Imamite Rationalism in the Buyid Era

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to revise existing theories of the Imamite turn towards rationalism. In the first chapter I discuss trends in Imamite thought during the period of the presence of the Imams; explore the impact of the Occultation on the Imamite community; and assess the character of the Imamite traditionism in the century after the Occultation. The bulk of the second chapter comprises a comparison of two texts: *I'tiqādāt al-imāmiyya* by Ibn Bābūya, which represents Imamite traditionism during the first century of the Occultation, and *Taṣḥīḥ i'tiqādāt al-imāmiyya*, which is a correction to Ibn Bābūya's creed by his student al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, considered the founder of the rationalist school in Imāmism. Finally, in the conclusion I will address the conceptual problems found in the intellectual history of this stage of development in Imamite thought with reference to the recent work of Quentin Skinner.

Abstract

Le but de cette étude est de réviser les théories existantes au sujet de la tournée imamite vers le rationalisme. Dans le premier chapitre, je discute les tendances dans la pensée Imamite pendant la présence des Imams, en éxaminant l'impact de l'Occultation sur la communauté imamite, et considérant le caractère du traditionisme imamite dans le siècle suivant l'Occultation. La plupart du deuxième chapitre est composée d'une comparison de deux textes : *I'tiqādāt al-imāmiyya* par Ibn Bābūya, qui représente le traditionisme imamite pendant le premier siècle après l'Occultation, et *Taṣḥiḥ i'tiqādāt al-imāmiyya*, qui est une correction du credo d' Ibn Bābūya, par son étudiant al-Shaykh al-Mufid, qui est considéré le fondateur de l'école rationaliste de l'Imamisme. Enfin, dans la conclusion, j' adresse les problèmes conceptuels trouvés dans l'histoire intellectuelle de cette étappe du développement de la pensée imamite, en référant à l'œuvre récente de Quentin Skinner.

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Introduction

In the past the similarities between Imamism and Mu'tazilism led scholars to presume that the two are originally related.[1] The resemblance between the Imamite and Mu'tazilite beliefs in the nature of the Quran, that it is not eternal, expressed in the ostensible alliance of the champion of Mu'tazilism, the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Ma'mūn (d. 218/833) and the eighth Imam 'Alī al-Riḍā (d. 203/818), lends credence to this view. However, it is more likely that this conclusion was informed by Imamite claims that the Imams were in fact the first promulgators of Mu'tazilite theses.[2] Imamite theologians often name one of their Imams as the original author of a theological position shared by the Mu'tazilites.[3] For example, in the following report, attributed to Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. ca. 117/735)[4], the Imam elaborates on the doctrine of the attributes of God:

> God is called Knowing and Capable in the sense that He gives knowledge to the knowing and capacity to the capable. All that you in your imagination distinguish as subtle dispositions of His essence is created and produced and is (insofar as these attributes are seen as distinct from His essence that admits of no multiplicity) your own (intellectual) act. It is as if the miniscule ants imagined that God has two feelers because, after all, such things are part of their own kind of perfection, and the lack of them, as they would see it, would be a shortcoming. Rational creatures do the same thing when they ascribe their own characteristics to God.[5]

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[1] Wilfred Madelung, "Imāmism and Mu'tazilite Theology," in T. Fahd (ed.), *Le Shī'ism imāmite.* Colloque de Strasbourg 1968 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), 13.

[2] Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law,* trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori, with an introduction and additional notes by Bernard Lewis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 203.

[3] Ibid.

[4] There is disagreement over the precise date of his death. For a summary of possible dates see E. Kohlberg, "Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bākir," in *EI.* Unless otherwise noted, all references to the Encyclopedia of Islam hereafter are to the 2nd ed.

[5] Muḥammad Bāqir Dāmād, *Al-Rawāshiḥ al-samawīya fi sharḥ al-aḥādīth al-imāmiyya* (Bombay, 1311 A. H.), p. 133, quoted in Goldziher, *Islamic Theology and Law,* 204.

The similarity between this report and the Muʻtazilites' thesis of unicity is apparent. Moreover, Imamite theologians explicitly state that the Hidden Imām belongs to the "school of ʻadl and tawḥīd," an epithet which normally denotes Muʻtazilism.[6]

Recently, this theory was discarded and replaced by another, according to which, Imamism and Muʻtazilism were, originally, poles apart.[7] The primary evidence offered in support of this view is the heresiographical reports of the Muʻtazilite ʻAbd al-Raḥīm b. Muḥammad al-Khayyāṭ (d. ca. 300/913) and the famous Sunnite theologian ʻAlī b. Ismāʻīl al-Ashʻarī (d. 324/935-6). Briefly, the Islamic heresiographical tradition should be divided into early and later, more developed periods. Early works, such as Ashʻarī's *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, are arranged topically; the beliefs of different sects and individuals are listed under subject headings. These early works also function as creeds and, therefore, they are mainly polemical.[8] In later works, such as ʻAbd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī's (d. 429/1037) *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, heresiographical material is arranged under the names of sects, indicating that the sects themselves are the focus of the author's inquiry.[9] The organization of material in the later heresioraphical tradition is connected to a *ḥadīth*, one version of which Baghdādī has placed at the beginning of *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, according to which Prophet Muḥammad predicted that the Muslims will be divided into seventy-three sects.[10] This presents a problem since the heresiographers sometimes enumerated individuals, counting them as sects, and sometimes discounted entire groups, placing them outside the pale of Islam, in order to

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[6] Goldziher, *Islamic Theology and Law*, 204. See Asad Allāh al-Tustarī, *Kashf al-qinā* (Qom: Muʼassasat Āl al-Bayt li-ihyā al-turāth, 1980), 99.

[7] Madelung, "Imāmism and Muʻtazilite Theology," 13-30.

[8] W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), 1.

[9] Ibid., 2.

[10] Ibid.

ensure that the final reckoning was equal to the prophesized seventy-three. Both

Khayyāṭ and Ashʿarī belong to the early period in the development of the

heresiographical tradition, so we need not concern ourselves here with criticisms of the

later tradition.

Khayyāṭ's *Kitab al-intisār wa'l-radd ʿala ibn al-Rawandī al-mulḥid* and Ashʿarī's

Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn confirm that the position of the majority of the Imamites of their

time, that is, the late 3rd/9th and early 4th/10th centuries, on theological issues, such as

anthropomorphism and free-will, ran contrary to contemporary Muʿtazilite dogma.

After refuting what Ibn al-Rāwandī claims about the beliefs of the Muʿtazilites and

listing their "real" beliefs, Khayyāṭ goes on to say:

> As for the sum of the saying of the Rāfiḍites it is that God, the exalted and the mighty,
> has height (*qadd*), shape (*sūra*) and limit (*ḥadd*); he moves (*yataḥarrak*) and he rests
> (*yaskun*); he comes close (*yadnū*) and moves away (*yabʿud*); he is light (*yakhuff*) and
> heavy (*yathqul*); and that his knowledge is originated (*muḥdath*); and that he did not
> know and then knew; and all of them believe in *al-badāʾ*, that is that God knows that he
> will do a thing then changes it and does not do it. This is the *tawḥīd* of the Rāfiḍites in
> its entirety except for a few among them who used to associate with the Muʿtazilites
> and believed in *al-tawḥīd* so the Rāfiḍites snuffed (*naffa*) them and disassociated from
> them. As for the majority of them and their leaders like Hishām b. Sālim, Shayṭān al-
> Ṭāq, ʿAlī b. Maytham, Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, ʿAlī b. Manṣūr and al-Sakkāk, their beliefs
> are what I related [above]. Then there is their belief about determinism (*al-qadr*), that
> the unbeliever (*kāfir*) disbelieves because God removed himself from him commiting
> him to disbelief; rather God commits him to his disbelief and compels him to it and
> enters him into it; and that God wills all abominations and desires every sin. All of
> them believe in the return to the world before the Resurrection. Then there is their
> saying that the Quran has been changed and altered; there is something extra in it
> something missing from it, and its passages have been distorted.[11]

Both Khayyāṭ and Ashʿarī report the existence of a new, much smaller group of

Imamites who, having previously affiliated with Muʿtazilism, combine Muʿtazilite

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[11] Abu'l-Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Khayyāṭ, *Kitāb al-intisār wa'l-radd ʿala ibn al-Rawandī al-mulḥid mā qaṣada bihi min al-kadhb ʿala'l-muslimīn wa'l-ṭaʿn ʿalayhim* (The book of victory and refutation against Ibn al-Rawandī the atheist and what lies he told about the Muslims and attacks against them) (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat dār al-kutub, 1344/1925), 5-6.

theology with fundamental Imamite beliefs. Therefore, according to this theory,

proselytes physically transported Mu'tazilite theology to Imamite circles where it was

adopted by, most importantly, two members of a prominent Shi'ite family from

Baghdad, the Banū Nawbakht: Abū Sahl Ismāʿil (d. 311/923) and his nephew al-Ḥasan

b. Mūsā (d. ca. 300-10/912-922).[12] This explanation, which is prevalent, is

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[12] So as not to understate the importance of the Nawbakhti family to the development of Imamite theology, I shall discuss them briefly here: Nawbakht was an astrologer in the entourage of the caliph al-Manṣūr (d. 158/775). Originally Zoroastrian, he converted to Islam under Manṣūr's influence. His son Abū Sahl b. Nawbakht succeeded him as court astrologer for Manṣūr. Under Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809) Abū Sahl held a position in Khizānat al-Ḥikma translating Pahlavi books into Arabic. He probably died before the end of Hārūn al-Rashīd's caliphate. Ibn al-Nadīm lists seven works on astrology by Abu Sahl b. Nawbakht which are no longer extant (D. Pingree, "Abū Sahl b. Nawbakht," EIr.). Abū Sahl Ismāʿil b. 'Alī b. Isḥāq b. Abi Sahl Nawbakhtī (d. 311/924) was an Imamite leader and scholar. He recorded his debates with the Sabian philosopher, logician and mathematician Thābit b. Qurra (d. 288/834) in Majālis Thābit b. Qurra. Abu'l-Ḥusayn Ṣāliḥī, a Mu'tazilite theologian, took part in debates in Abū Sahl Ismāʿil's house. He held high secretarial posts for most of his life. Abū Sahl Ismāʿil supported the "orthodox" view that Imam al-'Askarī's son was the twelfth Imam. During the vizierate of Qāsim b. 'Ubayd Allāh b. Sulaymān (288-91/901-4) Abū Sahl Ismāʿil was imprisoned as part of the vizier's effort to purge the government of Shi'ite officials. He rose to prominence during the vizierate of the Shi'ite Banu'l-Furāt and was regarded as the leader of the Imamites in Baghdad. Abū Sahl Ismāʿil's views can only be gleaned from the titles of works no longer extant and statements by later scholars. He upheld some views that are commonly associated with Mu'tazilism such as the Mu'tazilite doctrine of God's attributes, God's justice, free-will and the beatific vision. Some of his other views went against beliefs that are commonly associated with Mu'tazilism. He held that, "the reality of man consists in an unspatial, live soul governing the dead body" (W. Madelung, "Abū Sahl," EIr.). He held that the Prophet and the Imams may intercede for unrepentant sinners among their followers. He upheld the Imamite doctrine of the imāmate and helped formulate the doctrine of the occultation of the twelfth Imam. According to Madelung, Ibn al-Nadīm's statement that Abū Sahl Ismāʿil believed that the twelfth Imam had died in hiding and had been succeeded by a son is not reliable (Ibid.). However, according to Madelung, it is likely that he did not unequivocally affirm that the twelfth Imam is the last Imam and the Mahdi (Ibid.). There is a report, quoted by al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in Kitāb al-Ghayba, according to which Abū Sahl Ismāʿil saw the twelfth Imam as a child with his father. This report may have been taken from Abū Sahl Ismāʿil's Kitāb al-anwār fī tawārīkh al-a'imma. He wrote refutations of several works by Ibn al-Rāwandi. In the field of law, he rejected ijtihād and qiyās and refuted al-Shāfiʿī's Risāla. Iqbāl lists forty-three works by al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī (d. 300-13/912-22) (Abbās Iqbāl, Khāndān-i Nawbakhtī (Tehran: Kitāb Khānah-yi Ṭuhūrī, 1357), 129-35. Most of the works listed are also listed in Rijāl al-Najāshī.). Kitāb al-ārā' wa'l-diyānāt, which is his most important work according to Kraemer (J. L. Kraemer, "al-Nawbakhtī," EI), is cited in Ibn al-Jawzī's Talbīs Iblīs, al-Mas'ūdī's Murūj al-dhahab and Ibn Abi'l-Ḥadīd's Sharḥ nahj al-balagha. It discusses the Sophists (Sceptics), Dualists, Greek Philosophers (Socrates), the views of Stoic philosophers, Indian religions (Barāhima), Ṣabians and Majūs, astronomers and astrologers, the views of Jahm b. Ṣafwān, Hishām b. al-Ḥakam's view on anthropomorphism, the views of Muqātil b. Sulaymān, Naʿīm (Nu'aym) b. Ḥammād and Dāwūd al-Jawāribī. Madelung showed that al-Hasan b. Mūsā used Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq's (d. 247/861) Kitāb ikhtiṣāṣ madhāhib al-ithnayn and/or Kitāb al-maqālāt for information on dualistic religions, Manichaeans, Marcionites and the Bardesanians (Ibid.). His polemical works include al-Radd 'alā'l-ghulāt and a refutation of Abū 'Alī al-Jubbāʿī's refutation of astrologers. He wrote a brief summary of Aristotle's De Generatione et Corruptione and a work on atomism. He is famous for his heresiography Firaq al-shi'a. During the caliphate of the 'Abbāsid al-Muqtadir (d. 320/932), when

unsatisfactory for the following reasons: First, a basic question remains unanswered, that is, if the theological developments that took place during the Buyid era actually involved a *volte-face*, then *why* did Imamites receive Mu'tazilite theology so well? Second, some of the Imams' *ḥadīths*, particularly those narrated by Imam al-Riḍā (d. 203/818), support positions between Mu'tazilite theology and Sunnite traditionism on major doctrinal questions. Given Imam al-Riḍā's close association with the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Ma'mūn (d. 218/833), this is not surprising. Third, among the Imams' companions, as far back as the imamate of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), there were both traditionists and rationalists. Fourth, the precise meaning of statements made by the Imams' companions, specifically Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795-6), must be understood in light of contemporary dialectic; for when Hishām b. al-Ḥakam declares that God is a body, does he intend the kind of anthropomorphism that the heresiographers alleged or is it that, for Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and his contemporaries, immaterial things are non-existent. Fifth, the traditionism prevalent in the generation before al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) was intended to prove the existence of the twelfth,

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court politics were dominated by the conflicting interests of the Banu'l-Jarrāḥ and the Banu'l-Furāt, the Banū Nawbakht were allied with the latter. His brother Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī and his son Isḥāq (d. 322/934) were also court appointees. Abū Sahl Nawbakhtī's son Ismā'īl was present at the courts of al-Ma'mūn and al-Wāthiq, both of whom are remembered as Shī'ite and Mu'tazilite sympathizers. Abu'l-Ḥusayn 'Alī b. al-'Abbās and his son al-Ḥusayn, from another branch of Banu Nawbakht, were agents of the court during the caliphate of al-Muqtadir. Abu Ṭālib, another Nawbakhtī, also served the 'Abbāsid court. Newman describes the role of the Banū Nawbakht in the late 3rd/9th and early 4th/10th centuries as follows: "Nawbakhtī discourse addressed the very real, and new, problematic presented by the disappearance of the Imam, the rise of such alternative Shī'ī discourses as Zaydism, Ismā'īlism and other 'extreme' (*ghālī*) Shī'ī and proto-Shī'ī movements and risings such as the Zanj and the Qaramatians, the rise of Sunnī traditionism and the support it found among the military and merchant circles by building on the extant body of rationalist, and distinctly Mu'tazilī, discourse developed by earlier generations of Imāmī scholars and, at the political level, on the older Mu'tazilī/Shī'ī confluence of interests, and grounding the latter, as earlier in the century, on a firm identification with the established political institution, particularly the palace itself. The latter was attested to especially by the Nawbakhtī record of service to the caliphs" (Andrew J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shī'ism: Ḥadīth as Discourse Between Qum and Baghdad* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 20).

occulted Imam (b. ca. 255/869-261/875) to a widely confused and suspicious community rather than the continuation of an original trajectory. Sixth, the traditionist school, represented by Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941) and Ibn Bābūya (d. 381/991), incorporated fundamental rationalist principles and, in the case of Ibn Bābūya, sophisticated theological proofs. Finally, on most points, the difference between the traditionists and the rationalists is methodological, not substantial, so it is better not to polarize these tendencies. Above all the prevalent theory disacknowledges the creativity involved in assimilation, the shifting meanings and applications of these ideas in different historical contexts, and thereby denies agency to Imamite scholars.

It is true that rationalism eclipsed traditionism in Imāmite jurisprudence and theology in the 5th/11th century. The "triumph of rationalism" occurred during the Būyid era and was centered in Baghdād, where Muʿtazilism was an intellectual force in the religious topography. The aim of the present study is to redefine the Imamite turn towards rationalism by addressing the points raised above. Furthermore, I believe that there are conceptual problems with the way that the intellectual history of this stage in the development of Imamite thought is written. Intellectual developments are shaped by social and political circumstances engulfing Imamite scholars and illuminating their works. So, I will contextualize the developments in Imamite jurisprudence and theology in connection to three central historical and socio-political forces: first, the crisis of the Occultation of the twelfth Imam (ca. 260/874) and its implications for early Imamite jurists and community leaders; second, Būyid patronage at a time when Shīʿite views of

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various kinds were popularly received[13]; and third, the nature of sectarianism and scholarly controversy and debate across schools of law (*madhāhib*) and theological circles in Baghdad.

In the first chapter I discuss the trends in Imamite thought during the period of the presence of the Imams. Second, I explore the impact of the occultation of the Twefth Imam on the nascent Imamite community. Third, I assess the character and implications of the predominant school of Imamite traditionism in the century after the Occultation.

The bulk of the second chapter comprises a comparison of two principle theological texts: The first text, *I'tiqādāt al-imāmiyya* by Ibn Bābūya, represents the traditionist trend prevalent in Imāmite scholarship during the first century of the Occultation. The second text, *Tashīh i'tiqādāt al-imāmiyya*, is, as the title indicates, a correction to Ibn Bābūya's creed written by his student al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, who is considered the founder of the rationalist school in Imāmism. A detailed comparison of each article of both creeds will provide answers to some of the questions I have raised. Finally, in the conclusion I will address the conceptual problems found in the intellectual history of this stage of development in Imamite thought with reference to the recent work of Quentin Skinner. In the end I hope this study will be not only a revision of long-standing views of the formative period in Imamite history but also a contribution to Shī'ite historiography.

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[13] Accordingly, Hodgson termed this era "the Shī'ī century." Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 2, *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 36.

Chapter 1

The period of the presence of the Imams is a unique phase in the intellectual history of Shī'ism because of the diversity of theological positions that Shī'ite scholars held and the modes of discourse that they considered acceptable. There was a group of the Imams' companions who held theological and legal opinions that are considered rational in the Shī'ite tradition and in contemporary Western studies. As far as I can tell, this assessment is based on the extent to which scholars' accepted dialectic theology as a means to uncover religious truths and the role they assigned to reason in deriving legal norms. Individual points of doctrine are also associated with rationalism. Therefore, the term rationalism actually refers to two things: a methodology and a set of theological positions. The first category may be called formal-rationalism and the second category, which is more permeable, may be called material-rationalism. The conflation of these two rationalisms is a source of confusion since formal-rationalists did not always hold "rational" positions on individual points of doctrine. Disentangling formal-rationalism from material-rationalism is the key to understanding the theological developments that took place in the Būyid era as the outcome of an internal process linked to concurrent developments in jurisprudence, namely the rejection of *akhbār al-āḥād.*

In this section I will present evidence of a strong formal-rationalist trend in the period of the presence of the Imams. I am not concerned here with the Imams' instructions to their followers. This contentious issue has no bearing on the present study since it is well-known that the Imams' companions did not always agree with

their leaders[14] and it was the Imams' companions who shaped the development of

Shī'ism more so than the Imams themselves. It is true that the majority of the Imams'

followers, especially in Qom, were traditionists, that is, they restricted themselves to

recording and transmitting the Imams' ḥadīths. While it is clear that the rationalists

were a much smaller group among the Imams' companions and the Shī'ite scholars, they

were by no means marginal.[15] In the period of the presence of the Imams most Shī'ite

jurists were also dialectic theologians[16] and, as we shall see, some of the most prominent

companions were indeed rationalists. The formal-rationalist trend in this period was the

foundation upon which later scholars drew to formulate material-rationalist positions.[17]

The following report names some of the most important theologians among

Imam al-Ṣādiq's companions:

> Yūnus b. Ya'qūb said, "I was with Abū 'Abd Allāh (Ja'far), peace be upon him, when a
> Syrian came to him. He said, 'I am a scholar (ṣāḥib) of theology, jurisprudence, and the
> laws of inheritance. I have come to dispute with your followers.' 'Is your theology
> from the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, or from yourself?' Abū
> 'Abd Allāh (Ja'far), peace be upon him, asked. 'Partly from the Apostle of God, may
> God bless him and his family, and partly from myself,' replied (the other man). 'Then
> are you a partner of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family?' enquired
> Abū 'Abd Allāh (Ja'far). 'No,' he answered. 'Have you heard inspiration (waḥy)
> (direct) from God?' 'No,' he replied. 'Is obedience to you required as is obedience to

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[14] For example, Abū Muḥammad Layth b. al-Bakhtiyār al-Murādī, one of the most prominent companions of Imams al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq who is known as Abū Baṣīr in Shī'ite sources, did not accept the judgments of Imam al-Kāẓim, whom Abū Baṣīr thought had not yet gained sufficient knowledge of the law. Hossein Modarressi, *An Introduction to Shī'ī Law: A Bibliographical Survey* (London: Ithaca Press, 1984), 28. Nevertheless, Abū Baṣīr is counted among the *aṣḥāb al-ijmā'*, a group of eighteen of the Imams' companions whose reliability is a matter of consensus among Shī'ite scholars. 'Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī, *Introduction to Ḥadīth*, trans. Nazmina Virjee (London: ICAS Press, 2002), 205-11.

[15] This goes against Amir-Moezzi's assessment that the predominance of traditionism was nearly absolute while the rationalists and an intermediary group were minor figures. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, trans. David Streight (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 15. Even among the traditionists of Qumm there were those who held doctrinal positions in common with the rationalists. Modarressi, *Introduction to Shī'ī Law*, 27-8.

[16] Ibid., 27.

[17] For example, in *al-arkān fī da'ā'im al-dīn* Mufīd argued that early Imamite theologians employed rational arguments in debates with the approval of the Imams. Martin J. McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022)* (Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq, 1978), 28.

the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family?' 'No,' was the answer. Abū 'Abd Allāh, peace be upon him, turned to me and said, 'Yūnus b. Ya'qūb, this man has contradicted himself before he has begun (the real business) of discussing.' Then he said, 'Yūnus, if you were good at theology, you should speak to him.' How sad it was, for I said to him, 'May I be your ransom, I have heard you forbid (taking part in) theology and say: Woe to the theologians who say that this follows and that this does not follow, that this is entailed and that this is not entailed, that this we accept as rational and this we do not accept as rational.' 'I only said,' Abū 'Abd Allāh, peace be upon him remarked, 'woe to them, if they abandon what I say and adopt their own wishes.' Then he told me, "Go out to the door and look for any of the theologians you can see, and bring them in.' I went out and found Ḥumrān b. A'yan who was good at theology, and Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān al-Aḥwal, who was a theologian, and Hishām b. Sālim and Qays b. al-Māṣir, both theologians. I brought them (all) to him. [Then Abū 'Abd Allāh called a young Hishām b. al-Ḥakam into his tent and made room for him.] He told Ḥumrān, 'Debate with the [Syrian] man.' Ḥumrān debated with him and overcame him. Then (Abū 'Abd Allāh) said, 'O my Ṭāq, debate with him.' So Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān debated with him and overcame him. Next he said, 'Hishām b. Sālim, debate with him.' So they both argued together. He then told Qays b. Māṣir to debate with him and he did so. Abū 'Abd Allāh, peace be upon him, began to smile at their discussion as the Syrian sought to escape in front of him. He told the Syrian, 'Debate with this lad [i.e. Hishām b. al-Ḥakam].' [Hishām defeated the Syrian and Abū 'Abd Allāh told the Syrian about his (i.e. the Syrian's) past journey, whereupon he converted to Islam and accepted Abū 'Abd Allāh as God's trustee (waṣī).] Abū 'Abd Allāh approached Ḥumrān and said, 'Ḥumrān, conduct theology on the basis of traditional knowledge (āthār) and you will be correct.' He turned to Hishām b. Sālim and said, 'You want to use traditional knowledge but you don't know it.' Then he turned to al-Aḥwal and said, 'You are a man who uses qiyās and is evasive, a man who refutes falsehood with falsehood, even though your false argument is stronger.' Then he turned to Qays b. Māṣir and said, 'When you debate, the nearer you are to truth and traditions (khabar) on the authority of the Prophet, the further you are from it. You mix up the truth with what is false. A little truth suffices for much which is false. You and al-Aḥwal are skillful (verbal) gymnasts.'…Then he said, 'Hishām [b. al-Ḥakam], you are hardly likely to fall, for you tuck in your legs (like a bird). When you are about to fall to the earth, you fly. Therefore a person like you should debate with the people. Guard against slipping and intercession will be behind you.'"[18]

Even if it is not authentic[19], this report demonstrates that the theologians among the

Imams' companions were regarded highly by their contemporaries and subsequent

[18] Mufid, Kitāb al-Irshād: The Book of Guidance into the Lives of the Twelve Imams, trans. I. K. A. Howard (New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 1981), 420-23. The same tradition is reported in al-Kāfī, ed. al-Ghaffarī (Beirut, 1401/1980), 1:169-73, so Mufid could not have invented it to support his position on theological debate. Two prominent theologians from the 3rd/9th century that do not appear in this report are Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān and al-Faḍl b. Shādhān.

[19] Van Ess noted that it is likely fabricated in Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra, vol. I (Berlin: Walter de Gouyter, 1991), 352.

generations of Shīʿites. A summary of the works of three companions will show that rationalism was not a marginal trend in the period of the presence of the Imams.

Al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī

Al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī (d. before 183/799) was a companion of Imams al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāẓim.[20] Scholars of *ʿilm al-rijāl* have disagreed on his credibility. Al-Najāshī said that his religion was corrupted (*fāsid al-madhhab*), that he narrated insufficiently supported *ḥadīths* (*muḍṭarib al-riwāya*), that he was unimportant (*lā yuʿbaʾu bihi*) and that he was a follower of the famous heretic Abuʾl-Khaṭṭāb al-Asadī (d. 138/755).[21] Ghaḍāʾirī said that he was weak, incoherent (*mutahāfit*), that his claims were exaggerated (*murtafiʿ al-qawl*), that he was a follower of Abuʾl-Khaṭṭāb, that he narrated heretical *ḥadīths* and that it is not permissible to write down his *ḥadīths*. On the other hand, Mufid counted him among the distinguished companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq who reported the designation of Imam al-Kāẓim.[22] Ṭūsī counted him among the

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[20] Al-Ṭūsī counted him among the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq and, in another place, among the companions of Imam al-Kāẓim in his biobibliographical dictionary. Al-Barqī counted him among the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq. Al-Ghaḍāʾirī said that he related *ḥadīths* from Imams al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāẓim. Abuʾl-Qāsim al-Khūʾī, *Muʿjam rijāl al-ḥadīth wa tafṣīl ṭabaqāt al-ruwwāt* (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrā, 1403/1983), 18: 293.

[21] Ibid. Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq listed the Mufaḍḍalites, the followers of Mufaḍḍal, among the sub-sects of the Khaṭṭābites, on whom see W. Madelung, "Khaṭṭābiyya," in *EI*. They agreed with other Khaṭṭābite sects on deifying Imam al-Ṣādiq and claiming prophethood for themselves. However, unlike other Khaṭṭābites, the Mufaḍḍalites repudiated Abuʾl-Khaṭṭāb. According to one report, Imam al-Ṣādiq appointed Mufaḍḍal to guide the followers of Abuʾl-Khaṭṭāb after he condemned him.

[22] "Among the shaykhs of the followers of Abū ʿAbd Allāh, peace be upon him, his special group (*khāṣṣa*), his inner circle and the trustworthy righteous legal scholars, may God have mercy on them, who report the clear designation of the Imamate by Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jaʿfar, peace be upon him, for his son Abuʾl-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be upon him, are: al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī, Muʿādh b. Kathīr, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥajjāj, al-Fayḍ b. al-Mukhtār, Yaʿqūb al-Sarrāj, Sulaymān b. Khālid, Ṣafwān al-Jammāl and others whom it would make the book to long to mention." Mufid, *Irshād*, 436. It may be that, in retrospect, siding with orthodoxy during a crisis of succession earned Mufaḍḍal the favor of Mufid despite what Najāshī said about him.

praised ones (*mamdūḥūn*) in his work on the Occultation[23], but he was less forthright in praising him than Mufid.

Najāshī mentioned that Mufaḍḍal had written a book which Najāshī called *Kitab fakkir.*[24] According to Khū'ī this book is commonly known as *Tawḥīd al-Mufaḍḍal.*[25] Since it is a clear example of the rationalist trend in the pre-Occultation period, I will quote it at length. *Tawḥīd al-Mufaḍḍal* begins with Mufaḍḍal overhearing a conversation between Ibn Abi'l-'Awjā' and his unnamed companion.[26] Ibn Abi'l-'Awjā' said to his companion, "There is no maker (*ṣāni'*) and no planner (*mudabbir*), rather things came into existence by themselves, without a planner, and so the world is eternal."[27] Mufaḍḍal rebuked him with the following words:

> Oh enemy of God! You have apostated from God's religion. You have denied the Fashioner (*al-Bārī*), exalted is his holiness, who created you in the best form (*taqwīm*) and molded (*ṣawwara*) you in the most complete shape (*ṣūra*)... If you reflected upon it honestly... you would find indicators of lordship and traces of workmanship (*ṣan'a*) in yourself. Evidences of him are apparent in your creation and the proofs of him are listed for you.[28]

Ibn Abi'l-'Awjā' replied:

[23] Khū'ī, *Rijāl*, 18: 293. Technically, *mamdūḥ* refers to someone who is not Imamite. 'Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī, *Miqbās al-hidāya fī 'ilm al-dirāya*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Māmaqānī (Beirut: Mu'assasat āl al-bayt li-iḥyā al-turāth, 1411/1991), 212.

[24] Ibid., 18: 292. He also said that the ascription of the works attributed to him is problematic. Ibid. It is also known as *Kitāb fī bad' al-khalq wa'l-ḥadath 'alā'l-i'tibār*. Hossein Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival: A Bibliographical Survey of Early Shī'ite Literature* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), 334. Modarressi noted that Najāshī probably called it *Kitāb fakir* because many paragraphs begin with the imperative "*fakkir*" (Think!). Ibid.

[25] Khū'ī, *Rijāl*, 18:292.

[26] According to Ibn al-Jawzī, 'Abd al-Karīm b. Abi'l-'Awjā' was the foster son (*rabīb*) of Ḥammād b. Salma and a student of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728). Al-Baghdādī said that he was a Manichean who believed in transmigration, inclined towards Shī'ism (*madhhab al-rāfiḍa*) and believed in determinism (*al-qadr*). According to al-Bīrūnī, he spoke about justice (*al-ta'dīd*) and injustice (*al-tajwīr*), which connotes theological disputation. He reportedly had many debates with Imam al-Ṣādiq. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, the governor of Kufa, imprisoned him, then killed him in 155/771 or 160/776. Al-Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar al-Ju'fī, *Tawḥīd al-Mufaḍḍal imlā al-imam Abī 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣādiq 'ala'l-Mufaḍḍal bin 'Umar al-Ju'fī*, with annotations by Kāẓim al-Muẓaffar (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-wafā, 1403/1983), 6.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 7.

If you were from among the people of *kalām* we would talk to you and if you established a proof we would follow you. If you are not from among them, there is nothing to say to you. And if you were from among the companions of Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq you would not address us like this. You would not argue with us with the likes of your proof. He has heard more of our speech than you did, yet he was not obscene in addressing us and he did not attack our answer for he is mild-tempered (*al-ḥalīm*) and composed (*al-razīn*)... So if you were from among his companions you would address us the way that he addresses us.[29]

Then Mufaḍḍal went to Imam al-Ṣādiq and told him what happened whereupon the Imam told him to come to him the next day, when he would present him with the wisdom of the fashioner in creating the world. The rest of the book comprises Imam al-Ṣādiq's instructions to Mufaḍḍal. His explanations form a sophisticated argument from design (*dalīl al-'ināya*) or teleological argument which resembles, stylistically, a much later period. However, the substance of the argument aside, the context reveals that Mufaḍḍal was expected to engage in rational theological disputation. Modarressi described Mufaḍḍal as, "the leader of the *Mufawwiḍa* school of Shī'ite Extremism [*ghuluww*]."[30] Mufaḍḍal's extreme views can be found in *Kitāb al-haft wa'l-azillā*[31], an important Nuṣayrī text attributed to him, *Mā yakūn 'ind zuhūr al-Mahdī*[32] and *Kitāb atṣirāt*.[33] So, he is one example of a formal-rationalist who held extremist views generally placed outside the bounds of material-rationalism.

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 333.

[31] Ibid., 335. See Ibid., 334-37 for a list of ten works attributed to al-Mufaḍḍal.

[32] Extremist cosmology and notions of cyclical time are discussed in this work. Ibid., 335.

[33] As Modarressi noted, *Kitāb atṣirāt* was published by Leonardo Capezzone in the *Revista degli Studi Orientali* 69 (1995): 295-414. See also "La questione dell'eterodossia di Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar al-Ǧu'fi nel Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl di al-Māmaqānī," *Oriente Moderno* 21 (2002): 147-57 by the same author.

Hishām b. al-Ḥakam

Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795) was a companion of Imams al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāẓim and the most prominent representative of the rationalist trend in the pre-Occultation period. A great deal of information about his life and thought is available to us.[34] He was of Kufan origin, born in Wasit. He spent the early part of his life in and around these two towns. Later, he had a shop in the Karkh quarter of Baghdad.[35] Before pledging his allegiance to Imam al-Ṣādiq, Hishām was associated with the Jahmites and the Daysanites and his teachings are clearly directed against the Jahmites' positions on determinism and the description of God as a non-thing (*lā shay*).[36] He must have joined Imam al-Ṣādiq's entourage at an early age since he is identified as a youth (*ghulām*) in one of the earliest accounts of Hishām debating an opponent on behalf of the Imam.[37]

Thirty-seven works are attributed to Hishām.[38] Their titles reveal his particular interests and the range of his intellectual activity:

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[34] There are two biographies of Hishām: ʿAbd Allāh Niʿma, *Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam: ustādh al-qarn al-thānī fīʾl-kalām waʾl-munāẓara* (Beirut, 1959) and Aḥmad Ṣafāʾī, *Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam: mutakallim-i maʿrūf-i qarn-i duwwum-i hijrī* (Tehran, 1341). Niʿma also has a detailed section on Hishām in his book *Falāsifat al-shīʿa: ḥayātuhum wa ārāʾuhum* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1961), 562-77. The most complete list of Hishām's works is in Michele A. DeAngelis, "The collected fragments of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, Imamite *mutakallim* of the second century of the Hegira together with a discussion of the sources for and an introduction to his teaching" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1974), 18-23 and Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 262-68.

[35] Masʿūdī gave him the *nisba* al-Ḥarrār which means the silk weaver. DeAngelis, "Hishām," 8.

[36] DeAngelis, "Hishām," 7.

[37] The account is of a debate between Hishām and the Muʿtazilite Amr b. ʿUbayd (d. 144/761) in the Great Mosque of Basra. Ibid. Another instance where Imam al-Ṣādiq referred to Hishām's youth is the account of the debate between Hishām and a Syrian theologian quoted above.

[38] This list is based on DeAngelis' list in, "Hishām," 18-23 and Modarressi's list in *Tradition and Survival*, 262-68. Wherever the content of a work is not obvious from its title, I have summarized DeAngelis' and Modarressi's descriptions. DeAngelis noted that the titles of Hishām's works conform to the thematic contents of the works of his contemporaries and, on that basis and on the basis of her analysis of the fragments of Hishām's works, suggested the likely contents of each work. DeAngelis, "Hishām," 17. DeAngelis included the alternate titles from Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel (Leipzig, 1871-71) and Najāshī's *Kitāb al-rijāl* (Chāpkhāna-i Muṣṭafawī, n.d.). Finally, I have deleted *Kitāb al-*

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1. *Kitāb al-maʿrifa* is perhaps the title of a text quoted in *al-Kāfī* on the authority of Hishām comprising advice given to him by Imam al-Kāẓim on how to know God.[39]

2. *al-Dalāla ʿalā ḥudūth al-ashyā* (or *al-ajsām* according to Najāshī)[40]

3. *Kitāb al-qadar*

4. *Kitāb al-jabr wa ʾl-qadr*

5. *Kitāb al-istiṭāʿa*

6. *Kitāb al-alṭāf*[41]

7. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ* is a refutation of the natural philosophers who claim that elementary qualities or natures determine being

8. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā Arasṭāṭālīs fī ʾl-tawḥīd*

9. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā aṣḥāb al-ithnayn* is a refutation of dualism

10. *Kitāb al-radd ʿala ʾl-zanādiqa* may be a record of a question and answer dialogue between a *zindīq* and Imām al-Ṣādiq[42]

11. *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*

12. *Kitāb al-shaykh wa ʾl-ghulām* on God's unity

13. *Kitāb al-thamāniya abwāb* is perhaps a description of the gates of paradise[43]

14. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā Shayṭan al-Ṭāq*[44]

15. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā Hishām al-Jawālīqī* perhaps against defining God as a form (*ṣūra*)[45]

16. *Kitāb al-imāma* contains a discussion of the principles of the imamate and probably includes rational and traditionist proofs

17. *Kitāb ikhtilāf al-nās fī ʾl-imāma* is a record of his last debate with the leaders of other theological schools in the vizier Yaḥyā b. Khālid al-Barmakī's home[46]

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mīrāth which appears to be a misspelling of either *Kitāb al-mīzān* or *Kitāb al-maydān* and added *al-Tamyīz wa ithbāt al-ḥujaj ʿalā man khālafa al-shīʿa* and *Tafsīr mā yalzimu al-ʿibād al-iqrār bihi*, which only Ibn Shahrāshūb mentioned in his *Maʿālim al-ʿulamā*, ed. ʿAbbās Iqbāl (Tehran: Maṭbaʿat Fardīn, 1353/1934), 115, to my reckoning.

[39] Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 267.

[40] Based on Najāshī's entry Modarressi lists this work as *Kitāb al-dalāla ʿalā ḥadath al-ajsām* in *Tradition and Survival*, 263.

[41] This work may be the same as *Kitāb al-alfāẓ* on which see note 53. If the title is rightly *Kitāb al-alṭāf*, then it refers to the well-known theological concept of divine favor as it relates to free-will. See O. N. H. Leaman, "Luṭf," in *EI*. The importance of this concept to Muʿtazilite theologians and the fact that Hishām was actively engaged in debating them, makes this the likely subject of his work.

[42] Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 263-4.

[43] The extant version of this work, quoted by Ibn Bābūya in his *Amālī* mentions only six of the eight gates. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survivial*, 268.

[44] He is Muḥammad b. al-Nuʿmān al-Aḥwal Shayṭān/Muʾmin al-Ṭāq, a companion of Imam al-Ṣādiq.

[45] He is Hishām b. Sālim al-Jawālīqī, a companion of Imams al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāẓim.

[46] It was after this debate that the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd ordered Hishām's arrest. See Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 266; W. Madelung, "Hishām b. al-Ḥakam," in *EI*. Madelung identified this work as the source of Nawbakhtī's *Firaq al-shīʿa* and Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qummī's *Kitāb al-maqālāt wa ʾl-firaq* in his article "Bemerkungen zur imamitischen Firaq-Literatur," *Der Islam* 43(1967), 37-52. He based his conclusion on parallels between *Firaq al-shīʿa* and *Kitāb uṣūl al-niḥal* by al-Nāshī who used Hishām's work. There are many parallels between this work and *Kitāb al-maqālāt wa ʾl-firaq*. According to Kraemer it is likely that Qummī used *Firaq al-shīʿa* to write his work. J. L. Kraemer, "al-Nawbakhtī," *EI*. However, more recently, Modarressi suggested that, with respect to the source of these redactions, Hishām's *Kitāb al-mīzān* is a better candidate. Moreover, Modarressi contended that references to the Imamites as *rāfiḍa* and indifference shown to anti-Shīʿite ideas, like Abū Ṭālib's death as a non-Muslim, in both heresiographies may indicate that the source of both of them is a Sunnite work; however, Modarressi notes, "given that these references are in the form of quotations from others, even this theory is open to debate." Modarressi adds that none of the quotations from *Kitāb al-mīzān* found in other sources (see note 40) are found in either of the heresiographies. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 266.

18. *Kitāb al-hakamayn* contains a discussion of the two arbitrators in the battle of Ṣiffīn[47]

19. *Kitāb al-waṣiyya wa'l-radd 'alā man ankarahā*[48]

20. *Kitāb al-majālis fī'l-imāma* (or *Kitāb majālis Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam* which Najāshī ascribed it to 'Alī b. Maytham)

21. *Kitāb al-tadbīr* (Najāshī adds *fī'l-imāma*) comprises 'Ali b. Manṣūr's collection of Hishām's dialectic discussions on the management of the imamate[49]

22. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā man qāla bi imāmat al-mafḍūl* is a refutation of the Zaydites

23. *Kitāb al-radd 'ala'l-mu'tazila fī amr Talḥā wa'l-Zubayr* is a refutation of the Mu'tazilites who do not side with either Imam 'Alī or Talḥā and al-Zubayr

24. *Kitāb 'ilal al-taḥrīm*[50]

25. *Kitāb al-farā'iḍ*[51]

26. *Kitāb al-akhbār* (Ibn al-Nadīm adds *kayfa taṣṣuḥ*, Najāshī adds *kayfa yaftaḥ*)[52]

27. *Kitāb al-alfāẓ*[53]

28. *Kitāb al-radd 'ala'l-mu'tazila*

29. *Kitāb al-mīzān* on differences of opinion among Hishām's contemporary Shī'ites[54]

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[47] Ibn Bābūya called this work *Faṣl li-Hishām bin al-Ḥakam ma' ba'd al-mukhālifīn fī'l-ḥakamayn bi-Ṣiffīn: 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ wa Abī Mūsā al-Ash'arī.* Judging from what Ibn Bābūya quoted of it, Modarressi concluded that it was a record of a debate between Hishām and an opponent on this topic. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 267. Hishām is said to have requested that his epitaph read: *hādhā Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam alladhī ṭalabahu amīru'l-mu'minīn.* DeAngelis, "Hishām," 15. Given the title of this work, one can not help but see the intended pun on his name.

[48] Modarressi noted that a passage quoted from Hishām by Ibn Ḥazm may indicate that this work was written after the death of Imam al-Ṣādiq. According to this passage, the Imam would become known, without the need for a clear designation, if his brothers suffered from physical defects that disqualified them from the imamate. This issue arose in the debates between the supporters of Imam al-Kāẓim and the Fatḥites, after Imam al-Ṣādiq's death. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 262-3. The Fatḥites held that Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's elder son 'Abd Allāh, who was known as *afṭaḥ* or flat-footed, had succeeded him and Mūsā al-Kāẓim was 'Abd Allāh's successor.

[49] Najāshī listed this work as *Kitāb al-tadbīr fī'l-tawhīd wa'l-imāma* under his entry on 'Alī b. Manṣūr. On that basis Modarressi suggested that it is the same as *Kitāb al-majālis fī'l-imāma* and another work, not mentioned by DeAngelis, titled *Kitāb al-majālis fī'l-tawhīd*, both of which Najāshī added to Ibn Nadīm's list of Hishām's works. Ibid., 263.

[50] DeAngelis' description of this book as a work on the proscribed *ratio legis* is probably incorrect. It is more likely that it was on the rationale of prohibitions. See Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 262.

[51] On the basis of Najāshī's entry, DeAngelis listed this work and *Kitāb 'ilal al-taḥrīm* separately. However, Modarressi considered Najāshī's entry a mistake and listed one work titled *Kitāb 'ilal al-taḥrīm wa'l-farā'id.* Ibid.

[52] DeAngelis' described this work as a collection of Prophetic and Imamic traditions. DeAngelis, "Hishām," 23. Based on what Khayyāṭ quoted from Hishām, Modarressi suggested that it may have been about the validity of a widely transmitted report. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 268.

[53] Ṭūsī listed this work as *Kitāb al-alṭāf* in his *Fihrist*, in which case it is the same as no. 6 in my reckoning. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 267. If it is indeed a distinct work then it is most likely about the ontological, not etymological, origins of words. Ibid.

[54] Modarressi mentioned two passages that Ibn Ḥazm quoted from this work. Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy's opinion on whether all Qurayshites qualify for the imamate or whether it is restricted to the Prophet's descendants is quoted in the first passage. The second passage is about the opinions and practices of an early extremist sect, the Kisfiyya who were the followers of Abū Manṣūr al-'Ijlī. Modarressi also traced two other passages in Ibn Ḥazm's *Fiṣal* back to this book and a third passage from 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Tathbīt* on the views of early Shī'ites on the imamate. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 265. This is important because of Modarressi's view that Hishām's *Kitāb al-mīzān* is the source of Nawbakhtī's *Firaq al-shī'a* and Sa 'd b. 'Abd Allāh al-Qummī's *Kitāb al-maqālāt wa'l-firaq*, contrary to Madelungs opinion. See note 46.

30. *Kitāb al-maydān*[55]

31. *al-Tamyīz wa ithbāt al-hujaj 'alā man khālafa al-shī'a*

32. *Tafsīr mā yalzimu al-'ibād al-iqrār bihi*

33. *Kitāb/ Aṣl* is his notebook of *ḥadīths* related by his one time student and disciple Ibn Abī 'Umayr

34. *Kitāb ākhar 'ala'l-mu'tazila*

35. *Kitāb Burayh al-Naṣrānī* is a work written as a record of a fictitious debate between Hishām and a leader of the Christians of Mesopotamia

36. *Kitāb fī'l-jism wa'l-ru'yā*[56]

37. *Kitāb ākhar 'ala'l-mu'tazila*

The titles of these works demonstrate his particular interest in the most contentious

theological issues of his day such as free-will versus determinism (#3. *Kitāb al-qadar*

and #4. *Kitāb al-jabr wa'l-qadar*), the capacity of humans to act (#5. *Kitāb al-istiṭā'a*)

and Divine grace (#6. *Kitāb al-alṭāf*). He refuted his coreligionists' positions on

anthropomorphism (#14. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā Shayṭān al-Ṭāq* and #15. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā*

Hishām al-Jawālīqī) and he defended the Imamite doctrine of imamate against the

Zaydites and others (#17. *Kitāb ikhtilāf al-nās fī'l-imāma* and #22. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā*

man qāla bi imāmat al-mafḍūl). Most importantly, he was entrenched in disputes with

the Mu'tazilites (#23. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-mu'tazila fī amr Talḥā wa'l-Zubayr*, #28.

Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-mu'tazila and #34. *Kitāb ākhar 'alā'l-mu'tazila*). The formal-

rationalist tendency in Imamism was developed through these disputes and some

Mu'tazilite ideas took root in Imamite consciousness.

Hishām is famous for having defined God as a body unlike other bodies.[57]

Allegations of anthropomorphism place him outside material-rationalism and cast doubt

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[55] Modarressi judges this to be a corruption of *Kitāb al-maydān*. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 265.

[56] Modarressi suggested that this may be a pejorative reference to Hishām's *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* or his refutation of the Mu'tazilites. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 268.

[57] The most famous formulation of his doctrine is *huwa jism lā ka'l-ajsām* recorded in Ash'arī's heresiography *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, ed. H. Ritter, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden, 1963), 33. Variants of his basic anthropomorphist doctrine are recorded in Khayyāṭ, *Kitāb al-intiṣār*, 37 and 80; Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa'l-tārīkh*, ed. C Huart, vol. 1 (Paris, 1899), 39; Juwaynī, *al-Shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. H.

on the existence of a rationalist trend in early Imamism. However, the precise meaning

of his statements must be understood in light of contemporary dialectic and in the

context of his cosmology. For Hishām, being (*shay*) refers to material reality (*ḍarūrī al-*

wujūd) and is equivalent to bodies (*ajsām*).[58] Put differently, he identified existent

entity (*shay' mawjūd*) with body (*jism*).[59] This may be because, as DeAngelis pointed

out, prior to the Basran Mu'tazilite theologian Abū Ya'qūb al-Shaḥḥām (d. after

257/871) it was not clear that an immaterial entity is significant.[60] Hishām defined

body in two ways: First, he defined it in terms of extension, structure, state and

properties, in which case it is sensible to organs and faculties of perception.[61] Second,

he defined body as existent, "both the individual existence of the thing in its

actualization of being existent and its persisting in existence."[62] Furthermore, regarding

material causality, he conceived of non-corporeal intrinsic potentialities or determinants

inhering in material bodies. He defined these determinants as non-spatial motive acts,

on the realization of which the actualization of a being depends and so they are material

causes.[63] Given Hishām's cosmology, it seems that he did not intend the kind of

anthropomorphism that the heresiographers—writing after Shaḥḥām described the non-

Klopfer (Wiesbaden, 1960), 401; Kulaynī, *Uṣūl min al-kāfī*, ed. Najm al-Dīn al-Amālī, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1388), 104 and 106; Ibn Bābūya, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* (Tehran, 1387), 98 and 99; Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, ed. Ḥasan al-Muṣṭafawī (Mashhad: Chāpkhānah-i dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1348), 284.

[58] DeAngelis, "Hishām," 75.

[59] Ibid., 78.

[60] Ibid., 75. Shaḥḥām was allegedly the first theologian to hold that what is not yet in existence is nevertheless a thing (*al- ma'dūm shay*). He specified that even bodies are bodies before they come into existence. D. Gimaret, "al-Shaḥḥām," *EI*.

[61] DeAngelis, "Hishām," 84

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid., 76.

existent (*ma'dūm*) as a thing (*shay'*)—alleged.[64] So, at least on this point, we may

consider him a material as well as formal-rationalist.

Al-Faḍl b. Shādhān

Al-Faḍl b. Shādhān b. al-Khalīl Abū'l-Azdī al-Nīshābūrī (d. 260/874) was

another prominent scholar in the period of the presence of the Imams. It is not entirely

clear which Imams Faḍl was associated with. According to a report which Ibn Bābuya

included in his *'Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* Faḍl was a disciple of the eighth Imam al-Riḍā.[65]

Najāshī said that Faḍl's father was one of Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān's companions who

narrated traditions from Imam al-Jawād.[66] Najāshī also noted that it is said that Faḍl's

father narrated traditions from Imam al-Riḍā.[67] Ṭūsī said that Faḍl was a disciple of

Imam al-Hādī in his *Fihrist*[68] and al-Kashshī preserved the text of a statement attributed

to Imam al-'Askarī which suggests that he did not recognize al-'Askarī as the Imam at

some point.[69]

Faḍl is noted as a rationalist by his biographers. He was accused of practicing

qiyās however, as Modarressi noted, it is likely that he supported analytical reasoning in

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[64] Madelung agreed that early Shī'ite theologians, including Hishām, probably defined God as a body in the sense that he is existent. Wilfred Madelung, "The Shiite and Khārijite Contribution to Pre-Ash'arite *Kalām*," in *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. Parviz Morewedge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979),122.

[65] Ibn Bābuya, *'Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, ed. M. M. al-Khurasān (Najaf: al-Maṭba'a al-Ḥaydariyya, 1970) II, 119, quoted in Tamima Bayhom-Daou, "The imam's knowledge and the Quran according to al-Faḍl b. Shādhān al-Nīsābūrī (d. 260 A. H./874 A. D.)," *BSOAS* 64, no. 2 (2001): 190.

[66] Khū'ī, *Rijāl*, 13:289.

[67] Ibid. The phrasing of this remark in the passive voice (*qīla*) suggests that Najāshī may have been skeptical of it.

[68] Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, ed. M. Rāmyār (Mashhad: Chāpkhānah-i dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1351), 254.

[69] Kashshī, *Ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 539-41. See Bayhom-Daou, "al-Faḍl b. Shādhān," 198-202 for an analysis of this report.

law, not the Sunnite conception of *qiyās*.[70] Ibn al-Junayd (d. ca. mid-4th/10th century),

himself a rationalist, wrote a treatise defending Faḍl from these attacks.[71] Najāshī said

that Kashshī mentioned that Faḍl compiled over 180 works. A list of the works

attributed to him will demonstrate his interests and establish Faḍl as a rationalist among

the Imams' companions:

1. *Kitāb al-naqs 'alā'l-Iskāfī fī taqwiyat al-jism*[72]
2. *Kitāb al-'urūs* which is the same as *Kitāb al-'ayn*
3. *Kitāb al-waʿīd*
4. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā ahl al-taʿṭīl*
5. *Kitāb al-istiṭā'a*
6. *Kitāb masā'il fī'l-'ilm*[73]
7. *Kitāb al-'ilal*
8. *Kitāb al-īmān*
9. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-thanawiyya*[74]
10. *Kitāb ithbāt al-raj'a*
11. *Kitāb al-raj'a*?
12. *Ḥadīth al-radd 'alā'l-ghāliyya al-Muḥammadiyya*?[75]
13. *Kitāb al-a'rāḍ wa'l-jawāhir*
14. *Kitāb tibyān aṣl al-ḍalāla*
15. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā Muḥammad ibn Karrām*
16. *Kitāb al-tawḥīd fī kutub Allāh*[76]
17. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn*[77]
18. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-Aṣamm*[78]

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[70] Modarressi, *Introduction to Shīʿī Law*, 31. This opinion is based on the judgments of early Shīʿites who were accused of *qiyās* quoted in Tustarī, *Kashf al-qinā'*, 82-3. See Robert Gleave, "Imāmī Shīʿī Refutations of Qiyās," in *Studies in Islamic Legal Theory*, ed. Bernard Weiss (London: Brill, 2000), 267-92.

[71] Modarressi, *Introduction to Shīʿī Law*, 36. Compare this view of Faḍl to what Tamima Bayhom-Daou argued in "al-Faḍl b. Shādhān, 188-206. Based on al-Faḍl's work *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ*, she argued that he denied reason any role in law, a corollary to his belief that all of doctrine and the law is based in the Quran. If she is correct, then al-Faḍl is an interesting case: Based on his belief that *ilhām* is not a source of the Imams' knowledge—and therefore not a source of doctrine or law in the post-Prophetic era either—rather, the Imams' knowledge is based solely on transmission, he is what I called a material-rationalist but not a formal-rationalist. Note that neither Najāshī nor Ṭūsī listed this work. See my list below.

[72] Ṭūsī listed this work as *Kitāb al-naqs 'alā'l-Iskāfī fī'l-jism*. Khūʾī, *Rijāl*, 13:290.

[73] This may be the same work that Ṭūsī listed as *al-Masā'il fī'l-'ilm wa ḥudūthih*. Ibid.

[74] This may be the same work that Ṭūsī listed as *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-dāmigha al-thanawiyya*. Ibid.

[75] Ṭūsī listed a work titled *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-ghulāt*. Ibid.

[76] Ṭūsī listed this work as *Kitāb al-tawḥīd min kutub Allāh al-munazzala al-arba'a* which he said is the same as *Kitāb al-radd 'alā Yazīd ibn Bazī' al-khārijī*. Ibid.

[77] Ṭūsī listed a work titled *Kitāb al-radd 'alā Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā*. Ibid.

[78] This may be a refutation of Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm (d. ca. 201/816), an early Basran Muʿtazilite. He denied the existence of accidents (*a'rāḍ*) and rejected the notion of an intermediate rank between belief

19. *Kitāb fī'l-waʿd wa'l-waʿīd ākhar*
20. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā'l-Binān b. Rabāb*[79]
21. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā'l-falāsifā*[80]
22. *Kitāb miḥnat al-islām*
23. *Kitāb al-sunan*
24. *Kitāb al-arbaʿ masāʾil fī'l-imāma*
25. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā'l-mināniyya?*
26. *Kitāb al-farāʾiḍ al-kabīr*
27. *Kitāb al-farāʾiḍ al-awsaṭ*
28. *Kitāb al-farāʾid al-ṣaghīr*
29. *Kitāb al-mash ʿalā'l-khuffayn*
30. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā'l-murjiʾa*
31. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā'l-qarāmiṭa*[81]
32. *Kitāb al-ṭalāq*[82]
33. *Kitāb masāʾil al-buldān*
34. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā'l-bāʾasa?*
35. *Kitāb al-laṭīf*
36. *Kitāb al-qāʾim ʿalayh al-salām*
37. *Kitāb al-malāḥim*
38. *Kitāb ḥadhwa'l-naʿl bi'l-naʿl*
39. *Kitāb al-imāma al-kabīr*
40. *Kitāb faḍl amīr al-muʾminīn ʿalayh al-salām*
41. *Kitāb maʿrifat al-hudā wa'l-ḍalāla*
42. *Kitāb al-thaghrī wa'l-ḥāṣil*
43. *Kitāb al-khiṣāl fī'l-imāma*
44. *Kitāb al-miʿyār wa'l-muwāzina*
45. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalāʾ-ḥashwiyya*
46. *Kitāb al-najāḥ fī ʿamal shahr Ramaḍān*
47. *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā'l-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī fī'l-tafḍīl*
48. *Kitāb al-nisba bayn al-jabriyya wa'l-batriyya (al-khayriyya wa'l-sharriyya)*[83]
49. *Kitāb al-masāʾil wa'l-jawābāt*
50. *Kitāb al-mutʿatayn mutʿat al-nisā wa mutʿat al-ḥajj*
51. *Kitāb al-Ḥusaynī*
52. A portion of *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā'l-muthallatha*
53. *Kitāb jamʿ fīh masāʾil mutafarriqa li'l-Shāfiʿī wa Thawr wa'l-Iṣfahānī wa ghayrihim*[84]
54. *Kitāb al-dībāj*
55. *Kitāb al-tanbīh fī'l-jabr wa'l-tashbīh*[85]

and disbelief. D. Gimaret, "Muʿtazila," *EI.* Faḍl would not have opposed the latter thesis, however his opposition to the former is plain in the title of his work *Kitāb al-aʿrāḍ wa'l-jawāhir.*

[79] This may be the same work that Ṭūsī listed as *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā Yamān b. Rabāb al-khārijī.* Khūʾī, *Rijāl*, 13:290.

[80] Ṭūsī listed a work titled *Kitāb al-naqs ʿalā man yaddaʿī al-falsafa fī'l-tawḥīd wa'l-aʿrāḍ wa'l-jawāhir.* Ibid. It is not clear if it is the same as this work or perhaps 13 above.

[81] This is probably the same work that Ṭūsī listed as *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā'l-bāṭiniyya wa'l-qarāmiṭa.* Ibid.

[82] Ṭūsī listed a work titled *Kitāb al-naqs ʿalā Abī ʿUbayd fī'l-ṭalāq.* Ibid.

[83] Najāshī stated that, of the 180 works ascribed to Faḍl by Kashshī, 1-48 have reached him. Ibid., 13: 289-90.

[84] Ṭūsī mentioned that this work was named by Faḍl's student ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Qutayba. Ibid., 13:291.

[85] 49-55 were listed by Ṭūsī but not Najāshī. Khūʾī, *Rijāl*, 13:290-1.

56. *Kitāb al-tafsīr*
57. *Kitāb al-qirā'a*
58. *Kitāb al-sunan wa'l-fiqh*[86]

Like Hishām, Faḍl addressed major theological issues in his writings such as

anthropomorphism (#1. *Kitāb al-naqs 'alā'l-Iskāfī fī taqwiyat al-jism* and #55. *Kitāb al-*

tanbīh fī'l-jabr wa'l-tashbīh), human capacity (#5. *Kitāb al-istiṭā'a*) and Divine grace

(#35. *Kitāb al-laṭīf*). He defended Imamite doctrines such as *raj'a* (#10. *Kitāb ithbāt al-*

raj'a) and Imamite laws such as the prohibition against wiping over one's shoes in the

ritual ablution (#29. *Kitān al-masḥ 'alā'l-khuffayn*), the prohibition against triple-

divorce (#32. *Kitāb al-ṭalāq*), fixed-term marriage and the permission to marry during

the period of deconsecration between an *'umra* and a *ḥajj* performed on a single journey

(*mut'at al-ḥajj*) (#50. *Kitāb al-mut'atayn*). In addition to polemical works against

Dualists (#9. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-thanawiyya*), Shī'ite extremists (#12. *Kitāb al-radd*

'alā'l-ghāliyya al-Muḥammadiyya), philosophers (#21. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-falāsifa*),

Murji'ites (#30. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-murji'a*) and Qarmatians (#31. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-*

qarāmiṭa), Faḍl wrote a number of works directed against the Mu'tazilites (#3. *Kitāb al-*

wa'īd, #4. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā ahl al-ta'ṭīl,* #18. *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-Aṣamm* and #19.

Kitāb fī'l-wa'd wa'l-wa'īd ākhar). Faḍl was definitely a material-rationalist and, while

it is not entirely clear[87], it seems more likely that he was a formal-rationalist as well.

From this small sample of early Shī'ite scholars it is clear that there was a strong

formal-rationalist tendency in the period of the presence of the Imams. Imamite

scholars began engaging Mu'tazilite theses as early as the mid-2nd/8th century. A

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[86] 56-58 were only mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm. Ibid., 13:291.
[87] See note 71.

number of Imamites wrote early refutations of Mu'tazilism. These include *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-qadariyya* by Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767), *Kitāb al-imāma* by 'Isā b. Rawḍa al-Tābi'ī (d. 158/775), *Kitāb al-imāma* by 'Alī b. Ismā'īl b. Shu'ayb b. Maytham b. Yaḥyā al-Tammār (d. ca. 2nd/8th century), *Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-mu'tazila fī imāmat al-mafḍūl* by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān (d. ca. 2nd/8th century) and *Kitāb al-istiṭā'a wa'l-afā'il fī'l-radd 'alā ahl al-qadar wa'l-jabr* by Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad b. 'Umar (d. 217/832).[88] Through these early encounters a process of cross-fertilization began in which Imamism started to develop towards the theological and legal system that we find in the Būyid era. On the other side, some Mu'tazilites embraced a veneration of Imam 'Alī that went beyond non-Shī'ite bounds and a number of them converted to Imamism. Among them are Abū Ḥafṣ 'Amr b. Muslim al-Ḥaddād (d. 252/860)[89], Abū 'Isā Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Warrāq (d. 247/861-62), Ibn al-Rāwandī (d. 245/859-60) and Abū Ja'far b. Qiba al-Rāzī (d. before 319/931).[90] So, contrary to a widely-held opinion, the "rationalist turn" in Imamism cannot be attributed solely to Mufid and his generation; rather, it was a gradual process spurred by an internal momentum, namely the existence of a formal-rationalist tendency in Imamism, that began in the period of the presence of the Imams.[91] Early Imamite scholars cultivated formal-rationalism in their school appropriating specifically certain Mu'tazilite ideas to

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[88] Abdul-Amir al-A'asam, *Kitab Fadihat [sic] al-Mu'tazilah: Analytical Study of Ibn ar-Riwandi's [sic] Method in his criticism of the Rational Foundation of Polemics in Islam* (Beirut: Editions Oueidat, 1975-77), 20-22. It is noteworthy that nearly half of the early refutations that al-A'asam listed were written by Imamites.

[89] Khayyāṭ accused him of being a Shī'ite in *Intiṣār* however, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā denied that in *Kitāb al-shāfī fī'l-imāma*. Ibid., 16.

[90] Hossein Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shī'ite Islam: Abū Ja'far ibn Qiba al-Rāzī and his Contribution to Imāmite Shī'ite Thought* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1993), 117.

[91] This is also the opinion of Paul Sander, *Zwischen Charisma und Ratio: Entwicklungen in der frühen imāmitischen Theologie* (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1994), except that Sander dates the beginning of this development back to the latter part of the 3rd/9th century, nearly a century later.

legitimize their positions and introject doubt in the "received" concepts and beliefs of their opponents. In turn, the formal-rationalist tendency in Imamism yielded material-rationalist positions on major theological questions.

The *Ḥayra*

The death of the eleventh Imam Ḥasan al-'Askarī in 260/874 marks the end of the period of the presence of the Imams. His death sparked a crisis that interrupted the development of the rationalist current in law and theology which existed in the period of the presence of the Imams.

According to the earliest Imamite sources, Imam al-'Askarī did not appoint his successor publicly out of fear of 'Abbāsid intrigues.[92] The notion that an 'Alid Imam would lead an uprising against the government was circulating widely in traditions since the imamate of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. Moreover, the 'Abbāsid central government had been weakened by tenuous alliances between the Caliph and provincial notables, the formation of a corps of Turkish slave soldiers whose loyalty was to their officers not the Caliph and the expanding bureaucracy dominated by self-interested factions.[93] One of these factions was the Shī'ite Banū al-Furāt of Baghdad. The power of an appeal to Shī'ite sympathies is apparent in the original 'Abbāsid call to *al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad*[94] and the placatory nomination of Imam al-Riḍā in 201/816 to succeed al-Ma'mūn in the wake of civil war (ca. 193/809-197/813). So it seems that the 'Abbāsid

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[92] Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shī'a*, ed. Ritter (Leipzig, 1931 and Najaf, 1963), 79; Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt wa'l-firaq*, ed. Mashkūr (Tehran, 1963), 102; Mufid, *al-Irshād*, 523; Ibn Bābuya, *Kamāl al-dīn wa tamām al-ni'ma* (Tehran, 1378/1958), I, 101.

[93] Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 103-6.

[94] Patricia Crone, "On the Meaning of the 'Abbāsid call to al-Riḍā," in *Shī'ism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 291-307.

government had good reason to fear a popular Shī'ite rebellion in the name of the *qā'im*, a rebellion which the ineffectual state could not afford to suppress, and thus it kept Imam al-'Askarī under surveillance.

The best way to demonstrate the nature and extent of the crisis, which is termed *al-ḥayra* in Imamite sources[95], is to enumerate the schisms that existed after Imam al-'Askarī's death.[96] First, there were the Wāqifites, who claimed that the eleventh Imam al-'Askarī was the *qā'im* and the *mahdī*.[97] The Wāqifites can be subdivided into three groups: One group claimed that Ḥasan al-'Askarī did not leave a son to succeed him and that he did not die but went into hiding. On the basis of a tradition, according to which the Imam cannot die without appointing his son to succeed him, and another tradition, according to which the *qā'im* will disappear twice, this group claimed that Ḥasan al-'Askarī would emerge from his first occultation to be concealed once more. Another group of Wāqifites held that Ḥasan al-'Askarī had died childless but claimed that he was resurrected, though he was hiding. This group based their claim on a tradition attributed to Imam al-Ṣādiq, according to which the designation *qā'im* refers to his resurrection. The third group, called *al-wāqifa al-lā adriyya*, confirmed Ḥasan al-'Askarī's death but could not determine who had succeeded him, his son or his brother Ja'far, so they withheld their allegiance to any Imam after al-'Askarī until they ascertained the identity of the next true Imam.

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[95] The state of the Imamite community during the first century after the Occultation was such that the term *al-ḥayra*, which literally means perplexity, came to be a technical synonym for *al-ghayba*. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Mūsā b. Bābūya al-Qummī, *al-Imāma wa'l-tabṣira min al-ḥayra*, ed. al-Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ḥusaynī (Beirut: Mu'assasat āl al-bayt li-iḥyā' al-turāth, 1407/1987), 104.

[96] Jassim M. Hussain has gleaned the details pertaining to these schisms from the earliest sources in *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam: A Historical Background* (London: Muhammadi Trust, 1982), 56-67. My summary is based on this work.

[97] This group is of course to be distinguished from the Wāqifites who claimed that the seventh Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim was the *mahdī*. See H. Halm, "al-Wāḳifa," *EI*.

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The next major group, the Jaʿfarites, was comprised of those who claimed that ʿAlī al-Hādī's youngest son Jaʿfar was the Imam. This group originated in the lifetime of ʿAlī al-Hādī. During his imamate, Fāris b. Ḥātim b. Māhawayh al-Qazwīnī, one of ʿAlī al-Hādī's agents in Sāmarrāʾ, got into a dispute with another aide ʿAlī b. Jaʿfar al-Humānī in which the Imam sided with al-Humānī. However ʿAlī al-Hādī chose not to make the matter public to avoid aggravating Fāris, the Imām's main representative to the Imamites of Jibāl in the central and western parts of Iran and through whom they sent their dues to the Imam.[98] Despite ʿAlī al-Hādī's instructions to the contrary, the people of Jibāl continued to send their religious dues to Fāris, which he stopped forwarding on to the Imam. Imam al-Hādī condemned Fāris in two letters[99] and Fāris reacted by agitating against him. The situation came to a head when Imam al-Hādī ordered the assassination of Fāris. His order was carried out and, "the assassin continued to receive a payment from Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī until his death in 260/874."[100]

Many of ʿAlī al-Hādī's followers expected his son Muḥammad to succeed him.[101] However Muḥammad died in 252/866, three years before ʿAlī al-Hādī, and Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī was designated his father's successor. While the vast majority of Imāmites accepted Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī's imamate, the circumstances surrounding his designation led many of his followers to question his authority. Some Imāmites criticized his knowledge of the Law[102] and some of his actions. He was criticized for tearing his collar, a familiar expression of grief, in his father's funeral procession, for dressing

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[98] Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 71.

[99] Ibid., 72

[100] Ibid., 72.

[101] "Some reports even suggest that his father had explicitly singled out Muḥammad from among his sons to succeed to the Imāmate." Ibid., 65.

[102] Ibid., 66.

lavishly and for making grammatical mistakes in his letters.[103] He was also criticized

for spending too much on one of his agents 'Alī b. Ja'far al-Humānī.[104]

After Imam al-Hādī died Fāris' followers held that the Imam's eldest son

Muḥammad was the Imam. Modarressi noted that, "this was, perhaps, partly an act of

defiance directed against 'Alī al-Hādī, who named Ḥasan as his successor, and partly

against Ḥasan himself who, unlike 'Alī al-Hādī's third son, Ja'far, had supported his

father's actions against Fāris."[105] Fāris' followers claimed that Muḥammad had

appointed Ja'far and that he was the Imam after 'Alī al-Hādī.

Ja'far's followers, the majority of whom were Fāris' supporters, can be divided

into four groups: One group of Fatḥites held that, since Ḥasan al-'Askarī did not leave a

son to succeed him, Ja'far became the Imam after him. They justified lateral succession

on the basis of the Fatḥite claim that the imamate had passed from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq to his

eldest son 'Abd Allāh to Mūsā al-Kāzim. They claimed that Ja'far was the thirteenth

Imam, based on their inclusion of 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far in the line of Imams, and that the

imamate would continue in the progeny of Ja'far. A second group of Fatḥites invoked

the doctrine of *badā'*, which became relevant in the succession to the sixth Imam Ja'far

al-Ṣādiq, to justify lateral succession. They argued that, just as God had made clear his

decree by causing Ismā'īl b. Ja'far to die while his father was alive and, in doing so,

caused the imamate to pass from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq to 'Abd Allāh to Mūsā al-Kāzim, he

had made clear that the imamate should continue in the progeny of Imam al-Hādī's son

Ja'far by causing Ḥasan al-'Askarī to die childless. Thus Ja'far was the Imam after

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[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., 66-7.
[105] Ibid., 73.

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Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī. This was a popular view among the theologians of Kufa, notably the Fatḥite theologian ʿAlī b. Ṭāḥī or al-Ṭalḥī al-Khazzāz. The Banū Faḍḍāl, a Kufan Fatḥite family, may also have held this view. Among them were Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Faḍḍāl (d. 260/874) and his brother ʿAlī. A third group denied lateral succession and held that the imamate had passed from ʿAlī al-Hādī to Jaʿfar.[106] They argued that since Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī had died childless and lateral succession was impossible after Imams al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn[107], Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī could not have been the true Imam. This group included Fāris' sister and ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. Bashshār. There is one report which suggests that propagandists of this group succeeded in converting some of Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī's followers. The fourth group, the Nafīsites, claimed that ʿAlī al-Hādī had designated his son Muḥammad. Muḥammad designated Jaʿfar and entrusted the Imam's sacred paraphernalia to his slave Nafīs. He ordered him to give it to Jaʿfar upon al-Hādī's death. When Muḥammad died Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī's followers discovered the arrangement and Nafīs, fearing that the imamate would be cut off, gave the Imam's belongings to Jaʿfar.

The third major group was the Muḥammadites who denied the imamates of both Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī and Jaʿfar. They argued that neither of them had been explicitly designated by ʿAli al-Hādī. Furthermore, Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī had died childless so he could not have been the Imam and Jaʿfar was disqualified from the imamate on account of his impiety. Since the imamate must continue and since Muḥammad had children

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[106] These were Jaʿfar's original supporters described above. However, as the report cited suggests, some of this group may have been loyal to Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī in his lifetime and switched to Jaʿfar's side in the wake of the controversy surrounding his death.

[107] Ibn Bābūya recorded ten traditions to this effect in *Kamāl al-dīn wa tamām al-niʿma*, ed. Ḥusayn al-Aʿlimī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-aʿlamī liʾl-matbūʿāt, 1412/1991), 381-84. The elder Ibn Bābūya, ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, recorded six in *al-Imāma*, 187-9.

and was upright, the imamate must have passed from 'Ali al-Hadi to his eldest son. Some of this group considered Muhammad the *qā'im* and the *mahdi* while others denied his death.

The fourth major group was the Qat'ites. They made up the majority of the Imamites and held that Hasan al-'Askari had died and left behind his son to succeed him. The Qat'ites comprised six groups: One group held that Hasan al-'Askari designated his only son Muhammad and he was the *qā'im* who was hiding out of fear of Ja'far. Another, small group which was concentrated in the suburbs of Sawad and Kufa, held that Hasan al-'Askari's only son was named 'Ali. A third group held that Hasan al-'Askari's son was born eight months after his father died and went into hiding. Hasan al-'Askari ordered him to be named Muhammad. A fourth group claimed that a slave girl had conceived Hasan al-'Askari's son who would be the Imam once he was born, even if her pregnancy was abnormally long. A fifth group held that Hasan al-'Askari's son was Muhammad the Awaited One (*al-muntazar*) who had not died but would return to fill the earth with justice. Finally there was a group that claimed that Hasan al-'Askari had died and that his son was the Imam in whose progeny the imamate would continue until the end of time. The majority of Imamites who were loyal to Hasan al-'Askari held this view including: Abū Sahl Ismā'il al-Nawbakhti, al-Hasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhti, Sa'd b. 'Abd Allāh al-Qummi, 'Uthmān b. Sa'id al-'Amri and his son Muhammad. It was only after the absence of the Imam exceeded a normal lifespan that Imamite scholars began to reconsider this view.

The last major group believed that the imamate had come to an end. One group among them did not believe that a *qā'im* would rise up in the future and the other

claimed that God would raise one of the dead Imams or one of the descendants of Ḥasan al-'Askarī as the *qā'im.*

A total of sixteen factions existed after Imam al-'Askarī's death, half of which explicitly denied that he had a son. Ibn Bābūya stated that he compiled *Kamāl al-dīn* while he was in Nishapur because the Occultation baffled the Imamites and they had gone astray.[108] According to some reports, the majority of Imamites converted to other creeds, such as Ismāʿilism.[109] It was the Imamite *muḥaddithūn* who set out to resolve this crisis. They compiled traditions in which various companions are said to have seen the twelfth Imam before he vanished[110] and recorded rescripts from the Imam.[111] Above all else, one Prophetic tradition, preserved by Sunnite transmitters, was particularly instrumental in this regard. This tradition quotes the Prophet predicting that there would be twelve Qurashite caliphs after him.[112] As Modarressi noted, it was circulating in the first half of the 2nd/8th century and it was on record in the *Amālī* of an Egyptian scholar Layth b. Saʿd (d. 175/792) and the *Musnad* of Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī (d. 204/819-20), so Imamite scholars could not have fabricated this tradition to support their position.[113]

These traditions were the foundation of the *muḥaddithūn*'s defense of the legitimacy of the Imamite cause as vested in the progeny of Imam 'Alī and Fāṭima until

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[108] Ibn Bābūya, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 14-15.

[109] There are numerous references to widespread conversion in the works of Nuʿmānī, Ibn Bābūya and Mufīd. See Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 98.

[110] For example, Ibn Bābūya devoted a large section in his work on the Occultation to the reports of those who saw the twelfth Imam. Ibn Bābūya, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 399-435.

[111] Ibid., 438-463.

[112] For the provenance of this tradition, see Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation*, 99.

[113] Ibid., 100. However, there is no written evidence from before the end of the 3rd/9th century that this tradition drew the attention of Imamite scholars. Ibid.

the end of the 4th/10th century.[114] The *muḥaddithūns'* strategy, deliberately compiling

traditions without extrapolating, spawned a wave of traditionism that dictated trends in

jurisprudence and theology and, consequently, retarded the development of rationalism

in the century after the Occultation. However, as the case of al-Kulaynī will show, the

brand of traditionism that prevailed was moderate, having already incorporated

fundamental elements of rationalism.

Kulaynī and Moderate Traditionism

In the first century after the occultation traditionism dominated Imamite

scholarship almost completely.[115] The traditionists, I would suggest, should be

subdivided into moderates and extremists on the basis of their methodologies.

Moderate traditionists were careful to examine the reliability of transmitters and

implemented some basic legal principles expressed in the Imams' traditions.[116] This

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[114] "By the end of the 4th/10th century, it seems that the argument based on traditions and employed by al-Kulaynī, al-Masʿūdī [d. 346/957], al-Nuʿmānī, al-Sadūq and al-Khazzāz were no longer sufficient." Hussain, *Occultation*, 145. "There are two reports which support this point. First al-Sadūq mentions that the Zaydites accused the Imamites of inventing the Prophetic traditions which indicate that his successors will be twelve Imāms [Ibn Bābūya, *Kamāl al-dīn* (1378/1958), 67-8; see also Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Qiba al-Rāzī, "*Naqd kitāb al-ʾishhād li abi zayd al-ʿalawī,*" in *Crisis and Consolidation,* ed. Hossein Modarressi (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1993), 171-201, for Zaydī criticism]. The Zaydite al-Sāḥib b. ʿAbbād (d. 381/991) held this claim against the Imāmites [John J. Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq 334H./945 to 403H./1012: Shaping Institutions for the Future* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), 11]. Also the Ismāʿīlis did so." Hussain, *Occultation*, 203. Therefore, in the second stage, that of the rationalists' school, Imāmī scholars, like al-Mufīd, changed their strategy and relied on theological arguments to support their belief in the Occultation. "In his [e.g. al-Mufīd's] work *al-Fuṣūl al-ʿashara fī al-ghayba* he tries to prove the existence of the hidden Imām on the basis of two principles: the necessity of the existence of an Imam at every period of time and the infallibility of this Imām." Ibid., 145.
[115] Two other trends existed in this period. First, there were the Qadīmayn: Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī ʿAqīl al-ʿUmānī al-Ḥadhdhāʾ (d. first half of the 4th/10th century) and Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Junayd al-Kātib al-Iskāfī (d. middle of the 4th/10th century). Both of these scholars were rationalists. Second, there was an intermediate school whose scholars upheld the validity of *akhbār al-āḥād* without proposing a systematic treatment of the law. The intermediate school includes ʿAlī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 329/904), Abuʾl-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sābūnī al-Juʿfī (d. first half of 4th/10th century), Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Qūlūya al-Qummī (d. 369/979-80) and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Dāwūd b. ʿAlī al-Qummī (d. 368/978-9). See Modarressi, *Introduction to Shīʿī Law,* 35-9.
[116] Ibid., 32.

subgroup included Kulayni and Ibn Bābūya. Extreme traditionists, "followed traditions

without compromise and completely ignored the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh* and the rules

by which a tradition could be examined... [and] the procedures of debate, reasoning and

modes of discourse."[117] Abū'l-Ḥusayn 'Alī al-Nāshi' (d. 366/976-7) belongs in this

subgroup. Extreme traditionists based their judgments on the reports available to them.

Many of these reports were contradictory, which explains why individual jurists held

conflicting views. Thus, the extreme traditionists were marginalized because of their

lack of a coherent dogma and legal system and did not gain the following that the

moderate traditionists did. This may also substantiate the view that Imamite scholars

sought to organize and present traditions in ways amenable for juridical arguments and

derivation of opinions.[118]

Very little is known about the early part of Kulayni's life. He was probably born

in the time of Imam al-'Askari.[119] He came from a renowned family from Rayy and

grew up and was educated there.[120] In the late 3rd/9th and early 4th/10th centuries the city

of Rayy was divided along legal-political (*madhāhib*) lines. The majority of the city

belonged to the Imamites including all of the western part of the city, all of the south

and the south-east. The Shāfi'ites were settled in the eastern part of the city and south

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[117] Ibid., 33. A similar trend in Sunnī circles was pejoratively known as *hashwiyya*. They, "uncritically and even prompted by prejudice, recognize as genuine and interpret literally the crudely anthropomorphic traditions." *EI*, s.v. "Ḥashwiyya." This term became a polemical device used to describe Shī'ites as well.
[118] Robert Gleave, "Between Ḥadith and Fiqh: the 'Canonical' Imāmī Collections of Akhbār," *Islamic Law and Society* 8, no. 3 (2001): 350-82.
[119] 'Abd al-Rasūl 'Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Ghaffār, *al-Kulaynī wa 'l-Kāfī* (Qumm: Mu'assasat al-nashr al-islamī, 1416), 125. Ghaffār referred the reader to Faḍl Allāh Shams al-Dīn, *'Ayn al-ghazāl fī fihris asmā' al-rijāl* (1315), 1 and noted that some introductions to *al-Kāfī* mention that he was born in the same year as the twelfth Imam, 255/868. However, al-Ghaffār said that it is more likely that he was born between 254/867 and 260/873. Ibid., 167.
[120] See Ghaffār, *al-Kulaynī wa 'l-Kāfī*, 125 for a short list of well-known scholars from his family. See Ibid., 166-82 and Amīn al-'Amilī, *Buhūth hawl riwāyāt al-Kāfī* (Qumm: Dār al-hijra, 1415), 98-171 for a detailed list of Kulaynī's teachers.

of Jabal al-Rayy al-Kabīr, which they shared with the Ḥanafites. The Shāfiʿites and the

Ḥanafites are said to have shared the congregational mosque. However, all of the

eastern section south of Jabal al-Rayy al-Kabīr was Ḥanafite.[121] These groups

experienced rich and fluid intellectual exchanges and intense disagreements that shaped

their relationship to each other and to their own followers.

Many of Kulaynī's teachers were from the Ashʿarī tribe settled in Qom, an

Imamite stronghold.[122] On that basis, Madelung inferred that he studied in Qom for

some time, perhaps in the last decade of the third/first decade of the tenth century.[123]

His source for the views of the famous theologian al-Faḍl b. Shādhān was Muḥammad b.

Ismāʿīl al-Nīsābūrī so he may have been at Nishapur as well.[124] Early in 4th/10th century

Kulaynī moved to Baghdad[125] where he settled in the Imamite quarter, al-Karkh.[126]

Sometime during the reign of the Caliph al-Muqtadir (rg. 908-932), Kulaynī was

recognized as the leader of the Imamites. He completed his only extant work[127] and

magnum opus *al-Kāfī*, which is said to have taken him twenty years to compile, in

Baghdad.

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[121] Ḥusayn Karīmān, *Rayy bāstān* (Tehran: Chāpkhānah-i Bahman, 1349), 2:83-4, quoted in Ghaffār, *al-Kulaynī wa ʾl-Kāfī*, 265.

[122] Fayḍ noted that, in the time of ʿAlī b. Babūya al-Qummī (d. 329/904), the *muḥaddithūn* numbered twenty thousand in Qumm. ʿAbbās Fayḍ, *Ganjīnat athār Qumm* (Qumm: Chāpkhānah-i Mahrāstūr, 1349), 162, quoted in Ghaffār, *al-Kulaynī wa ʾl-Kāfī*, 265.

[123] W. Madelung, "al-Kulaynī," *EI*.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Madelung suggested between 300/913 and 310/923. Ibid.

[126] Ghaffār, *al-Kulaynī wa ʾl-Kāfī*, 265. More specifically, "he lived and taught in Darb al-Silsila near Bāb al-Kufa on the west bank of the Tigris." W. Madelung, "al-Kulaynī," *EI*.

[127] His other works include *Kitāb taʿbīr al-ruʾyā*, *Kitāb al-rijāl*, *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā ʾl-qarāmiṭa*, *Kitāb rasāʾil al-aʾimma*, *Kitāb al-rawḍa*, *Kitāb mā qīla fī ʾl-aʾimma ʿalayhum al-salām min al-shiʿr*, *al-Dawājin wa ʾl-rawājin*, *al-Zayy wa ʾl-tajammul* and *al-Wasāʾil*. Ghaffār, *al-Kulaynī wa ʾl-Kāfī*, 214-17. Najāshī attributed *Kitāb taʿbīr al-ruʾyā* to Abū'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Iṣfahabad (?) al-Qummī. Ibid., 214. Ibn Shahrāshūb is the only one to have counted *Kitāb al-rawḍa* as a book separate from *al-Kāfī*. Ibid., 216. Najāshī and Ṭūsī considered *al-Dawājin wa ʾl-rawājin* and *al-Zayy wa ʾl-tajjamul* part of *al-Kāfī* while Ibn Shahrāshūb counted them as separate books. Ghaffār confirmed the opinion that they are indeed part of *al-Kāfī*. Ibid., 217.

The views that Kulaynī expressed in *al-Kāfī* are representative of the traditionist

school that overtook Imamite scholarship in the century after the Occultation. His

brand of traditionism was moderate, incorporating fundamental principles of formal-

rationalism and basic tenets of material-rationalism. For example, Kulaynī held that

God is invisible (*lā tadrukuhu al-abṣār, 'urifa bi-ghayri ru'ya*)[128] and that he is

immaterial (*lā yuḥīṭu bihi miqdār, wuṣifa bi-ghayri ṣūra, nu'ita bi-ghayr jism*).[129]

Evidently, by the first half of the 4th/10th century, traditionists had already taken strict

stances against anthropomorphism and the Beatific Vision. *Al-Kāfī* also contains a

rudimentary formulation of the doctrine of *al-'adl* which came to characterize Imamism

and which Imamites held in common with the Mu'tazilites. Kulaynī says of God that he

sent his messengers as proofs to his creation and made matters clear with his indicators

and sent messengers bearing glad tidings and admonishing, so that whomsoever perished

perishes according to clear evidence.[130] It is anti-determinist insofar as Kulaynī holds

man responsible for his own salvation. He blames people for having depended on their

intellects (*'uqūl*) in matters small and large[131]; but he also demands that faith, like

actions, be based on knowledge (*'ilm*) and insight (*baṣīra*).[132] In this context *'ilm* likely

means knowledge of Prophetic and Imamic traditions and *baṣīra* connotes a level of

understanding beyond the literal meaning of traditions.[133]

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[128] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ja'farī, trans. Sayyid Muhammad Hasan Rizvi, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1398/1978), 4.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid., 9.

[132] Ibid., 13-14.

[133] Note the distinction that the traditionists drew between *'ilm* and *baṣīra*, on the basis of this distinction they could incorporate what they needed of formal rationalism to sort the *aḥādīth* and still blame the rationalists for their reliance on *'aql*.

The moderate traditionists evaluated chains of transmission and tried to reconcile conflicting traditions. Kulaynī adduced three *hadīths* as the criteria for judging between traditions: Place the traditions before the Quran and take whatever agrees with it and reject what goes against it; leave aside whatever the masses (i.e. the Sunnites) agree upon for the Truth is contrary to them; and take, "what is held in common by all the narrators quoting us," (*al-mujma' 'alayh*) for there is no doubt in it.[134] Kulaynī admitted that only a few contradictions can be resolved on this basis. In that case it is permissible to follow any of the conflicting reports based on the *hadīth*, "Whatever you have accepted and followed with the intention of obeying (the Imām) is valid for you" (*bi-ayyumā akhadhtum min bāb al-taslīm wus'ukum*).[135]

Finally, the title of the first book of *al-Kāfī, Kitāb al-'aql wa'l-jahl,* ostensibly confirms what I have said about the role of reason in moderate traditionism. It is also true that in many of the *hadīths* comprising this book *'aql* is more like what Amir-Moezzi called hiero-intelligence than dialectic reasoning.[136] Nevertheless, in some of these *hadīths* *'aql* is an intellectual faculty employed to discern, among other things, the indicators of a teleological proof of God's existence and the elegance and evincibility of speech, a usage which resembles ordinary reason closely.[137]

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[134] Ibid., 19.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Amir-Moezzi, *Divine Guide*, 6-13.
[137] For example, see *hadīths* 12, 15, 20 and 23 in Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 31-49, 55, 57-9, 60.

Chapter 2

I begin this chapter by placing Ibn Bābūya and Mufīd within their distinct

historical contexts to highlight some of the social, political and economic factors which

shaped their bodies of work. Since I have already discussed the moderate traditionists'

school, of which Ibn Bābūya is a member, in connection with the *ḥayra* and Kulaynī, I

will limit myself here to an overview of his career. Mufīd deserves more attention

mainly because the "rational turn" in Imamism is said to have taken place at his hands in

Baghdad; accordingly, his section is lengthier and more detailed. Affixed to it is an

excursus on an important aspect of the political relationship between Baghdad's

Imamites and their Būyid patrons and a brief description of the intellectual milieu of

Baghdad, both critical elements in Mufīd's historical moment. Finally, I conclude with

a comparison of Ibn Bābūya's creed *I'tiqādāt al-imāmiyya* and Mufīd's *Taṣḥīḥ*

(*Correction*) to it, drawing on the historical data presented to suggest reasons for the

differences between them which, as we shall see, are mostly methodological.

Ibn Bābūya

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Bābūya al-Qummī, known as al-

Shaykh al-Ṣadūq or simply Ibn Bābūya, was born in Qom to a learned family. Both of

his brothers, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, were modest scholars. His father 'Alī b. Bābūya

al-Qummī was a wealthy merchant and an outstanding scholar of the intermediate

school.[138] 'Alī b. Bābūya was honored in a letter ascribed to the eleventh Imam in

which the Imam addressed him as "my jurist" (*faqīhī*) and "the one on whom I rely"

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[138] A. A. A. Fyzee, "Ibn Bābawayh," *EI.* See note 115 for a brief description of the intermediate school.

(*mu'tamidī*) and "my scholar" (*shaykhī*).[139] According to Ṭūsī, 'Alī b. Bābūya met with

al-Ḥusayn b. Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī (d. 326/937), the third deputy to the twelfth Imam[140], in

Iraq sometime between 305/917 and 311/923.[141] These details suggest that a wealthy

merchant class provided the liaison with the Imam's deputies and disseminated

"orthodox" traditions in Qom. The possible motivations of this class to uphold the

deputies' views regarding the imamate need to be investigated further.[142]

Ibn Bābūya received his early education from his father, from whom he narrated

many *ḥadīths*. In his youth he attended the lectures of many prominent scholars until he

joined Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. al-Walīd's sessions in Qom.[143] Before

reaching twenty years of age he held his own classes in which he narrated *ḥadīths* to

men older than himself.[144] In 339/950, a decade after his father's death, he left Qom in

search of *ḥadīths*[145]. In the cities he visited he attended the lectures of Sunnites as well

as Shī'ites, exposing himself to a range of textual interpretations.[146]

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[139] Ibn Bābūya, *Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh*, ed. Ḥasan al-Khirsān, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1405/1980), ذ – و.

[140] On whom see Hussain, *Occultation*, 119-32.

[141] Ibn Bābūya, *Faqīh*, ى. This dating is my own, based on the first year of the incumbency of the third deputy and Fyzee's suggestion, based on Saʿīd Nafīsī's introduction to Ibn Bābūya's *Musādaqat ikhwān*, that Ibn Bābūya was born in 311/923 or earlier. According to a popular legend recorded in Ṭūsī's *al-Ghayba*, after meeting Nawbakhtī in Iraq, 'Alī b. Bābūya returned to Qom and sent a letter to Nawbakhtī in which he asked Nawbakhtī to ask the Imam to supplicate God on his behalf for a son. Ibn Bābūya was born as a result of the Imam's prayer. Ibid., ح.

[142] An economic analysis of the relationship between the Imam's deputies and learned aristocracy of Qom must consider the taxation policies that left the economy of Qom destitute in the 4th/10th century. See Ann K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 41. A precursory suggestion is that increased competition for resources rendered the aristocracy ineffectual in its leadership role so it sought alternate sources of authority.

[143] Ibn Bābūya, *Faqīh*, ه.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid. His decision to leave Qom may also have had to do with the economic conditions there mentioned in note 6.

[146] Ibn Bābūya, *al-Amālī*, ed. Ḥasan al-Khirsān (Najaf: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Ḥaydariyya, 1389/1970), 7.

In 350/962 the Buyid emir Rukn al-Dawla invited Ibn Bābūya to his court in

Rayy.[147] His affiliation with the court, not to mention his travels, demonstrates the

problems with the simplistic view that theology and law in Qom developed in an

isolated Shī'ite enclave whose scholars did not have to contend with competing views

and who faced a homogenous social and political reality[148]; if the case of Ibn Bābūya is

any indication, then the scholars of Qom faced a spectrum of social, economic, political

and intellectual configurations analogous to the Shī'ite quarter of Baghdad.

Rukn al-Dawla's seems to have taken an interest in Shī'ism. Ibn Bābūya is said

to have instructed him in Shī'ite dogma and debated opponents upon his request.[149] In

352/963 Rukn al-Dawla granted Ibn Bābūya permission to leave Rayy to visit Imam al-

Riḍā's grave in Mashhad.[150] Apparently, he also visited Baghdad for the first time in

352/963 and taught there briefly.[151] On his way to Khurāsān he visited Marw al-Rūd

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[147] Muhammad Ismail Marcinkowski, "Twelver Shī'ite Scholarship and Buyid Domination: A Glance on the Life and Times of Ibn Bābawayh al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991)," *Islamic Culture* 76, no. 1 (2002): 206. Faqīhī said that Ibn Bābūya went to Rayy from Qom in *Āl-i Būyah* (Gīlān, 1357), 278.

[148] Newman's suggestion however, that al-Barqī's *al-Maḥāsin* and al-Ṣaffār's *Baṣā'ir al-darajāt* were uniquely the product of Qom is based on a much more sophisticated textual and historical analysis (see Newman, *The Formative Period*, 50-93). Qom, unlike the way Newman portrays it, was not so different from other loci of Shī'ism in terms of the impact of fiscal policy and overall economic destitution in the 4th/10th century. Al-Ṣūlī's account of the transfer of power from the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Rāḍī to Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Rā'iq, then the military leader in control of Wāsiṭ and Basra, in 324/936, "details spiraling inflation, speculation, rioting, pillaging and famine, coupled with natural disasters such as fire and flood which were crippling his city, Baghdad." David Waines, "The Pre-Buyid Amirate: Two Views from the Past," *IJMES* 8, no. 3 (1977): 345. Therefore, we should not expect, nor will we find, substantial differences between Ibn Bābūya's creed and Mufid's *Correction* that can be traced back to economic bases in Qom and Baghdad respectively.

[149] Faqīhī, *Āl-i Būyah*, 278-9; Asaf A. A. Fyzee, introduction to Ibn Bābūya, *A Shī'ite Creed: A Translation of I'tiqādātu' l-Imāmiyya (The Beliefs of the Imāmiyyah of Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī known as al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq), (306/919-381/991)*, trans. Fyzee (Tehran: Wofis, 1982), 10. Faqīhī said that Ibn Bābūya mentioned a portion of a debate he took part in at Rukn al-Dawla's court in *Kamāl al-dīn*. Faqīhī, *Āl-i Būyah*, 278. There are only two debates (*mubāḥatha*) mentioned in *Kamāl al-dīn*, the first of which took place in Baghdad; so, perhaps the debate Ibn Bābūya mentioned in *Kamāl al-dīn*, 30 took place at the court.

[150] Marcinkowski, "Ibn Bābawayh," 206.

[151] Ibn Bābūya, *Faqīh*, صر. See ibid., ق – س, for the names of scholars from whom Ibn Bābūya heard traditions in Baghdad and the other cities he visited.

and Sarkhas.[152] He stopped in Nishapur in Sha'bān 352/963 and taught there for some

time. This is the trip that Ibn Bābūya mentioned in his introduction to *Kamāl al-dīn*,

where he found the Imamites in Nishapur confused about the Occultation.[153] After his

pilgrimage to Imam al-Riḍā's grave he returned to Rukn al-Dawla's court in Rayy.

Ibn Bābūya went on the *ḥajj* and visited the Prophet's grave in Medina in

354/965.[154] On his way to Mecca he visited Hamadān and Kufa.[155] On his return from

Mecca he visited Fayd, a town half way between Mecca and Kufa,[156] then went to

Baghdad for a second time in 355/966.[157] In Dhul'l-Ḥijja 367/978 he visited Mashhad

for the second time. He dictated some of the contents of *al-Amālī* on this trip[158]; the

twenty-sixth session was dictated in Mashhad on the day of Ghadīr Khumm.[159] He

returned to Rayy at the end of Dhu'l-Ḥijja, where he dictated the twenty-seventh

session of *al-Amālī* on the first of Muḥarram 368/979.[160] He visited Imam al-Riḍā's

grave for a third time in Sha'bān 368/979.[161] He stayed in Samarqand, Balkh, Farāghana

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[152] Ibid., ف.
[153] Ibid., ع . See Ibn Bābūya, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 14-15.
[154] Ibn Bābūya, *Faqīh*, ق
[155] Ibid., ق – ص.
[156] Ibid., ق.
[157] Ibid., ص. Ibn Bābūya recorded his reply to a man in Baghdad who questioned him about the Occultation in *Kamāl al-dīn*, 26. However, since he visited Baghdad twice, it is not clear if this discussion took place on the trip in question.
[158] The contents of the second session of *al-Amālī* were dictated in Rajab 367/978, months before his second visit to Mashhad. Ibn Bābūya, *Amālī*, 5. So, perhaps, this session was held in Baghdad or en route to Mashhad, probably the latter. The second session contains *ḥadīths* on the benefits of fasting in Rajab, against exercising one's personal judgement (*ra'y*) to interpret Prophetic *ḥadīth*, against the use of *qiyās* and extolling the Prophet and Imam 'Alī. Ibid., 5-8.
[159] Ibn Bābūya, *Faqīh*, ع and *Amālī*, 107. As one might expect, this session contains *ḥadīths* on the designation of Imam 'Alī on the day of Ghadīr Khumm. Ibid., 107-11.
[160] Ibn Bābūya, *Faqīh*, ع and *Amālī*, 112. This session contains *ḥadīths* on protocols prescribed for Muḥarram, enumerating the Imams without naming all of them, in praise of Fāṭima bt. Asad and recounting Imam 'Alī's birth in the Kaaba. Ibid., 112-28. So, it seems that the calendar year determined the content of lectures to some extent; we may not be able to tell much about the people in a particular city from what was said to them.
[161] Ibn Bābūya, *Faqīh*, ع

and Ilāq in the same year.[162] He delivered the contents of the last four sessions in *al-Amālī* in Khurāsān.[163] He met al-Sharīf Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, known as Ni'ma, in Ilāq, upon whose request he wrote *Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh*.[164]

At some point, the famous Būyid vizier al-Ṣāhib b. 'Abbād (d. 385/995) banished Ibn Bābūya from Rayy. Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī said this was because Ibn 'Abbād prohibited the narration of *ḥadīths*.[165] Since Rukn al-Dawla favored Ibn Bābūya[166] and Ibn 'Abbād was not appointed vizier until after Rukn al-Dawla's death in 366/976[167], it is more likely that he was banished after 366/976.[168] Evidently, the advancement and growth of systematized Imamite *ḥadīths* carried political weight and had implications beyond the scholarly community. After an unknown period of time, Ibn Bābūya was allowed to return to Rayy for he died and was buried there in 381/991.

Mufīd and Būyid Baghdad

Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān al-Ḥārithī al-'Ukbarī, known as al-Shaykh al-Mufīd and Ibn al-Mu'allim, was born in Suwayqat Ibn al-Baṣrī

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[162] Ibn Bābūya, *Faqīh,* ص – ف .

[163] Ibn Bābūya, *Faqīh,* ع . The contents of the ninety-third session were dictated in Nishapur (see Fyzee, introduction to *Shī'ite Creed,* xxxviii-xxxix.) and the contents of the final, ninety-seventh session were dictated in Mashhad (see Ibn Bābūya, *Amālī,* 602.).

[164] Ibn Bābūya, *Faqīh,* ح . McDermott said that Ibn Bābūya read *Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh* to the sheikhs of Balkh in 372/983. McDermott, *Mufīd,* 13.

[165] Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn,* ed. Muḥammad b. Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī (Damascus: Majma' al-'ilm al-'arabī, 1965), 166-7. Cahen and Pellat noted that Tawḥīdī's account of Ibn 'Abbād is prejudiced in "Ibn 'Abbād," *EI.* The editor of Tawḥīdī's *Akhlāq* incorrectly identified the Ibn Bābūya whom Tawḥīdī mentioned among the scholars that Ibn 'Abbād banished as Ibn Bābūya's father, who died when Ibn 'Abbād was only three years old. Ibid., 167.

[166] In addition to what has already been said, Rukn al-Dawla is said to have awaited Ibn Bābūya's arrival in Rayy personally at the city's gate with his entourage, a show of respect. Faqīhī, *Āl-i Būyah,* 278. Furthermore, Rukn al-Dawla reportedly asked Ibn Bābūya to supplicate Imam al-Riḍā on his behalf on his first trip to Mashhad. Ibid., 278-79.

[167] Cl. Cahen and Ch. Pellat, "Ibn 'Abbād," *EI.*

[168] Ibn Bābūya quoted two of Ibn 'Abbād's poems extolling Imam al-Riḍā in the beginning of *'Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā,* suggesting that, at least at some point, he regarded him highly. Ibn Bābūya, *'Uyūn,* 4-7.

near 'Ukbara in 336/948.[169] Mufid's father was a teacher in Wāsiṭ—whence his epithet

Ibn al-Mu'allim—before moving to 'Ukbara. In 347/958, when he was eleven years old,

al-Mufid is said to have heard *ḥadīths* in the Manṣūr Mosque, one of the main centers

for the study of the Qur'ān, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and *uṣūl al-fiqh* in Baghdad. The Manṣūr

Mosque was apparently a Ḥanbalite locus[170], although other scholars also taught there.

This may be where al-Mufid was initially exposed to Sunnite traditionism, which he

criticized sharply.[171]

In positive law his primary teacher was Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Qūlūya of Qom

(d. 369/979-80).[172] In theology his main teacher was Abu'l-Jaysh al-Muẓaffar b.

Muḥammad al-Balkhī al-Warrāq (d. 367/977-8), who was Abū Sahl b. Nawbakht's

disciple. He probably studied with Abu'l-Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Ka'bī, leader of the

Baghdādite Mu'tazilites, too.[173] Mufid heard *ḥadīths* from Abū 'Ubayd Allāh al-

Marzubānī (d. 384/994) and al-Ḥāfiẓ Abu Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. al-Ji'ābī (d.

355/966). Although he never visited Qom, he learnt *ḥadīths* of Qummite provenance

from Ibn Qūlūya, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Dawūd b. 'Alī al-Qummī (368/978-9) and Ibn

Bābūya.[174] He also studied with Ibn al-Junayd and Abū'l-Ḥusayn al-Nāshi', which is to

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[169] According to Madelung, 333/945 and 338/950 are also possible, though less likely. W. Madelung, "Al-Mufid," in *EI*.

[170] Based on the coincidence of dates, Mufid is likely to have heard traditions in the Manṣūr Mosque from one of two, or perhaps both, of the following Ḥanbalites: Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Salmān al-Najjād (d. 348/960) and Abū Isḥāq al-Bazzāz (d. 369/980).

[171] Mufid's works against traditionists/traditionism include: *Kitāb fī radd 'alā'l-Sha'bī*, *Kitāb al-mas'ala li-Janbaliyya* [sic: *Ḥanbaliyya*]; and *Kitāb maqābis al-anwār fī'l-radd 'alā ahl al-akhbār*. This short list does not include the works that he wrote in opposition to Ibn Bābūya which were, in all likelihood, critical of traditionism.

[172] Ibn Qūlūya belonged to the intermediate school discussed above. It is noteworthy that Mufid wrote *Lamḥ al-burhān fī 'adam nuqṣān shahr Ramaḍān* in support of Ibn Qūlūya against Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Dāwūd b. 'Alī al-Qummī in 363/973-4. McDermott, *Mufid*, 36.

[173] Mufid refuted al-Balkhī in a work titled *Kitāb naqd al-khams 'ashara mas'ala 'alā'l-Balkhī*.

[174] Mufid is likely to have learned *ḥadīths* from Ibn Bābūya during the latter's visit to Baghdad in 352/963 and/or 355/966.

say that Mufid's teachers represented each of the major theological and legal tendencies

found in the 4th/10th century.[175]

He taught in the mosque in Darb Riyāḥ in al-Karkh. All of the important

scholars of the 5th/11th century were Mufid's students. These include the Sharīfs al-Raḍī

and al-Murtaḍā, Ṭūsī, Najāshī, al-Karājakī, Sālār al-Daylamī and Abu'l-Ṣalāḥ al-Ḥalabī.

He was expelled from Baghdad during Sunnite-Shī'ite riots in 392/1002, 398/1008 and

409/1018. In the second instance rioters targeted Mufid personally, an indication of his

prominence rather than his involvement in the foment.[176] He died in Baghdad in

Ramaḍān 413/1022 and was initially buried in his house, then in Maqābir Quraysh in the

vicinity of Imāms al-Kāẓim and al-Jawād. His funeral was a major public event

attended by an enormous crowd.[177]

Mufid wrote prolifically on a wide range of theological and legal issues.[178] He

was especially concerned with the Mu'tazilites, against whom he wrote over sixteen

works.[179] The subject of these refutations was often a theological or legal position

which Mu'tazilites held, yet which was not unique to Mu'tazilism, such as their views

on the imamate and fixed-term marriage. Mufid addressed the major theological and

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[175] Modarressi, *Introudction to Shī'ī Law*, 40.

[176] Similarly, Imamites targeted the leader of the Shāfi'ites Abū Ḥamid al-Isfarā'inī (d. 406/1015) though it is unlikely that he was personally involved in the attacks on them. Madelung and Donohue corroborated Mufid's innocence in the matter. Madelung, "al-Mufid," *EI*; Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 332.

[177] Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, Introduction (Beirut, 1983), 105.

[178] See McDermott, *Mufid*, 27-40 for a list of 172 works attributed to him.

[179] These include: *Kitāb al-radd 'alā Ibn al-Ikhshīd fī'l-imāma, al-Radd 'alā Abī 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī fī tafḍīl al-malā'ika, Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-Jubbā'ī fī'l-tafsīr, Kitāb al-radd 'alā'l-Khālidī fī'l-imāma, 'Umad mukhtaṣara 'alā'l-mu'tazila fī'l-wa'īd, al-Kalām 'alā'l-Jubbā'ī fī'l-ma'dūm, Mas'ala jarat bayn al-shaykh wa bayn al-qāḍī al-bahshāmī fī'l-imāma wa ma'nā al-mawlā, Kitāb al-muḍīḥ fī'l-wa'īd, Kitāb naqd al-imāma 'alā Ja'far b. Ḥarb, Kitāb naqd al-khams 'ashara mas'ala 'alā'l-Balkhī, Kitāb al-naqḍ 'alā Abī 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī fī'l-mut'a, Kitāb al-naqḍ 'alā Ibn 'Abbād fī'l-imāma, Kitāb naqḍ faḍīlat al-mu'tazila, Kitāb al-naqḍ 'alā 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-Rummānī, al-Naqḍ 'alā'l-Wāsiṭī,* and *Kitāb naqḍ kitāb al-Aṣamm fī'l-imāma.* See ibid. to identify the individuals named in these titles. This list does not include tracts written against the Ḥanafites and the Zaydites, both of whom were affiliated with Mu'tazilism in Baghdad. Donohue remarked that the Imamite attack on Zaydite shades of Mu'tazilism was intended to obscure Imamite rationalism. Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 332.

legal controversies of his day in refutations of specific Mu'tazilites, which suggests that

he considered them his principle intellectual rivals and challengers. The success of

Mu'tazilism in Būyid Baghdad, where it attracted many Ḥanafites and Zaydites among

others, confirms this suggestion. The chronicles of Būyid historians, however, name a

Shāfi'ite jurist al-Isfarā'inī and Ḥanbalite mobs as the principal agitators against the

Imamites, indicating that the Imamites' main political rivals were Shāfi'ites and

Ḥanbalites. Consequently, one might expect to find more polemic directed against these

two groups in Mufid's works. The dearth of such polemic may be because Sunnite legal

heritage, in the form of Shāfi'ism, was useful to Imamite scholars in building their own

legal tradition in the 5th/11th century.[180]

At the same time, faced with Sunnite opposition to Mu'tazilism, Imamites found

it useful to obscure their own rational tendencies and directed their works against

Mu'tazilism and its affiliates. Mufid struggled to distinguish Imamite scholars'

rationalist modes of thought and content from those of the Mu'tazilites at the same time

as he underscored similarities. Mufid's theological views were more akin to the

reportedly pro-'Alid Baghdadite school of Mu'tazilism which rejected Abū Hāshim al-

Jubbā'ī's (d. 321/933) theory of states (*aḥwāl*), even though the Baṣran school prevailed

in Baghdad at the time.[181] Mufid wrote a work on the agreement of Baghdadite

Mu'tazilism with Imamic *ḥadīths* titled *Kitāb al-risāla al-muqni'a fī wifāq al-*

baghdādiyyīn min al-mu'tazila li-mā ruwiya 'an al-a'imma.

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[180] See Devin Stewart, *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy: Twelver Shiite Responses to the Sunni Legal System* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998).

[181] See Abū Rashīd al-Nishābūrī, *al-Masā'il fī'l-khilāf bayn al-baṣriyyīn wa'l-baghdādiyyīn*, ed. ed. Ma'n Ziyada and Riḍwān al-Sayyid (Beirut: Ma'had al-Inmā' al-'Arabī, 1979). See also my discussion of Baghdad's Mu'tazilites below.

The Fāṭimid caliphate-imamate also influenced Mufid's work. The Fāṭimids' successes appealed to Shī'ites' messianic aspirations, threatening to draw 'Alid support away from Baghdad. This is evident in al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's lyric composition bemoaning, "his degraded position 'in an enemy country' while his kinsmen the Fāṭimids," ruled Egypt, an affront for which the Caliph al-Qādir admonished Raḍī's father, the incumbent 'Alid *naqīb*, and his initial refusal to repudiate the Fāṭimids' genealogy.[182] The Fāṭimids implemented an astrological calendar so the beginning of Ramaḍān did not depend on a moon-sighting (*ru'ya*).[183] Early in his life Mufid agreed with his teacher in positive law Ibn Qūlūya that it is not the new moon which inaugurates Ramaḍān, rather the beginning of Ramaḍān is based on a fixed calculation. Later, he changed his opinion, holding that the beginning of Ramaḍān does depend on a moon-sighting, and wrote at least six works to this effect.[184] Mufid's later ruling reflects a process in which Imamites sought to draw ideological lines between themselves and the Fāṭimids, who threatened Baghdad politically, thus assuring their patrons of their benignity and securing a place for themselves within a broader Islamic context.

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[182] Mafizullah Kabir, "A Distinguished 'Alid Family of Baghdad During the Buwayhid Period," *Royal Asiatic Society of Pakistan* 9 (1964): 52-3.

[183] Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-islam*, ed. Asaf b. 'Alī Asghar Fyzee (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1370/1951), 322. According to the historian Maqrīzī, the Fāṭimid general Jawhar introduced the astrological calendar when he conquered Egypt (idem, *The Pillars of Islam*, vol. 1, trans. Asaf A. A. Fyzee, revised and annotated by Ismail Kurban Husein Poonawala (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 339.); however, some evidence suggests that the Fāṭimid Caliph-Imam al-Mu'izz instituted it when he adopted *Da'ā'im al-islam* as the state's law. See Ismail K. Poonawala, "Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān and Isma'ili jurisprudence," in *Mediaeval Isma'ili History and Thought*, ed. Farhad Daftary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 118.

[184] These include: *Jawāb ahl al-Raqqa fī'l-ahilla wa'l-'adad, Kitāb jawābāt ahl al-Mawṣil fī'l-'adad wa'l-ru'ya, al-Radd 'alā Ibn Bābūya/ Fī'l-radd 'alā'l-Saduq fī qawlih anna shahr ramaḍān lā yanquṣ/ al-Risāla al-'adadiyya, Kitāb 'adad al-ṣawm wa'l-ṣalāt, Maṣābīḥ al-nūr fī 'alāmat awā'il al-shuhūr*, and *Kitāb mas'ala fī takhṣīṣ al-ayyām.* See McDermott's list of Mufid's works in *Mufid*, 27-40.

I will show that the principle difference between Ibn Bābūya's creed and Mufid's

correction to it is the extent to which Mufid implemented formal-rationalism in

expounding Imamite dogma. Possible reasons for this difference can be located in the

sociopolitical and intellectual milieu of Būyid Baghdad. The Imamites were a strong

community in Baghdad even before the advent of the Būyids. By the time of the reign

of the Caliph al-Muqtadir (rg. 295/907-320/932), the Imamites of Baghdad were holding

congregational prayers in the Barātha mosque in western Baghdad.[185] They also cursed

the Prophet's Companions which led Muqtadir to order the demolition of the Barātha

mosque in 313/925.[186] The Karkh quarter, a business district that came to exist, "as a

result of al-Manṣūr's removal to that locality of the markets that originally formed part

of his Round City," was another early Imamite stronghold in western Baghdad.[187] Riots

between the Imamites of Karkh and the Sunnites began to erupt in 338/949, shortly after

Muʿizz al-Dawla's arrival in Baghdad, indicating that the Imamites had already

occupied it for some time.[188] Besides these two main centers in western Baghdad, the

Imamites settled in Nahr al-Ṭābiq in the west and Sūq al-Silāḥ, Bāb al-Ṭāq, Sūq Yaḥyā

and al-Furḍa in the east. However, based on the fact that the Imamites of these smaller

settlements are not known to have participated in sectarian rioting until the emirate of

Jalāl al-Dawla (rg. 418/1027-435/1043), Kabir concluded that they moved into these

areas after the advent of the Būyids in Baghdad.[189] The Imamite presence in an

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[185] Mafizullah Kabir, *The Buwayhid Dynasty of Baghdad: 334/946-447/1055* (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1964), 202. For Ibn ʿAqīl's later description of western Baghdad see George Makdisi, "The Topography of Eleventh-Century Baghdād, Materials and Notes (I)," *Arabica* VI (1959): 189-95.

[186] It was rebuilt as a Sunnite mosque in 328; however, the Imamites seem to have regained control over it later. Ibid., 203.

[187] Ibid. Karkh sometimes denotes all of western Baghdad. Makdisi, "Topography," 189.

[188] Ibid.

[189] Ibid.

important commercial sector of Baghdad meant that the Būyids needed to conciliate them.[190] Mu'izz al-Dawla ordered all shops closed to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥusayn on 10 Muḥarram and instituted the festival of Ghadīr Khumm on 18 Dhu'l-Ḥijja to celebrate the appointment of Imam 'Alī to succeed the Prophet. Both commemorations occasioned violent sectarian rioting over the course of Būyid rule. However, the most important Būyid concession was the appointment of an 'Alid naqīb.

The 'Abbāsids had appointed one naqīb over all of the Hāshimites. According to al-Māwardī and Abū Ya'lā al-Farrā' the naqīb's responsibilities included genealogical, material and moral matters; regarding moral matters, these partly overlapped the sphere of the qāḍī. The naqīb maintained a register of nobility, entering births and deaths and excluding false claimants to Hāshimite descent; he prevented Hāshimite women from marrying non-Hāshimites; he procured state pensions for Hāshimites from the treasury; he administered the endowments (awqāf) which were established for Hāshimites; and he was responsible for preserving the honor of the Hāshimites by preventing them from transgressing proper moral bounds. Execution of ḥadd punishments and judgment of litigations between Hāshimites fell within the scope of one type of niqāba, al-niqāba al-'āmma.[191]

This arrangement, however, benefited the 'Abbāsids more than it benefited the 'Alids[192] so the Būyid emir Mu'izz al-Dawla, partly to secure the support of the 'Alids and partly because the Būyids were themselves Shī'ites of some sort[193], put the 'Alids

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[190] See Roy P. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 72-96 on the loyalty inspired by perceived benefits.

[191] A. Havemann, "Nakīb al-ashrāf," *EI*.

[192] Kabir, "'Alid Family," 50.

[193] The Būyids were most likely Zaydites. Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, xiv; Heribert Busse, "Iran Under the Būyids," in R. N. Frye, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4, *The Period from the Arab Invasion*

under the jurisdiction of their own *naqīb*. Kabir asserted that the designation of a *naqīb*

to look after the interests of the 'Alids gave them a sort of "extraterritoriality within the

state."[194] The unlikelihood of Kabir's assertion notwithstanding, the *naqīb* was an

important court official in Baghdad and it seems that both the 'Alids and the 'Abbāsids

also had *nuqabā'* in provincial towns.[195] The emir 'Aḍud al-Dawla relied on the 'Alid

naqīb to carry out his plans for the reconstruction of Baghdad and the restoration of

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to the Saljuqs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 256; Kabir, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 201; M. S. Khan, "The Early History of Zaydī Shī'ism in Daylamān and Gīlān," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 125, no. 2 (1975): 313; Hossein Modarressi, review of *The Just Ruler in Shī'ite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imāmite Jurisprudence*, by Abdulaziz Abdulhussain Sachedina, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111, no. 3 (1991): 554. Modarressi stated that there is clear evidence of this in the works of the Būyids' Imāmite contemporaries such as Ibn Bābūya; Marcinkowski said that the Būyids were Imāmites in, "Sadūq," 71, however, his evidence is mendacious. He stated that the Būyids followed Imāmite law rather than Sunnite law, which they would not have done if they were Zaydite since the Zaydites followed Sunnite law. The Zaydites, however, did not follow Sunnite law. Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Ubayd Allāh b. Ḥasan al-Karkhī, a Ḥanafite, is reported to have appointed Ibn al-Dā'ī, a Zaydite, to lead his funeral prayer. However, Ibn al-Dā'ī refused to use a Sunnite formula in the prayer, insisting on a Shī'ite formula instead, so he was not allowed. Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Maḥallī, *al-Ḥadā'iq al-wardiyya fī dhikr a'immat al-zaidiyya*, British Museum MSS. Or. 3786, fol. 60 a., quoted in Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 325. To be sure, the Zaydites had their own law, expounded by their Imāms, which was in some cases, such as inheritance and triple-divorce (*talāq al-bid'a*), similar to Imāmite law. See Madelung, "Zaydiyya," in *EI*. Other scholars have taken a more nuanced approach. Momen stated that, while the Būyids, owing to their Daylamite roots, were originally Zaydite, they leaned towards Imāmism after they came to power because Zaydism, "would have required the Buwayhids...to install an 'Alid Imām [since they themselves were not 'Alids] for all to obey." Thus the vanished Imām of the Imāmites was politically attractive to them. Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 77; Joel L. Kramer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 41. Cahen does not accept the Būyids' Daylamite origin as evidence of their Zaydite affiliation because there were also Ismā'īlites in Daylam and Imāmites in, "the entourage of [the Zaydite Imām] al-'Uṭrūsh or his descendants." Cahen, "Buwayhid," in *EI*. Assuming that the Būyids were Imāmites, he explains, "the persistence, in later Buwayhid society, of Zaydī doctrinal influences," which would suggest that the Būyids may have been Zaydite, by underestimating the early differentiation between Zaydites and Imāmites. For one example of this early differentiation see Ibn Qiba al-Rāzī, "*Naqd kitāb al-'ishhād li Abī Zayd al-'Alawī*." Cahen seems to be saying that the Būyids were at least politically Imāmite if not more than just that. There are some anecdotal reports which suggest that the Būyids were Imāmite. Rukn al-Dawla is said to have interrogated Ibn Bābūya about "prophethood and the imamate", believed in the Occultation of the twelfth Imām in the course of one of Ibn Bābūya's debates with a *mulḥid* held at his court and requested Ibn Bābūya to supplicate Imām al-Riḍā on his behalf. Faqīhī, *Āl-i Būyah*, 278, 480-1. On the other hand, Mu'izz al-Dawla named Ibn al-Dā'ī, a Zaydite 'Alid, *naqīb* of the 'Alids in Baghdad (see below). Kraemer, *Humanism*, 39; Kabir, "'Alid Family," 50. He was also known to discuss faith with Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī, a Zaydite Mu'tazilite, who visited him on his death-bed. Kraemer, *Humanism*, 40. Finally, he was buried next to the graves of Imāmite Imāms, though this may have been his son, 'Izz al-Dawla's wish. Ibid.
[194] Kabir, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 187.
[195] Kabir, "'Alid Family," 50.

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endowments to suburban mosques.[196] The 'Alid *naqīb* was also entrusted with the

dispensation of charity: Mu'izz al-Dawla put the 'Alid *naqīb* in charge of 10,000

dirhams to be distributed among the people.[197] The *nuqabā'* conferred legitimacy on the

emir. For example, the 'Alid and 'Abbāsid *naqībs* were called to witness the official

pledge of allegiance to the emir Musharrif al-Dawla in 415/1024.[198] However, the

naqīb's appointment was contingent upon court politics. Under obscure circumstances,

the Būyid vizier Abū al-Faḍl dismissed the third 'Alid *naqīb* al-Ṭāhir al-Mūsawī in

360/971. 'Izz al-Dawla reinstated him four years later and 'Aḍud al-Dawla had him

arrested and confiscated his property.[199] Bahā' al-Dawla reinstated him once again and

appointed him *amīr al-ḥajj* and judge over the *maẓālim* court in 380/990-1[200]; Bahā' al-

Dawla also tried to appoint him *qāḍī al-quḍāt* but ultimately yielded to the Caliph al-

Qādir's protestation. When the Caliphs began to reassert their authority towards the

end of the Būyid era the 'Alid and 'Abbāsid *nuqabā'* served as liaisons between the

Caliph and the emir.[201] Moreover, they cooperated with the government to quell some

of the most serious sectarian riots in Baghdad.[202]

The first 'Alid *naqīb* was Abū'l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Kawkabī. The second

was a Zaydite known as Ibn al-Dā'ī; Ibn al-Dā'ī accepted the position under the

conditions that he would, "not have to accept any robe from the Caliph since this would

be black—the official 'Abbāsid color," nor would he be required to present himself

before the Caliph, "on any occasion on which he might have to wear black robes or kiss

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[196] Kabir, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 62.
[197] Kabir, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 164.
[198] Ibid., 99.
[199] Kabir, "'Alid Family," 52.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Kabir, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 199.
[202] Kabir, "'Alid Family," 51.

the ground before him as had by now become customary at the court."[203] Under these conditions Ibn al-Dāʿī became the *naqīb* in 348/959 and retained his independence from the Caliph. The conditions of his appointment are indicative of the political influence that Shiʿites held in Būyid Baghdad.

One Imamite family occupied the post from 354/965 to 449/1057, two years after the Saljūqs arrived in Baghdad. Muʿizz al-Dawla appointed al-Ṭāhir al-Mūsawī (d. 400/1010) in 354/966. In 359/970 he was put in charge of the *hajj* caravan and had the *khuṭba* read in the ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Muṭīʿ's name in Mecca, a significant move since both the Fāṭimids and the ʿAbbāsids claimed Mecca at the time.[204] Ṭāhir's son al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1015) administered the post, first on behalf of his father starting in 380/990-1, and then on his own, until he died. Raḍī was honored several times by being appointed *amīr al-hajj* and being placed in charge of the *maẓālim* court.[205] He also founded an academy called Dar al-ʿIlm in Baghdad. Raḍī's brother al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 435/1043-4) became the *naqīb* after he died, followed by Raḍī's son ʿAdnān who held his post until his death in 449/1057-8.[206]

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[203] Kabir, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 188.

[204] Kabir, "ʿAlid Family," 52. The threat of a rival Shīʿite caliphate which seemed to be fulfilling Shīʿite messianic aspirations was perhaps another reason for the Būyids' desire to secure ʿAlid support in Baghdad.

[205] Heinz Halm, *Shiʿism*, trans. Janet Watson and Marian Hill, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 51.

[206] Two points concerning Murtaḍā need to be noted here. Based on an anecdote, the Būyid vizier Fakhr al-Mulk preferred Raḍī to his elder brother Murtaḍā because the latter had once petitioned the vizier to be exempted from a tax of one dinar levied to irrigate land that Murtaḍā owned while Raḍī had refused a gift of one thousand dinars from the vizier. Kabir, "ʿAlid Family," 55. The anecdote reveals that Murtaḍā was a landowner, indicating the economic class from which the *naqīb* was selected and part of the reason why it was important for the Būyids to patronize the Imamites. The second point is that Murtaḍā wrote a treatise on the permissibility of working with the government in some cases. See Wilfred Madelung, "A Treatise of the Sharīf al-Murtaḍā on the Legality of Working for the Government (*Masʾala fīʾl-ʿamal maʿaʾl-sulṭān*)," *BSOAS* 43, no. 1 (1980): 18-31. So, perhaps, there was opposition to such close dealings with the government based on the Imamite ideal that all governments are unjust in the absence of the Imam, which prompted the composition of his treatise.

Halm took the careers of Raḍi and Murtaḍā as, "typical of the prominent

position of the Shi'ites in Buyid Baghdad."[207] Both of them were called to formally

repudiate the Fāṭimid Caliph-Imam's genealogy in 402/1011. Initially, Raḍi refused to

disclaim the Fāṭimid Caliph-Imam's genealogy, however, two years into his term as

naqīb, he agreed to it publicly. The importance that the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Qādir

attached to securing the 'Alid *naqībs*' support in the matter is a testament to their social

standing and political influence at the court. The Buyid emirs' overtures to the

Imamites suggests that the Imamites were an influential minority in Baghdad and the

fact that they occupied Karkh, the main business district of Baghdad, lends credence to

this suggestion. Buyid patronage did two things: First, it enhanced the authority of the

Imamite learned aristocracy in Baghdad, transferring leadership of the community from

Qom to Baghdad, where Imamite scholars had to defend their views with rational

arguments. Tradition-based arguments were not evincive because many of these

traditions had not been narrated outside the Imamite community.[208] Second, and

perhaps more directly so, Buyid patronage elevated Imamite scholars' profiles, exposing

them to the criticisms of a rich intellectual community and prompting responses.

All the major legal and theological schools—Ḥanbalites, Shāfi'ites, Ḥanafites,

Mālikites, Ẓāhirites, Ash'arites, Mu'tazilites, Zaydites and Imamites—were represented

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[207] Halm, *Shi'ism*, 50.

[208] See, for example, Murtaḍā's section on the inadequacy of revelatory arguments against *qiyās* in *al-Dharī'a ilā uṣūl al-sharī'a*, where he does not present any of the numerous Imamic *ḥadīths* prohibiting *qiyās*. As Gleave noted, "these, for Shī'īs, would have been conclusive proof...The reason for their omission can be traced to the intended readership of *al-Dharī'a*. Murtaḍā clearly hoped to offer non-Shī'ī *uṣūlīs* justification of the Shī'ī position, based on proofs which both groups would find acceptable. Imamic *akhbār* would simply fail to fulfill this purpose; hence he did not cite them. The only Shī'ī argument he used in his refutation of *qiyās* is *ijmā' al-imāmiyyah*, which he claimed to have shown to be a proof (*ḥujja*) of the Sharī'a, but this argument is not expanded further." Gleave, "*Qiyās*," 281.

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in Baghdad. The Friday prayer was permitted in six mosques: Jāmi' al-Madīna (or Madīnat al-Manṣūr), Jāmi' al-Ruṣafā, Jāmi' Dār al-Khalīfa (or al-Qaṣr), Jāmi' Barāthā, Jāmi' Qaṭī'at Umm Ja'far and Jāmi' al-Ḥarbiyya.[209] These mosques, plus some smaller ones (*masājid*), were the main centers for the study of the Qur'ān, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

The following anecdote alludes to three Ḥanbalite attitudes that existed in Baghdad during the 4th/10th century:

> Ibn Baṭṭa relates the story of the avid follower of Barbaharī who passed a man who was a heretic. The latter remarked, "These Ḥanbalites!" At that the Ḥanbalite came back to him and explained, "There are three types of Ḥanbalites: the ascetic who fasts and prays, the learned type who writes and pursues law, and the type that strikes down every rebel like yourself." At that the Ḥanbalite struck him.[210]

"This strain of active opposition," depicted in the anecdote, "blended in with the general Sunnite opposition to the Shiites in Baghdad during the Buwayhid period."[211] Those who held study circles include Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Salmān al-Najjād (d. 348/960) and Abū Bakr 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Ja'far, called Ghulām al-Khallāl (d. 363/974). Najjād conducted two weekly study circles in Jāmi' Madīnat al-Manṣūr and Ghulām al-Khallāl taught in Jāmi' al-Qaṣr. Another Ḥanbalī jurist Abū Isḥāq al-Bazzāz (d. 369/980) also held two study circles, in Jāmi' Madīnat al-Manṣūr and Jāmi' al-Qaṣr. In the second half of the 4th/10th century Abū'l-Faḍl 'Abd al-Wāḥid (d. 410/1020), son of an important

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[209] Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 317.

[210] Ibn Abī Ya'la, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamīd al-Fiqī, vol. 2 (Cairo, 1371/1952), 177, quoted in Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 320.

[211] Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 320. In the Sunnite-Shī'ite riots, "which periodically beset Baghdad, the opposition to the Shiites is labeled, almost always, as Sunnite, and, at times, Hashimite, but seldom Hanbalite." Ibid. According to Kraemer, the Ḥanbalite masses spearheaded the opposition. Kraemer, *Humanism*, 60-3.

Ḥanbalī jurist Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Tamīmī[212], taught in Jāmi' Madīnat al-Manṣūr. His brother Abū'l-Faraj 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 425/1034) took over 'Abd al-Wāḥid's study circles in the same mosques and was succeeded by his son. Evidently, Jāmi' Madīnat al-Manṣur was a Ḥanbalī locus.[213] Among the ascetics were Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Thābit (d. 370/981), Abū'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Sam'ūm (d. 387/997), Abū 'Abd Allāh b. Ḥāmid (d. 403/1013), Abū Bakr al-Rushnānī (d. 411/1021) and Abū Sa'īd al-Naqqāsh.

Late in the 4th/10th century a fourth attitude emerged. Ḥanbalites began working for the government as judges (quḍāt). Prior to this, "there had been Ḥanbali witnesses, but the mention of Hanbalite judges is infrequent."[214] Ḥanbalite judges of the 5th/11th century include Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Mūsā al-Hāshimī, Abū'l-Husayn Muḥammad b. Ḥurmuz al-Qāḍī al-'Ukbarī, the unnamed al-Qāḍī al-Muwaqqar al-Ḥanbalī and Abū Ya'la Muḥammad b. Husayn b. al-Farrā' (d. 458/1066). The revival of Sunnī orthodoxy, exemplified by the publication of the Qādirite Creed in 433/1042[215], was, in part, a result of the influence of these Ḥanbalites—and not the rioting public—on the Caliph who found their position congenial to his political strength and stability, by then largely undermined.

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[212] He was accused of Mu'tazilism. The same accusation, made by the Shāfi'ite Abū Ḥamīd al-Isfarā'inī, may have forced 'Abd al-Wāḥid to leave Baghdad. Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 319.

[213] Kraemer made the same observation in *Humanism*, 60.

[214] Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 321.

[215] The Qādirite creed was published by the Caliph al-Qā'im (d. 467/1075). It proclaimed Ash'arite doctrine orthodox. "It stressed the eternity of the word of God [e.g. the Qur'ān]—which was the kernel of controversy between the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites. It laid emphasis on the veneration of the companions of the Prophet and their gradation in the order: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī--which was of course intensely repugnant to the Shī'ah of all varieties. Finally the creed enjoined veneration for both 'Ā'ishah and Mu'āwiyah, whose hostility to the 'Alid cause was particularly loathsome to the Shī'ah." Kabir, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 208. Donohue adds that it was directed against Ḥanafite Mu'tazilism specifically in *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 336.

Leadership (*ri'āsa*)[216] of the Shāfi'ites passed from Abū'l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b.

Muḥammad al-Qaṭṭān (d. 359/970) to Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Marzubān al-

Baghdādī (d. 366/977), then Abū'l-Qāsim 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dārakī (d. 375/985), "the

leading Shāfi'ī in Iraq, and perhaps, in the east."[217] He had a study circle in Jāmi'

Madīnat al-Manṣūr and taught law in a private mosque in the Qaṭī'a quarter of the city.

It is reported that Dārakī sometimes ignored Shāfi'ite and Ḥanafite principles in favor of

ḥadīth, yet he was accused of Mu'tazilism.[218] Later, Abū Ḥamīd Aḥmad b. Ṭāhir al-

Isfarā'inī (d. 406/1015), an outspoken Ash'arī, took over leadership of the school. He

was close to the emirs, who gave him disposal over the alms, and taught in a private

mosque in the Qaṭī'a quarter as well. His reputation earned him the honor of being put

above even the eponym of his school.[219] Isfarā'inī, "used his position for political

purposes and came to be regarded by the Shiites as the leader of the opposition to

them."[220] Other important Shāfi'ites of this period are Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Muḥamilī and

Abū Ṭayyib al-Ṭabarī.

The association of the Ḥanafite school with Mu'tazilism may have popularized

the latter in Baghdad through judgeship channels traditionally held by Ḥanafites.

Judgeship in turn was strongly shaped by issues of political legitimacy and economic

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[216] See Mottahedeh, *Loyalty*, 135-50, on leadership among the *'ulamā'*.
[217] Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 322.
[218] Ibid., 322-3.
[219] This claim was made by a Ḥanafite. Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tarīkh Baghdād*, 14 vols. (Cairo, 1349/1931), 2239, quoted in Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 323.
[220] Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 323. "In the riot which broke out in Baghdad in 398 [/1008], the Hashimite attack on the Imamite *faqih* Ibn al-Mu'allim, was countered by a Shiite attack on Abū Ḥamīd." Ibid. Mufid was targeted because of his prominence, though he did not instigate the riots. W. Madelung, "Al-Mufid," in *EI*, Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 332. Similarly, the fact that the Shī'ites targeted Isfarā'inī does not mean that he was personally involved in attacks on them.

policies of the rulers.[221] Abū'l-Ḥasan ʿUbayd Allāh b. Ḥasan al-Karkhī (d. 340/951), a

Muʿtazilite, led the Ḥanafites in the early 4th/10th century. Abū ʿAmr Aḥmad b.

Muḥammad al-Ṭabari (d. 340/951) was a contemporary of Karkhī. He was succeeded by

Abū ʿAlī al-Shāshī (d. 344/955) and Abū Bakr al-Dāmaghānī. In the second half of the

4th/10th century Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Rāzī (d. 370/981) was the leader of the

Ḥanafis. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Khwawārizmī (d. 403/1013), an opponent of

theology, succeeded Rāzī.[222] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Jurjanī (d.

398/1008) taught in a private *masjid* in the Qaṭīʿa quarter. His student Abū'l-Ḥusayn

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qudūrī (d. 428/1037) became the leader of the Ḥanafites after

Khwārizmī. Ḥanafite judges in this period include Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad

al-Ṣaymari (d. 436/1045), Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Simnānī (d. 444/1052),

an Ashʿarī, and *qāḍī al-quḍāt* Ibn Afkānī.

Among the Mālikites, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Abhari (d.

375/985) held a study circle in Jāmiʿ Madīnat al-Manṣūr. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b.

Ṭayyib al-Bāqillanī (d. 403/1013) was a proponent of Ashʿarite theology. In the 5th/11th

century the Mālikite presence in Baghdad declined. In the first half of that century the

leader of the Mālikites Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. ʿAlī moved to Egypt,

"because he found it impossible to earn a living in Iraq."[223]

The Ẓāhirite school, also in decline, included Abū Saʿīd Bishr b. Ḥasan,

appointed *qāḍī al-quḍāt* in 369/980, and his student Abū'l-Ḥasan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b.

Aḥmad al-Kharazī, a judge. The latter, "had some few students in Baghdad, but the

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[221] Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 325. However, "it was not until the Seljuk period that the Hanafites were graced with a chief judge who was also their leader in learning and disputation." Ibid., 327.

[222] Among Khwawārizmī's students was the Imāmī poet and compiler of *Nahj al-balāgha* al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1015).

[223] *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 3035, quoted in Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 328.

center of the school remained in Shiraz, where Abū'l-Faraj al-Qāmī...propagated both

Ẓāhirite law and Mu'tazilism."[224] Two minor schools active in this period were the

Jarīrites, founded by the famous polymath Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923),

and the Thawrites, followers of Sufyān al-Thawrī.[225] In Baghdad the Zaydites were so

closely associated with Mu'tazilism that Imamites equated the two.[226]

In the 4th/10th-5th/11th century there were three schools of Mu'tazilism in

Baghdad: Baghdadite, Bahshamite and Ikhshīdite. Baghdadite Mu'tazilites followed

the teachings of Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir (d. 210/825), Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāṭ (d.

290/902) and Abu'l-Qāsim al-Balkhī (d. 319/931).[227] The Bahshamites include those

Basran Mu'tazilites who advocated Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī's theory of states (aḥwāl).[228]

Abū Hāshim's theory of aḥwāl concerns, "how God's attributes belong to Him"[229]; All

God's attributes (ṣifāt) are considered states (aḥwāl) which mediate between existence

(wujūd) and non-existence ('adam) except for one attribute, namely al-ṣifa al-ilāhiyya,

exclusive to the creator and unknown (ghayr ma'lūm).[230] Notable among the

Bahshamites in the 5th/11th century is 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār al-

[224] Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 329.

[225] The last Thawrite Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Ghaffār died in 405/1014. Ibid.

[226] See Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 316, quoted in Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 332. Donohue thought that Imamites interpreted the attack on Mu'tazilism in the 5th/11th century as an attack on Zaydism. He cites Imamite criticisms of Shī'ite Mu'tazilism mentioned in ibid.

[227] The Baghdadite school was reportedly pro-'Alid. McDermott, *Mufīd*, 5. Mufid's views coincided with Baghdadite Mu'tazilism on certain points. Donohue claimed that some of Mufid's writings were, "directed against the Baghdadī Mu'tazilites like Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī [d. 367/977-8] and the followers of Ikhshīd." Donohue, *Buwayhid Dynasty*, 332. Gimaret counted Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī among the Basran Mu'tazilites and Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Ikhshīd (d. 326/938) among the Baghdadites. D. Gimaret, "Mu'tazila," in *EI*. McDermott considered Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī and al-Ikhshīd both Basran Mu'tazilites. McDermott, *Mufīd*, 5-6.

[228] Gimaret, "Mu'tazila," in *EI*.

[229] McDermott, *Mufīd*, 328.

[230] Rashīd al-Khayyun, *Mu 'tazila al-Baṣra wa Baghdād* (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥikma, 1997), 226-28. Both Ṭūsī and al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī explained *aḥwāl* further. Ḥillī said that Abū Hāshim was motivated by the need to distinguish between attributes (states) shared by humans and God from one, the fifth state, which is can only be ascribed to God.

Hamadhānī al-Asadābādī (d. 415/1025). The Ikhshīdites followed the teachings of Abū

Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Ikhshīd, who broke away from the Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī's

group, retaining more of the teachings of his father Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī (d. 303/916).[231]

The major bone of contention between these Muʿtazilite schools was Abū

Hāshim's theory of states. His father Abū ʿAlī rejected the thesis that God's attributes,

such as knowledge, are entities (*maʿānī*) in God. Instead, he held that God is, for

example, knowing in accordance with his essence (*li-dhātih*), that is, by himself.

However, his opponents argued that if God is knowing by himself and, for example,

powerful by himself as well, then "knowing" and "powerful" mean the same thing since

they both denote God's essence. Abū Hāshim's theory of states addressed this objection

by positing that God is, for example, knowing because of what state he is in, in

accordance with his essence (*li-mā huwa ʿalayhi fī dhātihi*); so "knowing" denotes God

in his state of knowing, not knowledge in God. Abū Hāshim's elegant revision of his

father's thesis allows one to predicate of God that he is knowing by his essence or that

he is knowing because of what state he is in, in accordance with his essence and

ostensibly avoids any, "substantization within God's essence such as entities [*maʿānī*]

might imply."[232] However, Mufīd and others held that Abū Hāshim had missed his mark

since the states he conceived of entail substantization just as entities would.

This survey of the intellectual landscape of Būyid Baghdad demonstrates the

fluidity of perceived taxonomies, legal and theological. Shāfiʿites and even Ẓāhirites,

not to mention Ḥanafites and Zaydites, crossed theological boundaries to participate in

a scene impregnated with the language of Muʿtazilism. Smaller schools which either

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[231] McDermott, *Mufīd*, 6.
[232] McDermott, *Mufīd*, 140. See ibid., 134-42 for the details of this controversy.

did not distinguish themselves sufficiently or could not secure judgeships or teaching

positions in Baghdad, such as the Jarirites[233] and Thawrites, fell into decline. As I

stated earlier, arguments based on Imamite traditions were not evincive because many

of these traditions had not been narrated outside Imamite circles. In order to carve out a

niche for themselves in a broader Islamic context Imamites employed formal-rationalist

arguments in their defense of Imamite dogma. That is not to say that tradition-based

arguments became obsolete; rather, Imamite scholars employed formal-rational proofs

even when they had explicit proof texts at hand. Upon close examination, this point

will be evident in Mufid's *Correction* to Ibn Bābūya's creed.

Mufid's *Correction* to Ibn Bābūya's Creed

Ibn Bābūya begins *I'tiqādāt al-imāmiyya* with a section titled, "On the nature of

the belief of the Imāmīya [sic] concerning *tawḥīd.*" More specifically, he enumerates

the attributes of God's essence, disavows anthropomorphism, rejects the Beatific Vision

and hierarchizes the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* in terms of their epistemological status.[234] He

declares:

> Know that our belief concerning *tawḥīd* is that Allāh, exalted is He, is One (*wāḥid*) and
> Absolutely Unique (*aḥad*). There is naught like unto Him; He is Prior (*qadīm*, Ancient);
> He never was, and never will be, but the Hearing (*samī'*) and the Seeing One (*baṣīr*); the
> Omniscient ('*alīm*); the Wise (*ḥakīm*); the Living (*ḥayy*); the Everlasting (*qayyūm*); the
> Mighty ('*azīz*); the Holy (*quddūs*); the Knowing One ('*ālim*); the Powerful (*qādir*); the
> Self-sufficient (*ghanī*). He cannot be described by His Essence (*jawhar*), His Body
> (*jism*), His Form (*ṣūra*) or by His Accidental Qualities ('*araḍ*). Nor in terms of length
> (*khaṭṭ*), breadth ('*arḍ*), surface (*saṭḥ*), weight (*thiqal*), lightness (*khiffa*), quiescence
> (*sukūn*), motion (*ḥaraka*), place (*makān*) or time (*zamān*). He, exalted is He, transcends
> all the attributes of his creatures. He is beyond both limitations (*ḥadd*) of transcendence

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[233] C. E. Bosworth, "al-Ṭabari," *EI.*

[234] It is interesting to note here that the Akhbāri school of the 12th/18th century reversed this order and placed the *sunna* before the *kitāb*. Robert Gleave, *Inevitable Doubt: Two Theories of Shī'ī Jurisprudence* (Boston: Brill, 2000), 31.

(*ibṭāl*) and of immanence (*tashbīh*).... 'Human eyes cannot behold Him; while He discerns (the power of) eyes.' ...And he who believes in *tashbīh* (immanence) is a polytheist (*mushrik*). Every tradition (*ḥadīth*) which does not accord with the Book of Allāh is null and void (*bāṭil*), and if it is to be found in the books of our doctors, it is apocryphal (*mudallas*).[235]

He continues to expand on his anti-anthropomorphist thesis by explaining physical descriptions of God in the Quran (e.g. face, leg and hands) metaphorically, then extends his argument to similar *ḥadīths*. Although he does not quote any *ḥadīths* which are in need of such interpretation, it is clear from his concluding remark[236] that his goal is to defend the probity of those traditions. Mufid only disagrees with Ibn Bābūya over the actual meaning of certain anthropomorphic expressions in the Quran.[237]

In the next section Ibn Bābūya defines the attributes of the essence (*ṣifāt al-dhāt*) and distinguishes them from the attributes of the act (*ṣifāt al-afʿāl*). He states:

> Whenever we describe Allāh by the attributes of (His) essence, we only desire by such attribute the denial of its opposite in respect of Him.... We do not say that He, the Glorious and Mighty, has always been the Great Creator (*khallāq*), the One possessed of Action (*fāʿil*), Will (*shāʾī*) and Intention (*murīd*), the Approver (*rāḍī*), the Disapprover (*sākhiṭ*), the Provider (*rāziq*) the Bountiful One (*wahhāb*), the Speaker (*mutakallim*),— because these are attributes of His action (*afʿāl*), and (therefore) they are created (*muḥdath*). For it is not permissible to say that Allāh is always to be qualified by them.[238]

Ibn Bābūya does not cite any proof-texts in this section, so it is incorrect to attribute to him the belief that, "the scope allowed to the experts [in *kalām*] is limited to quoting

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[235] Ibn Bābūya, *Shīʿite Creed*, 27-8.

[236] "In the traditions which are attacked by opponents and heretics, there do not occur any except words similar to these [Qurʾānic verses], and their meaning is the meaning of the words of the Qurʾān." Ibid., 31.

[237] See Mufid, *Kitāb sharḥ ʿaqāʾid al-Ṣadūq aw Taṣḥīḥ al-iʿtiqād*, ed. ʿAbbasquli Ṣ. Wajdi, with an introduction and notes by Hibat Allāh al-Shahrastāni, 2nd ed. (Tabrīz: Charandābī, 1371), 5-6, quoted in McDermott, *Mufid*, 339.

[238] Ibn Bābūya, *Shīʿite Creed*, 31-2.

and explaining traditions," as McDermott did.[239] Mufid agrees with Ibn Bābūya's distinction.

Regarding obligation (*taklīf*), Ibn Bābūya holds that, "Allāh imposes upon His slaves (mankind) only such legal obligations as are within their powers (to obey)."[240] As proof he offers Quran 2:286 which states that, "God does not charge (*yukallifu*) a soul, except [according to] its capacity (*wusʻ*)." Then he uses a common-usage argument to distinguish between *wusʻ* and *ṭāqa*, the former indicating, "a lesser degree of potentiality," than the latter, in order to reconcile Quran 2:286 with a *ḥadīth* narrated by Imam al-Ṣādiq which adds that the obligation imposed on man is *less* than what he is capable of, that is, his *ṭāqa*.[241]

Ibn Bābūya places his section on human actions immediately after his section on obligation. The significance of the placement of this section is, perhaps, that Ibn Bābūya wanted to make his opposition to determinism clear before declaring that human actions are created, for what have *taklīf* and capacity got to do with a determinist's scheme? He states:

> Our belief concerning human actions is that they are created (*makhlūqa* [sic: *makhlūq*]), in the sense that Allāh possesses foreknowledge (*khalq taqdīr*), and not in the sense that Allāh compels man to act in a particular manner by creating a certain disposition (*khalq takwīn*). And the meaning of all this is that Allāh has never ceased to be aware of the potentialities (*maqādīr*) of human beings.[242]

Still, Mufid is not satisfied and rebukes Ibn Bābūya in his *Correction* as follows:

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[239] McDermott, *Mufīd*, 316. In other places McDermott is less categorical about Ibn Bābūya's methodology. See ibid., 367. McDermott quotes long rational proofs from Ibn Bābūya's different works, making his initial statement more peculiar. See ibid., 324, 326, 328, 354.

[240] Ibn Bābūya, *Shīʻite Creed*, 32.

[241] Ibn Bābūya, *Shīʻite Creed*, 32-3.

[242] Ibid., 33.

The sound tradition from the family of Muḥammad is that man's acts are not created by God. And what Abū Jaʿfar [al-Sadūq] has said came by an invalid tradition whose chain of authority is not approved. The true tradition says the opposite. And it is unknown in the language of the Arabs for knowledge of something to be creation of it. Were it as the opponents of truth maintained, then anyone who knows the Prophet would necessarily have created him! And whoever knows heaven and earth is their creator! And whoever knows anything that God has made and affirms it in his own mind—why he must be its creator! That is absurd. Its error escapes none of the followers of the Imams, much less the Imams themselves. As for *taqdīr*, linguistically it is creation. For *taqdīr* takes place only by an action. As for knowledge, it is not *taqdīr*, nor can it (i.e., *taqdīr*) be mere thought. Far is God above creating monstrosities and evil deeds in any case.[243]

Note the order of Mufid's arguments: (1) traditionist, (2) common-usage and (3) reductio ad absurdum. He concludes with traditions narrated by Imams al-Kāzim and al-Riḍā which state that man produces his acts. Therefore, it is not true that Mufid prefers rational proofs to proof-texts, as McDermott claimed.[244] Rather, Mufid will first note its foreignness to the Imams and their followers on the basis of proof-texts and second he will advance a rational proof, even when he has an explicit proof-text at hand, for a different audience, in order to ensure that his doctrinal position is not lost on those who would reject the proof-texts. This is consistent with what has been said about the religious milieu of Baghdad above.

Ibn Bābūya's fifth section, on compulsion (*jabr*) and delegation (*tafwīḍ*), consists of one, short *ḥadīth* narrated by Imam al-Ṣādiq:

There is neither (complete) compulsion (or constraint) (on human beings), nor (complete) delegation (or freedom), but the matter is midway between the two (extremes). He was asked to define what was meant by "an affair midway between the two"? He said: For instance, you see a man intent upon a crime and you dissuade him, but he does not desist, and you leave him; then he commits the crime. Now, it is not, because he did not accept (your advice) and you left him, that you are the person who commanded him to commit the crime.[245]

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[243] Mufid, *Taṣḥīḥ*, 11-12, quoted in McDermott, *Mufīd*, 343.

[244] McDermott, *Mufīd*, 367.

[245] Ibn Bābūya, *Shīʿite Creed*, 33.

First Mufid dismisses the proof-text because it is, "incompletely supported." Then he

explains that, "The mean between these two theses is that God empowered creatures for

their acts and gave them ability for their deeds, and He set bounds and limits for them,

and He forbade them to do evil by reprimanding and warning, by the Promise and the

Threat."[246] The difference between them is that, for Ibn Bābūya, the proof-text is a

sufficient theodicy, whereas, for Mufid, it is necessary to assert man's free-will in order

to necessitate that God is irreproachable; substantially they agree.[247]

The sixth section of Ibn Bābūya's creed is about God's intention (*irāda*) and will

(*mashī'a*). He says that the Imamite doctrine is based on a *hadīth* narrated by Imam al-

Ṣādiq which states that, "Allah wills (*shā'a*) and intends (*arāda*); or He does not like

(*lam yuḥibba*) and He does not approve (*lam yarḍā*)."[248] He explains the *hadīth* as

follows:

> Now by *shā'a* (He wills) is meant that nothing takes place without His knowledge; and *arāda* is synonymous with it; and He does not like (*lam yuḥibba*) it to be said that He is "the third of the three"; and He does not approve of disbelief on the part of His slaves. Says Allāh, the Mighty and Glorious; "Verily, thou (O Muḥammad) guidest not whom thou lovest, but Allāh guideth whom He will."[249] ...Our opponents denounce us for this, and say that according to our belief, Allāh intends (that man should commit) crimes and that He desired the murder of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, on whom both be peace. This is not what we believe. But we say that Allāh desired that the sin of the sinners should be contradistinguished from the obedience of those that obey, that He desired that sins, viewed as actions, should not be ascribed to Him, but that knowledge of these sins may be ascribed to Him even before the commission thereof. And we hold that Allāh's wish was that the murder of Ḥusayn should be a sin against Him and the opposite of obedience. And we say that Allāh intended that his (Ḥusayn's) murder should be prohibited, and something which was not commanded. And we say that his murder was something that was disliked and not approved; and we say that his murder was the cause

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[246] McDermott, *Mufid*, 343-4.

[247] McDermott's judgment that Ibn Bābūya was unwilling to state that God has given man the power to choose what he does is not justified. Ibid., 344. It is equally likely that Ibn Bābūya did not feel the need to restate what the Imam had already stated when he said, "and you left him." Neither is Mufid's correction evidence of a substantial disagreement, for even though Mufid criticized Ibn Bābūya's idea of *khalq taqdīr* in his *Correction*, he used it to discuss souls in *al-Masā'il al-sarawiyya*. See ibid., 364.

[248] Ibn Bābūya, *Shī'ite Creed*, 34.

[249] Many other similar Qur'ānic verses are quoted here. See ibid.

of Allāh's displeasure and it was not the cause of His approval, and that Allāh the Mighty and Glorious did not desire to prevent his murder by means of (His) compulsion or power, but merely by prohibition and word. And if He had prohibited it by (His) compulsion and power, even as he [sic] prevented it by prohibition and word, surely he would have escaped being murdered...And we say that Allāh always knew that Ḥusayn would be killed...We hold that what Allāh wills; happens; and what he willeth not, will not happen.[250]

Mufid states that, "The truth of the matter is that God wills (*yurīd*) only good actions and intends (*yashā*) only beautiful deeds. He does not will the evil and does not intend the monstrous. Far is God above what the deceivers say!"[251] He goes on to accuse Ibn Bābūya of determinism:

> The determinists' avoidance of saying unreservedly that God wills to be disobeyed and disbelieved, that His friends be killed and His loved ones vilified, by saying instead that He wills what He knows to take place as He knows it and wills that disobedience be an evil and forbidden, really means a persistence in what they claim to have fled and an entanglement in what they claim to have disowned. For if the evil He knows happens as He knows it, and God was willing that the evil He knew should be as He knew it, then He wills the evil, and He has willed that it should be evil. So what sense is there in fleeing from one thing to the same thing and in their escape from one idea to the same idea?[252]

In his section on destiny (*qaḍā*) and decree (*qadar*) Ibn Bābūya is concerned with God's justice as it relates to man.[253] As such, he merely quotes a *hadīth* narrated by Imam al-Ṣādiq which states that, "when Allāh will collect the slaves in the Day of Resurrection, He will ask them concerning what he had enjoined on them, and will not question them concerning what He had destined for them."[254] Then he prohibits any further discussion of the matter, citing two *hadīths* in support of that. Mufid's first criticism is that the provenance of the proof-texts Ibn Bābūya quoted is not confirmed.

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[250] Ibid., 34-6.

[251] McDermott, *Mufid*, 344. McDermott does not refer to the source of the quotation.

[252] Mufid, *Tashīh*, 18, quoted in McDermott, *Mufid*, 346.

[253] Compare with Ibn Bābūya's section on *jabr* and *tafwīḍ* where he is concerned with God's justice as it relates to God.

[254] Ibn Bābūya, *Shī'ite Creed*, 36-7.

Then he gives *qadā'* four possible meanings: creation, command, indication or a judgment in a decision. He provides examples of these meanings from the Qur'ān and concludes that, "in none of them can God be said to predestine man's evil deeds." According to Mufid, "God exercises *qadā'* and *qadar* by commanding man's good acts, forbidding his bad acts, and giving him the power freely to act on his own."[255]

Ibn Bābūya quotes a *ḥadīth* narrated by Imam al-Kāẓim to explain his notion of ability (*istitā'a*) in the ninth section. He states:

> Our belief regarding (this) question is what Imām Mūsā b. Ja'far al-Kāẓim, on both of whom be peace, said, when he was asked, "Has a human being (lit. the slave) capacity [*istitā'a*]?" He said: Yes, provided he possesses four characteristics—(he should be) free in respect of action (*mukhalla as-sarb* [sic: *al-sarb*]); in good health; complete in the possession of limbs, and in the possession of capacity given him by Allāh. Now when all these qualities coexist, then the man is said to be capable (*mustatī'*).... (Suppose) there is a man who is free to act, in good health, possessing normal limbs. It is not possible for him to fornicate unless he sees a woman. Now when he meets the woman, it may be either that he...prevents himself (from sin)...or that he may act freely with her and fornicate.... He cannot be said to have obeyed Allāh under compulsion (in the first case); nor can he be said to have disobeyed Him by being overpowered (in the second case).[256]

Therefore, according to Ibn Bābūya, ability does not inhere solely in the agent. For Mufid physical health (*al-ṣiḥḥa wa'l-salāma*) is ability.[257] Ability inheres in the agent and, while external circumstances may prevent the agent from acting, they are not a part of his ability. Ibn Bābūya and Mufid agree that ability precedes the act although McDermott suggests that Mufid corrects Ibn Bābūya because his definition bears a superficial resemblance to the determinists' doctrine that ability comes to man only simultaneously with the act.[258]

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[255] McDermott, *Mufid*, 346.
[256] Ibn Bābūya, *Shī'ite Creed*, 39-40.
[257] Mufid, *Taṣḥīḥ*, 24, quoted in McDermott, *Mufid*, 351.
[258] McDermott, *Mufid*, 351-2.

The tenth section deals with the Imamite doctrine of *bada'*. Ibn Babuya states

that God has not relinquished the affair of creation, which he accuses the Jews of

believing. He offers the abrogation of all previous religions and books by Islam and the

Qur'an as an example of *bada'*, then declares that, "He who asserts that Allah the

Mighty and the Glorious does something new which He did not know before,—from

him I disassociate myself. He who asserts that Allah, after doing something, repents

concerning it,...he is a denier of Allah."[259] He concludes by explaining the crux of the

controversy:

> And as for the saying of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq [sic], peace be upon him, that, "Nothing appeared *to* Allah concerning any matter, as it appeared to Him as regards my son Isma'il [*bada li-llahi fi kadha*]"—verily he (Imam Ja'far) says: Nothing manifested (itself) *from* (the will of) Allah, Glory be to Him, concerning any affair, as that which appeared regarding my son Isma'il when he cut him off by death before me, so that it may be known that he was not the Imam after me.[260]

For Ibn Babuya *bada'* is, in the first place, like abrogation. It also refers to, "an

unanticipated divine decision, that is, that [ordinary] people came to realize that the

divine decision had [always] been different from what they had thought it was."[261]

Mufid agrees with al-Saduq that *bada'* is like abrogation and does not mean that God

does anything which he did not know since eternity. He explains the *hadith* quoted by

Ibn Babuya with a common-usage argument:

> The Arabs say, 'A good deed occurred to so-and-so (*bada li-fulan*), and an eloquent speech occurred to him,' just as they say these things 'appeared from so-and-so (*bada min fulan*),' making the *lam* stand in its place. So the meaning of the Imamites' saying, *bada li-llahi fi kadha*, is 'appeared to Him in it (*zahara lahu fihi*).' And the meaning of 'appeared in it' is 'appeared from Him (*zahara minhu*).' What is meant here is not a change of mind or a matter coming clear which had formerly been hidden from Him. All

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[259] Ibn Babuya, *Shi'ite Creed*, 41-2.

[260] Ibid., 42.

[261] Modarressi, *Crisis*, 58. The early Kaysanite doctrine of *bada'* was a belief in the possibility of a change in the divine decision. The Kaysanite was a group of Kufan Shi'ites who supported Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyya instead of 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin. They did not survive beyond the 2dn/8th century. Ibid., 5.

His actions upon His creatures which appear after they have been nonexistent have been known [to Him] from eternity.[262]

Ibn Bābūya had rendered *lillāhi* (to him) *min allāhi* (from him) in his commentary as well, though without explaining why it is appropriate. Mufid also agrees that *badā'* describes an event which was not anticipated, though the unanticipated event which Imam al-Ṣādiq alluded to is not the imamate of Mūsā al-Kāzim, rather the thwarting of the murder of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar.[263] The only substantial addition to Ibn Bābūya's doctrine follows:

> Something may be "written" conditionally, and circumstances may change... And God has said in what he related of Noah in his exhortation to his people, "Ask pardon of your Lord. He is forgiving, and He will let loose the skies for you in plenteous rain," to the end of the verse [Quran, 71: 10-11). Thus He made extension of their lives and abundant blessings conditional upon their asking for mercy. When they did not do so, He shortened the term of their lives, cut off their lifespan, and destroyed them in punishment. Thus *badā'* from God specifies what is conditional in His preordination, and it is neither a transfer from one decision to another nor a change of mind.[264]

Since the imamate is not conditional on God's preordination, Mufid's addition precludes Ibn Bābūya's interpretation of the unanticipated event which Imam al-Ṣādiq referred to in the *ḥadīth*.

Ibn Bābūya opens his section on disputation with *ḥadīths* prohibiting it. However, he mollifies that with the following amendment:

> Now as for controversy against opponents by means of the word of Allāh and the Prophet and the Imāms, or by means of the significance of their sayings, it is allowed without restriction to him who is well-versed in theology (*kalām*), but not permitted (*maḥzūr*) to him who is not well-versed in it and totally forbidden (*muḥarram*).[265]

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[262] Mufid, *Taṣḥīḥ*, 24-5, quoted in McDermott, *Mufid*, 337.

[263] Mufid does refer to the expectation that Ismāʿīl would become the seventh Imām in *Irshād*, 431.

[264] Mufid, *Taṣḥīḥ*, 25, quoted in McDermott, *Mufid*, 337-8.

[265] Ibn Bābūya, *Shīʿite Creed*, 43.

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He concludes with a well-known anecdote according to which Abū'l-Hudhayl al-'Allāf wished to debate Hishām b. al-Hakam on the condition that the loser would adopt the winner's beliefs. Hishām is said to have refused this and set his own preconditions: "If I overcome you, you will accept my faith; but if you overcome me, I shall refer to my Imām."[266] Mufid's approach to this question starts by distinguishing between true and vain dispute. True dispute is, "desirable, and indeed was actually commanded by the Quran and the example of the Imams,"[267] and their companions who, "used reason (nazar) and disputed for the truth and repelled falsehood with arguments and proofs, for which the Imams praised, lauded, and commended them."[268] His proof-texts are hadīths which support his thesis. Finally, he states that the Imams' prohibitions [quoted by Ibn Bābūya ?] only forbid talking about God's, "likeness to creatures and of His using constraint in His wise governance."[269]

The fifteenth section is on souls and spirits. Ibn Bābūya's main points are that souls were the first things that God created, they are eternal and of a different kind than the rest of creation. He says:

> Our belief regarding souls (nufūs) is that they are the spirits (arwāh) by which life (hayāt) is maintained, and they were the first of created things [according to a Prophetic hadīth]... we believe that they were created for eternal existence (baqā'), and not for extinction (fanā') [according to a Prophetic hadīth]... and Imām Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq has said: Verily, Allāh has inculcated fraternity between souls in the World of Shadows two thousand years prior to the creation of bodies... And the belief concerning the spirit is that it is not a kind of body, but is a different creation [according to Qur'ān 23:14].[270]

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[266] Ibid.

[267] McDermott, Mufīd, 315.

[268] Mufid, Tashīh, 26-7, quoted in McDermott, Mufīd, 315.

[269] Mufid, Tashīh, 27, quoted in McDermott, Mufīd, 316.

[270] Ibn Bābūya, Shī'ite Creed, 45-8.

In his *Correction* Mufid is primarily concerned with rejecting metempsychosis

(*tanāsukh*). He states:

> As for Abū Ja'far [al-Sadūq] saying that souls are created two thousand years before
> bodies, that those who were (then) mutually acquainted are united, and those what [sic:
> that] were not are disunited, it is a tradition of one, a singular report.[271] It also has an
> explanation other than the one supposed by him who has no insight into the truth of
> things: God created the angels two thousand years before men, and those of them who
> were mutually acquainted before men were created are united at the creation of men,
> and those who then had been unacquainted are disunited after the creation of men. The
> matter is not as the partisans of metempsychosis think it is. And doubt has entered the
> minds of the ignorant traditionists (*al-hashwiyya*) among the Shī'a, so that they have
> imagined that active essences, subject to command and prohibition, were created in
> particles (*dhar*) which were mutually acquainted, intelligent, understanding, and
> speaking. God afterwards created bodies for them and put them into them. If that were
> so, we would have some knowledge of what we used to be, and when reminded of it
> would recall it.... And the explanation which Abū Ja'far has given of the meaning of
> spirit and soul is the very thesis of the partisans of metempsychosis—although he did
> not know it.[272]

Furthermore, Mufid criticizes Ibn Bābūya for claiming that souls were created for

eternal existence:

> What he said about souls being permanent is unacceptable. It expressly contradicts the
> words of the Quran where God has said, "Every one thereon will vanish. There remains
> the face of your Lord possessed of might and honor [Quran, 55:26-27]." What he has so
> fancifully related is really the doctrine of many of the godless philosophers, who claimed
> that the soul is not touched by coming-to-be and corruption, and that it is permanent,
> whereas only composite bodies vanish and corrupt; and some of the partisan [sic] of
> metempsychosis hold this too, claiming that souls forever repeat their forms and abodes
> (*hayākil*), are not temporally produced, and do not perish. This is among the worst of
> errors and farthest from the truth.[273]

Mufid's belief is that souls do not possess eternality as an accident of their essences,

rather, since they were created, they have been and will forever be sustained by God.[274]

Ibn Bābūya explicitly denies metempsychosis in another section.[275]

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[271] Note that Mufid rejects the *hadīth* that Ibn Bābūya quoted specifically because it is an *akhbār al-āhād.*

[272] Mufid, *Tashīh*, 32-36, quoted in McDermott, *Mufīd*, 362-3.

[273] Mufid, *Tashīh*, 36-8, quoted in McDermott, *Mufīd*, 364

[274] McDermott, *Mufīd*, 365, where he refers to *Masā'il al-sarawiyya.*

[275] Ibn Bābūya, *Shī'ite Creed*, 61.

Regarding the promise and the threat (*al-wa'd wa'l-wa'id*) Ibn Bābūya says, "He

whom Allāh promises a reward for his good actions will certainly receive it...But he

whom Allāh has threatened with a punishment may have an alternative. If He punishes

him, it is His Justice; but if He forgives, it is His generosity."[276] Mufid confines the

possibility of forgiveness to believers.[277] Both Ibn Bābūya and Mufid agree that no

believer will remain in Hell for eternity and that intercession is for grave sinners who

have not repented, for those who have repented do not need intercession.[278]

Ibn Bābūya states that the Quran is, "the Word (*kalām*) of Allāh and His

revelation sent down by Him, His speech and his Book."[279] Although it is not stated in

I'tiqādāt al-imāmiyya, Ibn Bābūya considers the Qur'ān originated (*muḥdath*), not

created (*makhlūq*), since the latter can also mean fabricated (*makdhūb*).[280] Mufid agrees

that, "the Quran is produced in time"; his proof, "is from the nature of articulated

speech, which must be produced in a succession of moments."[281] Regarding *taḥrīf* Ibn

Bābūya states that, " the Qur'ān, which Allāh revealed to His Prophet Muḥammad, is

(the same as) the one between the two boards (*daffatayn*). And it is that which is in the

hands of the people and is not greater in extent than that."[282]

Both Ibn Bābūya and Mufid agree that prophets, apostles, Imams and angels are

ma'ṣūmun. Ibn Bābūya states that, "Defect (*naqṣ*) cannot be attributed to them, nor

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[276] Ibid., 63.

[277] For Mufid's discussion of the promise and the threat see McDermott, *Mufid*, 251-76.

[278] See ibid., 361, and Ibn Bābūya, *Shī'ite Creed*, 62.

[279] Ibid., 76.

[280] McDermott, *Mufid*, 353. The arguments which Ibn Bābūya makes in *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* to establish the temporality of the Quran are based on rational principles—such as what is joined or separated must be temporally produced—not on proof-texts. See ibid., 353-5.

[281] Ibid., 355.

[282] Ibn Bābūya, *Shī'ite Creed*, 77. According to Ibn Bābūya chapters 93 and 94 of the 'Uthmānite codex form one *sūra* and chapters 105 and 106 form one *sūra*. Ibid. For Mufid's discussion of *taḥrīf* see McDermott, *Mufid*, 92-9.

disobedience (*'isyān*), nor ignorance (*jahl*), in any of their actions (*aḥwāl*)."[283] However,

Mufid draws a clear distinction between *'iṣma* and being compelled not to sin.[284]

One significant difference between them is that Ibn Bābūya allows the possibility of

absent-mindedness (*sahu*) in duties common to all men, like prayer, while Mufid does

not.[285]

Ibn Bābūya stated that *taqiyya* is, "obligatory, and he who forsakes it is in the

same position as he who forsakes prayer."[286] He added that, "until the Imām al-Qā'im

appears, *taqiyya* is obligatory and it is not permissible to dispense with it. He who

abandons it before the appearance of the Qā'im, has verily gone out of the religion of

Allāh... and disobeys Allāh and His Messenger and the Imāms."[287] Mufid stated that

taqiyya is simply,

> concealing one's beliefs concerning the Truth and refraining from conversing openly
> about them with those opposed to oneself, both in regard to religion and worldly affairs,
> as necessity dictates. *Taqiyya* becomes obligatory if there is known to exist or if it may
> be reasonably supposed that there exists a 'dire necessity'. But if there is no certain or
> likely harm in publishing the Truth, the duty of *taqiyya* does not apply.[288]

The plain fact that Ibn Bābūya expounded Imamite dogma himself seems to belie his

prescription of *taqiyya*. This was not lost on Mufid who pointed it out in a rather

sarcastic fashion.[289] *Taqiyya*, however, has two meanings: precautionary dissimulation

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[283] Ibn Bābūya, *Shī'ite Creed*, 87.

[284] See Mufid, *Taṣḥīḥ*, 60-1, quoted in McDermott, *Mufid*, 356.

[285] McDermott, *Mufid*, 356-7.

[286] Ibn Bābūya, *Shī'ite Creed*, 96.

[287] Ibid., 97.

[288] L. Clarke, "The Rise and Decline of *Taqiyya* in Twelver Shi'ism," in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought*, ed. Todd Lawson (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 56.

[289] Mufid, "Taṣḥīḥ al-i'tiqād," in *Muṣannafāt al-Shaykh al-Mufīd Abī 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nu'mān ibn al-Mu'allim al-'Ukbarī al-Baghdādī*, vol. 5 (Qom: al-Mu'tamar al-'ālamī li-alfiyyat al-Shaykh al-Mufid, 1413/1992-3), 137-8.

and "esoteric silence".[290] The first meaning of *taqiyya* is relevant to situations in which disclosing one's true belief(s) is likely to endanger oneself. In this sense *taqiyya* is a legal dispensation (*rukhsa*), forbidden in certain cases such as drinking *nabīdh*, wiping over one's shoes in the ritual ablution and making the lesser and greater pilgrimages on one trip, separated by a de-consecration.[291] The second meaning of *taqiyya*, esoteric silence, is antonymous with *idhā'a*, deliberately divulging secrets to non-Shī'ites. Some presumably deeper secrets must also be kept from Shī'ites. One famous example of this level of *taqiyya* is the *hadīth* of Imam 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn:

> By God, if Abū Dharr knew what was in Salmān's heart, he would have killed him—and the prophet made them brothers! So what do you think about the rest of creation? The knowledge of the learned one (*al-'ālim*, i.e. the Imam) is difficult and it seems so; no one can bear it except for a prophet sent by God or an angel close to God or a believing servant whose heart God has tested for faith. However, Salmān became one of the learned ones because he was made one of us, the *ahl al-bayt*, so that is his connection to us.[292]

Another aspect of this level of *taqiyya* is also political quietism. The final restoration of justice is postponed until the Imam's reappearance, thus, "Those who rise up before the appointed time are attempting to 'hasten' ('-*j*-*l*) God's calendar."[293] They are sinners because they rely on their own wills, not God's will.[294] At this level, *taqiyya* is an inviolable doctrine.

It is certain that Ibn Bābūya used "*taqiyya*" in its second, esoteric sense while Mufid, perhaps purposefully, used it in its legal sense. Clarke pointed out that the passage in Mufid's *Correction* is couched in dense legal language. "The crucial legal

[290] Clarke employed the phrase "esoteric silence" in, "*Taqiyya*," 46.

[291] Etan Kohlberg, "Some Imāmī Shī'ī Views on Taqiyya," *JAOS* 95, no. 3 (1975): 399.

[292] Saffār al-Qummī, *Baṣā'ir al-darajāt fī faḍā'il āl Muḥammad*, ed. Muhsin Kūche Bāghī al-Tabrīzī (Qom: Manshūrāt maktabat Ayat Allah al-'uẓmā al-Mar'ashī al-Najafī, 1404), 25.

[293] Clarke, "*Taqiyya*," 52.

[294] See Nu'mānī, *Kitāb al-ghayba*, ed. 'Alī Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Tehran: Maktabat al-Ṣadūq, 1977), 194-201 for *hadīths* of this type.

term, however, is 'dire necessity' (*ḍarūra*). Here is the clearest indication that al-Mufīd

is speaking not of a permanent duty or belief (as in Ibn Bābawayh's parallel between

taqiyya and prayer), but something that is almost the direct opposite, since it takes

effect only when forced by circumstance—that is the practical, necessitous, legal

taqiyya."[295] Given that Ibn Bābūya and Mufīd are really talking about two distinct

things, these passages do not establish a substantial doctrinal disagreement between

them.[296]

Mufīd and Ibn Bābūya agree on many points of doctrine such as the distinction

between, and the identity of the attributes of the act and the attributes of the essence.

As for the points on which Mufīd ostensibly disagrees with Ibn Bābūya, these are

superficial incongruities whereby Mufīd is aiming for rhetorical refinement or polemical

effect. Regarding the former, Mufīd is keen to demonstrate the logical entailments of

Ibn Bābūya's cruder propositions, such as that souls are eternal. Mufīd anticipates the

potential similarity between Ibn Bābūya's position and the proponents of

metempsychosis and refines Ibn Bābūya's claim accordingly; this despite Ibn Bābūya's

unequivocal rejection of metempsychosis.

Regarding the polemical aspect of Mufīd's criticisms, it is apparent in the cases

of *jabr* and *tafwīḍ*, the createdness of human acts and God's will. In each of these cases

Ibn Bābūya and Mufīd agree that God does not compel man to sin, yet Mufīd rebukes

Ibn Bābūya nonetheless. It is even more obvious in the case of *taqiyya*, where Mufīd

purposefully misinterprets Ibn Bābūya's intent for polemical effect.

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[295] Clarke, "*Taqiyya*," 56.

[296] However, Clarke considered the shift of emphasis, from esoteric to legal *taqiyya*, crucial to the development of Imamism. Ibid., 55. It is difficult to imagine that Mufīd was not perfectly aware of what Ibn Bābūya meant; his criticism was most probably a polemic device.

Mufid employs common-usage arguments as epistemic indicators in language. These arguments are part of his philosophy of language—an extension of his belief that the Quran is created in time or perhaps vice versa. According to Mufid, human beings invent words to signify ideas in the mind that are abstracted from the objects we perceive; words are not directly or naturally connected to the objects they signify but are linked to them by the intention (*qaṣad*) of the namer.[297] Since words are only significant by convention, the ordinary usage of a word is a good indicator of what abstracted idea it signifies.

One should pay close attention to Mufid's first line of criticism: he rejects the validity of the traditions Ibn Bābūya adduces. In some instances Mufid rejects a tradition because it is a *khabar al-wāḥid*, demonstrating the importance of *ḥadīth* authentication for Mufid and the role that a legal principle, the rejection of *akhbār al-āḥād*, plays in the elaboration of Imamite theology along formal-rational lines. The direct relationship between the development of formal-rationalism and concurrent developments in jurisprudence underlies my view that there is an organic, internal momentum driving the evolution of dialectic theology. Finally, in his substantial defense of Ibn Bābūya's doctrinal positions Mufid advances a rational proof even when he has an explicit proof-text at hand. This seems to be due to the diversity of his audience discussed above, and confirms that the difference between them is primarily methodological, not substantial.

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[297] McDermott, *Mufid*, 134-6.

Conclusion

I have argued that the term rationalism, in both contemporary Western studies and the Imamite tradition, actually denotes two things: a methodology, which I call formal-rationalism, and a permeable set of theological positions, which I call material-rationalism. The latter category is permeable because developments in formal-rationalism led to modifications in the set of theological positions comprising material-rationalism. On the basis of the works of prominent Imamite scholars, I have concluded that formal-rationalism was a small, but not a marginal trend in the period of the presence of the Imams, before the Banū Nawbakht assimilated aspects of Mu'tazilism into Imamism. The formal-rationalist tendency in Imamism was developed through early encounters with Mu'tazilism and the need felt by Imamite scholars to introject doubt into the "received" conceptions of their detractors. In turn, the formal-rationalist tendency in Imamism yielded material-rationalist positions on major theological questions.

The heresiographical reports which informed the view that the position of the majority of early Imamites on theological issues ran contrary to Mu'tazilite dogma date from the late $3^{rd}/9^{th}$ and early $4^{th}/10^{th}$ centuries, a time when the crisis brought on by the Occultation had retarded the further development of formal-rationalism and traditionism had set in. The preponderance of moderate traditionism in the century after the Occultation was the outcome of strategies employed by Imamite scholars to resolve the crisis of the Occultation rather than having been a continuation of an original trajectory. As the example of Kulaynī indicated, the brand of traditionism that overtook Imamite scholarship in the century after the Occultation was moderate, having already

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incorporated fundamental elements of formal and material-rationalism. On basis of statements such as Hisham b. al-Hakam's that God is a body, the early heresiographers placed Imamism outside the bounds of material-rationalism. However, in the context of contemporary dialectic, these statements do not signify what the heresiographers alleged; on the contrary, they reveal a complex cosmology that was not based on tradition and which employed a measure of interpretation beyond it and hence rational derivations.

In the $4^{th}/10^{th}$ and $5^{th}/11^{th}$ centuries Būyid patronage enhanced the authority of the Imamite learned aristocracy in Baghdad, transferring leadership of the community from Qom to Baghdad, where Imamite scholars had to defend their views with rational arguments. Tradition-based arguments were not evincive because many of these traditions had not been narrated outside the Imamite community. Secondly, Būyid patronage elevated Imamite scholars' profiles, exposing them to the criticisms of a rich intellectual community and prompting responses. In Baghdad Mufid considered the Mutazilites his principle intellectual rivals and addresses the major theological and legal controversies of his day in works against the Muʻtazilites. The need Imamite scholars of the Būyid era felt to defend their doctrines with arguments that were not based on traditions encouraged the development of formal-rationalism in Imamism.

My comparison of Ibn Babuya's creed and Mufid's correction to it reveals that the main difference between them is methodological not substantial. So, contrary to a widely-held opinion, the "rationalist turn" in Imamism cannot be attributed solely to Mufid and his generation; rather, it was a gradual process spurred by an internal momentum, namely the existence of a formal-rationalist tendency in Imamism, that

began in the period of the presence of the Imams. Mufid's contribution to the development of rationalism lies in the advancements he made in formal not material-rationalism. Accordingly, Mufid's role as the founder of the rationalist school in Imamism must be revised. He belongs in a line of Imamite scholars, dating back to around the middle of the $2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century, who continually contributed to the development of formal-rationalism in Imamism. Mufid only deserves to be singled out on the basis of the success he achieved in shaping the future of Imamite theology, a future in which rationalism was the approach of the majority. However, even in this role, it must be said that Mufid was not a lone actor. The reasons for the success of this new stage of formal-rationalism rest first on the post-Occultation thrust to come to terms with the crisis of "absence" which devolved to the *'ulamā'*; second, on the weakening of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate and with it classical Sunnite sources of legitimacy which brought a greater reception of Imamite political concepts at the popular level; and third, on Mufid's participation, more so than preceding *'ulamā'*, in public argumentation and exposition of Imamite positions to a Sunnite audience of diverse theological and philosophical tendencies.[298] This was also a time when Shī'ites of difference groups were appropriating a number of Mu'tazilite precepts and shaping others. This role which Mufid played was facilitated by Būyid patronage and the transference of the leadership of the Imamite community from Qom to Baghdad. Mufid's student Murtaḍā continued to refine formal-rationalism until it became a sort of material-rational position in so far as he supported the idea that fundamental doctrines must be known by way of reason, an idea which received little modification and became an almost

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[298] See Hodgson, *Venture*, 36.

universal Imamite principle. In law, however, Tusi is more significant since he reclaimed the validity of *akhbār al-aḥād.*

I have also tried to discuss in this study the question of origins. The issue of origins has beset Western studies on Shī'ism since they first appeared. Until the second half of the 20th century it was rare to find a study on Shī'ism in the West that did not consider it, at best, a politically motivated offshoot from original Islam or, at worst, a continuation of old world notions of time and kingship in Islamic garb. Recent criticisms of Western studies on Shī'ism focus on demonstrating the probability of the existence of some forms of Shī'ism in the lifetime of the Prophet and have little to offer in terms of addressing the central problem with this historiographical approach. It is the search for origins itself, not the incorrect identification of any particular origin, which mars this subfield in Islamic history.

The problem with the search for origins is that it begins in texts. Were it a genuine genealogical study hardly anyone would complain.[299] The texualist posing as a historian of ideas believes that texts in a canon contribute, "to a single debate on issues of universal significance," that texts, "have a meaning which transcends the context in which they were written," and that this meaning, "can be revealed by studying the text as a self-sufficient object of inquiry."[300] But the social historian is acutely aware that, "when placed in their historical context, the canonical texts prove to be articulations of

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[299] See Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews,* ed. D. F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139-40.
[300] Ben Rogers, "Review Article Philosophy for Historians: The methodological writings of Quentin Skinner," in *Historiography: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies,* ed. Robert M. Burns, vol. 3 (New York: Routledge, 2006), 65.

local, often material interests."[301] The texualist holds to the false assumption that

contexts are dispensable because they are, "invariable and thus transparent."[302]

Accordingly, his, "business becomes that of identifying the range of answers that have

been given to the canonical questions," and placing those answers in chronological order

to glimpse a panoramic view of their teleological development.[303] But, as Quentin

Skinner declares, there are no perennial questions and the incorrect belief that there are

sends textualists on a search for, "preconceived notions of the secrets that their research

will reveal."[304] Rogers summarizes Skinner's view as follows:

> Intellectuals work within shared but historically variable frameworks of concepts which inescapably set their philosophical and political agenda. If the purpose of studying texts is the retrieval of their historical identity, then the historian must recognize that any text is bound to represent an individual response to a culturally specific constellation of issues. So the historian must understand that intellectuals are, "engaged in local (but not parochial) intellectual battles and that their weaponry was forged from a limited and conventional vocabulary."[305]

This appraisal of the vicissitudes of historical contexts relies on a

Wittgensteinian conception of language:

> The language of any single community does not serve simply to provide a common means of referring to things its members apprehend independently; rather it shapes and even constitutes their experience itself. The linguistic and conceptual conventions of a historical community actually furnish criteria in virtue of which judgments are either valid or invalid; they provide it with its standards of reason and morality and its sense of the problematic and the coherent.[306]

Therefore, in order to understand the texts a particular linguistic—in the

Wittgensteinian sense of the word—community produces we must not, "search outside

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[301] Ibid.
[302] Ibid.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid., 66.
[306] Ibid.

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it, for the objective issues it must, *a priori*, be addressing," but, "get inside what

Wittgenstein called its 'language games.'"[307] Skinner goes on to say that it is precisely

these, "language games which 'cause a certain range of issues to appear problematic,

and a corresponding range of questions to become the leading subjects of debate.'"[308]

Most of the studies on Twelver Shī'ite ideas remain circumscribed and confined to a

modern hermeneutical control of texts authored by faceless men and understood in

connection to other texts of similar genres but from a different life. This can be seen in

studies aimed at understanding rationalism and traditionism in the 10th/16th and

11th/17th centuries exclusively in connection to texts written in the 4th/10th and 5th/11th

centuries and outside multiple places and intents.

Austin's theory of speech acts helps us to understand the nature of these

language games by emphasizing how language is employed for a multiplicity of

purposes.[309] Put simply, "Words are used to do things with."[310] A serious utterance

carries a point or an "illocutionary force" apart from its propositional significance or

"locutionary meaning."[311] Uncovering this force involves, "identifying the agent's

intentions in undertaking it."[312] The consideration of illocutionary forces of texts means

that we assume, "All intellectuals will be endeavoring to endorse, repudiate, amend and

transform the discourses in which they find themselves placed."[313] Reflecting upon our

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[307] Ibid.

[308] Ibid., 66-7.

[309] "Austin argues that philosophers tend to treat all meaningful utterances as if they were statements and statements only, containing a sense and a reference and nothing more. But in fact language serves not only to describe and to designate; it is employed for a multiplicity of purposes from seducing to marrying and from betting to judging." Ibid., 67.

[310] Ibid. See J. L. Langshaw, *How to do things with words*, ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbiṣa (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

[311] Rogers, "Philosophy for Historians," 67.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Ibid., 68.

own uses of language justifies this assumption. So, while the texualist's advice is to let the text speak for itself, by ignoring the illocutionary force of a text, his enduring accomplishment is to have muted the text.

The search for the origins is concerned with the locutionary meanings of texts. Illocutionary forces belie the search for origins because they are specific to each historical moment. By ignoring illocutionary forces the search for origins leads us to an illusory teleology in which thought reproduces itself and social contexts do not determine much. But ideas develop in a web of social, political and economic experiences so it is overly optimistic to imagine that we can identify a single, individual or group progenitor.

Furthermore, the examination of locutionary meanings does not acknowledge creative aspects of appropriation. Skinner argues that a critical element of innovations in intellectual histories is that the intellectual seeks, "to manipulate traditional normative vocabularies," for example, by changing their sense or reference or with neologisms.[314] He does this, "not only to describe but to legitimate ethically unacceptable courses of action."[315] Skinner's example is, "the way in which English entrepreneurs at the beginning of the 17th century stretched the conventions of Protestant Christianity—the language of 'providence', 'devotion' and 'service'—in order to justify their morally

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[314] Ibid., 71.

[315] Ibid. Skinner's example is, "the way in which English entrepreneurs at the beginning of the 17th century stretched the conventions of Protestant Christianity—the language of 'providence', 'devotion' and 'service'—in order to justify their morally suspect commercial enterprises." Ibid., 71. See for example Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 2nd ed., trans. Talcott Parsons, with an introduction by Randall Collins (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 1998), 155-83.

suspect commercial enterprises."[316] However, in addition to being a resource, intellectual

conventions also constrain innovators. He writes:

> Language can be manipulated but never replaced in one fell swoop, and therefore the
> innovating ideologist finds himself obliged not only to cut his language to fit his actions,
> but to trim his actions to suit his language. It follows not only that the ideologist's
> material interests explain his ideology, in the way materialists suggest, but also, contrary
> to what materialists suppose, reference to his ideology will figure in any adequate
> explanation of his action. To continue with the last example, by manipulating the
> traditional language of Protestantism, the English merchants not only legitimized their
> involvement in activities formerly considered immoral; they also constrained themselves
> to frugal patterns of consumption and to the practice of a traditional Christian charity.[317]

Awareness of the creativity involved in appropriation further disrupts origins'

paradigms.

Universals are one dimension of intellectual history, for there *is* a level of

abstraction in intellectual history that links, for example, Arabs to the Chinese. At this

level we can speak of universals shaped by common human experiences, from wars to

mortality, from the physical to the metaphysical. So there is a history of universals, a

history which embodies the common experiences of humans, but it is only part of the

story, a part which masquerades as the whole when we come to Islamic history.

Furthermore, universals are just an expression of common experiences felt again and

over again in local histories. Universals do indeed have a history, though perhaps not a

noble one[318], that needs to be excavated but the groundwork must be done in social

history before we can write the history of universals. Because the predominance of

textualism is indifferent to how social contexts shaped ideas, there is an immense need

to create the historical moments of Shī'ite thought. Here again, the groundwork in

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[316] Ibid.
[317] Ibid.
[318] See Foucalt, "Nietzsche," 142.

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social history must be done before we can begin to capture the full meanings of these texts and draw conclusions about abstract things like religious symbolism. Now, I suspect that by problematizing the perceived continuities and discontinuities among texts on the basis of an understanding of the lives and societies of their authors, I have only been partially successful in this endeavor but I hope that it is a step towards the normalization of Shī'ite history.

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