THE IMĀM AS INTERPRETER OF THE QUR'ĀN ACCORDING

TO AL-QĀDĪ AL-NUᶜMĀN (D.363/974)

By

Bulbul Shah, The Institute of Islamic Studies

McGill University, Montreal

May 1984

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate

Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of

the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

ABSTRACT

The Imām as Interpreter of the Qur'ān According to

al-Qāḍī al-Nuᶜmān

The present thesis chiefly examines the view of al-Qāḍī al-Nuᶜmān, one of the early Fāṭimid scholars, on the necessity of a Divinely designated guide to interpret the Qur'ān after the Prophet. The Imāmah being the succession to the prophecy, al-Nuᶜmān establishes that the Imāms must be from the progeny (ahl al-Bayt) of the Prophet through ᶜAlī and Fāṭimah. At the same time the Imāms must be Divinely designated and recipients of the prophetic knowledge.

This being established, al-Nuᶜmān then studies the Imāms' interpretative functions with regard to the Qur'ān. To al-Nuᶜmān, the exoteric and esoteric aspects of the Qur'ān can be interpreted only by the Imāms. In addition, the Imāms are the unchallengeable authority concerning the transmission and interpretation of the sunnah of the Prophet and the teachings of the previous Imāms. According to the conclusion of al-Nuᶜmān, the Imāms are the means through whom the Divine knowledge becomes manifest.

RÉSUMÉ

L'Imām comme Interprète du Coran selon al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān

La présente thèse traite principalement de la pensée d'al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, un des premiers penseurs fatimides, concernant la necessité d'un guide divinement désigné pour interpréter le Coran après le Prophète. Etant donné que la fonction de l'Imāmah succède à celle de la prophétie al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān soutient que les Imāms doivent appartenir à la famille du Prophète (Ahl al-Bayt) à travers ʿAli et Fāṭimah. Ils doivent être désignés par Dieu et être les réceptacles de la connaissance prophétique.

Cela étant établi, al-Nuʿmān étudie les fonctions de l'Imām concernant son pouvoir d'interpréter le Coran. Pour al-Nuʿmān, les aspects ésoterique et exotérique du Coran peuvent être interprétés par les seuls Imāms. De plus les Imāms représentent l'autorité indisputable concernant la transmission et l'interprétation de la Sunnah du Prophète et de l'enseignement des Imāms précédents. Al-Nuʿmān conclut que les Imāms sont les médiateurs à travers lesquels la connaissance divine devient manifeste.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would not have been possible for us to bring the present thesis to its final form without the support of the following institutions and individuals.

The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, deserves our special thanks for its active support in making available the necessary financial assistance. In addition, the Institute has provided the means for the completion of this work, particularly in making an adequate arrangement for the typing of the final draft.

Professor Hermann Landolt has supervised the present work. We are very grateful for his kind supervision. Professor Landolt checked the whole work several times and made a number of valuable suggestions. The Professor's penetrating supervision enabled us to solve the intricate and challenging problems which arose in the course of our research.

We thank Professor Bernard Weiss for his assistance in improving the form of major parts of the thesis.

Both the Institute of Islamic Studies' Library at McGill University, Montreal and that of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, deserve our thanks. We particularly extend our gratitude to Mrs. Raja Dirlik, the head librarian and Ms. Salwa Farahiyan, the Library supervisor at the Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill, and Mr. Adam Gacek, the head Librarian of the Institute of Ismaili Studies for their support in providing us with all the necessary sources.

INDICATIONS

1. In this thesis we have frequently referred to Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall's translation of the Qur'ān. However, where this disagrees with the Shī^{c}ah interpretation, we have given the general Shī^{c}ah translation.

2. Although we have used Fyzee's translation of ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn and Lokhandwala's translation of the letter of Imām al-Mu^{c}izz, we have modified certain words in ways which, to our understanding, are better.

3. The system of diacritical marks used in this thesis is that of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill.

4. As far as the footnotes and bibliography are concerned, Kate L. Turabian's A Manual for Writers, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1973, has been followed.

5. All the death dates given in the bibliography are cited in the Islāmic Hijrah calendar.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Early Shī⁻ᶜah View on the Imāmah

'The necessity of a Divinely designated Imām (guide) after the demise
of the Prophet Muḥammad is stressed by all the branches of Shī⁻ᶜah Islām.
Shī⁻ᶜah writers have devoted a major part of their works to expounding
this subject throughout history. In this thesis we will study the views
of an early Fāṭimid scholar, al-Qāḍī al-Nuᶜmān (d. 363/974) on the neces-
sity of a Divinely appointed Imām, particularly his function as interpreter
of the Qur'ān (tarjumān al-Qur'ān). However, before studying al-Nuᶜmān
we will discuss the views of some earlier Shī⁻ᶜah writers, both Ismāᶜīlī
and Ithnā⁻ᶜasharī, in order to provide the necessary background for this
topic. Since it is not possible to study all of the earlier Shī⁻ᶜah
scholars we will deal only with those whose works are comprehensive and
well-known, viz. Abū Ḥātim Aḥmad b. Ḥamdān b. Aḥmad al-Warsinānī al-Rāzī
(d. 322), Abū Yaᶜqūb Isḥāq b. Aḥmad al-Sijzī (or al-Sijistānī)[1] and Jaᶜfar
b. Al-Ḥusayn b. Abū⁻ᶜAlī b. Al-Farḥ b. Ḥawshab Manṣūr al-Yaman[2], among
the Ithnā⁻ᶜasharīs Abū Jaᶜfar Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī (d. 329) and
Abū Jaᶜfar Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī Ibn Bābūyah al-Qummī (d. 381).

The following themes seem to be especially prominent in the early
Shī⁻ᶜah discussion of the Imāmah:

The Role of the Designation and that of the Inheritance in the Imāmah

The family of the Prophet (ahl al-Bayt), i.e. his progeny through
ᶜAlī and Fāṭimah, received the Divine authority from the Prophet in the
same way as the families of the previous prophets. Thus, the Prophet

Muhammad specifically designated (Nassa) ^{c}Alī b. Abī Ṭalib, and his descendants, as his successors and inheritors.

The Importance of the Imāmah

With the establishment of ^{c}Alī's successorship (walāyah, wiṣāyah, Imāmah), and that of his progeny the religion was perfected and God's bounty completed.

The Distinctive Features of the Imām

In Ismā^{c}īlism ^{c}Alī is regarded as the Foundation (asās) of the Imāmah, and is believed to have been (1) saved from idol worship and from any form of impurity, (2) in possession of special knowledge and (3) distinguished for outstanding qualities of bravery, piety and morality. All of the later Imāms, being of his progeny and his successors, inherit the above-mentioned features. Although the various Imāms display certain distinctive characteristics as individuals, their status as Imāms remains the same.

The Function of the Imām

The Imām is the proof (ḥujjah) of God, the guided guide (al-Hādī al-Muhtadī) the speaker-of-the-Qur'ān (al-Nāṭiq bi-al-Qu'rān), the informed expert on the Divine law (al-^{c}Ālim bi al-Aḥkām), the one who is firmly grounded in religious knowledge (al-Rāsikh fī al-^{c}ilm), and the authority on the ta'wīl of the Qur'ān. He is regarded as the medium between God and mankind and the witness (shahīd) against the people of his time. The Imām is the only guarantee for the preservation of the religion (al-Dīn).

B. Life Sketch of al-Nu^{c}mān

Name

According to al-Nu^{c}mān's grandson al-Qāḍī ^{c}Abd al^{c}Azīz b. Muhammad, al-Nu^{c}mān's full name is al-Qāḍī al-Nu^{c}mān b. Muhammad b. Mansūr b. Ahmad b. Hayyūn al-Tamīmī.[3] However, Abū Hanīfah has been used as a surname for al-Nu^{c}mān by a number of non-Fāṭimid writers.[4] The modern writers such as A.A.A. Fyzee have accepted it as such without undertaking an analytical study of it.[5] It is interesting to note that we do not find this name in the works of al-Nu^{c}mān, nor do we find it in other Fāṭimid works. The following evidence bears witness to this.

1. Imām al-Mu^{c}izz, the fourth Fāṭimid caliph addresses al-Nu^{c}mān by merely saying "Oh! Nu^{c}mān" and mentions his name by calling him Nu^{c}mān b. Muhammad al-Qāḍī.[6]

2. As we have already mentioned, ^{c}Abd al-^{c}Azīz b.Muhammad, one of the descendants of al-Nu^{c}mān does not mention Abū Hanīfah together with al-Nu^{c}mān's names. (See above).

3. The famous Fāṭimid writers al-Kirmānī (d.412) and al-Shīrāzī (d. 470) refer to al-Nu^{c}mān, but they do not indicate this name.[7]

From all this it is clear that Abū Hanīfah as a surname of al-Nu^{c}mān did not receive any attention by the Ismā^{c}īlīs. Yet W. Ivanow holds that the name Bū Hanīfah as contained in some verses of the Dīwān of Nāṣir Khusraw has been used for al-Nu^{c}mān.[8] But from the context it appears that the name Bū Hanīfah refers to Abū Hanīfah, the founder of the Hanafī school. For example in one of these verses Nāṣir criticizes an adherent of the Hanafī school who considers theirs to be the only right one.[9]

Ivanow's view may lead one to think that Nāṣir expresses a contra-
dictory view by considering Abū Ḥanīfah as an <u>Ismāʿīlī</u> <u>dāʿī</u>, on the one
hand, and a <u>Sunnī Imām</u> on the other. At any rate, it appears to us that
Nāṣir refers to Nuʿmān b. Thābit, the founder of the <u>Ḥanafī</u> school
whenever he uses Bū Ḥanīfah – not to al-Nuʿmān b. Muhammad, the
<u>Ismāʿīlī</u> <u>qāḍī</u>.

Astarābādī, one of the <u>Ithnāʿasharīs</u>, not only considers Abū Ḥanīfah
as the surname of al-Nuʿmān but goes one step further by saying that the
name and <u>kunyah</u> of al-Nuʿmān were the same as those of Abū Ḥanīfah, the
founder of the <u>Ḥanafī</u> school, and that giving al-Nuʿmān the name Abū
Ḥanīfah of the <u>Shīʿah</u> is both a matter of pride and propaganda for the
Shīʿah in general and the Fāṭimids in particular.[10]

This may be objected to on the grounds that if the name Abū Ḥanīfah
were a matter of pride for the Fāṭimids, the Fāṭimid <u>Imāms</u> and their
followers would certainly mention it along with al-Nuʿmān's names. But
this is not the case, as we have already pointed out.

Finally, we may say that giving al-Nuʿmān the name Abū Ḥanīfah is
nothing but a non-<u>Ismāʿīlī</u> invention. However, we are unable to establish
the reason for this innovation.

Date of Birth

Al-Nuʿmān was probably born in Qayrawān.[11] The exact date of his
birth is unknown. Neither Fāṭimid nor non-Fāṭimid sources contain any
indication of it. However, a number of modern writers express different
views. For example A.A.A. Fyzee holds that al-Nuʿmān may have been born
in 293 A.H. Fyzee's view is based on the assumption that al-Nuʿmān was

twenty years old when he entered the service of <u>Imām</u> al-Mahdī, the first Fāṭimid caliph, in 313 A.H.[12] This, in his opinion, is in agreement with the date of the death of al-Nu^cmān, in 363 A.H. at the age of seventy years.[13]

Poonawala thinks that al-Nu^cmān may have been born between 283/896 and 293/905. He bases his view on the assumption that al-Nu^cmān was in his twenties when he entered the Fāṭimid service in 313/925. According to Poonawala, this agrees with the gaining of momentum of the mission of the dā^cī Abū ^cAbd Allah al-Shī^cī in North Africa.[14]

Due to the unavailability of substantial evidence we cannot reach a definite conclusion.

Date of Death

Both Ibn Zūlāq[15] and Idrīs ^cImād al-Dīn hold that al-Nu^cmān died on the last day of Jumādā II, 363/Friday, 28th March 974.[16] The <u>Imām</u> al-Mu^cizz li-Dīn Allah led the funeral prayer.[17]

Al-Nu^cmān's Madhhab

There is no disagreement among our sources that al-Nu^cmān in his maturity adhered to Shī^cism, a point to which we will later return, but they differ as to whether al-Nu^cmān was an adherent to Shī^cism from the beginning of his life or was later converted, and also as to whether he was an <u>Ithnā^casharī</u> or an <u>Ismā^cīlī</u>. We will here explore these points of difference, noting the views of the writers concerned.

According to Ibn Khallikān al-Nu^cmān was at first a <u>Mālikī</u> and then became an <u>Imāmī</u>,[18] whereas Ibn Taghribirdī holds that al-Nu^cmān was a <u>Ḥanafī</u> before becoming a <u>Bāṭinī</u> (<u>Ismā^cīlī</u>).[19] These views stand in sharp

contrast to the view that al-Nu^{c}mān was an Ismā^{c}īlī from the beginning
of his life and that it was not he but his father who was converted to
the Ismā^{c}īlī faith. In elaborating this latter view we will make frequent
references to I.K. Poonawala because of his detailed research in this
matter. Since this view bears closely upon the history of the develop-
ment of Ismā^{c}īlī da^{c}wah in the Maghrib we must take cognizance, briefly,
of that history.

It becomes obvious from the Iftitāḥ al-Da^{c}wah of al-Nu^{c}mān that in
the Maghrib Shī^{c}ism was initiated by two dā^{c}īs, Ḥulwānī and Abū Sufyān,
who were sent by Imām Ja^{c}far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148) in 145 A.H.[20] This da^{c}wah
continued even after the death of these dā^{c}īs. Abū ^{c}Abd Allah al-Shī^{c}ī
(d. 298) should be regarded as instrumental in the expansion of the da^{c}wah
in the Maghrib, but not in its initiation. Here it is germane to point
out that according to al-Nu^{c}mān, although al-Shī^{c}ī came to Qayrawān in
296 A.H. prior to the establishment of the Fāṭimid caliphate, he sent
his du^{c}āt to the various tribes during his stay in Akjān, a village of
the Maghrib.[21]

From this we can conclude that it is quite possible that al-Nu^{c}mān's
father accepted the Ismā^{c}īlī faith after coming into contact with an
Ismā^{c}īlī dā^{c}ī. Furthermore, by taking into account al-Nu^{c}mān's profound
grasp of Ismā^{c}īlī teachings and his major contribution to the Ismā^{c}īlī
da^{c}wah, as we will explain later, we can infer that his father may have
been an Ismā^{c}īlī dā^{c}ī who trained his son, al-Nu^{c}mān, in Ismā^{c}īlī
teachings.[22]

Poonawala is also of the opinion that it was not al-Nu^{c}mān who was converted to the Ismā^{c}īlī faith but his father. According to Poonawala, the statement concerning al-Nu^{c}mān's conversion is based on a misunderstanding over the person who was converted. It was thus not al-Nu^{c}mān but his father who was converted to the Ismā^{c}īlī faith from the Mālikī school.[23] Elaborating upon this, Poonawala refers to M. Ḥārith al-Khushanī, who left Qayrawān when he was twelve years old and settled in Qurṭubah (Andalus) where he wrote his book Quḍāt Qurṭubah wa ^{c}ulamā' Ifrīqiyah.[24] In this book al-Khushanī mentions Muḥammad b. Ḥayyān as an Ismā^{c}īlī convert.[25] Since this name is also that of al-Nu^{c}mān's father, Poonawala suggests that the two persons are one and the same. Yet there is a slight difference between Ḥayyān and Ḥayyūn. Poonawala argues Ḥayyān may be an altered form of Ḥayyūn, assuming that the latter occurred either due to al-Khushanī's mistake or due to a scribal error.[26]

Since some Ithnā^{c}asharī writers consider al-Nu^{c}mān as one of themselves while others do not, we will present both views. Amongst the former Muḥammad al-Bāqir al-Majlisī strongly believes al-Nu^{c}mān to have been an Imāmī (Ithnā^{c}asharī). According to him, most of the traditions contained in the Da^{c}ā'im al-Islām are in agreement with those of the famous Ithnā^{c}asharī sources. In his opinion, al-Nu^{c}mān did not refer to the later Ithnā^{c}asharī Imāms after Imām Ja^{c}far al-Ṣādiq out of fear of the Fāṭimid caliphs. In other words he stated the truth under taqiyyah.[27] Amongst the latter Ibn Shahr-Āshūb may be referred to as one who explicitly denies that al-Nu^{c}mān was an Ithnā^{c}asharī.[28]

It may further be argued, following Poonawala, that Ibn Khallikān's statement that al-Nu^{c}mān became an Imāmī[29] does not mean he became an

Ithnā^{c}asharī, since the term <u>Imāmiyyah</u> is sometimes used in a more general sense.[30] More importantly, however, al-Nu^{c}mān's <u>Urjūzat al-Mukhtārah</u> provides evidence for al-Nu^{c}mān's devout commitment to the <u>Ismā^{c}īlī</u> faith.[31] Furthermore, Poonawala argues on the basis of a statement of al-Nu^{c}mān himself that the latter received <u>Ismā^{c}īlī</u> training at an early age and was brought up as an <u>Ismā^{c}īlī</u>.[32]

Before reaching any conclusion it will be relevant to take note of al-Nu^{c}mān's attitude toward <u>Ithnā^{c}asharī</u> Shī^{c}ism. Al-Nu^{c}mān in his <u>Iftitāh al-Da^{c}wah</u> harshly criticizes the <u>Ithnā^{c}asharī</u> doctrine concerning the Mahdī and concealment (<u>ghaybah</u>) of Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. ^{c}Alī, the twelfth <u>Ithnā^{c}asharī Imām</u>. In his opinion, Muhammad b. al-Hasan is not the Mahdī. It is Muhammad b. al-Hasan's adherents who unduly ascribe this status to him. According to al-Nu^{c}mān, the doctrine of concealment is no more than a claim (<u>za^{c}m</u>) on the part of the <u>Ithnā^{c}asharīs</u> which has no validity (<u>batulat</u>). Al-Nu^{c}mān regards all the notions surrounding the <u>Ithnā^{c}asharī</u> Mahdī as an outlandish absurdity (<u>hamāqah ^{c}ajībah</u>).[33]

In conclusion we may say that the view that al-Nu^{c}mān was an <u>Ismā^{c}īlī</u> from the very beginning of his life cannot be established with certainty. It may not therefore be considered as the decisive conclusion. Nevertheless, al-Nu^{c}mān's criticism of the <u>Ithnā^{c}asharī</u> doctrine of the Mahdī demonstrates the fact that he was definitely an <u>Ismā^{c}īlī</u> in his maturity.

Al-Nu^{c}mān's Judicial Status

Al-Nu^{c}mān entered the service of <u>Imām</u> al-Mahdī bi-Allah (d. 322), the first Fātimid caliph.[34] Later his service was continued up to and through the reign of <u>Imām</u> al-Mu^{c}izz (d. 365), the fourth Fātimid caliph,

as we will mention below. During the time of Imām al-Mahdī and of Imām
al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allah (d. 334) al-Nu^cmān was responsible for providing
information about the Fāṭimid capital, and at the same time he trans-
cribed (Istansakha) and composed a number of books.[35]

Since al-Nu^cmān is well known as a Fāṭimid judge (qāḍī) we now examine
his judicial status. There are different views concerning the date of
al-Nu^cmān's appointment as judge. According to Kāmil Ḥusayn, since al-
Nu^cmān was acquainted with the law it is very likely that al-Mahdī may
have appointed him as a judge.[36] Fyzee and Lokhandwala hold that al-
Qā'im, the second Fāṭimid caliph, appointed al-Nu^cmān judge to Tripoli.[37]
Al-Habīb al-Faqī, Ibrāhīm Shabbūh and Muhammad al-Ya^clāwī express a
different view. To them it was al-Manṣūr (d. 341) the third Fāṭimid caliph,
who for the first time appointed al-Nu^cmān judge to Tripoli. This view
has been derived from one of al-Nu^cmān's statements in which he says
that "when al-Qā'im, may God's blessings be upon him, passed away he
(Imām al-Manṣūr), may God's blessings be upon him, appointed me as a judge
and I was the first amongst those judges whom he appointed".[38]

Al-Nu^cmān's statement does not necessarily indicate that Imām
al-Manṣūr appointed him as a judge for the first time. This statement
only indicates that the Imām first appointed him as a judge before appoin-
ting his other judges. Since not all of al-Nu^cmān's works are available
we are not in a position to reach a firm conclusion.

During the time of Imām al-Manṣūr al-Nu^cmān's judicial status became
a distinctive one. The Imām appointed him judge to al-Mahṣūriyyaḥ
al-Qayrawān, al-Mahdiyyah and to the rest of the cities of Ifrīqiyeh
and to its provinces.[39]

Imām al-Muᶜizz appointed al-Nuᶜmān judge to al-Mansūriyyah and to its provinces and at the same time he authorised him to look into the complaints brought to him from all corners of Fāṭimid jurisdiction, and he also had the authority to direct other Fāṭimid judges.[40] This may be the basis for the view of ᶜImād al-Dīn that Imām Muᶜizz appointed al-Nuᶜmān as the chief judge (qāḍī al-Quḍāt).[41]

After the shifting of the Fāṭimid capital to Egypt al-Nuᶜmān was not an official judge. According to Ibn Zulāq, Jawhar (d. 381), the famous Fāṭimid commander, did not remove Abū Ṭāhir (d. 367) a Sunnī judge, from his post; but he directed the latter to take decisions according to the Fāṭimid Fiqh.[42] Since al-Nuᶜmān was well acquainted with the Fāṭimid Fiqh it is very likely that Abū Ṭāhir consulted him.

After discussing al-Nuᶜmān's status as a judge, we should briefly examine his position as the alleged founder of Ismāᶜīlī law.

There is no doubt that al-Nuᶜmān studied both Shīᶜah and non-Shīᶜah sources. Wilferd Madelung's comprehensive study of the sources of Ismāᶜīlī law may be referred to as evidence for this. However, for al-Nuᶜmān, the criteria for the acceptance of a non-Shīᶜah view is its being in consonance with the opinion of the Imāms.[43]

According to al-Nuᶜmān, it is the Imāms who provide guidelines to him regarding the elucidation of Ismāᶜīlī law.[44] Al-Nuᶜmān's famous book Daᶜāim which will be dealt with later in detail, was composed at the suggestion and under the supervision of Imām al-Muᶜizz.[45] Al-Nuᶜmān frequently acknowledges the Imām as the supreme authority; he regards him as his guide as well as the source of his knowledge.[46]

In the light of this evidence it may be said that Fyzee's and Poonawala's determination of al-Nu^{c}mān's status as the founder of Fāṭimid law[47] is perhaps an exaggeration and should be qualified.

Al-Nu^{c}mān's Contribution to the Ismā^{c}īlī Da^{c}wah

Al-Nu^{c}mān played a remarkable role in the Ismā^{c}īlī da^{c}wah which embraces both the exoteric and esoteric aspects of Ismā^{c}īlī teachings. Although Fāṭimid sources do not indicate his position in the Ismā^{c}īlī hierarchical order, Idrīs ^{c}Imād al-Dīn holds that Imām al-Mu^{c}izz elevated al-Nu^{c}mān to the utmost position among the du^{c}āt.[48] From this it may be concluded that al-Nu^{c}mān was the chief dā^{c}ī (dā^{c}ī al-Du^{c}āt).

At any rate al-Nu^{c}mān was enthusiastic in his undertaking of the da^{c}wah. He used to deliver lectures to the followers (mustajībūn) on the wisdom (al-Ḥikmah), the directions (al-Waṣāyā), the exhortation (al-Mawā^{c}iz) and the real knowledge (al-^{c}Ilm al-Ḥaqīqī). These lectures used to be attended by overwhelming numbers of the followers.[49] In addition to this, al-Nu^{c}mān composed several works, as we shall see presently.

Al-Nu^{c}mān's Works

As we have already discussed, al-Nu^{c}mān's literary activities began when he entered Fāṭimid service. Through constant engagement in literary activities a number of books were composed by him. It is an exceptional characteristic of al-Nu^{c}mān that he composed books on a variety of subjects, such as Qu'rānic interpretation, jurisprudence and history, etc.

Historians have praised al-Nu^{c}mān's literary contribution highly. For example, Ibn Zulāq giving the life sketch of al-Nu^{c}mān's son ^{c}Alī

b. al-Nu^{c}mān says that his father al-Nu^{c}mān was a man of extraordinary

abilities amongst those learned in the Qur'ānic sciences. He was well

versed in jurisprudence, philology, poetry and history. He treated these

subjects with reasoning and justice. According to Ibn Zulāq, al-Nu^{c}mān

composed excellent and voluminous books on the virtues of the progeny

of the Prophet. At the same time he refuted opponents such as Abū

Ḥanīfah and al-Shāfi^{c}ī.[50]

Since W. Ivanow,[51] Kāmil Husayn,[52] Poonawala,[53] Lokhandwala,[54] and

some others have undertaken a detailed study of al-Nu^{c}mān's works, we

will mention only some of the more important ones, which cover the various

aspects of the Ismā^{c}īlī da^{c}wah. Among those the Imāmah is the most impor-

tant one. It should, however, be noticed that since we are unable to

ascertain the chronological order of all the sources dealt with here,

we will first mention those works which deal with the exoteric aspect,

then the ones dealing with the esoteric aspect.

1. Da^{c}ā'im al-Islām Wa Dhikr al-Ḥalāl Wa al-Ḥarām Wa al-Qaḍāya Wa al-Aḥkām.

Da^{c}ā'im has remained the most authoritative work on Ismā^{c}īlī theology

and law. Al-Nu^{c}mān composed it at the suggestion and under the super-

vision of the Imām al-Mu^{c}izz.[55]

Da^{c}ā'im has been divided into two volumes. In the first volume,

al-Nu^{c}mān deals with the faith (al-Īmān) and the pillars of Islām, which

are seven, according to Fāṭimid doctrine. In this regard al-Nu^{c}mān

refers to Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 113) having said "Islām is based

on seven pillars (Da^{c}ā'im): 1) Acceptance of the authority of the Imām

and devotion to him (al-Walāyah/al-Wilāyah) and this is most excellent

and through it and the Imām (the purpose of) the other pillars can be
known. 2) The ritual purity (al-Ṭahārah). 3) The prayer (al-Ṣalāh).
4) The alms (al-Zakāh). 5) The fasting (al-Ṣawm). 6) The pilgrimage
(al-Ḥajj). 7) The holy war (al-Jihād).[56] In the second volume al-Nuʿmān
discusses what is lawful (ḥalāl) and what is unlawful (harām). The
decisions (al-Qaḍāyā) and the rules (al-Ahkām) are also discussed in this
volume.

According to al-Nuʿmān, although Daʿāim is a concise book, it is
comprehensive. As far as the narrations (riwāyāt) are concerned, only
the sound (ṣaḥīḥ) and established (thābit) ones have been mentioned, while
those that have been omitted are ones on which the narrators hold dif-
fering points of view.[57]

The Daʿāʾim has enjoyed a very high reputation amongst the Ismāʿīlīs.
During the time of Imām al-Muʿizz a special assembly (majlis) used to
be held at the palace of the Imām which was devoted to studying the
Daʿāʾim, and the Imām permitted the followers to derive full benefit from
it.[58] Moreover, Imām al-Ẓāhir (d. 427) directed his adherents through
the medium of his Duʿāt to commit the Daʿāʾim to memory and he fixed a
reward for its successful memorization.[59] Furthermore, al-Kirmānī, a
hujjah of Imām al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allah (d. 412) recommended to his readers
that they study the Daʿāʾim before studying his own book Rāhat al-ʿAql.[60]
Another Fāṭimid writer, al-Shīrāzī, a hujjah of Imām al-Mustanṣir bi-
Allah (d. 487) used to read a chapter from the Daʿāʾim to Abū Kālijār
every Friday night after the latter's conversion to the Ismāʿīlī faith.[61]

2. __Kitab Ikhtilaf Usul al-Madhahib Wa al-Radd ^CAla Man Khalafa al-Haqqa Fiha.__

In this work al-Nu^Cman discusses mainly the Imamah of ^CAli and that of his progeny as an authoritative institution after the Prophet Muhammad. He expounds this subject mostly from an Isma^Cili legal point of view. In this connection he mentions the sources of Isma^Cili as well as of Sunni law. According to al-Nu^Cman, there are only three sources of Isma^Cili law: The Qur'an, Prophetic sunnah (al-Sunnah) and the teachings (madhahib) of the Imams.[62] The Sunnis, in addition to the Qur'an and the Prophetic sunnah, accept some other sources, such as analogical deductions (qiyas), individual opinion (ra'y) and discretion (istihsan) etc.[63] The Imamah of the progeny of the Prophet is not considered by them to be a source.

Ikhtilaf appears to be the next most prominent work on the Isma^Cili law after Da^Ca'im. Al-Nu^Cman as well as his son Muhammad (d. 379) and grandson ^CAbd al-^CAziz (d. 398-401) were allowed by the respective Imams, al-Mu^Cizz, al-^CAziz and al-Hakim to narrate Ikhtilaf and to write it down.[64]

3. __Al-Majalis Wa al-Musayarat Wa al-Mawaqif Wa al-Tawqi^Cat ^CAn al-Imam al-Mu^Cizz Li-DinAllah Wa ^CAn Aba'ih__

This book of al-Nu^Cman is a source of early Fatimid history. In this book al-Nu^Cman provides us with all the information about the lives of the Fatimid Imams, their teachings as well as their internal and external policy. It also gives us an impression of al-Nu^Cman's command of Isma^Cili law, and at the same time it shows al-Nu^Cman's proficiency in Arabic literature. It is a true picture of Isma^Cili literature and the Isma^Cili creeds.[65]

4. Kitāb al-Himmah Fī Ādāb Atbāᶜal-A'immah

In this work al-Nuᶜmān discusses the Imāmah and the relationship between the Imām and the followers. Although al-Nuᶜmān discusses various subjects relating to the Imām, he devotes its major parts to elaborating the rules of adab observed by the followers towards the Imāms. It can be said that this work of al-Nuᶜmān is a comprehensive source for the sociological aspect of the Imāmah from the Ismāᶜīlī point of view.

5. Asās al-Ta'wīl

The Asās appears to be a detailed study of the Kitāb al-Wilāyah/walāyah of the Daᶜā'im. Al-Nuᶜmān first studies the role of the exoteric/esoteric aspects and then gives the esoteric aspect of the biographies of the famous prophets. As regards the question of whether al-Nuᶜmān compiled the Asās before compiling his Ta'wīl al-Daᶜā'im, we do not find any clue to this in al-Nuᶜmān's own sources. However, some later writers, such as Majdūᶜ say, without providing any evidence, that the Asās was written before the Ta'wīl.[66]

6. Ta'wīl al-Daᶜā'im.

The Ta'wīl is an esoteric interpretation of the whole Daᶜā'im. From al-Nuᶜmān's statement it is clear that he was constantly in touch with Imām al-Muᶜizz during the compilation of this work.

As regards the status of this source of esoteric interpretation, Imām al-Muᶜizz recommended it to his most spiritually elevated followers. The paramount position of the Ta'wīl may be witnessed in a consideration of the levels of Ismāᶜīlī teachings. According to al-Nuᶜmān, Imām al-Muᶜizz classified the Ismāᶜīlī teachings into three categories: (1) the exoteric aspect (the primary stage); (2) the introduction to the esoteric aspect (the middle stage); (3) the pure esoteric aspect (the highest stage).

Al-Nu^{c}mān studies the different levels of the teachings in detail
and compares them with the different stages of human life since to him
this world and the spiritual world provide evidence for each other. Thus
in the spiritual world a newly converted Ismā^{c}īlī is equated with a newly
born child. Accordingly, the Ismā^{c}īlī gives up the non-Ismā^{c}īlī attitude
to the exoteric aspect and adapts to that of the Ismā^{c}īlī, particularly
the concept of God and sharī^{c}ah, namely the Da^{c}ā'im.[67]

The Ismā^{c}īlī's renunciation of the previous faith, al-Nu^{c}mān holds,
is comparable to adjusting the body of a child immediately after his birth,
for example in removing the umbilicus.[68] Then comes the spiritual baby-
hood stage (ḥadd al-Raḍā^c al-Bāṭin). The Imām admitted into this level
the ones whom he selected from those at the primary stage. He introduced
ta'wīl to the elevated. Although (esoteric) allusions were made frequently,
sometimes clear (exoteric) indications were also given.[69] Al-Nu^{c}mān
considers his Ḥudūd al-Ma^{c}rifah as the collection of the material approp-
riate to the second level.[70] This training, however, was to be for two
years just like the two year infancy period of a child.[71]

Afterwards, the Imām initiated the selected ones into the spiritual
upbringing stage (ḥadd al-Tarbiyah), where the Ta'wīl al-Da^{c}ā'im was
taught. Those who fulfilled all the conditions of this level were
considered as spiritually mature adherents, just like a child who attains
his maturity.[72]

C. Footnotes to Chapter I

[1]There is disagreement among the writers as to when Abū Ya^{c}qūb died. W. Ivanow thinks that "it is usually believed that Abū Ya^{c}qūb died about the same time as Nakhshabī (d. 331). This is wrong, however, because his book Kitāb al-Iftikhār (cf. Guide no.6) referred to in the Riyād, was, according to internal evidence that it contains, composed some time after 360/971." According to Ivanow, thus Abū Ya^{c}qūb died soon after 360 A.H. See: W. Ivanow, Studies In Early Persian Isma Ilism (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1918), 119; see also: Encyclopedia of Islam, new ed. s.v., "Abū Ya^{c}qūb" by Stern.

[2]No specific date has been given. According to Ivanow, however, Ja^{c}far b. Mansūr al-Yaman died soon after 380/990. See: Ivanow, Studies, p. 85

[3]Al-Qādī al-Nu^{c}man, Ikhtilāf Usūl al-Madhāhib, ed. S.T. Lokhandwala (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1972), P.1; Al-Maghribī and al-Qayrawānī are also attributed to al-Nu^{c}mān. See: Ibid, Introduction, p.1.; Idem, Al-Himmah Fī Ādāb Atbā^c al-A'immah, ed. Muhammad Kamil Husayn (Egypt: Da al-Fikr al-^{c}Arabī, n.d.), Introduction, p.5

[4]Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-A^{c}yān, ed. M. Muhyī al-Dīn, 6 vols. (Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Nahdah al-Misriyyah, n.d.), V: 48

[5]Asaf A.A. Fyzee, "Al-Qadi an-Nu^{c}man the Fatimid Jurist and Author" JRAS (January 1934): 6-7; Idem, "Isma^{c}ili Law and its founder" Islamic Culture IX (1967): 110

[6]Al-Nu^{c}man, Al-Majālis Wa al-Musāyarāt, ed. Al-Habīb al-Faqī, Ibrahīm Shabbūh and Muhammad al-Ya^{c}lāwī, (Tunis: Al-Matba^{c}ah al-Rasmiyyah, 1978), p.307; Idem, Ikhtilāf, p.9

[7]Hamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, Rahat al-^{c}Aql, ed. M. Kāmil Husayn (Qāhirah: Dār al-Fikr al-^{c}Arabī, 1952), p.22; Al-Mu'ayyad Fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī. Al-Sīrah al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, ed. M. Kāmil Husayn (Qāhirah: Dār al-Kātib al-Misrī, 1949), p.43

[8]Ivanow, A Guide to Ismaili Literature (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1933), p.90; Ivanow's view, however, is not to be found in the revised edition. See: Idem, Ismaili Literature, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1963), p. 159

[9]Nasir b. Khusraw, Dīwān-i Ash^{c}ar, ed. Sayyid Nasr Allah Taqawī (Tehran: Kitāb Furūshiyi Ibn Sīnā, 1335 A.H.,), pp.370,116,117

[10]Al-Nu^{c}man, Ikhtilāf, Introduction, p.7, footnote no.2

[11]Ibid., p.1

[12]Fyzee, "Al-Qadi an-Nu^{c}man the Fatimid Jurist", p.7; it is clear from al-Nu^{c}mān's statement that he entered the Fātimid service in 313 A.H. See: Al-Nu^{c}man, Al-Majālis, p.79

[13]Fyzee, "Al Qadi an-Nu^{c}man the Fatimid Jurist", p.7

[14]I.K. Poonawala, "A Reconsideration of al-Qādī al-Nu^{c}mān's Madhhab", BSOAS XXXVII part 3 (1974): 577

[15]Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, p.48

[16]Idrīs ^{c}Imād al-Dīn, "^{c}Uyūn al-Akhbār", London, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, Abbas Hamdani MSS, MS (R) 8, 6: 176

[17]Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, p.48

[18]Ibid., p.48

[19]Ibn Taghribirdī, Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah, 12 Vols. (Egypt: Wazārat al-Irshād al-Qawmī, n.d.), 7: 106-107;also see: Al-Nu^{c}mān, Iftitāḥ al-Da^{c}wah ed. Ferḥāt Dashrāwī (Tunis: STD, 1975): p.21

[20]Ibid., p.26-27; see also: Ibid., Introduction, p.45 Mohamed Talbi, L'emirat Aghlabide (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d' Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1966), pp. 574-579

[21]Al-Nu^{c}mān, Iftitāḥ, p.146

[22]Al-Ḥabīb al-Faqī and his colleagues think that al-Nu^{c}mān's father may have been an Ismā^{c}īlī dā^{c}ī. This view is based on al-Nu^{c}mān's last name al-Dā^{c}ī mentioned by Ibn Khallikān on the authority of Ibn Zūlāq. According to al-Faqī and others it is possible that this name (al-Dā^{c}ī) refers to al-Nu^{c}mān's father in which case the latter was an Ismā^{c}īlī dā^{c}ī. See: Idem,Al-Majālis, Introduction, p.7

[23]Poonawala, "A Reconsideration", p.576

[24]Poonawala has used the edition by M. Ben Cheneb by the name of Ṭabaqāt ^{c}Ulamā' Ifrīqiyah.

[25]Al-Khushanī uses tasharraqa for those who converted to the Ismā^{c}īlī faith. It becomes transparent from this statement and the statements of some others which will be mentioned below that this word (tasharraqa) as well as some of its derivatives were used in a specific connotation; see for a detailed study: Muḥammad b. Ḥārith al-Khushanī, Quḍāt Qurtubah Wa ^{c}Ulamā' Ifrīqiyah, ed. ^{c}Izzat ^{c}Attār (Egypt: Maktabat Nashr al-Thaqāfah al-Islāmiyyah, 1372 A.H.), Introduction pp.6-7; according to al-Nu^{c}mān, al Shī^{c}ī became famous by the name al-Mashriqī due to the fact that he came from al-Mashriq and those who accepted the Ismā^{c}īlī faith at his preaching were called al-Mashāriqah. See: Al-Nu^{c}mān, Iftitāḥ, p.79. The Ismā^{c}īlī dā^{c}wah was known by al-Tashrīq. See: Ibn ^{c}Idhārī al-Marrākushī, Al-Bayān al-Mughrib Fī Akhbār al-Andalus wa al-Maghrib, ed. G.S. Colin and E. Levi Provencal, 3 vol (Paris and Beirut: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner and Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1930 - 1951), 1: 152

[26]Poonawala, "A Reconsideration", p.579

[27] Muhammad al-Bāqir al-Majlisī, Bihār al-Anwār, ed. Sayyid Jawād ʿAlī and Muḥammad Akhūndī, 110 vols. Tehrān: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah and al-Maktabah al-Islāmiyyah, 1389 A.H. - 1398 A.H.

[28] Shahr-Āshūb, Kitāb Maʿalim al-ʿUlamā', ed. ʿAbbās Iqbāl (Tehrān: Fardīn, 1353 A.H.), p.113

[29] Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, p.48, E. Kohlberg, "From Imāmiyyah to Ithnā-ʿAshariyyah," BOAS XXXIX part 3 (1976): 521, footnote no.2

[30] Poonawala, "A Reconsideration", pp. 576-577; Al-Ashʿarī, Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn, ed. by Muḥammad Muḥyi al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamid, 2 vols. (Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1969), 1: 79; Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, Al-Milal Wa al-Nihal, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿAbd al-Wakīl, 2 vols. (Qāhirah: Mu'assasat al-Ḥalabī, 1968), 1: 27-28

[31] Poonawala, "A Reconsideration", p.577

[32] Ibid., p.578; also see: Al-Nuʿmān, Al-Himmah. p.33; Al-Ḥabīb al-Faqī and his colleagues also regard al-Nuʿmān as an Ismāʿīlī from the beginning of his life; see: Idem. Al-Majālis, Introduction p.7

[33] Idem, Iftitāḥ, p.4 It is to be noted that the Iftitāḥ al-Daʿwah edited by Farḥāt al-Dashrāwī gives "al-Ḥusayn" to be the name of the father of the 12th Ithnāʿasharī Imām. See: Ibid. But Waddād al-Qāḍī in her edition mentions "al-Ḥasan" to be his name, which has, unanimously, been accepted by the Ithnāʿasharīs and Sunnīs; see for a detailed study: Ibid., ed. Waddād al-Qāḍī (Beirūt: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1970), p.33; Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣul, 2: 148; Hāshim Maʿrūf al-Ḥusaynī, Sirat al-A'immah al-Ithnā-ʿashariyyah, 2nd ed. (Beirūt: Dār al-Qalam, 1978), 2: 501; Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, 1: 372

[34] Al-Nuʿmān, Al-Majālis, p.79; Abbas Hamdani, The Fatimids (Karachi: Pakistan Publishing House, 1962), p.10

[35] Al-Nuʿmān, Al-Majālis, p.79

[36] Idem, Al-Himmah, Introduction, p.7

[37] Al-Nuʿmān, Ikhtilāf, Introduction, p.2; Fyzee, "Ismaʿili Law", p.110

[38] Al-Nuʿmān, Al-Majālis, pp.80-81, also see: Introduction, p.3

[39] Ibid., p.348

[40] Idem, Ikhtilāf, pp.19-21

[41] ʿImād al-Dīn "ʿUyūn", p.29

[42] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, Rafʿ al-Iṣr ʿAn Quḍat Miṣr in Kitāb al-Wulāt Wa Kitāb al-Quḍāh of al-Kindī (d. 350), ed. Rhuvon Guest (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1912), p.584; Kāmil Ḥusayn without referring to a source holds that it was al-Muʿizz who asked Abū Ṭāhir to continue in his office as judge and to take decisions according to the Fāṭimid Fiqh. See: Al-Nuʿmān, Al-Himmah, Introduction, p.8; however, it appears that the Imam al-Muʿizz confirmed the decision of Jawhar.

[43]Madelung, "The Sources of Isma͞c͞il͞i Law", JNES 35, no. 1 (1976): 32

[44]Al-Nu͞cman, Al-Himmah, Introduction, p.8; Idem, Ikhtil͞af pp. 21-24

[45]cAbd al-Ras͞ul al-Majd͞u͞c Fihrist al-Kutub wa al-Ras͞a'il, cAl͞inaq͞i Monzav͞i (Ṭehr͞an: Danishg͞ah-ı Ṭehr͞an, 1966), p.18

[46]Al-Nu͞cman, Ikhtil͞af, p.2

[47]Fyzee, "Isma͞cili Law", pp.107,111; Poonawala, Biobibliography, p.48

[48]cIm͞ad al-D͞in, "cUy͞un", p.29; also see the following: Al-Nu͞cman, Ikhtil͞af, Introduction p.27; Fyzee, Isma͞cili Law", p.108; cAbd al-Muncim M͞ajid, Zuh͞ur Khil͞afat al-F͞aṭimiyy͞in Wa Suq͞uṭuh͞a F͞i Miṣr, (Isqandariyyah: D͞ar al-Ma͞c͞arif, 1968), p.33

[49]Al-Nu͞cm͞an, Al-Maj͞alis, pp.546-547

[50]Ibn Khallik͞an, Wafay͞at, p.48

[51]Ivanow, A Guide, pp.37-42

[52]Al-Nu͞cm͞an, Al-Himmah, Introduction, pp.11-12

[53]Poonawala, Biobibliography, pp.51-68

[54]Al-Nu͞cm͞an, Ikhtil͞af, Introduction, pp.14-50

[55]Al-Majd͞u͞c, Fihrist, pp.18-19

[56]Al-Nu͞cm͞an, Da͞c͞a'im al-Isl͞am, ed, A.A.A. Fyzee, 2 vols.(Egypt: D͞ar al-Ma͞c͞arif, 1951-1960), 1: 3

[57]Ibid., p.2

[58]Idem, Al-Maj͞alis, p.306

[59]Taq͞i al-D͞in Ahmad al-Maqr͞iz͞i, Itti͞c͞az al-Hunaf͞a', ed. Jam͞al al-D͞in Shayy͞al (Q͞ahirah: D͞ar al-Fikr al-cArab͞i, 1948) pp.274-275

[60]Al-Kirm͞an͞i, R͞aḥah, p.22

[61]Al-Sh͞ir͞az͞i, S͞irah, p.43; To know the status of the Da͞c͞a'im amongst some Ithn͞a͞cashar͞i writers see: Poonawala, Biobibliography p.47

[62]Al-Nu͞cm͞an, Ikhtil͞af, pp.21,22,25

[63]Ibid., p.25; Muḥammad b. Idr͞is al-Sh͞afi͞c͞i, Ris͞alah...F͞i Uṣ͞ul al-Fiqh (B͞ul͞aq: Al-Maṭba͞cah al-Kubr͞a al-Am͞iriyyah; 1321 A.H.), pp.65-69

[64]Al-Nu͞cm͞an, Ikhtil͞af, p.1

[65]Hasan Ibrāhīm Hasan, Tāhā Ahmad Sharaf, <u>Al-Mu^cizz Li-Dīn Allah</u>, (Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1947), pp.262-264

[66]Al-Majdū^c, <u>Fihrist</u>, p.135

[67]Al-Nu^cmān, <u>Ta'wīl al-Da^cā'im</u>, ed. Muḥammad Ḥasan al-A^cẓamī, 3 vols. (Egypt: Dār al-Ma^cārif, n.d.), 1: 48

[68]Ibid.

[69]Ibid., p.49

[70]Ibid., <u>Asās al-Ta'wīl</u> ed. ^cĀrif Tāmir (Beirūt: Manshurāt Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1960), pp.25-26

[71]Idem, <u>Ta'wīl</u>, p.49

[72]<u>Ibid</u>

CHAPTER II. THE IMĀMAH IN THE LIGHT OF ḤADĪTH
AL-THAQALAYN

A. The Role of the Designation

It is generally agreed that the most serious of the issues which confronted Muslims immediately after the demise of the Prophet was that of the succession: who was to take the place of the Prophet as leader of the community?

The need for a successor was inescapable and the events of Ghadīr Khumm and Saqīfat Banī Sāᶜidah bear testimony to the fact that this need was keenly felt. The urgency of the issue was only intensified by the civil strife between ᶜAlī and Muᶜāwiyah and the emergence of the Khawārij. In time a number of divergent positions crystallized, namely those of the Shīᶜah, Sunnīs (the ᶜĀmmah), the Khawārij, the Murji'ah and the Muᶜtazilah. By the third Islamic century the whole discussion over the Imāmah had taken its final form. Al-Nuᶜmān undertook an analytical study of the above-mentioned positions. Before considering his discussion, however, it will be useful first to present a brief account of the general Ismāᶜīlī Shīᶜah view concerning the succession.

The Ismāᶜīlī branch of Shīᶜah Islām believes in the continuation of Divine guidance. Although the prophecy as such ended with the Prophet Muḥammad, guidance continues through the Imāmah of the descendants of the Prophet. Since ᶜAlī is believed to be the foundation of the Imāmah, it is expedient to mention the evidence cited by the Ismāᶜīlīs for the Imāmah/Walāyah of ᶜAlī.[1] This evidence embraces the following points.

1. At the beginning of the Prophetic mission (al-Da^Cwah) it was ^CAlī who, despite his young age, took the responsibility of being the vicegerent (waṣi) of the Prophet, his vizier (wazir), his brother (akh), his heir (warith) and the master (walī) of the believers after him.[2] 2. According to a Prophetic tradition ^CAlī was to Muhammad what Aaron was to Moses; that is to say, the former was the successor to the latter.[3] 3. ^CAlī was one of the ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet whom God saved from every kind of impurity.[4] 4. The Prophet considered ^CAlī as the gate of knowledge.[5] 5. The other virtues of ^CAlī, such as his communication of Surat al-Barā'ah (Qur'an: IX) to the polytheists during the ḥajj[6] and his presence in the imprecation (mubāhalah), mark his close proximity to the Prophet.[7] 6. The Prophet's explicit designation of ^CAlī as his successor at Ghadir is believed to be a binding pact (ākad bay^Cah) and the most compelling evidence (awjab mā yūjib al-Imāmah) for the Imāmah of ^CAlī.[8]

The following Qur'ānic verses are believed to provide the background for the designation of ^CAlī. "Your master (walī) can only be Allah, and His messenger and those who believe, who establish worship and pay the poor-due, while they are bowing down (in the prayer)" (V: 5). In this verse "those who believe...down" is taken to refer to ^CAlī and his progeny.[9] Then, the following verse was revealed which intensified the conveyance (tablīgh) of the Imāmah of ^CAlī. "O messenger make known that which hath been revealed to you from thy Lord, for if thou do it not, thou will not have conveyed His message. Allah will protect thee from mankind." (V:67). Upon the revelation of this verse the Prophet designated ^CAlī as his vicegerent.[10] It is held that when the Prophet stepped out of the last

pilgrimage (Hijjat al-Wada^C) and arrived at Ghadīr Khumm, a place between Meccah and Madīnah,[11] the people were asked to gather together. The Prophet addressed them and said, "O people! know ^{C}Alī is to me what Aaron was to Moses except that there will be no prophet after me, and he is your master (walī) after me. Thus, he to whom I am the master (mawlā), ^{C}Alī is his master. O God! be affectionate to him who is devoted to ^{C}Alī, show enmity to him who is his enemy, give victory to him who helps ^{C}Alī, forsake him who forsakes ^{C}Alī and direct the truth (al-Ḥaqq) with him where he moves."[12] The following verse is taken to be evidence of the fact that the declaration of the Imāmah is the culminating point of the whole body of the Islamic teaching. "This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed my favour unto you, and have chosen for you al-Islām to be the religion." (V:3).[13] Furthermore, hadīth al-Thaqalayn is given as evidence of the Imāmah of ^{C}Alī and that of the succeeding Imāms of the ahl al-Bayt. According to Abū Dharr al-Ghiffārī, one of the companions of the Prophet, the Prophet uttered this ḥadīth when he was about to pass away: "I leave two substantial things (al-Thaqalayn) among you, the Book of God and my progeny, the members of my family. Verily they shall never be separated till they return to me at the pond (al-Ḥawḍ) in this manner" - and the Prophet put together the two index fingers of his two hands and then he joined them and showed that they were of equal size - "and not like this"...and he joined together the middle finger and index finger of his right hand because, said the Prophet, "the one is longer than the other. Beware they are like the ark of Noah; he who boarded it was saved and he who forsook it was drowned."[14]

Having briefly surveyed the Ismā'īlī view on the designation of the

Imāmah, we may now turn to al-Nu'mān's comparative study of this subject.

According to al-Nu'mān, all the major groups within Islām developed

different views on the establishment (tathbīt) of the Imāmah. It should

be kept in mind that, though al-Nu'mān mentions the non-Shī'ah

views in detail, generally, however, all of these point to one and the

same position - the leader should be appointed by the people, a view

contrasting with the Shī'ah attitude that the Imāms are designated

by Divine command, not by the people. Al-Nu'mān's study demonstrates

the two above-mentioned contradicting views. At any rate, al-Nu'mān first

discusses the view of the Sunnīs, which he refers to as the generality

(al-'Āmmah). As he notes, the 'Āmmah claim that it is the people who

have the authority to elect the Imām in the same way as the companions

of the Prophet elected a leader for themselves. Sunnīs do not, however,

unanimously agree on the qualifications for the Imām, nor do they agree

on whether the Prophet designated a particular person, though most of

them deny that he did. Only one group of Sunnīs holds that the Prophet

pointed to Abū Bakr (ashāra ilayh) as his successor by asking him to

lead the prayer. According to al-Nu'mān the Sunnī view does not take

into account the family background so that even an Ethiopian can be elec-

ted as an Imām and obedience to him is obligatory. Furthermore, Sunnīs

do not rebel against their Imām even if he commits a sin.[15] According

to al-Nu'mān the Sunnī view is unacceptable not only to Ismā'īlīs but should

be   to all other Muslims in view of the following juristic rule: if

a person denies a thing (fact) then his negative witness is not consid-

ered. Thus, in al-Nu'mān's view the Sunnī position denies the designation

of the Imamah of the descendants of the Prophet, particularly, the event

of Ghadīr. In such a case the negative witness of this school based on

denial (inkār) is not acceptable; conversely, in al-Nuᶜmān's opinion those

are the trustworthy witnesses who give positive evidence for this fact.

Al-Nuᶜmān, then, discusses the question of whether the appointment of

the Imām is based on the choice of the people or on the Divine will. Of

course, according to al-Nuᶜmān there is no justification for the choice

of the people in electing an Imām. He considers that this view disagrees

with both the Divine command and human nature. Expounding his argument

he mentions that if there was any ground for the choice of the people,

the Prophet would have indicated this explicitly, but in his opinion this

is not the case. As for human nature, he says that it is impossible for

people of differing inclinations who were often envious of each other

to agree on a person. Thus, according to him, the circumstances surrounding

the appointment of Abū Bakr were evidence that the community members were

not unanimous on his appointment. To substantiate this point, al-Nuᶜmān

refers to the event of Saqīfah. In al-Nuᶜmān's opinion the appointment

of Abū Bakr was not based on the unanimous agreement of all the members

of the community. There was, to the contrary, disagreement between the

emigrants (al-Muhājirūn) and the helpers (al-Anṣār). Al-Nuᶜmān alludes

to the reaction of the helpers to what some emigrants claimed to be the

legitimate successor to the Prophet.[16] Furthermore, according to him

a group of the eminent companions of the Prophet (from among the emigrants)

refused to acknowledge the Imamah of Abū Bakr.[17] Here it is necessary

to mention that al-Nuᶜmān does not provide us with information on the

result of the disagreement and refusal. However, from his statement it

appears that he does not differ from the general view on both the above

mentioned points.[18] In addition to this, al-Nu^{c}mān notes that those Muslims who were outside Madīnah were not consulted at all. From all this evidence al-Nu^{c}mān concludes that according to Sunnīs the authority to appoint the leader is to be enjoyed by some, but not others. And in al-Nu^{c}mān's opinion there is no justification for this in the Qur'ān or in the Prophetic tradition, nor is there any justification in the consensus (ijmā^c).[19] Thus al-Nu^{c}mān sees a contradiction in the Sunnī position. On the one hand, it holds that the people have the authority to elect an Imām and on the other hand it excludes some Muslims from this election. Also, al-Nu^{c}mān sees an inconsistency between the earliest method of appointment and the Sunnī concept of the leadership. Al-Nu^{c}mān next discusses the position of an elected Imām. In his opinion an elected Imām is under the authority of the people concerned, and they can remove him at any time. The concept of a non-Divinely appointed Imām held by the generality entails, he claims, an admission of innovation (al-Bid^{c}ah). Al-Nu^{c}mān expounds the discussion by undertaking a comparative study of the Sunnī and the Shī^{c}ah concepts of Imāmah. Sunnīs, he maintains, consider the Imāmah as a part of religion and at the same time do not believe it to be confirmed by the Divine Command. It is thus in effect merely an innovation. In his opinion this innovation leads to the following conclusion: God did not perfect His religion, nor did the Prophet clarify it, so that it is they who must perfect and clarify the religion. Al-Nu^{c}mān condemns this view as a most despicable allegation and the worst possible thing that may be attributed to God and His messenger.[20] The Shī^{c}ah concept, on the other hand, is according to al-Nu^{c}mān based on the Qur'ān and the Prophetic tradition. He substantiates this view by the event of Ghadīr, a point which we have already explained (pp. 23,24).[21]

Al-Nu^{c}mān also objects to the view that the Prophet pointed to Abū Bakr
as his successor. It must be kept in mind that it is not only Abū Bakr
but also the other three caliphs, ^{c}Umar, ^{c}Uthmān and ^{c}Alī, who are
considered as the rightly guided caliphs (al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn) in
Sunnism. Al-Nu^{c}mān in his discussion of the Sunnī view takes into account
the differing methods by which the two caliphs after Abū Bakr were
appointed; ^{c}Umar was nominated by Abū Bakr and ^{c}Uthmān was appointed
by an electoral committee consisting of six members.[22] Al-Nu^{c}mān, in
order to show the contradiction in the Sunnī position, holds that if the
appointment of Abū Bakr was based on Prophetic nomination then the later
caliphs should have been nominated accordingly; but the method was in
fact changed. Likewise, al-Nu^{c}mān sees no cogency in their view that
Abū Bakr's leadership in prayer points to his being the legitimate succes-
sor to the Prophet. Al-Nu^{c}mān argues that if leadership in prayer was
a legitimizing basis for the Imāmah then Suhayb was more entitled to the
Imāmah than ^{c}Uthmān since he was asked by ^{c}Umar to lead the prayer. Al-
Nu^{c}mān insists that one should not rely on this argument since, according
to Sunnīs, prayer is permissible under the leadership of anyone, whether
he is righteous (barr) or sinful (fājir).[23] Moreover, according to al-
Nu^{c}mān the following evidence further indicates the contradiction in the
Sunnī view: both Abū Bakr and ^{c}Umar were under the command of ^{c}Amr b.
al-^{c}Āṣ in the battle of Dhāt al-Salāsil and ^{c}Amr led the prayer.[24] Both
of them were also at one point under the command of Usāmah b. Zayd, and
he too led the prayer.[25] From this evidence al-Nu^{c}mān infers that if
leading the prayer is considered to be the legitimizing basis for the
Imāmah, then ^{c}Amr and Usāmah were more entitled to it than Abū Bakr and
^{c}Umar. Al-Nu^{c}mān uses these facts as evidence not only of contradiction

in the Sunnī position but also of the rightful claim of ᶜAlī to the Imāmah: nobody was given command over ᶜAlī, nor did he pray under the leadership of anyone except the Prophet. Finally, al-Nuᶜmān looks into the report indicating Abū Bakr's leadership in prayer. According to him, this report is not authentic since its transmission (al-Naql wa akhbār) is confused and its versions differ and also since all the reports emanate from ᶜĀ'ishah, daughter of Abū Bakr. In al-Nuᶜmān's opinion there is no justification for anyone to accept this report, owing to the involvement of the father-daughter relationship in it, for a report from ᶜAlī concerning Fāṭimah is rejected on the basis of the husband-wife relationship.[26] Al-Nuᶜmān is probably referring here to the witness of ᶜAlī to the Fadak as the possession of Fāṭimah.[27] At any rate, al-Nuᶜmān concludes that the above-mentioned report is groundless. In his opinion the Prophet himself led the prayer even prior to his death.[28]

Al-Nuᶜmān then deals with the Murji'ah view; that the people should exercise their power in the matter of electing an Imām. However, according to them the leader should be elected on the basis of superiority (fadl) and knowledge. As regards the interpretative function, the leader should take the decision relying on the Qur'ān and Prophetic sunnah. If he finds nothing in these sources, he should decide out of his own opinion. For the Murji'ah it is necessary to obey the leader as long as he obeys God, otherwise he should be replaced by another one.[29]

Al-Nuᶜmān thereafter discusses the view of Muᶜtazilah. According to him this school holds that the Prophet neither nominated a specific person nor indicated him, but authorized the community to elect an Imām. In al-Nuᶜmān's opinion this view contrasts the sunnah of the Prophet,

the event of Ghadīr. Al-Nu^{c}mān further argues that God never authorized a man-made Imām, nor did he authorize men to remove and criticize the Divinely appointed Imām. In elaborating this, he refers to the Divine universal law, namely, that no prophet was elected by the people; on the contrary every prophet was selected by God. Since there is no inconsistency in the Divine law, the selection of the Imām must be by Divine command.[30]

As far as Khawārij are concerned, they do not have any idea whether the Prophet disclosed anything concerning the Imāmah or not. According to al-Nu^{c}mān the lack of awareness of this school is not a proof against those who are aware of it, i.e. the declaration of the Imāmah.[31]

Finally, al-Nu^{c}mān puts forward the Shī^{c}ah view on the designation (al-Naṣṣ wa al-Tawqīf). For al-Nu^{c}mān the role of designation has remained a Divine universal law; thus all the prophets such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad were designated according to this law and all of them received their authority through an explicit designation. Al-Nu^{c}mān, referring to this law, believes the Divine guidance to be continued through the institution of the Imāmah and the method of the designation unchanged. According to al-Nu^{c}mān the view of the ^{c}Āmmah that the Divine guidance was discontinued at the demise of the Prophet Muḥammad is illogical, as is the conclusion that nobody was designated after him. On the contrary, al-Nu^{c}mān holds that the people are in a greater need of the guides (al-Awṣiyā wa al-A'immah) because of the termination of the prophecy and cessation of revelation; thus, to him it is the Imāms from the progeny of the Prophet who have been Divinely authorized to take the responsibility for community affairs in particular

and for the whole creation in general. In conclusion al-Nu^{c}mān expresses the view that the method of the explicit designation (al-Tawqīf, wa al-Bayān) is a Divine universal law within the whole history of the Divine guidance.[32]

It should be mentioned that al-Nu^{c}mān does not take note of the Ithnā^{c}asharī views as such, despite the fact that it is an independent theological school. The elimination of the Ithnā^{c}asharī view may be due to the fact that both Ismā^{c}īlism and Ithnā^{c}asharism agree on the Divine appointment, though differ on points of detail.

B. The Role of the Inheritance

Any discussion of the Ismā^{c}īlī notion of the presence of a Divinely designated Imām necessarily entails some consideration of the position of the Imām as legitimate heir of the Prophet. This is because the concept of designation is inseparable from that of inheritance in the Shī^{c}ah understanding of the Imāmah. Since it is well known that questions concerning the legitimate heir of the Prophet have evoked great controversy within the Muslim community, we will now explore this subject. In doing so, we will concern ourselves mainly with the Shī^{c}ah view, particularly that of al-Nu^{c}mān; although we will touch upon the non-Shī^{c}ah attitudes.

First some attention must be given to the key Arabic terms which underly the concept of inheritance, namely, wirāthah, irth, wirth and mīrāth. These carry the same meaning, inheritance, which is said to have the sense of survival of one's nobility and possessions after death.[33]

As regards the role of inheritance in the rule of Divine guidance, these verses are always referred to. "For We bestowed upon the house of Abraham (of old) the Scripture and Wisdom, and We bestowed on them a mighty kingdom." (IV:54). "And We gave the Scripture as inheritance unto those whom We elected of our bondmen." (XXXV:32).

The verses just cited not only consider the inheritance as an integral part of the prophecy but also explain that the inheritance consists of the Book, Wisdom and the Divine authority.

The Shīᶜah notion of the inheritance of the Imāmah is based on such evidence; accordingly the Imām who receives the Book and Wisdom from the Prophet has to be from his progeny. As regards the Divine authority, according to the Shīᶜah understanding, as will be explained later, it refers to prophecy and then to the Imāmah as well. Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir interpreting the previously cited verse (IV:45) says the phrase "a mighty kingdom" refers to (the Divine authority of) the prophets and the Imāms.[34] Moreover, this verse is taken as evidence for the transmission of the inheritance to the Imāms. "Lo Allah commandeth you that ye restore deposits to their owners (tu'add al-Amānāt ilā ahlihā), and if ye judge mankind that ye judge justly. Lo comely is which Allah admonisheth you. Allah is ever Hearer, Seer." (IV:58). According to Imām al-Bāqir the phrase "Lo Allah commandeth you that ye restore deposits to their owners" refers to the Books (al-Kutub) the knowledge (al-ᶜIlm) and the weapon (al-Salāḥ) inherited by the Imām.[35]

Since this interpretation of Imām al-Bāqir emerges as the basis for the discussion of inheritance in both the Ismāᶜīlī and Ithnāᶜasharī Shīᶜism, an attempt will be made to elaborate it further. Let us first

discuss the role of the Books. It must be remembered that in the state-
ment of Imām al-Bāqir the word "Books" being plural refers to more than
one Book, the Qur'ān; hence this needs an explanation. From the Shī^cah
sources it appears that it refers to the previously revealed Books such
as the Bible.[36] At the same time it could refer to the Prophetic tradi-
tion.[37] However, the Qur'ān plays the most important role in this regard
because it is the final revelation. The following verses are considered
as evidence that the Imām exclusively receives the Qur'ān as his heritage.
"Then We gave the Scripture an inheritance unto those whom We elected
of our bondmen. But of them are some who wrong themselves and of them
are some who are lukewarm, and of them are some who outstrip (others)
through good deeds by Allah's leave, this is the great favour." (XXXV:32).
In the opinion of Imām al-Bāqir in this verse "and of them are those who
outstrip (others) in good deeds" refers to the Imām. Expounding this al-Nu^cmān
objects to the view of the generality who hold that all the community-
members are meant by this verse. According to him if all the Muslims
were chosen, then according to the following verse they would be in
paradise. "Gardens of Eden they enter them wearing armlets of gold and
pearl and their raiment therein is silk." (XXXV:33). Furthermore, Imām
al-Bāqir cites this verse. "But it is clear revelation in the hearts
of those who have been given knowledge." (XXIX:49). It is the Imāms
in whose hearts are the revelation and it is they who possess knowledge.[39]

As regards the subject of knowledge and Wisdom, frequent reference
is made to the following verse. "Say Allah and whosoever hath knowledge
of the Scripture, is sufficient witness between you and me." (XIII:43)
Al-Nu^cmān takes this verse to be a reference to the Imāms, to whom the
Prophet entrusted and transmitted the knowledge.[40]

We may now turn to the subject of the weapon (al-Salāh) as it
relates to the question of inheritance of the Imāmah. It becomes clear
from the description of al-Nuᶜmān that "the weapon" points to the famous,
sword, the Dhū al-Fiqār which was given to ᶜAlī by the Prophet and which
is said to be inherited by the Imāms.[41] It must be borne in mind that
the significance of the Dhū al-Fiqār as understood by the Ismāᶜīlīs
is metaphorical (mathal). Imām al-Muᶜizz, elaborating upon this, holds
that, by bestowing the Dhū al-Fiqār upon ᶜAlī, the Prophet has given an
example and evidence for the Divinely granted peculiarities of ᶜAlī such
as his nobility (karāmah), his aptitude for argument (al-Hujjah), and
(above all) his knowledge.[42] Expounding this, the Imām refers to the
saying of ᶜAlī in which he speaks of knowledge received from the Prophet:
"the Prophet taught me thousands of ways (bāb) of the knowledge and Wisdom,
and every way leads to (another) thousand ways."[43] The explanation of
the Imām may be regarded as a clear indication that the Imām inherits
the weapon in the sense of receiving special knowledge.

From the above mentioned evidence it may be concluded that Divine
knowledge, particularly knowledge of the Qur'ān, is always regarded in
Ismāᶜīlī Shīᶜism as the sole right of the progeny of the Prophet, as will
be further explained in our discussion of the status of the Imām as the
source of ta'wīl.

It may be further noted that the knowledge of the Imām is held to
be a continuation of knowledge originating in Adam. It thus plays a univ-
ersal role as a vehicle of Divine guidance. ᶜAlī expresses this view
as follows: "The knowledge deposited with Adam and by which all the
prophets were preferred was possessed by Muhammad, the last Prophet,

and then it is possessed by the Imāms from his progeny."[44]   This saying
as well as some sayings of the later Imāms are an indication that the
knowledge of the Imām has nothing to do with human knowledge but is God-
given knowledge. Imām al-Bāqir explains it further: the Wisdom (al-
Hikmah) and the knowledge of the Qur'ān possessed by the Imām is not of
his own making but inculcated and inherited.[45]

Using this evidence al-Nu^c mān propounds the point further. According
to him the knowledge of the Imām is based on Divine inspiration (ilhām,
ta'yīd). To substantiate his view, he refers to one of the sermons of
Imām Mu^c izz whose competence cannot be attributed to any other source
of knowledge than Divine inspiration. Explaining this, al-Nu^c mān argues
that if the knowledge of the Imām was not based on Divine inspiration,
then the Imām could not deliver such a sermon. Physically speaking he
was young and inexperienced and had an insignificant educational background,
and also nobody had taught him except his father, who entrusted to him
the Imāmah. According to al-Nu^c mān, the method of entrusting the Imāmah
remains unchanged; thus, from the time of the Prophet till the end of
the world the same method will be maintained. Al-Nu^c mān makes it clear
that the Imāmah is entrusted to him amongst the progeny who fulfils the
conditions of the Imāmah (sālih).[46]

C. Footnotes to Chapter II

[1] Abū Ya^{C}qūb al-Sijistānī, "Tuḥfat al-Mustajibīn" Khams Rasā'il
Ismā^{C}īlīyyah, ed. ^{C}Ārif Tāmir (Salamiyyah: Dār al-Inṣāf, 1956), p.152

[2] Al-Nu^{C}mān, Da^{C}ā'im, 1: 20,23,25; Abū ^{C}Isā Tirmidhī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 1st edition,
13 vols. (Egypt: Al-Maṭba^{C}ah al-Miṣriyyah and al-Ṣāwī, 1931-1934), 13:
165; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad, 6 vols. (Beirūt: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī,n.d.),
1: 152; Ibn Kathīr, Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 2nd edition, 14 vols.
(Beirūt: Maktabat al-Ma^{C}ārif, 1974), 7: 339,345,347,348; Ibn Athīr,
Usud al-Ghābah, 5 vols. (Cairo: Al-Maktabah al-Islamiyyah, n.d.), 4: 27

[3] Al-Nu^{C}mān, Da^{C}ā'im, p.21; Ibn Hishām, Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah, ed. Ṭāhā
^{C}Abd al-Ra'ūf, 4 vols. (Beirūt: Dār al-Jīl, 1975), 4: 121; Muḥammad b.
Ismā^{C}īl al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 9 vols. (Egypt: Maṭba^{C}at Muḥammad,
n.d.), 5: 24; Muslim b. Hajjāj, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, ed. Muḥammad Fu'ād ^{C}Abd
al-Bāqī, 4 vols. (Egypt: Dār Iḥyā' Kutub al-^{C}Arabiyyah, 1955), 4: 1870-
1871; Tirmidhī, Ṣaḥīḥ, p.175; Al-Ḥakim al-Nayshābūrī, Mustadrak ^{C}Alā
al-Ṣaḥīḥayn, 4 vols. (Dakan: Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma^{C}ārif al-Nizāmiyyah,
1341 A.H.), 3: 109; Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb 12 vols. (Dakan:
Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma^{C}ārif al-Nizāmiyyah, 1326 A.H.); 7: 337; Ibn Kathīr,
Al-Bidāyah, pp. 335,339,340,341,342; Ibn Athīr, Usud, pp.26-27

[4] Al-Nu^{C}mān, Da^{C}ā'im, pp. 44-45; Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, p.130; Tirmidhī, Ṣaḥīḥ,
pp.448-449; Al-Ḥakim, Mustadrak, p. 108; Ibn Kathīr, Al-Bidāyah, p.339

[5] Al-Nu^{C}mān, Ta'wīl al-Da^{C}ā'im, p.86; Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb,p.337; Al-Ḥakim,
Mustadrak, pp.133,146,147

[6] Al-Nu^{C}mān, Da^{C}ā'im, p.23; Al-Ḥakim, Mustadrak, p.127

[7] Al-Nu^{C}mān, Da^{C}ā'im, pp.22-23; Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, p.1871; Tirmidhī, Ṣaḥīḥ,
p.172

[8] Al-Nu^{C}mān, Da^{C}ā'im, p.50

[9] Ibid., 20; Abū Ja^{C}far Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣūl Min al-Kāfī,
ed, ^{C}Alī Akbar al-Ghaffārī, 4th ed. 2 vols. (Beirūt: Dār al-Ṣa^{C}b, 1401 A.H.),
1: 288; Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi^C al-Bayān ^{C}An Ta'wīl Ay al-
Qur'ān (Tafsir al-Ṭabarī); 30 vols. (Egypt: Muṣṭafā' al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī,
1954), 6: 288-289

[10] Al-Nu^{C}mān, Da^{C}ā'im, p.18; Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣūl, p.279

[11] For a detailed study of the event of Ghadīr see:Al-Nu^{C}mān, Al-Majālis,
pp. 327,328; also see: Encyclopedia of Islam, new ed. s.v. "Ghadīr" by
Vaglieri

[12] Al-Nu^{C}mān, Da^{C}ā'im, pp.20-21; Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, pp.84,118,119,152;
also see: 4: 281,368,370,372,373 and 5: 347, 366, 419; Al-Kulaynī,
Al-Uṣūl, pp.289, 295

[13] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Da^{c}ā'im, p.19; Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣūl, p.289; although al-Ṭabarī does not mention this verse to be a confirmation of the Imāmah of the ahl al-Bayt, the different versions given by him show that the verse was revealed either on the ^{c}Arafah day, the ninth of Dhī al-Ḥijj or on the day of Ḥijjat al-Wadā^c. See: Tafsīr, 6: 79-84; according to Ibn Kathīr, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī has incorporated a ḥadīth on the merit of the 18th of Dhi al-Ḥijj when the Prophet designated ^{c}Alī. Al-Baghdādī maintains that after the designation this verse was revealed. See: Ibn Kathīr, Al-Bidāyah, pp.350-351

[14] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Da^{c}ā'im, p.35; Ibn Bābūyah al-Qummī, Ma^{c}ānī al-Akhbār, 2 vols (Al-Najaf al-Ashraf: Manshūrāt al-Matba^{c}ah al-Ḥaydariyyah, 1971), 1: 89-93; Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ pp.1873-1874; Tirmidhī. Ṣaḥīḥ, pp.200-201; Al-Ḥākim, Mustadrak, p.109; Ibn Kathīr, Al-Bidāyah, p.350; it is expedient to mention here that the term ahl al-Bayt has remained one of the contro-versial points of discussion; from the Da^{c}ā'im it is clear that the gener-ality are of the opinion that ahl al-Bayt refers to the whole community. See; p.35; yet, the following non-Ismā^{c}īlī ḥadīth sources indicate that ahl al-Bayt refers to those from whom every kind of impurity has been kept away, namely, Muḥammad, ^{c}Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. See: Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, pp.1873-1883; Tirmidhī, Ṣaḥīḥ, pp.172,200; Al-Ḥākim, Mustadrak, p.108

[15] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Da^{c}ā'im, p.49; it is to be noted that different views have been expressed regarding the Sunnī concept of Khilāfah/Imārah/Imāmah. On the one hand it is held that the leaders must be from the Quraysh, and on the other hand, every one is believed to be a rightful person for the office of the khilāfah. See: Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3: 1452-1453,1486; Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah, ed. I.M. Katmir, 3 vols. (Beirūt: Maktabat Lubnan, 1858), 1: 350-351; Azim Nanji, "An Ismā^{c}īlī Theory of Walāyah" Essays on Islamic Civilization, ed. D.P. Little (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), pp.263-264; E.I. New ed. s.v. "Imāma" by Madelung; E.I. Old ed. s.v. "Khalīfa " by Arnold

[16] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Da^{c}ā'im, pp.50-51; Ibn Hishām, Al-Sīrah, p.225; Al-Ṭabarī, Ta'rīkh, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 11 vols. (Egypt: Dār al-Ma^{c}ārif, 1952), 3: 206; Nanji, "The Ismā^{c}īlī Theory", pp.264-265; S.H.M. Jafri, The Origin and Early Development of Shī^{c}ah Islām, (London, Longman, 1979), p.27-53

[17] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Da^{c}ā'im, p.51; Ibn Hishām, Al-Sīrah, p.226; Al-Ṭabarī, Ta'rīkh, p.208

[18] Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imāmah Wa al-Siyāsah, ed. Ṭaha Aḥmad, 2 vols. (Beirūt: Dar al-Ma^{c}ārif, n.d.), 1:12-14; Al-Ṭabarī Ta'rīkh, p.208

[19] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Da^{c}ā'im, p.51

[20] Ibid

[21] For a detailed study see: Ibid., pp.19,20,21,56

[22] Ibid

[23]Ibid., Abū Dā'ūd, Sunan Ma^Ca Ḥashiyat ^CAwn al-Ma^Cbūd, 4 vols. (Beirūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-^CArabī, 1318 A.H.), 1: 231

[24]Al-Nu^Cmān, Da^Cā'im, p.52; Ibn Hishām, Al-Sīrah, p.199,200,201

[25]Al-Nu^Cmān, Da^Cā'im, p.52

[26]Ibid., p.53

[27]For a detailed study of Fadak see: E.I. new ed., s.v. "Fadak" by Vaglieri

[28]Al-Nu^Cmān, Da^Cā'im, p.53; for the differing reports about this see: Al-Ṭabarī, Ta'rīkh, pp.196-199

[29]Al-Nu^Cmān, Da^Cā'im, p.53

[30]Ibid., pp.53-54

[31]Ibid., p.54

[32]Ibid., pp.53-57

[33]Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-^CArab, 1956 ed., s.v. "wirth"; Edward Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, 1980 ed., s.v. "wirth"

[34]Al-Nu^Cmān, Da^Cā'im, pp. 26-27

[35]Ibid., Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣūl, p.276

[36]Al-Nu^Cmān, Ikhtilāf, p.3; Al-Majālis, p.379; Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣul, pp. 223-228

[37]Al-Rāzī, Al-Zīnah, ed. Ḥusayn Hamdānī, 2 vols. (Qāhirah: Matba^Cat al-Risālah, 1958), 2:120; Ja^Cfar, "Sarā'ir al-Nuṭaqā'", London, The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library, Ms 17

[38]Al-Nu^Cmān, Da^Cā'im, p.29

[39]Ibid., Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣūl, pp.213-214

[40]Al-Nu^Cmān, Ta'wīl al-Da^Cā'im, p.61; Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣūl, p.229; it should be mentioned that in Sunnī Islām, the religious scholars are considered as the heirs of the Prophet. Sunnīs support this by a Prophetic ḥadīth. The Prophet is reported to have said: "the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets..." See: Tirmidhī, Ṣaḥīh, 10: 155

[41]Al-Nu^Cmān, Al-Majālis, pp.208-209; Al-Kulaynī, Uṣūl, pp.232-237

[42]Al-Nu^Cmān, Al-Majālis, pp.208-209

[43]Ibid., p.209

[44]Ibid., _Ta'wīl al-Daᶜā'im_, p.61. This view has also been expressed by
Imām al-Sādiq. See: _Al-Majālis_, p.272; _Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣūl_, p.223;
it is to be noted that a similar view has been held by Abū Ḥafṣ ᶜUmar
Shḟhāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, one of the authorities in Ṣūfism, regarding
mystical knowledge. According to him the saint (al-Shaykh) is the heir
of the Prophet. He substantiates this by the previously cited ḥadīth
"the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets..." In the view of Suhrawardī,
the knowledge of the saint is a continuation of the Divine knowledge depo-
sited with Adam. See: ᶜAwārif _al-Maᶜārif_, (Egypt: Al-Maktabah al-
ᶜĀlamiyyah, 1939), pp.62-63

[45]Al-Nuᶜmān, _Al-Majālis_, p.271

[46]Ibid., _Iftitāḥ al-Daᶜwah_, p.338

CHAPTER III. THE IMĀM AS INTERPRETER OF THE QUR'ĀN

A. Zāhir and Bāṭin

The discussion of the inheritance of the Imāmah calls for an elabora-
tion of the interpretative function of the Imām since this is the means
through which the Divine knowledge imparted to the Imām becomes manifest
to the community. It is therefore the raison d'etre of the inheritance
of the Imāmah. Although a variety of proofs for this all-important func-
tion is furnished by Shīʿah writers, we will here refer to one of the
sayings of Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣadiq, which appears to be at the center of
the whole discussion of the Divine knowledge expounded by al-Nuʿmān.
Imām Jaʿfar, considering the Imām's knowledge to be comprehensive of all
the Quranic sciences, says: "the Imāmah embraces all that is necessary
for the community to know in respect to what is lawful and what is unlaw-
ful; (it furthermore embraces) knowledge of the Book, both in its general
and in its particular aspects, its exoteric and esoteric meanings, its
explicit commands and its metaphorical teaching, its abrogating and abro-
gated verses, and the subtleties of its connotation and the rarities of
its interpretation." In al-Ṣadiq's opinion the following Qurʾanic verses
support these points. "Lo We did reveal the Torah, wherein is guidance
and a light, by which the prophets who surrendered (unto) God judged the
Jews and the rabbis and the priest (judged) by such of Allah's Scripture
as they were bidden to observe, and thereunto were they witness." (V:44).
"Are those who know equal with those who know not? But only men of under-
standing will pay heed." (XXXIX:9). "But it is clear revelations in the
hearts of those who have been given knowledge." (XXIX:49). "But none
will grasp their meaning save the wise." (XXIX:43). "The erudite among

His bondsmen fear Allah alone." (XXXV:28). "Is he who leadeth to the
truth more deserving that he should be followed or he who findeth not
the way unless he (himself) be guided. What aileth you." (X:36).[1]

From all these verses Imām Ja^{c}far concludes that the Imāms are the
possessors of knowledge (^{c}ulamā'), in which case the people are neces-
sarily in need of them, particularly since this knowledge embraces the
knowledge of what is lawful and what is not.[2]

Although all the points outlined by Imām al-Ṣadiq concerning the
Imām's interpretative function cannot be elaborated due to the limited
scope of our work, an attempt will nonetheless be made to put forward
the following points: the Imām as (1) the source of ta'wīl, (2) the
interpreter of the Sharī^{c}ah. At present we are concerned with the first
of these points, i.e. the Imām as the source of ta'wīl. Before entering
into this subject, however, it will be helpful to provide some informa-
tion concerning the notion of exoteric and esoteric aspects of the Qur'an.
This is because the whole discussion of the interpretative function pre-
supposes the notion and also because the esoteric/exoteric distinction
has remained one of the controversial subjects amongst theologians, both
Sunnī and Shī^{c}ah, as well as amongst the Ṣufīs. Thus, in elaborating
the subject we will also refer to some non-Ismā^{c}īlī sources. However,
our major source will be the Asās of al-Nu^{c}mān.[3]

Al-Nu^{c}mān's discussion begins with a definition of the terms ẓāhir
and bāṭin. It should be noted that al-Nu^{c}mān does not define the terms
ta'wīl and amthāl despite the fact that he mentions both of them along
with ẓāhir and bāṭin. Thus, he probably considers his definition of

batin and zahir as covering these other terms. Nevertheless, according
to the definition of al-Nu^{c}man, zahir is employed for the thing percep-
tible through the senses, while batin refers to that which is contained
within the zahir and which is the proper object of true knowledge.[4]
Al-Nu^{c}man then discusses the universal role of the exoteric/esoteric concept
and says that the whole universe contains an exterior and interior aspect.
He substantiates this by the following verse. "And all things We created
by pairs (zawjayn) that haply ye may reflect." (LI: 49).[5] Thus, in the
opinion of al-Nu^{c}man, nothing stands alone, unassociated with another
object, except God, Who is alone. The duality in the creation may be
witnessed, al-Nu^{c}man holds, in a number of objects including the human
being who is compounded of body and soul. Al-Nu^{c}man elaborates the subject
and refers to a number of Qur'anic verses. Since we are not in a position
to cite all of them we will mention only a few which represent the main
idea. "See ye not how Allah has made serviceable unto you whatsoever
is in the skies and whatsoever is in the earth and loaded you with His
favours both without (zahirah) and within (batinah). (XXXI:20). "For-
sake the outwardness of sin (zahir al-Ithm) and inwardness (batinah)
thereof." (VI:121). "It is He who hath revealed unto thee (Muhammad)
the scripture wherein are clear revelation - they are the substance
(muhkamat) of the Book - and others (which are) allegorical
(mutashabihat). But those in whose hearts is doubt pursue, forsooth,
that which is allegorical seeking (to cause) dissension by seeking to
explain it. None knoweth its explanation, save God and those who are
of sound instruction (al-Rashikhun fi al-^{c}Ilm) (who) say: "We believe
therein, the whole is from our Lord; but only men of understanding really
heed." (III:7). "As for these similitudes (amthal), We coin them for

mankind, but none will grasp their meaning save the wise." (XXIX:43).[6]

Al-Nu^{c}mān finds in these verses an indication of the relationship which exists between this world and the spiritual world, and accordingly divides the creation into two categories: the visible creation (khalq al-Zāhir) and the "religious" i.e. spiritual creation (khalq al-Dīn).[7] We may go further and state that through the visible creation the religious creation becomes manifest. In this connection a prophetic tradition may be cited which explicitly expresses this point of view. The Prophet is reported to have said, "God has laid the foundation of His religion (assasa dīnah) upon the pattern (mithāl) of His creation, so that evidence can be obtained from His creation with regard to His religion and from this with regard to His Unity."[8]

Al-Nu^{c}mān's very detailed discussion also shows that through the instrumentality of the visible creation one can be led to true religion and to the Qur'ān in particular. Afterwards al-Nu^{c}mān discusses the two-fold aspects of the Qur'ān. In addition to the relevant verse (III:7) he refers to a Prophetic tradition in which the Prophet is reported to have said. "No verse of the Qur'ān has been revealed to me except that each one has an exoteric and esoteric aspect."[9]

Elaborating on the discussion, al-Nu^{c}mān emphasizes the importance of the existence of the exoteric/esoteric aspect. According to him the presence of these aspects is not unusual in the Arabic language. In his opinion the duality of exoteric/esoteric in the Qur'ān is evidence that the Qur'ān is a literary miracle and marvel (^{c}ajā'ib wa al-Gharā'ib).[10]

Finally, we would like to be more specific and try to establish the difference between the two dimensions of Qur'ānic knowledge.

The distinction, as developed by al-Nu^{c}mān, shows that the exoteric aspect embraces obligatory actions (a^{c}māl), while the esoteric aspect embraces knowledge only. Accordingly, al-Nu^{c}mān, in applying the words "coarse" (al-Kathīf) and corporeal (al-Jasadānī), makes the point that this knowledge (the exoteric aspect) is concerned solely with the realm of the obligatory. To the latter he applies the terms "delicate" (latīf) and "spiritual" (al-Rūḥānī), implying that this is pure knowledge alone, without the involvement of actions and obligation (taklīf). He substantiates this by referring to ^{c}Alī, who commenting on the Qur'ān says: "the exoteric dimension of the Qur'ān (zāhiruh) embraces obligatory knowledge (^{c}ilm mawjūb) while its esoteric dimension embraces concealed and hidden knowledge (maknūn, maḥjūb). This is known to us (the Imāms) and written down with us."[11]

B. The Imām as Source of Ta'wīl[12]

The Ismā^{c}īlī Shī^{c}ah believe the Imām to be the source of authoritative esoteric interpretation of the Qur'ān. This belief is supported by a number of texts among which the following appear to be pre-eminent. (1) "None knoweth its ta'wīl[13] save Allah and those who are of sound instruction (rāsikhūn fī al-^{c}Ilm)[14] (who) say we believe therein; the whole is from our Lord, but only men of understanding really heed." (III:7). Commenting on this verse Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir says: "the messenger of God is the most excellent among those who are rooted in knowledge; God taught him all that He revealed to him regarding the exoteric and esoteric aspects

(tanzil, ta'wil), and nothing has been revealed to him but he knew its ta'wil. Then the vicegerents (al-Awsiya) who succeeded him are (also) rooted in knowledge and know its ta'wil in its totality."[15] (2) "Say Allah and whosoever hath true knowledge of the scripture is sufficient witness between you and me." (XIII:43). According to the Imam, the phrase "whosoever hath true knowledge" refers to the Imams from the progeny of the Prophet.[16]

Prophetic traditions are also cited as evidence for the Imams' position as source of the Divine knowledge. For example the Prophet is reported to have said: "I am the city of the knowledge and ^{c}Ali is its gate."[17] Moreover, the Prophet is said to have referred to himself as the one responsible for the explanation of the exoteric aspect of the Qur'an and to ^{c}Ali as the one responsible for the interpretation of the esoteric aspect.[18]

For al-Nu^{c}man the preceding Qur'anic texts and the prophetic sayings serve as the guidelines for his elaboration of the elucidative function of the Imam. According to him the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an is the exclusive right of the Imam. The awareness of the esoteric dimension of the Qur'an entails, in his opinion, an acknowledgement of the Imams' authority (walayah).[19] Al-Nu^{c}man probably takes issue with commentators and sufi writers who do not acknowledge the authority of the Isma^{c}ili Imam. It is important to remember that during the time of al-Nu^{c}man the works of such commentators and other writers as al-Tabari and al-Hasan al-Basri were in circulation. Al-Nu^{c}man carries the point further: the esoteric dimension of the Qur'an is, he maintains, the miracle of the Imam just as the exoteric dimension is the miracle of the Prophet. Thus people

are incapable of discovering the esoteric dimension given by the __Imams__
just as they are incapable of producing the exoteric dimension given by
the Prophet.[20] In addition, al-Nu^c mān explains the relation between the
Qur'ān and the __Imam__ by making a parallel with an Arabic linguistic device.
According to him the Arabs call an object by the name of another closely-
related object. Describing this al-Nu^c mān uses the words __lā'ama__, __alifa__
and __ṣaḥiba__ which express the intimacy existing between two things. This
rule, al-Nu^c mān holds, is also applicable to the Qur'ān and the __Imam__.
Thus, to him the Qur'ān is closely-related to the __Imam__ since the latter
is the companion of the former and is the one on whom the believers depend
for knowledge of the Qur'ān. Al-Nu^c mān substantiates this by referring
to the previously cited verse (XIII:43; p.45). The view of al-Nu^c mān is
very close to the __hadīth al-Thaqalayn__ which speaks of the inseparability
of the Qur'ān and the __Imam__ until the Day of Judgment. At any rate, the
knowledge of the __Imam__ is for him the real and transmitted knowledge
(__al-^c Ilm al-Ḥaqīqī__, __al-^c Ilm al-Ma'thūr__) since it is God-given and
transmitted.[21]

Al-Nu^c mān makes it clear that the __Imams__ are unique as possessors of
Divine knowledge and authoritative interpreters of the Divine message.
It is thus from them alone that knowledge must be obtained. Those __Ismā^c īlī__
writers responsible for the __Ismā^c īlī__ __da^c wah__ from time to time accordingly
receive their knowledge from their respective __Imams__. Being instructed and
then commissioned by the __Imams__, they function as intermediaries between
the __Imams__ and the community-members. It is they who impart knowledge to
the community-at-large. Al-Nu^c mān substantiates this by means of a tra-
dition in which the Prophet says: "Obtain the knowledge from the learned

of my progeny ($^c\bar{a}$lim ahl Bay$\bar{t}$i), namely the Im$\bar{a}$m or from him who has obtained it from the learned of my progeny and you will be saved from Hell."[22]

This tradition emerges as evidence for the Ism$\bar{a}^{c}$$\bar{i}l\bar{i}$ hierarchy; the phrase "or from him who has obtained it from the learned of my progeny" is believed to apply to the ranks of the hierarchy. Al-Nu^{c}m$\bar{a}$n probably has this tradition in mind when he speaks of the transmission of the knowledge from the Im$\bar{a}$m to his hujjah and thence to the lower ranks.[23] However, he takes the view that only the Im$\bar{a}$ms are the learned in the real sense (al-^{c}ulam$\bar{a}$' bi-al-Haq$\bar{i}$qah) while the disciples of the Im$\bar{a}$ms are learned in a figurative sense (^{c}al$\bar{a}$ sab$\bar{i}$l al-Maj$\bar{a}$z) having to do with their obedience to and reverence for the Prophets and the Im$\bar{a}$ms. Al-Nu^{c}m$\bar{a}$n substantiates this by means of the Qur'$\bar{a}$nic passages: (Abraham, a famous prophet says) "but whoso followeth me, he is verily of me." (XIV:36). Further, God says: "he among you who taketh them for friends is (one) of them." (V:51).[24]

It is important to examine whether the Im$\bar{a}$m is believed to be just the transmitter of the Prophetic knowledge or is himself divinely inspired.

The Sh$\bar{i}^c$ah notion of the Im$\bar{a}$mah demonstrates that the Im$\bar{a}$m is not only the possessor of the Prophetic knowledge but also in contact with God. This may be substantiated by the fact that the Im$\bar{a}$m is believed to see by virtue of the Light of Allah (yanzuru bi N$\bar{u}$r Rabbih) to be helped by Him (ta'y$\bar{i}$d, tawf$\bar{i}$q, ^{c}awn), to be Divinely directed in the right path (tasd$\bar{i}$d),[25] and to receive Divine inspiration (ilh$\bar{a}$m).[26]

It should however be mentioned that the Sh$\bar{i}^c$ah do not use the word "wah$\bar{i}$" for the inspiration received by the Im$\bar{a}$m, as this is believed to

be peculiar to the prophecy, a point which we have already mentioned
(p. 30).

C. The Imām as Interpreter of Islamic Sharī^{c}ah

According to Ismā^{c}īlism, as we have already mentioned, the Imāmah
embraces a number of the Qur'ānic sciences as to what is lawful and what
is unlawful. At present we are concerned with the Imām's elucidative
authority on the sharī^{c}ah; that is to say that the Imām is the sole
interpreter of the Qur'ān, the sunnah of the Prophet and the teachings
of the previous Imāms.

The Shī^{c}ah attitude to the sharī^{c}ah stands in sharp contrast to
those views which not only consider the jurists concerned as the inter-
preters of the Qur'ān and sunnah of the Prophet, but also the originators
of a number of sources such as consensus (ijmā^c) and analogy (qiyās).
Al-Nu^{c}mān undertakes a comparative study of the Shī^{c}ah and non-Shī^{c}ah
views. It should, however, be borne in mind that though all the non-
Shī^{c}ah groups appear in various ways to have laid down additional
sharī^{c}ah sources, the Ḥanafī, the Mālikī and the Shafi^{c}ī are particularly
referred to in view of their greater contribution to these sources. This
may be substantiated by the fact that al-Nu^{c}mān considers Abū Ḥanīfah,
Mālik and al-Shāfi^{c}ī to be the ones on whom depended the great majority
of the people concerned (madār akthar al-Qawm).[27]

Accordingly, al-Nu^{c}mān frequently takes note of the Sunnī schools
mentioned above. In presenting al-Nu^{c}mān's view, therefore, we will
refer to the view of these schools as the non-Shī^{c}ah sharī^{c}ah sources
or words to that effect. However, al-Nu^{c}mān considers the Imām as the

interpreter of the sharī͜ᶜah and the non-Shī͜ᶜah view as an attempt to
reject the authority of the Imām. We will elaborate upon al-Nuᶜmān's view,
basing our discussion on the first chapter of al-Nuᶜmān's Ikhtilāf,
an introduction to the book. Before entering into al-Nuᶜmān's discussion,
however, we would like to define the key word sharī͜ᶜah in order to provide
preliminary information regarding the subject.

Etymologically the word sharī͜ᶜah contains a number of meanings such
as a road to be followed.[28] As a technical term, however, according to
al-Nuᶜmān, sharī͜ᶜah refers to the Divinely ordained path of devotion;[29]
that is to say, the totality of God's commandments. Al-Nuᶜmān expounds
the definition and refers to the following verses: (1) "He has ordained
for you (sharaᶜa lakum) that religion which He commanded unto Noah and
that which We inspire in thee (Muḥammad) and that which we commended unto
Abraham, Moses and Jesus saying: establish the religion and be not divided
therein." (XLII:13). (2) "For each We have appointed a Divine law
(shirᶜah) and a traced-out way (minhāj)." (V:48). (3) "And now We have
set thee (O Muhammad) on a clear road (sharī͜ᶜah), so follow it and do not
follow the whims of those who know not." (XLV:18).

These verses, in the opinion of al-Nuᶜmān, are an indication that
only the Divinely appointed individuals can interpret a Divinely ordained
law (sharī͜ᶜah), such as the Prophet Muḥammad and then his successors
(khulafā'), the Imāms. In view of the above mentioned evidence, al-Nuᶜmān
sees no justification for those who rely on their reasoning to decide
what is legal and what is not. Elaborating upon this he strongly objects
to non-Shī͜ᶜah sharī͜ᶜah sources emanating from reasoning, such as analogy
(qiyās).[30]

Al-Nu'mān's consideration of the sharī'ah as a body of the Divinely ordained commandments, and of the non-Shī'ah additional sharī'ah sources as the product of human reasoning, leads us to the distinction between the sharī'ah and the jurisprudence developed by the non-Shī'ah.

Al-Nu'mān opens his discussion of the Imām's role as the interpreter of the sharī'ah by mentioning the reasons for the difference ('illat al-ikhtilāf) which arose among the community over a number of affairs such as the interpretation of the sharī'ah. According to al-Nu'mān, the non-Shī'ah repudiation of the Divine authority of the Imām is the major reason for the divergent view. Al-Nu'mān first mentions the traits of the Imāms, particularly of 'Alī, the foundation of the Imāmah, probably to show the Imāmah as the legitimate institution to be the symbol for the unity of the Muslim ummah. In the opinion of al-Nu'mān, 'Alī was well aware of both the Qur'ān and sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad. 'Alī's profound grasp of the Divine message may be substantiated by a number of pieces of evidence. For example, the Prophet is reported to have said: "the best judge among you is 'Alī."[31] Furthermore, the Prophet prayed for 'Alī and said: "Oh God! grant him understanding in the religion and guide him to the right path."[32] Al-Nu'mān elaborates the point further and says that 'Alī's adjudicative capability embraces the knowledge of such community requirements of what is lawful and what is unlawful, the decisions, and the obligatory acts.[33]

Al-Nu^{c}mān emphasizes the point and refers to ^{c}Alī, who is said to
have spoken of his profound understanding of the Divine sources when he
says."There is no verse in the Qur'ān except that I know when and concer-
ning whom it was revealed."[34]

The knowledge of ^{c}Alī was not discontinued, but was transferred to
the later Imāms. Al-Nu^{c}mān substantiates this and refers to Imām Ja^{c}far.
Once someone asked Imām al-Ṣādiq about the reason for the difference. The
Imām turned the question back to the inquirer: "did the people during
the life of the Prophet differ on any point?" The questioner said: how
could they differ when the Prophet was with them to explain what they dis-
agreed on. So they used to come back to him. The Imām said to him "you are
right" and then maintained that "in the same way, if the one aware of the
answers assumed (worldly) authority (waliya al-Amr) after the demise of
the Prophet and the people asked him, he would answer them, then there
would be no difference. But the one assumed the authority who did not
know the answer when a question came to him. Due to his unawareness of
a number of affairs, he asked others who held different opinions among
themselves on these points. This was the reason for the difference."[35]
From the elaboration of al-Nu^{c}mān it is clear that Imām al-Ṣādiq, by saying
"unaware of the answer and held different opinions among themselves"
refers to the pre-Fāṭimid rulers, namely, the Umayyads and the Abbasids
and to the jurists such as Abū Yūsuf, the chief qāḍī of Hārūn al-Rashīd,
one of the Abbasid rulers.[36]

Al-Nu^{c}mān, afterwards, gives the details of the non-Shī^{c}ah
sharī^{c}ah sources which, in his opinion are nothing but an expression of
the non-Shī^{c}ah unawareness of the Divine message and the denial of

the right of the Imām.

Although al-Nu^cmān deals with the subject in detail, we will
mention those points which cover the fundamental theme of the discussion.

Imitation (taqlīd)

Taqlīd (lit. Imitation) means following. Generally speaking, obed-
ience plays an eminent role in Islām. Thus, a believer must obey God and
His appointees, that is to say, the prophets and the Imāms. The following
verse is given as an example of this. "On the day when the wrong-doer
gnaweth his hands, he will say: ah would that I had chosen a way together
with the messenger of Allah. Alas for me! ah, would that I had never taken
such an one for friend! He verily led me astray from the reminder after
it had reached me. Satan was ever man's deserter in the hour of need."
(XXV: 27-29).

According to al-Nu^cmān, this verse is an indication that only the
Divinely designated leaders should be followed.[37] However, in the context
of the non-Shī^cah additional sharī^cah sources, taqlīd is frequently used
for following the companions of the Prophet and also the later authorities
such as Abū Hanīfah. The non-Shī^cah taqlīd is substantiated by the
following hadīth. The Prophet is reported to have said: "my companions
are like stars; whomsoever of them you follow, you will be guided."[38]

Al-Nu^cmān, however, interprets this hadīth differently. According
to him, if this hadīth is valid, then the word ashāb does not refer to
those considered as ideal in the non-Shī^cah circles, but to the Imāms
from the progeny of the Prophet. Al-Nu^cmān justifies his view and gives
reasons for the disqualification of those considered as models in the

non-Shī^cah   context. The disqualification is substantiated by the

disagreement among the community-members immediately after the demise of

the Prophet. The first and foremost evidence for the disagreement, al-

Nu^cmān holds, was over the Muslim leadership. Expounding this he refers

to the disagreement between the emigrants and the helpers. According to

him, the helpers wanted to elect someone from among themselves. But the

emigrants objected to this. Al-Nu^cmān argues that if this hadīth was a

reference to the earliest community members, then the emigrants should

not have objected to the attitude of the helpers but should have followed

them, since they were the companions of the Prophet.[39] In addition, al-

Nu^cmān mentions the wars among the early Muslims, probably referring to

the wars between ^cAlī and ^cĀ'ishah and between ^cAlī and Mu^cāwiyah. Al-

Nu^cmān concludes that if the non-Shī^cah interpretation is accepted then

both the fighting groups should be on the right path. Consequently, the

murderer and the one who was murdered become equal. This, in the opinion

of al-Nu^cmān is of course a contradiction in the non-Shī^cah position.[40]

Al-Nu^cmān insists on the point and considers the implication of the word

"ashāb". According to him, the word does not necessarily express the idea

of coming under the influence of the one whom someone accompanies. Some-

times two fellows of different faiths can keep company without being

influenced by each other. Al-Nu^cmān substantiates this by the following

verse. "Coin for them similitude": two men, unto one of whom We had

assigned two gardens of grapes, and We surrounded both with date-palms

and had put between them tillage. Each of the gardens gave its fruit and

withheld naught thereof. And We caused a river to gush forth therein.

And he had fruit. And he said unto his comrade, when he spake with him:

I am more than thee in wealth, and stronger in respect of men. And he

went into his garden, while he thus wronged himself. He said: I think
not that all this will ever perish. I think not that the Hour will ever
come, and if indeed I am brought back unto my Lord I surely shall find
better than this as a resort. And his comrade, while he disputed with
him, exclaimed: Disbelievest thou in Him Who created thee of dust, then
of a drop (of seed), and then fashioned thee a man? But He is Allah, my
Lord, and I ascribe unto my Lord no partner (XVIII: 33-39).

Al-Nu^{c}mān infers from these verses that God considers the believer
as the comrade of the non-believer. Thus, one does not necessarily come
under the influence of the one whom he accompanies.[41] Furthermore,
according to al-Nu^{c}mān, the word "aṣḥāb" mentioned above appears to be
an epithet (na^{c}t) used like a noun (yajrī majr al-Ism). From this it
follows that the word qualifies the Imām, as will be clarified below.
For al-Nu^{c}mān thus the word "aṣḥāb" conveys more than one meaning. It
refers to those who keep company with someone physically (al-Ṣuḥbah bi
al-Badan). It also gives other meanings such as the Arab saying
"ṣāḥib māl" meaning a possessor of wealth. It is obvious that a possessor
of wealth does not always accompany his wealth. From the discussion of
al-Nu^{c}mān thus it appears that although the Imām does not accompany the
Prophet in the physical sense, he accompanies the Prophet in the sense
of possessing the Prophetic knowledge.[42] Following al-Nu^{c}mān's philolo-
gical analysis we may say that al-Nu^{c}mān's discussion of the Qur'ān-
Imām companionship which we have already mentioned (p. 46) is also based
on the latter interpretation. The Imām keeps company with the Qur'ān in
the sense of possessing the Divine knowledge.

Al-Nu^{c}mān's discussion suggests that the companions were not
legitimate models for the rest of the believers. On the contrary, for
al-Nu^{c}mān, it is only the Imams who are the associates of the Prophet and
hence ideal for the community. He supports the this view with the
fact that the Prophet transmitted his knowledge to the Imams. Elabora-
ting this, al-Nu^{c}mān provides considerable evidence such as the following
verses and a Prophetic tradition. (1) "Ask the people of the remembrance
if ye know not." (xvl:43). (2) "O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey
the messenger and those of you who are in authority." (1v:59). Al-Nu^{c}mān
then cites the ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn.[43] Basing his argument on the above
mentioned evidence, al-Nu^{c}mān considers the Imams as the possessors of
the knowledge of both the Qur'ān and sunnah of the prophet. In his
opinion every former Imam transmits this knowledge to his successor.
Expressing this he uses atharuh, rawawh and awda^{c}uh.[44] Al-Nu^{c}mān's view
leads us to the fact that the Imam speaks of the Divine knowledge. In
turn he does not speak from his own desire. This may be the reason for
al-Nu^{c}mān's consideration of the Imam as the only trustworthy informant.
From this, according to al-Nu^{c}mān, it follows that the Imam is the only
legitimate leader to be followed. Al-Nu^{c}mān then makes a distinction between the
Shī^{c}ah, i.e.Ismā^{c}īlī,notion of obedience and the non-Ismā^{c}īlī concept of
taqlīd. According to al-Nu^{c}mān, the Ismā^{c}īlī notion may be referred to
as taṣdīq not taqlīd. Taṣdīq means to believe someone to be truthful.
For al-Nu^{c}mān, the Ismā^{c}īlīs follow the Imam, believing that he has
received Divine knowledge, but taqlīd does not have this sense. In the
opinion of al-Nu^{c}mān, taqlīd is an imitation without knowledge of the status
of the leader. He substantiates this definition by some verses such as
"when it is said unto them: come unto that which Allah hath revealed and

unto the messenger, they say: enough for us is that wherein we found our fathers. What even though their fathers had no knowledge whatsoever and no guidance." (V:104).[45]

According to al-Nu^{c}mān, the taqlīd characterized by the Qur'ān indicates that the imitators neither observe critically those whom they imitate nor argue with them because of their inferior knowledge.[46] Al-Nu^{c}mān afterwards concentrates on the position of those imitated by the non-Shī^{c}ah. In his opinion, the ones considered as models may not be followed since they rely on reasoning in religion – not on the Qur'ān and sunnah of the Prophet (athar). Al-Nu^{c}mān probably refers to the non-Shī^{c}ah jurists such as Abū Ḥanīfah who is credited with using reasoning. Al-Nu^{c}mān consequently sees a major difference between the Ismā^{c}īlī attitude and that of the non-Shī^{c}ah. The Ismā^{c}īlī attitude is based on belief only in the possessors of the Divinely bestowed and transmitted knowledge while the non-Shī^{c}ah attitude is dependent on the reasoning of those who were not authorized by Divine command.[47]

Consensus (ijmā^c)

Secondly, al-Nu^{c}mān studies the role of consensus in the context of the non-Shī^{c}ah additional sharī^{c}ah sources. In the opinion of al-Nu^{c}mān, consensus is another kind of repudiation of the Imāms. However, let us first present the position of the adherents of consensus so that al-Nu^{c}mān's critical study may be justified. Consensus is basically substantiated by the following Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic traditions. (1) "Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be witness against mankind and that the messenger may be a witness against you." (11:143). (2) "He hath named you Muslim of old time and in this (scripture),

that the messenger may be a witness against you, and that ye may be wit-
ness against mankind." (XXII: 78). (3) "And whoso opposeth the messenger
after the guidance (of Allah) hath been manifested unto him, and followeth
other than the believer's way, We appoint for him that unto which he him-
self hath turned, and expose him unto hell, a hopeless journey's end."
(IV:115).[48]

According to the interpretation of the upholders of consensus, the
word muslimīn, mu'minīn and ummah used in the above mentioned verses refer
to all the believers. Thus the consensus of all Muslims should be
followed.[49] As traditions, the following are cited. The Prophet is
reported to have said: (1) "Allah will never make my community agree on
an error."[50] (2) "You should follow the community, for Satan accompanies
one person, but stands away from two."[51]

The verses and the traditions appear to be at the centre of the whole
discussion of consensus. It should, however, be borne in mind that the
definition of consensus has not remained consistent. The divergent views
may be witnessed in the fact that some of the non-Shī^{c}ah such as
al-Shāfi^{c}ī maintained the above mentioned view, that is that the consensus
of all the Muslims should be followed.[52] Others confined it to particular
groups, for instance, the Mālikīs restricted it to the general consensus
of the scholars particularly of those of Madīnah.[53] At any rate, though
al-Nu^{c}mān objects to all the views, he particularly concentrates his ob-
jection on the first one, probably because to him this may be the origin
of other views. In any case, al-Nu^{c}mān considers this attitude as
unjustified. In his opinion, it is illogical to take all community members
to be models since the community includes sinful, ignorant and even

misled Muslims.[54]

In contrast to the non-Shī‘ah attitude; al-Nu‘mān holds that God has used a number of terms such as community (ummah) to refer to the prophet and then the Imām. To substantiate this he cites a number of verses such as (1) "and remember when his Lord tried Abraham with His commands, and he fulfilled them, He said: lo! I have appointed thee a leader (Imām) for mankind. Abraham said: And of my offspring (will they be leaders)? He said: my covenant includeth not wrongdoers." (11:124). (2) "And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundation of the House (they prayed): our Lord accept from us (this duty). Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Hearer, the Knower. Our Lord! And make us submissive unto Thee and of our progeny, a nation (ummah) submissive unto Thee, and show us our ways of worship, and relent toward us. Lo! Thou, only, Thou art Relenting and Merciful." (11:127,128). (3) "And when Abraham said: my Lord! Make safe this territory and preserve me and my sons from serving idols." (xlv:35).[55] Al-Nu‘mān interprets these verses and refers to Imām al-Ṣādiq. According to the Imām, the words progeny (dhurriyyah) and the nation (ummah) contained in these verses indicate only those descended from Abraham, namely Muḥammad, ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and the later Imāms. These are the individuals who fulfilled the conditions mentioned in the verses; for example they never worshipped anything except God. Therefore, in the opinion of Imām Ja‘far, the prayer of Abraham/Ishmael is applicable to them – not to all the Muslims. However, a member of the community who has reverence for Muḥammad and his progeny and follows them may be included in the ideal community.[56] Furthermore, the Imām refers to these verses. (1) "And there may spring from you a nation

who invite to goodness and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency
Such are they who are successful." (III 104)   (2) "We have appointed
you a middle nation, that ye may be witness against mankind, and that
the messenger may be a witness against you." (II 143).

According to the interpretation of Imām al-Ṣādiq, it is the Imām
who is referred to as the witness against the people of his time. Elabora-
ting upon this the Imām objects to the ·ᴏⁿ⁻ˢᵘ. .· view that all the
community members are referred to as witnesses against the previous
communities. Imām al-Ṣādiq's argument is based on the Islamic legal system
of witness. Accordingly, someone who has not seen an event is not accepted
as a witness. According to the Imām, if someone's witness to (an incon-
siderable object such as) a sa⁻ᶜ of a date is unacceptable (in this world)
his witness to the previous communities will not be accepted (on the Day
of judgment).[57] The Imām then elaborates the subject further and compares
the Prophet Muhammad and his progeny with the prophet Abraham and his
progeny most probably to show the consistency in the system of Divine
guidance. Accordingly, at the beginning of his mission, Abraham alone
was himself counted as a community (ummah), (see the Qur'ān: XVI: 120).
Afterwards, God supported him by giving him Ishmael and Isḥāq and entrusted
the prophecy and the book to the descendants of both Ishmael and Isḥāq.
Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad was alone at the initial stage of his
daᶜwah, later on, Allah assisted him and gave him ᶜAlī and Fāṭimah and
made him abundant through al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn just as He made Abraham
abundant through Ishmael and Isḥāq. 'And He entrusted the Imāmah, the
succession to the prophecy to them (al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn) and then to the
progeny of al-Ḥusayn. The transmission of the Imāmah to the progeny of

al-Husayn is similar to the transmission of prophecy from the family of Ishaq to that of Ishmael.[58]

From the whole discussion al-Nu^{c}mān concludes that the non-Shī^{c}ah position is nothing but an innovation. On the other hand, al-Nu^{c}mān thinks the Shī^{c}ah, and hence Ismā^{c}īlī notion of Imāmah is based on Divine Command.[59]

Analogy (qiyās), Deduction (istidlāl), Personal Opinion (ra'y), Reasoning (ijtihād), Juristic Preference (istihsān) and Speculation (nazar)[60]

Now we may turn to the discussion of analogy, deduction, personal opinion, reasoning, juristic preference and speculation since they are considered as parts of the supplementary sharī^{c}ah sources.[61] Since these sources emanate from one and the same origin, namely, reasoning, we will refer to them as the reason-based sources.

At any rate, the reason-based sources are substantiated by a report considered a Prophetic tradition by the upholders of the sources of reasoning. The Prophet is reported to have permitted Mu^{c}ādh b. Jabal, one of his companions to use his reasoning (ijtihād al-Ra'y) if he found nothing in the Qur'ān or the sunnah of the Prophet[62] to solve a particular problem. This report appears to be the foundation of the whole concept of reasoning. However, from al-Nu^{c}mān's harsh criticism of this claim, as we will explain later, it remains beyond any doubt that to him this report is invalid. It is impossible for al-Nu^{c}mān to believe that the Qur'ān fails to provide guidance to all the phases of a believer's life. On the contrary, to him the Qur'ān embraces all things. He supports this by the following Qur'anic verses: (1) "We have neglected nothing in the Qur'ān." (VI:38). (2) "And We revealed the scripture unto thee as an

exposition (tibyān) of all things and a guidance and a mercy and good

tidings for those who surrendered to Allah." (XVI:89).[63] From these

verses al-Nuᶜmān concludes that everything regarding devotion to God

(taᶜabbud Allah) has been indicated clearly in the Qur'ān. Elaborating

this, he argues that the word explanation (bayān) mentioned in the follow-

ing verse (XVI:44) applies to a clear and well-known object. Still if

there is something unclear then it has to be referred to the Prophet and

then to those in authority (ulu al-Amr). Substantiating this, al-Nuᶜmān

cites these verses. (1) "and We have revealed unto thee the remembrance

that thou mayst explain (li-tubayyina) to mankind that which hath been

revealed for them." (XVI:44). (2) "And whatsoever the messenger giveth

you take it and whatever he forbiddeth, abstain (from it)." (IX:7). (3)

"Whereas if they had referred it to the messenger and such of them as

are in authority (ulu al-Amr) those among them who are able to think out

(yastanbiṭūnah) the matter, would have known it." (IV:83). (4) "O ye

who believe! Obey Allah and obey the messenger and those who are in auth-

ority (ulu al-Amr)." (IV:59). (5) "This day have I perfected your religion

for you and perfected my favour unto you, and hence chosen for you as

religion al-Islam." (V:3).[64] Furthermore, dependence on reasoning regard-

ing religious matters is, al-Nuᶜmān holds, against the attitude of the

Prophet. Elaborating upon this he says that the Prophet was never

authorized to use his reasoning; on the contrary, he was directed to follow

the Divine command. Furnishing evidence for this, al-Nuᶜmān refers to

such verses as "by the star when it setteth, your comrade erreth not,

nor is deceived; Nor doth he speak of (his own) desire. It is naught

save an inspiration that is inspired, Which one of mighty powers hath

taught him," (LIII:1-6). The dependence of the Prophet on the Divine command may further be substantiated, al-Nu^{c}mān holds, by the fact that the former never answered any question by relying on his reasoning but waited for revelation. A number of verses support this, such as "they question thee O Muhammad! concerning menstruation (ḥayḍ). Say it is illness so let women alone at such times..." (11:222). Al-Nu^{c}mān concludes that if employing reasoning was permissible concerning a religious matter, then the Prophet would have been the first to do so since he was the most rightful in distinguishing (tamīz), the most truthful in his supposition (ẓann), and the most excellent in his view (ra'y), analogy (qiyās), juristic preference (istiḥsān) and deduction (istidlāl).[65] Al-Nu^{c}mān takes the point further and considers the non-Ismā^{c}īlī attitude as an innovation in the religion. According to him the non-Ismā^{c}īlī position presupposes that God has not completed His religion: both the Qur'ān and the Prophet failed to fulfil the needs of the people. So it is they who complete the religion. In the opinion of al-Nu^{c}mān, an innovation has been prohibited in the religion. Substantiating this, al-Nu^{c}mān refers to the Prophet, who is reported to have said: "follow (ittabi^{c}ū) and do not invent (wa lā tabtadi^{c}ū), for every innovation is an error (ḍalālah) and every error leads to hell."[66] Al-Nu^{c}mān insists and cites another ḥadīth transmitted by ^{c}Alī, who says: I have heard the Prophet saying: there will be a dissension (fitnah). ^{c}Alī says: I asked the Prophet, O messenger of Allah' What is the way out of it? The Prophet said: the Qur'ān, within it is information of those who preceded you, news about the ones who will follow you, and an adjudication of that which is among you. The Qur'ān is the final decision not a joke. Any tyrant who discards it, God will destroy him. And whosoever seeks guidance from a

source other than the Qur'ān, Allah will leave him to go astray. This is the firm rope of Allah, the wise remembrance, and the straight path. It is the Qur'ān - because of it the inclinations do not deviate, nor the tongues remain uncertain. The learned people are not sated with it and it is not worn out by frequent use. Its miracles never cease. It is the Qur'ān to which jinns continuously listened and eventually said: "lo it is a marvellous Qur'ān which guideth unto righteousness, so we believe in it and we ascribe unto our Lord." (LXXII:1,2). Whosoever holds it, holds the truth. He who acts according to it, will be rewarded. The one who decides by it, does justice. He who points the way to it, guides to the right path. Whosoever wishes to be guarded by it, will be guarded."[67]

From this ḥadīth al-Nuᶜmān infers that since the Qur'ān encompasses all the aspects of a believer's life it is illogical to hold that God has failed to reveal anything the believer needs to know relating to his devotion to God. In turn, in the opinion of al-Nuᶜmān, the reason-based sources are unjustified since they have nothing to do with the Qur'ān and sunnah of the Prophet.[68]

The Ismāᶜīlī Sources of the Sharīᶜah

Finally, we should present al-Nuᶜmān's view of the Imām's authority on the Qur'ān, the sunnah of the Prophet and the teachings of the previous Imāms. Since al-Nuᶜmān's consideration of the subject is based on the guidelines provided to him by the Imāms of his time, particularly Imām al-Muᶜizz, we will first take note of them. The guidelines were explained in a letter (kitāb). We will mention only those points which are closely related to our present study. Furthermore, the beginning part of the letter cannot be translated succinctly from the ·Arabic text. Therefore,

we will give a free translation of its relevant part.

To begin with, Imām al-Mu^{c}izz justifies his authority and considers himself to be the Divinely appointed possessor of the exalted status of the khilāfah and the high degree of the Imāmah by referring to himself as the commander of the faithful (amīr al-Mu'minīn). (The insistence of al-Mu^{c}izz on the phrase "the commander of the faithful" may refer to the authority óf the ulu al-Amr mentioned in the verse (IV:59) which is always referred to by the Shī^{c}ah). Imām al-Mu^{c}izz further mentions the various aspects of his authority and says that Allah has appointed him as a shining lamp on earth so that guidance may be obtained through him, and light can be sought by means of him. Moreover, according to the Imām, God has set him up as a landmark for creation, a conductor of His affairs, as the one who made the pillar of the faith firm, the one who fastened the covenants of Islām. In addition, in the opinion of the Imām, Allah made him the one who plainly manifested the sharā'i^c of his ancestor, Muḥammad, the messenger of God, may Allah's blessings be upon him and his progeny. Afterwards, Imām al-Mu^{c}izz implying the sources of Ismā^{c}īlī law, says "...(O Nu^{c}mān!) in all your decisions and judgments, you should follow the Book of God to Whom belong the Might and Majesty, the Book "at which falsehood cannot come either from in front of it or from behind it. (It is) revelation from the Wise, the Owner of praise." (XII:42). For God, to Whom belong the Might and Majesty, has clearly indicated therein what is lawful and what is unlawful. He has explained His commandments and illuminated His signposts. If you find neither a text in the Qur'ān (concerning any problem), nor a decision in the sunnah of the forefather of the commander of the faithful, Muḥammad, the messenger of

God, of the Lord of the universe, may the salutation of God be upon him,
search for it in the teachings of the pious, pure and well-guided Imāms
from the progeny of the Prophet and forebears of the commander of the
faithful; may the salutation of God be upon all of them. They are the
ones to whom God has entrusted the matters of His religion, invested in
them the depositories of His knowledge and secrets of His revelation.
He appointed them as guides for the devotees, light for the world (al-
Bilād), lamps in the darkness of the bewilderment of blindness and the
gloom of destruction (maṣābīḥ al-Dujā min ḥayrat al-ᶜA mā wa ghayāhib
al-Radā). They are the model path, and are followed in matters both
religious and temporal. If something becomes obscure to you and hence
confusing, dubious and thus problematic, refer it to the commander of
the faithful, so that he may guide you to the proper decision. Thereafter,
follow it and act accordingly, for he is the remnant (baqiyyah) of the
rightly guided caliphs (al-Khulafā' al-Mahdiyyūn) of God, the Mighty and
Majestic and the descendants (sulālah) of the rightly guided Imāms
al-A'immah al-Rāshidūn). They are the ones God, may His name be High and
Mighty, has commanded (the believers) to ask, acquire knowledge from and
refer the matter to. He (God), may His mention (dhikr) be lofty and His
name blessed, has said: "whereas if they had referred it to the messenger
and such of them as are in authority (ulū al-Amr) those among them who
are able to think out the matter would have known it." (IV:83). And He,
may his name be lofty, has said: "ask the people of remembrance (ahl
al-Dhikr) if ye know not." (XVI:43). And Muḥammad, the speaking Prophet
(al-Nabī al-Nāṭiq) and the truthful messenger, may God's salutation be
upon him and his progeny, has said: "I am leaving amongst you two sub-
stantial things, the Book of Allah and my progeny. You shall not go

astray as long as you hold fast unto them. They shall not separate till
they come to the pond."[69]

Al-Nu^{c}mān bases his consideration on the preceding directing principles
and expounds the Shī^{c}ah sharī^{c}ah sources. He insists on the fact that
the Qur'ān contains within itself knowledge of all things. As regards
the interpretation of revelation, according to al-Nu^{c}mān, although some
verses are clear, others are not. They need an explanation. Al-Nu^{c}mān
probably makes an allusion to the Qur'ānic verse (III:7) which speaks
of the duality of the nature of the Qur'ān, namely, the clear revelation
(āyāt muhkamāt) and the allegorical verses (mutashābihāt). However, for
al-Nu^{c}mān, the unclear verses may not possibly be explained by others
than the Prophet and the Imāms. In the opinion of al-Nu^{c}mān, the inter-
pretative authority of the Imāms is the point of demarcation between the
Imāms and the believers. Discussing this al-Nu^{c}mān says that the obscure
part (Ighmād) of the Qur'ān points to the fact that the devotees of God
need the guidance of the Imāms. He further says that the concealed portion
of revelation is a proof that God has exclusively taught the Imāms. If
this was not the case, al-Nu^{c}mān argues, all the people would be equal
and there would be no question of superior (fādil) and non-superior
(mafdūl).[70] Al-Nu^{c}mān propounds the point further and particularly con-
centrates on some Qurānic verses such as "O ye who believe! Obey Allah,
and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority (ulu al-Amr)".
(IV:49). According to al-Nu^{c}mān, as we will explain later, the phrase
"those in authority" in this verse refers to the Imāms. However, the non-
Shī^{c}ah hold different views on the interpretation of the Qurānic term
"those in authority". Some of them consider jurists as those in authority

while others consider the term to refer to army officers.[71] The non-
Shī^{c}ah view is, of course, unacceptable to al-Nu^{c}mān for the following
reasons: the jurists are not unanimous among themselves on many such
matters as to what is lawful and what is unlawful.[72] Elaborating this,
al-Nu^{c}mān puts the question to the upholders of this view: "do you think
it is permissible for God to command His devotees to ask the people of
different opinions? If the response is positive, then whose interpreta-
tion should be taken? Al-Nu^{c}mān is insistent on this point and raises
another question: is it legitimate to hold that the truth lies within
the explanation of all of them or within those of only some of them?
Al-Nu^{c}mān, in any case, sees a contradiction in the non-Shī^{c}ah attitude
and says that God never commands His devotees to acquire knowledge from
people who are of different opinion among themselves.[73] Likewise, al-
Nu^{c}mān objects to the view that army officers are the ones referred to
as "those in authority". Expounding this he says that obedience to army
officers is obligatory insofar as the Imām appoints them. In this case,
army officers do not possess a higher status than the rest of the believers.
All of them are equal and God has commanded them to obey those in authority,
that is to say the Imām.[74]

Al-Nu^{c}mān's stress on the concealed parts of the Qur'an, to be inter-
preted by the Imām alone, may provide a justification for the Imām to
give a further interpretation of the Divinely revealed law.

Since the sunnah of the Prophet is believed to be one of the Shī^{c}ah
sharī^{c}ah sources, it is inevitable that we should examine it. It is well
known that the discussion of the sunnah and hadīth of the Prophet has
always been one of the most controversial subjects among all the Muslims.

Since we are unable to deal with it in detail, we present briefly the
Shī^cah position alone. According to al-Nu^cmān, the Imāms are the
possessors and transmitters of the sunnah and hadīth of the Prophet.[75]
Elaborating this al-Nu^cmān insists on the authority of the Imāms. He
considers the saying (qawl) of the Imāms as unchallengeable (hujjah).
This is so because they have been Divinely authorized. Substantiating
this, al-Nu^cmān refers to the verses (IV:59) and (XVI:43) which contain
the phrase "ulu al-Amr" and "ahl al-Dhikr". In view of this al-Nu^cmān
holds, the Imāms are trustworthy in whatever they say (musaddaqūn fīh,
umanā' ^calayh).[76]

In addition to this, the Imām, in the opinion of al-Nu^cmān, represents
both the Prophet (al-Nātiq) and ^cAlī (asās). Accordingly, the Imām
manifests the virtues (fadā'il) of the Prophet. He unveils the allusions
(rumūz) and the true meanings (mamthulāt) given by the Prophet by means
of the exoteric aspect (zahir) of the revelation (tanzīlih) and of the
sharī^cah. On the other hand, the Imām takes possession of the ta'wīl
of the da^cwah of the asās (^cAlī) and the secrets (bawātin) of his hikmah.[77]
Consequently, both the exoteric and esoteric aspects of the Islamic teach-
ings may be understood through the Imām. Substantiating this al-Nu^cmān
refers to this hadīth. "I am the city of the knowledge and ^cAlī is its
gate. Whoever wants to enter the city, he should enter through the gate."[78]

In view of this evidence, al-Nu^cmān confines the Divine knowledge
to ^cAlī and to the later Imāms. He supports this by the following verse.
"That (this) is indeed a noble Qur'ān, in a Book kept hidden, which none
toucheth save the purified (al-Mutahharūn). (LVI:77-79.[79] According
to the interpretation of al-Nu^cmān, "a Book" mentioned in this verse refers

to ^{G}Alī. In him is written the ta'wīl of the sharī^{TC}ah and its true meanings (manthulāt), which is veiled and hidden (maknūn, khafī, mastūr). Nobody knows this knowledge except the purified ones, namely, the Imāms.[80]

Al-Nu^{C}mān's consideration of the Imāms as the authority on the Divine knowledge reaches its peak when he declares "If a person claims that he obeys God and His messenger but disobeys the Imām or denies him, he is sinful due to his disobedience to the Imām. Due to his denial of and disobedience to the Imām, neither his obedience to Allah and to His messenger nor any of his actions will be accepted."[81]

Furthermore, the Imāms are fully aware of the attitudes of the previous Imāms. Al-Nu^{C}mān's view that the Imāms know best that which emanates from their ancestors (fahum...a^{C}lam bi-al-Thābit ^{C}an abā'ihim), indicates that the Imāms are the authority on the previous Imāms.[82]

At the end of this discussion we may say that the Shī$^{-C}$ah and the non-Shī$^{-C}$ah appear to agree in their insistence on an urgent need to interpret the sharī^{TC}ah in ever-changing circumstances. However, the Ismā$^{-C}$īlīs and the non-Ismā$^{-C}$īlī groups differ as to who is the legitimate interpreter.

Al-Nu^{C}mān's discussion demonstrates that the Ismā$^{-C}$īlī Imām is the Divinely authorized interpreter of the sharī^{TC}ah on earth, in which case the non-Ismā$^{-C}$īlī additional sharī^{TC}ah sources are unjustified because they do not come from the Imāms. This being so, the major point of contention is again the different approaches to the legitimization of the inter-preters concerned, namely the Divinely designated Imām for the Ismā$^{-C}$īlīs and non-Divinely designated ones, that is to say the jurists, for the non-Ismā$^{-C}$īlīs.

Footnotes to Chapter III

[1] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Da^{c}ā'im, pp.45-46

[2] Ibid., p.46

[3] Idem, Asās, pp.28-32

[4] Ibid., p.28

[5] Ibid

[6] Ibid., pp.29-32

[7] Idem, Ta'wīl al-Da^{c}ā'im, p.47

[8] Al-Shīrāzī, Al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, First volume edited by Muṣṭafā Ghālib, 8 vols. (Beirūt: Dār al-Andalus, 1974). I:97; Al-Shahrastānī, Al-Milal, p.39

[9] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Asās, p.30; although this ḥadīth exists in a number of Shī^{c}ah and Ṣūfī sources as well as in some Sunnī theological sources, it does not exist in the Sunnī ḥadīth collections. According to al-Nu^{c}mān, however, the ḥadīth has been agreed upon by the ummah (ijmā^c al-Ummah). It seems that by expressing this view al-Nu^{c}mān may take into account the Shī^{c}ah sources, Ṣūfī sources and Sunnī theological sources. See for a detailed study: Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Barqī, Kitāb al-Mahāsin ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq, 2 vols. (Najaf al-Ashraf, 1964), 2:243; Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Zarkashī, Al-Burhān fī ^{c}ulūm al-Qur'ān, ed. M. Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm 4 vols. (Egypt: Dār Iḥyā kutub al-^{c}Arabiyyah, 1957-1958), 2:169; for further information on this subject see: Abū Ṭalib al-Makkī, Qut al-Qulūb, 1st edition (Egypt: Al-Maṭba^{c}ah al-Miṣriyyah, 1932), 2:6-7; Ibn Taymīyyah. "Al-Risālah Fī al-^{c}Ilm al-Bāṭin Wa al-Ẓāhir", Majmū^{c}at Rasā'il al-Munīriyyah ed. Muḥammad Amīn Damaj, 2 vols. (Beirūt: Idārat Tabā^{c}ah al-Munīriyyah, 1970), I:230; Gerhard Bowering, The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), pp.138-142

[10] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Asās, p.31

[11] Ibid., p.58; Idem, Da^{c}ā'im, p.67

[12] The word ta'wīl embraces a number of meanings such as discovery, explanation, The End and the interpretation of dreams. See: Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-^{c}Arab, s.v. "awwal"; however, in its narrow sense it is taken as parallel to the exoteric aspect of the Qur'ān. See the following notes particularly no.14,15

[13] Commentators, particularly the Sunnī, make a distinction between ta'wīl and tafsīr. According to al-Suyūṭī, one of the Sunnī commentators, whatever is obvious in the Qur'ān and has also been fixed in the Sunnah of the Prophet is referred to as tafsīr, while ta'wīl is discovered by the experts

in the field. See: Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyyuṭī, Al-Itqān Fī ^{C}Ulūm al-Qur'ān,
2 vols. (Qāhirah: Hijazī Press, n.d.), 1:183; for the ShīCah view see:
note no.15

[14]Different opinions have been expressed regarding the interpretation
of this verse. Let us first take note of the Sunnī sources. According
to al-Ṭabarī, the commentators on the Qur'ān hold two different views
of this subject. CA'ishah, Ubay and Ibn CAbbās, for example, hold that
"those who are of sound instruction" (al-Rāsikhūn fī al-CIlm) do not know
the ta'wīl. In the opinions of these individuals, the phrase "those who
are of sound instruction" is not to be taken as an adjunct to the name
Allah (maCṭūf Calā ism Allah). In this case al-Rāsikhūn fī al-CIlm
confess only by saying "we believe therein, the whole is from our Lord".
On the other hand, Ibn CAbbās heads those who are of the opinion that
"al-Rāsikhūn fī al-CIlm"know the ta'wīl. Possessing the knowledge they
confess "we believe therein, the whole is from our Lord". It should be
noted that it is possible that Ibn CAbbās first expressed the former view
and then changed to the latter one. Otherwise the contradiction between
these views does not make any sense. Mujāhid, RabīC and some others hold
the second view. For the upholders of this view the phrase "al-Rāsikhūn
fī al-CIlm" is an adjunct to the name Allah. See: Al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr,
3:182-184. As for the ShīCah, it seems that the vast majority of them
consider the phrase "al-Rāsikhūn fī al-CIlm" as an adjunct to the name
Allah. Consequently, "those who are of sound instruction, "namely the
Imāms, know the ta'wīl which we are going to explain now in the text with
special reference to one of the sayings of Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, a
commentary on the verse mentioned above. See for a detailed study:
Al-NuCmān, DaCā'im, 1:28-29; Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣūl, 1:213; CAlī Ibrāhīm
al-Qummī, Tafsīr al-Qummī, ed. Al-Sayyid Ṭayyib al-Mūsawī, 2nd edition,
2 vols. (Al-Najaf: MaṭbaCat al-Najaf, 1968), 1:96-97; However, Abū JaCfar
al-Ṭusī, one of the IthnāCasharī commentators not only neglects the ShīCah
position on the subject, but also seems to incline towards the former
view to be found in the Sunnī sources, namely that "al-Rāsikhūn fī al-CIlm"
do not know the ta'wīl. This may be substantiated by the fact that al-,
Ṭusī seems to consider the phrase "al-Rāsikhūn fī al-CIlm" as not connec-
ted with the name Allah by putting "mim" in between, a sign of pause.
Al-Ṭusī's neglect of the ShīCah view strengthens our doubt of his acknow-
ledgement of the majority view of the ShīCah. See: Abū JaCfar al-Ṭusī,
Al-Tibyān Fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, 10 vols. (Al-Najaf al-Ashraf: Maktabat
al-Amīn, 1964-1969), 2:394-400. Some modern IthnāCasharī commentators
such as Mir Aḥmad Alī like al-Ṭusī do not connect the phrase "al-Rasikhūn
fī al-CIlm"with the name Allah. Mir Ahmad Ali, however, expresses the
view that those who are of sound instruction know the ta'wīl. See:
Mir Aḥmad Ali, The Holy Quran English Translation and Commentary (Karachi:
Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust, n.d.), pp.146,147,150-153

[15]Al-NuCmān, DaCā'im, p.28,29; Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣūl, 1:213; it should be
borne in mind that Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir has repeatedly used the word
ta'wīl in his statement. It seems to us that the recurrence of the word
implies different meanings. Accordingly, in the beginning, the Imām uses
the word in a specific sense, that is to say, as parallel to the exoteric
dimension (tanzīl), but afterwards he applies it as covering all the
interpretative Qur'ānic sciences. At any rate, in its narrow sense it
is employed as a synonym of the baṭin of the Qur'ān. See: Al-NuCmān,
Asās, p.71

[16] Idem, Da^{c}ā'im, pp.21-22

[17] Idem, Ta'wīl, p.86

[18] Ibid, p.200; Ibn Athīr, Usud, p.32; according to some other sources the prophet once addressing his companions said: "there is a person among you who will fight for the sake of the ta'wīl of the Qur'ān just like I fought for the sake of its tanzīl." Upon hearing this Prophetic statement, Abū Bakr and then ^{c}Umar stood up (expecting that the Prophet had referred to them). However, the Prophet said: "no, but it is the one who is mending the shoes (khāṣif al-Na^{c}l)". At that time, ^{c}Alī was mending the shoes of the Prophet. See: Aḥmad Ḥanbal, Musnad 3:33,82; see also: Al-Ḥākim, Mustadrak, pp.132-133

[19] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Ta'wīl, p.61

[20] Ibid, Idem, Asās, p.31

[21] Idem, Ta'wīl, p.66

[22] Ibid, p.71

[23] Ibid, p.66; Al-Majālis, p.94; Asās, p.85

[24] Idem, Ta'wīl, p.66

[25] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Al-Himmah, p.128; similar expressions are to be found in other Shī^{c}ah branches such as Ithnā^{c}asharī Shī^{c}ism. The terms connections (asbāb) and inspiration (ta'yīd), may be given as examples of this. See for a detailed study: Abd al-Karīm Crow, "The Teaching of Ja^{c}far al-Ṣādiq" (M.A. thesis, The Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, 1980), pp.37,38,143,144,145,148,149

[26] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Iftitāḥ, p.338

[27] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Ikhtilāf, p.40

[28] Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Mu^{c}jam mufradāt al-Qur'ān, 1972 ed., s.v. "shar^c"

[29] Al-Nu^{c}mān, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd", London, The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library, Fyzee Mss, MS(R) 25; fol. 130; Encyclopaedia of Islam, old ed., s.v. "Sharī^{c}a" by Schacht; Fyzee, Outlines of Muhammadan Law, 4th ed. (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1974), p.16

[30] Al-Nu^{c}mān, "Al-Tawḥīd", fol.130

[31] Ibid., fol.131

[32] Idem, Ikhtilāf p.3; ^{c}Alā al-Dīn ^{c}Alī Muttaqī al-Hindī, Kanz al-^{c}Ummāl, ed. Ṣafwat al-Saqqā, 16 vols. (Ḥalab and Beirūt: Maktabat al-Turāth al-Islāmī and Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1974), 9:641-643; ^{c}Umar the first probably refers to this ḥadīth when he says "^{c}Alī is the best judge among us..."

See: Ibn Ḥajar, <u>Thahdhīb</u> 7.337, this may be the grounds for the Shī^cah view that the Imām is the informed expert of the Divine law (al-^CĀlim bi al-Aḥkām) see: Al-Qummī, ^CUyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā, ed. S. Mahdī (Qumm: Dār al-^CIlm, 1377 A.H.) p.54

[33]Al-Nu^cmān, <u>Ikhtilāf</u>, p.3

[34]Ibid., p.4

[35]Ibid., for a detailed study of the subject see: P.J. Vatikiotis, <u>The Fatimid Theory of State</u>, first ed. (Lahore: Orientalia publication, 1957), pp.69-94

[36]Al-Nu^cmān, <u>Ikhtilāf</u>, pp.4-5

[37]Ibid., p.31

[38]Ibid., p.33; Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ^CAlī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, <u>Kitāb al-Kifāyah</u>, ed. Muḥammad ^CAlī ^CAbbāsī (Hyderabad: The Dā'irat al-Ma^Cārif al-^CUthmāhiyyah, pp.60-61; Muḥammad b. ^CAlī al-Shawkānī, <u>Irshād al-Fuḥūl</u> (Egypt: Maktabat wa Maṭba^Cat Muḥammad ^CAlī, 1349 A.H.), pp.73-74

[39]Al-Nu^cmān, <u>Ikhtilāf</u>, pp.33-34

[40]Ibid., p.36

[41]Ibid., p.37

[42]Ibid., p.38

[43]Ibid

[44]Ibid., p.47

[45]Ibid., pp.53-54

[46]Ibid., p.54

[47]Ibid., pp.54-55

[48]Ibid., pp.56-57

[49]Ibid., p.57

[50]ibid., Al-Shāfi^Cī, <u>Risālah</u>, p.65

[51]Al-Nu^cmān, <u>Ikhtilāf</u>, p.77; Tirmidhī, <u>Sahīh</u> 11:11

[52]Al-Nu^cmān, <u>Ikhtilāf</u>, p.82-85; It should be noted that al-Nu^cmān, without specifically referring to an individual, mentions the view of those who consider the unanimous agreement of all the Muslims as the consensus. However, from other sources it is obvious that al-Shāfi^Cī is the one who

insists on the consensus of all the Muslims (^{c}ammah). See: Al-Shāfi^{c}ī, Risālah, p.65; Joseph Schacht, An introduction to Islamic Law (Oxford: The University Press, 1979), pp.47-49; Idem, The Origin of Muhammadan Jurisprudence (Oxford: The University Press: 1979), p.88-94

[53] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Ikhtilāf, p.94-97; Schacht, An introduction, p.61, Idem, The Origin, p.83-85

[54] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Ikhtilāf, p.58

[55] Ibid., pp.64,65,74

[56] Ibid., pp.74-75

[57] Ibid., p.76; The Imām is the witness against the believers of his time. See: Ja^{c}far, "Sarā'ir"

[58] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Ikhtilāf, p.77

[59] Ibid

[60] Ibid., pp.9-10

[61] Ibid., p.10; It is clear from the relevant sources that all the non-Ismā^{c}īlī groups such as the Sunnīs and the Mu^{c}tazilah relied more or less on reasoning to decide what is legal and what is not. Consequently, the reason-based sources were introduced. See for a detail study: Ibid., pp.98,162,165,191,195,196,202,205,212,213; also see: Introduction, pp.128-133; Schacht, The Origin pp.98-128

[62] Abū Dā'ud, Sunan, 4 vols. (Beirūt, Dār al-Kātib al-^{c}Arabī, n.d.), 3:330-331, it is interesting to know that contrary to the above mentioned report, the Prophet is reported to have directed Mu^{c}adh to refer unclear matters to the Prophet. See: Ibn Mājah, Sunan, ed. Muḥammad Fu'ād ^{c}Abd al-Bāqī 2 vols. (Egypt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al ^{c}Arabī, 1975), 1:21

[63] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Ikhtilāf, p.11,12

[64] Ibid., pp.12-13

[65] Ibid., pp.13-16

[66] Ibid., p.16; Al-Dārimī, Sunan 2 Vols.(Qāhirah, Dār al-Fikr, 1978), 1:45

[67] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Ikhtilāf, pp.16-17; Al-Dārimī, Sunan, 2:435-436

[68] Al-Nu^{c}mān, Ikhtilāf, pp.17-18

[69] Ibid., pp.22-23

[70] Ibid., p.26

[71] Ibid., p.27; see for the different views. Al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, 5: 147-149

[72] Al-Nuᶜmān, Ikhtilāf, p.27

[73] Ibid

[74] Ibid., p.28

[75] Ibid., p.47

[76] Ibid., pp.147-148

[77] Idem, Asās, p.363

[78] Ibid., p.365

[79] Ibid., p.366

[80] Ibid

[81] Idem, Al-Himmah, p.48

[82] Idem, Ikhtilāf, pp.148-149

CONCLUSION

Al-Nu^{c}mān's discussion of the Imāmah is a representation of the early

Shī^{i}h attitude to the Muslim leadership, one of the fundamental princip-

les of Shī^{c}ah Islām. Al-Nu^{c}mān's consideration covers the manifold aspects

of the authority of the Imām.

The first and foremost dimensions of the Imām are the legitimizing

factors of the Imāmah, that is to say, the explicit designation and inheri-

tance. Al-Nu^{c}mān's discussion of the Divine appointment of the Imām bears

witness to the fact that Almighty Allah has never neglected His creatures

but rather has communicated with them through His delegated agents from

the beginning of time. Thus belief in the presence of a Divinely appoin-

ted guide after the demise of the Prophet Muhammad is not unnatural but

an expression of the unchangeable practice (sunnah) of God. The denial

of this universally established fact would result in the denial of the

Divine practice, in which case the greatest Mercy of Allah would be consid-

ered as restricted to some while excluding others. But the fact is that

Allah is the Lord of the whole universe (rabb al-^{c}Ālamīn). The essential

responsibility of God to His servants is providing them with guidance.

The continuation of the Divine guidance is substantiated by the following

verse, which appears to be the basis for the evidence furnished by al-

Nu^{c}mān. "(O Prophet!) Thou art a Warner only, and for every folk a

guide". (XIII:7).[1] Al-Nu^{c}mān's insistence on the Divine appointment is

reference to the consistency in the Divine practice. Thus, the Shī^{c}ah

view of the Imāmah as the exclusive right of the progeny of the Prophet

Muhammad through ^{c}Alī and Fāṭimah is in accordance with the Divine practice.

This is confirmed by the application of the same rule in the era of

Prophecy. God chose certain families for the office of prophethood. The following verses refer to this. (1) "Lo Allah preferred Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above (all His) creatures. They were descendants one of another. Allah is Hearer and Knower." (III:33,34).[2] (2) "That is Our argument (hujjah). We gave it unto Abraham against his folk. We raise unto degrees of wisdom whom We will. Lo thy Lord is Wise, Aware. And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob, each of them We guided; and Noah did We guide aforetime and of his seed. (We guided) David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward good. And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias. Each one (of them) was of the righteous. And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot. Each one of them did We prefer above (Our) creatures, with some of their forefathers and their offspring and their brethren; and We chose them and guided them unto a straight path." (VI:84-88).[3]

According to the classical Shi^cah doctrine as represented by our author, since the Imamah is the succession to the Prophecy, the Imām must be from the progeny of the Prophet and must be Divinely designated. In view of this, the terms āl, ahl al-Bayt, ^citrah, dhurriyyah and walī, khalīfah, Imām, warith, hād and waṣī, used in the Qur'ān or in the Prophetic hadīth regarding the family of the Prophet and his successorship, are taken to be expressions of the Divine authority of the Imāms.

The non-Shi^cas may, however, object to this view and say that the community at large can exercise the authority to elect an Imām. Substantiating this the following verse may particularly be referred to. "And (O Prophet!) consult with them upon the conduct of affairs". (III:159). .

Al-Nu'mān on the other hand would take this verse as evidence for the
necessity of the presence of a Divinely appointed Imām for the following
reason: The Prophet was commanded to consult the believers and finally
give his own decision. This verse, therefore, does not empower the community
members to pass any judgment on a religious affair. There are a consider-
able number of verses which indicate that the believers should obey the
Prophet and accept his authority willingly. The following verses may
be given as examples of this. (1) "O ye who believe Obey Allah and obey
the messenger and those of you who are in authority, and if ye have a
dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and His messenger if
you are (in truth) believe in Allah and the last day." (IV:59). (2) "But
nay by thy Lord, they will not believe (in truth) until they make thee
judge of what is in dispute between them and find within themselves no
dislike of that which thou decidest and submit with full submission."
(IV:65). (3) "And whatsoever the messenger gives take it. And whatsoever
he forbiddeth, abstain (from it)." (LIX:7).[6]

Similarly, al-Nu'mān's elaboration of the inheritance in the Imāmah
reveals that the Imāms are the legitimate recipients of the Prophetic
inheritance, particularly the Divine knowledge. The Ismā'īlī view of
the Imāms' knowledge as the continuation of the knowledge deposited with
Adam may be an indication of the metaphysical aspect of the Imām. This
aspect is frequently referred to as the Divine Light (nūr).

From this it follows that al-Nu'mān's discussion of the inheritance
is an objection to the non-Ismā'īlī view. According to our author neither
the Ṣūfis nor those considered as religious scholars in other non-Ismā'īlī
circles are the legitimate inheritors of the Prophetic knowledge. This

is so because al-Nu^{c}mān would say that the non-Ismā^{c}īlīs fail to fulfil

the condition of the designation, the first and foremost legitimizing

basis for receiving the Prophetic legacy.

The role of the designation and that of inheritance establishes justi-

fication for the Imām's position as the sole interpreter of the Qur'ān,

the source of Divine knowledge. It should be mentioned that the function

of the Imām as the interpreter of the Qur'ān appears to be justified by

the fact that the Qur'ān is the everlasting guidance. Therefore, it is

capable of fulfilling all the needs of the believers. The comprehensive-

ness of the Qur'ān found expression in the exoteric/esoteric dimensions

of the final revelation. According to the Ismā^{c}īlīs this duality in

the Qur'ān plays a remarkable role in establishing the authority of the

Imām. The esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān is particularly stressed regar-

ding the knowledge of the Imām.

At any rate, the distinction made between the exoteric and esoteric

aspects must not give the impression that the Imām has nothing to do with

the ẓāhir/tanzīl of the Qur'ān. The explanation forwarded by al-Nu^{c}mān

shows that though the Prophet is the founder of the exoteric aspect of

the Qur'ān, his successors (khulafā'), namely, the Imāms, are the only

possessors of the knowledge of the sunnah of the Prophet. The Imāms'

authority on the tanzīl may be witnessed in al-Nu^{c}mān's discussion of

the Imāms as the interpreters of the sharī^{c}ah. Furthermore, the Imāms are

the authority on the teachings of the previous Imāms.

In conclusion we may say that al-Nu^{c}mān's elaboration of the Imāms'

interpretative authority of the revelation suggests that the Imām of the

time is the only means through whom one can understand the Divine knowledge. This in turn implies that obedience to the Imām is obedience to the Prophet and to God.

Footnotes to the Conclusion

[1] Al-Nu^cmān, <u>Da^cā'im</u>, p.28; Idem, <u>Ikhtilāf</u>, p.51; Idem, <u>Al-Majālis</u>, p.118

[2] Idem, <u>Da^cā'im</u>, p.39; Idem, <u>Al-Majālis</u>, pp.48,79

[3] Idem, <u>Da^cā'im</u>, 2:365-366; Idem, <u>Asās</u>, p.94

[4] Idem, <u>Ikhtilāf</u>, pp.129,189

[5] Ibid., pp.116,189

[6] Ibid., pp.12,169

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abū Dā'ūd (d.275), Sulaymān b. Ash^{C}ath. Sunan Abī Dā'ūd Ma^{C}a Sharḥ ^{C}Awn al-Ma^{C}būd. Beirūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-^{C}Arabī. n.d.

Ali, Mir Ahmad. The Holy Quran English Translation and Commentary. Karachi: Peermahomed Ebrahīm Trust. n.d.

Al-Ash^{C}arī (d.324), Abū al-Ḥasan ^{C}Alī b. Ismā^{C}īl. Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn Wa Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn. Edited by Muḥammad Muhyī al-Dīn ^{C}Abd al-Ḥamīd. 2 vols. Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah. 1969

Böwering, Gerhard. The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980

Al-Barqī (d.274 or 280), Abū Ja^{C}far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālid. Kitāb al-Maḥāsin. Edited by Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq. 2 vols. Al-Najaf al-Ashraf: Al-Maṭba^{C}ah al-Ḥaydariyyah. 1964

Al-Bukhārī (d.256), Muḥammad b. Ismā^{C}īl. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. 9 vols. Egypt: Maṭba^{C}at Muḥammad ^{C}Alī Ṣabīh. n.d.

Crow, Abd al-Karim. "The Teaching of Ja^{C}far al-Ṣādiq." M.A. thesis McGill University, Montreal, Canada. 1980

Al-Dārimī (d.255), Abū Muḥammad b. ^{C}Abd Allah b. ^{C}Abd al-Raḥmān. Sunan al-Dārimī. 2 vols. Qāhirah: Dār al-Fikr. 1978

Encyclopedia of Islam. Old ed. s.v. "Khalīfa" by Arnold, T.W.

"   "   "   "   "Sharī^{C}a " " Schacht, J.

"   "   New ed. "   "Imāma"   " Madelung, W.

"   "   "   "   "Abū Ya^{C}qūb" by Stern, S.M.

"   "   "   "   "Fadak"   " Vaglieri, L.V.

"   "   "   "   "Ghadīr"   "   "   "

Fyzee, A.A.A. "Isma^{C}ili Law and its Founder". Islamic Culture IX (1934): 107-112

————. Outline of Muhammadam Law. Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1974

————. "Al-Qadi an-Nu^{C}man the Fatimid Jurist and Author". JRAS (January 1976): 1-32

Hamdani, Abbas. The Fatimids. Karachi: Pakistan Publishing House. 1962

Al-Ḥakim al-Nayshāburī (d.405), Abū ^{C}Abd Allah Muḥammad b. ^{C}Abd Allah. Al-Mustadrak ^{C}Alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn Fī al-Hadīth. 4 vols. Hyderabad Dakan: Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma^{C}ārif al-Niẓāmiyyah. 1341 A.H.

Hasan, Hasan Ibrahīm, and Sharaf, Ṭāhā Ahmad. Al-Mu^cizz Li-Dīn Allah. Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah. 1941

Al-Hindī al-Burhānfūrī (d.975), ^cAlā al-Dīn ^cAlī al-Muttaqī b. Husām al-Dīn. Kanz al-^cUmmāl. Edited by Ṣafwat al-Saqqā. 16 vols. Ḥalab and Beirūt: Maktabat al-Turāth al-Islāmī and Mu'ssasat al-Risālah 1969-1977

Al-Ḥusaynī, Hāshim al-Ma^crūf. Sīrat al-A'immah al-Ithnā^cashariyyah. 2nd ed. 2 vols. Beirūt: Dār al-Qalam. 1978

Ibn Athīr (d.630), ^cIzz al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ^cAlī b. Abī al-Karam Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ^cAbd al-Wāhid al-Shaybānī. Usud al-Ghābah Fī Ma^crifat al-Ṣaḥābah. 5 vols. Qāhirah: Al-Maktabah al-Islāmiyyah. n.d.

Ibn Bābuyah al-Qummī (d.381), Abū Ja^cfar Muḥammad b. ^cAlī. Ma^cānī al-Akhbār. 2 vols. Al-Najaf al-Ashraf. Al-Maṭba^cah al-Ḥaydarīyyah. 1971

—————. ^cUyūn Akhbar al-Riḍā. Edited by S. Mahdī. 2 vols. Qumm: Dār al-^cIlm. 1377 A.H.

Ibn Ḥajar al-^cAsqalānī (d.852), Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl b. ^cAlī. "Raf^c al-Iṣr ^cAn Quḍāt Miṣr." Kitāb al-Wulāt Wa Kitāb al-Quḍāh by al-Kindī. Edited by Rhüvon Guest. Leyden: E.J. Brill. 1912

—————. Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb. 12 vols. Dakan: Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma^cārif al-Niẓāmiyyah. 1341 A.H.

Ibn Ḥanbal (d.241), Aḥmad. Musnad. 6 vols. Beirūt: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī. n.d.

Ibn Hishām (d.212/213), Abū Muḥammad. Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah. Edited by Ṭāhā Aḥmad Ra'ūf. 4 vols. Beirūt: Dār al-Jīl. 1975

Ibn Kathīr (d.774), ^cImād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā Ismā^cīl b. ^cUmar. Al-Bidāyah Wa al-Nihāyah. 2nd ed. 14 vols. Beirūt: Maktab al-Ma^cārif. 1974-1977

Ibn Khaldūn (d.808), Walī al-Dīn ^cAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan. Muqaddimah. Edited by I.M. Katmir. 3 vols. Beirūt: Maktabat Lubnān. 1858

Ibn Khallikān (d.681), Abū al-^cAbbās Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr. Wafayāt al-A^cyān Wa Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān. Edited by Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ^cAbd al-Ḥamīd. 6 vols. Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah. n.d.

Ibn Mājah (d.275), Abū ^cAbd Allah Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Qazwīnī. Sunan Ibn Mājah. Edited by Muḥammad Fu'ād ^cAbd al-Bāqī. Egypt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-^cArabī. 1954-1975

Ibn Manẓūr (d.711), Abū al-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mukarram. Lisān al-^cArab. 1956 ed. s.v."Wirth"

Ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman (d.381), Ja\^{c\}far b. al-Husayn b. \^{c\}Alī b. al-Farḥ b. al-Ḥawshab. "Sarā'ir al-Nuṭaqā'." London. The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library. MS 17

Ibn Qutaybah (d.270), Abū Muḥammad \^{c\}Abd Allah b. Muslim. Al-Imāmah Wa al-Siyāsah. Edited by Ṭāhā Muḥammad. 2 vols. Beirūt: Dār al-Ma\^{c\}ārif n.d.

Ibn Shahr-Āshūb al-Sarawī al-Māzandaranī (d.588), Rashid al-Dīn Muḥammad b. \^{c\}Alī. Kitāb Ma\^{c\}ālim al-\^{c\}Ulamā'. Edited by \^{c\}Abbās Iqbāl. Tehrān: Fardin. 1353 A.H.

Ibn Taghribirdī (d.874), Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Maḥāsin Yūsuf. Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah Fī Mulūk Miṣr Wa al-Qāhirah. 12 vols. Egypt: Wazārat al-Thaqāfah Wa al-Irshād al-Qawmī. n.d.

Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728), Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-\^{c\}Abbās Ahmad b. \^{c\}Abd al-Ḥalīm b. \^{c\}Abd al-Salām b. \^{c\}Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad. "Al-Risālah Fī \^{c\}Ilm al-Bāṭin Wa al-Ẓāhir." Majmū\^{c\}at al-Rasā'il al-Munīriyyah. 2 vols. Beirūt: Idārat al-Ṭabā\^{c\}ah al-Munīriyyah. 1970

\^{c\}Imād al-Dīn (d.872), Idrīs. "\^{c\}Uyūn al-Akhbār Wa Funūn al-Āthār". London. The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library. Abbas Hamdani MSS. MS(R)8

Ivanow, W. A Guide to Ismaili Literature. London: Royal Asiatic Society. 1933

————. Ismaili Literature. 2nd ed. Tehran: Tehran University. 1963

————. Studies in Early Persian Ismailism. Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1918

Jafri, S. Hussain M. The Origin and Early Development of Shī\^{c\}ah Islam. London: Longman. 1979

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d.463), Abū Bakr Ahmad b. \^{c\}Alī b. Thābit. Kitāb al-Kifāyah Fī \^{c\}Ilm al-Riwāyah. 2nd ed. Hyderabad Dakan: The Dā'irat al-Ma\^{c\}ārif al-\^{c\}Uthmāniyyah. 1970

Al-Khushanī (d.361), Abū \^{c\}Abd Allah Muḥammad b. Harith. Quḍāt-Qurṭubah Wa \^{c\}Ulamā' Ifrīqiyah. Edited by Sayyid \^{c\}Izzāt \^{c\}Aṭṭār al-Ḥusaynī. Egypt: Maktabat Nashr al-Thaqāfah. 1372 A.H.

Al-Kirmānī (d.412), Hamīd al-Dīn Ahmad b. \^{c\}Abd Allah. Rāhat al-\^{c\}Aql. Edited by Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn and Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī. Qāhirah: Dār al-Fikr al-\^{c\}Arabī. 1952

Kohlberg, E. "From Imāmiyyah to Ithnā-\^{c\}Ashariyyah". BSOAS Vol. XXXIX part 3 (1976), 521-534

Al-Kulaynī (d.328/329), Abū Ja\^{c\}far Muḥammad b. Isḥāq. Al-Uṣūl Min al-Kāfī. Edited by \^{c\}Alī Akbar al-Ghaffārī. 4th ed. 2 vols. Beirūt: Dār al-Ṣa\^{c\}b. 1401 A.H.

Lane, Edward William. An Arabic-English Lexicon. 1980 ed. s.v. "Wirth"

Madelung, Wilferd "The Sources of Ismāʿīlī Law." JNES 35 No. 1 (1976): 29-40

Al-Majduʿ (d.1183/1184), ʿAbd al-Rasūl Ujaynī. Rihrist al-Kutub Wa al-Rasāʾil. Edited by ʿAlīnaqī Monzawī. Tehrān: Dānishgāh Tehrān. 1966

Majid, ʿAbd al-Munʿim. Zuhur Khilāfat al-Fātimiyyīn Wa Suqūtuhā Fī Misr. Iskandariyyah: Dār al-Maʿārif. 1968

Al-Majlisī (d.1111), Muhammad al-Bāqir. Bihār al-Anwār. Edited by Sayyid Jawād ʿAlī and Muhammad Akhūndī. 110 vols. Tehrān: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah and Maktabat al-Islāmiyyah. 1389 A.H.-1398 A.H.

Al-Makkī (d.386), Abū Tālib Muhammad b. ʿAlī al-Harithī. Qūt al-Qulūb. 1st ed. 2 vols. Egypt: Al-Matbaʿah al-Misriyyah. 1932

Al-Maqrizī (d.845), Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad b. ʿAlī. Ittiʿāz al-Hunafāʾ bi-Akhbār al-Fātimiyyīn al-Khulafāʾ. Edited by Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl. Qāhirah: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī. 1948

Al-Marrākushī (d.8th century), Ibn ʿIdhārī. Al-Bayān al-Mughrib Fī Akhbār al-Andalus Wa al-Maghrib. Edited by G.S. Colin and E. Levi Provencal. 3 vols. (Paris and Beirūt:Librairie Orentaliste Paul Geuthner and Dār al-Thaqāfah. 1930-1951

Nanji, Azim. "The Ismāʿīlī Theory of Walāyah." Essays on Islamic Civilization. Edited by D.P. Little. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976

Nasir b. Khusraw Qubādiyānī (d.471 or 481), Abū Muʿīn Hamīd al-Dīn. Dīwān-i Ashʿār. Edited by Sayyid Nasr Allāh Taqawī. Tehrān: Kitāb Furūshiyi Ibn Sīnā. 1335 A.H.

Poonawala, I.K. "A Reconsideration of al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān's Madhhab". BSOAS XXXVII part 3 (1974): 572-579

———. Biobibliography of Ismāʿīlī Literature. California: Undena Publication Malibu. 1977

Al-Qummī (d. After 307), Abū al-Hasan ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm. Tafsīr al-Qummī. Edited by Sayyid Tayyib al-Mūsawī. 2 vols. Al-Najaf: Manshūrāt Maktabat al-Hudā. 1387 A.H.

Al-Qushayrī al-Nayshaburī (d.261), Abū al-Husayn Muslim b. Hajjāj. Sahīh Muslim. Edited by Muhammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī. 1st ed. 5 vols. Egypt: Dār Ihyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyyah. 1955

Al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī (d.502), Abū al-Qāsim al-Husayn b. Muhammad b. al-Mufaddal. Muʿjam Mufradāt al-Qurʾān. 1972 ed. s.v. "Sharʿ"

Shafiʿī (d.204), Muhammad b. Idrīs. Risālah Fī Usūl al-Fiqh. Bulāq: Al-Matbaʿah al-Kubrā al-Amīriyyah. 1321 A.H.

Schacht, Joseph. An Introduction to Islamic Law. Oxford: The University Press. 1979

———. The Origins of Muhammadam Jurisprudence. Oxford: The University Press. 1979

Al-Shahrastānī (d.548), Muhammad b. ᶜAbd al-Karīm. Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal. Edited by ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz Muḥammad al-Wakīl. 2 vols. Qāhirah: Mu'assasat al-Ḥalabī. 1968

Al-Shawkānī (d.1255), Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad. Irshād al-Fuhūl Ilā Taḥqīq al-Ḥaqq Min ᶜIlm al-Uṣūl. Egypt: Maktabat Wa Maṭbaᶜat Muḥammad ᶜAlī. 1349 A.H.

Al-Shīrāzī (d.470), Al-Mu'ayyad Fi al-Dīn Hibat Allah b. Mūsā b. Da'ūd. Al-Sīrah al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. Edited by Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn. Qāhirah: Dār al-Kātib al-Miṣrī. 1949

———. Al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. vol. 1 edited by Muṣṭafā Ghālib. 8 vols. Beirūt: Dār al-Andalus. 1974

Al-Sijistānī or Sijzī (d.329), Abū Yaᶜqūb Isḥaq b. Aḥmad. Kitāb al-Iftikhār. Edited by Muṣṭafā Ghālib. Beirūt: Dār al-Andalus. 1980

———. "Tuḥfat al-Mustajībīn." Khams Rasā'il Ismāᶜīliyyah. Edited by ᶜArif Tāmir Beirūt: Dār al-Inṣāf. 1956

Al-Suhrawardī (d.632), Abu Hafṣ ᶜUmar Shihāb al-Dīn. ᶜAwārif al-Maᶜārif. Egypt: Al-Maktabah al-ᶜĀlamiyyah. 1939

Al-Suyyūṭī (d.911), Jalāl al-Dīn ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān. Al-Itqān Fī ᶜUlūm al-Qur'ān. 2 vols. Qāhirah: Ḥijāzī Press. n.d.

Al-Ṭabarī (d.310), Muḥammad b. Jarīr. Jāmiᶜ al-Bayān ᶜAn Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān (Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī). 30 vols. Egypt: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī. 1954

———. Ta'rīkh al-Rusul Wa al-Mulūk (Ta'rīkh al-Ṭabarī). Edited by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm. 11 vols. 1960-1969

Talbi, Muhamed. L'Émirat Aghlabide. Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve. 1966

Al-Tamīmī (d.363), Al-Qāḍī al-Nuᶜmān b. Muḥammad b. Manṣūr b. Aḥmad b. Ḥayyūn. Asās al-Ta'wīl. Edited by ᶜĀrif Tāmir. Beirūt: Dār al-Thaqāfah. 1960

———. Daᶜā'im al-Islām Wa Dhikr al-Ḥalāl Wa al-Ḥarām Wa al-Qaḍāyā Wa al-Aḥkām. Edited by A.A.A. Fyzee 2 vols. Egypt: Dār al-Maᶜārif. 1951-1960

———. Iftitāḥ al-Daᶜwah. Edited by Farḥāt al-Dashrāwī. Tunis: STD. 1975

———. ———. Edited by Waddād al-Qāḍī. Beirūt: Dār al-Thaqāfah. 1970

———. Kitāb al-Himmah Fī Ādāb Atbāᶜ al-A'immah. Edited by Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn. Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-ᶜArabī. n.d.

————. Kitab Ikhtilaf Usul al-Madhahib Wa al-Radd ᶜAla Man Khalafa al-Haqq Fiha. Edited by S.T. Lokhandwala. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study. 1972

————. "Kitab al-Tawhid". London. The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library. Fyzee MSS. MS(R)25

————. Al-Majalis Wa al-Musayarat Wa al-Mawaqif Wa al-Tawqiᶜat. Edited by al-Habib al-Faqi, Ibrahim Shabbuh and Muhammad al-Yaᶜlawi. Tunis: Al-Matbaᶜah al-Rasmiyyah. 1978

————. Ta'wil al-Daᶜa'im or Tarbiyat al-Mu'minin bi- al-Tawqif (or al-Tawfiq) ᶜAla Hudud ᶜIlm al-Din. Edited by Muhammad Hasan al-Aᶜzami. 3 vols. Egypt: Dar al-Maᶜarif. n.d.

Al-Tirmidhi (d.279), Abu ᶜIsa Muhammad b. ᶜIsa b. Sawrah. Sahih Tirmidhi. 13 vols. Egypt: Al-Matbaᶜah al-Misriyyah and al-Sawi. 1931-1934

Al-Tusi (d.460), Abu Jaᶜfar. Al-Tibyan Fi Tafsir al-Qur'an. 10 vols. Al-Najaf al-Ashraf: Maktabat al-Amin. 1964-1969

Vatikiotis, Panayiotis J. The Fatimid Theory of State. 1st ed. Lahore: Orientalia Publication. 1957

Al-Warsinani al-Razi (d.322), Abu Hatim Ahmad b. Hamdan b. Ahmad. Kitab al-Zinah. Edited by Husayn Hamdani. 2 vols. Qahirah: Matbaᶜat al-Risalah. 1958

Al-Zarkashi (d.794), Badr al-Din Muhammad. Al-Burhan Fi ᶜUlum al-Qur'an. Edited by M. Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim. 4 vols. Egypt: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-ᶜArabiyyah. 1957-1958