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FROM SHAYKHISM TO BABISM. A STUDY IN CHARISMATIC RENEWAL IN SHI'ITE ISLAM

University of Cambridge (Great Britain) PH.D. 1979

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FROM SHAYKHISM TO BABISM

A STUDY IN CHARISMATIC RENEWAL IN SHĪ^{C}Ī ISLAM

Denis M. MacEoin

King's College, Cambridge

July 1979

Submitted in application for the degree of Ph.D. to the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Cambridge.

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, David and Isobel, for their help and encouragement over so many years and their patience with what must have seemed at many times an incomprehensible field of study; and to my mother-in-law, Nancy, and my late father-in-law, Sydney, for their unfailing kindness and help.

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PREFACE

Sources

In writing the present dissertation, I have drawn on a wide variety of manuscript and printed sources in Persian, Arabic, English, French and, to a lesser extent, other European languages. As regards Shī'ī Islam general Qājār history, and other background topics, I have relied exclusively on printed materials. For Babism, I have drawn widely on MSS located in Cambridge University Library (mostly in the E.G. Browne Collection), the British Library, the Iranian National Bahā'ī Archives in Tihrān, the International Bahā'ī Archives in Haifa, and a few private collections. I have discussed at length the relevant materials in 'A Revised Survey of the Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History' (see bibliography) and more briefly in this dissertation. I have also made use of British consular and diplomatic materials kept in the Public Record Office, London; extensive research on these for the purpose of locating references to Shaykhism and Babism has been carried out over a period of several years by my friend and colleague, Dr. Moojan Momen, to whom I am most grateful for his permission to refer to his xerox copies and notes. Since large amounts of the main Shaykhī sources have been printed, I have made only limited use of manuscripts for this aspect of my research.

The printed materials for Babism include large numbers of books, many of them secondary, published by the Azalī Bābīs and the Bahā'īs in Iran. Since these books cannot be obtained through the normal channels, they are not generally available anywhere but in private hands; thanks to the kindness of many friends over several years, I have been able to build up an almost complete library of these works. Particular mention should be made here of the Azalī editions of several important works of the Bāb and to Mīrzā Asad Allāh Fādil-i Māzandarānī's Kitāb-i zuhūr al-haqq (Vol.3), which contains copious partial and complete quotations from early Bābī literature. Even less readily obtainable are copies of facsimile reproductions of MSS in the Tihrān Bahā'ī Archives, distributed to a very limited group of subscribers some years ago. The European printed materials by Browne, Gobineau, Nicolas and others are generally well-known and available in most libraries; I have used them widely, but with great caution, since they are often innacurate and certainly much outdated. Later Bahā'ī-produced materials in Persian or English are generally of little value for Bābī history or doctrine, but I have made careful use of Shoghi Effendi's edited translation of Nabīl Zarandī's 'Narrative' (the original text of which has not yet been published in any form) and several recent historical works by Malik Khusravī, Faydī, and

Balyuzi. The main printed materials for Shaykhism may be found adequately catalogued in Shaykh Abū 'l-Qāsim Khān Kirmānī's Fihrist-i kutub-i Shaykh Ahmad Ahsā'ī; this work also contains a detailed list of Shaykhī MSS kept in Kirmān. The only European sources dealing with early Shaykhism are works by Nicolas and Corbin, but none of these is at all adequate for the purposes of serious research.

Transliteration and dates

The system of transliteration is, with virtually no modifications, that commonly used in journals such as the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies; inconsistencies necessarily occur where I am quoting or referring to materials in European languages using different systems, but in all such cases I have retained the flat macron even where the original may have acute accents. In certain positions, I have preferred to drop an initial Arabic definite article in book titles, in order to avoid inelegant repetition with the English article. In transliterating titles, I have adopted the system recommended by the U.S. Library of Congress, whereby only proper nouns are capitalized.

In the text, reference is made to Christian and lunar Muslim dates, while, in the bibliography, use is also made of the solar Muslim, Bābī/Bahā'ī (solar), and Iranian Shāhanshāhī calendars.

The present dissertation is entirely original and is in no way the outcome of collaboration with any other person. It does not, to my knowledge, exceed in length the limit permitted by the Faculty of Oriental Studies.

King's College
Cambridge
July 1979

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the years during which research for the present study was in progress, I became deeply indebted to numerous organizations and individuals for their help, advice, and information. Needless to say, there have been too many for me to list them all here, but it would be unthinkable not to mention here as many as possible and to ask the rest to accept my grateful thanks for their kindness and assistance. To my wife Beth, above all others, must go my abiding thanks for her unfailing support, advice, and encouragement at all stages of this work; in a very real sense, this dissertation would not have been written but for her. Not only has she kept my spirits up even when I have most despaired of finishing, but her help at all stages of the work in reading proofs, suggesting improvements, and polishing my style has been invaluable, and her patience in the midst of recurring chaos and disorder quite unflagging.

I must also express my very deep thanks to my supervisor, Professor L.P. Elwell-Sutton, for so kindly undertaking the supervision of my work at a remove of several hundred miles and for his patient understanding of my aims and methods; to the Northern Ireland Department of Education for their financial support during the first three years of my research; to the trustees of the E.G. Browne Memorial Fund and the Spalding Trusts for research grants relative to my visit to Iran in 1977; to the Universal House of Justice for permitting me to examine materials in the International Bahā'ī Archives in Haifa in 1976; to the National Assembly of the Bahā'īs of Iran for permission to use manuscripts in their archives in Tihrān; to Mr Fu'ād Sānā'ī for his assistance there; to Mr Hasan Balyuzi for his advice, encouragement, and generous loan of materials; to Shaykh 'Abd al-Ridā Khān Ibrāhīmī for his exceptional generosity in providing me with the publications of the Shaykhī community of Kirmān and for granting me several interviews; to Mrs Fakhr-Tāj Dawlatābādī, Mr Nūrī Nazarī, and other Azalī Bābīs in Tihrān for supplying me with books and information; to Hāj Shaykh 'Abbūd al-Sālihī for his information on the Baraghānī family of Qazvīn; to Dr. Moojan Momen for all our discussions over the years and for letting me make use of the fruits of his indefatigable researches in the Public Record Office and elsewhere; to Mr Peter Smith for providing ideas and suggestions over many years and for his help with my sociology (the many errors in which remain very much my own); to Mr 'Abbās Amānat for invaluable help during the early stages of my work; to Allen Purvis, my wife, and all the other staff of the manuscript reading room of Cambridge University Library for their

kindness and assistance in coping with my many requests; to Mr. Wilfred Lockwood of the Oriental Department of Cambridge University Library for his many recommendations and untiring help in locating elusive materials; to King's College, for providing funds to assist in the preparation of the dissertation; to the Ashraf-Saysānī family of Tihrān for their very great kindness and hospitality during my last stay there, and above all, to the memory of ᶜAlī Ashraf Saysānī, whose death so soon after my return was a blow to us all.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AL-BAQARA. Sayyid ʿAlī Muhammad Shīrāzī Tafsīr Sūrat al-baqara (MS).

AL-DHARĪʿA. Muhammad Muhsin Shaykh Āghā Buzurg al-Tihrānī Al-dharīʿa ilā tasānīf al-Shīʿa.

AL-KAWTHAR. Sayyid ʿAlī Muhammad Shīrāzī Tafsīr Sūrat al-kawthar (MS).

B. 'Badīʿ': this indicates dates in the Bābī and Bahā'ī calendar.

CUL. Cambridge University Library.

E.I.1. Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1st. edition.

E.I.2. Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd. edition.

DALĪL. Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī Dalīl al-mutahayyirīn.

FIHRIST. Abū 'l-Qāsim ibn Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (Khān) Kirmānī Fihrsit-i kutub-i Shaykh Ahmad-i Ahsā'ī wa sā'ir mashāyikh-i ʿizām.

JAWĀMIʿ. Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī Jawāmiʿ al-kilam.

JRAS. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

KASHF. Iʿjāz Husayn Kantūrī Kashf al-hujub wa 'l-astār ʿan asmā' al-kutub wa 'l-asfār.

MAKĀRIM. Mīrzā Muhammad ʿAlī Muʿallim Habībābādī Makārim al-āthār dar ahwāl-i rijāl-i dawra-yi Qājār.

N.H. Mīrzā Husayn Hamadānī The New History (Tārīkh-i-Jadīd) of Mīrzā ʿAli Muhammed the Bab.

N.K. Hājī Mīrzā Jānī Kāshānī (attrib.) Kitāb-i-Nuqtatu'l-Kāf.

NUJŪM. Mullā Mīrzā Muhammad ʿAlī Nujūm al-samā.

QAYYŪM. Sayyid ʿAlī Muhammad Shīrāzī Qayyūm al-asmā (MS).

QISAS. Mullā Muhammad ibn Sulaymān Tanakābunī Qisas al-ʿulamā.

RAWDAT. Mīrzā Muhammad Bāqir al-Mūsawī al-Khwānsarī al-Isbahānī Kitāb rawdāt al-jannāt fī ahwāl al-ʿulamā wa 'l-sādāt.

RIJĀL. Mahdī Bāmdād Sharh-i hāl-i rijāl-i Īrān.

SH. 'Shamsī': this indicates dates in the Islamic solar calendar used in Iran.

SHSH. 'Shāhanshāhī': this indicates dates in the imperial calendar used in recent years in Iran.

SHARH. Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh al-Ahsā'ī Sharh-i hālāt-i Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī.

SĪRA. Husayn ʿAlī Mahfūz Sīra Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī.

TABAQAT. Muhammad Muhsin Shaykh Āghā Buzurg al-Tihrānī Tabaqāt aʿlām al-Shīʿa.

TARĀ'IQ. Muhammad Maʿsūm Shīrāzī Tarā'iq al-haqā'iq.

TBA. Tihrān Bahā'ī Archives.

T.N. E.G. Browne (ed. & trans.) A Traveller's Narrative Vol.2.

Z. I. Mīrzā Asad Allāh Fādil-i-Māzandarānī Kitāb-i zuhūr al-haqq.

An intellectual hatred is the worst

W.B. Yeats

A Prayer for My Daughter

INTRODUCTION

Recent events have vividly demonstrated the continuing power of religion as a force to be reckoned with in the life of the Iranian people. Economic frustrations, social disadvantage, and political oppression may, as always, have been major spurs goading the masses to revolution, but it was in devotion to Shī'ī Islam and enthusiasm for the 'ulamā who led them that they found a rallying-point and an effective means of channelling their demands for change. More than that, religious feelings of outrage at modernization, moral decline, and loss of religio-national identity, coupled with the fervour produced in the Shī'ī mind by the themes of martyrdom and suffering, proved perhaps the most important elements in driving men and women onto the streets. It is the fundamentally religious character of the Iranian revolution which has excited the most comment and caused the most mystification abroad.

The role of religion as a catalyst in revolutionary movements is well known,[1] not least in Iran, yet it is surprising how many otherwise perceptive commentators failed, even at the eleventh hour, to appreciate fully how critical a factor traditional Shi'ism might become among the forces of opposition to the Pahlavī regime.[2] Now that the revolution has taken place -- however long it may survive in a world its leaders seem little fit to cope with -- the eyes of scholars and journalists alike are turned towards Qum and the newly-powerful ranks of the Shī'ī 'ulamā, but it may be much to hope that sharp vision will replace shortsightedness overnight and that those unfamiliar with the dynamics of Shī'ī piety and political messianism will readily grasp the principles and forces involved in this most medieval of all modern revolutions. Doubtless the secular forces present throughout this period of upheaval -- those most amenable to study by Western political scientists and commentators -- shall be subjected to searching and competent dissection and analysis, but one may, I think, expect that many will find it more difficult readily to come to terms with the purely religious features of the revolution (insofar as these may be genuinely abstracted from the secular factors).

Lewy and others[3] have argued cogently against a narrow Marxist or quasi-Marxist interpretation of sectarian and millenarian revolt as 'phenomena of an ongoing class struggle in societies within which the class conflict has not yet become conscious',[4] maintaining that 'medieval heresy in all its diversity should be treated as genuine religious dissent rather than purely as a manifestation of the class struggle'[5] and that 'in the case of millenarian sentiments and move-

ments, the Marxist thesis is similarly unsupported'.[6] Christopher Hill, although himself a Marxist, has similarly stressed the autonomy of religious and intellectual factors in the English revolution. It is doubtless this failure to recognize that religious and ideological factors may be more than a mere superstructure erected on an economically-determined basis that has led Halliday and others to leave them out of their calculations in evaluating the modern history of Iran, whatever the value of a Marxist historical approach in other instances. This is all the more tragic in that Shī'ī Islam presents the historian and the sociologist with one of the more compelling examples of a religio-political symbiosis in which religious elements figure with a degree of autonomy and self-directedness rarely found elsewhere.

This is not to suggest that the role of religion has been ignored in studies of contemporary and pre-contemporary Iran. The work of Algar, Keddie, Lambton, and others shows a perfect grasp of the importance of the religious phenomenon and a keen appreciation of the part it has played since Safawī times in moulding the political and social destiny of the Persian people. As a basis for comprehending the forces behind recent and, doubtless, future, events, the studies of the above writers are likely to be unsurpassed for some time to come. In analysing the nature of relations between church and state on the one hand and the impact of modernization on the religious classes an their response to it on the other, they have identified many of the strands of thought and belief out of which Imām Khumaynī and his zealots wove their web of rebellion and revolutionary change.

Yet certain areas remain dim or even dark, whatever the light shed by recent happenings, not least of which is the question of the relationship in Shi'ism between charisma and authority and, in particular, the manner in which charismatic renewal takes place within the context of Shi'ism as an orthodox system. Closely linked to this question are those of the role of the 'ulamā during the period of the Imām's occultation, the continuance of the messianic impulse among the Shī'ī masses, and the means whereby orthodoxy and heterodoxy are distinguished and counterpoised. A careful reading of Khumaynī's Wilāyat-i faqīh will reveal just how significant these and related factors are for an understanding of the roots of Shī'ī Islam in the modern world.

Recent developments in Iranian Shi'ism, theoretical and actual alike, compel us to reconsider and re-evaluate many earlier developments, both for the clarity they may give to subsequent events and for the opportunity to assess past ideas and movements anew from the perspective of the present. 'It has become necessary', writes John Voll, 'to re-examine the significance of many movements in the light of recent

events. This has become an activity of special import. Geoffrey Barraclough has suggested a reason for this: "Today it is evident that much we have been taught to regard as central is really peripheral and much that is usually brushed aside as peripheral had in it the seeds of the future"'.[7] An excellent case in point is that of Babism and its antecedents. Almost from its inception the object of close attention and study in Europe, the Bābī movement drew the interest of contemporary observers as a potential force for religious and social change in Iran and, perhaps, elsewhere in the Islamic world. It was, as it were, the Iranian revolution of its day. But even by the time of Gobineau (whose Religions et philosophies dans l'Asie centrale, first published in 1865, popularized the movement throughout Europe), Babism was, in the political sense at least, a spent force. In 1910, E.G. Browne, who had devoted a considerable part of his career to the study of Babism, and who, as late as 1893, had expressed the belief that it might 'still not improbably prove an important factor in the history of Western Asia',[8] now conceded that 'the centre of interest in Persia has shifted from religion to politics'.[9] Babism as a revolutionary alternative was no longer even a remote possibility and, whatever relative success it may have had abroad in the form of the Bahā'ī movement, it has continued to remain aloof from the political and social life of Iran.

As Browne's fascination for Babism faded, so too did that of other scholars: before long, the Bābī episode had been relegated to a minor place as a passing convulsion of no long-term importance for the historian. This attitude is expressed succinctly by Algar, who writes that 'Babism was ultimately no more than a side issue in the Qajar history'.[9] This is certainly true in the obvious sense that the Bābī movement was defeated militarily, suppressed, driven underground, and transformed into a quietist religion seeking converts in the West. But recent events suggest that, in many ways, Browne's early enthusiasm for the Bābīs was not entirely misplaced. In its later development as a heterodox sect, its metamorphosis into the Bahā'ī religion claiming a new faith independent of Islam, its rejection by the majority of Shīʿī Muslims, and its lasting incapacity to become a powerful force in the land of its birth, Babism clearly appears as an abberation unrepresentative of contemporary Shiʿism in Iran. But this obscures the fact that, in its earliest days, Babism was a highly conservative, orthodox, and even reactionary religious movement (albeit extreme in certain respects) which emerged from a milieu of Shīʿī pietism developed in the Shaykhī school. Far from being uncharacteristic of the mainstream of Shiʿism, the Bābī sect -- in its early stages at least -- displays for us in exceptionally sharp relief many of the principal features of Shīʿī doctrine and practice which lie

at the very roots of contemporary religious life and thought in Iran. It is vital to bear in mind that neither Babism nor Shaykhism was a movement of dissent which sought to be consciously heretical over against a 'corrupt' established church; both Shaykhīs and early Bābīs saw themselves (as the Shaykhīs still do) as pious, devoted, and wholly orthodox Shīᶜī Muslims. They did not reject but were rejected.

Babism is really the last of the great medieval Islamic movements. It is of unusual importance for us in that it passed through all the major phases of its development in the period before Western pressures on Iran became too great to be ignored. Neither Shaykhism nor Babism itself displays the least sign of having been in any sense a reaction against Western encroachment or the growing secularization of Iranian society. A fresh look at both movements, then, may be expected to reveal much that cannot be learnt even from the Tobacco rebellion or the recent revolution, much that was significant in the Persian religious mind on the eve of Western involvement. Whatever the external economic and political forces which moulded it, Babism may be said to represent the last example of an unselfconscious expression of Shīᶜī pietism and messianic revolt untainted, as it were, by the context of modernism. As a movement which almost succeeded in overthrowing the Qājār dynasty and establishing a new, theocratic state in its place, and as the only sizeable Shīᶜī millenarian movement of the modern period, Babism has for too long been suffered to linger as something peripheral in the history of post-Safawī Iran. It is time for it to be returned to its rightful place as one of the most thought-provoking and controversial movements to arise in the Islamic world in recent centuries. Perhaps the present study will help re-awaken an awareness among those concerned with the study of Shiᶜism and Iran of the importance of Babism as an element to be considered in their research.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. See Guenter Lewy Religion and Revolution.

2. Notice, for example, the scant space devoted to the religious element in the chapter on opposition in Fred Halliday Iran: Dictatorship and Development.

3. See Lewy pp.104-7.

4. Werner Stark, quoted ibid p.105.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid pp.104-5.

7. 'The Sudanese Mahdi' p.145.

8. Introduction to Mīrzā Husayn Hamadānī The New History (Tārīkh-i-Jadīd) of Mīrzā ʿAlī Muhammed the Bāb p.vii.

9. Introduction to Hājī Mīrzā Jānī Kāshānī Kitāb-i Nuqtatu'l-Kāf p.XLIX.

10. Religion and State in Iran p.151.

CHAPTER ONE

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

The pronouncement of takfīr against Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī from about 1822, and the subsequent rejection of the Shaykhī school -- despite vigorous declarations by its various leaders as to its absolute orthodoxy -- by the mainstream of Twelver Shi^{c}ism, have tended to obscure the originally close links of Shaykh Ahmad with the representatives of Shī^{c}ī orthodoxy and the early development of his school as a a major element in the resurgent Shi^{c}ism of the early Qājār period. Although the French scholar Henry Corbin went to considerable pains to demonstrate the position of Shaykhism as the latest and, for him, profoundest development of the metaphysical tradition within Iranian Islam,[1] his emphasis on the theosophical elements of the school and its association with what has always been at best a suspect yet tolerated strand in Shī^{c}ī thought, has again clouded both the real reasons for al-Ahsā'ī's 'excommunication' and the place of his thought within the orthodox development of Shi^{c}ism in the first years of the Qājār restoration. More seriously, perhaps, Corbin's attempt to portray the Shaykhī school as a consistent and homogeneous movement from the time of al-Ahsā'ī to that of Shaykh ^{c}Abd al-Ridā Khān Sorāhīmī, the present head of the school, has concealed several important shifts in doctrine and avoided the problem of changing relationships between the Shaykhī community and the main body of Shi^{c}ism, as well as the influence of these fluctuations on the expression of doctrine in the literature of the school.

Not only Shaykh Ahmad and Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī, but also Sayyid ^{c}Alī Muhammad Shīrāzī in many of his early works, specifically and categorically condemned as unbelievers Sūfīs, philosophers (hukamā), 'Platonists' (ishrāqīyūn), and others,[2] while all three laid much emphasis on the 'orthodox' nature of their doctrines: as we shall see, the Bābīs at the inception of the sect were almost as notable for their rigorous orthodoxy and orthopraxy as they were later to become known for their extreme heterodoxy. Later writers, concentrating on the 'heretical' elements in Shaykhī and Bābī teaching, have lost sight of the powerful bond that existed in both cases with traditional Twelver Shī^{c}ī teaching, and have failed to explore the relationship between the Shaykhī and Bābī movements on the one hand and orthodox Shi^{c}ism on the other. The tendency of later writers to ignore or play down the significance of Shaykhism and Babism has likewise helped draw attention away from the fact that both movements were an integral feature of the development of Shi^{c}ism in Iran during the Qājār period, and that the shaping and exposition of

Shaykhī and Bābī doctrine owed as much to the general conditions of the period as did the moulding of what was considered as orthodox thinking. Before attempting to consider Shaykhism and Babism as separate phenomena, therefore, it will be essential first to survey briefly the religious background against which they developed.

Although the main area of investigation for our present purposes will be the developments in Shī^{c}ī thought in Arab ^{c}Iraq and Iran in the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, it seems to me both practical and theoretically sound to begin with a discussion of certain earlier, more general developments in Shi^{c}ism. To be specific, I propose to reconsider briefly the religious history of Shi^{c}ism in the period following the 'occultation' of the twelfth Imām in 260/872 in terms of the questions of charismatic and legal authority and the routinization of charisma. I intend to make such a reappraisal, not in the hope of contributing anything original to the discussion of Weberian or post-Weberian theory (for which I am far from qualified), but to provide a focus for certain key ideas which, as will be seen, occupy quite prominently the stage of Shī^{c}ī thought during the period of my main study. The issues of authority, charisma as invested in specific individuals, the 'polar motif', the role of ijtihād and the development of fiqh, millenarian expectation, and the relationships between the Imām, the ^{c}ulamā, and the body of the Shī^{c}a, are all central to any discussion of the emergence of Shaykhism and Babism.

Charismatic and legal authority in Imāmī Shi^{c}ism

The few writers who have discussed Shi^{c}ism as a charismatic movement have concentrated on the question of the legitimization of the authority of the Imāms (varying in number according to the sect in question),[3] generally contrasting the charismatic nature of that authority with the legal authority of Sunnism or the charismatic nature of the Sunnī community. Early Shi^{c}ism is a clear and useful example of extended hereditary charismatic leadership, and there is certainly much value in discussing the Imāms as almost classic 'bearers' of Weberian charisma of this type. To restrict ourselves to the period of the Imāms, however, is to avoid dealing with the much more complex set of issues which centre around the vital question of how Shi^{c}ism came to terms with the abrupt loss of a living bearer of absolute charismatic authority on the supposed disappearance of the twelfth Imām. The initial and fairly typical response was the attempted 'routinization' of the charisma of the Imām in the persons of Abū ^{c}Amr ^{c}Uthmān ibn Sa^{c}īd al-^{c}Umarī, his son Abu Ja^{c}far Muhammad (d.305/917), Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Husayn ibn Rūh Nawbakhtī

(d.326/937), and Abū 'l-Hasan ᶜAlī ibn Muhammad al-Sāmarrī (d.329/940) -- the four 'gates' (abwāb), 'representatives' (nawwāb), or 'ambassadors' (sufarā) between the Imām and his followers. It seems, however, that this attempt may have been less original or systematic than it is represented in retrospect by pious sources: already in the time of Jaᶜfar al-Sādiq and other Imāms, numerous wukalā had acted on their behalf in various regions.[4] Now, simultaneous with the four abwāb, other nā'ibs appeared in Baghdād and elsewhere, some of whom were accorded a degree of recognition, while others were rejected by the community.[5] Mashkūr gives the names of six individuals, including Husayn ibn Mansūr al-Hallāj and Abū Jaᶜfar Muhammad ibn ᶜAlī al-Shalmaghānī (ibn Abī 'l-ᶜAzāqir), whom he regards as having been false claimants to the position of nā'ib, and who were rejected by the majority of Shīᶜīs.[6] For reasons that are not clear, the innovation of nīyāba was abandoned on the death of the fourth bāb in 940, and no attempt was made to revive it.[7]

With the abandonment of the system of direct representation, in which letters allegedly dictated by the Imām were actually written in reply to questions, charisma could no longer be 'transmitted' to (or 'focussed' on) a single individual, and it became an urgent concern for Shiᶜism to discover new ways of legitimizing authority within the community. This legitimization seems to have taken several distinct forms.

1. Since the doctrine of the necessity of the existence of the Imām or proof of God (hujja) in every age and the impossibility of the earth being without an Imām was intrinsic to the very raison d'etre of Shiᶜism, it could not be abandoned without doing irreparable damage to much of its essence;[8] it was, moreover, an established article of faith that 'he who dies without an Imām, it is as if he has died in the age of ignorance' (man māta wa laysa lahu imām māta mayatan jāhilīyyatan).[9] It was, therefore, propounded (much as it had been in earlier Shīᶜī sects faced with similar problems) that, although the twelfth Imām was hidden from sight, he remained alive in a state of occultation (ghayba) as the Imām and Lord of the present age (sāhib al-zamān). Living in an interworld or barzakh, within but obscured from this world, the Imām could exercise his function as the maintainer of the equilibrium of the universe and the object of the active faith of the Shīᶜa, with whom he remained in contact through dreams, visions, and experiential awareness of the mundus archetypus in which he resided.[10] The possibility of encountering the Imām in a visionary state and of receiving direct guidance from him has played a major part in Shīᶜī piety down to the present day, not only for dreamers and mystics such as those mentioned by Corbin,[11] but for many leading ᶜulamā and fuqahā of considerably less imaginative bent. In 1302/1885, Hāj Mīrzā Husayn Nūrī (b. 1253/1837-8)

wrote a work entitled Jannat al-ma'wā, containing 59 accounts of encounters with the Imām related of numerous individuals, including men like al-Hurr al-ʿĀmilī, ʿAllāma Hillī, al-Shahīd al-Awwal, and, in the modern period, Sayyid Muhammad Tabātabā'ī Bahr al-ʿUlūm and Shaykh Muhammad Hasan al-Najafī.[12]

These meetings would take place in men's homes or as far afield as Bahrayn or Mecca, but most commonly in the Masjid al-Kūfa, the cellar (sardāb) in Sāmarrā (where the Imām was supposed to have disappeared), the shrine of ʿAlī in Najaf, or the Masjid al-Sahla. Side by side, then, with patently other-worldly meetings in the 'Jazīrat al-Khadrā' or the cities of Jābarsā and Jābalqā, we find records of the Imām appearing in locations known and accessible to anyone, some associated with his earthly life, some elsewhere. It was, for example, widely reputed that 'whoever shall go to the Masjid al-Sahla on forty Wednesdays shall behold the Mahdī'.[13] The ghaybat al-kubrā is, in fact, seen as a natural and uncomplicated extension of the earthly existence of the Imām and his period in the ghaybat al-sughrā, as is indicated by the fact that Nūrī's Jannat al-ma'wā has several times been published as an appendix to the volume of Bihār al-anwār dealing with the life and lesser occultation of the twelfth Imām.[14]

Remarkably little of the theoretical authority of the Imām can be said to have dissipated: he was and is alive, not only in the heart of the believer (as, for example, in certain forms of 'evangelical' Christianity), and not merely in a supernatural realm accessible to the saint or mystic, but, potentially at least, in real places, where he has been seen by real persons. At the same time, he is in occultation, and it is this fact which strengthens his symbolic function. Charisma, like baraka, with which it is closely associated (though not identical), would seem to be not so much something possessed by the charismatic individual as conferred on him by others: 'people in fact become possessors of baraka by being treated as possessors of it'.[15] It is significant that, in his state of occultation, the Imām appears to function less as a figure of charismatic authority (which, in real terms, he could not be) than as a possessor of baraka, for in such a state the subjective focussing of the faithful becomes dominant in the charismatic relationship. Disappearance of the charismatic figure may lead to the routinization of his charisma either in hereditary charisma or charisma of office (giving 'charismatic latency'), whereby 'the conception of personal qualities is... undergoing transformation into a conception of a transmissible, though immaterial power, which could light on the most ordinary personality and give it authority'[16] — which certainly took place in the case of the Imāms after the death of the Prophet. The further disappear-

ance of the bearer of hereditary charisma would normally be expected to lead either to the evaporation of the group or to a further routinization of the charismatic authority in a more 'church-like' organization.[17] While, as we shall see, something like this did occur, the concept of the living presence of the Imām and the belief in his return combined to postpone the process of ecclesiastical routinization.

2. Such a condition could not, however, be considered as indefinite. There would appear to be a tendency to avoid premature routinization of charisma -- such avoidance is, for example, a marked feature of Bābī and Bahā'ī history[18] -- and one of the most effective means of doing this is to introduce eschatological and chiliastic themes into the charismatic perspective. That the Imām was alive presupposed his return as the messianic liberator of his shī'a, as in the case of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafīyya and others. A body of traditions now grew up, attributing to Muhammad and the first eleven Imāms statements to the effect that there would be a total of twelve Imāms and that the twelfth would be the Qā'im and Mahdī.[19] Existing traditions relating to the imminent appearance of the Mahdī seem to have been fused to some extent with later forgeries rationalizing the fact that the Imāms must now be limited to twelve. In this way, the cessation of an earthly imamate with the twelfth Imām was justified and linked to what was now his personal eschatological role; just as the Ismā'īlīs found elaborate ways in which to rationalize the limitation of the Imāms to seven, so the Twelvers found equally elaborate means of demonstrating that the existence of twelve Imāms was, in some sense, part of the natural order of things, a symbol in the microcosm of a macrocosmic reality.[20] Drawing on existing messianic prophecy relating to the figure of the Mahdī, and on later ahādīth attributed in Twelver compilations to the Prophet and first eleven Imāms, Shī'ī scholars elaborated a corpus of traditions, some vague, some highly explicit, and many extremely contradictory, relating to the future return (raj'a) of the twelfth Imām before the universal resurrection (qīyāma) as the restorer of the faith and the mujāhid who would lead the final assault against infidelity.[21] Whereas in Sunnism the Mahdī does not appear in most of the books of tradition, such as the Sahīh of Muslim or that of al-Bukhārī, and is essentially a figure of popular piety, he is, for Shi'ism, an integral element of orthodox faith whose return is anticipated in the works of theologians as much as in popular eschatology. More importantly, where the Mahdī of the Sunnīs is merely an unidentified man descended from the Prophet, the Messiah of the Twelver Shī'a is explicitly identified with the twelfth Imām, now in occultation. It is in this way that the baraka and authority of the hidden Imām are extended

indefinitely through time up to the moment of his reappearance and final victory. Since the Imām in his role as Qā'im is as much a figure of charismatic focus as in his earthly or occult states, the postponement of his return acts in some measure as a brake on the routinization of charismatic authority. Inasmuch as the Imām, as one who is preserved (maᶜsūm) from sin (maᶜsīyya), neglectfulness (sahw), and even forgetfulness (nisyān),[22] is the sole source of infallible guidance and legislative renewal for the Shīᶜa, the promise of his advent rules out the assumption of his authority to carry out these functions by the ᶜulamā or the community as a consensus (ijmāᶜ).[23] The importance of this 'messianic motif' for an understanding of the dynamics of Babism has been stressed by Berger,[24] and will again be referred to by us in our discussion of the chiliasm current in the Shaykhī community on the death of Rashtī.

3. Meeting with the Imām in sleep or in a visionary state was theoretically possible for anyone, but, in practice, very few could claim such an experience. Ziyāra could, naturally, still be performed to the shrines of the Imāms and of Imāmzādas, or to places associated with them, and baraka thus acquired, but this was clearly no substitute for direct contact with the Imam or his living representative. Similarly, the Imām might, in theory, return tomorrow, but the tendency was to argue that his coming would be delayed until the world had developed and was ready for his parousia.[25] In the meantime, if the community of believers was not to be dispersed and a sense of purpose and guidance preserved, other, more immediate bearers of the Imām's charisma had to be found. In the corpus of akhbār which grew up rapidly in the period following the ghayba, we find several traditions which speak of the appearance of outstanding scholars and saints who will protect the Shīᶜī faith from corruption and act as guides to the truth. In a tradition attributed to Muhammad, for example, it is said that 'in every generation (khalaf) of my people, there shall be an upright man (ᶜadl) who shall cast out from this religion the corruption (tahrīf) of the extremists (al-ghālīn), the arrogation of the false, and the interpretation of the ignorant'.[26] ᶜAlī is recorded as stating in a khutba that 'I know that... Thou shalt not leave Thy earth without a proof (hujja) for Thee unto Thy creatures, whether outward but unobeyed, or fearful and concealed, lest Thy proof be made vain or Thy holy ones be led astray after Thou hast guided them'.[27] In a similar tradition, ᶜAlī prays to God not to leave the earth without 'one who shall arise on behalf of God (qā'im li 'llāh) with proof'.[28] In several traditions attributed to the Imām Jaᶜfar, it is stated that 'God shall not leave the earth without a scholar (ᶜālim) who will know

what has been increased and what has been decreased in the world; should the believers add anything, he shall turn them back from it and, should they neglect anything, he shall increase it for them'.[29]

On the basis of traditions such as these and the more creative role now played by them, numbers of individual scholars were able to achieve considerable renown and to exercise a large amount of charismatic authority as the de facto leaders and defenders of the faith. As 'ineritors' of the mantle of the Imāms, these individual ʿulamā represent a significant continuation of the 'polar motif' (as derived from the concept of a qutb or series of aqṭāb as centres of charismatic or latent charismatic authority in Islam) so characteristic of Shiʿism and so vital a feature of Bābī and Bahā'ī doctrine in all its stages.[30] Some of these men, born at appropriate times, acquired the name of mujaddid or murawwij for their century, and it is significant to note that, whereas the mujaddids of the first and second centuries were the Imāms Jaʿfar and Ridā respectively, it was not felt inappropriate to regard Kulaynī as the mujaddid of the third century and, after him, other leading ʿulamā.[31] The subsequent history of Twelver Shiʿism is particularly marked by the emergence of a series of outstanding scholars, for the most part associated with one or more books on fiqh, usūl, ḥadīth, or kalām.[32] Whereas the history of Sunnism is closely linked to the fortunes of dynasties and empires, or that of Catholicism much occupied with papal reigns, councils, and the founding of religious orders, Shīʿī history, largely divorced from the mainstream of events in the Islamic world, is an almost unchanging realm peopled by learned men and their books. As we shall see, however, it was not until the thirteenth/nineteenth century that the role of the individual scholar began to take on in practice something of the charismatic significance with which it had, in theory, been endowed from the time of the lesser occultation. We shall observe how the status of the mujtahid develops into that of the widely-recognized marjaʿ al-taqlīd and āyat allāh, while in Shaykhism the rukn al-rābiʿ concept comes to offer an original solution to the problem of charismatic authority within terms of the polar motif.

4. The doctrinal theories which have, in the past two centuries, permitted certain individual ʿulamā of exceptional merit or personality to hold almost universal sway over the Shīʿī world were slow in developing. In the meantime, traditions such as those quoted above were generally treated together with others which imbued the body of the ʿulamā as a whole with the authority to transmit the grace of the Imām. In a tradition attributed to the fifth Imām, Muhammad al-Bāqir, it is stated that 'God has created, after every prophet, a remnant of the people of knowledge

who summon (men) from error to guidance, and who endure afflictions with them; they respond to the one who calls to God (i.e. the Imām) and themselves summon (others) unto God with understanding; preserve them, then... for they possess an exalted station. Their sufferings in this world are as a trust: they bring the dead to life through the book of God, and they see amidst blindness by the light of God. How many slain by the devil have they resurrected, and how many an erring wanderer have they guided'.[33] The role of the ʿulamā during the ghayba of the Imām is clearly indicated in a tradition attributed to the eleventh Imām: 'were it not for those of the ʿulamā who shall remain after the occultation of your Imām, calling (men) unto him, producing evidences on his behalf, and striving for his faith with the proofs of God, delivering the weak among the servants of God from the snares and demons of Satan and from the traps of the wicked, there would be no-one but would abandon the faith of God'.[34] In a variant of one of the traditions quoted in the previous section, Muhammad is recorded as stating that 'righteous men (ʿudūl) shall bear this religion in every century, who shall cast out from it the interpretation of the false, the corruption of the extremists, and the arrogation of the ignorant, just as bellows remove the dross from the iron'.[35]

Shīʿī ʿulamā had already begun to emerge during the period of the Imāms, many of them being their pupils and companions. We may note a number of Shīʿī mufassirūn, muḥaddithūn, fuqahā, and, at a slightly later date, mutakallimūn who worked in this period,[36] including Faḍl ibn Shādhān al-Nayshābūrī,[37] ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl ibn al-Maytham al-Tammār,[38] and Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam al-Kūfī.[39] It is clear, however, that individuals such as these remained very much in the shadow of the Imāms, who were the infallible sources of guidance on all matters. ʿAbbās Iqbāl writes that 'the Imāmīyya differed from other Islamic sects in that they always had recourse to the infallible Imām in matters of tafsīr, interpretation of Qur'anic verses, and the sunna of the Prophet'.[40] At a period when the role of the Sunnī ʿulamā was paramount in the development of fiqh, ḥadīth, and kalām, the Shīʿa continued to depend primarily on charismatic guidance for the solution to often complex questions of a rational nature. The presence of a charismatic figure who is prepared to answer queries on any issue invariably inhibits the development of independent scholarship (as may be seen, for example, in the contrast between Catholic and Protestant theology in the twentieth century, or the absence of absence of serious scholarship in Bahā'ī circles during the eras of ʿAbbās Effendi and his successor Shoghi), and during this period we do not see the emergence of a distinct body of Shīʿī ʿulamā, free from the restraints of a living higher authority. Kalām in particular was much opposed, but

the demands of polemic and apologetics rendered it increasingly necessary and, from the time of Ja^{c}far al-Sādiq, Shī^{c}ī mutakallimūn began to make their appearance, borrowing initially from the Mu^{c}tazila, but later diverging strongly from the views of the latter group.[41] It is significant to note that many of the early Shī^{c}ī mutakallimūn were 'corrected' in their theories by the Imāms or their close companions[42] -- clearly, the removal of the Imām or his direct representative was bound to lead to significant developments in this area, although it was not until Nasīr al-Dīn Tūsī (d.672/1274) that Shī^{c}ī kalām reached its maturity. Later Shī^{c}ī ^{c}ulamā were often divided as to how they should regard these early theologians, particularly in cases like those of Abū ^{c}Īsā Muhammad ibn Hārūn Warrāq (d.247/861-2)[43] and Abū 'l-Husayn Ahmad ibn Yahyā 'Ibn Rāwandī' (d.245/859-60),[44] whose true relationship with orthodox Shi^{c}ism remains unclear; by and large, the works of these early writers are not those on which later Shī^{c}ī scholarship came to be founded. Even in cases where retrospective opinion is favourable to earlier writers, it is clear that the supposed sense of continuity may be much less than is thought: 'Later Shi'ite writers', says Watt, 'commonly refer to men like Hishām ibn-al-Hakam and his contemporaries as Imamites, but it is not certain whether they used this name of themselves'.[45]

Although Shī^{c}ī scholars had taken advantage of periods of relative tolerance towards the sect, notably under the caliph al-Ma'mūn (r.198-218/813-33),[46] such intervals were few and their influence limited. The lesser occultation, however, coincided with the beginning of a period of comparative freedom for the Shī^{c}a in many places, under dynasties such as the Samānids, the Hamdānids, and the Shī^{c}ī Būyids, who took Baghdād in 334/945, only five years after the death of the last of the abwāb al-arba^{c}a. The coincidence of freedom from charismatic restraint and political oppression gave the necessary impetus to the development of Shī^{c}ī scholarship. In the absence of any fully-fledged, centralized, and stable Twelver state, however, the religious authority of the ^{c}ulamā was not unduly routinized in the service of a secular authority in which ultimate power resided. The very fact that the ^{c}ulamā remained scattered in the various centres of Shī^{c}ī activity, principally in Qum (which became a major centre for religious studies from the time of the Būyids),[47] Kūfa, Basra, Bahrayn, Aleppo, Jabal ^{c}Āmil, and elsewhere,[48] meant that they preserved a high degree of independence from the demands of functioning within a wholly Shī^{c}ī context in a single state system, and from the hierarchical demands of a church-like structure which would be imposed by a centralized body of ^{c}ulamā. This position was altered radically by the rapid emergence and consolidation of the Safawī state in the early sixteenth century. 'It is', writes Hamid Algar, '... from

the Safavid period onward that one may meaningfully talk about the existence of a body of Shi^{c}i ulama'.[49] This had at least two major consequences: on the one hand, it led to the routinization of the inherited charismatic authority of the ^{c}ulamā in something resembling an ecclesiastical system in the context of a church-state symbiosis; on the other hand, and as the dynasty declined, the very large body of ^{c}ulamā who did not accept positions as state-appointed ecclesiastical functionaries, and who refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Safawī or any other state became highly popular with and influential over the Shī^{c}ī masses, particularly in rural areas. Contrary to Algar's statement that 'no authority in the strict sense of the term resided in the ulama',[50] it was precisely their ability to claim an inherited charismatic authority on behalf of the Imām and, importantly, over against the secular, illegitimate state, which gave and still gives the ^{c}ulamā so much of their power over the people. Ironically, therefore, the very existence of the Safawī, Qājār, and Pahlavī states did much to enhance the charismatic authority of the ^{c}ulamā, providing them with a political role which was clear throughout the nineteenth century and which is, perhaps, best exemplified in the part played by the ākhunds in the recent overthrow of the Pahlavi regime.

It has, indeed, been fundamental to the thinking of Āyat allāh Khumaynī that the fuqahā be seen as the only legitimate sources of political authority in a Shī^{c}ī state, inasmuch as they and they alone are the successors (jā-nishīnān; awsīyā) of the Prophet and the Imāms.[51] As such, they possess the same authority to rule as the latter: 'This notion that the governing powers of the Prophet were greater than those of the Amīr (^{c}Alī) or that the governing powers of the Amīr were greater than those of the faqīh is false and mistaken. Undoubtedly, the endowments of the Prophet are greater than those of all the world, and, after him, those of the Amīr are greater than all; but abundance of spiritual endowments does not increase powers of government. God has granted the same powers and guardianship (wilāyat) which were possessed by the Prophet and the rest of the Imāms... to the present government (i.e. that of the ^{c}ulamā), except that no one individual is specified; there is simply the term: "a just scholar (^{c}ālim ^{c}ādil)".'[52] This wilāyat of the faqīh is established by a firm appointment (nass) from the Prophet,[53] and, in this way, the need for a 'guardian of the cause' (walī-yi amr) at all times is taken care of.[54]

5. The function of the ^{c}ulamā, like that of individual ^{c}ālims, as bearers of the charismatic authority of the Imām, lay relatively dormant until the late eighteenth century. In the intervening period, however,

they came to inherit in a particular sense the charismatic 'aura' of the Shīᶜī community as a whole. Watt's somewhat untypical distinction between the 'charismatic community' of the Sunnīs and the 'charismatic leader' of the Shīᶜa only really holds true for the very earliest period.[55] From a relatively early date, the view developed that not only the Imāms but their true followers also were specially blessed, guided, and assured of salvation.[56] The charisma of the Shīᶜa and its polar motif were particularly focussed on the existence within the community of individuals known as nuqabā and nujabā.[57] A tradition ascribed to the eleventh Imām states that 'we shall send unto them the best of our shīᶜa, such as Salmān, al-Miqdād, Abū Dharr, ᶜAmmār, and their like in the age following them, in every age until the day of resurrection'.[58] This concept came to play an important role in the later version of the Shaykhī doctrine of the rukn al-rābiᶜ, along with that of the ᶜulamā as agents of the grace of the Imām: 'the existence of succour (ghawth) shall not suffice in this day without the pillars (al-arkān), and the pillars cannot exist without the nuqabā nor the nuqabā without the nujabā nor the nujabā without the ᶜulamā'.[59] According to this view, the presence of the hidden Imām is not sufficient for the needs of men, who require someone visible and tangible to aid them.[60] The ᶜulamā act as mediators for knowledge from the Imām to the masses (al-ᶜawwām), while the nujabā mediate for the ᶜulamā and the nuqabā for the nujabā, setting up a hierarchical chain leading from men to God.[61] Definition of the role and nature of the nuqabā and nujabā was to form an important part of Karīm Khān Kirmānī's refutation of the Bāb.[62]

6. All of the above are ways in which Twelver Shiᶜism to some extent routinized the charisma of the Imāms from the third century. This routinization is, perhaps, most apparent in the creation of a body of ᶜulamā from the Safawī period onward and in the related development of a corpus of authoritative Shīᶜī literature, showing an increasing measure of formalization and organization. During the lifetime of the Imāms, some four hundred compilations of akhbār, entitled Asl, are said to have been drawn up by Shīᶜī ᶜulamā,[63] but it is clear that the actual presence of an Imām divested these of any real authority. With the Imām in occultation, however, the need to possess authoritative akhbār became pressing, and the 'four books' -- Kulaynī's Al-kāfī, Ibn Bābūya's Man lā yahduruhu 'l-faqīh, and al-Tūsī's Al-istibsār fīmā 'khtulifa min al-akhbār and Tahdhīb al-ahkām -- soon came into existence to supply this need. The production of these collections and others such as the Nahj al-balāgha and Ibn Bābūya's Madīnat al-ᶜilm, as well as the inclusion in them of numerous ahādīth manufactured to justify in transcendentalized

terms the mundane reality of what had become Twelver Shi^{c}ism, was both a powerful means of continuing in theory Imām-centred charismatic authority and of routinizing, systematizing, and foreclosing the doctrinal and legal options of the Imāmī school. Other compilations of akhbār continued to appear, but it is significant that the fullest, most systematic, and, eventually, the most popular of these -- Majlisī's Biḥār al-anwār -- came into being as an expression of the routinization of religious authority in the ^{c}ulamā during the Safawī period. It is also relevant for our present thesis to note that two of the later heads of the Shaykhī school, Ḥāj Mullā Muhammad Karīm Khān and his son Ḥāj Mullā Muhammad Khān, produced what are, in fact, two of the lengthiest, best-organized, and most comprehensive collections of akhbār -- the Fasl al-khitāb and Al-Kitāb al-mubīn respectively.

7. The development, reassessment, and systematization of Shī^{c}ī fiqh continued much longer than in Sunnism, by reason of the doctrine of continuing ijtihād, and is, in theory at least, an unending process. The relationship of fiqh to the problem of retaining the authority of the Imām is made clear by al-Muẓaffarī: 'After them (the four gates) access to him (the Imām) and personal acquisition of guidance from him (al-akhdh ^{c}anhu ra'san) was terminated; the derivation of laws (al-aḥkām) was limited to ijtihād'.[64] This close relationship between imāma and ijtihād did not develop immediately, however, whatever retrospective Shī^{c}ī theory may suggest. One of the earliest works of Shī^{c}ī fiqh is supposed to have been a book written by the second nā'ib, Abū Ja^{c}far Muhammad, at the dictation of the hidden Imām[65] -- a clear indication of how difficult it was to break away from the influence of the original source of charismatic authority even in the development of a new source of legal authority.

The classic Sunnī distinction between ^{c}ilm, knowledge of Qur'anic and ḥadīth legislation, on the one hand, and fiqh, independent rational development of points of law, on the other, existed in a particularly marked form in the case of Shi^{c}ism. The Imāms, in particular Ja^{c}far, had functioned as the sole authorities on which Shī^{c}ī law was developed, and for some time Shī^{c}ī fiqh consisted largely of compiling the akhbār collections referred to above. Kulaynī, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, al-Ṭūsī (Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifa), and others studied and wrote extensively, but the first major works on fiqh were those produced by Shaykh Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Muṭahhar al-^{c}Allāma al-Hillī (d.726/1325), still regarded as the leading authority on uṣūl. Al-Hillī was, significantly, also the first Shī^{c}ī faqīh to lay considerable emphasis on the role of ijtihād as a continuing force for legislative renewal in Shi^{c}ism, although not strictly

the earliest to mention it.[66] His works have the distinction of being based firmly on independent research and rational discussion, a point which Khwānsārī makes in contrasting them with those of the later ᶜAllāma Majlisī.[67] Al-Hillī and his successors laid, as we shall see, a basis which made it possible for Āqā Bihbihbānī, in the middle of the eighteenth century, to establish Usūlī fiqh, based on a strongly-developed sense of the role of ijtihād, as the central bearer of legal authority within Shiᶜism. Karīm Khān Kirmānī notes that 'in these days... the knowledge of fiqh and the outward form of the sharᶜ... has reached a state of perfection' and that 'the beginning of the appearance and spread of the fiqh and akhbār of the Shīᶜa was at the end of the eleventh century, that is, one thousand one hundred; now (1268/1851-2) it is less than two hundred years that these manifest Shīᶜī sciences have been spread in the world. The truth of the matter is that the outward stages of the holy law reached perfection in the twelfth century, that is, in one thousand two hundred'.[68] We shall observe in a later chapter the relevance of this theory to Shaykhī concepts of the ages of zāhir and bātin. Two of Bihbihānī's most outstanding successors in the first half of the nineteenth century, Shaykh Muhammad Hasan al-Najafī and Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī, produced two of the most important and original works on Shīᶜī fiqh for some time. The former's Jawāhir al-kalām has been compared to the work of al-ᶜAllāma al-Hillī in respect of its independent and innovative nature,[69] while Tanakābunī writes of the latter's Kashf al-ghitā that 'no such book detailing the furūᶜ of the faith in this way had been written until then'.[70] This conjunction of legal authority, as seen in the development of fiqh by the nineteenth century, and charismatic latency, as observed in the efflorescence of the role of the mujtahid as marjaᶜ al-taqlīd by the same period, is an important feature of the age we are studying and tells us much of the character of Shiᶜism at the time of the development of Shaykhism and Babism.

To summarize, then, we may note that several strands appear to come together in the first half of the nineteenth century. The ᶜulamā, first properly developed under the Safawīs, found themselves regrouped, protected, and increasingly powerful; the position of mujtahid had been defined and stressed and, as we shall see, the way was open for the appearance of outstanding figures with unprecedented personal charismatic authority; legal authority, in the form of fiqh, had reached the peak of its development, but its expression was still closely linked to charismatic figures such as Shaykh Muhammad Hasan al-Najafī; messianic expectation was on the increase with the proximity of the year 1260, the thousandth year after the disappearance of the Imām. By this time,

however, it is obvious that there was growing tension between these elements. The authority implicit in the exercise of independent ijtihād did not march happily with that contained in the definitive volumes of fiqh, nor did the charismatic role of marjaʿ al-taqlīd harmonize readily with the chiliastic hope of the return of the Imām, although it clearly represented a major development of the third and fifth themes discussed above -- the existence of outstanding ʿulamā in every age, and the continued presence of nuqabā and nujabā in the community. The extreme veneration accorded the most outstanding ʿulamā conflicted to some extent with the charismatic role of the ʿulamā as a body, and also with the more diffuse concept of nuqabā and nujabā within the charismatic Shīʿī ecclesia. This last tension is particularly marked, as we shall note, in the contradiction between the visible role of the leaders of Shaykhism on the one hand and the doctrine of the 'fourth support' as referring to the ʿulamā or to the nuqabā and nujabā, on the other. It is also apparent in the variety of claims to charismatic polar authority within Babism, put forward not only by the Bāb, but by large numbers of his followers, particularly in the period after 1850, creating what Berger calls a 'charismatic field'.[71] The early nineteenth century can, then, be described as a period for Shiʿism in which several related issues came to a head at once, and in which potential charismatic tensions which had remained unresolved from the time of the lesser occultation came to the surface and shrilly demanded attention.

The eighteenth century reformation

Of particular importance for this development was the Shīʿī 'reformation' which took place at the shrines in ʿIrāq at about the time Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī arrived there from Bahrayn in the 1790's. What amounted to a revolution in Shīʿī thinking was being fostered there by several outstanding ʿulamā, with many of whom al-Ahsā'ī was to be associated. This revolution, or reformation, coinciding with the restoration of a central Shīʿī government in Iran under the Qājārs, was to set the tone for all subsequent developments in Twelver Shiʿism, not only at the ʿatabāt, but even more in Iran itself. The questions raised in the course of this reappraisal and reconstitution of Shīʿī theology were all, as we shall see, of considerable relevance to the claims put forward by the Bāb and his early disciples and explain in large measure the general rejection of Babism by the main body of Shīʿī Islam. The picture painted of Shiʿism in this period in many Bābī and Bahā'ī histories, as decadent, imitative, and static,[72] while not lacking altogether in validity, is only partial, and fails to take into account

the major developments we have mentioned. Both Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī and Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī are portrayed in these accounts as far removed from the mainstream of events in the period, and the question of their relations with other ᶜulamā is either ignored or treated negatively.

The collapse of the Safawī dynasty in 1722 precipitated a major crisis in Twelver Shiᶜism. For some two hundred years, Shīᶜī ᶜulamā had been consolidating the position of their branch of Islam as the national religion of Iran, had been educating the population as a whole in the fundamentals of Shīᶜī belief, and had been attempting to come to terms with the problems of co-existence between a religious hierarchy in theory obedient only to the hidden Imām on the one hand, and a state ruled by a monarch claiming descent from the seventh Imām and a large measure of divine right to rule on the other.[73] But from 1722 until many years after the Qājār restoration at the end of the eighteenth century, the political confusion of Iran was to render doubtful the continued existence of a Shīᶜī state in that country. During the interregnum, however, significant developments occurred in ᶜIraq which determined the nature of relations between the future Qājār state and the ᶜulamā.[74]

After the overthrow of the Safawīs, many of the ᶜulamā, fearing for their lives or their religious freedom under the Sunnī Afghāns and later under Nādir Shāh,[75] had fled to India and Arab ᶜIraq. The region around Baghdād where the ᶜatabāt -- the Shīᶜī shrines at Karbalā, Najaf, Kāzimayn, and Sāmarrā -- were situated was, in many respects, ideal as a refuge for such individuals. A sizeable Persian Shīᶜī population had long existed there, especially in Karbalā, while the shrines attracted Shīᶜī pilgrims from many regions. Najaf in particular became a focus on which scholars from Iran and elsewhere converged, its more Arab character being considerably changed and its importance as a centre of learning becoming greatly increased as a result.[76] Not only was Arab ᶜIraq situated beyond the vicissitudes convulsing Iran at this period, but, with the appointment of Hasan Pāshā as governor of Baghdād in 1704, an epoch of virtual independence for the region, under a succession of 'Mamlūk' rulers, had begun.[77]

It has been common to speak of the period between the fall of the Safawīs and the restoration under Āqā Muhammad Shāh Qājār as virtually devoid of religious scholars of any real ability. Sayyid Muhammad Hāshimī Kirmānī remarks that 'from the later years of the Safawī period, scholarship in Iran was extremely limited, as were the circles of theological study; during the period of Nādir Shāh and the Zands, the situation continued to decline. Several factors, the most important of which was the prevailing instability, contributed greatly to this deficit of learning.

It would appear that this situation was also prevalent in neighbouring countries at this time, as much as in Iran itself. In 1156 (1743), Nādir Shāh brought together in ᶜIraq the mujtahids and muftīs of Iran, the Caucasus, Turkistān, Afghānistān, ᶜIraq, and India. A very large gathering was assembled, but, from the remarks made there, one can see how superficial and banal their scholarship had become. Moreover, their names have all come down to us, and we do not observe a single outstanding scholar among them'.[78]

According to ᶜAbbās Iqbāl, 'the most famous of the Imāmī ᶜulamā in this interregnum period' were Mullā Ismāᶜīl Khwājū'ī Isfahānī (d.1173/1760), Mullā Muhammad Rafīᶜ Gīlānī, Shaykh Yūsuf Bahrānī (the author of the Hadā'iq and the Kashkūl 1106-86/1694-5 - 1772-3), and Muhammad Bīdābādī Isfahānī (d.1197/1783).[79] This statement is reproduced almost exactly by Algar, who adds that only Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī 'produced a work that attained any fame -- the Kashkūl'.[80] In these few words, Iqbāl and Algar sum up the religious activities of the period of the interregnum and proceed to a discussion of the achievements of Āqā Bihbihānī.

It seems to me that neither Hāshimī Kirmānī nor Iqbāl offers an adequate explanation nor a satisfactory picture of the period preceding the early Qājār reformation. A major point here is undoubtedly the fact that the period in question is overshadowed at one end by the figure of Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī (d.1111/1699),[81] the author of the voluminous Bihār al-anwār and the most influential of the late Safawī divines dominating the court of Shāh Sultān Husayn, and at the other by that of Āqā Muhammad Bāqir Bihbihānī (1118-1208/1706-93), regarded as the mujaddid of the thirteenth hijrī century. Khwānsārī, for example, speaks of 'the period of the absence of the ᶜulamā (zamān fitrat al-ᶜulamā)' between Majlisī and Bihbihānī.[82] It is easy to forget, however, that the influence of Majlisī, of several of his immediate predecessors -- such as Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Hurr al-ᶜĀmilī (1033-1104/1624-93),[83] Mullā Muhsin Fayd Kāshānī (1006-91/1597-8 - 1680),[84] Qādī Saᶜīd Qummī (1049-1103/1639-91),[85] and Āqā Husayn ibn Muhammad Muhaqqiq Khwānsārī (1016-98/1607-8 - 87)[86] -- and of the more eminent among his contemporaries, such as Sayyid Niᶜmat allāh al-Jazā'irī (d.1112/1700-1),[87] persisted well after the fall of the Safawīs, and that the achievements of Bihbihānī had their roots in developments over the past century or more. Even if the general standard of religious studies was, necessarily, poor, there are several individuals, apart from those mentioned by Iqbāl, who held positions of some eminence in this period. The most outstanding of these was Bahā al-Dīn Muhammad Isfahānī, better known as Fādil-i Hindī (d.1137/1725), the author of the

Kashf al-Ithām.[88] Others included Sayyid Sadr al-Dīn ibn Muhammad Bāqir Radawī Qummī (d.1218/1803);[89] a son of Shaykh Niᶜmat Allāh al-Jazā'irī, Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Shūshtarī (1088-1158/1677-8 - 1745), who had studied under al-Hurr al-ᶜĀmilī;[90] a son of Nūr al-Dīn, Sayyid ᶜAbd Allāh Shūshtarī (1114-73/1702-3 - 59-60);[91] Sayyid Murtadā ibn Muhammad Tabātabā'ī (d.1208/1793-4), the father of Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī Bahr al-ᶜUlūm;[92] Mullā Muhammad Akmal Bihbihānī, the father and teacher of Āqā Bihbihānī;[93] Shaykh Abū Sālih Muhammad Mahdī Fatūnī ᶜĀmilī,[94] and Shaykh Muhammad Taqī Darūqī al-Najafī,[95] both teachers of Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī, and many others; and Shaykh Muhammad Bāqir Hizārjarībī Najafī (d.1205/1790-1), a teacher of Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, Shaykh Jaᶜfar, and Abū 'l-Qāsim Qummī.[96] Men such as these, some in Iran and others at the ᶜatabāt,[97] if not themselves ᶜulamā of the first grade, nevertheless set the stage for the entrance of figures such as Āqā Bihbihānī, Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī, Sayyid ᶜAlī Tabātabā'ī, Hāj Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī, and Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī. The strength of the continuing tradition of Shīᶜī scholarship over the interegnum is clearly demonstrated in the fact that most of the ᶜulamā from whom Shaykh Ahmad received ijāzāt had studied under Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī[98] -- a fact which also shows the degree of al-Ahsā'ī's indebtedness to that tradition.

Three major factors contributed to the development of Shīᶜī thought in the interregnum, the problems raised being resolved finally by Bihbihānī and his contemporaries. These factors were: the challenge presented by the religious policies of Nādir Shāh, the reinterpretation of the role of the ᶜulamā in the absence of a Shīᶜī state (and during the continued occultation of the Imām), and the struggle for supremacy between the Akhbārī and Usūlī schools of thought.

The most serious threat posed to the continuation of Shiᶜism in Iran by Nādir Shāh -- his direct physical and economic attacks on the ᶜulamā apart[99] -- was his aim to unite the Shīᶜī sect to Sunnism through the ingenious expedient of so modifying Shiᶜism as to have it regarded as a fifth 'Jaᶜfarī' madhhab within the Sunnī structure. As we shall see when we come to consider the question in more detail later, the most disturbing aspect of this proposal as far as the Shīᶜī ᶜulamā were concerned was the implication that, by placing Shiᶜism side by side with the four existing Sunnī law schools, it would have to share with them the doctrine of the closing of the door of ijtihād, with the Imām Jaᶜfar al-Sādiq as the final authority within the Shīᶜī madhhab. Not only would this have denied to the Imāms after Jaᶜfar their traditonal role as sources of continued divine guidance, thereby removing the central feature of

Twelver Shi^{c}ism, but it would have dispensed with the role of the Shī^{c}ī mujtahid as a source of legislative renewal (in theory, at least) during the occultation of the Imām.[100] As we shall see, this latter possibility was a particularly disturbing threat at this point.

The question of the relationship between church and state in Shī^{c}ī theory and practice has attracted much attention and been discussed at length elsewhere;[101] there is no need to do more here than summarize the situation insofar as it affected the ^{c}ulamā following the collapse of the Safawī dynasty. For centuries before the establishment of the Safawī state, Ithnā-^{c}asharī Shi^{c}ism had persisted as a minority sect for which all secular authority -- Umayyad, ^{c}Abbāsid, or otherwise -- was illegitimate. This very sense of illegitimacy lay at the root of Shī^{c}ī belief, and led it inevitably to a sense of the illegitimacy of any state whatever. 'In contrast with the Sunni ulama', writes Keddie, 'who had to work out their doctrine under the rule of a government that claimed political sovereignty, the Shi^{c}is lacked political protectors, which for centuries weakened their real power, but also enabled them in theory to deny the sovereign claims of any state'.[102]

The peculiar nature of the creation of the Safawī regime had meant that, when a religious hierarchy finally developed, it had to come to terms with an existing secular state which had brought it into being, which sought to foster it (albeit it in an inferior role to the secular hierarchy), and which claimed a legitimacy based in part on religious considerations. The early Safawī ^{c}ulamā seem to have been content to accept the role forced on them by a state which held in its hands effective power over both secular and religious affairs. Initially, it would seem, the fact that a Shī^{c}ī monarch sat on the throne precluded any question of illegitimacy in the rule of the state. The doctrinal theory which denied legitimacy to secular rulers had been developed originally against the Sunnī 'usurpers' of the caliphate, and it was some time before the ^{c}ulamā began openly to infer from that theory that the rule of a Shī^{c}ī monarch must equally involve the usurpation of the function of the Imām as the divinely-appointed head of the Islamic umma.[103] As the power of the Safawī state declined, however, that of the ^{c}ulamā increased, and, towards the end of the seventeenth century, it was being claimed openly that not only was the rule of the Shāh illegal, but that, in the absence of the Imām, true authority lay with the mujtahids as his representatives.[104]

Although the collapse of Safawī rule and the ensuing anarchy caused much harm to the ^{c}ulamā, this was little more than a physical and economic setback. Sequestered in the comparative safety of the ^{c}atabāt, or in

various enclaves in an Iran conspicuously deprived of effective centralized government, the *ʿulamā* could well regard themselves as the remaining representatives of the vanished Shīʿī state, and could now give free rein to speculation on the role of the *mujtahid* class, whether in the perpetual absence of a Twelver Shīʿī state, or in whatever new order came to fill the vacuum left by the disappearance of the Safawīs.

The resulting debate took the form of a final clash between the Akhbārī and Usūlī (or Mujtahidī) schools of thought, and culminated in the victory of the latter party on the eve of the Qājār restoration. Since this debate and its consequences have a considerable bearing on the interpretation of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī's role among the early Qājār *ʿulamā*, it will be worthwhile to touch on the major aspects of the controversy.

The origins of this debate are somewhat obscure. Later Shīʿī writers normally regard the Akhbārīs as innovators first appearing in the seventeenth century with the emergence of Mullā Muḥammad Amīn Astarābādī (d.1033/1623-4). It is more probable, however, that the appearance of an Akhbārī school at this date is more a reflection of the growing power of the *mujtahids* and the early development of what came to be identified as the Usūlī position. The doctrine of the role of the *mujtahid* as the interpreter of the will of the Imām 'is apparently a late one that has no basis in early Twelver theory',[105] and it seems likely that the Akhbārī party was less innovatory than conservative, the true respective positions of the two schools becoming distorted after the victory of the Usūlīs.

That the Akhbārīs represented a purer and more primitive line of thought within Shiʿism clearly seems to have been the belief of Muḥammad Amīn Astarābādī, regarded as 'the first to open the door of reviling against the *mujtahids*'[106] and as 'the leader of the sect of the Akhbārīs'.[107] A Persian work of his, the *Dānish-nāma-yi shāhī*,[108] seeks to demonstrate that the Ijtihādī (Usūlī) school was an innovation which had not existed before the time of al-Kulaynī.[109] 'Up to the latter period of the lesser occultation, people followed the Akhbārī school'.[110] Muḥammad Amīn saw his own role as being that of restoring the Akhbārī teachings to their former position of dominance within Shiʿism.

He himself had studied initially under two of the leading Shīʿī scholars of his day, Sayyid Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Jabʿa'ī al-ʿĀmilī (946-1009/1539-1600),[111] the author of the important work entitled *Madārik al-aḥkām*,[112] and Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Manṣūr Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī (959-1011/1552-1602),[113] the author of the *Maʿālim al-dīn wa malādh al-mujtahidīn*[114] and a son of Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn

al-Shahīd al-Thānī. He later lived in Mecca and Medina, and studied during this period under Mullā Muhammad ibn ᶜAlī Astarābādī (d.1028/1619).[115] It was this man who encouraged Muhammad Amīn to 'revive' the Akhbārī school. The latter writes in his Dānish-nāma: 'After he (Muhammad ibn ᶜAlī) had instructed me in all the traditions, he indicated that I should revive the school of the Akhbārīs and should remove the doubts that were opposed to that school. "I have intended to do this", he said, "but God has decreed that your pen take up this subject"'.[116] Muhammad Amīn undertook the composition of his most important work, the Fawā'id al-madanīyya fī raddi man qāla bi 'l-ijtihād,[117] as a direct attack on the theory of ijtihād then current in Shīᶜī thought. He himself states that the work was well received,[118] a fact confirmed by Mullā Muhammad Taqī Majlisī, the father of Muhammad Bāqir, in his Lawāmiᶜ-i sāhibqirānī,[119] when he writes that 'about thirty years ago, the erudite scholar Mullā Muhammad Amīn Astarābādī busied himself with comparing and studying the traditions of the blessed Imāms, turned his attention to the condemnation of decisions reached by speculation and analogy (ara' wa maqāyis), and understood the path of the companions of the Imāms. He wrote the Fawā'id-i madanīyya (sic) and sent it to this country. Most of the people of Najaf and the ᶜatabāt approved of his thinking (tarīqat) and began to refer to the traditions (akhbār) as their sources. In truth, most of what Mullā Muhammad Amīn has said is true.'[120]

In the Fawā'id al-madanīyya, Astarābādī argues that 'the first individuals to abandon the path followed by the companions of the Imāms and to rely on the art of theological discussion (kalām) and on the juridical principles (usūl al-fiqh) based on rational arguments as common among the Sunnīs (al-ᶜāmma) were, as far as I know, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Junayd, who acted on the basis of analogy (qīyās) and Hasan ibn ᶜAlī ibn Abī ᶜAqīl al-ᶜUmanī the mutakallim'.[121] He goes on to say that, when al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d.413/1022)[122] expressed his views on the worth of these two men to his own pupils, these ideas continued to spread over a long period until the time of the foremost Shīᶜī authority on usūl, al-ᶜAllāma al-Hillī (d.726/1321),[123] who emphasized them in his writings. Astarābādī brings the development of Usūlī thought down to his own time through Muhammad ibn Makkī al-ᶜĀmilī al-Shahīd al-Awwal (d.786/1384),[124] Shaykh ᶜAlī (presumably Shaykh ᶜAlī ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī al-ᶜĀmilī, al-Muhaqqiq al-Thānī, d.940/1533-4),[125] Zayn al-Dīn ibn ᶜAlī al-ᶜĀmilī al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d.966/1558),[126] his son, and the teacher of Astarābādī, Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Mansūr al-ᶜĀmilī, and, finally, his own contemporary, Shaykh Bahā al-Dīn Muhammad al-ᶜĀmilī (d.1030/1620), better known as Shaykh Bahā'ī.[127]

The fundamentalist nature of Astarābādī's thought is evident from the foregoing. Not only was he opposed to the practice of ijtihād as current in his day, but he retrospectively criticized several of the leading figures in Shīᶜī theology in the period following the occultation of the Imām.[128] Surprisingly enough, however, Astarābādī's views, as we have seen, were at first well received, and several important scholars in succeeding years adopted, in varying degrees, the ideas he had put forward. Among these were Shaykh Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Hurr al-ᶜĀmilī, one of the 'three Muhammads' of the modern period and the author of several important works, including the influential Wasā'il al-shīᶜa and the Amal al-āmil;[129] Mullā Muhsin Fayd Kāshānī, another of the 'three Muhammads' of later Shiᶜism, a student and son-in-law of Mullā Sadrā, and one of the most eminent of the Safawī philosophers;[130] Qādī Saᶜīd Qummī, a philosopher of some note who also achieved recognition as a faqīh;[131] Sayyid Niᶜmat Allāh al-Jazā'irī, the leading contemporary of Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī;[132] and Mīrzā Muhammad ibn ᶜAbd al-Nabī Nīshāpūrī Akhbārī (b.1178/1765), the last and, perhaps, the most intransigent of the Akhbārī controversialists, best known for his involvement with the incident of the 'Inspector's head' during the reign of Fath-ᶜAlī Shāh.[133] A number of other important ᶜulamā, if not totally committed Akhbārīs, tried to walk a medial path between the Usūlī and Akhbārī positions. These included Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī[134] and Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh ibn Nūr al-Dīn al-Jazā'irī.[135]

For a considerable time, the Akhbārī teachings enjoyed a respectability and influence later obscured by the victory of the Usūlīs. There is no space here to enter into a detailed discussion of what these teachings were: in his Minyat al-mumārisīn, Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh ibn Sālih al-Samāhijī al-Bahrānī (d.1135/1722-3), an Akhbārī ᶜālim of some distinction,[136] lists forty points of disagreement between the Akhbārī and Usūlī schools,[137] a clear indication of how, towards the end of the Safawī era, Astarābādī's comparatively simple objections to the use of ijtihād had become elaborated to the point where, instead of two slightly diverging schools of thought co-existing peacefully within the body of Twelver Shiᶜism, the Akhbārī and Usūlī positions had become mutually antagonistic on a large number of issues, many of them very unimportant, even factitious -- a pattern which was to be repeated in the Shaykhī-Bālāsarī dispute. For our present purposes, it will suffice to note here a few of the more important elements in the Akhbārī-Usūlī debate which have a bearing on the developments with which we are primarily concerned. The Minyat al-mumārisīn mentions the following areas of disagreement of interest to us: the Usūlīs accept ijtihād, but the Akhbārīs accept only what is related by the Imāms; the Usūlīs have four sources of authority,

namely the Qur'ān, sunna, ijmāᶜ, and ᶜaql, whereas the Akhbārīs accept only the first two of these, some even rejecting all but the first; the Usūlīs divide mankind into groups, muqallid and mujtahid, while the Akhbārīs hold that all are muqallid to the Imām; the Usūlīs say that ijtihād is obligatory in the period of occultation and that direct derivation is possible only in his presence, but the Akhbārīs make it obligatory to go to the Imām, even if through an intermediary; the Usūlīs only permit fatwās through ijtihād, but the Akhbārīs permit them if there is a (relevant) tradition from an Imām; the Usūlīs say that a perfect mujtahid (mujtahid mutlaq) is learned in all religious ordinances through the strength of his intellect, whereas the Akhbārīs maintain that only the Imām is informed of all religious ordinances; the Usūlīs forbid taqlīd to a deceased marjaᶜ, while the Akhbārīs permit it; the Usūlīs say that the mujtahid must be obeyed as much as the Imām, whereas the Akhbārīs reject this.[138] It is worth noting at this stage that several of the Akhbārī doctrines listed here, particularly those relating to the overriding position of the Imāms, bear a significant resemblance to many of the views of Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī which formed the basis for the doctrine of the Shaykhī school.

The collapse of the Safawī power appears initially to have meant an increase in influence for the Akhbārī party, despite the advances made by the Usūlīs in the late seventeenth century. The reason for this development is probably very simple: the mujtahidī party had been elaborating its position in the context of a Shīᶜī state in which the role of ijtihād vis à vis the secular powers was progressing satisfactorily, particularly in the reign of Shāh Sultān Husayn. The removal of a Shīᶜī government created the necessity for the revision of the role of ijtihād. The Akhbārī position, however, needed little or no reappraisal. The existence or absence of a Shīᶜī state had small bearing on a system which depended solely on the Qur'ān, aḥādīth, or the Imām for guidance in all affairs, and which accorded to no contemporary authority the right to apply ijtihād in either the private or the public sphere. For some time after the Safawī collapse, indeed, the Akhbārīs clearly offered a more viable system in the absence of a centralized government and a state-fostered religious hierarchy. Until the mujtahids found a way to reinterpret and reassert their position, the ᶜulamā at the ᶜatabāt were dominated by the Akhbārī school.[139] The Usūlī revival which led to the final reversal in the position of the two schools was the result of a process which, as we have indicated, went on throughout the interregnum. However, the Usūlīs owed their eventual victory to one man above all others: Āqā Muhammad Bāqir Bihbihānī (1117 or 18-1205/1705-7 - 90-1).[140]

Bihbihānī was born in Isfahān, spent his childhood in Bihbihān, and later went to Karbalā. He studied at first under his father, Mullā Muhammad-Akmal,[141] and later with other teachers, including Mullā Sadr al-Dīn Tūnī,[142] whose daughter he married, Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī,[143] and Sayyid Muhammad Burūjirdī.[144] Through his ijāzāt from his father and Mullā Sadr al-Dīn, Bihbihānī possessed a chain of riwāya going back to Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī and, like many other ᶜulamā of this period, was himself descended from the Majlisī family[145] -- both indications of the continuity which existed between the later Safawī divines and those of the post-Safawī era.

Bihbihānī was, in many ways, the outstanding link between the late Safawī and early Qājār periods. Referring to his pupils, Mīrzā Muhammad ᶜAlī Habībābādī states that 'if we did not possess the link of their transmission (riwāyat) from him, and, if his chain (silsila) of transmission and one or two other chains apart from his did not go back to ᶜAllāma Majlisī and certain others in the twelfth century, there might have been a break in the chain of transmission of the Shīᶜī ᶜulamā during that troubled interval (fitrat)'.[146] Bihbihānī's central position in the transmission of authority is abundantly clear from the ijāzāt of many modern ᶜulamā, such as the late Āghā Buzurg al-Tihrānī, whose isnād is as follows: from ᶜAllāma Mīrzā Husayn Nūrī (1254-1320/1839-1902), from Shaykh Murtadā al-Ansārī (1214-81/1800-65), from Mullā Ahmad Narāqī (1185-1245/1771-1829), from Sayyid Mahdī Bahr al-ᶜUlūm (1155-212/1742-97), from Bihbihānī, from his father Mullā Muhammad Akmal, from ᶜAllāma Majlisī.[147] Many of the eminent ᶜulamā of the early thirteenth century hijrī were numbered among Bihbihānī's pupils. Habībābādī lists no fewer than forty ᶜulamā of some note who studied under him.[148] Of those mentioned, the following seem to the present writer to be of most importance: Bihbihānī's son-in-law Āqā Sayyid ᶜAlī Tabātabā'ī;[149] his sons Āqā Muhammad ᶜAlī[150] and Āqā ᶜAbd al-Husayn;[151] Āqā Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī Tabātabā'ī Bahr al-ᶜUlūm;[152] Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī;[153] Shaykh Asad Allāh Dizfūlī Kāzimaynī;[154] Āqā Sayyid Muhsin al-Aᶜrajī al-Kāzimaynī;[155] Mīrzā Abū 'l-Qāsim Qummī (Mīrzā-yi-Qummī);[156] Mīrzā Muhammad Mahdī Narāqī;[157] his son, Hāj Mullā Ahmad Narāqī;[158] Mīrzā Yūsuf Mujtahid Tabrīzī;[159] Sayyid Mīrzā Muhammad Mahdī Isfahānī, Shahīd-i Rābiᶜ;[160] Hāj Muhammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī;[161] and Sayyid ᶜAbd Allāh Shubbar al-Kāzimī.[162]

Lest a false impression be given, it is necessary to stress that the individuals named here and others of Bihbihānī's students do not form a single group of scholars working under one man. They have in common the fact that they all studied, for varying lengths of time, under the most outstanding figure of the period; some, like Mīrzā Muhammad Mahdī

Bahr al-ʿUlūm and Mullā ʿAbd al-Samad Hamadānī,[163] were associated with Bihbihānī for many years, while others attended his classes for only a short time. Several of the older students of Bihbihānī (such as Bahr al-ʿUlūm, Sayyid ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī, and Muhammad Mahdī Narāqī) had studied under Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī, and some (Bahr al-ʿUlum, Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī Isfahānī, Mīrzā-yi Qummī, and Shaykh Jaʿfar al-Najafī) under Shaykh Muhammad Mahdī Fatūnī, and thus themselves had direct links with the late Safawī period. Younger individuals studied under these men as well as Bihbihānī; thus, for example, Shaykh Asad Allāh Kāzimaynī was taught by Sayyid-ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī, Shaykh Jaʿfar al-Najafī, Mīrzā-yi Qummī, Bahr al-ʿUlūm, and Mīrzā Muhammad Mahdī Shahristānī,[164] while Hāj Muhammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī studied under Bahr al-ʿUlūm, Shaykh Jaʿfar al-Najafī, and Sayyid ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī. At the same time, it was not uncommon for individuals to teach a particular book or subject to one of their contemporaries or even to individuals older than themselves. Thus, for example, Bahr al-ʿUlūm included among his pupils Shaykh Jaʿfar al-Najafī, Sayyid Muhsin al-Aʿrajī, Āqa Sayyid Muhammad Shubbar, and Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī, while he himself studied falsafa under Mīrzā Muhammad Mahdī Isfahānī. Sayyid ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī was sent to join the classes of pupils much older than himself.[165]

The effective centralization of Shīʿī scholarship at the ʿatabāt thus resulted in the weaving of a complex web of master-pupil relationships, in which generations and individuals repeatedly overlapped. Where the Safawī and earlier periods had seen a relative scattering of Shīʿī learning through Iran, Arab ʿIraq, and the Bahrayn and Jabal ʿĀmil regions, the second half of the eighteenth century witnessed a high degree of concentration of scholars in a central location to which students headed in growing numbers, and from which some left as well qualified ʿulama to teach in Iran, India, and elsewhere. Before proceeding to consider the developments which followed him, let us return for a moment to evaluate the impact of Āqā Bihbihānī himself on the Shīʿī world of his period.

Bihbihānī's great achievement was twofold. On the one hand, he destroyed the influence of the Akhbārīs at the ʿatabāt: 'Before him', writes Tanakābunī, 'the Akhbārīs were in the ascendancy and were extremely numerous, but he uprooted them'.[166] His Risālat al-ijtihād wa 'l-akhbār remains the most important and influential treatment of the arguments used to invalidate the Akhbārī position and to justify that of the Usūlīs. On the other hand, he redefined the nature of ijtihād, established the role of the mujtahid, and laid the basis for a system of fiqh which has been in use in Twelver Shiʿism ever since.[167] 'He reformed

and refashioned the bases of jurisprudence (usūl al-fiqh)', writes Habībābādī, 'in a fresh and delightful manner and, by reason of his new insights into the areas of debate in the subject, provided a forceful and impressive impetus to its development'.[168] As a result of this formidable achievement, Bihbihānī came to be regarded as the mujaddid or murawwij of the thirteenth century hijrī.[169] That this was recognized by his contemporaries is amply testified by Sayyid ᶜAlī Tabātabā'ī in his ijāza to Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī, where he refers to Bihbihānī as 'the Founder (mu'assis) of the nation of the Prince of mankind at the beginning of the thirteenth century'.[170]

The reformation inspired by Bihbihānī was fraught with serious consequences for Twelver Shiᶜism. Before he launched his offensive against the Akhbārīs, relations between them and the Usūlīs had not resulted in serious animosity, much less in outright condemnation of one side by the other for heresy. By pronouncing a sentence of takfīr against the Akhbārīs, Bihbihānī set a dangerous precedent which was soon to be used against Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī and his followers. From the time of Bihbihānī, Shīᶜī orthodoxy became more sharply defined than ever before, and the threat of takfīr comes into use as the ultimate weapon against ideas and individuals likely to challenge the orthodox system or its exponents. It is, above all, a token of the routinization into a church-form which was taking place in Shiᶜism at this time.

During the early Safawī period, heterodox and semi-heterodox groups had been to some extent integrated within the rather amorphous form of Shiᶜism promoted by Shāh Ismāᶜīl.[171] The situation soon changed with regard to the ghulāt and the Sūfīs, but, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the existence of philosopher theologians such as Shaykh Bahā'ī, Mullā Sadrā, Mīr Dāmād, and Muhsin Fayd indicated that orthodox Shiᶜism could embrace a wide range of views.[172] The growth in the power of the mujtahids in the Safawī epoch culminated in the person of Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, whose extreme fanaticism was legendary. But even he praised Mullā Muhammad Amīn Astarābādī in his Bihār al-anwār.[173]

The period of the interregnum, however, gave the Usūlīs the opportunity to develop, in the absence of a central government, the theory of the mujtahid as a living source of charismatic authority in the period of ghayba. By refusing to recognize this authority, the Akhbārīs presented a serious obstacle to the complete domination of the Shīᶜī world and mind by the Usūlī school or -- more precisely -- by its representatives, and what had been a relatively polite theological disagreement intensified rapidly into a struggle for mastery over the development of post-Safawī Shiᶜism. It was inevitable that the Usūlīs would win the struggle. The

power vacuum created by the Afghān invasion had brought into existence a psychological need among the Shīᶜī population for stability and authority, and this is precisely what the Usūlī party offered.

The Usūlī victory had many consequences, but one in particular proves of considerable importance in helping us understand the reaction of the mass of ᶜulamā to Shaykhism and Babism, and, indeed, their very emergence in the first place. This was that taqlīd, limited by the Akhbārīs to the Imāms,[174] was applied by the Usūlīs to the mujtahid. As the mujtahids grew in power, so the role of marjaᶜ al-taqlīd increased in importance, not only as a source of charismatic authority, along the lines suggested earlier in this chapter, but increasingly as a source of unity for the Shīᶜī population.

Some modern authorities have adopted a practice of identifying certain leading ᶜulamā between Kulaynī and the modern period as outstanding marājiᶜ al-taqlīd. Thus, for example, Hairi, citing a monograph by Abū Muhammad Wakīlī Qummī, refers to no less than fifty-eight mujtahids between Kulaynī and Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī (d.1961) as having been 'recognized as great marjaᶜ-i taqlīds'.[175] Khurāsānī, however, gives the names of only twenty-four marājiᶜ from Kulaynī to Āyat Allāh Hāj Āqā Husayn Qummī (d.1366/1947).[176] This would, nevertheless, appear to be a highly innovatory practice which obscures the fact that the concept of marjaᶜīyya seems only to have been clearly defined from the mid nineteenth century. There is general agreement, however, that the modern theory of the role of the marjaᶜ as, ideally, a single individual universally recognized, was first embodied in the person of Shaykh Muhammad Hasan ibn Bāqir al-Najafī (c.1202-66/1788-1850), the author of the celebrated work on fiqh known as the Jawāhir al-kalām.[177]

Shaykh Muhammad Hasan had studied for the most part under students of Bihbihānī, including men such as Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī and his son Shaykh Mūsā, and held an ijāza from Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī. Khwānsārī states that 'none has been seen like him to this day in the elaboration of questions, nor have any beheld his like in the division of unusual elements of the law by means of various proofs; no-one has dealt with the classifications of fiqh so fully as he, nor has anyone systematized the rules of usūl as he has, nor has any mujtahid before him so consolidated the elements of ratiocination. How might it be otherwise when he has written a book on the fiqh of this school from beginning to end, known as the Jawāhir al-ahkām (sic)'.[178] He goes on to say that 'the leadership of the Shīᶜīs, both Arabs and Persians, in this age, fell to him'.[179] A measure of the influence enjoyed by al-Najafī is to be found in the fact that, when Sayyid ᶜAlī Muhammad Shīrāzī declared himself bāb

in 1260/1844, one of his first acts was to send a letter pressing his claims to the Shaykh,[180] while also despatching letters to Tihrān for Muhammad Shāh and Hājī Mīrzā Āqāsī, the Prime Minister.[181]

It was, however, a pupil of al-Najafī, Shaykh Murtadā Dizfūlī Ansārī, Shaykh al-Tā'ifa (1214-81/1800-64-5), who carried the role of mujtahid to its highest point. Having succeeded al-Najafī at the ᶜatabāt,[182] Ansārī was acknowledged as marjaᶜ not only in ᶜIraq and Iran, but in Turkey, Arabia, and India, thus becoming the first to be universally recognized throughout virtually the entire Shīᶜī world.[183] Of particular significance in the present context is the statement of Iᶜtimād al-Saltana that Ansārī was 'the first general vicegerent (nā'ib-i ᶜāmm) of the Imām'.[184] The Bāb's claim was, in the first instance, held by some to be that of 'special vicegerent' (nā'ib-i khāss) of the Imām.[185]

The sense of unity thus achieved was ruptured for a short time by various claims to leadership on the death of Ansārī, but was continued in the end by Mīrzā Muhammad Hasan Shīrāzī (d.1312/1895), the Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī who issued a fatwā against the Tobacco Regie in 1892.[186] In many respects, the importance of Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī exceeded that of Ansārī, to whose position he had succeeded. He is described by his pupil Hasan al-Sadr in his Takmila as 'the leader of Islam, the nā'ib of the Imām, the renewer (mujaddid) of the divine laws (at the beginning of the fourteenth century hijrī).... The leadership of the Jaᶜfarī sect throughout the world was centred in (him) towards the end of his life'.[187] Iᶜtimād al-Saltana, writing in Shīrāzī's lifetime, states that 'today he is the most learned of the mujtahids in the eyes of the people of discernment'.[188]

The lack of any real, hierarchically-organized ecclesiastical system, however, meant that the situation after Shīrāzī became somewhat unclear, with little agreement as to which precise individuals might be regarded as aᶜlam and worthy of holding the position of sole marjaᶜ. Hairi states that 'if at a given time, there existed several equally qualified mujtahids, none might be able to gain recognition as the sole marjaᶜ',[189] and gives the example of Mīrzā Muhammad Husayn Nā'īnī (d.1936), Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Karīm Hā'irī (d.1937), and Sayyid Abū 'l-Hasan Isfahānī (d.1945), in the period before the death of the first two. Nevertheless, a succession of individual scholars did appear who fostered the role of marjaᶜīyya, whether on an absolute or partial basis, and kept alive the possibility of a living source of charismatic authority in the Shīᶜī world.[190] Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī, who died in 1961, was particularly successful in establishing his position as sole marjaᶜ al-taqlīd, although even here there were those who tended to see him as head of the body of ᶜulamā in

an organizational rather than ideal charismatic sense.[191] During this period, the title 'Āyat Allāh' came to be used widely of mujtahids who had acquired the standing of marja^{c}, and, in more recent times, there has been a tendency to institutionalize the title, particularly in the form 'Āyat Allāh al-^{c}Uzmā', used of the most outstanding mujtahid. Thus, Burūjirdī was recognized as Āyat Allāh al-^{c}Uzmā in his lifetime,[192] and it appears that Āyat Allāh Khumaynī is now being referred to by this supreme title. In view of the proximity of the fifteenth hijrī century and the high degree of personal veneration which he has inspired, it seems likely that Khumaynī will achieve wide (but, I suspect, not universal) recognition as the mujaddid of the century. This is all the more intriguing when we consider that he has achieved his present position more by virtue of his political success and charismatic appeal than by any outstanding abilities as an ^{c}ālim -- in some ways a reversal of the trend towards ecclesiastical routinization by the irruption of latent charisma.

The implications of this development as a means of extending or projecting the charisma of the Imām into individual figures of supreme or near supreme authority are clear. The marja^{c} or Āyat Allāh is the living deputy of the Imām in an active and distinct sense. Thus, Mahmoud Shehabi writes that

> The order was received that during the long absence the ignorant are to be guided by the orders and the religious ideas of the leaders -- called public deputies (i.e. nā'ib-i ^{c}amm), or deputies not specifically appointed (i.e. as opposed to the nā'ib-i khāss) -- who know jurisprudence, can protect their religion, and are thus able to save the people from sins, corruption, and earthly desires. Such public deputies who have a thorough knowledge from the proper sources are, during the long absence, like an Imam, and following them is comparable to following an Imam. Since Shi^{c}a depends (sic) upon the one who is the most learned and accepts him as the public deputy, in every epoch the person who is the most learned and pious is regarded as the public deputy, and the people follow his ideas and his decisions concerning religious affairs.[193]

This link with the Imām is vividly illustrated by Hājī Mīrzā Yahyā Dawlatābādī, when he points out that one of the factors inducing Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī to live in Sāmarrā was the existence there of the cellar in which the twelfth Imām was said to have entered occultation, a fact which increased the stature of the nā'ib of the Imām living there.[194] According to Binder, 'Burujirdi's supporters came close to representing him as the sole spokesman for the hidden Imam'.[195] Some of Khumaynī's followers have, in fact, gone as far as to speak of him openly and in print as the nā'ib of the Imām[196] while his arrival in Iran in the early days of the revolution had what can only be described as messianic overtones. The significance of the role of the rukn al-rābi^{c} in Shaykhism, or of the bāb in early Babism becomes much clearer in the context of a growing

demand for a single source of charismatic authority in Shi^{c}ism from the time of Bihbihānī onwards. In the case of Babism, however, we shall see that the charisma was original rather than latent.

In this regard, it is important to understand that the emergence of Shaykh Muhammad Hasan al-Najafī as supreme marja al-taqlīd was itself the result of a development in which several individuals of importance figured. We have indicated above how many of the leading ^{c}ulamā of the early nineteenth century studied under Bihbihānī and one another, creating a complex network of masters and pupils. Out of this group there emerged a number of ^{c}ulamā who were, in a sense, prototypes of Shaykh Muhammad Hasan and his successors, on the one hand, and of the wealthy, influential ^{c}ulamā of the later Qājār period (such as Mullā ^{c}Alī Kanī, Shaykh Muhammad Taqī Isfahānī Najafī, and Hāj Āqā Muhsin ^{c}Irāqī) on the other.

Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī Tabātabā'ī Bahr al-^{c}Ulūm was widely regarded in Bihbihānī's lifetime as possessing influence at the ^{c}atabāt second only to that of the latter, and was certainly the leading ^{c}ālim in the brief period between Bihbihānī's death and his own. Bahr al-^{c}Ulūm was born in 1155/1742 in Karbalā, where he studied initally under his father, Sayyid Murtadā, later receiving instruction from Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī. He then went to Najaf, where he studied under Shaykh Muhammad Mahdī Fatūnī, Shaykh Muhammad Taqī Darūqī al-Najafī, and several other ^{c}ulamā. Following this, he returned to Karbalā to study under Bihbihānī. Among his pupils were Shaykh Ja^{c}far al-Najafī, Sayyid Jawād al-^{c}Āmilī, Mullā Ahmad Narāqī, Hāj Mullā Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī, Shaykh ^{c}Abd ^{c}Alī ibn Muhammad al-Bahrānī, and Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī, to whom he gave an ijāza. His writings are comparatively few, including the Hāshīyyat al-wāfīyya on usūl, the Durrat al-manzūma on fiqh, and the Fawā'id al-Usūlīyya.[197]

Shaykh Ja^{c}far al-Najafī (1156-1228/1743-1813), whose polemics against Mīrzā Muhammad al-Akhbārī in the time of Fath-^{c}Alī Shāh put a seal on Bihbihānī's victory over the Akhbārī movement, exercised great influence, not only at the ^{c}atabāt but in Iran itself, where he commanded the obedience of the Shāh. According to Tanakābunī, Shaykh Ja^{c}far 'permitted Fath-^{c}Alī Shāh to ascend the throne (idhn dar saltanat dād), and appointed him as his deputy (nā'ib), but on certain conditions: that he appoint a mu'adhdhin to each of the regiments of the army and an Imām-Jum^{c}a for the army as a whole, who should deliver a sermon once a week and give instructions on (religious) questions'.[198] Despite his well-known love for food and sex, he had a reputation as a sternly religious man, attending rigorously to his devotions, and it was his example which inspired Mullā Muhammad Taqī Baraghānī Qazvīnī to apply himself to his

prayers during the night, even in winter.[199] Apart from Bihbihānī, Shaykh Jaᶜfar studied under Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, Shaykh Muhammad Mahdī Fatūnī, and Shaykh Muhammad Taqī Darūqī (themselves teachers of Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, as we have noted). An Arab, whose Persian was not very fluent, his influence in Iran, where he travelled almost every year, prefigures in many respects that exercised by Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī, who was, in fact, one of his pupils. In particular, his influence in Isfahān and Qazvīn shows a striking resemblance to that achieved a short time later by al-Ahsā'ī in those same places, and, with the notable exception of Muhammad Taqī Baraghānī, was exercised over many of the same people. We have referred earlier to the importance of Shaykh Jaᶜfar's work on fiqh, the Kashf al-ghitā, as an example of the conjunction of charismatic and legal authority in the work of certain individual scholars. He was, in the words of Khwānsārī, 'obeyed by both Arabs and Persians',[200] and became, as he himself writes, 'the Shaykh of all the Shaykhs of the Muslims'.[201] Āghā Buzurg al-Tihrānī describes him as 'the favoured leader of the Shīᶜīs, and their greatest marjaᶜ in his day'.[202] Some even regarded as the nā'ib of the Imām,[203] a point of some significance in the present context.

Among the most important contemporaries of Shaykh Jaᶜfar, we may note Hājī Mīrzā Abū 'l-Qāsim Qummī (Mīrzā-yi Qummī) and Āqā Sayyid ᶜAlī Tabātabā'ī Karbalā'ī. Mīrzā-yi Qummī (1152-1231/1739-40 - 1816) studied under Bihbihānī, Shaykh Muhammad Mahdī Fatūnī, and others, and eventually came to live and teach in Qum, where he did much to raise the standard of religious studies. His important work on fiqh, Al-qawānīn al-muhkama, is one of the most important contributions to the study of usūl, to the extent that Khwānsārī says of it that 'it has abrogated all the books of usūl'[204] -- yet another example of the way in which Shīᶜī fiqh developed in this period. Sayyid ᶜAlī Tabātabā'ī (1161-1231/1748-1816)[205] is the author of another famous work on fiqh, the Riyād al-masā'il, noted for its contribution to furūᶜ. Born in Kāzimayn, he was descended from Mullā Muhammad Taqī, the father of Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, while his own father had married a sister of Āqā Bihbihānī; he himself later married one of Bihbihānī's daughters. His early studies were carried out under the direction of Bihbihānī's eldest son, Āqā Muhammad ᶜAlī, but he later studied under the murawwij himself. He himself taught a number of important ᶜulamā, including Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī, Hāj Muhammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī, Hāj Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Shaftī, Hāj Mullā Muhammad Taqī Baraghānī, and his brother, Hāj Mullā Muhammad Sālih (the father of the Bābī leader Qurrat al-ᶜAyn).

Sayyid ᶜAlī provides us with an excellent example of an increasingly common phenomenon in the period under review: the ᶜālim with close links not only by means of ijāza but also through physical descent and marriage

with other ʿulamā of significance. From the late Safawī period on, we can observe how religious authority passed not only from teacher to pupil but from father to son as well; descendants of Muhammad Taqī and Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, of Shaykh Niʿmat Allāh al-Jazā'irī, Āqā Bihbihānī, Bahr al-ʿUlūm, Shaykh Jaʿfar al-Najafī, and Tabātabā'ī himself came to occupy positions of importance in the religious hierarchy. Not only was the power of the individual mujtahid increasing, but the influence of certain clerical families was growing. Intermarriage between the members of these families strengthened this power to a degree that made entry into the highest echelons of the ʿulamā class increasingly difficult for someone outside the circles of this power structure (although, as Bill has noted, the religious classes have provided a path into the middle sector of society for young men of humble birth up to the modern period.[206] By way of contrast, as we shall note, Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī was neither descended from a clerical family nor related to one by marriage. None of his descendants aspired to rank within the religious hierarchy, although many of his students rose to eminence. Sayyid Kazim Rashti, similarly, came from an important family of sayyids who had no connection with the ʿulamā, and, although some of them were scholars, none of his descendants (with the limited exception of his son Sayyid Ahmad) held a notable position within the Shīʿī hierarchy. Hāj Muhammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī, Rashtī's successor as head of the Shaykhī school, was the only ʿālim in a family closely related to the ruling Qājār house, but it is significant to note that he succeeded in establishing his own small dynasty of scholars in Kirmān, as did his rival, Mullā Muhammad Māmaqānī, in Tabrīz. Although Sayyid ʿAlī Muhammad Shīrāzī was related through his father to Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī and Sayyid Jawād Shīrāzī (an important Imām-Jumʿa of Kirmān), his family was, primarily, composed of wholesale merchants (tujjār). Much the same is true of several (but by no means all) of the Bāb's disciples, including Mullā Muhammad Husayn Bushrū'ī and Mullā Muhammad ʿAlī Bārfurūshī.

A student of Shaykh Jaʿfar, Bihbihānī, Bahr al-ʿUlūm, Āqā Sayyid ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī, and Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī, Hāj Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī (1180-1261/1766-7 - 1845) seems to have been one of the earliest mujtahids to achieve recognition as a marjaʿ beyond a restricted area, being acknowledged as such for the whole of Iran, Arabia, and India[207] -- although his recognition cannot be said to have been universal in those regions. Khwānsārī describes him as 'the source of sciences, wisdom, and writings, the centre of the circle of noble scholars, the axis around which the sharīʿa revolved in this age, and the support of the Shīʿa and their distinguished and mighty shaykh'.[208] Descendants of Kalbāsī are numbered

among the leading ʿulamā of the later period in Isfahān and ʿIraq. His contemporary and associate in Isfahān, Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Shaftī (Rashtī), Hujjat al-Islām (1175-1260/1761-2 - 1844) had studied under Bihbihānī, Sayyid ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī, Bahr al-ʿUlūm, Shaykh Jaʿfar, Sayyid Muhsin al-Aʿrajī, and Mīrzā-yi Qummī. He is described by Algar as 'the first example of the wealthy, assertive mujtahid, whose power -- judicial, economic, and political -- exceeds that of the secular government, which functions, indeed, only with his consent and subject to his ultimate control'.[209] Shaftī's influence did not end, however, in the financial or political spheres; he acquired a considerable reputation as a scholar, attracting pupils from several countries,[210] and became, in the words of an English observer, 'renowned for his sanctity from Kerbelah to the Ganges, and considered the most shining luminary of the Sheeah faith'.[211] The importance of his position towards the time of his death is indicated by the fact that Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī singled him out as the one individual whose approval of the Shaykhī position would secure for it considerable protection from the attacks of other ʿulamā, and sought to influence him by sending Mullā Muhammad Husayn Bushrū'ī to Isfahān in order to win his allegiance.[212]

Had it not been for the pronouncement against him of takfīr in about 1822, Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī might well have been the first Shīʿī ʿālim to achieve universal marjaʿīyya. Despite the takfīr and the continuing prejudice against Shaykhism in orthodox circles, later writers have almost universally accorded him the highest praise, and there is no doubt that, in his own lifetime, he was one of the most powerful and respected ʿulamā living in Iran. Although strongly favoured by Fath-ʿAlī Shāh and, from 1814, lavishly patronized by Muhammad ʿAlī Mīrzā in Kirmānshāh, he succeeded in avoiding the imputation of having sold out to the secular powers, and was regarded as both pious and brilliant. No study of the development of charismatic authority in Shiʿism during this period would be complete without detailed reference to Shaykh Ahmad, not least because of the manner in which the Shaykhī school after him and, from 1844, the Bābī movement interpreted and expressed the nature and function of such authority and of the 'gnostic motif'. Having provided some idea of the intellectual milieu of Twelver Shiʿism at the time of his arrival in ʿIraq from Arabia, let us now discuss at greater length the career of Shaykh Ahmad himself.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

Full details of all works mentioned in these and subsequent notes may be found in the bibliography. Where no ambiguity is possible, the name of the author alone has been given in the second and subsequent references; where there is more than one author of the same name or more than one work by the same author, a short title is also given. In the case of works frequently cited, abbreviations have been used: these may be found listed at the front of this work.

1. See En Islam iranien Vol.4 pp.205-300; Terre Céleste et corps de résurrection pp.183-7, 281-401; 'L'École Shaykhie en Théologie Shî'ite', In Terre Céleste (p.183), Corbin observes of the Shaykhī school 'qu'elle marque une revivification puissante de la gnose shî'ite primitive et des enseignements contenus dans les traditions remontant aux saints Imâms'.

2. 'He (Shaykh Aḥmad) opposed the Platonists, the Stoics, and the Aristotelians (ḥukamā-yi ishrāqīyīn wa rawāqīyīn wa mashā'īn) on most questions, and insisted on refuting them and demonstrating the falsity of their arguments' (Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn p.21; cf. ibid pp. 39, 50-2). See also Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsa'i Sharḥ al-ziyārat al-jāmi'at al-kabīra pt.1 pp.24, 70; Sayyid Kāẓim Rashti, introduction to translation of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī Ḥayāt al-nafs pp.5, 10-11; idem Risāla-yi usūl al-'aqā'id (MS) pp.10, 13, 61-2, 63-4, 202; Ḥāj Muḥammad Bāqir Hamadānī Kitāb al-ījtināb pp.113-4. For the views of the Bāb on these groups, see various khutub in TBA 5006.C pp.317-35, 339-40, 354-63.

3. See, for example, Bryan S. Turner Weber and Islam pp.84-91; W. Montgomery Watt 'The conception of the charismatic community in Islam'; idem Truth in the Religions pp.115-6, 144-5.

4. R. Strothmann 'Shī'a' p.353.

5. Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al-Muẓaffarī Ta'rīkh al-shī'a p.65.

6. Muḥammad Jawād Mashkūr Tārīkh-i shī'a wa firqahā-yi islām pp.142-6; cf. Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī Biḥar al-anwār Vol.51 pp.367-81.

7. The traditional sources maintain that the Imām addressed a last letter to al-Samarrī, in which he instructed him to appoint no-one in his place (see Majlisī Vol.51 p.361)

8. For traditions relating to this doctrine, see Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī Al-usūl min al-Kāfī Vol.1 pp.332-5; Ḥāj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī Faṣl al-khiṭāb pp.72-4; Ḥāj Muḥammad Khān Kirmānī Al-kitāb al-mubīn Vol.1 pp.199-207.

9. Recorded Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī Rawḍat al-Kāfī p.129.

10. On the nature and significance of this interworld, see Corbin Terre Céleste passim. For a discussion of visions of the Imām from a later Shaykhī viewpoint, see Ḥāj Zayn al-'Ābidīn Khān Kirmānī Risāla dar jawāb-i Āqā-yi Niẓām al-Islām Isfahānī pp.72-103.

11. See En Islam Vol.4 pp.322-89.

12. Jannat al-ma'wā published as appendix to Majlisī Vol.53 pp.199-336. On Nūrī, see Āghā Buzurg al-Tihrānī Ṭabaqāt aʿlām al-shīʿa Vol.1 pp.543-5.

13. Nūrī Jannat p.245.

14. It was first published thus by Ḥāj Muḥammad Ḥasan Iṣfahānī (Kumpānī) in his first edition of the Biḥār al-anwār (see Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī Al-dharīʿa ilā taṣānīf al-shiʿa Vol.5 pp.159-60).

15. Ernest Gellner 'Concepts and society', quoted Turner Weber and Islam p.68.

16. Betty R. Scharf The Sociological Study of Religion p.154.

17. It is relevant to note here that one of the best examples of such further routinization following the death of the bearer of hereditary, latent charisma is to be found in the Bahā'ī movement after the demise of Shoghi Effendi, the walī amr Allāh, in 1957; the subsequent increase in organizational elements, the introduction of a vastly expanded complex of appointed officials, and the combination of charismatic and legal authority in an elected body have all resulted in a very high degree of routinization and a much more 'church-like' image. See V.E. Johnson 'An Historical Analysis of Critical Transformations in the Evolution of the Baha'i World Faith'. For earlier routinization in the movement, see Peter L. Berger 'From Sect to Church: A Sociological Interpretation of the Baha'i Movement'.

18. See Berger 'From Sect to Church'; idem 'Motif messianique et processus social dans le Bahaisme'; Johnson 'An Historical Analysis'.

19. See Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn Āl Kāshif al-Ghiṭā Aṣl al-shīʿa wa uṣūluhā p.92; ʿAllāmah Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'i Shiʿite Islam p.190. A large number of such traditions is cited by Sayyid ʿAlī Muḥammad the Bāb in his Sharḥ Sūrat al-Kawthar (MS) ff.44b, 45b, 46b, 48a, 49a. This question is discussed in detail in Etan Kohlberg 'From Imāmiyya to Ithnā-ʿAsharīyya'.

20. See Rashtī Uṣūl pp.174-5.

21. On the Mahdī in Sunnī and, to a lesser extent, Shīʿī belief, see D.S. Margoliouth 'Mahdi'; D.B. Macdonald 'Al-Mahdī'. The most popular Shīʿī source for traditions on the rajʿa of the twelfth Imām is Majlisī Vol. 53 pp.1-144. An excellent systematic compilation of traditions relating to resurrection in general (maʿād), qīyāma, and rajʿa is to be found in Kirmānī Mubīn Vol.2 pp.115-257. Succinct accounts of this topic (which is particularly relevant to our later discussion of Shaykhī expectation) may be found in al-Aḥsā'ī Ḥayāt al-Nafs pp.91-134 and Ḥāj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī Irshād al-ʿawwām Vol.3 pp.338-453. An early Bābī compilation of messianic traditions, largely derived from the ʿAwālim, may be found under Anon., risāla 1 in Nivishtijāt wa āthār-i ashāb-i amr-i aʿlā (MS) pp.1-196.

22. Kirmānī Mubīn Vol.1 pp.264-7; Ibn Bābūya Risālat al-Iʿtiqādāt pp.99-100.

23. Compare Macdonald 'Al-Mahdī' p.113.

24. 'From Sect to Church'; 'Motif messianique'. For a divergent view, see Peter Smith 'Millenarianism in the Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions'.

25. An example of this view relevant to the present study may be found in Karīm Khān Kirmānī Risāla-yi tīr-i shihāb pp.167-81, esp. pp.178-81.

26. In Kirmānī Mubīn Vol.1 p.434.

27. In ibid p.435.

28. In Kirmānī Fasl p.95.

29. In Kirmānī Mubīn Vol.1 p.434.

30. On the value of the polar motif in this context, see Peter Smith 'Motif Research: Peter Berger and the Baha'i faith'.

31. See Mullā Muhammad ibn Sulaymān Tanakābunī Qisas al-ʿulamā p.204.

32. For this reason, Shīʿī ʿulamā are often referred to by titles incorporating the names of their most important works, such as 'Ṣāḥib al-Wasā'il', Sāhib al-Madārik', 'Sāhib Kashf al-Ghitā', or even 'Kāshif al-Ghitā'.

33. In Kirmānī Mubīn Vol.1 pp.434-5.

34. In Kirmānī Fasl p.95.

35. In Kirmānī Mubīn Vol.1 p.435.

36. For general lists of early Iranian Shīʿī exponents of these disciplines, see S.H. Nasr and M. Mutahhari 'The Religious Sciences' pp.468, 472, 473-4, 478. On early Rāfiḍī scholars, including Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, ʿAlī ibn Maytham al-Tammār, and Hishām ibn Sālim al-Jawālīqī, see W. Montgomery Watt The Formative Period of Islamic Thought pp.157-62. The most comprehensive lists of Shīʿī scholars who were companions of the Imāms, listed under each Imām in turn, can be found in Shaykh Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī Rijāl al-Ṭūsī and Shaykh Abū ʿAmr Muḥammad ibn ʿAmr al-Kashshī Kitāb maʿrifa akhbār al-rijāl. See also Sayyid Muhsin al-Amīn Aʿyān al-shīʿa.

37. See Abū 'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Najjāshī Al-rijāl pp.235-6; Shaykh Abū Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Ṭūsī Al-fihrist pp.150-1; al-Kashshī pp.333-7.

38. See ʿAbbās Iqbāl Khānadān-i Nawbakhtī pp.80-1, and bibliography there.

39. See Iqbāl Khānadān pp.79-80, and bibliography there; al-Najjāshī p.338; al-Ṭūsī Al-fihrist pp.203-5; al-Kashshī pp.165-81; Watt Formative Period pp.186-9; W. Madelung 'Hishām ibn al-Hakam'.

40. Iqbāl Khānadān p.69.

41. Ibid pp.72, 74.

42. Ibid p.74.

43. See ibid pp.84-7, and bibliography there.

44. See ibid pp.87-94, and bibliography there.

45. Formative Period p.274.

46. Tabātabā'ī Shiʿite Islam p.63.

47. Heribert Busse 'Iran under the Būyids' p.288.

48. On the development of Shiʿism in these regions, see al-Muzaffarī pp.76-7, 108-10, 261-4, 139-48, 149-60.

49. Religion and State in Iran 1785-1906 p.5.

50. Ibid.

51. Imām (Rūḥ Allāh) Khumaynī Wilāyat-i Faqīh pp.74-89.

52. Ibid p.64.

53. Ibid p.142.

54. Ibid p.49.

55. Truth in the Religions pp.67-8; cf. pp.115-6, 144-5, where he limits this distinction to the Khawarij and the early Shī^{c}a.

56. There are numerous akhbār on this theme: see, for example, Kulaynī Rawḍat pp.68, 128, 180-1, 201, 300-1; Kirmānī Mubīn Vol.1 pp.234-546.

57. Kirmānī Irshād Vol.4 pp.142-449; Kirmānī Mubīn Vol.1 pp.437-8.

58. In Kirmānī Faṣl p.95.

59. Hāj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī Al-fitrat al-salīma Vol.3 p.258.

60. Idem Irshād Vol.4 pp.160-4.

61. Ibid pp.166-75.

62. See Ḥāj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī Izhāq al-Bāṭil pp.177-262; idem Tīr-i Shihāb pp.212-25.

63. Iqbāl Khānadān p.71.

64. p.65.

65. Mashkūr p.139.

66. Mullā Muḥammad Amīn Astarābādī Fawā'id al-madanīyya, quoted in Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir al-Mūsawī al-Khwānsārī al-Iṣbihānī Kitāb rawḍāt al-jannāt p.34; Leonard Binder 'The Proofs of Islam' p.124.

67. Rawḍāt p.174; cf. Qiṣaṣ p.360.

68. Tīr-i Shihāb p.175.

69. Muhammad Jawād Mughnīyya Ma^{c}a ^{c}ulamā al-Najaf al-ashraf p.81.

70. Qiṣaṣ p.198.

71. 'From Sect to Church' pp.161-2.

72. See (Aḥmad Afandī Suhrāb) Al-risāla al-tis^{c} ^{c}asharīyya p.9; Mīrzā Ḥusayn Hamadānī The New History of Mīrzā ^{c}Alī Muḥammed the Bāb Preface pp.180, 185, 321-2; (Mullā Muḥammad (Nabīl) Zarandī) The Dawn-Breakers pp.1-2.

73. For discussions of relations between church and state in the Safawī period, see Algar Religion and State pp.27-30; N.R. Keddie 'The Roots of the Ulama's Power in Modern Iran' pp.217-22; M.M. Mazzaoui The Origins of the Safavids passim; H. Braun 'Iran under the Safavids and in the 18th. Century'; A.K.S. Lambton 'Quis Custodiet Custodes' pt.2 pp.131-42.

74. For a detailed discussion of relations between the state and the ʿulamā in the Qājār period, see Algar Religion and State.

75. On his accession, Nādir had the Shaykh al-Islām of Iṣfahān strangled in his presence. He also confiscated waqf properties, restricted the functioning of the sharʿ legal system, and had many ʿulama put to death when they attempted to organize risings against him in several regions. On Nādir Shāh generally, see Lawrence Lockhart Nadir Shah.

76. Shaykh Jaʿfar ibn Bāqir Āl Mahbūba Mādī al-Najaf wa hādiruhā p.380.

77. See Stephen Longrigg Four Centuries of Modern ʿIraq p.123 ff.

78. Sayyid Muhammad Hāshimī Kirmānī 'Tā'ifa-yi Shaykhīyya' p.247.

79. 'Hujjat al-Islām Hāj Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Shaftī' p.28.

80. Algar Religion and State pp.33-4. For details concerning the four men named by Iqbāl and Algar, see the following -- 1. On Mullā Ismāʿīl Khwājū'ī: Rawdāt pp.31-3; Mullā Muḥammad ʿAlī Kashmīrī Nujūm al-samā pp.268-9. 2. On Mullā Muḥammad Rafīʿ Jīlānī: Nujūm pp.232-3. 3. On Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī: Rawdāt pp.614-5; Nujūm p.320; Muḥammad Maʿṣūm Shīrāzī Tarā'iq al-haqā'iq Vol.3 pp.214-5; Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 p.15. 4. On Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrani: Rawdāt pp.741-3; Nujūm pp.279-83; Qiṣaṣ pp.271-4.

81. On Majlisī, see Rawdāt pp.119-24; Nujūm pp.160-6; Qiṣaṣ pp.204-28.

82. Rawdāt p.331.

83. The author of the Wasā'il al-shīʿa and Amal al-āmil fī ʿulamā Jabal ʿĀmil. See Rawdāt pp.616-9; Nujūm pp.157-60; Qiṣaṣ pp.289-93; al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Ḥusayni, introduction to Amal al-āmil by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan (al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī) Vol.1 pp.8-52. A large number of his works are listed in Iʿjāz Ḥusayn Kantūrī Kashf al-ḥujūb wa 'l-astār; see also al-Ḥusaynī, introduction to al-ʿĀmili pp.27-33. The latter provides a list of the main pupils and rāwīyūn of al-ʿĀmilī (pp.15-18).

84. The author of Al-wāfī etc. See Rawdāt pp.516-23; Nujūm pp. 9-25; Qiṣaṣ pp.322-33; ʿAlī Asghar Halabī Tārīkh-i falāsifa-yi Īrān pp.745-51.

85. See Rawdāt pp.301-2; Corbin En Islam Vol.4, Book 5, Chapter 3.

86. See Rawdāt pp.194-6; Qiṣaṣ p.265; Halabī pp.752-3.

87. See Rawdāt pp.728-30; Qiṣaṣ pp.436-53; Nujūm pp.167-72. E.G. Browne gives a summary of his autobiography in his Literary History of Persia Vol.4 pp.360-7.

88. See Rawdāt pp.621-3; Nujūm pp.211-12; Qiṣaṣ pp.312-13.

89. See Rawdāt pp.331-2; there described as 'one of the great muḥaqqiqīn of the period...between Majlisī and Bihbihānī'.

90. See Nujūm pp.238-42.

91. See Rawdāt pp.365-6; Nujūm pp.251-8.

92. See Nujūm pp.302-3.

93. See brief accounts in biographies of his son.

94. See Nujūm pp.294-5; brief account in biography of Bahr al-ʿUlūm in Rawdāt p.649.

95. See Nujūm pp.276-7.

96. See Tabaqāt Vol.2 pp.174-5; Qisas p.196.

97. It is not entirely true to say, as does Algar, that '...the few ulama whose names attained any prominence resided there (the ʿatabāt)' (Religion and State p.30). Of the four ʿulamā referred to by Algar himself as eminent, only one -- Shaykh Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī -- lived at the ʿatabāt (and that only for a time), the other three residing in Isfahān and Mashhad.

98. Namely, Āqā Mīrzā Muḥammad Mahdī Shahristānī, Shaykh Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Darāzī al-Baḥrānī, Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-Baḥrānī al-Damastānī, and Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī Ṭabāṭabā'ī Baḥr al-ʿUlūm. Details of these men may be found in this and the next chapter.

99. See note 75 above.

100. On the absence of genuine renewal or reformism among the Shīʿī ʿulamā by reason of their attachment to precedent, see W.G. Millward 'Aspects of modernism in Shīʿa Islam' pp.112-3.

101. See Algar Religion and State passim and, in particular, pp.21-5; Joseph Eliash 'The Ithnāʿasharī-Shīʿī Juristic Theory of Political and Legal Authority'; Lambton 'Quis Custodiet'; Keddie 'Roots'; Gianroberto Scarcia 'A Proposito del Problema della Sovranita presso gli Imamiti'.

102. Keddie 'Roots' p.216.

103. On this, see Ṭabāṭabā'ī Shiʿite Islam pp.39-50, 173-84.

104. On this, see Jean Chardin Voyages de Monsieur le Chevalier Chardin en Perse Vol.2 pp.207-8, 208, 337.

105. Keddie 'Roots' p.217.

106. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī Lu'lu'atayi 'l-Baḥrayn p.122.

107. Nujūm p.41; cf. Rawdāt p.169, where he is described as the founder (mu'assis) of the school. On Muḥammad Amīn, see Rawdāt pp.33-9; Qisas pp.321-2; Nujūm pp.41-2; al-Bahrani pp.122-3.

108. See Kashf p.210; Al-dharīʿa Vol.8 p.46.

109. Thiqat al-Islām Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d.329/940) is the compiler of the important Shīʿī ḥadīth collection Al-kāfī, and is regarded as the mujaddid of the fourth century. See Rawdāt pp.524-7; Sayyid Nūr Allāh ibn Sharīf Shūshtarī Majālis al-mu'minīn pp.185-6; Ḥusayn ʿAlī Maḥfūz Sīra Abī Jaʿfar Muḥammad...al-Kulaynī, with bibliography.

110. Rawdāt p.33.

111. See Rawdāt pp.601-4; Nujūm pp.4-5; Qisas pp.281-2; al-ʿĀmilī Vol.1 pp.167-9.

112. See Kashf p.499.

113. See Rawdāt pp.179-80; Nujūm pp.5-9; Qisas pp.282-5; al-ʿĀmilī Vol.1 pp.57-63.

114. See Kashf p.532.

115. See Rawdāt pp.599-601; Qiṣaṣ p.322; Kashf pp.138, 171, 324, 488; Al-dharīᶜa Vol.10 pp.121, 141.

116. Dānish-nāma-yi shāhī, quoted Rawdāt p.33.

117. See Kashf p.406. The book was completed in 1031/1622 in Mecca.

118. See Dānish-nāma quoted Rawdāt p.34.

119. A Persian commentary on Ibn Bābūya's Man lā yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh. See Kashf pp.481-2; Al-dharīᶜa Vol.18 pp.369-70 (under Al-lawāmiᶜ al-qudsīyya).

120. Lawāmiᶜ-i ṣāḥibqirān, quoted Rawdāt p.38.

121. Fawā'id al-madanīyya, quoted Rawdāt p.34. Ḥasan ibn ᶜAlī ibn Abī ᶜAqīl is the author of a work on fiqh entitled Al-mutamassik bi-ḥabl āl al-rasūl. He is described by Baḥr al-ᶜUlūm as 'the first to elaborate jurisprudence (awwal man hadhaba 'l-fiqh), to theorize, and to open discussion on uṣūl and furuᶜ in the beginning of the greater occultation; after him came the illustrious Shaykh Ibn Junayd' (Fawā'id al-rijālīyya, quoted Rawdāt p.168). For details, see Rawdāt pp.168-9. Abū ᶜAlī Muḥammad ibn Junayd al-Baghdādī (d.381/991-2) is the author of several works, none of them well known. Khwānsārī describes him as 'the first to make progress in ijtihād concerning the laws of the sharīᶜa' (Rawdāt p.534). For details, see Rawdat pp.534-6; Qiṣaṣ pp.430-1.

122. Abū ᶜAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥārithī al-Baghdādī; see Rawdāt pp.536-43; Qiṣaṣ pp.398-406; Shūshtarī pp.191-2.

123. Astarābādī simply writes 'al-ᶜAllāma', al-Ḥillī being the ᶜAllāma par excellence (al-ᶜallāma ᶜalā 'l-iṭlāq). On him, see Rawdāt pp.172-7; Qiṣaṣ pp.355-64; Shūshtarī pp.236-8. For his works, see Carl Brockelmann Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur Supp.2 pp.206-9.

124. See Rawdāt pp.589-94; Qiṣaṣ pp.337-42; al-ᶜĀmilī Vol.1 pp.181-3.

125. See Rawdāt pp.390-4; Qiṣaṣ pp.346-8; al-ᶜĀmilī Vol.1 p.123. According to Khwānsārī, some Sunnīs referred to him as 'the originator of the Shīᶜī madhhab (mukhtariᶜ madhhab al-shīᶜa).

126. See Rawdāt pp.287-98; Qiṣaṣ pp.248-63; al-ᶜĀmilī Vol.1 pp.85-91.

127. Rawdāt p.34. See ibid pp.604-13; Qiṣaṣ pp.233-47; Halabī pp.680-96.

128. Apart from those referred to, he mentions in passing Sayyid Murtaḍā ᶜAlam al-Hudā (d.436/1044-5; see Rawdāt pp.374-9) and his close associate Abū Jaᶜfar Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d.458/1066; see Rawdāt pp.553-63).

129. The first 'three Muḥammads' were: Muḥammad ibn Yaᶜqūb al-Kulaynī, Muḥammad ibn ᶜAlī ibn Bābūya, and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, the compilers of the 'Four Books'. The later 'three Muḥammads' were: Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-ᶜĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn al-Murtaḍā (Muḥsin Fayḍ) Kāshānī, and Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, the compilers of the 'Three Books' of the later period (see Browne Literary History Vol.4 pp.358-9). On al-Ḥurr al-ᶜĀmilī, see note 83 above.

130. Tanakābunī describes him as a 'pure Akhbārī' (akhbārī ṣarf), and gives the titles of several books in which he attacks the mujtahids (Qiṣaṣ p.323). On him, see note 84 above.

131. See note 85 above.

132. See note 87 above.

133. See Rawdāt pp.625-9; Kashf pp.61, 63, 185, 293, 314, 363, 533, 569, 570, 576; Algar Religion and State pp.64-6; Mīrzā Muḥammad ʿAlī Muʿallim Ḥabībābādī Makārim al-āthār Vol.3 pp.925-44. Ḥabībābādī considers him to have been one of the most learned and capable ʿulamā in a long time (p.929).

134. See note 80 above. Nujūm (p.282) mentions that he was originally an Akhbārī but later avoided the dispute between Akhbārīs and Uṣūlīs, choosing a middle path. The beginning of his Hadā'iq contains a discussion of the differences between the two schools.

135. See note 91 above. Nujūm (p.255) mentions his adoption of a middle position between Akhbārīs and Usulīs in furūʿ.

136. For his works, see Kashf under ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥāj Ṣāliḥ al-Samāhijī.

137. For a summary of twenty-nine of the more important of these, see Rawdāt pp.35-6.

138. Quoted Rawdāt pp.35-6.

139. Hāshimī Kirmānī 'Tā'ifa' p.247; Rawdāt p.124; Nujūm p.304; Qiṣaṣ p.204.

140. See Rawdāt p.124; Nujūm pp.303-7; Qiṣaṣ pp.198-204; Tabaqāt Vol.2 pp.171-4; Makārim Vol.1 pp.220-35; ʿAlī Dawwānī Ustād-i kull Āqā Muḥammad Bāqir... Bihbihānī.

141. Muḥammad Akmal had ijāzāt from Āqā Jamāl Khwānsārī, Mullā Mīrzā-yi Shīrvānī, Shaykh Jaʿfar Qādī, and Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī (Qiṣaṣ p.199).

142. Nujūm p.244. See there and Tabaqāt Vol.2 p.171.

143. Makārim Vol.1 pp.224, 229.

144. Ibid pp.229-30; see Rawdāt p.650.

145. His father's mother was the daughter of Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn, a son of Mullā Ṣāliḥ ibn Aḥmad Māzandarānī, whose wife was the daughter of Mullā Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī. Nūr al-Dīn was the youngest of Mullā Ṣāliḥ's ten sons.

146. Makārim Vol.1 p.231.

147. Tabaqāt Vol.2 p.174.

148. Makārim Vol.1 pp.231-3.

149. See Rawdāt pp.400-2; Nujūm pp.338-40; Qiṣaṣ pp.175-80.

150. See Rawdāt pp.124-5, 632-3; Qiṣaṣ pp.199-204 (these two under his father's biography); Makārim Vol.2 pp.561-7. It is Āqā Muḥammad ʿAlī, and not his father, as Algar mistakenly notes (Religion and State p.34 n.43), who was known as 'Sūfī-slayer' (sūfī-kush) -- see Qiṣaṣ p.199; cf Rawdāt p.633.

151. See Rawdāt pp.124-5; Nujūm pp.336-7; Qiṣaṣ pp.199-204 (under his father's biography); Makārim Vol.1 p.235.

152. See Rawdāt pp.648-52; Nujūm pp.313-8; Qiṣaṣ pp.168-75; Makārim Vol.2 pp. 414-29 (including the best lists of teachers and pupils).

153. See Rawdāt pp.152-4; Nujūm pp.341-2; Qiṣaṣ pp.183-98; Tabaqāt Vol.2 pp. 248-52; Makārim Vol.3 pp.852-6.

154. See Rawdāt p.28; Nujūm p.379; Qiṣaṣ pp.196, 312; Makārim Vol.3 pp.928-81.

155. See Rawdāt p.523; Nujūm p.344; Qiṣaṣ p.198.

156. See Rawdāt pp.493-6; Nujūm pp.340-1; Qiṣaṣ pp.180-3; Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 pp.52-4; Makārim Vol.3 pp.911-9. His grandson, Ḥājī Mīrzā Mūsā, was converted to Babism by Mullā Muḥammad Ḥusayn Bushrū'ī (see Mīrzā Asad Allāh Fāḍil-i Māzandarānī Kitāb-i ẓuhūr al-ḥaqq pp.391-2).

157. See Rawdāt pp.647-8; Nujūm p.319; Makārim Vol.2 pp.360-4.

158. See Rawdāt pp.27-8; Nujūm pp.343-4; Qiṣaṣ pp.129-32; Makārim Vol.4 pp. 1235-42.

159. See Nujūm p.318.

160. See Nujūm pp.330-1; Makārim Vol.3 pp.645-8; Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Ḥusayn Amīnī Najafī Shahīdān-i rāh-i faḍīlat pp.420-31. He was killed by Nādir Mīrzā Afshār in the course of the siege of Mashhad by Muḥammad Walī Mīrzā in 1217/1802-3 (see Muhammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk Sipihr Nāsikh al-tawārīkh Vol.1 pp.121, 123).

161. See Rawdāt pp.11-12; Qiṣaṣ pp.117-22; Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 pp.14-15.

162. See Rawdāt pp.366-7; Makārim Vol.4 pp.1164-8.

163. See Makārim Vol.2 pp.600-3.

164. See Nujūm pp.320-1; Najafī Shahīdān pp.422-7; Makārim Vol.2 pp.611-4.

165. Qiṣaṣ p.176.

166. Ibid p.204.

167. Algar Religion and State p.34.

168. Makārim Vol.1 p.222.

169. Thus Qiṣaṣ p.204; Rawdāt p.124; Makārim Vol.1 p.222. Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī was also regarded by some as the mujaddid of the thirteenth century (see, for example, Suhrāb p.11 f.n., citing inscription on the Shaykh's tombstone).

170. Ijāza quoted Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh al-Aḥsā'ī Sharḥ-i ḥālāt-i Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī p.88.

171. On the role of the Ṣūfī and extreme Shīᶜī groups in the early Ṣafawī period, see Mazzaoui; Keddie 'Roots' pp.217-9.

172. On these and other individuals, see Browne Literary History Vol.4 pp.427-36; Corbin En Islam Vol.4, Book 5; Ḥalabī pp.664-751; S.H. Nasr 'The School of Iṣfahān' and 'Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā) and bibliographies in these articles; idem Islamic Studies chapters 10 and 11; idem Sadr al-Din Shirazi and his Transcendent Theosophy.

173. See Nujūm p.42.

174. See items 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 of the summary from the Minyat al-mumārisīn.

175. See Abdul-Hadi Hairi Shīᶜism and Constitutionalism in Iran pp.62-3, citing a 'mimeographed research' entitled 'Tashkīlāt-i madhhab-i shīᶜa by Āqā

Muhammad Vakīlī Qummī.

176. (Husayn) Khurāsānī Maktab-i tashayyuᶜ dar sayr-i tārīkh pp.194-6.

177. Pace Algar, who bestows this accolade on Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (Religion and State p.163). On Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan, see Rawḍāt pp.181-2; Qiṣaṣ pp.103-6; Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 pp.310-4; Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān Iᶜtimād al-Salṭana Al-ma'āthir wa 'l-āthār pp.135-6; Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar, introduction to Jawāhir al-kalām by Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Najafī; Mughnīyya ᶜUlamā al-Najaf pp.81-5.

178. Rawḍāt p.181.

179. Ibid p.182; cf. Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 p.311.

180. See Zarandī pp.90-1; Shaykh Kāẓim Samandar Tārīkh-i Samandar p.347.

181. ᶜAlī Qulī Mīrzā Iᶜtiḍād al-Salṭana Al-mutanabbīyūn (section on Bāb) under the title Fitna-yi Bāb p.35; Sipihr Vol.3 p.235.

182. Qiṣaṣ p.106; Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 p.313. 'Some time before his death, he (Muḥammad Ḥasan) made him (Anṣārī) his appointed successor (khalīfa manṣūṣ) and particular vicegerent (nā'ib makhṣūṣ)' (Iᶜtimād al-Salṭana Ma'āthir p.136).

183. Compare Algar Religion and State p.163. On Anṣārī, see Qiṣaṣ pp.106-7; Iᶜtimād al-Salṭana Ma'āthir pp.131-7; Muḥammad Mahdī Kāẓimī Aḥsan al-wadīᶜa Vol.1 pp.147-50; Ḥājī Mīrzā Yaḥyā Dawlatābādī Tārīkh-i Muᶜāṣir Vol.1 pp.24-5; Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī Zindigānī wa shakhṣiyyat-i Shaykh Anṣārī; Makārim Vol.2 pp.487-517; Mahdī Bamdād Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i rijāl-i Īrān Vol.6 pp.260-1; Mughnīyya ᶜUlamā al-Najaf pp.87-90.

184. Iᶜtimād al-Salṭana Ma'āthir p.136.

185. Qiṣaṣ p.59.

186. On Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī, see Kāẓimī Vol.1 pp.159-62; Iᶜtimād al-Salṭana Ma'āthir pp.137-8; Ṭabaqāt Vol.1 pp.436-41; Ḥāj Mullā ᶜAlī Wā'iẓ-i Khīyābānī al-Tabrīzī Kitāb-i ᶜulama-i muᶜāṣirīn pp.46-50. Dawlatābādī describes his struggle to succeed to leadership of the Shīᶜī world on Anṣārī's death (Vol.1 pp.25-7). Al-Ṭihrānī describes him as 'the greatest and the most famous of the ᶜulamā of his age, and the most important marjaᶜ of the Shīᶜīs in the other lands of Islam in his time' (Ṭabaqāt Vol.1 p.436; cf. p.438). He studied under Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Najafī and Anṣārī. It is not widely known that he was a relative of the Bāb, being a paternal cousin of his father. A Bahā'ī writer, Muḥammad ᶜAlī Faydī, has provided circumstantial evidence that he was, in private, a follower of the Bāb (Kitāb-i Khānadān-i Afnān pp.13-17; cf. H.M. Balyuzi The Bāb p.33); this, however, seems unlikely.

187. Quoted Ṭabaqāt Vol.1 p.440.

188. Iᶜtimād al-Salṭana Ma'āthir pp.137-8.

189. p.64.

190. We may note the following as particularly important in this context: Shaykh Muḥammad Kāẓim Khurāsānī (d.1329/1911), Ḥujjat al-Islām Sayyid Muḥammad Kāẓim Ṭabāṭabā'ī Yazdī (d.1337/1919), Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Ḥā'irī Shīrāzī (d.1338/1920), Shaykh Fatḥ Allāh Sharīᶜat-i Iṣfahānī (d.1338/1920), Ḥāj Sayyid Abū 'l-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī (d.1365/1946), Ḥāj Āqā Ḥusayn Qummī (d.1366/1946), Shaykh Muḥammad Kāẓim Shīrāzī (d.1367/1947), and Ḥāj Āqā Ḥusayn Burūjirdī (d.1380/1961).

191. Binder p.132.

192. Ibid.

193. 'Shi^{c}a' p.202.

194. Vol.1 p.27.

195. p.132.

196. See, for example, cyclostyled letter produced by Gurūh-i Badr of students in the University of Shīrāz: 'Rizhīm dar andīsha-yi tūtī'a-i dīgar'.

197. On Bahr al-^{c}Ulūm, see note 152 above.

198. Qisas p.191.

199. Ibid pp.193-4.

200. Rawdāt p.151.

201. Quoted ibid.

202. Tabaqāt Vol.2 pp.248-9.

203. Qisas p.197. On Shaykh Ja^{c}far, see note 153 above.

204. Rawdāt p.493. On Mīrzā-yi Qummī, see note 156 above.

205. See note 149 above. His elder son was the Āqā Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī who led the jihād against Russia in 1826, and his younger son, Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī, became -- as we shall see -- the leading opponent of Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī.

206. J.A. Bill The Politics of Iran p.28.

207. Abū 'l-Qāsim ibn Zayn al-^{c}Ābidīn (Khān Kirmānī) Fihrist-i kutub-i Shaykh Ahmad Ahsā'ī p.149.

208. Rawdāt p.11. On Kalbāsī, see note 161 above.

209. Religion and State p.60.

210. Iqbāl 'Hujjat al-Islām' pp.39-40.

211. W.K. Stuart Journal of a Residence in Northern Persia p.246.

212. Zarandī pp.19-24. On Shaftī, see Rawdāt pp.125-7; Qisas pp.135-68; Tabaqāt Vol.2 pp.192-6; Iqbāl 'Hujjat al-Islām'.

CHAPTER TWO

SHAYKH AHMAD AL-AHSĀ'Ī

SHAYKH AHMAD AL-AHSĀ'Ī

Birth, Childhood, and Youth

Viewed in the light of his later fame as one of the leading Shīᶜī ᶜulamā of his day, the circumstances of Shaykh Ahmad's birth were most inauspicious. The individuality of his contribution to Shīᶜī thought in the early years of the nineteenth century may, in some ways, be attributed to the background of his early life. Unfortunately, our sources reveal comparatively little about his early period, and we must depend on circumstantial evidence in attempting to trace the main influences on his thought and outlook, cast as they are in an original and even eccentric form.

According to his own testimony, Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī was born in the month of Rajab 1166/May 1753.[1] His birthplace was a small Shīᶜī village called al-Matayrafī, situated in the oasis of al-Ahsā (or al-Hasā) near the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula,[2] where his family had lived for several generations. The first of his ancestors to settle there had been Shaykh Dāghir, his great-great-great-grandfather, who had become estranged from his father Ramadān and gone to live in the village. The dispute was almost certainly about religion: Dāghir was the first of al-Ahsā'ī's ancestors to embrace Shiᶜism, at about the time local tradition speaks of the conversion of several Arab tribes, about four hundred years ago.[3] Before that, the Shaykh's forebears had been nomadic Sunnīs.[4] None of our sources provides details as to the occupation of Shaykh Ahmad's father or other relatives, but it is reasonable to assume that none of them were ᶜulamā. It is possible, however, that his family was of some influence in the area, since they belonged to the dominant Mahāshir clan of the ruling Banī Khālid.[5]

Despite the religious diversity of al-Ahsā, which, in the eighteenth century, included Jews and Sabaeans as well as Shīᶜīs and Sunnīs,[6] the principal religious orientation of the region was Shīᶜī. When the Safawī dynasty in Iran found itself compelled to look abroad for Shīᶜī scholars to instruct the Iranian population in Twelver doctrine, they went to Jabal ᶜĀmil in Syria and to Bahrayn.[7] Men such as Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn ᶜAlī ibn Sulaymān al-Bahrānī Umm al-Hadīth (d.1064/1653-4),[8] Sayyid Hāshim ibn Sulaymān al-Bahrānī (d.1109/1607-8), the author of the Ghāyat al-marām,[9] Shaykh Sulaymān ibn ᶜAbd Allāh al-Muhaqqiq al-Bahrānī (d.1120/1708-9),[10] and Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Khattī al-Bahrānī (d.1120/1708-9)[11] are among the numerous ᶜulamā from Bahrayn who achieved distinction in orthodox Shīᶜī circles in the Safawī period. Side by side with

the development of Shī^{c}ī orthodoxy in the region, however, there appears to have been a recurrent tendency to favour more heterodox systems. One of the most eminent Ishrāqī thinkers, Muhammad ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Ahsā'ī (d. circa 902/1495), was a native of the region. Tanakābunī has claimed that Shaykh Ahmad obtained the library of Ibn Abī Jumhūr and that the books in it proved a major influence on his mind as a young man.[12] Whether or not this is true -- and it seems highly unlikely -- al-Ahsā'ī certainly acquired considerable familiarity with Ishrāqī literature at some point.

Of possibly greater significance in the Shaykh's development may have been residual Qarmatī influence in the area. As is well known, the Qarmatī sect founded a state in al-Ahsā under Abū Sa^{c}īd al-Hasan al-Jannābī in A.D. 899. Although the military power of the Qarāmatī declined by the eleventh century, the state in al-Ahsā remained in existence, its internal affairs being run by a representative council of sādāt, which body 'seems to have maintained local autonomy down to the xviiith. century'.[13] There is also evidence of fresh Qarmatī influence from the Yemen in eighteenth century al-Ahsā. In the 1760's, one of the most important of the Ismā^{c}īlī tribes in the Yemen, the Banī Yām of Najrān, came under the control of the Makramī family, by whom it has been ruled down to this century.[14] The Makramī shaykh -- whose name appears to have been Hasan ibn Hibbat Allāh[15] -- was made governor of Najrān by the Imām of San^{c}a, but soon achieved independence, extending his influence by 1763 over other Ismā^{c}īlī tribes in Sa^{c}fān, Harāz, Manākha, and Tayba.[16] In 1764, several members of the Banī ^{c}Ajmān, who had been defeated by the Wahhābīs at Hadba Qidhla, fled to Najrān and persuaded the tribes there to join in a counter-attack on the Wahhābīs. Hasan ibn Hibbat Allāh led his forces to Wādī Hanīfa and defeated a Wahhābī force under ^{c}Abd al-^{c}Azīz.[17] Although Hasan eventually left after negotiations, it seems that, at this time, he entered al-Ahsā for a period.[18] Massignon maintains that the Makramīs attempted to revive Qarmatism while in al-Ahsā, and that Qarāmatī still exist there in the form of what he calls 'neo-Ismā^{c}īlīs'.[19]

The possibility of such a revival in the region at that time is highly suggestive, and may not impossibly lead to fresh conclusions as to the sources of much of al-Ahsā'ī's thought. Certain intriguing parallels exist between elements in his later teaching and Qarmatī/Ismā^{c}īlī doctrine. The Qarmatī view that the Imamate is not a hereditary function but one which may be conferred through a form of divine illumination, making the new Imām the 'substituted' son of his predecessor, may well have influenced the Shaykhī theory of succession (up to Muhammad Khān Kirmānī) and even played a part in the transition from Shaykhism to Babism. The concept of the world as a series of phenomena being repeated in cycles,

like a drama replaying itself, which is found in Qarmatī and Hurūfī doctrine, offers a parallel to the Bābī view of successive zuhūrāt, in which the chief actors of the divine drama return to the stage in each epoch, while the use of jafr equivalents for the letters of the alphabet is a recurring feature of Qarmatī, mainline Ismā'īlī, Hurūfī, and Bābī thought. Significant also is the appearance in both Shaykhī and Bābī literature of technical terms common to extreme Shī'ī sects like the Qarmatī, and it is not impossible that much of the curious Arabic terminology adopted by al-Ahsā'ī had such an origin. We shall observe in our final chapters a number of further points of resemblance between Shaykhī/Bābī and Ismā'īlī doctrine.

Until further evidence becomes available, however, it would be unwise to fall back too readily on Qarmatī/Ismā'īlī influence in the direct sense as an explanation for the development of al-Ahsā'ī's thought along lines somewhat different to those of the majority of Twelver Shī'ī 'ulamā at the 'atabāt or in Iran during this period. It is, nevertheless, clear that, in respect of orthodox Shi'ism, al-Ahsā in the eighteenth century was not a place where a young man of scholarly bent could readily find instruction beyond the rudimentary level. There were, of course, 'ulamā in the region. Shaykh 'Abd Allāh al-Ahsā'ī speaks of 'those learned in externals ('ulamā-yi zāhirī) in al-Ahsā at the time of Shaykh Ahmad's first departure for 'Iraq.[20] The same source indicates that many of the 'ulamā in the area were Sunnīs, most of whom were also Sūfīs.[21] Several Shī'ī 'ulamā of the period are referred to by Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī in his Lu'lu'atayi '1-Bahrayn, composed in 1182/1768. Many of Shaykh Ahmad's own letters are addressed to 'ulamā in al-Ahsā and Qatīf, particularly the latter region. As we shall see later, two of al-Ahsā'ī's ijāzāt were obtained from 'ulamā resident in Bahrayn, while Rashtī speaks of 'ulamā there and in Qatīf and al-Ahsā who were among the admirers of Shaykh-Ahmad.[22] Much of Rashtī's own correspondence, like that of al-Ahsā'ī, was in reply to questions from 'ulamā in that region, but it was not there that the more capable and influential scholars resided.

With the movement of large numbers of Iranian 'ulamā to the 'atabāt following the Afghān invasion, and the subsequent revival of Shī'ī learning at the holy cities in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the better 'ulamā had largely been drawn away from peripheral centres such as Bahrayn. Although the Wahhābīs did not conquer al-Ahsā until the 1790's, their progress elsewhere in the Arabian Peninsula and occasional clashes with the Banī Khālid appear to have caused lively distress to the Shī'ī 'ulamā in the Bahrayn region. Muhammad Hāshimī Kirmānī has suggested that Shaykh Ahmad left al-Ahsā in the wake of a general exodus of Arab 'ulamā (presumably Shī'ī) who went to Iran in order to escape

the Wahhābīs.[23] Many of these ᶜulamā settled in Fārs and Kirmān, and were later among the admirers of al-Ahsā'ī in those parts. This exodus of Shīᶜī ᶜulamā during the period of the Shaykh's early life may have been a factor in his own decision to leave al-Ahsā for a brief time when he was aged twenty.

There are indications that al-Ahsā in that period was regarded as little more than a provincial backwater, lacking proper facilities for anything but the most elementary intellectual pursuits. Bahr al-ᶜUlūm expressed surprise that someone as learned as Shaykh Ahmad should be a native of 'a region which is empty of knowledge and wisdom, and whose inhabitants are desert-dwellers and country-folk, the furthest extent of whose learning consists in how to perform the salāt'.[24] Al-Ahsā'ī himself often remarked that the people of his village were worldly and given to what he regarded as idle pleasures, that they knew nothing of the laws of Islam, and that he could find no-one there to teach him beyond the elementary stages.[25]

Outside the main towns of Hufūf and al-Mubarraz education in al-Ahsā was, it appears, largely confined to instruction by individual shaykhs or muᶜallimūn, few of whom can have been well-educated themselves. Young Ahmad, having completed the traditional 'reading' of the Qur'an by the age of five,[26] was not, it seems, intended for tuition beyond this stage. Fortunately, a young cousin was receiving training in grammar and other elementary subjects at a nearby village, and Ahmad was able to persuade his father to let him join him there.[27] Between this time and the period of his early studies at the ᶜatabāt when he was twenty, we possess no further information as to his education.

Somewhat problematic is the statement made in a number of sources, that al-Ahsā'ī was for a time a murīd of Sayyid Qutb al-Dīn Muhammad Nayrīzī, the thirty-second qutb of the Dhahabiyya Sūfī order, one of the very few Shīᶜī tarīqas in existence.[28] Mīrzā Shafīᶜ Thiqat al-Islām Tabrīzī, a Shaykhī who had studied under al-Ahsā'ī, refers to this in his Mir'āt al-kutub. He quotes the Qawā'im al-anwār, a work by Mīrzā Abū 'l-Qāsim Shīrāzī, the fourth person to succeed Sayyid Qutb al-Dīn as head of the Dhahabī order.[29] In this book, Mīrzā Abū 'l-Qāsim states that Qutb al-Dīn lived for a time in Najaf, where he taught Ibn al-ᶜArabī's Al-futūhāt al-Makiyya. Among those who studied under him, it is claimed, were Muhammad Mahdī Tabātabā'ī Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī, and Mullā Mihrāb Jīlānī.[30] He goes on to say that, when Qutb al-Dīn was in al-Ahsā, Shaykh Ahmad studied under him.

Thiqat al-Islām then quotes from the Risāla tāmm al-hikma of Abū 'l-Qāsim's son, Sayyid Muhammad Majd al-Ashrāf.[31] According to this source,

Sayyid Qutb al-Dīn sent Mullā Mihrāb to Isfahān and ᶜIrāq ᶜAjam, instructed Bahr al-ᶜUlūm and Shaykh Jaᶜfar to remain at the ᶜatabāt, and sent al-Ahsā'ī to Iran.[32] Majd al-Ashrāf is quoted to the same effect by Maᶜsūm ᶜAlī Shāh in his Tarā'iq al-haqā'iq; here it is added that Sayyid Qutb al-Dīn also sent Āqā Muhammad Hāshim Shīrāzī to Fārs.[33] Maᶜsūm ᶜAlī also refers to Sayyid Qutb al-Dīn as having taught Shaykh Ahmad while in al-Ahsā.[34]

Convincing as all this may appear, it does not sustain critical attention. Sayyid Qutb al-Dīn was a contemporary of the last Safawī monarch, Shāh Sultan Husayn (d.1729), and had studied under Shaykh ᶜAlī Naqī Istihbanātī.[35] He died in 1173/1759-60, when al-Ahsā'ī was only about seven years old.[36] With the exception of Āqā Muhammad Hāshim Shīrāzī, there seems to be no independent evidence linking any of the persons mentioned above with Sayyid Qutb al-Dīn or, indeed, with Sufism at all. The only conclusion to be drawn is that the account of Qutb al-Dīn's dealings with men such as Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, al-Najafī, and al-Ahsā'ī -- three of the most influential ᶜulamā of their day -- was for no other reason than to gain a certain respectability for Sufism at a time when orthodox Shīᶜī attacks on certain Sūfī orders had become extremely fierce, following a Niᶜmat Allāhī revival in the latter half of the eighteenth century.[37]

Shaykhī sources, including two autobiographical risāles by al-Ahsā'ī himself, lay stress on certain visionary experiences as central to his development during this early period. Showing a marked predilection for seclusion and introspection -- a feature also characteristic of the childhoods of Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī and Sayyid ᶜAlī Muhammad Shīrāzī[38] -- al-Ahsā'ī was given to morbid reflection on the transience of the world.[39] He was really one of Lawrence's Arabs, ascetic and craving the solitary wastes. An impressionable mind joined with favourable circumstances and a lack of facilities for formal intellectual training to urge a life of reflection and self-abnegation,[40] culminating, at an unspecified point, in a series of dreams or visions. These visions were to have a lasting effect on the mind of the young Shaykh, and came to play a central role in his intellectual and spiritual development. Their significance, both in terms of the formation of his thought and the light in which he was regarded by his contemporaries and by later Shaykhīs, is very great. They are particularly important in terms of the charismatic relationship between the Shaykh and the Imāms on the one hand, and between him and his own followers on the other. In general, these visions seem to have been experienced by him in sleep and to have taken the form, typical to Shīᶜī piety, of meetings with various Imāms and, on a number of occasions, the Prophet.

The first of these experiences was a dream of a young man, seemingly aged about twenty-five, and carrying a book, who came to sit near the Shaykh. He turned to him, read a verse of the Qur'an, and proceeded to comment on it.[41] Shaykh Ahmad was so impressed by the words he heard from this young man that he resolved to abandon the study of grammar and other exoteric subjects. In his account of this incident, he states that he had met many shaykhs yet never heard any speak words such as those in the dream: in itself an indication that he had, by the time of this initial visionary experience, been studying for a while.

A succession of such visions followed, in the course of which the Shaykh believed that he met various Imāms and the Prophet and was taught verses by the Imām Hasan, the purpose of which was to enable him to call on the Imāms whenever he required an answer to any problem -- a significant factor in his development as a source of charismatic authority.[42] Such visions, he writes, were experienced by him most days and nights.[43] On two occasions, once with the Imām Hasan and once with Muhammad, he claimed to have undergone what appears to have been a form of initiatory experience, involving the drinking of saliva from the mouth of the Imām or Prophet.[44] Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī speaks of the initiatory meeting with Imām Hasan as the first of the Shaykh's visions,[45] followed by a two-year period during which he did not associate with people and scarcely ate or drank, until he was near death. At this point, the meeting with Muhammad took place, and the effect of imbibing the saliva of the Prophet was to quiet his excessive religious ardour.[46]

Leaving aside the question of their authenticity, there is no doubt that the subjective impact of these visions on the Shaykh was tremendous. The intensity of his reaction can well be gauged by the behaviour just referred to. He now believed himself to be in direct contact with the Prophet and the Imāms, and to have them as his source of guidance on all subjects. In a significant vision, presumably towards the end of this period, he believed himself to have encountered the tenth Imām, ʿAlī ibn Muhammad al-Hādī. Having complained to the Imām about the condition of the people among whom he lived, he was instructed to leave them and busy himself with his own affairs. The Imām is then recorded as giving him several sheets of paper, saying 'this is the ijāza from us twelve (i.e. the twelve Imāms)'. When al-Ahsā'ī looked at these papers, he saw that each page contained an ijāza from one of the twelve Imāms.[47]

It is this belief that his knowledge was directly granted him by the Prophet and the Imāms (the latter in particular) that distinguishes Shaykh Ahmad from contemporary religious leaders. Speaking of al-Ahsā'ī's knowledge of various sciences, Rashtī states that 'these sciences came to that distinguished one in true and veracious dreams from the Imāms

of guidance'.[48] The role of the Imāms as spiritual guides has always been emphasized in Shi^{c}ism, but al-Ahsā'ī seems to have taken this concept to an extreme degree. In his Sharh al-Fawā'id, written in 1233/1818, some eight years before his death, he writes: 'the ^{c}ulamā derive their knowledge (tahqīqāt ^{c}ulūmihim) one from the other, but I have never followed in their way. I have derived what I know from the Imāms of guidance and error cannot find its way into my words, since all that I confirm in my books is from them and they are preserved (ma^{c}sūm) from sin and ignorance and error. Whosoever derives (his knowledge) from them shall not err, inasmuch as he is following them'.[49] Elsewhere, he writes: 'When anything was hidden from me, I would see its explanation, even if only in summary. And whenever any explanation was given to me in sleep (al-tayf), after I awoke the question would appear clear to me along with the proofs related to it, in such a way that nothing concerning it would be hidden from me. Even if all men were to gather together, they would be unable to achieve anything resembling that; but I would be cognizant of all the proofs of the matter (in question). And, if a thousand criticisms were levelled against me, the defence against them and the answers would be shown to me without any effort on my part. Moreover, I found that all traditions were in agreement with what I had seen in sleep, for what I saw in my dreams I saw directly, and no error could enter into it....I say nothing unless by virtue of a proof which is derived from them (the Imams)'.[50]

In one place, he describes these dreams as ilhām, a species of revelation generally reserved for the Imāms themselves, although inferior to the wahy given to prophets.[51] More usually, he speaks of kashf or mukāshifa, the 'unveiling' of inner meanings by means of these visions.[52] This last concept was given sufficient prominence to give rise to the use of the term kashfīyya as a name for the school which grew up around al-Ahsā'ī. Rashtī, referring to the use of this term, gives the concept of kashf a somewhat general application, but there seems little doubt that the name was applied to the school by reason of the use of the term in a more technical sense.[53] It is worth recalling, in this context, the experience of Fadl Allāh Astarābādī (740-96/1340-94), the founder of the Hurūfī sect, who, at the age of forty, heard a disembodied voice announcing that '...others attain faith by imitation and learning, whereas he attains it by an inner and clear revelation (kashf wa ^{c}iyān)'.[54]

It would, however, be misleading to suggest that the Shaykh's reliance on these visions caused him to dispense with formal learning altogether. When Shaykh ^{c}Abd Allāh writes that his father abandoned 'exoteric studies',[55] the implication seems to be simply that he gave

up the study of grammar, philology, rhetoric, and similar pursuits and devoted himself to the study of the Qur'an and ahādīth, as well as hikma ilāhīyya. This view would seem to be confirmed by Rashtī, who writes that 'he did not receive these sciences and inner teachings so much in sleep, but rather, when he awoke, he discovered manifest proofs and evidences from the book of God and from the path of the explanations and instructions of the Imāms of guidance'.[56] This statement bears great similarity to that of al-Ahsā'ī, quoted above, in which he says 'I found that all traditions were in agreement with what I had seen in sleep'.

By 1186/1772-3,[57] therefore, when he was twenty, al-Ahsā'ī had reached a point in his intellectual and spiritual development where he stood in serious need of instruction and inspiration which local teachers could not give him. Whether aware of the theological developments taking place there or not, it was in the ᶜatabāt that the young Shaykh decided to look for such guidance.

The Intermediary Years

Shaykh Ahmad's first sojourn in ᶜIraq was of insufficient duration to allow him to benefit greatly from the opportunities for study available among the ᶜulamā of the shrine cities. Not long after his arrival, plague broke out in ᶜIraq. Beginning in March 1773 at Baghdād, where it had been carried by a caravan from Erzerum, the epidemic spread rapidly as far as Basra. It continued at Baghdād until mid-May and at Basra until September, with heavy fatalities throughout the country.[58] As a result, large numbers of the population dispersed, and Shaykh Ahmad joined the exodus, returning to al-Ahsā.[59] Judging from his later attitude to urban life and his obvious reluctance to return to the ᶜatabāt after the passing of the plague, we may suppose that the Shaykh had found conditions there uncongenial. As a young and comparatively untrained student from the provinces, he may have found it difficult to benefit fully from classes designed for those with a better general grounding in theological studies. He may, in modern idiom, have experienced a form of 'culture shock'. Whatever the cause, the fact is that he chose to remain for a long time in relative seclusion in al-Ahsā, rather than return to what was then the centre of theological activity in Shiᶜism at that period. Had it not been for the Wahhābī advance on Bahrayn, it is probable that he would never have sought to leave the region again.

After his return to al-Ahsā, the Shaykh married his first wife, Maryam bint Khamīs Āl ᶜAsīr, a girl related to him from the village of Qarayn, where he had studied as a child.[60] He was to marry a total of eight

wives over the years, from whom he had altogether twenty children.[61] It is never made clear exactly how he provided for his growing family during this period, but there are clear indications that he became well known in the region as a religious authority. Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh states that, even before his journey to ᶜIraq, people had begun to ask him to pray on their behalf, and we may suppose that a measure of financial return was given for this. During the period after his return, he became famous and was regarded as a marjaᶜ for the people of the region, but how far his fame actually reached, it is impossible to tell.[62]

One result of his increased association with the people around him was the cessation of his visions.[63] Possibly as a result, he seems to have devoted himself to a wide programme of studies, although here again we have little information as to the books he read or the teachers under whom he worked. Rashtī, however, makes it clear that he acquired some competence in a wide variety of subjects, listing some thirty sciences, including astronomy, arithmetic, astrology, alchemy, medicine, kalām, and fiqh, and several crafts, including weaving and metal-working, in all of which he claims the Shaykh was well-versed.[64] Although a knowledge of many of these subjects may have been acquired later in life, we must assume that his studies were, for the most part, carried out during the twenty years or so he now spent in al-Ahsā and Bahrayn.[65] Tanakābunī has noted that, when he came to Iran, al-Ahsā'ī claimed to be aᶜlam and learned in every science.[66]

That al-Ahsā'ī was well read and felt himself competent to write on a wide variety of topics (and was asked by others to write on them) is apparent from many of his writings. Apart from the generally learned content of these, and their wealth of quotation from books of tradition, the Qur'an, and other works, several are specific commentaries on books by other scholars. These include his commentaries on the Mashāᶜir and the ᶜArshīyya of Mullā Sadrā,[67] on the Risāla-yi ᶜilmīyya and other writings of Mullā Muhsin Fayd,[68] on the last portion of the Kashf al-ghitā of Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī,[69] on the Tabsira of ᶜAllāma Hillī,[70] and on the philsophical poetry of Shaykh ᶜAlī ibn ᶜAbd Allāh ibn Fāris.[71] That a large proportion, if not the bulk, of his reading was done before the Shaykh finally left al-Ahsā is indicated by his earliest ijāza, given him by Shaykh Ahmad ibn Hasan al-Bahrānī al-Damastānī[72] on 1 Muharram 1205/10 September 1790.[73] This ijāza indicates that he had become proficient in the basic religious sciences and had studied several major works of Shīᶜī theology; it permits him to 'transmit from me all that our ᶜulamā have written on the Arabic sciences, on literature, grammar, usūl, fiqh, and akhbār, in particular the Four Books around which we

circle in this age....as well as the Tafsīl wasā'il al-shīᶜa (by al-Hurr al-ᶜĀmilī), the Hidāyat al-umma (also by al-Hurr al-ᶜĀmilī), and the Biḥār al-anwār (by Majlisī)'.[74]

Although the bulk of al-Aḥsā'ī's writings date from the later period in ᶜIraq and Iran, he undoubtedly composed several works during his years in al-Aḥsā. Rashtī states that, before leaving there, he wrote risālāt and books which became well known,[75] although he does not supply the titles or indicate the contents of these. Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh refers to his father's first meeting with Baḥr al-ᶜUlūm, stating that the latter asked al-Aḥsā'ī for an example of something he had written, whereupon he was shown some pages of a commentary on the Tabṣira of al-Hillī.[76] As we have noted, there is in existence an incomplete commentary by al-Aḥsā'ī entitled Sirāt al-yaqīn, which corresponds to this description, and we may presume it to be the same work as that referred to here.[77] The same source also speaks of an early risāla on qadr composed about the time al-Aḥsā'ī met Baḥr al-ᶜUlūm.[78] This may well be the Risālat al-qadrīyya, composed at the request of Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh ibn Dandan in explanation of statements by Sayyid Sharīf (al-Jurjānī?).[79] Several other works of the Shaykh's are actually dated as belonging to this period or that immediately succeeding it.[80]

After some time, according to Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh, al-Aḥsā'ī brought his family to Baḥrayn, where they lived for four years. The same source goes on to say that they remained there until Rajab 1212/December 1798, when the Shaykh's mother-in-law died, whereupon he moved to ᶜIraq, later bringing his family from Baḥrayn.[81] There is, however, a serious difficulty involved in Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh's dating: Shaykh Aḥmad's ijāzāt from Āqā Mīrzā Muḥammad Mahdī Shahristānī (resident in Karbalā) and Baḥr al-ᶜUlūm (resident in Najaf) are both dated 1209/1794-5.[82] We should also remember that the final Wahhābī invasion of al-Aḥsā occurred in 1795, and that it is the appearance of the Wahhābīs which is adduced by Rashtī as the reason for al-Aḥsā'ī's departure for the ᶜatabāt.[83] The date given for the death of Shaykh Aḥmad's mother-in-law may well be correct, but it seems to be misleading in the context of his departure from Baḥrayn. A possible explanation is that his family did not leave Baḥrayn until her death.

It is, in fact, possible that al-Aḥsā'ī left Baḥrayn well before 1795. In 1788, the Wahhābīs under Sulaymān ibn ᶜUfaysan had attacked al-Aḥsā and put the people to the sword. In 1789, Saᶜūd himself led a second attack on the province, killing three hundred people in Fudhūl, defeating the Banī Khālid Shaykh Duwayhis, and installing Zayd ibn ᶜArᶜar as the new shaykh. Saᶜūd attacked al-Aḥsā again in 1792 and defeated Barrak ibn

ᶜAbd al-Muhsin, who had deposed Zayd. Eventually Saᶜūd was invited by the population of the province to receive their submission; parties were sent out to destroy Shīᶜī tombs and shrines, and steps were taken to instruct the inhabitants in the tenets of Wahhabism. The populace of Hufūf rebelled but, in 1793, Saᶜūd returned, captured Shuqayq, laid siege to Qaraỵn and al-Mataỵrafī, and carried out widespread plunder throughout al-Ahsā.[84] Shaykh Ahmad may well have realized the danger by the early 1780's and gone to ᶜIraq by the early 90's, but not before September 1790, the date of his ijāza from Shaykh Ahmad ibn Hasan al-Bahrānī.

The Years in ᶜIraq

Bābī and Bahā'ī writers have tended to regard al-Ahsā'ī's departure for ᶜIraq -- and, ultimately, Iran -- in the early years of the thirteenth century hijrī, as an act motivated by a sense of divine mission to purify the decadence of Islam and to prepare men for the appearance of the hidden Imām in the person of the Bāb.[85] The final decision as to the validity or otherwise of such a view must, in the end, rest on criteria which fall outside our present sphere of competence. Nevertheless, it seems to me worth stating that such an approach involves a large degree of retrospective interpretation and that it cannot be supported by known external evidence. None of the Shaykh's own writings, as far as I am aware, refers to such a mission, nor do Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī or other Shaykhī writers regard his journey to ᶜIraq in this light. Rashtī, as we have observed, refers specifically to the Wahhābī invasion as the direct cause of al-Ahsā'ī's departure from Arabia. It is likely, however, that the Wahhābī threat acted merely as the final stimulus to a growing urge to visit the ᶜatabāt once more.

In the last chapter, we have seen that what amounted to a revolution in Twelver Shīᶜī thought was taking place among the Iranian and Arab ᶜulamā living at the shrines in ᶜIraq. It is probable that al-Ahsā'ī, by now more confident of his own ability to participate in such developments, was no longer satisfied with a second-hand knowledge of the questions being debated. It is unlikely, however, that he seriously considered playing a leading role in the discussions: his love for seclusion and his evident distaste for remaining in any one place for very long strongly suggest that he was a man on whom greatness was thrust much against his own wishes.

It would seem that Āqā Bihbihānī was either already dead or in virtual retirement by the time al-Ahsā'ī arrived in ᶜIraq. But, if he did not study under the murawwij himself, Shaykh Ahmad certainly

did attend the classes of several of his pupils. As we have mentioned, before his departure from Bahrayn, he had obtained an ijāza from Shaykh Ahmad ibn al-Hasan al-Bahrānī al-Damastānī, a pupil of Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī and his brother Shaykh ᶜAbd ᶜAlī.[86] He now began to seek ijāzāt from several of the contemporaries and pupils of Bihbihānī. The most outstanding of these was Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī Tabātabā'ī Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, whose influence on and contribution to Shīᶜī studies in this period have been discussed briefly in the last chapter. We have referred above to how al-Ahsā'ī presented Bahr al-ᶜUlūm with part of his commentary on al-Hillī's Tabsira and with his risāla on qadr. It is stated by Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh that, on seeing the former work, Bahr al-ᶜUlūm said to the Shaykh 'it would be more appropriate for you to give an ijāza to me'.[87] The same source speaks of the veneration accorded al-Ahsā'ī by Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, and the content and phrasing of the latter's ijāza to him seem to corroborate this.[88] At about the same time, al-Ahsā'ī obtained ijāzāt from two other pupils of Bihbihānī -- Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī and Sayyid ᶜAlī Tabātabā'ī, to both of whom we have referred in the last chapter as being among the most important ᶜulamā of their period.[89]

In 1209/1794-5, the same year that he received his ijāza from Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, al-Ahsā'ī obtained another from Āqā Mīrzā Muhammad Mahdī ibn Abī 'l-Qāsim al-Mūsawī al-Shahristānī (d.1215/1800-1). Born in Shahristān in Khurāsān, Mīrzā Muhammad Mahdī had moved to Karbalā, where he had studied under Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī and others; he achieved a certain degree of renown in Anatolia, India, and Iran. A work entitled Al-masābīh on fiqh is listed by Kantūrī as belonging to him, but otherwise he does not seem to have written anything of note.[90]

Some five years later, al-Ahsā'ī obtained his last ijāza. This was given him by Shaykh Husayn ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Darāzī al-Bahrānī (d.1216/1801-2). This man was a nephew of Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī, under whom he studied in his youth, Shaykh Yūsuf's Lu'lu'atayi 'l-Bahrayn being originally written for him and his brother, Shaykh ᶜAbd ᶜAlī; he later studied under Yūsuf's brother ᶜAbd ᶜAlī,[91] and is the author of a work entitled Al-anwār al-lawāmiᶜ.[92] It is of interest to note that al-Ahsā'ī regarded Shaykh Husayn as the murawwij of the twelfth century, as he states in his Risāla wasā'il al-hammam al-ulyā, written for him.[93] Shaykh Ahmad's ijāza from him is dated 2 Jumadi I 1214/2 October 1799, a date which raises the question as to how it came into his possession. Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh does not mention a visit to Bahrayn at this point, and the ijāza itself states that Shaykh Husayn was blind and in ill health by this date and, therefore, unlikely to have travelled to ᶜIraq, even to visit the shrines there. Leaving aside the possibility of a faulty

transcription of the date by Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh,[94] it is likely that the ijāza was brought from Bahrayn to ᶜIraq by a relative or friend of al-Ahsā'ī's.

Abū 'l-Qāsim Khān Kirmānī mentions an ijāza to Shaykh Ahmad from Hāj Muhammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī,[95] but this must certainly be a mistake since Kalbāsī was a pupil of al-Ahsā'ī and had an ijāza from him, and not vice versa. Āghā Buzurg al-Tihrānī remarks that the statement in Nujūm al-samā (p.344) to the effect that one of al-Ahsā'ī's pupils was Sayyid Muhsin al-Aᶜrajī (d.1231/1816) is incorrect, and suggests that the Shaykh, in fact, received an ijāza from the latter.[96] Such an ijāza, however, does not seem to be extant.

An important question arises here: why did someone who believed himself to have received ijāzāt from the twelve Imāms, who regarded himself as the recipient of direct inspiration from them and the Prophet, who showed scant regard for rank or prestige, and who did not appear to seek any position within the Shīᶜī hierarchy in its accepted form, approach scholars such as Bahr al-ᶜUlūm in order to receive ijāzāt from them? The answer may be simpler than it appears. Two major factors have combined to give the false impression that al-Ahsā'ī stood completely outside the mainstream of Twelver Shīᶜī theology. On the one hand, as we have observed, there are the unusual circumstances of his early life, his possible contact with extreme Shīᶜī views, his reliance on dreams and visions, and the absence of teachers within the tradition of transmitted authority. On the other hand, there is the takfīr pronounced against him towards the end of his life by several -- but by no means all -- of the ᶜulama in Iran and ᶜIraq, virtually excommunicating him from the body of the faithful and certainly creating a new madhhab where there had not really been one.

As we shall see, however, in the intervening period, al-Ahsā'ī did not seek to disocciate himself from the Usūlī tradition, even if his relationship with it was not, perhaps, one of total identification. Apart from his close association with leading representatives of that tradition in Karbalā, Najaf, Yazd, Isfahān, Mashhad, and elsewhere, there are other indications of the Shaykh's general affinity with the orthodox position. His contempt for Sufism and certain forms of mystical philosophy, in particular the thought of Ibn al-ᶜArabī and Muhsin Fayd, his refusal to collaborate closely with the state, and his rejection of the validity of the takfīr which sought to place him and his followers beyond the pale of orthodoxy -- all these demonstrate al-Ahsā'ī's close bond with traditional Shiᶜism. It is in this context that we should consider the question of his ijāzāt. The possession of 'spiritual' ijāzāt from the Imāms did

not, of itself, invalidate physical ijāzāt from recognized mujtahids. We have already discussed the role of the ʿulamā as bearers of the charismatic authority of the Imām in his absence. There is no reason to believe that al-Ahsā'ī had any wish to divorce the inward inspiration he thought himself to have been given by the Imāms from the more conventional guidance to be gained from a teacher who provided a living link with a silsila of teachers going back to the Imāms themselves and, in a sense, transmitting their baraka to men. More particularly, an ijāza implied familiarity with the major works of Shīʿī tradition and law, which we have already identified as one of the main sources of charismatic guidance in the period of ghayba. That al-Ahsā'ī regarded these works as at least complementary to his inner inspiration is amply attested by his ijāzāt, which refer specifically to a large number of works which, it is presumed, he had studied in depth.[97]

The relationship between Shaykh Ahmad's direct visionary experiences of the Prophet and the Imāms, on the one hand, and his formal links with the ʿulamā -- through reading books, studying and teaching, receiving and granting ijāzāt -- on the other, is a particularly compelling example of the complex functioning of charisma and authority in Shiʿism. As we have indicated, the charismatic force of Shiʿism did not reside only in visions and direct inspiration, but inhered also in the community, in the ʿulamā, and in the system and books of fiqh and akhbār. Both routinized and direct forms of charisma could co-exist reasonably easily within a single system or, indeed, individual, and al-Ahsā'ī clearly saw no inherent contradiction between his receiving 'spiritual' ijāzāt from the Imāms and seeking their physical counterparts from various ʿulamā. It was only the pronouncement of takfīr towards the end of his life which brought to the surface the hidden tensions which such a network of values contained.

During the period of his stay at the ʿatabāt and the next few years spent in Basra and its vicinity, al-Ahsā'ī wrote a number of works, several of which are dated.[98] Like most of his writings, these generally take the form of risālāt written in reply to various individuals, and deal with a variety of topics, from statements of Muhsin Fayd on the nature of fanā[99] to questions relating to ijmāʿ[100] and aspects of īmān and kufr.[101]

Having obtained his ijāzāt, al-Ahsā'ī does not seem to have wanted to remain in the ʿatabāt. From now until his death, he continued to move from place to place in ʿIraq and Iran, sometimes staying for several years in one place -- such as Yazd and Kirmānshāh -- but never content to settle permanently in any town, even in old age. This peripatetic existence was to prove a major factor in spreading his fame over a very

wide area. During the next few years, spurred on, perhaps, by the growing power of the Wahhābīs in the Jazīra region, he travelled restelessly from Basra to Dhū Raqq, back to Basra, to Habārāt, once more to Basra, then to Tanwīyya, Nashwa, Safāda, and Shatt al-Kār. In 1221/1806-7, he set off again for the ᶜatabāt.[102] The Wahhābī threat was by no means ended, but resistance to their incursions in the Jazīra had hardened somewhat and the situation appears to have been much safer by the time of the Shaykh's visit.[103]

It was al-Ahsā'ī's intention to follow his pilgrimage to the ᶜatabāt with a further ziyāra, this time to Mashhad.[104] Whether he was at this time already considering emigration to Iran, it is hard to tell. Despite somewhat increased security in ᶜIraq, al-Ahsā'ī continued to be worried by the Wahhābī raids, as is indicated by Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh.[105] Iran, now reasonably secure under the newly-enthroned Fath-ᶜAlī Shāh, had its attractions, not least of which was the re-established Shīᶜī state which the Qājār dynasty sought to promote. We shall have to return later to the question of Shaykh Ahmad's relations with the state in Iran; for the moment, we need only suggest that he may have regarded the protection of the Qājārs as an attractive alternative to the settled conditions of ᶜIrāq or Bahrayn. After visits to Najaf, Karbalā, and Kāzimayn, he set out with several companions for Mashhad.[106]

Iran 1221-38/1806-22

Shaykh Ahmad's first major stop in Iran was Yazd, a city with a continuing reputation for sanctity, where a large number of ᶜulamā then resided.[107] The religious zeal, at times turning to fanaticism, of the Yazdīs -- in part a result of the existence of a sizeable Zoroastrian community in and around the town -- is well known and, in its more positive aspects, must have created an atmosphere which al-Ahsā'ī would have found congenial. On his arrival there, he was warmly welcomed by the inhabitants, in particular the ᶜulamā, some of whom he may have known personally. Kashmīrī states that, when Shaykh Ahmad arrived in Yazd, all the ᶜulamā honoured him, with the sole exception of Āqā Sayyid Ahmad Ardakānī Yazdī.[108] According to Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh, Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī was then present in Yazd. Apart from this, two of the ᶜulamā mentioned by Rashtī as being in the town at this time had been students of Bahr al-ᶜUlūm not many years previously. One of these men, Sayyid Haydar ibn Sayyid Husayn Mūsawī Yazdī (d. circa 1260/1844),[109] had been given his ijāza by Bahr al-ᶜUlūm in 1209/1794-5, the same year al-Ahsā'ī had received his. The other, Mullā Ismāᶜīl ibn ᶜAbd al-Malik ᶜAqdā'ī Yazdī (d. between 1230/1815 and 1240/1824-5),[110] was the leading

mujtahid in Yazd at this time. His student Āqā Ahmad ibn Muhammad ᶜAlī Kirmānshāhī states in his Mir'āt al-ahwāl that he studied under ᶜAqdā'ī in Najaf in 1210/1795-6,[111] providing evidence that he was studying with Bahr al-ᶜUlūm at about the same time as al-Ahsā'ī. It is not improbable that the latter had at least met these men, a supposition reinforced by their request that he stay in Yazd, which suggests that they were familiar with his abilities.

Agreeing to return to Yazd once his pilgrimage was completed, al-Ahsā'ī continued to Mashhad. His stay there on this occasion appears to have been brief, and he was soon back in Yazd in accordance with his agreement. It was not his intention to stay there, however, and, after a few days, he attempted to leave, but was prevented from so doing by the populace. It is not difficult to assess the motives of the people of Yazd in wishing the Shaykh to reside there. The presence of powerful ᶜulamā in a town provided a form of insurance against oppression from local governors and their agents. Hasan Fasā'ī gives an example of such protection in Fārs during the governorship of Farīdūn Mīrzā Farmān Farmā. The governor had entrusted the administration of the entire province to Mīrzā Ahmad Khān Tabrīzī, who eventually gained a reputation for favouritism towards Adharbāyjānī refugees in the area and injustice towards local inhabitants; leading in the end to the serious riots and political upheavals in Shīrāz which began in 1839. Fasā'ī points out, however, that 'as long as the mujtahid Hājī Mīrzā Ibrāhīm was alive, Mīrzā Ahmad Khān did not oppress the populace, out of respect for him'.[112]

In the case of al-Ahsā'ī's residence in Yazd, his own increasing fame and the veneration in which he came to be held by Fath-ᶜAlī Shāh made his continued sojourn there a matter of considerable importance for the local population. From al-Ahsā'ī's point of view, however, the possibility of becoming embroiled in political affairs was extremely distasteful, and we shall see later how it proved a significant factor in his decision not to accept the Shāh's offer to reside at the capital.

Since the Shaykh only arrived in Iran in 1221/1806-7, his fame must have spread through the country at a remarkable rate, for Fath-ᶜAlī Shāh began corresponding with him no later than 1223/1808, and possibly somewhat earlier. This rapid growth in al-Ahsā'ī's reputation suggests that manuscripts of some of his risālas must by now have been circulating in Iran. In addition, a number of his works can be assigned to the period of his first stay in Yazd, several of which indicate the beginnings of what was to develop into a wide correspondence with various ᶜulamā and others throughout the country.[113]

As we have indicated, the Shaykh's fame soon reached the ears of Fath-ᶜAlī, then in about the tenth year of his reign. It is possible

that the specific source of the king's information about al-Ahsā'ī may have been Ibrāhīm Khān Zahīr al-Dawla, a cousin of the monarch and the governor of Kirmān and Balūchistān. Ibrāhīm Khān became a fervent admirer of the Shaykh; his own son, Hāj Muhammad Karīm Khān, succeeded Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī as head of the Shaykhī school, the later leadership of the main school passing to his descendants. Ni^cmat Allāh Radawī notes that Ibrāhīm Khān corresponded with al-Ahsā'ī and visited him in Yazd.[114] That it was through the mediation of Ibrāhīm Khān that the name of Shaykh Ahmad reached the ears of the king is explicitly stated by Hashimī Kirmānī,[115] and it seems likely that this was the case.

Fath-^cAlī soon addressed several letters to the Shaykh, expressing a desire to see him in person.[116] The motives underlying this wish on the king's part to pay such close attention to an Arab ^calim newly arrived in a remote corner of Iran are not, I think, hard to discern. First of all, there was Fath-^cAlī's personal religiosity, which led him to evince a deep-seated veneration for the ^culamā, even to the point of submitting to their judgment in certain matters. There was also his desire to emphasize the Shī^cī character of the new regime, as evidenced by the large number of religious endowments made by him in Qum, Shīrāz, Mashad, and the ^catabāt, and in his patronage of several outstanding ^culamā, such as Mīrzā-yi Qummī, Shaykh Ja^cfar al-Najafī, Āqā Sayyid Muhammad Tabātabā'ī, and Mullā Ahmad Narāqī.[117]

The reverence, almost subservience, which Fath-^cAlī bore towards the ^culamā is evident from the wording of one of his letters to al-Ahsā'ī, as quoted by Āqā Sayyid Husayn Yazdī in his Kashkūl. In this letter, the king, after addressing the Shaykh with the customary hyperboles, writes: 'we desire to meet you as the one fasting desires the new moon, as the thirsty longs for pure waters, as the husband is eager for his wife, and the destitute for wealth', and invites him to set out immediately for Tihrān so that he may benefit from his presence and obtain illumination from him.[118] Despite the courteous tone of this letter -- the Arabic original of which would not, of course, have been penned by the king himself -- the 'invitation' to come to the capital is, in reality, nothing but a veiled command. At this stage, however, pressure to go to Tihrān was not sufficiently great to compel compliance, and al-Ahsā'ī made various excuses for his inability to leave Yazd.[119] At the same time, he did reply to certain questions put to him by the Shāh; his answers are contained in the Risālat al-khāqānīyya, dated early Ramadān 1223/late October 1808.[120] It is of interest to compare the somewhat superficial questions put by the king at this time with the two he put to al-Ahsā'ī some ten years later, after the latter's return to Kirmān-

shāh in 1234/1818, and which the Shaykh answered in his Risalat al-sultānīyya.[121] These two questions, which deal with the distinction between the Imāms and the stations of nubuwwa and wilāya, indicate a growing knowledge of religious matters on the king's part, and suggest that his interest in theology, if not profound, was at least serious.

The receipt of the Risālat al-khāqānīyya seems to have whetted the Shāh's appetite and made him even more eager to have al-Ahsā'ī come to Tihrān, and a letter was soon sent expressing this wish in particularly strong terms. This letter was brought to Yazd by one of the members of the court, Mīrzā Muhammad Nadīm,[122] and, according to Rashtī, the king's instructions were communicated to al-Ahsā'ī through the governor of Yazd.[123] Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh gives a synopsis of this letter, in which the Shāh declares that it is his own duty to visit the Shaykh but that, for various reasons, it is not in his power to do so, and that he asks pardon for this. He goes on to say that, if he should have to make a personal visit to Yazd, he should have to bring with him at least ten thousand soldiers; since Yazd is a valley without much cultivation, the arrival of so many troops would result in famine for the inhabitants. The king ends by expressing his humility towards Shaykh Ahmad, and politely asks him to visit him as soon as he receives this letter -- 'otherwise I shall have no choice but to come to Yazd (dār al-ᶜibāda)'.[124] The thinly-veiled threat is obvious: the effects of sādirāt -- irregular and arbitrary levies imposed on towns or provinces on such occasions as a royal visit -- were too well known to require elaboration.[125] The letter was, in effect, an ultimatum.

Faced with the choice of either becoming involved with the court or bringing famine to Yazd, al-Ahsā'ī determined to quit Iran altogether. He decided to leave for Shīrāz, planning to take that route back to Basra, but, when the people of Yazd heard of this, they prevented his departure. The threat of a royal visit was serious enough, but, on the other hand, if the king thought they had encouraged him to go in fear of that threat, there was the more serious risk of their incurring royal displeasure and being punished. It was, in any case, the winter season and travel would be difficult.[126]

The problem remained as to how to reply to the Shāh. A meeting of the leading citizens was held, but they could think of no solution. Al-Ahsā'ī himself pointed out that, if he were to excuse himself from going, the Shāh would come and cause great distress in the region, but, if, on the other hand, he were to promise to go, he would be preventing by the cold from actually travelling to the capital. By this point, the Yazdīs seem to have been seriously alarmed about the possible consequences of

a continual refusal on the part of the Shaykh to go to Tihrān, and sufficient pressure was at last put on him to make him relent and agree to go. It was arranged that Mīrzā ᶜAlī Ridā,[127] a mujtahid, would accompany him to the capital and ensure that he suffered no discomfort on the way.[128] It is probable that Mīrzā ᶜAlī Ridā's real function was to make sure that the Shaykh did not attempt to take another route back to ᶜIraq.

Shaykh Ahmad and his companion proceeded directly to Tihrān, arriving around November 1808.[129] He had frequent meetings with the Shāh while there and wrote several risālas in reply to various questions put by him.[130] Rashtī notes that the Shaykh was visited by all the ᶜulamā and tullāb then living in the capital;[131] they were probably as much attracted by his standing in the eyes of the king, however, as by his reputation as an ᶜālim. As a result of his association with the Shaykh, the Shāh's admiration for him increased, but the latter, feeling that he had fulfilled his obligation to the king, quickly wearied of Tihrān and decided to leave. Continuing Wahhābī attacks in the neighbourhood of Basra were a constant cause of concern to him since most of his wives and children were still resident there. The Shāh, however, tried to prevent his departure and eventually succeeding in persuading him to stay in Iran, arguing that he could not openly make his knowledge known in ᶜIraq (presumably because it was a Sunnī-governed country).[132] Having succeeded in this, Fath-ᶜAlī began to apply pressure on the Shaykh to live in the capital, offering to put a house at his disposal there.[133] This offer was tactfully but forcefully refused.

Fath-ᶜAlī had probably intended from the beginning to ask al-Ahsā'ī to stay in Tihrān. The invitation accorded with his general policy of encouraging ᶜulamā to live in the new capital.[134] Men such as Hājī Mullā Muhammad Jaᶜfar Astarābādī,[135] -- later the author of an attack on al-Ahsā'ī -- Sayyid Muhammad Hasan Qazvīnī Shīrāzī,[136] Mullā Muhammad ᶜAlī Māzandarānī Jangalī,[137] and others were invited to come to Tihrān in an attempt to raise the prestige of the city and of the dynasty which had made it its capital, as well as to encourage the development of a centre of religious authority close to and allied with the seat of government -- unlike the ᶜatabāt, which were outside the borders of Iran. Fath ᶜAlī's policy was destined to failure. The ᶜatabāt retained their influence, increasing in importance through the nineteenth century and, in Iran itself, Isfahān, Qum, and Mashhad remained the centres of religious studies. Although the number of ᶜulamā resident in the capital greatly increased in the reign of Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh,[138] even men such as Mullā ᶜAlī Kanī, Shaykh Fadl Allāh Nūrī, Sayyid ᶜAbd Allāh Bihbihānī, and Sayyid Muhammad

Tabātabā'ī were unable to make Tihrān a religious capital such as Isfahān had been under the Safawīs.

Shaykh Ahmad's reason for not staying in Tihrān, as explained to Fath-ʿAlī, is of great interest in helping us understand how the ʿulamā in this period regarded the secular authority of the Qājārs. We may assume that the version of this reply given by Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh is tolerably accurate, in view of the fact that it agrees in substance with that given in the Tārīkh-i ʿAdudī. The Shaykh argued that, were he to remain at the capital, it would mean the end of the king's power (saltanat). When asked why this would be the case, al-Ahsā'ī inquired of the king whether he (al-Ahsā'ī) should live in honour or disgrace. When Fath-ʿAlī replied that he should live in the greatest honour, the Shaykh said

> in my opinion, kings and governors execute their orders and their laws through tyranny. Since the masses regard me as someone whose word is to be obeyed, they would turn to me in all matters and would seek refuge with me. Now, it is incumbent on me to defend the people of Islam and to fulfill their needs. Were I to seek intercession for them from the king, one of two things would occur: either he would accept (my intercession), thereby suspending the operation of his authority, or he would refuse it, thus causing me to be humiliated and disgraced'.[139]

This argument did not fail to impress the Shāh, who could not be unaware of the counter-threat it contained. We have already noted how it lay in the power of certain ʿulamā to force the hand of the Shāh in cases of injustice and oppression. Perhaps more than any particular incident of the period, al-Ahsā'ī's warning to Fath-ʿAlī prefigures the later expression of clerical opposition to the throne during the Tobacco Regie, in the Constitutional movement, and even in the recent revolution.[140] Fath-ʿAlī immediately offered al-Ahsā'ī freedom of choice in his place of residence, but the latter chose, curiously enough, to return to Yazd.

It is, I think, worth noting the role played by this visit in the later Bahā'ī version of the incident, as originated by Zarandī.[141] For this writer and others after him, the visit is fraught with overtones of messianic expectation. Al-Ahsā'ī, far from being reluctant to travel there, sets out for the capital because he perceives 'the first glimmerings that heralded the dawn of the promised Dispensation from the direction of Nūr, to the north of Tihrān'.[142] He leaves the city with the greatest reluctance, wishing to spend the rest of his life there.[143] In order to give full force to this interpretation of the event, Zarandī makes the visit coincide with the birth of Mīrzā Husayn ʿAlī Nūrī Bahā Allāh, which occurred in Tihrān on 2 Muharram 1223/12 November 1817, a date which is quite impossible. Other contradictions occur, such as Zarandī's statements that al-Ahsā'ī was accompanied by Sayyid Kāzim

Rashtī and that he left Tihrān directly for Kirmānshāh. The whole effect is one of tendentiousness of the most extreme kind, making this version of the incident -- which has acquired an important place in Bahā'ī historical myth -- of considerable interest as an example of how a controversial religious figure may be adopted and transmogrified into a character of messianic import by a later movement with which he may have a tenuous connection.

Although al-Ahsā'ī did not go to Kirmānshāh at this point, he did become acquainted with Muhammad ᶜAlī Mīrzā Qawām al-Khilāfa, who was later to be his patron there for several years. Since the prince was at that time already governor of Khūzistān, Hawīza, and their dependencies,[144] he offered to send one of his agents from Khūzistān to Basra in order to bring the Shaykh's family to Yazd. The prince wrote a farmān to the governor of Basra, Ibrāhīm Āqā, asking him to give his agent the necessary authority to carry this out on his arrival -- an interesting example of the influence of this young prince within the borders of ᶜIraq.[145] Al-Ahsā'ī himself returned to Yazd not later than 19 Safar 1224/5 April 1809, as is clear from a letter written there and bearing this date.[146]

Al-Ahsā'ī spent the next five years in Yazd,[147] with the exception of at least two pilgrimages to Mashhad in 1226/1811[148] and 1229/1814.[149] It is stated by a number of sources that he produced the bulk of his writings during this period,[150] most of these being, it seems, replies to the numerous letters which now began to arrive from ᶜulamā in many places. On the evidence of those letters which are dated, however, it would seem that fewer were written in this period than during the Shaykh's later stay in Kirmānshāh -- although it would be unwise at this stage to regard this as a wholly reliable means of assessing the distribution of his writings from different periods.

It is, in any case, clear that the dissemination of the Shaykh's writings during his stay in Yazd gained him an increasingly large following there and in Fārs, Khurāsān, and Isfahān.[151] His visits to Mashhad brought him into contact with numerous ᶜulamā, and the high estimation in which he was held by the scholars resident there must, in its turn, have spread by means of the pilgrims with whom they spoke.[152] Al-Ahsā'ī's ideas seem to have made their way to a very wide audience, as is suggested by Rashtī when he speaks, significantly, of how 'some of the topics dealt with by the Shaykh, which were not clear to anyone outside his circle (ghayr-i ahlish), became current among the masses, and day by day people became eager and enthusiastic about those topics and remained awestruck when they heard them mentioned'.[153] This situation

appears to have led to some misunderstanding, for the Shaykh himself at one point gave instructions for someone to preach from the pulpit on the orthodoxy of his views on the relationship between outward and inward beliefs (zāhir wa bāṭin).[154] Although the details of this incident are unclear, it is likely that we have here the beginnings of what was to develop into serious opposition to the views of al-Aḥsā'ī leading in the end to the takfīr pronounced against him in his final years.

A few days after his return from a pilgrimage to Mashhad in 1229/1814, despite an earlier intention to stay in Yazd,[155] Shaykh Aḥmad determined to visit the ʿatabāt, travelling via Shūshtar. Rashtī states that the reason for his departure from Yazd was a dream of the Imām ʿAlī inviting him to perform a pilgrimage to Kūfa.[156] Karīm Khān Kirmānī, however, gives a more cogent reason in stating that the Shaykh was distressed by the behaviour of some notables in Yazd, who did not appreciate his importance and were lax in showing respect.[157] An additional reason -- and very possibly the cause of al-Aḥsā'ī's displeasure with the above notables -- may well have been an invitation from Muḥammad ʿAlī Mīrzā to go to Kirmānshāh. Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh describes his father's arrival there as unpremeditated and unexpected, and states that the prince's invitation to stay was spontaneous -- but this does not seem to be consistent with the reality of the situation. Al-Aḥsā'ī cannot have been unaware of the implications of his going to Kirmānshāh, the seat of the most powerful and ambitious prince in the kingdom. Muḥammad ʿAlī Mīrzā, for his part, is unlikely to have relied on chance to bring such an important religious figure -- and one, as we have seen, already indebted to him -- to his capital. The willingness of the Shaykh to stay in Kirmānshāh and the subsequent length of his sojourn there also suggest a previous decision to accept a formal invitation from the prince. Further evidence that this was the case is provided by Kashmīrī when he states that the prince gave Shaykh Aḥmad the sum of one thousand tūmāns for his travelling expenses to Kirmānshāh.[158]

Fatḥ-ʿAlī Shāh's policy of inviting important religious personages to live in Tihrān was emulated by many of the royal princes in the hope of raising the prestige of their provincial capitals.[159] Muḥammad ʿAlī Mīrzā made a particular point of increasing the importance of Kirmānshāh. R.K. Porter remarks of the city that 'the population amounts to about 15,000 families, some few of which are Christians and Jews; the views of its governor inclining him to draw into his city, and to disperse through the whole range of his government, these sorts of persons most likely to increase his revenues, and to spread his general influence'.[160]

The invitation to Shaykh Ahmad fitted in well with the prince's general aims, but it is less easy to understand the motives of the former in accepting. Al-Ahsā'ī, whatever his reservations about close identification with secular authority, was not actually averse to associating with representatives of the state, as attested by his cordial relations, not only with Fath-ʿAlī and Muhammad ʿAlī Mīrzā, but also with Mahmūd Mīrzā, with whom he corresponded,[161] ʿAbd Allāh Khān Amīn al-Dawla, with whom he stayed in Isfahān,[162] Ibrāhīm Khān Zahīr al-Dawla, and possibly even ʿAbbās Mīrzā, who is described as one of his admirers.[163] At the same time, the close attachment of Ibrāhīm Khān cannot have been without its attendant problems in the form of sycophants on the one hand and political rivals on the other. The later difficulties in Kirmān which followed on the death of Ibrāhīm Khān, and the more serious religio-political disturbances on the death of Karīm Khān indicate how problematic such relations could become.[164]

Despite an attempt to prevent his departure by the governor of Yazd, Shaykh Ahmad succeeded in leaving for Kirmānshāh, travelling by way of Isfahan, where he stayed for forty days.[165] During this period, he associated with the leading ʿulamā of the city and their pupils, and was requested to stay there permanently.[166] Citing the dream which had spurred him to travel to the ʿatabāt, al-Ahsā'ī made his excuses and prepared to leave; at this point, a deputation from Muhammad ʿAlī Mīrzā arrived to bring him to Kirmānshāh, and, in compliance with the prince's request, he set off from Isfahān.[167] The very fact that the prince knew he would be there is itself highly suggestive of a prior arrangement.

News of his impending arrival reached Kirmānshāh, and the prince and townspeople went out about two stages to welcome him. Following the istiqbāl, tents were pitched at Chāh Kalān outside the city.[168] At this point, whether for the first time -- as is claimed, but seems unlikely -- or as a reiteration, Muhammad ʿAlī invited al-Ahsā'ī to stay in his capital, adducing as his reasons 'the good pleasure of God; the nearness of your excellency; and my distinction among others and exaltation among them'.[169] No doubt the true order of motivation was exactly the reverse. The Shaykh argued that he had left Yazd out of a longing to visit the ʿatabāt, but the prince immediately agreed to pay the expenses for an annual pilgrimage to the shrines. Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh states that he also offered to accompany the Shaykh there every year, but it is highly, in view of the prince's relations with the government in Baghdād, that this was intended seriously.[170]

Exactly how many of the Shaykh's expenses were in the end undertaken

by Muhammad ʿAlī Mīrzā is very hard to determine. Tanakābunī states that al-Ahsā'ī had debts and that the prince asked him to sell him a gate of paradise for one thousand tūmāns; this the Shaykh did, writing out a bond for the gate.[171] According to Kashmīrī, as mentioned above, the prince gave al-Ahsā'ī one thousand tūmāns for the journey from Yazd. The same source states that the prince also paid him a stipend of seven hundred tūmāns per month,[172] although Tanakābunī maintains that this was his annual allowance.[173] It is also worth noting that it has been stated -- almost certainly without foundation -- that Fath-ʿAlī gave al-Ahsā'ī the enormous sum of one hundred thousand tūmāns with which to pay off his debts.[174] The figure in question is improbably high, but it is not impossible that the king at one time gave a smaller sum to the Shaykh. That the latter may have incurred heavy debts more than once is suggested by Abū 'l-Qāsim Khān Kirmānī, who states that he gave away his entire wealth twice in his life; he was, it seems, about to do so again when he saw Fātima in a dream and was dissuaded from such a course.[175] It is not impossible that al-Ahsā'ī, his commitments growing, may have found himself in debt in Yazd and gone to Kirmānshāh expressly to live under a patron with sufficient resources to support him.

Shaykh Ahmad entered Kirmānshāh on 2 Rajab 1229/20 June 1814. His initial stay there lasted over two years: in 1232/1817, he performed what appears to have been his first pilgrimage to Mecca.[176] Returning by way of Najaf and Karbalā, the Shaykh decided to stay for a while at the ʿatabāt; he remained there for a total of eight months, associating with several important ʿulamā, including Sayyid ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī and Mīrzā-yi Qummī.[177] It seems that some doubts were expressed about this time as to the orthodoxy of the Shaykh's beliefs, since some of his risalas were shown to Sayyid ʿAlī with the request that he comment on their acceptability. He kept the risālas in question for two days and, on the third day, expressed the opinion that their contents were perfectly orthodox.[178] In view of later developments, this expression of approval from a champion of the orthodox Usūlī position such as Tabātabā'ī is highly significant. It seems, incidentally, that it was in this period that al-Ahsā'ī taught the Risāla ʿilmīyya of Muhsin Fayd in the shrine of Husayn in Karbalā.[179]

Shaykh Ahmad returned to Kirmānshāh on 4 Muharram 1234/3 November 1818.[180] There he stayed, with the possible exception of some visits to the ʿatabāt, until one year after the death of Muhammad ʿAlī Mīrzā in 1237/1821. During the years he spent in Kirmānshāh, he added considerably to his output of treatises and commentaries. Several works are dated as having been written during his first stay of over two years.

The most important of them is the monumental and central Sharh al-ziyārat al-jāmi^{c}at al-kabīra dated 1230/1815.[181] Comprising 34,000 bayts in four volumes, this work is probably the most important single source for the Shaykh's doctrines, particularly with regard to the station of the Imams. Soon after the completion of this massive work, al-Ahsā'ī wrote a commentary of over 2,500 bayts on the Risāla ^{c}ilm ...ya of Muhsin Fayd just referred to above.[182] At least one work was written by the Shaykh during his stay in Karbalā in 1233/1818; this is a risāla written at the request of one of his followers on his own Fawā'id.[183] On his return to Kirmānshāh, he continued this prodigious output. Among the most interesting works produced during this period are: Al-risālat al-sultānīyya, written in reply to two questions from Fath-^{c}Alī Shāh, less than one month after his return to the city;[184] the lengthy and important Sharh al-Mashā^{c}ir, written in 1234/1818 for Mullā Mashhad;[185] the even lengthier and more influential Sharh al-^{c}Arshīyya, written in 1236/1821.[186] As well as major works such as these, the Shaykh continued to pen numerous, often lengthy, replies to questions from ^{c}ulamā and others in a variety of places.[187]

In 1237/1821, war broke out between the Ottoman Empire and Iran.[188] Although most of the fighting was under the command of ^{c}Abbās Mīrzā, who achieved several important successes on the Kurdish frontier, Muhammad ^{c}Alī Mīrzā also set out with a large force to attack Baghdād. Having come within a short distance of his objective, he died on 26 Safar 1237/ 22 November 1821.[189] His son, Muhammad Husayn Mīrzā Hishmat al-Dawla, was appointed governor of Kirmānshāh in his father's place.[190] The removal of Muhammad ^{c}Alī was, however, a severe blow to the region, and conditions began to decline seriously, being aggravated by a heavy flood which destroyed a quarter of Kirmānshāh about this time.[191] Al-Ahsā'ī remained in the city for a further year,[192] but, in 1238/1822, plague entered Iran from China and India, bringing widespread infection and a high mortality rate.[193] The Shaykh decided to leave Kirmānshāh, but not, apparently, to escape the plague (unless he thought to avoid it by heading where it had been), since he set off towards Mashhad, travelling by way of Qum and Qazvīn.

The period of takfīr 1238-41/1822-6

Although there is no direct evidence, it would seem that it was at this time that al-Ahsā'ī stayed for a short time in Qazvīn and had the serious disagreement with Hāj Mullā Muhammad Taqī Baraghānī which led to the pronouncement of takfīr against him. Muhammad Taqī was the oldest of three brothers originally from Baraghān near Tihrān. Descended from

a family of ʿulamā which dated back to the Būyid period, he was born about 1173/1760.[194] He first studied in Qazvīn, then in Qum, where he attended some classes given by Mīrzā-yi Qummī; disliking these, he went to Isfahān, where he studied hikma and kalām, and then to the ʿatabāt, where he was taught by Āqā Sayyid ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī, Shaykh Jaʿfar al-Najafī, and Muhammad ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī. When the last-named came to Iran in 1242/1826 to lead the second jihād against Russia, he visited Qazvīn, where he gave an ijāza to Muhammad Taqī; both Taqi and his brother Muhammad Sālih were among the ʿulamā who went on the jihād. He later spent some time in Tihrān, but, following a disagreement with Fath-ʿAlī Shāh, returned to Qazvīn, where he eventually became Imām-Jumʿa, achieving particular recognition as one of the best preachers of his day. He composed a number of works, of which the best known are the Kitāb manhaj al-ijtihād (in twenty-four volumes) and the Majālis al-muttaqīn, attaining some fame as a writer on the sufferings of the Imāms. Iʿtimād al-Saltana writes that he and his two brothers were 'among the great ʿulamā of the Qājār state'.[195] In later years, Muhammad Taqī won considerable notoriety as the leading opponent of the Shaykhī school in Iran; as a result of this opposition and his subsequent stand against Babism, he was murdered on 15 Dhū 'l-Qaʿda 1263/25 October 1847, apparently by three men, one a Shaykhī, one a Bābī, and one a Shaykhī with strong Bābī leanings.[196] The circumstances of his assassination earned for him the title of Shahīd-i Thālith.[197]

A reasonably detailed account of al-Ahsā'ī's visit to Qazvīn and his dispute with Baraghānī is given by Tanakābunī, a pupil and supporter of the latter. During his stay, Shaykh Ahmad was a guest of the then Imām-Jumʿa, Mullā ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, apparently because the latter sent ahead an invitation to Hamadān[198] -- not improbably because he already had a special interest in the Shaykh's views.[199] Chahārdihī has suggested, not, perhaps, without some justice, that Baraghānī, believing himself to be the most learned of the Shīʿī ʿulamā, felt slighted that al-Ahsā'ī had not chosen to be his guest during his visit.[200] That this may have been the case seems confirmed by Baraghānī's own son, Shaykh Jaʿfar Qazvīnī, the only one of his children to become a Shaykhī.[201]

Baraghānī seems to have been an ambitious man,[202] and this apparent slight by someone as important as al-Ahsā'ī was not calculated to further his interests. He was, moreover, a man ever ready to enter into disagreements with other ʿulamā, and had crossed swords on more than one occasion with several important scholars, including Mīrzā-yi Qummī, Āqā Sayyid ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī, Hājī Mullā ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Qazvīnī, Hāj Mullā Ahmad Narāqī, and Mullā Muhammad ʿAlī Jangalī.[203] At one time, as we

have noted, he even had a serious disagreement with the Shāh himself, as a result of which he left Tihrān.[204]

It is important to realize that it was with such a strongly-opinionated man as this that al-Ahsā'ī's takfīr originated. Until his disagreement with Baraghānī, there had been little question of the Shaykh's orthodoxy and, even if some individuals had rejected his views and one or two openly disputed them, only the most tentative suggestions had been made that they might be heretical.[205] Had Baraghānī not pronounced the sentence of takfīr and made assiduous efforts to circulate it in Iran and at the ʿatabāt, it is probable that Shaykhism as a distinct school might never have come into existence and that later interpretations of al-Ahsā'ī's thought would have taken a different direction more in harmony with the mainstream of contemporary Shīʿī thinking. Had that happened, it is highly improbable that the Shaykh's theories would have been able to function as a matrix for the speculations of the Bāb and his followers.

Tanakābunī describes in detail the incidents which led to Baraghānī's condemnation of al-Ahsā'ī. At the beginning of his stay in Qazvīn, the Shaykh went to the Masjid-i Jumʿa, where he performed salāt along with Mullā ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and the other ʿulamā of the city, except for Baraghānī.[206] One day, he went to visit Muhammad Taqī, probably in order to placate his feelings after his imagined snub. A heated discussion soon began on the topic of resurrection (maʿād), centred on al-Ahsā'ī's view that man has four bodies (two jasad and two jism) and that, of the two jasad, only that composed of the elements of the interworld of Hurqalyā would survive physical death as a vehicle for the resurrection of the two jism; Baraghānī, in common with the most orthodox ʿulamā, simply maintained that resurrection would take place in an earthly, elemental body. Confirmation that the topic round which this disagreement revolved was that of resurrection is to be found in a letter from al-Ahsā'ī to Mullā ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Qazvīnī, in which he states that 'Shaykh Shaqī' (i.e. Taqī) had discovered references in one of his books to man's two bodies (jasadayn), one of which will return in the resurrection and the other of which will not. 'Satan', writes al-Ahsā'ī, 'inspired Shaqī and he declared "this is unbelief (kufr) and he (al-Ahsā'ī) is an unbeliever (kāfir), and Ākhund Mullā ʿAbd al-Wahhāb has prayed behind an unbeliever"'.[207] Later that day, when Shaykh Ahmad went to the Masjid-i Jumʿa, only ʿAbd al-Wahhāb accompanied him. Baraghānī seems to have issued his fatwā of takfīr almost immediately, and soon had it spread throughout Qazvīn and even printed in the Dār al-Tabāʿa there,[208] making of it, quite possibly, the first fatwā of its kind to be printed in Iran.

An attempt was made to save the situation by the governor of Qazvīn, ᶜAlī Naqī Mīrzā Rukn al-Dawla, a son of Fath-ᶜAlī.[209] Tanakābunī says he acted to heal the breach because it would give a bad reputation to the town and, significantly, because it would displease the king. Rukn al-Dawla invited the ᶜulamā to dine with him one night and, while they were there, reprimanded Baraghānī for his behaviour, stating that al-Ahsā'ī was the most important of the ᶜulamā of the Arabs and Persians and should be treated with honour. But Baraghānī refused to retract his accusation.[210] Such interference in a purely theological matter by a local governor is possibly unique in the history of the period and throws an interesting light on the relations of the state and the religious institution in the early Qājār era. Although Rukn al-Dawla's intercession failed to mollify Baraghānī, it does seem to have been instrumental in easing the situation somewhat with regard to other ᶜulamā. According to Mullā Jaᶜfar Qazvīnī, who was present at the time, the governor persuaded al-Ahsā'ī to stay a further ten days in Qazvīn. The Shaykh stayed at Darb Kūshk near the town and continued to lead the prayers either there or in the Masjid-i Jumᶜa. On one occasion, the prince came with five thousand notables, ᶜulamā, merchants, tradesmen, and others to attend prayers outside the city.[211]

According to Tanakābunī, the reasons for the declaration of takfīr were three: the Shaykh's views on resurrection (maᶜād), on the ascension of the Prophet (miᶜrāj), and on the nature of the Imāms.[212] As the takfīr was taken up by several other ᶜulamā, the charges made came to include further points. Rashtī mentions some of these in his Dalīl al-Mutahayyirīn: it was claimed that al-Ahsā'ī had said that all the ᶜulamā from al-Shaykh al-Mufīd to his own contemporaries were in error and that the Mujtahidī (Usūlī) school was false; that he regarded ᶜAlī as the Creator; that he held all Qur'anic phrases referring to God as really being references to ᶜAlī; that he spoke of God as uninformed of particulars and maintained that He had two forms of knowledge, one old (qadīm) and one new (hadīth); and that he did not believe the Imām Husayn to have been killed.[213] Rashtī refers to these charges (some of which are merely the stock-in-trade of the heresiologists) as 'absurdities' and cites a sermon attributed to the Shaykh in which they are severally refuted. After the death of al-Ahsā'ī, however, an even greater number of heretical and quasi-heretical views were attributed to him.[214] Muhammad Husayn Shahristānī's Tarvāq-i fārūq contains no fewer than forty points of disagreement, many of them extremely factitious.

The validity or otherwise of some or all of these charges is, however, entirely irrelevant. Without the takfīr, it is highly likely that al-

Ahsā'ī would have continued to be regarded as no more heterodox than Mullā Sadra or others among the 'philosopher-theologians' of the Safawī period.[215] Tanakābunī maintains that the underlying reason behind the takfīr was that al-Ahsā'ī tried to combine shar^{c} with hikma and to harmonize rational (ma^{c}qūl) ideas with those derived from tradition (manqūl);[216] but, as Hāshimī Kirmānī has observed, it was really the takfīr which prevented his being regarded as a Mullā Muhsin Fayd or Mullā Sadrā,[217] whose achievement was precisely that of combining hikma with orthodox religious views.

Had Baraghānī alone pronounced takfīr, it is unlikely that it would have had much effect outside Qazvīn and, thanks to the intervention of Rukn al-Dawla, probably very little even there. Baraghānī's stature as an ^{c}ālim was not sufficiently great for him to expect his fatwā to be widely respected without his winning the support of other, more eminent ^{c}ulamā. He, therefore, wrote letters to scholars at the ^{c}atabāt, informing them that he had pronounced the takfīr;[218] a number of them joined him in the attack on al-Ahsā'ī. Several individuals went to Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī Tabātabā'ī (d.1249/1833-4), a son of Āqā Sayyid ^{c}Alī, and presented him with certain passages from the works of Shaykh Ahmad which they claimed to be heretical.[219] Although his brother, Āqā Sayyid Muhammad, the leader of the jihād against Russia in 1826, was more eminent, Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī was highly respected, to the extent that he was able to show open defiance towards Muhammad Shāh during his last visit to Tihrān.[220] Under Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī's leadership, a meeting was held, at which a large number of ^{c}ulamā attended to draw up a fatwā announcing al-Ahsā'ī's takfīr. According to Rashtī, no sooner had they begun to write the takfīr than an earthquake occurred and the meeting dispersed.[221]

Tanakābunī gives a list of those ^{c}ulamā who pronounced takfīr against the Shaykh, these being: Mullā Muhammad Taqī Baraghānī, Āqā Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī Tabātabā'ī, Hājī Mullā Muhammad Ja^{c}far Astarābādī Sharī^{c}atmadār (d.1263/1847),[222] Mullā Āqā-yi Darbandī (d.1286/1869-70),[223] Mullā Muhammad Sharīf (Sharīf al-^{c}Ulamā Māzandarānī; d.1246/1831),[224] Āqā Sayyid Ibrāhīm Qazvīnī Karbalā'ī (d.1246/1830-1),[225] Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Qazvīnī (d.1254/1838-9),[226] and Shaykh Muhammad Hasan al-Najafī.[227] Rashtī, however, states that the true originators of the takfīr were only three individuals, one in Karbalā and two in Najaf; Baraghānī he does not mention at all.[228]

According to al-Ahsā'ī, large sums of money were spent to ensure that the takfīr would obtain as wide a currency and acceptance as possible.[229] His opponents went so far as to send the fourth part of his Sharh al-ziyāra, containing passages offensive to Sunnī sensibilities,

to the governor of Baghdād, who had recently put to death the uncle of Shaykh Mūsā ibn Jaᶜfar al-Najafī for less serious remarks.[230] That such a foolhardy act could even have been contemplated is a telling measure of the lengths to which the Shaykh's opponents were prepared to go in order to discredit him. Chahārdihī maintains that the ᶜulamā of Karbalā and Najaf became 'more audacious' after the takfīr of al-Ahsā'ī and started to excommunicate anyone who began to gain leadership and of whom they were afraid.[231]

The condemnation of al-Ahsā'ī and the forcible creation of Shaykhism as a separate madhhab from the main body of Shiᶜism seems to have been necessary in the absence of a target to take the place of the Akhbārī school. By attacking the Shaykhīs, it was possible for the Usūlīs to define further their own position, and very soon the Shaykhī/Bālāsarī division came to replace that between Usūlī and Akhbārī,[232] to be replaced in its turn by the Shīᶜī/Bābī and Shīᶜī/Bahā'ī divisions of later years -- each stage representing a sharper and fuller division than the one before. It must, at the same time, be remembered that, as Corbin has pointed out, the pronouncement of takfīr did not represent a declaration of excommunication from the body of an established church, but was, rather, the personal initiative of Baraghānī in the first instance.[233] It is as important to note the names of those leading ᶜulamā who did not pronounce takfīr as it is to indicate those who did. Men such as Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Shaftī, Mullā ᶜAlī Nūrī, Hāj Muhammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī, Sayyid Muhammad Tabātabā'ī, and others were hesitant to condemn the Shaykh, and either continued to admire him openly or else adopted a neutral stance in the matter.[234]

It was some time, however, before the takfīr became widely known, and al-Ahsā'ī left Qazvīn with considerable honour, accompanied by an entourage of some seventy people.[235] Travelling by way of Tihrān, he visited Shāhrūd, Tūs, and Mashhad, where he stayed for twenty-eight days before leaving for Yazd via Turbat and Tabas.[236] Throughout this journey, al-Ahsā'ī was treated with great respect by local governors, and was even given an escort of one hundred horsemen and two hundred infantry to accompany him from Tabas to Yazd.[237] After three months in the latter town, he set off for Isfahān, where he was welcomed by the ᶜulamā and nobles of the city and made the guest of ᶜAbd Allāh Khān Amīn al-Dawla, as mentioned earlier. Although he planned to leave after only a short stay, he was prevailed upon to extend his visit over the coming month of Ramadān, since his performing the fast there would bring baraka to the city and its inhabitants.[238] He agreed to stay and sent his 'unnecessary baggage and his wives' to Kirmānshāh with Shaykh ᶜAbd

Allāh, who then returned to Isfahān. Large crowds came to visit him there, and, on one occasion, the number of people performing salāt behind him reached sixteen thousand.[239] It is probable that on this occasion, as on that of his previous visit to Isfahān, al-Ahsā'ī led the prayers in the Masjid-i Shāh.[240]

Shaykh Ahmad had numerous admirers in Isfahān, among whom were several of the leading ᶜulamā of the day. Most notable among them were Hāj Muhammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī and Hājī Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Shaftī, to both of whom we have referred in the previous chapter. When al-Ahsā'ī was in Isfahān, Kalbāsī suspended his classes, cancelled his Friday prayers, and prayed behind the Shaykh.[241] Although Shaftī was later perturbed by the takfīr, he hesitated to condemn al-Ahsā'ī himself, and it has been claimed that, towards the end of his life, he was convinced of the falsity of the charges levelled against his teachings.[242] Other admirers in Isfahān included Mullā ᶜAlī Nūrī (d.1246/1830-1),[243] who also suspended his classes when al-Ahsā'ī was in the city, and Shaykh Muhammad Taqī Isfahānī (d.1248/1832-3), a pupil of Bahr al-ᶜUlūm and a son-in-law and pupil of Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī.[244] Even if none of these men were 'Shaykhīs' in the strict sense, and may in some cases have held doubts about the Shaykh's beliefs after the takfīr, none of them lent his support to the attack launched against him. Kalbāsī, who had an ijāza from al-Ahsā'ī, was sufficiently unimpressed by the takfīr that, on the Shaykh's death, he held a three-day memorial meeting attended by large numbers, including men of rank in the city.[245] That men such as Kalbāsī and Shaftī refused to condemn the Shaykh was a major factor in restricting the effectiveness of the takfīr.

On 12 Shawwāl 1238/22 June 1823, al-Ahsā'ī left Isfahān for Kirmānshāh, where he stayed for another year; he then went to Karbalā, having left his wives (and, presumably, his unnecessary baggage) in Kirmānshāh.[246] It was after he had been in Karbalā for a short time that serious opposition began, led by Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī Tabātabā'ī.[247] According to Rashtī, someone compiled a book containing heretical ideas of mulhids, zindīqs, Sūfīs, Trinitarians, and so on, attributing them to Shaykh Ahmad, and reading them to a large gathering assembled for the purpose.[248] We have mentioned above the deliberate attempt to incite the governor of Baghdād, Dā'ūd Pāshā, against the Shaykh. The latter seems to have recognized the serious danger he was in and decided to travel to Mecca, leaving Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī behind in Karbalā as his leading pupil and, in some sense, successor.[249] Accompanied by several companions, he went first to Baghdād, from where he set out for Syria.[250] On the way he grew ill and, two or three stages from Medina, at Hadīyya, died on 21 Dhū 'l-Qaᶜda 1241/27 June 1826, aged seventy-five.[251] His grave is in Medina.[252]

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. Risāla by al-Aḥsā'ī in Ḥusayn ᶜAlī Maḥfūẓ Sīra Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī p.9; Fihrist p.133. See also Sharḥ p.5. Alternative dates are given in T.N. Vol.2 p.235; Zarandī p.18; Rawḍāt p.26; Shaykh ᶜAlī al-Aḥsā'ī quoted ᶜAbd al-Ḥamīd Ishrāq Khāvari Qāmūs-i Īqān Vol.4 p.1604.

2. On al-Aḥsā, see F.S. Vidal The Oasis of al-Hasa; J.G. Lorimer Gazeteer of the Persian Gulf Vol.2A pp.642-57, 657-79.

3. Lorimer Vol.2A pp.207-8.

4. Sharḥ pp.4-5; Sīra p.9; Fihrist p.132.

5. On the Mahāshir, see H. St. John Philby Saudi Arabia p.25. See also Carl Niebuhr Description de l'Arabie p.294.

6. Niebuhr speaks of both Jews and Sabaeans in the region in the mid-eighteenth century (p.293). Lorimer remarks that, after the Turkish occupation of al-Aḥsā in the 1870's, there were few Jews left, and speaks of the Sabaeans as no longer in existence there (Vol.2A p.645).

7. Browne Literary History Vol.4 p.360. A comprehensive account of Shīᶜī divines from Baḥrayn is to be found in the lengthy ijāza from Shaykh Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī, published under the title Lu'lu'atayi 'l-Baḥrayn, referred to in the last chapter. An unpublished biographical dictionary of ᶜulamā from al-Aḥsā, Qaṭīf, and Baḥrayn is the Anwār al-Baḥrayn of Shaykh ᶜAlī ibn Ḥasan al-Baladī al-Baḥrānī (d.1340/1922) -- see Al-dharīᶜa Vol.2 p.420). The Amal al-Āmil is also useful.

8. See Nujūm pp.56-7; Qiṣaṣ pp.277-8. He is described as the first to develop the science of ḥadīth in Baḥrayn.

9. See Rawḍāt pp.736-7; Nujūm pp.154-6; al-ᶜĀmilī Vol.2 p.341; Kashf index under 'Hāshim al-maᶜrūf bi 'l-ᶜAllāma'.

10. See Rawḍāt pp.303-5; Nujūm pp.185-8; Qiṣaṣ pp.275-7.

11. Rawḍāt pp.24-5; Qiṣaṣ pp.278-9.

12. Qiṣaṣ p.35.

13. L. Massignon 'Karmatians' p.768.

14. Adolf Grohmann 'Yām' p.1154.

15. Thus Philby p.57.

16. Niebuhr p.236; Grohmann p.1154.

17. Philby p.57.

18. Niebuhr p.237.

19. L. Massignon 'Esquisse d'une bibliographie Qarmate' p.338.

20. Sharḥ p.22. It must not necessarily be assumed that this is a reference to fuqahā; more likely it refers to Ṣūfī-orientated ʿulamā in the tradition of Ibn al-ʿArabī (for whom al-Aḥsā'ī had an abiding animosity); cf. Hāshimī Kirmānī 'Ṭā'ifa' p.246.

21. Sharḥ p.22.

22. Dalīl p.27.

23. 'Ṭā'ifa' p.248; this article gives the names of several of these emigrés.

24. Sharḥ p.24.

25. Ibid pp.7, 22; Sīra p.11; Fihrist p.134.

26. Sīra p.10; Fihrist p.133.

27. Sharḥ pp.8-11; Sīra pp.11-13; Fihrist pp.134-6.

28. For details concerning this Order, see Iḥsān Allāh ʿAlī Istakhrī 'Taṣawwuf-i Dhahabīyya'; Mīrzā Abū 'l-Ḥasan Ḥāfiẓ al-Kutub Muʿāwin al-Fuqarā 'Silsila-yi mubāraka-yi Dhahabīyya'. On Sayyid Qutb al-Dīn Muhammad, see Ṭarā'iq Vol.3 pp.216-9.

29. He was known as Mīrzā Bābā and bore the takhallus of Rāz-i Shīrāzī (see Muʿāwin al-Fuqarā p.76).

30. On Mullā Mihrāb, see Ṭarā'iq Vol.3 p.255.

31. His full name was Āqā Mīrzā Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Majd al-Ashrāf; he succeeded his father as qutb of the order (see Muʿāwin al-Fuqarā p.76). The Tāmm al-ḥikma was an introduction to his father's Kitāb-i sharā'it al-ṭarīqa (see Ṭara'iq Vol.3 p.339).

32. The passages from Thiqat al-Islām referred to are quoted by Chahārdihī p.110.

33. Ṭarā'iq Vol.3 p.339. Āqā Muḥammad Hāshim Darwīsh Shīrāzī became Sayyid Qutb al-Dīn's successor as head of the order (Muʿāwin al-Fuqarā p.76).

34. Ṭarā'iq Vol.3 p.217.

35. Ibid p.216.

36. Chahārdihī p.110; Hāshimī Kirmānī 'Ṭā'ifa' p.251.

37. Reaction to this revival, which began with the propaganda of Maʿṣūm ʿAlī Shāh in Shīrāz during the reign of Karīm Khān Zand, was energetic. Maʿṣūm ʿAlī and his disciple Fayḍ ʿAlī Shāh were severely persecuted. Another Niʿmat Allāhī darwīsh, Mushtāq ʿAlī Shāh, was put to death in 1790 in Kirmān, and Nur ʿAlī Shāh, a son of Fayḍ ʿAlī, appears to have been poisoned by agents of Muḥammad ʿAlī Bihbihānī in 1215/1800-1. For details of these and related events, see Algar Religion and State pp.38-40; Sir John Malcolm A History of Persia Vol.2 pp.417-22; Zayn al-Dīn Shīrvānī Būstān al-sīyāḥa pp.77-84; Ṭara'iq Vol.3 pp.170-94. Al-Aḥsā'ī was far from favourably inclined towards Sufism, as we have noted.

38. On Rashtī's childhood, see an account by Ḥājī Mīrzā ʿAlī Aṣghar (a classmate of his) in Mullā Jaʿfar Qazvīnī 'Tārīkh' p.455. Like al-Aḥsā'ī, he disliked games, and would look after the books of the other children while they played. On the Bāb's childhood, see ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Āvāra

Al-kawākib al-durrīyya pp.31-2. A contemporary of the Bāb, Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣaḥḥāf Shīrāzī, is quoted to the effect that the Bāb did not join in the games of his class-mates, but would be found in prayer in a secluded place. We may also note the ascetic childhood and youth of Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī, the founder of the Ḥurūfī sect, who also experienced dreams of the Imāms before embarking on his religious mission (see A. Bausani 'Hurūfīyya' p.600).

39. See, for example, Sīra pp.9-10; Sharḥ pp.5-7; Fihrist p.134.

40. Tanakābunī states that al-Aḥsā'ī practised asceticism greatly during the early part of his life (Qiṣaṣ p.37), and mentions that Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī (under whom he studied for a short time) told him that Shaykh Aḥmad had performed forty chillas of rīyāḍāt (ibid). Rashtī himself states that al-Aḥsā'ī only practised severe asceticism for a two-year period following his initial vision of the Imām Ḥasan (Dalīl p.12).

41. Sīra p.13; Fihrist p.136; Sharḥ pp.11-12.

42. See Sīra pp.14-22, 23-4; Fihrist pp.136-42, 143-4; Sharḥ pp.12-21; Dalīl pp.11-12; al-Aḥsā'ī Sharḥ al-zīyāra pt.1 p.115.

43. Sīra p.17; Fihrist p.139; Sharḥ p.17.

44. Sīra pp.17-8; Fihrist pp.139-40; Sharḥ pp.18-19. These initiatory dreams of al-Aḥsa'ī are closely paralleled by a visionary experience in which the Bāb dreamt he drank blood from the severed head of the Imām Ḥusayn (see Bāb Ṣaḥīfa-yi ʿAdlīyya p.14; Zarandī p.253), and by a dream similarly involving the ingestion of the saliva of the Prophet by Mullā Muḥammad Ḥusayn Bushrū'ī (see Muḥammad ʿAlī Malik Khusravī Tārīkh-i shuhadā-yi amr Vol.1 p.21).

45. Al-Aḥsā'ī himself indicates that it was extremely early, saying it took place fī awwal infitāḥ bāb al-ru'yā (Sīra p.17; Fihrist p.139).

46. Dalīl pp.11-12.

47. Sharḥ p.20; Sīra p.20; Fihrist pp.141-2.

48. Dalīl p.11.

49. Sharḥ al-Fawā'id p.4.

50. Sīra pp.19-20; Fihrist p.141.

51. Kuntu fī tilka 'l-ḥāl dā'iman arī manāmāt wa hīya ilhāmāt; cf. Sīra p.19; Fihrist p.141; Qiṣaṣ p.37.

52. See Qiṣaṣ p.35.

53. Dalīl p.9. On the distinction between various modes of revelation and cognition, such as waḥy, ilhām, and kashf, and their relationship to the concepts of risāla, nubuwwa, and wilaya, see Corbin En Islam Vol.1 pp.235-51, Vol.3 pp.171-5; idem Histoire de la philosophie islamique pp.79-92. Some inimical sources have tried to argue that al-Aḥsā'ī laid claim to waḥy, but this appears to be based more on biased misreadings of passages in his works than on any straightforward remarks to that effect by him (see Hamadānī Ijtināb pp.396-7).

54. Bausani 'Hurūfīyya' p.600.

55. Sharḥ p.12.

56. Dalīl p.12.

57. Both Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh and Sayyid Hādī Hindī give the year 1176/1762-3, but this clashes with the most reliable date for al-Aḥsā'ī's birth (see Sharḥ p.22; Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn, cited Fihrist p.161). The correction to 1186/1772-3 seems the simplest solution.

58. Lorimer Vol.1B p.1241; cf. Longrigg p.188.

59. Sharḥ p.25.

60. Ibid.

61. For a list of al-Aḥsā'ī's wives and children, see ibid pp.55-7. Abū 'l-Qāsim Khān has stated that he was not aware of any descendants of Shaykh Aḥmad still in existence, although he does mention some Arabs without learning whom he met in Mashhad, and who claimed to be descended from a daughter of al-Aḥsā'ī (Fihrist p.172). Khwānsārī mentions two sons, Shaykh Muḥammad and Shaykh ᶜAlī, and maintains that the former rejected his father's teachings (Rawdāt p.26). According to Kashmīrī, Shaykh ᶜAlī was his father's successor in Kirmānshāh (Nujūm p.367; cf. Qiṣaṣ p.38).

62. Sharḥ p.25.

63. Ibid.

64. Dalīl pp.13-6.

65. See Sharḥ p.26.

66. Qiṣaṣ p.36. This tendency to polymathism is particularly marked in the cases of Ḥāj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī and his son Ḥāj Muḥammad Khān, later heads of the Shaykhī school (see the topics on which they wrote, listed Fihrist pp.9-10, 360). On the significance of this polymathism with respect to the derivation of knowledge from the Imāms, see ibid p.58; Aḥmad Bahmanyār, quoted Chahārdihī p.227).

67. See Fihrist pp.228, 241. The Sharḥ al-Mashāᶜir (1234/1818) exists in MS; the Sharḥ al-ᶜArshiyya (1236/1820) was printed in Tabrīz in 1278/1861-2.

68. Ibid pp.228, 221. The Sharḥ al-Risālat al-ᶜilmīyya (1230/1815) was printed in the compilation Jawāmiᶜ al-kalim Vol.1 pt.2 pp.166-200; Al-risālat al-Baḥrānīyya (1211/1797), which deals with various statements of Fayd, can be found in ibid pp.217-9.

69. Fihrist p.249. Entitled Risāla dhū ra'sayn, this treatise was printed in Jawāmiᶜ Vol.1 pt.3 pp.87-108.

70. Fihrist p.249. Entitled Sirāt al-yaqīn; printed in Jawāmiᶜ Vol.1 pt.3 pp.1-84.

71. Fihrist p.252. Dated 1207/1792; printed in Jawāmiᶜ Vol.1 pt.2 pp.210-4.

72. On whom, see Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 pp.80-1.

73. The full text of the ijāza is given in Sharḥ pp.81-4.

74. Quoted Ibid p.82.

75. Dalīl p.57.

76. Sharḥ p.23.

77. See note 70 above.

78. Sharḥ p.23.

79. See Fihrist p.243; printed in Jawāmi^{c} Vol.2 pp.141-50.

80. These are items 18, 24, 38, 59, 63, 92, and 97 in Fihrist.

81. Sharḥ p.26.

82. Ibid pp.84-6; 89-93.

83. Dalīl p.13.

84. Philby pp.77, 78, 79-80, 81, 82.

85. See, for example, E.G. Browne (ed.) Kitāb-i-Nuqṭatu'l-Kāf pp.99-100; Zarandī pp.1-2.

86. The full text is given in Sharḥ pp.81-4.

87. Ibid p.23; cf. Fihrist p.162. Compare the wording in Shaykh Aḥmad's ijāza from Shaykh Ḥusayn Āl ^{c}Asfūr (Sharḥ p.69).

88. Sharḥ p.24. For the text of the ijāza, which was of general application, (^{c}āmma), see ibid pp.89-93. It is quoted in part in Dalīl p.25.

89. The text of Shaykh Ja^{c}far's ijāza is given in Sharḥ pp.93-6, and is quoted in part in Dalīl p.26. Sayyid ^{c}Alī's ijāza is given in Sharḥ pp.87-8, and quoted in part in Dalīl pp.26-7.

90. Kashf p.523. Kanturī gives 1240/1824 + as the date of his death, but I prefer to rely here on Kashmīrī, who quotes Āqā Muḥammad Bihbihānī's Mi'rāt al-aḥwāl in reference to events in Karbalā in 1215; Ḥabībābādī gives 1216/1801-2 (Makārim Vol.2 p.611). For details of Mirzā Muḥammad Mahdī, see previous chapter, note 164. For the text of his ijāza to al-Aḥsā'ī, see Sharḥ pp.84-6; it is quoted in part in Dalīl pp.25-6.

91. See his ijāza to al-Aḥsā'ī, quoted Sharḥ p.70.

92. Kashf p.69. For details of Shaykh Ḥusayn, see Tabaqāt Vol. pp.427-9. The text of his ijāza to al-Aḥsā'ī is given in Sharḥ pp.68-81 and in the volume containing Hamadānī's Ijtināb (pp.2-8); it is given in part in Dalīl p.26. See also Nujūm p.367. The ijāza is referred to by al-Aḥsā'ī in Sharḥ al-ziyāra pt.1 pp.106-7.

93. Jawāmi^{c} Vol.2 p.42.

94. 1204, for example, would make good sense within the framework of our chronology. The date in question is written in figures.

95. Fihrist p.150. For references to al-Aḥsā'ī as a teacher of Kalbāsī, see Tabaqāt Vol.2 pp.15, 91.

96. Tabaqāt Vol.2 p.91. On Sayyid Muḥsin, see Nujūm pp.344-5; Qiṣaṣ p.198; Rawḍāt p.523.

97. See, in particular, the ijāzāt from Sayyid ^{c}Alī Tabātabā'ī (quoted Sharḥ pp.87-8) and Baḥr al-^{c}Ulūm (quoted ibid p.90).

98. The dated works include items 5, 14, 18, 39, 55, 72, 82, 89, and 100 in Fihrist.

99. Al-risālat al-Bahrāniyya: see note 68 above.

100. Al-risālat al-ijmāciyya: Fihrist p.246; printed Jawāmi[c] Vol.1 pt.3 pp. 108-44.

101. Risāla to Shaykh [c]Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Baḥrānī, a son of Shaykh Yūsuf al-Bahrānī: Fihrist pp.241-2; printed Jawāmi[c] Vol.2 pp.61-9.

102. Sharh pp.26-8.

103. For an account of the annual Wahhābī raids between 1803 and 1810 and resistance to them, see Lorimer Vol.1B pp.1077-9.

104. Sharh p.29.

105. See ibid p.34.

106. Ibid p.29; see also Dalīl p.13.

107. Rashtī gives the names of several of these in Dalīl p.17. Karīm Khān Kirmānī names two others in Hidāyat al-tālibīn p.38.

108. Nujūm p.418.

109. See ibid pp.345-6, 418 (a separate entry); Tabaqāt Vol.2 p.449.

110. He is the author of Al-ḥusn wa 'l-qabḥ (see Al-dharī[c]a Vol.7 pp.18-9) and Ḥaqā'iq al-usūl. For details, see Nujūm pp.417-8; Tabaqāt Vol.2 p.142; Makārim Vol.3 pp.892-3.

111. Quoted Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 p.142; this seems to disprove Habībābādī's statement that, in 1208/1793-4, he travelled to Mashhad and returned from there to Yazd, where he remained (Makārim Vol.3 p.892).

112. Ḥasan Fasā'ī Fārsnāma-yi Nāṣirī Vol.1 p.296. Other examples are the direct intervention by the Shaykh al-Islām of Shīrāz during the early years of the reign of Fatḥ-[c]Alī Shāh, in which he forced the governor, Muḥammad Nabī Khān, to lower the price of bread and succeeded in having him dismissed (see Sir William Ouseley Travels in Various Countries of the East Vol.2 pp.209-10); the expulsion of the governor of Kāshān by Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī, and his forcing Fatḥ-[c]Alī to appoint a new incumbent in his stead (see Qisas p.130) and the role of Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī in protecting large numbers of citizens during th 1843 siege of Karbalā (see next chapter). See also Algar Religion and State pp.52-3; A.K.S. Lambton "Persian Society under the Qājārs' p.135; Malcolm Vol.2 p.304.

113. Dated works from this period include items 2, 6, 45, and 65 in Fihrist.

114. Tadhkirat al-awliyā pp.5-6.

115. 'Tā'ifa' p.252.

116. Sharh pp.30-31.

117. For a detailed discussion of Fatḥ-[c]Alī's relations with the religious sector, see Algar Religion and State pp.45-72.

118. Quoted Fihrist p.166.

119. Sharh p.31.

120. Fihrist pp.240-1; printed in Jawāmi^{c} Vol.1 pt.1 pp.120-29.

121. Fihrist p.241; printed in Jawāmi^{c} Vol.2 pp.245-9. What appear to be this and the previous risāla are referred to by the single title Khāqāniyya by Shaykh ^{c}Abd Allāh (Sharh pp.59, 60; cf. Nujūm p.371).

122. Sultān Aḥmad Mīrzā ^{c}Aḍud al-Dawla Tārīkh-i ^{c}Aḍudī p.128. On Mīrzā Muḥammad Nadīm, see ^{c}Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā'ī, notes to ibid pp.269-70.

123. Dalīl p.17.

124. Sharh pp.31-2.

125. On ṣādirāt, see Sir George Curzon Persia and the Persian Question Vol.2 pp.477-8; James Morier A Journey through Persia p.237.

126. Sharh p.32.

127. See Dalīl p.17.

128. Sharh pp.32-3; Dalīl p.18; ^{c}Aḍud al-Dawla p.128.

129. The exact dating of al-Aḥsā'ī's visit is difficult, since none of our sources gives precise details. However, the Risāla khāqāniyya, presumably written from Yazd, is dated early Ramaḍān 1223/late October 1808; a letter dated 19 Ṣafar 1224/5 April 1809 is recorded as having been written in Yazd (Fihrist p.287). Further evidence is provided by the date of the arrival of Muḥammad ^{c}Alī Mīrzā's envoy in Baṣra, at the beginning of Dhū '1-Qa^{c}da 1223/mid-December 1808. The reference to the journey as occurring in winter also helps us pinpoint the approximate date of his arrival. It is unclear whether the fa'ida of al-Aḥsā'ī's dated 20 Ramaḍān 1223/ 9 November 1808 was written in Yazd or Tihrān (Fihrist p.229).

130. Sharh p.33.

131. Dalīl p.18. Kirmānī states that, among those who visited al-Aḥsā'ī in Tihrān was Mīrzā Muḥammad Akhbārī (Hidāyat p.39).

132. Sharh pp.34-5.

133. Ibid p.35; cf. ^{c}Aḍud al-Dawla p.128.

134. On this policy, see Algar Religion and State pp.51-2.

135. On whom, see Rawḍāt pp.154-5; Nujūm pp.414-5; Qiṣaṣ pp.100-1; Makārim Vol.1 pp.83-92. On his attack on al-Aḥsā'ī, entitled Ḥayāt al-arwāḥ, completed in 1240/1824-5, see Al-dharī^{c}a Vol.7 pp.115-6. A refutation of this work, entitled Sharḥ Ḥayat al-arwāḥ, was written in 1252/1837 by Mullā Muḥammad Ḥasan Gawhar Qarācha-dāghī, a leading pupil of al-Aḥsā'ī and Rashtī (see ibid Vol.13 p.215; see also Vol.5 p.174).

136. See Algar Religion and State p.51; Tabaqāt Vol.2 pp.354-5; Tarā'iq Vol.3 pp.340-5; Makārim Vol.4 pp.1099-1102. His great-nephew, Mīrzā Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, was a follower of Mullā Ḥasan Gawhar, referred to in the last note (Tarā'iq Vol.3 p.343; Tabaqāt Vol.1 p.4).

137. Qiṣaṣ pp.31-2.

138. I^{c}timād al-Salṭana lists a large number of these in Ma'āthir pp.135-86.

139. Sharh pp.35-6; cf. ᶜAdud al-Dawla p.128; Dalīl p.18.

140. On these and other cases of later clerical opposition to the state, see Algar Religion and State chapters 12, 13, and 14; idem 'The Oppositional Role of the Ulama in Twentieth-Century Iran'; N.R. Keddie Religion and Rebellion in Iran.

141. pp.5-13.

142. Ibid p.12.

143. Ibid p.13.

144. Sharh p.36. Hidāyat states that he was made governor of Khūzistān, Lūristān, the Bakhtīyārī region, and Kirmānshāh in 1222/1807, when he was nineteen (Ridā Qulī Khān Hidāyat Rawdat al-Safā-yi Nāsirī Vol.9 p.602).

145. Sharh p.36. He had recently conquered Sulaymān Pāshā, the Kahyā of Baghdād, in 1221/1806 (see Fasā'ī Vol.1 p.255).

146. Fihrist p.287.

147. Dalīl p.19.

148. Sharh p.38.

149. Ibid pp.40-4. Abū 'l-Qāsim Khān states that the Shaykh made numerous visits to Mashhad in this period (Fihrist p.167).

150. Hāshimī Kirmānī 'Tā'ifa' p.252; Zarandī p.5.

151. See Hāshimī Kirmānī 'Tā'ifa' p.252.

152. Rashtī mentions several of the ᶜulamā who were resident in Mashhad at the time of al-Ahsā'ī's visits (Dalīl p.20). Kirmānī names two others (Hidāyat p.40).

153. Dalīl p.19.

154. Ibid.

155. See Sharh p.44.

156. Dalīl p.20.

157. Hidāyat p.41.

158. Nujūm p.367, based on the Rawdat al-bahīyya of Sayyid Shafīᶜ al-Mūsawī.

159. See Algar Religion and State p.45.

160. Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia Vol.2 pp.201-2. On Muhammad ᶜAlī Mīrzā (1203-37/1789-1821), the eldest son of Fath-ᶜAlī, see ibid pp.202-4; Navā'ī, notes to ᶜAdud al-Dawla pp.218-9; Rijāl Vol.3 pp.430-1.

161. The Shaykh wrote at least two letters in reply to intelligent questions from this prince; see Fihrist pp.236-7; the first of these is printed in Jawāmiᶜ Vol.1 pt.2 pp.200-7. On Mahmūd Mīrzā, the fourteenth son of Fath-ᶜAlī, see Navā'ī, notes to ᶜAdud al-Dawla pp.227-8; Rijāl Vol.4 pp. 51-3.

162. Sharh p.50. On ᶜAbd Allāh Khān, twice Sadr-i Aᶜzam, see Fasā'ī Vol.1 pp.269, 270, 271, 274; ᶜAdud al-Dawla pp.60-5, 99-102; Navā'ī, notes to ibid p.236; Rijāl Vol.2 pp.278-81.

163. Hāshimi Kirmānī 'Ṭā'ifa' p.247.

164. See Chahārdihī pp.246-64.

165. Fihrist p.167.

166. Dalīl pp.31-2.

167. Ibid p.32.

168. Sharh p.45.

169. Ibid p.46.

170. Ibid.

171. Qisas p.36. The same source relates a similar anecdote about Āqā Sayyid Riḍa Ṭabāṭabā'ī, a son of Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, who also had debts and came from Najaf to Kirmānshāh (ibid).

172. Nujūm p.367, based on the Rawdat al-bahīyya of al-Mūsawī.

173. Qisas pp.37-8.

174. Hāshimi Kirmānī 'Ṭā'ifa' p.253. This author argues against the validity of this statement, which he has not seen recorded.

175. Fihrist p.159.

176. Sharh pp.42-7.

177. Ibid p.48. Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh also names Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī as one of those with whom al-Aḥsā'ī associated on this occasion, but it is widely agreed that al-Najafī had died four years previously in 1228/1813. Rashtī gives the names of several ᶜulamā with whom the Shaykh associated at the ᶜatabāt during his pilgrimages in the period of his stay in Kirmānshāh from 1814 (Dalīl pp.22-3). Elsewhere, Rashtī states that, on several journeys to the ᶜatabāt, al-Aḥsā'ī associated with Mīrzā-yi Qummī and Shaykh Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn Āl ᶜAṣfūr, both of whom showed great admiration for him (ibid p.24). He omits to mention here another man with whom al-Aḥsā'ī probably associated during his earlier journeys to the ᶜatabāt -- Sayyid Muḥsin al-Aᶜrajī (d.1231/1816), from whom he may have received an ijāza.

178. Dalīl pp.23-4.

179. Ibid p.23; Kirmānī Hidāyat p.48. The Shaykh's commentary on the Risāla ᶜilmiyya is referred to above (note 68).

180. Sharh p.48.

181. Fihrist p.226. See Al-dharīᶜa Vol.13 p.305.

182. See note 68 above. Other works written in this period include items 3, 36, 57, and 129 in Fihrist.

183. Fihrist p.227; see bibliography.

184. See note 121 above.

185. Fihrist p.228; see bibliography.

186. Ibid p.241; see bibliography.

187. Among these are items 40, 41, 85, and 109 in the Fihrist.

188. Muḥammad Jaᶜfar (Khān) Khurmūjī Ḥaqā'iq al-akhbār-i Nāṣirī p.16. The war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Erzerum in 1238/1823 (see Hidāyat Vol.9 pp.616-7, 625-9).

189. Hidāyat Vol.9 p.602.

190. Ibid p.603.

191. Sharḥ p.48.

192. Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh says two years (ibid p.49).

193. Fasā'ī Vol.1 pp.268-9.

194. See Z.H. p.309.

195. Ma'āthir p.144.

196. For varying accounts of this incident, see Zarandī pp.276-8 (who attributes the murder to a single Shaykhī); Muᶜīn al-Salṭana Tabrīzī Tārīkh-i Muᶜīn al-Salṭana (MS) pp.242-5; Qiṣaṣ p.57; Samandar p.356.

197. On Mullā Muḥammad Taqī, see the lengthy biography (with numerous digressions) in Qiṣaṣ pp.19-66; Nujūm pp.407-11; Kāẓimī Vol.1 pp.30-5; Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 pp.226-8; I timad al-Salṭana Ma'āthir p.144; Rijāl Vol.1 pp.203-4; Anṣārī pp.192-3; Najafī Shahīdān pp.476-9.

198. Chahārdihī p.37.

199. Although ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb never seems to have been regarded as a Shaykhī, his attitude towards the school, as well as to Babism, was basically favourable. On the death of Rashtī, he was the only ᶜālim in Qazvīn to organize a memorial gathering (Qazvīnī p.469). His two sons, Āqā Mīrzā Muḥammad ᶜAlī and Mīrzā Hādī, were both Shaykhīs and later became Bābīs, being included in the small group of the earliest disciples, the ḥurūf al-ḥayy (Zarandī pp.80-1; Samandar p.85).

200. Chahārdihī p.37.

201. Fihrist p.156. Shaykh Jaᶜfar (d.1306/1888-9) lived in Karbalā, but later went to Kirmān, where he associated with Muḥammad Khān, Karīm Khān's son and successor. Muḥammad Khān relates traditions from Shaykh Jaᶜfar in his Kitāb al-mubīn, and Karīm Khān's Taqwīm al-lisān (printed 1272/1855-6) was written at his request (Fihrist p.396).

202. On the method he used to displace Ḥājī Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī, the former Imām-Jumᶜa, see Qiṣaṣ p.29.

203. See ibid pp.19-20, 22, 22-3, 31, 31-2.

204. Ibid p.22.

205. Dalīl pp.19, 23-4, 37; Hāshimī Kirmānī 'Tā'ifa' p.247.

206. See Qazvīnī p.448.

207. Quoted Fihrist pp.157-8. Abū 'l-Qāsim Khān maintains that al-Aḥsā'ī and Baraghānī agreed on the fact of physical resurrection, but disagreed as to its manner (ibid p.152). This is largely true, in that al-Aḥsā'ī did not -- as some sources have suggested -- speak in terms of a spiritual resurrection. Bābī and Bahā'ī allegorizing is a later development.

208. Qisas p.43.

209. See Rijāl Vol.2 pp.496-8.

210. Qisas p.43.

211. pp.449-50.

212. Qisas pp.44-8.

213. Dalīl p.40. Rashtī also mentions the denial of physical resurrection and the physical ascension of Muḥammad. He likewise states that the four main points of disagreement with al-Aḥsā'ī concerned: miᶜrāj, maᶜād, ᶜilm (the divine knowledge), and the belief in the Imāms as the cause of creation (ibid pp.57-8).

214. Since it has proved impossible to include within this dissertation even a brief discussion of Shaykhī doctrine, reference may be made to the following sources for further information. On the divine knowledge, see Jawāmiᶜ Vol.1 pt.2 pp.227-9, pt.3 (a) pp.1-8; Vol.2 pp.69-75, 282, 285-7. On maᶜād, see ibid Vol.1 pt.1 pp.14-111, 122-4, pt.2 pp.68-114, 136, pt. 3(a) pp.8-10; Vol.2 pp.46-8, 114-66 (questic . 41), 280-2; al-Aḥsā'ī Ḥayāt al-nafs pp.91-127 idem Sharḥ al-ziyāra pt.4 pp.8-10. On miᶜrāj, see Jawāmiᶜ Vol.1 pt.1 pp.137-9, pt.2 pp.114-66 (question 26). On the nature of the Imāms, see ibid Vol.1 pt.2 pp.233-4; Vol.2 pp.80-2; Sharḥ al-ziyāra passim. These main points and numerous others are dealt with by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shahristānī in his polemical Taryāq-i fārūq, quoted and commented in Hamadānī Ijtināb; Hamadānī's Al-Naᶜī al-ḥādira, refuting a polemic entitled Dār al-salām, is also useful. A convenient summary of al-Aḥsā'ī's beliefs, with quotations, is given in Ishrāq Khāvarī Qāmūs Vol.4 pp.1615-39. Some important passages have been translated and annotated by Corbin in Terre Céleste pp.281-337.

215. On the ability of the Shīᶜī ᶜulamā to assimilate a wide range of ideological diversity within the framework of the Twelver belief system, see Binder pp.134-5.

216. Qisas p.42.

217. 'Tā'ifa' p.350.

218. Chahārdihī p.38.

219. Dalīl pp.37-8.

220. For details of Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī, see Qisas pp.124-5; Nujūm pp.366-7; Kāzimī Vol.1 pp.13-15.

221. Dalīl p.39. The meeting referred to by Tanakābunī (Qisas pp.43-4) as called by Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī after al-Aḥsā'ī's death and attended by Mullā Muḥammad Sharīf al-ᶜUlamā Māzandarānī, Ḥājī Mullā Muḥammad Jaᶜfar Astarābādī, and Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī, appears to have been a second meeting, probably identical with that described in Dalīl p.59 (and see next chapter).

222. See note 135 above.

223. Qiṣaṣ pp.107-112; Kāẓimī Vol.1 pp.59-63; I^{c}timād al-Salṭana Ma'āthir p.139; Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 pp.152-3.

224. See Qiṣaṣ pp.112-7; Nujūm pp.375-6; Makārim Vol.4 pp.1269-72; Anṣārī pp.148-50. Sharīf al-^{c}Ulama was one of the teachers of Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī.

225. See Qiṣaṣ pp.4-19; Rawḍāt pp.12-13; Makārim Vol.2 pp.518-26; Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 pp.-0-11; Anṣari p.49 f.n.

226. See Nujūm pp.37 -80; Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 pp.390-1. He was himself a bitter opponent of Sharīf al-^{c}Ulama (see Fihrist p.160).

227. Qiṣaṣ p.44. As mentioned previously, Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan had an ijāza from al-Aḥsā'ī. Hamadānī disputes the claim that he pronounced takfīr against him (Ijtināb p.106).

228. Dalīl p.80.

229. Letter to Mullā ^{c}Abd al-Wahhāb Qazvīnī, quoted Fihrist p.157.

230. Dalīl pp.45-8; cf. Rawḍāt p.26. The governor of Baghdād at this period was Dā'ūd Pāshā.

231. p.44.

232. See ibid p.38. On the meaning of the term 'Bālāsarī', see Zarandī pp.84-5; A.L.M. Nicolas Cheïkh Ahmed Lahçahi preface pp.5-6. Rashtī notes that one cannot really compare the Shaykhī-Bālāsari with the Akhbārī-Uṣūlī division, because the latter did not result in the declaration of takfīr (Dalīl p.8).

233. En Islam Vol.4 p.225.

234. Rashtī gives a list of ^{c}ulamā at the ^{c}atabāt and in Iṣfahān who opposed Sayyid Mahdī in his takfīr (Dalīl pp.79-80).

235. Qazvīnī p.450.

236. Sharḥ p.49.

237. Ibid p.50.

238. Ibid.

239. Ibid p.51.

240. See Fihrist p.170.

241. Ibid p.149. Tanakābunī says that al-Aḥsā'ī was a guest of Kalbāsī and prayed in his mosque, the Masjid-i Ḥakīm, while in Isfahān (Qiṣaṣ p.35).

242. Zarandī pp.19-24.

243. See Rawḍāt pp.402-3; Makārim Vol.4 pp.1264-7; Chahārdihī p.54 (where it is suggested that Nūrī later regretted having taught the views of al-Aḥsā'ī; cf. Qiṣaṣ p.35).

244. See Qiṣaṣ p.117; Nujūm p.380; Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 pp.215-7; Anṣārī pp.18-9 f.n.

245. Rawdāt p.26.

246. Sharḥ p.51. Al-Aḥsā'ī remained active during this period in Karbalā. Two of his works are dated 1239/1823 (see Fihrist items 7 and 43).

247. Dalīl pp.37-8.

248. Ibid p.39.

249. Ibid p.48.

250. Sharḥ p.53.

251. Ibid p.54; Dalīl p.48.

252. Sharḥ p.54.

CHAPTER THREE

SAYYID KĀẒIM RASHTĪ

SAYYID KĀZIM RASHTĪ

We do not, unfortunately, possess any very detailed accounts of the life of Sayyid Kāzim similar to Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh al-Ahsā'ī's life of his father. Two manuscript biographies written by pupils of the Sayyid -- the Nūr al-anwār, written for prince Āsif Mīrzā by Mīrzā ᶜAlī Naqī Qummī Hindī, and the Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn, by Āqā Sayyid Hādī Hindī[1] -- are known to be in existence.[2] Unfortunately, despite efforts to trace these for the present author during a visit to Kirmān in 1977, the Shaykhī community there has been unable to discover their current location. There is, however, a summary of their contents by Hāj Sayyid Jawād Qarashī Hindī, a descendant of Mīrzā ᶜAlī Naqī and a nephew of Āqā Sayyid Hādī; this has been printed by Abū 'l-Qāsim Khān Kirmānī in his Fihrist.[3] Brief accounts of Rashtī may also be found in the Qisas al-ᶜulamā, Rawdāt al-jannāt, Makārim al-āthār, Hidāyat al-tālibīn, and elsewhere.

Sayyid Kāzim was born in Rasht in 1198/1784,[4] 1205/1791,[5] 1209/1794-5,[6] 1212/1797-8,[7] or 1214/1799-1800,[8] the son of Āqā Sayyid Qāsim ibn Ahmad. Sayyid Ahmad was a Husaynī sayyid, belonging to an important family in Medina, who had left his native city on the death of his father, Sayyid Habīb, on account of plague, and travelled to Rasht in north-west Iran. Āqā Sayyid Qāsim was born in Rasht and, according to Qarashī, became 'one of the great scholars (fudalā)' of the city.[9] Whatever his literary or other intellectual attainments, however, Sayyid Kāzim's father was not an ᶜālim, but a silk merchant by trade,[10] and there seems to be no evidence that the family had any close connections with the ᶜulamā in Rasht or elsewhere. Like al-Ahsā'ī, then Rashtī's impulse to study the religious sciences derived from personal initiative rather than upbringing or parental encouragement, in contrast to the majority of leading ᶜulamā in his period and since. Like al-Ahsā'ī too, the Sayyid seems to have been drawn to a life of retirement and reflection from early childhood, refusing to join in games with other children.[11]

According to the short biography in the possession of E.G. Browne, at the age of twelve Rashtī was living at Ardabīl.[12] While there, states Mullā Jaᶜfar Qazvīnī, he engaged in ascetic practices and, like al-Ahsā'ī, began to have visions, although with none of the intensity or frequency experienced by the latter.[13] Browne's biography states that, while at Ardabīl, he had a dream of one of the ancestors of Shaykh Safī al-Dīn (the progenitor of the Safawī house), who instructed him to travel to Yazd in order to become a disciple of al-Ahsā'ī.[14] It seems improbable that the Sayyid should have gone to Yazd at such an early age, and some other sources, in fact, suggest that he first met al-Ahsā'ī there in his

late teens or early twenties. It is more likely that he should have returned to Rasht at this point -- as is stated by Qazvīnī, who says he did so after a dream of al-Ahsā'ī.[15]

Like the Shaykh, he had an early desire to study, and was sent by his father to a local teacher who appears to have run a small maktab in the town.[16] When he had completed these 'external' studies, he wished to continue to the 'higher studies', and expressed a desire to travel for this purpose, probably to the ʿatabāt or one of the centres of learning in Iran. His family were opposed to this, however, and prevented him from leaving[17] -- a fact reminiscent of the dissatisfaction felt by the family of the Bāb at his leaving for the ʿatabāt, and reinforcing the similarity in the backgrounds of these two men. According to the standard Shaykhī account, he dreamt one night of Fātima, who revealed to him the existence of Shaykh Ahmad; on the fourth night after this dream, he had another, in which she told him that the Shaykh was then living in Yazd. He set out, accordingly, in that direction, met al-Ahsā'ī, and became one of his pupils.[18]

Our sources, already in disagreement as to the date of Rashtī's birth, are equally contradictory in respect of his age on meeting al-Ahsā'ī, although they do seem to be agreed that the meeting took place in Yazd -- probably between the Shaykh's return from Tihrān in 1224/1809 and his departure for Kirmānshāh in 1229/1814, Browne, as noted above, suggests that he travelled to Yazd shortly after the age of twelve -- a date which has been rejected by us as most improbable. Corbin thinks he was aged fifteen, thus arriving in Yazd in 1227/1812.[19] According to Qazvīnī, the Sayyid travelled to Yazd via Qazvīn in the company of an old man of his family, some time after the arrival of al-Ahsā'ī in Iran; the same source quotes an unnamed mullā from Yazd, who recalls how al-Ahsā'ī went out to meet the Sayyid on his arrival and that the latter was then seventeen or eighteen years old.[20] Zarandī, however, maintains that Rashtī was aged twenty-two on his arrival in Yazd, although he incorrectly states that this was in 1231/1815-6, at the time al-Ahsā'ī was preparing to leave Yazd for Kirmānshāh.[21]

Such a confusing welter of dates and ages makes it extremely difficult for us to estimate the nature and extent of Rashtī's development prior to meeting al-Ahsā'ī. There seems little doubt that he showed very considerable precocious talent and began writing at an early age. Zarandī notes that 'at the age of eleven, he had committed to memory the whole of the Qur'ān. At the age of fourteen, he had learned by heart a prodigious number of prayers and recognized traditions of Muhammad'.[22] Mullā Jaʿfar Qazvīnī states that, on his return to Rasht from Ardabīl, his

name reached the ears of prince Muhammad Ridā Mīrzā, who came to visit him, and that, at the age of fifteen, he wrote risālāt in reply to questions from this prince.[23] How much truth there is in this account, it is hard to determine. Muhammad Ridā Mīrzā, the thirteenth son of Fath-ʿAlī Shāh, was, in fact, about the same age as Rashtī or, if we accept an earlier date of birth for the latter, much younger than him, being born in 1211/1797. He did not become governor of Gīlān until 1234/1819, and it is possible that he lived in Tihrān up until then. On the other hand, a risāla on akl wa ma'kūl addressed to this prince is recorded as having been written at an unspecified date by Rashtī.[24] It is also clear that the prince was deeply interested in religious matters, as witnessed in his devotion to the Niʿmat Allāhī Sūfī order, in which his personal murshid was Hāj Muhammad Jaʿfar Kabūdār Āhangī in Hamadān.[25]

At least three works are known to have been written by Rashtī at a relatively early age, these being the Risāla matālīʿ al-anwār, written at the age of nineteen in reply to Mullā Muhammad Rashīd in explanation of some phrases in the Kalimāt-i maknūna of Mullā Muhsin Fayd;[26] the Masā'il-i Rashīdīyya, also written at the age of nineteen, in reply to the same individual, on the differences of capacities (qābilīyāt);[27] and a tafsīr of part of the 'throne verse' (āyat al-kursī: Qur'an 2:255), written during a hajj journey undertaken at the age of twenty.[28] Although the controversy surrounding the date of his birth makes it impossible to determine his exact age at the time of writing, there are several dated risālas by Rashtī which can be ascribed with reasonable certainty to his twenties or early thirties. Among the more important of these, we may note Al-risālat al-suʿūdīyya wa 'l-nuzūlīyya (1233/1818);[29] Al-risālat al-ʿĀmilīyya (1236/1821);[30] the Sharh Duʿā al-samāt (1238/1823);[31] an Arabic risāla on sulūk and usūl (1238/1823);[32] and the Risāla asrār al-shahāda (1238/1823).[33]

In general, we may note that, up to the death of al-Ahsā'ī in 1241/1826, Rashtī was actively engaged in writing commentaries and replies to questions from a wide variety of individuals.[34] Zarandī states that, within 'a few weeks' of his arrival in Yazd, the Sayyid was told by al-Ahsā'ī to remain in his own house and cease attending his lectures. Those of the Shaykh's disciples who had difficulties in understanding were from then on to be referred to him.[35] While it is highly unlikely that Rashtī should so rapidly have been designated the leading disciple of al-Ahsā'ī, especially if he was only in his teens on his arrival, there is no doubt that, after some time, he succeeded in winning the confidence and respect of the Shaykh and was regarded, well before the latter's death, as his deputy and the semi-official expounder of his views. According to Kirmānī,

al-Ahsā'ī's attitude of respect towards Rashtī had already become apparent in Yazd: 'Sayyid Kāzim understands, but no-one else does', he is reported to have said there.[36]

Rashtī's precise position during the lifetime of the Shaykh is not entirely clear, but he does seem to have been entrusted with the task of answering questions on behalf of the latter, a function which does not appear to have been given to any other of his disciples to perform. An excellent example of his role as the Shaykh's deputy is a lengthy risāla written in 1235/1820 in reply to twenty-four questions originally asked of al-Ahsā'ī but referred by him to Rashtī.[37] He also acted as continuator for al-Ahsā'ī in the case of a risāla to a certain Mīrzā Muhammad ʿAlī.[38] In this period also, Rashtī began to carry out a task which was to preoccupy him greatly in later years -- defence of al-Ahsā'ī from attacks made on him by hostile ʿulamā. Thus, for example, in 1240/1825, he wrote a detailed reply to an unnamed individual who had attacked the views of the Shaykh on resurrection (maʿād) and the divine knowledge.[39] It may also have been before the death of Shaykh Ahmad, or shortly after it, that Rashtī undertook the translation of some of his works into Persian, namely the Mukhtasar al-Haydarīyya,[40] the Hayāt al-Nafs,[41] and part of the first section of the Sharh al-zīyāra.[42]

Contrary to the impression given in most of our sources, however, Sayyid Kāzim does not seem to have remained constantly in the company of al-Ahsā'ī from the time of their meeting in Yazd to the latter's final departure for Arabia. At the age of twenty, possibly some years after his arrival in Yazd, Rashtī made the pilgrimage to Mecca -- the only occasion on which he was able to do so, according to Niʿmat Allāh Radawī.[43] In 1229/1814, he accompanied Shaykh Ahmad to Kirmānshāh,[44] but there is evidence that he did not stay constantly with him there: two letters, one from Rashtī and the other a reply from al-Ahsā'ī, both apparently written during the latter's stay in Kirmānshāh, and possibly during the lifetime of Muhammad ʿAlī Mīrzā, indicate that the Sayyid spent at least a year, perhaps much longer, in Karbalā, with at least one visit to his home town of Rasht.[45] His absence would appear to have been on the instructions of the Shaykh, seemingly for the purpose of acting as his representative at the ʿatabāt: in his reply to Rashtī, who had complained of his separation from his teacher and suggested that he had been rejected by him, Shaykh Ahmad writes 'know that I have placed you in a position of rank on my behalf, which is not known to most people, but which I had thought was known to you; I would otherwise have given you what I give everyone else....I have removed from you the decree of dissimulation (al-taqīyya) and have bestowed on you

a position on my behalf'.[46]

As we have mentioned previously, al-Ahsā'ī left Kirmānshāh in 1238/1822, travelling to Tihrān, Mashhad, Yazd, and Isfahān, returning to Kirmānshāh for a year towards the dnd of 1238, and finally leaving for Karbalā in 1239/1824. Rashtī does not seem to have accompanied him on any of these journeys. In Safar 1238/October-November 1822, he was staying in the vicinity of Rasht, as is apparent from a letter written in that month from the village of Shīrvān.[47] This journey to Iran may have been an extended one: his commentary on ᶜAlī ibn Mūsā al-Andalūsī's Al-qasīdat al-bā'īyya from the Shudhūr al-dhahab was written in the village of Mārān near Hamadān in Shawwal 1239/June 1824.[48]

It is also clear that, sometime before the death of Shaykh Ahmad, Rashtī studied under and received ijāzāt from a number of ᶜulamā, all of whom, like the Shaykh, were themselves pupils of Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī. This is a fact of some importance in assessing the nature of Rashti's relationship with orthodox Shiᶜism. Despite the unusual character of his bond with al-Ahsā'ī, which was, in some ways, closer to that of a Sūfī disciple to his murshid than a Shīᶜī ᶜālim to the mujtahid granting him ijāza, it is clear that Rashtī did not feel himself excluded from the more traditional mode of transmission of authority and learning. In an ijāza written for Sayyid Muhammad Hasan Mūsawī Isfahānī (d.12 3/1847),[49] and in another written for Āqā Muhammad Sharīf Kirmānī,[50] Rashtī refers to four individuals from whom he possessed ijāzāt. Apart from al-Ahsā'ī, these were Sayyid ᶜAbd Allāh Shubbar (1188-1242/1774-5 - 1827), Shaykh Mūsā al-Najafī (d.1241/18 6), and Mullā ᶜAlī Rashtī.

Sayyid ᶜAbd Allāh Shubbar and his father, Sayyid Muhammad Ridā, are mentioned by Rashtī as among the ᶜulamā with whom al-Ahsā'ī associated while in Kāzimayn.[51] Sayyid ᶜAbd Allāh had himself studied under several important ᶜulamā, including Mīrzā Muhammad Mahdī Shahristānī, Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī, Āqā Sayyid ᶜAlī Tabātabā'ī, Mīrzā-yi Qummī, Shaykh Asad Allāh al-Kāzimaynī, and Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī.[52] The author of a number of works, he is perhaps best known for his massive compilation on fiqh, the Jāmiᶜ al-maᶜārif wa 'l-ahkām, which Habībābādī regards as comparable to the Wāfī, the Wasā'il al-shīᶜa, or the Bihār al-anwār.[53] It is of interest to note that Sayyid ᶜAbd Allāh was also one of the teachers of Mullā Muhammad Sālih Baraghānī, the brother of Mullā Muhammad Taqī.[54] According to Ansārī, he was known in his day as 'the second Majlisi'.[55]

Shaykh Mūsā al-Najafī was one of the sons of Shaykh Jaᶜfar, under whom he studied extensively. His father regarded him highly and is said to have considered him as more capable in fiqh than any but al-

Muhaqqiq al-Hillī and Muhammad ibn Makkī al-Shahīd al-Awwal,[56] or, according to another source, as one of 'the most learned of men in fiqh' along with himself and al-Shahīd al-Awwal.[57] It is related that, on the death of Shaykh Jaʿfar, Mīrzā-yi Qummī declared Shaykh Mūsā to be 'the general marjaʿ and the proof of God unto you...for he is superior to all others in knowledge'.[58] Shaykh Mūsā was one of several eminent ʿulamā who defended al-Ahsā'ī against the attacks of his opponents at the ʿatabāt.[59]

The identity of Mullā ʿAlī Rashtī is not clear; he may have been the Mullā ʿAlī ibn Mīrzā Jān Rashtī for whom Shaykh Ahmad wrote his lengthy Al-risālat al-Rashtīyya in 1226/1811.[60] If this is so, it is conceivable that Sayyid Kāzim studied under him while still living in Rasht and that it was on his recommendation that he set out for Yazd to study under al-Ahsā'ī. In the absence of dated texts of the ijāzāt in question, however, our theories as to the periods when Sayyid Kāzim studied under them must remain conjectural, although the dates of the deaths of Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh and Shaykh Mūsā do at least provide us with termini ad quem for his study under them.

The death of al-Ahsā'ī in 1241/1826 was an event fraught with serious consequences for Iranian Shiʿism. Despite the takfīr which, for some four years, had been gaining notoriety throughout the main centres of the Shīʿī world, the Shaykh's position was still essentially that of a respected and influential mujtahid and marjaʿ al-taqlīd on whom a sizeable body of tullāb and ʿulamā pinned their allegiance. It is of the utmost importance that we bear in mind that by no means all of al-Ahsā'ī's pupils became identified as 'Shaykhīs' in the technical sense of the word. Many, like Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī and Hāj Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī, went on in later years as perfectly respectable ʿulamā with no overt connections with the 'Shaykhī school'. At the time of al-Ahsā'ī's death, there was, indeed, no hint of an attempt to set up a separate school within Shiʿism, to create a division based either on doctrinal differences or on conflicting claims to authority. Nevertheless, it is clear that the effective resolution of the Akhbārī/Usūlī struggle had left something of a vacuum which demanded filling. The status and influence of the increasingly powerful mujtahid class as representatives of orthodoxy could best be tested and demonstrated in a conflict with heterodoxy -- as defined by the establishment itself. The Niʿmat Allāhī Sūfī revival of the late eighteenth century provided a useful focus for such a conflict, but the issues involved were somewhat stale and, despite a number of deaths, matters never really reached very serious dimensions. The division over the affair of al-Ahsā'ī's orthodoxy was, however, potentially much more crucial. Although the conflict with Sufism was

essentially centred in irreconcilable claims to authority, on behalf of the Sūfī shaykh on the one hand and the Shīᶜī Imām or his representatives on the other, the issue did not, on the whole, affect or call into question relations within the Shīᶜī hierarchy itself.

Al-Ahsā'ī's death threatened to render the issue entirely academic, however. Whatever the ensuing debate as to his personal orthodoxy, the more fundamental -- if generally unspoken -- issue of authority would now have ceased to be relevant. That it did not was entirely due to the unusual manner in which Rashtī was 'appointed' the Shaykh's 'successor', entailing as it did the creation of an order (silsila) or school (madhhab) within the Shīᶜī fold. Without such an appointment or its ready acceptance by the vast majority of al-Ahsā'ī's pupils, it is highly unlikely that 'Shaykhism' as a definable entity would have come into being at all or that a matrix would have existed in which Babism might be formed.

When al-Ahsā'ī left Karbalā for Mecca in 1241/1826, Rashtī stayed behind, teaching in his place.[61] His assumption of the role of leader of the Shaykh's disciples at the ᶜatabāt does not, however, seem to have been based on a merely tacit recognition of his de facto position there on the latter's death. According to Kirmānī, al-Ahsā'ī had already appointed him as the future leader of this group, both verbally and in writing. 'Some asked the Shaykh "If we have no means of access to you, from whom are we to obtain this knowledge?" He replied "From Sayyid Kāzim, for he has learnt what he knows orally from me and I have learnt (what I know) orally from the Imāms and they have learnt from God without the mediation of anyone". And it is known that the Shaykh wrote (this) in his own hand'.[62] This appointment was unusual in a number of ways. Although a leading pupil or eldest son might often inherit the sanctity and position of his teacher or father, it was uncommon for a marjaᶜ al-taqlīd to designate anyone as marjaᶜ in his place, particularly at this period. At a later date, something of this kind did occur, significantly in connection with the attempt to restrict marjaᶜīyyat to a single individual; thus, Shaykh Murtadā al-Ansārī took over the role of marjaᶜ from Muhammad Hasan al-Najafī during the latter's final illness, in the presence of witnesses,[63] while al-Ansārī's own successor, Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī, was clearly singled out for that role in his teacher's lifetime.[64] The experiment did not succeed, however, as we have observed in the first chapter, possibly because of a reluctance on the part of each marjaᶜ to endorse his verbal approval with a written appointment (nass). The unformalized method of acquiring authority by means of growing recognition and popularity seems to fit in more easily with the unstructured system of the Shīᶜī hierarchy.

Not only was Rashtī's appointment unusual in occurring well before any comparable development in the main body of Shi^{c}ism (unless we include Mīrzā-yi Qummī's declaration in favour of Shaykh Mūsā al-Najafī), and in being written, but it was highly unorthodox in its content. Sayyid Kāzim was not merely a mujtahid receiving authority from another to expound and develop the religious law, but was being identified as the direct recipient of a body of knowledge derived, through al-Ahsā'ī, from the Imāms and, through them, from God. He was, as Karīm Khān describes him, 'a bearer (hāmil)...for that innate knowledge (^{c}ilm-i ladunī).[65] The only useful comparisons are those of the appointment of each Imām by his predecessor, beginning with ^{c}Alī's designation as waṣī by Muhammad; the nomination by the shaykh of a Sūfī order of his successor; or the later development of a 'covenant' (mīthāq; ^{c}ahd) system in Baha'ism, whereby ^{c}Abbās Effendi was appointed as interpreter (shārih; mubayyin) of the sacred writ by his father, and Shoghi Effendi Rabbani as walī by his grandfather (^{c}Abbās Effendi). Karīm Khān explicitly makes the comparison between al-Ahsā'ī's appointment of Rashtī and the nass of Muhammad designating ^{c}Alī or that of each Imām in respect of his successor.[66] Khwānsārī describes Sayyid Kāzim as al-Ahsā'ī's 'representative' (al-nā'ib fī 'l-umūr manābuhu) and the 'leader (imām) of his disciples',[67] clearly echoing the notion of a formal appointment of this nature. By virtue of this appointment, Rashtī became 'the interpreter (shārih) of the knowledge of the Shaykh, the clarifier of the difficulties of his books, and the expounder of his stations'.[68] In this respect, the Sayyid was endowed with a function very similar to that of the Imām as qayyim bi 'l-Qur'ān or, more significantly perhaps, the head of the Ishrāqī order as qayyim bi 'l-kitāb.[69]

The self-effacing tone of his writings makes it difficult for us to determine exactly how Rashtī himself understood his position after the death of the Shaykh. It is also clear that, even as late as 1258/1842, he persisted in denying the charge that he had established a new madhhab within Islam,[70] and that he constantly represented himself as simply the expounder and defender of the views and person of his shaykh. The meaning of the term 'Shaykhīyya', used to refer to what he calls 'this sect' (īn firqa), is simply 'people who are adherents of (mansūband bar) this Shaykh'.[71] Rashtī's beliefs regarding Shaykh Ahmad rather than himself are, in fact, probably the best guide to his attitude towards his own role as his successor. Since this is a point to which we shall return in another chapter, I propose to indicate here only very briefly something of Rashtī's understanding of the position of al-Ahsā'ī within the overall perspective of sacred history.

In an important passage in his Sharh al-qasīda,[72] Rashtī refers to two ages of the dispensation of Muhammad: an age of outward observances (zawāhir) and an age of inward realities (bawātin). The former age came to an end after twelve centuries and the second then commenced. In every century of the first age, there appeared a promulgator (murawwij) of the outward laws; at the commencement of the first century of the second age, the first murawwij of the inward truth appeared -- Shaykh Ahmad.[73] Similarly, in a letter written to al-Ahsā'ī during the latter's stay in Kirmanshah, he describes him as 'the one testifying to the wilāya of the first walī in the first period of the second age'.[74] This conception of the role of al-Ahsā'ī was, clearly, current among the followers of Rashtī, as is apparent from an anonymous risāla written sometime after 1261/1845; the author of this risāla speaks of the beginning of the revelation (of inner truth) in the person of Shaykh Ahmad at the end of one thousand two hundred years, and refers to the Shaykh as the murawwij of the first century of the second age and, indeed, of the twelfth century of the first age of (inward) truth.[75] outward

We may, then, tentatively suggest that Rashtī regarded himself as empowered by al-Ahsā'ī to develop and deepen men's understanding of the 'inner realities' revealed by him. It may well be that he conceived of himself as, in some sense, the trustee or teacher of a select group of initiates to this higher gnosis promulgated for the first time by al-Ahsā'ī, somewhat after the fashion of a Sūfī shaykh entrusted with the maintenance of baraka and ʿirfān within the tarīqa of which he is the head. There seems to be no direct evidence that Rashtī thought of either Shaykh Ahmad or himself as vice-gerents or gates of the Imām, although it is clear that the attribution of just such a station to them by a section of the Sayyid's followers was a significant factor in the inception of Babism. At the most, Rashtī seems to have looked on Shaykh Ahmad as privy to knowledge of esoteric truth imparted by the Imāms, and himself as, in turn, a direct recipient of the Shaykh's knowledge. He was, in a sense, the sāmit following the nātiq of inner truth.

Rashtī's position appears to have been recognized with little or no hesitation by the vast majority of al-Ahsā'ī's followers, in contrast to the major schisms which occurred on his own death. There can, of course, be little doubt but that al-Ahsā'ī's preferential treatment of the Sayyid and his authorization of him to expound his teachings to his other disciples excited a certain degree of resentment among his more ambitious followers, as Zarandī suggests.[76] There also appears to have been a number of other ʿulamā belonging to al-Ahsā'ī's circle who were regarded or regarded themselves as pre-eminent. Tanakābunī claims

that his maternal uncle, Āqā Sayyid Abū 'l-Hasan ibn Muhammad Tanakābunī (d. circa 1265/1849) was the leading (arshad) pupil of al-Ahsā'ī, and notes that the latter wrote a commentary on a risāla on ʿilm written by him.[77] In fact, no such commentary by Shaykh Ahmad is known to me, although there are two risālas written by him in 1223/1808 and 1224/1809 for a Sayyid Abū 'l-Hasan Jīlānī, who may well have been Tanakābunī's uncle.[78] Qazvīnī refers to a former Ishrāqī ʿālim named Mullā Ahmad Mullābāshī, who was at one time regarded as next in rank to al-Ahsā'ī but who, on reading Rashtī's Sharh al-khutbat al-tutunjīyya, acknowledged the superiority of the latter.[79]

During the period of his leadership of the Shaykhī school, Rashtī appears to have remained for the most part in Karbalā, with occasional visits to the other shrine towns of ʿIraq. Muhammad Taqī Harawī, an important Shaykhī ʿālim who later became a Bābī for a short period, writes in Al-durar al-manthūra -- a commentary on the Sayyid's Al-lawāmiʿ al-Husaynīyya[80] -- that he received explanations of the text from Rashtī himself in Karbalā, Kāzimayn, Sāmarrā, and Najaf.[81] It is possible that the Sayyid performed an annual zīyāra to Najaf on the occasion of the festival of Ghadīr Khumm, as he himself suggests in the Dalīl al-Mutahayyirīn,[82] while he is recorded as having travelled to Kāzimayn each year in the month of Dhū 'l-Qaʿda.[83] According to Chahārdihī, however, he never once visited Iran during the entire period of his leadership.[84] In thus adopting a highly sedentary mode of existence, in sharp contrast to the peripatetic restlessness of al-Ahsā'ī, Rashtī gave to the amorphous body of the Shaykh's admirers and disciples 'a local habitation and a name'. By thus providing the formless 'school' of Shaykh Ahmad with a centre and a focus, Sayyid Kāzim -- perhaps quite inadvertantly -- did much to hasten its crystallization into a body increasingly far removed from the mainstream of orthodox Shiʿism.

Despite his constant efforts to do so, Rashtī failed to reintegrate the Shaykhī school with mainline Shiʿism, and he and his writings remained the target of continued opposition on the part of the ʿulamā up to the time of his death, although, as we shall see, this stood in direct contrast to the political influence he wielded in the ʿatabāt region. The Sayyid's earliest and most determined opponent was Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī Tabātabā'ī, a son of Sayyid ʿAlī and brother of Āqā Sayyid Muhammad, as noted in the last chapter. Although less illustrious than his father or brother and disinclined either to write or to hold classes,[85] Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī possessed some degree of prestige in Karbalā by association with them and, as we have seen, was probably the first individual there to declare takfīr against al-Ahsā'ī. On the Shaykh's death, he and his

supporters at first abandoned their campaign for about two years.[86] They revived it, however, as it gradually became apparent that Rashtī, as the Shaykh's successor, had been able to maintain a sense of identity among his pupils and was continuing to defend and disseminate his views. That the takfīr campaign thus ceased for a period indicates how much it was directed against al-Ahsā'ī as an individual, rather than against a sect or school deemed to have been established by him. Its resumption, in turn, shows that Tabātabā'ī and others now recognized that, under Sayyid Kāzim, just such a school was being created. One of their specific attacks on Rashtī was, in fact, that he was attempting to form a madhhab separate from and independent of orthodox Shi'ism.[87]

On Friday 1 Rajab 1243/18 January 1828,[88] Rashtī was summoned to a meeting organized by his opponents and held in the house of Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī Shahristānī, a son of Mīrzā Muhammad Mahdī Shahristānī (one of al-Ahsā'ī's teachers).[89] The purpose of the meeting -- which was attended by 'several thousand people'[90] -- was to secure Rashtī's admission that, according to the popular meanings attached to the terminology used in them, certain statements of al-Ahsā'ī constituted heresy (kufr). The concept that 'the body which is composed of elements shall not be resurrected (al-jasad al-unsurī la ya'ūdu)'[91] was particularly criticized and the Sayyid was urged to write a declaration to the effect that it was heretical. This he did, but his 'admission' of heresy was heavily qualified with statements maintaining that only the outward and popular meaning was objectionable and that, properly understood, none of the words of al-Ahsā'ī could be deemed contradictory to the Qur'an, the traditions, or, indeed, the writings of the great Shī'ī 'ulamā.[92]

Although this meeting soon dispersed, its objective had scarcely been attained. Rashtī's testimony was too much qualified to be of use and could even backfire on his opponents if brought into play by them. Shortly after this first gathering, therefore, a second meeting was held in the sahn of the shrine of 'Abbās, at which it was determined to expel Rashtī from Karbalā.[93] According to Kirmānī, Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī ascended a minbar and urged those present to take immediate action to put this decree into effect; a large crowd made for the house of Sayyid Kāzim but, once there, dispersed for no apparent reason.[94] It is quite possible that the civil authorities, fearing the possible consequences of such an expulsion, prevented the mob from carrying out their intention.

Some time after this, Tabātabā'ī returned to Najaf, where he normally resided.[95] There, he seems to have encountered some degree of opposition from other 'ulamā, who regarded his behaviour towards Rashtī

as indefensible and advised him that his criticisms lacked any solid foundation.[96] This defence of Rashtī by ᶜulamā not actually belonging to the circle of al-Ahsā'ī's followers is of considerable importance in showing to what extent the debate on the latter's takfīr was essentially a controversy within the context of Shīᶜī orthodoxy, rather than the orthodox (Bālāsarī) versus heterodox (Shaykhī) conflict it later became. Whereas, at the later stage of the debate, opposition to Shaykhism implied simple identification with Usūlī orthodoxy, at this point its implications were less cut and dried. The efforts of Tabātabā'ī and others to make of al-Ahsā'ī's takfīr a cause cèlèbre may initially have owed much to existing rivalries in the religious institution, themselves possibly fostered by feelings of uncertainty as to the nature of authority -- charismatic or otherwise -- among the ᶜulamā in what was very much a period of transition. Feelings of confusion with respect to authority may have been exacerbated in individual cases by a lack of personal prestige coupled with strong ambition -- as in the case of Baraghānī or that of Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī. The role of Sayyid Kāzim as al-Ahsā'ī's wasī clearly raised the question of authority in a particularly sharp form, even though opposition to him did not centre openly on this issue. As we shall see, a similar problem faced the Shaykhī ᶜulamā some twenty years later, when confronted with the rise of Babism as a charismatic movement which threatened to jeopardize even further the Shaykhī position vis à vis the religious establishment.

It seems to have been in Dhū 'l-Hijja 1243/July 1828,[97] while Rashtī was performing his annual ziyāra to Najaf for the Ghadīr festival, that a messenger arrived from Shaykh ᶜAlī al-Najafī, requesting him to meet with the latter.[98] Shaykh ᶜAlī (d.1254/1838-9) was a son of Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī and a brother of Sayyid Kāzim's supporter Shaykh Mūsā (and, like Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī, a man overshadowed by his father and brother). He seems to have originally been a firm supporter of Rashtī,[99] but had at some point clashed with him over a question of property rights, and soon joined the opposition to him.[100] Shaykh ᶜAlī was in a particularly good position to help further the campaign against Rashtī since, although normally resident in Najaf, he spent three months of every year in Karbalā.[101]

Rashtī refused to meet with Shaykh ᶜAlī unless an independent arbitrator could be found, whose decision as to the validity of any arguments advanced by either party would be considered binding.[102] When Shaykh ᶜAlī refused to accept this condition and made it known among the pilgrims in Najaf for the festival that Rashtī had failed to respond to no fewer than nineteen invitations to meet with him, the

Sayyid reacted by having a minbar erected in the sahn of the shrine of ᶜAlī, from which he preached during the afternoon to a large crowd. The summary of this sermon, which he himself gives in Dalīl al-mutahayyirīn, is valuable evidence as to the four main points of dictrine then at issue, as well as to the Sayyid's use of taqīyya, which becomes a marked feature of Shaykhī writing from this time on.[103] In his sermon, Rashtī stresses the exalted station of the Imāms and Fātima while refuting any claims that they are divine or 'partners of God' or that God has transferred (tafwīd kard) His command to them.[104] In referring to the miᶜrāj of Muhammad, he maintains that the Prophet 'ascended to heaven with his body (jism), his clothes, and his sandals' and goes on to say that 'on the day of resurrection, all created things shall be raised up in their visible, tangible, earthly bodies and corporealities (badanhā wa jasadhā).[105] As far as the knowledge of God is concerned, Rashtī holds that 'God knows all things collectively before their creation, after their creation, and at the time of their creation'.[106] Such a clear refutation of four of the specific charges of heresy levelled against him and Shaykh Ahmad cannot have failed to make an impression on Rahtī's audience. As a result, in the evening of the same day, a deputation comprising two merchants and one of Shaykh ᶜAlī's tullāb came to repeat the invitation to meet with the Shaykh.[107] Rashtī himself deputed one of his leading followers, Mullā Muhammad Hasan Gawhar, to present Shaykh ᶜAlī with what amounted to a challenge to mubahāla.[108] Although Shaykh ᶜAlī accepted an alternative proposition to write down his objections against specific passages in the works of Sayyid Kāzim, to have the latter write down a reply to these, and to send all of this to an acceptable ᶜālim for arbitration, he failed, in the end, to comply.[109]

In Rabīᶜ I 1244/January 1829, Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī began to express objections to a phrase in a risāla of Rashtī's on morals, which, loosely interpreted, suggested that the Sayyid was recommending the abandonment of all traditional doctrines and authorities and attempting to establish a new madhhab.[110] Although Rashtī replied to this accusation in a separate treatise,[111] his opponent refused to retract his allegations and continued to pursue a policy of denunciation for the next two years.[112] Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī carried his campaign beyond the ᶜatabāt, writing letters in condemnation of Rashtī to India and, probably, elsewhere.[113] It seems that, with the support of Shaykh ᶜAlī al-Najafī, Tabātabā'ī was gradually able to bring most of the ᶜulamā of Najaf to his side, and that the opposition to Shaykhism gained much ground there.[114] Rashtī nevertheless continued to make his annual pilgrimage to the town. In Dhū 'l-Hijja 1246/May-June 1831, a total of three gatherings were held

in Najaf by Tabātabā'ī and his followers for the purpose of again confronting Sayyid Kāzim. The first two meetings were held in the house of Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī's brother, Sayyid Mahmūd, and the third in the house of Sayyid Muhammad ᶜAlī, the Keeper of the Keys to the shrine of Husayn. Among those present were Shaykh Khalaf (ibn ᶜAskar), Mullā Sharīf, and Hājī Mullā Jaᶜfar Astarābādī.[115] Mullā Muhammad Hamza Sharīᶜatmadār Māzandarānī, a Shaykhī ᶜālim who was present at these meetings and is the only writer to refer to them, does not, unfortunately, make clear what result, if any, they had, but, in view of Rashtī's isolation on each occasion, it is unlikely that anything of value was achieved. Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī died in Shāh ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīm near Tihrān in 1249/1833-4, leaving the opposition to Rashtī in Najaf in the hands of Shaykh ᶜAlī.

In Karbalā, Sayyid Ibrāhīm Qazvīnī emerged as the Sayyid's chief rival in both religious and political affairs. Possibly as a result of his involvement in the politics of Karbalā, Rashtī was made the target for several attempts on his life,[116] as well as petty threats and insults.[117] On one occasion, he was even fired on with a rifle in the sahn of the shrine of Husayn.[118] Despite this, he continued to be active in his public defence of the views of Shaykh Ahmad, preaching to pilgrims and others on festivals, Thursdays, Fridays, and during the month of Ramadān.[119] He also encouraged his followers to emulate him in adopting a defensive stance against the orthodox condemnation of Shaykhism, a policy which inevitably widened the range of arguments employed in the doctrinal debate. On one occasion, for example, he made a general request to the Shaykhī ᶜulamā to write polemics in defence of al-Ahsā'ī;[120] among those who responded was the niece of Mullā Muhammad Taqī Baraghānī, Fātima Khānum, whom Sayyid Kāzim subsequently named Qurrat al-ᶜAyn.[121] More specifically, Rashtī requested one of his leading followers in Karbalā, Mullā Muhammad Hasan Gawhar Qarāchadāghī, to take sections from his (Gawhar's) commentary on the Hayāt al-arwāh of Mullā Muhammad Jaᶜfar Astarābādī, dealing with specific attacks on al-Ahsā'ī, and to compile these into a separate risāla.[122] Another of Rashtī's leading supporters in Karbalā, Muhammad Husayn ibn ᶜAlī Akbar Muhīt Kirmānī, wrote a reply to points raised by Mullā ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī Tabasī, at Rashtī's request.[123] In thus encouraging the Shaykhī ᶜulamā to defend and expound the 'doctrine' of the school, at a time when the precise nature of that doctrine was still unclear to many, Sayyid Kāzim undoubtedly prepared the way for the serious disputes which ensued between his leading followers (including Qurrat al-ᶜAyn, Mullā Hasan Gawhar and Mīrzā Muhīt in particular) on his death. Although real and potential doctrinal divisions were generally subordinated to the authority of Rashtī during his lifetime, the rapidity with which the Shaykhī school disintegrated into warring factions following

his removal from the scene indicates how precarious was the situation in the years immediately prior to his death.

Apart from his influence over the immediate circle of his followers, from his base in Karbalā the Sayyid carried on a widely-flung correspondence with ʿulamā in most of the centres of Shīʿī Islam, including Baghdād,[124] Damascus,[125] Bahrayn,[126] Jabal ʿĀmil,[127] al-Ahsā,[128] Isfahān,[129] Khurāsān,[130] and India.[131] His reputation in these places, especially in more distant regions where the Shaykh's takfīr had had little impact, seems to have been high, but it was, if anything, even more so in ʿIraq itself. Despite the takfīr and the continuing campaign against him, Rashtī succeeding in establishing for himself a position as one of the leading mujtahids of Karbalā and, indeed, the ʿatabāt. Outside of the immediate circle of the Shaykhī school, he and his writings were highly respected by many of the leading ʿulamā of the period, several of whom had already supported al-Ahsā'ī. These included Shaykh Mūsā al-Najafī,[132] Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh Shubbar,[133] Sayyid ʿAlī Tabātabā'ī,[134] Hāj Muhammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī,[135] and Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Shaftī,[136] as well as numbers of their relatives and pupils.[137] Rashtī's influence was not, however, confined to the Shīʿī ʿulamā, but extended to individuals such as Shihāb al-Dīn Mahmūd Abū 'l-Thanā al-Ālūsī, the famous Sunnī muftī of Baghdād,[138] for whom he wrote at least two risālas,[139] and ʿAlī Ridā Pāshā, on whose directions he wrote the Sharh al-qasīda.[140]

Of even greater significance was his relationship with Sulaymān Khān Afshār (d.1309/1891-2), one of the leading officials of the Qājār state. Not only was Sulaymān Khān an ardent follower of the Sayyid, who wrote at least one risāla in reply to intelligent questions from him,[141] but his son, Ridā Qulī Khān (who later became a Bābī) was married to Rashtī's daughter.[142] In view of Sulaymān's close connection with the court -- he was married to Qaysar Khānum, the thirty-fourth daughter of Fath-ʿAlī Shāh[143] -- the marriage of his son (albeit by another wife) to the daughter of Sayyid Kāzim was both a token of his own feelings of respect towards the Sayyid and a means of enhancing the latter's prestige in government circles in Iran. Sulaymān Khān later became a follower of Karīm Khān Kirmānī (himself a relative of Fath-ʿAlī), with whom he corresponded;[144] he later built two mosques in Tabrīz for the Karīm Khānī Shaykhīs of the town[145] and left waqf monies to pay for the publication of Shaykhī books there. He appears to have met Sayyid ʿAlī Muhammad Shīrāzī in Mecca towards the end of 1260/1844,[146] but refused an appeal for assistance written to him by the latter while near Qazvīn en route to prison in Ādharbāyjān.[147] He is, perhaps, best known to historians of Babism as the man appointed by Mīrzā Taqī Khān Amīr-i Kabīr to quell

the disturbance at Shaykh Tabarsī in Māzandarān in 1849.[148]

The Sayyid's political influence, both at the ᶜatabāt and, less directly, in Iran, appears to have been considerable. According to Chahārdihī, he associated closely with various Qājār princes exiled to the ᶜatabāt by Muhammad Shāh; as a result, large numbers of the Qājār family became Shaykhīs.[149] The princes involved at the ᶜatabāt are not identified, but they may well have included the three sons of Husayn ᶜAlī Mīrzā Farmānfarmā, who left Shīrāz on their father's defeat following his abortive attempt to take the throne on the death of Fath-ᶜAlī, namely: Ridā Qulī Mīrzā, Tīmūr Mīrzā, and Najaf Qulī Mīrzā.[150] There is evidence that Rashtī provided funds to ᶜAlī Shāh Mīrzā Zill al-Sultān, a former claimant to the throne of Iran, during his exile in Karbalā,[151] and that he associated closely with Hulāgu Mīrzā, the exiled son of Hasan ᶜAlī Mīrzā Shujāᶜ al-Saltana.[152] He also seems to have been on close terms with a certain Hāshim Khān Nizām al-Dawla, another Iranian official resident in Karbalā,[153] and with prince Sulaymān Mīrzā.[154] In Iran itself, a core individuals favourable to him was created at the court, with the notable exceptions of ᶜAlī Qulī Mīrzā Iᶜtidād al-Saltana and Hāj Farhād Mīrzā Muᶜtamad al-Dawla.[155] Of the forty-eight children of ᶜAbbās Mīrzā, all but a few are said to have been Shaykhīs.[156] In Karbalā, Rashtī came to be reckoned one of the two most influential mujtahids, the other being his rival Sayyid Ibrāhīm Qazvīnī.[157] According to Chahārdihī, Sayyid Kāzim was, for a period of one or two years, in charge of 'the money from India (pūl-i Hindī), which may be a reference to either the Oudh bequest funds (divided at that time between two mujtahids, one in Najaf and one in Karbalā) or the sahm-i imām sent from the Shīᶜīs of India -- it is not clear which.[158]

Active though he was in the political life of Karbalā, Rashtī seems to have been a somewhat reluctant participant in such matters, as is evidenced by a letter written by him to Karīm Khān Kirmānī:

> As regards the matter of the administration of justice (hukm) and the issue of legal judgements (qadā), beware, beware! Flee from legal judgements as you would from a lion. Dear friend, as far as is in you, shut fast this door, for these are but wretched people and association with them and involvement with their affairs shall prove a cause of loss to you in this world and the next, unless it be at times in order (to prevent) the eating of unclean meat (matta) or for the preservation of the faith. In such matters, you have no choice -- as is the case with this powerless one. I ask the help and assistance and succour of God! Had I regarded it as permissible for me to tell another "Go to Zayd in order to pass judgement", by God, I should not have sat a single day in the court of justice. Indeed, I that must endure the bitterness and trials of it know what happens. Dear friend, dear companion, dear brother, as far as you are able, abandon this business, whether in religious or worldly matters, save out of necessity, at such times as you yourself think best'.[159]

Rivalry between Rashtī and Qazvīnī was for some time an important element in the local politics of Karbalā. Since about 1822, the city had been 'a self-governing semi-alien republic', effectively independent of the Ottoman authorities in Baghdad.[160] Some three-quarters of the inhabitants were Iranian and actual control of the city was in the hands of a band of from two to three thousand girāmī -- criminals and fugitives from Iran and Arab ᶜIraq who made a living preying on the local population and pilgrims to the shrines.[161] The girami were themselves split into at least two factions,[162] the most powerful of which was led by Sayyid Ibrāhīm Zaᶜfarānī.[163] Both Rashtī and Qazvīnī had the support of a body of girāmī, the former having the allegiance of Zaᶜfarānī (who may have been a Shaykhī), the latter relying on a force under a chief named Mīrzā Sālih, who was regarded as the most powerful leader next to Zaᶜfarānī.[164] Zaᶜfarānī's (and, thus, Rashtī's) position was strengthened by the support of Sayyid Wahhāb, the titular governor of the city,[165] and, by 1842, he was in absolute control.[166]

In Shaᶜbān 1258/September 1842, a new Pāshā, Muhammad Najīb, arrived in Baghdād to replace ᶜAlī Ridā.[167] Unlike his predecessors, Najīb Pāshā was not willing to tolerate the continued independence of Karbalā. By the end of Ramadān/October, the failure of the population of that city to send supplies to Baghdād in recognition of the authority of the central government, and their refusal to allow his entry to their city, even as a pilgrim, with more than four or five attendants, determined Najīb to insist on the reception of a military garrison there.[168] When Zaᶜfarānī declared that, should the Pāshā come to Karbalā with troops, he would refuse him entry, the latter decided to make his entrance to the city by force if necessary.[169] He proceeded, accordingly, with a force towards Karbalā in Dhū 'l-Qaᶜda/December and pitched camp at nearby Musayyab.[170] Negotiations now began with representatives of the population of Karbalā, in which Rashtī played a leading role.

While Najīb Pāshā was encamped at Musayyab, he was visited for four days by a deputation from the city, composed of the nominal governor, Sayyid Wahhāb, ᶜAlī Shāh Zill al-Sultān, Sayyid Kāzim, Sayyid Husaynī, and Sayyid Nasr Allāh.[171] Before this party returned to Karbalā in the hope of persuading the inhabitants to cede to some of the demands of the Pāshā, the latter requested Rashtī and Zill al-Sultān to try to persuade the Iranian section of the population to dissociate themselves from the girāmī factions; ideally, they were to quit the town or, if this were impossible, to retire to one quarter of it or take refuge in the shrines of Husayn and ᶜAbbās.[172] It is likely that, on this same occasion, Najīb assured both Rashtī and Zill al-Sultān that anyone seeking refuge

in their houses would be spared in the event of an attack.[173] The Iranian consul in Baghdād also seems to have written on two occasions to Rashtī, requesting his assistance in persuading the Persian population to evacuate the town, although the Sayyid later maintained that he never received his letters to this effect.[174]

Najīb Pāshā now received reinforcements and, on 19 December, Sa^{c}d Allāh Pāshā, the military commander, arrived before Karbalā.[175] During the month that now passed before the asault on the town, Rashtī and the Zill al-Sultān visited Sa^{c}d Allāh in an effort to effect some compromise, but they remained unable to persuade the townspeople to accede to the Pāshā's demands.[176] In the town, the Shī^{c}ī ^{c}ulamā were urging the people to fight a jihād against the Sunnī forces of the Pāshā,[177] while the girāmī took steps to prepare the town to repel the coming attack.[178] In contrast, Rashtī -- who, in the absence of Qazvīnī in Baghdād, was the leading mujtahid in the city -- made strenuous efforts to effect a reconciliation and to dissuade the Karbalā'īs from undertaking what he must have recognized would be a hopeless defence. According to Farrant

> The Chief Priest Hajee Seid Kausem did all in his power to prevent hostilities, he preached against their proceedings, he was abused and threatened, they would not listen to him -- this I have heard from many people at Kerbella -- at this time all were unanimous in defending the place....to the very last he entreated them to listen to the Pacha but without avail, he shewed great courage on the occasion, as he had all the chief Geramees and Mollahs against him.[179]

On 13 January 1843, the forces of Najīb Pāshā stormed Karbala[180] and, as is well known, put to the sword large numbers of the inhabitants and caused widespread destruction.[181] Estimates of the numbers killed varied tremendously,[182] but at least four thousand people are thought to have perished. In the course of the sack, the only places accorded immunity were the shrine of Husayn,[183] the house of the Zill al-Sultān, and the house of Sayyid Kāzim.[184] It is hard to estimate how many took refuge in Rashtī's house and in adjoining houses which he appropriated for the occasion,[185] but that the number of refugees was large may be surmised from the fact that between sixty six and two hundred people were crushed to death in the melée.[186]

On the day following his capture of Karbalā, Najīb Pāshā entered the city and was greeted in the shrine of Husayn by a party of its surviving notables, including Hāj Mahdī Kamūna, the deputy kalīd-dār (keeper of the keys) of the shrine, Sayyid Kāzim, Mullā ^{c}Alī al-Khassī, Shaykh Wādī al-Shaflah, and others.[187] Despite his unpopularity prior to the fighting, Rashtī's offices in securing the safety of so many citizens, and the obvious accuracy of his earlier evaluation of the state of affairs, as well as his reputation as one of the few individuals in the city who had tried to persuade the townspeople not to resist the

Baghdād troops, meant that his prestige was now higher than ever. Although he himself died almost exactly one year after the attack, his son, Sayyid Ahmad, continued to exercise influence in the city, possessing, according to Chahārdihī, authority in the appointment and dismissal of the Keeper of the Keys of the shrine of Husayn,[188] and being regarded as one of a small number of individuals closely attached to the Ottoman court.[189] The Rashtī family has remained prominent in Karbalā since then.[190]

Apart from his personal position, Rashtī's preaching, wide correspondence, and increasingly popular classes were instrumental in heightening the prestige and expanding the numbers of the Shaykhī school in both ᶜIraq and Iran. Mirza Aleksander Kazem-Beg states that 'during the life of Sayyid Kazim, the doctrine of the Shaykhis spread throughout Persia, so much so that, in the province of ᶜIraq alone, there were more than one hundred thousand murīds'.[191] Exaggerated as this figure undoubtedly is — even if, as seems likely, it is intended to include Arab ᶜIraq — there is no doubt that the number of those who gave some form of allegiance to Shaykhism was considerable. Aside from sizeable groups in larger towns such as Kirmānshāh, Tabrīz, and (possibly) Kirmān, many small towns and villages in Iran, such as Mīlān in Ādharbāyjān, were, it seems, predominantly Shaykhī.[192]

Had Rashtī not died at a relatively early age or had Sayyid Ahmad been able to preserve the unity of the school and maintain Karbalā as its centre, it is more than likely that, with time, Shaykhism would have come to exercise increasing influence on political circles in both ᶜIraq and Iran. Its potential as a religious movement attractive to statesmen such as Muhammad ᶜAlī Mīrzā, Ibrāhīm Khān Zahīr al-Dawla, and Sulaymān Khān Afshār has already been demonstrated in the cases of both al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī. In later years, no Shaykhī leader commanded the respect or influence of the two shaykhs (although it should be noted that, when Abū 'l-Qāsim Khān died while on a pilgrimage to Mashhad in 1969, Muhammad Ridā Shāh himself defied anti-Shaykhī sentiment in signifying that he be buried with ceremony in the precincts of the shrine and that a large memorial meeting be held in the capital), but the school remained an important private religious alternative for many princes and government officials.[193] The most significant example of this is the 'conversion' to Shaykhism of Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh, who was encouraged to adopt it as his personal faith by his mother, Shawkat al-Dawla, a niece of Karīm Khān Kirmānī.[194] Although the later influence of Shaykhism was largely confined to individuals on a personal basis, in certain areas, such as Tabrīz and Kirmān, it proved a continuing factor in local politics. Bāstānī Pārīzī has drawn attention to the fact

that, since the governors of Kirmān during the later Qājār period were generally princes of the royal house, related to the family of Karīm Khān, they tended to favour the Shaykhī sect in the city, a policy which provoked the resentment of most of the population.[195] In 1905, serious trouble broke out between the Shaykhī and non-Shaykhī sections of the populace, in the course of which deep-rooted political and economic divisions in the city came to the surface.[196] In general, however, Shaykhism never regained the prestige it had acquired under the leadership of Rashti; as we shall see, the emergence of Babism as a radical religio-political movement forced the remaining branches of what was now a divided school to adopt a quietist and non-interventionist position in politics, coupled with the use of taqīyya in religious matters.

Following the sack of Karbalā, the Shīᶜī population of the city was obliged to observe taqīyya during the initial period of occupation by the Sunnī troops of Najīb Pāshā.[197] According to Kirmānī, the strain of the siege and attack and the stresses imposed on him during the occupation of Karbalā had a crippling effect on Sayyid Kāzim; his hair grew white and he became physically debilitated.[198] In early Dhū 'l-Qaᶜda 1259/late November 1843, according to his custom, Rashtī left Karbalā, accompanied by a number of followers, to perform a pilgrimage to Kāzimayn.[199] Returning to Karbalā in the early days of Dhū 'l-Hijja/late December,[200] in time for the festival of al-ᶜArafa on the 9th/31st, he died in the early hours of the evening of 11 Dhū 'l-Hijja/1 January 1844.[201] This date, which is given in Shaykhi sources, seems confirmed by a statement in a letter written by the Bāb from prison to his uncle, Hājī Mīrzā Sayyid ᶜAlī, in which he says that Rashtī died 'nineteen days before the revelation of the mystery', and that the beginning of this 'revelation' was the start of the year 1260.[202] We can, I think, dismiss as fictions accounts which claim that Rashtī was poisoned in Baghdād by Najīb Pāshā.[203]

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. The Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn is based on statements from the author's father, Āqā Sayyid Muhammad Taqī (Fihrist p.114).

2. Ibid pp.113, 114.

3. Ibid pp.114-123.

4. Thus Zarandī (p.45), who states that he died in 1259/1843 'at the ripe age of sixty'. This, however, contradicts an earlier statement by the same author (p.10) to the effect that Rashtī was aged twenty-two in 1231/1815-6.

5. Thus Makārim Vol.1 p.209, based on a statement in a MS copy of the Tarikh-i Sartip of Mīrzā ᶜAbd al-Razzāq Khān Muhandis Sartīp Baghāyarī. Also Āvāra p.27.

6. Thus Zarandī (p.10), who states that Rashtī was twenty-two years old in 1231/1815-6, in contradiction to his statement cited in note 4. Nicolas cites a Shaykhī ᶜālim called Thiqat al-Islām (presumably Mīrzā ᶜAlī Thiqat al-Islām Tabrīzī, the grandson of Mīrzā Shafīᶜ Thiqat al-Islām, who was hanged in Tabrīz by the Russians in 1330/1912), who states that Rashtī died at the age of fifty, which would give a birth-date of 1209/1794-5 (Séyyèd Kazem Rechti p.5). Browne cites a statement to the effect that he died in 1259 'ere he had attained his fiftieth year' (T.N. Vol.2 p.238).

7. Thus Hāj Sayyid Jawād Qarashī in Fihrist p.115.

8. Thus Nicolas, who states that Rashtī may have been aged forty-five on his death, on the authority of a Shaykhi ᶜālim called Shaykh ᶜAlī Jawān (Séyyèd Kazem p.5).

9. Fihrist p.115.

10. Āvāra p.26.

11. Qazvīnī p.455.

12. T.N. Vol.2 p.238.

13. p.455; cf. Fihrist p.115.

14. T.N. Vol.2 p.238.

15. p.456.

16. Ibid; Fihrist p.115.

17. Fihrist p.115.

18. Ibid pp.115-6.

19. 'L'Ecole Shaykhie' p.26.

20. p.456.

21. Zarandī p.10.

22. Ibid.

23. p.456.

24. Fihrist p.314.

25. On Muḥammad Riḍā Mīrzā, see Navā'ī, notes to ᶜAḍud al-Dawla pp.188-9; Rijāl Vol.3 p.401. Shams-i Jahān Bigum, who was converted to Babism in Hamadān in 1847 by Qurrat al-ᶜAyn, appears to have been a daughter of Muḥammad Riḍā.

26. Fihrist p.305; this work no longer appears to be extant.

27. Ibid pp.304-5; this also no longer appears to be extant.

28. Ibid p.331; this tafsīr has been printed (n.p, n.d.). According to Zarandī (p.10), it was written at the age of eighteen.

29. Ibid p.317; printed (n.p., n.d.).

30. Ibid pp.338-40; printed (n.p., n.d.).

31. Ibid p.292; printed (n.p., n.d.).

32. Ibid p.317; the original risāla is no longer extant, but a Persian translation was made by Ḥusayn ibn ᶜAlī Khusraw-shāhī in 1242/1827, and printed.

33. Ibid p.332; printed (n.p., n.d.).

34. Among these, we may note items 138, 141, 150, 155, 157, 159, 164, 171, 188, 199, 202, 207, 213, 214, 230, 292, 297, and 302 in the Fihrist.

35. Zarandī p.10.

36. Hidāyat p.71. A version in Fihrist (p.116) reads: 'my son Kāẓim....'.

37. Fihrist pp.350-2.

38. See Jawāmiᶜ Vol.1 pt.2 pp.239-48.

39. Fihrist p.316.

40. Ibid p.323.

41. Ibid p.310; printed (1st. ed. Tabrīz?, 1276/1859-60; 2nd. ed. Kirmān, 1353 Sh./1974-5). Referring to al-Aḥsā'ī in his introduction to this translation, Rashtī uses the words aṭāla 'llāh baqāhu, which implies that the Shaykh was alive at the time of writing (2nd. ed., p.12).

42. Fihrist p.289.

43. pp.73-4.

44. Dalīl p.20.

45. Letters quoted Fihrist pp.116-22 f.n.

46. Quoted ibid p.121 f.n.

47. Item 219 in ibid.

48. Ibid p.294.

49. See Tabaqāt Vol.2 pp.315-6; ijāza cited Makārim Vol.1 p.217: according to Tabaqat (Vol.2 p.315), this ijaza has been included by Sayyid Muhammad ᶜAli Rawḍatī Isfahani in his Rīyād al-abrār.

50. Ijāza cited Fihrist p.126.

51. Dalīl p.23.

52. Rawḍāt p.367.

53. Makārim Vol.4 p.1166.

54. Qisas p.91.

55. p.389 f.n. On Sayyid ᶜAbd Allāh, see Rawḍāt pp.366-7; Makārim Vol.4 pp.1164-8.

56. Rawḍāt p.152.

57. Anṣārī p.150.

58. Ibid p.151. Anṣārī's statement that the pupils of Sharīf al-ᶜUlamā Māzandarānī left Karbalā on his death in 1245/1830-1, in order to study in Najaf under Shaykh Mūsā is obviously impossible. On Shaykh Mūsā, see ibid pp.150-3; Makārim Vol.4 pp.1131 ff.

59. Dalīl p.76.

60. Fihrist pp.260-2.

61. Dalīl p.48; Fihrist p.116.

62. Hidāyat p.71. For a later Shaykhī attempt to interpret this passage in a manner acceptable to orthodox thought, see Ḥaj Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn Khān Kirmānī Risāla dar Jawāb-i Āqā-yi Niẓām al-Islām Isfahānī pp.49-72.

63. Tabaqāt Vol.2 p.313.

64. Ibid Vol.1 p.438.

65. Hidāyat p.133. The Bāb, in an early work, states that he is 'the bearer of knowledge like Kāzim' (prayer in TBA 6003.C p.188).

66. Ibid pp.71-2.

67. Rawḍāt p.26.

68. Hidāyat p.72.

69. On the latter, see Corbin Philosophie islamique p.303.

70. Dalīl p.64.

71. Ibid p.11.

72. See Fihrist p.293; Chahārdihī p.139; ᶜAlī al-Wardī Lamahāt ijtimā'īyya pp.107-8. This well-known work is a commentary on a qasīda by the

Mawsilī poet ᶜAbd al-Bāqī al-ᶜUmarī (1204-78/1790-1861), written on the occasion of the donation by Sulṭān Maḥmūd II of a piece of the covering from the tomb of the Prophet for the shrine of Imam Mūsā in Kāẓimayn; the commentary was written on the instructions of ᶜAlī Riḍā Pāshā. The qaṣīda is contained in al-ᶜUmarī's dīwān on Shīᶜī themes entitled Al-bāqiyāt al-ṣāliḥāt; for a list of other commentaries on it, see Makarim Vol.1 p.173. On al-ᶜUmarī, see ibid pp.172-4; al-Wardī pp.106-8.

73. Text quoted Mīrzā Abū 'l-Faḍl Muḥammad Gulpāygānī Kitāb al-farā'id pp.575-7.

74. Letter quoted Fihrist p.116 f.n.

75. Risāla in TBA 6003.C pp.399, 407.

76. Zarandī p.11. Zarandī specifically refers to Mullā Muḥammad Māmaqānī and Mullā ᶜAbd al-Khāliq Yazdī, but, since the former was later among those who issued a fatwā for the death of the Bāb in 1850, and the latter became a renegade from Babism about 1849, it is likely that religious animosity may have played some part in his choice of individuals (cf. his references to Muḥīṭ Kirmānī, Karīm Khān Kirmānī, and Mullā Ḥasan Gawhar, all opponents of the Bāb -- pp.20, 39-40, 48).

77. Qiṣaṣ p.43. On Sayyid Abū 'l-Ḥasan, see Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 p.33.

78. Fihrist p.220 (items 1 and 2). Al-Ṭihrānī suggests (Ṭabaqāt Vol.2 p.31) that this Sayyid Abū 'l-Ḥasan Jīlānī is a distinct individual from Tanakābunī's uncle, but his only knowledge of him seems to be as the recipient of one of these letters.

79. pp.457-8. On the Sharḥ, see Fihrist p.292.

80. See Fihrist p.302.

81. Cited Al-dharīᶜa Vol.8 p.136.

82. p.67.

83. Zarandī p.42.

84. p.139.

85. Nujūm pp.366, 367.

86. Dalīl p.49.

87. Ibid p.63.

88. Rashtī (ibid p.59) writes only 'the first of Rajab'; earlier (p.49), he refers to the lapse of some two years from the death of al-Aḥsā'ī. The first of Rajab 1243 did, in fact, fall on a Friday (Wednesday in Europe).

89. Fihrist p.153. Kirmānī (Hidāyat p.138) states that the house faced the shrine of Ḥusayn.

90. Dalīl p.59.

91. On this, see Sharḥ al-ziyāra pt.4 pp.8-10.

92. Dalīl pp.60-1. It seems to have been as a result of his writing this statement that Rashtī was accused in Iran of having pronounced takfīr against al-Aḥsā'ī; a deputation of Shaykhī ᶜulamā from there visited

him and were reassured that this was not the case (Qazvīnī p.462).

93. Dalīl p.62.

94. Hidāyat p.140.

95. Dalīl p.63.

96. Ibid pp.63-4.

97. I have calculated the date on the basis of a sermon given by Rashtī on this occasion, in which he states that it is a Friday and also the festival of Ghadīr Khumm (17 Dhū 'l-Ḥijja). The only Ghadīr festival at this period to fall on a Friday was that of 1243.

98. Dalīl p.67. This source mentions only 'the Shaykh', but Kirmānī (Hidāyat p.146) states that the individual was Shaykh ᶜAlī.

99. Dalīl p.77.

100. Kirmānī Hidāyat pp.141-2.

101. Ansārī p.153. On Shaykh ᶜAlī, see ibid; Makārim Vol.4 pp.1420-1.

102. Dalīl p.68.

103. Ibid pp.69-71.

104. Ibid p.69.

105. Ibid p.70.

106. Ibid.

107. Ibid p.71.

108. Ibid pp.71-2.

109. Ibid p.73.

110. Ibid p.63.

111. Ibid; this treatise does not seem to be extant (see Fihrist p.318, item 224).

112. Ibid p.66.

113. Ibid; Kirmānī Hidāyat p.144.

114. Kirmānī Hidāyat p.141.

115. Mullā Muḥammad Ḥamza Sharīᶜatmadār Māzandarānī Asrār al-shahāda, quoted Chahārdihī pp.171-3.

116. Dalīl p.74.

117. Ibid pp.74, 75.

118. Ibid p.75.

119. Ibid pp.77-8.

120. Z.H. p.312.

121. Ibid; Zarandī p.83. The fate of her treatise is unknown.

122. Al-dharīᶜa Vol.5 p.174; Vol.13 p.215.

123. Ibid Vol.5 p.208.

124. Fihrist item 258.

125. Ibid item 179.

126. Ibid items 251, 301.

127. Ibid items 154, 300.

128. Ibid items 261, 262.

129. Ibid items 237, 295.

130. Ibid item 178.

131. Ibid item 303; Qisas pp.55-6.

132. Dalīl pp.76, 79.

133. Ibid p.79; Fihrist p.117.

134. Fihrist pp.116-7.

135. Dalīl p.80.

136. Ibid. According to Zarandī (p.21), Shaftī originally favoured both Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāzim but, in later years, adopted a neutral position; about two years before his death, Rashtī sent the future Bābī apostle Mullā Muḥammad Ḥusayn Bushrū'ī, to visit Shaftī with the aim of enlisting his support against his opponents at the ᶜatabāt, in which mission he is said to have been successful (ibid pp.19-24). Muḥammad ᶜAlī Faydī prints a letter which he claims to have been written by Rashtī to Bushrū'ī, praising him for this (Ḥaḍrat-i Nuqṭa-yi Ūlā pp.52-3); the facsimile facing p.52 is not in the handwriting of Rashti. For what appears to be a summary of the same letter, see al-Qatīl ibn al-Karbalā'ī, risāla in Z.H.p.523

137. The names of some of these may be found in Dalīl pp.79-80; Fihrist p.117.

138. Fihrist pp.118-9. On Ālūsī, see al-Wardī pp.100-6, 146-51; Muḥammad Zuhrā al-Najjār (?), preface to Shaykh Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī Rūḥ al-maᶜānī; Ismāᶜīl Pāshā al-Baghdādī Hadīyyat al-ᶜārifīn Vol.2 pp.418-9; ᶜUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla Muᶜjam al-mu'allifīn Vol.12 pp.175-6 (with extensive bibliography). Al-Ālūsī later treated with favour Qurrat al-ᶜAyn, who stayed under house arrest in his home in Baghdād in early 1847.

139. Fihrist pp.323, 331 (items 256, 271).

140. Ibid p.293.

141. Ibid pp.311-2.

142. Z.H. pp.74-5.

143. Rijāl Vol.2 p.116 and f.n.2; ᶜAḍud al-Dawla pp.68, 239, 297. Qaysar Khānum's mother was Qamar al-Nisā Khānum, a daughter of Ḥusayn Khān Afshār (Sipihr Vol.2 p.163).

144. Z.H. p.74.

145. Ibid p.75.

146. Ibid.

147. Zarandī p.235.

148. Sipihr Vol.3 pp.257-8. For details of Sulaymān Khān, see Rijāl Vol.2 pp.116-8; Nava'ī, notes to ʿAdud al-Dawla pp.239-40.

149. p.138.

150. See Heribert Busse History of Persia under Qajar Rule p.236 f.n.19; Rijāl Vol.5 pp.47-9, 100-2.

151. Suhrāb pp.19-20. On Ẓill al-Sulṭān, see Rijāl Vol.2 pp.381-4; Navā'ī, notes to ʿAdud al-Dawla pp.213-8.

152. Rijāl Vol.4 pp.429-30.

153. Dalīl p.74.

154. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.509. On Sulaymān Mīrzā, the thirty-fourth son of Fath-ʿAlī, who was exiled with ʿAlī Shāh Ẓill al-Sulṭān and Imāmwardī Mīrzā, see Rijāl Vol.5 pp.114-5.

155. Chahārdihī p.138. On ʿAlī Qulī Mīrzā, see Rijāl Vo .2 pp.442-8. He is the author of Al-mutanabbīyūn, which largely consists of an inimical history of Babism (published in part as Fitna-yi Bāb by Navā'ī). On Farhād Mīrzā, see Rijāl Vol.3 pp.86-92.

156. Chahārdihī p.139.

157. Lorimer Vol.1B p.1350.

158. p.267.

159. Radawī p.33.

160. Lorimer Vol.1B p.1349; Longrigg p.288; ʿAbbās al-ʿAzzāwī Ta'rīkh al-ʿIrāq Vol.7 pp.64, 65.

161. I am grateful to Prof. L.P. Elwell Sutton for suggesting that, as Farrant implies, the original term for these groups was girāmī, although it seems to have been corrupted in later accounts to the Turkish yaramaz (good-for-nothings), as used by Lorimer and others.

162. Compare the situation in Najaf, which was troubled by the two city factions of Shumurd and Zugurt until this century: Longrigg p.288; al-ʿAzzāwī Vol.8 p.187.

163. Lorimer Vol.1B p.1349.

164. Ibid pp.1349, 1350; al-ʿAzzāwī Vol.7 p.65 (and f.n.1 where Zaʿfarānī is described as a Shaykhī).

165. Lorimer Vol.1B p.1350.

166. Al-ʿAzzāwī Vol.7 p.65; letter from Najīb Pāshā to Iranian consul in Baghdād, attached to Sheil's despatch of 9 March 1843 (FO 60/96).

167. Al-ᶜAzzāwī Vol.7 p.63.

168. Lorimer Vol.1B p.1350.

169. Letter from Najīb Pāshā to the Iranian consul in Baghdād, 16 Shawwāl 1258/18 November 1842, enclosed in letter of Farrant to Sheil, 2 May 1843 (FO 248/108

170. Al-ᶜAzzāwī Vol.7 p.64; Lorimer Vol.1B p.1350.

171. Report of Farrant to Canning, 15 May 1843, enclosed in Farrant's letter to Sheil, 20 May 1843 (FO 248/108).

172. Ibid.

173. See letter from Najīb Pāshā to (? Ẓill al-Sulṭān or Rashtī), 11 December 1842 (FO 60/97); Zarandī p.36; al-Wardī p.121.

174. Farrant to Canning, 15 May 1843.

175. Lorimer Vol.1B p.1351.

176. Ibid; Farrant to Canning, 15 May 1843.

177. Farrant to Canning, 15 May 1843.

178. Lorimer Vol.1B p.1350.

179. Farrant to Canning, 15 May 1843.

180. Ibid.

181. For general accounts of the sack of Karbalā, consult Lorimer Vol.1B pp.1352-8; al-ᶜAzzāwī Vol.7 pp.65-9; al-Wardī pp.118-22.

182. See Algar Religion and State p.115 f.n.67.

183. Al-Wardī p.121, noting that Muṣṭafā Pāshā only spared those in the shrine after Ḥāj Mahdī Kamūna had pleaded with him for clemency. Those in the shrine of ᶜAbbās tried to bar the doors against the enemy and were mercilessly butchered once they were breached. See also Farrant to Canning, 15 May 1843.

184. See letter of Mullā ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz (Iranian consul in Baghdad) to Hāji Mīrzā Āqāsī, undated (FO 60/95); account by Mullā Āqā-yi Darbandī enclosed in letter from Sheil to Aberdeen, 1 April 1843 (FO 60/96); letter from Ross to Taylor, 22 January 1843 (FO 60/97); Farrant to Canning, 15 May 1843; Zarandī p.36; al-ᶜAzzāwī Vol.7 p.66 (on p.65, al-ᶜAzzāwī misquotes Karīm Khān Kirmānī as stating that the homes of Shaykhis in general were spared).

185. Zarandī p.36. Kirmānī states that nearly ten thousand individuals sought sanctuary there (Hidāyat p.153), but this seems impossibly high.

186. Farrant gives sixty six (letter to Canning, 15 May 1843), Mullā ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz about two hundred (letter to Āqāsī, undated).

187. Al-Wardī pp.121-2.

188. p.266.

189. Ibid p.238.

190. Al-ʿAzzāwī Vol.7 p.69.

191. 'Bab et les Babis' 7:463.

192. See Z.H. p.41.

193. Among the Qājār notables who were Shaykhīs or had contacts with the Shaykhī leadership in Kirmān were: Amān Allāh Khān Majd al-Dawla (on whom see Rijāl Vol.5 pp.31-2), Ḥamza Mīrzā (see ibid Vol.1 pp.462-8), Tahmāsb Mīrzā Mu'ayyad al-Dawla (a son of Muḥammad ʿAlī Mīrza; see ibid Vol.2 pp.195-200), ʿAbbās Mīrzā Mulk Ārā (see ibid Vol.2 pp.222-7), ʿAbd al-ʿAlī Khān Adīb al-Mulk (see ibid Vol.2 p.270, and compare ibid Vol.5 p.10 f.n.2), ʿAzīz Khān Mukrī Sardār-i Kull (see ibid Vol.2 pp. 326-35), Ghulāmshāh Khān (a governor of Kurdistān; see ibid Vol.3 pp. 228-32), and Muḥammad Walī Mīrzā (see ibid Vol.4 pp.26-33), all of whom corresponded with Karīm Khān Kirmānī; Mīrzā Isḥāq Khān Mufakhkham al-Dawla (see ibid Vol.1 pp.167-9), Mīrzā Ḥusayn Khān Mu'taman al-Sulṭān, Bahrām Mīrzā Muʿizz al-Dawla (see ibid Vol.1 pp.192-5), and Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān Khabīr al-Mulk, all of whom corresponded with Ḥāj Muḥammad Khān; Asad Allāh Mīrzā (see ibid Vol.1 pp.114-5), Mīrzā ʿAbd al-Karīm Khān Mukhābir al-Mulk, and Muḥammad Ḥasan Mīrzā Sartīp (see ibid Vol.5 pp.226-7), all of whom corresponded with Ḥāj Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Khān.

194. Dawlatābādī Vol.1 p.149; Rijāl Vol.4 p.121; Maḥmūd Farhād Muʿtamed Mushīr al-Dawla Sipahsālar-i Aʿẓam pp.189-91. Three of the works of Karīm Khān Kirmānī (Risāla-yi radd-i Bāb-i murtād, Risāla-yi Sulṭānīyya, and Risāla-yi Nāsirīyya) were written at the request of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh.

195. Introduction to Shaykh Yaḥyā Aḥmadī Farmāndihān-i Kirmān pp.20-1.

196. See Algar Religion and State pp.243-4; Gianroberto Scarcia 'Kerman 1905: La "Guerre" tra Seihi e Balasari'; Nāẓim al-Islām Kirmānī Tārīkh-i bīdārī-yi Īrānīyān Vol.1 pp.69-80; Bāstānī Pārīzī, notes to Aḥmadī pp.190-6 f.n. An interesting case of a clash in Kirmān between two brothers (one a Shaykhī, the other a Bālāsarī) over their father's property is mentioned by Pārīzī in ibid pp.140-1 f.n.

197. Dalīl p.154.

198. Ibid.

199. Zarandī p.42. He may also have intended to visit Sāmarrā on this occasion (Fihrist p.120).

200. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.509.

201. Ibid; Fihrist p.122. Zarandī says he died on the day of al-ʿArafa (p.45).

202. Letter quoted Z.H. p.223.

203. See Fihrist pp.121-2; Kirmānī Hidāyat p.155.

CHAPTER FOUR

FROM SHAYKHISM TO BABISM

FROM SHAYKHISM TO BABISM

The succession to Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī

The death of Rashtī precipitated the first major internal crisis in the Shaykhī school, of which he had been the acknowledged head for some seventeen years. To be more precise, it created a situation in which concealed tensions, disagreements, rivalries and ambitions within the Shaykhī community were brought to the surface. Rashtī did not, for reasons that are unclear, emulate al-Ahsā'ī in appointing a successor, nor did he leave clear instructions as to the direction of the school after his death. Since he was relatively young when he died, it may simply be that he had not thought it yet necessary to take steps to provide for this eventuality. Without a clear appointment of a successor to the Sayyid, the school rapidly fragmented into several factions, of which the two largest were those grouped around Sayyid ᶜAlī Muhammad Shīrāzī, the Bāb (1235-66/1819-50) and Hāj Mullā Muhammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī (1225-88/1810-71). These two factions in particular expressed diametrically opposed tendencies inherent in Shaykhism, the first moving away from the outward practice of Islam towards a concentration on the revelation of its inner (bātinī) features and, ultimately, a new revelation (zuhūr) following the appearance of the hidden Imām; the second emphasizing the continuing role of the Prophet and the Imāms and seeking accommodation with the Shīᶜī majority which had formerly excommunicated the founder of the school and his successor. It was inevitable that, once these incompatible interpretations of Shaykhī thought came to be openly expressed, an unrelenting hostility would grow up between the two parties, fiercer if anything than that which previously existed between Shaykhīs and Bālāsarīs.

Karīm Khān Kirmānī himself acknowledges that Rashtī had not indicated a successor in direct terms and that, on his death, a number of leaders gained a following, while many of his disciples scattered to different places.[1] That considerable confusion existed in the minds of Rashtī's followers is apparent from a number of statements in an Arabic risāla written in reply to Karīm Khān's Izhāq al-bātil by an early Bābī of Karbalā named al-Qatīl ibn al-Karbalā'ī, who had himself been in the circle of the Sayyid's companions. 'Those among the tullāb who were possessed of discernment', he writes, 'were confused as to where they should go and to whom they should cling'.[2] He himself, he states at the beginning of his treatise, did not know where to turn during the first four months following Rashtī's death.[3] This confusion appears to have been compounded by the dissemination of various rumours and reports, some of them vaguely messianic in character, others relating to the

question of the direction of the school in the period immediately after the death of the Sayyid.

Among these reports were a number in which Rashtī was said to have alluded obliquely to an 'affair' or 'cause' (amr) which would occur or appear after him. According to Kirmānī, his reply to those who asked him about his successor (al-khalīfa ba^{c}dahu) had been to say 'God has an affair which He shall bring to maturity (li 'llāhi amrun huwa bāligh-uhu)'.[4] Rashtī's use of this phrase was certainly not accidental, and must have been calculated to evoke specific associations in the minds of his hearers: it was, in fact, the very phrase traditionally ascribed to the fourth nā'ib of the hidden Imām, Abū 'l-Hasan ^{c}Alī al-Sammarī, when asked on his death-bed concerning the matter of succession.[5] That Rashtī made use of this phrase in this connection more than once is apparent from a reference in al-Karbalā'ī's risāla, where it is recorded that the Sayyid was asked about his successor by Mullā Muhammad Taqī Harawī,[6] to whom he made this reply, adding, however, the qualification 'our cause is not like that of the abwāb'.[7] The significance of this last statement is not entirely clear; as we shall observe, a section of the Shaykhī community at this period certainly seems to have regarded both al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī as 'gates' of the Imām, a belief which was instrumental in facilitating the transition to Bābism. It is possible that Rashtī was thought to have been implying that, whereas the Imām had gone into major occultation on the death of the fourth bāb, he might now be preparing to return. That the 'affair' or 'cause' to which the Sayyid referred was in some way linked to the advent of the Imām or to have been synonymous with that event or the preparations for it, seems clear from his statement: 'Are you not content that I should die and the cause of your Imām (amr imāmikum) be made manifest?'[8] Zarandī ascribes a similar remark to the Sayyid, though endowing it with more obviously messianic overtones: 'Would you not wish me to die, that the promised One be revealed?'[9] Mullā Ja^{c}far Qazvīnī similarly states that he was present when Rashtī said 'are you not content that I should go and the truth (haqq) be made manifest?'[10] The messianic quality of Rashtī's utterances on this topic is apparent in the following statement attributed to him by Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn: 'O people! My passing is near, yet you have not understood what I have been saying to you, nor have you comprehended my purposes. After me, there shall appear a great cause and a severe test and you shall fall into disagreements with one another. We have been but as a herald (mubashshir) for that great cause'.[11] As we shall see in more detail later, this chiliastic strain played an important role in the development of Bābism as an expression of the more extreme charismatic and gnostic tendencies within the school.

According to at least two accounts, Rashtī had instructed certain of his followers to stay after his death with Mullā Muhammad Hasan Qarāchadāghī (Mullā Hasan Gawhar) for 'a little time' (bi-zamānin qalīl) until 'our affair would appear.'[12] Mullā Jaᶜfar Qazvīnī writes that someone asked Rashtī to whom his followers should turn after him; he replied that it was permissible to turn to anyone but that 'for some days, you should stay about Mullā Hasan Gawhar'. He later explained that Mullā Hasan would be there for forty-five days and then the truth would be manifested.[13] Although Mullā Hasan's position remained at first ambiguous, there is no doubt that many of Rashtī's followers thought it natural to be referred to him. A former pupil of al-Ahsā'ī, Mullā Hasan was one of the oldest and most highly regarded disciples of the Sayyid, from whom he held an ijāza.[14] Several works by him are still extant,[15] and it seems that some of these had received the direct approval of Rashtī.[16] It would not have been surprising if a section of the Shaykhī community in Karbalā should have looked on Mullā Hasan as a potential successor to Rashtī and, as we shall note, it was not long before he put forward a claim to succession on his own behalf. Initially, however, the question of succession remained in abeyance while news of Rashtī's death made its way to Shaykhī communities outside the ᶜatabāt.

Al-Karbalā'ī states that, following the funeral of Rashtī, some of the tullāb approached Mullā Hasan and his close associate, Mīrzā Muhammad Husayn Muhīt Kirmānī, and asked if they had heard anything from the Sayyid concerning the succession. Mullā Hasan replied that he had heard nothing, while Mīrzā Muhīt implied that he had, in fact, been told something but that he could not at that time reveal what it was; they should not disperse, he said, but remain in Karbalā.[17] As if in corroboration of Mīrzā Muhīt's advice to await developments, a rumour became current to the effect that Rashtī had said 'the affair shall be made manifest one year after me'.[18] Currency also seems to have been given to a prophecy, allegedly related by Rashtī himself, which had been made in a dream to one of the members of his household, and in which it was stated that the 'affair' would be manifested in another thirty weeks.[19] These thirty weeks, according to al-Karbalā'ī, would be completed at the beginning of Jumādī I (1260)/late May (1844),[20] and it was probably under the influence of this second rumour that numbers of tullāb waited out the four months of Muharram, Safar, Rabīᶜ I, and Rabīᶜ II, thinking that Mīrzā Muhīt might be right in what he said.[21]

It seems, however, that Mīrzā Muhīt said or did something unspecified which caused many to reject him, whereupon they dispersed from Karbalā,[22] some even before the four month period had ended. That a substantial number of Shaykhīs left Karbalā in different directions at about this

time is indicated in several sources. We have already referred to Kirmānī's statement to this effect in Izhāq al-bātil. This version of events is substantially corroborated by Mīrzā Husayn Khān Dakhīlī, the son of Mullā Husayn Dakhīl, a Shaykhī who had lived in Karbalā with Mullā Muhammad Husayn Bushrū'ī and who also later became a Bābī. Mīrzā Husayn Khān writes: 'after the death of the late Sayyid, his companions scattered, and from whomsoever they heard a call, they would go in search of the lord of the affair (sāhib-i amr)'.[23] Zarandī indicates, however, that, when Mullā Husayn Bushrū'ī returned to Karbalā on 1 Muharram 1260/22 January 1844, he met with Mullā Hasan Gawhar, Mīrzā Muhīt, 'and other well-known figures among the disciples of Siyyid Kāzim', and that these individuals advanced various pretexts for not leaving Karbalā.[24]

With the dispersal of many of the tullāb within about two months of Bushrū'ī's arrival, the main area of events moved, for a time, from Arab ᶜIraq to Iran. In Iran, the bid for leadership of the Shaykhī community came to be centred in three places: Tabrīz, Kirmān, and Shīrāz. In Tabrīz, two men made simultaneous claims, each of them achieving considerable success in establishing his position as a leader of the Shaykhīs in Ādharbāyjān but neither succeeding in winning very much of a following outside the region. The first of these was Hājī Mīrzā Shafīᶜ Thiqat al-Islām Tabrīzī (c.1218-1301/1803-84), a mujtahid who, in 1242/1826-7, had gone to the ᶜatabāt to complete his studies under Shaykh Muhammad Hasan al-Najafī, Shaykh ᶜAlī al-Najafī, and Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī. Having become a Shaykhī, he returned to Tabrīz, where he encouraged students to travel to Karbalā in order to study under Rashtī, whom he regarded as the most learned (aᶜlam) of the Shīᶜī ᶜulamā. On Rashtī's death, he claimed that succession was restricted to himself but, apart from styling himself 'shaykh' of the school, he does not appear to have advanced any major claims on his own behalf, nor to have introduced any radical changes in doctrine.[25] There seems to be no justification for the statement of Iᶜtimād al-Saltana that he claimed rukniyyat for a short time.[26] Mīrzā Shafīᶜ appears to have left Tabrīz shortly before the revolt there of the Kurdish leader Shaykh ᶜUbayd Allāh Naqshbandī, which occurred in 1298/1881; and to have gone to live in Mecca.[27] On his death there in 1301, at the age of 83, he was succeeded in Tabrīz by his son, Shaykh Mūsā Thiqat al-Islām.[28]

The second claimant to succession in Tabrīz was Mullā Muhammad Māmaqānī (or Mamaqānī) Hujjat al-Islām. It would seem that, for Māmaqānī, succession meant little more than taking Rashtī's place as a marjaᶜ al-taqlīd for all those who regarded themselves as muqallid to him. He played down the charismatic and gnostic aspects of Shaykhism to such a degree that he became a highly respectable figure within the orthodox

community in the region, being widely regarded as a marja[c] for government officials, nobles, tujjār, and bazaar merchants; these followers built for him the Masjid-i Hujjat al-Islām beside the Masjid-i Jāmi[c] of Tabrīz.[29] On his death in 1268/1851-2 or 1269/1852-3, he was succeeded by his son, Mīrzā Muhammad Husayn Hujjat al-Islām (d.1303/1885-6), also a former student of Rashtī.[30]

Apart from Thiqat al-Islām and Māmaqānī, there were several other notable Shaykhīs in Tabrīz, the most outstanding of whom were Haj Mullā Mahmūd Nizām al-[c]Ulamā (d. circa 1272/1856), the tutor of Nāsir al-Dīn Mīrzā; Mīrzā [c]Alī Asghar Shaykh al-Islām (d.1264/1848), his son Mīrzā Abū 'l-Qāsim Shaykh al-Islām, and Mullā [c]Alī Mu[c]īn al-Islām. Although incidents between Shaykhīs and Bālāsarīs took place intermittently in Tabrīz, notably riots in 1267/1850[31] and 1285/1868-9,[32] it is clear that the Shaykhī notables and [c]ulamā of the city were particularly eager to identify themselves with the main body of Shi[c]ism and to avoid, as far as possible, all imputations of heterodoxy.

This trend towards orthodoxy was given added impetus by the emergence of Babism as an identifiable and vulnerable target for the concerted attacks of conventional Shī[c]īs and Shaykhīs alike. The fact that, as we shall see, the Bāb himself and all but a few of his principal followers had been students of Rashtī, coupled with the continuing veneration shown by the Bābīs to him and al-Ahsā'ī as, in some sense, 'precursors' of their movement or as 'the two preceding bābs', placed the remaining Shaykhīs in serious danger of being closely linked with Babism in the minds of the public and the [c]ulamā. At first, this simply meant the continuation of some form of ostracism of Shaykhism by many of the orthodox community but, before long, it began to carry the risk of physical persecution as the Bābīs resorted to arms and became the objects of attacks from government and people. In order to offset the unwelcome implications of their mutual origin, certain Shaykhī [c]ulamā, particularly in Tabrīz, proved eager to take a leading role in the theological, judicial, and even physical assault on the Bāb and his followers.

The trial of the Bāb, held in Tabrīz in August 1848, was attended by Nāsir al-Dīn Mīrzā, leading government officials, religious dignitaries, and eminent members of the Shaykhī community, including Mullā Muhammad Māmaqānī and Mīrzā [c]Alī Asghar Shaykh al-Islām; it was directed by Hāj Mullā Mahmūd Nizām al-[c]Ulamā.[33] Following the trial, in which the Shaykhī participants took a prominent part, the Bāb was bastinadoed at the home of Mīrzā [c]Alī Asghar by the Shaykh al-Islām himself.[34] In 1266/1850, when the Bāb was brought to Tabrīz for execution, Māmaqānī was among the small number of [c]ulamā who signed a fatwā for his death.[35] Apart from a book by Mīrzā Muhammad Taqī Māmaqānī,[36] however, the Shaykhī [c]ulamā

of Tabrīz -- unlike their counterparts in Kirmān -- do not appear to have engaged in much polemical conflict with the Bābīs. There can be little doubt, nevertheless, that their direct involvement in the condemnation of the Bāb proved a significant factor in helping them ingratiate themselves with the orthodox community, become integrated into it, and, in the end, become wholly re-identified with it.

It was Kirmān rather than Tabrīz which finally came to be recognized as the new centre of Shaykhism, displacing Karbalā for the majority of Iranian Shaykhīs and for smaller numbers in ᶜIraq and elsewhere. In numerical and historical terms, Babism had by far the greater impact, but it was in its Kirmānī form that Shaykhism was to be preserved -- albeit much modified -- as a distinct school within Twelver Shiᶜism. If, on the one hand, the Shaykhīs of Ādharbāyjān were to stress and deepen the conservative elements in Shaykhī belief and practice, rendering it practically indistinguishable from orthodox Shiᶜism, and the Bābīs, on the other hand, were to exploit the more extreme tendencies of the school, breaking entirely from Islam before the lapse of many years, the development initiated by Karīm Khān Kirmānī was to travel something of a middle road, identifying and reinterpreting certain key themes in the works of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī in an unusual and unorthodox fashion while retaining a strong sense of identity with and loyalty to Twelver Shiᶜism as the true expression of Islamic faith and practice.

Hāj Mullā Muhammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī was born in Kirmān on 18 Muharram 1225/23 February 1810.[37] His father, Ibrāhīm Khān Zahīr al-Dawla, was a cousin and son-in-law of Fath-ᶜAlī Shāh,[38] and, at the beginning of the latter's reign, was appointed governor of Khurāsān, later being transferred to the governorship of Kirmān and Balūchistān,[39] a position which he held from 1803 until his death in 1824-5.[40] Ibrāhīm Khān's relationship with the ruling dynasty was strengthened by his marriage to Humāyūn Sultān Khānum-i Khānumān,[41] the eldest daughter of Fath-ᶜAlī and a sister of Husayn ᶜAlī Mīrzā Farmānfarmā and Hasan ᶜAlī Mīrzā Shujāᶜ al-Saltana, and, by the marriage of two of his sons to two other daughters of the monarch.[42] In addition, as we shall note, Karīm Khān was later married to a daughter of Muhammad Qulī Mīrzā Mulk Ārā, the third son of Fath-ᶜAlī.

In the course of his term as governor of Kirmān, Ibrāhīm Khān did much to restore the physical prosperity of the city.[43] A deeply religious man, he showed concern at the absence of fuqahā in the region following the sack of Kirmān by Āghā Muhammad Shāh in 1794, and invited ᶜulamā from Arabia, Khurāsān, and Fārs to come and live there. He showed particular favour to Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī, whom he met several times during the latter's residence in Yazd and, as we have noted, it has been

suggested that it was through his influence that Fath-ʿAlī Shāh invited the Shaykh to Tihrān in 1808.

It appears to have been his father's wish that Karīm Khān be raised a scholar (unlike his other sons, all of whom were given administrative posts throughout Kirmān province)[44] -- possibly with the intention that he eventually become the ʿālim in charge of the Madrasa-yi Ibrāhīmīyya which he had built in 1232/1817.[45] He was, therefore, provided with tutors as a child and, in adolescence, continued his studies under the general supervision of Mullā Muhammad ʿAlī Nūrī Mullā-bāshī, whose daughter he married.[46] On the death of Ibrāhīm Khān in Tihrān in 1240/1825-6, the inevitable wrangling broke out among his sons, but Karīm is said to have avoided becoming involved in these disagreements and to have continued with his studies and devotions.[47] Shaykhī sources relate that he concentrated on purely religious issues, endeavouring to find the 'perfect man' (insān-i kāmil). In search of this individual, he associated with a variety of sects and schools of thought but was, in the end, directed by a certain Hāj Muhammad Ismāʿīl Kūhbanānī -- a former pupil of al-Ahsā'ī[48] -- to visit Rashtī in Karbalā.[49] Despite the efforts of the new governor, Hasan ʿAlī Mīrzā, to prevent any of the sons of Ibrāhīm Khān leaving Kirmān,[50] Karīm succeeded in making his way to the ʿatabāt, where he met and began to study under Sayyid Kāzim.

This first visit to Karbalā took place in about 1828, when Karīm Khān was eighteen, and was extended into a stay of one year. Returning to Kirmān, he continued his studies and gave classes to others for a time, before leaving once more for Karbalā, this time accompanied by his wife. He now became a close disciple of Rashtī, receiving considerable praise from his teacher and making marked progress under his instruction. It was probably during this period that Rashtī wrote his ijāza for him, possibly the only one he ever received.[51] After some time, however, Rashtī instructed him to return to Kirmān in order to teach the people there.[52] It is possible that Rashtī considered Karīm Khān, quite apart from his undoubted intellectual capabilities, as a singularly valuable supporter, in view of his close association with the Qājār family, his wealth, and potential influence in the somewhat remote Kirmān region. In sending him thus to a part of Iran which seems to have had few Shaykhīs, Rashtī may have hoped to establish a base of religious and political influence with which to offset the damaging effects of the continuing campaign against the school.

Leaving his wife in Kāzimayn, Kirmānī headed for his home town via Hamadān. There he undertook what may, in the context of a possible drive towards acquiring political influence, be considered a most significant action -- namely the arrangement of a marriage with his half-

cousin, one of the twenty-three daughters of Muhammad Qulī Mīrzā Mulk Ārā.[53] Since the girl in question was then in Tihrān, he headed there for the marriage, afterwards spending some time in the capital, where he improved his standing by associating with Muhammad Shāh, whom he had previously met in Kirmān. It was not long, however, before he set off again on the final stage of his journey home, accompanied by his new wife.[54] In Kirmān, he continued to correspond with Rashtī, whose regard for him is apparent from numerous letters. Among these is a brief letter in which he writes, speaking of Kirmānī, that 'his decree is to be obeyed and whatever he prefers is to be done; to reject him is to reject God, the Prophet, and the blessed Imāms'.[55] In another letter, Rashtī speaks of his 'spiritual communion' and 'mysterious relationships' with Karīm Khān and assures him that he has a place 'in the very core' of his heart and shall not be forgotten by him.[56] In yet another instance -- and it is a particularly significant one in view of subsequent events -- he writes how, in speaking with a certain Hājī Muhammad ᶜAlī in Sāmarrā, he referred to Kirmānī (jināb-i Hājī) as 'a tongue uttering the truth, a speaking book', and urged his companions to 'ask your questions of him and enquire of him concerning reality, for he shall inform you of matters particular and general, brief and comprehensive, manifest and hidden, save those things which are hidden in the hearts of men'.[57] In view of these and similar statements made in his respect by Rashtī, it is scarcely surprising that, on the latter's death, Karīm Khān should have regarded himself as the one most fit to assume the leadership of the school.

Kirmānī must have returned from Karbalā in about 1255/1839-40.[58] It seems to have been shortly after his arrival that he became involved in a dispute concerning the control of his father's waqf properties, in particular the Madrasa-yi Ibrāhīmīyya. The origins of this dispute are obscure, but its main outlines can be reasonably well defined. In order to provide for the upkeep of the madrasa, Ibrāhīm Khān had made over portions of his estates in Māzandarān and other private lands as waqf properties.[59] On his death, these properties, including the madrasa itself, were probably placed in the hands of a mutawallī, but, when Hasan ᶜAlī Mīrzā became governor of Kirmān in 1243/1828, he placed all the financial affairs of Zahīr al-Dawla's children under his own supervision and, although he did not directly interfere with the wuqūf, probably exercised considerable control over them.[60] By the time of Karīm Khān's return to Kirmān following his first visit to Karbalā, around 1245/1828, Hasan ᶜAlī Mīrzā's position in the city seems to have weakened somewhat and Karīm was able to exercise some degree of freedom in financial matters, giving the supervision of his personal properties to

a certain Āqā Sayyid Muhammad ᶜAlī and that of the madrasa and the waqf properties belonging to it to Mullā ᶜAlī, a local mujtahid.[61] Already, during his first stay in Karbalā, he had offered to make over to Rashtī all the property he had inherited from his father; when this offer was refused, he promised Rashtī the payment of khums on his possessions, which proved acceptable.[62]

During his second absence in ᶜIraq, however, matters seem to have fallen very much out of his control or that of his appointees. Fīrūz Mīrzā Farmānfarmā became governor of Kirmān in 1253/1837, replacing Āqā Khān Mahallātī, the Ismāᶜīlī leader.[63] He seems to have attempted to exercise control over the ᶜulamā of the city by means of a policy of divide and rule: a year after his arrival, he expelled from Kirmān Ākhund Mullā ᶜAlī Akbar, a rigorously puritanical divine who insisted on close observance of the religious law.[64] At the same time, he showed considerable favour towards two mujtahids, Mullā ᶜAlī Tūnī (known as Aᶜmā) and Hāj Sayyid Jawād Shīrāzī. Under the patronage of Fīrūz Mīrzā, Sayyid Jawād succeeded in replacing Ākhund Mullā ᶜAlī Akbar as Imām Jumᶜa of Kirmān, a position which he held until his death in 1287/1870-1.[65] Sayyid Jawād also improved his prestige in the city by marrying one of the daughters of Ibrāhīm Khān.[66] He and Mullā ᶜAlī Tūnī became increasingly involved in the affairs of the madrasa and the wuqūf of Zahīr al-Dawla about the time of Karīm Khān's return to Kirmān, and managed to exercise such influence over the tullāb that the latter was unable to regain control of the waqf.[67] Kirmānī, in retaliation, declared the waqf invalid, meaning to inherit it personally as irth property, and applied for confirmation of his fatwā from Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Shaftī in Isfahān.[68] Shaftī's concurrence notwithstanding, the tullāb refused to hand over the madrasa until one of Kirmānī's followers succeeded in taking control one night by means of a ruse; on the following day, Shaykhī tullāb were installed in the madrasa, which has remained in their hands since then.[69] It seems that Kirmānī's position was further strengthened by his success in persuading the other children of Ibrāhīm Khān each to make his share of the inheritance into waqf.[70] Although he did not manage the waqf personally, leaving it in the hands of trustees,[71] there is no doubt that much of Karīm Khān's power in Kirmān -- as, indeed, that of his descendants -- derived from his ultimate control over much of his father's vast wealth. It is said that he received an annual income from his relatives of from two to three thousand tūmāns, in the form of khums and zakāt.[72]

On the death of Rashtī, Karīm Khān, then aged thirty-four, began to claim for himself the leader of the Shaykhī community throughout Iran and ᶜIraq and, within a short time, was able to draw to himself the

the majority of Iranian and a number of Arab Shaykhīs who had not become Bābīs. In general, those Shaykhīs who became followers of the Bāb only to abandon him at a later stage in the development of his doctrines, tended to turn to Kirmānī as an alternative. By the end of his life, he had so consolidated his position as head of the sect that the succession, after a brief dispute, passed to his second son, Hāj Muhammad Khān (1263-1324/1846-1906), passing from him to his brother Hāj Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn Khān (1276-1360/1859-1942), from him to his son Abū 'l-Qāsim Khān (1314-89/1896-1969), and from him to the present head of the school, ᶜAbd al-Ridā Khān.[73]

Our sources do not make entirely clear the details of how Kirmānī established his position as head of the Shaykhī community at Kirmān and, before long, in Iran as a whole, but the general outlines of this development can be reconstructed from a careful examination of the materials currently available. It seems that Sayyid ᶜAlī Kirmānī, who acted as amanuensis to Rashtī in Karbalā,[74] initiated a belief that he had referred, albeit in somewhat cryptic fashion, to Karīm Khān as being aware of the identity of his successor. In a letter which he is said to have forged in the Sayyid's name, and which may have been written in the lifetime of the latter, Sayyid ᶜAlī quoted the tradition frequently attributed to the Imām ᶜAlī, which ends with the words 'I am the point beneath the bā'; he then went on to write, apparently in reference to Karīm Khān, that 'you are aware of him, and have met with the point of knowledge and reached the goal'.[75] This letter was read to some of the tullāb and caused a certain amount of tumult; it was, according to al-Karbalā'ī, a factor in encouraging certain tullāb to leave for Kirmān after Rashtī's death. Although Karīm Khān himself does not appear to have been a party to this forgery, al-Karbalā'ī thinks that he may indeed have been informed as to the 'bearer' (hāmil) of knowledge after Sayyid Kāzim.[76] Sayyid ᶜAlī also seems to have been instrumental in fostering similar ideas concerning Karīm Khān in Kirmān as well. In a letter to Kirmān, apparently written after Rashtī's death, he stated that the Sayyid had said 'a certain person (fulān) is informed as to the point of knowledge (nuqtat al-ᶜilm), and that person is spiritual...and more worthy (than others) to be followed; it is permissible to gain knowledge from him'.[77] According to al-Karbalā'ī, it was to this that Kirmānī referred in his Izhāq al-bātil, in writing of Rashtī that 'he indicated what he indicated',[78] with reference to the matter of succession.

Karīm Khān was not, however, entirely passive in this matter. After Rashtī's death, he wrote letters to the Shaykhīs of Kāzimayn and to Mīrzā Muhīt Kirmānī, Mullā Hasan Gawhar, and prince Sulaymān Mīrzā,[79]

claiming to be 'the one arising in the cause after him that is hidden from men (al-qā'im bi 'l-amr baᶜda 'l-ghā'ib ᶜan al-nās)'.[80] It seems that, at a later stage, following his defection from Babism, Kirmānī employed Mullā Jawād Vilyānī as his 'herald' (munād) both to carry letters from him and to write on his behalf to others.[81] The exact nature of the claims put forward by Kirmānī in these letters is unclear. Radawī maintains that, immediately following the death of Rashtī, the Khān claimed that 'one thousand gates of knowledge were opened to me, and within each of those gates another thousand gates lay open'.[82] The implication appears to be that, just as Rashtī became the bearer of the knowledge which al-Ahsā'ī had derived from the Imāms, so Karīm Khān, in his turn, was the recipient of the same supernaturally acquired knowledge. There is also, almost certainly, a conscious reference to a hadīth in which it is stated that the Prophet 'taught' ᶜAlī one thousand gates (of knowledge), from each of which another thousand opened.[83]

In general, Kirmānī succeeded in attracting a following by emerging as the chief representative of certain views and tendencies which appealed to a large section of the Shaykhī school, notably the more cautious and conservative section. His prodigious output of works on numerous topics and the comparative simplicity of most of his Persian writings ensured a rapid spread of his fame and a wide popularity. The emergence of Babism proved to be of particular help to him in consolidating his influence with that section of the school to which he made the strongest appeal, because it gave him the opportunity to make clear his position on the important question of the relationship of Shaykhism to Shiᶜism as a whole, and to define his attitude towards more extreme Shaykhī views, particularly those being exploited within the context of Babism. While conserving the identity of the school, Kirmānī and his successors strove to drive a wedge between its present and its past and to integrate it as far as possible with the orthodox community, largely by playing down those elements in the original Shaykhī teaching which clashed most forcibly with traditional or existing views, and by emphasizing those aspects which asserted their identity with accepted Shīᶜī beliefs.

This emphasis can be seen throughout the works of Karīm Khān, such as his well-known Irshād al-ᶜawwām, but we may use as a convenient example section seventeen of his Risāla-yi sī fasl, written in 1269/1853.[84] This section was written in reply to the request to 'provide an explanation of the beliefs of Shaykhism', and begins with the words: 'If you should wish for a brief reply, our beliefs are the beliefs of all Twelver Shīᶜīs; whatever the Shīᶜīs agree upon in respect of the principles (usūl) of religion, we confess the same, and whatever they

reject, they also reject. We regard the consensus (ijmāᶜ) of the Shīᶜīs on the bases and subsidiaries (furūᶜ) of faith as evident and proven'. The rest of the section is a summary of standard Shīᶜī beliefs concerning God, the Prophet, and the Imāms, in a manner resembling the more detailed discussion provided by al-Ahsā'ī in his Hayāt al-nafs and by Rashtī in his Risāla-yi usūl wa ᶜaqā'id.

We have noted above how the trend towards orthodoxy among many Shaykhīs after the death of Rashtī was given impetus by the emergence of Babism as a definable target for Bālāsarīs and Shaykhīs alike. For Kirmānī, the emergence of such a target proved the key to the establishment of his own role as the defender of Shaykhism against the heretical views of the Bābī Shaykhīs and as the leader of the rapprochement with authority, such a role making him an obvious focus for the less radical element in the school. His attacks on the Bāb, which he carried out from the pulpit and through the writing and dissemination of four extended refutations, had the virtue of being, on the one hand, negative in its uncompromising rejection of Babism as an innovation (bidᶜa) essentially unconnected with Shaykhism and, on the other, positive in its consolidation of the orthodox Shīᶜī position which he was seeking to adopt for the school and its doctrines. It is worth noting that, in all four refutations, in particular the earliest, Izhāq al-bātil, considerably more space is devoted to argument in favour of orthodox doctrine than to condemnation of Bābī belief.

Sayyid ᶜAlī Muhammad Shīrāzī

The main details of the life of the Bāb have been dealt with adequately if, at times, sketchily and hagiographically, in several separate works, to which reference may be made.[85] We need only note here a few basic facts of his early life, both in an attempt to clarify and reinterpret the details and in order to serve as background to the more general events under discussion. Named ᶜAlī Muhammad,[86] he was born on 1 Muharram 1235/20 October 1819[87] to a prominent family of Husaynī sayyids in Shīrāz.[88] His father, Sayyid Muhammad Ridā, was a prosperous wholesale merchant (tājir), dealing in cloth from premises in Shīrāz and Būshihr, in conjunction with members of his wife's family.[89] Apart from Mīrzā Muhammad Hasan Shīrāzī (Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī) and Hājī Sayyid Jawād Shīrāzī -- both paternal cousins of the Bāb's father -- the family would seem to have had no members among the ᶜulamā, although the Bāb's maternal uncles and some other relatives appear to have been active adherents of the Shaykhī school.[90] The Bāb himself received some six or seven years basic schooling at a local maktab,[91] but it is clear that he was destined to join his uncles in running the family business. Although he may have

been involved in business pursuits from as early as the age of ten,[92] he did not leave the maktab until he was about thirteen and did not take a full part in the family concern until he reached fifteen.[93] Shortly after this, he moved to Būshihr with his uncle and guardian, Hājī Mīrzā Sayyid ᶜAlī, and, after four years trading in partnership there, became independent at the age of nineteen.[94]

The Bāb's own attitude towards commerce, however, was certainly negative, and he seems to have become increasingly preoccupied with religious and intellectual pursuits. In his earliest extant work, a short risāla on sulūk, he remarks that 'a Jewish dog is better than the people of the bazaar, for the latter are they that hesitate on the path'[95] -- a telling illustration of his attitude towards the merchant classes at this stage. Perhaps even more significant is a statement in the Sahīfa bayna'l-haramayn, written in early 1261/1845, to the effect that 'the science of fiqh is obligatory for all those who wish to engage in commerce; it is not permissible for anyone who believes in God to carry out trading (al-tijāra) without a knowledge of fiqh'.[96] The frequent citations of aḥādīth, allusions to and quotations from works of Shīᶜī scholarship, and detailed discussion of matters relating to points of fiqh and kalām in works such as the Tafsīr Sūrat al-baqara, Tafsīr Sūrat al-kawthar, Risāla furūᶜ al-ᶜAdlīyya, and Dalā'il-i sabᶜa, suggest that the Bāb himself acquired considerable familiarity with theological literature about this period.[97] It seems that, while he was in Būshihr, he began to compose works of a devotional and theological character, including khutub and eulogies of the Imāms.[98] In the Qayyūm al-asmā, he himself refers to works written by him for other merchants during his days in Būshihr.[99] According to Āvāra, some of these works were read by Shaykhīs and excited curiosity as to the identity of their author.[100] Nicolas -- who does not, unfortunately, cite his authority for the statement -- maintains that the first work penned by the Bāb was a treatise entitled Risāla-yi fiqhīyya, composed in Būshihr at the age of nineteen.[101] No manuscript of this work is known to exist, but there are a number of copies extant of a short treatise which appears to have been written in the lifetime of Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī. This is the risāla on sulūk referred to above. It would seem from a passage near the end of this treatise, in which the Bāb refers to 'my lord, protector, and teacher, Hāj Sayyid Kāzim al-Rashtī, may God prolong his life', that it was written between 1255/1839-40, when the Bāb visited Karbalā for a year, and the death of Rashtī at the beginning of 1844.[102] It seems that the composition and distribution of these early works by the Bāb excited some degree of controversy: Hāj Sayyid Jawād Karbalā'ī, a prominent Shaykhī who had close ties with the Bāb's family, is recorded

as stating that Hāj Mīrzā Sayyid Muhammad, one of the Bāb's uncles, once approached him with a request to 'give some good counsel to my nephew... tell him not to write certain things which can only arouse the jealousy of some people: these people cannot bear to see a young merchant of little schooling show such erudition, they feel envious'.[103] The Bāb himself indicates in the Qayyūm al-asmā that his relatives treated his activities with considerable disapproval.[104]

In the end, ascetic practices and religious matters gradually came to occupy the Bāb's mind to the exclusion of his business affairs, and, in 1255/1839-40, he closed up his office in Būshihr and headed for Karbalā.[105] He remained at the ʿatabāt for about one year,[106] during which period he attended the classes of Rashtī, who received him with much attention on several occasions.[107] According to al-Karbalā'ī, the Bāb remained at the ʿatabāt for eleven months, eight in Karbalā and three at other shrines; when in Karbalā, he would attend the classes of Rashtī every two or three days.[108] Ahmad Rūhī Kirmānī states that he attended the general class of Rashtī every day.[109] Balyuzi has argued, in keeping with the Bābī/Bahā'ī hagiographical tradition of innate knowledge (ʿilm-i ladunī), that 'these occasional visits did not and could not make Him a pupil or disciple of Siyyid Kāzim'.[110] While this is certainly correct in the sense that the Bāb never completed a full course of studies on the basis of which he might have been granted an ijāza by Rashtī or another mujtahid, it is misleading in terms of his mental attitude towards Sayyid Kāzim. We have already quoted the Risāla fi 'l-sulūk, in which the Bāb refers to Rashtī as 'my lord, support, and teacher (sayyidī wa muʿtamadī wa muʿallimī)'; in an early prayer, he speaks of himself as having been 'one of the companions of Kāzim, may my spirit be his sacrifice'.[111] Similar references may be found in numerous other early letters.[112] It seems that, while in Karbalā, the Bāb also studied Arabic literature under Mullā Sādiq Khurāsānī, who later became one of his most active converts.[113]

Several sources indicate that, in the course of his stay in Karbalā and, particularly, his visits to the classes of Rashtī, the Bāb became acquainted with and attracted a certain amount of attention from a number of Shaykhīs, many of whom later became his followers. These included Shaykh Hasan Zunūzī,[114] Mullā Jaʿfar Qazvīnī,[115] Mullā Sādiq Khurāsānī,[116] Mullā Muhammad Husayn Bushrū'ī,[117] Mīrzā Muhammad ʿAlī Nahrī and his brother Mīrzā Hādī,[118] Mullā Ahmad Muʿallim Hisārī,[119] Mīrzā Muhammad Rawda-khwān Yazdī,[120] and Sayyid Jawād Karbalā'ī.[121] Mīrzā Husayn Khān Dakhīlī, a son of Mullā Husayn Dakhīl Marāgha'ī, states in an unfinished manuscript that his father met the Bāb with Sayyid Kāzim and that a group of mutual friends used to talk about him before Rashtī's death.

This group included Mullā Ahmad Ibdāl Marāgha'ī, Āqā Muhammad Hasan, Āqā Muhammad Husayn Khāla-ughlī Marāgha'ī, and Mullā ᶜAlī Ardabīlī.[122] That the Bāb met and served Sayyid Kāzim and was held in respect while in Karbalā is also noted by Kirmānī in his first polemic against him, the Izhāq al-bātil, although he does point out that he himself never met him.[123]

After about one year, in 1256/1840-1 or, according to another version, in the autumn of 1841,[124] the Bāb ceded to requests from his mother and uncles and returned to Shīrāz. Before long, however, he seems to have grown restless again and planned to go back to ᶜIraq. The family, reluctant for him to leave, intervened once more, arranging a marriage for him on 18 Rajab 1258/25 August 1842, to Khadīja Bigum, a daughter of his mother's paternal uncle, Hājī Mīrzā ᶜAlī.[125] A child named Ahmad was born in 1259/1843, but died in infancy or, according to one source, was still-born.[126]

It was several months after this that the Bāb had what appears to have been the first of a number of dreams or visions which convinced him that he had been chosen as the bearer of divine knowledge to succeed Rashtī, and as the gate to the hidden Imām. In a passage at the beginning of his tafsīr on the Sūrat al-baqara, he states that, on the night before he began the book (his first major work), he dreamt that the city of Karbalā (al-ard al-muqaddasa) rose piecemeal (dharratan dharratan) into the air and came to his house (in Shīrāz) to stand before him, whereupon he was informed of the imminent death of Rashtī.[127] The implication is that the Bāb had what he regarded as a significant dream not long before the death of the Sayyid in Dhū 'l-Hijja 1259, possibly in the month of Dhū 'l-Qaᶜda/November-December 1843, as suggested by Māzandarānī.[128] According to a majority of manuscripts consulted by me, this tafsīr was completed up to the first juz' of the Qur'an (verse 131 of the sūra) in Muharram 1260/January-February 1844.[129] The second half of the tafsīr was completed in the course of 1260/1844 and was among the works in the Bāb's possession when he performed the hajj in the latter part of that year; it was, however, stolen from him, together with a number of other volumes, between Medina and Jidda.[130]

The extant text of the first half of the Tafsīr Sūrat al-baqara reveals very little which might be taken as seriously heterodox, in contrast to the highly unconventional Qayyūm al-asmā, begun only a few months afterwards. The abrupt and significant change in style and content between these two works seems to be attributable to a second, more compelling visionary experience which the Bāb underwent about one month before the announcement of his claims to Muhammad Husayn Bushrū'ī in May 1844. In his Kitāb al-fihrist, written in Būshihr on his return

from pilgrimage on 15 Jumādī II 1261/21 June 1845,[131] the Bāb clearly states that 'the first day on which the spirit descended into his heart was the middle (i.e. the 15th.) of the month of Rabīᶜ II'.[132] Since it is added that fifteen months had passed since that experience, we can give the date as 15 Rabīᶜ II 1260/4 May 1844. It would seem that this 'descent of the spirit' was accompanied by a vision similar in many respects to initiatory dreams described as experienced by al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī; this is described by the Bāb in his Ṣaḥīfa-yi ᶜadlīyya as follows:

> Know that the appearance of these verses, prayers, and divine sciences is the result of a dream in which I saw the blessed head of the prince of martyrs (Imām Ḥusayn) severed from his sacred body, alongside the heads of his kindred. I drank seven drops of the blood of that martyred one, out of pure and consummate love. From the grace vouchsafed by the blood of the Imām, my breast was filled with convincing verses and mighty prayers. Praise be unto God for having given me to drink of the blood of him who is His Proof, and made thereof the reality of my heart'.[133]

Just as al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī had felt themselves confirmed in their roles as, in some sense, mediators of the knowledge of the Prophet and Imāms following dreams, so the Bāb now clearly began to regard himself as the recipient of the divine afflatus, verbally inspired by the grace of the Imām and filled with the holy spirit. However, whereas his two predecessors had been members of the ᶜulamā class and were able to adapt their visionary experiences to their role within the accepted patterns of religious behaviour inside the 'ecclesiastical' hierarchy (within whose confines the takfīr controversy remained), the Bāb was to take the step characteristic of uneducated or partially-educated individuals who believe themselves to be granted supernatural revelations but have no recognized position within the formal religious structure of their society -- the creation of a role for himself outside the established ecclesia, corresponding to an approved charismatic or messianic figure revered in popular belief or expectation. The Bāb continued to experience dreams or visions until at least Ramaḍān 1260/September-October 1844,[134] and possibly much later, but their significance dwindled somewhat as he came to believe himself to be in a state of perpetual grace and a recipient of direct verbal inspiration from the twelfth Imām or, indeed, God Himself.

It seems possible that, even before the death of Rashtī, the Bāb had begun to view himself as his future successor and as the 'bearer of the cause' he predicted. Kirmānī maintains that, during the lifetime of Rashtī, the Bāb had been held in some respect, but was even then influenced by certain ideas and events which ultimately led to his later claims.[135] He holds that the Bāb had heard of the appearance of a certain Mullā Ṣādiq in Ādharbāyjān, who had acquired a following of

some one thousand two hundred during Rashtī's lifetime, and that he was impressed by him.[136] The Mullā Sādiq named here would, in fact, appear to have been Mullā Sādiq Urdūbādī, who preached the imminent advent of the Qā'im in the Caucasus in the period before 1844,[137] but there is no evidence in the Bāb's own writings that he had either heard of or been influenced, however indirectly, by him. In a letter written in late 1260 or 1261, he indicates that 'following the death of the late Sayyid, there must be such a leader (sayyid) among his followers in every age', and makes it clear that he was the individual to whom the Shaykhīs were meant to turn.[138] It seems that he received at least two letters from Rashtī, the contents of which he interpreted as an indication of his future position.[139] Āvāra states that he saw a letter in the Bāb's hand, dated 1259, in which he instructs his uncle to 'tell the tullāb that the cause has not yet reached maturity and the time has not yet come',[140] which strongly suggests that he was attracting attention as a potential leader at this point. The proximity of the year 1260, exactly one thousand lunar years after the entry of the twelfth Imām into the ghaybat al-sughrā, cannot have failed to further encourage his belief in the nearness of a new revelation of inner truth, not, perhaps, unrelated to the eventual return of the Imām. In a letter written from prison in Ādharbāyjān to his uncle Hāj Sayyid ʿAlī, the Bāb indicates his belief that the year 1260 witnessed the beginning of a period of revealed bātin, following several centuries of zāhir:

> From the time of the revelation of the Qur'an for a period of nineteen times 66 years (1254), which is the number of Allāh (i.e. sixty-six in abjad reckoning), was the outward reality (zāhir) of the family of Muhammad, during which every 66 years one letter of the words bism Allāh al-rahmān al-rahīm passed by, while four more years additional to the form of all the letters passed in the time of the perfect Shīʿī, that is Ḥāj Sayyid Kāẓim....It was for this reason that the letters of bism Allāh al-rahmān al-rahīm, which contain all the Qur'an, were gathered together in his presence. Nineteen days before the beginning of the revelation of the mystery, he joined the supreme concourse; the beginning of the year 1260 was the beginning of the revelation of the mystery'.[141]

The stage was clearly set for the arrival of Mullā Husayn Bushrū'ī and other Shaykhīs from Karbalā from about April to June 1844.

The hurūf al-hayy or sābiqūn

We have observed in the first part of this chapter that, for a period of some four months after the death of Rashtī, the Shaykhī community of Karbalā found itself unable to initiate any positive action to determine the mode of succession to its late head. Then, as al-Karbalā'ī states, a break with Mīrzā Muhīt Kirmānī and Mullā Hasan Gawhar occurred, and some people began to disperse. This dispersal may well have been initiated -- and was certainly led -- by a young

Iranian Shaykhī ʿālim of about thirty-one, Mullā Muhammad Husayn Bushrū'ī.[142] Born the son of a local merchant in Bushrūyya, Khurāsān, in 1229/1814, Bushrū'ī was sent at an early age to Mashhad, where he studied in the Mīrzā Jaʿfar madrasa.[143] His principal teacher in Mashhad was Sayyid Muhammad Qasīr Radawī Mashhadī (d.1255/1839-40),[144] a pupil of Āqā Bihbihānī and the teacher of another leading early Bābī, Mullā Muhammad Sādiq Khurāsānī.[145] Bushrū'ī appears to have become a Shaykhī in Mashhad[146] and to have studied afterwards in Tihrān[147] and Isfahān[148] before travelling to the ʿatabāt to study under Rashtī.[149] In Karbalā, where he stayed for nine or eleven years,[150] he gained a reputation as one of the leading pupils of the Sayyid, who entrusted him with the task of answering questions on his behalf.[151] He wrote at least two books during this period, including a tafsīr on the Sūrat al-kawthar, and seems to have acquired a private following of tullāb and admirers, among them Mullā Muhammad Taqī Harawī, Mullā ʿAbd al-Khāliq Yazdī, and Mīrzā Ahmad Azghandī.[152] There appears to have grown up a conviction among some that Bushrū'ī would be the successor of Rashtī (al-qā'im bi 'l-amr baʿdahu), a belief which was made public on the latter's death but rejected by Bushrū'ī himself.[153]

As noted previously, about four years before the death of Rashtī, Bushrū'ī was sent on his behalf to Isfahān and Mashhad to discuss the Shaykhī position with Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Shaftī and Hājī Mīrzā ʿAskar (then Imām-Jumʿa of Mashhad).[154] Following his visit to Mashhad, he seems to have returned to Bushrūyya for a time; on his way back to the ʿatabāt, he heard of Rashtī's death while in Kirmānshāh,[155] arriving back in Karbalā soon after, on 1 Muharram 1260/22 January 1844.[156] On his return, Mullā Husayn, as we have noted above, discussed the situation with Mullā Hasan Gawhar, Mīrzā Muhīt Kirmānī, and other leading Shaykhīs, but appears to have been dissatisfied with their wait-and-see policy. On or about 2 Safar/22 February, he retired with his brother, Mīrzā Muhammad Hasan, and cousin, Mīrzā Muhammad Bāqir, to the Masjid al-Kūfa, in order to engage in iʿtikāf for the conventional forty-day period (arbaʿīn).[157] While there, he was joined by Mullā ʿAlī Bastāmī and some six or twelve companions, who began an iʿtikāf some days behind the first arrivals.[158] Zarandī appears to limit the number participating in the iʿtikāf to those who were later to become the Bāb's first disciples, the hurūf al-hayy or sābiqūn,[159] thereby giving the misleading impression that a simple division occurred between those who set out in search of a successor to Rashtī -- and, by virtue of that act alone, 'discovered' the Bāb -- and those who were prepared to await developments in Karbalā. It seems, however, that larger numbers were involved: Mīrzā Husayn Hamadānī, the author of the Tārīkh-i jadīd, relates that

he was present at the i^{c}tikāf in the mosque at Kūfa (presumably a fiction of convenience on his part) and that he saw there, apart from several of those who later became hurūf al-hayy, a Mīrzā ^{c}Abd al-Hādī, a Mullā Bashīr, and 'many other learned and devout men who had retired into seclusion'.[160] Māzandarānī mentions Hājī Sayyid Khalīl al-Madā'inī, a tribal leader who had studied under Rashtī, as also present at the i^{c}tikāf.[161] The Hasht bihisht maintains that no fewer than forty individuals were involved.[162]

After the celebration of the birth of the Prophet on 12 Rabī^{c} I/ 1 April, Bushrū'ī left Kūfa with his brother and cousin and, possibly, several others, heading for Kirmān with the intention of meeting and consulting with Karīm Khān. According to Shaykh Muhammad Taqī Hashtrūdī's Abwāb al-hudā, he was accompanied on his journey by Mullā Yūsuf Ardabīlī, Mullā Jalīl Khū'ī (Urūmī), Mullā ^{c}Alī Bushrū'ī, Mīrzā Ahmad Azghandī, Shaykh Abū Turāb Ashtahārdī, and others.[163] The same source states that Bushrū'ī himself had told the author that, having despaired of Mullā Hasan Gawhar, he had decided to visit Kirmānī.[164] Ahmad ibn Abī 'l-Hasan Sharīf Shīrāzī records a similar statement by a companion of Bushrū'ī.[165] Ahmad Ruhī holds that Kirmānī was already 'inviting people' to join him, and that Bushrū'ī and his companions sought him out as the possible bāb of the Imām.[166] The route taken by Bushrū'ī and his fellow-travellers passed, however, through Būshihr and Shīrāz, where it would seem that they sought out Sayyid ^{c}Alī Muhammad. According to one account, Bushrū'ī told Mīrzā ^{c}Abd al-Wahhāb Khurāsānī that 'since the Seyyid ^{c}Alī Muhammad had honoured me with his friendship during a journey which we made together to the Holy Shrines..., I at once on reaching Shīrāz sought out his abode'.[167] Other sources are agreed that Bushrū'ī had at least seen the Sayyid during the latter's stay in Karbalā in 1841, probably shortly before his departure for Isfahān,[168] while Āvāra maintains that he had formed a particular affection for the Bāb at that period.[169]

According to Zarandī, Bushrū'ī arrived in Shīrāz on 4 Jumādī I/22 May, was met by the Bāb on his arrival, and acquainted that evening with the latter's claims.[170] Almost two months, however, seems unnecessarily long for the journey from Karbalā to Shīrāz, and we may presume that Bushrū'ī actually arrived some weeks before this. That such was the case seems to be confirmed by Hamadānī, who describes a process of gradual conversion over several meetings culminating in his reading of the Qayyūm al-asmā.[171] Mīrzā Yahyā Subh-i Azal indicated to E.G. Browne that it was the perusal of the Qayyūm al-asmā which had initially convinced Bushrū'ī of the truth of the Bāb's claims.[172] During this period, Bushrū'ī also read part at least of the Bāb's incomplete tafsīr on the

Sūrat al-baqara[173] and his short commentary on the Ḥadīth al-jārīyya.[174] Mullā Jaᶜfar Qazvīnī states, on the authority of Mullā Jalīl Urdūbādī (Urūmī), himself one of the ḥurūf al-ḥayy, that the Bāb showed various writings to Bushrū'ī while the latter was teaching in the Wakīl mosque; he says that Bushrū'ī would go with his companions every day to visit the Bāb and that, after forty days, the latter openly revealed his claims to them.[175] Whatever the details of this preliminary period, the Bāb did, in the end, announce to Bushrū'ī that he was the successor to Rashtī and, indeed, the bāb al-Imām; Bushrū'ī accepted his claims, by reason of which he came to be known as 'the first to believe' (awwal man āmana), the 'gate of the gate' (bāb al-bāb), and even the 'return of Muhammad'.[176] The date of this 'declaration' is given by the Bāb himself with great precision in the Bayān-i fārsī as the evening of 5 Jumādī I/22 May, at two hours and eleven minutes after sunset.[177]

Some three weeks before that, on 15 Rabīᶜ II/4 May, another group of Shaykhīs set off from Karbalā for Shīrāz, apparently travelling some of the way by sea, presumably following Bushrū'ī's route via Būshihr.[178] This group consisted of seven individuals 'to the number of the days of the week', namely Mullā ᶜAlī Bastāmī, Mullā ᶜAbd al-Jalīl (Urūmī), Mīrzā Muhammad ᶜAlī Qazvīnī (a brother-in-law of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn), Mullā Ḥasan Bajastānī, Mullā Aḥmad (Ibdāl) Marāgha'ī, Mullā Maḥmūd Khū'ī, and Mullā Muhammad Mīyāmī.[17] Zarandī, however, in writing of what must be the same group, omits the last name and adds another seven, bringing the total to thirteen.[180] Arriving at the latest some forty days after the Bāb's 'declaration',[181] this group of thirteen met the Bāb individually and accepted his claims, most probably with the encouragement of Bushrū'ī and his brother and cousin, who had also joined the ranks of the Bāb's disciples.[182] Included in this group were Mullā ᶜAlī Qazvīnī and his brother Mīrzā Hādī; the former was, as we have noted, a brother-in-law of Fāṭima Khānum Baraghānī, better known by the titles Qurrat al-ᶜAyn (given her by Rashtī) and Jināb-i Ṭāhira (given her by the Bāb).[183] This woman had already won a reputation as an outstanding and radical Shaykhī ᶜālima, and was to become a centre of much controversy following her acceptance of Babism. Although then in Qazvīn,[184] she was enrolled by the Bāb in his group of ḥurūf al-ḥayy, apparently on the recommendation of Mullā Muhammad ᶜAlī.[185] It would appear that the latter then corresponded with her concerning the Bāb and that, on receipt of his information, she, for her part, accepted his claims: '...at the beginning of the cause of this mighty one, I was in Qazvīn and, as soon as I heard of his cause, before reading the blessed tafsīr (on the Sūra Yūsuf: i.e. the Qayyūm al-asmā) or the Ṣaḥīfa Makhzūna, I believed in him'.[186]

We shall discuss the subsequent activities of Qurrat al-ʿAyn in a later chapter.

The last member of the group of eighteen individuals known as the hurūf al-hayy was a young Shaykhī tālib from Māzandarān who had, it seems, also been engaged in iʿtikāf at the mosque in Kūfa, but had travelled independently to Shīrāz.[187] Mullā Muhammad ʿAlī Bārfurūshī, later known as Hadrat-i Quddūs, became a close favourite of the Bāb, whom he accompanied on the hajj in the autumn of 1844, and eventually led the Bābī uprising in his native province in 1848.[188] With the arrival of Bārfurūshī in Shīrāz and his acceptance of the Bāb's claims, the latter considered the group of his first apostles to be complete.[189] The eighteen hurūf al-hayy (in abjad reckoning, hayy = 18)[190] appear to have constituted with the Bāb himself the first 'unity' (wāhid = 19) of a series of nineteen 'unities' which would make up a body of three hundred and sixty one individuals -- a kullu shay' (= 361) -- the first believers in the bāb of the Imām.[191] The hurūf al-hayy are themselves regarded as identical with the sābiqūn referred to in early works of the Bāb and his followers,[192] both in the literal sense of their having preceded others in the recognition of the Bāb and in the more esoteric sense of their identity with the first group of mankind to respond to God's pre-eternal covenant.[193] This latter group is itself identified in Shīʿī literature with Muhammad and the Imāms,[194] and it is clear that the Bāb regarded the hurūf al-hayy as the return of the Prophet, the twelve Imāms, the original four abwāb, and Fātima.[195] As we shall see, both the exclusive position granted the hurūf al-hayy and their identification with the most sacred figures of Shiʿism were to be productive of serious controversy in the early Bābī community of Karbalā.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Izhāq p.14.
2. Risāla in Z.H. p.508.
3. Ibid p.502.
4. Izhāq p.14.
5. Majlisī Vol.51 p.361; Mashkūr p.142.
6. See Makārim Vol.3 pp.625-31; Tabaqāt Vol.2 pp.212-5.
7. Risāla in Z.H. p.508. See also letter of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn to Mullā Jawād Vilyānī, printed in ibid p.493.
8. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.508.
9. Zarandī p.45.
10. p.463.
11. Risāla to Vilyānī in Z.H. p.493.
12. Risāla in Z.H. p.509.
13. p.463.
14. Al-dharīᶜa Vol.11 p.205.
15. See ibid Vol.3 pp.80, 80-1; Vol.11 p.205; Vol.13 pp.213, 215; Tabaqāt Vol.2 p.341; Makarim Vol.4 pp.1136-7, 1137 f.n.
16. Al-dharīᶜa Vol.13 p.215.
17. Risāla in Z.H. p.510.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid p.508.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid p.510.
22. Ibid.
23. From an incomplete MS, quoted ibid p.55.
24. Zarandī p.48.
25. Rijāl Vol.5 pp.116-7; Chahārdihī p.39.
26. Ma'āthir p.179.
27. Ibid; on the date of ʿUbayd Allāh's rebellion, see Tarā'iq Vol.3 p.425.

28. Rijāl Vol.5 p.117. On Mīrzā ʿAlī Thiqat al-Islām, a son of Mūsā and a prominent Constitutionalist, who was hanged by the Russians in 1330/1912, see Chahārdihī pp.187-93.

29. Chahārdihī p.176.

30. Ibid pp.177-8; Rijāl Vol.6 p.83. Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥusayn was succeeded by his brother Ismaʿīl (d.1317/1899), a pupil of Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Uskūʾī (one of the leading Shaykhīs of Karbalā and a pupil of Mullā Ḥasan Gawhar), who was in turn succeeded by the son of Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥusayn, Mīrzā Abū ʾl-Qāsim (d.1362/1943), after whom the family seems to have died out (see Chahārdihī pp.196 8). Māzandarānī (Z.H. p.9) claims that Mīrzā Ismāʿīl became a Bahāʾī.

31. Chahārdihī pp.49-50.

32. Rijāl Vol.6 p.83.

33. Numerous and conflicting accounts of this important tribunal have been written. See, in particular, Sipihr Vol.3 pp.125-30; Hidāyat Vol.10 pp.423-8 (based on a report by Niẓām al-ʿUlamā); T.N. Vol.2 pp.277-90; Browne Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion pp.245-64; Mīrzā Muḥammad Mahdī Khān Zaʿīm al-Dawla Miftāḥ bāb al-abwāb pp.137-45; Zarandī pp.314-20; Z.H. pp.9, 10, 14-20; Qiṣaṣ pp.56-9.

34. Zarandī p.320.

35. Ibid p.510.

36. Z.H. p.9. The same author (p.10) also refers to an anti-Bābī tract by Mīrzā Abū ʾl-Qāsim Shaykh al-Islām, entitled Qalʿ al-Bāb. This work, however, is one of a number of polemics written by Ḥaji Mīrzā Abū ʾl-Qāsim ibn Sayyid Kāẓim Zanjānī (1224-92/1809-75): see Navāʾī, notes to Fitna-yi Bāb p.156; Al-dharīʿa Vol.4 p.3, Vol.12 p.153, Vol.17 pp.161, 171; Tabaqāt Vol.2 pp.61-2.

37. Radawī p.7.

38. He was the son of Mahdī Qulī Khān, a son of Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān, a son of Fatḥ-ʿAlī Khān Qājār; Mahdī Qulī was a brother of Āghā Muḥammad Shāh. The latter put his brother to death and gave his widow and child (Ibrāhīm Khān) into the keeping of his nephew, Bābā Khān (the future Fatḥ-ʿAlī Shāh). Ibrāhīm Khān's mother had three further children by Fatḥ-ʿAlī, these being two daughters, Zaynab Khānum and Khadīja Khānum, and a son, Muḥammad Qulī Mīrzā Mulk Ārā (see ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Navāʾī 'Ḥāj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī' pp.112-3.

39. Radawī p.4.

40. Sipihr Vol.1 p.354; Aḥmadī pp.50, 55; Bāstānī Pārīzī, introduction to ibid p.12.

41. She was also known as Nawwāb Mutaʿālīyya and Dawlat Gildī: see Sipihr Vol.2 p.155; Navāʾī, notes to ʿAḍud al-Dawla p.316.

42. Rustam Khān was married to Shāh Gawhar Khānum, the nineteenth daughter of Fatḥ-ʿAlī, and Naṣr Allāh Khān to Tājlī Bigum, his twentieth daughter (see Aḥmadī p.50 n.1; Sipihr Vol.2 p.158; Navāʾī, notes to ʿAḍud al-Dawla p.319).

43. Maḥmūd Ḥimmat Tārīkh-i mufaṣṣal-i Kirmān pp.252-4.

44. Bāstānī Pārīzī in Aḥmadī p.53 f.n.

45. Himmat p.254; Bāstānī Pārīzī in Aḥmadī p.52 n.2. ᶜAbd al-Majīd Mūsawī Qarābāghī states that it was expressly built for Karīm Khān (see Muḥammad ᶜAlī Jamālzāda 'Shuyūkh-i silsila-yi Shaykhiyya' p.490.

46. Radawī p.12.

47. Ibid pp.12-13.

48. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Bāstānī Pārīzī Wādī-yi haft wād p.358.

49. Radawī pp.14-15.

50. Undoubtedly on account of the rebellion of Ibrāhīm Khān's son and immediate successor, ᶜAbbās Qulī Khān, against Fatḥ-ᶜAlī Shāh (see Aḥmadī pp.55-8; Himmat pp.257-9).

51. The text of this ijāza has been printed in Radawī pp.26-8.

52. Ibid p.24.

53. Ibid p.25. The girl was also descended, through her mother, from Shāh-rukh Shāh.

54. Ibid pp.25-6.

55. Quoted ibid p.29.

56. Quoted ibid p.32.

57. Quoted ibid p.30.

58. He cannot have arrived before this since, as we shall note, by the time of his arrival, Ḥājī Sayyid Jawād Shīrāzī appears to have already established his position in Kirmān quite successfully; the latter did not arrive in the city until 1254/1838-9 (Aḥmadī p.76).

59. Chahārdihī p.259.

60. Ibid p.260.

61. Radawī pp.22-3.

62. Ibid p.19.

63. Aḥmadī pp.74-5. On Fīrūz Mīrzā, see Rijāl Vol.3 pp.110-4.

64. Aḥmadī p.75; Aḥmad ᶜAlī Khān Vazīrī Tārīkh-i Kirmān p.387.

65. Chahārdihī p.260; Vazīrī p.389. Bāstānī Pārīzī states that he replaced Shaykh Niᶜmat Allāh al-Baḥrānī as Imām Jumᶜa in about 1246/1830-1 (notes to ibid p.486), but he does not appear to have arrived in Kirmān until about 1254/1838-9 (Aḥmadī p.76). On Ḥāj Sayyid Jawād, see ibid pp.76-7 f.n. He was a cousin of the Bāb's father and, according to Fayḍī, was secretly an adherent of the former (Khānadān-i Afnān p.17).

66. Aḥmadī p.76 f.n.1.

67. Chahārdihī p.261.

68. Bāstānī Pārīzī Wādī p.362.

69. Chahārdihī pp.261-2.

70. Ibid p.263.

71. Ibid; Radawī pp.87, 88.

72. Bāstānī Pārīzī in Ahmadī p.149 f.n.2.

73. For details of these individuals, see the relevant chapters in Fihrist. A temporary split occurred in Kirmānī Shaykhism when Muḥammad Raḥim Khān, Karīm's eldest son, was passed over in favour of Ḥāj Muhammad Khān; his followers, known as Raḥīm Khānīs, seem, for the most part, to have rejoined the main group on the death of Muḥammad Khān (Chahārdihī p.247). A more serious split took place on Karīm Khān's death, when Ḥāj Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Hamadānī (1239-1319/1824-1901-2), the leader of the school (under Karīm Khān) in Hamadān, opposed the succession of Muḥammad Khān on the grounds that he was himself the most learned of the ʿulamā and that the leadership of the school ought not to become hereditary. His followers, known as Bāqirīs (in distinction to those of Muḥammad Khān, known as Nāṭiqīs or Nawāṭiq), predominate in Hamadān, Jandaq, Bīyābānak, Nā'in, and Isfahān (Rijāl Vol.6 pp.209-11; Chahārdihī p.247).

74. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.519.

75. Ibid p.518.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid p.519.

78. Ibid. See Izhāq p.14.

79. See previous chapter, note 154.

80. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.517.

81. See ibid pp.520, 527.

82. pp.100-1.

83. Kulaynī Usūl Vol.1 p.456.

84. The section referred to may be found on pages 86-93, and the original question on pp.11-12.

85. The best and most convenient are: Zarandī; N.H.; Fayḍī Nuqta-yi ūlā; Balyuzi The Bāb; Nicolas Ali Mohammed; T.N. Vol.2 Notes C, G, I, L, M, and S; Āvāra.

86. Bāb Kitāb al-fihrist (MS) p.288; cf. idem Qayyūm al-asmā (MS) f.43b.

87. Bāb Kitāb al-fihrist p.286.

88. Zarandī pp.72-3; Faydī Nuqta-yi ūlā p.64; Āvāra p.27. The Bāb himself refers to his lineage in the Qayyūm al-asmā f.43b.

89. Shīrāzī quoted Khān Bahādur Āghā Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Some New Notes on Babism' p.446.

90. Zarandī p.30.

91. On the Bāb's schooling and childhood generally, see Balyuzi The Bāb

pp.33-9; Mīrzā Abū 'l-Faḍl Gulpāygānī and Mīrzā Mahdī Gulpāygānī Kashf al-ghiṭā pp.82-4; Āvāra pp.31-2.

92. Faydī Nuqṭa-yi ūlā p.82.

93. Balyuzi The Bab p.39.

94. Faydī Nuqṭa-yi ūlā pp.85-8. Muᶜīn al-Salṭana says he was twenty when he went independent (quoted Balyuzi The Bab p.41), but this conflicts with the Bāb's own statement that he left Būshihr at that age.

95. Bāb Risāla fi 'l-sulūk (MS).

96. Idem Al-ṣaḥīfa bayna 'l-ḥaramayn (MS) pp.80-1. It is, however, interesting to compare a passage in the later Bayan-i farsī (7:6, p.246), in which he states that the ᶜulamā, ḥukkām, tujjār, and others should marry within the limits of theor own class.

97. Among the works referred to and quoted by name by the Bāb in various writings, we may note: Majlisī Biḥār al-anwār (Al-kawthar ff.56a, 58b; Dalā'il-i sabᶜa p.51); idem Ḥaqq al-yaqīn (Al-kawthar f.5a); al-ᶜĀmilī Al-bayan (Kitāb al-ṭahāra (MS) p.173); Ibn Bābūya Man lā yaḥduruhu 'l-faqīh (ibid p.167); al-Tūsī Al-misbāḥ (ibid p.167; Dalā'il p.66); al-Aḥsā'ī Al-fawā'id (Al-kawthar ff.24a, 27b; letter quoted Z.H. p.274); Rashtī Al-lawāmiᶜ (Al-kawthar f.24a). He also quotes numerous khuṭub of the Imām ᶜAlī, including his Khuṭbat al-yatīma (Tafsīr Sūrat al-baqara (MS) f.4a), Al-khuṭbat al-tuṭunjīyya (Dalā'il p.46), Khuṭba yawm al-ghadīr (ibid p.47), Khuṭbat al-ijmāᶜ (Al-kawthar f.77b), and Khuṭbat al-maḥzūn (ibid f.85b). It would also appear that the Bāb was familiar with the Bible, as attested by ᶜAbbās Mīrzā's physician, Dr. William Cormick, who records that he was seen reading a copy while in custody (quoted Browne Materials p.262). His only quotation (as far as I am aware) from the Gospels is, however, quite apocryphal (Al-baqara f.20b).

98. Faydī Nuqṭa-yi ūlā p.88.

99. Qayyūm f.43a.

100. p.35.

101. Ali Mohammed pp.189-90.

102. The words 'may God prolong his life (aṭāla 'llāh baqāhu)' appear only in the texts in 4011.C and 6006.C.

103. Narrative of Mīrzā Ḥabīb Allāh Afnān, quoted Balyuzi The Bab p.40. On Sayyid Jawād Karbalā'ī (a grandson of Baḥr al-ᶜUlūm), see Gulpāygānī Kashf pp.55-90; Z.H. pp.238-44.

104. Qayyūm f.43b.

105. The Bāb states that he was fifteen when he went to Būshihr, and that he left for Karbalā five years later (prayer quoted Faydī Nuqṭa-yi ūlā pp. 104-5). Balyuzi gives an interesting account of his departure (The Bab p.41) but, on the authority of Gulpāygānī, gives the date as the spring of 1841.

106. Bāb, prayer quoted Faydī Nuqṭa-yi ūlā p.105.

107. Sipihr Vol.3 p.39; Zarandī pp.26-7.

108. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla i: Z.H. p.529.

109. Shaykh Aḥmad Rūḥī Kirmānī Faṣl al-khiṭāb fī tarjumati aḥwāl al-Bāb (MS) f.3b.

110. The Bab p.42.

111. Prayer in TBA 6005.C pp.5-6.

112. See Mīrzā Asad Allāh Fāḍil-i Māzandarānī Asrār al-āthār Vol.4 p.369.

113. Ibid p.370.

114. Zarandī pp.25-30. On Zunūzī, who later transcribed many of the works of the Bāb, see ibid pp.25, 30, 212, 245, 249, 307, 593-4; Z.H. pp.37-8.

115. Qazvīnī pp.463-4. On Mullā Jaʿfar, see ibid passim; Samandar p.232; Z.H. pp.363-5.

116. Nicolas Ali Mohammed pp.191-5. On Mullā Ṣādiq, see Z.H. pp.145-53; Samandar pp.162-70; Zarandī pp.100, 145, 184.

117. Nicolas Ali Mohammed p.193.

118. Z.H. p.97. On these two brothers, see ibid pp.96-9; ʿAbbās Effendi Tadhkirat al-wafā pp.269-70, 276.

119. Z.H. p.159. On Mullā Aḥmad, see ibid pp.157-60; Samandar p.252. He was, as we shall see, later Qurrat al-ʿAyn's chief rival in Karbalā.

120. Z.H. p.458. On Mīrzā Muḥammad, see ibid. He was one of the Bāb's ḥurūf al-ḥayy, but later travelled to Kirmān and became a Shaykhi under Karīm Khān, one of whose relatives he married.

121. Gulpāygānī Kashf p.57. On Sayyid Jawād, see note 103 above.

122. MS cited Z.H. p.55. Apart from Mullā Ḥusayn Dakhīl (a poet who lived with Bushrū'ī at one time) and Mullā Aḥmad Ibdāl (who became one of the ḥurūf al-ḥayy), none of these individuals is well known.

123. Izhāq pp.104-5.

124. Thus Balyuzi The Bab p.41.

125. Faydī Nuqṭa-yi ūlā p.158.

126. Ibid p.193; Balyuzi The Bab p.46. See also Zarandī pp.76-7; Qayyūm f.44b. It is more likely that the child was still-born since he appears to have been born prematurely in Safar 1259/March 1843 (ibid f.195a).

127. This passage generally occurs before the tafsīr of the Sūrat al-fātiḥa, which precedes that of Al-baqara proper, but it can be found in other positions or not at all (as in the Cambridge MS, Browne F.8). The MSS used by me for this passage are in TBA 6004.C, 6012.C, and 6014.C.

128. Asrār Vol.2 p.62.

129. Thus MSS 6004.C and 6012.C in TBA, and a copy in Haifa Bahā'ī Archives, originally in possession of A.L.M. Nicolas. MS 6014.C in TBA bears the date Dhū 'l-Ḥijja 1260/December 1844-January 1845; this is almost certainly corrupt since there is evidence that the second part of the tafsīr must have been completed by that date.

130. Bāb Khuṭba i Jidda (MS) p.332. The date as given in this MS is 1 Safar,

but, on the basis of other dates relating to this pilgrimage, it is clearly incorrect. Ishrāq Khāvarī cites another MS which clearly gives 11 Safar 1261/19 February 1845 (Taqwīm-i tārīkh-i amr p.24).

131. Thus dated in TBA MSS 4011.C, 6003.C, and 6007.C.

132. MSS 6003.C (p.286) and 4011.C (p.63).

133. ᶜAdlīyya p.14; cf. Zarandī p.253; Bāb, letter to Muḥammad Shāh, in Muntakhabāt-i āyāt p.14.

134. Thus Qayyūm ff.25a, 71a, 120b-121a. The vision described on f.71a is said to have occurred in Ramaḍān; the section of the Qayyūm al-asmā in which it occurs appears to have been written in the same month (see ff.65b, 80a), and we may conclude that Ramaḍān 1260 is intended. What may have been a vision of the hidden Imām is described in Al-kawthar ff.68b-69a.

135. Izhāq p.106.

136. Ibid; cf. p.175.

137. See ᶜAbd al-Ḥamīd Ishrāq Khāvarī Raḥīq-i makhtūm Vol.2 pp.309-10.

138. Letter quoted Z.H. p.284.

139. Letter quoted ibid p.286.

140. Letter quoted Āvāra pp.35-6. Āvāra says the letter was written from Būshihr to Shīrāz, but the Bāb was definitely in Shīrāz at this date.

141. Letter quoted Z.H. p.223; cf. Bāb Al-kawthar f.88b.

142. On Bushrū'ī, see Rijāl Vol.1 pp.379-83; Malik Khusravī Vol.1 pp.19-58; Z.H. pp.112-42.

143. Malik Khusravī Vol.1 pp.19-20.

144. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.521. On Muḥammad Qaṣīr, see Nujūm pp.378-9; Kāzimī Vol.1 pp.15-9; Makārim Vol.1 p.232.

145. Samandar p.163.

146. Malik Khusravī Vol.1 p.20.

147. Ibid.

148. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.521.

149. Conflicting versions are given in ibid and Malik Khusravī Vol.1 p.20.

150. Zarandī (pp.415-6) gives nine years, Malik Khusravī (Vol.1 p.21) eleven.

151. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. pp.521, 522.

152. Ibid pp.521-2.

153. Ibid p.522. See also Shīrāzī, quoted Khān Bahādur Āghā p.448 f.n.

154. Zarandī pp.19-24, 416; al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. pp.522-3.

155. Letter from Qurrat al-ᶜAyn to Vilyānī in Z.H. p.499.

156. Zarandī p.47.

157. Ibid p.50; al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.510. The Jāmi^{c} al-Kūfa was one of four mosques in which Shī^{c}ī law permitted i^{c}tikāf, according to specific rules (see Abū 'l-Qāsim Najm al-Dīn Ja^{c}far ibn al-Ḥasan al-Hillī Al-mukhtaṣar al-nāfi^{c} pp.97-8).

158. Zarandī p.50; al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.510.

159. Zarandī pp.50, 66. Of the ḥurūf al-ḥayy, Mullā Muḥammad ^{c}Alī Bārfurūshī and Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn are not included among the mu^{c}takkifūn by Zarandī. There are close parallels between Zarandī's account of the occult manner in which the ḥurūf al-ḥayy were 'drawn' to the Bāb (see pp.52, 63, 68, 69-70) and the 'search after hidden truth' element recurrent in Isma^{c}īlī biographical writing (see M.G.S. Hodgson The Order of Assassins p.17 and f.n.15). This points up the significance of the gnostic motif in Babism (and its connection with the polar and chiliastic motifs), to which we shall return. This same theme is extremely common in later Bahā'ī biographical and autobiographical materials in both Iranian and Western contexts.

160. N.H. p.33.

161. Z.H. p.262.

162. Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī and Shaykh Aḥmad Rūḥī Kirmānī Hasht bihisht p.276.

163. Abwāb al-hudā (MS) quoted Z.H. p.117. On Hashtrūdī (d.1270/1853-4) and this work, see ibid pp.73-4.

164. Ibid.

165. Quoted Khān Bahādur Āghā p.448 f.n.

166. Faṣl al-khiṭāb f.4a.

167. N.H. p.34; cf. Rūḥī Kirmānī Faṣl al-khiṭāb f.4b.

168. See Nicolas Ali Mohammed p.193; Faydī Nuqṭa-yi ūlā pp.101-2.

169. p.39.

170. Zarandī pp.52-61.

171. N.H. pp.35-9. It is possible that Bushrū'ī initially decided to stay in Shīrāz in order to receive treatment for a cardiac condition from which he suffered (see ibid p.34; N.K. p.106). The Bāb himself states that it was the reading of his writings which convinced Bushrū'ī of the truth of his claims (letter quoted Māzandarānī Asrār Vol.3 p.103).

172. E.G. Browne 'A Catalogue and Description of 27 Bābī Manuscripts' p.499.

173. N.H. pp.35-6.

174. Ibid p.38. For the ḥadīth, see Kulaynī Uṣūl Vol.1 pp.495-6.

175. p.472.

176. See Zarandī p.6 ; Bāb Dalā'il p.54; idem Bayān-i fārsī 1:2, p.6; idem Qayyūm ff.161b, 197b; al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.521; Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn risāla to Vilyānī in ibid p.499.

177. Bayān-i fārsī 2:7, p.30.

178. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.510.

179. Ibid.

180. Zarandī pp.66, 80-1. The seven additional names are: Mullā Khudā-bakhsh Qūchānī, Sayyid Ḥusayn Yazdī, Mīrzā Muḥammad Rawḍa-khwān Yazdī, Shaykh Sa^{c}īd Hindī, Mullā Bāqir Tabrīzī, Mullā Yūsuf Ardabīlī, and Mīrzā Hādī Qazvīnī. On these thirteen individuals severally, see Z.H. pp.19-22, 47, 49-52, 53-4, 63, 105-8, 169-70, 171, 304-5, 453, 458, 459-61; Māzandarānī Asrār Vol.3 pp.97-8, Vol.4 pp.384-5; Malik Khusravī Vol.2 pp.2-6, 6-10, 201-4, 204-10, 210-12, 218-9, 225-8, Vol.3 pp.276-83; Ishraq Khāvarī Qāmūs Vol.2 pp.1126-33, Vol.4 pp.1877-9; Samandar pp.85-6, 153-4, 216-8, 351-2; Balyuzi The Bab pp.58-68; T.N. Vol.2 pp.247-8, 248-9.

181. Bāb Bayān-i fārsī 8:15, p.300.

182. Zarandī pp.66-9, 80.

183. Pending the publication of my forthcoming biography, for details on Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn consult: Malik Khusravī Vol.3 pp.129-215; Samandar pp. 72-84, 343-70; Z.H. pp.310-69; Anon. Bi-yād-i sadumīn sāl-i shahādat-i ...Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn; Ḥissām Nuqabā'ī Ṭāhira Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn; al-Wardī Vol.2 pp.152-90; Āqā Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Baghdādī Risāla amrīyya; Mīrzā ^{c}Alī Akbar Dihkhudā (ed.) Lughat-nāma art. 'Ṭāhira'; Mu^{c}īn al-Salṭana Tabrīzī Sharḥ-i ḥāl i Ṭāhira Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn (MS); ^{c}Abbās Effendi Tadhkira pp. 291-310; Furūgh Arbāb Akhtarān-i tābān pp.26-42; Ni^{c}mat Allāh Dhukā'ī Bayḍā'ī Tadhkira-yi shu^{c}arā-yi qarn-i awwal-i Bahā'ī Vol.3 pp.63-133; Gulpāygānī Kashf pp.92-110.

184. Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn risāla to Vilyānī in Z.H. p.494. All other sources state that she was then already in Karbalā, but her own statement is unequivocal.

185. Zarandī pp.81-2.

186. Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn risāla to Vilyānī in Z.H. p.494.

187. N.H. p.33; Zarandī pp.69-72.

188. On Bārfurūshī, see Malik Khusravī Vol.1 pp.58-82; Z.H. pp.405-30; Rijāl Vol.3 pp.451-5.

189. Zarandī p.69. Accurate lists are given in ibid pp.80-1 and Gulpāygānī Kashf p.90.

190. See Bāb Bayān-i fārsī 1:2, p.7; 2:2, p.20; 5:17, p.180; 6:13, p.220.

191. Zarandī p.123; Bāb Bayān-i fārsī introduction p.3; A.L.M. Nicolas (trans.) Le Beyan Persan Vol.1 pp.7-9 f.n., 13 f.n. On the relationship of this system to the Bābī calendar, see Bāb Bayān-i fārsī 5:3, p.153. A certain similarity to the Isma^{c}īlī hierarchical system may be noted.

192. See, for example, Qayyūm ff.37a, 45a, 132a, 134a, 161a, 162a, 182b; Bāb Ḥaramayn p.16; idem, letter to Mīrzā Ḥasan Khurāsānī in TBA 6003.C p.321; Shaykh Sulṭān al-Karbalā'ī, letter quoted Z.H. pp.249-50; Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn risāla to Vilyānī in ibid p.500.

193. On this use of the term, see Rashtī ^{c}Aqā'id pp.57, 58.

194. See ibid pp.90-1; Kirmānī Al-mubīn Vol.1 pp.304-5.

195. Bāb Bayān-i fārsī 1:2, pp.6-7; 1:3-19, pp.8-10; idem, letter to Ḥāj Sayyid ^{c}Alī Shīrāzī, quoted Z.H. pp.223-4; see also Mullā Shaykh ^{c}Alī Turshīzī, letter quoted ibid p.166.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOME ASPECTS OF EARLY BĀBĪ DOCTRINE

SOME ASPECTS OF EARLY BĀBĪ DOCTRINE

The early writings of the Bāb

The hurūf al-hayy were primarily responsible for spreading the claims of the Bāb to their fellow-Shaykhīs and, to a lesser extent, other Shīᶜīs, and we shall have cause to consider their activities in this connection at a later stage. In thus furthering the Bāb's claims, they placed considerable emphasis on the writings which he was now beginning to pen in large numbers.[1] Of these early writings, by far the most important and influential was the Qayyūm al-asmā or Ahsan al-qasas, a lengthy 'commentary' on the Sūra Yūsuf (and often referred to in early Bābī literature simply as 'the tafsīr').[2] There are, unfortunately, serious problems connected with the dating of this work, which appear at present to be insoluble. According to Zarandī, the first chapter of the tafsīr, entitled 'Sūrat al-mulk', was written in the presence of Bushrū'ī on the evening of the Bāb's 'declaration', although his account gives a curious impression of an extremely lengthy chapter, which the 'Sūrat al-mulk' is not.[3] Hamadānī, however, implies that Bushrū'ī was shown a complete copy of the tafsīr, possibly on the same occasion.[4] The Bāb himself states in a letter that he completed the writing of the Qayyūm al-asmā in forty days, although he does not make it clear when he began or ended work on it.[5] It is generally reckoned that, on leaving Shīrāz before the autumn of 1844, both Mullā ᶜAlī Bastāmī and Mullā Husayn Bushrū'ī carried with them separate copies of this book, which they brought to ᶜIrāq and Tihrān respectively.[6] That this tafsīr was widely distributed in the first year of the Bāb's career is further confirmed by him in the Bayān-i fārsī, where, in reference to his hajj journey of 1844-5, he states that 'in that year the blessed commentary on the Sūra Yūsuf reached everyone'.[7] It is certainly clear that the book must have been begun in 1260/1844, since the Bāb states in an early passage that he is now twenty-five years old.[8]

Internal evidence, however, suggests that the Qayyūm al-asmā was, in fact, completed much later than the forty-day period mentioned. There are, for example, two references to 'this month of Ramadān'[9] -- most probably Ramadān 1260/August-September 1844. Other references include those to a storm at sea,[10] quite possibly one of those suffered by the Bāb on his journey from Būshihr to Jidda between 19 Ramadān/2 October and late Dhū 'l-Qaᶜda/early December;[11] to what appears to be his first public declaration of his claims at the Kaᶜba in Mecca;[12] to God's having revealed matters to him in the Kaᶜba;[13] to his call 'from this protected land, the station of Abraham', apparently Mecca;[14] to his having been 'raised up' in the Masjid al-Harām (in Mecca);[15] and,

finally, to what seems to have been yet another experience in Mecca, in which he says 'when I went to the Kaʿba (al-bayt), I found the house (al-sakīna) raised up on square supports before the bāb; and, when I sought to perform the circumambulation around the Kaʿba, I found that the duty imposed in truth in the Mother of the Book was seven times'.[16] These references, all of which occur in the later section of the book, strongly suggest that it was completed during the Bāb's pilgrimage to Mecca, from which he returned to Būshihr on 8 Jumādī I 1261/15 May 1845.[17] If this supposition is correct, then Bastāmī and Bushrū'ī and possibly others of the huruf al-hayy must have carried only portions of the tafsīr with them when they left Shīrāz. It is also not unlikely that, if this hypothesis as to a later date of completion be correct, the Bāb's reference to 'forty days' should be taken to mean forty days in all, over a prolonged period, rather than forty consecutive days.

Consisting of one hundred and eleven 'sūras', corresponding to the number of āyāt in the Sūra Yūsuf, the Qayyūm al-asmā is really much more than a tafsīr in the normal sense of the word. Much more space is taken up with doctrinal reflections of the Bāb than with actual Qur'anic commentary, and, when a verse is finally commented on, it is usually in an abstruse and allegorical fashion. The style is consciously modelled on that of the Qur'an -- a fact true of many of the Bāb's earlier writings -- this being alluded to in a statement quite early in the book: 'We have sent this book down upon our servant by the permission of God, (in a manner) like it (the Qur'an)',[18] and in later passages.[19] This apparent similarity to the style of the Qur'an (which is not, in fact, as consistent as it might at first appear), combined with the form of the book, as divided into suwar and āyāt, and the occurrence of numerous passages closely paralleling the exact wording of the Qur'an,[20] led to accusations that the Bāb had produced a 'falsified' Qur'an or 'forged' his own Qur'an. Thus, for example, Tanakābunī states that, in the year of his appearance, the Bāb sent his 'false Qur'an (Qur'ān-i jaʿlī) to ʿIraq, and that this 'Qur'an' was taken from his messenger by the Pāshā of Baghdād (Najīb Pāshā).[21] Similarly, Major Henry Rawlinson, the British Political Agent in Baghdād at the time of Mullā ʿAlī Bastāmī's arrest and trial, wrote to Stratford Canning that Mullā ʿAlī 'appeared in Kerbela, bearing a copy of the Koran, which he stated to have been delivered to him, by the forerunner of the Imam Mehdi, to be exhibited in token of his apporaching advent. The book proved on examination to have been altered and interpolated in many essential passages, the object being, to prepare the Mohammedan world for the immediate manifestation of the Imam, and to identify the individual to whom the emendations of the text were declared to have been revealed, as his inspired and true

precursor'.[22] Rawlinson elsewhere speaks of Bastāmī's 'perverted copy of the Koran'.[23]

The text of the Qayyūm al-asmā itself, however, indicates that this was a most superficial response and that that theory behind the tafsīr was much more complex than mere imitation of the Qur'an. At the very beginning of the book, it is made clear that the twelfth Imām had sent it (akhraja) to his servant (the Bāb, frequently referred to as 'the remembrance' -- al-dhikr);[24] he has been sent these 'explanations' from 'the baqīyyat Allāh, the exalted one, your Imām'.[25] To be more precise, 'God has sent down (anzala) the verses upon His Proof, the expected one', who has, in his turn, revealed them to his remembrance.[26] In different terminology, the Imām inspires (awhā) the Bāb with what God has inspired him.[27] The role of the Imām here appears to be very similar to that of the angel Gabriel in the Qur'anic theory of revelation; thus, for example, he has inspired the Bāb just as God inspired the prophets of the past.[28] The process is not, however, quite so simple, for the bulk of the work seems to be intended as the words of the Imām speaking in the first person, while there are a great many passages in which either God or the Bāb is intended as the speaker, and others in which it is not at all clear as to whom is intended. It is, nevertheless, manifest that the book is represented as a new divine revelation of sorts, comparable to the Qur'an. Thus, the Imām is 'made known' through 'the new verses from God',[29] while God speaks 'in the tongue of this mighty remembrance (i.e. the Bāb)'.[30] It is stated that 'this is a book from God',[31] and that 'God has sent down (anzala) this book',[32] while the Bāb is summoned to 'transmit what has been sent down to you from the bounty of the Merciful'.[33] In this respect, a comparison is drawn with the Qur'an which goes beyond mere form: God has 'made this book the essence (sirr) of the Qur'an, word for word',[34] and one 'will not find a letter in it other than the letters of the Qur'an';[35] this book 'is the Furqān of the past',[36] and is referred to repeatedly as 'this Qur'an',[37] 'this Furqān',[38] or one of 'these two Furqāns',[39] while reference is made to 'what God has sent down in His book, the Furqān, and in this book'.[40] As in the case of the Qur'an, a challenge is made to men to produce a book like it,[41] for it is held to be inimitable.[42] As such, it is in itself the evidence of the Imām to men.[43] It contains the sum of all previous scriptures,[44] abrogates all books of the past, except those revealed by God,[45] and is the only work which God permits the ᶜulamā to teach.[46]

The Qayyūm al-asmā may be said to combine something of the character of the tawqīᶜāt written by the hidden Imām through his intermediaries, the four abwāb, of the various books reputed to be in the possession of the Imāms -- the mushaf of Fātima, Al-sahīfa, Al-jāmiᶜa, Al-jabr, the

complete Qur'an, and the previous scriptures[47] -- and of the Qur'an itself. The tension between the Bāb's specific claims at this period to be the gate of the hidden Imām, the remembrance of God and the Imām, and the 'seal of the gates' (khātim al-abwāb) -- a topic with which we shall deal in the next section -- and what appears to be a clear impulse in the direction of a claim to prophethood, if not actual divinity (which characterizes the Bāb's works from 1848 onwards), forms one of the more interesting features of this book. It is, in any case, one of the lengthiest works of the Bāb and, leaving aside the extremely diffuse Kitāb al-asmā, the most extensive of his Arabic writings. While hardly the easiest of books to understand, being terse, allusive, and, at times, extremely vague in style, it does provide us with a reasonably detailed picture of the Bāb's thought as it must have impressed itself on his earliest disciples and opponents.

There is clearly no space here to adequately summarize the contents of a work of some four hundred pages, much of which is given over to the unsystematic treatment of metaphysical themes: reference to certain of the more interesting topics it contains must suffice. A theme which recurs throughout the book is that it is an expression of the 'true Islam' and that, indeed, salvation exists only in acceptance of the claims of the Bāb, as the representative of the Imām and of God. Thus, at the very beginning of the book, it is stated that 'the pure religion (al-dīn al-khālis) is this remembrance, secure; whoever desires submission (al-islām), let him submit himself to his cause'.[48] Similarly, it is said that 'this religion is, before God, the essence (sirr) of the religion of Muhammad',[49] and that whoever disbelieves in the Bāb shall have disbelieved in Muhammad and his book.[50] The hidden Imām declares in one passage that 'there is no path to me in this day except through this exalted gate',[51] and it is maintained that 'God has completed His proof (atamma hujjatahu) unto (men) with this book'.[52] The gate and representative of the Imām, the Bāb was also, in a sense, the Imām himself 'in the worlds of command and creation (ʿawālim al-amr wa 'l-khalq)',[53] and, as such, was entrusted with a mission on behalf of the Imām to all mankind.[54] He himself constantly addresses the 'peoples of the earth',[55] or of 'the East and West',[56] and calls on his followers to 'spread the cause to all lands'.[57] Towards the beginning of the tafsīr, he summons 'the concourse of kings' to take his verses to the Turks and Indians and to lands beyond in the East and West.[58] God Himself had assured him of sovereignty over all lands and the peoples in them,[59] had written down for him 'the dominion of the earth',[60] and already ruled the world through him.[61] The Bāb, clearly, did not conceive of his message as limited to Iran, or to the Shīʿī or even the

Islamic world, but envisioned a universal role for himself complementary to that of Muhammad and the Imāms. Since the laws of Muhammad and the decrees of the Imāms were to remain binding 'until the day of resurrection',[62] there was no question but that the primary means of bringing men to the true faith was to be jihād.

Messianic expectation and exhortation to jihād were clearly linked for the Bāb in the role of the Imām as the victorious mujāhid of the last days: 'the victory (nasr) of God and His days are, in the Mother of the Book, near at hand'.[63] On the one hand, it is clear that aiding God (nasr -- a term widely used in the Qur'an to mean fighting in the path of God) was seen by the Bāb as a means of anticipating the Day of Judgement and of helping to bring its advent -- of 'immanentizing the eschaton'. He speaks of 'the man who has submitted himself (aslama wajhahu) to God, and who aids our cause and anticipates the dominion (dawla) of God, the Almighty, as drawing near'.[64] Elsewhere, he calls on 'the peoples of the East and West' to 'issue forth from your lands in order to come to the assistance of God (li-nasr Allāh) through the truth for, truly, God's victory (fath Allāh) is, in the Mother of the Book, near at hand'.[65] More explicitly, the Bāb links the waging of holy war with the necessary preparations for the advent of the Qā'im: 'O armies of God!' he writes, 'when you wage war with the infidels (al-mushrikīn), do not fear their numbers....Slay those who have joined partners with God, and leave not a single one of the unbelievers (al-kafirīn) alive upon the earth, so that the earth and all that are on it may be purified for the remnant of God (baqīyyat Allāh), the expected one (i.e. the twelfth Imām in his persona as al-Mahdī)'.[66]

On the other hand, the Bāb anticipated jihād as one of the events prophesied in the traditions relating to the appearance of the Qā'im.[67] In a relatively early passage of the Qayyūm al-asmā, the Imāms (ahl al-bayt) prophesy that they will wage war on behalf of the Bāb: 'We shall, God willing, descend on the day of the remembrance, upon crimson thrones, and shall slay you, by the permission of God, with our swords, in truth -- just as you have disbelieved and turned aside from our mighty word (i.e. the Bāb)'.[68] The Qayyūm al-asmā itself was 'revealed', it states, 'in order that men might believe and assist him (the Bāb) on the day of slaughter (yawm al-qitāl)'.[69] The Bāb himself was, it seems, awaiting permission from the Imām to 'rise up in the cause' when the time came[70] -- a possible allusion to his projected visits to Kūfa and Karbalā, to which we shall refer later.

Regulations concerning the conduct of jihād are set out in some detail in the Qayyūm al-asmā, principally in sūras 96 to 101.[71] For the most part, these consist -- like a great many passages of the book

(notably those devoted to legislation) -- of verbatim or near-verbatim reproductions of existing Qur'anic passages, or echoes of such passages, with only occasional novel features introduced by the Bāb himself. Apart from these regulations for jihād, which are of particular interest for the light they shed on early Bābī history and on the question of militancy in the movement, the Qayyūm al-asmā contains passages detailing the basic Islamic laws concerning salāt,[72] hajj,[73] ṣawm,[74] zakāt,[75] marriage and divorce,[76] manslaughter,[77] foodstuffs,[78] ablutions,[79] inheritance,[80] usury and trade,[81] adultery,[82] theft,[83] nawāfil,[84] the lex talionis,[85] idols, wine, and gambling,[86] and smoking (which is prohibited).[87] There is no room here to enter into a discussion of the relationship of the Bāb's legal pronouncements here or elsewhere (as in his Risāla furūᶜ al-ᶜAdlīyya) and Islamic law as it appears in standard works of Shīᶜī fiqh; the most important point to note is the contrast between this early insistence on the observance of Islamic law with the later abrogation of the sharīᶜa and its replacement by the highly idiosyncratic system of legislation embodied in the Arabic and Persian Bayāns.

Aside from the Qayyūm al-asmā and the second part of the tafsīr on the Sūrat al-baqara, the Bāb penned several shorter works during the year or so between his 'declaration' and his return to Būshihr from the hajj in May 1845. There has been some confusion as to the identity of the earliest works of the Bāb,[88] but, fortunately, he himself has listed most or all of these in two works, the first entitled Kitāb al-fihrist, clearly dated 15 Jumādī II 1261/21 June 1845, and certainly written in Būshihr, and the second probably entitled Risāla-yi dhahabīyya,[89] which records fourteen works written 'from the beginning of the year 1260 to the middle of the first month of the year 1262'[90] (i.e. from 1 Muharram 1260/22 January 1844 to 15 Muharram 1262/13 January 1846). The first of these works, although earlier in date, in fact contains a larger number of individual titles than the second. It also has the advantage of giving the actual names of the works cited, whereas the Risāla-yi dhahabīyya gives oblique references which require elucidation on the basis of information gleaned elsewhere.[91] We shall restrict ourselves here, therefore, to the list of works given in the Kitāb al-fihrist.[92]

Apart from the works already mentioned, the Kitāb al-fihrist refers to the Duᶜa-yi ṣahīfa, Ṣahīfa aᶜmāl al-sana, Ṣahīfa bayna 'l-haramayn, Tafsīr bism Allāh, Kitāb al-rūḥ, thirty-eight letters to individuals, twelve khutub delivered on the hajj journey, and replies to forty-one questions. In addition to the above, the Bāb lists here the titles of several works stolen from him by a bedouin while on pilgrimage. According to his own statement, in a khuṭba written in Jidda, this occurred on 11 Safar 1261/19 February 1845, between Medina and Jidda.[93]

It is not certain at what date the Du^{c}a-yi sahīfa was written, but its inclusion in the Kitāb al-fihrist immediately after the Qayyūm al-asmā suggests that it may have been contemporary with it. This seems to be confirmed by a statement in the latter work that 'we have sent down unto you with this book that written sahīfa, that the people may read his prayers (da^{c}wātahu) by day and by night',[94] which is almost certainly a reference to this work. Māzandarānī refers to it by the title Al-sahīfat al-makhzūna,[95] and a comparison of texts under these two titles confirms that they are indeed the same work. This important early piece is a collection of fourteen prayers, largely designed for use on specific days or festivals, such as the ^{c}Īd al-Fitr, ^{c}Īd al-Adhā, the night of ^{c}Āshūrā, and even the night of the Bāb's 'declaration' on 5 Jumādī I. Mullā ^{c}Alī Bastāmī carried a copy of this work with him to the ^{c}atabāt in the autumn of 1844, and it appears to have been copied and distributed there.[96] Similarly, when Bushrū'ī left Shīrāz shortly after Bastāmī, but in the direction of Tihrān, he also carried a copy of the Sahīfa makhzūna, together with the Qayyūm al-asmā and some other short works.[97] At least seven manuscripts of this work are still in existence.[98]

It seems that at least three major works of the Bāb were written in the course of his nine-month hajj journey. Of these, the most important is undoubtedly the Sahīfa bayna 'l-haramayn. This treatise was written, as the title indicates, between Mecca and Medina, for Mīrzā Muhīt Kirmānī and Sayyid ^{c}Alī Kirmānī (who were also on the hajj that year),[99] on and possibly after 1 Muharram 1261/10 January 1845.[100] This work of about one hundred short pages is an unsystematic collection of replies to questions together with prayers. Among the topics dealt with are: the Bāb's mubāhala challenge to Mīrzā Muhīt;[101] the use of talismans;[102] the seven causes of creation;[103] the courses of the celestial bodies;[104] and sulūk.[105] There are prayers to be said at sunset,[106] after the noon and dawn salāts,[107] on the evening of Friday,[108] and at the beginning of every month,[109] as well as instructions for pilgrims to the shrine of Husayn.[110] Of particular interest is a lengthy passage in which the Bāb sets out a somewhat strenuous daily routine for the seeker (sālik), with directions as to prayer, nawāfil, fasting (which includes a fast of ten days each month to the age of thirty, of fifteen days from thirty to forty, of three days from forty to fifty, and of Ramadān only from fifty), the taking of gum mastic, water, and milk, study (including that of fiqh), sleep, and prayers during the night.[111] Several manuscripts of this work are known to exist, the earliest of which are one in the Bahā'ī Archives in Haifa, dated 1261/1845, and another in their Tihrān Archives, dated in the same year.

The fate of the Kitāb al-rūḥ, composed at sea on the Bāb's return journey,[112] was less fortunate. According to Nicolas, this book, which the Bāb himself thought highly of, describing it as 'the greatest of all books',[113] and which he wished to have sent to all the ʿulamā,[114] was seized at the time of his arrest and thrown into a well in Shīrāz.[115] Nicolas claims that it was rescued by 'pious hands', albeit in a seriously damaged condition.[116] As a result, several partial copies are in existence today, a total of five manuscripts of differing degrees of completeness being known to the present author. This work would also appear to be known as the Kitāb al-ʿadl,[117] and is recorded as having originally consisted of seven hundred sūras.

A third work, of some interest for its doctrinal implications, also appears to have been composed during this journey. According to Zarandī, when the Bāb returned to Būshihr in 1845, he sent Muhammad ʿAlī Bārfurūshī (who had accompanied him to Mecca) ahead of him to Shīrāz.[118] Bārfurūshī was entrusted with a letter to the Bāb's uncle, Hājī Mīrzā Sayyid ʿAlī,[119] and a copy of a work entitled the Khasā'il-i sabʿa: 'a treatise in which He had set forth the essential requirements from those who had attained to the knowledge of the new Revelation and had recognized its claims'.[120] This work was given to Mullā Ṣādiq Khurāsānī by Bārfurūshī when the latter reached Shīrāz, and it was in accordance with one of the precepts contained in it that Mullā Ṣādiq made use of an altered form of the adhān in the Masjid-i Shamshīrgarān in Shīrāz.[121] A riot ensued, as a result of which Bārfurūshī, Khurāsānī, and a third Bābī named Mullā ʿAlī Akbar Ardastānī were physically punished and expelled from the city, not long before the Bāb's arrival there -- the first example of opposition to the Bābīs in Iran (though hardly the conscious attack on Babism which later partisan sources make it out to be).[122]

Although I have never been able to trace a copy of this work, there seems to be at least one manuscript in existence, since both Ishrāq Khāvarī and Faydī refer to its contents. Since they are of considerable interest, I shall list the seven regulations given in this work as cited by these two writers:[123]

1. To read the Ziyārat al-jāmiʿat al-kubrā on Fridays, festivals, and holy nights, after the performance of ablutions and purification of body and clothes with great care, in a spirit of sanctity.
2. To perform the prostration of salāt on the grave of Imām Husayn, in such a way that the nose of the worshipper touches the grave.
3. To add the formula ashhadu anna ʿAlīyan qablu Muhammadin ʿabdu baqiyyati 'llah to the adhan.[124]
4. Each believer to hang round his neck, reaching to his chest, a talisman (haykal) in the Bāb's hand, containing various names of God and other mysterious devices based on the divine names.[125]
5. Each believer to wear a ring of white agate bearing the words: 'there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Prophet of God; ʿAlī is the walī of God; 273'.[126]

6. To drink tea with the greatest cleanliness and delicacy.
7. To refrain from smoking.

It is, I think, clear that none of these prescriptions constitutes, in strict terms, an abrogation of any part of the Islamic sharī^{c}a; they appear to be rather in the nature of supererogatory observances designed to mark out the followers of the Bāb as especially pious -- a point to which we shall return.

An important work which seems to have been written in Būshihr after the Bāb's return from the hajj is the Sahīfa (or Kitāb) a^{c}māl al-sana. This work contains fourteen chapters, interspersed with unnumbered sections, basically dealing with the observances and prayers for various important dates in the Muslim calendar, and bearing, in this respect, a close resemblance to the Sahīfat al-makhzūna. Of even greater importance are two works written most probably shortly after the Bāb's return to Shīrāz in the summer of 1845.[127] These are two related treatises on fiqh, the Sahīfa-yi ^{c}adlīyya and the Risāla furū^{c} al-^{c}Adlīyya, dealing with usūl and furū^{c} respectively.

The Sahīfa-yi ^{c}adlīyya consists of five abwāb as follows: 1. On the mention of God; 2. In explanation of the Balance according to the command of God; 3. On the knowledge of God and His saints (awlīyā); 4. On the return to God (ma^{c}ād li 'llāh); 5. On the prayer of devotion to God (ikhlās li 'llāh). This would appear to be the first Persian work of the Bāb's, as he himself explains in the text.[128] It is of particular value in helping us form a clear picture of the Bāb's ideas at this juncture, especially since it seems to represent the first step taken by him to address himself to a wider audience than the Shaykhī ^{c}ulamā for whom his earlier works had been written. In the course of this work, he states that the sharī^{c}a legal system 'shall not be abrogated';[129] speaks of his verses as 'utter nothingness when compared with a single word of the book of God or the words of the people of the house of purity (i.e. the Imāms);[130] praises Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī, but condemns his followers;[131] refers to a vision of the head of the Imām Husayn, which he appears to have regarded as instrumental in giving him his earliest inspiration;[132] condemns the concept of wahdat al-wujūd as shirk;[133] lists the seven bases (usūl) of ma^{c}rifa as tawhīd, ma^{c}ānī, abwāb, imāma, arkān, nuqabā, and nujabā;[134] states that prayer through through the Imām or others is unbelief (kufr), and denies that either al-Ahsā'ī or Rashtī prayed through ^{c}Alī or thought him the Creator (a point on which, as we have seen, they had been attacked);[135] regards the station of the Imāms as higher than that of the prophets (anbiyā);[136] states that 'most of the men and women of the ithnā-^{c}asharī sect, by virtue of their ignorance of this station (i.e. of the nuqabā), shall

go to hell (dūzakh);[137] declares the enemies of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī to be unbelievers like the Sunnīs;[138] speaks of the former as the shī'a khālis;[139] writes of the necessity of belief in a physical resurrection and mi'rāj, condemns the idea of spiritual resurrection, and maintains that al-Ahsā'ī did not speak of it;[140] and, finally, speaks of obedience to himself, as the 'servant' of the twelfth Imām, as obligatory.[141]

The Risāla furū' al-'Adlīyya is often found in manuscripts accompanying the foregoing, but is generally less common. It has the distinction of being, as far as is known, the earliest work of the Bāb's to have been translated. While its author was staying at the house of Mīr Sayyid Muhammad, the Imām-Jum'a of Isfahān, in the course of his visit to that city from late 1846 to 1847, Mullā Muhammad Taqī Harawī (a Shaykhī 'ālim to whom we have referred previously as a close disciple of Rashtī) translated the risāla from Arabic into Persian. It consists of seven abwāb as follows: 1. Zīyāra jāmi'a (saghīra); 2. On salāt; 3. On ahkām al-salāt; 4. On zakāt; 5. On khums; 6. On jihād; 7. On dayn. All of these topics are dealt with in the traditional Shī'ī manner, often entering into minute details of observances, purification, and suchlike, and suggesting much familiarity on the part of the Bāb with works of fiqh.

The most important work which can be assigned to the period of the Bāb's residence in Shīrāz from July 1845 to September 1846 is the well-known tafsīr on the Sūrat al-kawthar, a commentary of over one hundred folios written for Sayyid Yahyā Dārābī (Wahīd), during the visit he made to Shīrāz to interview the Bāb (according to Bābī accounts, on behalf of Muhammad Shāh).[142] An account of the writing of this work is given by Zarandī.[143] It appears to have been widely circulated by the Bāb's followers: Navā'ī speaks of it being sent to Tihrān, Kirmān, and Isfahān,[144] but it undoubtedly went much further afield than that -- it was used, for example, by Qurrat al-'Ayn when preaching Babism in Kirmānshāh,[145] and we may, I think, assume that Dārābī himself carried a copy on his travels, which carried him to most parts of Iran. Interesting as it undoubtedly is in places, and highly regarded as it was by the early Bābīs, this work is, for the most part, almost unreadable, consisting of highly abstract and insubstantial speculations on the verses, words, and even letters of the sūra on which it is supposed to be a 'commentary'. Of greater interest are the numerous ahādīth which the Bāb quotes in a later section of the work, indicating his familiarity with works of tradition and his concern with the prophecies relating to the advent of the Qā'im. In view of the development of Bābī doctrine after 1848, it is of interest to note the Bāb's reference here to the fact that, although the halāl and harām of Muhammad shall endure until the day of resurrection, yet, when the Qā'im appears, he shall bring a new book,

new laws, and a new dominion.[146]

We have here again, as in the Qayyūm al-asmā, an appeal to the inimitable verses of the book,[147] but, in distinction to the Sahīfa-yi ʿadlīyya, the claim that only the words of the Imāms can compare with those of the Bāb.[148] As in the latter work, he praises al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī but condemns their followers,[149] while here he maintains that 'all that Kāzim and Ahmad before him have written...does not equal a single word of what I have revealed to you'.[150] Nevertheless, as we shall note in the next section, the claims which he advances in this work are in apparent contradiction to those which he had made previously.[151] The Bāb's remarks here on the concept of al-rukn al-rābiʿ shall also be dealt with separately. It is of interest to note that, in the course of this tafsīr, the Bāb specifically identifies the Imāms as the general cause of creation (ʿilla kullīyya fī ibdāʿ al-mumkināt wa ikhtirāʿ al-mawjūdāt)[152] -- a doctrine for which al-Ahsā'ī had been attacked.[153] During this period, the Bāb also wrote a large number of tafsīrs, including those on the āyat al-nūr, the Sūrat al-qadr, the Sūrat al-tawhīd, and various ahādīth; he also continued to pen replies to queries from a large number of individuals and to write treatises on topics such as jabr and tafwīd, qadr, and even grammar and syntax (nahw wa sarf).[154]

It is, I think, clear that ample material exists, albeit scattered and, at times, badly transcribed, which may serve as a basis for the study of the inception and early development of the Bāb's thought. One of the most difficult things about following this development is its very rapidity, several large-scale modifications of doctrine taking place in the space of only six years. Most that has been written about the Bāb's thought has concentrated on his later ideas, as expressed in the Persian Bayān and other works of the late period. This needs to be balanced in future studies by detailed reference to his ideas at this critical early stage. In the works we have mentioned above may be found answers to several important questions, such as what the Bāb's earliest claims were, what his attitude was to Islam, the Qur'an, the sharīʿa, the Imāms, and the abwāb, what he thought about the advent of the hidden Imām, what his ideas were with regard to the waging of jihād, and what he thought of the Shaykhī school.

The early claims of the Bāb

In our first chapter, we indicated several ways in which the charismatic authority of the Imāms was transformed or routinized in the period following the 'disappearance' of the twelfth Imām, and discussed the development of charisma among the ʿulamā, especially the

mujtahidūn, marāji^{c} al-taqlīd, and āyāt Allāh, in the modern period. Later, in our discussions of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī, we showed how their roles as 'bearers' of the knowledge of the Imāms represented a particularly dramatic expression of the 'polar motif' in Shi^{c}ism, and were closely related to its 'gnostic motif'. In our last section, we demonstrated how, in his early writings, the Bāb emphasized the 'gnostic motif' by laying claim to direct knowledge from the hidden Imām, which was, in turn, wahy from God, and, in our final chapter, we shall return to this motif in relation to the concept of 'inner knowledge' (bātin) 'revealed' by the Bāb. At this point, however, it will be useful to discuss -- albeit more briefly than is desirable -- the polar motif as developed in the early claims of the Bāb, both in terms of his own statements and those of his followers concerning him.

It will, perhaps, be as well to take as our starting-point the Shaykhī doctrine of the 'fourth support' (al-rukn al-rābi^{c}). In his Izhāq al-bātil, Kirmānī maintains that the 'basic question' involved in the dispute with Babism is the existence of the true bearer (hāmil) of the rukn al-rābi^{c}. When Rashtī died, there had to be a bearer after him, and people went in search of his successor in this capacity. At this point, the Bāb made his claims and many came to regard him as this hāmil al-rukn al-rābi^{c}.[155] In the same work, Kirmānī states that, during the lifetime of Rashtī, the Bāb had read what he (Kirmānī) had written on the need for a fourth support and the impossibility of any age being deprived of it.[156] Inadvertantly, as it were, Kirmānī here provides us with an important clue as to the nature of the doctrine of the rukn al-rābi^{c} as he originally taught it, and the reason for his modification of the doctrine in subsequent writings.

Let us first give a short description of the doctrine as expounded by Kirmānī in seven works written between 1261/1845 and 1282/1865-6.[157] Briefly, it is this: traditional Shī^{c}ī theology speaks of five bases (usūl) of religion -- tawhīd, nubuwwa, ma^{c}ād, ^{c}adl, and imāma. Shaykhī belief, according to Kirmānī, is that knowledge of God, like that of the Prophet or Imāms, implies and involves a knowledge of all of His attributes. Since none of these attributes can be denied by the believer, it makes more sense to speak of 'the knowledge of God' as the first base of religion. Similarly, resurrection is a necessary consequence of the justice of God, since 'it is a corollary of justice that the obedient be rewarded and unbelievers punished';[158] from another point of view, belief in the resurrection is necessitated by a belief in the Prophet and the veracity of his words.[159] 'Therefore', he writes, 'all five of the bases of religion are clearly affirmed in these three bases (i.e. knowledge of God, nubuwwa, and imāma)'.[160]

A fourth asl or rukn is added on the grounds that the bases of religion are those matters in which each indivdual believer must exercise his own initiative (ijtihād) and not rely on or imitate others (i.e. use taqlīd).[161] Kirmānī maintains that the decision as to whether one is entitled to exercise ijtihād or must base one's actions on taqlīd to a scholar of the rank of mujtahid is, in itself, another area in which every believer must exercise his own judgement.[162] The recognition of such a mujtahid (or ʿālim, faqīh, etc.) ranks, therefore, as a fourth support of religion.[163] The nature of this fourth rukn is elsewhere expressed by Kirmānī in somewhat different terms. Religious questions, he says, are of two kinds: knowledge of essences (dhawāt) and knowledge of the statements (aqwāl) of these essences. The knowledge of the essences involves four groups: knowledge of God, the Prophet, the Imams, and the generic (nawʿī) knowledge of their friends (awliyā) and enemies.[164] With respect to the statements of these four groups, man is required to know the divine decrees (sharāyiʿ), which obliges him to know the words of the prophets in which they are expressed, which in turn demands knowledge of the words of the Imāms in which these latter are interpreted; the bearers of the knowledge of the Imāms are the transmitters (rawāt) of their words and the scholars (ʿulamā) familiar with their traditions, whose words also must be known.[165] Knowledge of the words of these four groups constitutes the usūl.[166] Thus, the four usūl or arkān are: 1. Knowledge of God; 2. Knowledge of the Prophet; 3. Knowledge of the Imāms; 4. Knowledge of the awliyā of the Imāms.[167] In the sense that the term awliyā may be applied to a wide range of people -- in its fullest sense to all of the shīʿa -- including nuqabā and nujabā, in practice the mujtahidūn and fuqahā are the lowest grade of the rukn al-rabiʿ.[168]

In his Risāla-yi sī fasl and Risāla dar jawāb-i yik nafar Isfahānī, Kirmānī devotes considerable space to refuting the charge that he regarded himself in a specific sense as the rukn al-rābiʿ, or that the term could, indeed, be applied to a specific person in a given age. 'The rukn-i rābiʿ of the faith', he writes, 'consists of the scholars (ʿulamā) and worthies (akābir) of the Shīʿa, and they are numerous in every period'.[169] 'We regard the rukn-i rābiʿ as love (walāyat) for the friends of God (awliyā' Allāh) and dissociation (barā'at) from the enemies of God; after the arkān, we regard the nuqabā and nujabā as the greatest of the friends of God....But, by God, we have not considered it obligatory to know the friends of God in the form of their chiefs (aʿyānihim) or their individual members (ashkhāsihim), and have not laid on men an insupportable duty (taklīf mā lā yutāq). Nay, we have said that the generic knowledge (maʿrifat-i nawʿ) of the awliyā is essential, that is, "what sort of

person is the walī and what are his attributes?"....We have not said that one should recognize a specific or definite naqīb, or that one should recognize one of the nujabā in a specific or definite form'.[170] The relevance of the foregoing to our earlier discussion of the role of the arkān, nuqabā, nuqabā, and ʿulamā as general bearers of the charisma of the Imāms is not, I think, in need of elaboration.

Kirmānī also refutes the idea that al-Ahsā'ī or Rashtī were the rukn al-rābiʿ in their respective ages. In the general sense, he says, this is true, in that they fulfilled the conditions necessary for a marjaʿ al-taqlīd, 'but', he goes on, 'God forbid that I should regard them as the specific rukn-i rābiʿ for their ages'.[171] In this general sense also, Kirmānī regarded himself as a marjaʿ after al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī,[172] but refutes any charge of his having claimed personally to be the nā'ib of the Imām.[173] The Bābīs, however, have, he maintains, held it as obligatory to obey a single individual.[174]

Originally, the Bāb himself would appear to have taught a version of the rukn al-rābiʿ doctrine similar to that developed more fully by Kirmānī. In his earliest extant work, the Risāla fi 'l-sulūk, he states that 'religion stands on four pillars: al-tawhīd, al-nubuwwa, al-wilāya, and al-shīʿa'.[175] In the Tafsīr Sūrat al-baqara, he repeats that 'the shīʿa are the rukn al-rābiʿ' and quotes a popular hadīth in this connection, in which the Imām Mūsā states that the 'greatest name' (al-ism al-aʿzam) consists of four letters: 'the first is the statement "there is no god but God"; the second "Muhammad is the Prophet of God"; the third is us (Imāms); and the fourth our shīʿa'.[176] The Qayyūm al-asmā and other works written soon after his 'declaration' contain no references to the doctrine, but it is discussed again under the title 'the hidden support' (al-rukn al-makhzūn) in the tafsīr of the Sūrat al-kawthar, written for Sayyid Yahyā Dārābī, who had not been a Shaykhī. 'Had you been one of the companions of Kāzim', he writes, 'you would understand the matter of the hidden support, in the same way that you comprehend the (other) three supports'.[177] The Bāb argues that, 'just as you stand in need of an individual sent from God who may transmit unto you what your Lord has willed, so you stand in need of an ambassador (safīr) from your Imām'.[178] If it should be objected that the ʿulamā as a whole fulfill this function (as Kirmānī held by this date, if not before), he would reply that the ʿulamā differ in rank, some being superior to others. They are not even in agreement on all issues, as is evident from the variation in their words, actions, and beliefs. Now, if we accept the principle that certain ʿulamā are superior to others, it becomes necessary for us to abandon one of inferior rank in order to give our allegiance to his superior -- a process which must, in the end, lead

us to the recognition of a single person superior to all others.[179] It is impossible', he writes, 'that the bearer of universal grace from the Imam should be other than a single individual'.[180]

The rukn al-rābi^{c} doctrine is developed in relation to the Bāb by Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn in an undated risāla. Describing Muḥammad and the Imāms as the 'sign' of God's knowledge to His creation,[181] she indicates that they have appeared in every age in different forms and 'clothing' and that men have been and shall be tested by this until the day of resurrection.[182] In each age, these 'signs' appear in the form of 'perfected humanity' (insāniyyat-i kāmil) and 'all-embracing luminosity' (nurāniyyat-i shāmil).[183] Faith (īmān) is based on four pillars (arkān),[184] the fourth pillar being the 'manifest towns' (qurā ẓāhira) referred to in Qur'an 34:18, that is, the ^{c}ulamā from whom the mass of believers (ra^{c}āyā) must take sustenance (i.e. knowledge) during the period of ghayba.[185] God has chosen to reveal the station of the rukn al-rābi^{c} in this age, although it was previously concealed, just as the rukn of wilāya was kept hidden in the time of Muhammad.[186] The meaning of the term rasūl in each age is the 'bearer of the hidden sign', whom God reveals whenever He deems it suitable.[187] In this age, He has revealed the rukn al-rābi^{c} and sent a rasūl, bayana, and dhikr al-imām (i.e. the Bāb).[188] This individual, she says, is the 'manifest town' (in the singular) revealed by God.[189] That the rukn al-rābi^{c} has, therefore, been revealed in a single person is made fully clear some pages, when she states that God has sent the pure shī^{c}a in a specific form (shī^{c}a-yi khālis-rā az maqām-i ikhtiṣās nāzil farmūda).[190]

Sayyid Yaḥyā Dārābī (originally a non-Shaykhī, as we have mentioned) also applies the rukn al-rābi^{c} concept to the Bab in what appears to be a letter belonging to the slightly later period:

He (God) sent him (Adam) to reveal the mystery of one of these (four) arkān, namely that of tawḥīd and the sign of the gracious one (i.e. God); and assistance was given in the spread (of this principle) by the other prophets, both those endowed with constancy (ūlā 'l-^{c}azm) and the rest, until the rise of the sun of knowledge from the horizon of certitude, that is, the seal of the prophets and the prince of men and jinn (i.e. Muḥammad). And He commanded him to reveal the mystery of the second rukn, namely, that of nubuwwa, the source of all truths, until the day of al-Ghadīr (i.e. Ghadīr Khumm), the best of days and the pivot of all ages. Whereupon he brought himself to perfection and entrusted his successors (waṣīya ilā awliyā'ihi) the revelation of the third rukn, that is, the rukn of wilāya and the interpretation (ta'wīl) of the Qur'anic verse 'when it is said to them "There is no god but God", they grow proud (37:35). (This continued) until the rising of the sun of eternity in sixty-one preceded by one thousand and two hundred (i.e. 1260), when the Imāms (āl Allāh) and the letters of the word of explanation inspired the heart of their servant, whose breast was expanded for all revelations by the shining of the body of the princess of women (i.e. Fāṭima), nay of all created things in the kingdom of command and creation, that he might reveal the mystery of the fourth rukn of the universal word, the last of the conditions of faith. At this point, the ages came to their close

(tammat al-adwār) and the dispensations were completed (kamulat al-akwār).[191]

The Bāb himself emphasizes the need for a bearer of the divine knowledge in every age. The earth, he says, is never empty of the proof (hujja) of God,[192] and there must always be a 'bearer of the cause of God' (hāmil amr Allāh) between prophets (ᶜalā fitratin min al-rusul).[193] Thus, he himself, as the dhikr, has come during such an interval.[194] During the shorter ghayba, he states, the hidden Imām was represented on earth by wukalā and nuwwāb, these being the four abwāb.[195] Thus, the Imām sent the abwāb down during the ghayba and recently sent Ahmad (al-Ahsā'ī) and Kāzim (Rashtī).[196] A similar view is put forward in a risāla written by an anonymous Bābī in 1264/1848, where it is stated that, in the shorter ghayba, there appeared the 'four appointed gates' (al-abwāb al-arbaᶜa al-mansūsa), while, in the greater ghayba, there were 'gates not appointed by name or connection', who appeared in every age until two further specific gates were sent -- al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī.[197]

It does seem that the acceptance of Sayyid ᶜAlī Muhammad as bāb was facilitated by prior recognition of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī as 'the Shaykh and Bāb' (al-shaykh al-bāb) and 'the Sayyid and Bāb' (al-sayyid al-bāb),[198] or as 'the first Bāb' and 'the second Bāb',[199] or as 'the previous two gates',[200] or simply as 'the two gates'.[201] Even the later Nuqtatu'l-Kāf speaks of them as 'those two mighty gates'.[202] The Bab himself refers to them on several occasions as 'the two previous gates of God'[203] and speaks of his 'revelation' as being in confirmation of 'the two gates'.[204]

The close relationship between the Bāb and his two predecessors is clearly outlined by Qurrat al-ᶜAyn in what seems to be an early risāla. Beginning with the assertion that man has been created to know God, but that the gate of direct maᶜrifa is closed to him,[205] she refers to a tradition from the Imām Sādiq, who indicated that man might know God 'through His Name and His Attribute'.[206] This 'Name and Attribute' has a place of revelation (mazhar) and appearance (zuhūr) in every age and epoch.[207] God chooses an individual, teaches him what He wishes, and makes him His hujja, bāb, nabī, dhikr, and rasūl to the creation.[208] There is no difference between the nabī, wasī, rasūl, and bāb in reality.[209] God sent down the prophets, then Muhammad, then the Imāms; after this, the twelfth Imām became hidden.[210] Since, however, it was still necessary for men to be guided, the abwāb were appointed.[211] Following them, there appeared in every age 'an arbiter' (ᶜadūl) to keep the faith pure.[212] The Shīᶜa were thus guided until there appeared sinful ᶜulamā who advanced various claims and rendered it necessary for the Imām to distinguish the good from the wicked.[213] The Imām singled out a perfect man, taught him his inner knowledge, and made him maᶜsūm -- this was al-Ahsā'ī.[214] After

him, God appointed Rashtī as another sign.[215] On the Sayyid's death, it was necessary for God to establish a sign according to the exigencies of the time and place, so He revealed the Bāb as His gate and proof,[216] as 'the third gate after the two' (al-bāb al-thālith baᶜda 'l-ithnayn),[217] as the fourth letter of the greatest name of God,[218] and as the bāb, dhikr, and rasūl.[219]

In this earliest period, then, the Bāb made himself known as a gate to the Imām succeeding al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī. Mīrzā Muhammad ᶜAlī Zunūzī thus describes these early claims: 'At the beginning of the cause, he made himself known by the title bāb and "servant of the baqīyyat Allāh", so that, as people say, he was regarded as having been sent by the hidden Imām, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan....He established his verses below the words of the Imāms, but above those of the Shaykh and the Sayyid...and gave himself out as an interpreter (mubayyin) and promulgator (murawwij) of the Qur'an and Islam....while all his followers...regarded him as the gate of divine knowledge and as superior to the Shaykh and the Sayyid.'[220] 'Most of the Bābīs in the first years', writes Māzandarānī, 'regarded the Bāb as the pillar of the knowledge of the Imām'.[221] The Bāb thus identifies himself in the Qayyūm al-asmā as 'the servant (of God) and the gate of His proof (i.e. the hidden Imām) unto all the worlds',[222] as 'the servant of God and the gate of the baqīyyat Allāh',[223] and as 'the gate of the walī'.[224] In this respect, he is no different from the abwāb of the past[225] (who are, indeed, regarded as still alive),[226] except that he is the 'seal of the gates' (khātim al-abwāb),[227] the 'gate of your expected Imām'.[228] His appearance, then is for the express purpose of making the way ready for the Imām's parousia; his earliest books, states Qurrat al-ᶜAyn, were sent out to prepare men for the advent of the Qā'im,[229] which will take place after him.[230] Writing in retrospect in the Dalā'il-i sabᶜa, the Bāb speaks thus of his earliest claims: 'Consider the grace of the promised one (hadrat-i muntazar) in so extending his mercy to the people of Islam (al-muslimīn); so that he might give them salvation, he that is the first of all created things and the manifestation of the words "Verily, I am God" revealed himself as the bāb of the Qā'im of the family of Muhammad'.[231]

On the principle that belief in the abwāb leads to belief in the Imāms, the Prophet and God, and disbelief in them to kufr,[232] the Qayyūm al-asmā states, in the words of the Imām, that 'there is none who has followed this remembrance (hādhā 'l-dhikr -- the Bāb) but that he has followed me; whoever loves the remembrance for the sake of God, loves me; whoever seeks to behold me, let him behold his face, and whoever seeks to hearken to my words (al-hadīth minnī), let him give ear to the novelties of wisdom and the keys of mercy from the tongue of God'.[233] Similarly, whoever

visits the Bāb, it is as if he has visited the Imāms,[234] while whoever obeys the dhikr and his book has obeyed God and His saints.[235] He is, indeed, the gate of God[236] and His remembrance;[237] those who pledge allegiance to him have done so to God,[238] and those who visit him have visited God on the throne.[239]

Identification with the Imām (but not, at this stage, with God) is taken at times beyond simple representation. Thus, 'the Imām' declares that 'we are he and he is we, save that he is himself and is our servant, who was a witness in all the worlds in the Mother of the Book; and we are ourselves, whom God has made His proofs collectively to all the worlds, through the mighty truth'.[240] 'God', he states, 'has made him (the Bāb) my own self in the worlds of command and creation. I am, by God's permission, never absent from him for the least period that your Lord, the merciful, can calculate, nor is he ever absent from me'.[241] Again, he says that 'those that have disbelieved in God ask you about meeting me (ʿan liqā'ī); say "behold me, if your souls be firm, and you shall see him"',[242] while, in a later passage, he declares that 'my proof unto you is this person, (who is) my own person'.[243]

We have here perhaps the clearest and most highly developed expression of the continuance of the charismatic authority of the Imām during the period of the ghaybat al-kubrā. Once we move into the later stage of the Bāb's claims, from about 1848 onwards, we enter a different charismatic framework; he is no longer claiming to be the channel of the Imām's authority nor even his alter ego, as it were, on earth, but to be the Imām himself and, before long, a theophanic representation of the divinity (mazhar ilāhī). The Bāb is the focus of charismatic attention throughout (although not the only focus), but, in the early period, his authority is derived (latently) from the overriding charismatic image of the Imām, whereas, at a later stage, he assumes an independent authority cancelling all previous notions of charismatic relationship, transforming latent into original, 'prophetic' charisma. Although even the earliest claims of the Bāb constantly threaten to overturn the system of relationships on which they are postulated (by claiming, for example, to be the person of the Imām), this threat is kept in check by the presence of a dialectic tension between more developed claims on the one hand and less startling ones -- and even recantations of claims -- on the other. Thus, he states in an early prayer that 'I am the bearer of a knowledge like Kāzim, and if God should choose to reveal another cause, he will be the solace of my eyes; otherwise, I have not claimed anything and do not say that I am the bearer of a cause other than that'.[244] In the Sahīfa-yi ʿadlīyya, he describes himself as a 'servant' chosen by the hidden Imām 'in order to protect the faith of God',[245] and indicates

that his words are as 'utter nothingness' compared to the Qur'an and the words of the Imāms.[246] This tendency is most marked in the Tafsīr Sūrat al-kawthar, where he declares that anyone who says he claims wahy and a Qur'an is a blasphemer, as is anyone who says he claims to be 'the gate of the baqīyyat Allāh',[247] and maintains that he has not claimed 'special bābīyya'.[248] He is merely, he states, a Persian chosen to protect the faith of the Prophet and the Imāms,[249] and a servant of God confirming the laws of the Qur'an.[250] In general, however, a gradual development may be observed, whereby the Bab explores most of the permutations of radical charismatic authority available to him within the terms of Shaykhī and Shī'ī theory. Taken beyond these limits, the claims inherent in extreme Shī'ī theophanology led inevitably to a complete break with Shaykhism and, in the end, to the abandonment of Islam itself.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. For a more detailed discussion of this subject, see D.M. MacEoin 'A Revised Survey of the Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History' pp.58-102.

2. For details further to those given here, see E.G. Browne 'The Bābīs of Persia.II' pp.904-9; idem 'Catalogue and Description' pp.261-8, 699-701; V. Rosen Collections Scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues Orientales de Saint Pétersbourg Vol.1 pp.170-91; Ishrāq Khāvarī Qāmūs Vol.3 pp.1277-82.

3. Zarandī p.61.

4. N.H. p.39.

5. Letter quoted Z.H. p.285.

6. See Z.H. pp.106, 121, 187.

7. Bayān-i fārsī 4:18, p.148.

8. Qayyūm f.14a.

9. Ibid ff.65b, 80a.

10. Ibid f.126a.

11. See Zarandī p.130; on the dating of the Bāb's pilgrimage, see his Khutba fī Jidda pp.332-3.

12. Qayyūm f.137b. The passage reads: wa idhā kashafnā 'l-ghitā ᶜan abṣārihim li 'l-bayt al-ḥarām fa-hum qad kānū tawwāfan ḥawl al-dhikr ka-annahum nāmū fi 'l-bayt ᶜalā ḥadd al-tahdīd min anfusihim wa lā yanzurūn ilā 'llāh mawlāhum al-ḥaqq lamḥatan ᶜalā al-ḥaqq al-qawī qalīlan. Compare Mīrzā Ḥabīb Allāh Afnān, quoting Ḥājī Abū 'l-Ḥasan Shīrāzī, in Balyuzi The Bāb pp.71-2. This may, however, be a reference to the Bāb's declaration and mubāhala challenge addressed to Mīrzā Muhīt Kirmānī at the Kaᶜba on 15 Dhu 'l-Hijja/26 December, and again on two subsequent occasions (Haramayn pp.14-15.

13. Qayyūm f.137b.

14. Ibid f.152a.

15. Ibid f.154b.

16. Ibid ff.192b-193a.

17. Supralinear annotation in Kitāb aᶜmāl al-sana (MS), end of first of two untitled prayers between sūras 5 and 6.

18. Qayyūm f.7b.

19. Ibid ff. 35a, 53b, 65b, 67b, 72b, 141b, 167b, 174b, 196b.

20. See in particular the passages dealing with legislation on ff.80a-83b, 168b-173b, 179b, 183b-192a.

21. Qisas p.186.

22. FO 248/114, dated 8 January 1845, enclosed in Rawlinson to Sheil, 16 January 1845.

23. Ibid; Rawlinson to Sheil, 16 January 1845 (FO 248/114).

24. Qayyūm f.2a.

25. Ibid f.14a.

26. Ibid f.196b; cf. f.29b: 'we have sent down this book from God as a blessing unto our servant'.

27. Ibid f.4b; cf. f.90b: 'God has inspired (awḥā) his proof (the Imām) upon that mighty word (the Bāb)'. On the Imāms as recipients and mediators of waḥy, see al-Aḥsā'ī Sharḥ al-ziyāra Vol.1 pp.12-13, 74, 123-4. On the application of the term waḥy to the Bāb, see Qurrat al-ʿAyn, autograph risāla (MS) in possession of Azalī Bābī in Tihrān, pp.19, 22-3.

28. Qayyūm f.109b.

29. Ibid f.39a.

30. Ibid f.97b; cf. f.76a, where the Bāb is described as 'the truthful tongue of God'.

31. Ibid f.100b.

32. Ibid f.117b.

33. Ibid f.106b.

34. Ibid f.72b; cf. f.53b.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid f.141b.

37. Ibid f.65b.

38. Ibid f.167b.

39. Ibid ff.174b, 196b.

40. Ibid f.65b.

41. Ibid ff.49b, 66b.

42. Ibid ff.14a, 27a.

43. Ibid f.40b.

44. Ibid f.15b.

45. Ibid f.56a.

46. Ibid f.41a.

47. On these, see Kulaynī Uṣūl Vol.1 pp.438-40, 441-3, 456-62; Kirmānī Al-mubīn Vol.1 pp.288-92, 295-6. On the Qur'an in all its aspects being in the keeping of the Imāms, see al-Aḥsā'ī Sharḥ al-ziyāra Vol.1 p.59. The Kalimāt-i maknūna of Ḥusayn ʿAlī Nūrī Bahā Allāh was originally identified

with the sahīfa of Fāṭima (see Ishrāq Khāvarī Raḥīq Vol.2 p.84).

48. Qayyūm f.2a.

49. Ibid f.78a.

50. Ibid f.7b.

51. Ibid f.76b; cf. f.132b.

52. Ibid f.55b.

53. Ibid f.76b; cf. ff.89a, 142b.

54. Ibid ff.26a, 46b.

55. Ibid f.3a etc.

56. Ibid f.49b etc.

57. Ibid f.41a; cf. f.68b.

58. Ibid f.3a.

59. Ibid f.89b.

60. Ibid f.102a.

61. Ibid ff.26a, 121b.

62. Ibid f.185b.

63. Ibid f.41b.

64. Ibid f.74b.

65. Ibid f.169b.

66. Ibid f.172b.

67. For a useful summary of traditions relating to the role of the Qā'im as mujāhid, in a Shaykhī context, see al-Aḥsā'ī Ḥayāt pp.116-26.

68. Qayyūm f.55a.

69. Ibid f.84b.

70. Ibid f.99b.

71. For a discussion of these regulations and of the Bāb's attitude to jihād in general, see my paper 'The concept of jihād in the Bābī and Bahā'ī movements'.

72. Ibid ff.25b, 81b, 83a, 83b, 183b, 187b, 188a.

73. Ibid ff.74b, 80b, 179b, 185b.

74. Ibid ff.80a, 83b, 186b.

75. Ibid ff.81b, 83a.

76. Ibid ff.81a, 183b, 184a, 190b, 191a.

77. Ibid f.81b.

78. Ibid ff.81b, 82a, 83a, 187a.

79. Ibid ff.82a, 191b.

80. Ibid ff.82b, 189b.

81. Ibid f.183b.

82. Ibid f.185b.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid ff.187b, 189a.

85. Ibid f.82a.

86. Ibid ff.80b, 82b, 185a, 187a.

87. Ibid f.80b.

88. See A.L.M. Nicolas (trans.) introduction to Le Livre des Sept Preuves pp.I-II; Subh-i Azal, quoted T.N. Vol.2 pp.339-40.

89. For my reasons for thus naming this work, which appears in the CUL Browne MS F.28 (item 6) as the Sahīfa-yi Radawīyya, see my 'Revised Survey' note 160, pp.239-40.

90. Browne MS F.28 (item 6).

91. On the identity of the works listed in the Risāla-yi Dhahabīyya, see my 'Revised Survey' pp.65-9.

92. I have collated the lists in two MSS in TBA 4011.C (pp.62-9) and 6003.C (pp.285-93).

93. Khutba fī Jidda p.332. See last chapter, note 130.

94. Qayyūm f.67b.

95. Asrār Vol.4 pp.246-7.

96. Z.H. p.106.

97. Ibid p.121.

98. Among these is an unidentified copy in CUL, Add. 3704 (6).

99. Title of Leyden University Library MS 2414. See also CUL Browne MS F.7 pp.4, 14. On the place of writing, see ibid p.10; cf. Zarandī p.137.

100. Haramayn pp.10, 89, 96, 97.

101. Ibid pp.14-15.

102. Ibid pp.27-37.

103. Ibid p.35; cf. Bāb ʿAdlīyya p.16.

104. Haramayn pp.38-41.

105. Ibid pp.41-6, 49-55, 60-64, 66-84. In ʿAdlīyya (p.32), the Bāb states

that 'the path of servitude and the journey towards God have been set out in detail in the Sahīfa-yi Haramayn'.

106. Haramayn pp.46-8.

107. Ibid pp.55-8, 64-6.

108. Ibid pp.84-96.

109. Ibid pp.96-101.

110. Ibid pp.101.22.

111. Ibid pp.66-84.

112. Nicolas Ali Mohammed p.213; Z.H. p.288.

113. Aʿzam al-kutub: see Māzandarānī Asrār Vol.4 p.44.

114. Ibid.

115. Nicolas Ali Mohammed p.60.

116. Ibid.

117. Māzandarānī Asrār Vol.4 p.45; cf. Bāb ʿAdlīyya pp.7, 9.

118. Zarandī p.142.

119. Trans. Nicolas Ali Mohammed pp.214-8.

120. Zarandī p.143.

121. Ibid p.144. In a letter to Khurāsānī written at the same time, the Bāb instructs him to chant the adhān and to teach in the mosque 'where the verses were sent down from your Lord'; this was the Shamshīrgarān mosque near the Bāb's home, and not the Masjid-i Naw, as Zarandī states (see letter quoted Z.H. p.149; N.H. pp.200, 201). According to Faydī, however, the book was given, not to Khurāsānī, but to the Bāb's uncle, Hājī Mīrzā Sayyid ʿAlī (Nuqta-yi ūlā p.153).

122. Balyuzi The Bab pp.76-8.

123. Faydī Nuqta-yi ūlā pp.53-4; Ishrāq Khāvarī Muhādirāt Vol.2 pp.785-6.

124. Compare the adhān formula used by the Hurūfīs and described in the Istiwā-nāma of ʿAlī al-Aʿlā (see Bausani Hurūfīyya p.601).

125. On the Bāb's use of hayākil for men and dawā'ir for women, see Browne Materials p.216; Māzandarānī Asrār Vol.3 pp.46-7, Vol.4 pp.115-20.

126. The figure '273' here is a reference to the words 'ʿAlī Muhammad bāb Allāh'.

127. The Bāb is now known to have been about one week's journey from Shīrāz, at Kunār-takhta, on 24 Jumādī II 1261/30 June 1845 (see Balyuzi The Bab p.105.

128. ʿAdlīyya pp.3-4.

129. Ibid p.5.

130. Ibid p.7; cf. p.10.

131. Ibid p.13.

132. Ibid p.14.

133. Ibid p.16.

134. Ibid pp.20-31. This hierarchy is based on a tradition related by Jābir; for an early Bābī interpretation, see al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.528; see also al-Aḥsā'ī Sharḥ al-ziyāra Vol.1 pp.8-11, 40, and (on ma'rifa of the first four stations) 26-7.

135. ʿAdlīyya pp.20, 22.

136. Ibid p.24.

137. Ibid p.31.

138. Ibid pp.32-3.

139. Ibid p.33.

140. Ibid p.34.

141. Ibid p.41.

142. On Dārābī, probably the most active Bābī dāʿī of this period and the leader of the Bābī risings in Yazd and Nayrīz, see Rijāl Vol.4 pp.433-8; Muḥammad ʿAlī Faydī Nayrīz-i mushkbīz pp.7-75; Muḥammad Shafīʿ Rawḥānī Nayrīzī Lamaʿāt al-anwār Vol.1 pp.40-54.

143. Zarandī pp.174-6.

144. Notes to Iʿtidād al-Saltana p.160.

145. Al-Baghdādī Risāla amrīyya p.112.

146. Bāb Al-kawthar f.28a.

147. Ibid f.5a.

148. Ibid.

149. Ibid ff.6a-6b, 19a.

150. Ibid f.11b; cf. ff.24a, 25a.

151. See ibid ff.7b, 15a, 17b.

152. Ibid f.99b.

153. For the Shaykh's view, see Sharḥ al-ziyāra Vol.1 pp.25-6, 64.

154. A list of these works, with notes of the manuscripts in which they occur, may be found in my 'Revised Survey' pp.92-101.

155. Izhāq p.107; cf. p.10, where Rashtī is referred to as ṣāḥib al-rukn al-rābiʿ.

156. Ibid p.106; cf. p.175.

157. Apart from those works specifically cited, we have also referred to Hidāyat pp.168-77. Kirmānī also discusses this topic in other works, notably the manuscript Ilzām al-nawāṣib.

158. Sī fasl p.22. On this basis, Kirmānī discusses resurrection after divine justice in the section on tawhīd in Al-fitra Vol.1 pp.223ff, 292ff.

159. On this basis, Kirmānī discusses resurrection after prophethood in Irshād Vol.1 p.110ff; Vol.2 p.7ff.

160. Sī fasl p.23.

161. On there being no taqlīd in durūrīyāt or usūl, see Āl-Kāshif al-Ghitā p.107.

162. Sī fasl p.23.

163. Ibid p.24.

164. Risāla dar jawāb-i īrādāt-i Mullā Husayn ᶜAlī Tawīsargānī p.146; Al-fitra Vol.3 p.190; cf. Risāla dar rafᶜ-i baᶜd-i shubahāt pp.198-9.

165. Jawāb-i Tawīsargānī p.147; cf. Rukn-i rābiᶜ p.9.

166. Jawāb-i Tawīsargānī p.147.

167. Rukn-i rābiᶜ p.21; Al-fitra Vol.3 pp.185, 190.

168. Risāla dar jawāb-i yik nafar Isfahānī p.81.

169. Sī fasl p.31.

170. Jawāb-i yik nafar Isfahānī pp.79-80.

171. Sī fasl p.31.

172. See Risāla-yi chahār fasl pp.1, 3.

173. Rafᶜ-i shubahāt pp.199-201.

174. Jawāb-i yik nafar Isfahānī p.82.

175. Risāla fi 'l-sulūk p.73; cf. risāla by unidentified Bābī in TBA 6003.C p.384.

176. Al-baqara f.5a-5b.

177. Al-kawthar f.36a. On the 'hidden support', cf. letter to Muhammad Shāh in Muntakhabāt p.14.

178. Al-kawthar f.36b; cf. f.68a.

179. Ibid. Compare the dialectical argument back to the Imām used by Hasan-i Sabbāh, described by Hodgson p.54.

180. Al-kawthar f.37a.

181. Risāla in possession of an Azalī Bābī in Tihrān pp.3-4.

182. Ibid p.6.

183. Ibid. For a discussion of the insān al-kāmil concept in a Bābī context, see Hermann Roemer Die Babi-Beha'i pp.12-13.

184. Azalī risāla pp.6-7, 8.

185. Ibid p.8. References to Qur'an 34:18 in similar contexts are extremely

common in Shaykhī and Bābī literature of this period (see, for example, Kirmānī Tīr pp.179-81).

186. Azalī risāla p.10.

187. Ibid p.12.

188. Ibid p.14.

189. Ibid.

190. Ibid p.18.

191. Letter quoted Z.H. p.474.

192. Al-kawthar f.94b.

193. Ibid. For the last phrase, see Qur'an 5:19.

194. Qayyūm f.106a.

195. Al-kawthar ff.65b, 66a, 66b ff. By contrast, later Bahā'ī doctrine regards the four abwāb as imposters and, indeed, maintains that the twelfth Imām was never born at all (see Bahā Allāh in ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Ishrāq Khāvarī (ed.) Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī Vol.4 pp.91, 141).

196. Qayyūm f.41a.

197. Risāla by unidentified Bābī in TBA 6006.C p.8.

198. Risāla by unidentified Bābī in TBA 6003.C pp.400, 401-2.

199. Risāla in TBA 6006.C pp.8-9.

200. Qurrat al-ʿAyn, risāla in Gulpāygānī Kashf p.18; risala to Vilyānī in Z.H. p.488.

201. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.504.

202. N.K. p.100.

203. Letter to Mīrzā Hasan Khurāsānī in TBA 6003.C p.321; Qayyūm f.139a.

204. Qayyūm f.64b.

205. Risāla in Gulpāygānī Kashf p.2.

206. Ibid p.3.

207. Ibid.

208. Ibid.

209. Ibid p.4; cf. Bāb Al-kawthar f.109b, where Muhammad and the Imāms are described as 'one person'.

210. Risāla in Gulpāygānī Kashf p.5.

211. Ibid pp.5-6.

212. Ibid p.6; on the ḥadīth quoted here, see chapter 1, note 26.

213. Ibid p.7.

214. Ibid pp.8-11.

215. Ibid pp.11-13.

216. Ibid p.13.

217. Ibid p.2.

218. Ibid.

219. Ibid p.14.

220. Risāla quoted Z.H. pp.31, 32.

221. Z.H. p.314.

222. Qayyūm f.46b.

223. Ibid.

224. Ibid f.69b.

225. Ibid f.50b.

226. Ibid f.31a.

227. Ibid f.36a.

228. Ibid f.96a.

229. Risāla in Gulpāygānī Kashf p.14.

230. Ibid p.15.

231. Dalā'il p.29; cf. letter quoted Māzandarānī Asrār Vol.5 p.369.

232. See Al-kawthar f.66a.

233. Qayyūm f.76a.

234. Ibid f.166a.

235. Ibid f.3a.

236. Ibid ff.19a, 69b. On the Imāms as the gate of God, see Kirmānī Al-mubīn Vol.1 pp.227-31; idem Yanābī^{c} al-hikma Vol.1 pp.437-55.

237. Qayyūm f.103b.

238. Ibid f.73b.

239. Ibid ff.103b, 143b. On Ismā^{c}īlī identification of the Imām with God, see Abū Ishāq Qūhistānī Haft Bāb pp.37-8.

240. Qayyūm f.73b.

241. Ibid f.76b.

242. Ibid f.89a.

243. Ibid f.109a.

244. Prayer in TBA 600/.C p.188.

245. ᶜAdlīyya p.13; cf. p.7.

246. Ibid p.7; cf. p.11.

247. Al-kawthar f.7b.

248. Ibid f.15a.

249. Ibid f.4b.

250. Ibid f.7b.

CHAPTER SIX

THE BĀBĪ DA^{C}WA AMONG THE SHAYKHĪS AND THE BREAK WITH SHAYKHISM

THE BĀBĪ DA^{C}WA AMONG THE SHAYKHĪS AND THE BREAK WITH SHAYKHISM

The da^{c}wa in Karbalā

According to al-Qatīl ibn al-Karbalā'ī, the Bāb's initial 'revelation' (zuhūr) to the hurūf al-hayy lasted from the first tenth (al-^{c}ashr al-awwal) of Jumādī I to 20 Jumādī II/7 July of the year 1260/1844.[1] He then instructed them to return to their homes,[2] telling them not to reveal his name or identity,[3] but urging them to announce that the bāb or nā'ib-i khāss of the hidden Imām had appeared.[4] Through these 'forerunners' (sābiqūn) and the men they met and converted, the claims of the new teacher were rapidly made known, principally to the Shaykhī communities in the areas they visited. Mullā Yūsuf Ardabīlī succeeded in converting most or all of the large Shaykhī population of Mīlān in Ādharbāyjān.[5] Mullā Ahmad Ibdāl Marāgha'ī acquainted Mullā Husayn Dakhīl Marāgha'ī with the Bāb's claims; the latter in turn travelled to Shīrāz, only to find that the Bāb had left on the hajj. Returning to Marāgha, he made a point of telling the Shaykhīs in every town and village en route of the Bāb's appearance, while he succeeded in converting most of the Shaykhīs in Marāgha itself.[6] Mullā Jalīl Urūmī was instructed to go to Qazvīn, where he married and stayed for some three years teaching Babism, his converts consisting in the main of Shaykhīs from the town.[7]

Mullā Husayn Bushrū'ī, along with his inseparable brother and cousin, was sent to Khurāsān via Tihrān, where he attempted to present a letter from the Bāb to Muhammad Shāh and his Prime Minister, Hājī Mīrzā Āqāsī; in this missive, the king was called on to embrace the Bāb's cause in return for a promise of victory over foreign states.[8] Bushrū'ī finally proceeded to Mashad, where he established a flourishing centre for Bābī propaganda, again drawing much support from Shaykhī ^{c}ulamā.[9] In this way, a growing section of the Shaykhī school followed the Bāb in the period of his earliest claims, even if -- as happened in Marāgha, for example -- many of these abandoned him some three years later on his assumption of the station of Qā'im and his abrogation of the Islamic shari^{c}a. The unity of Shaykhism was irretrievably shattered, and a core of convinced Bābīs created, who were eager to put into practice the radical changes implicit in the Bāb's later claims.

The most shattering impact made by the dissemination of Bābī propaganda on the Shaykhī world occurred, inevitably, at the heart of that world, in Karbalā. Most or all of the group which had arrived in Shīrāz with Mullā ^{c}Alī Bastāmī returned to Karbalā, although it would seem that Bastāmī himself did not accompany them on this occasion. Al-Karbalā'ī states that they arrived there on 26 Rajab/11 August.[10] The following

day, 27 Rajab/12 August, was the ziyārat al-mabᶜath, and Shaykhīs from Baghdād, Hilla, and elsewhere had gathered in Karbalā with those from the town itself; on hearing that Bastāmī's group had returned, they met with them and were told something of what had occurred.[11] According to al-Karbalā'ī, 'the cause of the Imām was manifested in the month of Rajab and was so much spread about that there remained no-one in this region who had not heard of it'.[12] It seems likely that the Bāb's identity was, in fact, revealed by some of the huruf al-hayy, for al-Karbalā'ī notes that 'those who had seen the Bāb before that said "if such a person is making a claim, then I shall accept him (fa-anā min al-muslimīn)"; this included Bālāsarīs and persons weak in their faith in Shiᶜism, among the people of al-Kāzimayn, and likewise servants of the blessed shrines'.[13] The Bāb himself states in an early letter that he never mentioned his name in any of his works, but that some of his first followers revealed it.[14]

Although he may have left Shīrāz before the other members of his group, possibly shortly after Bushrū'ī's departure,[15] Bastāmī did not arrive in Karbalā until about October 1844.[16] He travelled by way of Būshihr (where he visited the Bāb's uncle, Sayyid ᶜAlī), Najaf and Kūfa,[17] carrying with him a copy of the Qayyūm al-asmā',[18] a ziyārat-nāma to be read at the shrine of ᶜAlī in Najaf,[19] and a copy of the Sahīfat al-makhzūna.[20] With Bastāmī's arrival at the ᶜatabāt, events began to move at an increasingly rapid pace, precipitating a final break in the already disintegrating Shaykhī community, lending fresh impetus to the new movement of the Bāb, and giving to the Shīᶜī ᶜulamā in ᶜIraq their first premonition of the alarming developments which were to take place there and in Iran in coming years. While in Najaf, on instructions from the Bāb, Bastāmī made known the latter's claims to Shaykh Muhammad Hasan al-Najafī, to whom we have referred in our first chapter as the leading Shīᶜī ᶜālim and marjaᶜ of this period. According to Samandar, Mullā ᶜAlī carried with him a letter from the Bāb addressed to al-Najafī.[21] The Shaykh's reaction and that of his tullāb -- among whom were numbered several Shaykhīs -- was necessarily negative, and they expelled Bastāmī from Najaf as a heretic[22] -- the first of many cases in which the Bāb's claims served as a means of identifying the interests of Shaykhīs and Bālāsarīs, by providing a target which both could condemn.

According to Samandar, the Bāb instructed his followers to call a meeting of the ᶜulamā in Karbalā and to challenge them to mubāhala.[23] Whether or not Mullā ᶜAlī actually issued such a challenge, his activities in Karbalā certainly aroused fierce opposition from the mujtahids there. Concentrating his preaching among the Shaykhīs, he soon succeeded in winning over what, in Rawlinson's words, constituted 'a considerable

section...of the Sheeahs of Nejef, who...have lately risen into notice as the disciples of the High Priest Sheikh Kazem (i.e. Rashtī), and who are in avowed expectation of the speedy advent of the Imam'.[24] If anything, Bastāmī's influence was much greater among the Shaykhīs of Karbalā than among those of Najaf. Although he was himself arrested soon after his arrival in Karbalā,[25] imprisoned and tried in Baghdād,[26] and finally exiled to Istanbul,[27] where he was sentenced to labour in the docks,[28] he succeeded in converting large numbers even while in prison, through the mediation of Shaykh Muḥammad Shibl al-Baghdādī, the late Sayyid Kāẓim's wakīl in Baghdād.[29]

During his stay at the ʿatabāt, Bastāmī had, in fact, awoken something of a chiliastic fervour among the Shaykhīs of the region. There already existed a sense of messianic expectation in Karbalā and Baghdād. According to al-Karbalā'ī, who had by then accepted the Bāb's cause without, at that time, knowing anything of his identity, people expected that 'the cause would be revealed to them and the veil lifted from them so that the secret might conquer them in the year 1261'.[30] The same writer, who was present in Karbalā at this period, indicates that a considerable sense of expectancy centred on the year 1261. He cites Ḥāj Mullā Jaʿfar Kirmānshāhī as saying that he was a one with al-Aḥsā'ī during the latter's preparations for his last journey to Mecca in 1826; some people asked him concerning the signs of the appearance of the Imām, and he merely replied 'sixty one'.[31] Mullā Jaʿfar is said to have spread this 'prophecy' before and after the death of Rashtī. According to al-Karbalā'ī, some Jews in Karbalā referred to the Bāb's cause as being 'what we awaited in the month of Rabīʿ I of the year '61',[32] while many Sūfīs, particularly those of the Shāh Niʿmat Allāhī order, were expecting the Imām to appear -- al-Karbalā'ī claims that he had heard twenty-five years previously certain prophecies from them referring to the year '61.[33] Everyone, he writes, expected the promised one to appear from his own group, and he specifically mentions here the Sūfīs, Bālāsarīs, Ismāʿīlīs, other Shīʿīs, and even Sunnīs.[34] How widespread this sense of expectancy really was outside the circles of the Shaykhī school (and even within those circles) is extremely difficult to say without independent evidence, but there is reason to believe that it was by no means restricted to the Shaykhī community.

The purpose of the Qayyūm al-asmā, one of the works of the Bāb brought to the ʿatabāt by Bastāmī, was, in the words of Rawlinson, 'to prepare the Mohammedan world for the immediate manifestation of the Imam, and to identify the individual to whom the emendations of the text (of what was regarded, as we have noted, as a corrupted copy of the Qur'an) were

revealed, as his inspired and true precursor'.[35] Bastāmī's arrest and trial did little to calm the growing unrest and messianic expectancy; in his account of the trial, Rawlinson writes: 'I understand that considerable uneasiness is beginning to display itself at Kerbela and Nejef, in regard to the expected manifestation of the Imam, and I am apprehensive that the measures now in progress will rather increase than allay the excitement'.[36]

The nervous anticipation which this activity aroused was further intensified by the arrival of news that, on leaving for pilgrimage in September,[37] the Bāb had said that he would reveal his cause in Mecca, enter Kufa and Karbala, and fulfill the prophecies.[38] In various letters, he called on his followers to gather together in Karbalā, in order to aid the Qā'im when he would appear.[39] In one of these letters, he writes: 'In this month, there has occurred that which your Lord had promised unto everyone, old or young. He shall, indeed, triumph over the holy land (al-ard al-muqaddasa -- i.e. Karbalā) by virtue of a word through which all that is in the heavens and on the earth shall be cleft asunder; wait, therefore....He who shall arise in truth (al-qā'im bi 'l-haqq) is the one who shall dispense justice; he shall be made manifest from Mecca.... Lend your support, then, unto the Qā'im (whose advent) you have awaited, in the company of those who expect him, from every direction, and do not create mischief in the land. Truly, behind Kūfa a new cause shall be manifested'.[40] In an early letter to Mīrzā Hasan Khurāsānī,[41] the Bāb instructs him to 'send greetings from him who is the remembrance of the name of your Lord unto those who were the first to believe (al-sābiqūn) and tell them to travel to Karbalā (al-ard al-muqaddasa)'.[42]

Large numbers of Bābīs appear to have responded to the Bāb's appeal and headed for Karbalā to await his arrival, many of them, apparently, preparing to fight a holy war in the company of the Imam, in conformity with the explicit exhortations of the Qayyūm al-asmā.[43] Numbers of these seem to have brought with them or obtained arms with which to wage this jihād, in accordance with the Bāb's instructions in that book to 'purchase arms for the day of gathering together (yawm al-jamᶜ)'.[44] According to Kirmānī, the followers of the Bāb had spread out, telling men of his promise to come to Karbalā with the intention of coming forth from the shrine of Husayn on the day of ᶜĀshūrā, bearing a sword, in order to lead his followers in jihād.[45] On 22 January 1845, Rawlinson reported to Canning that 'the concourse of Persian pilgrims at Kerbelah at the present season is immense -- it is estimated that between twenty and thirty thousand of these devotees are now assembled at the shrine of Hussein'.[46] It is unclear how many of those assembled at Karbalā at this period anticipated an actual war and how many believed that they

would go forth in the company of the Imām to re-enact the suffering and martyrdom of the day of ʿĀshūrā. Al-Karbalā'ī maintains that some said the Bāb commanded his followers not to rise up in Karbalā, and quoted the tradition 'the heads of my followers shall be given as presents even as those of the Turks and the Daylamites'.[47] This passion motif certainly loomed large in the minds of the Bābīs besieged in the fort of Shaykh Tabarsī in 1848/9.

The ʿĀshūrā rites, which had developed in Iran in the sixteenth century, had for a long time been proscribed by governors of ʿIraq, but, during the governorship of ʿAlī Ridā Pāshā, a Biktāshī Sūfī with Shīʿī sympathies, permission was given, and both taʿziyas and processions began to be held in 1832.[48] Religious tension between Sunnīs and Shīʿīs in Karbalā, already unusually tense following the sack of the city in 1842, was all too easily heightened by the Muharram celebrations. Turkish-Persian relations were particularly bad at this period and, since Bastāmī's trial had already stirred up considerable animosity on this basis, even between the two governments, the influx of Iranian Shīʿīs anticipating some form of messianic upheaval was clearly a matter of concern. The situation in Karbalā threatened to be explosive and, if the Bāb had actually arrived, it is hard to say what might have happened.

Kirmānī maintains, however, that the Bāb had miscalculated the distance from Mecca to Karbalā and that, realizing he could not succeed in reaching his destination by the 10th. of Muharram, he was compelled to put back the date of his arrival to Naw Rūz.[49] In the event, however, the land-route from Mecca to Karbalā was closed by Arab tribes and the Bāb was forced to return to Iran by way of Būshihr.[50] When Muharram and and then Naw Rūz passed and the Bāb did not put in an appearance, no-one knew whether 'he had been drowned at sea or burnt on land' and, in the end, his followers felt ashamed of the claims they had put forward on his behalf.[51] Rawlinson noted that 'the religious excitement which has been for some time prevalent among the Sheeahs of this quarter, is beginning gradually to subside, the imposter who personated the character of the forerunner of the Imam Mehdi, and who was expected to declare himself at Kerbela during the present month on his return from Mecca, having been deterred by a sense of personal danger from attempting any further agitation, and having accordingly joined as a private individual the caravan of pilgrims which is travelling to Persia by the route of Damascus and Aleppo'.[52] Kirmānī himself regarded both the Bab's call to wage jihād and his eventual failure to fulfill the promises he had made as evidence of the falsehood of his mission.[53]

Sailing, in fact, from Jidda on 24 Safar 1261/4 March 1845,[54] the Bāb reached Būshihr on 8 Jumādī I/15 May, as noted previously. Shortly

after his arrival there, he sent a letter to Karbalā, probably with Hājī Sayyid Jawād Isfahānī, telling his disciples still assembled there that it had proved necessary to alter his plans in order to return directly to Iran, and that they ought to proceed to Isfahān and remain there until the arrival of further instructions.[55] Whatever the reasons for the Bāb's change of plans, it precipitated a serious breach in the ranks of his followers in Karbalā, leading large numbers to abandon him. According to al-Karbalā'ī, 'only a tiny band' remained after this incident, the trial of Mullā ᶜAlī, and the arrest, some six months later, of Mullā Sādiq Khurāsānī, Mullā Muhammad ᶜAlī Bārfurūshī, and Mullā ᶜAlī Akbar Ardistānī in Shīrāz.[56] This small group of diehards regarded the change in intentions as the interposition of badā' and were, if anything, reinforced in their new allegiance.[57]

The Bāb himself appears to have indicated that, because of opposition to his cause and attacks on his messengers, God had become angry with men and decreed a postponement of five years in which they might increase in sins and the divine proclamation to them be completed.[58] In his Kitāb al-fihrist, completed in Būshihr about one month after his return to Iran, he writes: 'Woe to you, O people of the earth! Some of you have contended against our signs, wherefore have we forbidden our signs to all men for a period of five years, as a punishment for their lies'.[59] In effect, the proclamation of qā'imiyya and qiyāma was 'postponed' to the fifth year of the Bāb's career. Up to that point -- and possibly after it -- he seems to have retained a desire to return to Karbalā, the most appropriate place for such a proclamation. This is evidenced by a short letter written by him from prison in Mākū to Sayyid Ahmad Yazdī, one of a group of Bābīs who formed a close circle in Karbalā under the leadership of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn, in which he writes: 'I beseech God that He may gladden the hearts of the believers through His grace and make it possible for us to rise up and enter the holy land (al-ard al-muqaddasa)'.[60]

With the Bāb's arrival in Shīrāz in early July 1845, it became possible for those who remained loyal to him in Karbalā either to travel to meet him in person or to receive news of him at first hand from those who returned from Shīrāz. A considerable movement between Karbalā and Shīrāz now began, as a result of which the Bāb's now precarious position was again strengthened and his authority extended over what was by now developing into a more consciously radical group of Shaykhīs under the leadership of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn in the former city. Mīrzā Hādī Nahrī and his brother Mīrzā Muhammad ᶜAlī, who had frequently met the Bāb in Karbalā, had already gone to Shīrāz while he was in Arabia, the former returning to the ᶜatabāt, where he doubtless brought further information

about the absent Sayyid to his companions.[61] Other Shaykhīs travelled between the two towns, among them Shaykh Sālih al-Karīmī, a convert of Bastāmī's,[62] Shaykh Sultān al-Karbalā'ī,[63] Shaykh Hasan Zunūzī,[64] Sayyid Jawād Karbalā'ī,[65] and Āqā Sayyid ᶜAbd al-Hādī Qazvīnī, later the husband of a niece of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn.[66]

Māzandarānī states that, in 1261/1845, pilgrims returned from Mecca to Karbalā, where they mentioned the claims of the Bāb, having heard of them while taking part in the hajj; these individuals probably returned to Karbalā in the early months of 1845.[67] In an early prayer, the Bāb gives the names of a number of individuals whom he informed of his claims while in Mecca; these included Sayyid ᶜAlī Kirmānī, to whom we have previously referred as the leading supporter of Karīm Khān in Karbalā.[68] It appears that Sayyid ᶜAlī had, in fact, accepted the Bāb's claims for a time, following the return of the hurūf al-hayy from Shīrāz, but that he had become nervous when arrests began among the Bābīs (presumably after Bastāmī's arrival) and headed for Mecca.[69] He appears to have been accompanied on the hajj by Mīrzā Muhīt Kirmānī and Mullā Hasan Gawhar, both of whom also met the Bāb in Mecca and were challenged by him there to mubahāla.[70] As we have noted, the Bāb's Sahīfa bayna 'l-Haramayn was addressed to Sayyid ᶜAlī and Mīrzā Muhīt; the latter received a copy on his return to Karbalā.[71] In view of the position held by these three men in the Shaykhī community generally and in Karbalā in particular, there is no doubt that their meeting with the Bāb and their negative reaction to his claims were important factors in shaping the views of their followers in this respect, and may also have had an influence on the response of Karīm Khān, with whom Sayyid ᶜAlī and Mīrzā Muhīt were generally on good terms.

The writings of the Bāb were also reaching Karbalā in this period. As mentioned previously, Bastāmī carried several of these to ᶜIraq (and the other huruf al-hayy may have brought some as well), and they were soon circulating in the Karbalā region. An important early manuscript collection of works of the Bāb, containing the Qayyūm al-asmā, Sahīfa aᶜmāl al-sana, Al-sahīfat al-makhzūna, numerous khutub, ziyārāt, and prayers, was transcribed in Karbalā in mid 1262/1846 by a certain Muhammad ᶜAlī, in the Mīrzā Jaᶜfar madrasa.[72] In a letter from Karbalā, dated 1263/1847, from Shaykh Sultān al-Karbalā'ī to Bābīs in Iran, the Bāb's commentary on the Hadīth al-jārīyya, his Qayyūm al-asmā, a khutba, and several letters are quoted in a context which suggests they were familiar to the Bābīs of Karbalā.[73] Among the early writings of the Bāb are five prayers addressed in direct reply to individuals resident in Karbalā[74] -- evidence that communication existed between the Bāb and his followers there from almost the earliest period. We may also note that, according

to al-Baghdādī, Qurrat al-ᶜAyn read portions of the Tafsīr Sūrat al-kawthar to the ᶜulamā in Karbalā.[75]

Qurrat al-ᶜAyn

Leadership of the nascent Bābī community at the heart of the Shīᶜī world fell, curiously enough, to the one woman member of the hurūf al-hayy, Qurrat al-ᶜAyn. Born in Qazvīn in 1814,[76] she was raised under the tutelage of her father, Hāj Mullā Muhammad Sālih Baraghānī, and her uncles Hāj Mullā Muhammad Taqī (who pronounced the takfīr against al-Ahsā'ī) and Hāj Mullā Muhammad ᶜAlī (who was a Shaykhī). Married at the age of fourteen to Muhammad Taqī's son, Mullā Muhammad, she travelled soon afterwards with him to Karbalā, where he studied for some thirteen years.[77] Already well educated by her father and uncles, she continued to acquire a knowledge of fiqh, kalām, and other religious sciences. At some period, whether during this or a subsequent stay in Karbalā, she associated with the leading ᶜulamā there and eventually determined to ask for ijāzāt from various mujtahids. It seems that, on the basis of her writings, they admitted she was sufficiently learned to merit an ijāza, but said that it was not customary for one to be given to a woman.[78] This, however, was not strictly true. It was not uncommon for the daughters of ᶜulamā to be as well educated as their sons and, indeed, to become ᶜulamā themselves, even, in some cases, being granted ijāzāt. The daughters of Shaykh Jaᶜfar al-Najafī, for example, were regarded as faqīha,[79] while Tanakābunī states that 'among the generality of women, there have been many with ijāzāt'[80] and gives the names of several of them.[81] In the modern period, a woman mujtahid named ᶜAlawīyya attained considerable fame in Isfahān, receiving ijāzāt from three of the leading marāji ᶜ al-taqlīd of her time.[82] Significantly, many of the early female converts to Babism were also well educated, including Qurrat al-ᶜAyn's sister Mardīyya, and the mother and sister of Mullā Husayn Bushrū'ī.[83]

Whether independently or, as has been suggested, under the influence of her maternal cousin, Mullā Jawād Vilyānī,[84] or her uncle, Hāj Mullā Muhammad ᶜAlī,[85] she became attracted to Shaykhism and appears to have studied under Rashtī in Karbalā.[86] She seems to have returned to Qazvīn with her husband and children in 1841,[87] but our sources are contradictory as to her movements in the next few years. Most authorities have assumed that she was again in Karbalā when she received news of the Bāb's 'declaration', possibly through Mullā ᶜAlī Bastāmī, but, in fact -- as we have noted above -- she herself clearly states in a letter to Mullā Jawād Vilyānī that she was still in Qazvīn when she first heard of the Bāb. It would seem, however, that she headed for Karbalā shortly after this, and may even have been there when Bastāmī arrived.[88] According to the

Nuqtatu'l-Kāf, she professed 'outward belief' after the perusal of some of the writings of the Bāb, possibly those brought to Karbalā by Bastāmī.[89]

Qurrat al-ʿAyn's position in Karbalā was greatly enhanced by the fact that, from the time of her arrival, she took up residence in the house of the late Sayyid, her classes there taking the place of those given by him.[90] The importance of thus securing for the followers of the Bāb the seat of the leadership of the Shaykhī school is stressed by him in a letter to Hājī Mīrzā Hasan Khurāsānī, apparently written after his return from the hajj, in which he states that '...it is incumbent on one of you to teach our verses in the house of the previous gate of God (bāb Allāh al-muqaddam -- i.e. Rashtī)'.[91] Qurrat al-ʿAyn appears to have given three separate classes in Rashtī's house -- the first a general class open to anyone, the second for Bābī men, and the third for Bābī women. Apart from this, it seems that, in keeping with the practice of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī, she gathered about her a small band of elite disciples (khawwās), to whom she imparted the more recondite, gnostic elements of the Shaykhī and -- as time passed -- Bābī taʿlīm.[92] It was not long, indeed, before the Bābīs in Karbalā became into two groups: those who followed Qurrat al-ʿAyn and those who refused to do so. At the beginning of a letter discussing this division, Mullā Ahmad ibn Ismāʿīl Khurāsānī states that there are many religious sects in existence: there are, to begin with, Sunnīs and Shīʿīs; these latter are, in turn, divided between the Bālāsarīs and the Shaykhīs; the latter are themselves divided into two groups -- the Bābīs and the rest; and the Bābīs have also been split into two parties -- those who follow the daughter of Sālih Qazvīnī (i.e. Qurrat al-ʿAyn) and the rest.[93]

The composition of the group centred around Qurrat al-ʿAyn is of some interest. Whereas those who went with Bushrū'ī or Bastāmī to Shīrāz were, with the exception of an Indian, Saʿīd Hindī, all Iranians, Qurrat al-ʿAyn's circle contained a number of Arabs from Baghdād and Karbalā. This fact is particularly important in indicating that, whatever the causes of later dissension in the Bābī community of ʿIraq, Arab-Iranian rivalry seems to have played little or no part in it. Similarly, in apparent contrast to the group which initiated the Bābī movement, several of Qurrat al-ʿAyn's supporters were elderly members of the ʿulamā class. Considering that the views associated with her and her followers came to be regarded as the most revolutionary of those held by any Bābī group in the early period, there is a strong indication here that youthful kicking against the traces of precedent was not the only nor even the dominant element to be found in the dynamic of the new sect. In general, the role of elderly figures in revolutionary or messianic movements has been to mitigate to some extent the earliest extremes as the movement

has begun to move into a phase tending towards rapprochement with the established order, whereas here we can observe a number of elderly divines consciously going in the vanguard of the most radical departure from religious and social norms.

This group was largely composed of ᶜulamā, most if not all of whom had studied under Rashtī and one or two under al-Ahsā'ī. Their activities centred mostly around the classes given by Qurrat al-ᶜAyn, although there is some evidence that she herself initiated lecture groups held by other scholars.[94] It would appear that, during her earlier stay in Karbalā, and probably in the early period of her later residence, she lectured on works of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī,[95] but, as time passed and more of the Bāb's works became available, her classes concentrated on them to the exclusion of others. Although it is clear from her letters that she persisted in intellectual debate to the end of her life, various accounts indicate that her lecturing became more and more akin to preaching and that her preaching became increasingly impassioned. At her more popular classes, as distinct from those limited to the elite circle of scholars and close initiates to whom we have referred, her fervour and eloquence won her large audiences and created a stir wherever she went.[96] These preaching activities, with their ever-heightening air of tension and messianic expectancy, were ultimately responsible for much of the public outcry against her that led, in the end, to her expulsion from ᶜIraq in 1847; but it was in the course of her more specialized classes and her discussions with other Bābī intellectuals that the ideas voiced to a wider audience were initially formulated and the startling conclusions she drew from the Bāb's writings reached.

The Shaykhī reaction to the Bābī daᶜwa

Relations between the Bābīs, especially the 'Qurratīyya' branch, and the rest of the Shaykhī community in Karbalā became progressively worse. It appears that, at some point, Mullā Hasan Gawhar had claimed wisaya and Mīrzā Muhīt Kirmānī nizāra,[97] implying some form of succession to Rashtī and a degree of authority over the school. Mīrzā Muhīt seems to have vacillated between making a claim to personal leadership and giving support to Karīm Khān, for whom he probably acted as an agent in Karbalā; but his attitude towards Babism appears to have remained negative.[98] Mullā Hasan retained the greatest influence among the non-Babi Shaykhīs and followed Rashtī's policy of fostering ties with the governor of Karbalā.[99] His relations with Qurrat al-ᶜAyn and her followers were particularly bad; having fallen into a serious disagreement with her during a visit to Kāzimayn,[100] he preached against her and her circle in his own classes and those of Mīrzā Muhīt,[101] and was ective in making

complaints against her to the authorities in Baghdād and Istanbul, as a result of which she was held under house arrest in the former city and finally expelled from ᶜIraq in the spring of 1847.[102] Relations between the Shaykhī groups in Karbalā were complicated by Karīm Khān Kirmānī's unfavourable reaction to the Bāb.

As far as can be determined, Mullā Sādiq Khurāsānī, an elderly Shaykhī who had studied under Rashtī, was the first Bābī to communicate the claims of Sayyid ᶜAlī Muhammad to Karīm Khān. Converted by Bushrū'ī in the course of the latter's visit to Isfahān in mid-1844, Khurāsānī headed for Kirmān,[103] carrying with him, in the words of Karīm Khān, 'a number of sūras in the style of the Qur'an, a number of books in the style of the Sahīfat al-sajjādīyya, and several khutub in the style of the Nahj al-balāgha'.[104] The 'sūras' in question were a number of chapters from the Qayyūm al-asmā, as is clear from those parts of them quoted by Karīm Khān in several of his works. Mullā Sādiq was, according to Kirmānī, brought to a meeting presided over by him, defeated in argument, and sent on his way.[105]

Khurāsānī was followed to Kirmān after some time by Mullā Muhammad ᶜAlī Bārfurūshī, probably the best acquainted of all the Bāb's followers with his teachings at this stage. Bārfurūshī brought with him a letter for Kirmānī in the Bāb's own hand, and succeeded in delivering it to him before being expelled like his predecessor;[106] the letter in question is quoted in full by Kirmānī in Al-shihāb al-thāqib.[107] Mullā Sādiq and Mullā Muhammad ᶜAlī were, according to Kirmānī, the only Bābīs he ever met.[108] In his final attack on the Bāb (written in 1283/1867), however, he refers to and quotes from the Bayān-i fārsī, and gives detailed references to what would seem to be the Arabic Bayān,[109] evidence that, even if he did not have further direct contact with Bābīs, he was at least able to obtain their literature.

In 1845, Karīm Khān was aged thirty-five and was at the height of his powers. As we have indicated previously, he was already a firm claimant to the position of supreme leader of the Shaykhī school. Between 1247/1832, the date of his first extant risāla, and 1260/1844, he had written a total of twenty works, principally untitled treatises. From about 1844, his output began to increase markedly, a minimum of ninety-five titles being produced between that date and 1270/1854. These included important works such as the Irshād al-ᶜawwām (written in four parts between 1263/1847 and 1267/1851), the Hidāyat al-tālibīn (1261/1845), the Jawāmiᶜ al-ᶜallāj (1269/1853), and the Rujūm al-shayātīn (1268/1852).

It is hardly surprising, then, that Karīm Khān's response to the Bāb's claims took the form of a series of refutations in Arabic and Persian, which were spread widely, to Shaykhīs in particular. Māzandarānī maintains

that Kirmānī attacked the Bāb in no less than twelve of his works, although he fails to give all but a few of their titles.[110] Kirmānī himself writes in his Risāla-yi sī fasl (1269/1853): 'I have written five or six books in refutation of him (i.e. the Bāb), and have sent them to different parts of Ādharbāyjān, ʿIrāq Aʿjam, ʿIrāq ʿArab, Hijāz, Khurāsān, and India. I have also written letters to the ʿulamā and sent petitions to officials of the victorious government. At times in Yazd and Kirmān, and on a journey to Khurāsān, I have made clear their unbelief from pulpits, with proofs and evidences'.[111] Of these 'five or six books', only three are actually known: Izhāq al-bāṭil (1261/1845); Tīr-i shihāb (1262/1846); and Al-shihāb al-thāqib (1265/1849). A fourth complete work in refutation of the Bāb, the Risāla dar radd-i Bāb-i murtād, was written by Kirmānī at the request of Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh in 1283/1867.

Karīm Khān's numerous and often complex objections to the claims of the Bāb are, perhaps, best summarized in his own list of ten items in the Bāb's teachings (as found in his early writings) which he identifies as opposed to Islam, some of them being regarded as bidʿa. These are listed in the Tīr-i shihāb as follows:[112]

1. The claim to wahy after that of Muḥammad.
2. The claim to bring a new book after the Qur'an.
3. Legitimization of jihād, which is ill-gitimate in the time of ghayba.
4. The prohibition on writing his books in black ink, and the requirement to write them in coloured ink.
5. The promulgation of claims regarded as the prerogatives of the Prophet and Imāms.
6. The decree that his name be mentioned in the adhān.
7. The claim to nīyāba khāṣṣa.
8. The decree that all must obey him, and that whoever refuses to do so is a kāfir.
9. The claim that all must worship him and regard him as the qibla and masjid.
10. Deceits relating to the twelfth Imam (apparently in respect of prophecies relating to his advent, or the claim to have revelation from him).

On the basis of such points, Kirmānī declares the Bāb a kāfir, maintaining that 'our God is not his God, our Prophet is not his Prophet, and our Imām is not his Imām'.[113]

The fierceness of Kirmānī's attacks and his outright condemnation of the Bāb as a kāfir, whose claims and teachings were bidʿa, immediately polarized the Shaykhī community. For the Bābīs, Karīm Khān became the embodiment of opposition to their cause: in the writings of the Bāb, he appears to be identified with 'the first to disbelieve' (corresponding negatively to Bushrū'ī, 'the first to believe'), the 'Tree of Negation', and the 'Embodiment of Hellfire', whose abode is 'the Land of Fire' and whose food is 'the Tree of Zaqqūm'.[114] Al-Karbalā'ī draws a comparison between Kirmānī and the Umayyads, the Sufyanids, the followers of Muʿāwīya, and Muʿāwīya himself,[115] while Zarandī speaks of him as the

'antichrist' (Dajjāl?) of the 'Bābī revelation',[116] and Mīrzā Muhammad ᶜAlī Zunūzī, identifying Hājī Mīrzā Āqāsī as Dajjāl, refers to him as 'the manifestation of Sufyān' (zuhūr-i Sufyānī).[117] When copies of Izhāq al-bātil reached Karbalā, both Qurrat al-ᶜAyn and al-Qatīl ibn al-Karbalā'ī wrote counter-polemics against it.[118] Sayyid ᶜAlī Kirmānī and Mīrzā Muhīt were informed of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn's refutation of Karīm Khān[119] and, as a result, relations between them and her appear to have further deteriorated.

Equally serious in its effect on Bābī/orthodox Shaykhī relations in Karbalā was the defection to Karīm Khān of Mullā Jawād Vilyānī, Qurrat al-ᶜAyn's maternal cousin, who had, for a time, been a convert to Babism but apostatized after meeting the Bāb in Shīrāz. One of the first in Qazvīn to acknowledge the Bāb as the new Shaykhī leader, he had been one of those awaiting his arrival in Karbalā in 1845.[120] Disappointed by the Bāb's failure to appear, he travelled to Shīrāz with a group of fellow-Shaykhīs, including Mullā ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī Harātī and Mīrzā Ibrāhīm Shīrāzī. Within a short time of their arrival in Shīrāz, Mullā Jawād and these two companions came into conflict with the Bāb and his other followers there, including Mullā Husayn Bushrū'ī.[121] Serious disagreements seem to have occurred, in the course of which these three men were expelled from the community of believers and allied themselves in some way with the Bāb's enemies in the city. This schism appears to have led to the outbreak of disturbances of some kind between Bābīs and non-Bābīs, resulting in the expulsion from Shīrāz of Mullā Jawād and his companions by the civil authorities.[122] It is not clear why these men rather than the Bāb's other newly-arrived disciples, defying the ban on meeting with their magister spiritualis, should have been expelled.

Having by now rejected the Bāb as a legitimate successor to Rashtī, Vilyānī and his fellow-recusants made for Kirmān, where they joined forces with Karīm Khān. In Kirmān, Vilyānī appears to have adopted the role of spokesman on behalf of Kirmānī and to have written letters in support of his claims to various individuals, as is indicated by al-Karbalā'ī, who refers to Vilyānī as Kirmānī's 'herald' (munād).[123] The secession of three followers of the Bāb and the transfer of their allegiance to himself was without a valuable factor in enhancing Kirmānī's reputation at this critical juncture. Undoubtedly, too, these men were able to supply him with much of the fresh information which he incorporated into his second and third attacks on the Bāb. Two untitled treatises in refutation of the latter were, in fact, written by Karīm Khān in reply to questions from Vilyānī.[124] The latter returned after some time to Qazvīn, where he is himself reported as having written a polemic against the Bāb, the text of which does not, unfortunately, seem extant.[125]

The Bāb, for his part, regarded this act of apostasy on the part of Mullā Jawād, Mullā ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī, and Mīrzā Ibrāhīm, as a serious setback, and wrote at length and in very strong terms deprecating their actions. In a letter written in Shīrāz, probably not long after these events, he states that 'the worst thing which has befallen me is the action of Khuwār al-Vilyānī (i.e. Mullā Jawād) in his injustice to me; at the time when I was writing the decree of his expulsion, it was as if I heard one calling within my heart "Sacrifice the most beloved of all things unto you, even as Husayn made sacrifices in my path"'.[126] In another letter, quoted by Zarandī, he refers to Mullā Jawād and Mullā ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī as 'the Jibt and Ṭāghūt, the twin idols of this perverse people (the Shaykhīs?)',[127] while elsewhere he speaks of them and Mīrzā Ibrāhīm as 'the Golden Calf, and its body and its lowing'.[128] Vilyānī, in particular, is often referred to in Bābī and Bahā'ī literature as 'khuwār', the 'lowing' of the Golden Calf.[129] The opening passage of the Tafsīr Sūrat al-kawthar, written not long after these events in Shīrāz, makes lengthy and pained reference to the infidelity of these three men.[130]

Mullā Jawād's rejection of the Bāb and his expulsion from the ranks of his followers had repercussions in Karbalā. He himself wrote a letter to Qurrat al-ᶜAyn, evoking an impassioned and, at times, severe reply from her, addressed to him, Mullā ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī and 'others'.[131] Written in 1261/1845, this would seem to be the earliest dated work of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn's which we possess. It contains fairly detailed references to the content of Vilyani's original letter, outlining the nature of his objections before proceeding to refute them. Among the points raised by Mullā Jawād were: the Bāb's failure to appear in Karbalā,[132] the difficulty for most people in reading the Arabic writings of the Bāb,[133] his acceptance of parts of the Bāb's writings but not others,[134] the possibility that God may establish the truth in a person or place not fit to receive it,[135] his own claim to have written a 'Qur'an' more eloquent and complete than the Bāb's tafsīr (i.e. the Qayyūm al-asmā),[136] the confusion of the language of the latter work,[137] and the station accorded Mullā Husayn Bushrū'ī by the Bāb.[138] Taken together, the arguments raised by Vilyānī -- most of which are of little consequence in isolation -- indicate a general attitude which seems to lie at the root of his eventual abandonment of the Bāb. Already shaken in his convictions by the latter's failure to appear in Karbalā as he had promised, Mullā Jawād had clearly headed for Shīrāz with the express intention of engaging in mubāhala with him; a major factor in his eventual disenchantment with and rejection of the Bāb was certainly the latter's reaction to his attempt to put his claims to the proof.

Mubāhala was common at this period, and the Bāb not only engaged in it himself, but instructed several of his followers to do so on his behalf or else approved of their doing so.[139] In this case, however, the Bāb regarded such a challenge as unacceptable and even improper. In a prayer written after Vilyānī's departure from Shīrāz, he writes: 'Know that Jawād Qazvīnī has written in his letter in Persian, which he wrote with the images of hell, vain words, among which were those in which he sought to put our proof to the test....In his letter, he has challenged me to mubāhala, thus making a liar of himself -- for it is as if he had not read in the book of God that mubāhala is my decree and my sign, and that he has no authority to issue a challenge to it'.[140] The point at issue is that of the station to be accorded the Bāb. In declaring himself to be the sole source of divine guidance then on earth -- whatever the precise nature of his claim -- the Bāb demanded a degree of non-rational obedience which Mullā Jawād and other Shaykhīs seem to have been unwilling to give. The history of Babism up to 1848 is marked by a high measure of tension between the cautious intellectualizing of the large numbers of Shaykhī Bābīs who became more and more disillusioned and abandoned the Bāb in greater and greater numbers as his doctrines and injunctions jarred increasingly with established theory, and the unthinking dedication of bands of saints and fanatics who argued, fought, and were, in the end, all but wiped out for a cause they often understood little of. There is, in many respects, a useful analogy here with the epistemological stance of the Nizārī Ismā'īlism of Hasan-i Sabbāh and his successors, in which reason is largely abandoned in favour of existential recognition of the Imām as the only source of truth and guidance.[141]

The emphasis which the Bāb placed on observance of the Islamic laws and his references to his station as being below that of the Imām, attracted much of that section of the Shaykhī community which sought for a formal continuation of the leadership provided by al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī in the context of a rigid adherence to Islamic practice and veneration for the Imāms, thereby tending towards the routinization of charisma within the school. On the other hand, it soon became apparent to some individuals that, even at this stage, there existed in the claims and ideas of the Bāb elements which were clearly in a state of tension with his apparently normative and traditionalist injunctions. There thus emerged a group which, although initially amenable to the claims explicit or implicit in the Bāb's writings, persisted in judging those claims in terms of existing theory. When the Bāb seemed to jettison much of the theory on which their judgements were based, the ideological edifice of their faith appeared to collapse for such individuals.

Mullā Jawād seems to have been one of the first (probably a little after Sayyid ᶜAlī Kirmānī) to detect an incongruity between the Bāb's claims and the modes in which he actually proposed to establish them. Thus, the Bāb's writings did not conform to the established criteria of Qur'anic style or grammar, his answers to questions appeared to function outside the framework of normal question-answer relationships, even of accepted epistemological approaches, and his most favoured disciples seemed to be ascribed roles alien to the established religious roles available to the ᶜulamā. Joining Karīm Khān, who sought to approximate Shaykhī doctrine more and more closely to the established norms of Twelver Shiᶜism, he was able to find in the books of his new shaykh a consistency between claims and criteria which he had not found in the writings of the Bāb.

By contrast, Qurrat al-ᶜAyn, as is clear from her letter to Vilyānī, had both seen the implications of the Bab's claims and ideas and found them consonant with her own attitudes. Where Vilyānī saw only purposeless contradiction, she seems to have apprehended a dialectical process. Where he appears to have wanted to see in Sayyid ᶜAlī Muhammad a third bāb succeeding to and, to some extent, continuing the charisma of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī, she, while speaking of these latter as 'the two previous gates',[142] nevertheless saw in the role of the Bāb a distinct break with the charismatic modes of Shaykhism and a thrust in a wholly new direction, into a new 'universe of discourse'. In her letter to Vilyānī, she quotes Rashtī as having said near his death that he was 'but as a herald (mubashshir) for that great cause'.[143]

Elsewhere in the course of her reply to Mullā Jawād, Qurrat al-ᶜAyn cites a tradition of Jaᶜfar al-Sādiq, to the effect that wahy could be given to someone other than the Prophet, and this in a context referring to the Qā'im himself.[144] That she regarded the writings of the Bāb as inspired in such a manner seems clear from her numerous comparisons between them and the Qur'an, and her quotation of a passage from the Qayyūm al-asmā, which declares that 'my proof is this book from God'.[145] It is similarly clear from several of her references to the Bāb that she looked on him, if not as a prophet or Imām, certainly as the possessor of a most exalted spiritual station. In various places in her letter, she refers to him as 'the central Point of the Circle of Existence'[146] and 'the Lord of Lords, Manifestation of the grace and loving-kindness of the King of Beneficence'.[147] These titles do not seem to refer to any particular station for the Bāb, such as qā'imiyya, and they certainly do not provide grounds for believing that Qurrat al-ᶜAyn thought of him, at this point, as the promised Imām himself. But such titles, coupled with the general tone of profound respect with which she refers to the

Bāb in this letter, indicate a preparedness on her part to accept as valid any roles which he might assign to himself in the future.

Division within the Bābī community

Vilyānī's defection must have caused profound anxiety to the Bābī enclave in Karbalā, where the issue of the relations between Shaykhism and Babism was most sharply felt. More serious, however, were the problems raised in the course of a violent split among the Bābīs, involving Qurrat al-ᶜAyn and her supporters on the one hand and Mullā Ahmad Khurāsānī and his followers on the other. Although communications between the Bāb and his devotees were never entirely severed, contact did, at times, become difficult, and it was, in any case, impossible to refer to him any and every question for elucidation or arbitration. For this reason, Mullā Husayn Bushrū'ī was empowered by the Bāb to reply to questions and issue challenges to mubāhala on his behalf.[148] The task of exposition of Bābī doctrine in a number of provincial centres fell increasingly, however, on the leading followers of the Bāb in those areas: in Mashhad, Mullā Muhammad ᶜAlī Bārfurūshī assisted Bushrū'ī in this task;[149] in Burūjird, Kurdistān, Tihrān, Qazvīn, Isfahān, Qum, and elsewhere, the peripatetic Sayyid Yahyā Dārābī taught and expounded the new daᶜwa;[150] in Tihrān, Mullā Muhammad ᶜAlī Zanjānī, despite restrictions placed on him there by the civil authorities, was able to give advice to his fellow-Bābīs;[151] and, in Qazvīn, Mullā Jalīl Urūmī gave classes in Bābī doctrine on the instructions of the Bāb.[152]

Qurrat al-ᶜAyn's position and role as a centre of authority for the Bābīs of Karbalā was confirmed by the Bāb himself in more than one letter,[153] but it was inevitable that her performance of this role should excite suspicion and hostility in some quarters. Whereas Vilyānī and his companions rejected the Bāb and his doctrines as such, and thereby separated themselves from the Bābī community, Mullā Ahmad and his supporters maintained adamantly that their opposition to Qurrat al-ᶜAyn was based on a desire to purify the faith of the Bāb from the false interpretations and harmful innovations which she was introducing into it. Unlike the defection of Vilyānī, therefore, this disagreement resulted in an actual division within Babism, rather than a retraction from it.

Mullā Ahmad Khurāsānī (also known as Muᶜallim-i Hisārī)[154] was a mujtahid from Nāmiq near Turshīz, who had undertaken the task of teaching the children of Sayyid Kāzim Rashtī. Informed of the Bāb's claims in a letter from Bushrū'ī, he had become one of his earliest followers in Karbalā. He spent some time after his conversion in Khurāsān, where he became better acquainted with Bushrū'ī, but decided, in the end, that his place was in ᶜIrāq and so returned to Karbalā, possibly early in

1262/1846. During his absence, Qurrat al-ʿAyn and others had risen to prominence in the community there, and friction began to develop between them and Mullā Ahmad around Ramadān 1262/September 1846. Shaykh Sultān al-Karbalā'ī describes an altercation on 23 Ramadan/13 September between Mullā Ahmad and Mullā Bāqir Tabrīzī over the question of smoking, which the former did not regard as prohibited. Qurrat al-ʿAyn and Rashtī's widow (whom she had converted) were drawn into the dispute and, from petty beginnings, the matter grew into a serious argument.[155] Khurāsānī himself, in his version of the disagreement, makes no reference whatever to the smoking incident, and instead locates the origins of the dispute between him and Qurrat al-ʿAyn in a much less trivial debate concerning her position and that of Mullā Bāqir. According to Khurāsānī, Mullā Bāqir interpreted a letter from the Bāb in praise of Qurrat al-ʿAyn as evidence that the Bābīs should gather about her and, despite his protests, proceeded to assemble a group of men in support of her, including Shaykh Sultān al-Karbalā'ī, Shaykh Sālih al-Karīmī, and Mīrzā Hādī Nahrī. Khurāsānī continued to protest and, in the end, was condemned for his pains as an unbeliever and forbidden either to lecture to the believers or to teach the children (presumably of Rashtī). Qurrat al-ʿAyn, for her part, decreed that whatever might be said by Mullā Bāqir should be regarded as true and accepted by all.[156]

Khurāsānī sought support for his views, writing letters to a number of individuals, including the Bāb (by then probably in Isfahān), Mullā Shaykh ʿAlī Turshīzī in Shīrāz, Sayyid Husayn Yazdī in Isfahān, and Sayyid ʿAlī (Shubbar?) in Kāzimayn.[157] According to Mullā Ahmad, replies were received from both the Bāb and Sayyid Husayn Yazdī in condemnation of the words and behaviour of his opponents -- but these were not specific refutations of Qurrat al-ʿAyn or Mullā Bāqir, since he had not referred to them by name in his original letters.[158] The disagreement soon developed doctrinal justifications and elaborations. Al-Wardī mentions several points of doctrinal difference, including two which do not seem to be referred to elsewhere. The first of these is that Mullā Ahmad regarded the works of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī as immortal and continued reading them (and, presumably, lecturing from them). Qurrat al-ʿAyn and her followers, on the other hand, looked on these works as abrogated by the Bāb.[159] Although, as we shall see, the Bāb did at a later date specifically forbid his followers to read the works of al-Ahsā'ī or Rashtī or to sit with their followers, the only passage known to me in his early writings which might be interpreted in this way is his general statement in the Qayyūm al-asmā that all the books of the past, except those from God, had been abrogated.[160] That Qurrat al-ʿAyn and her supporters may have drawn a more specific conclusion with regard to the works of the founders

of Shaykhism is a fact of no little moment. The other point mentioned by al-Wardī is that Qurrat al-ᶜAyn was said to have forbidden mourning for the Imām Husayn or the performance of ziyāra to the shrines of the Imāms, on the grounds that there is no real meaning in references to the 'thirst' or 'death' of Husayn.[161] If this be true, she was clearly opposed here to the Bāb's own teaching.[162]

Her position was, however, much enhanced at this juncture by the arrival of several letters from the Bāb, in which he spoke of her in terms of the highest praise and approbation.[163] Strengthened in her position by statements in her favour from such a source, Qurrat al-ᶜAyn continued to emphasize the significance of the role of the hurūf al-hayy as the sābiqūn who had recognized the Bāb before all others. Mullā Ahmad and his companions -- for he seems to have acquired a following of his own by this stage -- objected vigorously to what they regarded as unwarranted interpretations by her of certain passages in the Bāb's referring to the sābiqūn, while their opponents countered with various quotations of a more explicit nature.[164] Khurāsānī went on to allege that his rivals believed 'that the remembrance (al-dhikr -- i.e. the Bāb) is a lord apart from God, and his gate and the first to believe in, Mullā Husayn, is Muhammad ibn ᶜAbd Allāh (i.e. the Prophet), and the second to believe in him, Mullā ᶜAlī, is ᶜAlī ibn Abī Tālib, and Qurrat al-ᶜAyn is the reality of Fātima, and the remaining eleven (sic) sābiqūn are the other Imāms, and the Shaykh and the Sayyid (i.e. al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī) were created from the surplus matter of the bodies of the sābiqūn'.[165] A meeting was called in Rashtī's house (where Khurāsānī also seems to have lived) in order to resolve this particular issue, attended by Mulla Ahmad and several of his companions.

The matter appears to have remained unresolved, however; both sides stayed intransigent and tension continued as before. Shaykh Sultān refers to the accusations of Khurāsānī regarding the claims made for the sābiqūn as mere 'falsehoods'.[166] As we have already noted, however, the Bāb himself did teach that the hurūf al-hayy were identical with the Prophet, Imāms, abwāb, and Fātima, and there seems little doubt that this doctrine was being promulgated in some form by the group around Qurrat al-ᶜAyn and Mullā Bāqir. The former in particular appears to have been the object of great veneration in this respect, becoming all but the centre of a cult in which she was regarded as 'the fair and spotless emblem of chastity and the incarnation of the holy Fātimih'.[167] The Nuqtatu l-Kāf describes the origins of this veneration as follows: originally, the followers of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn practised extremely severe forms of asceticism; they would not eat bread bought from the bazaar because they regarded it as unclean, inasmuch as anyone who rejected the Bāb thereby rejected

the Prophet and, in so doing, rejected God[168] (that is, they became kuffār, whose property was considered najis). This situation continued until the Bāb's Risāla furūᶜ al-ᶜAdlīyya reached Karbalā. In this, it was stated that the glances of Fātima and the Imāms (āl Allāh) were among the agents whereby impure and forbidden (harām) materials could be rendered lawful (halāl).[169] When she read this, Qurrat al-ᶜAyn claimed to be 'the manifestation of Fātima (mazhar-i jināb-i Fātima) and said that 'the glance of my eye has the same effect as that of hers, and whatever I cast my gaze upon shall be made pure'. She then instructed her companions to bring whatever they bought in the bazaar for her to render halāl.[170] According to Māzandarānī, she was also regarded by some as 'the point of divine knowledge' after Rashtī.[171] It is not, perhaps, surprising that, according to ᶜAbbās Effendi, she claimed to be divine in the course of the Bābī conclave held at Badasht in Māzandarān in 1848.[172]

Despite attempts by Qurrat al-ᶜAyn to defuse the tension within the Bābī community by calling on her partisans to tone down their remarks about her,[173] and to placate Mullā Ahmad in person,[174] no lasting rapprochement was possible. The Bāb himself remained eager to effect a reconciliation even at the cost of some doctrinal blurring. In general, it seems that, although he disapproved of the behaviour of Khurāsānī and was strongly in favour of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn, he deprecated antagonism on either side, instructed the followers of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn to avoid attacking Mullā Ahmad, and instructed all involved to remain united in spite of their disagreements. In a letter from prison in Mākū, he writes:

> I have read your letter and informed myself of what you mentioned in it. I had heard from your companion about the dissension in the holy land (Karbalā)....Know that the sābiqūn, so long as they do not have doubts or misgivings in their own affair, have been chosen for that honour above all others. But neither their words nor their actions are a proof for anyone -- nay, in this day the proof is but one individual (i.e. the Bāb himself). Even if there should enter into the faith of God servants who surpass them in knowledge or in deeds, yet that honour is theirs from God and none may rival them therein. No-one has the right to reject them, as long as he does not see them commit what would be contrary to the faith. This is the measure of justice in what concerns them. Nor do any of those who arrive from the house of justice (i.e. the house of Rashtī) have the right to condemn the pure one (al-ṭāhira -- i.e. Qurrat al-ᶜAyn) in respect of her learning, for she has understood the (various) aspects of the cause through the grace of God. In this day, she is an honour to this sect, and whoever shall wrong her in the faith shall have committed a manifest sin. It is the same as regards those who have followed her -- it is not for any of them to reject Ahmad in the house of justice, for he has understood our meaning in the verses of justice; though I am aware that he has committed in this disagreement what has been a clear iniquity, I shall not reveal it in this letter or speak of it, in order that they may return to what they were commanded and so that no-one may condemn anyone else'.[175]

In a letter to Mullā Ahmad himself, the Bāb speaks favourably of Qurrat al-ᶜAyn, defends her from the charge of having denied the identity between outward and inward realities, and goes on:

> As for what you have asked about the pure leaf, concerning the fact that she has claimed for herself the station of being a proof unto others -- this is nothing dreadful or serious, for praiseworthy meanings can be attributed to 'being a proof'....She has recognized the aspects of my decree and has pondered on the lights shining from my verses. Let none of those who are my followers repudiate her, for she speaks not save with evidences that have shone forth from the people of sinlessness (i.e. the Imāms) and tokens that have radiated from the people of truth. This is sufficient unto her as an honour among this sect....'.[176]

We can see, than, that, in spite of serious accusations on the one hand and excessive adulation on the other, Qurrat al-ᶜAyn appears to have succeeded in steering a middle course which evoked a favourable reaction from the Bāb himself and preserved her position in the Bābī hierarchy as a leading exponent of the new doctrine. As far as it is accurate at this stage to speak of such a thing, we may consider her a representative of the orthodox mainstream of Bābī thought, even if her expression of that thought was to prove at times controversial even to other exponents of it. Her insistence on turning to the Bāb for guidance or on referring to his writings for information on doctrine and practice was to prove a valuable unifying factor in a religious movement which had expanded numerically more rapidly than its tenets had been expounded or published abroad. Not only had the Bāb not yet attempted to systematize his theories, but the changes in doctrinal emphasis which occurred from time to time as his claims developed in complexity or as circumstances demanded caution in their exposition, combined with a serious lack of manuscript copies of even his major writings and the existence of incorrectly copied versions of some of these, all led to a degree of doctrinal confusion in the widely-scattered Bābī communities which became particularly marked in the period following the Bāb's execution in 1850. In this context, it was inevitable that there should be clashes both of personality and opinion, particularly where someone as outspoken and impatient of contradiction as Qurrat al-ᶜAyn was concerned. There is little doubt but that, in the end, she must have carried the day with the Bābīs in Karbalā in her struggle with Mullā Ahmad, but other events intervened before a final and decisive clash could take place.[177]

First steps towards the abrogation of the Islamic sharīᶜa

Qurrat al-ᶜAyn was by now making unequivocal claims for the Bāb as the bearer of a divine mission expanding and fulfilling that of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī, and as the immediate precursor of the Imām, while she was asserting that no-one could be saved unless he believed in him.[178]

Such a position could not but be extremely embarrassing to the non-Bābī Shaykhī leadership in Karbalā, especially Mullā Hasan Gawhar and Muhīt Kirmānī. Many of the points advanced by Qurrat al-ʿAyn in evidence of the claims of the Bāb -- such as the identity of station between prophet and Imām or the divine inspiration of the Bāb's writings[179] -- were among those adduced by Karīm Khān in his refutation of him. Although the orthodox Shaykhī community of ʿIraq does not seem to have been unduly hostile to the Bābīs in the early period, the growing prestige and influence of Karīm Khān and his demand to be recognized as overall head of the sect made it necessary for them to clarify their position vis ā vis the followers of a man whom he had categorically condemned as a heretic. This final break with Shaykhism was to be given a sharp impetus by a serious worsening of relations between Qurrat al-ʿAyn and the Shīʿī community at large.

Mullā Ahmad Khurāsānī states that, during the period of his disagreement with Qurrat al-ʿAyn, she became increasingly well-known to the population of Karbalā and that, after some time, certain people became so disturbed by her behaviour that they went to the governor, to whom they complained that she was an unbeliever (kāfira).[180] The Nuqtatu'l-Kāf suggests that it was her behaviour in rendering lawful food from the bazaar which excited the suspicions of the populace.[181] It is also likely that the strife between her party and that of Mullā Ahmad, as well as the increasing hostility between her and the Shaykhī leadership, may have given cause for concern in a city already seriously divided by factional disputes of various kinds. In a letter written shortly after her arrival in Baghdād, following her departure from Karbalā around the beginning of 1847, she complains that her enemies had condemned her followers and issued a fatwā of takfīr, and that the outcry produced had reached the ears of the 'unbelievers' (presumably the Shīʿī populace as a whole).[182]

But at the root of her trouble with the Shīʿī population lay Qurrat al-ʿAyn's crucial decision to abrogate, in some sense, the laws of Islam, possibly as a preparation for the introduction of innovations to be recommended by the Bāb. At the beginning of the daʿwa, he had insisted on full observance of the Islamic sharīʿa. Thus, for example, he writes in the Qayyūm al-asmā that 'God has made the laws of Muhammad and his awliyā (i.e. the Imāms) bonding in every book until the resurrection....'.[183] He himself confirms in his later Dalā'il-i sabʿa that it was his intention in the Qayyūm al-asmā to 'command observance of the laws of the Qur'an, so that men might not be disturbed by a new book and a new cause'.[184] In the Sahīfa-yi ʿadlīyya, he states that 'since no change may be decreed for (the faith of God), this blessed sharīʿa shall never be abrogated.

Nay, what Muhammad has declared lawful (halāl Muhammadin) shall remain lawful to the day of resurrection, and what he has declared unlawful (harām Muhammadin) shall remain unlawful until the day of resurrection'.[185] This same point regarding the inviolability of the halāl and harām of Muhammad was made publicly by the Bāb in the course of a khutba delivered by him in the Vakīl mosque of Shīrāz in 1845,[186] and in the contemporary Tafsīr Sūrat al-kawthar.[187] In this latter work, the Bāb describes himself as 'the servant of God confirming what you possess of the injunctions of the Qur'an'[188] and declares that 'it is incumbent on all to act in accordance with it (the Qur'an); whoever rejects a word of it has disbelieved in the prophets and messengers and shall have his punishment in the fire of hell'.[189] Similarly, in an early letter to Qurrat al-ʿAyn, he writes 'rest assured that all the externals of the sharīʿa are observed. Whoever neglects the least of its laws, it shall be as if he has neglected all of them'.[190] In a letter written as late as his stay in Isfahān, he maintains that 'I have not instructed anyone save (to observe) the laws of the Qur'an'.[191]

In general, the Bāb sought to clarify obscure or tangled issues related to the details of the sharīʿa. In the Tafsīr Sūrat al-kawthar, he refers to the inability of the ʿulamā to give correct judgements on furūʿ,[192] and, in the Qayyūm al-asmā, states that he has clarified certain laws over which there had been disagreement.[193] The Risāla furūʿ al-ʿAdlīyya is, as we have noted, a systematic attempt to set out in detail the finer points of observance relating to certain major aspects of the sharīʿa, such as salāt, zakāt, and jihād. Beyond this, however, he introduced a number of ordinances which extended and intensified the standard Qur'anic regulations. Thus, for example, he prohibited smoking in the Khasā'il-i sabʿa and recommended supererogatory prayer and fasting in the Sahīfa bayna 'l-haramayn. Mīrzā Muhammad ʿAlī Zunūzī[194] writes that, in his early letters, the Bāb 'put desirable matters (mustahabbāt) in the place of obligatory (wājibāt) and undesirable matters (makrūhāt) in the place of forbidden (muharramāt). Thus, for example, he regarded it as obligatory to have four tablets (muhr) of the soil (from the shrine) of the prince of martyrs (i.e. Imām Husayn) on which to place the hands, forehead and nose during the prostration of namāz; he considered the pilgrimage of ʿĀshūra a duty; he laid down prayers (adīʿa) and supererogatory observances (taʿqībāt); he proclaimed the obligation of Friday prayer...; and he fashioned amulets (hayākil), charms (ahrāz), and talismans (tilismāt) such as are prepared among the people....All his companions acted with the utmost circumspection according to the usūl and furūʿ of Islam'.[195]

The early followers of the Bābī movement appear to have been as noted for the strictness of their observance of Islamic law as they were later to be characterized by their abandonment of it; in this respect they significantly resemble the pre-qiyāma Nizārī Ismā'īlīs.[196] Mu'īn al-Saltana Tabrīzī quotes several individuals, including Hājī Ahmad Mīlānī and Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Tabrīzī, on the attitude of the Bābīs at this period to the Islamic sharī'a. Man, for example, performed a fast of three consecutive months during Rajab, Sha'bān and Ramadān. Similarly, they would not wear black clothes because the Imams had forbidden this colour as being that of the 'Abbāsid dynasty, which had persecuted them. For this same reason, even the writing of books in black ink was prohibited (red or gold ink normally being used instead); the Bāb himself wrote in red ink before the composition of the Bayān-i fārsī.[197]

In many of her early letters, Qurrat al-'Ayn herself emphasized that 'this is the traditional way (sunna) of God, which was in the past and shall be in the future. You shall find no change in the sunna of God'.[198] Innovative in her interpretation of Islamic doctrine as she may have been, it was as a staunch defender of Shī'ī orthodoxy (as she understood it) that she represented herself to her fellow-believers in the Bāb and to the population at large. So long as the Bāb appeared to command strict obedience to the law, she strove to enforce such obedience within the Bābī community. But, by the summer of 1846, she began to infer from the Bāb's writings that it was time to suspend the laws of the Islamic revelation.

Samandar clearly states that 'she understood the (need for) the abrogation of the laws of the Qur'an before all or most of the people of the Bayān (i.e. the Bābīs), deriving this from the stage of development reached by the words of the Bāb'.[199] Mu'īn al-Saltana also refers to her originality in abrogating the Qur'anic laws, laying stress on what he regards as her spiritual perception in so doing before it was made known that the Bāb had done so; he does, however, incorrectly attribute this behaviour to the period when she was in Qazvīn and Tihrān, from 1847.[200] Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī Zunūzī also refers to the fact that 'with the permission of the Sayyid (i.e. the Bāb), Qurrat al-'Ayn rendered in practice all the previous laws and observances null and void'.[201] Shaykh Mahmūd al-Ālūsī, the well-known Sunnī muftī of Baghdād, with whc Qurrat al-'Ayn stayed for two months in 1847, remarks that 'she was one of those who followed the Bāb after the death of Rashtī, and then disobeyed him in some matters, among them religious obligations (takālīf). It is said that she used to speak of permitting women to be seen by men (hall al-furūj) and the suspension of all religious obligations whatsoever'.[202]

Qurrat al-ʿAyn herself dates the beginning of her move to abrogate the sharīʿa from the month of Rajab 1262/June-July 1846. In a letter written about this time, she states that 'the gate of tribulations was opened through the revelation of a blessed leaf from the blessed, crimson tree (i.e. a letter from the Bāb) in the month of God (shahr Allāh -- i.e. Rajab)..., in which he addressed this insignificant one, calling on her to carry out his commands'.[203] This letter from the Bāb seems to have instructed her to tell her husband (qul (sic) li-baʿliki) that this new cause was not like that of Muhammad who came before. Strengthened, as she puts it, by God's grace and might, she read these verses to the believers, telling them of the greatness of God's cause and calling on them to strive to understand 'the verses of innovation' (āyāt al-badʿ). She then summoned them to 'enter the gate of innovation, prostrating youselves'. Some, she says, accepted this summons and 'discarded restraints and shut their eyes to rules and regulations', while others objected and censured her.[204]

Not enough detail is given by Qurrat al-ʿAyn in her letter for us to tell exactly what was involved in the abandonment of Islamic laws (al-hudūd). It was certainly not a full-scale abrogation such as took place later, under her direction, at the conclave of Badasht, nor is there any evidence that it involved a wholesale plunge into antinomianism such as seems to have occurred at Alamūt in 1164, when Hasan ibn Muhammad proclaimed the advent of the qiyāma and abolished all observance of the sharīʿa.[205] There are, nevertheless, numerous and significant parallels with the latter event, especially in terms of doctrine. When Hasan addressed his followers assembled at Alamūt, he announced to them that a letter had come to him from the hidden Imām, containing new guidance: 'The Imām of the age sends his blessings unto you and mercy, and designates you his servants, whom he has singled out. He has removed from you the burden of obedience to the sharīʿa, and has brought you to the time of resurrection (al-qiyāma)'.[206] 'The ties and chains of sharīʿat restrictions', writes Quhistānī, 'were taken from the necks of the faithful'.[207] Juwaynī writes concerning the Ismāʿīlī beliefs at this period that

> they explained paradise and hell...in such a way as to give a spiritual meaning to these concepts. And then on the basis of this they said that the Resurrection is when men shall come to God and the mysteries and truths of all Creation be revealed, and acts of obedience abolished, for in this world all is action and there is no reckoning, but in the world to come all is reckoning and there is no action. And this is the spiritual (Resurrection) and the Resurrection promised and awaited in all religions and creeds is this, which was revealed by Hasan. And as a consequence thereof men have been relieved of the duties imposed by the Shariʿa because in this period of the Resurrection they must turn in every sense towards God and

abandon the rites of religious law and established habits of worship'.[208] It is of particular interest to note how closely the development of Hasan's claims parallels that of the Bāb's -- from dā^{c}ī and hujja of the Imām, to the Imām himself in spiritual reality (al-haqīqa), to the Qā'im proclaiming the age of qiyāma.[209]

Although it is necessarily difficult to know what motivated Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn to begin to abandon the sharī^{c}a at this point, it seems very likely that it was for reasons similar in many respects to those adduced by the Nizārīs for their own abrogation of those same laws. As we have briefly noted before, many Shaykhīs, like the Ismā^{c}īlīs, placed considerable emphasis on the distinction between the outward observances of the faith (al-zāhir) and its inward realities (al-bāṭin), and believed that the age of bāṭin had commenced with al-Ahsā'ī and would culminate in the appearance of the hidden Imām. Thus, side by side with the central 'polar motif' emphasizing the role of the bearer of charisma, we find a 'gnostic motif' in which the revelation of bāṭin takes precedence over other elements of faith and doctrine.[210] In our chapter on Rashtī, we referred briefly to an important passage in his Sharh al-qasīda, in which he refers to the inception of an age of bāṭin with al-Ahsā'ī; it will be worthwhile at this point to look again at this passage in somewhat greater detail.

The Sayyid begins by stating that the prophet Muhammad possesses two names, one on earth (Muhammad) and one in heaven (Ahmad). Since the name is a revelation (al-ism huwa 'l-zuhūr), this means that Muhammad is revealed twice (lahu zuhūrān). One revelation is in the outward worlds (al-^{c}awālim al-zāhirīyya), with respect to the external aspects of bodies, their regulations, acts, and so on, and has its location (mazhar) in the name Muhammad. The other is in the inward worlds (al-^{c}awālim al-bāṭinīyya) and its location is known as Ahmad. Since creation is one the arc of ascent (al-qaws al-su^{c}ūdī) and, as it rises back to its origin, becomes progressively more refined;[211] and since, from the time of the Prophet, there has appeared at the beginning of each century someone to propagate (man yurawwiju) the laws appropriate to that stage (of development); and since the beginning of the arc was education for the appearance of outward laws, and the propagator (al-murawwij) in each century has propagated the sharī^{c}a according to the outward exigencies of the people; and since the outward body has two stations, one relating to differences, accidents and changes, the other free of these; and since each stage reaches perfection only through six phases (atwār) -- therefore, the outward laws related to the manifestation of the name Muhammad reached a state of perfection only after twelve hundred years.

On the completion of these twelve hundred years, the first age (al-dawrat al-ūlā) connected with the outward aspects of the sun of nubuwwa and the twelve periods of the moon of wilāya were ended.[212] The second age is for the purpose of making explicit the laws relating to the appearance of inner truths and mysteries. By way of another analogy, the first age was for the education of bodies and the spirits belonging to them, like the foetus in the womb, while the second age is for the education of pure souls and spirits, unconnected to bodies. In this second age, outward realities are subordinate to inward, in distinction to the first age, in which the reverse was true. The name of the Prophet in this age is his heavenly name, that is, Ahmad; the murawwij and leader (ra'īs) of this age was also named Ahmad (al-Ahsā'ī).[213]

In a treatise written by an anonymous Bābī who had, clearly been a Shaykhī, reference is similarly made to two ages: that of zāhir, ending in the twelfth century, and that of bātin, beginning with the appearance of al-Ahsā'ī.[214] The Shaykh himself 'revealed of hidden knowledge what men could bear',[215] but throughout his lifetime and in the early days of Rashtī, concealment of their real teachings (taqīyya) was completely observed.[216] This author uses a similar analogy to that adopted by Rashtī in the last section of the above passage: he compares the world to a body without spirit or reason until the birth of Muhammad, whereupon it became a new creation and reached the stage of a body endowed with spirit, in the same way that a child develops by degrees. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, it resembled a child of about ten, endowed with powers of discretion and, in the time of the seal of the gates (i.e. the Bāb),[217] developed to the stage of a child on the verge of maturity. The beginning of maturity will, he says, occur on the appearance of the hidden Imām.[218] Much the same analogy is used by al-Karbalā'ī, who states that the period of Shaykh Ahmad (al-shaykh al-bāb) and Sayyid Kāzim dated from the beginning of the first century of the second age (dawra) up to the appearance of the Bāb; their period was 'a body (jasad) for this substance (li-hādhā 'l-jism) and a substance (jism) for this spirit (li-tilka 'l-rūh), and an outward form (zāhir) for this inward reality (li-dhālika 'l-bātin) and an inward reality for the inward reality of all inward realities (li-bātin al-bātin)'.[219] In a risāla written at a slightly later date, Qurrat al-ʿAyn states that, in this day, the decree of the bātin al-bātin of the Qur'an is manifest,[220] and indicates that the outward meaning of the Qur'an is related to the Prophet while its inner meaning belongs to the Imāms.[221] The Bāb himself made it clear that he spoke concerning the bātin al-bātin, in the same way that the Imām Husayn spoke of the bātin al-zāhir.[222] By contrast, Karīm Khān Kirmānī objected that, since the work of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī was

as yet incomplete and the bāṭin had not been perfected, it cannot be time for the revelation of the bāṭin al-bāṭin.[223] He was, however, agreed that 'the outward stages of the holy law reached perfection in the twelfth century, that is, in one thousand two hundred'.[224]

As we shall see presently, Qurrat al-ʿAyn had concluded that the time for concealing the true meaning of Islam and observing its outward form had ended. Her decision to dispense with the Islamic sharīʿa at this period must be carefully distinguished from her later announcement, at the Badasht gathering, that the dispensation of Islam was abrogated. In the latter case, the rationale for the abrogation of the entire Islamic system was the conviction that the qiyāma had occurred and that the Qā'im had appeared and revealed a new sharīʿa (even if it was not yet made known to his followers). In Karbalā, it was not the end of the Islamic religious dispensation as such which was at issue, but, rather, the open revelation of the bawāṭin of the faith and, hence, the abandonment of all outer practices. As may be expected, this move was to provoke considerable consternation in the Bābī community and, as the decision became public, among the Shaykhī and orthodox Shīʿī and Sunnī populations. Serious opposition came first from the Shaykhīs and Shīʿīs but, in Baghdād, Qurrat al-ʿAyn's behaviour was to provoke heavy and determined criticism from a large section of the Bābī community.

Following an incident on 1 Muharram 1263/20 December 1846,[225] in which Qurrat al-ʿAyn and her sister celebrated the Bāb's birthday in house of Sayyid Kāzim, interrupting a meeting for rawḍa-khwānī while dressed in bright clothing and henna,[226] she was arrested and imprisoned for a few days.[227] It appears that she was then kept confined in her home, although free to receive visitors, for some three months, while the governor wrote to Baghdād for advice on how to deal with the situation.[228] In an account of a visit made to Qurrat al-ʿAyn, apparently at this period, Mullā Aḥmad Khurāsānī gives, in her own words as he remembered them, an unequivocal statement of her intentions at this point, although even he does not seem to have realized how critical for the future development of Babism these intentions were to be:

> She asked me 'Do you know why I summoned you?' I replied 'No'. She said 'I was previously given the responsibility for the authority (wilāya) of Mullā Bāqir, and I made it incumbent on all of you to accept it. Yet no-one accepted it from me, with the exception of fourteen individuals, seven men and seven women. Now I shall present you with something else'. I said 'What is that?" She replied "It has come upon me, through the tongue of my inner mystic state (bi-lisān al-ḥāl), not through physical speech, that I wish to remove all concealment (taqiyya) and to establish the proof of the remembrance and go to Baghdad'.[229]

An argument ensued, at the end of which Mullā Aḥmad left, maintaining that he had himself received no less than seven letters from the Bāb.

all commanding observance of taqīyya.[230] There appears to be ample evidence that Qurrat al-ʿAyn was acting quite independently of the Bāb, on the basis of her own promptings and her esoteric interpretation of his writings.

In a letter addressed to various groups and written in Baghdād shortly after her arrival there from Karbalā, Qurrat al-ʿAyn refers clearly in several places to her decision to discard taqīyya. She remarks 'how strange it is that this tiny sect, which can hardly be said to exist, so small is it, has fallen into quarrels and become scattered'.[231] She then criticizes those 'who do not make efforts in the path of their Lord', and who curse anyone who does, 'while the Muslims reproach (the one who makes such efforts), saying his blood may be shed with impunity, since he has opposed the Lord of Might and torn aside the veil of taqīyya'.[232] She complains that her opponents do not understand the real meaning of taqīyya and only hold to it out of fear.[233] After this general criticism, she turns her attention to one individual, saying 'you did not write out copies (of the Bāb's works) after it was made incumbent on you to pen his books in gold ink, making the excuse of taqīyya'.[234] She then calls on this same individual to 'discard the meaning which you have given to taqīyya and return unto the decree of your Lord'.[235] After this, addressing 'the noble ones' (i.e. the followers of the Bāb), she calls on them to 'carry the verses of God unto every soul...and follow the decree of innovation in the latter book'.[236] Referring to the distinction between ẓāhir and bāṭin, she speaks of 'the community of believers who have reached the station of outwardly demonstrating Islam but who turn aside from its reality'.[237] There then follows the passage quoted above, in which she describes how, following the arrival of a letter from the Bāb, she began to call on the Bābīs to discard the laws of Islam. Finally, towards the end, she claims that God has freed her from sins and error and that whatever may be said by her or, indeed, by her followers, is the truth.[238]

Qurrat al-ʿAyn left Karbalā early in 1263/1847; in just over a year, having in the meantime been at the centre of several controversies in Baghdād (where she was condemned by a section of the Bābī community for appearing unveiled in the presence of men), Hamadān, Kirmānshāh, and Qazvīn (where she was accused of plotting the murder of her uncle, Ḥāj Mullā Muḥammad Taqī), she spearheaded the movement for the abrogation of Islam at a gathering of some eighty one Bābīs at Badasht in Māzandarān,[239] following the Bāb's own declaration of qā'imīyya in prison at Mākū.[240] As the extreme views adopted by her, the Bāb, and other leaders forced large numbers to abandon the movement, either to return to Shaykhism or mainline Shiʿism,[241] Babism acquired the radical, non-

Islamic form in which it is best known. The roots of later Bābī doctrine lie in the Shaykhī theories of charismatic leadership and revealed inner truth. The Bāb and his followers carried these and other, related, concepts to what was a logical conclusion but, in so doing, broke entirely from the Shaykhī school, from Shi^{c}ism and, in the end, from Islam.

The Bābī rejection of Shaykhism

Karīm Khān's rejection and refutation of the Bāb, his identification of him as a heretic, and his continued efforts to emphasize the validity of the Shaykhī school as a legitimate silsila --- a sort of eccesiola --- within the framework of strictly orthodox Twelver Shi^{c}ism, made it difficult for the followers of the Bāb to continue to describe themselves as Shaykhīs without a measure of confusion. The distinction between 'Shaykhīs', 'Bābīs', or even 'Karīm Khānīs' was blurred for quite some time in the public mind,[242] and it rapidly became almost as desirable for the followers of the Bāb to disocciate themselves from the Shaykhī school as it was for the latter to disclaim any real link with Babism. As early as 1846, in his commentary on the Sūrat al-kawthar, the Bāb, referring to the Shaykhīs, spoke of 'the falsehood of this sect (fi'a)', the followers of which had 'committed what Pharaoh did not commit before this' and who were 'in this day of the people of perdition'.[243] He takes pains, however, to point out that both al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī would agree that the Shaykhīs had gone astray. At the same time, he makes clear his relationship to his predecessors when he writes that 'all that Kāzim and Ahmad before him have written concerning the truths of theology and sacred topics does not match a single word of what I have been revealing to you'.[244] Similarly, he takes care to refute the charge that his Qur'anic commentaries were merely references to the words of al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī, maintaining that no-one, not even they, could rival him in writing,[245] although their words were confirmed by his verses.[246]

Continued opposition to his cause by the Shaykhī leadership seems to have hardened the Bāb's attitude with regard to the school. In his Risāla dar radd-i Bāb, Karīm Khān, in order to make it clear that the Bāb was actually opposed to Shaykhism, quotes a passage from the latter's writings on this subject. The passage in question, although not identified as such, would appear from its description as 'concerning the knowledge of the (divine) name al-Quddūs, in the first stage (martiba)', to be one of several sections missing from standard texts of the Bāb's Kitāb al-asmā, all the abwāb of which are similarly headed.

Kirmānī begins by quoting the Bāb's statement that 'we have forbidden you...(to read) the Tafsīr al-zīyāra (i.e. the Sharh al-zīyārat

al-kubrā) or the Sharh al-Khutba (i.e. the Sharh al-Khutbat al-tutunjīyya), or anything written by either Ahmad or Kāzim....Should you look on even a letter of what we have forbidden you, even should it be for but the twinkling of an eye or even less, God shall, in truth, cause you to be veiled from beholding him whom He shall manifest (man yuzhiruhu -- the messianic figure of later Bābī literature)'.[247] He then proceeds to quote a statement from the same passage, in which the Bāb says that 'Ahmad and the fuqahā are incapable of either comprehending or bearing the mystery of the divine unity, whether in their acts or in the core of their beings, for they are indeed the people of limitation and their knowledge is as nothing before God'.[248] Finally, he quotes the following:

> O people of the remembrance and the Bayān: we have prohibited unto you this day, even as we prohibited unto you the reading of the fairy-tales of Ahmad and Kāzim and the fuqahā, that you should sit down in the company of those who have followed them in the decree, lest they lead you astray and cause you to become unbelievers. Know, O people of the Furqān and the Bayān, that you are, in this day, enemies unto those who have followed Ahmad and Kāzim, and they are enemies unto you; you have no greater enemy on the face of the earth than them, nor have they any enemy greater than you....Whoever shall allow into his heart seven sevenths of ten tenths of the head of a grain of mustard of love for these people, he whom God shall make manifest shall punish him with a painful fire upon the day of resurrection.[249]

The Shīᶜī insistence on knowing and shunning the enemies of the true faith is present here in all its force; it recurs again and again in the course of divisions within the Bābī and Bahā'ī communities.

The Bāb's attitude to al-Ahsā'ī and Rashtī had not changed fundamentally -- at quite a late date, for example, he wrote a zīyāratnāma for the former[250] -- but it is clear that, towards the end of his life, he came to regard the Shaykhī school as represented by Kirmānī as not merely misguided but as positively inimical to true religion. This hardening of attitude may well have been immediately occasioned by the actively hostile role of several Shaykhī ᶜulamā in the Bāb's examination at Tabrīz in 1848, to which we have referred previously, but this would not, in itself, seem sufficient to explain it. Of more significance was the proclamation of qā'imīyya at this time. If it had been necessary for Kirmānī and other Shaykhī leaders to disclaim any relationship with the Bāb or his ideas, it was now equally vital for the latter to disocciate himself from Shaykhism, in order to avoid continued ambiguity concerning his role and station. By stressing, at this point, the alienation of the Bāb from Shaykhism, his followers (more and more of whom were coming from a non-Shaykhī background)[251] were able to focus more clearly the nature of their radical departure from Islam itself. In the total separation which we have, thus, seen develop between Babism and Shaykhism, we can observe not only the beginnings of a process whereby the latter

school effectively acquired the status of an ecclesiola within the wider community of Twelver Shi^{c}ism, but also -- and, perhaps, more vividly still -- the mechanics of the development which transformed Babism from a movement within the Shaykhī school to a distinct sect of Shi^{c}ism and, in the end, to a religion claiming independence from the revelationary jurisdiction of Islam.

With the transformation of Babism into an independent religious movement eschewing (in theory at least) all sectarian connection with Islam, it passes out of the area of our immediate concern. At this juncture, the study of Babism proper may be said to begin -- an important and useful study, but one not immediately relevant to the questions we have sought to answer, however tentatively, in these pages. With the development of independent Babism, its suppression, and its eventual failure in that form, the latest and perhaps the last of the great sectarian responses to the problems of charisma and authority in Shi^{c}ism had run its course. The impact of the West and the subsequent secularization of much of Iranian society were to raise fresh problems and to demand new responses from the religious institution. Babism and, indeed, the later Bahā'ī faith to which it gave birth were lessons for the ^{c}ulamā: charisma, unless controlled within routinized forms, could run riot and lead, in the end, beyond Shi^{c}ism and Islam itself. The modern development of Iranian Shi^{c}ism has, in many ways, been a search for these routinized forms, be it in the office of Āyat Allāh or the re-organization of theological studies in Qum by Burūjirdī, or the attempt to define the role of the marja^{c} al-taqlīd (as in the exposition Bahthī dar barā-yi rūhānīyyat wa marja^{c}īyyat).[252] Should the revolution led by Khumaynī succeed in establishing for the ^{c}ulamā a leading position and a formal role within the sphere of government, we may anticipate a further, more thorough, routinization and organization of charismatic authority in Shi^{c}ism. Whether this, in its turn, will lead to further outbursts of prophetic charisma in heterodox movements remains a matter for speculation; the study of Shaykhism and Babism may, at least, help us to speculate more clearly.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. Risāla in Z.H. p.511.

2. Ibid; Zarandī pp.92, 94; Bāb Qayyūm ff.198a, 199a, 200a. If these later passages represent the original instruction, my conjectured dating for the latter part of this work would be rendered problematic.

3. Zarandī p.94; Gulpāygānī Kashf p.72; idem, unpublished notes, referred to in Balyuzi The Bab pp.37-8; al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.511.

4. Zarandī p.94; Kirmānī Risāla dar radd-i Bāb p.18; Qurrat al-ʿAyn risāla in Kashf p.20.

5. Z.H. p.41.

6. Ibid pp.56, 58.

7. Samandar p.351.

8. Sipihr Vol.3 p.235; Zarandī p.86. The Bāb wrote several further letters to Muḥammad Shāh, from Būshihr, Kulayn, and prison in Mākū. For texts of some of these, see CUL Browne F.28 item 7; Bāb Muntakhabāt pp.5-8, 9-13, 13-18.

9. Zarandī pp.-23-6, 267.

10. Risāla in Z.H. p.511.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid p.512.

13. Ibid.

14. Letter quoted Z.H. pp.279-80.

15. In a letter to his uncle, Sayyid ʿAlī, the Bāb, speaking of the return to earth of Muḥammad and the Imāms in the persons of the ḥurūf al-ḥayy, states that the first to return was Muḥammad and that he was the first messenger of the Qā'im (i.e. Bushrū'ī -- see Bayān-i fārsī 1:2, p.6; 1:3, p.8); the second to return was ʿAlī, and he took the message of the Bāb to Ḥājī Mīrzā Sayyid ʿAlī (his uncle) in Būshihr (i.e. Basṭamī -- see Mīrzā Ḥusayn ʿAlī Bahā Allāh 'Lawḥ-i Naṣīr' in Majmūʿa-yi alwāḥ-i mubāraka pp.190-1): letter quoted Z.H. pp.223-4. Zarandī (pp.87-90) states that Bastami was the first to leave Shiraz.

16. Evidence for this date may be found in Rawlinson-Canning (8 January 1845): 'About three months ago, an inferior priest of Shiraz appeared in Kerbela, bearing a copy of the Koran, which he stated to have been delivered to him, by the forerunner of the Imam Mehdi, to be exhibited in token of approaching advent' (in Rawlinson-Sheil, 16 January 1845, FO 248/114). Later reports from Rawlinson confirm that the reference is to Mullā ʿAlī.

17. Qisas p.196; Zarandī pp.90-1; al-Baghdādī Risāla amrīyya p.106; Z.H. p.106.

18. Z.H. p.187.

19. Ibid p.186.

20. Ibid p.187. The Bāb himself notes that he sent the Ṣaḥīfat al-makhzūna with the Qayyūm al-asmā (see Qayyūm f.67b).

21. p.347; cf. Bahā Allāh 'Lawḥ-i Naṣīr' in Majmūᶜa-yi alwāḥ pp.190-1. Māzandarānī quotes part of a second letter from the Bab to al-Najafī, written after the latter's rejection of his claims (Z.H. p.107).

22. Zarandī pp.90-1.

23. p.347. On the extensive use of mubahāla as a form of confrontation between Bābīs and their opponents before 1848, see my 'Concept of jihād' pp.21-3.

24. Rawlinson-Canning, 8 January 1845 (FO 248/114).

25. Al-Baghdādī Risāla amrīyya p.106. This source indicates that Basṭāmī spent about three months in prison in Baghdād before his trial there; since the trial took place on 13 January 1845, he must have been transferred to Baghdād about the middle of October.

26. Ibid pp.106-7; Qiṣaṣ pp.196-7; al-Wardī pp.138-40. A full account of Bastāmī's arrest and trial, making use of British diplomatic records, is given by Balyuzi in The Bab pp.61-8; see also Moojan Momen The Bābī and Baha'i Faith: Some contemporary Western Accounts (unpublished) pp.185-202. The court of inquiry was attended by both Shiᶜī and Sunnī ᶜulamā, under the presidency of Najīb Pāshā; al-Wardī states that 'this was the first gathering of its kind in the Ottoman period, since it was not then customary for the ᶜulamā of both parties to meet together in a single gathering for a trial' (p.138).

27. Balyuzi The Bab pp.66-7.

28. Momen The Bābī and Bahā'ī Faith pp.200, 202.

29. Al-Baghdādī Risāla amrīyya pp.105-6. Muḥammad Shibl was the father of Muhammad Muṣṭafā.

30. Risāla in Z.H. p.512.

31. Ibid p.514.

32. Ibid p.515.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Rawlinson-Canning, 8 January 1845 (FO 248/114).

36. Rawlinson-Sheil, 16 January 1845 (FO 248/114).

37. The Bāb left Shīrāz on 26 Shaᶜbān 1260/10 September 1844 (Bāb Khuṭba fī Jidda p.332).

38. Zarandī pp.63, 96, 158; Kirmānī Izhāq p.15. On the various prophecies relating to the appearance of the Qā'im in Mecca and Kūfa, and other events associated with his advent, see Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Mufīd Al-irshād pp.336-45; Majlisī Vol.53 pp.1-144; anon, untitled risāla in Nivishtijāt wa āthār pp.1-196; al-Aḥsa'ī Ḥayāt al-Nafs pp.91-134; Bāb Al-kawthar ff.37b-40b, 77b-88b.

39. Z.H. p.235.

40. Quoted ibid.

41. A convert of Bushrū'ī; fought at Shaykh Ṭabarsī; killed Tihrān 1852 (see Z.H. p.169; Malik Khusravī Vol.2 pp.78-9, Vol.3 pp.313-4).

42. Letter in TBA 6003.C p.320.

43. Z.H. pp.121, 235.

44. Qayyūm f.176b.

45. Izhāq pp.15, 111; Tīr p.197.

46. Rawlinson-Canning, 22 Jaunuary 1845 (FO 195/237).

47. Risāla in Z.H. p.514.

48. Al-Wardī pp.109-10.

49. Tīr p.197; cf. Izhāq p.111.

50. Tīr p.198; Izhāq p.111.

51. Izhāq p.110.

52. Rawlinson-Sheil, 28 February 1845 (FO 248/114).

53. Izhāq pp.95, 127-44, 164-76; Radd-i Bāb pp.29-30; Tīr pp.195, 210, 241.

54. Bāb Khuṭba fī Jidda pp.332-3.

55. Zarandī p.158. Sayyid Jawād met the Bāb at Masqaṭ and returned with him to Būshihr; he was then permitted to go to the ʿatabāt by way of Baṣra, and must certainly be the person who carried word there of the Bāb's arrival and the change in his plans (see Z.H. p.100).

56. Risāla in Z.H. p.503.

57. See Zarandī p.158.

58. See al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.512.

59. TBA 6003.C p.286; 4011.C p.63.

60. TBA 4012.C p.96.

61. ʿAbbās Effendi Tadhkira pp.262-70.

62. Zarandī p.271.

63. Z.H. p.38.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid p.244.

66. Ibid p.383; Samandar pp.135-6, 173.

67. Z.H. p.104/b.

68. Prayer quoted ibid p.271.

69. Al-Karbalā'ī risāla in ibid p.519.

70. Z.H. p.271; Bāb Al-haramayn pp.14-15.

71. Zarandī pp.134-7.

72. In TBA 5006.C.

73. Letter quoted Z.H. pp.245-9.

74. See TBA 6003.C pp.295-8, 305-18. Evidence that these prayers were written before 15 Jumādī II 1261/21 June 1845 is to be found in the fact that they are mentioned in the Bāb's Kitāb al-fihrist, completed on that date (see Kitāb al-fihrist p.69).

75. Risāla amrīyya p.108.

76. Al-Wardī p.152. Most other sources give 1817, but Dr. al-Wardī's information is taken from Ḥāj Shaykh ᶜAbbūd al-Ṣāliḥī, a descendant of her father, who has assured the present writer that it is based on family records.

77. Ibid p.153.

78. Samandar pp.344-5.

79. Qiṣaṣ p.185.

80. Ibid p.128.

81. Ibid. For details of others, see Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān Iᶜtimād al-Salṭana Khayrāt Ḥisān. See also Robert and Elizabeth Fernea 'Variations in Religious Observance among Islamic Women' pp.385-401.

82. Tabrīzī ᶜUlamā'-i muᶜāṣirīn pp.311-25.

83. Others included Shams-i Jahān Bigum, a grand-daughter of Fath-ᶜAlī Shāh; Khurshīd Bigum, a cousin of Ḥāj Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Shaftī; and Bigum Kūchik, a maternal aunt of Ḥājī Mīrzā Jānī Kāshānī.

84. ᶜAbbās Effendi Tadhkira p.292; Z.H. p.312.

85. Samandar p.334.

86. Ibid pp.344-5.

87. Al-Wardī p.153.

88. ᶜAbbās Effendi Tadhkira p.295.

89. Nuqtatu'l-Kāf p.140.

90. Samandar p.346.

91. TBA 6003.C p.320.

92. This circle included three of the ḥurūf al-ḥayy: Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Tabrīzī, Mullā Muḥammad ᶜAlī Qazvīnī, and Mullā Muḥammad Hādī Qazvīnī; Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Karīmī (see Malik Khusravī Vol.3 pp.77-81); Āqā Sayyid Aḥmad Yazdī (see Z.H. p.459); Shaykh Sulṭān al-Karbalā'ī (see ibid pp. 244-5); Mullā Ibrāhīm Mahallātī (see ibid pp.389-90); Sayyid ᶜAbd al-

Hādī Qazvīnī (see Samandar pp.135-7, 173); Sa^{c}īd al-Jabbāwī (see Z.H. p.261); and Hājī Muhammad al-Karādī (see ibid pp.261-2).

93. Letter quoted al-Wardī p.160.

94. See ibid p.161.

95. Mu^{c}īn al-Saltana Qurrat al-^{c}Ayn p.3.

96. Al-Wardī p.156.

97. Al-Karbalā'ī risala in Z.H. p.510.

98. Zarandī p.137.

99. Al-Wardī p.169.

100. Ibid p.156.

101. Shaykh Sultān al-Karbalā'ī risāla, quoted Z.H. p.256.

102. Al-Wardī p.169.

103. See Zarandī pp.100-1; N.H. pp.200-1; Kirmānī Hasht Bihisht p.286 f.n.1. There is contradictory evidence which suggests that Khurāsānī travelled to Kirmān in the summer of 1845, after his expulsion from Shīrāz in June (Zarandī pp.183-7). The present reconstruction would seem, however, to avoid the most inconsistencies.

104. Radd-i Bāb pp.27-8; see also p.58.

105. Ibid p.28. See also Nicolas Ali Mohammed pp.228-9.

106. Radd-i Bāb p.27.

107. Al-shihāb al-thāqib pp.25-7.

108. Radd-i Bāb p.58.

109. See ibid pp.44, 47-55.

110. Z.H. p.400. Mīrzā Ḥusayn ^{c}Alī Bahā Allāh states that Kirmānī wrote an attack every year (Alwāh-i mubāraka-yi hadrat-i Bahā Allāh p.16).

111. Sī fasl pp.34-5.

112. Tīr p.211; cf. p.241; cf. also Izhāq pp.82, 95, 107.

113. Izhāq p.92.

114. See Bāb Bayān-i fārsī 2:5, pp.27-8; 2:10, p.46; 2:16, p.65; 2:17, p.67; idem letter quoted Ishraq Khavarī Qāmūs Vol.1 p.42; Browne 'Bābis of Persia II' p.910.

115. Risāla in Z.H. pp.517, 519.

116. Zarandī p.40.

117. Risāla quoted Z.H. p.35. For other references to Kirmānī in later Bābī and Bahā'ī works, see Mīrzā Ḥusayn ^{c}Alī Bahā Allāh Kitāb-i īqān pp.142-8; idem Al-kitāb al-aqdas pp.56, 59 (the 'land of kāf and ra' is Kirmān); Shoghi Effendi in Ishrāq Khāvarī (ed.) Mā'ida Vol.6 pp.59, 64, 79;

Ishrāq Khāvarī Qāmūs Vol.1 pp.40-50, Vol.2 pp.665-70. The concept of an opponent (dadd) of each prophet is also a feature of Ismā'īlī doctrine (see Nasīr al-Dīn Tūsī Rawdat al-taslīm p.151).

118. Only the work of the latter seems to have survived; it is the risāla referred to frequently in these pages.

119. Shaykh Sultān al-Karbalā'ī risāla quoted Z.H. pp.256-7.

120. Qazvīnī p.474; Zarandī p.159 (where Mullā Jawād is incorrectly called 'Baraghānī'.

121. Zarandī p.161.

122. Ibid pp.161-2.

123. Risāla in Z.H. pp.520, 527.

124. See Kirmānī Al-shihāb al-thāqib p.2.

125. Z.H. p.388.

126. Quoted ibid p.280.

127. Zarandī p.162; on the terms 'Jibt' and 'Tāghūt', see Qur'an 4:51.

128. Prayer quoted Z.H. p.275.

129. Z.H. p.388; al-Karbalā'ī risāla in ibid p.520; Qazvīnī p.473; and see generally prayers of the Bāb quoted Z.H. pp.269-70, 273-4, 274.

130. Al-kawthar f.3a-3b.

131. Printed Z.H. pp.484-501; cf. N.H. p.283.

132. Qurrat al-ʿAyn risāla to Vilyānī in Z.H. p.485.

133. Ibid p.489; cf. Bāb ʿAdlīyya p.3.

134. Qurrat al-ʿAyn risala to Vilyānī in Z.H. pp.491-2.

135. Ibid p.492.

136. Ibid p.493.

137. Ibid p.495.

138. Ibid p.499; cf. pp.121, 388.

139. See Samandar p.347; Bāb Al-haramayn pp.14-15; idem prayer quoted Z.H. p.271; idem, letter dated 7 Dhū 'l-Hijja 1262/26 November 1846, in Āvāra pp.105-6; idem, letter to Muḥammad Shāh in Muntakhabāt p.11; idem letter in Z.H. p.274; Qurrat al-ʿAyn, letter in ibid p.352; ʿAbbās Effendi Tadhkira p.29; al-Baghdādī Risāla amrīyya pp.110, 113.

140. Letter quoted Z.H. p.274.

141. See Hodgson pp.51-60, 126-31.

142. Risāla in Z.H. p.488.

143. Ibid p.493.

144. Ibid p.490.

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid pp.488, 495.

147. Ibid p.491.

148. Bāb ᶜAdlīyya pp.3-4; Māzandarānī Asrār Vol.4 pp.247-8.

149. Zarandī p.267.

150. Ibid p.465; Rawhānī Nayrīzī Vol.1 pp.46, 50.

151. Zarandī p.539.

152. Samandar p.351.

153. See letters in Z.H. pp.331, 331-2, 332-3, 333-4.

154. On Mullā Ahmad, see Z.H. pp.157-60.

155. Shaykh Sultān al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z H. pp.245-6.

156. Mullā Ahmad Khurāsānī risāla in al-Wardī p.160.

157. Ibid p.161.

158. Ibid.

159. Al-Wardī p.159.

160. Qayyūm f.56a.

161. Al-Wardī p.159.

162. See Bāb, letter to Qurrat al-ᶜAyn in Z.H. p.333; Qayyūm f.104b.

163. See letters quoted Shaykh Sultān al-Karbalā'ī risāla in Z.H. p.247; see also note 153 above.

164. Ibid pp.248-50.

165. Ibid p.252.

166. Ibid.

167. Shoghi Effendi God Passes By p.32; cf. Zarandī p.295.

168. On the orthodoxy of this view in Bābī doctrine, see Bāb Qayyūm f.103a.

169. The original passage may be found in chapter one of the Furūᶜ al-ᶜAdlīyya (TBA 5010.C, there numbered 'chapter seven', p.94; also Persian translation there numbered 'chapter thirteen', p.130); it reads: 'And among the purified substances in certain verses are those things which have fallen beneath the gaze of the Family of God; even though none of the ᶜulamā have mentioned this, nevertheless, the decision rests with him whom God hath caused to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth'.

170. N.K. pp.140-1.

171. Z.H. p.314.

172. ʿAbbās Effendi Makātīb-i ʿAbd al-Bahā Vol.2 p.255. We can observe an interesting extension of this 'charismatic field' (as defined by Berger) in Babism, with the later role of Mullā Ḥusayn Bushrū'ī and Mullā Muḥammad ʿAlī Bārfurūshī as the 'Qā'im-i Khurāsānī' and 'Qā'im-i Jīlānī' respectively, contemporaneous with the Bāb's own claim to qā'imīyya (see Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Hādī Zavāra'ī Waqāyiʿ-i mīmīyya (MS) pp.1, 3, 54, 70; idem Majlis-i shahādat-i hadrat-i awwal man āmana, Qā'im-i Khurāsānī (MS) passim; Luṭf ʿAlī Mīrzā Shīrāzī, history (MS) p.71; N.K. pp.152, 154, 181, 199, 202).

173. See Qurrat al-ʿAyn letters quoted Z.H. pp.360, 361, 362.

174. Khurāsānī risāla in al-Wardī p.161.

175. Letter quoted Z.H. p.332.

176. Letter quoted Z.H. p.333.

177. Mullā Aḥmad continued to play an active, if not very prominent, role in the promulgation of Babism (see Z.H. pp.159-60). He was, it seems, arrested for a time as late as 1876, and appears to have died a natural death in 1886 (see Ishrāq Khāvarī Taqwīm pp.93, 106).

178. See, in particular, her letter printed as an appendix to Gulpāygānī Kashf.

179. See ibid p.4.

180. Risāla in al-Wardī p.161.

181. N.K. p.141.

182. Letter quoted Z.H. p.348.

183. Qayyūm f.185b.

184. Dalā'il p.29.

185. ʿAdlīyya pp.5-6.

186. See account by Hājī Mīrzā Sādiq Muʿallim in Balyuzi The Bab pp.97-8.

187. Al-kawthar f.28a.

188. Ibid f.7b.

189. Ibid f.11a.

190. Letter quoted Z.H. p.334.

191. Letter in TBA 7009.C p.133.

192. Al-kawthar f.4b.

193. Qayyūm f.185b.

194. A relative of Shaykh Ḥasan Zunūzī and himself an ʿālim, he was executed with the Bāb in Tabrīz in 1850 (see Z.H. pp.27-31).

195. Risāla quoted Z.H. pp.31-2.

196. Rashīd al-Dīn Fadl Allāh Hamadānī Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh p.98; Hodgson p.118.

197. Qurrat al-ʿAyn p.6; on the use of coloured inks, see Qayyūm ff.67a, 162b, 192b; Qurrat al-ʿAyn risāla quoted Z.H. p.345. On the 'colour motif' in heterodox Iranian movement , see B.S. Amoretti 'Sects and Heresies' pp. 513-4; Browne Literary History Vol.1 pp.311-2.

198. Risāla in Kashf pp.3-4.

199. p.349.

200. Qurrat al-ʿAyn pp.6-7.

201. Risāla quoted Z.H. p.35.

202. Rūḥ al-maʿānī, quoted al-Wardī p.169; cf. Gulpāygānī Kashf p.95.

203. Letter quoted Z.H. p.349.

204. Ibid.

205. See, for example, Hodgson pp.148-59; B. Lewis The Assassins pp.71-5.

206. Hamadānī Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh p.164.

207. Quhistānī p.42.

208. ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik Juwaynī The Tārīkh-i-Jahān-Gushā Vol.3 pp.237-8; The History of the World-Conqueror Vol.2 pp.695-6. See also Ṭūsī Rawdat al-taslīm pp.172-3.

209. See Hodgson pp.151-3. Nāṣir Khusraw Qubāydhīyānī notes that 'he (the Qā'im) shall first foster the sharīʿa, then he shall stand in his own station and make manifest the truth' (Wajh-i Dīn p.166).

210. On the value of the gnostic motif in Shaykhī and Bābī doctrine, see Berger 'From Sect to Church'; Smith 'Motif Research'.

211. On the relationship of the arcs of descent and ascent to the periods of nubuwwa and wilāya, see Corbin En Islam Vol.1 pp.209, 211, 273.

212. The analogy here is with the cycle of the solar year and the twelve lunar months.

213. Sharh al-qasīda quoted Gulpāygānī Al-farā'id.

214. Risāla in TBA 6003.C pp.380-416; this reference p.407; cf. pp.399, 413, 415.

215. Ibid p.399.

216. Ibid p.403.

217. On the Bāb's own use of this title, see Qayyūm f.36a.

218. Risāla in TBA 6003.C p.408. Kirmānī also makes use of a developed form of this analogy (Tīr pp.167-77). For the use of a similar analogy in an Ismāʿīlī context, see Ṭūsī Rawdat al-taslīm pp.152-3. One might with profit compare Hegel's use of much the same idea in relation to the evolutionary development of the spirit in history (see Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction pp.129-31).

219. Risāla in Z.H. p.513.

220. Azalī risāla p.32; cf. pp.19, 20.

221. Ibid pp.11-12.

222. Letter quoted Z.H. p.280. There is an echo here of the recurrent theory of three historical ages, as found in Joachim and others; for examples, see Norman Cohn The Pursuit of the Millenium.

223. Tīr pp.178181.

224. Ibid p.175.

225. Samandar states only 'the birthday of the Bāb' (1 Muharram); I have supplied the year from the fact that he subsequently mentions that this event led to her being sent to Baghdād.

226. Samandar pp.346-7; cf. p.78. See also Bahā Allāh in Ishrāq Khāvarī (ed.) Mā'ida Vol.8 pp.186-7.

227. Khurāsānī risāla in al-Wardī pp.161-2; ᶜAbbās Effendi Tadhkira pp.271-2, 296-7; Qurrat al-ᶜAyn risālas quoted Z.H. pp.350, 354-5.

228. ᶜAbbās Effendi Tadhkira pp.296-7.

229. Risāla quoted al-Wardī p.162. On the abolition of taqīyya on the appearance of the Qā'im, see Ibn Bābūya Risālat al-iᶜtiqādāt p.111.

230. Risāla quoted al-Wardī p.162.

231. Risāla quoted Z.H. p.344.

232. Ibid.

233. Ibid.

234. Ibid p.345.

235. Ibid p.346.

236. Ibid.

237. Ibid.

238. Ibid p.350.

239. See Zarandī pp.292-8 (and note the reference to explicit antinomianism on p.298); Z.H. pp.109-12; J.A. Comte de Gobineau Religions et philosophies dans l'Asie centrale pp.165-9; Nicolas Ali Mohammed chapter 4.

240. Z.H. pp.69-72, 164-6.

241. See, for example, al-Baghdādī Risāla amrīyya pp.109-10; Samandar p.80; Zarandī pp.297, 461; Z.H. p.58.

242. As late as 1307/1890, Hamadānī was obliged, in his Kitāb al-ijtināb, to refute the claim that 'the Bābī sect is accounted as belonging to the Shaykhī school' (p.144).

243. Al-kawthar f.6b.

244. Ibid f.11b.

245. Ibid f.24a.

246. Ibid f.25a.

247. Radd-i Bāb p.45.

248. Ibid p.46.

249. Ibid.

250. This ziyāratnāma may be found in CUL Browne F.20 ff.85b-87b.

251. The widening of the Bāb's appeal and the decrease in numerical importance of Shaykhīs within the Bābī movement is noted by Moojan Momen in 'The Social Basis of the Bābī Upheavals' pp.14-15.

252. This latter point is discussed by A.K.S. Lambton in ' A Reconsideration of the Position of the Marjaᶜ al-Taqlīd and the Religious Institution'.

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