

**The “Sphere of *Walāyah*”: Ismā‘īlī *Ta’wīl* in Practice
according to al-Mu’ayyad (d.ca. 1078 C.E.)**

by

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Précis

Elizabeth R. Alexandrin

Title: The "Sphere of *Walāyah*": *Ismā'īlī Ta'wīl* in Practice according to al-Mu'ayyad (d.ca. 1078 C.E.)

Department: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University

Degree sought: Ph.D.

Dans son recueil de conférences connu sous le titre de Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (m. ca. 1078 de l'ère commune) établit une typologie de l'*imām* qui révèle une approche originale à l'imamologie ismaélienne. Cette vision particulière du rôle de l'*imām* s'explique par la volonté qu'avait al-Mu'ayyad de perfectionner la doctrine de ses prédécesseurs et de ses contemporains actifs au sein de la convocation ismaélienne (*da'wah*). La critique que fait al-Mu'ayyad des "Maximalistes" (*Ghulāt*) et des "Minimalistes" (*Muqaṣṣirūn*) souligne l'importance de la *walāyah* comme doctrine d'autorité et de bonne direction religieuse dans les débats concernant la divinité ou l'humanité de l'*imām* dans la tradition médiévale chiite. Dans son oeuvre doctrinale principale, al-Mu'ayyad intègre habilement une conception de l'être humain (*al-insān*) et une théorie d'anthropologie prophétique à sa présentation de l'*imām* ismaélien et des "amis de Dieu" (*awliyā' Allāh*). L'importance commune de la *da'wah* et des "rangs de la religion" (*ḥudūd al-dīn*) comme modes pour atteindre la perfection individuelle, met l'accent sur la nécessité de la bonne direction religieuse durant la formation et le développement (*al-nash'ah*) du croyant. Grâce au modèle des "amis de Dieu", le croyant peut atteindre une nouvelle forme d'humanité, symbolisée par une renaissance et une nouvelle croissance (*al-nash'ah al-ākhirah*)—une croissance spirituelle et non pas physique—qui a lieu à l'intérieur de son âme subtile.

Selon l'imamologie d'al-Mu'ayyad, même les croyants se trouvant au dernier rang de l'*ḥudūd al-dīn* peuvent éventuellement devenir *imām*. De plus, al-Mu'ayyad affirme qu'il doit y avoir un *imām* en tous temps, physiquement présent au sein de la communauté, pour que les croyants puissent bénéficier de sa présence. Un des objectifs de ce mémoire sera de démontrer que les concepts élaborés par al-Mu'ayyad, tels que "l'homme absolu" (*al-insān al-muṭlaq*), "l'*imām* en tout temps (indéterminé)" (*al-imām al-muṭlaq*) et le "sceau des *imāms*" (*khātam al-a'imma*), et intégrés dans le lexique technique ismaélien fatimide au onzième siècle, eurent des effets durables sur le développement des débats concernant la *walāyah* et la hiérarchie "des amis de Dieu". En ce qui concerne la définition que donne al-Mu'ayyad des paramètres de la "sphère de la

walāyah», il apparaît que la doctrine sotériologique portant sur la perfection finale de la révélation prophétique grâce au modèle des «amis de Dieu» culmine par l'apparition du Messie (*al-Qā'im*) à la fin des temps.

Abstract

Elizabeth R. Alexandrin

Title: The "Sphere of *Walāyah*": Ismā'īlī *Ta'wīl* in Practice according to al-Mu'ayyad (d.ca. 1078 C.E.)

Department: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University

Degree sought: Ph.D.

In his collection of lectures, the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī's (d.ca. 1078 C.E.) typologies of the *imām* set forth a distinctive concept of the Ismā'īlī *imām*, as it subsequently results from al-Mu'ayyad's engagement in the works of his predecessors and contemporaries in the Ismā'īlī missionary organization (*da'wah*). Al-Mu'ayyad's refutations against the "Exaggerators" (*Ghulāt*) and the "Shortcomers" (*Muqaṣṣirūn*) call attention to the importance of *walāyah* as a doctrine of religious authority and guidance in the light of debates concerning the divinity or humanity of the figure of the *imām* in the mediaeval Shī'ī tradition. In his main doctrinal work, the concept of the human being (*al-insān*) and a theory of prophetic anthropology are inherently enmeshed in al-Mu'ayyad's skillful presentation of the Ismā'īlī *imām* and the "friends of God" (*awliyā' Allāh*). The shared significance of the *da'wah* and the "ranks of religion" (*ḥudūd al-dīn*) as vehicles for perfection on the level of the individual human being stresses the necessity of religious guidance throughout the individual practitioner's formation and development (*al-nash'ah*). Through the guidance of the "friends of God", the individual practitioner may potentially attain to a true humanity that is associated with another birth and formation (*al-nash'ah al-ākhirah*); another formation that is spiritual rather than physical, and which takes place in the individual's subtle soul.

Underlying al-Mu'ayyad's typologies of the *imām*, where one of the specified lower ranks of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* may potentially qualify to become the *imām*, is the idea that there has to be one specific *imām* at any time who is manifest and physically present so that individual practitioners can benefit from the presence of the *imām*. As this dissertation aims to elucidate, al-Mu'ayyad's introduction of the *imām* as the "absolute human being" (*al-insān al-muṭlaq*) and the concepts of the "imām at any (undetermined) time" (*al-imām al-muṭlaq*) and the "seal of the imāms" (*khātam al-a'imma*) into the 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī technical lexicon has broader implications for the internal mediaeval

Ismā'īlī debates concerning the concept of *walāyah* and the hierarchy of the "friends of God". In terms of al-Mu'ayyad's definition of the parameters of the "sphere of *walāyah*", the soteriological doctrines associated with the final perfection of prophetic revelation through the guidance of the "friends of God" culminate in the appearance of the Messiah (*al-Qā'im*) at the end of time.

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My family, Glen, Wendi Ding, Philip, Lucia and Elsa Alexandrin, and Judy and Tibor Weiss, have shown their love and unflagging support in so many different ways over the years. For reasons that we all can understand, I dedicate this dissertation in loving memory of my mother, Barbara Ross Alexandrin.

Winnipeg April 2006

I. Transliteration

In the transliteration of Arabic and Persian, the present dissertation follows the standard table of transliteration used at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University.

Letters	Transliteration
ا	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h, ah, at (in construct or when case endings are indicated)
و	w
ي	y
؛	,

2. Transliteration of Vowels and Diphthongs

Transliteration of vowels and diphthongs, in all cases, will follow the system of transliteration used at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University.

In the case of all book titles, including those in Persian, the Arabic transliteration of vowels and diphthongs will be used.

3. There are some exceptions to the rules with respect to the transliteration of Persian, such as the following:

- the letter , is always transliterated as *v* when it appears in the title of books.

II. Translations and Passages Cited from Manuscripts

All of the translations of the passages from primary sources in Arabic and Persian, unless indicated otherwise with a reference, are my translations.

Throughout the dissertation, variant readings are indicated in footnotes.

As well, all the verses cited from the Qur'ān throughout this dissertation are from the Yusūf 'Alī translation of the Qur'ān.

In terms of passages cited from manuscripts, [] indicates an alternate reading of a passage in the manuscript; / / a passage which is not clearly legible in the manuscript; and ... part of a passage not fully cited from the manuscript. Any passage from a manuscript that is presented in this dissertation reflects the palaeography and spelling of the original text in the manuscript. When errors do occur in the manuscript, they will be indicated after the passage by the following, [sic].

Introduction

At a once and future time, the “sphere of *walāyah*” draws to a close on the side of created being. The final juncture of *walāyah*, or “the end of the saints”, may indicate not only the end of the world but also the completion and fulfillment of prophetic revelation and religion.¹

This study focuses on the relatively untouched prose works written by the 11th-century Fātimid Ismā‘īlī chief missionary (*dā‘ī al-du‘āt*), al-Mu‘ayyad fī al-Dīn Abū Naṣr Hibat Allāh al-Shīrāzī (d.ca. 470 A.H./1078 C.E.).² Al-Mu‘ayyad’s main work, the Majālis al-Mu‘ayyadiyyah, an eight volume collection of lectures (sing. *majlis*, pl. *majālis*) written in Arabic, and the short treatises attributed to him, offer the unique opportunity to

¹ M. A. Amir-Moezzi. Guide divin dans le shī‘isme originel. Paris: Verdier, 1994. (Citations throughout refer to the English translation.) D. Streight, trans. The Divine Guide in Early Shi‘ism. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994: 115-123; M. Chodkiewicz. Le Sceau des saints. Paris: Gallimard, 1986. (Citations throughout refer to the English translation.) L. Sherrard, trans. Seal of the Saints. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993: 173. The third chapter of Chodkiewicz’s work, Seal of the Saints, is entitled “The Sphere of *Walāyah*”, and deals ostensibly with Ibn al-‘Arabī’s discussions of the hierarchy of the *awliyā’*, the structure of *walāyah* and the relationship between “sainthood” and “prophethood”.

² See B. T. Qutbuddin. Al-Mu‘ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī: Founder of a New Tradition of Fātimid Da‘wah Poetry. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Harvard University, 1999: 19-20, on al-Mu‘ayyad’s honorific titles. The title “al-Mu‘ayyad fī al-Dīn” (“The One aided [by God] in religion”) may have been given to al-Mu‘ayyad when he was appointed as *dā‘ī* of Fārs. Qutbuddin (*ibid.*): Appendix E, also provides

examine in detail one key Ismā'īlī concept that was subject to much debate in mediaeval Islamic intellectual circles: Ismā'īlī hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*).³ My doctoral dissertation will elucidate the concept of *ta'wīl*'s

a facsimile of al-Mu'ayyad's investiture as *dā'ī al-du'āt*, based upon a (an unspecified) manuscript from the Tayyibī Da'wa Library in Mumbai, India.

³ See C. Brockelmann. Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur. Supplement I. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1937-1942: 326; A. Gacek. Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the Institute of Ismā'īlī Studies. London: Islamic Publications, 1984. Volume I: 59-64; I. Poonawala. Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature. Malibu, 1977: 103-109, for detailed information on the published editions of al-Mu'ayyad's two works as well as the extant manuscripts of the eight volumes of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, England. To date, only three volumes of the Majālis have been edited. As M. Kāmil-Husayn. Diwān. Cairo, 1949: intro: 60-61, has indicated in his introduction to al-Mu'ayyad's poetic work, the Diwān, a topical summary of the Majālis exists in a later Ismā'īlī work, entitled Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq, by the 12th-century Yemenī *dā'ī* Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī. This work, to which F. Daftary (The Ismā'īlīs. Cambridge, 1992: 638, n. 132) also refers, has been edited in part with Volume I of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, by M. 'Abd al-Nāsir. al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. Volumes I and II. Cairo 1975, and will serve as a standard reference work throughout this dissertation. In conjunction with 'Abd al-Nāsir's edition, I have made use of MS. 95 (MFAr 51), *Bāb* 1-5. Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, of the Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq. Please consult Chapter Three for further information and details concerning MS. 95 as well as the other manuscripts used in this dissertation.

In addition, see A. Hamdani. "The *Dā'ī* Ḥātim Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 596 H./ 1199 A.D.) and his Book *Tuḥfat al-Qulūb*." *Oriens* (1974): 23/24: 279-284, for addition information on Ḥātim ibn Ibrāhīm's biography and his works.

As for other extant works and treatises of al-Mu'ayyad, Qutbuddin (personal communication, October 26, 1999) has informed me that she is preparing a complete hand-list of al-Mu'ayyad's works in manuscript form housed in the Tayyibī-Bohra libraries in Mumbai and Surat-- which are only discussed in passing in W. Ivanow. Ismā'īlī Literature: A Bibliographical Survey. Tehran, 1963, and I. K. H. Poonawala. Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature. Her recent dissertation contains two appendices (Appendices B-C) on al-Mu'ayyad's works.

With regard to the Fātimid tradition of Ismā'īlī *majālis* literature as "lectures", a topic which will be addressed more thoroughly in both Chapter Two and Three in terms of the study, transmission and redaction of Fātimid Ismā'īlī doctrinal works, please consult D. DeSmet. La Quiétude de l'intellect. Louvain: 1995: 12-13, and S. Nomoto. Early Ismā'īlī Thought on Prophecy according to the *Kitāb al-Islāh* by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d.ca. 322/ 934-5). Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. McGill University, 2000: 39, n. 8, for the points they contribute to the discussion originally raised by S. M. Stern, in his article, "Cairo as the Centre of the Ismā'īlī Movement."

close association with 11th-century Ismā'īlī soteriology and doctrines of divine guidance and religious authority, or *walāyah*.

Following a discussion of the sources for the study of the 11th-century Ismā'īlī *da'wah* and al-Mu'ayyad's career, from Fāṭimid missionary (*dā'ī*) to Fāṭimid chief missionary, in Chapters One and Two, Chapter Three will examine the composition of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah and the manuscripts attributed to al-Mu'ayyad. Chapter Three will also address al-Mu'ayyad's employment of a variety of mediaeval Muslim authors' works in his lectures for the purpose of religious instruction. As an extension to Chapter Three's discussion of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah as a compendium of Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī doctrine, Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm's Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq and the short treatise attributed to al-Mu'ayyad, Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah li al-Muhtadīn, serve as two distinct examples of the transmission of al-Mu'ayyad's works and his *da'wah* teachings in the form of scholarly abridgements and study-guides. In addition, the treatise Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah provides an opportunity to examine the distinction between Ismā'īlī Neoplatonic doctrine introduced into the public setting of the sermon and the very same doctrine presented in the form of a short philosophical treatise.

Chapter Four sets up al-Mu'ayyad's typologies of the *imām* in the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah and presents a more precise definition of the concept of the Ismā'īlī *imām*, as it subsequently results from al-

Mu'ayyad's engagement in the works of his predecessors and contemporaries in the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*. In the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, the concept of the human being (*al-insān*) and a theory of prophetic anthropology are inherently enmeshed in al-Mu'ayyad's skillful presentation of the Ismā'īlī *imām* and the "the friends of God" (*awliyā' Allāh*). The shared significance of the *da'wah* and the "ranks of religion" (*ḥudūd al-dīn*) as vehicles for perfection on the level of the individual human being stresses the necessity of religious guidance throughout the process of the individual practitioner's formation and development (*al-nash'ah*). Al-Mu'ayyad's introduction of the *imām* as the "absolute" or "unlimited" human being (*al-insān al-muṭlaq*) into the 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī technical lexicon has broader implications for the internal mediaeval Ismā'īlī debates concerning the concept of *walāyah* and the hierarchy of the "friends of God".

In Chapter Five, the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'ān and the celebration of the "Night of Power" ("*Laylat al-qadr*") during the Muslim holy month of Ramaḍān will serve as this dissertation's second point of departure in order to determine al-Mu'ayyad's definition and application of the different modes of the exegetical method of *ta'wīl*. From this angle of enquiry, Chapter Five pays close attention to the special role accorded both to the acquisition of esoteric religious knowledge and the performance of religious practices as the two main

“disciplines” of salvation available to the individual practitioner in mediaeval Ismā’īlī doctrinal thought. Of particular importance to this discussion is another short treatise in manuscript form attributed to al-Mu’ayyad, entitled Kitāb al-Ibtidā’ wa al-Intihā’, which will be analyzed in conjunction with select lectures from the Majālis al-Mu’ayyadiyyah. Equally, in al-Mu’ayyad’s Majālis, the microcosm (*al-‘ālam al-ṣaghīr*) mirrors the macrocosm (*al-‘ālam al-kabīr*) within a Neoplatonic cosmological framework, indicating the application of Neoplatonist elements to Fātimid Ismā’īlī doctrinal thought. Therefore, the final two chapters of the dissertation will consider the ontological ramifications of the individual internal cycle of initiatory experience and the external cycles of prophetic history as combined processes of gradual perfection culminating in individual resurrection (*qiyāmah*), the advent of the Messiah (*Qā’im al-qiyāmah*) at the end of historical time, and endless salvation.

al-Mu’ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī

Al-Mu’ayyad’s autobiography, the Sīrat al-Mu’ayyadiyyah and his *magnum opus*, the Majālis al-Mu’ayyadiyyah, first attracted the attention

of such Islamicists as A. Hamdani, H. Hamdani, Kraus and Margoliouth.⁴ More recently, Daftary, Glassen, Halm and Klemm have addressed different questions concerning al-Mu'ayyad's position in the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in the light of historical developments in the Fātimid period. In general, the majority of the scholarship on al-Mu'ayyad has astutely analyzed his political and social role as the Fātimid *dā'i al-du'āt* in the latter half of the 11th Century as well as the overwhelming importance of his autobiography as a historical document.⁵

⁴ A. Hamdani. The Sīra of the Dā'i al-Mu'ayyad fī d-Dīn aṣ-Ṣirāzī. 1950; H. Hamdani. "A Compendium of Ismā'īlī Esoterics." *Islamic Culture* (1937): 11: 210-220; H. Hamdani. "The History of the Ismā'īlī Da'wat and its Literature during the Last Phase of the Fātimid Empire." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1932); P. Kraus. "Beiträge zur islamischen ketzergeschichte. Das Kitāb az-Zumurrud des Ibn ar-Rāwandī." *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* (1933-34): 14: 93-129; 355-379. Reprinted in, Rémi Brague, Editor. Alchemie, Ketzerei, Apokryphen im frühen Islam. Zürich/ New York, 1994; D. S. Margoliouth. "Abū'l-'Alā al-Ma'arrī's Correspondence on Vegetarianism." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1902): 34: 289-332.

⁵ H. Busse. Chalif und Grosskönig: Die Buviden im Iraq (945-1055). Beirut, 1969: 7, 125-127; Daftary. The Ismā'īlīs. 1992: 205, 213-214. A. Hamdani. The Sīra of the Dā'i al-Mu'ayyad fī d-Dīn aṣ-Ṣirāzī. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of London, 1950, and V. Klemm. Die Mission des fātimidischen Agenten al-Mu'ayyad fī d-Dīn in Ṣirāz. Frankfurt am Main: 1989, have dealt most thoroughly with al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography, his diplomatic career and the socio-political impact of the Fātimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah* under his leadership as "chief missionary". Glassen's work discusses al-Mu'ayyad's career as a Fātimid missionary and his role as a diplomat in the broader context of mid-11th-century 'Abbasid religio-political policies. See E. Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. Wiesbaden, 1981.

As well, Halm's brief survey of Fātimid approaches to religious education mentions al-Mu'ayyad's works as important documents for reconstructing the historical context of the Ismā'īlī *majlis* at the *Dār al-'ilm* ("the House of Wisdom") in 11th-century Cairo. See H. Halm. "The Ismā'īlī Oath of Allegiance (*ahd*) and the Sessions of Wisdom (*majālis al-hikma*) in Fātimid Times." In, F. Daftary, Editor. Medieval Ismā'īlī History and Thought. New York, 1996b and "Al-Azhar, Dār al-'Ilm, al-Raṣad: Forschungs und Lehranstalten der Fatimiden in Kairo." In, U.

Less attention, however, has been paid to al-Mu'ayyad as a formative and influential Ismā'īlī author. According to Daftary and Poonawala, al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis represent "the high watermark of Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī thought".⁶ Al-Mu'ayyad's works are undoubtedly distinctive primary sources for the purpose of reconstructing a pivotal period in the history of mediaeval Islamic thought. The series of polemical debates (*munāzarah / radd*) recorded in his autobiography, the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, and in the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, provide a wealth of information and offer new perspectives on a number of key philosophical and theological issues current in 11th-century Islamic intellectual circles.

The recent research of a number of Islamicists strongly indicates the importance of al-Mu'ayyad's Ismā'īlī works for the field of Islamic Studies in general, and for the mediaeval and modern histories of the Ismā'īlī tradition in particular. Calder, DeSmet, Stroumsa and Van Ess have examined in part the theological component of al-Mu'ayyad's thought through reconsidering Kraus' earlier research on the textual evidence for Ibn al-Rāwandī's (fl. 3rd A. H. /9th C.E.) polemic against the "Brahmans" contained in Volume Five of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah.⁷

Vermeulen & D. De Smet, Editors. Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras. Louvain, 1995: 99-109.

⁶ Daftary. The Ismā'īlīs. 1992: 214; Poonawala. Biobibliography. 1977: 106.

⁷ N. Calder. "The Barāhima: Literary Construct and Historical Reality." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1994): 41; D. DeSmet. "al-Mu'ayyad fī d-Dīn ash-Shīrāzī et la polémique ismaélienne contre les 'Brahmanes' d'Ibn ar-

As well, al-Mu'ayyad's poetic work, the Dīwān, and its importance in the post-Fātimid and modern Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlī traditions, has formed the substance of B. T. Qutbuddin's recently published Harvard University doctoral dissertation.⁸

Despite the above-mentioned facts, H. Corbin's *Annuaire* summary of his seminar on al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis, held in 1978-1979 at the École pratique des hautes études, M. Kāmil-Husayn's introduction to the 1949 edition of al-Mu'ayyad's Dīwān, his 1950 article, and P. Peerwani's 1988 article, serve as the only existing scholarly introductions to the Ismā'īlī doctrines entailed in al-Mu'ayyad's prose works.⁹ Thus, there is ample

Rāwandī." In, D. DeSmet & U. Vermeulen, Editors. Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras. Louvain, 1995a; P. Kraus. "Beiträge zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte. Das Kitāb az-Zumurrud des Ibn ar-Rāwandī." (1933-34); S. Stroumsa. "The Blinding Emerald: Ibn al-Rāwandī's *Kitāb al-Zumurrud*." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1994) 114/2: 163-185; S. Stroumsa. Freethinkers of Medieval Islam. Leiden, 1999: 65-86; J. Van Ess. "Ibn ar-Rāwandī, or the Making of an Image." *Al-Abhāth* (1978-79) 27: 5-26. These articles draw upon Kraus's edition of select passages from a manuscript of Volume V of al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyah, from the library of H. Hamdani. The above-mentioned scholars discuss in particular Ibn al-Rāwandī's views on such matters as the *mubāhalah* verses in the Qur'ān, *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, the primacy of reason, and the nature of prophecy. Taken as a whole, this body of secondary literature speaks to the on-going debate within the field of Islamic Studies with respect to the "image" of Ibn al-Rāwandī. As well, they reaffirm the importance of often ignored mediaeval Ismā'īlī primary sources for reconstructing various facets of mediaeval Islamic intellectual history.

⁸ Now published as B. T. Qutbuddin. Al-Mu'ayyad al-Shirazi and Fatimid Da'wa Poetry. Leiden, 2005. B. T. Qutbuddin. Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī: Founder of a New Tradition of Fātimid Da'wa Poetry, 1999, also touches upon the use of al-Mu'ayyad's poetry for the purposes of religious education and ritual liturgy in the post-Fātimid and modern Ṭayyibī tradition.

⁹ H. Corbin. "Annuaire 1978-1979." In, C. Jambet, Editor. Itinéraire d'un enseignement. Tehran: 1993: 179-185; M. Kāmil-Husayn, Editor. Dīwān Dā'ī al-du'āt. Cairo, 1949: 99-105; 123-128; M. Kāmil-Husayn. "Theory of 'Matter' and

evidence to support the need for an in-depth study of al-Mu'ayyad's system of thought. The main purpose of this dissertation is therefore to examine al-Mu'ayyad's response to a number of philosophical and theological debates current in mediaeval Islamic intellectual history in order to introduce and present for the first time in an academic study, the basic tenets of his thought. Of equal importance is to consider al-Mu'ayyad's main doctrinal work, the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, in the light of some extremely pertinent questions with respect to mediaeval Ismā'īlī doctrine: what constituted the main doctrinal shift in 10th-11th-century mediaeval Ismā'ilism concerning the hierarchy of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*? Did al-Mu'ayyad, in his role as Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī chief missionary, aim to counter internal movements and doctrinal trends within the 11th-century extended Ismā'īlī *da'wah* that were not strictly in keeping with the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī doctrine of *walāyah*?¹⁰

In Western scholarly circles, there has been a natural tension between wanting to convey the richness of mediaeval Ismā'īlī texts in terms of the broader context of mediaeval Islamic philosophy and theology, on the one

'Spirit' and its Influence on the Egyptian Poetry of the Fāṭimid Period." *Islamic Culture* (1950): 24: 108-116; P. Peerwani. "Ismā'īlī Exegesis of the Qur'ān in al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah of al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī." *BRISMES Proceedings of the 1988 International Conference on the Middle East* (1988): 118-127.

¹⁰ D. DeSmet. "Al-Mu'ayyad fī d-Dīn ash-Shīrāzī et la polémique ismaélienne contre les 'Brahmanes' d'Ibn ar-Rāwandī." In, D. DeSmet & U. Vermeulen, Editors. Louvain, 1995a; M. Kāmil-Ḥusayn, Editor. Dīwān Dā'ī al-Du'āt. Cairo, 1949; Introduction: 87-89.

hand, and addressing the very same works with regard to their social, political and historical contexts, on the other hand. As unique primary sources largely in unedited form, posing their own, specific set of challenges in terms of textual interpretation, al-Mu'ayyad's prose works demand a high degree of sensitivity with regard to the formation and transmission of the mediaeval Ismā'īlī manuscript traditions in the post-Fātimid and modern periods. I have aimed to address the content of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah and the short treatises attributed to al-Mu'ayyad in the view of a number of broader considerations: the function and context of mediaeval Ismā'īlī *da'wah* teachings.

My research, while taking into account methodological considerations and theoretical issues, foremost relies upon the close textual analysis of the primary sources, as they exist at present in edited and in manuscript form. This dissertation makes use of the first three edited volumes of al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis as well as the available manuscripts of the Majālis in conjunction with two of his shorter doctrinal treatises, Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah, and Kitāb al-Ibtidā' wa al-Intihā', recently donated as part of the Zāhid 'Alī collection to the library of the Institute of Ismā'īlī Studies in London, England.¹¹

¹¹ An additional discussion and review of the manuscripts and editions utilized in this study will appear in Chapter Three. I would like, however, to take this opportunity to thank especially the staff at the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. London, England, Dr. Duncane Haldane, Alnoor Merchant, Shellina

For the most part, Western scholarship has occupied itself with the issue of Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* as an overarching hermeneutic process.¹² To date, there has been no comprehensive or systematic study dealing with the

Karmali and Khadija Lalani, for their invaluable assistance and great generosity in providing the microfiches of the manuscripts used throughout this dissertation. I would also like to acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to Alnoor Merchant and Dr. Delia Cortese, Middlesex University, for allowing me to have access to the manuscript of *Kitāb al-Ibtidā' wa al-Intihā'* before it was catalogued as part of the library's collection.

¹² H. Corbin's studies on *ta'wīl* in general and on the Ismā'īlī esoteric interpretation of religious tenets and practices in particular have not yet been surpassed. See H. Corbin, Editor. *Trilogie ismaélienne*. Tehran/Paris, 1961: Introduction; Corbin. *Face de Dieu, face de l'homme*. Paris, 1983b: 4-151, in addition to Corbin. "L'Ismaélisme et le symbole de la croix." *Table Ronde* (Dec. 1957): 122-154, on Sijistānī's *ta'wīl* of the Muslim profession of faith, the *shahādah*; and H. Corbin. *Temple and Contemplation*. Trans. L. Sherrard. London, 1986: 132-182, for the article entitled "Sabian Ritual and Ismā'īlī Exegesis".

For a brief overview of the importance of *ta'wīl* in mediaeval Ismā'īlī doctrinal texts, albeit from a historical perspective, see Daftary. *The Ismā'īlīs*. 1992:138, 232-233.

See J. F. Gagnon. *Gnose et philosophe: une étude du ta'wīl ismaélien*. Unpublished M. A. thesis. McGill University, 1995; A. Nanji. "Towards a Hermeneutics of Qur'ānic and other Narratives in Ismā'īlī Thought." In, R. C. Martin, Editor. *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*. Tuscon, 1985; A. Nanji. "Transcendence and Distinction: Metaphoric Process in Ismā'īlī Muslim Thought." In, D. Burrell & B. McGinn, Editors. Notre Dame, 1990. Gagnon and Nanji, each in their own respective ways, approach and examine the Ismā'īlī concept of *ta'wīl* foremost as a method of hermeneutics. The former author deals exclusively with Sijistānī's concept of *ta'wīl*, whereas the latter draws upon numerous Ismā'īlī treatises on *ta'wīl* by different authors, including briefly, al-Mu'ayyad's *Majālis*.

In addition, see Article. H. Halm. "Bāṭenīya." *Encyclopedia Iranica*. Volume III: 861-863; Article. C. Gilliot. "Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval." *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*. Leiden: 2002: 99-124.

fundamental principles of Ismā'īlī Qur'ānic exegesis and interpretation.¹³ Western scholarship has not yet embarked upon the task of determining the exact placement of Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* within the larger framework of mystical Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*).¹⁴ The fact that non-Ismā'īlī exegetes also employed the term *ta'wīl* is problematic in terms of establishing any sort of "exclusive" or predominantly sectarian origin and development for one of the more prominent forms of mediaeval Ismā'īlī Qur'ānic interpretation, and indeed, one of the more distinguishing features of 10-12th-century Ismā'īlī doctrinal works.¹⁵

In actuality, the proliferation of texts and treatises throughout the 10-12th Centuries alludes to the wide-range of mediaeval Ismā'īlī authors' methods for defining, supporting and defending the "science" of *ta'wīl* in

¹³ See D. DeSmet. *La Quiétude de l'intellect*. Louvain, 1995b: 23-29; A. Nanji. "Towards a Hermeneutics of Qur'ānic and other Narratives in Ismā'īlī Thought." (1985): 164-165; I. Poonawala. "Ismā'īlī *Ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān." In, A. Rippin, Editor. *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*. Oxford, 1988a: 199-222; I. Poonawala. "An Ismā'īlī Treatise on the *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1988b): 108: 379-385. These scholars focus, to some extent, on Ismā'īlī approaches to the Qur'ān. While both authors note the absence of a systematic treatment of the subject in the field of Islamic Studies, they in fact, make great efforts to situate their respective authors' works and treatises within the mainstream of Islamic philosophy and theology.

¹⁴ Corbin. *Face de Dieu*. 1983b; Gagnon. *Gnose et philosophie*. 1995; A. M. Heinen. "The Notion of *Ta'wīl* in Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī's *Book of the Sources* (*Kitāb al-Yanābī*)." *Hamdard Islamicus* (1979): 2: 35-45.

¹⁵ Kāmil-Husayn, Editor. *Diwān Dā'ī al-Du'āt*. Cairo, 1949: 99-105; 123-128. See in particular, Kāmil-Husayn. (*ibid.*: 106-108) as well as "Theory of 'Matter' and 'Spirit' and its Influence on the Egyptian Poetry of the Fāṭimid Period." *Islamic Culture* (1950): 24: 108-116, on al-Mu'ayyad's theory of *mathal* and *mamthūl* and its close links with Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl*.

relation to their Ismā'īlī and non-Ismā'īlī audiences.¹⁶ Varying modes of Qur'ānic and non-Qur'ānic interpretation were exemplified by *ta'wīl* within 10-12th-century Ismā'īlism.¹⁷ Given the variety of exegetical methods that al-Mu'ayyad employs in his Majālis under the rubric of

¹⁶ By way of explanation, and to offer a concrete example of this point, see M. Kāmil-Husayn, Editor. Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadīyyah. Cairo, 1949: 16-30, for the debate between al-Mu'ayyad and his opponent over the issue of the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān and the four "modes" of the Qur'ānic text. Also, see Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah. Editor, M. Ghālib. Beirut, 1976. Volume I: 221, 292, 348.

An issue related to the question of the transmission of these texts (and one that is still subject to debate) is the matter of al-Mu'ayyad's Persian translation of Qādī al-Nu'mān's 10th-century work on *ta'wīl*, Asās al-ta'wīl. For more information on this, see Corbin. Face De Dieu. 1983b: 116, n. 140. Of even greater interest is Schmidtke's recent edition of the correspondence between Corbin and Ivanow, and the letters' remarks concerning the extant manuscripts of this Persian translation. See S. Schmidtke, Editor. Correspondance Corbin-Ivanow. Louvain, 1999a: 97, 149. With regard to other available manuscripts of this work, Qutbuddin. Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī. 1999: 346, does not mention any other manuscripts besides the one catalogued at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London.

On a somewhat different note, see DeSmet. La Quiétude de l'intellect. 1995b: 26 n. 112, who takes into account Kirmānī's incorporation of particular Greek philosophical texts and philosophy in general into his exegesis of certain Qur'ānic passages. Of equal importance is DeSmet's (*ibid.*): 23-29; 355-377, discussion of Kirmānī's concept of *ta'wīl* and its implications (as esoteric knowledge possessed by the *imāms*) for Ismā'īlī soteriology.

¹⁷ See in particular, Poonawala. "Ismā'īlī *Ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān." (1988a). It is important to point out here that in this article Poonawala emphasizes the fact that Western scholars have generally explained *ta'wīl* as being one of the most prominent forms of Qur'ānic exegesis employed by mediaeval Ismā'īlī authors. At the same time, Poonawala points out that in general, Western scholars have overlooked the fact that different Ismā'īlī authors made use of the concept of *ta'wīl* in different ways, and with different intents. Amongst other things, Poonawala (*ibid.*): 210-212, also makes the point, on the basis of his analysis of Sijistānī's Kitāb al-Iftikhār, that some Qur'ānic verses are more in need of *ta'wīl* than others, especially the verses with "physical objects, such as heaven, earth mountains, rivers, animals, trees and fruits", and the *mutashābihāt* verses. Poonawala notes that Sijistānī outlines one basic method of *ta'wīl* in the above-mentioned work. Sijistānī's discussion of the application of *ta'wīl* to particular Qur'ānic verses also includes recognizably doctrinal passages detailing the Ismā'īlī concept of the prophetic revelation's esoteric (*bāṭin*) and exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and different explanations for the necessity of the prophets and the cycles of *imāms*.

ta'wīl, Chapter Five of this study will devote itself exclusively to al-Mu'ayyad's concept of *ta'wīl*-- in theory and in practice. In other words, in which instances may *ta'wīl* be applied to the Qur'ānic text and by whom; what are the non-textual oriented methods of *ta'wīl*; what esoteric sources of knowledge are accessible through *ta'wīl*; and how are the benefits of the esoteric knowledge obtained through *ta'wīl* "idealized" in Fāṭimid texts?

In many respects, this study of al-Mu'ayyad is interested in ascertaining the philosophical and theological reasoning behind according an undeniably high status to the "science" of *ta'wīl* in comparison to the traditional Islamic sciences within mediaeval Ismā'īlī circles. For the above-mentioned reasons, al-Mu'ayyad's works are of paramount importance for determining the developments within the Fāṭimid *da'wah* with respect to the varying mediaeval Islamic attitudes towards the doctrinal and philosophical interpretations of the Qur'ān, religious practices and the figure of the *imām*, following the Druze schism and prior to the Nizārī-Must'alī split.¹⁸

¹⁸ See D. Bryer. "The Origins of the Druze Religion." *Der Islam* (1975): 25: 47-83; 239-262; (1976): 53: 5-27; M. A. Hodgson. "Al-Darzī and Ḥamza in the Origin of the Druze Religion." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1962): 82: 5-20; Daftary. *The Ismā'īlīs*. 1992: 218, for a general introduction regarding the emergence of the Druze movement and the history of Fāṭimid Ismā'īlism. Also, see D. C. Peterson. *Cosmogony and the Ten Separate Intellects*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of California Los Angeles. 1990: 224-265, and J. Van Ess. *Chiliasmische Erwartungen und die Versuchung der Göttlichkeit*. Heidelberg, 1977,

It may also be noted here at the outset of this dissertation that a movement towards more conservative typologies of the *imām* may be evident in 11th-century Ismā‘īlī circles, with a higher priority placed upon composing polemical material in order to refute the more “exaggerated” views of the *Ghulāt* and to propound a less divinized conceptualization of the *imām*. Al-Mu‘ayyad’s reintroduction of Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s theory of *walāyah* raises a number of questions that this dissertation also aims to answer: is al-Mu‘ayyad’s reintroduction of Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s theory of *walāyah* an indication of the Fāṭimid *da‘wah* maintaining core teachings or does it represent an effort on the part of the Fāṭimid *da‘wah* to reconsolidate the extended Ismā‘īlī *da‘wah* doctrinally on such issues as the figure of the *imām* and prophetic inheritance, in what is retrospectively viewed as the post-Druze and pre-Nizārī and Ṭayyibī period of Ismā‘īlism?

Studies on Walāyah

In his seminal work, The Divine Guide in Early Shi‘ism, Amir-Moezzi makes a useful distinction between the technical complexity of the term

who offer insightful and in-depth analyses of the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī *da‘wah* during

walāyah in Sufism and the concept in Shī'ism.¹⁹ Also of great conceptual and practical importance are the multiple significations the individual *walī* and the hierarchy of the *awliyā'* acquire in mediaeval Sufi, Ismā'īlī and Shī'ī texts and treatises; most notably, in a pre-Safavid form of Shī'ism which still holds doctrinal affinities and concerns in common with Ismā'ilism, and *vice versa*, and in a mediaeval Sufism which predates Ibn al-'Arabī's response to Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's (d. 932 C. E.) 10th-century work, Khatm al-Awliyā'.

A number of Islamicists have directed their scholarly attention to the concept of *walāyah*. Chodkiewicz's exemplary study, Seal of the Saints, aims to show that Ibn al-'Arabī's (d. 1240 C.E.) Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam and al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyyah were the first doctrinal works to give a systematic definition to the concept of *walāyah*.²⁰ In Ibn al-'Arabī's 13th-century Sufi

the reign of al-Ḥakīm and the emergence of the Druze.

¹⁹ Amir-Moezzi. The Divine Guide in Early Shī'ism. 1994: 29; M. M. Dakake. Loyalty, Love and Faith: Defining the Boundaries of the Early Shī'ite Community. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 2000: 29, 42-43, 60-61, 107, 175, 221-222; H. Landolt. "Walāyah." Article. In, M. Eliade, Editor. Encyclopaedia of Religion. 1987a; H. Landolt, Editor & Trans. Le Révélateur des mystères. La Grasse, 1986: 74-79; M. Momen. An Introduction to Shī'ism. New Haven, 1985: 157; S. H. Rizvi. "Metaphysics and Soteriology: on *Wilāya* in Early Shī'ism and in the Thought of Mullā Ṣadrā." International Journal of Shī'ī Studies (forthcoming). See in addition, J. Friedmann. Prophecy Continuous. Berkeley, 1989: 53-82, for his analysis and survey of the classical mediaeval sources on the idea of *khatm al-nubuwwah* and the term *khātam al-nabiyyūn*.

²⁰ More recently, G. Elmore. Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time. Leiden, 1999, has examined Ibn al-'Arabī's concept of *walāyah* on the basis of a work that pre-dates both the Fuṣūṣ and the Futūhāt, namely Kitāb 'Anqā' Mughrib ("The Book of the Fabulous Gryphon"). Also, see his discussions of *walāyah* and the "Seal" of the "Saints" in his introduction. In conjunction with these, see A. Knysh.

works, *walāyah* is inherently linked to the more prominent terms of “legislative” prophecy (*risālah*) and “general” prophecy (*nubuwwah*).²¹ The term *walāyah* may be defined as “sainthood” or “divine friendship”.²² The term also may refer more directly to the “friends of God” (*awliyā*) “who neither fear nor grieve” (*sūrah* 10: 62) as well as those individuals who have attained “proximity” (*muqarrabūn*) with God.²³

In Seal of the Saints, Chodkiewicz scours the early Sufi doctrinal and hagiographic literature in order to gain an understanding of what he believes to be the wide-spread reluctance amongst mediaeval Muslim thinkers (prior to Ibn al-‘Arabī) to articulate a response to Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī’s work, Khatm al-Awliyā, or even to explore such a potentially controversial topic.²⁴ Chodkiewicz also delves more deeply into the

Ibn al-‘Arabī and the Later Islamic Tradition. Albany, 1999: 193-197, analyzes Ibn Khaldūn’s discussion of Kitāb al-‘Anqā and his response to Ibn al-‘Arabī’s concept of *walāyah*. Knysh (*ibid.*): 193, also notes the fact that Ibn Khaldūn “described it as ‘virtually saturated with Shī‘ī theories”, namely that the Sufi theory of *walāyah* had “affinities” with the Shī‘ī doctrine of the *imām*.

²¹ Chodkiewicz. Seal of the Saints. 1993: 15.

²² V. Cornell. Realm of the Saint. Austin, 1998: xvii-xxi; H. Landolt. “Walāyah.” (1986b); Le Révélateur des mystères.

1987b: 84-85; C. S. Taylor. In the Vicinity of the Righteous. Leiden, 1999: 80-81.

²³ Chodkiewicz. Seal of the Saints. 1993: 23, 26.

²⁴ Chodkiewicz. Seal of the Saints. 1993: 27-33; Cornell. Realm of the Saint. 1998: 205, 223; Elmore. Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time. 1999: 138-143; Knysh. Ibn al-‘Arabī and the Later Islamic Tradition. 1999: 53-54; H. Landolt. Book Review of B. Radtke. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1994): 114/2: 303-304; Taylor. In the Vicinity of the Righteous. 1999: 81-82. It must be noted here that while Taylor’s work in fact deals with current modes of pious expression in late mediaeval Egypt, his brief discussion of the concept of *walāyah* is entirely culled from Chodkiewicz’s work, Seal of the Saints. A more recent discussion of “sainthood”, based on Sufi doctrinal works from the late mediaeval Egyptian

interrelations between *walāyah*, the function of the individual “friend of God” (*walī*) and prophetic revelation.²⁵ Herein lies the source of much of the controversy and debate concerning the rank of the prophets (as *anbiyā’* or *rusul*) in relation to the *awliyā’* as well as the issue of prophetic inheritance (*wirāthah*).²⁶ The controversy over the doctrine of *walāyah*, however, is not so simple, given the number of equally reliable and pertinent Ismā’īlī sources that also discuss the theory of *walāyah* in relation to the doctrines of *imāmah* and *wiṣāyah*. Chodkiewicz, however, chooses to overlook these non-Sunni authors, all of whom in actuality

context, may be found in R. J. A. McGregor. A Study of Sainthood in Medieval Islamic Egypt. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. McGill University, 2001: 9-40; 29-31 on the concept of *walāyah* in particular. This dissertation has recently been published under the title of Sanctity and Mysticism in Medieval Egypt. Albany, 2004.

It is also important to note here that according to B. Radtke’s analysis of the internal references in other works by Tirmidhī, and as discussed by Landolt (1994: 304-305), Tirmidhī’s work on *walāyah* should be more properly entitled Sīrat al-Awliyā’. See B. Radtke. Drei Schriften des Theosophen von Tirmidh. Beirut, 1992: 1-33; The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism. Surrey, 1996: 2-11. Landolt (1994: 304) states the following:

The work under discussion is, in any case, a rather loosely knit collection of ‘questions’ and ‘answers’ on the general subject of *wilāyah*, the *Awliyā’* and their ‘stages’ (*manāzil*); and the theme of the mysterious ‘Seal’ (*khatm* or *khātim*) does occupy a prominent place in it. The existence and identity of such a parallel to the ‘Seal of Prophethood’ was undoubtedly the most sensitive issue, and evidently the one which appealed most to the Sufis.

²⁵ Chodkiewicz. Seal of the Saints. 1993: 26-46.

²⁶ Chodkiewicz. Seal of the Saints. 1993: 26-46, 51-59; Landolt. “Walāyah.” (1987a): 321-322; Book Review of M. Chodkiewicz. Le Sceau des saints. *Annales islamologiques* (1987b): 83-85.

Also, see Böwering. The Mystical Vision of Existence. 1980: 238, and Elmore. Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time. 1999: 110, 132-162, on the mediaeval Sufi discussions of these two issues, to which Elmore (*ibid.*): 132, aptly refers as the “the nature of the *walī/ nabī* dichotomy” as well the “*tafdīl al-walī* bias”.

preceded Ibn al-ʿArabī with respect to giving shape to the doctrinal concept of *walāyah*.²⁷

Admittedly, in the English translation of his monograph that followed shortly after Landolt's review of Le Sceau des saints, Chodkiewicz briefly mentions in passing al-Mu'ayyad's concept of the "seal of the Imāms" (*khātam al-a'immah*), whose works will form the subject of this study.²⁸ Only a few scholars, however, have examined the Ismā'īlī concept of *walāyah*, either based on Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's (d. 974 C.E.) Da'ā'im al-Islām or al-Mu'ayyad's Diwān and the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah.²⁹ In his introduction to Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Da'ā'im al-Islām, Fyze explains "The Ismā'īlī concept of *walāyah* involves not only love and devotion to the Imāms of the house of the Prophet but also implicit obedience to their

²⁷ Amir-Moezzi. The Divine Guide. 1994: 55, 100-123; Daftary. The Ismā'īlīs. 1992: 86-87; Landolt. "Walāyah." (1987a): 319-322; Book Review. B. Radtke. (1994): 304. See in particular Chodkiewicz's. Seal of the Saints. 1993: 136-137, and B. Radtke, Editor. Drei Schriften des theosophen von Tirmid. Beirut, 1992: (Intro.): 36. Radtke points out that one of the earliest references to Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's work, ʿIlm al-Awliyā', appears in the 10th-century Ismā'īlī Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī's Kitāb al-Zīnah.

²⁸ Chodkiewicz. Seal of the Saints. 1993: 33, n 16; Landolt. "Walāyah." (1987a): 320; 1987b: 84-85). This particular reference to al-Mu'ayyad's concept of the "seal of the Imāms" only appears in the English translation of Chodkiewicz's monograph, and was most likely included into the English translation following the publication of Landolt's review of Le Sceau des saints (1986).

²⁹ A. A. A. Fyze, Editor. Da'ā'im al-Islām. Cairo, 1963. Volume I: Introduction: 2, 22, n. 1, 4; Kāmil-Ḥusayn, Editor. Diwān. 1949: 69-78; Landolt. "Walāyah." (1987a): 319-322; Book Review of M. Chodkiewicz (1987b): 84; A. Nanji. "An Ismā'īlī Theory of *Walāyah* in the Da'ā'im al-Islām of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān." In, D. P. Little, Editor. Essays on Islamic Civilization. Leiden, 1976b: 263.

commands".³⁰ Herein I would like to suggest that the Shī'ī concept of *walāyah* holds an additional, complementary meaning alongside of the brief definitions Chodkiewicz and Fyzee put forth. By way of explanation, Amir-Moezzi states the following:

... applied to the imāms of different prophets, it refers to their ontological status or their sacred initiatory mission; the walī-imām is the "friend" and the closest "helper" of God and His prophet; he immediately "follows" the latter in his mission; he is the "chief", the "master" of believers par excellence. In this acceptance, walī is a synonym of waṣī...Applied to the faithful of the imāms, *walāyah* denotes the unfailing love, faith and submission that the initiated owe to their holy initiating guide...³¹

Kāmil-Ḥusayn and Landolt also note that similarities between the Shī'ī and Ismā'īlī doctrines of *walāyah* exist, but only to a certain extent. *Walāyah* itself stands as one of the religious duties, or "pillars" (*da'ā'im*), of Islam in 10-11th-century Ismā'īlī doctrinal works, including those of our author, al-Mu'ayyad.³² Kāmil-Ḥusayn makes the point that for al-Mu'ayyad in particular, *walāyah* is the "seal" of the "pillars" of Islam, and of necessity, includes obedience (*ṭā'ah*) to the *imāms* descended from 'Alī

³⁰ A. A. A. Fyzee, Editor. *Da'ā'im al-Islām*. Cairo, 1963: 2.

³¹ Amir-Moezzi. *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism*. 1994: 159, n. 151.

³² A. A. A. Fyzee, Editor. *Da'ā'im al-Islām*. Cairo, 1963. Volume I: 22, n. 1, 4; Kāmil-Ḥusayn, Editor. *Diwān*. 1949: Introduction: 69-73; Landolt (1987a: 319-320); A. Nanji. "An Ismā'īlī Theory of *Walāyah* in the *Da'ā'im al-Islām* of Qāḍī al-

and designated through appointment (*naṣṣ*).³³ As well, the doctrine of *walāyah* entails an esoteric conception of Qur'ānic hermeneutics and what may be termed initiatory knowledge, or the knowledge transmitted in each cycle of prophetic history from the *imāms* and the members of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* to the Ismā'īlī community at large.³⁴

Of equal importance is the fact that al-Mu'ayyad, as first indicated by Landolt, introduces and develops the concepts of the "seal" of the *imāms*, or the *imām* of "resurrection" (*khātam al-a'imma*), and the "absolute human being" (*al-insān al-muṭlaq*), which signify the successive roles of the prophets, the *imāms* and the members of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in their respective time-periods.³⁵ As mentioned above, the substance of Chapter Four will be devoted to al-Mu'ayyad's typologies of the *imām* in order to shed light on the development and revision within 10-11th-century Ismā'īlī texts of the doctrine of *walāyah* and the status of the *awliyā' Allāh*, receptive to the transmission of *ta'yīd* and the esoteric knowledge of *ta'wīl* within a circle of distinction and proximity.

From a different perspective, Calderini emphasizes the connections between the "world of religion" (*ālam al-dīn*), knowledge and obedience

Nu'mān." In, D. P. Little, Editor. Essays on Islamic Civilization. Leiden, 1976b: 263.

³³ Kāmil-Ḥusayn, Editor. Dīwān. 1949: (Intro.): 70-71.

³⁴ Amir-Moezzi. The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism. 1994: 29, n. 151; Daftary. The Ismā'īlis. 1992: 36-37.

(*ṭā'ah*) in her discussion of the mediating function of the “world of religion” in mediaeval Ismā'īlī doctrinal thought. Calderini also notes that al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis reflects a doctrinal shift, in relation to Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī's (d.ca. 1021 C.E.) philosophical elaboration of the “balance of religions” (*mīzān al-diyānah*). She suggests that al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis marks a return to a “Sijistānī-like double hierarchy” of the Ismā'īlī *ḥudūd*. Al-Mu'ayyad's employment not only of Sijistānī's prophetic anthropology, but also of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's original drafting of an Ismā'īlī theory of *walāyah*, are of undeniable importance for the history of mediaeval Ismā'īlī thought and will be addressed at various points throughout my dissertation.³⁶

In keeping with the points raised above, the concluding chapter of this study will indicate the ways in which the 11th-century Ismā'īlī concept of *walāyah* demarcates the parameters of religious authority and guidance embodied in the *imām* of the time (*imām al-'aṣr*), or the “absolute human being” (*al-insān al-muṭlaq*).³⁷ On the basis of select passages from al-

³⁵ Landolt. “Walāyah.” (1987a): 319-320; Landolt. Book Review of M. Chodkiewicz (1987b): 84.

³⁶ S. Calderini. Studies in Ismā'īlī Cosmology: The Role of Intermediary Worlds. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of London, 1993: 462-463. For references in the Majālis to *mīzān al-diyānah*, see in particular Calderini (*ibid.*): 463 n. 51. Calderini also refers to a similar reference to this term in the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah. Editor, M. Ghālib. Volume III: 60, in her article entitled “Cosmology and Authority in Medieval Ismailism.” *DISKUS* (1996): 4/1: 20, n. 16. Also see DeSmet. La Quiétude de l'intellect. 1995b: 27-ff.

³⁷ Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah. Editor, M. Ghālib. Volume I: 49, 51, 235, 307, on *al-insān al-muṭlaq*.

Mu'ayyad's Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah in conjunction with two of his short doctrinal treatises, I will determine in what ways "the sphere of *walāyah*" forms the mesocosm mediating in between the two abodes, the *dār al-dunyā* and the *dār al-ākhirah*, in the form of the *imām* and the spiritual hierarchy embodied by both the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* and the "friends of God". In this manner, this study will delineate the overarching implications of the "sphere of *walāyah*" for 11th-century Ismā'īlī doctrines of redemption and salvation.³⁸

³⁸ Majālis. Editor, M. Ghālib. Volume I: 19, 284. The term "mesocosm" is drawn from Corbin's discussion of Ismā'īlī hermeneutics and gnosis and his analysis of the afore-mentioned Asās al-Ta'wīl. In effect, I am adopting it. See in particular Corbin. Face de Dieu. 1983b: 114-115.

Chapter One: Between Heresiography and Historiography: Mediaeval Persian and Arabic Sources on the Ismā'īlī Da'wah

In order to situate al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d.ca. 470 A.H./1077-78 C.E.) as an 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *dā'ī* between the preceding "Persian School" of mediaeval Ismā'ilism and the subsequent Nizārī and Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlī traditions, it was necessary to take into consideration the textual documentation for the two periods of his office: first, in Shīrāz and other urban centers of Western Iran and then second, in Cairo.¹ I then found myself contending with a growing multiplicity of

¹ A. Hamdani The Sira of the Fāṭimid Dā'ī al-Mu'ayyad fī d-Dīn ash-Shīrāzī. Unpublished thesis. University of London, 1950, and V. Klemm. Die Mission des fāṭimidischen Agenten al-Mu'ayyad fī d-Dīn in Shīrāz. Frankfurt, 1989, have both examined al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography foremost as a historical source. Also, see Ḥusayn V. Ḥakīm Ilāhī "Hibat Allāh Shīrāzī." *Dānish* (1949-50) I: 501-508, 594-595, 635-41; (1950) II: 22-23, and B. T. Qutbuddin. Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī: Founder of a New Tradition of Fatimid Da'wa Poetry. Unpublished dissertation. Harvard University, 1999: 19-23, for the specifics of al-Mu'ayyad's early life in Shīrāz. In the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. Editor, M. Kāmil-Ḥusayn. Cairo, 1949 (henceforth cited as Sīrah in the footnotes): p. 15, al-Mu'ayyad refers to his father's status and role as a *dā'ī* in Fārs as well as his own participation in *da'wah* activities. A more detailed discussion of al-Mu'ayyad's role as a Fāṭimid *dā'ī* will be provided in the following chapter.

For additional information on the "Persian School" ("die persische Schule") of mediaeval Ismā'ilism, see H. Halm. Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismā'īliya. Wiesbaden, 1978: 16, 128-138, and H. Halm. Empire of the Mahdi. Leiden, 1996: 288-77. Also, see W. Madelung. "Das Imamāt in der frühen ismailitischen Lehre." *Der Islam* (1961) 37: 101-114. In general, two separate terms-- the "Persian school" or the "Neoplatonists"-- designate the same group of early Ismā'īlī authors influenced by Neoplatonist philosophy and who were active in Iran but not necessarily as Fāṭimid *dā'īs* per se. On the affiliations of the 10th-century *dā'īs* with the Fāṭimids in particular, see M. Brett. "The Realm of the Imām: the

hydra-headed issues concerning the study of mediaeval Islamic historiography in general and the history of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in particular.

The initial question posed to the historical sources, as it were, was disarmingly simple. Why is it the case that al-Mu'ayyad, an Ismā'īlī author from Shīrāz and a chief missionary (*dā'i al-du'āt*) during the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustansir's reign (d. 487/1094 C.E.), is accorded a certain degree of prominence in the "Egyptian" historical chronicles, the works of the Baghdad and Syrian schools of historiography, and a mediaeval local history for the region of Fārs in Iran, but is only briefly mentioned by name in the universal histories of Rashīd al-Dīn, Abū al-Qāsim al-Qāshānī and Hāfiẓ-i Abrū?²

Fāṭimids in the Tenth Century." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1996). Reprinted in M. Brett. *Ibn Khaldūn and the Medieval Maghrib*. Variorum Reprints. Aldershot, 1999: 431-449; F. Daftary. *The Ismā'īlis*. Cambridge, 1990: 144, 165-ff; and P. Walker. *Early Philosophical Shiism*. Cambridge, 1993: 9, 11, 13-19. As well, Halm. *Empire of the Mahdi*. 1996: 289, n. 51; B. Lewis. *Origins of Ismā'īlism*. Cambridge, 1946: 97; L. Massignon. "Equisse d'une bibliographie Qarmate." Reprinted in, *Opera Minora*. Volume I. Beirut, 1963: 629-630, and P. Walker. *Early Philosophical Shiism*. 1993: 16, point out that the main source for the spread of the *da'wah* into Iran, Khurāsān and Transoxania and "Eastern" authors is in fact, Nizām al-Mulk's (d. 1092 C.E.) 11th-century work, the *Siyāsatnāmah*.

In addition, see Daftary. *The Ismā'īlis*. 1992: 144, where al-Mu'ayyad is listed amongst the other Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī authors of the 10-11th Centuries, the majority of whom operated as missionaries in mediaeval Iran as well as in Cairo.

² Al-Mu'ayyad's role in the Cairene *da'wah* first consisted of diplomatic activities amidst and between the early Saljūq and the late Būyid, 'Abbasid and Fāṭimid courts at the time of the Saljūq invasions and the final conquest of Baghdad in between the years 1055 and 1058 C.E. Subsequent to the downfall of the Sunni vizier al-Yāzūrī, al-Mu'ayyad was appointed Fāṭimid *dā'i al-du'āt*.

Examining the sources from another perspective, that of the historical development of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*, yielded forth another and equally intriguing issue. With regard to the content of the not always contemporaneous, yet extant historical sources, it became apparent that both the Persian and Arabic sources place a marked emphasis on imparting the heresiographical material related to the "origins" of the Fāṭimids, in addition to narrating the distinctive features of mediaeval

For a most astute analysis of the sources available on the Abū al-Ḥārith Arslān al-Basāsīrī *débâcle*, see in particular, G. Hoffmann. "An Ismā'īlī/Fāṭimid Stronghold in Iraq? The Case of al-Basāsīrī." In, Shī'ah Islam, Sects and Sufism. Editor, F. de Jong. Utrecht, 1992: 32-33. Most important of all, Hoffmann concludes that both Shī'ī and Sunnī sources explain the events in a similar fashion. Hoffmann also notes that there are a number of distinct variations between the account given in al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography and such sources as Ibn al-Athīr's and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's histories.

For a general summary of the available sources for the late Būyid period, see H. Busse. Chalif und Grosskönig. Beirut, 1969: 3-13, with specific reference to al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography, the Sīrah, as an important primary source for Būyid intellectual and social history on p. 7. Also, see H. Bowen. "The Last Buwayhids." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1929) 225-245; H. Laoust. "Les Agitations religieuses à Baghdād aux IV^e et V^e siècles de l'Hégire." In, Islamic Civilisation, 950-1150. Editor, D. S. Richards. Oxford, 1973: 173-178; C. Cahen. "Historiography of the Seljuqid Period." In, Historians of the Middle East. Editors, B. Lewis & P. M. Holt. London, 1964: 61-64, and F. Daftary. The Ismā'īlīs. Cambridge, 1992: 149, for additional details related to the primary sources for this time-period, especially Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's Mir'āt al-Zamān. These matters will be discussed further in Chapter Two, especially the importance of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's Mir'āt al-Zamān for 11th-century Fāṭimid historiography and al-Mu'ayyad's career as a Fāṭimid emissary at the time of the Saljūq invasions of Baghdad.

For more information on the connections between the Īlkhānīd universal histories and Ḥāfiz-i Abrū's historical works, see C. Melville. "Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī's Zafarnāmah and the Historiography of the Late Īlkhānīd Period." In, Iran and Iranian Studies. Editor, K. Eslami. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

On the vizier al-Yāzūrī in particular, see M. Brett. "The Execution of al-Yāzūrī." In, Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras. Volume II. Editors, U. Vermeulen & D. DeSmet. Louvain, 1998.

Ismā'īlī doctrine.³ Moreover, there is a chronological “gap” in the Persian historical sources themselves, the very sources which have been most frequently employed for reconstructing the 10th to 11th-century history of the “Persian” Ismā'īlī *da'wah* and the biographies of key mediaeval Ismā'īlī authors who operated in part outside of Fāṭimid Cairo proper. One finds in the histories of the Persian court historians an explicit periodization of the history of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*, in which the accounts of the “old *da'wah*” (*al-da'wah al-qadimah*) and the “new *da'wah*” (*al-da'wah al-jadidah*) are distinctly separated. The separation of the historical data pertinent to the two periods of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* is in keeping with the accounts of the history of Ismā'ilism as it appears in the mediaeval Islamic heresiographical material. Both the historical and heresiographical sources selectively limit the scope of their enquiry and discussion of the histories of mediaeval Ismā'ilism and the Fāṭimid dynasty in a manner that underscores the 11th-century Nizārī Ismā'īlī-Must'alī schism, while leaving other aspects of these respective histories virtually untouched. The lacunae in the primary sources further complicate the matter of tracing the continued presence of the Fāṭimid

³ Daftary. The Assassin Legends. London, 1994: 23-25; Daftary. The Ismā'ilis. Cambridge, 1992: 91-137; 145-146; W. Ivanow. The Alleged Founder of Ismailism. Bombay, 1946; B. Lewis. The Origins of Ismā'ilism. Cambridge, 1940: 3-22; 31-43; Walker. Exploring an Islamic Empire. London, 2002: 17-39, on the historical discussions of the “origins” of the Fāṭimids and Ibn Rizām's 10th-century polemical treatise.

Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in the “Eastern” lands of the Islamic world throughout the course of the 11th Century. The fact that the Persian historical sources present an abridged and tailored version of the history of the mediaeval Ismā'īlī *da'wah*—rather than the role of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in the course of Islamic history-- throws into question their relevance for al-Mu'ayyad's biography. Nonetheless, while the Persian historical sources may not provide much in the way of additional information on al-Mu'ayyad's career as a Fāṭimid missionary, they may provide some insight into the history of the extended 11th-century Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in Iran, over which al-Mu'ayyad served as chief missionary in the latter half of his career. Therefore, they merit some consideration.

Of equal import, the loss of Fāṭimid historical chronicles, documents and treatises after the Ayyūbid conquest of Cairo in 1171 C.E. gives rise to a very different sort of problematic in examining the 11th-century Ismā'īlī *da'wah*.⁴ Maqrīzī's “topographical” history of Cairo, the al-Mawā'iz wa al-I'tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khitat wa al-Āthār (the Khitat), and his history of the Fāṭimids, the Itti'āz al-Hunafā', stand uniquely as works specifically devoted to the establishment of Cairo under Fāṭimid rule and the Fāṭimid

⁴ Daftary. The Ismā'īlis. 1992: 145-147; Walker. Exploring an Islamic Empire. 2002: 22. Both scholars emphasize this point in their respective discussions of the available historical sources for the Fāṭimid period.

dynasty.⁵ As Denoix explains, Maqrīzī's Khitat of Cairo, and to a lesser degree, the city of Fustat, consists of "une description de topographie historique."⁶ Maqrīzī's 15th-century Khitat and Itti'āz represent the product of an increasingly refined "Egyptian" historiographical tradition.⁷ Maqrīzī's histories are of great value, namely because these works yield forth detailed information on the institutional aspects of Fāṭimid Cairo as well as the *Ismā'īlī da'wah* and *majlis*.⁸ In addition, Maqrīzī's Itti'āz stands as a unique history specifically devoted to the history of the Fāṭimid dynasty and is likewise a virtual repository of no longer extant Fāṭimid histories and biographies. The fact that Maqrīzī, writing in the 9th A.H./ 15th Century C.E., quoted at length from a large number of Fāṭimid-period histories and chronicles, and that he is one of a long list of "post-Fāṭimid" historians to do so, suggests that the majority

⁵ A. F. Sayyid. La Capitale de l'Égypte jusqu'à l'époque Fatimide. Beirut, 1998: 172: on the *khitat* genre of historiography.

⁶ S. Denoix. Décrire le Caire. Institut Français d'archéologie orientale du Caire. Cairo, 1992: 13.

⁷ Denoix. Décrire le Caire. 1998: 17; Sayyid. La Capitale. 1998: xxi, xxxii-xxxvii. Maqrīzī's history, as a culmination of the *khitat* genre, serves not only as a detailed chronicle of the city and its inhabitants over the course of seven centuries, but also as a quarter by quarter survey of the remaining traces of the historical past in his own turbulent time-period; since its establishment as an "Islamic city", to its collapse and ruin with the decline of the Fāṭimid dynasty, to post-Fāṭimid developments and crises. Denoix explains that there is a particular twist to the usual "eschatological"-Qur'ānic aspect of history in Maqrīzī's work. From another perspective, Sayyid explains that even though it is quite usual for histories of cities (for example, Ta'rikh Baghdad) to begin with a section on the topography of the city itself, Maqrīzī's approach is of a different nature: the *khitat* genre is a specific and unique genre of writing history.

of the Fāṭimid historical works might have been destroyed or lost at a later date than what is typically suggested.⁹

In fact, Brett and Walker have remarked that for the last twenty-odd years of al-Mustansir's reign, including the events which brought the vizier Badr al-Jamālī to complete power, ca. 1094 C. E., there are scarcely any records or historical chronicles whatsoever, in comparison to what already may be considered to be a dearth of contemporary sources.¹⁰ The same period covers the last part of al-Mu'ayyad's life in Cairo as *dā'ir al-du'āt*, of which there is likewise no account in his *Sīrah*.¹¹ Brett, however, has put forth a different line of reasoning in order to provide an explanation for the virtual disappearance of the Fāṭimid historiographical tradition in the turbulent 11th Century. Brett's theory counters the argument that the mass destruction of Fāṭimid historical works simply occurred at the hands of the Ayyūbids in the course of the

⁹ Amongst others, al-Nuwayrī, Qalqashandī, Ibn Muyassar, Ibn Khallikān, Ibn Taghribirdī, which would strongly suggest that the Ayyūbid's 1171 C.E. "Sunni restoration" of Cairo was not the sole reason behind the loss of Fāṭimid historical works. See Sayyid. *La Capitale*. 1998: xxx, xxxi, n. 1, xxvii.

¹⁰ M. Brett. "Fāṭimid Historiography." In, M. Brett. *Ibn Khaldūn and the Medieval Maghrib*. 1999; "The Battles of Ramla (1099-1105)." In, *Egypt and Syria under the Fatimids, Ayyubids and Mamluks*. Volume I. Editors, U. Vermeulen & D. DeSmet; Brett. *The Rise of the Fāṭimids*. 2001: 58; C. Cahen. "Quelques chroniques anciennes relatives aux dernier Fatimides." *BIFAO* (1937-38): 1-27; A. Sayyid. "Lumières nouvelles sur quelques sources de l'histoire fatimide en Egypte." *Annales Islamologiques* (1977) 13: 1-41; Walker. *Exploring an Islamic Empire*. 2002: 69.

¹¹ See Kāmil-Husayn, Editor. *Sīrah* (Intro.): 11-27, for how the *Sīrah* breaks off abruptly after al-Basāsiri's failure to maintain permanent Fāṭimid control over Baghdad and with al-Mu'ayyad's secret return to Cairo from exile ca. 1058 C.E., after al-Maghribī had become vizier.

"Sunnī restoration" of Cairo. When considering the reasons for the loss of Fāṭimid historical sources, Brett takes into account the practical ramifications and end results of the Fāṭimid Empire in a state of collapse, due to a series of famines and internal disputes amongst the military guard and court elite in the second half of the 11th Century, amongst other tribulations.¹² By extension, he argues that an analogous breakdown in the Fāṭimid historical tradition and in the system of keeping records during this period of upheaval would surely be a likely consequence of the grim events of the times.¹³

Turning to issues of a more methodological nature, several Western scholars, in the course of addressing the field of mediaeval Islamic historiography, have delineated a variety of frameworks for categorizing and identifying historical works and related texts.¹⁴ Such categories, as

¹² Sayyid. *La Capitale*. 1998: 616-625. In particular, as a final blow, the "Great Calamity" (*al-shiddah al-'uzmā*), between the years 457-466 A. H./ 1064-1071 C.E..

¹³ Brett. "The Battles of Ramla (1099-1105)." (1999): 58; G. Hoffmann. "An Ismā'īlī/Fāṭimid Stronghold in Iraq? The Case of al-Basāsiri." In, *Shī'ah Islam, Sects and Sufism*. Editor, F. de Jong. Utrecht, 1992: 27; Y. Lev. "The Fatimid Conquest of Egypt- Military, Political and Social Aspects." *Israel Oriental Studies* (1979) 9: 315-328.

¹⁴ Here I have in mind the classification of sources accordingly into the following categories: documents, biographical dictionaries, local histories, chronicles, works on *adab* ("mirror for princes" literature), and on occasion, works of a more doctrinal inclination (e.g., the example of Sufi hagiography), as Bosworth has outlined. See C. E. Bosworth. *The Ghaznavids*. Beirut, 1973: 8.

The seminal work of F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*. Leiden, (reprint) 1968, the more recent works of C. E. Bosworth, R. S. Humphreys and T. Khalidi, whose research undeniably builds upon Rosenthal's, have the most bearing upon the study of the mediaeval Arabic historiographical tradition. As well, those of A. Lambton, J. Meisami and C. Melville, are of great use though their focus is more specifically on the "regional" production of Persian

devised, though extremely useful and of great benefit, generate an additional set of questions about the “writing of history”, as concerns 11th-century Fāṭimid history and the history of the 11th-century Ismā‘īlī *da‘wah*. Only through examining the relevant historical sources, however, as well as understanding their composition is it to all intents and purposes, possible to reconstruct al-Mu‘aḡyad’s intellectual environs in 11th-century Shīrāz and Cairo. Taking into account the nature of the primary sources at our disposal for al-Mu‘aḡyad as an Ismā‘īlī *dā‘ī* is of vital importance, not only from the perspective of the historical development of the mediaeval Ismā‘īlī *da‘wah*, but also in terms of 11th-century Ismā‘īlī doctrine: more specifically, complementary discussions of the Ismā‘īlī concept of *walāyah*.¹⁵

historiography. D. Aigle. “Un Fondateur d’ordre en milieu rural.” In, Editor, D. Aigle. *Saints orientaux*. Paris, 1995: 181-209, whose work analyzes connections between Persian local histories and the Kāzerūnī Sufī tradition of Fārs, as seen in Ibn-i Zarkūb’s *Shīrāznāmah*, is of the greatest benefit with regard to outlining a preliminary methodology of sorts for utilizing the multi-faceted aspects of mediaeval Sufī texts as historical sources. I shall address these issues in more detail in the course of the following chapter.

¹⁵ With regard to the term “composition”, more precisely, the historians’ employment of the sources they had at their disposal, be it contemporary historical works, records, documents, or earlier historical works. Concerning the classification of the available and most germane primary sources for the study of al-Mu‘aḡyad, we are following the lead of A. Hamdani and B. T. Qutbuddin, especially as it concerns al-Mu‘aḡyad’s autobiography, the *Sīrah*. See in particular, A. Hamdani. *The Sīra of the Fāṭimid Dā‘ī al-Mu‘aḡyad fī d-Dīn ash-Shīrāzī*. Unpublished dissertation. University of London, 1950: 12, and Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu‘aḡyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*. 1999: 350-354. Qutbuddin does not, however, include Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Mir‘āt al-Zamān* in this list of primary sources.

It should also be noted here that V. Klemm, in her work on al-Mu‘aḡyad’s *Sīrah*, and E. Glassen, in her work on late ‘Abbasid-period religious policy, utilize to a

It is not my main purpose here to deal exhaustively with the numerous problems 11th-century Islamic historiography poses, in terms of the extant sources. Rather, to the extent that it is feasible, my aim is to take note of the reasons behind several significant gaps in the historical record for the majority of al-Mu'ayyad's career as Fāṭimid *dā'ī al-du'āt* in Cairo as well as for the history of the 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah* and *majlis*. Secondly, in reconsidering the genre of Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature and Ismā'īlī doctrinal works as key historical documents, it is of primary concern to assess the means by which these often ignored sources provide an additional, alternative perspective on mediaeval Ismā'īlī discussions of the doctrine of the *imām* and by extension, the concept of *walāyah*. Solely addressing the first area of concern, however briefly, still necessitates drawing upon a wide range of historical sources because the more worldly aspects of al-Mu'ayyad's eventful career as an Ismā'īlī *dā'ī* were quite significant. For this reason, and in an attempt to organize the material, the sources have been divided into four categories: the local and universal Persian histories, the works of the Baghdad and Syrian "schools" of historiography, the "Egyptian" chronicles and last but not least, the "internal" Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī sources.

large degree, the same historical sources for situating al-Mu'ayyad as an Ismā'īlī *dā'ī*.

Thus, the discussion and analysis of the portrayal of the 11th-century Fāṭimid *da'wah* and the Ismā'īlī *majlis* will be distributed between Chapters One and Two, in keeping with the chronology of al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography, the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. From the foundation of a general investigation of the most germane sources for the scholarly study of al-Mu'ayyad as an 11th-century *dā'i*, we then can move from the function of the 11th-century Fāṭimid *da'wah* itself to more pertinent issues concerning al-Mu'ayyad's doctrinal work, the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, in the following chapters. The following thematic concerns, however, span the breach between the study of mediaeval Islamic historiography and the study of Ismā'īlī doctrine, but are of adequate significance to keep in mind throughout the forthcoming chapters:

- 1). The concept of *ta'wīl* (an "esoteric" approach and method of interpreting the Qur'ānic text) and the role of the *imām* serve as gauges of internal "orthodoxy" for the 11th-century Ismā'īlī community as well as external measures of "orthodoxy" for non-Ismā'īlī communities *vis à vis* the Fāṭimids and the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*.
- 2). A movement towards more conservative typologies of the *imām* is evident in 11th-century Ismā'īlī circles, with a higher priority placed upon composing polemical material in order to refute the more "exaggerated" views of the *Ghulāt* and to propound a less divinized concept of the *imām*. Al-Mu'ayyad's reintroduction of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's theory of *walāyah*

raises a number of questions: is it an indication of the Fāṭimid *da'wah* maintaining core teachings or is it in an effort to reconsolidate the extended *da'wah* doctrinally on such issues as the figure of the *imām* in what is retrospectively viewed as the post-Druze and pre-Nizārī and Ṭayyibī period of Ismā'īlism?

3). The often-noted trend towards orthodoxy, frequently referred to as the “Sunnī revival” under the Saljūqs in the 11th Century also emerges as a newly adopted doctrinal stance in non-Sunnī intellectual circles of the same time-period. As an 11th-century Ismā'īlī author, al-Mu'ayyad, has often been regarded as representative of the apex of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s full institutional establishment, and by extension, Ismā'īlī “orthodoxy”. In al-Mu'ayyad's works, a once-controversial 10th-century Ismā'īlī author of the “Persian School”, Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī, is rehabilitated and his cosmological doctrines are partially incorporated into seemingly “mainstream” Fāṭimid teachings. Yet, according to the sources, during the last decade of al-Mu'ayyad's career as Fāṭimid *dā'ī al-du'āt*, the discernible traces of a nascent Nizārī movement are already evident in the “Eastern” lands of the *da'wah*. Was then al-Mu'ayyad's re-introduction of Sijistānī's prophetic anthropology a gesture of doctrinal conciliation to the “Eastern” *da'wah*?

4). In the specific example of the shift in al-Mu'ayyad position from *dā'ī* to Fāṭimid *dā'ī al-du'āt*, the Ismā'īlī *majlis* allows al-Mu'ayyad to be situated as an Ismā'īlī author and mediaeval Muslim thinker in general. This is foremost due to his own discussions of the *majlis* in his autobiography and then his use of different philosophical and theological texts in the course of his *magnum opus*, the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. As

a result, it is then possible to consider al-Mu'ayyad's didactic employment of non-Ismā'īlī and Ismā'īlī works (i.e., Shī'ī *ḥadīth* collections and texts, works by Ismā'īlī authors in the *da'wah*, and a wide range of Sunnī and non-Sunnī *tafsīr* works and theological treatises).

Mise en scène: The "Origins" of the Ismā'īlī Da'wah

Central to Western scholarship's discussion of the "origins" of the Fāṭimids, and lying at the heart of the above-mentioned mediaeval Islamic historiographical traditions, is a cache of non-Shī'ī and Shī'ī polemical treatises and works of heresiography.¹⁶ Stern's and Madelung's treatment of the Fāṭimid's earliest origins and the subsequent developments in the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* are based primarily on the use of specific historical sources while according a great deal of importance to these heresiographical accounts. At the same time that these sources address the much-debated "origins" of the Fāṭimids and the proclaimed

¹⁶ In particular, I am referring here to early Shī'ī works, authored by Kulaynī, Nawbakhtī, Qummī, and others. See Brett. *Rise of the Fāṭimids*. Leiden, 2001: 54-55; 60-67; Halm. *Empire of the Mahdi*. Leiden, 1996: 6, 8-11, 16-22; Halm. *Die Kosmologie*. 1978: 1-11; 18-19; W. Ivanow. *The Alleged Founder of Ismailism*. Bombay, 1946: 2-ff.; W. Madelung. "Das Imamāt." (1961): 43-65; L. Massignon. "Esquisse d'une bibliographie Qarmate." Reprinted in, *Opera Minora*. Volume I. Beirut, 1963: 627-639; Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism*. 1983: 47-53 (reprint of article, "The Account of the Ismā'īlīs in *Firaq al-Shī'a*.").

ancestry of the dynasty's founders, they also raise questions concerning the status accorded to religio-political rulers tracing their lineage and descent from the Prophet's family.¹⁷ The matter falls well within the scope of mediaeval Islamic religious history for a number of reasons, but foremost because these accounts voice a (largely) non-Shī'ī, non-Ismā'īlī antagonism towards the Fāṭimid dynasty's divergences from 'Abbasid modes of legitimacy and political authority as well as reflect a particular perception of sectarianism and messianism.¹⁸

Madelung and Stern have suggested that from the earliest times, there were clear and marked regional distinctions in the Ismā'īlī movement, and especially in relation to autonomous or sectarian conceptualizations of the figure of the *Mahdī*. Both scholars note that the extant historical sources delineate the early Ismā'īlī movement into "North African" and "Iranian/Iraqi" branches.¹⁹ Brett suggests, however, that the regional

¹⁷ Brett. Rise of the Fāṭimids. Leiden, 2001: 18-25. "The claims of the dynasty, however, were disputed; and the controversy aroused by its version of history in the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries has been revised by modern scholarship as it probes the mystery of the Imams in *satr*, for whose existence there is little evidence apart from the statements of the Mahdi and his successors. At a critical point in the history of Islam, as the community took up its historical positions, it would seem that historical theology has erected an impenetrable barrier to historical enquiry into the origins of one of the most important contenders for possession of the empire and the faith."

¹⁸ Halm. Empire of the Mahdi. Leiden, 1996: 21-22, on the uniquely Ismā'īlī casting of the messianic figure of the *Mahdī*. Also, see Brett. The Rise of the Fāṭimids. 2001: 18-25; Walker. Exploring an Islamic Empire. 2002: 8.

¹⁹ Brett. Rise of the Fāṭimids. Leiden, 2001: 39-42; Halm. Empire of the Mahdi. 1996: 5-34.

demarcations tacitly suggests that there was in fact, a fixed “center” to the movement from the earliest time-period of the Ismā‘īlīs; a “center” in North Africa, which would hold enough power and authority to regulate and enforce matters, on the level of doctrine.²⁰ Brett, in keeping with other scholars working on the emergence of Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlism, favors this particular portrayal of the different branches of the early Ismā‘īlī movement as it is presented as such in the Fāṭimid and non-Fāṭimid historical sources. Brett also mentions that this particular delineation of the early movement into different regional centers is foremost based upon Ibn Rizām’s account, as mediated through Ibn al-Nādim’s *Fihrist*. Stern concurs on this point as well.²¹ It seems that Brett would like, however, to admit to the possibility that centers of the *da‘wah* outside of Cairo maintained a greater degree of autonomy, on the level of doctrine proper,

Also see Nizām al-Mulk. *Siyāsatnāmah*. Editor, H. Darke. Tehran, 1962: pp. 262-289; *Guzidah-yi Siyāsatnāmah*. Editor, M. Mohaghegh. Tehran, 1385/ 1996: 111-139.

²⁰ According to Somogyi, in his article on the Qarmathian movement, Somogyi claims that Ibn al-Jawzī’s history, the *Muntazam fī Ta’rikh*, provides one of the most thorough accounts of early Ismā‘īlism. He also explains that Ibn al-Jawzī’s account borrows heavily from Ibn Rizām as well as Ghazālī’s *Mutazhiriyyah*. See Somogyi. “A Treatise on the Qarmatians in the ‘Kitāb al-Muntazam’ of Ibn al-Jawzī.” *Rivista degli studi orientali* (1931-32) 13: 248-265. This provides, to a large extent, another concrete example of mediaeval Muslim historians drawing upon currently circulating treatises as well as local accounts concerning the history of the Ismā‘īlīs, the Fāṭimids and their doctrines. Also of note is the fact that Brett, Halm and Walker do not consult Ibn al-Jawzī’s account of the Ismā‘īlīs. B. Lewis. *The Origins of Ismā‘īlism*. 1940: 93, however, takes note of the fact that in Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Talbis*, Ibn al-Jawzī comments upon the appeal of “*Bāṭinī*”, esoteric teachings have for the “masses” (*awāmm*).

²¹ See Brett. *The Rise of the Fāṭimids*. 2001: 39, n. 32; Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā‘īlism*. 1983: 205-207, 223-224.

than first put forth by Stern and later maintained by Daftary, Halm and Walker.

Without a doubt, the work of S. M. Stern has been most influential in terms of shaping current scholarly conceptions of the history and development of the Fāṭimid *da'wah*. His research, the first to analyze to such a degree of accuracy Nizām al-Mulk's Siyāsatnāmah and Rashīd al-Dīn's Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh, for the purpose of reconstructing the succession of Ismā'īlī *dā'īs* in 10th-11th-century Iran and Khurāsān, has likewise served a paradigmatic function with respect to later scholarly discussions of the development of mediaeval Ismā'īlī doctrine.²² The "Persian School" of mediaeval Ismā'ilism, as a prime example, is a frequently employed term used to designate both the geographical and doctrinal parameters of a collectivity of early Ismā'īlī authors, whose exact political allegiance to the nascent Fāṭimid dynasty still remains uncertain, foremost due to a lack of concrete, reliable historical textual evidence.²³ The early Ismā'īlīs, nonetheless, are regarded as having entered onto the "stage" of history as a unified movement and "sect". As Stern explains,

...soon afterwards their successful preaching, the increasing

²² Stern. Studies in Early Ismā'ilism. 1983: 18-233, 247-249. Also see S. Nomoto. Early Ismā'īlī Thought on Prophecy. Unpublished dissertation. McGill University, 2000: 123-ff, on Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, yet based on Nizām al-Mulk's report as well as Rashīd al-Dīn.

²³ Brett. "The Realm of the Imām." Reprinted in, Ibn Khaldūn and the Medieval Maghrib. Variorum Reprints, 1999: 440-443; Brett. The Rise of the Fātimids. 2001: 204-218; Halm. Empire of the Mahdi. 288-297; Madelung. "Das Imamāt." (1961): 86-101; Stern. Studies in Early Ismā'ilism. 1983: 188-189, 216-223.

number of their followers, and various armed conflicts with the authorities, brought the movement to the knowledge of the outside world and secured for it the first entries in the pages of the chroniclers.²⁴

Indeed, the very lack of early doctrinal and historical sources originally prodded Western scholars into examining different contemporaneous Shī'ī sources as well as Sunnī works of heresiography in order to ascertain the specifics of the early history of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* and its doctrines.²⁵ In his examination of the "Neoplatonists", Halm's own designation for the "Persian School" of mediaeval Ismā'ilism, Halm has foremost utilized in his own work, Empire of the Mahdī, the following sources: Nizām al-Mulk's Siyāsatnāmah, Ibn al-Nadīm's Fihrist, 'Abd al-Jabbār's Tathbīt, Baghdādī's Farq Bayn al-Firaq, and lastly, Maqrīzī's Itti'āz al-Hunafā'.²⁶ Halm notes that in the 4th-/10th Century, the Kufan Ibn Rizām wrote an anti-Ismā'īlī treatise. The following authors employed Ibn Rizām's no longer extant work as a source of seemingly valid information in their respective discussions of the mediaeval Ismā'ilis: Ma'sūdī's (d. 345 A.H./956 C.E.) Tanbih; Ibn al-Nadīm (d.ca. 397 A.H./987 C.E.) Fihrist; 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415 A.H./1025 C.E.) Tathbīt; al-

²⁴ Stern. Studies in Early Ismā'ilism. 1983: 189.

²⁵ Daftary. The Ismā'ilis. 1990: 136-37; 178-80; 239-246; Halm. Die Kosmologie. 1978: 13-16; 128-138; P. Walker. Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and the Development of Ismā'īlī Neoplatonism. Unpublished dissertation. University of Chicago, 1974: 3-13.

Bustī (d. 420 A.H./1030 C.E.) Kashf; Nizām al-Mulk (d. 485 A.H./1092 C.E.) Siyāsatnāmah. As well, Halm suggests that the “Egyptian authors”, Ibn Zāfir, Ibn al-Dawādārī, al-Nuwayrī and al-Maqrīzī, drew upon a version of Ibn Rizām’s treatise, through an intermediary text: Akhū Muḥsin’s citations of Ibn Rizām in his own polemical treatise.²⁷

In a more recent study on the early Fāṭimids and perhaps subject to criticism in due course, Brett has suggested that the mediaeval polemical treatises dealing with the “origins” of the Fāṭimids “evolved” over the course of time into “...a specifically Fāṭimid version of this sacred history.”²⁸ On the basis of his analysis of Qāḍī al-Nu’mān’s “official” history of the emergence of the Fāṭimids, the Iftitāh al-Da’wah, Brett explains that the non-Ismā’īlī heresiographers’ particular mode of representing the divisiveness within the early Ismā’īlī movement parallels the discussions of the same issues occurring simultaneously in what Brett would deem to be “internal”, i.e., Fāṭimid and Ismā’īlī sources.²⁹ Of

²⁶ H. Halm. The Empire of the Mahdi. Leiden, 1996: 186-187, 288-297, 425.

²⁷ Lewis. The Origins of Ismā’īlism. 1940: 61-62; Halm. The Empire of the Mahdi. 1996: 425; W. Madelung. “Fatimiden und Bahrainqarmaten.” *Der Islam* (1959/34): 59, n. 1. (This article has been revised and translated as “The Fatimids and Qarmatis of Bahrayn.” In, Editor. F. Daftary. Mediaeval Ismā’īlī History and Thought. Cambridge, 1996); Madelung. “Die Imamat.” (1961): 62-65, discusses Ibn Rizām’s and Akhū Muḥsin’s polemical treatises in some detail.

²⁸ Brett. The Rise of the Fāṭimids. 2001: 46, 114, 127-129.

²⁹ Which is, in more simple terms, the general question of whether certain works of heresiography can yield forth precise information on Ismā’īlī doctrine and the historical development of the *da’wah*. On the issue of sources for the “internal history” of the Ismā’īlīs and Fāṭimids (“*l’histoire intérieure de l’ismaélisme*”), see M. Canard, Editor. Vie de l’Ustadh Jawdhār. Algiers, 1958: 13.

decisively more importance are the ideas Brett has put forth in this work with regard to the unity imposed on varying representations of “Sevener” belief in the earliest of time-periods, in terms of the sources.³⁰ Such a unity is quite apparent in Ibn Rizām’s 10th-century treatise. Brett has aptly illustrated that the unity portrayed in the heresiographical literature concerning the “origins” of the early Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī movement is also echoed in the Fāṭimid sources.

In the course of addressing the issue of religious sectarian formation, Brett states that the 286 A.H./899 C.E. schism within the movement over the advent of the *Mahdī*, requires a new reinterpretation and analysis of what the so-called division over the emergent, unconcealed leadership within early Ismā‘īlism might have really entailed. He questions whether a single religious movement would somehow really divide over one event, as portrayed in the sources.³¹ Without a doubt, the scholarly contention and debates that have emerged in connection with the “origins” of the Fāṭimids (both amongst mediaeval and modern authors) throw into sharp relief preconceived notions of sectarianism within the mediaeval Islamic,

³⁰ Brett. The Rise of the Fāṭimids, 2001: 33, 46-47. Also, see P. Walker. “The Ismā‘īlī Da‘wah and the Fāṭimid Caliphate.” In, The Cambridge History of Egypt. Volume I. Cambridge, 1998: 123, who postulates that the earliest leaders of the Ismā‘īlī movement were following and guided by a “single central leadership”, whilst admitting that the evidence in support of this particular interpretation is not necessarily adequate.

³¹ Brett. The Rise of the Fāṭimids. 2001: 46-49. Brett’s primary objective may be to establish a concrete factual basis, which would suggest that there is an element of

and more specifically the Ismā'īlī, context.³² Subsequently, as shall be addressed in the course of this dissertation, the emergence of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī movement from the 11th-century Fāṭimid *da'wah* may be treated with the same degree of scrutiny and with similar considerations in mind - the theoretical considerations that are applicable to the formation of a new religious community, while taking into account that the diversity of doctrinal beliefs maintained by the new religious community may become, so to speak, retrospectively compressed when discussed and presented in historical and doctrinal works seeking to explain the “origins” of the community. With the above-mentioned points in mind, it is important to note here that the aim of both Chapters One and Two is to reconstruct the historical contexts of al-Mu'ayyad's career in the Fāṭimid *da'wah* in order to lend further perspective on the diversity of teachings as well as doctrinal positions concerning the concept of the *imām* and *walāyah* al-Mu'ayyad himself draws upon and discusses in his collection of lectures, the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah.

In terms of the works of mediaeval Islamic heresiography, another scholar has pointed out that Shahrastānī (d.ca. 1153 C.E.) was in fact, the first author to deal comprehensively with the sub-divisions of the Shī'ah

retrospective representation of a “unified” Ismā'īlī movement in the earliest time-period.

³² M. Brett. “The Realm of the Imām.” (1999): 431-449; The Rise of the Fāṭimids. 2001: 7-11.

and to discuss the Ismā'īlīs as an entirely separate sect in his magisterial work of heresiography, the Milal wa al-Nihal.³³ Eisenstein postulates that Shahrastānī's division of the Ismā'īlīs into the "old" and "new" *da'wahs*, is revealing of the degree of doctrinal development within 12th-century Ismā'īlism. Eisenstein's reading of the Milal wa al-Nihal also indicates that throughout the 12th-century Islamic world, there was a high degree of awareness with regard to internal developments within the Ismā'īlī tradition as well as the emergence of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī movement. Therefore, internally, and in the eyes of outsiders, there were already several acknowledged points of separation (in terms of historical "origins", doctrines, and institutions) between the "Old School" (*al-da'wah al-qadimah*) and the "New School" (*al-da'wah al-jadidah*) of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*.³⁴

Yet, later, the picture that emerges from such sources as the Persian universal histories and the "Egyptian" chronicles of the Fāṭimid *da'wah* is retrospective in more than one sense. The Fāṭimid *da'wah* is a preoccupation of mediaeval historians in so far as it is the proclaimed point of origins of a movement that threatened the stability of numerous

³³ H. Eisenstein. "Sunnite Accounts of the Subdivisions of the Shī'a." In, Shī'a Islam, Sects and Sufism. Editor, F. de Jong. Utrecht, 1992: 4-5. Also see G. Monnot's comments in his introduction to his translation of Shahrastānī's Milal, with regard to this matter. D. Gimaret & G. Monnot. Livre des religions et des sectes. Volume I. Louvain, 1986: introduction.

³⁴ Brett. "The Realm of the Imām." (1999): 445; Eisenstein. "Sunnite Accounts of the Subdivisions of the Shī'a." (1992): 4-5.

pre-Mongol and Mongol dynastic powers. Because of the historical importance granted to the impact of the Nizārī movement and the subsequent vanquishing of the Nizārī movement, the portrayal of the 11th-century *da'wah* may simply be nothing more distinct than the “pre-Nizārī Ismā’īlī *da'wah*”, from the vantage point of the post-Fātimid “Egyptian” authors and Persian court historians. As Hillenbrand has indicated, indicative of the degree of consideration given in the historical record to the emergence of the Nizārī movement, Ibn al-Athīr, similar to Ibn al-Jawzī, “...accords the emergence of the Ismā’īlīs of Alamūt a special excursus under the year 494/1101.”³⁵

In terms of sectarian movements, however, the Qarmathians and the religio-political ramifications lying behind the “origins” of the Fātimid *imāmate* are two overlapping areas of preoccupation for Arabic and Persian historians of the classical period (pre-13th Century).³⁶ The Qarmathians, and then subsequently, the Nizārī Ismā’īlīs for later mediaeval historians, were common concerns in so much as they were labeled as religio-political movements and established powers with the

³⁵ C. Hillenbrand. “The Power Struggle between the Saljūqs and the Ismā’īlīs of Alamūt, 487-518/1094-1124: The Saljūq Perspective.” In, Mediaeval Ismā’īlī History and Thought. Editor, F. Daftary. London, 1996: 211.

³⁶ In the case of the Persian Saljūq historians, up until the mid-11th century, it should be noted here, the Ismā’īlīs are still referred to as the “*qarmaṭīyān*”. It is not until Juwaynī that we see the term “*malāḥidah*” employed interchangeably with “*Ismā’īliyyān*”. For the 11th-century examples, see Meisami. “Rāvandī’s *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*: History or Hybrid?” (1994): 194-202. For specific examples from one Persian Saljūq history, see Ibn al-Rawandī, Rāḥat al-Sudūr pp. 150-156.

capability of overturning an increasingly weakened, Sunnī-minded 'Abbasid state.³⁷

In the case of the Īlkhānid court historians, however, their interests in the once prevalent religio-political power of the Fāṭimids, the Fāṭimid definitions of what constituted just Islamic rule, and their methods of securing legitimacy are multi-variant. The Persian court historians' own particular motivations must be noted: the establishment of stable Īlkhānid rule in mediaeval Iran was the direct result of the politically advised and encouraged destruction of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī centres of powers. The court historians' collective interest in these matters, therefore, was that of direct participants concerned with recording the events of the time. One need only recall the eminent positions such individuals as Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274 C.E.), al-Juwaynī (d. 1283 C.E.) and Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1318 C.E.) held, not solely in terms of advising the Īlkhān rulers, but also in the production of the Persian Īlkhānid universal histories as oblique social commentaries on the Perso-Islamic communities the Mongols first conquered and the Īlkhāns consequently ruled.³⁸

³⁷ C. Melville. "From Adam to Abaqa: Qādī Baidawī's Rearrangement of History." *Studia Iranica* (2001): 80, where he indicates that Baydawī's history, the *Nizām al-Tawārikh*, accords the Ismā'īlīs a separate account as a distinct "dynasty", as the "*Malāhidah*", amongst his presentation of the history of "Iranian" dynasties.

³⁸ Melville. "From Adam to Abaqa." (2001): 78, 83: on Juwaynī's and Rashīd al-Dīn's attitudes towards Mongol rule. In addition, Melville (p. 83) states: "...the view of their masters, Ghazan and Öljeitü, who wanted to preserve the record of the Mongols' global achievements at a time when first, the various elements in the empire were becoming increasingly estranged from each other and secondly,

It is thus possible to consider the accounts of the Īlkhān court historians as subsequently colored by and formulated on the basis of a much larger, over-arching concern with the quality of what Meisami claims is, "The intertwined themes of the transfer of power and the ethics of kingship...".³⁹ Admittedly, these discussions may revolve around the principles of "empire building" and expose an imperialist trend in Persian historiography. As a consequence, the primary objective of the Īlkhānid historical accounts may not even be so much with disparaging the Ismā'īlīs as "heretics" (as a whole, both Fāṭimid and Nizārī) but rather with piecing together the circumstances and mishaps that led to the collapse, on the one hand, and the conquest, on the other, of what may be deemed to be two mediaeval Ismā'īlī "states".⁴⁰

Another assumption underlies the historical accounts' collective narration of the events leading to the formation and "rise" of the Fāṭimids and the dynasty's subsequent "fall". Both the mediaeval Sunnī and non-Sunnī accounts are tinged with the internal sectarian divisiveness of the early Ismā'īlī and Qarmathian movements, which in turn influence the examination and analysis of Ismā'īlī doctrinal works. In a sense, this sort of categorization may determine whether or not a

individual elements, such as the Ilkhanate itself, were in danger of losing their Mongol identity in the dominant cultures of their subjects."

³⁹ Meisami. Persian Historiography. 1999: 361.

certain work is “orthodox” and “Fāṭimid”, doctrinally speaking.⁴¹ No less of an authority on mediaeval Ismāʿilī thought than H. Corbin has also been highly influential in terms of how modern scholars perceive the different periods of the history of mediaeval Ismāʿilism and their respective, representative authors.⁴²

Corbin’s interpretation of the historical development of the Ismāʿilī *daʿwah* relies heavily upon Shahrastānī’s stark division of mediaeval Ismāʿilī doctrine into the “old *daʿwah*” and the “new *daʿwah*”, though perhaps with a rather unexpected depiction of sectarian tendencies within mediaeval Ismāʿilism:

Other questions remain, such as the following: how did the subsequent fusion come about between the Nizārī and the unreformed Fāṭimid traditions? How was the reform of Alamūt itself effected? To what extent did this reform of the Ismāʿilis in Persia cause a ‘reactivation’ of primitive Ismāʿilism, even of Qarmatism? There is also the problem

⁴⁰ Thus, in this sense, similar to the concerns of the Mamlūk historians, in which the reign of al-Mustansir is seen as the most pivotal. See Daftary. *The Ismāʿilis*. 1990: 421-430.

⁴¹ Halm. *Die Kosmologie*. 1978: 6. The Qarmathians and Ismāʿilis were often considered to be one sect, according to the heresiographers. The following scholars address this exceedingly complex issue in more detail than can be presented in the course of this chapter’s discussion of the early Ismāʿilī *daʿwah*: Brett. *The Rise of the Fātimids*. 2001: 30-48, 58-59, 64-72; F. Daftary. *The Assassin Legends*. London, 1994: 21-25; Daftary. *The Ismāʿilis*. 1990: 93, 125-143; Halm. *The Empire of the Mahdi*. 1996: 63-68; 250-264; Lewis. *The Origins of Ismāʿilism*. 1940: 76-89; Massignon. “Equisse d’une bibliographie Qarmate” (1963): 627-639.

⁴² Brett. “The Realm of the Imām.” (1999); “The Mim, the ‘Ayn and the Making of Ismāʿilism.” (1999): 25-39; H. Corbin. “Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis.” (1983); H. Corbin. *Face de Dieu, face de l’homme*. Paris, 1983; C. Jambet. *La Grande résurrection d’Alamūt*. Lagrasse, 1990: 9-29, who divides Ismāʿilism into four periods, the first being the ‘theological’ and the second, when the Fāṭimid ‘systems’ were developed. The final two are the period of ‘reform’ Alamūt Ismāʿilism, and then of post-Alamūt doctrine.

of the compatibility of an esoteric brotherhood with an official state, even that of the Fāṭimids, where poor Abū'l Khattāb would have had more difficulty in finding a place for himself than in the Ismā'īlī 'commanderies' of Alamūt and Kūhistān.⁴³

The questions raised above by Corbin support an interpretation of the history of Ismā'īlī thought which posits that the pre-Fāṭimid and early Fāṭimid members of the "Persian School" produced Ismā'īlī Neoplatonism by integrating elements of philosophy with Ismā'īlī doctrine. Yet as a doctrine that developed at a distance, far away from the center of the Fāṭimid *da'wah* in Cairo, the "Persian School" of Ismā'ilism is often equivocated with a less "orthodox" and more esoteric form of Ismā'īlī thought. But, as is presented in Stern's and Halm's readings of the 10th-century Fāṭimid sources, the tension between the "Persian School" and the Fāṭimid *da'wah* centered in Cairo comes to be addressed through a series of polemical debates concerned with the spiritual hierarchy implicit in the concept of *walāyah*, the employment of philosophical argumentation, and the figure of the *imām*. These debates thereby may concretely portray something of the historical reality of the internal developments and doctrinal shifts within the larger mediaeval Ismā'īlī community. If

⁴³ H. Corbin. "Nasir Khusrau and Iranian Ismailism." In, The Cambridge History of Iran: from the Saliūqs to the Mongols. Volume VI. 1989: 528-529; H. Corbin. Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis. London, 1983: 32, 37-47.

anything, what is represented in the sources themselves for this particular time-period is the prevalence of debates and discussions on a set of doctrinal issues within the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah* itself. There may be a great deal of disparity between what appears in the corpus of Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī literature and what is presented by scholars; scholars who have come to draw a set of conclusions perhaps influenced by a certain understanding of the periodization of mediaeval Ismā'īlī thought. For example, as if in stark disparity to the Neoplatonist interests of his contemporary, Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī works have been considered to exemplify "orthodox", *sharī'ah*-based, textual elucidations of religious tenets and practices.⁴⁴ In both Stern's and Halm's reading of the Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt, the Fāṭimid refutations of the "Eastern" *da'wah* deliberate on the "Eastern" *da'wah*'s use of philosophy. However, such an interpretation of these select lectures from Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's work are open to debate; that is to say, if these refutations are directed against the so-called "Persian School" in the first place or if they do indeed represent a response to the "heterodox" Ismā'ilism of the "Eastern" *da'wah*. It can still be suggested, however, that the 10th-century intra-*da'wah* debates incorporated in the Majālis wa al-Musāyaāt offer a concrete example of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān being propelled

⁴⁴ A. Nanji. "An Ismā'īlī Theory of *Walāyah* in the Da'ā'im al-Islām of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān." In, D. P. Little, Editor. Essays on Islamic Civilization. Leiden, 1976b.

to pen polemical refutations in order to address points of contention, or even quell disagreements, within the extended Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*.⁴⁵

A number of questions, methodological in intent and historiographic in nature, nonetheless remain. These questions may have no ready and simple answer. In connection with the 11th-century Ismā'īlī *da'wah* is the sense of a movement towards increasing orthodoxy, where "...the recondite epistemology of the Iranian al-Sijistānī became the formula of the Caliphate in Egypt", and where Ismā'īlī *majālis* literature becomes one of the prevailing models for Fāṭimid doctrinal texts.⁴⁶ Yet at the same time, in the 11th-century Ismā'īlī *da'wah* itself and the destabilization of the Fāṭimid Empire are the seeds of the inchoate Nizārī Ismā'īlī movement.

By around 460/1067, the Persian Ismā'ilism in the Saljūq territories had come to own the authority of a single chief *dā'ī* who had his secret headquarters at Isfahān, the main Saljūq capital. The chief *dā'ī* in Persia at this time was 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭṭāsh. A highly learned *dā'ī*, Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh seems to have been the first Iranian *dā'ī* to have organized the various communities of the Saljūq territories in Persia, and possibly Iraq, under a central leadership.

This new institutional frame was essentially retained in subsequent times and it was utilized effectively by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. Ibn 'Aṭṭāsh occupies a particularly important place in the annals of Iranian Ismā'ilism and the Nizārī movement for his role in launching the career of Ḥasan-i

⁴⁵ *Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt*. Editors, H. el-Feki, I. Chabbouh & M. el-Yalaoui. Tunis, 1978: para. 136: pp. 273-274; para. 138: p. 276.

⁴⁶ Brett. *The Rise of the Fātimids*. 2001: 218.

With the benefits of hindsight, the Mamlūk historians mark the end of the Fāṭimid empire between the years 1055-1058 C.E., first with the Basāsirī *débâcle* and then second, with the execution of the Sunnī Fāṭimid vizier al-Yāzūrī.⁴⁸ In the following decade, the Fāṭimids-- whether deemed a North African dynasty or potentially a wide-reaching Islamic empire-- grind to a crashing halt with the rise to power of the “military” vizier Badr al-Jamālī.⁴⁹ The prominence of Badr al-Jamālī at the Fāṭimid court coincides with the last decade of al-Mu’ayyad’s life. But perhaps ironically, it is also in this time-period that al-Mu’ayyad, at long last, permanently secures the highly esteemed position of Fāṭimid *dā’i al-du’āt* without any fear of being sent into exile once again.

The extant historical sources attest to the caliph al-Mustansir’s loss of power and the destabilization of the Fāṭimid central administration. In the sources, the collective causes of a series of grim events are duly noted. Yet, the production and transmission of doctrinal works from this time-period points to the continuation of *da’wah* activities in Cairo (in terms of training *dā’is* and the operation of the Ismā’īlī *majlis* under al-

⁴⁷ Daftary. “Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and the Origins of the Nizārī Movement.” In, *Mediaeval Ismā’īlī History and Thought*. Editor, F. Daftary. Cambridge, 1996: 184; Meisami. *Persian Historiography*. 1999: 158-159, 186.

⁴⁸ Sayyid. *La Capitale*. 1998: 616-625.

Mu'ayyad's direction), regardless of the temporal predicaments in 11th-century Fāṭimid Cairo.⁵⁰ The disappearance of historical works from the second half of the 11th Century in comparison with the Yemenī and Indian Ismā'īlī communities' preservation of the eight-volume Majālis of al-Mu'ayyad, his other doctrinal works, and the *siḡillāt* issued by al-Mustansir during his reign, adequately reflects the contrast between the stability as well as authority of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* and that of the Fāṭimid court. Both the *da'wah* and the Fāṭimid court were to fall increasingly under the thumb of the "military" vizier Badr al-Jamālī. It is only after the death of al-Mu'ayyad that Badr al-Jamālī himself assumed full control of the coveted position of *dā'i al-du'āt*.⁵¹

Badr al-Jamālī's procurement of the esteemed position of chief missionary for himself, was to some extent, the natural culmination of a plan previously set in motion by others in power at the 11th-century Fāṭimid court. As shall be seen in Chapter Two, al-Yāzūrī merged the three positions of vizier, chief missionary and chief jurist at the Fāṭimid

⁴⁹ Sayyid. La Capitale. 1998: 365-381.

⁵⁰ The examples of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and the Yemenī *qāḏī* Lamak b. Malik are most noteworthy, and shall be discussed in more detail later, especially with regard to School of Oriental and African Studies MS. 25740. Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn. Risālah al-Bayān limā Wajab.

⁵¹ Sayyid. La Capitale. 1998: 379-380; Stern. Studies on Early Ismā'ilism. 1983: 240-241. On al-Mu'ayyad's own awareness of this possible influence upon the *da'wah* as early as 460 A. H./ 1068 C.E., after dealing with al-Yāzūrī and other viziers of his ilk, see Sīrah pp. 81-82, 91-93, 99.

court. In order to unify the control over the administration of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*, al-Yāzūrī limited the independent authority embodied in the position of *dā'ī al-du'āt* by merging this post with that of the posts of vizier and chief jurist. As shall be seen in the following chapter, the changes al-Yāzūrī introduced into the 11th-century Fāṭimid administration further eclipsed the Fāṭimid caliph-*imām*'s religio-political authority over *da'wah* activities.⁵²

Perhaps it was at this very time when Badr al-Jamālī rose to prominence at the Fāṭimid court that al-Mu'ayyad called into question something at the very heart of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī doctrine of *walāyah*. At face value, it may very well seem that al-Mu'ayyad's theory of *walāyah* would later lend support to Badr al-Jamālī's rule, in terms of re-articulating the necessity of descent from the Family of the Prophet (*Ahl al-bayt*) and the religio-political authority to rule in the name of the Fāṭimid dynasty. As shall be discussed in Chapters Four and Five of this dissertation, al-Mu'ayyad clearly argues instead that those individuals who are religiously affiliated with the Prophet Muḥammad and 'Alī through spiritual descent as well as designated by the reception of the "Holy Spirit" (*rūḥ al-quḍus*) associated with "divine support" (*ta'yīd*),

Klemm mentions that the title Badr al-Jamālī took was in fact, "*Hādī du'āt al-mu'minīn*". See Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. London, 2003: 104 (citing Maqrīzī. *Ith'āz*. Volume 2: p. 319).

⁵² Brett. *The Rise of the Fāṭimids*. 2001: 430-432; Sayyid. *La Capitale*. 1998: 577.

possess a unique dominion to rule. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the *imāms* are, in fact, the “possessors of divine support” (*aṣḥāb al-ta'yīd*).⁵³ Following the logic of al-Mu'ayyad's argument further, if there exists periods in which the true *imām* may be concealed, the specified ranks of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* may come to serve as the physical representatives of the ideal *imām*, the “*imām* at any time” (*al-imām al-muṭlaq*), in place of, perhaps generally speaking, the Fāṭimid caliphs. More importantly for al-Mu'ayyad, it is through the reception of *ta'yīd* that these representatives are directly linked to the “seal” of the *imāms*, the *Qā'im* of the resurrection.⁵⁴

The “Writing” of History

The question of “internal history writing”, as addressed by Brett, is of some relevance to our discussion here, especially with regard to what constitutes authentic material for the history of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*. It is

⁵³ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 48: pp. 235-236; Majlis No. 63: p. 307, ln. 4-11; Volume I ('Abd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 31: p. 134-135; *Majālis*. Volume I ('Abd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 31: p. 133, ln. 4-14 (the text in the Ghālib edition appears in Volume I: p. 153, ln. 5-14).

⁵⁴ *Majālis*. Volume II (Hamīd al-Dīn edition). Majlis No. 48: p. 298, ln. 83-84; Majlis No. 55: pp. 340-341; Volume III (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 28: pp. 85-86, ln. 3-21 and ln. 1-8.

foremost related to the categorization and classification of the sources available for the study of the mediaeval Ismā'īlī *da'wah* and why the use of the extant sources is often highly problematic.⁵⁵ With regard to 11th-century Fāṭimid historiography, there was a marked distinction between different periods. The divergences in extant historical documentation are the result of several factors: the initial stability and prosperity of the dynasty in Cairo at the beginning of the century; the rise of the most powerful of the caliph al-Mustansir's political advisors and viziers in the middle of the 11th-century; the periodic splintering of the Fāṭimids' messianic movement; and then finally, a collapse in the momentum of the Fāṭimid's empire-building.⁵⁶

A distinct difficulty emerges with regard to Fāṭimid historiography, due to the often-fragmented nature of the available sources. Brett has

⁵⁵ Brett. *The Rise of the Fāṭimids*. 2001: 11-16, on the Fāṭimid's "own version of their history"; pp. 49, 73 –75, 87-92, 100-111, on Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's history of the Fāṭimids, the *Iftitāh al-Da'wah*. In terms of the historical information on Ismā'īlī *da'wah* activities in the region of Fārs, provided by Ismā'īlī doctrinal sources, see Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī's 11th-century treatise, *Risālah Mabāsīm al-Bishārāt bi al-Imām al-Hākīm bi Amr Allāh*. In, *Majmū'ah Rasā'il al-Kirmānī*. Editor, M. Ghālib. Beirut, 1403/1983. Kāmil-Ḥusayn (*Sīrah*. 1949: (Intro.): 13), amongst others, has noted that this treatise mentions al-Mu'ayyad's father (Mūsā b. Dā'ūd) as a prominent *dā'ī* in Fārs. In Kirmānī's *Risālah Mabāsīm* p. 125, Mūsā b. Dā'ūd had asked if he could appoint two of his sons to succeed him but was not granted permission to do so. Also, *Sīrah* p. 15, where al-Mu'ayyad mentions his father's status as a Fāṭimid *dā'ī* in Fārs.

Lastly, see Daftary. *The Ismā'īlīs*, 1990: 144-ff., for a brief survey of the available historical sources for the Fāṭimid period of Ismā'īlism.

⁵⁶ Daftary. *The Ismā'īlīs*. 1990:144-151.

made the following statement, which succinctly sums up many of the challenges implicit in the study of Fāṭimid historiography:

The history of the Fāṭimids is the history of the Ismāʿīlī sect and the history of Egypt. The two came together in the course of the tenth century, and eventually parted. From the end of the eleventh century the traditions of these histories likewise developed and finally survived separately. That of the sect, brilliantly edited and established by al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, fell to the various branches into which the sect divided, in Syria, Iran, the Yemen and India. That of Egypt was maintained by the men of the Pen, the clerical class of the country, to culminate in the historical literature of the land in the later Middle Ages.⁵⁷

At first glance, such a statement is perhaps ambiguous. In comparison with other periods of the Ismāʿīlīs (i.e., the “origins” of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* and post-Fāṭimid developments in Ismāʿīlism), the Fāṭimid period is rich in sources, embracing the full gamut of chancery documents, historical chronicles, doctrinal sources and autobiographical works for the dynasty and *daʿwah* in Cairo itself.⁵⁸ The Yemenī histories, which are often *sijill*-based, offer an alternative, retrospective perspective on the history of pre-Nizārī Ismāʿīlism, the historiography of the Fāṭimid

⁵⁷ M. Brett. “Fāṭimid Historiography: A Case Study—The Quarrel with the Zīrids, 1048-58.” In, *Ibn Khaldūn and the Medieval Maghrib*. Variorum Reprints. London, 1999: section VIII: 48.

⁵⁸ Daftary. *The Ismāʿīlīs*. 1990: 144-ff.; Walker. *Exploring an Islamic Empire*. 2002: 164.

Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in particular, and late Fāṭimid history.⁵⁹ Yet at the same time, the much later Yemenī "Ismā'īlī" history, the *Uyūn al-Akḥbār*, often serves as the only source that can corroborate the authenticity of still extant Fāṭimid works, as is the case with al-Mu'ayyad's *Sīrah* in particular. Another factor, however, is the fact that:

The *sijillāt* themselves survived independently, and probably not in Egypt, as theological rather than historical documents of the Ismā'īlī sect. It is clearly possible to ascribe this degeneration of the historical account to the drastic changes in the Fāṭimid regime which began with the death of al-Yāzūrī and the repudiation of his policy towards Baghdad and the Seljuk Turks, continued with the mayoralty of Badr al-Jamālī and his son al-Afdal, and ended with the schism of the Ismā'īlī sect and the renunciation by the caliphs of their claim to the Imamate. But it is probable that it occurred more fundamentally at the level of the annalistic tradition itself.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ A. Hamdani. *The Sīrah*. 1950: 137-161. The 15th-century Yemenī Ṭayyibī-Ismā'īlī historian, Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn quotes verbatim sections from al-Mu'ayyad's *Sīrah* as well as his poetic work, the *Dīwān*, in his *Uyūn al-Akḥbār*. See "Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn." *Encyclopedia of Islam*. Supplement. Leiden: 427; Daftary. *The Ismā'īlīs*. 1990: 258-259; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn*. 1999: 21-22, 73-77, for additional information on the importance of 'Imād al-Dīn's historical work for the history of Ismā'ilism in general and the Ṭayyibī-Ismā'īlī tradition in particular.

See A. Hamdani. "The Dā'ī Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm." *Oriens* (1974-5): 23-24, and Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn*. 1999: 297-322, on al-Mu'ayyad's impact on the post-Fāṭimid tradition of Ismā'īlī poetry and doctrinal works: in particular, his influence on Ibrāhīm al-Hamīdī (d. ca. 1191 C.E.), the author of *Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq* (an abridged work of al-Mu'ayyad's *Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*); 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Wālīd (d. 612 A. H./ 1215 C.E.); and Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Wālīd (d. 667 A.H./ 1268 C.E.), whose work, *al-Īdāh wa al-Bayān*, is greatly indebted to al-Mu'ayyad's work on eschatology, *Kitāb al-Ibtidā' wa al-Intihā'*.

⁶⁰ Brett. *The Rise of the Fāṭimids*. 2001: 58. A prime example of this may also be seen in Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn*. 1999: 350-351, 353-369, especially in

The Fāṭimids have frequently been studied as a dynastic movement, centered in Cairo, and thus have been limited topically to the confines of “regional studies”.⁶¹ When the history of the Ismā‘īlī *da‘wah* is restricted to the history of North Africa or Egypt, this in turn, quite obviously determines the selection of a certain body of sources over another. In addition, it delineates a center versus a periphery with regard to such hotly contended topics as the “Persian School’s” or “Eastern” *da‘wah*’s doctrinal divergences from the core tenets propounded by the Cairene Ismā‘īlī authors proper. Yet another factor has been that in the pursuit of historical facts concerning Fāṭimid institutions and court life, Western scholars have perhaps unintentionally disregarded the less obvious aspects of Ismā‘īlī religious history.⁶²

reference to al-Mu‘ayyad appointment as Fāṭimid *dā‘ī al-du‘āt* and the reinstatement of his position after the third period of his exile.

⁶¹ Brett. *The Rise of the Fāṭimids*. 2001: 3-25.

⁶² In this context, Brett and Walker are referring to the works of such scholars as Y. Lev, P. Sanders and A. F. Sayyid, whose works on Fāṭimid Cairo and Fāṭimid institutions have been invaluable in terms of these aspects of the study of Fāṭimid historiography.

Also, see C. Melville. “From Adam to Abaqa.” (2001): 74-75. Melville explains, with regard to the objectives of studying history, that Western scholars have often disregarded Baydāwī’s 14th-century work, the *Nizām al-Tawārīkh*, because it did not offer any new and additional information, in comparison with what was already provided by other historical sources. He also states that in the mediaeval period, the merit of an historical work was not foremost due to its being “a source for raw data. However, the ‘facts’ were not of cardinal importance to mediaeval writers. They were more concerned with the ‘lessons of history’ (*favā’id*), and used their material to illustrate ethical questions, and the significance of the rise and fall of dynastic power.”

J. Meisami. “History as Literature.” *Iranian Studies* (2000): 33: 17, 19. Meisami, while focusing on the Saljūq period, also addresses the “ethical-historiography” of

They largely ignore the religious dimension of the Caliphate and Imamate. In both cases, the Fāṭimids lose their identity with the loss of their unity. In the first, they are assigned to two quite different regional histories; in the second, they are shorn of the ideological dimension which made the Fāṭimids meaningful to themselves and their contemporaries.⁶³

The purpose of writing of history, in the case of the Fāṭimid period, was more than a project devised to chronicle and glorify the deeds and acts of rulers and their court officials or one of producing dynastic histories.⁶⁴ As Daftary explains:

It is, therefore, not surprising that the Ismā'īlīs have generally lacked a tradition of historiography. In fact, from early on in the third/tenth century, the Ismā'īlīs developed their own metahistorical notions and came to hold a particular conception of history, which may more appropriately be called hierohistory, representing an *a priori* sacral image of the past and a cyclical view of time and the religious history of mankind. There were, however, two exceptional periods in the Ismā'īlī movement when the Ismā'īlīs did particularly concern themselves with history in its traditional sense, and with historical writing; and they produced or commissioned works which may be regarded as official chronicle...viz., the Fāṭimid Caliphate and the Nizārī Ismā'īlī state centered at Alamūt in Persia.⁶⁵

court historians such as Bayhaqī, as well as their use of "literary devices" in their narration of history. In her own words, she states (p. 19): "For one thing, the events depicted were a matter of historical record: their outcome was already known to their audiences, but their meaning was geared both to contemporary and to general concerns. The fact of telling them is part and parcel of the historian's task."

⁶³ Brett. *The Rise of the Fāṭimids*. 2001: 4-5.

⁶⁴ Brett. *The Rise of the Fāṭimids*. 2001: 18-25; Daftary. *The Ismā'īlīs*. 1990: 91.

⁶⁵ Daftary. *The Ismā'īlīs*. 1992: 91. Also, see Hodgson. *The Assassins*. 1955: 18-19. Hodgson likewise highlights the "metahistorical" interests of the Fāṭimids, by explaining that the vital importance of the position of the *imām* in Ismā'īlī thought

In mediaeval Ismā'īlism, there are two dimensions of prophetic thought, both of which might have shaped and delineated Fāṭimid historical works per se: the importance of the *imāmate* (centered around the *imām* as the "divine guide") and the cycles of the prophets and *imāms*, with their eschatological implications (the concept of the prophetic cycles, from Adam to Muḥammad, and onwards).⁶⁶ Discussing these organizing principles of Fāṭimid doctrinal works may help to explain the importance accorded to Ismā'īlī sacred history, or what Halm has termed "*heilsgeschichte*". Equally, it may aid in explaining the emergence of a genre of Fāṭimid historical literature which includes works exclusively concerned with the establishment of Cairo as the center of an Ismā'īlī, Islamic empire as well as the lives and deeds of the Fāṭimid caliphs as *imāms* (religio-political rulers appointed through *naṣṣ*). All of this would occur at the risk of the increased marginality of the production of historical chronicles, in favor of the composition of works similar to Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Iftitāh al-Da'wah and Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature in general.

in turn influenced the Fāṭimid conception of history, resulting in a concept which is inherently cyclical in nature.

⁶⁶ S. Nomoto. Early Ismā'īlī Thought on Prophecy. Unpublished dissertation. McGill University, 2000: 2-3. The two "horizontal" (chronological) dimensions of history (the *imāmate* and the prophetic cycles) both culminate in the messianic return or *parousia* of the seventh *imām* of the final cycle—the *Qā'im*. The "vertical dimension" consists of the Ismā'īlī concept of the early and spiritual hierarchies that operate in order to transmit prophetic revelation to humans. In addition, see A. Rippin. "The Commerce of Eschatology." In, The Qur'ān as Text.

In keeping with the above-mentioned assertions, Brett claims that the emphasis placed upon “messianism” and eschatology constitutes the Fāṭimid project of “internal history writing”. In his use of the Iftitāh al-Da‘wah as a historical source, Brett indicates that a fresh interpretation of Islamic sacred history is reflected in the works of the Fāṭimid authors. In a sense, Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s work mirrors the religious history of the Ismā‘ilis as the founders of the Fāṭimid empire; that is, their own perception of their development and continuation throughout history.⁶⁷

As Brett explains,

For the Fatimids themselves, on the other hand, any distinction between their ancestry and their Imamate was impossible; historically and theologically, they were inseparable. The truth of both was an article of faith as well as the justification for their imperial enterprise.⁶⁸

Yet, from another perspective, a focus on the Qur’ānic aspects to history, pre-Islamic prophets and an acknowledgement of the eschatological outlook of “monotheistic” history points to the fact that

Editor, S. Wild. Leiden, 1996. Rippin’s article is especially useful, in terms of ascertaining the influence of Islamic eschatology on historical narratives.

⁶⁷ Brett. “The Mim, the ‘Ayn and the Making of Ismā‘ilism.” (1999): 32.

⁶⁸ Brett. The Rise of the Fāṭimids. 2001: 9, 10, for Brett’s criticism of the earlier approaches to the study of the Fāṭimid period and his suggestions for an alternative interpretation of Fāṭimid history.

Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī endeavors in the sphere of historiography were in keeping with other mediaeval Islamic historiographical traditions.⁶⁹

Saljūq and Ilkhānid Perspectives on the 11th-century Ismā'īlī Da'wah

In determining the historical background of *da'wah* activities in Shīrāz, the Fārsnāmah, a 12th-century Persian "local history", refers to al-Mu'ayyad as an Ismā'īlī *dā'i* operating in the province of Fārs.⁷⁰ By the time of Ibn Zarkūb-i Shīrāzī's somewhat latter 14th-century Shīrāznāmah,

⁶⁹ S. Hamdani. From Da'wah to Dawlah. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Princeton University, 1995: 114; Khalidi. Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period. 1994: 30-34, 68-73.

⁷⁰ Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 139, n. 2; J. Meisami. Persian Historiography. Edinburgh, 1999: 185-189; Ibn al-Balkhī. Fārsnāmah. Editor, G. LeStrange. London, (reprint) 1998: pp. 117-119. Meisami (pp. 162-188) also points out in her discussion of the Fārsnāmah (which parallels LeStrange's introduction), to this earliest of the Saljūq histories written in Persian, the other important features of this work with regard to its discussions of Sassanian administrative practices in Fārs in the pre-Islamic period as well as the history of the Shabānkarā Kurds of Fārs. She also (*ibid.* 286) comments upon Ibn al-Balkhī's "schematic" presentation of heresy "episodes" in the Fārsnāmah, which naturally includes the account of al-Mu'ayyad at the Būyid court of Abū Kālījār and his conflict with the Sunnī *Qāḍī* 'Abd Allāh.

In the Fārsnāmah, al-Mu'ayyad is mentioned by his proper name, Abū Naṣr ibn 'Umrān, rather than by his title. A number of well-known Sunnī *qāḍīs* of Shīrāz are mentioned as well in the same section of the Fārsnāmah, in particular the *Qāḍī* 'Abd Allāh, who created problems for al-Mu'ayyad at the Būyid court of Abū Kālījār. See Sīrah pp. 2-22, in conjunction with Ibn al-Balkhī's discussion of Abū Kālījār's "conversion" to Ismā'ilism at the hands of al-Mu'ayyad and the role of the Sunnī *qāḍī* 'Abd Allāh, issues which shall be addressed in the course of Chapter Two. Also see Bowen. "The Last Buwayhids." (1929): 234; Hoffmann. "An Ismā'īlī/Fāṭimid Stronghold in Iraq?" (1992): 32; F. Soberioj. Ibn Ḥafīf aṣ-Ṣīrāzī. Beirut, 1998: 173, 181-182.

however, there is no mention at all of Ismā'īlī *da'wah* activities during the reign of the Būyid Abū Kālījār or of al-Mu'ayyad's influence at the Būyid court.⁷¹ Resurfacing much later and in an almost hagiographic context, in the universal histories of Rashīd al-Dīn, Qāshānī and Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ is greeted by individuals "such as Bū Da'ūd, who was the *dā'i al-du'āt*", and the city's other nobles (*ashrāf*) and notables on his arrival to Cairo, before trying to gain an audience with al-Mustanşir. In all accounts except for Juwaynī, this event seems to have occurred between 469- 471 A.H./1076-1078 C.E., prior to Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's attempts to meet with the caliph al-Mustanşir ca. Safar 471 A.H./ 1078 C.E..

Although all of the Īlkhānid historians (including Juwaynī in this

⁷¹ Ibn-i Zarkūb's *Shīrāznāmah* (also falling in the category of Persian local histories), although lacking in detailed information on Ismā'īlī activities in the province of Fārs, is an exceedingly useful primary source for the intellectual and social histories of Shīrāz in the Būyid and Saljūq periods, due to its emphasis on presenting the biographies of learned individuals from this city in the pre-Mongol period. Chapter Two will address the importance of this source for biographical information on certain religious scholars in Shīrāz in connection with al-Mu'ayyad's *da'wah* activities in Shīrāz.

A. Lambton. "Persian Local Histories: The Tradition behind them and the Assumptions of their Authors." In, Editor, B. Scarcia-Amoretti. *Yād-nāma*. Volume I. Rome, 1991: 227-238, and C. Melville. "Persian Local Histories: Views from the Wings." *Iranian Studies* (2000) 33: 1-2, discuss the distinctions between the sort of information provided by universal versus local histories, in the context of mediaeval Iran. As well, Melville addresses a number of key issues, which are of importance to this paper's discussion of the "writing of history". In a similar vein, see J. Meisami. "History as Literature." *Iranian Studies* (2000): 33: 15-30; Meisami. *Persian Historiography*. Edinburgh, 1999: 1-13, 281-298; and Meisami. "Why Write History in Persian?" In, *Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth*. Volume II. Editor, C. Hillenbrand. Leiden, 2000: 351. Meisami indicates, in the last cited work, that the Persian "local history" is a work that is foremost concerned with a mixture of biographies of local rulers and scholars as well as the "topography" and local historical traditions related to the city portrayed in the work.

instance) indicate that Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ did not meet with al-Mustans̄ir immediately on his arrival to Cairo, they do indicate his professing his support of Nizār as the rightful caliphal successor. According to the mediaeval Persian historical accounts, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's profession of support would ultimately lead to his increasingly troubled relationship with the powerful "military" vizier, Badr al-Jamālī. With regard to the almost hagiographical account of the meeting between Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and the *dā'ī al-du'āt* Bū Dā'ūd, the evidence provided by the Fāṭimid and Mamlūk chronicles that the chief missionary to take the place of al-Mu'ayyad directly after his death was in fact, Badr al-Jamālī himself, lends credence to the fact that the Bū Dā'ūd referred to in the Īlkhānid histories was none other than al-Mu'ayyad himself.⁷²

⁷² See Juwaynī. *Tarīkh*. Editor, M. Qazvinī. Volume III. London, 1912-24: pp. 188-191; Rashīd al-Dīn. *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*. Editor, M. Dānishpazhūh. Tehran, 1338/1960: p. 100; Abū al-Qāsim al-Qāshānī. *Zubdah al-Tawārīkh*. Editor, M. Dānishpazhūh. Tehran, 1987: p. 136; Ḥāfiz-i Abrū. *Majma' al-Tawārīkh al-Sultāniyyah*. Editor, M. Modarresi-Zanjānī. Tehran, 1363: p. 193 (in Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, "*chūn Abū Da'ūd*", rather than "*mithl Bū Da'ūd*" in all other accounts).

See Juwaynī. *Tarīkh* p. 189, where Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ goes directly to Egypt in 471 A.H., without the additional account of his being greeted by anyone on his arrival. Also, see B. T. Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī: Founder of a New Tradition of Fāṭimid Da'wa Poetry*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Harvard University, 1999: 19; Appendix D, pp. 350-354; Appendix E, pp. 355-359, on the variations in al-Mu'ayyad's name, as mentioned particularly the *siyillāt*. Al-Mu'ayyad's name, usually attested to in both Ismā'īlī and non-Isma'īlī sources, is Abū Naṣr Hibat Allāh b. Abī 'Umrān ('Imrān, according to Qutbuddin as a likely variant) Mūsā b. Da'ūd, but with marginal variations. This reference to al-Mu'ayyad in the Persian "universal" histories has not been previously noted by either Klemm or Qutbuddin in their discussion of the historical sources for the biography of al-Mu'ayyad.

On the basis of the mediaeval Persian historical sources, there is the recognition of the fact, however, that in the pre-Nizārī period there were two main centers of Ismā'īlī activity in 11th-century North-western Iran: Rayy and Isfahan.⁷³ This information is based foremost on Nizām al-Mulk's Siyāsatnāmah as well as the autobiographical information contained in the extant fragments of Ḥasan-i Šabbāh's Sar-gudhasht-i Sayyidnā (e.g., the urban centers in mediaeval Iran he went to in order to be trained as a *dā'ī*).⁷⁴ Despite the fact that Ḥasan-i Šabbāh serves as the focal point of the Īlkhānid universal histories' accounts of the Ismā'īlīs, this ostensibly retrospective information is vital in order to discern where the centers of Fātimid *da'wah* activity were in Iran proper: first, in order to determine the extent of the Ismā'īlī presence in mediaeval Shīrāz, a city governed by Shī'ī Būyid *amīrs*; second, in order to piece together a more coherent picture of the relations between these assumedly peripheral

⁷³ See in particular, Juwaynī. Tar'ikh pp. 188-191; Qāshānī. Zubdah al-Tawārikh pp. 134-136; Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū. Majma' al-Tawārikh pp. 192-193, on the *dā'ī* 'Abd al-Malik 'Aṭṭāsh. With remarkably little textual variation, these passages explain that he was the head *dā'ī* in Iraq as well as Iran. Around 467 A.H., Ḥasan-i Šabbāh was summoned to Rayy as well as Isfahan in order to meet with 'Aṭṭāsh. Shortly afterwards, Ḥasan-i Šabbāh was advised to go to Egypt for further training as a *dā'ī*.

In addition, see Daftary. "Ḥasan Šabbāh and the Origins of the Nizārī Movement." (1994): 185-188; F. Daftary. "The Medieval Ismā'īlīs of the Iranian Lands." In, Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth. Volume II. Editor, C. Hillenbrand. Leiden. 2000: 62-64, on Ḥasan-i Šabbāh's education and training and Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 113-114, where she discusses Ḥasan-i Šabbāh's Sar-gudhasht-i Sayyidnā as a work of Ismā'īlī *sirah* literature.

centers of Ismā'īlī activity to the center *par excellence* in Cairo; and third, to reassess the background of the Nizārī movement and the surrounding circumstances of the subsequent collapse of Fāṭimid Cairo as the doctrinal stronghold of Ismā'īlī doctrine in the course of the late 11th and early 12th Centuries.⁷⁵

Al-Mu'ayyad's own autobiography and the mediaeval Arabic historical sources document at length and refer to the 11th-century *da'wah*'s activities, diplomatic and otherwise.⁷⁶ The Persian works of the 11th-12th Centuries (in particular, Nizām al-Mulk's *Siyāsatnāmah*) and those of the Īlkhānid period, however, pass over in silence the exact details of the Fāṭimid dynasty's active role in the contemporary events of the

⁷⁴ F. Daftary. "The Medieval Ismā'īlīs of the Iranian Lands." In, Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth. Volume II. Editor, C. Hillenbrand. Leiden, 2000: 43-81; F. Daftary. The Assassin Legends. London, 1994: 31-32.

⁷⁵ See S. M. Stern. Studies in Early Ismā'īlism. Jerusalem & Leiden, 1983: 235, on Cairo as the "center" of Ismā'īlism: "Thus the movement was organized in two concentric circles. First, the territorial domain of the Fāṭimids, where Ismā'īlism was the state religion. This domain was enormously extended by the conquest of Egypt and Syria."

See Daftary on pre-Nizārī Ismā'īlī doctrines and missionary activities in Iran as well as for a discussion of the Īlkhānid sources on Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ. F. Daftary. "The Medieval Ismā'īlīs of the Iranian Lands." (2000): 43-81; F. Daftary. "Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ and the Origins of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī Movement." In, Mediaeval Ismā'īlī History and Thought. Cambridge, 1996: 183-187.

Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 137-138, explains that Shīrāz was indeed the center of *da'wah* activities in the province of Fārs and also discusses the role of al-Mu'ayyad's father, Mūsā b. Da'ūd, as a Fāṭimid *dā'i*. However, in broader terms, these points also speaks to the issue of whether or not Fāṭimid doctrines were indeed tailored to suit the diverse intellectual environs in which Ismā'īlī *da'wah* activities were taking place, something that is of exceeding importance in the case of situating al-Mu'ayyad's doctrinal works *vis à vis* the "Persian School".

⁷⁶ See E. Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. Wiesbaden, 1981: 12, 30-49; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 47-60; 186-196; Stern. Studies. 1983: 240-241.

period, before the arrival of the Saljūqs in Baghdad. There are notable lacunae in the sources with regard to Ismā'īlī *da'wah* activities in the early Saljūq period.⁷⁷ Rather, the Persian histories as a collectivity seem to favor instead a much older tradition of the history of Ismā'ilism-- one which reflects a strong anti-Ismā'īlī bias and contests the religio-political authority of the Fāṭimid caliphs as *imāms*-- while also drawing upon the currently circulating theological discussions of Ismā'īlī doctrine.⁷⁸

To draw upon one particular example: the product of a distinct historiographical tradition, Juwaynī's (d. 1283 C.E.) Ta'rikh-i Jahāngushāy narrates in part the dynastic history of the Fāṭimids, the development of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* and the salient features of pre-Nizārī

⁷⁷ See The History of the Seljūq Turks from the Jāmi' al-tawārikh. Editors/Translators. K. Luther & C. E. Bosworth. London, 2001: introduction. Rāhat al-Sudūr. 1921: (Intro.): xxix-xxxvii.

For additional information on the Siyaṣatnāmah, from the perspective of the developments in Persian historiography during the Saljūq period and Nizām al-Mulk's treatment of the "Bāṭiniyān", see Meisami. Persian Historiography. 1999: 145-162.

With regard to Saljūq and post-Saljūq accounts of the Basāsirī *débâcle*, see al-Rāwandī. Rāhat al-Sudūr pp. 107-110, where there is only an oblique reference to the fact that Basāsirī said the *khutbah* in Baghdad in the name of the "Egyptians" (Miṣriyān). Zāhir al-Dīn al-Nishāpūrī. Saljūqnāmah pp. 19-20; Rashīd al-Dīn. Jāmi' al-Tawārikh pp. 22-24, 180. Al-Mu'ayyad own account of this occurs on pp. 94-184 of the Sīrah, the discussion of which appears in A. Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 58-105. The accounts of the Persian histories may be contrasted with Ibn al-Athīr's account of the *khutbah* said in the name of al-Mustanṣir. See al-Kāmil fī al-Tarīkh. Volume VIII. Beirut, 1967: pp. 83-85.

⁷⁸ Stern. Studies in Early Ismā'ilism. 1983: 189; M. Brett. The Rise of the Fāṭimids. Leiden, 2001: 29-48; F. Daftary. "Persian Historiography of the Early Nizārī Ismā'ilīs." *Iran* (1992: 30): 146. Daftary in particular indicates, "such anti-Fāṭimid positions had probably originated with Ibn Rizām, who had aimed at discrediting the entire Ismā'īlī movement." Also, see F. Daftary. "Hasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and the Origins of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī Movement." (1996): 96.

Ismā'īlī doctrine. The seminal works of S. M. Stern and H. Halm have indicated the wholesale incorporation of Ibn Rizām's (d. 10th C.E.) polemical treatise against the Ismā'ilīs into Ibn al-Dawadārī's, al-Nuwayrī's and al-Maqrizī's "Egyptian" chronicles. Therefore, one of the primary purposes of this concluding section of Chapter One is to take note briefly of the sources employed in Juwaynī's account of medieval Ismā'īlī doctrines, prior to the advent of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ. While reviewing the textual evidence for Juwaynī's use of Shahrastānī's (d.ca. 1181 C.E.) heresiography, Milal wa al-Niḥal, whether the later Persian historians (notably, Rashīd al-Dīn and Qāshānī) act independently of Juwaynī's presentation of pre-Nizārī Ismā'īlī doctrines will be briefly considered.

The composition of the mediaeval Persian universal histories has received a great deal of scholarly attention. Qazvīnī and Stern, however, were the first to address the links between the Persian histories of the Īlkhānīd period with regard to the accounts of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*. Scholars consider Rashīd al-Dīn's account to be the most thorough in its presentation of the history of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* before the Nizārī schism.⁷⁹ Shahrastānī's accounts of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, as presented in his work, Milal wa al-Niḥal, is corroborated by both Juwaynī and Rashīd al-

⁷⁹ Browne/Qazvīnī. Editor. Tar'ikh Jahāngushāy. Volume I. 1912: (Intro.): xvi-ff; xvii-xxvii. Also, see R. Levy. "The Account of the Ismā'īlī Doctrines in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1930): 509-536; Stern. Studies on Early Ismā'ilism. 1983: 227-ff.

Dīn.⁸⁰ As a number of scholars have already indicated, portions of Ḥasan-i Šabbāh's works appear in the histories of Juwaynī, Rashīd al-Dīn and Qāshānī, though not to the same degree of completeness.⁸¹ Hodgson, Ivanow and Massignon worked with the assumption that the material in the Milal on Ḥasan-i Šabbāh and the Nizārīs was based upon authentic biographical and doctrinal material, as the *Sabi'a* section in the Milal and Ḥasan-i Šabbāh's Fuṣūl Arba'ah are similar. In a comparable manner, it is logical to consider whether the sections concerning Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī doctrine in the Tar'ikh and subsequent Persian universal histories might likewise bear striking similarities with Shahrastānī's selection of doctrinal principles as well as his method of presentation. It is reasonable to assume for a number of reasons that in the case of Juwaynī, the sections concerning Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī doctrine are either directly culled from or modeled upon Shahrastānī's heresiography, for the purposes of more astutely discussing theological issues.⁸²

⁸⁰ Hodgson. The Assassins. 1955: 26-ff.; Daftary. "Persian Historiography." (1992): 93-95.

⁸¹ Daftary. "Persian Historiography of the Early Nizārī Ismā'īlīs." *Iran* (1992): 93-95; Daftary. The Ismā'īlīs. 1992: 327-331; Hodgson. The Assassins. 1955: 26-ff.

Browne/Qazvīnī. Tar'ikh. Volume I. 1912: 27, points out that the account, or in actuality, the direct quotation from Ḥasan-i Šabbāh's Sar-gudhast-i Sayyidnā, is significantly longer in Rashīd al-Dīn's Jāmi', in comparison with the material in Juwaynī's Tar'ikh. Not only that, as also confirmed by Daftary. "Persian Historiography." (1992): 93-95, Rashīd al-Dīn's account includes other additional material that is not quoted or available elsewhere.

⁸² Hodgson. The Assassins. 1955: 41-ff.

Thus, it is of some importance to determine whether the sections concerning Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī doctrine in the Īlkhānid histories are derived from and based upon the same material; i.e., from authentic Ismā'īlī doctrinal sources, works of heresiography and local traditions. As well, it poses the question of whether authentic Fāṭimid sources and additional pre-Mongol period historical works were directly accessible to Juwaynī, Rashīd al-Dīn, Qāshānī and Ḥāfiz-i Abrū. In addition, in terms of the developments within the Persian historiographical tradition, from the Saljūq period to the Īlkhānid period, an examination of the parallels between the works of the Persian historians and Shahrastānī's account of the mediaeval Ismā'īlīs allows us to reassess the most germane primary sources for the study of the history of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in the Eastern parts of the mediaeval Islamic world.

Stern initially pointed out that Rashīd al-Dīn drew upon Nizām al-Mulk's Siyāsatnāmah for his discussion and account of the early Ismā'īlī *da'wah*.⁶³ The Siyāsatnāmah is amongst the mediaeval sources that recapitulate Ibn Rizām's polemic against the Ismā'īlīs. The assumption also has been that Qāshānī closely followed Rashīd al-Dīn's account,

⁶³ Stern. Studies on Early Ismā'ilism. 1983: 188, 204, 227, 230. As one example put forth in support of this argument, Stern explains that these two sources discuss Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī's successors in the *da'wah* in virtually identical terms, with only one marked variation in the text. Nomoto. Early Ismā'īlī Thought on Prophecy. 2000: 23-24, likewise agrees that both Rashīd al-Dīn and Qāshānī closely follow portions of Nizām al-Mulk's account of the *dā'īs* of the "Persian School".

though the original model (pointing to how the material ought to be organized, due to these histories sharing in the same “historiographical” tradition) seems to remain Juwaynī’s Ta’rikh. The question that remains is therefore two-fold: 1). Do the later Persian historians embrace the information contained in the Ibn Rizām “legend” (similar to their Egyptian and Baghdādī counterparts), as mediated through the Siyāsatnāmah, and 2). Do they follow Juwaynī’s employment of Shahrastānī’s method of organizing the material on the origins of the Ismā’īlīs as a distinct “sect”, and then its subsequent development into the old and new *da’wahs*, despite their use of additional sources in their accounts?⁸⁴

Did the Persian historians of the Īlkhānīd period, however, have any access to the works of their “Egyptian”, “Iraqī” or “Syrian” counterparts? A theory advanced by Brett suggests that in essence, al-Maqrīzī’s Itti’āz ought to be considered a “local history”. As al-Maqrīzī, an “Egyptian author” of the 15th Century, could freely draw upon local traditions and records (namely, *sijillāt* and other material from the post-Fātimīd and

⁸⁴ Daftary. The Ismā’īlīs. 1990: 220; 608, n. 136, points out that Stern relied heavily on the Siyāsatnāmah for the purposes of his research on early Ismā’īlism. Brett. The Rise of the Fātimīds. Leiden, 2001: 205; Lewis. The Origins of Ismā’īlism. 1940: 98. Brett (p. 205) states the following: “As reconstructed by Stern, their story is heavily reliant upon the *Siyāsat-nāma* of that great opponent of the Fātimīds, the Seljūk *wazīr* Nizām al-Mulk in the second half of the fifth/eleventh century, whose information may well have been derived from the equally hostile Ibn Rizām. Whatever may be thought of Ibn Rizām’s account of the third/ninth

Mamlūk *dīwān al-inshā's*), more readily available in his own environs, this might help to explain why the Īlkhānid Persian histories did not have as equally direct access to this material. While foremost basing his observations on the research of A. F. Sayyid, Walker notes that the Mamlūk historians and the Yemenī author, Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, (who wrote within fifty years of one another), were historians who had to collect the material of earlier historians as well as surviving documents and evidence in order to write their respective historical accounts of the Fāṭimids. To a certain extent, this may be contrasted with the efforts of the Persian court historians, who were contemporaries to the events, or near-contemporaries, about which they wrote.⁸⁵ Another possibility is that the Persian court historians had first-hand knowledge of the Fāṭimid material but simply did not choose to incorporate it, due to their own schematic objectives and historiographical concerns. From this vantage point, this would lend more credence to the theory that Juwaynī established an initial model for organizing the material and presenting the "facts" of Fāṭimid history as well as the history of the pre-Nizārī and Nizārī Ismā'īlī *da'wahs*.

century, he was at least an Iraqī contemporary of events in the second quarter of the fourth/tenth, so that the lurid tale of the *Siyāsat-nāma* may be broadly true."

⁸⁵ S. Denoix. Décrire le Caire. Cairo, 1992: 11-17; Walker. Exploring an Islamic Empire. 2002: 12-13.

The Īlkhānid universal histories exemplify remarkable variations in terms of the supplementary material provided in order to depict the historical development and impact of the mediaeval Ismā'īlī *da'wah*. In terms of Western scholarship on the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*, these works have been utilized to the highest degree in order to reconstruct the different periods of the doctrinal and historical development of mediaeval Ismā'ilism. But, as shall be seen in what follows in Chapter Two, al-Mu'ayyad's memoir of his career as a Fāṭimid missionary in Western Iran and Egypt provides a distinctive account of the 11th-century Fāṭimid *da'wah*, whilst it also offers up a parallel discussion of the doctrine of *walāyah* from the perspective of Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature.

Chapter Two: Religious Biography, Autobiography and Walāyah in Practice
Section a: Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī Sīrah and Majālis Literature

Between the past and the future, as it were, the centrality of the *imām* is a distinctive feature of 10th to 11th-century Ismā'īlī works. Both the historical and doctrinal discussions of the *imām* as a repository of *ta'wīl* present an ideal depiction of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*, where the scholarly *imām* is surrounded by the learned members of his *da'wah* and where he imparts the esoteric knowledge of *ta'wīl* to his community of believers.

Chapter Two addresses several issues through examining al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography, the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. By and large, the academic field of Islamic Studies is dependent upon the study of texts not always readily classified or easily placed into the respective categories of doctrinal or historical works. Whether Fāṭimid *sīrah* and *majālis* literature focused upon the rule of the *imām* constitutes a genre of Ismā'īlī works of a purely doctrinal nature or a unique genre of Fāṭimid historiography is one issue addressed at the core of this chapter. Another area of enquiry is to what extent is the facet of Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī "protocol" or etiquette (*adab*), which incorporates the principle of *walāyah* in practice, clearly apparent in later Ismā'īlī *sīrah* works, such as al-Mu'ayyad's Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. The

caliph al-Mustansir (r. 427-487 A.H./ 1035-1094 C.E.) as the *imām* is nearly absent in the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadīyyah in comparison with earlier works of Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature. The sources do not portray al-Mustansir as being at the centre of *da'wah* activities or as a "scholar"-*imām*, as was the case with the caliph al-Mu'izz (r. 342-386 A.H./ 953-975 C.E.). In addition, the material of such historical interest, as concerns the social context of religious instruction, is likewise absent from al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah.

Different scholarly interpretations predominate with regard to al-Mu'ayyad's agenda in his presentation of this pivotal period of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s history. Some have suggested that his work of *sīrah* was foremost meant to put forth a defense of 11th-century *da'wah* activities *vis à vis* the Sunnī dynastic powers and the members of the 'Abbasid political establishment (i.e. Ibn al-Muslimah).¹ As A. F. Sayyid suggests, al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography is a retrospective memoir of his career at the Fāṭimid court and intended to serve as a commentary, truthful and "without flattery", on the changing status of the Fāṭimid caliphate as *imāmate* in this time-period. His memoir also takes note of the altercations within the 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*.²

¹ The conflict between al-Mu'ayyad and Ibn Muslimah will be discussed in both parts I and II of this chapter. At this juncture, however, see E. Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. 1982: 30-39; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 40-41, 183-184; Qutbuddin. Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī. 1999: 43; P. Walker. Exploring an Islamic Empire. 2002: 144.

² A. F. Sayyid. "Lumières nouvelles sur quelques sources de l'histoire fatimide en Égypte." *Annales islamologiques* (1977) 13: 16-18.

Sayyid notes that the picture of the mid-11th-century Fāṭimid dynasty is contradictory in terms of appearances: the Fāṭimid caliphate and empire is at its most powerful yet the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustanṣir is at his weakest, and subject to the whims of his political advisors and viziers. In assessing the importance of al-Mu'ayyad's Sīrah as both a historical and doctrinal work, Sayyid explains that it is al-Mu'ayyad, in his role as an Ismā'īlī *dā'ī*, who remarks upon the social forces eroding away at the Fāṭimid caliph's authority. In his memoir, al-Mu'ayyad chose to document the shift in the Fāṭimid caliph's position, from the center of power to the margins of his own court. In turn, Sayyid believes that the rivalry al-Mu'ayyad witnessed and experienced first-hand at the 11th-century Fāṭimid court ultimately led to the weakened religio-political authority of the Fāṭimid *imāmate* during the reign of al-Mustanṣir.³

Since A. Hamdani, Glassen, Klemm and Sayyid have already astutely discussed the importance of the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah as a primary source for 11th-century Islamic history, the aim of Chapter Two is, necessarily, rather different in intent. The first part of Chapter Two will focus on al-Mu'ayyad's work of Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature in order to: 1). Consider the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah as a "local" account of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s activities and modes of religious instruction in urban centers outside of Fāṭimid Cairo; 2). Reconstruct the changing nature of the *da'wah* in the pre-Nizārī and Ṭayyibī period of Ismā'ilism; and 3). Take into account al-

³ Sayyid. "Lumières nouvelles." (1977): 18.

Mu'ayyad's autobiographical narration of his role in the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah* through the means of one genre of Fāṭimid historiography, Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature. The second part of Chapter Two presents al-Mu'ayyad's career, from Ismā'īlī *dā'ī* to Fāṭimid *dā'ī al-du'āt*, from within the larger context of the mediaeval Persian and Arabic historiographical traditions.

Ismā'īlī Sīrah and Majālis Literature

One aspect of Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature as well as the doctrinal works of such 10th-century Ismā'īlī authors as Ustādh Jawdhar (fl. 365-386 A. H./ 975-996 C.E.) and Qādī al-Nu'mān (d. 363 A.H./ 974 C.E.) is that they record and valorize the noble deeds of the Fāṭimid caliph.⁴ From another perspective,

⁴ In particular, referring to such works as Qādī al-Nu'mān's *Kitāb al-Himmah* and *Majālis wa al-Musāvarāt* as well as Ustādh Jawdhar's work of *sīrah*. See M. Kāmil-Husayn, Editor. *Kitāb al-Himmah*. Cairo, n.d.; *Majālis wa al-Musāvarāt*. Editors, H. el-Feki, I. Chabbouh & M el-Yalaoui. Tunis, 1978. Also see in conjunction with the following work of Ustādh Jawdhar, M. Canard. "L'Autobiographie d'un chambellan du Mahdī 'Obeidallāh le Fāṭimide." *Hesperis* (1952): 279-324; M. Canard, trans. *La vie d'Ustādh Jawdhar*. Algiers, 1958.

S. Hamdani and V. Klemm have dealt with the genre of Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature the most extensively. See S. Hamdani. *From Da'wah to Dawlah*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Princeton University, 1995: 171-258, and V. Klemm. *Die Mission des fāṭimiden agenten*. 1989: 105-119. Klemm (*ibid.*: 119, n. 2) makes a number of very important comments with regard to Majdū's (fl. 1769-70 C.E.) presentation of *sīrah* literature as "works on the Imām", but more importantly, his placement of *siyar* works in the chapter of his work which discusses *zāhir* (as opposed to *haqā'iq*) literature. Also see her comments (*ibid.*: 117-119) on the different literary forms and rhetorical strategies employed by the different authors of mediaeval Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature and the importance of such works in general for the "ideological history" of the Ismā'ilis.

Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature highlights the human aspect of the caliph in his role as the Ismā'īlī *imām* of the time. Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature as religious biography thus encapsulates an additional aspect of the doctrine of *walāyah* in practice: the relations between the *imām* and members of his *da'wah*.⁵ As S. Hamdani argues convincingly, Fāṭimid works of *sīrah* “celebrated” individual rulers, “...whose importance lay both in the realm of sacred and religious history, as well as secular history.”⁶ Amongst another group of extant sources dating from the Fāṭimid period, the early collections of lectures known as Ismā'īlī *majālis* literature document numerous aspects of the social history of the Fāṭimid court and the history of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī

In addition, see H. Halm. *Empire of the Mahdi*. Trans. M. Bonner. Leiden: 1996: 338-342; 346-354; W. Ivanow. *A Guide to Ismaili Literature*. London, 1933: 32-37, No. 64, 66, 79, 80; Poonawala. *Biobibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature*. 48-68 (on Qāḍī al-Nu'mān); 91 (on the *Sīrah Ustādh Jawdhār* of Abū 'Alī Mansūr al-'Azīzī Jawdhārī); P. Walker. *Exploring an Islamic Empire*. London, 2002: 131-144.

⁵ S. M. Ayyad. “Epistolography in the Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid Periods.” In, Editor, J. Ashtiany. *'Abbasid Belles-Lettres*. Cambridge, 1990 : 421-422, who states, after his discussion of such works as Ustādh Jawdhār's work of *sīrah* and its use of caliphal documents, that “...it might be more apt to treat such ostensibly historical material as a distinct literary genre, giving it the name of narrative prose...”. See in addition, M. Canard, Editor & Trans. *Vie de l'Ustādh Jaudhar*. Algiers, 1958: (Intro.): 13-20.

With regard to this method of narration in Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's *Majālis*, S. Hamdani states the following: “Al-Nu'mān's use of the form and concept of *majālis*, in other words, conveys the impression of a record of information and news personally obtained and to some extent informally obtained in sessions with the *imām*, and in this sense approximates the works deriving from the institution of the same name in the Sunnī *adab* tradition.”

⁶ Hamdani. *From Da'wah to Dawlah*. 1995: 219-220. Brett states (after addressing Wansborough's argument in the article entitled “On Recomposing the Islamic History of North Africa.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1969): 161-170) that even though the Fāṭimid sources provide often autobiographical and therefore, contemporary accounts of events transpiring in the early history of the Fāṭimids, the interpretation of the sources themselves requires a certain dexterity, especially as concerns the 10th-century formation of a primarily religious, or “ideological” narration of al-Mu'izz's rule as Fāṭimid *imām*. According to Brett, this particular manner of narrating of al-Mu'izz's rule coloured substantially the historical works of the Fāṭimid authors.

da'wah. *Majālis* literature also concretely indicates the parameters of the doctrinal principle of adherence or obedience (*tā'ah*) to the *imām*.⁷

In addition to Fāṭimid *sīrah* and *majālis* literature, there are also other Fāṭimid texts that depict the centrality of the caliph-*imām* at the 10th-century Fāṭimid court. In outlining an *adab* of religious instruction, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's 10th-century work, *Kitāb al-Himmah*, articulates a specific hierarchy of inter-relations between the Fāṭimid ruler as the *imām* and the community at large.⁸ It can be said that the socio-political aspect of this hierarchy was one which was perceived in the light of contemporary discussions concerning the full gamut of the religious authority entailed in the gradated ranks of the "friends of God" (*awliyā' Allāh*), the *imāms*, the pre-Islamic prophets and the Prophet Muḥammad.⁹ The structure and

⁷ Halm. *Empire of the Mahdi*. Leiden, 1996: 341-342, on how this work in conjunction with the *Sīrah* of Ustādh Jawdhār, serve as key sources for the social history of the reign of al-Mu'izz; Hamdani. *From Da'wah to Dawlah*. 1995: 172-173; 257-258; S. Hamdani. "The *Kitāb al-majālis wa'l-musāyarāt* and Fāṭimid *Da'wa-dawlah* Relations." *Maghreb Review* (1994) 19/3-4: 266-276.

Hamdani. *From Da'wah to Dawlah*. 1995: 219, explains that the construction a new image of the *imām* in the *Majālis* is largely dependant upon the use of *akhbār* in order "to construct a model of ideal rule". She also points out that Qāḍī al-Nu'mān combined elements of the format of "literary *majālis* works" with Shī'i *akhbār* as part of an active effort to secure support for the Fāṭimid *dawlah*. In this manner, according to Hamdani, part of the "zāhiri" strategy of al-Mu'izz entailed formulating a doctrine of the *imām* which could potentially appeal to individuals and communities outside of the inner *da'wah* circle.

⁸ Halm. *Empire of the Mahdi*. 1996: 351-352, who refers in particular to the proper *adab* on the part of those attending the *majlis* of the *imām* (citing, *Kitāb al-Himmah* pp. 104-ff; 109-112); P. Sanders. *Ritual and Politics in Fāṭimid Cairo*. Albany, 1994: 16-ff.

See *Kitāb al-Himmah* pp. 57-58: "It is encumbant upon the followers of the *imāms*, the *awliyā' Allāh*, that they refine themselves through the *adab* of God."

⁹ Kāmil-Husayn, Editor. *Kitāb al-Himmah*. n.d.: (Intro.): 19; (Text): pp. 74-ff. Note here in particular Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's use of the pre-Islamic prophets as models and exemplars in terms of practice and in his discussion of the ranks of the "friends of

function of *walāyah*, in this particular sense, operated actively between both the ruler as the *imām* and members as well as non-members of the Ismā'īlī community. In Kitāb al-Himmah, Qādī al-Nu'mān inserts this particular hierarchy into the larger framework of Ismā'īlī prophetic history.¹⁰ In and of itself, Qādī al-Nu'mān's definition of *walāyah* in the context of what might be termed Fāṭimid court literature bears more than a simply striking resemblance to mediaeval Islamic works of court *adab* and Sufi handbooks.¹¹

God" (*awliyā' Allāh*). Also consult in conjunction with the above-cited passage, Da'ā'im al-Islām. Revised Trans., I. Poonawala. Delhi : Oxford University Press, 2002: 44-46; Da'ā'im al-Islām. Editor, Fyze. Cairo, 1951: pp. 26-ff., for Qādī al-Nu'mān's presentation of the pre-Islamic prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) as an essential component to his concept of *walāyah* and the legitimacy of the *ahl al-bayt*, based on a tradition of Ja'far al-Šādiq, and H. Corbin. Face de Dieu, Face de l'homme. Paris, 1983: 119-151, on Qādī al-Nu'mān's interpretation of prophetic history, based on the Asās al-Ta'wīl; Hamdani. From Da'wah to Dawlah. 1995: 171-172.

Lastly, al-Qadi notes, in her analysis of the *'ahd* section of the Da'ā'im al-Islām that Qādī al-Nu'mān introduces a social hierarchy familiar in some sense to what may be found in mediaeval works of *adab*. See al-Qadi. "An Early Fāṭimid Political Document." (1978): 73-74. Poonawala concurs with al-Qadi's reading of the *'ahd* section. See The Pillars of Islam. Trans. I. K. Poonawala. 2002: 436, n. 63. Two paragraphs, amongst certainly many others, from the Majālis wa al-Musāwarāt also hold some bearing. See Majālis wa al-Musāwarāt para. 103, p. 209 ("Discussion (*kalām*) in the *majlis* concerning the preference (*faḍl*) of the "friends of God"); para. 108, p. 231 ("People are in ranks like the ranks (*darajāt*) of jewels and their levels (*marātibī-hā*)").

¹⁰ Kitāb al-Himmah pp. 78-ff. In this context, Qādī al-Nu'mān's use of *khawf* draws upon a Qur'ānic passage frequently associated with the *awliyā' Allāh*, based on Qur'ān (10: 62): "Behold! Verily on the friends of God (*awliyā' Allāh*) there is no fear (*lā khawfun*) nor shall they grieve."²²

¹¹ See Kitāb al-Himmah p. 82, where Qādī al-Nu'mān states: "...I have already presented in this book what is incumbent upon the servants (*al-'ibād*) concerning the love (*maḥabbah*) of the "friends of God", purifying hearts and the tenets (*i'tiqād*) of consciences and intents...". Other examples of Qādī al-Nu'mān's presentation of particular virtues include "forbearance" (*ḥilm*) and patience (*ṣabr*). For the discussion of these, see Kitāb al-Himmah pp. 57, 99.

The recent article by F. Soberioj, entitled "Ibn Khafīf's Kitāb al-Iqtisād and Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī's Ādāb al-Murīdīn." *Journal of Semitic Studies* (1998) 63/2: 327-345, addresses the practical guides to mediaeval Sufi *adab* and the thematic "clusters" dealing with ethics and spiritual practice (*vis à vis* the teacher or the

The Kitāb al-Himmah also reveals the degree to which Qāḍī al-Nu'mān introduced into the public setting of the Fāṭimid court select elements of Ismā'īlī doctrine, such as the concept of *walāyah*. By way of explanation, in the section on "fear" (*al-khawf*) from the Kitāb al-Himmah, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān states:

It is incumbent upon the one who recognizes the *imāms* that he fears them just as he fears his Lord (*rabba-hu*), and he dreads them just as he dreads God, for if God the Mighty and Exalted has joined obedience to them (*tā'atahum*) to obedience to Him and has made them intermediaries (*al-wasā'it*) in what is between Him and His creation, and witnesses (*al-shuhadā'*) for His servants (*'ibādi-hi*), then their contentment (*riḍā'*) is bound to the contentment of God, and their displeasure is tied (*ma'qūd*) to His displeasure, and to them He gives rewards and the others He punishes. Ja'far b. Muḥammad stated: ^{cc}...our Shī'ah are from us and the remainder of the people are in the Fire; through us he follows God, through us he obeys God and through us God renounces, due to our being obedient, as it was submission to God, and the one who renounces us, has renounced God. ^{cc12} Our obedience resolutely preceded from God before His creation, so that He does not accept one deed except through us, for we are the "gate" (*bāb*) of God and His proof (*ḥujjah*), and we are his safe-guarders (*umanā'ū-hu*) over His creation, the custodians of His secret and the repositories of His knowledge, for it is the duty of all servants to approach (*al-taḳarrub*) through obedience (*al-tā'ah*) the friends of God (*awliyā' Allāh*) and to adorn them with sound deeds

community) that appear in Ibn Khafīf's and the later Sufi author, al-Suhrawardī's works. See as well, F. Meier. "Ein knigge für Sufi's." *Rivista degli studi orientali* (1957) 32: 485-524; B. Radtke. Adab al-mulūk. ein Handbuch zur islamischen Mystik aus dem 4./10. Jh. Beirut/ Stuttgart, 1991; O. Safi's article, "Bargaining with Baraka: Persian Sufism, "Mysticism", and Pre-Modern Politics." *Muslim World* (2000) 90: 264-281, offers forth an additional perspective onto this chapter's discussion of what may be termed *walāyah* in practice. Given his focus on Sufi hagiographical accounts of the Saljūq period, his discussion constitutes a thorough review of the Saljūq historical narratives of political legitimization through the Sufi sanction of "saintly *wilāyah*".

¹² *Hadīth* of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. See Da'a'im al-Islām. Volume I: p. 57.

(*bi al-a'māl al-sāliḥah*).¹³

Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's introduction of *walāyah* as the crowning feature of religious and political authority and as the "most preferred" of Islamic religious practices, occurred at a time which was crucial for the founding of a legitimizing identity for the Fāṭimids.¹⁴ The Kitāb al-Himmah and Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's other works, however, have a great deal more to say about the doctrine of *walāyah*. In Chapter Four, we will have another opportunity to look at Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's theory of *walāyah* in conjunction with al-Mu'ayyad's typologies of the *imām*.

¹³ Kitāb al-Himmah pp. 78-79.

¹⁴ Primarily the argument first put forth by al-Qadi, based on the Da'ā'im al-Islām. See in particular, W. al-Qadi. "An Early Fāṭimid Political Document." *Studia Islamica* (1978) 48: 71-108. Also see M. Brett. "The Realm of the Imām: The Fāṭimids in the Tenth Century." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1996) 59: 436-438, an article which, in many respects, offers a general critique of H. Halm's monograph on the Fāṭimids in addition to reviewing critically the prevailing scholarly approaches to the study of Fāṭimid texts and Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī authors.

See A. A. A. Fyzee, Editor. Da'ā'im al-Islām. Cairo, 1951. Volume I: pp. 3-103; The Pillars of Islam. Trans. A. A. A. Fyzee. Revised Trans. I. K. H. Poonawala. Oxford: 2002: 18-122; Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn. Uyūn al-Akḥbār. Editor, M. Ghālib. Beirut, 1973. Volume VI: pp. 43-ff. Poonawala states in his introduction to his revised translation of Fyzee's earlier work: "...it is in the chapter on *walāyah* that Nu'mān's most original contribution lies." See in addition, A. Nanji. "An Ismā'īlī Theory of *Walāyah* in the Da'ā'im al-Islām of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān." In, D. P. Little, Editor. Essays on Islamic Civilization. Leiden, 1976b. On Qāḍī al-Nu'mān as a "jurist", see R. J. H. Gottheil. "A Distinguished Family of Fatimide Cadis (al-Nu'mān)." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1906) 27: 217-296; R. J. H. Gottheil, Editor. Abū Umar Muḥammad Ibn Yūsūf ibn Ya'qūb al-Kindī. The History of the Egyptian Cadis. Paris, 1908: (Intro.): xviii-xix; W. Madelung. "The Sources of Ismā'īlī Law." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (1976) 35: 29-40; I. K. Poonawala. "Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān and Ismā'īlī Jurisprudence." In, F. Daftary, Editor. Mediaeval Ismā'īlī History and Thought. Cambridge, 1996: 117-143; I. K. Poonawala. "A Reconsideration of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's *Madhab*." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1974) 37: 572-579.

As discussed in the course of Chapter One, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī works served a decisive social function with regard to defining the ideals of dynastic rule but also in order to document through historical narration a self-reflective stance towards the consolidation of religio-political authority. In Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's collection of *majālis*, his own personal "audiences" with al-Manṣūr (r. 334-341 A.H./ 945-952 C.E.) and al-Mu'izz (r. 342-386 A.H./ 953-975 C.E.), in their respective roles as Fāṭimid *imām*, were immediately recorded and preserved as part of historical memory. In the Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt, autobiographical narration occurs in tandem with religious biography in order to valorize the Fāṭimid caliph-*imām*'s widespread influence at the Fāṭimid court as well as upon the *da'wah* at work.¹⁵ The method of narration in the Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt also concretely reflects its author's self-awareness in both writing and delivering *da'wah* lectures to his audience. Throughout the Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān is careful to note the Fāṭimid *imām*'s encouragement, approval and sanction of not only his lectures and works in general, but also al-Mu'izz's astounding astuteness in more than one field of the religious sciences, and

¹⁵ Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt. 1978: para. 83, p. 142; para. 106, p. 212; para. 134, p. 269; para. 156, p. 301. Para. 158, p. 305, refers specifically to Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's reading of the Kitāb Da'ā'im al-Islām in the *majlis*. Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's reading of the *majlis* "lectures" is also referred to in Maqrīzī's Khitat. See Khitat. Bulāq Edition (fascimile). Beirut, 1971: Volume I: pp. 390-391; Volume II: pp. 341-342. Khitat. Volume I: pp. 388-400, as H. Halm has already adequately addressed, discusses the Ismā'īlī *majlis* in 10th-century Fāṭimid Cairo in more general terms. Volume I: pp. 458-460 discusses the Fāṭimid *Dār al-'ilm*, up until the time of the "military vizier" al-Afḍal, c.a. 589 A.H. See in addition, P. E. Walker. "Fāṭimid Institutions of Learning." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* (1997) 34: 179-200.

beyond.¹⁶ With Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's particular attention to the doctrine of *walāyah* and the practice of *tā'ah* to the *imām*, the Da'ā'im al-Islām and the Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt would become texts of fundamental importance for the Fāṭimids and their associated *da'wah* in the course of the 10th-11th Centuries. Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Fāṭimid works therefore served a specific purpose-- to support doctrinally al-Mu'izz's shift in emphasis from caliphate to *imāmate*-- and were polemical when necessary.

S. Hamdani has indicated, concerning the prevailing scholarly approach to 10-11th-century Fāṭimid history:

In much the same manner as moderations in Ismā'īlī doctrine concerning *imāma* had been largely overlooked in scholarship on Fāṭimid rule, so was the ideological basis informing relations between the ruling imam and his subjects. That is, while historiography on the Fāṭimid period of course treats relations between the state and subject, much of it does so largely from the perspective of administrative history.¹⁷

There are marked degrees of variation in scholarly interpretation with regard to Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Kitāb al-Himmah as a work of Fāṭimid court literature and its presentation of the figure of the Fāṭimid *imām*. Taken as a

¹⁶ Al-Mu'izz as "a book-worm", presented in Halm. Empire of the Mahdi. 1996: 366-370. See in particular, Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt. Editors, H. el-Feki, I. Chabbouh & M el-Yalaoui. Tunis, 1978: para. 276 and para. 169 in particular, where Ptolemy appears to al-Mu'izz in a dream and explains a matter of astronomical calculation to him, far beyond the capabilities of the astronomers at the court.

Also see Idris 'Imād al-Dīn. Uyūn al-Akhbār. Editor, M. Ghālib. Beirut, 1973. Volume VI: pp. 44-50, on al-Mu'izz's role in the authorship of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Da'ā'im al-Islām.

¹⁷ Hamdani. From Da'wah to Dawlah. 1995: 224-225. Also see B. Shah. The Imām as Interpreter of the Qur'ān according to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363/ 974). Unpublished M.A. thesis. McGill University, 1984: 14.

whole, the divergent scholarly interpretations of this particular work's ramifications for the social history of the 10th-century Fāṭimid court concisely sum up some of the existing theoretical stumbling-blocks as well as reveal a larger, wide-spread hesitancy with approaching the thematic concerns of 10-11th-century Fāṭimid historical texts. As a result, examining whether or not Fāṭimid historical works were solidly enmeshed in contemporary models of historical narration has frequently fallen by the proverbial wayside.¹⁸

For example, B. Shah, in his M.A. thesis on Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's doctrine of the *imām* as the interpreter of the Qur'ān, refers to the Kitāb al-Himmah as "...a comprehensive source for the soteriological aspect of the *Imāmah* from the Ismā'īlī point of view".¹⁹ Sanders introduces from this work the chapters on *adab* at the Fāṭimid court as historical examples of socio-political ritual embedded in religious devotion and practice.²⁰ While S. Hamdani employs select passages of Kitāb al-Himmah as a source akin to Fāṭimid court literature, she does so in such a way as to reinforce her argument that Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's aim in this work was to define a "social order" and to distinguish the rule of the Fāṭimid caliph as *imām* from "the rule of worldly kings" for a

¹⁸ P. Sanders, "Claiming the Past : Ghadīr Khumm and the Rise of Hāfizī Historiography in Late Fāṭimid Egypt. " *Studia Islamica* (1992) 75: 81-82; Walker. Exploring an Islamic Empire. 2002: 8-10; 131-133.

¹⁹ B. Shah. The Imām as Interpreter of the Qur'ān according to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363/ 974). 1984: 45-48, 128.

²⁰ P. Sanders. Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fāṭimid Cairo. Albany, 1994: 14-18, drawing upon Kitāb al-Himmah pp. 109-116 ("On standing and sitting in the presence of the *imām*"). Majālis wa al-Musāvarāt para. 6, p. 59, likewise addresses the ceremonial kissing of the ground in front of the *imām* ("Kissing the ground is not a bow of prostration (*sujūdan*) in actuality").

potentially, largely non-Ismā'īlī audience.²¹ From another perspective, M. Kāmil-Husayn, the editor of the Kitāb al-Himmah, makes some very intriguing comments in the introduction to his edition. In his opinion, one of the primary aims of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī works, including Kitāb al-Himmah, was to strengthen the position of the *imām* in direct response to the non-Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī "Exaggerators" (*Ghulāt*).²²

Situating al-Mu'ayyad's efforts to record his experiences at the Būyid and Fāṭimid courts and his *da'wah* activities in the light of the 10th-11th-century genre of Fāṭimid *sīrah* literature will then provide insights into the practice of *tā'ah* to the *imām*, in terms of the presentation of *walāyah* in the different social settings of the Fāṭimid court and the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *majlis*.

²¹ S. Hamdani. From Da'wah to Dawlah. 1995: 169-175. A "zāhiri" construction of Fāṭimid legitimacy, or one to appeal to a non-Ismā'īlī audience, who are in the majority. Since it remains a fundamentally important text after the collapse of the Fāṭimids, Hamdani believes that it represents a "reassessment of Shī'ī expectations." She also states that the work addressed "what constitutes legitimate power or authority." Yet foremost in her analysis (*ibid.*: 171), there is an emphasis on Kitāb al-Himmah as a text that outlines "social order" and which also defines what constituted the Ismā'īlī community of the time. According to Hamdani, it depicts the shift from *da'wah* to *dawlah*, due to the manner in which it reflects the "Fāṭimid perception of the constitution of their state."

S. Hamdani views Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's works as indications of a shift to *dawlah*, since a *zāhiri* concept of the *imām* is portrayed in these Fāṭimid works. In the case of the Kitāb al-Himmah, Ismā'īlī *tā'ah* to the *imām* is discussed in terms of representing the *adab* of court literature and ceremonial "protocol". Such a reconstruction, based on a close reading of the sources themselves, aims to emphasize that the doctrine of the *imām* has become more *zāhiri* (in this instance, referring to the potential for the doctrine to be intelligible and appealing to a non-initiate, non-Ismā'īlī audience, rather than simply "exoteric") than was the case at the beginning of the Fāṭimid dynasty. S. Hamdani, however, does not present the issue of Ismā'īlī *adab* in terms of complementary discussions of the ranks of the *awliyā'* in the *da'wah* itself nor the doctrine of *walāyah* in relation to current articulations of religio-political authority at this time. These are two particular topics of debate that would have held relevance for the non-Ismā'īlī audiences Qāḍī al-Nu'mān might have been aiming to reach through his works.

²² M. Kāmil-Husayn, Editor. Kitāb al-Himmah. Cairo, n.d.: (Intro.): 21-26.

Considered through the lens of the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadīyah, the Da'ā'im al-Islām studied in a *majlis* held by al-Mu'ayyad with the Būyid *amīr* Abū Kālījār offers an example of the application of some of the centralizing features of the Fāṭimid “state” (*dawlah*), as S. Hamdani terms it, in 11th-century Būyid Shīrāz. From the larger historical context, one can then see particular dynamics at work. In the case of Abū Kālījār, the use of a Fāṭimid text in the *majlis* indicates that it was indeed an introductory text for non-Ismā'īlī audiences.²³ Other accounts drawn from the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadīyah provide examples of the weekly Ismā'īlī *majlis* held in Shīrāz and Ahwāz amongst the Daylamīs.²⁴

That Qādī al-Nu'mān's Da'ā'im al-Islām has been considered by a number of scholars to be a legalistic hand-book tends to reinforce any sort of interpretation which posits that the mediaeval Ismā'īlī *majlis* concerned itself with “traditionalist” subjects in addition to prominent *da'wah* teachings. Exactly what remains open to enquiry is the extent to which the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *majlis*, centered in Cairo, took definitive shape and institution form through “...monopolising the process of determining orthodoxy” and standardizing *da'wah* teachings.²⁵ Köhler has also drawn parallels between the Fāṭimid institution of learning, the “house of wisdom” (*dār al-'ilm*) and the *madrasah*, especially in the light of the manner in

²³ This is bolstered by further evidence, in that al-Mu'ayyad, as a member of the Fāṭimid *da'wah* would have most likely followed *da'wah* protocol for the use of certain texts in religious instruction. See Sīrah pp. 44-46.

²⁴ Sīrah pp. 9-12; 54-68.

²⁵ G. Makdisi. “Baghdad, Bologna, and Scholasticism.” J. W. Drijvers & A. A. MacDonald, Editors. Centres of Learning. Leiden, 1995: 155.

which legal texts and instruction in law formed part of the Fāṭimid curriculum, in particular, Qādī al-Nu'mān's works.²⁶ Stern articulates the issue at hand in a concise manner:

These, however, were lectures on law, and of a more public character than [sic] theological lectures meant for the members of the sect. For them there were systematic courses which were then published in the form of treatises, with or without a formal division into "lectures" (*majālis*). Or else the form of lecture was more prominent. This second type of lecture finally predominated and the *majālis al-ḥikma*, "lectures on wisdom" (i.e. on Ismā'īlī theology) became a recognized literary form.²⁷

The subject of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *majlis* carries within it additional complexities, especially if the study of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *majlis* is extracted from its habitual Fāṭimid historical and social contexts centered in Cairo. In the afore-mentioned example from the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadīyyah, would the *majlis* between al-Mu'ayyad and Abū Kālījār represent the establishment of a Fāṭimid institution in 11th-century Shīrāz or a formalized setting of religious instruction? As shall be seen in the following section, the potential establishment of Fāṭimid *da'wah* activities, with the official sanction of the Būyid court in 11th-century Shīrāz, is precisely what launched the Sunnī establishment into full attack against al-Mu'ayyad. It may be argued that the *majlis* setting, however, employing the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s "hand-books" for religious instruction, alludes to another issue.

²⁶ B. Köhler. Die Wissenschaft unter den ägyptischen Fatimiden. Hildesheim. 1994: 56-64; 76-80

²⁷ S. M. Stern. "Cairo as the Centre of the Ismā'īlī Movement." In, Studies in Early Ismā'īlism. Jerusalem/ Leiden. 1983: 237.

Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt documented the process by which the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mu‘izz put forth his interpretations of doctrine based on the Qur’ān. As a Fāṭimid work, it thereby marked the emergence of an ideal model of the transmission of religious knowledge for the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī *da‘wah*. The caliph-*imām* and members of the *da‘wah* worked in consort as to provide a range of levels of religious instruction for the “community of believers”. In fact, Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān himself aims to underscore that this ideal model was put into practice when he narrates al-Mu‘izz’s guidance and direction as a “scholar”-*imām* during the drafting of a number of works for the Fāṭimid *da‘wah*.²⁸

Brett, S. Hamdani and al-Qadi suggest that the Da‘ā’im al-Islām aimed to solidify the position of the Fāṭimid caliph as a ruler over a diverse community; a community to which the caliph held different responsibilities, and over which, as *imām*, “submission” was required in practice rather than “conformity” in interpretation.²⁹ In simpler terms, these scholars maintain that the Fāṭimids’ centralization of power coincided with a firmly articulated stance on the parameters of the *imām*’s religio-political authority *vis à vis* the community as well as the Ismā‘īlī *da‘wah* itself. Certainly it can be said that this was one aim of the Ismā‘īlī doctrine of *walāyah* addressed in Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s Da‘ā’im al-Islām.³⁰

²⁸ Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt para. 185, p. 361.

²⁹ Brett, “Realm of the Imām.” (1996): 446; W. al-Qadi. “An Early Fāṭimid Political Document.” *Studia Islamica* (1978) 48: 103.

³⁰ See in particular, Brett (*ibid.*); Poonawala. “Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān and Ismā‘īlī Jurisprudence.” (1996): 127, who states that there is a “legalistic place to *al-walāya*”

There is another facet to the Fāṭimids' efforts to consolidate *da'wah* activities under al-Mu'izz. In her treatment of the *'ahd* section of the Da'ā'im, al-Qadi puts forth an extremely relevant argument. She points out that included in the chapter on the *'ahd* of 'Alī is a narrative concerned in part with al-Mahdī's establishment of the Fāṭimid dynasty, despite the opposition to his rule as the *imām*. Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's explicit correlation of the unification of religious and political authority in the figure of a single person ruling over a unified empire to al-Mahdī's legitimacy, "...was very relevant to the situation of al-Mu'izz", who also grappled with perhaps what might be best termed "dissident" *du'āt*.³¹ Equally, such concerns informed the composition of the Da'ā'im al-Islām.³²

Alongside of these points, it is also important to note here that S. Hamdani draws a link between what she calls the "broader", less "specialized" nature of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Da'ā'im al-Islām and the Fāṭimids' move towards a less exclusive, more exoteric doctrinal stance on the concept of the *imām*. Hamdani's argument suggests that the shift in the

in the introduction of this doctrine as a "pillar" of practice; al-Qadi. "An Early Fāṭimid Political Document." (1978): 48.

³¹ al-Qadi. "An Early Fāṭimid Political Document." *Studia Islamica* (1978) 48: 104. The Majālis wa al-Musāwarāt para. 219, pp. 419-420 specifically refers to the problem of "*ghuluww*".

³² For the text of the *'ahd* of 'Alī, see Da'ā'im al-Islām pp. 411-431; The Pillars of Islam. Trans. I. K. Poonawala. 2002: pp. 436-456.

al-Qadi. "An Early Fāṭimid Political Document." *Studia Islamica* (1978): 105-107. Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's incorporation into the Da'ā'im of what al-Qadi explains was already a widely circulated recension of the *'ahd*, used in conjunction with older versions of the sayings of 'Alī from Nahj al-Balāghah, ensured its continued textual authority, acclaim and transmission. Al-Qadi's research strongly suggests the earlier recension of this chapter of the Da'ā'im al-Islām circulated in the form of a compendium, though points to an established oral transmission of the work as well.

presentation of Ismā'īlī doctrines notable in Qādī al-Nu'mān's works thus served the needs of a larger audience and no longer simply the members of the *da'wah*, thereby reflecting the Fāṭimids' 10th-century increased dynastic expansion and diversification.³³

In ways similar to S. Hamdani, Dachroui touches upon the underlying reasons behind the "broader" presentation of doctrine in the setting of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *majlis*. The setting of the public lecture necessitates a different format for presenting doctrinal arguments, to suit a didactic purpose. Dachroui, however, is the only scholar to have voiced an opinion with respect to the content of the works of *majālis* as recorded lectures in comparison with the presentation and format of Ismā'īlī doctrine appearing in other, more specifically doctrinal works. With regard to the employment of Qādī al-Nu'mān's Da'ā'im al-Islām in the context of the mediaeval Ismā'īlī *majlis*, Dachroui's remarks buttress Brett's theory that the Da'ā'im al-Islām functioned as a "hand-book" or a "utopian" manual of Ismā'īlī Fāṭimid law.³⁴

In keeping with Hamdani, Brett proposes that the Da'ā'im al-Islām also

³³ Hamdani. From Da'wah to Dawlah. 1995: 86-91; 224-225. Hamdani (*ibid.* 86-87) states the following : "Qadi al-Nu'man's *zāhirī* formulation of a mandate for the authority of the Fatimid imams, should thus be seen as responding not only to the exigencies and realities of the actual rule of an imam, but also to the issue of his universal legitimacy." Dachroui, Editor. Iftitāh al-Da'wah. (Intro.): 22: "In actuality, al-Nu'mān contributed largely to the elaboration of Ismā'īlī law (*fiqh*) in the light of the doctrine of the impeccable Imāms and especially in close collaboration with al-Mu'izz himself. One notices in the *Magālis* the zeal and effort that he displays in codifying Ismā'īlī law and in its "vulgarization" for the public teaching (*durās al-hikma*) of the doctrine of the Imāms."

³⁴ Brett. "The Realm of the Imām." (1996); Dachroui, Editor. Iftitāh al-Da'wah (Intro.): 22, n. 3.

served to present the Fāṭimid's ideals of religio-political rule.³⁵ The possibility that the Da'ā'im al-Islām did not solely serve as a text for legal rulings and juridical decisions does not diminish the important conclusions S. Hamdani, Poonawala and al-Qadi have reached concerning the Da'ā'im al-Islām's far-reaching influence on the development of later Ismā'īlī authors active in the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*. Chapter Three, however, will provide further occasion to consider the compendium format of works of Fāṭimid *majālis* literature in terms of this genre's presentation of doctrinal principles and *da'wah* teachings. As it shall be argued, the collections of Fāṭimid *majālis* do not necessarily reflect a more "general" or "broader" presentation of Ismā'īlī doctrine, but rather replicate the exigencies of the instructional setting of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *majlis*. In the following section of Chapter Two, however, we will return again to some of the assertions concerning the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *majlis*, but from the vantage point of al-Mu'ayyad's *da'wah* activities in 11th-century Shīrāz.

Section b: Studying Ismā'īlī Texts in 11th-century Shīrāz: al-Mu'ayyad and the "Conversion" of the Būyid Amīr Abū Kālījār

429 A.H. <i>Shawwāl I</i> / [July] 1038 C.E.	Beginning of the <u>Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah</u> . Celebration of 'Id al-Fitr in Shīrāz. The first out-break of
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³⁵ Brett. "The Realm of the Imām." (1996); Dachroui, Editor. Iftitāh al-Da'wah. (Intro.): 22, n. 3.

	<i>fitnah.</i>
429 A.H./ 1038 C.E.	Stay in Fasā for one year.
430-433 A.H./ 1039-1042 C.E.	<i>Majlis</i> with Abū Kālījār. Restoration of the <i>masjid</i> in Ahwāz. The second out-break of <i>fitnah</i> . Al-Mu'ayyad debates at the Būyid court. House arrest for seven months in Shīrāz.
Ca. 433-436 A.H./ 1043-1045 C.E.	Exile from Shīrāz, through Jannāba to Ahwāz.
436-437 A.H./ 1045-1046 C.E.	To Mosul. Pilgrimage to Kufa and Karbala. Arrival in Cairo.

The Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, an 11th-century autobiographical work, narrates three periods of exile, travel and flight in the life of the Fātimid dynasty's chief Ismā'īlī missionary, Abū Naṣr Hibat Allāh al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. ca. 470 A.H./ 1078 C.E.). The opening of the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah begins with al-Mu'ayyad's descriptions of his preparations in the main mosque in Shīrāz on 'Īd al-Fitr (429 A.H./ July 1038 C.E.).³⁶ A complaint lodged against al-Mu'ayyad by the local judge (*qāḍī*) Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Fazārī to the Būyid *amīr* Abū Kālījār places into context al-

³⁶ Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 2.

Mu'ayyad's description of the growing tumult in Shīrāz over the matter of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s presence in the city.³⁷

Al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography, the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, is a frequently overlooked primary source for the religious and social histories of 11th-century Western Iran, Syria and Egypt. It serves as an important written record of mediaeval Ismā'īlī *da'wah* activities (i.e., conversion narratives, polemical debates, public preaching and religious instruction) as well as Fāṭimid-Saljūq diplomatic relations. Its significance as a source is due to its author's unique participation and placement in the pivotal events of a century one Western scholar has described as having produced "une transformation de la civilisation musulmane", in an "age of transition."³⁸

Al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography records the fierce competition amongst the different Muslim religious communities in Shīrāz for both popular support and the Būyid court's sanction. In addition, the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah attests to the 11th-century "Persian" Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s rapprochement with a fundamentally Fāṭimid doctrinal work, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Da'ā'im al-Islām. Of particular importance for this chapter's discussion of Ismā'īlī works of

³⁷ Sīrah pp. 63-64; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 25; 142-145, 150. Beshir. The Fāṭimid Caliphate 386-487 A.H./ 996-1094 A.D.. Unpublished D. Phil thesis. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1970 : 151, n. 108, first indicated that in School of Oriental and African Studies MS. No. 25740. Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn. Risālat al-Bayān limā Wajab. folio 41a, al-Mu'ayyad refers to himself as a "trustee" (*mutawālī*) of the *da'wah* in Fārs, rather than by the title of any recognizable *da'wah* post. In Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn's other work, the Uyūn al-Akhhār, however, there appears to be no discussion of this presented in the course of al-Mu'ayyad's biography. See Qutbuddin. Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī. 1999: 19-53.

³⁸ See in particular, Sīrah pp. 4-76; Islamic Civilisation. Editor, D.S. Richards. Oxford, 1973: vii.

sīrah and *majālis* literature is the account of al-Mu'ayyad's employment of the Da'ā'im al-Islām in the context of a study session (*majlis*) with the Būyid *amīr* Abū Kālījār. The first part of this section will focus on al-Mu'ayyad's work of Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature in order to consider the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah as a "local" account of the Fātimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s activities and modes of religious instruction in Western Iran. The second part of this section will address the "social strife" (*fitnah*) in Būyid Shīrāz and Ahwāz that followed al-Mu'ayyad's growing influence on the "converted" Būyid *amīr* Abū Kālījār.

In one of the Sīrah's accounts of al-Mu'ayyad's relations with the Būyid *amīr* Abū Kālījār, al-Mu'ayyad and Abū Kālījār read together a chapter of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Da'ā'im al-Islām in a weekly *majlis* prior to the outbreak of *fitnah* in Shīrāz.³⁹ In ways that are very indicative of al-Mu'ayyad's method of presentation in the *majlis*, the text of Sīrah reads as follows:

...he set up the *majālis*, which were called into session in his presence on Friday nights provided that they commence with the recitation of something from the sections on the hours of the Last Judgement (*qawāri'*) in the Qur'ān. He praised highly a chapter from the Kitāb al-Da'ā'im, and it was repeated three times in order that he could ask questions about whatever he wanted from it and so that I could answer his questions about it. It concluded with the praise to God (*al-tamhīd*) and with the *khutbah* to our Master, the *Imām*, may God lengthen his rule, and to the one who succeeds him. Then I withdrew to my house.⁴⁰

³⁹ Shah. The Imām as the Interpreter of the Qur'ān. 1984: 13; Sīrah p. 43, on al-Mu'ayyad reading a chapter from the Da'ā'im al-Islām to Abū Kālījār.

⁴⁰ Sīrah p. 43; Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 43; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 16: who divides the *majālis* held by al-Mu'ayyad with Abū Kālījār into four parts : reading from the Qur'ān; a chapter from the Da'ā'im; the discussion of a "theme" between al-

The account of the *majlis* between al-Mu'ayyad and the Būyid *amīr* Abū Kālījār from the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah is a frequently cited passage and often referred to in order to indicate al-Mu'ayyad's "conversion" of Abū Kālījār to Ismā'īlism.⁴¹ The Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah also provides concrete textual documentation of the 11th-century Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s application of the Da'ā'im al-Islām in the context of religious instruction outside of the center of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in Cairo.⁴² At the same time, this particular passage from the Sīrah quite clearly indicates the manner in which written texts were incorporated and employed in the *majlis*. A written chapter from Qādī al-Nu'mān's Da'ā'im al-Islām is used in conjunction with the recitation of certain parts of the Qur'ān, which, as al-Mu'ayyad points out, Abū Kālījār

Mu'ayyad and Abū Kālījār; and finally, the *khuṭbah* for "*mawlanā al-imām*". Also, see Klemm (*ibid.*): 157-158.

⁴¹ Qutbuddin. Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī. 1999: 28-29

⁴² According to Qādī al-Nu'mān's own account in his Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt, the Da'ā'im al-Islām was written under the scholarly direction of the caliph al-Mu'izz at the time of the foundation of the Fāṭimid dynasty in Cairo. Both the Fāṭimid and the later "Egyptian" sources attest to the fact that Qādī al-Nu'mān read the Da'ā'im al-Islām in the setting of the 10th-century Fāṭimid *da'wah*'s *majlis*.

S. M. Stern points to the "evolution" of Qādī al-Nu'mān's works: "It is remarkable that the Ta'wīl al-Da'ā'im is divided into *majālis*; this clearly indicates its origin as a lecture course." Also, see Stern. "Cairo as the Centre of the Ismā'īlī Movement." (1983): 238.

Halm has indicated (Empire of the Mahdi. 1996: 376, citing Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt para. 283) that Qādī al-Nu'mān's Majālis refers to the drafting of the Ta'wīl al-Da'ā'im al-Islām, in addition to the audience of the individuals who have taken an oath of loyalty in order to attend the sessions discussing this work.

See Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt para. 83, p. 142; para. 106, p. 212; para. 134, p. 269; para. 156, p. 301. Para. 158, p. 305, refers specifically to Qādī al-Nu'mān's reading of the Kitāb Da'ā'im al-Islām in the *majlis*. Qādī al-Nu'mān's reading of the *majlis* "lectures" is also referred to in Maqrīzī's Khitat. See Khitat. Bulāq Edition (fascimile). Reprint. Beirut, 1971: Volume I: pp. 390-391; Volume II: pp. 341-342. Khitat. Volume I: pp. 388-400.

suggested and requested himself. The *majlis* is then followed by the traditional closures to a lecture: the *tamhīd* and *khutbah*.⁴³ As al-Mu'ayyad indicates, portions of the chapter from the Da'ā'im al-Islām were read over the course of several lectures, so as to facilitate additional questions and commentaries on the written text itself or perhaps other themes as well. Al-Mu'ayyad's narration of Abū Kālījār's active interest in the Da'ā'im al-Islām makes it apparent that the lectures held on a weekly basis were in a *majlis* setting akin to a study session rather than one of a "literary salon".⁴⁴

It would be difficult to find a more appropriate passage from a historical work which details al-Mu'ayyad's method of holding a *majlis* as well as his use of Fātimid texts in the course of instruction. Another example of al-

⁴³ Additional examples from the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah as well as other collections of mediaeval sermons are provided in Chapter III of this dissertation.

⁴⁴ Article, "Madjlis." Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd Edition. Leiden: 1031-1033; F. Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schriftum. Volume II. Leiden, 1967: 83-85, primarily on works of *majālis* and *amālī*.

Some prime examples of the caliph's *majlis* may be found in al-Jāhiz's Kitāb al-Tājī. Editor, A. Z. Pashā. Cairo, 1914. French trans., Ch. Pellat. Le Livre de la couronne. Paris, 1954. Other examples are given in D. Brookshaw, "Palace, Pavillions and Pleasure-gardens : the Context and Setting of the Medieval *Majlis*." Middle Eastern Literatures (2003): 6/2: 99-223.

M. R. Cohen & S. Somekh, "Interreligious Majālis in Early Fatimid Egypt." In, H. Lazarus-Yafeh & M. Cohen, Editors. The Majlis. Wiesbaden, 1999: 128-136; S. Stroumsa, "Ibn al-Rāwandī's *sū' adab al-mujādala*: the Role of Bad Manners in Medieval Disputations." In, H. Lazarus-Yafeh & M. Cohen, Editors. The Majlis. Wiesbaden, 1999: 66-67. During the reign of the Fātimid caliph al-Mu'izz, the vizier Ibn Killis also hosted his own private *majlis* study sessions. The *majālis* at the Fātimid court in the presence of al-Mu'izz discussed in this article are supported by an important Genizah document. S. Stroumsa, with regard to the extant Ibn al-Rāwandī material, examines the *majlis* as a forum for debate.

For an addition discussion of the *majlis*, albeit neither from the Ismā'īlī nor Fātimid contexts, see N. Pourjavādī, "Majālis-i Aḥmad-i Ghazzālī bā ḥudūr-i Yusūf-i Šūfī." Ma'ārif (1381) 55: 3-20, which presents detailed information on the *majālis* Aḥmad-i Ghazzālī (d. 1161 C.E.) delivered in Baghdad and which are partially preserved in Ibn al-Jawzī's work on sermons, the Kitāb al-Qussās wa al-Mudhākirīn.

Mu'ayyad's employment of the Da'ā'im al-Islām in a public setting exists, however, in the course of his first polemical debate at the Būyid court of Abū Kālījār. Al-Mu'ayyad refers to the Da'ā'im al-Islām in his debate (*munāẓarah*) on the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān.⁴⁵ According to the Sīrah, al-Mu'ayyad's skillful disputation in defense of the Ismā'īlī concept of the allegorical interpretation of the Qur'ān had a highly favorable outcome. Abū Kālījār is convinced by the arguments al-Mu'ayyad upheld during the debate and then wishes to study with al-Mu'ayyad.⁴⁶ Though scholarly debates were often a standard feature of the court *majlis*, as also seen in a number of other examples from al-Mu'ayyad's Sīrah, it points to the fact that more frequently than not, the lectures on Ismā'īlī doctrine held by al-Mu'ayyad in Shīrāz were study sessions (either formal or informal) or sermons.⁴⁷

As to the distinctiveness of al-Mu'ayyad's autobiographical accounts of his troubles and triumphs at the Būyid court, it is necessary to mention once again that al-Mu'ayyad's Sīrah is virtually the only extant source which contains any degree of historical information on the Fātimid Ismā'īlī *majlis* in 11th century Western Iran. Moreover, the Sīrah permits a number of

⁴⁵ Sīrah pp. 16-25; In the text of the debate, al-Mu'ayyad is referred to as Hibat Allāh b. Mūsā, Sīrah p. 16.

⁴⁶ Sīrah pp. 43-44.

⁴⁷ With regard to al-Mu'ayyad's accounts of his debates held at the Būyid court of Abū Kālījār, Wasserstein states (p. 110): "Unlike the great majority of such texts, the memoirs of this Ismā'īlī missionary appear in large part to offer a reflection of historical truth." D. J. Wasserstein. "The 'Majlis of al-Riḍā': A Religious Debate in the Court of the Caliph Al-Ma'mūn as Represented in a Shī'ī Hagiographical Work about the Eighth Imām 'Alī ibn Mūsā Al-Riḍā." In, H. Lazarus-Yafeh & M. Cohen, Editors. The Majlis. Wiesbaden, 1999: 108-118; 109-110 (on al-Mu'ayyad in particular).

previously unnoted observations of the employment of the Da'ā'im al-Islām as a Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī text in the context of religious instruction, given the fact that Abū Kālījār's introduction to Ismā'īlī doctrine, as far as it can be ascertained, is through the guided study of a chapter from this work. As the Da'ā'im al-Islām focusses primarily on the basic duties of Islam and "pillars" of practice, it is my opinion that in the particular example of Abū Kālījār's *majlis* with al-Mu'ayyad, the chapter from the Da'ā'im al-Islām constitutes the very sort of introduction to Ismā'īlī doctrine suitable for non-Ismā'īlīs or potential "converts". But at the end of this section, we shall return to the question of Abū Kālījār's "conversion" once again.

Fitnah in Shīrāz and Ahwāz

From the vantage point of the mediaeval Islamic Persianate world, Sufi *sīrah* and biographical literature offer a similar perspective onto life at the courts of local dynastic rulers and governors as 10th-11th-century Fāṭimid works of *sīrah* literature provide for the history of mediaeval Cairo and Egypt. Perhaps surprisingly, al-Mu'ayyad's accounts of the emergence of *fitnah* in 11th-century Shīrāz and Ahwāz share distinctive features in common with the long tradition of Sufi works of religious autobiography and biography, especially such works as the 10th-century Bad' Sha'n Abī 'Abd

Allāh Muhammad al-Hakīm al-Tirmidhī of Hakīm al-Tirmidhī (d.ca. 295-300 A.H./ 905-910 C.E.), the Sīrat-i Ibn Khafīf (d.ca. 932 C.E.) of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Daylamī (fl. 4th A.H./ 10th C.E.), and the Kitāb-i Firdaws al-Murshidiyyah of Maḥmūd ‘Uthmān al-Daylamī (d. 747 A.H./ 1346 C.E.).⁴⁸ Amongst the most striking features shared in common are the accounts of a ruler’s “conversion”, public debates in defense of doctrinal positions, and dream-vision narratives.

Within Sufi *sīrah* and hagiographical literature, the disputation motif often appears as an important narrative feature.⁴⁹ In the Bad’ Sha’n, Tirmidhī recounts being accused publicly of heresy. He narrates the events

⁴⁸ Busse, interestingly enough, does not discuss any of the Būyid period Sufi autobiographical and biographical works of the Kāzerūnī tradition as possible primary sources for the social history of mediaeval Western Iran in his Chalif und Grosskönig. See in particular, Article. “al-Daylamī, Abū’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Moḥammad.” Encyclopaedia Iranica. Volume VII: 338-339; F. Soberioj. Ibn-i Hafīf. 1998: 13-33; 238.

⁴⁹ Radtke. The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism. Surrey, 1996: (Intro.): 9-10. Radtke has indicated that Hakīm al-Tirmidhī’s Bad’ Sha’n, is one of the earliest surviving autobiographical works written in Arabic. In fact, al-Tirmidhī’s work was not discovered until after Rosenthal had completed his seminal study on Islamic historiography.

With regard to the autobiographical works of al-Tirmidhī, al-Mu’ayyad, as well as others, Robinson claims that the genre of autobiography was taken up by “...non-traditionalist rationalists and iconoclasts (philosophers, mystics and Ismā’īlī Shī’ites...”. In his opinion, prior to the 13th Century, autobiographical works were not indicative of the ‘mainstream’, traditionalist oriented method of historical narration. See in particular, C. Robinson. Islamic Historiography. Cambridge, 2003: 95-96. Robinson, however, does not address Ibn Bannā’s 11th-century autobiographical “diary” in this particular presentation of mediaeval autobiographical works. Likewise, he does not take a clear stance on Makdisi’s theories about the development of a historiographical tradition from the “diaries” of traditionalist, *ḥadīth* focussed scholars and historians. See Robinson (*ibid.*: 182). In many respects, Ibn Bannā’s “diary” is a parallel text to al-Mu’ayyad’s Sīrah, especially given the fact that Ibn Bannā, as a contemporary of al-Mu’ayyad, narrates many events from the vantage point of Baghdad and pays particular attention to outbreaks of *fitnah* in different neighborhoods of mid-11th-century Baghdad. See G. Makdidi. “Autograph Diary of an Eleventh-Century Historian of Baghdad- I.” Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (1956) 18: 9-31; 239-260.

that led to the theological debates he participated in as to defend his doctrinal position. Tirmidhī's autobiography selectively emphasizes his perseverance in spiritual matters despite the adversity from the local political authorities and the opposing theologians at court.⁵⁰ While such narratives of public disputation are a common motif in Sufi *sīrah* literature and religious biography, they also provide evidence of the competition amongst different religious communities in mediaeval urban centers (and their surrounding environs) in Iran and Central Asia.⁵¹

Al-Mu'ayyad's "heresy episodes" from the *Sīrah* are similar in tone to Tirmidhī's but, unlike the material from Tirmidhī's autobiography, they are richly corroborated by two extant, anonymous, mediaeval Persian local histories. The anonymous 12th-century *Fārsnāmah* refers directly to al-Mu'ayyad's growing influence at the Būyid court, on the Būyid *amīr* Abū Kālījār, and his popularity amongst the Daylamī community in Shīrāz.⁵² In the case of the Saljūq-period *Mujmal al-Tawārīkh*, the account of Abū Kālījār's reign details the social repercussions of the influence of certain suspect religious doctrines on Abū Kālījār, which led to the outbreak of *fitnah* in Shīrāz. There is, however, a "multi-sectarian" aspect to the

⁵⁰ Radtke. *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism*. 1996: (Intro.): 2; (Text): 20-23. A debate is held at the court in order that Tirmidhī might defend his public preaching on the doctrine of love, from which he emerges victorious.

⁵¹ D. Aigle. "Un Fondateur d'ordre en milieu rural." In, D. Aigle, Editor. *Saints orientaux*. Paris, 1995, which includes a number of examples concerning disputes between the Zoroastrian community of Kāzerūn and Sufi leaders; B. Radtke. *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism*. Surrey, 1996: (Intro.): 2.

⁵² J. Meisami. *Persian Historiography*. Edinburgh, 1999: 185-188, explains that the *Fārsnāmah* is replete with accounts of *fitnah* in both the pre-Islamic and Islamic contexts as they concern the history of the Iranian province of Fārs.

emergence of *fitnah* in Shirāz during the time of al-Mu'ayyad's increasingly prominent *da'wah* activities, which included al-Mu'ayyad's growing influence on Abū Kālījār and Abū Kālījār's "conversion" to Ismā'īlism.

Another prominent individual of Ismā'īlī affiliation, one of whom numbered among Abū Kālījār's closest companions at the Būyid court, also figures in al-Mu'ayyad's accounts of the public accusations against him.⁵³ In the *Sīrah*, it becomes apparent that the influence of one of Abū Kālījār's close associates (a *nadīm*), was someone who al-Mu'ayyad claims had "embraced the Fāṭimid *madhhab* not for God" and "not through sincere belief".⁵⁴ Al-Mu'ayyad disparagingly refers to this individual as the "renegade" (*al-māriq*). The presence of this other Ismā'īlī at the Būyid court turns out to be at the source of many of the problems that then follow for al-Mu'ayyad, including his increasingly unstable position in Shirāz itself. Using his influence at the Būyid court, the "renegade" Ismā'īlī was successful in his intrigues against al-Mu'ayyad as well as in his efforts to discredit the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad was ordered to suspend the public lectures on Ismā'īlī doctrine he held in Shirāz.⁵⁵ In the *Sīrah*, al-Mu'ayyad notes that the "renegade" brought his plans to fruition through meeting with the Sunnī *qāḍī al-quḍāt* of Fārs, 'Abd Allāh al-Fazārī. The "renegade" was then able to convince Abū Kālījār that al-Mu'ayyad had the power to mobilize his Daylamī supporters against Abū Kālījār, to the extent

⁵³ See Klemm's most recent monograph, for a summary of the "other" Ismā'īlī's intrigues against al-Mu'ayyad. *Memoirs of a Mission*. 2003: 36-39.

⁵⁴ *Sīrah* pp. 44, 46; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī*. 1999: 29.

⁵⁵ *Sīrah* pp. 57-68.

that he could be overthrown.⁵⁶ In part, a group of individuals of different religious persuasions at the Būyid court coalesced in order to work steadily against al-Mu'ayyad as a Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *dā'i*, in order to discredit him, to break his hold on Abū Kālījār, and to exile him from Shīrāz.⁵⁷

Ultimately, al-Mu'ayyad's problems in Shīrāz were due to the Sunnī establishment's public accusations, spear-headed by the Sunnī *qāḍī* 'Abd Allāh al-Fazārī.⁵⁸ Whether or not the *amīr*'s conversion to Ismā'ilism took place in fact, it is reasonable to propose that there was initially, a number of multi-sectarian reactions at the Būyid court to al-Mu'ayyad's growing influence on Abū Kālījār. The following passage from the *Sīrah* refers to the degree to which the conflict between the different religious communities (the Sufis, the jurists and the traditional storytellers) in Shīrāz finally reached:

On the day of the large gathering in the square, the minister⁵⁹ arrived before the Daylamis and spoke of rectifying the situation. He ordered that the judges, the religious storytellers, and the Sufi mystics be brought to him, every last one of them. They arrived, cutting through the ranks of the Daylamis right and left. The Daylamis' tongues lashed out at them, uttering all manner of foul speech and revilement right to their faces, until they had entered the building, frightened to death by what they had just suffered at the hands of the Daylamis and by what had caused them to be summoned to the sultan's palace.

When they stood before the minister's court, they were set upon with every kind of reproach, chiding and reprimand [by the minister]: "You have squandered our

⁵⁶ *Sīrah* pp. 60-64.

⁵⁷ *Sīrah* pp. 44, 46; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*. 1999: 29.

⁵⁸ *Sīrah* p. 63.

⁵⁹ The vizier was al-'Ādil Bahrām b. Māfanna (d. 433 A.H./ 1041-42 C.E.). See *Fārsnāmah* pp. 139; 166; *Sīrah* p. 54; Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. 2003: 21-23; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*. 1999: 26.

grace, and our gifts have made you ungrateful for the protective shade of security and justice that has been extended over you. You have become bent on stirring up sedition, and your talk has become an incitement to riot between the Shi'ites and the Sunnis. If it reaches me that any of you entertains mention of this or that it even crosses the tongues in your mouths, you will have brought death and destruction upon yourselves. And whosoever survives thereafter will have his property confiscated and be dragged off in chains. So be heedful and watch where you tread. Peace be upon you!" Thus they [the judges, storytellers, and Sufis] departed heavyhearted after having entered lighthearted.⁶⁰

Let us now turn to the pivotal role the *qāḍī* Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Fazārī plays in the Fārsnāmah's rather polemical account of al-Mu'ayyad's influence on Abū Kālījār.⁶¹ The role of the Fazārī family as judges at the Būyid court, from the reign of 'Aḍūd al-Dawlah onward, is attested to in numerous Persian historical sources and Sufi biographical works. The Kitāb Firdaws al-Murshidiyyah discusses the role of the *qāḍī* al-Fazārī, Ibn 'Abd Allāh's father, at the court of Fakhr al-Mulk in Shīrāz.⁶² According to the

⁶⁰ In, Editor, D. Reynolds. Interpreting the Self. Los Angeles. 2001: 139. (Trans. J. Lowry); Sirah pp. 10-11.

⁶¹ See Sirah pp. 3-79, and in particular, pp. 44-49; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 183-184; Meisami. Persian Historiography. 1999: 185-188. It is important to note here that in the 13th-century Persian history, the Nizām al-Tawārikh of al-Bayḍawī (c. 674 A.H./1275 C.E.), there is no mention of Ismā'īlī influence on Abū Kālījār. See, however, the accounts on Abū Kālījār and the Būyid dynasty. Nizām al-Tawārikh. H. S. Qadri. Hyderabad, 1930: pp. 63-68.

⁶² Fārsnāmah p. 118; Kitāb-i Firdaws al-Murshidiyyah. Editor, F. Meier. Leipzig, 1943: 117-119; Sobieroj. Ibn Hafīf aṣ-Ṣirāzī. 1998: 199. The Kitāb-i Firdaws al-Murshidiyyah, contains a great deal of relevant information on the strength and continuity of certain religious communities in 10-11th-century Shīrāz and its surrounding environs-- the Sufis, the traditional Qur'ānic storytellers, and jurists.

One sub-chapter from this work, entitled "The Account of the Beginning of the *Majlis* of the Shaykh Murshid (may God bless his inner-most secret)", records

Shirāznāmah, al-Fazārī taught in a Sufi meeting-place (*khānaqāh*) of Ibn-i Khafīf's Sufi followers.⁶³ The 14th-century Sufi manual on pilgrimage sites, the Shadd al-Izār, also discusses the *madrasah* al-Fazārī founded.⁶⁴ An examination of the Sirah in conjunction with the Persian local histories also points to the prominence of the Sunnī religious establishment in Shīrāz and its surrounding environs under Būyid rule. The importance of the Fārsnāmah, however, lies in the fact that as a local history, it attests to al-Mu'ayyad's Ismā'īlī *da'wah* activities amongst the Daylamīs, his initial success in converting Abū Kālījār to Ismā'īlism, and his troubles with the Sunnī *qāḍī* 'Abd Allāh al-Fazārī.⁶⁵ In the Fārsnāmah, al-Fazārī convinces Abū Kālījār that al-Mu'ayyad's popularity amongst the Daylamī community poses a substantial threat to the stability of his rule in Shīrāz. In addition, the Fārsnāmah narrates in a parallel manner to the Sirah, al-Mu'ayyad's decision to go to Cairo after being sent into exile, due to the *qāḍī* Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Fazārī's ultimate success in convincing Abū Kālījār to cease supporting al-Mu'ayyad *da'wah* activities.⁶⁶

several accounts of sermons being delivered at the congregational mosque of the old town (*dar masjid-i jāmi'-i shahr-i kuhnah*) and the almost visceral tensions which subsequently developed between the Sufi Shaykh and the traditional deliverers of the Friday sermons (*wa'z*) in Kāzerūn, the traditional storytellers. See Kitāb-i Firdaws pp. 134-135.

⁶³ Ibn Zarkūb-i Shīrāzī. Shīrāznāmah. Editor, I. W. Jawādī. Tehran, 1351: 53, 151. In addition, see Sobieroj. Ibn Hafīf aṣ-Ṣīrāzī. 1998 : 18, on the Shīrāznāmah's use of Sufi works.

⁶⁴ Shadd al-Izār. Editor, M. Qazwīnī/ A. Iqbāl. Tehran, 1328/1950: 358-365, 396-397.

⁶⁵ See Sirah pp. 66, 69; Fārsnāmah. Editor, G. LeStrange & R. A. Nicholson. London, 1921: pp. 117-119; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 37-38; F. Sobieroj. Ibn Hafīf aṣ-Ṣīrāzī. Beirut, 1998: 181-182.

⁶⁶ Fārsnāmah pp. 117-119; Sirah p. 63, the *qāḍī* denounces al-Mu'ayyad.

Are there, however, any other indications of Abū Kālījār's Ismā'īlī affiliation? One passage from the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah states how it was the custom of Abū Kālījār to be present at the congregational mosque (*al-masjid al-jāmi'*) in Shīrāz every Friday during the month of Ramaḍān. This could be a significant detail, given the fact that this was a custom of the Fāṭimid caliphs, such as al-Ḥakim and al-Zāhir.⁶⁷ In addition, albeit from an even more hostile Sunnī perspective, the Mujmal al-Tawārīkh corroborates the Fārsnāmah with respect to Abū Kālījār's periodic, non-Sunnī religious affiliation. In one passage, the Mujmal al-Tawārīkh states that Abū Kālījār's changing religious tendencies and the influence of 'bad' doctrines on him directly resulted in the outbreak of *fitnah* during his reign.⁶⁸

Al-Mu'ayyad and the Daylamīs

Given that two of the public accusations lodged against al-Mu'ayyad concerned his influence over the Daylamīs in Shīrāz, it is important to consider further al-Mu'ayyad's relationship with the Daylamī communities in Shīrāz and Ahwāz. When the above-mentioned accounts from the Sīrah and the local histories are considered together as a whole, they also reflect a shift

⁶⁷ Sīrah p. 63. See P. Sanders. Ritual and Politics in Fāṭimid Cairo. Albany, 1994: 26; 60-61; 64-67. On the Fāṭimid caliph al-Ḥakim leading the Friday prayer at different mosques throughout Cairo during the month of Ramaḍān, see Itti'āz. Editor, M. Hilmī. Cairo, 1971-1973. Volume II: pp. 97-99. I would like to thank Professor P. Sanders for pointing out this detail to me.

⁶⁸ Mujmal al-Tawārīkh. 2000: p. 311.

in the growing prominence of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah*, as well as al-Muʿayyad himself, in 11th-century Būyid Shīrāz. In the Sīrah, prior to the outbreak of *fitnah* in Shīrāz, when al-Muʿayyad delivers a sermon on ʿĪd, most of the audience in attendance are from the Daylāmīs and the Būyid *amīr* is only slightly aware of his existence.⁶⁹ In the Fārsnāmah, despite its Sunnī bias, it is noted about al-Muʿayyad that, “amongst the Daylam, it was accepted that he was like a prophet (*payghambarī*)”.⁷⁰ Based on the following passage itself as well as the previous quote from the Sīrah, it is reasonable to assume that in Shīrāz and Ahwāz, the Daylamīs constituted the main body of the Ismāʿīlī community as well as al-Muʿayyad’s main supporters at the Būyid court. When the Ismāʿīlī community in Shīrāz first falls under the Sunnī establishment’s painful eye of scrutiny, al-Muʿayyad advises his supporters through the following sermon:

I devoted myself to them with the sermon (*waʿz*) and the admonition (*al-indhār*) and I said: “You are well aware of the form of the time in terms of hardship and of the enemies dissimulating and increasing in number, even though they are the ones busily engaged in villifying the beauty of our works and attributing terrible things to us, whereas we are the ones who excel in carrying out the burden of devotional duties and established obligations and the practices sanctioned by law and custom. So it is necessary that you rein in yourselves, better your deeds and piously fear God the pious fear He is due. Be mindful that what clings to one amongst you in shame or finds easy expression sets free slander upon [all of] you. Patience and peace upon you, as verily God is with the patient.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ Sīrah pp. 3-5; Būyid critique of the Fāṭimid *daʿwah*, p. 4.

⁷⁰ Fārsnāmah p. 119.

⁷¹ Sīrah p. 5.

In between his troubles at the Būyid court and his attempts to improve his relations with Abū Kālījār, al-Mu'ayyad travelled to Ahwāz. After a stay in Fasā, al-Mu'ayyad reclaimed a *maṣjid* he himself owned in the city of Ahwāz, ca. 432-33 A.H./ 1041-42 C.E.. Al-Mu'ayyad states the following: "I had owned a *maṣjid* fallen into disrepair that the Sufis (*al-ṣufiyyah*) retired to...and they busied themselves with its building until they made it into a sight wondrous to the eyes".⁷² In the *maṣjid*, al-Mu'ayyad inscribed on the *mihrab* the names of the Prophet, 'Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, Ja'far b. Muḥammad, Ismā'īl b. Ja'far and Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. Also included in the inscription were the names of the Fāṭimid caliphs, up to al-Mustansir. In addition to having the Shī'ī call to prayer (*ādhān*) recited there, al-Mu'ayyad wanted to hold the Friday prayers in this *maṣjid* and to give the sermon (*khuṭbah*) in the name of al-Mustansir.⁷³

At this juncture of the *Sirah*, al-Mu'ayyad states that he had informed the Daylamīs from this city, who were supporters of Fāṭimid *da'wah* activities, if not also Ismā'īlī in persuasion, that he was interested in establishing these two manifestedly Fāṭimid testimonies at the *maṣjid*.⁷⁴ After his intention became public knowledge, general tumult ensued in Ahwāz, placing al-Mu'ayyad once again in tenuous relationships *vis à vis* the

⁷² *Sirah* p. 55. Busse. *Chalif und Grosskönig*. 1969: 125-127; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī*. 1999: 42.

⁷³ *Sirah* pp. 54-57; Hamdani. *The Sirā*. 1950: 37; Klemm. *Die Mission*. 1989: 20-22; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī*. 1999: 42.

⁷⁴ *Sirah* pp. 55-ff..

Sunni scholarly community as well as both the Būyid and ‘Abbasid political authorities. In what follows in the text of the Sīrah, the *qāḍī* Ibn Mushtarī writes to the caliph in Baghdad and notifies him of the problems emerging from al-Mu‘ayyad’s *da‘wah* activities in Ahwāz.⁷⁵ This section of the Sīrah provides a narrative function with regard to explaining the widening circle of the intrigues against al-Mu‘ayyad (i.e., the involvement of the ‘Abbasid authority from Baghdad, Ibn al-Muslimah), which ultimately led to al-Mu‘ayyad’s second debate at the Būyid court and his final exile from Shīrāz. It also provides evidence that amongst the Daylamīs in Ahwāz, a weekly *majlis* was held on Tuesdays.⁷⁶

According to the Sīrah, al-Mu‘ayyad’s debate with the Zaydī Shī‘ī scholar at the Būyid court was arranged at the suggestion of the “renegade” Ismā‘īlī, who was primarily concerned with discrediting al-Mu‘ayyad.⁷⁷ Although Chapter Four will present certain aspects of al-Mu‘ayyad’s discussions of the

⁷⁵ Sīrah p. 55, n. 2. Kāmil-Husayn points out that the *qāḍī* of Khuzistān and Fārs, Abū al-Hasan ‘Abd al-Wahāb b. Maṣṣūr b. al-Mushtarī (d.ca. 436-37 A.H./ 1044 C.E.) is mentioned in Ibn al-Athīr. al-Kāmil fī al-Ta’rīkh. Volume IX: 36. I have not, however, been able to locate this reference. Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 40, n. 2, indicates that there are two other biographical references to Ibn Mushtarī as a judge, in Ibn Kathīr’s al-Bidāyah and al-Baghdādī’s Ta’rīkh.

See in particular, L. Massignon. The Passion of al-Hallāj. Trans. H. Mason. Volume I. Princeton, 1982: 140-ff., for his discussion of public preaching in 10th century Ahwāz in addition to how both scribes and *qāḍīs* in Ahwāz maintained strong ties with ‘Abbasid Basra and Baghdad throughout the 3rd A.H./ 9th C.E..

⁷⁶ Sīrah pp. 55-61.

⁷⁷ Sīrah p. 57. Al-Mu‘ayyad describes how the Zaydī Shī‘ī scholar was someone who associated with the the Sufis, the traditional storytellers, and the *ḥadīth* scholars (*aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*). See Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 38.

On Zaydī Shī‘ism in 10th to 11th-century Būyid Iran, see Busse. Chalif und Grosskönig. 1969: 286-ff; “The Minor Dynasties of Northern Iran.” In, The Cambridge History of Iran. Volume IV. Cambridge, 1974: 206-225; W. Madelung. “Zu einigen Werken des Imams Abū Ṭālib an-Nāṭiq bi l-Ḥaqq.” Der Islam (1986) 63: 5-10.

“Shortcomers” (*Muqaṣṣirūn*), or those who deny the importance of the doctrine of *walāyah* in the absence (the “occultation” or *ghaybah* in the Zaydī and Ithnā ‘Asharī Shī‘ī traditions) of the *imām*, the debate at the Būyid court in Shīrāz between al-Mu‘ayyad and the Zaydī scholar may provide some historical insight into the possible sources of al-Mu‘ayyad’s later *da‘wah* teachings on *walāyah* and the figure of the *imām*.⁷⁸ In addition, there are other passages in the *Sīrah* where al-Mu‘ayyad makes reference to the beliefs of the Shī‘ī inhabitants of towns in Western Iran, such as Pasā Or Fasā), which may likewise reflect some of the nature of al-Mu‘ayyad’s views on Shī‘ī communities in Western Iran.⁷⁹ One such passage from the *Sīrah*, as Halm has noted, presents al-Mu‘ayyad’s account of the destruction of a Shī‘ī shrine for pilgrimage in Pasā around 1038 C.E., which suggests further research into these issues may yield more information about the history of different Shī‘ī communities in Western Iran at the time of al-Mu‘ayyad.⁸⁰

Following al-Mu‘ayyad’s second debate at the Būyid court, however, occurs one of the most intriguing passages in the *Sīrah*. Al-Mu‘ayyad narrates another individual’s dream-vision concerning the unjustness of his persecution at the hands of the ‘Abbasid authority, Ibn al-Muslimah. There are also a number of historical details in this account, for example, the

⁷⁸ *Sīrah* pp. 57-60.

⁷⁹ *Sīrah* p. 12; Hamdani. *The Sira*. 1950: pp. 30-31. Hamdani also notes that *qaṣīdah* No. 23 from al-Mu‘ayyad’s collection of poetry, the *Diwān*, discusses how Ismā‘īlīs were massacred and the tombs of the Shī‘ī *imām* Mūsā al-Kaẓīm and Ja‘far b. Khaddād were destroyed on the order of Ibn Muslimah. See Hamdani. *The Sira*. 1950: 125.

⁸⁰ H. Halm. *Die Kalifen von Kairo*. Munich, 2003: 352-353.

description of the people of Shirāz gathering and attending public sermons delivered on festival days. In the dream-vision of this unnamed individual from the Būyid court, 'Alī delivers a sermon to the people of Shirāz in defense of al-Mu'ayyad.

...a person from the retinue—there was no association between him and I, and no acquaintance except rarely—saw in his dream, just as the sleeping person sees, the people of Shirāz heading towards their place of prayer in accordance to the custom of festivals, and he asked about the reason for their hurry when it wasn't a festival day. The speaker said: "The *Amīr al-mu'minīn* 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him) is in the place of prayer (*al-muṣallā*), delivering a sermon to the people." The man said: "So I rushed in the crowd of people hurrying, for then he, peace be upon him, is on the dune of sand, and he is delivering the sermon known by the one seeing the vision (*al-ru'yah*)," according to what he said. Then when he ['Alī] finished, he spread out his hands and lifted the two of them to the sky, and the people raised their hands as he had raised his two hands, and he said: "Oh God, destroy (*ahlik*) the one who harmed so-and-so"—meaning me by it—except that he confused the wording in his narrative with his, peace be upon him, the expression "destroy" (*ahlik*) precisely in the same way, or the word was similar to the meaning of "destroy" (*al-halāk*). The man said: "Then I awoke and I was terrified by this fearful vision", and I said to myself, "Then the people really are wrong in intending to harm this person, and that certain person—meaning the one he named specifically— who is from the king's associates and from among the intimates of the king, is sincere" ... The man made his way to the audience of the king and narrated to him the dream-vision, and the king became filled with anger over it.⁸¹

⁸¹ *Sīrah* pp. 66-67, referred to by Qutbuddin. *al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*. 1999: 43, n. 63; Klemm. *Die Mission*. 1989: 27.

In a state of irritation, and convinced that al-Mu'ayyad might have been the one who invented the dream-vision in order to vindicate himself, Abū Kālījār places al-Mu'ayyad under house arrest. Al-Mu'ayyad's exile soon followed, seven months later, at the official request of the 'Abbasid authority in Baghdad, Ibn al-Muslimah, and the Būyid *amīr* Abū Kālījār. His exile in 437 A.H./ 1046 C.E. marked the end of his public Fāṭimid *da'wah* activities in Shīrāz.⁸²

The "Conversion" of Abū Kālījār

Abū Kālījār's study sessions with al-Mu'ayyad and the evidence from the Sirat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah concerning the Daylamī support of al-Mu'ayyad's public *da'wah* activities and sermons give us a good idea of the degree of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s presence in 11th-century Shīrāz and Ahwāz. In fact, the growing support for Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah* under the direction of al-Mu'ayyad reached such heights of prominence that it attracted the hostile attention of the Sunnī establishment in Shīrāz and Ahwāz as well as the 'Abbasid authorities in distant Baghdad.

⁸² A. Hamdani. The Sira. 1950: 40-45; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 26-27; L. Massignon. The Passion of al-Hallāj. 1982: 57, n. 24.

Currently, there are two scholarly discussions linked to the mediaeval Fāṭimid Ismāʿilī *majlis* as a form of religious instruction that help to clarify the matter of Abū Kālījār's interest in Ismāʿilī doctrine. Although the Fāṭimid *majlis* drew upon specific subjects from the mediaeval Islamic sciences for the purposes of religious instruction, there is no doubt that Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān's Daʿāʾim al-Islām served as a core doctrinal text for the 10th-11th-century Fāṭimid *daʿwah*. In brief, both of these scholarly discussions address the function, what might be termed the topical content of the Ismāʿilī *majlis*, and the question of the audience in attendance at the *majlis*. One theory proposes that the Fāṭimid *majlis* served as formal lectures and study sessions, only open to members of the Ismāʿilī *daʿwah*. Another theory suggests that the *majlis* noticeably exemplified exclusive or inclusive approaches to Ismāʿilī *daʿwah* teachings, in the sense that the lectures were addressed to more than one audience. The lectures therefore reflected a varied presentation of different aspects of Ismāʿilī doctrine, so that non-Ismāʿilis or potential "converts" could then attend.

Was it then merely coincidental that Abū Kālījār chose to study the Daʿāʾim al-Islām with al-Muʿayyad? Did it entail a change of religious affiliation on the part of Abū Kālījār? Amongst the 11th-century members of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿilī *daʿwah*, the Daʿāʾim al-Islām likely served as an introductory text on Ismāʿilī doctrine, perfectly suited for explaining the key tenets of Ismāʿilism to non-Ismāʿilis. The above-mentioned points would imply that studying the Daʿāʾim al-Islām in a *majlis* would not require the

“conversion” of Abū Kālījār to Ismā‘īlism. Another account from the Sīrah, the public debate on the *ta’wīl* of the Qur’ān at the Būyid court, draws further attention to the fact that members of the Fāṭimid *da’wah* employed the text of the Da’ā’im al-Islām in non-*da’wah*, public settings.⁸³

In view of the larger historical significance of Abū Kālījār’s initial support of al-Mu’ayyad, Klemm has suggested that in the years 430-433 A.H./ 1038-1042 C.E. (the very years in which al-Mu’ayyad maintained a certain degree of prominence at the Būyid court), Abū Kālījār sought to establish his independence from Baghdad. During this time, he also took on the Persianate title of *shāhanshāh* (“King of Kings”).⁸⁴ According to the Sīrah, al-Mu’ayyad viewed Abū Kālījār’s interest in studying the Da’ā’im al-Islām as an excellent and ideal opportunity to then suggest to the Būyid *amīr* the possibility of forging political alliances with the Fāṭimid dynasty.⁸⁵ It is also likely that Abū Kālījār’s close associates at the Būyid court and the Sunnī establishment in Shīrāz would have viewed his study of the Da’ā’im al-Islām as the acceptance of a Fāṭimid testimony. However, as al-Mu’ayyad explains, Abū Kālījār’s interest in pursuing further the practice of Ismā‘īlī

⁸³ Sīrah pp. 16-43; Klemm. Memoirs of a Mission. London, 2003: 27-29.

⁸⁴ V. Klemm. Memoirs of a Mission. London, 2003: 48-49. The Sīrah refers to Abū Kālījār by the title of *shāhanshāh*. See Sīrah p. 62.

⁸⁵ Sīrah pp. 43-44. There is another account in the Sīrah that lends more credence to the theory that Abū Kālījār might have been seriously considering an alliance with the Fāṭimids. A year after al-Mu’ayyad leaves Shīrāz, Abū Kālījār writes a letter to al-Mu’ayyad, suggesting that he draft a treaty for an alliance between the Būyids and the Fāṭimids, in order to stave off the threat of the impending Saljūq invasions. See Sīrah pp. 76-78.

doctrine or following al-Mu'ayyad's religious guidance quickly faded.⁸⁶ In sum, Abū Kālījār became increasingly suspicious of al-Mu'ayyad the Fāṭimid missionary, as different individuals clamouring for power and influence at court began to intrigue against al-Mu'ayyad and to discredit the idea of an alliance with the Fāṭimid dynasty. In the end, as Klemm so succinctly states: "the pressure of the Sunni lobby pushed the government to curb the ambitious mediator."⁸⁷

Section d: Deception and Intrigue at the Fāṭimid Court: Altercations in the 11th-century Ismā'īlī Da'wah

436-437 A.H./ 1045-1046 C.E.	Al-Mu'ayyad arrives in Cairo and is appointed to a post by al-Tustarī.
<i>Jumādā I</i> 439 A.H./ October 1048 C.E.	Execution of al-Tustarī.
<i>Sha'bān</i> 439 A.H./ Feb. 1048 C.E. 441 A.H./ 1049 C.E.	Al-Mu'ayyad meets al-Mustansir. Al-Yāzūrī is appointed chief <i>qādī</i> .
442 A.H./1050 C.E.	Appointment of al-Yāzūrī to the post of vizier. Al-Yāzūrī appoints Ibn al-Nu'mān <i>dā'i al-du'āt</i> .
<i>Dhu al-Qa'da</i> 443 A.H./ March 1052 C.E.	Al-Yāzūrī appoints al-Mu'ayyad to the <i>diwān al-inshā'</i> .

⁸⁶ *Sīrah* pp. 44-54.

⁸⁷ Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. 2003: 48.

Many gates led into the mediaeval city of Cairo. Through one in particular, perhaps chosen simply due to its location on the outskirts of the Fāṭimid seat of power and prestige, the exiled Ismāʿīlī missionary al-Muʾayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī entered Cairo, with the full intention of gaining an audience with the *imām* of the time, al-Mustanṣir.⁸⁸

For the purposes of this section, al-Muʾayyad's autobiography narrates in detail a series of complicated events that led to al-Muʾayyad's acceptance at the Fāṭimid court and in the Fāṭimid *daʿwah*, although only grudgingly on the part of the Sunnī vizier and would-be chief missionary (*dāʾī al-duʿāt*), al-Yāzūrī. Following numerous struggles for the position of chief missionary between al-Yāzūrī and al-Muʾayyad, in a time-period further exacerbated by invasions, rebellions and famines, al-Yāzūrī appointed al-Muʾayyad to the task of diplomatic relations in the Fāṭimid chancery (*dīwān al-inshāʾ*).⁸⁹ Al-Yāzūrī's own downfall and execution, the end-result of an alleged intrigue involving secret alliances formed with the Saljūqs, marks the beginning of al-Muʾayyad's acclaim as the Fāṭimid dynasty's chief missionary in Cairo. The Sīrat al-Muʾayyadiyyah is also of primary importance for reconstructing the context of a notable shift within the 11th-century Fāṭimid court's

⁸⁸ Sīrah p. 81: al-Muʾayyad explains that, "They led me in through the gate of *al-Qāhirah al-Muʾizziyyah* to the palace of the caliphate (*qaṣr al-khilāfah*).” Also, see Sīrah pp. 74-76; 80-82; ʿUyūn al-Akhhbār. Volume VII. Editor, A. F. Sayyid. London, 2002: 38.

For additional details on the topography of mediaeval Fāṭimid Cairo, see Sayyid. La Capitale. 1998: 152; 212-213. Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Safarnāmah includes a description of the gates into "Old Cairo", ca. 439 A.H./1047 C.E.. See Nāser-e Khosraw's Book of Travels. Trans., W. Thackston. Albany, 1986: 44-46.

⁸⁹ Sīrah p. 93; Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 57; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 58-60; Qutbuddin. Al-Muʾayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī. 1999: 60.

hierarchy as well as the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s growing independence—or separation—from the Fāṭimid caliph as the *imām*.

Initially, al-Mu'ayyad's relations and strong ties with the Karaite Jewish vizier, Abū Sa'd al-Tustarī, as described in the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, temporarily secured him a position at the Fāṭimid court, but one which was bereft of the religious authority and legitimacy al-Mu'ayyad sought to attain.⁹⁰ The importance of the Karaite Jewish family, the Tustarīs, at the 11th-century Fāṭimid court in Cairo serves as one of several foci in this section. Al-Tustarī's prominent position at the court of al-Mustanṣir is also attested to in numerous other mediaeval Islamic historical chronicles as well as the Genizah documents.⁹¹ It poses, along with mid-11th-century Fāṭimid history in general, an especially interesting methodological challenge in terms of textual-based studies of the history of religion.

Based foremost on the information contained in the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, this section also intends to delve deeper into the question of the emergence of divisive power factions at the court of the Fāṭimid ruler, al-Mustanṣir, prior to the Turkic Saljūq invasions of Baghdad. The travails at

⁹⁰ Sīrah pp. 81-83; attested to in Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn's 15th-century Yemenī history of the Fāṭimids, the Uyūn al-Akhhbār. See Uyūn al-Akhhbār. Editor, A. F. Sayyid. London, 2002. Volume VII: pp. 38-41.

⁹¹ For biographical information on al-Tustarī, see Maqrīzī. Itti'āz al-Hunafā'. Editor, J. al-Dīn al-Shayyāl. Cairo, 1938: p. 56; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī. al-Ishārah. Editor, A. F. Sayyid. Cairo, 1990: pp. 71-72, 74; Uyūn al-Akhhbār. Editor, A. F. Sayyid. 2002. Volume VII: pp. 38-41. M. Gil. Ha-Tustarim. Tel-Aviv, 1981: 40, referring to Sīrah al-Mu'ayyadiyyah pp. 81-84. I would like to thank Professor C. Fraenkel for his assistance with the translation of this reference in Gil's work.

For additional information on the importance of the Genizah documents for Fāṭimid history, see Daftary. The Ismā'īlis. 1990: 150-151; Walker. Exploring an Islamic Empire. 2002: 114-115, 117-118, 128-130.

the Fāṭimid court resulted in the murder and execution of the Fāṭimid ruler's two key advisors but nonetheless, in the eventual appointment of al-Mu'ayyad as the chief missionary and religious instructor of the Cairene Ismā'īlī community and the Fāṭimid *da'wah*.

A. Hamdani, the first scholar to focus exclusively on al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography as key historical text for mediaeval Islamic history originally noted that the events in the *Sīrah* are corroborated by other historical sources: al-Khāṭib al-Baghdādī (d. 463 A.H./1071 C.E.); Ibn al-Qalānisī (d. 555 A.H./ 1160 C.E.); Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630 A.H./ 1233 C.E.); Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī (d. 654 A.H./ 1257 C.E.); Ibn Khallikān (d. 681 A.H./1282 C.E.); Ibn Taghrī Bardī (d. 874 A.H./1469 C.E.); Dhahabī (d. 748 A.H./1348 C.E.) and Suyūṭī (d. 911 A.H./ 1505 C.E.). In terms of the "Egyptian" histories, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, Ibn Muyassar and Maqrīzī refer to al-Mu'ayyad in the context of the Basāsīrī *débâcle*.⁹² The second part of the *Sīrah* covers the years 439-447 A.H./1048-1055 C.E. (In Egypt) and 447-451 A.H./1055-1058 C.E. (In Syria and 'Iraq), ending abruptly before the final re-capture of Baghdad from al-Basāsīrī at the hands of the Saljūqs.⁹³

As well, the *Sīrah* offers an "insider's" view of the Sunnī vizier al-Yāzūrī's rise to power at the Fāṭimid court. In his autobiography, al-Mu'ayyad discusses the powerful role Abū Sa'd al-Tustarī played at the Fāṭimid court and al-Yāzūrī's hand in the execution of the vizier al-Fallāhī,

⁹² Hamdani. *The Sīrah*. 1950: 50

⁹³ Hamdani. *The Sīrah*. 1950: 49; Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. 2003: 69-84; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*. 1999: 18; 65-72; Walker. *Exploring an Islamic Empire*. London, 2002: 144.

who was very much under the control of al-Tustarī.⁹⁴ In the midst of his account of his own difficulties at the Fāṭimid court of al-Mustanṣir, al-Mu'ayyad comments upon al-Tustarī's execution in 439 A.H./1047 C.E.; one set of events, amongst others, which led to al-Yāzūrī securing power at the Fāṭimid court.⁹⁵

From 436-439 A.H./ 1044-1048 C.E., both al-Tustarī and his brother held power in Fāṭimid Cairo, at the court and in society. Abū Sa'd b. Sahl al-Tustarī and the caliph al-Mustanṣir's mother were the most powerful alliance during the vizierate of al-Jarjarā'ī (r. 427-436 A. H./1035-1045 C.E.).⁹⁶ Al-Tustarī admittedly did not hold any real office but was highly

⁹⁴ *Sīrah* p. 87: Al-Mu'ayyad notes that the relationship between al-Yāzūrī and Jarjarā'ī was of the same type of relationship of power and influence that was between al-Tustarī and Fallāḥī.

⁹⁵ There are two references in the *Sīrah*'s account of al-Mu'ayyad's early career at the Fāṭimid court that could provide an indication as to when al-Mu'ayyad might have written this part of his memoir. See *Sīrah* pp. 87, 91. In his account of the vizier al-Jarjarā'ī, al-Mu'ayyad mentions twice that al-Yāzūrī is currently vizier, suggesting that he wrote this part prior to al-Yāzūrī's execution in 450 A.H./1058 C.E.. See Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. 2003: 70, who suggests that al-Mu'ayyad wrote this account during his stay in Aleppo between *Ṣafar* 449 A.H./ April 1057 C.E. and *Ramaḍān* 450 A.H./October 1058 C.E..

Sīrah pp. 85-87. Also, see *Sīrah* p. 86: on the nature of relations between Yāzūrī and al-Mu'ayyad as well as al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on Yāzūrī's role in the execution of the vizier Fallāḥī.

See M. Gil. *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*. Cambridge, 1992: 403-404, on al-Yāzūrī's as well as al-Mu'ayyad's original links with the Tustaris in terms of Fāṭimid court politics; S. D. Goiten. *Mediterranean Society*. Berkeley, 1967-1993. Vol. 5: 98, 239, 331, 370, for additional information on the Tustarī family at the Fāṭimid court and their prominence in the Karaite Jewish community in Cairo.

⁹⁶ Al-Jarjarā'ī had also been vizier under al-Ḥākim and al-Zāhir. Ibn al-Ṣayrafī. *al-Ishārat ilā man Nāla al-Wizārah*. A. F. Sayyid, Editor. Cairo, 1990: 68-69; P. E. Kessler. *The Reign of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mustansir bi-llāh (1027-1094 A.D.): a Discussion of Maqrīzī's Portrayal in the Itti'āz al-hunafā'*. Unpublished B.A. thesis. University of Oxford, 1971: 9-11.

In addition, al-Jarjarā'ī, as Qutbuddin, *al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*. 1999: 19, n. 13, has indicated, refers to al-Mu'ayyad by his title "al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn" ca. 441 A.H./ 1049 C.E., at least thirteen years before al-Mu'ayyad is appointed as

influential through the caliph's mother on a succession of fairly young viziers (in particular al-Fallāhī), as well as on the caliph himself.⁹⁷ It is commonly believed that since al-Mustansir's mother was once a slave owned by al-Tustarī, al-Tustarī was able to secure loyalties for himself in this manner at the Fāṭimid court.⁹⁸ The vizier Al-Fallāhī happened to be completely subservient to al-Tustarī, until around the year 439 A.H./1049 C.E. Shortly after, the Turkish contingent of soldiers, who formed part of the Fāṭimid guard, murdered al-Tustarī.⁹⁹ As Brett has astutely analyzed, al-Tustarī's death in *Jumāda I* 439 A.H./October 1047 C.E. occurred during a period of time when there was a strong rivalry between the Berber and Turkish troops and thus, a great deal of infighting amongst the caliph's bodyguard. In Maqrizī's account of these events, he explains that al-Tustarī in fact, favoured the non-Turkish component of the bodyguard, to the extent

Fāṭimid *dā'i al-du'āt*, suggesting that al-Mu'ayyad's title was bestowed while he was still active as a *dā'i* in the province of Fārs. See *Sirah* p. 90.

⁹⁷ Ibn al-Ṣayrafī. *al-Ishārah*. 1990: pp. 71-72; Kessler. *The Reign of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mustansir bi-llāh (1027-1094 A.D.): a Discussion of Maqrizī's Portrayal in the Itti'āz al-hunafā'*. Unpublished B.A. thesis. University of Oxford, 1971: 13; folio 83a-87b (covering the period between the death of al-Jarjarā'i and the rise of al-Yāzūrī to power, c.a. 436-442 A.H.).

For additional information on the ties between the caliph al-Mustansir's mother and al-Tustarī, see *Itti'āz* Vol. II: pp. 141; 152; 190-ff.

⁹⁸ See *Uyūn al-Akhbār*. Volume VII. Editor, A. F. Sayyid. London, 2002: pp. 38-41.

⁹⁹ Occurring in *Jumādā I*, 439 A.H. *Sirah* p. 84; *Uyūn al-Akhbār*. Volume VII. 2002: pp. 40-41; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī. *al-Ishārah*. 1925: pp. 36-ff.; *Itti'āz*. Volume II: p. 195.

Nāsir-i Khusraw's *Safarnāmah* makes a brief reference to Abū Sa'd al-Tustarī and his demise. Following this passage, Nāsir Khusraw states that in *Dhu al-Qa'dah* 439 A.H./ 18 April 1048 C.E., he left Egypt. See W. Thackston, trans. *Safarnāmah*. Albany, 1986: p. 58-59.

of even giving them a higher salary. The directive to get rid of the vizier al-Fallāhī, however, came directly from al-Mustansir's mother.¹⁰⁰

Though al-Tustarī and al-Mustansir's mother had already begun to lose some of their power and influence at court when al-Mu'ayyad arrived in Cairo ca. 437 A.H./ 1045-1046 C.E., it was primarily due to al-Tustarī that al-Mu'ayyad was finally able to secure his first position and stipend at the Fāṭimid court.¹⁰¹ Individuals from within the Fāṭimid *da'wah* itself, the chief missionary al-Qāsim b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad b. Nu'mān, along with Ibn 'Abdūn, formed an alliance against al-Mu'ayyad almost from the very moment he first appeared at the Fāṭimid court. After al-Mu'ayyad's relations with al-Tustarī soured, these highly placed members of the court elite worked diligently to prevent al-Mu'ayyad from obtaining an official audience with the caliph al-Mustansir. In the *Sīrah*, al-Mu'ayyad explains that al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad al-Nu'mān served as the "*wāsiṭah*" between him and the "*majlis al-imāmah*".¹⁰²

There are a number of accounts in the *Sīrah* that reflect al-Mu'ayyad's employment of the genre of Ismā'īlī *sīrah* literature as he narrates his initial experiences at the Fāṭimid court in Cairo and in the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah*

¹⁰⁰ *Sīrah* p. 84; M. Brett. "The Execution of al-Yāzūrī." In, Editors, U. Vermeulen/ D. DeSmet. *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*. Vol. II. Leuven, 1998: 15-28; Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. 2003: 71.

¹⁰¹ *Sīrah* pp. 81-83; Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. 2003: 70-71.

¹⁰² Hamdani. *The Sira*. 1950: 52-53; *Sīrah* pp. 81-82; *Uyūn al-Akhbār*. Volume VII: pp. 38-39. Ibn al-Ṣayrafī refers to Ibn Nu'mān, *al-Ishārah* p. 74, with regard to his change in position with al-Yāzūrī's rise to power at the Fāṭimid court, ca. *Muḥarram* I, 441 A.H.. Also, see Ibn Muyassar. *Akhbār* p. 9; Maqrīzī. *Khitat*. Volume I: p. 355; Maqrīzī. *al-Itti'āz*. Volume II: p. 208.

itself. As concerns the Sirah's presentation of his arrival to Cairo, al-Mu'ayyad's narrative takes on the form of a letter written to a close friend.¹⁰³ On his arrival to the caliphal palace, al-Mu'ayyad prostrates himself in the dust in front of the palace according to the custom (*al-'adāh*).¹⁰⁴ His initial hope and pleasure turns to unease when he learns that his original goal of meeting the *imām* would not be easily attained, due to court politics. Al-Mu'ayyad describes the inaccessible caliph al-Mustanṣir as "a sun concealed by the veil and the appearance of day brightening, by clouds".¹⁰⁵ Al-Mu'ayyad's first audience with al-Mustanṣir on *Sha'bān* 439 A.H./ February 1048 C.E., also powerfully calls to mind the descriptions of proper *adab* in the presence of the *imām* as Qāḍī al-Nu'mān originally delineated in his Kitāb al-Himmah:

My eyes had barely fallen on him when awe took hold of me and reverence overcame me: and it appeared to me as though I was standing in front of the Messenger of God and the Commander of the Faithful ['Alī], may God's blessings be upon them, and [that I was] facing their faces. I tried, when I fell to the earth prostrating for the master of prostration and the one worthy of it, to make my tongue intercede with him in a goodly manner by its speech, and I found it bound by the tongue-tiedness of awe, and isolated from the virtue of eloquent speech.

When I lifted my head from the prostration and gathered my clothes about me in order to sit, I saw a finger signaling me to rise for someone present in that place, and the Commander of the Faithful—may God perpetuate his kingdom—frowned with his face at him in rebuke; I had not raised my head by

¹⁰³ Sirah p. 80.

¹⁰⁴ Sirah p. 81.

¹⁰⁵ Sirah pp. 80-81; Klemm. Memoirs of a Mission. 2003: 70-71.

[the signal] nor accorded it any value. I stayed in his Presence for an hour, my tongue not rising to speech nor finding the way to words, and each time those present tried to get me to speak, I increased in tongue-tiedness and in storming up the steep hill of stammering, and he—may God perpetuate his kingdom—kept saying, “Let him be till he calms down and becomes accustomed.”

Then I arose, took his noble hand and kissed it and placed it upon my eyes and breast, and bade farewell and left.¹⁰⁶

A much less appealing commentary on life in the 11th-century Fāṭimid *da'wah* in Cairo is apparent in al-Mu'ayyad's critique of the individual whose position he sought, despite his protestations to the exact opposite. With such depths of personal sentiment perhaps unwittingly, yet grippingly narrated, it would be very easy to overlook how the following passage from al-Mu'ayyad's memoir provides another account of the manner in which the *da'wah majlis* was held and attended in 11th-century Fāṭimid Cairo. In fact, as in the case of the passage from the *Sīrah* concerning al-Mu'ayyad's *majlis* with Abū Kālījār, the *majlis* read by the chief *dā'ī* also employs Qur'ānic passages in the course of the sermon delivered to the *da'wah*.

...and it was at the time of al-Qasim b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān, God's mercy upon him... I saw him as a man conveying in spoken language his affinity with the craft that confers distinction for it by excluding from language its purpose; empty, like the morals (*fawā'id*) of Mūsā's mother, peace be upon him, and in him, a mental disorder (*junūn*) was beginning to

¹⁰⁶ Qutbuddin. *al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī*. 1999: 58. Trans. of *Sīrah* p. 85. See in addition, *Uyūn al-Akhbār*. Volume VII: pp. 41-43.

show in all of his doings. Nevertheless, he was strained in his relations towards me, due to what some of the human fiends (*shayāṭin al-ins*) insinuated to him, that I most likely was in competition for his position. When it was the day of his performing his duty, and he had appeared, lacking in eminence, and I saw him sitting on his chair in order to read what he read to the believers (*al-mu'minīn*), he mentioned the statement of God the Most High, the story (*hikāyah*) of the Hudhud (*sūrah* 27: 23): “I found (there) a woman ruling over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a magnificent throne.”¹⁰⁷ And it was what the Caliph called Ibn ‘Abdūn, the most fair and the most blue-eyed. The two of them were encumbered by a passionate enmity towards me and by the obsession to shake me out from that position; the two of them supported another group of people against my group, and they were from Bulaydah¹⁰⁷ and the company of elders and they disavowed favour. They made a common cause against me, but it was of no avail to them, and they did not find a way to exclude me.¹⁰⁸

The cresting wave of al-Tustarī’s influence at the Fāṭimid court coincided with the rise of another’s: the eminent Sunnī *qāḍī* from al-Ramlah, al-Yāzūrī.¹⁰⁹ Al-Yāzūrī would be yet another one of al-Mu’ayyad’s active opponents. In Maqrīzī’s account of al-Yāzūrī’s rise to power and influence at the Fāṭimid court, his position of power in Palestine led to his similar prominence in Egypt, even though al-Yāzūrī was at first, a proverbial pawn

¹⁰⁷ Al-Mu’ayyad refers to a market place in Ahwāz, the *sūq al-Bulaydah*, near the congregational mosque, so it is possible that the individuals al-Mu’ayyad refers to in this particular passage were originally from this neighborhood in Ahwāz. See *Sīrah* p. 69.

¹⁰⁸ *Sīrah* pp. 81-82. See Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. 2003: 70.

¹⁰⁹ On al-Yāzūrī, see Ibn al-Dawādārī. *Die Chronik des Ibn al-Dawādārī*. Editor, S. al-Dīn al-Munajjid. Cairo, 1961: Vol. VI: pp. 359-360; 363-364; 370; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī. *al-Ishārah*. 1925: pp. 73-ff; Brett. “The Execution of al-Yāzūrī.” (1998): 15-27; Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. 2003: 73-75; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu’ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*. 1999: 59-64; Walker. *Exploring an Islamic Empire*. 2002: 46; 49.

in the court politics of the time. According to Maqrīzī, it was much to al-Yāzūrī's chagrin that he was pushed ahead into increasingly more prominent positions by others at the court because their primary concern lay in ridding the Fātimid court of Abū Sa'd al-Tustarī's influence.¹¹⁰ By 441 A. H./1049 C.E., however, al-Yāzūrī had garnered more power and had assumed the position of chief *qāḍī*. After being granted this position, al-Yāzūrī delegated to his son his original job as overseer.¹¹¹

According to Maqrīzī's account in the *Itti'āz*, al-Yāzūrī became increasingly hostile towards the vizier, apparently intrigued against him and finally accused the vizier of treason with regard to sending troops to Aleppo. By 442 A.H./1050 C.E., al-Yāzūrī had become vizier and "... the succession boded well for the state, for he seemed to have its interests at heart, and although previously in the service of the caliph's mother, appeared, unlike Abū Sa'd, to be able to resist her demands."¹¹² He did so, however, by first ridding the court of everyone who stood in potential opposition to his power.

When Ibn Nu'mān is dismissed from the post of chief *dā'i*, the vizier al-Jarjarā'i makes al-Yāzūrī, in an unprecedented manner, both chief *qāḍī* and

¹¹⁰ Kessler. The Reign of the Fātimid Caliph al-Mustansir bi-llāh (1027-1094 A.D.): a Discussion of Maqrīzī's Portrayal in the *Itti'āz al-hunafā'*. 1971: folio 84 b.; Klemm. Memoirs of a Mission. 2003: 70-71; Walker. Exploring an Islamic Empire. 2002: 61.

¹¹¹ Kessler. The Reign of the Fātimid Caliph al-Mustansir bi-llāh (1027-1094 A.D.): a Discussion of Maqrīzī's Portrayal in the *Itti'āz al-hunafā'*. 1971: 13-14; folio 87a. A general named Rifq, who was in an expedition to Aleppo, secured for al-Yāzūrī the job as the "overseer of the estates of the caliph's mother".

¹¹² Kessler. The Reign of the Fātimid Caliph al-Mustansir bi-llāh (1027-1094 A.D.): a Discussion of Maqrīzī's Portrayal in the *Itti'āz al-hunafā'*. 1971: 14.

chief *dā'ī*.¹¹³ In the *Sīrah*, al-Mu'ayyad complains about the newly appointed vizier holding the two posts. According to al-Mu'ayyad, it is at this time that a notable altercation in the hierarchy of the *da'wah* occurs.¹¹⁴ Al-Mu'ayyad explains that his supporters continued to believe strongly that he ought to have been made chief missionary, despite al-Yāzūrī's original usurpation of this position of religious authority and even after al-Yāzūrī decides to reappoint Ibn Nu'mān to the position of chief *dā'ī*.¹¹⁵ Beshir states that it,

...was in fact an endorsement of the subordination of the judicial and religious authorities to the executive. The vizier appointed the *Dā'ī al-du'āt* as his deputy, and as al-Mu'ayyad points out in such a situation there is no chance of uniting the judicial and religious powers in one person apart from the vizier.¹¹⁶

Al-Mu'ayyad, having been passed over in terms of the position of chief *dā'ī* more than once, is "commissioned" by al-Yāzūrī to write the texts for the *majālis* the chief *dā'ī* is responsible for delivering to the *da'wah*.¹¹⁷ Stern states:

After making the modest remark that the only fault with these lectures was that at the beginning al-Yāzūrī wished to assert himself by making some additions of

¹¹³ *Sīrah* pp. 88-89; Hamdani. *The Sira*. 1950: 55; Klemm. *Memoirs of a Mission*. 2003: 73.

¹¹⁴ *Sīrah* pp. 81-82, 91, 93, 99. Al-Yāzūrī's merging of the three positions is also noted in Ibn Taghrībirdī's *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirat fī Mulūk al-Misr wa al-Qāhirah*. Cairo, 1348-1391/1929-1972. Vol. V: p. 114 (under the year 450 A.H.).

¹¹⁵ *Sīrah* pp. 88-90; Beshir. *The Fātimid Caliphate 386-487 A.H./ 996-1094 A.D.* 1970: pp. 108-115.

¹¹⁶ *Sīrah* p. 91; B. Ibrahim Beshir. *The Fātimid Caliphate 386-487 A.H./ 996-1094 A.D.* Unpublished D. Phil thesis. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1970: 141-142.

¹¹⁷ *Sīrah* pp. 89-90.

his own; al-Mu'ayyad states that this state of affairs continued for over a year. Even after the deposition of the vizier al-Jarjārā'ī, al-Yāzūrī did not cease from the reading of the *majālis* on their days, according to the rule. But when he was appointed vizier (Muḥarrām or Dhu'l-Qada, 442), his new office prevented him from appearing 'in the assemblies for the reading of the *majālis al-da'wa*'. Al-Mu'ayyad hoped to be appointed as his successor in that job, but al-Yāzūrī appointed instead Qāsim b. al-Nu'mān, who ascended the *minbar* and read to the audience.¹¹⁸

At this point in al-Mu'ayyad's career at the Fāṭimid court, his contact with al-Yāzūrī was about to increase, rather than diminish, during the *Basāsīrī débâcle*.

¹¹⁸ S. Stern. "Cairo at the Center of the Ismā'īlī Movement." (1983): 240-241. In addition, see *Sīrah* pp. 89-90, 91, specifically on the *majlis* at the time when al-Yāzūrī was appointed in 442 A.H./1050 C.E.

Chapter Two: Religious Biography, Autobiography and Walāyah in Practice
Part II: Al-Mu'ayyad and the Basāsīrī Dēbācle

In recent years, the study of Fāṭimid historiography and the study of the sources for the history of Fāṭimid Egypt have garnered more scholarly attention. In fact, within the larger field of mediaeval Islamic history, more attention has been paid to the “writing of history”, the genres of historical works, and the models of Islamic historiography. Several scholars bridging concurrently the fields of mediaeval Sufism and Persian historiography have proven effectively in their respective studies the significance of frequently unnoted primary sources for mediaeval Islamic history; namely, Sufi hagiographies, religious biographies and autobiographies.¹¹⁶

Part II of Chapter Two focuses on the mediaeval historical accounts of the “anti-Saljūq” coalition led by Abū al-Ḥārith Arslān al-Basāsīrī (d. 451 A.H./1058-59 C.E.). One of the accounts selected, that of Ghars al-Ni'mah's (fl. 416-17-480 A.H./ 1025-27-1088 C.E.), is preserved in Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's (d. 654 A.H./ 1257 C.E.) Mir'āt al-Zamān. The Mir'āt al-Zamān, however, has not often been given its due as a key source for the histories of the early Saljūq and late Būyid and Fāṭimid periods. The other account, the autobiography of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī missionary, al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-

¹¹⁶ D. Aigle. “Un Fondateur d'ordre en milieu rural.” In, Editor, D. Aigle. Saints orientaux. Paris, 1995: 181-209; O. Safi. “Bargaining with *Baraka*: Persian Sufism, “Mysticism”, and Pre-Modern Politics.” *Muslim World* (2000) 90: 264-281.

Shirāzī, throws into sharp relief the necessity of considering religious autobiographies of the Fāṭimid tradition as historical sources of pivotal importance. Is Fāṭimid *sīrah* literature a distinct model of Fāṭimid historiography? Moreover, are the models of Fāṭimid historiography in keeping with developments in mediaeval Islamic historiography of the same time-period? These are, in fact, the main points underscored in Part II.

The 11th-century “anti-Saljūq” coalition drew together, for a time, local governors and leaders from various principalities in ‘Iraq and Syria. It was backed by funds from the Fāṭimid treasury brought by the reluctant diplomat and Ismā‘īlī missionary, al-Mu‘ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī. The coalition, which al-Mu‘ayyad fostered, with the prodding and guidance of the Fāṭimid vizier al-Yāzūrī, occurred at the time that the Saljūq forces were steadily moving into ‘Iraq, from Western Iran, ca. 447 A.H./1055 C.E, and would last, in various degrees of power and strength, until 450 A.H./1058 C.E.

It has often been a source of chagrin for scholars that the majority of the sources for the early Saljūq period are not contemporary accounts, whether from the Persian or Arab historiographical traditions. Despite the loss of key historical texts for 11th-century Islamic historiography, Cahen first remarked upon the fact that the works of the Būyid court historians, Hilāl al-Ṣābī’ and Ghars al-Ni‘mah, serve as the backbone for subsequent authors, such as Ibn

al-Jawzī and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī.¹¹⁷ Of decided importance here is addressing the significance of particular primary sources written in Arabic on the Saljūqs and the Būyids, and in conjunction with these two dynasties, the history of Western Iran as well. Some key primary sources are often inadvertently overlooked due to the manner in which they are categorized; by way of explanation and serving as focal points throughout the following are the autobiography of the Fāṭimid *dā'i* al-Mu'ayyad and the 13th-century "Iraqī" history of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī. These two works are replete with rich amounts of socio-historical information on 11th-century Fāṭimid-Saljūq relations as well as Būyid Iran but their multi-variant relevance has largely escaped notice.

An additional element to the present discussion is that it is as necessary to deliberate on the lacunae of information in the Persian historiographical tradition, as it is to appraise the historical accounts at hand. The notable absence in the mediaeval Persian historiographical tradition of any "factual" commentaries on the Fāṭimid involvement in al-Basāsiri's capture of Baghdad in turn, offers an opportunity to reconsider some theoretical points concerning the transmission and adaptation of contemporaneous sources for the history of the 11th-century. Briefly examining the Persian histories from this vantage point shall throw into sharp relief a number of frequently debated features of 11th-century Islamic historiography, inclusive of the

¹¹⁷ Cahen. "The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period." (1964): 60; Makdisi. "The Diary in Islamic Historiography." (1990): 181-182. Also see C. E. Bosworth. The Ghaznavids. Beirut, 1973: 12.

Saljūq conquest of Baghdad, episodes of Shīʿi-Sunnī *fitnah* (“civil strife”), and the often-discussed “Sunnī revival” of the period in which al-Muʾayyad operated as a Fāṭimid *dāʿī* and diplomat.¹¹⁸

Of particular import is that Bowen, Cahen and Makdisi first noted the significance of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī’s Miʾrāt al-Zamān as a primary source for late Būyid and early Saljūq history and more specifically, as it appears in the recension of Bibliothèque nationale MS. arabe 1506.¹¹⁹ Less frequently remarked upon is the significance of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī’s Mirʾāt al-Zamān for the history of 11th-century Fāṭimid *daʿwah*.¹²⁰ Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī’s work is of undeniable importance for reconstructing the middle period of al-Muʾayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī’s career as a Fāṭimid *dāʿī* as well as corroborating the events narrated in al-Muʾayyad’s autobiography, the Sīrat al-

¹¹⁸ Makdisi. “The Sunnī Revival.” In, Editor, D. S. Richards. Islamic Civilisation, 950-1150. Oxford, 1973. Also, see V. Klemm. Die Mission des fātimidischen Agenten al-Muʾayyad fī d-dīn in Šīrāz. Frankfurt, 1989: 125-128.

¹¹⁹ Cahen. “The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period.” (1964): 60; C. Cahen. “À Propos d’une édition.” *Arabica* (1970): 17: 83-91; C. Cahen. “Les Chroniques arabes concernant la Syrie, l’Égypte et la Mésopotamie.” *Revue des études islamiques* (1936): 4: 339-40; Makdisi. “The Diary in Islamic Historiography.” (1990): 181-182; G. Makdisi. “The Marriage of Tughril Beg.” In, History and Politics in Eleventh-Century Baghdad. Variorum Reprints, 1990: 259-275.

In addition, F. Malti-Douglas. “Controversy in the Biographical Tradition.” In, Power, Marginality, and the Body in Medieval Islam. Variorum Reprints, 2001: 117, 120-121, 122, 126, utilizes MS. arabe 1506 (folios 130v-133v) for al-Khāṭib al-Baghdādī’s (d. 463 A.H./ 1071 C.E.) biography and notes that it offers a more complete account than what is available in other historical sources, a point I shall return to later.

¹²⁰ See in particular the appendix Cahen provides to his article, Cahen. “À Propos d’une édition.” (1970): 86-91, for the events and accounts covered by the Mirʾāt al-Zamān but not included in the Sevīm edition. More recently, P. Walker. Exploring an Islamic Empire. London, 2002: 159-160, has briefly alluded to the importance of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī’s history as a primary source for the history of the Fāṭimid dynasty.

Mu'ayyadiyyah.¹²¹ One objective is thus to highlight the uniqueness and importance of the above-mentioned sources for 11th-century Islamic history in what follows.

A comparison of the passages concerning al-Mu'ayyad's involvement in Fāṭimid-Saljūq relations illustrates the distillation of the historical events through the means of the various historiographical traditions.¹²² Drawing our attention for the purpose of the aforementioned is the existence of three virtually, or almost virtually contemporary accounts of Fāṭimid support for Abū Hārith Arslān al-Basāsīrī and the surrounding circumstances of the Saljūq conquest and re-conquest of Baghdad between the years 447-48-450-51 A.H./1055 to 1058-59 C.E.

These accounts also attest to the role al-Mu'ayyad the Fāṭimid *dā'ī* played as a diplomat with local rulers based in Syria and Iraq.¹²³ Al-Mu'ayyad's Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah as well as the Mir'āt al-Zamān noticeably include an extensive use of the complete texts of official letters of correspondence. In

¹²¹ Klemm. Die Mission des fātimidischen Agenten. 1989: xvi-xvii; xx-ff, on the Sīrah's narration of the Basāsīrī *débâcle*.

¹²² Please see the article, "Al-Basāsīrī." Encyclopaedia of Islam. Second Edition. Volume I: 1105-1107; H. Bowen. "The Last of the Buwayhids." Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1929): 225-245; H. Busse. Chalif und Grosskönig. Beirut, 1969: 5-6; E. Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. Wiesbaden, 1981: 37; G. Hoffmann. "An Ismā'īlī/Fāṭimid Stronghold in Iraq?" The Case of al-Basāsīrī." In, Shi'ah Islam Sects and Sufism. Editor, F. de Jong. Utrecht, 1992: 26-34; V. Klemm. Die Mission des fātimidischen Agenten al-Mu'ayyad fī d-Dīn in Šīrāz. Frankfurt, 1989: xvi-xxiii; B. T. Qutbuddin. Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī: Founder of a New Tradition of Fatimid Da'wa Poetry. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Harvard University, 1999: 65-72; P. Walker. Exploring an Islamic Empire. London, 2002: 159-160.

¹²³ Local rulers such as Quraysh b. Badrān and Ibn Warrām. See in particular, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī. Mir'āt al-Zamān. Editor, A. Sevim. (Text): pp. 6, 34-39, 47-57; al-Mu'ayyad. Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah pp. 141-ff.; A. Hamdani. The Sīra of the Dā'ī al-Mu'ayyad fī d-Dīn aš-Šīrāzī. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of London, 1950: 75-ff.; 86; V. Klemm. Die Mission. Frankfurt, 1989: xv-xxiii.

the case of Ibn al-Ṣayrafī's al-Ishārat ilā man Nāla al-Wizārah, as Brett argues, Fāṭimid documents (*siḡillāt*) provide the framework for the historical narration of both the Basāsīrī *débâcle* and the downfall and execution of the vizier al-Yāzūrī.¹²⁴ The works are as follows:

- a. Ghars al-Ni'mah's ʿUyūn al-Tawārīkh, preserved in Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's Mir'āt al-Zamān.

Ghars al-Ni'mah provides another contemporary chronicle of the advent of the Saljūqs, though from the vantage point of Baghdad. His "lost" history, used exclusively by Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī in the Mir'āt al-Zamān (covering the years 448-79 A.H. to 1055-86 C.E.) does not particularly reflect a Sunnī bias but does link the Basāsīrī *débâcle* to the emergence of *fitnah* in the different quarters of the city of Baghdad of the time.¹²⁵

- b. Al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography, the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah.

Al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography serves as an "eyewitness", participant account of the Basāsīrī *débâcle*. The text of the Sīrah narrates the events and provides the diplomatic letters (*rasā'il*) al-Mu'ayyad wrote while serving

¹²⁴ M. Brett. "The Execution of al-Yāzūrī." In, Editors, U. Vermeulen/ D. DeSmet. Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras. Vol. II. Leuven, 1998: 15-28; M. Brett. "The Battles of Ramla." (more specifically on the use of *siḡillāt*); Brett. The Rise of the Fāṭimids. 2001: 339-341, also addressing Ibn al-Ṣayrafī's work in the context of the developing "Egyptian" historiographical tradition.

¹²⁵ Bosworth. "Ghars al-Ni'mah." (1991): 133-134; Bowen. "The Last Buwayhids." (1929): 226; H. Laoust. "Les Agitations religieuses à Baghdad." (1973): 177-178; G. Hoffmann. "An Ismā'īlī/Fāṭimid Stronghold in 'Iraq?" The Case of al-Basāsīrī." In, Editor, F. de Jong. Shi'ah Islam, Sects and Sufism. Utrecht, 1992: 26-34.

as the head of the Fāṭimid chancery (*dīwān al-inshā'*), placed in a pivotal position with regard to Fāṭimid-Saljūq diplomatic relations; of special interest, official letters to the Saljūq vizier 'Amīd al-Mulk Abū Naṣr al-Kundurī and the 'Abbasid "Chief of the leaders" (*rā'is al-ru'asā'*) Ibn al-Muslimah.¹²⁶ Al-Mu'ayyad's *Sīrah* also documents at length 11th-century Ismā'īlī *da'wah* activities in Western Iran, Syria and Egypt.¹²⁷

c. Ibn al-Ṣayrafī's (d. 1147 C.E.) *al-Ishārat ilā man Nāla al-Wizārah*.

The *al-Ishārah*, more specifically, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī's discussion of the vizierate of al-Yāzūrī, represents one form of the *sijill*-based works of the "Egyptian tradition". Basing his account on chancery material (*sijillāt*) from Fāṭimid Cairo, the main body of the *al-Ishārah* is devoted to delineating one of the thematic concerns of the "Egyptian historiographical tradition: the rise to power of numerous Fāṭimid viziers.¹²⁸ Providing an account of two pivotal events, the Basāsirī *débâcle* and the end of al-Yāzūrī's vizierate, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī's account is comparable in substance to the account the Mamlūk

¹²⁶ Please see the article, "Ibn al-Muslimah." *E. I.* Second Edition. Volume III: 915-916; Glassen. *Die mittlere Weg*. 1981: 37; 42-43; *Sīrah*: pp. 95-96.

¹²⁷ For additional information, see Busse. *Chalif und Grosskönig*. 1968: 125-127, 413-415; Glassen. *Die mittlere Weg*. 1981: 12, 30-49; Klemm. *Die Mission*. 1989: 47-60; 186-196; Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī*. 1999: 15-26; S. Stern. *Studies in Early Ismā'ilism*. Jerusalem/ Leiden, 1983: 240-241; Walker. *Exploring an Islamic Empire*. London, 2002: 144.

¹²⁸ Presently in two excellent editions: see *al-Ishārat ilā man Nāla al-Wizārah*. Editor, A. F. Sayyid. Cairo, 1998: pp. 73-87. M. Brett. *The Rise of the Fātimids*. Leiden, 2002: 339-341; Hamdani. *The Sīra*. 1950: 72, n.1.

historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 845 A.H./ 1411 C.E.) presents but with numerous diversions in the narration.

Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630 A.H./ 1233 C.E.) is likewise another significant 13th-century historian who authored a “universal” history, especially with regard to al-Mu’ayyad’s role as a Fāṭimid *dā’ī* in the Basāsīrī incident.¹²⁹ His history, al-Kāmil fī al-Ta’rīkh, provides an additional perspective on the use of Fāṭimid historical sources by the different regional “schools” of historiography in the post-Fāṭimid period. His treatment of the Basāsīrī *débâcle* however, will not form a separate discussion in this chapter. Amongst other issues, the following sections will address the transmission and varying uses of the “Egyptian tradition” by later historians.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Ibn al-Athīr. al-Kāmil fī al-Ta’rīkh. Volume 9. Beirut, 1969: Yr. 448 A.H., pp. 635-ff.; Article. “Ibn al-Athīr.” Encyclopaedia of Islam. 2nd Edition. Volume III. Leiden: 723-725; Article. “Ibn al-Athīr.” Encyclopedia Iranica. Volume VII: 671-672; Busse. Chalif und Grosskönig. 1968: 5-6; M. Kāmil-Husayn (Editor). Sirat al-Mu’ayyadiyyah. Cairo, 1949: (Introduction): 23, who originally pointed out that there are differences between al-Mu’ayyad’s account of the Basāsīrī incident and Ibn al-Athīr’s narration of the events.

Also, see Little. “Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Epochs.” (1998): 414-416, on Ibn al-Athīr as a “scholar historian”.

¹³⁰ To which it is necessary to add here that Ibn al-Athīr himself criticized Ibn al-Jawzī for his Ḥanbalī predilections and leanings. Subsequently, such authors as Maqrīzī, preferred to use certain histories over others, thus partially explaining Maqrīzī’s utilization of Ibn al-Athīr in his own histories, especially for the sections on the Fāṭimids rather than Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, who was seen as part of the “Syrian” tradition of historiography. See M. Brett. “The Battles of Ramla. (1099-1105).” In, Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras. Volume I. Editors, U. Vermeulen & D. DeSmet. Louvain, 1995: 20-21; Khalidi. Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period. 1994: 203.

One work from the Persian historiographical tradition of the 12th Century, the anonymous Mujmal al-Tawārīkh, parallels a related use of "Iraqī" sources for its detailed discussion of the Būyid dynasty; most notably, the author's use of the Kitāb al-Tājī of Hilāl al-Ṣābī'.¹³¹ Considered as one of the first dynastic histories written in Persian, the section on the Būyid dynasty in particular from the Mujmal al-Tawārīkh is organized along the lines of the chronological format of the Būyid histories.¹³²

Numerous historians of both the Arabic and Persian historiographical traditions in fact copied the Būyid dynasty's family lineage (*zīj*) directly from the Kitāb al-Tājī of Hilāl al-Ṣābī' or cited the history in the course of

¹³¹ Bosworth. "Ghars al-Ni'ma" (1991): 13-132; H. Busse. Chalif und Grosskönig. Beirut. 1969: 7, 518-519; Editor, M. 'Awwād. Rusūm Dār al-Khilāfah. Beirut, 1986: (Introduction): 14-17 (who derives his information from the biographical account provided in Ibn al-Jawzī's Muntazam). Hilāl al-Ṣābī' is the author of one of the first "official" Būyid histories, the Kitāb al-Tājī fī Akhbār al-Dawlat al-Daylamiyyah, which was written during the reign of 'Aḍud al-Dawlah. It is also a "lost" history. With regard to the Ṣābī' family, standing in a long line of court historians and secretaries in the Būyid *diwān al-inshā'*, Ghars al-Ni'mah's great-grandfather, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl (313-84 A.H./ 925-93 C.E.), was a court secretary and well known "as an epistolary stylist".

On the anonymous Saljūq history, the Mujmal al-Tawārīkh, see Cahen. "The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period." (1964): 64; J. Meisami. Persian Historiography. Edinburgh, 1999: 188-209; Editors, S. Najmabadi & S. Weber. Mujmal al-Tawārīkh. Edingen-Neckarhausen, 2000: (Introduction): 13-25; (Text): p. 301; Editor, M. Ramaḍānī. Mujmal al-Tawārīkh. Tehran, 1318: (Introduction): p. 'hā'.

¹³² Mujmal al-Tawārīkh 2000. (Intro.): 6; Cahen. "The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period." (1964): 64; Makdisi. "The Diary." (1990): 176-178. With regard to the Būyid period, the Mujmal al-Tawārīkh contains a more detailed account of the reigns of the different Būyid *amīrs* in comparison to other Persian historical works of its time.

discussing the Būyid dynasty. Ibn Ḥaṣṣul's (fl. 454 A.H./ 1063 C.E.) Risālat fī Tafdīl al-Atrāk, and Ibn Isfandiyār's (fl. 7th/13th C.E.) Tarīkh-i Tabaristān, present two other related examples of a sophisticated response to the Kitāb al-Tājī.¹³³

According to Meisami, the Būyid court histories exerted an influence on what emerges in the later period as a distinct historiographical model, especially prominent amongst mediaeval historians writing in Persian. She traces the "origins" of the dynastic model of writing history to such histories as Hilāl al-Ṣābī's Kitāb al-Tājī and Miskawayh's Tajārib al-Umam. Meisami then addresses the possibility that the works of the Būyid court historians served as a catalyst for the development of what she terms "ethical-rhetorical historiography" in mediaeval Muslim societies and more specifically, in cultural and political centers where composing works in classical Persian was in ascendance.¹³⁴

The majority of the Persian works of the 11th-12th Centuries and those of the Īlkhānid historians, however, pass over in silence the exact details of the

¹³³ M.S. Khan. "A Manuscript of an Epitome of al-Ṣābī's Kitāb al-Tājī." *Arabica* (1965); 30: 30-33, on the histories that cite the Kitāb al-Tājī; pp. 38, 41, referring to Ibn Isfandiyār's citations from the Kitāb al-Tājī in the Tarīkh-i Tabaristān and how the Tarīkh-i Tabaristān serves as a useful text in terms of proving the authenticity of the existing MS. of the Kitāb al-Tājī.

For Ibn Isfandiyār's citations from the Kitāb al-Tājī, see Tarīkh-i Tabaristān. Editor, 'A. Iqbāl. Tehran, 1320: pp. 139-140, 300. On Ibn Isfandiyār's use of Arabic sources as a littérateur, see C. Melville. "The Caspian Provinces." *Iranian Studies* (2000): 33: 86.

On Ibn Ḥaṣṣul's work, written in refutation of Hilāl al-Ṣābī's Kitāb al-Tājī (in Arabic) during the reign of Tughril Beg, see in particular Khan. "A Manuscript of an Epitome of al-Ṣābī's Kitāb al-Tājī." (1965): 35-ff; Editors, A. 'Azzāwī & S. al-Dīn Yaltqāya. "Tafdīl al-Atrāk (Ibnī Hassul'un Türkler hakkında bir eseri)." *Belleten* (1940): 15: (Intro. in Arabic): 1-25; (Text): 26-51.

¹³⁴ Meisami. Persian Historiography. 1999: 10-11; 144-145.

Fāṭimid dynasty's active role in the contemporary events of the period before the arrival of the Saljūqs in Baghdad. There are also notable gaps in the sources with regard to Ismā'īlī *da'wah* activities in the early Saljūq period.¹³⁵ Yet, as Meisami has adequately illustrated in her most recent study on Persian Saljūq historiography, the role of the Saljūq vizier al-Kundurī and the historical interpretation of his demise in the 12th-century Rāhat al-Sudūr reflects in more definite terms the central concerns of the Saljūq-period historians. Herein Meisami indicates that the issue of *fitnah*, brought upon society by "heretics" in general, was one of the main concerns of Saljūq historians alongside of the motif of the transfer of power and the establishment of just, moral rule and leadership.¹³⁶

As an additional point of consideration, the Saljūq sources, written both in Arabic and Persian, post-date the mid-11th-century developments that led to the establishment of the "*ahl-i Saljūq*" as a prominent Islamic dynasty.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ On another quite complicated matter, related to the extant historical sources for the Saljūq period, the later adaptation of these key works, and the exact relationship (the question of "authorship") between Rashīd al-Dīn and Qāshānī's works to the earlier histories, see The History of the Seljuq Turks from the Jāmi' al-tawārikh. Editors/Translators. K. Luther & C. E. Bosworth. London, 2001: introduction. Also see Iqbāl's notes in his introduction to the Rāhat al-Sudūr. 1921: xxix-xxxvii; Meisami. Persian Historiography. 1999: 145-162.

With regard to Saljūq and post-Saljūq accounts of the Basāsīrī *débâcle*, see al-Rāwandī. Rāhat al-Sudūr: pp. 107-110; Zāhīr al-Dīn al-Nishāpūrī. Saljūqnāmah pp. 19-20; Abū al-Qāsim al-Qāshānī. Zubdat al-Tawārikh. Editor, M. T. Dānishpazhūh. Tehran, 1366: pp. 106-111 (significantly more detailed); Rashīd al-Dīn. Jāmi' al-Tawārikh pp. 22-24, 180; Sīrah pp. 94-184.

¹³⁶ Meisami. Persian Historiography. 1999: 244-245; 158-162 (on the Nizārīs in particular); 281-283.

¹³⁷ Cahen. "Historiography of the Saljuqid Period." (1964): 62-78; Meisami. Persian Historiography. 1999: 141-145. Meisami (p. 299, n. 8) states: "the apparent failure of the Saljūqs to exploit the legitimacy uses of history may be contrasted with later

When the Saljūq authors did concern themselves with the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* per se at the time that they composed their histories beginning in the 12th Century, the Nizārī Ismā'īlī movement captured their full attention-- a vital, powerful, seemingly menacing presence in the Syrian and Iranian lands of the newly minted Sunnī Saljūq dynasty.¹³⁸ Yet another factor adding to the complexity of drawing on the available sources is that in terms of the Persian Saljūq histories, such as Ṣāḥīb al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī's Saljūqnāmah, the accounts survive intact and with the most textual integrity in the Īlkhānid universal histories. The sections concerning the Saljūq dynasty have frequently been appended as *dhayls* (codicils) onto the Īlkhānid universal histories, such as is the case with Rashīd al-Dīn's Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh and Abū al-Qāsim al-Qāshānī's Zubdat al-Tawārīkh. In the specific examples of the other mediaeval Īlkhānid and post-Īlkhānid Persian histories, the Saljūqnāmah forms the basis of the accounts of the Saljūqs in an abridged form.¹³⁹

dynasties—Mongols, Timūrids, Ottomans—who sponsored both historical writing and extensive programmes of copying and translation.”

¹³⁸ Perhaps not surprisingly on the part of the Saljūq historians, the continued Ismā'īlī presence was not construed as a Saljūq failure to rid those regions of any vestige of former Fāṭimid rule. See T. K. El-Azhari. The Saljūqs of Syria. Berlin, 1997: 24-59, for the Saljūq conquest and rule in Syria in the pre-Crusade period. Also see A. F. Sayyid. La Capitale de l'Égypte jusqu'à l'époque fatimide. Beirut, 1998: 137, on the Fāṭimid loss of the Syrian territories in the middle of the 11th Century.

C. Hillenbrand. “The Power Struggle between the Saljūqs and the Ismā'īlīs of Alamūt, 487-518/1094-1124: The Saljūq Perspective.” In, Mediaeval Ismā'īlī History and Thought. Editor, F. Daftary. Cambridge, 1996: 205-220; Luther/Bosworth. The History of the Seljuq Turks. 2001: 11, 25;

¹³⁹ See in particular, the recent work of Luther/Bosworth. The History of the Seljuq Turks. Surrey, 2001: (Introduction): 6-19; (Text): pp. 42-43, 47; Bosworth. The Ghaznavids. 1973: 12; Cahen on Saljūq historiography, Cahen. “Historiography of

Surprisingly, the Persian historians of the Saljūq period devote a minimal amount of space to recording with exactitude the events of the Saljūq conquest of Baghdad as well as the considerable power struggles within the Saljūqs themselves, most clearly seen in the case of Tughril Beg's half-brother, Ibrāhīm Yīnāl.¹⁴⁰ Thematically, the historical accounts mark certain ethical or moral points. As Meisami has indicated, the account of the infighting between Tughril Beg and his brothers forms in part, a retrospective examination of the historical past, in order to determine and trace the roots of contemporary issues. The account given of Ibrāhīm Yīnāl in the 12th-century Rāhat al-Sudūr,

...anticipates their decline and the fragmentation of their rule because of the disunity arising from conflicts and rivalries amongst different members of the house. Thus

the Seljuqid Period.”: 62-78; Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. 1981: 37; J. Meisami on Ibn al-Rāwandī's Rāhat al-Sudūr, in “Rāwandī's Rāhat al-ṣudūr: History or Hybrid?” Edebiyāt (1994): 5: 183-215. Admittedly, M. Th. Houtsma's introductory comments to his Recueil de textes relatif à l'histoire seljoucides. Volume I. Leiden, 1886, and M. Iqbāl's introduction to the Rāhat al-Sudūr still remain the most useful starting points, due to their thorough and concise discussions of the Persian histories of the Saljūq period and on the Saljūqs. See M. Iqbāl (Editor). Muḥammad ibn 'Alī b. Sulaymān al-Rāwandī. Rāhat al-Sudūr. London, 1921: (Intro.): xi-xxix, xxix-xxxvii (with specific bearing upon the matter of the Saljūqnāmāh employed in an abridged form in later Persian histories). A new edition by A. H. Morton, however, of the text, has recently been published, with an introduction to the manuscript tradition of the Saljūqnāmāh.

¹⁴⁰ At a distance from the court of the Būyids, Baghdad and Fātimid Cairo, one of the earliest known works of Sufi hagiography, Muḥammad Ibn al-Munawwar's Asrār al-Tawhīd, links Ibrāhīm Yīnāl's disassociation from Tughril Beg and his uprising to a much different source than the Fātimids and al-Basāsiri-- to the nexus of Abū Sa'īd's Sufi authority-- while still echoing a familiar theme of “ethical-rhetorical” concerns. See Muḥammad Ibn-i Munawwar. Asrār al-Tawhīd. Trans. J. O'Kane. Costa Mesa, 1992: (Intro.): 32, 43-45; (Text): 205-206. O'Kane (*ibid.*: 43) states: “A case of ‘*récupération*’ of a historical figure's unsuccessful revolt and consequent execution is to be found in an anecdote dealing with Ebrahim Inal.” F. Meier notes, however, in his monograph on Abu Sa'īd, that this event is lacking a historical basis. See F. Meier. Abu Sa'īd-i Abu l-Hayr. Leiden, 1976: 329.

does Rāvandī introduce another of the recurrent themes of his history.¹⁴¹

Associated with an intermingled ethical motif of social decline and political change, the very events of the mid-11th Century mark more than simply a clean break from Shī'ī Būyid tutelage of the 'Abbasids or the "restoration" of Sunnī rule in the mediaeval Islamic world at the hands of the Saljūqs themselves. Yet, Western scholars of Islamic history have placed a selected emphasis upon the establishment of religious institutions and in turn, religious orthodoxy during the Saljūq period.¹⁴² In the historical accounts themselves, the Saljūq historians do not seem to depict the Saljūq dynasty so graphically or to place the same weight on the religious role of the Saljūqs as "defenders" of orthodoxy in the context of the conquest of Baghdad.

It seems reasonable to hazard a guess as to what extent religious orthodoxy was the primary concern of the 11th-century Muslim historians. It is largely due to the scholarship of G. Makdisi that the idea of a mid-11th-century "Sunnī revival" gained the most currency. By now a well-established theory, it bears many frequently unexamined ramifications for the study of both the intellectual and social histories of the 11th-century Baghdad as well as other cultural and political centers of the time.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Meisami. *Persian Historiography*. 1999: 244, 246.

¹⁴² Makdisi's own critique. Makdisi. "The Sunnī Revival." (1973): 155-168.

¹⁴³ Makdisi. *Ibn 'Aqil*. 1997: 257: "The eleventh century in Baghdad, cosmopolitan center of the Islamic world, is a Traditionalist century of great importance for the

In enthusiastic response to his theory, however, a number of scholars have overlooked some of the most important points Makdisi put forth with regard to the issue of a revival of Sunnī traditionalism.¹⁴⁴ The characterization of the 11th-century as a century of religious orthodoxy is one Makdisi in actuality backdates to the efforts of the Sunnī-minded Ghaznavids rather than the Saljūqs.¹⁴⁵ Often overlooked as well is Makdisi's approach to the historiography of the 11th-century Islamic world. His approach is also pervaded with a selective understanding of what constituted, it must be noted, foremost Sunnī traditionalism as well as who were the transmitters of traditionalism. As Makdisi states:

The genres of historiography are peculiarly Traditionalist in their genesis and content; for instance, the diary (*ta'rikh*), dated by the month; the annalistic-biographical work (*ta'rikh 'ala 's-sinin*), so called because dated by the year, a development from the diary; the biography (*tabaqāt*), another such development. The diary came into being because of the exigencies of *ḥadīth* criticism, calling for all possible information on the transmitter of a Prophetic Tradition (*ḥadīth*), information required to minimise the possibility fraud or error in the transmission ...The desire to collect all details placing the transmitter in his environment, recording his relations with others—

political and religious history of classical Islam, as well for its institutional and intellectual history."

See Laoust. "Les Agitations religieuses." (1973): 172, who, in agreement with Makdisi, explains that Ibn al-Jawzi in his *Muntazam*, traces the beginning of "Sunnī restoration" to the year 408 A.H./ 1017 C.E., coinciding with the "activities" of Mahmūd of Ghazna and his efforts to "defend" the *Sunnah*.

¹⁴⁴ R. S. Humphreys. *Islamic History*. Princeton, 1991: 148-168; J. Paul. "Von 950 bis 1200." In, Editors, A. Noth & J. Paul. *Die islamische Orient*. Würzburg, 1998: 222-223. Glassen and Klemm have investigated this issue in particular. See Glassen. *Die mittlere Weg*. 1981: 12, 30-49; Klemm. *Die Mission*. 1989: 125-135.

¹⁴⁵ G. Makdisi. "The Sunnī Revival." In, Editor, D. S. Richards. *Islamic Civilisation, 950-1150*. Oxford, 1973: 155-168. See as well H. Laoust. *La Profession de foi d'Ibn Batta*. Damascus, 1958: xcii-civ.

teachers, students, colleagues—as well as his writings, called for the keeping of a dated record (*ta'rikh*, 'dating', 'date'), a diary.¹⁴⁶

As recorded in the works of the Persian historiographical tradition, the Saljūq historians' retrospective understanding of the Saljūqs' rise to power is readily apparent. When dealing with these multi-faceted issues concerning the "Sunnī revival", Meisami's remarks as concerns the historiography of the pivotal 11th Century hold much bearing. The composition of the majority of the still extant historical works occurred at a time when the dynasty was at ebb. Even the "Iraqī" histories Makdisi relies upon most heavily in order to reconstruct the history of 11th-century Baghdad and the revival of Sunnī traditionalism, as will be discussed later, served more than one function with regard to recording historical and biographical information and were also shaped by temporal exigencies.

Klemm's recent study of al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography questions whether it is fitting to speak of a Būyid and therefore by extension, an exclusively "Shī'ī" opposition to the 'Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad in 11th-century Shīrāz. With regard to the larger question of the restoration of Sunnī Islam at the hands of the Saljūqs, Glassen explains that following the eclipse of Būyid rule, an anti-Saljūq coalition at work is the most apparent in the historical

¹⁴⁶ Makdisi. *Ibn 'Aqīl*. 1997: 65.

narration of the events, without evoking a particular religious affiliation or agenda.¹⁴⁷

Al-Basāsīrī's oath of allegiance to the Fāṭimids is such a case in point. Mentioned in the text of the Mir'āt al-Zamān as the *ba'yah*, and in the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadīyah as the *'ahd*, al-Basāsīrī gives his pledge in al-Mu'ayyad's presence on receiving the material goods the Fāṭimids sent in support of fostering an anti-Saljūq coalition. Al-Mu'ayyad's binding provision of Fāṭimid material support and al-Basāsīrī's pledge occur as follows in the Mir'āt al-Zamān:

Abū Naṣr b. Abī 'Umrān the *dā'ī* reached him as an emissary from Egypt with much money, robes and honorific titles and he obtained the *ba'yah* from him and those with him from the Turks, the Kurds and the Arabs so that they would be resolved on the goal of Baghdad.¹⁴⁸

In the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadīyah, al-Basāsīrī gives the *'ahd* to al-Mustansir and al-Mu'ayyad bestows upon him a robe of honor. Regardless of the religious persuasion of their respective authors, both histories described the same event in the same manner.¹⁴⁹ Al-Basāsīrī's *ba'yah* to the Fāṭimids may

¹⁴⁷ Laoust. "Les agitations religieuses." (1973): 173, stresses the role of the *Qāḍī al-quḍāt* (chief judge) in Shī'i-Sunnī relations of this time-period. He examines *fitnah* during the reigns of al-Qādir and al-Ḥākim in connection with the famous "Baghdad Manifesto", which refuted the Fāṭimid's origins. The "affaire sur le predicateur chiite" occurred in Baghdad ca. 416-420/1025-29 C.E..

E. Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. Wiesbaden, 1981: 33-ff; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: xviii, 163-165.

¹⁴⁸ Mir'āt al-Zamān. Editor, Sevīm: p. 6, ln. 7.

¹⁴⁹ MS. arabe 1506: 14b: al-Mu'ayyad (Abū Naṣr b. Abī 'Umrān); ln. 15; 17a-17b: the beginning of Fāṭimid support for al-Basāsīrī and what was sent from Egypt in the

be interpreted as only an indication of commitment, as Hoffmann suggests, as it seems that in this particular instance the parameters of the pledge did not extend to include a change of religious affiliation on the part of al-Basāsīrī.¹⁵⁰

Al-Mu'ayyad's account of his efforts on the behalf of the Fāṭimids to form a united coalition of local rulers in Syria and 'Iraq against the Saljūqs likewise supports Glassen's argument. Al-Mu'ayyad's correspondence with the local leaders of different factions in 'Iraq and Syria, whom he wanted to organize together in a coalition against the Saljūqs, is attested to in the Sīrah alongside of a parallel narrative on the internal Fāṭimid opposition he faced from the vizier al-Yāzūrī.¹⁵¹ Quraysh b. Badrān, the ruler of Mosul's negotiations with al-Mu'ayyad serve as one example of this dynamic at work. Quraysh b. Badrān, as both the Mir'āt al-Zamān and the Sīrah explain, aligned himself with the Saljūqs at first but then continued to shift his allegiance back and forth.¹⁵² In another instance, al-Mu'ayyad explains to Ibn Marwān the problems the last Būyid ruler, al-Malik al-Raḥīm faced

way of material support for al-Basāsīrī; Mir'āt al-Zamān. Editor, Sevīm: pp. 6, 47-48; Sīrah pp. 120-124. Al-Mu'ayyad also includes text of the *'ahd* (pp. 122-124).

See Hoffmann. "An Ismā'īlī/Fāṭimid Stronghold in 'Iraq?" (1992): 26-34; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: xviii.

¹⁵⁰ Hoffmann. Ibid., based on his analysis of the account in the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah.

¹⁵¹ Sīrah pp. 144-ff.; Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 75-ff., local leaders such as Ibn Warrām and Quraysh b. Badran.

¹⁵² Sīrah pp. 130-131; Mir'āt al-Zamān. Editor, Sevīm: 39-43; Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. 1981: 44; Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 71-72. In Mosul, however, the *khutbah* was said in the name of al-Mustanşir.

from the Saljūqs, when trying to form an alliance of any sort with them.¹⁵³

Al-Mu'ayyad also attempted to create an alliance between the Saljūq vizier al-Kundurī and the Fāṭimids, by denouncing the *rā'is al-ru'asā'* Ibn al-Muslimah and denigrating the 'Abbasids as untrustworthy in general. Ibn al-Muslimah, as the Sīrah documents, was responsible in part for sending al-Mu'ayyad into exile from Shīrāz.¹⁵⁴

The "anti-Shī'ite politics" of the *rā'is al-ru'asā'* Ibn al-Muslimah is a frequently upheld example of the seldom lenient 'Abbasid attitude towards the Shī'i-Sunnī tensions of 11th-century Baghdad.¹⁵⁵ The material available from al-Mu'ayyad's Sīrah, unacknowledged by Laoust, shows in detail exactly to what extent the Būyids, even in a so-called peripheral urban center as Shīrāz, continued to follow what Glassen has termed 'Abbasid "religious policy", despite the Būyids' Shī'i inclinations.¹⁵⁶

In general, it may be said that the historical material available from under-utilized Persian sources, like the 12th-century local history for the

¹⁵³ Sīrah pp. 113-116; Hamdani. The Sira. 1950: 66, n. 2, citing Bowen, p. 237, where he refers to MS. arabe 1506, folio 10a. Also see Ibn al-Jawzī. Muntazam. Volume 8: p. 136.

¹⁵⁴ For the complete account of al-Kundurī in the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadīyah, see Sīrah pp. 154-156; Hamdani. The Sira. 1950: 81, n. 1. Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. 1981: 32-ff.

¹⁵⁵ Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. 1981: 30-39; Laoust. "Les agitations religieuses." (1973): 174.

¹⁵⁶ Sīrah pp. 66-67; Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. 1981: 31-34; Qutbuddin. Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī. 1999: 43, on Ibn al-Muslimah.

See Sīrah pp. 3-79, and in particular, pp. 44-49; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 183-184, on the pivotal role the *qāḍī* al-Fazārī plays in the Fārsnāmah's account of al-Mu'ayyad in Shīrāz and his influence at the Būyid court (references to F. Sobieroj's monograph and the Fārsnāmah appear in the note below). The matter of the Sunnī *qāḍī* Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Fazārī and his relations with al-Mu'ayyad at the Būyid court of Abū Kālījār is covered in more detail in Chapter Two, Part I of this dissertation.

province of Fārs, the Fārsnāmah, and later works such as the Shadd al-Izār and the Shīrāznāmah, do not impart a detailed account of the events surrounding al-Basāsīrī's capture of Baghdad. In conjunction with al-Mu'ayyad's Sīrah, however, they shed additional light on one frequently debated aspect of Būyid rule. Nullifying a sweeping generalization that the secondary literature usually makes with regard to Būyid rule as predominantly Shī'ī, these sources point to the fact that in mid 11th-century Shīrāz, a long maintained center of Būyid rule, the many features of "traditionalist" Sunnī Islam Makdisi first acquainted us with already held sway. As addressed earlier, the Sunnī *qāḍī* 'Abd Allāh al-Fazārī's protestations with regard to an active Ismā'īlī presence (namely, al-Mu'ayyad himself) at the Būyid court of Abū Kālījār attests to the Sunnī "orientation" of 11th-century Shīrāz.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ See Sīrah pp. 66, 69; Fārsnāmah. Editor, G. LeStrange & R. A. Nicholson. London, 1921: pp. 117-119; Shadd al-Izār. Editor, M. Qazwīnī/ A. Iqbāl. Tehran, 1328/1950: pp. 358-365, 396-397 (on the *madrasah* al-Fazārī founded); Ibn Zarkūb-i Shīrāzī. Shīrāznāmah. Editor, I. W. Jawādī. Tehran, 1351: pp. 53, 151; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: 37-38; F. Sobieroj. Ibn Hafīf as-Šīrāzī. Beirut, 1998: 181-182. The role of the Fazārī family as judges at the Būyid court, from the reign of 'Aḍud al-Dawlah onward, is attested to in the above-mentioned Persian sources. Sobieroj indicates that according to the Shīrāznāmah, 'Abd Allāh al-Fazārī taught in a *khānaqāh* of Ibn Khafīf's followers. In addition, the Kitāb Firdaws al-Murshidiyyah. Editor, F. Meier. Leipzig, 1943: pp. 117-119, discusses the role of the *qāḍī* al-Fazārī at the court of Fakhr al-Mulk in Shīrāz. The Kitāb Firdaws al-Murshidiyyah is also quite useful as a source that documents the inter-relations between Būyid rulers and religious leaders of varying persuasions in Shīrāz in the time-period directly before al-Mu'ayyad.

Are the boundaries of late Būyid historiography fixed or fluid? In his seminal study on the Ghaznavids, C. E. Bosworth states the following: "The history of the Būyids in western and central Persia is to a large extent interwoven with that of the Samānids and Ghaznavids in eastern Persia."¹⁵⁸ In the course of examining the sources for the history of mediaeval Western Iran, Bowen first indicated in his study on the eclipse of Būyid rule in Western Iran that Bibliothèque nationale MS. arabe 1506 is more complete in terms of its report of the last Būyid rulers in the province of Fārs. Covering the reign of Abū Kālījār, his negotiations with the Ghaznavids and subsequently, with the Saljūqs, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's history, in the recension of MS. arabe 1506, is perhaps an unexpected source of historical information on regions outside of 11th-century Baghdad, especially Būyid Iran.¹⁵⁹ In

¹⁵⁸ C.E. Bosworth. *The Ghaznavids*. Beirut, 1973: 9.

¹⁵⁹ MS. arabe 1506: Folio 2a: in the context of discussing Damascus and Aleppo, al-Basāsirī and the vizier of Abū Kālījār in Fārs and Baghdad, Muhammad b. Ja'far b. Abī al-Faraj b. Fasānjas; Folio 2b-3a: Abū Kālījār's rule over the regions of Shīrāz and Ahwāz; 10b: the *Saljūqiyyah* in 'Iraq. The *khuṭbah* in Baghdad is no longer said in the name of the *Banū Buwayh*, thus indicating the end of the Būyid "state" (*dawlah*); 11a: Abū Kālījār, among the list of other Būyid rulers. The use of the title, "King of Kings" (*shāhanshāh*); 12b: Abū Kālījār and the Daylamī notables.

See Bowen. "The Last of the Buwayhids." (1929): 225-245; G. Makdisi. "The Marriage of Tughril Beg." (1991): 264-265, with a high degree of dependence on Ms. arabe 1506 for his discussion, based on folios 70-72b (on al-Kundurī, and Kundurī-related material, foremost dealing with his problematic relationship with the Sultān and then his instrumental role in arranging the marriage of the Sultān's daughter to Tughril Beg). Apparently, al-Kundurī was involved in a plot against Tughril Beg but only at the time of the uprising of Ibrāhīm Yināl. After the failure of Ibrāhīm Yināl, he did what he could do to get back on good terms with Tughril

addition, the Mir'āt al-Zamān reflects, true to its name, the prevailing complexity of the period and the on-going struggles between competing dynasties for power. It also indicates a common ground with regard to the pertinent sources for the histories of Western Iran and the Būyid, Fātimid and Saljūq periods.¹⁶⁰

There are, necessarily, different scholarly theories regarding the transmission of the no longer extant Būyid court histories and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's almost sole dependence on Ghars al-Ni'mah's "lost" history, the Uyūn al-Tawārikh, for the years 448 to 486 A.H./1056 to 1088 C.E..¹⁶¹ MS.

Beg. Was his alleged intrigue assumed because of his contact with al-Mu'ayyad, and by association Fātimid support for both al-Basāsiri and Ibrāhīm Yīnāl?

MS. arabe 1506, folio 70b: text of letter, related to appointment of the vizier: Kunduri is not acknowledged as he would like by the Caliph in Baghdad and someone else is appointed to the post of vizier instead of him.

R. Mottahedeh. Loyalty and Leadership in Early Islamic Iran. Princeton, 1980: 114-115, n. 21 also indicates the usefulness of this source for the history of this time-period.

¹⁶⁰ References to other histories in MS. arabe 1506: folio 79a, ln. 6-7: Tar'ikh Mayyāfāriqīn; folio 130a: Ibn al-Qalānisi's history of Damascus. The Ta'rikh Mayyāfāriqīn, written by Ibn Azraq al-Fariqī (d. 572 A.H.) exists in manuscript form in the collection of manuscripts formerly at the British Museum (MS. Br. Museum No. 5803) and now housed at the British Library. See Editor, C. F. Baker. Subject Guide to the Arabic Manuscripts in the British Library. London, 2001: 243, 257, and Editors, A. G. Ellis & E. Edwards. A Descriptive List of the Arabic Manuscripts Acquired by the Trustees of the British Museum since 1894. London, 1912: 33. C. Hillenbrand. A Muslim Principality in Crusader Times. Leiden/Istanbul, 1990, has edited large portions of al-Fariqī's history, based on the two manuscripts in the British Museum collection.

¹⁶¹ Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī. Mir'āt al-Zamān. Bibliothèque nationale MS. arabe 1506. Folio 11b; Mir'āt al-Zamān. Editor, 'Alī Sevīm. Ankara: 1968: (Introduction): 5-9; (Text): p. 1; Hilāl al-Ṣābī'. Rusūm Dār al-Khilāfah. Editor, M. 'Awwād. Beirut, 1986: (Introduction): 14-17; C. E. Bosworth. "Ghars al-Ni'ma Hilāl al-Ṣābī' and *Kitāb al-Hafawāt al-nādirah* and Late Būyid History." In, Editor, A. Jones. Arabica Felix. Oxford, 1991: 131-134. In the year 448 A. H., Abū al-Hasan Muḥammad b. Hilāl al-Ṣābī' al-Muḥassin b. Ibrāhīm al-Ṣābī' commenced his history, the 'Uyūn al-Tawārikh.

arabe 1506 also presents a clear depiction of the degree of variation between the existing recensions of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's Mir'āt al-Zamān.¹⁶²

11th-century diplomatic negotiations for rule over Baghdad are on record in what remains of the lost Būyid court histories. Composed by Hilāl al-Ṣābī' (fl. 359-448 A.H./ 970-1056 C.E.), and then continued by his son, Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Hilāl al-Ṣābī', more commonly known as Ghars al-Ni'mah (fl. 416-17-480 A.H./ 1025-27-1088 C.E.), the works of the Būyid court historians do not immediately seem to constitute a distinct genre of mediaeval Islamic historiography.¹⁶³ Makdisi, however, marks the beginnings of a clearly defined school of historiography with the appearance of the Būyid court historians. In his opinion, the Būyid histories exemplify a form of historical writing organized upon the principles of the "historian's diary", thus recording a mixture of autobiographical information and chronicling important events within a month-to-month time frame, on a yearly basis.¹⁶⁴ While Ibn al-Jawzī and his grandson, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, later reformulated this particular annalistic method, the works of the Baghdad

¹⁶² Bowen. "The Last Buwayhids." (1929): 226, n.1, citing Amedroz, who in an article (*JRAS* 1906: 854) indicated that the Paris codex "...embodies part of a later recension of the work, comprising 'added matter, drawn probably from authorities to which the author had later access.'"

See Index général des manuscrits arabes musulmans de la Bibliothèque nationale de Paris. Volume I. Paris, 1953: p. 481, for additional information on MS. arabe 1506.

¹⁶³ C. Cahen. "The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period." In, Historians of the Middle East. Editors, B. Lewis & P. M. Holt. London, 1964: 59-64, an opinion and evaluation Cahen extends to include the historiography of the Saljūq period as well.

¹⁶⁴ G. Makdisi. "The Diary in Islamic Historiography: Some Notes." In, History and Politics in 11th-Century Baghdad. Variorum Reprints, 1990: 172-177, 180; G. Makdisi. Ibn 'Aqil. Edinburgh, 1997: 65.

school of historiography, or “Iraqī tradition”, stand out more conspicuously as amongst some of the few remaining sources for the history of the early Saljūq period.¹⁶⁵ Though Baghdad remained the primary focus of these histories, their authors also document the “Eastern” concerns of the Būyid and ‘Abbasid dynasties and record the advent of the Saljūqs.¹⁶⁶

Despite remarkable variations in the employment of the annalistic/chronological method of narration, Western scholars have chosen to highlight the annalistic format as the most marked feature of mediaeval Arabic historiography, especially in comparison with the “ethical-rhetorical” concerns of the Persian historiographical tradition.¹⁶⁷ Guo and Khalidi consider the narrative methods of both Ibn al-Jawzī and his grandson, Sibṭ,

¹⁶⁵ Editors, C.E. Bosworth/ K. A. Luther. The History of the Seljuq Turks. London, 2001: 12, 219; Cahen. “The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period.” (1964): 59-64.

¹⁶⁶ Cahen. “The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period.” (1964): 59-64; H. Laoust. “Les Agitations religieuses à Baghdād aux IV^e et V^e siècles de l’Hégire.” In, Editor, D. S. Richards. Islamic Civilisation, 950-1150. Oxford, 1973: 169-186.

¹⁶⁷ J. Meisami. “History as Literature.” *Iranian Studies* (2000): 14-22; 26-27, 29; Meisami. Persian Historiography. 1999: 9-13.

Also see J. Meisami. “The Past in Service of the Present: Two Views of History in Medieval Persia.” *Poetics Today* (1993: 14/2): 247-253, and “Why Write History in Persian?” In, Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth. Editor, C. Hillenbrand. Leiden, 2000: 348-361; J. Paul. “Early Islamic History of Iran: from the Arab Conquest to the Mongol Invasion.” *Iranian Studies* (1998): 31/3-4: 463-471. In the first article, Meisami comments upon Gibb’s initial judgment of the pre-Saljūq Persian histories as non-chronological. With regard to the second article, it is important to note that Luther and Waldman, two scholars who focused exclusively on late 10th and 11th-century developments in the Persian historiographical tradition, placed particular emphasis on the techniques of historical ‘narration’. Undoubtedly, their respective works laid the ground work and form the foundation from which later scholars, such as Meisami, discuss the “ethical-rhetorical” concerns of Persian historiography.

as autobiographical in some sections of their respective works.¹⁶⁸ The presentation of their histories, based on a model established by Ibn al-Jawzī, consists of an annalistic format, interspersed by two subsequent sections: one concerning “events” (*ḥawādith*) and the other, separate biographical accounts and obituaries (*wafayāt*).¹⁶⁹ Yet as briefly mentioned earlier, Makdisi considers Ghars al-Ni‘mah’s method of historical writing as inclusive of the above-mentioned two genres and to have set the precedent for later historians of the Baghdad school. According to Makdisi:

Heretofore it was thought that Ibn Jauzi’s *Muntazam* was the first of its kind. Indeed it represented a break in the line of historiographical development as one could see it in the History of *Tabari* (839-923) and in that of Ibn Athir (1160-1233). Of the antecedents of Ibn Jauzi’s (116?-1200) *Muntazam* nothing was known because such works were not known to exist. And although still not extant, such works may yet be clearly identified as annalistic-biographical through quotations in extant works...¹⁷⁰

Other examples exist which attest to the move towards recording biographical information on the part of the Būyid court historians though through an alternative framework, the court literature of *adab*. Ghars al-Ni‘mah’s *Kitāb al-Hafawāt al-Nādirah*, is one such example, written, it can be said, in emulation of al-Tanūkhī’s (d. 384 A.H./ 994 C.E.) earlier work, the

¹⁶⁸ T. Khalidi. *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*. Cambridge, 1994: 201-204; Makdisi. *Ibn ‘Aqil*. Edinburgh, 1997: 6, 31: on Ḥanbalī scholars and mediaeval Islamic historiography.

¹⁶⁹ L. Guo. *Early Mamlūk Syrian Historiography*. Volume I. Boston/Leiden, 1998: 86; Khalidi. *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*. 1994: 201-204.

¹⁷⁰ Makdisi. “The Diary in Islamic Historiography.” (1990): 181.

Nishwār al-Muhādarah.¹⁷¹ Although replete with much relevant biographical information for the history of the Būyid court in Baghdad, the Kitāb al-Hafawāt does not receive the attention typically accorded to the works of annalistic history.¹⁷² The Kitāb al-Hafawāt does reflect, however, another manner in which the Būyid historians consciously modeled their works on those of their predecessors and concerned themselves with the genre of *adab*, whilst still relying on authoritative modes of transmitting and recording historical reports.

In the Kitāb al-Hafawāt, Ghars al-Ni'mah employs an *isnād* (chain of transmission) method of citation as well as specifically attributes the material he uses in his accounts of life at the Būyid court to its original source, whether an individual or a written work.¹⁷³ The *ḥadīth* method of noting the transmission of accounts recorded in the Kitāb al-Hafawāt in this case does not necessarily indicate an annalistic project at hand, for the work's main focus is to convey (with an inclination towards satire) the consequences of social blunders and *faux pas* at the Būyid court.¹⁷⁴ At the same time, it raises the question of the distinction between court literature

¹⁷¹ Kitāb al-Hafawāt. Editor, S. al-Ashtar. Beirut, 1967: (Intro.): 27-29; Bosworth. "Ghars al-Ni'mah." (1991): 134-135; Busse. Chalif und Grosskönig. 1968: 7, 503; Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. 1981: 47.

¹⁷² Bosworth. "Ghars al-Ni'ma." (1991): 129-140.

¹⁷³ By way of explanation, see Kitāb al-Hafawāt. 1967: (Intro.): 14, 15; (Text): pp. 158 (transmitted from Abū 'Alī al-Muḥassin b. 'Alī al-Tanūkhī); 308, 325, 378 (transmitted from Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl al-Ṣābī); Bosworth. Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Bosworth "Ghars al-Ni'ma." (1991): 134-135. See for example, anecdotes No. 208, 287 (on 'Amīd al-Dīn al-Kundurī) in the Kitāb al-Hafawāt. 1967: pp. 218; 294-295

and court histories, as Arkoun addresses in the more specific context of Ibn Miskawayh's (d. 421-22 A. H. /1030 C.E.) works.

Ethics infuses the Arabic annalistic tradition. Arkoun believes that the reliance on, and varied uses of, ethical themes was an attribute held in common between both the mediaeval Arabic and Persian historiographical traditions.¹⁷⁵ Examples drawn from the Kitāb al-Hafawāt illustrate the many literary techniques Ghars al-Ni'mah as a Būyid court historian availed himself of in order both to carry on the work of his father and al-Tanūkhī.¹⁷⁶ Of special interest is Ghars al-Ni'mah's own account of the Saljūq vizier al-Kundurī, where he records his personal contact with the vizier and the renowned Saljūq *qādī al-quḍāt* Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Dāmghānī (d. 478 A.H./1085 C.E.).¹⁷⁷ In the Kitāb al-Hafawāt, Ghars al-Ni'mah provides a cross-reference to the historical account he presents on al-Kundurī under the year 449 A.H./1057 C.E. in his no longer extant Uyūn al-Tawārīkh.¹⁷⁸ This anecdote also serves as one of two concrete references in the Kitāb al-Hafawāt to al-Basāsiri's activities to gain control over Baghdad in Tughril

¹⁷⁵ Arkoun. Contribution à l'étude de l'humanisme arabe. 1970: 124.

¹⁷⁶ Ghars al-Ni'mah. Kitāb al-Hafawāt. 1967: (Intro.): 18-23; Bosworth. "Ghars al-Ni'ma." (1991): 132-135, who also points out (p. 141, n.16) that unfortunately, Busse does not provide any information on this work due to the fact it only appeared in edited form after the publication of Chalif und Grosskönig.

¹⁷⁷ Ghars al-Ni'mah. Kitāb al-Hafawāt. 1967: No. 287, p. 295; Bosworth. "Ghars al-Ni'ma." (1991): 140.

For additional information on the *qādī* al-Dāmghānī, see Makdisi. Ibn 'Aqīl. 1997: 180,183.

¹⁷⁸ Ghars al-Ni'mah. Kitāb al-Hafawāt. No. 287, pp. 294-295; Mir'āt al-Zamān. Editor, Sevīm: 15-26; Glassen. Die mittlere Weg. 1981: 47.

Beg's absence.¹⁷⁹ Despite a seemingly stark reliance on an annalistic framework, on the one hand, and the *ḥadīth* model of transmission, on the other, we shall see that the resulting "Iraqī" accounts of the advent of the Saljūqs share similar thematic objectives as the works of the Persian historians and those of the "Egyptian" tradition.¹⁸⁰

The key importance of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's Mir'āt al-Zamān is that it stands alone as a mediaeval source containing excerpts and passages from what constitutes a contemporary account of the Basāsīrī *débâcle*. Despite the possibility that the Muntazam might have served as a direct source of information for Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, there is no hint of Ghars al-Ni'mah's Uyūn al-Tawārīkh being preserved at large in the history of Ibn al-Jawzī.¹⁸¹ The "lost" history of Ghars al-Ni'mah specifically attests to al-Mu'ayyad's role as a Fāṭimid *dā'ī* in the events, a fact that is not recorded in the Muntazam. As will be addressed in the course of discussing the "Egyptian" perspective on al-Mu'ayyad's involvement with al-Basāsīrī, the Mir'āt al-Zamān also provides a fairly bias-free and detailed account of these events.

Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī leaves Ghars al-Ni'mah's history relatively unaltered, though not necessarily intact.¹⁸² In keeping with the aforementioned, the basic framework of the Mir'āt al-Zamān is annalistic. He employs in a very interesting and revealing way Ibn al-Jawzī's Muntazam as a skeleton

¹⁷⁹ Bosworth. "Ghars al-Ni'mah." (1991): 139-140, the other being No. 208 (see n. 33).

¹⁸⁰ Mir'āt al-Zamān. Editor, A. Sevīm. (Introduction): 8-9; Bosworth. "Ghars al-Ni'ma." (1991): 134-135.

¹⁸¹ See in particular, Ibn al-Jawzī. al-Muntazam fī al-Tar'ikh. Volume 8. Hyderabad, 1359 (reprint): pp. 162-212 (obituary of al-Basāsīrī on p. 212) .

¹⁸² Bowen. "The Last Buwayhids." (1929): 226.

structure for the Basāsīrī “years” and by doing so, retains such features as the biographical accounts of the Muntazam, with minor inclusions.¹⁸³ In addition, the basic accounts of the “year’s events”, especially the *fitnah* “episodes” in Baghdad are recorded, with only minor variations from the Muntazam.¹⁸⁴ The additional material available from Ghars al-Nī‘mah’s history is interspersed throughout the annalistic framework. It likewise seems that the exclusiveness of this original account of the Basāsīrī *débâcle* was notable enough to merit Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī’s continual comment and inter-textual references to it throughout the Mir’āt al-Zamān.¹⁸⁵

Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī as a Source for Fāṭimid History

As addressed in Cahen’s 1970 review of the Sevīm edition of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī’s Mir’āt al-Zamān, the Mir’āt al-Zamān provides tangible insights into 11th-century Fāṭimid history in addition to the history of the Saljūq period.

¹⁸³ MS. arabe 1506: biographical accounts as examples; folios 19b-21b: Biography of Hilāl al-Ṣābī’ (see also Ibn al-Jawzī’s Muntazam. Vol. 8: 173-179); 22b-23a, Occurring under the year 449 A.H., see the biography and death of Ibn al-Muslimah; folios 30a-30b: Biography of the vizier al-Yāzūrī, as a vizier and a *qāḍī* of Sunnī persuasion (also see Muntazam. Vol. 8: pp. 183-184); folios 34a-ff.: Biography of the poet al-Ma’arrī (Muntazam. Vol. 8: pp. 184-187).

¹⁸⁴ MS. arabe 1506: 2a-2b: *Fitnah* in Baghdad amongst the Shī‘ah ca. 441 A.H.; Folio 5b: Year 443 A.H., more on the Shī‘ah of Baghdad; 5a: *Ahl al-sunnah/ ahl al-shī‘ah*. How the people of Basrah also held the *Ahl al-bayt* in high esteem.

¹⁸⁵ MS. arabe 1506: folios 8a, 130b-133b: Biography of the historian al-Khāṭib al-Baghḍādī and an internal reference to the Sunnī-Shī‘ī conflicts at the time of al-Basāsīrī in Baghdad.

See Malti-Douglas. “Controversy.” (2001): 117, 121-122, 126.

Important passages, however, have been expunged from the edition Sevīm presents of what still forms only one part of the complete work of the Mir'āt al-Zamān. Another feature of the edition is that it inexplicably commences with the year 448 A.H./ 1055-56 C.E., though this does have the effect of highlighting Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's reference to Ghars al-Ni'mah's "lost" history.¹⁸⁶ In Sevīm's efforts to meet his objective, however, of collecting the passages from the Mir'āt al-Zamān foremost concerned with Saljūq history, Cahen also indicates that another useful and important feature of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's history has likewise been removed: the biographical accounts and obituaries of important religious scholars and political leaders of the Saljūq period.¹⁸⁷ This again underscores the irreplaceable nature of MS. arabe 1506. In addition, Cahen's article, virtually indispensable while employing the Mir'āt al-Zamān as a source for Fāṭimid history and Fāṭimid-Saljūq diplomatic relations, pin-points two areas in the work of the greatest concern to our present analysis of the available sources for 11th-century Islamic historiography and the Basāsīrī *débâcle*—information which is readily available in MS. arabe 1506.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Ms. arabe 1506: Years 442-443 A.H., folio 3b: The first mention of Tughril Beg; 6a: Tughril Beg moves into Rayy; 7a: Tughril Beg gains control and rule over Hamadan and its surrounding areas; 8a: Tughril Beg, of the *madhhab* of Ibn Hanīfah. All of these reference, of course, pertain to Saljūq history but are neither included in the Sevīm edition nor referred to by Cahen in his 1970 review of Sevīm's edition of the Mir'āt al-Zamān.

¹⁸⁷ Cahen. "À Propos d'une édition." *Arabica* (1970): 83-91.

¹⁸⁸ Cahen. "À Propos d'une édition." (1970): 86-91. Cahen considers the recension of MS. 1506 to be a fine representative of the pre-Yunīnī transmission and redaction of the Mir'āt al-Zamān. Cahen explains, however, that even though MS. arabe 1506 is the most frequently utilized of all of the available manuscripts for the Mir'āt al-

Is it the case that the “Iraqī” tradition is so divergent from the “Egyptian” tradition with regard to their respective accounts of the Basāsīrī “affair”? Brett suggests that they are not so distant from each other. He makes this supposition even before taking into consideration the fact that the Sevīm edition of the Mir’āt al-Zamān does not include what one might call “post-Basāsīrī” Fāṭimid diplomatic relations as well as accounts concerned with the rise to power of the military vizier Badr al-Jamālī.¹⁸⁹ The additional information provided by MS. 1506 also includes one especially pertinent passage with regard to the career of al-Mu’ayyad. In a passage not included in the Sevīm edition nor referred to in any of the secondary literature, MS. arabe 1506 provides a clear date for al-Mu’ayyad’s “abandonment” of the by-then Basāsīrī-led coalition. The passage states that in *Muḥarram* 450 A.H./1058 C.E., leaving from the fort (*qa’lah*) in Aleppo, al-Mu’ayyad then returned to Cairo, a fact that is likewise supported and confirmed by al-Mu’ayyad’s narration of the event in the Sīrah.¹⁹⁰

Zamān, it is “presque négligeable”, because it is clearly based on the oldest manuscript (Sarray Ahmet III 2907) and therefore, not entirely unique.

¹⁸⁹ MS. arabe 1506: folio 86a: the name of one *qādī* under al-Mustansir is mentioned, Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim b. ‘Abd ‘Aziz b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu’mān, al-Mu’ayyad’s contemporary in the Fāṭimid *da’wah*; 145b-146a: 466 A.H.: al-Mustansir requests that Badr al-Jamālī come to Cairo. He is referred to as the *amīr al-jayūsh*; 165b-ff.: Year 469 A.H., conflicts between the different elements of the soldier guards in Cairo and the Fāṭimid “re-conquest” of Syria from Atsiz (referred to in A. F. Sayyid. *La Capitale*. 1998: 374-375).

¹⁹⁰ Mir’āt al-Zamān. Editor, Sevīm. 1968: p. 26, ln. 21: lacuna. Missing passage provided by MS. arabe 1506: folio 44a, ln. 21-25. Corroborated by Sīrah pp. 174-178. See in addition, Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 91-92; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: xix-xx. Qutbuddin. Al-Mu’ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī. 1999: 18, 73, indicates that in the Sīrah, al-Mu’ayyad’s return to Cairo occurs before *Rābi’ I*, 450 A.H..

Also see Sīrah pp. 97-100; Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 61. At this time, Ibn ‘Uqayl was the governor of Ṣūr. The headquarters of al-Basāsīrī in Syria was al-

Al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography, the Sīrah, and Ibn al-Ṣayrafī's al-Ishārah, narrate the events which led to al-Basāsīrī's failure to secure Fāṭimid control over Baghdad as well as stave off the Saljūqs from the Fāṭimid territories in 'Iraq and Syria. Both Fāṭimid authors viewed the Basāsīrī *débâcle* as the end-result of what is best termed as the Sunnī vizier and *qāḍī al-quḍāt* al-Yāzūrī's machinations and maneuvering at the Fāṭimid court, internally, and his intriguing with different factions amongst the Saljūqs, externally. Similar to the social commentary put forth by the later Mamlūk historian, al-Maqrīzī concerning the collapse of the Fāṭimids, their respective discussions of the imminent downfall and collapse of the formerly secure Fāṭimid "state" are linked to the acts and deeds of two individuals; primarily, al-Basāsīrī and al-Yāzūrī.¹⁹¹

As well, in the eyes of individuals more contemporary to the events, such as al-Mu'ayyad, al-Yāzūrī's ill-conceived ambitions marked the first indication of an increasingly destabilized Fāṭimid administration. It likewise pointed to the potential for a newly emerging power-base within the Fāṭimid empire, where the "Men of the Sword" would hold sway, rather than the

Rahbah, as his army was stationed there. Fāṭimid territories in Syria at this time, it must also be noted, included the city of Aleppo. Hamdani briefly refers here to MS. arabe 1506 of the Mir'āt al-Zamān, without mentioning any folio number but correlates the reference to Ibn 'Uqayl with p. 100 of the Sīrah.

¹⁹¹ Ibn Muyassar. Annales d'Égypte. Editor, M. H. Massé. Cairo, 1919: 11; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī. al-Ishārah. 1925: pp. 43-46/67-70.

“Men of the Pen”, giving way to an atmosphere of competition and anxiety al-Mu’ayyad so carefully portrays in his autobiography. In fact, quite indicative of the genre of autobiography, al-Mu’ayyad reflects upon past power struggles at the Fāṭimid court as well as foreshadows the future implications of al-Mustansir’s weakened caliphal authority, following al-Yāzūrī’s demise and prior to the appearance of the military vizier, Badr al-Jamālī.¹⁹² Al-Mu’ayyad’s account of al-Yāzūrī, however, and the manner in which he usurped control over the *da’wah* through merging the authority of the vizierate with that of the two positions of *qāḍī al-quḍāt* and *dā’ī al-du’āt* evince a severely critical stance.¹⁹³

The “paradoxical” downfall of the vizier al-Yāzūrī in 450 A.H./1058 C.E. coincides with the Fāṭimid capture of Baghdad, an event cloaked in historical garb that seems at face value to be a moment of power and strength. Despite his dubious reputation, later historians remark upon the fact that al-Yāzūrī was the last “successful” vizier to “hold together” the different factions of the Fāṭimid ruling elite.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² *Sīrah* p. 178; S. Enderwitz. “From Curriculum Vitae to Self-Narration. Fiction in Arabic Autobiography.” In, Editor, S. Leder. *Story-telling in the Framework of Non-Fictional Arabic Literature*. Wiesbaden, 1998: 5-8; Klemm. *Die Mission*. 1989: 88.

¹⁹³ *Sīrah* pp. 89-94, with regard to al-Yāzūrī making the most of his political power in order to garner additional acclaim at the Fāṭimid court, in religious affairs. Chapter III, sections 1-2 addresses this issue of power struggles within the 11th-century Ismā’īlī *da’wah* more thoroughly.

¹⁹⁴ Following al-Yāzūrī, there was a swift succession of Fāṭimid viziers for a period of almost two decades, until the appearance of the *amīr al-jayūsh*, Badr al-Jamālī c.a. 1074 C.E. See F. Daftary. *The Ismā’īlis*. Cambridge, 1990: 202-204; Sayyid. *La Capitale*. 1998: 371-383; P. Sanders. “The Fāṭimid State, 969-1171.” In, *The Cambridge History of Egypt*. Volume I. Cambridge, 1998: 151-174; Walker. *Exploring an Islamic Empire*. 2002: 65-71;

During his vizierate, al-Yāzūrī served as chief *qāḍī* and chief *dāʿī* and grappled with regional, “Egyptian” problems as well as with the “Eastern” concerns of the Saljūqs and al-Basāsīrī. In terms of the existing secondary literature, in a unique article on Fāṭimid historiography, Brett concerns himself more with the local problems in Egypt, and to a higher degree of thoroughness.¹⁹⁵ According to Brett, the “Egyptian” historical tradition is based on annalistic record keeping, and as it concerns Fāṭimid-Saljūq diplomatic relations, goes back to the two main Fāṭimid histories of the 11th and 12th Centuries: Ibn Muyassar and al-Musabihhī.

We must note here that Brett almost overlooks the Sīrat al-Muʿayyadiyyah as a Fāṭimid source depicting the reasons behind al-Yāzūrī’s downfall as a vizier and the power struggles-- by no means only an attempt to secure the position of vizier-- at the Fāṭimid court of the time. Brett, however, does briefly refer to the Sīrat al-Muʿayyadiyyah as an important primary source for supplementing the accounts put forth in the “Iraqī” tradition, and later reflected in the Egyptian chronicles as concerns al-Basāsīrī.¹⁹⁶

In the case of Maqrīzī, the account given under the year 448 A.H. concerning the reasons behind al-Yāzūrī’s execution includes much of the material Ibn al-Ṣayrafī provides in his Ishārah. Maqrīzī, however, under the year 450 A.H./1058 C.E., supplies a much longer discussion of al-Yāzūrī’s rise

¹⁹⁵ Brett. “The Execution of al-Yāzūrī.” (1998): 17-19.

¹⁹⁶ Brett. “The Execution of al-Yāzūrī.” (1998): 19.

and fall, including the material in the anonymous and no longer extant Sirat al-wazir al-Yazuri.¹⁹⁷ Maqrizi, under the year 448 A.H./1056 C.E., explains that al-Yazuri sent funds from the Fātimid treasury with al-Mu'ayyad (Ibn al-Athir narrates the event in a similar fashion).¹⁹⁸ In this first annalistic account of the event, the initial "triumph" of al-Basāsiri is connected to al-Yazuri's active, financial support for his endeavors to seize control of Baghdad. In the sources of the "Egyptian tradition", despite "losing sight of the chronology", as Brett states, al-Yazuri is in fact, given the credit for this Fātimid success. Brett believes that the 450 A.H. account of Yazuri's support of al-Basāsiri resembles a more "official Fātimid version of the affair...", and was most likely based upon a *sijill*.

Ibn al-Ṣayrafī provides more detail as to the events surrounding al-Yazuri, and also includes a "biographical notice". It must be pointed out here that the biographical account is exceedingly similar in content to what appears in Ibn al-Jawzi's Muntazam, and later, in Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzi's Mir'at al-Zamān.¹⁹⁹ Brett believes that in his account of al-Yazuri, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī inserts the additional information into the annalistic framework later

¹⁹⁷ Maqrizi. Itti'āz. Volume II: p. 262; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī. al-Ishārah. Editor, A. F. Sayyid: 73-81; Brett. "The Execution of al-Yazuri." (1998): 18; Daftary. The Ismā'īlis. 1990: 202-203; A. F. Sayyid. La Capitale. Beirut, 1998: 618-620.

¹⁹⁸ Ibn al-Athir. Al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rikh. Volume 9. Beirut, 1967 (Reprint) : pp. 597, 625-650 (pp. 640-645, on al-Basāsiri ; pp. 635-636, on al-Yazuri); Ibn Muyassar. Annales de l'Égypte pp. 10-11; Maqrizi. Itti'āz. Volume II: pp. 233-243; Brett. "The Execution of al-Yazuri." (1998): 20.

¹⁹⁹ See note 82 above.

paralleled by Ibn Muyassar.²⁰⁰ Thus it is likely that the two authors were likely drawing upon the same source, rather than that Ibn Muyassar only built upon the earlier work of Ibn al-Ṣayrafī.

One theory as to al-Yāzūrī's downfall states that al-Yāzūrī wasted Fāṭimid resources and "antagonized" the enemies of the Fāṭimids.²⁰¹ In Ibn Muyassar's account, al-Yāzūrī secretly contacted Tughril Beg and stole money from the Fāṭimid treasury, so he could run away to Baghdad and then invite the Saljūqs to invade Egypt whilst he himself was in a more secure position.²⁰² From another perspective, also voiced by Ibn Muyassar, al-Yāzūrī's alleged intrigues intended to accomplish three things: to keep the Saljūqs out of Syria, to encourage Ibrāhīm Yīnāl's uprising against Tughril Beg, and thus to allow for al-Basāsīrī to maintain control over 'Iraq. Also stated in the Akḥbār Miṣr, and with much more dire implications, is that in the year 448 A.H./1056 C.E., al-Yāzūrī sent al-Mu'ayyad with the funds for al-Basāsīrī, emptying the treasuries for the purpose of conquering Baghdad and quickly catapulted the Fāṭimid state into irreversible decline.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Brett. "Fāṭimid Historiography: A Case Study- The Quarrel with the Zīrids, 1048-58." (1998): 55.

²⁰¹ Brett. "The Execution of al-Yāzūrī." (1998): 21-22.

²⁰² Maqrīzī. Itti'āz. Editor, J. Shayyāl. Vol. II: pp. 236-38; Brett. "The Execution of al-Yāzūrī." (1998): 22, n. 21 ; Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 102.

²⁰³ Ibn Muyassar. Annales de l'Égypte. Editor, M. H. Massé. Cairo, 1919: p. 8.

The Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah and Fāṭimid Sīrah Literature

Returning to some of the events addressed in Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's Mir'āt al-Zamān, the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah offers up to the interested reader a complementary discussion of the end of Būyid rule, the nature of the diplomatic relations at the time of the advent of the Saljūqs and internal power struggles at the Fāṭimid court.

Al-Mu'ayyad's memoirs present a distinctive narrative and documentation of a transitional period in mediaeval Islamic societies, whether from the perspective of political, social or religious history. Of particular interest are his reflections, and perhaps even ruminations, on the internal power struggles at the Fāṭimid court of al-Mustanṣir. One crucial account with regard to al-Mu'ayyad's career at the court as well as external historical events concerns al-Mu'ayyad's troubled relations with the vizier al-Yāzūrī. Al-Mu'ayyad's difficulties with al-Yāzūrī commenced when al-Mu'ayyad was passed over again for the position of chief *dā'ī*. His friends urge him to flatter al-Yāzūrī after the vizier's recent successes in quelling the Banū Qurrah in order to encourage him to change his mind. Ironically, al-Yāzūrī, "in appreciation" of al-Mu'ayyad's gesture, appoints him as the head of the Fāṭimid *dīwān al-inshā'*. At this juncture in the Sīrah, al-Mu'ayyad's narration of his disenchantment with his role at the Fāṭimid court extends to include a wide range of issues, but finally comes to rest on

the incompetence of Ibn al-Nu'mān, whose position as chief *dā'ī* he had sought for himself. Nonetheless, he accepts the other position offered to him in the *dīwān al-inshā'*.²⁰⁴ His response to al-Yāzūrī is included in the text of the *Sīrah*.²⁰⁵

Then, perhaps in an attempt to rid himself of his only serious rival, as al-Mu'ayyad quietly suggests in his autobiography, al-Yāzūrī sends al-Mu'ayyad on the dangerous task of bringing the Fāṭimids' material support to al-Basāsiri.²⁰⁶ Due to his suspicions, al-Mu'ayyad only takes on the task when the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustansir also demands that he does so.²⁰⁷

Undeniably, close relations existed between al-Yāzūrī and an unwilling al-Mu'ayyad at this historical juncture. These ties are indicated by the documented correspondence al-Mu'ayyad himself selected to preserve in the text of the *Sīrah*, especially as concerned what action to take *vis à vis* the alliance with Ibn Sālīh.²⁰⁸ Without a doubt, al-Yāzūrī and al-Mu'ayyad were in consultation with regard to the management of diplomatic relations in the process of building a multi-party, anti-Saljūq coalition. When al-Mu'ayyad receives a letter written by the historian and diplomat al-Quḍā'i indirectly from al-Yāzūrī, al-Mu'ayyad denounces his handling of matters and his

²⁰⁴ *Sīrah* pp. 93-94; Hamdani. *The Sira*. 1950: 58. Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzi*. 1999: 18, indicates that this appointment occurred in 443 A.H./ 1051 C.E..

²⁰⁵ *Sīrah* pp. 91-92; Hamdani. *The Sira*. 1950: 57; Klemm. *Die Mission*. 1989: 55-60.

²⁰⁶ *Sīrah* p. 96; Hamdani. *The Sira*. 1950: 60.

²⁰⁷ *Sīrah* p. 99. Also see the account of these events given in the Yemenī-Ismā'īlī history of Idrīs 'Imad al-Dīn, the *'Uyūn al-Akhbār*. Volume. Editor, M. Ghālib. Beirut, 1984: pp. 330-ff., which is largely based on the *Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*.

²⁰⁸ *Sīrah* pp. 91-103; Hamdani. *The Sira*. 1950: 62.

position, not only al-Yāzūrī's, and once again voices his dissatisfaction with his situation in what amounted to being in exile from Cairo.²⁰⁹

Already with a growing sense of his futile efforts in a struggling cause and far from the events taking place at the Fāṭimid court, al-Mu'ayyad is then confronted by al-Basāsīrī and accused of stealing 2,000 *dīnār* from the funds meant to support the coalition.²¹⁰ The infighting amongst the aligned leaders begins to appear as a substantial problem, thus weakening the "coalition" against the Saljūqs. As the events continue to unfold, with a concurrent dissolution of the plan to capture Baghdad in the name of the Fāṭimids, the newly instated vizier Ibn al-Maghribī (the second successor to al-Yāzūrī, after his execution), suddenly dissuades al-Mu'ayyad from his original mission and yet, at the same time, suggests to him that he not return to Cairo. By the time al-Basāsīrī has successfully captured Baghdad from the Saljūqs, al-Mu'ayyad, in exile once again, is absent from the scene.²¹¹

Is the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah a work of religious history, religious autobiography or a memoir in the manner Makdisi described? Does it narrate the events of this transitional period of Islamic history in such a way that reflects the *da'wah*'s absolute centrality in the events that unfold, or does it foremost reflect al-Mu'ayyad's acute sense of political instability and social decline as an individual?

²⁰⁹ Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 63. See Sīrah p. 103, where al-Mu'ayyad describes how he received a letter written "in his hand"; i.e., al-Qudā'ī's.

²¹⁰ Sīrah pp. 151-153; 108, 188.

²¹¹ Sīrah pp. 177-178; Hamdani. The Sīra. 1950: 79, 91-92; Klemm. Die Mission. 1989: xxii.

Chapter Two has touched upon the narration of historical events at the 11th-century Būyid and Fāṭimid courts in the Fāṭimid *dāʿī* al-Muʾayyad's Sīrat al-Muʾayyadiyyah in ways which indicates its importance as a memoir, a religious autobiography and as a historical document. Al-Muʾayyad's autobiography exemplifies many of the main principles of Fāṭimid *sīrah* literature through depicting the efforts of the 11th-century Fāṭimid *daʿwah* in a pivotal period of mediaeval Islamic history. Whilst al-Muʾayyad employs the classical genre of Fāṭimid *sīrah* literature to urge the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustansīr to take up once again his proper role as Ismāʿīlī *imām* over the community of the believers, he also requests that al-Mustansīr allow him to assume the role of leadership over the Fāṭimid *daʿwah*. His Sīrah therefore includes his personal testimony as a loyal Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*, and as one who continues to be willing to face adversity in the name of the Fāṭimid *imām* and his *daʿwah*.²¹²

Yet, al-Muʾayyad's observations and comments on the historical events of the Basāsīrī *débâcle*, as they unfold, remain in keeping with other contemporary and near-contemporary histories from the mediaeval Persian and Arabic historiographical traditions that employ the format of religious biography and autobiography in conjunction with the annalistic narration of historical events. In the example of the Saljūq invasion and Fāṭimid capture of Baghdad, the histories of the Egyptian and ʿIraqī traditions are constructed around the accounts of the misdeeds of individual rulers and

²¹² Klemm. Memoirs of a Mission. 2003: 75-77.

viziers, and form a common ground as concerns the Fāṭimid dynasty's failure to maintain control over Baghdad and the dynasty's subsequent downfall, pinning the blame on one individual in particular, the vizier al-Yāzūrī. Al-Mu'ayyad's Sīrah, alongside of these histories in question and the later Persian Saljūq histories, likewise reflects similar thematic and ethical concerns with regard to its presentation of social decline and the ephemeral nature of dynastic powers at the time of the emergence of the Saljūqs and their capture of Baghdad.

We are perhaps now more familiar, within the mediaeval Islamic historiographical tradition at large, with the varying axes of religious authority and social critique in the 11th Century and their associated methods and models of historical narration. Al-Mu'ayyad's autobiography typifies many of these features, as its author enfolds with great skill and expertise two late Būyid models of literary and historical narration into the Fāṭimid genre of *sīrah*, in a personal memoir that actively and evocatively intertwines the themes of court literature, religious biography and autobiography.

Chapter Three: The Composition and Transmission of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah
Section a: The Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah

Thus far in Chapters One and Two, this dissertation has addressed the historical and social contexts of the mid-11th-century Ismā'īlī *majlis* in Būyid-period Shīrāz, Ahwāz and Fāṭimid Cairo as based primarily on the memoir of al-Mu'ayyad, the Sīrah. Through examining in particular al-Mu'ayyad's employment of one chapter of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Da'ā'im al-Islām in the public setting of the *majlis* and in the context of religious debate at the Būyid court in Shīrāz, Chapter Two laid the foundation for putting forth a general theory concerning al-Mu'ayyad's method of didactics and doctrinal elaboration in the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. It is also hoped that the discussion of the centrality of the *imām* in the works of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, in particular, his collection of lectures, while by no means exhaustive, will nonetheless lend some insight into the development of *majālis* literature in the Fāṭimid context as well as its significance for the transmission of mediaeval Ismā'īlī thought.

One of the main aims of Chapter Three is to introduce some of the problematics of working with al-Mu'ayyad's main doctrinal work, the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. In what follows in this chapter, particular attention will be paid to a number of issues concerning what I have chosen to define as "thematic clusters" in

the text of the Majālis. Another aim of this chapter is that it will provide a working definition of the composition of al-Mu'ayyad's eight volume work and thereby clarify some aspects of the consolidation and transmission of Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah* teachings as *majālis* literature. As stated in the introduction of this dissertation, my thesis research by no means depended upon each of the eight volumes of al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis but rather focused more extensively on Volumes I to III, and IV to V. Even if the "sin of omission" constitutes one of the worst of the scholarly "sins", this chapter will set forth in part the rationale behind the more exclusive focus on Volumes I to III in the course of Chapters Four and Five of this dissertation. Since so very little work has previously been done on al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis beyond this dissertation at present, I hope that further research will cast more light into the dark shadows of the less explored volumes of his *magnum opus*.

The Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah is a work of eight volumes, with each volume consisting of precisely one hundred lectures (*majālis*) written in Arabic.¹ At present, only the first three of the eight volumes have been edited, to varying degrees of precision, accuracy and completion. It is important to point out here that to the best of my knowledge, no particular review of the available editions of the

¹See in particular, 'Abd al-Nāṣir, Editor. al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. Cairo, 1975. Volume I: Introduction: 10-17; F. Daftary. The Ismā'īlīs. Cambridge, 1992: 214. Also see A. Gacek. Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. London, 1984: 59-64, and D. Cortese. Ismaili and other Arabic Manuscripts. London, 2000, and Arabic Ismaili Manuscripts. London, 2003, for the manuscripts of the Majālis housed in the collection of the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London.

Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah exists at present. Therefore, some comments of a seemingly very general nature are required at the outset of this chapter.

Mustafā Ghālib's edition of the first volume and third volume pose several problems with regard to textual accuracy.² Ḥamīd al-Dīn's editions of the first two volumes of the Majālis set a high standard not only for scholarly editions but also for the other relevant and extremely useful features provided in his editions, such as the indication of variant readings, summaries of the main points of each *majlis* provided as marginalia to the main body of the text, and indices of Qur'ānic citations and technical terms.³ The 1975 Cairo edition of the first volume of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah also provides in conjunction with select portions of the Majālis, references to specific topics presented in al-Mu'ayyad's work, based upon the 12th-century Yemenī *dā'ir* Ḥatīm b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥamīdī's (d. 557 A.H./ 1162 C.E.) abridged version of the Majālis, the Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq.⁴ The Cairo edition contains several quite useful indexes of a topical nature; e.g., dealing with the subjects al-Mu'ayyad discusses throughout the Majālis, in such a way which adequately and succinctly reflects al-Mu'ayyad's technical lexicon and use of

² Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah. Editor, M. Ghālib. Volume I. Beirut, 1974; Volume III. Beirut, 1984.

³ Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah. Editor, Ḥ. Ḥamīd al-Dīn. Volume I. Bombay, 1976; Volume II. Oxford, 1986. More recently, Volume III has just been published. It was not, however, available to me prior to completing my dissertation.

⁴ al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah. Editor, M. 'Abd al-Qādir 'Abd al-Nāṣir. Cairo, 1975. Two Volumes. *Talkhīṣ*, Ḥatīm b. Ibrāhīm.

Ismā'īlī terminology. After addressing the structural features of the Majālis, its composition and the unifying features of the work as a whole, a more thorough review of the above-mentioned available editions of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah will follow as a separate section of this chapter.

'Abd al-Nāṣir provides in the introduction to his edition one of the only existing scholarly discussions on the composition and arrangement of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah.⁵ His edition of Majālis, however, does not include certain portions of the text of each individual lecture; that is, the very features of the text which reflect that al-Mu'ayyad's lectures were meant to be delivered as sermons, to an audience. In the abridged version of al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis, the Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq, the textual features of the sermon are not incorporated.

Each lecture recorded in the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah follows a set form of presentation, as follows⁶:

⁵ Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah. Editor, 'Abd al-Nāṣir. Cairo, 1975: 14-19.

⁶ The method for presenting the standard format of the *majlis* in the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah is based upon the approach adopted by M. Swartz in his article entitled "The Rules of Popular Preaching in Twelfth-Century Baghdad, according to Ibn al-Jawzi." In, Predication et propagande au Moyen Age. Editors, G. Makdisi, D. Sourdél & J. Sourdél-Thomine. Presses universitaires de France. Paris, 1983: 227-229.

P. Kraus has indicated in his article, "Beitrage zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte", that the "lectures" in the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah follow a particular narrative format, in terms of a standard introduction, followed by the "sermon", and then a conclusion. See "Beitrage zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte." Reprinted in, Alchemie, Ketzerei, Apokryphen im frühen Islam. Editor, R. Brague. Hildesheim, 1994: 126. These comments are echoed by Corbin, with one important addition: the manner in which al-Mu'ayyad's lectures on particular themes continue over the course of often more than one lecture. See H. Corbin. "Annuaire 1978-1979". In, Itinéraire d'un enseignement. Editor, C.

- 1). Exordium (الحمد لله): consisting roughly of seven lines of praise to God, and then especially to the Prophet, 'Alī and his descendants.
- 2). Greetings to the audience and Introduction of the subject of the "lecture" (معشر المؤمنين): between eight to twelve lines.
- 3). Main body of the *majlis*: introduction of the treatise, doctrine or Qur'ānic verse which will serve as the topical focus of the "lecture" itself (e.g. قد سمعتم ما قرئ عليكم من الرسالة إلى حيث (انتهت)).⁷
- 4). Closure to *majlis*:
 - a). Internal reference (و باقي الرسالة يتلى عليكم فيما يلي هذا) as to whether or not the topic will be taken up and continued in the following "lecture".⁸
 - b). The phrase جعلكم الله and then, praise of the Prophet, 'Alī and his descendants.
 - c). Closing phrase to each *majlis*: و نعم الوكيل.

'Abd al-Nāṣir has made several apt points about the composition of the *Majālis* and with regard to the *Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*'s internal unity. I would like to introduce here 'Abd al-Nāṣir's comments as relevant contributions to this chapter's over-arching discussion of the composition of the *Majālis al-Jambet*. 1993: 180.

Stern also indicated in his article, "Cairo as the Centre of the Ismā'īlī Movement." pp. 240: that the *Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah*, a collection of "lecture notes" dating from c.a. 451 A.H., follows a set method of presentation: opening; main body divided into two parts; followed by a closing formula.

⁷ *Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*. Editor, M. Ghālib. 1984. Volume III. Majlis No. 43: p. 132.

⁸ *Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*. 1984. Volume III. Majlis No. 48: p. 148.

Mu'ayyadiyyah. In addition, receiving particular consideration is whether or not al-Mu'ayyad's main doctrinal work constitutes a compendium of mediaeval Ismā'īlī doctrines; more specifically, a compendium of Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* and Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī commentaries on key doctrinal issues and theological debates.⁹

The first point to be addressed is that in the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, there are internal references from *majlis* to *majlis*, especially in the cases where al-Mu'ayyad continues his discussion of a subject, his commentary on a treatise, or his interpretation of verses from the Qur'ān over the course of two to three lectures. This textual feature, as 'Abd al-Nāṣir has indicated, serves a distinct purpose in that it helps to prove the unity of the work as well as stands as further proof of al-Mu'ayyad's single authorship of the lectures entailed in the Majālis.¹⁰

The second point to be addressed is that the *ta'wīl* of verses from the Qur'ān proceeds forth in the Majālis in an ordered manner, commencing from the beginning verse of the Qur'ānic chapter and concluding with the final verse of the Qur'ānic chapter before

⁹ B. T. Qutbuddin. al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shirāzī: Founder of a New Tradition of Fāṭimid Da'wah Poetry. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Harvard University. 1999: 80, who indicates that in her opinion, the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah is primarily "...a Fatimid *ta'wīl* work containing esoteric exegesis of Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic Hadith."

H. Corbin, in his *Annuaire 1978-1979*, notes in his seminar on al-Mu'ayyad: "en choisissant parmi celles qui pouvaient particulièrement nous éclairer sur deux concepts fondamentaux de la gnose ismaélienne: le concept du *ta'wīl* ou hermeneutique du sens esoterique du Livre, et le concept shī'ite de l'Imām et de l'imāmat. Mo'ayyad s'efforce de suivre la voie du juste milieu entre les maximalistes (les *gholāt*, les ultra-shī'ites) et les minimalistes (les *moqassirūn*). Il denounce avec une parfaite lucidité toute confusion entre allegorisme ou sens allegorique (chez les Mo'tazilites) et le sens esoterique spirituel." In, Itinéraire d'un enseignement. Editor, C. Jambet. Tehran, 1993: 180.

¹⁰ Editor, 'Abd al-Nāṣir. al-Majālis. Volume I: Introduction: 15.

commencing the interpretation of the next chapter. Some of the lectures on the *ta'wīl* therefore proceed from one verse to the next, in keeping with the Qur'ānic text.¹¹ Though not as readily apparent in the 'Abd al-Nāṣir and M. Ghālib editions, this feature of al-Mu'ayyad's lectures is much more evident in Ḥāmid al-Dīn's editions of Volumes I and II. It is in fact the manner in which the interpretation of Qur'ānic verses precedes from lecture to lecture that points towards the internal unity of the Majālis and strongly argues for the single authorship of the Majālis.

Additionally, that the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān may be considered to be one of the main focal points of the Majālis is underscored by Ḥāmid al-Dīn's summaries in the margins of the main body of the text and the indexes at the end of each volume. On the basis of this point and the one stated above, it may be argued that al-Mu'ayyad's lectures in its compendium format constitute a work of Qur'ānic exegesis, amongst other things. Ḥāmid al-Dīn's indexes highlight al-Mu'ayyad's use and interpretation of Qur'ānic verses throughout the corpus of the first two volumes of the Majālis. Also of note is that Kāmil-Ḥusayn and 'Abd al-Nāṣir demarcate a number of themes that al-Mu'ayyad concerns himself with throughout the body of the Majālis: in particular, *ta'wīl*, and in association with al-Mu'ayyad's "refutations" of the "Exaggerators" (*Ghulāt*), the concepts of *walāyah* and the *imāmah*.¹²

¹¹ See in particular 'Abd al-Nāṣir's comments in his introduction to his edition of the Majālis, pp. 14-18.

¹² 'Abd al-Nāṣir, Editor. al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyah. Volume I: Intro.: 19-20. See as well, 'Abd al-Nāṣir, Editor. al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyah. Volume II: 387: *ta'wīl*: No. 47, 54; *al-ta'wīl*: No. 8, 14, 17, 26-27, 35, 41, 45, 48, 49, 52-54, 56-58, 62-63, 70-72, 74, 76, 80-82, 87, 93, 95, 97, 100; *ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*:

Being that there is a general scholarly consensus concerning the fact that the Majālis represents a compendium of *ta'wīl*, with respect to the interpretation of the Qur'an as well as key Ismā'īlī doctrines, let us now point out some additional textual features of the Majālis which speak to the nature of its authorship. As well, before turning to the existing works that serve as scholarly "abridgments" of the Majālis, it is of equal importance to address the probable transmission of al-Mu'ayyad's lectures in the collected and redacted corpus of an important doctrinal work in the post-Fāṭimid period of Ismā'ilism; particularly with respect to the existence of other collections of lectures from mid-11th-century Fāṭimid Cairo. There is one other prominent collection of lectures from al-Mu'ayyad's time-period, the Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah, which existed in the manuscript collections of the Ṭayyibī communities in India and which was edited by Muḥammad Kāmil-Ḥusayn.¹³

Yet there are additional questions with respect to the collections of lectures from the Fāṭimid and post-Fāṭimid periods. Stern originally posited that perhaps there were two types of lectures: the collections of *majālis* and the *majālis al-ḥikmah*. He suggested that perhaps the *majālis* were read out by the chief missionary at meetings whereas the *majālis al-ḥikmah* represented "more authoritative expositions of Ismā'īlī doctrine" and were read out weekly, on both Thursdays and Fridays.¹⁴ Further complicating the

No. 46; *ta'wīl al-maḥq*: No. 61; *ta'wīlāt*: No. 72; *ta'wīlī*: No. 52; *al-ta'wīliyyah*: No. 52-53.

¹³ Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah. Editor, M. Kāmil-Ḥusayn. Cairo, no date.

¹⁴ S. M. Stern. "Cairo as the Centre of the Ismā'īlī Movement." Reprinted in, Studies in Early Ismā'ilism. Leiden/Jerusalem, 1983: 238-239.

question of the codification and redaction of Fāṭimid lectures into collections of *majālis* is one particular historical fact that Stern chooses to discuss, as based on his analysis of the extant historical sources for the 10-11th Centuries. He states that being able to distinguish between these two types of lectures becomes even more difficult because it appears that by the mid-11th-century, weekly meetings began to be held customarily only on one day each week, Thursday.¹⁵

In the course of this discussion, however, Stern does not clarify the exact status of the Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah as a collection of Fāṭimid lectures. According to Stern, the lectures compiled in the Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah were delivered on a weekly basis, from the month of *Muḥarram* until the third week of the month of *Ramaḍān* in the year 451 A.H. (for nine months, until October 1059 C.E.). Stern claimed that these lectures were delivered by a missionary, al-Malījī, who held the post of chief judge from 7 *Dhu al-Qa'da* 450 A.H. to 11 *Rajab* 452 A.H. (26 December 1058 to 23 August 1059 C.E.), though Stern fails to address the more vital matter of the authorship of the lectures compiled in the Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah.¹⁶ To have had the authority to read lectures in Fāṭimid Cairo is one thing. To have possessed the authority to write the lectures is another. As was seen in Chapter Two, there is ample historical evidence to indicate that while al-Yāzūrī claimed the authority to read the lectures as chief judge and chief missionary,

¹⁵ Ibid.: 241-242.

¹⁶ Ibid.: 239-240.

al-Mu'ayyad in fact authored the lectures.¹⁷

As A. Hamdani has noted, the "erroneous attribution" of the Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah problematized earlier studies on al-Mu'ayyad's doctrinal thought as represented in the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah.¹⁸ Very little attention has been paid to the fact that included in the corpus of the Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah are numerous lectures authored by al-Mu'ayyad himself and which are included in Volumes I and II of the Majālis. Additionally, A. Hamdani indicated that Kāmil-Husayn had derived his analysis of al-Mu'ayyad's thought on the basis of the abridged version of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, the Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq. According to Hamdani, Kāmil Husayn's consideration of the contents of al-Mu'ayyad's lectures is directly taken from the Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq.¹⁹

Nonetheless, Stern's brief comments on the Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah and its method of doctrinal elaboration warrant attention at this junction before turning once again to al-Mu'ayyad's lectures. He notes that each of the lectures in the Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah begin with a stylized opening and are likewise closed by "final formulae".²⁰ According to Stern, the main body of each lecture consists of two parts, both of which are focused on the exegesis of the Qur'ān: by the means of *ta'wīl* in reference to Islamic religious practices and tenets or to specific verses and

¹⁷ In fact, as indicated in Chapter Two, Stern was one of the first to note that al-Mu'ayyad was the "ghost writer" for al-Yāzūrī. See Ibid.: 240-241.

¹⁸ Hamdani. The Sira. 1950: 122.

¹⁹ Hamdani. The Sira. 1950: 127; Dīwān. Editor, M. Kāmil-Husayn. Cairo, 1949: Introduction: 60-62.

²⁰ Ibid.: 240.

chapters from the Qur'ān.²¹ What is of great importance here are two marked similarities between the Majālis al-Mustansiriyyah and the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah with respect to the composition of each lecture.

Let us now turn to the manner in which select lectures on *ta'wīl* from the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah are presented by Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī in his Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq. Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm's selection represents foremost *ta'wīl* as the main subject of discussion in al-Mu'ayyad's lectures as well as puts forth al-Mu'ayyad's definitions of *ta'wīl* as a form of knowledge possessed by "those firmly rooted in knowledge" (*al-rāsikhūn fī 'ilm*). As noted above, al-Mu'ayyad's *ta'wīl* of certain chapters of the Qur'ān appears throughout the corpus of the Majālis, to which Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm refers to in part in the Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq. It is important to note that Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm's topical index of al-Mu'ayyad's employment of the exegetical methods entailed in Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* is by no means exhaustive. Additionally, Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm does not preserve the components of each lecture nor the specificities of each lecture's context in the larger corpus of the Majālis, all of which speak generally to al-Mu'ayyad's method of Qur'ānic exegesis and allegorical interpretation of the Qur'ān.

Some perspective, however, is still lent by Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm's abridged version of the Majālis, yet even its use as an apparatus for studying the major themes of al-Mu'ayyad's main doctrinal work may be somewhat misleading as to the extent to which the *ta'wīl* of

²¹ Ibid.: 240.

Qur'ānic verses serves as one of the most consistent, unifying features of the Majālis. The Jāmi' al-Haqā'iq lists al-Mu'ayyad's "lectures" on *ta'wil* from the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah but without reference to al-Mu'ayyad's exact method and style of Qur'ānic commentary.²²

Another feature of the Majālis points to its uniqueness as a mediaeval primary source. Throughout the Majālis, there are many references to individuals, religious sects and schools of thought in Islam, as well as to other religious communities, such as the following: Kumayl ibn Zayd, Abū Ma'shar, the "Astronomers" (*ahl al-tanjīm*), Socrates, Plato, the "Philosophers" (*al-ḥukamā'*), the Mu'tazilites, the "People of opinion" (*ahl al-rā'y*), the "Theologians" (*mutakallimūn*), al-Thughūrī, Al-Sāmīrī, Ibn al-Rāwandī, al-Ma'arri, Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, Shī'ī sects, such as the *Mukhammisah* and the *Mīmiyyah*, and the Christians, Jews, Sabians and Zoroastrians. As will be discussed in the course of Chapter Four, especially with respect to al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on the Khutbat al-Bayān, the Majālis represents a virtual repository of commentaries on lost Ismā'īlī works and sermons. It also incorporates many aspects of the Shī'ī *ḥadīth* tradition and early Qur'ānic commentaries, some of which are no longer extant.

²² See Institute of Ismaili Studies Library MS. 95 for the references to lectures specifically on *ta'wil* in the Majālis: Majlis No. 5, Volume I: folio 2; No. 81, Volume II: folio 4; Majlis No. 19, Volume II: folio 14; Majlis No. 30, Volume II: folio 18-19; Majlis No. 71, Volume I: folio 24; Majlis No. 8, Volume II: folio 25-26; Majlis No. 48, Volume IV: folio 29; Majlis No. 89, Volume IV: folio 33; Majlis No. 8, Volume II: folio 36; Majlis No. 9, Volume III: folio 45; Majlis No. 77, Volume V: folio 47; Majlis No. 80, Volume V: folio 51; Majlis No. 92, Volume V: folio 54-55

As noted in Chapters One and Two, in the specific example of the shift in al-Mu'ayyad's position from missionary to Fātimid chief missionary, al-Mu'ayyad's lectures allow al-Mu'ayyad to be situated as an Ismā'īlī author and mediaeval Muslim thinker in general. This is foremost due to his own discussions of the Ismā'īlī *majlis* in his autobiography, the Sīrat al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. His use of different philosophical and theological texts in the course of the Majālis suggest that the work itself is a compendium of *da'wah* teachings, with its main purpose being the instruction of members of the Ismā'īlī community in the basic teachings of Islam as well as Ismā'īlī doctrine. As a result, it is then possible to consider al-Mu'ayyad's didactic employment of non-Ismā'īlī and Ismā'īlī works (e.g., Shī'ī *ḥadīth* collections and texts, works by Ismā'īlī authors in the *da'wah*, a wide range of philosophical texts, and numerous Sunnī and non-Sunnī works of exegesis.

Throughout this dissertation, references will be provided concerning the sources al-Mu'ayyad employs in his lectures for the purpose of religious instruction in the *majlis* setting. It is also important at this juncture to underscore once again that the idea of "thematic clusters" in the Majālis governed how this dissertation has employed al-Mu'ayyad's work as a primary source. This is also to suggest that in the Majālis, there is a progression of certain themes, concepts and doctrines from one volume to the next. At the same time, in many instances, al-Mu'ayyad often briefly returns to a certain topic much later on, in another set of lectures. It is with this understanding of the composition of al-Mu'ayyad's main doctrinal work that it was possible to take note of the fact that the

first three volumes of the Majālis commence with many important discussions of *walāyah*, the concept of the human being, and the role of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*. Accordingly, more attention was paid to the first three volumes of the Majālis in the course of this dissertation, especially Chapters Four and Five.

Section b.: The Majālis as Sermon Material

Chapter One referred quite briefly to al-Mu'ayyad's stature amongst later Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlī authors of the mediaeval and pre-modern periods. If one is to speak in broad terms of al-Mu'ayyad's doctrinal "influence" on later Ismā'īlī thought, it is most clearly reflected in the use of al-Mu'ayyad's main work, the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, as sermon (*wā'iz*) material, as well as in the instances where the Majālis forms the focal points of commentaries and study guides for the post-Fāṭimid *da'wah* in the Yemen and India.

Al-Mu'ayyad's employment of mediaeval Ismā'īlī and non-Ismā'īlī treatises and theological works first received scholarly attention due to fact that extant in Volume V of the Majālis are passages and paraphrases of one of the more controversial works from the early period of mediaeval Islamic theology, Ibn al-Rāwandī's Kitāb al-Zumurrud. In this chapter's presentation of the

different scholarly views on the Ibn al-Rāwandī material from Volume V of the Majālis, I shall focus on the fact that even though Van Ess, Stroumsa, Calder, DeSmet and Kraus posit often conflicting view-points on Ibn al-Rāwandī's stance on the necessity of prophecy, for the most part, they concur that al-Mu'ayyad's quotations and paraphrases from the Kitāb al-Zumurrud reflect an accurate, albeit selectively incomplete, rendition of Ibn al-Rāwandī's no longer extant work.

In the example of the short treatise attributed to al-Mu'ayyad, the Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah and the select lectures from Volume V, and "Key" No. 52 of Sijistānī's Kitāb al-Maqālīd, al-Mu'ayyad employs Ismā'īlī and non-Ismā'īlī treatises and works in the course of doctrinal commentary, theological refutation and *da'wah*-centered religious instruction. As P. Kraus first noted, the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, besides including other topical themes, cites polemical tracts and treatises, and thus served as material used in the course of religious instruction and training within the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* itself.²³ The argument Kraus himself aimed to emphasize, in the example of Ibn al-Rāwandī's Kitāb al-Zumurrud, was that the compilation of the text al-Mu'ayyad cited from and quoted could have likely been a paraphrase or summary written by al-Mu'ayyad or by an earlier member of the *da'wah*. Kraus argued that refutations were either written by members of the *da'wah* itself or material culled from polemical tracts which were, at the

²³ P. Kraus, "Beiträge zur islamischen ketzergeschichte. Das Kitāb al-Zumurrud des Ibn ar-Rāwandī." *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* (1933-34): 14: 93-129; 355-379. Reprinted in, Remi Brague, Editor, Alchemie, Ketzererei, Apokryphen im frühen Islam. Zürich/ New York, 1994; S. Stroumsa, Freethinkers in Medieval Islam. Leiden, 1999.

time, still currently in circulation, and were of keen enough interest to merit debate and commentary. In the more specific case of the identity of the missionary referred to in this particular set of lectures on Ibn al-Rāwandī, Kraus claimed that by the means of a simple rhetorical devise, al-Mu'ayyad could address and present his own side of the debate by employing the arguments of a so-called anonymous missionary.²⁴

In a recent article, DeSmet reviews the material from the Kraus edition of lectures No. 417-419 of the Majālis concerning Ibn al-Rāwandī. In the remainder of his article, DeSmet aims to present the material from the Majālis. In many instances, he is responding to a different set of concerns than previous scholars who have studied the Kraus edition of this single set of lectures from the Majālis in order to gain more insight into Ibn al-Rāwandī's no longer extant works. This poses an important question: why is it the case that scholars have failed to address the more practical aspects of working with the corpus of lectures in al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis and who perhaps likewise viewed these issues as insignificant to understanding their questions on the authenticity of the passages quoted from Ibn al-Rāwandī's Kitāb al-Zumurrud?²⁵ Nevertheless, DeSmet is the first scholar to examine this set of lectures on Ibn al-Rāwandī in order to gain a better glimpse of the reasons as to why the Fāṭimid *da'wah* would have introduced this polemical

²⁴ Kraus. "Beiträge zur islamischen keztergeschichte. Das Kitāb az-Zumurrud des Ibn ar-Rāwandī." (1994).

²⁵ D. DeSmet. "al-Mu'ayyad fī dl-Dīn ash-Shīrāzī et la polemique ismaelinne contre les 'Brahmanes' d'Ibn ar-Rāwandī." In, Egypt and Syrian in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras. Editors, D. DeSmet & U. Vermeulen. Louvain, 1995.

material into the *majlis* setting. It is important to point out here, however, that Kraus' research on this particular set of lectures remains relevant when his learned remarks are taken into consideration with respect to other lectures in the Majālis that provide commentaries or refutations of doctrines, sermons and treatises. As mentioned previously, when al-Mu'ayyad refers to the arguments of a certain *dā'i* he might, in fact, be referring to himself by the means of a rhetorical device; for example, in terms of a set of lectures which appears in Volume III concerning the "treatise of our *dā'i* in the East".

According to al-Mu'ayyad, Ibn al-Rāwandī uses the "Brahmans" for attacking prophecy in the name of reason. Reason (*'aql*), the most precious of gifts that creatures receive from God, is the measure of all things. It permits humans to acquire the knowledge necessary for subsistence and to distinguish good from bad. Because of reason, human beings can live in society, according to a strictly rational morality. In Majlis Nos. 19-21 of Volume V, al-Mu'ayyad comments on Ibn al-Rawandi's arguments on prophecy and reason. For example, al-Mu'ayyad argues that if prophecy revealed truths that everyone can know by the sole power of reason, then the mission of the prophets becomes perfectly useless, and they can only pretend to have a particular authority. These lectures also cover the issues of the inimitability of the Qur'an (*i'jāz al-Qur'ān*), the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad, and the question of whether or not the *shari'ah* (as well as the religious duties of Islam in general) is based on the principles of reason.

DeSmet stresses that part of the reason that al-Mu'ayyad

employs the Ibn al-Rāwandī material is in order to defend the necessity of the Ismā'īlī concept of the imamate in tangent with prophecy. DeSmet states: "we know that for a Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī, there exists a perfect balance between prophecy and the imamate: there is no Imam without the Prophet and there is no Prophet without the Imam...by rejecting prophecy, Ibn al-Rāwandī automatically denies the imamate."²⁶ DeSmet also states: "For al-Mu'ayyad, it thus is not just a matter of an abstract polemic, but it is a topical question: legitimizing the power of the imam-caliph al-Mustansir by demonstrating the necessity of prophecy, where the imamate constitutes the indispensable complement. Seen from this perspective, the debate is right in its place in the official *majālis* of the Fāṭimid court."²⁷

DeSmet also takes into account that the arguments of the "heretic" were aimed at addressing the question of rationality as well as the power of human reason. DeSmet argues that it is actually the case that in al-Mu'ayyad work's, one finds that al-Mu'ayyad grants to reason as high of a position and importance as any philosopher or Mu'tazilite "rationalist" but that there is a critical distinction in how rationality is reflected in the world and with respect to soteriology. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the error that Ibn al-Rāwandī, the philosophers, et al., make is that they consider human reason to function in and of itself As shall be seen in the course of Chapter Four and Five, one prime example of this lies in al-Mu'ayyad's discussion of intellect in potentiality, where

²⁶ D. DeSmet. Ibid.: 92.

²⁷ Ibid.

the intellect *in potentia* cannot develop on its own and by itself and therefore requires the guidance of the “friends of God” in order to attain to its full potential.²⁸

Ibn al-Rāwandī’s rejection of the *sharī‘ah* is based on the fact that it is contrary to reason. DeSmet then presents al-Mu‘ayyad’s views on the function of the *sharī‘ah* in relation to the perfection of the human being (from lecture Nos. 18). Al-Mu‘ayyad’s discussion of the different forms of *akhlāq* appear in the course of the lectures on Ibn al-Rāwandī, as we shall have further occasion to discuss in the course of Chapter Four.²⁹

Section b.: Compendiums and Study-Guides of the Majālis

As mentioned previously, the Jāmi‘ al-Haqā’iq serves as an apparatus for studying the major themes of al-Mu‘ayyad’s Majālis.³⁰ In this section of Chapter Three, I shall provide some discussion of the compendium and study-guides of the Majālis, though the research at present is only at a preliminary stage. The very subject matter, nonetheless, poses some interesting questions

²⁸ Ibid.: 92-93.

²⁹ Ibid.: 94-95.

³⁰ ‘Abd al-Nāṣir, Editor. al-Majālis al-Mu‘ayyadiyyah. Volume I. Intro.: 16.

concerning the transmission of mediaeval Islamic manuscripts in the context of religious instruction. Also included in this section of Chapter Three are brief notes on some of the manuscripts that are relevant to this discussion as well as some of the other manuscripts used in the course of this dissertation, and which had not been catalogued at the time I undertook my research. In addition, I have included important references and passages from a number of different works and short treatises that have the most bearing upon the question of al-Mu'ayyad's application of elements of Neoplatonist philosophy to Ismā'īlī doctrine, and in particular, in the *majlis* setting.

MS. 720 (Zāhid 'Alī Collection) in the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. Volume Four of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah

Description:

Binding: Brown leather, redone later than rest of cover (green-black leather, stamped with patterned design).

Inside cover, stamp: "The Ismailia Association" Karachi West Pakistan.

Cover-page: 720, written in pencil.

Following page: In different hands and different inks.

المائة الرابعة من المجالس المؤيدية

(In Latin script), crossed out: Al-mahsul al-mustansiriyah

Written: Al-majalisul-muayyadiyah [sic]

4th hundred

Crossed out: Al-Majalis al Muayyadiy [sic]

Written in pencil: 720

المجالس المؤيدية
المائة و الرابعة
- ٣٧ -

Inner-folio of cover: edges of folio repaired with a different type of paper. Notes given on contents of different *majlis* on the top of the page:

المائة الرابعة من المجالس المؤيدية تمام
- و ايضا فيه ان / / الصادق / / صلوات الله عليه قال ان سببي من
رسول الله / / إلى من نسبي اليه

(with distinct ligatures on the letter *sīn*)

Colophon:

و نعم الوكيل / / تم نساخته في اليوم السادس من شهر ربيع الاخر في
سنة ٩٩٧ ايها القاري و الناظر ادعوا الله لكتابه لحكي يرفع درجته في
الدارين

Next folio:

بحق محمد و آل الطيبين الطاهرين
صلوات الله عليه هم اجمعين

(in red ink)

Cut out and pasted onto a new folio.

Red ink: vowelling (folios 215b, 218a).

Throughout the manuscript, parts of folios are repaired with newer paper (edges as well as probably some of the larger worm holes).

*MS. 1250 (ArI). Zāhid 'Alī Collection. Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. Abū Naṣr Hibat Allāh al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d.ca. 1078 C.E.). Kitāb al-Ibtidā' wa al-Intihā'*³¹

32 folios.

Title Page:

كتاب الابتدا و الانتها تاليف سيدنا المويد في الدين عصمة المومنين صفى
امير المومنين و خالصته هبة الله ابن موسى بن داود السلماني داعي الدعاة
قدس الله روحه و هو شرح التوحيد هذا الرسالة شرح [بالتاباق] في ذكر
القيام علينا سلامه

يتلو فيها شرح التوحيد من غير تشبيه و لا تعطيل و فيه ذكر الابداع والعلة
و الوحدة و الكلمة و العقل و الفاعل و المفعول و الواحد و الاحد و الامر

*Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies MS. (Ar. Suppl.) 1026
Risālah Nahj al-Hidāyah lil-Muhtadīn*³²

³¹ The Zāhid 'Alī collection has recently been catalogued by D. Cortese and has been published in *Arabic Ismaili Manuscripts*. London, 2003. Therefore, my description of this particular manuscript, at this point in time, is entirely independant. Qutbuddin. *Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī*. 1999: 345; 345, n. 30-31, considers this work to be authentic, based on the fact that excerpts of it are quoted in 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd's (d. 612 A.H./ 1215 C.E.) *Kitāb Diyā' al-albāb*. She also categorizes it amongst the works discussing *ḥaqīqah* topics, whereas the *Majālis* is classified under works of *ta'wīl*. See *ibid.*: 343.

H. Hamdani, in his study, *al-Sulayhiyūn wa al-harakah al-Fātimīyyah fī al-Yaman*. Cairo, 1955: 264, discusses the contents of this work as well as the fact that it refers to another work of al-Mu'ayyad's, *Itḥāt al-Nubuwwah*. This is an important internal detail, as it distinguishes this work as al-Mu'ayyad's from other later Ṭayyibī works under the same title.

³² See in particular, D. Cortese. *Ismaili and other Arabic Manuscripts*.

Book stamped: Kitāb Mustafā Ghālib Salāmiyyah Sūriyyah (in Arabic) in the inner folio of book-cover.

Pagination in pencil throughout but corrected (Roman numerals, in upper left-hand corner of the folio).

Yā Kabikāj in red ink.

Likely originally part of a *majmū'ah*; the work is incomplete at the end and does not include a colophon.

32 leaves; 17 lines per folio; sewn binding on folio 23a.

Folio 1b:

كتاب نهج الهداية للمهتدين من كلام داعي الدعاة

Title: folio 2b (red ink, faded):

كتاب نهج الهداية للمهتدين ليعرض اصحاب اليمين الساكنين بطور سينين و هو من كلام داعي الدعاة المؤيد في الدين هبة الله بن موسى السليماني قدس الله روحه

Up to folio 4a: Description of the section headings (*faṣl*) and their contents:

فصل من المجالس الرابع و الخمسين و الخمسمائة من مجالس سيدنا المؤيد في الدين قدس الله روحه قال فيه النطق ينقسم قسمين احدهما الانسان عن البهائم عارده عن الدنيا و عن نفسه و الآخر النطق عن الدار الاخرى المتميزة اهل التائيد الدين يتكلمون عما وراء / / سمي النطقاء عليهم السلام النطقاء لاعلى انهم يتكلمون و صلى الله على محمد و اله و سلم

London, 2000: 66; Gacek. *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts*. 1984: 84, no. 99 (listed in catalogue as *Nahj al-Hidāyah lil-muhtadīn*, with al-Mu'ayyad's death date incorrectly mentioned as 1058 C.E.); Ivanow. *Ismā'īlī Literature*. 167; Poonawala. *Biobibliography*. 108, no. 5. Also discussed in H. Hamdani. *al-Sulayhiyyūn wa al-harakah al-Fāṭimiyyah fī al-Yaman*. Cairo, 1955: 263-265, with a description of the work's contents and a brief discussion of the history of the transmission of al-Mu'ayyad's works to the Yemen.

Folio 4b-ff: words filled in the blank sections of the MS. in a different hand and ink.

The work is divided into chapters (*bāb*), which are listed in introduction as follows:

الباب الاول في اثبات التوحيد و ما يمكن ان يقال فيه و ان عظم ذلك إلا بمقدار الاثبات المنزه عن التشبيه و التعطيل

الباب الثاني في معرفة الابداع و الكلمة الوحدة و العقل و الامر و ما يرجع هذه الاسماء مع اختلافها من معنى واحد

الباب الثالث في معرفة المبدع الاول و ما يخصه من الاسماء مثل العقل الاول و العلم و السابق و المعقول و المعلول الاول للشيء و الوجه و العرش و غير ذلك

الباب الرابع في معرفة المخلوق الثاني و المنبعث من الاول و ما خصه من الاسماء مثل النفس و اللوح و / و التالي و الكرسي و غير ذلك

الباب الخامس في معرفة الهيولى و الصورة و الطبائع المفردة

الباب السادس في معرفة الطبيعة الكلية و الجزئة و القول فيها

الباب السابع في معرفة الرسول و الرسالة و كيف / / في الحكمة و ما الموجب لهما

الباب الثامن في معرفة الوصي و الوصاية و ما الموجب لهما في الحكمة

الباب التاسع في معرفة الامام و الامامة و كيف / / هما و ما موجبهما في الحكمة

الباب العشر في معرفة مبدء البشر و المعاده و كيف ذلك و ما موجب فذلك احدي عشر باباً و الله المعين

As a general comment, the framework of this treatise, arranged in such a manner as to present concisely the fundamental principles of God's *tawhīd*, is remarkably Neoplatonic in its outlook. In more than one sense, the treatise Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah is reminiscent of the discussions of Ismā'īlī cosmology and prophetic anthropology Sijistānī presents in two of his works, Kitāb Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah and Kitāb al-Yanābī.³³

There are several notable features of this treatise, especially when it is read in conjunction with select lectures from Volume V of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. The treatise, attributed to al-Mu'ayyad, and Majlis Nos. 54-58 in particular of Volume V of the Majālis, speak to al-Mu'ayyad's employment and interpretation of Sijistānī's 10th-century Ismā'īlī doctrines.³⁴ A difference of opinion

³³ In particular, Sijistānī's discussion of *al-nafs al-qudsiyyah* and *al-mu'ayyad bi rūḥ al-quds* as a special 'category' of soul pertaining to the prophets and *imāms*. See Kitāb al-Yanābī. Trans., P. Walker. Salt Lake City, 1994: 77-79, 109-110; Sijistānī. Kitāb Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah. Editor, 'Ā. Tāmir. Beirut, 1966: 119, 121, 165-171, and in particular, the passage on p. 168 that refers to the 'seven stages' of the human being's 'creation'.

It is of some importance to point out here that D. Lobel, in her study of the 12th-century Jewish author Judah Ha-Levi, points out a similarity between Ha-Levi's discussion of the prophets as a separate 'species' and Sijistānī's, on the basis of her analysis of al-Kitāb al-Kuzarī and Kitāb Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah. See D. Lobel. Between Mysticism and Philosophy. Albany, 2000: 121.. Also see I. K. Poonawala, Editor. Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī. Kitāb al-Iftikhār. Beirut, 2000: Introduction: xx.

³⁴ Majālis. Volume V. Institute of Ismaili Studies Library MS. 535. Volume Five: folios 114a-134a.

exists, however, concerning the authenticity of this treatise. The authenticity of this treatise was most recently addressed by B. T. Qutbuddin. While the author of the treatise most likely was not al-Mu'ayyad himself, the work does draw extensively from al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis; specifically a section from Majlis No. 54 from the fifth volume of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah.³⁵ Although only Qutbuddin maintains that its authenticity is in doubt, Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah still maintains a certain degree of importance as a short philosophical treatise purporting to present al-Mu'ayyad's teachings on *tawḥīd* and other aspects of Ismā'īlī Neoplatonic doctrine.

The arrangement of the treatise Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah, for this reason in particular, must be viewed in the light of two considerations with regard to its discussion of Ismā'īlī doctrine: al-Mu'ayyad's reintroduction of Sijistānī's doctrines of prophetic anthropology as a backdrop to his own presentation of the *imām* as the *al-insān al-muṭlaq* as well as his employment of the arguments and works of earlier Ismā'īlī authors in the context of religious

³⁵ Qutbuddin. Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī. 1999: Appendix C: 348-349. It must be mentioned here that Qutbuddin does not refer to H. Hamdani's discussion of Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah in his monograph, al-Sulayhiyyūn. In her perhaps initial appraisal of this work's authorship, she seems to have readily correlated the absence of any mention or reference to this work in Majdū's Fihrist to this work's doubtful authenticity. Her other considerations concerning the authorship of this treatise, however, are valid and therefore, will be taken into account.

instruction; that is, the public setting of the Ismā'īlī *majlis*.

As an author, al-Mu'ayyad was solidly embedded in the mediaeval Ismā'īlī tradition. Therefore, only through examining the manuscript of Volume V of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah in conjunction with Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah and Kitāb al-Ibtidā' wa al-Intihā' is it possible to address in a more concrete manner where his originality as an author resides. As an Ismā'īlī thinker, sections of his main work and the short treatises attributed to him constitute a subtle re-introduction of themes, which by the 11th-century, have become standard, or if one prefers, "classical" Fātimid *da'wah* teachings. In addition, the short treatises attributed to al-Mu'ayyad, while perhaps spurious in nature, indicate the degree to which certain aspects of his doctrinal formulations were in circulation; either as material later Ismā'īlī authors in the Yemenī and Indian Ṭayyibī communities drew upon for the purpose of sermons and *da'wah* instruction or as "study guides" for al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis. It is in the latter category that Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah appears to lie, an issue the third section of this chapter shall touch upon briefly.

Introducing some philosophical concepts unique to Islamic Neoplatonism, the fifth chapter of the Kitāb Nahj discusses the

relationship between *hayūlā* and *ṣūrah*. The *al-hayūlā al-awwal* is the first material (*māddah*) to manifest from the Universal Soul, through the *al-ḥarakah al-wahmiyyah*.³⁶ What appears in the following are some of the most important passages from this short treatise as concerns al-Mu'ayyad's employment of elements of Neoplatonism in conjunction with Ismā'īlī doctrine.

Folio 22b, ln. 4:

وجب ان يكون لهما ولد من نسلهما روحاني يرث مقامهما و يلي من امر
الامته بعدهما في حفظ التنزيل و الشريعة و التاويل و الحكمة و اقامته / /
الحدود و تنفيذ الاحكام

Folio 22b, ln. 3-8: Prophets/legatees, *imāms* and "proofs"

و حقيقة الامامة هو الفضل الوروث من الرسول و الوصي و الذي يرث ذلك
[منها اظهر الذرية نفساً فا قدسهم قلباً و احشعهم] لله و احقهم لوراثة ذلك
من جميع الامة في زمانه لا يتعداه ذلك الفضل و لا يشاركه فيه غيره من
ذرية الرسول و الوصي صلى الله عليه و
سلم و لا من غيرهما من سائر البشر في زمانه

Folio 22b, ln. 14-17:

[ال] شجرة النبوية
...التي هي شجرة النبوية و فرعاً من فروعها كما بين الله سبحانه في كتابه

³⁶ *Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah*. Institute of Ismaili Studies Library MS. 1026: folio 12b, ln. 5-ff. ان الهيولى الاول هي اول مادة ظهرت من النفس الكلية بالحركة الوهمية و هي جوهر مظلم ناقص عن جوهر النفس لا صورة فيه لكنه مهيا لقبول الصورة و الصورة هي التي اتحدت بالهيولى عن الكون الوهمي و هما جميعاً اثرت عن النفس الكلية و عنهما و بهما تكون ما دونهما من العالم الجرماني و الجسماني بعد قيام الطبائع الاربع المفردات

العزیز عند ذکر الله الاصطفاء لما قال ان الله اصطفى آدم و نوحاً وآل ابراهيم و آل عمران على العالمين ذريةً بعضها من بعض ...ان ينتهي ذلك إلى سابع الاسابيع الذي يتكامل فيه القوة فيتصل بعله اتصالاً تاماً كاملاً بغير واسطة بينها وبينه

Folio 22b, ln. 12-17 to folio 23a, ln. 1:

...إلى ان ينتهي ذلك إلى السابع الاسابيع الذي تكمل فيه القوة فيتصل بعله اتصالاً تاماً كاملاً بغير واسطة بينها وبينه ففكرن فعله في ما دونه من البشر فعل العلة في المعلول و ذلك ان القوة التي تختص بها الائمة يزيدون بها على شركائهم في النطق كمثّل القوة الزائدة في البشر على شركائهم في الحسن من جميع الحيوان و كذلك القوة الزائدة في الرسل على شركائهم في التأييد من الائمة و كذلك القوة الزائدة في القائم على شركائهم من النطقاء الانبياء و الرسل صلرت الله عليهم اجمعين و يزيد ان نبين الدرجات التي تنتهي اليها الموجودات بياناً شافياً

Folio 22b-23a: A discussion of the distinctions between the different forms of *quwwah*, from the animals, etc., on up.

القوة الزائدة/ القوة النامية

Folio 25a, ln. 6-9:

اصحاب الادوار و هو القائم سلام عليه بالحق (المحتوى) على جميع المراتب و المنتهى إلى اشرف المنازل و المرتقى إلى اعلى الدرجات و الواصل إلى / / الكليات و اتم المعالات فيكون به الكمال و التم

Folio 23b, ln. 3-6:

...ان الانسان الأدمى من العالم البشري له قوة زائدة [على] الحيوان [الآخرى] بدرجة واحدة و هي القوة الناطقة التي بها يفكر و يتوهم و يفعل الاشياء

Folio 23b, ln. 9-12:

...ثم ان الامام المشارك للبشر في النطق و الفكر و غير ذلك مما يتميز به
على الحيوان [الحس] زايد على شركائه في النطق بدرجة واحدة و هي القوة
المطهرة المقدسة المؤيدة بروح القدس

Folio 24a: on Mary, Jesus, and the *rūḥ al-quḍus*.

...و نعود إلى حد الأئمة المطهرة فنقول ان الامامة جارية فيهم إلى ان تنتهي
إلى السابع منهم و تكون له على من تقدمه درجة لاحتوايه على ما كان معهم
و انفراده بما اختص به دونهم كما تفردت به المرتبة السابعة من الخلقة
المنتقلة من السلالة إلى النطفة ثم إلى الغلقة ثم إلى المضعة ثم إلى العظام
ثم إلى اللحم ثم (انشاونا) خلقاً آخر فتبارك الله احسن الخالقين و كما كانت
النشأة في المرتبة السابعة كذلك يكون كمال الامامة في السابع من الأئمة
عليهم السلام حتى يكون في حد الرسل الناطقين ان احتاج الزمان إلى نطقة

*School of Oriental and African Studies. University of London. MS.
25740. Risālat al-Bayān limā Wajab.³⁷ Author: Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn b.
al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī. Copied by al-Ṭayyib 'Alī Mullā Jiwābhā'.*

Title:

الحمد لله مبدع العقل بالاحدية منفردا... اما بعد فانه لما كانت اوضاع الانبيا و

³⁷ Two copies of this manuscript exist in the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. See A. Gacek. Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. London, 1984: 106, no. 130.

See Poonawala. Biobibliography: 173-174, no. 6, on the variant titles of this work, as listed in Majdū's Fihrist, compared to Bharūchi's al-Azhar.

For the details of SOAS MS. 25740, see A. Gacek. Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London. London, 1981: 172, no. 282.

At this point in Chapter Three, it is possible to put forth an argument concerning the transmission of al-Mu'ayyad's *da'wah* teachings whilst at the same time, realizing that the substance of this argument may only be proven after additional research. Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn's Sharh limā Wajab, however, may serve as another example of the transmission of al-Mu'ayyad's thought and point to the continued interest on the part of post-Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī authors in certain aspects of al-Mu'ayyad's unique doctrinal formulations. More specifically, this treatise in manuscript form, likely stemming from a private collection of a member of the Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in India, presents in abbreviated form an esoteric interpretation of the "Night of Power" and the Muslim holy month of Ramaḍān in conjunction with a larger discussion of the individual soul's ascent (*mi'rāj*).³⁸

It is possible that this Yemenī-Indian work might have served as a study guide to al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis. It is also highly probable

³⁸ See in particular, Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, MS. 720 (Ar). Volume IV: folio 124b-ff. on *sūrah al-Najm*.

School of Oriental and African Studies MS. 25740: folio 7a: Aim of work, the *sharḥ* of the months of *Rajab*, *Sha'bān* and *Ramaḍān*. See as well, folio 11b, ln. 2-ff.:

و تلك اشارة إلى فضل وصية الذي حبه حسنة بكونه تاسع الاوصياء لان وصي ادم ع م هابيل
و شبت و وصي نوح ع م سام و وصي ابراهيم ع م اسمعيل و اسحاق لانه سلم إلى اسمعيل
حد الوصاية و الامامة فبقيت في عقبه الشريف إلى يوم القيمة

that the work reflects the independent commentary or “notes” of its author, the 14th-century Yemenī-Ṭayyibī historian best known for his multi-volume history of the Fāṭimid dynasty. This work’s exact relationship (in terms of textual citations) with al-Mu’ayyad’s Majālis, the short treatise Kitāb al-Ibtidā’ wa al-Intihā’ attributed to him, and Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm’s Jāmi’ al-Haqā’iq, thus warrants further exploration, especially in the light of the development and formation of the al-Mu’ayyad “tradition” of Ismā’īlī thought in the post-Fāṭimid period, but it remains beyond the scope of this dissertation at the present time. Some references to al-Mu’ayyad and the Yemenī Ismā’īlī *da’wah* warrant, however, mention.³⁹ In addition, as shall be seen in Chapter Five, a more detailed comparison between al-Mu’ayyad’s commentaries on *Laylat al-qadr* and the Risālat al-Bayān suggests many possibilities for future avenue of researchs with regard to the post-Fāṭimid Ismā’īlī which are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this chapter at the present time.

folio 15b-16a, ln. 8-ln. 1-2:

³⁹ folio 40b, ln. 8:

و كذلك ما روي عن الداعي الاجل الاعظم صفى امير المؤمنين قاضي القضاة في اليمن ملك بين مالك الحامدي من هجرية إلى حضرة الامام المستنصر بالله امير المؤمنين (ع م) م كونه اخذا عن الداعي المؤيد في الدين حجة الامام (ع م) القائم في دعوته بالنقص و الابرار الذي خاطبه مولاه فقال مبنيا لفضله الذي اولا يا حجة ما مثلها في الوري وطود علم اعجز المرتقى...

folio 41b, ln. 5, 6:

الداعي ملك بين مالك
ما ذكره السلطان الداعي الاجل حاتم ابراهيم الحامدي

فذلك اشارة إلى ان على ابن ابي طالب وصية هو القائم برتبة النبوة و
الرسالة و الوصاية و الامامة التي هي باقية في عقبه إلى يوم القيمة

folio 18a, ln. 4-7:

و صار للائمة الطاهرين من عترية و هم الجامعون لمرتبة النبوة و الرسالة و
الوصاية و الامامة الباقية ذلك فيهم إلى يوم القيمة

folio 18b, ln. 3-4:

و ان محمد (ص) افضل الانبياء وصية اشرف و الاوصياء و الائمة من ذرية

folio 19a, ln. 6:

فمعنى رجب هو دعوة الائمة عليهم السلام

*Section c.: Neoplatonic Elements in Ismā'īlī Thought and the
Fāṭimid Majlis*

At the outset of the final section of this chapter, it is of adequate importance to introduce here and quote at length D. DeSmet's statements on the transmission, redaction and codification of mediaeval Ismā'īlī treatises originating from collections of "lecture notes". His insights into the transmission of mediaeval Ismā'īlī *da'wah* teachings are quite relevant to the composition of al-Mu'ayyad's works, even if it is the case that he first introduced these views concerning textual variations within the Ismā'īlī manuscript tradition with Kirmānī's Kitāb Rāḥat al-'Aql foremost in mind.

Ismā'īlī literature is, above all, a secret literature, strictly reserved only for the members of the sect.

The Ismā'īlī authors neither wrote in order to touch a large audience, nor for entering into a dialogue with the elite of the philosophers and the learned men of their time-period; their works were, above all, designed for direct and oral instruction inside the *da'wa*. The majority of the authors (Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, Siġistānī, Kirmānī, al-Mu'ayyad...) were the *du'āt*, the missionaries or propagandists in charge of teaching Ismā'īlī doctrine to a circle more or less limited to disciples. Most of the works which have reached us originally were texts written (*rediges*) from the perspective of this instruction, viewed in the same way as course notes or syllabi. We are thus in the presence of a "living" literature (*une littérature "vivante"*).⁴⁰

DeSmet's remarks touch upon some of the questions originally broached in the course of Chapter Two concerning the *da'wah's* exclusive or inclusive approach to religious instruction in the context of the Fāṭimid *majlis*. With respect to philosophical teachings, could the context of the Fāṭimid *majlis* mark a "broader", more "popular" presentation of Ismā'īlī doctrines in this didactic context versus, as Stern originally posited, the "authoritative" commentaries set forth in the context of the *majlis al-ḥikmah*? Al-Mu'ayyad's works, as seen in the example of Volume V of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah and then, with his short treatise,

⁴⁰ D. DeSmet. La Quietude de l'Intellect. Louvain, 1995: 12.

the

Kitāb Nahj al-Hidāyah, do not necessarily utilize the same rhetorical framework for approaching and discussing key concepts, such as, for example, the doctrine of *tawḥīd*, etc. In addition, after additional research, the contrast between the lecture format of the Majālis and al-Mu'ayyad's short treatises might yield forth something more concrete about al-Mu'ayyad's relationship with the Neoplatonism/ philosophical arguments employed by earlier Ismā'īlī authors, such as the members of the so-called "Persian School", and in particular, in terms of the delivery of the *majlis* in the *da'wah* setting. These points aside, several prime examples of al-Mu'ayyad's application of Neoplatonist philosophy to Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī thought will be seen in what follows in this dissertation. Whilst al-Mu'ayyad defends the use of philosophical argumentation on the part of members of the "Eastern" *da'wah*, as in the case of the "treatise of our *dā'ir* in the East", al-Mu'ayyad reserves employing elements of Neoplatonism specifically for interpreting the key tenets of the faith, such as the doctrines of the *imām* and *walāyah*. He does so as well in order to reinforce his arguments on the hierarchy embodied in doctrine of *walāyah*.

In sum, the placement, use, context of the application of Neoplatonist elements in al-Mu'ayyad's Ismā'īlī works is evident in the lectures from Volume IV. Yet there remains a caveat after

setting forth such statements. What constitutes the Neoplatonist elements of Ismā'īlī thought certainly requires further research and scholarly attention but it remains beyond the scope of this dissertation. The lectures mentioned above, however, are of equal importance to this chapter's discussion of al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis as a compendium of Ismā'īlī doctrine and *ta'wīl*. Herein lies the tension in terms of the study of mediaeval Islamic thought and "contextualizing" mediaeval thinkers such as al-Mu'ayyad himself. As has been mentioned previously, in Majlis No. 54, al-Mu'ayyad puts forth his *ta'wīl* of the "Light Verse" (*sūrah* 24: 35). Though this also necessitates further research, one can see in a brief comparison of the Kitāb al-Nahj, Volume V. of the Majālis, and "Key" No. 52 from Sijistānī's Kitāb al-Maqālīd the transmission of a teaching on *ta'yīd* and the "Light Verse", and concerning the distinction between the *tanzīl* and *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān.⁴¹ This comparison of textual passages illustrates quite well three features of al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis: "thematic clusters", textual commentaries and the didactic nature of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī lecture as well as its instructional setting. It serves us well to keep in mind some of the comments DeSmet put forth above on Ismā'īlī texts as part of a "living literature" before turning to the content of the Majālis in the

⁴¹ Sijistānī. Kitāb al-Maqālīd. MS. Hamdani Library. "Key" No. 52: folios 97b-ff. I would like to thank Professor Landolt for kindly lending me a copy of these folios.

course of Chapters Four and Five.

Chapter Four: The “Sphere of Walāyah”
Part I: Al-Mu’ayyad’s Typologies of the Imām

As was noted in Chapter Three, al-Mu’ayyad’s *ta’wīl* of Qur’ānic verses occurs over the course of several lectures in the Majālis al-Mu’ayyadiyyah, thereby forming “thematic clusters”. Chapter Three also presented the argument that al-Mu’ayyad’s introduction of key concepts of Ismā’īlī Neoplatonism in the public setting of the 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā’īlī *majlis* does not stand as concrete evidence of the further “popularization” of Ismā’īlī Neoplatonist philosophy. While at times, al-Mu’ayyad chooses to reveal a supposedly tentative relationship with philosophical argumentation, al-Mu’ayyad’s selective presentation of elements of Ismā’īlī Neoplatonism in the compendium format of the Majālis al-Mu’ayyadiyyah is most closely linked to his homiletics.

By way of explanation and example, ensconced in the third volume of al-Mu’ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī’s Majālis al-Mu’ayyadiyyah is a hitherto unknown treatise of an “Eastern” Ismā’īlī *dā’ī*. Al-Mu’ayyad’s commentary upon the treatise is recorded in part and employed for the purpose of religious instruction in Majlis Nos. 38-50 of Volume III. Al-Mu’ayyad’s commentary may be of striking importance for the historical delineation it

provides of intra-regional *da'wah* dynamics in the mid-11th Century.¹ In addition, these select lectures, amongst many others, from the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah may offer a wealth of details on a crucial question: did the 11th-century Fāṭimid *da'wah* exert special efforts to reconsolidate the extended Ismā'īlī *da'wah* on such doctrinal issues as the *walāyah* of 'Alī and the role of the *imām* in the pre-Nizārī period?

Al-Mu'ayyad's commentary upon the hierarchy of the prophets and the *imāms* and the spiritual resurrection of individual souls, initially introduced in the "treatise of our *dā'i* in the East" (*risālah dā'i-nā bi al-sharq*), occupies almost the entirety of Volume III of the Majālis.² One of al-Mu'ayyad's opening responses to the treatise is, however, to offer up a refutation of the "exaggerated" (*ghuluww*) views concerning the preference (*tafḍīl*) for 'Alī over the Prophet Muḥammad.³ Therefore, the primary purpose of Chapter Four is to address not only al-Mu'ayyad's construction of the doctrine of *walāyah*, which includes within its sphere of religious guidance, the

¹ Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. Editor, M. Ghālib. Beirut, 1974. Volume III. Majlis No. 38-50: pp. 115-147.

² Other references to sermons from members of the "Eastern" *da'wah* appear in Volume III of the Majālis. See Volume III. Majlis No. 78: p. 277, ln. 12-13. "We are putting forth for you the 'Id sermon (*khutbah 'Idiyyah*) one of our *du'āt* in the East preached." As well, see Volume III. Majlis No. 54: p. 161, ln. 12; Majlis No. 55: p. 165, ln. 10, for other references to sermons by "one of our missionaries in the East" (*aḥad du'āti-nā bi al-sharq*).

³ Majālis. Volume III. Majlis No. 38: p. 119, ln. 8-15.

For a brief review of the issue of "the priority [precedence] of the 'friend of God'" (*tafḍīl al-walī*) in early and mediaeval Sufism, see G. Elmore. Islamic Sainthood in the Fulness of Time. Leiden, 1999: 131-136; 157-162. Elmore bases part of his discussion of the concept of *walāyah* in early Sufism on Chodkiewicz's Seal of the Saints and Böwering's The Mystical Vision of God in Classical Islam, both of whom substantially review the works of the Sufi authors, Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, Sahl al-Tustarī and al-Hujwiri.

hierarchy of the prophets, the *imāms* and the “friends of God” (*awliyāʾ Allāh*), but also its underlying theory of prophetic anthropology. The inimitable nature of the material available in the *Majālis* permits for the close examination of al-Muʾayyad’s process of expounding upon the Fāṭimid doctrinal stance on the figure of the Ismāʿīlī *imām* and the elite circle of the “friends of God” in the light of larger historical considerations; in particular, internal debates within the extended Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah*. These debates are likely to have occurred during the latter half of al-Muʾayyad’s career as Fāṭimid chief missionary in Cairo.⁴

Responses to the *Ghulāt* were formulated in the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī doctrinal literature that preceded al-Muʾayyad’s main doctrinal work, the *Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyyah*. The Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī concern with refuting *ghuluww* coincided with a broader program to articulate in clear terms the parameters of the Ismāʿīlī *imām*’s religious authority and role as a “divine guide” for the mediaeval Ismāʿīlī community at large. Earlier scholarship has addressed to different degrees the reaction to the *Ghulāt* within mediaeval and pre-modern Shīʿism.⁵ Mediaeval Ismāʿīlī communities and

⁴ As addressed in part in Chapter One of this dissertation, with regard to the training of Hasan-i Sabbāh in 11th-century centres of the *daʿwah* in Northern Iran, ca. 469-471 A.H./1075-78 C.E.

⁵ With regard to the study of the *Ghulāt* in mediaeval Shīʿism, see in particular, M. A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shīʿism*, Trans. D. Streight, Albany, 1994; K. Babayan’s work on the *Ghulāt* in Safavid and pre-modern Iran, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, Cambridge, 2002; H. Halm, “Das ‘Buch der Schatten’: Die Mufaddal-Tradition der *ghulāt* und die Ursprünge des Nusairierts,” *Der Islam* (1981): 58/2; M. Moosa, *Extremist Shiʿites: The Ghulat Sects*, Syracuse, 1987; W. al-Qadi, “The Development of the Term *Ghulāt* in Muslim Literature with Special Reference to the Kaysaniyya,” In, *Akten des VII. Kongresses für Arabistik und*

individual missionaries, however, falling within the scope of the Fāṭimid *da'wah* were likewise subject to a series of internal polemical refutations that served as rejoinders to the priority placed on the role of the *imām* over the exemplar of the Prophet Muḥammad.⁶ The Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī polemics against the *ghuluww* involved as well countering a set of doctrines which were deemed to evince an excessively divinized concept of the *imām*.⁷ As is seen in the case of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, 10th-century Fāṭimid literature took up the question of the hierarchy of the "friends of God", with the terms of their obedience to the *imām*'s teachings and their ability to follow proper *da'wah*

Islamiwissenschaft Göttingen. Editor, A. Dietrich. Göttingen, 1976; W. Tucker. "Rebels and Gnostics: al-Mughīra Ibn Sa'īd and the Mughīriyya." *Arabica* (1975): 22: 33-47.

⁶ In his introduction to Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Kitāb al-Himmah, M. Kāmil-Ḥusayn provides a discussion of different Fāṭimid treatises concerned with refuting the doctrines of the *Ghulāt*; in particular, knowledge of the unseen (*ilm al-ghayb*), metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*) and "incarnation" (*hulūl*). See (Intro.): pp 21-26.

Editor, 'Abd al-Nāṣir. Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. Cairo: 1975: (Intro.): 18, notes that the Majālis contains a number of refutations against the *Ghulāt*. Also see Kāmil-Ḥusayn, Editor. Dīwān Dā'ī al-Du'āt (Intro.): 77-79.

With special bearing upon Kirmānī's refutations of *ghuluww*, see D. DeSmet. La Quiétude de l'intellect. Louvain, 1995: 7, 16, 371, 383. For additional information on the *Ghulāt* in the Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlī tradition, see the recent article by D. DeSmet, "Éléments chrétiens dans l'ismaélisme yéménite sous les derniers Fatimides: Le problème de la gnose ṭayyibite." In, L'Égypte fatimide. Editor, M. Barrucand. Paris, 1999: 45-53.

⁷ One notable exception to the more prevalent presentation of internal "exaggerators" from within the 10th-century mediaeval Ismā'īlī tradition, may be found in al-Rāzī. See Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī. Kitāb al-Islāh. Editor, Ḥ. Mīnūchehr. Tehran, 1998: pp. 159-160, on the *Ghulāt* of the Zoroastrians and Jews. In this passage, Rāzī notes that both groups apparently favor a doctrine of *tanāsukh*, or the transmigration of the soul (*rūh*) into different bodies (*al-ajsād*). P. 159, ln. 9-10. of Rāzī's Kitāb al-Islāh addresses in addition, "exaggeration" in terms of the interpretation of scripture and religious law, with the "exaggerators" being those who prioritize the esoteric meaning of the scripture over the exoteric.

See in conjunction with the first passage from the Islāh, S. M. Stern. "Al-Rāzī on Persian Religion." Reprinted in, Early Studies on Ismā'ilism. Leiden/ Jerusalem, 1992: 41, n. 27. Stern originally posited that Rāzī's discussion of the "*ghulāt al-Yahūd*", "like Sadakah", referred to the Shadkaniyya, "an obscure Jewish sect."

etiquette and religious practices specifically in mind. According to Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, the members of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *da'wah* and community could avoid the error of *ghuluww* through the means of sound religious practice (*al-a'māl al-ṣāliḥah*), proper *adab*, and the practice of *ṭā'ah* to the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *imām*.⁸

To a large degree, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Kitāb al-Himmah and the Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt impart an ideal Fāṭimid stance on the Ismā'īlī hierarchy, where the *imām* is surrounded by his *da'wah*. These two works also indicate that the refutations against the *Ghulāt* were most likely polemics directed at the 10th-century Qarmathians (or non-Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī communities) in the effort to redress the balance of religious authority between the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī *imām*-caliph and the *da'wah* itself.⁹ Al-Mu'ayyad's collection of lectures does not reflect the same precision regarding the historical context of the original transmission of the 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī lectures as

⁸ See the following passages concerning *ghuluww* and the *Ghulāt* from Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt. Editors, H. el-Feki, I. Chabbouh & M. el-Yalaoui. Tunis, 1978: para. 219, pp. 419-420; on the necessity of *da'wah* etiquette amongst the *du'āt* and the *awliyā'*, para. 44, p. 106; para. 85, p. 156; para. 157, p. 303; para. 266, p. 515; para. 272, p. 526. On whether or not the *imām* possesses the *ilm al-ghayb*, see para. 18, p. 84; para. 211, p. 404; para. 253, p. 487; para. 269, p. 523; para. 285, p. 548.

From the Kitāb al-Himmah, see in particular, pp. 32-33; 53; 60-62 (*"al-taslīm li awliyā'i-hi wa al-'amal bi ṭā'ah Allāh wa ḥafẓ ḥudūd Allāh"*).

⁹ On the "friends of God" from the Majālis wa al-Musāyarāt of Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, see para. 5: p. 55; para. 33: p. 98; para. 103, p. 209; para. 136, pp. 273-274; para. 179: p. 344; para. 225: 428; para. 284: p. 548; Bad *"du'āt"*, see para. 113, p. 237; para. 169: p. 307; and lastly, see para. 18, pp. 84-85, 147, para. 96-97, pp. 198-200, on the Fāṭimid Cairene *da'wah*'s response to the philosophical formulations of the "Eastern" *da'wah* (cited in part in Halm. The Empire of the Mahdī. 1996: 297).

S. Hamdani. From Da'wa to Dawlah. 1995: 239. S. Hamdani states: "This obviously resonates with Mu'izz's overall effort to moderate the Ismā'īlī doctrine of *imāma*, and to bring in line extremist factions that sought to return to a more messianic understanding of his role."

Qādī al-Nu'mān's Majālis wa al-Musayārāt. Al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis, however, shares in common certain doctrinal and thematic concerns with the works of his predecessor in the Fātimid *da'wah*, Qādī al-Nu'mān.

In the Majālis, al-Mu'ayyad presents a series of polemical refutations (*al-radd*) against the "Exaggerators" (*Ghulāt*) and the "Shortcomers" (*Muqaṣṣirūn*) with several strands of commentary on a number of the most prominent philosophical issues in mediaeval Ismā'īlī Neoplatonism. Al-Mu'ayyad contends with those members of the larger Shī'ī community who either exaggerate the doctrine of *walāyah* or do not recognize *walāyah* as a religious duty. In what follows in this chapter, I have aimed to present as concisely as possible the main features of al-Mu'ayyad's refutations against the *Ghulāt* and *Muqaṣṣirūn*, based on Majlis Nos. 17-18 and 30-36 of Volume I and Majlis Nos. 38-50 of Volume III.¹⁰ In the course of Volume I of the Majālis, al-Mu'ayyad puts forth a set of refutations against the *Ghulāt* who argue in favour of 'Alī's "divinity" (*rubūbiyyah*) and his "preference" (*tafḍīl*) over the Prophet Muḥammad.¹¹ Al-Mu'ayyad discusses the views of the

¹⁰ Majālis. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis Nos. 17-18: pp. 79-90; Majlis Nos. 33-38: pp. 109-190; ('Abd al-Nāṣir edition). Volume I. Majlis Nos. 37-38: pp. 148-154; (Ḥamīd al-Dīn edition). Volume I. Majlis Nos. 17-18: pp. 70-80; Majlis Nos. 33-38: pp. 150-170; Majlis No. 39-40: pp. 181-189.

A brief summary of the lectures in Volume I of the Majālis concerning al-Mu'ayyad's refutations of *Ghulāt* and the *Muqaṣṣirūn* first appeared in H. Corbin. Itinéraire d'un enseignement. Editor, C. Jambet. Paris/ Tehran, 1993: 181, 182-185.

¹¹ Majālis. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 31: pp. 150-153; Majlis No. 32: pp. 156-158; Majlis No. 33: pp. 160-164; Majlis No. 34: pp. 166-169; Majlis No. 36: pp. 176-178 (al-Mu'ayyad's commentaries on the Khutbah). Majlis No. 35: pp. 170-173 (on the *nāsūt* and *lāhūt*). Majlis No. 37: pp. 181-183; Majlis No. 38: pp. 186-189; Majlis No. 191-195; Majlis No. 40: pp. 197-199 (the views of the *Ghulāt* as well as the comparisons between 'Alī and Jesus (*al-Masīḥ*) in the Christian tradition).

Ghulāt in relation to the *Mīmiyyah* and the *Mukhammasah* of Shī'ī

heresiography in Majlis No. 39 of Volume I. In Majlis No. 34 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad offers up a six-point commentary on one of 'Alī's statements from the *Khutbat al-Bayān*, "I am knowing in all things".¹²

In Majlis No. 17 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad employs Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* in order to explain that "the one soul" (*al-nafs al-wāḥidah*) of *sūrah* (4: 1) refers to the Prophet Muḥammad as the Adam of his cycle and that the wife (i.e., 'Alī as Eve) "born" (*mawlūd*) from him is the creation of religion (*khilqah al-dīn*).¹³ Majlis No. 17 elucidates the true nature of 'Alī's relationship to the Prophet Muḥammad. In this lecture, al-Mu'ayyad also argues against the *Ghulāt* view that the Qur'ān could have been revealed to 'Alī alone.¹⁴ As shall be discussed in conjunction with al-Mu'ayyad's theory of "spiritual birth" (*al-wilādah al-naḥsāniyyah*), the religious affiliation between the Prophet Muḥammad and 'Alī as his legatee mirrors the initial cosmic "pairing" formed between Universal Intellect and Universal Soul. The dyad

Majālis. Volume II. Majlis Nos. 25 and 31: pp. 136-139 and pp. 171-175) (on the *tafḍīl* of 'Alī).

Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 39: pp. 194-195, ln. 19-20 and ln. 1-3. Al-Mu'ayyad explains that the *Mukhammasah* maintain that Muḥammad, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are all one, like the Christians (*al-Naṣārā*) state that the trinity is one, and *vice versa*. It is important to take note of the fact that Massignon first addressed the currency of some of these "exaggerated" Shī'ī doctrines in 10th-century Baghdad as well as the conflation of these viewpoints with those maintained by the 10th-century Sufi, Ḥusayn ibn al-Manṣūr al-Hallāj (d. 922 C.E.).

¹² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 34: pp. 166-169.

¹³ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 17: pp. 79-84; (Ḥamid al-Dīn edition): pp. 70-75. In *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 88: p. 237-238, ln. 17 and 1-2 al-Mu'ayyad explains that the "one soul" are the souls of the prophets, the *awṣiyā'* and the *imāms*, from whom the individual practitioner may derive the benefits of the light of its guidance.

¹⁴ See *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 17: 82-83; Majlis No. 79: pp. 386-389. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: p. 340.

between Universal Intellect and Universal Soul is sustained throughout all of God's creation, down to the lowest ranks of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*.¹⁵ This religious affiliation is defined as well by the fact that when the next immediate rank brings the lower rank from potentiality to actuality, it constitutes both resurrection (i.e., *nash'ah*) and spiritual birth.¹⁶ In both al-Mu'ayyad's refutations of the *Ghulāt* and his commentary on the treatise of the "Eastern" *dā'i*, al-Mu'ayyad is at pains to stress that the spiritual relationship of Muḥammad as the *nāṭiq* and 'Alī as the *waṣī* is one where 'Alī is a rib from the ribs of Muḥammad (*kāna ḍil'a min idlā'a'i-hi*).¹⁷ As shall be seen in this chapter and Chapter Five, this particular distinction of the creation of the *waṣī* from part of the *nāṭiq* has important ramifications for al-Mu'ayyad's doctrinal stance on the emanation of the Universal Soul from the Universal Intellect as well as his theory of spiritual birth in general.¹⁸

Al-Mu'ayyad's refutations against the *Ghulāt* and the *Muqaṣṣirūn* in Volume I of the *Majālis* call attention to the importance of *walāyah* as a

¹⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 84, ln. 82-83: besides employing the Qur'anic image of the "one soul", al-Mu'ayyad also describes the relationship of the legatee, the imams and the "proofs" to the *ṣāhib al-sharī'ah* as being like the limbs of his body, similar to a discussion found in Sijistānī concerning the cycles of prophetic history culminating in the advent of the *Qā'im*. See *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah* p. 167; *Kashf al-Mahjūb*. Trans. H. Landolt. *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*. Volume II. Oxford, 2002: p. 110, for the idea that prophets form the limbs and members of prophethood.

¹⁶ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 20: p. 60-61.

¹⁷ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis 55: p. 340. Volume I. Majlis No. 79: p. 388, ln. 1-14. The discussion of how Eve was created from one of Adam's ribs is not Qur'anic, and may be, in fact, based on Genesis 2: 22, which was subject to much scrutiny in the exegetical traditions of Christianity and Judaism. On Adam and Eve in the 10th-century Ismā'īlī tradition, see Qādī al-Nu'mān. *Asās al-Ta'wīl*. pp. 58-59; H. Corbin. *Swedenborg and Esoteric Islam*. Trans. L. Fox. West Chester, 1999: 105-106.

¹⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 17: pp. 81-83.

doctrine of religious authority and divine guidance. The necessity for a physical representative of the *imām* as the “divine guide” in each cycle and epoch is paramount in mediaeval Ismā‘īlī thought. In the broader tableau of 10th-11th-century Ismā‘īlī intellectual history, al-Mu‘ayyad’s polemics against *ghuluww* may be understood in part as a means of addressing the interpretive ambiguities that naturally resulted from Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s particular emphasis on the Fāṭimid practice of *tā‘ah* to the *imām* in the Kitāb Da‘ā’im al-Islām, Kitāb al-Himmah and Ta’wīl Da‘ā’im al-Islām. In the Majālis, al-Mu‘ayyad rearticulates the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī practice of *tā‘ah* as one where the individual practitioner’s obedience is *foremost* to the preserved hierarchy of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* embodied in the “sphere of *walāyah*”.¹⁹ Al-Mu‘ayyad clarifies precisely how *tā‘ah* to the *imām*, symbolic of the religious duty of *walāyah*, remains an obligatory practice but within the parameters of its designated rank amongst the other “pillars” of Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlism.²⁰ Underlying al-Mu‘ayyad’s typologies of the *imām*, where one of the specified lower ranks of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* may potentially qualify to become the *imām*, is the idea that there has to be one specific *imām* at any time who is “manifest” and physically present so that individual practitioners can benefit

¹⁹ See in particular, Majālis. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 14: pp. 118-119, ln. 6-20 and ln. 1-9; Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 150, ln. 48-61; Majlis No. 55: pp. 338-339, ln. 17-26 and ln. 27-41.

One example that clarifies the interconnected and interdependent relationship between *nubuwwah*, *wiṣāyah* and *imāmah* appears in Volume II. Majlis No. 2: p. 12, ln. 38-41: “for there is no *wiṣāyah* except with the existence (*bi wujūd*) of *al-nubuwwah* and there is no existence for *imāmah* except with the existence of *al-wiṣāyah*.”

See as well, Volume II. Majlis No. 25: pp. 138-139, ln. 45-48.

²⁰ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: pp. 148-150, ln. 17-61.

from the presence of the *imām*.²¹ Significantly, in every epoch (*‘aṣr*) and in each time-period (*zamān*), the “Good Tree” (the “*al-shajarah al-ṭayyibah*” of *sūrah* 14: 24-25) defines the supreme status of the “friend of God” (*walī Allāh*). He is the “absolute” *walī*, to whom the ranks of the potential *imāms* are connected, and whom the infallible *imāms* represent at any time. The *walī Allāh* is also the “*imām* at any time”; that is, he is the *al-imām al-muṭlaq*. The *walī Allāh* is “the Good Tree”, whose root is stable”, and who can give his fruits (i.e., the fruits of Paradise) at any time (*sūrah* 14: 25).²²

²¹ This appears in Volume III. Majlis No. 20: pp. 59-60. The “potential” *imāms* may be from the ranks of the *bāb*, the *ḥujjah*, the *dā’ī*, and the *ma’dhūn* (the lowest rank of the *da’wah* being the *mustajīb*, the “novice”). The whole structure is also a commentary on Qur’ān (17: 71). See Volume III. Majlis No. 20: p. 60, ln. 16.

²² *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 48: p. 298, ln. 83-84. The absolute *walī* can give his fruits at any time because he “can trace his origin in his substance to the First Substance (*al-jawhar al-awwal*)” (i.e., the Prime Intellect, which is the “stable root” of everything in existence). In *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 86: p. 247, ln. 2-15, al-Mu’ayyad puts forth an interpretation of the “Good Word” (“*al-kalimah al-ṭayyibah*”), Qur’ān (14: 24) in the light of his theory of species. He compares the *al-kalimah al-ṭayyibah* to the palm tree (*nakhlah*), which is the “best” (*ṣafwah*) of the trees. The best of the trees is the “Good Tree” (“*al-shajarah al-ṭayyibah*”) referred to in Qur’ān (14: 24-25). He clarifies his statement from two perspectives: the *al-kalimah al-ṭayyibah* is the *shahādah* as well as the *al-shajarah al-ṭayyibah*, but it is also what established the “Heavens and the Earth” through God’s command, “Be!”. Al-Mu’ayyad states that the meaning concerning “its horizons” (*āfāqu-hu*) is that it is the “root” (or origin, *aṣl*) of originated beings (*al-mubda’āt*), emanated beings (*al-munba’athāt*), created existents (*al-kā’ināt*) and generated existents (*al-mutawwaladāt*). In the manner that the *ṣāhib al-shar’* resembles the *al-kalimah al-ṭayyibah*, he is the origin of the *al-mawālīd al-dīniyyah* as well as the existence of what may be found in the Afterlife of the “divine forms” (*al-ṣuwar al-malakūtiyyah*). Therefore, the “Word” is the root (*sankh*) of the “Tree”, and vice versa.

On the significance of the palm tree as the *arbor inversa* (the inverted, cosmic tree whose roots are in Heaven) in the thought of Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 638 A.H./ 1240 C.E.) and Shaykh Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1288 A.H./ 1870 C.E.), see H. Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*. Trans. N. Pearson. Princeton, 1977: 135-137, 225, 327, n. 9.

Al-Mu'ayyad thereby addresses the *walāyah* of the Prophet Muḥammad and the complementary *walāyah* of those who follow after him (i.e., his *waṣī*, 'Alī, and the *imāms*) in accordance with the stages of human development and perfection, for in the framework of *walāyah*, the stages of development parallel the Fātimid Ismā'īlī "pillars" of practice.²³ The definitions al-Mu'ayyad's prophetic anthropology provides of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* reveal their efficacy in the realm of individual practice. Al-Mu'ayyad's prophetic anthropology permits even the lowest *ḥadd* of the physical *ḥudūd al-dīn* to be linked to the chain of transmission from Adam, for perfecting the human forms (*al-ṣuwar al-insāniyyah*), and from the Prophet Muḥammad, for attaining the religious forms (*al-ṣuwar al-dīniyyah*) and the Afterlife forms (*ṣuwar al-ākhirah*) hidden in their souls.²⁴

Majlis Nos. 33-38 of Volume I of the *Majālis* also constitute a critique of a set of "exaggerated" doctrinal stances on the role of 'Alī at the same time that they reaffirm Fātimid Ismā'īlī doctrines of redemption and salvation, although in the *Majālis*, al-Mu'ayyad's polemics are not exclusively reserved

²³ See *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 24: pp. 118-119, ln. 6-20 and ln. 1-9. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: pp. 148-151; Majlis No. 36: p. 203, ln. 53-58. *Walāyah* is the centre (*markaz*) around which the spheres (*al-dawā'ir*) revolve. Along parallel lines, the religious duties (*al-farā'id*) are like the limbs of the body (*al-jawāriḥ*), of which *walāyah* is the heart (*al-qalb*), for the heart is the leader (*amīr*) of the limbs of the body.

In the course of Volume II. Majlis No. 38: p. 212, ln. 87-93, al-Mu'ayyad also indicates that each realm is linked and necessary for the next, immediate, and higher realm, as each of the *ḥudūd* is necessary for the existence of the next. Therefore, the existence of the *imām* is necessary and conditional for the existence of the *waṣī*, the subsequent and higher *ḥadd*.

²⁴ Some examples of this transmission of the different types of forms may be found in *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 60: p. 374, ln. 103-111. Volume III. Majlis 20: pp. 59-60, ln. 19 and ln. 1-20.

for the Shī'ī *Ghulāt*.²⁵ In other lectures in Volume I, II, and III we see that generally speaking, al-Mu'ayyad refutes not only the Shī'ī *Ghulāt* but equally, both the "Sunnī Literalists" (*ahl al-taqlīd*) and the "Theologians" (*aṣḥāb al-ra'y/ Mutakallimūn*).²⁶ Drawing our attention, however, are the distinctions the *Ghulāt* make between the divine nature (*lāhūt*) and the human nature (*nāsūt*) of the figure of 'Alī as well as the comparisons al-Mu'ayyad makes between 'Alī and the Messiah (*al-Masīh*) in the Christian tradition.²⁷

In Majlis No. 30-36 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on 'Alī's saying from the *Khutbat al-Bayān*, "I am the First and I am the Last", is presented in the course of his refutations of the *Ghulāt* and the *Muqaṣṣirūn*.²⁸ As discussed by Amir-Moezzi and Corbin, al-Mu'ayyad introduces material from the *Khutbat al-Bayān* which is not included in the *Bihār al-Anwār* of the renowned Shī'ī theologian of the Safavid period, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d.ca. 1110 A.H./1699 C.E.).²⁹ In part

²⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis Nos. 33-38: pp. 159-195.

²⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis Nos. 27, 28; pp. 132, 171; Volume II: pp. 372, 72-77. In Volume III. Majlis No. 61: p. 181, ln. 8-22, al-Mu'ayyad presents the varying interpretations the "Exegetes" (*Mufasssīrūn*), the *Ahl al-rā'y* (the "Rationalists", sometimes incorporating the Mu'tazilites), and the *Ahl al-ḥadīth* (the "Traditionalists") offer on Qur'ān (7: 143): "When Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and his Lord addressed him, he said: 'O my Lord! Show (Thyself) to me, that I may look upon Thee.'"

²⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 30: pp. 146-148; Majlis No. 31: 150-151; Majlis No. 35: pp. 170-173. Other lectures comparing the Messiah and 'Alī exist in Volume II. See, for example, Majlis No. 64: pp. 401-405.

²⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 31: pp. 149-154; Majlis No. 36: pp. 176-177.

²⁹ M. A. Amir-Moezzi. "Aspects de l'imāmologie duodécimaine." *Studia Iranica* (1996): 207; Corbin. *Itinéraire* pp. 182-184, 185; B. T. Lawson. "The Dawning Places of the Lights of the Faithful by Rajab Bursī." In, *The Legacy of Mediaeval Persian Sufism*. Editor, L. Lewisohn. London/ New York, 1992: 267-269; M. Momen. *An*

commentary, and in part abjuration, al-Mu'ayyad provides a corrective to the *Ghulāt's* statements concerning the individual's perception and vision (*al-ru'yah*) of the *imām*.³⁰ These refutations and commentaries from the *Majālis* point to how al-Mu'ayyad's prophetic anthropology is defined and constructed so that the philosophical elements of Ismā'īlī Neoplatonism support his argument concerning the hierarchy implicit in the sainthood of *walāyah*. Al-Mu'ayyad's polemics against the *Ghulāt* incorporate arguments pertaining to the relationship of the Universal Intellect (*al-'aql al-kullī*) and the Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyyah*) that are crucial for understanding the spiritual affiliation between the Prophet Muḥammad and his *waṣī*, 'Alī.³¹ Most notably, al-Mu'ayyad's distinctions between the ordinary human being and the elite circle of individuals who share in the status of the "absolute human being" (*al-insān al-muṭlaq*) in each cycle and time-period heightens the eminence and the priority of the prophets over the *awṣiyā'* and *imāms*.³² That is to say, during their life-times, the prophets' eminence is founded upon the

Introduction to Shi'i Islam. New Haven, 1985: 149. Kalām-i Pīr. Editor/Trans. W. Ivanow. Bombay, 1935. (Introduction): p. 28, n. 3; (Text): pp. 75, 79-81.

Amir-Moezzi notes that the 14th-century Shi'i author, Ḥaydar Āmulī, refers to the *Khutbat al-Bayān* in his *Jāmi' al-Asrār*. In addition to the passage Amir-Moezzi has indicated, there exists another reference to the *Khutbat al-Bayān* in the *Jāmi' al-Asār*. Editor, H. Corbin. Tehran/Paris, 1969: pp. 111-112.

A more complete text of the *Khutbat al-Bayān* appears in Volume I. Majlis No. 30: p. 148, ln. 12-15 ; Majlis No. 31: p. 151.

³⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: pp. 159-164.

Corbin. *Itinéraire d'un enseignement*. 1993: 184-185.

³¹ See in particular, *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 17: pp. 82-83; Majlis No. 36: pp. 177-178; Majlis No. 77: p. 378. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: pp. 340-341, ln. 49-66. Volume III. Majlis No. 16: pp. 48-49, ln. 18-20 and ln. 1-12; Majlis No. 17: p. 51, ln. 2-21.

³² *Majālis*. Volume I: pp. 153, 175, 235, 307; Volume III: pp. 49, 51.

distinction of the perfect potentiality and actuality of intellect (*al-tamāmiyyah bi al-quwwah wa al-fi'l*) and intellect *in potentia* and *in actu* (*'aql tāmm bi al-quwwah wa al-fi'l*), whereas the *waṣī* represents only the perfect potential of intellect (*'aql tāmm bi al-quwwah dūna al-fi'l*).³³ While al-Mu'ayyad's doctrinal stance on the figure of 'Alī as the *waṣī* and *imām* circumvents the majority of the problems with the *imām*'s divine nature, it also permits for a degree of obscurity concerning how the *al-imām al-muṭlaq* and the "seal of the *imāms*" (*khātam al-a'immaḥ*) and their precise identities may be hidden and occulted.³⁴

Chodkiewicz's seminal work on sainthood in the mediaeval Islamic mystical tradition, *Seal of the Saints*, is complemented further in view of the mediaeval Ismā'īlī considerations of the doctrine of *walāyah*. Examining the Ismā'īlī concept of *walāyah* in relation to the Fatimid Ismā'īlī polemics against *ghuluww* throws into sharp relief the very same process of doctrinal revision within mediaeval Ismā'ilism of the 10th –11th Centuries as Chodkiewicz's work first offered for the study of post-classical Sufism. As Chodkiewicz has discussed in *Seal of the Saints*, numerous Sufi authors

³³ See *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 48: p. 235, ln. 3-12. Volume III: pp. 48-49, 51.

See H. Landolt. "Suhrawardī's 'Tales of Initiation'." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1987): 107/3: 483-484: on the two aspects of soul in Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *Shish Fasḥ*, where souls may be perfect *in potentia* and *in actu*, and the souls of the prophets and *imāms* are called the *nafs-hā-yi buzurgān*. See *Shish Fasḥ*. Editor/Translator, W. Ivanow. Leiden, 1949: 49, 62. See Z. R. Kassam. *The Problem of Knowledge in Nāṣir-i Khusraw*. Unpublished M. A. thesis. McGill University, 1984: 58-64.

³⁴ To be addressed below, in conjunction with al-Mu'ayyad's theory of the *Qā'im*. See *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: pp. 340-341. Volume III. Majlis No. 28: pp. 85-86, ln. 3-21 and ln. 1-8, which seems to imply that the *'al-khalq al-ākhar*³⁵ (= *walāyah*) is above the master of the religious law (*ṣāhib al-shar'*).

debated at length the status of the “friends of God” (*awliyā’ Allāh*) in tandem with the concept of *walāyah*. In the 11th-century Fātimid Ismā’īlī context, it is through a series of refutations against the *Ghulāt* and the *Muqaṣṣirūn* that al-Mu’ayyad aims to clarify the issues of prophetic inheritance as well as to moderate the Fātimid Ismā’īlī position on the figure of the *imām*.³⁵

In fact, Chodkiewicz’s approach to Ibn al-‘Arabī’s theory of sainthood serves as a reasonable starting-point for this section’s presentation of al-Mu’ayyad’s concept of *walāyah* and his typologies of the *imām*. According to Chodkiewicz, *walāyah* represents “proximity to God” for Ibn al-‘Arabī.³⁶ *Walāyah* also represents “...all that is initiatic in Ibn ‘Arabī’s work (as opposed to what is purely metaphysical)”.³⁷ Chodkiewicz calls attention to the fact that Ibn al-‘Arabī’s *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* culminates in the discussion of the “station of proximity” (*maqām al-qurbah*): “In these, Ibn ‘Arabī discusses the ‘stations’ (*maqāmāt*) of sainthood, of prophethood and of the mission of the Messengers (*risāla*), first in general terms, and then in terms of how they related to the human condition on the one hand and the angelic state on the other.”³⁸

According to Ibn al-‘Arabī, *walāyah* is the “sphere” that “encompasses all the others”. In one aspect, *walāyah* is *naṣr*, in the sense of “assistance”. The *naṣr* is either active or passive: active when *walāyah* is a “divine attribute” of

³⁵ Amongst other examples, see *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 14: pp. 118-119, ln. 6-19 and ln. 1-9. *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 31: pp. 150-151. Volume II. Majlis No. 48: p. 296, ln. 52-62.

³⁶ Chodkiewicz. *Seal of the Saints*. 1993: 57.

³⁷ Chodkiewicz. *Seal of the Saints*. 1993: 47.

³⁸ Chodkiewicz. *Seal of the Saints*. 1993: 55.

God but also, as Chodkiewicz explains: “Only the gnostics know that ‘Allāh’s *walāyah* is universal and extends to all His creatures insomuch as they are His servants’, whether or not they desire it.” In many respects, the “assistance” of *naṣr* is entailed in the “divine trust”, or the primordial covenant of *amānah* of *sūrah* (7: 172).³⁹

Ibn al-‘Arabī describes how *walāyah* pertains on the individual level, in terms of what the “friends of God” receive and to what degree *walāyah* is reflected in their mystical states. Chodkiewicz also alludes to further distinctions of status in the spiritual hierarchy of the “friends of God” in the mediaeval Sufi tradition.⁴⁰ In the *Ihyā’ al-‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, Ghazālī explains that the highest level for human beings is the stage of those who are “sincere” (*ṣiddīqiyyah*), since the higher stations have been “closed off” by the prophecy of Muḥammad.⁴¹ Marking a difference of opinion, Ibn al-‘Arabī disagrees with al-Ghazālī’s interpretation of the higher stations, for as Chodkiewicz explains:

...there is a spiritual station which is higher than the *ṣiddīqiyya*, intermediate between that and the ‘prophetic station’. This is the ‘station of proximity’ (*maqām al-qurba*), which represents the ultimate point in the hierarchy of the saints...It is accessible only to the *afrād*, otherwise known as the *muqarrabūn*, ‘those who are close’.⁴²

³⁹ Chodkiewicz. *Seal of the Saints*. 1993: 57.

⁴⁰ Chodkiewicz. *Seal of the Saints*. 1993: 73. Chodkiewicz, however, does include a discussion of a “typology of the *awliyā’*”.

⁴¹ Chodkiewicz. *Seal of the Saints*. 1993: 57-58. In this context, Chodkiewicz is referring to a passage in Ghazālī. *Ihyā’ al-‘Ulūm al-Dīn*. Volume III. Cairo edition, n.d.: p. 99; Volume IV: pp. 159, 245.

⁴² Chodkiewicz. *Seal of the Saints*. 1993: 58.

Ibn al-‘Arabī’s concentration on the hierarchy of the “friends of God” closely resonates with al-Mu‘ayyad’s theory of *walāyah*. According to al-Mu‘ayyad, *walāyah* abides in the abode of pure intelligibles and the abode of permanency, the abode of sincerity (*dār al-ṣidq*).⁴³ In the *dār al-ṣidq*, the *imāms* are the “men of the Afterlife” (*rijāl al-ākhirah*).⁴⁴ Al-Mu‘ayyad also refers to the *imāms* as the “friends of God” (*awliyā’ Allāh*) and the “sincere ones” (*al-ṣādiqūn*).⁴⁵ In the *Majālis*, al-Mu‘ayyad advances the theory that in the realm governed by change and transformation (*dār al-dunyā’*), the “friends of God” and the gradations of the *imāms* are concealed and hidden from the unbelievers.⁴⁶ Al-Mu‘ayyad’s position on the concealment of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* and more specifically, the *imāms* as the “friends of God”, is clarified when it is viewed in conjunction with his theory of forms. Al-Mu‘ayyad’s theory of a hidden spiritual hierarchy implies that the individuals embodied in the *ḥudūd al-dīn* become the most perfectly manifest in the realm of the Afterlife in what al-Mu‘ayyad often refers to as

⁴³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 89: pp. 444-445, ln. 6-18 and ln. 10-22; Majlis No. 90: pp. 449-450, ln. 16-22 and ln. 1-11; Majlis No. 96: pp. 480-481, ln. 8-21 and ln. 16. Volume II. Majlis No. 46: pp. 285-287, ln. 119-152; Majlis No. 60: p. 370, ln. 34-43.

⁴⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 32: p. 155, ln. 11; Majlis No. 90: p. 450, ln. 4-7. In Volume I. Majlis No. 90: p. 450, al-Mu‘ayyad explains that in the following lecture, the explanation of these points will be provided. These are, in fact, a set of lectures on Qur’ān (2: 23), “And if you are in doubt as to what We revealed, from time to time to Our servant then produce a *sūrah* like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides God, if you are truthful (*ṣādiqīna*).”

⁴⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 77: p. 376, ln. 8-20; Majlis No. 89: p. 444, ln. 6-19; Majlis No. 90: pp. 450-451, ln. 8-23 and ln. 1-5. Volume II. Majlis No. 36: pp. 284-286. Volume III. Majlis No. 35: p. 107, ln. 17-18.

⁴⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 90: pp. 449-450.

the “true form” (*ṣūrah al-ḥaqīqah*).⁴⁷ Al-Mu’ayyad, however, demarcates further typologies of the spiritual hierarchy formed by the *imāms* as well as the other members of the Ismā‘īlī *da‘wah*. In the hierarchy of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*, there is a unique individual of each *ḥadd* who will become a member of the next higher *ḥadd*.⁴⁸ Due to the dynamic of the movement from potentiality (*bi al-quwwah*) to actuality (*bi al-fi‘l*) that occurs on all levels of God’s Creation, some of the most distinguished members of the spiritual hierarchy are in fact, hidden *imāms*, in the particular sense that they bear the potential to become *imāms*. Even in this world, the realm of the *dār al-dunyā*, some individuals may recognize these hidden members of the spiritual hierarchy, though their true status as *imāms* may not have yet been obtained in actuality or acknowledged. For example, in Volume III of the *Majālis*, al-Mu’ayyad outlines one of his typologies of the *imām* as follows (speaking in the name of the “*ālīm*”):

for all of these *ḥudūd* together are *imāms* in potentiality (*ḥadd al-quwwah*)⁴⁹, just as we said before, that the human being is an angel in potentiality, and they are connected to the actually established *imām* at any (undetermined) time (*al-imām al-muṭlaq al-qā‘im bi al-fi‘l*). The “*imāms* at any (undetermined) time” (*al-a‘immah al-muṭlaqūn*) are in the domain (*dā‘irah*) of the *awṣiyā’* and these are their final point and the *awṣiyā’* are in the the domains⁵⁰ of the speaking-

⁴⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: p. 161, ln. 18-20. This is actually a “spiritual birth” that occurs in the subtle soul.

⁴⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 48: p. 235, ln. 3-12. Volume III. Majlis No. 20: p. 60.

⁴⁹ *Majālis*. Volume III: p. 60, ln. 16. Commentary on Qur’ān (17: 71)

⁵⁰ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 20: p. 60. Variant reading, *dā‘irah*: MS. 532 (Ar.): folio 63: ln. 7.

prophets (*al-nuṭaqā'*) and these are their final point. Thus, the lowest (*adnā*) degree (*al-martabah*) from amongst these degrees (*al-marātib*) is connected to the loftiest (*al-lā'ihā*) of them, and the loftiest of them is connected to (*manūṭ*) the lowest of them. ^cWe are from the light of God (*nūr Allāh*), and our Shī'ah in relation to us are like a tree (*shajarah*) that possesses a root, branches, fruits and leaves, and all are from the tree. ⁵¹

In order to define in clearer terms how Ibn al-'Arabī describes, "perfect sainthood as occulted", Chodkiewicz states:

Among these saints, we must also distinguish between the *aṣḥāb al-aḥwāl*, the beings who are governed by their spiritual states, and the *aṣḥāb al-maqāmāt*, who master the 'stations' while remaining masters of their states, and are 'the most Virile men along the Way'. The former are relatively imperfect, but their *walāya* can be seen by most people. The *walāya* of the latter, in a certain way, is even more evident, but its very brilliance conceals it from man's eyes: 'They manifest themselves endowed with the Divine Attributes (*bi-sifāt al-Ḥaqq*) and for this reason they are unnoticed.' ⁵²

In the final section of this chapter, we will again direct our attention to the soteriological ramifications concerning the individual acquisition of the Adamic forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ādamiyyah*) through the unification (*ittiḥād*) with

Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Shish Fasl* p. 77. Nāṣir-i Khusraw employs the term *dā'irah* in relation to the *imām*.

⁵¹ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 20: pp. 59-60. This *ḥadīth* is attributed to Ja'far al-Sādiq, and also appears in Volume I. Majlis No. 30: p. 30.

Also, see Volume II. Majlis No. 48: p. 298, ln. 82-84.

In Majlis No. 54 of Volume V. MS. 535 (Ar): folio 120b-ff, al-Mu'ayyad's *ta'wil* of Qur'ān (36: 80) states that the tree (*shajarah*) is a symbol (*ramz*) for the Messenger of God who, in the world of the body (*'ālam al-jism*), is comparable to the *al-kalimah al-tayyibah* in the world of origination (*'ālam al-ibdā'*).

⁵² Chodkiewicz. *Seal of the Saints*. 1993: 57.

God's greatest name (*al-ism al-'azīm*), *Allāh*. The greatest name of God is the highest *ḥadd* of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*.⁵³ We shall see how al-Mu'ayyad equates the names of God with the *ḥudūd* in general and the prophets in particular. The "living speaking-prophets" (*al-aḥyā' al-nuṭaqā'*) represent God's "Beautiful names" (*asmā'u-hu al-ḥusnā*) (*sūrah* 7: 180).⁵⁴ The *ḥudūd al-dīn* are the "living names", as opposed to the "dead letters" of the "false *imāms*" (*a'immah al-bāṭil*), who are limited (in their understanding) to only the exterior of the Qur'ān.⁵⁵ In al-Mu'ayyad's thought, God's "Beautiful names" secure the redemption and salvation of those individuals who choose to emulate them as models of practice.⁵⁶

⁵³ One of al-Mu'ayyad's commentaries on the greatest name of God, *Allāh*, appears in *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 59: pp. 364-365, ln. 23-59. Al-Mu'ayyad discusses the greatest name of God in conjunction with the *ḥadīth*, "God created Adam in His form (*bi šurati-hi*)."⁵³ Al-Mu'ayyad returns to this discussion throughout the *Majālis*. See Volume III. Majlis No. 100: p. 286, ln. 10-16. Volume IV. Institute of Ismaili Studies MS. 720 (Ar.): folio 45a, ln. 9-15. Volume V. MS. 535 (Ar.): folio 23a-ff.

⁵⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 43: pp. 212-213; Majlis No. 71: p. 346; Volume I. Majlis No. 73: p. 354; Majlis No. 93. Volume II. Majlis No. 37: p. 208, ln. 7-18; Majlis No. 44: p. 264, ln. 76-79. See Majlis 64 of Volume IV. MS. 720 (Ar): folios 152b-153a, ln. 11-12 and ln. 15, for two references to the *al-aḥyā' al-nuṭaqā'*. Later in this chapter, we will address in further detail how the *ḥudūd* are the "living names", as opposed to the "dead letters" of the "false" *imāms*.

As well, concerning the tradition of Ja'far al-Šādiq, where the *imāms* represent God's most beautiful names, see M. A. Amir-Moezzi. "Aspects de l'imāmologie duodécimaine." *Studia Iranica* (1996): 25: 200-201.

⁵⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 14: p. 85, ln. 29-42; Majlis No. 37: p. 209, ln. 29; Majlis No. 59: p. 365, ln. 55.

⁵⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 71: p. 346, ln. 4-14. In conjunction with Qur'ān (7: 180), al-Mu'ayyad makes the following point: the "noble, spiritual, upper ranks of religion" (*al-ḥudūd al-sharīfah al-rūḥāniyyah al-'ulwiyyah*) are tantamount to "And to Allah belong the best names"⁵⁶. The corporeal, lower ranks (*al-jismāniyyah al-suflīyyah*) are tantamount to "so invoke Him by them"⁵⁶, thereby emphasizing how the lower ranks lead to the higher ranks. See Volume II. Majlis No. 37: p. 209, ln. 34-38.

The Human Being in Potentia and in Actu

As to avoid the error of falling into *ghuluww*, al-Mu'ayyad's typologies of the *imām* first delineate the parameters of the *imām* as a human being (*al-insān*). The primary difference between the *imāms* and human beings in general, however, lies in the fact that human souls (*al-anfus al-bashariyyah*) need to be brought from potentiality to actuality and "extracted" towards their perfection (*istikhlāṣi-hā kamāla-hā*) by the *imāms*.⁵⁷ In Majlis No. 67 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad puts forth a number of arguments to prove that the difference between the "friends of God" and human beings in general is not in terms of corporeality (*al-jismiyyah*); that is to say, physical appearance.⁵⁸ The station (*al-manzilah*) God grants to the *imāms* pertains to their souls. In keeping with his theory of religious affiliation and spiritual development, al-Mu'ayyad explains that the *awliyā' Allāh* represent mature individuals (*al-bulaghā'*) and the rest of humanity are like children (*al-aṭfāl*) due to this difference between their souls.⁵⁹

It is through the *imāms*, who act as "spiritual parents", that human souls are brought to their perfection (*kamāla-hā*) and therefore, from potentiality

⁵⁷ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 86: p. 545, ln. 58-60.

⁵⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 67: p. 327, ln. 3-14.

⁵⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 67: 326-328; Volume I ('Abd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 67: p. 238, ln. 4-16.

to actuality.⁶⁰ The “spiritual mother” (*al-umm al-nafsāniyyah*) of the individual soul is the “proof” (*ḥujjah*) of the master of the cycle (*ṣāhib al-dawr*) and of the master of every epoch (*‘aṣr*) after him.⁶¹ The master of the cycle is the “spiritual father” of the individual soul, “from the perspective of the origination of souls (*inshā’ al-nufūs*) through knowledge (*bi al-‘ilm*), not from the perspective of the birth of the body (*wilādah al-jism*)”.⁶² Al-Mu’ayyad situates the potential range for individual perfection through the paradigm of individual human physical development (*nash’ah*) and the individual soul’s ascent through the *ḥudūd al-dīn*. The secondary ascent, one of noetic perfection, takes the individual soul upward towards those angelic beings (*al-malā’ikah*) whom al-Mu’ayyad explains are within proximity to the highest rank of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*. Key to the reception of “divine support” (*al-*

⁶⁰ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 86: p. 545, ln. 56-60. In Majlis No. 32: p. 179, ln. 57-59, al-Mu’ayyad explains how the Messenger of God and his *waṣī* are the two “upper” (*a’lā*) parents (*al-wālidān*) and the *imām* and the “proof” are the two “lower” (*dana’a*) parents.

⁶¹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 48: p. 294, ln. 22-23; Majlis No. 45: p. 271, ln. 58-59.

⁶² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 77: p. 378, ln. 4-21: in connection with the *ḥadīth*, “I am and you are, oh ‘Alī, the father of the believers.”

See as well, Volume I. Majlis No. 52: p. 256, ln. 1-6, where al-Mu’ayyad discusses this Qur’ānic verse in conjunction with the concept of *amānah*. Volume II. Majlis No. 4: pp. 26-28; Majlis No. 16: p. 95, ln. 49-57: “*fa hiya ḥudūd qawābil li ‘ulūmi-hi wa ḥikami-hi fa hum ināth min ḥaythu qabūl al-māddah al-ilāhiyyah lā min ḥaythu al-unthawīyyah bi al-ṣuwar al-jismiyyah*.” In Majlis No. 63: p. 394, ln. 51-55, al-Mu’ayyad clarifies that the speech of the prophets (*kalām al-anbiyā’*) all together is like the sperm that contains in it, all of the human being, if this speech is received in the wombs of the suitable women (*arḥām al-anāth al-akfā’*), who are the *awṣiyā’*. The metaphor of the sperm is associated with the male and providing form with the female, where this process occurs in the faculty of their subtle souls. On this point, see Volume I. Majlis No. 17: p. 82, ln. 10-12: “accepting the *amānah* of His religion and the repository of the secrets of His revelation and His *tanzil*, just as the female is the receptacle of the sperm [*nuṭf* instead of *nuṭq* as a variant reading] of the male and brings it to maturation (*mublaghah bi-hā*), from where it has no form to the degree of having form.”

ta'yīd) and revelation (*al-wahy*) is that the angelic beings serve as intermediaries to those individual human beings who are distinguished and set apart as the prophets, the *awṣiyā'*, the *imāms*, and the *awliyā' Allāh*.⁶³

Al-Mu'ayyad's theory of the individual human being's development is hinged upon the parameters of potentiality and actuality. According to al-Mu'ayyad, an essential feature of the human being is that he is a brutish animal *in actu* (*al-bahimah bi al-fi'l*) but an angel *in potentia* (*malak bi al-quwwah*).⁶⁴ Situated between the corporeal and intellectual realms, the human being possesses two sides. With respect to its soul and its intellect, the human being belongs to the world of the angelic beings (*'ālam al-malā'ikah*). With regard to the human being's body and denseness, it belongs to the world of nature (*'ālam al-ṭabī'ah*) and the place of deviation (*makān al-iwaj*). The individual human being is therefore capable of perceiving and comprehending what is directly below (the *'ālam al-ṭabī'ah*) and directly

⁶³ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 84: p. 533, ln. 83-89. Volume II. Majlis No. 65: p. 409, ln. 36-39: the faculty of divine support (*quwwah al-ta'yīd*) is obtained from the "upper ranks" (*al-hudūd al-'ulwiyyah*); i.e., Intellect and Soul. See as well, *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 63: p. 306, ln. 16-19.

⁶⁴ See in particular, *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 21: p. 122, ln. 73-78: "Another point is that the human being is between the angels (*al-malā'ikah*) and the animals (*al-bahā'im*), for it is from the perspective of its soul that it is an angel *in potentia* (*malak bi al-quwwah*) and from the perspective of its body, it is an animal in actuality (*bahimah bi al-fi'l*)."

See as well, *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 78: p. 222, ln. 2-3: "Praise be to God who created the human being possessing two sides (*ṭarafayn*), one side from the world of nature (*'ālam al-ṭabī'ah*) and one side from the world of intellect (*'ālam al-'aql*), for the highest side (*al-ṭaraf al-'ālā*) is in relation to him (*qā'im min-hu*) in the *hadd* of potentiality (*hadd al-quwwah*) and the lowest side (*al-ṭaraf al-adnā*) subsists in it in actuality (*bi al-fi'l*)."
Variant reading: p. 222, ln. 3, *fi'l*, instead of *'aql*.

above (the world of religion, the *'ālam al-dīn*, and the World of Intellect and Soul, the *'ālam al-'aql wa al-nafs*).

In the ascent of the subtle soul, the true human being may potentially strive to attain to the abode of purity (*dār al-ṣafā'*) and the vicinity of the upper ranks (*mujāwarah al-ḥudūd al-'ulwiyyah*) of Paradise. In the ascending cycle, it is at the upper ranks that density (*al-kathāfah*) accepts the influences of the subtle (*āthār al-laṭāfah*) according to its capacity to accept these influences, as in one of the prime examples al-Mu'ayyad himself employs: the light of the faculty of divine support comes from the upper ranks, from which the “divine fruits” (*al-thamarāt al-malakūtiyyah*) are also derived, for the “divine forms” are at the end-point of al-Mu'ayyad's theory of forms.⁶⁵ It is in their descent from the abode of purity that the “spiritual substances” (*al-mawādd*) unite (*ittiṣāl*) with the ranks of religion according to their capacity to receive the allotments (*aqsām*) of revelation and “divine support”, so that the religious births pour forth (*yastafīdu*) from the *ḥudūd al-dīn*. It is in the abode of purity that the origination of the “divine forms” (*nash'a al-ṣuwar al-malakūtiyyah*) occurs.⁶⁶ In the descending cycle, the very same influences of the subtle reach the world of corporeality and density (*dār al-kathāfah*) safe-guarded by “coverings” (*agḥṭiyyah*) and “shells” (*qushūr*).⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 65: p. 409; Majlis No. 61: p. 387, ln. 40-41.

⁶⁶ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 48: p. 299, ln. 99-101.

⁶⁷ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 48: p. 298, ln. 89-91. *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 80: p. 256, ln. 6-12.

In al-Mu'ayyad's theory of *walāyah*, the individual may perfect himself through *ṭā'ah* to the *ḥudūd al-dīn* in order to attain to the higher human forms (*al-ṣuwar al-insāniyyah*) and the Adamic forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ādamiyyah*).⁶⁸ With respect to the corporeal aspect of the human form, the more subtle Adamic forms come into being as an extension of the most coarse and corporeal aspect of the human forms, the "brutish" human forms (*al-ṣuwar al-bashariyyah*). Each *ḥadd* of development and spiritual perfection, however, is situated between the *ḥadd* immediately beneath it and the *ḥadd* immediately above it. Al-Mu'ayyad posits that a set of homologues exist parallel to each other in each realm or sphere of development and activity.⁶⁹

In practical terms, *walāyah* develops the two forms necessary for the individual practitioner's immediate human development and future spiritual perfection in the Afterlife, the physical form and the soul.⁷⁰ In al-Mu'ayyad's thought, the *ṭā'ah* to the *imām* becomes equivalent to what al-Mu'ayyad terms "corporeal protocol" or corporeal ethics (*al-akhlāq al-jismāniyyah*). The stage of the recognition (*ma'rifah*) of the *imām* is in accordance with what al-Mu'ayyad sets forth concerning the stages of human

⁶⁸ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 59: pp. 364-365; Majlis No. 60: pp. 371-374. Volume III. Majlis No 92: p. 262, ln. 2-ff. Volume IV. MS. 720 (Ar.): folio 45a-ff.

⁶⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 9: pp. 41-42, ln. 13-19 and ln. 1-15. See as well, Volume II. Majlis No. 45: p. 271, ln. 53-58.

⁷⁰ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 36: p. 202, ln. 36-37; Majlis No. 86: p. 546-547, ln. 76-83. In Volume II. Majlis No. 39: p. 226, ln. 53-61, al-Mu'ayyad explains that humankind has two forms (*al-bashar dhū suratayn*), one which resembles the animals, and the other, which is the spirit (the *al-rūh*, as based on Qur'ān (17: 85)), obtained from the *amr Allāh*, which comes through the Prophet, the *waṣī* and the *a'immaḥ*.

development and initiation into the *ḥudūd al-dīn*.⁷¹ As al-Mu'ayyad illustrates, it is through the upbringing that parents provide on a daily basis, that children (*al-aṭfāl*) acquire "human refinements" (*ādāb al-insāniyyah*).⁷² In an analogous manner, the "novice" in the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* (*al-mustajīb*) requires the training that the *sharī'ah* imparts in order to break away from the "habits" and behavior of animals and to be distinguished from the animal species. For the individual practitioner, the recognition of the *imām* represents the stage of "youth" (*shabāb*), an initial stage of spiritual perfection with regard to the individual initiatory ascent. Between the stages of youth (*al-shabāb*) and old age (*al-shaykhūkhah*), however, is the stage of maturity (*al-kuhūlah*). The individual's attainment of maturity is equivalent to having recognized the rank of *waṣī*.⁷³ On a higher level of the initiatory ascent, the recognition of the Prophet Muḥammad leads beyond material life to the acquisition of the spiritual *ḥudūd*.⁷⁴

In ways which reinforce al-Mu'ayyad's spiritual discipline of *tā'ah*, human customs (*al-'ādāt al-bashariyyah*) serve as what is only the starting-point for obtaining the spiritual ethics (*al-akhlāq al-rūḥāniyyah*) that in due

⁷¹ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 26: p. 78, ln. 3-15.

⁷² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 66: p. 323, ln. 7-9.

⁷³ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 26: p. 78, ln. 3-18.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: p. 78, ln. 3-18. In Volume II. Majlis No. 64: p. 403, ln. 50-55, al-Mu'ayyad makes a comparison between Jesus and the Prophet Muḥammad. Just as Jesus anointed the eyes of the blind, and made the blind see, the Prophet draws away the coverings (*aghṭiyyah*) from the eyes of people so that they see the lights of the Afterlife (*al-anwār al-ākhirah*) and see Heaven and its rewards, or conversely the fire and the punishments of Hell.

course, lead to the “divine ethics” (*al-akhlāq al-malakūtiyyah*).⁷⁶ Human customs, however, are to be killed for the sake of acquiring the “divine ethics”.⁷⁶ In the schema that al-Mu’ayyad provides of individual practice, the “divine ethics” denote the first degree and rank (*darajah*) of the Afterlife. The acquisition of the “divine ethics” is connected to the process in which the individual “becomes consubstantial with the substance of the angels (*al-tajawhur bi jawhar al-malā’ikah*)”.⁷⁷

This consubstantiation is the first degree amongst the degrees of the Afterlife.⁷⁸ It also points to the natural movement and progression from the *ṭā’ah* and perception of one *ḥadd*, to the next higher *ḥadd* directly above it in the hierarchy, and then, from the physical *ḥudūd* to their spiritual

⁷⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 5: p. 22, ln. 15-17. Volume III. Majlis No. 81: p. 233, ln. 6.

⁷⁶ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 30: pp. 166-167, ln. 21-34. See in particular, p. 166, ln. 15-20. Articulated in a manner that places additional emphasis on the fact that following the *sharī’ah* is the first step in becoming truly human, al-Mu’ayyad explains that one of the miracles of prophecy (*i’jāz al-nubuwwah*) consists of providing mankind with religious laws that permit them to break from the custom of animal nature (*kharq al-’ādah al-ḥayawāniyyah*) and that lead them to human nature (*al-insāniyyah*).

⁷⁷ D. DeSmet. “Al-Mu’ayyad fī d-Dīn ash-Shīrāzī et la polémique ismaélienne contre les ‘Brahmanes’ d’Ibn ar-Rāwandī.” In, D. DeSmet & U. Vermeulen, Editors. *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*. Louvain, 1995a: 94-95. P. Kraus. “Beiträge zur islamischen ketzergeschichte. Das Kitāb az-Zumurrud des Ibn ar-Rāwandī.” *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* (1933-34): 14: 93-129; 355-379. Reprinted in, R. Brague, Editor. *Alchemie, Ketzerei, Apokryphen im frühen Islam*. Zürich/New York, 1994. Kraus first provided an edition of the lectures on the Ibn al-Rāwandī material from the *Majālis*.

Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 5: p. 22, ln. 15-17. Volume II. Majlis No. 51: p. 316, ln. 70-71: the individual who has become a rational, intelligent human being is the “isthmus between the two seas” (*barzakh al-baḥrayn*), between the animals and the angels.

⁷⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 76: p. 323. If individuals resemble the angels who come to them at the time of transformation (*intiḳāl*), secret upon secret and state after state are attached to them. This, at first, is the boundary (*ḥadd*) of death and the exiting of the *rūḥ* of which al-Mu’ayyad explains the unbelievers are wary.

counterparts in the realm of the pure intelligibles. The potential for an increasingly subtle progression of corporeal forms likewise re-emerges as a defining feature in terms of the collectivity of the *da'wah* as Heaven in *potentia* (*al-jannah bi al-quwwah*). The members of each *ḥadd* symbolize a potential Heaven. The potential Heaven of each *ḥadd* leads to the permanency and the eternity of the Heaven in *actu* (*al-jannah bi al-fi'l*) in creation's modalities of origination, "arising", and resurrection.⁷⁹

In brief, the individual process of ascent represents the perfection of the forms of the human being and entails the absolute refinement of all of the lower qualities entailed in the animal forms (*al-ṣuwar al-bahīmiyyah*), which humankind initially resembles as a member of the animal species (*al-ajnās*

⁷⁹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 3: p. 18, ln. 32-35. Al-Mu'ayyad explains that two Qur'ānic verses, Qur'ān (55: 62) and (55: 54), attest to the account of *al-jannah bi al-quwwah* and *al-jannah bi al-fi'l*. See in addition, Volume I. Majlis No. 12: pp. 106-107.

Al-Mu'ayyad also states that each of the prophets, the *awṣiyā'* and the *imāms*, in and of themselves, are Heaven. See Volume I. Majlis No. 14: p. 67, ln. 8-11. Volume II. Majlis No. 2: p. 12, ln. 31-33. Also, in Volume II. Majlis No. 1: p. 8, ln. 102-104: the *ḥudūd al-dīn* serve the purpose and function of allowing individuals to have access to Heaven, where "the possessors of divine support (*aṣḥāb al-ta'yīd*), who are the bearers (*ḥāmilūn*) of the revelation of God (*waḥy Allāh*), His book and His messengership, and their *awṣiyā'* and the *imāms* of their epoch are heavens (*jannāt*). Through them one attains to the heaven that is Paradise (*dār al-khuld*)."
Volume II. Majlis No. 3: p. 18, ln. 40: "We stated that the heavens are the *ḥudūd dīn Allāh* according to the definition of *ta'wīl* (*fi ḥadd al-ta'wīl*)."
In Volume II. Majlis No. 1: p. 6, ln. 65-69: "the *da'wah* of *ta'wīl* is the special domain (*al-mukhtaṣṣah*) of the family of the Prophet...and it is the heaven in potential (*al-jannah bi al-quwwah*) that brings about the heaven in *actu* (*al-jannah bi al-fi'l*)."

Majālis. Volume IV. MS. 720 (Ar): folios 47b-48a: the *da'wah* is Heaven in *potentia* (*al-jannah bi al-quwwah*), like the sperm (*al-nuṭfah*) is the human being in *potentia* (*al-insān bi al-quwwah*). On folios 142b-143a, al-Mu'ayyad explains how the Heaven established in *potentia* is the *al-da'wah al-ta'wīliyyah*.

al-ḥayāwāniyyah).⁸⁰ After casting away the lower, “brutish” forms of mankind (*al-ṣuwar al-bashariyyah*), the individual ascends upward through a progression of the human forms (*al-ṣuwar al-insāniyyah*) and the Adamic forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ādamiyyah*). In a secondary ascent, the individual may obtain the Afterlife forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ākhirah*) by the means of unification with the *kalimah*; a unification that is, in fact, the return of the soul to the command of God (*amr Allah*), from which human souls (*al-nufūs al-insāniyyah*) originated.⁸¹ While it might be assumed that the individual’s ascent constitutes an element of “progressive transmigration”, where the lower, coarse forms are cast away in the process of obtaining the higher and more subtle human forms, the individual’s acquisition of higher and subtler forms necessarily maintains the preserved order of the hierarchy of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* in each of the realms of God’s creation. In al-Mu’ayyad’s thought, no stage of development can be eliminated or omitted, because each stage lends its necessary and conditional support to the next stage of development.⁸²

With respect to the function of the prophets, al-Mu’ayyad states that while humanity (*al-insāniyyah*) might be adorned with virtue (*al-faḍl*), and

⁸⁰ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 45: p. 275, ln. 118-119. It is difficult to determine why this term is plural, for genus is higher than species. Al-Mu’ayyad also explains in this context that the human being is the fruit of the world as well as its “essence” (*lubb*) and its “choicest part” (*ṣafwah*). See as well, Volume II. Majlis No. 3: p. 19, ln. 56-61. Volume III. Majlis No. 5: pp. 18-19.

⁸¹ *Majālis*. Volume I; II. Majlis No. 86: pp. 545-547, ln. 55-83. Volume III. Majlis No. 5: p. 19, ln. 15-18.

⁸² *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. p. 12, ln. 35-43; Majlis No. 38: p. 212, ln. 82-98. Volume III. Majlis No. 20: pp. 59-60, ln. 19 and ln. 1-20.

the lights of the intellect (*anwār al-‘aql*) glimmer (*lama‘at*) in the human being, the prophets necessarily provide a religious law (*sharī‘ah*) for mankind. The prophets perceive that mankind is related to the animals, because the human being’s composition is of clay, soft matter (*al-‘ajnah*) and the human being needs food and drink, and possesses instinctual suspicions (*al-ārāb al-shahwāniyyah*).⁸³ In a passage from Volume IV, al-Mu‘ayyad comments on how the *sharī‘ah* of the prophets draws people away from the animal nature of the human being. Since the human being cannot be free of resembling the animals (*tashabbuh al-bahā‘im*), the prophets and legal judgements (*qaḍiyyah al-shar‘*) exist so that the people can advance from the *ḥadd al-bahīmiyyah* to the *ḥadd al-insāniyyah*.⁸⁴ As will follow in this chapter, the “sun” of prophecy and the guidance it provides maintains its analogues on the microcosmic level of the human being.⁸⁵

According to al-Mu‘ayyad, the biological *nutfah* and the spiritual *nutfah* share in the same paradigm of development, but this development is one that in fact, occurs along parallel lines. The *shahādah* is the “point of origin” (*mabda‘*) of the *ṣūrah al-naḥs*, in the same way that the biological *nutfah* is the beginning of the *ṣūrah al-jism*. The sperm of the religious

⁸³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 76: p. 370; (Ḥamīd al-Dīn edition): p. 367, ln. 25-27.

⁸⁴ *Majālis*. Volume IV. MS. 720 (Ar): folio 55a.

⁸⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 28: pp. 137-138; Majlis No. 46: pp. 226-227, ln. 19-22 and ln. 1; (Ḥamīd al-Dīn edition): pp. 217-218. Al-Mu‘ayyad states: “The prophet (ṣ) is the lamp (*sirāy*) of the perceptions (*al-baṣā‘ir*), through which they are perceived, just as if the sun is the lamp, through which the perceptions are perceived, and as the lamp is of no use to the blind deprived of vision (*al-baṣr*), likewise the guidance (*irshād*) of *nubuwwah* does not benefit the one possessing the blindness (*al-‘mā*) of intellect (*al-‘aql*) and discernment (*al-baṣīrah*).”

forms symbolized by the Muslim testimony of faith (the *shahādah*) develops in each of the parallel realms, the world of the body (*‘ālam al-jism*), the world of religion (*‘ālam al-dīn*), and the World of Soul (*‘ālam al-nafs*).⁸⁶ The first continuum of individual perfection occurs with the finite limits of created, corporeal existence. In the realm of the world of nature (*‘ālam al-ṭabī‘ah*), the “living speaking-prophets” (*al-aḥyā’ al-nuṭaqā’*) correspond to the names of God and cause the souls to arise from the *sharī‘ah*, wherein the *sharī‘ah* is tantamount to the corporeal body of the human being.⁸⁷ In the emanation of God’s “second creation” (*al-khalq al-thānī*)⁸⁸, the prophets, the *awṣiyā’*, and the *imāms* as the “absolute human being” guide the individual soul to a continual progression of resurrection (*nash‘ah*) in the Afterlife.⁸⁹

According to al-Mu‘ayyad’s prophetic anthropology, the human being is at the

⁸⁶ See *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 78: p. 383, ln. 12-13; Volume I. Majlis No. 9-10: pp. 39-48; Majlis No. 59: p. 290, ln. 2-4. “*fa inna al-nafs al-nāṭiqah li sūrah al-dār al-ākhirah bi manzilah al-nuṭfah li sūrah dār al-dunyā’*.” Volume I. Majlis No. 78: p. 383, ln. 12-21.

⁸⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 43: pp. 212-213, ln. 14-20 and ln. 1-7; Majlis No. 71: p. 346, ln. 4-14; Majlis No. 73: pp. 354-355, ln. 15-18 and ln. 1-6. See in particular, Volume I. Majlis No. 22: p. 105, ln. 9-16, as well as the passage in Volume II. Majlis No. 44: p. 266, ln. 106-110.

⁸⁸ On the prophets, *awṣiyā’* and *al-insān al-muṭlaq* as the “second creation”, see *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 16: p. 49, ln. 7-12. In Majlis Nos. 82-83: pp. 235-239: in actuality, the *waṣī* is death (*mawt*) and life (*ḥayāt*)-- death with respect to mortifying the animal passions-- and life, for the one who has obtained this excellence, is living the “true life” (*ḥayy ḥayāt al-ḥaqīqah*), and consubstantiates with the substance of the angelic beings. Just as earth (*turāb*) is the origin of the first formation (*al-nash‘ah al-ulā*), *turāb* symbolizes the origin of the “other formation” (*al-nash‘ah al-ākhirah*), which is faith (*imān*). Al-Mu‘ayyad makes the point here that the “Hypocrites” deny the Afterlife and they likewise reject the *al-nash‘ah al-thānī* (= the resurrection).

⁸⁹ How human souls (*al-nufūs al-insāniyyah*) are from the *amr Allāh* appears as well in *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 5: pp. 18-19. In Volume II. Majlis No. 86: p. 546, ln. 76-ff., al-Mu‘ayyad explains that in general, things return to their point of origin. Therefore, since human souls are from the *amr Allāh*, after death, their return (*al-rajū’*) is to the *amr Allāh*.

apex of the animal species but this marks only the first rank of the human being in comparison with the further degrees of spiritual perfection it may potentially attain in the angelic form.⁹⁰

Parallel to the first continuum of human development is another modality of *nash'ah* and continued perfection for the individual soul. In the realm of the Afterlife (*dār al-ākhirah*), the individual soul acquires the forms suited to resurrection, the *al-ṣuwar al-ākhirah*, that mirror the manner in which the *Qā'im*, the "master of the Great Resurrection" (*ṣāhib al-qiyyamah*), ushers in "another creature" (*al-khalq al-ākhar*) (*sūrah* 23: 04) through the perfection and completion of the cycles of prophetic history.⁹¹ From one vantage point, the two levels co-exist in a duality of the *dār al-dunyā* and *dār al-ākhirah*. From another perspective, the human being symbolizes this world but the abode of its perfection (*dār kamālī-hi*) is the Afterlife.⁹²

⁹⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 68: p. 328, ln. 1-9. Al-Mu'ayyad explains in this lecture that the most noble of the ranks that the human form (*al-ṣūrah al-alifiyyah al-qā'imah insānan fī dār al-dunyā*) can attain to in this world is the rank of the angels (*rutbah al-malā'ikah*). This rank, at which the human being becomes consubstantial with the substance of the angels, is obtained through the purification (*taṣfiyyah*) of the soul with "the two devotions of knowledge and practice" (*al-'ibādatayn al-ilmīyyah wa al-'amaliyyah*) that are acquired from the prophets and the "friends of God". See as well, Volume III. Majlis No. 89: p. 254, ln. 1-10; Majlis No. 80: p. 256, ln. 6-12. Also worthy of note is the use of the term physical upbringing (*al-tarbiyyah al-jismāniyyah*) on p. 256, ln. 3.

See as well, *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 43: p. 256-257, ln. 75-93. Feki. *Les Idées religieuses*. 1978: 173-174.

⁹¹ Commentary on Qur'ān (23: 12-14), *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 24: pp. 118-119, ln. 6-19 and ln. 1-9. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 150.

⁹² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 54: p. 284, ln. 1-7: "Its spiritual form (*ṣūratu-hu al-nafsāniyyah*) is established and perfected through knowledge (*bi 'ilm*)."

This chapter's first consideration of al-Mu'ayyad's term, the "complete human being" (*al-insān al-muṭlaq*), will be set forth alongside of al-Mu'ayyad's concept of the spiritual hierarchy of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* as the intermediary world of religion (*ʿālam al-dīn*) in 11th-century Ismāʿīlī cosmology. In their respective epochs and times, the prophets, the *awṣiyāʾ* and the *imāms* represent the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*, to whom an obedience and different degree of emulation is due. The "dominion" of the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*, with his "rule" over the "Heavens and the Earth and what is between them" (*sūrah* 50: 38), is obtained through the faculty of divine support (*quwwah al-ta'yīd*).⁹³ Al-Mu'ayyad's technical term of the *al-insān al-muṭlaq* sets apart the individual human being who has become the microcosm (*al-ʿālam al-ṣaghīr*) in his epoch or cycle. In each time, there is always one individual, the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*, who has emulated completely the degrees in God's creation, with particular reference to the Prophet Muḥammad and ʿAlī in the final cycle of prophetic history.⁹⁴

⁹³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 48: pp. 235-236; Majlis No. 63: p. 307, ln. 4-11; Volume I (ʿAbd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 31: [p. 134-135].

In Volume I. Majlis No. 36: p. 178, al-Mu'ayyad explains that it is with the faculty of divine support from God that the *awliyāʾ Allāh* are elevated above creation, as God elevated the Heaven above the earth.

⁹⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 36: p. 177, ln. 11-14. Al-Mu'ayyad also employs two other concepts unique to 11th-century Ismāʿīlī thought: the "Adamic individual" (*al-shakhṣ al-ādami*) and the true human being (*al-insān al-ḥaqīqī*). See Majlis No. 48: p. 236, ln. 14-16; Majlis No. 60: pp. 293-294, ln. 20-22 and ln. 1-6; MS. 720 (Ar): folio 67a. In Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 48: p. 236, ln. 14-16: al-Mu'ayyad mentions that the "*maḥall al-qalb min al-shakhṣ al-ādami alladhī yusammā al-ʿālam al-ṣaghīr...maḥall al-shams min al-ʿālam*." In terms of his body, the *al-shakhṣ al-ādami* is equal to the microcosm but the heart of this individual stands to it like the Sun stands in relation to the world, and it is the heart which corresponds to the "true human being" (*al-insān al-ḥaqīqī*).

It is in the course of al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on the saying of 'Alī, ^{cc}"I am the First and I am the Last"⁹⁵, that he broadens his definition of the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*. With the completion and perfection of the prophetic cycles, the "absolute human being" will comprehensively join *nubuwwah* and *wiṣāyah*, for, as al-Mu'ayyad explains elsewhere, the prophet and the *awṣiyā'* and *imāms* who take his place after him are all the "absolute human being".⁹⁶ We can see more clearly in the comments put forth by Corbin on Majlis No. 31 of Volume I that it is the *imām*, in his role as *waṣī*, who is the ^{cc}"First"⁹⁷, as the immediate successor and spiritual inheritor of the Prophet and as the first *imām*. The *imām* is also the ^{cc}"Last"⁹⁸, in terms of being the final *imām*, the *imām* of the Great Resurrection.⁹⁶

In Majlis No. 17 of Volume III, al-Mu'ayyad presents his theory of the prophets, the *awṣiyā'* and the *imāms* as the *al-insān al-muṭlaq* in relation to whether or not they possess intellect *in potentia*, intellect *in actu*, or are perfect potentially and actually (*al-tamāmiyyah bi al-quwwah wa al-fi'l*) in intellect. The *imāms* at any given (undetermined) time (*a'immaḥ al-muṭlaqūn*) are distinguished from the "potential *imāms*" (i.e., the *ḥudūd*, from the rank of the *bāb* down to the *ma'dhūn*). They are the same as the

Also, see R. Brague. "Deux Versions du microcosme être le monde en petit ou imiter le monde en grand." (1997): 524. Brague raises one especially pertinent question: is man a microcosm or does he become the microcosm?

⁹⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I ('Abd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 31: p. 153, ln. 4-14; (Ghālīb edition): p. 133, ln. 5-14.

⁹⁶ Corbin. *Itinéraire*. 1993: 183. From another vantage point, "L'Imām est ainsi le Premier, parce que prend origine avec lui la connaissance des *ḥudūd* (ses ismaélien monadologique du *tawhīd*), et il est le Dernier, parce que cette connaissance s'étend jusqu'au *Qā'im*, l'Imām de la Grande Résurrection."

pure, infallible *imāms* (*al-a'immah al-ma'sūmūn*). Therefore, the *al-imām al-muṭlaq* refers to the general concept of the true *imām*, instantiated at any time by a concrete infallible *imām*, the *imām* who is the physical representative and who is “manifest”. In a similar manner, the *al-insān al-muṭlaq* refers to the concept of the “true core” (the essence) of the (sanctified) human being, which is instantiated by the prophet, the *awṣiyā'*, and the *imāms*, each in their respective times.⁹⁷

We state: the soul is intellect *in potentia* (*'aql bi al-quwwah*) since there is in its potential⁹⁸ to become pure intellect (*'aqlān maḥḍan*), just as we state that the human being is an angel *in potentia* because it is in its potential to become an angel, and when the matter is along these lines, we state: it is the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*, whose form is its form, and they are the prophets and the *awṣiyā'*, peace be upon them, the intellects of the natural world (*'ālam al-ṭabī'ah*), comparable to the intellects in the World of Intellect (*'ālam al-'aql*), for amongst them are some who are intellect *in potentia* and *in actu* (*'aql bi al-quwwah wa al-fi'l*), like the Intellect in its world, and they are the prophets. Amongst them are some who are perfect intellect *in potentia*, not *in actu* (*'aql tāmm bi al-quwwah dūna al-fi'l*), like the Soul in its world, and they are the *al-awṣiyā'*. When this arrangement (*al-tarkīb*) existed, the pairings (*al-izdiwāj*) exist, so the prophets who possess perfection *in potentia* and *in actu* (*al-tamāmiyyah bi al-quwwah wa al-fi'l*), like the Intellect in its world are in the place of males (*bi maḥall al-dhukūr*), and the *al-awṣiyā'*, who possess perfection *in potentia* (*al-tamāmiyyah bi al-quwwah*), like the Soul in its world, are in the place of females (*al-anāth*), just as there is nothing other to the female than accepting the sperm and its arrangement in the most hidden place, and conveying it from stage to stage [i.e., of development],

⁹⁷ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 20: p. 60. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: pp. 162-163; Volume III. Majlis No. 17: p. 51.

⁹⁸ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 17: p. 51, ln. 13: reading *quwwati-hā* instead of *fawqi-hā*.

until she gives birth to it as a shaped form (*ṣūrah muṣawwirah*).⁹⁹

Al-Mu'ayyad maintains that the prophets are intellects both *in actu* and *in potentia* (like the cosmic intellects), while the *awṣiyā'* are perfect intellects *in potentia* only (like the cosmic Soul).¹⁰⁰ That there are spiritual counterparts to the earthly *ḥudūd al-dīn* is in keeping with al-Mu'ayyad's theory of the "symbol" and the "symbolized" (*al-mathal* and *al-mamthūl*). In the continuum of forms al-Mu'ayyad introduces with regard to the human being, the dark and tenebrous forms as well as the more subtle and luminous forms stand in a necessary duality with the soul, in the sense that the body is an apparent, outward (*ẓāhir*) symbol (*ramz*) of the soul. In the same manner, on the macrocosmic level, the *dār al-dunyā* alludes as a symbol to the hidden reality of the realm of pure intelligibles, the *dār al-ākhirah*.

Throughout God's creation, such things as the body (*al-jasad*) and the soul (*al-nafs*), and the Qur'ān and its esoteric interpretation (*al-ta'wīl*), exist in a parallel relationship of the apparent (*al-ẓāhir*) and the hidden (*al-bāṭin*).¹⁰¹ Revealing of the degree to which these dyadic equivalences form a

⁹⁹ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 17: p. 51, ln. 12-21. See as well, *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 24: p. 134, ln. 34-41: the *imāms* are the intellects (*al-'uqūl*) of the *'ālam al-ṭabī'ah*, serving their necessary function in that they strike the flint-stone (*al-zinād*) of intellects and bring them in existence.

¹⁰⁰ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 17: p. 51, ln. 12-20.

¹⁰¹ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 4: p. 18, ln. 12-15; ('Abd al-Nāṣir edition): p. 60): on the *hajj* as the "sealer of the religious practices" (*khitām al-a'māl al-sharī'iyyah*). As well, al-Mu'ayyad points out that the *hajj* takes place in the month that "is the seal of the year" (*huwa khitām al-sanah*), and that "*wa huwa mithla 'alā ṣāhib dawr bi-hi khitām al-nubuwwah wa al-bayt al-mahjūj huwa*

central point of al-Mu'ayyad's Ismā'īlī cosmology is his commentary on *sūrah* (51: 49), ^{cc}And of every thing We have created pairs³². God created in His creation pairs (*zawjayn*) between the apparent (*ẓāhir*) and the hidden (*bāṭin*), this world (*al-dunyā'*) and the Afterlife (*al-ākhirah*), the body (*al-jasad*) and the soul (*al-rūḥ*).¹⁰² The perfect form of the symbolized becomes manifest in the abode of the *dār al-ākhirah*, which is tantamount to the realm of pure intelligibles. The forms in the abode of this world, that is to say, the symbols, however, are not mere ciphers. As in one of al-Mu'ayyad's examples, the material life is a metaphor for the "true life" (*al-ḥayāt al-ḥaqīqah*) of the *dār al-ākhirah*.¹⁰³ In contrasting the existence of the *dār al-dunyā'* and the *dār al-ākhirah*, al-Mu'ayyad employs the image of how the limbs of the body develop while in the mother's womb, where the individual's body exists *in actu* but the soul exists *in potentia*, and thereby awaits further development

qiblah al-muṣallīna alladhī 'aẓama Allāh qudra-hu". In Volume I. Majlis No. 46: pp. 226-227, the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and the esoteric (*bāṭin*) aspects to prayer (*ṣalāt*), pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) and fasting (*ṣawm*) are discussed in relation to the perception of members of the spiritual hierarchy and their respective missions, such as is the case with the prophet Muḥammad and his messengership (*al-risālah*), and his successor, 'Alī, and his *wiṣāyah*. Volume I. Majlis No. 64: p. 310, ln. 12-16: an interpretation of prayer (*al-ṣalāt*), where the soul (*al-rūḥ*) and the body (*al-jasad*) are equivalent to the *al-ākhirah* and the *al-dunyā'*. See as well, Majlis No. 93: p. 464, ln. 14-16.

In Volume II. Majlis No. 1: p. 6, ln. 76-77, the soul and the body are tantamount to *al-ta'wīl* and *al-tanzīl*. Volume V. MS. 535 (Ar.): folio 11a: (on the *al-mathal* and *al-mamthūl*, and the *al-maḥsūs* and the *al-ma'qūl*).

M. Kāmil-Husayn. "Theory of 'Matter' and 'Spirit' and its Influence on the Egyptian Poetry of the Fāṭimid Period." *Islamic Culture* (1950): 24: 108-116.

¹⁰² Also referring to Qur'ān (51: 20-21). *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 14: p. 116. In Majlis No. 46: p. 310: the body (*jasad*) and the soul (*nafs*) are in a relationship of the 'symbol' (*ramz*) and the 'symbolized'.

¹⁰³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 3: p. 14, ln. 7-16.

Corbin. *Itinéraire d'un enseignement*. 1993: 180-181.

and perfection in the next realm.¹⁰⁴ The body is equivalent to the world of bodies (*‘ālam al-ajsām*), whereas the soul alludes to the abode of perfection and completeness (*dār al-kamāl wa al-tamām*).¹⁰⁵ Because it is through the soul that the individual progresses in the Afterlife, the human being “is born (*mawlūd*) into the world of the Hereafter (*‘ālam al-ma‘ād*) in his subtle spiritual soul (*bi nafsi-hi al-rūḥāniyyah al-laṭifah*)”.¹⁰⁶

Providing insight into his theory of forms, in Majlis No. 33 of Volume I, al-Mu‘ayyad addresses the question of whether or not the appearance of ‘Alī’s form (*ṣūrah*) and appearance in the *dār al-dunyā* is the same as his manifestation (*tajallī*) in the Afterlife.¹⁰⁷ As Corbin originally indicated, al-Mu‘ayyad refutes the *Ghulāt* stance that the individual’s “vision” of the *imām* is one of physical perception (*bi ‘uyūn al-jismiyyah*) in conjunction with ‘Alī’s saying from the *Khutbat al-Bayān*, “I am the First (*al-awwal*) and the Last (*al-ākhir*). I am the Apparent (*al-ẓāhir*) and the Hidden (*al-bāṭin*)”¹⁰⁸. In the typology of the *imām* presented in Majlis No. 33 of Volume I, ‘Alī is manifested (*tajallī*) in a true form that is hidden in this world, though it is

¹⁰⁴ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 21: p. 122, ln. 73-74: “the human being is the mid-point between the angels and the animals for from the perspective of its soul, it is an angel *in potentia* and from the perspective of its body, it is an animal *in actu*.”

¹⁰⁵ See Volume I. Majlis No. 62: pp. 302-303, ln. 14-24 and ln. 1.

¹⁰⁶ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 4: p. 28, ln. 88-93.

¹⁰⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: p. 161, ln. 17-20.

Corbin. *Itinéraire*. 1993: 184. As Corbin has explained, *tajallī* may also be translated as “self-disclosure” or as “theophany”, but not necessarily in this particular context. It is also from the Qur’ānic narrative concerning Moses on Mount Sinai. See Qur’ān (7: 143).

¹⁰⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 36-38. Majlis No. 33: pp. 326-327 in particular. Corbin. *Itinéraire*. 1993: 184-185.

apparent in the Afterlife. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad claims that it remains true that 'Alī is "the Apparent and the Hidden".

For if we have freed the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*), may He be praised, from this and withhold from Him the characteristic of createdness (*bi ṣifah al-makhlūq*), then the Commander of the Believers remains within the condition of createdness, for he does not apply to it the claim of his divinity (*rubūbiyyah*) when he stated: "I am the Apparent (*al-zāhir*) and I am the Hidden (*bāṭin*)".¹⁰⁹ Thus we state: he is the Apparent in the other abode (*al-dār al-ākhirah*), which is the abode (*maqarr*) of his perfection, and the place of his manifestation (*tajallī-hi*) in the true form (*ṣūrah al-ḥaqīqah*), hidden in the abode of the world (*dār al-dunyā*).¹⁰⁹

In fact, al-Mu'ayyad contends with the hierarchy of *imāms* in the course of his refutations against the *Ghulāt* in order to make the case that the *imāms* are concealed and hidden in this world.¹¹⁰ The individual's perception of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* is limited: he can only see the immediately superior level to himself, and by means of a form of vision which is spiritual, rather than physical.¹¹¹ Al-Mu'ayyad stresses that those individuals whose hearts are veiled (*ghishāwah*) are held back from the light of the truth (*nūr al-ḥaqq*) that would permit them to obtain the wisdom of how the *imām* is apparent

¹⁰⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: p. 161.

¹¹⁰ As is seen in *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 38: pp. 188-189, al-Mu'ayyad situates his own views on the human being as the microcosm and his theory of forms between the two doctrinal stances of the *Ghulāt* and the *Muqaṣṣirūn*. In Volume I. Majlis No. 39: p. 192, ln. 4-14, al-Mu'ayyad makes the argument that there must be the *zāhir* and the *bāṭin*, in the same manner that 'amal and 'ilm must co-exist together in terms of religious practice.

¹¹¹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: p. 162.

(*ẓāhir*) in his person (*bi shakhṣi-hi*), but hidden (*bāṭin*) in terms of his superiority (*bi faḍli-hi*).¹¹²

As in his refutation of the *Ghulāt* in Volume I of the *Majālis*, the relation between Universal Intellect and Universal Soul and the issue of spiritual resurrection emerge as two important focal points in al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on the treatise of the "Eastern" *dā'ī*. In the "treatise of our *dā'ī* in the East", al-Mu'ayyad employs his commentary on the treatise of the "Eastern" *dā'ī* as a means to refute the views maintained by other members of the "Eastern" *da'wah* who had opposed the "Eastern" *dā'ī*.¹¹³ But perhaps al-Mu'ayyad's defense of the "Eastern" *dā'ī* was meant to serve more than one purpose in "post-Kirmānian" 11th-century Ismā'ilism: to reintroduce the earlier debates on the dyadic affiliation between the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul and the relationship between individual soul and the Universal Soul in the light of the views maintained by the members in the "Persian School" but not necessarily by the means of Kirmānī's *Kitāb al-Riyād* itself.¹¹⁴ In Sijistānī's Neoplatonist cosmology, Alibhai has noted: "The

¹¹² *Ibid.*: p. 163.

¹¹³ *Majālis*. Volume III: p. 116, 120, 148; Majlis No. 54: p. 161, ln. 10-11.

¹¹⁴ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis Nos. 38-47: pp. 115-146.

Sijistānī's argument concerning the human being as the microcosm reinforces his doctrinal stance on the relation between individual soul as a part (*juz'*) of Universal Soul. See *Kitāb al-Yanābī'*, para. 86. Further arguments on how the individual soul is part (*juz'*) of Universal Soul, see *Kitāb al-Yanābī'* pp. 70-73 (17th "wellspring"). Related to the question of soul's potential to transcend the corporeal domain, is whether or not individual soul is a part (*juz'*) or a trace (*athār*) of Universal Soul. According to *Kitāb al-Yanābī'* (Arabic text) pp. 44-45, 46-47, the individual soul is a part. In keeping with Sijistānī's stance, in his prose works, Nāṣir-i Khusraw states that the individual soul is a part of the Universal Soul. See *Khawān al-Ikhwān* pp. 148-150, 231.

jismānī realm becomes a second, parallel channel of guidance by the universal soul, which itself operates under the guidance of the First Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-awwal*).¹¹⁵ In the *Kitāb al-Iftikhār*, the dyad of Universal Soul and Universal Intellect are in a relationship of receiving assistance (*istimdād*) and assistance (*imdād*).¹¹⁶ In the *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah*, Sijistānī further elaborates upon his theory of the “pairing” (*zawj*) between Universal Soul and Universal Intellect as the source of spiritual and bodily prophecy, where the corporeal messenger (*rusūl jismānī*) conveys the *ʿaql bi al-*

In the *Majālis*, al-Muʿayyad sets forth the views of those who maintain that individual soul and body (*jism*) are parts. See Volume I. Majlis No. 8: pp. 36-37, ln. 11-21 and ln. 1-17. Another discussion of individual soul as a trace of Universal Soul appears in Volume I. Majlis 36: pp. 176-177, ln. 21 and ln. 1-3, a position al-Muʿayyad himself maintains, similar to Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī.

As recorded in Kirmānī's *Kitāb al-Riyād*, and addressed by Halm, Madelung, Nomoto, Stern, and Walker in their respective works on early Ismāʿīlī Neoplatonism, another component of the debate on prophecy concerned the relationship between Universal Intellect and Soul, as well as individual soul's relationship to the Universal Soul (whether or not individual soul exists as a trace (*athār*) or a part (*juzʾ*) of the Universal Soul). See DeSmet. *La Quiétude de l'intellect*. 1995b: 185-186, 230-231; Halm. *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāʿīliya*. 1978: 83-85; Nomoto. *Early Ismāʿīlī Thought on Prophecy*. 2000: 232-236; P. Walker. “The Universal Soul and the Particular Soul in Ismāʿīlī Neoplatonism.” In, P. Morewedge, Editor. *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought*. Albany, 1992: 155-156: two different positions on the soul's potential union with Intellect, where Rāzī views the intelligible world as transcendent, compared to Nasafī, who posits that there is a harmony between the corporeal and spiritual realms in a manner that individual soul shares in the Universal Soul.

¹¹⁵ M. Alibhai. *Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī and Kitāb Sullam al-Najāt: A Study in Islamic Neoplatonism*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Harvard University, 1983: 84.

¹¹⁶ Sijistānī. *Kitāb al-Iftikhār* p. 93: the relationship between Intellect and Soul is described as one of *imdād* and *istimdād*.

Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 48: pp. 236-237: as well, on the microcosmic level, the body is provided with life through *istimdād* from the heart. This process, however, is not circumscribed and limited to the ranks of the prophet and his *waṣī* or *imām* alone. See Volume II. Majlis No. 2: p. 14, ln. 77-79.

quwwah. The human form (*al-sūrah al-insāniyyah*) is specifically manifested as the prophets in the world of corporeality (*‘ālam al-jismānī*).¹¹⁷

The process of *becoming* the *al-‘ālam al-ṣaghīr* and the perfect Adamic form of the human being clarifies al-Mu‘ayyad’s definition of the *imām* as the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*. In its final culmination, the continuum of human forms and Adamic forms disclosed in the course of prophetic history alludes to the form the *Qā’im* will make manifest in the final cycle as the “seal” of the cycles (*khātam al-adwār*) and the “seal” of the *imāms* (*khātam al-a’immah*).¹¹⁸

In Imitation of the Universal Soul: the Human Being as the Microcosm

Throughout the *Majālis*, al-Mu‘ayyad presents his doctrinal position on the hierarchy of the *imāms* in accordance with two proofs that pertain to the macrocosm and microcosm, the Qur’ānic verse, “In the horizons and in their souls” (*sūrah* 41: 53), and the prophetic *ḥadīth* as well as philosophical axiom, “He who knows his self (*nafsa-hu*), then knows his Lord (*rabba-hu*)”.¹¹⁹ In *Majlis* Nos. 12-20 of Volume III, al-Mu‘ayyad outlines his stance

¹¹⁷ Sijistānī. *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah* p. 49; Alibhai. *Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī and Kitāb Sullam al-Najāt: A Study in Islamic Neoplatonism*. 1983: 62.

¹¹⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. *Majlis* No. 74: p. 363; Volume II. *Majlis* No. 55: pp. 338-339.

¹¹⁹ On the *ḥadīth*, “He who knows his self, then knows his Lord”, see *Majālis*. Volume I. *Majlis* Nos. 8-9: pp. 34-ff.; Volume III. *Majlis* No. 23: p. 70, ln. 5-23.

on the doctrine of *walāyah* and the spiritual hierarchy of the prophets, the *imāms*, and the “friends of God” as the realm of intermediation between the macrocosm (*al-‘ālam al-kabīr*) and the microcosm (*al-‘ālam al-ṣaghīr*).¹²⁰

These particular lectures from Volume III of the *Majālis* also touch upon the significance of the paradigm of human development for the stations of initiation into the *Ismā‘īlī da‘wah*.¹²¹ More pointedly, the human being itself as the microcosm not only reflects the influences of the macrocosm but also benefits from the fact that in the course of prophetic history, *amānah* has been established for the human being. In the first prophetic cycle, *amānah* defines the prophet Adam as the most preferred locus of God’s “divine trust” in the form of the human being.¹²² The doctrine of *walāyah* in conjunction

This *ḥadīth* is attributed to Muḥammad as well as ‘Alī. See Furūzānfar, *Aḥādīth-i Mathnawī*. Tehran, 1334/ 1955: p. 162. Also, see F. Meier. “Die Schriften des ‘Azīz-i Nasafī.” In, *Bausteine*. Editor, G. Schubert. Istanbul/Stuttgart, 1992. Volume I: 180, where Meier notes that the philosophical axiom may be attributed to Clement of Alexandria.

¹²⁰ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis Nos. 10-11, pp. 66-71: According to the interpretation of the “elite” (*tafsīr al-khāṣṣah*), the *al-‘ālam al-ṣaghīr* is analogous to the *al-‘ālam al-kabīr*. The two sides of the human being are the “lowest side” (*al-ṭaraf al-adnā*) and the animal (*bahīmiyyah*) quality, and the “loftiest side” (*al-ṭaraf al-a‘lā*) and the angelic (*malā‘ikah*) quality of the human being. See as well, Volume II. Majlis 49: pp. 303-304, ln. 36-47.

¹²¹ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 49: p. 150, ln. 3-14.

¹²² See *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis Nos. 12-20: pp. 39-61: (the “treatise” of an ‘Ālim *Āl Muḥammad* concerning the relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm). In Volume III. Majlis No. 13: p. 42, ln. 15-16, al-Mu‘ayyad quotes from the words of the ‘Ālim and refers to him as one of the *imāms* (“*kalām al-ḥikmah al-ṣādir ‘an ‘ālim al-a‘immah min Āl Muḥammad*”). This evidence points in the direction that the treatise on the microcosm and the macrocosm al-Mu‘ayyad quotes from might be from the *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Safā’*. Beirut, 1957. Volume III: pp. 212-217. It is possible that al-Mu‘ayyad’s reference to the ‘Ālim as an *imām* could be a reference to Imām Aḥmad of the *ṣaṭr* period, between 260-297 A.H./ 873-909 C.E.. See A. Hamdani. “Brethren of Purity, a Secret Society for the Establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate: New Evidence for the Early Dating of their Encyclopaedia.” In, *L’Égypte Fatimide*. Editor, M. Barrucand. Paris, 1999: 81-82.

with *amānah* provides for the individual human being and human society throughout the course of human history: 1). Guidance in the form of the prophets and their scriptures sent to religious communities; and 2). Alludes to the fact that in each epoch (*‘aṣr*) and prophetic cycle (*dawr*), there exists an individual from amongst the prophets, the *awṣiyā’* (the adjuncts), the *imāms*, and the *awliyā’ Allāh*, who possesses the potential to be distinguished amongst the human species as a repository of the light of *ta’yīd*. These select individuals bear the potential to become the microcosm *in actu* in the form of the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*.

According to al-Mu’ayyad, the soteriological aspect to Ismā’īlī doctrine is encapsulated in the two concepts of *walāyah* and *amānah* in terms of securing the necessary guidance for salvation in the Afterlife. His soteriology sets out in clear terms for the individual practitioner how in

On the theme of the human being as the microcosm in mediaeval Islamic philosophy, see A. Altmann. "The Delphic Maxim in Medieval Islam and Judaism." In, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism*. London, 1969: 19-28; R. Brague. "Deux Versions du microcosme être le monde en petit ou imiter le monde en grand." In, *Perspectives Arabes et médiévales sur la tradition scientifique et philosophique grecque*. Editors, A. Hasnawi et. al. Louvain, 1997: 523-533; S. Pines. "Une Encyclopédie arabe du 10e siècle: les épîtres des frères de la pureté, Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’." Reprinted in, *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines*. Editor, S. Stroumsa. Jerusalem, 1996. Volume III: 409. *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis Nos. 17-18, 22, 41, 52. Majlis No. 33: pp. 162-163: on *amānah*, the *waṣī* and the "horizon" (*āfāq*). Volume II. Majlis Nos. 6-7; Volume II: Majlis Nos. 11-12. Volume III. Majlis No. 35: p. 106, ln. 14-15: related to *al-zakāt*: "*hadhahi darajah muta’allaqah bi al-nabī aw man huwa fi āfāq faḍli-hi min imām yaqūmu maqāma-hu*".

Majālis. Volume III. Majlis Nos. 3-4: pp. 14-16: *walāyah* in connection with *amānah*; Majlis No. 5-6: pp. 18-23: the Qur’ānic images of the Heavens, the Earth and the Mountain of Qur’ān (33: 72) are equivalent to the *maḥsūṣah* and the *ma’qūlah* aspects of *amānah*. Volume III. Majlis 51: p. 154, ln. 19-23: the *waṣī* serves as the "bearer" (*hāmīl*) of *amānah*, and represents the two sides to the *ittiṣāl* with the *kalimah*. With regard to the reference to *imāmah* in the same passage, there are two sides to the conjunction or union (*ittiṣāl*) with the *kalimah*.

relation to the practice of *tā'ah* to the *ḥudūd al-dīn*, the benefits of *walāyah* are extended to all who choose to accept the “divine trust” of *amānah*. Concurrently, a counter-*walāyah* exists as a parallel hierarchy and demarcates the tenebrous forms and lower animal characteristics of the human being. In the counter-hierarchy, over which Iblīs serves as the *imām*, al-Mu'ayyad clearly differentiates the development of the Iblisian elements from a distinct point of origin than any of the other forms that are entailed in his concept of the human being.¹²³ The “distorted” Iblisian elements, however, signify another component of *amānah*: those individuals who have chosen to deny the “divine trust” of *amānah* as well as to reject the practice of *tā'ah* to the *ḥudūd al-dīn*.¹²⁴ Whereas the human being, at the summit of God's creation and as a unique creation, benefits from the *ta'yīd* transmitted from Universal Intellect, those who follow Iblīs as an *imām* are blind and lack discernment (*baṣīrah*). The followers of the counter hierarchy are incapable of perceiving the light of the guidance embodied in the Prophet

¹²³ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 59: p. 365, ln. 45-59; Majlis No. 60: pp. 373-37, ln. 97-114 and ln. 119-123. In Volume III. Majlis No. 87: p. 250, ln. 7-11, al-Mu'ayyad states that God created two parties (*hizbayn*): one of His “friends” and His followers, and the other, of the Satans and their sons.

¹²⁴ That is, the elements of the natural realm subject to unevenness or deviation (*i'wijāḥ*), transformation (*istiḥālah*) and alteration (*tabaddul*).

See as well, *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 20: p. 114, ln. 74-77, on the Adamic substance (*al-jawhar al-ādami*) and the Satanic substance (*al-jawhar al-iblisī*).

See DeSmet. “Angeles, diables et démons en gnose islamique.” In, *Démons et merveilles d'Orient*. *Res Orientales* (2001): 13: 61-70; Y. Marquet. *La Philosophie des Iḥwān as-Safā*. 1973: 239, 242-243: on Iblīs and Adam according to the Iḥwān al-Safā'.

Muhammad's prophethood.¹²⁵ Al-Mu'ayyad's employment of the theme of a counter-hierarchy ('governed' by the Iblīs of each epoch) is one we shall return to at different junctions in this dissertation, particularly in the following sections of Chapter Four as well as in the final two sections of Chapter Five. Perhaps more provocatively, al-Mu'ayyad's theory of *walāyah* and counter-*walāyah* may have been drafted in order to obscure and conceal the true identity of the individual who may hold the rank of the *Qā'im*, to whom al-Mu'ayyad refers as the "seal of the *imāms*".¹²⁶ As well, it is the *Qā'im* who signifies the stage of "another creature"; that is to say, the new creation which takes place when the prophetic cycles have been brought to their completion and final perfection through the guidance of the *hudūd al-dīn*.

First, let us turn to the Qur'ān. It may be argued that al-Mu'ayyad's understanding of a counter-hierarchy, as in the case of earlier Shī'ī and Ismā'īlī authors, is deeply rooted in a reading of the Qur'ān and the role of the Prophet Muhammad as an exemplar in the context of the history of the first Muslim community (*ummah*). The Meccan chapters, the verses revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in the first part of his prophetic career, provide an account of eschatology "that begins with God's cosmic undoing of the 'old world' followed by the last judgment and creation of a 'new world' of

¹²⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 28: pp. 137-138; Majlis No. 46: p. 226 (Ḥamīd al-Dīn edition): pp. 217-218.

¹²⁶ These concepts will be discussed in the course of Chapter Four and Five.

everlasting paradise or hell".¹²⁷ In the Meccan chapters of the Qur'ān, the opponents of the Prophet are addressed as the unbelievers. The unbelievers are those individuals who believe that they are safe in the material world. They are the ones who only yearn for the riches and pleasures of this world at the same time that they fail to acknowledge the possibility of God's "new creation" (*khalq jadīd*), the Resurrection, and the true rewards of the Afterlife.¹²⁸ By contrast, the Medinan chapters, those revealed to Muḥammad in the second part of his career as a prophet, stress the importance of allegiance and group identity: there are groups with either the right or the wrong allegiance. The followers of the Prophet are the "friends" (*awliyā'*), whereas the opponents of the Prophet are the unbelievers who have gone astray.

Due to the works of Rubin and Amir-Moezzi, it is possible to explore the roots of an Islamic theory of *walāyah* and counter-*walāyah* and more specifically, its trajectory in the early Shī'ī tradition.¹²⁹ As Rubin explains,

Verse ii 257 states that Allāh is the patron of those who believe. He brings them forth from darkness into light. But those who disbelieve, their patrons are *ṭāghūt*, that draw them away from light to darkness. The Shī'ī interpretations identify the people of light with Muḥammad's family, and the people of the *ṭāghūt* with the enemies of the Shī'a.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ B. Stowasser. "The End is Near: Minor and Major Signs of the Hour in Islamic Texts and Contexts." Unpublished conference paper. Yale University, 2002.

¹²⁸ Landolt; F. Rahman. *Major Themes of the Qur'ān*. Minneapolis, 1989: 106-120.

¹²⁹ M. A. Amir-Moezzi. *Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism*. Albany, []; U. Rubin. "Pre-Existence and Light: Aspects of the Concept of *Nūr Muḥammad*." *Israel Oriental Studies* (1975): 5: 65-66.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*: 66.

In the early Ismā'īlī tradition, the opponents to the Prophet become emblematic of a counter-hierarchy that exists in each and every prophetic cycle. The dialectic is between one of light and one of darkness. The opponents, who are the “materialists”, exist in every time period until the very end of human history. The allegiance to the *imām* of the time is re-articulated in terms of a historical event that took place towards the end of the Prophet's life, prior to the completion of his “Farewell Pilgrimage”. The allegiance to the *imām* is thereby couched in terms of developments in the earliest period of Islamic history. From this Shī'ī perspective, both a caliphate and a counter-caliphate have emerged following the death of Muḥammad, especially for earlier Ismā'īlī authors, such as Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman (fl. 4th A.H./10th C.E.). With respect to the period of succession to the Prophet Muḥammad, Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman clarifies his stance on the caliphate and the counter-caliphate. The companions of the Pharoah of Moses are like the companions of Mu'awiyah from the Banū Umayyah. The prophets and their opponents stand in relation as such in every century.¹³¹ In his Kitāb al-Kashf, Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman further elaborates how the opponents and their followers stand in opposition to the “true Calling” (*da'wah al-ḥaqq*).¹³² In the case of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī's Kitāb al-Iftikhār, the counter-caliphate of the Banū Umayyah (and perhaps

¹³¹ Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman. Kitābu'l Kashf. Editor, R. Strothmann. London/New York, 1952: pp. 10-11.

¹³² Ibid.: pp. 4-5.

by extension, the 'Abbasid caliphate of Sijistānī's day) is emblematic of the opponents who stand against the *imāms* in each prophetic cycle and epoch, as shall be seen in the following section of Chapter Four in terms of al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on Iblīs and *Ghadīr Khumm*.¹³³

Returning, nevertheless, to al-Mu'ayyad's employment of the philosophical concepts of the microcosm and macrocosm, the aim in what follows is to address how al-Mu'ayyad reinforces the importance of *tā'ah* to the *imām* as one of the first steps towards then relying upon the prophet as a model for individual development and perfection. The individual's imitation (*tamaththul*) of the order (*nizām*) of the Universal Soul in fact, signifies one degree of *tā'ah* to 'Alī's *walāyah*.

When presenting his explanation of the importance of the relationship between the human being as the microcosm (*al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr*) and the macrocosm (*al-'ālam al-kabīr*) in Volume III, al-Mu'ayyad introduces the image of the stamp (*al-khātim*) and the impression (*al-naqsh*) it makes. The image of the stamp and its impression serve as the explanations for the homologues between the individual human being and what is contained in the macrocosm, such as the celestial spheres (*al-aflāk*), the stars (*al-anjūm*) and the four elements (*al-arkān*).¹³⁴ Central to the definition of the human being is the fact that the human being as the microcosm comes into being in a reversed order than the spiritual world (*al-'ālam al-naḥsānī*), which is its

¹³³ Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī. *Kitāb al-Iftikhār*. Editor, I. K. Poonawala. Beirut, 2000: pp. 170-171; 172-180. Parts of the discussion of *imāmah* were deleted from the Ghālib edition of *Kitāb al-Iftikhār*.

¹³⁴ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 14: p. 44, ln. 14-16.

beginning and point of origin (*awwalu-hu wa mubda'u-hu*).¹³⁵ Al-Mu'ayyad

states:

then all of what is "beginning" (*ibtidā'*) in the physical composition (*al-khilqah al-jasadiyyah*), is the "end" of the spiritual composition (*al-khilqah al-nafsāniyyah*); and all of what is the "end" in the physical composition, is "beginning" in the spiritual composition.¹³⁶

The example al-Mu'ayyad provides to clarify the above-mentioned point is that the first things that appear in the form of the human being are the faculties of growth and sense (*dhāt al-namā' wa al-ḥiss*). Following the development of the faculties of growth and sense, the rational faculty (*al-quwwah al-nāṭiqah*) appears in the human being. When the individual is able to distinguish and differentiate between good (*al-khayr*) and bad (*al-sharr*) through the rational faculty (*al-quwwah al-'āqilah*), the human being has attained to the final point in his development.¹³⁷

In other terms, al-Mu'ayyad explains that the gradation of the knowledge of the spiritual world (*'ālam al-nafsānī*) is tantamount to the stamp reflected in the impression the seal makes upon it. Yet, the microcosm represents the uneven image of the impression rather than the seal itself; it is a reversal of the order, in that what is the starting point of the spiritual world becomes apparent in the human being at the end of his spiritual development and

¹³⁵ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 13: pp. 42-43, ln. 15-18 and 1-18.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*: p. 43, ln. 2-4.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*: p. 43, ln. 4-6.

perfection.¹³⁸ When the human being has obtained the spiritual first principles (*al-mabādī' al-naḥsāniyyah*), the final point of the utmost degrees (*ghāyat al-ghāyāt*) are reflected in the human being. The last thing to develop in terms of the physical order of the human being is the intellect, whereas in the spiritual order, the intellect is the first origination. With specific bearing on the human being and the human being's rationality, al-Mu'ayyad points out that the Universal Intellect is the first of God's creation.¹³⁹ The last thing to develop in the human being, however, is the intellect.¹⁴⁰ From the perspective of God's creation, the Universal Intellect was the first of what God originated (*wa awwal ibdā'i-hi*). The spiritual world comes first in the macrocosm (i.e., the Neoplatonic Intellect and Soul) but it comes last in the microcosm (i.e., individual human development in time).¹⁴¹

Al-Mu'ayyad explains that the rational power (*al-quwwah al-nāṭiqah*) of the soul is the intermediary between intellect and physical form, for it (the

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*: p. 43, ln. 10-17.

¹³⁹ On the *ḥadīth* that the first thing God created was Intellect (*"awwalu mā khalaqa Allāh"*), see D. K. Crow. *The Role of al-'Aql in Early Islamic Wisdom with Reference to Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. McGill University, 1996. Volume I: p. 38, n. 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 51: p. 251, ln. 14-17: intellect was made by God inside of the human being, as the structure of the eye (*tarkīb al-'ayn*) was made on the outside of the human being.

¹⁴¹ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 15: p. 47, ln. 2-3. See as well, Volume III. Majlis No. 19: pp. 57-58, ln. 16-23 and ln. 1-6.

soul) is the support of intellect and supported by the bodily form.¹⁴² In a similar manner,

Concerning the spiritual world (*al-tarkīb al-naḥsānī*), we state that the Universal Soul (*al-naḥs al-kullīyyah*) is the intermediary (*wāṣiṭah*) between Intellect and the form (*al-ṣūrah*) that is the arrangement (*tarkīb*) of the world, for it is supported by (*maḥmūlah*) the Intellect and the bearer of (*ḥāmilah*) the world, related to the Intellect on one of its sides, and to the arrangement, on the other.¹⁴³

The individual soul's potential form holds the form that may be attained in actuality, in a progression marked by the development and actualization of a secondary level of being. In many respects, what al-Mu'ayyad implies with regard to the perfection or completion of the human being is that the individual's body exists at present in an animal form, but the individual soul has the potential to attain to the angelic form. It is the realization of the human being's potentiality on a secondary level of existence. Yet, all that is entailed in the human being in terms of its resemblance (*tashabbuh*) with the animal species, inclusive of the animal forms (*al-ṣuwar al-bahīmiyyah*), is the order of the microcosm itself and the degrees of knowledge equated with each rank of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*. As addressed in the passage that follows, the individual's "other formation" (*nash'ah al-ākhirah*) is brought

¹⁴² *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 14: p. 45, ln. 4. Variant reading, *wāṣiṭah*: MS. 532 (Ar.): folio 44, ln. 12.

¹⁴³ *Majālis*. Volume III: Majlis No. 14: p. 45, ln. 4-7; Majlis No. 15: p. 47, ln. 5: use of the term *māddah*, for *naḥs* from 'aql. Volume II. Majlis 60: p. 372, ln. 65-68: the *al-ṣūrah al-bashariyyah* is the bearer of growth (*al-namā*).

about through the *ḥudūd al-dīn*.¹⁴⁴ As a Qur'ānic term derived from *sūrah* (29: 20), the “another formation” may be equated with the resurrection and the soul’s “arising” that takes place at the end of the spiritual *ḥudūd*, where the individual acquires the angelic form.¹⁴⁵

According to al-Mu’ayyad, each stage of individual human development is necessary and mutually dependent upon the order of each of the other existing stages in the same manner that the embryo develops, first from the sperm (*al-nuṭfah*), through a series of progressive stages. When the embryo acquires its completed form, the enfant is then ushered forth through birth into the world of the corporeal domain and the natural realm.¹⁴⁶ The paradigm of human development serves as al-Mu’ayyad’s main metaphor with respect to the other formation that results after the soul’s perfection through the *ḥudūd*.

They know that God the Most High made the *ḥudūd* of His religion a tool (*ālāh*) for the perfection of the form of mankind (*ṣūrah al-bashar*) in its other formation (*nash’atī-hā al-ukhrā*) just as He made the “Heaven and the Earth and what is between them” (*sūrah* 50: 38) a tool for the perfection of the form of mankind in its first origination (*al-nash’ah al-ūlā*).¹⁴⁷

The preserved order of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* incorporates both the microcosmic and macrocosmic domains. In Majlis No. 20 of Volume I, al-

¹⁴⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 56, p. 274, ln. 3-4.

¹⁴⁵ Qur’ān (29: 20): “so will God produce a later creation (*al-nash’ah al-ākhirah*).”

¹⁴⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 62: pp. 302-303, ln. 14-24 and ln. 1; Majlis No. 67: pp. 328, ln. 1-9; (‘Abd al-Nāṣir edition) pp. 239-240. Volume II. Majlis No. 51: pp. 316-317.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*: p. 274, ln. 3-5.

Mu'ayyad states: "It is known that the recognition of God (*ma'rifah Allāh*) is the pole (*al-quṭb*) around which the sphere (*dā'irah*) of messengership (*al-risālah*) and prophethood (*al-nubuwwah*) revolves."¹⁴⁸ In the well-known *ḥadīth* of "whoever knows his self, then knows his Lord", each *ḥadd*, in combination with the knowledge of the self (microcosmic), leads to the knowledge (or recognition) of God's creation and of God (macrocosmic).¹⁴⁹ Hence, the importance of the correlation between the microcosm and macrocosm lies in the fact that the nexus between the body and soul is not negated in the individual human being's acquisition of knowledge. The homologues between the human being, the world of the body (*'ālam al-jism*), and the World of Intellect and Soul are necessary requisites, for if this hierarchy of relationships did not exist between the human being and God's originations (*mubda'āt*), the human being could not strive to obtain the knowledge of the Originator (*ma'rifah al-mubdi'*).¹⁵⁰

In a lecture from Volume II, al-Mu'ayyad correlates the interpretation of the "elite" (*tafsīr al-khāṣṣah*) concerning *sūrah* (95: 4), "in the best of forms (*taqwīm*)", with the image of the human being as the microcosm. In order to explain the hierarchy implicit in the microcosm, al-Mu'ayyad presents a commentary on how the animal passions associated with the animal species are the "lowest of the low" (*asfal sāfilīn*).¹⁵¹ Comprising the "lowest of the low", the animal passions are the lowest side (*al-ṭaraf al-adnā*) of the

¹⁴⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 20: p. 97, ln. 17-18.

¹⁴⁹ See in particular, *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis Nos. 8-9.

¹⁵⁰ Corbin. "Divine Epiphany and Spiritual Birth." (1983): 114.

¹⁵¹ See as well, *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 51: pp. 316.

human being. In this particular instance, the microcosm parallels the macrocosm in terms of its shape and representation. “In the best of forms” refers to the fact that the microcosm has precedence over the macrocosm from the perspective that the macrocosm is *ṣāmit* (“silent”) and the microcosm is *nāṭiq* (“speaking”). In the second part of the verse, the statement “then We debase him (to be) the lowest of the low”, signifies that the human being, having benefited from the light of the intellect (*istimdādi-hi min nūr al-‘aql*), which is the apex (*dhurwah*) of the world, its root (*aṣl*), its axis (*quṭb*), and its foundation (*qiwām*), has wasted (*infāq*) this light (he had benefited from) in the darkness of animality.¹⁵²

In Majlis No. 20 of Volume I, al-Mu’ayyad explains that the *‘ālam al-jism* possesses the sun, the moon and stars that God made as a cause for the existence of the created corporeal beings (*wujūd al-mawjūdāt al-jismiyyah*) in the *dār al-dunyā’*, as well as their origination, their formation, and their intermediation. Al-Mu’ayyad provides a commentary on a prophetic *ḥadīth* in conjunction with *sūrah* (53: 41) in order to clarify the homologues between body (*jism*) and creation (*khalq*), and religion (*dīn*) and command (*amr*). In the present world, the sun, moon and stars are the “source” of physical existence and growth. By analogy, in the other world, the prophet, the *waṣī*, and the *imāms* are the “source” of spiritual existence and the growth of the

¹⁵² Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 10: p. 66.

spiritual forms; that is, the *al-nash'ah al-ākhirah*.¹⁵³ The world of religions (*'ālam al-diyānāt*) is a copy of it, and includes in it, *risālah*, *wiṣāyah* and *imāmah*. *Risālah*, *wiṣāyah* and *imāmah* are the causes of the existence of the spiritual forms in the *dār al-ākhirah*, in which the corporeal forms (*al-ṣuwar al-jismāniyyah*) refer to the first *nash'ah* and the spiritual forms (*al-ṣuwar al-rūḥāniyyah*) allude to the second *nash'ah* of the other world.¹⁵⁴ Al-Mu'ayyad states:

It has been read to you from the words of a scholar (*'ālim*) of the *Ahl bayt al-nubuwwah*, peace be upon them, concerning the meaning of the microcosm (*al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr*) and its relation to the macrocosm (*al-'ālam al-kabīr*). What you know about it is up until the statement cited from it, concerning the fact that all parts of creation depend on each other in this existence (*wujūdi-hā*), up to its (upper) limit (*tantahī*); i.e., the First Existence (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*), which is the origination (*ibdā'*) of God, may He be praised, without intermediation (*bi lā wāsiṭah*), and its existence is that which holds together the whole, and preserves (*ḥāfiẓ*) the whole, like one in mathematics, to which all of the numbers are connected, and through whose existence they (=all numbers) exist. If it is confirmed,

¹⁵³ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis 20: p. 97, ln. 1-9; (Ḥamīd al-Dīn edition): pp. 86-87, ln. 30-43. Variant reading: p. 86, ln. 31: *alladhayni kamā Allāhu 'an-humā*.

On the *ḥadīth*, “God laid the foundation to His religion in a way resembling His creation, so that one may find guidance from His creation to His religion and from His religion to (the knowledge of) His Oneness”, see Shahrastānī. *Mafātih* Volume I. Tehran, 1989: folio iia (who attributes this *ḥadīth* to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq); Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. *Tasawwurat* p. 103 (p. 152 of Ivanow translation); *Paradise of Submission*. Editor/ Trans., S. J. Badakhchani. London, 2005: p. 172, para. 413 (Persian text); p. 138 (English translation).

¹⁵⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 20: p. 97, ln. 1-14; Majlis No. 28: pp. 138-139, ln. 4-18 and ln. 1-15. Al-Mu'ayyad explains that according to the *Ahl al-tanjīm*, as long as the sun influences the human being, the human being is alive (*ḥayy*). Al-Mu'ayyad offers an alternative interpretation: “*mā dāma al-insān mutamasikan muta'alliqan bi 'alā'iq al-nubuwwah wa al-sharī'ah fa-innahu ḥayy ḥayāt al-ḥaqīqah*.”

they are confirmed, and if it is falsified, they are falsified. Now, if its (i.e., Intellect's) first meaning is "to be that which holds together creation", as we mentioned, then it is also that which holds together the "arising" (i.e., resurrection, *al-ba'th*), [i.e.] the composer (*al-munshī*) of the "other composition" (*al-nash'ah al-ākhirah*), which (composition) is connected to the prophets, legateses (*awṣiyā*), and *imāms*. And those learned in religion (*'ulamā' al-dīn*: i.e., the religious hierarchy as a whole), whom God established as a "sign" for the "arising" (*āyatan li al-ba'th*) exist in several divisions and have various names in the Calling of the Intellect (*da'wah al-'aqliyyah*), with the ranks of some being above some of the others.¹⁵⁵

At various points throughout the *Majālis*, al-Mu'ayyad reviews the arguments of the "Philosophers" (*al-ḥukamā'*) and the "Astronomers" (*Ahl al-tanjīm*) on the meaning of the term *al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr*.¹⁵⁶ Al-Mu'ayyad's employment of the philosophical concept of the human being as the microcosm serves a more distinct purpose with regard to his theory of *walāyah* and its initiatory aspect for the individual practitioner. Al-

¹⁵⁵ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 20: pp. 59-60: even in the world of *ma'ād*, the grades (*darajāt*) remain preserved (*maḥfūzah*). This corresponds with what al-Mu'ayyad states in another lecture about there being no alteration or change in the *hudūd*. See Volume III. Majlis No. 99: p. 282, ln. 18-20.

¹⁵⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 28: pp. 137-139: *Ahl al-tanjīm* and their discussion of the influences (*tā'thīrāt*) of the sun on the human being; Volume I. Majlis No. 38: p. 189, ln. 5-6: the *Ahl al-ḥikmah* discuss the human being as the *al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr*. In Volume II. Majlis No. 25: p. 137, al-Mu'ayyad refers specifically to the meaning of Qur'ān (50: 38), with the cosmology of the sun (*al-shams*), moon (*al-qamar*), and the stars (*al-nujūm*) and their stations in the human body, where on the microcosmic level, the heart holds the place (*maḥall*) of the sun and serves as the *amīr*. Volume V. MS. 535 (Ar.): folio 5a-5b.: The human form (*al-ṣūrah al-insāniyyah*) is the place of combining together (*majmū'*) the influences of the world (*tā'thīrāt al-'ālam*).

Additional references to microcosm-macrocosm text appear in *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis Nos. 12-16, 20: pp. 40-43, 44-ff. (the views of the *Ahl al-tanjīm* and the *al-ḥukamā'* on the human being as the *al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr*).

Mu'ayyad's commentaries on the homologues between the macrocosm and the microcosm reveal the degree to which the concept of *walāyah* is correlated to the concept of the human being. The parallels between the macrocosm and the microcosm also speak to another issue: the internal visionary aspect of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* and the manifestation and the transmission of the forms that are specific to each stage of development and spiritual perfection within the individual human being. Al-Mu'ayyad employs the discussion of the sun and moon distinctions in the microcosm and macrocosm in order to address another facet of the relationship between the prophet and his *waṣī*. The sun and moon in the macrocosm, where the moon serves as a vizier to the sun, is equated to the relationship between the *nabī* and the *waṣī*.¹⁵⁷ Through the afore-mentioned distinctions, al-Mu'ayyad explicitly points to the parallels between the role of the prophet and the role of the *waṣī*.¹⁵⁸ Through the use of two terms, providing (*al-imdād*) and being provided (*al-istimdād*), al-

¹⁵⁷ See Kirmānī. *Kitāb al-Riyād*. 'A. Tāmir. Beirut, 1960: pp. 168-ff. Prior to Kirmānī's presentation of the story of Moses, he notes the distinction between the ranks of religion, the upper and lower ranks as based upon Sijistānī's no longer extant *Nusrah*. Of decided interest with regard to the perception of the ranks of religion in the form of the stars, the moon and the sun, Kirmānī (*Ibid.*: p. 168) cites Sijistānī's comparison of the *sābiq* and the *tālī* to the *nāṭiq* and the *asās*, and the *nāṭiq* and the *asās* to the sun and the moon in the three realms of the world of origination, the world of the body, and the world of religion.

For additional information on the *Kitāb al-Riyād* and its summation of the doctrinal debates within early Ismā'ilism, see DeSmet. *La Quiétude de l'intellect*. 1995b: 14-15; Nomoto. *Early Ismā'ili Thought on Prophecy*. 2000: 95-ff.; Sijistānī. *Kitāb al-Iftikhār*. Editor, I. Poonawala. Beirut, 2000: (Intro.): xi.

¹⁵⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 28: p. 138, ln. 11-12: "We state: there is nothing in the celestial spheres of the world of command that is of the ranks of the *ḥudūd* and its stations that is more glorious and loftier than the rank of *nubuwwah* and by it, all of the others are established (*bi-hā qiwām kulli-hā*)."

Mu'ayyad circumscribes the primary, active position of the prophet and the receptive nature of the rank of his *waṣī*.¹⁵⁹

Elsewhere in the *Majālis*, al-Mu'ayyad maintains that the place of the “pure friends of God” (*maḥall awliyā' Allāh al-tāhirīn*) in the macrocosm is equivalent to the place of the intellect (*al-'aql*) in the form of the human being (*ṣūrah al-insān*).¹⁶⁰ In Majlis No. 44 of Volume I, in his epoch, the *maḥall* of the Prophet is analogous to the *maḥall* of the first origination (*awwal mubda'*) from God in the world of origination (*'ālam al-ibdā'*).¹⁶¹ For, as explained in conjunction with the relations between God's Origination, Universal Intellect and Universal Soul, the first origination is a perfect origination, with no imperfection in it and with no intermediary other than perfection.¹⁶² Showing, however, an element of judiciousness with regard to philosophical statements, al-Mu'ayyad provides traditional proof texts in order to support his commentary on the sun of *nubuwwah* and the moon of *wiṣāyah*, with an interpretation of *sūrah* (20: 29), and a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad, which states that in terms of their respective stations, he is like Mūsā and 'Alī is like Hārūn.¹⁶³ In addition, as can be seen in al-Mu'ayyad's *ta'wīl* of the *Qiṣṣah Ibrāhīm*, the hierarchy of *walāyah* is such

¹⁵⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 31: p. 139, ln. 2-6.

¹⁶⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 59: p. 288, ln. 15-16.

¹⁶¹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 44: p. 216, ln. 18-19.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*: p. 216, ln. 6-11. Intellect is governed by rest, because movement would imply need. The rest of Intellect implies the perfection of Intellect. Further in the text, al-Mu'ayyad states that this is similar to what is implied by those who employ the term “Pen”, as it appears in a prophetic *ḥadīth*.

¹⁶³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 28: p. 139, ln. 1-15. For this *ḥadīth*, see *Da'ā'im al-Islām*. Volume I: p. 21, ln. 1-2.

that, “the prophets, the *awṣiyā’* and the *imāms* are the kings of the world of religion (*mulūk al-diyānāt*), and they are in relation to that world like the sun, the moon and the stars are in relation to the *dār al-dunyā’*.”¹⁶⁴

In Majlis No. 28 of Volume I, al-Mu’ayyad clarifies how in the parallel realms of God’s creation, the *maḥall* of the *nabī* and *nubuwwah* in the ‘*ālam al-amr*, is like the *maḥall* of the sun in this world, the ‘*ālam al-khalq*.¹⁶⁵ The brain is like a vizier to the heart, and as the sun passes its power to the moon, the *waṣī* serves as a vizier to the prophet in the world of command. It is in this manner that the brain is connected to the moon. The prophet’s power passes to the *waṣī* and his knowledge is linked to him, so the *waṣī* can explain the realities of religion (*ḥaqā’iq al-dīn*) granted to him by the prophet’s power. Just as the brain has the capability of perceiving things, the *waṣī* is established to call people to the reality of the examples (*amthāl*) of the *sharī’ah* through the tools (*al-ālāt*) that he has, which are his *hudūd*.¹⁶⁶

Al-Mu’ayyad indicates that the “Philosophers” claim that the human being is the microcosm because the influences of all of what is in the macrocosm (*al-‘ālam al-kabīr*) exist in the human being.¹⁶⁷ In this context,

¹⁶⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 64: p. 311, ln. 16-19. See as well, Volume III. Majlis No. 10: pp. 33-34.

¹⁶⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 28: p. 137.

¹⁶⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 29: p. 143.

¹⁶⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 28: p. 137. Al-Mu’ayyad’s presentation of the views of the *Ahl al-tanjīm* and their discussion of the influences (*tā’thirāt*) of the sun on the human being differs somewhat in this lecture. In Volume I. Majlis No. 38: p. 189, al-Mu’ayyad presents the views of the *Ahl al-ḥikmah* concerning the human being as the *al-‘ālam al-ṣaghīr*.

he cites *sūrah* (35: 37) in order to establish the proof that the human form (*al-haykal al-insānī*) is the *al-‘ālam al-ṣaghīr*. The heart (*al-qalb*), which is the most noble thing in the human being, is the “house of life” (*bayt al-ḥayāt*), and it is analogous to the sun on the level of the macrocosm, which is the noblest of the heavenly spheres. The heart is designated to accept the power of the sun. The brain (*al-damāgh*), which is the intellect’s centre of sense and considered to be the noblest thing in the human being after the heart, is the source of the perceptions of tastes (*al-tu‘ūm*), and scents (*al-rawā’ih*), colors (*al-alwān*), and sounds (*al-aṣwāt*).¹⁶⁸ On the microcosmic level, the brain is tantamount to the moon because the moon is second only to the sun in terms of the heavenly spheres and planets. Continuing the comparison, al-Mu‘ayyad points out that the “Philosophers” state that the brain is the vizier to the heart.¹⁶⁹ The “Philosophers” also say that the power (*quwwah*) passes through the heart to the brain, just as the power of the sun penetrates (*nufūdh*) the moon. As the locus of perception, the brain perceives the reality of tastes, scents, colors and sounds through the organs of hearing (*al-sam‘*), sight (*al-baṣar*), scent (*al-shamm*), and taste (*al-dhawq*).¹⁷⁰ The brain’s perceptions are the result of the power the brain receives from the heart, because the heart provides the brain with heat (*al-ḥarārah*). In the same way, the moon makes use of what it obtains in the world of nature (*‘ālam al-ṭabī‘ah*) from the forms of individuals and created

¹⁶⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 29: pp. 142-143.

¹⁶⁹ See *Al-Farabī on the Perfect State*. Editor/Translator, R. Walzer. Oxford, 1985: Chapter II. “Limbs and Organs of the Body”: pp. 175-ff.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*: pp. 142-143.

things (*ṣuwar al-ashkhāṣ wa al-mawālīd*) due to the assistance the sun's power provides.¹⁷¹

It is in Volume I that al-Mu'ayyad first addresses the human being as the microcosm in conjunction with *wiṣāyah* and its descent from the world of command (*ʿālam al-amr*). According to al-Mu'ayyad, *wiṣāyah* occupies the station of the moon (*manzilah al-qamar*) in the world of creation (*ʿālam al-khalq*).¹⁷² He explains that the forms of existents (*ṣuwar al-mawjūdāt*) are linked through (*ta'allaqa*) the moon of *wiṣāyah* to the Afterlife (*dār al-ākhirah*).¹⁷³

The "Philosophers" also maintain that sense and the intellect are corrupted with the corruption (*bi fasād*) of the brain. When the brain is corrupted, it is prevented from discerning perceptions (*idrāk al-ma'ārif*). With equal bearing on the status of the *waṣī* as the moon of the world of religion (*ʿālam al-dīn*), al-Mu'ayyad then quotes from the "Philosophers" that if there was no heavenly sphere of the moon, then the world would be prevented from manifesting forms (*iẓhār al-ṣuwar*).¹⁷⁴ His own comment stresses how this particular analogy with the *waṣī* holds true, because the absence of the *waṣī* would entail the impossibility of divine knowledge and eternal life.¹⁷⁵ Just as the event of the corruption of the brain necessitates the corruption of sense (*al-ḥiss*) and the intellect, the alteration (*istiḥālah*) of

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*: p. 143.

¹⁷² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 29: p. 142, ln. 5-8.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*: p. 142, ln. 12-13.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: p. 143.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*: p. 144, ln. 2-5.

the moon's heavenly sphere necessitates the transformation of the existence of the forms (*wujūd al-ṣuwar*).¹⁷⁶ As a corollary, the event of the non-existence ('*adam*') of the *waṣī* in the world of command, would necessitate the alteration of the religious forms which are prepared (*muhayy'ah*) to accept the benefits of the Afterlife, just as if there was no moon, natural forms would not exist. In connection with *sūrah* (51: 20-21), al-Mu'ayyad explains that if there was no *waṣī*, there would neither be any cognitions of the divine (*al-ilāhiyyah*) nor would the forms of the everlasting life exist (*ṣuwar al-ḥayāt al-abadiyyah*).¹⁷⁷

The human being as the microcosm, is comparable to the *sharī'ah*, which is the world of command (*ālam al-amr*). The placement (*ḥulūl*) of the heart is connected to the sun and is the source of life. The heart is the *amīr* of the body's limbs and extremities (*al-jawāriḥ*), which do not move or proceed except with its command. By analogy, concerning the placement of the prophet, al-Mu'ayyad explains that he is the *amīr* of the world of command and the source of the life of creation (*ma'dan ḥayāt al-khalq*). The prophet is likened to a leader who does not move or send out the *ḥudūd* of his religion except through his vision and his command.¹⁷⁸

The heart is the locus of where the faculties (*quwā*) of the macrocosm are received, in the sense that the influence of the sun, central to the macrocosm, is connected to the body through the heart on the level of the microcosm and

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: pp. 143-144.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*: p. 144, ln. 1-9. Qur'ān (51: 20-21): "On the earth are signs for those of assured faith. As also in your own selves: will [they] yet not then see?"

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: p. 143.

gives the human being life. By extension, al-Mu'ayyad argues that divine wisdom (*ḥikmah al-ilāhiyyah*) necessitates that there is an *amīr* in the macrocosm to whom the world is connected and who provides the world with life. It is likewise necessary that the brutish human form, which is born from the world (*mawlūdah*), be shaped in its (the world's) shape in so far as it (the form) is firmly connected to its heart and is alive through the heart.¹⁷⁹ Since there are homologues (*tawāfuq*) between creation and religion, the "carpet of religious law" (*al-bisāṭ al-shar'ī al-dīnī*), which is the foundation (*asās*) of the existence of the permanent spiritual forms (*al-ṣuwar al-nafsāniyyah al-bāqiyyah*) in the *dār al-ākhirah*, must necessarily follow the same rule as the two worlds.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, with regard to the "carpet of religious law", the prophet in his time (*ʿaṣr*) occupies the place of the heart with regard to the body (*al-jism*) and gives life to religion with his life. The prophet is the "house of life" (*bayt al-ḥayāt*) for the people of the religious law (*Ahl al-sharīʿah*), in the sense of the religious life (*al-ḥayāt al-dīniyyah*) he provides, not in terms of natural life.¹⁸¹

Since the body's actions are centered around the heart and are dependant upon it in order to receive its power and influence, and because the prophet is equivalent to the heart on the microcosmic level, the prophet transmits the knowledge of religion and God's unity (*tawḥīd*) which penetrates (*nufūdh*)

¹⁷⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 48: p. 237, ln. 1.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: p. 237, ln. 1-5.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*: p. 237, ln. 6-9.

the souls of the *Ahl al-sharī'ah*.¹⁸² As well, the same logic applies to the role and function of the *imām* in his respective time (*zamān*). Majlis No. 48 of Volume I, however, also focuses its discussion on another question of equal import. Al-Mu'ayyad provides a commentary on *sūrah* (2: 7) in order to explain how the members of the counter hierarchy, the unbelievers (*kuffār*) and the *imāms* of going astray (*a'immaḥ al-dalāl*), have seals (*khātam*) on their hearts. Because their hearts are sealed, they can neither receive the light of the sun on the microcosmic level of the heart nor can they transmit the religious forms in the manner that the prophet and his *waṣī* or *imām* can.¹⁸³

In Majlis No. 85 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad cites a commentary concerning how the fetus (*jinīn*) requires natural sustenance (*al-ightidā' al-ṭabī'ī*) in order for it to grow and develop.¹⁸⁴ In relation to the prophetic *ḥadīth*: “the world is a prison for the believer and paradise for the unbeliever”, al-Mu'ayyad discusses the acquisition of knowledge as a form of “nourishment”, which nurtures growth, until the degree within the individual becomes like a prison (*al-sijn*); i.e., the mother's womb, which signifies this world as well as the *da'wah*. It symbolizes the movement from one degree (*ḥadd*) to another

¹⁸² *Ibid.*: p. 237, ln. 8-18.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*: pp. 235-236, 238.

¹⁸⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 67: pp. 327-328, ln. 20-21 and ln. 1-19; Majlis No. 85: pp. 420, 422. Volume II. Majlis No. 3: pp. 20-21, ln. 71-85; Majlis No. 43: pp. 254-255, ln. 29-47: “*ka mithli dhalika fa inna al-ā'māl al-shar'iyyah wa al-'ulūm al-rubbāniyyah allatī tukṣibu al-nufūs ṣuwara-hā al-sharīfah al-abadiyyah*.” Also in connection with al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation of the month of Ramadān, see *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 85: pp. 420-421, ln. 18-21 and ln. 1-21.

ḥadd within the individual, from *al-quwwah* to *al-fi'l*.¹⁸⁵ The individual's development and spiritual growth through the *da'wah*'s "nurturing" is analogous to the manner in which, in the first stage of natural development, the individual fetus attains to the limits of growth in the womb of the mother.¹⁸⁶ The fetus acquires ears and eyes, etc., in the womb of its mother, but can neither see or hear or sense things as it shall be able to when its development is complete and it is then born, or as al-Mu'ayyad states: "the covering (*al-ghaṭā'*) is unveiled from it in birth (*bi al-wilādah*)."¹⁸⁷ The abode of this world, and in particular, the *'ālam al-ṭabī'ah*, becomes like a prison, where the individual may attain what it will need in the Afterlife (*al-ākhirah*).¹⁸⁸

Individuals may receive spiritual substance (*al-māddah*) as a form of "nourishment" after having attained to a high degree of perfection in their souls.¹⁸⁹ Just as physical food sustains the form of the body, the lights of

¹⁸⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 85: pp. 422, ln. 2-13. For this *ḥadīth*, see *Da'ā'im al-Islām*. Volume I: p. 60, ln. 6.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*: pp. 420-421. Al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on this *ḥadīth* also appears in Majlis No. 68 of Volume IV. MS 720 (Ar.): folio 164b-165a.

Connected as well to Volume I. Majlis No. 58: pp. 285-286. Volume II. Majlis No. 48: pp. 294, ln. 18-19 (including an additional commentary on the views of the *Ahl al-tanjīm* in this particular instance). Volume III. Majlis No. 15: pp. 75-ff. Majlisi. *Bihār al-Anwār*. Beirut, 1983. Volume V: p. 153 ("*Bāb al-sa'ādah wa al-shaqāwah*");

¹⁸⁷ "The miserable person is miserable in the womb of his mother".

¹⁸⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 85: pp. 421-422.

¹⁸⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 58: p. 285.

¹⁸⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 85: pp. 420-421, ln. 18-21 and ln. 1-21. See the passage in Sijistānī. *Kashf al-Mahjūb* pp. 82-83, para. 4, which discusses the *Mahdī*. The lords of concealment, the prophets in each cycle, are like doctors who can prescribe certain foods to eat. With the "law" of the *Qā'im*, at this time it is then possible for individuals to be "nourished" as a healthy person is "nourished", so there are no restrictions, in the manner that the "law" restricts.

“divine support” (*anwār al-ta’yīd*) (whether obtained by the speaking-prophet, the “founder” (*asās*), the *imām*, or the “proof”) preserve the form of the soul.¹⁹⁰ In a lecture from Volume III, al-Mu’ayyad states:

As we see that the corporeal form (*al-ṣūrah al-jismiyyah*) is not established in the world of the body except through the intermediation of the corporeal parents (*abawayn jismāniyyayn*) and corporeal sustenance (*aghdhiyah jismāniyyah*) and its support is from the elements (*arkān*) of the ‘*ālam al-jism* in the formation (*al-inshā*’), so likewise the spiritual forms (*al-ṣuwar al-naḥsāniyyah*) are not established from the corporeal shapes (*al-hayākil al-jismiyyah*) except through the intermediation of the spiritual parents (*abawayn naḥsāniyyayn*)¹⁹¹ and spiritual sustenance (*aghdhiyah naḥsāniyyah*), and their support is from the elements of the ‘*ālam al-naḥs* in the formation, and those are the *al-ḥudūd* who are engaged for the sake of God the Most High on His earth in the extraction (*bi istikhhlāṣ*) of the spiritual forms and their formation through the divine sciences (*inshā’i-hā bi ‘ulūm al-malakūtiyyah*), and their conjunction with the World of Soul (*ilhāqi-hā bi ‘ālam al-naḥs*). All of these *ḥudūd* are in relation to the human soul (*naḥs al-insān*) in its connection to them and its affiliation to them, what the elements of the corporeal world are to the body.¹⁹²

In Majlis No. 76 of Volume I, al-Mu’ayyad goes on to provide an explanation and esoteric interpretation of the different forms of

Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Khawān al-Ikhwān* pp. 107-110: *riyādat* and “laws” as necessary restrictions.

¹⁹⁰ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 65: p. 409-410, ln. 43-46.

¹⁹¹ Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Vajih-i Dīn* pp. 277-278. With regard to the “spiritual parents”, Nāṣir-i Khusraw explains that the prophet is the father and the *waṣī/ imām* is the mother, based on the *ḥadīth* (p. 278, ln. 10-11), “Oh ‘Alī, you and I are the father and the mother of the believers.” Also, see Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Jāmi’ al-Hikmatayn* pp. 295-298 (p. 297, ln. 15-16 in particular).

¹⁹² *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 13: pp. 69-70, ln. 18-23 and ln. 1-2. A similar passage appears in *Majālis*. Volume VIII. Institute of Ismaili Studies Library MS. 538 (Ar.): folio 244: lns. 5-7.

nourishment for the human body.¹⁹³ In the beginning of its existence, the infant receives the nourishment of the body (*ightidhā' al-jism*) from the mother's breast (*al-thady*). On a higher level of development, the individual receives the nourishment of the soul (*ightidhā' al-nafs*) through hearing (*al-sama'*). Part of al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation is based upon 'Alī's statement: "I am the hearing ear" (*ccAnā al-udhun al-wā'iyyah*"), as well as the expression from *sūrah* (69: 12), "hearing" (*ccwā'iyyah*"). Al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on 'Alī's statement appears in Majlis No. 66 of Volume I.¹⁹⁴ From this perspective, 'Alī's function in religion (*ḥulūl al-dīn*) is equivalent to the place of the ear (*al-udhun*) in the human form. The stations (*maqāmāt*) of the *waṣī* and the *imāms* are likewise equivalent to "hearing ears" (*al-ādhān al-wā'iyyah*).¹⁹⁵

Al-Mu'ayyad continues his interpretation of *sūrah* (2: 19) in order to underscore the *waṣī*'s necessary guidance in the process of the individual practitioner's development and spiritual perfection.¹⁹⁶ Al-Mu'ayyad describes how the connection of the ear to the soul allows spoken expressions (*al-alfāz al-mantiqiyyah*) to reach the soul, which is one of the things that

¹⁹³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 76: pp. 369-374.

¹⁹⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 66: p. 322, ln. 9-16. Volume II. Majlis No. 43: pp. 257-258, ln. 94-116.

¹⁹⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 66: pp. 322-323, ln. 8-21 and 1-9. A similar passage on the *al-akhlāq al-bahīmiyyah* appears in Volume II. Majlis No. 43: pp. 258-259.

¹⁹⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 66: pp. 322-323. Qur'ān (2: 19): "Or (another similitude) is that of a rain-laden cloud from the sky: in it are zones of darkness, and thunder and lightening: they press their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap, the while they are in terror of death. But Allāh is ever round the rejecters of the Faith."

define the human being as human and rational.¹⁹⁷ As al-Mu'ayyad also argues, if the position of the *waṣī* did not exist, the spiritual material (*māddah*) would not reach the soul. Continuing his interpretation of *sūrah* (2: 19), the blow of thunder and strike of lightening represents how souls are released from their bodies, when in their time-periods, the *imām* and the *waṣī* call for the mortification of the faculty of the animal passions (*imātah al-quwwah al-shahwāniyyah al-bahīmiyyah*).¹⁹⁸ As al-Mu'ayyad elaborates, on a daily basis, fathers and mothers raise their children through their upbringing and guidance and then replace their children's shameful qualities of the animal dispositions (*al-akhlāq al-bahīmiyyah*) with human qualities (*al-shamā'il al-insāniyyah*). In a similar fashion, through following the *imām* or the *waṣī*, the individual practitioner is led away from the animal passions.¹⁹⁹

The practice of *ṭā'ah* to the *imām* and *waṣī* of the time acquires another set of distinctions when al-Mu'ayyad discusses the varying forms of spiritual exercise (*al-riyādah*).²⁰⁰ The *ḥudūd al-dīn* are the vehicles of spiritual development and perfection. In Majlis Nos. 17-22 of Volume V, al-Mu'ayyad explains that the prophets (*al-anbiyā'*) bring the Adamic form (*al-ṣūrah al-*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*: p. 322.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*: pp. 322-323. Also, see Volume III. Majlis No. 82: pp. 234-235, ln. 16-18 and ln. 1; Majlis No. 19: p. 57, ln. 16-20, where al-Mu'ayyad discusses the effort (*si'ah*) required in order to move away from the *bahīmiyyah* qualities of the human.

¹⁹⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 66: p. 323, ln. 5-9. Volume II. Majlis No. 43: p. 258, ln. 111-115. See as well, Volume I. Majlis No. 76: p. 370, ln. 15-16, where this process is connected to ridding the body of the "natural defilements" (*al-qādhūrāt*).

²⁰⁰ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 89: p. 254, ln. 4: "*riyādah al-naḥs bi al-'ibādatayn al-'ilmiyyah wa al-'amaliyyah*."

ādamiyyah) from potentiality (*ḥadd al-quwwah*) to actuality (*al-fi'l*), just as the striker of the flint-stone (*qādiḥ al-zinād*) ignites the fire hidden in the stone.²⁰¹ As shall be seen in the following section of this chapter, the parameters of the spiritual disciplines and ethics available to the individual practitioner lend additional support to al-Mu'ayyad's definitions of the complementary *walāyah* shared between the Prophet Muḥammad and 'Alī.

The *al-insān al-muṭlaq* is the individual who attains to union (*ittiḥād*) with the 'ālam al-'aql and the 'ālam al-naḥs, and becomes like a sphere (*dā'irah*), its two sides meeting and encompassing the "Heavens and Earth".²⁰² Feki has explained quite briefly how the individual human being, in his process of ascent and perfection, emulates both the Universal Soul and the Universal Intellect.²⁰³ Only the individual who was properly "nurtured" through the *da'wah*'s upbringing (*ḥaḍn*) while in this world, will enter into the vast and unlimited space (*faḍā'*) of the World of Intellect and Soul, which is "what no eye has seen, and no ear heard, nor has entered the heart of

²⁰¹ MS. 535. Volume V; *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 30: pp. 166-167. See as well, Volume I. Majlis No. 60: p. 293-294, ln. 13-22 and ln. 1-6. Here al-Mu'ayyad explains that there is a second fire (*nār thāniyyah*), which is what Moses perceived on the side of the mountain; that is, the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-quḍus*). Al-Mu'ayyad then explains that it is the *ta'yīd* of *risālah*, *wiṣāyah* and *imāmah*.

See DeSmet. "al-Mu'ayyad fī d-Dīn ash-Shīrāzī et la polémique ismaélienne contre les 'Brahmanes' d'Ibn ar-Rāwandī." (1995a): pp. 94-95; Kraus. "Beiträge zur islamischen ketzergeschichte. Das Kitāb az-Zumurrud des Ibn ar-Rāwandī." (1994): 112-125 (on *akhlāq* and *adab* in particular).

²⁰² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 31: p. 153.

²⁰³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 8: pp. 36-37, ln. 11-21 and ln. 1-17.

Feki. *Les Idées religieuses*. 1978: 173-174.

man.²⁰⁴ This account also presents one of more subtle narratives on the proximity the true human being may potentially attain.²⁰⁵ “He attains (*fāza*) to the vicinity (*mujāwarah*) of the angels and the company (*murāfaqah*) of the prophets (*al-nabiyyīn*), the honest ones (*al-ṣiddiqīn*), the witnesses (*al-shuhadā’*), and the virtuous (*al-ṣāliḥīn*).”²⁰⁶ In a noteworthy passage, al-Mu’ayyad states that the following explanation of the “absolute human being” is denied amongst the “Shortcomers” (*min jahd al-muqaṣṣirīn*)²⁰⁷:

(Coming after the animals and the plants in creation), the human form (*al-ṣūrah al-insāniyyah*) is the perfect form (*al-ṣūrah al-kāmilah*) that is the “seal” of the forms (*khātimah al-ṣuwar*). Since the human form is the perfect form, it is prepared to accept the traces (*āthār*) of rationality (*nuṭq*) and the intellect, which are from the spiritual faculties (*al-quwā al-rūḥāniyyah*) and they are not linked to natural mixtures (*bi al-amzījah al-ṭabī’iyyah*). Therefore, the human being, by virtue of its unification (*bi ittiḥādī-hi*) with the World of Intellect and Soul (*‘ālam al-‘aql wa al-nafs*), wherefrom it takes its rationality and intellect [directly] as a dictate (*yastamlī*), has become “a first”, while in view of its [physical] straight stature (*qāmati-hi al-alifiyyah*), which is prepared to receive their [Intellect and Soul’s] traces, it has become “a last”. He becomes like the sphere (*al-dā’irah*), its two sides meeting, encompassing the ^cHeavens and the Earth and what is between them³⁰ (*sūrah* 50: 38), and for that reason, the human being is made to take possession over everything with his knowledge, a ruler over the populace (*al-kāffah*)

²⁰⁴ This is similar to what is alluded to in Qur’ān (32: 17), but is in fact, *Ḥadīth qudsī* No. 37, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah. Al-Mu’ayyad also refers to this *ḥadīthin* Volume I. Majlis No. 59: p. 290, ln. 8-9.

²⁰⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 41: p. 244, ln. 89-94. This is also tantamount to becoming separated from (after being born) the placenta (*al-mashīmah*) of the *dār al-dunyā’*. See as well, Volume I. Majlis No. 75: pp. 366-367, ln. 3-20 and ln. 10. Volume II. Majlis No. 3: pp. 20-21, ln. 81-85. Volume III. Majlis No. 19: pp. 57-58, ln. 16-23 and ln. 1-6.

²⁰⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 75: p. 367, ln. 4-5.

²⁰⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I (‘Abd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 31: p. 133; (Ghālib edition): p. 153.

by his jurisdiction, subjugating the animal species in order to make use of them for its own benefits (*maṣāliḥi-hi*). If this is the mark (*nuṣbah*)²⁰⁸ of the human being in view of rational necessity (*al-ijāb al-ʿaqlī*), then the “absolute human being” (*al-insān al-muṭlaq*) is in reality, the one through whose prophethood prophethood is sealed, and through whose *wiṣāyah wiṣāyah* is sealed, so both [together] are “the First and the Last”.²⁰⁹

In many respects, the above-cited passage sets the limits of al-Muʿayyad’s concept of the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*, whilst also demarcating the points of juncture between the cycles of *nubuwwah* and *wiṣāyah*. His typologies of the *imām* therefore situate his *Qāʾim*-ology, as shall be seen in what follows in al-Muʿayyad’s refutations of the *Ghulāt* and the *Muqaṣṣirūn* in addition to his commentaries on the religious duty of *walāyah* and its relation to the “another creature” of *sūrah* (23: 04).

²⁰⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I (ʿAbd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 31: p. 133. In the Ghālib edition (Volume I: p. 153, ln. 12), variant reading: *nisbah*.

²⁰⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I (ʿAbd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 31: p. 133, ln. 4-14 (the text in the Ghālib edition appears in Volume I: p. 153, ln. 5-14).

Chapter Four: The "Sphere of *Walāyah*"

Part II: Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī Interpretations of *Walāyah* and the *Awliyā' Allāh*

Section a: The *Walāyah* of the Prophet Muḥammad and 'Alī

Ghadīr Khumm is an event that took place during the Prophet Muḥammad's last pilgrimage to Mecca. Muḥammad's last pilgrimage is also known as the Prophet's "Farewell Pilgrimage". In terms of religious and political succession, this event is particularly significant. Both some Sunnīs and Shī'īs acknowledge that *Ghadīr Khumm* is when the Prophet Muḥammad designated 'Alī as his successor. More importantly, in many sources, *Ghadīr Khumm* marks the commencement of 'Alī's *walāyah* in human history, with particular reference to *sūrah* (5: 3), "Today I have perfected for you your religion and completed my favor upon you, and I am pleased with Islam as your religion."²⁰¹ According to the Ithnā 'Asharī Shī'ites and the Ismā'īlīs, 'Alī's *walāyah*, crucial for the guidance of the religious community and the interpretation of the Qur'ān, is continued by 'Alī's descendants. In the Ismā'īlī tradition, *Ghadīr Khumm* also represents

²⁰¹ M. A. Amir-Moezzi. *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism*. 1994: 29; M. M. Dakake. *Loyalty, Love and Faith: Defining the Boundaries of the Early Shī'ite Community*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 2000: 29, 42-43, 60-61, 107, 175, 221-222; H. Landolt. "Walāyah." Article. In, M. Eliade, Editor. *Encyclopaedia of Religion*. 1987a; H. Landolt, Editor & Trans. *Le Révélateur des mystères*. La Grasse, 1986: 74-79; M. Momen. *An Introduction to Shi'ism*. New Haven, 1985: 157; S. H. Rizvi. "Metaphysics and Soteriology: on *Wilāya* in Early Shi'ism and in the Thought of Mullā Ṣadrā." *International Journal of Shi'ī Studies* (forthcoming). See in addition, J. Friedmann. *Prophecy Continuous*. Berkeley, 1989: 53-82, for his analysis and survey of the classical mediaeval sources on the idea of *khatm al-nubuwwah* and the term *khātam al-nabiyyūn*.

how the Prophet Muḥammad's revelation will be perfected and completed through the *imām*'s (i.e., 'Alī's and his descendant's) religious guidance and the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'ān for the religious community. It is in connection with the tradition of *Ghadīr Khumm* that we first see how the role of the *imām* is necessarily paired with the Prophet Muḥammad's role as the leader of the religious community of Islam. With the above-mentioned ideas in mind, we can also begin to appreciate how scholars in the mediaeval Ismā'īlī tradition would come to pair the Prophet Muḥammad's revelation of the Qur'ān (*tanzīl*: the exoteric) to 'Alī's interpretation of the Qur'ān (*ta'wīl*: the esoteric) on the basis of the *Ghadīr Khumm* tradition, as well as equate their respective stations with the Universal Intellect (*al-'aql al-kullī*) and the Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kullīyah*).²⁰²

It has been thus far maintained in Chapter Four that al-Mu'ayyad's typologies of the *imām* point to an internal systematization of the Fātimid

²⁰² Ibn Ḥanbal. *Musnad*. Volume 4, p. 281 (cited in M. Moomen. *An Introduction to Shi'ism*. 1985: 15). M. A. Amir-Moezzi. "Notes à propos de la *walāyah* imāmīte." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (2002): 122/4: 738, n. 123. For references to the *ḥadīth al-walāyah*, see M. A. Amir-Moezzi. "Notes à propos de la *walāyah* imāmīte." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (2002): 122/4: 728, n. 44: on the "*Kitāb al-walāyah*" from Qādī al-Nu'mān's *Da'ā'im al-Islām*. See *Da'ā'im al-Islām*. Volume I: p. 24, ln. 8-12, for the account of *Ghadīr Khumm*.

Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah. Volume I. Majlis No. 36: pp. 177-178. See as well, Volume I. Majlis No. 36: pp. 176-177, ln. 20 and ln. 16. Also see Majlis No. 36: pp. 177-178, ln. 18-20 and ln. 1-12, which also includes a discussion of the Universal Intellect as the "Pen" (*al-qalam*) and the Universal Soul as the "Preserved Tablet" (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*). In Volume I. Majlis No. 12: p. 56, ln. 1-18: the Universal Soul, as the "Preserved Tablet", is discussed in terms of its "impressions" (*nuqūsh*) in this world (*dār al-dunyā*) and the Afterlife (*dār al-ākhirah*). In Volume I. Majlis No. 28: p. 137, ln. 8-17, al-Mu'ayyad explains creation (*khalq*) and command (*amr*) as "*sharī'ah*" terms in connection with *walāyah*, as well as "philosophical" terms (*bi līsān al-falsafah*), the "First Perfection" (*al-kamāl al-awwal*) and the "Second Perfection" (*al-kamāl al-thānī*).

Ismā'īlī doctrine of *walāyah* and the function of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*, lending a particular prominence to the soteriological implications of the 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī practice of *tā'ah*. In Volumes I and II of the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, it is possible to see in more concrete terms how al-Mu'ayyad delineates his own doctrinal position on the Fāṭimid doctrine of *walāyah*.²⁰³ Al-Mu'ayyad develops further the practice of *tā'ah* to the *ḥudūd al-dīn* into a doctrine on the mysterious, negative spiritual hierarchy over which Iblīs serves as *imām*. Paired with each master (*ṣāhib*) of every cycle (*dawr*), is his Iblīs, who is perfectly matched in accordance with the capacity or potential (*quwwah*) of the master of the cycle (*ṣāhib al-dawr*). At the end of the cycles of prophetic history, the “seal of the cycles” (*khātam al-adwār*) ushers in the second continuum of perfection for humanity. With the “seal of the most evil Iblises” (*khātam al-abālisah al-ashrār*), the counter spiritual hierarchy too attains to a higher level of ontological perfection and completion.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Majālis. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 6: pp. 25-28; Majlis No. 10: pp. 43-48; Majlis No. 12: pp. 53-58; Majlis No. 14: pp. 64-68; Majlis No. 20: pp. 95-98; Majlis No. 24: p. 118, ln. 12-17.

See in particular, Majlis No. 27: pp. 148, 151-152. On p. 151, ln. 73-75, al-Mu'ayyad mentions that in a previous lecture he has already read concerning the account of the revelation of the verse with respect to *Ghadīr Khumm*, Qur'ān (5: 3). This seems to refer to Volume I. Majlis No. 6: pp. 23-28, where al-Mu'ayyad provides a commentary on this Qur'anic verse and the significance of the religious tenet of *walāyah*. Majālis. Volume II (Ḥamīd al-Dīn edition). Majlis No. 26: p. 143, ln. 51-63: in conjunction with *tā'ah*, 'Alī is the *waṣī* of Muḥammad on *Ghadīr Khumm*. Therefore, the *imāms* are the “possessors of authority” (*‘ulū al-amr*) of Qur'ān (4: 59). See as well, Volume II. Majlis No. 39: pp. 231-232, ln. 6-21 and ln. 1-18; Majlis No. 47; Majlis No. 56: pp. 345-347, ln. 50-86.

²⁰⁴ Majālis. Volume I ('Abd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 77: p. 272; (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 77: p. 377, ln. 18-20.

See D. DeSmet. “Anges, diables et démons en gnose islamique.” (2001): 67 (citing al-Risālah al-Jāmi'ah pp. 221-225). In relation to the two ends of the continuum in the thought of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', worthy of note is the fact that the

At different junctures in the Majālis, al-Mu'ayyad responds to the works of earlier members in the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* whilst he advances his own doctrinal stance on the figure of the *imām* and the complementary *walāyah* shared between the Prophet Muḥammad and his *waṣī*, 'Alī.²⁰⁵ For al-Mu'ayyad, the rational soul is the “embryo” of the spiritual forms to be born in the Afterlife. To develop as such, it needs the influence of the sun of *walāyah*, just as the physical *nutfah* needs the influence of the physical sun to develop.²⁰⁶ The practice of *ṭā'ah* to the Prophet's *waṣī*, 'Alī, allows the individual practitioner to perfect his physical form and to become a true human being. The *walāyah* of Muḥammad allows the individual to strive towards attaining the religious forms (*al-ṣuwar al-dīniyyah*) that secure “another origination” (*al-nash'ah al-ākhirah*) for the individual soul.²⁰⁷

Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' discuss how, “Dans chaque catégorie d'êtres il y a des créatures angéliques et nobles qui cristallisent le mouvement ascendant (l'or, le palmier, le cheval, Prophètes et Imams) et des créatures démoniaques, agents de la voie descendante (le goudron, l'oléandre, le por, le pharaon).”

See in addition, al-Risālah al-Jāmi'ah. Editor, M. Ghālib. Beirut, 1974: p. 74, on how the Iblīs and Satans exist in every time, along with all of whom God establishes as his prophets, his messengers, his *imāms* and his vicegerents (*al-khulāfā'*).

²⁰⁵ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 46: p. 282, ln. 70-71.

²⁰⁶ Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 99: p. 495, ln. 9-14.

²⁰⁷ One crucial passage discussing this point appears in Volume I of the Majālis, and will be discussed in what follows. Volume I. Majlis No. 59: pp. 289-290, ln. 16-20 and ln. 1-7. Majlis No. 75: pp. 473-474, ln. 41-46. See as well, Volume II. Majlis No. 45: p. 271, ln. 52-58, on the beginning (*mabda'*) of the *ṣuwar al-nufūs*. In Majlis No. 75: pp. 473-474, ln. 41-46, al-Mu'ayyad contrasts the *nash'ah al-ākhirah* (which concerns the soul) with the *nash'ah al-dunyā'* (which concerns the body).

Commentary on Qur'ān (23: 12-14), Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 24: pp. 118-119, ln. 16-19 and ln. 1-9. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 150.

Majlis No. 27 of Volume II discusses in particular the religious duty of *walāyah*.²⁰⁸ Above all, this lecture encapsulates the essential features of al-Mu'ayyad's theory of *walāyah* as one which is intrinsically connected to his concept of the human being, and where the individual practitioner stands at the mid-point between the animal and angelic realms. It is also in al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on the "pillar" of *walāyah* that we are first introduced to the full range al-Mu'ayyad grants to the technical term *muṭlaq* ("unrestricted" or "complete") in relation to the concept of the human being.²⁰⁹

Through accentuating the models of reliance and obedience to the prophet and his *waṣī* in practice, al-Mu'ayyad reinforces his argument on how the two aspects of the human being correspond to the concept of *walāyah*. Following the *sharī'ah* is the first step in becoming truly human rather than remaining on the animal level. Al-Mu'ayyad, however, makes it clear that *walāyah* is no dispensation from the observance of the *sharī'ah* (i.e., the other six duties); but conversely, no observance of the *sharī'ah* has any validity without *walāyah*. In the context of 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā'ilism, the *walāyah* of the Messenger (*walāyah al-rusūl*) is like the center (*markaz*) of a sphere (*dā'irah*), around which the religious duties (*al-farā'id*) revolve.²¹⁰ In al-Mu'ayyad's theory of *walāyah*, the individual

²⁰⁸ See *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 148, ln. 17-20.

²⁰⁹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 149, ln. 36-40.

²¹⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 6: p. 26, ln. 3-4. See as well, Volume I: p. 226, ln. 53-61: humankind has two forms (*al-bashar dhū suratayn*), one which resembles the animals, and the other, which is the spirit (the *al-rūh*, as based on Qur'ān (17: 85)),

practitioner's *ṭā'ah* to God is conditional on the obedience to the Messenger of God, which is conditional upon the obedience to the "possessors of authority" (*ʿulū al-amr*) (*sūrah* 4: 59). The term *ʿulū al-amr* signifies the *imāms* and concerns the necessity of the practice of *ṭā'ah* to the lower members of the hierarchy of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*.²¹¹ The *walāyah* of the *ʿulū al-amr* is the crucial religious act, without which none other will be accepted.²¹²

The *walāyah* of the Messenger is valid during his life-time but the *walāyah* of those who are entrusted with the authority of his religion (*man yuwallīhi amra dīni-hi*) after his death is just like the Prophet's; i.e., the *walāyah* of 'Alī and the *imāms*.²¹³ Central to al-Mu'ayyad's explanation of the pivotal importance of the religious obligation of *walāyah* is the manner

obtained from the command of God (*amr Allāh*), which comes through the Prophet, the *waṣī* and the *a'imma*. Volume II. Majlis No. 39: p. 227, ln. 73-78. Volume II. Majlis No. 36: pp. 202-203, ln. 36-38 and ln. 47-61. In Majlis No. 36: p. 205, ln. 94-96. Al-Mu'ayyad also states: "Each one of them encompasses what rose from the East (*mashraq*) of *al-nubuwwah* and what set in the West (*maghrib*) of *al-wiṣāyah* from the sciences (*al-'ulūm*) through which is the life of souls (*ḥayāt al-nufūs*) and the salvation of souls (*najāt al-arwāḥ*) from the terror of the ominous day (*ḥawl yawm 'abūs*)." He also explains (p. 205, ln. 92-93) that the *imāms* are the seven distinguishing marks (*al-shaddāt al-sabī'*) on the Prophet's banner (*al-liwā'*).

On the *ʿulū al-amr*, see Volume I. Majlis No. 31: pp. 150-151, ln. 21 and ln. 1-12. Volume II. Majlis No. 51: p. 314, ln. 37-42.

²¹¹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 39: p. 227.

²¹² *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 36: p. 202, ln. 36-37.

²¹³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 6: p. 26, ln. 3-6. Al-Mu'ayyad supports this statement with Qur'ān (33: 6). Al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on this verse shall be discussed in the course of this chapter. He also explains (ln. 12-14) in conjunction with the *ḥadīth*, "Of whomsoever I am master (*mawlā*), then 'Alī is also his *mawlā*", that *walāyah* is transmitted from one to the other, and the son inherits it from the father. For this *ḥadīth*, see Qāḍī al-Nu'mān. *Da'ā'im al-Islām*. Volume I: p. 24, ln. 11-12.

Volume II. Majlis No. 36: pp. 202-203, ln. 36-38 and ln. 47-61 (members of the *umm al-kitāb*).

in which its elevated status amongst the other religious duties of Islam is tantamount to the human being, who is at the pinnacle of God's creation, in terms of its perfection as well as its dominion over the plant and animal realms.²¹⁴ *Walāyah* is the most crucial point of the world of religion (*'ālam al-dīn*), just as the human being is the noblest degree in creation (*khalq*).²¹⁵ Failing to acknowledge *walāyah* in God's creation is equivalent to neglecting to recognize the human being as the unique receptacle of Universal Intellect in the corporeal domain. As al-Mu'ayyad states:

For *walāyah* stands in relation to the *sharī'ah* in the same place as the human form (*maqām al-ṣūrah al-insāniyyah*) stands in relation to this world, for the one who omitted the ordinance (*ḥadd*) of *walāyah* in religion is like the one who omitted the rank (*ḥadd*) of humanity (*al-insāniyyah*) in this world, and is from all of the grazing livestock, just as God, may He be praised, stated: “They are like cattle, nay, more misguided, for they are headless.” (sūrah 7: 179).²¹⁶

On the basis of key Qur'ānic verses and *ḥadīth*, al-Mu'ayyad expounds upon how the human being as well as the human form is singled out in God's creation as the locus for the enactment of *walāyah*. In Majlis No. 27 of Volume II, al-Mu'ayyad states that the human being is the last of the created existents (*al-mawjūdāt*) from God in this world. The proof of “in the horizons and in their souls” (sūrah 41: 53) corroborates the composition and structure (*tarkīb*) of the microcosmic and macrocosmic aspects of the human

²¹⁴ Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 6: pp. 24-26.

²¹⁵ Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 14: pp. 118-119, ln. 6-19 and ln. 1-9.

²¹⁶ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 149, ln. 32-35.

being.²¹⁷ While the form of the human's body (*ṣūrah jasad al-insān*) is in the stages of the sperm, the blood clot, and the fetus, it possesses the faculty of growth (*quwwah al-namā*'), equivalent to the plants that increase through growth and develop (*tanmī* and *tarbū*).²¹⁸ Occurring parallel to the lower end of the hierarchy incorporated in the "sphere of *walāyah*", the human being's first stage of development is in keeping with how the realm of the plants (*ālam al-nabāt*) is the first of the created existents. When sense (*al-ḥiss*) appears in the human being, it is equivalent to how the second of the created existents is from the realm of the sensate animals (*ālam al-ḥayawān al-ḥassās*). The fact that rationality (*al-nuṭq*) appears at the end of its development points to how the existence of the human being is the last of the created existents of the world and the most complete and perfect of them.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 148, ln. 21-24; Majlis No. 51: p. 316, ln. 68-79.

²¹⁸ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 148, ln. 24-26; Majlis No. 27: p. 152, ln. 81-93. Volume I. Majlis No. 31: p. 152-153, ln. 18-20 and ln. 1-4: "We state, with the assistance and aid of God: the human being is the 'first', as concerns its soul and the 'last', with respect to its straight stature and its body, and the proof of that when it is in the *ḥadd* of the sperm and the blood-clot, it is equivalent to the plants that possess nothing other than the faculty of growth (*al-quwwah al-nāmiyyah*). Then it progresses and it becomes sensate, like the animals who feel pleasure and pain. Then it advances and it becomes rational. Then it becomes intelligent, and it is distinguished from the animals by virtue of its rationality and intellect, and this progression [categorization] (*al-tadrīj*) is the way to the knowledge of the first principles." The rest of this passage appears on p. 241 of the previous section of this chapter, in conjunction with al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on 'Alī's saying, "I am the First and I am the Last".

²¹⁹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: pp. 148-149; Volume V. Institute of Ismaili Studies Library MS. 535 (Ar.): folios 12b-13b: with regard to the stages of human development, how the form of the embryo, etc., is unlike the form of the sperm. Al-Mu'ayyad then correlates the Qur'ānic paradigm of human development to how the religious community (*millah*) of Adam is unlike the religious community of Noah. On folio 14a, proof is given as to why Islam is the most notable (*afḍal*) of their communities (*afḍal min jam'ī-him*).

Because in actuality, mankind (*al-bashar*) resembles the animal species, a progressive ascent upward through the ranks of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* in the corporeal domain is necessary in order for the individual to acquire the humanity (*al-insāniyyah*) of the human being (*al-insān*). It may be noted here that for al-Mu'ayyad, the stages of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* demarcate a unidirectional path of progress²²⁰ to the knowledge of God and God's creation as well as the process of individual development and spiritual perfection through *walāyah*.²²¹ In keeping with what was presented in the previous section of Chapter Four concerning al-Mu'ayyad's concept of the human being as the microcosm (*al-ʿālam al-ṣaghīr*), the human being's rationality is its most distinguishing feature.²²² Near the end of the final stages of physical development, the human being receives the illumination (*ishrāq*) coming from the intellect's light (*nūr al-ʿaql*).²²³ It is through this illumination from the intellect that the individual perfects his form and makes sound his humanity (*insāniyyah*) without trusting in his condition (*hāli-hi*), and without increasing his wealth and possessions (*māli-hi*).²²⁴ In order to differentiate between physical maturity and the spiritual perfection of true humanity, al-Mu'ayyad correlates the illumination of *ta'wīl* from the

²²⁰ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 99: p. 282, ln. 5-8.

²²¹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: pp. 149-150, ln. 40-47.

²²² *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 10: pp. 65-66, ln. 28-57.

²²³ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 149, ln. 36-40. See Volume I. Majlis No. 28: p. 138, ln. 14-21: "*fa nuqūlu inna jamī' mā yaḥṣulu fī 'ālam al-amr min al-ṣuwar al-dīniyyah al-makhlūqah li baqā' al-abad fa min quwwah al-nubuwwah wa ta'thīri-hā. Thuma nuqūlu inna faḍīlah al-nubuwwah wa al-nabī (ṣ) fī inbisāṭ anwāri-hi wa ishrāq al-dār al-ākhirah*".

²²⁴ *Majālis*. Volume II: p. 149, ln. 36-37.

imāms with following the “perception of proper conduct in religion”.²²⁵

Concerning his spiritual maturation, the individual human being who attains to the extent of the beneficence of the intellect in him, is completed in terms of his humanness. Al-Mu’ayyad then explains that the individual who has become complete in his spiritual development is then set free (*uṭliqa*) from natural disposition (*al-malakah*) and is no longer bound by changes in his condition and wealth.²²⁶

If we take into account the *walāyah* of the *waṣī* and his *imāms*, we find it stands in relation to the *sharī’ah* as the perception of proper conduct (*inās al-rushd*)²²⁷ stands in relation to the corporeal form (*al-ṣūrah al-jismiyyah*); for the meaning of the perception of proper conduct is that a man recognizes his expenditures (*al-rajal al-mutaṣṣarafāti-hi*) in this world (*dār al-dunyā*) and he perceives what pertains to him and what he owes and he does not lose himself, does not squander his wealth, and does not spend it on what is not necessary; and the perception of proper conduct in religion (*inās al-rushd fī al-dīn*) is that he is loyal to His *awliyā*’, namely, the legatees and the *imāms*, so he becomes illuminated by the lights of their *ta’wīl* and with respect to the dark shadows of similitudes and symbols (*ẓulumāt al-amthāl wa al-rumūz*), and perceives their significances, their realities, and the aim in everything

²²⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 49: pp. 302-303, ln. 25-30. Commentary on Qur’ān (17: 35). *Ta’wīl* takes things back to their origin, to their true reality, to the first of the created existents (*mawjūdāt*). The first of the *mawjūdāt* from God are the originated beings (*mubda’āt*), “*fa alladhī yaqtabisu min ‘ilm al-ta’wīl yaktabisu ṣūrah al-mubda’āt wa yalḥaqu bi al-manba’ alladhī yanbi’u min-hu ‘ayn al-ḥayāt.*”

²²⁶ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 149, ln. 36-40; Majlis No. 51: p. 316, ln. 68-79. In the latter lecture, al-Mu’ayyad (p. 316, ln. 72-78) explains that having ascended to the stage of a rational human being, there remains only one intermediary stage for him to become an angelic being. This intermediary stage is, “*wa hiya al-darajah al-muhtāj fī-hā ilā arkān al-ba’th min awwal al-ḥudūd al-’ulwiyyah, ilā ākhir al-ḥudūd al-suflīyyah...fa man takhallā ‘an al-ḥudūd alladhīna hum arkān ba’thi-hi min al-khilqah al-nafsāniyyah, ka mithli-hā min al-khilqah al-jismāniyyah, wa qiyāmi-hi li al-nash’ah al-malakūtiyyah*” (i.e., *walāyah*).

²²⁷ The term *inās al-rushd* is based on Qur’ān (4: 6), “if then you find sound judgment in them”.

from them. He does not waste the wisdoms and does not offer them to the unworthy. Then it has been made clear that the perfection of the religious form (*kamāl al-ṣūrah al-dīniyyah*) is in *walāyah*, just as the perfection of the corporeal form (*kamāl al-ṣūrah al-jismiyyah*) is in the perception of proper conduct from it [i.e., the corporeal form].²²⁸

There are other passages where al-Mu'ayyad employs the paradigm of human development concerning the concept of *walāyah* as well as the relationship between the Prophet Muḥammad and his *waṣī*, 'Alī. In order to illustrate and to emphasize the finality of each *ḥadd* in terms of their respective domains within God's creation, al-Mu'ayyad explains that the Prophet Muḥammad revealed the *walāyah* of 'Alī as the seventh of the religious duties (*farā'id*) as symbolically corresponding (*mumāthalan*) to the human being coming as the seventh after the minerals, plants, and animals in God's creation.²²⁹ With regard to the individual's noetic journey, coming to the end of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* is in fact, the "another creature", in which the physical *ḥudūd al-dīn* initially serve as a "tool" for the first continuum of perfection and the development of rationality. Coming to the end of the physical hierarchy represents concurrently, attaining to the Afterlife.²³⁰

²²⁸ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: pp. 149-150, ln. 40-47.

²²⁹ Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 24: p. 118, ln. 7-12. This passage is important for understanding the realms incorporated in *walāyah*. Al-Mu'ayyad states that the *imāms* are seventh from the *darajāt al-mawjūdāt*; that is, the minerals (*al-ma'ādīn*), plants (*al-nabāt*), wild beasts (*al-ḥursān*), animals (*al-bahā'im*), beasts of prey (*al-sibā'*), and birds (*al-ṭayr*). The human being is in the seventh rank (*al-ḥadd al-sābi'*).

Feki. *Les Idées religieuses*. 1978: 173-ff.

²³⁰ Majālis. Volume. II. Majlis No. 27: p. 150, ln. 48-61.

Also incorporated into al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on the religious tenet of *walāyah* in Majlis No. 27 is the eschatological significance of *sūrah* (23: 12-14), which al-Mu'ayyad employs in order to indicate how the human being moves (*naqala*) to perfection in seven stages (*sab'ah aḥwāl*).²³¹ Al-Mu'ayyad provides a further exposition on the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī "pillars" of practice, in that the "another creature" refers to the manner in which it is an unification and combination (*rābiṭ*) of all of the stages that precede it, especially in terms of the development and perfection that occurs on both the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels.²³²

The "another creature" (*sūrah* 23: 04) is the end and the perfection (*al-tamām*), and it takes the place, in what the prophet presented as the carpet of religious law (*al-bisāṭ al-sharī*), of *walāyah*, through which the religious duties (*al-farā'id*) are perfected, like the example of what God the Most High stated: "Today have I perfected your religion, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. (*sūrah* 5: 3)". Just as the drop of water, the sperm, the blood clot, the fetus, the muscles, and the flesh are invalidated if the meaning of what is called "another creature", through which created being (*al-khalqah*) is perfected, is invalidated, so purity (*al-ṭahārah*), prayer (*al-ṣalāt*), alms (*al-zakāt*), fasting (*al-ṣawm*), pilgrimage (*al-ḥajj*), and striving (*al-jihād*) are destroyed if *walāyah* is destroyed.²³³

²³¹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 150, ln. 48-53.

²³² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 24: pp. 118-119, ln. 5-18 and ln. 1-11. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 150.

²³³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 24: p. 119. For a similar commentary on Qur'ān (23: 12-14), see *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 24: pp. 118-119, ln. 16-19 and ln. 1-9. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 150, ln. 53-61.

See as well, Sijistānī. *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah* p. 168.

Let us now address very briefly the implications of this first continuum with regard to the development of the faculties of growth, sense, and rationality and the individual human being's potential to perceive the light of *ta'yīd* and the pure intelligibles in the realm of the *'ālam al-dīn*.²³⁴ In al-Mu'ayyad's Neoplatonized Qur'ānic framework, on each level of God's creation, the active dynamic of "Praise" (*'al-hamd*) (*sūrah* 1: 2) for the Creator moves created being from *in potentia* (*bi al-quwwah*) to *in actu* (*bi al-fi'l*). In terms of the individual practitioner's development, the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*) and its spiritual growth is comparable to the physical *nutfah* and its material growth. The *al-ṣuwar al-dīniyyah* are intrinsically potential in the religious sperm (*al-nutfah al-dīniyyah*) of the *shahādah*.²³⁵

Not only does al-Mu'ayyad conceive of the perfection of the human being and the human form in terms of the outer and inner aspects of *walāyah* but also through the means of the *kalimah* of God's creative command and the Muslim testimony of faith (*al-shahādah*). The *kalimah* of the *shahādah* operates in the four realms in God's creation. In many respects, its definitive enactment *vis à vis* the individual human being becomes apparent in the form of the "living speaking-prophets" (*al-aḥyā' al-nuṭaqā'*) and in the speech

²³⁴ Sijistānī. *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah* pp. 168-170. On pp. 82-83, the *Qā'im* is compared to the Prophet Muḥammad. One of the main distinctions is that following the Prophet Muḥammad requires religious practice, whereas the *Qā'im* does not. See as well, Sijistānī. *Kitāb al-Iftikhār* p. 82-ff.; S. Nomoto. *Early Ismā'īlī Thought on Prophecy*. Unpublished dissertation. McGill University, 2000: 115, n. 97: "the *da'wah* of the *Qā'im* is a '*da'wah* by knowledge' (*da'wah ilmiyah*) unlike that 'by action' (*'amaliyah*), which is that of the apostles (*da'wat al-rusūl*)".

²³⁵ See *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 59: pp. 289-290, ln. 16-20 and ln. 1-7.

of the prophets (*kalām al-anbiyā'*).²³⁶ According to al-Mu'ayyad, the *shahādah* is the point of origin (*mabda'*) of the form of the soul (*ṣūrah al-nafs*) in the same manner that the sperm (*al-nuṭfah*) is the beginning of the form of the corporeal body (*ṣūrah al-jism*).²³⁷ The sperm contains the forms (*al-ashkāl*) of the organs and limbs that constitute the human being, so that in their being perfected (*bi istikmālī-hā*), the individual fetus acquires form and becomes human.

We state: its likeness is like the sperm (*al-nuṭfah*) that despite its smallness, encompasses the apparent and hidden shapes (*al-ashkāl al-zāhirah wa al-bāṭinah*) of the human forms (*al-ṣuwar al-insāniyyah*) shaped in the shapes of the world of corporeal matter (*‘ālam al-jism*), because of it being produced (*mawlūdah*) by its intellect and its soul, until it, due to reflection (*al-fīkr*), encircles the worlds and what is in them as the line of the circle (*al-dā'irah*) surrounds its center (*bi markazi-hā*).²³⁸

Just as the corporeal form (*ṣūrah jismāniyyah*) accepts the benefits of the *dār al-dunyā'*, the “divine” form (*ṣūrah malakūtiyyah*) is prepared to accept the benefits of the Afterlife (*dār al-ākhirah*).²³⁹ With regard to the religious forms, the *shahādah* contains the spiritual and corporeal cognitions

²³⁶ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 63: p. 394, ln. 50-57; Majlis No. 65: p. 410, ln. 47-60.

²³⁷ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 45: p. 271, ln. 52-58: passage on the beginning (*mabda'*) of the *ṣuwar al-nufūs*.

²³⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 9: p. 42, ln. 4-11.

²³⁹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 35: p. 195, ln. 29-35. Also see Majlis No. 61: p. 378, ln. 40-41, and Majlis No. 61: p. 378, ln. 40-41, with regard to the term *al-ṣuwar al-malakūtiyyah*. In Majlis No. 46: p. 284, ln. 111-114, al-Mu'ayyad explains that the “divine” forms are not subject to deviation (*“wa hiya al-ṣuwar al-malakūtiyyah wa lā yakūna fī-hā ‘iwaḥ’*). As well, they are the forms of the souls in the spiritual world, where they truly benefit from the *imāms*.

(*ma'ārif al-rūḥāniyyah wa al-jismāniyyah*), so that when the individual receives these in full, the individual becomes a human being in that world. Al-Mu'ayyad alludes to the individual who becomes complete in his maturation and formation (*tamām al-bulūgh wa al-takwīn*) as a perfect human being (*insānan kāmilan*).²⁴⁰ It is at this stage that in his soul, this human being is “born” (*mawlūd*) of the proof (*ḥujjah*) of the Master of religious law and religion (*ṣāhib al-shar' wa al-dīn*).²⁴¹ Al-Mu'ayyad states that he will provide another example that will make it easy to accept this particular understanding of the *kalimah al-ikhlāṣ*:

This word, which is the *kalimah al-ikhlāṣ*, is a word, though small in its volume (*ḥajami-hā*) and insignificant in its mass (*jurmi-hā*), that combines and encompasses all of what God created, such as the World of Intellect (*ālam al-'aql*), the World of Soul (*ālam al-nafs*), the world of the celestial spheres (*ālam al-aflāk*), and the world of nature (*ālam al-ṭabī'ah*).²⁴²

Throughout the Majālis, al-Mu'ayyad posits a theory in which the human being is “born” from the *ḥudūd al-dīn*. He proposes that the individual's development and spiritual perfection occurs on each rank of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* in connection with a birth that is spiritual, rather than physical, in nature. Al-Mu'ayyad therefore positions his refutations of the more “exaggerated” views on the religious affiliation between the Prophet

²⁴⁰ Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 22: p. 106, ln. 19-20.

²⁴¹ Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 78: p. 383, ln. 12-20.

²⁴² Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 9-10: pp. 39-48. See in particular, Volume I. Majlis No. 9: p. 42, ln. 4-6. In this lecture, the *kalimah* is also connected to the axiom, “*man 'arafa nafsa-hu fa qad 'arafa rabba-hu*”, p. 41, ln. 13-19.

Muhammad and his *waṣī* 'Alī in the light of its specific significance for the human being's *nash'ah* from *ḥadd* to *ḥadd*. Moreover, following the practice of *tā'ah* to the lower ranks of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* and the *imām* in particular, the first continuum culminates in the emulation of the model of the Prophet Muhammad and leads to the spiritual *ḥudūd*, as may be seen in the following passage from Volume III of the *Majālis*.²⁴³

The 'Ālim stated: the infant (*al-ṭifl*) is helpless by himself. He remains weak as long as he is in the domain of childhood (*ḥayz al-ṭufūliyyah*)... Similar to him is the novice (*al-mustajīb*), who is in the station of the child from the perspective of the spiritual formation (*al-nash'ah al-naḥsāniyyah*). He is weak in the capacities (*quwā*) of his soul, falling short of the divine discoveries (*al-ma'lūmāt al-ilāhiyyah*), except that he is prepared to derive benefit (*al-istifādah*), for he continues to derive benefit until he ascends to the rank (*ḥadd*) of the youth (*al-shabāb*), which is at the station of the *ḥadd* of the recognition (*ma'rifah*) of *imāmah*. The *imām* is the one alluded to by the Prophet, in his saying, "The Sayyid of the youths of the people of Heaven (*Ahl al-jannah*)".²⁴ Then he ascends to maturity (*al-kahūlah*), which is at the *ḥadd* of the *waṣī*, which is in between the two sides (*al-ṭarafayn*) of *al-nubuwwah* and *al-imāmah*, just as maturity is in between the two sides of youth and old age (*al-shaykhūkhah*). Then he ascends to the recognition (*ma'rifah*) of the Prophet (ṣ), which is at the *ḥadd* of old age, to whom God alluded as "the Warner (*al-nadhīr*)",²⁵ for the Most High stated, "And (moreover) the warner came to you (*sūrah* 35: 37)".²⁶ The old man (*al-shaykh*) is the one who attains his aim from this world (*waṭara-hu min al-dunyā*) and is drawing close to entering the Afterlife (*al-muqtarib liḥāqa-hu bi al-ākhirah*), and (is) the one who moves between (*al-muntaqil*) in the conditions (*aḥwāl*) of youth, maturity and old age. The Prophet is closest (*aqrab*) to the people of the spiritual

²⁴³ Feki, *Les Idées religieuses*. 1978: 173-174: "Al-Mu'ayyad met en parallèle l'évolution de l'homme et de ses facultés spirituelles avec la hiérarchie des formes intelligibles."

world (*al-‘ālam al-naḥsānī*), and he is the “comprehensive joiner” (*al-jāmi‘*) of the ranks of *nubuwwah*, *wiṣāyah* and *imāmah*. Then, when he advances towards the investigation of the spiritual ranks (*baḥṭh ‘an al-ḥudūd al-rūḥāniyyah*), he starts the decline (*al-inḥiṭāṭ*), for the more his degree is elevated, the more reflection (*al-fikrah*) is diminished and he becomes incapable of perceiving and comprehension (*al-iḥātah*). Then, as he attains to the matter of God’s unity (*shā’n al-tawḥīd*), he becomes again incapable of perceiving, like in the beginning of his days as a child. God the Most High states: ^{cc}and he to whom We grant long life We reverse in creation; so will they not understand?^{cc} (*sūrah* 36: 68), and He stated: ^{cc}and among you is he who is returned to the most old age so that he knows, after [once having] knowledge, nothing.^{cc} (*sūrah* 22: 5).²⁴⁴

There exists a correspondence between *dīn* and *khalq*, where the *walāyah* of ‘Alī, the *khalq ākhar*, and the *yawm al-istiḥwā’* are equivalent to the seventh and therefore, are the most important.²⁴⁵ The religious tenet of *walāyah* forms the unification and combination (*rābiṭ*) of all of the other religious duties, such as purity, prayer, alms, fasting, pilgrimage and striving.²⁴⁶ Significantly, al-Mu’ayyad clarifies that out of the religious duties the prophet made requisite, the *walāyah* of ‘Alī and the *imāms* is the

²⁴⁴ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 26: p. 78, ln. 3-20.

²⁴⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 24: p. 119, ln. 2-10. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 150, ln. 53-56.

²⁴⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 24: p. 117, ln. 7-17. The order (*nizām*) of the six days (*sittah ayyām*) is preserved (*ḥāfiẓ*) by the seventh (*al-sābi‘*), who is equivalent to the Throne (*istawā’ ‘alā al-arsh*). The six days are comparable to the six “pillars” of Islam. The Prophet Muḥammad preserved the order of the six “trusts” (*ḥafaza nizām al-waḍā’i*) through his *waṣī*. “He proclaimed his *walāyah* and he made him the treasury of his knowledge, the repository of his secret and the gate of his Pardon (cf. Qur’ān (2: 58) (*khāzin ‘ilmi-hi wa mustawḍa’ sirri-hi wa bāb ḥiṭṭati-hi*), for ^{cc}I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī is its gate (*Anā madīnah al-‘ilm wa ‘Alī bābu-hā*).^{cc}” See Volume II. Majlis No. 44: p. 263, ln. 52-56, for another interpretation of this prominent *ḥadīth*.

seventh and last (*ākhir*) of the religious obligations in the religion of the Prophet.²⁴⁷ Continuing his comparison between the development of the human being and the concept of *walāyah*, al-Mu'ayyad explains that “another creature” is the “last meaning” (*ākhir ma'anī*) to be found in the human shape (*al-shakl al-insānī*), just as the *walāyah* of 'Alī and the *imāms* is the last (and most important) of all of the religious duties.²⁴⁸ As shall be discussed in Chapter Five, al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on *sūrah* (23: 04) holds specific bearing upon his theory of *Qā'im*-ology, where the *Qā'im* signifies the culmination and final point of all of the preceding stages of development and spiritual perfection prefigured in the form of the human being. In Majlis No. 27 of Volume II, al-Mu'ayyad likewise maintains that the human creation (*al-khalq al-insānī*) is as necessary as the earlier stages of human development in the mother's womb for validating the proper meaning and significance of the “another creature”.²⁴⁹ In Chapter Five, there will be further occasion to clarify what is the relationship of the *Qā'im* to the Prophet Muḥammad in the light of the “Persian School's” earlier debates on the issue.

Indicating another manner in which the perfection of religion (*kamāl al-dīn*) is through *walāyah* is the tradition of *Ghadīr Khumm*. It is also in the course of Majlis No. 27 of Volume II that al-Mu'ayyad introduces his interpretation of the non-Shī'ī communities' rejection of the investiture of

²⁴⁷ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: pp. 150-151, ln. 48-75.

²⁴⁸ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 150, ln. 47-56.

²⁴⁹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: pp. 150, ln. 48-61.

'Alī's *walāyah* at *Ghadīr Khumm* on the basis of *sūrah* (3: 72). Al-Mu'ayyad provides the *tafsīr*, and then the *ta'wīl*, of three terms from *sūrah* (3: 72): "A section of the People of the Book say: 'Believe in the morning what is revealed to the Believers. But reject it at the end of the day.'" Al-Mu'ayyad introduces the three terms, "at the end (*al-ākhir*)", "the day (*al-nahār*)" and "the morning (*wajhu al-nahār*)", in order to explain how, towards the end of the Prophet Muḥammad's life, God made obligatory the last of His religious obligations at *Ghadīr Khumm*.²⁵⁰ While "At the end" refers to the end (*khitām*) of the Prophet Muḥammad's life and his death (*intiqāli-hi ilā dār al-qarār*), it also symbolizes how the religious obligation of the *walāyah* of 'Alī and the *imāms* was revealed to him at the end of his life. The phrase, "the morning", represents the *walāyah* of 'Alī, and how it was rejected by those who did not believe in what the Prophet Muḥammad revealed as the last of the religious duties of Islam. According to al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation, since a group of people did not believe in the religious obligation of *walāyah* that was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad at *Ghadīr Khumm*, they have rejected a key tenet of Islam established by the Prophet Muḥammad.²⁵¹

In conjunction with *sūrah* (2: 13), "When it is said to them, 'Believe as the people believe'", al-Mu'ayyad broaches the issue of the religious births (*al-mawālīd al-dīniyyah*), where both the Prophet and the *waṣī* act as the

²⁵⁰ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 151, ln. 65-75.

²⁵¹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 151, ln. 65-75. Also, see Volume I. Majlis No. 6: pp. 24-26.

“father” (as well as the *imām* and the *bāb*, in terms of taking their places after them with respect to offering guidance (*al-hidāyah* and *al-rushd*)).²⁵² Towards the end of his commentary, al-Mu’ayyad suggests that the meaning of “the people” (“*al-nās*”) refers to the *imāms*. Al-Mu’ayyad supports his interpretation with a *ḥadīth* from Ja’far al-Ṣādiq that the “the people” referred to in *sūrah* (4: 54) are the Shī’ah, “for what God has given them of his bounty” is both the *khilāfah* and *imāmah*, to the exclusion of all other people. He then poses a rhetorical question: why is the obedience due to the *imāms* established amongst the people of Abraham (*Āl Ibrāhīm*), but the people of Muḥammad (*Āl Muḥammad*) deny that the *ṭā’ah* to the *imāms* God made obligatory is “the great kingdom” (“*al-mulk al-‘azīm*”, *sūrah* (4: 53))?²⁵³

Section b: Walāyah and Counter-Walāyah in the Majālis al-Mu’ayyadiyyah

What are the soteriological implications of contravening the proper order and hierarchy of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* embodied in the doctrine of *walāyah* or of rejecting the 11th-century Fātimid Ismā’īlī practice of *ṭā’ah*? The unbelievers

²⁵² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 56: pp. 274-275.

²⁵³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 56: p. 275, ln. 15-19. In connection with *sūrah* (4: 54). Al-Mu’ayyad picks up the threads of this discussion on how the Prophet Muḥammad’s *waṣī* and his *imāms* have been rejected as *al-shirk* on p. 277, ln. 2-11.

are those individuals who do not follow proper *ṭā'ah* through the spiritual hierarchy of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*, demarcated by *walāyah*. The unbelievers thereby rely upon Iblīs as an *imām*. These individuals are distinguished and set apart, in their own right, as the followers of Iblīs. In a state equivalent to blindness, they are unable to perceive the more subtle forms as well as the light of *ta'yīd* embodied in the guidance of the prophets and their messengership. From this vantage point of consideration, al-Mu'ayyad introduces his first set of distinctions through the contrast between the "Adamic forms" (*al-ṣuwar al-ādamiyyah*) and the "Satanic shapes" (*al-ashkāl al-shayṭāniyyah*).²⁵⁴ In his theory of forms, the "human forms" (*al-ṣuwar al-insāniyyah*) may also be understood to be "images", rather than forms per se. Some of the forms the individual human being may obtain and acquire are luminous and subtle, whereas the others are shadowy and tenebrous. The subtle forms, *al-ṣūwar al-laṭīfah*, are the necessary complements of the dense forms, *al-ṣuwar al-kathīfah*. The manner in which the two sequences of forms co-exist corresponds with the concurrent presence of *walāyah* and counter-*walāyah*, where the subtle forms are the pure intelligibles and the coarse, tenebrous forms are the outer aspect that the unbelievers perceive instead of the subtle forms.²⁵⁵ The unbelievers' "blindness" is due to the fact

²⁵⁴ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 59: pp. 363-364, ln. 19-39; Majlis No. 60: pp. 371-375, ln. 45-ff. Volume I. Majlis No. 27: pp. 133-134, ln. 21 and ln. 1-13.

²⁵⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 61: pp. 298-299, ln. 6-21 and ln. 1-20: a *tafsīr* that the Qur'ān is the light (*al-nūr*). Therefore, the positive spiritual hierarchy as well as its negative counterpart, the "false Gods" (*Tāghūt*) Qur'ān (2: 257), may be distinguished in terms of their respective subtlety and luminosity, or coarseness and darkness. On the *Tāghūt* and their *awliyā'*, see Landolt. "Walāyah." (1987a): 317.

that both their eyes and hearts are “veiled” (*ghishāwah*) and “sealed”.²⁵⁶ The unbelievers are “blind” because their discernment (*al-baṣīrah*) and intellects are deficient, as equally are the *imāms* who they follow. The “*imāms* of going astray” (*al-ḥimāh al-ḍalāl*) have “sealed hearts” (*khatama ‘alā qulūbi-him*) but they too have the potential to attain to the more complete forms of the negative elements they signify.²⁵⁷ In this realm, where the negative aspect of *walāyah* stands pervasive, the realm of the *dār al-dunyā* demarcates not only the modality of perception on the part of the unbelievers but also what is subject to perception. It is termed the abode of falsehood (*dār al-kadhb*) because it is the realm in which created beings and created existents are subject to unevenness (*i‘wijāj*), altercation (*tabaddul*), and transformation (*istihālah*).²⁵⁸

First, however, it is necessary to shed addition light on the doctrinal background of al-Mu‘ayyad’s model of *walāyah* and counter-*walāyah*. The doctrinal antecedents of al-Mu‘ayyad’s model of *walāyah* and counter-*walāyah* may be traced in part to the works of Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān. In the 10th.

Of equal importance in this passage is that al-Mu‘ayyad (p. 299, ln. 8-13) refers to how the *Ahl al-bayt* proceed freely (*yasrihūn*) in the vast and unlimited space of the World of Intellect and the World of Soul (*faḍā’ ‘ālam al-‘aql wa ‘ālam al-nafs*).

²⁵⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 48: p. 237, ln. 8-11. Volume II. Majlis No. 39: pp. 228-229, ln. 82-108.

²⁵⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 48: pp. 237-238, ln. 19 and 1-17; Majlis No. 51: p. 252. “When the Deniers (*al-Munkirūn*) rejected the stages of the ‘friends of God’ (*maqāmāt awliyā’ Allāh*), who are the intermediaries between Him and His creation, God sealed their hearts (*khatama Allāh ‘alā qulūbi-him*) of whomsoever denied that the religious cognitions (*al-ma‘ārif al-dīniyyah*) is obtained through them.”

See as well, Volume II. Majlis No. 11: pp. 70-71, ln. 43-55.

²⁵⁸ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 46: pp. 283-285, ln. 97-117. Volume III. Majlis No. 83: p. 238, ln. 5-23.

century Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī work, the Ta'wīl Da'ā'im al-Islām, Qāḍī al-Nu'mān provides a commentary on the *walāyah* of Adam and the pivotal importance of the practice of *tā'ah*. The practice of *tā'ah* is embodied in bowing down in prayer (*sujūd*), the very act Iblīs refused to perform.²⁵⁹

According to the Ta'wīl Da'ā'im, the “pillar” of *walāyah* is the “seal” of the “pillars” of Fāṭimid Ismā'ilism, as originally outlined in the Kitāb Da'ā'im al-Islām. The “pillar” of *walāyah* also signifies the station of Adam as the first prophet. As Qāḍī al-Nu'mān points out, Adam inaugurated the cycle of *walāyah* through accepting the *amānah* of God. When the angels then bowed down to Adam, they demonstrated their obedience (*tā'ah*) to him and to his *walāyah*. As well, “he [Adam] is the origin (*aṣl*) from which God makes his *walāyah* obligatory upon His messengers, His prophets, and the *imāms* of His religion, and he is the first of them and their father (*abū'uhum*).”²⁶⁰ More specifically in terms of the implicit element of prophetic anthropology entailed in al-Mu'ayyad's concept of *walāyah*, the prophet Adam is the cause of the physical descendants (*'illah li al-nasl al-jismānī*). With regard to spiritual lineage and affiliation, the Prophet Muḥammad is the cause of the religious descendants (*'illah li al-nasl al-dīnī*).²⁶¹

We state that the master (*ṣāhib*) of every religious law

²⁵⁹ Qāḍī al-Nu'mān. Ta'wīl Da'ā'im al-Islām. Editor, M. H. al-A'azamī: p. 51.

Corbin. “Divine Epiphany” (1983): 76-84; DeSmet. “Angeles, diables et démons en gnose islamique.” (2001); B. Lewis. “An Ismaili Interpretation of the Fall of Adam.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1938-39): 9, on the role of Iblīs as the “fallen angel” in Yemeni Ismā'īlī texts.

²⁶⁰ Ta'wīl Da'ā'im al-Islām p. 51.

²⁶¹ Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 79: pp. 386-387, ln. 18-20 and ln. 1-7.

(*shar'*) is the Adam of his *dawr*²⁶², from the perspective of the origination of souls (*inshā' al-nufūs*) through knowledge (*bi al-ilm*), not from the perspective of the birth of the body (*wilādah al-jism*). This is verified by the statement of God the Most High: "The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves and his wives are their mothers." (sūrah 33: 6), and if it is established that his wives (*azwāju-hu*) are their mothers (*ummahātu-hum*), it is established that the Prophet (s) is their father (*abū'u-hum*).²⁶³

The prophet Adam also represents the father of the spiritual genealogy of the prophets and the *imāms*. Al-Mu'ayyad's own interpretation concerning the status of Adam in each epoch (*al-dawr*) and time (*waqt/zamān*) is unique with regard to Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī commentaries on the role of Adam as a prophet in hiero-history. While al-Mu'ayyad repeatedly returns to the function of the Prophet Muḥammad as the Adam of his epoch throughout the *Majālis*, his theory of religious birth (*al-mawlūd al-dīnī*) reflects the initial cosmic "pairing" between Universal Intellect and Universal Soul. At a different level, the *nāṭiq* is the religious father and the *waṣī* is the religious mother (*wālidah al-dīn*) of the members of the *da'wah*, who are likened to their children, and who receive the benefits of the *da'wah*'s "nurturing".²⁶⁴ The pairing of Universal Intellect and Universal Soul is extended throughout the hierarchy of the *da'wah*, for, "...the dyad is in actuality, the foundation of creation": in relation to the stations of the Prophet Muḥammad and 'Alī,

²⁶² Variant reading: (Ḥamīd al-Dīn edition): p. 375, ln. 62, *Ādamu dawri-hi*.

²⁶³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 77: p. 378, ln. 4-21: in connection with the *ḥadīth*,

"I am and you are, oh 'Alī, the father of the believers."

See as well, Volume I. Majlis No. 17: p. 82, ln. 10-12; Majlis No. 52: p. 256, ln. 1-6. Volume II. Majlis No. 4: pp. 26-28; Majlis No. 16: p. 95, ln. 49-57.

²⁶⁴ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 41: p. 244, ln. 89-94.

from one perspective, but then in relation to 'Alī and the *imāms* who take his place after him, and the *ḥudūd al-dīn*.²⁶⁵ In Majlis No. 99 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad provides one of many commentaries on the saying of the Prophet, "I am and you are, oh 'Alī, the Father of the Believers".²⁶⁶ Whether the individual, however, is compared to his father as a son, or to his brother as a brother (amongst other examples), "The man is one man (*raḡul wāḡid*) and the allusions (*kināyāt*) to him differ in accordance with the times (*al-mawāqit*). Likewise the science of *ta'wīl* (*'ilm al-ta'wīl*) differs in accordance with the situations (*muwāqa'ah*), and it is one thing (*shay' wāḡid*)."²⁶⁷

In the same manner that *walāyah*, through the acceptance of God's "divine trust" of *amānah*, establishes the Adam of the epoch, there exists as well the Iblīs of the epoch. The Iblīs of the epoch makes manifest to Adam the "pact of deviation" (*saḡqah al-'unūd*) by refusing to bow down.²⁶⁸

It is necessary that God, may He be praised, makes of God's pure unity (*ikhhlāṡ tawḡīd*) an *amānah* to entrust it to His best (*ṡaḡwata-hu*) and to His friends (*awliyā'a-hu*), and prohibits it from His opponents

²⁶⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: p. 340, ln. 47-53. Al-Mu'ayyad indicates that he lectured before on Qur'ān (4: 1) in preceding lectures, and refers to the statement he made before, stating: "the one soul" in our epoch (*dawri-kum*) is Muḡammad and the partner created from him as a creation of religion (*khilqah al-dīn*) is 'Alī". In this context, this Qur'ānic verse is also supported by the *ḡadīth*, "I am from 'Alī and 'Alī is from me". See Qāḡī al-Nu'mān. *Da'a'im al-Islām*. Volume I: p. 447, ln. 11; p. 25, ln. 3, for this *ḡadīth*. We shall return to al-Mu'ayyad's theory of the acquisition of the "Adamic forms", in reference to al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on the "greatest name (of God)". In this commentary, which appears in Volume II. Majlis No. 59: p. 364, al-Mu'ayyad refers back to the discussion on how in particular, Muḡammad is Adam in his epoch.

Feki. *Les Idées religieuses*. 1978, 173-175.

²⁶⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 99: p. 495, ln. 14.

²⁶⁷ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: pp. 340-341, ln. 59-66.

²⁶⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 77: p. 378, ln. 20-21.

(*mukhālifi-hi*) and His enemies (*a'dā'i-hi*), in order to distinguish His best with the favor (*bi fadl*) of what He confers through it to them, and in order to make them necessary for people without exception. For this reason, *amānah* existed and its repositories (*mustawada'ū-hā*), and in order that the cause of salvation (*sabab al-najāt*) be inaccessible to Iblīs, God's curses upon him, and when he saw Adam, bowing down in prayer and standing up. Likewise, century after century, and epoch after epoch, every time has its Iblīs, may God's curses be upon him, and its Adam, may God's prayers be upon him.

When God chose the best from His creation, making them the guarantors (*al-umanā'*) of His *amānah*, they were honored with respect to preserving (*bi ḥifẓ*) the *amānah* bestowed upon them, because the *amānah* was unified (*ittiḥadat*) with their souls. Then through it, their souls were ennobled and rendered transparent (*shaffat*) until their souls and the *amānah* became one thing. Thus it was possible that these guardians (*al-ḥāfiẓūn*) of the *amānah* of God are designated by its name and itself, just as it was possible that the bearer (*ḥāmil*) of "the message" (*al-dhikr*), who is the Prophet (ṣ), is called "a message", is designated by the name of "the message" itself, as God the Most High said: "For God hath indeed sent down to you a Message, a Messenger" (*sūrah* 65: 10-11). Since the *walāyah* of 'Alī (ṣ) is the bearer of God's pure unity, which is the *amānah* of God, may He be praised, it is called by its name. So it is said: the *amānah* is the *walāyah* of 'Alī, just as it is said that "the message" is the Prophet (ṣ) exactly in the same manner.²⁶⁹

Al-Mu'ayyad's statements concerning how *amānah* is safeguarded from Iblīs, where the cause of salvation is inaccessible to Iblīs, merit additional consideration.²⁷⁰ Al-Mu'ayyad explains that the individual comes to resemble the figure of the *imām* to whom he gives his allegiance and loyalty.

²⁶⁹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 11: p. 71, ln. 50-63.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*: p. 71, ln. 52-55.

The most extreme example al-Mu'ayyad offers in order to clarify how Iblīs may serve as an *imām* is how individuals may alter God's creation by emulating the Satanic shapes (*al-ashkāl al-shayṭāniyyah*) rather than the exemplars of the prophet Adam and the other members in the spiritual hierarchy of *walāyah*. The Satanic shapes al-Mu'ayyad discusses in association with Iblīs are also corporeal forms and subject to perception. These shapes, however, do not bear the potential to develop into the Adamic forms in the manner of the human forms.²⁷¹ In Majlis No. 6 of Volume II, al-Mu'ayyad states that the members of the negative spiritual hierarchy (that is, the *aḍḍād al-dawr*) exemplify the "tenebrous allotment" (*al-ḥazz al-ẓulmānī*), like clay (*ṭīn*) is murky (*ẓulmah*) and contains no light in it. As we shall see in what follows, it is in more than one sense that the followers of Iblīs are entirely corporeal.²⁷²

As mentioned previously, in the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, the defining features of *walāyah* and counter-*walāyah* are most evident in the example of Adam and Iblīs in connection with the "divine trust" of *amānah*. In Majlis No. 9 of Volume II, al-Mu'ayyad provides a commentary on *sūrah* (2: 26),
^cBy it He causes many to stray, and many He leads into the right path; but

²⁷¹ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 59: p. 363, ln. 10-23; Majlis No. 60: pp. 371-375. Volume I. Majlis No. 27: pp. 133-134, ln. 21 and ln. 1-13.

²⁷² Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 6: p. 41, ln. 76-80. See as well, Volume II. Majlis No. 76: pp. 481-482. It is not just that they exemplify the extreme of corporeality; there are also the "coverings" (*aghṭiyyah*) that hinder them, so that they can neither speak in symbols (*rumūz*) nor employ "allusions" (*ishārāt*). In that they are restricted to the exoteric, they are held back from obtaining the spiritual forms (*al-ṣuwar al-naḥsāniyyah*).

He causes not to stray, except those who forsake (the path)²⁷³ in conjunction with the significance of the oath (*ba'yah*) of *Ghadir Khumm*.²⁷³

The meaning of to stray (*al-fusūq*) is to step outside of *al-tā'ah* and the contract of the *ba'yah*: and the *imām* of those who go astray is the one who prescribed going astray, "he broke the command of his Lord" (*sūrah* 18: 50), in the cycle of Adam, which is the first of the cycles (*awwal al-adwār*), and he is Iblīs, may God's curses be upon him, for he violated the *ba'yah* of God. God, may He be praised, stated concerning it: "Behold! We said to the angels, 'Prostrate to Adam': they prostrated except Iblīs. He was one of the Jinns, and he broke the command of his Lord." (*sūrah* 18: 50). Then he is the one who entered its [Paradise's] dwellers (*nazala 'alā sukkāni-hi*) in the last of the cycles, which is the *dawr* of Muḥammad (ṣ), so he violated the *ba'yah* of *Ghadir*, and he became the last on the way of the first (*minhāj al-awwal*), for Iblīs is the *imām* of those who go astray first of all and he is the *imām* of those who go astray last of all.²⁷⁴

In Volume II of the *Majālis*, the significance of Iblīs's refusal lies in the fact that bowing down in prayer (*al-sujūd*) is part of the practice of *tā'ah* to Adam. In this Qur'ānic context, al-Mu'ayyad asserts: "the first direction of prayer (*qiblah*) God, may He be praised, commanded to turn towards is the "living *qiblah*" (*qiblah ḥayy*), Adam."²⁷⁵ In his commentary on (*sūrah* 4: 119), al-Mu'ayyad accounts for Iblīs going astray. Iblīs's refusal to bow down to Adam was the result of his delusion (*iqlāl*) concerning the *ḥudūd Allāh*; Iblīs did not understand that the *ḥudūd* were established as necessary

²⁷³ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 9: pp. 60-61, ln. 80-97.

²⁷⁴ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 9: p. 61, ln. 91-97; Majlis No. 14: p. 85, ln. 29-42; Majlis No. 60: p. 370, ln. 32.

²⁷⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 57: p. 350, ln. 32-33.

intermediaries and therefore, could not impinge upon the purity of God's unity (*ikhhlāṣ tawḥīd*).²⁷⁶ Iblīs's going astray is tantamount to revoking the *tā'ah* due to the *ḥudūd al-dīn* of his time and the *tā'ah* that Adam symbolizes as the first "living *qiblah*". The co-existing negative spiritual hierarchy likewise bears the imprint of the template of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* and in so doing, further emphasizes the irrefutable centrality of their necessary function as intermediaries in al-Mu'ayyad's thought. Those who have separated themselves from the "path of esoteric interpretation" (*al-sabīl fī al-ta'wīl*) are the *imāms* of "going astray" (*a'immaḥ al-ḍalāl*). The *imāms* of "going astray" hinder people on the way to the Afterlife because they reject the adherence to the intermediaries (*al-wasā'it*) and the *ḥudūd*. The *imāms* of "going astray" thereby turn their followers away from the recognition of God's *tawḥīd*.²⁷⁷ Al-Mu'ayyad's theory of counter-*walāyah* strongly underscores the soteriological implications of abrogating the order, placement and prioritization of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* within 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī cosmology.

It is important to note that on the individual level, the Iblisian element within human beings, the "Satanic sperm" (*al-nuṭfah al-shayṭāniyyah*), contains the potential for neglecting the teachings of the *imām* and failing to recognize and acknowledge the *ḥudūd al-dīn* of God's creation necessary for

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: p. 353, ln. 84-87.

²⁷⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 54: p. 266, ln. 12-15. Al-Mu'ayyad provides another example of the *imāms* of "going astray" in conjunction with the Qur'ānic example of the boat (*safīnah*) of the Prophet Nūḥ (Qur'ān (29: 15)). In this context, the waves of "innovation" (*amwāj al-bida'*) and the "errors" (*al-ḍalālāt*) are the *imāms* of "going astray". See Volume I. Majlis No. 25: p. 124, ln. 9-11.

securing salvation in the Afterlife.²⁷⁸ In the human being, the divine religious law (*al-sharī'ah al-ilāhiyyah*) is in the station (*manzilah*) of the womb (*al-arḥām*) in the body. The divine religious law is connected to (*iqtirān*) the "Satanic sperm" of the people of "innovation" (*ahl al-bida'*).²⁷⁹ Al-Mu'ayyad states that the form of Adam (*ṣūrah Ādam*) of their *dawr*, in which human beings are created, permits them to resemble Adam. This resemblance thus allows for their noble souls to obtain learned virtues (*al-faḍā'il al-'ilmiyyah*) and the spiritual lights (*al-anwār al-rūḥāniyyah*).²⁸⁰ Those individuals who incline towards (*hannū*) the Iblis of their *dawr* and become part of his group (*ḥizbi-hi*), however, alter God's creation (*ghayyarū khalq Allāh*).²⁸¹ They are banished from (*intafū 'an*) the Adamic form (*al-ṣūrah al-ādamiyyah*). Those human beings who are favorably inclined towards the Iblis of their epoch are transformed from the Adamic form into the Satanic shapes (*al-ashkāl al-shayṭāniyyah*).²⁸²

In the manner that Muḥammad is the Adam in his cycle, the *waṣī* is the Adam of the cycle at another occasion (i.e., after the Prophet Muḥammad's

²⁷⁸ *Majālis*. Majlis No. 60: p. 384, ln. 99-100.

²⁷⁹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 60: pp. 374-375, ln. 103-123.

²⁸⁰ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 59: pp. 363-364.

²⁸¹ Qur'ān (58: 19) refers to the "party of Satan" (*ḥizb al-Shaytan*).

²⁸² *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 59: pp. 363-365, ln. 10-51. See as well, Majlis No. 60: p. 371, ln. 46-48: Iblis and his followers from the Satans are the *jinn*, "*hum al-jinn aladhīn lā yatashakhṣūna bi ashkhāṣ taqā'u taḥta al-ru'yah ka ashkhāṣ al-ādamiyyīn*"; Volume II. Majlis No. 12: pp. 76-77, ln. 53-70. As well, see Volume I. Majlis No. 27: p. 134, ln. 1-13.

Volume II. Majlis No. 58: pp. 360-361, ln. 115-120. In relation to the earlier discussion of 'Alī's saying, "*Anā al-udhun al-wā'iyyah*", which indicates his station with regard to *al-quwwah al-nāfiqah* as the *waṣī*, al-Mu'ayyad explains that Iblis is defective in this respect, and falsifies wisdom (*ḥikmah*).

death), and so are the *imāms* at their times. They are, in fact, all one.²⁸³

With regard to Adam and the religious birth (*al-wilādah al-dīniyyah*) that occurs on the different levels of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* in each of the prophetic cycles, al-Mu'ayyad mentions: "the Prophet is the Adam in his cycle, from the perspective that the religious birth (*al-wilādah al-dīniyyah*) has its ultimate base in him (*muntahiyyah ilayhi*)".²⁸⁴ It is in fact, the overflowing of the prophet's faculty (*fudālah quwwah al-nabī*) that pours forth onto the souls from the words of God (*kalimāt Allāh*), so that the believers (*al-mū'minīn*) acquire the lights of prophethood (*anwār al-nubuwwah*) through the intermediaries; that is, they become sons through the pious mother (i.e., the *imāms*), and the Prophet becomes (thereby) their father (*bi wāsiṭāt al-umm al-barrah abnā'an, wa al-nabī abā*).²⁸⁵

It is in the course of Majlis No. 15 of Volume I, however, that al-Mu'ayyad addresses more precisely the main points of differentiation between the false *imāms* (*a'immaḥ al-bāṭil*) and the true *imāms* (*a'immaḥ al-ḥaqq*).²⁸⁶ Underlying al-Mu'ayyad's discussion is the disconcerting question

²⁸³ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: pp. 340-341, ln. 59-66.

²⁸⁴ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis 56: p. 343, ln. 11-12.

²⁸⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 77: p. 378, ln. 16-19; (Ḥamīd al-Dīn edition): pp. 375-376, ln. 62-75. Volume II. Majlis No. 48: p. 294, ln. 16-24: "*fa ammā min jahat al-nafs fa-inna ḥujjah ṣāhib al-dawr fī waqti-hi wa ṣāhib kullu 'aṣr min ba'di-hi huwa al-umm al-nafsāniyyah*."

See as well, Volume I. Majlis No. 18: p. 138, ln. 14-17: "*fa nuqūlu inna jamī' mā yaḥṣilu fī 'ālam al-amr min al-ṣuwar al-dīniyyah al-makhlūqah li baqā' al-abad fa min quwwah al-nubuwwah wa ta'thīri-hā. Thumma nuqūlu inna faḍīlah al-nubuwwah wa al-nabī (ṣ) fī inbiṣāṭ anwāri-hi wa ishrāq al-dār al-ākhirah*."

²⁸⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 25: pp. 123-124, ln. 13-19 and ln. 1-21. Also, see Volume I. Majlis No. 82: pp. 406-407, ln. 9-22 and ln. 1-6. At the end of this passage, al-Mu'ayyad states that it is not surprising that one cannot distinguish

of the outward resemblance of the false *imāms* to the true members of the spiritual hierarchy.

because the masters of resemblance (*aṣḥāb al-tamāthīl*) are the false *imāms* (*a'immah al-bāṭil*), who are established opposite to the true *imāms* (*a'immah al-ḥaqq*), and the creation of people (*khalq al-nās*) [only] resembling the [real] creation of God, may He be praised, and they are apparitions (*ashbāḥ*) without souls (*arwāḥ*). Meaning, God did not breath into them the soul of the true life (*rūḥ al-ḥayāt al-ḥaqīqiyyah*) with the designation (*bi naṣṣ*) from the Messenger of God (*ṣ*), and there is no appointment (*lā tawqīf*).²⁸⁷

There is no appointment by God for the “masters of resemblance” to become the “true *imāms*” because they lack the “soul of the true life”, with which God first designated the prophet Adam at the beginning of prophetic history. The absence of souls thus reflects the absolute manner in which the “false *imāms*” are banished from the Adamic form in each cycle of prophetic history. Following this passage in the text, al-Mu'ayyad then sets forth his explanation of the transmission of the soul of life (*rūḥ al-ḥayāt*) in the last cycle of prophetic history, beginning first with the Messenger of God.²⁸⁸ Stating that God first breathed His spirit into the Messenger of God (^{cc}*nafakha Allāh fīhi rūḥ al-ḥayāt*^{cc}) (*sūrah* 38: 71-72), al-Mu'ayyad then explains, based on *sūrah* (42: 52), that the revelation (*al-wahy*) Muḥammad received is the spirit (*al-rūḥ*) that God breathed into him. Muḥammad is the

between the “true *imām*” and the “false *imām*” in the *dār al-dunyā'*, because the two of them are the same in terms of corporeality (*“wa humā fī al-jismāniyyāt mithlān”*).

²⁸⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 25: p. 124, ln. 18-21.

²⁸⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 25: p. 124, ln. 20-22.

first in his time and in his epoch to receive the *rūḥ*.²⁸⁹ According to al-Mu'ayyad, until the hour of resurrection (*al-sā'ah*), God designates the *rūḥ* for the succession of *imāms* who follow after the first three Shī'ī *imāms*, 'Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. The Prophet designates 'Alī (through the appointment of *naṣṣ*), in the same manner that 'Alī designates Ḥasan, one *imām* after the other, and all by a designation that implies that the same *rūḥ* is also in them. "These possessors of the sanctified souls (*aṣḥāb al-arwāḥ al-muqaddasah*) have their ultimate basis in the Holy Spirit (*al-muntahiyah ilā al-rūḥ al-amīn*), the messenger (*al-mubligh*) from the Lord of the Worlds, may He be praised."²⁹⁰ Al-Mu'ayyad equates the Holy Spirit with the "soul of true life" but at times, it seems that he maintains more than one position with regard to the transmission of the *rūḥ* or the exclusivity of its transmission as revelation *per se*.²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 25: pp. 124-125, ln. 20-22 and ln. 1-5.

²⁹⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 25: p. 125, ln. 1-5. Also, see Volume II. Majlis No. 57: pp. 346-347, ln. 71-86, which culminates in a discussion of the *rūḥ al-quḍus* that God blew into His prophets and His *awliyā'* by the means of *ta'yīd*.

See Landolt. "Ghazālī." (1991): 48, n. 112 on the Shī'ī *ḥadīth* concerning the "spirit" (*al-rūḥ*) in connection with Qur'ān (17: 82).

On the *rūḥ al-quḍus*, see Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Jāmi' al-Hikmatayn* p. 16; *Zād al-Musāfirin* pp. 472-475; Sijistānī. *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah* pp. 119, 121, 165-171; *Kitāb al-Yanābi'*. Trans., P. Walker: pp. 77-79, 109-110.

²⁹¹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 70: pp. 293-294, ln. 20-22 and ln. 1-6; Majlis No. 75: p. 365, ln. 8-18. Volume II. Majlis No. 48: p. 294, ln. 16-26. Volume II. Majlis No. 44: p. 263, ln. 48-51. For example, in Majlis No. 44 of Volume II, when the *sharī'ah* is viewed as one of the benefits of revelation, its outer aspect is not restricted from anyone and it is not concealed, whereas its inner aspect (equated with the soul and its world) is confined to its people (*ahli-hi*) and therefore, is forbidden from those who are not worthy of it (*mustaḥaqqi-hi*). Volume III. Majlis No. 93: p. 264; Majlis No. 2: pp. 10-11, ln. 8-13 and ln. 1-14: the spiritual human faculty (*al-quwwah al-insāniyyah al-nafsāniyyah*) is acquired from (*mustafādah*) the World of Intellect and the World of Soul.

Consequently, with respect to shape (*shakl*) and form (*sūrah*), the *imām* of “going astray” is like a counterfeit (*muzawwar*) of the *imām al-ḥaqq*. Excepting the similarity in their outward appearances, the “true *imām*” possesses an inner attribute: “the spiritual faculty (*al-quwwah al-nafsāniyyah*) is known as the “Holy Spirit, through which he [i.e., the “true *imām*”] speaks, thinks, hears, apprehends and expounds from the *al-dār al-ākhirah*”. Al-Mu’ayyad then simply states, with the proof text of *sūrah* (7:

Landolt. “Ghazālī and ‘Religionswissenschaft’.” (1991): 25, n. 24, (citing *Mishkāt al-Anwār*. Editor, ‘Afifī. Cairo, 1382/1964: pp. 79-81); 27, on Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad and the theme of *ittiṣāl / wāṣilūn* in conjunction with the “prophetic power (*al-quwwa al-nabawiyya*)”; G. Böwering. “From the Word of God to the Vision of God.” In, *The World of Ibn Tufayl*. Editor, L. E. Conrad. Leiden, 1996: 218 (citing P. Nwyia. *Trois oeuvres inédites*. Beirut, 1972: pp. 56). Böwering notes that Ibn ‘Aṭā’ discusses the “preparation of Muḥammad’s soul (*nafs*) for the reception of revelation”, for “In its nature (*ḥilqatan*), his soul is similar to the soul of other human beings, but in its reality (*ḥaqīqatan*), it is different from theirs, because it is a soul that has been sanctified by the lights of prophethood, fortified by the vision of the [spiritual] realities, and firmly established in the nearest place and the highest station.”

See in particular, B. Radtke. “How Can Man Reach the Mystical Union?” In, *The World of Ibn Tufayl*. Editor, L. E. Conrad. Leiden, 1996: 165-194. Radtke (*ibid.*: 187-188, citing al-Sarrāj. *Luma’*, p. 435: 5-6, and Sulamī. *Ghalaṭat*, p. 194: 2-3). Radtke also points out how the Sufi al-Sarrāj (d. 378 A.H./988 C.E.) discusses matters verging on the unorthodox currents in the Sufism of al-Sarrāj’s day, concerning the *rūḥ*, but does not mention the “subscribers” of such views by name. On p. 188, Radtke notes that “The *rūḥ* is created, but the *rūḥ al-quḍus* is of the essence of God”, and “The unbeliever has one *rūḥ*, the believer three; the prophets and particular friends of God have five.” Radtke also indicates here in this note that the Shī‘ī *Ghulāt* believed that the soul had five parts (citing Halm’s article, “Das ‘Buch der Schatten’.” *Der Islam* (1981) 58: 26, n. 37). Radtke mentions that Ghazālī’s *Mishkāt al-anwār* lists five souls (citing pp. 76-77 of the ‘Afifī edition). See in addition, *Mishkāt al-Anwār*. Editor, D. Buchman. Provo, 1998: pp. 12; 20; 38: the fifth level is associated with the prophets and the saints: “The fifth is the holy prophetic spirit (*al-rūḥ al-quḍī al-nabawiyyah*) that is singled out for the prophets and some of the friends of God. Within it are disclosed flashes of the unseen, the properties of the next world, and some of the knowledge of the dominion of the heavens and the earth, or, rather, some of the lordly knowledge that the rational and reflective spirits (cannot reach).”

179), “the false *imāms* and their followers are unlike that”.²⁹² It is through this final set of distinctions concerning the “true *imāms*” and the “false *imāms*” that al-Mu’ayyad underscores the fact that the *al-quwwah al-nafsāniyyah* sets apart the members of the spiritual hierarchy embodied in the “sphere of *walāyah*” for two reasons: 1). These individuals’ acquisition of the spiritual faculty is analogous with the reception of the *rūḥ al-quḍus*; and 2). Al-Mu’ayyad is careful to present the transmission of the *rūḥ* from the Prophet Muḥammad to ‘Alī in connection with the tradition of *Ghadīr Khumm* in order to skirt elements of *ghuluww* and “incarnationism” (*ḥulūl*) in his Imamology. The transmission does not refer to the breathing in of the *rūḥ* of natural life (*al-ḥayāt al-ṭabī‘ah*). Al-Mu’ayyad thereby articulates in clear terms that the transmission of the *rūḥ* is spiritual (through the appointment of *naṣṣ*) rather than through physical or biological descentance.²⁹³

With regard to the transmission of the *rūḥ* connected to *ta’yīd*, al-Mu’ayyad reintroduces his earlier commentary on *sūrah* (33: 6), “His wives are their mothers”, in conjunction with “the prophet is closer to the believers than their own souls”, and the *ḥadīth* of *Ghadīr Khumm*, “and

²⁹² *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 35: p. 199, ln. 99-109: “*al-quwwah al-nafsāniyyah al-musamāt rūḥ al-quḍus allatī bi-hā ‘an al-dār al-ākhirah yantiqu wa ya’qulu wa yasma’u wa a’immah al-dalāl wa man tābi’u-hum min al-dalāl bi khilāf dhālika.*”

See as well, Volume III. Majlis No. 92: p. 262, ln. 16-20.

²⁹³ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 56: p. 346, ln. 75-79.

‘Alī is his master’²⁹⁴. In succession, the pure *imāms* (*al-a’immah al-ṭāhirīn*) receive *ta’yīd*, until the time of the Hour (*al-sā’ah*), when it is transmitted from the father to the son (*muntaqalān ilā an taqūmu al-sā’at ilā walad min wālid*). Therefore, each *imām* in his epoch is like Muḥammad, in that he is ‘closer to the believers than their own souls’²⁹⁵.

Lest his discussion of the “true *imāms*” and the *imāms* of “going astray” be misinterpreted as the dualism of the Zoroastrians, al-Mu’ayyad quotes from the *‘Ālim*:²⁹⁶

The *‘Ālim* stated: since there is a group (*qawm*) they call the “Dualists” (*al-ṭhanawīyyah*), who allege ‘two gods for worship (*sūrah* 16: 51)²⁹⁷-- one of the two created (*yuhdathu*) the light and the other created the darkness (*al-ḡulmah*), according to their claim-- there is (also) in comparison to them in the *sharī’ah* of the Prophet, in his community a group resembling them in their doctrines and they are the unifiers between his *waṣī* and between his opponent (*ḡidd*) in the doctrine of love of the two of them (*maḥabbati-himā*) and piety (*al-tadayyun*) for the two of them. Most certainly, the *waṣī* is the master of the light due to his union with the light of *ta’yīd* and the divine material (*li ittiṣāli-hi bi nūr al-ta’yīd wa al-*

²⁹⁴ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 33: pp. 183-184, ln. 39-54. In the introduction to this lecture, al-Mu’ayyad states that he has already explained before about the account of the “*al-ummahāt al-dīniyyah*” (p. 183, ln. 12).

²⁹⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 33: p. 184, ln. 45-48.

²⁹⁶ See *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 21: p. 103, ln. 1-17. On p. 103, ln. 7-10, al-Mu’ayyad refers to “some of the people of wisdom” (*ba’d ahl al-ḥikmah*), who stated that only light exists and darkness has no basis, which is, in fact, just the opposite of what the “Dualists” believe. It is in his commentary on this “Monist” point of view that al-Mu’ayyad compares the sun to the prophet and the light (*al-nūr*) to his *waṣī*. The light is like the *waṣī* because the source of the light is from the sun, the prophet.

In Volume I. Majlis No. 39: p. 193, ln. 12-13, al-Mu’ayyad quotes a Prophetic *ḥadīth* that states that the *Qadariyyah* are like the “Zoroastrians” of the Muslim community. In Volume II. Majlis No. 20: p. 114, ln. 66-67, where al-Mu’ayyad explains how the Zoroastrians refer to Iblīs as Ahriman. In Volume V: folio 16a, al-Mu’ayyad refers to “the Zoroastrians in India up until today” (*al-Majūs bi al-Hind ilā al-yawm*).

māddah al-ilāhiyyah), and his *didd* is the master of the *ẓulmah*. God the Most High stated: “God is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He leads them forth into light (*sūrah* 2: 257)”.²⁹⁷ The darknesses (*al-ẓulumāt*) are the tenebrous, corporeal bodies (*al-ajsām al-muẓlimah*) that do not have souls in them; the mute letters (*al-hurūf al-kharsā’*), unintelligible sounds (*al-‘ajmā’*), that do not have any meaning to them; the world of nature and turbidity (*al-kadar*) that possesses no purity (*safā’*) in it. The light (*al-nūr*) is the noble souls (*al-arwāḥ al-sharīfah*), through which the corporeal bodies are illuminated. It is the subtle meanings, by which speech is adorned, and it is the world of purity and brightness (*‘ālam al-ṣafā’ wa al-ḍiyā’*) that concludes it (*bi-hi al-khitām*).²⁹⁷

God’s “Beautiful Names” and the Hudūd al-Dīn

The image of the mute letters associated with the *didd* and the light equated to the noble souls that illuminate corporeal bodies from the passage cited above signifies how the *ẓāhir* without any other aspect to it except the corporeal is like dead matter; that is, it has no *bāṭin*, the very soul that gives life to it. One discussion al-Mu’ayyad presents in the course of Majlis No. 63 of Volume I helps to clarify another aspect of the reception of the light associated with *ta’yīd* as well as its source and point of origin. Drawing upon the example of the Prophet Muḥammad’s “Night Journey” (*‘al-Isrā’*)

²⁹⁷ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 14: p. 85, ln. 29-42; Majlis No. 37: p. 209, ln. 29.

See J. Van Ess. *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*. Volume III. Berlin/New York, 1991: 435-436.

(*sūrah* 17), al-Mu'ayyad provides a commentary on the meaning of the mythical steed, the *Burāq*, which the Prophet Muḥammad rode on his Night Journey. According to al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation, the *Burāq* is the "flashing light" (*al-nūr al-bāriq*) from the World of Intellect and Soul. This flashing light, characterized by its quick and dazzling brightness, flashes over the *ṣāhib al-sharī'ah* from the influences (*āthār*) of the upper ranks of religion (*al-ḥudūd al-'ulwiyyah*); that is, Intellect and Soul.²⁹⁸

In the same lecture, al-Mu'ayyad discusses the Prophet Muḥammad as the "absolute human being".²⁹⁹ With respect to his Adamic form (*al-shakl al-ādami*), the Prophet Muḥammad is a man (*al-bashar*) but the Prophet also resembles the angelic beings because as concerns what may be inferred to be the subtlety of his soul, he consubstantiates with the substance of the angels.³⁰⁰ In this context, al-Mu'ayyad clearly defines the concept of the *insān muṭlaq* as the Prophet and those who replace him after his time (the *awṣiyā'* and the *imāms*).³⁰¹ In the same manner that mankind (*al-bashar*) has dominion over the animals (*al-hayawān*) due to the "allotment of rational speech" (*ḥaẓẓi-hi al-manṭiqī*) they possess, the *al-insān al-muṭlaq* is in a relationship of domination over human beings in general (*al-bashar*) through

²⁹⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 63: p. 306, ln. 16-19. See Volume I. Majlis No. 65: pp. 317-318, ln. 20 and ln. 1: "*ilm aṣḥāb al-sharā'i al-mu'ayyadīn min 'inda Allāh subḥānuhu*." A very similar passage occurs in Volume II. Majlis No. 43: p. 257, ln. 86-93.

²⁹⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 63: p. 307, ln. 4-11.

³⁰⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 63: p. 307, ln. 13-17.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*: ln. 12-17; Volume II. Majlis No. 76: p. 482, ln. 60-62.

the faculty of his “divine support” and his “divine allotment” (*ḥaẓẓi-hi al-ilāhi*).³⁰²

In Volume II of the *Majālis*, al-Mu’ayyad explains that the *waṣī* and the *imāms* descended from him, “up until our time, are the words of God (*kalimāt Allāh*), the ‘living speaking-prophets’”.³⁰³ Al-Mu’ayyad’s distinctions between human beings in general and the “absolute human being” permit for further consideration of the function of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* as the names of God (*asmā’ Allāh*) in terms of Ismā’īlī soteriology. In Majlis Nos. 43 and 71, 73, and 93 of Volume I of the *Majālis*, al-Mu’ayyad equates the names of God with the *ḥudūd* in general, and the prophets in particular. Once established, the “living speaking-prophets” (*al-aḥyā’ al-nuṭaqā’*) are tantamount to God’s “Beautiful names” (*asmā’u-hu al-ḥusnā*).³⁰⁴ As well, in a passage from Majlis No. 43 of Volume I, the “names” are the prophets, the *awṣiyā’* and the “infallible *imāms*” (*al-a’immah al-ma’ṣūmīn*).³⁰⁵

³⁰² *Ibid.*: ln. 12-17.

³⁰³ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 73: p. 464, ln. 94-95.

³⁰⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 71: p. 346, ln. 4-14. Volume III. Majlis No. 99: p. 282, ln. 14-17. The latter lecture discusses the *ḥudūd Allāh* as the “living speaking-prophets” in conjunction with the names and words (*kalimāt*) Adam learned from God, based upon Qur’ān (10: 64) and (2: 37).

Feki. *Les Idées religieuses*. 1978: 93. Feki indicated that in Volume IV, Majlis Nos. 464-465 and 468, al-Mu’ayyad discusses the unity of God and His “Divine Names”. MS. 535 (Ar.). Volume IV. Majlis 64: folios 152b-153a, ln. 11-12 and ln. 15: two references to the *al-aḥyā’ al-nuṭaqā’*.

Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Vajh-i Dīn*. Editor, G. R. Aavani. Tehran, 1977: p. 127, ln. 18-20; p. 131, ln. 14-17: each rank is the “name of God” (*nām-i khudā’*) in their respective time (*zamān*). Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī. *Sayr va Sulūk*. Editor/Trans. S. J. Badakhchani. London, 1998: p. 39, para. 29.

³⁰⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 43: p. 212, ln. 14-19.

The main purpose of the *ḥudūd* as the names of God is to provide individual practitioners with the intermediation or means of access to God Himself (without any tinge of *tashbīḥ* or *taʿtīl*, it must be noted) so necessary for their redemption and salvation.³⁰⁶ As al-Muʿaḥḥad notes, “the one who turns his face away from them is ruined and destroyed”.³⁰⁷ Though the “living speaking prophets” are the *ḥudūd al-dīn*, in which no change (*al-taghayyur*) or alteration (*al-tabdīl*) occurs, their negative counterparts, the false *imām* (*imām al-bāṭil*) and the counterfeit religious scholars (*ʿulamāʾ zūr*), coexist as forgeries of the true spiritual hierarchy.³⁰⁸ While the *ʿulamāʾ al-dīn* (i.e., the *ḥudūd* as a whole) are likened to the sign of mercy (*āyah al-raḥmah*) and the false religious scholars (*ʿulamāʾ al-bāṭil*) are tantamount to the sign of punishment (*āyah al-ʿadhāb*), it does not matter if an individual turns from one *ḥadd* to another *ḥadd* in *tāʿah*, as long as he does not turn to the *ʿulamāʾ al-bāṭil*.³⁰⁹

In another passage from Volume I, al-Muʿaḥḥad provides a brief commentary on the “signs” of God which are apparent (the verses of the Qurʾān) and the “signs” of God which are hidden (the *imāms*).³¹⁰ The *imāms*

³⁰⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 73: pp. 354-355, ln. 15-18 and ln. 1-14. Volume II. Majlis No. 36: p. 204, ln. 7-13: the *ḥudūd dīn Allāh* are the *al-aḥyāʾ al-nuṭaqāʾ*, where the “silent” (*al-ṣāmit*) points to the “speaking” (*al-nāṭiq*), and *vice versa*. See as well, Volume II. Majlis No. 37: pp. 208-ff.; Majlis No. 44: pp. 265-266, ln. 95-114.

³⁰⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 71: p. 346, ln. 4-6.

³⁰⁸ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 99: p. 282, ln. 14-20. See as well, Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Vajh-i Dīn* p. 129, ln. 13, on the *imām-i bāṭil*.

³⁰⁹ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 99: p. 283, ln. 2-6.

³¹⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 22: pp. 104-106, ln. 11-14 and ln. 1-ff. Also, see Volume II. Majlis No. 37: p. 211, ln. 1: the name “*al-Raḥmān*” is a lower rank (*adnā rutbah*) than the name “*al-Raḥīm*”. In another context, the name “*al-*

are to the Qur'ānic verses what the spirits are to the bodies, without which the verses themselves would simply be like lifeless matter. As al-Mu'ayyad further elaborates:

The names are signs (*a'lāman*) to use as a means to the Named (*al-musamā*) and the names are of two kinds: names spelt (*muḥajjāh*), composed of letters any writer writes and erases, and the living (*ḥayyah*), speaking (*nāṭiqah*), rational (*ʿāqilah*) and noble (*sharīfah*) names, like the prophets, and the *awṣiyā'* and the infallible *imāms* (*al-a'immaḥ al-ma'ṣūmīn*), peace be upon them, who are the signs of the Afterlife (*a'lām al-ākhirah*), and the proofs (*adillah*) of God's unity (*al-tawḥīd*) and the intermediary between the servant (*al-'abd*) and the Worshipped (*al-ma'būd*).³¹¹

In the Majālis, a number of other interpretations of key Qur'ānic passages lends further weight to the names attributed to God as well as the causes lying behind the progressive movement towards perfection (*al-kamāl*) that permeates each level and realm of God's creation. In Majlis No. 44 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad provides a commentary on *sūrah* (1: 2), "Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds."³¹² Perhaps the most significant of al-Mu'ayyad's statements is the one where he explains: "We judged that this movement is not the movement caused by imperfection and the desire for

*Raḥmān*³⁰ is considered as higher than the name, *al-Raḥīm*³⁰. We shall direct our attention to al-Mu'ayyad's discussion of this point of distinction between the two names of God in the following section of this chapter. At this juncture, it is also important to note that Nāṣir-i Khusraw provides a commentary on these two names of God. Unlike al-Mu'ayyad's commentary, however, Nāṣir-i Khusraw does not include a discussion of the importance of the name, *al-Raḥmān*³⁰ with respect to the *Qā'im*. See Vajih-i Dīn pp. 124-129.

³¹¹ Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 43: p. 212.

³¹² Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 44: pp. 216-217.

more (*al-istizādah*), but rather the movement of praise (*ḥarakah al-shukr*) to the One who bestowed (*an'ama*) perfection (*bi al-kamāl*).³¹³ Each of the different realms constitutes a world that subsists due to the praise (*al-ḥamd*) of God. Al-Mu'ayyad also alludes to the fact that in their existence, the different realms are based on the perfection of the Creator and His Glory (*al-mustanadah fī wujūdi-hā ilā kamāli al-mubdi'i wa majdi-hi*).³¹⁴ In Majlis No. 76 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad puts forth an important discussion concerning Intellect as the First Origination (*al-mubda' al-auwal*) in conjunction with a commentary on *sūrah* (28: 88), “Everything is destroyed except for His face”.³¹⁵ Al-Mu'ayyad states: “in actuality, the face of God (*wajh Allāh*) is the First Origination (*al-mubda' al-auwal*)”.³¹⁶

This same principle of perfection pertains to the Universal Intellect and God's *ibdā'*. Furthermore, al-Mu'ayyad's explanation of the cause of movement is one in which the “Praise” of the Universal Intellect is situated

³¹³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 44: p. 216.

³¹⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 44: p. 217. Also referring to Qur'ān (51: 20-21).

See as well, Volume I. Majlis No. 14: p. 116. As in the earlier examples of how everything in creation is in “pairs”, al-Mu'ayyad explains that rest (*sukūn*) and motion (*ḥarakah*) constitute another such “pair”, as does the spoken word, which is composed of “silent” (*sākin*) and “moving” (*mutaharrik*) letters.

³¹⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 76: pp. 372-373. The significance of this movement—that is, how Creation is linked to the movement of Intellect (i.e., the “Pen”), who only moves in order to praise its Creator—is discussed in part in the following works: Landolt, “Ghazālī and ‘Religionswissenschaft’.” (1991): 45; P. Walker, trans. *The Wellsprings of Wisdom*. Salt Lake City, 1994. (Intro.): 18-19.

³¹⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 76: pp. 372-373, ln. 21 and ln. 1-16. In relation to the transmission of *māddah* to the ranks of religion, this passage occurs in connection with al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on 'Alī's saying from the *Khutbat al-Bayān* (p. 372, ln. 17-20), “I am the face of God. I am the hand of God.”

at a rank beneath the transcendence and ultimate perfection of God and therefore, does not impinge upon His *tawhīd*.³¹⁷

The *‘Ālim* stated: since³¹⁸ intellect is tantamount to what we mentioned about it concerning perfection (*al-tamām*), it is governed from one perspective, by movement (*bi ḥukm al-ḥarakah*) and from the other, by rest (*al-sukūn*). But the rule of movement is not because its movement is to obtain an objective (*ghāyah*) or to fulfill a will (*bulūgh irādah*), because with respect to not moving to a goal, it is due to perfection. Rather, its movement is in order to praise the Benefactor (*al-mun‘im*) who originated it (*abda‘a-hu*). As for the rule of rest, it is due to the fact that it is free from want (*al-ghaniyy*)³¹⁹ and those beneath it are in need (*al-fuqarā’*). As for our statement that its movement is in praise of the Benefactor who originated it, it [means] the emanation of the soul from [Him], all at one time³²⁰, like God the Most High’s statement: ^c“And Our Command is but a single word,- like the twinkling of an eye”³²¹ (*sūrah* 54: 50). [The Soul emanates as one] Perfect (*tāmmah*) in its potentiality, deficient (*nāqishah*) in its actuality, since it is not possible that the one existent from it [i.e., Intellect] be the same as it.³²¹

³¹⁷ See Landolt. “Ghazālī and ‘Religionswissenschaft’.” (1991): 45: “Furthermore, if the Intellect does, then, play the role of the ‘Lord’ in a sense, it is at the same time also the Prime ‘Worshipper’: ‘gushing forth’ from the divine Order (*amr*) or the creative Logos (*al-kalima*) with which it is, in fact, ‘united’ (*muttaḥid*) according to Sijistānī, it is also the one that performs the prime ‘act of worship’ (*‘ibāda*) by celebrating the *shahāda* (*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*) at the very center of the cosmos to be.”

P. Walker. *Early Philosophical Shiism*. 1993: 82-86 (on the term *abda‘a*).

³¹⁸ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 16: p. 48, ln. 17: MS. 532 (Ar.): folio 48, ln. 10: “*inna al-‘aql lammā kāna bi al-mathābah*”.

³¹⁹ See Corbin. *Trilogie ismaélienne* p. 62, n. 124, with regard to Sijistānī’s *Kitāb al-Yanābī’* and the term *ghunyah* used in connection with Intellect. See H. Landolt, trans. *Kashf al-Mahjūb*. In, *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*. Oxford, 2001. Volume II: 79, n. 29.

³²⁰ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 16: p. 49, ln. 2-3: “*fa hiya inbi‘āth al-naḥs min-hu daf‘ah wāḥidah*.”

³²¹ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 16: pp. 48-49, ln. 17-19 and ln. 1-12.

The praise consists in the existence of all existents-- from the World of Intellect, the world of the celestial spheres, to the world of the body-- due to the noble name (*al-ism al-sharīf*) of God, *Allāh*, who is “the Lord of the worlds” (*sūrah* 1: 2). The human being is the produced existent (*mawlūd*) from all of these realms and serves as a proof (*dalīl*) of all of them.³²² In order to clarify this particular correlation, al-Mu’ayyad explains that the human being possesses density (*al-kathāfah*) from the world of the body and its movement is derived from the world of the celestial spheres, which is the source of movements (*ma’dan al-ḥarakāt*). In an analogous manner, the World of Intellect is the source of the intelligence and reflection (*al-fikrah*) that separates the human being from the animals. It is the *al-quwwah al-nafsāniyyah* that permits the *al-insān al-muṭlaq* in particular to hold a unique dominion over the created realm, for as al-Mu’ayyad explains:³²³

the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*, who is the Messenger (ṣ) and the one who takes his place after him, is the human being of that world [= the divine or spiritual world], subjugating the species of mankind thanks to the faculty of “divine support” (*quwwah al-ta’yīd*) that he has from that world, just as mankind subjugates the animal species, so that they utilize them as a tool (*ālah*) for their souls, just as mankind employs animals as a tool for himself.³²⁴

When “born” of Universal Soul, the *al-insān al-muṭlaq* reflects the essential perfection of Soul.³²⁵

³²² *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 37: p. 210, ln. 5-12.

³²³ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 37: p. 210, ln. 7-15.

³²⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 63: p. 307, ln. 4-11.

Thus, since there is perfection in her (i.e., Soul's) capacity [due to her essence], the second creation (*al-khalq al-thānī*), which subsists by means of the heavenly spheres and the composite [earthly] matters—that is to say, the absolute human being, such as the prophets, *awṣiyā'* and *imāms*—came out of her [or due to her essential capacity] as an even picture and a perfect creation, reflecting [the essential perfection of] the Master of the compositions [i.e., the Demiurge, Soul herself—her creation or action being the “inverted picture”, i.e, the world of the heaven and the earth], who is the “even picture” [in the first place], and the first creation, and the one that emanated from the Intellect. ^{cc}As we originated the first creation, so shall we bring it back again³²⁵ (*sūrah* 21: 104).³²⁶

In Majlis No. 36 of Volume I, one can see the elements of al-Mu'ayyad's prophetic anthropology at work, especially with regard to his understanding of the relationships between the microcosm and macrocosm and individual soul and Universal Soul.³²⁷ Al-Mu'ayyad explains that the human being, in the allotment of his soul (*bi ḥaẓẓ nafsi-hi*), is a trace (*athar*) of the traces (*āthār*) of Universal Soul.³²⁸ As noted in the previous section of this chapter, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the human being may obtain the traces of both the World of Soul and the World of Intellect.³²⁹ The form of the human being provides a clear proof that the true human being is “born” from the Universal Soul, which is the ^{cc}Heavens and the Earth and what is between them³³ (*sūrah* 50: 38). In this context, ^{cc}what is between them³³ reflects

³²⁵ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 17: p. 51.

³²⁶ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 16: p. 49, ln. 9-12.

³²⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 36: p. 177.

³²⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 36: p. 176.

³²⁹ In particular, see *Majālis*. Volume I ('Abd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 31: p. 153, ln. 4-14 (the text in the Ghālib edition appears in Volume I: p. 133, ln. 5-14).

Soul's impression (*naqshu-hā*), "for from this perspective, it is capable of its resemblance (*mumāthilati-hā*) in its actions".³³⁰ In a passage that emphasizes the complementary ranks of the prophet and his *waṣī*, al-Mu'ayyad states:

If it is established that the human being is "born" of the Universal Soul, established from it [i.e., Soul] are the impressions of the upper and lower world (*nuqūsh al- 'ālam 'ulū'i-hi wa sufli-hi*). The true human being (*al-insān al-ḥaqīqī*), and true child of the Universal Soul (*mawlūd al-nafs al-kulliyah al-ḥaqīqī*) is the Messenger of God and the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*.³³¹

Having discussed al-Mu'ayyad's interpretations of *walāyah* and his typologies of the *imām* in Parts I and II of Chapter Four, we will now direct our attention to al-Mu'ayyad's refutations against the *Ghulāt* and the *Muqaṣṣirūn* in the final section of Part II.

³³⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 36: p. 177, ln. 10-11.

³³¹ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 36: p. 177, ln. 9-14.

Chapter Four: The “Sphere of *Walāyah*”
 Part II: Fātimid Ismā‘īlī Interpretations of *Walāyah* and the *Awliyā’ Allāh*
 Section c: Al-Mu‘ayyad’s Refutations against the *Ghulāt* and the *Muqassirūn*

Who are the “friends of God” and what sets them apart and distinguishes them from the rest of human society? In each time, the *al-insān al-muṭlaq* is the one unique individual (*fard wāḥid*) in the “horizons” (*al-āfāq*), upon whom the name of humanness (*al-insāniyyah*) applies without restriction.³³² The proximity (*qurb*) of those from the believers nearest to this particular individual, however, is not a proximity to this individual’s body. It is the proximity of being the closest to the center of humanity (*markaz al-insāniyyah*).³³³

In every epoch (*‘aṣr*) and time (*zamān*), there is one “absolute human being” (*al-insān al-muṭlaq*), and he is the prophet (*ṣ*) in his time, the *waṣī* in his time, and the *imām* in his time. Everyone who draws close to him in religious proximity (*qurbah dīniyyah*) and resembles him, as regards his knowledge (*‘ilmi-hi*) and his certitude (*yaqīni-hi*), is most worthy of the mark of humanity (*mīsam al-insāniyyah*) and is furthest from the species of brutish animals (*jīns al-bahīmiyyah al-ḥayāwāniyyah*).³³⁴

In Majlis No. 18 of Volume I, al-Mu‘ayyad refers to how some of the *Ghulāt* prioritize ‘Alī over the Prophet Muḥammad. This lecture’s discussion

³³² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 48: p. 235.

³³³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 48: p. 235, ln. 9-10.

³³⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 56: pp. 275-276, ln. 19-21 and ln. 1-2.

of species (*al-jins*) is significant for understanding al-Mu'ayyad's prophetic anthropology, where the prophets are at the upper-limit of the species of the human being. Al-Mu'ayyad explains that each species, the animal (*al-hayawān*), plant (*al-nabāt*), and mineral (*al-jamād*) species, possesses one thing that is at the final point or upper limit (*al-ghāyah*) of the species.³³⁵ Employing a beautiful image in his commentary on the species of the human being, al-Mu'ayyad explains that the red ruby (*al-yāqūt al-aḥmar*), which is from the species of dense, dark stones (*al-ḥajar al-kathīf al-muḥḍam*), provides an example of the one thing that is at the pinnacle of its species.³³⁶

God had distinguished it, even though it was a stone, and He granted to it the power of the influence of the sun as a tincture (*ṣibghah*) and a light; so, from this we infer about the stations of the prophets (*maqāmāt al-anbiyā'*), whom God the Most High chose from mankind (*al-bashar*), even though they are men, He colored them with the tincture of His religion and granted to them the power of His messengership and the bearing of His "divine trust" (*ḥaml al-amānati-hi*).³³⁷

As addressed previously in this chapter, each member of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* is capable of perceiving the *imām* in accordance with their capacity and

³³⁵ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 86: p. 247, ln. 2-15; Volume II. Majlis No. 31: p. 173, ln. 29-33.

³³⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 18: pp. 87-ff.

See Sijistāni. *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah* p. 41; P. Walker. *Early Philosophical Shiism*. Cambridge, 1993: 109.

³³⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition): Majlis No. 18: p. 87, ln. 16-20; Majlis No. 99: p. 495. Volume II. Majlis No. 31: pp. 172-174, ln. 11-49; Majlis No. 72: p. 456, ln. 89-93. *Ṣibghah* is a Qur'ānic term, from Qur'ān (2: 138): "Our religion takes its hue from God and who can give it a better hue than God."³³

This passage may be cross-referenced with Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Jāmi' al-Hikmatayn* pp. 107-ff, where the gradations of the spiritual hierarchy are equated with ever-increasingly purer and more refined substances.

what is limited to their rank and proximity. Al-Mu'ayyad suggests in conjunction with *sūrah* (7: 198), “You will see them looking at you but they see not”, that there likewise exists those individuals who are incapable of the “vision” of the *imām*; that is, the internal and spiritual recognition of the *imām* on the microcosmic level.³³⁸ In Majlis No. 33 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad articulates in clearer terms the status of the individual who is in the “horizons of its favor [preference]” (*āfāq faḍlati-hi*) of his *ḥadd*.³³⁹ In this particular lecture, he clarifies his earlier statements on how each species contains an individual who is at the upper end of the species as well as his theory of how one member of each potential rank (*ḥadd bi al-quwwah*) may acquire another rank in actuality (*ḥadd bi al-fi'l*). The *ḥadīth* is also taken by al-Mu'ayyad to refer to recognizing the *imām* who is the apparent and pure infallible *imām* (both *ẓāhir* and *ma'sūm*) and one who is the pure infallible *imām*. The pure infallible *imām* (*al-imām al-ma'sūm*), who is in the horizon (*āfāq*) of *wiṣāyah*, may fill the place (*sād al-masad*) of the *waṣī* in terms of rank (*al-rutbah*).³⁴⁰

³³⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: pp. 162, 164.

³³⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: p. 162, ln. 18-21.

At this juncture, please take note of the passage that appears in Volume I. Majlis No. 48: p. 235, ln. 3-12, concerning the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*, who is the one distinct individual in the horizons (*fard wāḥid fī al-āfāq*), as well as another passage from Volume II. Majlis No. 25: p. 139.

³⁴⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: p. 163, ln. 1-2. See as well, Volume II. Majlis No. 7: p. 46, ln. 58-63, for al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on Qur'ān (17: 12): “*ja'alnā marātib al-wiṣāyah hiya mamthūl al-qamar mahjūbah bi jaliyyati-hā 'an abṣār al-nāzirīn*, “*ja'alnā ayata al-nahār mubṣiratan*”, *ayya marātib al-nubuwwah al-risālah allatī hiya mamthūl al-shams mukasshafah lā sitr 'alayhā*.”

The chain of benefits entailed in *ta'yīd*, which links the upper ranks to the lower ranks and brings each potential rank to its actuality, may also be understood in relation to the motif of the hidden and the apparent in al-Mu'ayyad's thought. As based on a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad, "Blessed (*tūbā*) is the one who saw me, and blessed is the one who saw the one who saw me", al-Mu'ayyad explains that this particular *ḥadīth* could not possibly imply that the enemy of the Prophet (*'adūwu-hu*) would be capable of seeing the Prophet in the same exact way that his friend (*walī'u-hu*) perceives him.³⁴¹ According to al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation, the meaning of the vision constitutes one of directing the "vision of the souls" to his soul without applying the "vision of bodies" (*ru'yah al-ashkhāṣ*) to his figure or person (*li shakhṣi-hi*).³⁴² The benefits of the *ḥadīth*, "Blessings to the one who sees me", are also passed down to the lower ranks of the *da'wah*, to the believers who follow the *imāms* in *tā'ah*.³⁴³

The views maintained by the *Ghulāt* provide further occasion for al-Mu'ayyad to dwell upon the theme of the outward resemblance of human beings in general and the figure of the *imām*. There are also a number of passages in the *Majālis* that allow for addressing very briefly the question of al-Mu'ayyad's familiarity with mediaeval Sufi doctrines on the *awliyā' Allāh* and the concept of *walāyah*. In Majlis Nos. 17-18 of Volume II of the

³⁴¹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: p. 162, ln. 11-14.

³⁴² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: p. 162, ln. 14-16.

³⁴³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: p. 163, ln. 2-5.

cross reference with *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 8: p. 36, ln. 15 : ("*min haythu jismi-hi al-kathīf al-zāhir wa min haythu quwā'i-hi al-laṭīfah al-bāṭinah*"); (Abd al-Nāṣir edition): pp. 137-140.

Majālis, al-Mu'ayyad discusses the role of Khidr as a *wali*.³⁴⁴ In the introductory prefaces of Majlis Nos. 17 and 18, al-Mu'ayyad explains that his discussion is based upon the questions posed by some Sufi adherents to an “*‘ālim*” from the “religious scholars of the family of the Prophet” (“*‘ulamā’ Āl Muḥammad*”).³⁴⁵ Al-Mu'ayyad employs the term Sufism (*taṣawwuf*) several times in these two lectures. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī is mentioned by name in Majlis No. 27 of Volume II.³⁴⁶ It seems that in Majlis No. 27 in particular, the discussion of Khidr as a *wali* may relate back to al-Mu'ayyad's overarching commentary on the question of whether or not the “friends of God” are hidden and concealed from ordinary perception.³⁴⁷

For al-Mu'ayyad, the “friends of God's” inspiration is located in their pure souls.³⁴⁸ The *awliyā’ Allāh* are those who witnessed the creation of the “Heavens and the Earth” (*sūrah* 50: 38) in their heavenly material (*bi mawādi-him al-malakūtiyyah*).³⁴⁹ The “friends of God” are the witnesses (*al-shuhadā’*) of God's creation and the “guarantors” (*al-umanā’*) of His religion.³⁵⁰ According to al-Mu'ayyad's *ta'wīl* of *sūrah* (7: 172), God's “Heavens” are the *imāms*. In the manner that God raised the Heaven above

³⁴⁴ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 17: pp. 97-100; Majlis No. 18: pp. 101-105.

³⁴⁵ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 17: p. 98, ln. 17-20; Majlis No. 18: p. 102, ln. 10-15.

³⁴⁶ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 27: p. 153, ln. 81.

³⁴⁷ On the different views on whether or not Khidr is a prophet or a *wali*, as well as Shī'ī views on Khidr as a hidden *imām*, please consult P. Franke. Begegnung mit Khidr. Beirut, 2000: 321-323; 292-295.

³⁴⁸ Majālis. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 48: p. 235. Volume II. Majlis No. 31: p. 173, ln. 43-44: “*wa kāna jisma-hu min jahat mujāwarah nafsi-hi al-zakiyyah ashraf al-ajsām.*”

³⁴⁹ Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 89: p. 444.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.: p. 444.

the earth, the *imāms* rise above the Creation (*al-khalq*) with the faculty of “divine assistance” (*bi al-quwwah al-ta’yīd*) from God. His mountains serve as the “poles” (*awtād*) of their *da’wah*, a term which has pertinence in mediaeval Sufi doctrinal treatises on the concept of *walāyah* and the spiritual hierarchy of the “friends of God”.³⁵¹

Elsewhere, al-Mu’ayyad mentions that the “friends of God” are not immune from sickness, suffering and death in order to underscore the manner in which they too hold in common the corporeal aspects of the human form with the rest of humanity.³⁵² We again see that al-Mu’ayyad underscores the idea that even though their bodies are ordinary human bodies that can be seen by anyone, the ignorant people are veiled from seeing the reality or “truth” (*ḥaqīqah*) of the “friends of God”. While their physical bodies can well be seen by even the enemies, as in the above-mentioned passages from Volume I of the *Majālis*, their *ḥaqīqah* cannot be perceived. As in the statement of those who claim that they perceive ‘Alī metaphorically (*majāz*), and not in actuality (*ḥaqīqah*), al-Mu’ayyad states that this statement is correct but only regarding the perception of *‘ilm* and not the perception of ‘Alī’s body.³⁵³ Al-Mu’ayyad continues his refutation of the claims of the *Ghulāt* and *Muqaṣṣirūn* concerning the *awliyā’* by using the

³⁵¹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 36: p. 178. Also of interest is the fact that al-Mu’ayyad also notes in this lecture that the “friends of God” are the place of descent (*mahbiṭ*) of the sustenance of souls (*arzāq al-nufūs*).

³⁵² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 67: p. 326, ln. 7-13. According to al-Mu’ayyad, the *awliyā’* are composed from the clay of the earth (*ṭīnah al-arḍ*) and their bodies are liable to (*maḍmūnūn li*) generation and corruption (*al-kawn wa al-fasād*).

³⁵³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 67: pp. 326-327, ln. 20-22 and ln. 1-14.

example of 'Alī. As for the *Ghulāt*, who claimed that the *imāms* cannot really be seen because they are divine, al-Mu'ayyad responds (with a touch of irony) that they are indeed quite correct: the *Ghulāt* could not see them in so far as seeing means understanding, but not with regard to physical sight. He then argues in connection with *sūrah* (7: 198), that God did not mean that these people could not perceive whether 'Alī was tall (*tawīl*) or short (*qaṣīr*), young (*shāb*) or old (*shaykh*).³⁵⁴ Al-Mu'ayyad states:

but if they have perceived that as a whole, as his shape (*ha'iyyah*) in its actuality, they are only veiled from the *ru'yah al-'ilm* of him, from where his noble, sanctified soul is unified with the light of their Lord, ... then, as we have explained, there is no distinction between them and others concerning corporeality (*al-jismiyyah*). The only distinction between them is in what God grants to them, according to their station (*al-manzilah*) and between their followers, concerning whom God the Most High stated the narrative (*hikāyah*) about Ibrāhīm, His friend: "he then who follows my (ways) is of me (*sūrah* 14: 36)".³⁵⁵

Spiritual Parents and the Word of Revelation

Thus far, we have seen that al-Mu'ayyad advances many arguments in order to emphasize the distinctions between the souls of human beings in

³⁵⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 67: p. 327, ln. 1-18. It is of some interest to point out here al-Mu'ayyad's use of the term, *qamīṣ al-insāniyyah*.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*: p. 327, ln. 1-6.

general and those individuals who are spiritually more “mature” and thus, are capable of an inward perception of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* which is in keeping with the degree of the subtleness of their souls. Concerning the characteristic (*kayfiyyah*) of the descent of *al-waḥy* to the prophets, al-Mu’ayyad states:³⁵⁶

The difference between us and them is that our subtle souls (*nufūsu-nā al-laṭīfah*) are in service (*khādimah li*) to our natural dispositions (*tabā’i’i-nā*). The meaning of this is that our subtle souls are in service to our desires, our pleasures, and our corporeal, worldly conceptions (*ārā’i-nā al-jismiyyah al-dunyāwiyyah*). Their souls, amongst other things, are the opposite, for their natural dispositions are in service to their souls and are subject to their command...The prophets conceive through their luminous souls (*nufūsi-him al-shifāfah*) without the mediation of the senses (*wisāṭah al-ḥawāss*) in the cognitions (*ma’ālim*) of religion and the Afterlife.³⁵⁷

In Majlis No. 17 of Volume I, the dyad of Adam and Eve serve as a metaphor for the exoteric aspect of the *sharī’ah* and the esoteric meaning of the *ta’wīl*. As “spiritual parents”, Adam and Eve also represent, respectively, the prophet (*nāṭiq*) and his adjunct (*waṣī*). It is somewhat later in the *Majālis*, in Majlis No. 33 of Volume II, that al-Mu’ayyad returns to the themes of religious affiliation and spiritual birth. Al-Mu’ayyad refers to the wives (*al-azwāj*) of the Prophet Muḥammad, to whom he recited the word of revelation (*kalimah al-waḥy*). In the manner that the corporeal forms (*al-ṣuwar al-jismāniyyah*) are removed from the womb due to the arrival of water (e.g., the sperm) in it (*bi khulūṣ al-mā’ ilayhā*), the spiritual forms (*al-*

³⁵⁶ *Majālis*, Volume I, Majlis No. 17: p. 83.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*: p. 83, ln. 3-10.

ṣuwar al-naḥsāniyyah) are extracted through the acquisition of knowledge as well as with the influence of the intellects and the *ḥudūd* on the individual.³⁵⁸ The word of revelation finds a receptacle (*qābilah*) for a “pure soul” (*naḥsan zaḥiyyah*) in “His wives”. The Qur’ānic statement, “His wives”, also signifies the rank of the “proofs” (*ḥujaj*) in the *da’wah*.³⁵⁹

Through a model of religious affiliation between the immediately (adjacent) upper and lower ranks of religion, al-Mu’ayyad circumscribes the ranks of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* into a continuum of active and receptive functions. The rightly guided *imāms* (*al-a’immah al-mahdiyyin*) are the possessors of the spiritual sperms (*aṣḥāb al-nuṭaf al-rūḥāniyyah*) in comparison to the lower ranks of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*, such as their proofs (*ḥujaj*) and their gates (*abwāb*), who are compared to pure [chaste] women (“*al-nisā’ al-muḥṣināt*”, *sūrah* (5: 6)). This comparison of the lower ranks to “women”, based on the *ta’wīl* of *sūrah* (4: 1), carries down through the *ḥudūd*, to the lowest of the ranks, the *al-muḥḍin* and the *al-mustafidīn*.³⁶⁰ The distinction belonging to the Prophet during his life-time is made on the basis of the above-mentioned

³⁵⁸ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 33: p. 184, ln. 49-54.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: pp. 184-185, ln. 49-54 and ln. 62-64. Other references to the “pure souls” (*al-nuḥūs al-zaḥiyyah*) appear in Volume I. Majlis No. 46: p. 225, ln. 7; Volume II. Majlis No. 35: p. 195, ln. 33. Volume III. Majlis No. 3: p. 13, ln. 10.

As well, see Volume II. Majlis No. 76: pp. 481-483. The *ta’wīl* of the *waṣī* is from the *amr Allāh*. It is also in the course of this lecture that al-Mu’ayyad discusses the *ḥaṣṣ al-ta’yīd* and the *rūḥ al-quḍus* (in the *imāms*) with regard to Qur’ān (2: 87). In addition, the *waṣī* is likened to the female (*al-unthā*) and the “clear proofs” (*bayānāt*) to the *waṣī* and *wiṣāyah*.

³⁶⁰ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 34: p. 191, ln. 3-9. See as well, Volume I. Majlis No. 99: p. 495, ln. 9-14: concerning the spiritual fatherhood and motherhood of Muḥammad and ‘Alī in relation to the *al-nuṭṭah al-ilāhiyyah*, rather than the sort of physical parentage that might be implied in the *ḥadīth* that Muḥammad is the father of the believers.

relationship between the Universal Intellect, as perfect and masculine, and the Universal Soul, as potentially perfect and feminine. The *waṣī* foremost serves the necessary and corresponding function to the Prophet as the repository of Universal Intellect. The *waṣī* provides form.³⁶¹

In Majlis No. 55 of Volume II, al-Mu'ayyad offers an interpretation of *sūrah* (4: 1) in conjunction with his commentary on the *ḥadīth*, “‘Alī is from me and I am from him”.³⁶² Employing *ta'wīl*, he explains that “the one soul” (*‘al-nafs al-wāḥidah*) of *sūrah* (4: 1) refers to the Prophet Muḥammad and that the wife created from him (‘Alī) is the creation of religion (*al-zawj al-makhlūqah min-hu khilqah al-dīn*).³⁶² In addition, al-Mu'ayyad specifies how the mother of the believers (*umm al-mu'minīn*) (with reference to the term “*zawja-hā*” from *sūrah* (4: 1)) is a rib from the ribs of the master of the cycle (*ṣāḥib al-dawr*). The proof from his proofs (*ḥujjah min hujaji-hi*) and the ‘ulamā’ from his signs (*‘ulamā’ min a’lāmati-hi*) are likewise created from the *ṣāḥib al-dawr*.³⁶³ The *ṣāḥib al-dawr* and Adam are one and the same in terms of status and rank.

Majlis No. 17 of Volume I of the Majālis concentrates on what al-Mu'ayyad terms “the spiritual birth” (*al-wilādah al-nafsāniyyah*) and “religious fatherhood” (*al-ubuwwah al-dīniyyah*), with the main focus on the

³⁶¹ Majālis. Volume III. Majlis No. 17: p. 51; Volume II. Majlis No. 45: pp. 271-272, ln. 58-75.

Majālis. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 17: p. 82, ln. 10-12, to be addressed in further detail later, in conjunction with the “Eastern” *dā‘ī*.

³⁶² Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: p. 340?

Also, see Volume I. Majlis No. 17: 82-83; Majlis No. 79: pp. 386-389.

³⁶³ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 34: pp. 190-191, ln. 17-18 and ln. 1-2.

relationship between Adam and Eve and respectively, the Prophet Muḥammad and ‘Alī.³⁶⁴ As mentioned previously, Muḥammad is the Adam of this epoch from the perspective of the fatherhood of souls (*ubuwwah al-nufūs*).³⁶⁵ In order to clarify the main distinction between Muḥammad’s and ‘Alī’s stations, al-Mu’ayyad explains that the religious law (*al-sharʿ*) indicates that Adam is the father of mankind (*Abā al-bashar*) and that Eve, who is their mother, was created from him, based on *sūrah* (4: 1). Outlining another interpretative position, al-Mu’ayyad puts forth the “Exegetes” commentary on the phrase “*al-nafs al-wāḥidah*”, as meaning that Adam was created out of clay (*ṭīn*) and by the expression, “his wife” (“*zawja-hā*”), that Eve was created out of him.³⁶⁶

Al-Mu’ayyad then presents the views of the *Ahl al-ta’wīl*, who state: “the station (*maqām*) of the Prophet in his cycle (*dawri-hi*) is the station of Adam in his cycle”.³⁶⁷ With reference to the “*al-nafs al-wāḥidah*” from which both Adam and Eve were created, God formed and originated Adam’s form as the first form of mankind (*al-ṣūrah al-bashariyyah*). It is a physical composition of dust (*khalq al-turāb*). According to al-Mu’ayyad, this composition, of a physical nature, clarifies that Adam’s form refers to this

³⁶⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 17: pp. 81-83; Volume I (‘Abd al-Nāṣir edition): pp. 94-97.

³⁶⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 34: p. 188.

³⁶⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 17: p. 81. Variant reading, *min-humā*: Volume I (‘Abd al-Nāṣir edition). Majlis No. 17: p. 95.

³⁶⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 17: p. 82. The *Ahl al-ta’wīl* are the *imāms* from the Family of the Prophet.

world.³⁶⁸ Therefore, with regard to “the one soul” Adam is created from, his physical constitution is of *turāb*. In comparison, Muḥammad is the first form in the form of the monotheistic religious community (*ṣūrah millah al-ḥanīfah*) in his cycle. Al-Mu’ayyad responds to the more literal interpretation of this verse by stating that God originated the Prophet’s form from the perspective of subtlety, and not with respect to his earthy, dense body, in order to clarify that the form of the Prophet pertains to the Afterlife. Muḥammad, however, as the *khalq al-dīn*, also implies that ‘Alī is his “wife” (*zawj*), from the perspective of the subtle soul (*al-nafs al-latīfah*), and not the dense body (*al-jism al-kathīf*).³⁶⁹

Also clarified by the above-mentioned arguments is that the Prophet Muḥammad is the father of those individuals who form the solidarity of the ranks of religion, but only in terms of “spiritual birth” (*al-wilādah al-nafsāniyyah*) and religious fatherhood (*al-ubuwwah al-dīniyyah*). Al-Mu’ayyad points out that the Qur’ānic passages are not contradicted with regard to its statements concerning physical birth (*al-wilādah*), since Adam and Eve begat Muḥammad, ‘Alī, and the *imāms* descended from ‘Alī.³⁷⁰ In al-Mu’ayyad’s opinion, the difference between the Prophet and ‘Alī is like the

³⁶⁸ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 81: p. 233, ln. 12-17; Majlis No. 82: p. 235, ln. 2-5: al-Mu’ayyad explains that the true definition (*ḥadd al-ḥaqīqah*) of *al-turāb* is that it is faith (*al-īmān*), which is the origin (*aṣl*) of the *al-nash’ah al-ākhirah*, and from which the *al-ṣuwar al-dīniyyah* originate in the Afterlife.

³⁶⁹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 34: pp. 188, 190. Variant reading (‘Abd al-Nāṣir edition: p. 95): “*fa kamā annahu awwal ṣūrah bashariyyah ṣuwwara-hā Allāh subhānahu wa aqāma-hā*”; “*fa kadhalika Muḥammad (ṣ) fī dawr-hu awwal ṣūrah ṣuwwara-hā Allāh ta’ālā fī ṣūrah al-millah al-ḥanīfah wa aqāma-hā min ḥaythu al-latīfah, la min ḥaythu jism-hu al-tarābī al-kathīf.*”

³⁷⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 17: p. 82.

difference between the heaven (*al-samāʿ*) and the earth (*al-ard*), because ʿAlī becomes a receptacle (*qābīlan*) of Muḥammad’s *amānah* as well as serves as the repository (*al-mustawdiʿ*) of the secrets of the Prophet’s revelation and his *tanzīl*.³⁷¹ This line of reasoning is set forth in order to buttress al-Muʿayyad’s arguments against the *Ghulāt*, and in particular, their view that the Qurʾān could have been revealed only to ʿAlī and not to the Prophet Muḥammad.³⁷²

In Majlis No. 33 of Volume I, al-Muʿayyad states that ʿAlī shares a necessary relationship with the Prophet Muḥammad, who holds the rank of the “Pen” (*al-qalam*) in the World of Command. He explains that just as God does not write except with His “Pen” on the “Tablet” in this world, there is no writing on the “Tablet” without His “Pen” in the next world.³⁷³ In Majlis No. 36, al-Muʿayyad’s commentary on the Qurʾānic terms for Universal Intellect and Universal Soul, the “Pen” and the “Tablet”, also offers a succinct explanation of the relationship between the forms subscribed in *risālah* and *wisāyah*.³⁷⁴ The following passage seems to imply that the “Tablet” is a necessary antecedent of *risālah* and therefore shares a portion of *wisāyah*.³⁷⁵ Al-Muʿayyad explains as follows:

³⁷¹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 17: p. 82.

³⁷² *Ibid.*: pp. 82-83.

³⁷³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 33: p. 162; (ʿAbd al-Nāṣir edition): pp. 138-139.

³⁷⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 36: pp. 177-178.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*: p. 177, ln. 19-20, citing a prophetic *ḥadīth*, “God the Most High wrote with His Pen on His Tablet everything of what He created in His Creation of the Heavens and the Earth and what is between them.”

Majālis. Volume III. Majlis No. 82: p. 235: “*al-kitāb al-mahfūz fī al-aṣl huwa al-lawḥ al-mahfūz al-thābit fī jamīʿ al-nuqūsh wa al-kināyāt wa fī al-farʿ fa-anna al-*

In their two epochs (*‘aṣri-himā*), the prophet and the *waṣī* belong to the other composition (*al-nash’ah al-ākhirah*) in the station of the “Tablet” (*manzilah al-lawḥ*), and the “Pen” belongs to the first origination (*al-nash’ah al-awwalah*), and just as it does not have any lines, nor writing, nor engraving except if it is in the domain (*mudmār*) of the “Pen”, it does not take shape and it does not appear except if it occurs in the “Tablet”. Likewise, the form of the other composition is in the domain of messengership, but it is not formed and it does not take shape except after producing it in the sphere (*ḥayz*) of *al-wiṣāyah*.³⁷⁶

As seen in the previous sections of Chapter Four, al-Mu’ayyad’s refutations of the *Ghulāt* and the *Muqaṣṣirūn* demarcate a set of models concerning the religious affiliations potentially available to the individual practitioner, with particular reference to how the Adam and Eve of the epoch function as “spiritual parents”. In Volume III of the *Majālis*, al-Mu’ayyad argues for the preservation (*maḥfūzah*) of each rank of the hierarchy of the prophets and of the *da’wah* as reflecting the essential order of God’s creation. Al-Mu’ayyad stresses the preservation of the earthly hierarchy and the chain of benefits that allows even the lowest rank to have some indirect connection to the highest.³⁷⁷

lawḥ al-mahfūz huwa waṣī rusūl Allāh al-manqūsh fī-hi nuqūsh al-ākhirah wa al-suwar al-dīniyyah naqshan min takallam Allāh fī ‘ālam al-jismāniyyin.”

³⁷⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 36: pp. 177-178, ln. 20 and ln. 1-7.

See as well, Volume I. Majlis No. 36: p. 177: the Universal Soul establishes the *nuqūsh* of the “Heavens and the Earth”. In Volume I. Majlis No. 12: p. 56, the Universal Soul, as the “Preserved Tablet”, is discussed in terms of its *nuqūsh* in the *dār al-dunyā’* and the *dār al-ākhirah*. *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 76: p. 481, ln. 38-44; p. 482, ln. 45-62.

³⁷⁷ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 20: p. 60.

These passages from Volume III bear important implications for the question of whether or not the process of 'devolution' into lower human forms may entail transmigration or not, which is key to the Fāṭimid refutations of some of the views of the members of the "Eastern" *da'wah*; in particular, Sijistānī's.³⁷⁸ In Majlis No. 66 of Volume I of the Majālis, we can see that al-Mu'ayyad presents a more concrete refutation of metempsychosis into animal forms (*maskh*), in which he disavows the possibility of retrograde movement to the earlier stages of development.³⁷⁹ Al-Mu'ayyad explains that the human form begins as the sperm (or the drop of water), as in *sūrah* (23: 04), and then, in terms of its development, it proceeds forth to higher stages of development without returning to the previous stages. For example, the fetus (*al-janīn*) established in the womb of its mother does not return to the loins of the father (*ṣulb al-ab*), nor does the infant, once born, return to the

³⁷⁸ See the following works on this issue: H. Landolt. "Shaykh Mufid on Transmigration of the Soul (*tanāsukh*) and the Problem of the *Barzakh*." Unpublished paper presented to the 1000th Anniversary International Conference on Shaykh Mufid in Qom, April 1993: 12 pp.; W. Madelung. "Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and Metempsychosis." In, Iranica Varia: Papers in Honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater. Leiden, 1990: 131-143; P. Walker. "The Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Islam." (1991): 219-238.

³⁷⁹ Majālis. Volume I. Majlis No. 66-67: pp. 369-374. As for the matter of souls suffering afflictions, as in the case of transmigration into an animal form (*maskh*), al-Mu'ayyad explains that people usually discuss this in conjunction with the rewards and punishments of the Afterlife. He in fact, gives his arguments for refuting the four different forms of transmigration. To the best of my knowledge, al-Mu'ayyad is the first Ismā'īlī author to discuss four modalities of transmigration (*raskh*, *faskh*, *maskh*, *naskh*); a discussion which anticipates Mullā Ṣadrā's treatment of the transmigration of souls in his 17th-century work, the Asfār, a point raised by M. Kāmil-Ḥusayn in his introduction to the Dīwān of al-Mu'ayyad. See Dīwān Dā'i al-Du'āt. Editor, M. Kāmil-Ḥusayn: (Intro.): 126-128.

womb of its mother (*baṭn al-umm*).³⁸⁰ Yet, in the course of the same discussion, al-Mu'ayyad suggests that there is metempsychosis as concerns the soul (*maskh min haythu al-nafs*), and not as it concerns the body.³⁸¹ In the *Aqwāl al-Dhahabiyyah* and *Rāhat al-'Aql*, it should be noted, Kirmānī takes up the debate concerning the transmigration of souls. In these two works, Kirmānī refutes the possibility of *tanāsukh* through stressing that there exists a movement towards perfection on the part of the individual soul, from *in potentia* to *in actu*. In this context, Kirmānī employs the example of the sperm and the human being, in that the individual, having developed into a human being, cannot revert back to the sperm.³⁸²

In terms of al-Mu'ayyad's responses to the so-called "Persian School" as well as al-Mu'ayyad's immediate predecessor in the Ismā'īlī *da'wah*, Kirmānī, additional research is certainly required. From another perspective, further research is also needed in order to elucidate further the impact of al-Mu'ayyad's thought on his contemporary in the "East", Nāṣir-i Khusraw, especially in the light of particular doctrinal developments in 11th-century Ismā'īlism: the "spiritual birth" associated with the prophet and the lower ranks of religion in the absence of the *imām* and the concept of resurrection. In the final chapter of this dissertation, nonetheless, we will direct our attention to al-Mu'ayyad's allegorical interpretation of the "Night

³⁸⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 67: p. 328; ('Abd al-Nāṣir edition) pp. 239-240. Volume III. Majlis No. 99: p. 282, ln. 5-8.

³⁸¹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 67: p. 328, ln. 12-13. p. 134: on the place of the Adamic forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ādamiyyah*).

³⁸² Kirmānī. *Aqwāl al-Dhahabiyyah*. Editor, S. al-Sawī. Tehran, 1977: pp. 52-54; *Rāhat al-'Aql*. Editors, M. Kāmil-Ḥusayn & M. M. Hilmy. Cairo, 1953: pp. 395-397.

of Power³³ (*Laylat al-Qadr*) and the manner in which the month of Ramaḍān symbolizes the resurrection and spiritual birth that occurs with the appearance of the *Qā'im* at the end of time.

Chapter Five: Religious Affiliation and Spiritual Birth
Section a: The Ta'wīl of the Month of Ramaḍān and the “Night of Power”

- 1). We have indeed revealed this (message) in the Night of Power.
- 2). And what will explain to you what the Night of Power is?
- 3). The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.
- 4). Therein come down the angels and the Spirit (*al-rūḥ*) by Allāh’s permission, on every errand.
- 5). Peace!...This until the rise of morn! (Qur’ān 97: 1-5)

Revisiting H. Corbin’s work on Ismā’īlī ritual, Chapter Five shall address a number of issues of crucial concern to the intersecting fields of the study of Religion and mediaeval Ismā’īlī thought through examining al-Mu’ayyad’s esoteric interpretation (*ta’wīl*) of the Muslim religious celebration of the “Night of Power” (*“Laylat al-qadr”*) during the month of Ramaḍān.

S. Wasserstrom, in *Religion after Religion*, criticized Corbin’s approach to Ismā’īlī esoteric doctrines as “anti-legalistic”.¹ His advocacy of a return to an historical method for the study of mediaeval Islamic traditions poses its own set of unique problems. This chapter will likewise aim to suggest some of potential snares in Wasserstrom’s methodology, if extended fully to include the history of Ismā’ilism, the study of mediaeval Islamic religious practices and the doctrines associated with both.

¹ S. Wasserstrom. *Religion after Religion*. Princeton, 1999: 177-182. See as well, M. E. Subtelny. “History and Religion: the Fallacy of Metaphysical Questions (A Review Article).” *Iranian Studies* (2003) 36/2: 91-101.

S. Wasserstrom's critique of Corbin's approach to Ismā'īlī esoteric doctrines as "anti-legalistic" echoes many of the opinions concerning "Bāṭinī" beliefs mediaeval Muslim heresiographers put forth in their works. In the past, the preponderance of such views within non-academic and academic circles marginalized, in the true sense of the word, the field of Ismā'īlī Studies and hampered the study of mediaeval Ismā'īlī texts and doctrines as an intrinsic component of mediaeval Islamic thought.

Advocating a return to a historical approach to the Study of Religion, Wasserstrom surprisingly overlooks the pivotal importance of one of Corbin's main points in his work on Ismā'īlī initiation and ritual: throughout the history of Ismā'ilism, Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* in association with ritual has been in itself a religious practice.² More specifically, and as this chapter aims to show, *ta'wīl* applied in its non-textual oriented form (e.g., the celebration of Muslim religious holidays and daily religious practices) is one which simultaneously parallels *ta'wīl* as a science of "means" for interpreting the multi-layered Ismā'īlī teachings on the Qur'ān and the doctrine of the *imām*.

Even when applied on a theoretical level to select passages from al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, and his treatise on the *ta'wīl* of the month of Ramaḍān and the "Night of Power", the Kitāb al-Ibtidā' wa al-Intihā', Corbin's seminal study on Ismā'īlī ritual allows us to approach Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* as a practice as well as to explore its relationship to al-Mu'ayyad's theory of initiation into the *da'wah*, with particular emphasis on

² Wasserstrom. Religion after Religion. 1999: 178-179; 326, n. 40.

the reception of the "Holy Spirit" (*rūḥ al-qudus*).³ In terms of the Study of Religion, these are often the very elements of a religious tradition that escape discernment or create difficulties when scholars aim to convey the practice of everyday life as well as individual religious experience as articulated solely on the basis of mediaeval texts.

Serving as an example in order to clarify the aforementioned, the first section of Chapter Five focuses on al-Mu'ayyad's *ta'wīl* of the "Night of Power" in relation to the individual's reception of *ta'yīd* and the "Holy Spirit" (*rūḥ al-qudus*). Al-Mu'ayyad's discussion of the "Night of Power" links the eschatological fulfillment of the prophetic cycles to the advent of the *Qā'im* and the spiritual resurrection that occurs at the end of historical time, thus indicating the completion and final perfection of prophetic revelation. Of particular importance is the fact that according to al-Mu'ayyad, the celebration of the "Night of Power" serves as a working paradigm for the process of individual perfection concomitant with the soul's secondary ascent through *al-nash'ah al-ākhirah*.

Wasserstrom's proposed *anti-esotericist*, historical approach to the mediaeval Islamic tradition would in fact, render Ismā'īlī rituals as practiced by mediaeval Ismā'īlī communities devoid of the full continuum of their multi-layered significance and symbolic content. This raises the question: what alternative methodological approaches are available to scholars which

³ Corbin. "Sabian Temple." In, Temple and Contemplation. Trans., L. Sherrard. London, 1986.

could convey accurately the full range of mediaeval Muslim perspectives, such as al-Mu'ayyad's, on religious practices beyond the purely legalistic ones Wasserstrom suggests should hold the highest priority?

Before discussing al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on the month of Ramaḍān and the celebration of the "Night of Power", it is important to address in general terms al-Mu'ayyad's *ta'wīl* of the religious duties of Islam.

Examining the corresponding passages from the Majālis on the tenets of religious practice not only sheds light on al-Mu'ayyad's exegetical methods but also frames the discussion that will follow in this chapter as concerns the centrality of religious practice in 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā'īlism. As shall be seen in al-Mu'ayyad's Majālis and the short treatise attributed to him, the Kitāb al-Ibtidā' wa al-Intihā', the final epoch before the advent of the *Qā'im* is defined as the epoch of practice (*dawr al-'amal*), and is one in which religious practices are still obligatory on the part of the individual practitioner. With the establishment of the *Qā'im* and the commencement of the epoch of knowledge (*dawr al-'ilm*), even the practice of obedience (*ṭā'ah*) to the *ḥudūd al-dīn* is no longer required.

As mentioned earlier, al-Mu'ayyad's position as chief missionary in 11th-century Fāṭimid Cairo gives rise to a set of working arguments with regard to his efforts to consolidate Ismā'īlī *da'wah* teachings. In keeping with this point, Walker has set up a useful distinction between *ta'wīl* as "the interpretation" and as "an interpretation" specifically in conjunction with how the functioning body of the mediaeval Ismā'īlī *da'wah*'s spiritual

hierarchy transmitted *ta'wīl*.⁴ He raises the question of whether or not when *ta'wīl* becomes the “sole” interpretation of a doctrine if it then establishes a fixed teaching or doctrine of the *da'wah*.

Al-Mu'ayyad's method of *ta'wīl* has to be approached in a manner that allows for the distinction between the formation of set doctrines (and thus, their application and re-interpretation) and *da'wah* teachings and what al-Mu'ayyad, following his *da'wah* predecessors, such as Qādī al-Nu'mān, Sijistānī and Kirmānī, adds significantly (as additional commentaries, interpretations or elaborations, theological or otherwise) to the Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* of the same practices and religious tenets. In conjunction with the above, given the high priority granted to the *ta'wīl* of religious tenets in mediaeval Ismā'ilism at large (i.e. the Da'ā'im al-Islām and the Ta'wīl Da'ā'im al-Islām; the Kitāb al-Iftikhār, the later Vajh-i Dīn and select lectures from the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah itself), it is the logical response to the texts themselves to examine the interpretation of religious practices as the most apparent focal point of doctrinal debate and revision, especially in periods of greater internal division within the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* itself.

As was discussed throughout the course of Chapter Four, the doctrine of *walāyah* is central to al-Mu'ayyad's theory of the *Qā'im* as the “seal of the *imāms*”. In the course of al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation of *Laylat al-qadr*, his concept of *walāyah* is presented in tandem with the salvific benefits of the

⁴ Walker. Early Philosophical Shiism. Cambridge, 1993: 130-ff.

soteriological doctrines associated with the *Qā'im*.⁵ Let us now turn to al-Mu'ayyad's *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ānic passages concerned with the month of Ramaḍān and *Laylat al-qadr*. In Majlis No. 2 of Volume III, al-Mu'ayyad sets forth his interpretation of *sūrah* (97: 5) in such a way that the breaking of dawn is synonymous with the light of God and the *Qā'im*. Also of concern to al-Mu'ayyad is the following point: in the time of the concealment of the *Qā'im*, there exists members of the *da'wah* who instruct the people, thus allowing for them to be 'summoned' to the reality of the *Qā'im*.

God's saying: "Until the break of dawn", and the break of dawn (*al-fajar*) is the overflowing of light (*infijār*) from out of the fissure of darkness, and it is the manifestation of the light of God, the Powerful and the Glorious, which is the *Sāhib al-qiyāmah* in the world of nature, which is the abode of turbidity and darkness (*dār al-kadūrah wa al-ẓulmah*). As God the Most High stated: "And the earth will shine with the light of (their) Lord." (*sūrah* 39: 69)...The announcers of prayer (*munādūn*) summon people out of their sleep and call them to readiness and preparation. They say: "Have a light meal before the morning prayer, and the breaking of dawn (*infijār al-fajar*)"; that refers to the missionaries who are established in the time of concealment (*sitr*) and pious dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) in order to instruct (*li tanbīh*) the people.⁶

In the *ta'wīl* of verse, "The Night of Power is better than one thousand months", the allusion (*ishārah*) in the verse is to until the "Gate" (*Bāb*) of the *Qā'im*. Al-Mu'ayyad suggests that the *Bāb* of the *Qā'im* "is better than all of those who established the manifestation of the ranks of the intellects

⁵ *Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*, Volume II. Majlis No. 108: p. 47: on religious tenets (*walāyah* in particular) and *ta'wīl*.

⁶ *Majālis*, Volume III. Majlis No. 2: p. 12, ln. 1-3.

(*khayr min kulli man qāma bi-izhār marātib al-‘uqūl*); that is, the *awṣiyā’* of the masters of the religious laws (*aṣḥāb al-sharā‘i*). Because he is close to the seventh, he is like the perfection (*kamāl*) of the prophets and the direction of prayer (*qiblah*) of their souls and their intellects.⁷

According to al-Mu‘ayyad, the “Night of Power” is a metaphor (*mamthūl*) for the “gate” (*bāb*) and the “proof” (*ḥujjah*) of the *Qā’im*, in the sense that the *Bāb* of the *Qā’im* is the master of “the total elucidation and the true unveiling” (*ṣāhib al-bayān al-kullī wa al-kashf al-ḥaqīqī*). In a comparison of ‘Alī to the “proof” and *Bāb* of the *Qā’im* and to the “month of Ramaḍān”, al-Mu‘ayyad then makes an intriguing statement: “he is the opener of the commencement (*fātiḥ al-muftataḥ*) of this epoch for him”. According to al-Mu‘ayyad’s *ta’wīl*, the “month of Ramaḍān” (*sūrah* 2: 185) is tantamount to the rank of the *waṣī*, and its division is into nine, because nine is at the end of the single digit numbers.⁸ Because the year signifies the completion of months, weeks, days and hours, God established these different divisions of the year for the creation (*li ijād*) of the natural (physical) forms and their annihilation (*ifnā’ihā*). As well, He established them for the creation of the spiritual forms with permanence in the abode that is established eternally, in comparison to the others.⁹

In reference to the descent of angels during *Laylat al-qadr* (*sūrah* 97: 4), al-Mu‘ayyad refers to his earlier arguments concerning the human being *in*

⁷ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 1: p. 8, ln. 4-8.

⁸ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 200: p. 610-612.

⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I: p. 212, ln. 49; p. 212, ln. 49-54; Majlis No. 100: p. 611, ln. 28-ff.

actu and *in potentia*. The *imāms* and the *ḥudūd* established on the earth are there for the extraction (*bi istikhlāṣ*) of souls from the tarnishing of nature (*shawb al-ṭabī'ah*) and its murkiness. Because God the Most High made them sovereign over the souls of created beings and He entrusts them to their guidance (*bi hidāyat-him*), and He made them a trust (*amānah*) for them, the *imāms* and the *ḥudūd* make souls join the world of Light from the realm of the Afterlife of the angels (*bi 'ālam al-nūr min dār akhirati-hā, malā'ikah*). Al-Mu'ayyad states: "As for God's saying, "Therein come down the angels" (*sūrah 97: 4*); its meaning is that He arranges the *ḥudūd*, *imām* after *imām*, with the guidance of [creation], as will be explained presently".¹⁰ The month of Ramaḍān is tantamount to the *waṣī*. It being the ninth month of the year, the *waṣī*'s job is to manifest the true meaning of God's unity, His *tawḥīd*, as well as the *kalimah al-ikhlāṣ*. Since the month of Ramaḍān is the month in which the religious practice of fasting (*al-ṣawm*) is observed, and fasting is refraining from eating, drinking and conjugal relations except during the night, al-Mu'ayyad indicates that its *mamthūl* is the *waṣī*. This analogy is made because the limit of the *waṣī*'s *da'wah* is to abstain from explaining the spiritual meanings (publicly). Just as the month of Ramaḍān is a set number of days, without anything from it changing its amount, there is a set number of the *ḥudūd* of the *waṣī*.¹¹

¹⁰ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 1: pp. 7-8.

¹¹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 200: p. 610-612.

In his *ta'wil* of *sūrah* (2: 185) “brought down to him the Qur’an”, al-Mu’ayyad explains that the true meaning (*ḥaqīqah*) of the Qur’ān is in harmony with (pure) souls and the intellects, not the external contradictions. As well, as alluded to in *sūrah* (97: 1), it was in one specific night (of decision, *al-Qadr*) that the descent of the Qur’an occurred. According to al-Mu’ayyad, God distinguishes one night from all of them with great nobleness. The remainder of the *ḥudūd* from this month is connected in relation to the other *ḥudūd* of this rank, and it is the “Night of Power”. Therefore, the meaning of *al-Qadr* is tantamount to the *Qā’im*. The meaning of the “Night of Power” is tantamount to his *Bāb* and “proof”; i.e, the “master of total eluciation”, who is the legatee and who is the opener of this cycle (‘Alī).

In Majlis No. 2 of Volume III, the explanation of the “Night of Power” occurs in conjunction with al-Mu’ayyad’s presentation of material from the Qur’ānic *sūrah* on ‘Īsā and Maryam in order to elucidate the meaning of the *rūḥ al-qudus*.

We say about the meaning of God the Most High’s saying, “The angels and the Spirit (*al-rūḥ*)” (*sūrah* 97: 4) that it is the *quwwah* of *ta’yīd* connected with them (the *malā’ikah*= *imāms* and *ḥudūd*), and the “divine material” (*al-māddah al-ilāhiyyah*) penetrating into them, and that is, it is the “Holy Spirit” (*rūḥ al-qudus*), through which God distinguishes the prophets, legatees and *imāms*, may God’s prayers be upon them. God the Most High stated: “Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: “I am about to create man from clay: when when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in prostration unto him.” (*sūrah* 38: 71-72). And He said: “The Messiah,

‘Īsā b. Maryam, was a messenger of God (*rasūl Allāh*) and His word (*kalimata-hu*), which he bestowed on Maryam and a Spirit from Him¹² (*sūrah* 4: 171), and He said to His *nabī*: “And thus have We, by Our command, sent inspiration to thee.” (*sūrah* 42: 52).¹² Thus, the “Spirit” alludes to the Qur’ān. It is from revelation (*al-wahy*) and divine support (*al-ta’yīd*), for the one fakes as *imām*, one who does not have an allotment (*ḥaẓẓ*) of the “Holy Spirit”, which is “heavenly divine support” (*al-ta’yīd al-samāwī*), is a worshipper of an idol (*ṣanam*) in which there is no spirit in it, just as the common idol has no *rūḥ* in it and it does not have speech, so it falsifies his worship. In the same manner, there is therefore no allotment of the “Holy Spirit” to this false *imām*, and it is not possible for him to speak through the faculty of divine support (*bi al-quwwah al-ta’yīdiyyah*): God’s saying: “With the permission of their Lord”, as it is their Lord who inundates them (*yafīdu*) with the capacities (*quwā*) from the World of Intellect.¹³

In Majlis No. 200 of Volume II, al-Mu’ayyad stresses that since God’s Creation of the year, is joined together with what is excluded from it of the parts and months, it is incumbent that the rank of prophecy (*al-nubuwwah*) is comprehensive (*jāmi’ah*) and the most perfect of the ranks altogether and completes (*mustawfiyyah*) the other ranks in their totality.

We cite the saying of God, may He be praised: “It is He who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light (of beauty), and measured out stages for it, that ye might know the number of years and the count (of time).” (*sūrah* 10:5). Meaning, through Him in actuality, are the measures (*maqādīr*) of the prophets and the *ḥudūd*. The month of Ramaḍān is the ninth of the months of the year, and the totality of the amount is divided into four sections, ones, tens, hundreds and thousands, and nine is the last of the single digit numbers, and the month of Ramaḍān is their time (*mawqa’a-hā*) during the year. It is followed by

¹² Majālis. Volume III. Majlis No. 2: p. 10.

¹³ Majālis. Volume III. Majlis No. 2: p. 10-11.

the month of *Shawwal* and its time falls on the tens; *Dhū al-Qa'idah*, its time falls on the hundreds; and *Dhū al-Hijjah*, its time falls on the thousands. It completes the months of the year by being equal to the number.¹⁴

In Majlis No. 1 of Volume III, al-Mu'ayyad's commentary (*sharḥ*) on "The Night of Power is better than one thousand months" (*sūrah* 97: 3) alludes to the fact that the *da'wah* of the legatees comes to an end with the *Qā'im*. Moreover, the *Qā'im* unites the end of the word of God (*kalimah*) with its beginning, thus bringing about a new creation.

We stated that mathematics (*ḥisāb*) is divided into four parts and they are: ones, tens, hundreds and thousands, and the "thousand" (*alāf*), is the cause (*'ilah*) of mathematics and the "thousandth" (*al-alūf*) is the caused (*ma'lūlah*). The first possesses the limit (*ḥadd*) of "firstness" (*al-awwaliyyah*), and the thousandth possesses the limit of "lastness" (*al-akhariyyah*), [as] the last is unified (*mutaḥḥad*) with the first. "First is thought (*al-fikrah*) and last is action (*al-'amal*)". The [units] of ones are comparable to the World of Intellect (*'ālam al-'aql*), then tens are comparable to the world of nature (*'ālam al-ṭabī'ah*), and the hundreds are comparable to the world of religion (*'ālam al-dīn*), and they are the religious laws of the prophets (*sharā'ī al-anbiyā'*). The thousands are in the degrees (*marātib*) of the *ta'wīl* comparable to the intellects, and it is the *ḥadd* of the legatees (*awṣiyā'*) and the end of their *da'wah* goes to the "thousand" in truth; i.e., the absolute caused (*al-ma'lūl al-muṭlaq*), the *Ṣāhib al-qiyāmah*, in order that he unites the end of the *kalimah* with its beginning, so a full circle (*dā'irah al-mustadayyirah*) occurs. "Even as We produced the the first Creation, so shall We produce a new one" (*sūrah* 21: 104).¹⁵

¹⁴ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 200: pp. 610-612.

¹⁵ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 1: p. 7-8; MS. 535: folio 2b, ln. 10, variant reading: *fa-taḥṣulu*.

Section b.: the Qā'im and Pure Knowledge

In the short treatise attributed to al-Mu'ayyad, the Kitāb al-Ibtidā' wa al-Intihā', the Prophet Muḥammad "is the "seal" of the prophets and through him God the Most High seals all of the religious laws. "He is the perfect and complete rank (*ḥadd al-kamāl wa al-tamām*), as he is the sixth of the speaking-prophets and the *Qā'im* is the seventh."¹⁶ At the end of time, however, the *Qā'im* ushers in a new epoch which represents an epoch of pure knowledge, the *dawr al-'ilm*.

Several matters need to be raised in terms of the authenticity of this short treatise, the Kitāb al-Ibtidā', before turning to its content. The author seems to be writing under al-Mustanṣir who is probably the "fourth" of the third heptade "in which we are".¹⁷ However, he also mentions after that about the "seventh" of the same heptade. Could this "seventh" be the mysterious Ṭayyib and could the author be offering predictions? He also seems to be indicating elsewhere that "more than half" of the four heptades have already passed though this would not necessarily contradict the author writing under al-Mustanṣir.¹⁸

¹⁶ Kitāb al-Ibtidā' wa al-Intihā'. Institute of Ismaili Studies Library MS. 1250: folio 4a.

¹⁷ Ibid.: folio 27a, ln. 10-11.

¹⁸ Ibid.: folio 15a. I would like to thank Professor Landolt for pointing out these passages in the manuscript and who also suggested that another passage in the manuscript could be important for proving the authenticity of this work if it could be confirmed independently as well; namely, folio 31b, ln 3, where the author refers

Nonetheless, the Kitāb al-Ibtidā' takes up a number of discussions concerning Universal Intellect as the “Pen” as well as incorporates several definitions of the relationship between *al-ibdā'* and the *al-mubda'*. The author defines Intellect as perfect and Soul as the “second Intellect” (*al-'aql al-thānī*) “because the perfect thing (*al-shay' al-kāmil*) is Intellect.”¹⁹ Intellect is first in rank in terms of creation. Soul is called the “second Intellect” because “its forms are potentially the form of Intellect (*kānat šūratu-hā bi al-quwwah šūrata al-'aql*)”. Intellect and Soul are in a relationship of “pairedness” (*izdiwāj*), one of giving benefits (*ifādah*) and receiving benefits (*istifādah*). Due to Intellect’s perfection, the ipseity [essence] (*huwiyyah*) of Intellect appears without intermediaries, whereas the *huwiyyah* of Soul is due to the intermediary of Intellect. What is beneath Intellect is in need of it in terms of the benefits Intellect provides through *ifādah* but Intellect itself is free from needing benefits for its completion and perfection (*al-'aql mustaghani 'an al-istifādah min-hā li tamām wa kamāli-hi*). Need defines Soul, in terms of the benefits it receives from Intellect. Soul receives form from Intellect and bestows form on Matter (*hayūlā*); form and Matter refer the speaking-prophet and the “founder”. In this manner, the prime matter of the lower world also benefits from Soul.²⁰ According to the author’s *ta'wīl*, both Matter and form refer to

to his book on *rujū' al-nafs ilā ma'dini-hā*, if this is the Risālat al-Ma'ād Poonawala and the Majdū' refer to as one of al-Mu'ayyad's works (on the liberation of the rational soul from the bonds of the sensual soul and its return to its own world).

¹⁹ Ibid.: folio 6a-8a.

²⁰ Ibid.: folio 8a.

the speaking-prophet (*nāṭiq*) and the “founder” (*asās*) of every *dawr* of the prophetic cycles. Intellect, however, is *afḍal* than Soul in this “pairing” because, as the author elaborates upon in this context, in every pair (*zawj*), one of the pair is always better than the other. Many examples are provided by the author here, such as day over night, the sun over the moon, the Heaven over the earth, inclusive of the ranks of the *da‘wah* as well. For example, the *waṣī* is more preferred (*afḍal*) than the *imām*, and the messenger than the *waṣī*, because one benefits from the other, implying need.²¹ In brief, Soul is in need of Intellect for, as the author explains, “and to go beyond the limit of potentiality to the limit of actual potentiality (*ḥadd al-quwwah ilā ḥadd al-fi‘l*) and to enter into the station Intellect has, because imperfection is always in search of the rank of perfection (*li ānna al-nāqiṣ abadan yaṭlubu darajah al-kamāl*)”.²²

We see once more in the *Kitāb al-Ibtidā’*, as in the *Majālis*, that the term *khātam al-a‘immah* refers to the *Qā’im*. The author also introduces another term for the *Qā’im*: he is the “perfect child” (*al-walad al-tāmm*).²³ With the end of the prophetic cycles and with the end of the *imāms*, the “perfect child” breathes the “second breath” (*nafakhah al-thānī*) into every human being; that is to say, when he blows into the trumpet (*fī ṣūr*) [at the time of the Resurrection]. Through the appearance of the *Qā’im*, the forms acquired in the material world through the hierarchy of the prophets, the legates, and so

²¹ *Ibid.*: folio 8a.

²² *Ibid.*: folio 8a-8b.

²³ *Ibid.*: folio 12a-12b; 14b; 20a.

forth, become like bodies and the spiritual breath (becomes) the spirits. At the time of *Qā'im*, humanity will attain to the *ḥadd al-jannah* due to the “second breath”.²⁴ Therein arises another set of distinctions: between the epoch of practice (*dawr al-'amal*) and the epoch of knowledge (*dawr al-'ilm*). The *dawr al-'ilm* is the time of the *Qā'im*, and associated with this is *ta'yīd*, purity, and more significantly, “pure knowledge” (*al-'ilm al-mahḍ*).²⁵ The proverb, “First is thought and last is action”, has bearing upon the *Qā'im* and the loftiness of his degree [rank] (*darajah*), in particular reference to when the *Qā'im* leaves the corporeal world (*al-'ālam al-jismānī*) for the spiritual world (*al-'ālam al-rūḥānī*).²⁶ As concerns the relationship between Intellect and Soul, one question emerges: do these passages imply that Soul will attain to the perfection of Intellect at the end of time, with the advent of the *Qā'im*?

That the *Qā'im* is the “perfect child” alludes to the “sealing” of the beginning to the end (*al-mushār ilayhi min al-ibtidā' ilā al-intihā' bi al-khitām*), in the sense that all of the ranks of religion, in each epoch, are in service to the *Qā'im* (*khuddām li al-Qā'im*).²⁷ For this reason, the *Qā'im* is the “seal of the *imāms*” (*khātam al-a'immaḥ*) because after him, there is no

²⁴ *Ibid.*: folio 13b.

²⁵ *Ibid.*: folio 8a-13b.

²⁶ *Ibid.*: folio 13b-14a: “*wa hiyā darajah sidrat al-muntahā*”. See at this juncture, Sijistani. *Ithbat al-Nubuwwah* pp. 165-ff., on the *sidrat al-muntahā*, in the context of the discussion of the completion of the prophetic cycles. This is addressed in part in Marquet's study on Ismaili *mī'rāj*. See Y. Marquet. “L'Ascension spirituelle chez quelques auteurs ismailiens.” In, *Le Voyage initiatique en terre d'Islam*. Editor, M. A. Amir-Moezzi. Louvain/Paris, 1996: 117-126.

²⁷ *Ibid.*: folio 14b-15b.

longer need for the ranks of religion, from the *imām* downward. Because the *Qā'im* is established at the end of the *dawr al-'amal*, the epoch of the *Qā'im* is the epoch of purity (*ṣafā'*), *ta'yīd* and *'ilm*, without religious obligation in terms of practice (*taklīf*).²⁸ As we shall see below, al-Mu'ayyad stresses in Volume II of the *Majālis* that the obedience (*tā'ah*) to the *Qā'im* is no longer required after his advent.

The month of Ramaḍān and the "Night of Power" are connected to the *Qā'im* and his "proof" (*ḥujjati-hi*).²⁹ In fact, in this part of the short treatise attributed to al-Mu'ayyad, the author reaffirms the manner in which in each epoch, the ranks of religion are connected and linked to the *Qā'im*. The *Qā'im* overflows over all of created beings (*al-khalā'iq*), from state (*ḥāl*) to state, and from degree to degree, whether concerning the uppermost ranks or those below him. The grace (*barakah*) of the *Qā'im* and his *māddah* overflow in such a manner that the *māddah* is connected to him (*waṣalat ilayhi*). The grace of the *Qā'im*'s *māddah* is synonymous with the knowledge of religious instruction (*'ilm al-ta'līm*).³⁰ This connection is possible, as the author explains further, only by the means of the *walāyah* of the *imāms*, for every true *imām* (*imām ḥaqq*), in every time-period, and more specifically, in his own time, is linked to the *Qā'im*.³¹

²⁸ *Ibid.*: folio 17b-18a; 18b. "lā yakūn ba'da-hu imām wa lā ḥujjah wa lā mustafīd wa lā mufīd bal yuzūlu ḥadd al-ta'līm wa al-'amal wa yakūn dawra-hu dawr ṣafā' wa ta'yīd wa 'ilm bi ghayr taklī"

²⁹ *Ibid.*: folio 20b.

³⁰ *Ibid.*: folio 22b.

³¹ *Ibid.*: folio 23b.

Another facet of the Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* of the month of Ramaḍān and the “Night of Power” in the Kitāb al-Ibtidā', may be seen when the author claims that the meaning and *ta'wīl* of the two is that the angels descend upon the heavens of the world (*al-samā' al-dunyā*) and that the spiritual angels (*al-malā'ikah al-rūḥāniyyūn*) descend upon the master of every time-period (*ṣāhib kullu zamān*) by the means of *ta'yīd* and the *rūḥ*. The descent is tantamount to the knowledge of *ta'wīl*, which God provides to every “friend” (*walī*) and then increases during the “Night of Power”.³² Significantly, at this point in his commentary on the “Night of Power”, the author explains that the knowledge equated with the *Qā'im* is equivalent to eternal life (*al-ḥayāt al-abadiyyah*).³³

In Volume II of the Majālis, there is an interpretation of one of God's name, “*al-Raḥman*”, which holds significance for al-Mu'ayyad's theory of the points of juncture between *nubuwwah*, *wiṣāyah*, and *imāmah*. In the manner that the word, *al-raḥam* (the womb), is derived from the name of God, “*al-Raḥman*”, *imāmah* is derived from *wiṣāyah*. In turn, *wiṣāyah* is derived from *nubuwwah*. The derivation of the three from one another permits for the individual practitioner to obtain one from the other, and ultimately, to attain to God.³⁴ The origination of *imāmah* from *wiṣāyah*, and *wiṣāyah* from *nubuwwah* reaffirms the conditional support of the lower ranks of the *ḥudūd al-dīn* upon the higher ranks, and *vice versa*. Al-

³² Ibid.: folio 21a.

³³ Ibid.: folio 22a.

³⁴ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 34: p. 192.

Mu'ayyad indicates that the derivations of *imāmah*, *wiṣāyah* and *nubuwwah* also clarifies the fact that there cannot be any obedience to God without the preceding forms of *ṭā'ah* to the prophet, the *waṣī*, and so forth, down to the lowest ranks of the *da'wah* embodied in the *ḥudūd al-dīn*. Conversely, the one who separates one of the forms of obedience to the *ḥudūd al-dīn* from the obedience necessary to the others, is separated from God.³⁵

One can also see in al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation of the opening of the Qur'ān (*fātiḥah*) that states, "In the name of God, the Merciful (*al-Raḥman*), the Compassionate (*al-Raḥīm*)", "the Merciful, the Compassionate" represent another two of the names of God.³⁶ Al-Mu'ayyad explains that in these two names of God, the letter "a" (*al-alif*) that is vocalized in the name, "*al-Raḥīm*" represents the masters of the six religious laws (*Aṣḥāb al-sharā'i al-sitah*), whereas the letter "a" that is not written out in the name, "*al-Raḥman*", though it remains vocalized, represents the *Qā'im*. In this context, the letter "a" is like the concealment (*idmār*) of the *Qā'im al-qiyāmah*, who, although he is first in terms of rank, is the last in existence (*wa in kāna fī al-wujūd akharan kāna fī al-rutbah awwalan*).³⁷ At the same time, the letter "a" that is hidden in the written name of "*al-Raḥman*" points to the fact that there is no *ṭā'ah* to the *Qā'im* necessary at the present time, for, according to al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation,

³⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 34: p. 192.

³⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 4: p. 18; Majlis No. 43: p. 212; Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Vajh-i Dīn*. p. 127; Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī. *Sayr va Sulūk*. Editor/Trans. S. J. Badakhchani. 1998: p. 39, para. 29.

³⁷ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 37: p. 210, ln. 13-16.

the practices of *al-tā'ah* to the masters of the religious laws are confirmed as being sufficient for people.³⁸

The human being moves to perfection in seven stages, two of which do not have sensible form (*lā šūrah la-humā maḥsūsah*), the first (the *sulālah*) and the last, the *khalq ākhar*. Earlier, Sijistānī applied the Qur'ānic model of human growth and development from *sūrah* (23: 12-16) to the prophetic cycles and the advent of the *Qā'im* from the "womb of history", as Walker has so succinctly described the procession of human history and Ismā'īlī sacred history towards the eschaton.³⁹ Poonawala notes:

Al-Sijistānī, therefore, states that the *qiyāma* refers to a spiritual event at a future date. In elusive language, he suggests that it will occur when the most virtuous and noblest of mankind will emerge in an auspicious time. It is obvious from his other works that he refers to the coming of the *Qā'im* (the messiah). The emergence of this figure, he adds, will radiate spiritual signs (*lumū' āthārin nafsāniyyatin*), which will reach those who have believed in him and have waited for his coming.⁴⁰

In Sijistānī's Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah,

every speaking-prophet resembles a stage from the six stages: Adam resembles the clay, Noah resembles the sperm, Abraham resembles the blood clot, Moses resembles the embryo, Jesus resembles the bone, Muḥammad resembles the flesh, and the *Qa'im*

³⁸ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 37: pp. 210-211, ln. 17-18 and ln. 1.

³⁹ P. E. Walker. Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and the Development of Ismaili Neoplatonism. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of Chicago. 1974: 185.

On the debate amongst the members of the "Persian School" concerning the question of whether or not Adam brought a *sharī'ah*, see Halm. Kosmologie und Heilslehre. 1978: 101-109. On Adam and the *Qā'im*, see Nomoto. Early Ismā'īlī Thought on Prophecy. 2000: 95-105; 100-101.

⁴⁰ Sijistānī. Ibid.: (Introduction): p. xxiii-xxiv.

resembles ^{cc}another creature³³.⁴¹

Sijistānī's paradigm of human development serves as a clear commentary on the cycles of prophecy; that is to say, what form they acquire and in which realm, as well as the matter of the development of the senses appropriate to each cycle. Al-Mu'ayyad explains that for Adam there was no *sharī'ah*, like the fetus in the womb has no "outer form".

Then the bones are cloaked with flesh, so they hold together firmly its spiritual form (*ṣūratī-hi al-naḥsiyyah*) to the *Ṣāhib al-shar'*, may the best peace be upon him, and the wisdom of the greatness of his *ḥadd*. Then its creation arises last of all, through progressing (*bi al-tarqī*) to the wisdom of the spiritual ranks (*al-ḥudūd al-naḥsiyyah*), which are ^{cc}another creature³³ (*khalq ākhar*), and there is no correspondence between it and them concerning the state of the body (*fī ḥāl al-jism*), and they do not possess form with respect to the existence of sense (*wujūd al-ḥiss*).⁴²

In the last cycle, the same logic applies to the question of whether or not the *Qā'im* brings a *sharī'ah* if the *Qā'im* is the "seal" (*khātam*) of *nubuwwah*, *wiṣāyah* and *imāmah*.⁴³ Also in the same context, al-Mu'ayyad states: "The *al-khalq al-ākhar* has no form; meaning, there is no *sharī'ah* established for it, like the first."⁴⁴ In Majlis No. 69 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad explains how

⁴¹ Sijistānī. *Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah* p. 168. Also see in *Kitāb al-Yanābir* p. 102, para. 166—167 : concerning the "growth" of the human being, in the womb and in the world, and then, in the "spiritual world", in terms of the faculty of sense.

⁴² *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālīb edition). Majlis No. 18: pp. 85-86.

⁴³ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 28: pp. 85-ff.

⁴⁴ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 18: p. 86. As well, see Volume V. MS. 535. Folio 28a-28b, ln. 8-ff.: "We stated that when the perfection of the corporeal form (*kamāl*

the *Qā'im* establishes the signs of resurrection (*ayāt al-qiyyamah*) and he is the “seal” of *nubuwwah*, *wiṣāyah* and *imāmah*.⁴⁵ These passages are relevant for a number of reasons as concerns al-Mu'ayyad's concept of the human being and his theory of the interconnected cycles of *nubuwwah*, *wiṣāyah* and *imāmah*. The *nabī* is the “comprehensive joiner” (*al-jāmi'*) of the ranked degrees of *nubuwwah* and *wiṣāyah*. *Nubuwwah* may therefore be considered to be elevated and superior to the latter two, in the sense that it contains both of the others; that is, both *wiṣāyah* and *imāmah*.⁴⁶

Al-Mu'ayyad's commentary on “God created Adam in his image” (*“khalaqa Ādam bi-ṣūratī-hi”*) serves as the foundation of the discussion of forms pertaining to the human being on the different levels of spiritual perfection, first through the practice of obedience to the *imām*, and then, at the highest level, where the angels serve as “intermediaries” to the abode of permanence, or the abode of the Afterlife. Al-Mu'ayyad indicates that in

al-ṣūrah al-jismiyyah) is in the sixth *ḥadd* of the *ḥudūd*, of which the first is the drop of water and the last is the flesh, it is necessary that there is the perfection of the souls pertaining to the *dār al-ākhirah* with respect to the religions (*al-diyānāt*), like this number of the religious communities (*al-milal*) that God the Most High made a cause of the arising of the souls of the other formation (*al-inshā' al-nufūs al-nash'āh al-ākhirah*). The last of them is the religious community of Islam, for it was due to the religious communities that the perfection of human souls (*al-nufūs al-bashariyyah*) is in the station (*bi manzilah*) of the flesh, which is the perfection of the human bodies (*al-aṣām al-bashariyyah*), and so after it, form is not acquired. Then, by this, it was made evident that the religious community of Islam is the most preferred and most perfect of religious communities and that Muḥammad, may God's prayers be upon him, by bringing it, is the *khātim al-nabiyyīn*, and so forth. Just as the powers (*quwā*) of the drop of water and the sperm and the blood clot, and the others, lead to the other meaning, which is the flesh, then likewise the *quwwah* of the religious communities as a whole, lead to the religious community of Islam.”

⁴⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 69: p. 335.

⁴⁶ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 200: p. 610, ln. 13-16.

their *tafsīr* interpretation, the “Exegetes” are concerned with the issue of to whom the *hā’* of *bi šūrati-hi* refers. They explain that the ‘his’ of “his image” refers to Adam, and not God.⁴⁷ The name of God, *Allāh*, is the greatest name of God, as well as the greatest of His *ḥudūd*. This explains how Adam was made in His form—the form (*shakl*) of the *al-ism al-‘azīm*--which symbolizes the highest of the ranks of the spiritual hierarchy.⁴⁸

As was seen in Chapter Four, the highest of the *ḥudūd* and the greatest name of God (*ismu-hu al-‘āzam*) is of significance in terms of al-Mu’ayyad’s soteriological doctrines. In al-Mu’ayyad’s theory of *walāyah* and counter-*walāyah*, Adam and Iblis co-exist throughout prophetic history as the *imām* and the *ḍidd* in each cycle until the “Day of the Time appointed” (“*yawm al-waqt al-ma’lūm*”) (*sūrah* 15: 38). Because in terms of capacity (*fī al-quwwah*), the vanquisher (*al-qāhir*) and the vanquished (*al-maḡhūr*) are equally and mutually matched to each other (*mutadāniyyin*), one of the two will conquer the other due to the equanimity (*rajāḥah*) in him. As for the reason why God does not conquer one of them himself, al-Mu’ayyad explains that it is because the relationship between God and His creation is one that is so distant in terms of capacity. Therefore, Iblis must be matched with his equal, Adam, rather than being vanquished by God Himself. Al-Mu’ayyad then follows the same line of reasoning a bit further by stating:

Rather, at the end of time (*tamām al-muddah*), the Adamic substance (*al-jawhar al-ādamī*), which is His

⁴⁷ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 73: p. 364.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: p. 365: all of the *Banū Ādam* are formed in the *shakl* of the prophet Adam.

creation, is entitled to vanquish the Iblisian substance (*al-jawhar al-iblisī*) due to the relationship between the two of them in terms of capacity, which is the statement of God, may He be praised, “God stated: ‘Respite is granted to you until the Day of the Time appointed.’” (*sūrah* 15: 38)⁴⁹

In connection with his commentary on *sūrah* (2: 20), al-Mu’ayyad states that “If He would wish” (“*wa law shā’ Allāh*”) alludes to His name that in the *‘ālam al-ṭabī‘ah*, acquires the place of His greatest name (*ismi-hi al-‘āzam*).⁵⁰ If God had wished to rid His Creation of Iblis and his representatives in each cycle and epoch through the means of His greatest name, he would have, for “God has power over all things” (*sūrah* 2: 20).⁵¹

Meaning, that “if He would wish” (*sūrah* 2: 20), he erases (*yatmusu*) the Iblises of his epoch, who are the ears and eyes for their parties, in his capacity. Just as it was stated in another place, “And if it had been Our will, We would have transformed them in their places; then should they have been unable to move about, nor could they have returned (after error).” (*sūrah* 36: 66-67), but Iblis’s expectation (*intizār*) for “the Day of the Time appointed” (*sūrah* 15: 38) belongs to the secret (*li sirr*) from God, may He be praised, concerning His hidden command (*amri-hi maktūm*).⁵²

⁴⁹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 20: pp. 112-113, ln. 66-79.

⁵⁰ A very similar passage on God’s greatest name in the *‘ālam al-ṭabī‘ah* appears in *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 44: pp. 264-265.

⁵¹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 34: p. 192.

⁵² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 71: p. 346.

Section c.: *Walāyah* and the “Seal” of the *Imāms*

In his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Nomoto has noted how the 10th-century Ismā‘īlī author Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī presents a discussion on the union the *Qā’im* will attain with Intellect at the end of prophetic history. Rāzī suggests that in comparison with the prophets, the *Qā’im* is the one who attains to the highest degree of union with Intellect.⁵³ Much later, in the 11th-century Ismā‘īlī work, *Vajh-i Dīn*, Nāṣir-i Khusraw also discusses the *Qā’im* and the distinctions between the prophets.⁵⁴ What doubtlessly merits further research is to what extent al-Mu‘ayyad may have concurred with al-Rāzī on a number of significant points concerning the *Qā’im* as the most perfect human being, for as previously discussed by Nomoto, the end of “this cosmos” occurs with the perfection of the human being.⁵⁵ As shall be seen in what follows, al-Mu‘ayyad puts forth a set of arguments in his commentary on the *Khutbat al-Bayān* concerning the “First” and the “Last” that offers something fresh and unique in terms of Ismā‘īlī doctrines on the *Qā’im* at the same time that it returns once again to the identity and stature of the “absolute human being” and the “absolute friend of God” in al-Mu‘ayyad’s theory of *walāyah*.

⁵³ See *Kitāb al-Islāh* pp. 199-211; 211-ff., on the ranking of the *nuṭaqā’*; *Kitāb al-Iftikhār* (Ghālib edition) pp. 47-56: on *Kūnī* and *Qadr* and the prophets.

⁵⁴ See *Vajh-i Dīn*. Editor, G. R. Aavani. Tehran, 1977: pp. 64-65; 245-246; 256-257.

⁵⁵ Nomoto. : 183.

As we have seen thus far, the interpretation of the numerical significance of the *ḥudūd* is important for al-Mu'ayyad's *ta'wīl* of the month of Ramaḍān at the same time that it lend further support to the manner in which the cycle of *walāyah* commences and draws to a close at a single point, as in the image of a circle itself, for the “first” *imām* is also the “last” *imām*, the “*imām* of resurrection”. In conjunction with his commentary on ‘Alī’s saying, “I am the First and the Last”, al-Mu’ayyad elucidates another aspect as to why ‘Alī is the “First and the Last”.⁵⁶ According to al-Mu’ayyad’s interpretation, in reference to *sūrah* (10: 5), *al-ḥisāb* is the “root” (*aṣl*) of all that God created in the world of nature and the World of the Intellect. The end (*ghāyah*) of numbers is from one to a thousand, after which they repeat. Al-Mu’ayyad presents another argument concerning how numbers are divided into four categories: ones, tens, hundreds, and thousands, the prime example being of this being the *ḥudūd Allāh* in the world of creation (*‘ālam al-khalq*) and the world of command (*‘ālam al-amr*).⁵⁷

Together, the “absolute cause” (*al-‘illah al-muṭlaqah*) and the “absolute caused” (*al-‘ma’lūl al-muṭlaq*) possess two aspects (*ṭarafān*), “the first (*al-awwal*)” and “the last (*al-ākhar*)”.⁵⁸ All of what is from the numbers between one and a thousand are in their essence, the “cause” or the “caused”, and the “cause” and the “caused” are like the *al-wālid* and the *mawlūd*. For

⁵⁶ *Majālis*. Majlis No. 31: pp. 149-154; pp. 157.

⁵⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 32: pp. 156-157:

⁵⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 32: p. 157, ln. 1-7.

example, one is like the father (*ab*) of all numbers, since all numbers come from one, but it does not have a “father” itself.⁵⁹ As concerns the number “thousand”, it is *mawlūd al-jamī*, and it does not have any *mawlūd*. Therefore, one and thousand are the end (*ghāyatī*) of creation (*al-khalq*) and the command (*al-amr*); one of which is the “first”, which has no “first” before it, and the other which is the “last”, and has no “last” after it. With regard to the status of ‘Alī as the “first” and the “last” in his role as *imām*, al-Mu’ayyad sets forth a number of distinctions between the cause (*‘illah*) and the caused (*ma’lūl*).⁶⁰

Majlis No. 31 of Volume I touches on the concept of *istinbāṭ* in continuation with al-Mu’ayyad’s commentary on ‘Alī’s saying, “I am the first and the last.”⁶¹ As noted above, this lecture contains an extremely important discussion of al-Mu’ayyad’s concept of the *al-insān al-muṭlaq*. Al-Mu’ayyad claims that according to the “Shortcomers”, the Messiah is first and ‘Alī is second in rank in terms of the identity of the “seal”. In another passage from Volume I, which likewise draws upon the *Khutbah*, the “Shortcomers” believe that first it is the *Masīh* and then ‘Alī who “seal” *walāyah* at the end of time. Majlis Nos. 30-37 of Volume likewise introduce the discussion of this saying in the context of al-Mu’ayyad’s theory of the *imām*.⁶² The “first” is what does not have anything before it, which is the light of the word of God, who established the “first” and the “last” from it.

⁵⁹ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 32: p. 157.

⁶⁰ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 32: p. 157, ln. 6-21.

⁶¹ *Majālis*. Majlis No. 31: pp. 149-154; 150-151.

⁶² *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 37-38: pp. 182-185; Majlis No. 30: pp. 147, ln. 12-15.

The “last” does not have anything after it, which is also the light of God, from which God establishes the resurrection (*al-ba‘th*).⁶³ In Volume II, however, al-Mu‘ayyad returns again to the question of religious affiliation and spiritual birth: Jesus is like the Prophet in his epoch and Simon the Pure (Sam‘ūn al-Ṣafā‘) is his *asās*, and just like the Prophet and ‘Alī in their epoch, they are the “fathers of the believers” (*abawī al-mu‘minīn*).⁶⁴ Jesus was anointed with the word of God (*kalimah Allāh*), whereas the Prophet was distinguished with the words of God (*kalimāt Allāh*). According to al-Mu‘ayyad, the Prophet Muḥammad was the most worthy to be anointed by them; that is, by the upper ranks of religion (*al-ḥudūd al-‘ulwiyyah*) in the Abode of Origination (*dār al-ibdā‘*).⁶⁵

In relation to *sūrah* (53: 8-9), the Prophet Muḥammad travels (*sā‘iḥan*) in his soul and intellect in the wide and empty space of the “Divine World” (*‘ālam al-malakūt*), traveling and coming to the limit of “Then he approached and descended and was at a distance of two bow’s length or nearer” (*sūrah* 53: 9). The spiritual and prophetic ascent of the “Night

⁶³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 31: pp. 150-151, ln. 13-21 and ln. 1-12.

⁶⁴ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 64: p. 401, ln. 20-22. In Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s commentary on the *Qiṣṣah* ‘Īsā from the *Asās al-Ta’wīl*, he suggests that Mary was a *ḥujjah* and that her reception of *ta’yīd* represents an immediate ‘conjunction’ without intermediation. See *Asās al-Ta’wīl* pp. 322-ff; Corbin. *Face de Dieu*. 1983: 152-162; Corbin. *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*. 1983: 183-184. According to Corbin, the virgin birth of ‘Īsā represents his “initiatory birth”. Corbin also explains that since the *imām* was in hiding at the time, ‘Īsā was initiated into prophethood by someone with the “vocation of his Angel”. From another perspective, this refers to the pairing between the Intellect and Soul throughout the domain of God’s creation, with bearing upon the transmission of *ta’yīd* and prophetic revelation. On this point in particular, see *Asās al-Ta’wīl* p. 327.

⁶⁵ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 64: p. 402, ln. 29-31.

Journey⁶⁶ (*sūrah* 17) is unique to Muḥammad alone as a prophet.⁶⁶ As well, in Majlis No. 16 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad quotes from a Qur'ānic commentary of Ja'far al-Šādiq, which also elucidates the manner in which *walāyah* commenced with Adam and will conclude with the *qiyāmah*.⁶⁷

When Adam was in the heaven, he saw written on the leg of the Throne (*al-'arsh*), the *lā ilaha illā Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* confirmed by 'Alī, for the two of them are near God concerning the station and the first place (*al-manzilah wa al-makānah al-awwal*), and from the perspective of *risālah* and *wiṣāyah*, the two of them are completed by the two others (*al-makhtūman bi-himā ākhir*), and this statement is *shar'ī*, and the other statement is *mā'thūr*. It is known that the rank (*rutbah*) of *nubuwwah* and *wiṣāyah*, from the perspective of the commencement of the two of them, is well-arranged according to the sealing [concluding] of the two of them and the prophecies (*al-bashā'ir*), from the beginning parts, are still connected to the ending parts. The goal is then from the beginning parts to the ending parts, and if it is such as that, likewise the two of them are the "first" and the "last". This statement is *shar'ī* and the other is *mā'thūr*: if God, may He be praised, created the souls before the bodies in seven thousand years, then it is necessary that He arranged them, for there is nothing more noble than the two of them in the stations (*maqāmāt*) of *al-nubuwwah* and *al-wiṣāyah*, for the two of them are the "first" and the "last", and this statement is *shar'ī*.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: ln. 38-42: "*wa hadhā ḥaẓẓ laysa li al-Masīḥ wa lā li ghayri-hi min ibnā' jinsi-hi.*"

⁶⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 16: p. 78, ln. 3-10. As referred to previously, a commentary on Qur'ān (95: 1-3) appears in Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *Vajih-i Dīn* p. 98, though without reference to Ja'far al-Šādiq's *ta'wil* of this verse. Nāṣir-i Khusraw emphasizes the four-fold virtues, similar to Sijistānī, and offers up an "*aqli*" interpretation of the implicit values and qualities of these fruits and places, where the four function in all cycles, and not just with regard to a number of 'historical' prophets or the present cycle (and the earthly hierarchy thereof).

⁶⁸ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis 31: p. 152; Majlis No. 32: p. 157, ln. 1-ff. Volume II. Majlis No. 25: p. 137: another reference to how Adam saw the name of Muḥammad written on the throne.

In Majlis No. 55 of Volume II, al-Mu'ayyad provides another commentary on *sūrah* (23: 13-14), with respect to the spiritual religious creation (*al-khilqah al-dīniyyah al-nafsāniyyah*) as a means of returning to his earlier discussions of the *khalq ākhar* and the *Qā'im* as being the seventh in terms of rank. Pointing out that he has discussed this matter in previous lectures, he then equates each of the prophets with the stages of human development in the mother's womb: the *sulālah* is like Adam, the sperm is like Nūḥ, the blood-clot is like Ibrāhīm, the fetus is like Mūsā, the bones are like 'Īsā, and the flesh is like Muḥammad.⁶⁹ Al-Mu'ayyad employs the paradigm of human development once again in order to elucidate further how it is indeed Muḥammad who is the "seal of the prophets" (*khātim al-nabiyyīn*). The perfection of *al-khilqah* and the completion of the *sūrah* and the *al-khalq al-ākhar* suggests that since Muḥammad represents the stage of development in which no other forms or shapes are acquired afterwards, the flesh that he signifies places the seal (*al-khatam*) on form generally speaking. Al-Mu'ayyad states, "Likewise, since prophethood (*al-nubuwwah*) comes to an end in Muḥammad, it placed the seal on it."⁷⁰ Al-Mu'ayyad introduces a distinctive prophetic *ḥadīth* in order to support this interpretation: "every stone and clump of clay witnesses my prophethood" (*ʿyashhadu bi nubuwwatī kullu ḥajar wa madarin*). The implication here is that to state

⁶⁹ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: pp. 338-339, ln. 19-44. Majlis No. 39: pp. 225-226, ln. 31-47 (in connection with Qur'ān (23: 14). See in addition, Tasawwurat (Ivanow translation) pp. 152-153.

⁷⁰ Majālis. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: p. 339.

that something occurs after the six ranks of prophets would imply that the sixth of them is not the perfection and seal of the ranks (*kamālu-hā wa khātamu-hā*).⁷¹

In the same manner that the perfection of the fetus as a form is through the combination (*bi ijtīmā'*) of all of the prior stages of development in it, leading to the completed form of its body, the religious laws of all of the speaking-prophets are combined in the Prophet Muḥammad's *sharī'ah*. Their prophethoods shared a portion in his prophethood (*inṣabat nubuwwātu-hum ilā nubuwwati-hi*). As al-Mu'ayyad is careful to indicate, this particular interpretation of the prophethood of Muḥammad does not depart from the assertions people made concerning the Prophet Muḥammad or the characteristic of the people of his *dawr*.⁷²

Two passages from Majlis No. 74 of Volume I address more specifically the identity of the *Qā'im* as the "seal" of the cycles of *nubuwwah* and *wiṣāyah*. With the advent of the *Qā'im*, there is no more need for corporeal forms of religion or the physical *hudud al-din*. The corporeal form (*al-ṣūrah al-jismāniyyah*), which is supported (*maḥmūlah*) between the "Heavens and the Earth"⁷³ (*sūrah* 50: 38), is in the domain of the seven days of the week. The seven days of the week are symbolic of God's act of Creation, which took six days. God made the seventh day, the Sabbath (*al-sabt*), the day of rest

⁷¹ *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: pp. 339, ln. 32-36. There exists another interpretation of this *ḥadīth* in *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 4: p. 16, ln. 14. In *Vajh-i Dīn* p. 85, ln. 14, a variant of this *ḥadīth* appears.

⁷² *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 55: p. 339, ln. 37-44. "*ijtima'at sharā'i al-nuṭaqā' kulla-hum fī sharī'ati-hi*". See as well, *Tasawwūrāt* (Ivanow translation) p. 152.

(*rāḥat*). The spiritual form (*al-ṣūrah al-naḥsāniyyah*), is supported between the *tanzīl* and the *ta'wīl*. The spiritual form is in the domain of the seven *adwār*.⁷³ In Majlis No. 15 of Volume I, al-Mu'ayyad quotes an 'ālim, who explains that if the "religious birth" (*al-mawlūd al-dīnī*) fulfills (*istawfī*) the wisdom of the seven ranks of the *ḥudūd*, they occur in comparison to the Qur'ānic verse, "God created the Heavens and the Earth and what is between them in seven days" (*sūrah* 25: 59). For, in reference to *sūrah* (13: 2), al-Mu'ayyad explains as follows:

equivalent to the throne (*istawā' al-'arsh*) is the Seventh and he is derived from the most radiant of their lights in the womb of his spiritual mother (*fī baṭn ummi-hi al-naḥsāniyyah*). It is the enclosure of the *da'wah* (*kinf al-da'wah*), set free from the wombs of the four elements (*buṭūn al-ummahāt al-arba'*) into the vast and unlimited space (*faḍā'*) of the World of Soul, worthy of the everlasting life (*al-ḥayāt al-abadiyyah*) and eternal permanence (*al-baqā' al-sarmadī*).⁷⁴

The "the last day (*al-yawm al-ākhir*)" is the *al-qiyāmah yawm al-khitām*, and the day that God granted (*'āṭā-hu*) the perfection of the days. According to al-Mu'ayyad's *ta'wīl* of this Qur'ānic verse, the "seal of the *imāms*" establishes the resurrection of religion (*qiyāmah al-dīn*). After him, the resurrection of the world (*qiyāmah al-dunyā'*) takes place.⁷⁵ In the same manner that the Sabbath is the "seal" (*khātimah*) of the days of the week,

⁷³ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 74, p. 363.

⁷⁴ *Majālis*. Volume III. Majlis No. 15: pp. 75.

⁷⁵ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 49: p. 243.

the cycle of the *Qā'im al-qiyāmah* is the “seal of the cycles” (*khātimah al-adwār*).⁷⁶ As the cycles of *imamah* have their ultimate basis in the *Qā'im al-qiyāmah* (*wa al-muntahiyah ilayhi adwār al-imāmah*), the *Qā'im* ^{cc}will fill the earth with justice and peace, just as it has been filled with tyranny and oppression³³, and humanity will finally be ushered into the realm of pure knowledge at long last.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ *Majālis*. Volume I (Ghālib edition). Majlis No. 74: p. 363 (“*khātimah al-adwār dawr al-qiyāmah*”).

Also, see *Majālis*. Volume II. Majlis No. 182: p. 518. ^{cc}*al-khalq al-ākhar*³³ as the seventh in relation to Qur’ān (23: 14).

⁷⁷ *Majālis*. Volume I. Majlis No. 74: p. 363. This *ḥadīth* appears in a more complete form in Volume III. Majlis No. 93: p. 264, ln. 17-18.

Conclusions

When their ultimate goal is reached, these things will be revealed in their real identity and, casting off their gross manner, they will be confirmed in the most beautiful form and most sublime rank, being then what “eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered the heart of man.”¹

It has been argued throughout this dissertation that it may be possible to trace a movement in 11th-century Ismāʿīlī intellectual circles towards more conservative typologies of the *imām*; a movement which placed a higher priority upon composing polemical material in order to refute the more “exaggerated” views of the *Ghulāt* and to propound a less divinized concept of the *imām*. From the perspective of the history of Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism, al-Muʿayyad’s reintroduction of Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān’s theory of *walāyah* into Fāṭimid *daʿwah* teachings, as is suggested by one of the main doctrinal focal points of the *Majālis*, raised a number of questions, especially in the light of taking into consideration internal debates in the extended Fāṭimid *daʿwah* on the figure of the *imām*. In an effort perhaps to reconsolidate the extended *daʿwah* doctrinally, or to re-articulate the theological “middle-ground” of competing definitions of Shīʿī religious authority (the views of both the *Ghulāt* and the *Muqaṣṣirūn*), al-Muʿayyad engages in the on-going debates

¹ Walker, trans. *The Wellsprings of Wisdom*. 1994: p. 89, para. 131.

within the larger Shīʿī tradition concerning the hierarchy of the prophets and the *imāms* and thus further systematizes the Ismāʿīlī doctrine of *walāyah*.

The first two chapters of this dissertation focused extensively on the social and historical contexts of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* and the *majlis*. As well, determining whether or not Fāṭimid *sīrah* literature constitutes a unique genre of Fāṭimid historiography, as best exemplified by al-Muʿayyad’s memoir of his career as a Fāṭimid missionary, was of particular importance in terms of examining the introduction of an Ismāʿīlī theory of *walāyah* into Fāṭimid *daʿwah* teachings as well as into different contexts of religious instruction and public life. On multiple levels of signification, *walāyah* served as the focal point of Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī identity.

My dissertation has also proposed the argument that the 10th-century Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī author Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān employed the pre-Islamic prophets as exemplars of practice in the context of an emergent Ismāʿīlī *adab*, where obedience to the *imām* of the time signified sound religious practice as well as correct doctrinal belief. This particular consideration of Ismāʿīlī ethics was vital for understanding what may be termed to be the “mystical”, rather than the “legalistic”, approach to teachings on *walāyah* in the public setting of the Fāṭimid court as well as other contexts of religious instruction. As noted in Chapter One and Two, Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān’s introduction of *walāyah* as a defining feature of religious and political authority took place at a time that was crucial for the Fāṭimid dynasty’s foundation of a legitimizing religious identity. Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān’s discussions of the role of the Prophet

Muḥammad and his *waṣī* ‘Alī entailed a demarcation of sanctity whilst also addressing the issue of prophetic inheritance. Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān inserts the hierarchy of prophets and *imāms* embodied in *walāyah* into the larger framework of Ismā‘īlī prophetic history. Of importance for the *da‘wah* and the community of believers is that of necessity, in the course of prophetic history, the interpretive process of revisiting the Qur’ān is continued by the *imām* himself and by the means of the method of *ta’wīl*, for which the *imām* is distinctly qualified due to his reception of the “divine support” of *ta’yīd*.

Chapters Four and Five maintained that al-Mu‘ayyad’s typologies of the *imām* point to an internal systemization of the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī doctrine of *walāyah* and the function of the *ḥudūd al-dīn*, lending a particular prominence to the soteriological implications of the 11th-century Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī practice of *ṭā‘ah*. Al-Mu‘ayyad develops his own distinct doctrinal position on the Fāṭimid doctrine of *walāyah* through the introduction of a set of concepts concerning the human being and the *imām*; in particular, a technical lexicon that allows for a “progressive” understanding of the concept of the human being and how its parallel development and formation occurs through the guidance of the “friends of God” as well as a deeper understanding of the ascending cycle of *walāyah*, which commenced with Adam and concludes with the *Qā’im*.

Al-Mu‘ayyad’s theory concerning the representative of Adam and Iblīs in each epoch is also of great importance to the manner in which al-Mu‘ayyad develops further the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī practice of *ṭā‘ah* to the *ḥudūd al-dīn*

into a doctrine on the mysterious, negative spiritual hierarchy over which Iblīs serves as *imām*. Indeed, additional evidence of both al-Mu'ayyad's engagement in the Shī'ī tradition as well as his further systematization of Fāṭimid *da'wah* teachings may be located in al-Mu'ayyad's theory of *walāyah* and counter-*walāyah*, where just as at the end of prophetic history, the "seal of the cycles" ushers in the second continuum of perfection for humanity, the "seal of the most evil Iblīs" (of counter-*walāyah*) too attains to a higher level of ontological perfection and completion. Another substantial contribution of al-Mu'ayyad to mediaeval Shī'ī debates on the figure of the *imām* lies in his presentation of the "pairing" between the physical representative of the *imām* and the *ḥaqīqah* of the *imām*, as he truly appears in the *dār al-ākhirah*. The significance of al-Mu'ayyad's imamology was discussed at length in Chapter Four.

As was also evident in Chapter Four, al-Mu'ayyad's *Majālis* offers to the individual practitioner several redemptive strategies for salvation: the role of religious practice and spiritual ethics through the reliance on the *ḥudūd al-dīn*. Al-Mu'ayyad's concept of *ṭā'ah* marks the further development of what may be called Ismā'īlī ethics from the "classical" Fāṭimid model of *ṭā'ah* Qāḍī al-Nu'mān originally drafted and introduced into two settings in Fāṭimid Cairo: the public court setting and the *da'wah* setting of the *majlis*. It may be stated that for al-Mu'ayyad, ethical models for perfection and spiritual purification serve as only the first stage towards the means of acquiring knowledge of a decidedly esoteric nature. In the mediaeval Ismā'īlī

tradition, inclusive of such authors as Qāḍī al-Nu'mān and al-Mu'ayyad, and which may be extended to include some of the 13th-century works of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, the forms of obedience and submission to the *imām* likewise determine the manner in which ethics is approached as one of the most pivotal religious practices. Al-Mu'ayyad suggests that spiritual ethics are put into practice through the individual's reliance on the *imām* at the same that his articulation of *tā'ah* takes into account the necessity of "spiritual parents" from the lower ranks of the *da'wah* in the absence of a physical representative of the *imām mutlaq* for the individual's spiritual development and perfection.

Sometimes within a thesis, there is yet another thesis. From the perspective of mediaeval Ismā'īlī thought, my dissertation has argued that al-Mu'ayyad's elaboration of an Ismā'īlī theory of *walāyah* incorporates a series of discussions revolving around the gradated ranks of human beings, where the prophets and the "friends of God" represent a separate category of the human being. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the "friends of God" are uniquely receptive to the transmission of *ta'yīd*, within a circle of distinction and proximity to God. Al-Mu'ayyad's concept of *walāyah* thus entails a clear definition as to the role and function of the *imām* in terms of mediaeval Ismā'īlī soteriology. As well, it is clear that al-Mu'ayyad's articulation of the religious practice of *tā'ah* stresses its importance for the formation and spiritual perfection of the individual practitioner. As has also been seen throughout this dissertation, the *ḥudūd al-dīn* form the necessary

intermediaries between the two realms of the *dār al-dunyā*’ and the *dār al-ākhirah*. Yet from another perspective, within the dark image of man as a brutish beast is the potential for redemption through the guidance of the “friends of God”, the knowledge of *ta’wīl* and the light of *ta’yīd*. Al-Mu’ayyad suggests that for humanity, the paradise of knowledge is often lost but it may be regained through the *da’wah*, the potential Heaven (*jannat bi al-quwwah*) on earth, actualized as the abode of Heaven (*jannah bi al-fi’l*) in the Afterlife. Having attained to true humanity, the individual may potentially acquire the divine forms in the Afterlife, for the divine forms are the forms of the souls in the spiritual world, where they truly benefit from the *imāms*.

In conclusion, many questions remain with respect to the larger historical significance of al-Mu’ayyad’s introduction of the doctrine of *walāyah* into 11th-century *da’wah* teachings as well as its significance in terms of later developments in mediaeval Islamic intellectual history at large; in particular, in terms of what may fall under the rubric of “Islamic mysticism”. Although it has been frequently argued that Ismā’īlī Neoplatonism maintained very little of a hold on the majority of the population of 10th-11th-century Fāṭimid Cairo, I would like to propose that it is only by examining the doctrinal concerns of the Fāṭimid Ismā’īlī author al-Mu’ayyad that it is possible to gain a fleeting glimpse of what might have paved the way for the future prevalence of the doctrine of *walāyah* in the discussions of post-Fāṭimid Egyptian Sufi texts. More focused research may also deepen our understanding of the engagement of Ismā’īlī authors,

needless to say, such as al-Mu'ayyad himself, in the works of their Sufi contemporaries, especially with respect to teachings on *walāyah*, devotional strategies, and the religious guidance embodied in the figure of the “complete” or “perfect” human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*) as the true representative of God. In addition, as suggested above, further research is also certainly needed with respect to the emergence of a genre of Persian literature in Mongol-period Iran concerned with ethics in the contexts of both Ismā'īlī thought and mystical philosophy, as seen in the 13th-century works of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Bābā Afdal. But without a doubt, these issues, as well as many others that touch upon al-Mu'ayyad's *magnum opus*, the Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah, await future research.

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