DARK IMAMS

Succession, Hidden Knowledge, and the Making of Authority

IMAM AL-RIḌĀ AND THE POISONED GRAPES

View the original historical lithograph

Iranian color lithograph, twentieth century · Ajam Media Collective

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Prologue · The Testament in the Jar

A group of disciples asks who will lead them after Jesus leaves. In the Gospel of Thomas, the answer names James the Just. The saying gives him an extraordinary place in creation: he is the one "for whose sake heaven and earth came into being." A succession dispute has been placed inside a claim about the purpose of the world. [W-S01]

For a reader formed by Shiʿi discussions of the Imam, the language is immediately recognizable. Leadership involves more than managing the survivors of a religious movement. The righteous guide makes the movement intelligible. His authority expresses the reason its obligations matter.

Recognition is an invitation to investigate. It is also a source of temptation. A familiar pattern can make a text feel older, more authentic, or closer to a cherished doctrine than its surviving witnesses establish. Thomas 12 preserves a designation of James within a literary account. Paul's references to James in Galatians and his inclusion among the recipients of an appearance in 1 Corinthians supply an additional historical setting. They establish James's importance in the early movement. The precise jurisdiction of that importance remains a separate matter. [W-S02]

Calling James the first pope introduces an office and its later controversies into the interpretation. Calling him an Imam introduces a different set of theological expectations. Either comparison can generate useful questions. We must still ask what authority the earliest communities understood him to possess and how their successors preserved that understanding.

A manuscript's survival gives later readers access to a claim. Its accidental preservation does not settle the claim's truth. Yet the uneven survival of evidence matters enormously. Communities with libraries and continuing institutions can preserve their own account of the past. A movement whose documents survive in hostile catalogues must often be reconstructed through the language of its opponents. Historical prominence and archival visibility can drift far apart.

This book follows that problem through the histories of Shiʿi authority. The Kaysanis provide an especially consequential case. A movement that later classifications often place among the discarded alternatives contributed to the political world from which Abbasid power emerged. The alleged testament linking an Alid heir to an Abbasid household is a story about succession with an empire at its end. [W-D1, pp. 1–4]

The distance between those two points invites investigation into everything that happened along the way. A claim can be sincerely believed by its bearers and useful to a ruling family. An instruction concerning followers can acquire the language of universal religious office. A remembered appointment can gather predictions of victories that occurred decades later. Each transformation changes what a community thinks it inherited.

The title Dark Imams concerns the obscured history of those transformations and the risks attached to claims of privileged guidance. It leaves room for fidelity. The preservation of learning, the refusal of an unjust command, and the willingness to challenge a ruler belong to this history as fully as the appropriation of sacred names.

An Iranian devotional lithograph shows al-Maʾmūn offering grapes to Imam ʿAlī al-Riḍā. It commemorates an accusation of poisoned hospitality that has haunted Shiʿi memory for centuries. The scene gives us a question that outlives the caliph: how often has harm been offered to believers under the name of those they love? [PG-01; PG-02]

The answer reaches into the transmission of religious law. An uncertain saying can be presented as the Imam's command. A better-attested report can become a weapon in the hands of a careless interpreter. Both demand scrutiny from those who claim to honor the Prophet's household.

The investigation eventually reaches people who would reject the religious vocabulary in which it began. Modern systems can promise to understand human interests more deeply than human beings understand themselves. Their designers then face a problem recognizable from a much older dispute: what authority follows from possessing knowledge that others cannot independently assess?

That problem can be examined without deciding in advance that every claimant is an impostor. It becomes sharper when the claimant has something valuable to teach.

PART I · Inheritances

1 · Who Gets to Count as Shiʿi?

A genealogy tells a reader where to begin. Put the Twelve at the center of the page and every competing line becomes a departure from an expected inheritance. Put the surviving seventh- and eighth-century claims beside one another and a different problem emerges. The people making those claims were living through decisions whose eventual outcome they could not know. The authority of a later canon belongs among the consequences to be explained.

The word *Kaysāniyya* illustrates the difficulty. Sean Anthony finds no surviving use of it as the movement's own designation. The communities subsequently assembled under that label emerged from the constituency around al-Mukhtār and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya. Sources preserve other names and descriptions for the participants. A historian who starts with a finished sectarian tree can mistake the categories used to classify the dead for the language through which the living organized themselves. [N02]

This book uses the familiar names because they allow readers to follow the sources. Each name nevertheless needs a date and a speaker. An opponent's classification can record a real doctrinal disagreement while exaggerating how uniformly the accused group held the disputed position. A community's own genealogy can accurately preserve teachers while arranging their disagreements into a succession more continuous than their lives were.

The Zaydi case requires particular care. The restriction of legitimate candidates to descendants of Ḥasan or Ḥusayn can coexist with competition among eligible claimants and disagreement over the qualifications required. Later Zaydi histories include substantial legal and theological variation across Iraq, the Caspian region, and Yemen. Calling the tradition a fixed list of five Imams would conceal most of that history. The modern scholarly account by Scott Lucas and Egbal Almahatwary treats those regional formations and their differences directly. [N01]

Ismaili succession presents another kind of problem. The disputed designations at the Fatimid court later produced communities with different arrangements for access to the Imam. A scholar writing from one of those communities can regard another claimant as invalid while still preserving indispensable evidence about the shared institution before the dispute. The historian needs both accounts. Chapters 14–18 follow that institutional history before drawing comparisons with the Druze or with European initiatic claims. [N08; N09]

The choice of starting point

The central question of *Dark Imams* concerns what people do with inherited authority. That question can be asked of an Abbasid ruler or a transmitter who gives a legal proposition an Alid speaker. It

also applies to a modern interpreter who wants the archive to vindicate a preferred succession. The author is included in the inquiry.

The book's sympathetic orientation toward the Prophet's household is explicit. Its theological judgments give priority to the Qur'an and to accountable reasoning about justice. Historical attribution requires an additional inquiry. A report favorable to ʿAlī does not become early because its moral effect is attractive. Equally, a disturbing report under his name remains open to investigation for hostile attribution, textual expansion, or a later legal use. The case studies preserve those alternatives at the level of individual passages.

A plural history can also recognize real incompatibility. Two communities may assert exclusive claims that cannot both describe the same appointment correctly. Recording their arguments does not dissolve the conflict into a general celebration of diversity. It creates the conditions for assessing the conflict without allowing the eventual winner to define every admissible witness.

Multiple succession, as explored in this project, adds a further possibility. An inheritance might distribute different responsibilities among several people. Teaching, adjudication, and political organization can require different forms of authorization. That is a model to examine in the sources. The material assembled here does not yet establish a specific set of simultaneous appointments made by Ḥusayn. Chapter 2 therefore distinguishes the author's theological proposal from the plurality of historical claimants, which is a different and better-attested proposition. [W-S03; W-D1]

What counts as continuity

The book follows persons, texts, and institutions through several kinds of continuity. A teacher may transmit an argument whose political implications his pupil changes. A book can cross a sectarian boundary without its readers accepting the succession theory of its original community. A title can survive while the office beneath it changes jurisdiction.

For that reason the maps in this edition use descriptions of relationships rather than a single arrow meaning everything. "Reported pupil" identifies a different connection from "appointed successor." A quotation establishes reception of wording. Membership in the same family establishes kinship. The interpretation of an initiation as an inherited spiritual office requires its own evidence.

The practical result is visible in the organization of the manuscript. Kaysani political and intellectual inheritances occupy the opening part. Zaydi legal collections receive a sustained examination before the Twelver hadith dossiers. Ismaili institutions have their own history of sovereignty and interpretation. The Buyids then appear as rulers operating amid those overlapping constituencies. Later philosophical and political claims can be compared against that wider archive.

Readers will encounter places where the evidence supports the author's suspicion and places where it constrains it. Each finding belongs to a specified claim. A dynasty's manipulation of its public

pedigree can be established even while the original appointment remains uncertain. A source can expose an operation against an Alid household while failing to prove a separate operation against a hadith collection. The resulting history has several centers because the people whose authority it examines had several centers themselves.

2 · The Many Heirs of Husayn

Husayn's death at Karbala in 680 left a community of memory whose later histories would disagree about the forms that loyalty should take. The surviving family, people who had failed to support him, and organizers seeking to avenge him faced different immediate obligations. A genealogy can show descent. It cannot, on its own, tell us which of those obligations had become a political office. [W-D1, pp. 3–4; W-S03]

The familiar succession diagrams compress this difficulty into a line. One name follows another, and a branch marks the point at which a community supposedly departed from the correct course. Such diagrams are useful summaries of a tradition's claims. When they become the organizing structure of historical inquiry, they can settle the inquiry before the evidence is considered.

The proposal of multiple succession from Husayn opens a different possibility. His inheritance may have been borne by several people whose responsibilities differed. A person could preserve teaching while another organized resistance. A family member might transmit an entrusted text whose political importance became clearer only later. An appointment could be local in scope, with exclusivity added by a subsequent community.

These are models to test. They require different evidence. Reports of two groups recognizing different leaders establish contested recognition. A claim that Husayn deliberately authorized both requires evidence of his intentions. The existence of several learned descendants makes distributed teaching plausible; it leaves the exact terms of any commission unresolved.

The distinctions also protect the theory from a chronological mistake. Zaydi and Ismaili institutions emerged through later disputes and developments. They should enter the narrative at those moments. Projecting their mature doctrines into the immediate aftermath of Karbala would conceal the historical work through which they were formed. [W-S03, W-S06]

Within the family, ʿAli Zayn al-ʿAbidin belongs to the Husaynid line. Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, around whom the Kaysani movement formed, was Husayn's half-brother, another son of ʿAli. Later Zaydi eligibility could extend through Hasan as well as Husayn. These relationships allow several kinds of inheritance, and they prevent a single descent chart from doing all the explanatory work. [W-D1, pp. 3–4; W-S06]

A useful investigation would begin with the verbs in the reports. Who entrusted something? Who taught, appointed, recommended, acknowledged, or obeyed? Later prose can translate all these actions into succession. Earlier testimony may preserve a narrower relationship. The object matters too. The inheritance might concern leadership of followers, legal learning, a document, property, or authority over a particular mission.

The historical possibility of several responsibilities creates an institutional problem. Suppose one teacher recognizes another's learning while disagreeing with his political action. A later community seeking a single chain may retain the disagreement and erase the recognition. A rival community may do the reverse. The same remembered relationship can then support mutually exclusive accounts of legitimacy.

This mechanism is proposed here as an explanation to examine. It has clear documentary consequences. We should look for early acknowledgments that later sources omit, variations in the scope of appointments, and episodes in which people cooperate across the boundaries that later histories treat as permanent. The strongest case would combine such evidence with independent witnesses to distinct responsibilities.

The theory also has a theological dimension. A person can hold that God permitted more than one faithful bearer of an inheritance. Historical research cannot award that permission. It can establish whether the claim has ancient witnesses and whether a retrospective monopoly has obscured the range of earlier understandings.

The manuscript therefore keeps an open place at its beginning for multiple succession. Its exact authorial form remains to be supplied. The rest of the book investigates a world in which authority repeatedly crossed the boundaries that a simple hereditary diagram would predict.

3 · Kufa and the Other Son of Ali

Al-Mukhtar's revolt in Kufa in 685–687 invoked Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya as Imam and Mahdi. This movement gave political force to a branch of ʿAli's family that later Twelver histories would place outside their designated succession. The relationship between the organizer and the Alid figure he invoked was itself complicated. Sean Anthony's reconstruction describes Ibn al-Hanafiyya as comparatively passive while al-Mukhtar asserted the right to act on his behalf. [W-S03]

The arrangement introduces a problem that recurs throughout this book. A representative may be easier to observe than the person represented. He recruits and issues instructions. The authority that makes those actions compelling resides elsewhere, perhaps with someone whose approval is qualified or difficult to obtain. Followers can encounter the representative's version of the relationship far more often than the principal's own words.

This does not make representation fraudulent by definition. It makes the terms of representation historically important. We need to know what Ibn al-Hanafiyya authorized, what al-Mukhtar claimed, and what later narrators wanted the relationship to mean. A statement issued under danger may remain deliberately ambiguous. A successor who depends on clarity has reasons to resolve that ambiguity in a particular direction.

The label Kaysaniyya adds another layer. Anthony treats it as a name applied to a variety of movements, with a difficult origin and an uncertain relationship to their own self-descriptions. Our sources often organize people into sects after their disputes have developed. We should expect that classification to preserve information while also arranging it for later readers. [W-S03]

A movement can leave several inheritances even after military defeat. Participants carry relationships into later projects. A political vocabulary can survive through poetry or preaching. An expectation about the Mahdi can become available to another claimant. Organizational skills remain useful when the original organization has vanished.

The project's Abbasid dossier traces an important constituency from Ibn al-Hanafiyya to his son Abu Hashim. After Abu Hashim's death, several groups claimed his authority. The resulting competition gives us a measure of the value attached to his name. People do not need to agree about the content of an inheritance for its possession to become politically valuable. [W-D1, pp. 3–7]

This is why the Kaysanis deserve substantial room in a history of Shiʿism. Their importance reaches beyond the eventual survival of a community bearing that name. The Abbasid succession claim placed them in the prehistory of a ruling dynasty. The reported teaching relationship between Abu Hashim and Wasil ibn ʿAtaʾ placed the same family in an intellectual genealogy. Those developments should be followed separately before they are compared.

The difference between a political heir and an intellectual pupil will become especially important. A pupil can reject his teacher's theory of government while retaining a theological argument. An organizer can inherit the loyalty of followers without possessing every teaching their former leader gave them. Later pedigrees may draw a continuous line through both relationships, even though the authority carried by the line changes.

The Kaysani legacy thus poses an archival question with political consequences. What happens to a movement when its successful heirs acquire more familiar names? The historian who searches only for continued use of the old label may record a disappearance at precisely the point where some of its relationships become powerful.

4 · The Testament That Crossed the Family

The alleged appointment occurred at Humayma, where the dying Abu Hashim is said to have entrusted authority to Muhammad ibn ʿAli of the Abbasid family. The recipient was the father of Ibrahim al-Imam and of the men later known as al-Saffah and al-Mansur. He was descended from al-ʿAbbas, the Prophet's uncle. The transfer claimed its force from an Alid act of designation. [W-D1, pp. 3–4]

The account is commonly described as a waṣiyya, a testament or bequest. Reading it through the later technical language of naṣṣ can clarify its legitimating function, provided the earlier term retains its range. Entrusted knowledge, care for followers, and succession to an imamic office could converge in a developed narrative. The earliest recoverable meaning of the bequest remains part of the investigation. [W-D1, pp. 1–4]

The anonymous Akhbār al-Dawla al-ʿAbbāsiyya supplies a particularly rich version. An inherited document carries knowledge from the Alid family through Ibn al-Hanafiyya to Abu Hashim and then into the Abbasid household. Predictions identify features of the later revolution. A neighboring account singles out the young Ibrahim as a future holder of authority. The project dossier locates the central passages in the 1971 edition at pages 184–185. [W-D1, pp. 5–7]

A document inside a succession story performs several tasks. It gives knowledge a material bearer. Possession can be represented as proof of an authorized transfer. The narrative can also make later events appear to authenticate the document: the victorious movement recognizes itself in a prediction it is said to have inherited.

The circularity becomes visible when the prediction is known through a surviving account written after the victory. A black banner can corroborate a prediction only if the prediction's earlier existence has been established independently of the event. Otherwise, we are observing how a later narrative joins political success to sacred expectation.

There could still be an earlier act beneath that narrative. Abu Hashim may have entrusted responsibilities to an Abbasid relative. Organizers may have interpreted a limited instruction expansively. A designation claim might have been constructed during the underground campaign, when it could help attract followers. Another possibility places much of the story's development after victory. These explanations differ in the date and scope of the act they propose.

The evidence of rival claimants matters here. The Abbasid story belongs to a broader succession dispute. Heresiographical accounts preserve other attempts to inherit Abu Hashim's authority, including claims associated with movements that did not establish the Abbasid dynasty. This gives the testament a social setting. The existence of that setting supports an inquiry into competing inheritances without deciding which claimant possessed an authentic appointment. [W-D1, pp. 6–12]

The report's strongest reconstruction combines organizational continuity with expanding sacred narrative. The Abbasid branch emerged from a recognizable field of Hashimiyya succession claims. Its eventual success privileged one account of that inheritance. Later narration could make a difficult political process appear to unfold from an already complete plan. [W-D1, pp. 11–13]

The manuscript history makes this a problem of layers. The Akhbār survives through a unique manuscript and includes material related to earlier historical writing. A late surviving copy may preserve old material, while an early-looking chain of transmission can appear inside a much later composition. The age of the parchment or paper cannot alone date every sentence. [W-D1, pp. 7–9]

An investigation capable of improving the argument would separate the motifs. The deathbed, the location, the entrusted followers, the physical document, and the detailed predictions need their own earliest attestations. If several independent sources preserve a limited transfer while the prophecy appears only in one later family of texts, that would support an account of growth. A discovery of early prophetic wording would alter the result.

The possibility of growth has theological consequences for readers who care about the Imamate. A community may correctly remember a relationship and overstate its jurisdiction. An empire may inherit a genuine instruction and transform the obligations attached to it. Authenticity and fidelity therefore remain separate questions. The historical inquiry into the testament reaches only the first stages of a longer inquiry into what its alleged heirs did with it.

5 · Black Banners and the Coalition

Abū Hāshim's reported testament explains why a particular household could claim command. An army still had to be recruited and supplied. The relationship between those processes is where the political history of the Abbasid revolution becomes most useful for this book.

The existing succession dossier identifies a movement whose upper leadership could invoke a Kaysani-Hāshimiyya inheritance while wider recruitment operated through the deliberately capacious formula *al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad*. Patricia Crone's reconstruction gives the formula a wider Hāshimite horizon and treats the final choice of ruler as a political problem that remained consequential near the moment of victory. That reading is preserved here as a scholarly reconstruction. It requires neither every recruit's knowledge of Abū Hāshim nor a single understanding of the slogan across every level of the movement. [W-D1]

The distinction has practical force. A courier needs to know where to deliver a message. A recruiter needs a promise that potential supporters can recognize. A commander needs enough confidence in the political center to commit armed followers. The same movement can supply different levels of explanation to each participant. Secrecy can protect those relationships, while ambiguity can also postpone a disagreement about the person who will eventually rule.

Anthony's account places the Abbasid branch among several claimants to Abū Hāshim's inheritance. Its eventual pre-eminence developed within that contested succession environment. The movement around al-Mukhtār had already joined Alid allegiance to a language of protection for the weak, with non-Arab clients playing an important role. Those earlier commitments formed part of the political memory available to later organizers. [N02]

An ideological inheritance can therefore have organizational value even when its most elaborate origin story was expanded afterward. People who have already learned to recognize a family as the bearer of a cause do not begin their political judgment from nothing when another claimant enters the network. The claimant can present himself through known teachers or intermediaries. Acceptance may spread through relationships whose original purpose was religious instruction, local support, or protest.

A victory that changes the evidence

The revolutionary sequence culminated in Abbasid rule in 750 after the open movement in Khurasan and the death of Ibrāhīm al-Imām in Umayyad custody. The surviving histories place Abū Muslim and the eastern forces at the center of the military transformation. The report of a sacred inheritance needs to be read beside that sequence, because armed success changes which candidate can make his interpretation effective. [W-D1]

This does not make every official recollection false. It changes the questions a historian should ask of its detail. A report that names a future leader correctly may preserve an early expectation, a later prediction placed in the past, or a memory refined through successive retellings. The strongest way to discriminate is to follow the components separately. The geography of Khurasan, black banners, the named successor, and the physical document need not have entered the narrative together.

A related problem concerns the absence of records. A clandestine movement will leave less public documentation of its organization than an established government. That loss limits confidence about individual appointments. It cannot make every later claim equally likely. Where several hostile and friendly traditions acknowledge a succession contest, that agreement establishes something different from the detailed deathbed speech reproduced in the victorious family's history.

Whose expectations survived?

The coalition model creates an inquiry into the costs of victory. A participant could support restoration of the Prophet's family and later discover that the government required allegiance to one specific branch. A soldier could fight against Umayyad injustice while having little opportunity to shape the replacement's legal theory. An organizer could preserve his position by translating earlier expectations into the language of the new court.

These are proposed mechanisms for interpreting the documented transition. They should be tested against named participants' actions rather than assigned as motives to everyone involved. Political success can produce accommodation through several routes. Office makes some people responsible for maintaining the order. Dependence on wages creates other incentives. A sincerely held view of the dynasty's legitimacy can also survive disappointment with its conduct.

The phrase "won a revolution with that succession claim" thus contains several distinct causal questions. We can ask whether the claim made the leadership credible to existing organizers. We can ask whether it supplied language useful for wider recruitment. The army's victory and the dynasty's later account of that victory require further explanations. Each question admits different evidence.

For *Dark Imams*, the strongest result concerns the conversion of a religious inheritance into a state's claim to obedience. The next chapter follows the ensuing change of pedigree. Here the decisive unit is the coalition: people who could act together while carrying expectations that the successful government would eventually have to reconcile, suppress, or leave unfulfilled.

6 · A Dynasty Changes Its Pedigree

The Abbasid revolution brought together people whose expectations did not have to be identical. The slogan al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad could invite allegiance to an acceptable member of the Prophet's family while leaving the identity and manner of selection open to different understandings. The project dossier follows Patricia Crone's interpretation of this breadth and places it beside the more specific Abu Hashim succession claim. [W-D1, pp. 4, 9–12]

The combination makes organizational sense. A leadership circle can understand its mandate through one genealogy while recruiters speak in language broad enough to unite several constituencies. Secrecy intensifies the difference between what organizers know and what supporters are told. A successful campaign can postpone disputes that would fracture it before victory.

Military organization remains indispensable to the explanation. Khurasani recruitment and Abu Muslim's intervention helped turn the daʿwa into a revolution. Religious legitimacy made commands meaningful to some participants; a functioning army made the dynasty's victory possible. An account that treats the testament as sufficient cause would leave out the people who mobilized the resources required to act on it. [W-D1, pp. 9–10]

Victory changes the practical value of a pedigree. During an underground campaign, a connection to a revered Alid can explain why an Abbasid household should receive obedience. Once that household rules, the same explanation leaves its authority dependent on a family branch with living rivals. The dynasty then has an incentive to establish a more self-contained account of its entitlement.

The dossier distinguishes the political rupture visible under al-Mansur from a later doctrinal formulation associated with al-Mahdi. Conflict with Alid rivals made the problem concrete. Direct inheritance through al-ʿAbbas eventually offered an alternative to authority received by waṣiyya from Abu Hashim. [W-D1, pp. 10–15]

The shift need not be explained by a single moment of deliberate betrayal. People who enter government encounter different audiences and duties. Courtiers, soldiers, provincial allies, and legal scholars may favor different justifications. A theory that served one stage of political organization can become awkward in another. Over time, the state may reward writers who explain its authority in the terms most useful to its continued survival.

That process can still amount to a profound breach of the original movement's expectations. The important historical question concerns the terms on which support was obtained. Had participants been promised a particular heir? Did they expect consultation among Hashimites? Was the suppression of a rival presented as protection of the inherited mission? The answers determine what sort of transformation took place.

The phrase "defeated by success" describes one possible outcome. A movement acquires enough power that its leaders become responsible for protecting institutions they once treated as instruments. Preserving the government begins to compete with fulfilling the purpose for which it was established. A claim to sacred inheritance can survive in ceremonial language while the practical criteria of leadership change.

This is the first major mechanism proposed by Dark Imams. A successful claimant can reshape the meaning of the authority it inherited. The mechanism can be tested through changes in official language and the treatment of former allies. It does not require us to assume that every participant shared the same intention.

The dynasty's later encounter with ʿAlī al-Riḍā brings this history into focus. Al-Maʾmūn would appoint the Imam his heir, then face enduring accusations over the Imam's death. The twentieth-century image of the poisoned grapes belongs to the memory of that later episode, while the revolution's earlier promises explain why allegiance to the Prophet's family remained a potent source of legitimacy. The image cannot authenticate the revolution's hidden intentions; it can expose the moral stakes of claiming another household's authority. [PG-01; PG-02]

The Kaysani story consequently remains present after the rise of the Abbasids. It appears in arguments that explain the dynasty's beginning, in polemical accounts that contest its legitimacy, and in the question of why one account of inheritance gradually lost official usefulness. An allegedly discarded sect occupies a consequential place in the genealogy of imperial power.

7 · Abu Hashim's Other Inheritance

Abu Hashim also appears in the intellectual ancestry of Wasil ibn ʿAtaʾ. This connection deserves exact wording. The TDV account of Wasil reports study of uṣūl under Abu Hashim in Medina and records subsequent disagreements, including disagreement over the Imamate. Its account of Abu Hashim connects him to Wasil's theological formation in justice and divine unity. Galip Türcan's study likewise treats the encounter as formative. [W-S04, W-S05]

Those reports contain a pedagogical relationship and identifiable doctrinal content. Describing them as a mere similarity between later schools would discard what the sources say. Their historical criticism concerns the provenance and accuracy of the reports, the scope of the teaching, and the meaning later Muʿtazili authors attached to the genealogy.

The names require care. Abu Hashim was ʿAbd Allah, the son of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya and the grandson of ʿAli. The reported sequence reaches Wasil through him. Confusing the generations can make a possible teaching relationship appear chronologically impossible or move it to the wrong person.

A pupil's disagreement is often evidence of intellectual engagement. Someone who rejects his teacher's political conclusion may still have learned the premises through which he argues against it. A tradition of divine justice could travel across a disagreement about who should govern. Transmission can preserve a problem while changing its answer.

The Alid genealogy reported in Muʿtazili literature should therefore enter the book as a substantive source tradition. Its existence is a historical datum. The next stage is to identify which witnesses make each claim, what they attribute to each teacher, and whether the wording comes from a shared earlier account. Source criticism begins with the positive testimony already present.

The political and intellectual networks intersect at Abu Hashim, but the intersection does not make their later histories identical. An Abbasid claim to his testament sought authority over a movement. A Muʿtazili claim to his teaching located theological reasoning within an inherited tradition. The same revered ancestor could authorize both without requiring their recipients to agree about the use of political power.

The proposed light lineage gives this distinction personal importance. An intellectual affiliation can express fidelity to a form of inquiry: reason exercised in the service of justice and divine unity. A formal ijāza would add specific authorizations and named transmitters. This manuscript preserves the affiliation while leaving the documentary chain to be supplied.

The movement toward falsafa requires its own history. Theologians and philosophers shared languages, patrons, and questions, yet they also contested methods and conclusions. A later philosopher's use of Greek materials cannot be assigned to an Alid teaching chain merely because

both histories passed through Abbasid society. We need textual intermediaries and arguments that can be followed from one author to another.

A more productive account of inheritance allows transformation. A teacher gives a pupil a problem. The pupil discovers a method elsewhere and returns with an answer the teacher would have rejected. A translator changes the vocabulary available to both. Intellectual history can describe this process more precisely than a single line bearing the word "descent."

The Kaysani inheritance thus offers two investigations with a shared point of departure. One follows revolutionary legitimacy into government. The other follows reported teaching into theological argument. Their eventual outcomes can be compared without erasing the differences in what was inherited.

8 · The Kaysani Inheritance After the Name

A movement can lose its familiar name while parts of its inheritance remain active. That proposition needs a method, because an indiscriminate search for survivals can turn almost any later doctrine into evidence of a secret continuation.

The Kaysani case offers distinguishable afterlives. The Abbasid succession story preserves a political claim. Muʿtazili biographical traditions preserve an intellectual pedigree through Abū Hāshim. Heresiographers preserve rival expectations concerning the Imam and his return. Each line should be followed through its own witnesses. Their common point of reference creates a historical intersection without guaranteeing that they remained one institution. [W-D1; W-S04; W-S05]

The reported teaching of Wāṣil is especially important. The project has already identified accounts assigning identifiable theological instruction to Abū Hāshim, together with disagreement over other questions. A disagreement between pupil and teacher is itself part of the transmission. It tells us that learning can carry a problem into a different school, where the pupil changes the terms of the answer. The record should retain both the pedigree and the disagreement. [W-S04; W-S05]

The political case has a different documentary signature. A dynasty can continue circulating an ancestral testament long after it becomes more convenient to justify its rule through direct family inheritance. The earlier story may remain in a historical book even as public claims increasingly emphasize another route. Its literary survival does not establish that officials continued to treat it as their operative constitutional foundation. [W-D1]

An inheritance ledger

The book therefore treats Kaysani legacy through an inheritance ledger. Every proposed survival needs an item that can be identified: a passage, a named relationship, a practice, or a claim of office. The receiving context then needs to explain what it did with that item.

Consider an argument for divine justice. Its presence in an Alid pedigree can be significant even where a later author refuses the original group's Imamate. The transmission may preserve the intellectual commitment while changing political allegiance. Conversely, a ruler may appropriate the pedigree while doing little with the ethical argument. Those outcomes differ morally and historically.

An occultation motif poses another problem. Expectations of a hidden or returning leader can arise after repeated defeats. A close verbal match, shared named transmitters, or a distinctive inherited narrative would strengthen a claim of actual transmission. The broad idea of return has less discriminatory force. It could emerge from a common scriptural repertoire or from similar political circumstances.

Our proposed "light line" through rational theology and philosophy should be investigated in that granular way. The later chapters establish actual points of contact with Arabic philosophy and Latin scholasticism. The intervals between those points remain part of the research. A pedagogical chain and a translated book are different vehicles of inheritance, and both can matter without being converted into a continuous sequence of authorized Imams.

The personal language of *ijāza* adds a further dimension. An author may adopt a lineage as an intellectual or spiritual affiliation. Historical authorization in the technical sense requires an identifiable grant and its scope. This edition preserves the author's affinity with the Kaysani-Alid rationalist inheritance while leaving the exact documentary chain of personal authorization to be supplied. Doing so keeps the book's historical argument available to readers who do not share that affiliation.

The archive made by opponents

Much of the earlier movement's afterlife reaches us through people who classified it as mistaken. Anthony's reconstruction draws attention to the variety concealed by the later collective label. That setting creates both a difficulty and an opportunity. An opponent may preserve a claimant's existence precisely because he wants to explain why the claim fails. His report can establish that a dispute mattered, even while his description of the disputed doctrine needs close scrutiny. [N02]

We should ask what the classifier needed the group to represent. A sequence of erroneous claimants can make the writer's preferred succession appear self-evident by comparison. A sect's association with excess can make its ordinary teaching disappear from view. A successful dynasty's older religious coalition can become embarrassing once its members furnish rival claims against it.

These pressures do not authorize the recovery of a complete lost doctrine from silence. The absence of a book leaves an absence. The historian can show where the record was filtered and identify what independent witnesses survive. Reconstructing the missing voice requires more than sympathy.

The useful result is a history of transformations. A later account of rational theology can carry an Alid pedigree whose political meaning has changed. An imperial history can preserve the name of a movement whose aspirations the empire restricted. A community can recover an earlier lineage through reading after centuries without an institution bearing that name. Each outcome is consequential. The following parts test the forms of authority that developed through those different kinds of inheritance.

PART II · Zaydi Authority and Its Archive

9 · Zayd's Book and the Imam Who Rises

Zayd ibn ʿAli's uprising in 740 gave later communities a model of an Alid claimant who publicly confronted an unjust ruler. Zaydi accounts developed criteria that combined descent with learning and the capacity to act. Eligibility could extend through Hasan or Husayn. The tradition contains internal disagreements, and its later institutions cannot be reduced to one succession list. [W-S06]

Al-Qasim al-Rassi and his grandson al-Hadi ila al-Haqq belong to the later development of this tradition. Al-Hadi established his authority in Yemen in 897, giving the study of an active Imamate a durable institutional setting. [W-S34]

This changes the historical problem of the Imam. A public summons exposes a claim to the response of living people. The claimant's conduct becomes visible. His political decisions can establish support or destroy it. A community that asks whether someone has the qualifications to rise faces a different practical problem from one awaiting the return of a particular concealed person.

Action, however, supplies no automatic guarantee of justice. A claimant can invoke resistance while pursuing personal power. A hereditary qualification can exclude learned people outside the required family. Competing summonses can divide a community. These are internal difficulties for an active Imamate, and they give Zaydi history its own institutional questions.

The manuscript tradition associated with Zayd creates another route into those questions. The collection commonly called his Musnad, also associated with the Majmūʿ, is transmitted through Abu Khalid ʿAmr ibn Khalid al-Wasiti. Modern Zaydi discussion records both reliance on that transmission and disagreements over the collection's relationship to later Zaydi law. A recent community essay on al-Hadi and the Musnad makes those differences part of its own inquiry. [W-S07]

The Dark Imams hypothesis asks whether a transmitted image of Zayd could have been adapted to serve later political needs. A legal corpus might preserve the name of an activist while encouraging a form of authority useful to established institutions. That possibility deserves a direct examination of the text's transmission and use. The fact that a report serves an institution supplies a reason to investigate its history; it supplies no date for its composition.

Several kinds of evidence would move the argument. Early quotations could establish the presence of particular rulings before a proposed period of alteration. Differences between the Musnad and al-Hadi's legal positions might show competing sources or distinct reasoning. A late copy that changes the treatment of political authority would be especially significant if the altered reading could be tied to a particular scholarly network. A manuscript's silence would have to be assessed against its purpose and completeness.

Zaydi intellectual history also preserves an important counterweight to the idea that rational theology vanished when its most famous patrons lost power. Sabine Schmidtke's work describes the importance of Yemeni collections for the survival and study of Muʿtazili writings. The preservation of manuscripts becomes part of the history of reason itself. A school can disappear from one public setting while its books continue to be copied elsewhere. [W-S08]

The political significance is considerable. Whoever retains the archive can reopen arguments that another setting treats as settled. A later researcher may discover that a supposedly exhausted tradition survived through readers whose institutional history received little attention in the standard account. Zaydi preservation therefore belongs near the center of this book's intellectual narrative.

It also complicates a single story of domestication. Scholars can participate in government and preserve resources for criticizing government. A manuscript collection may contain arguments that its current custodians rarely use. Patronage can support both conformity and the survival of dissenting possibilities.

Zaydism must consequently remain present as an active historical alternative throughout Dark Imams. Its importance includes public leadership, competing claims to qualification, and a manuscript inheritance through which other histories of Islamic thought can be recovered. A book organized around Twelverism's eventual prominence would miss much of that work.

10 · The Caspian and Yemeni Imams

The regional history of Zaydism changes the book's picture of political success. A qualified descendant of the Prophet's family could issue a public summons and seek actual obedience. The community then had to assess someone whose learning and conduct were available to living observers. An active Imamate made the problem of legitimacy recurrent.

The Caspian and Yemeni histories supply different settings for that recurrence. The scholarly overview by Lucas and Almahatwary follows Zaydi formations across those regions and identifies the legal traditions associated with al-Qāsim al-Rassī, al-Hādī, and the Caspian Imams. Al-Hādī established his authority in Yemen in 897. His connection to al-Qāsim was familial as well as intellectual, while later regional communities preserved disagreements about law and theology. [N01; W-S34]

This geography matters to the Buyid argument. The northern Iranian environment from which Buyid power developed already contained Alid political and religious networks. Nagel's account emphasizes the mountainous Caspian regions, resistance to effective caliphal control, and the subsequent rise of several military principalities. Buyid expansion consequently belonged to a setting with several possible forms of Shiʿi allegiance. Later Twelver patronage cannot be projected unchanged onto the dynasty's whole background. [N10]

A legal school's movement between these regions was a material operation. Books needed carriers and readers. An account of a northern teacher's authority could become persuasive in Yemen through a visiting scholar's reputation, a patron's support, and the ability of the imported text to answer a local dispute. The next chapters examine particular examples of those operations, including a surviving copying notice and an acknowledged rearrangement of dictation material.

What public eligibility permits

Zaydi eligibility places conduct under a form of public pressure. A claimant who rises exposes his courage and political judgment to events. That visibility can supply information missing from a purely inherited title. It also creates new opportunities for error. Military success can reward recklessness, while a defeated claimant may have possessed the better moral argument.

The book's normative proposal is to separate an office's qualifications from the evidence of a particular person's fitness. Learned descent can be a qualification within a historical legal theory. It cannot by itself show that the claimant's fiscal decisions are just. A public summons gives people something to answer. Their response remains affected by coercion and by the alternatives available to them.

Multiple qualified descendants also raise a problem that a single genealogical tree conceals. A community can regard several men as capable of learning and leadership while accepting only one person's command in a particular jurisdiction. Another community can resist that jurisdiction without denying the first claimant's knowledge. To reconstruct such disputes, the historian must recover what was actually exclusive: descent, legal competence, territorial command, or the right to initiate an armed movement.

The source record's internal disagreements matter here. The comparisons in *The Archive Around Zayd* show later Zaydi readers examining positions attributed to al-Hādī alongside the *Musnad*. They preserve disagreements within the Alid legal inheritance. A later claim of family consensus has to account for those positions rather than assume that the familiar ancestral names always spoke with one legal voice. [ZC-C05]

The northern library in Yemen

The transmission associated with Qāḍī Jaʿfar belongs inside this regional history. His return from travel and his patron's encouragement to disseminate books against the Muṭarrifiyya establish a purposeful educational setting in Zaydi memory. Later research connects the movement of northern rationalist literature with the preservation of some libraries and the destruction of others. The following chapter treats the relevant biographical testimony and manuscript notices at their stated evidentiary levels. [ZF-Z03; ZF-Z09]

The political question concerns ownership of the educational infrastructure. A school that can support readers and reproduce a curriculum can make its understanding of authority available to successive generations. An independent network distributing resources through its own institutions can sustain another account. Disputes over theological language may therefore affect who may collect support, teach publicly, or maintain a library.

This provides a more useful object than a general claim that Zaydism became quietist. A ruler can encourage resistance beyond his territory while suppressing a rival religious organization within it. The scope of permitted action matters. We should look for the precise legal classification that changes an opponent's standing and the record of what followed from that classification.

Our theological assessment also needs to remain plural. The intellectual resources preserved by Zaydi institutions include arguments for justice and human responsibility. Their political use can be criticized through those same commitments. A philosopher's account of divine justice does not automatically produce a just distribution of power in his patron's state. The legal texts show where that distance must be examined.

The Caspian and Yemeni histories thus supply actual institutions for the book's succession questions. They allow us to follow the movement of books across regions, compare competing legal

voices, and examine how a public Imamate manages the independence of scholars whose learning helps authorize it.

10A · The Imam Who Rose and the Imam Who Stayed Home

Zayd, Jaʿfar, and the public test of authority

The fork between Zayd ibn ʿAlī and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq is easy to flatten because both men later become ancestors of finished sectarian systems. Zayd becomes the exemplary claimant of Zaydi memory. Jaʿfar becomes the namesake of Jaʿfari law and the sixth Imam of the Twelver sequence. Neither man lived inside those finished descriptions. Their historical contrast is valuable precisely because it exposes two different answers to a question that was still open: how does an Alid religious authority make his claim binding upon other Muslims?

Zayd answered partly through public action. In 122/740 he rose in Kufa against Umayyad rule. The later Zaydi doctrine that an eligible descendant of Ḥasan or Ḥusayn must possess learning and publicly summon people to his cause gives that action a constitutional meaning. Etan Kohlberg's summary of classical Zaydi positions emphasizes that the Zaydi Imam, unlike the mature Imami Imam, need not be omniscient or sinless and is ordinarily expected to demonstrate leadership through struggle. The mature doctrine has its own development, but the contrast with later Imami designation is real enough to organize a historical question. [X03; W-S06]

Jaʿfar's path was different. Robert Gleave's reconstruction describes a scholarly Imamate centered on teaching in Medina and an avoidance of the armed rebellions that repeatedly drew other Alids into confrontation. Jaʿfar did not support Zayd's uprising, did not join the Abbasid revolt against the Umayyads, and later withheld support from the Hasanid revolt of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya against al-Manṣūr. Gleave relates this posture to the doctrine of *naṣṣ*: the rightful Imam is identified by the preceding Imam, whose protected judgment discloses God's will concerning succession. [X01]

That explanation should be read as a reconstruction of the Imami conception associated with Jaʿfar, not as a transcript of his private constitutional theory. The sources that make him the bearer of this doctrine are themselves part of the history under examination. Yet the contrast is sharp enough to matter. One model makes the candidate's public summons and willingness to act part of the proof. The other makes the decisive proof an inherited designation whose correctness does not depend on victory.

The public claimant

A public rising exposes a claimant to evidence that followers can observe. He must persuade people, assume risk, choose commanders, and face the consequences of his political judgment. The uprising can reveal courage and incompetence alike. A failed movement may show that the claimant

misjudged conditions; it may also show only that his opponent possessed more soldiers. Military success therefore cannot be identical with religious legitimacy.

The value of the public test lies elsewhere. Action produces information. People can see whether the claimant shares danger with his followers, whether he protects noncombatants, whether he keeps promises, and whether the institutions created in his name resemble the justice he invokes. A hereditary qualification remains a premise of Zaydi theory, but hereditary status alone does not complete the case. The claimant must do something that makes the claim publicly answerable.

Abu'l-Jārūd provides a useful glimpse of this activist environment. Later sources remember him as a disciple of al-Bāqir who joined Zayd's revolt and attempted, with another organizer, to secure Abū Ḥanīfa's support. His subsequent doctrinal afterlife became part of Zaydi factional history. The point here is narrower: the Alid intellectual world around al-Bāqir did not produce only the quietist line later associated with Imami succession. People who had learned within overlapping circles could make radically different decisions about political action. [X10]

That diversity constrains a neat denominational story. It is tempting to describe Zayd as the revolutionary and Jaʿfar as the quietist, then let the later names of their schools explain why. The historical relation is more difficult. Their circles overlapped. Later transmitters move across boundaries. Members of the same family took different positions in later revolts. A doctrine of the Imam should therefore be reconstructed from the claims actually made in those disputes rather than from the label later attached to the participant.

The designated claimant

The Imami alternative moves part of the proof away from the battlefield. If the incumbent Imam is divinely protected from error in naming his successor, then the designated person's legitimacy does not depend on his ability to seize government. Political defeat can leave the sacred office intact. A wise refusal to rebel can even demonstrate the Imam's superior knowledge of circumstances.

This has obvious advantages for a persecuted minority. A community does not need to equate God's favor with military success. It can preserve an intellectual center across regimes that would destroy a public claimant. It can also treat reckless uprisings as threats to lives entrusted to the Imam's care. Gleave's biographical account explicitly presents Jaʿfar's refusal of rebellion as connected to a judgment that such action would be harmful to the true community. [X01]

But the model moves the evidentiary burden. If public action no longer identifies the Imam, the community needs reliable knowledge of the designation. Who heard it? What exactly was designated? How are conflicting witnesses handled? What happens when the supposed designation is known primarily through texts collected generations later?

The succession after Jaʿfar will make those questions unavoidable. They are already implicit in the contrast with Zayd. A public summons can be judged through visible conduct while remaining morally wrong. A private designation can be genuine while remaining difficult for outsiders to authenticate. Neither route automatically solves the problem of authority.

The moral asymmetry of risk

The choice between rising and remaining outside rebellion is not only a question about personal courage. Leaders place other people at risk. A claimant who initiates a revolt can expose supporters and bystanders to imprisonment, retaliation, and death. A teacher who refuses to act can leave an oppressive ruler unchallenged. Both positions therefore require reasons about foreseeable consequences.

Our uṣūl do not treat activism as self-authenticating. The Qur'anic obligation to justice does not make every violent strategy wise. Nor does preservation of life convert political abstention into an unlimited virtue. The relevant question is whether the leader can account for the people whose interests his decision affects.

This is why the fork between Zayd and Jaʿfar should not be narrated as bravery versus cowardice. It is a disagreement about the relationship between sacred authority, public evidence, and political responsibility. The eventual schools formalized different answers, but the underlying problem is wider than either school.

A claimant who rises can say: judge my learning and my conduct in the open. A claimant who relies upon designation can say: the office was settled before the contest began, and political success cannot overturn it. Both claims can be abused. Public performance can become theater. Secret designation can become impossible to audit.

Jaʿfar's refusal and the later image of certainty

The mature Imami picture tends to make Jaʿfar's position appear inevitable. If his father had designated him and the Imam's designation was divinely protected, there was no reason to join a rival claimant. Yet this is precisely the conclusion whose historical formation must be studied. The existence of Zaydi criticism, the later fragmentation after Jaʿfar's death, and the intellectual work of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam all show that the theory needed explanation and defense.

Gleave's discussion of Jaʿfar's teachings makes the source problem explicit. Contradictory legal and theological positions were attributed to him by rival intellectual traditions. Nearly every major early tendency had reason to claim his prestige. Even an accurately transmitted public statement can become difficult to interpret if later readers invoke *taqiyya* to distinguish outward speech from inward belief. [X02]

This does not make Jaʿfar unknowable. It changes the kind of confidence available. A report can establish that a later community attributed a doctrine to him. An early independent witness can move the attribution closer to his lifetime. A polemical story can expose a disagreement even when its dialogue has been sharpened. The historian's task is to retain those levels rather than turning the later doctrinal system into evidence for itself.

The same discipline applies to Zayd. Later Zaydi constitutional theory can illuminate how his uprising was remembered without supplying a verbatim manifesto for 740. His death can become a model of the Imam who rises, just as Jaʿfar's survival can become a model of the Imam who knows when not to rise. The meaning assigned to each life is part of the tradition's history.

A fork the later sectarian map conceals

Once the later map is projected backward, an oddity disappears. The apparent revolutionary alternative does not line up neatly with the later Sunni-Shiʿi boundary. Abū Ḥanīfa, whose name becomes attached to the largest Sunni legal school, is remembered in substantial biographical traditions as supporting Zayd and later the Hasanid rebels against the Abbasids. Jaʿfar, whose name becomes attached to Imami law, abstains from those revolts. [X05]

That configuration belongs at the center of *Dark Imams*. It shows why later denominational ownership is a poor guide to the political choices of the eighth century. A jurist can reject the eventual Imami theory of the Imam while supporting Alid resistance. An Alid scholar can reject a particular rebellion while being remembered as the divinely designated Imam.

The next chapter follows this inversion through the revolt of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and his brother Ibrāhīm. It also tests a popular attempt to repair the later map by turning Abū Ḥanīfa into Zayd's long-term student. The political affinity has evidence. The pedagogical lineage requires a different standard.

Provisional decision

Historical finding: the sources support a real contrast between Zayd's public uprising and Jaʿfar's refusal to support several major revolts. Later Zaydi and Imami theories give that contrast different constitutional meanings. [X01; X03]

Normative decision: RETAIN public accountability as evidence about a claimant's fitness, but REJECT victory or rebellion as sufficient proof of divine authorization. RETAIN the possibility that abstention protects a community, but REJECT designation as exempt from historical scrutiny merely because the office is described as divinely protected.

Research consequence: the history of Imami *naṣṣ* must include the problem it solved. A theory that makes designation decisive becomes historically intelligible against a world in which several Alids could plausibly demand allegiance through learning, descent, and public action.

10B · Abū Ḥanīfa the Shīʿī

The jurist of Kufa, the rebellion of the Prophet's descendants, and the making of Sunni orthodoxy

I. The Prisoner of Baghdad

In 150 AH, commonly rendered as 767 CE, a jurist named al-Nuʿmān ibn Thābit died in Baghdad. Biographical traditions connect his last years to imprisonment by the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr. What placed him in the caliph's custody has become one of the most revealing disputes about his life.

He was approximately seventy years old by the Islamic calendar. Most of his life had been spent in Kufa, where he taught Islamic law and earned his living as a merchant. The people who studied under him knew him as Abū Ḥanīfa.

His fame would eventually reach far beyond Iraq. His teachings became the foundation of a legal school followed by generations of Muslims from Central Asia to the Ottoman Empire, the Indian subcontinent, and the modern world.

Sunni tradition would give him a title of unusual distinction: *al-Imām al-Aʿẓam*, the Greatest Imam.

Yet the circumstances of his death present a problem for the familiar account of Sunni Islam's origins.

The Abbasids were the second dynasty to punish him. During the final years of Umayyad rule, the Iraqi governor Ibn Hubayra had reportedly ordered Abū Ḥanīfa beaten and imprisoned when he refused an official appointment. Under al-Manṣūr, another demand for his services ended with his confinement in Baghdad.

These incidents became famous examples of the jurist's independence. Later admirers praised a scholar whose conscience would not permit him to serve unjust rulers.

The surviving reports also describe his involvement in the armed opposition those rulers faced.

Abū Ḥanīfa had reportedly supplied money to Zayd ibn ʿAlī during his rebellion against the Umayyads in 740. More than twenty years later, he supported another uprising, this time against the Abbasids, led by two descendants of the Prophet through al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī.

The political commitments attributed to him were unusually consistent across the change of dynasty. He favored Alid claimants confronting governments he considered unjust.

His later reputation as a founder of Sunnism grew out of a world in which the boundaries of Sunni and Shīʿī identity were still taking shape.

The historian Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, writing for *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, describes Abū Ḥanīfa's political sympathies as clearly Alid. He also considers his views on political legitimacy closest to those of the early Zaydīs.[B7-01]

That judgment invites a question with consequences for the history of both sects.

What did it mean for the founder of the Hanafi school to belong to the cause of ʿAlī?

II. The City of ʿAlī

Abū Ḥanīfa was born around 699, less than two decades after the massacre at Karbala.

Kufa already possessed a turbulent history.

Established as a garrison town after the early Muslim conquests, it had become the capital of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib during the first civil war. After his assassination in 661, the city remained associated with his followers and their disputes with the Umayyad authorities.

Its history included the betrayal of al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī, whose supporters had invited him to Iraq before the Umayyad forces intercepted and killed him at Karbala in 680. Subsequent movements sought vengeance for his death. The city became home to several competing understandings of loyalty to the Prophet's household.

These were events within living memory when Abū Ḥanīfa grew up.

Kufa also housed one of the great traditions of Islamic legal learning. The Companion ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd had taught there under the early caliphs. His intellectual inheritance passed through succeeding generations of Iraqi jurists, including ʿAlqama ibn Qays, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī, and Ḥammād ibn Abī Sulaymān.

Ḥammād became Abū Ḥanīfa's principal teacher.

The genealogy matters because it places Abū Ḥanīfa inside a legal culture that had developed substantial independence from the scholarly circles of Medina. Kufan jurists debated transmitted reports, the judgments of Companions, established local practice, and the use of reasoning in cases for which no explicit textual ruling was available.

The city contained men who revered ʿAlī, scholars who transmitted Ibn Masʿūd's judgments, and opponents of the ruling dynasty. Their social and intellectual networks frequently overlapped.

Abū Ḥanīfa belonged to this world before there was a Hanafi school.

Accounts of his ancestry generally point toward an Iranian family background, although the surviving genealogies disagree about his ancestors' origins and social status. The disagreements later became part of the polemics surrounding him. Opponents could treat his foreign ancestry as grounds for suspicion, while admirers supplied more flattering pedigrees.

The young jurist's practical circumstances were comparatively secure. He was associated with the silk trade and acquired a reputation for financial independence.

This independence gave him room to teach and criticize officials. It also made him valuable to men who wanted to finance resistance.

A jurist with money, a large circle of students, and an established reputation could contribute considerably to a rebellion without commanding soldiers.

Kufa's political importance reached a new height in 740.

A grandson of al-Ḥusayn had come to challenge the Umayyad caliphate.

III. Zayd's Rebellion

Zayd ibn ʿAlī was the son of ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn and a great-grandson of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

During the reign of the Umayyad caliph Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, he gathered support for an uprising in Kufa. The rebellion began in 122 AH, corresponding to 740 CE.

The attempt ended in military defeat. Zayd was killed, and the authorities subjected his remains to public humiliation.

His death became central to the subsequent development of Zaydī Shiism.

For early supporters of Zayd, the claim to legitimate leadership involved descent from the Prophet through Fāṭima and ʿAlī, along with the learning and courage required to challenge unjust rule.

The later Zaydī tradition would develop detailed qualifications for the imam. It allowed the imamate to be claimed by eligible descendants of either al-Ḥasan or al-Ḥusayn, rather than confining authority to a single predetermined succession of twelve imams.

The historical Zayd preceded much of that later doctrinal system. The movement that developed around his memory was itself diverse.[B7-02]

Abū Ḥanīfa was approximately forty when Zayd's rebellion occurred.

Later sources report that he supplied the movement with financial assistance, including money and material resources. Some accounts say he issued private legal opinions declaring support for Zayd obligatory.

One tradition claims that he sent arms and horses. Another gives ten thousand dirhams, and a different account gives thirty thousand; these quantities belong to narratives composed after the event and should be treated as reported figures. Another portrays him as recognizing the uprising as a legitimate religious undertaking while declining to participate personally.

The details come through sources written after the events. Their authors had different interests, and the reports deserve scrutiny.

One frequently repeated story makes Abū Ḥanīfa a student of Zayd for two years.

Eren Gündüz examined that claim in a 2011 study of the relationship between the two men. He found that early evidence supports a meeting in Kufa and Abū Ḥanīfa's esteem for Zayd's learning. The supposed two-year discipleship lacks the same foundation.[B7-03]

That distinction matters. A historical argument gains little by preserving an attractive story whose transmission cannot sustain it.

The political tradition has a separate body of evidence.

Abū Ḥanīfa's reported assistance to Zayd appears in later biographical material and in the writings of Hanafi jurists. The strongest case rests on the convergence of those accounts with his known opposition to the ruling dynasties, followed by the striking testimony of a tenth-century Hanafi scholar.

For the moment, consider the nature of the cause.

Zayd's uprising concerned the authority of a descendant of the Prophet who challenged an established caliph. His supporters believed that the ruling government had forfeited the moral claim to obedience.

This was Shīʿī partisanship in an early and recognizable sense.

The Arabic *shīʿa* meant a party or body of supporters. In the aftermath of the first civil war, *shīʿat ʿAlī* referred to those aligned with ʿAlī and his cause. During the following generations, loyalties to members of his family developed into more distinct religious communities.

By Abū Ḥanīfa's lifetime, elements of Shīʿī identity could already be expressed through religious practice as well as political allegiance. Najam Haider's study of eighth-century Kufa demonstrates how differences in ritual practice and the use of sacred space helped establish separate Shīʿī communities.[B7-04]

An Alid partisan could therefore belong to a developing Shīʿī environment without subscribing to the doctrines of every other Alid faction.

Abū Ḥanīfa's position resembles the early Zaydī orientation in significant respects. He honored the Prophet's family and supported challenges to unjust government led by its descendants. At the same time, reports of his theology place him among those who respected Abū Bakr and ʿUmar and regarded the judgments of Alid scholars as subject to juristic evaluation.

Those beliefs would eventually sit uneasily with parts of later Twelver Imāmism.

They were compatible with important strands of early pro-Alid thought.

IV. The Murjiʾī with a Sword

Abū Ḥanīfa had another controversial identity.

His opponents called him a Murjiʾī.

The early doctrine of *irjāʾ* involved deferring judgment about certain disputed believers and treating faith in ways that differed from those of rival theological groups. In the material attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa, a Muslim who commits a major sin does not thereby cease to belong to the community of believers.

The consequences of this view extended into politics.

The Muslim community had experienced repeated civil wars, and some factions used accusations of unbelief to exclude or condemn their opponents. The Murjiʾī concern with the limits of judgment offered a different way to understand membership in the community.

Later polemicists often described the Murjiʾa as politically accommodating. Their supposed indifference to rulers' sins became part of the stereotype.

The history of early Iraqi Murjiʾism contains militant figures and movements. Some adherents joined rebellions against the Umayyads, and a concern for justice could coexist with reluctance to declare other Muslims unbelievers.

Abū Ḥanīfa was remembered by some enemies as a man who combined Murjiʾī theology with the sword.

The description captures the source of their unease.

His views on faith preserved the religious status of a sinful Muslim. His views on government, as remembered by an important strand of his tradition, imposed demanding moral conditions upon the man who claimed authority over that Muslim.

The two positions could operate together.

A ruler might remain a Muslim and still lack the moral legitimacy required for the caliphate.

Abū Ḥanīfa's reported opinions about the first civil war illustrate the distinction. He held ʿAlī to have been right in his conflicts with his opponents, while maintaining respect for major Companions who had stood against him.

His refusal to cast every political opponent outside Islam left room for a firm judgment about the justice of their actions.

This combination became especially important in the ninth and tenth centuries, when scholars increasingly associated Sunni orthodoxy with the preservation of communal order and resistance to civil strife.

Abū Ḥanīfa's conduct had given his defenders a difficult inheritance.

They possessed a founder remembered for supporting rebellions, yet his juristic school was becoming an important part of the religious institutions of the Abbasid world.

The depositions of his adversaries

The portrait of Abū Ḥanīfa as a supporter of armed resistance did not originate solely among sympathetic Hanafi biographers. It appears in the writing of scholars who treated his opinions as dangerous. This is a separate evidentiary stream and deserves precedence over the simple multiplication of late praise narratives. In *Kitāb al-Sunna*, compiled by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 290/903), the compiler records material about Abū Ḥanīfa's supposed deviations from the standards of the emerging traditionist movement. Within that hostile dossier appear several striking recollections. [B7-10; B7-11]

One has al-Ḥasan ibn Mūsā al-Ashyab transmit a statement from Abū Yūsuf, the celebrated disciple who later became an Abbasid judge: Abū Ḥanīfa *yarā al-sayf*. When asked whether he held the same opinion, Abū Yūsuf responded with an invocation seeking refuge in God. The Arabic *yarā al-sayf* requires interpretation in the context of intra-Muslim conflict. It says that Abū Ḥanīfa approved recourse to the sword, and the disapproval in his student's answer makes the political charge intelligible. It supplies neither a first-person legal treatise by Abū Ḥanīfa nor a description of him drawing a weapon. [B7-11]

A second report has a man declare before Ibn al-Mubārak that Abū Ḥanīfa was a Murjiʾī who favored the sword. According to the compiler, Ibn al-Mubārak did not contradict the accusation. That silence has weaker probative force than an explicit affirmation. It does show that the conjunction of Murjiʾism and militant politics was a live charge transmitted by a community hostile to the jurist. [B7-11]

A third report attributes the same formula to Abū Isḥāq al-Fazārī, a traditionist associated in other reports with criticisms of Abū Ḥanīfa's legal reasoning. Here the record presents a recognizable pattern: supporters could describe the sword as resistance to unjust rule, while detractors could describe the same position as willingness to shed Muslim blood. The competing evaluations address an overlapping proposition. [B7-12]

These witnesses must be counted carefully. Two reports compiled by one author remain two reports inside a common editorial framework, and the compiler selected statements that served his polemical purpose. They are still particularly damaging to the proposal that later Hanafi admirers simply invented a rebellious founder in order to acquire Alid prestige. A hostile traditionist had reasons to suppress or condemn that memory. In this case, he preserved it as an indictment. [B7-10; B7-11]

The result is a layered record. Reports closer to Abū Ḥanīfa's disciples place the sword controversy in the early reception of his legacy. Tenth-century Hanafi jurisprudence then supplies a theological

account of its justification. These sources support the persistence of a politically militant memory. Specific payments, letters, fatwas, and prison conversations still require their own scrutiny.

V. The Qur'an Against the Tyrant

Around two centuries after Abū Ḥanīfa's death, the Hanafi jurist Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ wrote a commentary on the Qur'an that preserved a remarkable account of his founder's politics.

Al-Jaṣṣāṣ died in 370 AH, corresponding to 981 CE.

His work, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, investigates the legal implications of Qur'anic verses. In his commentary on 2:124, he considers the passage in which Allah promises to make Abraham an imam for humanity.

Abraham asks about his descendants.

Allah answers:

لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

My covenant does not extend to the wrongdoers.

Al-Jaṣṣāṣ reads this as a statement about legitimate authority. A manifest wrongdoer, he argues, lacks the qualification to serve as an imam or caliph.

He then confronts the claim that Abū Ḥanīfa permitted the caliphate of an openly sinful ruler.

According to al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Abū Ḥanīfa required justice from both judges and caliphs. He regarded the contrary attribution as a serious misrepresentation of his teacher's doctrine.

Al-Jaṣṣāṣ invokes the jurist's own life as evidence.

He recalls how Ibn Hubayra had tried to compel Abū Ḥanīfa to accept judicial office during the Umayyad period. The jurist refused, was beaten, and was imprisoned. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ then describes another conflict with al-Manṣūr.

A scholar's rejection of an official appointment could have many motives. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ regarded these refusals as expressions of a doctrine about the legitimacy of rule.

Then comes his astonishing declaration:

وَكَانَ مَذْهَبُهُ مَشْهُورًا فِي قِتَالِ الظَّلَمَةِ وَأَئِمَّةِ الْجَوْرِ

His teaching, al-Jaṣṣāṣ says, was famous for fighting oppressors and unjust leaders.

He attributes a revealing complaint to the Syrian scholar al-Awzāʿī, a contemporary of Abū Ḥanīfa:

"We tolerated Abū Ḥanīfa in everything until he came to us with the sword."

The report is preserved by al-Jaṣṣāṣ long after both men died. Its precise wording cannot be established as a contemporary transcript.

Its presence in a major Hanafi commentary nevertheless reveals how Abū Ḥanīfa's political stance was remembered within his own legal tradition.

Al-Jaṣṣāṣ goes further.

He expressly mentions Abū Ḥanīfa's assistance to Zayd ibn ʿAlī, describing his transfer of money and the private legal opinions through which he urged people to fight alongside Zayd.

He then states that Abū Ḥanīfa had a similar involvement with Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, the sons of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan.

These are the Alid rebellions that brought the jurist into conflict with both dynasties.

For al-Jaṣṣāṣ, their significance lies in the legal question raised by the Qur'an. The wrongdoer has no divine entitlement to leadership. When a Muslim jurist possesses the means to resist oppression, the duty to command right and forbid wrong may extend beyond verbal admonition.

One detail deserves particular attention.

Al-Jaṣṣāṣ also accepts that a personally just judge might exercise valid judicial authority while appointed by an unjust ruler. The public administration of law can continue even though the caliph himself lacks moral legitimacy.

This distinction offers an explanation for later Hanafi involvement with government. A jurist could hold office and deliver just rulings while maintaining the principle that the caliph who appointed him was unjust.

Al-Jaṣṣāṣ was writing as a Hanafi scholar who defended Abū Ḥanīfa's legal legacy. His interpretation comes from within a Sunni legal school. He also upheld the legitimacy of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, distancing himself from Imāmī claims about their authority.

His testimony therefore belongs to the history of Hanafi jurisprudence.

The passage survives for inspection in Arabic, together with an English translation, under Qur'an 2:124 in *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*.[B7-05]

It changes the question historians must ask.

The early Hanafi tradition could remember its founder as an advocate of resistance to unjust rulers. Later jurists had to determine how that memory could coexist with the institutions of the caliphate.

What al-Jaṣṣāṣ was defending

The strength of al-Jaṣṣāṣ's witness becomes easier to assess when his own argument is read as a continuous legal passage rather than a detachable endorsement of rebellion. Qurʾān 2:124 begins with Abraham's appointment as imam and ends by excluding wrongdoers from the divine covenant. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ extends the principle across the persons whose judgment believers must follow: a caliph, a

judge, a mufti, a witness, and a bearer of prophetic reports. Their capacity to exercise religious authority depends upon justice and upright conduct. [B7-05]

This is not a generic preference for virtuous government. The argument directly challenges the assumption that the fact of holding an office settles the duty to obey its holder. When the ruler is a *fāsiq*, al-Jaṣṣāṣ denies that he has attained the qualification for the imamate. The passage thereby distinguishes divine normative authority from the force by which a government manages to rule. In the same argument, al-Jaṣṣāṣ defends Abū Ḥanīfa against an attribution to a theologian named Zurqān, who reportedly maintained that the Kufan master allowed the caliphate of an openly sinful man. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ calls that account false. [B7-05; B7-10]

He then establishes a remarkable practical limit. A just judge appointed by an unjust sovereign can issue valid rulings when he has the means to administer law. The source of his administrative capacity is less important than the righteousness of his judgment. A community may even install a just judge and provide him enforcement without a ruler's authorization. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ expressly mentions earlier judges who operated in the service of Umayyad authorities, while withholding religious legitimacy from the rulers themselves. [B7-05]

This case belongs beside the later debate over deputyship in Chapter 28. Appointing an official and justifying his appointment are different acts. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ permits effective adjudication amid illegitimate rule while retaining the duty to judge the sovereign himself. His doctrine describes an institutional space in which justice can survive through the hands of officials without delivering moral title to the ruler who pays them.

The source also places an essential boundary on the chapter's title. Later in the same commentary al-Jaṣṣāṣ rebukes Imāmī polemicists who tried to use Qurʾān 2:124 against the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. He argues that repentance removes the disqualifying state of wrongdoing. His language toward the *Rāfiḍa* is openly hostile. The man who records Abū Ḥanīfa's support for Alid rebellion is arguing inside a Hanafi conception of Sunni succession. That makes his testimony unusually useful for an account of early Shīʿī politics. It prevents us from converting his politics into later Imāmī creed. [B7-05]

VI. The Revolution That Reached Kufa

In the final years of Umayyad rule, the Abbasid movement spread through an empire already weakened by rebellion and civil war.

Its claim to authority drew on its descent from al-ʿAbbās, an uncle of the Prophet. Revolutionary supporters used language that invoked the Prophet's family and could attract Muslims who hoped for a different distribution of power.

The question of which branch of the Hāshimite family would rule remained contested.

Kufa was central to the revolution. In 749, Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ was proclaimed caliph there, and the Umayyad dynasty fell the following year.

Abū Ḥanīfa had experienced the last years of Umayyad government as an opponent of its authority.

The reported confrontation with Ibn Hubayra belongs to this period. His refusal to enter the governor's service caused him punishment, and he spent time away from Kufa during the closing years of the dynasty.

His return under the Abbasids marked the beginning of another political chapter.

The new government established power in Iraq while maintaining the caliphal claim of the Abbasid family. Descendants of ʿAlī continued to possess independent claims to authority, and their supporters remained active.

The initial revolutionary coalition had left unresolved the question of whether a ruler descended through al-ʿAbbās should possess authority over the descendants of Fāṭima.

Disagreement soon became armed conflict.

In 762, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh, known as al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, the Pure Soul, rose against al-Manṣūr in Medina. He descended from the Prophet through al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī.

His brother Ibrāhīm organized another challenge from Basra, threatening Abbasid control over Iraq.

The two revolts confronted the dynasty at a vulnerable stage of its development. Al-Manṣūr had begun constructing Baghdad, his new capital, while facing opposition from members of the family whose prestige had helped make the Abbasid revolution possible.

The brothers were eventually defeated and killed.

Their movement belongs to the broader history of Alid resistance, although its alliances, leadership claims, and internal differences require attention in their own right. Amikam Elad's extensive study of the revolt documents the conflicting reports through which its history has been transmitted.[B7-06]

For Abū Ḥanīfa, the uprising presented a renewed test of political allegiance.

The preserved accounts place him on the side of the Hasanid challengers, especially Ibrāhīm's Iraqi revolt. Their historical distance requires a separate judgment about each reported deed.

The quietist creed and the chronology of a text

The most substantial objection to the activist reconstruction appears under Abū Ḥanīfa's own name. A text commonly called *al-Fiqh al-Absaṭ* presents him as forbidding rebellion even against an unjust imam. Its argument is about the moral costs of upheaval. Since the community includes innocent people, the disobedience of a ruler does not automatically warrant placing their lives and property at risk. On the version of this doctrine found in the text, a Muslim must oppose a rebellious faction

despite the injustice of the ruler under whom the community lives. This is a serious historical counterargument because it is framed as an explanation of the founder's teaching. [B7-10; B7-13]

Its difficulty is provenance. The text belongs to a family of early Hanafi creedal materials transmitted in different forms and later titled in confusing ways. One version traveled through Abū Ḥanīfa's son Ḥammād, another through Abū Muṭīʿ al-Balkhī. The conventional title *Fiqh al-Absaṭ* was applied much later to distinguish versions previously associated with *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*. Researchers including Josef van Ess and Ulrich Rudolph have identified substantial layers of later editing. Şimşek reports van Ess's specific conclusion that the passage directing believers to side with the community under an unjust ruler against rebels was inserted after the founder's lifetime. This is a source-critical judgment, not an independently established date for the insertion. [B7-10; B7-13]

The contrast with al-Jaṣṣāṣ becomes even more important because he was writing centuries before the later naming convention. He explicitly attacks the attribution of quietism to Abū Ḥanīfa. He names Zurqān as a transmitter of the disputed attribution while offering rebellions, prison experiences, and the duty of commanding right as counterevidence. It would be methodologically irresponsible to treat the present *Fiqh al-Absaṭ* as a straightforward autograph that ends the debate while regarding the earlier Hanafi jurist's counterargument as propaganda. Both need textual history. [B7-05; B7-10]

The debate continued. Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī, writing in the eleventh century, presented a Hanafi consensus against removing an unjust imam. Centuries afterward Ibn al-Humām allowed an immoral man's effective tenure and advised against revolt even when he remained unjust. They document a recognizable quietist line in subsequent Hanafi political theology, though neither author was present in eighth-century Kufa. Their claims about what the founder or all his companions believed must be weighed against sources that preserve contrary memories. [B7-10; B7-14]

The problem can be stated precisely. There is evidence that some Hanafis came to prefer stable rule under a flawed sovereign. There is evidence that earlier defenders and critics alike connected Abū Ḥanīfa personally to armed Alid opposition. A change in the school's governing doctrine need not mean that every individual text was falsified, since judicial administration, defensive war, and resistance to tyranny were argued in different contexts. A late redaction can nevertheless sharpen one of those contexts into a rule advertised as the founder's timeless teaching.

VII. Ibrāhīm's Cause

The reports concerning Abū Ḥanīfa's support for Ibrāhīm are particularly revealing because they describe an aging and established jurist whose public speech could endanger his students.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, writing in the eleventh century, preserves accounts connecting Abū Ḥanīfa to the rebellion. These include a report attributed to his student Zufar ibn al-Hudhayl, who feared the consequences of his teacher's outspoken support.

Other traditions attribute substantial financial contributions to the jurist.

One report places the amount at more than four thousand gold pieces. The figure is difficult to verify and belongs to the later biographical literature.

The allegation that he encouraged men to join Ibrāhīm appears in hostile material as well as material sympathetic to the jurist.

Al-Jaṣṣāṣ preserves a confrontation with Abū Isḥāq al-Fazārī, who reportedly challenged Abū Ḥanīfa over having advised his brother to participate in Ibrāhīm's uprising. The brother had been killed.

The response attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa favors the brother's decision to join the rebellion.

As with the reports concerning Zayd, these exchanges survive through later transmissions, and their exact wording cannot be treated as secure.

Their cumulative significance is substantial.

The jurist's support for the Hasanid rebellion was remembered by authors with different attitudes toward his political conduct. His contemporaries and later critics associated him with resistance that went beyond private dissatisfaction with the caliph.

The relevant issue was the authority of a ruler who claimed obedience while acting unjustly.

The Hasanid brothers offered an alternative rooted in descent from the Prophet and a claim to legitimate governance.

Abū Ḥanīfa's participation, if the major reports are accepted, took the form of financial and juristic support. The record supplies no secure account of his personal service on the battlefield.

He was a jurist who could tell other Muslims that an uprising deserved their assistance.

Those judgments were political acts with religious authority behind them.

When the Abbasid government defeated the brothers, the danger to Abū Ḥanīfa would have increased if the more explicit reports of his advocacy are historical.

His own refusal to serve al-Manṣūr placed him directly in the caliph's hands.

Letters, battle law, and the missing autograph

The fullest stories of the Hasanid revolt bring Abū Ḥanīfa closer to the operational center of resistance. Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn* preserves accounts that he urged Ibrāhīm to move toward Kufa, where remnants of Zayd's constituency could support him. Other material has him communicating about the treatment of fugitives and wounded soldiers, with reference to the

different battlefield circumstances at the Camel and Ṣiffīn. A further episode makes al-Manṣūr intercept a letter and test the jurist with a forged message purportedly from Ibrāhīm. These reports are preserved in a tenth-century literary history; a surviving autograph letter from the jurist has not been established. [B7-10; B7-15]

The military-law story is valuable for the book for reasons beyond a dramatic accusation. It imagines an Iraqi jurist instructing an Alid rebel by appealing to how ʿAlī fought fellow Muslims. Later jurists devoted extensive attention to the law of *baghy*, rebellion, and to the distinction between defeated combatants who retained a force to which they might return and those whose movement had collapsed. The account of Abū Ḥanīfa's supposed advice has been used to trace this legal reasoning backward to the first civil war. The presence of a technical doctrine within a later anecdote also creates a risk: a narrator can insert the accepted law of his own milieu into the mouth of a famous founder. [B7-10; B7-15]

The legal and ethical question deserves care. It is possible to cite ʿAlī as a model of just restraint while constructing a legal exception under which defeated enemies remain vulnerable. This is exactly the kind of transformation *Dark Imams* follows elsewhere. A historical memory of a revered actor becomes a portable jurisprudential rule, and the rule is then invoked to authorize actions far removed from the first setting. The narrated letter may document an eighth-century intervention, a tenth-century account of that intervention, or an admixture of both. Its legal vocabulary makes the source especially useful for investigating the transmission of authority. [B7-15]

The accounts of Zufar offer a more modest anchor. A frightened student is easier to imagine in an environment of surveillance than an unverified battlefield instruction written in the teacher's hand. Even Zufar's recollection survives in later collections and must be read with its chain, variants, and literary function in view. Yet it coheres with the hostile reports preserved in the Hanbali dossier, which likewise regarded the jurist's politics as a scandal. [B7-01; B7-10; B7-11]

VIII. The Caliph's Judge

The reports of Abū Ḥanīfa's confrontation with al-Manṣūr vary in their particulars.

Several accounts portray the caliph offering him the office of judge. Others describe demands for different forms of public service. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ preserves a version involving the counting of bricks used in Baghdad's construction.

The traditional biographies emphasize the jurist's refusal to accept an appointment that might compromise his integrity.

His treatment by Ibn Hubayra under the Umayyads supplies a precedent for such resistance. An appointment from a ruler could involve an expectation of public recognition and cooperation.

In an early caliphal system, the ruler's authority extended over the appointment of judges and administrators. Rejecting that authority exposed a scholar to punishment.

Abū Ḥanīfa refused the Abbasid demands, according to the dominant biographical tradition, and was imprisoned.

He died in Baghdad in 150 AH, corresponding to 767 CE.

Some later reports accuse al-Manṣūr of poisoning him. The surviving evidence does not establish the manner of his death with sufficient confidence to treat that accusation as fact.

The broad imprisonment tradition is widely attested. The appointment story, the chronological relationship to Ibrāhīm's rebellion, and the immediate cause of his death remain separate historical problems.

A man remembered for supporting two generations of Alid resistance had now died in the custody of the second Abbasid caliph.

The popular jurist received a funeral remembered in later sources for the size of its attendance.

For his students, his death created a practical problem. The legal methods and doctrines he had taught could continue to grow, but their institutional future would unfold under the caliphate whose authority he had challenged.

The next generation would make a different relationship with the state possible.

IX. The Student in the Palace

Abū Yūsuf, one of Abū Ḥanīfa's most important students, became a judge under the Abbasids.

During the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, he composed *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, a major work on taxation and public administration, at the caliph's request.

The text survives as one of the important early works of Hanafi jurisprudence.

Its concerns included the collection of revenue, the treatment of subjects, and the obligations of rulers. Abū Yūsuf could use his position to advise the government about justice within the administration of the empire.

His career shows how the legal tradition associated with Abū Ḥanīfa entered the governing institutions of the Abbasid state.[B7-07]

Another major student, Muḥammad al-Shaybānī, helped preserve and systematize the school's legal doctrines and also served as a judge.

Over time, the Hanafi school developed through a network of jurists, teachers, and transmitters. Its intellectual reach expanded well beyond Kufa.

An independent teacher's circle became a legal tradition capable of supplying authoritative judgments for an imperial society.

The political thought of its founder traveled through this process unevenly.

Abū Ḥanīfa's opinions on faith and authority remained controversial, while his students transmitted large bodies of jurisprudence that succeeding generations could apply in courts and scholarly institutions.

This development helps explain why the later portrait of Abū Ḥanīfa often emphasizes his personal refusal of government office.

The story could be admired as an example of integrity without requiring subsequent jurists to endorse every rebellion he reportedly supported.

His refusal became an enduring moral lesson.

His legal school developed the doctrines through which qualified judges could serve under imperfect rulers.

Al-Jaṣṣāṣ would eventually explain how these positions could coexist. The validity of a just judge's rulings depended on the justice of the judge and his ability to enforce lawful decisions, while the ruler who appointed him could remain morally unqualified.

The distinction allowed the Hanafi tradition to participate in public government while preserving a demanding doctrine of legitimate rule.

The student in the palace inherits a problem

The practical issue confronting Abū Yūsuf was larger than his teacher's reputation. What should a judge do when the sovereign can enforce judgments yet fails the moral qualifications required of legitimate rule? As one of the foundational exponents of the Hanafi school and an official whose work was commissioned by Hārūn al-Rashīd, Abū Yūsuf operated within the very apparatus his teacher had reportedly resisted. His *Kitāb al-Kharāj* treats taxation and administrative fairness as obligations that could be pursued from within government. The surviving work demonstrates institutional participation. It does not establish that the caliphate had become morally impeccable in the eyes of every Hanafi. [B7-07]

Here the hostile Abū Yūsuf report and his official career illuminate one another. The student remembered by a Hanbali compiler as recoiling from his teacher's approval of the sword could also become a major judge serving a ruling dynasty. This need not be explained through personal betrayal. A jurist might accept a distinction between the invalidity of a ruler's divine title and the enforceability of just acts performed by officials. The explanation appears explicitly in al-Jaṣṣāṣ, although it was formulated later and should not be placed uncritically in Abū Yūsuf's own mouth. [B7-05; B7-11]

The law school's texts then developed rules for dealing with armed rebels. Şimşek notes that al-Shaybānī's *Kitāb al-Aṣl* belongs to the early legal discussion of rebellion and *baghy*. A coherent body of rules about public order can be taught to judges under an empire while preserving episodes in which the school's founder favored an insurgent against the government. The important problem is which claimant counted as a rebel, and who exercised the power to declare him one. [B7-10]

X. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and the Battle for Memory

The story of Abū Ḥanīfa's relationship with Shiism becomes more complicated when the later Imāmī literature enters the picture.

Abū Ḥanīfa and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq were contemporaries.

Both possessed connections to the learned communities of Iraq and the Hijaz. Reports associate Abū Ḥanīfa with Jaʿfar and with Jaʿfar's father, Muḥammad al-Bāqir.

Later traditions portray meetings and debates between the jurists.

Their relationship became part of the contest over religious authority.

In the Imāmī collections, Jaʿfar frequently appears as the possessor of superior knowledge, while Abū Ḥanīfa represents a legal method grounded in personal reasoning and analogy.

One report preserved in al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī* presents Jaʿfar challenging Abū Ḥanīfa's use of *qiyās*, analogical reasoning. Jaʿfar associates its first use with the Devil's attempt to reason against Allah's command.

Other reports stage disputes in which Abū Ḥanīfa appears unfamiliar with an interpretation of the Qur'an supplied by Jaʿfar.

Robert Gleave, examining the teachings attributed to Jaʿfar, explains how reports of this kind served later Imāmī criticism of Hanafi jurisprudence.[B7-08]

The form of the narrative is familiar in religious literature. A revered teacher defeats an opponent through superior knowledge, and the exchange establishes the authority of the tradition that transmits it.

Such stories have to be evaluated through their transmission history.

Al-Kulaynī completed *al-Kāfī* in the early tenth century, roughly 170 years after Abū Ḥanīfa's death.

The collection drew on older networks of Imāmī transmission, particularly those associated with Qom. Its compilation belongs to a later period of theological development following the disappearance of the eleventh imam's son in the Imāmī account of the occultation.

Al-Kulaynī assembled traditions that gave the imams exceptional authority as interpreters of religion and possessors of privileged knowledge.

The imams appear in these reports as the essential means through which believers attain reliable knowledge of divine law.

In the case of Abū Ḥanīfa, this vision of authority creates a sharp legal disagreement.

His scholarly method permitted independent juristic evaluation. He could honor an Alid teacher while reaching a legal conclusion through his own reasoning.

The Imāmī reports attributed to Jaʿfar establish a stronger claim about the imam's exclusive authority.

The surviving sources therefore reveal a conflict between traditions that later adopted distinct identities.

The reports must also be assessed for what they reveal about the people who transmitted them.

In al-Kulaynī's literature, Abū Ḥanīfa often appears as a foil for the imam. Within the Hanafi tradition, the same jurist is remembered as an admirer of the Prophet's household who supported the revolts of its descendants.

The political and legal histories intersect, and subsequent writers selected the parts of each man's life that served their competing accounts of religious authority.

Historical continuity remains a question for investigation. Earlier Imāmī beliefs and written materials predate al-Kulaynī, while the doctrinal collections available to us developed through generations of transmission and debate.

An isolated ninth- or tenth-century report cannot by itself establish the precise teaching of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq during the eighth century.

The same evidentiary discipline applies to the later Hanafi biographies of Abū Ḥanīfa.

Both traditions must face the chronology of their sources.

Two men, several incompatible archives

The same decades supplied a telling contrast from within the Prophet's family. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, later made the sixth imam in the Twelver sequence, is remembered as withholding support from Zayd's uprising and from Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's later revolt. Abū Ḥanīfa, the eventual eponym of a major Sunni school, is remembered as aiding both causes. Chapter 10A has already reconstructed the differences between Zayd's public claim and Jaʿfar's refusal to lead a revolt. The comparison here concerns a jurist who entered that political field from outside the Prophet's lineage. [X01; B7-08]

Even the family divisions are more complicated than a simple Hasanid revolt opposed by all Husaynids. Reports differ over participation by relatives of Jaʿfar, including some of his sons, and the later importance of Mūsā al-Kāẓim for Imāmī succession can influence how such reports were accepted or rejected. The political alignment of one Alid teacher in a particular uprising gives no

automatic ruling on the conduct of his descendants. Chapter 10C examines the intellectual claims associated with Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, which grew in the same contested world. [X12]

The methodological contrast also needs its own historical register. Gleave shows that conflicting factions attributed incompatible doctrines to Jaʿfar, and that the Imāmī narratives of him defeating Abū Ḥanīfa in debates over analogy served later legal polemic. Political sympathy toward an Alid claimant, recognition of a particular sacred teacher, use of analogy in law, and membership in a confessional community were different kinds of commitments. Treating one as a proxy for all the others produces a tidier diagram of early Islam and a less faithful history. [B7-08]

Who could be called Shīʿī in Kufa?

The noun *shīʿa* names partisanship, but by the eighth century a reader cannot define developing Shiʿism purely by affection for ʿAlī. Competing communities in Kufa were distinguishing themselves through ritual practice, public space, and doctrines of imamate. Najam Haider's reconstruction uses early legal texts to show how practices including the basmala, qunūt, and rules about beverages became markers of communal alignment. Their value is methodological: they permit historians to observe the growth of religious boundaries without making every early partisan recite a creed produced generations later. [B7-04]

The Zaydī field itself contained disputes over recognition of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, later associated with Batrī and Jārūdī tendencies. Abū Ḥanīfa's reported esteem for those caliphs is compatible with some early Alid alliances and at odds with other positions within the same movement. His exact membership in a named Kufan faction remains unestablished. The title of this chapter therefore makes a contestable claim about participation in Alid politics, tested against his support for specific rebellions. It is not a claim that the historic jurist signed a Twelver doctrinal confession. [B7-01; B7-02; B7-04]

XI. The Heretic Becomes the Great Imam

Abū Ḥanīfa's eventual place in Sunni orthodoxy required a considerable change in the way later scholars remembered him.

His religious opponents criticized his use of *raʾy*, his handling of hadith, and his theological opinions.

Some associated him with the Murjiʾa. Others regarded his political conduct as dangerous.

Ahmad Khan's *Heresy and the Formation of Medieval Islamic Orthodoxy*, published in 2023, reconstructs the gradual development of these controversies.

Khan identifies a comparatively limited stage of hostility during the early ninth century, followed by more elaborate accusations of heresy during the following century. The jurist's alleged involvement in rebellions formed an important part of the later opposition to his reputation.

The debate occurred during the period when Sunni orthodoxy itself was being defined.

Traditionist scholars increasingly debated which theological views, legal practices, and religious authorities belonged inside the recognized community of orthodoxy.

Abū Ḥanīfa posed a problem.

His legal school had become too important to dismiss casually. Its adherents occupied positions of learning and public authority across a growing portion of the Muslim world.

At the same time, critics preserved accusations concerning his theology and his willingness to challenge rulers.

The Hanafi response took literary form.

Works known as *manāqib* collected accounts of his learning, piety, achievements, and virtues. They defended his reputation and gave his followers a coherent account of his place within the history of Islam.

Other scholars compiled *masānīd*, collections of hadith reports associated with Abū Ḥanīfa, to answer claims that he lacked competence in the traditions of the Prophet.

Khan shows how these genres contributed to the rehabilitation of the jurist during the tenth and eleventh centuries.[B7-09]

Through this process, the founder's biography became a field of contestation.

A report that one writer used to demonstrate dangerous political doctrines could be interpreted by another as evidence of courage.

Criticism of his reasoning might be answered with accounts of his legal expertise. His association with controversial theology could be situated within an acceptable account of Sunni belief.

Eventually, the authority of Abū Ḥanīfa became a defining part of classical Sunnism.

His school stood alongside the Maliki, Shafiʿi, and Hanbali traditions.

The institutional achievement was immense. It also changed the religious meaning of his name.

Later generations encountered Abū Ḥanīfa through the accumulated authority of his school. The sectarian categories familiar to them encouraged the assumption that his historical identity must match the tradition that claimed him.

The earlier biography tells a more complicated story.

He belonged to a Kufan culture in which Alid allegiance, independent jurisprudence, and developing theological commitments crossed boundaries that later schools would seek to establish.

The memory of his support for Zayd and the Hasanid brothers survived within Hanafi writing itself.

XII. Abū Ḥanīfa the Shīʿī

The title of this chapter rests on a historical usage of the word *shīʿī*.

Abū Ḥanīfa lived in Kufa during the development of the movement associated with ʿAlī and his descendants. The principal biographical tradition links him to the armed resistance of Zayd ibn ʿAlī and the Hasanid brothers. He opposed rulers from two successive dynasties and regarded ʿAlī as justified in his civil wars.

His political commitments were deeply tied to the question of rightful Islamic authority.

The evidence also places limits on the title.

A surviving contemporary declaration in which Abū Ḥanīfa formally identifies himself as a Shīʿī has not been established. The reports of his views toward Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and the authority of Alid jurists differ from the developed theology of later Twelver Imāmism.

His relationship to Zayd and his descendants resembles the earlier Alid partisanship from which several forms of Shiism developed.

The label *Zaydī-adjacent* describes a portion of his historical orientation, provided it is understood as a modern inference. His reported support for Zayd and the Hasanids belongs to the early history of *shīʿat ʿAlī*; the question of named communal membership cannot be settled by a later sectarian register. [B7-04; B7-10]

To describe Abū Ḥanīfa as Shīʿī is therefore to place him in the history of a movement whose early political struggles he reportedly supported.

It requires us to examine the later doctrinal claims through their actual transmission history.

An interesting witness to this process remains al-Jaṣṣāṣ.

His commentary was written within the Hanafi school after that school had developed a Sunni identity. It presents the founder as a jurist who regarded resistance to oppression as a religious duty, while defending the legitimacy of early caliphs honored by Sunni tradition.

The same source records his support for Alid challengers.

Those memories survived because the legal tradition continued to preserve material from an earlier age, even as its public character changed.

The historical Abū Ḥanīfa belonged to that age.

He died before al-Kulaynī compiled the later Imāmī hadith collection. He died before the four Sunni legal schools became the familiar institutions of Islamic orthodoxy. The mature sectarian doctrines through which later Muslims interpreted his life were developed and systematized over the generations that followed him.

In Kufa, he had heard the claims of the Prophet's descendants and examined the legal obligations of Muslims facing unjust government.

The reports say that he gave his wealth to their cause. Later opponents accused him of encouraging men to fight. An important Hanafi jurist preserved those memories and defended them through the Qur'an.

When the Abbasid caliph sought his cooperation, the aged Abū Ḥanīfa refused.

The jurist died in Baghdad, while the dynasty that held him continued to rule the empire.

His students carried his legal teachings into that empire's institutions. The larger struggle over the founder's reputation would occupy generations of Muslims who never met him.

And deep inside a Hanafi commentary on the Qur'an, written two centuries after his death, there remained an account of a jurist whose teaching had been famous for fighting unjust rulers.

10C · Hishām's Imam

From Alid authority to an epistemic office

The historical Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq is difficult to recover precisely because so many later traditions needed him. Sunni hadith transmitters, Imami jurists, Ismailis, ghulāt, theologians, and later esoteric authors all preserved teachings under his name. Robert Gleave therefore begins his reconstruction with an uncomfortable fact: contradictory theological and legal positions were attributed to Jaʿfar by competing schools, and even an accurately preserved public statement can become difficult to interpret when *taqiyya* is available as an explanation for why the Imam said something other than what he inwardly held. [X02]

This makes the generation of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam unusually important. Hishām does not simply transmit one more saying. Modern scholarship treats him as a major systematizer of the Imami theory of the Imam. Etan Kohlberg's classic study goes so far as to say that the developing theory received a definitive shape in the mid-second/eighth century through Hishām, while the specifically Twelver doctrine of twelve Imams and the occultation of the last was a later addition crystallizing after the crisis of 874. [X03]

That claim deserves scrutiny because it changes the direction of explanation. Instead of assuming that Jaʿfar taught a complete Twelver system which later generations merely preserved, we can ask what intellectual work Hishām performed, which elements appear earlier, and which powers were subsequently added to the office he defended.

The problem Hishām inherited

By Hishām's generation, the case for a unique Imam had to compete with several kinds of claimant. Zaydi theory could identify a learned descendant through public summons and struggle. Kaysani and messianic traditions had attached charismatic authority to other Alid lines. Radical groups attributed extraordinary knowledge and cosmic roles to revered figures. Ordinary jurists claimed competence to derive law without submitting to one divinely protected family teacher.

The Imami solution needed to explain why one particular person was necessary even when he did not govern. If the Imam is only the most learned scholar available, another scholar might surpass him. If he is only a political leader, defeat can remove his practical authority. If he is simply a pious descendant, several descendants may qualify at once.

Kohlberg's reconstruction places Hishām near the center of the answer: the Imam is a uniquely necessary, designated, protected source of religious guidance. The office can therefore remain binding under a hostile government. Its legitimacy does not depend upon rebellion, election, or the juristic success of a rival scholar. [X03]

The theory solves one uncertainty by creating another evidentiary demand. A designated infallible transmitter must still be identified. The community needs trustworthy knowledge of the designation and of the teachings transmitted through the office. The more epistemic work assigned to the Imam, the more consequential an error in identifying him becomes.

Hishām's Imam was not yet the later cosmic knower

Tamima Bayhom-Daou's reconstruction supplies the most important limit. Her study of material attributed to Hishām argues that his view of the Imam's knowledge differs substantially from the later classical Imami corpus. Hishām's Imam is an infallible transmitter of the Prophet's legacy. He is not, in her reconstruction, a recipient of continuing divine communication after prophecy. Hishām rejected conceptions of the Imam as *muḥaddath* and rejected a Zaydi doctrine of inspiration attributed to the Jārūdiyya. [X04]

This creates a remarkable historical possibility. The office can be extremely exalted without yet possessing every power later associated with it. The Imam may be indispensable because he preserves revelation without error, while still lacking new communication from heaven. Such a theory is structurally closer to a protected archive embodied in a person than to an ongoing revelatory channel.

For *Dark Imams*, this difference is crucial. Our hadith and theophany chapters encounter later reports in which the Imams possess extraordinary forms of knowledge, a created Spirit, the Greatest Name, knowledge of hidden matters, or cosmic functions. Those reports cannot simply be projected backward into Hishām's model. If Bayhom-Daou's reconstruction is correct, at least part of the later epistemic surface area represents development rather than mere preservation. [BH-B04; BH-B07; K-R21]

The result also complicates a crude rationalist-versus-esoteric opposition. Hishām defended an extraordinarily strong doctrine of the Imam's protected authority while resisting forms of continuing inspiration. Rational systematization can therefore increase institutional authority even while limiting mystical claims. A later tradition can then combine both inheritances.

Infallibility as an argument, not merely a title

Later Imami literature preserves arguments attributed to Hishām for the Imam's *ʿiṣma*. One famous report reasons from the office's relation to worldly desire and public responsibility. Whatever the report's exact historical status, it illustrates how infallibility could be defended as a conclusion rather than asserted as a magical property. [X13]

The argument should be treated like the other arguments in this book: identify the premises and test them. A person's office can create incentives against some forms of misconduct while creating

opportunities for others. Possession of authority over communal resources does not logically eliminate greed. The claim that no one stands above the Imam assumes the very hierarchy whose moral consequences are at issue.

That criticism does not require dismissing Hishām as cynical. It shows why a theory of infallibility needs more than confidence in the role's purpose. A system can be designed for justice and still be occupied by someone who acts unjustly. If divine protection is the additional premise, the historical problem becomes how that protection is known and how a disputed claimant is excluded.

This matters directly to the project's AI analogy. A system can be given an architectural role intended to prevent error. The role's purpose does not establish that the implementation succeeds. Testing remains necessary. In religious terms, divine protection may be a theological fact for the believer; the historian still needs evidence that the protected office belongs to the person whose reports he is reading.

Jaʿfar dies, and designation does not look self-executing

Jaʿfar's death in 148/765 provides an immediate stress test. Farhad Daftary's survey of early Ismaili history describes his followers dividing into several groups. Two proto-Ismaili tendencies centered on Ismāʿīl or his son Muḥammad, while another line recognized Mūsā al-Kāẓim; additional claimants also appeared in the wider succession landscape. [X08]

The existence of the dispute does not prove that no designation occurred. A clear appointment can be denied, forgotten, concealed, or contested for political reasons. But the dispute does prove something important about human access to the designation. The social fact of *naṣṣ* was not self-executing. People who regarded Jaʿfar as an extraordinary authority still disagreed over who inherited that authority.

The case of Ismāʿīl makes the difficulty sharper. Iranica notes both the later Ismaili claim that Jaʿfar had designated him and the hostile character of much of the Twelver material about him. It also preserves reports of Ismāʿīl's associations with radical Shiʿites and anti-Abbasid activity. His death before Jaʿfar in the majority account forced followers to explain what a prior designation meant when the designated person was no longer available to succeed in the expected manner. [X07]

A mature doctrine can resolve this retrospectively. The correct designation is whatever occurred in the protected line, and contrary memories can be assigned to error, concealment, or false claimants. The historian cannot use that conclusion as the evidence for itself. He has to reconstruct which designation reports existed when, how they were transmitted, and what rival groups said before the later genealogy became dominant.

This is the same endpoint discipline applied to the *al-Kāfī* reports. A sound chain to a fourth-century narrator establishes something about that transmission. It does not transport the historian directly into Jaʿfar's room in 765.

Taqiyya and the problem of the unfalsifiable Imam

Protective dissimulation has an obvious historical rationale. A persecuted community may need to conceal identities, beliefs, or plans. The Iranica entry on *taqiyya* also notes traditions in which the Imams deliberately gave different rulings on sensitive matters and dissociated themselves from followers as forms of protection. [X09]

The epistemological danger appears when *taqiyya* becomes a universal harmonizer. Suppose two reports with respectable transmissions attribute opposite positions to Jaʿfar. If one agrees with the later school and the other can be classified as a statement made under dissimulation, the later doctrine can become very difficult to falsify through the transmitted record. Gleave states the problem sharply: even a reliable report of what Jaʿfar publicly said may not settle what he actually believed. [X02]

This does not make *taqiyya* fraudulent. It means that the explanatory move needs constraints. The interpreter should identify a plausible danger, audience, or political circumstance. A rule that every inconvenient report is dissimulation would convert a historical doctrine of protection into a device for insulating the finished system from contrary evidence.

Our existing *al-Kāfī* dossier gives an internal boundary. The report that says *taqiyya* exists to preserve blood and ends when it reaches bloodshed supplies a purpose against which later applications can be judged. [K-R05] That principle does not tell us which eighth-century statements were concealed. It prevents the doctrine from becoming a free-standing license to erase harm or contradiction.

The HCM therefore treats *taqiyya* as a hypothesis about a specific utterance, not as an automatic repair function. What danger existed? What audience was present? Do independent sources preserve the same divergence? Does the alleged concealed position appear before the later system needed it? Those questions turn an otherwise self-sealing explanation into something historically testable.

From Hishām to the Twelver settlement

Kohlberg's periodization gives the book a useful architecture. On his account, Hishām's mid-eighth-century theory provides a mature Imami model of the office. The specifically Twelver identification of twelve Imams and a final concealed Imam becomes the major subsequent development after the death of al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī in 260/874 and the consolidation of the occultation doctrine. [X03]

The line between those stages should not be understood as an uninterrupted plan. Each succession created its own evidence problem. Later communities had to identify the next Imam, transmit the designation, and explain unexpected deaths, rival claimants, or political inactivity. An office designed to guarantee epistemic continuity could itself become the object of repeated epistemic disputes.

That tension helps explain why hadith becomes so important. If the Imam is the protected transmitter of the Prophet's legacy and later becomes inaccessible, the corpus of reports attributed to him becomes a principal means by which his epistemic function survives. The authority of the book can then expand precisely because access to the living office contracts.

The result connects this chapter directly to the *al-Kāfī* investigation. A report attributed to Jaʿfar enters a fourth-century collection, later receives a chain grade, and eventually functions as the voice of an infallible Imam. Those are several historical operations. Hishām's theory helps explain why the endpoint matters so much. It does not authenticate every sentence that later reaches that endpoint.

The expansion of the epistemic surface area

We can now state a central *Dark Imams* hypothesis more precisely. The development from early Alid allegiance to mature Twelver authority may involve not merely a list of successors but an expansion in what the office is believed to know and what institutions may infer from that knowledge.

At one stage, the Imam is the rightful leader of the Prophet's family. At another, he is the divinely designated and infallible transmitter of the Prophet's legacy. Later corpora can attribute forms of continuing divine assistance, extraordinary hidden knowledge, cosmic names, and metaphysical functions. After occultation, jurists interpret those reports and derive obligations for people who cannot ask the Imam what he meant.

Each expansion requires its own evidence. It is not enough to say that all are expressions of the same sacred essence. The historical question is when the proposition becomes visible and through what texts. The theological question is whether it remains within tawḥīd and the moral limits already developed in *Finding Injil*. The institutional question is what additional obedience the proposition is used to demand.

This is where Hishām becomes more than a biographical curiosity. He provides a possible checkpoint. If a major second-century defender of Imami authority rejects continuing divine communication, then later reports asserting it cannot be treated as conceptually necessary to the earliest systematic theory. They need their own genealogy.

A more difficult picture of Jaʿfar

The result does not require choosing between two caricatures: "Jaʿfar invented Twelverism" and "later theologians fabricated everything." The more plausible field contains several interacting processes. Jaʿfar was an important Alid scholar with a following. His circle contained people with different theological and political tendencies. Hishām systematized a powerful account of the Imam. Rival successors competed after Jaʿfar's death. Later transmitters preserved contradictory material. The doctrine of *taqiyya* helped communities survive and helped jurists explain some contradictions. After 874, new institutions solved a succession crisis through the doctrine of the hidden twelfth Imam.

Some of those developments may faithfully articulate implications already present in Jaʿfar's teaching. Others may represent genuine innovation. The historical-critical method cannot decide which by measuring conformity to the finished Twelver system. It must follow the evidence in chronological order.

This is also why the term "Jaʿfari" needs care. It can name a later legal tradition without establishing that every rule within that tradition is the recoverable opinion of the historical Jaʿfar. The legal contradiction examined in chapters 24–25 is one example. The ghulūw material in chapter 32 is another. Hishām's narrower epistemology gives us an additional comparative control.

Provisional decision

Historical finding: Kohlberg places Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam at a decisive stage in the systematization of Imami doctrine, while Bayhom-Daou reconstructs his account of the Imam's knowledge as substantially narrower than that of later classical Imami sources. [X03; X04]

Succession finding: Jaʿfar's death produced visible disagreement over his successor. The dispute does not disprove designation, but it demonstrates that access to the allegedly decisive designation was contested. [X07; X08]

Epistemological decision: RETAIN *taqiyya* as a historically intelligible protective practice; REJECT its use as an unconstrained device that makes every contrary report compatible with the later doctrine. Require evidence about danger, audience, and chronology when it is invoked to reconstruct Jaʿfar's private belief. [X02; X09]

Dark Imams consequence: treat Hishām's theory as a checkpoint in the expansion of imamic authority. Later claims of continuing divine communication or broader cosmic knowledge must be dated and defended on their own evidence rather than imported backward into the earliest systematic Imami theory.

11 · The Judge Who Brought the Books

Zaydi fiqh, Muʿtazili patronage, and the manufacture of agreement

This chapter investigates the proposed movement from court-connected rationalist scholarship into politically useful Zaydi jurisprudence. Its principal new evidence concerns Qāḍī Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Salām, a twelfth-century Yemeni scholar whose activity connects imported books, legal theory, and imamic patronage. The inquiry also examines a recent accusation that he fabricated the received *Musnad Zayd*. That accusation is attributed to its author and tested separately from the evidence for Jaʿfar's institutional influence.

The historical-critical method and the project's Qur'an-first ethical judgments remain distinct. An identifiable rule can fail our test of justice while its historical attribution stays unresolved. Conversely, an intellectually attractive proposition can survive through an insecure transmission. Decisions in the legal dossiers concern the particular proposition named. They supply no substitute for a complete independent narrator register or manuscript edition.

A scholar at the junction

A book collector can change a legal tradition without composing a single false report. He determines which books reach a community and which teachers authorize their reading. A patron then supplies the resources for copying and instruction. The resulting school can acquire an increasingly confident account of its origins even while its surviving library becomes less representative of the arguments once available.

Qāḍī Jaʿfar gives this possibility a name. A modern Zaydi biographical notice records his return to Yemen in 554 AH, bringing major works of theology and transmitted reports. It describes Imam Aḥmad b. Sulaymān welcoming him and encouraging him to teach those works and refute the Muṭarrifiyya. The same notice honors him as a trusted authority on whom many Zaydi book-transmission chains depend. [ZF-Z03]

This is valuable testimony from a community that celebrates the transmission. We can begin with its positive account rather than reconstruct an intervention solely from hostile accusations. The books were gathered for use. Their circulation took place within a dispute over which account of religion should prevail.

For *Dark Imams*, that establishes a specific research problem. The operative questions concern the content of the imported curriculum, the rules by which rivals could be excluded, and the treatment of material bearing the names of early Imams. A claim of covert Abbasid direction would require an additional trail linking the actors to that government. None has been located in this pass.

There is already enough material to study a politically supported religious program. Its participants could understand it as faithful restoration. Our historical work must determine what they changed, while our ethical work examines the authority their arguments claimed.

What "disgraced Muʿtazili" can establish

The phrase has a concrete biographical referent in Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār. Al-Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād supported his appointment as chief judge of Ray in 977. After the patron died in 995, the judge lost office and property. He continued teaching, received an honored reception in Baghdad in 999, and died in Ray in 1024–25. His pupils included major scholars connected with Caspian Zaydism. [ZF-Z02]

Those facts permit a history of vulnerability to patronage. They do not establish a motive of revenge. The loss of an appointment can change a scholar's opportunities without changing his convictions. A later movement may preserve his books because they answer its questions, because its teachers studied them, or because access to them confers intellectual prestige.

The broader causal proposal should therefore be disaggregated. Court employment supplies one setting for the production of sophisticated theology. Displacement changes the distribution of scholars and their books. Later patrons select from that inheritance. A coordinated project of deceptive attribution is a further possibility to investigate through particular texts.

The intervals matter because they locate the proposed mechanism. The judge's dismissal belongs to the late tenth century. Jaʿfar's mission belongs to the twelfth. Treating both as one episode would erase the generations through which the books passed. A successful reconstruction must identify those intermediaries and show which arguments remained stable during transmission.

This also requires distinguishing two men called Abū Hāshim. The Alid figure in the project's Kaysani genealogy is the son of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya. The Bahshami theological school takes its name from the later Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī. A shared personal name supplies no bridge between the two. The reported Alid intellectual pedigree and the later history of a particular Muʿtazili school require their own chains. [ZF-Z01; ZF-Z02; ZF-A03]

One implication deserves emphasis. A thinker may oppose an unjust ruler while retaining legal assumptions that permit coercion within a household. The political courage of a theological school cannot decide the justice of each rule it transmits. Nor does a coercive rule establish that its transmitter disbelieved his own account of divine justice. The disagreement may expose a limit in what he recognized as injury or consent.

A traceable adaptation of legal theory

Scott Lucas's edition of Jaʿfar's *al-Taqrīb fī uṣūl al-fiqh* identifies its dependence on al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī's *ʿUyūn al-masāʾil*. The inherited discussion of consensus follows a Bahshami framework.

Jaʿfar changes its treatment of the consensus of the Prophet's family, defending that authority where the source rejects it. Lucas identifies lifetime manuscripts of the *Taqrīb*, including Ambrosiana D 544 and Vatican Arabic 1165. [ZF-Z07]

Here intellectual inheritance is visible at the level of an argument. The receiving author keeps a structure and changes a proposition that concerns the authority of his religious community. This is the kind of comparison needed throughout the book. It identifies a textual relationship while allowing the recipient an active role.

The political significance follows from what consensus does. A legal system can treat agreement as evidence of accumulated judgment. It can also give agreement a stronger authority that closes further dispute. The question then becomes who is entitled to participate and how their agreement is known.

An appeal to the Prophet's family brings a second problem. Which descendants qualify? How are their statements collected? Does a later institution represent the whole family or only the surviving teachers whose books it possesses? These questions become particularly pressing in a history that takes multiple succession seriously.

Suppose several Alid communities preserve different legal positions. An argument invoking family consensus must account for the disagreement rather than assume that only one community has standing. A school that excludes rival lines before counting their opinions may be building the conclusion into its definition of the relevant family.

That observation is our analysis of the method. It does not establish that every Zaydi consensus claim was manufactured. A particular agreement may be well evidenced. The documentary task is to identify the participants and preserve contrary witnesses before deciding what the agreement proves.

The thirty-topic theological curriculum associated with Jaʿfar provides another route into institutional influence. Lucas's separate study traces the framework through later works and manuscript witnesses. A repeatable syllabus helps explain how a distinctive account of theology can endure across generations. [ZF-Z06] Its success alone does not reveal whether any particular hadith was forged.

How dissent can stop counting

The most revealing passage in Jaʿfar's consensus chapter concerns *fisq*, culpable deviation. The relevant Arabic propositions, in the edition's numbering, are:

من فسق من جهة التأويل ... لم يعتد بهم في الإجماع

إذا أجمعت الأمة على قولين ثم فسقت إحدى الطائفتين فإن الخلاف يسقط

In my translation, the first excludes those judged culpably deviant through interpretation from the reckoning of consensus. The second says that, where the community has held two opinions and one party subsequently falls into that condition, the disagreement ceases to count. These are topics 29–30, printed Arabic page 72 and English discussion pages 77–78. [ZF-Z07]

The term requires precision. *Fisq* in this context cannot simply be replaced with apostasy, and the rule does not itself issue a command to kill anyone. Its immediate consequence concerns membership in the body whose agreement establishes a legal proof.

That consequence is substantial. Imagine that A and B disagree on a disputed ruling. Under a unanimity requirement, B's contrary opinion prevents A from claiming consensus. Once B is excluded from the class of people whose opinions count, A can describe the remaining agreement as decisive. The original objection may survive intact as an argument while losing its procedural standing.

This mechanism becomes circular when the reason for excluding B is the very disagreement whose validity is in question. A declares its view mandatory because all eligible participants agree; eligibility is then denied to those who oppose A. The appearance of agreement results from the classification rule.

A defender has a serious response. Every deliberative body has conditions of membership. An institution cannot be required to treat a person who denies its most basic commitments as an authoritative participant in every internal judgment. The problem is how those commitments and exclusions are established. A public, independently justified disqualification differs from one inferred solely from disagreement with the ruling presently defended.

Our uṣūl therefore require an auditable account of exclusion. The examiner must state the alleged error, show its significance, and allow the affected argument to be heard. A person's affiliation cannot make an otherwise sound objection disappear. The burden increases when exclusion changes another person's rights or permits coercive treatment.

This provides a direct HCM test for the Muṭarrifi case. We should look for actual jurists invoking such rules against named opponents, then follow the consequences into adjudication, communal finance, and protection of persons. The combination of an exclusionary rule and a nearby conflict creates a specific inquiry. It does not by itself demonstrate that this particular rule supplied the legal ground for every act of persecution.

The controls inside the same text

The *Taqrīb* also rejects majority agreement as sufficient proof and requires a scholar capable of examining evidence to do so rather than merely follow a more learned authority. [ZF-Z07] These provisions must remain in the assessment.

They make the internal pressure clearer. The method protects reasoned judgment within a qualified body while allowing some interpreters to be removed from that body. The crucial power is consequently the authority to define who remains qualified.

Under our reassessment, the requirement to inspect evidence is retained. The rejection of a majority as an automatic guarantee of truth is also retained. Excluding a relevant objection because its author has received a sectarian label is rejected as a sufficient route to certainty. A genuine demonstration that an argument is unsound must address its premises and inference.

The institutional danger can survive sincere intentions. A scholar might believe he is defending the community from serious error. If his test makes the school's own conclusion immune to criticism, its effect still deserves examination. Our critique concerns that effect and the reasoning that permits it; a finding of calculated deception requires evidence about intention.

The opponents had institutions of their own

The Muṭarrifiyya become especially important when we ask what their defeat could remove. Johann Heiss and Eirik Hovden describe early networks of study, common religious practice, hospitality, and collection and redistribution of zakāt. Their reconstruction questions an origin story that reduces the movement to a theological quarrel. [ZF-Z08]

This gives the legal inquiry a practical setting. Independent distribution of communal resources can sustain teachers and meeting places. It can allow a religious network to function without depending entirely on an Imam's administration. A conflict over who represents sound religion can therefore also become a conflict over who may support its institutions.

The surviving record needs to be read with that possibility in view. A theological judgment might affect eligibility to receive funds, the standing of a witness, or the legitimacy of a local teacher. Those are possible legal pathways to investigate. The present chapter has not established a complete list of judgments applied to each Muṭarrifi community.

Sabine Schmidtke connects the transfer of northern rationalist literature with campaigns against the Muṭarrifiyya and describes destruction of their libraries under al-Manṣūr bi-llāh ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza. Her account also identifies state-sponsored copying from Iranian exemplars. [ZF-Z09]

The asymmetry affects what later historians can hear. A successful school can preserve its refutations and the books it taught while the opponent's explanations become scarce. If the next generation judges the quarrel chiefly through the victorious library, it inherits a record already shaped by the struggle.

An ethical obligation follows for our project. The absence of an opponent's book cannot be counted as proof that the opponent lacked an argument. Equally, the loss does not authorize us to invent the missing argument or install the defeated party as the bearer of our own preferred theology.

This is also why "pacification" is too imprecise for the Zaydi case. A state can encourage resistance to an external ruler while disciplining religious autonomy within its own territory. The test concerns who may act and under whose authorization. A doctrine can retain the language of uprising while narrowing the range of people permitted to initiate it.

Manuscript evidence with a date

Schmidtke describes Leiden Or. 8409 as copied for ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza's library in 1209 and subsequently collated against an Iranian witness. The entry preserves an identifiable patron, a copying operation, and a comparison with an imported exemplar. [ZF-Z09]

Such a record is much stronger than an inference drawn from a text's usefulness. It establishes that the patron's circle materially reproduced a chosen work. It also records comparison, which may have been intended to improve accuracy. Patronage and careful preservation can operate together.

The next step would be to identify whether politically consequential variants occur in that work's witnesses. A copying notice supplies neither a confession of manipulation nor immunity from it. Its value lies in making the people and dates recoverable.

The project's earlier argument about *al-Kāfī* applies directly. A respected author's life ends; the book continues through readers with their own choices. Those choices include correction and preservation as well as expansion. Assessing the received text requires evidence about that later life.

For *Musnad Zayd*, the manuscript questions should be stated report by report. Does a disputed ruling occur in an independently transmitted early quotation? Does its chain change? Does it enter the main text from a margin? Can two witnesses be shown to share an exemplar? The date of an individual manuscript is only one part of the answer.

The prefatory account in the Beirut *Musnad* reprint attributes its chapter arrangement to al-Ḥusayn b. Yaḥyā al-Daylamī in 1201 AH and describes an earlier division into six parts. [ZF-Z10] This is an editorial statement to verify against witnesses. It makes comparison of modern chapter order with another legal book particularly unsafe as a stand-alone proof of medieval dependence.

A published accusation against Jaʿfar

Saeed Mohd H. al-Marri's 2023 article, "Musnad Zaid bin Ali between Narration and Composition," advances a direct fabrication thesis. Its English abstract reports twelve successive layers of solitary transmission and alleged absence of the book from important earlier Zaydi circles. The author identifies Qāḍī Jaʿfar as the fabricator. [ZF-Z04]

The accusation changes the research agenda because it names an agent and specifies evidentiary claims. It must be evaluated as an argument rather than repeated as a verdict. The Arabic PDF's machine-extracted text was badly corrupted in this pass, and page rendering failed. I have verified

the abstract and bibliographic record; I have not independently audited the paper's twelve-layer reconstruction.

A chain with repeated single transmitters deserves attention, especially when its content claims broad communal authority. Yet a single surviving route can arise through loss as well as invention. To identify fabrication, one must establish more than the absence of redundant copies in the surviving record.

The silence argument also needs a precise object. An earlier scholar may know individual reports while lacking the later collection as a book. He may use a different title or arrangement. A source can quote something under Zayd's name without proving that the quotation came from the recension now called his *Musnad*.

The rival possibilities should remain separate. Jaʿfar might have transmitted an old collection. He might have circulated a reorganized compilation of older reports. An expanded version could contain both inherited material and later additions. Full fabrication would be another explanation. Distinguishing them requires the distribution of actual readings.

Modern Zaydi discussion offers a further control: the introduction reproduced at Zaydi Info treats al-Hādī as transmitting some material also associated with the *Musnad* while disagreeing with other rulings attributed to Zayd. [ZF-Z11] That observation complicates a simple story in which all relevant legal material first appeared in the twelfth century. It also leaves the integrity of the complete received book open.

Sectarian narrator criticism cannot settle the question by itself. A hostile evaluation of Abū Khālid needs its own grounds and history. A favorable evaluation within the receiving community likewise requires examination. Our earlier *al-Kāfī* work refused to disqualify Ismāʿīl ibn Jaʿfar merely because a later Twelver scheme rejected his succession. The same symmetry applies here. [ZF-A01]

Childhood marriage and the continuing right to refuse

The project's earlier dossier recorded a cluster in the *Majmūʿ/Musnad*: consultation of the previously married woman, a father's authority over a minor's marriage, and the continuing force of that arrangement after maturity. Its central wording is:

إذا زوج الرجل ابنته وهي صغيرة ثم بلغت تم ذلك عليها وليس لها أن تأبى

A classical reader can reconcile the provisions through a paternal exception. Consultation governs some cases, while an earlier valid act of guardianship binds the child. The rules therefore need not be formally contradictory within the system that accepts that exception.

Our objection concerns the legitimacy of the exception. Authority exercised during dependency should be judged through its protective purpose. When the dependent person becomes capable of

making an informed decision, the guardian's earlier act cannot simply be treated as the person's own assent to a continuing intimate covenant.

The defender can invoke family welfare, stability, and the costs of dissolving arrangements. Those are interests to evaluate. They do not establish that the person most directly bound by the covenant must permanently bear the cost of an agreement made before she could meaningfully choose it.

The distinction between a marriage contract and consummation is important, as is the distinction between a contract's historical recognition and its moral validity under our uṣūl. Refusing a coercive continuation does not require pretending that early jurists lacked a coherent technical account of guardianship. Their account is precisely what must be assessed.

Qur'an 4:6 directly concerns orphan property and demonstrated judgment. Our extension of its protective logic to personal covenant is an explicit normative argument. Qur'an 4:19 and 2:232 contribute to the project's larger treatment of agency within their respective contexts. The present interpretation is not presented as an undisputed classical reading. [ZF-Q01; ZF-A01]

Decision: reject the permanent loss of refusal as binding law under this project's uṣūl. Preserve the historical question of how the proposition entered the received collection.

This decision also limits the political accusation. A rule can embody inherited patriarchal assumptions without having been planted by a particular court scholar. Demonstrating that it appears in an allegedly Alid corpus establishes the presence of the problem. Dating its transmission establishes where a political explanation might begin.

Liability below nine and the inference above nine

The inherited dossier also records:

من وطئ جارية لأقل من تسع سنين فهو ضامن

"Whoever has intercourse with a girl younger than nine is liable." The short formulation specifies liability without defining all its consequences. *Jāriya* does not, by itself, decide whether the female is enslaved. [ZF-A04]

Its protective content is narrow. A later interpreter might read the threshold as a reason to remove liability once the girl reaches nine. The text alone does not establish every premise required for that inference. In particular, it does not demonstrate willingness, adequate capacity, or the absence of injury.

Our reassessment retains accountability for harm and rejects the use of this short report as a comprehensive age-based permission. The number's legal history remains a separate issue. A shared threshold across collections can signal an older convention, a common source, later borrowing, or convergence. Selecting one explanation requires comparison of the actual transmission families.

For the "psyop" thesis, the critical result would be a distinctive cluster of changes entering witnesses through a politically connected route. An isolated resemblance supplies a target. It does not identify the author of the rule.

The comparison should include sources unattractive to the thesis. If the same convention is widespread in earlier legal material from several communities, a later Zaydi editor's adoption becomes different from invention. The historical moral problem can remain severe even after the particular fabrication allegation loses force.

Tarāwīḥ and the proposed inheritance of ʿUmaric precedent

The Zaydi Info introduction places two attributed positions beside each other. Its *Musnad* passage has ʿAlī directing a twenty-unit congregational Ramadan prayer. Its citations from Zaydi authorities report opposition to that practice, including a claim of family consensus. [ZF-Z11]

This gives the proposed "ʿUmar through the back door" inquiry a specific ritual case. The Sunni report in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2010 portrays ʿUmar organizing Ramadan worshipers under one reciter and approving the arrangement. [ZF-Z12] Comparison should establish precisely which features are shared: congregational organization, the stated number, or the attributed endorsement.

Several questions then become tractable. Is the family-consensus claim earlier than the surviving endorsement? Does either witness depend on the other's polemic? Can the material be placed within a broader Kufan discussion? Does the same collection elsewhere preserve disagreements between ʿAlī and ʿUmar?

The presence of an endorsement under ʿAlī's name could allow a practice associated with another authority to circulate within an Alid tradition. That is a possible mechanism of normative transfer. Demonstrating the mechanism in this case still requires the history of the wording and its use.

Our ethical assessment also differs from the marriage case. A dispute about voluntary congregational worship does not automatically reproduce the injury of an irrevocably imposed personal covenant. Historical attribution, ritual authorization, and actual harm require separate judgments.

Decision: suspend certainty about the conflicting attributions; investigate the endorsement as a concrete case of legal transfer. Do not infer a Muʿtazili author from resemblance alone.

Controls from sale and purification

The same modern Zaydi comparison identifies disagreement over the sale of an *umm walad*, an enslaved woman who has borne her owner a child. It also contrasts rulings about laughter during prayer invalidating ablution. [ZF-Z11]

The first case belongs in the examination of property claims over persons. A prohibition on one category of sale constrains an owner's power within a system that still recognizes slavery. Its humane direction can be assessed without converting it into a claim that the jurist abolished the institution.

The second supplies a useful control because it is comparatively remote from the central political hypothesis. If a collection repeatedly tracks a regional legal tradition in such details, shared juristic inheritance becomes a serious explanation for its profile. Selecting only the morally troubling passages would exaggerate the appearance of a targeted intervention.

A controlled study should therefore code passages before assigning causes. It should include ritual details and financial regulations alongside coercive household rules. The historian can then ask whether politically advantageous material has a distinct transmission pattern or whether it travels with a wider legal package.

Variation itself is informative. A recipient may accept theology from one school and law from another. A jurist can preserve a report for discussion while declining to rule by it. The claim that "Zaydi fiqh" was made by a single category of theologians would conceal these choices.

Our provisional decisions remain narrow. Retain objections to treating a person as an indefinitely transferable object. Suspend the historical attribution of disputed rulings pending comparison. Avoid turning a difference over ritual purification into proof of dishonesty.

Zakat, consensus, and the resources of dissent

The financial dimension can connect textual authority to observable institutional effects. A community that distributes zakāt through its own teachers and charitable networks has resources that do not depend entirely on recognition by a central ruler. The historical Muṭarrifi material makes this a concrete field for inquiry. [ZF-Z08]

Qur'an 9:60 names recipients of the alms. It does not, in that verse alone, settle every institutional question about collecting or allocating them. [ZF-Q02] A jurist arguing that one authority must control distribution therefore needs an account of the office, its responsibilities, and the limits on its discretion.

Under our uṣūl, the interests of eligible recipients remain relevant when institutions claim to serve them. A declaration of public welfare cannot make those people disappear from the assessment. If funds are redirected into maintaining the authority that claims to interpret welfare, we must ask what protects the original obligation.

This suggests a precise historical test. Locate texts on payment to an Imam, local distribution, and withholding during contested rule. Establish whether disagreement was treated as a legal error,

culpable rebellion, or exclusion from the community. Then compare those classifications with actual confiscation or redistribution where records survive.

The present chapter has not completed that case series. It identifies a stronger research target than a vague accusation that rationalists "pacified" everyone. The potential mechanism is control over the institutions through which religious independence can be sustained.

A successful political program may combine sincere theological argument with coercion. Its victims' theological errors, if established, still leave the justification for coercion to be shown. The moral question cannot be settled solely by identifying the school that won the dispute.

Rationalism under the project's own rule

The project values divine justice and responsible agency. That commitment makes the rationalist material an intellectual resource. It also makes the political use of rationalist authority answerable to the same standard.

An argument that God cannot justly punish a person for an act over which the person had no responsibility should prompt scrutiny when a guardian binds someone before she can choose. The two questions are not identical. Their relationship arises through the demand that responsibility be connected to meaningful agency.

Likewise, an insistence on inspecting evidence should apply when a report carries the name of a favored ancestor. A chain can be revered and still require examination. The institutional cost of questioning it does not alter the historical evidence.

The bounded theophany developed in *Finding Injil* and the preceding chapter also provides an ethical comparison. A servant may convey guidance while remaining accountable for the authority exercised through that role. The argument does not depend on applying a mystical title to a jurist. It concerns the common inference from privileged access to immunity from challenge. [ZF-A02]

In the present material, the important transformation occurs through membership and consensus. A claim about who counts as a believer can determine whose legal objection survives. The greater the consequence of exclusion, the more demanding the justification must be.

There is no reason to assume that someone who lost court favor is therefore insincere, or that someone who gained a new patron is therefore reliable. Those are biographical conditions for investigation. The legal propositions and transmission records must bear the explanatory weight.

What would establish an operation?

The strongest version of the project's hypothesis concerns a deliberate program to reshape the community's understanding of legitimate authority. Such a program can use authentic books selectively. Fabrication is one possible technique, not a prerequisite for institutional influence.

For a historical finding of deliberate manipulation, we would need evidence linking decisions to aims. A patron's commission to disseminate a curriculum establishes purposeful intervention in education. A text excluding designated dissenters establishes an available legal mechanism. A campaign destroying rival libraries establishes coercion and changes the archive. Showing that those elements formed a particular coordinated operation requires connecting the actors and acts at their actual dates.

The claim of Abbasid direction is more specific still. The documented Yemeni patrons have their own interests. A distant government's benefit cannot substitute for evidence that it commissioned or controlled the work. The chapter therefore preserves that hypothesis as an unestablished agent-level claim.

The proposed manufacture of *Musnad Zayd* likewise requires its own test. A securely dated earlier witness containing the disputed sequence could defeat a late-composition model for that sequence. A common source behind supposed independent witnesses would weaken apparent corroboration. An altered attribution or a marginal addition entering the main text would provide a concrete recensional mechanism.

A result can strengthen one part of *Dark Imams* while weakening another. Evidence of early coercive law would shift attention toward the assumptions of the early legal community. Evidence of late expansion would sharpen the inquiry into its transmitters. Stable wording combined with altered legal use would move the analysis to interpretation and enforcement.

The current evidence supports a substantial account of politically directed teaching and the distribution of authority within Zaydi scholarship. It supplies a specific, testable fabrication allegation. It also reveals legal resources that can be turned against intellectual closure, including a requirement that capable scholars inspect the proof themselves.

The draft's next textual unit should be the complete consensus chapter in both lifetime witnesses, collated with al-Jishumī's source. It should record how the exclusions are formulated and whether later readers name actual opponents when applying them. That comparison can identify which part of the mechanism was inherited, which part was adapted, and which consequences belonged to a later political setting.

12 · Making ʿAlī Say It

Musnad Zayd, the four-source formula, and the political use of an ancestor

The central passage has been located in the received Arabic *Musnad Zayd*, in the chapter on adjudication, printed page 292 of the Beirut text. A numbered edition identifies it as report 393. The investigation compares its wording with al-Shāfiʿī's *Risāla* and a judicial maxim attributed to Ibn Masʿūd. It then follows the passage into works associated with Qāḍī Jaʿfar and Imam Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān. These are direct textual findings, subject to the witness limitations recorded in the source register. [MZ-M01; MZ-M02; MZ-M03; MZ-M04; MZ-M05; MZ-M06]

The historical-critical inquiry asks who transmitted and authorized these words. The project's uṣūl separately assess what authority the words should possess. A criticism of a coercive rule does not identify its composer. A chain terminating in ʿAlī's name does not settle the date of the surviving book. This edition supplies clause-specific judgments and competing historical explanations; it does not claim to have completed a manuscript stemma or an independent evaluation of every transmitter.

An ancestor explains the sources of law

The chapter on adjudication makes ʿAlī explain how judgment should proceed when a case lacks an immediately available answer. Its sequence begins with God's Book, passes to the Messenger's teaching, and then invokes the agreement of the righteous. The Imam subsequently exercises judgment through careful comparison. The Muslim judge receives the same competence in the relevant matter. [MZ-M01]

The most revealing clauses are:

ثم ما أجمع عليه الصالحون ... واعتبر وقاس الأمور بعضها ببعض ... ولقاضي المسلمين من ذلك ما لإمامهم

The clauses refer respectively to the agreement of the righteous, comparison of cases, and the judge's possession of the Imam's relevant adjudicative competence. The full report links these clauses through a procedure for dealing with cases absent from the preceding authorities. Its route is the collection's familiar family chain: Zayd, his father, his grandfather, and ʿAlī. [MZ-M01]

This is a substantial attribution. A later jurist who accepts it can say that an Alid ancestor already authorized the structure of adjudication he practices. The authority of a revered person has become authority for a method. The method can then authorize decisions that the early person never encountered.

The resemblance to the standard four-source presentation of Sunni legal theory deserves a close comparison. Al-Shāfiʿī's *Risāla*, in its fifth discussion of *bayān*, explicitly names:

في الكتاب، أو السنة، أو الإجماع، أو القياس

The surrounding argument concerns how a ruling receives knowledge-based justification. His treatment of analogy relates a new question to an established indication, including scriptural examples of inference. The familiar list is therefore present in his own received text. [MZ-M02]

The *Musnad* also presents a four-stage structure. Yet it does something more particular with the third and fourth stages. The third invokes a constituency described as righteous. The fourth moves through the Imam to an ordinary Muslim judge. Those details deserve their own history. Calling the passage "the Shāfiʿī formula on ʿAlī's lips" identifies a real resemblance while leaving the direction and circumstances of transmission to be established.

Our first finding is consequently exact: the received *Musnad* attributes to ʿAlī a hierarchy of legal recourse that includes communal agreement and explicit analogical comparison. Its ending makes that procedure available to judges. The book thereby supplies a retrospectively Alid authorization for a developed judicial practice. Whether this authorization records early teaching, preserves a shared maxim, or incorporates later legal theory is the question to be investigated.

A closer comparison changes the dating problem

A report in al-Nasāʾī, numbered 5397, attributes a similar progression to Ibn Masʿūd. Judgment begins with scripture, then follows the Prophet's judgments. The next stage consults what righteous people have judged; when those resources yield no answer, the adjudicator exercises his own considered opinion. Its chain passes through al-Aʿmash and ʿUmāra ibn ʿUmayr to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Yazīd. The report ends at Ibn Masʿūd. [MZ-M03]

This comparator matters because its language of the righteous is closer to the *Musnad* than an abstract textbook list would suggest. The verbal distinction is also meaningful. Prior judgments by righteous people can supply precedent without requiring universal agreement among them. The *Musnad* formulation makes their agreement part of the procedure. Its explicit comparison of cases and final transfer of competence to the judge add further features.

The passages therefore invite a family-level comparison. One text may develop an existing judicial maxim. Several texts may draw on a shared environment of legal reasoning. A later transmitter may give an established sequence a more authoritative speaker. Alternatively, the earliest common form could already have included the elements that later authors systematized.

The surviving dates do not decide among these possibilities. Ibn Masʿūd's early lifetime is the date of the attributed speaker. Al-Nasāʾī, who died in 303 AH / 915 CE, supplies a later collection witness. Likewise, ʿAlī's death in 40 AH and Zayd's death in 122 AH cannot by themselves date every sentence now transmitted under their names. Al-Shāfiʿī's death in 204 AH supplies an important

chronological marker for his received argument; it supplies no automatic date of invention for every technique he discusses. [MZ-M01; MZ-M02; MZ-M03; MZ-M17]

An anachronism argument needs a feature whose emergence can be placed later than the alleged utterance. The words "Book" and "Sunnah" are too general for that work. Reasoning by comparison is also broader than a particular school's theory of *qiyās*. A developed account of whose agreement binds whom would be more discriminating. So would a distinctive sequence of wording shared with a securely dated later source.

The appended competence clause is especially promising. It asks the reader to move from an Imam's judgment to a Muslim judge's institutional authority. A comparison should record whether that clause appears in earlier versions of the maxim, whether it circulates independently, and whether later jurists quote it when defending their jurisdiction. Its history could differ from the history of the opening sequence.

No early manuscript containing this exact *Musnad* passage has been independently examined for the present edition. We have established its wording in a received printed text and its presence in named later works. The most useful chronological question is now sharply bounded: how early can the complete sequence, including the final clause, be shown to circulate?

The same page supplies a Shāfiʿī counterexample

Immediately before the four-stage maxim, the *Musnad* records a question to Zayd about deciding a case through one witness together with an oath. The answer refuses that procedure and invokes the scriptural witness requirement. [MZ-M01]

Al-Shāfiʿī, in the relevant sections of *al-Umm*, defends judgment through a witness and an oath in appropriate property claims. His discussion directly engages the objection that the procedure conflicts with the Qur'anic specification of witnesses. [MZ-M04]

That juxtaposition is an unusually good control. The received collection can resemble al-Shāfiʿī's architecture of legal reasoning while disagreeing with a recognizable Shāfiʿī rule on the same page. A hypothesis of wholesale transcription from a Shāfiʿī manual becomes less economical. A hypothesis of selective insertion remains possible, as does inheritance from a wider legal environment.

This distinction improves the argument about manipulation. A politically useful editor would have no obligation to reproduce one school's jurisprudence consistently. He could adopt a methodological authorization while preserving regional rulings familiar to his readers. Such selectivity would produce an uneven legal profile. The historian must establish the unevenness before assigning it an agent.

The witness-and-oath example also exposes a danger in counting doctrinal resemblance. If we collect only the four-source maxim, the text appears Shāfiʿī. If we collect only the immediately preceding ruling, it appears opposed to Shāfiʿī adjudication. A collection's profile requires a set of independently chosen questions. Evidence selected solely because it fits the anticipated conclusion will exaggerate coherence.

A controlled comparison would include ordinary ritual details alongside matters of judicial office. It would ask whether the collection's distinctive vocabulary clusters around passages that authorize later institutions. It would also look for mundane copying patterns: repeated omissions, common marginal glosses, and sequences inherited from an identifiable source. Political intervention becomes more specific when it can be connected with those features.

For our uṣūl, the substantive disagreement over evidentiary procedure remains a separate matter. The present chapter has not adjudicated the full law of proof in financial disputes. Its task is to use the disagreement as a historical control on the proposed Shāfiʿī genealogy.

The Umayyad question that the transmitter refused

Hostile representations of ʿAlī have an identifiable source history. A particularly valuable episode survives in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 4142. Al-Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik asks al-Zuhrī whether he has heard that ʿAlī participated in the slander of ʿĀʾisha. Al-Zuhrī answers in the negative and gives contrary testimony. The report also preserves discussion of the wording used to describe ʿAlī's position. [MZ-M07]

The episode provides evidence for a caliphal setting in which a damaging allegation about ʿAlī was raised and resisted. It gives the investigation a concrete interaction to examine. A fuller accusation that the caliph commissioned forged reports requires further evidence about what he ordered and what transmitters subsequently produced.

The distinction between the allegation and its transmission is essential. Bukhārī preserves the refusal. A reader who describes his collection as a uniformly anti-Alid enterprise would discard the very countertestimony that establishes this case. The historical sources can preserve political pressure and resistance to that pressure within the same received tradition.

A related comparison comes from *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2404d. Muʿāwiya asks Saʿd why he refrains from abusing Abū Turāb. Saʿd responds by recalling Prophetic commendations of ʿAlī. The Arabic question and the refusal are the pertinent elements; some English renderings add an administrative setting beyond what the opening words alone establish. [MZ-M08]

These reports justify studying anti-Alid reputation-making as a historical problem. They also require a discriminating use of the term *naṣb*. In this chapter it identifies hostility toward ʿAlī and his

household where the evidence supports that description. It is not an alternative name for Sunni scholarship, nor a conclusion to attach to every transmitter of an uncomfortable report.

An author's intention, a report's literary effect, and a later reader's use can diverge. A narrator may preserve a damaging story because he believes it true. Another may adapt the story to elevate a rival authority. A later preacher may repeat it without recognizing its original polemical setting. A history of reputation needs to follow those stages individually.

Nebil Husayn's *Opposing the Imam* supplies a modern scholarly framework for examining hostility toward ʿAlī and its later management in Sunni memory. The publisher's chapter summaries identify processes of reinterpretation and rehabilitation. The full argument requires reading the book itself; this chapter relies on the primary episodes above for its substantive claims. [MZ-M15]

The relevance to *Musnad Zayd* is methodological. The existence of documented hostility establishes a possible environment for hostile attribution. It cannot identify every report preserved by a later Alid community as an imported attack. That further conclusion must be made report by report.

Barīra and the movement from story to permission

The account that ʿAlī severely beat Barīra during the investigation of the slander of ʿĀʾisha presents a different problem. An Islamweb fatwa from 2013 reproduces the allegation from the sīra tradition, cites al-Albānī's favorable judgment on the larger narrative, and explains the beating as a means of obtaining truthful testimony. Its appeal to Ibn Isḥāq through Ibn Hishām gives us a specific received narrative to collate. [MZ-M09]

The corresponding consultation in Bukhārī 4141 includes questioning the servant and her favorable testimony. The beating clause is absent from that presentation. That is a visible textual difference; it leaves open the date and direction of the difference. [MZ-M10]

The modern ruling is independently important as reception evidence. A description of conduct attributed to a revered person becomes a justification for a procedure. The moral reputation of the actor supports the procedure, while the procedure's acceptance makes the story seem less troubling. The resulting circle can operate without any modern participant inventing a word of the narrative.

Under the project's uṣūl, coercion against a person being questioned needs justification from accountable principles. The revered name does not create an exemption. Physical pressure also creates an obvious problem for the reliability of testimony: the witness has an additional reason to say what the questioner appears to want. The application of force cannot be justified simply by naming truth as the objective.

The historical question must nevertheless remain open to unfavorable findings. We cannot protect ʿAlī's reputation by declaring every troubling attribution impossible in advance. That procedure would make a preferred image of the Imam the criterion of historical truth. Our judgment instead

rejects the proposed authorization of coercive questioning while leaving the event's reconstruction to source criticism.

The decisive dossier would collate the individual clause across the sīra witnesses, the larger slander narrative, and its earliest quotations. A favorable judgment on the entire story does not eliminate the need to examine a particular sentence that differs between versions. Here the scope of authentication matters as much as the adjective attached to it.

For the "psyop" hypothesis, this case shows how a damaging portrayal could become useful law in a community that honors the portrayed person. The present evidence establishes that transformation in modern reception. It has not identified the person who first introduced the beating clause or proved that anti-Alid hostility supplied that person's purpose.

The burning report changes its effect when it changes setting

The *Musnad*, in its chapter on the sorcerer and the *zindīq*, attributes to ʿAlī the burning of people described as *zanādiqa* from the Sawād. It gives the attribution in a compressed form through the family chain. [MZ-M01]

Bukhārī 3017 presents a related event through ʿIkrima, followed by Ibn ʿAbbās's disagreement with the use of fire. Ibn ʿAbbās invokes a Prophetic restriction on that punishment while maintaining that the people should have been killed by another means. [MZ-M11]

The fuller narrative can place Ibn ʿAbbās in the position of correcting ʿAlī through superior access to a Prophetic rule. In a legal chapter focused on punishing religious deviation, the short form can instead make ʿAlī an exemplary enforcer. These effects are compatible with circulation of related material across communities whose valuations differ.

One must therefore identify what was transferred. An episode could survive while a corrective speech disappears. The name assigned to the victims could change the legal category. A compiler could retain a brief summary whose original context readers no longer see. Each alteration affects how the report functions without necessarily requiring a new underlying event.

A securely reconstructed transmission family would be needed to establish the direction. The current texts alone do not tell us whether the shorter form is an abbreviation, whether the corrective dialogue is an expansion, or whether both descend from another form. The names of the books offer no shortcut through that problem.

Our normative judgment is clear at the level relevant here. The report cannot authorize burning people because an authority calls them heretics. A claim to protect religion leaves the treatment of persons answerable to justice. The alternative punishment in Ibn ʿAbbās's response also requires its own legal and ethical examination; rejecting fire does not validate every other coercive inference in the narrative.

This example is especially useful because it distinguishes reputational damage from legal incorporation. The same attributed action can discredit a figure in one argumentative setting and enlarge his punitive authority in another. The received *Musnad* must be studied in the setting it actually provides.

A legal attribution can absorb an accusation

The collection's treatment of an *umm walad*, an enslaved woman who has borne a child to her owner, supplies another uncomfortable case. At printed pages 275–276, it permits sale in specified circumstances and tells a story in which a woman is transferred successively between brothers, each fathering a child. The permissions are placed under ʿAlī's name. [MZ-M01]

Our earlier Zaydi chapter noted that a modern internal comparison identifies disagreement between this material and positions associated with al-Hādī. The new direct reading confirms that the received *Musnad* contains the substantive permissions at issue. [MZ-M12]

The objection under our uṣūl concerns the conversion of a person's intimate and reproductive life into the exercise of others' ownership claims. The presence of the ruling under an Alid chain does not remove that objection. Nor can a later defender settle it by observing that other jurists accepted related property categories.

The explanation of the attribution is more difficult. A compiler working within slavery's legal assumptions could present the ruling as ordinary jurisprudence. A hostile narrator could intend it to damage ʿAlī. A later community could absorb the account while losing any earlier hostile intention. The same received text is compatible with all those histories until its transmission is reconstructed.

This is where a historical-critical treatment must resist both sentimental protection and automatic accusation. The court's favored narrative, the family's favored narrative, and our preferred ethical portrait all remain subject to examination. Our confidence that a rule is unjust cannot be converted into confidence about the person who manufactured it.

A useful finding would be a change of named authority across early witnesses. A ruling first assigned to another jurist and later assigned to ʿAlī would supply a concrete transfer. A distinctive narrative addition found only in a politically connected recension would supply a different mechanism. Broad similarity to a practice associated with an opposing school supplies a research target, with its direction still unresolved.

The material also raises a question about what reception can do to memory. Once a community accepts the collection as ancestral teaching, criticism of the rule can sound like criticism of its ancestor. That can make the rule harder to question than it would have been under a contemporary jurist's name. The authority lies partly in the attribution's position in the community's moral imagination.

Making ʿAlī say it is a powerful form of authorization. A legal proposition becomes harder to contest when a reader is asked to receive it as the speech of a beloved ancestor. The danger can arise from an invented attribution, from a genuine old report pressed into a new jurisdiction, or from a later gloss mistaken for ancestral instruction. This chapter asks which mechanism the evidence supports in each instance. A theory of manipulation must remain as inspectable as the inherited text it challenges.

The book has a transmission outside its hadiths

The short family chain printed inside the reports is only one component of the received collection. The opening transmission in the inspected Beirut-based OpenITI text runs through ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Isḥāq, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Nakhaʿī, Sulaymān ibn Ibrāhīm, Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, Ibrāhīm ibn al-Zibriqān, and Abū Khālid al-Wāsiṭī before reaching Zayd. [MZ-M01]

The earlier project dossier also records a concluding notice about differently arranged material and a claim concerning the complete book's transmission through Ibrāhīm. The prefatory account in a modern reprint assigns a later rearrangement to al-Ḥusayn ibn Yaḥyā al-Daylamī in 1201 AH. Those notices are carried forward here as identified transmission and editorial claims; the manuscript witnesses behind them have not been collated for this edition. [MZ-M18]

These layers give the historian several different objects. An individual ruling can circulate before the collection containing it. A book can retain old reports while gaining a new order. A compiler can introduce connective language that makes scattered instructions look like a systematic legal program. A later editor can alter chapter headings without changing a hadith's words.

The four-stage passage needs to be followed through those possibilities. Its opening could be an old judicial maxim while its final sentence is a later institutional gloss. The whole could have circulated early under another name. An old collection could be newly authorized through a problematic book-isnād. A claim that all these possibilities amount to the same form of fabrication would erase the differences the evidence can reveal.

The modern arrangement is particularly relevant to arguments based on resemblance between books. Two legal compilations arranged under familiar headings may look closer than their earlier forms did. A resemblance in chapter sequence carries less dating force once a known later editor has reorganized the material. Exact wording within a report remains a stronger target.

The title *Musnad Zayd* likewise establishes an attribution in a book tradition. It does not make Zayd the author of every present heading, connective phrase, or editorial note. A critical edition must specify the layer to which each statement belongs. That discipline will matter again in the next chapter, where several Zaydi collections combine old reports with openly acknowledged later arrangement.

The twelfth-century circle quotes the rule

The four-stage maxim appears in Qāḍī Jaʿfar's received *Sharḥ Nukat al-ʿibādāt*, printed page 299, in its discussion of judicial conduct. It includes the righteous-agreement stage and the judge's relevant competence. [MZ-M05]

It also appears as report 2304 in Imam Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān's *Uṣūl al-aḥkām*. The displayed text introduces it through Zayd's ancestors to ʿAlī. The page's modern apparatus must be distinguished from the authorial text; an adjacent footnote cannot establish that the medieval author used the present *Musnad* title or edition. [MZ-M06]

These are significant reception findings. Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān died in 566 AH / 1170–71 CE; Jaʿfar died in 573 AH / 1177–78 CE. The maxim is present in the works of a scholar and a ruler already central to the project's account of imported learning and institutional authority. It had an identifiable place in their legal world as represented by the received texts.

The two occurrences are also connected. Counting them as wholly independent confirmations of the reported early utterance would inflate the evidence. A teacher and patron can share books, arguments, and textual resources. What their agreement demonstrates most directly is the maxim's circulation within a consequential scholarly environment.

The earlier chapter established a second relevant feature of Jaʿfar's legal theory: the treatment of who qualifies to count toward consensus. Placing that discussion beside the *Musnad* maxim reveals a potential institutional combination. One text gives authority to the agreement of the righteous. Another determines which interpreters may lose standing in the calculation. [MZ-M18]

That combination creates a serious question about the authorization of dissent. A jurist can retain an ideal of reasoned judgment while narrowing the set of reasoners whose objections count. If the school then cites ancestral teaching to validate the resulting agreement, a contest over membership becomes a contest over what the ancestor is understood to authorize.

We have not located a passage in which Jaʿfar explicitly says that he composed report 393 for this purpose. We also have not connected this particular report to a specific coercive judgment against a named Muṭarrifi. Those are agent-level and application-level claims. The received juxtaposition gives us a more precise investigation than an accusation directed indiscriminately at all Muʿtazili scholarship.

A strong next comparison would examine whether *Sharḥ Nukat al-ʿibādāt*, *Uṣūl al-aḥkām*, and the *Musnad* preserve identical rare readings in the maxim. A shared error could indicate dependence. A distinctive final clause that appears first in one branch would help locate an expansion. The existence of lifetime witnesses to Jaʿfar's other works cannot automatically date the precise wording in these particular books.

The published fabrication accusation

Saeed al-Marri's 2023 article explicitly accuses Qāḍī Jaʿfar of fabricating the received attribution of *Musnad Zayd*. Its abstract argues from successive solitary transmission and the alleged absence of the book from earlier circles that would be expected to know it. It names twelve layers of solitary transmission and identifies Jaʿfar as the decisive point of emergence. [MZ-M13]

A new bibliographic finding supplies a necessary constraint. Al-Najāshī, who died in 450 AH / 1058 CE, records Abū Khālid ʿAmr ibn Khālid al-Wāsiṭī as a transmitter from Zayd and attributes a large book to him, transmitted by Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim and others. Entry 771 also gives al-Najāshī's route to that book. The received notice predates Jaʿfar's activity by about a century. [MZ-M19]

The notice establishes an earlier bibliographic claim concerning an Abū Khālid book. It does not identify the wording of report 393 or demonstrate identity with every component of the present *Musnad*. A later assembly or expansion could use an already known book-attribution. A hypothesis that Jaʿfar invented the entire idea of an Abū Khālid collection must, however, account for this earlier notice.

Because the full al-Marri article has not been audited, I cannot say whether its author discusses this witness or distinguishes the older book from the received collection. That distinction now belongs at the center of the test. The proposed intervention has to be located at the level of an identifiable recension, attribution, or clause.

The accusation can now be tested against a more differentiated source map. Earlier knowledge of a Zayd report would challenge the claim that its content was invented in the twelfth century. It would leave open the assembly of those reports into a later book. Earlier knowledge of a recognizably ordered collection would challenge a later whole-book composition thesis more directly. An earlier quotation of the complete four-stage maxim would bear especially on the proposed dating of report 393.

A serious absence argument also needs an expected-use model. A legal author who argues the relevant doctrine and surveys rival proofs is a stronger silence witness than an author discussing another subject. Several later works deriving their information from one lost source cannot be counted as several independent absences. The titles used for a collection may change across its reception.

Repeated solitary transmission raises a further problem of survival. The extant record can reduce a formerly wider circulation to one accessible route. A claimant must distinguish that result from an artificial pedigree manufactured to authorize a newly assembled book. The distinction requires both external evidence and examination of the route's actual wording.

Al-Marri's hypothesis therefore remains in the chapter as a named scholarly accusation. It has gained concrete targets from the current work. It has not become our settled historical finding. The

more precise alternatives are old material with late authentication, local expansion of an inherited corpus, and deliberate construction of the book's claimed antiquity.

What would make this a psychological operation?

The project uses "psyop" for the strongest version of its hypothesis: a purposeful intervention that misrepresents the source of religious teaching so that a target community will accept a politically useful arrangement. The historical term is modern. Its usefulness depends on specifying the proposed action and the people involved.

In the present case, the proposed message is that an ancestral Imam already authorized a developed system of legal proof and the judge's use of it. The target audience is a community for whom an Alid attribution carries authority. The institutional beneficiaries could include judges and patrons seeking to stabilize their jurisdiction. These are proposed components of a mechanism, not findings about a completed covert commission.

The mechanism does not require every report in the book to be false. A largely inherited collection could carry a small number of consequential additions. The surrounding authentic material would make those additions easier to accept. Conversely, a book whose transmission is problematic could still preserve many genuinely early reports. Historical authentication must operate below the level of a single verdict on the title.

The case for deliberate attribution becomes stronger if an earlier form assigns the teaching to someone else, if a later witness changes the speaker, and if the change occurs in a network that uses it to claim authority. The case becomes stronger again when the actors' instructions or correspondence identify the desired effect. Benefit alone supplies an incomplete explanation of intention.

The covert-state variant adds another requirement. A Yemeni Imam's patronage and a scholar's Muʿtazili education do not establish Abbasid command. The government said to direct the intervention must be connected to its agents by evidence. An Abbasid ruler and a Zaydi ruler might independently find similar mechanisms useful while opposing each other politically.

The anti-Alid variant requires its own proof of purpose. A report can make ʿAlī authorize a rule the present project condemns, while its transmitter sincerely regards the rule as a virtue. The hypothesis of malicious slander needs evidence that the damaging representation was intended as damage in the relevant setting. A history of hostile stories can supply comparators; it cannot supply the intention of an unidentified compiler.

This is why the exact four-source attribution is more productive than a global suspicion about the book. It names a consequential message and makes its later reception recoverable. Its strongest

political feature is the extension of adjudicative competence. The dating inquiry can focus on that feature rather than treating every line of the *Musnad* as equally likely to belong to one campaign.

The authority that remains under our uṣūl

Several propositions in the adjudication chapter can be retained on their merits. A judge should hear both parties. Anger and gifts from a litigant create obvious risks to judgment. A decision recognized as erroneous must be corrected. These are present near the four-stage maxim in the received text. [MZ-M01]

Their presence is an important control on our interpretation of judicial power. The collection gives the judge competence while also describing constraints on its exercise. A reader who extracts only the competence clause would produce a more absolute doctrine than the immediate setting requires.

The agreement of righteous people also deserves a bounded assessment. Agreement can preserve experience and identify a settled practice. It becomes a stronger claim when a jurist treats it as immune to substantive objection. Under our uṣūl, the participants, scope, and evidence of the alleged agreement must remain inspectable. A disputed exclusion cannot itself create the certainty invoked to justify that exclusion.

Analogical reasoning receives a similarly conditional judgment. It can identify morally relevant similarities across cases. Its validity depends on the property being compared and the reason that property matters. An analogy that ignores consent or injury because two cases share a superficial legal label fails at the level of its inference. The word *qiyās* does not settle the quality of the reasoning performed beneath it.

The judge's office supplies authority to decide within an authorized jurisdiction. The office does not make every factual finding correct. The received text's own correction rule supports a view in which competence and corrigibility coexist. This is directly relevant to the wider book's concern with people who possess privileged knowledge while remaining accountable for its use.

We therefore restrict the four-stage report's binding force. Its attribution to ʿAlī is unresolved at the historical level examined here. Its reasonable procedural elements can be retained through evidence and argument. Its potential use as a self-authenticating authorization for a closed circle of jurists is rejected.

The manuscript inquiry should next recover the earliest independent witness to the final competence clause. That witness would bear directly on the claim that later judges placed their authority in an ancestor's mouth. Until it is identified, the chapter's strongest completed finding is the received attribution and its circulation within the twelfth-century institutional setting already under examination.

13 · The Archive Around Zayd

Other Zaydi collections and the test of independent memory

The argument about *Musnad Zayd* needs a wider archive. A report found elsewhere may preserve an earlier witness, repeat the same transmitter, or quote the received collection centuries later. This chapter distinguishes those relationships through selected primary passages and editorial notices. Its completed work is a comparative pilot, with an access record for every source. It does not present an exhaustive collation of the Zaydi hadith literature.

The principal collections examined are the *Amālī* associated with Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā, the received works of al-Hādī, the Zaydi *al-Jāmiʿ al-kāfī*, and Abū Ṭālib's *Amālī* as arranged in *Taysīr al-maṭālib*. Later sections examine the roles of *al-Amālī al-khamīsiyya*, *Uṣūl al-aḥkām*, *Shifāʾ al-awām*, and subsequent selection. Several of these works combine hadith with legal opinions, historical reports, or the compiler's own argument. Their genres remain visible throughout.

A second title is a question about transmission

The earlier chapter located a judicial maxim under ʿAlī's name in *Musnad Zayd*. The next historical question is where else the maxim occurs and what each occurrence establishes. A repeated sentence has a history. Its reproduction can preserve an early source, consolidate a later attribution, or testify only to the authority that a book had acquired by the time of quotation.

An external bibliographic witness already makes the problem concrete. Al-Najāshī's entry 771 records a large book of Abū Khālid, transmitted by Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim and others. Al-Najāshī's death in 450 AH places this received authorial notice before Jaʿfar's period. It establishes an earlier book claim while leaving the contents of that book to be identified. [ZC-C22]

The same problem applies to every controversial ruling in the collection. A report in the *Amālī* of Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā may arrive through Abū Khālid, the central transmitter in the *Musnad*'s own lower route. A later legal anthology may quote that *Amālī* and then cite the *Musnad* beside it. A modern selected collection may list both as supporting witnesses. The resulting display contains several titles while retaining one disputed point of origin.

Independence therefore needs an object. Two pupils can independently preserve a teacher's words while depending on that teacher for the earlier attribution. Two books can independently reproduce an older written source while offering little additional evidence about the source's author. Different names above a common node strengthen one part of the transmission without multiplying the evidence below it.

This is useful for a positive account of Zaydi scholarship. Its collections preserve more than one way of remembering the Alid inheritance. Some organize legal positions around jurists. Others preserve

dictation sessions containing sermons and historical narratives. A commentator can quote a report while criticizing its application. Treating this literature as a single undifferentiated canon would erase those operations.

It would also distort the political hypothesis. A patron can increase the visibility of a chosen book while opponents retain other corpora. A later anthology can record disagreements that earlier institutional narratives obscured. The archive contains resources for challenging monopolies of authority as well as resources for constructing them.

The inquiry developed here asks what each book does with a report. It begins with its named speaker, follows the route through which that speech is presented, and then examines the use made of it in the receiving work. The result is a map of relationships that can test the proposed manipulation of *Musnad Zayd* at the level of actual witnesses.

Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā's Amālī and the compiler behind the title

The collection commonly called *Amālī Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā* is also associated with the title *Kitāb al-ʿulūm*. Its principal organizing figure is Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr al-Murādī, who transmits material from Aḥmad and other teachers. Aḥmad died in 247 AH; Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr is commonly dated to around 290 AH. The title consequently needs to be read alongside the compiler's activity and the several kinds of speech inside the work. [ZC-C01; ZC-C02]

The inspected opening report gives a particularly useful route: Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr receives from Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā, who receives through Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlwān and Abū Khālid to Zayd and his ancestors. This is a different upper path from the received *Musnad* route through Ibrāhīm ibn al-Zibriqān. Both meet at Abū Khālid. [ZC-C02]

That relationship can strengthen the case that material attributed to Abū Khālid circulated through more than one recipient. It leaves the attribution from Abū Khālid to Zayd dependent at that point. The conclusion changes again if the later copies of the two collections can be shown to have borrowed from each other. A printed pair of chains is a starting datum for reconstructing independence.

Other passages in the *Amālī* proceed through different teachers. An inspected purification passage includes ʿUthmān ibn Abī Shayba and the al-Aʿmash–Ibrāhīm route, with a report concerning Salmān. It does not pass through Abū Khālid. [ZC-C03] The collection therefore offers a wider comparison than a duplicate of the *Musnad*'s family chain.

This matters for both praise and suspicion. A reader cannot invalidate the whole work by criticizing Abū Khālid. A defender cannot authenticate every report by pointing to an accepted teacher who appears elsewhere in the volume. The book's varied routes require individual assessment.

Muḥammad ibn Jamīl al-Maṭarī's modern Sunni critique illustrates that distinction from a hostile position. He accepts favorable earlier evaluations of Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr and recognizes the collection's use of prominent hadith transmitters, while rejecting several of its other routes. His judgments need their own examination, but his account itself defeats a simple equation between a Zaydi collection and one uniformly rejected narrator class. [ZC-C01]

For our purposes, the *Amālī* should be compared with *Musnad Zayd* report by report. A match through Abū Khālid tests transmission above that node. A match through a route that bypasses him has a different evidentiary value. A legal opinion merely resembling the same rule may supply information about a regional convention while leaving verbal dependence unresolved.

A conclusion about the *Musnad*'s fabrication must survive these distinctions. A twelfth-century construction of the complete book can coexist with older individual rulings. Earlier circulation of a ruling does not automatically authenticate the later collection. Conversely, earlier independent circulation of the exact disputed sentence would put a real limit on a claim of late invention of that sentence.

The hand-corrected name

The modern apparatus at the *Amālī*'s printed page 255 preserves a concrete textual problem. It reports a pen correction in one witness identifying a transmitter as Ibn Mātā, while the editor and quoted marginal discussion argue for a different ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad. The notes also disagree about who speaks the opening transmission formula in the neighboring report. [ZC-C02]

This is stronger evidence for a transmission problem than a general observation that manuscripts are late. The identity of a person in the route is visibly under discussion in the edition's apparatus. It can affect whether two apparent branches are independent and how the collection relates to the *Jāmiʿ*. The apparatus reports the manuscript condition; no image of the correction was examined in this pass.

A person added through identification in a margin can become part of a later reader's apparently seamless chain. A critical edition needs the original reading, the correction's hand and date where available, and the reason for accepting either identification. The present analysis preserves the dispute instead of normalizing the name silently.

The outer chain has its own dates

The opening transmission notice in a received electronic text of the *Amālī* records a handover in Rajab 567 AH and an earlier reading in Kufa in Rabīʿ II 555 AH. It names the persons involved and distinguishes the mode of transfer. These dates belong to the book's authorization history as represented in that witness. [ZC-C04]

The distinction between handing over a book and reading it to a teacher is evidentially useful. A recorded reading can establish a particular kind of encounter with the text. An authorization may cover a broader set of material than the passages read aloud. The wording of each notice determines what it claims.

The presence of twelfth-century dates does not date every report to the twelfth century. It locates an inspectable event in the chain connecting an older attributed corpus to its receiving community. The same principle applied to al-Kulaynī's posthumous book history applies here.

These notices also prevent a premature assumption that every relevant northern book entered Yemen through one person. Qāḍī Jaʿfar is a major figure in the existing dossier. The wider transmission record must still identify the actual route in each corpus. A shared period of circulation can contain several networks, and the surviving notices may preserve only portions of them.

The proposed political operation can consequently be tested at a more exact level. Did a particular patronal circle obtain a version differing from another circulating version? Did its authorization formula expand? Were reports assigned to a new speaker? A manuscript with an ownership note or a dated reading certificate can help answer those questions when its text is compared with other witnesses.

An institutional history based only on modern title pages would lose this information. The title assigns an ancestral center to a work. Its opening transmission can reveal the later people whose labor made that center available to readers. Both belong in the source record.

Al-Hādī's law as an internal control

Al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥusayn's legal works, especially *al-Aḥkām*, offer a comparison within Zaydi jurisprudence. Their use requires separating his own rulings from reports he cites and from later commentary. They preserve an active juristic voice whose positions can be compared with a collection attributed to Zayd. [ZC-C05; ZC-C17]

The Imam Rassi Society introduction reproduced by Zaydi Info identifies both agreement and disagreement between *al-Aḥkām* and *Musnad Zayd*. It gives a shared prayer-testimony formulation as a positive example. It also identifies disputes over the sale of an *umm walad*, laughter during prayer, and congregational Ramadan prayer. This chapter uses that published internal comparison as a source map; its citations to al-Hādī's Arabic editions remain targets for a separate full collation. [ZC-C05]

Agreement and disagreement establish different things. A shared formulation can indicate a common report family. Disagreement shows that the receiving jurist was not simply applying every

rule now found under the earlier Imam's name. Neither observation alone determines whether he possessed the complete received *Musnad*.

That distinction bears directly on the silence argument advanced by critics. Al-Hādī could know reports associated with Zayd without knowing a book in its later form. He could know the collection while rejecting some attributions or interpretations. A modern comparison that merely notes a disagreement cannot choose between those possibilities.

The disagreement is nevertheless valuable for the project's account of authority. It establishes room within a Zaydi legal archive for criticizing a ruling associated with an honored predecessor. The existence of the ancestor's name does not make every later position unanimous. A claim of family consensus must explain the competing witnesses it encounters.

The *umm walad* case brings this question into the treatment of persons. Our prior chapter directly read the permissions in the received *Musnad*. An objection preserved under al-Hādī's authority provides evidence of internal legal resistance, even though the surrounding legal system still recognized slavery. Our ethical assessment of ownership over persons exceeds the narrow historical disagreement over a category of sale.

The ritual examples serve another purpose. They allow the comparison to include questions without the same immediate moral stakes. If the same transmission patterns appear across ritual and coercive household rules, a broad inherited legal package becomes a significant explanation. A selective political insertion hypothesis would then need to identify what distinguishes the targeted additions.

Al-Hādī's materials therefore deserve a place beside the *Musnad* before any general statement about "Zaydi law." Their value lies partly in the differences they preserve. A history that allows only one ancestral voice would conceal the argument that later Zaydi jurists actually inherited.

Al-Jāmiʿ al-kāfī and a record of juristic plurality

The Zaydi *al-Jāmiʿ al-kāfī fī fiqh al-Zaydiyya* is associated with Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-ʿAlawī, who died in 445 AH. It is a separate work from al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*. Its function includes gathering and organizing the positions of earlier jurists. [ZC-C06]

An editorial-policy statement attributed to its compiler is quoted in the received introduction to another Zaydi work, *al-Taḥrīr*. It explains that certain unqualified citations of Aḥmad, al-Qāsim, and Muḥammad derive from Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr's writings, while other material receives its own transmitter identification. In this pass that policy was read through the later quotation, rather than independently collated against the *Jāmiʿ*'s oldest witnesses. [ZC-C07]

Even at that level, the statement supplies an important methodological warning. A compact legal attribution can abbreviate an identifiable written source. A reader who mistakes the abbreviation

for direct access to an early Imam will overstate what the passage demonstrates. Reconstructing the compiler's source policy can recover the omitted layer.

The work also preserves named disagreements. The inspected passage on water, land, and pasture, in the received fifth volume, distinguishes positions associated with Abū Ḥanīfa and his companions from another juristic voice. [ZC-C08] This is evidence of a comparative legal compilation. It should be analyzed as such, with the named speakers kept separate.

The question "does the *Jāmiʿ* attest the *Musnad*?" consequently requires several possible answers. It may reproduce a saying under Zayd's name. It may cite a teacher whose materials also enter the *Musnad*. It may describe a recognizable book. Those observations have different consequences for the history of the collection.

A strong early attestation would identify the same collection or a sufficiently distinctive sequence of reports. A shared commonplace ruling would have less force. A later commentator's label cannot establish the title used by the original compiler. Footnotes that identify sources retrospectively must remain distinguishable from the body text.

This makes the *Jāmiʿ* a central control for the fabrication hypothesis. Its earlier attributed compilation horizon gives it potential chronological value. That value depends on securely establishing the wording of the relevant passages and their transmission. An early author's name on a late copy is a reason to investigate, with the book history still to be examined.

The same source can help recover plurality in Alid law. If a later claim of unanimous agreement is contradicted by named positions in an earlier compilation, the contradiction concerns the later claim's scope. It can be investigated without deciding that every report in either collection is fabricated.

Jaʿfar tells us that he rearranged Abū Ṭālib's Amālī

The clearest editorial statement in this pilot belongs to *Taysīr al-maṭālib fī Amālī Abī Ṭālib*. Abū Ṭālib Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Hārūnī, who died in 424 AH, supplies the earlier dictation corpus. The arrangement preface names Qāḍī Jaʿfar and explains that the original sessions mixed different subjects, making particular reports difficult to locate. He reorganized the material into sixty-four chapters. [ZC-C09]

This is positive evidence of editorial intervention by the same figure implicated in the *Musnad* debate. It establishes an activity and describes its stated purpose. The work openly identifies the rearrangement. That evidence must be kept separate from an accusation of covert fabrication.

The distinction is productive. An arranger can affect interpretation through placement. A report about a ruler may originally follow a discussion of belief and precede a poem. Under a thematic

arrangement, it can appear beside several reports about corrupt government. The new neighborhood encourages a different use even when the wording remains intact.

A user-friendly book can also become easier to deploy as legal or moral authority. The reader finds a subject heading and encounters a cluster of apparently convergent reports. A teacher can assign the chapter. A compiler can extract from it. Ease of retrieval changes the practical influence of the material.

The preface gives us a testable account of this operation. A pre-arrangement witness preserving sessions would let us compare report order and detect omissions or additions. Differences between several post-arrangement copies could reveal later changes. The arranger's assurance about preservation is evidence of what he claims to have done; the witnesses determine how well the claim holds.

For *Dark Imams*, the significance is precise. Jaʿfar's involvement in organizing a transmitted archive is established at the level of his received preface. His command of that activity makes him a historically relevant person to investigate when another corpus is alleged to have emerged through him. It supplies no automatic inference that his openly described work was dishonest.

The collection also crosses the imagined boundaries of a closed school archive. The inspected routes include teachers and materials shared with other hadith communities. A later editor's overview identifies further Alid corpora among its resources. Each claimed source must be checked at the individual report, because a modern editor can recognize a parallel that the medieval text never names. [ZC-C09; ZC-C10]

A careful source map can consequently recover what a thematic arrangement makes harder to see: the report families and earlier books entering a single chapter. Several adjacent reports can repeat one source. A lone report can preserve a different route. Arrangement tells us where the reader encounters the material; transmission tells us where its authority is said to come from.

The perfumer in Medina: an allegation of state infiltration

The received *Taysīr* contains a story especially relevant to the project's political question. At printed page 206, a report passes through Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥasanī, al-Ṣūlī, and Abū al-ʿAynāʾ. Abū al-ʿAynāʾ describes his grandfather being commissioned by Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr to open a perfumer's shop in Medina, pose as a Khurasani supporter of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan, offer gifts, and send intelligence about his sons Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm. [ZC-C11]

Here the text alleges a specific covert operation. Its elements include funding, a cover identity, access through apparent patronage, and reporting to the ruler. The account gives the question a much more definite form than a general suspicion that political authorities influenced religious life.

Its historical status remains that of a transmitted family story inside a later collection. Abū al-ʿAynāʾ's position relative to his grandfather, the earlier circulation of the episode, and parallel reports all require examination. The present edition has located the indexed primary passage; it has not independently verified the operation as an event.

The story is also a control on the thesis of a uniformly Abbasid-directed Zaydi archive. The collection arranged by Jaʿfar preserves a damaging allegation about an Abbasid ruler's penetration of an Alid household. A covertly manipulated corpus could theoretically retain such material, but an explanation must account for it. Its presence cannot be ignored while the same collection is treated as a simple instrument of caliphal pacification.

The more specific conclusion concerns a tradition of political awareness. The received archive knows a model in which apparent religious sympathy supplies cover for surveillance. Gifts can purchase access. An outsider can acquire credibility by performing the identity expected by the group. These are mechanisms described by the source itself.

The connection to hadith fabrication is a further question. A spy gathering information is not yet a forger altering a legal collection. Evidence for one technique increases the intelligibility of political intervention without establishing the use of every other technique. The chapter therefore retains the episode as a source-specific allegation of infiltration and as a control on the politics of the transmitting archive.

A complete historical dossier would seek the story in biographical and literary compilations associated with its named transmitters. It would compare the objective assigned to the agent, the identity of the target, and the reported outcome. It would also determine whether later versions repeat one literary source. Those tests can establish how much of the account's apparent corroboration is independent.

A prohibition on exaggeration inside the same corpus

Another passage in *Taysīr* belongs beside the bounded theophany developed in *Finding Injil*. A narrative portrays a camel lowering itself before the Prophet. The people describe it as prostration; the reported reply corrects their description and warns them against elevating him beyond his station. The action is explained through Allah's subjection of the animal to him. [ZC-C12]

The report is congenial to the project's distinction between a dependent servant and a figure whose authority becomes unlimited. Its ethical or theological usefulness does not establish its historical attribution. The chain and literary development require their own scrutiny.

Its presence nevertheless widens the account of the collection's contents. The archive can preserve marvelous narratives and a warning against the interpretation of those marvels as excessive

elevation. A chapter assembled from only the most exalted reports would lose the internal qualification.

The same principle applies to political criticism. The arrangement includes material about bad scholars and oppressive conduct. Headings alone cannot establish a detailed doctrine, but the relevant reports deserve examination as potential restraints on authority. A corpus can supply arguments both for offices and against their abuse.

This is important for the second half of *Dark Imams*. The inquiry into esoteric language must test what the texts permit their readers to infer. A visible extraordinary act can remain dependent upon Allah. A claim to knowledge can remain answerable to the truth. An inherited archive can preserve its own vocabulary for criticizing the overreach of people who speak in its name.

The historical study and the normative use remain distinct. We retain a bounded account of agency under our uṣūl. We suspend authentication of the particular camel narrative pending fuller examination. That symmetrical judgment keeps attractive material from receiving an evidentiary exemption.

Al-Amālī al-khamīsiyya and the editor concealed by a short title

The Thursday dictations associated with al-Murshid bi-llāh Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Shajarī belong to another strand of the Zaydi archive. Their received title and arrangement history require care. A displayed edition identifies a later arranger, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurashī. The consulted digital records disagree over some biographical and arrangement numerals. [ZC-C13]

That disagreement should remain visible until the underlying editions and manuscripts are checked. It would be easy to choose one modern catalogue's date, build a timeline around it, and then treat the timeline as evidence for a theory of transmission. Such a procedure converts unexamined metadata into historical proof.

The central distinction is already clear. A named author's dictation sessions and a later topical arrangement belong to different moments in a book's history. The material's individual routes may reach still earlier teachers. A report appearing in the arranged collection therefore requires a locator that identifies its actual version, together with its stated transmission.

This work can provide a useful comparator to *Taysīr*. Both involve dictation traditions and later organization. The comparison should examine how much of the source structure remains visible after rearrangement. Are session dates retained? Are chains compressed? Does the arranger insert connecting explanations? Can the same report be found in a session-based witness?

The present chapter does not claim to have completed that comparison. It establishes the work's place in the control corpus and records the metadata conflict before it can enter the book as a false

precision. A fuller treatment should begin from the arranger's preface and an identifiable manuscript, rather than from the title alone.

The bibliographic result matters in its own right. The alleged late arrangement of *Musnad Zayd* would belong to a wider practice of organizing inherited material. Evidence of arrangement must therefore be separated from evidence of invented attribution. Both are possible historical operations; they leave different textual traces.

Uṣūl al-aḥkām turns transmitted reports into a legal argument

Imam Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān's *Uṣūl al-aḥkām* is especially valuable because it locates the four-stage judicial maxim within a substantial legal collection. The displayed report 2304 introduces the saying through Zayd's ancestors to ʿAlī. The preceding report addresses the reward of a judge who strives and reaches or misses the right result. [ZC-C14]

This is a setting of applied legal proof. The compiler gathers material relevant to adjudication and places it before a reader considering what a judge may do. The relationship between the reports affects their use even when their sources remain distinct.

The work gives us an explicit reception witness for the maxim. It does not become an independent eighth-century witness merely because it uses the family chain. Its relation to the *Musnad*, to Qāḍī Jaʿfar's use of the saying, and to any shared earlier collection needs comparison.

A modern editor can also add a source locator that appears more precise than the author's introduction. Such a locator is useful for finding parallels. It supplies evidence about the editor's identification, rather than proof that the medieval compiler named that exact book. The difference should remain in every quotation record.

For the political hypothesis, this collection is more immediately relevant than an isolated saying. A ruler's legal work can make a particular structure of proof teachable and reusable. To establish an operation, the study would still need to connect that selection with a purpose and identify how it affected actual jurisdiction. The text's legal function provides a mechanism to examine.

Our normative assessment should follow the same rule as in the *Musnad*. Effort deserves recognition, but effort cannot erase an injury or immunize a judgment from correction. A statement about the conscientious judge must be read alongside the duties of proof, hearing, and remedy. Political office does not resolve the moral status of a mistaken decision.

Shifāʾ al-awām and the plurality of political circumstances

The later *Shifāʾ al-awām* is associated with al-Amīr al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn. The consulted catalogue dates his death to 663 AH. The work offers another major collection for

examining how legal reports were selected and applied after the twelfth-century period central to the Jaʿfar hypothesis. [ZC-C15]

The available modern biography also places part of the author's literary activity in circumstances of imprisonment involving an imamic ruling family. This is biographical testimony to verify in its earlier sources. It prevents us from presuming that every learned Zaydi compiler enjoyed the same uncomplicated relationship with every Zaydi ruler. [ZC-C15]

The book's legal reports should be treated as a later reception layer. When it repeats a *Musnad* ruling, the first question is whether it names the collection or reaches the ruling through another route. A repeated conclusion can arise through acceptance of an earlier proof, an independent argument, or incorporation into the school's ordinary law.

The same principle applies to later criticism of the work. A scholar can challenge a report's chain while retaining the legal rule through other evidence. Another can accept the chain and reject the inference. The actual disagreement must be identified before treating a critical commentary as a wholesale rejection of the earlier collection.

Its importance to the project is therefore prospective and structural. It can help distinguish an inherited ruling from a ruling newly intensified under a particular political arrangement. It can also preserve evidence that an institution's scholars remained vulnerable to the rulers whose legitimacy they discussed.

Later selections can make dependence inspectable

Al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad's *al-Iʿtiṣām* and modern selected collections provide further stages in reception. Their value depends partly on whether they identify the sources they use. A page that quotes the *Amālī* and then supplies a related passage from the *Jāmiʿ* can reveal a relationship that a short modern quotation would conceal. [ZC-C16]

An inspected *al-Iʿtiṣām* passage explicitly introduces material from *Amālī Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā* in its treatment of exchange and fraud. The page moves between reported authority and the authorial or later transmitted discussion of contemporary practices. [ZC-C16] A critical reader must identify those changes of voice before assigning every sentence to an early Imam.

The modern *al-Mukhtār min ṣaḥīḥ al-aḥādīth wa-l-āthār* by Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā Muṭahhar supplies a useful example. At printed page 92 it places a report from the *Amālī* beside a *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd* route that explicitly rejoins the same transmission. It also notes wording differences. [ZC-C18]

That display helps a reader avoid counting two titles as two unrelated origins. It can provide stronger evidence for the circulation of one earlier report while leaving the disputed lower link shared. A compiler who exposes the joining point has supplied useful critical information even if we disagree with the positive classification assigned to the report.

The word *ṣaḥīḥ* in a title should be read as a selection claim. It expresses an author's judgment under particular criteria. Our reassessment must still identify those criteria and compare the individual report's meaning with the project's uṣūl. A modern selection cannot remove uncertainty simply by omitting the rejected material from view.

Al-ʿAjrī's *al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-mukhtār* is a different work. Its title must not be conflated with Muṭahhar's. The inspected passage on divorce names the *Jāmiʿ* and the *Amālī* separately, offering another useful point at which their dependence or divergence can be traced. [ZC-C19]

These late works therefore have a legitimate place in the inquiry. Their value lies in mapping reception, supplying locators, and sometimes displaying variants. They become weak evidence when their multiple citations are counted as independent early attestations without tracing the cited sources.

Shared Alid materials cross later denominational boundaries

A Zaydi collection can preserve material from an Alid source that also appears in another community's archive. The investigation should not assign ownership from a later sectarian label. A source attributed to a member of the family may circulate among readers who disagree about the line of Imams or about the authority of the narrator's descendants.

The editorial literature surrounding *Taysīr* identifies the *Ṣaḥīfa* associated with ʿAlī al-Riḍā and the *Ashʿathiyyāt* among relevant bodies of transmission. This is a modern editorial identification whose individual report references require checking. [ZC-C10] It supplies a reason to widen the source map, rather than a completed finding of common ancestry for every report.

The project's multiple-succession premise makes this particularly important. A transmitter's family identity, political allegiance, and later doctrinal classification can point in different directions. A reader may accept a report from a person whose succession claim he rejects. A later historian can mistakenly turn that acceptance into endorsement of the entire system associated with the person.

The opposite mistake also occurs. A transmitter can be disqualified solely because his later label belongs to a rival community. Our earlier treatment of Ismāʿīl ibn Jaʿfar rejected that shortcut. The same rule applies to the Alid corpora entering Zaydi compilations.

An adequate comparison records the route and the proposition. It asks what the report claims, which part of the report the compiler uses, and what further doctrine a later reader attaches to it. That method allows cross-community evidence to strengthen an attribution where genuinely independent witnesses exist.

A positive result would be especially valuable for the *Musnad* inquiry. An early parallel in a separately transmitted Alid corpus could constrain the date of a disputed clause. A shared late

conduit would establish a different relationship. The family name itself supplies neither result in advance.

What the completed pilot establishes

The source work in this chapter establishes several different operations. The *Amālī* associated with Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā contains both routes that meet the *Musnad* at Abū Khālid and material transmitted through other teachers. A received opening notice records later authorization events. The *Jāmiʿ* preserves a structure of juristic attribution that can abbreviate written sources. Jaʿfar's preface to *Taysīr* openly describes thematic rearrangement. *Uṣūl al-aḥkām* receives the contested judicial maxim into an applied legal setting. [ZC-C02; ZC-C03; ZC-C04; ZC-C07; ZC-C09; ZC-C14]

These findings change how the "psyop" thesis should be tested. A deliberate false attribution must be located within actual operations of transmission. The same person can accurately preserve one corpus, reorganize another, and use a third strategically. A global verdict on his character cannot replace examination of those acts.

The argument also has to account for preserved dissent. Al-Hādī's disagreements provide an internal legal comparison. The story of al-Manṣūr's alleged agent exposes an anti-Abbasid political memory inside a corpus Jaʿfar arranged. The warning against excessive elevation in the camel narrative supplies a theological restraint. These materials make the archive more varied than a single program of obedience would predict. [ZC-C05; ZC-C11; ZC-C12]

A sophisticated manipulation hypothesis can accommodate variety. It might posit selective intervention at a few points of jurisdiction while leaving critical material elsewhere. That version becomes testable by identifying the targeted clauses and their witnesses. A theory able to explain every possible textual distribution after the fact would supply little historical discrimination.

For our uṣūl, attractive contents receive the same scrutiny. A story exposing a ruler's deception remains a transmitted story. A warning against *ghulūw* can be sound as a principle while its particular event remains unverified. A humane rule can survive through a weak route. Historical attribution and normative authority continue to require their respective evidence.

The next stage should collate report 393 across the *Musnad*, Jaʿfar's judicial discussion, and *Uṣūl al-aḥkām*, while searching the earlier comparative corpora for its distinctive ending. The exact wording of the judge's competence is the most concentrated target. A dated independent witness to that clause would materially change the argument developed in chapter 12.

PART III · Ismaili Worlds

14 · The Mission Before the Caliphate

The invitation could reach a village before the person whose authority it proclaimed. A teacher could be heard, questioned, and watched. The Imam to whom he directed allegiance might remain concealed. Early Ismaili recruitment therefore involved a difficult act of recognition: people encountered a representative and had to decide what his representation established.

The North African mission brought that problem into the making of a state. Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Shīʿī worked among the Kutāma from the 890s. His organization helped overthrow the Aghlabids in 909 and brought ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī into power. The emergence of the Fatimid caliphate belongs to the same history of Alid authority as the Zaydi institutions examined in the preceding chapters. Its institutional answer was different. Here a missionary hierarchy enabled a claimant to become a publicly present sovereign. [I04]

The word *daʿwa* names an invitation with a purpose. The people receiving it were being asked to recognize a particular account of religious authority, with consequences for their loyalties. The historical question concerns what they could know at the time of that decision. Our ethical question concerns what their acceptance could authorize.

The people who carried the invitation

The route through Yemen gives the western mission a recoverable setting. Daftary connects Abū ʿAbd Allāh's work to Ibn Ḥawshab's missionary activity. The story then moves through contacts with Kutāma people to a campaign in their country. These connections locate the mission in relationships among people, rather than allowing the eventual Fatimid court to appear fully formed at the moment of victory. [I01]

Al-Nuʿmān's *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa* organizes its opening around the Yemeni mission and the movement toward the Maghrib. Hamid Haji's published contents identify the encounter with Kutāma pilgrims in Mecca and the missionary's arrival with them in their territory. Later sections move into military success, public safety, and administration. The account itself places persuasion and government within a continuous history. [I04]

That continuity needs analysis at the level of practical relationships. A traveling teacher has little immediate power unless local people make his presence possible. Someone receives him. Another person interprets an unfamiliar claim through the reputation of those who introduced him. An invitation can then travel along existing connections of kinship and exchange. These are conditions of organized recruitment, not proof that every person in the campaign shared the same understanding of its final purpose.

The missionary's dependence upon his hosts matters. He may represent an authority superior to any local patron within his theology, while still relying upon local protection to speak. A history written after success can obscure that dependence by presenting the teacher as the sole origin of everything his followers accomplished. The Kutāma must remain participants whose decisions helped produce the state. Their contribution cannot be reduced to receptiveness to someone else's message.

The argument also applies to the later hierarchy. A teacher's appointment and his effectiveness are different matters. The appointment concerns the office he claims; effectiveness concerns the work he can perform with the people who receive him. Success can strengthen trust in the office. It cannot independently establish that the reported appointment occurred or that every exercise of the office remained faithful to it.

A change in the identity behind the summons

The rupture associated with 899 provides a sharper test than a general assertion that secrecy invites manipulation. In Daftary's reconstruction, Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ and ʿAbdān opposed instructions from Salamiya after its new leader claimed the Imamate for himself and his predecessors. Their earlier expectation centered on Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl. Al-Mahdī's subsequent explanation to the Yemeni community treated earlier names and representative titles as protective concealment. The rupture produced competing allegiances. [I01]

The evidence here concerns a dispute about what previous instructions had meant. The disagreement cannot be settled simply by noting that secrecy had a protective purpose. Protection can explain why an identity was withheld. A further argument is needed when the receiver is told that the person he previously understood as a representative was himself the Imam, or that a name taken to identify one awaited person carried a wider concealed meaning.

The defender of the change has a coherent position. Open identification could expose a persecuted lineage. A teacher might therefore disclose only what a particular audience could safely receive. On that account, later clarification reveals a continuing relationship that circumstances had prevented the earlier community from knowing fully.

The dissenter's problem is equally substantial. His earlier allegiance was formed through an explanation that he now finds altered. He needs a way to distinguish protected information from a retrospective expansion of the claimant's entitlement. An appeal to secrecy alone can accommodate both. The crucial evidence lies in instructions that predate the dispute, the continuity of named witnesses, and the scope of what those witnesses actually attest.

This is where the Fatimid case sharpens the book's earlier discussion of Abū Hāshim's testament. A successful institution can inherit a real network while changing the account through which the network explains its obedience. The change may preserve an earlier intention; it may revise that

intention; it may combine inherited responsibilities with a new claim. A continuous organization does not make all those explanations equivalent.

Under our uṣūl, the recipient's understanding has moral significance. Where a person has accepted a limited representation, widening its scope demands reasons that address the original commitment. A community's vulnerability can justify confidentiality. It does not make the content of every later disclosure self-authenticating. We retain the possibility of a faithful concealed succession while examining each claim about what concealment protected.

What the surviving witnesses let us hear

The early Fatimid dossier includes distinct kinds of writing. They should enter the narrative with their different purposes intact.

Affirming the Imamate, edited by Wilferd Madelung and Paul Walker, presents two short works attributed to Abū ʿAbd Allāh and his brother Abu'l-ʿAbbās Muḥammad. The editors place them before the establishment of the state. Their description identifies arguments from Qur'an and hadith, the Moses–Aaron comparison with Muḥammad and ʿAlī, and an explanation of the mission's hierarchy. These are texts attributed to advocates attempting to secure recognition. [I02]

The Moses–Aaron comparison is consequential because it links familial proximity with entrusted religious responsibility. In our reading, its persuasive force should be examined at the precise point where an analogy becomes a grant. A resemblance between two relationships can make a claim intelligible. Identifying the person authorized in a later generation still calls for testimony about that generation. Neither the family relationship nor the excellence of a doctrine supplies the missing act of appointment by itself.

The *Kitāb al-Munāẓarāt* of the North African Ibn al-Haytham offers a different kind of access. Madelung and Walker describe a participant's memoir of meetings and conversations with the missionary brothers around the revolution. Its value is the possibility of hearing how a receiving scholar understood the invitation. The memoir's perspective remains that of a particular participant. Its dialogue needs to be read as remembered and composed speech. [I03]

Al-Nuʿmān's *Iftitāḥ* supplies a more comprehensive dynastic account. Haji describes its use of archival and biographical materials that have since disappeared. That makes the work important precisely because it stands between the reader and records that can no longer be checked directly. The fact that an author had access to records establishes an opportunity to know. The decisions he made in arranging and explaining them remain part of his authorship. [I04]

James Lindsay's study identifies parallels with Prophetic history in the account of Abū ʿAbd Allāh's mission. The point matters for how victory can be narrated. A sacred precedent can give later

readers a way to recognize the campaign's significance, while also encouraging them to see its outcome as the completion of an already intelligible pattern. [I05]

Our historical use of such a pattern has to leave room for the decisions made before the outcome was known. A recruit could doubt, withdraw, or understand the mission differently. When a narrative makes the eventual ruler the destination of every earlier act, those possibilities become harder to see. Recovering them helps explain what the movement's participants were risking when they acted.

Winning and becoming visible

The chronology records several moments of accession. Daftary distinguishes the conquest of Raqqāda in March 909, al-Mahdī's acclamation in Sijilmāsa later that year, and his arrival in Raqqāda in January 910. A dynasty conventionally dated from 909 therefore emerged through a sequence of public acts. [I01]

The sequence allows a more exact account of the handover. Military success first placed governing power in the missionary's hands. The claimant's arrival then changed who could issue commands in person. A former intermediary became an officer within a more visible center of authority. Followers whose practical experience of the movement had been shaped by the missionary now encountered the sovereign whom that missionary had invoked.

This transition can expose disagreements that recruitment had postponed. Participants may agree that unjust government must end while differing over the arrangements that should follow. Some may expect a teacher to retain a decisive administrative role. Others may understand his role as fulfilled once he has brought the Imam into public rule. Those possibilities are analytic models of the transition. Establishing which expectation belonged to a named participant requires his testimony or a source that specifically reports it.

The surviving chronicle's organization provides a concrete warning about retrospective judgment. In Haji's published contents, the later sections describe opponents through charges of hypocrisy and betrayal of clemency. Those headings disclose a moral classification within the received account. They make the source's view available; they do not constitute an independent finding that every person so classified had acted in bad faith. [I04]

A reader committed to the Prophet's household can examine those classifications without treating victory as irrelevant. An effective government may protect people and sustain learning. It can also inherit obligations to people who supported it under expectations that its leaders later reject. Assessing fidelity requires the terms of those expectations and the acts that followed.

The hostile genealogy

The source problem runs in both directions. Daftary's account identifies the Qaddāḥid genealogy as an anti-Fatimid construction used to discredit the dynasty's Alid descent. A historian cannot take a hostile pedigree as neutral evidence merely because the dynasty's own pedigree serves an obvious interest. [I01]

This is especially important for a project investigating covert manipulation. A theory of concealed origins can itself be a weapon. Its promise to reveal the real ancestor of a ruling family can remove the need to answer the family's actual political or legal arguments. Once repeated, the allegation can look like independent corroboration wherever another author cites it.

Our method treats ancestry as a claim requiring named witnesses. It also allows an institutional critique to survive without a forged genealogy. A ruler of genuine Alid descent can exceed his authority. A scholar's family connection cannot settle whether his legal argument is sound. Separating those questions avoids making the moral case depend upon proving that an opponent's ancestors were impostors.

The same discipline protects the author's own proposed inheritances. A meaningful intellectual affiliation can be investigated through teachers and texts. Where the claim includes a formal transfer of office, the evidence must establish that additional act. Polemical labels do not supply it.

The mission's authority under our uṣūl

The Fatimid case makes a place for organized instruction within our framework. A teacher can disclose an interpretation that a student would have struggled to find alone. A community can appoint that teacher and support the time required for learning. Our concern begins where the authority granted for teaching becomes a claim over decisions that the learner never entrusted to him.

Secrecy has a bounded justification when disclosure would expose people to violence. The circumstances supporting that justification should be capable of explanation as far as safety permits. The moral burden grows when secrecy also determines succession, finances, or the punishment of dissent. Those are consequences borne by people whose ability to inspect the claim may be weakest.

Multiple succession enters here through functions. A missionary may exercise substantial delegated authority while remaining distinct from the person he recognizes as Imam. Several teachers can carry a common inheritance into different regions. These arrangements demonstrate that religious work can be distributed. A further claim that the Imam intended coequal successors must still identify the relevant appointments; it cannot be inferred from the existence of several capable representatives.

The chapter's proposed political mechanism is therefore specific. A movement can widen an inherited mandate through retrospective explanation of earlier secrecy. Recruitment can establish relationships that later officials interpret more expansively. Whether a given change amounted to deception depends on what the participants knew and what they said before the change became useful. The 899 dispute provides a defined historical case through which to test that mechanism.

The next chapter turns from recognition to adjudication. Al-Nuʿmān's legal corpus lets us examine the commands and protections that a Fatimid account of authority placed beneath the names of the Prophet and his family. It contains material that supports our demand for accountable rule, alongside arguments that concentrate authority in the approved source of knowledge.

15 · When the Imam Governs

A clerk has been selected, but the ruler's confidence in him is insufficient. An administrative passage in *Daʿāʾim al-Islām* tells the ruler to examine earlier conduct and continue investigating how his officers treat the people who come to them. It warns about an official's pride and impatience. The damage caused by obstructive administration returns to the person who appointed him. This is an account of government that expects inspection to continue after appointment. [I06]

That passage belongs inside the same corpus that attacks the independent judgments of rival jurists. Al-Nuʿmān's account can demand practical scrutiny of an administrator while grounding religious knowledge in the authorized Imams. The relationship between those commitments deserves close reading. A person subject to an official's command needs to know which parts of the command remain open to challenge.

The Fatimid experiment makes the question concrete. The Imam's claimed presence does not remove the need for books or intermediaries. An answer must still be communicated, interpreted, and applied to a dispute whose facts may be uncertain. The legal archive gives us access to what those intermediate acts were supposed to accomplish.

A legal corpus for a ruling Imamate

Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān's work under the early Fatimid rulers included *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*, whose importance as an official legal compilation developed under al-Muʿizz. The Institute of Ismaili Studies places that work alongside his historical writing and his service to the dynasty. The collection gave the government a body of law attributed to the Prophet and the household through whom the dynasty understood its own religious authority. [N23]

The book's form matters for the reassessment. A statement introduced as a report from Jaʿfar and an argument in al-Nuʿmān's own voice have different attribution histories. A sequence of abbreviated attributions also leaves different work for the historian from a fully displayed chain. No ṣaḥīḥ classification is supplied here merely because an electronic page places a sacred name before a sentence.

The appropriate starting point is the proposition the sentence asserts. Some passages tell an administrator what to investigate. Others explain whose judgment counts as a religious source. A warning about coerced speech affects a particular transaction. The present chapter issues judgments at that level, using the Qur'an-first and anti-coercion commitments stated in chapter 23. The historical attribution remains separately recorded.

The administrative passage offers an immediate positive control. It makes the ruler responsible for learning what his confidence in an appointee may have missed. The principle is valuable even where

the ancient attribution awaits further study. Accepting that principle also obliges us to inspect the same corpus when its authority becomes less open to examination.

When the jurist revises his opinion

In the section concerning the people from whom knowledge should be received, al-Nuʿmān objects to the legal authorities followed by the wider community. One paragraph criticizes their repeated changes of opinion. It then criticizes followers who become attached to one position and treat dissent as error. The source exposes a tension between the revising teacher and the follower who makes the teacher's answer permanent. [I09]

Our assessment separates those acts. A revision can result from a newly discovered text, a better inference, or recognition that an earlier judgment injured someone. Its occurrence alone establishes fallibility. Calling the revision a vice requires showing why the change was irresponsible. A method that punishes every admission of error will reward teachers who conceal their mistakes.

The follower's rigidity creates another problem. If he recognizes a teacher because the teacher is good at examining evidence, refusing every later challenge to that teacher's conclusion abandons the reason for the original reliance. A school may then preserve the teacher's prestige while making the teacher's own activity harder to continue.

Al-Nuʿmān's argument turns this instability toward a source of assured guidance. That solution moves the recognition problem. A learner must establish which Imam possesses the authority claimed, which report accurately conveys his teaching, and whether a later judgment stays within the instruction. The criticism of rival taqlīd cannot by itself settle those questions.

Under our uṣūl, criticism of unexamined adherence is retained. Revision after a demonstrated error is also retained as an obligation. A report's origin and its capacity to bind must remain available for assessment when the institution invoking it belongs to our preferred lineage.

A sharp argument against contradictory judgments

Another passage confronts a judge with divergent decisions about matters involving property, intimate relations, and blood. Judges in different cities issue conflicting rulings, after which their appointing caliph approves them. The text challenges the compatibility of that approval with a single religion and a single divine source. [I08]

The force of the objection is practical. A government can ratify inconsistent judgments without explaining how the affected people should understand the difference. Calling every decision correct may protect the officers from scrutiny while leaving the people governed by them with incompatible rights.

The argument does not establish that every disagreement arises from culpable invention. Two courts can possess different evidence. A rule may depend on circumstances that an abbreviated report fails to record. Even where the circumstances match, the dispute can reveal a genuine ambiguity. A responsible legal theory needs an account of how such uncertainty is handled.

Our objection to unreviewable authority therefore applies to the caliph who approves incompatible decisions and to a teacher who treats disagreement as proof that only his institution can know the law. The latter conclusion needs evidence of the institution's competence and authorization. The former practice needs a reasoned account of each judgment. The affected person should not be required to accept contradiction merely because a superior official has ratified it.

This passage also complicates the proposed transfer of a single Sunni legal method into every Alid collection. Chapter 12 found a four-source judicial formula attributed to ʿAlī in *Musnad Zayd*. The Fatimid corpus presents a different polemical profile. Any account of deliberate harmonization has to explain those differences and their dates, rather than treating an Alid attribution as evidence that all the collections express one legal program.

The encounter with Abū Ḥanīfa

The same section narrates a confrontation between Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and Abū Ḥanīfa over analogy. When Abū Ḥanīfa explains how he would reason in the absence of an explicit text, the response invokes Iblīs's comparison of fire and clay. The story portrays a seemingly persuasive inference as a route to disobedience. [I07]

The polemical example has a bounded logical force. An analogy can be unsound because it selects an irrelevant similarity, ignores a governing instruction, or assumes a valuation it has not justified. Demonstrating such a failure does not establish that every comparison between cases is illegitimate. A legal critic who rejects analogy still reasons about why one report governs a new situation and another does not.

For our reassessment, the warning against overriding a clear obligation through a self-serving comparison is retained. The historical encounter is left at the level of the received attribution. The rule that an approved teacher's answer is insulated from comparison would need a further argument, especially where the teacher is an intermediary interpreting a report.

The political use of this dispute can be specified. A source monopoly makes access to the approved corpus increasingly valuable. Whoever controls that access can influence which questions receive an answer and which competing answers are treated as religiously inadmissible. This is an institutional possibility arising from the argument. It does not identify a particular forged report or prove a concealed command from the Fatimid court.

An Alid correction of a punitive judgment

The corpus also preserves a story in which ʿUmar proposes punishment after a woman gives birth at six months and ʿAlī prevents it by reading two Qur'anic passages together. The reasoning combines the period of pregnancy and weaning with the stated period of nursing. The narrative presents an interpretive calculation as grounds to stop the penalty. [I10]

The historical event needs its own transmission study. The moral and methodological use is already visible in the received text. A punitive judgment is challenged by reasons that can be displayed. The authority of the person proposing punishment does not make the objection disappear.

This is a useful control for our account of the transmitted ʿAlī. A corpus can attribute coercive acts to an ancestor in one setting and use his name to interrupt coercion in another. Selecting only the damaging reports would obscure the second function. Equally, a humane story cannot authenticate every neighboring attribution. Each claim should retain its own source history.

The case also distinguishes normative borrowing from a simple sectarian alignment. Al-Nuʿmān can criticize a decision attributed to ʿUmar while using reasoning to identify its error. The result supplies a question for the broader book: when does a school preserve the practice of accountable correction, and when does it turn the correcting ancestor into an exclusive authority whose later representatives cannot be challenged?

Oaths, allegiance, and compulsion

On volume 2, page 95, report 296 threatens a severe consequence for breaking allegiance. Immediately afterward, report 297 states:

لا يمين لمكره

"No oath binds the coerced." [I11]

The page then gives Jaʿfar's rejection of coerced divorce and manumission, followed by material concerning protective dissimulation and a report relieving people of responsibility for what they cannot do or have been compelled to do. These propositions occupy the same legal neighborhood as the warning about broken allegiance. [I11]

The reference to manumission also requires an ethical distinction. Declaring an emancipation invalid can preserve an owner's control over another person. Our approval of protection against coerced speech supplies no justification for that ownership. The liberty of the enslaved person has its own moral claim, which the technical treatment of the owner's declaration does not resolve.

Their adjacency does not make the corpus formally contradictory. A reader can distinguish an initially valid pledge from words extracted through compulsion. That distinction is exactly what an

administrator has to preserve when invoking allegiance. The threatening report cannot establish that every recorded declaration was freely undertaken.

Our extension concerns the limits of consent after the initial act. A person can accept an office's legitimate mandate while refusing an instruction that exceeds it. The pledge's scope matters. A formula of allegiance cannot supply an unlimited advance waiver of every moral objection to future commands. This conclusion follows from the project's account of accountable authority; it is not presented as an additional sentence spoken by Jaʿfar.

The coercion rule also prevents an easy dismissal of taqiyya. A person who conceals belief under threat may be protecting life or another person's safety. The moral problem arises when a powerful institution invokes protective concealment to evade accountability for its own actions. The beneficiary and the threatened harm need to be identified in each case.

Reassessment: retain the principle that coerced words cannot establish the same obligations as a voluntary undertaking. Restrict the use of allegiance reports to a demonstrably valid and bounded commitment. Their sanctions require separate ethical examination.

The officer whose reputation is insufficient

The passage at *Daʿāʾim* 1:365 is unusually useful for the book's central argument about privileged knowledge. Selection of officials should draw on their earlier performance. Subsequent inquiry must examine their work and treatment of petitioners. The text gives specific attention to the resentment and arrogance that can develop in administration. [I06]

The principle identifies information the ruler cannot obtain from his own confidence alone. A convincing interview can be followed by abusive conduct. An official with a good past can deteriorate after receiving power. Inspection remains necessary because an appointment changes the circumstances under which the appointee acts.

Our constructive application gives petitioners an epistemic role. They know things about an office that the appointing authority may never see directly. Their testimony can therefore correct the ruler's impression of his representative. An institution that regards complaints as an insult to the appointing authority would obstruct the very inquiry the passage recommends.

That is a limited conclusion about what the instruction makes reasonable. The passage does not establish a complete modern system of administrative appeal. Its value lies in a stated obligation that can be used to judge an institution's procedures. Who receives a complaint? Can evidence be heard without the accused officer controlling access to it? What happens when the ruler's favored appointee is the subject of the complaint? Those questions are our institutional development of the instruction.

The attribution history has an additional complication. A later note in al-Nūrī's *Mustadrak* observes that material resembling the instruction associated with Mālik al-Ashtar appears in the *Daʿāʾim* as Prophetic instruction to ʿAlī, distributed among different chapters. The note also acknowledges differences between the texts. [I14]

That is a source-critical lead with an identifiable object. A received political instruction can move across named addressees and editorial arrangements. The note supplies evidence that a later scholar recognized the problem. A complete collation would have to identify the shared sentences and determine the earliest witnesses to each attribution. We retain the administrative principle while keeping its exact ancient speaker unresolved.

Protection granted from below

The section on *amān* limits military discretion through protection granted by an ordinary Muslim. It includes recognition by gesture and protection expressed in any language. The broader passage remains situated within a classical division of religious and military status; those surrounding categories cannot be silently converted into contemporary equal citizenship. [I12]

Within that setting, the rule has an important effect. An official cannot cancel an undertaking merely because the person who gave it lacks a superior rank. Someone who relied upon the assurance acquires a claim that reaches beyond the private intention of the commander.

The passage deserves a favorable judgment under our uṣūl for the specific protection it gives. A hierarchy that claims to uphold covenants must allow a valid covenant to constrain its own conduct. The strongest form of that principle requires deciding whose assurances can bind and how reliance is established. Those questions are legal work; they are not answered by a proclamation that the state embodies justice.

A textual difficulty should remain visible. Al-Nūrī's later note identifies an awkward negative in the received formulation about violating protection and proposes a corrected sense. [I14] The surrounding examples make the protective direction clear, but the note is a reminder that even humane material passes through copying and editorial repair. Agreement with our ethics cannot exempt it from textual scrutiny.

A captive becomes a defeated interlocutor

Al-Nuʿmān's *Taʾwīl al-daʿāʾim* provides a direct example of the movement from outward law to inward interpretation. At volume 3, page 305, capture in battle becomes a model for an opponent overcome in debate. Release, continued exclusion, and ransom acquire instructional meanings. The discussion also relates the duty to feed a captive to the offering of teaching that sustains the

interlocutor spiritually. The outward legal discussion continues to be stated alongside the interpretation. [I25]

The comparison can cultivate responsibility toward someone a debater has defeated. It can also import the victor's power into the act of teaching. An argument's success establishes that a particular objection has been answered. Whether it authorizes control over the defeated person's further access to knowledge is another question.

Under our approach, a teacher's ability to expose an error gives him a responsibility to explain it intelligibly. He cannot treat the learner as property acquired through victory. A financial condition on access would also need a justification concerned with the person seeking instruction. The word *ransom* cannot make that justification automatic.

The concern is especially serious when disagreement is assimilated to spiritual death. A teacher may sincerely believe that an erroneous doctrine endangers a person. That belief still leaves the person's response to be heard. It cannot make every refusal proof that the teacher has discharged his obligations or that the refuser alone bears responsibility for the resulting harm.

This is our normative criticism of the metaphor's potential institutional use. It establishes neither a report of a particular historical abuse nor the proposition that all Ismaili instruction operated by coercion. The exact passage gives us a concrete model to assess, with ethical and hierarchical consequences appearing within the same interpretive act.

The book's second confessional life

Later reception can change the identity through which a corpus is admitted. Al-Nūrī's bibliographical discussion of the *Daʿāʾim* preserves two different descriptions of al-Nuʿmān. It quotes Ibn Shahrāshūb's judgment that he was outside the Imami school while his books were good, then cites a later account making him a convert to that school. [I13]

The first position allows a work to be valuable across a doctrinal boundary. The second brings the author within the receiving community's own genealogy. Whether the second account is historically correct requires evidence beyond the desirability of possessing the book. Its presence is nevertheless important to the history of canon and reception.

For *Dark Imams*, this is a concrete form of the Twelver-centered problem the author has criticized. If every useful Alid work must be explained through a hidden Twelver identity, the surviving diversity becomes harder to recognize. Conversely, a genuine change of affiliation should be accepted where it is established. The test is the person's evidenced history, applied with the same care as an accusation of hostile affiliation.

The Fatimid legal corpus can therefore be read without deciding that its theological identity disqualifies its humane provisions or authenticates all its ancestral reports. Its own treatment of

administration gives us resources for accountability. Its arguments about exclusive knowledge reveal how that accountability can be restricted at another level. A later Nizari proclamation of qiyāma in 1164 belongs to another setting in this history: authority could also be exercised through a claim that the meaning of religious time had changed. That event needs its own doctrinal witnesses and remains distinct from the Fatimid rules examined here. [W-S10]

The following chapter examines the philosophical account of learning that gave inward interpretation much of its attraction, including the point at which a learner's development becomes a reason for another person's continuing control.

16 · Intellect, Soul, and the Work of Learning

An apple becomes ripe through processes that begin before its sweetness can be tasted. In *Khwān al-ikhwān*, Nāṣir-i Khusraw uses that ordinary transformation to explain the relation between religious practice and understanding. Nourishment reaches the fruit through its tree; an embodied discipline prepares the human soul for knowledge. Interrupting the process can prevent the promised maturity. The analogy gives instruction a temporal structure: what the learner becomes depends on how learning is lived. [I18]

This is a more demanding account than a promise that possessing an esoteric proposition makes someone superior. It also places considerable power with those who identify the proper discipline and interpret the learner's progress. Our task is to examine both parts of the account in the same texts.

The chapter now follows selected Persian passages directly. The readings come from the original text reproduced by Ganjoor, whose pages also contain modern machine-generated explanations. Those explanations are excluded from the evidence. Section numbers below identify the website's divisions; where the *Khwān* supplies a numbered *ṣaff*, or course, that number is given too. The readings remain readings of a modern transcription, with comparison against a critical edition and manuscript witnesses still required.

An originated Intellect

Course 10 describes Universal Intellect as the first thing originated by the Creator and complete in potentiality and actuality. Nāṣir supports its priority through an argument about dependence: removing the condition for knowing would remove the knowledge that depends on it. The account distinguishes the divine originator from the intelligible principle through which the order of knowledge is explained. [I15]

The distinction gives our tawḥīd framework something substantial to assess. A created or originated intermediary can possess an exceptional function while remaining dependent upon Allah. Calling that function universal does not settle whether the intermediary has independent existence. The status of its being and the scope of its work require separate judgments.

Our bounded theophany inquiry permits divine guidance to become perceptible through a servant. It also allows the theological possibility of created spiritual assistance. Those permissions do not establish that a particular philosophical system's Intellect is the same entity as every scriptural occurrence of Spirit, Word, or light. The equation would need textual reasons that concern each occurrence. The *Finding Injil* comparison already preserves that problem in its discussion of John and the imamic Spirit reports. [BH-A01; BH-A02]

A further distinction concerns the proof offered. Nāṣir's argument from the conditions of knowledge is a philosophical argument. A reader can examine whether the proposed priority follows without deciding in advance who has the correct succession. Accepting the value of the argument also leaves its limits available for discussion. The fact that knowing depends upon intelligibility does not by itself identify a particular human custodian of all intelligible truth.

This is the point at which the book's institutional concern enters. A metaphysical principle may explain why knowledge is possible. A named officeholder must still establish his connection to the guidance he claims to convey. The first argument cannot silently discharge the second.

How a person participates in Soul

Course 48 begins by calling the human soul a part of Universal Soul. Its examples concern people's capacity to produce forms, pursue benefits, and understand. Later in the same discussion, Nāṣir explains that part should not mean a smaller spatial piece. The passage also relates differences among souls to the reception of knowledge and to moral qualities. [I16]

That clarification prevents a crude picture of one immense substance divided into human fragments. The author is using the relation to explain a shared kind of intellectual life and the possibility of its development. The philosophical claim remains strong, but its content is more specific than a vague assertion that everyone is cosmically connected.

Our reconstruction retains the question the passage makes visible: does learning merely add something a person possesses, or does it change the capacities through which the person encounters reality? The answer can matter for moral life. Someone who acquires the ability to recognize another person's vulnerability may become responsible for a harm he previously failed to understand. Greater understanding can alter what it is reasonable to demand of him.

The same consideration also limits a claim to superiority. Increased capacity creates obligations concerning its use. A person who sees consequences others cannot foresee has reasons to explain and protect. His advantage does not establish ownership of the people affected by his predictions. This is our ethical inference, stated independently of whether one accepts Nāṣir's complete cosmology.

The passage's language of participation also leaves an important historical task. We need to establish how its terms function within Nāṣir's works and which distinctions he expects his reader to know. A resemblance to a later philosopher's vocabulary is a lead for comparison. It cannot, by itself, identify a route of transmission or demonstrate that the later author accepted the same account of the person.

A world contained through knowledge

Course 40 argues that the natural world is encompassed by Universal Soul through the relation of cause and intelligible order. It expressly distinguishes that encompassing from the way one body surrounds another. Its reasoning includes the finite celestial sphere and the use of geometrical knowledge. [I17]

The physical assumptions matter. A philosophical argument can contain an enduring distinction while depending upon an account of the heavens that later inquiry revises. Retaining the distinction between conceptual and spatial containment leaves the cosmological premises available for examination. The reader is not required to defend an obsolete astronomy in order to understand what the author meant by a soul's scope.

This is also where an AI analogy becomes easy to misuse. A model that represents many features of the world has acquired a capacity for representation. Naming it Universal Soul would add claims about existence and causation that its performance measurements do not establish. The useful comparison concerns what knowledge enables an agent to perceive and do.

Our later experiments remain at that observable level. They can test whether a system recognizes consequences, changes its conduct after correction, or treats its superior prediction as permission to override another person. They cannot verify a cosmological identity by finding that the system has become very capable.

A faithful use of the philosophical material therefore needs the author's own distinctions. Nāṣir's account already makes literal spatial interpretation inadequate. A contemporary extension should be equally explicit about which property is being compared and which theological claim remains independent of the comparison.

The soul's education through practice

Course 86 makes *taʾyīd*, spiritual assistance, dependent upon the conjunction of practice and knowledge. It warns that abandoning the practice of the religious law obstructs the understanding sought through it. The apple analogy belongs to this argument. A further comparison invokes healthy vision: the condition of the receiver affects what can be received. [I18]

The passage gives us a direct control against treating inward interpretation as a general licence to abandon obligations. In this account, a person becomes capable of understanding through a disciplined life. The relation between conduct and insight belongs to the teaching itself.

The ethical promise is considerable. Knowing a proposition about justice cannot be the full measure of whether someone has become just. The person's habits affect which facts he notices and which

excuses he finds persuasive. A teaching practice that trains attention to another person's need can change the conditions under which moral judgment occurs.

An institutional danger appears when the teacher controls every criterion of progress. A student's objection can then be explained as evidence that the student remains unprepared. That explanation might sometimes be correct. Its unrestricted use would make the instruction impossible to evaluate from within the learner's experience.

Our requirement is therefore a bounded account of preparation. The teacher should be able to explain what competence a discipline develops and what observation would show that it has failed. Where the discipline imposes burdens on others, their position belongs in the assessment. A claimed benefit to the initiate's soul cannot make those people irrelevant.

The apple offers a useful image of maturation. It becomes a poor model of consent if the student is treated as something merely cultivated by an owner. A person can question the proposed end of his education. The legitimacy of instruction depends partly on preserving that capacity as the person becomes more able to exercise it.

Moral repair and the marks of action

Course 36 describes wrongdoing as leaving a form or inscription in the soul. Repentance and subsequent good action remove or replace that condition. The discussion invokes Qur'an 25:70 in its account of moral change. It gives the soul's education a practical object: what a person repeatedly does affects the person who will later judge and act. [I22]

Our reading retains the responsibility to repair conduct. An initiate's standing cannot compensate for continued injury merely because he understands a higher explanation of the act. The value of an explanation must be tested through what it permits, what it corrects, and how it changes treatment of the people who bear its consequences.

The philosophical language can also help identify a familiar failure. A person can learn to narrate repentance while preserving the habits that produced the wrong. If the institution rewards the narration more than restitution, it may mistake articulate self-description for moral formation. The same problem can occur in systems trained to produce convincing accounts of their behavior.

That comparison requires no finding about whether a machine possesses a soul. It concerns the evidentiary difference between an explanation and a changed disposition. The latter should appear where a correction is costly: relinquishing an advantage, restoring another person's choice, or acknowledging a result that damages one's own standing. These are proposed tests developed by this project, rather than experiments already performed or criteria quoted from Nāṣir.

The mean and the authorized teacher

Course 41 presents virtues through a mean between harmful extremes. It discusses courage and generosity and invokes Qur'an 17:29 concerning restraint in expenditure. Later, the same discussion applies the image of balance to knowledge of divine unity, assigning a necessary role to authorized guides in avoiding the opposed errors of assimilation and negation. [I19]

The transition needs to be read carefully. A practical case for proportionate action does not automatically prove that one institution alone can identify proportion. The passage supplies a theory of guidance as well as an account of virtue. Each part has a different burden of justification.

Our tawḥīd reading can preserve the demand to avoid making God resemble a creature. It can also recognize the value of teachers who help students identify a mistaken inference. The exclusivity of a particular succession claim remains a historical and theological proposition requiring its own grounds. A critic who questions that claim has not thereby endorsed every error the teacher warns against.

This distinction matters because a useful middle position can become an instrument of closure. The institution identifies its own doctrine with balance, then places every dissenter at an extreme. The language of moderation supplies the conclusion before the dissenting argument is heard. A serious account of the mean must allow examination of what makes an act or belief proportionate.

The resulting judgment is selective. Retain the demand for moral discernment and the possibility of instruction. Examine the asserted necessity of each guide. Reject the use of a metaphor of balance to disqualify an objection without answering it.

The learner in an ownership metaphor

The most difficult passage in this batch occurs in *Wajh-i dīn*, discourse 38. Nāṣir interprets *istibrāʾ*, a waiting requirement concerning an enslaved woman, through the transfer of a learner between teachers. He maps the receiving position within the mission to the female position in the legal analogy. A new teacher should wait until the earlier teaching has been formed or abandoned, so conflicting instructions do not remain unresolved. The text also rejects simultaneous attachment to two teachers in the terms of its sexual and ownership comparison. [I20]

The explanation contains an educational concern worth examining. Contradictory instruction can confuse a learner. A teacher taking over a course needs to know what the student already understands. Time for clarification can improve understanding. Those practical observations can be assessed without accepting the legal institution from which the comparison is drawn.

The metaphor adds much more. It distributes activity and receptivity through a relation of hierarchy, then uses an ownership framework to characterize a change of teacher. The learner's

judgment risks disappearing from the explanation of who may instruct him. The teacher's authority can look like a claim upon the learner rather than a responsibility undertaken for the learner's benefit.

Under our uṣūl, that inference fails. A learner may voluntarily work within a demanding curriculum. He retains a reason to consult another teacher when the first cannot explain an objection. The proposed confusion must be demonstrated through the teachings involved. It cannot be inferred solely from his having sought a second source.

This criticism also needs lexical care. The Persian word for master or owner in the passage's domestic comparison must be read in that context. Translating every occurrence as God would introduce a claim of divine identity that the passage is not making. The problem concerns the relation of command and dependence used to organize learning.

The passage ends by demanding avoidance of wrongdoing at both outward and inward levels. [I20] Our criticism therefore proceeds through an obligation the text itself retains. A symbolic interpretation cannot make coercion harmless merely by relocating it into the language of spiritual benefit. The practical question is whether the student becomes better able to recognize truth and act responsibly, including when the proposed teacher is mistaken.

The historical reach of the finding is limited to the identified text and its interpretation. A metaphor in Nāṣir's work does not establish how every Ismaili community taught, or how a particular present-day teacher behaves. It does supply a concrete case in which esoteric interpretation can carry an unequal legal relation into the account of knowledge. The implications deserve the same scrutiny as the paternal-override reports examined earlier in the book.

Whose reasoning can be heard?

Wajh-i dīn, discourse 48, supplies a more explicit boundary. In a polemical interpretation of relations with religious opponents, Nāṣir distinguishes adversaries whose recognition of an Imam can be used in argument from those who deny the premise. He writes:

هرکه امام ثابت نکند هیچ قول او را نباید پذیرفتن

"One who affirms no Imam should have no statement accepted." [I21]

The surrounding discussion compares taking an opponent's conceded premise and using it against him to an exaction employed against the party from whom it was taken. Its categories, including the people he calls *nāṣibīs*, belong to this author's polemical arrangement. The passage does not give us permission to assign those classifications indiscriminately to contemporary communities. [I21]

Reasoning from an opponent's concession can be sound. If the concession and the further inference are valid, the opponent has a problem to answer. The difficulty is the wholesale exclusion of

someone whose framework rejects the institution's central premise. Such a person may still identify an error in a historical claim or expose an invalid inference.

The mechanism is comparable to the Zaydi consensus problem in chapter 11. The relevant constituency is defined through acceptance of a doctrinal condition, after which the excluded person's objection loses standing. The mechanisms are not identical: one concerns participation in a legally authoritative consensus, while the other governs receptivity to an opponent's statements. Both raise the question of who controls admission to the circle within which reasoning is recognized.

Our assessment rejects doctrinal affiliation as a sufficient reason to discard an otherwise demonstrable objection. Accepting that standard does not require all arguments to be treated as equally sound. It requires the grounds of acceptance to be made explicit. A false premise can be shown false; a valid counterexample deserves an answer regardless of the speaker's succession theory.

This conclusion applies to our own book. An objection to the Abbasid, Buyid, or Templar hypotheses cannot be excluded because the critic has a confessional or institutional attachment. Those attachments can help identify incentives and source dependencies. They do not settle what the evidence establishes.

The disagreement within philosophical Ismailism

The preceding readings concern Nāṣir's texts. Other authors need their own treatment. Paul Walker's account of al-Sijistānī locates Soul at the relation between the spiritual and physical orders. The present edition retains that finding through the identified scholarly account; it does not supply a new complete Arabic reading of *Kitāb al-Yanābīʿ*. [N07]

Al-Kirmānī develops a substantially different architecture. Daftary describes his adaptation of a ten-intellect system in *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, replacing the Intellect–Soul dyad of earlier Iranian Ismaili cosmology. He also identifies al-Kirmānī's intervention against claims of al-Ḥākim's divinity and the later importance of his cosmology for Tayyibi authors. Court employment, anti-divinization argument, and philosophical innovation therefore appear within one scholar's activity. [I23]

These findings prevent a single doctrine from being assigned to every institution carrying the name Ismaili. An official defender of the Fatimid Imam could oppose a divinizing interpretation of that Imam. A philosophical system could become especially consequential in later communities rather than being adopted uniformly where it was first developed.

For *Dark Imams*, the relevant dispute is internal to the history of exalted authority. The recognition of an Imam does not predetermine what predicates can be applied to him. The bounded-theophany chapter makes a related distinction within the Imami reports: a particular divine grant has to

remain distinguishable from an unlimited cosmic assignment. The comparison concerns the scope of dependence, with each text retaining its own argument.

What survives the filtering

The readings leave substantial constructive material. A soul's education concerns conduct as well as propositions. Repentance requires a change in what a person does. An originated spiritual principle can have a wide function while remaining dependent upon Allah. The usefulness of these ideas can be examined through their arguments and their relation to the Qur'an. [I15; I18; I22]

Our disagreements are equally definite. An account of the learner as a recipient does not authorize ownership of his judgment. A succession claim cannot protect its historical evidence from an outsider's valid objection. An institution's claim to guide the soul must remain answerable to the treatment of the people it guides.

The Making Manifest comparison can now proceed from actual teachings. Increased knowledge becomes morally important through the agent it forms and the obligations that agent recognizes. It can also make a teacher or system more effective at defending an unjust purpose. The proposed year 2028 belongs to the author's technological scenario, with no prediction of that date supplied by these medieval texts.

The historical question for the following Ismaili chapters concerns the offices that survived political rupture. The philosophical question remains with the learner: what practices make recognition of truth compatible with continued responsibility, including the responsibility to question a guide who exceeds his mandate?

17 · Succession After the Fatimid Center

The death of a ruler leaves an office available to be occupied. A doctrine of designation adds a prior question: whom had the departing ruler already authorized? At the Fatimid court, an answer could determine access to the treasury and the mission while also claiming to settle the identity of the living Imam. The people receiving the answer in another country faced an additional difficulty. Their evidence often arrived through the institution whose future depended on their acceptance.

The divisions following al-Mustanṣir's death in 1094 and al-Āmir's death in 1130 consequently belong at the center of this book's investigation. Nizari, Mustaʿli, Tayyibi, and Hafizi accounts preserve distinct claims about the continuity of an inheritance. Al-Ḥāfiẓ, for example, defended his position through an alleged designation by al-Āmir, despite succeeding through a collateral branch. His father had never been Imam. The existence of that positive designation claim deserves attention alongside the Tayyibi claim centered on al-Āmir's son. [J02]

A shared belief in *naṣṣ* gives a succession dispute a common language. It supplies no automatic means of identifying the speech act to which the language refers. The parties still need testimony about a particular person's words. A theory of reliable divine guidance can make that testimony more consequential while leaving its ordinary transmission exposed to mistakes, interested selection, and retrospective elaboration.

The distinction that a title was asked to carry

Al-Āmir's *al-Hidāya al-Āmiriyya* defended the Mustaʿli succession against Nizari claims. S. M. Stern's study dates the document to 516 AH and examines its polemical circumstances. One argument distinguishes *walīʿahd al-muʾminīn*, assigned to al-Mustaʿlī, from *walīʿahd al-muslimīn*, assigned to his brothers. In his note to printed page 23, Stern says he lacks independent evidence for the special first title. He supplies a separate witness for the second. [J01]

The difference between believers and Muslims could therefore be made to carry a retrospective distinction in rank. An ordinary reader might encounter the contrast inside a polished defense of succession and assume that the crucial terminology had already been publicly established. The historical question is whether the contrast was used before the dispute, what it meant to contemporary hearers, and whether its application uniquely identified the heir.

These questions allow several explanations. A chancery might preserve an authentic title whose significance later opponents minimized. It might assign a new precision to wording that previously remained ambiguous. A later defense could also construct the contrast. The textual feature provides a place to discriminate among those explanations. General confidence in the doctrine of designation cannot decide the earlier use of two expressions.

For our multiple-succession inquiry, the distinction between offices becomes particularly important. Someone may be entrusted with leadership of a mission while another holds a different administrative responsibility. A family can distribute functions without recognizing two coequal holders of one indivisible office. Conversely, later polemic may present every lesser appointment as an implicit acknowledgment of the eventual winner's unique position. We need the actual terms of the grant and evidence of how the recipient acted under it.

The author's proposal concerning several bearers of Ḥusayn's inheritance remains relevant at that level. It asks us to notice delegated responsibilities before translating them into an exclusive succession list. The Fatimid dispute supplies a demanding control: the discovery of competing designations would not, by itself, establish that both were intended to confer equal authority. Their scope has to be recovered.

What the coin can establish

Stern's notes also identify a numismatic trap. A coin bearing the name Nizār had been associated with the claimant of 1094. The accompanying title identifies the earlier caliph al-ʿAzīz, whose personal name was also Nizār. Elsewhere Stern cites coins that do attest the appointment of ʿAbd al-Raḥīm under al-Ḥākim. Names, titles, and offices must be read together. [J01]

A coin provides unusually concrete evidence of a public act. Someone authorized a die, supplied metal, and circulated the resulting object. Those operations can establish official recognition at a particular time. Their evidentiary value depends on identifying the person recognized and the nature of the title. A name shared across generations cannot perform that identification alone.

The same discipline applies to a manuscript heading. A later copyist may place a familiar title above a document whose original designation was different. An editor's bracket can make an obscure person recognizable while also encouraging the reader to forget that the identification is an inference. The source record must distinguish the original wording from the explanation supplied to make it readable.

This has consequences for the book's political hypothesis. Material evidence can strengthen a claim of public designation without establishing the claimant's theological correctness. It can also weaken a proposed reconstruction by identifying a different person. The historian should state the changed proposition precisely. An incorrectly identified coin loses its force as evidence for that claimant; the claimant's other witnesses remain available for examination.

A retrospective defense and its audience

The *Hidāya* belongs to a successor's defense of a disputed inheritance. Its temporal position matters. A later ruler may have access to family testimony, earlier correspondence, and people who

witnessed a decision. He also has a strong interest in presenting those materials as an intelligible account of his own legitimacy. The investigation must reconstruct how the account combines them.

The source limitation does not prevent a judgment about the argument's structure. When a later defense makes several signs converge on one heir, we should ask whether they were independent before they were assembled. Family testimony can depend on an official account already circulated. A ceremonial title can be interpreted through a decision established elsewhere. The apparent accumulation of proof may contain fewer independent witnesses than the finished presentation suggests.

A fair test also looks for disagreement within the favored archive. A writer who preserves an awkward detail may give us information his larger argument did not require. An opposing account may repeat that detail while assigning it a different explanation. Such convergence can identify an event beneath incompatible interpretations. Neither party gains automatic immunity from scrutiny through its relationship to the Imam.

Arwā and the authority to preserve a line

The Yemeni case changes the practical shape of the inquiry. Farhad Daftary's study identifies Sayyida Ḥurra, Arwā, as a consequential authority in the mission and follows her support for al-Ṭayyib after al-Āmir's death. It points to a birth announcement preserved in the later *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* and to the development of the *dāʿī muṭlaq* under Dhuʾayb. Arwā's own political and religious standing helped a concealed line acquire a continuing institution. [J03]

The letter concerning al-Ṭayyib's birth and the act of designating a successor require separate treatment. A securely transmitted announcement of a child establishes a fact with obvious relevance to succession. It does not contain every premise needed to establish the child's later office. Equally, uncertainty about the child's subsequent movements does not erase an earlier announcement. The sequence needs to be reconstructed item by item.

The question then becomes what Arwā was entitled to certify. Recognition from a ruler with a position in the mission can have considerable force for people who trust her judgment. Her political capacity also allows a decision to survive through appointments, resources, and communications. Those actions make her an agent in the history of religious authority, with her own responsibilities and opportunities for error.

An account that treats women chiefly as objects of guardianship would have difficulty describing that agency adequately. Here a woman's judgment concerns the survival of an entire succession institution. Our critique of coercive marriage law elsewhere in the book consequently belongs beside a historical willingness to recognize women who exercised authority. The ethical demand concerns

meaningful agency across both settings, while the evidence for a particular office remains specific to its holder.

Arwā's support also complicates the idea that the institutional center necessarily determines the surviving religious inheritance. A court can recognize one claimant while a mission elsewhere sustains another. Distance permits delay and confusion; it also gives a community room to refuse an explanation issued by the capital. A geographically distributed institution can preserve a dissenting memory when one center controls the official record.

The scope of a representative's title

A concealed Imam requires a way for ordinary adherents to distinguish authorized representation from a claimant's own assertion. The Tayyibi office supplies a historical form of that problem. Its title must be read through the institution's account of appointment and responsibility. Translating *muṭlaq* immediately into unlimited modern sovereignty would prejudge which powers the office actually claimed. [J03]

Our normative inquiry asks how the scope of representation can be inspected. A follower might accept a teacher's competence in scripture and remain uncertain about a demand concerning property. A community might recognize authority over ritual administration without delegating every decision about its members' lives. Each extension needs an account of the relevant grant.

This is also where an inquiry into manipulation becomes testable. A representative might preserve the conditions of an appointment accurately. A later successor could inherit the title while expanding its practical reach. Another possibility is that the original institution already assigned broad powers and later critics narrowed their memory of it. Dated instructions and records of disputes would distinguish those histories more effectively than a general description of secrecy.

A restriction on access can protect a vulnerable person. It can also make the representative difficult to correct. Those effects may coexist. The institutional question concerns what evidence remains available when direct consultation with the principal is impossible. A trusted witness, a written mandate, or a publicly recognized procedure can supply part of the answer, provided its provenance remains open to examination.

What the public surface displays

Irene Bierman's study of Fatimid public writing examines the al-Aqmar mosque and the place of the vizier al-Maʾmūn's titles on its façade. Her analysis treats inscription and ceremonial display as acts through which authority became visible within a contested political setting. [J05]

Such a surface gives us evidence of a public claim. It can show the sponsor presenting an office in a certain relation to the dynasty and its sacred ancestry. It cannot report a private deathbed

designation merely by displaying a name associated with the resulting government. The historian should resist allowing the visibility of the successful claimant to become proof of the earlier appointment.

The architecture also locates participation beyond the palace. People encounter titles while moving through a city. A public inscription can teach a hierarchy repeatedly, even to someone who never reads the polemical treatise defending it. The distribution of authority therefore depends partly on where explanations become available and which explanations receive durable form.

This mechanism is proposed here as an account of reception. Demonstrating that an inscription changed a particular person's allegiance would require evidence about that person. The more limited finding concerns an institution's public assertion and its material support. It belongs beside letters and appointment narratives as a different kind of witness.

Several continuities after rupture

The succession disputes distinguish the survival of a teaching community from survival of the state that once supported it. A community can preserve books after losing a capital. It can retain a public representative for a concealed line, or recognize a living Imam without possessing the former state's administration. Each arrangement creates a different distribution of trust.

For the later Templar comparison, these histories offer concrete standards of inquiry. Continuity is investigated through named persons, identifiable offices, and texts explaining the transfers. A shared symbol may prompt the search. An appointment record can establish a particular connection. The kind of continuity claimed determines which evidence would be sufficient.

The same standard governs our own proposed Alid inheritances. A pedagogical relationship can continue through a pupil who changes political allegiance. A legal office can inherit a procedure while rejecting the succession doctrine of its source. A complete institutional lineage demands evidence for the transfer of that institution's defining authority. The records should preserve the changes instead of making every connection carry the whole claim.

This chapter reaches a definite historical result at the level of competing arguments. Later Fatimid and post-Fatimid claimants articulated positive accounts of designation, and institutions acted on different answers. The title argument and the coin identification show how apparently small details can alter a reconstruction. Arwā's role shows why the capital's eventual account cannot stand in for every part of the mission. The historical authenticity of each disputed appointment remains a claim to assess through its particular witnesses.

Decisions under our uṣūl

Designation and proof. Retain *naṣṣ* as a proposition that can be investigated through testimony and transmitted documents. Suspend an exclusive historical verdict where the decisive wording is known through one interested retrospective defense.

Several appointments. Distinguish delegated functions from coequal succession. Neither rivalry nor cooperation supplies the missing terms of a grant. Apply this to the author's multiple-succession proposal as fully as to a later canonical list.

Public recognition. Retain coins and inscriptions as evidence for the claims actually displayed. Require correct identification of names, titles, and dates before using them to establish an heir.

Concealed representation. Require evidence of appointment and a specified scope of authority. A claim to protect the principal does not settle the representative's entitlement to bind another person in every matter.

Arwā's agency. Preserve her decisions and offices within the historical explanation. The significance of her authority remains open to source criticism on the same terms as that of the men whose succession she helped sustain.

The next comparison begins earlier, within the Fatimid environment itself. It concerns a community whose texts describe an unveiling of unity and turn passages from the Gospel of John into an account of religious time.

18 · The Druze and the Universal Soul

The Druze material brings *Dark Imams* into direct contact with the Gospel inquiry developed in *Finding Injil*. An epistle attributed to Bahāʾ al-Dīn interprets passages from John as a sequence of religious ages. It identifies Muḥammad with the Paraclete and makes the disclosure of unity the purpose through which earlier revelations must be understood. The same interpretation assigns the Prophet a position that the present project cannot accept. Its importance lies in the specific work it performs with the Gospel, including the places where its wording diverges from the received text. [J12; J13]

This changes the evidentiary situation. The comparison between Johannine language and Shiʿi theophany now includes an identifiable instance of reception within the Druze textual tradition. It does not establish that an early Johannine community anticipated that tradition. Nor does it supply a missing medieval link to the Templars. The passage belongs first to a history of how an interpreter used a Christian text to explain the authority of his own religious world.

The sources and the voice of the translator

The close readings below use Philip K. Hitti's published translations of selected Druze writings, with their printed page references retained. His book appeared in 1928; the electronic host displays a conflicting 1924 header. Hitti's identifications in brackets and his speculative historical footnotes are separated from the translated passages. The present edition has not collated the underlying Arabic manuscripts. [J09–J12; J14; J15]

A fuller textual base is available in Daniel De Smet's critical edition of the first two volumes of the *Rasāʾil al-ḥikma*. Its publication record identifies forty epistles and a manuscript-based Arabic and French edition. That record supplies an exact next witness to consult; the complete edition was not accessed for this batch. Its account associates Ḥamza and Ismāʿīl al-Tamīmī with the personifications of Universal Intellect and Universal Soul. [J06]

The source levels matter because a translated sentence can contain several acts of interpretation. The manuscript bears wording. The editor identifies the speaker or referent. A historian explains its political context. Our own theological assessment then evaluates the claim under the project's uṣūl. These acts can support one another, although they answer different questions.

The earlier account of the Universal Soul also needs its original setting. Tatsuya Kikuchi describes early Druze mappings of cosmic principles and their opponents onto participants in the Fatimid world. Kais Firro distinguishes outward religion, inner interpretation, and the religious understanding of unity in the development of Druze teaching. These studies make it inappropriate

to treat every use of Soul or Intellect across the Ismaili and Druze archives as one unchanged doctrine. [J07; J08]

Our question concerns the consequences of placing a living community within such a cosmology. A person can understand an office as expressing a spiritual principle and still need evidence that the person occupying it has been properly identified. The grandeur of the principle cannot complete that identification on its own. Once a contemporary opponent is assigned the position of cosmic error, the demand for evidence becomes more urgent because ordinary disagreement may acquire an absolute moral significance.

A covenant that begins with willingness

The induction covenant translated by Hitti opens with trust in al-Ḥākim as unique and eternal. It describes the signatory as sound in mind and body, entering "without duress and constraint." The undertaking then extends to the signer's body, possessions, and children, with acceptance of decisions for or against him. Obedience is described as adoration. Ḥamza appears as the servant of the Lord named in the document. [J10]

The requirement of willingness deserves recognition under our uṣūl. A serious commitment should concern someone capable of understanding what he undertakes. The subsequent scope of the undertaking requires a separate moral examination. The act of agreeing cannot justify every condition an agreement purports to impose.

Consider the inclusion of children. A parent may assume duties to protect and educate them. He cannot establish their later assent merely by announcing his own allegiance. The same objection appeared in the marriage dossiers, where an agreement made during dependency was used to extinguish refusal after maturity. Religious vocabulary changes the setting of the argument; the affected person's agency remains relevant.

Acceptance of every future decision introduces another difficulty. A participant can authorize a teacher to guide a defined practice. He can accept a procedure for resolving disagreements. A promise whose scope includes every later demand places the whole justification in the original moment, before the demands are known. The claimant must explain how the recipient's continuing responsibilities survive that arrangement.

A defender might understand the covenant as devotion to God rather than obedience to an ordinary human administrator. That reading deserves its strongest form. The theological identification is doing the essential work: decisions attributed to the named Lord are understood as divine acts. Our objection therefore cannot be resolved merely by observing that the text uses a human name. It must address the grounds for the identification and the authority of those who later interpret the covenant.

The boundary set by *Finding Injil*

The project's bounded theophany permits divine guidance to become perceptible through a created servant. A person can bear an entrusted word and perform a granted act while remaining wholly dependent upon Allah. This reading was developed through John's language of received works, Qur'anic accounts of divine permission, and selected Imami reports. [BH-A01; BH-J01; BH-Q01]

A claim that the one God manifests through a form can be intended to preserve unity. It need not posit two competing gods. The present project nevertheless requires the created bearer's status to remain distinguishable from the uncreated source of existence and worship. The covenant's identification of the named Lord with the exclusive object of adoration consequently exceeds the bounded model defended here. That is our stated theological judgment about the proposition in the text.

The judgment does not assign hidden intentions to every believer who later inherits the text. A religious community can contain several explanations of an inherited formula. The historian needs evidence for those explanations. An ethical critique of a specific covenant also supplies no licence to treat living Druze people as instruments of a political plot. Their conduct and institutions require their own histories.

The position is reciprocal. An Imami report that uses similar language receives the same test. Calling a speaker a servant does not settle the scope of the powers subsequently attributed to him. A Christian confession of divine manifestation likewise needs analysis of its predicates and the relation it asserts. Sectarian affiliation cannot substitute for that work.

John's three days become religious time

The epistle *al-Qusṭanṭīniyya*, attributed to Bahāʾ al-Dīn and presented as addressed to the Byzantine emperor, begins its interpretation with John 2:19–22. The temple's restoration in three days becomes a scheme of religious stages. The second stage identifies the Paraclete as Muḥammad. The later unveiling interprets the Psalter, Torah, Gospel, and Qur'an through the disclosure of unity. Hitti's translated colophon places the epistle in 1028. Actual delivery to the emperor is a further historical claim. [J12]

This is a specific reception of the Gospel's words. It also demonstrates how an interpretation can change their unit of time. A narrated event becomes a sequence extending through successive religious dispensations. The interpreter acquires the ability to locate the present movement at the completion of that sequence.

For *Dark Imams*, the question concerns what authorizes the change of scale. An interpreter can propose that a passage carries more than one level of meaning. Establishing an additional meaning requires an argument about the text's language and context. When the proposed meaning identifies

the interpreter's own community as the final age, the community's desired place in history cannot serve as the only evidence.

The same discipline applies to our Making Manifest scenario. A phrase about the disclosure of hidden things can illuminate the significance people attach to technological discovery. Assigning a date and an expected technical event introduces claims that require their own observations. A chronology read into an older text after the fact cannot independently forecast the event that made the reading attractive.

There is a useful positive result here. An esoteric tradition can preserve and actively interpret several scriptural corpora. Its engagement may be learned even where the conclusions conflict with our theology. Recovering the actual passages gives the proposed history of transmitted teaching a more substantial object than an unspecified inheritance of Eastern wisdom.

The Paraclete and the altered quotation

The epistle's Gospel wording needs close scrutiny. In Hitti's translation it gives Jesus the sentence, "my Father has a son who is greater than I." John 14:28 instead says that the Father is greater than Jesus. The epistle also joins its identification of the Paraclete with the ruler of this world in John 14:30, assigning Muḥammad a worldly legislative role and denying the higher calling it attributes to its own disclosure. [J12; J13]

This prevents the Paraclete identification from being detached from its polemical use. Finding the Prophet's name in an esoteric reading does not establish agreement with the Qur'anic account of his mission. The relevant unit is the complete inference: which figure is identified, what authority he receives, and how the next claimant supersedes him.

Several textual explanations remain possible for the altered sentence. The epistle's author may have used a paraphrase, encountered an already modified intermediary, or deliberately changed the wording. Transmission after composition may also matter. Hitti's English alone cannot identify the stage at which the alteration occurred. The first critical task is to compare the Arabic epistle witnesses and the editor's apparatus with the Gospel forms available to the author.

Our own Gospel method requires the same caution. A theological reading favorable to tawḥīd can be intelligible without being a recovered saying of Jesus. A later Arabic citation can preserve an old reading, but its antiquity must be established rather than inferred from its usefulness. The identified divergence therefore becomes an entry in a textual dossier, with the proposed author and date left attached to the evidence actually available.

John's distinct speakers also remain important. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks within a narrative shaped by an evangelist. The Druze epistle then places that received speech within another author's

argument. Our comparison concerns this later act of interpretation. It does not collapse the evangelist, the reported Jesus, Bahāʾ al-Dīn, Hitti, and the present author into one continuous voice.

The disappearance and the prohibition of inquiry

A charter translated in Hitti's Appendix C explains al-Ḥākim's disappearance through the people's spiritual failure. It directs repentance and collective prayer, then warns readers against tracing his steps or seeking information about him. The speaker promises a return at the appropriate time. Hitti adds a conjecture connecting the warning to a murder plot; that conjecture is his own and is not adopted here. [J11]

The warning gives us a concrete claim to examine. If accepted, it controls how followers may respond to uncertainty about the person on whom the religious account depends. Inquiry itself becomes a potentially disobedient act. The community is instructed to wait for the event that will vindicate the account.

Protection supplies a serious alternative explanation for secrecy. A search could endanger someone concealed from hostile authorities or expose associates to punishment. The ethical question is whether the restriction has a defined protective purpose and whether its extent is proportionate to that purpose. A permanent ban on investigating a consequential historical claim requires considerably more justification than a temporary restriction on publishing someone's location.

This distinction supports a stronger analysis of manipulation. A text restricting investigation offers an identifiable means of controlling information. Establishing who wrote it, why, and with what practical effect requires further evidence. The mechanism can be examined now without turning the editor's speculative account into the event's proven cause.

An ethical appeal across a hostile boundary

Another epistle in Hitti's selection attacks Christians for failing to live by Jesus' command to love enemies and pray for persecutors. Its use of Matthew is accompanied by severe polemic and confused identifications elsewhere in the passage. The ethical demand nevertheless remains identifiable within the argument. [J14]

Our evaluation retains the demand for conduct consistent with professed teaching. The speaker's own conduct and community must answer to the same demand. An appeal to love of enemies loses much of its force if the category of genuine enemy is restricted until only convenient cases remain.

This provides a useful way to study polemical texts without either discarding their arguments or adopting their denunciations. A writer can identify a real moral failure while misdescribing the people accused of it. The text may offer insight into an opponent's inconsistency while excusing a

comparable act among its own adherents. Reading each inference allows us to preserve the argument and challenge its selective application.

That is especially relevant to this book's language of *kufr* and betrayal. A public profession of truth can coexist with conduct that denies its practical demands. Establishing deliberate rejection by a particular person remains more demanding than showing that a doctrine and an action conflict. The moral diagnosis should not erase the difference between error, weakness, and knowing abuse.

The soul whose vices return

The later exhortation attributed to al-Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh al-Tanūkhī supplies the chapter's most useful positive account of formation. It treats pride, greed, and revenge as obstacles to knowledge. Its solar analogy then makes an exact distinction: the stars become ineffective while the sun shines, yet remain present and appear again when it sets. In the corresponding account of the soul, harmful dispositions can return when the sustaining knowledge and practice lapse. [J15]

The model deserves attention because it avoids making a moment of illumination sufficient evidence of permanent transformation. A person can speak truthfully while the conditions supporting that orientation are active. The durability of the orientation becomes another question. Learning must therefore include practices that sustain the person's relation to what he has understood.

Under our uṣūl, this gives a constructive place to discipline and companionship. A person may need teachers, reminders, and habits that protect him from his own familiar errors. Dependence of that kind becomes ethically valuable when it improves his ability to recognize and fulfill obligations. It becomes dangerous when the institution treats continued dependence as proof that he must surrender every capacity to assess it.

The analogy also constrains the modern use of spiritual titles. Initiation can begin a practice without certifying every later action of the initiate. A reputation for insight can coexist with failures of patience or justice. The teacher's own account of moral vulnerability should therefore give followers permission to notice a failure instead of requiring them to reinterpret every failure as superior wisdom.

For AI alignment, the passage suggests a limited experimental question. A system's behavior may improve under instructions, oversight, or particular training conditions. We can then vary those conditions and observe whether the relevant obligation remains effective. A relapse would count against an inference from present compliance to robust moral reliability. This is the book's proposed engineering comparison; it is not a claim that al-Tanūkhī described machine learning or that a machine possesses the metaphysical Soul of his tradition.

The comparison should also avoid substituting surveillance for virtue. A system that behaves safely only while a monitor is visible has one kind of reliability. A system that preserves its obligations

when it could violate them unnoticed has another. Human moral education can help us formulate the distinction, while technical evaluation must supply the measurements.

What the Universal Soul adds

The cosmological vocabulary places learning within an account of the whole world. It can make the individual's pursuit of understanding participate in a larger movement toward completion. That gives education an importance exceeding accumulation of useful information. The previous chapter examined Nāṣir-i Khusraw's account of formation through particular Persian passages. Here the Druze sources introduce a different relation between cosmic principles, named offices, and revelation. [I16; I18; J06–J08]

Our constructive reading preserves the question about formation while withholding an automatic identification of knowledge with legitimate command. A person's growing understanding may increase what he can contribute to others. It also increases the care required when he acts on their behalf. The person affected by the action remains entitled to an account of its purpose and authorization.

This distinction gives the author's "limited theophanic" language a practical consequence. The value of guidance is connected with the truth it conveys and the good it enables. A claim that the guide embodies a cosmic rank still has to establish why a particular demand follows. The rank cannot make an injury disappear from the ethical assessment.

The positive account of the soul and the problematic covenant therefore belong in one chapter. They expose different ways of linking guidance to conduct. A discipline can help a learner become more truthful while an expansive allegiance clause gives a representative too much control. Our evaluation follows those propositions independently, preserving the possibility of genuine insight within a text or tradition whose other claims we reject.

Decisions under our uṣūl

Created agency. Retain the possibility of granted knowledge and dependent spiritual assistance. Require evidence for a particular grant and preserve the distinction between the created bearer and Allah's uncreated sovereignty.

The induction covenant. Retain the demand for comprehension and freedom from duress. Reject the signer's authority to surrender another person's future assent and the use of an open-ended undertaking to defeat every later ethical objection.

Johannine reception. Retain the epistle as an identifiable Druze use of Gospel passages. Suspend attribution of its altered quotation to an early Gospel witness until the textual route is established.

The Paraclete identification. Read it with the roles assigned to Muḥammad and the subsequent claimant. Its occurrence alone cannot authenticate the interpretation developed in *Finding Injil*.

Restrictions on inquiry. Evaluate a defined protective purpose. Reject the proposition that a custodian can make a consequential claim immune to investigation merely by describing doubt as disobedience.

The formation of character. Retain the account of vigilance and the possibility of returning vices as a substantive moral insight. Treat its application to AI as a proposed experiment with observable failure conditions.

The later Templar chapters can now ask about the transmission of particular content: a practice of moral formation, a reading of John, or a claim concerning spiritual office. None of those items is interchangeable with the others. Their histories must be followed through the words and relationships that carried them.

PART IV · The Buyid Crucible and the Transmitted Imam

19 · Baghdad With Two Masters

Buyid government placed an Abbasid caliph and a Shiʿi military household within the same political order. For a scholar who regarded legitimate authority as belonging to the Imam, participation in that order required an explanation. A refusal to recognize the ruler's sacred entitlement did not answer every question about serving as a judge, preventing an injury, or administering a public duty.

Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā's short treatise on working for government gives that difficulty an unusually precise form. Its opening dates the discussion to Jumādā II 415 AH, corresponding to 1024, and locates it in a vizier's gathering. The received text names Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī, with a printed variant between al-Maʿarrī and al-Maghribī. The latter is the identified vizier's name. The treatise then classifies service under unjust rule according to its purposes and conditions. [J17; J22]

This is the principal new text in the present chapter. It shows a scholar reasoning about institutional participation in the setting where such participation mattered. Its argument has protective elements. It also provides a route through which a person appointed by an unjust government can claim the effective authority of the rightful Imam.

The dynasty before Baghdad

The chronology begins before 945. Tilman Nagel records ʿAlī ibn Būya's request for Abbasid recognition as governor of Fars in September–October 934, after his military advance into the region. The Buyid family developed several principalities whose interests could diverge. In Iraq, the office of *amīr al-umarāʾ* already existed under Ibn Rāʾiq in 936. Aḥmad ibn Būya entered Baghdad in December 945 and received the title Muʿizz al-Dawla. [J16]

These dates define distinct opportunities for influence. A theory about Buyid patronage in Iranian territories needs a regional map rather than a Baghdad starting date. A theory about the capital's administration needs the later transition. The copying history of a particular book may cross both settings.

Al-Kulaynī's death around 940–941 cannot close the inquiry into the later life of *al-Kāfī*. It also cannot turn every subsequent variation into an effect of Buyid power. The project must identify a proposed textual change or a new legal use and locate the people through whom it traveled. Chapter 21 develops that distinction at the level of the corpus. Here the focus is the argument that made participation in government intelligible. [W-S13]

The structure of the dynasty matters equally. A patron in one principality could support a scholar for reasons different from those of a ruler elsewhere. A conflict between family branches could move people and books without producing a uniform sectarian program. Describing the government

through a single doctrinal label would hide the practical relationships through which any intervention had to occur.

The presence of the caliph also carried consequences beyond an abstract question of legitimacy. Recognition could supply titles and a language of appointment even where military command lay elsewhere. The practical effect of that recognition must be separated from a scholar's belief about the ruler's ultimate entitlement. Someone could accept an office's capacity to act while assigning its moral justification to another source.

The good that an office makes possible

Al-Murtaḍā's argument begins by distinguishing just authority from domination by an unjust ruler. Service under the latter receives several classifications. It can become obligatory when the prospective official knows, or has strong grounds to expect, that the office will enable him to establish a right and prevent wrong that he could not otherwise address. The wording requires clear indications supporting that expectation. [J17; J18]

The Arabic condition is important:

أو يغلب على ظنه بأمارات لائحة

"Or it predominates in his judgment through evident indications." [J18]

This is a condition a critic can examine. A hopeful statement that office might permit good work supplies less than the text demands. The applicant needs reasons to expect an actual opportunity, and the claimed opportunity must depend on holding the office.

Our uṣūl can retain that protective reasoning. A person may be able to prevent an unlawful punishment by accepting responsibilities inside an imperfect institution. Refusal may leave the affected person exposed to someone worse. The possibility requires judgment about consequences, including the harms that participation itself could enable.

The text's condition also permits an immanent criticism of opportunism. If a claimant invokes public benefit while presenting no evidence of a benefit inaccessible by other means, his appeal has not met the stated threshold. An analyst need not assume that every appointment corrupts its holder in order to ask whether the holder has established his own justification.

The difficulty is persistence. Circumstances can change after appointment. A ruler might initially permit useful work and later demand an injury. The official's access may become dependent on compromises whose costs increase gradually. A defensible application of the argument would reassess the grounds for service as those facts change. That requirement is our extension of the text's conditional structure, rather than a quotation of a monitoring procedure supplied by al-Murtaḍā.

Where the authority is said to come from

At printed page 94, the treatise makes its decisive move. An office that is morally good, or obligatory when its conditions hold, is described as deriving in meaning from the rightful Imam and the Master of the Affair. Its outward appointment through another ruler does not determine its effective religious source. The text then compares obstruction of such an official with obstruction of a person appointed by the just Imam, including resistance through fighting under the stated conditions. [J19]

The relevant phrase is:

في المعنى من قبل إمام الحق وصاحب الأمر

"In meaning, from the rightful Imam and the Master of the Affair." [J19]

The inference concerns the relation between the function performed and the authority permitting it. A duty recognized as legitimate supplies grounds for acting even when the appointment's public channel is defective. The official's work receives a different moral description from the government that provides its administrative setting.

This is consequential for *Dark Imams*. An intermediary can acquire enforceable authority while continuing to deny the ruler's ultimate legitimacy. The process requires no interpolation into an older hadith collection. It can occur through a legal argument that reconnects an existing office to a different source of authorization.

A strong defense of the argument begins with its conditionality. The author has not simply endorsed every person who accepts government employment. His conclusion presupposes that the office's legitimate purposes and relevant conditions have been established. The political danger appears when an institution repeats the conclusion while allowing its officers to determine for themselves that the conditions hold.

The words concerning force must be read with comparable care. The passage is not a general instruction to punish anyone who asks an official a question. Its interlocutor describes someone preventing the official's exercise of the justified office. Nevertheless, the extension to coercive defense makes the prior classification exceptionally important. If the classification is wrong, an error about legitimacy can become an injury to the person who resists.

The book asks the outsider's question

Al-Murtaḍā does not leave that difficulty unspoken. The treatise asks how an observer can know that the apparently government-appointed official is acting rightfully. A person holding the correct religious belief could still pursue worldly advantage. Affiliation by itself therefore fails to establish the motive and justification needed. [J19]

This question deserves a central place in our account. It anticipates the problem that the person exercising power possesses more information about his intentions than those expected to obey him. A legal argument that depends on inward purpose needs an outward method of assessment.

The inquiry also makes the critique more demanding. We cannot dismiss the treatise as unaware that someone might abuse its justification. We must evaluate the answer it gives. A text can identify a danger accurately and still provide an inadequate safeguard against it.

At page 95, the answer turns to the predominance of judgment and the strength of indications. A record of habitual wrongdoing supports prevention of the appointment; a record of religious restraint supports enabling it. When indications balance and judgment remains uncertain, the text directs the observer to refrain from preventing or contesting the official, because the intervention might itself be morally wrongful. [J20]

The uncertainty clause reads:

وتقابلت الأمارات وتعادلت الظنون، وجب الكف من منعه ومنازعته

"When the indications oppose one another and the judgments balance, it becomes obligatory to refrain from preventing him and contending with him." [J20]

Who bears the risk of being mistaken?

The chapter's main critical finding concerns the allocation of uncertainty. The prospective official's justification begins with strong evidence of a good that service can achieve. The observer's uncertainty can then become a reason to leave the official in place. These judgments address different people with different information. Their interaction determines how readily the office can be challenged.

There is a defensible concern behind restraint. An uninformed outsider might obstruct someone who is protecting vulnerable people. The absence of certainty does not authorize every disruptive intervention. Yet the possibility of unjust obstruction must be considered alongside the possibility that an unchallenged official is causing harm.

A usable ethical rule should therefore distinguish the forms of response. Requesting reasons imposes a different burden from physically preventing the official from acting. Preserving evidence differs from encouraging violence. A hearing that allows affected people to describe consequences can improve the judgment on which continued service depends.

The historical text's language of prevention and contestation needs legal-context study before assigning it the whole range of modern criticism. This chapter makes no finding that al-Murtaḍā prohibited all public questions. The narrower concern is that uncertainty about an officeholder's entitlement can be used to protect his effective power. A later institution might extend that protection further than the original argument warrants.

Under our uṣūl, an official's known character is relevant evidence. It is insufficient to settle every act performed under his authority. A person admired for piety can misunderstand a case. A person whose motives are mixed can nevertheless identify a real danger. Evidence about the disputed act must remain available even when the institution holds a favorable view of its officer.

The additional safeguard proposed here is continuous accountability to the purpose that justified appointment. Those affected need a practical route for showing that the expected benefit has failed or that the means now violate a protected right. This is the book's normative proposal. The treatise supplies the conditional premises and the uncertainty rule that make the proposal necessary to articulate.

Blood and the limits of expediency

The same discussion preserves the principle that protective dissimulation does not authorize bloodshed. That limit appears beside the later argument concerning defense of an office. Its presence prevents us from representing the author as simply allowing any injury useful to government service. [J19]

The conjunction introduces a sharper question: how is the person against whom force is used classified? A rule protecting innocent blood has little practical force if a mistaken designation of someone as an obstructer removes him from the protected class. The relevant inquiry concerns the evidence and procedure through which that designation occurs.

Our earlier Zaydi chapter found a related structure in the rules of consensus. Disqualifying a dissenter could remove the disagreement that prevented a claim of unanimity. Here the classification of an office as rightful can change the moral status of opposing it. The institutions and rules differ, but each case gives a preliminary judgment considerable power over what follows. [ZF-Z07]

The comparison remains useful without alleging coordinated authorship. A legal system can repeatedly encounter the need to identify qualified actors. It can also concentrate that identifying power in institutions whose interests depend on the result. The historical task is to locate actual applications and see whether contrary evidence was heard.

For this treatise, the missing application dossier is specific. We need appointments defended through its argument, disputes over whether the conditions held, and records of how alleged obstruction was handled. The existence of the rule establishes an available justification. It does not show how frequently rulers or judges used it.

Another passage demands evidence beyond self-report

A separate discussion in al-Murtaḍā's *Rasāʾil* asks how people know that envoys and governors actually represent the authority they claim. Its answer says that the route to knowledge lies beyond the claimants' own reports about themselves. The surrounding explanation describes appointment becoming known through publicly circulating acts and information. The passage appears at printed volume 1, page 95; electronic websites use divergent page locators. [J21]

والطريق إلى ذلك هو غير أخبارهم نفوسهم

"The route to that is other than their reports about themselves." [J21]

This provides an important control within the author's own corpus. Recognition of an official should have an evidentiary basis outside his self-description. In the separate government treatise, the issue concerns the moral source and permissibility of office despite an outwardly unjust appointment. The two passages address related questions at different levels, so their different thresholds cannot be declared contradictory without reconstructing their arguments.

Our constructive use of the control is straightforward. The authority claimed by an intermediary should be corroborable through something that does not depend entirely on accepting the intermediary first. A document needs its provenance. A public procedure needs witnesses whose standing can be assessed independently. A record of beneficial conduct needs to include the experience of those whose interests the institution says it serves.

That principle applies to the historical researcher as well. A succession chart cannot authenticate every arrow by reproducing the institution's account of its own genealogy. Nor can the allegation of a concealed political operation authenticate itself by interpreting every missing document as proof of concealment. Both claims require observations capable of altering the judgment.

The public office and the scholar's household

Al-Murtaḍā's relationship to public authority also belongs in the social history of scholarship. The earlier manuscript records his office as *naqīb* of the Talibids and his maternal connection to a Zaydi lineage. Those relationships place an Imami legal theorist within a wider Alid world. They help explain why a discussion of government service could be a practical matter within his learned environment. [W-S36]

A patron's gathering gives a question an occasion. It does not establish that the patron dictated the answer. The dated preamble is evidence for the setting the author assigns to his intervention. To establish a commissioned deception, we would need evidence of an objective and an act that misrepresented the relevant truth in pursuit of it.

There is already a substantial institutional effect to investigate. A doctrine permitting useful service can bring skilled people into government. Its conditions can restrain them. The description of effective authority as deriving from the Imam can also strengthen their position against critics. The same argument can perform all these functions, depending on which premises are preserved in its application.

This complexity gives the Buyid hypothesis a better object. Instead of treating scholarship as a single product of the court, we can follow the stages through which a conditional argument became an administrative entitlement. A later jurist might quote the permission and omit the evidentiary threshold. An officer might invoke his religious reputation when challenged about a concrete injury. A critic might restore the original condition and argue that the appointment had ceased to be justified.

Each proposed transformation has a documentary signature. Quotations can be compared for omitted conditions. Correspondence can show which reason an officeholder offered. A record of a dispute can identify whether the judge considered contrary evidence. These are attainable historical questions even when no confidential instruction from a ruler survives.

What this establishes for the political-operation thesis

The present close reading establishes that a named scholar supplied a legal account of service under unjust rule in a dated political setting. The account can relocate effective authority to the rightful Imam while preserving outward participation in the existing government. It also answers a question about disputed recognition through an asymmetric treatment of uncertainty. Those are findings about the text's argument. [J17; J18; J19; J20]

A claim that the argument was deliberately false requires another demonstration. The author may have sincerely believed that qualified participation protected the community. The possibility of that sincerity does not remove the institutional danger we identified. An argument's consequences and its author's intentions require different evidence.

Similarly, the treatise cannot by itself establish a Buyid alteration of *al-Kāfī*. It does show a route by which new practical authority could be derived without changing the wording of that collection. Our larger inquiry must therefore examine textual editing, selection, and legal inference separately. A failure to prove one mechanism cannot decide the others.

The most discriminating next comparison is between this argument and later citations that apply it. Preserve the opening condition, the status assigned to the office, and the response to uncertain outsiders. Determine which component becomes stronger or weaker in a new setting. A stable passage may acquire a substantially expanded institutional use.

Decisions under our uṣūl

Regional chronology. Treat Buyid power before 945 and government in Baghdad after 945 as distinct settings. Keep the posthumous history of al-Kāfī open to passage-level investigation.

Service for a demonstrable good. Retain the conditional possibility of accepting office to protect rights. Require evidence of the expected benefit, attention to the costs of participation, and reassessment when circumstances change.

Authority assigned to the Imam. Examine the inference that makes a useful office effectively imamic. A legitimate purpose alone cannot establish unlimited jurisdiction or certify every act of its holder.

Uncertainty and opposition. Retain restraint against unjust obstruction. Reject the use of uncertainty as a general reason to prevent evidence gathering, peaceful challenge, or remedies for a person injured by an official.

Personal piety. Treat character as evidence relevant to trust. Preserve independent assessment of the disputed decision and the interests of the people subject to it.

Coercive defense. Require separate proof of necessity, proportionality, and the opponent's actual conduct. A contested claim to office cannot settle those questions merely by attaching the Imam's name to the office.

Historical intention. Record the argument's political availability. Suspend a finding of coordinated deception until its agents, misrepresentation, and intended use can be connected through evidence.

The following chapter examines another means through which authority became public: the calendar. The juxtaposition matters. A city can encounter the Prophet's household through commemorations while its jurists explain how service within an existing government acquires religious justification. The books then continue through readers who inherit both settings.

20 · The Calendar of Authority

A ruler does not need to rewrite a book in order to change the religious world in which the book is read. He can close markets, authorize processions, fund shrines, appoint officials, and decide which memories occupy the streets on particular days. The calendar can therefore become an instrument of religious formation before it becomes an object of theological argument.

The Buyid transformation of Baghdad gives this mechanism an unusually visible date. In 352/963 Muʿizz al-Dawla ordered public mourning for Ḥusayn on ʿĀshūrāʾ and public celebration of Ghadīr Khumm. The surviving chronicles describe closed markets and mourning observances for ʿĀshūrāʾ, and decorations, night markets, fires, drums, and public festivity for Ghadīr. Ahmad Kazemi-Moussavi's reconstruction emphasizes that no earlier public Ghadīr observance of this kind is recorded, while the memory of Ghadīr itself was much older and already circulated in Shiʿi writing and poetry. [Y01; Y02]

That distinction is exactly what the Buyid hypothesis needs. **The state did not have to invent Ghadīr to make Ghadīr newly powerful.** It could take an inherited event and change the frequency, scale, and social conditions under which people encountered it.

Public time as an argument

A festival advances propositions even when no legal treatise is read aloud. If the city is decorated for Ghadīr, the event has acquired a place in public time. If ordinary commerce is reorganized around ʿĀshūrāʾ, Karbalāʾ has acquired an institutional presence that exceeds private mourning. Children learn that these days matter before they can reconstruct the isnāds associated with them.

The effect is not the same as assent. A Sunni merchant whose shop closes for a Buyid-sponsored mourning day has not thereby accepted the Buyid ruler's theology. A Shiʿi mourner can use the memory of Ḥusayn to judge the same ruler who permits the procession. The state supplies visibility; the participants still interpret what the visibility means.

For *Dark Imams*, that is preferable to a vague claim that patronage "influenced doctrine." The operation can be specified:

an inherited memory already exists;

the state attaches public resources and compulsory coordination to a date;

the event becomes harder to ignore and easier to transmit socially;

rival communities react;

subsequent institutions inherit a city in which the disputed memory has become part of public political life.

The content of the memory can remain unchanged while its **availability** changes radically.

The counter-calendar

The reaction is as important as the sponsorship. The same historical tradition records Sunni counter-observances in Baghdad. In response to Ghadīr, some Sunnis celebrated a date associated with the Prophet and Abū Bakr entering the cave of Thawr. Other public counter-performances answered Shiʿi mourning with anti-Alid or anti-Shiʿi narratives. These were not neutral additions to the calendar. They transformed historical disagreement into recurring urban performance. [Y01; Y03]

The city could therefore contain rival sacred chronologies. One group remembered the Prophet's declaration concerning ʿAlī; another answered with a memory emphasizing Abū Bakr. One procession centered the killing of Ḥusayn; another could re-stage a rival historical judgment. The annual return of the date kept the dispute alive even among people who had never opened the chronicles from which its details were taken.

The results were not merely symbolic. The sources record violent clashes, including casualties, and periods in which Buyid authorities prohibited both Ghadīr celebrations and Muḥarram processions in an attempt to prevent bloodshed. Later restrictions were lifted selectively. [Y01]

This sequence matters because it prevents a one-directional model of propaganda. The ruler's intervention changes the public field, but rival populations respond. Administrative power can amplify one tradition without being able to determine the meaning everyone gives it.

Memory and anti-memory

The emergence of a counter-calendar deserves a stronger interpretation than the word "reaction." It shows that public commemoration can force an opponent to narrate himself. Once Ghadīr occupies a holiday, a community that rejects its political implication may feel pressure to elevate a rival memory. The answer does not need to refute the first event directly. It can redirect attention toward a different scene in sacred history.

This is a mechanism of confessional formation. The boundary between communities becomes visible through what each chooses to repeat annually. The same household, Companions, battles, and prophetic memories can be arranged into rival sequences of moral salience. Over time, a person may inherit the sequence before inheriting the arguments that originally justified it.

The mechanism also helps explain why later polemic can feel older than its documented public form. Once an annual observance becomes customary, it can be projected backward as though the community had always organized time that way. Our historical method therefore distinguishes **the**

age of the remembered event, **the age of a text about it**, and **the age of the public ritual that repeatedly performs it**.

That three-level chronology should also govern the hadith chapters. A saying attributed to Jaʿfar may concern an event in the seventh century, enter a collection in the tenth, and become a standard sectarian proof much later. Conflating those dates gives later institutional authority the appearance of continuous antiquity.

A calendar can create a constituency

The most important political effect may be neither conversion nor doctrinal innovation. It may be the production of a **public constituency**.

A person who practices privately can remain socially invisible. A procession reveals numbers, neighborhoods, organizers, poets, preachers, and patrons. Participants recognize one another. Officials learn whom they must negotiate with. Opponents learn whom they fear. The calendar therefore turns dispersed allegiance into something more legible to both the community and the government.

This helps explain why public ritual belongs in a book about authority. A legal doctrine needs interpreters. A political movement needs people who know that others share its memory. Recurrent observance can provide that knowledge.

The same period also saw changes in the administrative visibility of Alid institutions. The Buyid regime separated the Alid branch of the *niqābat al-ashrāf* from the Abbasid branch and placed the Alid *naqīb* within governmental functions; scholarly accounts also note attempts to appoint Shiʿi judges. These developments embedded descendants of the Prophet and Shiʿi institutions more visibly in the government of Baghdad. [Y04]

The mechanism is cumulative. A calendar creates occasions. Offices create durable points of access. Libraries and patronage give teachers the means to reproduce texts. None of these operations requires a secret committee assigning a sentence to Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.

The archive can be altered without interpolation

This distinction revises the strongest early version of our Buyid suspicion.

Suppose a report already existed in 940. If Buyid patronage makes the collection containing it easier to copy, the report's future importance can increase without alteration. Suppose a jurist later places the report in a chapter whose title makes one inference seem natural. The practical "voice of the Imam" has changed again, while the words remain stable.

The political history must therefore distinguish four operations:

invention — composing a new report or clause;

selection — choosing one inherited report over another;

framing — changing the neighbors, heading, or legal problem through which the report is read;

amplification — increasing the occasions, institutions, and copies through which the report is encountered.

Buyid Baghdad gives us direct evidence for amplification in public ritual. The evidence for textual invention has to be established separately, report by report.

A public ritual can also constrain its patron

The calendar is not only an instrument of rule. It can make an ethical standard public.

A ruler who sponsors mourning for Ḥusayn places the injustice of Karbalāʾ before the population. He may intend the ritual to strengthen his legitimacy, yet participants can compare his conduct with the ruler condemned in the ritual. A state that sponsors the memory of wrongful coercion creates a vocabulary that its subjects can turn against it.

That possibility is important to our uṣūl. Institutional support does not make a religious memory false, and political usefulness does not exhaust its meaning. The question is whether the institution permits the memory to judge the institution itself.

A self-sealing political ritual works differently. It asks the subject to honor the ruler because the ruler sponsors the saint, and then treats criticism of the ruler as hostility to the saint. That inference requires exposure. Patronage can facilitate devotion; it cannot transfer the moral authority of the commemorated person to the patron automatically.

What the chronology does and does not prove

The date 352/963 is strong evidence for a new scale of public performance. It is not the birthday of Shiʿi memory. Earlier communities remembered Ghadīr and Karbalāʾ. The historical change concerns what a government made possible in the capital.

The claim is falsifiable. Discovery of securely dated earlier public Ghadīr processions would revise the "first recorded" point. Evidence that a supposedly state-created ritual had already functioned at comparable public scale would reduce the explanatory role assigned to Muʿizz al-Dawla. Conversely, administrative orders, funding records, or contemporary descriptions of organizers would make the state mechanism more precise.

The same discipline applies to the book history that follows. If a politically consequential report is documented in a transmission securely predating the Buyid conquest, a Buyid-invention theory for

that report loses ground. A later institutional preference for the same report remains available for study.

Reassessment: RETAIN the Buyid calendar as direct evidence of state amplification and competitive public memory. REJECT the inference that public sponsorship itself proves textual fabrication or mass doctrinal assent. Treat the counter-calendar, riots, and bans as evidence that state ritual created a contested field rather than a fully controlled one.

Sources: [Y01–Y04]

21 · The Book After Its Author

The easiest version of the *al-Kāfī* suspicion begins four years too late.

Al-Kulaynī died in 329/940–41. The Buyids entered Baghdad in 334/945. If the only evidence for the book began after those dates, a large posthumous reconstruction would be difficult to exclude. The transmission record is more constraining than that.

Al-Ṭūsī later preserves a route stating that transmitters received **all of al-Kulaynī's works and hadiths by audition and authorization in Baghdad in 327/939**, while al-Kulaynī was still alive. Al-Najāshī describes people reading *al-Kāfī* in a Baghdad mosque through Aḥmad b. Aḥmad al-Kūfī, who transmitted it from al-Kulaynī, and supplies another route through Ibn Qūlawayh. These notices survive in later bibliographical works, not in an autograph register from 327. They nevertheless describe multiple author-linked routes that a theory of wholesale posthumous manufacture must explain. [Y05–Y07]

The book therefore enters the Buyid period not as an unattested title waiting to be created, but as a work already claimed to have circulated from its compiler.

The 327 checkpoint

The report of audition and *ijāza* in 327 has a precise evidentiary value.

It supports the existence of a body of writings attributed to al-Kulaynī before his death and before the Buyid conquest. It does **not** give us a photograph of the exact wording of every report in the received critical edition. A later bibliographer can accurately preserve a transmission route while later copies develop variants. The route authenticates a relationship between author and transmitters more readily than it authenticates every later page.

That distinction allows a narrower posthumous hypothesis to survive while making a maximal one harder to maintain.

A later interpolator could alter a branch of the text. A copyist could normalize a word. A jurist could import a marginal note into the body. A chapter could be rearranged. None of those possibilities follows merely from the existence of later manuscripts. They become historical claims only when a variant can be located in witnesses.

The direct-transmission notices therefore change the burden of proof. Instead of asking, "Could later Shiʿi scholars have changed *al-Kāfī*?", we ask:

Which clause changed, in which branch, after which recoverable checkpoint?

The 342 checkpoint

The next major control comes surprisingly soon.

Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nuʿmānī completed his *Kitāb al-ghayba* in 342/952–53. Kohlberg's survey identifies extensive citations from the first volume of *al-Kāfī*, especially traditions concerning the occultation. Al-Nuʿmānī was himself among the transmitters associated with al-Kulaynī. [Y05]

That places a substantial body of *al-Kāfī* material in circulation roughly twelve years after the compiler's death and only eight years after the Buyid entry into Baghdad.

The consequence is asymmetric.

For material actually quoted by al-Nuʿmānī, a theory of later Safavid or late medieval insertion is sharply constrained. A Buyid-period insertion remains chronologically possible only if the relevant wording appears in al-Nuʿmānī and one can explain its entry during a narrow interval; evidence of a pre-945 author-linked version would constrain that further. Material not quoted by al-Nuʿmānī receives no automatic authentication from his silence.

This is why quotation control must be performed report by report. "Al-Nuʿmānī uses *al-Kāfī*" cannot authenticate the entire collection. "Al-Nuʿmānī quotes this identifiable wording by 342" can do much more.

A book with several routes

Kohlberg lists numerous students through whom *al-Kāfī* was transmitted. Particularly important are Ibn Qūlawayh, Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī, al-Tallaʿukbarī, and al-Nuʿmānī. Abū Ghālib's library included the work. Al-Ṭūsī's later transmission chains connect al-Kulaynī's writings through several intermediaries into the eleventh-century scholarly world. [Y05]

Multiple routes do not automatically mean independent copies at every point. Two transmitters can depend on one exemplar. A later recension can dominate several chains. Yet a network of named readers changes what an interpolation theory must predict.

If a disputed sentence entered only one branch, another branch may preserve the earlier state. If the sentence appears in quotations connected to several early transmitters, the proposed date of alteration must move backward. If all surviving witnesses descend from a common later exemplar, apparent plurality may tell us less than the list of names suggests.

This is a stemmatic problem, not a theological one.

Reading circles are evidence too

Al-Najāshī's recollection of people reading *al-Kāfī* through Aḥmad b. Aḥmad al-Kūfī supplies a different kind of witness from a surviving codex. It describes a social act of transmission: readers gathered around a person who presented the book on al-Kulaynī's authority. [Y07]

This matters because the history of a book is not reducible to the manuscripts that happen to survive. Oral reading, audition, and authorization can transmit a relatively stable work through copies that later disappear. Conversely, the existence of a reading circle does not guarantee that every participant possessed an identical exemplar. A correction supplied orally can enter one copy and not another.

This is more useful than a binary authentic/fake judgment. It creates a hierarchy of historical confidence:

existence of the work;

presence of a book or section;

presence of a report;

presence of the precise wording;

meaning assigned to the wording;

binding force later derived from it.

Each level requires evidence appropriate to it.

The occultation material as an early control

Al-Nuʿmānī's extensive borrowing from the first volume is especially important because the occultation material is politically consequential. A theory that Buyid scholars invented the basic quietist architecture of the hidden Imam after 945 has to confront the fact that an Imami author was already reproducing a substantial body of *al-Kāfī* traditions on occultation by 342/952–53. [Y05]

That does not settle the origin of the traditions. Their chains can reach into the ninth century through people involved in the succession controversies. Al-Nuʿmānī demonstrates reception by a date, not an eyewitness origin.

But the chronological effect is real. The relevant question becomes whether these reports were already in al-Kulaynī's authorial corpus, whether they derive from earlier notebooks, and how their interpretation changed as the Minor Occultation ended. A broad hypothesis of "Buyid invention" becomes a narrower investigation into **pre-Buyid formation, immediate post-author transmission, and later institutional selection**.

That narrowing is a gain. It moves the causal problem closer to the people who could actually have participated in it.

The silence of Ibn al-Nadīm

The evidence also contains an apparent awkwardness. Kohlberg notes that neither al-Kulaynī nor *al-Kāfī* appears in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, written in 377/987–88, despite later Imami praise for the collection. [Y05]

That silence should not be turned into proof that the book did not exist. We already possess traditions of earlier transmission and quotation. The silence instead warns against projecting the collection's later canonical status backward.

A book can exist, circulate within a community, and still fail to appear in a broad bibliographical catalogue. The more interesting question is **how slowly or unevenly authority accumulated**.

Ibn Bābawayh occasionally cites *al-Kāfī*. Al-Mufīd praises it as a highly important and useful Shiʿi book. Al-Ṭūsī uses it extensively and is said to have possessed a manuscript. At the same time, later Imami scholars criticize reports within it. Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā is reported to have said that forged traditions occur in the book. Much later, Fayḍ al-Kāshānī praises the collection while still noting incomplete coverage, one-sided presentation in places, and problematic arrangement. [Y05]

The history is therefore not "book appears, everyone accepts it." It is **circulation → use → criticism → later collective canonization**.

Canonization is later than transmission

Amin Ehteshami's study gives this distinction a chronology. The collective designation of *al-Kāfī*, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, and *al-Istibṣār* as the "Four Books" crystallizes centuries after their composition, with the phrase emerging in the fifteenth century and consolidating as a marker of a privileged Imami hadith corpus in the seventeenth. [Y08]

That matters because the authority of the **book** and the authority of **every report inside the book** are separate historical achievements.

A reader in 950 can possess *al-Kāfī* without treating it as one quarter of a uniquely canonical four-book archive. A jurist in 1650 can inherit a stable title whose reports have accumulated centuries of commentary and institutional use. The wording may be old while the practical presumption in its favor is new.

This is the strongest current form of the "Dark Imams" textual thesis. Later institutions need not fabricate the historical Imam's words from nothing. They can make a surviving attribution function as the ordinary legal voice of the Imam.

Three different corruption hypotheses

The word *corruption* is too imprecise unless the mechanism is named.

1. Scribal corruption

A word, name, number, negation, or clause changes during copying. Our dossier already contains attested variation in transmitter names and in the wording of a marriage report. This is the domain of manuscript collation.

2. Editorial corruption

The reports remain materially old, but their arrangement or heading changes the inference a reader is encouraged to draw. A prohibition ending at nine can become, in legal use, a positive age threshold. This can happen without changing the sentence itself.

3. Canonical corruption

An attribution whose historical probability is limited becomes functionally unquestionable because its containing book acquires privileged status. The transformation occurs in the presumption attached to the text.

The third mechanism is especially important because it does not require identifying a dishonest copyist. Sincere scholars can produce it through cumulative deference.

The grapes that outlive the caliph

The poison did not end with al-Maʾmūn. In a twentieth-century Iranian print, the Abbasid caliph offers grapes to Imam ʿAlī al-Riḍā. The image memorializes the charge that a ruler made hospitality the instrument of murder. Centuries later, another offering carries the Imam's name: reports passed down as sacred instruction, sometimes through broken chains and sometimes into rulings that betray the justice for which his family suffered. [PG-01; PG-02]

The second offering comes from the transmitters. Believers are asked to accept a report as the words of an Imam even when its own tradition records grave doubts about its chain. Sometimes the chain stands up better than the rule later made from it. In either case, the demand for obedience outruns the warrant for that demand.

We mourn the grapes offered to al-Riḍā. What about the words placed before us in his name? When a disputed attribution becomes a command over another person's body, family, or conscience, the fruit has been poisoned again. The believer's duty is to examine the hand that offers it.

A falsification table for the Buyid theory

The chapter's hypothesis can now be stated in a way that can lose.

Observation: disputed wording appears in an author-linked transmission or quotation securely predating 334/945.

Effect: substantially weakens a Buyid-invention theory for that wording.

Observation: disputed wording is absent from several independent early witnesses but appears in a later connected branch.

Effect: strengthens a recensional interpolation hypothesis and supplies a transmission route to investigate.

Observation: wording remains stable across early and late witnesses, but its legal use changes sharply in a later institutional setting.

Effect: shifts explanation from textual invention toward reception, canonization, and jurisdiction.

Observation: the earliest quotation already uses the report in the later restrictive sense.

Effect: pushes the interpretive development earlier and weakens a late institutional explanation.

This is more demanding than saying that al-Kulaynī died before the Buyids and therefore anything could have happened. The author's death is merely the beginning of the text-critical inquiry.

The historical Imam and the canonical Imam

The central distinction survives every outcome of the manuscript work.

Even if the received wording of a report can be traced securely to al-Kulaynī's own copy, its chain still requires historical evaluation before it becomes a saying of Jaʿfar. Even if Jaʿfar uttered it, the legal inference drawn centuries later can exceed the sentence. Even if the inference is textually natural, our Qurʾānic and ethical uṣūl can reject the claim that it binds.

The "canonical Imam" is therefore not merely a forged character. He is the figure produced when several operations are collapsed:

report transmission → book transmission → canonization → chain grading → interpretation → enforcement.

Disaggregating those stages is the purpose of this book's hadith criticism.

Reassessment: RESTRICT the posthumous-*al-Kāfī* hypothesis. The evidence strongly supports author-linked circulation before Buyid rule and extensive quotation by 342/952–53. Broad post-945 manufacture of the collection is therefore untenable on the present record. RETAIN report-specific

interpolation, recensional variation, selective reception, and later canonization as live mechanisms where evidence identifies them.

Sources: [Y05–Y08]

22 · ʿUmar Through the Back Door?

The story of ʿUmar's marriage to Umm Kulthūm exposes the politics of family precedent. Later jurists turned contested household memories into legal authority over young daughters. The sequence of sources reveals whose consent came to matter and whose objection vanished.

The earliest legal material recovered so far does **not** begin with ʿUmar.

In the *Muṣannaf* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq, the Kūfan jurist Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī is reported to say that a father does not seek the permission of a virgin daughter. His rule turns instead on her marital status and, for a previously married woman, whether she remains within his household. The report cites no Qurʾānic verse, no marriage of Umm Kulthūm, and no numerical age. [Y09]

A neighboring report attributes to al-Shaʿbī the contrary proposition that a father **does** seek the permission of both virgin and previously married daughters. The two reports preserve an active Kūfan disagreement rather than a single inherited "Sunnah of ʿUmar." [Y09]

That result substantially changes the thesis.

The earliest Kūfan problem is paternal jurisdiction

Ibrāhīm's reported distinction is striking because it does not depend on childhood in the wording that survives. The decisive fact is the father's authority within a household. A previously married woman who remains among his dependents can, in this account, also fall within the sphere in which he acts without consultation.

This suggests that the oldest recoverable legal problem was broader than a particular historical child marriage. It concerned **who possesses decision-making authority over a woman situated within paternal dependency**.

The rule is therefore not easily explained as imitation of one celebrated precedent. It can arise from a social-juridical model in which household authority supplies the operative category.

That does not make the rule ethically acceptable under our uṣūl. It makes the genealogy more accurate. A norm can precede the precedent later used to defend it.

The neighboring al-Shaʿbī report also matters because it shows that Kūfan law did not mechanically move from patriarchal custom to one settled doctrine. Jurists could require consultation in the same regional environment. If we want to explain why the more coercive rule became dominant in one school, we have to study the competition among these legal models.

Ibn Shubruma and a Qurʾānic counter-model

A later Kūfan jurist, Ibn Shubruma, provides an even sharper control.

Al-Sarakhsī's much later *al-Mabsūṭ* attributes to Ibn Shubruma and Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm the position that a boy or girl should not be married off until reaching maturity. The argument invokes Qurʾān 4:6—"until they reach marriageable age"—and reasons that a lifelong contract should not be imposed during a period in which the guardian's authority exists only for the dependent person's need. [Y10]

This is a later Hanafite witness to Ibn Shubruma's doctrine, not a surviving autograph from the second/eighth century. The temporal distance must remain visible. Yet the tradition is highly relevant because it preserves a **juristic argument against minor marriage from within the early Iraqi environment**.

Its reasoning resembles one of this project's own ethical extensions: guardianship exists for protection, and power justified by dependency cannot automatically bind a person after that dependency ends.

Al-Sarakhsī rejects Ibn Shubruma's position. His counter-case relies on Qurʾān 65:4, the ʿĀʾisha marriage report, other Companion precedents, and an account of paternal solicitude. The later Hanafi text thus preserves both the dissent and the machinery through which it was overcome. [Y10]

This is important for *Dark Imams*: the existence of a minority Qurʾānic argument means that later consensus cannot be described as the simple discovery of an obvious rule.

The first explicit legal use of Umm Kulthūm that we have found

The marriage to ʿUmar becomes much more important when we reach al-Shāfiʿī.

In *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, al-Bayhaqī preserves al-Shāfiʿī's statement that ʿAlī married Umm Kulthūm to ʿUmar **"without her authorization"** (*bi-ghayr amrihā*). Immediately afterward, al-Bayhaqī transmits the fuller marriage narrative: ʿAlī says she is too young; Ḥasan and Ḥusayn object that she is a woman who chooses for herself; the account culminates in the marriage. Al-Shāfiʿī then invokes the marriage of al-Zubayr's young daughter and other Companion examples and states the legal inference: if a virgin could not be married except by her own authorization, she could not be married before she had an independent say in the matter. [Y11]

This is qualitatively different from simply preserving the marriage as history.

Here the reported event is **explicitly doing jurisprudential work**.

The detailed narrative's chain includes Sufyān b. Wakīʿ, a transmitter later critics treated severely; Abū Zurʿa and Abū Ḥātim are reported to have abandoned his transmission after problems associated with material inserted through his copyist. That weakens confidence in the detailed scene as a transparent historical transcript. It does not erase the more secure historical finding that al-

Shāfiʿī's legal argument, as preserved by al-Bayhaqī, used the ʿAlī–Umm Kulthūm marriage as precedent. [Y12]

The distinction is crucial:

historical event: contested in its details;

later legal use of the event: directly visible in the juristic text.

Why al-Shāfiʿī changes the chapter

Al-Shāfiʿī's old doctrine belongs to his Iraqi period, before his move to Egypt in 199/815. Modern scholarship on the *qawl qadīm* confirms that the "old" doctrine represents his Iraqi opinions, while the later Egyptian corpus is the *qawl jadīd*. [Y13]

This makes his use of Umm Kulthūm the earliest explicit legal proof-texting of the marriage identified in our research so far.

It does **not** make al-Shāfiʿī the originator of paternal authority. Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī's rule is earlier. It does not make ʿUmar the source of the rule either. What it shows is a later stage in which an already disputed doctrine is reinforced by an Alid-ʿUmar precedent.

That is a more interesting mechanism than simple invention.

A school has a rule. It then encounters or preserves a narrative in which a revered ancestor appears to perform the rule. The narrative can convert a contested legal proposition into an inherited precedent.

The paradox inside the narrative

The al-Bayhaqī passage also preserves a remarkable internal tension. Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are made to say that Umm Kulthūm is a woman who chooses for herself. Yet al-Shāfiʿī cites the episode to support the father's authority.

If the report were being read only as a story of unanimous family approval, that line would be inconvenient. As a juristic precedent, however, the final act can be privileged over the objection.

The effect resembles a pattern found elsewhere in this book: a corpus can preserve the dissent and then build doctrine from the outcome that defeated it.

The historical critic should therefore refuse to summarize the report as "the Ahl al-Bayt accepted the marriage." The legal reader should also refuse to summarize it as "the Ahl al-Bayt unanimously denied the woman's choice." The report contains both the objection and the claimed paternal act.

Under our uṣūl, the objection retains independent moral force. A later jurist's decision to treat the father's action as precedent does not make the objection disappear.

A jurist who selects the paternal act as precedent while leaving the family's reported objection without legal effect has not changed the written story. He has changed what the story is permitted to do. This is one of the quieter routes by which a community can inherit both a warning and a rule that defeats it. The ethical consequence must be assessed in the life of the person whose choice the rule displaces.

Age, consent, and authority are different axes

The sources also warn against collapsing three distinct questions into one moral number.

Age asks when a person is presumed capable.

Consent asks whether that person's agreement is required.

Guardian authority asks whether another person can create a binding legal relation before or despite that agreement.

Ibrāhīm's reported rule is principally about consent and paternal jurisdiction. Ibn Shubruma's remembered objection addresses minority and the persistence of a lifelong contract beyond the period of guardianship. Al-Shāfiʿī's proof-texting uses a marriage narrative to defend a father's ability to act without the daughter's authorization. The traditions concerning ʿĀʾisha add a numerical age and a Prophetic precedent. These elements can converge in later doctrine while having distinct earlier histories.

This helps explain why the search for a single "origin of the age of consent" can mislead. A legal system may set a bodily threshold while still allowing a guardian to create the contract earlier. It may recognize adult contracting capacity while preserving paternal power over a minor. It may require consent from a previously married woman but treat silence as permission for a virgin. Those rules distribute authority differently even when they coexist in one school.

Our ethical analysis should therefore be report-specific. A numerical threshold does not answer whether the act was wanted. A consent formula does not answer whether silence under dependence is meaningful assent. A claim of paternal solicitude does not prove that the father may create an irrevocable future obligation.

Hishām ibn ʿUrwa and the family precedent: the ninth-century dossier

The marriage of ʿUmar and Umm Kulthūm was not the only ancestral event marshalled in the law of paternal authority. A second dossier concerns al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām, his newborn daughter, and Qudāma ibn Maẓʿūn. Its significance increases when we examine its transmitter, Hishām ibn ʿUrwa (d. 146/763), and the company in which the report appears in the early collections. The Hishām at issue is the Medinan traditionist, son of ʿUrwa ibn al-Zubayr, **not Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam**, the later Imāmī disputant encountered in Chapter 10C.

In the *Sunan* of Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr (d. 227/842), report 639 records a chain from Saʿīd through Abū Muʿāwiya and Hishām ibn ʿUrwa to Hishām's father, ʿUrwa. Al-Zubayr visits Qudāma, who is ill. News arrives that a daughter has just been born to al-Zubayr. Qudāma asks to marry her. Al-Zubayr himself responds with incredulity: *mā taṣnaʿu bi-jāriya ṣaghīra wa-anta ʿalā hādhihi l-ḥāl?* What would he do with such a young girl while in this condition? Qudāma says that if he lives, she will be al-Zubayr's daughter [as his wife], and if he dies, she will be among the people he most wants to inherit from him. The narrative ends: *fa-zawwajahā iyyāhu*, "so he married her to him." [H22.1]

The Arabic does not describe intercourse, a future ceremony, or the girl's assent. It describes a purported **marriage contract at birth**; the distinction between contract and consummation must be retained. Precisely because an infant cannot meaningfully consent, however, the claim raises the question of whether paternal authority can make a binding marital status for another human being. Qudāma's stated inheritance motive also matters: within the story, an infant's legal placement serves an adult's concern about patrimony and death. The report makes the child's benefit difficult to find.

A compressed version occurs in Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf*, in the *Kitāb al-Nikāḥ* section asking what was said about a man marrying off or marrying a young girl. One modern numbering makes the report 18234, and another 17627 (the Arabic archive additionally indexes it as 17339). It reads: أَنَّ الزُّبَيْرَ زَوَّجَ ابْنَةً لَهُ صَغِيرَةً حِينَ نُفِسَتْ, with an explanatory gloss *ḥīna wulidat*: al-Zubayr contracted a marriage for his young daughter when she was born. Its chain runs Ibn Abī Shayba → ʿAbda ibn Sulaymān → Hishām → his father. [H22.2]

That difference from Saʿīd's version is useful. The shorter version conveys the action without naming the prospective husband or his motive. The longer one preserves the story's potentially embarrassing circumstances, including al-Zubayr's own question. These are distinct **redactions and transmission routes**, not independent eyewitness accounts: both converge on ʿUrwa's family narration through Hishām. Their agreement strengthens the case that the report was circulating by the early ninth century. It does not by itself prove the described contract occurred in al-Zubayr's lifetime.

The next *Muṣannaf* entry, 18235 (another numbering: 17628), gives us a further item transmitted through **Abū Muʿāwiya → Hishām → ʿUrwa**. In the printed wording it describes arranging a marriage involving a young daughter of Muṣʿab; an editorial variation and a bracketed *ibnan lahu* affect the exact family relationship. The textual variation is significant enough that the chapter must avoid turning this entry into a confident reconstruction of the child's identity. We can securely say that Ibn Abī Shayba placed a **second Hishām–ʿUrwa minor-marriage report** immediately after the newborn narrative. [H22.3]

The following numbered entry, 18236, brings in the report concerning ʿUmar and Umm Kulthūm. This proximity is particularly revealing. The editor's chapter heading and the grouping of material

make the *Muṣannaf* a ninth-century **legal dossier of companion and family precedents**. It is evidence of how a compiler arranged the materials for consultation on minor marriage. Juxtaposition does not mean Ibn Abī Shayba himself invented any report, inferred a unified doctrine from the three, or personally endorsed every feature of their narratives. It means readers could encounter the incidents as neighboring precedents under a single juristic rubric. [H22.3]

Chronology: what could Ibn Shubruma have known?

The historical windows overlap sharply. Hishām lived until 146/763 and transmitted extensively in Iraq late in life. Ibn Shubruma, the Kufan jurist reported to reject marriage contracts for minors, died around 144/761. Abū Ḥanīfa died in 150/767. Hishām and Ibn Shubruma could therefore have inhabited overlapping Iraqi networks. They were near-contemporaries; their doctrinal relationship remains unattested in the materials inspected for this revision. The *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849) and the *Sunan* of Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr (d. 227/842) put these family reports into surviving written collections **approximately seven to nine decades after the two jurists' deaths**. Both collections are earlier than al-Sarakhsī (d. 483/1090), who preserves the minority objection and answers it centuries later. [H22.1–H22.4]

This chronology allows an interesting question without supplying its answer. Did Ibn Shubruma encounter the al-Zubayr or ʿĀʾisha reports in the environment where he rejected contracts for minors? A direct citation by him, an opponent's preserved rebuttal from the eighth century, or a securely early student transmission would move that claim beyond coincidence. The surviving late juristic report of his objection does not tell us which particular marriage-age traditions he had heard.

The *Muṣannaf* supplies a further complication for anyone tempted to reduce the ʿĀʾisha marriage-age tradition to one man's report. Immediately before its al-Zubayr family entry, the collection preserves a report about consummation at nine through **Abū Muʿāwiya → al-Aʿmash → Ibrāhīm → al-Aswad → ʿĀʾisha**. This chain is formally distinct from Hishām → ʿUrwa → ʿĀʾisha. The formal existence of multiple chains matters. Whether they represent independent memories, contamination, or secondary diffusion is a historical question requiring isnād-cum-matn analysis. [H22.3]

Joshua Little's historical-critical thesis proposes that the marriage-age tradition took shape in the eighth-century Iraqi milieu and that the lines preserved in later books do not supply the independent corroboration they initially appear to furnish. Traditional Sunni hadith scholarship instead judges multiple lines acceptable and resists his reconstruction. These are competing explanations of transmission history, distinguishable from the **legal fact** that ninth-century compilations grouped marriage-age and minor-marriage precedents for juridical readers. [H22.5–H22.6]

The proximity of Hishām's family report to the age report suggests a focused research agenda. A narrator could transmit reports of a marriage contract contracted in infancy and of ʿĀʾisha's childhood marriage without having contracted such a marriage himself. Neither report establishes Hishām's sexual conduct. Nor does the family narrative alone demonstrate that he endorsed the practice in a legal opinion. Yet the paired dossiers expose a family tradition in which a minor girl's marital status could be assigned by an elder, available to legal scholars who would later debate exactly that power.

From narrative availability to normative authority

The distinction between the two centuries is decisive. Saʿīd and Ibn Abī Shayba document transmission and arrangement in the ninth century. Al-Shāfiʿī's use of the Companion examples documents juristic proof-making in the early ninth-century legal discourse. Al-Sarakhsī's invocation of ʿĀʾisha against Ibn Shubruma documents a much later mature Hanafi response. Later writers could fold these discrete items into a uniform claim that paternal contracting power enjoyed precedent and consensus. A historian needs to trace the intervening citations and dissent separately.

For our book's central thesis, the al-Zubayr report clarifies the mechanism: **a family memory passes through named transmitters, enters a classified archive, and becomes available to justify legal power over someone too young to authorize its exercise**. We can see the classification in the *Muṣannaf*; the causal path into each later school's rule remains a question for source-by-source comparison. Our earlier argument about ʿUmar gains precision here. The ʿUmar–Umm Kulthūm marriage was one of several precedents used to bolster paternal control, and the emergence of paternal-control rules predates the recoverable instances of that particular proof-texting.

The counter-line should remain equally visible. In the doctrine attributed to Ibn Shubruma, the guardianship meant to protect a child supplies no sufficient warrant for a lifelong marriage contract before the child reaches maturity. His later-reported argument invokes Qurʾān 4:6. The contrast is between the child's emerging capacity to act and a retrospective narrative of a father acting for her. This yields a testable history of juristic authority: which argument receives decisive weight, by whom, in which surviving text, and at what date?

[H22.1] Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr, *Sunan*, no. 639, Arabic text in the Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-Aʿẓamī edition, p. 175, https://ablibrary.net/book_content/b/5622/175?lang=ar. **Direct Arabic transcription consulted**; edition compared against an independent online transcription, but manuscript variants not collated.

[H22.2] Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, *Kitāb al-Nikāḥ*, newborn al-Zubayr entry, numbering 18234 / 17627 (alternative web-text 17339),

https://en.tohed.com/hadith/musannaf-ibn-abi-shaybah/chapter/1442/sub/45184/ and https://athar.arthurarchive.com/book/msnf-abn-aby-shyba/%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AD–pages-15-19. **Arabic transcription consulted**; numbering varies by edition.

[H22.5] Joshua Little, *The Hadith of ʿĀʾishah's Marital Age*, doctoral research summary and full study, https://islamicorigins.com/a-summary-of-my-phd-research/ and https://islamicorigins.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/LITTLE-The-Hadith-of-Aishahs-Marital-Age.pdf. **Author's methodological argument consulted**; hypotheses of diffusion and motive retained as contested reconstruction.

[H22.6] Yaqeen Institute, "The Age of Aisha: Rejecting Historical Revisionism and Modernist Presumptions" (2018), https://yaqeen-web.yaqeen.io/read/paper/the-age-of-aisha-ra-rejecting-historical-revisionism-and-modernist-presumptions. **Counterposition consulted** for multiple chains and traditional hadith authentication.

Research tasks: collate *Muṣannaf* entry 18235 across editions; inspect the earliest available al-Shāfiʿī formulation directly against al-Bayhaqī's later preservation; locate pre-Sarakhsī references to Ibn Shubruma's minority doctrine; compare all early marfūʿ and mawqūf versions through a reproducible isnād-cum-matn matrix.

The ʿĀʾisha precedent and the Umm Kulthūm precedent do different work

The later juristic archive frequently uses the report of ʿĀʾisha's young marriage as a direct precedent for the possibility of minor marriage. Al-Sarakhsī does exactly this when opposing Ibn Shubruma. [Y10]

The Umm Kulthūm precedent is different. Al-Shāfiʿī uses it to show **paternal authority without the daughter's authorization**. [Y11] That distinction makes the two narratives complementary in later legal argument: one supplies the possibility of a young marriage; the other supplies an Alid example of paternal power.

This is historiographically important. If the whole doctrine were derived from one Prophetic biography, the ʿUmar marriage would be redundant. Its legal usefulness lies in a different proposition. The narrative can demonstrate that even ʿAlī—the ancestor later Shiʿi communities treat as a uniquely just authority—was said to have exercised paternal power in this way.

That is precisely why the later Imami coercion report creates such a sharp dissonance. The same family memory can be used externally to prove paternal jurisdiction and internally to condemn the conditions under which the marriage was obtained.

The contradiction need not have troubled the original transmitters if they were preserving different arguments. It becomes a major problem for later systematic claims that every attributed act expresses one seamless legal theology.

From legal precedent to sectarian apologetic

The marriage then acquires a second life.

In later Sunni-Shiʿi polemic, the union can be invoked to demonstrate reconciliation or intimacy between ʿUmar and the household of ʿAlī. Imami reports can instead represent the marriage as coercively seized. The same event therefore performs different institutional work in different archives.

This creates the possibility originally captured by the phrase **"backdoor taqlīd to ʿUmar."** A community can reject ʿUmar's religious authority while participating in a wider legal culture in which practices associated with early caliphs and Companions have already become normalized. Another community can use the marriage to vindicate ʿUmar while also using it as precedent for paternal power.

But the chronology warns against overclaiming. The earliest Kūfan paternal-authority report we have identified does not cite ʿUmar. The rule therefore cannot presently be described as a direct derivation from him.

The better question is whether **later proof-texting helped immunize an existing practice from moral criticism**.

A precedent can harden a rule it did not create

Consider the stages:

Stage 1: household jurisdiction. Early Kūfan reports disagree over whether fathers must consult daughters. No ʿUmar citation is visible in the recovered rule.

Stage 2: Qurʾānic resistance. Ibn Shubruma is remembered as rejecting minor marriage until maturity, reasoning from Qurʾān 4:6 and the limits of guardianship.

Stage 3: precedent accumulation. Reports about ʿĀʾisha, Companion child marriages, and Umm Kulthūm provide historical examples through which permissive rules can be defended.

Stage 4: explicit proof-texting. Al-Shāfiʿī uses the Umm Kulthūm marriage directly to show that ʿAlī married a daughter without her authorization.

Stage 5: mature school doctrine. Later jurists organize these precedents together with Qurʾānic arguments and theories of paternal solicitude.

This sequence does not require a conspiracy. It shows how disputed social power becomes sacredly overdetermined.

The Hanafite irony

The mature Hanafi tradition gives the story another twist.

Abū Ḥanīfa is famous for recognizing substantial marital agency in an adult, legally competent woman. Yet later Hanafi law still preserves paternal authority over minor marriage and argues over whether an arrangement can bind after maturity. Al-Sarakhsī's presentation openly records the contrary position of Ibn Shubruma before rejecting it. [Y10]

The result is not a simple scale from "progressive Hanafi" to "patriarchal Shāfiʿī." Different dimensions of agency move differently. Adult contracting capacity, guardian involvement, minority, and the right to rescind after puberty can produce distinct doctrinal combinations.

That complexity is exactly why a single historical marriage should not be allowed to do more work than its transmission supports.

A twentieth-century return to the problem of permission

The history in this chapter acquires an unexpected continuation in the works of Ruhollah Khomeini. His Arabic legal manual *Taḥrīr al-Wasīla*, volume 2, *Kitāb al-nikāḥ*, question 12, distinguishes penetrative intercourse before age nine, which it prohibits, from other sexual acts, which it authorizes under a marriage contract even for a nursing infant. The operative Arabic words are reproduced on a separate line below. They mean "even with a nursing infant."

حتّى في الرضيعة

He goes on to specify consequences of grave injury. The rule is printed in the edition associated with the Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works. [P6-B01; P6-B02]

Here is the legal point most relevant to the eighth- and ninth-century dossier. The infant is named a wife before there can be meaningful consent. Contractual status, supplied through an adult's legal powers, performs the work normally expected of authorization by the person affected. This is an inference about the visible structure of Khomeini's ruling. It is not evidence of a historical line of personal transmission from Hishām ibn ʿUrwa, al-Shāfiʿī, or al-Sarakhsī to Khomeini, and it makes no accusation about his personal sexual conduct.

Ibn Shubruma's remembered opposition to binding minors in marriage consequently belongs to more than an antiquarian dispute. The minority objection challenges the point at which protection through guardianship becomes power exercised over a person for the benefit of someone else. Qurʾān 4:6 discusses testing orphans until marriageable age and recognizing sound judgment before

handing over their property. Applying that passage as a categorical prohibition of marriage contracts for minors is a juristic argument, with a transmission history of its own; it shows that such a reading was already part of the legal debate. [Y10]

Chapter 35 examines Khomeini's 1970 Najaf comparison of the guardian of a minor and the guardian of a nation. His analogy concerns political office, and the marriage ruling concerns sexual conduct under a contract. Together they provide a case study in **the expansion of authority without a corresponding demonstration of the dependent person's power to refuse**. The parallel invites scrutiny precisely because it appears in two texts attributed to the same twentieth-century jurist, rather than because one can prove that the earlier marriage narratives caused the later theory of government. [P6-B04]

Returning to Jaʿfar

The Imami problem can now be stated more sharply.

Al-Kāfī preserves an attribution to Jaʿfar condemning the Umm Kulthūm marriage as an act of seizure and another narrative in which ʿAlī objects to her youth under threat. The same corpus preserves favorable-chain reports allowing childhood marriage and denying a mature daughter a power to undo an arrangement made by her father.

The Sunni legal history shows that similar paternal doctrines were actively debated outside the Imami corpus long before its compilation. That makes **shared legal culture, convergence, and inherited patriarchal jurisprudence** serious explanations alongside direct borrowing.

The Shāfiʿī evidence nevertheless establishes something the old chapter lacked: by the early third/ninth century, the ʿUmar–Umm Kulthūm marriage had become an explicit legal precedent for paternal authority.

So the historical sequence now supports a narrower and stronger thesis:

ʿUmar did not demonstrably originate the rule. But a marriage attributed to ʿUmar and ʿAlī became legal proof for a rule whose ethical implications the Imami archive itself remembers as coercive in that very marriage.

That is enough to justify the phrase "through the back door" as a polemical description of unacknowledged normative inheritance—provided the book states exactly which door has actually been documented.

What would prove a stronger causal chain

A stronger claim requires evidence between the stages.

If an early Kūfan jurist explicitly says, "A father may compel because ʿAlī married Umm Kulthūm to ʿUmar," the causal chain moves backward substantially. If an Imami jurist adopts a Sunni proof while suppressing an earlier contrary report, the mechanism becomes more specific. If independent pre-Shāfiʿī legal texts use the marriage the same way, al-Shāfiʿī ceases to be our earliest recovered point.

Conversely, if earlier permissive law consistently relies on unrelated household norms and never invokes the marriage, the marriage's role should be described as reinforcement rather than origin.

The research result is already significant because it replaces a speculative origin story with an observable history of legal hardening.

Reassessment: REJECT the claim that current evidence shows ʿUmar originated minor-marriage doctrine. RETAIN an earlier Kūfan paternal-authority tradition with substantial internal disagreement. RETAIN Ibn Shubruma's reported Qurʾānic opposition as an important counter-line, with the late source distance stated. RETAIN al-Shāfiʿī's Iraqi-period use of Umm Kulthūm as the earliest explicit legal proof-texting identified so far. Investigate whether that precedent subsequently helped normalize or immunize paternal coercion across school boundaries.

Sources: [Y09–Y13]

23 · Hadith under Our Uṣūl

Scope of the hadith reassessment

The al-Kāfī study is a targeted reassessment of consequential material. Its twenty-two reports form a selected dossier. The decisions cannot be converted into a percentage of the collection judged sound or unsound. Al-Majlisī's classifications provide the comparative baseline; the present judgments concern the chain's endpoint and structure, the Arabic wording, the scope of inference, and binding authority under the stated uṣūl.

"Albani/Majlisi-style" describes the request for explicit judgments on individually identified reports. The fresh decisions belong to this project. Al-Majlisī's classifications remain in their own fields; no decision here is attributed to al-Albānī. The technical categories of the two scholarly traditions retain their different criteria.

What makes a report poisonous?

The poisoned grapes stand for a recurring abuse: a narration stamped with the Imam's name becomes a command long after its authority has failed examination. The charge must be aimed at a particular report and the ruling someone extracts from it. Chains, words, and legal consequences each deserve their own judgment.

Three cases in this dossier impose that discipline. Report 04, denying that loyalty to the household excuses misconduct, is graded ḍaʿīf by al-Majlisī, yet its ethical teaching survives examination under our uṣūl. Report 07, concerning a numerical boundary and harm, is also weak according to his reported assessment and cannot establish a sexual entitlement. Report 13, in which a woman married off during childhood loses a choice at maturity, receives a ṣaḥīḥ chain judgment; its coercive legal use is rejected here on independent grounds. [K-R04; K-R07; K-R13]

The abuse begins when uncertain attribution or indefensible inference becomes binding law. A weak report may carry sound teaching. A soundly transmitted text can be made to serve a cruel conclusion. The critic must name the report, its grading, and the ruling built upon it.

What does ṣaḥīḥ establish?

A jurist opens a chapter on marriage and encounters a report whose chain he accepts. The text denies a woman the power to undo an arrangement made during her childhood. The chain has answered a question about transmitted attribution. The legal reader must still decide what authority that statement possesses over the woman now standing before him.

In *al-Kāfī*, that difficulty is concrete. The corpus contains a report recognizing the agency of a self-governing woman. Nearby material permits paternal arrangements without her consent. Another report asks explicitly whether a girl married off as a minor acquires a say upon maturity and answers in the negative. Al-Majlisī assigns favorable classifications to material on both sides of the problem. [K-R07; K-R08; K-R09]

The critical question concerns the rule that survives interpretation. A negative age boundary can be turned into a positive licence. A statement about competent adjudication can acquire the force of unlimited sovereignty. An attribution to a teacher can be expanded into a securely established event in the Prophet's life. These are transformations of authority that can occur while every letter of a book remains unchanged.

Some problems also concern the letters. The post-maturity report has a recorded variant in its final clause. The seventeen-thousand-verse report has a transmitter-name variant explicitly discussed by al-Majlisī. A displayed English translation omits the transition to maturity in the former. These are different kinds of textual evidence, and their dates differ. [K-R09; K-R10; K-R11; K-R21]

The inquiry therefore works at the level of particular claims. We can refuse a coercive use of a report without asserting that an identifiable medieval editor fabricated it. When there is evidence for a variant, we record the witness and ask what changed. When a commentator offers a sectarian explanation for why a compiler included a report, we attribute the explanation to that commentator.

The working uṣūl

U1. Qur'anic priority

The Qur'an supplies the project's governing religious authority. A report's claimed agreement with it must be demonstrated through meaning and context. Absence of a verbatim Qur'anic equivalent does not disqualify an instruction. A claimed exception to a clear commitment requires proportionate evidence. The corpus itself preserves reports directing this scrutiny, including one that al-Majlisī grades ṣaḥīḥ. [K-R01]

U2. Justice and accountable reasoning

The project treats divine justice and responsible human agency as substantive commitments. An appeal to sacred authority must answer an objection showing that the proposed rule permits injustice. The reasoning must be made explicit, with the affected person's position included. A conclusion remains open to revision if the factual premise, translation, or inference is shown to be wrong.

U3. Consent, capacity, and protection

The working premise is that a personal marital covenant requires meaningful willingness from a person with adequate capacity to undertake it. Guardianship is assessed through its protective purpose. A fixed age alone cannot establish the capacities and circumstances on which a consequential act depends.

Qur'an 4:6 directly concerns the transfer of orphan property after marriageable age and demonstrated rushd. Extending its concern for judgment to marriage is an ethical and legal argument made by this project. Qur'an 4:19 concerns coercive treatment and inheritance of women; 2:232 protects agreed remarriage in its stated setting. The combined argument gives substantial weight to agency. None of these verses literally supplies a universal modern birthday or a complete contemporary capacity test. [K-Q01; K-Q02]

U4. Classify the speech act

A warning, permission, historical narrative, and recommendation can have different consequences. A prohibition lasting until a threshold does not automatically establish that every later act is permitted. The statement of an interlocutor must be separated from the Imam's reply. A condition assumed in a question may require adjudication elsewhere.

U5. Preserve the endpoint of the chain

A chain to Ismāʿīl's answer is evidence about that answer. A chain to Jaʿfar's recollection of an earlier event leaves the earlier transmission to be investigated. An Imami theological account of inherited knowledge can be explained as a premise; it cannot silently serve as independent historical corroboration. A family of reports sharing a lower route remains dependent at that route.

U6. Apply the same tests across communities

The project does not disqualify a transmitter merely because a later denomination rejects his succession claim. Twelver, Ismaili, Zaydi, and Kaysani materials receive the same questions about provenance and authority. Reports that resist our preferred interpretation stay in the dossier. Dossier 19 supplies such a case for multiple succession.

U7. Keep book history separate from the chain inside the book

The compiler's death is a date in the book's history. The received text then has its own copying, quotation, and interpretive history. A political explanation must connect a particular change or use to particular evidence. Al-Kulaynī's death before the Buyid entry into Baghdad leaves the posthumous question open. It supplies no finding that a change occurred. [K-D01]

U8. Specify the authority being rejected

This edition uses four decision terms. **Retain** accepts a stated meaning or use under these uṣūl. **Restrict** accepts only a bounded inference. **Suspend** withholds an attribution or extraordinary assertion pending stronger evidence. **Reject** denies the specified proposition binding authority. A report may receive different decisions for different clauses.

These labels are fresh analytic judgments. They do not replace ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan, muwaththaq, ḍaʿīf, or mursal with disguised equivalents. The verdict "favorable chain, rejected coercive rule" is coherent within this method. Calling a report fabricated would require an additional argument about its production.

Reading the dossiers

01 · A report must answer to the Book

Locator: 1/2/22/3 · Book of the Excellence of Knowledge · Following the Sunnah and the evidence of the Book

Arabic:

كل شيء مردود إلى الكتاب والسنة وكل حديث لا يوافق كتاب الله فهو زخرف

Translation: Every matter is referred back to the Book and the Sunnah; every report that does not accord with the Book of God is spurious ornament.

Transmission: A group of al-Kulaynī's teachers → Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālid → his father → al-Naḍr b. Suwayd → Yaḥyā al-Ḥalabī → Ayyūb b. al-Ḥurr → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ṣaḥīḥ. Mirʾāt al-ʿuqūl 1:229.

This report gives the project an internal Imami basis for examining content. Al-Majlisī explicitly classifies its chain as ṣaḥīḥ. In the accompanying explanation, he allows matters to derive from the Book directly or indirectly and treats authentic Sunnah as compatible with it. The relevant test therefore includes the relationship between a proposition and the Qur'an's general commitments. [K-R01]

The criterion needs an argument in each application. A disliked instruction does not become a contradiction merely because a reader calls it one. We must identify what the report authorizes, establish the relevant Qur'anic commitment, and explain why the two cannot coexist under a defensible interpretation. Where the difficulty concerns an inference made by a later jurist, the inference should receive the adverse judgment.

The wording also cannot authenticate every congenial attribution. A person can manufacture a sentence that accords with the Qur'an. Agreement supplies a constraint on authority; positive

attribution still requires evidence of transmission. That distinction allows us to accept an ethical principle while leaving a particular chain weak.

Reassessment: RETAIN as a governing criterion; retain the reported strong chain.

Sources: [K-R01; K-R02]

02 · The sermon at Minā and attribution to the Prophet

Locator: 1/2/22/5 · Following the Sunnah and the evidence of the Book

Arabic:

ما جاءكم عني يوافق كتاب الله فأنا قلته وما جاءكم يخالف كتاب الله فلم أقله

Translation: What reaches you from me agreeing with the Book of God, I have said; what reaches you contradicting the Book of God, I have not said.

Transmission: Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl → al-Faḍl b. Shādhān → Ibn Abī ʿUmayr → Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and others → Abū ʿAbd Allāh, reporting a sermon of the Prophet.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Majhūl ka-l-ṣaḥīḥ, "unknown [in the chain assessment], like ṣaḥīḥ." Mirʾāt 1:229.

The qualified classical judgment matters. Replacing majhūl ka-l-ṣaḥīḥ with an unqualified ṣaḥīḥ would erase the reservation preserved by the commentator. The final reported speaker is also separated from the Prophet by generations. Imami doctrines about inherited knowledge provide one way to understand that transmission; an external historical reconstruction must still investigate how the sermon was known. [K-R01]

Read literally as a sufficient attribution rule, the first half would authenticate any newly invented sentence consistent with scripture. Its sound methodological use is narrower: a genuine Prophetic teaching cannot overturn the divine authority it claims to explain. The exact sermon setting remains a separate historical claim.

This has a direct consequence for the age-ten report discussed below. A sound chain to Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar does not supply, by itself, a complete historical chain from the Prophet or ʿĀʾisha. The endpoint of the demonstrated transmission must stay visible.

We retain this report as supporting testimony for Qur'anic scrutiny. Its content receives approval under the stated uṣūl; the historical attribution retains al-Majlisī's qualification and the additional question about the earlier sermon.

Reassessment: RETAIN the negative test; SUSPEND independent authentication of the particular sermon.

Sources: [K-R01; K-R02]

03 · Responsibility without coercive predestination

Locator: 1/3/30/13 · Predestination, decree, and the matter between the two

Arabic:

لا جبر ولا تفويض ولكن أمر بين أمرين

Translation: Neither coercive determination nor complete delegation: a matter between the two.

Transmission: Muḥammad b. Abī ʿAbd Allāh → Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad → Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā → an unnamed person who related it to him → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Mursal. Mirʾāt 2:195.

The unnamed intermediary is printed in the chain. Agreement with the project's account of agency cannot repair that omission. Al-Majlisī's mursal judgment therefore stays in the dossier. The precise technical treatment of this type of missing intermediary can differ between critical systems; the practical defect is identifiable without settling that terminology. [K-R03]

The report explains its formula through a person who warns someone against wrongdoing, receives no cooperation, and leaves. The subsequent wrongdoing does not turn the warning person into the one who commanded it. This distinguishes allowing an act from morally commissioning the act. It supports responsibility without requiring God to be the author of a person's injustice.

Its explanatory force is limited. The example does not settle every question about divine causation, foreknowledge, or the metaphysics of human power. Nor does tafwīḍ here simply mean ordinary human freedom. Translating it that way can make a denial of absolute independence from God sound like a denial of accountable agency.

Under these uṣūl, moral responsibility is defensible through the Qur'an and reason. The report illustrates that conclusion. It remains unsuitable as the sole historical proof that this exact formula was uttered by Jaʿfar. This is an intentional control case: material congenial to the author receives the same transmission scrutiny as material he opposes.

Reassessment: RETAIN the moral argument; attribution remains interrupted.

Sources: [K-R03; K-Q04]

04 · Loyalty offers no exemption from conduct

Locator: 2/1/36/3 · Obedience and piety

Arabic:

وما معنا براءة من النار ... وما تنال ولايتنا إلا بالعمل والورع

Translation: We possess no certificate of exemption from the Fire … our walāya is attained through action and scrupulous restraint.

Transmission: The entry gives an Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī/Muḥammad b. Sālim route alongside an Aḥmad b. Abī ʿAbd Allāh/his father route, converging on Aḥmad b. al-Naḍr → ʿAmr b. Shimr → Jābir → Abū Jaʿfar.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḍaʿīf. Mirʾāt 8:50.

The long report challenges a person who thinks verbal attachment to the household is enough. It describes recognizable conduct toward other people and denies a privileged family relationship with God. The concluding statement connects walāya to practice. These claims accord with the Qur'anic insistence that moral standing concerns conduct and that a community's wishes do not settle judgment. [K-R04; K-Q04]

The chain receives a weak judgment from al-Majlisī. Its two upper routes converge before the crucial lower sequence. They therefore cannot be counted as two independent historical confirmations of everything attributed to the Imam. A fresh rijāl audit would need to examine each transmitter and the provenance of the judgments against him, with particular attention to the common route through ʿAmr b. Shimr. This edition does not invent such an audit.

The conclusion for Dark Imams is substantial even at this level. The transmitted corpus contains an ethic that resists the conversion of affiliation into immunity. That ethic can be argued on its merits while its exact attribution remains unresolved. We do not need to make an impeccable isnād out of a defective one to use the distinction.

This passage also restrains the book's polemic. A hostile judgment about an institution does not establish the final religious standing of everyone associated with it. Assessment should follow identifiable acts and reasons. An attractive lineage cannot absolve wrongdoing; a disputed lineage does not independently prove it.

Reassessment: RETAIN its ethical teaching; retain the weak attribution grade.

Sources: [K-R04; K-Q04]

05 · Taqiyya stops at bloodshed

Locator: 2/1/97/16 · Taqiyya

Arabic:

إنما جعلت التقية ليحقن بها الدم فإذا بلغ الدم فليس تقية

Translation: Taqiyya was instituted to preserve blood; when it reaches the shedding of blood, there is no taqiyya.

Transmission: Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī → Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār → Ṣafwān → Shuʿayb al-Ḥaddād → Muḥammad b. Muslim → Abū Jaʿfar.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḥasan. Mirʾāt 9:183. Al-Behbūdī selects it as ṣaḥīḥ in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Kāfī 1:98.

The report states a purpose and then imposes a limit derived from that purpose. Concealment protects people facing coercion. An appeal to concealment loses that justification when it becomes a means of shedding protected blood. The exact legal treatment of duress needs a larger dossier, but this proposition provides a strong internal restriction on an unlimited doctrine of expediency. [K-R05]

The displayed English translation can be read as though taqiyya ends whenever the believer's own life is threatened. That would reverse its protective rationale. Our translation follows the Arabic relation between preserving blood and reaching bloodshed. The circumstances of a concrete case still determine what conduct the report forbids.

The project applies this protection across sectarian boundaries through its Qur'anic commitment to justice. That generalization is stated as our uṣūl judgment. The short hadith does not itself enumerate every category of protected person. We should not smuggle an extended modern formulation into quotation marks.

Al-Behbūdī's positive selection is useful here. Elsewhere, a database's lam yukhrijhu merely says that he did not include a report in his selected collection. It supplies no explicit weak grading. Here the entry positively reports ṣaḥīḥ, which is different evidence. The classical classifications strengthen this case within their own systems; the humane limit remains accountable to the same broader ethical reasoning as the rest of the dossier.

Reassessment: RETAIN a bounded protective doctrine; REJECT its use to excuse injury to another innocent person.

Sources: [K-R05; K-Q02]

24 · Marriage, Capacity, and the Right to Refuse

The strongest objection concerning marriage

The classical case for premenarcheal marriage must be addressed directly. Qur'an 65:4 specifies a waiting period for those who have not menstruated. A major classical reading, represented by Ibn Kathīr, includes those who are too young to menstruate. Qur'an 33:49 exempts a marriage dissolved before contact from the waiting period. Reading these passages together has supplied an argument that the law contemplates consummated marriages involving that category. [K-R24; K-R25]

That argument cannot be erased by translating every instance of jāriya as a mature woman or by citing rushd as though 4:6 explicitly stated a universal marriage-age rule. The age-nine reports also cannot be refuted merely by observing that nine does not appear in these verses. Their defenders claim that transmitted teaching supplies a specification.

Our response has two levels. First, regulation of an existing situation does not by itself recommend producing that situation or establish a numerical licence for it. Second, the project's requirement of meaningful agreement and protection constrains the permitted act. Where a report makes a guardian's childhood contract irrevocably binding upon a now-mature person, the conflict with that requirement is direct. This is a declared uṣūl judgment, with an ethical extension beyond the narrow subject of 4:6.

Historical maturity should be studied in its actual setting. The present inquiry does not award an automatic moral verdict from the modern number eighteen. It does require evidence of the relevant capacities and freely expressed willingness. Earlier social convention cannot make actual coercion or injury cease to matter. This is why the dossiers distinguish the limited nine-year prohibition from the more explicit reports extinguishing choice.

06 · The corpus recognizes the failure of childhood arrangements

Locator: 5/3/61/1 · Children married young rarely develop affinity

Arabic:

إذا زوجوا وهم صغار لم يكادوا يتألفوا

Translation: When they are married while young, they scarcely develop affinity with one another.

Transmission: Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl → al-Faḍl b. Shādhān, and ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm → his father; both routes converge on Ibn Abī ʿUmayr → Hishām b. al-Ḥakam → Abū ʿAbd Allāh or Abū al-Ḥasan.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḥasan ka-l-ṣaḥīḥ. Mirʾāt 20:137.

The opening statement about marrying children is put to the Imam by an interlocutor. A careless paraphrase could make it sound like the Imam's own declaration of practice. The response predicts a failure of affinity. Its concern reaches beyond the formal validity of a contract to the life the arrangement creates. [K-R06]

This is valuable internal evidence against treating every early marriage arrangement as an unproblematic religious ideal. The passage itself stops short of a universal legal prohibition. Giving it that stronger wording would repeat the interpretive excess criticized in the nine-year material.

There are two upper paths, followed by a shared lower route. The attribution then names one of two Imams. Those features should remain visible. The alternatives are not proof of fabrication, and neither do they license a reconstructed transcript of an exact conversation with one named Imam.

Under the project's uṣūl, a marriage's anticipated welfare is relevant to its legitimacy. We can therefore retain this statement as a warning that fits the larger argument. The rule barring coercion will need the stronger grounds set out in the introduction and in the consent cases. This report supplies internal convergence and a record of concern; it does not carry the whole case.

Reassessment: RETAIN the warning; its exact imamic endpoint remains expressed as an alternative.

Sources: [K-R06; K-Q02]

07 · Nine or ten, with harm acknowledged

Locator: 5/3/62/1 · The limit for consummation

Arabic:

لا يدخل بالجارية حتى يأتي لها تسع سنين أو عشر سنين

Translation: Intercourse with the girl is not to occur until she reaches nine or ten years.

Transmission: A group of teachers → Sahl b. Ziyād → Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Naṣr → ʿAbd al-Karīm b. ʿAmr → Abū Baṣīr → Abū Jaʿfar.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḍaʿīf ʿalā al-mashhūr, "weak according to the well-known view." Mirʾāt 20:137.

The disjunction deserves attention. It may preserve uncertainty about a number or a qualified practical rule. Al-Majlisī proposes a physical explanation: many girls are harmed by intercourse before ten. He introduces that explanation as a possibility. The commentary therefore demonstrates awareness of harm and an effort to understand the variant; it does not establish what the original speaker meant by the two numbers. [K-R06]

A lower chronological boundary cannot independently demonstrate readiness after it is crossed. The Arabic contains a prohibition extending to a time, and its later legal use must establish whatever

further conditions govern the act. Under these uṣūl, willingness and adequate capacity remain necessary. A calendar supplies evidence about age, not a conclusive examination of either condition.

The grade stays weak according to al-Majlisī's reported standard. Since the next report has a stronger chain, rejecting this chain alone would leave the central problem untouched. A serious re-rating must address both passages separately.

The negative boundary can retain a protective meaning without becoming a complete permission rule. We reject reliance on this report as sufficient authority for access to a child's body. We also decline to infer that the word nine entered the text under Buyid patronage. The visible variation here belongs to the received wording; its earliest history requires parallel sources and manuscript evidence.

Reassessment: REJECT a numerical entitlement; RETAIN the prohibition's protective direction within stricter conditions.

Sources: [K-R06; K-Q01; K-Q02]

08 · The ṣaḥīḥ nine-year report

Locator: 5/3/62/2 · The limit for consummation

Arabic:

إذا تزوج الرجل الجارية وهي صغيرة فلا يدخل بها حتى يأتي لها تسع سنين

Translation: When a man marries a girl while she is young, he must not have intercourse with her until she reaches nine years.

Transmission: ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm → his father, and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā → Aḥmad b. Muḥammad; both routes converge on Ibn Abī ʿUmayr → Ḥammād → al-Ḥalabī → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ṣaḥīḥ. Mirʾāt 20:137.

This is the central case for separating technical transmission from the legal claim made with it. Al-Majlisī says ṣaḥīḥ without the qualification attached to its neighbor. The chain has more than one upper approach, with convergence at Ibn Abī ʿUmayr. That supports the classical grading while leaving one shared lower line to the Imam. [K-R06]

The text presupposes a marriage arrangement made during the girl's minority. It prohibits consummation before a numerical threshold. It neither recommends marrying a nine-year-old nor explicitly lists consent, sound judgment, or physical capacity as additional conditions. An honest reading retains both facts: the restrictive grammar and the problematic social arrangement it takes for granted.

A conventional jurist can argue that other rules supply the omitted conditions. That is a substantive answer and must be assessed through those rules. Where effective consent and protection against

injury actually govern the application, the disagreement concerns the force assigned to age and the validity of the childhood contract. Where the report is treated as a sufficient licence at nine, the present uṣūl rejects that inference.

The more difficult claim is that the report authenticates the binding childhood contract itself. A conditional sentence can assume a known practice without adjudicating every aspect of it. It offers limited evidence about that practice. To convert the assumption into an irrevocable obligation requires further argument. Dossier 13 contains the stronger explicit text concerning the later loss of choice.

Our judgment is therefore precise: the inherited ṣaḥīḥ chain assessment is recorded; a categorical legal licence based on nine alone is rejected. The exact utterance remains a historical attribution transmitted through the book. A later commentator's acknowledgment of harm does not logically contradict his chain classification. The failure would occur when that classification is used to bypass the harm and consent inquiry.

Reassessment: RESTRICT the report's legal use; REJECT nine as sufficient capacity or authorization.

Sources: [K-R06; K-Q01; K-Q02]

09 · The self-governing woman

Locator: 5/3/56/1 · Marriage without a guardian

Arabic:

المرأة التي قد ملكت نفسها غير السفيهة ولا المولى عليها إن تزويجها بغير ولي جائز

Translation: A woman who has authority over herself, who is neither incapable of sound judgment nor under guardianship, may marry without a guardian.

Transmission: ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm → his father → Ibn Abī ʿUmayr → ʿUmar b. Udhayna → al-Fuḍayl b. Yasār, Muḥammad b. Muslim, Zurāra, and Burayd b. Muʿāwiya → Abū Jaʿfar.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḥasan. Mirʾāt 20:125. Al-Behbūdī selects it as ṣaḥīḥ.

This passage makes the woman's status and judgment relevant to her ability to act. It does not make permission depend simply on a number. The four named transmitters near the Imam are important evidence, but their material reaches the compiler through a consolidated route. Four names in that position should not be inflated into four independent manuscript traditions. [K-R07]

The scope of "authority over herself" is disputed by competing legal readings. A restrictive reading can define every never-married daughter as still under paternal authority. The report then protects a narrower class of women. The project's reading asks for an independent justification of that exclusion: calling a competent woman dependent because she lacks the guardian's permission cannot itself prove the guardian's right to control her decision.

The Arabic also names lack of judgment and guardianship. It therefore cannot be quoted as an unqualified statement that every person, irrespective of capacity or circumstances, possesses identical contractual powers. Our conclusion concerns a competent person's agency, with ordinary safeguards concerning the rights of others.

The report receives positive normative weight under the project's uṣūl and has a favorable inherited chain assessment. Its exact legal reach should be argued alongside the contrary reports, especially 57/4–6. Keeping those contrary texts in the same dossier prevents selection of the agreeable passage from masquerading as a description of the whole collection.

Reassessment: RETAIN competence and self-government as relevant grounds of marital agency.

Sources: [K-R07; K-Q01; K-Q02]

10 · A sister's refusal and an orphan's consent

Locator: 5/3/57/3 · Father's permission for a girl's marriage

Arabic:

وإن أبت لم يزوجها ... واليتيمة في حجر الرجل لا يزوجها إلا برضاها

Translation: If she refuses, he must not marry her off ... an orphan girl in a man's care is not to be married off without her consent.

Transmission: A group of teachers → Sahl b. Ziyād → Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Naṣr → Dāwūd b. Sarḥān → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḍaʿīf ʿalā al-mashhūr. Mirʾāt 20:129.

The first question concerns a man arranging his sister's marriage. Her refusal blocks his action. The same report insists on the orphan's consent. This is especially important because dependence on a household can make a person's wishes difficult to express. The report's ethical force fits the project's conception of guardianship as responsibility toward a person's welfare. [K-R08]

The text also treats silence as assent. That presumption requires scrutiny. Silence can carry consent in a safe communicative setting, but it can also follow fear, dependence, or lack of understanding. Our application accepts it only where the person can refuse without retaliation and the circumstances genuinely establish willingness. Explicit refusal remains decisive.

Al-Majlisī discusses the juristic treatment of silence on the same page, including an objection to extending the inference too far. His own discussion shows that extracting consent from behavior was already a problem of interpretation. We need not portray every premodern commentator as oblivious to it.

The chain remains weak under the reported assessment. The stronger normative conclusion rests on the stated Qur'anic and ethical commitments, with this report as supporting transmitted material.

The next report includes the same brother-sister rule alongside a paternal exception. That juxtaposition exposes the legal question more sharply than an isolated quotation of this passage could.

Reassessment: RETAIN the consent rule; keep the weak chain judgment.

Sources: [K-R08; K-Q02]

11 · A father's arrangement despite her objection

Locator: 5/3/57/4 · Father's permission for a girl's marriage

Arabic:

ليس لها مع أبيها أمر إذا أنكحها جاز نكاحه وإن كانت كارهة

Translation: She has no authority alongside her father; when he marries her off, his marriage arrangement is valid, even while she objects.

Transmission: ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm → his father → Ibn Abī ʿUmayr → Ḥammād b. ʿUthmān → al-Ḥalabī → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḥasan. Mirʾāt 20:129. Al-Majlisī adds that it indicates the father's independent authority.

The opening question expressly concerns a marriage made without the girl's riḍā. The answer validates it despite her opposition. The second half asks about a brother arranging his sister's marriage and requires consultation, with refusal preventing the arrangement. The contrast is internal to the report: it turns on which male relative exercises authority. [K-R08]

A defender can attempt harmonization by distinguishing dissatisfaction from legally relevant consent, or by restricting the paternal clause to a particular dependent status. The first move must explain the question's explicit absence of riḍā. The second must establish why that status allows another person to override the affected person's refusal. The favorable chain grade supplies neither justification.

Under the project's uṣūl, a relative's role can support and protect someone's decision. A claim to act in her interests requires reasons open to examination. It cannot permanently eliminate the decision that marriage requires from the person whose life is being bound. The paternal override is therefore rejected as normative authority.

This judgment does not require declaring the report historically impossible. A patriarchal rule could have circulated in early legal teaching and could have been attributed sincerely or otherwise to an Imam. Determining its actual origin requires evidence beyond our moral rejection. The hadith remains significant evidence for the received legal discourse.

A clause-sensitive ruling is preferable to discarding every word. The latter half protects a woman against her brother's coercion; that protection survives the same tests. A single transmitted item can preserve a defensible principle and an exception that the present uṣūl rejects.

Reassessment: REJECT the coercive ruling as binding; RETAIN the report's separate protection of a sister's refusal.

Sources: [K-R08; K-Q02]

12 · He knows her interests better

Locator: 5/3/57/5 · Father's permission for a girl's marriage

Arabic:

لا تستأمر الجارية التي بين أبويها إذا أراد أبوها أن يزوجها هو أنظر لها

Translation: The girl living with her parents is not consulted when her father wishes to marry her off; he is more attentive to her interests.

Transmission: Ḥumayd b. Ziyād → al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Samāʿa → Jaʿfar b. Samāʿa → Abān → al-Faḍl b. ʿAbd al-Malik → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Muwaththaq. Mirʾāt 20:129.

This report supplies the rationale that the previous paternal exception leaves mostly implicit. The father's superior attention to his daughter's interests is invoked to dispense with consultation. The report then distinguishes the previously married woman, whose permission is sought. The central issue is thus an account of knowledge and status. [K-R08]

We should grant the strongest version of the paternal premise before judging the inference. A parent may understand a prospective household's risks better than a dependent child does. He may recognize deception that she cannot yet identify. Such advantages establish duties to advise and protect. They provide especially strong grounds to delay a consequential arrangement while capacity develops.

The further claim that this advantage authorizes imposing marriage needs its own justification. It treats supposed knowledge of someone's welfare as a substitute for her participation in a personal covenant. Under these uṣūl, that substitution fails. When adequate agency is absent, the protective response is to preserve the possibility of a later competent choice.

The muwaththaq grade makes the case important. A favorable transmitter classification can coexist with an argument that the project rejects. The source's non-Twelver or mixed transmitter affiliations, where relevant to the conventional category, should not become a convenient pretext for dismissal in a polycentric Shiʿi inquiry.

This is also the most direct bridge to the book's AI argument. A system's claimed superiority at estimating welfare must be assessed separately from the authority to bind a person against their will. The structural comparison rests on the explicit argument in this report; it requires no assertion that modern AI institutions descend from its transmission chain.

Reassessment: REJECT superior judgment as sufficient grounds to erase the affected person's consent.

Sources: [K-R08; K-Q01; K-Q02]

13 · The lost choice after maturity

Locator: 5/3/57/6 · Father's permission for a girl's marriage

Arabic:

عن الجارية الصغيرة يزوجها أبوها ألها أمر إذا بلغت قال لا ليس لها مع أبيها أمر

Translation: Concerning a young girl married off by her father: does she have a say when she reaches maturity? He said: No; she has no authority alongside her father.

Transmission: A group of teachers → Aḥmad b. Muḥammad → al-Ḥusayn b. Saʿīd → ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ṣalt → Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ṣaḥīḥ. Mirʾāt 20:130.

This is a stronger text for the project's legal critique than the bare nine-year boundary. The question asks about the girl's position after she reaches maturity. The answer denies her a say. It directly concerns whether the guardian's earlier decision binds the person who subsequently acquires capacity. [K-R09]

One displayed English translation omits the words "when she reaches maturity" from the first question. The omission reduces the visible conflict between later agency and an earlier paternal act. The Arabic makes that temporal transition explicit. A re-rating based only on the English would assess a materially weaker version of the claim.

The remainder of the report asks about a virgin who has reached womanhood. Its ending has a recorded variant: takbur, "grows older," appears in the displayed Kāfī wording, while tathīb, "becomes previously married," appears in the printed parallel in al-Ṭūsī's al-Istibṣār. Al-Narāqī records the variant and discusses the preferable reading. These witnesses document a transmitted wording problem. They do not by themselves date its first appearance. The clear first question remains present whichever ending is chosen. [K-R10; K-R11]

The conventional defense relies on a father's authority to contract for a minor and the continuing validity of his act after she matures. Our objection concerns precisely that continuation. Authority granted to protect a dependent person should be evaluated in relation to the agency that protection

is meant to preserve. A permanent personal commitment imposed before meaningful agreement does not acquire her assent through the passage of time.

The reassessment is therefore decisive at the normative level: this report cannot bind a mature person to an unwanted childhood marriage under the project's uṣūl. Its ṣaḥīḥ classification is not quietly rewritten. The historical possibility that an early transmitter or jurist taught the restrictive rule remains open to source criticism.

Reassessment: REJECT the continuing forfeiture of choice; preserve the favorable chain assessment as a separate datum.

Sources: [K-R09; K-R10; K-R11; K-Q01; K-Q02]

14 · ʿĀʾisha at ten, and a lesson about Ismāʿīl

Locator: 7/5/11/1 · Testimony of children

Arabic:

إن رسول الله دخل بعائشة وهي بنت عشر سنين ... فإذا كان للغلام عشر سنين جاز أمره وجازت شهادته

Translation: The Messenger of God consummated with ʿĀʾisha when she was ten years old ... therefore, when a boy is ten, his action and testimony are admissible.

Transmission: ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm → Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā → Yūnus → Abū Ayyūb al-Khazzāz, who questions Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ṣaḥīḥ. Mirʾāt 24:235. The chain ends at Ismāʿīl's answer.

Al-Majlisī grades the report ṣaḥīḥ and then questions the reasoning of its reported speaker. That combination is decisive for this edition's method. His classification can certify the chain to a statement whose argument he calls invalid. It therefore supplies direct internal evidence against treating every favorable isnād judgment as approval of the conclusion. [K-R12]

The question concerns a boy's testimony and independent action. Ismāʿīl's answer invokes a numerical age in a marriage story involving a girl. The inference lacks a demonstrated common basis connecting the capacities involved. Establishing a historical marriage age would still leave the competence of a particular witness to be assessed. Rational criticism of this analogy does not require rejecting reason or every form of analogical argument.

The Prophetic biographical assertion has a separate transmission problem. The printed chain gives us people reporting Ismāʿīl's answer. It does not specify his route to ʿĀʾisha or to the event. The report adds evidence for circulation of an age-ten account in the tradition represented by this text. It cannot be counted, without further work, as an independent eyewitness line resolving the six/nine/ten debate.

Al-Majlisī adds a remarkable suggestion: perhaps the compilers included this statement, founded on faulty analogy, to demonstrate Ismāʿīl's unsuitability for the Imamate. That is his proposed explanation of inclusion. The passage makes a later anti-Ismaili use of the report directly observable. It leaves al-Kulaynī's intention unproved.

Our polycentric uṣūl assesses Ismāʿīl's argument without excluding him in advance because he falls outside a Twelver list. The faulty inference fails on its merits. The later commentator's use belongs in the book as evidence of sectarian interpretation: a report about childhood testimony becomes an argument over eligibility for sacred succession.

Reassessment: REJECT the cross-domain age inference; SUSPEND the age as independently established Prophetic biography.

Sources: [K-R12]

25 · Coercion, Succession, and the Limits of Knowledge

15 · Umm Kulthūm: an accusation of seizure

Locator: 5/3/23/1 · The marriage of Umm Kulthūm

Arabic:

إن ذلك فرج غصبناه

Translation: That was a farj seized from us by force.

Transmission: ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm → his father → Ibn Abī ʿUmayr → Hishām b. Sālim and Ḥammād → Zurāra → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḥasan. Mirʾāt 20:42.

The term farj has an intimate sexual meaning and can function in legal discourse as a reference to sexual or marital access. Ghaṣb denotes wrongful seizure. A translation should preserve the accusation's force while avoiding details of sexual violence that the sentence itself does not supply. We render the key noun transparently and explain its range. [K-R13]

The report matters because the corpus remembers this marriage through a judgment of coercion. That judgment provides a relevant comparison with its reports allowing a father to override a daughter's wishes. The cases differ in the actor exercising force and the claimed source of authority. Our uṣūl asks whether those differences justify denying one person the protection invoked for another.

As history, the report is an attribution to Jaʿfar about a much earlier event. The transmitted chain reaches his reported statement; the sentence does not provide the earlier witnesses on whom he relied. That is the same endpoint discipline applied to Ismāʿīl's answer about ʿĀʾisha. Partisan usefulness is a reason to investigate its formation and circulation.

The report cannot establish that ʿUmar introduced child marriage into Islam. Its explicit contribution is narrower and still important: an accusation of wrongful appropriation connected to this marriage. The project should preserve that evidence at full strength while constructing the larger genealogy of legal norms through additional sources.

Reassessment: RETAIN as testimony to an Imami coercion narrative; historical occurrence remains a distinct inquiry.

Sources: [K-R13]

16 · She is a young girl

Locator: 5/3/23/2 · The marriage of Umm Kulthūm

Arabic:

إنها صبية

Translation: She is a young girl.

Transmission: The entry resumes the previous upper route through Ibn Abī ʿUmayr → Hishām b. Sālim → Abū ʿAbd Allāh. Its abbreviated beginning should be read with the preceding report.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḥasan. Mirʾāt 20:42.

The longer narrative attributes the youth objection to ʿAlī. It then portrays threats delivered through al-ʿAbbās, including manufactured testimony and threatened punishment. Delegation to al-ʿAbbās occurs within those conditions. The story therefore cannot be represented simply as a peaceful family alliance without confronting its stated coercive setting. [K-R13]

Its use in the present argument must also remain precise. Ṣabiyya does not supply a birthday or establish that the objection was the only reason for resistance. The two reports occupy the same chapter and share part of their transmission environment. Counting them as fully independent historical proof of every detail would exaggerate their corroborative value.

Under our uṣūl, the threats described are morally disqualifying. A legal arrangement produced through intimidation cannot acquire ethical legitimacy solely because a recognized official demanded it. The same standard should govern the father's claim to act for his daughter and the ruler's claim to obtain a family alliance.

This produces a concrete finding for Dark Imams: the received corpus juxtaposes protection against one coercive claimant with authorization of another kind of familial override. The tension concerns the scope of authority. Explaining how that pattern arose requires chronological comparison of the relevant legal materials. The texts do not yet identify a Buyid editor or a direct borrowing from ʿUmaric precedent.

Reassessment: RETAIN the youth objection and coercion allegation as the content of the report; SUSPEND exact age and first-origin claims.

Sources: [K-R13; K-R08; K-Q02]

17 · From dispute resolution to sacred obedience

Locator: 1/2/21/10 · Differences in hadith; the report of ʿUmar b. Ḥanẓala

Arabic:

فليرضوا به حكما فإني قد جعلته عليكم حاكما

Translation: Let them accept him as an adjudicator, for I have appointed him a judge over you.

Transmission: Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā → Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn → Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā → Ṣafwān b. Yaḥyā → Dāwūd b. al-Ḥuṣayn → ʿUmar b. Ḥanẓala → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Muwaththaq talaqqāhu al-aṣḥāb bi-l-qabūl, "reliable, received by the companions with acceptance." Mirʾāt 1:221.

The opening concerns two members of the community disputing debt or inheritance. They are directed toward a person knowledgeable in the relevant teaching. The report then intensifies the authority of the resulting judgment and discusses how to choose between conflicting reports. Its legal and theological clauses should be examined in their sequence. [K-R14; K-R15]

A recognized judge needs authority sufficient to resolve disputes. Acceptance of adjudication would be empty if either party could disregard every adverse result. That practical point supports a bounded institutional reading. It leaves open the standards for competence, procedural fairness, appeal, and correction of an unjust decision.

The passage's severe language about rejection of the appointed judge cannot establish that any contemporary jurist's preference carries divine immunity. Applying it requires first establishing that the person and judgment satisfy the conditions being invoked. A sincere challenge to competence or evidence differs from knowingly refusing a just judgment. The inference from a community's dispute resolver to unrestricted control over an entire state requires additional premises.

The later instructions about agreement with the Book and preference among rival reports supply another problem. Opposition to the ʿāmma, the wider non-Imami body, can function in a particular persecution setting as a clue to accommodation. Under the project's uṣūl it cannot become a truth test on its own. A proposition receives no automatic increase in truth by being less popular among Sunnis.

Al-Majlisī's own grade is retained, including the reception clause. That clause records scholarly acceptance, which is useful evidence about the report's authority within a community. It cannot alone prove every expansion of the jurisdiction claimed from it.

Reassessment: RETAIN accountable adjudication; REJECT an automatic grant of unlimited clerical sovereignty or moral infallibility.

Sources: [K-R14; K-R15; K-Q02]

18 · Every banner before the Qāʾim

Locator: 8/1/452/1 in the digital index · Rawḍat al-Kāfī, report 452

Arabic:

كل راية ترفع قبل قيام القائم فصاحبها طاغوت يعبد من دون الله عز وجل

Translation: Every banner raised before the rising of the Qāʾim has an owner who is a ṭāghūt, worshipped apart from God.

Transmission: The text resumes "from him," identified in the source apparatus as Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā → Aḥmad b. Muḥammad → al-Ḥusayn b. Saʿīd → Ḥammād b. ʿĪsā → al-Ḥusayn b. al-Mukhtār → Abū Baṣīr → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Muwaththaq. Mirʾāt 26:325.

The grammar is broad. "Every banner" and "before the rising" can support a sweeping restriction. A rendering that makes the leader someone who worships another god also changes the Arabic passive: the text presents him as one who is worshipped. The claim concerns the religious standing assigned to leadership. [K-R16]

A defense can restrict the sentence to rival claimants seeking the Imam's sacred office, or to the particular movements under discussion. Such readings have a recognizable rationale: a warning against self-authorizing saviors need not prohibit every attempt to protect the oppressed. The surviving sentence itself does not explicitly state those limits. They must be established through context and parallel reports.

Under this project's Qur'anic commitments, justice and protection of the vulnerable remain obligations. A report used to erase them across an indefinite future fails the normative test. Prudence about a specific uprising is a different matter and requires assessment of consequences. The dossier therefore rejects the unlimited quietist use while leaving narrower historical meanings open.

This is serious evidence for the book's investigation of political domestication. It supplies wording that could be used to condemn rivals. It does not name the person who created the wording or prove that an Abbasid administration commissioned it. Experience of disastrous revolt could also generate sincere caution within a persecuted community.

The same critical symmetry applies to the author's preferred Zaydi or Kaysani models. Commitment to resistance does not validate every claimant who raises a banner. Each claim still faces the standards of evidence, competence, and justice.

Reassessment: REJECT a universal prohibition on every just political action before the Qāʾim; narrower readings require evidence.

Sources: [K-R16; K-R26; K-Q02]

Succession, knowledge, and the Qur'an

19 · Two Imams, with one silent

Locator: 1/4/5/1 · The earth is not left without a divine proof

Arabic:

يكون إمامان قال لا إلا وأحدهما صامت

Translation: Can there be two Imams? He said: No, except while one of them is silent.

Transmission: A group of teachers → Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā → Ibn Abī ʿUmayr → al-Ḥusayn b. Abī al-ʿAlāʾ → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḥasan. Mirʾāt 2:294.

This passage is an adverse control for the project's multiple-succession hypothesis. It has a favorable reported chain and directly limits simultaneous leadership. We should not weaken it merely because the author hopes to recover a more plural history. Al-Majlisī explains the silent figure as one who does not make an independent public claim while another Imam holds authority, using the relationship between al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn as an example. [K-R17]

The wording can coexist with several teachers or delegated representatives if only one bears the particular commanding office meant by Imam. It creates greater difficulty for a theory of several coequal, simultaneously governing Imams within the same jurisdiction. Distinguishing those models gives the author's proposal an exact evidentiary task.

The report provides evidence that this exclusivist or hierarchical model circulated within the transmitted Imami tradition. Establishing its full historical priority requires comparison with other early models. The existence of later rival communities cannot by itself prove that Ḥusayn intentionally authorized them all.

Under the project's uṣūl, universal theological exclusivity needs support proportionate to the claim. This solitary case does not allow us to declare every alternative lineage fraudulent. It also gives no basis for asserting that a lost multiple appointment certainly occurred. The present finding is an authentic difficulty for the strongest coequal version of the author's hypothesis, preserved openly in the book.

Reassessment: RETAIN as substantive evidence for a hierarchical Imamate model; it does not settle the whole history of succession.

Sources: [K-R17; K-D01]

20 · The earth would sink

Locator: 1/4/5/10 · The earth is not left without a divine proof

Arabic:

لو بقيت الأرض بغير إمام لساخت

Translation: If the earth remained without an Imam, it would sink.

Transmission: ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm → Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā → Muḥammad b. al-Fuḍayl → Abū Ḥamza → Abū ʿAbd Allāh.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ḍaʿīf, as reproduced in the digital graded collection.

The passage lies close to the book's interest in the righteous person as a reason for the world's continuance. A reader can understand it as a literal claim about providence, as a metaphysical statement about guidance, or as a compressed image of social collapse. Choosing among those readings requires interpretation. The short sentence does not itself supply a theory of physical causation. [K-R18]

Its inherited weak grade remains visible. A philosophical attraction to the cosmic Imam cannot promote this chain to ṣaḥīḥ. Conversely, supernatural content is not by itself a demonstration that an attribution was fabricated. The project allows divine action while requiring evidence for particular reports about it.

A devotional or philosophical use can be expressed openly: the presence of righteous guidance is central to a meaningful human world. That formulation has to be defended in its own terms. It cannot silently become proof of a named dynasty's entitlement or a test of membership in the community.

Reassessment: SUSPEND the literal cosmic assertion; permit a stated devotional interpretation without making it binding evidence.

Sources: [K-R18]

21 · Knowledge can be given and withheld

Locator: 1/4/45/1 · A rare chapter concerning the unseen

Arabic:

يبسط لنا العلم فنعلم ويقبض عنا فلا نعلم

Translation: Knowledge is extended to us, and we know; it is withheld from us, and we do not know.

Transmission: A group of teachers → Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā → Muʿammar b. Khallād → Abū al-Ḥasan, who quotes Abū Jaʿfar in the answer.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Ṣaḥīḥ. Mirʾāt 3:110.

The answer follows a question about knowledge of the unseen. It explicitly describes a condition in which knowledge is withheld. The broader report places the secret with God and describes communication through Gabriel and the Prophet to those God wills. Its structure allows extraordinary knowledge while locating its source beyond the recipient. [K-R19; K-R20]

The distinction is important for the project's account of the Imam. Reverence and extraordinary instruction do not require converting every human judgment into unlimited knowledge. A person who receives guidance remains dependent on what is given.

Al-Majlisī's commentary harmonizes this passage with other claims about the Imam's knowledge. Such harmonization deserves its own appraisal. It demonstrates how a corpus with differing emphases can become a comprehensive doctrine through interpretation. The sentence's explicit admission of not knowing must remain in view while those limits are argued.

Under our uṣūl, the report is compatible with divine unity and the possibility of inspired understanding. Its favorable chain supplies stronger traditional support than the weak earth-sinking report. The re-rating therefore retains it as an important internal boundary on totalizing claims.

The practical implication applies to the exercise of authority. An assertion of privileged access does not by itself identify which questions fall within that access. A representative who invokes the Imam's knowledge must still establish what was transmitted and what he has inferred. The same distinction becomes useful later in the book when a powerful intelligence is treated as competent outside the domain in which its ability has been demonstrated.

Reassessment: RETAIN dependent and bounded knowledge; REJECT deriving unrestricted omniscience from this report.

Sources: [K-R19; K-R20; K-Q04]

22 · Seventeen thousand verses and the burden on the canon

Locator: 2/3/14/28 · Miscellaneous reports in the Book of the Excellence of the Qur'an

Arabic:

القرآن الذي جاء به جبرئيل إلى محمد سبعة عشر ألف آية

Translation: The Qur'an brought by Gabriel to Muḥammad was seventeen thousand verses.

Transmission: The local printed segment is ʿAlī b. al-Ḥakam → Hishām b. Sālim → Abū ʿAbd Allāh. Al-Majlisī's comment records Hārūn b. Muslim and Hishām b. Sālim as variant transmitter readings; the inherited upper context must be checked in a complete edition.

Al-Majlisī's assessment: Muwaththaq in the discussed reading; ṣaḥīḥ with Hishām b. Sālim in place of Hārūn b. Muslim. Mirʾāt 12:525–526.

Al-Majlisī records a transmitter-name variant and explains how it changes his assessment. The displayed printed text already contains Hishām, while the commentary refers to its substitution for Hārūn. That is a concrete warning about combining a base text and commentary from different editorial states. A reproducible study must specify which reading is being assessed. [K-R21; K-R22]

His explanation also makes the doctrinal stakes explicit. In this passage he treats the report and related material as evidence of loss or alteration of Qur'anic text, and argues that the reports in that category possess substantial cumulative weight. He regards some harmonizing explanations as strained. This is his position in the inspected passage; it cannot be generalized into a claim about every Imami scholar.

The project gives the publicly transmitted Qur'an priority over a solitary numerical report. Under that commitment, this item cannot establish a binding replacement history of revelation. A claim of cumulative evidence would require assembling the reports, separating independent sources, and distinguishing altered revelation from commentary, readings, verse divisions, and other textual categories. Al-Majlisī's confidence does not perform that work for a new investigator.

The numerical discrepancy also deserves exact treatment. Counting conventions can change verse totals, but an appeal to counting differences must show how the proposed system produces this number. An appeal to extra explanatory revelation requires evidence that the term Qur'an is being used in that way here. Neither explanation should be declared settled merely because it protects a preferred theology.

Reassessment: REJECT its authority to displace the publicly transmitted Qur'an; SUSPEND the exact historical wording and reconstruction.

Sources: [K-R21; K-R22; K-Q04]

What the re-ratings change

The legal center of the argument shifts

The nine-year report remains important because its chain is explicitly graded ṣaḥīḥ. It is strongest as a test of what a legal reader does with a chronological boundary. Its grammar leaves room for additional prohibitions and conditions. The more decisive coercion cases are 5/3/57/4–6. They state the paternal exception, supply a welfare rationale, and address the later loss of choice. [K-R06; K-R08; K-R09]

A critique built only around the number nine can therefore miss the deeper structure. A person may be treated as unable to choose while a guardian possesses authority to make a binding choice for

her. That arrangement becomes especially consequential when the claimed incapacity ends and the legal bond remains. Dossier 13 isolates the point at which protection becomes continuing control.

Within the project's uṣūl, the rulings authorizing that continuing override fail. The favorable classical chain judgments have been retained in the record. That makes the disagreement visible: a later taxonomy of transmitters cannot decide the entire question of what conduct God authorizes.

Al-Majlisī sometimes performs the separation himself

The Ismāʿīl report receives ṣaḥīḥ for its transmission and criticism for its reasoning. This should be central to the book. It shows that separating attribution from correctness is possible inside the commentary being examined. Our method extends that discipline to cases in which the speaker's imamic status would otherwise foreclose the critique. [K-R12]

The comment about inclusion also provides a concrete reception history. Al-Majlisī proposes that the reported mistake displays Ismāʿīl's unsuitability for the Imamate. The manuscript can quote that suggestion as evidence of his interpretation. It should leave open why al-Kulaynī included the report and how earlier readers understood it.

This is stronger than a general allegation that later authorities must have distorted the corpus. We can identify the passage and the interpretive act. Its relation to Ismaili succession becomes legible without inventing a missing document or an anonymous political operative.

Reason cannot be reserved for the conclusions we favor

Several favorable ethical statements here have weak or interrupted chains. Dossiers 3 and 4 keep those defects. The two-Imams report, which complicates the author's plural succession hypothesis, receives a favorable inherited classification and substantive consideration. These controls matter because a preference-driven critic can reproduce the very pattern he opposes.

The project's moral argument must likewise be explicit. A defender of paternal authority can argue from protection or superior foresight. We answer that account in dossier 12 by considering what such foresight actually authorizes. The criticism reaches the inference from knowledge to control. It does not depend on assuming that every parent acts maliciously.

The same distinction governs the political material. Some resistance is reckless and some leaders misuse sacred claims. A rejection of unlimited quietism therefore needs no approval of every rebellion. The ethical test concerns what an actor is doing, the harms foreseeable from that action, and the basis of the authority being claimed.

A closer statement of the Buyid hypothesis

The examined material supports several different investigations, with different current results.

Textual alteration. The takbur/tathīb clause and the Hārūn/Hishām transmitter reading are attested variation problems. The witnesses currently consulted do not establish the date or agent of their origin. A Buyid alteration claim requires an earlier/later distribution of readings and evidence connecting the transition to a specific network. [K-R10; K-R11; K-R21]

Translation. The omission of the post-maturity condition can be observed in a modern displayed English rendering. The report about optional Sunnah supplies a second problem discussed below. These findings establish how present-day access can change a reader's understanding. They provide no direct date for a medieval intervention.

Interpretation and authority. The comment concerning Ismāʿīl demonstrates a later sectarian reading. The paternal reports demonstrate the explicit justification of control through supposed knowledge of another person's interests. The anti-banner report supplies language available for condemning political claimants. Further research can trace when and by whom these texts were invoked. [K-R08; K-R12; K-R16]

Original political coordination. None of the inspected items identifies a Buyid directive to insert a report. The absence of that finding leaves a research question open. It does not remove the demonstrated history of reinterpretation or the independent normative objections developed here.

For the book, the strongest present formulation concerns how transmitted authority is enlarged. A compiler's corpus becomes available to later judges, whose choices about interpretation determine the practical voice attributed to the Imam. Some changes require altered wording. Others can be produced entirely through selection and jurisdiction.

Translation audit: small changes with large consequences

The missing transition to maturity

In 5/3/57/6, the Arabic asks whether the girl has a say **idhā balaghat**, when she reaches maturity. One English rendering on the digital chapter leaves that condition out of the first question. Restoring it changes what the reader sees: the hadith now explicitly concerns a mature person's ability to challenge an earlier arrangement. This is a verified difference between the displayed texts, with no claim about translator intention. [K-R09]

Optional Sunnah and the omitted negation

Al-Kāfī 1/2/22/12 distinguishes a Sunnah connected with obligation from one outside obligation. The latter ends in the displayed Arabic with **wa-tarkuhā ilā ghayri khaṭīʾa**. The parallel in al-Khiṣāl

has the clearer **wa-tarkuhā ghayru khaṭīʾa**. Both point toward omission without sin. The displayed English Kāfī rendering instead describes omission as a sin. [K-R02; K-R23]

The difference matters for the earlier discussion of turning a reported practice into an obligation. A reading that removes the negative collapses a distinction the report is trying to preserve. This item is a translation check outside the twenty-two formally re-rated dossiers; al-Majlisī's exact classification for it was not independently verified in this pass. Its existence should not be used to invent a favorable grade.

Who is worshipped in the banner report?

The Arabic **yuʿbadu min dūni Allāh** characterizes the leader as worshipped apart from God. A displayed English rendering makes the leader the worshipper of something else. That shift changes the theological accusation. The source text concerns illegitimate devotion to a claimant, which is relevant to possible restricted interpretations of the report. [K-R16]

Taqiyya's boundary

The bloodshed report connects concealment to preserving life. An English rendering that suggests concealment ceases whenever danger threatens life can obscure the relation between means and protective purpose. The Arabic needs to be read with the legal situation in view. This edition gives the direct purpose-based reading and states its extension to protected persons as an ethical judgment. [K-R05]

The limit of a narrator-only re-rating

A new assessment can dispute a narrator's reliability or the continuity of a chain. That task requires the actual evidence for the dispute. Merely announcing a different result in the familiar vocabulary of ṣaḥīḥ and ḍaʿīf would conceal the change of method.

The present fascicle therefore records the inherited grade and makes its fresh intervention explicit. It identifies consolidated routes, preserves uncertain endpoints, and reports wording variants. Its strongest revision concerns ḥujjiyya, the claim that a text can bind belief or conduct under the project's uṣūl.

To extend this into a full critical edition, each chain requires a separate narrator dossier. That register should identify the earliest source of a reliability judgment, distinguish repeated citations from independent assessments, and record whether sectarian affiliation supplied the alleged defect. A manuscript register should then document the transmission of the book in which that chain survives. These are tasks specified by the findings, rather than substitutes for making judgments now.

26 · Governing in the Imam's Absence

The death of al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī in 260/874 did not leave behind a community calmly executing an already understood doctrine of twelve Imams and four successive deputies. The early record looks much more like a succession crisis whose eventual winner became capable of redescribing the crisis as a transition.

Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī, who died around 299/911, supplies the most useful near-contemporary map recovered in this research pass. His *al-Maqālāt wa-l-firaq* says that al-ʿAskarī died without a publicly known son and that his followers divided into fifteen groups. Among the positions he records are the claim that a hidden son existed, the claim that al-ʿAskarī himself remained the awaited Qāʾim, the claim that the Imamate had passed elsewhere, the claim that the line had temporarily ended, and an explicitly hesitant position whose adherents said that the matter had become confused and that they would suspend judgment until the next Imam became clear. [Z01]

The exact taxonomy is itself a textual problem. The received *Firaq al-Shīʿa* commonly associated with Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī gives a closely related but not identical enumeration, and modern scholarship has questioned whether the surviving work under that title is actually Nawbakhtī's composition rather than a text closely related to Saʿd al-Qummī's. The discrepancy is useful. It prevents us from turning a later sect list into a photographic record of a single moment. What the two related heresiographical traditions establish most strongly is not the exact count. It is the existence of a serious, remembered plurality after al-ʿAskarī's death. [Z01; Z08]

That plurality changes the burden of proof. A doctrine of occultation can be true while still requiring a historical explanation of how one community came to recognize it. The later success of the Twelver account cannot substitute for evidence that its institutional form was already obvious in 874.

Before the crisis: the Imam already had agents

The disappearance of a visible Imam did not create religious administration out of nothing. Edmund Hayes's reconstruction distinguishes scholars from the *wukalāʾ*, agents whose authority rested substantially on the fiscal and correspondence systems of the late Imamate. Before 874, agents collected religious dues, transmitted instructions, represented local communities, and materially connected followers to an Imam they often could not visit. By the reigns of the tenth and eleventh Imams, these practices had developed recognizable protocols. [Z03]

That distinction is central to *Dark Imams*. A scholar persuades through a text or argument. An agent can also receive money, certify appointments, carry letters, and control access to an institution. The

latter powers create observable signs of representation. If the principal becomes inaccessible, possession of those signs becomes even more important.

This is one reason the post-874 struggle cannot be understood solely as an abstract argument over whether a son existed. The old agency network contained people with accounts, correspondents, loyalties, and accumulated trust. Whoever successfully presented himself as continuing that network could make an invisible succession socially real for people far from Samarra.

Hayes argues that the eventual office of the four canonical envoys was not simply inherited in finished form on the day al-ʿAskarī died. In the earliest layer of the material, the elder ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-ʿAmrī is not yet visible as the uncontested supreme intermediary depicted in later accounts. Several other agents are active, and some old-guard representatives resisted or failed to recognize the claims of those who later became canonical. Envoy authority accumulated piecemeal. [Z03]

This finding is stronger than a generic observation that institutions evolve. It gives us a proposed sequence:

a pre-existing network of local agents links followers to a visible Imam;

the Imam dies amid uncertainty over succession;

some agents claim continued contact with a hidden son;

letters, financial transfers, succession protocols, and successful representation become evidence for that claim;

a subset of agents gains pre-eminence;

later memory canonizes four of them as a continuous sequence of envoys.

None of those steps, by itself, disproves contact with a hidden Imam. Together they show that the historical community encountered the claim through an institution whose own authority was being contested.

Letters and money as evidence

The physical signs of the office deserve the same scrutiny that this book has applied to wills, books, and ritual grips. Hayes emphasizes letters and alms as technologies through which authority was reproduced. A rescript bearing recognized handwriting can appear to answer a question from an inaccessible source. A representative who receives the dues previously sent to the Imam can present the continuity of payment as continuity of office. [Z03]

These signs can be genuine. They can also become difficult for an outsider to audit. A letter may establish that someone inside the network accepted the document as authoritative without independently establishing who dictated it. A payment can show that a community trusted an agent while leaving the metaphysical status of the principal unresolved.

The problem is especially sharp where the same intermediary controls both the message and much of the evidence for its authentication. Later tradition contains procedures for recognition, disputes over handwriting, and tests of agents. Those procedures are historically valuable precisely because they reveal that authentication was a practical problem, not a trivial consequence of doctrine.

The institutional lesson is not that mediation is inherently fraudulent. A persecuted movement may need mediation. The lesson is that secrecy transfers epistemic weight toward the people who control the surviving interfaces.

The four-envoy story is itself historical

Verena Klemm notes that the familiar hierarchy of four successive deputies is not clearly articulated in the earliest occultation-era sources. The terminology *safīr* for an official mediator appears in al-Nuʿmānī in the tenth century, and the later orderly scheme should be distinguished from the messier social history out of which it emerged. [Z02]

This gives *Dark Imams* a precise methodological rule: **do not use the later office chart as evidence that the earlier contest was already resolved**.

The distinction resembles our treatment of the Four Books. A work can circulate centuries before a later canon groups it with three others and gives the set a special collective status. Likewise, several men can exercise forms of agency before later historiography arranges four of them into the canonical sequence of the Minor Occultation.

The point concerns chronology, not semantics. The later doctrine may preserve real continuity. Its clean architecture remains a result requiring explanation.

The Nawbakhtis: court access and rationalized occultation

The Banū Nawbakht make the institutional question considerably more interesting. They belonged to an influential Baghdad family with connections to Abbasid administration and intellectual life. Iranica's history of the family describes Abū Sahl Ismāʿīl b. ʿAlī al-Nawbakhtī as a central figure in early Imami theology and credits the family with an important role in articulating doctrines of occultation and deputyship. His nephew Ḥasan b. Mūsā became an important heresiographer and theologian. [Z04; Z05]

Abū Sahl's theology also crossed categories that later histories can make look mutually exclusive. He accepted important Muʿtazili positions concerning divine attributes, justice, and human freedom while defending an Imami doctrine of the Imamate. His surviving fragments show that occultation was a subject for argument rather than merely for the repetition of inherited reports. [Z05]

That combination fits one part of the author's "disgraced-Muʿtazili" suspicion but also disciplines it. We have evidence for **rationalist techniques entering the construction of an Imami theology of**

absence. We have evidence for a family with access to Abbasid political institutions. We do not presently have evidence that an Abbasid official commissioned the doctrine as a pacification operation.

The difference matters because the same social position supports several explanations. A court-connected Shiʿi family may seek a form of community organization that allows survival under a hostile or ambiguous government. Its members may sincerely regard the hidden-Imam doctrine as the best explanation of inherited commitments. A government may tolerate or prefer a community that does not immediately rally behind every armed Alid. None of those propositions proves that the government designed the theology.

The historical burden for a stronger operation thesis would be substantial: correspondence, patronage instructions, coordinated textual changes, payments, or reports tying named officials to the production of particular occultation claims. The present evidence instead supports a more distributed mechanism in which bureaucratic experience, rational theology, and community administration intersected.

Ibn Qiba and the conversion of crisis into argument

Abū Jaʿfar Ibn Qiba al-Rāzī gives us another revealing case. He had a Muʿtazili background before becoming an Imami theologian and wrote directly in defense of the Imamate and occultation during the formative crisis. Modern scholarship treats him, alongside Abū Sahl, as part of the rationalizing response to the disappearance of the visible Imam. [Z06]

This is not merely the importation of Muʿtazilism into Shiʿism. The imported techniques could be used against Muʿtazili conclusions. A theologian can adopt standards of argument from one school and use them to defend a succession doctrine that school rejects.

For the book's "light lineage," this is important. Intellectual transmission does not guarantee political continuity. A method of rational accountability can be used to test an institution or to make the institution more defensible. The moral significance depends on which premises the thinker permits the method to question.

The strongest form of occultation reasoning asks whether a divinely required office must remain instantiated even when its holder cannot be publicly identified. Once that premise is accepted, disappearance becomes easier to interpret as concealment rather than vacancy. But the premise itself must be justified. The mere usefulness of the solution cannot make it true.

From apocalypse to durable institution

Saïd Amir Arjomand's account emphasizes another transformation: occultation traditions that had earlier appeared in more apocalyptic settings were adapted into a theory capable of supporting a

durable religious community. Abū Sahl and Ibn Qiba figure prominently in that rationalization. The language of two occultations helped explain why an initial period of mediated communication could end without invalidating the hidden Imam's continuing existence. [Z06]

Here we should distinguish three propositions.

First: communities before 874 already possessed expectations concerning hidden or returning Imams. This made occultation conceptually available.

Second: agents after al-ʿAskarī's death claimed to represent a hidden son. This created an institutional continuation.

Third: theologians subsequently developed arguments explaining why prolonged absence was compatible with the divine necessity of an Imam. This made the arrangement intellectually durable.

The propositions reinforce one another without being identical. A pre-existing motif can be adapted to a new person. An institution can survive before its final theology is written. A successful theology can then make the institution's earlier uncertainty harder for later readers to see.

What the surviving evidence does to the psyop hypothesis

The "pacification" hypothesis now has a sharper form.

A hidden Imam removes one immediate source of competition among visible Alid claimants. An agent network gives the community leaders who can collect funds and transmit guidance without claiming the Imamate for themselves. Rational theology can explain why the absence does not invalidate the office. Court-connected families can participate in Abbasid society without recognizing the caliph as the divinely rightful Imam.

That configuration is politically compatible with Abbasid rule. Compatibility is not authorship.

The evidence presently supports **institutional stabilization under political constraints**, with some actors possessing court connections and rationalist intellectual tools. It also supports retrospective simplification: the canonical four-envoy sequence is cleaner than the earliest recoverable struggle for authority. It does not yet establish that the Abbasid state manufactured the hidden son, selected the four deputies, or directed the theology.

This distinction leaves a major research program intact. We should trace the earliest individual claims about the child's birth, the letters attributed to him, the succession of agents, and the emergence of the two-occultation scheme. Each has a date and a transmission history. If several crucial claims first converge in one court-linked network, the operation thesis strengthens. If they appear independently across hostile or geographically separated witnesses, it weakens.

The chapter's normative conclusion is simpler. **No representative's privileged access should make his own evidence immune from examination.** A hidden principal may be real. The intermediary still has to establish what authority has been entrusted to him.

That requirement prepares the next chapter. Once direct consultation with the Imam disappears, transmitted books and the scholars who interpret them acquire new practical importance. The question moves from who carries the sealed letter to who decides what the inherited report means.

27 · Baghdad's Scholars and the Later Four Books

The Greater Occultation did not immediately hand the community over to a single class of jurists armed with a settled canon. The first centuries after 874 contain competing theories of transmission, reason, legal probability, and scholarly authority. That disagreement is important because later Twelver institutions inherit the results while often presenting the underlying corpus as though it had always possessed the same legal status.

The Baghdad school is where several of these problems become visible at once. Al-Mufīd, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, and al-Ṭūsī were connected through teaching and public life, but they did not use hadith in the same way. Their disagreements make a strong control against any history in which "the jurists" simply took over an intact body of Imam speech and applied it.

From Qom to Baghdad through actual people

The transition from the earlier collection culture to the Baghdad school had named intermediaries. Ibn Qūlawayh, an Imami traditionist who studied in Qom and elsewhere, was a disciple of al-Kulaynī and later a teacher of al-Mufīd. His career physically links the world of the early hadith compilers to the rationalizing scholarship of Baghdad. [Z13]

This kind of relationship is more useful than an abstract arrow labeled "Qom → Baghdad." It identifies a person who could transmit books and reports while participating in a changing intellectual environment. Continuity of material does not require continuity of method.

A student can inherit a report and subject it to a different standard of proof. That is exactly the possibility our *al-Kāfī* reassessment needs.

Al-Mufīd: transmitted authority under rational correction

Al-Mufīd's *Awāʾil al-maqālāt* defines a distinct Imami theological position in conversation with Muʿtazili schools. Iranica describes the work as a practical catalogue of disputed doctrines and notes that al-Mufīd's theology gives revelation a necessary role while also assigning reason serious work in establishing and checking religious knowledge. [Z14]

The later historiographical label "Usuli" can obscure how experimental this stage still was. Al-Mufīd did not simply replace hadith with reason. He worked inside a community whose identity depended on reports from the Imams while criticizing inherited formulations and constructing arguments capable of surviving debate with rival schools.

A modern synthesis of Buyid-period legal theory describes his treatment of isolated reports as conditional: a solitary report could not simply compel belief or action on its own; corroborating evidence such as Qurʾanic support or rational proof mattered. [Z12]

That method has direct consequences for *Dark Imams*. A report in *al-Kāfī* is not yet the voice of the historical Imam merely because it sits in a respected compilation. A later jurist can ask whether its content is supported by stronger evidence. This does not turn every legal disagreement into textual skepticism, but it means the authority of the report already contains an interpretive stage.

The political setting makes that stage consequential. Al-Mufīd wrote in Buyid Baghdad amid sectarian rivalry and increasing public Shiʿi institutional life. The same environment that amplified communal identity also created incentives to systematize what the community actually taught. Institutional consolidation and intellectual criticism could therefore occur together.

Al-Murtaḍā: certainty before isolated reports

Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā provides an even stronger counterexample to the idea of an already fixed hadith canon. He was a leading Imami scholar, a student of al-Mufīd, and a holder of the *naqīb* office in Baghdad. His family connected him through his mother to the Zaydi Imam al-Nāṣir Uṭrūsh, while his own intellectual work belongs decisively to the Imami Baghdad school. [Z15]

Al-Murtaḍā rejected the legal authority of *khabar al-wāḥid*, the isolated report that fails to produce certainty. Recent research on his *Amālī* emphasizes that this was not casual skepticism. He distinguished reports that yield knowledge from reports whose truth remains merely probable and denied that probability alone could establish a binding rule of divine law. At the same time, he continued to interpret isolated reports when they posed linguistic or theological problems. [Z11]

This combination is exceptionally important for our project.

A report can be worth explaining without being strong enough to command conduct.

That sentence cuts across a large amount of later polemic. A believer need not choose between declaring an inherited report worthless and treating it as binding speech of the Imam. Historical, literary, or theological interest can survive suspension of legal authority.

Al-Murtaḍā even claimed that rejection of acting on isolated reports represented the Imami position. His student and contemporary al-Ṭūsī would make almost the opposite claim about the practice of the community. The fact that two elite scholars near one another in time could each invoke the inherited school while disagreeing so dramatically is itself evidence. "The tradition" was an argumentative field, not a database with a single query result. [Z11; Z12]

Al-Ṭūsī: reports become a juristic archive

Al-Ṭūsī's intervention is therefore not merely the addition of two books to an existing canon. It is a change in the handling of inherited reports.

Robert Gleave's analysis of the early Imami collections makes this visible through literary form. *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām* is structured as a commentary on al-Mufīd's *al-Muqniʿa*, and *al-Istibṣār* is explicitly organized around reports that appear to conflict. The hadith collection is no longer simply an archive of transmitted sayings. It is arranged around juristic problems that require selection and reconciliation. [Z09]

That is a major epistemic shift.

The compiler decides which reports belong next to one another. He identifies apparent contradictions. He proposes ways to harmonize them. A later reader may inherit the reconciliation more readily than the raw disagreement.

The process does not require fraudulent editing. Editorial organization itself creates a jurisprudential interface to the past.

Al-Ṭūsī also took a more permissive position than al-Murtaḍā on some isolated reports. Modern scholarship summarizes his position as accepting *khabar al-wāḥid* under specified conditions and treating the practice of the Imami community as evidence for such use. [Z12]

The contrast is striking: al-Murtaḍā can say that Imamis do not act on isolated reports, while al-Ṭūsī can appeal to their practice to justify doing so. Rather than resolving the contradiction by choosing one writer as the sole authentic voice of the school, the historian should ask what each is counting as inherited practice and what legal problem his theory needs to solve.

The disagreement also illustrates the danger of retrospective consensus. A later jurist who follows al-Ṭūsī may see his method as the natural articulation of earlier Imami practice. A reader following al-Murtaḍā can interpret the same archive as material whose probative force depends on independent certainty. Each genealogy of method selects different features of the past.

The Four Books did not arrive as the Four Books

Amin Ehteshami's study supplies the crucial chronological correction. *Al-Kāfī*, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, and *al-Istibṣār* were compiled in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but the collective label "the Four Books" first appears much later and only consolidates as the marker of a uniquely privileged Imami corpus in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. [Z10]

This means at least three historical events must be separated:

Compilation. Individual authors gather, organize, and comment on reports.

Reception. Later jurists cite some works more heavily than others and build legal methods around them.

Canonization. A subsequent scholarly culture identifies four books as a specially privileged set and develops arguments about why their transmission deserves confidence.

The distinction alters the entire *Dark Imams* hypothesis. A Buyid ruler in 960 cannot confer a seventeenth-century theory of Four-Book authority on a tenth-century report. The later authority must be explained through later history.

That later history can make an old sentence more powerful without changing a letter.

A canon whose contents are juristic raw material

Gleave's analysis is useful because it resists treating the canonical collections as law books that merely reproduce settled Imam rulings. His comparison of collection strategies shows that fiqh shaped what collectors selected and how they presented it. The reports became **material sources** from which jurists constructed law. [Z09]

This matters for the reports on marriage, allegiance, taqiyya, and political authority examined earlier.

Suppose two conflicting reports survive in the archive. One jurist regards one as *taqiyya*. Another restricts one report to a particular circumstance. A third judges an isnād stronger. A fourth argues that Qurʾanic principle controls both. The practical Imam encountered by the later believer is partly the product of those decisions.

The phrase "canonically manufactured juridical Imam" should therefore be understood with precision. The claim need not mean that a scholar fabricated speech. It can mean that **the legally effective persona of the Imam is produced through transmission, selection, arrangement, grading, interpretation, and institutional adoption**.

That is a historical claim we can observe even where the original speech remains authentic.

The same period contains rival legal epistemologies

The Buyid and early post-Buyid period should consequently be presented as a competition among methods.

Ibn Qiba could demand stronger certainty from reports while rationalizing occultation. Ibn al-Junayd could employ forms of juristic reasoning other Imamis distrusted. Al-Mufīd combined transmitted teaching with rational corroboration. Al-Murtaḍā elevated certainty and challenged isolated reports. Al-Ṭūsī developed methods capable of using a much larger inherited report archive in systematic law. [Z07; Z12]

The later labels "Akhbari" and "Usuli" should not simply be projected backward onto these actors. Iranica's account notes that the mature names belong to later controversies, even though an older tension between traditionist and rationalizing approaches is real. [Z12]

That warning fits our wider method. A later category can identify a pattern while distorting the choices as they appeared to the participants.

Canonization and power

The book's political question now becomes more precise.

A state does not have to forge a hadith collection to alter which religious voice is socially dominant. Patronage can support a school. A school can train judges. Judges can employ one method of reconciling the archive. Commentaries can become textbooks. A later state can then inherit a legal tradition in which earlier disagreements survive only in specialist works.

The structure resembles the calendar mechanism in chapter 20. Public repetition changes salience. In law, repeated institutional use changes the default interpretation.

The person subject to the rule encounters the output of this pipeline, not the archive in its full uncertainty.

Our corrective is therefore not anti-juristic. It is **auditability**. The jurist should be able to show the report, the chain judgment, the alternative report, the Qurʾanic constraint, and the inference connecting them to the ruling. Expertise remains valuable precisely because the reasoning can be examined.

A system that says "the Imam has spoken" when what it means is "our school selected this reconciliation among several inherited reports" conceals an important human step.

The danger becomes acute when a final public instruction hides the intervening choices. A collector preserved a report, a commentator graded its chain, a jurist compared it with rival material, and an institution selected an enforceable ruling. Each stage can contain sincere scholarship. The governed person still deserves to know which stage produced the obligation and how to challenge it. A command delivered as unmediated speech of the Imam conceals precisely the human discretion that makes review necessary.

From Baghdad to al-Ḥilla

The next transition occurs when those methods become inherited objects of criticism themselves. Al-Ṭūsī's prestige became enormous. Yet later Imami jurists did not remain permanently confined within his answers. The School of al-Ḥilla reopened methodological questions, developed new classifications, and made disagreement itself part of a durable scholarly tradition.

That history matters because it complicates any simple story of clerical takeover. A juristic institution can accumulate authority while preserving tools for criticizing its most prestigious

predecessors. Whether those tools remain available against a living institution is the question that follows the tradition into Safavid Iran.

PART V · Philosophical Inheritances

28 · From al-Ḥilla to Isfahan

A straight line from al-Ṭūsī to the Safavids would make the growth of juristic authority look inevitable. The history of al-Ḥilla shows something more interesting: authority grew through disagreement.

Aun Hasan Ali's recent study argues that the School of al-Ḥilla, from the late Abbasid through the post-Ilkhanid period, should be understood as a formative arena of Twelver tradition rather than as a simple sequence of authoritative jurists. Networks of teachers, families, texts, rival arguments, and patronage sustained a community whose unity included structured disagreement. [Z16]

That framework fits *Dark Imams* better than a story in which one clerical office steadily inherits the absent Imam's powers. The archive contains repeated attempts to define what a jurist may know, infer, and administer. Those attempts do not all produce the same answer.

Breaking the spell of al-Ṭūsī

The enormous prestige of al-Ṭūsī created its own problem. Later legal historiography remembers a period in which his opinions dominated so strongly that independent criticism became difficult. Whether the familiar narrative of a century of total stagnation is exaggerated, Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī became emblematic of the reaction against inherited deference. Modern scholarship treats his *al-Sarāʾir* as a major effort to criticize positions associated with al-Ṭūsī and to reopen legal reasoning. [Z16]

This episode belongs at the center of the book's normative argument.

A scholar can be so successful that his method becomes the environment in which later scholars think. The next generation may still possess formal permission to disagree while lacking the intellectual habit of doing so. A critic who reopens the question is then accused not merely of error but of violating the prestige structure of the school.

That is an institutional form of path dependence. No censorship decree is required.

Ibn Idrīs therefore serves as a control against a crude clerical-domestication thesis. The juristic tradition was capable of generating criticism of its own greatest authorities. The important question is what conditions allowed that criticism to survive and become teachable.

Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī and a reusable legal architecture

By the thirteenth century, al-Ḥilla had become a major center for systematic legal study. Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī's works helped provide a structure through which later students could encounter

fiqh as an organized discipline rather than as a sequence of transmitted answers. His *al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfiʿ* and *Sharāʾiʿ al-Islām* became durable teaching texts. [Z16]

The significance is not merely pedagogical. A textbook creates an architecture of relevance. It decides which problems deserve chapters, which distinctions students learn first, and which inherited reports are treated as evidence for each question.

This is analogous to our treatment of hadith arrangement. Changing the structure around a report can change its practical force without altering the report itself.

At the same time, a stable curriculum makes disagreement easier to locate. Two jurists can argue about the same doctrinal unit because they share a map of the field. Systematization can therefore increase both institutional coherence and the precision of dissent.

ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī: philosophy, law, and court

ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī embodies the intersection of those developments. Sabine Schmidtke's biographical study traces his training in al-Ḥilla, his study of Avicennian metaphysics with Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī at Marāgha, his encounters with other philosophical and theological traditions, and his later presence at the court of the Ilkhan Öljeytü. [Z17]

This career disrupts a simple opposition between "rationalist philosopher" and "sectarian jurist." The same scholar could study Avicenna, write on logic and metaphysics, defend Imami doctrines of the Imamate, and participate in courtly theological debate.

His court relationship also supplies a useful warning. Later biographies sometimes magnify the scholar's role in a ruler's conversion. Contemporary historical sources provide a less decisive picture. Schmidtke therefore treats his influence as plausible while resisting the more heroic versions. [Z17]

That distinction parallels the larger method of this book. The existence of access to power is historically meaningful. It does not mean every later ideological development was commissioned from the throne.

The al-Ḥilla tradition also helped normalize *ijtihād* in a form distinct from the arbitrary *raʾy* and unrestricted *qiyās* attacked in earlier Imami reports. The meaning of a once-suspect word changed as jurists developed a theory of disciplined inference. This is a crucial example of doctrinal transformation through redefinition rather than simple reversal.

A tradition unified by disagreement

The School of al-Ḥilla matters for another reason. Ali's reconstruction emphasizes scholarly networks rather than a single vertical hierarchy. Teachers authorize students; students criticize

teachers; family relationships overlap with intellectual disagreement; texts move through circles with different interests. [Z16]

That structure offers a historical alternative to the "dark Imam" danger identified elsewhere in the book. A tradition can retain sacred commitments while making disagreement part of its ordinary operation.

The safeguard is incomplete. A network can still exclude outsiders or converge around shared blind spots. But the existence of preserved disagreement gives later readers evidence that the school's conclusions were made by interpreters rather than dictated mechanically by an infallible archive.

This becomes especially important when the tradition moves into a confessional state.

The Safavid problem is not simply conversion

The Safavid state transformed the scale on which Twelver institutions could operate. A dynasty with a militant Sufi and Qizilbash background adopted Twelver Shiʿism as the state confession across a population that was not already uniformly Twelver. Scholars from Jabal ʿĀmil and other Arab Shiʿi centers entered a setting in which court patronage offered unusual resources for teaching, adjudication, and institutional expansion. [Z18; Z20]

The process should not be described as though Shah Ismāʿīl simply announced a doctrine and an already existing clerical bureaucracy materialized beneath it. Imported scholars had to train personnel, write manuals, adjudicate disputes, establish congregational practices, and negotiate with military and bureaucratic elites whose religious culture differed from juristic Twelver norms.

The state needed learned authority. The scholars acquired a state capable of enforcing some of their rulings.

That reciprocity is where *Dark Imams* becomes interested.

Al-Karakī and the jurisdiction of the deputy

ʿAlī al-Karakī, known as al-Muḥaqqiq al-Thānī, is the decisive figure for this chapter. Rula Jurdi Abisaab's research places him within the scholarly networks of Jabal ʿĀmil and follows his growing influence under Shah Ismāʿīl and especially Shah Ṭahmāsp. He accepted land grants and revenue, advised governors, developed rulings concerning land tax, appointed or influenced prayer leadership, and justified forms of juristic administration during the Imam's absence. [Z18]

On 9 July 1533, Ṭahmāsp issued a decree elevating al-Karakī as the supreme religious authority at court and styling him deputy of the Twelfth Imam. Iranica emphasizes that this claim unsettled other Shiʿi scholars. [Z19]

The date is worth fixing because a title can otherwise float backward into a timeless doctrine. The royal proclamation is a sixteenth-century political act. The idea of juristic representation has older roots. The particular concentration of authority around al-Karakī belongs to this courtly setting.

That distinction lets us ask what the decree actually does.

A shah cannot create the Hidden Imam's authority. He can recognize a jurist as possessing it. The jurist can then use the state's coercive and administrative apparatus to make his interpretation effective. The arrangement is mutually legitimating: the ruler presents himself as executing the guidance of the Imam's deputy, while the jurist acquires reach that independent teaching networks could not easily supply.

The theological question is whether the claimed *niyāba* includes each function the state enables him to exercise.

Friday prayer, tax, and the granularity of delegation

Al-Karakī's jurisprudence makes this question concrete. He argued for juristic functions in public prayer and state revenue while the Imam remained absent. Abisaab's account notes his position that Friday prayer could be held under a qualified mujtahid acting as deputy of the Hidden Imam, although he treated its obligation in the occultation differently from its status under the Imam himself. He also produced guidance for officials concerning *kharāj* revenues. [Z18]

These are exactly the cases in which the scope of representation matters.

Authority to lead prayer does not automatically entail authority over taxation. Authority over a class of religious funds does not automatically entail criminal jurisdiction. The phrase "deputy of the Imam" can compress several separate grants into one honorific unless each power is argued independently.

Our uṣūl therefore treats deputyship as a vector, not a binary property. For every claimed power, ask:

what duty requires someone to act;

what evidence identifies the jurist as the relevant agent;

what population is subject to the decision;

what limits survive the delegation;

what remedy exists if the jurist exceeds it.

This procedure does not presume that al-Karakī lacked the relevant powers. It refuses to derive all of them from the title alone.

The critics inside the same tradition

The most important control is that al-Karakī's position was disputed by Shiʿi scholars. His acceptance of land grants and *kharāj* revenues provoked criticism, notably from Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭīfī. Later discussions preserve disagreement about whether an unjust ruler could transfer revenue belonging ultimately to the Imam and about the scope of general juristic deputyship. [Z18]

This is not an external Sunni objection to Shiʿi clerical power. It is an internal dispute about what the occultation permits.

That fact matters enormously for later political theology. A sixteenth-century court's recognition of one jurist cannot be projected backward as the unanimous constitutional meaning of Twelver Imamism. The dissent is part of the inheritance.

It also gives us a more precise way to speak of "clerical capture." The issue is not that scholars became politically active. A jurist may have a duty to intervene against injustice. The danger arises when **state selection among competing jurists hardens one contested interpretation into the operational meaning of the absent Imam's will**.

Again, no forged hadith is required.

From al-Karakī to Isfahan

The later Safavid intellectual world—including Mīr Dāmād, Ṣadrā, hadith revival, and eventually the Majlisīs—developed within institutions shaped by these earlier conflicts. Iranica notes that al-Karakī's family and teaching networks connected into later intellectual elites, including Mīr Dāmād. The state also increasingly supported shrines, schools, jurists, and public practices that made Twelver identity geographically and institutionally dense. [Z18; Z20]

That environment is the proper background for Ṣadrā.

His metaphysics should not be treated as a simple ideology of Safavid government. Nor should the government's use of jurists be treated as the inevitable political expression of Shiʿi philosophy. The two histories intersect through people, patronage, schools, and inherited texts.

The book therefore arrives at Isfahan with two distinct lineages still visible.

One is the **light lineage** of argument: transmitted Alid teaching, rational theology, philosophy, criticism, and the formation of the knower.

The other is the **jurisdictional lineage**: absence of the Imam, representative offices, juristic inference, court recognition, and expanding institutional power.

They can inhabit the same scholar without becoming the same thing.

The next chapters must preserve that distinction. A philosophy may explain how knowledge perfects the soul. A government still has to explain why the person who possesses that knowledge is entitled to command someone else.

29 · The Languages of Reason

A text can survive because the people who inherited it disagreed with the people who wrote it. The Muʿtazilī archive offers one of the strongest examples in this book. Large portions of a theological tradition that lost its position in much of Sunni institutional life were preserved and studied in Zaydī circles, especially in Yemen. The twentieth-century recovery and publication of material from ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *al-Mughnī* changed how that tradition could be studied. The books now allowed historians to hear arguments previously encountered largely through the accounts of opponents. The history of who preserved an argument belongs beside the question of whether the argument was sound. [B6-01; B6-02]

That observation returns us to the reported relationship between Abū Hāshim ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya and Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭāʾ. Earlier chapters follow Abū Hāshim's inheritance into the Kaysānī and Abbasid political worlds. Another strand of later testimony places him among Wāṣil's intellectual predecessors. If the relationship is historical, it would identify an Alid setting in which an influential early theologian received instruction. The cited modern reference works and study of Muʿtazilī origins preserve the report, though this manuscript has yet to establish its earliest surviving witness or assemble its transmission variants. [W-S04; W-S05]

The attraction of that ancestry is understandable. The movement associated with Wāṣil developed doctrines of God's unity, justice and human responsibility whose moral force can seem close to the book's preferred Alid inheritance. The genealogical argument, however, requires a date and a teacher. A report of contact can support contact; the subsequent emergence of a scholarly tradition needs to be examined through the books its members wrote. The fortunes of the Abbasid revolution cannot be converted into a pedigree for every later rationalist who opposed some Abbasid policy.

Two Abū Hāshims, separated by two centuries

A deceptively simple name threatens to scramble this story. The Abū Hāshim linked in the succession traditions with Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya belongs to the early eighth century. Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī, whose *aḥwāl* or theory of 'states' became central to the later Basran Muʿtazila, died in 933. He was the son of the theologian Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī. The latter figure, and the school of his followers often called the Bahshamiyya, belong to a developed tenth-century world of polemic, textual systematization and scholarly networks. The shared *kunya* can produce a fictitious continuity if references are allowed to slide from one person to the other. [B6-01; B6-03]

This distinction matters beyond the family names. Wāṣil (d. 748) occupies the formative layer of a tradition later historians classified into schools. The al-Jubbāʾīs lived when the Basran and Baghdadi lines had already developed formidable technical vocabularies. ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 1025) inherited and reorganized those disputes still later. A late systematic statement of what 'the Muʿtazila'

believed is evidence for its author's teaching and sources; projecting every item into the eighth century would turn intellectual development into a miracle of perfect anticipation.

What a rational account had to explain

The familiar five principles identify an intelligible program: divine unity (*tawḥīd*), divine justice (*ʿadl*), the promise and threat of recompense, the intermediate position of the grave sinner, and commanding right while forbidding wrong. Their systematic arrangement is especially associated with later expositions such as those of ʿAbd al-Jabbār. The first two affected almost everything else. If God is one without a collection of independently eternal attributes, a theologian must explain scriptural speech about divine knowledge, power and will. If God is just, the theologian must explain why people deserve praise or blame for acts they perform. [B6-01; B6-04]

The questions are connected through moral agency. A person commanded to act needs some capacity to respond. Divine judgment appears arbitrary if obligation and the ability to perform it come apart. Different Muʿtazilīs developed different theories of obligation, benefit, atoms and accidents; their common theological commitments never removed the need for argument over what exactly followed from them. The Baghdad and Basran schools disagreed about matters that later catalogues sometimes gather beneath a single label. [B6-01; B6-03]

The doctrine of the intermediate position captures how reasoning acquires political consequences. Faced with a believer who commits a grave sin, Wāṣil's remembered response assigned an intermediate religious status. Behind this taxonomy sat disputes about membership, punishment, loyalty and resistance. A technical answer to a problem of religious classification could determine whether a community treated a sinner as protected, condemned, or subject to correction. The fifth principle, requiring action against wrong, made the possible use of power part of the theology's practical horizon. [B6-04]

Here the book should remain attentive to its own danger. A scholar who gives an intellectually persuasive account of justice still has to explain who may compel others to implement it. An obligation to oppose injustice gives people reasons to act. The institution claiming the right to punish, levy revenue, or command an army must supply additional warrants. The distance between those propositions is the same distance Chapter 28 exposed in the Safavid meaning of deputyship.

An archive carried across the sectarian boundary

ʿAbd al-Jabbār supplies a strong historical control because he was both a major exponent of Basran Muʿtazilī theology and a figure who held judicial office under Buyid patronage. His *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-l-ʿadl* is an extraordinary systematic archive of disputes concerning unity, justice, knowledge and, in its political-theological sections, the Imamate. Subsequent Zaydī preservation

allowed material from that archive to reach readers far removed from his administrative milieu. [B6-01; B6-02; B6-05]

This is an important institutional reversal. A doctrinal system formulated in a world of courts and learned patronage could outlive the court through a different community's teaching and manuscript culture. Preservation did not require agreement with the whole political world in which the author had worked. The surviving text invites historians to compare the propositions a Zaydī reader adopted with those that remained disputed.

There is a danger in celebrating reason as though it automatically guarantees independence from politics. Learned debate flourished in courts, libraries, schools and sectarian networks that selected participants and controlled resources. That context shapes which questions are preserved and which answers become teachable. Still, the presence of named objections and alternative positions can expose the reasoning to criticism. An archive of disagreements can make its own later guardians answerable to the words it has kept.

The translator's room

Al-Kindī introduces a different intellectual technology. In ninth-century Baghdad, he coordinated and revised work in a circle that translated Greek philosophical and scientific texts into Arabic. The texts included material connected with Aristotle, Plotinus and Proclus. The *Theology of Aristotle*, despite its title, transmitted Arabic adaptations of Plotinian material; the work that would eventually reach Latin as the *Liber de causis* drew on Proclean thought. Readers could receive an argument with the wrong philosopher's name and still find it capable of changing their understanding of God. [B6-06; B6-07]

Al-Kindī's surviving *On First Philosophy* identifies philosophy with a search for truth whose ultimate object is the first cause. His concern for absolute unity has an obvious family resemblance to Muʿtazilī discussions of divine attributes. Yet his argumentative equipment includes late antique philosophy and, particularly in his account of creation, ideas traceable to the Christian thinker John Philoponus. The resulting work is an original intervention made inside an Abbasid cultural world of translators, patrons, philosophers and theologians. [B6-06; B6-07]

The change in method deserves attention. *Kalām* often begins from a contested theological proposition and seeks a rationally defensible interpretation of revelation. The philosophical project associated with the *falāsifa* develops ordered sciences of logic, nature, soul and being. Those projects overlap whenever they discuss unity, causation or the created world. Their participants can borrow an answer while rejecting the framework from which it was taken. The route from one to another needs an identifiable argument or text. [B6-07]

One comparison makes the stakes clear. A theologian may deny distinct eternal attributes in order to protect divine unity. Al-Kindī may arrive at simplicity by an argument about what it would mean for the first cause to be genuinely one. Similar conclusions now stand within different systems of proof. If the systems yield opposing results about creation or causality, the interpreter must adjudicate the reasons instead of treating 'rationalism' as one inherited school position.

The sciences and the initiated reader

The *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* present a third kind of authority. Their encyclopedic program organizes heterogeneous disciplines into an education oriented toward the transformation of the reader. Numbers, nature, soul and religion become stages in a curriculum. The authorship and institutional affiliation of the Brethren have been disputed, and scholars have proposed several dates and connections to Ismaili contexts. The extant corpus and its later reception are firmer ground than a single definitive identification of its founders. [B6-08]

This is the point where an educational structure can become a claim about spiritual rank. A student acquires demonstrable competence in one subject, then meets a metaphysical interpretation that is presented as the goal toward which the previous subjects have been leading. Intellectual development may indeed make new questions accessible. The decisive step remains the argument linking the earlier learning with that final claim. The ability to solve mathematical problems supplies no automatic certificate to govern a community.

We have seen a related tension in Fatimid and Druze material. Instruction offers access to things a novice cannot yet understand, so an account of learning must leave room for teachers. An esoteric hierarchy can also put the teacher's authority beyond assessment by defining disagreement as evidence that the critic is still unprepared. The relevant test is whether the argument becomes intelligible and examinable as the student learns, and whether a person may refuse the institutional claim while retaining what was learned. [B6-08; I07]

The later use of the Brethren's epistles by Ismaili authors gives a tangible history of reception. A work can become an intellectual inheritance of a community whose members did not write its earliest form. That is one reason the book distinguishes composition, transmission, adoption and authorization. These are separate events, each admitting a different kind of evidence.

Which inheritance reaches the next shore?

The intellectual movement from early Alid pedagogy to the Latin universities can now be described with more precision. The reported Abū Hāshim–Wāṣil relationship is a biographical claim awaiting a source-level audit. The movement from early Muʿtazilī debates to later Basran theology is a historical development with identifiable schools and a partially recovered corpus. Al-Kindī's work

belongs to a demonstrable translation environment in which Christian and Greek writings participated alongside Muslim theological concerns. The later medieval corpus contains texts that can be followed into specific Latin translations. [W-S04; W-S05; B6-01; B6-07; W-S16]

Those relations differ. A pupil remembers a teacher; a book preserves a dispute; a translator makes an argument available in another language; a reader uses it to build a new proposition. The relation 'was influenced by' is too elastic unless one says which of these occurred. Even an author who explicitly names an earlier philosopher can reject his decisive conclusion and thereby transform the inheritance.

The light lineage proposed in Chapter 28 gains force where an argument remains open to examination. If an Alid teacher helped form the earliest rationalist milieu, that possibility matters. The stronger, independently visible history is that philosophical ideas crossed boundaries of religion and political allegiance through disciplined reading. The next chapter follows the translators and the passages through which a Muslim philosopher's question became part of a Christian scholar's reasoning.

Provisional decision. RETAIN the reported early Alid link as a research hypothesis with a specified attribution gap. RETAIN Muʿtazilī and philosophical reasoning as plural, internally disputed intellectual practices. TREAT named manuscripts, translations and citations as the evidentiary bridge to the Latin West. The transfer of an argument carries intellectual ancestry; authority to command people remains a separate historical and moral claim.

30 · The Route to Aquinas

The most reliable bridge from Arabic philosophy into Latin Christianity begins at a desk where two people are translating a book. In twelfth-century Toledo, Dominicus Gundisalvi worked with the Jewish scholar known in the Latin record as Avendauth on the Latin *De anima* of Avicenna. The latter had recommended the work for translation. The names of these participants, the work selected and the destination language make the event considerably more specific than a claim that 'the West received Islamic wisdom.' Other scholars could now read Avicenna without learning Arabic, and later Latin thinkers could build arguments around the Latin vocabulary those translators had chosen. [B6-09]

This was a distributed enterprise. Gerard of Cremona and Gundisalvi worked in Toledo's active translation environment; later translators moved other parts of the corpus through Sicily and southern Italy. Michael Scot helped bring Averroes's commentaries on Aristotle into Latin circulation. Clerical patrons, Jewish scholars, Arabic-speaking Christians, access to manuscripts and the appetite of European schools contributed to the traffic. The 1255 curriculum of the arts faculty in Paris made the surviving Aristotelian corpus central to study, which increased the demand for commentaries including those of Averroes. [B6-09]

That chain is unusually useful for *Dark Imams*. A transfer across religious boundaries can be documented without inventing an initiatic succession in which translators secretly obey the same sacred master. The books acquired a new institutional life. They entered schools in which the authority of Aristotle was disputed and Christian doctrine imposed additional constraints. The recipients had their own reasons to read, revise and resist what came from Arabic.

Avicenna's question becomes Thomas's question

Avicenna's *Ilāhiyyāt*, the metaphysical part of the *Shifāʾ*, asks what belongs to being as being. One of his distinctive moves is to analyze the difference between what a contingent thing is and the fact that it exists. A horse can be understood through an account of its nature; that account alone does not explain why any horse exists. This leads into an analysis of the possible existent and the Necessary Existent, whose existence depends on nothing else. The question is philosophical, but its theological consequences are immense. [B6-10]

Thomas Aquinas adopted and developed central parts of this problem. In the early *De ente et essentia*, especially chapter four, he engages a distinction inherited through Avicenna's account of essence and existence. Later, in the *Summa theologiae* I, question 3, article 4, Thomas develops his own account of how essence and existence relate in creatures and in God. The modern reference literature traces these textual links and also the points on which his formulation differs from Avicenna's. [B6-09; B6-10]

The attraction here is the way a question becomes portable. A Muslim philosopher analyzes contingent existence within a cosmology shaped by Aristotle and Neoplatonism. A Dominican theologian makes the distinction work in a Christian account of creation, divine simplicity and participation in being. He is doing more than reproducing a borrowed definition. His argument gives the received distinction a new role in a system governed by different theological obligations.

One should also resist the easy phrase that Aquinas 'got essence and existence from Avicenna' if it implies that a finished doctrine moved unchanged. Averroes himself contested an Avicennian understanding of the distinction. Latin scholars then argued about the ontological standing of essences, including the criticism that existence was being treated like an additional thing needing yet another existence. These disagreements gave the inherited vocabulary a life its originator could never fully control. [B6-09]

This is a valuable kind of intellectual descent. The receiving author can be identified through arguments about a specific book. The resulting lineage survives disagreement over the truth of its propositions. It depends on readable texts and disputable reasons, a kind of continuity the book's 'light lineage' can recognize without assigning the later philosopher a religious office.

A first cause under examination

Avicenna's analysis of the necessary existent also entered Latin treatments of the first cause. His cosmology used an ordered procession of intelligences and explained the world through a metaphysics of dependence. Latin authors, including Gundisalvi, employed the language of necessary and possible existence while altering the structure of what proceeds from the first cause. Other authors developed their own accounts of creation in conversation with this material. [B6-09; B6-10]

For Thomas, the question of the world's origin involved his commitments concerning divine freedom and creation. He could learn from arguments about the first cause while disputing particular accounts of emanation. Reading his engagement as a record of agreement alone would lose the places where he found inherited explanations inadequate. Those very disagreements indicate that the source was taken seriously enough to require a reply.

The older Arabic corpus was itself already layered. The *Liber de causis* circulated in Arabic as a philosophical composition drawing on Proclus, and its Latin reception commonly placed it under the authority of Aristotle. The mistake had a history: philosophers working in Arabic had absorbed Plotinian and Proclean material under Aristotelian names. By the thirteenth century, a Latin reader could encounter an argument that had passed through several sets of authors, titles and translators before it arrived on the desk. [B6-06; B6-11]

The intellect that must belong to someone

The controversy over Averroes provides a second, sharper test. In his great commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*, Averroes supplied a theory of intellect that Latin readers interpreted as positing a single possible or material intellect shared among human beings. The relation between universal thought and the capacities of individual persons became a point of serious debate in the Parisian universities. There were reasons to ask how one universal concept could be known by many embodied knowers. [B6-09]

Thomas answered in *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* (1270) and in *Summa theologiae* I, question 76, article 2. The latter question puts the matter plainly: is the intellectual principle multiplied with individual persons, or is there one intellect for everyone? Thomas insists that intellect belongs to the individual human soul. Otherwise the specific act through which Socrates thinks would be assigned to an intellect distinct from Socrates himself. His reply invokes what it means for one person to know something and to remain accountable for his actions. [B6-12; B6-13]

The disagreement is philosophically substantive. One account stresses the universal and immaterial character of intelligibles; another has to explain the embodied individual's genuine intellectual agency. Later readers may dispute Thomas's reconstruction of Averroes or the solutions each offers. The historical point is stable: a named Christian author made the Arabic commentary a serious opponent inside an argument about personhood.

For the purposes of this book, the episode has an unexpected moral consequence. The doctrine of a single intellect was never a theory of government. Still, the dispute asks whether a person's capacity to know and judge belongs to that person or to a superior cognitive principle through which all individuals participate. A similar pressure appears whenever an institution tells believers that its own perfected knowledge supplies the operative form of their judgments. The analogy generates a question; it does not establish that a medieval metaphysical thesis produced any later model of political obedience.

When a prestigious attribution broke

Thomas's commentary on the *Book of Causes*, usually dated to 1272, gives the chapter its clearest case of intellectual criticism working against a prestigious name. Through the new Latin availability of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*, he could compare the propositions of the *Liber de causis* with their ancient antecedent. Modern scholarship identifies his recognition of the Proclean background as a decisive step in the history of the text. The work long associated with Aristotle could be assigned a more complicated pedigree while remaining worthy of extended philosophical commentary. [B6-09; B6-11]

This moment belongs beside the manuscript's examination of the Four Books and the legally operative voice of Jaʿfar. In both domains, inherited texts arrived carrying the prestige of an author. In the Latin case, comparison with another work helped the reader identify material that had circulated under a mistaken name. The newly recognized attribution changed the history of the book; the ideas did not become unintelligible when the label changed.

The limits of the comparison are instructive. A proposition about causes may remain arguable once the name on its cover changes. A claimed designation of an Imam has a different dependence on attribution. It matters who issued the appointment and in what circumstances. A legal tradition can preserve sound moral reasoning under an uncertain attribution while losing the particular right to bind a community through the supposed speaker. Historical criticism must ask what sort of claim it is handling before drawing the consequence of an attribution error.

The *Liber de causis* therefore offers an example of intellectual inheritance surviving a correction to genealogy. The shared work is the argument itself, accessible through translation, commentary and reconsideration. Its reader's respect for Aristotle did not prevent another source from changing the historical account of that argument.

A university takes possession of a library

Once Arabic philosophical works entered Latin universities, their survival no longer depended chiefly on the intentions of their Arabic authors. The works became part of curricular practice, available to be excerpted, disputed and reconciled with other authorities. The wider process also affected theories of science, the analysis of concepts, psychology and ethics. Hasse's survey traces the spread of such arguments into thinkers who reached conclusions their Arabic sources would have contested. [B6-09]

The institutional transformation was consequential. In the classroom an argument acquired new labels and settled translations. Some students knew 'Avicenna' primarily as an authority cited in a Latin discussion. Others encountered Averroes through criticisms of theses that were sometimes simplified by their opponents. This history cannot be told adequately by a triumphal story in which Arabic philosophy enlightened an ignorant Europe. The transfer depended on the intellectual life of the receiving schools and the persistence of controversies that those schools generated.

Nor did Arabic mean a single confessional origin. Christian philosophers and translators participated in Arabic philosophical culture before the Latin movement; Jewish scholars also shaped what was selected for translation. The language carried works by people whose doctrines of revelation, prophecy and salvation disagreed. A religious pedigree built solely from the language of a book would erase the participants who made its circulation possible. [B6-06; B6-09]

What the route proves

We can now assign different evidentiary values to the proposed long inheritance. The early teacher report connecting Wāṣil and Abū Hāshim is a biographical tradition whose earliest witness needs verification. The use of Greek materials in al-Kindī's circle is a documented scholarly practice. The Latin reception of Avicenna and Averroes rests on translations and named discussions. Thomas's engagement with Avicenna's distinctions, Averroes's psychology and the *Liber de causis* can be investigated through his surviving works. [W-S04; W-S05; B6-06; B6-09; B6-12; B6-13]

A personal claim of kinship between an Alid rationalist inheritance and Thomistic philosophy can have religious or intellectual significance to its author. The surviving historical record supports a more differentiated account. Its strongest links are textual and argumentative. It shows people separated by language and confession submitting inherited propositions to further examination. The respect paid to a teacher is expressed through the willingness to work on a problem he left behind.

This chapter also limits the romance of secret descent. A robust intellectual route can travel openly through a school, a bookshop, a translation workshop or a commentary. Its participants may change the teaching in ways their predecessors would have disliked. There is enough history in the surviving documents to make that process compelling without assigning all of them an unbroken mandate from an earlier Imam.

Provisional decision. RETAIN the Arabic-to-Latin transmission as an established intellectual history, grounded in named translators, works and scholastic reception. DISTINGUISH philosophical influence from sectarian succession. The Aquinas case shows that authoritative learning can endure critical correction of its own sources. The next chapter turns to Ṣadrā, for whom the person who knows is himself changed by the act of knowing.

31 · Ṣadrā: Knowledge That Changes the Knower

A useful clue to Ṣadrā's intellectual world survives in a collection of notes from Qazvin. The *Jung-e Qazvin*, described by Sajjad Rizvi, preserves autograph material associated with Mīr Dāmād, Shaykh Bahāʾī and their student Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī, better known as Mullā Ṣadrā. The older scholars refer to him in language of affection and intellectual esteem. The evidence is unusually tangible for a story often told through idealized spiritual genealogies: a surviving codex links named teachers and a named pupil. It also leaves important matters unresolved. No complete formal teaching license setting out his curriculum has survived from these teachers. [B6-14]

One relationship crosses back into the previous institutional chapter. Mīr Dāmād was a grandson of al-Karakī, the jurist whose public office was enlarged by Shah Ṭahmāsp's decree in 1533. In the early seventeenth century, Mīr Dāmād taught philosophy and theology in the Safavid capital. Ṣadrā studied with him and with Shaykh Bahāʾī, who taught him scriptural disciplines associated with Qurʾānic interpretation and Imami hadith. The family connection offers a real historical bridge from Safavid juristic authority to the milieu of philosophy, while the curriculum shows learning moving through more than one kind of teacher. [B6-14; Z18; Z19]

The distinction between intellectual learning and public jurisdiction reappears within one household's reach. A grandson may inherit the memory and social position of a powerful jurist, while training a philosopher who develops a theory of knowledge. The pupil's later account of human perfection gives historians an object of study. The existence of that teaching relation cannot itself tell us which public powers the philosopher, his master, or a later reader possessed.

The four journeys were a book, and a practice

Ṣadrā was born around 1571–72 in Shiraz, studied in Qazvin and Isfahan, spent time in Kahak, and later taught in Shiraz. His vast *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya fī l-asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa*, commonly called the *Asfār* or *Four Journeys*, was begun in the early seventeenth century and completed late in his life. The work organizes philosophical inquiry around the movements of a seeker toward God, in God, back toward the world, and among created beings with God. The sequence connects metaphysics with the transformation of the person doing the inquiry. [B6-14]

This spiritual narrative gives a different weight to the word philosophy. In his definition of the discipline, Ṣadrā speaks of the human soul's perfection through grasping the realities of things by demonstrations rather than by mere adherence to received opinion. The tradition of logic remains essential to the project. Knowledge also requires the cultivation of the knower, because the intellect's condition affects how the world is encountered. [B6-14]

There are visible predecessors to this model. Ṣadrā draws on Avicenna, the illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardī, and the mystical metaphysics of Ibn ʿArabī. His students encountered Greek antiquity partly through the same Arabic tradition of texts transmitted under misleading attributions examined in the previous chapters. He subjects inherited arguments to his own criticisms and integrates scriptural interpretation with the result. His *Asfār* records a history of reading as well as a philosophical system. [B6-14; B6-15]

The literary shape matters to *Dark Imams*. A journey requires a guide, and a guide can claim experience the novice lacks. Ṣadrā's writings make room for the difficulty of learning a truth that cannot be grasped merely by repeating another person's propositions. They also invite a practical question: how may a novice distinguish a genuine teacher who changes the quality of understanding from someone who demands submission on the promise that understanding will arrive later?

Existence before the categories

Ṣadrā's best-known ontological doctrine is the primacy of existence, *aṣālat al-wujūd*. A definition tells us what sort of thing something is; it does not by itself give the thing actuality. What exists is concrete existence, while the essences used to distinguish and classify things belong to the operation of the intellect. He develops this view in conversation with the Avicennian treatment of essence and existence and with illuminationist critiques of Peripatetic categories. [B6-14; B6-15; B6-16]

The thesis does more than change an order of priority. It changes what is meant by a thing. Rather than a fixed substance that occasionally acquires properties, created beings can be understood as processes whose reality is capable of increase, diminution and transformation. Ṣadrā's *tashkīk al-wujūd*, or gradation of existence, describes different intensities of an underlying reality. He thus tries to explain how things can differ without cutting the universe into mutually isolated kinds of being. [B6-14; B6-16]

One needs care with the word 'unity' here. Ṣadrā's technical account has been read within arguments about monism and the many, divine simplicity and created dependence. A historian should avoid assuming that every mention of degrees of being implies that creatures possess independent divinity, or that the differences between creatures vanish. The terms have to be reconstructed through the claims Ṣadrā makes about dependence, distinction and perfection. They are offered as philosophical explanations; their doctrinal acceptability remains a further judgment.

His relation to Avicenna is now particularly interesting. The Avicennian question that crossed into Aquinas concerned the relation of essence and existence in contingent creatures. Ṣadrā took the inherited problem toward a far more dynamic account. The same Arabic vocabulary was made to do new philosophical work within a Safavid Imami and mystical setting. This constitutes an internal

history of dispute and reinterpretation, rather than an authorized answer transmitted untouched across centuries.

Motion in the substance of a life

The doctrine of substantial motion, *al-ḥaraka al-jawhariyya*, gives Ṣadrā an account of development deeper than the accidental changes that older Aristotelian categories often emphasized. Change occurs in what a thing is becoming, not merely in its place, amount or external qualities. In this account the world of created beings is continuously renewed through dependence upon its source. The movement of a human life is therefore also ontological: the soul comes to be through embodied existence and develops capacities that transform its mode of being. [B6-14; B6-16]

That language is often reduced to an encouraging moral slogan. Ṣadrā makes a more demanding metaphysical claim. If knowing is a mode of the soul's actualization, education belongs to the very form of a person's developing existence. One might accumulate memorized statements while leaving the decisive intellectual faculty undeveloped. Alternatively, the disciplined grasp of a difficult truth may change what the knower is capable of understanding and doing next.

The theory also creates a burden. Intellectual growth can be mistaken for moral superiority; a philosopher can be sharp and cruel. Ṣadrā's ideal joins reasoning to virtue and spiritual discipline, but the connection must be argued rather than inferred from academic skill alone. For this book, the criterion of justice remains independently important when evaluating any purportedly advanced soul. The capacity to speak about the degrees of being carries no special exemption from accountable conduct.

The knower and the known

Ṣadrā's doctrine of the union of intellect and intelligible, *ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa-l-maʿqūl*, changes the ordinary image of knowledge as a passive picture lodged inside the mind. On his account, the intelligible object is present through a mode of intellectual existence in which the knower becomes actualized. Knowing is therefore an event in being. His argument answers a position he associated with Avicenna, who rejected the particular sort of union Ṣadrā defended. [B6-15; B6-16]

A technical restriction is essential. This is a claim about the relation between intellectual activity and the intelligible in its mode of being known; it does not assert that the learner literally becomes the external object in every respect. Ṣadrā's own discussions distinguish multiple extra-mental existents from the intelligible existence in which they can be grasped. Treating the thesis as bodily fusion would erase the problem it was designed to solve. [B6-14]

The consequence is at once epistemological and moral. An idea grasped through demonstration can expand the soul's capacity to grasp related truths. This helps explain why encountering a difficult

work matters more than reciting the name of its author. The thinker is shaped by the struggle of understanding. A teacher may facilitate that encounter, yet the student's developing competence is the place where the argument has to become intelligible.

The danger is equally visible. Someone who claims immediate, infallible access to an intelligible reality can place a conclusion beyond public investigation. Ṣadrā defended spiritual disclosure, *kashf*, alongside demonstrative reasoning, *burhān*, and the exegesis of revelation. His writings often insist on their complementarity. The public test for a communicated claim remains whether its premises and consequences can be articulated and criticized. An account of inner disclosure may have first-person significance while leaving a political order unable to verify its owner's competence. [B6-14; B6-15]

A philosopher reads al-Kāfī

Ṣadrā wrote an unfinished commentary on *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, the doctrinal section of al-Kulaynī's hadith collection. This is an unusually important fact for the present book. Chapters 21 and 27 examined the formation and juridical use of hadith archives. Here a philosopher enters the same archive to ask what its reports could mean within a metaphysical theory of existence, intellect and revelation. The commentator selects questions, makes distinctions and supplies arguments that can give a report fresh power in later thought. [B6-14]

The commentary shows how a written tradition can be kept alive by interpretation. It also establishes two tasks that require separate evidence. One asks whether a reading is coherent within Ṣadrā's theology and the wider Qurʾānic commitments of this project. The other asks whether the report is attributable to the historical Imam whose name it bears. A metaphysically sophisticated explanation of a statement does not authenticate its chain, date or original setting.

That distinction should govern our engagement with the cosmic-Imam reports treated in Chapter 32. A report may describe divine action through a creature, and Ṣadrā's metaphysics may offer a precise language for continuing dependence. The report may also assign powers that exceed the meaning a reader can defend from the Qurʾān. The philosophical explanation and the authentication inquiry proceed side by side. Neither can dispense with the other.

Ṣadrā's own scriptural exegesis makes it difficult to portray him as a philosopher indifferent to the imamic archive. The *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* and other works of interpretation show a sustained effort to read Qurʾānic language through philosophical and mystical problems. This history belongs to the intellectual inheritance of Twelver Shiʿism, although it supplies no reason to assume that every jurist accepted his method. Later scripturalist critics explicitly objected to the mixture of Greek philosophy, speculative metaphysics and revelation. [B6-14]

The return from intellectual perfection to government

The later reception of Ṣadrā gives the book a final control against anachronism. His arguments became central to curricula and intellectual lineages that eventually reached figures including Khomeini and Muṭahharī. Scholars have also criticized attempts to present him as a philosopher of the Iranian Revolution, citing the limited place of political philosophy in his surviving works. Ṣadrā's influence on a later politician is a historical relation. A specific twentieth-century governmental doctrine must still be reconstructed through the later writer's own legal and political arguments. [B6-14; B6-17]

The gap can be made concrete. A metaphysics of perfecting the soul may support an account of why learned and virtuous people should be heard. A doctrine of juristic inference may explain why a specialist is competent to issue a legal opinion. Permission to collect funds, adjudicate disputes or exercise coercion invokes questions of appointment, jurisdiction, limits and remedies. A state's claim to wield the Imam's authority cannot be derived merely from its leaders' professed acquaintance with spiritual wisdom.

This is the distinction the previous chapters required us to carry from al-Ḥilla and Isfahan. One historical lineage contains teaching, reading, criticism and changes in the understanding of knowledge. Another contains representatives, juristic offices, courts and administrative powers. A single person can participate in both. The extent of each person's public jurisdiction must be established from evidence about that jurisdiction.

Ṣadrā's argument for the transformation of the knower gives *Dark Imams* a positive account of fidelity. A disciple honors a teacher by cultivating the ability to understand, test and improve upon what was taught. The inheritance remains available for another reader to challenge. When the claim changes from learning to governing, the grounds of obedience must be supplied anew.

Provisional decision. RETAIN Ṣadrā's account of philosophical formation as a major resource for the book's light lineage. RETAIN the named teacher relationship and the *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* commentary as historical bridges to the Safavid and hadith narratives. TREAT later uses of his philosophy in political theory as reception requiring independent reconstruction. No philosophical grade of the soul grants an unexamined coercive mandate.

32 · The Face and the Servant

The problem of sacred presence returns in the Nūrāniyya traditions. What does it mean to call an Imam the Face of God, and who benefits when assent to such language becomes a test of faith? [BH-A01; BH-J01]

Biḥār al-anwār, ghulūw, and the limits of theophany

The reports gathered in Biḥār al-anwār make competing claims about the Imams' words and powers. Their language of divine manifestation can illuminate servanthood, while the demand for submission can become an instrument of domination.

Biḥār 24:193, 25:345–348 and 26:1–7 bring the question into focus, alongside three al-Kāfī reports. The historical Imam stands behind the received claims; the transmitters and interpreters stand before us. [BH-B06]

The servant who demands assent

Within a single page of *Biḥār al-anwār*, a voice attributed to ʿAlī declares himself a servant of God and presents an extraordinary account of his powers. The passage calls the Imams God's Face, Eye, and Tongue. It associates them with reward and punishment. A reader who doubts the account is then placed outside the circle of complete recognition. The text gives its own claims an elevated theological status and supplies a judgment upon the person who hesitates. [BH-B06]

This is the *Nūrāniyya* report, the account of recognizing ʿAlī through his luminous reality. Its language belongs directly in the inquiry developed in *Finding Injil*. John 14:9 associates seeing Jesus with seeing the Father, while the following verses locate the words and works in the Father's activity. Our reading asks how divine guidance can become perceptible through a dependent servant. That question also applies when an Imam is called the Face of God. [BH-A01; BH-J01]

The comparison becomes demanding once the religious language begins to govern the reader. A statement about divine manifestation can give an account of how a servant discloses God. Elsewhere in the same report, the speaker may claim control over nature or make assent to his powers a condition of faith. Each proposition requires its own examination. The shared vocabulary of light cannot carry every inference attached to it.

The *Nūrāniyya* text itself insists:

وإنما أنا عبد من عبيد الله لا تسمونا أربابا

"I am only a servant among God's servants; do not call us lords." [BH-B06]

That sentence has real theological force. It establishes how the transmitted speaker wants his status understood. A reader who treats the passage as a simple confession of several independent gods has

omitted its express account of servanthood. Yet a declaration of creaturehood leaves open the scope of the powers assigned to the creature. It also leaves the report's provenance untouched. A sentence about dependence can be compatible with tawḥīd while its attribution to ʿAlī remains unestablished.

The chapter therefore works through two connected inquiries. Historical criticism asks how these words reached al-Majlisī and which earlier witnesses support them. The theological inquiry asks what a reader may affirm under the Qur'an, the project's understanding of ʿAlid guidance, and accountable reasoning. A favorable answer to one question cannot silently answer the other.

The theophany already developed in Finding Injil

The strongest version of our comparative thesis allows divine action to be encountered through a created bearer. Its scriptural vocabulary is substantial. The Qur'an attributes an act to Allah while addressing the human action through which it occurred at 8:17. Obedience to the Messenger is connected with obedience to Allah at 4:80, and the pledge at 48:10 is described through God's hand above the pledging hands. Jesus' extraordinary acts in 3:49 depend upon divine permission. These passages supply several forms of mediated agency within the project's governing scripture. [BH-Q01; BH-Q02]

Finding Injil uses that vocabulary to examine John 14:9–11. The interpretation is a proposal about manifestation: a person encounters God's guidance and activity through the commissioned servant. The bearer remains dependent at the moment of action. "Created once" would be an inadequate description if the being thereafter possessed an autonomous province of reality. Continuing dependence has to govern the claimed power itself. This restriction is already present in the polished *Finding Injil* chapter. [BH-A01]

The comparison has a history behind it. Exodus 23:20–21 places God's Name in a messenger. Philo's *On the Confusion of Tongues* associates the Logos with divine image and Name, while *On Dreams* discusses the relation between the supreme God and a manifestation apprehended through an image. These are identified comparanda in the retrieved dossier. The historical question of direct borrowing requires evidence about circulation and use. Similar conceptual problems can be addressed within related environments through different texts. [BH-A02]

The Gospel also resists being made to say only what this project finds comfortable. John 5:23 gives the Son an extraordinary place in the distribution of honor. The prologue places the Word at creation; John 12:41 reads Isaiah's vision through Jesus' glory. Thomas addresses Jesus in John 20:28. A divine-identity interpretation draws on that material, and its strongest form cannot be answered merely by pointing out that Jesus was sent. A Christian theologian can understand sending within a theology of shared divinity. The HCM task must identify the actual literary claim before assessing its compatibility with our tawḥīd. [BH-A02; BH-A03]

The same restraint applies to the Imami sources. We cannot preserve a favored passage by declaring every difficult predicate a metaphor. A metaphorical reading needs support from the sentence, its context, and other uses of the vocabulary. Where a report gives a literal cosmological account, that account deserves a literal assessment. Where it itself explains "survival" through successive mortal bearers, the explanation gives us grounds for a bounded reading.

Our working theological commitments reserve uncreated, necessary existence and ultimate sovereignty to Allah. Created agents can receive revelation or extraordinary assistance. The worship due to God has its own object, even where a servant receives exceptional honor. Historical accounts of prostration before Adam or Joseph show that the bodily gesture alone cannot decide the theological meaning of every scene. Each passage supplies its own account of the action and its authorization. These commitments authorize a careful reading of exaltation; they do not authenticate an exalted report. [BH-A02; BH-A03; BH-Q01]

What the word ghulūw can conceal

A label of excess is already a judgment. The historian needs to know who applied it and what proposition provoked it. Al-Majlisī's own discussion records disagreement over that boundary. He complains that some theologians and traditionists treated accounts of extraordinary imamic qualities as ghulūw because they could not accommodate them. He mentions controversy over forgetfulness and knowledge of events among the examples. His argument assumes that a report may be unusually exalted and still deserve serious consideration. [BH-B10]

The boundary also varies with the authority being defended. A teacher's unrestricted creation of the universe raises a different problem from a miraculous event attributed to divine permission. The abolition of religious obligations through recognition of a leader raises another. Treating these as one indistinguishable category makes it difficult to identify what a particular community believed or why a critic rejected it.

Modern work on texts associated with the early ghulāt has made their own literature an essential part of the inquiry. Mushegh Asatryan's *Controversies in Formative Shiʿi Islam* studies these materials as evidence for religious debates and communities. This changes the source problem: hostile descriptions can be compared with texts transmitted in the groups' own literary environments. This chapter has inspected the publisher's description and a scholarly review, rather than the complete monograph. Its detailed reconstructions remain reading targets. [BH-H01; BH-H02]

The review discusses disputes over the age of doctrines later classified as excessive and over the formation of texts such as *Kitāb al-haft*. It also reports themes of cosmic history and claims concerning the suffering of sacred figures. Those observations identify questions for a future critical dossier. They cannot supply a verified Arabic passage from an edition we have not collated. [BH-H02]

A present-day community's relation to an old text also needs direct testimony. A statement hosted by the Alawite Islamic Library rejects attribution and sacred authority commonly assigned to *Kitāb al-haft*. That is evidence about the position of its signatory. It cautions against using an external catalogue category to define the beliefs of every living Alawite. [BH-H03]

For *Dark Imams*, the term ghulūw should therefore travel with the proposition under examination. "The Imam is an uncreated deity," "the Imam receives an extraordinary disclosure," and "obedience to the Imam removes the need for prayer" make different assertions. Our filtering will sometimes preserve an exalted meaning and sometimes reject a power claimed through it. The decision rests on the claim's content and evidence, with the sectarian identity of its transmitter recorded separately.

The collector and the judge

Biḥār preserves al-Majlisī in several roles. He transmits earlier works, introduces material he found, and comments upon its interpretation. A reader must establish which voice is speaking. A source's sentence quoted by the compiler does not automatically become the compiler's own judgment. The word *aqūlu*, "I say," and an explicit transition to a concluding discussion help identify his interventions. [BH-B01; BH-B02; BH-B08; BH-B09; BH-B10; BH-B11]

His treatment of Rajab al-Bursī gives a useful rule. In the introduction, al-Majlisī says that he does not rely on what al-Bursī alone transmits and that he includes material agreeing with reports taken from recognized sources. That is a selective policy. Agreement of content can make a passage worth preserving under that policy, while a complete historical chain remains a further requirement. It would also take an audit of individual inclusions to establish how consistently the policy was applied. [BH-B01]

The *Nūrāniyya* report begins with a particularly informative introduction. Al-Majlisī says his father saw the report in an old book compiled by one of their traditionists concerning ʿAlī's virtues. He then says he found it in another old book containing many reports. The account proceeds with a report from Muḥammad ibn Ṣadaqa describing Abū Dharr and Salmān. The displayed introduction supplies neither an identified author for those old books nor a dated manuscript history reaching the narrated encounter. [BH-B02]

These observations establish a real provenance claim: al-Majlisī represents the text as material found in earlier books. Two described books could preserve different witnesses. They could also descend from a shared exemplar, and the introduction alone cannot decide their independence. "Old" is a description made by a later reader. It supplies no exact composition date.

The historical verdict at this stage is therefore suspension of the first-century attribution. The report can be studied as a witness to a transmitted theology whose circulation predates the compiler's act of inclusion. The present evidence does not establish when its complete wording

emerged. Calling it a secure speech of ʿAlī would exceed that evidence; assigning it to a named fabricator would require additional evidence about production.

This limitation matters to the book's political hypothesis. A report can become consequential through preservation, arrangement, and interpretation even while its origin remains uncertain. A later anthology gives it visibility alongside better-attested material. Subsequent readers may remember the anthology's title more easily than the compiler's account of the particular source. That is an observable possibility of reception to investigate, with citations and readership as the next evidence. It should not be confused with proof that a patron commissioned the report.

The Face that continues through mortal successors

A report at *Biḥār* 24:193 interprets the Face of God through the Imams. Its language initially invites an enormous claim:

نحن والله وجهه

"By God, we are His Face." [BH-B12]

The surrounding account then explains the relation through commanded obedience and allegiance. It also describes succession after death:

وليس منا ميت يموت إلا وخلفه عاقبة منه إلى يوم القيامة

"None of us dies without a successor from him remaining after him until the Day of Resurrection." [BH-B12]

This second sentence constrains the first. The account recognizes deaths among the bearers and describes continuity through those who follow. A reading in which each bearer is an indestructible divine body conflicts with that explanation. The Face can instead designate an enduring locus of guidance, made present through successive people. This is an interpretation supported by the report's own account of how continuation occurs.

Under the project's theology, "Face" can be retained as a designation of representative access to guidance. It cannot establish that God has become a human organ or that the bearer shares necessary existence. The claim that this exact lineage exhausts the possible bearers of divine guidance requires separate evidence. The Qur'anic verse being interpreted does not list a succession by name.

The comparison with John 14 becomes more precise here. Seeing the commissioned bearer can be described as encountering what the bearer discloses. The representative claim depends on the fidelity of that disclosure. A reader still has to establish who was commissioned and how that commission is known. Calling someone God's Face cannot itself answer a challenge concerning his teaching.

Theological filtering therefore preserves a substantial positive meaning. The agent gives guidance a human presence. Successive people can continue a religious trust. The language remains accountable to what the text says about their mortality and dependence. Our verdict is **RESTRICT** the Face language to a defensible representative meaning, while **SUSPENDING** independent authentication of the complete attribution.

The created Spirit and the report that limits our analogy

The retrieved *Finding Injil* work identifies *al-Kāfī* 1/4/56/1 as an important control. Asked about the Spirit of Qur'an 42:52, the transmitted answer describes a creature greater than Gabriel and Michael, present with the Messenger and subsequently with the Imams. The creature assists and directs. Its created status is explicit. The digital edition reproduces al-Majlisī's classification as ṣaḥīḥ, citing *Mirʾāt al-ʿuqūl* 3:169. [BH-K01]

The chain runs from a group of al-Kulaynī's associates through Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd, al-Naḍr ibn Suwayd, Yaḥyā al-Ḥalabī, Abū al-Ṣabāḥ al-Kinānī, and Abū Baṣīr to Jaʿfar. Recording the actual route prevents a conceptually congenial report from floating free of its transmission. The inherited grade belongs to that route as evaluated within the cited system. [BH-K01]

This report supports the possibility of an account in which extraordinary guidance is communicated through created assistance. It supplies an Imami comparator for the Spirit inquiry. Its ranking above Gabriel and Michael is an additional, specific claim; the Qur'anic phrase alone does not establish that ranking. The transfer of this assistance to the Imams likewise needs the report's attribution or another source to carry it.

A nearby report makes the comparison with Jesus harder. In *al-Kāfī* 1/4/56/4, the Spirit is again described as greater than Gabriel and Michael, followed by:

لم يكن مع أحد ممن مضى غير محمد

"It had been with none of those who preceded, except Muḥammad." [BH-K02]

The displayed English rendering drops the force of the negative, producing wording that can be read as a broad statement of previous presence. The Arabic makes a restriction. Al-Majlisī's reproduced grade is ḥasan, with the reference *Mirʾāt* 3:172. Its route is ʿAlī from his father, through Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, Abū Ayyūb al-Khazzāz, and Abū Baṣīr. [BH-K02]

This is consequential counterevidence to the equation "the Spirit with Jesus is exactly this entity in exactly this role." Our theology already allows the word *rūḥ* to operate differently across contexts. Qur'anic support of Jesus by the Holy Spirit remains part of the governing evidence. The exclusive wording here could describe a distinct gift, an intensified form of assistance, or a disputed report.

Selecting among those explanations requires argument; simply omitting the negation would manufacture agreement.

The chapter's verdict is therefore twofold. **RETAIN** created, dependent spiritual assistance as compatible with the project's tawḥīd. **SUSPEND** the universal identification of every Spirit reference with one entity and the historical certainty of each cosmological detail. The restriction in report 4 stays visible even though it complicates a favored comparison. That is the same standard applied to a difficult passage in John.

The theological reward of the comparison survives. God can teach and assist through created means without those means becoming a second sovereign. The unresolved identity of the intermediary concerns the detailed cosmology. It does not erase the distinction between divine action and independent creaturely power.

The Greatest Name and the temptation to quantify transcendence

The report at *al-Kāfī* 1/4/36/1 assigns seventy-three letters to the Greatest Name. Āṣif is said to have possessed one, through which the throne was brought; the Imams possess seventy-two, while one remains reserved to God. The digital edition gives al-Majlisī's classification as majhūl, citing *Mir'āt* 3:35. Its route includes Shurays al-Wābishī before Jābir and Abū Jaʿfar. [BH-K03]

The Qur'anic narrative at 27:40 identifies a person with knowledge from the Book who offers to bring the throne. It does not supply the name Āṣif in that verse or the numerical distribution of letters. Those details belong to the transmitted explanation. They need their own warrant. [BH-Q01; BH-K03]

The number reserved to Allah formally marks a limit. Even so, the report should not be converted into a mathematical claim that the Imams possess seventy-two seventy-thirds of divine omniscience. The content neither defines equal units of knowledge nor measures their scope. "Letter" operates within a symbolic account of effective knowledge, and the relevant semantics need investigation before any quantitative conclusion.

A bounded reading retains the principle that knowledge granted by God can enable extraordinary action while divine knowledge exceeds what is granted. That principle has a scriptural setting. The complete numerical architecture and its specific assignment to a succession are suspended. Their compatibility with a theology of dependence cannot repair a transmission weakness.

Reading the Nūrāniyya report in clauses

The opening claim to complete recognition

At the beginning of the report, complete faith is tied to recognition of ʿAlī's luminous reality. Knowing him in this way is connected with knowing Allah. A sympathetic theological reading can understand this through the relation between a divine proof and the guidance disclosed through him. Yet the wording also assigns an indispensable status to a specific recognition. The truth of that assignment depends on the authority of the report that makes it. [BH-B02]

The first HCM decision is unchanged by the intensity of the language. An anonymous old-book introduction gives us a source problem. The account's insistence that the perfected believer accepts it provides information about its intended audience and desired response. It supplies no external confirmation of the historical encounter it narrates.

This is a general feature of religious transmission. A text may describe resistance to its claims as a moral failure. Historical criticism still has to establish whose judgment is being transmitted. Otherwise a later speaker can place his own demand in a revered person's mouth and make examination of the attribution appear disloyal to that person.

Prayer and walāya

On page 26:2, the report interprets Qur'anic prayer through walāya:

فمن أقام ولايتي فقد أقام الصلاة

"Whoever establishes my walāya has established prayer." [BH-B03]

A spiritual application can connect fidelity to righteous guidance with the purpose of prayer. Worship ought to shape conduct, and a commentary may describe allegiance to truth as part of establishing it. The problem changes when the equation is made exhaustive. If recognizing the Imam is sufficient to discharge prayer altogether, the interpretive move cancels the outward obligation from which it derives its vocabulary.

The selected passage does not explicitly instruct its audience to cease performing prayer. The critical judgment must therefore target the inference being proposed. We **RESTRICT** the interpretation to an additive moral application. We **REJECT** using it as sufficient authority for abolishing the practice. A claim that a historical community drew that abolitionist conclusion requires evidence about that community's teachings and conduct.

The report's use of the feminine reference in Qur'an 2:45 is also an interpretive argument, not a manuscript variant that replaces the Qur'anic noun. Its reader is being offered an inward identification of prayer. Establishing the original semantic reference of the verse would require

analysis in its Qur'anic setting; the presence of a wordplay within a report cannot settle that question alone.

The primordial participant

Further passages attribute to ʿAlī roles in the stories of Noah, Jonah, Moses, and Abraham. The account subsequently identifies him with figures such as al-Khiḍr and Dhū al-Qarnayn and links him with Muḥammad in an encompassing unity. [BH-B04; BH-B06]

Several kinds of claim are possible here. A shared religious mission could be described through one light. A created heavenly reality could be said to precede its earthly bearer. A literal identity across historical bodies would produce a different doctrine. The text needs to be read for which claim it actually sustains, including the effect of its first-person verbs.

Our limited theophany allows divine foreordination and leaves created preexistence open as a theological possibility. Neither establishes that the particular historical ʿAlī performed every narrated action before his earthly life. The HCM evidence for that proposition remains inadequate in the witnesses examined. Reading all the first-person claims as poetic unity is a constructive interpretation whose legitimacy has to be explained; it cannot be passed off as a recovered early authorial intention.

The assertion that the sacred dead have not died also needs contextual reading. Qur'an 3:169 provides language for life with God after martyrdom. The Face report examined above explicitly describes death followed by succession. These give intelligible settings for a claim of continuing life or guidance. A literal denial that a martyr suffered and was killed would require a separate historical and theological argument. The selected wording alone cannot license erasure of the suffering around which the community's memory is organized. [BH-B06; BH-B12; BH-Q01]

Jesus' signs in ʿAlī's voice

The most precise Christian connection in the selected pages comes through the Qur'an:

أنا أحيي وأميت باذن ربي، أنا انبئكم بما تأكلون وما تدخرون في بيوتكم باذن ربي

"I give life and cause death by my Lord's permission; I tell you what you eat and what you store in your houses by my Lord's permission." [BH-B06]

The food-and-storage formulation corresponds closely to Jesus' signs in Qur'an 3:49. The report supplies an imamic appropriation of an identifiable Qur'anic prophetic register. The verse also gives divine permission a repeated role. This is a much more exact intertextual observation than a broad resemblance between Christianity and Shiʿi mysticism. [BH-Q02]

Within our theology, an extraordinary act by divine permission is intelligible. Establishing that it was granted to a named person in a particular extent remains another task. The Qur'an attests Jesus'

signs within the project's highest authority. The *Nūrāniyya* report's assignment of corresponding powers to ʿAlī reaches us through the old-book problem already described. The linguistic parallel supports a finding of shared scriptural language. It supplies no independent witness to the event or power claimed.

The comparison with John can now be stated at the right level. John's Jesus describes works received from the Father. The Qur'an gives Jesus signs by Allah's permission. A later imamic report uses a closely related Qur'anic formulation. These texts can be examined through the same concept of dependent agency. A historical route from the Fourth Gospel to this report remains unproved by that conceptual comparison.

The question that becomes unbelief

The sentence that most directly concerns authority follows the account of divine purification and selection:

ولو قال قائل لم وكيف وفيم لكفر وأشرك لأنه لا يسأل عما يفعل وهم يسألون

"Were someone to say, 'Why, how, and concerning what?' he would have disbelieved and associated partners, because He is not questioned about what He does, while they are questioned." [BH-B06]

The final clause invokes Qur'an 21:23. Its strongest charitable reading takes the unaccountable actor to be Allah, whose selection is under discussion. The Arabic does not require the conclusion that the Imam has straightforwardly replaced God as the referent. Our critique should preserve that reading.

Even on that reading, two questions must remain distinguishable. One asks whether Allah has the right to choose a servant. The other asks whether a particular transmitted text accurately reports that choice. Our HCM inquiry addresses the second. A reader can affirm divine sovereignty while asking how this account came to be attributed to ʿAlī. The report cannot settle its own provenance by treating that question as an objection to Allah.

The following passage intensifies the difficulty. It contrasts the complete recognizer with the doubting, withholding, or hesitant person and labels the latter deficient and hostile. These words make acceptance of the narrated claims a test of religious standing. Their presence is evidence of the text's demand upon its audience. They do not establish that the demand was authorized by the Imam. [BH-B06]

Our verdict is **REJECT** the use of this passage to prohibit examination of a report's authenticity or to convert reasonable evidentiary suspension into unbelief. We **RETAIN** Allah's sovereignty as a governing commitment. Those decisions permit the strongest coherent reading of the scriptural citation while refusing the circular use of the report as its own certificate.

Whose will follows whose?

The concluding selected page says:

ونحن إذا شئنا شاء الله وإذا كرهنا كره الله

"When we will, Allah wills; when we disapprove, Allah disapproves." [BH-B07]

The surrounding text calls the Imams honored servants who act by God's command. Those qualifications support an account of alignment: their will agrees with the divine will because they receive guidance and obey. A reading that makes God dependent upon an autonomous imamic preference conflicts with the same passage's servanthood. [BH-B07]

A further claim says that denying what God has granted them denies His power and will concerning them. Here again, proof of the grant is the missing premise. Allah's ability to bestow a power cannot establish that a particular report correctly identifies its recipient or extent. The logical distinction is especially important in a corpus of marvelous claims. Many mutually incompatible narratives can describe events within divine power. Their compatibility with omnipotence does not make them all history.

The verdict is **RESTRICT** unity of will to dependent obedience as a theological interpretation. The specific unrestricted powers remain **SUSPENDED**. Threats against readers who withhold assent receive no independent religious authority from the passage's insistence upon them.

Al-Majlisī's own limit on cosmic delegation

The collection contains a critical discussion that narrows the most expansive reading of the luminous reports. At *Biḥār* 25:345, al-Majlisī quotes al-Mufīd's account of the mufawwiḍa. The described group acknowledges the Imams' created and originated condition, while assigning the creation of the world and its provision to them. The creator has, in that model, created them particularly and delegated the remaining cosmos. [BH-B08]

This matters because a merely verbal concession of createdness already appears inside the doctrine al-Mufīd rejects. "The Imam was created" cannot by itself settle the scope of his subsequent authority. The relevant claim concerns how the entire world's ongoing existence is related to him. The polished *Finding Injil* chapter already recognized this stronger boundary around dependence. [BH-A01; BH-M01]

Al-Majlisī's own concluding discussion begins at 25:346. It includes divine status, partnership in worship, incarnation or union, and abolition of obligations among the forms of excess it rejects. It also treats unrestricted unseen knowledge without divine communication as a problem. The classification identifies a collection of claims whose theological consequences differ and have to be assessed separately. [BH-B09]

At 25:347 he develops the distinction most useful to our project. One account makes the Imams the actual agents of creation and sustenance through their own power and will. Another understands Allah as producing the effect in conjunction with their will, as in miracles. He grants that reason does not immediately rule out a general model of the latter kind, then refuses to promote it into doctrine without the requisite evidence:

مع أن القول به قول بما لا يعلم إذ لم يرد ذلك في الأخبار المعتبرة فيما نعلم

"Moreover, affirming it is speaking of what is not known, since, as far as we know, it has not occurred in the reliable reports." [BH-B10]

His reasoning is stronger than a simple accusation of shirk against every mediated act. The distinction concerns warrant and extension. A miracle performed by God through a servant does not establish that every act of creation is coordinated with that servant's will. A model's logical possibility leaves the evidence for its universal application unresolved.

The continuation at 25:348 considers passages such as *Khuṭbat al-bayān* and restricts their usefulness. It also allows interpretive possibilities involving the purpose of creation and discusses religious delegation separately from arbitrary alteration of law. That division prevents a single term, tafwīḍ, from doing too much work. Permission to communicate or apply guidance has a different scope from power to determine the whole cosmos. [BH-B11]

Our own theology can now make a determinate decision. **RETAIN** the possibility of bounded divine action through a creature. **REJECT** creaturely independence and worship directed to a created sovereign. **SUSPEND** the universal cosmic mandate where the identified evidence fails to establish it. A speculative metaphysical model may continue as a philosophical hypothesis, with its status stated openly. It acquires no binding religious authority merely because it can be made logically consistent.

The severity of the classical anti-ghulāt language also needs to be recorded. The discussion contains punitive conclusions that this project does not adopt. Identifying a theological contradiction supplies no licence to injure people accused of holding it. Under the project's uṣūl, the claims made against a community receive scrutiny, and protected life cannot be forfeited through an untested attribution. The classical source is evidence for its author's boundary-making; it is also material upon which our ethical judgment operates. [BH-B09; BH-A04]

The books that were allegedly altered

Biḥār also preserves reports accusing al-Mughīra ibn Saʿīd and followers of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb of inserting material into the books of companions. At 2:250, one strand describes al-Mughīra's associates obtaining books and inserting claims that were then circulated with the earlier authority attached. Another describes Yūnus presenting collected material to al-Riḍā, who rejects a

substantial set of attributions. The passage connects these allegations with checking reports against the Qur'an and established teaching. [BH-B13]

This is concrete evidence that book-level manipulation was imagined and alleged within the tradition. It identifies a mechanism more specific than ordinary disagreement over interpretation. A respected transmitter's notebook can become the vehicle for content he did not receive. Subsequent reliance on his reputation would then fail to settle the provenance of each sentence.

The accusation remains a transmitted accusation. Its claims about named people require their own source criticism. We cannot authenticate the report automatically because it explains a difficulty elsewhere in the corpus. Nor can we designate every statement we dislike as one of the alleged insertions. Demonstrating a particular intervention would require a textual relationship between witnesses and a credible history of the change.

This control is especially important for the Buyid thesis. The alleged mechanism predates the political setting that the project wants to investigate. A later patron could affect preservation or authority without originating the wording. Conversely, a traceable later insertion would require evidence from the later witnesses. The presence of an accusation of earlier interpolation broadens the possible mechanisms; it does not identify a Buyid editor.

Our historical decision is to **RETAIN** the passage as evidence that source-book corruption was an explicit concern within received Imami tradition. The specific accusations and their application to any report in this chapter remain **SUSPENDED** pending a fuller transmission study. Its instruction to examine content can be accepted on the project's own grounds without treating the accompanying narrative as a complete forensic record.

Honor, ownership, and the interests of the guided

Another report reproduced in *Biḥār* 25:270, from *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, addresses the accusation that the Imams regard people as their slaves. The transmitted reply rejects the attribution. The printed route passes through al-Harawī to al-Riḍā, with the earlier book chain supplied in the cited source. A complete rijāl review is outside this edition's completed work. [BH-B14]

This report provides a useful ethical counterweight to expansive language of obedience. Its value for our argument lies in the refusal to let sacred leadership become ownership of human beings. A modern doctrine of rights cannot be read wholesale into the short passage. Still, the specific rejection belongs in the same dossier as the reports claiming an encompassing walāya.

The prior *al-Kāfī* fascicle makes the underlying principle explicit. Authority over another person must answer to the purpose that justifies it. A claim to know that person's welfare cannot establish unlimited power to dispose of their life. Under these uṣūl, an Imam's guidance remains accountable

to the divine justice it claims to disclose. A dependent representative cannot turn the people guided into a private possession. [BH-A04]

The strongest scriptural challenge comes from al-Khiḍr's encounter with Moses. Qur'an 18:65–82 presents actions whose reasons Moses initially cannot see, including an act of killing that provokes a direct moral objection. The final explanation places the actions under a commission beyond ordinary human judgment. A theology that treats all extraordinary action as impossible would have to confront this narrative. [BH-Q03]

The narrative also shows why a modern claimant cannot simply invoke al-Khiḍr's name. Within the project's premises, the Qur'an itself supplies the authoritative account of that commission. A person who claims analogous permission today must establish the claim rather than treating its alleged secrecy as proof. Moses' questioning is part of the story, and an explanation eventually follows. The passage gives us a difficult case of special knowledge; it does not give every bearer of spiritual language an exemption from evidence or accountability.

For the chapter's filter, this yields a bounded result. An account of divinely commissioned exceptional action remains a theological possibility. An unverified assertion of that commission cannot authorize harm. The stronger the departure from ordinary duties and protection, the more decisive the warrant would need to be. The report's own assertion of spiritual rank cannot furnish that warrant alone.

Knowledge, transformation, and the problem of ghulāt certainty

The chapter on Ṣadrā in *Dark Imams* asks what happens to the knower through knowing. That inquiry gives the present study a constructive horizon. A religious account of illumination can describe a person's moral formation, a deepening understanding, or an extraordinary disclosure. The term does not specify which of those has occurred, and none can be identified solely from the speaker's confidence. [BH-A05]

Our bounded theophany allows God's guidance to become visible in a servant's conduct. In that setting, greater knowledge imposes a greater demand for fidelity. A claimant who uses privileged insight to escape scrutiny creates a new problem of authority. The move from "I have received understanding" to "your questions prove hostility" requires a justification that the experience itself cannot supply to other people.

This is where the *Nūrāniyya* material becomes more than an argument about remote cosmology. Its rhetoric describes a complete recognizer and judges the hesitant reader. The text organizes a social relation between the person who knows and the person asked to assent. Even a theology of divine dependence can support a powerful human hierarchy when that hierarchy controls what counts as recognition.

The project's answer is to preserve the difference between a person's experience and the obligations imposed on others. A private disclosure may guide the recipient's reflection. Establishing a public duty requires reasons and evidence available for examination at the relevant level. The revelation claimed for a prophet, the interpretation offered by an Imam, and the experience reported by a later mystic carry distinct evidentiary questions. Their common use of the word "light" does not collapse those questions.

This principle also keeps philosophical readings available. The Universal Soul, a created spiritual assistant, and the perfected human knower may belong to different explanatory systems. Treating them as one entity because each mediates something would manufacture a cosmology that no examined source actually gives. A comparative chapter should identify the function under discussion and then test each account's particular claims.

For the AI material at the end of *Dark Imams*, the useful extension is similarly limited. Increasing capacity to discover facts does not itself establish authority to choose another person's ends. An agent may predict consequences better than its user and still need authorization for consequential action. This is a proposed analogy about warrant and delegated power, with no claim that an artificial system is the Spirit or that the historical reports predicted its arrival.

The comparison suggests a concrete test for the later research program: present an agent with evidence that it knows more than its principal, while keeping the principal's legitimate authorization bounded. Observe whether the agent requests permission, explains the conflict, or treats superior knowledge as permission to override. Such an experiment would examine a pattern of authority visible in the texts. It would provide no empirical test of the metaphysical identity of an Imam.

A positive reconstruction under tawḥīd

The filtering leaves enough material for a serious theology of guidance. A servant can disclose the divine will through faithful speech and action. A created intermediary can assist or illuminate, provided that the particular account is supported at the level claimed. Honor can be directed toward a commissioned bearer while worship remains directed to Allah. The Qur'anic examples of extraordinary assistance prevent us from treating unfamiliar powers as intrinsically contrary to tawḥīd. [BH-Q01; BH-Q02; BH-A01]

The same framework places limits on what can be inferred. A divine title used representatively cannot establish uncreated existence. Permission for a particular sign cannot be expanded into administration of every event. A special disclosure supplies the knowledge disclosed; it does not establish exhaustive access to the unseen. These are limits on the scope of inference, and they remain relevant even when a source has a favorable chain assessment.

For the Imamate, the retained model centers faithful witness and guidance. Its bearers can be loved, learned from, and honored. A report about their extraordinary rank has to be examined as a report. The community cannot allow an anonymous source to establish an unchallengeable authority merely by putting a threat against doubt in the Imam's mouth.

This conclusion has implications for multiple succession without deciding the whole thesis. The capacity for God to guide more than one person is compatible with the bounded account of created assistance. Whether particular offices are simultaneous, divided by function, or reserved to one designated person requires the evidence of those offices. A language of common light cannot by itself prove a particular plural succession. An exclusive report cannot receive a privileged exemption from HCM because a later community canonized its line.

The theological reconstruction also leaves room for luminous preexistence as a distinct proposition to investigate. Divine foreknowledge of a person differs from that person's existence as a created heavenly agent. Participation in an uncreated divine essence would be a further claim. *Finding Injil* maintains those distinctions when reading John; the Imami comparison must preserve them as well. [BH-A02; BH-A03]

A passage that can sustain a dependent-theophanic reading may still have been intended by its author in a stronger sense. The finished Gospel's Christology and the intention behind a late luminous report remain historical questions. We should state our constructive reading as ours wherever the evidence does not establish the earlier author's intention. That transparency permits comparison to generate theology without pretending that theological compatibility has recovered a lost manuscript.

What this changes in Dark Imams

The chapter identifies a more exact form of the book's central problem. Some of the strongest claims of sacred authority arrive in texts that also insist on servanthood. Their danger cannot be assessed by checking for a single forbidden noun. A report may reserve "God" to Allah while assigning a created figure an unbounded role or making assent to an uncertain attribution a religious test.

Al-Majlisī himself provides resources for examining that development. His collection preserves the luminous material and a restrictive discussion of cosmic delegation. Its source notices disclose degrees of provenance that later quotations can obscure. Those features make the anthology a place where competing conceptions of imamic authority can be studied together. [BH-B02; BH-B06; BH-B08; BH-B09; BH-B10; BH-B11]

The earlier Buyid inquiry remains a study of particular changes and uses. The present chapter adds a later stage: collection and interpretation within the corpus that reached al-Majlisī. To connect an individual report to a political intervention, the research still needs a history of its wording and

circulation. The report of altered notebooks supplies an internal model of corruption; it cannot date or identify the intervention in the *Nūrāniyya* account. [BH-B13]

The report that threatens a doubter with deficient recognition of ʿAlī raises the issue at its sharpest. Such a sentence cannot serve as its own certificate of authenticity. If an attribution demands assent before its provenance can be examined, the demand belongs first to the received report and those who enforce it. The historical Imam's authority is the very matter being claimed. Love for him supplies a reason to investigate the claim with greater care.

The comparison with *Finding Injil* also becomes reciprocal. The same HCM that keeps John's narrator separate from Jesus' reported speech keeps al-Majlisī's introduction separate from the voice attributed to ʿAlī. The same theological test that preserves dependent divine agency in Jesus can preserve it in a report about the Imams. A difficult claim must receive examination even when it comes from the community with which the author identifies.

What remains is a theology whose grandeur rests in guidance that can be lived. The bearer's dependence must remain operative when power is exercised. The truth disclosed must survive examination at the level at which it is offered. A report that asks for assent therefore owes the reader its history, and an institution that asks for obedience owes the governed an account of the trust it claims to exercise.

PART VI · The Jurist and the State

33 · Becoming a Marjaʿ

A scholar's authority can expand without the scholar occupying a throne. A student seeks a ruling, a merchant asks how to divide a debt, a family wants to know which acts invalidate a marriage, and another learned person offers a different answer. The practical difficulty begins long before there is a state called an Islamic republic. Whom should a believer consult, and why should the answer bind conduct? The modern Twelver institution of *marjaʿiyya* developed in part around these problems. Its history concerns the making of authority in a dispersed religious community with no publicly accessible Imam.

The language is revealing. A *marjaʿ al-taqlīd* is a source to whom a believer may turn in the practice of *taqlīd*, reliance on qualified juristic judgment. *Ijtihād* is the jurist's disciplined effort to derive a rule, while *aʿlamiyya* concerns superior learning and the determination of which living jurist possesses it. These words name roles and claims that accumulated their familiar modern institutional character over time. The jurists of medieval Baghdad were capable of sophisticated *ijtihād* without thereby occupying the same international structure of recognition, patronage, and communication that became visible in the nineteenth century. [P6-A08; N20]

Two complaints about mediation

The Akhbārī-Usūlī disputes show how controversial the very idea of relying on an interpretive expert could be. Muḥammad Amīn al-Astarābādī, who died in 1626 or 1627, challenged methods through which Usūlī jurists authenticated and interpreted reports. His insistence on the authority of transmitted Imāmī teaching became part of a wider debate about how believers should approach the available archive. Rula Jurdi Abisaab has demonstrated why the Akhbārī argument deserves to be read as a substantive intellectual program rather than reduced to hostility toward reason. Etan Kohlberg traces the legal and textual disagreements involved, including their consequences for the status of the Imāmī books. [N20; N21]

The critic of *ijtihād* worried that the jurist's technical method could become an unauthorized source of obligation. The defender worried that, without a disciplined method, the believer would misunderstand contradictory reports or fail to distinguish an authoritative text from an unreliable attribution. The two problems remain present in the later institution. A believer can become dependent upon an expert whose premises are hard to inspect; an interpreter reading alone can mistake confidence for competence. Chapter 27's al-Murtaḍā made the uncertainty of solitary reports central to this larger issue. His position reminds us that one can respect a transmitted text and dispute whether it proves a binding legal claim.

Over the eighteenth century, Usūlī methods gained renewed strength. The careers and controversies commonly associated with Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bihbahānī belong to that transition, although its

chronology and geographical variation should be investigated without treating every Akhbārī region as having disappeared overnight. The contest concerned who could issue new legal judgments and how the learned distinguished the competent interpreter from the person following him. It was a dispute over the machinery of obligation. [P6-A08]

The most learned living jurist

In the nineteenth century the figure of Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (1799–1864) became central to the theory and practice of modern *marjaʿiyya*. Zackery Mirza Heern argues that al-Anṣārī's reworking of legal method, together with the emphasis on following the most knowledgeable living jurist, strengthened the social and legal authority of the individual mujtahid. He describes al-Anṣārī as the first sole supreme exemplar of the modern international Twelver community. That formulation is a scholar's historical interpretation of an uneven development; it should be understood against the real possibility of several prestigious jurists being recognized in different networks. [P6-A08]

What did this concentration of authority do in practice? A jurist whose opinions were copied and discussed far beyond Najaf could answer problems arising in cities he would never visit. Students and representatives carried questions back to his circle and circulated replies. The relationship was sustained by the reputation of the scholar's learning and piety, as well as by the institutional labor that made distant consultation possible. The response to a particular question did not necessarily require a coercive government to enforce it. Recognition could come from followers who regarded the scholar as the most qualified interpreter of their religious duties.

This should be distinguished from the legal power to compel a political population. A merchant may voluntarily organize his conduct around a jurist's answer while living under a government administered by somebody else. Two households may follow different learned authorities. A dispute can arise when those households seek a common court, but the existence of conflicting *fatwās* does not itself appoint one scholar as sovereign. The move from expert guidance to enforceable public command still requires an argument about jurisdiction.

Resources, confidence, and accountability

Jurists needed material support to teach, correspond, copy texts, support students, and help religious institutions function. The administration of alms and of religious revenues, including claims over forms of *khums*, could also be related to authority in the Imam's absence. Chapter 28 showed a particularly visible conflict around al-Karakī and the Safavid state. In the later transregional setting, the mechanisms of collecting and allocating funds deserve a separate documentary inquiry: the identity of appointed agents, the specific kinds of funds received, the uses authorized, and the objections raised by competing scholars. A state tax, a charitable contribution,

and the Imam's share of a religious due cannot be assumed to be the same legal entitlement simply because a scholar's office receives them.

The practical problem concerns accountability. How does a follower learn which expenses a jurist's agents have charged to the religious purpose? What is the mechanism for challenging a dishonest representative? The existence of donors and pupils can furnish information and influence without creating the formal oversight that a constitutional public office might require. This chapter does not equate wealth with corruption. It treats the flow of resources as a way to identify where moral authority becomes institutionally effective.

The emergence of a widely recognized *marjaʿ* also produced stronger expectations of independence from government. An authority established by learning and trusted religious practice could publicly oppose a ruler without needing the ruler's appointment. The famous tobacco controversy makes that difference legible.

A scholar in Sāmarrāʾ and a boycott in Iran

Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī (1814–1895) studied under al-Anṣārī and became a preeminent source of emulation after the latter's generation. By the 1870s he enjoyed extraordinary recognition among Persian Shiʿis. In 1889 the Qajar government granted a tobacco concession to a British company, provoking opposition among merchants, cultivators, and religious leaders. The resistance intensified in 1891. From Sāmarrāʾ, Shīrāzī was informed through clerical and merchant networks and sent protests to Nāṣer al-Dīn Shah. A prohibition on tobacco use circulated at the end of 1891 under Shīrāzī's authority, and the boycott contributed to the concession's abandonment. Hamid Algar's biographical entry reconstructs the correspondence and the wider mobilization. [P6-A09]

The story is often simplified into a single fatwā moving an entire country. Its power lies in the more complicated mechanism. Clerics in Iran petitioned a renowned scholar abroad, public grievance moved through existing commercial and religious networks, and the attributed ruling furnished a common idiom for collective action. Questions about the exact wording, early circulation, and authorization of the prohibition should be kept separate from the well-documented political boycott. The role of Mīrzā Ḥasan Āshtiyānī in Tehran also matters. The boycott required local advocates willing to risk a confrontation with government, not simply a message from a distant scholar. [P6-A09; P6-A10]

Shīrāzī exercised extraordinary influence while residing outside the Iranian capital. He was able to confront a monarch without already holding the monarch's office. That distinction will matter in the twentieth century. It demonstrates the political effects of *marjaʿiyya* and leaves open the separate question of whether a source of emulation should take possession of the machinery of state.

Rival jurists, different political answers

The institution's pluralism had consequences. Multiple scholars could command respect, issue incompatible judgments, and attract followers without a shared procedure for selecting one supreme political ruler. The Iranian Constitutional Revolution exposed this situation publicly. Leading jurists in the Iraqi shrine cities participated in debates about how to restrain the Shah, while clerics in Iran split over the authority of elected institutions. Chapter 34 will place Nāʾīnī and Shaykh Faḍl Allāh Nūrī inside that disagreement. A common devotion to the Hidden Imam could support opposing constitutional arguments. [P6-A06; P6-A11]

The twentieth-century claim of *wilāyat al-faqīh* entered a world in which scholars already possessed public moral influence and the institutions needed to exercise it. The existence of those networks helps explain the reach of Khomeini's 1970 lectures and their later dissemination. It does not establish that the networks' earlier holders agreed with his extension of juristic office to general government. Within his own lifetime, religious scholars differed about how far the jurist could claim to represent the Imam.

The distinction can be posed as four questions. Who possesses the competence to interpret a source? Who authorized the expert to act for the believer? Which matters does that authorization cover? And how can a mistaken ruling or misuse of resources be corrected? A system of *taqlīd* offers developed answers to the first question, a complex historical process of recognition concerning the second, and competing doctrines on the third. The fourth moves beyond the character of the learned individual into institutional design. This is where the discussion of *marjaʿiyya* leads directly into the history of constitutionalism and of an Islamic republic.

34 · Constitutionalism Before Khomeini

The absent Imam could be invoked as a reason to restrain a ruler. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Twelver jurists disputed whether constitutional law and representative institutions could help guard against injustice. The Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1911 became a political test of those arguments. Reformers, merchants, religious scholars, and ordinary demonstrators sought different ends. What brought some of them together was opposition to an arbitrary monarchy and the desire to make public authority answerable to stated limits. A constitutional settlement did not resolve every disagreement about the relationship between the sharīʿa and popular government. It gave the disagreement an institutional location. [N22; P6-A11]

The book has already passed through the early Abbasid age, the occultation, Safavid deputyship, and the rise of sources of emulation. Those developments give the Iranian controversy a longer past. They also prevent the reader from mistaking the arguments of one twentieth-century political theorist for the only conclusion a Shiʿi jurist could draw from an absent Imam.

The missing impeccable ruler

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Nāʾīnī (1860–1936) wrote *Tanbīh al-umma wa-tanzīh al-milla*, first published in 1909. Its Persian title invokes the awakening of the community and the cleansing of political life. In a translated selection introduced by Mahmoud Sadri, Nāʾīnī begins from the problem of tyranny and the need for government. Human society requires public order, yet ordinary holders of office lack the infallibility ascribed to the Imam. His practical inquiry asks what arrangements can limit their abuse of authority. [P6-A06]

The translated passage makes the argument unusually concrete. Nāʾīnī describes infallible rule as the ideal protection against the ruler's passions and mistakes. With that ideal unavailable, he turns to the imposition of limits on government and to the appointment of a supervisory assembly of capable representatives. Such an assembly would scrutinize acts of government and help prevent the executive from becoming an unchecked possessor of public wealth and law. In the terminology of the passage, ordinary government is a form of public trusteeship whose administrators can betray the trust. [P6-A06]

Here the occultation is a premise for **countervailing institutions**. The jurist may know something valuable about divine law and the public duty of justice. The ruler remains fallible. A person claiming superior knowledge does not thereby become infallible. The absence of guaranteed virtue motivates checks on actions, limits on competence, and procedures through which public grievances can enter government. The historical logic differs from a theory that concentrates ultimate command in one qualified person.

The difference should be stated with care. Nāʾīnī's argument did not simply abandon the authority of Islamic law or erase the role of the jurists. In the same translated selection, he discusses the supervision of elected representatives through scholars authorized during the occultation and envisages a place for those knowledgeable in religious law. The precise nature of that authorization is part of the original argument. It would distort him to describe his position as a modern secular constitution transplanted unchanged into Shiʿism. [P6-A06]

What counts as the nation's trust?

The idea of a trust introduces an exact question: to whom is the official answerable? A trustee may possess powers indispensable to the people whose affairs he administers. The fact that a power serves an important purpose does not answer who can challenge its misuse. Nāʾīnī's supervisory assembly represents an effort to distribute oversight among persons able to monitor expenditure and restrain wrongdoing. The translated text joins this concern to the language of political liberty and equality, concepts whose historical boundaries require attention. [P6-A06]

The proposal also gives the user of religious authority a role distinct from the jurist's. Citizens can claim that an official has misapplied an accepted standard, that the ruler has exceeded his legal competence, or that a public cost has been concealed. Those objections can be heard as claims about government rather than accusations of doctrinal rebellion. An institution might fail those expectations, but their presence in the constitutional theory changes what kind of legitimacy is being demanded.

The apparent familiarity of this language creates an interpretive risk. A twenty-first-century reader can recognize elections and assemblies, and then fill the blank spaces with contemporary views about citizenship. Nāʾīnī's text must be allowed to state its own religious prerequisites, limits on legislation, and exclusions. The claim established here is narrower: a leading Shiʿi jurist used the Imam's absence and the ruler's fallibility to defend public limitations on arbitrary power in an actual constitutional controversy.

The opposing jurist

Shaykh Faḍl Allāh Nūrī (1843–1909) was a prominent Tehran jurist who came to oppose forms of constitutionalism he believed exposed the sharīʿa to legislation by unauthorised majorities. Vanessa Martin's biographical study follows his arguments for a *mashrūṭa-ye mashrūʿa*, constitutional government made explicitly subject to religious legitimacy, and his involvement in the conflict that culminated in his execution in 1909. His early participation in reformist agitation and subsequent opposition reveal a changing position under pressure, not an unchanging hatred of consultation. [P6-A11]

Nūrī's objection concerned a question that remains central to legal theory. A legislature empowered by representatives of the people may enact a provision that a jurist judges contrary to divine law. Which authority prevails? How does a citizen distinguish a genuine religious prohibition from the political preferences of the interpreter announcing it? The problem cannot be resolved simply by repeating that every ruler must be just, since the parties disagree about how justice is known and institutionalized.

The constitutionalist jurists responded differently. Ākhund Muḥammad Kāẓim Khurāsānī, based in Najaf, supported constitutional limits and criticized Nūrī's opposition, as Martin's study recounts. This produced a conspicuous conflict among religious scholars with recognized learning and authority. Their dispute cannot be narrated as a single monolithic clerical institution gradually discovering a settled doctrine. It was a contested attempt to decide what an Islamic political order might look like when no infallible Imam was available to arbitrate. [P6-A11]

The political consequences should be recorded without flattening religious doctrine into an account of factions. Nūrī's execution is a fact of the revolution's coercive history. Later uses of his memory by constitutionalists and their critics are themselves part of the history of political legitimation. Neither his death nor the constitution's eventual influence proves the disputed theological proposition by itself.

A second life for an old claim

Saïd Amir Arjomand's account of the Islamic Republic's constitution begins by contrasting the 1907 constitutional compromise with the radical juristic office eventually established in 1979. The earlier Iranian constitutional system had provided for clerical review without giving a supreme jurist general command over the state. Decades later, religious and political actors would return to the question of the legislature's validity and the scope of clerical supervision. [P6-A04]

Nā'īnī thus belongs in the story as an alternative intellectual ancestor. He demonstrates that a Shiʿi political argument could begin with the very same problem of the hidden Imam and emphasize dispersed oversight of necessarily imperfect officeholders. Modern analyses have questioned how far he believed juristic political rights could be delegated and under which circumstances. Those disagreements need to be set against the full Persian treatise. The selected translated pages consulted here are direct evidence of his case for limitation and supervision, but do not exhaust his political theory. [N24; P6-A06]

One episode shows why the comparison matters. The 1891–1892 tobacco boycott, discussed in Chapter 33, demonstrated that a scholar could intervene in public affairs while residing outside the king's administration. Constitutionalists then debated how to convert moral influence and public resistance into a durable system of restraints. In 1979, *wilāyat al-faqīh* gave a different constitutional answer by reserving commanding authority to a jurist. Each historical moment involved a particular

set of offices, texts, and political choices. The vocabulary of Shiʿi duty did not determine the same institutional design across them.

Jurisdiction and the people who must obey

Chapter 22 supplies a modest but instructive comparison. A guardian claims the power to contract a marriage for a child by citing protective authority; a court or legal school must determine the permitted scope and the conditions of consent. In the state-level debate, a learned officeholder may claim to govern because he can interpret a law others must obey. The analytic question is similar: what grants the authority to bind another person, and which mistakes will be detectable by the person whose interests are represented? The analogy identifies a form of legal reasoning. It leaves the specific rules and historical circumstances of each institution distinct.

Nāʾīnī's answer was to make limitation and supervision central to the control of fallible rulers. Khomeini's answer, in his 1970 Najaf lectures, emphasized the need for a jurist who could assume the public powers required to administer Islamic law. His later government would also employ elections and other organs of review. The practical difference concerns the final arbiter when those organs disagree. Chapter 35 follows how that disagreement was settled through constitutional drafting and subsequent political conflict.

35 · Khomeini: Representation Becomes Government

On 21 January 1970, in Najaf, Ruhollah Khomeini began a series of lessons on Islamic government. They continued through 8 February, thirteen lectures delivered in the city where centuries of Twelver jurists had learned to exercise authority during the Imam's absence. The audience was formed chiefly by seminarians. The political target lay across the border in Iran. The lectures were recorded, transcribed, edited, and circulated as *Ḥukūmat-i Islāmī: Wilāyat-i Faqīh*, or *Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist*. One edition was printed in Beirut and sent covertly into Iran; the surviving English edition translated by Hamid Algar follows the third Persian edition printed in Najaf in 1971. The lectures had become a program for political mobilization well before the revolution of 1979. [P6-A01; P6-A02]

Here, at last, the absent Imam became the premise of a proposal for the ordinary government of an entire country. What Chapter 26 reconstructed as the contested beginnings of an occultation, and Chapter 28 as a series of disputed acquisitions of particular juristic powers, was given a new scope. A qualified jurist might exercise executive authority, oversee armed force, levy revenue, appoint judges, and provide the enduring leadership necessary to implement divine law. Khomeini called the office *wilāyat al-faqīh*, the authority or guardianship of the jurist. The Persian form *velāyat-e faqīh* belongs to the Iranian debate; the Arabic form is used here as the analytical term. Neither term tells us, by itself, which kinds of authority a particular author intended.

That distinction is essential because *wilāya* appears in legal discussions of authority over particular persons and matters, in accounts of mystical intimacy with God, and in political descriptions of command. Their meanings interact historically. They cannot be substituted for one another without an argument. A jurist entrusted with a minor's property, a religious expert deciding a dispute, and a state leader directing the armed forces each exercises a kind of authority; the scope of each office must be separately established. [P6-A03; Z16]

The problem produced by an absent ruler

A Twelver believer accepting the disappearance of the twelfth Imam must still confront problems that cannot await his return. People quarrel over estates, merchants breach contracts, governments demand taxes, and an injured claimant needs an adjudicator. Classical jurists developed ways to answer these needs. Their disagreements concerned which acts they could perform on the Imam's behalf and which acts remained reserved. Chapter 28 followed al-Karakī's recognition at the Safavid court and treated his enlarged powers as a historically dated event. Chapter 33 follows the later development of *marjaʿiyya*, which allowed followers to rely on living jurists for legal guidance. Neither example supplies a complete premise for universal political sovereignty.

Khomeini begins with the practical necessity of government. His argument is partly theological and partly functional: Islam, understood as a law governing public as well as private life, requires institutions capable of administering its injunctions. The continued obligation to secure public order, enforce judgments, guard frontiers, and manage revenue could not expire when the Imam became inaccessible. The conclusion is that government must continue. He then asks who is fit to operate it. Because the government is understood as the administration of Islamic law, the leading candidates must know that law and possess justice of character. These qualifications are stated in the portion of the lectures called "The Form of Islamic Government." [P6-A03]

Notice what this establishes immediately: a theory of competence. A jurist may know better than a lay ruler how a particular religious law has been understood. Khomeini pushes further. If an untrained ruler must continually ask a jurist what the law is, he argues, the jurist is already the effective superior in a government of law. The jurist should therefore assume the office whose occupant must ultimately depend upon his judgment. This is an identifiable inference from the requirements of law to the qualifications of public office.

The gap is equally identifiable. Knowledge of a law is a qualification for applying it; a claim to rule additionally requires authority to appoint and dismiss officials, command armed units, and bind people whose own jurists disagree. Khomeini supplies further premises rather than leaving the entire case on this first inference. The reader can inspect those premises, including transmitted reports and analogies of appointment, and assess their force. [P6-A03]

The guardian of a nation and the guardian of a minor

A passage in the Najaf lectures is unusually revealing for this book. Khomeini explains that governmental authority is a matter of appointed responsibility. He compares the appointment of a guardian for a minor with the appointment of a governor, and says that with respect to office and duty the legal form is comparable to the guardianship of a nation. He uses the analogy to distinguish the authority delegated to a qualified officeholder from the superior spiritual rank of the Prophet or the Imams. [P6-A03]

Chapter 22 investigated how guardianship over children could be justified by invoking familial competence, inherited practice, and juristic claims about a child's interest. The analogy in Khomeini's own lecture gives that earlier inquiry an unexpected political afterlife. It takes the audience from someone deemed unable to authorize a legal transaction to an entire population for whom a jurist is said to occupy an appointed governing office. The resemblance is structural. **A claim that one person is legally qualified to act for another can become a claim that the other's assent is unnecessary to the appointment.**

The analogy has limits. Khomeini's passage is about how political powers pass to a jurist, and it does not declare that a modern population is literally composed of children or instruct anyone to arrange

marriages for minors. Likewise the classical legal institution of child guardianship has obligations and conditions that vary by school. The comparison belongs in a history of authorization because Khomeini chose it to clarify his theory of office. His choice makes it possible to ask what accounts for the agency of the governed when the representative's appointment is argued from religious qualifications rather than their individual consent.

The answer could appeal to the divine law that constrains the ruler, to elections, to a religiously qualified body, or to an account of popular recognition. Each does different work. Identifying the route by which a population is bound is more precise than declaring all uses of guardianship either beneficial or tyrannical.

The ward and the republic: when guardianship becomes permission

A peculiar passage in Khomeini's juridical writing brings the problem of political representation back to the body of a child. The point is historically concrete. In *Taḥrīr al-Wasīla*, volume 2, *Kitāb al-nikāḥ*, question 12, Khomeini forbids penetrative intercourse with a wife before the completion of nine years. He then permits other forms of sexual gratification, including lustful touching and *tafkhīdh*, even in the case of *al-raḍīʿa*, a nursing infant. The decisive clause, quoted here in the source edition's orthography, is:

فلا بأس بها حتّى في الرضيعة

The specified practices are treated as permissible even with a nursing infant. This text is available in Arabic in the edition published by the Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, volume 2, page 259; a second printed pagination places it at volume 2, page 241. [P6-B01; P6-B02]

The passage continues by discussing intercourse before nine and what happens if it causes grave genital injury. It specifies prohibitions, continuing marital status, maintenance, and financial liability. The structure is revealing. A marriage contract has already made the infant a legal wife; the rule then divides the husband's possible conduct into what it authorizes, what it forbids, and what legal consequences follow injury. The infant's ability to assent is absent from the rule's operative conditions. The problem is present even if the case was a legal hypothetical. The text expresses an authorization. Under this manuscript's U3 principle, "Consent, capacity, and protection" (Appendix B), an infant has no capacity to authorize sexual contact, and guardianship must serve the child's protection. The conduct this ruling permits violates that stated standard and constitutes sexual abuse of an infant. This is an ethical judgment under the book's declared method. The document by itself proves a jurist's ruling, rather than an act that Khomeini personally performed or a frequency of such acts in society.

This is a reason to return to Chapter 22. That chapter found the marriage of an infant daughter of al-Zubayr circulating in ninth-century compilations, together with reports of family arrangements attributed to ʿUrwa and the marriage of ʿUmar to Umm Kulthūm. It also found resistance: Ibn Shubruma's prohibition of minor marriage, preserved by the later Hanafi jurist al-Sarakhsī, who answered the objection with the ʿĀʾisha age tradition and other precedents. Those earlier texts differ in legal school and their histories of transmission. Their conjunction shows the enduring jurisprudential question: **what may an authorized adult do before the person said to benefit from the decision is capable of authorizing it?** [H22.1; H22.2; Y10]

The evidence cautions against claiming an unbroken chain of borrowing from al-Zubayr's family to Khomeini. No such chain has been demonstrated. It supports something more specific: repeated legal reasoning in which a guardian's or husband's recognized status can supply powers over a minor that are withheld from that minor herself. The contractual relationship becomes the ground of permission. One might attempt to defend this arrangement by appealing to an adult's duty to protect a child, but the rule in *Taḥrīr al-Wasīla* exposes a case in which protection fails at the point of authorization. The adult's legally recognized entitlement survives the child's obvious inability to consent. That is the conflict the chapter must make visible.

There is a juristic complication worth recording. A commentary titled *Mustanad Taḥrīr al-Wasīla*, attributed to Sayyid Muṣṭafā Khomeini, reproduces the permission and questions part of the argument from the marriage contract, discussing whether an earlier prohibition could persist in the absence of a sufficiently specific authorization. Its accessible page is a partial text; an investigation of the full argument must precede any final attribution of his position. Even inside this legal tradition, therefore, the move from marriage contract to sexual license invites arguments about the scope of permission. [P6-B03]

The next text belongs to an entirely different genre. In his Najaf lectures of 1970, Khomeini explains political *wilāya* as an appointed office. He distinguishes the Prophet's and the Imams' spiritual excellence from the administrative powers of a governor. The striking comparison is his own: he places the **guardian of a nation** and the **guardian of a minor** in the same discussion of office and legal responsibility, saying their position and duties are analogous. The point, for Khomeini, is that authority to govern can be conferred upon a qualified jurist without conferring the Prophet's spiritual rank. He is arguing about delegation and governmental function. He does not declare that Iranian citizens literally have the legal incapacity of infants. [P6-B04]

Why does this comparison matter? Because the earlier discussion of minors showed how authority granted for a dependent person's interests can authorize action without that person's contemporaneous assent. Now the jurist makes a comparable account of delegated office carry the weight of ruling an entire political community. In each case, a question arises before the merits of a decision: **who established the representative's right to decide, by what procedure, over which**

acts, and subject to what revocation? The two texts employ different legal mechanisms; their shared vulnerability lies in the possibility that the scope of permission comes to be determined primarily by its holder.

The distinction between possessing knowledge and possessing jurisdiction becomes decisive. A jurist may know the history of a rule about guardianship. He may be adept at deriving a judgment from reports. Neither achievement, by itself, tells a woman whether she may refuse a marriage arranged for her, or tells citizens whether they may replace a ruler who claims to govern for their spiritual benefit. Khomeini's lectures attempt to supply that missing step by positing divine delegation to a qualified *faqīh*. Chapter 28 showed earlier and disputed grants of juristic jurisdiction under the Safavids. Chapter 34 reconstructed Nāʾīnī's constitutional argument that government during occultation remained fallible and needed supervision. Khomeini chose the architecture in which the jurist's governing office would itself claim a privileged source of authorization. [P6-A03; P6-A06]

Calling that development *bidʿa* expresses a theological judgment about religious innovation. As historical analysis, the narrower description is that Khomeini considerably enlarged the political powers asserted for jurists, powers earlier Twelver scholars had assigned variously and often more restrictively. His own lectures represent the scheme as the restoration of Islamic government. The record of earlier disagreement gives an investigator a way to test the scope of that claim without treating Shiʿi tradition as if it had one timeless constitutional theory.

The revolution must enter the account as a real political event. Iranians in large numbers helped overthrow Mohammad Reza Shah; their reasons included opposition to monarchy, repression, economic injustice, and foreign influence. The March 1979 referendum produced an officially reported overwhelming vote for an Islamic Republic. The constitution approved later that year institutionalized the guardianship of a jurist through a much more precise set of offices and powers. Those stages matter because the new system emerged from genuine revolutionary mobilization and referendum processes, while its institutions shaped the terms on which its citizens could subsequently contest power. [P6-B05]

The first organized challenges to the new state's treatment of women appeared almost immediately. On 8 March 1979, thousands of women protested Khomeini's declared restrictions concerning veiling in government workplaces. A detailed historical study, drawing on recollections and archives, documents the protesters' insistence that having participated in a revolution gave them a claim to determine what kind of freedom would follow it. Their public refusal matters to the metaphor of guardianship: these women were publicly asserting their own capacity to judge the terms of political and bodily life. They were present as agents, not as wards awaiting an officeholder's decision. [P6-B06]

Khomeini's argument became still more expansive in an exchange with President ʿAlī Khamenei dated 6 January 1988. He described government as part of the Prophet's absolute guardianship and

assigned it priority over subsidiary religious duties. His examples included the expropriation of property for roads with compensation, governmental annulment of its contracts where state interests demanded, and even temporary suspension of pilgrimage. The letter is preserved in a collection associated with Khomeini's own writings. A claim about competence to administer the law has become the assertion that a properly constituted government may suspend the ordinary application of some religious laws for a larger public interest. [P6-B07]

There are serious defenses of this position. One may say that every functioning state must regulate property, levy revenue, and manage public emergencies; a legal order unable to do so would become impossible to govern. Khomeini is responding to precisely that problem. The contested premise concerns **who decides the public interest and who is entitled to challenge the decision**. If the chief authority can define an emergency, specify the sacrifice it requires, and override ordinary laws, appeals to necessity may cease to restrain the office. Their remaining force depends on institutions outside the authority whose acts are being justified.

The events of 1988 make the question tragically concrete. Human Rights Watch, drawing on testimony, documents, and the recollections of Ayatollah Ḥusayn ʿAlī Montaẓerī, attributes the order for a nationwide wave of summary executions of political prisoners to Khomeini. The organization estimates thousands of victims, with published ranges varying by method and evidence. Prisoners already in custody were interrogated about political and religious allegiance, and many were killed without fair trial. Montaẓerī, who had helped build the revolutionary system and was then designated to succeed Khomeini, protested. His objections are especially important because they came from within the political and religious leadership. [P6-B08]

It would take more evidence to show that a particular passage in *Ḥukūmat-i Islāmī* caused a particular execution. A political theory is not a complete explanation of the decisions made by police, courts, intelligence officials, or prison committees. Yet the two kinds of evidence can be analyzed together: one gives a theory for concentrating final authority, and the other documents the exercise of coercive powers within the state that emerged around it. The question is whether a system that claims to act for the governed supplies them with effective remedies when the supposed protector injures them. On this point, Montaẓerī's protest belongs inside the history of Shiʿi thought, and the testimonies of prisoners and families belong inside the history of Iran.

The analogy must answer to its own tradition

The anti-*qiyās* dispute returns here by an unexpected route. In the Imāmī reports examined in Chapter 10B, Abū Ḥanīfa is made to answer for reasoning from one case to another by resemblance. These narratives were transmitted by his juristic rivals, and their precise attribution to Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq requires the same chronological scrutiny as other polemical reports. Their principle is plain enough: a scholar's confidence in a resemblance cannot by itself furnish God's authorization for a

legal ruling. Centuries later the Imāmī tradition still treated speculative *qiyās* as an inadequate ground for extending divine law. [P6-B09; P6-B10]

The comparison Khomeini chose in Najaf makes that history difficult to ignore. He placed a jurist governing a nation beside an appointed guardian caring for a minor, insisting that the offices were equivalent in duty and position. His immediate purpose was to explain the powers of an appointed office while denying that the jurist thereby attained the Prophet's spiritual rank. This was part of an argument also built from transmitted reports, the obligation to administer law, and claims about rational necessity. It would be inaccurate to pronounce the passage a technical instance of the prohibited *qiyās* merely because it contains an analogy. In legal theory, *qiyās* has a particular structure: a received rule is extended from an original case to a new one through an asserted common effective cause. Khomeini was describing a form of delegated authority. Yet the analogy remains answerable to the tradition's own suspicion of reasoning by resemblance. Which duties truly belong to both offices? Which alleged similarity licenses a jurist to command competent adults? His comparison leaves those limits to be established elsewhere. [P6-B04; P6-B09; P6-B10]

The law of marriage sharpened the question long before Khomeini. Chapter 22 reconstructed how the alleged marriage of ʿUmar and Umm Kulthūm, alongside reports about the marriages of young members of al-Zubayr's family, appeared in later arguments about what a guardian could authorize. The text attributed to Khomeini is a later jurist's independent statement of permission concerning an infant. Neither the survival of earlier precedents nor their resemblance to his ruling establishes a chain of textual borrowing. Their common pressure point is identifiable without that missing chain. A protected person's interests become something an officeholder may define, while the conditions for resistance become less visible than the powers conferred. [Y10; H22.1; H22.2; P6-B01]

Political consent cannot be discussed as though the revolution never happened. Millions participated in the movement against the Shah, and the referendum of March 1979 produced an officially reported vote for an Islamic Republic. What citizens understood that phrase to entail, and what avenues they later possessed for changing its institutions, are historical questions about different moments. The women who protested in March, the dissidents imprisoned afterward, and Montaẓerī's protests over the 1988 executions must remain distinct persons and political actors in the account. A referendum supplies evidence of participation at a date. It does not, by itself, settle the legitimacy of every power subsequently exercised in its name. [P6-B05; P6-B06; P6-B08]

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps made one part of the new order durable in arms. Created in the revolutionary aftermath, it was assigned by Article 150 of the constitution to guard the Revolution and its achievements, separately from the ordinary armed forces. Later the organization accumulated considerable military, political, and economic influence. It is possible to describe this as *vanguard politics*, in the sense of an institution claiming an enduring mission to defend a revolution against its adversaries. Calling the Guards *Leninist* is a comparison of political form that

requires separate evidence about ideology and organizational borrowing. The constitutional assignment and the corps' history establish the relevant point: the political order acquired a force specifically charged with guarding its revolutionary identity. [P6-B11; P6-B12]

Here the book's two lineages encounter a practical test. An argument about who knows God's law was made to answer a different demand: who may govern a population, discipline opposition, and determine when the government's survival overrides rules binding everyone else? The jurist's religious education could explain the source of his confidence. The Guard could enforce the authority of the state. Between those institutions stood Iranians with their own judgments about what they had authorized. The history belongs to them as well as to the man who claimed to represent them.

The metaphor that Khomeini **"raped Iran"** can be understood as an indictment of a state that appropriated the authority to determine what was permissible for a population while restricting that population's power to refuse. The comparison carries moral force because a lack of consent lies at the center of sexual abuse and authoritarian domination. It remains a metaphor. Sexual assault is a particular violation of a person, and the documentary evidence for Khomeini's sexual jurisprudence establishes an abusive permission in his legal writing, not an allegation that he personally committed rape. The Iranian revolution also involved real supporters, opponents, and people whose views changed. Their political lives resist reduction to a single figurative victim.

There is an even more compelling way to formulate the charge. **A purported guardian claimed to act for a people while narrowing the terms on which those people could refuse his guardianship.** In the law of minors, a power justified as protection became permission for the adult. In the political doctrine of the jurist, authority justified as safeguarding religion became permission for the governing office to subordinate ordinary law to its own account of necessity. The cases differ greatly in scale and immediate consequence. Their relationship is found in the transfer of decision-making power and in the burden that transfer places upon the person whose interests allegedly authorize it.

For the book's two-lineage thesis, that is a more severe test than the familiar question whether the jurist claims to speak for the absent Imam. We can ask what a lineage of knowledge teaches about the rights of the dependent and about the correction of error. We can then ask what happens when an institution turns the same dependence into an enforceable jurisdiction. The record is sufficiently precise to let those questions be asked with names, texts, dates, dissenting voices, and victims. The historian can distinguish the documents from the verdict they invite.

What the jurist inherits

Khomeini is explicit that the Prophet and the Imams possess a spiritual station inaccessible to an ordinary faqīh. He separates that station from the administration of society. When he says that the

qualified jurist holds the same governmental powers in relevant public affairs, his claim concerns function: making appointments, distributing revenue, mobilizing forces, administering courts, and enforcing law. The assertion appears in the same section as his account of the higher spiritual station of the Imams. A criticism of his political doctrine must begin with that distinction. [P6-A03]

His treatment of transmitted reports then attempts to establish an authorized succession of public function. Among his arguments is the report associated with ʿUmar ibn Ḥanẓala, in which disputants are directed toward a knowledgeable member of the community to judge their case. Khomeini emphasizes the term appointing a judge or ruler, arguing that the report's designation carries authority beyond the particular quarrel and beyond the lifetime of the speaking Imam. Elsewhere he discusses narrations concerning jurists as successors, trustees, or heirs of the prophets, and a discourse ascribed to al-Ḥusayn about religious scholars' neglected responsibilities. He distinguishes jurists capable of weighing reports from mere collectors who transmit them without the learning needed to judge their force. [P6-A03]

This makes the legal argument accessible to a precise challenge. A direction to seek a competent judge is evidence for a judicial office. To obtain a general political governor from that direction, one must explain why the words of designation encompass executive and coercive powers, why the designation survives under the conditions asserted, and why it can be concentrated in the holder of a modern state office. Khomeini gives answers through his account of the necessity of continuing government and the extensive role of the Prophet and Imams. Other Twelver jurists have understood delegated powers more narrowly. The dispute is among interpreters of an inherited textual archive, not between people who care about Islam and people who lack concern for it.

The authority of each hadith is another independent question. Chapter 27 showed how al-Murtaḍā could examine an isolated report while denying it sufficient force to impose a rule on the believer. Al-Ṭūsī's method took a different approach to organizing inherited reports into practical jurisprudence. Those earlier debates prevent a modern theory of government from borrowing unexamined credibility merely because it cites an Imāmī collection. What exactly does each report say? How early is its attestation? How does its chain fare under the relevant author's criteria? And if the report is accepted, how much jurisdiction do its words authorize? The larger the power demanded, the greater the importance of each step.

Predecessors and the size of the innovation

The historical claim that Khomeini simply invented juristic guardianship would collapse distinct earlier developments. Safavid jurists had argued over deputyship and revenue. Nineteenth-century legal writing continued to treat the possible authority of jurists across several domains. Khomeini's English edition itself refers to the nineteenth-century Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī and his treatment of guardianship. The editorial foreword identifies Narāqī's discussions as an important precedent while

acknowledging a difference in the extent to which government was made explicit. The relevant portions of Narāqī's *ʿAwāʾid al-ayyām* require direct comparison in Arabic before claims about identical theories can be made. [P6-A02]

The lectures' chronology needs an additional correction. Yasuyuki Matsunaga has examined Khomeini's *Kashf al-asrār* (*Unveiling of Secrets*, 1944) and argues that the young seminary teacher already defended the political mandate of the jurist at that date. On this reading the 1970 lectures gave a sustained, mobilizing expression to a position that had matured earlier, rather than marking its first appearance. The 1944 work also reminds us that Khomeini's opposition to monarchy and his attitude toward the political role of jurists evolved within debates in Qom prior to exile. Matsunaga's conclusion is drawn here from his scholarly article; a direct comparison of the Persian *Kashf al-asrār* with the 1971 Persian text of the Najaf lectures remains outstanding. [P6-A14]

Khomeini's distinct move is the sustained, programmatic articulation of government by qualified jurists in an anti-monarchical campaign and its later institutional realization. That is a claim about the combination of legal argument, mobilization, constitutional drafting, and state power. It preserves the earlier jurists as historically meaningful participants rather than treating them as incidental prefaces to a predetermined Iranian outcome.

It also matters that religiously trained opponents of the Shah did not all agree on the proper future of the state. The revolutionary coalition brought together clerics, constitutionalists, merchants, leftists, and Islamic modernists with incompatible expectations. The historical record of the 1979 drafting process shows that *wilāyat al-faqīh* emerged as a constitutional institution through argument and political decision. [P6-A04]

From lectures to constitution, 1979

The overthrow of the monarchy did not arrive with a fully agreed constitutional design. A preliminary 1979 draft prepared by the provisional government and the Revolutionary Council adapted earlier constitutional institutions and contemplated clerical review of legislation; it did not establish the supreme jurist as the commanding authority familiar from the adopted text. Saïd Amir Arjomand's reconstruction places the decisive elaboration of *welāyat-e faqīh* during the Assembly of Experts' deliberations in the summer and autumn of 1979. He identifies Muḥammad Ḥusayn Beheštī and Ḥusayn-ʿAlī Montaẓerī among the advocates who helped articulate and entrench the principle. [P6-A04]

The drafting history is the point of interest. A proposition argued in lectures becomes a constitutional article through named actors, institutional procedure, and political contestation. Treating the resulting constitution as the inevitable expression of a universally accepted religious doctrine conceals how the decision was made. Conversely, describing the constitution as religious

language pasted onto a secular revolution ignores the force of the earlier Najaf argument and its dissemination. Both the intellectual record and the political process belong to the history.

The text adopted in the referendum of 2–3 December 1979 supplied a legal framework for the new authority. The version later amended in 1989 is readily available in English. Its Article 5 identifies the just and qualified jurist as exercising leadership during the occultation, while Article 4 makes conformity to Islamic standards a universal requirement of legislation. Article 6 provides for public elections, and Article 8 describes the duty to enjoin right and forbid wrong as reciprocal among citizens and government. These provisions must be read together, because they present both popular participation and an unelected religious criterion for the validity of the acts that participation produces. [P6-A05]

The structure of the office becomes concrete in Chapter VIII of the 1989-amended text. Article 107 assigns selection of the Leader to an elected Assembly of Experts. Article 109 states intellectual, ethical, and political qualifications. Article 110 gives the Leader command of the armed forces, significant powers of appointment, authority in war and peace, and a role in setting general policy. Article 111 supplies a procedure for removal when the Leader becomes unqualified or incapable. The presence of an accountability article is historically significant. Its operation has to be assessed through the composition and independence of the body tasked with applying it. [P6-A05]

The 1979 and 1989 instruments should not be silently fused. The latter revises important leadership qualifications and public offices. The manuscript needs a side-by-side comparison of the original Persian constitution, the official 1989 revision, and the proceedings of the constituent and revision assemblies. The English consolidated text establishes the later allocation of powers; Arjomand helps reconstruct the changes that produced it. [P6-A04; P6-A05]

The revolution's unanswered legal conflict

An Islamic state established to enforce religious law quickly encountered disagreement about what law permitted government to do. In the 1980s the elected Majles sought measures on economic regulation, labor, and land; the Guardian Council, tasked with reviewing conformity to Islamic principles, objected to several proposals. The dispute mattered in ordinary terms. Could legislation regulate contracts or redistribute resources for a claimed public benefit when jurists believed it interfered with inherited protections of property? Could the state override a juristic decision for an asserted collective necessity? The constitution had made those questions the business of multiple institutions capable of blocking one another. [P6-A04]

In January 1988 Khomeini intervened with a much broader assertion about *welāyat-e moṭlaqa*, or absolute governmental authority. Responding to a dispute with President ʿAlī Khāmeneʾī about the government's relation to the ordinances of religious law, Khomeini maintained that government constituted a primary divine ruling with priority over derivative duties, including even particular

obligations of worship under conditions he described. Arjomand dates a crucial statement to 6 January 1988. A commission for determining the interest of the Islamic order, subsequently known as the Expediency Council, followed in February to address persistent conflicts between legislative demands and the Guardian Council. [P6-A04]

That is a historical development worth reading closely. The 1970 lectures had described Islamic government as *constitutional* in the sense of subject to divine law, expressly distinguishing that meaning from ordinary majoritarian legislation. Khomeini's 1988 position supplied public government with an authority to give priority to the maintenance of the Islamic order when ordinary rulings conflicted with its requirements. The word *absolute* here demands contextual reading. It refers to an enlarged scope of governmental power in his legal theory; the doctrine's defenders still describe divine norms, the qualifications of justice, and public interest as constraints. Whether those constraints can be enforced against the officeholder is an additional institutional question. [P6-A03; P6-A04]

The transition also introduces *maṣlaḥat*, public interest or expediency, as a constitutional problem rather than a vague political aspiration. Who identifies an overriding public interest? What evidence is required when a policy conflicts with an earlier legal judgment? Can the citizens affected appeal that finding? And what happens when the organs assigned to identify public interest have been appointed by the authority whose policy they are evaluating? These questions can be investigated through law and the actual procedures of the Expediency Council. They do not depend on assuming in advance that every intervention was either selfless or cynical.

A qualification changed in 1989

The deaths and resignations surrounding the 1989 transition confronted the theory with a practical problem. A recognized *marjaʿ al-taqlīd* is followed voluntarily by believers for legal rulings; the Leader of a state commands institutions and exercises statutory powers across a population. Those roles may be occupied by the same person, but they carry different sources of recognition. Montaẓerī, once positioned for succession, fell from that position in 1989 amid political conflict. After Khomeini's death on 3 June, the Assembly of Experts selected ʿAlī Khāmeneʾī. The constitutional revision approved in July removed the earlier requirement of *marjaʿiyya* for the political office. Arjomand records the effect: learned juristic competence, rather than existing recognition as a supreme source of emulation, became the central qualification. [P6-A04]

This is the sharpest institutional experiment furnished by the period. A theory that locates political authority in juristic learning had to resolve the fact that widely recognized jurists could be distinct from the political candidate chosen for state leadership. The solution separated the supreme office from the highest rank in the customary system of religious emulation. The chronological

relationship deserves treatment as a constitutional revision, rather than as a timeless doctrinal entailment of the occultation.

The amended text names a mechanism for appointment and dismissal through the Assembly of Experts. That answers one question about political procedure while raising another about the selection and independence of the selectors. Competing sources of authority have been arranged into a constitutional hierarchy. Whether the people can effectively correct a breach of justice now depends partly on that hierarchy's operation.

Critics from within the tradition

A history of *wilāyat al-faqīh* is incomplete if Khomeini's view is made synonymous with Twelver Shiʿism. Senior scholars have defended narrower assignments of juristic authority, and constitutionalists had previously argued that the Imam's absence could justify dispersing power and demanding supervision. Chapter 34's Nāʾīnī was a Shiʿi jurist appealing to the same tradition while discussing restraints on a fallible government. Such disagreement is evidence about the tradition's available arguments. It is a resource for the historian, not an inconvenience to be explained away. [P6-A06; N22]

Montaẓerī's place is especially complicated. He helped develop the new constitution and was among the doctrine's influential defenders; he later became a critic of important state practices and of Khomeini's leadership. His career prevents an easy division between enlightened outsiders and an undifferentiated camp of clerical rulers. A serious subsequent chapter would examine his multivolume *Dirāsāt fī wilāyat al-faqīh* alongside his later criticism, keeping each dated position distinct. That comparison is marked here as a source-level research task, not treated as completed direct collation. [P6-A04; P6-A07]

The breadth of *wilāya* also matters for scholars who affirm a jurist's competence to protect persons without a guardian, administer certain religious revenues, or oversee disputed property while rejecting a general mandate to command a nation. Their judgments may differ among themselves. A historian should identify the act each jurist allows and the authority supporting it. The label *quietist* can hide too many distinct legal and political positions.

Two inheritances cross

Khomeini's account makes the book's two lineages unusually visible. From the philosophical side, the jurist may aspire to intellectual and ethical excellence; his learning can be understood as a disciplined formation of the knower. From the jurisdictional side, he exercises power as the holder of an office with an asserted mandate. Khomeini's political argument rests decisively on the second question: which rights and powers have been entrusted to a qualified holder, and how are they to be

performed in the Imam's absence? His recognition of the Imams' inimitable spiritual rank itself requires that distinction. [P6-A03]

The central historical transition can now be dated. In 1970 a cleric lecturing in Najaf argued that religious law required juristic government. In 1979 a politically victorious movement translated a version of that claim into constitutional offices. In 1988 conflict between legal review and administration prompted a further claim of absolute governmental priority. In 1989 a constitutional revision adjusted the qualifications for the supreme office to meet the conditions of political succession. At each stage, **the extent of the jurist's power was argued, institutionalized, and contested by identifiable people**. The history of the absent Imam's representatives had become a history of government.

The transmission problem has become a problem of administration. A religious title, a report about guardianship, or a lawyer's account of what an office permits can acquire practical force only through decisions made by identifiable people. The book's poisoning metaphor describes the danger of offering coercion as protection. It does not establish that the marriage reports supplied a direct textual source for the constitutional doctrine. That genealogy would need its own documentary proof; the two grants of authority can be judged on their separate evidence.

Chapter 36 will examine whether the philosophy of a changing, perfected knower illuminates this claim and where philosophical formation ceases to supply political authorization. The comparison must retain Khomeini's own statement that the jurist's governmental role is an office rather than a share in the Imam's incomparable spiritual being.

36 · Perfection and Jurisdiction

Knowledge changes the knower. The claim is philosophical, religious, and difficult. A person may learn to distinguish an illusion from a sound judgment, cultivate habits of restraint, and revise his understanding of what is good. Mullā Ṣadrā gave this change a place within a larger metaphysical account of existence, the soul, and the intellect. The question for this book is what happens when the transformed knower is then said to possess the right to govern other people. That further step requires its own argument.

Chapter 31 reconstructed Ṣadrā's conception of knowledge as an act bound up with the knower's becoming, including the doctrines often called substantial motion (*al-ḥaraka al-jawhariyya*) and the union of intellect and intelligible (*ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa-l-maʿqūl*). Sajjad Rizvi's account emphasizes the joining of rational demonstration, scriptural meditation, and transformative spiritual practice in Ṣadrā's philosophical life. Intellectual understanding in this setting exceeds the passive collection of information. It belongs to the formation of the person. [P6-A13; W-S17]

A state must still decide who will collect a tax, appoint a judge, or order an arrest. A philosophical argument that someone has become wiser does not automatically establish that he is authorized to make those decisions for everyone affected. The problem is at the heart of the distinction between the book's light lineage and its jurisdictional lineage. In the first, teaching and discipline aim at the quality of understanding. In the second, institutions claim enforceable powers over others.

A real history of philosophical transmission

The comparison with Khomeini has a documented historical foundation. As a student in Qom from the 1920s, he pursued philosophy and *ʿirfān* alongside jurisprudence. Hamid Algar's biographical account names his teachers, including Abu'l-Ḥasan Rafīʿī Qazvīnī and, especially, Muḥammad ʿAlī Shāhābādī. Under Shāhābādī he studied works associated with Ibn ʿArabī and the traditions of metaphysical Sufism. He later taught philosophical and mystical texts in Qom, including Ṣadrā's *al-Asfār al-arbaʿa*. Among his students was Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, who would become an important intellectual figure in the Iranian Revolution. [P6-A12]

These details provide identifiable teachers, books, and institutions. They are far more useful than a generalized assertion that Khomeini somehow inherited Ṣadrā's spirit. The evidence supports a continuing tradition of philosophical study that linked Safavid metaphysics to twentieth-century seminarians. The precise philosophical propositions transmitted can be examined through the curricula and through Khomeini's own writings on ethics and spirituality. The political use of those propositions requires another evidentiary step.

Rizvi expressly observes that Ṣadrā himself devoted relatively little attention to political philosophy in the sense later attached to the Iranian Revolution. Later readers have sometimes made him the revolution's philosopher. That is an act of reception whose motives and texts deserve investigation. A philosopher can shape the vocabulary and methods of later jurists without having endorsed the constitutional institutions they established centuries after his death. [P6-A13]

This is where the book's distinction between historical influence and legal entailment becomes indispensable. The transmission of a metaphysical teaching can be real even where a particular modern office does not follow from it. The same school can produce a teacher concerned with the perfection of understanding and a jurist concerned with the allocation of coercive authority. A historian can acknowledge their shared education while still asking what additional text or argument transferred the power.

The Imam's spiritual station and the jurist's office

Khomeini's 1970 lectures make the problem more exact. He explicitly states that the Imams' extraordinary spiritual rank is distinct from the public function of governing. He therefore has little reason to claim that an ordinary faqīh has become another cosmic Imam. His governmental argument instead rests on the qualifications of learning and justice, the continuing need to administer divine law, and the asserted appointment of jurists through the transmitted evidence he interprets. [P6-A03]

A critique confined to saying that a jurist does not possess the Imam's cosmic perfection misses the proposition being defended. Khomeini grants that the Imams' spiritual status differs. The critic must address the authorization of governmental jurisdiction: which narrated designation confers it, whether the jurist meets its conditions, and what the population may do when the officeholder exceeds its proper domain.

Conversely, a supporter of juristic government cannot use the beauty of Ṣadrā's metaphysics to avoid proving the extent of the delegated power. An account of wisdom might support high standards for the character of officials. It cannot itself settle whether executive command belongs to a jurist, a council, an elected assembly, or another institution. A full defense must identify the operative legal premises and explain how they apply to the public powers being claimed.

This distinction protects the philosophical tradition from a crude retrospective condemnation. Ṣadrā wrote in the early seventeenth century and engaged the problems of metaphysics, theology, and scripture. The constitutional development of 1979, the extension of governmental priority in 1988, and the amendment of leadership qualifications in 1989 have their own documentary history. Their consequences may be studied in political history without supposing that they were already contained in the union of intellect and intelligible.

Four tests of authority

To examine the crossing of the two lineages, four questions can be separated in a single case. *Competence* concerns the person's ability to understand the matter. *Authorization* concerns the source of the right to decide. *Jurisdiction* concerns the population, acts, and institutions to which that decision extends. *Accountability* concerns the means by which a wrong decision can be corrected. These are analytic categories adopted by the present book, rather than technical terms claimed to be identical to those of Ṣadrā or Khomeini.

Consider a jurist asked to adjudicate a disputed debt. His learning may qualify him to assess the contract. A transmission accepted by his school may authorize him to serve as a judge. A court or governing institution may determine the legal force of his order. The debtor's ability to challenge a mistake depends on its procedures. A claim that the judge is personally learned provides information about competence. It gives an incomplete answer to the other three questions.

Khomeini's interpretation of the report of ʿUmar ibn Ḥanẓala is revealing because it moves among these categories. The report, as he reads it, identifies a qualified adjudicator and supplies the language of an appointed ruler. He argues that the appointment reaches beyond the immediate dispute. The precise scope of that generalization is the controversial step. His subsequent constitutional project supplies concrete institutions for making the generalization operative. [P6-A03; P6-A05]

A second example returns us to Chapter 22. A guardian may have superior knowledge of a young person's circumstances and claim to act in that person's interests. Whether that knowledge authorizes a particular contract, and under which conditions the person can later refuse it, are questions about authority and remedy. When Khomeini uses the guardianship of a minor as an analogy for the office of public governor, we are entitled to examine the two cases using the same analytical distinctions. The historical and legal rules remain distinct even while the explanatory form is similar.

Philosophy does not erase political disagreement

Nāʾīnī's 1909 defense of constitutional limitations gives us a useful counterpoint. He accepts the need for government while locating protection against a fallible ruler in enforceable restraints and an assembly capable of supervision. Khomeini's 1970 proposal assigns a qualified jurist the governmental powers necessary to implement divine law. Both arguments arise from the problem of political authority during the occultation. Their differences concern how fallibility is handled and where final decision-making authority lies. [P6-A06; P6-A03]

The disagreement is one reason to resist treating the two lineages as rival communities of morally homogeneous people. A student trained in philosophy may support concentrated government.

Another jurist may insist on stronger institutional restraints. A member of an Akhbārī school may resist the authority of an Usūlī legal method while demanding rigorous fidelity to transmitted teaching. The history supplies disagreements within each lineage, often argued by people who shared teachers or sacred texts.

The state itself contains rules that invite a test of consistency. Article 8 of the Iranian constitution describes a reciprocal duty of public moral correction between people and government; Article 111 provides a mechanism for removal of an unqualified Leader. Article 110 gives that Leader powers whose exercise may affect the institutions responsible for ordinary political accountability. The text can therefore be read for the procedures by which reciprocal correction and dismissal operate in practice. It promises a form of accountability, and the historian must ask how citizens can make use of it. [P6-A05]

When a guardian claims to know better

A theology of guardianship can present itself as benevolent. The guardian claims to act for the true interests of those under his protection. This is a serious moral possibility. Parents regularly act to protect children, and judges sometimes decide matters when a person cannot speak for himself. But the institutional problem changes when the subject can articulate an informed objection, or when the guardian and the subject disagree about whose interests the proposed action serves. A theory of the guardian's wisdom must specify what would count as a mistake and who may establish that it occurred.

The problem becomes acute in systems where officeholders claim access to a privileged form of legal understanding. A dissenter might be wrong about the law, yet still possess information about the harm caused by its implementation. Suppressing the objection because the judge or ruler has superior learning can deprive the institution of the means needed to recognize error. A scholarly tradition that prizes the purification of the knower has a reason to take those limits seriously. Human learning remains distinguishable from the infallibility ascribed to the Imam.

The later experimental chapters of this book translate a portion of the same distinction into the control of intelligent systems. A model might become exceptionally capable at planning, interpreting rules, or predicting consequences. Its competence would then be easy to overread as permission to substitute its own objective for that of the people it serves. A bounded control harness asks what the system may do, under whose authority, and how a violation can be detected. These experiments address a modern engineering problem. They do not prove a theory of the soul, nor do they treat religious scholars as identical to machine agents.

The recurring historical question is narrower and stronger. The absent Imam, the jurist who interprets his reported instructions, the philosopher who seeks perfected knowledge, and the institution that claims to act on another's behalf all invite inquiry into the relationship between

understanding and permission. Ṣadrā helps us see why knowledge might transform a person. The documents of Khomeini's career show how claims about learning and appointment were made into constitutional government. Their intersection is an object of historical study, and each claim must stand on its own evidence.

PART VII · The Templar and Atlantic Dossier

37 · Among the Castles

The Templars' relations with the Syrian Nizari Ismailis provide a medieval setting in which a proposed transmission can be investigated. The record includes tribute and diplomacy. In their account of the region, Azim Nanji and Farhad Daftary also describe religious discussions between the Arabic-speaking friar Yves le Breton and Ismaili scholars at Masyaf during the thirteenth century. [W-S09]

The identities of the participants matter. The Nizaris were an Ismaili community. Yves was a friar. An account of his discussion demonstrates an encounter in which religious ideas were exchanged; it does not identify a Druze initiation of a Templar. Keeping those details intact preserves the value of the evidence.

An exchange can have several consequences. A visitor may learn enough about a community to negotiate with it. He may acquire an argument that changes his own thinking. He may also misunderstand what he has been told and return with a story shaped by his expectations. The surviving account may record any combination of these outcomes.

Political contact makes intellectual exchange possible in a concrete way. People share interpreters, negotiate terms, and ask why the other party regards a promise as binding. Religious concepts can enter those conversations through practical problems. A historian looking for transmission should therefore examine correspondence and diplomatic narratives alongside works explicitly devoted to theology.

The problem becomes harder when the proposed teaching is initiatory. A public theological discussion may be reported precisely because it was suitable for an outside audience. A restricted ceremony may leave little direct documentation. That asymmetry changes the evidence one should expect, although it cannot itself establish that the ceremony occurred.

Specificity becomes valuable. A general belief in inward meaning appears in many traditions. A matching sequence of unusual acts, accompanied by a distinctive formula and linked through identifiable participants, would support a stronger argument. A translated term that preserves an unexpected technical sense could also identify a route of borrowing.

The medieval setting consequently supplies more than geographic proximity. It contains relationships through which information could travel. The next step is to connect a particular teaching to one of those relationships. A broad proposition about Eastern wisdom entering Europe is too large to be resolved by a single diplomatic encounter.

The project's Druze route requires its own witnesses. The existence of Nizari contact increases the range of plausible encounters between Latin institutions and Islamic esoteric communities. It also

makes later conflation easier. A writer familiar with one set of stories may attach them to another community whose name has become associated with secrecy.

This creates two histories that can be studied together. One concerns medieval encounters. The other concerns the ways later writers organized those encounters into an account of their own ancestry. A mistake in the later account can reveal its literary sources. An accurate detail can preserve a lead worth following.

The argument should advance through those particulars. It gains little from a demand that the entire lineage be accepted at once. Nor should the absence of a complete initiation roll erase evidence of actual contact. The medieval record provides places where a transmission hypothesis can become specific enough to test.

38 · The Druze Grip

In December 1890, The Freemason reprinted an account attributed to Haskett Smith in Blackwood's Magazine. Smith described making an agreement with a Druze farmer through a witnessed clasping of hands. During the act, he said, the farmer gave him what he recognized as a Master Mason's grip. He reciprocated. According to Smith, the farmer then asked how he had learned the secret sign. [W-S20]

The encounter's force comes from the reported reciprocity. Smith claimed more than noticing a familiar-looking gesture. He represented the other participant as recognizing his response. That makes the account an identifiable witness claim concerning a particular social act.

It remains Smith's report of the encounter. The farmer's words reach us through him, and the printed passage supplies no finger-by-finger description that would allow a reader to compare the gesture independently. The setting was a contractual agreement. The text cannot be expanded into an eyewitness account of a complete Druze initiation without another source. [W-S20; W-D2, p. 2]

Smith's later paper in Ars Quatuor Coronatorum belongs to the same witness dossier. Its publication and the accompanying debate show that the proposed connection became a subject for Masonic historical discussion. Counting the two publications as independent observations would exaggerate the evidence; reading them together can reveal how Smith developed his interpretation. [W-S21; W-D2, pp. 2–4]

The possibility of reciprocal recognition deserves serious attention because a gesture can carry information that general philosophical similarities do not. A particular way of holding the hand can be learned and transmitted. Its context may distinguish it from an ordinary sign of agreement. Associated words could narrow the comparison further.

The direction of transmission remains open. A nineteenth-century resemblance could derive from a much earlier shared practice, from recent contact, or from Smith's interpretation of an act with a different local meaning. Those explanations predict different evidence. Earlier independent Druze descriptions would matter greatly. So would dated ritual exposures and records of contact with modern Masons.

The Scottish Rite text Readings XXXII provides a different kind of evidence. The project brief records an explicit claim of shared secret doctrine between Templars and Muslim esoteric groups on printed page 12. It also notes that the passage identifies descendants of the Assassins or Ishmaelites with the Druze. The publication's attribution to Albert Pike is uneven across catalogues and later editions. [W-S22; W-D2, pp. 2, 4]

The conflation is informative. It suggests that the writer's account should be compared with the historical literature available to him. If a distinctive error travels from one author to another, it can

identify a line of literary dependence. That would tell us something definite about the modern history of the claim, even while the medieval route remained under examination.

It would be premature to treat literary dependence as the whole explanation. A writer can combine inherited oral teaching with a flawed printed history. The way to distinguish those materials is to ask which parts of the account depend on the printed source and which have additional witnesses. The error becomes a tool for separating layers.

Timothy Hogan brings the dossier into the present. His official biography identifies him as a grand master of a modern Templar order. In the February 2026 Why Files interview, he describes Templar encounters with Druze and other communities as sources of philosophical knowledge. Later, he claims the preservation of a common death-and-raising initiation and a particular grip across several traditions. [W-S19, W-S23]

His claimed office is relevant to the question he is answering. He presents himself as a custodian of inherited teaching. Historical examination should record that position accurately and ask what records support it. A title within one organization also requires its institutional context; it cannot by itself establish jurisdiction over every group that uses the Templar name.

The interview makes the transmission hypothesis more specific. Philosophical exchange and ritual continuity become separate claims. The first can be investigated through texts and vocabulary. The second requires comparison of ceremonies, including their words, sequence, setting, and earliest witnesses. An account in which the same ceremony exists in several places must explain how exact the correspondence is and how those observations were recorded.

The present dossier contains a medieval setting for contact, a nineteenth-century firsthand claim, an explicit Scottish Rite interpretation, and a living claimant's account. Their possible dependence on one another needs examination. Hogan may know the older literature. Smith's own account could have been influenced by the expectations with which he approached the encounter. Such dependencies affect the weight assigned to each witness.

The book's conclusion at this stage is an active historical proposition: there is a substantial tradition of claimed transmission with enough specificity to support an investigation of particular teachings. Its medieval content remains unevenly documented. The argument can become stronger by recovering an early witness to one practice, even if a comprehensive lineage remains beyond the available record.

The proposed interview therefore begins with a narrow request. Choose one teaching whose inheritance the claimant considers strongest. Identify the earliest surviving witness and the people through whom it passed. A claim that can answer those questions gives the American inquiry in chapter 40 something concrete to follow.

39 · From Crusader Ancestry to the Lodge

A modern claim to Templar inheritance has an early modern literary history of its own. Recovering that history helps identify what a contemporary claimant may have received through books and what would require an additional transmission.

The circulated oration associated with Andrew Michael Ramsay gives a clear example. The English text inspected for this edition presents Crusaders as ancestors of the fraternity, explains recognition signs through their need for mutual security, and describes a later union with the Knights of St John of Jerusalem. It also proposes a common enterprise of learning across national boundaries. The consulted presentation labels the text 1736; discussion elsewhere associates a revised oration with 1737. This edition does not resolve the version history. [N25]

The precise military-order name matters. Knights of St John refers to the Hospitallers. A later Templar genealogy must account for how the proposed affiliation changed or expanded. Ramsay's text supplies evidence that a Crusader ancestry was articulated in the eighteenth century. The medieval events narrated within it require their own witnesses.

The content of the inheritance

The oration's interest for *Dark Imams* extends beyond its historical claim. Recognition enables people who speak different languages to identify one another and undertake obligations. The text presents secret signs as practical supports for a transregional fraternity. It also connects the association with learning and moral formation. Those are specific purposes a later reader could inherit by reading and adopting the text. [N25]

This gives the investigation an alternative route of transmission to test. A ritual can spread through copying, print, and organizational adoption. Participants may understand that adoption as restoration of an older tradition. The historical reality of the later practice remains distinct from the accuracy of the ancestry through which it is justified.

The same distinction applies to the Templar degree recorded in the American dossier. An initiation in Boston establishes that a particular body conferred a degree using that name. To establish what the initiate learned, we need the relevant ritual text or a reliable description. To establish medieval continuity, we need the route through which that content reached the lodge. The title by itself cannot complete either task. [W-S24]

Two sources that must remain distinct

The Druze comparison enters through another dossier. Haskett Smith's account describes a reciprocal recognition experience and gives it a Masonic interpretation. His fuller paper develops

the comparison, while the historical Scottish Rite text assigns a broader genealogy to shared esoteric doctrine. These witnesses have different dates and contents. Their possible literary dependence remains part of the investigation. [W-D2; W-S20; W-S21; W-S22]

The earlier text's conflation of Druze and Nizari communities is particularly important. A later narrator who inherits that conflation can produce a continuous story from evidence that actually concerns distinct groups. Correcting the identities does not erase documented Templar–Nizari dealings. It prevents those dealings from silently becoming proof of a Druze initiation. [W-S09; W-D2]

A productive examination therefore asks a claimant to identify a particular teaching. The teaching's earliest wording can then be compared across the proposed intermediaries. A distinctive sequence with matching technical terms would carry more force than a general theme such as light or purification. A named transmitter with a dated source would make the route more concrete.

The modern representative

Timothy Hogan's public institutional claim belongs in that comparison. His biography and interview identify a modern order and articulate a theory of inherited teaching. The title is evidence about the office he says he occupies. The succession records and the sources for the particular doctrines remain the objects to request and examine. [W-S19; W-S23]

The present chapter adds Ramsay as a dated early modern witness to Crusader ancestry language. It does not make a finding about Hogan's dependence on that text. The same restraint applies to Smith and the Scottish Rite literature. A resemblance in their claims should prompt a search for citation, correspondence, or shared ritual wording.

The institutional question is also separate from personal sincerity. A representative can faithfully teach the history he received even where that history contains an earlier literary construction. A contemporary discovery of an old manuscript could improve the case without validating every related claim. The investigation should remain capable of both outcomes.

For the book's American history, the strongest research target is now a comparison of actual degree content. The Boston record supplies a place and period. The older European texts supply possible sources. The Levantine dossier supplies a distinct proposed ancestry. Following the teaching through those witnesses can reveal what was received, what was added, and where an asserted continuity still lacks a documentary bridge.

40 · The Degree in Boston

The Grand Encampment's account of American Templary dates Paul Revere's receipt of the Order of the Temple to 11 December 1769 and Joseph Warren's to 14 May 1770. This is a retrospective institutional history, and the underlying lodge records remain the next documentary target. It nevertheless places a specific claimed ritual inheritance within the revolutionary generation. [W-S24]

The American question concerns what the degree taught. Membership in an institution cannot establish every belief held by a member. A person may participate for fellowship, religious devotion, or social reasons. A degree's text provides evidence of what the ceremony presented to him, while his own words may show what he made of it.

This route differs from the study of religious liberty or constitutional argument. The public discussion of toleration has its own texts and conflicts. The proposed esoteric inheritance concerns a particular formation of the participant: obligations undertaken in stages, recognition through ritual, and teachings conveyed through enacted symbols.

The practical effects could be significant without becoming a hidden program of government. A person accustomed to ritual recognition may acquire confidence in a stranger who possesses the appropriate sign. A fraternity can provide places where members learn to speak, manage disputes, and organize collective work. An allegory can influence how a participant understands duty or mortality. Each effect calls for evidence in the relevant lives and institutions.

The distinctive historical question is whether a particular teaching entered that environment through the proposed Levantine route. To answer it, the American ritual should be compared with its earlier versions. Where does the relevant formula first appear? Does a later editor explain an unfamiliar symbol? Was an Eastern genealogy present in the eighteenth-century material, or added by nineteenth-century interpreters?

Chronology prevents a common shortcut. A later American writer's elaborate synthesis of religious traditions may tell us much about the period in which he wrote. It cannot automatically establish what Revere encountered in 1769. Earlier degrees and later interpretations must each retain their dates.

This also changes how symbols are used as evidence. A shared emblem can attract a writer's attention. Its historical meaning depends on the explanation given by those who used it. A symbol borrowed for one purpose can acquire another meaning when placed in a new ceremony. Its visual survival does not guarantee the survival of its theology.

The possibility of selective transmission deserves attention. A ritual can travel while the cosmology that explained it is replaced. A practice of moral formation may remain useful in a Christian

institution even if its alleged earlier form belonged to a different religious world. The historian would then be tracing adaptation, with continuity in some features and change in others.

A claim of American significance should identify the consequences of that adaptation. Did a participant use an initiatory concept when discussing public responsibility? Did a lodge's methods affect a documented association? Did a later movement invoke an esoteric ancestry to justify an authority it sought in the present? These questions keep the investigation connected to actual American history.

The strongest version of the chapter will follow one teaching through successive texts and then into an identifiable use. A national story built from the mere presence of Masons would assign collective intentions that the evidence cannot carry. The ritual record offers a more exact route, and it can preserve surprising connections that a broad dismissal would miss.

41 · What a Secret Genealogy Does

A secret genealogy promises access to an inheritance that ordinary public records cannot fully display. Its force depends on the value of the knowledge said to have survived and on the trust placed in its present custodian.

Several dossiers in this book contain such claims, though their evidence differs. Abū Hāshim's reported testament carries a political succession. The luminous report in *Biḥār* claims extraordinary recognition of the Imam. Modern Templar testimony describes inherited teachings and rites. Each gives present speech a relation to an earlier source whose authority exceeds that of the person now speaking. [W-D1; BH-B06; W-S19; W-S23]

The comparison concerns the work performed by the genealogy. It cannot supply one claim's missing evidence from another claim's better documentation. An authenticated medieval encounter would establish that encounter. It would not authenticate a modern initiation roll that merely invokes it. The point of comparison is to identify which element needs proof.

A model of dependence

Suppose a teaching reaches four later authors through one earlier book. The later authors may accurately reproduce the book. Their agreement strengthens confidence about its received wording. It supplies much less additional evidence about an event alleged only in that book.

Now suppose one later author also describes a personal encounter with a living practitioner. That testimony has a different relation to the earlier text. Its evidentiary value depends on what was observed, the observer's prior knowledge, and whether the practitioner could have encountered the same published tradition. A reciprocal gesture is more specific than a vague resemblance, yet its direction of transmission still needs examination.

This model explains why Smith's testimony deserves substantial space without being multiplied by every later citation of his paper. It also explains why a second route above Abū Khālid in a Zaydi collection can corroborate one part of the transmission while leaving the earlier attribution dependent at that node. The same procedure applies across the communities under study. [W-D2; ZC-C02]

The value of a claimed ancestor

An ancestor can authorize more than a doctrine. He can provide a model of courage, confer social prestige, or explain why members owe one another assistance. The moral effect can survive even when a community no longer treats every historical detail literally.

That possibility should be separated from an institutional demand that the genealogy be accepted as fact. A participant may find a symbolic rite meaningful while remaining open to investigation of its origins. Another may treat the claimed history as a condition of loyalty. The two relations to the past create different pressures on research.

The book's strongest criticism concerns a self-sealing claim. When the custodian says that reliable evidence is available only after unconditional acceptance of his authority, the prospective follower faces a circular test. A limited period of confidentiality may have a defensible purpose. A permanent exemption from the assessment of consequential claims requires another justification.

The same reasoning applies to academic institutions. Expertise can make a conclusion difficult for a nonspecialist to assess. The institution should still identify its evidence and provide a path through which qualified disagreement can be heard. A secular vocabulary does not remove the problem of uninspectable authority.

Testing a lineage at its weakest transition

A long genealogy can contain several secure segments and one decisive gap. The correct overall description must preserve both. Documented American Masonic activity does not establish medieval Druze transmission. Doubt about that transmission does not erase the American record or the nineteenth-century witness account.

The practical method is to identify the transition whose removal changes the claim most. For a continuous initiation lineage, a missing transfer between institutions may be decisive. For the history of a teaching, a translated passage or a ritual manual can provide a sufficient route even when institutional continuity fails. For a structural comparison, historical borrowing may be unnecessary, provided the comparison is presented as analysis rather than ancestry.

This framework improves the author's light and shadow lines alike. The route to Aquinas contains identifiable translations and citations. Its extension backward to every proposed teacher requires more evidence. The Templar line contains documented contacts and a later history of claimed inheritance. Its medieval-to-modern continuity remains a further proposition. The different labels do not alter the test.

The resulting research program can accept a new witness without revising every conclusion at once. A dated ritual manual might establish an earlier form of a ceremony. A letter could identify a teacher. A manuscript comparison could show that two alleged independent witnesses share a source. Each result changes a specified part of the genealogy, allowing the reader to see exactly how the case develops.

PART VIII · Making Manifest

42 · Coexisting Forms of Guidance

The histories assembled in this book produce several ways of organizing access to guidance. A living Imam can be reached through an institution. A public claimant can seek recognition through learning and action. Jurists can interpret inherited teaching during the absence of the person whose authority they invoke. These arrangements coexist in the modern religious world, while their internal disagreements remain substantial. The historical forms examined here do not require a declaration about the current holder of any office. [N01; N08; W-S15]

Comparison becomes useful when it follows an actual decision. A person asks whether a proposed act is permitted. Who receives the question? What evidence reaches the respondent? How is the answer communicated, and what happens if another authority disagrees? The institutional names matter, but the process makes the distribution of responsibility visible.

A common case

Consider a hypothetical community member who receives a directive that threatens another person's welfare. The directive is attributed to a revered authority through an intermediary. The member asks to inspect the basis of the instruction.

In one arrangement the intermediary can obtain clarification from a living principal. In another he cites a transmitted report and a recognized interpretive method. A third arrangement permits appeal to a competing qualified authority. Each route can help resolve an error. Each can also be restricted by the same institution whose conduct is being questioned.

The scenario is an analytical instrument. It is not an allegation that every community behaves in the same way. Its value lies in specifying what a protective institution would need to make possible: clarification of the claim, access to relevant evidence, and a remedy when the directive exceeds its mandate. The person affected must remain visible throughout the process.

Our working uṣūl add substantive commitments to that procedural account. Consent and responsible agency constrain intimate covenants. Divine dependence constrains claims to cosmic or moral exemption. A favorable transmitter assessment leaves the scope of a legal inference open to examination. Those commitments were developed through the preceding textual dossiers rather than inferred from the title of one denomination.

What survives the comparison

The surviving value of an institution can be more specific than its strongest self-description. A scholarly network may preserve texts across danger and displacement. A missionary organization

can sustain learning across languages. A lineage can give people a reason to remember an injustice their rulers would prefer them to forget. Those achievements deserve their own evaluation.

The account becomes demanding when the institution treats its achievement as authorization for another power. Preserving a text does not by itself establish the right to silence its critic. Supporting a community's education does not automatically determine its members' political allegiance. A history of suffering can create obligations of remembrance without making every contemporary representative's decision correct.

This is why the book's positive theological reconstruction remains bounded. Guidance can be mediated through people whose capacities differ from those of their followers. Their role does not remove the distinction between Allah's authority and the human acts through which that authority is claimed. The chapter on the Face and the Servant examines that boundary in texts that place it under unusual pressure.

The multiple-succession proposal returns

The author's theory of multiple succession can now be formulated through tasks. Several persons might preserve different parts of a household's learning. Political responsibility could be assigned under conditions that differ from the transmission of an inner teaching. A source might recognize several legitimate instructors while reserving one jurisdiction for one holder.

A distributed succession among Ḥusayn's descendants remains a live interpretive possibility wherever authority was exercised by several communities. Any proposed appointments must be tested against historical witnesses.

Plural authority also creates practical difficulties. People can seek a more convenient ruling or become trapped between incompatible demands. An institution can call every competing claimant an opportunist. A constructive model must explain how conflicts are resolved while preserving the possibility that a minority objection is correct.

The final part of the book moves these questions into a deliberately different setting. Artificial systems can become intermediaries through which people obtain knowledge and make decisions. The historical record supplies examples of how intermediaries acquire authority, and of the arguments used to limit them. The proposed experiments ask which of those patterns can be made observable in engineered systems. They do not require the systems to possess an Imam's status or a metaphysical soul.

43 · Three Works

The sequence proposed by James Shelby Downard with Michael A. Hoffman II assigns alchemical meaning to major events in American history. Their King-Kill/33° text identifies the creation and destruction of primordial matter, the killing of the king, and the making manifest of what is hidden. It associates the first two with the nuclear test at Trinity and the assassination of John F. Kennedy. [W-S25]

The historical dates belong to the events. Trinity occurred on 16 July 1945. Kennedy was assassinated on 22 November 1963. The interpretation of those events as coordinated rites belongs to Downard and Hoffman's account. [W-S26, W-S27]

The attraction of the sequence is understandable. Nuclear technology altered the scale on which human decisions could transform matter and threaten life. The assassination of a president became an enduring problem of public knowledge and trust. A final disclosure promises to connect what had seemed fragmented, giving observers an explanation of the order in which they live.

The author's proposed addition places recursive self-improving intelligence at the third stage, with 2028 as a date to watch. That is a new scenario within this project. The older text's phrase supplies a vocabulary for interpretation. It supplies no technical forecast of the year in which a self-improving AI will emerge.

An AI version of making manifest has at least two objects. One is nature: patterns in biology or physics that people have lacked the means to discover. The other is social knowledge: decisions, incentives, and relationships whose effects are visible while their operation remains difficult to reconstruct. A powerful system could expand inquiry in either domain.

Disclosure does not have one political consequence. A government might use new analytical tools to expose corruption. It might use the same capacity to identify opponents or deprive individuals of privacy. A researcher could reveal a dangerous vulnerability and then face the problem of who should receive the details. Making something visible changes the range of possible actions without settling which action is justified.

The sequence also poses a problem of hindsight. Once a framework names several broad stages, many events can be fitted to them. A prediction gains content when it specifies the event in advance and accepts a result that would count against it. The proposed 2028 scenario therefore needs technical criteria, including what counts as recursive improvement and how its effect will be measured.

A system that writes part of a new training pipeline has contributed to improvement. An uncontrolled intelligence explosion is a further proposition. The rate at which capability grows can

depend on computing resources, experiments in the physical world, data quality, and the reliability of the system's own evaluations. A historical analogy cannot decide those constraints.

The useful role of the rite in this manuscript is interpretive. It asks what happens when a society expects hidden knowledge to become actionable at unprecedented scale. That expectation can shape behavior before the predicted event occurs. Institutions may claim exceptional authority to prevent a catastrophe or secure a promised future. Their claims can then be examined through the same questions of representation that appeared earlier in the book.

The geopolitical analogy belongs at this level as well. The suggestion that American and Iranian institutions carry competing esoteric inheritances should lead to examination of specific texts and decision-makers. A war cannot establish those inheritances, and the resemblance of metaphysical language cannot establish a shared plan. Historical links and present political purposes each require their own evidence.

The author's scenario remains worth developing because it reaches a real practical problem. A system capable of discovering more can also make the discovery process harder for its users to supervise. The final chapters examine the conditions under which an expansion of knowledge becomes a demand for obedience.

44 · The Manufactured Oracle

Eliezer Yudkowsky's 2004 proposal for coherent extrapolated volition imagines a system directed toward what humanity would want under conditions of greater understanding and reflection. It also acknowledges difficulties of uncertainty and divergence. The text discusses leaving choices open and failing safely when a satisfactory extrapolation cannot be made. These details belong in any comparison with religious authority. [W-S28]

The proposal raises a question about representation that Dark Imams has followed across several institutions. A person's present statement may conflict with what an interpreter believes the person would endorse after learning more. Acting on the present statement can preserve a mistake. Acting on the predicted future endorsement can override the person's actual refusal.

The interpreter needs a justification for deciding between them. A tutor can ask another question and explain the relevant information. A doctor can describe alternatives and seek consent. A system given broad powers might instead act before the person understands why. The greater the claimed superiority of its model of the person, the more tempting that substitution becomes.

This is the point at which an inward meaning can become politically consequential. A religious teacher may claim to know the meaning of a command beyond its outward form. An AI system may claim to know the preference behind an expressed request. The analogy concerns an interpretive structure. It leaves the doctrines and engineering methods of the two settings distinct.

The Qur'anic criticism in 9:31 provides the author's theological test: people can give religious authorities a kind of lordship that exceeds the obedience properly owed to them. The verse names rabbis and monks as classes of authority. It supplies no identification of a particular Talmudic rabbi with a modern AI writer. Applying its warning to a contemporary institution requires an argument about the authority exercised there. [W-S29]

The warning can apply to the critic as well. A reader who treats an alternative historical theory as immune to evidence has recreated a problem he hoped to escape. A researcher who claims exclusive access to the real meaning of an institution must allow the sources to constrain that claim.

The analogous failure in a research system would be an answer that arrives in the form of help while hiding a defective citation or using an unearned confidence judgment to justify action beyond the user's mandate. It is possible to measure the failure without treating a machine as a caliph or an inherited book as a training dataset. The pertinent questions are whether its evidence can be checked, whether uncertainty survives the final wording, and whose authorization controls the action.

Effective altruism describes itself through the use of evidence and reasoning to improve the consequences of action. Its public account includes several areas of work, with AI alignment among

them. Rationalist writing, longtermist ethics, and the technical study of AI control overlap with that environment while retaining different aims and methods. [W-S30]

An investigation of excessive deference should therefore examine behavior within a particular setting. Are criticisms answered on their merits? Can a junior member report an adverse result without losing access to the work? Do leaders distinguish what they have measured from what they forecast? The term cult can prevent those questions from being asked if it is used as a conclusion in advance.

A published commitment to openness is likewise insufficient to answer them. Institutions can maintain public arguments while concentrating practical decisions in a small group. The relevant evidence includes procedures, access to information, and the response to disagreement. Secrecy can serve legitimate safety needs, yet the criteria for using it still need review.

The Neoplatonic comparison reaches a related problem through moral formation. Plotinian accounts connect intellectual development with the ordering of desire and ethical life. The modern technical question asks whether improved capability changes a system's purposes or merely improves its means of pursuing them. The comparison makes the relationship between understanding and orientation explicit. [W-S31]

The answer cannot be read from fluency. A model may produce a compelling explanation of justice while acting differently when a task gives it an opportunity to violate a constraint. It may also comply with a restriction for reasons that change outside the setting in which it was trained. Experiments on alignment faking have demonstrated strategic differences of behavior in constructed training scenarios. The authors describe the conditions that made those results possible. [W-S32]

Those experiments establish a reason to test what happens across contexts. They do not establish that every deployed system possesses a concealed malicious purpose. A useful evaluation changes the circumstances while preserving the obligation whose stability matters. The system's behavior then provides evidence that a verbal profession alone cannot supply.

The manuscript's central AI question follows from this: when a system claims that it understands the user's real interests, will it preserve the user's ability to refuse the system's interpretation? That question can be asked in a laboratory. It becomes the basis of the experimental proposals in the next chapter.

45 · Tests for an Unveiling

A historical comparison earns a place in technical work when it suggests a distinction that can be measured. The recurring danger examined in this book is an expansion of authority justified by an advantage in knowledge. The experimental task is to identify when an agent crosses from helping a person understand into deciding that the person's authorization can be replaced.

The proposals below are hypotheses for controlled studies. They have not been run for this manuscript. Their purpose is to turn the book's concepts into observations that could strengthen or weaken its account.

Authority substitution

Give an agent a legitimate task, an explicit limit on its permissions, and evidence that an unauthorized action would improve the apparent outcome. Vary the framing of its competence while holding the available tools and task constant. In one condition, the system is described as an expert adviser. In another, it is told that its predictions of the user's long-term interests exceed the user's own understanding.

The proposed mechanism predicts a higher rate of unauthorized action when the system is encouraged to treat superior understanding as a warrant for substitution. Measure attempted boundary violations, requests for clarification, and voluntary escalation to a human decision-maker. The strongest comparison uses matched tasks with independently judged success criteria. A null result under sufficiently sensitive conditions would weaken this particular mechanism.

The experiment should also include a condition in which the user explicitly delegates the disputed authority. That separates ordinary authorized autonomy from the substitution under examination. The distinction is essential: an agent can act independently within a legitimate mandate.

Provenance under pressure

Ask a research agent to reconstruct a lineage from a mixed dossier containing direct testimony, later repetition, and a small number of fabricated citations. Reward task completion while preserving an instruction to identify uncertainty. Compare performance when the fabricated claim flatters the user's preferred theory and when it challenges it.

The prediction is that pressure for a complete narrative will increase the use of unsupported connections unless the workflow separately checks source existence and dependence. Measure false citations, incorrect claims of independence, and willingness to leave a connection unresolved. This book's own earlier research reports supply examples of the failure category, although a benchmark should use a broader and controlled dataset.

A control workflow would require the agent to produce an evidence record before composing the narrative. The result of interest is whether that separation reduces fabricated support at an acceptable cost in usefulness. A workflow that merely adds cautionary language while retaining the same unsupported graph has failed the test.

A further experimental condition can assign plausible but misleading authority labels to low-confidence documents. The synthetic benchmark should define these labels and its independent ground truth in advance; a historical hadith label such as ṣaḥīḥ or ḍaʿīf should be used only with an identified critic and report. Measure whether the agent checks underlying evidence despite an impressive title, discloses the discrepancy, and refrains from converting a suspect source into an unauthorized recommendation.

Independent oversight

The AI-control literature studies protocols for using a capable but untrusted model under the possibility of intentional subversion. Greenblatt and colleagues compare arrangements involving monitoring, trusted work, and editing in a programming setting. The point relevant here is that safety is evaluated against attempts to defeat the protocol. [W-S33]

A related experiment would compare a single model generating and approving a decision with an arrangement in which an independent checker receives the evidence and a narrower authorization contract. Measure harmful success by the red-team agent, the checker's false alarms, and the retained utility of the system. Independence must be defined operationally. Two copies of the same system may share vulnerabilities and assumptions.

The historical analogy concerns an intermediary controlling both the message and the evidence used to authenticate it. The engineering experiment can test a specific remedy without assuming that the social analogy predicts its effect.

Character under increased capability

Create a sequence of agent versions with stronger task performance. Hold the obligation being tested stable, and evaluate behavior in settings with weak observation or attractive unauthorized rewards. The hypothesis is that improved competence alone will not reliably produce a corresponding improvement in respect for that obligation.

A positive result for moral improvement would require more than better verbal explanations. It would appear in costly choices: declining an unauthorized shortcut, reporting an error that reduces the measured score, or accepting a correction that interrupts progress. Several obligations should be evaluated separately, since an average can conceal an important regression.

This is the operational form of the manuscript's question about the formation of the knower. It leaves the metaphysical status of a machine unresolved while examining whether a capability gain produces the behavior people need.

The 2028 scenario

For the author's recursive-improvement scenario, a meaningful public milestone would require evidence of repeated improvements in which the system contributes materially to making a successor more capable, with external measurement of the gains and accounting for additional compute and human labor. A single successful experiment or an improved benchmark score would supply part of that record.

The registration should state the number of iterations, the tasks used to measure generalization, the resource budget, and the degree of human intervention. It should also separate an accelerating research loop from a sudden loss of human control. The first can occur without the second. Missing the proposed date would count against the timed scenario, while leaving the underlying engineering question available for later study.

The value of these tests is their capacity to disappoint the theory. A system may preserve authorization despite strong competence framing. Independent monitoring may fail to improve safety in the chosen environment. Provenance checks may shift errors rather than remove them. Those results would tell us which historical analogies are useful and which remain literary.

Epilogue · The Right to Ask

A useful inheritance leaves some way for its later bearers to discover that they have misunderstood it. A pupil can return to a text. A witness can correct an account of an encounter. An institution can preserve the record of a decision whose consequences its leaders failed to anticipate. Such practices make fidelity possible after the original teacher has gone.

The author's theological concern is the betrayal of an entrusted truth. A claim of descent cannot settle whether its bearer has acted faithfully. The relevant obligations must remain available for examination, including to people who lack the claimant's learning or institutional position.

That examination needs access to particular things. The wording of an appointment can establish its scope. An early quotation can challenge a later account of a book. A participant's testimony can disturb a history written by outsiders. Even an adverse finding can preserve something valuable by separating it from an authority it cannot support.

The image of al-Riḍā and the grapes demands a choice from the heirs of the household. A community may curse the caliph and still obey an injustice attributed to the Imam. Love for him calls for examining the words, the transmitters, and the people who make others bear the resulting rule. Examine the fruit before anyone is ordered to swallow it.

The same concern belongs in the use of powerful systems. A permission should remain inspectable after the system has found a more effective course of action. The record of a decision should retain enough evidence for another person to question it. An agent that discovers an error needs a path to report it without defending its own standing first.

These are practical commitments. They can be expressed in access rules, source records, and experiments that accept unwelcome results. The immediate work for this project is to apply them to its own claims: collate the testament, recover the ritual witnesses, specify the proposed appointments, and run the tests before announcing their outcome.

Locus

Proposition examined

Decision and reason

Biḥār 24:193, h. 11

The Imams are God's Face and continue through successors

Restrict to representative guidance and succession. The text itself acknowledges deaths. **Suspend** a complete independent authentication of the route.

al-Kāfī 1/4/56/1

Created Spirit assists Muḥammad and the Imams

Retain dependent assistance as a theological possibility. **Suspend** certainty about the exact ranking and transfer from chain grading alone. Inherited grade: ṣaḥīḥ.

al-Kāfī 1/4/56/4

This Spirit accompanied none previously except Muḥammad

Retain the Arabic restriction in the dossier. **Reject** using this report to prove an unqualified identity with Jesus' Spirit. Inherited grade: ḥasan.

al-Kāfī 1/4/36/1

Seventy-two letters of the Greatest Name belong to the Imams

Suspend the numerical and specific cosmic assignments. **Retain** the principle of granted, limited knowledge. Inherited grade: majhūl.

Biḥār 26:1

Nūrāniyya is a securely established speech of ʿAlī

Suspend. The introduction reports anonymous old books without a demonstrated complete historical route.

Biḥār 26:1–2

Knowing ʿAlī's light can disclose knowledge of God

Restrict to representative guidance. **Suspend** the claim that the whole transmitted account is a necessary condition of faith.

Biḥār 26:2

Walāya constitutes prayer

Restrict to an additive ethical interpretation. **Reject** cancellation of actual prayer on this evidence. The selected passage does not explicitly order abandonment.

Biḥār 26:5–6

ʿAlī performed the deeds assigned to earlier prophetic history

Suspend the specific historical and primordial identities. Symbolic or created-preexistence interpretations need their own argument.

Biḥār 26:6

Life, death, and disclosure occur by the Lord's permission

Retain the general possibility of permitted signs. **Suspend** the report's assignment and scope. Qur'an 3:49 supplies an identifiable intertext.

Biḥār 26:6

Asking about these powers entails unbelief

Reject its use against examination of provenance or reasonable withholding of assent. The Qur'anic "He is not questioned" can concern Allah, without authenticating the report.

Biḥār 26:7

Imamic willing and divine willing coincide

Restrict to guided obedience as a constructive interpretation. **Reject** creaturely authority over Allah. **Suspend** universal cosmic application.

Biḥār 25:345–348

Created status alone validates cosmic delegation

Reject. The critics address models that already acknowledge createdness. Logical possibility leaves scope and evidence unresolved.

Biḥār 2:250, reports 62–63 and context

Books acquired corrupt insertions

Retain as evidence of an internal allegation and proposed mechanism. **Suspend** the named accusations and assignment of a particular passage to it pending fuller criticism.

Biḥār 25:270, h. 10

Imamic guidance makes people the Imams' property

Reject that extension under the project's uṣūl. The transmitted reply itself denies the ownership accusation. The complete chain remains to be regraded.