

CONVERTING PERSIA

Religion and
Power in the
Safavid Empire

Rula Abisaab

I.B. TAURIS

Converting Persia

*To my parents, Huda 'Attallah and Anis al-Jurdi,
with love and gratitude
and
To the memory of Husayn Muroeh*

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LONDON · NEW YORK

Published in 2004 by I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd
6 Salem Road, London W2 4BU
175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010
www.ibtauris.com

In the United States of America and in Canada distributed by
Palgrave Macmillan, a division of St Martin's Press
175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010

Published in association with the **Iran Heritage Foundation**

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International Library of Iranian Studies 1

ISBN 1 86064 970 X

EAN: 978 1 86064 970 7

A full CIP record for this book is available from the British Library
A full CIP record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

Library of Congress catalog card: available

Typeset in Palatino Linotype by Steve Tribe, Andover
Printed and bound in Great Britain by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin

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Acknowledgments

MY INTEREST IN DRAWING historical links between Arab and Persian Shi'ite societies originated at Yale University in the seminars of Abbas Amanat, my dissertation advisor. Amanat offered me distinct intellectual motivation, encouragement and friendship, which helped me find the voice of the historian. I am indebted to Said Amir Arjomand and Hossein Modarressi, who commented on and reoriented facets of this work in its dissertation form. My discussions with Rifa'at Abou el-Hajj helped shape the theoretical framework of this study. Willem Floor offered critical insights and suggestions on some aspects of this work. Rudi Matthee also made valuable comments on the work and raised important questions. Any shortcomings in this work are solely my responsibility.

Thanks to the Iranian Heritage Foundation, which supported my scholarship and the preparation of this monograph for publication. The current work, though based on the dissertation, underwent thorough revisions and critical alterations resulting in the elimination of one chapter and the addition of a new one and five central sections. In the process, I have departed from some of the assumptions made in the dissertation in the light of new research and in connection to the debates and theoretical underpinnings of the current historiography on Safavid Persia. I am grateful to several Iranian and Lebanese scholars who assisted me in obtaining copies of the manuscripts I needed and bringing new sources to my attention. These scholars are Sayyid Hasan al-Amin, Sayyid Jawad Shahrestani in Qum, Sayyid 'Ali Shahrestani in Mashhad, Sayyid Ahmad al-Husayni at the Mar'ashi library in Qum, and Dr. Kamran Fani and his assistant Fahimeh Khallaqi at Da'irat al-Ma'arif Tashayyu' in Tehran. I am also thankful to Aqa Hasan Ansari, Nezam Mafi, Sadeq Sajjadi, Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali Rawdati in Isfahan, and Rasul Ja'fariyan in Qum who, despite his

illness, met with me and advised me on a number of 'Amili works. I would also like to thank 'Ali Naqi Munzavi, 'Ali Rafi'i, 'A. Ha'iri at Majlis Library, and Vali Nasr. I am especially thankful to Jane Joyce who edited sections of this work and offered important suggestions as to its organization and style.

Parvaneh Khallaqi, Menouchehr Khoshnood and Fereshteh Kashani who hosted me in Tehran made my intellectual and personal experiences of Iran exceptional and deeply rewarding. I am thankful to my sisters Adelle, Hiba and Jinan for their unrelenting support and love. Malek, my partner, took a semester off his graduate studies to accompany me to Iran. Without him neither the trip experiences nor life to that matter would be the same.

MAP ONE

MAP TWO

Introduction

IN THE LAST THREE decades, Islam with its varied Sunnite and Shi'ite colorings has figured as an international socio-political phenomenon with significant legal and doctrinal dimensions. A plethora of studies probing resurgent facets of Islam and its culturally distinct manifestations have searched relentlessly into the past for the 'origins' of this turbulent phenomenon. Since the unfolding of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979–80, the Shi'ite world, clergy and lay society, have been transformed forever. A striking feature of this transformation was the unprecedented political power wrested by the Shi'ite *'ulama* and their hegemony over a vital medium of legal ideas, as they proceeded to reinterpret a *shari'a*-based society and redefine the foundations of its modern Islamic state and political outlook.

Safavid history became a focal point of investigation for modern scholars exploring questions of empire, nation, religious community and conversion, clerical leadership and relations among Muslims, Christians and Jews. In modern narratives on clerical and revolutionary Islam and their relevance to Persian society, Iranian and Arab nationalists and Islamists alike have given the Safavid period (1501–1736CE) a central place.¹ These narratives are largely rooted in culturalist interpretations, which glorify Arab agency in converting Iran to 'mainstream' Shi'ism or treat legalistic Islam as a cultural intrusion, an imposition of an Arab normative basis of worship by émigré clerics on Persian society.² They purport that legalistic Islam, unlike gnosticism and philosophy, was alien to Persian culture and its forms of intellectual inquiry. My work challenges such interpretations of religious transformation in Persia. My study also comes to life when juxtaposed against the political zeal invested by Muslim activists today in the renewal of Islamic law and the unprecedented power that clerics have assumed in recent decades. The debates among both Shi'ite and Sunnite

reformists and militants over the nature of political authority in Islam, find some of their formative elements in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Iran.

Few if any studies have attempted to delineate the dynamic processes of exchange between Arab and Persian scholars and the contribution of their respective social matrices to the development of Islamic political theory and juridical concepts before the age of European expansion and colonialism. Moreover, most scholars of Islamic law continue to treat ideas, particularly legal ideas, as developing outside the realm of social relations and severed from the loci of power.³ Religious thought is seen as reproducing itself from within the clerical establishment where an insulated community of legal experts seems to function outside the medium of history. My study, in contrast, probes into the internal social and political transformations that shaped the juridical concepts of the Syrian *'ulama* of Jabal 'Amil and the utility of their scholarship to the young Shi'ite state envisaged by the Safavid monarchs in the early sixteenth century. I delineate the changes the Syrian clerics made in the Islamic theory of government, their varied reinterpretations of law and 'reinvention' of religious legitimacy for state and society. Doctrinal and legal works on heterodoxy, Sunnite-Shi'ite polemic, Sufi practices, the convening of Friday prayer, religious seclusion, the meat slaughtered by Christians and Jews, alongside philosophical works on the nature of the world and God's relationship to it are all brought to bear on larger questions of social and political history. The theoretical framework of this work had drawn much inspiration from the epistemic foundation of Husayn Muroeh's *Al-Naza'at al-Madiyya fi al-Falsafa al-'Arabiyya al-Islamiyya*, which shifts the focus from culture to social process, investigating the transmission of knowledge from one civilization/culture to another, in this case from the Arab to the Persian, in the light of the internal structural and historical forces within the hosting society (Persia). Muroeh rejected attempts to understand the emergence of new philosophical, scientific and legal concepts in their own terms, as ruled by personal differences among scholars or institutional changes exerted from above. Instead, he focused attention on the incremental material-social developments, particularly class arrangements and conflicts, which shaped the production of ideas during different historical periods. I use 'class' in the pre-modern period to denote a human grouping whose members are engaged in similar economic-occupational activities, have a comparable position vis-à-vis the means of production, but who nonetheless draw upon a variety of social experiences and factional, religious, ethnic or regional identities that can and do undermine class. I also benefited from Rifa'at Abou El-Haj's treatment of the nature of the transfer of scholarship from one locale to another 'less as one of importation and more as one that meets local needs, thereby becoming for some... historians a creative, but projected, means for understanding their society and by extension themselves, that is in defining their identity'.⁴ In addition, I have found the treatment of 'tradition' in the works of Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger illuminating. By understanding the dynamic and multilayered notions of 'tradition', as changing rather than static, I cautioned myself against self-descriptions of 'tradition-based' juridical concepts and rulings advanced by Safavid

theologians. Customarily, theologians invoked past rulings and framed their argument in terms of conformity to clerical 'tradition' or the texts of foundational Shi'ite '*ulama*, even while advancing new legal opinions and juridical concepts. Their opinions and concepts, however, assumed new meanings derived from novel historical experiences and ideological positions.

The Safavid period (1501–1736CE) is of great significance to historians of Islam in that it captures the imperial adoption and institutionalization of Shi'ism in Persia. This study examines the historical circumstances which made Safavid Persia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the home of leading Arab '*ulama* who hoped to suppress folk and heterodox notions of Shi'ism and define 'orthodoxy' on the basis of Ja'fari legal parameters and clerical consensus. I focus attention on nine Safavid theologians of an 'Amili background who led glamorous careers and/or produced works of great import and relevance to Persian society in particular and the Shi'ite world at large. The scholars were 'Ali b. 'Abd al-'Ali al-Karaki (d. 940AH/1533CE), Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad (d. 984AH/1576CE), Husayn al-Mujtahid (d. 1001AH/1592CE), Baha' al-Din al-'Amili (d. 1030AH/1621CE), Mir Damad (d. 1041AH/1631–2CE), Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin (d. 1054AH/1644CE), Lutfullah al-Maysi (d. 1032AH/1622–3CE), 'Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-'Amili (d. 1103–4AH/1691CE) and Muhammad al-Hurr al-'Amili (d. 1111AH/1699CE). Except for 'Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din, all of the above theologians enjoyed close ties with the Safavid court, occupied the highest religious offices in Persia and created the principal tools for the routinization of Safavid rule irrespective of whether they inherently accepted its legitimacy or contrived to challenge it in time. Based on legal and doctrinal works, biographical précis, personal history, Safavid chronicles, travel accounts and Ottoman Arab literature, I highlight the social order in which the clerics lived, the rivalries they experienced, and the alliances they forged with the Persian notables and the military elite, known as the Qizilbash.⁵ The clerics' efforts at establishing a distinct system of Shi'ite ideas and legal practices found justification not in the Arab cultural background of the 'Amilis but rather in the Persian social ambit that nurtured and reworked those ideas. Their scholarship and careers spoke directly to Safavid legitimacy, imperial sovereignty, state structure, religious policy, popular dissent and the social struggles among the administrative-military elites.

Beyond the scholastic-social ties that bound the founders of the *madrasas* of Jabal 'Amil and their disciples together, there was a marked network of kinship relations, both consanguinal and marital, that reinforced the solidarity and elitism of this community. Access to *shari'a* knowledge tended to concentrate in tightly knit family groups and became the esteemed possession of their immediate descendants. By the early sixteenth century, Jabal 'Amil became the foremost center for Shi'ite learning, and an accrediting institution, producing and influencing hundreds of theologians who lived or settled in Syria, Mecca, Iraq, Persia and India.

The 'Amili '*ulama's* migration to Persia became one expression of the dramatic changes in Jabal 'Amil's political stability, the meager recruitment of 'Amili jurists

in the Ottoman teaching system, the clerics' frustrated hopes of implementing the Ja'fari rulings (*ahkam*) and legal punishments (*hudud*) in their locales, and their ambitions in recasting their social role in Shi'ite society.⁶

Unlike Qatifi and Iraqi Shi'ite scholars at the time, the 'Amilis were prepared to transform Shi'ism from a religion of the community to that of the state, proposing significant modifications in political theory and becoming highly equipped to circumvent Ottoman and Uzbek propaganda and ideological expansion. They espoused, to differing degrees, a close affinity with secular sovereignty. This is best illustrated in their distinct approaches toward Friday prayer (*salat al-Jum'a*). Whereas Friday prayer and the sermon succeeding it were systematically convened among Sunnite Muslims from early Islamic times, Shi'ites have for most of their history made a half-hearted commitment to its performance during the absence of the Imam. The early Safavid Shahs understood the extent to which the convening of Friday prayer was fundamentally tied to the legitimacy and sovereignty of the ruler and attempted, for the first time in Shi'ite history, to institute it. The enactment of Friday prayer, which required the presence of a jurist further aimed at restoring the Shi'ite community to political normalcy concomitant with state formation. Whether as rationalists (*usulis*), who favored the use of rational inference in deriving legal rulings, or as traditionalists (*akhbaris*), who relied solely on traditions for religious guidance, leading 'Amili scholars participated effectively in governmental offices and strengthened the foundation of Safavid rule without abandoning their aspiration for a total recovery of Imamate authority. By the mid seventeenth century, conventional 'Amili jurists faced a strong competition from new intellectual hybrids, namely, the Sufi bent and philosophically bent scholars who joined in the heated struggles over the legal status of Friday prayer.

The terms 'Shi'ism' and 'Sunnism' underwent significant shifts from the early Safavid period until the mid sixteenth century, as well as in the late seventeenth century. I have tried to delineate some of these shifts and to account for several competing versions of 'Shi'ism' under the early Safavids. Yet, we need more in-depth studies on this question. Willem Floor accurately noted that, 'apart from the fact that there are neither precise data on the entire population nor of its ethnic or religious distribution, one also does not exactly know what the term Moslim meant in those days'.⁷ Large sectors of non-sedentary populations including the Turkoman Qizilbash expressed shamanistic beliefs and ritual cannibalism at odds with urban clerical Shi'ism. As for Sunnism, it continued to appeal to important social groups in early Safavid society and to find use among political elites. Several traditions of Sunnism and Shi'ism overlapped, including the *ahl al-bayt* devotionism. Yet, mostly due to the Safavid-Ottoman political rivalry, Safavid religious servicemen encouraged and popularized the vilification of Sunnite symbols and drew stronger ritualistic and doctrinal boundaries between *shari'a*-based Shi'ism and *shari'a*-based Sunnism.

Far from remaining self-absorbed legal experts, the 'Amili jurists mediated their views effectively through a network of students and followers who translated their juridical rulings into Persian and state officials who turned them into decrees. The

'*ulama*'s doctrinal, legal and philosophical works reflected alterations in the monarchs' sources of legitimacy, measure of control over the Qizilbash, centralization efforts, economic stability, depopulation and forced migration aimed at thwarting Ottoman invasions in frontier areas heavily inhabited by Christians. The clerics' writings also reflected internal class conflicts, expressed in distinct ideological terms. At the time of Shah Tahmasb, but mainly under Shah 'Abbas, the translation and abridgment of major Shi'ite texts of doctrine and positive law from Arabic into Persian carried the legal-political debates from the exclusive circles of theologians to a vast community of low-ranking scholars, political figures, merchants and artisans.

Safavid jurists solicited, in addition to the clientship of a learned Persian elite, a following among the lower strata of Safavid society. Like other state-appointed officials, the 'Amilis saw themselves collectively as the custodians of a defined orthodoxy, encouraging not merely an explicit knowledge of doctrine but a systematic enactment of ritual. They built new bridges and supplied pertinent justifications for how an exegetic use of the past in Twelver Shi'ite history is relevant to the present. Concomitant with the dissemination of Shi'ite creed was a process of Persianization on class and state levels; that is the consolidation of an idiosyncratic Iranian Shi'ism. Perhaps the most indicative feature of Persianization was the almost complete eclipse of 'Amilism' as a scholastic-ethnic phenomenon at the Safavid court in the mid seventeenth century and the emergence of an eclectic body of Iranian '*ulama*' who carried the legal discourses to wider circles of scholars and politically charged domains.

As the 'Amili theologians ascended the highest ranks of the Safavid religious establishment, they had to define their approaches to both popular and 'high' Sufism, to the folk religious beliefs and rituals that thrived in guild sectors.⁸ In a dialectic of opposition and co-optation, state-backed jurists were able to score important victories against heterodoxy and popular Sufism, both of which were presented as a moral discordance to Shi'ite legalism. By the end of Safavid rule, much of the archetypal austerity, miraculous (*karamat*) powers and spiritual excellence known to the Sufis became the claimed grace of the guardians of the *shari'a* and its officially uncontested interpreters. Here I draw upon the studies of Abdol Hosein Zarrinkoob, particularly in *Dunbala-yi Justuju-yi Tasavvuf dar Iran*, but further explore Sufi adoptions of the legal discourse and highlight diversity within clerical and Sufi circles in changing historical contexts. In the meantime, influential religious leaders had wrested new sources of power through the Shahs' patronage, the consolidation of religious endowments (*waqf*), and the acquisition of economic grants and immunities from taxation. They never, however, acted independently or determined the Safavids' policies as such. Rather, they accommodated the sovereigns' agendas while simultaneously manipulating the judicial domain and reworking vital social alliances to achieve some autonomy and political power.

1

Sufi Regalia and Legal Banners

The Safavids and the Emigré Arab Jurists

I want a jurisconsult (*mujtahid*) from Jabal 'Amil
– *Shah Tahmasb*

IN 907AH/1501CE, A SUFI order in Ardabil, known as the Safavid, claimed sovereignty in Persia and founded an empire that rivaled the Ottomans in the West. The empire's assumption of a distinct religious identity, namely Shi'ite Islam, was concomitant with profound social and political changes in Persia and regional Arab Shi'ite societies during the sixteenth century.¹

The terms 'Shi'ite' and 'Shi'ism' require explanation. Following the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 11AH/632CE, one religious faction, known as the partisans (Shi'a) of 'Ali (d. 41AH/661CE), the cousin of the Prophet, promoted 'Ali as the rightful successor and caliph. The aspirations of this faction, however, remained unfulfilled for 30 years, during which three of the Prophet's Companions in turn became caliphs, namely Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman. These caliphs came to represent 'mainstream' or Sunnite Islam. Their followers argued that they constituted the 'Sunna' (the right path) supported by the majority of the Muslim community. 'Ali and his followers rejected this position, and protested that 'Umar and 'Uthman promulgated Islam in ways contrary to the Qur'an and Muhammad's statements. Shi'ism asserts that its authority originates in 'Ali, the first Imam (an infallible religious guide), and is transmitted to 'Ali's descendants from Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-'Askari, the twelfth and last Shi'ite Imam, had no progeny. He disappeared or went into hiding in 260AH/873CE. Shi'ites consider the twelfth Imam to be the Mahdi (Messiah) and await his return to establish the legitimate Shi'ite government.

During the fourteenth century CE, leaders like Sultan Junayd and Haydar of the Turkoman Safavid clan (Safavid Empire: 907–1135AH/1501–1736CE) tried to strengthen their base by calling men to arms in Anatolia.² The clan's Sunnite ancestor Safi al-Din (d. 735AH/1334CE) was a local Sufi divine, and the site of his Sufi order, Ardabil, in northwest Iran, became first a shrine and later the center of the tribe's political and military activities. When the Safavids accepted Shi'ite Islam late in the fourteenth century CE, they espoused a fervent but unrefined Shi'ism, bestowing on their religious guides claims to prophetic ability and divine authority. The Safavids' military, political and religious objectives coalesced in the reign of the first Safavid Shah, Isma'il I (907–930AH/1501–1524CE), who introduced central changes in the Persian court and its administrative branches. To achieve his goals, Isma'il I relied on Turkoman military forces known as the Qizilbash ('redheads', so called from their distinctive crimson cone-shaped, twelve-gored hats; each gore represented one of the twelve Shi'ite Imams). After Isma'il's investiture, the Qizilbash embellished the military base and political outlook of his young Empire.³

Soon after Shah Isma'il I ascended the throne, he mandated that all regions under Safavid control accept Twelver Shi'ism.⁴ His immediate successors also persevered in their efforts to convert Persia's numerous tribal groups and social classes to Twelver Shi'ism by trying, though not always successfully, to suppress millenarianism, shamanism and popular Sufi expressions. The Shahs especially wanted the ruling classes to adopt a literate urban Shi'ite doctrine, which lends itself to legal regulation and state structure. This form of Shi'ism was distinct from mystical and folk Shi'ism evident in the Safavids' own background and that of the Turkoman nomads in the west.⁵ To achieve this aim, Shah Isma'il I and his son Shah Tahmasb (930–984AH/1524–1576CE) invited renowned Twelver Shi'ite '*ulama*' (religious scholars and jurists) from Arabic-speaking countries – Iraq, Bahrain and Jabal 'Amil in Syria – to reinforce the Shi'ite '*ulama*' already in Persia.⁶ The early Safavid Shahs purposely placed these erudite émigré teachers and jurists in important religious and quasi-administrative positions to disseminate their well-defined Islamic creed based on the Shi'ite School of law or *madhhab*. Gradually a regional Shi'ite identity emerged. The Qizilbash and emigrant '*ulama*'s interactions, particularly those from Jabal 'Amil in Syria, as well as their separate and joint clashes with the Persian nobles are discussed below.

Although often diverted by internecine and external challenges to their power, the early Safavid royalty welcomed the Arab jurists and divines, of whom the foremost scholars from Jabal 'Amil are collectively called 'the 'Amilis'. The Safavid monarchs realized that Shi'ite intellectuals held 'Amili scholarship in high regard, yet the decision to patronize these Syrian clerics rested on the belief that the 'Amilis would provide a much-needed source of legitimacy for imperial sovereignty. For their part, the 'Amilis consented to such sovereignty, and eagerly sought Safavid patronage. They accumulated significant power and prestige and achieved positions in such civic-religious institutions as *shaykh al-Islam*, the highest religious dignitary of the important cities, and *pish-namaz*, prayer leaders for the royal court and the

great city mosques. 'Amili scholars and their Iranian descendants also served as custodians of religious practice (*vakil-i halaliyyat*), judges (*qadis*), expounders of Islamic law (*muftis*), ministers (*viziers*), professors of theology (*mudarris*), and even administrators and heads of religious endowments (*sadrs*). (See Appendix II) Over several generations in Persia, the 'Amilis and their descendants taught in *madrasas* (schools) and transmitted their knowledge to an ever-increasing network of students and followers.⁷ For the entire Safavid period (to the seventeenth century CE), at least 158 scholars (*'alim*) are identifiable as first, second and third-generation Syrian emigrants to Safavid Persia.⁸

Clerical discipline and 'orthodox' Shi'ism with its detailed legal ordinances coincided with the Safavids' political vision and gave the empire its formative image. However, the Persian environment in which the 'Amilis gained wide acclaim was significantly different from their remote Syrian homeland at the periphery of the Ottoman Empire. The rustic early 'Amilis encountered continuing turbulence in the branches of the royal family and disputes, intrigues and competition among and with both the courtiers and the elite classes. The first 'Amilis also found the synergetic Safavid religious milieu and the fluid exchange of ideas among philosophers, sectarians and mystics discomfiting. The 'Amilis nonetheless envisioned the Safavids as the temporal rulers who would make it possible for Shi'ism to become an overtly expressed, assertive faith rather than a marginal sect. Based on the tracts the 'Amilis wrote, the decrees (*fatwas*) they issued and the religious and legal questions they deliberated, the 'Amilis strove to wed Twelver Shi'ism to the increasingly vigorous Safavid state. Among the *'ulama*, a professional class of *mujtahid(s)*, or juriconsults, quickly demonstrated that they were eager to please their superiors and to promote their own status. The 'Amili *mujtahids* tried to uproot heterodox precepts and patterns of conduct among the populace and to redefine the juriconsult's role in society. At the same time, they expressed an unprecedented willingness to support temporal authority and Shi'ite statehood. Not all the 'Amilis received equal treatment from the Shahs, and at times the émigré *mujtahids* competed among themselves for a Shah's favors. By the end of the seventeenth century CE, the Persian populace showed mixed feelings of devotion to some *mujtahids* alongside ridicule and disdain for others.

Among the influential scholars of the Safavid Empire during the first half of the sixteenth century, three 'Amilis in particular contributed to the development of the Safavid religious order and clerical leadership. Respectively, they are Nur al-Din Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Abd al-'Ali al-Karaki (d. 940AH/1533CE), also known as al-Muhaqqiq al-Thani, but referred to most often as al-Karaki; Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad al-Harithi al-Juba'i (d. 984-AH/1576CE), known as Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad; and al-Karaki's maternal grandson Husayn al-Mujtahid (d. 1001AH/1592-3CE), known as al-Mujtahid. Of them, no 'Amili court scholar wielded greater power than al-Muhaqqiq al-Karaki, given the difficult tasks he encountered as a pioneer and his successful endorsement of legal opinions that engendered both controversy among the local elite and resistance from Arab and Persian *'ulama*. By

the later sixteenth century CE, Safavid society, deeply shaped by Twelver Shi'ism, exhibited several integrated themes: the Shahs had focused their political and dynastic aspirations; the initially resistant elites had begun to incorporate clerical Shi'ism; and the 'ulama of 'Amili origin would appropriate elements of Persia's heterodox milieu to empower themselves and inculcate popular conformity to clerical rulings across ethnic and class divisions. The Safavids, with the 'Amilis as their agents, decisively imprinted Persia's doctrinal precepts and juridical practices and brought about political changes in Persian society that are subject to debate even today.

The Sovereign and Religious 'Authenticity'

Shah Isma'il I apparently received little if any theological Shi'ite training characteristic of the 'ulama's tradition: 'It would appear that the young Isma'il and his advisers were not even aware of the meaning of the central Shi'ite concept of specific designation (*nass*).'⁹ Shah Isma'il's 'Islamic' faith drew upon ancient Asian rituals and the cult of 'Ali, but his Anatolian followers may not have distinguished between dervish and shaman, as Jean Aubin noted.¹⁰ As such, the Safavid order and its leadership were more keen on reconciling not Sunnism with Shi'ism, but Qizilbash heterodoxy, animism and Sufism with a legally based Twelver Shi'ism.¹¹ It is not clear when and how the Safavids first became acquainted with fundamental Shi'ite concepts such as infallibility ('*isma*) and designation (*nass*).¹² Major Safavid sources concurred that Shah Isma'il I's invitation to the Arab 'ulama was necessary to institute a proper, court-sanctioned religious socialization for both educated and common Persians.¹³ The Safavids also saw political expediency in retaining foreign 'ulama with a steadfast Shi'ite faith but no entrenched ties to any of Persia's contending ethnic or political groups and who thus offered little threat even in the highest religious ranks.¹⁴

Several Persian notables had only general Sunnite training outside the confines of the conventional Islamic *madrasa*. Their studies emphasized philosophy, grammar, logic, mathematics, astronomy, rhetoric, literature and the composition of puzzles. Evidently, the Persian notables' mastery of and commitment to a comprehensive Shi'ite tradition was suspect. Notwithstanding, a few specialized in Shi'ite doctrine and theology and were sufficiently qualified to be the Safavids' religious spokesmen. To name but two, Amir Nizam al-Din 'Abd al-Hayy and Mawlana 'Abd al-'Ali were trained in the Shi'ite legal disciplines and addressed questions of positive law, jurisprudence and *hadith* (Tradition).¹⁵ From the end of the fifteenth century CE, Persian scholars served as *shaykh al-Islam* under Timurid rulers, issued *fatwas* and were adept in both subsidiary and principal sections of Shi'ite law.¹⁶ These scholars, however, worked within the rubric of provincial governorships in a decentralized political world. There was no interest in the standardization of Shi'ite practice among the ruling elites nor in the dissemination of a distinctly Shi'ite Tradition among the popular classes to consolidate state control. The young and still insecure

Safavid Empire could hardly find such scholars useful for its interest in embracing a standard Shi'ite Islam cutting across class, ethnicity, language and region. This explains why Hasan-i Beg Rumlu, a court historian, complained that around 906AH/1500CE, the Persian populace was ill informed about the legal foundations of Twelver Shi'ism and noted that no texts on Shi'ite law were in circulation.¹⁷

When the 'Amilis came to Persia, Safavid narrative has it, they reinforced the Shi'ite school of law through their own works and reintroduced earlier Shi'ite authors to Persian scholarship. Jabal 'Amil's prominence was recognized in Persia from at least the fourteenth century CE when the Sarbadarid ruler 'Ali b. al-Mu'ayyad al-Khurasani (d. 788AH/1386CE) invited Muhammad b. Makki al-'Amili, known as al-Shahid (d. 786AH/1384CE), to establish Twelver Shi'ism in Khurasan.¹⁸ By the sixteenth century CE, the centers of Twelver Shi'ite learning had shifted from Hilla to Karbala and Najaf, then to Mosul and ultimately to Jabal 'Amil, whose preeminence was well known in Persia. Until the seventeenth century CE, the most important teaching was conducted in the Syrian 'Amili villages of Juba', Mays, and Karak-Nuh, to which many students traveled from Persia.¹⁹

These factors influenced the Safavid preference for the Syrian 'Amili scholars but do not explain why the Shahs chose them, not the Iraqis or the Bahrainis (including the Qatifis who had also had an established Shi'ite tradition of legal scholarship), to define and bring about the Safavids' religious policies. Even after the death of al-Karaki in 940AH/1533CE, Shah Tahmasb declared that no one except a *mujtahid* from Jabal 'Amil would occupy al-Karaki's position as *shaykh al-Islam*.²⁰ Indeed, this did not become the rule, for the Safavid Shahs did integrate different groups of theologians into their religious ranks. Two factors help put in context the Safavids' resolve to promote the 'Amilis.

First, the 'Amili *'ulama's* profound knowledge of Sunnite doctrine, jurisprudence and polemical literature was advantageous if not indispensable for the Safavid monarchs. The monarchs' gradual adoption of a 'high' tradition of Shi'ism became one expression of their attempts, first, to convert the Persian aristocracy from 'Sunnism' to 'Shi'ism' and, second, to successfully thwart the formidable and expansionist Ottoman Empire. It is important here to note that what were designated 'Sunnism' and 'Shi'ism' were constantly undergoing change. During early Safavid rule there were distinct forms of Sunnism ranging from a theologically developed faith to popular *ahl al-bayt* devotionism. Floor noted that, there were also:

Allaholahis and other esoteric sects who clearly were not orthodox Moslem either, if at all... Among the remaining Moslem population were Sunnis or Shi'ites of various hues. However, what did these terms mean in the 1500s and how did their meaning change over time?²¹

Likewise, there was the Safavid heterodox-Sufi veneration of 'Ali and the Twelve Imams as distinct from the fully developed and articulated doctrinal, *shari'a*-based Shi'ism of the Iraqi or 'Amili *'ulama*.²² Rosemary Stanfield showed that several major

Persian cities professed solid beliefs in Sunnism, as '*ahl al-Sunna wa'l-jama'a*' of Ash'ari or Hanafi legal affiliations. The term '*ahl al-Sunna wa'l-jama'a*', as she correctly noted, had significant legal implications. Cities like Qazvin, Shiraz and Hamadan may have nurtured such a legally based urban form of Sunnism.²³

The educated Persian classes were hardly impressed by Qizilbash beliefs and did not find sufficient reason, historically speaking, to convert to it from Sunnism, particularly when the Shahs themselves were not promoting it as the basis for religious integration in the empire. In comparison, a rigorous and formal creed of Shi'ism furnished by jurists and clerics could have a more authoritative position. The demands of a centralized state were incompatible with the millenarian and heterodox background of the Qizilbash, but again such a realization did not happen overnight nor did it automatically dispense with heterodoxy, which found new ways to 'co-exist' with clerical Shi'ism. At the heart of the Safavids' interest in employing the 'Amilis lay the need for religious and political legitimation from within and from without.²⁴ The Shahs wanted to be recognized by their subjects and the Ottomans alike as avowedly Muslim, and 'mainstream' at that. This could be achieved if Safavid religious practices were derived from an 'authentic' Islamic base and an established school of law. Moreover, the 'Amilis perceptively and pragmatically enabled the Safavids to comprehend and co-opt Sunnite precepts. In different Arab and Persian regions, leading Shi'ite scholars utilized and recast knowledge of Sunnite jurisprudence in order to meet the changing needs of their societies and their own group as legal experts.²⁵

The second aspect of the Safavids' interest in the Syrian scholars of Jabal 'Amil was their facile use of *ijtihad*, rational inference of legal precepts. Unlike leading Shi'ite scholars of Iraq, Persia, Bahrain and Qatif, the 'Amilis expanded their area of jurisdiction through the use of *ijtihad*, entertaining new interpretations of Tradition, and advancing new approaches toward secular government and Shi'ite political authority. They advocated a socio-political role for the jurists and had little compunction about associating with temporal rulers or receiving financial rewards from them. All this proved congenial to state formation and Safavid imperial sovereignty.²⁶ For instance, early 'Amili clerics encouraged all Safavid subjects to perform Friday prayer for the first time in Shi'ite history, as a sign of the 'authenticity' of their Shi'ism and the legitimacy of their political rule. The new empire needed clerics like the 'Amilis who could 'invent' sources of legitimacy. The 'Amili clerics opened new vistas in the interpretive capacity of religious law (*shari'a*) manuals, and expanded their application in areas previously untouched. The Safavids could not mandate an ideological shift without offering theologically acceptable rationalizations. Coercion would yield only short-term change, not a universally accepted state control.²⁷

On their part, the Safavid sovereigns felt assured about the 'Amilis favorable approach toward a Shi'ite Empire. The 'Amilis presented Ottoman Sunnite rule as religiously hostile and politically antagonistic to Shi'ites on the basis of a few isolated and multilayered historical incidents. Safavid accounts pointedly note that 'the

illustrious Shi'ite mujtahid', Zayn al-Din al-'Amili, known as al-Shahid al-Thani (the second martyr) (d. 966AH/1558CE), was captured by an Ottoman official while circumambulating the Ka'ba. Al-Shahid al-Thani was taken to the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul who executed him in 966AH/1558CE. Furthermore, the Safavids almost unanimously present the departure of Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad (d. 984AH/1576CE) from Syria as a reaction to the execution of his teacher, al-Shahid al-Thani.²⁸ Despite the inaccuracy of these accounts, they revealed the frustrations and fears, which politically visible Shi'ite scholars experienced in Syria. These accounts also emphasize that the 'Amilis anti-Ottoman stand hardened after the execution of al-Shahid al-Thani and their loyalty to the Ottoman's enemies, the Safavids, increased.²⁹ In a recently discovered manuscript written by Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, titled *Risala fi'l-Rihla*, we learn that al-Shahid al-Thani had advised his students, particularly, to leave Jabal 'Amil to Iraq and Persia after 956AH/1549CE.³⁰

The Safavid demand for 'Amili 'ulama remained strong until the early seventeenth century CE.³¹ Given the 'Amilis unprecedented proximity to the Shahs and access to power, primarily through the post of *shaykh al-Islam*, leading 'Amili clerics tended to expand the scope of their judicial interpretations to accommodate the demands of their society. Even provincial Safavid rulers made use of 'Amili expertise.³² The processes the 'Amili 'ulama used to restructure the religious institutions of the empire reflected both their political alliance and potential conflict with elements of the Safavid court.

Domestic Contests: The Persian Aristocracy, the Qizilbash and the 'Amili Jurists

The military Qizilbash figured in the ranks of the Safavid civil administration, and they were appointed at times to the treasury or posts in the senior civil service such as the chancellery, despite the fact that Persian professionals and bureaucrats controlled its operation.³³ Unlike the 'Amilis, the Qizilbash only infrequently laid claim to judicial and religious posts or participated in administering the religious endowments (*awqaf*) vested in the office of grand *sadr*.³⁴ They occasionally challenged the appointment of Persians to posts in the civil administration but only once aspired to the post of *shaykh al-Islam* in Herat.³⁵ The Qizilbash might have found common cause with the 'Amili 'ulama against their mutual rivals, the Persians, or Tajiks (the name indicates Persian ancestry), who often sought the offices that the 'Amili 'ulama occupied. However, considerable differences on theological issues and conversion tactics separated the Qizilbash and the 'Amilis. The former firmly upheld the Safavids' Sufi-engendered belief in the divine rule of the Shah and coerced conversions to Twelver Shi'ism, while the 'Amilis promoted an urban 'orthodox' theological basis for Shi'ism and encouraged individuals to accept it, at least theoretically, through 'persuasion'.

The Persian notables differed dramatically in their social and religious background from both the Turkoman tribes and the 'Amili 'ulama. Before the

beginning of the sixteenth century CE, at the time of Khaqan Mansur, father of the last Timurid ruler, Sultan Husayn Bayqara (875–911AH/1470–1506CE), the Persian schools of Ghiyathiyya, Sultaniyya, Ikhlasiiyya, Madrased-yi Sultani, Madrased-i Mahd-i Ulya Goharshad and others in Herat instructed their students in the general religious subjects of positive law (*furu'*), jurisprudence (*usul*) and Tradition, but mostly in philosophy-theosophy, dogmatic theology, logic, mathematics, astrology and puzzles.³⁶ This was at variance with the intellectual make-up of Persian and Arab Shi'ite scholars, trained in Shi'ite dogma and law at conventional schools (*madrasas*) whether in Jabal 'Amil, Najaf or Mashhad. These scholars approached Islamic belief from a juridical standpoint. Notwithstanding, the Persian elite's initial resistance to the clerical leadership of Arab jurists did not arise from intellectual or cultural variations. A complex set of socio-political and economic factors brought together Persian notables and a few Arab '*ulama* against the 'Amili court jurists.

Under Shah Isma'il I, Persian notables exerted their considerable political influence to check the power of the Turkoman Qizilbash *amirs*.³⁷ With the Shah's approval, an 'Iranophile' policy prevented the Qizilbash from seizing all power. Of the five principal state posts under Shah Isma'il I, Qizilbash officers were to occupy the top two, which imbued their holders with extraordinary power: commander-in-chief of the army (*amir al-umara*) and head of the royal life guards (*qurchibashi*). The Persian aristocracy was given the other two posts of super minister (*vazir*) and *sadr*.³⁸

The attempt of the Safavid Shahs to curtail the power of the Qizilbash in administrative offices dates to 915AH/1509CE, the time of death of Shaykh Najm al-Din Mas'ud Rashti, named the first Persian deputy (*vakil*), who functioned as both commander-in-chief and grand vizier. Another Persian, Yar Ahmad Khuzani, better known as Najm-i Thani, succeeded Najm al-Din and simultaneously assumed both the military and civil functions of his offices.³⁹ The Qizilbash were displeased when they found themselves in the service of an ambitious and independent deputy like Najm al-Din.⁴⁰ As Floor noted, Shah Isma'il tried to appease the Qizilbash *amirs* by splitting the office of *vikalat* into two following the military defeats in 1512 and 1514CE of the Safavid army against the Uzbeks and the Ottomans.⁴¹ As soon as the Qizilbash detected that the Shah had become receptive to the aspirations of the second Persian *vakil*, Mirza Shah Husayn Isfahani, they had Isfahani murdered in 929AH/1523CE.⁴²

Shah Isma'il's son Tahmasb was only ten years old when he ascended the throne in 930AH/1524CE, and he neglected state affairs. From 932 until after 937AH (1526 to 1530–1CE), Persia experienced the Qizilbash wars involving the Rumlu, Ustajalu, Tekellu and Shamlu tribes.⁴³ Into 937AH/1526CE, these inter-tribal conflicts grew in intensity and magnitude and spread from northwest Persia to neighboring territories, the most central of which was Khurasan.⁴⁴ At court, the Qizilbash, not the Shah, wielded effective political power from 930 until 940AH (1524 to 1533CE).⁴⁵ They demanded that Shah Tahmasb discontinue his father's policy of recruiting Persians into the highest civil ranks, and their supremacy

was shown in their firm seizure of the office of *vikalat*, which played a decisive role in electing the *sadr*.⁴⁶ Only in 940AH/1533CE was Shah Tahmasb able to wrest his imperial prerogatives from the Qizilbash and gradually reinstate his command over state affairs, which he maintained for 40 years.⁴⁷ As I will illustrate in this chapter, this historical period coincided with the eminence of al-Karaki at the Safavid court. This reality forces us to reexamine a dominant view in the secondary literature on the Safavids that the Qizilbash and the 'Amilis were enemies with irreconcilable ideological and political differences.

In addition to their internal affairs, the early Safavid Shahs contended with the Ottomans in the west and the Uzbek tribe in eastern Persia. The Uzbeks had become a threatening force in Transoxiana around 901AH/1495CE, under the leadership of Muhammad Shaibani Khan. The Uzbeks wanted to annex Khurasan and other territories controlled by the then ruling rival Timurid tribe and regain Herat, Khurasan's capital city. During Shah Tahmasb's reign, between 930 and 947AH (1524 to 1540CE), Safavid military contingents constantly warred with the Uzbeks and ultimately thwarted their expeditions.

Well before securing the Uzbeks' total retreat, the sixteen-year-old Shah Tahmasb had marched west to Baghdad in 936AH/1529CE to crush a revolt encouraged by the Ottomans.⁴⁸ Later, in 955AH/1548CE and again in 961AH/1554CE, Shah Tahmasb faced attacks by the Ottomans under Sultan Suleiman (r. 927–974AH/1520–1566CE). When it became clear that neither side had achieved a decisive victory, the Safavids and Ottomans concluded the Amasya treaty on 8 Rajab 962AH/29 May 1555CE. This first official peace between them lasted until 986AH/1578CE.⁴⁹

'Inventing' Shi'ism. Al-Karaki (d. 940AH/1533CE) as a Court Jurist

In Shah Tahmasb's early rule, the Qizilbash effectively held power and were eager to suppress the Persian aristocracy. Under the guidance of al-Karaki, the 'Amili *'ulama* and their allies first threatened the Persian aristocrats and succeeded in obtaining critical positions at the court.

Al-Karaki was the first major scholar to emigrate in the early sixteenth century CE from Jabal 'Amil to Najaf and from there to Persia.⁵⁰ He features in most biographical accounts as the 'pure' *mujtahid* and certified *'usuli*, namely, a scholar who uses rationalist methods to arrive at a legal opinion. Safavid records praise him for his profound religious knowledge and piety. Born to a family of jurists from Karak-Nuh in Ba'labak, al-Karaki studied with Ibn Khwatun al-'Amili and 'Ali b. Hilal al-Jaza'iri (d. 909–915AH/1504–10CE), who stood in the intellectual line of descent from the martyred al-Shahid.⁵¹ Beyond his 'Amili scholarship, al-Karaki received training in Syria, Egypt and Iraq.

Al-Karaki was eager to join the court of Shah Isma'il I. In this, he and succeeding 'Amili emigrants were a minority, because Shi'ite jurists, particularly in Iraq, rejected any association with temporal rule even under a Shi'ite sovereign like Shah Isma'il who claimed descent from the Seventh Imam. As long as the Twelfth Imam is in

hiding, conventional jurists continued to shun involvement in governmental institutions. Al-Karaki, like succeeding 'Amili theologians, never accepted claims by Safavid followers that the Shahs were the rightful Imams, and agreed that the political state of the Mahdi is the ideal legitimate form of authority for Shi'ites. Nonetheless, they considered the religious service and support, which a cleric renders to a 'just' ruler in the absence of the Imam, necessary and spiritually rewarding.⁵² Shi'ite law differentiated between the just and unjust ruler and considered the sovereignty of the latter illegitimate.⁵³ Adept and pious jurists can even assume the functions of the 'just' ruler during the period of awaiting the Mahdi, known as the Occultation (*ghayba*). Naturally, the new social processes emerging with the consolidation of the Safavid Empire sealed the approval and future popularity of al-Karaki's position. Several 'Amilis embraced court positions and imperial offerings which caused a decisive change in their material conditions and social status.

In 910AH/1504–5CE, almost a year after moving to Najaf's Shi'ite seminaries, he visited Shah Isma'il I in Isfahan.⁵⁴ The Shah was actively seeking the support of religious jurists to propagate and spread Twelver Shi'ism in the Safavids' newly conquered provinces of eastern Persia, but six years elapsed before al-Karaki and several other Shi'ite scholars in Najaf received an invitation to Herat and Mashhad. Around 916AH/1510CE, he was officially recognized as the Safavid's religious scholar in Iraq and received monetary funds from Shah Isma'il I to the great indignation of numerous theologians.⁵⁵ A year later, the Shah invited al-Karaki and a number of Shi'ite scholars in Najaf to Herat and Mashhad. In later years, al-Karaki made a few trips to the Safavid court where he witnessed the military preparations for the battle of Chaldiran against the Ottomans in 920AH/1514CE.⁵⁶

Toward the end of Shah Isma'il's reign, al-Karaki finally moved to central Iran and became so firmly established in his profession that he was mentioned with praise by the Safavid court historian Khwandamir.⁵⁷ Embroiled as he was in the extremist beliefs of his Sufi order and the Qizilbash perception of him as the incarnation of God, Isma'il I had not been able to uphold legalistic Twelver Shi'ism.⁵⁸ To ascertain his distinct authority as *mujtahid*, al-Karaki partook in the Safavid thrust to convert Persia from Sunnism to Shi'ism. The Safavids took severe measures against a number of Sunnite scholars when they felt it was politically expedient, as happened to Qadi Mir Husayn Yazdi in 909AH/1503–4CE, to the orators (*khatibs*) of Kazirun in the same year and to Khurasan's *shaykh al-Islam*, Farid al-Din Ahmad b. Yahya b. Muhammad b. Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani in 916AH/1510–11CE. It is unlikely that the *sadrs* were responsible for the implementation and propagation of Shi'ism even though they held exclusive administrative authority over theologians and judges.⁵⁹ The coercive measures used against the above Sunnite scholars were at odds with the 'Amili *mujtahids'* approach of self-conversion specifically championed by al-Karaki.⁶⁰ Al-Karaki preferred to refute Sunnite theological beliefs publicly among both Sunnites and Shi'ites so as to bring converts to Twelver Shi'ism based on their freely chosen, unequivocal adherence to the

rightful cause of the Imams.⁶¹ Al-Karaki believed this would initiate a wave of conversions to Shi'ism in Herat and achieve several subtle goals: the more peaceful spread of Shi'ism; the decrease in military use; and an increased respect for the *mujtahid's* role on both popular and court levels.

Isma'il I's son and successor Shah Tahmasb profoundly trusted the *sayyids* (descendants from the house of the Prophet), whose interests he consistently promoted through the office of *sadr*.⁶² *Sayyids* and clerics administered *awqaf* (endowments) and paid out stipends to renowned persons of the religious classes. During Shah Tahmasb's reign, recorded incidents of conflict between the *sadrs* and al-Karaki suggest that the latter had sufficient stature and power to challenge the authority of the former. Indicative of his position, al-Karaki caused on two occasions the dismissal of a *sadr*.⁶³

Amir Ni'matullah al-Hilli, an Iraqi scholar and notable, appointed *sadr* in 935AH/1528–9CE, was soon displeased by al-Karaki's impact on court decisions. At one time al-Hilli had been a student of al-Karaki, but under circumstances now obscure, al-Hilli developed an aversion toward him and withdrew from his study circle. Al-Hilli contacted a well-known Arab jurist, Shaykh Ibrahim al-Qatifi (d. after 945AH/1539CE), who had written a number of treatises refuting al-Karaki's legal opinions on Friday prayer, land tax and the licitness of accepting the gifts of the temporal ruler. Al-Qatifi also harbored a personal disaffection toward al-Karaki that went beyond disagreement on theological questions.⁶⁴ By about 937AH/1530–1CE, a group of Shi'ite *'ulama* who were either marginal to the Safavid court or had rejected association with it, allied themselves with al-Hilli. Among these were al-Mawla Husayn al-Ardabili and al-Qadi Musafir, who encouraged al-Hilli to debate with al-Karaki in front of Shah Tahmasb on the subject of Friday prayer during Occultation. They hoped to manage a strong blow to al-Karaki's status and credibility, and they found common cause with the Persian aristocrats of the Safavid bureaucracy. The Safavid chronicles describing the debate highlight al-Karaki's opposition among the aristocratic-administrative class. Among the named princes and state officials (*umara' va arkan-i dawlat-i shahi*) siding with Amir Ni'matullah al-Hilli were Mahmud Beg Mohrdar (the keeper of the seal) and 'Malik Beg Khu'i and others.⁶⁵ The Persian Jamal al-Din Muhammad Astarabadi, who was *sadr* under Shahs Isma'il I and Tahmasb, remained true to his social group and did not prevent the skirmish with al-Karaki. After first joining al-Karaki's law (*fiqh*) lessons, Astarabadi later pretended to be ill and absented himself from his lectures, specifically those during which al-Karaki advanced his own commentary on al-'Allama al-Hilli's *Al-Qawa'id*. Resentment against al-Karaki was so deep that an anonymous enemy or enemies forged a letter charging al-Karaki with obscene attacks and slurs against Shah Tahmasb.⁶⁶ The letter was dropped in Sahib Abad in the Tabrizi court of the Shah. The Shah investigated the matter and found that Amir Ni'matullah al-Hilli was implicated because he had knowledge of it. Consequently, the Shah expelled Amir Ni'matullah al-Hilli from Persia to Baghdad.

Another member of the Persian aristocratic class, Mir Ghiyath al-Din al-Dashtaki al-Shirazi (d. 948AH/1540CE) had been joint *sadr* with Amir Ni'matullah al-Hilli. For some time after al-Hilli's exile, Ghiyath al-Din was the sole *sadr*, and he strove to balance Turkoman Qizilbash and Persians in the highest state offices while also attempting to prevent the Qizilbash from seizing all power. He soon 'got off on the wrong foot with Shaikh 'Ali,' that is al-Karaki.⁶⁷ The Dashtakis, apparently originally Sunnites, were believed to have carried into Safavid times no more than a veneer of dissimulating Shi'ism.⁶⁸ Around the late fifteenth century CE, the Dashtakis started to integrate Shi'ite *hadith* in their writings instead of relying exclusively on Sunni sources.⁶⁹

Given the well-known Sunni origins of the Dashtaki family, it is noteworthy that Mir Ghiyath al-Din occupied the *sadarat* and was charged with some religious functions. For one, the Shah ordered him to send a reply to the Ottoman sultan who had condemned the Safavid *tabarra'iyan* practice of vilifying the first three Sunni caliphs, 'Umar, Abu Bakr and 'Uthman. Mir Ghiyath al-Din was to expound to the sultan the justification for prostrating to the Shah, when the Ottomans found permissible prostration only to God.⁷⁰ The propositions that Ghiyath al-Din gave supporting the former practice were devoid of an adept Shi'ite jurist's conventional legalistic or *hadith*-based arguments. He also found prostration to the Shah analogous to the angel's prostration to Adam when God revealed it to them to do so. In contrast, al-Karaki showed no compunction about denouncing prostration altogether, insisting that it encouraged Sunnites to view Shi'ism as non-Islamic and by implication 'heretical'. Al-Karaki's argument, however, did not have a lasting impact, for the practice of *zamin-bus* and '*atabeh-bus* (kneeling and prostrating) continued.⁷¹

Like other notables, Ghiyath al-Din, who had called al-Karaki an 'ignoramus', must have resented his intrusion in matters the *sadrs* once governed and regulated. He disagreed with al-Karaki on a number of legal questions relating to practical religious observances, especially the direction of prayer (*qibla*), which al-Karaki had altered in the regions of Iraq, Arab and Khurasan.⁷² Mir Ghiyath al-Din insisted that designating the *qibla* fell within the expertise of mathematicians, not jurists. Arguing from what seemed a legal and logical position, he declared that al-Karaki's attempt to change the *qibla* in all the mosques of Iraq 'Ajam with the full approval of Shah Tahmasb, even if proven correct, could not be delivered without a geometric illustration that would display all the calculations and provide justification for what did not fall within al-Karaki's expertise. Although al-Karaki emerged unscathed in these debates, Ghiyath al-Din did not find al-Karaki's legal opinions acceptable let alone binding.⁷³ Mir Ghiyath al-Din, like several Persian aristocrats rejected al-Karaki's claims to authoritative religious leadership. Tellingly, on the *qibla* issue, Shah Tahmasb upheld al-Karaki's viewpoint, and the Shah eventually dismissed Ghiyath al-Din from office in 939AH/1532CE.⁷⁴

During the same year, and as a sign of al-Karaki's eminence at the court, Shah Tahmasb issued a royal decree (*farman*) declaring him the deputy (*na'ib*) of the

Imam and giving him the title 'Seal of the Jurisconsults' (*khatam al-mujtahidin*).⁷⁵ Al-Karaki reinforced the legal rules of religious observances with such rigor and alacrity and went 'to such extreme limits' in disseminating the Imami *madhhab* that some nicknamed him 'the inventor of Shi'ite religion'.⁷⁶ With Mir Ghiyath al-Din removed, the office of *sadr* was then conferred, in accordance with the wishes of 'the Seal of Jurisconsults' (that is al-Karaki), on Mir Mu'izz al-Din Muhammad Isfahani (938–944AH/1531–2 to 1537–8CE), who was 'a paragon of scholarship and a practical man'.⁷⁷ Before the advent of Mir Mu'izz al-Din, al-Karaki acted as the interim sole *sadr* with full authority to appoint deputies and agents. These developments point to the shifting social boundaries between the aristocratic and the clerical elite. They also reflect the unstable fluctuating nature of the *sadarat* during the early reign of Shah Tahmasb. After the Shah had wrested control from the Qizilbash in 940AH/1533CE, the Persian aristocracy firmly regained the office of *sadr*. Mir Mu'izz al-Din remained *sadr* for six years and was succeeded by Mir Shams al-Din Asadullah Mar'ashi Shushtari, who remained in office until his death in 963AH/1555–6CE.

Despite their varied religious backgrounds and beliefs, al-Karaki and the Turkoman Qizilbash seem to have coalesced at several occasions to promote their interests within the world of court maneuvers and intrigues. In 936AH/1532CE, shortly following al-Karaki's dispute with Ghiyath al-Din, the Turkoman leader Chuha Sultan was appointed the tutor of Bahram Mirza, the son of Shah Tahmasb. On his trip from Herat to Isfahan stopping by at Yazd, Chuha Sultan was accompanied by al-Karaki, and the two arrived together at Isfahan.⁷⁸ As military men, the Turkoman *amirs* would not have viewed with suspicion al-Karaki's influence on filing the religious ranks, for they had competed only once with the Persian aristocracy over the post of *shaykh al-Islam*.⁷⁹ On the other hand, the Qizilbash struggled relentlessly with the Persian *vakils* over political influence. They tried to undermine the *vakil's* function, except in the case of Najm al-Din 'Abd al-Baqi (d. 920AH/1514CE) – mostly because he devoted more time to religious matters than to secular administration.⁸⁰ The *sadrs*, however, having seen how the Shah invested al-Karaki with power, titles and economic grants, were in the more difficult position of a professional class whose territory had been trespassed upon.⁸¹ The Persian historian and notable Qadi Ahmad Ghaffari (d. 975AH/1567–8CE) expressed the deep-seated resentment his aristocratic class had for the 'Amili clerics and questioned their imprudent requisition of the title '*ulama*, 'the learned'.⁸² In comparison, the Turkoman historian Hasan-i Beg Rumlu cast al-Karaki in a favorable light, and ranked him above Ghiyath al-Din, the Persian *sadr*.⁸³ Iskandar Beg Munshi, another Turkoman historian, showed great admiration and respect toward 'Amili '*ulama*, with the exception of al-Karaki's grandson, Husayn al-Mujtahid, whose excessive assumption of honorific titles triggered only Munshi's mild criticism.

While Shah Tahmasb seemed determined to promote the Syrian 'Amili clerics, it is unlikely that he was solely or independently successful at that.⁸⁴ On the one hand, he felt secure in strengthening the position of the early 'Amilis, who had no ties to the powerful and contending groups in Safavid society and who easily became

loyal supporters. (Even so, al-Karaki played on Tahmasb's fears and inexperience.) On the other hand, the young Tahmasb's decisions about religious policies and their political implications facilitated the goals of both the Qizilbash and al-Karaki, odd allies as they were. The most decisive of these choices was the extent to which Shah Tahmasb succumbed to the scriptural and legal regulations of religious life and distanced himself from the more heterodox and millenarian features of his Sufi upbringing.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, Shah Tahmasb's resistance to the Persian notables' pressures clearly meant that the Qizilbash implicitly if not actively endorsed the Shah's movement toward an 'Amili-fostered Twelver Shi'ism. Curiously, the Qizilbash *amirs* did not foresee the long-term effect of clerical Shi'ism and the way in which it gradually eroded their own mystical and heterodox milieu. It is also important to note that the Qizilbash did not act as one unified ethnic group. Rather, the high-ranking leaders became gradually more open to mainstream Shi'ism (as I will show in my discussion of the period of Shah Isma'il II) even when the general tribal populace expressed diverse anti-clerical sentiments. This can be explained by the fact that the Qizilbash *amirs* had a vested interest in preserving the empire and were themselves organs of the new state. Even if they had initially rejected 'orthodox' Islam, the *amirs* started to entertain elements of it or contradictory heterodox and orthodox doctrines simultaneously. They felt a *shari'a*-based Islam could be of good service to their political careers. Unlike millenarian, mystical, or shamanistic precepts, clerical Islam can develop a wide, stable, legitimate and consensual basis for the state.

Al-Karaki's life and other 'Amilis' experiences in general do not support the idea that they stood ethnically apart from Persian society or were a non-assimilative group.⁸⁶ That idea pays little attention to the Safavid Persian social landscape in which the immigrant 'Amilis lived and to which their legal decisions responded. Tensions between the Arab and Persian scholars were an outcome, frequently but not always stated in ethnic terms, of their competition to influence policy decisions and obtain posts at court. Indicative of al-Karaki's efforts to build ties of friendship and professional support among the Persian aristocrats was his nomination of Mir Mu'izz al-Din Muhammad Isfahani and later Mir Asadullah Shushtari for the *sadarat*. Al-Karaki also forged important ties with Persian families through intermarriage; at least two of his daughters married into the Astarabadi family.⁸⁷ Among the Astarabadis, al-Karaki had friends, students and followers in juridical method.

Friday Prayer: Tailoring Shi'ism to Statehood

Friday prayer, also referred to as congregational prayer, is the weekly assembly for the fulfillment of worship. Friday worship has two cycles of prostration (*rak'as*) and is followed by a sermon (*khutba*). The sermon is an integral part of the religious service, without which it would not even be valid. From the early days of Islam, congregational prayer and the sermon were a manifestation of the ruler's authority and legitimacy. Sovereigns normally led Friday prayer or appointed a special deputy

to fulfill this duty. For the most part, however, Shi'ites viewed the rule of Sunnite caliphs and sultans as a usurpation of the rights of their Imams, the descendants of 'Ali and Fatima. Consequently, they rejected participation in Friday prayer.⁸⁸

As the Safavid Sufi order grew into a ruling apparatus, the Shahs found themselves in need of the same legitimizing symbols and emblems used by Sunnite rulers and manifest in Friday prayer. A decade after the investiture of Shah Isma'il, many people seemed confused and uncertain about the legal status of Friday prayer during Occultation.⁸⁹ Shah Isma'il was determined to publicize his newly acclaimed sovereignty in Persia through the Friday prayer sermon. On the eve of his campaign against the city of Tabriz, Shah Isma'il was warned by his advisors about the hazards of promulgating Shi'ism as the empire's religion in a city of which two-thirds was Sunnite. He reassured them of his ability to crush any resistance, but could not help but feel perturbed. Soon he was comforted by a dream in which Imam 'Ali advised him on a strategy to overcome his enemies, the Aq Quyunlu:

Let the Qizilbash be present in the mosque fully armed, encircling the worshippers; if anyone makes a move when the *khutba* (formal address in a mosque) is recited, the Qizilbash will be able to contain the situation.⁹⁰

Clearly, the Shah found the performance of Friday prayer in his name a central step toward the reinforcement of state authority.

Al-Karaki was among the earliest Shi'ite clerics to lift the prohibition against the convening of Friday prayer, encouraging full participation in this ritual. In 921AH/1515CE, he defended his position, emphasizing the merits of Friday worship and its special place in Islamic tradition. Notwithstanding, he made it optional (*al-wujub al-takhyiri*) rather than obligatory (*al-wujub al-'ayni*) for one to observe Friday prayer. He declared that congregational prayer must be held by a designated *mujtahid* who is qualified to act as the general deputy of the Hidden Imam.⁹¹ Only in the presence of such a *mujtahid* or the Imam himself is it absolutely necessary for Shi'ites to perform Friday prayer.⁹² Al-Karaki insisted the *mujtahid* does not need a special appointment from the Hidden Imam to perform Friday prayer. A general deputyship is sufficient. Nowhere did al-Karaki state that the sovereign should identify the deputy of the Imam. Only a high-ranking cleric and legal expert can determine who is qualified to be the general deputy of the Imam. In retrospect, al-Karaki extended to the jurist a socio-political base somewhat independent from the sovereign.

Al-Karaki's views about Friday prayer were unpopular among his fellow theologians. The latter refused to acknowledge the Safavid state and insisted that Friday prayer should not be performed until the advent of the Hidden Imam. Curiously, Arab and Persian scholars at the Safavid court and outside publicly challenged al-Karaki's views on Friday prayer. Possibly, al-Karaki's emphasis on the pivotal role of the jurist in convening Friday prayer angered the *sadrs*. The latter feared clerics would promote their exclusive rights in performing Friday prayer, and hence strengthen their ties to the monarch and the public. Ultimately,

al-Karaki was attempting to embellish the cleric with the power of legitimizing the Safavid Empire and validating its religious foundations. The opposition he incurred perhaps explains why Friday prayer was not widely practiced during his time and remained in abeyance several decades after his death.⁹³

From Marginality to Privilege

In their Syrian hometowns, 'Amili scholars found it difficult to join the Ottoman learned hierarchy or for that matter to earn a livelihood on the basis of their scholarly expertise.⁹⁴ The Ottoman learned hierarchy had provided the state with a steady supply of able scholars, but it was vitiated by increasing power of its high-ranking '*ulama* and the preferential treatment they extended to their family descendants. At some time during the sixteenth century it became the rule, for example, for sons of judges to be appointed directly to a 40-*aksh*e school, after completion of their religious education, and for sons of *muftis* and *hojas* to be appointed directly to external and even internal schools.⁹⁵ 'Amili scholars strove to attain permanent or adequate teaching posts at Ottoman schools with sufficient funds to cover the teacher's expenses and student stipends.⁹⁶ For instance, al-Shahid al-Thani, a distinguished 'Amili scholar, led a modest and austere life in the village of Juba' in Jabal 'Amil. He taught by day, carried wood for his family on his donkey at night and occasionally tended his vineyard.⁹⁷ He engaged in commerce to survive, selling ropes or strips and traveling to distant locations to distribute them.⁹⁸

The material conditions of the 'Amili émigré scholars shifted dramatically under the patronage of the Safavid sovereigns. The latter granted the '*ulama* economic privileges, gifts and honorific titles. This brought to the fore disagreements among the Shi'ite '*ulama* regionally over the legitimacy of accepting the offerings of temporal rulers like Shah Isma'il I who do not represent the ideal Shi'ite state of the Hidden Imam.⁹⁹ Sometime between 914AH/1508CE and 916AH/1510CE, al-Karaki reproached Ibrahim b. Sulayman al-Qatifi (d. after 945AH/1539CE) for refusing the gifts of Shah Isma'il and insisted that it was permissible and even favorable for him to do so. Al-Karaki had accepted many land grants from the Shah in the region of Najaf as a hereditary endowment including the revenues of land tax (*kharaj*).¹⁰⁰ It seems that several Shi'ite '*ulama* denounced al-Karaki's position and disapproved of his use of *kharaj* sources in his Iraqi residence.¹⁰¹ Indeed, al-Karaki's practices seemed unprecedented among Shi'ite scholars who remained largely marginal to Islamic governments before the sixteenth century CE. Al-Karaki strove to show that jurists could cooperate and lend service to a just political authority, even if it were illegitimate (that is a state not founded by the Hidden Imam).¹⁰² During Occultation, the Shi'ite '*ulama* were also entitled to receive financial support from *kharaj* revenues even if these were administered by an unjust ruler. Al-Karaki even argued that his tenure in the Iraqi village given to him by Shah Isma'il I had profited its inhabitants!¹⁰³ Conquered by the Shah, the Iraqi territory in question and its *kharaj* should be used to benefit Muslims and strengthen Twelver

Shi'ism; a model, al-Karaki argued, was set by Imam 'Ali himself.¹⁰⁴ By all standards, al-Karaki's legal views were novel, signaling a fundamental historical transformation in the economic and political conditions of the Shi'ite jurists.

The decree which Shah Tahmasb issued recognizing al-Karaki as the deputy of the Imam extended an exclusive authority to a Shi'ite jurist for the first time in Safavid history. The idea was not innovative; earlier Shi'ite scholars had discussed the form of deputyship in matters of religious law and practice that the jurist was supposed to assume during Occultation. Under the Safavids this largely nonpolitical concept referred only to a religious form of deputyship. Yet al-Karaki pursued it with great intensity, furnishing the jurist with an opportunity for modifying those legalistic matters that also carried considerable political weight.¹⁰⁵ As early as 916AH/1510CE, and preceding the royal recognition in the *farman*, al-Karaki designated himself the deputy of the Imam.¹⁰⁶ Al-Karaki was eager to awaken the political aspects of Shi'ism and resolve the paradox caused by the Occultation. The Occultation denoted that earthly advancement for individuals and political aspirations for groups would remain in stasis until the re-manifestation of the Imam or his designate appeared. The rise of the powerful Safavid state, which declared Shi'ism its official religion, permitted al-Karaki and others to inscribe a Shi'ite reinterpretation of temporal authority and to create, through the jurist, more solid connections between state and society and between political and religious jurisdictions.

Equally significant, the *farman* was the earliest indication of the privileged economic status the Shi'ite *'ulama* had begun to enjoy in Persia. The *farman* decreed that:

The agricultural estates of Kabisa and Dawalib... adjacent to the river of the holy Najaf... the cultivated lands of Umm al-'Azmat and the Khain al-Wa'd lands of Ramahiyya that he [al-Karaki] has brought into cultivation be made endowment (*waqf*) for him, and for his descendents after him, according to the correct procedure of the Sacred Law as specified in the deed of endowment... The officials must give the above sum priority over all receipts and drafts and not pay a single dinar to anyone until it has reached his deputies (*vukala'*).¹⁰⁷

Shah Tahmasb conferred on al-Karaki a hereditary *waqf* of extensive land holdings annually valued at 700 tumans. In further official recognition of al-Karaki, one of his sons, 'Abd al-'Ali, and his grandson Husayn were each given the appellation the '*Mujtahid* of the Age', which was not afterwards extended to other *'ulama*. Later, during the second half of the seventeenth century CE, acclaimed *mujtahids* were very few, and at times none might be alive.¹⁰⁸ The notable Persian elite uneasily acknowledged such titles for the 'Amili *'ulama*.¹⁰⁹ Shah Tahmasb acknowledged al-Karaki's son 'Abd al-'Ali even more than his brother Hasan, although neither enjoyed the great influence and glamour accorded to their father, al-Karaki. 'Abd al-'Ali, depicted as the undisputed 'second *mujtahid*' of his time, held no significant posts in the Safavid capital but resided away from the heated political scene of the court

in Kashan, where he delivered regular teaching sessions.¹¹⁰ As for his brother Hasan, no biographical records are present for him in the major Safavid chronicles or biographical dictionaries, raising the question: was there a deliberate effort after al-Karaki's death to curtail the influence of his family and to avoid making his position a hereditary post? Complaints about al-Karaki's influence may have caused the Shah to distance himself for some time from al-Karaki's successors.

'Orthodoxy': Ostracizing Sufis and Storytellers

Early clerics like al-Karaki competed against powerful rivals over religious custody of Safavid subjects. Aside from striving to convert the majority of Persians from Sunnism to Shi'ism, he had to discredit folk Shi'ite concepts and Sufi practices that had taken root among many Persians and Turkomans, particularly in trade and artisan guilds.

In his famous work, *Refuting the Criminal Invectives of Mysticism (Mata'in al-Mujrimiyya fi Radd al-Sufiyya)*, composed around 937AH/1530CE, al-Karaki defines Shi'ite 'orthodoxy' of the empire on the basis of scriptural and legal accountability that is exclusively provided by the legal experts, the jurists.¹¹¹ The latter struggled to set Shi'ism apart from the mystical and cultist practices that impregnated the decentralized, polyphonic world of pre-Safavid Persia. Most disconcerting for al-Karaki was the deification of Abu Muslim al-Khurasani (d. 138AH/755CE) in several Persian and Qizilbash Sufi traditions, which embellished him as a pro-'Alid hero who plotted to destroy the Sunnite Umayyad Caliphate and bring a Shi'ite state to power. In public resorts and social gatherings of Persian cities and towns, storytellers recited one of the most esteemed and endearing epic-romances of the time, the *Abu Muslim Namah*. The epic embellished Abu Muslim with qualities of ideal manliness and chivalry characteristic of the traditions of *futuwwat*, Muslim youth fraternities, which emerged in the medieval Islamic period. Evidently, al-Karaki was keen on making his views accessible to the educated and lay community alike, mainly through translations of his refutations from Arabic into Persian at the hand of his student Muhammad b. Ishaq Hamawi. Al-Karaki presented Abu Muslim as a treacherous opportunist who struck a temporary friendship with the 'Alids to guarantee their support of the 'Abbasids against the Umayyads.¹¹² He blamed the storytellers for tampering with historical facts and noted how Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam (d. 148AH/765CE) had prohibited believers from listening to storytellers and warned that listening attentively or obsessively to a storyteller would lead one to worship him!¹¹³ Anyone who upheld the Imamate of Abu Muslim or bestowed divine qualities on him, as the members of the Abu Muslimiyya, Khurramiyya and Jirmaniyya cults did, was a heretic. Al-Karaki explained that Prophet Muhammad said in one Shi'ite Tradition: 'The Imams succeeding me are twelve and those who claim more or less are infidels'.¹¹⁴ To counteract and marginalize the Abu Muslim cult, al-Karaki issued a *fatwa* calling for the public cursing of Abu Muslim and placing a ban on storytellers who recited his epic.¹¹⁵

The social context and political implications of al-Karaki's onslaught on the cult of Abu Muslim are significant, given the fact that he was the first major cleric of the Safavids. At some time during his reign, Shah Isma'il I decided to uproot the Abu Muslim cult and interdicted against the mausoleum dedicated to Abu Muslim, despite the fact that several of his Sufi followers embraced the epic stories of Abu Muslim.¹¹⁶ In this light, al-Karaki's *fatwa* was only marginally directed against the Qizilbash and mildly effective at that. Three additional treatises were composed a century later showing that the Abu Muslim heterodoxy was partially suppressed and confined but not eliminated.¹¹⁷

At the lower levels of Safavid society stood not only the small merchants of the cities, but also the artisans and the shopkeepers and the rural peasants.¹¹⁸ The local trade and artisan guilds featured prominently in public life and secured an official channel of communication with the government. The *futuwwat* ideals attracted the poor and the dervishes and emerged into a vehicle for lower-class political dissent and 'unorthodoxy'.¹¹⁹ The socio-religious values of the male youth fraternities, encapsulated in manuals (*futuwwat-nama*), were promoted by a Sufi master. The *futuwwat* tradition fostered popular panegyrics (*manaqib*) expounding the feats of the 'Alids, and the virtues of Imam 'Ali (*fada'il-khwanan*), best represented in the poems of 'Abd al-Jalil Razi (sixth century AH/twelfth century CE). From that time, fraternity members in Persia delivered these narratives and eulogies for the martyred Imam Husayn in public places, particularly the bazaars. Curiously, the *futuwwat* milieu also became a bedrock for devotional folk Shi'ism as well as Sunnite *ahl al-bayt* pietistic attitudes. In Persia, expressions of these tendencies ranged from panegyrics recanting the feats and virtues of the 'Alids, to popular eulogy for the martyred hero-Imam, Husayn.¹²⁰ During the fifteenth century CE, Kamal al-Din Husayn Sabzavar, also known by the pen-name, Kashif (d. 910AH/1504CE), laid down *Rawdat al-Shuhada'*, the first Persian work on the sufferings of the house of 'Ali and the great martyrs of Karbala. Kashif belonged to a youth fraternity where he emerged as a chivalrous local hero (*javanmard*). His writings underscored the affinity between Shi'ite popular eulogies and elegies on the one hand and the *futuwwat* subculture on the other.¹²¹ By the late Safavid period, themes of heroism, chivalry and noble manliness familiar to the social and spiritual system of *futuwwat* could be gleaned in the recital of the suffering of the third Imam, Husayn son of 'Ali (d. 61AH/680CE). These recitals known as the *rowzeh-khani* and the 'passion play' (*ta'ziyeh*) commemorating the death of Imam Husayn were ritualized and encouraged by the *ulama* and the rulers.¹²²

Al-Karaki, like most jurists, also viewed with suspicion the close association between guild traditions and Sufism and the artisans' libertine and often callous adaptation of the *shari'a*. Guild members abided by the fraternity's internal laws, which they viewed as superior and more sacred than the jurist's authority. Whatever seemed in past decades the religious domain of the guild masters was now seen as the responsibility of the jurist.

We learn that around 939AH/1533CE a man complained to al-Karaki about the claims and influence of a well-known guildsman who had attracted a considerable

following among artisans.¹²³ Al-Karaki resented the fact that the 'blasphemous' guildsman acted as a legal authority, issuing opinions and rulings, which were binding to his followers. Any person joining the ranks of the guild or taking up a craft must meet the approval of this man and take the oath of allegiance. Al-Karaki, who was by then the 'seal of jurisconsults', declared such activity a violation of the *shari'a* and described the guildsman as a cursed adulterer and liar.¹²⁴ In this and other instances, there is a consistent identification between guild and Sufi orders. The jurists were struggling to provide religious guidance for the urban lower classes whose artisans and guildsmen drew upon popular Sufi creed and possibly the *futuwwat* heritage. Notably, al-Karaki directed a subtle criticism at 'government officials' for their inexcusable leniency toward guilds leaders given their obvious disdain for clerics. The Safavid rulers used various methods to control the guilds, but clearly, as al-Karaki's complaints show, the rulers interfered little in the guilds' internal religious practices, since their primary concern was fiscal.¹²⁵

On another occasion, al-Karaki openly chastised two Sufi groups, the Qalandaris and the Marinis, alongside the artisans for following spiritual leaders who undermined the sacred law.¹²⁶ These leaders, al-Karaki stated, had declared licit what God had otherwise forbidden, such as the shaving of beards, mustaches and eyebrows. Al-Karaki encouraged his community to ostracize these leaders and humiliate them publicly. Shaykh Hasan, the son of al-Muhaqqiq al-Karaki, also took up the crusade against the Sufis in his work 'The Chief Proposition on the Infidelity of the Misguided' (*'Umdat al-Maqal fi Kufr Ahl al-Dalal*). He first expounded then denounced the doctrines of the incarnation of God (*hulul*) in the bodies of Gnostics (*'arifs*), the belief that God is the soul of existence and that every existing being is God. He branded the advocates of such doctrines with infidelity, adultery and blasphemy.¹²⁷

Apparently, the struggle between the clerics on the one hand and *futuwwat* Tradition and popular Sufism on the other had just started. During this struggle, the *'ulama* felt it necessary to emphasize devotional literature alongside observance of *shari'a*. They gradually developed parallel and competing religious symbolisms that carried some of the attraction of the *futuwwat* narratives.

Instruments of Conversion. Public Cursing

The approach that the early Safavid sovereigns took toward Persia's Sunnite population was complex and multifaceted. Sunnite notables continued to feature as courtiers, bureaucrats and dissimulating prayer leaders.¹²⁸ Among the Persian aristocrats, Sunnite bureaucrats were bound to the empire by strings of political interest and economic benefit. Rosemary Stanfield Johnson convincingly argued that Shah Tahmasb considered the opinion of the Sunnite aristocrats of Qazvin when furnishing his state policies.¹²⁹ In general, as long as Sunnites refrained from an open display of their religious affiliation, they were mostly unharmed. The lower strata, however, were the focus of systematic Safavid efforts at conversion from Sunnism to Shi'ism.

In 917AH/1511CE, al-Karaki wrote an elaborate treatise, entitled 'Breath of Divinity in Cursing Magic and Idolatry' (*Nafahat al-Lahut fi La'n al-Jibt wa'l-Taghut*), denouncing the foundations of Sunnite political claims and religious emblems.¹³⁰ His treatise served a double aim: to supply Safavid officials with an ideological defense against the Ottomans and embellish the superiority and religious 'authenticity' of Shi'ism for Safavid subjects. Magic and idolatry were allegorical references to the first two Caliphs, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, whom Sunnites hold in high esteem. Al-Karaki invoked the Qur'an and Tradition to demonstrate that cursing the two was not merely licit but even commendable. He pointed to two Qur'anic verses: 'and when there cometh unto them that which they know (to be the truth) they disbelieve therein. The curse of Allah is on disbelievers' and 'Lo! Those who disbelieve, and die while they are disbelievers; on them is the curse of Allah and of angels and of men combined'.¹³¹ Imam 'Ali, he added, also expressed his devotion to God by cursing his political opponents like Mu'awiya and his agent 'Amru b. al-'As, among others. The defamation and slander of Sunnites is a complementary part of one's faith and carries great spiritual value and reward!

Following this dramatic attack on Sunnism, al-Karaki turned his efforts to the interpretation of *hadith* sections to provide proofs for the right cause of Imam 'Ali and his progeny through Fatima and the universality of the Imamate.¹³² Al-Karaki rejected the prohibitions which Sunnite schools of law have against the unconditional use of rational inference (*ijtihad*) and defended it.¹³³

As 'Breath of Divinity' attests, al-Karaki played a pioneering role in promulgating the practice of public cursing, known as *tabarra'iyān*. A retinue of Shi'ite devotees regularly roamed around the city cursing Abu Bakr and 'Umar. The Safavid Empire, however, was far from secure about its religious foundations and was still struggling with rivaling forces from within as much as from without. Sanctified by the Safavid sovereigns and coveted by Qizilbash and Persian elements alike, the public cursing of Sunnism was an effective tool for setting sharper boundaries between Sunnism and Shi'ism. It made allegiance to the latter almost inconceivable without a rejection of the former. Indeed, the pre-Safavid world harbored fluid and open exchanges between the two. Several Sunnite Persian notables were even sympathetic to Shi'ism.¹³⁴ Extreme expressions of Shi'ite affiliation served the particular political goals of the new empire.

Translating and Transporting the Word of Law

Needless to say, the layperson and the elite classes alike found legalistic Shi'ism and the 'Amili juridical works hardly comprehensible, especially since most of them were written in Arabic. This was a major impediment, first, to conversion from Sunnism to Shi'ism and, second, to the promotion of a standardized religious practice capable of providing a stable legitimate basis for the empire, internally and externally. Several 'Amili émigré *'ulama* including al-Karaki, 'Ali al-Minshar, and Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad spent a few years in Persia before they assumed the functions of

shaykh al-Islam. They must have become well versed in the Persian language. Al-Karaki traveled considerably within the empire and relied on a network of Persian students and agents to transport his rulings to numerous towns and cities. He visited Herat, Kashan and Tabriz mostly for the purpose of disseminating the Shi'ite creed and ensuring conformity with the Shi'ite school of law, known as the *Ja'fari*.¹³⁵ In Kashan, he paid great attention to public affairs, adjudicating in diverse matters, mediating between feuding parties, and executing his rulings.¹³⁶

Safavid sources shed further light on the method in which al-Karaki's opinions became authoritative and binding in remote parts of the empire. Shah Tahmasb decreed to all provincial governors to adopt the religious directives of al-Karaki, whom he described as 'the deputy of the Imam'.¹³⁷ For his part, al-Karaki provided the governors with a manual (*dustur al-'amal*) instructing them on various socio-economic matters, particularly the collection and administration of land tax. He set the legal punishments (*hudud*) and encouraged the performance of Friday prayer.¹³⁸ He specifically called for the appointment of a prayer leader in every village and city and gave him clear instructions as how to carry out his tasks. By 'force or by the power of conviction', many embraced religious learning and adhered to Shi'ite ritual.

During the reign of Shah Isma'il, one of the provincial Safavid rulers commanded the translation of *Al-Alfiyya*, a classic compendium of Shi'ite law written by al-Shahid, from Arabic into Persian.¹³⁹ The court historian, Khwandamir, noted that al-Karaki's commentary on the *Al-Alfiyya* and his own treatise on worship and ablution, known as 'Al-Risala al-Ja'fariyya', were widespread among Persians.¹⁴⁰ Serious translation efforts ensued among Persian scholars, the most noteworthy of whom was 'Ali b. al-Hasan al-Zawari (alive around 947AH/1540CE), a student of al-Karaki.¹⁴¹ Al-Zawari focused on Shi'ite doctrinal works, Tradition, Qur'anic exegesis and popular literature. He translated various works into Persian, such as *Al-Ihtijaj* by al-Fadil b. Hasan al-Tabarsi (d. 548AH/1153CE), *Al-I'tiqad* by Ibn Babuya al-Qummi (d. 381AH/991CE), and *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, attributed to Imam Hasan al-'Askari, and *Sharh al-Arba'in Hadithan* by al-Shahid. Al-Zawari also wrote a commentary on the popular work *Nahj al-Balagha* by al-Sharif al-Murtada.¹⁴²

Similarly, under Shah Tahmasb, Mir Sayyid Husayn al-Mujtahid (d. 1001AH/1592-3CE), the grandson of al-Karaki, was directly involved in arbitration among the populace and the local elite alike. He held court hearings among the army personnel.¹⁴³ He issued injunctions on a wide array of topics and registered his rulings as part of the official ascriptions. As Willem Floor noted, the *shaykh al-Islam* wielded great power and delegated authority not only in the capital city but in the provinces as well.¹⁴⁴ Sanson wrote that the *shaykh al-Islam* was 'the Judge that dispatches most business. He is Chief of the Law-Colleges, and constantly reads upon it his Subaltern Officers every Wednesday and Saturday'.¹⁴⁵

Simplified and concise legal manuals, translated into Persian and short enough to be committed to memory, became essential guides for a systematic application of Shi'ite precepts in everyday life. Al-Karaki's *Jami' al-Maqasid*, for instance, was at the time the most accessible commentary on the legal work *Qawa'id al-Ahkam* by al-'Allama

al-Hilli.¹⁴⁶ During the sixteenth century, 'Amili clerics like al-Karaki, 'Abd al-'Ali (d. 993AH/1585CE) and Hasan, his sons, Mir Sayyid Husayn, his grandson, 'Ali b. Hilal al-Karaki, known as al-Minshar (d. 984AH/1577CE), and Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad al-Juba'i al-'Amili (d. 984AH/1576CE) devoted much attention to positive law (*furu'*), particularly acts of worship (*'ibadat*) and contracts (*'uqud*). But by far the most extensive legal works circled around ritual purity and worship, ablution (*wudu'*), direction of prayer, and Friday prayer. (See Appendix III) Almost all the works on Shi'ite Tradition produced by the mid sixteenth century were authored by Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad. Equally significant during the early Safavid reign was the composition of original polemical works against Sunnism and Sufism. Except for Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad who expressed a marked interest in literature, ethics and 'classical' Sufism, the 'Amili scholars were jurists par excellence who defined their religious outlook and profession in legalistic terms. (See Appendix III)

Afterthoughts

By the time al-Karaki died in 940AH/1533CE, the words and actions of 'Amili jurists bore great moral, social and political weight. Before the year 940AH/1533CE ended, an otherwise unknown émigré prayer leader (*pish-namaz*) at the imperial camp of Shah Tahmasb, Sayyid Muhammad Jabal 'Amili (d. 968AH/1560CE), saw the Prophet in a dream portending that if the Shah were to interdict prohibited acts, he would achieve a victorious conquest of his enemies' regions.¹⁴⁷ (Although the historian Munshi gave no details, he noted that during 939–940AH/1533–34CE Shah Tahmasb was in Herat intending to invade Transoxiana to defeat the Uzbeks and subjugate their leader, 'Ubayd Khan.¹⁴⁸ In the same year, the Shah received the alarming news that Sultan Suleiman had invaded Azerbaijan and Persian Iraq, which forced him to direct his military expeditions westward.) When Sayyid Muhammad Jabal 'Amili related his dream to the Safavid royalty, courtiers and *viziers*, they decided to act upon it but could not understand what those prohibited acts were to which the Prophet was referring in the dream. They hoped to be guided by another vision or sign. The following night, a distinguished notable saw in a dream humans and demons prostrating to the Tenth Imam, 'Mir Hadi Musavi Muhtasib' 'Ali al-Hadi (d. 254AH/868CE), holding his hand and repenting for alcohol drinking, adultery and homosexuality. When the distinguished notable narrated his dream to the Safavid princes, they professed repentance from such practices among themselves and among government officials. They then issued a command prohibiting alcohol, gambling and other similar acts.¹⁴⁹ They further decreed that the large amount allotted annually to the taverns, gambling houses, brothels and places serving electuary (a fermented medicinal paste or drink made in part with honey and herbs) would be deducted from coffers of the collective provinces and offices.

By the end of al-Karaki's life, he had overseen the recognition in the Safavid court and Persian society of both Twelver Shi'ism and its immigrant communities

of 'Amili, Iraqi and Bahraini *'ulama*. Through his calculated exposition of Twelver scholarship on *hadith* and law, al-Karaki had instituted roles at the Shah's court and in society for the émigré scholars that deftly combined their religious duties and privileges with temporal roles. Consequently, some Twelver Shi'ite *mujtahids* became esteemed and powerful religious and political figures in Persia, and some even were deemed to reflect the political prerogatives of the Shahs.

Al-Karaki explicitly intended to extract Shi'ism from its scholastic puritanism and confinement at the communal level as well as its marginalization within a Sunnite state structure, explaining in part why Shah Isma'il I took notice of him. The new empire needed clerics who could wed Shi'ism to Safavid statehood and provide stability and a standard system of religious worship. To develop a *shari'a*-based society, the Safavids needed to standardize religious practice and to vest religious scholars with imperial authority; neither the Qizilbash nor the erudite Persian notables were suitable for this task.¹⁵⁰ Aside from attesting to the gradual empowerment of Shi'ite clerics as exclusive legitimators and guardians of imperial sovereignty, these developments illustrate the utility of juridical Islam to the Safavid monarchs.

2

The *Mujtahids* Navigate the Sovereign's World

SHAH ISMA'IL'S DEFEAT BY the Ottomans at the battle of Chaldiran in 920AH/1514CE undermined his theocratic claims and charismatic sway over the Turcoman Qizilbash as their divinely guided leader.¹ Impregnated with messianic expectations, the Qizilbash warriors had previous to this battle expressed unwavering loyalty and devotion to their Sufi master and king, Shah Isma'il, who inspired religious zeal and triumph over enemies in the western and central Iranian regions.² The Safavid order, like several religious movements that rose in the wake of political decentralization following the destruction of the Islamic Caliphate under the Mongols, nurtured popular Shi'ism and folk Islamic beliefs.³ These religious movements undermined legalistic or 'high' Islamic traditions characteristic of the early medieval Caliphal era. They were fluid and multifaceted, often interweaving diverse streams of Shi'ism, Sunnism, and Sufism.

The Safavid order underwent an internal transformation during the late fifteenth century CE when it grew into a militant and expansionist force in western Iran. The Sufi spiritual guides became simultaneously supreme chiefs and divinely ordained leaders fighting 'infidels' outside the abode of Islam (*dar al-Islam*).⁴ After the rise of the empire, the Sufi ties, which the Qizilbash maintained with the early Safavid sovereigns, were partly useful to the Shahs as a basis of solidarity, but in the long run proved to be exacting and burdensome to them.⁵ The Qizilbash expected their master-king to act in conformity with his new theocratic office. Shah Isma'il and Shah Tahmasb, however, could hardly maintain their imperial sovereignty on the basis of the old Sufi allegiance invested in the concept of *shahsevan* (love for the ruler as Sufi master). The Shahs also struggled against the Qizilbash sense of entitlement to political supremacy and their internal

competitions.⁶ As a temporal ruler and builder of a state, Shah Tahmasb increasingly turned to stable sources of religious legitimacy, ones that could be harnessed by him or which lend themselves to state control. In their attempt to weaken the hold of the Qizilbash over the Safavid state and to prevent their dominance in the bureaucracy, Shah Isma'il and his son Tahmasb boosted the position of the Persian aristocrats. Prior to and during the civil war, when the Shah was weak, a number of Persians were appointed to state offices and high court positions only to face sabotage and elimination at the hands of the Qizilbash.⁷ In the aftermath of Shah Isma'il's death in 931AH/1524CE, Sufi discipline and imperial authority were seriously challenged by intertribal conflicts among the Qizilbash that developed into a civil war which consumed the first decade of Shah Tahmasb's reign.⁸ Factionalism more so than the defection of some Qizilbash military sections to the Ottoman side, such as Ulama Tekellu in 1531CE and later Elghas Mirza, made the Safavid Empire prey to Uzbek and Ottoman invasions of Khurasan and Azerbaijan respectively.⁹

Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad (d. 984AH/1576CE) at the Court of Shah Tahmasb in Qazvin

An 'Amili émigré and outstanding jurist, Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad al-Harithi al-Juba'i (d. 984AH/1576CE), became a significant figure at Shah Tahmasb's court. Husayn devoted his efforts to the revival of Shi'ite Tradition, as a central source for deriving legal rulings and validating religious practice. In so doing, Husayn helped recast – at least in scholastic circles – the contentious issues of traditionism (*akhbarism*) and rationalism (*usulism*) present in Shi'ite jurisprudence. The traditionists consist of jurists who rely primarily on the Traditions of the Imams as a source of religious and legal knowledge. The rationalists, on the other hand, allow reason a larger share in the elaboration of law and theology. Husayn's interest in the verification of Tradition, reflected in his legal discussion of the purification of mats, the Imam's share and the sifting of Traditions (*diraya*), placed him in a traditionist category. On other legal matters such as Friday prayer, imitation of a deceased *mujtahid* and association with secular government, Husayn drew on rationalist positions, strengthening the interconnection between the two legal trends that lasted until the mid seventeenth century CE.

When Husayn arrived in Persia around 960AH/1552CE, he spent three years teaching the religious sciences in Isfahan, before he came to Shah Tahmasb's attention in 963AH/1556CE.¹⁰ Due to the efforts of Shaykh 'Ali al-Minshar, a fellow 'Amili and student of al-Karaki, and the *shaykh al-Islam* of Isfahan, Shah Tahmasb decided to recruit Husayn into the empire's clerical establishment. He sent Husayn the robe of honor and royal gifts and summoned him to Qazvin, the capital city of the empire since 955AH/1548CE. Husayn spent around seven years in Qazvin, where he functioned as the *shaykh al-Islam*.¹¹ After that, he spent five years in Mashhad and eight years in Herat.

While in Qazvin, Husayn wrote a letter to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman in 968AH/1561CE at the request of Shah Tahmasb, discussing the fate of the Sultan's fugitive son, Bayezid.¹² Bayezid had rebelled against Suleiman and taken refuge in Persia in 967AH/1559CE.¹³ Husayn fulfilled the conditions of his titular posts, but he neither claimed nor did the Shah designate him the supreme, authoritative cleric of the empire. Moreover, Husayn did not enjoy the political prestige or influence that the Safavids extended to al-Karaki or his grandson, Mir Husayn. Husayn seemed particularly disturbed by the license that an imperial sovereign like Tahmasb gave himself in ranking clerics and in designating top jurists. He seemed frustrated by the sovereign's attempt to control decisions on clerical leadership. On the other hand, Husayn wanted to protect the Shah and Safavid society from false jurisconsults (*mujtahids*) and claimants to supreme juridical knowledge. Whether in his delineation of Friday prayer, the direction of prayer or in tackling the more mundane questions on the purification of mats, Husayn emphasized the jurist's susceptibility to error and limited scope of authority. He invoked a well-established opinion among Shi'ite *mujtahids*, namely, the impermissibility of adopting the rulings of a dead jurist. On this basis, he debunked and reversed several rulings and practices instigated by al-Karaki.

Husayn also reinstated the reading of *hadith* books in Persia and worked diligently to verify Twelver Shi'ite traditions in a manner reminiscent of al-Shahid al-Thani, his teacher.¹⁴ Husayn's association with esteemed scholar al-Shahid al-Thani and his thorough knowledge of Shi'ite dogma and polemical literature greatly enhanced his own credentials. Safavid chronicles emphasized Husayn's connection to al-Shahid al-Thani to embellish his intellectual genealogy but, more importantly, to highlight the 'Amilis' struggle against Ottoman injustices that had made al-Shahid al-Thani a martyr. These factors furnished significant grounding for Husayn's credibility and valor in the eyes of the Safavid sovereigns and the Shi'ite public.¹⁵

Aims of a Polemic

The interconnected doctrines of *bara'a*, or dissociation from one's enemies, and *walaya*, allegiance toward the house of 'Ali and Fatima, were well developed in Imami Shi'ism by the late eighth century CE.¹⁶ Ja'far al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam, considered allegiance to him and his followers incumbent upon Shi'ite believers alongside enmity toward their opponents.¹⁷ The statements made at Ghadir Khum, the most significant Shi'ite tradition, delineates the dissociation-enmity theme particularly in the Prophet's statement: 'He who follows me follows 'Ali. God! befriend those who befriend him and oppose those who oppose him' (*man kuntu mawlah fa-'Ali mawlah, wali man walah wa-a'di man 'adah*).¹⁸ This theme takes a new meaning after the rise of the Safavid Empire and its political duels with the Ottomans to the west. Under Sunnite Caliphs, Shi'ites professed at times open 'Alid allegiance but could hardly dissociate themselves from Sunnite rulers. The Safavids dramatized and 'invented' a number of Shi'ite rituals that emphasized differences rather

than similarities between Sunnism and Shi'ism. They popularized anti-Caliphal features to 'de-normalize' Sunnism by presenting it as a usurpation of the rights of the house of the Prophet. Ultimately, this aimed to discredit the foundations and religious character of the traditional Persian elite and the Ottoman Empire alike.

During the mid sixteenth century, Husayn expounded in writing a debate between him and a Sunnite scholar from Aleppo, Syria over Shi'ite doctrine. The debate was successfully publicized in Safavid society, even though the debate took place in Syria around 951AH/1544CE under the title *Munazare-yi Juba'i ba Danishmand-i Sunni*.¹⁹ *Munazare-yi* attests to Husayn's profound knowledge of Sunnite *hadith* and doctrine and his sagacity and tactfulness in converting his Sunnite friend to Shi'ism. The debate presents the major arguments which adept Twelver Shi'ite scholars advanced to verify the rightful Imamate of 'Ali b. Abi Talib, the first Imam, and his descendants. It became the Safavid scholars' confirmed model to fortify their society's legal defenses and to confront the Uzbek and Ottoman '*ulama*.²⁰

In a collegial ambiance, Husayn revealed to the Aleppine scholar his Shi'ite identity and proceeded to examine the foundations of Sunnite political thought, the Caliphate and the Imamate. He explained to his friend that Sunnites rejected the Imamate of 'Ali b. Abi Talib on the basis of dubious traditions related by untrustworthy men like Abu Hanifa.²¹ In the tradition of leading Shi'ite scholars, Husayn manipulated intra-Sunnite disagreements over the trustworthiness of Sunnite transmitters of *hadith*, consequently casting doubt on their accounts which form the basis of the Sunnite rejection of 'Ali's Imamate and Caliphate. He utilized Shafi'ite (one of the four Sunnite schools of law) arguments, in particular those advanced by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 505AH/1111CE) in order to discredit Abu Hanifa, one of the major transmitters of Sunnite *hadith*.²² Husayn explained that Shi'ites are not bound by the Sunnite schools of law or their Traditions simply because Sunnite leaders unlike 'Ali and his descendants from Fatima, are fallible. Husayn tells his readers that his Aleppine friend succumbed to his proofs and would have been positively inclined toward Shi'ism, if it were not for Shi'ite ritual cursing of the Companions of the Prophet, particularly the first two Caliphs, 'Umar and Abu Bakr. At first, Husayn did not know how to proceed with this debate. He paused, reflecting inwardly:

I knew that if I were to profess to him [Sunnite scholar] the admissibility of cursing them [Sunnites] in our school of law, he would never convert to Shi'ism even if I provided him with a thousand proofs. So I said to him: 'According to our school of law, it is not compulsory to curse them [meaning 'Umar and Abu Bakr] and only the fanatical among the laity do so.' As for the '*ulama*, none of them had called for the necessity of cursing them, and their books are [clear on that/available for consultation on this point].²³

Indeed, cursing the first two Caliphs for their alleged usurpation of 'Ali's rights was not a tenet of the Shi'ite faith but a feature of its dogma. Yet, the Aleppine

scholar pointed to a leading thirteenth-century Shi'ite scholar, al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli, who had endorsed the cursing of the first two Caliphs. Husayn explained then that Shi'ite scholars legitimized cursing on the basis of rational inference, namely, *ijtihad*. The Shi'ites cursed Abu Bakr and 'Umar because they believed both have mistreated Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, and committed injustices against 'Ali.²⁴ Shi'ites also accuse 'Umar of violating the Prophet's rulings by prohibiting temporary marriage and marriage during pilgrimage, and punishing anyone who practiced them. As for 'Uthman, the third Caliph, he appointed wanton officials for the administration of Muslim affairs and committed abominable acts like alcohol drinking and crime.²⁵ Husayn then states that the Aleppine scholar converted from Sunnism to Shi'ism and 'cursed the enemies of the House of the Prophet in general and the three in particular, God damn them!'²⁶

Husayn's defense of *ijtihad* had important political dimensions. At the time, the four Sunnite schools of law, the Hanafite, which the Ottomans upheld, and the Shafi'ite, the Hanbalite and the Malikite, all restricted or prohibited the use of *ijtihad* as a method for deriving a legal opinion. Historically, a jurist who uses rationalist methods of argumentation and is known as a *mujtahid* infers a legal precept on the basis of four sources, namely, the Qur'an, Tradition, the consensus of the Shi'ite jurists and Imams (*ijma'*), and reason ('*aql*').²⁷ Whereas the Shi'ite legal practices have emphasized rational inference, Sunnism had for the most part restricted its use to a few major scholars of the early Islamic period.²⁸ Husayn, explained that Sunnite scholars have used *ijtihad* at different instances but denounced the Shi'ite '*ulama*' for using it.²⁹ He defended the Ja'fari school of law against Ottoman Sunnism and rejected the foundations of Sunnite political thought, presenting it as a usurpation of the rights of Imam 'Ali and his descendants through Fatima.

It is unclear what the direct context and exact motives are for recounting and documenting this debate at this historical period. Overall, Husayn's exposition served as a model for Safavid religious guides and learned members of society. It provided the Safavids with tools of doctrinal defense of Shi'ism and a knowledge of the central and classical arguments used by Shi'ite '*ulama*' against Sunnism, particularly for the purpose of religious conversion. It is also noteworthy that Husayn's ideas reflected his and the Safavids' interest in consent and personal conviction as a basis for conversion. Coercion and political pressure would only serve a short-term purpose in securing Safavid overlordship over Persia.³⁰

Supreme and False *Mujtahids*

No mujtahid is safe from a critic, nor a person from a deficiency
 – Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad

The integration of the Syrian Shi'ite clerics of Jabal 'Amil into Safavid society and the Persian aristocracy's resistance to their ascendancy in the religious ranks marked the early period of Shah Tahmasb's reign. Meanwhile, the social status and economic

privileges obtained by the émigré scholars through Safavid patronage and intermarriage with the Persian aristocracy led to the rise of class distinctions among the jurists in general and the 'Amilis in particular. These factors also led to the consolidation of a clerical elite. It comes as no surprise then that jurists needed to determine, among other things, whether it is permissible to collect the monetary share of the Hidden Imam, in the form of *khums* (fifth of one's income) or as a votive offering (*nadhhr*) during Occultation.³¹ Now that Shi'ites are living under just Shi'ite rulers, the *'ulama* had to determine whether the Imam's share can devolve to *sayyids* of modest means. *Sayyids* are distinguished by their descent from Hashim, the house of the Prophet through patrilineal or matrilineal lines. Husayn would argue that it is wise and reasonable to defray the fifth to needy Shi'ite *sayyids* because the Imam is expected to provide for them during his presence and likewise during his absence.³² Husayn even admitted that the Shi'ite traditions supporting his opinion are weak and inconclusive, yet these traditions have to be upheld on the basis of reason and precaution. In retrospect, legal parameters themselves were undergoing significant change not due to self-emerging ideas but rather due to the social process we described above.

Mir Husayn, the grandson of al-Karaki, also endorsed a similar view about the necessity of distributing fifth monies during Occultation to the needy among the Hashimites.³³ It is important to note, however, that customarily the *'ulama* were entrusted with collecting the fifth monies and votive offerings, whenever applicable, and distributing it to needy *sayyids* and their families. Shah Tahmasb showed great reverence to *sayyids* and bestowed on them honors and privileges, including land allotments.³⁴ By the time Shah Isma'il II was enthroned, the *sayyids* and the *mujtahids* were a central group in the court ceremonial of kissing the Shah's feet.³⁵ They walked behind the royal princes in the procession and were followed by the Qizilbash *amirs*, the viziers and the notables of the bureaucracy.³⁶ As such, Husayn did not have difficulty convincing other leading *'ulama* or the Shah of his legal position which in turn provided the *'ulama* themselves with significant social influence and possibly economic flexibility.

The social transformation of the Shi'ite *'ulama* under the Safavids, on the one hand, and the sovereigns' pressing need for internal legitimation and ideological refutation of the Uzbeks and the Ottomans on the other, in turn led to diverse and often irreconcilable doctrinal and legal differences among the clerics of the Safavid Empire. This is illustrated in Husayn's discussion of the purity of mats, the Imam's share, the direction of prayer, and Friday prayer.³⁷ In the opening statements of the treatise on the purity of prayer mats (completed 968AH/1560CE), he exalts the Safavid Empire and prays to God that it remains victorious over its enemies until the Day of Judgment. Trivial as the topic seems, it reflects inquiries of common believers as to the proper conditions, clothes and utensils used in prayer. Against a widespread opinion among late Shi'ite scholars including al-Karaki, Husayn states that when exposed to urine, a mat is impure and it is not permissible to judge otherwise except by supplying a legal proof.³⁸ The scholars who opposed this view, Husayn noted, seem to have relied

on obscure accounts from untrustworthy men. As such, their proofs are weak. It is preferable to declare the mats are impure on the basis of reason, Tradition and prudence (*ih̄tiyat*).³⁹ Husayn's carefully expounded legal methodology reflected the clerical interest in making systematic and standard all enactments of worship (ritual purity and worship). Ultimately, this would create clarity and legitimacy to the official Shi'ite face of the empire. More important, Husayn's argumentation opened the door for a pluralism of legal opinions against attempts to monopolize clerical knowledge. Curiously, at times Husayn upheld traditionist arguments and at other times rationalist ones in order to support new opinions and verdicts that arose not from hypothetical discussions of an isolated community of theologians but rather from a new realignment of ideology and class interest.

Husayn denounced the idea that an '*alim* can reach the highest degree of *ij̄tihad* (the rational inference of legal precepts) or become the ultimate living religious authority. Instead, he declared that, 'no *mujtahid* has been saved from a critic, nor a person from a deficiency'.⁴⁰ Husayn seemed to allude to al-Karaki and his grandson, Mir Husayn, both of whom assumed the title of 'the seal of *mujtahids*' and spread their legal views. Since Shah Tahmasb sanctioned the claims of the two al-Karakis, Husayn cast doubt indirectly on the Shah's judgments. He felt that the Shah was not equipped to evaluate claimants to *ij̄tihad* or safeguard society from false *mujtahids*. These views may have dispelled the fears of the Persian aristocrats about the *shuyukh al-Islam*, seen now as religious servicemen rather than ultimate models of imitation or authoritative guides.

Husayn also openly opposed al-Karaki's delineation of the direction of prayer in 'Iraq al-'Ajam and Khurasan. He explained in proper mathematical calculations and geometric illustrations the correct angle at which the prayer niche should be situated. He explicitly criticized the blind imitation (*taqlid*) of al-Karaki and his rulings by Safavid society, reminding believers that al-Karaki himself had denounced such emulation and proclaimed it impermissible.⁴¹ Obviously, this was a vindication of the Persian *sadr*, Ghiyath al-Din Dashtaki, who had previously questioned al-Karaki's rulings on the direction of prayer. By advancing an opinion contrary to al-Karaki's, Husayn imparted to the Persian elite and the lay community alike a sense of legal plurality, a multiplicity of religious guides rather than one. He also brought into the open the fissures and rifts among the clerical elite. Promoting plurality may have weakened the *sadrs* opposition to clerical leaders, particularly the 'Amilis.

To Remedy the Shah From Mania: Ritual Purity and Friday Prayer

Shah Tahmasb encouraged finely drawn statements on religious issues. From childhood he suffered from a sometimes-debilitating obsession with cleanliness and ritual purity. Mindful of the Shah's disturbed psychological state, Husayn and other '*ulama* produced legal works explicating Shi'ite rituals of prayer and purity. Around 969–970AH/1562–3CE, Shah Tahmasb asked Husayn to write a work on

mania (*waswas*) that expounded the proper execution of religious obligations including daily worship and ritual ablutions. To this purpose, Husayn composed a treatise, titled *Al-'Iqd al-Husayni (Al-Tahmasbi)*. Using a lucid literary style at odds with his specialized legal expositions, Husayn intended *Al-'Iqd* to be an enjoyable and easy read. He leads his reader through discursive topics like kingship, piety and prayer, the way the thread of a necklace (*'iqd*) travels through gems and beads of various colors and kinds.⁴²

To comfort the Shah, Husayn explained the circumstances under which a person suffered from mania and sought to provide him with a remedy for it.⁴³ The Imams, he stated, asserted that the devil, the source of this malady, caused one to have an obsession with purity and thus to perform flawed ritual worship and prayer. Husayn specified two ways to counteract mania: first, one should adhere to God's revelation, invoke His name, curse Satan and recite the Imams' prayers. Second, Husayn advised a practical rather than a strictly literal observance of the religious law and the Imams' rulings on purity and impurity.⁴⁴ As such, he encouraged moderate observation of cleanliness and worship in daily life.

It seems that Husayn manipulated the Shah's vulnerability to promote his views about the administration of sacred law in the empire. He argued forcefully for the juridical regulation of social life and genuine adoption of Shi'ism by the Safavid sovereigns and rulers themselves. Furthermore, Husayn reminded the Shah that divine will limits his political sovereignty and undermines his authority. The 'able' and 'shrewd' ruler must embrace humility and austerity because material entanglements are antithetical to true worship of God.⁴⁵

Shah Tahmasb's attempt to seek Husayn's help to overcome mania gave the latter a pretext to promote his views on Friday prayer. During the mid sixteenth century, Shi'ite scholars were divided into three groups on the question of Friday prayer. The first supported the absolute necessity of convening Friday prayer with or without the presence of a designated juriconsult.⁴⁶ The second group argued that it is optional for a Shi'ite to observe Friday prayer but required the presence of a juriconsult to convene it. The third group forbade its practice altogether during Occultation, irrespective of the presence of a juriconsult. Curiously, for almost two decades after al-Karaki's death, Shah Tahmasb and Safavid governors halted the performance of Friday prayer, particularly due to the disagreement among leading Safavid *'ulama* and notables over its status and conditions.⁴⁷ Husayn suggested, however, that the Shah was religiously obliged to convene Friday prayer for the benefit of the faithful. Husayn's arguments, unlike those of al-Karaki, downplayed the role of jurist, and emphasized instead the religious and the political significance of convening Friday prayer for the Safavid Shahs. As was pointed out earlier, al-Karaki did not succeed in popularizing Friday prayer or spreading its performance during the early Safavid period.⁴⁸ Husayn, unlike al-Karaki, kept a low profile amidst court intrigue and competition and tried to disentangle the question of Friday prayer from the political turmoil of Shah Tahmasb's early reign. Husayn removed al-Karaki's requisite that a jurist, appointed by the Imam in a

general or specific manner, be present to convene Friday prayer. Husayn also contradicted al-Karaki and his grandson, Mir Husayn, when he declared Friday prayer obligatory, not optional. Husayn explained to the Shah that the Safavids could not justify the discarding of Friday prayer in the face of valid Sunnite arguments corroborated by the Qur'an and Tradition.⁴⁹ The tensions rising from the theocratic claims of the Safavids, which prevented al-Karaki from proclaiming Friday prayer to be mandatory, were considered less relevant to the arguments of Husayn. The latter declared that he who performs prayer on Friday, is exonerated from guilt and fulfills his obligation to God, His Prophet, the Imams and the Shi'ite *'ulama*. Thanks to the Safavid Empire, Shi'ites can discard dissimulation and openly practice their beliefs. They have no excuse to desert Friday prayer.⁵⁰

Under Husayn's guidance, Friday prayer was transported systematically to the major Persian provinces, suggesting that Shah Tahmasb understood *Al-'Iqd's* intent. Husayn convinced the Shah that Friday prayer was simply a religious necessity, symbolizing Islamic temporal sovereignty. By holding it, the monarch can silence Sunnite allegations that the Safavid Empire's foundations are 'un-Islamic'. In this context, Husayn undermined the necessity for the 'deputyship' of the jurist and limited the latter's political influence. As such, he dispelled both the Shah's and the administrative elite's fear of the *mujtahid's* exclusive power to sanction and give approbation to Safavid sovereignty. The Shah's increased control over state affairs in comparison to his early reign, and the notables' acceptance of a limited role for *shaykh al-Islam*, articulated by Husayn, were favorable factors for the promotion of Friday prayer.

Conversion and Consent in Herat

Around 970AH/1562CE, Husayn left Qazvin for Mashhad where he spent five years acting as *shaykh al-Islam*.⁵¹ Around 975AH/1567CE, Shah Tahmasb summoned him to the more challenging post of *shaykh al-Islam* in Herat. One elaborate argument supports the view that the Shah intentionally dismissed Husayn from his religious post in Qazvin and moved him to Herat in favor of Mir Husayn (d. 1001AH/1592–3CE), al-Karaki's grandson, recognized by the court as a *mujtahid* in his own right. Indeed Husayn had questioned and criticized harshly a number of legal opinions advanced by Mir Husayn but, to date, no data suggest any overlap between the careers of Husayn and Mir Husayn.⁵²

During the almost eight years Husayn was in Herat, he laboriously promulgated Shi'ite doctrine and edicts. Most of Herat's inhabitants knew little if anything about Twelver Shi'ism or the conduct of Shi'ite prayer rituals and worship.⁵³ Husayn's contemporaries believed that he successfully effected a movement of conversion from Sunnism to Shi'ism in that region. It is difficult to verify this statement, but it implies that the *mujtahids* were promoting themselves as indispensable agents of conversion through 'conviction' rather than military force. Well versed in both Sunnism and Shi'ism, Husayn – like other 'Amili clerics

– considered the conversion of a Sunnite to Shi'ism a noble mission as well as an intellectual challenge. This is more significant given the predominant Sunnite character of Khurasan and its surrounding region. In 974AH/1566CE, the Shah authorized him as the governor's deputy generally in Khurasan and specifically in Herat.⁵⁴ Persian and Transoxanian students and scholars flocked to him to collate and compare Shi'ite Traditions and strengthen their knowledge in religious law.⁵⁵ In return for Husayn's services, the Shah extended him the ownership and associated endowments of three villages in Herat.

Safavid chronicles and correspondence between Husayn and his son Baha'i show that Husayn's position at Herat was equal to and occasionally more prestigious than that at Qazvin. Herat figured prominently in Safavid chronicles because it was both the seat of the former Timurid dynasty (795–911AH/1393–1506CE) and the site of Safavid-Uzbek struggles in the sixteenth century.⁵⁶ Munshi devoted an overwhelming section of his history to Khurasan and its two capital cities, Herat and Mashhad, which attests to their political, military and economic importance.⁵⁷ Herat was also subject to Uzbek incursions and was the seat of one of the princes of the blood royal. As an indication of the esteemed post which Husayn occupied in Herat, Shah Tahmasb commanded his son and potential successor, prince Muhammad Khudabanda, after prayer every Friday to the congregational mosque in Herat for instruction in Tradition and law by Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad. The Shah demanded that Khudabanda comply with all of Husayn's decisions, set an example for others by obeying his rules and acknowledge Husayn as the highest and most authoritative religious source in Herat.⁵⁸

Husayn and his family also considered Herat favorably, as seen in a 100-verse poem about the city, entitled *Al-Zahira* (The Radiant [City]), which Baha'i supposedly produced in one day in Qazvin as he lay ill with ophthalmia (inflammation of the eyes).⁵⁹ Baha'i's vivid longing for Herat, reflected in *al-Zahira*, hardly resembles feelings one would exhibit toward a disagreeable place, let alone a site of enforced exile for himself and his father.⁶⁰ During the Herat period, Husayn and his son gained a sense of their value to Shah Tahmasb. Husayn's service created an enduring local Shi'ism, shaped regional Sunnite-Shi'ite relations and advanced Safavid sovereignty at the predominantly Sunnite western frontier.

Around 982–3AH/1574–5CE, Husayn visited Qazvin for the second time and requested permission for himself and Baha'i to go on pilgrimage to Mecca. The facts of Husayn's life in Persia convey a vanity and emptiness about him caused by his association with the royalty's turbulent, irreligious lives and the restrictive conditions under which he served the Shahs. The Shah granted him that permission but denied it to Baha'i, possibly to force Husayn to return or because he envisaged in Baha'i the succeeding religious guide for the city of Herat.⁶¹ From his final residential station in Bahrain near the end of his life, Husayn sent Baha'i an exhortation about choices in life that left a memorable impact on the son's outlook. In a simple *ruba'iyya* (quatrain) Husayn discoursed:

If this world is what you seek,
 Then leave to India
 If the hereafter is what you desire,
 Then you must come to Bahrain
 But if you seek neither this world nor the next,
 Then reside in Persia!⁶²

In choosing Bahrain and not Persia as his abode for the next life, Husayn showed great ambiguity about his relationship and his son's potential one with the Safavid Empire and the Shahs. His poem showed his deep discontent with the Shah's lifestyle and his sense of alienation from Safavid society. He sought spiritual and scholastic retreat in Bahrain.⁶³ Moreover, Husayn expressed a widespread view that the wealthier Mughal court offered greater material rewards for scholars than the Safavid one. Poets, within whose ranks Husayn counted Baha'i, thrived under the Mughals. Despite the fact that the Safavids in general and Shah Tahmasb in particular were generous patrons, several poets turned to the Mughal court.⁶⁴

Despite his misgivings about the Shahs, Husayn long hoped Shi'ite jurists would administer and shape the religious order of their societies. Historical circumstances favored Husayn's stance. Aside from his devotion to the verification of Tradition, Husayn emphasized multiple religious guides, which helped the prospects of a rigorous and expanding clerical leadership in Safavid Persia.

'Normalizing' Sunnism?

After Shah Tahmasb's death in 984AH/1576CE, all the Turkoman tribes except the Ustajalu upheld his fourth son Prince Isma'il II (r. 984–985AH/1576–1578CE) as his successor. Within the royal family, Tahmasb's daughter Princess Pari Khanom, a group of her followers and her Circassian maternal uncle Shamkhal Sultan also endorsed Isma'il II's succession to the throne.⁶⁵ Shah Isma'il II at once determined to overturn a number of religious policies advocated by his predecessors. Embarking on a new political venture, he tried to halt anti-Sunnite propaganda, so popular under his father, and adopted a reconciliatory approach toward Sunnism. Several explanations exist for Shah Isma'il II's attempted reinstatement of Sunnism. One theory precariously suggests that his dependence on drugs, apparently begun during his eighteen-year imprisonment as a youth in the fortress of Qahqaha under his father's order, caused him severe mental and psychological impairments and led him to oppose the previous Safavid policies. Another argument also based on psychological motives, posits that Isma'il II's change of policy was a manifestation of hostility toward his father and thus toward the latter's efforts at spreading Twelver Shi'ism.⁶⁶ A few scholars challenged the above assumptions, suggesting that Isma'il II resented the Shi'ite clerics' increasing power and sought to minimize it through the readmission of

Sunnism to Persia.⁶⁷ This view has merit when tied to two additional factors: first, the Shah's rapprochement with the Ottomans for various economic and political considerations; second, the opposition of a few Qizilbash factions to the Shah's economic policy, which encouraged them to coalesce with the clerics against him. Together, prominent Qizilbash leaders and the clerics used the Shah's political moderation toward Sunnism to accuse him of renegeing on the empire's commitment to Shi'ism and as such to discredit his rule. In this respect, even the historical statements preserved by court historians on the reign of Isma'il II and the causes of his death, are hardly objective. They must be understood as statements of what the ruling elite and the succeeding Shahs accepted to be the official story of Shah Isma'il II.

There is no decisive evidence that the Shah wanted a full readmission of Sunnism into Persia. He wanted to comply with Ottoman demands in the Amasya peace treaty in 962AH/1555CE, possibly in order to win concessions from the Ottomans and foster good relations with the Sultan.⁶⁸ Sunnite rivals often objected to the defamation of Sunnite emblems and ritual cursing of the first three Caliphs.⁶⁹ In response, Isma'il II cooperated with Persian notables of Sunnite leanings to 'normalize' Sunnism among his subjects by suppressing militant Shi'ite ideas (*ghuluww*) and halting the *tabarra'iyan* practice (a retinue that publicly denounces the first two Caliphs and 'Aisha, the wife of the Prophet). This position coincided with an internal struggle at court between Shah Isma'il II and powerful Qizilbash *amirs*, most notably the Ustajalu, over his economic policies and political-administrative restructuring of land grants (*suyurghals*). The Shah dealt a severe blow to the Ustajalu military leaders.⁷⁰ He divided and withdrew land grants, and neglected affairs of state and was indecisive in the appointment of state officers.⁷¹ Already, the Shah attempted to reshuffle land allotments of *sayyids* and sequester land grants from the 'ulama to weaken and undermine them.⁷² The early Safavid sovereigns extended to the 'ulama immunities from taxation in the form of land grants (*suyurghals*), which benefited whole families of scholars through 'a kind of prescriptive right'.⁷³ By the late Safavid period, the high-ranking 'ulama continued to have access to such grants which sustained their powerbase.⁷⁴ As Bert Fragner explained, Safavid sovereigns struggled to achieve state centralization by preventing any major sector of society from accumulating large land grants.⁷⁵ It is important to clarify, however, that centralization was never truly achieved and was only practiced in limited bureaucratic and economic domains.⁷⁶

Influential Qizilbash *amirs* were clearly partial to the confrontation between the Shah and the 'ulama for they sided with the latter.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, several Qizilbash *amirs* who expressed their commitment to Twelver Shi'ism manipulated the Shah's favorable views toward Sunnism in order to discredit him. They developed a viable opposition to him among the *sayyids* and the clerics. Safavid sovereigns refrained from taking drastic political measures against powerful Qizilbash leaders during their early reign or without building solid counter-alliances with one or more Qizilbash faction. For instance, Shah 'Abbas I (r. 995AH/1587CE–1038AH/1629CE) took three years to subjugate the Qizilbash mainly by relying on Georgian,

Armenian and Circassian army commanders and councils integrated into the Safavid system as royal slaves (*ghulamān*).⁷⁸ More importantly, much diplomatic communiqué and subtle maneuvering took place between Shah 'Abbas and Ya'qub Khan, a powerful Qizilbash officer of the tribe of Zu'l-Qadr who governed Shiraz and the province of Fars before the Shah decided to execute him.⁷⁹ Shah Isma'il II, however, alienated several members of the elite during the first few months of his reign and did not secure the military and bureaucratic support capable of subduing his Qizilbash opponents. Without having any overwhelming support from a major Qizilbash constituency, the Shah proceeded to dispossess several Ustajalu leaders and eliminated others including the governor of Herat who was the guardian of prince 'Abbas.⁸⁰ A short while after ascending the throne, the Tekellu and the Turkomans, who were among the Shah's strongest supporters, started to plot against him. This forced the Shah to try and rebuild bridges with the Ustajalus.⁸¹ The official narrative has it that the Tekellu and the Turkomans turned against the Shah due to his desire to reinstate Sunnism, but the actual historical picture is more complicated. Evidently, the Qizilbash feared that political moderation toward Sunnism would promote the political and economic interests of aristocratic Persian families, particularly the notables of Qazvin. Already under the administration of the crypto-Sunni *sadr* Mirza Makhdum, a number of Qazvinis received monetary grants for verifying that they have never cursed the Companions of the Prophet.⁸² None of the Persian notables seemed part of the campaign against Shah Isma'il II, which, in turn, shows that the Qizilbash felt exposed and somewhat undermined by the Shah's attempt to surround himself with Tajik competitors who, unlike them, mildly consented to ritual cursing. Extreme expressions of Shi'ism were not a defining ideological trait for them as a class.

Even before Shah Isma'il II rose to power, a number of 'ulama had cultivated good ties with the Qizilbash *amirs*. Under Shah Tahmasb the 'ulama played a mediatory role between him and a Qizilbash official who fell from the favor of his 'perfect guide' (*murshid-i kamil*), that is the Shah.⁸³ In another example, during an insurrection in Gilan in 979AH/1571–72CE, Bektash Beg, the son of the governor of Gilan Allah Quli Sultan, was accused of dereliction of duty. The Qizilbash Sufis, who normally acted collectively to punish a miscreant in their ranks, forbade him to enter the palace gates. For three months, Bektash Beg waited to no avail at the palace gates, imploring the Shah for forgiveness. Finally, a few *sayyids* and 'ulama interceded on his behalf during the month of Ramadan and succeeded in gaining the forgiveness of the Shah who offered him permission to leave the palace in peace. The Shah did not harm him and his tribe was only able to put Bektash Beg to death after the Shah's death. The 'ulama had some sway with the Shah and the Qizilbash to undertake let alone succeed in their mediatory role.

Safavid sources conveniently implicate the new *sadr*, Mirza (Mir) Makhdum al-Sharifi, a Persian notable and descendant of a scholarly-oriented family, in the pro-Sunni measures, which Shah Isma'il took. Shi'ite texts depict Mir Makhdum as the archenemy of Shi'ism whose evil enticements affected Isma'il II's beliefs and

outlook.⁸⁴ Mir Makhdum was the grandson of Qazi Jahan Sayfi Husayni Qazvini (d. 974AH/1566CE), who was grand *vizier* during Shah Tahmasb's reign.⁸⁵ He also claimed descent from a reputed Sunnite scholar, Sayyid Sharif Jurjani (d. 824AH/1413CE).⁸⁶ Mir Makhdum's principal scholastic training was the study of Tradition and exegesis of the Qur'an. Mir Makhdum succeeded in nurturing a good relationship with Shah Isma'il II, from whom he received half of the post of *sadr*; the other half went to the chief (*naqib*), Shah 'Inayatullah Isfahani, who had been the chaplain of the army (*qazi-yi mu'askar*) under Shah Tahmasb.⁸⁷ With Mir Makhdum's assistance, Shah Isma'il II strove to reverse some of Shi'ism's 'excessive' practices widespread among the populace since the early days of Safavid rule, especially the defamation of 'Aisha and the ritual cursing of the first three Caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman.⁸⁸ In place of 'zealot' Shi'ite scholars like the Astarabadis, now linked by marriage with al-Karakis, the Shah appointed Sunnite notables such as Mowlana Mirza Jan Shirazi and Mir Makhdum Lala to significant posts. On several occasions, Shah Isma'il II openly sided with Sunnite positions against the deliberations of the Shi'ite clergy, thus undermining their position and exposing them to ridicule. The majority of the Shi'ite '*ulama* avoided a confrontation with the Shah but discreetly resisted his policies.⁸⁹ The Qalandari Sufis became loyal supporters of Isma'il II. The mere mention of the Qalandaris ignited great hatred among the clerics due to their heterodox Islamic beliefs. The 'Amili '*ulama*, including al-Karaki, issued *fatwas* that proclaimed the Qalandaris religiously deviant and called for severe retribution against them.⁹⁰

Despite the suspicion that he was a dissimulating Sunnite, Mir Makhdum was an eloquent preacher, whose sermons 'drew large crowds' in the Haydariyya Mosque at Qazvin.⁹¹ Neither Shah Tahmasb nor any major group of the local elite took measures against him, indicating that his religious identity was not contentious as long as Mir Makhdum expressed loyalty to the Safavids and upheld their authority. Sunnite notables remained a visible force at court.⁹² No systematic exclusion of their affluent members from the state's administrative ranks occurred, and an unspoken agreement existed that as long as they did not express their views overtly, no real harm would befall them. It was only when Mir Makhdum exceeded reasonable bounds in regard to his Sunnite beliefs and made no effort to conceal them that he was eventually unmasked as a Sunnite and dismissed from office.⁹³

Even later, when the majority of the Qizilbash suspected Mir Makhdum of being 'a Sunni at heart', he survived alleged murder plots.⁹⁴ He fled Safavid territories and sought refuge in the Ottoman Empire as a self-declared Sunnite, and became the grand jurist of Mecca.⁹⁵ In a most illuminating section of his autobiographical work, *An Offensive in Refutation of the Shi'ites (Al-Nawaqid fi al-Radd 'ala al-Rawafid)*, Mir Makhdum depicts 'Abd al-'Ali, al-Karaki's son, as a mediocre *mujtahid* but admits that 'Abd al-'Ali:

had an unrestrained demeanor, knowledge in some questions of [Shi'ite] jurisprudence and positive law, an agreeable nature and a compromising

approach toward the [Sunnite] schools of law, so much so, that if a self-professed non-Twelve Shi'ite were to seek his help, he would not fail to shelter him and save him from harm. And is there anyone more undisguised in his Sunnism than myself? At the end my tether when – with God's permission – I pleaded with him, may God furnish him with perfect faith and good deeds, he did not fail to protect me and knew my worth.⁹⁶

Evidently, 'Abd al-'Ali al-Karaki shunned 'extremism' and the ritual cursing of Sunnite Caliphs, which his father had endorsed. Mir 'Abd al-'Ali was inclined, at least initially, to give his daughter in marriage to Mir Makhdum. The latter blamed the Shi'ite community for preventing the marriage and for chastising 'Abd al-'Ali for his rash decision. For his part, 'Abd al-'Ali had convinced 'Shah [Tahmasb] to appoint him [Mir Makhdum] as supreme judge for all the Persian provinces'.⁹⁷

The Cleric Against the King

Mir Sayyid Husayn, the maternal grandson of al-Karaki, was the leading scholar to defy Shah Isma'il II, and he thus became Mirza Makhdum's target. As the titles 'Mir' and 'Sayyid' show, the émigré 'Amili clerics and their descendants attained new aristocratic distinctions and pedigree based on descent from the Prophet. This development was the outcome of two factors, namely, Shah Tahmasb's attempt to honor these clerics and the 'Amili intermarriage into the Persian aristocracy.⁹⁸ Mir Husayn had spent a considerable period of his life in the service of Shah Tahmasb, who extended him great deference, esteem and exceptional power. For instance, when the news about Shah Tahmasb's death went out:

representatives of the doctors of religion and the law, led by Mir Seyyed Hoseyn Jabal 'Ameli the *mujtahed* [that is Mir Husayn], at the request of the *amirs* went to the palace, washed the Shah's body according to the dictates of canon law, and buried it at Yort Sirvani, between the harem garden and the palace.⁹⁹

From at least 979AH/1571–2CE, Mir Husayn was one of the few '*ulama* upon whom Shah Tahmasb bestowed exceptional privileges. Eager to show both his newly acquired noblesse and his descent from the line of the Prophet (*siyada*), Mir Husayn advanced his scholarly credentials and legacy as a descendant of al-Karaki and manipulated social pedigree to his benefit. He commanded the court secretaries to inscribe a list of titles for his seal that was attached to legal documents. Among these titles were the following:

The leader of the verifiers of the truth, the authority of those versed in the fine points of the law, the inheritor of the world of the Prophets and Messengers, the Seal of the *mujtaheds*.¹⁰⁰

No one dared openly criticize Mir Husayn for either his notorious assumption of pompous titles or his claim to supreme *ijtihad*.¹⁰¹ Shah Tahmasb so respected the status of *sayyids* that several occupied the highest ranks in his service and some also 'attained a degree of intimacy never before reached by anyone in the service of any prince.'¹⁰² Similarly, during Shah Isma'il II's enthronement ceremony, *sayyids*, '*ulama* and *mujtahids* were the first to follow the royal princes in the ceremony of kissing the Shah's feet. Walking behind them were other high-ranking *amirs*, the Qizilbash nobility, the *viziers* and other member of the bureaucracy.¹⁰³

Shah Isma'il II believed that Mir Sayyid Husayn and the Astarabadis turned the Qizilbash against him.¹⁰⁴ Well aware of the status which several 'Amili '*ulama* had obtained in his father Shah Tahmasb's time, Shah Isma'il II protested: 'They [the '*ulama*] had, with flattery and hypocrisy deceived my father; I will not be deceived by them.'¹⁰⁵ He ordered all of Mir Husayn's books impounded and sealed and evicted Mir Husayn from his residential quarters.¹⁰⁶ The Shah viewed with distrust another 'Amili scholar, the court scribe (*katib*) 'Mir Seyyed 'Ali, the son of al-Karaki. Shah Isma'il II made an attempt against 'Abd al-'Ali's life, after which the latter fled from Qazvin to Hamadan.

Unlike 'Abd al-'Ali, Mir Husayn was not intimidated and he remained in Qazvin and strengthened his position presumably under the protection of a few powerful Qizilbash *amirs* and royal princes. Mir Husayn became the confidant of some courtiers who approached him with 'all the knotty problems, which no one could solve, not even the royal princes'; his requests were invariably accorded.¹⁰⁷ More important, however, he enjoyed excellent relations with some Qizilbash leaders and collaborated with them at some point to remove Isma'il II from power. This explains why the Shah could not eliminate him easily. For instance, Shah Isma'il II severely punished most performers of ritual cursing by mutilating their bodies, but he could not exact a similar punishment on Mir Husayn.¹⁰⁸

Mir Makhdum resented the fact that: 'The hearts of the Qizilbash inclined toward him [Mir Husayn], for until now he is an obeyed *mujtahid* in their eyes.'¹⁰⁹ Mir Makhdum was most disdainful of Mir Husayn's claims to be the general deputy of the Hidden Imam. In a statement verging on hyperbole, he claimed Mir Husayn had issued 'more than 20,000 false opinions (*fatwas*) that no one can understand but him!'.¹¹⁰ Evidently, Shi'ite and Sunnite '*ulama* alike voiced their resistance to 'Amili claims to authoritative *ijtihad* validated by Shah Tahmasb himself.

Mir Husayn espoused Shi'ite 'extremism' and invested much effort in repudiating Sunnite political emblems. He felt that Sunnite beliefs were still upheld by the laity and took upon himself the task of refuting the 'heresies' of the Sunnites.¹¹¹ In two slightly different tracts, Mir Husayn verified the date of 'Umar's death and how Shi'ite believers should commemorate it. He highlights a rare Shi'ite Tradition, related by Ahmad b. Ishaq al-Qummi, a close companion of 'Ali b. Muhammad, Abu'l-Hasan al-'Askari (d. 254AH/868CE), the Tenth Imam, through two Shi'ite followers, Abu'l-'Ala' al-Hamadhani al-Wasiti and Yahya b. Muhammad b. Jarih al-Baghdadi. Apparently, after Abu'l-'Ala' and Yahya disagreed on a question

relating to oration, they decided to consult Ahmad al-Qummi.¹¹² When Ahmad came out to meet Abu'l-'Ala' and Yahya in his house in Qum, he was dressed up festively and the smell of amber came out of his wrapper. Ahmad explained that it was the ninth day of the month of Rabi al-Awwal, a day of celebration for the death of the Caliph 'Umar. Ahmad noted that the Twelfth Imam had asked his servants to dress up in new clothes, within their modest means, on that day.

Using this rare account, Mir Husayn promoted Shi'ism as a natural extension of Muhammad's prophecy and as the fulfillment of divine will. He emphasized the obligation and centrality of 'dissociation' (from one's enemies) to Shi'ite eschatological traditions.¹¹³ He tells his readers that the Prophet predicted that the ninth of Rabi al-Awwal will bring good tidings and triumph to the house of the Prophet, 'Ali and Fatima and their progeny.¹¹⁴ On this day, God will destroy Imam 'Ali's enemies, fulfill Fatima's prayers, and accept the deeds of loyal Shi'ites. God had also predicted that on such a day 'a hypocrite' (meaning 'Umar) will obstruct God's way, burn His book, change His teachings, undermine His Imam, disown the Prophet's daughter and benefit from illegal inheritance. 'Umar is presented as the forger of the Qur'an who pleased Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians. More importantly, Mir Husayn suggests that the Caliph 'Umar plotted to assassinate Imam 'Ali.

Mir Husayn incorporates the day of 'Umar's death into a Shi'ite eschatological order. He argues that when 'Umar died, God ordered His angels and those who love the Prophet to celebrate it. He also commanded His honorary scribes to 'lift their pens' as not to record any human sins in honor of the Prophet and Imam 'Ali, his legatee (*wasi*).¹¹⁵ God will increase the fortunes of those who celebrate this day and save them from hell!

The defamation of the first three Caliphs, particularly 'Umar, marked both the clerical official apparatus of Shi'ism and popular shamanistic tendencies among Safavid subjects. Mir Husayn clearly suggests the interdependence of 'dissociation from' and 'cursing of' Sunnite figures in Shi'ite faith. It is misleading to assume, however, that Mir Husayn's position is simply a formulation of a well-established practice among Shi'ites. Occasional and spontaneous Shi'ite cursing of Sunnite Caliphs is at variance with institutionalized ritual cursing, which occurs routinely in public and becomes a defining character of a 'faith'. State instigated cursing was less an expression of sectarian hostilities, than a function of political conflict. The Safavids aimed to 'denormalize' Sunnism and draw sharper lines between it and Shi'ism among their subjects. This was a major development from the post-Mongol period, where Persians, Turkomans and Arabs have indiscriminately drawn upon both in defining their religious identity. Internally and externally, the Safavids benefited from the maintenance of a rejectionist, militant, dramatized approach toward Sunnism.

For their part, the *'ulama* also adapted elements of folk religion present among Qizilbash and Persian Sufis alike. As Alexander Morton pointed out, the *chub-i tariq* appropriated by the Safavid jurists had clear Qizilbash origins.¹¹⁶ The latter

considered *chub-i tariq* an effective way to control Shi'ite practice and reach the widest popular base.¹¹⁷ The *chub-i tariq* was led by the *khalifa* who started his ritual by praising God and Shah Tahmasb. After an hour of Sufi *dhikr*, followed by the chanting of Isma'il's and Tahmasb's poems, everyone present at the Shah's court, particularly *qurchis*, were called one by one to make a contribution of money. These men would then come to the center of the room and stretch themselves on the ground in front of the Shah. The *khalifa* gave each one of them a blow on the behind, then kissed their heads and feet, and kissed the stick.¹¹⁸

A more subtle and complex exchange among various religious groups, including the jurists, continued to develop throughout the Safavid period. The Shi'ite *'ulama* cultivated a pietistic popular tradition, which linked them to saintly and Sufi figures. Baha'i appropriated elements of dervishism and Sufism in his writings even as he continued to denounce messianism and heterodoxy. Baha'i also liked to paint an image of his forefathers in Jabal 'Amil as austere worshippers who, not unlike Sufi saints, had reached high spiritual ranks (*maqamat*) and performed miracles (*karamat*).¹¹⁹ He related that one severe winter day in the 'Amili town of Juba', his grandfather, Shams al-Din, realized there was no food for his children. The heavy snow blocked the roads and prevented him from seeking help. The children were crying out of hunger when Shams al-Din said to his wife: 'Comfort the children and let us pray to God to feed us.' The woman gathered some snow and her husband put it in the hot oven saying: 'This is the bread I am baking for you'. As Shams al-Din prayed, God illuminated his way and turned the snow into bread loafs in less than an hour!

Replacing the King

To test the limits of his authority, Shah Isma'il II decided on one occasion to eliminate the names of the Twelve Imams inscribed on the coinage. He expressed his views among the princes, notables and military leaders and deceptively stated that he feared the Imams' names would be disgraced if the coins fell into the hands of infidels. He advised that the inscription instead be that of the royal tax (*ghurma*). Of those present, Mir Husayn decided to prevent such a change, advising the Shah to inscribe a poetry verse by the famous Persian poet Mawla Hayrati that included the cursing of the first three Sunnite Caliphs. Infuriated but cautious, the Shah dismissed the subject lest it incur the support of several courtiers. He decided, however, on a plot to murder Mir Husayn by imprisoning him in a hot bath, which Mir Husayn apparently survived. But Mir Husayn continued to support a retinue charged with roaming the city, cursing 'A'isha and the Sunnite Caliphs, and he declared, in a reference to ritual cursing:

I will never renounce it [*tabarra'iiyyun*]. Even if the Shah were to kill me, let him do so; then our successors will say: 'Another Yazid had killed another Husayn who committed no sin, and they will curse him the way they cursed the first damned ignoble Yazid!'¹²⁰

Mir Husayn's entanglement in the empire's internal political affairs went further than defending the Shi'ite creed to searching for possible replacements for Shah Isma'il II. Mir Husayn apparently favored a nephew of the Shah, Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, 'a most talented and cultured man, an artist, outstanding musician and poet', and he secretly endorsed him as an alternative candidate for the throne.¹²¹ Mir Husayn's plans formed at a time when the Qizilbash were already disconcerted by both the Shah's deviation from the path of his forefathers and his severe measures against many royal princes and officials. As an example, Shah Isma'il II reprimanded Bolgar Khalifa, who occupied the high position of *khalifat al-khulafa*, and castigated him as a 'simple-minded Turk' for having argued in support of the ritual cursing of the three Caliphs, another indication that Mir Husayn and the Qizilbash had found a common cause. Some of the Shah's loyal officers informed him that Bolgar Khalifa had been made to memorize this argument in the presence of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, Mir Sayyid Husayn the *mujtahid* and Khwaja Afzal. The Shah felt his position was increasingly precarious, and he knew that the '*ulama*, led by Mir Husayn and allied to the Qizilbash *amirs*, and some royal members and their adherents among the Persian notables were advocating Sultan Ibrahim Mirza as his own replacement. The Ustajalu Qizilbash, whose regions Shah Isma'il II essentially razed for their support of Haydar Mirza, were but one constituency estranged from the Shah.¹²² The Shah's economic policy, which rested on sequestering land grants from the *sayyids* and the Shi'ite '*ulama*, alienated other malcontents.¹²³

Resistance to Shah Isma'il II, overtly projected against Mir Makhdum, grew stronger, especially when twelve royal guards (*qurchis*) exacted a deadly beating on the curser (*tabarra'i*), Darvish Qanbar, who interrupted Mir Makhdum's Friday sermon by reciting two verses encouraging cursing.¹²⁴ The incident stirred up such anger and grief among the populace that the Qizilbash's already shaken loyalty to the Shah waned. In a last attempt to hold the reins of power and appease both the Qizilbash and his people, the Shah arrested Mir Makhdum. Furthermore, during his own assemblies, the Shah refrained from any discussion of religious affairs. This may indicate that the Shah was reconsidering his policies and trying to appease the Qizilbash. Yet, this change of heart came somewhat late. A group of Turkoman and Tekellu Qizilbash *amirs* were already plotting to remove him and enthrone Sultan Hasan Mirza, a son of Muhammad Khudabanda, who was residing in Tehran.¹²⁵ Suspecting conspiracies against him, the Shah took severe measures toward family members he supposed were aspiring to the throne. On the Shah's command, Prince Ibrahim Mirza was murdered in Qazvin.¹²⁶ Then, on pure conjecture, the Shah put to death several of his cousins and all his brothers except one, Prince Mohammad Khudabanda. The Shah's timely death from poison or intoxication saved Prince Khudabanda's son 'Abbas Mirza, the future Shah 'Abbas I, from assassination at the Shah's request by 'Ali Quli Khan, the governor-general of Herat.¹²⁷ In circumstances that remain largely vague, the Shah was found dead. Few attributed it to natural causes, but many believed he was poisoned either by the princess Pari Khanom or by some Qizilbash *amirs* who had grown weary of his actions.¹²⁸

Despite their pro-Ottoman tone and persecution hyperbole, Mir Makhdum's autobiographical notes in *Al-Nawaqid* confirm that Sunnite elements were present at the highest state level in the early Safavid period. The period of Shah Isma'il II cannot be persuasively understood on the basis of a 'Shi'ite-Sunnite' struggle over the religious identity of the Safavid Empire.¹²⁹ There are also no hints as to the particular religious convictions of Shah Isma'il II or that he aimed to 're-convert' Persia to Sunnism. This period, however, attests to the tacit alliance between the 'Amili clerics and the Qizilbash *amirs* and the manner in which the former co-opted and reshaped elements of 'extremism' to widen their appeal to the public and increase their influence. It is also clear that the upper-class Qizilbash started to covet an 'orthodox' Islamic creed. This forces scholars in the field to reexamine the dominant assumptions that, first, the Qizilbash expressed heterodox beliefs across class; second, they were the natural opponents of the '*ulama*'; and third, that the '*ulama* imposed their version of Shi'ism mechanically and largely from without causing the corrosion of shamanistic and Sufi practices in Safavid Persia.

Afterthoughts

Indeed, the clerics strove to expunge heterodoxy and Sufism from Twelver Shi'ite practices but, interestingly, they also nurtured some of the popular *ghuluww* practices that overlapped with Qizilbash religious background, such as anti-Sunnite ritual cursing and the beating ritual-confession. This evidence forces scholars in the field to present a more nuanced and multifaceted picture of religion in Safavid Persia, which takes into account class divisions and transformation among the Qizilbash and the clerics alike, and Safavid statehood. It is unlikely that the Qizilbash Sufi warriors remained unchanged on the doctrinal level by new class distinctions and military power vested in a centralized state. The 'Amili clerics on their part could not simply impose their version of legalistic Shi'ism without a measure of consent at the state and popular levels. Co-opting a few elements of popular Sufism and heterodoxy allowed the clerics to strengthen their own political positions and legitimize imperial sovereignty. Legalistic Shi'ism became an internal Safavid affair, thus acquiring an unmistakably Persian character. Much of the secondary literature views the association between the 'Amilis and the Safavid state as an intrusion of ethnic and intellectual dimensions. The writings of Jean Calmard and Kathryn Babayan, which reflect this approach, treat Arab legalistic Shi'ism as mechanically imposed on the 'indigenous' spiritual landscape of Persia rather than being, more accurately, a product of a social process within Persian society.¹³⁰ Unfortunately, Calmard and Babayan's views were based on Andrew Newman's precarious observations about clerical migration, and on a limited and selective examination of the early Safavid sources.¹³¹ Calmard denies the 'clerical migration' of Arab Shi'ite '*ulama* to Iran, maintaining that 'Ali al-Karaki (d. 940AH/1534CE) was 'the only Arab Imami *mujtahid* who associated himself with the Safavid court'.¹³² Babayan also felt that the Arab theologians as a whole refused to immigrate to Persia on the

basis of their rejection of the mystical and heterodox Islamic beliefs harbored by the Qizilbash.

In reality, however, the 'Amili *'ulama* openly coveted Safavid religious posts and lent support to a Persian rather than an Arab need for doctrinal certification and for clerical discipline. In Jabal 'Amil these scholars played a modest role in their communities, struggled to earn a living, and rarely debated the legitimacy of convening Friday prayer, the direction of prayer or the prerogatives of a *mujtahid*; all of which are strongly tied to the project of statehood in Persia. Under the Safavids, the 'Amilis had to adapt to Persia's political climate and lend support to its Shi'ite state in ways they had never experienced or known before while they were living in Jabal 'Amil. As the coming chapters illustrate, the building of a stable state projecting religious coherence necessitated the appropriation of the clerical Shi'ism of the 'Amilis. It is inaccurate to assume that the Qizilbash or the *'ulama* were each bound by a constant set of beliefs or practices or remained mutually exclusive. Rather, members of the two groups, depending on their class interests and socio-political goals, were transformed by the Safavid experience. Each appropriated elements from the other that aimed to strengthen their political positions and relations to the state.

Summary and Conclusions

The first leaders of the Safavid Empire sought to transform their deistic rule from a communally practiced Shi'ism to a state-operated Shi'ism, and they hired the 'Amilis to bring about the change. The 'Amilis helped the Safavid Shahs shape their dynastic authority and entered Persian society as a new social group, the *mujtahids*. Gradually, a handful of these *mujtahids* joined the landed aristocracy, attained upper-class distinctions and tapped popular sources of social power. Of all the Safavid Shahs, Tahmasb placed the greatest trust in the 'Amilis in general and in the al-Karaki family in particular. His reign, however, brought tensions within the clerical community surrounding, first, claims to supreme religious knowledge; second, designating the jurist as the Imam's deputy; and third, the degree of legitimacy which the clerical elite should extend to the Safavid Empire. Indeed, the 'Amilis were not a monolithic group acting on the basis of a projected ethnic solidarity, but were rather divided along professional and political lines.

Husayn rejected the monopoly over *ijtihad*, practiced by both al-Karaki and his grandson, Mir Sayyid Husayn, both of whom took on the title of 'seal of *mujtahid*'. His position helped revalidate the position of several Persian notables during the early reign of Shah Tahmasb. Husayn held steadfastly to the idea of a pluralism of authority, reflected in the rationalist renewal of legal rulings and a rejection of the opinions of dead *mujtahids*. More importantly, however, Husayn resisted attempts by his sovereign to control questions of clerical leadership or to designate a 'seal'. Ultimately, he aimed to bring a measure of autonomy for the jurists and high-ranking *'ulama* during their association with temporal rulers.

The period of Shah Tahmasb also brings to the fore clear contests over the performance of Friday prayer. Whereas al-Karaki had argued that observing Friday prayer was optional for Shi'ite Muslims, Husayn considered it obligatory to observe Friday prayer on the basis of infamous Shi'ite and Sunnite traditions. He succeeded in reinstating Friday prayer, largely because he downplayed the role of the jurist in performing this ritual. Professional jurists drew significant social status and political influence from administering Friday prayer.¹³³ Husayn's views seemed to have quelled the fears of Persian courtiers and even future sovereigns as to the scope of authority of the cleric. Husayn was also more successful than al-Karaki in convincing the ruler that holding Friday prayer was a powerful statement against the Ottomans. It confirmed the Islamic character of the Safavid Empire. The complex evolution of Shi'ism from a communal faith to a state religion along with the empire's need for deflecting Uzbek and Ottoman Sunnite propaganda, called for a conceptual transformation in the Shi'ite's approach toward temporal authority. The literature surrounding Friday prayer owes some part to Ottoman-Safavid struggles and the Safavids' concern with their religious image and political stature.¹³⁴

During the reign of Shah Tahmasb and Shah Isma'il II, a few Qizilbash *amirs* promoted 'Amili clerics and accepted their ascendancy in ranks of religious service to undermine the Persian *sadrs* and bureaucrats, and boost their own political interests. A few aligned themselves with 'Amili legalism in an attempt to confirm their commitment and defense of Twelver Shi'ism as the empire's foundation and religious identity. Despite the fact that the Qizilbash emerged from a heterodox, Sufi form of folk Shi'ism, as they assumed power in the Safavid state they began to nurture diverse, often contradictory approaches to Shi'ism on the basis of political interest and social class. A number of their *amirs* became gradually receptive to a legally regulated Shi'ism, which the 'Amilis espoused. At the same time, the 'Amilis were aware of the need to co-opt – on a limited basis – popular features of Twelver Shi'ism.¹³⁵

The 'Amili clerical elite also underwent significant alteration. Its association with the Safavid Shahs rendered almost pointless for it the central Shi'ite belief in the suspension of temporal authority in the absence of the *Mahdi* ('appointed one'). The 'Amilis promulgated legal and doctrinal points to serve three worldly purposes: to legitimize the state's authority over the Shahs' divine rights; to provide ideological Shi'ite links that validated the concepts of state and society; and to promote at least a partial autonomy for the clerical elite. For its part, 'Amili legalism shaped the character of Persian society in as much as this society was ready, historically speaking, to undergo socio-political transformation, under the contingencies of Safavid statehood. From heterodoxy and popular Imamism to clerically controlled Shi'ism, the 'Amili ideas reflected the course of religion in early modern Iran.

3

Shah ‘Abbas and Imperial Reign as Clerical Discipline, 1587–1629CE

SHAH SULTAN MUHAMMAD KHUDABANDA (r. 985–95AH/1578–87CE) came to power amidst a renewal of Qizilbash intertribal strife and army factionalism, giving Safavid rivals a golden opportunity to overrun large regions of Persia.¹ Safavid monarchs attempted to administer a delicate balance of power not simply between the Qizilbash elite and the Persian notables but also among the leading Qizilbash tribes themselves. During their episodic conflicts and military clashes, the Tekellu-Turkoman tribes united against the Ustajalu-Shamlu ones.² The Safavid state constantly had to reshuffle its alliances with the upper class on the basis of divisions within and across elite lines. By the time of Shah Muhammad Khudabanda, intra-Qizilbash struggles had become an increasing liability to the Safavid state, given the indispensability of the military for an empire constantly engaged in reconfirming its sovereignty within its borders and against a powerful foe, the Ottomans. The latter took the opportunity offered by these struggles to subjugate northern Azerbaijan and most of Georgia in 986AH/1578CE. Less than a decade after, in 993AH/1585CE, the Ottomans succeeded in capturing the provincial capital of Tabriz and wrested control of the whole of Azerbaijan.

Khayr al-Nisa’ Begum, known as Mahd-i ‘Ulya, the tenacious wife of Shah Muhammad Khudabanda, had considerable sway in state affairs and hoped to weaken the Qizilbash by extending patronage to the Mazandarani and offering them provincial governorships and grants of money. Angered by the Shah’s deferment to Mahd-i ‘Ulya’s measures, Qizilbash military officers assassinated her in 987AH/1579CE, along with several Persian aristocrats allied to her.³ Only those who had forged solid ties with Turkoman *amirs* emerged unscathed.⁴

During the reign of Shah 'Abbas I (r. 995–1038AH/1587–1629CE), known as 'Abbas the Great, historical narratives promoted new conceptions of imperial sovereignty and dynastic rule.⁵ These conceptions were shaped by a transformation in the Safavid social structure, and 'Abbas's political claims during the early seventeenth century CE. Under Shah 'Abbas, the Safavid Empire experienced a forceful restructuring of the Qizilbash military, a centralization of state marked by tribal redistribution, massive depopulation, military expansion and economic growth. Shah 'Abbas eliminated some of the seditious Qizilbash army commanders and councils with Georgian, Circassian, Caucasian and Armenian royal slaves (*ghulaman*), whose status and interests derived primarily from their loyalty to him.⁶ He made structural changes to their financial and military powerbase but continued to rely on them for his military campaigns. The process of recruiting the *ghulaman*, particularly from Georgian prisoners, into the Safavid military started at the time of Shah Tahmasb but became a systematic and conscious practice at the time of Shah 'Abbas.⁷ Rather than leading to a demise of tribal Turkoman elements, the major reforms of Shah 'Abbas marginalized them in the military and administrative systems.⁸ Individual Qizilbash figures, however, relying on their skills and initiative rather than their position within one of the corporate tribal groupings, reemerged in state offices.⁹ Due to the extensive campaigns the Shah launched to defend the frontiers against Ottoman invasions, his state needed skillful and reliable military personnel who, at least in theory, were easier to dispense with and lacked the collective menacing power of the Qizilbash tribes. The *ghulaman* system aimed in principle to produce able military and administrative servicemen who depended totally on the monarch for their social and economic standing. Several *ghulaman* received provincial governorships and critical state offices and increased their fortunes, which eventually gave them a measure of power and autonomy toward the end of Shah 'Abbas's reign.¹⁰

Safavid Persia had a pre-capitalist agrarian economy administered by a patrimonial political system.¹¹ The Shah's authority was maintained through a decentralized exercise of political control and balance of administrative and military personnel.¹² Meanwhile, as Rudi Matthee convincingly argued, state institutions were 'fluid and flexible inasmuch as circumstance and royal disposition directly influenced their composition, function, and effectiveness'.¹³ State politics did not circle around the personal actions of the sovereign, nor did the latter have complete and exclusive hegemony over economic resources, political organization or the military.¹⁴ The Safavids did not establish an absolutist state with static or total monopoly over power relations but rather 'dispensed power and profit through a process of bargaining whose main characteristics were inclusion and manipulation'.¹⁵ As for economic development, there seemed to have been little differentiation and distinction among tasks pertaining to political administration, agriculture, industry or trade.¹⁶ Floor insisted that Persia witnessed neither a major economic growth in the sixteenth century, nor a change in the mode or structure of production and labor. Meanwhile, 'Abbas more so than any of his predecessors,

reorganized the fiscal basis of the state by converting large provinces into crown lands, and cutting the

Qezelbash down in size, and instituting the silk monopoly and taking other measures to get more control over trade. In this way he was able to claim a larger share of the economic surplus generated by the economy.¹⁷

'Abbas was called the 'prince of traders' due to his efforts in building a solid commercial base in Isfahan. Leading merchants managed the elite's capital and shaped guild business as Floor showed.¹⁸ Through the export monopoly of raw silk, elite and state interference in the market became most 'pronounced and formalized under Shah 'Abbas'.¹⁹ These features had important political implications, for Shah 'Abbas, more so than earlier Safavid sovereigns, derived complex and subtle forms of ideological control over important social sectors in Persia.

The 'Knighted' Jurists and the Restructuring of the State

The social formations under Shah 'Abbas reflected, in addition to the gradual ascendancy of *ghulams*, a marked growth in the power and prestige of several clerical families, including a handful of émigré Arabs from Jabal 'Amil in Syria, who were integrated into the Persian aristocracy through intermarriage or/and court titles and gifts. The title, 'Mir', borne by the descendants of these émigré Arabs, is indicative of their integration into the Persian aristocracy.²⁰ 'Ali b. 'Abd 'Ali al-Karaki cultivated important ties with the Persian nobility. At least two of his daughters married into the Astarabadi family. Mir Damad and Mir Husayn were al-Karaki's grandchildren. One of al-Karaki's sons, namely Taj al-Din 'Abd al-'Ali acquired the title Mir Sayyid 'Ali.²¹ Al-Karaki also cultivated positive ties with two princes from the Isfahani and Shushtari families, whom he nominated for the *sadarat* under Shah Tahmasb. Other 'Amili descendants, like Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin al-'Alawi, also carried the titles 'Mir' and 'Sayyid'. In the late Safavid period, the maternal uncle of yet another scholar of 'Amili descent, Abu'l-Hasan Sharif b. Tahir al-Futuni, was from the nobility. He was Mir Saleh Khatunabadi. Lutfullah al-Maysi al-'Amili, a leading Safavid cleric, gave one of his daughters in marriage to Shah 'Abbas and another to a notable scholar from Astarabad, namely Muhammad Mu'min Astarabadi al-'Uqayli.²²

Concomitant with the political changes he made, Shah 'Abbas sought distinct sources of legitimacy, central to which was his guardianship of Imami Shi'ism and the espousal of Shi'ite legalism. A controlled process of cooperation and resistance defined the relationship between the clerics and a powerful monarch like Shah 'Abbas. Unlike the earliest Safavid monarchs, Shah Isma'il (r. 907–30AH/1501–24CE) and Shah Tahmasb (r. 930–84AH/1524–76CE), who extended distinct powers to 'Amili scholars like al-Karaki and his grandson, Mir Husayn, Shah 'Abbas closely monitored the activities of the jurists and hampered the autonomy of the clerical

elite. He prevented individual jurists from achieving political prerogatives or claiming exclusive legal authority. Meanwhile, the court clerics were busy developing a religious system, which lent support to imperial concerns with political integration, social discipline and the Persianization of Shi'ism. Despite its high level of centralism, Shah 'Abbas's rule was protested against by diverse social elements, not least the class of Shi'ite jurists. Shah 'Abbas had to reckon with clerical reservations about the state's theocratic claims and, as such, about sanctifying fully its political order. In other words, the clerics avoided making a theological linkage between the Safavid state and the ideal Imamate authority. This explains the fact that the leading court jurists under Shah 'Abbas, along with their students, proclaimed that the observation of Friday prayer was licit but optional for Shi'ites.²³ Shaykh Lutfullah al-Maysi (d. 1032AH/1622–23CE) was the only cleric who endorsed the obligatory observance (*'ayniyya*) of Friday prayer.²⁴

In terms of the empire's regional preoccupations, Shah 'Abbas was engaged in extensive military campaigns to defend the frontiers from Ottoman invasions and encroachments. He concluded a peace treaty with the Ottomans – the Peace of Istanbul – on 21 March 998AH/1590CE, which ended, though only for a while, a twelve-year hostility between the two parties. The treaty deprived Persia of much of the Safavid territories, including Tabriz. Shah 'Abbas turned his efforts to the Uzbeks who had occupied Khurasan for almost ten years. After several failing attempts against 'Abd al-Mu'min Khan, son of 'Abdullah Khan Uzbek, the Safavids succeeded in regaining Khurasan's two capitals, Herat and Mashhad, in 1007AH/1598–9CE and reaffirming their sovereignty.²⁵ In 1011AH/1602–3CE, he regained almost all Safavid territory, and eventually concluded another peace treaty with the Ottomans, ensuring the same terms as the treaty of Amasya promulgated under Shah Tahmasb.²⁶ But the Shah still had to deal with his domestic foes and waves of internal rebellions in Isfahan, Shiraz, Kirman, Gilan, Mazandaran and Lorestan.²⁷

The thrust for a sustained social 'Shi'itization' of Persian society carried by Shah 'Abbas for socio-political reasons, along with renewed confrontations with the Ottomans described above, explains to a large extent the revived Safavid interest in employing scholars of Arab 'Amili background to occupy the highest religious offices of the empire. In the period following the death of Shah Isma'il II (r. 984–85AH/1576–78CE), names of 'Amili jurists and scholars seemed to have receded from the court annals, and even the flamboyant Shaykh Baha'i was faintly recognized by Shah Sultan Muhammad Khudabanda. With the ascent of Shah 'Abbas, the fortunes of Jabal 'Amil's legal experts and their descendants rose anew. Shah 'Abbas recognized several 'Amili descendants alongside Baha'i, namely Muhammad Baqir b. Shams al-Din Muhammad Astarabadi, known as Mir Damad (d. 1041AH/1631–32CE), Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin al-'Alawi (d. 1054AH/1644CE), Lutfullah al-Maysi (d. 1032AH/1622–23CE) and his son, Ja'far.

Shah 'Abbas's imperial designs for an orderly, rigorous, and accountable world, packaged in edicts and injunctions, illustrate the utility of Islamic legalism. Clerical Shi'ism insisted that the faithful Shi'ite know and embrace his/her faith through

the minutiae of legal conduct, a manual of quantifiable steps, recitals and rituals. Together they offered the empire a way to present itself as an objectification of the Shi'ite faith, its explicator and a visible extension of it. Floor noted that Shah 'Abbas was the first Safavid monarch to offer fiscal incentives for converting and maintaining the Shi'ite faith. He was worried 'about the insufficient level of "Shi'itization" of Safavid society'.²⁸ Even though this process was initiated at the highest imperial levels, it remained by no means a purely state-clerical affair. Social discipline was not mechanically reproduced by centralized agencies like the state or the clerical establishment. Rather, it became diffuse, disseminated by a network of students and followers in the religious colleges (*madrāsas*) and mosques, and was gradually supported by members of the upper class. The merchants and the artisans also appropriated the *'ulama* style of worship. The concerns of these distinct social groups at the popular and state levels ultimately modified the ideas of the jurists and their legal production. The earliest Safavid theologians, more specifically the 'Amilis, imparted their form of religious knowledge to the common Persian through simplified doctrinal and legal works, abridged manuals and popular literature. Despite the sway of folk and heterodox notions, *shari'a*-regulated Shi'ism was gradually claimed and demanded by common Persians from below. Ruling and working groups not only consented to clerical Shi'ism, but also started to partake actively in and manipulate its legal discourse. This is not to say that conformity with Shi'ite legalism prevailed. On the contrary, the internalization of clerical edicts grew side by side with resistance and dissent expressed in popular Sufism and mysticism. But by the time of Shah 'Abbas, facets of folk Shi'ite devotionalism overlapped with pietistic *'ulama* traditions.²⁹ Without the consent of several sectors of Persian society, it was difficult, if not impossible, to implement a *shari'a*-regulated system of worship. Indeed, Shah 'Abbas entertained selective Sufi and philosophical inclinations, but these were limited by the principles of orthodox Shi'ism which had a direct utility for him. The political order he envisaged was as much revealed in Isfahan's art and architecture as it was remolded and negotiated in the juridical literature. For instance, the legitimacy of Shah 'Abbas's centralized state was symbolized in the individual and associational dimensions of the monumental arches, royal mosque, the bazaars and schools around the area of Meydan-i Shah in Isfahan after the transfer of the capital. The new *meydan* in Isfahan became an architectural testimonial to the success of Shah 'Abbas's effective subjugation of the Uzbeks and, more importantly, his economic and political reforms in 1011AH/1602CE, which he had begun fourteen years earlier.³⁰ The Qaysariya Gateway, Stephen Blake wrote, 'stood as a monument to 'Abbas's recently reorganized state and to the new city center it overlooked'.³¹ Notwithstanding, the Shah had at times to negotiate his way into a number of situations where major elite opposition surfaced. For instance, the old quarters of the city were dominated by the traditional notable families, which competed with the Shah over this urban space. Delicate power relations existed between these families and the Shah who inhabited the new zone in the city of Isfahan.³² Clerical rulings and theological

debates were another platform where questions of sovereignty and state authority were played out.

To Benefit the Learned and the Lay: Shi'ite Books under Shah 'Abbas

Beyond the clerical class, specialized legal compendiums and tracts on Shi'ite doctrines and rituals were inaccessible. This is particularly true since the largest percentage of juridical works, including 'Amili works, was in Arabic.³³ For this reason, the early Safavids and their jurists felt that simplified and concise *fiqh* manuals, translated into Persian and short enough to be committed to memory, were essential for religious and political integration. Several 'Amili commentaries on canonical legal texts went on to become authoritative in their own right. Acts of worship (*'ibadat*) works continued with the same thrust from the early Safavid period to the time of Shah 'Abbas. In fact, under the latter there was an increased interest in spreading and reinforcing Shi'ite Tradition. Except for Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad's works, little interest in collections of Tradition appeared at the time of Shah Isma'il and Shah Tahmasb. (See appendix III) Shaykh Baha'i, Mir Damad and Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin al-'Alawi, better known as Ahmad 'Alawi, the student and brother-in-law of Mir Damad, each produced works on Tradition. Baha'i compiled concise legal works, which gained great popularity, such as *Al-Habl al-Matin fi Ahkam al-Din* and *Mashriq al-Shamsayn wa Iksir al-Sa'adatayn*. It was also at the time of Shah 'Abbas that a new Persian translation of Muhammad b. Ya'qub al-Kulayni's (d. 329AH/941CE) monumental *Usul al-Kafi fi 'Ilm al-Din* was laid down.³⁴ By far the most popular legal compendium was Baha'i's *Jami'i 'Abbasi*, commissioned by Shah 'Abbas. It touched on questions of Islamic ritual, the Imams' proper dates of birth and death, pious endowments, charity, sale, marriage, divorce, vows, atonement and penal law.³⁵ In a conscious attempt to deliver to Persian society a token of a Persianized Shi'ism, Shah 'Abbas ordered that *Jami'i 'Abbasi* be delivered in 'a clear, comprehensible language in order that all people, the learned and the lay, would seek benefit from it'.³⁶ Unlike the 'ulama's specialized tracts, the works commissioned by Shah 'Abbas serve a socially diverse readership. In this sense, *Jami'i 'Abbasi* was a watershed in the popularization of Shi'ite legal literature, an exercise in political cohesion and homogenization across the empire. Until the end of the seventeenth century, the clerics invested much of their efforts in organizing smaller collections and manuals of *hadith* with commentaries, particularly on chapters of Ibn Babuya's *Usul al-Kafi* and *Man la Yahduruh al-Faqih* and Shaykh Tusi's *Tahdhib* and *Al-Istibsar*.

Mir Damad also had his share of commentaries on Shi'ite collections of Tradition, namely *Al-Ta'liqa 'ala Kitab al-Kafi* and *Al-Usul min al-Kafi*. He also wrote a commentary on *Al-Istibsar*.³⁷ Like a few state-appointed clerics, Mir Damad expressed a keen interest in philosophy (*hikmat*), dogmatic theology (*kalam*), and mathematics. (See appendix III) Except for Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, who entertained literary and Sufi predilections, the early émigré scholars of Syria were

jurists par excellence. Works drawing on the 'high' learned tradition of Sufism also appear with Baha'i and Mirza Ahmad al-Husayni, the brother of Habibullah, the Safavid *sadr* and great grandson of al-Karaki. Baha'i also wrote a work titled *Milal va Nihal*, identifying and discussing Sufi groups.³⁸ Around fifteen mathematical works were laid down by Baha'i and 'Amili descendants. These were Baha'i's brother, 'Abd al-Samad (d. 1020AH/1613CE), his nephew, Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, and his students, Najib al-Din, 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Jubayli al-'Amili and Jawad b. Sa'd al-'Amili. Baha'i's *Bahr al-Hisab*, his largest arithmetical book and its summary, *Khulasat al-Hisab*, became authoritative textbooks.³⁹

Whereas polemical treatises in refutation of Sunnism and Sufism dominated the early and mid sixteenth century, around four works refuting Christianity and Judaism surfaced during the reign of Shah 'Abbas. (See appendix III) These works were written by the court scholar, Ahmad 'Alavi. Ahmad devoted one polemical work to the refutation of Sufism. Due to the fact that popular Sufi groups were effectively suppressed and marginalized by Shah 'Abbas, the clerics seemed to have turned their focus away from them, at least for the time being. It is noteworthy that the seventeenth century CE witnessed the appearance of the first Safavid 'Amili treatise devoted to the *akhbari-usuli* controversy produced by Husyan b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki (d. 1076AH/1656CE). (See appendix III) This is indicative of the crystallization of internal political divisions and juridical disagreements among the '*ulama* that carried important implications for the clerical and secular elites, the sovereigns, and Safavid society at large. Arjomand suggested that the 'Persian clerical estate' and its core of *sayyids* adopted traditionism to counter the Shi'ite *mujtahids*' 'bid for hierocratic domination'.⁴⁰ The Persian notables blended traditionism with Gnostic philosophy advocating 'innerworldly salvation through the hermeneutic comprehension of the sacred texts'.⁴¹

Afflicted by the Company of Kings: 'The Baha'i is who I am, and great is my worth!'

Shaykh Baha'i was born in Ba'labak proper in 953AH/1546CE to the northeast of the 'Amili hometown Juba' in Jabal 'Amil.⁴² He was around six or seven years old when his father migrated from Jabal 'Amil to Persia.⁴³ As such, he grew up as a Persian who drew upon his 'Amili descent and intellectual social experience. A grim view of public office and scholastic leadership embroiled in competition and royal whims remained vivid through his writings. He proclaimed: 'If my father had not come to Persia, I would not have been afflicted with the company of the Shah.'⁴⁴ The king's companion, he confessed, though envied by the elite and commoners alike, is doomed because: 'The wielder of power is like the rider of a lion, for when it seems that the lion is the rider's horse in reality the rider is the lion's horse!'⁴⁵

Baha'i also expressed his wish to live simply in a manner reminiscent of his father's teacher, al-Shahid al-Thani, who built his own house, attended to his vineyard at night and tutored his students during the day. In his *Kashkul*, Baha'i

paints a self-portrait of an austere scholar roaming in the clothes of a dervish and enduring the harshness of travel to obtain spiritual fulfillment away from the limelight. His wish to retreat from public office was equally embellished and exaggerated in official Safavid narratives.⁴⁶ But Baha'i was not altogether faithful to these aspirations. The image his contemporaries painted of a dervish-like traveler is rather a function of Baha'i's own romanticized version of the Sufi-philosopher in pursuit of knowledge in far and distant places.⁴⁷ In fact, however, Baha'i's travels outside Persia lasted less than three years.⁴⁸

At a young age, Baha'i was very much part of the court circle. Following the death of Shaykh 'Ali al-Minshar, his father-in-law, in 984AH/1576CE, Baha'i assumed the post of *shaykh al-Islam* and supervised the application of religious law as counsel on permissible conduct (*vakil-i halaliyyat*) in Isfahan.⁴⁹ The *vakil-i halaliyyat* may have been a new post, which points to a growth in inquiries and management of *'ibadat* or more specifically defining prohibited and licit behavior. Some sources suggest, however, that Baha'i's first official post was actually in Herat as *shaykh al-Islam*, or the administrator of religious law, filling the gap left by his father's departure from Persia around 983AH/1575CE.⁵⁰ During the reign of Shah Isma'il II and following his murder, Baha'i remained aloof from the dynasty's affairs. The fact that he had dedicated a Persian treatise, *Awzan-i Shar'i* ('Legal meters'), to Shah Muhammad Khudabanda during the latter's early reign in 985AH/1577–78CE shows Baha'i's eagerness to be associated with the Safavid court. The Shah was well acquainted with Baha'i for, during the former's youth in Herat, he sat through the Friday sermons of Baha'i's father, and was instructed by him in Shi'ite doctrine.⁵¹ Shah Muhammad Khudabanda, however, did not recruit him into any of the state's significant religious offices.

The lack of interest, which Shah Isma'il II (r. 984–85AH/1576–77CE) and Shah Muhammad Khudabanda showed toward Baha'i, and the incessant tribal wars that weakened the empire may have encouraged Baha'i to journey to Ottoman provinces.⁵² Travel carried a mixed task, combining study, religious pilgrimage and an escape from social and professional frustrations. In a poem he wrote in 1001AH/1592CE, Baha'i disclosed to Sayyid Mir Rahmatullah al-Fattal al-Najafi, the past prayer leader of Shah Tahmasb's camp, feelings of betrayal and despair.⁵³ Baha'i found solace from anguish in travel: 'I will wash off the filth of humiliation with a revival in which settling is less and wandering is more.'⁵⁴ Following in the footsteps of renowned 'Amilis, he made intellectual contact with reputed Sunnite scholars from Egypt, Jerusalem and Syria.⁵⁵ The trip to these Ottoman regions brought him fame and prestige in the eyes of scholars and students alike, who were eager to study and controvert with him.⁵⁶

Shah 'Abbas did not initiate any contact with Baha'i in the early years of his reign. Instead, Mir Husayn Mujtahid was the foremost court scholar of that period; a fact overshadowed by the emphasis on his connection to the reign of Shah Isma'il II.⁵⁷ The 'Mujtahid al-Zaman Mir Sayyid Husayn' was present at major official ceremonies and directly involved in resolving social and legal matters for the court

princes. It was not until 1008AH/1600CE, two years after the Shah moved his capital city from Qazvin to Isfahan, that Baha'i became *shaykh al-Islam* there.⁵⁸ Baha'i's name became closely associated with the period of Shah 'Abbas and its distinct socio-religious character.

The amicable relations between the Safavid Empire and the Mughal Empire (933–1275AH/1526–1858CE), proved beneficial to a nephew (sister's son) and student of Baha'i, namely Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Khwatun al-'Amili (d. *circa* 1111AH/1699CE). Muhammad b. Khwatun made his way to the Mughal vizierate and wrested the functions of court secretary (*munshi' al-mulk*) of the principality of Golkonda in the Deccan (1020–1083AH/1626–1672CE).⁵⁹ 'Abdullah Qutbshah, the ruler of Golkonda, expressed great allegiance to Shah 'Abbas, inscribed his name on the coinage and incorporated it in the official sermon of Friday prayer. It is likely that Baha'i's influence at the court of Shah 'Abbas helped him promote his nephew for this position in India. The Shah had extended his power over the Deccan region and expected Ibn Khwatun to promote his interests there. Indeed, Ibn Khwatun seemed to have played no small role in nurturing good relations between Shah 'Abbas and the Sultan, in one instance, leading a delegation to the Shah expressing Mughal vows of friendship and gifts. The Sultan, possibly under the encouragement of Shah 'Abbas and religious experts like Ibn Khwatun, hoped to spread standard Shi'ite practices and make legal edicts accessible to the Persian-speaking officials and subjects of his principality. Ibn Khwatun translated Baha'i's *Kitab al-Arba'in* from Arabic into Persian, known as *Tarjumeh-i Qutbshahiyya*, and dedicated it to 'Abdullah Qutbshah.⁶⁰ In 1038AH/1628CE, the succeeding Sultan, the seventh of the Qutbshahi rulers, bestowed on Ibn Khwatun even greater favors by appointing him grand *sadr* and governor of his kingdom, and bestowed upon him distinguished titles like *mir jumleh* and leader (*pishva*).

Imperial Uses of Clerical Shi'ism

Under Shah 'Abbas, the social and ethnic composition of the military and the administrative staff underwent fundamental changes, mainly due to a systematic replacement of Qizilbash leaders with Circassian and Georgian slave soldiery (*ghulams*). Safavid society was arguably shaped by forced migration and the depopulation policies in the face of Ottoman military expansion in the west and Uzbek opposition in the east. Shah 'Abbas launched decisive and systematic counter-attacks in 1006AH/1597–98CE, when he made the eastern frontier with the Uzbeks safe and moved his capital city to Isfahan. From 1012AH/1603CE until 1024AH/1615CE he turned his efforts to regaining Safavid territories from the Ottomans and reorganizing vital Safavid regions. Shah 'Abbas, more intensely and extensively than his predecessors, used depopulation and 'scorched earth' policy to prevent Ottoman occupation of frontier regions and cities;⁶¹ I would add to those two policies the forced conversion of frontier populations, particularly Christians, to Islam. Many of those forced to convert were captives recruited in the Safavid army.

It is useful to highlight first the nature of forced migrations and depopulation in the Safavid Empire. Shah 'Abbas first implemented tribal redistributions on a short-term basis in order to thwart northern attacks by the Ottomans, should the latter occupy the area of Ganja.⁶² Thus, in 1012AH/1603CE he moved all the tribes of the Aras valley to east of Julfa and to the south of Qarabagh to defend the banks of the Aras river northwest. John Perry asserted that Shah 'Abbas's policies of resettlement along frontier lines to repel raids against Khurasan aimed at defending the northern borders of the Safavid state. But tribal relocation did not yield decisive military success over the Ottomans, so the Shah adopted the 'scorched earth' policy to discourage Ottoman invasions between Qars and Lake Van and prevent them from crossing the Aras river. In 1013AH/1604CE, he ordered his troops to burn the crops and pastures of Qars and Zarneshad.⁶³ Furthermore, the army ravaged the countryside between Qars and Erzerum. Around two to three thousand Armenian families were moved to Iraq. Overall, 20,000 'non-Muslims were taken captive and embraced Islam in qezelbash custody'.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, Tahmasbquli Beg, a *ghulam* of the royal household, carried out the Shah's commands of transferring the population of Julfa to Isfahan between 1603CE and 1605CE. During the same period, Shah 'Abbas enforced systematic and long-range depopulation of Greater Azerbaijan.⁶⁵ Agriculture and estates were destroyed while thousands of Georgian, Armenian and Turkish prisoners were moved southeast before the Ottomans could launch another attack. At least 3,000 families were settled at New Julfa in the suburb of the capital and in the Bakhtiyari foothills. The Armenian inhabitants of Julfa were skilled craftsmen, who, as the court historian Munshi noted, 'would be of use for the Shah'.⁶⁶ In 1015–16AH/1606–08CE, the Shah made it standard policy to leave the Erivan region uncultivated and thus deny the Ottoman army much needed supplies until he secured his hold over Azerbaijan.⁶⁷ In order to compensate for the devastation caused by the 'scorched earth' policy, Shah 'Abbas forced the settlement of vast numbers of peoples in various Safavid regions in order to restore their economic prosperity through the labors and skills of the new emigrants. This was the case with 500 Armenian families, which were moved to Shiraz, mainly 'to engage in viticulture'.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, a third dimension of Safavid measures against Ottoman expansion was the occasional resort to converting large Christian populations and other non-Muslims residing in frontier regions to Islam. This was largely due to the fact that Shah 'Abbas felt that, being non-Shi'ite, these communities could be much more easily persuaded to take the Ottoman's side or make concessions to the Safavids' enemies. In 1014AH/1605–6CE, the Safavid army attacked and devastated the province of Albaq ruled by an Ottoman provincial governor.⁶⁹ The Safavid army:

Took captive around a thousand women and children belonging to Christian infidels who had fought the Muslim forces and who had therefore forfeited their right to protection as non-Muslim peoples under Muslim rule; their being taken as prisoners of war was consequently quite legal.⁷⁰

This statement further reflects the state's concern with the 'legality' of this practice and furnishing justification, on the basis of Islamic practice of protecting the *dhimmis* (non-Muslims) living under Islamic rule. The Shah seemed to have transferred several churches in Georgia to mosques and forced the conversion of Christians and Jews to Islam around 1023AH/1614CE.⁷¹ Between 1023AH/1614CE and 1024AH/1616CE around 30,000 Georgian captives were forced to convert to Islam.⁷² But far from being a fixed policy toward non-Muslims of the empire, the Shah took diverse approaches toward them depending on historical circumstances and political expediency. In 1023AH/1614CE, the Shah carried out severe punitive measures against Qizilbash soldiers who took possession of Georgian homes and plundered them.⁷³ After that, 'no rascal dared lay his hands on even a piece of straw belonging to a [Georgian] peasant'. James Reid noted that Qizilbash soldiers, particularly those who were an unpaid and relied primarily on booty, resorted at times to plunder and took part at times in banditry.⁷⁴ This, however, was more characteristic of the periods of Shah Tahmasb:

[Shah 'Abbas d]rew into the regiments of musketeers many unemployed men, providing, as Floor noted, relief to the lower classes 'from their lawless activities'.⁷⁵

The political affiliation of the populations of the frontiers was a consideration, which applied to all religious communities. This view was consciously expressed by Shah 'Abbas around 1023–4AH/1614–16AH as a reason for transferring Armenians, Muslims and Jews from Georgia to Mazandaran. These communities had fled to Georgia from Shirvan and Qarabag, which fell under Ottoman occupation at the time. The Shah noted that these communities:

Were not natives of the region and some of their sentiments are suspect so they shouldn't be placed in these frontier areas.⁷⁶

In 1024AH/1615CE, further depopulation of the Transaraxian region ensued. Around 50,000 families were moved to Gilan and Farahabad in Mazandaran in the Caspian Sea area in the hope that they would develop the region, benefit economically and as such express some form of loyalty or appreciation for the Shah. Thousands of Georgian and Armenian prisoners were also moved to the capital and integrated into the *ghulams* of his empire. Shah 'Abbas's resettlement measures in Khurasan and the western provinces particularly Azerbaijan made them unattractive to his enemies. In 1026AH/1617CE, the Shah laid waste the area of Erzerum-Van which deprived Ottoman invaders of provisions.⁷⁷ The Shah may also have sought to instill a greater measure of cohesion and integration among the empire's populations through conversion. In 1030AH/1620–21CE, he decreed that Armenians and other Christians given agricultural land and settled on the borders of the Bakhtiyari region should be 'invited to become Muslims'.⁷⁸ Even the

Armenian Christians who were moved to Mazandaran were 'forcibly converted to Islam'.⁷⁹ In addition to his concern about the Ottoman threat, Shah 'Abbas hoped forced migration and depopulation would help develop trade in the capital city and other favorite regions.

As new Christian regions and groups came under Safavid control, novel and thorny legal questions about Muslim-Christian relations surfaced. Both Mir Husayn Mujtahid and Shaykh Baha'i wrote treatises on slaughtered animals (*dhabihiyya*). Baha'i's treatise is undated but tells us that during the visit of an Ottoman envoy to the Safavid court, he was urged by Shah 'Abbas to put forth his legal rulings on whether it was licit for Muslims to consume the meat/game slaughtered by Christians and Jews. Apparently, during one of the court assemblies, the Ottoman envoy openly criticized the Shah for prohibiting the consumption of animal meat slaughtered by Christians and Jews pointing to a long-established Sunnite tradition proclaiming the consumption of such meat licit.⁸⁰ Baha'i's legal opinion on the meat slaughtered by the People of the Book (*Dhaba'ih Ahl al-Kitab*) provided a forceful doctrinal and legal defense of Ja'fari law against its Ottoman critics. In comparison to Shafi'ite, Malikite and Hanafite Sunnite legal views, Ja'fari law have shown a stronger tendency to prohibit the consumption of meat slaughtered by Christians and Jews. The explanation for this must be sought in each historical instance and social occasion when Shi'ite jurists put forward such views. For our purpose, we will focus on the historical occasion that shaped Baha'i's ruling.⁸¹ Baha'i wanted 'to reveal the truth about it to the learned' and to confirm the Twelvers' compliance with the Qur'an and the *shari'a*.⁸² Shah 'Abbas felt that it was necessary to circumvent the slander of Twelver Shi'ism by the Ottoman 'ulama. As such, he wanted Baha'i to send a written reply to the Sultan elucidating the legal Islamic basis for the prohibition to counterbalance Ottoman self-identification as a consensual (Sunnite), widely based Islam. It is also possible that the Shah feared that the Ottomans were manipulating this question to undermine the affinity between him and Christian Safavid population, particularly the Armenian merchants of Julfa. Julfa, in Isfahan, fell under Safavid rule in 1603. Even when Julfa was under Ottoman control, and before its commercial eminence in the late sixteenth century, Julfa's Armenian merchants had close and amicable ties with Shah 'Abbas.⁸³ Shah 'Abbas envisaged in the Julfa traders his future loyal emissaries to Europe. Baha'i was particularly keen on accommodating new political situations even while claiming to preserve a basis for theoretical continuity and consensus among the Shi'ite 'ulama. He prohibited the use of clothes, gold, silver and other items which 'infidels' make or work with because they were 'impure'.⁸⁴ Baha'i noted that he was personally motivated to clarify these matters because of his society's indifference to Shi'ite rulings on *dhaba'ih* and handmade items. In comparison with their Sunnite counterparts in the Ottoman Empire, Baha'i's rulings promoted the exclusion of Christian and Jewish craftwork, foods and meats from the larger market dominated by Muslims. Overall, Baha'i's treatise brings to light an important aspect of Shah 'Abbas's policy of forced conversions and its envisaged political benefits.

Sunnite and Shi'ite *'ulama* have debated the ruling on the *dhaba'ih* of the people of the book on the basis of varied interpretations of the Qur'an, 5.5:

Today the good things are permitted you, and the food of those who were given the Book is permitted to you, and permitted to them is your food. Likewise believing women in wedlock, and in wedlock women of them who were given the Book before you, if you give them their wages, in wedlock and not in licence, or as taking lovers.⁸⁵

The prevalent Sunni interpretation of this verse is that God has made it permissible for Muslims to eat the *dhaba'ih* of the People of the Book.⁸⁶ Sunni accounts and legal arguments emphasize the fact that the Companions of the Prophet ate the food of Christians in Syria and raised no religious objections to it. Sunni sources acknowledge, however, that Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib advised against eating the *dhaba'ih* of the Syrian Arab clan of Taghlib or intermarrying with their women. The Sunni position considers this prohibition applicable only in connection with this clan, whose proper adherence to Christianity was doubtful.

Not all the Shi'ite *'ulama* agreed on the legal jurisdiction of the meat slaughtered by Christians and Jews. A few made it permissible for a Muslim to eat the meat slaughtered by Christians and Jews if they invoked God's name (*tasmiya*) upon slaughtering.⁸⁷ Baha'i argued, however, that due to their restricted definition of *tasmiya*, major Shi'ite jurists eventually endorsed the absolute impermissibility of this meat with or without invoking God's name.⁸⁸ They argued that when Christians mentioned God upon slaughtering the animal, they actually meant the father of Christ, and when the Jews did the same they were denoting His friend. Therefore, neither form of invocation was considered adequate because neither was a reference to the true God of the Muslims.⁸⁹

Baha'i further explained that most Sunnites derive their view of the licitness of the meat of Christians and Jews from an account relating that the Prophet ate from the meat slaughtered by a Jewish woman. Shi'ites, however, do not consider this account sound or widespread among them.⁹⁰

In theory at least, the Safavid Shi'ite clerics took a more restrictive approach to the meat of Christians and Jews than did the Ottoman Sunni clerics. Notwithstanding, Shi'ite jurists have constantly advanced new arguments and justifications for their rulings and we know at least one leading Shi'ite scholar of the tenth century, Ibn Babuya al-Qummi (d. 381AH/991CE), who accepted the Sunni position. Based on a few sound accounts related from the Imams, Ibn Babuya argued in favor of the permissibility of consuming the meat slaughtered by Jews, Christians or Zoroastrians if God's name was invoked upon slaughtering. Baha'i noted that the nature of invoking God's name should be investigated further and that Ibn Babuya's position does not necessarily contradict the dominant Shi'ite accounts on its absolute impermissibility. Baha'i felt that when an accurate definition of *tasmiya* is provided, Ibn Babuya's opinion would converge with the prevalent

conviction.⁹¹ Baha'is prohibition of these meats as such is not an expression of juridical loyalty. Baha'i did not choose to even support a conditional permissibility of the meat of the People of the Book. His arguments demonstrated to the Ottomans a more political reading of Islamic worship and rituals than the Sunnite Hanafite school of law, which the Ottomans followed.

Given the absence of a date for Baha'is treatise on *dhaba'ih*, it is difficult to furnish the direct reasons for its composition. Did the question as a whole emerge in connection to massive depopulation that threatened the business of Muslim artisans and merchants? Did the latter face serious competition from new ethnic-religious elements? It is difficult to situate this ruling outside the context of frontier defense from Ottoman occupation through policies of forced migration, and religious conversion as a way to strengthen the state's control over all parts of the empire. By taking a more extreme position within the Islamic camp in favor of sharpening religious boundaries and social segregation in favor of Shi'ite superiority, the Shah found a new way to force Christians of the frontiers to convert to Shi'ism. In the words of his court historian, 'Only oppression causes a man to change his religion'.⁹²

Clerical opinions also confirmed the Shah's concern with the misconduct of his own army and the 'depredations of the Qizilbash' in Georgian regions. The transformation of most churches to mosques at times aimed to control the Muslim commander's ambitions and independent acts of confiscating or overrunning Christian property. Churches, which were transformed into mosques, were normally preserved and their valuables protected from looting and destruction by Safavid soldiers. Alaverdi Church, for one, was among the largest and most significant in Georgia but when, in 1023-4AH/1614-16CE, the Qizilbash took as booty a sacred relic 'a crown, encrusted with pearls and rubies' valued at five hundred royal Iraqi *tooman*, the Shah decided to transform the church into a stronghold with 200 musketeers to defend it.⁹³ Curiously, there is a ruling by Baha'i that it was impermissible to destroy a church that functioned as a mosque in the 'land of infidels' or even to interrupt its activities and source of funding. The church, Baha'i argued, cannot become any person's property.⁹⁴ Changing historical motives informed other rulings on Muslim-Christian socio-economic relations. In eighteen legal questions that Shah 'Abbas put forth to Baha'i, he seemed particularly concerned with furnishing a clear socio-economic framework for Muslim-Christian relations. John Chardin, a French traveler, noted that a strict observation of purity rituals among Muslims was a clear hindrance to traveling abroad to engage in trade with Europeans, because theoretically the *shari'a* prohibited the consumption of meat or the wearing of clothes made by non-Muslims and in extreme cases coming in direct touch with them. But when the need arose there were ways to work around such laws as Baha'is rulings, discussed in the coming section, showed. Chardin himself noted that even though the *shari'a* forbade usury and interest, Muslim traders collected changes:

especially Maritime Changes, upon any Advantage whatsoever, as thirty and forty per cent Profit, or more: As to Interest, the Parties have the way of eluding

the Law just as they please. They go to the Judge and borrower, holding in their Hand a Bag of Money; one saith there is in it such a Sum, tho' the Interest agreed on be wanting in it, the Judge without any further Enquiry, orders the Writing to be drawn up; 'Tis even enough, without so much Precaution, to own before Witnesses, that one has received so much (altho' less) to make the Debt Authentik.⁹⁵

In the same vein, one finds a number of Baha'i's rulings to be flexible on Shi'ite acts of worship and daily conduct.⁹⁶ Baha'i identified a list of food items consumed by Christian Georgians and permitted to Muslims living amongst them or in their company. He ruled that Muslims were not religiously obliged to forbid Christians from eating pig's meat or drinking wine. Moreover, Muslims who happen to live around Christians, or find a benefit for Islam in that, may commingle freely with them. It was also permissible for Muslims to dissimulate by falsely claiming to eat pig's meat and drink wine. Indeed, Baha'i put clear limits on such dissimulation by declaring it impermissible for Muslims to consume pig's meat or wine for whatever benefit. Otherwise, they would lose their reward by weakening their Islamic faith.⁹⁷ Similarly, Baha'i expounded the unique conditions under which it is possible to consider grape syrup, honey or vinegar to be religiously pure, if offered to a Muslim by a Georgian.⁹⁸ Unfortunately, Baha'i's rulings on the food items and handicrafts of Georgian Christians are not dated and do not account for the motives surrounding their issuance. Did Shah 'Abbas hope some of these clerical rulings would promote social integration in depopulated areas, particularly those with a Christian majority? For now, suffice to note, that Baha'i's rulings encourage the social adaptation of a Muslim minority to a majority of Georgian Christians, and promote flexible economic relations for the benefit of their region or city. Shah 'Abbas's leading clerics were called upon to furnish a solid legal foundation for imperial plans in the face of Ottoman opposition, and that restructuring of the empire due to depopulation policies furthered the utility of Shi'ite legalism for the Safavids. It provided them with a manual, a practical approach to the organization of social relations among their subjects.

In retrospect, the demand for legalism directly related to political control from above and the gradual diffusion of social discipline from below. There was a need to guide the socio-religious choices of the common Persians according to the newly established doctrine. This explains the conspicuous time jurists spent discussing and debating questions that seem to us trivial. For example, the governor of Gilan felt it necessary to obtain a clear stand from Baha'i on two contradictory legal rulings pertaining to fasting, which had caused some confusion among the Gilani *'ulama*.⁹⁹ Baha'i argued that tooth picking was not permissible during fasting, but he explained that fasting is not always void when one picks one's teeth. He noted that in case a small portion of the food remaining (between the teeth) had accidentally reached the stomach, one would still fulfill the conditions of fasting.¹⁰⁰

The thrust to produce and implement standardized Shi'ite edicts and rulings was not simply a clerical enterprise. Rather, it was a way to create normative patterns

that encouraged conformity to the imperial order of Shah 'Abbas. One's faith was designed around an expanding and constantly revised body of rituals, the management of which fell to the jurists. Shi'ite legalism was put to particular political uses, while conformity to clerical edicts became a gauge for social discipline. Legal rulings and edicts were constantly recast and needed justification, a process encouraged in the Ja'fari school of law, namely *ijtihad* and the invalidity of the opinion of a dead *mujtahid*.

Navigating Clerical Dissent

The more fame Baha'i reaped, the more restricted he became by the protocol of courtly life. Nowhere is this constraint more evident than in the Shah's attempt to regulate and control his *'ulama's* relationship to the Sufis and dissenters. Once, Shah 'Abbas discovered that Baha'i had frequented the quarters of 'the poor', commingling and spending time with them. The Shah feared the aspirations of the depressed social classes and carefully navigated popular protest against official Shi'ism. He reproached Baha'i saying: 'I have heard that a great scholar commingled with the poor and the vile in their cottages which is improper.' Baha'i answered: 'This is not true, for many are the times I spent in these places and it never happened that I encountered any such scholar there!'¹⁰¹

Although Baha'i enjoyed a fair relationship with the Shah, he doubted at times the spiritual value of the service he rendered to him. This clearly shows the clerical elite enjoyed less freedom in pursuing independent social or political goals. Shah 'Abbas closely supervised the *mujtahids* and scholars and their intellectual production. Meanwhile, he hardly abided by their decrees, enjoying all the diversions common to the royal family, namely wine-drinking and drugs, and various forms of entertainment like dancing and singing. So fond was the Shah of alcohol, that he ordered his personal doctor to compose a work on its benefits and on the graceful manners of wine-drinkers.¹⁰² Of course, in comparison with his successors, Shah 'Abbas was still considered moderate in his drinking, which never hampered his control over state affairs.¹⁰³ Shah 'Abbas also embellished and celebrated the lights' festivity (*chiraghan*), which he held at random times during the year.¹⁰⁴ During *chiraghan*, a myriad of lanterns and torches were lit while foreign ambassadors, merchants and travelers were invited to a high lighthouse, from where they watched the display of light. In 1018AH/1609CE, the Shah decided to hold this festivity during 'Ashura, the tenth of Muharram sacred memorial, infuriating the Shi'ite clerics. Despite his personal neglect of juridical directives, Shah 'Abbas cultivated and dramatized visible public Shi'ite ceremonies and rituals as emblems of his dominion.¹⁰⁵

Where Shah 'Abbas maneuvered the power of his jurists, some possessed the courage to oppose him. Baha'i, as a few chroniclers and *'ulama* tell us, possessed enough leverage as to deliver moral counsel to the Shah. He did not hesitate to confront the Shah with some of the latter's objectionable acts. When Safi Mirza, the son and

successor-designate of Shah 'Abbas, was killed under his father's order, he remained in the mud for four hours, until Baha'i ordered that his body be carried away, washed and properly buried. Safavid historians would tell us that Baha'i blamed Shah 'Abbas for his heinous act in words that left him with a deep remorse throughout his life.¹⁰⁶

From the perspective of the jurist, the association with monarchs was rife with contradictions and suspicion. A central theme running through Baha'i's popular literary work *Gorbeh va Mush* deals with the occasional naiveté of sovereigns who succumb to the deceit of their courtiers or offer patronage to unworthy claimants to wisdom. Baha'i tells the story of a king in Khurasan, who praised the poor recital of weak poetry by one of the novices of a famous dervish. The king rewarded the novice with a good sum of money. It then occurred to the famous dervish that he could gain more material rewards than his student were he to recite proper, metrically accurate poetry. When the monarch heard the poetry of the dervish, he condemned him to death. In order to save his life, the dervish claimed that he could perform miracles and told the monarch that he would make him a magnificent turban that only bastards born out of wedlock could not see. The vizier and the courtiers who saw no traces of such a turban praised it, nonetheless, lest they be accused of bastardy. To the monarch, they elaborated on the unique craftsmanship that went into the making of this turban, which he was unable to see. The gullible monarch was led to doubt his own origin until his mother warned him about the treachery of his courtiers and the circumspect claims of the dervish. The dervish admitted that he had fabricated the story of the turban to save his own life. The monarch dismissed his deceitful vizier and appointed the dervish in his place!¹⁰⁷ Baha'i denounced a monarch's good deed toward ill-deserving officials, but he found forgiveness for minor errors to be magnanimous. *Gorbeh va Mush* also offers a model for the ideal ruler in the person of the medieval Islamic ruler, Sultan Mahmud the Ghaznavid, and his shrewd and just vizier, Ahmad b. Hasan Maymandi.¹⁰⁸

Baha'i occasionally experienced sharp criticism from rival scholars or local notables. Unfortunately, we know very little about the nature of these criticism and social conflicts or the actual identity of the critics. Such situations, however, were manipulated by the Shah to ensure conformity with his commands. During the convening of one of the 'courts of high standing and eminent assemblies', an anonymous figure, who kept a pretense of fealty to Baha'i, lambasted him behind his back and attributed to him several flaws.¹⁰⁹ When this anonymous person realized that Baha'i knew about his lashings, he immediately apologized and expressed his remorse. In one instance, the Shah undermined Baha'i's scholarly reputation in favor of another rivaling scholar. Protesting to the Shah, Baha'i wrote:

From whose imaginary existence, a hundred disgrace befalls me,

You know not my worth, so sell me not for little.

The Baha'i is who I am, and great is my worth.¹¹⁰

Baha'i and Mir Damad, possibly due to their similar intellectual training and 'Amili ancestry, enjoyed cordial bonds even when they cherished divergent views of a legal and philosophical nature. Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin al-'Amili (d. 1054AH/1644CE), the student and brother-in-law of Mir Damad, elucidated some of these disagreements, taking the side of his teacher and relative, Mir Damad, against Baha'i, in the most vehement and zealous manner.¹¹¹ Mir Abu'l-Vali Inju, the Safavid *sadr*, disagreed with Baha'i over a juridical matter during their trip to Georgia with Shah 'Abbas.¹¹² To resolve the matter, they decided to solicit the legal opinion of Mir Damad, who was residing at the time in Isfahan. Mir Damad took the side of Abu'l-Vali Inju and refuted Baha'i's conclusions.

A late and probably apocryphal anecdote highlights the way the *'ulama* perceived the relations between the Safavid monarch, Baha'i and the eminent jurist and philosopher, Mir Muhammad Baqir Astarabadi, best known as Mir Damad (d. 1040AH/1631–32CE), rather than how these relations were realistically cast. One story has it that during one of his promenades accompanied by both Baha'i and Mir Damad, the Shah was tempted to test the depth of their friendship and loyalty to each other.¹¹³ Mir Damad's horse was moving slowly, fatigued by its rider's heavy weight, while Baha'i's horse at the head of the procession was running lightly, as if carrying a feather. The Shah approached Mir Damad, who was riding at the rear of the procession, and said: 'Do you see how that Shaykh in the front is fiddling with his horse instead of strolling like you, politely and respectfully among these people?' Mir Damad replied: 'The horse, driven with passion for its rider, is unable to walk slowly. Don't you realize who is riding it?' The Shah then rode up to Baha'i and said: 'Our Shaykh, can you see behind you how the body of this Sayyid had fatigued the horse and worn it due to his obesity when a commanding scholar should instead be like you, physically fit and consuming of little food?' Baha'i answered: 'No, Shah, for the fatigue which appears on the horse's face is due to his inability to carry the weight of knowledge which giant mountains, with all their strength, cannot carry.' When the Shah heard him, he dismounted his horse, knelt down on his knees and smeared his face with sand, thanking God for granting his empire scholars who are devoid of envy and rivalry!¹¹⁴

This anecdotal piece emerges in the *'ulama* circles to underscore the indispensable role of the jurists to the imperial monarch and his respect for them. The anecdote is also significant in the way it portrays the demeanor of Shah 'Abbas, who was keen on nurturing a level of controlled competition and concord among his scholars. The story also emphasizes the unity and pietist tradition of the jurists, and possibly reflecting a sense of solidarity which some believed existed among scholars of 'Amili descent. On the other hand, the story hints at the rarity of friendship among high-ranking clerics who usually competed for the Shah's favors and for professional ascendancy.

Mir Damad (d. 1041AH/1631–2CE): The Cleric as Philosopher

Shams al-Din Muhammad, a *sayyid* and notable from Astarabad, married two of al-Karaki's daughters, one of whom begot Muhammad Baqir, known as Mir Damad. Though born in Astarabad, Mir Damad was raised in Mashhad. Shams al-Din, his father, remained in the eyes of Persian historians and scholars the 'damad', or the 'son-in-law', of al-Karaki.¹¹⁵ This title transferred from Shams al-Din to his son, Muhammad Baqir, who came to be known as Mir Damad. Biographical literature emphasizes 'Amili traits in his legalistic training, for he had studied with his maternal uncle, 'Abd al-'Ali, and Nur al-Din 'Ali b. Abi'l-Hasan al-Musawi al-'Amili in Mashhad.¹¹⁶ Mir Damad's 'Amili descent, though devoid of any cultural significance, functioned as a scholastic status, an intellectual pedigree esteemed by Safavid society. Mir Damad's acquisition of the theological disciplines and his ambitions to become a *mujtahid* were coupled with a phenomenal progress in the rational sciences and philosophical studies.¹¹⁷ Facilitated by his family standing and wealth, Mir Damad became well versed in the Persian philosophical traditions through the study circles of Mir Fakhr al-Din Muhammad Sammaki Astarabadi during the reign of Shah Muhammad Khudabanda (r. 985AH/1578CE–995AH/1587CE).¹¹⁸ Mir Damad's philosophical predilections were well established by 988AH/1580CE, that is before he entered the service of Shah 'Abbas, yet he laid down his major philosophical works after his association with the Shah.¹¹⁹ Shah 'Abbas took particular interest in the philosophical inquiries of a few Indian scholars who wanted to know the reasons why the body of Moses withstood the fire that swept the hilltop when God appeared to him. He commanded Mir Damad to expound these reasons in *Al-Jadhawat*. In 1023AH/1614CE, the same year that he composed his work *Al-Sab' al-Shidad* on the principles of religion, Mir Damad related in *Al-Risala al-Khal'iyya* his metaphysical thoughts about a spiritual vision he had in Isfahan.¹²⁰ His late work *Al-Qabasat*, completed in 1034AH/1625CE, is considered the hallmark of his philosophical thought.

Mir Damad attended to standard legal matters such as worship, foster relations (*rida'*) and divorce (*talaq*), all of which catered to wide social sectors. On the question of Friday prayer, he suggested that its convening was legitimate during the presence of a *mujtahid*, who held 'a general vicegerency (*niyaba 'amma*)' as the deputy of the Imam.¹²¹ The *mujtahid* is he who 'combines the sciences of *ijtihad* and the conditions for delivering legal opinion (*ifta'*)'.¹²² Friday prayer can be convened only in the presence of the just ruler (*al-sultan al-'adil*), who is the infallible Imam or someone appointed on his behalf specifically for that purpose or someone who qualifies to be his general deputy. Without this condition, Friday prayer must not be observed. Mir Damad encouraged Shi'ites to join other believers in the noon prayer but asked them to avoid Friday prayer until such time as it was proper to convene it. Mir Damad declared that it is unmerited in the eyes of God to observe Friday prayer in the absence of the above conditions. As such, 'a few [prayers] in a year are better than plenty borne out of innovation! (*bid'a*)'.¹²³

Mir Damad and Baha'i gave both jurists and society the option to observe Friday prayer or avoid it. This was the same position advanced by al-Karaki, though under different circumstances. In the case of Baha'i, his opinion diverged from that of his father, Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, reflecting the complex social and political changes that had transformed Persian society and its ruling elite from the late sixteenth century CE to the early seventeenth century CE. Baha'i felt that it was 'favorable' (*istihbab*) to hold Friday prayer and added that its observance was obligatory only when all the conditions tied to it are provided.¹²⁴ Two of Baha'i's students expressed similar views.¹²⁵ Only Shaykh Lutfullah al-Maysi al-'Amili (d. 1032AH/1622–23CE), esteemed jurist of Isfahan, along with a lesser-known scholar of the period, Abdullah b. al-Husayn al-Tustari (d. 1021AH/1612CE), called for the necessity of convening Friday prayer.¹²⁶

Mir Damad preserved a dimension of clerical autonomy and 'claims for hierocratic authority' without dauntlessly menacing the Shah's sovereignty.¹²⁷ He withheld approval of the theocratic foundations of the Safavid state but justified its historical and temporal dimensions. Mir Damad continued a Safavid-born tradition of allowing the Shi'ite jurist to reverse centuries of political detachment from temporal authority. Shah 'Abbas would negotiate with his clerics nothing less than the legality of Friday prayer. This, Mir Damad consented to but rejected the unconditional or universal endorsement of Friday prayer as an emblem of Safavid Imamate theocracy. In the multilateral discussions of Friday prayer, Mir Damad denied the *mujtahids* a comprehensive political authority in the absence of the universal sovereign, the Imam.

The Making of the World Inside and Outside Time

Even though philosophy (*hikmat*) flourished at the time of Shah 'Abbas, it was confined to the few who were themselves administrators of the *shari'a*, such as Baha'i, Mir Damad and Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin. The same can be said about the first 'Amili works with marked Sufi elements which appeared during this period. These works were authored by Baha'i and by Mirza Ahmad al-Husayni, a contemporary of Baha'i and the brother of the *sadr*, Mirza Habibullah al-'Amili, the great grandson of al-Karaki. Mir Damad's philosophical works had a restricted readership. They lend us a rare insight into the ideas an upper class Persian intellectual and top-ranking state jurist harbored about human freedom, the relation of God to the world and ultimately congruence between divine will and history. Whereas Mir Damad's doctrinal and legal expositions were concerned with concise enactment of worship, metaphysical inquiries probed into the very function of the *shari'a* and its epistemological value for the laity and the learned alike.

Mir Damad was among the first Safavid thinkers to appropriate the philosophical ideas of Shihab al-Din Yahya Suhrawardi (d. 587AH/1191CE) and revive Illuminationist (*ishraqi*) theosophy.¹²⁸ He adapted Avicennan metaphysics to Suhrawardian illumination that drew in markedly Shi'ite symbolism and

eschatological elements.¹²⁹ For Suhravardi, there are illuminationist units which serve as mediums between the earth and the sky. Through these mediums, Suhravardi emphasized the links and interconnection between the upper sources of authority and the lower levels of human-social existence. Mir Damad accepted and utilized this illuminationist framework in his work, showing that being is the outcome of progressive emanations from the Divine Presence to the physical world. In his most important philosophical work, *Al-Qabasat*, which he composed six years before he died, Mir Damad focused his philosophical energies on the relation between the eternal (*qadim*) and the created (*hadith*) in time.¹³⁰ He distinguished between three levels of existence: eternity (*sarmad*) and its immutable essence, perpetuity (*dahr*) below it, which links the eternal to the changing realm of time (*zaman*), which is the lowest realm. God creates and precedes the world not simply on the mental or imaginary level but in actuality, and in a clear rupture, '*taqadduman infikakiyyan*'.¹³¹ He upheld this position in order to avoid any assumption that God is changeable or has material extensions.¹³² It is precisely through the idea of perpetuity (*huduth dahr*) that Mir Damad's uneasiness with the scripturalist view of the origination of the world comes forth. He stated that the world succeeds God in pure perpetuity (*ta'akhkuran sarihan dahriyan*) and does not exist with Him in eternity. The world then exists in the medium of perpetuity, not time, because there can be no real or imagined time extending between God and the world. God exists first with the pre-world (*'adam al-'alam*) in perpetuity and later with the world after its creation in time.¹³³ Other parts of the world come about in a process of gradation (*fayd*). Eternity is characteristic only of God's medium. Our world in this scheme is not created directly by the eternal essence but through the interaction between the immutable archetypes of the highest realm and the changing world at the lowest realm. Whatever exists in time changes with its change, and has a beginning and end in time. Perpetuity, however, is the mold of time because it surrounds it (*wa'a' al-zaman, li'annah muhat bili*).¹³⁴ The interactive activity between eternity and time is manifest in the middle realm of perpetuity. The world, as such, is created in and outside time in an interactive and relative manner.

The process of relative creation posed by Mir Damad is a reflection of the movement of change and being, which in turn resonates Suhravardi's formulations.¹³⁵ The top-ranking emanations and superior sources of being are tied to the lowest ones. The world is partly a manifestation of the archetypal superior realm and partly independent from it, being controlled by the emanation directly preceding it. Transported to the socio-political world, this theory gives a partial historical reality to society making it somewhat but not entirely inconsequential. Like Sadr al-Din Shirazi, a leading philosopher and distinguished student of Mir Damad, better known as Mulla Sadra (d. 1050AH/1640CE), Mir Damad argued that existence is not an illusory/mental state but rather intrinsically tied to reality and extends to it. In this, Mir Damad and Sadra diverged from Suhravardi, giving the external world some sense of objectivity.¹³⁶ Despite that, contradictions and tensions between spiritual idealism and material realism characterized their

positions. For Sadra, as for Mir Damad, one cannot conceive the reality of existence; it must be intuited at the subjective level, inwardly. Sadra suggests that conceiving of existence does not in itself lend proof to its actualization in reality.¹³⁷ Pure Existence is in the mind only and can only be known through direct intuition (*mushahada, hudur*).

In order to delineate the relationship of Mir Damad's thought to the social forces of his time, it is useful to compare it to Suhrawardi's. Suhrawardi's notion of intermediary agents (*wasafit*), as Husayn Muroeh argued, seem 'pre-revolutionary' during the twelfth century CE inasmuch as they reflected social stratification, and vertical and horizontal distinctions in the historical world and the belief that all living things are tied essentially and eternally to movement.¹³⁸ Suhrawardi also departed from scriptural cosmology when he rejected the createdness of the world. He believed that the world was eternal, with no beginning in time. Furthermore, he professed that the line of prophecy was endless; the world does not exist without a Prophet-Imam.¹³⁹ Suhrawardi expressed these thoughts at a time when the Syrian sultanate in Aleppo could only claim a local, temporary power largely based on shifting military fortunes. In the aftermath of the erosion of Caliphal legitimacy in Baghdad under the 'Abbasids (r. 236AH/850CE–654AH/1256CE), Suhrawardi's ideas reflected total disregard for supremacy of ruler over ruled and advocated the possibility of reversing history at any moment through a prophecy-Imamate that essentially negates history (the existing polity). The clerical spokesmen for the Aleppine authorities also found disquieting Suhrawardi's attempt to substitute light for existence and to hold that light is equally and essentially shared by all beings.¹⁴⁰ Suhrawardi would explain that the difference between one's being and God's being is not in the essence/quality but simply in quantity, a difference between perfect and less perfect. As such, the attempt to perceive the difference between temporal rulers and their subjects quantitatively rather than qualitatively weakened all claims of divine privilege for the ruling dynasty.¹⁴¹

Suhrawardi's conceptions of God's relation to the world evolved in the wake of multiple ruling bodies and volatile and transitional hierarchies of power in the medieval Islamic period. In contrast, the apex of the reign of Shah 'Abbas in the seventeenth century CE brings a thrust for centralization of the state, which was capable of harnessing multiple economic sources, and became better situated than its predecessors to dominate the socially and ideologically diverse groups within the ruling elite.¹⁴² Several complex and indirect levels of separation between society and the Shah emerged during the early seventeenth century CE. Given these levels of separation and the multifold sources of Safavid legitimacy and state power under 'Abbas, Mir Damad recast Suhrawardian views in ways deemed 'realistic' for a member of a clerical aristocracy allied to the state, yet struggling to achieve autonomy. This autonomy is tied to the preservation of a 'post-historical' universal Imami sovereignty for which *mujtahids* like Mir Damad act as witnesses and legatees. On the whole, Suhrawardi's ideas seemed more 'radical' and subversive to his rulers even if they were indeed coupled with his declaration that existence is a mental

category 'to which nothing corresponds in reality'.¹⁴³ It is also important to note that Imamological concepts (Imam as the pole of being and witness of God and without whom no human society can exist) proposed by Suhrawardi could not be reconciled at any level with the ideological foundations the Abbasid Caliphate, or the basis of rule for the Aleppine provincial leaders.¹⁴⁴ Such concepts were, however, partly adapted to the Shi'ite basis of the Safavid Empire.

Several contemporary and modern scholars alike noted the difficult if not impossible style of Mir Damad's writing.¹⁴⁵ This fact is not accidental. Rather it reflects Mir Damad's attempt to make philosophical tools and methods of thinking inaccessible to the public and subtle enough to merit the approval of the monarch. Through an abstract and individualistic medium of thought like philosophy, Mir Damad's views were somewhat impeachable to both the Shah and the theologians.¹⁴⁶ This fact may explain why Mir Damad was never portrayed as a dissenter but rather as a model for public religious conduct and a tool of social discipline and conformity to the state. An anecdote has it that Sadra saw his deceased teacher, Mir Damad, in a dream and asked him:

'My views do not differ from yours, yet I am denounced as an infidel and you are not. Why is this?' 'Because,' replied Mir Damad's spirit, 'I have written on philosophy in such wise that the theologians are unable to understand my meaning, but only the philosophers; while you write about philosophical questions in such a manner that every dominie and hedge-priest who sees your book understands what you mean and dubs you an unbeliever.'¹⁴⁷

But the difference between Mir Damad and Sadra was not simply a matter of style or language. Sadra did not belong to the clerical elite. Rather, he experienced clerical opposition and was forced to desert the scholarly centers of major cities to pursue his philosophical writings.¹⁴⁸ It is misleading to assume, however, that Mir Damad aimed to reconcile philosophy and the *shari'a*. In fact, he tactfully prevented philosophical rationalism and mystical intuition from being judged clerically and vice versa. True, he defended the primary and irreversible function of the *shari'a* in human society and validated it philosophically. But ultimately, his concept of '*huduth dahri*' jettisoned the confrontation between a clerical interpretation of the scriptures and philosophical/intuitive knowledge of the Divine and the world. He simply compartmentalized 'philosophy' and '*shari'a*' through the very notion of perpetuity discussed above, with each realm being bound by its own set of laws. Sadra's views, in contrast, openly challenged the scriptural worldview. As Fazlur Rahman correctly noted, Sadra's 'argument for the self-emergence and self-origination of the content of the world-process renders God rather superfluous'.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, Sadra saw movement occurring not only in the category of substance, in its increase or decrease, but rather in the substance itself.¹⁵⁰ Again, this is further rationalization of philosophical thought based on the view that change occurs from within living entities, including humans at all levels, not from without. Mir Damad doesn't posit such a position, but remains

rather faithful to the idea that change occurs from without, that is with one emanation flowing and changing what is below it. For Sadra, movement is the 'certain known reality', which occurs in the physical and spiritual world alike.¹⁵¹

To be sure, Sadra's shift in belief from the 'primary reality of quiddity' (essential properties and intelligible qualities of a thing) to the 'primary reality of existence' was a rather significant departure from the Qur'anic emphasis on the transcendental nature of God and the fundamental separation between God and humans.¹⁵² Sadra saw this separation as artificial and stated that existence takes infinite forms but remains one and the same from eternity to eternity. Much like Sufi notions of Oneness with God, Sadra's views were not tolerated by official Safavid clerics and spokesmen.

Furthermore, Sadra took a radical step away from theosophical idealism when he purported that the human soul undergoes transformation through its interaction with various levels of the material and intelligible orders.¹⁵³ The images of the material world and its changing realities are central to the essence/identity of the human soul. Sadra as such empowers all humans with comparable abilities to arrive at higher truths through distinct forces of physical change and 'remembrance' of the original archetypal essences. Within this context, Heavenly rewards and punishments of Hell do not correspond to an actual physical domicile. The scriptural foundation for human salvation and certitude become as such irrelevant. Heaven and Hell are situated inwardly within the soul and are reached esoterically. Sadra also tied more closely questions about human souls and the knowledge of God to Imamology.¹⁵⁴ He purported that a Shi'ite believer cannot connect to the Imam of his age through any particular concrete institution of this world, which clearly marginalized Safavid authority and deemed null its assumed links to the Twelve Imams. The Twelfth Imam is 'hidden to the senses but present in the heart of the faithful: he is the mystical pole of being'.¹⁵⁵

Human Freedom, Certitude and the *Shari'a*

Mir Damad sustained and elucidated his central belief in the free will of humans alongside its seemingly contradictory antithesis, that God knows and preconceives human thoughts and actions. Depending on whether we are assessing 'free will' at the level of time, perpetuity or eternity, we will find contradictory answers.¹⁵⁶ Mir Damad endorses the Qur'anic position that the Original Divine Judgment is inclusive of all actions, thoughts and intentions. It is the source of all 'books' (*Um al-Kitab*) and the preserved table (*al-Lawh al-Mahfuz*).¹⁵⁷ In the descending cycle of emanations from God to humans, the unchangeable pre-conceived judgment (*qada'*) produces at each level a number of possible actions at the level below it in the form of fate (*qadar*).

On this basis, Mir Damad explained the Shi'ite doctrine of the changeability of God's will (*bada'*). Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, among others, objected to this belief, referring to the Qur'anic verse (13:39): 'God blots out, and He establishes whatsoever He will; and with Him is the Essence of the Book.'¹⁵⁸ Mir Damad noted that changeability occurs in *qadar* but not in the *qada'*. This means that acts occurring in

time in the human world may contradict the First Divine Judgment but that the latter is all-knowing and all-inclusive of such contradictions.¹⁵⁹ For Mir Damad, perpetuity is the source of all living entities (*Um al-Ka'inat*), and each creature is written in this realm of pre-time by the pen of creation in actuality. This means that God makes the changes at the level of time, not at the level of perpetuity, even though His original divine judgment is unchangeable.¹⁶⁰

There are clear tensions in Mir Damad's thought because, on the one hand, he sees history as gaining meaning from a transcendent premise where natural law and the scriptures seem but never succeed in becoming tied together harmoniously. Mir Damad admits the presence of discrepancies and contradictions at the level of perpetuity and time. These contradictions are not illusory, nor transitional. Mir Damad noted that they were meaningful and purposeful for the highest Divine Judgment or Will.

Mir Damad supported his philosophical arguments suitably by Qur'anic and *hadith* statements. In the Fourth Firebrand (*qabas*) in *Al-Qabasat*, for instance, he invokes the scriptures and the statements of Shi'ite scholars and Imams, implying that philosophy is not an independent or superior method for knowing God but rather a supplemental and exegetical one.¹⁶¹

Mir Damad advocated a hierarchy of consciousness and gradations of knowledge and emphasizes the necessity for humans to be ruled by those who are more knowledgeable and able. At each stage of consciousness and intelligibility, exists a 'caliph' or ruler (*khalifa*). Among humans, the heart is such a ruler, the purest of human organs which rules the self (*nafs*). The latter in turn rules and oversees the function of the mind (*'aql*). Humans need a leader:

who rules either on the basis of exoteric [meaning of the scriptures] and is as such the sultan [temporal ruler], or someone who rules on the basis of the esoteric [meaning of the scriptures] like the scholar/sage, or someone who rules on the basis of both [the exoteric and esoteric] like the Prophet or a man who takes his place.¹⁶²

Mir Damad refers to the Qur'anic verses of al-Ra'd, al-Naba' and al-Mubahala, alongside the Tradition to confirm the elevated level of Imam 'Ali as the successor to Prophet Muhammad.¹⁶³ He takes a relativistic look at the *shari'a* when he denies the existence of evil as an independent entity. 'Evil' (*shar*), he argued, is the absence of existence or absence of a perfection of existence or absence of perfection in an existing being.¹⁶⁴ What society labels 'evil', in reference to injustice or adultery, is a construction and as such has no absolute reality. 'Evil', then, describes the person who is lacking in justice, uprightness or goodness, or it simply describes the standpoint of 'civic political law (*al-siyasa al-madaniyya*) whose order is disrupted due to such imperfection'.¹⁶⁵ Notwithstanding, Mir Damad does not advocate different levels of legal judgment, nor does he distinguish between divine laws and clerical rulings in the administration of 'justice' and the role of state supervision. This implies that

mujtahids remain indispensable tools for the translation of these laws. He considered the fear of divine retribution, necessary for preventing the commitment of abominable acts.¹⁶⁶ One is still rewarded or punished for one's freely willed acts even if one is not the absolute, highest cause of such acts.¹⁶⁷ Mir Damad also advocates the idea of the necessity of some 'evil' in particularities, for the immense good of the whole. As such, punishment, whether corporal or psychological, and inflicting pain on the few can bring overall benefit and public good.¹⁶⁸ In retrospect, as long as Mir Damad supported the state's foundation and demand for legal discipline, Shah 'Abbas would hardly oppose his philosophical inquiries.¹⁶⁹

Much like classic Sufis, Mir Damad embraced a spiritual journey outside the parameters set by the scriptures and the *shari'a*.¹⁷⁰ During the month of Sha'ban 1023AH/1614CE, Mir Damad's spiritual retreat and internal reflection gave way to a mystical experience where he was transported to a realm of God's presence. By moving away and above the laws of nature, laws of scriptures, and the binarisms of faith and infidelity – transmigrated from his body, he achieved certitude.¹⁷¹ Here and elsewhere, philosophy and rationalism were subordinated to illumination and spiritual practices.¹⁷² Mir Damad's spiritual journey, accomplished through an inner illumination and ratiocination, offered a challenging model to the idea of prophetic agency, and brought out the possibility of a superior world to the historical one, the seat of political reality. The journey also confirmed that real certitude was not attained through the established institutions of faith or politics.

These contradictory conceptions in Mir Damad's thought lead us to believe that he only extended the privilege of such journeys to the select and the elite. As for the rest, the *shari'a* would do. Mir Damad did not allow illumination or rationalism to become sources of social discipline or the basis for the relationship between the monarch and his imperial subjects. On a personal level, these constructs also reflect Mir Damad's desire to seek spiritual fulfillment not through agency or the clerical profession but rather through individualized, theosophical-mystical pursuits. Even if Mir Damad's concepts lend themselves to an oppositional politics undermining the state or seem to negate his function as cleric, in reality such politics proved inept and enclosed upon itself.¹⁷³ As S. A. Arjomand accurately asserted, 'gnostic Shi'ism', practiced by Mir Damad, implied 'radical political indifferentism'. It entailed 'not the rejection of temporary sovereignty... but the radical devaluation of earthly sovereignty'.¹⁷⁴ Even Sadra, who was more politically confrontational than Mir Damad, did not attempt to declass philosophy or publicize theosophical experiences. Shunned by the 'literalist jurists', he still harbored disdain for popular Sufis.¹⁷⁵

In conclusion, Mir Damad laid down his principal philosophical ideas at a time when socio-economic relations became more complex, thus assuming a more rigid hierarchical structure that translated into sharper social and cognitive boundaries with distinct forms of dominance and subordination.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, political forces in Persia have also achieved complexity at the time of Shah 'Abbas, producing distinct ideological trends, which may seem at one given historical moment contradictory to the social reality that cradled them. In fact, however, the

contradiction seems of a dialectical nature paving the way for a new reality altogether, which takes full form during the mid seventeenth century CE. On the one hand, Mir Damad's philosophical arguments found justification for the temporal and legal dimensions of Safavid rule. On the other hand, this rule seemed replaceable and open to controversy within the larger scheme of his cosmology and metaphysics. One can discern these tensions in the relationship among the shifting frameworks of eternity perpetuity and time. The changing context of these cosmogonic-ontological realms may suggest that a historical polity can be the fulfillment of the Divine Will or a temporary negation of it.

Shah 'Abbas and the Muslim-Christian Polemics of Ahmad 'Alavi

'Amili kinship, juridical training and philosophical pursuits were but three of the major features that Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin al-'Alawi al-'Amili (d. 1054AH/1644CE), known better in Persia as Mir Sayyid Ahmad 'Alavi 'Amili, shared with Mir Damad and Baha'i. Little is documented about his personal life even though he was a distinguished scholar with a strong grounding in law, doctrine, Qur'anic exegesis, dogmatic theology and philosophy.¹⁷⁷ Ahmad 'Alavi's scholarly talents were soon put to political use by Shah 'Abbas as he embarked on a number of polemical feats against 'Christianity' and 'Judaism'.¹⁷⁸ The polemics disclosed an important chapter in the Shah's conflict with the Portuguese garrisons stationed in the islands of Hormuz and Qishm. Here is yet another example of one of the *'ulama* doing the Shah's bidding. The Shah aimed to benefit his empire from an expanding maritime commercial activity, which necessitated a Persian dominance over the Gulf waters.¹⁷⁹ He also sought to end Portugal's encroachments on Persian territory and resources.¹⁸⁰

Ahmad devoted two lengthy works to the refutation of Christianity in 1030AH/1620CE and 1032AH/1622CE, shortly after P. Jerome-Xavier dedicated *A'ineh-yi Haqq Nama* to Jahanghir, the sovereign of Lahore in India, which embellished the superiority of Christian dogma over Islam and repudiated its theological foundations.¹⁸¹ Earlier, Jerome-Xavier had also devoted to Shah Akbar, Persian works such as *Dastan-i Masih* on Jesus Christ, and *Dastan-i Pedro* on Saint Pierre, which expounded and popularized the Christian faith.¹⁸² But Ahmad's polemical writings were not simply theological exercises among otherwise independent scholars with strong religious convictions. Rather, they are tied to Shah 'Abbas's conflict with the Portuguese and emerge before and in the aftermath of his military victory over them at Hormuz in 1030AH/1620–21CE.

The Portuguese interest in strengthening their maritime activity in the Gulf region dates to the earliest Safavid period. In 913AH/1507CE, Alfonso Albuquerque, the commander of a Portuguese fleet, launched a successful attack at the island of Hormuz forcing its king, Sayf al-Din, to pay an annual tribute as a vassal of the king of Portugal.¹⁸³ Though forced to abandon the island, Albuquerque recaptured it in 921AH/1515CE, and concluded a treaty with Shah Isma'il II, which tied Hormuz

even more strongly to Portugal claims. For more than a century, Portugal maintained a naval base monitoring the activities in the Persian Gulf and a strategically important commercial outpost.¹⁸⁴ The Persians became mostly apprehensive of Portugal's seizure of the Bahrain islands against its promise in the treaty concluded in 921AH/1515CE to assist Persia in recovering the islands from the Arab Jabrid rulers. The Portuguese owned and overlooked the islands for 80 years.¹⁸⁵ They 'repeatedly resorted to trickery and guile', breaching their oaths and promises to the princes of Hormuz.¹⁸⁶ Floor suggested that security at sea was an important issue for the Safavids rather than European expansion per se. He noted that:

the area around Bandar 'Abbas had become unsafe due to piracy by the Arabs from Nakhilu who had differences with the Captains of Hormuz, despite the fact that the latter had ravaged the littoral as far as Basra. The Portuguese fleet seized any native craft without a Portuguese pass. This may have been part of the conflict with Persia which slowly but surely was retaking the various islands controlled by the Portuguese (Bahrain [1602], Qeshm [1620]).¹⁸⁷

From 1017AH/1608CE until 1031AH/1621CE, the relations between Shah 'Abbas and the Portuguese deteriorated. The delegations sent to Portugal, which aimed at rejuvenating proper trade relations between Persia, Spain and Portugal, came to naught.¹⁸⁸ With the military and naval aid of England's East India Company, the Shah ended the Portuguese presence in Hormuz and the Gulf region as a whole in 1032AH/1622CE.¹⁸⁹ Shah 'Abbas also destroyed the fort, which they had built on the neighboring island of Qishm which furnishes Jarun's water supply.

Following this expedition, Shah 'Abbas initiated a wave of conversion from Christianity to Islam among the inhabitants of the island.¹⁹⁰ During the same year, following the expulsion of the Portuguese, the Shah also seemed inclined to convert Armenian Christians to Shi'ism, mostly to prevent their wealthy elites from threatening his power in Isfahan, and to ensure the community's overall loyalty to the empire. It is possible that some women and children were eager to embrace Islam in return for certain privileges and protection, but most of the population was coerced. Amir Abu'l-Ma'ali Natanzi, the royal *males-nevis*, must have exerted more than 'a little pressure' to the monks and priests, with the result of numerous Christians converting to Islam.¹⁹¹

Ahmad conveys a sense of urgency and great mission for composing *Misqal-i Safa*. He noted that two years before he started studying the foundations of Christianity, he saw the Mahdi in a vision commanding him to write this work.¹⁹² He explored the religious tenets of Christianity and the Biblical approach toward the essence of God, and the essence of Jesus Christ.¹⁹³ The Bible, Ahmad declared, was forged, for it was devoid of God's true message. This he tried to prove on the basis of Christ's dubious miraculous birth and crucifixion, the contradictions between the Bible and the Torah, the doubtful stories and accounts and the statements attributed to Christ, which seem unlikely to have been uttered by a

prophet.¹⁹⁴ Using philosophical arguments in addition to Qur'anic scripture and Tradition, Ahmad insisted that there was a contradiction between God's essence on the one hand and the concept of the Trinity and Christ's divine qualities on the other.¹⁹⁵ In the same vein, Ahmad embellished the superiority of the Islamic religion by utilizing rationalist and traditionalist proofs, and verified the foundations of the Imamate and the infallibility of prophets and the Imams.¹⁹⁶

Ahmad 'Alavi's refutation of foundational tenets in the Old Testament and the Christian creed in the Bible reflected a new development in the Shah's domestic policies during the last decade of his reign. European expansion overseas rather than direct Ottoman threat became a pressing issue. The Shah's attempt to curtail European supremacy in the Persian Gulf and his hope of reaping the fruits of world trade kindled an interest in Islamizing Christian groups which could potentially ally themselves with European powers.¹⁹⁷

Lutfullah al-Maysi (d. 1032AH/1622–3CE) in Isfahan

During childhood or early adulthood, the jurist and scholar Lutfullah b. 'Abd al-'Ali al-Maysi al-'Amili migrated with his family from the village of Mays al-Jabal in Jabal 'Amil to Mashhad in Persia.¹⁹⁸ It is possible that the family arrived in Persia late in the reign of Shah Tahmasb under the encouragement of Ibrahim al-Maysi, Lutfullah's maternal uncle, who was recognized and patronized by the Safavid court.¹⁹⁹ In Mashhad, Lutfullah pursued juridical training and cultivated professional and personal ties with a number of its 'ulama, the most significant of whom was Mawlana 'Abdullah Shushtari. Shushtari, a recent emigrant from Najaf and the father-in-law of Mir Damad, engaged in vehement debates with Lutfullah over a number of theological questions including the issue of *ijtihad* and possibly Friday prayer.²⁰⁰ Shushtari was partly a product of 'Amili scholasticism and came to be known as the Third Martyr (*al-Shahid al-Thalith*) in association with the first two from Jabal 'Amil.

Lutfullah received a lectureship post in theology and joined the administrative staff of the shrine of Imam al-Rida in Mashhad as the attendant (*khadim*), obtaining a stipend from the revenues of its religious endowments. Unlike early 'Amili clerics like al-Karaki and Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, who produced several works on jurisprudence, Lutfullah devoted his efforts to common legal concerns, particularly those pertaining to religious worship, its conditions and proper delivery. His well-known work, *Al-Maysiyya*, is a commentary on al-Karaki's *Siyagh al-'Ulud wa'l-Iqa'at*, dealing with legal contracts. He also addressed the question of monetary inheritance and advanced a number of *fatwas* including one on 'the impure root of sour wine' (*'irq al-khil al-mutanajjis*).²⁰¹

The turning point in Lutfullah's career, however, came with the Safavid-Uzbek confrontations in Herat in 997AH/1588–89CE, when the city was captured by the Uzbeks. Thousands of Shi'ites in Herat were killed.²⁰² Lutfullah sought refuge at the court of Shah 'Abbas in Qazvin, where he lectured for some time. Soon after,

and under a royal command, he left for Isfahan and resided within the precincts of the mosque of Meydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan facing the royal palace. In the flourishing city of Isfahan, he led an active life as a prayer leader and instructor of *hadith* and jurisprudence.²⁰³ His expenses were defrayed from the revenues of the royal household.²⁰⁴ In further deference to him, the Shah married one of his daughters and built him a mosque and a school, which, until our days, still bears his name. Lutfullah's family also received royal pensions and stipends. Ja'far, Lutfullah's son, also entered the service of the Shah.

Lutfullah was the only state cleric of Shah 'Abbas's times who upheld the view that it was necessary and incumbent on every Shi'ite to observe Friday prayer during Occultation. He used to perform Friday prayer in his mosque.²⁰⁵ In contrast to al-Karaki, he laid no claims to exclusive or general *ijtihad*, nor for that matter did he link the performance of Friday prayer to the presence of a deputized *mujtahid* appointed by the Imam, as Baha'i and Mir Damad had argued. Lutfullah prided himself on implementing proper rules of worship in both Qazvin and Isfahan and expressed a great devotion to the Safavid Empire, which he described as an 'Alid dynasty of 'pure descent'. He declared that the Safavids' exalted sovereignty is but an extension of the sovereignty of the Mahdi and hoped the Shah would prevail over his Uzbek and Ottoman foes.²⁰⁶

Mistrust of Shah 'Abbas: Lutfullah's Mosque and the Guildsmen of the Old Meydan

At the height of his religious career as the *shaykh al-Islam* of the Safavid capital, Isfahan, Lutfullah faced serious challenges to his legal rulings and authority as the state *mujtahid*. This can be largely explained by the decisive shift in elite composition, economic alliances and, consequently, class boundaries in urban Isfahan. With the advent of Shah 'Abbas in the city, a new elite was formed whose economic standing became tied less to the longstanding center of Meydan-i Harun-i Vilayat with its artisans and merchants and more so to the new center built by the Shah, namely Meydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan, and its imperial interests.²⁰⁷ This eventually led to the marginalization of several members of the traditional urban leaders of Isfahan. Originally, Shah 'Abbas wanted to move into Meydan-i Harun-i Vilayat and started renovating its schools, shops and mosque, known as Masjid-i Jami'. Several merchants and notables who owned shops in the bazaar (market) of Meydan-i Harun-i Vilayat expressed resistance to the Shah's activities in fear he might 'take possession of their property'.²⁰⁸ Shah 'Abbas tried to prevent a confrontation and maintained delicate power relations.²⁰⁹ He decided to develop a new area for his own purpose, the square facing the Naqsh-i Jahan Garden, which became the site of the Imperial Palace, the Masjid-i Shah and the mosque of Lutfullah completed in 1028AH/1618–19CE.²¹⁰ The Shah's change of heart dispelled the suspicions of the Isfahani notables at the time, but it created a subtle competition between them and the Shah over the economic control of the city's resources and business.

Contemporary Persian chroniclers never called the mosque in the new *meydan* by Lutfullah's name.²¹¹ Apparently, Lutfullah's reputation was not universally known when the mosque was completed. The urban center of Isfahan had undergone extensive transformation under Shah 'Abbas, which meant that many of the names of locales in it were transitory. It is also noteworthy that the school, which later carried the name of Lutfullah, was built before that of Maidan-i Naqsh-i Jahan and most Isfahanis knew it by the name of the Madrasa of Khwaja Malik Mustaufi.²¹² It faced the Naqsh-i Jahan Garden. During Lutfullah's late clerical career the school became associated with him.

From the start, the Shah hoped the new mosque of Lutfullah would replace the older one, Masjid-i Jami', which had stood for more than 500 years at the northwest corner of the Meydan-i Harun-i Vilayat and served as the main congregational mosque and the religious and social center.²¹³ The Shah consciously compared the two and intended for Lutfullah's mosque to have congregational qualities.²¹⁴ Lutfullah's mosque exhibited a distinct dome and gateway but lacked a minaret or open courtyard.²¹⁵ The shift from the old to the new mosque marked a parallel one in social boundaries and political influence. Skilled artisans and prominent wholesale merchants and artists gradually deserted the old *meydan* and moved to the new one to join the imperial court there. Meanwhile, the old *meydan* became the political and economic quarters of the lower classes. The new *meydan* came to symbolize the Safavid ruler and his partners. Consequently, the Meydan-i Harun-i Vilayat suffered a decisive setback until the reign of Shah 'Abbas II (1052–1077 AH/ 1642–66 CE) when caravanserais, shops, coffee houses and even mosques began to emerge in it.²¹⁶

The royal bazaar hosted a limited number of shops. Each guild was allowed a specific number of shops in a certain lane (*rasta*).²¹⁷ Master craftsmen paid a guild tax (*haqq-i bunicha*) to own the right to do business in the bazaar. The bazaar lane generally comprised of a conglomerate of buildings such as a mosque, public bath, theological college, gymnasium and a drinking fountain.²¹⁸ Indeed, the prestige of the mosque and its popularity normally influenced the scope and amount of business done in a certain lane.²¹⁹ To give but one example, the bookbinders' bazaar benefited from its close location to both the Masjid-i Shah and Masjid-i Shaykh Lutfullah, which people visited for daily and Friday prayers.²²⁰ In order to obtain greater profits, the binders appointed one of their members to open his shop on Friday and he provided the needs of the worshippers on Fridays, when his shop alone was open.

This social setting provides the context for the conflict which arose between Lutfullah and a group of guildsmen and merchants who expressed loyalty to the Masjid-i Jami', the old congregational mosque.²²¹ As his well-known treatise *Al-tikafiyya* (seclusion, spiritual retreat) shows, Lutfullah became furious when an Isfahani guildsman (and possibly an influential merchant) and his social allies challenged Lutfullah's clerical authority. The guildsman in question frequented the court of a few *sayyids* and notables where he openly discredited Lutfullah and

made a negative appraisal of the rulings of other Arab ('Amili) scholars including the late al-Shahid.²²² He accused Lutfullah of abrogating the sacred law by committing an innovation and fabricating sources in a number of religious practices. More specifically, the guildsman took Lutfullah to task over the question of seclusion (*i'tikaf*) and its conditions, arguing that it must be performed in the Masjid-i Jami' of Isfahan which is congregational (suitable for holding Friday prayer) and central to the city, rather than in Lutfullah's new mosque.²²³

The mosque of Lutfullah became a sign of the imperial redefinition of Isfahan's urban space. By introducing this mosque into his precincts, Shah 'Abbas hoped to balance and compensate for the importance of Masjid-i Jami'. Lutfullah denounced his critics, embellished his distinguished rapport with the Shah, and confirmed the congregational quality of his own mosque:

For it has become widely known in Khurasan and Iraq that the sovereign of this empire and of its [spiritual, religious] hopes had built a congregational mosque in Isfahan to so and so, until many of the inhabitants of these remote countries and prosperous towns, upon arriving to Isfahan would ask about us in the following manner: 'Where is the shaykh for whom the Shah had built a new congregational mosque, that we may be graced by him and become his slaves?'.²²⁴

This is by far the clearest and most direct statement confirming Shah 'Abbas's intention to build Lutfullah a congregational mosque, which could hold one or two thousand people and a school.²²⁵ Accompanied by Lutfullah on one of his trips, the Shah addressed him:

orally with this clear statement: 'I want to build you a congregational mosque which can fit from a thousand to two thousand people, facing my house that Turks, slaves and every other willing person including myself, may come to you!'²²⁶

One striking feature of Lutfullah's conflict with the Isfahani craftsmen is its racial undertones. Lutfullah would express in his treatise *Al-I'tikafiyya* (seclusion, spiritual retreat) his deep gratitude to God for making him 'an Arab scholar', for the Arabs were the 'fountainhead' of the purist progeny, and for creating him a Twelver Shi'ite rather than a member of the 'Shu'ubiyya or the Rattaniyya or their supporters'.²²⁷ He asked God to bless and honor the 'Arab' Prophet and his noble family. He invoked his 'Arabness' to discredit his rivals whom he cast as *Shu'ubis*, those who glorify the Persian civilization and consider it superior to its Arab counterpart. Lutfullah found his critics' religious knowledge wanting and claimed that they, being non-Arab, could never attain such knowledge anyway. Lutfullah's boasting about his Arab descent carried a double entendre, of exalting Shah 'Abbas who used to glory in his putative Arab descent, and to defame his rivals.²²⁸ The latter in turn had consciously devalued

Lutfullah's Arab descent and by that indirectly ridiculed the Shah's attempts to claim one. In response, Lutfullah lavished honorary titles on 'Amili scholars, especially Baha'i and Mir Damad. He treated the 'Amilis as exemplars and models for pious and authoritative religious leadership. Evidently, this defense of the 'Amilis is a response to the way the Isfahani guildsmen discredited them.²²⁹

The exchange of racial slander was in essence an expression of a social struggle between the disadvantaged artisans and guildsmen of the old *meydan* and the elite of the new *meydan*, over resources, business and prestige. The class and occupational content of this confrontation is telling. Lutfullah described the common people (*'awam*) as despicable and ignorant and lumped them with the debased (*andhal*).²³⁰ As for the craftsmen (*ahl al-sana'i* and *ahl al-hiraf*), they were 'inferior' and short of 'the ranks of the learned'. They claim legal knowledge 'through approximation and conjecture', without relying on the information of the Traditionists or *mujtahids*.²³¹ Underscoring his own noble pedigree, he urged his readers to turn to men of his caliber in religious matters because they carry the nobility, perfection, intelligence and virtue through a long line of descent from one century to another since ancient times!²³² It is worth pointing out too that Lutfullah included 'merchants' among the ignorant commoners, hinting at the fact that a number of them had disregarded his rulings on seclusion as well, and rejected the congregational qualities of his mosque.

Despite disagreement among Shi'ite jurists surrounding the conditions of spiritual seclusion, Lutfullah stated that seclusion was normally held during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, known as *ihya'* or *ahya* (nights spent in prayer).²³³ The Isfahani craftsmen and merchants in question objected to four conditions under which Lutfullah performed seclusion.²³⁴ These were holding seclusion, first in his newly built mosque, second during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, third during retreat and devotion to prayer (*darb al-qubba*) and fourth during the nights of *ahya*, presumably popularized by al-Karaki.²³⁵

Based on a *hadith* by Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, Lutfullah argued that seclusion was lawful in the mosques of al-Kufa, al-Basra, Mecca and Medina. Some jurists, he noted, misunderstood the *hadith* to mean that seclusion can only be held in these few mosques. Later scholars, including Lutfullah, however, counted other mosques as equally suitable for holding seclusion.²³⁶ He insisted that the legal conditions that he set for seclusion were consistent with the position of leading Shi'ite scholars.²³⁷ More importantly, however, Lutfullah implied that holding seclusion also served Safavid sovereignty. Performed during *ahya* and other single or combined nights referred to as *al-ifrad* or *al-jam'*, and during religious festivals, seclusion helps Safavid subjects overcome evil temptations and ultimately protect the Safavid "Alid dynasty and Musawi Sultanate... and [help] subjugate all Uzbek and Ottoman enemies and other Sunnites".²³⁸ Clearly, Lutfullah is extending a political function to seclusion as a regulatory source of political discipline among Shi'ite subjects resulting in the perseverance of the empire. Apparently, the Shah didn't need much convincing. He supported the performance of seclusion by Lutfullah in Qazvin and Isfahan.

Among the opponents of Lutfullah, some argued that seclusion must be eliminated altogether in the absence of the Imam. They argued that seclusion can only be performed in the presence of an *imam 'adl*, taken to mean the infallible Imam, who summons people for congregational prayer.²³⁹ This is a significant point, which denotes that Lutfullah's opponents were indirectly challenging the Imamate foundations of Shah 'Abbas's rule. Lutfullah was convinced that the term *imam 'adl*, taken in the context of the original Tradition, does not refer to the infallible Imam. The Tradition shows that the mosques of Baghdad which observed seclusion fell under Sunnite governments. Consequently, the infallible Imam couldn't have summoned believers to seclusion under such conditions.²⁴⁰ On the whole, Lutfullah confirmed the necessity of executing central religious tasks by able jurists during Occultation irrespective of the nature of government.

Lutfullah suggested that seclusion be held only in a congregational mosque during fasting. The Prophet, he explained, used to retire to a secluded place during the last ten days of Ramadan, devoting himself to prayer through the night in a domed shrine.²⁴¹ In his view, a congregational mosque may or may not be the largest mosque in the city as the two Shahids asserted. A congregational mosque does not need to be the newest or the closest to the bazaars or tribal encampments.²⁴² It simply requires the presence of a Shi'ite prayer leader. Lutfullah reflected in disdain that only craftsmen, merchants and commoners would assume that a congregational mosque should be the largest in size. This view, Lutfullah argued, has no value among the elite or the men of virtue, nor is it customary among the jurists who draw their views from the books of the noble Imams.

It is unclear what role Mawlana 'Abdullah Shushtari played during this conflict over Friday prayer. Shortly before his death, Mir Damad possibly helped reconcile him with Lutfullah. Even though Shushtari received less recognition than Lutfullah from the Safavid court, his biographical précis in *'Alam-ara-yi* is longer and more animated than that of Lutfullah. Munshi, the court historian, praised his 'outstanding spiritual accomplishments' but cautiously hinted at Shushtari's ability to duplicate the functions of Lutfullah. He noted that 'it was believed' Shushtari was furnished with a special authority to conduct Friday prayer.²⁴³ This statement is significant given the fact that Shushtari was closely associated with the old congregational mosque of Isfahan and was buried in it.

In retrospect, the debate over spiritual seclusion was an attempt to undermine Lutfullah's juridical authority as *shaykh al-Islam*. This carried subtle expressions of opposition to the Shah himself for diverting social recognition and economic profit away from Meydan-i Harun-i Vilayat. The anti-Arab sentiment against Lutfullah was also the outcome of the professional and political competition he faced from Persians who have joined the ranks of an expanding, more stratified clerical foundation and aspired to occupy his post. Prominent merchants and low-ranking artisans used legal arguments, the very tools of the clerics, to undermine Lutfullah, questioning the state's infatuation with the 'Amilis, and raising doubts about the Shah's judgment. The social struggle embedded in such anti-Arab sentiments was

reflected by how Isfahanis referred to an Arab religious school – the 'School of the Asses'¹²⁴⁴

Summary and Conclusions

The reign of Shah 'Abbas brings together, through its Arab émigré scholars and their Persian descendants, new facets in clerical function and intellectual production. Hybridity, manifest in Baha'ís and Mir Damad's philosophical, mystical and scientific inclinations, was once marginal to 'Amili Shi'ism. Combined with their juridical expertise, these inclinations were welcomed by Shah 'Abbas in their individualized and elitist forms. There was no actual conciliation between clerical legalism and Sufi and philosophical ideas in pursuit of imperial legitimacy. The latter was closely tied to the production of legal knowledge and management of *shari'a* matters. Popular millenarian and heterodox leanings, which fell outside the parameters of the *shari'a*, were rejected by both Mir Damad and Baha'i. In *Gorbeh va Mush*, Baha'i presents himself as a jurist who is disdainful of 'feeble-minded' and ignorant claimants to juridical knowledge as well as Sufi-cultist traditions. He, however, reserves his respect to the 'high' tradition of Sufi and philosophical learning.

Leading clerics invested much effort in supporting Safavid aims for internal cohesion and political integration, which Shah 'Abbas hoped to achieve through depopulation policies and forced conversions, particularly in frontier zones, among other measures. The clerical literature reflects the sovereign's interest in counteracting Ottoman threats, confronting Portuguese claims to vital resources, regulating the socio-economic relations among Muslims and Christians and redrawing the political map and class boundaries in Isfahan. In this respect, Baha'ís and Mir Damad's intellectual production as a whole recasts and appropriates the ideological world of Shah 'Abbas in subtle and complex terms. Such a world licensed selective intellectual inquiries by the court clerics, popular obedience to the *shari'a* and restricted heterodox approaches to religious knowledge and, hence, political sovereignty. This is not to say that a perfect correspondence existed between clerical thought on the one hand and the state ideology on the other. From 'Abbas's imperial viewpoint, only the views of Lutfullah al-Maysi on Friday prayer were truly satisfactory. The rest of the clerics refrained from sanctifying the theocratic claims and title of 'Abbas's state. There were, however, clear limits to jurisprudential liberties on the part of the clerical elite whose social position and intellectual outlook were vested in the interests of the state. Meanwhile, leading clerics presented their ideas as a non-imitative continuation of a real or imaginary juridical consensus and a core tradition, even where these ideas were new. Ultimately, the *mujtahids'* task honored the 'contract' they had with the ruling elite in taming the social order to a *shari'a*-enlightened political will.

4

Safavid Mistrust, Popular Protest and the Rationalists' Retreat

HISTORICAL NARRATIVES SURROUNDING THE reigns of Shah Safi I (1038–1052AH/1629–1642CE) and Shah 'Abbas II (1052–1077AH/1642–1666CE) present their political outlook and religious policies as markedly at odds with those of Shah 'Abbas. These narratives note that the two monarchs ignited a spirit of anticlericalism at court due to a revival of theosophical and Sufi thought.¹ In reality, however, the Shahs encouraged individualized and 'high' traditions of theosophy and Sufism, all of which found their way into new substrata of *'ulama*. Most of the Gnostics and Sufi-bent scholars associated with the court never truly departed from a *shari'a* self-reference. Their activities had little in common with the folk mystical and heterodox leanings of the early Qizilbash, or the popular Persian Sufism and only partially entertained the core philosophical constructs of Gnostics like Mulla Sadra and Mir Findiriski (d. 1050AH/1640–41CE).² As novel intellectual hybrids with strong ties to the court, the philosophically and Sufi-bent *'ulama* signaled the onset of a social process weaving in new socio-economic and political factors, which shaped state structure and politics, and elite composition in the direction of internal differentiation and ideological conflict. Below, I will illustrate the nature of this development.

The Safavid court embraced Sufi-bent and philosophically bent *'ulama* at a time when power was gradually being shared between the monarch and his grand viziers. The marked decline in frontier military defense under Shah Safi and the bureaucratic reorganization of the empire led to a reorientation in economic policies, which increased the power of viziers and courtiers. More specifically, grand viziers became more relevant to the management of the state than were the provincial military governors many of whom started to lose their privileges. This is illustrated

through the political career of Mirza Muhammad Taqi, better known as Saru Taqi, who served as grand vizier under Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas from 1044AH/1634CE until 1055AH/1645CE.³ Saru Taqi was one of the major proponents of the state's policy to accelerate the growth of crown estates (*khassah*), which supported the sovereign's personal expenses and obstructed the feudal division of land.⁴ Mirza Taqi showed great ability in managing the civil administration and increasing the Shah's funds and carrying his orders, including a close supervision of provincial governors.⁵ The decrease in frontier wars and military campaigns against external foes, particularly against the Ottomans, made Shah Safi agree to the increase of crown estates at the expense of the *mamalik* (provinces). It was precisely in these terms that Saru Taqi made his case to Shah Safi to transform several *mamalik* to crown land. He explained that at a time of political stability and peace with the Ottomans there was no justification for maintaining all the provincial governors and their extensive courts and armies.⁶ A lot of money was converted from provinces like Fars, Qazvin, Gilan, Mazandaran, Yazd, Kirman and parts of Azerbaijan and Khurasan into crown estates.⁷ We do not know how this policy influenced the local economies of these provinces or the relationship of merchants and peasants to the provincial governors and the state. We merely know that the Qizilbash *emirs* who had held provincial governorships as military fiefs (*tiyul*) since early Safavid days were outraged and awaited the opportunity to act against this policy.⁸ The *tiyul* was the grant of the tax yield or a portion of it from a particular area, which in principle lacked a hereditary character and was granted in return for a service. As the upkeep of the provincial armies and their finances decreased, they became more prone to invading neighboring regions for booty and rebelled more often.⁹ Sufficiently worried about Saru Taqi's political designs, a number of Qizilbash officers including Beglerbegis succeeded in assassinating him in 1055CE.¹⁰

The promotion of crown land led to a rise in the fortunes and influence of key state administrators such as the stewards of the royal court (*nazir-i buyutat*) and financiers at the level of treasurer of the royal household, and the steward's financial assistants.¹¹ Even if the post of treasurer of the royal household never overtook that of the treasurer of the revenues (*mustawfi al-mamalik*), as Floor noted, it became more influential. The grand viziers were, however, a diverse group largely drawn from competing constituencies of the *ghulaman*, the Persian clerical-administrative classes including *sayyids*, and to a lesser extent from Turkoman and Kurdish Qizilbash leaders. Like Georgian, Armenian, and Circassian court officials, the Qizilbash did not rely on their tribes' standing to acquire state posts. Rather, during this period they derived power from the criteria of 'fidelity' and 'competence' as determined by their relationship to the Shah.¹² Meanwhile, the grand vizier controlled much of the central bureaucracy and acted somewhat independently of the Shah in appointments to state offices.¹³ In a Persian painting, dating from 1133AH/1720–1CE, a turbaned grand vizier rather than the Shah dominates the festive setting of the New Year, Nowruz.¹⁴ In addition to the grand vizier's increasing influence, a number of his associates and servicemen staffed the bureaucracy. This

is not to imply that the grand vizier became the sole and unchallenged authority at court. Rather, he struggled to protect his position from major units and subunits within the administrative elite, such as the steward of the royal court, the secretary-general of the royal secretariat (*nazir-i daftar-i humayun*), the treasurer of the royal household, the treasurer-general (*mustawfi al-mamalik*), the major military commanders and court eunuchs.¹⁵ This situation was somewhat helpful to the monarchs who occasionally manipulated these divisions to shift support from one subgroup to another to empower themselves. The Shah, however, could not recover his full authority over the state or exert the type of control which Shah 'Abbas enjoyed.¹⁶

Believed to have been long addicted to opium, and developing excessive wine-drinking habits, Shah Safi lost control over state affairs.¹⁷ In a dramatic shift from the times of Shah 'Abbas, the relations between the Safavid Empire and the Indian Mughals deteriorated to the extent of total severance of ties in 1046AH/1636CE. Furthermore, Persia lost additional territories to the Ottomans and resorted to new peace negotiations that culminated in the peace treaty of Zuhab on 14 Muharram 1049AH/17 May 1639CE.¹⁸ Around the time of Shah Safi's death, though, Persia seemed relatively secure from neighboring threats.

Social Forces from Below

Safavid sources do not allow us to form a clear picture about the changes in the conditions and outlook of lower echelons of society, be they the urban guilds or the peasantry, which had a bearing on political and ideological changes at the highest levels. The presence of multiple regional economies rather than one also complicates the picture.¹⁹ Agriculture was the most important economic sector, which employed around 80 per cent of the population of Safavid Persia.²⁰ Despite a marked demand for Persian cash crops like silk and goat hair in the world market, as Matthee and Floor noted, agriculture faced a number of environmental, technological and social obstacles, which limited productivity.²¹

Peasants were treated as slaves, restrained and punished in cases of fleeing the land or refraining from paying their agricultural rent.²² Landlords, including the *'ulama*, as Floor noted, regularly turned to the state to hold the peasants to their land. As such, peasants had 'extremely circumscribed possibilities for migration and were largely tied to the soil and hence restricted in their pursuit of economic opportunities'.²³ Following the accession of Shah Safi to the throne, a number of insurrections broke out. In Gilan, a major revolt with popular messianic elements broke out against heavy taxations following the conversion of Gilan into crown land.²⁴ Thousands from Gilan and other Caspian provinces, presumably silk cultivators and peasants, joined the revolt. In theory, Islamic law upheld the freedom in movement and settlement of people, but 'economic reality overcame religious scruple' even in cases where clerics were landowners.²⁵ Even though we know little if anything about the class composition and social background of insurrections against the Safavid government under Shah 'Abbas II, it is possible to extrapolate

that peasants – not merely rural commanders or notables – lent a strong impetus to these revolts. Such was the case with the rebels of the mountainous region Daghistan.²⁶ There is also a mention of the Shah's confrontation with the Bakhtiyari group some time before 1055AH/1645CE.²⁷ The peasants paid agricultural products as taxes to the local governors.²⁸ The occasional tax exemptions extended by the monarch to his subjects should be seen as a mechanism to diffuse mass rebellions and ensure centralization. The comparisons which John Chardin, a French traveler, made between the Persian peasant and his/her European counterpart unfortunately confused the picture and overestimated the fortunes of the peasants of Persia.²⁹ The contradictory statements Chardin made to describe peasants attest to the social complexity and regional variations among the Persian peasantry.³⁰

Many of the changes in peasant life and output during the mid seventeenth century CE arguably pertained to earlier policies of forced migration and large-scale devastation of arable land under Shah 'Abbas. Little can be known about the nature of these changes and their long-term implications. Peasant revolts were discussed in the official Safavid chronicles as expressions of allegiance to a rural notable who sought political power or had delusional and false messianic expectations. Much of the peasant resistance to the state is overshadowed by the chroniclers' emphasis on the rural notables who led these revolts, presumably in pursuit of provincial autonomy, political ascendancy and economic gain. Peasants fought on the side of these notables possibly on a promise of an improvement in their conditions or in spontaneous resistance to the government's policies. Despite the apocalyptic and millenarian aspirations manifest in peasant resistance and military outbreaks against the state, socio-economic variables were constantly at play.³¹ Peasants were targets of vandalism and marauders and many became dispossessed, thus joining the underworld of Safavid society.³²

Shah 'Abbas introduced mechanisms of relief and allowed occasional outlets for class discontent which balanced his thrust for centralization. Around 1020AH/1611CE, he focused attention on 'the administration of justice' in Tabriz and addressed petitions from both the military and civilians.³³ During his expedition to Azerbaijan, he arrested officials in Gilan and Qazvin and addressed complaints of malpractice and avarice against tax collectors.³⁴ He waived taxes in 1022AH/1613–14CE for both peasants and landlords for three years in Isfahan in order to reward the merchants and artisans for the upkeep of the bazaar and the decoration of the stores around the Meydan and the Qaysariyya.³⁵ In 1024–25AH/1615–17CE Shah 'Abbas decided to 'give away' each year, in the form of alms to the peasants and farmers, the income of the month of Ramadan 'accrued from divan dues, taxes, leases and rents from property', that is he exempted them from the tax demanded by the central bureaucracy.³⁶ This also served his conversion policies. It is unclear whether other sectors of the population of a province had to provide the remainder of the tax amount. During the month of Ramadan in 1024–25AH/1615–17CE, he exempted all people from tax demands, and 'no creditor was allowed to hound a debtor' across the empire.³⁷ Evidently, many people complained about the fines

collected by the night watches (*ahdas*) and accused the government of taxing them twice over. The Shah wanted his chief accountants in all the regions to account for both sources of money as part of one whole tax quota. Overall, the tax was reduced but the practice of keeping the fines was confirmed. Shah 'Abbas also occasionally invited a whole population of a region to raise complaints and address grievances against the officials in their provinces.³⁸ The court historians were keen on presenting Shah 'Abbas as a compassionate king who investigated his people's complaints against the injustices of local governors in Isfahan, Kashan and Gilan. But equally noteworthy is the fact that Shah 'Abbas also instructed his courtiers on several occasions to block any petition or complaint and forced people to address their concerns through bureaucratic channels as Floor noted.³⁹

The last decade of Shah 'Abbas's rule was marked by human disaster largely caused by a combination of political and environmental forces. In 1032AH/1622–23CE, the people of Baghdad suffered from the pursuits of political autonomy by the ruler, Bakr, who permitted his soldiery to abuse and exploit the peasants and cultivators. The latter left their fields untilled, which caused a shortage of cereals and great hardships. A drought also set in, followed by famine, which pushed one hundred thousand people to desert the city.⁴⁰ People:

fled wherever they heard there was a bite of bread to eat, and many people, in their desperation, slew their children with the sword... There was not a single stage on my journey, and not a single village through which I passed, where I failed to see a number of destitute refugees from Baghdad, with no fixed abode, eking out a living on the charity and alms provided by the peasants. As for the poor, who did not possess the wherewithal either to stay in Baghdad or to leave, they collapsed in the streets and died of hunger.⁴¹

When the Shah captured Baghdad from Bakr in January 1623CE, he still had to attend to the problem of starvation.⁴² There is no mention of what exactly the state did to improve the situation. We know little about the effects of these events, including the pestilence, which spread four years earlier leading to the illness of the Shah, and the plague, which afflicted Azerbaijan in 1033AH/1623–24CE.⁴³ Ardabil was directly affected and around 20,000 people died. The plague spread to adjacent districts including Qazvin.

Mounting class discontent went hand in hand with a steady state obstruction of informal and public address of grievances under Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II and their grand viziers.⁴⁴ Initially, the vizier took over the judicial functions of the Shahs, giving immediate verdicts on petitions submitted by the populace in writing.⁴⁵ The court of justice under Shah 'Abbas II realized this preference for curtailing spontaneous public access to the monarch and strengthened the resolve of bureaucratic elements.⁴⁶ The Shah was expected to oversee court cases three days a week, but he was soon replaced by the grand vizier. In 1657CE, Muhammad Beg, the grand vizier 'stopped public audiences, which had been regularly held by

himself and his predecessors, to hear the people's requests and complaints'. Under Shah Suleiman the situation worsened, for he denied petitioners any access to him and seemed insulated from his subjects' protests against injustice, particularly if the officials responsible for these injustices were linked or supported by the *divan-begi*.⁴⁷ In 1683CE, the state formally eliminated the practice of addressing one's grievances directly to the Shah.⁴⁸ As such, even this sporadic and delicate channel was denied to the poor, reflecting the decrease in regulatory monarchical pressure against the abusive and exploitative economic enterprises of the elite. Meanwhile, upper-class merchants and government officials:

interfered in the market by organizing bread and meat monopolies, through the artificial creation of shortages in the market. These events occurred especially during economically difficult times and when the Shah's authority was weak.⁴⁹

Around 1072AH/1661CE, a combination of drought and locust attacks on crops in Isfahan caused a dramatic increase in the price of basic food items. Destitute and starving men and women complained to Shah 'Abbas II, who 'ordered an end to monopoly' by merchants over food items, invoking the *qanun-i millat* (Shi'ites' law).⁵⁰ These monopolies, appearing in times of drought, famine and natural disasters, must have taken their toll on the poor. Some time before the death of Mirza Taqi in 1055AH/1645CE, an earthquake erupted in Bandar 'Abbas causing the death of many people and extensive damage to property.⁵¹ Brigandage became more popular and better organized, possibly with the secret compliance of the local governors. For instance, Chardin noted that in 1672CE, in an unprecedented move, around 500 horsemen succeeded in capturing a caravan returning with riches and goods from India to Isfahan.⁵² Indeed, in 1678CE, the situation was so grave that 'the poor brought food platters, which were taken to the palace for the shah, and received the grand vizier and *divan-begi* with stones, forcing the administrators to flee on horse'.⁵³ Military commanders and governors engaged at times in orchestrated brigandage and gave critical information to the brigands about caravans either to thwart their threat or to profit economically. This was similar to the role played by the urban bazaar's petty tradesmen in support of gangs.⁵⁴ Acts of theft and marauding against travelers in Persia after 1680CE increased largely due to the weakening of the government and its regulatory authority over road safety.⁵⁵

Overall, alterations in the structure of politics at court in favor of greater freedoms in economic enterprises for the elite, expressed by obstructing public demands and diffusing complaints of injustice, gave impoverished sectors little outlet for their grievances and contributed to their alienation and dispossession. The absence of mechanisms of relief, characteristic of the period of Shah 'Abbas, sharpened the social contradictions among various classes and strengthened the opposition to the government and its ideological sources of legitimacy. Peasant revolts, which espoused millenarian notions, may have increased as a reaction to these changes.

In the light of these pivotal social changes, new ideas in legal theory, philosophical inquiry and Sufi thought emerged and started to gain popularity. More specifically, *akhbarism* (traditionism), previously a scholastic tendency to rely on foundational Shi'ite traditions developed into a coherent and self-conscious juridical-political trend. In addition, Gnosticism adapted normative *shari'a* elements at the expense of pronounced rationalist and peripatetic pursuits. These intellectual developments will be the subject of later sections in this chapter.

Once Upon a Time, an 'Amili

Syrian theologians from Jabal 'Amil continued to express interest in emigration to Persia during the seventeenth century CE. (See Appendix I) A small number of these scholars and their Persian descendants received religious posts with differing degree of importance such as: *shaykh al-Islam*, judge (*qadi*), theological instructor (*mudarris*), prayer leaders (*imam jum'a*), shrine attendant (*khadim, sadin*) and court scholar or poet. (See Appendix II)⁵⁶ Among these were Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Muhyiddin al-Musawi (alive in 1057AH/1647CE), a judge in Mashhad, Husayn b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn al-Juba'i (d. 1069AH/1658CE), who served as a theological instructor and the *shaykh al-Islam* in Mashhad, and 'Abd al-Latif b. 'Ali b. Ahmad b. Abi Jami' (alive in 1094AH/1682CE), the *shaykh al-Islam* in Tustar. Muhammad al-Hurr al-'Amili al-Mashghari (d. 1104AH/1692CE) and his brother, Ahmad, became the *shuyukh al-Islam* of Mashhad and Tustar respectively.⁵⁷

Many 'Amili scholars, however, were not absorbed by the religious institutions of the city or the provinces signaling, first, the increasing competition between the émigré scholars and their Persian counterparts and, second, the state's limited interest in the contributions of the 'Amilis. This was the case with Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki (d. 1076AH/1665CE), who lived in Isfahan for a while and later in Haydarabad, and 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-Juba'i (d. 1103–4AH/1691CE), referred to here as 'Ali al-Shahidi. After the proliferation of clerical expertise, the reigns of Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II dispensed with 'Amilism altogether. It is not surprising that biographical treatises and dictionaries paying homage to the once glamorous 'Amili scholars appear at this time. Nostalgic and reverent, these works signal a status reversal among 'Amili scholars. In *Al-Durr al-Manthur min al-Khabar al-Ma'thur wa Ghayr al-Ma'thur*, 'Ali al-Shahidi, a striving émigré, presented an incomplete yet vivid account of the distinct intellectual make-up of al-Shahid al-Thani, his great maternal grandfather, and his descendants in Ottoman Syria.⁵⁸ 'Ali was also the maternal great grandson of al-Karaki. The most comprehensive work of its kind on the 'Amilis during the Safavid period was *Amal al-Amil fi Ma'rifat 'ulama' Jabal 'Amil* laid down by Muhammad al-Hurr al-'Amili (d. 1104AH/1693CE). Al-Hurr claimed that the 'Amili community was among the earliest if not the first to join 'Ali's Partisans which by the eighth century CE had evolved into 'Twelver' Shi'ism. Al-Hurr went to great length to prove the 'Amilis' seniority in professing Shi'ism and their earned prominence in Shi'ite history.⁵⁹ He

cited one obscure Shi'ite tradition from which subsequent 'Amili writings construed a reference to Jabal 'Amil. This account states that the Sixth Shi'ite Imam and legal scholar Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 148AH/765CE) was once asked to reveal the course of action Twelver Shi'ites must take during occultation and following the advent of the *Qa'im* (the Riser).⁶⁰ He foretold that there would be 'houses by the seashore in the lower mountainous regions of Syria', where the choicest of his Shi'a resided, diligently awaiting their *imam*. Based on this vague description, Al-Hurr proposed that the location was Jabal 'Amil.

From the mid seventeenth century CE onward, it was possible for sons of the clerical aristocracy trained in religious disciplines and bureaucratic skills to cross over from purely religious posts to political and administrative ones in both the provinces and the capital city. (See Appendix II) Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Khwatun, a descendant of Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad through his daughter, became vizier in Haydarabad. Descendants of al-Karaki and Lutfullah al-Maysi, for instance, found their way to the *sadarat* and the vizierate. Husayn b. Badr al-Din al-A'raji al-'Amili (alive in 1050AH/1640CE) became *sadr* in Isfahan. Mirza Habibullah, the son of Husayn b. Badr al-Din, trained both as a bureaucrat and scholar, became grand *sadr* during the reign of Shah 'Abbas II. His son Mirza Muhammad Mahdi (d. 1080AH/1669CE) became grand vizier.⁶¹ 'Ali, the son of Mirza Habibullah, and three of his grandsons served in religious posts like *shaykh al-Islam* of Isfahan and Tehran. (See Appendix II) Jamal al-Din b. Nur al-Din 'Ali al-'Amili al-Juba'i (d. 1098AH/1686CE) was *sadr* in Haydarabad.⁶² Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Mahmud al-Mashghari (d. after 1090AH/1679CE) acted as vizier at one of the provincial Safavid courts. 'Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad al-'Alawi al-'Amili (d. 1121AH/1708CE) was a well-known prayer leader in Isfahan. Ja'far al-'Amili al-Ridawi (alive in 1148AH/1735CE) became grand *sadr* in Isfahan. (For court recognition of scholars and poets of 'Amili descent, see Appendix II)⁶³ Mirza Baha' al-Din Muhammad, Mirza Kamal al-Din Husayn, and Mirza Muhammad Shafi' b. Baha' al-Din al-'Amili (d. 1125AH/1713CE) all served as *shuyukh al-Islam* of Qazvin in the last decades or so of Safavid rule and possibly after.

The conventional *'ulama*, to whose ranks several 'Amili descendants belonged, struggled relentlessly to regain their centrality to the empire's religious-bureaucratic institutions. Meanwhile, a major section of the propertied Persian nobility was weaving a distinct ideological thread. This section promoted new forms of religious leadership based on selective adaptations of Gnosticism and philosophy to juridical Islam. The Sufi-bent and philosophically bent Persian scholars promoted a public adherence to juridical conventions for the masses yet an elitist privatized venture toward faith and the knowledge of God for the few, normally the aristocracy.

The Clerics' Resources

Even though distinguished jurists were in general revered and emulated, the clerical community as a whole, with its varying juridical ranks, was at times the center of

ridicule and disdain among common Persians. Proponents of folk Sufism attracted a significant following among the lower classes, which perceived them as more genuine, altruistic, austere and generous than the jurists.⁶⁴ These contradictory developments reflected a social protest against state support of the *mujtahids*, who manipulated the power to 'discipline' for self-interest and greed. The observations of two travelers, Chardin and Kaempfer, are illuminating.⁶⁵ The *mujtahids*, they reflected, were hypocrites, who put on the semblance of sainthood, austerity and detachment from material entanglements (much like the Sufis) and as such attracted a large following.⁶⁶ Chardin explained that Shi'ite devotees and men of religion who emphasized the strict application of the *shari'a*, believed that an 'infallible *mujtahid*' with purity of soul, perfect knowledge of the religious sciences and a mastery of questions of religious and civil law should occupy the 'royal seat' in the absence of the Imam.⁶⁷ The clerical community, however, was inclined to accept the leadership of a *mujtahid*, who did not have such impeccable or perfect qualities. This position, and the devotion which many Persians showed toward some of these *mujtahids*, displeased the Shahs and contributed to their interest in replacing them with another group of religious servicemen.

The story of Mulla Qasim and Shah 'Abbas II highlights these features. Around 1666CE, Mulla Qasim passed for a prophet and austere saint and his fame spread through Isfahan.⁶⁸ He scorned worldly pleasures but was 'irreproachable' due to his outward adherence to the *shari'a*. On one occasion, he proclaimed that the Shah was constantly intoxicated and denounced him publicly, asking that he be replaced by one of the children of the *shaykh al-Islam*.⁶⁹ The son of the *shaykh al-Islam* was the chief judge of the civil court. It is noteworthy, as Chardin implied, that the Shah could not easily or openly eliminate him. He was secretly favored by the clergy and continued to preach his views against Shah 'Abbas II for six months. The court, however, decided to remove him to Shiraz. Under the Shah's orders, Mulla Qasim was pushed down a high cliff on the way to Shiraz and died. The Shah decreed that the *shaykh al-Islam* and his children be put under house arrest. The *shaykh al-Islam* and his son went and threw themselves at the feet of the Shah proclaiming their innocence and devotion to him. The Shah accepted their gesture and placed the robes of honor on them.⁷⁰

The clerics and their staff enjoyed political strength and relative stability. Originally, as was noted in Chapter 3, the community's leadership was drawn from two distinct sources: Arab 'Amili and Iraqi émigré families, many of whom became propertied and assumed aristocratic membership, and a nobility class of Persian administrative-clerical families. By the mid seventeenth century CE, the Persian nobility became the most representative element of the clerical elite. Members of the lower class too served in a wide array of low-ranking posts such as *mullahs*, theological instructors, prayer leaders, shrine attendants and notaries.⁷¹ Indeed, the title of *mujtahid* or the attribute of *ijtihad* became a sign of an acquired pedigree, a surrogate *siyada* of sorts, which explains why many members of the elite were embellished with these titles, even in a loose way.⁷² The consolidation of the category

of religious endowments (*waqf*), which gave public property a particular private status, provided a steady source of financial security not only for the elite but also for various clerical servicemen.⁷³ Chardin wrote that:

Il ya un si grand nombre de colleges en Perse, qu'on assure que leur revenu est de cent mille tumans, que font quatre millions cinq cent mille livre monnoie de France.⁷⁴

Many *mujtahids* were appointed administrators of the religious endowments (*mutawallis*), which benefited their families, staff and students.⁷⁵ Several such administrators could easily draw great fortunes from their post, which explains Shah 'Abbas II's attempt to minimize their profits by reshuffling their offices and curtailing their privileges.⁷⁶

As a material base, the endowments were independent from state bureaucracy and exempt from governmental confiscation. The religious notables received *suyurghals* out of religious endowments, which, alongside their benefits, carried a hereditary character transferred to whole families of scholars.⁷⁷ The income obtained by the religious holder of a *suyurghal* was able in turn to support a large number of alms recipients.⁷⁸ As noted earlier, the central bureaucracy of the state had to maintain its dominance over the elites and aim to prevent any major sector of society from accumulating great *suyurghals*. In this the state under Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II partially succeeded. It replaced the great *suyurghals* granted to prominent military and administrative statesmen with the non-hereditary *tiyul* (a category of land attached to a salary). Yet, the 'ulama alone kept their *suyurghals* intact.⁷⁹ Moreover, between 1066AH/1655CE and 1088AH/1677CE, a number of *tiyul* again assumed hereditary ownership that differed little from the earlier type of *suyurghals*.⁸⁰ This is indicative of a fundamental shift in state-elite relations and class boundaries. The bureaucratic elite and a few military commanders were able to re-access the hereditary prerogatives of land ownership. In each of these shifts, it seems, a considerable number of 'ulama families remained secure.⁸¹

The lands owned by the Shah and by private landlords and holders of religious endowments were usually rented to peasants on the basis of a crop-sharing agreement. The holders of fiefs and endowments were expected to make the peasants comply with the Shah's expectations of supplying the necessary tax and as such fined, disciplined and detained peasants. If the harvest was poor, the peasantry faced 'the prospect of starvation'.⁸² Religious endowments provided important assistance to a small category of 'ulama, the high-ranking, the judges and *sayyids* alike. This may explain how the grievances of the lower classes found expression in popular Safavid poetry and proverbs ranging from sarcasm, comic critiques to outright denunciation of the *mujtahids*. Much of the popular lore and Sufi literature highlights the discontent with the religious officials and *mullahs* which blurs at times the social origins and political roots of this discontent. One need only turn to references to bribe taking, and abuse of power, which seemed to

have intensified in the mid seventeenth century CE as one way to earn a living among low ranking clerics and even distinguished ones at the religious courts. In poetry and proverbs alike, common Persians challenged the integrity of different groups of *'ulama* and satirized their commitment to God's law:

The *mohtaseb* is a thief and the *qadi* a bribe taker
 The *sheikh al-eslam* is a devil, the *mollah* a miserable wretch
 In hell they make *boghra* soup
 Which is waiting for the *sheikh* and the *mollah*.⁸³

Similar depictions surfaced about low-ranking clerics, the *mullahs*. Thus:

Keep a wary eye in front of you for a woman
 behind you for a mule
 and from every direction for a *mulla*.⁸⁴

Also telling of one of the popular images of a cleric is the proverb, 'Two cannot enter the heavens: the bread of the *mullah* and the Qalandar's prayer'.⁸⁵

The religious dignitaries who received land grants and immunities were to remain a subtle but constant menace to the state's centralization goals and sovereignty. In a rather complex manner, the very process that forced the monarchs to manipulate the judicial domain to achieve greater legitimacy created the historical conditions to undermine the monarchs and the Safavid state. Notwithstanding, the high-ranking and ambitious *'ulama* were not in a position to become independent of the state or to force their particular vision and goals on it without accommodating and servicing the sovereign or/and the influential ministers.

The New Ornament in the Crown. Khalifa Sultan

Mir 'Ala' al-Din Husayn, known as Khalifa Sultan (d. 1064AH/1654CE) and nicknamed Sultan al-'Ulama, succeeded Saru Taqi as grand vizier in 1054AH/1645CE. Earlier, under Shah 'Abbas, he also served as a prime minister between 1624CE and 1632CE. Khalifa Sultan grew up as a sayyid in Isfahan but his family came originally from Mazandaran.⁸⁶ His 'impeccable' financial records/registers revealed his mastery in accountancy and helped secure his appointment to the office of grand vizier. Khalifa Sultan's father was the 'incumbent in the office of *sadr*' at the time of Shah Tahmasb. He was self-sufficient and used his personal money to assist his students and relatives. Added to these professional traits and *siyada* pedigree were Khalifa Sultan's marital ties to the Safavid royal family. His chronogram establishes him as the Shah's son-in-law and the 'new ornament in the crown'.⁸⁷

A distinguished student of Baha'i, Khalifa Sultan, drew upon the heritage of Shi'ite legalism and the curriculum of the Persian literati, namely philosophy, dogmatic theology, medicine and mathematics.⁸⁸ The 'fountain of the knowledge of Gnostic philosophers' and the reinstator of Muhammad's sacred law (*shari'at-i Muhammadi*), Khalifa Sultan was a new clerical breed who was claimed by both conventional jurists and philosophers alike.⁸⁹ Once a grand vizier, he strove to institute 'proper' religious observances, presenting himself as a religious scholar much in tune with juridical Islam. He composed a commentary on *Al-Rawda al-Bahiyya* of al-Shahid al-Thani, entitled *Al-Zahrat al-Dhawiyya fi Sharh al-Rawda al-Bahiyya*, which gained wide circulation.⁹⁰ Khalifa Sultan's succession to the grand vizierate in place of Saru Taqi was an exercise in patrimonial politics, a practical shuffling of ranks among the major power groups in a manner that would offer the Shah new ways to assert his sovereignty. Meanwhile, the Shah's refrain from appointing an Armenian, Georgian or Circassian for the post following Saru Taqi's assassination at least temporarily diffused the dissatisfaction of the Qizilbash.⁹¹ Floor noted, however, that the Shah turned against the Qizilbash conspirators soon after. His approval of the murder of Saru Taqi, and his elimination of the murderers after that, proved highly beneficial to his position, both politically and economically.⁹² Notwithstanding, the Shah could not maneuver these conflicts or control them without recourse to influential social groups at court. As such, it is not surprising that the Shah, to counterbalance his support for the assassination of Saru Taqi and later that of his assassins, tried to restore the loyalty of his military, paying those 'who had not received their wages for some time' 100,000 *tumans*, and extended valuable presents to the high-ranking officers.⁹³

Under Shah 'Abbas II, the administrative-clerical group to which Khalifa Sultan belonged became a force to reckon with. Increasingly, the members of this administrative-clerical upper class came to represent and speak for normative Shi'ism. The latter now meant giving validity to overlapping and multiple ventures toward salvation, central to which remained the *shari'a*. Khalifa Sultan was keen on making public knowledge his onslaught on all signs of religious 'deviance' and 'immorality', ranging from brothels to certain forms of entertainment. But wine drinking was widespread at court and only occasionally did Khalifa Sultan succeed in suppressing it, which shows that legal moralism was mainly a tool for public order.⁹⁴

Khalifa Sultan seemed to have slowed or halted the domestic economic policies of Saru Taqi, thus accommodating Qizilbash concerns. Provincial governors including the Qizilbash seemed the most likely supporters of Khalifa Sultan. As such, it is safe to extrapolate that they praised his lack of 'severity' and 'arrogance' and above all his willingness 'to make allowances'.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, inter-elite and intra-elite struggles and shifting alliances at court ensued. The administrative-clerical notables seemed united with the Qizilbash in their resentment toward the powerful *ghulaman*. This can be attested in the way they protested against the Shahs' admission of Christians into the Safavid bureaucracy.⁹⁶ The intra-elite struggle between the administrative-clerical notables and the *ghulaman* is illustrated in the

rivalry between Khalifa Sultan and Allahverdi Khan, the Armenian *ghulam* who became master of the hunt (*amir shikarbashi*) in 1053AH/1644CE, a year before Khalifa Sultan became grand vizier. As soon as Khalifa Sultan died, Allahverdi, trying to counteract an intrusion of another administrator-cleric into the court, supported Muhammad Beg, another *ghulam*, for the vacant post. Apparently, the diverse elites did not act cohesively or systematically as stable entities of internal group solidarity. Rather, intra-elite and inter-elite competitions and alliances fluctuated and changed as they continued to influence court politics.

Khalifa Sultan succeeded in shaping the empire's politics for some time. So powerful did he become that the Shah eventually removed him from office and blinded his two distinguished sons lest they aspire to overcome the Safavid successor to the throne.⁹⁷ The Shah also removed Mirza Rafi' al-Din Muhammad from the *sadarat* and Talib Khan from the vizierate. Khalifa Sultan's children were blinded along with those of Mirza Rafi' al-Din Muhammad and Mirza Muhsin the *mutavalli sarkar fayd athar*, in 1039AH.⁹⁸ The *sadarat* was given to Khalil, the son of Mirza Habibullah, during the same year. Yet this did not deter the Shah from making use again of Khalifa Sultan's expertise, which revealed the increasing contradictions and tensions in the Shah-vizier relationship. On the one hand, it attests to the increasing importance and usefulness of the grand vizier to the Shah, but points equally to the latter's decreasing sense of security and fear of such a political magnate.

The Penniless 'Amili Pilgrim and the Glory that Was

Khalifa Sultan's social standing and political influence marked the demise of the once prominent émigré jurists. Khalifa Sultan emerged as a spokesman for the propertied and pedigreed Persian clerical elite. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-'Amili, also known as 'Ali al-Shahidi, expressed the sentiments of the old elite that had become marginalized. In 1075AH/1664CE, 'Ali refuted Khalifa Sultan's commentary on his grandfather's work, *Al-Rawda al-Bahiyya*.⁹⁹ Most scholars of the time agreed that 'Ali expressed great fanaticism and argued in the 'worst possible manner' against Khalifa Sultan. 'Ali accused Khalifa Sultan of lacking the scholarly ability to appraise *Al-Rawda*.¹⁰⁰

Intellectually, 'Ali presented himself as a 'mainstream' jurist who rejected the eclecticism of Khalifa Sultan and considered it a flaw. In contrast to Khalifa Sultan, 'Ali was of modest economic means and deprived of royal recognition or favors. 'Ali admitted that one day, after he had decided to travel from Isfahan to Mecca, he started secretly to sell some of his books to furnish the means for his trip. On the following day, a eunuch by the name of Khwaja Iltifat, who was in the service of Zeinab Begum, the daughter of Shah Tahmasb, inquired whether 'Ali al-Shahidi was actually selling his books.¹⁰¹ Khwaja Iltifat explained that Zeinab Begum asked him: 'Is there a man in this city by the name of Shaykh 'Ali, a descendant of Shaykh Zayn al-Din [al-Shahid al-Thani]?' When Iltifat confirmed it, she said:

Tonight I saw in a dream Shah 'Abbas the Great saying a statement to the effect that: This man ['Ali al-Shahidi] comes to our country [out of his own will] when his forefathers whom we summoned to us had declined. How did he reach such a state that he is forced to sell his books while you [Zeinab] are present?¹⁰²

This dismal picture of 'Ali's conditions presents a stark contrast to the shimmer and flare of the lives of the early émigrés of Jabal 'Amil. 'Ali lamented the years he spent in the land of 'estrangement', Persia, 'broken-hearted, having obtained nothing but remorse'.¹⁰³ A short while after Khalifa Sultan's death, 'Ali would write, as if to an Arab audience, that 'a noble virtuous Persian, Khalifa Sultan' undertook the study of the works of al-Shahid al-Thani and Hasan, his son. He explained how much Khalifa Sultan esteemed 'Amili scholars reflecting:

I heard that Shaykh Hasan died during his composition of *Al-Muntaqa* and *Al-Ma'alim*. Possessed of a great intellect and [excellent] verification, it is not surprising that he would die while exerting his mind in their composition.¹⁰⁴

On the one hand, 'Ali seemed gratified that someone of the stature of Khalifa Sultan had paid homage to his grandfather Hasan, the author of *Al-Ma'alim*. On the other hand, he hoped to show that Khalifa Sultan was a beneficiary of his ancestors.

The stability of the empire and the secure position of Shi'ism, a century and a half after the Safavids came to power, alongside the absorption of clerical Islam by new substrata among the Persian elite, not to mention middle and lower social echelons, caused the waning of 'Ali's conventional group of jurists and scholarly pilgrims. He was outraged, as the court of Shah 'Abbas II became a meeting place for philosophically bent 'ulama and artists, as well as dervishes. 'Ali disavowed traditionalists (*akhbaris*) including Sufi-bent scholars such as Muhsin al-Fayd Kashani (d. 1091AH/1680CE) who received ample recognition from Shah 'Abbas II.¹⁰⁵ 'Ali's social frustrations in turn took the form of theological exhortations against the 'weak' commitment to the *shari'a* among his contemporaries and 'laxity' in religious observances in Persian society. Such flippancy in the treatment of the sacred law was, he noted, part of an intentional campaign to degrade its rank and 'diminish its influence'.¹⁰⁶ He considered the Shah responsible for this state of affairs and blamed 'obeisant Shi'ites', who had vindicated the abusers of the *shari'a* and treated them as God-fearing people. Denouncing the Sufis and the Sufi-bent 'ulama, he proclaimed that their falsifications had passed unnoticed by the great majority. He saw how 'the old and the young' took up Sufi ways, a reality facilitated by the:

careless cultivation of the religious sciences [on behalf of the Sufi bent clerics], which are the means they used to obtain sublime ranks.¹⁰⁷

In essence, 'Ali felt that clerical expertise was simply a cloak which some had donned to attain court religious posts and royal favors. A great challenge for 'Ali had now

fomented in this new clerical elite of philosophically bent and Sufi-bent *'ulama* who had encroached on the jurists' terrain that was decades ago walked by 'licensed' legalists. Nowhere is 'Ali's sense of being ousted more clear than in his 'Second Advise' where he prays that the Shah:

will remain successful in following the path of his forefathers, and past ancestors who exerted their efforts in defending this pure *shari'a* and the splendid monotheistic community.¹⁰⁸

His exhortations betrayed his fear that the Shah might defect from the right path and weaken his religious community under the influence of those who hold 'a corrupt faith'.¹⁰⁹

New Contenders in the Vizierate Ranks

When Shah 'Abbas II ascended the throne in May 1052AH/1642CE, it was clear that the folk Sufi observances had become a thing of the past. Since he was thirteen years old, the affairs of the state devolved upon his court officials, the most prominent of whom was his grand vizier Muhammad Beg, an Armenian from Tabriz.¹¹⁰ It was only at a much later stage in his rule that the Shah endeavored to regain his mastery, only to retreat to chronic drinking and pastime hunting.¹¹¹

Muhammad Beg was a *ghulam* who moved up in rank and secured a place in the upper class. As the *ghulaman* achieved positions of distinction and faced inter-elite struggles, so they faced intra-*ghulam* competitions exemplified in the rivalry between Muhammad Beg and 'Ali Khan. Upon his appointment as *ghulam-i Khassseh-yi*, Muhammad Beg received around one thousand royal Tabrizi *tumans*. The Shah also issued decrees for *Beglerbegis* and high-ranking *emirs* to receive the financial management of the provinces.¹¹²

The office of Muhammad Beg was associated with a phase of forced conversion to Islam and the persecution of Persian Jews and Armenians in Isfahan and other parts of the empire beginning in 1656CE.¹¹³ Since this question has been investigated by a number of historians, most notably Vera Moreen, I will highlight its overall character and add a few observations on the historical factors shaping this episode of Safavid history. Erza Spicehandler suggested that a decline in positive political relations with European powers after the weakening of the Ottoman threat gave way to a zealous policy of persecution of minorities.¹¹⁴ This view, however, leaves many questions unanswered. On the one hand, the Shahs allowed the existing Christian European missions in Persia to resume their activities without any restrictions. On the other hand, it is unclear how Persian Jews could be unambiguously identified with Europe and European interests. The answer has to be sought in the internal history of the empire at the time and the concerns of the central bureaucracy.

Persian Jewish and Christian European sources disagree on who the actual enactor of a policy of suppression and forced conversion was. Persian Jewish sources

considered Muhammad Beg to be the primary culprit and perceived the Shah to be only indirectly involved in the persecution; Moreen argued that Muhammad Beg was the actual architect of this policy.¹¹⁵ Rudi Matthee, however, introduces another dimension to this debate as he asserts that it was Khalifa Sultan, rather than Muhammad Beg, who instigated this anti-Jewish campaign over a relatively short period of time. The campaign contained 'all the elements of a ritual cleansing, an attempt at purification by a functionary anxious to establish his credentials upon taking office'.¹¹⁶ Indeed, there is evidence that Khalifa Sultan subscribed to such a policy, which reflected a convergence of the interests of a number of courtiers and the grand vizier. It is doubtful, however, whether anti-Jewish and even anti-Armenian measures were primarily motivated by clerical adversity. Meanwhile, most sources establish that the state-initiated conversions to Islam used, first, material motives and, second, coercive measures demanding internalization of Shi'ism and not simply outward expression of the faith. Thus, there is a mention of paying two *tumans* for converts in addition to exemptions from poll tax (*jizya*), which lured several Jews in and outside Isfahan to convert to Islam.¹¹⁷ Several Armenians, particularly males, converted to Islam because this alone would allow them to inherit their fathers' property.¹¹⁸

Quite accurately, Moreen cautions against considering the Shi'ite belief about the 'impurity' of the Jews as the motivator for the persecutions, and noted that references to such 'impurity' in the Safavid chronicle *Abbasnameh* conceals economic considerations and rivalries.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, it is difficult to discern the nature of such rivalries from the surviving sources. It is useful to add that Persian Zoroastrians – who were also branded as 'impure', in addition to being 'infidels' – did not seem to suffer the same fate as the Jews of Isfahan.¹²⁰ We also know that sovereigns and viziers alike have occasionally bent ideal religious rules with respect to non-Muslims whenever they had a keen political and pragmatic interest in doing so. For instance, on the basis of Shi'ite law, a convert to Islam can still claim the inheritance of his/her non-Muslim parents. Yet, to counteract this law, several Armenians sold their property to a Muslim judge who then sold it to that person's children.¹²¹ In other instances, the state raised no objections when the Carmelites baptized 3,000 Shi'ite Persian children, who were taken by their parents to the missionaries to be cured for various illnesses.¹²²

There is no reference to any leading cleric or *shaykh al-Islam* providing a theological or ideological endorsement of Muhammad Beg's policy toward the Jews and Armenians. Muhammad Beg, who had competed against clerical bureaucrats who aspired to occupy his rank, ordered a number of low-ranking *mullahs* to instruct the converts in the tenets of the Shi'ite faith after their conversion.¹²³ The *sadr*, though not a clerical authority himself, was the administrator of religious affairs, and as such must have had a say in this policy. The *sadr* seemed to have clarified to Muhammad Beg that Muslim law does not permit conversion to Islam by force. He did not attempt, however, to obstruct the actions of the grand vizier.¹²⁴ One concludes that, in reality, it was not the clerical community or the Shi'ite clergy who expedited

this policy, but rather a branch of the administrative elite at the court for reasons that remain largely obscure.

In 1072AH/1661CE, Muhammad Beg was succeeded by Mirza Muhammad Mahdi, the son of Habibullah the *sadr* and a great grandson of al-Karaki. Mirza Muhammad's family was known for its administrative-clerical expertise. For over ten years prior to his appointment to the *sadarat*, Mirza Muhammad served as *sadr-i mamalik*. Evidently, this clerical-administrative subgroup forged marital ties with members of their own group and with the royal family. In 1060AH/1651CE, Mirza Muhammad Mahdi's son, Mirza Ma'sum, married the daughter of Khalifa Sultan while his other son Mirza Muhammad Ja'far married the granddaughter of 'Isa Khan Sheikhavand, the grandson of Ma'sum Beg Safavi, a descendant of a collateral line of the Safavid royal family.¹²⁵ He married a sister of Shah 'Abbas the Great. During the latter's late reign, 'Isa Khan became the chief of the king's guards, the *qurchi-bashi*.¹²⁶ He was mentioned among the *emirs* and prominent state officials who were present upon the death of Shah 'Abbas. As a military official and central government figure, 'Isa Khan was responsible for appointing *qurchis* (the king's guards) and determining their salaries.¹²⁷ The *mustawfi* and grand vizier had to consult with him on questions dealing with the finances of these guards.¹²⁸ Floor noted that after the 1630sCE the *qurchi-bashi* had 'indeed become the most important state official'. He oversaw the ascent of Shah Safi to the throne by blocking the candidacy of a member of his own family branch, a Sheikhavand.¹²⁹ But, more so than Khalifa Sultan, who was related by marriage to the royal family, 'Isa Khan belonged to the Safavi family and his power grew beyond the function of his office which sufficiently threatened the new monarch whom he helped put on the throne.¹³⁰ After his return from Baghdad to Isfahan, Shah Safi had him executed along with his children in 1042AH/1632CE.¹³¹

The Shah disapproved of a number of the actions carried out by Mohammad Beg and may have grown suspicious of his ambitions and increasing power. He shifted his support to another substratum within the elite, even if it meant supporting a less able vizier.¹³² As such, against his demonstrated incompetence, Muhammad Mahdi, who had a clerical-bureaucratic background, became grand vizier until his death eight years later. Evidently, the Dutch officials found Muhammad Mahdi apathetic and inefficient, complaining to the Shah, 'that none of his courtiers measured up to Mohammad Beg'.¹³³

Akhbarism. The Challenge to Interpretive Rationalism

The transformation of the state, and the complexity of its new structure and the social conflicts and economic pressures occurring from below, necessitated a revisiting of interpretive rationalism as the character of state-supported clerical leadership. Even if the direct material and social basis for traditionism is no longer discernable or difficult to retrieve from the sources, traditionism as a set of ideas could not have emerged in a historical vacuum without social and material

dimensions. In other worlds, traditionism cannot be understood as an internal juridical affair within the clerical community divorced of social, political and economic forces shaping Safavid society at the time.¹³⁴

During the mid seventeenth century CE, scholars who invested a measure of *ijtihad* came to be known as *usulis* or rationalists who used reason to interpret the Islamic sources and evaluate the foundational Shi'ite traditions. No clear political-legal boundaries between a 'traditionist', now labeled an *akhbari*, and a 'rationalist' jurist existed before the Safavid period. A number of Safavid theologians expressed discontent with the methods of the 'late' scholars, meaning the post-thirteenth-century CE ones. Al-'Allama al-Hilli and his followers, the two Shahids and al-Karaki, seemed to fall into the category of the 'late scholars'. They used rational arguments to discredit certain accounts in Shi'ite *hadith* or exclude them as basis for legal action. 'Abdullah b. Husayn al-Tustari (d. 1021AH/1612CE) for one, was among the earliest Safavid scholars to promote Shi'ite Tradition as an independent source of legal knowledge and practice.¹³⁵ In *Safinat al-Najat*, Muhammad Amin Astarabadi (d. 1036AH/1626–27CE) offers the first comprehensive critique of the late scholars and a denunciation of *ijtihadi* Shi'ism.¹³⁶ He declared the *mujtahids* to be beyond the pale of Shi'ism and condemned them to a state of eternal damnation.¹³⁷ Astarabadi's views, however, did not initiate traditionism or for that matter lead to an immediate ascendancy of traditionism in the Safavid society. Rather, Astarabadi's thought was the culmination of growing social contradictions, which found an early intellectual expression and explication at the time of Shah 'Abbas. As such, traditionism finds its social origins in the late sixteenth century CE, albeit as a latent anti-rationalist disposition. It would take at least half a century for this precipitous legal-political resistance to rationalism to find a suitable habitat and thus attain numerous converts.¹³⁸ As such, complete works espousing or refuting Astarabadi's views surface in the mid seventeenth century CE. Among the 'Amilis, Nur al-Din, 'Ali b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn al-Musawi al-'Amili, the brother of Sahib al-Madarik (d. 1062AH or 1068AH), devoted *Al-Shawahid al-Makiyya fi Madahid Hujaj al-Khayalat al-Madaniyya* to the refutation of Astarabadi.¹³⁹ He dedicated his work to the sultan Qutbshah. Another 'Amili descendant, Husyan b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki (d. 1076AH/1665CE), on the other hand, wrote *Hidayat al-Abrar ila Tariq al-'Imma al-Athar* in support of traditionism.

Distinct political and economic conditions nurtured this scholarly rift between rationalism and traditionism and encouraged the state's support for traditionists. Unfortunately, the available historical sources do not illuminate the full scope of these conditions from below, which shaped the legal-political ideology against rationalism. Until a full knowledge of how other sectors of society, particularly the working groups, particularly the peasants, the low-ranking tradesmen and the craftsmen, shaped the forces leading to the *usuli-akhbari* controversy and, ultimately, *akhbari* popularity, the picture remains incomplete. Here, I will juxtapose traditionism against the state's outlook and its approach toward its subjects, and relations with the clerical community and the Persian aristocracy.

During the Safavid period, the traditionist discourse drew a strict separation between the 'early' founders of *hadith* scholarship and those labeled the 'late' Shi'ite scholars predominantly of the sixteenth century CE. In that century, Hasan, the son of al-Shahid al-Thani, noted in *Ma'alim al-Din* that Twelver Shi'ite traditionists relied exclusively on the *ahad* (transmitted by one authority) traditions traced to the Imams while the rationalists like Abu Ja'far al-Tusi and others accepted them in general. No one denied them except al-Murtada and his followers.¹⁴⁰ Hasan as such recognized differences among the 'old' scholars themselves in terms of their approbation of traditions. The difference between the traditionist and rationalist trends seems, at the time of Hasan, to be still a matter of degree rather than quality. Defining the conflict as one between the 'old' founders and the 'new' is one deliberately invested by seventeenth-century traditionism to show that *ijtihad* was a deviation from the fundamentals of Shi'ite jurisprudence as conveyed by the Shi'ite founders, who were the closest to the times of the Imams. A cognate to this position, is accusing *ijtihadi* scholarship to be diversionary due to its appropriation of Sunnite legal inference. In fact, the interdependence and linkage between traditionist and rationalist trends was characteristic of the history of Shi'ite jurisprudence and positive law.

This interdependence is evident in the fact that scholars disagreed on which of the founding fathers and their students actually utilized *ijtihad* in the evaluation of traditions, and to what extent. For instance, Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki, an émigré 'Amili traditionist, argued that al-Shaykh al-Tusi was mistakenly considered a *mujtahid* of sorts. Al-Tusi composed the work *Al-Mabsut* on positive law in which he showed how each legal area can be traced to the Imamate Tradition. Husayn argued that al-Tusi followed the method of the early Shi'ite scholars, the *akhbaris*, and did not practice *ijtihad*.¹⁴¹ Seventeenth-century Safavid society provided the seminal social phase for the polarization of the two legal methods. The traditionists reassessed Shi'ite juridical scholarship of their times concluding that it failed to conform to the original, and 'authentic', traditions of the Imams as imparted by the founding fathers. This newly interwoven traditionist discourse centered around a 'return' to original sources, and placed restrictions ranging from caution to total prohibition on the use of *ijtihad*. The discourse also showed that Shi'ite jurists disagreed on who actually used proto-*ijtihadi* or *ijtihadi* approaches to the traditions now projected backwards.

The traditionist school declared its rejection of the use of interpretive analysis and rational arguments to appraise the law or derive legal rulings. Astarabadi, who represented the extreme voice of traditionism, found fault in the *mujtahids'* use of Aristotelian logic in legal inference.¹⁴² Several traditionists claimed to adhere to the direct sources of Shi'ite traditions. As such, in its extreme position, *akhbarism* endorsed what is enjoined by traditions and prohibited anything not mentioned in them. Notwithstanding, one cannot simply take these proclamations of the *akhbaris* at face value. A close look at the works of traditionists shows that only the very puritanical among them could truly function as legal consultants for their

communities or become *shuyukh al-Islam* without a measure of rational approbation and reasoning. Subsequently, one is led to believe that traditionists were themselves a mix, the majority of whom simply hoped to limit rather than eliminate rationalist interpretation.

Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki lamented scholarly dissension, which characterized his times, concerning questions of jurisprudence and religion.¹⁴³ He used the terms *akhbariyyun* and *usuliyyun* as two discernable camps with political-legal features that sets them apart from their counterparts in the pre-Safavid period. The devil (*iblis*), Husayn proclaimed, had led astray righteous and wise scholars who fell prey to discord on questions of imitation (*taqlid*) and *ijtihad*. The rationalists and traditionists have exceeded all bounds in accusing anyone who opposed their opinions of error. Their 'tribalism' and 'love of leadership' had blinded and deafened them. Husayn felt it necessary to clarify the views of the early Shi'ite scholars around which the rift between the two legal schools emerged. He confirmed that central to the *usuli-akhbari* controversy was the validity of *ijtihad*.¹⁴⁴ The root of the controversy rested on the fact that the late Shi'ite scholars (including al-Shahid al-Thani) indiscriminately scrutinized on the basis of reason, *hadith* accounts, collected and collated by the early Shi'ite scholars. Al-Shahid al-Thani concluded that all accounts transmitted by one authority lead to doubt (*zann*), and proposed instead that only traditions related by a just Imami can be upheld. Husayn felt that this rationalist approbation of such traditions had done disservice to Shi'ites by way of minimizing the authoritative position of the early scholars and the traditions.¹⁴⁵ Husayn blamed the rationalists for disregarding the method of the older scholars who accepted and applied rulings based on these accounts. He attributed the mishaps of the late scholars to the 'influence' of Sunnite works of jurisprudence and positive law. Sunnism, he noted, made the rationalists move further away from Imamism and contradict its tenets as laid down in the traditions preserved by the founding fathers.

Husayn argued that Muhammad, the author of *Madarik*, and Hasan, the son of al-Shahid al-Thani, along with Baha'i all revived the debate on accounts transmitted by one authority and found some fault in the late scholars' disregard for these accounts. Yet, he noted that they 'did not dare openly oppose' the late scholars!¹⁴⁶ This clearly points to the political ascendancy of the *ijtihadi* trend under Safavid rule during the sixteenth century CE, mostly formulated and advocated by the 'Amilis. Another group of scholars, however, followed the lead of Muhammad, Hasan and Baha'i during the seventeenth century, openly siding with the early scholars and validating their accounts and, finally, rejecting *ijtihad* 'categorically'. Husayn found the third group too extremist in its position on *ijtihad* because it denied the use of reason in any shape or form even under certain restrictions the way the earlier scholars used it. Evidently, an uncompromising *akhbari* group clashed openly with the followers of the late scholars, the *mujtahids*.¹⁴⁷

Even though Husayn believed traditions must be a foundation for legal action, he did not agree that all *ahad* traditions should be accepted. Only those meeting certain conditions could be implemented, such as having a trustworthy transmitter

even if he was non-Shi'ite, and have the tradition corroborated by a Shi'ite in cases where the original transmitter of the tradition was not a Shi'ite. Husayn lists among the conditions for accepting an *ahad* tradition its agreement with reason, thus advancing a moderate traditionalist position.¹⁴⁸ Given the long association of 'Amili scholarship with *ijtihadi* thought, it is noteworthy to find Husayn support an *akhbari* position, albeit a moderate one. Yet, like other traditionalists, Husayn tried to find within 'Amili scholarship support for an emerging traditionalist position. Husayn noted for instance that Hasan, the son of al-Shahid al-Thani, and Baha'i validated fully the four books of *Al-Kafi*, *Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih*, *Al-Tahdhib* and *Al-Istibsar* as being derived from the original sources. Unlike the claims of the late scholars, these works, Husayn stated, were well edited and honed.¹⁴⁹ Husayn also assessed the development at the hands of Shi'ite scholars of the science of *diraya*, which investigates the content of the *hadith*, and its chain of transmission to determine which accounts can be accepted or rejected. Originally expounded by Sunnite jurists, *diraya* was, in Husayn's view, of little benefit in Imami jurisprudence because the accounts are derived from the Imams who are a prophetic source of guidance.¹⁵⁰ Based on this, there can be no real contradiction among accounts except where Shi'ite scholars were forced to practice precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyya*).¹⁵¹ Ultimately, he condemned *ijihad* as an emulation of Sunnite legal methodology and attributed *akhbarism* to an 'authentic', 'quintessential' Imamism.

A number of observations can be made on Husayn's exposition. First, the traditionalists wanted to restore the authoritative position and supreme validity of foundational traditions/texts over reason. In other words, they wanted juridical history and contemporary social concerns to conform to the foundational texts rather than to make the foundational texts amenable and thus open to reinterpretation and expansion on the basis of new and changing historical reality. It is on this basis that *ijihad* as a rationalist measure for evaluating traditions becomes a center of contention.¹⁵² Husayn clearly referred to the 'love for leadership' and corruption of power, as motives for the *usuli-akhbari* rivalry. Indirectly, this was an incrimination of the *mujtahids*, who dominated religious posts around his time. Second, traditionalists also hoped to curtail the political influence of numerous *mujtahids* with titles like 'the jurisconsult of the age', 'the seal of jurisconsults' and others who claimed exclusive legal-political rights in imparting Shi'ite doctrine and administering its central rituals. Third, the denunciation of rationalism as a Sunnite creation must not be taken at face value. Rationalists themselves also accused *akhbarism* of wholesale Sunnism. For both groups, accusations of Sunnism were part of the discourse of declaring the other group to be 'unauthentic' and far from the spirit of Shi'ite jurisprudence. Appropriations from Sunnism to Shi'ism were not the actual source of the conflict. Fourth, and as the succeeding work here will show, leading Arab 'Amili scholars adopted *akhbarism* and promoted its tenets much like their Persian counterparts. No ethnic or cultural distinctions seem relevant to this controversy.

When Perfectly Able Arabs Fall Prey to *Akhbarism*

In his polemical work *Al-Siham al-Mariqa min Aghrad al-Zanadiqa* (*Stray Arrows of the Infidels' Stratagems*), 'Ali al-Shahidi attested to the threat which traditionism started to pose as an alternative clerical worldview to rationalism, characterized by selective appropriations of Sunnite beliefs, alongside philosophical and Sufi precepts. 'Ali would write that the wrongdoers and those who committed abominable acts from among Shi'ite scholars 'in the manner of Sunnite scholars', lost credibility.¹⁵³ Conventional jurists like 'Ali and Mawla Muhammad Tahir Qummi were outraged; Shah Safi commissioned a translation of *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali from Arabic into Persian.¹⁵⁴ They expressed fears of intellectual Sunnism and its resurgence among Shi'ite scholars. Accusations of defecting from the true foundations of Shi'ism in favor of Sunnism were, however, part of intra-scholarly politics and conflicts.¹⁵⁵

'Ali went to great length to discredit Muhammad Amin Astarabadi for presumably drawing upon Sunnite legal concepts inspired by al-Ghazali's *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*. 'Ali denounced Astarabadi's defamation of *mujtahids* and the tarnishing of their reputation by accusations of infidelity.¹⁵⁶ 'Ali found Astarabadi's knowledge in religious sciences wanting and his ability at comprehending the '*ulama's* legal questions doubtful. He accused him of using opium and other drugs, and lamented the fact that numerous simpletons embraced his views.¹⁵⁷

'Ali was most disconcerted by Astarabadi's popularity, 'especially [among] the Arabs'. He questioned Astarabadi's appraisal of Shi'ite scholars like al-Shaykh al-Tusi, noting that only a person who is not familiar with al-Tusi's works, or who is not an Arab, could have arrived at such erroneous conclusions. In another instance, 'Ali argued that only those who knew the true meaning of Arabic terms and the figurative speech in the Qur'an, or who spoke Arabic, would know that one tradition gave Twelver Shi'ites exclusive access to religious knowledge and the interpretation of the scriptures and the Tradition.¹⁵⁸ Arab ethnicity was utilized by 'Ali to boost his status vis-à-vis Astarabadi and other influential yet rivaling Persian scholars, whom he accused of possessing an inferior knowledge of Arabic. Evidently, several Arab theologians, particularly from Bahrain, joined Astarabadi in his denunciation of *ijtihad*, which explains why 'Ali tried to interject ethnic tensions into the traditionist camp and to weaken the opposition to conventional *mujtahids* like himself.¹⁵⁹

Based on an investigation of the ideas of Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki and 'Ali al-Shahidi and some data provided by Safavid chronicles, one can make the following observations about the socio-political background and implications of the revival of traditionism. Within the direct legal framework, traditionism challenged the epistemic foundation of *ijtihadi* scholarship, its very basis of knowledge and its application of this knowledge in positive law. Traditionism aimed to discredit and restrict knowledge derived on the basis of reason claiming that such knowledge is invalid and unnecessary in place where tradition (*naql*), transmitted in foundational texts, is established. In political terms, this was

especially useful for the state at a time when, first, its authority was increasingly shared by competing and diverse strata of the elite and, second, when it faced intensified economic hardships and dissent among the working peoples and lower classes. Interpretive rationalism, at least potentially encouraged humans to reject blind emulation and conformity to established norms and practices. Rather, it supported the use of human reasoning, even within particular legal limits, to arrive at an informed opinion. State espousal of *ijtihadi* Shi'ism was a tool for internal discipline and external legitimacy. The earliest exponents of *ijtihadi* Shi'ism were émigré scholars with few ties to any of the contending parties of Persia, and as such were incapable yet of posing a serious challenge to the state. As the Safavid state underwent transformation so did its ideological resources. Thus, if interpretive rationalism served a militant expanding empire in the sixteenth century CE, which claimed Shi'ism as its religious identity, then traditionism seemed more suitable for a religiously stable empire with modest military goals and erosion in the power of its monarchs. Traditionism, which promoted a literal, 'homogenous' and somewhat blind following on the part of the common person to the written word, limited, at least theoretically, the diversification of legal opinions and as such the multiplicity of legal authorities. Traditionism also seemed a mechanism to suppress popular anti-Safavid sentiments and political dissent. This school of thought seemed more suitable for a transitory political state of mid seventeenth century CE Persia. The monarchs Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II did not merely lose power to court officials, particularly grand viziers, but also faced the ambitions of a clerical elite of *mujtahids* par excellence. At first glance, it seems as if the promotion of traditionism at the hands of a new stratum of the aristocracy would reverse the threat of a juristic-based political ascendancy. As will become clear in the last chapter, state alliances with traditionist aristocrats proved only temporarily beneficial to monarchs like Shah 'Abbas II and Shah Suleiman. The Persian aristocrats also found traditionism attractive because they seemed more closely involved in state decisions during this period. Traditionism restricted claimants to *ijtilhad* and upward climbers from lower social strata. As such, *akhbarism* became an intra-elite and an inter-elite affair at once. Unfortunately, we are in the dark as to the spread of traditionism among scholars outside the aristocracy and their motives.

Heterodox and Sufi spokesmen were not the only sectors of Persian society to seriously challenge the *mujtahids* and question their authority and integrity. This explains the contradictory popular images and representations of religious experts, be they the *shaykh al-Islam* or the *mullah*. A number of theologians saw traditionism as an attempt to restore faith in Shi'ite jurists, and to protest against state validation of *mujtahids* who represented a sort of a clerical aristocracy from the time of Shah Tahmasb until the time of Shah 'Abbas. In the long run, however, whether *akhbari* or *usuli*, Persia's clerical leadership succeeded in recovering important religious and state offices and found new ways of legitimation, which revived and multiplied its utility beyond the waning power of the state. As such, there was no fundamental difference between traditionists and rationalists in

terms of their willingness to service the government during Occultation or expand the political role of the jurist. It was at this juncture that clerical *akhbarism*, embraced by one branch of the Persian aristocracy, found a positive function for the Safavid state. It is also possible that the latter found it expedient to bring in traditionists as a balancing power to the *mujtahids* and fuel their internal divisions. The Persian notables' adoption of traditionist tenets was not motivated by an ethnic rivalry or opposition to 'an Arab' monopoly over clerical leadership in Persia. As I will illustrate below, several leading Arab jurists gave their numbers to *akhbari* ranks and even took extremist positions.

Dissent and the Politics of Friday Prayer

By the time of Shah 'Abbas the Great, leading *'ulama* like Baha'i and Mir Damad were already reluctant to enjoin their fellow Shi'ites to observe Friday prayer during Occultation. The meaning and implications of holding Friday prayer changed decisively at the time of Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II.

An outburst of treatises on Friday prayer, written in Persian, reflected the popularization of the question and likewise its Persianization. From the mid seventeenth century CE, it was no longer possible to talk about Friday prayer in terms of how it would legitimize the state, or verify its Islamic foundations against Ottoman political propaganda, or even enhance the temporal authority of the Safavids. The Shah entertained diverse positions on Friday prayer, which points to the fact that Friday prayer was no longer used as a gauge for ensuring the Islamic 'authenticity' of the Safavid Empire as it once was in the early sixteenth century. Nor was the discussion of the status of Friday prayer confined to a handful of distinguished clerics, mostly Arab. Rather, the struggle over the legal status of Friday prayer changed in content and found its way into the circles of low-ranking clerics as well as philosophically and Sufi-bent scholars.¹⁶⁰ A number of conditions nurtured this development, namely the stable military-political conditions of the empire, the partial loss of power to ministers and key courtiers, the *'ulama's* growing sense of autonomy from the state, and internal elite competition translated into debates over custody of religious life. Meanwhile, Shah 'Abbas II asserted the idea of divine kingship and the Safavid sacred mission; an idea which has always been problematic in Shi'ite political tradition, and which the *mujtahids* vehemently denounced.¹⁶¹ Several scholars, for instance, openly declared that temporal authority belonged not to the Shah but to the *mujtahid* of the time until the return of the Mahdi. The debate over Friday prayer became another platform where *mujtahids* tried to define state morality and ideology. In reaction, the Shahs who already felt their power waning were eager to transfer their support to a new clerical elite or upper-class constituency capable of assuming its formal post. This elite was made of the Sufi-bent and philosophically bent Persian notables. The Shahs built these scholars Sufi *tekkes* and sent them royal favors and privileges. Mulla 'Ali Rida Tajalli, for instance, received *suyurghals* from Shah 'Abbas II.¹⁶²

Far from being anticlerical, or for that matter liberal, the reigns of Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II witnessed an espousal of a reformist clericalism that accepted the amalgamation of 'high' individualized traditions of Gnosticism and Sufism. For instance, Muhammad Baqir Sabzavari (d. 1090AH/1679CE), a propertied notable living in Isfahan, was a philosophically bent scholar who admitted elitist forms of Sufism. He acted as the *shaykh al-Islam* of Isfahan and observed Friday prayer methodically.¹⁶³ Shah 'Abbas II expressed great respect for him. Like Sabzavari, Muhsin al-Fayd (d. 1091AH/1680CE), one of Mulla Sadra's students, was a beneficiary of royal favors.¹⁶⁴ But again, al-Fayd sought to bring philosophical precepts closer to Shi'ite legalism, as such seeking a more subordinate position for reason than the one originally declared by Mulla Sadra. Both Sabzavari and al-Fayd came under attack from conventional jurists like 'Ali al-Shahidi. Al-Fayd upheld only sacred law and illumination (*kashf*) and excluded reason as the core for epistemology.¹⁶⁵ For Mulla Sadra, the epistemological structure rested on a synthesis of the sacred law, illumination, ratiocination, and rational demonstration ('*aql*).¹⁶⁶ With al-Fayd, we witness a rigorous integration of philosophy with Shi'ite orthopraxy. This shows that the Safavid encouragement of Sufi and philosophical trends was calculated and quite distinct from more popular and radical derivatives. This in turn explains how a number of these intellectual hybrids mentioned here opposed the use of interpretive rationalism in the area of jurisprudence and law and endorsed public adherence to the traditions. These contradictions manifest in one and the same body of scholarship, reflect the transitory modes of socio-economic and political contradictions of this period.

Mawlana Khalil Qazvini, favored by Shah 'Abbas II, was not beyond the pale of jurists. A 'combiner of rational and traditional sciences', he wrote a Persian commentary on the canonical Shi'ite *hadith* of Kulini, requested by Shah 'Abbas II. The commentary reflected a predilection toward traditions (*akhbar*) and a personalized venture toward Imamism.¹⁶⁷ Nonetheless, he rejected absolute imitation and permitted *ijtihad* under particular conditions and capability.¹⁶⁸ He was a beneficiary of Baha'i, Mir Damad and Khalifa Sultan's juridical and Gnostic training. Qazvini also frequented the circles of Haj Mahmud Reyati and Mulla Husayn Yazdi. The Shah further acknowledged Mulla Rajab 'Ali Tabrizi, who drew upon Gnostic philosophy.¹⁶⁹ The contradictions in Khalil Qazvini's thought are manifest in his attempt to prohibit Friday prayer while upholding a basic adherence to traditions. Akhund Mirza Shirwani (d. 1098AH/1686CE) and Akhund Muhammad Tunikabuni Sarab, who received equal recognition from Shah 'Abbas II, were philosophically bent jurists.¹⁷⁰ Sarab adhered to the philosophical school of Mulla Rajab 'Ali Tabrizi, which nurtured a conformist attitude toward the government.¹⁷¹ Legalist Shi'ite thought gradually, however, overtook eclecticism. The Peripatetic (*mashsha'i*) and Gnostic schools in the last decades of Safavid rule tended to become more hostile to philosophy and Gnosticism.¹⁷²

Al-Fayd attempted to show around 1057AH/1647CE that a consensus had been reached among Twelver Shi'ites in support of the obligatory observance of Friday

prayer but Mawla Muhammad Amin b. 'Abd al-Wahhab argued against this position and from an equally legal angle.¹⁷³ Mulla Khalil Qazvini (d. 1089AH/1678CE), a Sufi-bent scholar, prohibited the convening of Friday prayer during Occultation.¹⁷⁴ He rejected the growing power of conventional jurists who utilized *ijtihad* to arrive at new legal rulings. Qazvini also opposed al-Fayd's belief in the unity of existence and rejected the Sufi views of Muhammad Taqi Majlisi.¹⁷⁵ Unlike Qazvini, Muhammad Taqi Majlisi (d. 1070AH/1659CE), known as Majlisi the First (*al-Awwal*), who was Sufi bent, believed Friday prayer was obligatory.¹⁷⁶ It is noteworthy that both Muhammad Taqi Majlisi and Mulla Khalil Qazvini, though expressing opposite views on Friday prayer, were highly esteemed by Shah 'Abbas II. In turn, Qazvini and Majlisi I came under attack from conventional clerics of a lower social rank like Mulla Muhammad Tahir Qummi (originally from Shiraz), the *shaykh al-Islam* of Qum. Qummi, a traditionist, observed congregational prayer methodically, chastising the Sufis and deserters of Friday prayer.¹⁷⁷ A leading traditionist from Yazd, Mawla Muhammad Muqim Yazdi was observant of Friday prayer and argued that it was incumbent upon every Shi'ite to observe it during the absence of the Imam.¹⁷⁸ Yazdi's view was a popular position among the traditionists at the time, as it was preponderant among the rationalists to argue in favor of the conditional and voluntary observance of Friday prayer.¹⁷⁹

Overall, most *mujtahids* of the mid and late seventeenth century CE endorsed the convening of Friday prayer under certain conditions, and felt it should be administered within a hierarchical clerical structure by a few rationalists with tools of legal inference and deputyship privileges. Yet, again, it is important to note that *mujtahids* of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries CE held a mix of views, some thinking that convening Friday prayer was not obligatory or necessary during Occultation. The traditionists emphasized its being obligatory and unconditional, as such 'decentering' the jurist in the process and undermining the deputyship of the jurist. Theoretically, traditionism may have seemed to be a precautionary trend against the growth of a monopoly over clerical affairs. In application, however, the power of the jurist was neither forfeited nor weakened under a traditionist leadership. The philosophically bent jurists for the most part denounced the observation of Friday prayer during Occultation as a subtle expression of their challenge to Safavid theocratic claims. It seems that these sentiments were as much part of the elite as of wider social constituencies. Sufi-bent scholars were split on the status of Friday prayer, some embracing it and others upholding the Imamate millennial ideal. The Sufi-bent scholars seemed to be largely drawn from once unrecognized social sectors, or upwardly mobile strata.

The Malaise of the Healer: Jurists on the Defensive

The jurists and the Sufis were constantly drawing upon each other's sources of legitimacy and reconceptualizing Shi'ite precepts. In time, they evolved into heterogeneous and internally differentiated subgroups.¹⁸⁰ In his *Justuju Dar Tasavvuf*

i Iran, 'Abdol Hosein Zarrinkoob argued that the high-ranking '*ulama* of the Safavid court were not opposed to Sufism per se, nor were central Sufi concepts alien to their works and outlook.¹⁸¹ Rather, they were mostly threatened by the popular, radical implications of their socio-economic content. Popular Sufism under the Safavids became a vehicle for political dissent among disadvantaged social sectors, particularly craftsmen in several guilds who challenged the clerical aristocracy and the state by undermining the *shari'a* and expressing defiance to the *mujtahids*.¹⁸² The monarchs closely watched militant Sufis who had the means to lead hundreds in rebellions and destabilize Safavid rule. The term 'Sufi' carried more than one connotation and encompassed variegated references to heresy, which calls for a redefinition of 'extremism'. The latter became euphemistic for acts whose common feature was dissatisfaction with the way political or religious power was exercised after its centralization at the end of the Safavid era.¹⁸³ The conversion of craftsmen to various Sufi *tariqas* led in some instances to a mass conversion of a local or provincial guild associated with him in defiance of the 'formal' Shi'ism of the jurists. The earlier Sunnite *ahl-i futuwaat* emphasized a solid work ethic and avoidance of deceit; traits which gradually blended with the Qalandari branch of the Malamatiyya in a reformist Sufi trend that found special popularity among commoners and *bazaaris*. This furnished an additional dimension to the jurists' discomfort with the Sufis.¹⁸⁴ The Qalandars are a particularly good example. Their disregard for the work ethic of their times, their boastful 'idleness' and turning to beggary earned them the wrath of high-ranking clerics who showered them with accusations of homosexuality and alcohol drinking. As a remnant branch of the Malamatiyya Sufis, 'the people of blame' – who conceal their good deeds and encourage public blame on themselves – the Qalandars discarded the Sufi garb and beard, expressed great cynicism at mainstream social observances, neglect for formalistic religious mannerism and were believed to consume hashish and henbane.¹⁸⁵

Zarrinkoob asserts that the '*ulama*'s opposition to the Sufis, from the time of Shah 'Abbas onward, increased in scope and intensity. In a sour and fervent disdain of the Sufis, Mirza Habibullah the *sadr*, Muhaqqiq Sabzavari, Shaykh 'Ali Kamarahi, Mir Sayyid Ahmad 'Alawi al-'Amili, Mirza Rafi' al-Din Na'ini and others issued legal injunctions proclaiming their depravity and sinfulness.¹⁸⁶ During the early seventeenth century CE, mainstream jurists attacked 'high' traditions of Sufism. Mulla Sadra became the target of their relentless attacks and accusations of heresy. As they forced him out of Isfahan, they felt secure about their indispensability to the monarchs.

In the reigns of Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II, Sufi-bent scholars seemed to have empowered themselves or at least legitimized their positions by co-opting the legal discourse to resituate the normative and break the legalists' hegemony. This posed a clear threat to conventional jurists like 'Ali al-Shahidi. Although Sufism had roots in Jabal 'Amil as reflected in the background of al-Shahidi, it remained a marginal trend within its scholastic-clerical community. A few expressed a general reverence for Sufi masters and a tendency to embrace an austere life. Among these were

Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, his son Baha'i and Mirza Ahmad b. al-Husayn al-'Amili, the brother of Habibullah the *sadr*.¹⁸⁷ Muhammad b. Hasan al-'Amili al-'Aynathi (originally al-'Aynatha'i) (d. after 1081AH/1670CE) showed visible Sufi leanings and was considered among those who performed charismata (*karamat*).¹⁸⁸ A Persian descendant of 'Amili scholars and the *shaykh al-Islam* of Qazvin, namely Muhammad Shafi' b. Baha' al-Din al-Karaki (d. 1125AH/1713CE), found in the rich and colorful milieu of mysticism and philosophy in Persia a source of intellectual stimulation. He expressed vivid interest in the translation and elaboration of the *masnavis* of Jalal al-Din Rumi and attempted to show that Rumi made a favorable appraisal of Twelver Shi'ism.¹⁸⁹

In his *Stray Arrows*, 'Ali al-Shahidi accused the Sufis of undermining Shi'ite sacred law and of expressing contempt toward jurists like him, the administrators of this law.¹⁹⁰ Several Sufis justified their aversion toward the legal sciences through the corruption and incompetence of jurists.¹⁹¹ Openly admitting to the presence of such jurists, 'Ali nonetheless reasoned that the shortcomings of legal experts should not cause one to revoke the sacred law. Only a few had acted irresponsibly or embraced earthly pleasures, and are therein blameworthy. The faith in juridical knowledge is still firm and unwavering. 'Ali made a plea to the members of his own community, the conventional jurists, to protect religious conduct and preserve their faith so that the people can follow their lead. He admitted, however, that only some jurists could be imitated. This statement clearly hints to the erosion in the jurists' authority and the thrust to restrict religious exemplars to few *mujtahids* whom the layperson can emulate.

Like 'Ali al-Shahidi, Ni'matullah al-Jaza'iri (d. 1112AH/1700CE) also embellished the image of the jurist as a 'healer' and anchor of moral ideals. This was a vivid sign of the serious challenge jurists encountered as a result of the proliferation of legal knowledge among diverse intellectual groups. Al-Jaza'iri described the jurist as 'the inheritor of the Prophet and the discharger on behalf of God and his deputy and the tongue that speaks for him'.¹⁹² Above all, the jurist was the 'doctor of religion' who provided the remedy for the patient.¹⁹³ Al-Jaza'iri saw himself as a missionary, a passionate proselyte (*tabligh al-da'wa*) who argued for the necessity of appointing a religious scholar:

for every district, city, town, or shrine to teach its people their religion and distinguish what harms them from what benefits them... the patients with heart diseases cannot know their disease and the man on whose face leprosy appears but has no mirror cannot know his leprosy unless someone else diagnosed it, and that is an obligation for all the *'ulama*. The Sultans must appoint a religious jurist in every village and quarter.¹⁹⁴

But al-Jaza'iri warned that many a religious scholar had fallen ill and had failed to live up to the required standards due to his lust and love for this life.¹⁹⁵

The Sufis Within and the 'Essential' Arabic

'Ali al-Shahidi chastised the 'Sufi deviants' and their 'blasphemous' supporters who not merely challenged but even 'attacked' the Shi'ite jurists.¹⁹⁶ He was most disaffected by Sufi scholars among the elite and within his own clerical community. He criticized Muhsin al-Fayd for coming to the rescue of Sufism and championing its doctrines. The Sufis, 'Ali would declare, led people astray through their belief to be the rightly chosen people of God. The wise, however, could see through their stratagems and falsifications. Notwithstanding, several distinguished and obscure men alike emulated them.¹⁹⁷

'Ali argued for the centrality of Arabic and 'Arabness' to an accurate knowledge of the scriptures and the Tradition. In one *hadith*, 'Ali noted, God had ordered that the Qur'an be read with the proper pronunciation and intonation (*alhan*) of the Arabs. God warned against the adulterers who corrupted Qur'anic reading. The Prophet, 'Ali added, predicted that a religious group practicing celibacy will arise after his time, reciting the Qur'an in chanting and singing. Like Sufis, members of this group played the lute, the guitar or chords for the entertainment of listeners. 'Ali found their use of magic or incantations (*tara'iq*) impermissible. It is noteworthy that the scholars' disagreement over whether music should be prohibited, completely or partially, was linked to the question of licensing Sufi thought and practices.¹⁹⁸

The term *tasawwuf* (Sufism), 'Ali noted, applied originally to a group of wise men who had deviated from the path of truth. After the rise of Islam, however, it applied to heretics and dissenters such as Hasan al-Basri and Sufyan al-Thawri and their followers. 'Ali was mostly alarmed by the ability of the Sufis to convert the populace to their cause and to lure noblemen and rulers through witchcraft and magic. He accused the Sufi-bent scholars of stealing the money of the rulers after joining their service.¹⁹⁹

Against the Sufi model, 'Ali advanced an ideal form of Shi'ite piety based on the Imams' life stories. He tried to convince his readers that it is safer and wiser to die while adhering to the right path (*Sunna*) than to die upholding an innovation (*bid'a*).²⁰⁰ Sufis, he wrote, are submerged in insane practices, harbor irrational ideas and may even see visions of the devil in several forms. The devil entices them to worship him by saying, 'I am your Imam' or even 'I am your God'.²⁰¹ They see imaginary objects, a feature accentuated by their consumption of chemical compounds, which also cause a change in their moods.²⁰² It is worth noting that 'Ali referred to statements made by Jesus to caution his readers against 'liars among the learned who wear wool and lower their heads to the ground'.²⁰³

Al-Jaza'iri was also critical of the '*ulama*, who employed Sufi ideas in their intellectual arguments. He noted for instance that al-Shahid al-Thani 'invaded' (*aghara*) Sufi arguments in his works on consensus and intention (*al-niyya*). Al-Jaza'iri found fault in utilizing Sufi terms and precepts even with the aim of discrediting Sufism. Al-Shahid al-Thani, he noted, encouraged persons with a deficient knowledge to adopt such precepts.²⁰⁴

Sufi ties to the lower classes, their altruistic acts of charity and their austerity became a dynamic source of popularity for them.²⁰⁵ 'Ali al-Shahidi found such charity futile and argued that God considers it more worthy to spend money first on one's parents, second on oneself and family, third on one's poor kindred, fourth on one's poor neighbors, and fifth on God. Thus, God does not merit conspicuous spending nor frugality but a middle ground between the two. It is unfavorable in God's eyes for one to give away all that one owns (the way many Sufis do), then turn to God in want, for then God will abandon him. On the same note, 'Ali related an account by Ja'far al-Sadiq showing that the Sufis had made a wrong interpretation (*ta'wil qabih*) of Qur'anic verses and manipulated their meaning to condone their 'objectionable acts' of charity.²⁰⁶

'Ali warned Shi'ites against accepting at face value Sufi precepts propagated by Sunnite scholars like al-Ghazali or embracing moderate Sufi views. To counteract al-Ghazali's popularity, 'Ali noted that the former extolled the virtues of Abu Bakr during a state of Sufi illumination. Al-Ghazali even prohibited the cursing of Yazid and refrained from accusing him of the murder of Imam Husayn. 'Ali did not advance theological arguments against al-Ghazali but rather emphasized his animosity toward Shi'ites. He explained that al-Ghazali denounced Twelver Shi'ites as recusants (*rawafid*) and rejected their claims to know the true meaning of the scriptures through the teachings of the infallible Imam.²⁰⁷ 'Ali also challenged a common belief among Twelver Shi'ites: that al-Ghazali was the companion of al-Sayyid al-Murtada during his pilgrimage to Mecca.

To the distress of al-Shahidi, many Shi'ites believed that a Medieval Andalusian Sufi, Muhyiddin b. 'Arabi (d. 638AH/1240CE), had harbored Shi'ite inclinations. With the two-fold pursuit of disavowing Sunnism and Sufism, 'Ali asserted that Ibn 'Arabi professed during his nocturnal journey (*isra'*) that Abu Bakr ranked high above all prophets. As such, 'Ali denounced al-Ghazali as a detester of Shi'ites and an idol worshipper who misled the layperson into believing he was following the right path.

Conclusion

A restructuring of relations between the state, central bureaucracy and provincial-military elites limited the resolve of the monarch but promoted new forms of authority for the state. These changes were dictated by a decrease in military expeditions at the frontiers in the form of defensive or offensive war characteristic of the reign of Shah 'Abbas. Subsequent reliance on bureaucratic social elements boosted the posts of ministers in general and the grand vizier in particular, which eventually encroached on the Shahs' individual power. Meanwhile, the growing social contradictions and economic tensions evident during the late reign of Shah 'Abbas found sharper expression during the mid seventeenth century CE. With the weakening of disciplinary restraints against the elites and the decline in mechanisms of relief advocated by Shah 'Abbas, lower-class discontent and rebellions attempting to undermine the state intensified.

Even though the Safavid scholarly elite was not a homogenous entity until the times of Shah Safi, it does seem to have acted as a self-contained group with relatively similar interests and outlook. After that time, however, diverse intellectual and political tendencies rise to the fore. This was part of, first, a change in state structure witnessing diffusion rather than centralization of power among different wings of the central bureaucracy, some of which adopted clerical Islam; second, clerical tasks diversified, became hierarchically organized, and carried local undertones in different social settings of the empire; and third, a strengthening of dissent from below brought greater ideological complexity and diversity within the clerical community. Meanwhile, the forceful espousal of clerical Islam by a section of the Persian aristocracy enhanced the demise of 'Amilism and promoted Persianized models of clerical leadership.

Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II aimed to limit the control of the clerical elite, predominantly composed of rationalist jurists, by cutting off their economic grants and then replacing many of them with another branch of the Persian clerical elite who promoted traditionism. A number of traditionists then became the new exponents of the Shi'ite 'normative', who posed a serious challenge to *ijtihadi* clerical practices. More significant was the admission of Sufi-bent and philosophically bent jurists to the official domain. It is within this context that legalists began to decry the monarch's weak commitment to the sacred law in the mid seventeenth century CE. They complained about the disintegration of the moral fiber of Safavid society and attacked what they labeled as the 'laxity' in the adherence and administration of Islamic *shari'a* in court and in society. These attacks were profoundly telling of the collapse of the political expectations of the old clerical elite and the competition it faced from the state-funded scholarly hybrids.²⁰⁸ Conventional jurists also experienced diffuse forms of resistance to their economic ascendancy, reflected in popular culture in the form of sarcasm and ridicule.

A section of the Persian aristocracy found in clerical Islam a suitable expression for its interests. In addition, religious scholars associated with the court sought individualized and elitist approaches to Sufism. It is inadequate to present the Safavid support of intellectual hybridity from a culturalist perspective as simply a triumph of Persian culture inherently defined by Sufism and philosophy against clerical Islam of the émigré Arab scholars. The conflicts among diverse currents of thought were entirely a Persian affair because the émigré scholars were themselves at this point Persian, living in Safavid society. Moreover, clerical Islam cannot be categorically treated as constantly antithetical or mutually exclusive to Sufi and philosophical thought. Sufi-bent and philosophically bent scholars from the Persian nobility, in their attempt to replace the old elite in state offices, co-opted the clerical discourse to achieve an authorizing stance.

Nowhere were these intellectual hybrids more indicative of the internal and cross-sectional class differences in seventeenth-century CE Persia than in the legal struggles over Sufism and congregational prayer.²⁰⁹ Intra-elite and inter-elite struggles were framed in theological polemics between jurists and Sufi-bent

scholars. This was not simply a clerical reaction to popular Sufism. It was also an internal contest over doctrinal and behavioral patterns of Shi'ism at a time when Sufi-bent scholars have acquired a proficient knowledge in legal Islam and 'high' Sufism had sneaked into the *'ulama's* domain. The disintegration of the old socio-religious boundaries was laid bare and legalists like 'Ali al-Shahidi strove to explain the moral mishaps of jurists and the loss of their grip over society which permitted the Sufi vision in its many shapes and forms to become an alternative course for Shi'ite persuasions.

The cross-fertilization between clerical Islam and these trends reflected the entry of diverse social elements into the power sphere, and diffusion of power not only away from the Shah, but also among multiple branches of the elite. This differed from the more centralized authority of Shah 'Abbas who, though receptive to popular Sufism for a short while, ultimately crushed the leaders of the Nuqtaviyya and Ni'matullahiyya and prevented their visions from becoming part of state ideology. The state found in the Sufi and philosophically bent scholars a balancing measure against the *mujtahids'* power and autonomy. At first glance, it may seem as if the monarchs and the central bureaucracy's flirtation with Sufi and philosophical hybrids was part of a policy of anticlericalism, as most scholars of Safavid Persia purported. I have argued instead that the majority of these scholars were well versed in juridical Islam, and were adept exponents of the *shari'a* and the clerical discourse. As such, they co-opted the conventional legalists by using the very tool for their ascendancy in state offices, namely juridical Islam. This is attested in the polemical writings on Friday prayer, gauged effectively in juridical terms by such hybrids. As such the debate never really fell outside clerical boundaries. Meanwhile, philosophical and Sufi scholarship of this period allowed only a few to seek sources of knowledge outside the *shari'a*, while traditionism restricted the application of reason in religious conduct and ultimately limited one's knowledge and interference in the social and political worlds.

The Sufi bent *'ulama* continued to problematize the question of Friday prayer, insisting that it was illicit. Except for the more moderate Sufis, like Muhammad Taqi Majlisi and Muhsin al-Fayd, no Sufi-bent scholar supported the obligatory observation of Friday prayer. The philosophically bent *'ulama* also for the most part declared Friday prayer obligatory. Rationalist jurists like Mawla Hasan 'Ali Tustari, Sulayman al-Shakhuri, Jamal al-Muhaqqiqin, and Mirza Muhammad al-Naysaburi endorsed its prohibition. Except for the traditionists, who divorced the observance of Friday prayer from imperial sovereignty, the Sufi-bent *'ulama*, like the rationalists, moved from expressions of hesitancy towards the Safavids' temporal rule to open dissent and resistance towards the state, one in pursuit of millennial spaces and the second in pursuit of the Mahdist Imamate ideal.

5

The Rediscovery of Traditions and the Shifting Normative

WHEN SHAH 'ABBAS II passed away in 1077AH/1666CE, the grand vizier, Mirza Muhammad Mahdi, supported the claims of his seven-year-old son Hamza Mirza in opposition to the majority of the courtiers who endorsed the enthronement of the nineteen-year old Safi Mirza.¹ Unlike his predecessors, Shah 'Abbas II realized he had little control over appointing a successor. As such, he did not declare which of his two able sons he wanted to succeed him.² It seemed more advantageous to:

those who are in Place to have a Minor King for their Sovereign, than one that is of Age to govern, all the Suffrages were unanimous for giving the Crown to the younger son, whom the King had brought along with him, and who was then upon the Spot.³

Safi Mirza, known later as Shah Suleiman, ruled for twenty-eight years until 1105AH/1694CE. Brought up in the secluded world of the harem, Safi showed little interest in political administration and state affairs at a time when the empire was suffering a severe economic and fiscal crisis.⁴ At times, administrative development coexisted with weak military control and bureaucratic paralysis.⁵ Matthee cautioned, however, against concluding that Shah Suleiman was largely responsible for the onset of economic disintegration in the Safavid Empire.⁶ By the time of Shah 'Abbas II, when territorial expansion came to an end, the treasury was already suffering from decline of revenue and income due to the increase in crown lands and military efficiency.⁷ Persian society experienced a significant decrease in 'wealth' between the 1070sAH/1660sCE and 1080sAH/1670sCE, and people complained that dishonest trade transactions and cheating were rampant. Persian farmers were in

dire straits as they faced a bad harvest and famine. In 1079–80AH/1668–9CE, Persians faced another devastating famine, which was difficult to reverse for years to come. Food expenses reached exceeding limits. In the middle of a severe winter season, in 1083AH/1672CE, food prices rose to prohibitive levels.⁸ Living conditions worsened to the extent that not only the poor but also the affluent protested against the Safavid government. The latter participated only modestly in productive sectors and limited its public investment, which allowed provincial governors and the merchant elite to pursue unbridled private enterprises and monopolies.⁹ Severe economic distress gave way to disease. In 1098AH/1686CE, an epidemic and a plague spread in Mazandaran and Astarabad. Many villages around Isfahan were stricken with consumption, which caused many people to perish. The decline in investment and maintenance of land affected agricultural output.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Shah Suleiman withdrew to the harem, ordering his council to convene there, ultimately deeming the organs of government, central to which were the council of state, the court assembly and the vizierate, ineffective.¹¹

Instability and Social Disorder

Shah Sultan Husayn (r. 1105–1135AH/1694–1722CE), nicknamed ‘Mulla Husayn’ for his religious piety, succeeded Shah Suleiman and was equally weak in running government affairs.¹² Court eunuchs and ministers alike, with diverse interests, competed over state control. They prevented Mirza ‘Abbas, the able son of Suleiman, from taking power and favored Mirza Husayn, a superstitious introvert.¹³ Mirza ‘Abbas seemed too strong willed and ambitious to conform to the expectations of his courtiers and eunuchs.¹⁴ The eunuchs became the ‘Arbiters of Affairs, the Dispensers of Employments and Favours, and absolute Matters of Government, assuming to themselves the Authority of all Offices’.¹⁵

The army lost its centrality to state affairs, engaged in a few confrontations with the Ottomans and maintained peace with the Mughal Empire for over forty years.¹⁶ Internal political clashes and social rifts within the empire’s provinces were commonplace. These provinces suffered greatly from the high incidence of replacement of governors, which caused political instability and diverted much money away from their peoples.¹⁷ Copper coins which governors minted lost one half of their value with each incident of governor replacement. As a result:

a Man who goes to Bed at Night with a Ten Penny Piece in his Breeches, finds but Five Pence there in the Morning, if the Governor was chang’d in the Night.¹⁸

The governors profited from these changes because, under the pretext of paying a gratuity ‘to the Officer that brought them [to power], they raised ten Times as much upon the People’.¹⁹ It is unclear what strategies or actions the people took to resist the damaging effect of elite politics to their economic interest and administrative disarray compounded by widespread bribery and the state’s reckless spending.²⁰

During the ceremonies commemorating the death of Imam Husayn, the government licensed and supported open fighting between local factions in different provinces. The factions competed over resources and political control in struggles that at times took the form of tribal, ethnic and racial conflict. The spirit of factionalism was encouraged by Shah 'Abbas as a method to control his provinces. Frustration and deprivation were channeled through these violent confrontations with stones and sticks, which caused numerous injuries and death.²¹ Meanwhile, governors succumbed to, or at times orchestrated, theft and highway robberies in the cities. The 'Caravans did not dare to stop any longer in the Villages, but chose rather to encamp under Tents, because of the Difficulty of avoiding the Ambushes of the Peasants'.²² Mothers encouraged their children to take up theft professionally and promised 'them a good Supper' in return.

Administrative problems at the center and political instability in the provinces, large-scale deterioration of central regional economies in the empire and the concomitant environmental calamities gave rise to sharper class divisions, social unrest and political dissension. It is within this context that Shah Sultan Husayn and his clerics issued royal decrees and injunctions to counteract a wide range of violations normally associated with depressed social elements, who threatened state security.²³ These violations, though involving at times the notables (*a'yan*), seem mainly directed against the common people (*ahali*) also associated with ruffians (*awbash*), ranged from gambling, laying bets on pigeon flight, wrestling, wine-drinking, hemp consumption, prostitution and brigandage to forms of entertainment, music and dancing. These developments were in part reflected in the increasing potency of the Safavid underworld, and open challenges to local governors and the state. Meanwhile, several Gnostics (*'arifs*) and Sufis found an enthusiastic following to their ideas among dissenting social sectors.²⁴ The 'commoners', or *'awam* in the language of clerics and high-ranking state bureaucrats, were as much the theologically debased as the socially low-ranking and dissenting voices of the Safavid world. Even though riots led by ruffian populations and uprisings with dervish chiliastic leanings against the state existed throughout the Safavid period, they were largely crushed by Qizilbash soldiery during the sixteenth century, and effectively suppressed under Shah 'Abbas.²⁵ As James Reid noted, the rural and urban underworlds of Safavid society including brigands, vagabonds, and local leaders were usually involved in revolts and political disturbances against the Safavids.²⁶ Unfortunately, little has survived about the full scope and incidence of the revolts of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries CE in Persia.

At this juncture in Safavid history, a more puritanical, traditionist clerical elite with a solid bureaucratic base came to the rescue of the ailing empire. Naturally, the monarch's sources of distinction and power had waned, which left his courtiers and servicemen with the task of finding adequate sources of legitimacy. Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (d. 1110AH/1698CE), a powerful court cleric and bureaucrat associated mainly with the reign of Shah Sultan Husayn, repeatedly embellished the reputation of the Safavid Empire by citing Shi'ite traditions which confirmed the Safavids'

genuine Imamism, and predicted their political feats and missionary zeal in spreading Shi'ism.²⁷ Meanwhile, another scholar extended to the Safavids the distinguished attributes of a pure progeny and an Arab pedigree.²⁸ In *Fada'il al-Sadat*, Muhammad Ashraf b. 'Abd al-Hasib al-Musawi al-Karaki (d. 1145AH/1732CE) spoke of the socio-economic privileges and spiritual excellence of *sayyids* related by blood to the Prophet, and to the tribe of Quraysh and the Arabs.²⁹ A grandson of Mir Damad, Muhammad Ashraf based his conclusions on the arguments of Ibn Tawus in *Kashf al-Hujja*, which gave the Hashimites social precedence and natural leadership.³⁰ He utilized these arguments to confirm the nobility and pure Prophetic line of the Safavid Shah who claims descent from the Hashimites.³¹ Muhammad Ashraf further noted that hostility toward the descendents of the house of the Prophet was a sign of bastardy and would incur punishment in the next world.³²

In 1135AH/1722CE, the Afghans made their triumphant entry into Isfahan, led by Mahmud the Ghaznavid, who had Sultan Husayn ride on his left side to legitimize his rule over Persia.

An Imperial Command on Friday Prayer

An outburst of treatises fervently debating the legal status of Friday prayer, written by Persian and Bahraini scholars, attested to the ambivalence of the court about it in the middle of increasing social contradictions and a weakening of state foundations by the end of the seventeenth century CE. Mawla 'Awad al-Tustari al-Kirmani (d. after 1100AH/1688CE), a conventional jurist, supported the necessity of Friday prayer and used to convene it himself.³³ Another renowned traditionist, Muhammad al-Hurr al-'Amili supported its obligatory observance against the claims of a notable *sayyid* and instructor at the Astane-yi Quds-i Radawi.³⁴

The participation of leading Bahraini (or Bahrani) scholars in the debate on Friday prayer added an important dimension to it. Bahrain became part of Safavid dominions, first, in 1011AH/1602CE, under Shah 'Abbas. In the language of congregational prayer and the Friday sermon, Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Rajab al-Maqabi al-Ruwaysi (d. 1050AH/1640CE), upheld the sovereignty of Shah 'Abbas.³⁵ By the time of Shah 'Abbas II, Bahraini scholars a growing resistance to the performance of Friday prayer had developed, leading to an open division. Several Bahraini scholars gave their numbers to *akhbarism*, such as Khalil b. Ghazi al-Qazvini (d. 1088AH/1677CE), Sulayman al-Bahrani (d. 1121AH/1709CE) and 'Abdullah b. Salih al-Bahrani (d. 1135AH/1723CE).³⁶ Zayn al-Din Ali b. Sulayman b. Darwish b. Hatim al-Qudami (d. 1064AH/1654CE), like several traditionists, believed Friday prayer was incumbent upon every Muslim believer.³⁷

Indeed, from the perspective of the Safavid monarchs, the performance of Friday prayer carried contradictory political elements, which gauged the nature and extent of their power, clerical autonomy and internal opposition to their rule. Initially, Shah Suleiman appointed a number of prayer leaders to convene Friday prayer in

Bahrain.³⁸ Later, however, he showed less enthusiasm for holding Friday prayer. He left it entirely to the contending religious elites to rule on it and came very close to prohibiting it altogether.³⁹ It is possible that this change came as a result of his attempt to undermine the special function of prayer leaders, or due to pressures from his viziers and other powerful elements at court, who were divided over this question. Shah Suleiman commanded his vizier, 'Ali Khan Zangineh (1086–1101AH/1675–1689CE), to form a synod for his *'ulama* to decide on whether Friday prayer should be convened or not. Upon this imperial command, Agha Jamal al-Din Khwansari (d. 1125AH/1712CE) argued in a lengthy legal tract against the observance of Friday prayer.⁴⁰ Many of his students followed his lead, refuting the views of the philosophically bent jurists like Akhund Mirza Shirwani (d. 1098AH/1686CE) and Akhund Muhammad Tunikabuni Sarab.⁴¹ The latter adhered to the philosophical school of Mulla Rajab 'Ali al-Tabrizi, which departed from central rationalist and theosophical foundations of Mulla Sadra's thought, and nurtured a more conformist attitude toward the government.⁴² Shirwani, who was summoned from 'Atabat to Isfahan by the Shah, was a staunch adherent to the Haydariyya Sufi order, and argued in favor of obligatory Friday prayer.⁴³ Finally, al-Muhaqqiq Sabzavari (d. 1090AH/1679CE) wrote two treatises on Friday prayer, in Arabic and Persian, expressing his support for the obligatory observance of Friday prayer.⁴⁴

The debate over Friday prayer under Shah Suleiman decreased the number of one's choices from several legal arrangements to just two: it was polarized between absolute unconditional observance and total prohibition. This was partly a dimension of the *akhbari-usuli* schism, at the root of which lies the question of whether the Qur'anic text and the traditions provide sufficient support for the convening of Friday prayer in Shi'ite society. Even though the traditionists went further than the early Safavid *mujtahids* like al-Karaki and his grandson in enjoining the unconditional observation of Friday prayer, the basis and supporting arguments each group used differed dramatically from the other, reflecting decisive shifts in historical circumstances. The traditionists of the late Safavid period hoped to promote a basic, unambiguous adherence to the religious text among the laity away from interpretive reasoning, and to marginalize the *mujtahids*. This position was partly accommodating to the state and helpful in counteracting the rationalist clerics and their allies. Traditionists endorsed Friday prayer on the basis of clear references to Friday prayer in the Qur'an and the *hadith* in the first place, and the Imams statements on the other. The early *mujtahids*, in contrast, supported mostly voluntary observance of Friday prayer, utilized rationalist proofs and not simply traditions, and made Friday prayer conditional upon the presence of a qualified jurist who is the deputy of the Hidden Imam. They also paid close attention to the type of temporal government in existence at the time, an issue of little significance for the traditionists. But, in the end, both groups lent some form of legitimacy to the temporal ruler without sanctifying his Imamate theocratic claims. Under Shah Sultan Husayn, court jurists like Majlisi insisted Friday prayer should be observed by all Shi'ites during Occultation.⁴⁵

Rationalists of the late Safavid period found no justification for convening Friday prayer, stating that the court clerics, and indirectly the Safavid state, lacked the qualifications and conditions necessary for convening it. The rationalists were not in a position to overlook or control the performance of Friday prayer, nor were they under pressure to validate the Safavid state. The legal and philosophical arguments over this question spread not merely among the elite but across class as well. The titles 'Mir', 'Mirza', 'Akhund' and 'Agha' and 'Mulla' reflected variations in the social status of the scholars who joined the debate on Friday prayer mentioned before. Unfortunately, we know very little about the activities of these scholars or the nature of their social transformation, as to form a clear opinion about the connections between their ideas and the historical realities they experienced. Sufi-bent scholars for the most part expressed dissent against Safavid rule. Muhammad Rida Qazvini (d. after 1136AH/1723CE), a Sufi-bent scholar, though maintaining good relations with the court, insisted that convening Friday prayer was forbidden as long as the Imam is in hiding.⁴⁶ Sufi-bent scholars declined to accept a 'closure' to the story of temporal authority and continued to find illegitimate features in any but the awaited Imam's government. Their position gave voice to political opposition from lower constituencies, a resistance to official notions of time, polity and human agency. It is plausible that rationalists, who prohibited Friday prayer, albeit from a different motive, found in *ijtihad* a source of empowerment against the clerical elite's emphasis on unquestioned adherence to traditions. In other words, denying the necessity of Friday prayer gave a theological window of maneuver for disgruntled sectors, which questioned the legitimacy of Safavid theocratic claims and the relevance of the state to the individual.

Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, the Rationalist-Traditionist Court Cleric

Shah Sultan Husayn inaugurated his reign by supporting clerical injunctions against wine drinking, faction fighting, pigeon flying and the Sufis. Around 6,000 bottles of wine from Shiraz and Georgia owned by the Safavid royalty were publicly destroyed. This act was more symbolic than practical, for it aimed at projecting an image of the state as *shari'a*-bound and pietistic. Eventually, the eunuchs and royal princes convinced the Shah of wine's healing power.⁴⁷ The Shah's second significant public act was the expulsion of the Sufis from the city of Isfahan, which became the center of much debate among modern scholars.⁴⁸ Both the early prohibition on the use of liquor and the expulsion of the Sufis pointed to pressures from the ranks of the bureaucratic-clerical elite including those who imparted to Shah Sultan Husayn the doctrinal and legal foundations of Shi'ism and emphasized public piety. Sources point to the lasting influence on state politics of *mujtahid al-zamani*, namely Majlisi, and his attempt to reorient Safavid religious policies and find novel uses for clerical Shi'ism in a time of decline.⁴⁹

Majlisi tutored the young Sultan Husayn after becoming *shaykh al-Islam*, in 1098AH/1686CE, a few years before Shah Suleiman passed away.⁵⁰ He occupied this post

until the end of his life, residing in the area of Masjid-i Jami' in Isfahan.⁵¹ Majlisi strove to breathe new life into the state he was serving by refurbishing its theological resources against marked socio-economic decline. He also tried to deflect the military weakness and administrative dilemmas of the Safavids. All this he did: first, through the promotion of a wide-based adherence to Shi'ite traditions; second, with a conscious and expansive use of collective ritual such as the celebration of the birth (*mawlid*) of Imam 'Ali; third, with an onslaught on 'moral depravity' (*fusuq*) and 'fornication' (*fujur*) largely connected with lower social elements; and fourth, through a rekindling of forced conversion to Shi'ism, particularly among Jews and Christians.⁵²

Muhammad Baqir Majlisi was the son of the religious scholar and Sufi Muhammad Taqi Majlisi, known as Majlisi al-Awwal. The Majlisi family was neither of the Persian nobility, nor carried a *siyada* status. It did, however, reap distinguished scholastic and administrative credentials, which helped Majlisi become upwardly mobile. The mother of Muhammad Taqi came from an Arab family in Jabal 'Amil which settled in Isfahan.⁵³ It is possible that Majlisi received scholarly training and intellectual inspiration from his father and brother.⁵⁴ He had a great aptitude for the study of jurisprudence, Tradition, exegesis and positive law. He also invested much effort in 'enjoining the good and prohibiting evil' (*al-amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa'l-nahi 'an al-munkar*).⁵⁵ The *mulla-bashi* of the court, a newly devised religious-administrative role implemented by the Shah in 1124AH/1712CE, became an important post after Majlisi's time. Majlisi's activities revived the power of the *'ulama* and promulgated a 'missionary' Shi'ism of a public devotional character.⁵⁶ By this time, judicial-religious posts had proliferated and their functions became more complex, accommodating a greater exercise of power by charismatic persons.⁵⁷ Apparently, tutors and *mullahs*, including prayer leaders, and seminary scholars alongside low-ranking clerics, notaries, and those who deal with questions of marriage and divorce became the deputies of the *sadr-i khassa*. They had to advance legal injunctions and opinions on court cases before governors could come to a decision concerning these cases.⁵⁸

Majlisi seemed to have situated enough followers and supporters in key administrative positions to secure the succession of his grandson, Mir Muhammad Husayn, to the office of *mulla-bashi*.⁵⁹ Majlisi also held power over the judicial organ of state and became *sadr-i khassa* and *sadr-i 'amma*.⁶⁰ The *sadr-i khassa* grew in importance in the second half of the seventeenth century CE, and was responsible for overseeing the religious endowments of all the central Persian regions, including Isfahan, Yazd, Kashan, Qum, Mazandaran and Astarabad.⁶¹ The *sadr-i khassa* also dealt exclusively with the legal affairs of the holy shrines, appointed judges and delegated his orders to administrators of endowments in the above regions.⁶² Consequently, in the very person of Majlisi the power of the *'ulama* and the authority of the *sadr* coalesced to produce a more homogenous ideology at the center and greater economic control by the clerical elite. Unlike the early Safavid period, when the *shaykh al-Islam* overshadowed the *sadr* at times, the latter enjoyed considerable power during the late Safavid period.⁶³

Modern scholars disagree on the nature of Majlisi's religious policies and his approach toward Sufism and contemporary Sufis of 'high' and popular traditions. Muslih al-Din Mahdavi refuted the view that Majlisi persecuted the Sufis as a whole.⁶⁴ Mahdavi asserted that Majlisi accepted 'moderate' and 'ethical' Sufism, meaning *shari'a*-conforming versions of Sufism and unpublicized spiritual experiences similar to those expressed by Muhammad Taqi, his father, and Baha'i.⁶⁵ Majlisi would write that the path of religion is one because God sent one messenger and one sacred law.⁶⁶ Recasting and co-opting Sufism, Majlisi praised the pristine 'Sufism' of Shi'ite jurists like 'Ali b. Tawus, 'a possessor of charismata and distinguished spiritual ranks (*maqamat*)', Ibn Fahd al-Hilli, known for his austerity, and al-Shahid al-Thani, who held 'Sufi secrets and signs'. These scholars, Majlisi added, protected the rightful religion, expressed religious devotions, glorified God, and invoked His name. Their acts conform to the *shari'a*. They were not extremists in their 'Sufism' like their Sunnite counterparts, who engaged in singing, dancing and drum beating.⁶⁷ For Majlisi, then, acceptable Sufism came to mean private spiritual revelations and a public expression of devotion, austerity and conformity to the *shari'a*. Majlisi rejected any attempt to substitute a literal, widely based communal Shi'ism, with Sufi beliefs in the unity of existence, transmigration of souls. He also denounced Sufi fraternities and *tariqas*, with their initiation ceremonies and courts of music and dancing which offer initiates spiritual immersion at odds with the teachings of clerical exegetes of Tradition and the *shari'a*. It is unclear whether Majlisi issued decrees to actively persecute or kill 'infidels', including Sufis.⁶⁸ Several students of Majlisi and Persian descendants of al-Shahid al-Thani also refuted Sufi ideas and movements.⁶⁹ There is no doubt, however, that the Sufi-bent '*ulama* were a force to reckon with and were considered by jurists a serious threat.⁷⁰ Muhammad Karim Sharif Qummi, for instance, strove to defend Sufism against the attacks of Mulla Muhammad Tahir Qummi in his work *Tuhfat al-'Ushshaq*. The physician of Shah Suleiman also wrote a Sufi work denouncing Muhammad Tahir's views, known as *Tabsirat al-Mu'minin*.⁷¹

It is unlikely that Majlisi used force in converting a presumed 1,070 Sunnites to Shi'ism in Syrian territories or that such conversions were the outcome of his successful explication of Imamism and its political cause in *Haqq al-Yaqin*.⁷² Sources point to Majlisi's active role in converting by force around 70,000 Sunnites and non-Muslims, but the circumstances surrounding these policies remain vague. It is possible that insurgencies in Qandahar and the increased tensions in areas populated by Sunnites encouraged the rhetoric of religious conversion and militancy by Safavid officials like Majlisi. A few modern scholars, notably Arjomand, further suggested that the Afghan invasion of Safavid Persia in 1135AH/1722CE may have been triggered by Majlisi's persecution of Sunnites in Afghanistan.⁷³ It seems that the language of conversion, like that of anti-Sufism, was a means to project a strong disciplinary state and to divert attention away from severe political and economic problems. The rhetoric of conversion also projected the growth of militant solutions to prevent the disintegration of the empire.

Imamhood and Eschatology in Lieu of a De-empowered State

Majlisi utilized limited rationalist interpretations of the *shari'a*, and reconfirmed the law's encompassing and ubiquitous nature. Majlisi's legal outlook could be described as a 'middle method' between rationalism and traditionism. He accepted the role of reason, consensus and the literal meaning of the scriptures in the same way as a *mujtahid* would uphold a tradition reached by consensus (*ijma' manqul*).⁷⁴ In the area of jurisprudence he was not a strict traditionalist. On the other hand, he revived traditions (*akhbar*) as a crucial and independent source of knowledge about points of law.⁷⁵

As a clerical leader, Majlisi derived much power not simply on the basis of a state appointment but rather by emphasizing the link between Shi'ite devotional attitudes and a reverence toward the custodians of Shi'ism, namely the jurists. He 'rediscovered' the utility of Shi'ite Tradition as he laid down a monumental, twenty-five volume compendium on traditions, known as *Bihar al-Anwar* (*Seas of Light*) started in 1077AH/1666CE, before the birth of Shah Sultan Husayn, but completed in 1104AH/1692CE. The Persian form of the traditions and their storytelling element gave *Seas of Light* distinct popularity. As such, Majlisi was able to 'declass' the interest in traditions unlike philosophers and Gnostics whose ideas remained largely inaccessible to the populace. The images of heaven and hell in *Seas of Light*, and the eschatological promises and futuristic expectations, were directed to a wide and indiscriminating readership whose intellectual abilities, he believed, were wanting. Majlisi, as such, co-opted certain elements of 'Sufism' and adapted them to the *ahl al-bayt* devotionalism. Arjomand is correct in noting that Majlisi's works succeeded in 'capturing the imagination of the people and enlisting their loyalty'.⁷⁶ *Seas of Light* aimed to bring together the basic, foundational, all-inclusive stories of the Imams and authorized a communal commitment to Imamism, irrespective of the shape of temporal authority. The spread of this devotional literature was also achieved through Persianization. Majlisi questioned the hegemonic role of Arabic as the language of creed, jurisprudence and law. He noted that it is insufficient for a scholar to master Arabic – he must rather acquire the core Islamic disciplines. Majlisi was not only critical of scholars who did not research the content of Arabic texts but also those who used Arabic mechanically. He composed several books on Tradition in Persian and valorized it as the language of scholasticism.⁷⁷ This stands in contrast to Chardin's observation that, under Shah 'Abbas II, Arabic was still 'l'idiome de la religion et des sciences relevées'.⁷⁸

It seems possible that Majlisi's practices hoped to untie the legitimacy of clerical Shi'ism to the legitimacy of the Safavid state in a period of political crisis. Furthermore, the promotion of traditions was a way of avoiding interpretive endeavors and discouraging Persians from pursuing expansive or divisive paths of legal rationalism. Majlisi argued that if humans possessed an independent intellect and comprehension, God would not have sent them Prophets and messengers. God ordered humans to obey these messengers in all that they decree.

Philosophical interpretation 'leads to error', and human inquiries are answered by the Qur'an and the *hadith*.⁷⁹ In place of the jurisprudential works characteristic of rationalists, arose a world of exaggerated Imamate piety, prayer and visitation, devotionism and dream interpretation. Majlisi, for instance, delved into the archetypal meaning of visions and actions in dreams, and discussed the attributes of certain plants and animals.⁸⁰

As the ideological strength of the Safavids weakened, clerics like Majlisi made greater efforts to strengthen the eroding image of the last Safavids. In *Raj'at (The Mahdi's Return)*, dedicated to Shah Suleiman, Majlisi explains in clear Persian how he came across two important traditions, which foretold the ascent of the Safavids and praised their glorious rule.⁸¹ His interest in publicizing this knowledge to the widest possible audience is illustrated in the way he presented the accounts first in Arabic, then translated them into Persian and offered his interpretation of their content. The Imams, he wrote, had confirmed the ties bonding the Safavid Empire to the awaited Imam who will rise (*al-Qa'im*) from the Prophet's house. From the East, a political group was destined to rise in pursuit of the just religion and wage a holy war against those who reject it.⁸² This prophecy, Majlisi noted, was fulfilled with the rise of the Safavids to power in 907AH/1501CE. Shah Isma'il I, a devout and true Shi'ite, Majlisi explained, fulfilled this prophecy as he rose in the region of Gilan to spread Shi'ism.⁸³ In reference to twelve additional accounts, Majlisi described the plans, actions and role of the awaited *Mahdi*. Evidently, Majlisi glorified the Shahs extensively in the introductions to several of his works.⁸⁴

At a Cushion's Distance From the Shah: Muhammad Al-Hurr al-'Amili (d. 1104AH/1692CE)

Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn al-Hurr al-'Amili al-Mashghari was born in the town of Mashghara in Jabal 'Amil. He studied under his father, his uncle, Muhammad al-Hurr, his maternal grandfather, 'Abd al-Salam, his father's uncle, 'Ali b. Mahmud, and others in the town of Juba'.⁸⁵ Evidently, Hasan, the father of al-Hurr, emigrated to Persia to be followed by two of his sons, namely al-Hurr and Zayn al-'Abidin.⁸⁶ Al-Hurr's scholastic training laid emphasis on legalistic, linguistic and dogmatic theological disciplines. In two lines of poetry summarizing the high esteem he accorded to legalistic studies in comparison to literature and poetry, he reflected:

My *'ilm* [religious knowledge] and my poetry quarreled and reconciled; Poetry succumbed to *'ilm* invariably.

For *'ilm* refused that I be considered a poet, while poetry recognized me as a religious scholar.⁸⁷

After spending forty years in Jabal 'Amil, al-Hurr traveled first to Iraq, then to Mashhad where he visited the shrine of Imam al-Rida. He took up residence in

Mashhad until his death, twenty-four years later. He traveled twice for pilgrimage and once to Iraq to visit the Imams' shrines.⁸⁸

Before his arrival in Mashhad for the first time in 1073AH/1662CE, he passed through Isfahan where he made an instant friend of Majlisi, and the two exchanged scholarly licenses (*ijazas*). Curiously, the Shah expressed little enthusiasm about this otherwise distinguished émigré Arab scholar. During his short stay in Isfahan, al-Hurr visited the court of Shah Suleiman and, without asking permission, he took his place on one side of the cushion on which the Shah was resting. When the Shah inquired about him, his courtiers explained that al-Hurr was among the great Arab *'ulama*, and that his name was Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Hurr al-'Amili. The Shah then turning to al-Hurr asked: 'Farq-i Mayan Hurr va khar Cheqadr ast?' (What is the difference between Hurr and *khar* [donkey]?). Al-Hurr had spent no more than few months in Persia, but knew enough Persian to answer: 'One cushion!' Instead of feeling offended, the Shah was amused by al-Hurr's courage and sharp wit.⁸⁹ Indeed, the intellectual labor of the 'Amilis was no longer directly relevant to the monarchs or to Safavid society at this historical juncture. Even if partly anecdotal, the above account also equally underscore the diminished stature of the monarchs. Al-Hurr's great contributions to Shi'ite *hadith* and law were indisputable, but they were neither unique nor indispensable to the empire's foreseeable goals as those of al-Karaki and Baha'i before. Mostly through the influence of Majlisi, al-Hurr became chief judge (*qadi al-qudat*) and *shaykh al-Islam*.⁹⁰ It is difficult to know with certainty how much political weight al-Hurr's position and views carried in these offices during the late seventeenth century CE. Floor noted that depending on location and circumstances the post of *shaykh al-Islam* was influential at the time. For instance, a royal decree issued in 1079AH/1669CE showed that the *shaykh al-Islam* of Mashhad was charged with setting a model of religious piety, and enjoining the good and prohibiting illicit acts. Furthermore, the *shaykh al-Islam* overlooked the payment of religious taxes like the fifth and alms, and decided on questions of inheritance.⁹¹ He, rather than the *sadr*, appointed district judges and low-ranking judicial staff. It seems that Persians believed that the views of the *shaykh al-Islam* carried significant weight due to his proximity to the Shah.⁹²

The interest in expanding adherence to traditions, eschatological literature and Imamate occultism are evident in al-Hurr's work as much as Majlisi's, at a time of political indeterminacy and decline in state power. Al-Hurr was the first to compile the Prophetic traditions (*ahadith qudsiyya*) in his work *Al-Jawahir al-Saniyya*. In *Al-Iqaz min al-Haj'a bi'l-Burhan 'ala al-Raj'a*, he points to 600 traditions and sixty-four Qur'anic verses among other sources, as proof for the return of the *Mahdi*.⁹³ He also argued in another treatise that the Imam is not merely infallible but does not forget or get distracted (*sahu*). The social demand for this literature, much like the attraction of Sufi precepts among the literati and the lay alike, reveals the popularity of millennial and apocalyptic notions of time and authority as expressions of disenchantment with and resistance to the existing political order.

If *usulism* was the hallmark of the legal-doctrinal outlook of the early clerics of a vibrant, expanding empire in the sixteenth century CE, then the growth of *akhbarism*

was a sign of political malaise and the growing irrelevance of imperial sovereignty to Persian society at large in the last decade of the seventeenth century CE. The most decisive difference between *akhbarism* and *usulism* in the late Safavid period, as Modarressi correctly noted, was the 'the validity or invalidity of reason in connection to religious matters'.⁹⁴ This has a number of seemingly contradictory implications. First, it discouraged rationalist, interpretive approaches to the *shari'a*, particularly among an alienated, disgruntled laity seeking to find answers to its socio-economic problems. This implies that state clerics like Majlisi and al-Hurr found open rationalism, even in the legal arena, harmful to the state and to their own goals under such conditions. Second, far from showing an aversion to temporal power, *akhbaris* coveted state offices and monopolized legal opinions for some time. Third, *akhbarism* of the state clerics was in no way absolute or exhaustive. On a practical level, it limited clerical competition to a few at the top, and denied other social strata the power to use *ijtihad* to advance new and diverse legal positions. Specialized legal and doctrinal works preserved links between traditionism and a restricted form of rationalism. The fact that Majlisi took a middle ground between *akhbarism* and *usulism* illustrates how top-ranking 'ulama permitted a measure of reasoning, however limited, within their ranks.⁹⁵ It was inevitable for Majlisi to achieve his goals as a state cleric without utilizing conditional reasoning. In retrospect, one needs to realize the interdependence and dialectical relationship rather than the absolute contradiction between rationalism and traditionism during different historical phases.⁹⁶

The multifaceted forms of exchange between the young Shi'ite dynasty and the Sunnite populations were defined by new historical realities. Renewed interest in conversion from Sunnism to Shi'ism in remote provinces of the empire, hoped to weaken threats to the state from the peripheries, and to rally Persians around a common cause. High-ranking 'ulama found renewed interest in Shi'ite-Sunnite polemics and expounded the central doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism in several works. Al-Hurr argued that public cursing was permissible when directed against committers of grave sins (*kaba'ir*). As for those who committed venial sins (*sagha'ir*), cursing them carried a further element, namely an accusation of blasphemy (*makfira*). Al-Hurr intended to devote a long work on cursing on the basis of both Sunnite and Shi'ite traditions but felt that al-Karaki had already 'established' the licitness of cursing, thus 'quenching the curiosity' of the seeker.⁹⁷

On Public Reference to the Mahdi

A few Shi'ite *sayyids*, possibly contemporaries of al-Hurr, had ruled that the mentioning (*tasmiya*) of the last Imam, the *Mahdi* or reference to him in public was prohibited during Occultation. In 1077AH/1666CE, al-Hurr explained in a lengthy treatise the permissibility of mentioning the name of the *Mahdi*, al-Qa'im, and Sahib al-Zaman in public circles.⁹⁸ Al-Hurr tried to show that numerous *hadiths*, reflecting the position of the majority of the late and early Shi'ite scholars, considered *tasmiya* permissible. Only a few sources prohibited *tasmiya* within the context of Shi'ite

dissimulation. In cases where one openly referred to the *Mahdi* in Sunnite circles or under Sunnite rule, such reference is considered reckless because it endangers a person's life and those related to him.⁹⁹ Under similar circumstances, disclosing the doctrinal features connected to the awaiting of the *Mahdi* is objectionable. Al-Hurr's interest in this subject again points to the emphasis on popular dimensions of Shi'ism and devotional ritualism. Perhaps this is best illustrated through the discrepancy found between the wording of the *hadiths* quoted by al-Hurr and their original counterparts in the canonical Shi'ite collections. Such a discrepancy may indicate, among other reasons, al-Hurr's desire to reach out to the laity and accommodate diverse levels of comprehension. Al-Hurr seemed at liberty to interpret the *hadiths* and render them intelligible to a wide audience.¹⁰⁰

On Tobacco

Persian sources expressed familiarity with tobacco-smoking early during the establishment of the Safavid Empire.¹⁰¹ It gained popularity, however, and had found wide circulation by the time of Shah 'Abbas, although he thought it was no better than horse dung and tried hard to root it out.¹⁰² All in vain; tobacco found its way into the homes of Persian notables, courtiers, merchants and craftsmen alike and continued to spread throughout the time of Shah 'Abbas II. Persians smoked tobacco, and the 'people of quality have their Pipe or Callion always carry'd before them by a Servant on Horse-back; and they often stop by the way to smoak, and sometimes smoak as they ride'.¹⁰³ Smoking also found its way to the religious seminaries for 'both Tutor and Pupil very hard at their Studies, and both of them with Pipes in the Mouths'. Some Persians used to break their fasts during Ramadan by first smoking tobacco.

During the reign of Shah Suleiman, the question of the legality of smoking (*tutun*) surfaced among the '*ulama* and seemed closely connected with the Shah's inquiries and the court's position. Mulla Khalil Qazvini did not hesitate to endorse the total prohibition of tobacco.¹⁰⁴ Strict traditionists (*akhbari*) at the time of al-Hurr prohibited it.¹⁰⁵ Al-Hurr, however, took a different stand. He recollected that at one time 'the noblest king of the world', Shah Safi, inquired about the reasons for al-Hurr's abstinence from drinking coffee and smoking tobacco. Al-Hurr intentionally avoided discussing legal matters for which there were no clear clues. As such, he answered the Shah that tobacco and coffee did not appeal to his taste.¹⁰⁶ Unsatisfied with the answer, the Shah confronted him and inquired whether he found jurisdiction on both items problematic or whether he would take the course of caution (*ihtiyat*) by refraining from them. Clearly, the Shah seemed well informed about the legal discussions surrounding coffee and tobacco. Al-Hurr admitted that he was acting out of caution and added that he would neither declare tobacco and coffee licit nor prohibit them due to the fact that they did not exist at the time of the Prophet and the Imams and as such there is no specific account or text clarifying their legal status. Al-Hurr further noted that since legal opinions around tobacco and coffee were controversial, caution is the preferred course of action.

As for Majlisi, he declared the licitness of tobacco smoking, chiefly by relying on traditions yet using a dimension of reasoning (*ijtihad*). He was himself a tobacco smoker.¹⁰⁷ Here, Majlisi seemed to have taken a position, which *usulis* may promote, even if claiming to refer mostly to the traditions to arrive at an opinion. After all Majlisi was criticized for including weak traditions in his works and relying on them to arrive at a ruling.¹⁰⁸ This is another example of the internal differentiation within traditionist and rationalist groups. It seems that a new dynamic for the derivation of legal rules or opinions among state-clerics rested during this period on a limitation of the role of reason and its monopoly rather than its total rejection.

The Duel Over Political Custody: Jurists and Sufis

Following the state's support of the jurists, the struggle between the latter and the Sufis culminated in the displacement of the Sufis and the transfer of their popular aura to the jurists in a dialectic of opposition and co-optation. The favoring of Sufi-bent scholars did not survive beyond the reign of Shah 'Abbas II. By the time al-Hurr gathered material against the Sufis in *Al-Ithna'ashariyya fi al-Radd 'ala al-Sufiyya*, the Sufis were already under attack from a number of scholars and faced suppression and persecution under Majlisi.¹⁰⁹ Mir Lawhi Sabzavari, a contemporary of Majlisi, was a staunch opponent of all forms of Sufism and Gnosticism who devoted much effort to the refutation of the Abu Muslimiyya, and the Hallajiyya.¹¹⁰ Evidently, the clerics' focused attacks against the Sufis point to the potency of Sufi doctrines, the popular appeal of the Abu Muslimiyya cult and ideas of infusion of the divine spirit (*hulul*) and unity with God (*ittihad*), which seem to be entangled with messianic leanings.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, several legal tracts emerged, prohibiting music mostly in connection with Sufi rituals.¹¹² Al-Hurr included around a thousand *hadiths* in refutation of fundamental tenets of Sufism and the religious claims of adherents to various Sufi movements.¹¹³

Jurists strove to nurture doctrinal homogeneity within clerical ranks by attacking any Sufi inkling or suspicion of Sufi sympathies among religious scholars. During this period, the clerics denounced not only popular Sufism, but also the accommodation of Sufi tenets and their appropriation at the hand of their co-legalists. Mir Lawhi and Ni'matullah al-Jaza'iri, for instance, blamed scholars like Majlisi al-Awwal and Baha'i for drawing on Sufi literature. Al-Jaza'iri was distressed by the fact that diverse Sufi sects claimed a cleric like Baha'i as their own, 'the choicest of Sufis'. The conventional jurists eyed with suspicion Baha'i's admiration for Sufi figures in his *Kashkul*, *Milal va Nihal* and *Nan va Halva*.¹¹⁴ Court historians embellished Baha'i's 'Sufi' disposition as well. Several months before his death in 1031AH/1621CE, Baha'i:

was performing his prayers one day at the tomb of the mystic Baba Rokn al-Din Esfahani, when he heard a voice from the grave addressing him as follows: 'What is the meaning of all this negligence? Now is the time for vigilance.' The speaker gave his name and genealogy and revealed some mysteries, but the

shaikh did not repeat them publicly and said nothing about the remarks made by the voice from the tomb except those concerning negligence and the need for vigilance. After the shaikh's death, however, one of his devotees who had been a confidant of the shaikh divulged something of these mysteries.¹¹⁵

Baha'i found his mastery of the *shari'a* insufficient, and sought Sufi forms of knowledge. One also learns that Baha'i's philosophical and mystical inclinations forced him at times to overlook legal prohibitions against music. One day during his stay in Herat, Baha'i saw a group of people gathered around a blind man carrying a stringed musical instrument (*rabab*). When Baha'i inquired about the reason for this gathering he learnt that the blind man recited poetry lines that disclosed the state of being of the person who comes close to him. Baha'i retorted in denial:

I intend to break his *rabab* and prevent him from profiting from it. But if he were to recite some poetry that expressed the reality of my inner self, I will let him free.¹¹⁶

When Baha'i came closer to the blind man, the latter screamed and pointed at Baha'i, saying:

If you are master of your ego, you are a true man

If you do not take fault of others, you are a true man

Manliness is not to strike the downtrodden but to help him.¹¹⁷

Baha'i reacted strongly to these verses, being beset by a strange state. Late seventeenth-century CE scholars appropriated such mystical experiences professed by jurists like Baha'i and argued that mysticism does not violate Shi'ite teachings and that it agreed with the spirit of the *shari'a*.¹¹⁸

The political instability and the deterioration in the social and economic bases of Safavid society paved the way for 'unorthodoxy' and wider, more potent forms of popular Sufism attested in the outburst of treatises on Sufism and music during this period.¹¹⁹ The challenge to the jurist's authority surfaced as much in the anti-clerical literature as in the statements of 'Ali al-Shahidi, Majlisi and al-Jaza'iri, as I explained in Chapter 4. Indeed, the Imamate doctrine of the Mahdi, in its core, entertains messianism, which could be used by disenchanting social sectors and lower social classes to protest against formal, state embellished Shi'ism. Zarrinkoob asserted that the defamation of the Sufis, reflected for instance in Majlisi's *'Ayn al-Hayat*, is intended as a warning for the layperson in order to dissuade him/her from adhering to the more radical features of Sufism. Majlisi's attempt to promote the image of the jurist attested further to the increasing relevance of mysticism for the populace. He explained that, unlike the layperson, a learned jurist could sift and tackle Sufi tenets adequately.¹²⁰ In *Jawahir al-'Uqul*, Majlisi used an allegorical structure similar to *Gorbeh*

va Mush to enumerate the shortcomings of both jurists and Sufis, indirectly admitting their comparable weight, and competition over social power.¹²¹

Meanwhile, a number of Sufi groups selected and appropriated features of legalistic Shi'ism. Descendants of the lineage-based Sufi orders like the Ni'matullahiyya, Zarrinkoob noted, turned away from philosophy and took up the legal sciences while others became *mujtahids* and *shuyukh al-Islam*.¹²² Clerical rejection of popular Sufism was directed against the non-lineage Sufis who encouraged their followers to challenge the 'orthodoxy' upheld by the state and its religious elite. The jurists received with great alarm the Sufi concepts of the Pole (*qutb*) and seat of deputyship (*maqam-i vilayat*), after the widespread popularity of Ibn 'Arabi's works.¹²³ The idea that Sufi Poles could open the door to deputyship or agency (*vilayat*) caused a major fissure in the formal Shi'ite dogma. It entailed that the deputy holder (*sahibi vilayat*), who was none but the Imam of the Age, would control the conditions of the deputyship and the Occultation. Subsequently, the jurists, as the guides for the Imam of the age, would become dispensable and replaceable.

The revival of attacks against the Qalandars, in the late Safavid period, are noteworthy, for they underscore the interconnection among economic dispossession, vagrancy, anti-Safavid political rebellion and, above all, Sufism-dervishism.¹²⁴ Al-Jaza'iri expressed great disdain for the Sufis, but he devoted special attention to the Qalandars. It is difficult to ascertain what particular historical incidents motivated al-Jaza'iri's anti-Qalandar statements, but it is certain that the Qalandars continued to gain momentum until the seventeenth century CE. Al-Jaza'iri likened the world to a human organism, and compared the kings to a man's head and the 'ulama to his heart. In this order, the Qalandars were analogous to a man's pubic and armpit hair because they have no function in the body. It is harmful and must be plucked out in the same way, as the Qalandars need to be uprooted from society.¹²⁵ Al-Jaza'iri dramatized the Qalandars' 'evil' ways and found their disdain for religious rituals, particularly prayer, most reprehensible.

By the end of Safavid rule, little of the archetypal austerity, *karamat* (*charismata*, miracles) and spiritual excellence remained exclusive to the Sufi tradition. The popular literature ranging from anecdotes and stories to the powerfully penetrating tone of the Persian *ruba'iyyat* promoted new discourses on Sufis and *mujtahids*.¹²⁶ In *Qisas al-'Ulama*, for instance, numerous biographical representations of jurists delineate their pietistic-*karamat* powers.¹²⁷ Once the exclusive holding of the Sufis, *charismata* was acquired by jurists who, like their Sufi counterparts, evolved into self-sacrificing *murids*.¹²⁸ From that time on, the populace bestowed on many jurists, in their *murid*-like posture, extraordinary miracles, the foretelling of dreams and the honor of receiving visitations from the Hidden Imam. This new aura surrounding jurists is vivid in *Tuhfat al-Akhyar* by Mawla Muhammad Tahir Qummi. Based on one tradition, Qummi proclaimed that on the Day of Judgment, when the Prophet weighs the ink of the 'ulama with the blood of martyrs, the ink will be given more value.¹²⁹ Zarrinkoob accurately showed that the jurist, while striving to uproot popular Sufism, had inadvertently

claimed a form of *maqam-i irshad* (spiritual guidance) as a Pole. A proverb reflected the jurists' newly tapped sources of power:

The ignorant worshipper [devoid of the knowledge of jurisprudence] is like the mill's donkey; he runs around without moving from his place!¹³⁰

The worshipper has not only been relegated to a lower rank but has become the antithesis of a religious scholar. Guidance and redemption passes through the agency of jurists, the interpreters of the law.

Summary and Conclusions

The changes in the economic organization and political needs of the Safavid Empire during the late seventeenth century CE, which led to a restructuring of relations between the Shah and the military and administrative elites at the center and in the provinces, along with the increased grievances and social conflicts among the working classes, led to the erosion of state authority. Distinct forms of resistance to the Safavids fomented in spontaneous rebellions and underworld activities in the urban cities. Meanwhile, a puritanical clerical-bureaucratic elite tried to restore some legitimacy and popular reverence to the Safavids. Weakened and threatened by internal dissent and external political challenges, the Safavid state rejected rationalist approaches to Shi'ism. In order to suppress legalistic and intellectual diversity, state clerics advocated an adherence to foundational Shi'ite traditions and an emotive use of collective Shi'ite ritual thus expanding the scope of veneration of the Imams. Eschatological images and visual representations of heaven and hell in Muhammad Baqir Majlisi's *Seas of Light*, delivered in Persian rather than Arabic, gained the favor of an indiscriminating readership. Meanwhile, Majlisi, like several other clerics co-opted Sufi notions of austerity, religious devotions, 'pirhood' and spiritual guidance and adapted them to the *ahl al-bayt* devotionism. Equal interest in eschatological literature and Imamate occultism was evident in al-Hurr al-'Amili's writings.

The intellectual milieu discouraged amalgamations between juridical Islam and philosophical or Sufi thought within clerical ranks. Scholars were forced to define themselves exclusively within one or the other circle. The 'ulama assigned the Sufis to a category of illegitimacy and as such socio-moral abnormality. The focused efforts of the 'ulama against the Sufis indicate that the latter were forceful proselytes who took common cause with the anti-Safavid elements most prone to rebel and shatter the political structure. The anti-Sufi literature ranged from accusations of blasphemy and satanic dispositions to deficiency in intellect and false reasoning.¹³¹ The anti-clerical literature was equally potent, accusing jurists of hypocrisy, corruption and ignorance, accusations which warranted defenses and explanations by jurists like 'Ali al-Shahidi, Ni'matullah al-Jaza'iri, and Majlisi. Notwithstanding, a process of appropriation and co-optation was underway between particular branches of Sufism and clerical Shi'ism. The jurists emerge into austere unitarianists endowed with

charismata, who, like their Sufi counterparts, turned into self-sacrificing *murids*. The populace bestowed on jurists, in their *murid*-like role, the performance of miracles, the foretelling of dreams, and made them recipients of visitations from the Hidden Imam. This dynamic and complex exchange between the *'ulama* and the Sufis, partly illuminated by Zarrinkoob, calls for a nuanced assessment of the changing character and boundaries of each of Sufism and clerical Shi'ism and an analysis of the social process shaping their relationship.¹³² We need to discuss multiple forms of Sufism as well as clerical Shi'ism within distinct historical contexts.

Traditionist scholars for the most part upheld the obligatory observance of Friday prayer but did not base such obligation on the nature of the state or its historical conditions in any shape or form. It was a largely an ahistorical, text-bound, 'non-interpretive' (for it is impossible to rule on any matter without a measure of interpretation) adherence to the words of the Qur'an and the *hadith*. Somehow, this de-linking between temporal authority and Friday prayer may have made it easier for Persians to accept the observance of Friday prayer. But, practically, such an observance hoped to strengthen the clerical-bureaucratic establishment, which serviced the state. Even though state clerics like Majlisi and al-Hurr al-'Amili encouraged the public to adhere to a limited set of socio-religious practices based on the traditions, they could not avoid using a measure of reasoning, however limited, to arrive at legal rulings. Majlisi, for instance, accepted the role of reason, Shi'ite consensus and the scriptures simultaneously as a basis for forming a legal opinion, thus taking a middle ground between rationalism and traditionism. Apparently, many Safavid traditionists admitted some forms of reasoning in particular legal fields and only the few prohibited the use of *ijtihad* completely, as was the position of Muhammad Amin Astarabadi. Moreover, in practice, traditionists and rationalists differed little in their relationship to the Safavid temporal rulers.

Sufi-bent scholars like *mujtahids* favored the prohibition of Friday prayer, albeit from distinct theological and legal angles. The Sufis rejected the theocratic claims of the Safavids, for they either upheld ideal Imamate rule or refused to forfeit messianic expectations, which derailed the existing historical trajectory. The elite articulated these views as well as lower-class constituencies, whose accounts and experiences were suppressed and only indirectly presented in Safavid chronicles. The *mujtahids* as rationalists found in *ijtihad* a source of empowerment against the clerical elite's emphasis on unquestioned adherence to one mold, that of the traditions. They underscored their rejection of the Safavids and their religious servicemen by ruling that the necessary conditions for observing Friday prayer were absent. Marginalized elite members and disgruntled social sectors seemed to have embraced this prohibition by the end of the Safavid era. The prohibition was a theological expression of the eroding legitimacy of the state and its ideological resources. By the time of Shah Tahmasb II (1135–1144AH/1722–1732CE), the opposition to the convening of Friday prayer had spread to the ranks of conventional jurists like 'Ali Naqi Kamarahi, the *shaykh al-Islam* of Shiraz and later Isfahan, and Agha Ibrahim al-Mashhadi (d. 1148AH/1735CE), the *shaykh al-Islam* of Mashhad.¹³³

Conclusion

THE YOUNG SAFAVID EMPIRE needed prestigious clerics who could strengthen its foundations by promoting a standard urban system of Shi'ite worship and a cohesive religious outlook based on the *shari'a*. Neither the Qizilbash, who adhered to folk heterodox Shi'ism, nor the erudite Persian notables, who had a general Sunnite training, were capable of providing the Safavid Empire with a collective social consciousness congenial to empire-building and state legitimacy. The founders of the Safavid Empire sought to transform their deistic rule from a communal Shi'ism to a state-operated Shi'ism at a time when several Arab theologians from Jabal 'Amil, along with their families, were emigrating from Ottoman Syria to Iraq, Mecca, India and Persia. A number of historical factors motivated this emigration of a surplus of jurists who could not find a professional outlet for their expertise, first due to the decrease in opportunities within the Ottoman learning system and, second, due to their limited ability to implement and formally spread their Shi'ite legal rulings in 'Amili villages and towns, which abided by the Ottoman's Sunnite religious instructions and legal practices. In addition, a few 'Amili scholars who were actively professing and implementing *ijtihad*, came under close scrutiny and at least one eminent scholar, al-Shahid al-Thani, was killed by an Ottoman official. The Safavids clearly realized how well they could benefit from the use of *ijtihadi* rationalism to shape their dynastic authority and project an image of Islamic 'authenticity' to their Ottoman foes to the west. Of all the Safavid Shahs, Tahmasb placed the greatest trust in the 'Amilis in general and in the Karaki family of Jabal 'Amil in particular. 'Ali al-Karaki, one of the earliest emigrants to Iraq, actively and persistently courted the Safavids, hoping to shape Safavid religious policies and fully implement Ja'fari law as the basis of

the new Shi'ite state. Shah Tahmasb's reign, however, brought tensions within the clerical community surrounding, first, clerical claims to supreme religious knowledge, second, designating the jurist as the Imam's deputy and, third, the degree of legitimacy which the clerical elite should extend to the Safavid Empire. Several Persian aristocrats resented al-Karaki's encroachment on their political power while their rivals, the Qizilbash elite, supported him. By the end of the sixteenth century CE, a number of 'Amili *mujtahids* had joined the landed aristocracy, attained upper-class distinctions and tapped popular sources of social power.

The 'Amilis promoted anti-Sunni rituals for practical political reasons, namely to popularize Shi'ite creed, create collective religious emblems and advocate emotional immersion in experiences distinguished as 'Shi'ite'. In a way, such an approach aimed to de-normalize the once fluid exchange among different facets of Shi'ism and Sunnism in favor of a self-conscious demarcation of things 'Shi'ite' as focal sources of identity for the laity. The context of Ottoman-Safavid and Uzbek-Safavid struggles and the need for religious legitimacy supplied the justification for such rituals.

Encouraged by his teacher, al-Shahid al-Thani, Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad left Jabal 'Amil for Iraq, finally settling in Persia. With an eagerness to bring Persian society under the fold of Shi'ite legalism, Husayn started actively to spread and propagate Shi'ite traditions. Al-Karaki had argued that observing Friday prayer was optional for Shi'ite Muslims and must only be held during the presence of a jurist who functions as the deputy of the Imam. The social and political importance which al-Karaki gave to such a jurist created much resistance among the Persian bureaucrats against the observance of Friday prayer, which was halted after his death. Husayn, however, convinced Shah Tahmasb that holding Friday prayer was a powerful weapon against the Ottomans and the Uzbeks, because it embellished the Islamic character of his empire. Husayn also tried to disentangle *ijtihad* from court politics, warning against accepting the opinions of al-Karaki and his grandson, Mir Sayyid Husayn, each of whom took on the title 'seal of *mujtahid*'. He held steadfastly to the idea of a pluralism of authority, reflected in the rationalist renewal of legal rulings and a rejection of the opinions of dead *mujtahids*. Indirectly, Husayn's emphasis on the importance of diversity and renewal of Shi'ite law revalidated the position of the Persian notables. More importantly, however, Husayn resisted attempts by his sovereign to control questions of clerical leadership or to designate a 'seal'. Ultimately, he aimed to bring a measure of autonomy to the jurists and high-ranking *'ulama* during their association with temporal rulers.

During the reign of Shah Tahmasb and Shah Isma'il II, influential Qizilbash emirs welcomed the ascendancy of 'Amili clerics to the religious posts in order to undermine their rivals, the Persian *sadrs* and bureaucrats. A few aligned themselves with 'Amili legalism, initially as a counterweight to the Persian notables and to ensure state stability and uniformity which they, as members of the ruling elite, were interested in achieving. After the establishment of the Safavid Empire, the Qizilbash tribes, though emerging from a heterodox, Sufi form of folk Shi'ism,

begin to nurture diverse, often contradictory approaches to Shi'ism on the basis of social class and political interest. In other words, even though the pastoralist and settled Qizilbash populace continued to promote local Sufi and heterodox leanings, members of the military elite, which functioned as an organ of the state, became more receptive to a legally regulated Shi'ism. Their support of the early 'Amili clerics attests to such a development. On their part, the 'Amili *'ulama* were forced to address popular features of Twelver Shi'ism in Persian society and were inevitably drawn to co-opt a number of its features in order to refit Shi'ite legalism to the needs of the lower classes as well as the state.

The emigré 'Amili theologians underwent significant socio-political and economic transformation in their new home in Persia. The opportunity to wed Shi'ism to the Safavid Empire rendered almost pointless for them the long-established idea of a total suspension of temporal authority in the absence of the *Mahdi*. The 'Amilis promulgated legal and doctrinal points to serve three worldly purposes: to legitimize the state's authority over the Shahs' divine rights; to provide ideological Shi'ite links that validated the concepts of state and society; and to promote the efficacy and autonomy of the clerical elite. On its part, 'Amili legalism shaped the character of Persian society inasmuch as this society was ready, historically speaking, to undergo socio-political transformation.

Under Shah 'Abbas, greater efforts were made to promote a rigorous, wide-based Shi'ite orthodoxy that could be internalized by diverse social classes. The renewal and expansion of Islamic law was a function of social processes, weaving in economic and socio-political elements. The increase in the interpretive capacity of the law, mainly through *ijtihad* and the creative re-production and refutation of *fatwas*, was concomitant with changes in polity and social life. Intensified military campaigns with the Ottomans, centralization and depopulation policies, socio-economic and geographical displacement and forced conversion to Islam all transformed the doctrinal and legal landscape. Meanwhile, the severity of Shah 'Abbas' depopulation and centralization policies drained the energy of the peasants, whose discontent was periodically balanced by tax exemptions, which kept fully fledged rebellions at bay. The treatise of Shaykh Lutfullah al-Maysi on spiritual seclusion became an occasion for Lutfullah to establish not only his credibility as a court *mujtahid*, but also the Shah's authority in the new public space, Meydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan in Isfahan. The debate over the congregational qualities of Lutfullah's mosque or their lack thereof, brought to the fore the social struggle between the old Isfahani business elite of Meydan-i Harun-i Vilayat and the Shah's rivaling and authoritative new business center, the Meydan. The struggle also took clear class dimensions when the lower sectors came to be more closely associated with the old center and its congregational mosque.

High-ranking theologians like Baha'i and Mir Damad expressed a keen interest in scientific and philosophical thought and appropriated traditions of 'high' Sufism. Shah 'Abbas welcomed this individualized and elitist eclecticism, particularly because it promoted outward conformity to the political order and de-legitimized

popular heterodoxy and dissent. The *mujtahids*, though seeking a greater autonomy from the state, honored their alliance with the temporal rulers, fitting a *shari'a*-enlightened order to Safavid sovereignty. As such, clerical Shi'ism, advocated by the émigré 'Amilis, found eager followers not only among a learned Persian elite, but also among the Safavid populace. Major sectors of Persian society consented to and appropriated official Shi'ism. The 'Amilis surmised critical methods as to how the foundational Shi'ite texts could be relevant to Persians of different walks of life. Persianization underwrote the emergence of a highly competent and eclectic group of Persian *'ulama*, who carried the legal discourses to a more public domain. Persianization was similarly evident in the politics of those who contested and questioned the legal authority of 'Amili scholars. For instance, a few decades after al-Karaki's ban on the much-cherished folk epic, *Abu Muslim Nameh*, several Persian *'ulama* took up the struggle against the Abu Muslimiyya devotees. Their attacks on the epic took a distinctively Persian character and became an internal social affair.

The high level of abstraction found in the specialized diction and conceptual molds of the rational sciences can distort their immediate link to societal change and political reality. Notwithstanding, Mir Damad's concerns with metaphysical questions, particularly God's relationship to the world, were ostensibly a statement about human knowledge, political conformity and the ideological tensions in the imperial order of Shah 'Abbas. These tensions surfaced in Mir Damad's treatment of the relationship among the shifting frameworks of eternity, perpetuity, and time. The changing context of these cosmogonic-ontological realms may suggest that a particular government can fulfill the will of the Divine or become a temporary negation of it. Under Shah 'Abbas, the state seemed capable of harnessing multiple economic sources, and better situated than its predecessors to dominate ideologically diverse groups within the ruling elite. This necessitated greater levels of separation between ruler and ruled and the rise of multifold sources for Safavid legitimacy and power. Mir Damad recast Suhrawardian views in ways congruent with his social position as a member of a clerical aristocracy allied to the state, yet struggling to achieve autonomy. This autonomy was tied to the notion of an ahistorical Imamate sovereignty for which *mujtahids* like Mir Damad act as witnesses and legatees. Mir Damad did not seek to reconcile philosophy and the *shari'a*. Rather, he prevented philosophical rationalism or mystical intuition, which he utilized, from being judged clerically and vice versa. The concept of *huduth dahrī* avoided a clash between clerical scripturalism on the one hand, and philosophical/intuitive knowledge of the Divine and the world on the other. As such, Mir Damad compartmentalized 'philosophy' and *shari'a* through the very notion of perpetuity, with each realm being bound by its own set of laws. He validated his position as a state cleric when he noted that the fear of divine retribution was necessary to circumvent the commitment of 'abominable acts', that is, acts held to be abominable by the *shari'a* experts and the disciplining state.¹ True human freedom is unattainable, yet one is still rewarded or punished for particular freely willed acts even if God is the ultimate cause of such acts.

During the mid seventeenth century CE, a restructuring of relations between the state, the central bureaucracy and provincial-military elites, transferred part of the monarch's authority to bureaucratic organs of the state. After a dramatic decrease in frontier wars with the Ottomans, Shah Safi increased crown estates at the expense of the provinces. Thus, much wealth was diverted away from provinces like Fars, Qazvin, Gilan, Mazandaran, Yazd, Kirman and parts of Azerbaijan and Khurasan. Consequently, provincial military elite and their staff suffered a blow to their resources while the political power of ministers in general and the grand vizier in particular, increased. Unlike Shah 'Abbas, Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II failed to implement systematic checks against elite monopolies or provide occasional relief to the lower classes in the form of tax exemptions. At the same time, greater economic grievances surfaced, some precipitated earlier at the time of Shah 'Abbas, which led to sporadic revolts against the Safavids. These developments brought greater ideological complexity and diversity to the clerical community including the court *'ulama*. The era of Shah 'Abbas brings an end to "Amilism" as a scholastic tradition exceptionally useful to the Safavid monarchs and Persian society at large. Already, with Baha'i and Mir Dimad, it was no longer possible to locate their intellectual and legal works exclusively within this tradition. Persianization was evident not only in the eclecticism of jurists like Baha'i and Mir Damad, but also in the educated and lay adoption of the legal voice of Islam among Persians.

As the impetus for conversion to Shi'ism weakened in comparison to the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries CE and Sunnite-Shi'ite polemical confrontations between Safavid and Ottoman scholars lost much steam, the need for the old clerical elite of rationalists (*mujtahids*) and its expansive legal jurisdiction waned. Furthermore, the increasing power of this elite alongside the tendency of the disgruntled lower classes to rally around open critics of the Safavids, as was the case with Mulla Qasim, made Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II turn against this elite and its *ijtihadi* practices. These *ijtihadi* practices had permitted, at least in theory, the ongoing critique and refutation of established practices or beliefs on the basis of rationalist legal approbation among court jurists as well as low-ranking *mullahs*, who gave voice to popular dissent. The Shahs cut off the *mujtahids'* economic grants and replaced them with another branch of the Persian clerical elite, which promoted traditionism (*akhbarism*). The Shahs hoped traditionism would limit the challenges to their weakened monarchical rule. When Sufi-bent and philosophically bent scholars joined the clerical ranks and were welcomed by the Safavid court, conventional jurists bemoaned the monarch's retreat from the sacred Shi'ite law of his ancestors. Behind their attacks on the Safavid moral laxity and hypocrisy lurked the *mujtahids'* anger at being displaced by such scholarly hybrids. I have argued that the monarchs' encouragement of Sufi and philosophical trends was not part of a policy of anticlericalism, as many scholars of Safavid Persia purported. Most of these hybrids were well versed in juridical Islam and were adept exponents of the *shari'a*. This may seem contradictory but, in reality, it is not. Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II and some of their ministers also encouraged conservative and elitist

versions of philosophical and Sufi inquiries, which hardly challenged the ruling structure. In addition, it is quite possible to entertain contradictory strings of intellectual activity during periods of historical transition. This transition brought to the fore distinct forms of economic and social conflicts. At the state level, these conflicts signaled among other things, a shift in class boundaries between old and new ruling elites, intra and inter-elite struggles and a diffusion of power away from the Shah. One witnesses sharper ideological rifts among the clerical-administrative courtiers, the landed aristocracy and the military. Unfortunately, the scarcity of sources allows one limited access to the nature of the economic dislocations and social conflicts experienced by the lower classes. Evidently, elements from the top and from below converged in opposing the *mujtahids*, albeit from diverse political and economic motives. This, however, does not lead to the demise of the conventional jurists. Persians continued to express a mixed adherence to and popular denunciation of *mujtahids* and *mullahs* of different legal persuasions.

The espousal of traditionist thought by the imperial power structure, and its popularity among lower social echelons is evident in Safavid chronicles as well as in the *ulamas'* writings, including those of Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki and Ali al-Shahidi, Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, and al-Hurr al-Amili. This picture challenges a number of prevalent assumptions in the secondary literature on *akhbarism* and *usulism*. First, that they were independent and separate legal schools before the sixteenth century, second, that they entertained fixed legal postulates and uniform political approaches to government, and third, that each one of them described a monolithic group of clerics with no internal differentiation or variation. I emphasize instead the interdependence of traditionist and rationalist elements in Shiite legal thought and practices even among Safavid scholars of the mid and late seventeenth century. There are a few extreme, self-conscious, and exclusionary proselytes of traditionism around this time but within *usuli* and *akhbari* circles there was a range of approaches to *ijtihad*, Friday prayer, and Shiite government. These approaches also shift over time and confirm the dialectical nature of the *akhbari-usuli* enterprise. Moreover, Astarabadi's *Safinat al-Najat* does not automatically lead to the rise of a full-fledged traditionist school among Safavid scholars. Rather, socio-economic forces central to seventeenth century Safavid society discussed above, gave voice to traditionism as a resistance to interpretive rationalism of the propertied court *mujtahids* and their staff of low-ranking *mullahs*.¹

Clerical Islam was not constantly antithetical or mutually exclusive to Sufi and philosophical thought. Sufi-bent and philosophically bent scholars from the Persian nobility co-opted the clerical discourse in order to replace the old rationalist jurists and achieve an authorizing stance. These hybrids challenged the legalists' model of normative Shi'ism and allowed elitist and individualized forms of Sufism and philosophy as the basis for religious knowledge. Intra-elite and inter-elite struggles were framed in theological polemics between jurists and Sufi bent scholars over Sufism and congregational prayer. This was not simply a clerical reaction to popular Sufism but also to clerically espoused Sufism. It was also a contest over which

group will decide the doctrinal and behavioral patterns of Shi'ism in Persia. Meanwhile, as 'Abdol-Hosein Zarrinkoob suggested in several studies, the jurists and the Sufis were constantly influencing each other and evolving into distinct and multifaceted subgroups. With the state's support of the jurists, the struggle between the latter and the Sufis culminated in a displacement of the Sufis, at least formally, and the transfer of their popular aura to the jurists in a dialectic of opposition and co-optation.

Except for the more moderate Sufis like Muhammad Taqi Majlisi and Muhsin al-Fayd, no Sufi-bent scholar supported the obligatory observation of Friday prayer. This position posed a challenge to the theocratic claims of the Safavids, for it reflected a persistence of messianic expectations, which reject a final ending to the trajectory of Shi'ite association with temporal authority. It is noteworthy that rationalist jurists like the Sufi-bent *'ulama* called for the prohibition of Friday prayer, albeit from a distinct theological and political position, namely to question Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II's adherence to proper Imamate practices and express their doubts about the qualifications of the religious servicemen who replaced them at court, namely the traditionists, Sufi-bent and philosophically bent scholars. Marginalized elites and disgruntled social sectors gave theological expression to their eroding belief in the efficacy and legitimacy of the Safavid state towards the end of the seventeenth century CE. The philosophically bent *'ulama* for the most part declared Friday prayer obligatory, lending much support to Safavid monarchical rule against its critics, the conventional rationalist jurists.

Diffuse sources of resistance to the Safavids and their puritanical clerical-bureaucratic elite emerged from spontaneous popular rebellions and urban Sufi movements in the late seventeenth century CE. To salvage its authority and renew itself, the Safavid state advocated an anti-rationalist adherence to foundational Shi'ite traditions and an emotive use of collective Shi'ite ritual expanding the field of veneration of the Imams. Ultimately, the late Safavids realized that the traditionists, much like their rationalist co-legalists, advocated the jurist's political involvement in society and government. The *'ulama's* ideas and modifications shaped the social order in a manner unpredicted by the Shahs. Against increasing popular resistance, traditionist scholars who dominated this era called for the obligatory observance of Friday prayer, not as an enactment of the Shah's sovereignty but as an imitative adherence to the scriptures. Majlisi used traditionism to strengthen the Safavids' image as true Imamis and the cleric as the guiding force for the masses. The ruling groups supporting traditionism hoped to prevent dissenting groups, particularly the lower social strata, from using *ijtihad* as a tool to advance views threatening to it. Eschatological literature and Imamate Occultism communicated largely in Persian rather than Arabic found an eager public, and flourished under the support of high-ranking clerics like Muhammad Baqir Majlisi. Meanwhile, Sufi notions of austerity, religious devotions, 'pirhood' and spiritual guidance found their way into clerical literature.

Appendices

I. The ‘Amili *‘Ulama* of Safavid Iran, 1501–1736CE¹

- Ibrahim b. ‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Maysi (alive in 934AH/1527CE)
- Jawad b. ‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Maysi (alive possibly in 934AH/1527CE)
- ‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Karaki, known as al-Muhaqqiq al-Thani (d. 940AH/1533CE)
- * Ni‘matullah b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Khatun (contemporary of al-Karaki)²
- Shams al-Din Muhammad al-‘Amili al-Hayyani, student of al-Shahid al-Thani (10thAH/16thCE)
- ‘Abdullah b. Jabir (alive in 940AH/1533CE)
- Hasan b. ‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Karaki (alive in 972AH/1564CE)
- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad (d. 984AH/1576CE)
- ‘Ali b. Hilal al-Karaki, known as al-Minshar (d. 984AH/1577CE)
- ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Karaki (d. 993AH/1585CE)
- Husayn b. Hasan al-Karaki (10thAH/16thCE)
- * Zayn al-‘Abidin al-‘Alawi al-Karaki, son-in-law of al-Karaki³
- Kamal al-Din Darwish al-Natanzi al-‘Amili (alive in 939AH/1532CE)
- Ja‘far b. Muhammad al-‘Amili (alive in 959AH/1551CE)
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. al-Hasan al-‘Udi al-Jizzini (alive in 962AH/1554CE)
- Muhammad Jabal ‘Amili (d. 968AH/1560CE)
- Ibrahim b. Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. Ahmad b. Muflih al-Maysi (d. 979AH/1571CE)
- Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Husayn al-Hurr al-Mashghari (d. 980AH/1572CE)
- ‘Ali b. ‘Ali b. al-Faqih al-Furzuli (alive in 983AH/1575CE)
- Abu‘l-Hasan al-Musawi al-‘Amili (alive in 988AH/1580CE)
- Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. Abi‘l-Hasan al-Musawi (the tutor of Mir Damad)
- Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. Ahmad b. Abi Jami‘ al-‘Amili (alive late 10thAH/16thCE)
- Husayn al-Mujtahid (d. 1001AH/1592–3CE)

- Khayr al-Din b. ‘Abd al-Razzaq b. Makki b. ‘Abd al-Razzaq b. Ali b. al-Shahid al-Shirazi al-’Amili (alive in 1007AH/1598CE)
- ‘Ali b. Ahmad al-Nabati (alive in 1012AH/1603CE)
- * Taj al-Din b. ‘Ali b. Ahmad al-Husayni (alive 1019AH/1610CE)
- Abu Turab, ‘Abd al-Samad, brother of Shaykh-i Baha’i (d. 1020AH/1611CE)
- Ahmad b. Ahmad b. Yusuf al-Sawadi al-’Inathi (alive in 1021AH/1612CE)
- Jamal al-Din Yusuf b. Ahmad b. Ni’matullah b. Khatun (alive before 1030AH/1621CE)
- Radiyy al-Din b. ‘Ali b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Abi Jami’ al-Juba’i (alive before 1039AH/1629CE)
- Fakhr al-Din b. ‘Ali b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. ‘Abi Jami’ (d. early 11thAH/17thCE)
- Hasan b. ‘Ali b. Ahmad b. Abi Jami’ al-’Amili (d. early 11thAH/17thCE)
- Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din (d. 1030AH/1620CE)⁴
- Husayn b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Hurr al-’Amili (d. after 1030AH/1620CE)
- Shaykh-i Baha’i (d. 1030AH/1621CE)
- Lutfullah al-Maysi (d. 1032AH/1622–23CE)
- Mir Damad (d. 1041AH/1631–2CE)
- Al-Husayni al-’Amili al-Isfahani, brother-in-law of Mir Damad
- ‘Ali b. Sabih al-’Amili (contemporary of Baha’i)
- Ja’far b. Lutfullah b. ‘Abd al-Karim b. Ibrahim b. ‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-’Ali al-Maysi (contemporary of Baha’i)
- Jawad b. Sa’d b. Jawad al-’Amili (contemporary of Baha’i)
- Najib al-Din, ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Juba’i al-’Amili (contemporary of Baha’i)⁵
- Husayn b. Haydar b. ‘Ali b. Qamar (alive in 1038AH/1628CE)
- Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Khwatun al-’Amili (d. after 1039AH/1629CE)
- ‘Ali b. Khwatun al-’Amili (alive mid 11thAH/17thCE)
- Jawad b. ‘Ali al-Karaki (alive mid 11thAH/17thCE)
- Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. Ja’far b. Lutfullah b. ‘Abd al-Karim al-Maysi (alive in 1044AH/1634CE)
- Husayn b. al-Hasan al-Mashghari (alive in 1048AH/1638CE)
- Muhammad al-Jawad b. ‘Ali al-Jami’i (d. 1050AH/1640CE)
- Husayn b. Abi’l-Hasan al-Husayni al-’Amili (alive in 1050AH/1640CE)
- Mirza Habibullah b. al-Husayn b. al-Hasan b. Ja’far al-’Araji al-’Amili (alive in 1050AH/1640CE)
- Ahmad b. al-Husayn al-Musawi, brother of Mirza Habibullah
- Muhammad b. al-Husayn b. al-Hasan al-’Amili, brother of Mirza Habibullah
- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad, paternal nephew of Baha’i
- Nuri b. ‘Abd al-Samad, paternal nephew of Baha’i
- Zayn al-’Abidin al-Husayni, maternal nephew of Baha’i
- Ahmad b. Zayn al-’Abidin al-’Alawi (d. 1054AH/1644CE)
- Husayn b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din, son of al-Shahid al-Thani (d. 1056AH/1646CE)
- Badr al-Din Hasan al-’Amili al-Mudarris (alive in 1056AH/1646CE)

- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Khwatun al-‘Amili al-Tusi (d. 1057AH/1647CE)
- Badr al-Din b. Ahmad al-Husayni al-Ansari (alive in 1057AH/1647CE)
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Muhyiddin al-Musawi (alive in 1057AH/1647CE)
- Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. Badr al-Din al-Hasan b. Ja’far al-A’raji al-Karaki (d. before 1060AH/1650CE)
- Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. ‘Ali b. Husayn al-Musawi (d. 1061–8AH/1650–7CE)
- Hasan b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Hurr, the father of Muhammad al-Hurr al-‘Amili (d. 1062AH/1652CE)
- Zayn al-Din b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-Juba’i (d. 1064AH/1653CE)
- Asadullah b. Muhammad Mu’min al-Khatuni (alive in 1067AH/1656CE)
- Husayn b. Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. ‘Ali b. al-Husayn b. Abi’l-Hasan al-Musawi al-‘Amili al-Juba’i (d. 1069AH/1658CE)
- Husayn b. ‘Ali b. Khudur al-Furzuli (alive before 1069AH/1658CE)
- Ni’matullah b. al-Husayn (d. 1069AH/1658CE)
- Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Maysi (alive in 1073AH/1662CE)
- Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki (d. 1076AH/1665CE)
- Zayn al-‘Abidin b. al-Hasan b. ‘Ali al-Hurr al-Mashghari, brother of al-Hurr al-‘Amili (d. 1078AH/1667CE)
- Husayn b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-Juba’i (d. 1078AH/1667CE).⁶
- Kamal al-Din or Nizam al-Din al-Harfushi (d. 1080AH/1669CE)
- Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Harfushi al-Karaki (d. 1080AH/1669CE)
- Mirza Muhammad Mahdi b. Mirza Habibullah al-Karaki (d. 1080AH/1669CE)
- Mirza Ja’far b. Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. al-Husayn b. al-Hasan al-Karaki (alive after 1080AH/1669CE)
- Husayn b. Badr al-Din b. Najm al-Din al-A’raji, father of Mirza Habibullah, (d. 1080AH/1669–70CE)
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hurr (d. 1081AH/1670CE)
- Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Hasan b. Qasim al-‘Inathi (alive in 1081AH/1670CE)
- ‘Ali b. al-Hasan al-Hurr al-Mashghari, brother of al-Hurr al-‘Amili (d. 1087AH/1676CE)
- ‘Ali b. Zayn al-Din b. Muhammad (alive in 1089AH/1678CE)
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Mahmud b. Yusuf al-Mashghari (d. after 1090AH/1679CE)
- Mirza ‘Ali al-Rida b. Habibullah al-A’raji al-Karaki (d. 1091AH/1680CE)
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Musay’id al-Husayni (alive in 1091AH/1680CE)
- ‘Abd al-Latif b. ‘Ali b. Ahmad b. Abi Jami’ (alive in 1094AH/1682CE)
- Mirza Muhammad Ma’sum b. Muhammad Mahdi b. Habibullah al-Musawi al-Karaki (d. 1095AH/1683CE)
- Hasan b. ‘Ali b. al-Hasan b. Yunus al-Zahiri al-‘Inathi (d. before 1096AH/1684CE)
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. al-‘Aqiq al-Tibnini (d. before 1096AH/1684CE)
- Al-Hasan b. Ibrahim b. ‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Maysi (contemporary of al-Hurr)
- ‘Abdullah b. Muhammad al-Faq’ani (alive in 1069AH/1684CE)⁷

- ‘Ali b. Zayn al-Din b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-Juba’i al-Isfahani, known as ‘Ali Kuchek (alive in 1096AH/1684CE)
- Haydar b. Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. ‘Abi’l-Hasan al-Juba’i (alive in 1096AH/1684CE)
- Husayn b. Jamal al-Din b. Yusuf b. Khatun (alive in 1069AH/1684CE)
- Ibrahim b. ‘Ali al-Juba’i (alive in 1069AH/1684CE)
- Ibrahim b. Ja’far b. ‘Abd al-Samad al-Karaki (alive in 1096AH/1684CE)
- Mirza Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. al-Husayn b. al-Hasan al-Musawi, son of Mirza Habibullah (alive in 1096AH/1684CE)
- Muhammad ‘Ali b. Ahmad b. Musa al-‘Amili al-Nabati (alive in 1096AH/1684CE)
- Muhammad b. Haydar b. Nur al-Din (alive in 1096AH/1684CE)
- Radiyy al-Din (or Al-Radi) b. Hasan b. Muhyiddin b. Abi Jami’ (alive in 1096AH/1684CE)
- ‘Ali b. Radiyy al-Din b. Hasan, son of the preceding scholar
- Yahya b. Ja’far b. ‘Abd al-Samad al-Karaki (alive in 1096AH/1684CE)
- Yusuf b. Ahmad b. Ni‘matullah b. Khatun (alive in 1069AH/1684CE)
- Ibrahim b. Ibrahim b. Fakhr al-Din al-Bazuri (d. around 1096AH/1684CE)
- Ni‘matullah b. al-Husayn al-‘Amili (d. 1069AH/1684CE)
- Muhammad b. Shafi’ b. Baha’ al-Din al-‘Amili (d. after 1096AH/1684CE)
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Ahmad al-Harfushi al-Hariri (d. before 1097AH/1685CE)
- Jamal al-Din b. Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. al-Husayn al-Juba’i (d. 1098AH/1686CE)
- ‘Ali b. Sa’id al-Jabal ‘Amili (alive late 11thAH/17thCE)⁸
- Zayn al-Din b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad or Zayn al-Din al-Saghir (d. 1100AH/1688CE)
- Zayn al-‘Abidin b. ‘Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad b. Zayn al-‘Abidin al-‘Amili (alive in 1101AH/1689CE)
- ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-Juba’i (d. 1103–4AH/1691CE)
- Muhyiddin b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-Juba’i, known as ‘Ali al-Kabir
- ‘Abd al-Nabi b. Ahmad al-‘Amili (alive early 12thAH/18thCE)
- Ibrahim b. ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Maysi (alive before 1103–4AH/1691CE)
- Hasan b. Zayn al-Din b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-Shahid al-Thani al-Juba’i (d. 1104AH/1692CE)
- Muhammad al-Hurr al-‘Amili al-Mashghari (d. 1104AH/1692CE)
- ‘Ali b. ‘Ali b. Ahmad b. Ja’far al-‘Umari al-Maysi (alive in 1105AH/1693CE)
- Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Hurr al-Mashghari al-Juba’i (alive in 1106AH/1694CE)
- Muhammad Rida, son of al-Hurr al-‘Amili (d. 1110AH/1698CE)
- Jamal al-Din Yusuf b. Muhammad Qasim al-‘Amili, brother of Ibrahim b. Muhammad (alive around 1110AH/1698CE)
- Sadr al-Din al-‘Alawi, brother of Zayn al-‘Abidin (d. 1110AH/1698CE)
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Khatun al-‘Amili al-‘Aynathi al-Tusi (d. around 1111AH/1699CE)
- Abu’l-Hasan b. ‘Ali b. al-Hurr al-‘Amili, son-in-law of ‘Allama Majlisi
- ‘Abd al-‘Ali b. Mahmud al-Chapalqi (d. around 1112AH/1700CE)

- Khayr al-Din al-Hafid al-Thani (alive late 11thAH/17thCE)⁹
- Baha' al-Din Husayn b. Muhammad b. Qasim al-'Amili, brother of Jamal al-Din b. Muhammad (alive in 1113AH/ 1701CE)
- Jamal al-Din Husayn b. Muhammad Qasim al-'Amili (alive in 1113AH/1701CE)
- Ibrahim b. Muhammad Qasim al-'Amili al-Jubrani (alive in 1115AH/1703CE)
- Yusuf b. Muhammad b. Qasim al-'Amili al-Jubrani (alive in 1115AH /1703CE)
- Muhammad Tahir b. 'Abd al-Hamir b. Musa al-Nabati (d. 1115AH/1703CE)
- Al-Hasan b. Sulayman b. al-Husayn al-Nabati (alive 1117AH/1705CE)
- Muhammad Amin al-Musawi (alive in 1118AH/1706CE)
- Muhammad Ibrahim b. Muhammad Amin al-Musawi (alive in 1118AH/1706CE)
- Muhammad b. Hasan b. Muhammad b. Sulayman al-Shatiri (alive in 1118AH/ 1706CE)
- Kamal al-Din b. Haydar b. Nur al-Din b. 'Ali al-'Amili (d. 1120AH/1708CE)
- Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. al-Hurr al-'Amili, brother of al-Hurr al-'Amili (alive in 1120AH/1708CE)¹⁰
- 'Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin al-Husayni al-'Alawi al-'Amili al-Isfahani (d. 1121AH/1709CE)
- Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Qasim b. Yusuf al-'Amili (alive in 1124AH/1712CE)
- Muhammad Shafi' b. Baha' al-Din al-'Amili (d. 1125AH/1713CE)
- Muhammad Talib al-'Amili (alive in 1126AH/1714CE)
- Murtada 'Al Abi'l-Hasan (alive in 1131AH/1718CE)
- Murtada al-'Amili al-Isfahani b. Haydar b. Nur al-Din (d. after 1132AH/1719CE)
- Mir Muhammad Ashraf b. 'Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin al-Karaki (d. 1133AH/1720CE or 1145AH/1732CE)¹¹
- Mirza Ghiyath al-Din Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Hasib al-'Alawi with the pen name Khayal (d. 1134AH/1721CE)
- Abu'l-Hasan al-Sharif b. Muhammad b. Tahir al-Futuni al-Nabati (d. 1138–9AH/ 1725CE)
- * Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Haydar al-Musawi al-'Amili (d. 1139AH/1726CE)
- Muhammad b. Ibrahim Sharaf al-Din b. Zayn al-'Abidin al-Juba'i (d. 1139AH/ 1726CE)
- Ja'far al-'Amili al-Radawi (alive in 1148AH/1735CE)
- Haydar al-'Amili al-Mashhadi (alive in 1158AH/1745CE)
- Hafiz b. Muhammad Ashraf b. 'Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad al-'Amili (d. 1160AH/ 1747CE)
- Hasan Nur al-Din al-'Amili (d. 1160AH/1747CE)
- Hasan al-'Inathi Wa'iz¹²
- Husayn al-'Amili¹³
- Khayr al-Din al-Hafid (contemporary of 'Allama Majlisi)
- Mirza Baha' al-Din Muhammad
- Mirza Kamal al-Din Husayn (12thAH/18thCE)
- 'Abd al-'Ali b. Mir Husayn al-Karaki, a great grandson of al-Karaki (12thAH/ 18thCE)

- ‘Ali b. Muhyiddin b. ‘Ali al-Kabir al-Mashhadi (12thAH/18thCE)
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Kabir al-Mashhadi (12thAH/18thCE)
- * Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Shahruri (n.d.)
- Mansur al-‘Amili (n.d.)
- * Zayn al-Din Abu Mansur al-‘Amili (n.d.)

II. Posts and Activities of the Emigré ‘Amili ‘*Ulama*¹

Period: 1500–1560CE

NAME	POSITION	CITY
‘Abd al-‘Ali b. ‘Ali al-Karaki or Taj al-Din	<i>Mudarris</i>	Kashan Qazvin
‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Karaki	<i>Mudarris</i> <i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Kashan Qazvin Tabriz
Muhammad Jabal ‘Amili	Prayer Leader of the Imperial Camp	Qazvin
Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Mashhad Qazvin
Husayn al-Mujtahid	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i> <i>Mudarris</i> <i>Vakil-e Halaliyyat</i>	Ardabil Qazvin
Ibn Hilal al-Karaki or ‘Ali al-Minshar	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i> <i>Vakil-e Halaliyyat</i>	Isfahan

Total: 6 scholars

Period: 1560–1620CE

NAME	POSITION	CITY
Ahmad b. Zayn al-‘Abidin al-‘Alawi	Court Recognition as Jurist and Philosopher	Isfahan
‘Ali b. Khatun al-‘Amili	<i>Mudarris</i>	Mashhad
‘Ali b. Sabih al-‘Amili	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Yazd
Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad nephew of Baha’i	<i>Qadi</i> <i>Vakil-e Halaliyyat</i>	Herat
Husayn b. Haydar b. Qamar	<i>Mufti</i>	Isfahan
Lutfullah al-Maysi	<i>Khadim al-Hadra</i> <i>Mudarris</i> <i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Isfahan Qazvin
Mir Damad	Court Jurist and Philosopher	Isfahan

Muhammad al-Jawad b. 'Ali al-Jami'i	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Tustar
Nuri b. 'Abd al-Samad, nephew of Baha'i	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Herat
Radiyy al-Din b. 'Ali b. Ahmad b. Abi Jami'	Administrator of <i>Waqf Qadi</i>	Shushtar South Iran
Shaykh-i Baha'i	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Isfahan Qazvin

Total: 11 scholars
Period: 1620–1680CE

NAME	POSITION	CITY
'Abd al-Latif b. 'Ali b. Ahmad b. Abi Jami'	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Tustar
Ahmad b. al-Hurr al-'Amili	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Mashhad
Badr al-Din b. Ahmad al-Husayni	<i>Mudarris</i>	Tustar
Badr al-Din Hasan al-'Amili	<i>Mudarris</i>	Mashhad
Husayn b. Badr al-Din, father of Habibullah	<i>Sadr</i>	Isfahan
Husayn b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn al-Juba'i	<i>Mudarris</i> <i>Sadin al-Rawda</i> <i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Mashhad
Ibrahim b. 'Ali b. 'Abd al-'Ali al-Maysi	Court Recognition as ' <i>Alim</i>	Isfahan
Jamal al-Din b. Nur al-Din al-Juba'i	<i>Sadr</i>	Haydarabad
Mirza 'Ali Rida b. Habibullah	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Isfahan
Mirza Habibullah	<i>Sadr</i> Vizier	Isfahan
Mirza Ibrahim b. Muhammad, grandson of Habibullah	<i>Qadi</i> <i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Tehran
Mirza Ja'far b. Ibrahim, grandson of Habibullah	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Tehran

Mirza Muhammad Mahdi, son of Habibullah	<i>Sadr</i> Vizier	Isfahan
Mirza Muhammad Ma'sum, grandson of Habibullah	Shaykh al-Islam	Isfahan
Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Khatun	Grand <i>Sadr</i> Vizier	Haydarabad
Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Mahmud al-Mashghari	Vizier	
Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Muhyiddin al-Musawi	<i>Qadi</i>	Mashhad
Muhammad al-Hurr al-'Amili	<i>Mudarris</i> <i>Qadi</i> <i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Mashhad

Total: 18 scholars

Period: 1680–1736CE

NAME	POSITION	CITY
'Abd al-Hasib al-'Alawi	<i>Imam Jum'a</i>	Isfahan
'Abd al-Nabi b. Ahmad	<i>Qadi</i>	Khalafabad
'Ali b. Radiyy al-Din b. Hasan	<i>Qadi</i>	Khalafabad
'Ali B. Sa'id al-Jabal 'Amili	Court Recognition as Poet	Isfahan
Ja'far al-'Amili al-Radawi	Great <i>Sadr</i>	Isfahan
Mirza Baha' al-Din Muhammad	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Qazvin
Mirza Ghiyath al-Din Ahmad al-'Alawi	Court Recognition as Poet	Isfahan
Mirza Kamal al-Din Husayn	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Qazvin
Mir Muhammad Shafi'	<i>Shaykh al-Islam</i>	Qazvin
Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Juba'i al-Shahruri	Court Recognition as ' <i>Alim</i>	Isfahan

Total: 10 scholars

Total scholars with distinguished posts for the whole Safavid Period: 45

III. The Intellectual Production of the Emigré ‘Amili *‘Ulama*

A. Shi’ite Law

Systematic Legal Works and Commentaries

- Baha’i (d.1030/1621): Al-Habl al-Matin, Mashriq al-Shamsayn
- Muhammad al-Hurr al-‘Amili or al-Hurr (d. 1104AH/1692CE): Bidayat al-Hidaya, Hidayat al-‘Umma ila Ahkam al-A’imma (3 selected volumes of his Wasa’il al-Shi’a)

Commentaries on Works by Ja’far b. Hasan al-Hilli, known as Al-Muhaqqiq Al-Awwal (d. 676AH/1277CE)

Al-Fara’id al-Nusayriyya

- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad (d. 984AH/1576CE)
- Baha’i

Al-Mukhtasar al-Nafi’

- Al-Karaki (d. 540AH/1533CE)
- ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Karaki (d. 993AH/1585CE)
- Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. ‘Ali b. Husayn al-Musawi (d. 1061–8AH/1650–7CE): Ghurar al-Majami’
- ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-Shahid al-Thani or ‘Ali al-Shahidi (d. 1103–4AH/1691CE)
- Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. al-Hurr (alive in 1106AH/1694CE)

Shara’i’ al-Islam

- Al-Karaki: Fawa’id al-Shara’i’
- Mir Damad (d. 1041AH/1631CE)
- ‘Ali al-Shahidi
- Jawad b. ‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Maysi (d. after 1117AH/1705CE)

Commentaries on Works by Hasan b. Yusuf al-Hilli, known as Al-‘Allama al-Hilli (d. 726AH/1325CE)

Irshad al-Adhhan

- Al-Karaki: Ta’liq al-Irshad
- ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Karaki: Manhaj al-Sadad
- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad
- Baha’i
- Jawad b. ‘Ali al-Karaki
- Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Khwatun (d. after 1039/1629): Burhan al-Sadad
- Lutfullah al-Maysi (d. 1032AH/1622–3CE)

Mukhtalaf al-Shi'a

– Al-Karaki

– Baha'i

– Mir Damad

Qawa'id al-Ahkam

– Al-Karaki: Jami' al-Maqasid

– 'Abd al-'Ali al-Karaki

– Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad

– Baha'i: Hall 'Ibara Mu'dala min al-Qawa'id

– Lutfullah al-Maysi

– Nur al-Din 'Ali b. Ahmad b. Abi Jami' (late 10thAH/16thCE)

– Mir Damad: Dala'il al-Ahkam

– Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Ahmad al-Harfushi al-Hariri (d. before 1097AH/1685CE)

– 'Ali al-Shahidi

Tahdhib Tariq al-Wusul

– Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Islah Jami' al-Bayn min Fawa'id al-Sharhayn

Tahrir al-Ahkam al-Shar'iyya

– Al-Karaki

– Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad

Commentaries on Works by Muhammad b. Makki al-'Amili, known as Al-Shahid al-Awwal (d. 786AH/1384CE)

Al-Alfiyya

– 'Abd al-'Ali al-Karaki

– Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Al-Jawahir al-Saniyya fi Sharh al-Alfiyya al-Shahidiyya

– Mir Damad

– Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Khwatun

– Husayn b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn al-Musawi al-Juba'i (d. 1069AH/1658CE)

– Nur al-Din 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Abi'l-Hasan al-Musawi

– 'Ali al-Shahidi

– Jawad b. 'Ali al-Maysi (d. after 1117AH/1705CE)

Al-Dhikra

– Al-Karaki

– Baha'i

Al-Durus al-Shar'iyya fi Fiqh al-Imamiyya

– Al-Karaki

Al-Lum'a al-Dimashqiyya

– 'Ali al-Shahidi

Al-Qawa'id wa al-Fawa'id

– 'Ali al-Shahidi (a commentary on the abridged version of al-Qawa'id written by al-Shahid al-Thani, entitled Tamhid al-Qawa'id)

– Baha'i

Commentaries on Works by Al-Miqdad b. ‘Abdullah al-Sayyuri al-Hilli (d. 826AH/1423CE)

Al-Tanqih al-Ra’i

– Mir Damad

Commentaries on Works by Zayn al-Din al-‘Amili, known as Al-Shahid al-Thani (d. 966AH/1558CE)

Al-Ithna’ashariyya

– Baha’i: commentary on ritual purity

Nata’ij al-Afkar fi Hukm al-Muqimin fi al-Asfar

– Baha’i: commentary

Al-Rawda al-Bahiyya

– Muhammad b. Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-‘Amili (d. 1030AH/1620CE): Kashf al-Rumuz

– ‘Ali al-Shahidi: Al-Zahrat al-Dhawiyya, Al-Radd ‘ala I’tiradat Khalifa Sultan ‘ala al-Rawda al-Bahiyya

Commentaries on Works by Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-‘Amili, known as Sahib al-Ma’alim (d. 1011/1602)

Al-Ithna’ashariyya

– Muhammad b. Hasan al-‘Amili

– Baha’i

Commentaries on Works by Baha’ al-Din al-‘Amili (d. 1031AH/1622CE)

Al-Ithna’ashariyya

– Abu’l-Hasan al-Musawi (alive in 988AH/1580CE): Al-Anwar al-Bahiyya fi Sharh al-Ithnay’ashariyya

– Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. al-Husayn al-Musawi

– Ahmad b. Zayn al-‘Abidin al-‘Alawi (d. 1054AH/1644CE)

– ‘Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad al-‘Alawi (d. 1121AH/1709CE): Al-Fitra al-Malakuhiyya *Zubdat al-Usul*

– Badr al-Din b. Ahmad al-Ansari (alive in 1057AH/1647CE)

Collections of Fatwas

– Al-Karaki: Risala-yi Ahkam (Persian translation of his collection of Fatwas), Usul al-Din wa Furu’ih

– Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad: Fatawa Mutafawwiqa

– Baha’i: Jami’-i ‘Abbasi (Persian, on acts of devotion), Majmu’at Fatawa

– Lutfullah al-Maysi: Majmu’at Fatawa

– Mir Damad: Shari’ al-Najat (Persian, on acts of devotion)

– Zayn al-‘Abidin al-Husayni (alive mid 11thAH/17thCE), maternal nephew of Baha’i: Tatmim al-Jami’ al-‘Abbasi

- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Khwatun (d. 1057AH/1647CE): Takmil al-Jami’ al-‘Abbasi, Commentary on Jami’-i ‘Abbasi

General Principles of the Law

- Al-Karaki: Risala fi al-Taqiyya, Risala fi al-Ghayba, Risalat al-Jana’iz, Risalat Ahkam al-Salam, al-Tahiyya, al-Mansuriyya, al-Risala al-Mahramiyya, Risala fi al-Ta’qibat, Risalat al-Jubayra
- Husayn b. Haydar b. Qamar al-‘Amili: Ishraq al-Haqq min Matla’ al-Sidq (on al-Ghayba al-Sughra, Taqiyya and possibly dogmatics)
- Baha’i: Al-Fara’id al-Baha’iyya, Risala ‘Amaliyya fi al-Fiqh, Hidayat al-‘Awam
- Mir Damad: Risala fi al-Nahi ‘an Tasmiyat al-Mahdi
- Zayn al-‘Abidin b. al-Hasan al-Mashghari (d. 1078AH/1667CE): Risala fi al-Taqiyya
- Al-Hurr: Kashf al-Ta’miya ‘an Wajh al-Tasmiya

Qur’anic Law

- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Haydar al-Musawi (d. 1139AH/1726CE): Inas sultan al-Mu’minin, Ayat al-Ahkam

Miscellaneous Legal Questions

- Al-Karaki: Ajwibat al-Masa’il al-Fiqhiyya, Al-Su’al wa al-Jawab, Ajwibat al-Masa’il al-Saymariyya, Ajwibat Masa’il waradat fi Muharram sanat 929AH/1522CE ‘an al-Sada al-‘Ulama, Fatawa, al-Masmu’a, Ajwibat Masa’il Mawlana Yusuf al-Mazandarani, al-Multaqatat
- Husyan b. ‘Abd al-Samad: Mas’alatan, Masa’il Fiqhiyya, al-Tusa’iyya, Jawabat al-I’tiradat al-‘Ashra, Jawabat Badr al-Din al-Hasan al-Husayni al-Madani
- ‘Ali b. Hilal al-Karaki: 29 legal questions
- ‘Abd al-Samad, brother of Baha’i: Explanatory notes on the margins of Al-Fara’id by Nasir al-Din Tusi
- Husayn al-Mujtahid: Al-Nafahat al-Samadiyya fi Ajwibat al-Masa’il al-Ahmadiyya
- Baha’i: Ajwibat Masa’il al-Shaykh Jabir, Ajwibat Masa’il al-Shaykh Salih b. Hasan al-Jaza’iri, Jawab-i Masa’il-i Shah ‘Abbas, Al-Masa’il al-Fiqhiyya, Jawab al-Masa’il al-Madaniyyat, Jawabat ba’d al-Nas, Ajwibat Masa’il Shah Fadlullah, Jawab-i Shaykh-i Baha’i beh Hakim-i Gilan
- Lutfullah al-Maysi: Fatawa on legal issues discussed with several ‘ulama
- Mir Damad: Al-I’dalat al-‘Awisat, Al-Ithna’ashariyya or ‘Uyun al-Masa’il al-Fiqhiyya, Su’al va Jawab
- Husayn b. Haydar b. ‘Ali b. Qamar: Isabat al-Haqq, Al-Rasa’il al-Kathira
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. al-Hasan al-Husayni al-Musawi: Ajwibat Masa’il Ibn Shudqum

B. Acts of Devotion

1. General

- Al-Karaki: Risala fi al-Bulugh wa Haddih, Risala fi al-Niyya
- Husayn al-Mujtahid: Risala fi al-Niyya

2. Comprehensive works

- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad: *Al-Wajibat al-Malikiyya*
- Baha’i: *Al-Ithna’ashariyyat*

3. On ritual purity and prayer

- Mir Damad: *Risala fi al-Tahara wa al-Salat*

Ritual Purity

1. General

- Al-Karaki: *Risala fi Ta’rif al-Tahara*, *Risala fi Mulaqi al-Shubha al-Mahsura*
- ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Karaki: Commentaries on work of ‘Ali b. Hilal al-Karaki
- Baha’i: *Risala fi al-Tahara*
- Mir Damad: *Al-Ta’liqat fi al-Tahara*

2. On waters

- Al-Karaki: *Al-Risala al-Kurriyya*
- Baha’i: *Al-Kurriyya*

3. On ablution

- Al-Karaki: *Risala fi Wujub al-Tahara*
- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad: *Mash al-Rijlayn* or *Wujub al-Mash wa Ta’yinihi wa ‘Adam Jawaz Ghasl al-Rijlayn*
- ‘Ali b. Hilal al-Karaki: *Kitab al-Tahara*
- Baha’i: *Mash al-Rijlayn*

4. On the deceased

- Husayn al-Mujtahid: *Risala fi Istiqbal al-Qibla*

5. On impurities

- Al-Karaki: *Risala fi ma Tanajjas ba’duhu wa Ishtabaha Mawdi’ al-Nijasa*
- Ahmad al-‘Alawi: *Risala fi Nijasad al-Khamr* (in refutation of the legal opinions of Muhammad Amin Astarabadi)

6. On vessels

- Husayn al-Mujtahid: *Risala fi al-Awani*

Prayer

1. General

- Al-Karaki: *Al-Alfiyya*, *al-Ja’fariyya*, *al-Najmiyya* (on dogmatics and prayer), *Ma’ani Af’al al-Salat*, *al-Risala al-‘Amaliyya fi Fiqh al-Salat al-Yawmiyya*
- ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Karaki: *Al-Nizamiyya*
- Hasan al-Karaki: *Risala fi al-Minhaj al-Qawim fi al-Taslim fi al-Salat*
- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad: *Al-‘Iqd al-Husayni* (al-Tahmasbi), *al-Masa’il al-Salatiyya*, *Risala fi al-Salat wa al-Iqrar*
- Baha’i: *Al-Ithna’ashariyya fi al-Salat*, *Risala Mukhtasara fi Fiqh al-Salat*, *Risala fi Qada’ al-Salat*
- Badr al-Din al-Ansari: *Al-Ithna’ashariyya al-Salatiyya*
- Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Hasib al-‘Alawi (d. 1133AH/1720CE or 1145AH/1732CE): *Ghawamid al-Salat*

2. On the direction of prayer

- Al-Karaki: *Risala fi al-Qibla*, *Risala fi Qiblat Khurasan*
- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad: *Tuhfat Ahl al-Iman, Qiblat ‘Iraq al-‘Ajam wa Khurasan*
- ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Karaki: *Risala Latifa fi al-Qibla ‘Umuman wa fi Qiblat Khurasan*
- Husayn al-Mujtahid: *Risala fi l-Qibla, Qiblat Khurasan*
- Baha’i: *Risala fi Tahqiq Jahat al-Qibla, Jihat al-Qibla, Ma’rifat Qiblat al-Bilad, Tahqiq Qiblat Iraq ‘Ajam wa Khurasan*
- Al-Hurr: *Risala fi Qiblat al-Iraq wa Khurasan*

3. On clothes for prayer

- Al-Karaki: *Risala fi Qalansuwat al-Harir wa al-Dibaj*
- Baha’i: *Al-Haririyya*

4. On recitation

- Baha’ al-Din: *Risala fi Istihbab al-Sura fi al-Salat, Risala fi Wujub al-Sura ba’da al-Hamd*

5. On prostration

- Al-Karaki: *Risala fi Jawaz al-Sujud ‘ala al-Turba al-Husayniyya al-Mashwiyya*
- Baha’i: *Risala fi Ahkam Sujud al-Tilawa, Risala fi Sajdat al-Qur’an wa Ahkamiha wa Adabiha*

6. Friday prayer

- Al-Karaki: *Risala fi Salat al-Jum’a*
- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad: *Risala fi Wujub Salat al-Jum’a*
- ‘Ali b. Hilal al-Karaki: *Risala fi Salat al-Jum’a*
- ‘Abd al-‘Ali al-Karaki: *Al-Lum’a fi Tahqiq Amr Salat al-Jum’a or ‘Adam Wujub al-Salat ‘Aynan fi Zaman al-Ghayba*
- Hasan b. ‘Ali al-Karaki: *Al-Bulgha fi I’tibar Idhn al-Imam fi Mashru’iyyat Salat al-Jum’a or Risala fi ‘Ayniyyat Salat al-Jum’a*
- Husayn al-Mujtahid: *Al-Lum’a fi Nafi ‘Ayniyyat Salat al-Jum’a or Al-bulgha fi ‘Adam ‘Ayniyyat Salat al-Jum’a*
- Husayn b. Haydar b. ‘Ali b. Qamar (alive in 1038AH/1628CE): *Risala fi al-Salat*
- Baha’i: *Risala fi Salat al-Jum’a*
- Mir Damad: *Risala fi Salat al-Jum’a*
- Al-Hurr: *Ithbat Wujub Salat al-Jum’a ‘Aynan*

7. On errors in prayer

- Al-Karaki: *Khalal al-Salat, Risala fi al-Sahu wa al-Shak fi al-Salat*
- Baha’i: *Sharh Mushkilat al-Salat, Risala fi Sihhat Salat mima la Tatimmu fi al-Sitr Wahdihi*

8. On travelers’ prayer

- Al-Karaki: *Fawa’id fi Salat al-Musafir*
- Baha’i: *Risala fi al-Takhyir fi al-Mawatin al-Arba’a lil-Musafin fi al-Qisar wa l-Itmam*

9. On Ziyarat

- Ahmad al-‘Alawi: *Risala-yi dar Namaz-i Ziyarat*

10. On prayer and residences

- Al-Karaki: *Maqala fi al-Khuruj ‘an Had al-Tarakhkhus min Mahal al-Iqama*

Alms

1. General

- Baha'i: Risala fi al-Zakat, Risala fi al-Zakat wa Taqdiriha bi'l-Mathaql
- Al-Hurr: Urjuza fi al-Zakat

Khums

1. General

- Zayn al-Din Abu Mansur al-'Amili: Jawab Mas'ala fi al-Khums.
- Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Risalat al-Husur wa al-Bawari wa Sahm al-Imam also known as Risala fi Sarf Sahm al-Imam min al-Khums ila Fuqara' al-Sada
- Baha'i: Al-Ithna'ashariyya fi al-Zakat wa al-Khums

2. Specific

- Mir Damad: Ithbat al-Siyada li-man Yantasibu ila Hashim Umman
- Ahmad al-'Alawi: Risala dar Siyadat-i Sharif-i

Fasting

1. General

- Al-Karaki: Risala dar Sawm
- Baha'i: Al-Ithna'ashariyya fi al-Sawm, Risala fi al-Sawm
- Badr al-Din al-Ansari: Sharh on al-Ithna'ashariyya al-Sawmiyya

2. On other topics

- Husayn b. Haydar b. Qamar al-Karaki: Ishtirat Sihhat al-Sawm al-Wajib bi'l-Ghushl min al-Jinaba
- Baha'i: Risala fi Takhlil al-Asnan fi Layali Shahr Ramadan also known as Al-Jam' wa al-Tawfiq bayna al-Fatwayayn

Seclusion

- Lutfullah al-Maysi: Al-I'tikafiyya or Ma' al-Hayat wa Safi al-Furat Hajj
- Al-Karaki: Risala fi al-Hajj wa al-'Umra, Risala fi Manasik al-Hajj followed by Mulhaq Kafarat al-Hajj
- Baha'i: Al-Ithna'ashariyya fi al-Hajj or Manasik al-Hajj, Risala fi al-Hajj
- Zayn al-'Abidin b. al-Hasan al-Mashghari: Sharh on Manasik al-Hajj by Baha'i, called Al-Manasik al-Marwiyya fi Sharh al-Ithna'ashariyya al-Hajjiyya

Holy War

1. General

- Husayn al-Mujtahid: Al-Jihadiyya

2. On booty of war

- Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-'Amili: Risala fi al-Ard al-Maftuha 'Anwatan

Ordering Good and Forbidding Evil

- Hasan al-Karaki: Al-Amr bi'l-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahi 'an al-Munkar

C. On Contracts

1. Generalities

– Al-Hurr al-'Amili: Risala fi Anna al-Tasarruf wa al-Yad Dalil al-Mulkiyya

2. On formulas

– Al-Karaki: Siyagh al-'Uqud wa al-Iqa'at, Anis al-Tawwabin

– 'Ali b. Hilal al-Karaki: Siyagh al-'Uqud wa al-Iqa'at

– Al-Hurr: Manzuma on Siyagh al-'Uqud wa al-Iqa'at

3. Possessions

– Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Risala fi Taqdim al-Shiya' (communal possession) al-Zanni 'ala al-Yad (personal possession)

– Al-Hurr: Fa'ida fi Hijjiyyat al-Yad

TRANSACTION

– Abu'l-Hasan al-Sharif b. Tahir al-Futuni (d. 1138–9AH/1725CE1): Sharh Kitab al-Matajir based on Kitab Kifayat al-Ahkam by Sabzavari

a. Prohibited business

1. On music

– 'Ali al-Shahidi: Tanbih al-Ghafilin, in refutation of Sabzavari's treatises on ghina'

2. On tax revenue and government's gifts

– Al-Karaki: Qati'at al-Lajaj fi Tahqiq Hill al-Kharaj

– Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Risala fi Hilliyyat Jawa'iz al-Sultan

b. Rights of cancellation

1. Specific

– Al-Karaki: Risala fi Tahqiq al-Bay' bi-Shart al-Khayar

c. Loan and interest

– Husayn b. Haydar b. Qamar al-Karaki: Isabat al-Haqq or Risala fi Jawaz Shart al-Murtahin al-Wikala li-Nafsihi fi Bay' al-Marhun

Endowment

1. Specific

– Ahmad al-'Alawi: Bayan al-Haqq wa Tibyan al-Sidq

Marriage

1. General

– Al-Karaki: Risala fi al-Nikah wa al-Mut'a, Al-Nikahiyya (on Tazwij al-Nabi li-Zaynab wa Ruqayya min 'Uthman)¹

– Baha'i: Ahkam al-Zawj wa al-Zawja

– Husayn b. al-Hasan al-Mashghari al-'Amili (alive in 1048AH/1638CE): Al-Nikah

2. On legal guardians

– Lutfullah al-Maysi: Al-Watha'iq wa al-Iqal li'l-'Ashwa' fi al-Layla al-Zalma' bi-Qiwa al-Hibal or Risala fi Faskh al-Zawja al-Saghira Nikah al-Wali Laha ba'da Kibariha

3. On legal obstacles

– Al-Karaki: *Shurut al-Nikah*

4. On foster relationship

– Al-Karaki: *Risala fi al-Rida'*

– Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: *Risala fi al-Rida'*

– Mir Damad: *Dawabit al-Rida'*, *al-Risala al-Rida'iyya*

– Al-Hurr: *al-Risala al-Rida'iyya*, *Manzuma fi al-Rida'*

– Abu'l-Hasan al-Futuni: *Risala fi al-Rida'*

5. On temporary marriage

– Al-Karaki: *Fa'ida fi al-Mut'a*

6. On nuptial gifts

– Baha'i: *Risala fi Jawaz Man' al-Zawja Nafsaha 'an al-Zawj Hatta Taqbid al-Mahr*, *Maqala fi Imtina' al-Zawja 'an Mutlaq al-Istimta' la Khusus al-Wat' Qabla Qabd Tamam al-Mahr* (which may be the same as the first one)

– Mir Damad: *Jawab al-Su'al 'an Tanazu' al-Zawjain fi Qadr al-Mahr wa Tasdiq Wakil al-Zawja li'l-Zawj*

d. On unilateral obligations

1. Divorce

– Al-Karaki: *Risala fi Talaq al-Gha'ib*

2. Confession

– Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: *Risala fi al-Iqrar*

e. On 'rules'

Hunting and slaughtering

1. Specific

– Husayn al-Mujtahid: *Risala fi Hukm Dhaba'ih Ahl al-Kitab*

– Baha'i: *Risala fi Dhaba'ih Ahl al-Kitab*, *Risala fi Nijasat Dhaba'ih al-Kuffar wa Sana'i'ihim*

Food and drink

1. On wine

– Ahmad al-'Alawi: *Risala dar Radd-i Mawla Muhammad Amin Astarabadi who declared wine-drinking lawful*

2. On tobacco

– Al-Hurr: *Risala fi Hurmat Shurb al-Tutun wa'l-Qahwa*

Reclamation

1. Specific

– Al-Karaki: *Risala fi al-Ard al-Mundarisa*, *Risalat Aqsam al-Ardayn*

Inheritance

1. General

– Al-Karaki: *Sharh Mabhath al-Mirath min al-Mukhtasar al-Nafi'*

– Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: *Al-Iqrar bi-Waladin fi al-Irth*

– 'Ali b. Muhyiddin al-Jami' (d. after 1008AH/1599CE): *Risala fi al-Mirath*

– 'Abd al-Samad (d. 1020AH/1611CE), the brother of Baha'i: *Commentaries on*

- Risalat al-Mawarithh by Nasir al-Din Tusi
- Baha'i: Al-Fara'id al-Bahiyya, Risala fi al-Mawarithh
 - Lutfullah al-Maysi: Tahqiq Mas'alat al-Wasiyya bi'l-Mal (based on al-'Allama's Irshad)
 - Ahmad b. al-Hasan al-Hurr (alive in 1106AH/1694CE): Urjuza fi al-Mawarithh²
 - Al-Hurr al-'Amili: Manzuma fi al-Mawarithh
 - 'Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad al-'Alawi
- Arbitration
1. On judicial procedure
 - Husayn al-Mujtahid: Risala fi Tanazi' al-Zawjan fi Mata' al-Bayt
 - Mir Damad: Risala fi Tanaz' al-Zawjain fi Qadr al-Mahr
 2. On witness
 - Al-Karaki: Risala fi al-'Idala or Risala fi Ma'rifat al-Kaba'ir
 - 'Abd al-'Ali al-Karaki: Risala fi al-Kaba'ir
 - Baha'i: Risala fi al-'Idala

D. *Usul al-Fiqh* (Jurisprudence)

- Al-Karaki: Risala fi al-Man' 'an Taqlid al-Mayt, Dirayat al-Hadith Risala fi Tariq Istinbat al-Ahkam, Wujub al-Ijtihad 'ala Jami' al-'Ibad 'inda 'Adam al-Mujtahidin, Risala fi al-Usul
- Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Risala dar Radd-i Mujtahidin, Ijtihad va Taqlid, Risala Wad'iyya
- Baha'i: Zubdat al-Usul, Nazm al-Usul, Tahdhib al-Usul, Marqat al-Usul, Hashiyat al-Zubda, Risala fi al-Diraya, Hashiyat Sharh al-'Adudi 'ala Mukhtasar al-Usul, Sharh Sharh al-Rumi 'ala al-Mullakhkhas, Hashiya 'ala Ma'alim al-Din
- Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-Shahid al-Thani (d. 1030AH/1620CE): Hashiya 'ala Ma'alim al-Din
- 'Abd al-Latif b. Abi Jami': Adam Jawaz Taqlid al-Mayt, Risalat Ithbat Luzum Wujud Mujtahid dar Ghaybat, Hashiya 'ala Ma'alim al-Din
- Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-'Aqiq al-Tibnini al-'Amili (d. before 1096AH/1684CE): Sunan al-Hidaya
- 'Ali al-Shahidi: Hashiya 'ala Sharh al-Lum'a
- Al-Hurr al-'Amili: Manzuma on Masa'il Usul al-Fiqh, Nuzhat al-Isma' fi Hukm al-Ijma'

E. Religious Writings

a. Hadith

- Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Al-Arba'in, Sharh Hadith "Hubbiba ilayya min Dunyakum Thalath", Risala fi al-Diraya, Wusul al-Akhyar ila Usul al-Akhbar
- Baha'i: Sharh al-'Arba'in Hadithan, Al-Wajiza fi 'Ilm al-Diraya
- Mir Damad: Al-Rawashih al-Samawiyya fi Sharh Ahadith al-Imamiyya (a Sharh on al-Kafi), Maqala fi Tad'if Hadith Sahu al-Nabi, Hashiyat Al-Istibsar on Hadith

- Ahmad al-'Alawi al-'Amili: *Manahij al-Akhbar fi Sharh al-Istibsar, Al-Ma'arif al-Ilahiyya fi Sharh Hadith "Man 'Arafa Nafsahu Faqad 'Arafa Rabbahu"*
- Badr al-Din al-Ansari: *'Uyun al-Jawahir fi Hujjiyyat Akhbar al-Ahad, Hawashi 'ala al-Ahadith al-Mushkila*
- Ni'matullah b. al-Husayn al-'Amili (d. 1069AH/1658CE) ³
- 'Ali al-Shahidi: *Al-Ahadith al-Nafi'a, Commentary on Al-Fawa'id al-Madaniyya*
- Al-Hurr al-'Amili: *Al-Jawahir al-Saniyya fi al-Ahadith al-Qudsiyya, Wasa'il al-Shi'a, Tafsir Wasa'il al-Shi'a ila Tahsil Masa'il al-Shari'a, Fihrist Wasa'il al-Shi'a, Ithbat al-Hudat bi'l-Nusus wa al-Mu'jizat, Al-Jam' wa al-Tawfiq bayna al-Khabarayn*
- Al-Hurr: *Al-Fusul al-Muhimma fi Usul al-A'imma*

Commentaries on Works by Muhammad al-Kulayni or al-Kulini (d. 328AH/939CE)
Al-Kafi Fi Usul al-Din

- Ahmad al-'Alawi
- Badr al-Din al-Ansari
- 'Ali al-Shahidi: *Al-Durr al-Manzum min Kalam al-Ma'sum (Sharh on usul al-Kafi)*
- Al-Hurr
- 'Ali b. Zayn al-Din, known as 'Ali Kuchek (alive in 1096AH/1684CE)
- Abu'l Hasan al-Sharif al-Futuni

Commentaries on Works by Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Qummi, known as Ibn Babuya and al-Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381AH/991CE)

Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih

- Baha'i
- Mir Damad
- Ahmad al-'Alawi
- Al-Hurr

Commentaries on Works by Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Tusi, known as Shaykh al-Ta'ifa (d. 460AH/1067CE)

Al-Istibsar

- Mir Damad
 - 'Abd al-Latif al-Jami'i
- Tahdhib al-Ahkam*
- Mir Damad

b. Qur'anic exegesis

- Baha'i: *Al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa fi al-Tafsir, Tafsir Surat al-Fatiha, Hashiyat Anwar al-Tanzil 'ala Tafsir al-Baydawi, Tafsir Surat "Fasuhqan li-'Ashab al-Sa'ir", Maqala fi Wajh al-Taghlib fi Qawlihi Ta'ala: "Wa Ma Kunna Ashab al-Sa'ir," Hal Qawl al-Baydawi, Al-Hashiya 'ala al-Hashiya 'ala Tafsir al-Baydawi, Hawashi al-Kashshaf, 'Ayn al-Hayat, Jawabat Thalath Masa'il Tafsiriyya*

- Mir Damad: Sudrat al-Muntaha, Amanat-i Ilahi (Tafsir Surat Amanat), Ta'wil al-Muqta'at fi Awa'il al-Suwar al-Qur'aniyya, Tafsir Surat al-Ikhlās, Maqala fi "Qul Huwa'l-Lahu Ahad"
- Ahmad al-'Alawi: Lata'if-i Ghaybiyya, Risala dar Aqwal-i Dabbat al-Ard
- Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Khwatun al-'Amili (d. 1057AH/1647CE): Lectures on Tafsir
- Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki (d. 1076AH/1665CE): Hashiya 'ala al-Baydawi
- Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. al-Hurr: Tafsir al-Qur'an
- Abu'l-Hasan b. 'Ali b. al-Hurr al-'Amili (late 17thCE): Mir'at al-Anwar wa Mishkat al-Asrar fi Tafsir al-Qur'an
- 'Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad al-'Alawi: 'Arsh Sama' al-Tawfiq

c. Biography: Ahwal, Tarajim, Rijal, Fawa'id, and Ijazat

- Muhammad b. 'Ali al-'Udi al-Jizzini (alive in 962AH/1554CE): Bughyat al-Murid fi al-Kashf 'an Ahwal al-Shaykh Zayn al-Din al-Shahid
- Husayn al-Mujtahid: Al-Hashiya 'ala 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida of al-Shaykh al-Saduq
- Husayn b. Haydar b. Qamar al-Karaki: Ijazat
- Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Risala fi Ahwal al-Mukhalifin li-Mawlana Amir al-Mu'minin wa Ta'yin Ba'dihim, Risala fi Ma'rifat Mashayikh al-Shi'a
- Baha'i: Hawashi 'ala Khulasat al-Rijal by 'Allama al-Hilli, Tawdih al-Maqasid fima Ittufiqat fi Ayyam al-Sana, Fawa'id fi al-Rijal, Tarjamat Muhammad b. Isma'il
- 'Abd al-Latif al-Jami'i: Concise work on Rijal
- Mir Damad: Hawashi Rijal al-Kashshi
- Ahmad al-'Alawi: Al-Minhaj al-Safawi fi Fada'il al-Sadat
- Kamal al-Din al-Harfushi (d. 1080AH/1669CE): Ijazat
- Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Tibnini: Jami' al-Aqwal
- 'Ali al-Shahidi: Al-Durr al-Manthur min al-Khabar al-Ma'thur wa ghayr al-Ma'thur, Al-Fa'ida al-Kabira (including 26 biographies), Al-Ta'liqat al-Rijaliyya
- Al-Hurr al-'Amili: Amal al-Amil fi 'Ulama' Jabal 'Amil, Manzuma fi Tarikh al-Nabi wa al-A'imma, Urjuza fi Tarikh al-Ma'sumin, Al-Fawa'id al-Tusiyya, Kitab Tarajim al-Rijal, Risalat al-Rijal, Risalat Ahwal al-Sahaba
- Muhammad Shafi' b. Baha' al-Din al-'Amili (d. 1125AH/1713CE): Mahafil al-Mu'minin (a dhayl of Majalis al-Mu'minin by Qadi Nurullah al-Shushtari), several biographies of prominent 'ulama and distinguished men
- Muhammad Ashraf b. 'Abd al-Hasib al-Musawi al-Karaki (d. 1133AH/1720CE or 1145AH/1732CE): Fada'il al-Sadat

d. Doctrine

- Al-Karaki: Al-Ma'rifa wa al-Miqdar al-Lazim Minha
- Husayn al-Mujtahid: Sharh Wajib al-I'tiqad, Al-Tawhid, Risalat Tawhid wa Ithbat-i Wajib
- Baha'i: Al-I'tiqadat, Fayide-yi Manqul az Wajib al-I'tiqad
- Mir Damad: Nibras al-Diya' fi Tahqiq Ma'na al-Bada'
- Zayn al-'Abidin b. al-Hasan al-Mashghari (d. 1078AH/1667CE): Risala fi al-Taqiyya

- Al-Hurr al-'Amili: Al-Iqaz min al-Haj'a bi'l-Burhan 'ala al-Raj'a, Risalat Tanzih al-Ma'sum min al-Sahu wa al-Nisyan, Al-Tanbih fi al-Tanzih
- Abu'l-Hasan al-Sharif al-Futuni: Diya' al-'Alamin fi Bayan al-A'imma al-Mustafin, Shari'at al-Shi'a wa Dala'il al-Shari'a (a sharh on Mafatih al-Shara'i' by Muqla Muhsin Kashani), Haqiqat Madhhab al-Imamiyya

e. Polemics ⁴

- Al-Karaki: Nafahat al-Lahut fi La'n al-Jibt wa al-Taghut, Al-Mata'in al-Majrumiyya
- Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Munazara ma'a ba'di 'ulama' Halab fi'l-Imama
- Hasan al-Karaki: Kitab 'Umdat al-Maqal fi Kufr Ahl al-Dalal
- 'Abd al-'Ali al-Karaki: Al-Munazarat
- Husayn al-Mujtahid: Radd Bida' al-'Ammah, Risala fi Yawm Qatl 'Umar
- Ahmad al-'Alawi: Misqal-i Safa dar Tajliyyeh va Tasfiyyeh-yi A'ineh-yi Haqq Nama, Lavami'i Rubbani dar Radd-i Shubhat-i Nasrani, Sawa'iq al-Rahman fi al-Radd 'ala al-Yahud wa Ithbat Tahrif Tawratihim, Risalat Izhar al-Haqq wa Mi'yar al-Sidq,⁵ Thuqub al-Shihab fi Rajm al-Murtab (against Sufism)
- Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki: Hidayat al-Abra' ila Tariq al-A'imma al-Akhyar (against Usulis)
- 'Ali al-Shahidi: Al-Siham al-Mariqa min A'rad (Aghrad) al-Zanadiqa, Zad al-Murshidin, Maslak al-Murshidin, Al-Radd 'ala Sultan al-'Ulama'
- Al-Hurr al-'Amili: Al-Risala al-Ithna 'Ashariyya fi al-Radd 'ala al-Sufiyya
- Muhammad Ashraf b. 'Abd al-Hasib al-'Alawi (d. 1133AH/1720CE or 1145AH/1732CE): Masa'ib al-Nawasib
- Abu'l-Hasan al-Sharif al-Futuni: Tanzih al-Qummiyyin fi al-Radd 'ala al-Sayyid al-Murtada

f. Language: Grammar/philology, lexicography, morphology, rhetoric

- Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Hashiyat al-Fawa'id al-Diya'iyya
- Baha'i: Al-Samadiyya fi al-Nahu, Lughz al-Samadiyya, Lughz fi al-Sarf wa al-Nahu, Al-Tahdhib fi al-Nahu, Mukhtalaf al-Nuhat (also called Nahj al-Najat), Lughz al-Zubda, Lughz al-Kafiya, Lughz al-Nahu, Lughz al-Kashshaf, I'jaz al-Alghaz, Tahdhib al-Bayan, Asrar al-Balagha, Hashiya 'ala al-Mutawwal, Sharh al-Shafiya fi al-Sarf, Hashiya 'ala Sharh al-Kafiya, Sharh Hashiyat al-Khitabi
- Mir Damad: Hashiyat Sharh Mukhtasar al-'Adudi ?
- Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki: 'Uqud al-Durar fi Hall Abyat al-Mutawwal wa al-Mukhtasar, Hashiya 'ala al-Mutawwal, Shawahid-i Mutawwal, Urjuza fi al-Nahu
- Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Hariri al-Harfushi (d. before 1097AH/1685CE): Al-La'ali al-Saniyya fi Sharh al-Ajrumiyya fi al-Nahu, Dalil al-Huda wa Sharh Mujib al-Nada
- Al-Hurr al-'Amili: Manzuma on Masa'il Nahawiyya, Al-'Arabiyya al-'Ulwiyya wa al-Lugha al-Marwiyya, Urjuza fi al-Ma'ani wa al-Bayan

g. Literature: Prose and poetry

- Shams al-Din Muhammad al-'Amili al-Hayyani, student of al-Shahid al-Thani: Poetry

- Al-Karaki: Poetry
- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad: A large collection of poetry, *Sharh al-Ra’iyya*
- Baha’i: *Kitab Sawanih Safar al-Hijaz* (same as Nan va Halva), *Al-Fawz wa al-Aman fi Madh Sahib al-Zaman*, *Al-Mikhlat*,⁶ *Al-Kashkul*, *Diwan*, *Miscellaneous poems* (*Elegy for his father*, *Sharh Yek Bayt*, *Guftari az Baha’i*, *Ghazal*, *Nazm*, *Qasa’id*, *Munajat*, *Manzumat*, *Muntakhabat*), *Al-Zahira*, *Min Lata’if al-Asmar wa Zara’if al-Akhbar*, *Kitab al-Khutab al-Baha’iyya*, *Masnavi Nan va Panir*, *Masnavi Shir va Shekar*, *Masnavi Tuti Namah*, *Falnamah*, *Goharnamah*
- Mir Damad: *Diwan* (Persian and Arabic poetry), *Mashriq al-Anwar*
- Najib al-Din al-Juba’i: *Surat Taqriz*
- Nuri, nephew of Baha’i: Persian poetry
- Badr al-Din b. Ahmad al-Ansari: Few poems
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Khwatun al-‘Amili: *Diwan*
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Muhyiddin al-Musawi (alive in 1057AH/1647CE): Poetry
- Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki: A collection of poetry, *Mukhtasar al-Aghani*
- Ibrahim b. Ibrahim b. Fakhr al-Din al-Bazuri (d. around 1096AH/1684CE): Short collection of poetry, *Rihlat al-Musafir wa Ghunya ‘an al-Musamir*
- Haydar b. Nur al-Din al-Juba’i (alive in 1096AH/1684CE): *Kashkul*
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Harfushi: Poetry
- Jamal al-Din b. Nur al-Din al-Juba’i (d. 1098AH/1686CE): Poetry
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hurr al-‘Amili: Collection of poetry
- Zayn al-‘Abidin b. al-Hasan, brother of al-Hurr al-‘Amili (d. 1078AH/1667CE): *Diwan*
- ‘Ali al-Shahidi: Numerous poems
- ‘Ali b. Said al-Jabal ‘Amili, known by his pen name Mehri Arab, contemporary of Shah Suleiman: Numerous poems including *al-Mulamma’at* in Arabic and Persian
- Al-Hurr al-‘Amili: *Diwan*
- Muhammad Shafi’ b. Baha’ al-Din: *Masnavi poetry*
- ‘Ali b. Radiyy al-Din b. Abi Jami’: Poetry
- Abu’l-Hasan al-Sharif al-Futuni: *Kashkul*, *Mi’raj Nameh*

h. Popular Shi’ite literature (Maqatil, Du’a, worship)

- Hasan al-Karaki: *Manaqib Ahl al-Bayt wa Mathalib A’da’ihim*
- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad: *Ta’liqat ‘ala al-Sahifa al-Kamila al-Sajjadiyya*
- Taj al-Din b. ‘Ali b. Ahmad al-Husayni (alive in 1019AH/1610CE): *Al-Tatimma fi Ma’rifat al-A’imma*⁷
- Baha’i: *Hada’iq al-Salihin* or *Hada’iq al-Muqarrabin* (a *Sharh* on *al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya*), *Miftah al-Falah fi ‘Amal al-Yawm wa al-Layla*, *Risala fi Maqatal al-Husayn*, *Davazdah Imam*, *Risala fi Wujub Shukr al-Mun’im*
- Mir Damad: *Sharh al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya*, *Al-Arba’at Ayyam*
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Khwatun: *Jami’ al-Amthal*
- Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki: *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*
- ‘Ali al-Shahidi: *Sharh al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya*
- Al-Hurr al-‘Amili: *Al-Sahifa al-Thaniya min Ad’iyat al-Imam al-Sajjad*, *Maqatal al-Husayn*

- ‘Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad al-‘Alawi: *Al-Jawahir al-Manthura fi al-Ad’iya al-Ma’tura*, *Sirat al-Zahidin*
- Muhammad Ashraf b. ‘Abd al-Hasib al-‘Alawi: *Sharh Du’a al-Sabah*
- Abu’l-Hasan al-Futuni: *Sharh ‘Ahd Nameh va Malik Ashtar*
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Shahruri (n.d.): *Tuhfat al-Talib fi Manaqib ‘Ali b. Abi Talib*, *Sharh al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya*

i. Ethics

- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad: *Al-Arba’ina Hadithan fi al-Akhlaq*, *Nur al-Haqiqa wa Nawr al-Hadiqa*
- Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Khwatun: *Tawdih-i Akhlaq-i ‘Abdullah Shah-i* (a *Sharh on Akhlaq-i Nasiri*)
- Al-Hurr al-‘Amili: *Manzuma fi al-Akhlaq*
- Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. ‘Ali b. al-Hurr al-‘Amili: *Kitab Jawahir al-Kalam fi al-Khisal al-Mahmuda fi al-Anam*
- Abu’l-Hasan al-Sharif al-Futuni: *Nasayih al-Muluk wa Adab al-Suluk*

j. Logic⁸

- Baha’i: *Sharh ‘ala Sharh al-Shamsiyya*
- Mir Damad: *Risala fi al-Mantiq*
- Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki: *Urjuza fi al-Mantiq*

F. General Intellectual and Scientific Works

a. Philosophy–theosophy

- Baha’i: *Al-Jawhar al-Fard*, *Khawas-i Asma’-i Ilahi*, *Fasl-i dar Ma’rifat-i Damir*, *Ithbat al-Anwar al-Ilahiyya*, *Risala fi al-Wujud al-Dhihni*
- Mir Damad: *Risala fi Tahqiq Mafhum al-Wujud*, *Al-Jabr wa al-Tafwid*, *Al-Imadat wa al-Tashriqat fi Huduth al-‘Alam wa Qidamih*, *Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, *Taqdimat Taqwim al-Iman*, *Taqwim al-Iman*, *Hashiyat Taqwim al-Iman*, *Hashiya ‘ala al-Shifa’*, *Al-Jadhawat*, *Al-Ufq al-Mubin*, *Risala fi Huduth al-‘Alam*, *Al-Tashihat wa al-Taqwimat*,⁹ *Al-Qabasat*, *Khilsat al-Malakut*, *Al-Iqazat*, *Etologia of Aristotle*, *Al-Iqadat fi Khalq al-A’mal wa Af’al al-‘Ibad*, *Al-Jam’ wa al-Tawfiq bayna Ra’yay al-Hakimayn fi Huduth al-‘Alam*, *Al-Habl al-Matin*, *Nafi al-Jabr wa al-Tafwid*, *Sharh al-Najat of Ibn Sina*, *Tashriq al-Haqq*, *Risala fi ‘Ilm al-Wajib*
- ‘Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad al-‘Alawi: *Sudrat al-Muntaha wa al-‘Atiyya al-‘Uzma*
- Ahmad al-‘Alawi al-‘Amili: *Riyad al-Quds*, *Hazirat al-Uns min Arkan Riyad al-Quds*, also called *Masabih al-Quds wa Qanadil al-Uns*, *Al-Nafahat al-Lahutiyya fi al-‘Atharat al-Baha’iyya*, *Miftah al-Shifa’ wa al-‘Urwa al-Wuthqa*, *Al-Hikma al-Mashriqiyya*, *Kihl al-Absar*, *Pasukh-i Amili beh Porsesh-i Tusi az Khosroshahi*

b. Dogmatic theology (kalam)¹⁰

- Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Samad: *Sharh Risalat Nafs al-Amr of Nasir al-Din Tusi*
- Mir Damad: *Rawdat al-Muttaqin*

- Ahmad al-'Alawi al-'Amili: *Kashf al-Haqa'iq* (Sharh on *Taqwim al-Iman* of Mir Damad)
- Al-Hurr al-'Amili: *Manzuma fi Masa'il Kalamiyya*
- 'Abd al-Hasib: *Sudrat al-Muntaha*
- Muhammad Ashraf b. 'Abd al-Hasib al-'Alawi: 'Alaqaṭ al-Tajrid (on Nasir al-Din Tusi's *Tajrid al-'Aqa'id*)

c. Sufism

- Baha'i: *Milal va Nihal*
- Mirza Ahmad, brother of Habibullah: A treatise on Sufism
- Muhammad Shafi' b. Baha' al-Din: Passages on *Istilahat al-Sufiyya wa al-'Urafa'*

d. Mathematics

- Al-Karaki: *Risala fi al-Kurr*
- Khayr al-Din b. 'Abd al-Razzaq b. Makki al-Shirazi al-'Amili (alive in 1007AH/1598CE): works on *Riyadiyyat* including a treatise with a long final section on *Ilm al-Hisab*
- Baha'i: *Bahr al-Hisab*, *Khulasat al-Hisab*, *Hashiyat Khulasat al-Hisab*, *Al-Risala al-Baha'iyya fi al-Hisab*, *Risala-ye dar Hisab*, *Bahr al-Hisab*, *Al-Tuhfa*, *Mizan al-Maqadir* or *Awzan-i Shari'a*, *Risala fi Nisbat Irtifa' A'zam al-Jibal ila Qutr al-Ard*, *Risala fi Nisbat al-Qutr ila al-Muhit*, *Risala fi al-Kurr*
- 'Abd al-Samad, brother of Baha'i: *Manzuma fi al-Jabr wa al-Muqabala*
- Mir Damad: *Unmuzaj al-'Ulum*, *Jayb al-Zawiya*
- Jawad b. Sa'd b. Jawad al-'Amili: *Sharh Khulasat al-Hisab*
- Najib al-Din, 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Juba'i: *Hisab al-Khata'ayn*
- Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, nephew of Baha'i: *Manzuma fi al-Jabr wa al-Muqabala*
- Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Khwatun: Lectures on rational sciences and mathematics
- Al-Hurr al-'Amili: *Manzuma fi al-Handasa*

e. Astronomy

- Baha'i: *Tashrih al-Aflak fi al-Hay'a*, *Hashiya 'ala Tashrih al-Aflak*, *Risala fi Ma'rifat al-Taqwim*, *Tadaris al-Ard*, *Al-Safiha* (on *al-Astirlab*), *Sharh al-Chughmini*, *Tuhfeyi Hatimi*, *Sharh Nusus Ma'rifat al-Taqwim*, *Risala fi Anna Anwar al-Kawakib Mustafada min al-Shams*, *Risala fi Hall Ishkalay 'Utarid wa al-Qamar*
- Al-Hurr al-'Amili: *Hay'at*, *Manzuma fi 'Ilm al-Nujum wa al-Falak*

f. Medicine

- Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki: *Kitab al-Tibb al-Kabir*, *Kitab al-Tibb al-Saghir*¹¹

g. History¹²

- Zayn al-'Abidin b. al-Hasan al-Mashghari, brother of al-Hurr (d. 1078AH/1667CE): *Tarikh*
- Ahmad b. Hasan b. 'Ali b. al-Hurr al-'Amili: *Al-Durr al-Masluk fi Ahwal al-Anbiya' wa al-Muluk*,¹³ *Al-Tibr al-Maskuk*, *Rawd al-Nazirin fi 'Ilm al-Awwalin wa'l-Akharin*¹⁴
- Muhammad Shafi' b. Baha' al-Din: *Sha'sha'a Dhu al-Faqar*¹⁵

h. Alghaz and fann-i mu'amma

- Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Several alghaz sent to his son Baha'i, Mu'ammaye va Hall-i An, Mu'amma beh Namah-yi Yunus, Lughz-i va Hall-i An beh Surat-i Porsesh va Pasukh
- Baha'i: Mu'ammaye beh Namah-yi Qasim, Lughz al-Qanun, Hall-i Lughz, Lughz al-Lughz
- Ibn Khwatun, Jawab Risalat al-Lughziyya al-Baha'iyya

G. Miscellaneous

Combined works

- 'Abd al-Hasib b. Ahmad al-'Alawi: Manahij al-Shari'in¹⁶
- Abu'l-Hasan al-Sharif al-Futuni: Al-Fawa'id al-Gharawiyya wa al-Durar al-Najafiyya¹⁷
- 'Ali al-Shahidi: Jami' al-Ghurur

The Qur'an

- Baha'i: Tahdhib al-Bayan fi Tartib al-Qur'an, Hall al-Huruf al-Qur'aniyya, I'jaz al-Asnaf¹⁸
- Al-Hurr: Risalat Tawatur al-Qur'an

Geneology

- Abu'l-Hasan al-Sharif al-Futuni: Al-Ansab
- Baha'i: Mashajjarat al-Rijal, Nasab Namah va Shajareh
- Ahmad al-'Alawi: Risala dar Nasab-i Mu'awiyah 'alayhi al-La'na wa al-'Adhab
- Abu'l-Hasan al-Sharif al-Futuni: Hada'iq al-Albab, Kashf al-Niqab 'an Wajh Rumuz Hada'iq al-Albab¹⁹

Letters, official correspondences

- Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Jawab Maktub al-Shah Sulayman al-'Uthmani ila al-Shah Tahmasb al-Safawi,²⁰ Maktub min al-Shaykh Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad ila al-Shahid al-Thani
- Baha'i: Namaha-yi Shaykh-i Baha'i beh Mir Damad, Mukatabat al-Shaykh al-Baha'i, Pasukh-i Baha'i beh Shaykh Lutfullah
- Mir Damad: Jawab al-Amir Abi'l-Hasan al-Farahani to Mir Damad, Namaha-yi Mir Damad, Namah-yi Mir Damad beh Hakim Shifa'i, Namah-yi Shah 'Abbas beh Sharif-i Makka (composed by Mir Damad)

Rihla/safarnamah

- Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad: Al-Rihla
- Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Hurr, paternal uncle of al-Hurr (d. 1081AH/1670CE): Al-Rihla
- Najib al-Din 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Juba'i: Al-Rihla possibly the same as Al-Rihla ila al-Haj
- Ibrahim b. Ibrahim b. Fakhr al-Din al-Bazuri: Rihlat al-Musafir wa al-Ghunya 'an al-Musamir

Copying and error

- Al-Hurr: Manzuma fi Qawa'id al-Khatt wa al-Kitaba
- Mir Damad: Al-Tashifat

Peculiar sciences (*'ulum ghariba*)

- Baha'i: Al-Jafr

Notes

Introduction

1. A significant body of literature emerged in both Iran and Lebanon attempting to revisit the Safavid period, focusing particularly on questions of monarchical rule, Imamate government, revolutionary and institutionalized Shi'ism, and Iranian cultural identity. See 'Ali Shari'ati, *Tashayyu'-i 'Alavi va Tashayyu'-i Safavi* (Iran, 1973); Maryam Mir Ahmadi, *Din va Madhhab dar 'Asr-i Safavi* (Tehran, 1984); Rasul Ja'fariyan, *Dunbalah-yi Justiju dar Tarikh-i Tashayyu' dar Iran* (Qum, 1995); Mahdi Munfarid Farahani, *Muhajarat-i 'Ulamay-i Shi'a az Jabal 'Amil beh Iran dar 'Asr-i Safavi* (Tehran, 1998).
2. A good example of this nationalist scholarship is Agha Buzurg Tehrani, *Tabaqat A'lam al-Shi'a: Al-Kawakib al-Muntashira fi'l-Qarn al-Thani ba'd al-'Ashara*, ed. 'Ali Munzavi (Tehran, 1993). In my interviews with Munzavi, he expressed his belief that Persian culture was naturally inclined toward Sufi thought and open philosophical inquiries alien to the cultural Arab background of the theologians of Jabal 'Amil. See also 'Abd al-Husayn Salihi Shahidi, 'Madrasa-yi Falsafi-yi Qazvin dar Asr-i Safavi', *Hozeh*, 58 (1372), pp. 169–192. On the Lebanese side, several works described the conversion of Persia to clerical Shi'ism, mechanically, as the outcome of the personal efforts and unique intellectual background of the 'Amili theologians. See 'Ali Muroeh, *Al-Tashayyu' bayna Jabal 'Amil wa Iran* (London, 1987); Ja'far al-Muhajir, *Al-Hijra al-'Amiliyya ila Iran fi'l-'Asr al-Safawi* (Beirut, 1989); Muhammad Mahdi Taskhiri, 'Al-Hurr al-'Amili in the Heart of the Iranian People', in Silsilat Mu'tamarat Hay'at 'Ulama' Jabal 'Amil, *Al-Hurr al-'Amili* (Beirut, 1419), pp. 45–56. In comparison, recent studies of the Safavid period by Rasul Ja'fariyan, *Safaviyah dar 'arasah-i din, farhang va Siyasat*, 3 vols (Qum, 1379/2000) and Mansur Sifatgul, *Sakhtar-i nihad va andishah-i dini dar Iran-i 'asr-i Safavi* (Tehran, 1381/2002) advance more nuanced treatments of these questions.

3. See Abu El Fadl Ezzati, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islamic Law and Jurisprudence* (Lahore, 1976); Norman Calder, 'The Structure of Authority in Imami Shi'i Jurisprudence', Ph.D. Diss., London University, 1983; Etan Kohlberg, *Belief and Law in Imami Shi'ism* (Great Britain and USA, 1991); Noel J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh, 1997). In comparison to these studies, Devin Stewart's *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy: Twelver Shi'ite Responses to the Sunni Legal System* (Utah, 1998), sheds some light on sectarian-legal politics among Shi'ite and Sunnite scholars, which shaped the development of Shi'ite legal precepts and juridical methods after the tenth century. Yet, we are still in the dark as to the social processes, with their economic and political components, which shaped the evolution and transformation of a particular juridical concept or practice or produced major legal debates and theological rifts at distinct historical junctures.
4. See Husayn Muroeh, *Al-Naza'at al-Madiyya fi al-Falsafa al-'Arabiyya al-Islamiyya*, vol. 2 (Beirut, 1988); Rifa'at Abou El-Haj, 'The Social Uses of the Past: Recent Arab Historiography of Ottoman Rule', *IJMES*, 14 (1982), pp. 185–201; Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge and New York, 1983).
5. See Eric Hobsbawm, 'The Social Function of the Past: Some Questions', *Past and Present*, no. 55 (1972) pp. 3–17. Historians cannot truly reproduce the past and therefore continue to struggle with the problem of analyzing the notion of the past and its transformation in society.
6. Contrary to a widely held view, the decline of the *madrasas* of Jabal 'Amil in the seventeenth century did not stem from the *'ulama's* large-scale migration to Mecca, Iraq, Iran and India. Legal expertise (and a surplus of scholars) grew irrelevant for 'Amili society. The view that 'Amili religious schools dwindled in the late sixteenth century due to the jurists' desertion of Jabal 'Amil after their forced migration to Safavid Persia under the Ottomans dominates most studies of Syrian-Lebanese Shi'ism. See Muhsin al-Amin, *Khitat Jabal 'Amil* (Beirut, 1983); Ja'far al-Muhajir, *Al-Hijra al-'Amiliyya ila Iran al-Safawiyya* (Beirut, 1989); Dalal 'Abbas, *Baha' al-Din al-'Amili: Adiban, Faqihan wa 'Aliman* (Beirut, 1995).
7. Willem Floor, *The Economy of Safavid Persia* (Reichert, 2000), p. 14.
8. The relationship between medieval Islamic trade guilds and the *futuwwat* tradition in Persia needs further research. Floor argued that there is no evidence for the interpenetration between the two based on an examination of a nineteenth-century work on the Faqr-i 'Ajam, a *futuwwat* association, which possibly antedates the foundation of the Safavid state. See Floor, 'Guilds and futuwwat in Iran', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft* 134 (1984) pp. 106–114.

Chapter 1. Sufi regalia and legal banners

1. I will use the terms 'Shi'ism' and 'Shi'ite' to denote Twelver Shi'ism. Other Shi'ite sects will be clearly identified.
2. Roger Savory, 'A Very Dull and Arduous Reading': A Reappraisal of the History of Shah 'Abbas the Great by Iskandar Beg Munshi', in *Studies on the History of Safavid Iran* (London, 1987), pp. 19–20; Hans R. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', in *The*

- Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, eds P. Jackson and L. Lockhart (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 189–90; see also S. A. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 105–8 for an analysis of the new developments brought by the Safavid normative order and religious policies.
3. Roger Savory, 'The Consolidation of Safavid Power in Persia', *Der Islam*, 41 (Berlin, 1965), pp. 71–94; H. R. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 213.
 4. Ghiyath al-Din al-Husayni, known as Khwandamir, *Habib al-Siyar fi Akhbar Afrad al-Bashar*, part 4, vol. 3, p. 34. *Habib al-Siyar* is a general history, which covers the early Safavid period until 930AH/1524CE, around the end of Shah Isma'il's reign. Yahya b. 'Abd al-Latif Qazvini, *Lubb al-Tavarikh* (n.p., 1363), 394. *Lubb* was completed 948AH/1541CE.
 5. See Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', pp. 195–198, for a discussion of the Shi'ite character of Safavid Sufism. Roemer questions the extent to which Shah Isma'il's beliefs exhibited a gradual transition from folk Islam to 'high' Shi'ite tradition. He argued that Shah Isma'il was actually proclaiming a Shi'ite theocracy with himself at its head as a god-king. See also Jean Aubin, 'La Politique religieuse des Safavides', in *Le Shi'isme imamite* (Paris, 1970), p. 239. Aubin elucidates the symbiosis between the decline of heterodox elements and the state adoption of Twelver Shi'ism. For a discussion of the process of the 'Shi'itization of Sunnism' in northwestern Iran and Anatolia, see Claude Cahen, 'Le Probleme du Shi'isme dans l'Asie Mineure Turque Preottomane', in *Le Shi'isme imamite*, p. 126.
 6. Albert Hourani, 'From Jabal 'Amil to Persia', p. 137; Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 126–7.
 7. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 130–1.
 8. A comprehensive survey of the principal sources on the 'Amili jurists, listed in Appendix I, allows one to arrive at this number. My findings confirm the general pattern provided by Moojan Momen for the increase in the number of jurists emerging from Jabal 'Amil relative to other Shi'ite regions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Arjomand had also provided a table accounting for high-ranking 'Amili 'ulama in Safavid Persia. See Appendices I and II. See also Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven and London, 1984), pp. 120, 122–3; Arjomand: *The Shadow of God*, pp. 125–132.
 9. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 346.
 10. Jean Aubin, 'L'avenement des Safavides reconsidere (Etudes safavides III)', *Moyen Orient and Ocean Indien*, 5 (1988), pp. 50–1.
 11. *Ibid.* pp. 91–2.
 12. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', pp. 340–1.
 13. *Ibid.* pp. 338, 345; Hasan-i Beg Rumlu, *Ahsan-u Tavarikh*, ed. 'Abd al-Husayn Nava'i (Tehran, 1357/1938), p. 86. *Ahsan-u Tavarikh* covers Safavid history from 900 to 985AH (1494–1577CE). Rumlu accompanied the Shah on all his major trips between 948AH/1541CE and 980AH/1572CE, and was a direct witness to the historical events of that period.
 14. Hourani, 'From Jabal 'Amil', p. 137; Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 126–7; see

- also Muhammad Baqir Khwansari, *Rawdat al-Janmat fi Ahwal al-'Ulama' wa'l-Sadat*, vol. 3 (Beirut, 1411/1991), pp. 361–2.
15. Khwandamir, *Habib al-Siyar*, vol. 3, part 4 (n.p, n.d.), pp. 117–8.
 16. Ibid. pp. 113, 117–118, 337. See also Ja'far al-Muhajir, *Al-Hijra al-'Amiliyya ila Iran al-Safawiyya* (Beirut, 1989), pp. 183–4. Al-Muhajir, drawing on *Rawdat*, refers to Husayn b. Sharaf al-Din al-Ardabili, another Persian scholar who had, at the request of Shah Isma'il, composed the first works in Persian of a legalistic Shi'ite nature.
 17. Rumlu, *Ahsan-u Tavarikh*, p. 86; see also Iskandar Beg Munshi, *Tarikh-i 'Alam-ara-yi 'Abbasi*, ed. Muhammad Isma'il Rizvani (Tehran, 1377), pp. 231–2; Roger Savory (tr.), *The History of Shah 'Abbas the Great (Tarik-e 'alamara-ye 'Abbasi)* by Iskandar Beg Munshi (d. 1043AH/1633CE), vol. 1 (Boulder, 1978), p. 233.
 18. Muhsin al-Amin, *A'yan al-Shi'a*, vol. 10, ed. Hasan al-Amin (Beirut, 1986), pp. 59–64.
 19. Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli, *Al-'A'lam*, vol. 4 (Beirut, 1992), p. 135; *A'yan*, vol. 8, p. 48. 'Abdullah al-Tustari studied with Ni'matullah b. Khwatur al-'Amili from whom he obtained an *ijaza* (license) in 'Aynatha.
 20. Mirza Afandi Isfahani, *Riyad al-'ulama' wa Hiyad al-Fudala'*, vol. 3 (Qum, 1981), p. 90.
 21. Floor, *The Economy of Safavid Persia*, p. 14.
 22. Rosemary Stanfield, 'Mirza Makhdum Sharifi: A 16th-century Sunni Sadr at the Safavid Court', Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1993, pp. 74–75. I would like to thank Rosemary for offering me a copy of this significant study and for her insights during our exciting discussions of Safavid history.
 23. Ibid. pp. 25, 76.
 24. Roger Savory and Hans R. Roemer suggested that Shah Isma'il and the Qizilbash leaders harbored deep Shi'ite convictions, which led them to proclaim Twelver Shi'ism, the state's religion.
 25. See Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, *Introduction to Shi'ite Law* (London, 1984), p. 49.
 26. Hossein Modarressi, *Kharaj in Islamic Law* (London, 1983), pp. 47, 54, 56–8.
 27. 'Adel Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict (906–962/1500–1555)* (Berlin, 1983), pp. 146–150.
 28. *'Alam-ara-yi 'Abbasi*, vol. 1, pp. 246–7; Savory, *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 247–8; 'Abdi Beg Shirazi, *Takmilat al-Akhbar: tarikh-i Safaviyye az Aghaz to 978 Hijri Qamari* (Tehran, 1369), pp. 112–3. See also *A'yan*, vol. 6, p. 60; *Riyad*, vol. 2, p. 119; Devin Stewart, 'A Biographical Notice on Baha' al-Din al-'Amili (d. 1030/1621)', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 111, 3 (1991), pp. 563–571.
 29. On the self-image of the 'Amilis, see Ahmad Rida, 'Al-Matawila aw al-Shi'a fi Jabal 'Amil', *Al-'Irfan*, vol. 2, 5 (1910), pp. 240–1.
 30. Yusuf Tabaja, 'Majahil al-Tarikh al-'Amili fi'l-Qam al-Sadis 'Ashar', *Al-Safir*, 11 August 2001, pp. 2–3.
 31. To name but a few, 'Abd al-Latif b. Abi Jami' al-'Amili, a student to Baha'i was invited in 1003AH/1594CE to Huwayza with other 'ulama by Mubarak al-Musha'sha'i, nicknamed al-Azraq (d. 1026AH/1617CE), a Safavid governor. Shaykh Mansur al-'Amili was invited to Kashan. See Al-Zirikli, *Al-'A'lam*, vol. 4, p. 60; 'Abd al-Rahim Kalantar Zarrabi, *Tarikh-i Kashan* (Tehran, 1977–1978?), p. 294; *A'yan*, vol. 9, pp. 42–3.

32. *Al-A'lam*, vol. 4, p. 60. Mubarak al-Musha'sha'i, the governor of Huwayza invited 'Abd al-Latif b. Abi Jami' al-'Amili to his province in 1003AH/1594CE. 'Abd al-Latif resided in Huwayza for some time then migrated to Tustar where he became *shaykh al-Islam*.
33. Willem Floor brought a corrective to the views advanced by Roger Savory that the Qizilbash were not elected to offices in the civil administration and that the Persian notables, the Tajiks, held these offices exclusively. See Savory, 'The Consolidation of Safavid Power', pp. 71–94; Willem Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions* (Costa Mesa, 2001), pp. 40, 66, 70–1. Floor noted that Qizilbash emirs were elected to the Royal Chancellery and that they dominated the ranks of the keepers of the seal (*mohrdars*).
34. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 31–2; Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 213.
35. Savory, 'The Principal Offices of the Safavid State during the Reign of Isma'il I (907–30/1501–24)', in *Studies on the History of Safavid Iran* (London, 1987), pp. 95–6; Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', pp. 228–9.
36. Khwandamir, *Habib al-Siyar*, part 4, vol. 3, pp. 111, 116, 338, 340, 343. See also *Ahsan-u Tavarikh*, p. 60.
37. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', pp. 230–1.
38. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, pp. 32–5.
39. *Ibid.* p. 230. See also Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, pp. 9–10. Najm-i Thani's open discord with the Qizilbash contributed to their defeat against the Uzbeks. He died in the battle of Ghudjuvan against the Uzbeks in 918AH/1512CE.
40. Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, pp. 9–10.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.* pp. 38–9.
43. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 233. On Safavid-Uzbek conflicts, see M. B. Dickson, 'Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks (The Duel for Khurasan with 'Ubayd Khan: 930–946/1524–1540)', Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1968.
44. *Ibid.* pp. 233–4. From 933AH/1527CE the Rumlu tribe became dominant, followed by the Tekellu. In 937AH/1530–1CE, a clash broke out between the Tekellu and the Shamlu, led by Husayn Khan Shamlu, the governor of Herat and maternal relative of the Shah. Husayn Khan was ousted and killed three years later.
45. Roemer, 'The Qizilbash Turcomans: Founders and Victims of the Safavid Theocracy', in Michel M. Mazzaoui and Vera B. Moreen (eds), *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson* (1990, Utah), p. 33.
46. Savory, 'The Principal Offices of... Isma'il I', pp. 103–4; 'The Principal Offices of the Safavid State during the Reign of Tahmasb I (930–84/1524–76)' in *Studies on the History of Safavid Iran*, pp. 70–72.
47. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', pp. 233–5.
48. *Ibid.* p. 236.
49. *Ibid.* pp. 243–4.
50. *Rawdat*, vol. 4 (Beirut, 1411/1991), pp. 346–360; *A'yan*, vol. 8, p. 208.

51. Wilfred Madelung, 'Al-Karaki', *Encyclopedia of Islam* 2 (E12), p. 610; Albert Hourani, 'The Safavid Era', in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (eds), *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi'ism in History* (Albany, 1989), pp. 187–8.
52. 'Ali b. 'Abd al-'Ali al-Karaki, *Rasa'il al-Muhaqqiq al-Karaki*, vol. 1, ed. Muhammad al-Hassun (Qum, 1409/1988), pp. 238–9.
53. Modarressi: *Kharaj*, pp. 47, 56–8.
54. Tehrani, *Ihya' al-Dathir*, pp. 160–1; Muhammad Muhsin Tehrani, *Al-Mashyakha* (Najaf, 1356/1937), pp. 55–6.
55. Al-Karaki, *Rasa'il*, vol. 1, pp. 237.
56. *Riyad*, vol. 3, pp. 441–60.
57. Khwandamir, *Habib al-Siyar*, part 4, vol. 3, p. 114.
58. Roemer, 'The Qizilbash Turcomans', pp. 30–1.
59. Willem Floor, 'The sadr or head of the Safavid religious administration, judiciary and endowments and other members of the religious institution', in *Zeitschrift Der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft (ZDMG)*, Band 150 (2000), pp. 463, 468–9.
60. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, pp. 34–5.
61. *A'yan*, vol. 8, p. 209.
62. '*Alam-ara-yi 'Abbasi*, vol. 1, p. 231; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 230.
63. Hasan-i Rumlu, *Ahsan al-Tavarikh*, ed. N. Seddon (Calcutta, 1931), p. 254; '*Alam-ara-yi 'Abbasi*, vol. 1, pp. 231–2; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 233; 'The Safavid Administrative System', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, pp. 362–3.
64. *Rawdat*, vol. 4 (Beirut, 1411/1991), p. 356.
65. Rumlu: *Ahsan-u Tavarikh*, p. 255; Muhammad Yusuf wa Alihi Isfahani, *Khuld-i Barin* (Tehran, 1372H/1952), p. 428; *Rawdat*, vol. 4, p. 357. See also Ghulam Sarwar, *History of Shah Isma'il Safawi* (Aligarh, 1975), p. 102.
66. Rumlu, *Ahsanu't-Tavarikh: A Chronicle of the Early Safawis*, vol. 2, ed. C. N. Seddon (Baroda, 1934), pp. 254–7.
67. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 229–230; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 231.
68. *Rawdat*, vol. 7, p. 183.
69. Ibid.; Agha Buzurg Tehrani, *Tabaqat A'lam al-Shi'a: Ihya' al-Dathir*, ed. 'Ali Naqi Munzavi (Beirut, 1972), p. 220.
70. *Rawdat*, vol. 7, p. 182.
71. There are several references to the continuation of kneeling and prostration in front of the Shah. See J. Chardin, *Les Voyages du Chevalier Chardin in Perse*, vol. 5, ed. L. Langles (Paris, 1811), p. 218.
72. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 229–230; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 230–1; *Rawdat*, vol. 4, pp. 357–8, vol. 7, pp. 168–9; Shirazi, *Takmilat al-Akhbar*, p. 193. Shirazi, who was clearly sympathetic to Mir Ghiyath al-Din, felt that the latter's objections to al-Karaki's designation of the *qibla* were not offensive but that court officials blew the issue out of proportion.
73. Shirazi, *Takmilat*, pp. 66–7.

74. 'Abd al-Husayn Khwaturabadi (d. 1105/1693), *Vaqayi'-u Sinin va'l-A'vam* (Tehran, 1352/1933), p. 360; *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 229–31; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 231–2; *Rawdat*, vol. 7, pp. 168–9.
75. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 133–4.
76. *A'yan*, vol. 8, p. 208.
77. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 230; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 231.
78. Shirazi, *Takmilat*, pp. 66–7.
79. Savory, 'The Principal Offices of... Isma'il I', pp. 95–6; Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', pp. 228–9.
80. Savory, 'The Significance of the Political Murder of Mirza Salman', in *Studies of the History of Safavid Iran*, p. 167.
81. Savory, 'The Principal Offices of Tahmasb I', pp. 81–3.
82. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, p. 133.
83. Rumlu, *Ahsan-u Tavarikh*, pp. 392–3.
84. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 33–6; Erica Glassen, 'Schah Isma'il I und die Theologen seiner Zeit', pp. 254–68.
85. B. Scarcia-Amoretti, 'Religion in the Timurid and Safavid Periods', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, pp. 642–3.
86. See several entries for 'Amili scholars in Agha Buzurg Tehrani, *Tabaqat A'lam al-Shi'a: al-Kawakib al-Muntashira*, ed. 'Ali Naqi Munzavi (Tehran, 1372/1952). See also Andrew Newman, 'The Myth of the Clerical Migration to Safavid Iran', *Die Welt des Islams*, 33 (1993), pp. 66–112. Munzavi points to essential and dichotomous cultural/intellectual traits for Arab and Persian scholars. Newman, for his part, emphasizes the ethnic background of the 'Amilis in explaining their legal opinions on issues like Friday prayer and association with temporal authority.
87. In addition to those listed in the second chapter, several 'Amili descendants married into prominent Persian families. 'Abdullah b. Jabir al-'Amili (d. 11thAH/17thCE) who transmits from the students of al-Muhaqqiq al-Thani, is a descendant of the paternal aunt of al-Mawla Taqi Majlisi, the father of Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (d. 1111AH/1699CE). The maternal grandfather of Muhammad Taqi Majlisi was the 'Amili scholar Darwish Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Natanzi. Again Mir Salih Khwaturabadi, the son-in-law of Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, was the maternal uncle of another late 'Amili scholar, namely Abu'l-Hasan Sharif b. Tahir al-Futuni. Other sources noted that the mother of Majlisi was the daughter of al-Futuni himself. See Tehrani, *Ihya' al-Dathir*, p. 59; Shihab al-Din al-Mar'ashi al-Najafi, *Al-Ijaza al-Kabira aw al-Tariq wa al-Mahajja ila Thamarat al-Muhja* (Qum, 1414/1993), p. 335; *A'yan*, vol. 9, p. 189.
88. A. J. Wensinck, 'Khutba', *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam (SEI)* (Leiden, 1974), pp. 258–9; A. A. Sachedina, *The Just Ruler (al-sultan al-'adil) in Shi'ite Islam* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 177–9.
89. Al-Karaki, *Rasa'il*, vol. 1, p. 139. Al-Karaki completed his treatise in 921AH/1515CE.
90. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, pp. 28–9.
91. *Rawdat*, vol. 4, p. 354.

92. Hasan b. 'Ali al-Karaki, 'Al-Bulgha fi Bayan I'tibar Idhn al-Imam fi Shar'iyat Salat al-Jum'a', in Sayyid Ahmad al-Husayni (ed.), *Fihrist-i Nuskhaha-yi Khatti-yi Kitabkhana-yi Mar'ashi* (Qum, 1975), collection 4697, no. 1, folio 31b.
93. Muhammad Muqim Yazdi, 'Al-Hujja fi Wujub Salat al-Jum'a fi Zaman al-Ghayba', in Sayyid Jawad Modarressi Yazdi (ed.), *Al-'Iqd al-Tahmasbi aw al-Husayni* (Yazd, n.d.), pp. 52–3; Isfahani, *Khuld-i Barin*, pp. 433–4.
94. *A'yan*, vol. 7, p. 145–50; *Rawdat*, vol. 3, pp. 348–9, 351; 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-'Amili (d. 1103–4AH/1691CE), *Al-Durr al-Manthur min al-Ma'thur wa ghayr al-Ma'thur*, vol. 2 (Qum 1398/1977), pp. 170–4.
95. See Richard Repp, 'Some Observations on the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy', in Nikki Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500* (Los Angeles, 1972), pp. 30–1.
96. 'Ali b. Zayn al-Din al-'Amili, *Al-Durr al-Manthur*, vol. 2, pp. 170–4; *Rawdat*, vol. 3, pp. 351–2.
97. *Rawdat*, vol. 3, p. 345.
98. *Al-Durr al-Manthur*, vol. 2, p. 162.
99. *A'yan*, vol. 1, pp. 142–3.
100. Modarressi, *Kharaj*, p. 54.
101. Al-Karaki, *Rasa'il*, vol. 1, p. 237.
102. *Ibid.* pp. 238–9.
103. *Ibid.* pp. 238, 244–5. Al-Karaki drew upon the writings of Shaykh al-Ta'ifa, al-'Allama, Ibn Idris and al-Shahid to support his position and reverse the dominant practice among his fellow jurists at the time.
104. *Ibid.*
105. See Arjomand, 'Two Decrees of Shah Tahmasb Concerning Statecraft and the Authority of Shaykh 'Ali al-Karaki', in S. A. Arjomand (ed.), *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism* (Albany, 1988), p. 254.
106. Wilfred Madelung, 'Al-Karaki', *EI2*.
107. Arjomand, 'Two Decrees of Shah Tahmasb', p. 254.
108. *Ibid.* p. 143; see Chardin, *Les Voyages*, vol. 5, pp. 194–5.
109. Arjomand, *The Shadow*, p. 142.
110. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 244; *Shah 'Abbas*, pp. 244–5.
111. *Mata'in al-Mujrimiyya* is inextant, but sections of it are included in a work by Fadil al-Din Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Muhammad Hamawi (d. 938AH/1531CE), a student of al-Karaki. See Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Muhammad Hamawi, *Anis al-Mu'minin* (Tehran, 1363/1943), pp. 145, 188–9. See also 'Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-'Amili, 'Al-Siham al-Mariqa min Aghrad al-Zanadiqa', MS in M. T. Danishpazhuh (ed.), *Fihrist-i Nuskhahay-i Khatti-yi Muqaddasa-yi Qum* (Qum, 1355/1936), collection 2356, folio 10a, 16b.
112. Hamawi, *Anis al-Mu'minin*, pp. 136, 142–3.
113. *Ibid.* p. 142.
114. *Ibid.* pp. 147, 175.
115. *Ibid.* pp. 188–9.

116. Zabihullah Safa, 'Majera-ye tahrir-e Abu Moslem-name', *Iran Nameh*, 5/2 (1986), pp. 233–249; Kathryn Babayan, 'The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamate Shi'ism', *Iranian Studies*, nos 1–4, vol. 27 (1994), p. 144.
117. Around 1043AH/1633CE, Mir Lawhi faced strong popular opposition when he reiterated al-Karaki's arguments against Abu Muslim and his cult. See Henry Corbin, *A'ineh Javanmardi*, tr. Ahsan Naraq (Tehran, 1363/1984), p. 163; Tehrani, *Al-Kawakib al-Muntashira*, pp. 416–7.
118. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, p. 8.
119. Abdol-Hosein Zarrinkoob, 'Persian Sufism in Historical Perspective', *Iranian Studies* 3–4/3 (1970), p. 181.
120. Mohammad-Dja'far Mahdjoub, 'The Evolution of Popular Eulogy of the Imams Among the Shi'a', in *Authority and Political Culture*, pp. 73–5.
121. Ibid.
122. Momen, *Shi'i Islam*, pp. 143, 240–3.
123. Al-Karaki, *Rasa'il*, vol. 2, pp. 319–20. The interlocutor addressed al-Karaki as 'the seal of *mujtahids*' a title donned on al-Karaki in 939AH/1533CE. This denotes that al-Karaki's *fatwa* (legal opinion) against guild practices occurred sometime around or after this date.
124. No exact date is given for the *fatwa* of al-Karaki against the artisans, but the interlocutor addressed him in the treatise as '*khatam al-mujtahidin*' (seal of juriconsults).
125. Mehdi Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life in the Later Safavid Period: Contributions to the Social-Economic History of Persia* (Berlin, 1982), p. 63.
126. Al-Karaki, *Rasa'il*, vol. 2, p. 320.
127. 'Al-Siham al-Mariqa', folio 16b.
128. Rosemary Stanfield Johnson, 'Sunni Survival in Safavid Iran: Anti-Sunni Activities during the reign of Tahmasb I', *Iranian Studies*, no. 1–4/27 (1994), pp. 132–3.
129. Ibid. pp. 131–3.
130. Al-Karaki, 'Nafahat al-Lahut fi La'n al-Jibt wa'l-Taghut', MS, in A. Anvar, *Fihrist-i Nusakh-i Khatti-yi Kitabkhana-yi Milli* (Tehran, 1344–58 Sh./1965–79), collection 1703, folio 4b–5a, 6b.
131. Ibid. folio 4b–5a. M. M. Pickthall, 'Al-Baqara, 2:89, 161', in *Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an* (New York, 1977).
132. 'Nafahat al-Lahut', folio 18a–b.
133. Ibid. folio 76b, 43b.
134. Floor, 'The sadr', p. 463.
135. *Rawdat*, vol. 4, p. 358.
136. Isfahani, *Khuld-i Barin*, pp. 429–30.
137. *Rawdat*, vol. 4, p. 347; Yusuf al-Bahrani, *Lu'lu'at al-Bahrayn fi'l-Ijzat wa Tarajim Rijal al-Hadith* (Najaf, 1386/1966), p. 153.
138. *Rawdat*, vol. 4 (Beirut, 1991), pp. 354–60.
139. Agha Buzurg Tehrani, *Al-Dhari'a ila Tasanif al-Shi'a*, vol. 4 (Beirut, 1983), p. 81.
140. *Habib al-Siyar*, part 4, vol. 3, p. 114.

141. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 14, p. 140; vol. 4, p. 75.
142. *Ihya' al-Dathir*, p. 152; *Rawdat*, vol. 4, pp. 361–2; Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Khafaji, *Rayhanat al-Alibba wa Zahrat al-Hayat al-Dunya*, vol. 1 (Cairo, 1967), p. 135; *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 22, p. 150; vol. 1, pp. 288–9; vol. 18, pp. 361–2.
143. *A'yan*, vol. 5, p. 474.
144. Floor: 'The sadr', pp. 486–7.
145. *Ibid.*; Sanson, *The Present State of Persia* (London, 1695), pp. 15–16.
146. Muhammad Muhsin Tehrani, *Al-Mashyakha aw al-Isnad al-Musaffa ila 'Al al-Mustafa* (Najaf, 1356/1937), pp. 55–6; Sayyid 'Abd al-Husayn Khatunabadi, *Vaqayi' al-Sinin wa'l-A'wam* (Tehran, 1352/1973), p. 458.
147. *Takmilat al-Akhbar*, pp. 76, 118.
148. *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 101.
149. *Ibid.*
150. See Elke Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik gegen die Safawiden im 16 Jahrhundert nach arabischen Handschriften* (Freiburg, 1970), pp. 56–60; Erica Glassen, 'Schah Isma'il I und die Theologen seiner Zeit', *Der Islam*, 48 (1971–72), pp. 254–268.

Chapter 2: The *mujtahids* navigate the sovereign's world

1. Roemer, 'The Qizilbash Turcomans', p. 33.
2. See Amir Mahmud Khwandamir, *Tarikh-i Shah Isma'il va Shah Tahmasb (Dhayl-i Tarikh-i Habib al-Siyar)*, ed. Muhammad Jarrahi (Tehran, 1370), pp. 52–66; Muhammad Muhsin Mustawfi, *Zubdat al-Tavarikh*, ed. Behruz Gudarzi (Tehran, 1375), pp. 47–56.
3. Michel Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Safavids: Si'ism, Sufism and the Gulat* (Wiesbaden, 1972), pp. 83–4. See also Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 81–2.
4. Mazzaoui, *The Origins*, p. 84.
5. For a discussion about Safavid genealogical claims and the Sufi order, see Ahmed Z. V. Togan, 'Sur l'origine des Safavides', *Melanges Massignon*, 3 (Damascus, 1957), pp. 345–7.
6. Richard Tapper, 'Shahsevan in Safavid Persia', *BSOAS*, 37 (1974), pp. 321–54.
7. R. M. Savory, 'The Significance of the Political Murder of Mirza Salman', *Islamic Studies*, 3 (1964), pp. 181–91.
8. Roemer, 'The Qizilbash Turcomans', p. 33.
9. Rumlu, *Ahsan-u Tavarikh*, ed. Nava'i, pp. 250–62; Qadi Ahmad Ghaffari (d. 975AH/1567CE), *Tarikh-i Nigaristan* (Tehran, 1404/1983), p. 363.
10. *Riyad*, vol. 2, p. 120; Yusuf Tabaja, 'Majahil al-Tarikh al-'Amili fi'l-Qarn al-Sadis 'Ashar', pp. 2–3. See also Isfahani, *Khuld-i Barin*, p. 434; *A'yan*, vol. 6, pp. 58–60.
11. Yusuf Tabaja, 'Majahil al-Tarikh al-'Amili', p. 3.
12. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 5, p. 193.
13. *Nameha-yi Shah Tahmasb*, p. 373.
14. *Riyad*, vol. 2, 108–10; Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, *Wusul al-Akhyar ila Usul al-Akhbar*, ed. 'Abd al-Latif al-Kuhkamri (Qum, 1041/1631), p. 11.
15. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 246–7; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 247; *Vaqayi' al-Sinin*, pp. 467, 481.

16. Etan Kohlberg, 'Bara'a in Shi'i Doctrine', in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, vol. 7 (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 144–7.
17. Ibn Babuya al-Qummi, known as al-Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381AH/991CE), *Al-Khisal*, ed. Al-Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi al-Khurasan (Najaf, 1391/1971), pp. 400, 402. Ten acts guarantee the Shi'ite believer entry into heaven, namely, the testimony (there is no god but God, and that Muhammad is His Prophet), accepting God's scriptures, holding prayer, giving alms, going on pilgrimage, fasting in the month of Ramadan, allegiance to the Imams, dissociation from their enemies, and avoidance of all alcoholic drinks.
18. *Ibid.* pp. 449, 521.
19. Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, 'Munazara ma'a Ba'di 'Ulama' Halab fi'l-Imama', MS, in Ahmad al-Husayni, *Fihrist-i Nuskhahay-i Khatti-yi Kitabkhanay-i 'Umumi-yi Mar'ashi*, collection 1161 (Qum, 1395). The treatise, which consists of five folios, does not seem to be commissioned by Shah Tahmasb, nor is it likely that Husayn wrote it in Jabal 'Amil when he was under Sunnite Ottoman rule. One version of this treatise was copied in 1139AH/1726CE.
20. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, pp. 612–21; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 564–75; Husayn Nava'i, *Shah 'Abbas: Majmu'ay-i Asnad-i va Mukatabat-i Tarikhi Hamrah ba Yaddashtihay-i Tafzili* (Tehran 1367/1988), pp. 194–208. The theological discussions presented by Mawlana Muhammad Mishkaki Rustamdari to the Uzbek scholars of Transoxiana at the time of 'Abdullah Khan Uzbek in 997AH/1588–9CE carried many of the same arguments included in *Munazara*. See Tehrani, *Ihya' al-Dathir*, p. 222.
21. *Munazara*, folio 1a.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.* folio 2a.
24. *Ibid.* folio 2b.
25. *Ibid.* folio 3a.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Hossein Modarressi, 'Rationalism and Traditionalism in Shi'i Jurisprudence: A Preliminary Survey', *Studia Islamica*, 59 (1984), p. 143.
28. *Ibid.* Indeed, even traditionist Shi'ite jurists, like many Sunnite jurists, reject the use of *ijtihad* and rely only on Tradition.
29. *Munazara*, folios 2a–2b.
30. The Ottomans considered Twelver Shi'ism an official Islamic sect, yet they rejected its political foundations and suppressed its doctrinal expansion. Shi'ite communities continued to develop under Ottoman rule but their scholars usually covered their identity (practiced *taqiyya*) in Sunnite circles in Syria and Egypt.
31. Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, 'Risala fi al-Husur wa al-Bawari wa Sahm al-Imam', in 'A. Ha'iri and others, *Fihrist-i Kitabkhana-yi Majlisi-i Shuray-i Milli* (Tehran, 1305–57/1926–78), collection 1836, folios 1a–7b.
32. *Ibid.* folio 3b.
33. Husayn b. Hasan al-Karaki, 'Risala fi al-Niyaba', *Fihrist-i Kitabkhana-yi Majlis-i Shura-yi Milli*, collection 3988, p. 376.

34. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 244; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 229; Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 133–4.
35. Al-Karaki, as we noted earlier, had objected to prostration for the king and considered it blasphemous. Evidently, his views didn't go far because the court Ceremonial of kissing the Shah's feet persisted.
36. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 319; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 307.
37. Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, 'Risala fi al-Husur wa al-Bawari', folios 1a–7b.
38. *Ibid.* folio 1a.
39. *Ibid.* folios 1a–b.
40. *Ibid.* folio 3a.
41. Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, 'Tahqiq Qiblat 'Iraq al-'Ajam wa Khurasan', folio 8. Devin Stewart was kind to offer me a copy of this treatise. It may be the same as 'Tuhfat Ahl al-Iman fi Qiblat Iraq al-'Ajam wa Khurasan'.
42. Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, *Al-'Iqd al-Husayni (al-Tahmasbi)*, ed. Sayyid Jawad Modarressi Yazdi (Yazd, n.d.), p. 3. This book is a collection of treatises dealing with Friday prayer, including 'Al-Hujja fi Wujub Salat al-Jum'a fi Zaman al-Ghayba' by Muhammad Muqim Yazdi (d. 1084AH/1673CE); Scarcia-Amoretti, 'Religion in the Timurid and Safavid Periods', in P. Jackson & L. Lockhart (eds), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6 (New York, 1986), pp. 642–3.
43. Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, *Al-'Iqd al-Husayni*, p. 3.
44. *Ibid.* pp. 4–6.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.* The call for the absolute necessity of convening Friday prayer reflects the positions of Sallar and Ibn Idris.
47. Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, *Al-'Iqd*, pp. 31–3; see also *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 247; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 247; *Khuld-i Barin*, p. 434.
48. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 247; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 247; Isfahani, *Khuld-i Barin*, p. 434.
49. Rasul Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat dar 'Asr-i Safavi* (Qum, 1370/1950), pp. 129–31.
50. M. Muqim Yazdi, 'Al-Hujja', p. 51.
51. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 1, p. 185.
52. Al-Muhajir, *Al-Hijra*, p. 149; Devin Stewart, 'The First Shaykh al-Islam of the Safavid Capital Qazvin', *Journal of the American Oriental Society (JAOS)*, 3/116 (July–September, 1996), pp. 402–4; *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, p. 575; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 631–2.
53. *Riyad*, vol. 2, p. 120; Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, *Wusul al-Akhyar*, p. 12.
54. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 247–8; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 247.
55. *Ibid.*; *Riyad*, vol. 2, p. 120; *A'yan*, vol. 6, pp. 57–60.
56. For more information on this issue, see Dickson, 'Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks'.
57. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 107–9, 161, 351–2, 376–7; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 109, 162, 342, 364. Munshi was covering the events of 944AH/1537CE when he made this observation.
58. Isfahani's *Khuld-i Barin* describes the post at Herat as 'an adorned seat of jurisprudence' while he presents Herat in flowery words as a captivating, 'pleasant' and 'exhilarating' site. See *Khuld-i Barin*, p. 434.

59. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 12, p. 13. *Al-Zahira* opens with a general description of Herat and then describes its waters, weather, fruits and women. Baha'i recounts some intimate memories of his time in Garizgah and at the Herati school of Mirza. Baha'i laments his departure from Herat.
60. Some letters, which Baha'i wrote to his father in Herat during his own stay in Qazvin indicate how strongly he felt about Herat. See *A'yan*, vol. 9, p. 247; Dalal 'Abbas, *Baha' al-Din al-'Amili: Adiban wa Faqihan wa 'Aliman* (Beirut, 1995), p. 110. 'Abbas offers the most comprehensive historical coverage of Baha'i's life to date. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 17, p. 288. 'Tahqiq Miqdar al-Karr' was published with *Al-Habl al-Matin* (Qum: Basirati, n.d.).
61. *A'yan*, vol. 6, p. 58.
62. Ibid. p. 60; *Riyad*, vol. 2, p. 121.
63. See Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad, *Nur al-Haqiqah wa Nawar al-Hadiqah* (Qum, 1403/1983) on ethics. *Iqd* is also a good example of Husayn's Sufi predilections. His metaphorical constructs of God as king and the divine as the royal *hadra* (presence) along with the themes of physical deprivation and toiling to please God, are reminiscent of general Sufi traditions. His open references to Ibrahim b. Adham, Bishr al-Hafi and '*ahl al-kahf*', the archetypal Sufi figures, triggered great disapproval from traditional jurists and scholars. See *Iqd al-Husayni*, p. 46; *A'yan*, vol. 6, p. 60; *Riyad*, vol. 2, p. 115.
64. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, pp. 205–7. Any ideas Baha'i may have entertained about contacting the Mughal court may have been dispelled by a letter which his friend Nurullah Shushtari wrote to him about the 'horrors of being stuck in India'. Shushtari was flogged to death in 1610CE. See Francis Robinson, 'Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2/8 (July 1997), p. 158.
65. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 251; Vali Quli b. Davud Quli Shamlu, *Qisas al-Khaqani* (Tehran, 1371/1951), pp. 93–6.
66. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 251.
67. Ibid. p. 252; see also Shohreh Gholsorkhi, 'Isma'il II and Mirza Makhdum Sharifi, An Interlude in Safavid History', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (IJMES), 26 (1994), p. 485.
68. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 252.
69. See Amir Mahmud Khwandamir, *Dhayl-i Tarikh Habib al-Siyar*, pp. 154, 181; Shirazi, *Takmilat al-Akhbar*, pp. 174–6.
70. Michel Mazzaoui, 'The Religious Policy of Safavid Shah Isma'il II', in *Intellectual Studies on Islam*, p. 53.
71. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 327; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 315.
72. Mazzaoui: 'Religious Policy', p. 53. Mazzaoui's insightful analysis is based on a brief statement made by Rumlu in *Ahsan-u Tavarikh*.
73. Bert Fragner, 'Social and Internal Economic Affairs', *The Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 506–7.
74. Ibid. pp. 510–11; Floor, *A Fiscal History of Iran in the Safavid and Qajar Periods* (New York, 1998), pp. 57–60; Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 6, p. 65. The small *suyurghals* were

- not generated exclusively from state land but also from religious endowments (*waqf*) and crown lands (*mamalik-i khassah*).
75. Fragner, 'Social and Internal Economic', p. 507.
 76. Rudi Matthee, 'Politics and Trade in Late-Safavid Iran: Commercial Crisis and Government Reaction Under Shah Solayman (1666–1694)', Ph.D. diss. (UCLA 1991), pp. 154–9.
 77. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 329–31, 333–35; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 318–20, 323–4; Mazzaoui, 'Religious Policy', p. 54.
 78. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 424–5; vol. 2, pp. 1043, 1047, 1061, 1306; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 406–8, 527–8.
 79. Sholeh Quinn, *Historical Writing During the Reign of Shah 'Abbas: Ideology, Imitation and Legitimacy in Safavid Chronicles* (Salt Lake City, 2000), pp. 103, 111–16.
 80. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 309; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 302–3.
 81. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 334; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 323.
 82. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 331; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 320.
 83. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 187–8; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 187–8.
 84. Mir Makhdum nurtured the same views on the weakness of the Shah and his inability to confine the Qizilbash. He also pointed to his own attempts to manipulate Isma'il II. See Mirza Makhdum al-Sharifi, 'Al-Nawaqid fi al-Radd 'ala al-Rawafid', MS, in Rudolf Mach (ed.), *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in Garrett Collection* (Princeton, 1977), Yahuda Collection, no. 2629, folio 82b.
 85. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 236; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 237; *Ihya' al-Dathir*, pp. 176, 245–6.
 86. Mirza Makhdum, 'Al-Nawaqid', folio 44b.
 87. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 320; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 308.
 88. Rumlu, *Ahsan-u Tavarikh*, p. 86. The early Safavids had promoted the ritual cursing of the first three Caliphs at least since 905–6AH/1499–1500CE.
 89. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 330–2; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 318–19.
 90. See al-Karaki, 'Fatawa Khatam al-Mujtahidin', in *Rasa'il al-Karaki*, vol. 2, p. 320.
 91. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 236; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 237.
 92. Stanfield Johnson, 'Sunni Survival', pp. 123–33.
 93. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 236; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 237.
 94. '*Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 340; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 329. Friendship ties between Pari Khan Khanum and Mirza Makhdum's mother helped secure Mirza Makhdum's safe departure from Persia. Gholsorkhi, 'Isma'il II and Mirza Makhdum', pp. 483–4.
 95. *Ibid.* pp. 329–30; see also Mir Makhdum, 'Al-Nawaqid', folio 119b.
 96. Mirza Makhdum, 'Al-Nawaqid', folios 102a–102b.
 97. *Ibid.* folio 102b.
 98. Al-Karaki cultivated limited, yet important, ties with the Persian nobility. At least two of his daughters married into the Astarabadi family. The celebrated scholar and philosopher Muhammad Baqir Astarabadi (d. 1040AH/1631–32CE), known as Mir Damad, was al-Karaki's maternal grandson. Mir Sayyid Husayn, another grandson of al-Karaki, carried the title of Mir. See Qadi Ahmad Qummi, *Khulasat al-Tavarikh: Fasl-i Marbut be Nakhustin-i Salihay-i Saltanat-i Shah 'Abbas Avoal* or *Die*

- Chronick Hulasat Al-Tawarih Des Qazi Ahmad Qumi, Der Abschnitt uber Shah 'Abbas I*, ed. & tr. Hans Muller (Weisbaden, 1964), pp. 6, 13, 17, 93. One of al-Karaki's sons, Taj al-Din 'Abd al-'Ali, acquired the title Mir Sayyid 'Ali. See *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 214–15; *Shah 'Abbas*, pp. 318–20. Al-Karaki cultivated positive ties with two princes from the Isfahani and Shushtari families, whom he nominated for the *sadarat* (administration of religious endowments) under Shah Tahmasb. Other 'Amili descendants, like Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin al-'Alawi, also carried the titles Mir Sayyid. In the late Safavid period, Abu'l-Hasan Sharif b. Tahir al-Futuni's maternal uncle was from the nobility, namely Mir Salih Khatunabadi. See *Ihya' al-Dathir*, p. 59; Shihab al-Din al-Mar'ashi al-Najafi, *Al-Ijaza al-Kabira aw al-Tariq wa'l-Mahajja ila Thamarat al-Muhja* (Qum, 1414/1993), p. 335; *A'yan*, vol. 9, p. 189. Lutfullah al-Maysi's daughter became one of the wives of Shah 'Abbas [the Great]. See *Riyad*, vol. 4, pp. 417–20.
99. *'Alama-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 203; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 205.
100. *'Alama-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 203; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 205. Munshi, unlike Khwandamir, compares Mir Husayn to Persian and Arab 'ulama alike. Although he is uneasy about Mir Husayn's pompousness, he would assert that the latter exceeded Arab and Persian 'ulama in 'eloquence of expression'.
101. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 203; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 204; Qadi Ahmad Qummi, *Khulasat al-Tavarikh*, pp. 6, 13, 17, 93.
102. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 228; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 229.
103. *Ibid.* vol. 1, p. 307.
104. *Ibid.* vol. 1, pp. 237, 319. Mir Sayyid 'Ali, the *katib* of Astarabad, was among the 'zealots' criticized by Munshi for going beyond reasonable limits in enjoining the good and forbidding evil. Munshi doubted his sincerity and credibility. The close exchange between the 'Amilis and the Astarabadis goes further back to the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Three of the major teachers of Husayn b. Shams al-Din Muhammad Astarabadi were 'Amili scholars, namely, Ibn Muflih al-Maysi (d. 938AH/1531CE), Ibn al-Mu'adhdhin, and al-Suhyuni. Several other Astarabadi students studied with al-Karaki and other 'Amilis in Persia, including Mirza Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Ibrahim Astarabadi (d. 1028AH/1618CE) who studied with Zahir al-Din, Ibrahim b. 'Ali b. 'Abd al-'Ali al-Maysi. See Muhammad Muhsin Tehrani, *Al-Mashyakha aw Al-Isnad al-Musaffa*, p. 13.
105. Gholosorkhi, 'Shah Isma'il II', p. 479–80.
106. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 331; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 320.
107. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, pp. 717–18; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 631–2.
108. Al-Sharifi, 'Al-Nawaqid', folio 107b.
109. *Ibid.* folio 102a.
110. *Ibid.* folios 101b, 102a.
111. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 11, p. 151. Mir Husayn, 'Risala fi Ta'yin Maqatl 'Umar', and 'Risala fi Qatl 'Umar', MSS, in *Fihrist-i Kitabkhana-yi Majlis-i Shura-yi Milli*, collection 3987, nos 3 and 4, pp. 419–20, 423–8. In *Riyad*, the treatise is listed under 'Ta'yin Qatl 'Umar wa'l-'Amal Fih.''

112. Mir Husayn, 'Risala fi Ta'yin Maqatal 'Umar', p. 415.
113. Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, *Al-Khisal*, pp. 449, 521; Muhammad b. Hasan al-Tusi, known as Shaykh al-Ta'ifa (d. 460AH/1067CE), *Al-Ghayba* (Najaf, 1385/1965), p. 275.
114. Mir Husayn, 'Risala fi Ta'yin Maqatal', p. 417.
115. *Ibid.* pp. 423–4.
116. Jean Calmard noted that the *chub-i tariq* was administered by the 'ulama in the seventeenth century. His statement was based on Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 6, p. 296 ff. See Calmard, 'Shi'i Rituals and Power II', pp. 166 ff., 116.
117. Calmard, 'Shi'i Rituals and Power II', p. 166. Alexander H. Morton accurately suggested a more nuanced treatment of the attitude of Shi'ite theologians toward Sufism in Safavid Persia. See Morton, 'The Chub-i tariq and Qizilbash ritual in Safavid Persia', in Jean Calmard (ed.), *Etudes Safavides* (Paris, 1993), pp. 242–4.
118. For a description of the ritual and its Qizilbash roots, see Michele Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539–1542)*, translated and introduced by A. H. Morton (London, 1999), pp. 42–3.
119. Mir Muhammad Salih Khwaturabadi, author of *Hada'iq al-Muqarrabin*, related it through Muhammad Taqi Majlisi who in turn heard it from his teacher, Shaykh Baha'i. See *Riyad*, vol. 5, pp. 88–97.
120. *Rawdat*, vol. 2 (Beirut, 1991), pp. 312–3.
121. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 329–30; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 318.
122. Mazzaoui, 'Religious Policy', p. 53.
123. *Ibid.* Mazzaoui's insightful analysis is based on a brief statement made by Rumlu in *Ahsan-u Tavarikh*.
124. *Ibid.* p. 319.
125. *Ibid.* p. 323.
126. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 329–30; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 318.
127. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 334–35; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 324.
128. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 336–8; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 325–7. Munshi seems to believe that the Shah was murdered.
129. Stanfield Johnson, 'Sunni Survival in Safavid Iran', pp. 132–3.
130. Scholars like 'Ali Naqi Munzavi present a different angle on this approach, namely the belief that "Amilism" was a sustained ethnic, cultural, intellectual entity throughout the Safavid period and that it imposed a traditionalist anti-philosophical spirit on Persia's indigenous religious landscape. See Tehrani, *Al-Kawakib al-Muntashira*, pp. 354–7, 656–7.
131. Newman, 'The Myth of Clerical Migration', pp. 66–112.
132. Jean Calmard, 'Shi'i Rituals and Power II. The Consolidation of Safavid Shi'ism: Folklore and Popular Religion', in Charles Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia: A History of an Islamic Society* (London, 1996), p. 140; Kathryn Babayan, 'Sufis, Dervishes and Mullas: The Controversy over Spiritual and Temporal Dominion in Seventeenth-Century Iran', in *Safavid Persia*, pp. 119–20, 125.
133. See Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat*, p. 137.
134. See Muhammad Muqim Yazdi, 'Al-Hujja fi Wujub Salat', pp. 52–3.

135. Abdol-Hosein Zarrinkoob adequately discusses this process of exchange and adaptation among Persian Sufis and clerics. See Zarrinkoob, *Dunbala-yi Justuju-yi Tasavvuf dar Iran* (Tehran, 1362/1983).

Chapter 3: Shah ‘Abbas and imperial reign as clerical discipline, 1587–1629CE

1. *‘Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 350–1, 360–1, 367; *Shah ‘Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 341–2, 351–2, 356. Munshi expressed open disapproval of Qizilbash activities, condemning their greed and internal struggles as ‘crimes’, which allowed the Ottomans to take over Safavid territories including Shirvan. On one occasion, Munshi noted that Mahd-i ‘Ulya voiced some ‘reasonable criticisms’ against the Qizilbash *amirs*, after their recapture of Shirvan in 988AH/1580CE.
2. *‘Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 500–1; *Shah ‘Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 454–7.
3. *‘Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 381–88; *Shah ‘Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 367–72.
4. See Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, pp. 35, 137; Roemer, ‘The Safavid Period’, pp. 255–6. In contrast with Roemer, Floor argued that Shah ‘Abbas did not eliminate the Qizilbash but rather some of his opponents among their ranks, and that he instead restricted them politically and economically.
5. Sholeh Quinn, *Historical Writing During the Reign of Shah ‘Abbas*, Chapters 2 and 3.
6. *‘Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, pp. 637–8; *Shah ‘Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 587–88. For Qizilbash conflicts at the time of Shah Muhammad Khudabanda, see *‘Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, pp. 573–7; *Shah ‘Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 506–9; Roemer, ‘The Safavid Period’, pp. 264–65. On the internal struggles and competition over power and wealth among the Qizilbash, see Nasrullah Falsafi, *Zindigani-yi Shah ‘Abbas-i Avoal*, vol. 2 (1332/1953–4), pp. 163–70, 342–45.
7. *‘Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 139–40; *Shah ‘Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 131, 141; vol. 2, p. 527.
8. Roemer, ‘The Safavid Period’, p. 264.
9. Willem Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions* (Costa Mesa, 2001), p. 35. Floor argued that in the mid seventeenth century the struggle over the grand vizier’s position showed that Qizilbash elements retained power through ‘the back door’.
10. *‘Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, pp. 675, 990, 1441–2; *Shah ‘Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 603, 803–4, 1087. The defiance which the governor of Isfahan, Yoli Beg, expressed toward Shah ‘Abbas illustrates the political power several *ghulamans* drew from the privileges extended to them by the state.
11. Floor, *A Fiscal History*, p. 3.
12. *Ibid.* pp. 4–5. Floor noted that the state ‘played a rather limited role whether in urban or rural areas... defined by its ability to provide security or expand its borders and enforce strict trade laws’.
13. Rudolph P. Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600–1730* (London, 1999), pp. 8–9, 62. Matthee noted that the state actively mediated between production and the market.
14. See Laurence Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia* (London, 1958), p. 12; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: The Gunpowder Empire*

- and Modern Times*, vol. 3 (Chicago, 1974), p. 50. Lockhart noted that the Safavid state developed into an absolute monarchy 'following the usual eastern pattern'. Yet, Lockhart contradicts himself when he points to a 'sharing or partial sharing of authority by the ministers and officials' in order to prevent a concentration of power in one particular political faction or household. Hodgson, too, characterized the political power of Shah 'Abbas as absolutist. In reality, however, Shah 'Abbas succeeded in bringing state offices more closely under his control but he could not eliminate the local power of the traditional elite in a city like Isfahan.
15. Matthee, *The Politics of Trade*, pp. 8–9, 62.
 16. John Foran argued that the seventeenth-century Safavids, due to their utilization of more than one mode of production, particularly the peasant crop-sharing and the urban petty-commodity, were in a unique position to claim a considerable proportion of Persia's surplus. See John Foran, 'The Modes of Production Approach to Seventeenth-Century Iran', *IJMES*, 20 (1988), pp. 350–5. Floor, in contrast with Foran, noted that the government played a limited role in developing the Safavid economy. Public investment 'was limited to irrigation, transport infrastructure and public construction projects'. See Floor, *The Economy*, p. 62; *A Fiscal History*, p. 17.
 17. Floor, *The Economy*, p. 61. See also page 55.
 18. *Ibid.* pp. 57, 59.
 19. Floor, *A Fiscal History*, p. 15.
 20. See Qadi Ahmad Qummi, *Khulasat al-Tavarikh*, ed. and tr. Hans Muller, pp. 6, 13, 17, 93.
 21. See *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, p. 331; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 320.
 22. See *Tabaqat A'lam al-Shi'a: Ihya' al-Dathir*, p. 59; Shihab al-Din al-Mar'ashi al-Najafi, *Al-Ijaza al-Kabira aw al-Tariq wa'l-Mahajja ila Thamarat al-Muhja* (Qum, 1414AH/1993CE), pp. 335; *A'yan al-Shi'a*, vol. 9, pp. 189; *Riyad al-'Ulama'*, vol. 4, pp. 417–20.
 23. See Baha' al-Din al-'Amili, 'Ytiqadat', MS, *Fihrist-i Nuskhaha-yi Khatti-yi Kitabkhana-yi 'Umumi-yi Mar'ashi*, ed. Ahmad al-Husayni, collection 7036, no 65, folio 1b; *Al-Dhari'a*, p. 79; Mir Damad, 'Risala fi Salat al-Jum'a', MS, *Fihrist-i Nuskhaha-yi Khatti-yi Kitabkhana-yi 'Umumi-yi Mar'ashi*, collection 7036, no. 51, folio 1a.
 24. *Riyad*, vol. 4, p. 417.
 25. *Ibid.* p. 539; Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', pp. 266–7. For more information on the encounters between Shah 'Abbas and the Uzbegs around 1009AH/1600CE, see 'Abd al-Husayn Nava'i (ed.), *Shah 'Abbas: Majmu'ay-i Asnad-i*, vol. 1, pp. 162–171.
 26. *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 540–1.
 27. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 653, 722, 811, 823; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 539.
 28. Floor, *The Economy of Safavid Persia*, pp. 14–15.
 29. 'Abdol-Hosein Zarrinkoob adequately discussed this complex process of adaptation, cooptation and exchange between the Sufi and the clerical traditions. See Zarrinkoob, 'Persian Sufism in Historical Perspective', *Iranian Studies*, nos 3–4/3 (1970), pp. 139–208; *Josteju dar Tasavvuf-i Iran* (Tehran, 1366/1987).
 30. Stephen P. Blake, *Half the World: The Social Architecture of Safavid Isfahan, 1590–1722* (Costa Mesa, 1999), pp. 26–7.

31. Ibid. p. 110.
32. Masashi Haneda, 'The Character of Urbanisation of Isfahan in the Later Safavid Period', in Charles Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia*, pp. 381–3.
33. Al-Muhajir, *Al-Hijra*, p. 181.
34. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, p. 148.
35. Baha' al-Din al-'Amili, *Jami'i 'Abbasi* (Iran, n.d.), pp. 2–3.
36. Ibid. p. 3.
37. Mir Damad upheld al-Tusi's rationalist interpretation of Shi'ite Tradition. See Newman, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 'Damad', p. 625.
38. Baha'i drew upon the works of *Ma'rifat al-Madhahib* and *Hadiqat al-Shi'a* by al-Muqaddas al-Ardabili. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 22, pp. 219–20.
39. Ibid. vol. 7, pp. 224–5.
40. Arjomand, *The Shadow*, p. 145.
41. Ibid.
42. *Lu'lu'at al-Bahrayn*, p. 26; *A'yan*, vol. 6, pp. 56, 58–9.
43. This information is based on Yusuf Tabaja's brief description of a newly discovered manuscript by Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad al-'Amili, the father of Baha'i. The manuscript is titled *Risala fi'l-Rihla*. We learn for the first time that al-Shahid al-Thani had advised Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad and a number of his students to leave Jabal 'Amil to Iraq and Persia after 956AH/1549CE. See Tabaja, 'Majahil al-Tarikh al-'Amili fi'l-Qarn al-Sadis 'Ashar', pp. 2–3.
44. *A'yan*, vol. 9, p. 240; Baha' al-Din, *Kashkul*, vol. 1, p. 213.
45. Ibid. p. 212.
46. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 247–8; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 248–9; Muhammad Yusuf wa Alih Isfahani, *Khuld-i Barin*, ed. M. H. Mohaddith (Tehran, 1372/1993), pp. 434–5.
47. Andrew Newman, 'Toward a Reconsideration of the "Isfahan School of Philosophy": Shaykh Baha'i and the Role of the Safawid 'Ulama', *Studia Iranica*, vol. 15 (1986), pp. 165–98.
48. Devin Stewart, 'The Lost Biography of Baha' al-Din al-'Amili and the Reign of Shah Isma'il II in Safavid Historiography', *Iranian Studies*, 2/31 (1998), pp. 187–8; Dalal 'Abbas, *Baha' al-Din al-'Amili Adiban wa Faqihan wa 'Aliman* (Beirut, 1995), pp. 117–38. Stewart noted convincingly that Baha'i's entire journey in Ottoman lands took less than nineteen months. 'Abbas dealt in depth with this issue arriving at conclusions similar to Stewart's, arguing that Baha'i's travels within and outside Persia took four years.
49. Muhammad al-Hurr 'Amili, *'Amal al-'Amil fi 'Ulama' Jabal 'Amil*, vol. 1 (Najaf, 1385/1965), pp. 155–60; *Riyad*, vol. 5, pp. 88–97; *A'yan al-Shi'a*, vol. 9, pp. 234–49; *Lu'lu'at*, pp. 16–23; *Rawdat*, vol. 7, p. 58; *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 247–8; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 247–9.
50. *Rawdat*, vol. 7, p. 58; *Riyad*, vol. 5, pp. 88–97; *A'yan*, vol. 9, pp. 234–49. Husayn al-Karaki stated that together with his teacher, Baha'i, he traveled to Herat '*allati kana sabiqan huwa wa-waliduhu fiha shaykh al-Islam*', which can be translated as 'where he and his father were *shuyukh al-Islam*' or 'where he and his father, the *shaykh al-*

- Islam*, resided'. In my dissertation, I was inclined toward the first reading of this statement. But I have found no solid references to Baha'i as the *shaykh al-Islam* of Herat after his father left Persia. This clearly converges with Stewart's position and suggestions. We know that Shah Tahmasb gave permission to Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad to go on pilgrimage, in other words, to leave Persia permanently in 983AH/1575CE, but he denied such permission to Baha'i. It may be that the Shah wanted Baha'i to take up his father's post or a similar post in another region. See 'A'yan, vol. 6, p. 58; See Stewart, 'A Biographical Notice', pp. 563–71; 'Abbas, *Baha' al-Din*, pp. 115–16.
51. *Al-Dhari'a*, p. 321.
 52. See 'Abbas, *Baha' al-Din*, pp. 124–6.
 53. *Ibid.* pp. 117–19, 139–40; *A'yan*, vol. 6, p. 469.
 54. Baha' al-Din, *Kashkul*, vol. 1, pp. 238–9.
 55. 'Abbas, *Baha' al-Din*, pp. 124–6.
 56. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 231–2; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 233–4.
 57. *Khulasat al-Tavarikh*, pp. 6, 13, 17, 93–4. Qummi refers to Baha'i only twice.
 58. Stephen P. Blake suggested that Shah 'Abbas moved the capital to Isfahan in 999AH/1590CE, that is, seven to eight years earlier than the official date presented by Persian historians. See Blake, *Half the World*, pp. 26–7. Despite the validity of Blake's argument, I believe that the Shah's seat of power became formally based in Isfahan in 1597–8CE, that is, several years after he took the decision to move to Isfahan and start major renovations and constructions in its urban quarters.
 59. *Amal*, vol. 1, p. 169; *A'yan*, vol. 10, pp. 10–11; *Ta'liqat Amal*, pp. 73–4.
 60. *Riyad*, vol. 5, pp. 134–5; *A'yan*, vol. 1, p. 169.
 61. See John Perry's article, 'Forced Migration in Iran during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Iranian Studies*, 8 (Autumn, 1975). Moreover, 'Alam-ara-yi, vols 1 and 2, the number of references that Munshi makes to 'Abbas's use of this policy exceed greatly such references to the use of that policy by his predecessors.
 62. *Ibid.* p. 206.
 63. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, pp. 1080–1; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 856–7.
 64. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, pp. 1080–1; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 857.
 65. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, pp. 1058–6; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 860. Apparently, the Shah was unable to reside in the once flourishing city of Nakhshivan during one of his military campaigns for its hamlets and fields were stripped of fertility. See also Perry, 'Forced Migration', pp. 206–7.
 66. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, p. 1084; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 859.
 67. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, p. 1212; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 930.
 68. Perry, 'Forced Migration', pp. 206–7; Muhammad Muhsin Mustawfi, *Zubdat al-Tavarikh*, pp. 70, 73.
 69. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, pp. 1101–1102; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 869.
 70. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, pp. 1101–2; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 869.
 71. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, p. 1442; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1088.
 72. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, p. 1442–3; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1089.

73. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, 1441–2; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1087.
74. James Reid, *Studies in Safavid Mind, Society and Culture* (Costa Mesa, 2000), pp. 305–6, 308. Reid noted that 'the *qizilbash* in particular levied soldiers who performed military service because the chieftain considered such service as an exaction due him in his role as the master and patron'.
75. Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, pp. 136–7.
76. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, p. 1454; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1095–6.
77. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 3, p. 1519–20; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1138.
78. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 3, pp. 1588–9; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1181.
79. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 3, pp. 1588–9; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1181–2.
80. Baha' al-Din, 'Risala fi Hukm Dhaba'ih Ahl al-Kitab', in *Kalimat al-Muhaqqiqin* (Qum, 1402), pp. 526–30; *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 10, pp. 3–4.
81. Baha' al-Din, 'Risala fi Hukm Dhaba'ih', pp. 526–7.
82. *Lu'lu'at*, p. 58.
83. Edmund Herzog, 'The Rise of the Julfa Merchants in the Late Sixteenth Century', in Charles Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society* (London, 1996), p. 315.
84. The treatise is entitled 'Risala fi Nijasad Dhaba'ih al-Kuffar wa Sana'ihim' (Treatise on the Impurity of the Slaughter Animals of the Infidels and their Hand-made Objects). Baha'i seems to have written two treatises on *dhaba'ih*. The 'Risala fi Nijasad' must be a different treatise from 'Risala fi Hukm Dhaba'ih', because the former includes a section on the handmade items of Christians and Jews, which the latter does not address.
85. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, p. 100.
86. Muhammad Rashid Rida, *Tafsir al-Manar* (Cairo, 1375/1955), pp. 113, 177–78.
87. *Lu'lu'at*, p. 47.
88. Baha' al-Din, *Hurmat Dhaba'ih Ahl al-Kitab*, ed. Zuhayr al-A'raji (Beirut, 1410/1990), p. 44.
89. *Ibid.* pp. 63–4.
90. *Ibid.* p. 73.
91. *Ibid.* p. 74.
92. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, pp. 1422–4; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1075–6.
93. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, p. 1442; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1088.
94. Baha' al-Din, 'Pasukh-i Baha'i ba Shah 'Abbas' [or 'Jawab-i Shaykh Baha'i ba Hakim-i Gilan'], MS, *Fihrist-i Kitabkhana-yi Madrasa-yi 'Ali-i Sipahsalar*, eds. Ibn Yusuf Shirazi et al., collection 8150 (Tehran, 1315–56/1936–77), fol. 1a.
95. *Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia*, edited and introduced by R. Percy Sykes (London, 1927), p. 281.
96. Baha' al-Din, 'Pasukh-i Baha'i ba Shah 'Abbas', fol. 1a.
97. *Ibid.* folio 1b.
98. *Ibid.* folio 2a.
99. Baha' al-Din, 'Pasukh-i Baha'i', pp. 281–2. This work is also known as 'Al-Jam' wa al-Tawfiq bayn al-Fatwayayn'.

100. Ibid. folios 1a–1b.
101. Tunukabuni, *Qisas al-'Ulama'* (Iran, 1320/1902), p. 184; *A'yan*, vol. 9, pp. 236–7.
102. Falsafi, *Zindigani-yi*, vol. 2, pp. 52–3, 256.
103. Personal comments by Rudolph Matthee.
104. Mulla Jalal, *Tarikh-i 'Abbasi ya Ruznameh-yi Mulla Jalal* (Iran, 1366/1964), pp. 360–1; Falsafi, *Zindigani-yi* vol. 2, pp. 318–20.
105. Calmard, 'Shi'i Rituals and Power II. The Consolidation of Safavid Shi'ism: Folklore and Popular Religion', in *Safavid Persia*, pp. 163–6; Charles Melville, 'The Pilgrimage to Mashhad in 1601', in *Safavid Persia*, pp. 191–229. Calmard noted the contribution of Shah 'Abbas to the 'solemnisation and dramatisation of Shi'i ritual'. See also 'Abd al-Husayn Nava'i, *Shah 'Abbas: Majmu'a-yi Asnad va Makatib-i Tarikh-i Hamrah ba Yaddashtha-yi Tafsihi*, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1367/1988), p. 168; *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, pp. 1366–71, 1477–8; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1037–39, 1111; Valiquli b. Davudquli Shamlu, *Qisas al-Khaqani* (Tehran, 1371/1992), pp. 186, 189. Major Safavid chronicles depict Shah 'Abbas as a pious man who expressed a strong commitment to religious affairs in accordance with Twelver Shi'ism. He was famous for his charity acts during the month of Ramadan, and his numerous visits to Shi'ite shrines and holy places like Mashhad, Karbala and Najaf.
106. Falsafi, *Zindigani-yi*, vol. 2, p. 291.
107. Baha' al-Din, *Majmu'a-yi az Athar va Ash'ar-i Shaykh Baha'i: Falnama, Gorbah va Mush, Ghazaliyyat, Nan va Halva, va Shir va Shikar*, intro. Sayyid Muhammad Suhufi (Qum, 1371/1992), pp. 190–91. Baha'i also points to the susceptibility of the viziers to the 'folly' of the Qalandars and their tricks.
108. Ibid.
109. Baha' al-Din, *Kashkul*, pp. 210–11.
110. 'Abbas, *Baha' al-Din*, pp. 195–6.
111. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 24, p. 251. Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin noted the areas of disagreement between Baha'i and Mir Damad in his 'Al-Nafahat al-Lahutiyya fi'l-'Atharat al-Baha'iyya'.
112. Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, *Mithalha-yi Sudur-i Safavi* (Qum, 1353/1934), pp. 14–15. This account is included in *Majalis Hidayatullah Qummi*, Majlis 13. Mir Abu'l-Vali Inju was dismissed from *sadarat* in 1015AH/1607–08CE, because his employees were accused of embezzling the funds for the shrine of Mashhad. See *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, p. 1175; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 910–11.
113. *Rawdat*, vol. 2, p. 62.
114. Tunukabuni, *Qisas*, pp. 193–4.
115. *Amal*, vol. 1, pp. 155–160; *Riyad*, vol. 5, pp. 88–97; *Khuld-i Barin*, pp. 417–8; Akbar Hadi, *Sharh-i Hal-i Mir Damad va Mir Findiriski* (Isfahan, 1363/1943), pp. 13–14.
116. Akbar Hadi, *Sharh-i Hal-i Mir Damad va Mir Findiriski*, pp. 25–6; *A'yan*, vol. 9, p. 189.
117. *Rawdat*, vol. 2, pp. 61–2; *Al-Kuna wa al-Alqab*, vol. 2, p. 207.
118. Hamid Dabashi, 'Mir Damad and the founding of the "School of Isfahan"', in S. H. Nasr and Oliver Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, part 1 (Routledge, 1996), pp. 600, 604.

119. Ibid. p. 604.
120. Andrew Newman, 'Damad', p. 625; H. Corbin, 'Confessions extatiques de Mir Damad', in H. Corbin, *Melanges Louis Massignon I* (Damascus, 1956), pp. 331–78.
121. Mir Damad, 'Risala fi Salat al-Jum'a', MS, in *Fihrist-i Nuskhaha-yi Khatti-yi Kitabkhana-yi 'Umumi-yi Mar'ashi*, collection 7036, no. 65, p. 1.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
124. Baha' al-Din al-'Amili, 'Ttiqadat', MS, in *Fihrist-i Nuskhaha-yi Khatti-yi Kitabkhana-yi 'Umumi-yi Mar'ashi*, collection 7036, no. 51, folio 1b.
125. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, pp. 67–8, 79. Two of Baha'i's students followed his opinions on Friday prayer: Nizam al-Din Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Qurashi al-Sawuji (d. circa 1040AH) rejected the obligatory observance of Friday prayer; and Muhammad Taqi b. Abi'l-Hasan al-Husayni al-Astarabadi, emphasized its legality and the necessity of performing it.
126. Ibid. p. 73.
127. See Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, p. 142.
128. Husayn Muroeh, *Al-Naza'at al-Madiyya fi al-Falsafa al-'Arabiyya al-Islamiyya*, vol. 2 (Beirut, 1988), p. 254. Muroeh argued that Suhrawardi openly challenged the ideological basis of the Aleppine political order through Sufism and Illuminationist philosophy. This informed the authorities' decision to execute him. The 'ulama's opposition to Suhrawardi, therefore, reflected the position of the Aleppine government.
129. Sayyid Husayn Nasr, 'Spiritual Movements, Philosophy and Theology in the Safavid Period', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, pp. 672–3.
130. Ibid. p. 674.
131. Mir Damad, *Al-Qabasat*, ed. Mehdi Mohaghegh (Tehran, 1374), pp. 79, 87.
132. Ibid. pp. 111–12.
133. Ibid. p. 113.
134. Ibid. p. 8.
135. Muroeh, *Al-Naza'at*, vol. 2, p. 256.
136. Ibid. p. 246; F. Rahman, 'The God-World Relationship in Mulla Sadra', in George F. Hourani (ed.), *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science* (Albany, 1975), p. 240.
137. F. Rahman, 'The God-World', p. 242.
138. Muroeh, *Al-Naza'at*, vol. 2, pp. 256, 263–5.
139. Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, tr. Liadain Sherrad (London, 1993), pp. 217–18.
140. Fazlur Rahman, 'The God-World', p. 244.
141. Suhrawardi's views as such challenge the ideas of the medieval Islamic scholar, al-Mawardi, who validated the Caliphate as a unifying Godhead without which the Islamic community cannot seek its spiritual validation. Deprived of de facto legitimacy, the Caliphate must remain the only 'witness' of Prophet Muhammad's agency and political community.
142. See John Foran, 'Modes of Production Approach', pp. 350–56.

143. Fazlur Rahman, 'The God-World', p. 246.
144. See H. Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, pp. 217–8.
145. S. H. Nasr, 'The School of Ispahan', in M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1966), p. 915.
146. E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1925–28), p. 429; Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, p. 217.
147. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, p. 218.
148. Hamid Dabashi, 'Mir Damad and the founding', p. 598.
149. F. Rahman, 'The Eternity of the World and the Heavenly Bodies in Post-Avicennan Philosophy', in *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science*, p. 235.
150. Ibid. p. 229. Unlike Heraclitus, Sadra does not see such movement situated in a dialectic of opposites or binarisms. It is an irreversible evolutionary process.
151. F. Rahman, 'The Eternity', p. 231.
152. Toshihiko Izutsu, 'Mir Damad and His Metaphysics', in *Al-Qabasat*, pp. 12–14.
153. Robert Avens, 'Theosophy of Mulla Sadra', *Hamdard Islamicus*, no. 3, vol. 4, pp. 15–16.
154. Ibid. pp. 12–13.
155. Ibid.
156. *Al-Qabasat*, p. 424.
157. Ibid. p. 422.
158. Ibid. p. 123–4; Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, p. 244. The verse in Arabic is: '*yamhu Allah ma yasha' wa yuthbit wa 'indahum um al-kitab*'.
159. *Al-Qabasat*, p. 423. '*Al-amr fi kitab al-qadar 'ala khilaf al-amr fi um al-kitab al-ladhi huwa al-qada' al-awwal*'.
160. Ibid. p. 127.
161. Ibid. pp. 121, 136–142.
162. Ibid. p. 398. Mir Damad wrote, '*fakadhalika al-insan, la budda lahu min ra'is. Wa'l-ra'is inma an yakun hukmuh 'ala al-zahir fahasb, wahuwa al-sultan, aw 'ala al-batin faqat, wahuwa al-'alim, aw 'alyhim jami'an, wa huwa al-nabiy aw man yaqum maqamahu*'.
163. *Al-Qabasat*, p. 399.
164. Ibid. p. 432.
165. Ibid. p. 432.
166. Ibid. pp. 437, 440–1.
167. Ibid. p. 437.
168. Ibid. p. 441.
169. See Nasr, 'Spiritual Movements', p. 671.
170. Dabashi, 'Mir Damad and the founding', pp. 614–15. 'Al-Risala al-Khal'iyya' was composed in 1023AH/1614CE.
171. Ibid. p. 618.
172. Nasr, 'Spiritual Movements', p. 673.
173. Muroeh, *Al-Naza'at*, vol. 2, p. 265.
174. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, p. 173.
175. Dabashi, 'Mir Damad and the founding', p. 627.
176. Foran, 'The Modes of Production Approach', pp. 350–1.

177. Mir Sayyid Ahmad 'Alawi 'Amili, *Misqal-i Safa dar Naqd-i Kalam-i Masihyyat*, ed. Hamid Naji Isfahani (Tehran, 1373/1994), pp. 89–99. He is buried in Tekiyeh-yi Agha Reza in Isfahan. Numerous descendants of his are mentioned by Jamal al-Din Mir Damadi in the introduction to Ahmad's work, *Lati'if-i Ghaybiyeh (Ayat al-'Aqa'id)* (Iran, 1396), pp. 6–27.
178. The most well known of these works are: *Lavami'i Rubbani dar Radd-i Shubahat-i Nasrani*, *Misqal-i Safa dar Tajliyah-yi va Tasfiyah A'ineh-yi Haqq Nama* and *Sawa'iq al-Rahman fi al-Radd 'ala al-Yahud wa Ithbat Tahrif Tawratihim*, also completed 1032AH/1622CE. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, p. 94; 'Alawi 'Amili, *Misqal-i Safa*, p. 115.
179. Hafez F. Farmayan, 'The Beginnings of Modernization in Iran: The Policies and Reforms of Shah 'Abbas I (1587–1629)', Research Monograph No. 1, Middle East Center, University of Utah (Salt Lake City, 1969), pp. 11–14.
180. P. Raphael Du Mans, *Estat De La Perse En 1660*, ed. Ch. Schefer, XXVIII–XCIII (Paris, 1890); L. Langlesse, *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse, et autres lieux de l'Orient* vol. 1 (Paris, 1811), pp. 98–9, 121.
181. The works of Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin al-'Alawi al-'Amili are titled *Lavami'i Rubbani dar Radd-i Shubahat-i Nasrani* and *Misqal-i Safa dar Tajliyah-yi va Tasfiyah A'ineh-yi Haqq Nama*. He also composed 'Lama'at Malakutiyya', in Rasul Ja'fariyan (ed.), *Mirath-i Islami-yi Iran*, vol. 3, pp. 729–50, in refutation of Christianity. See 'Alawi 'Amili, *Misqal-i Safa*, p. 115. See Naji's notes 23–4. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 21, pp. 130–1. It is puzzling that the treatise is dedicated to Shah Safi who did not assume power before 1038AH/1629CE unless it was later dedicated to him but originally to Shah 'Abbas. Almost ten years after Ahmad wrote his polemical treatise against Christianity, P. Guadagnoli published in 1041AH/1631CE in Rome a treatise against him entitled, 'Apologia pro christiana religione qua a R.P. Philippo Guadagnolo Malleanensi, clericorum regula minorum S. Theologiae et arabicae linguae professore, respondetur ad objectiones Ahmad filii zin Alabidin, Persae Asphahanensis, contentas in libro inscripto politar speculi. Romae, 1631'. See Du Mans, *Estat de La Perse*, xciii, footnote. Based on the notes of Modarressi, Ahmad b. Zayn al-'Abidin wrote a third treatise in religious polemics entitled 'Lama'at Malakutiyya' edited by Rasul Ja'fariyan. It is not listed in *Dhari'a* under this title.
182. Du Mans, *Estat de La Perse*, xcii–xciii. P. Le Jerome-Xavier had studied Persian for eight years and was assisted in writing his early works on Christianity by 'Abdul Samad Qasim, a learned man from Lahore.
183. Laurence Lockhart, 'European Contacts with Persia, 1350–1736', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, p. 380.
184. Lockhart, 'European Contacts', p. 381.
185. *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, vol. 1 (London, 1939), pp. 83–7; Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, p. 107.
186. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 3, pp. 1588–9; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1181.
187. Floor, *The Economy*, p. 35.
188. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, pp. 114–9.

189. Laurence, 'European Contacts', p. 393. For more information on the involvement of the East India Company in the assault against the Portuguese, see pages 444–6.
190. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 3, pp. 1588–9; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1181.
191. Ibid.
192. 'Alavi 'Amili, *Misqal-i Safa*, pp. 114–5.
193. Ibid. p. 24.
194. Ibid. pp. 65–68.
195. Ibid. pp. 54–5, 123–5.
196. Ahamd 'Alavi, *Lati'if-i Ghaybiyeh*, pp. 185, 208, 251, 336, 354, 365, 425.
197. 'Alavi 'Amili, *Misqal-i Safa*, p. 21.
198. *Rawdat*, vol. 1, p. 78. Khwansari noted that Lutfullah came to Persia at early age (*awa'il 'umrih*). His father, 'Abd al-Karim al-Maysi (alive in 984AH/1576CE), was at the Ridawiyya shrine in Mashhad around 981AH/1573CE where he had copied a section of 'Uqud al-Malik. *Riyad*, vol. 4, pp. 417–420.
199. *Riyad*, vol. 4, p. 418; 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 1, pp. 249–50; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 249; *A'yan*, vol. 9, p. 38.
200. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 2, p. 1417; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1070.
201. *Riyad*, vol. 4, p. 418.
202. *Riyad*, vol. 4, pp. 417–20.
203. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 3, pp. 1674–5; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1229–30. Munshi's historical account at the time of Shah 'Abbas I lacks much of the political dispute so evident in the early confrontations between the 'Amili 'ulama and court officials.
204. Ibid.
205. *Riyad*, vol. 4, p. 417.
206. Ibid. folio 9b.
207. Mulla Jalal, *Tarikh-i 'Abbasi ya Ruznameh-yi*, pp. 113–4.
208. See R. D. McChesney, 'Four Sources on Shah 'Abbas's Buildings in Isfahan', *Muqarnas V: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* (E. J. Brill, 1988), pp. 117–19.
209. Masashi Haneda, 'The Character of the Urbanisation of Isfahan in the Later Safavid Period', in *Safavid Persia*, pp. 381–3; Blake, *Half the World*, pp. 22–3, 150–1. Haneda and Blake successfully show the elements of negotiation between the Shah and the traditional urban elite in Isfahan.
210. Blake, *Half the World*, p. 23.
211. *Tarikh-i 'Abbasi ya Ruznameh-yi*, p. 412; 'Alam-ara-yi 'Abbasi, vol. 3, p. 1674; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1229–30.
212. Mahmud b. Hidayatullah Afushta'i Natanzi, *Naqawat al-Athar fi Dhikr al-Akhyar*, ed. Ihsan Ishraqi (Tehran, 1350/1931), p. 539.
213. Blake, *Half the World*, p. 150.
214. Lutfullah al-Maysi al-'Amili, 'Al-I'tikafiyya' [also known as 'Ma' al-Hayat wa Safi al-Furat'], MS, in M. T. Danishpazhuh, *Fihrist-i Nusakh-i Khatti-yi Kitabkhana-yi Astana-yi Muqaddasa-yi Qum*, collection 2244 (Qum, 1355), no. 34, folio 1b.
215. Blake, *Half the World*, p. 148.
216. Ibid. pp. 107, 113–4.

217. Mehdi Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life in the Later Safavid Period: Contributions to the Social-Economic History of Persia* (Berlin, 1982), p. 125.
218. *Ibid.* p. 142.
219. *Ibid.* p. 125. The extent to which a trade or craft is spread in the city depended to a certain extent on how profitable and esteemed it was for the Safavid Shahs.
220. *Ibid.* p. 145.
221. Lutfullah al-Maysi, 'Al-I'tikafiyya', folio 1b. Lutfullah addresses one anonymous guildsman as the main agitator against him, yet his treatise is replete with references to artisans, and a merchant who tried to rally some *sayyids* and notables to their cause.
222. *Ibid.* folio 9a.
223. Similar remarks were made by 'Ali b. Zayn al-Din al-'Amili, half a century later and under different conditions.
224. *Ibid.* The Arabic sentence reads '*idh qad ishtahara bi-Khurasan wa'l-'Iraq bi'anna sahib al-dawla wa'l-ashwaq...*'.
225. Lutfullah, 'Al-I'tikafiyya', folio 10a. R. D. McChesney doubted that Shah 'Abbas had built such a mosque for Lutfullah al-Maysi. The latter's direct quotations from the Shah in 'Al-I'tikafiyya', however, discount such doubts. Lutfullah Hunarfar and Stephen Blake's conclusions in this respect seem more accurate. See Lutfullah Hunarfar, *Ganjina-yi Asar-i Tarikh-i Isfahan* (Tehran, 1350/1971–72); Blake, *Half the World*, pp. 148–9. Blake correctly noted that Lutfullah lived in the precincts of the mosque and received a stipend from the imperial household; R. D. McChesney, 'Four Sources', pp. 123–4.
226. Lutfullah, 'Al-I'tikafiyya', folio 9b.
227. *Ibid.* folio 1a.
228. *The Pilgrim: The Travels of Pietro Della Valle*, tr. George Bull (London, 1989), p. 169. Della Valle noted that the Shah found it favorable to pass around a wine cup to court visitors during wine-drinking sessions, presumably as an enactment of an ancient Arab custom.
229. Lutfullah, 'Al-I'tikafiyya', folio 5b. Lutfullah also mentioned with admiration a number of Persian scholars, particularly Mawlana 'Abdullah al-Shushtari.
230. *Ibid.* folios 1b, 9a–9b.
231. 'Al-I'tikafiyya', folios 1a–1b.
232. See Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, p. 185; Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, pp. 40, 193–4. Lutfullah's onslaught on the artisans is not unique among the '*ulama*, as I indicated in previous chapters. It is doubtful whether, as Keyvani suggested, the '*ulama*, based on the *shari'a* or the Qur'an, truly honored artisan and craftwork. Savory also noted the 'close alliance' between the '*ulama* and the artisans which was supported by inter-marital ties. It is important, however, to distinguish between various classes of '*ulama*. High-ranking '*ulama* like al-Karaki and Lutfullah al-Maysi belittled guildsmen and their social rank. In comparison, the lower-ranking '*ulama*, who enjoyed none of the economic and social privileges of their superiors, tended to inculcate artisan following and some even worked in the bazaar with them.

233. See Ja'fariyan, *'Ilal-i Bar Uftadan-i Safaviyyan* (Qum, 1993), p. 318. It is possible that *ahya* was first introduced to Persian Shi'ite rituals by al-Karaki.
234. Ibid. pp. 313–21. Ja'fariyan brought my attention to Lutfullah's treatise on seclusion and had devoted a chapter for this question in *'Ilal bar*, namely 'Shaykh Lutfullah va Risala-yi I'tikafiyya'.
235. Ibid. folios 1b, 8b. Lutfullah mentions an anonymous artisan or guild master who directed slander (*tashni'*) and defamation (*tashhir*) against him.
236. Ja'fariyan, *'Ilal-i Bar Uftadan-i*, p. 318.
237. See Muhammad Jawad Mughniyya, *Fiqh al-Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq: 'Ard wa Istidlal*, part 2, vol. 3 (Beirut, 1402/1982), pp. 3–4.
238. *The Pilgrim*, p. 169.
239. Ja'fariyan, *'Ilal-e Bar Uftadan-i*, pp. 318–9.
240. Ibid. Several Shi'ite scholars accepted Lutfullah's rendering of the term *imam 'adl*. Muhammad al-Hurr al-'Amili argued that it was equivalent to a just witness (*shahid 'adl*).
241. Lutfullah, 'Al-I'tikafiyya', folio 2b. Lutfullah accepts the Traditions transmitted by al-Halabi on seclusion.
242. Ibid. folios 3a, 6a, 9a–9b.
243. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, p. 1417; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1070.
244. See L. Langles (ed.), *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin*, vol. 7, pp. 319–20. See also Chardin's description of the *madrasa* of Lutfullah, p. 363.

Chapter 4. Safavid mistrust, popular protest and the retreat of the rationalists

1. Several conventional jurists under Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbas II saw their own marginalization at the hands of philosophically and Sufi bent *'ulama*, as a lack of commitment on the part of the Shahs toward clerical Islam. These views must be approached with caution. Representatives of these views will be discussed at length in this chapter. Here, suffice to point to a few sources reflecting these views: Muhammad Tahir Vahid Qazvini, *'Abbasnameh*, ed. Ibrahim Dihgan (Tehran, 1329/1950), pp. 65–66, 70; *Qisas al-Khaqani*, pp. 292–7; 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Zayn al-Din, *Al-Durr al-Manthur min al-Ma'thur wa Ghayr al-Ma'thur*, vol. 2 (Qum, 1398/1977), pp. 242–5; 'Al-Siham al-Mariqa min Aghrad al-Zanadiqa', MS, in Ahmad al-Husayni, *Fihrist-i Nuskhahay-i Khatti-yi Kitabkhana-yi 'Umumi-yi Mar'ashi*, collection 1576 (Qum, 1975), folio 1a.
2. Indeed, one cannot treat Sufism as a fixed entity with constant beliefs and practices, for much like 'Shi'ism' and 'Sunnism' during this period, it underwent several changes and integrated diverse concepts, and projected regional and class differentiation.
3. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 282.
4. Bert Fragner, 'Social and Internal Economic Affairs', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, p. 522.
5. Floor, 'The Rise and Fall of Mirza Taqi, the Eunuch Grand Vizier (1043–55/1633–45)', *Studia Iranica*, 26 (1997), pp. 249–50. Floor argued on the basis of a number of

Safavid sources that Saru Taqi came from a distinguished family background rather than the *ghulam* stratum.

6. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, p. 23.
7. Muhammad Panahi Simnani, *Shah Sultan Husayn Safavi* (Tehran, 1994), pp. 41, 44.
8. See Muhammad Tahir Vahid Qazvini, '*Abbasnameh*', ed. Ibrahim Dihgan (Tehran, 1329/1950), p. 64.
9. Panahi Simnani, *Shah Sultan Husayn*, pp. 41, 44.
10. Qazvini, '*Abbasnameh*', pp. 64–5. Saru Taqi also faced competition from within his own constituency. See '*Alamara-yi*', vol. 3, p. 1819; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1322–3.
11. See Willem Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, pp. 24–5. Floor provides forceful evidence in support of his view that the grand viziers dominated Safavid politics during the seventeenth century CE.
12. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', pp. 289–90. Around this time, the court post was transformed from a largely titular one in the tenth century AH/sixteenth century CE to a specialized function, consequently allowing its incumbents to accumulate great influence that turned them into 'pillars of the state' (*arkan-i dawlat*).
13. Floor, *Safavid Government*, pp. 27, 34–5, 78.
14. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, pp. 489.
15. Matthee, 'Politics and trade in late Safavid Iran', pp. 33–4.
16. Floor, *Safavid Government*, p. 282.
17. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 282.
18. *Ibid.* pp. 284–7.
19. Floor, *The Economy of Safavid Persia* (Wiesbaden, 2000), pp. 61, 301, 329. Floor accurately noted that there was no national market as such, but rather multiple, self-sufficient regional ones.
20. Floor, *The Economy of Safavid Persia*, p. 301. For more on peasants, see pp. 289–301.
21. Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600–1730* (London, 1999), pp. 91–3; Matthee wrote that 'Iran's rulers were too strongly aware of the competitive nature of the outside search for silk'. See also Floor, *The Economy*, p. 301.
22. Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 5, pp. 386–9. See also Floor, *The Economy*, p. 290.
23. Floor, *A Fiscal History*, pp. 7–8, 30–1.
24. Matthee, *The Politics of Trade*, pp. 122–3.
25. Floor, *The Economy*, p. 290.
26. '*Abbasnameh*', pp. 271–5. The events took place around the time of building Sadatabad in Isfahan.
27. *Ibid.* pp. 59–61.
28. Vladimir Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-Muluk: A Manual of Safavid Administration (circa 1137/1725)* (London, 1943), pp. 45–52.
29. Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 5, pp. 386–392. Chardin's observations are integrated in Foran's assessment of the Safavid peasantry. See John Foran (ed.), *Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Revolution* (Boulder, 1993), p. 30.
30. Compare Chardin's notes in *Voyages*, vol. 5 on pages 388–90 with those on pages 391–2.

31. On the insurrection of the *sayyids* of Gilan, who raised messianic claims, see *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1174; *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 3, pp. 1574–5. Around 1029AH/1619–20CE, a leader of the province of Duraq proclaimed himself the deputy of the Hidden Imam and appointed agents.
32. James J. Reid, *Studies in Safavid Mind, Society and Culture* (Costa Mesa, 2000), pp. 230–2, 247–8. Reid questioned peasant support of the ambitions of a local governor or commander when no direct or clear advantages for them could be discerned.
33. *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1059; *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, p. 1401.
34. *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1063; *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, p. 1406.
35. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 3, pp. 1419–20; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1073.
36. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 3, p. 1478; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1111.
37. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 2, pp. 1477–8; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1111–12.
38. Floor, 'The Secular Judicial System in Safavid Persia', *Studia Iranica*, 1/29 (2000), pp. 14–15.
39. *Ibid.* p. 15.
40. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 3, pp. 1650–3; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1218–19.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 3, p. 1668; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1226.
43. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 3, pp. 1578–9, 1696; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1176, 1243.
44. Floor, *The Secular Judicial System*, p. 16.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *'Abbasnameh*, pp. 190–1.
47. Floor, 'The Secular Judicial System', pp. 16–17.
48. *Ibid.* p. 18.
49. Floor, *The Economy*, pp. 59–60.
50. *'Abbasnameh*, p. 307.
51. *Ibid.* pp. 62–3.
52. Reid, *Safavid Mind*, pp. 306–7.
53. Floor, 'The Secular Judicial System', p. 18.
54. Reid, *Safavid Mind*, p. 362.
55. Floor, *The Economy*, p. 34.
56. New material based on provincial histories of the period and names of scholars and clerics buried in several Iranian cemeteries revealed more 'Amili names than those listed in Appendix II.
57. See Appendix I. Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki, *Hidayat al-Abrar ila Tariq al-A'imma al-Athar*, ed. Ra'uf Jamal al-Din (Baghdad, 1977), preface.
58. This account is based on the inextant biographical tract 'Bughyat al-Murid fi al-Kashf 'an Ahwal al-Shaykh Zayn al-Din al-Shahid' by Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Hasan al-'Awdi/'Udi al-'Amili al-Jizzini, a student of al-Shahid al-Thani.
59. Muhammad al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Amal al-Amil fi 'ulama' Jabal 'Amil*, vol. 2 (Najaf, 1385/1965), p. 16; Safa, *Tarikh Jabal 'Amil*, 233; Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, *Khitat al-Sham* (Damascus, 1346/1927), p. 252.
60. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq was asked also to specify his *awliya'* (legal guardians or

- acknowledged legal sources) and to identify the righteous among the Shi'a who adhere to the teachings of their Imams.
61. Mirza Habibullah married the daughter of Lutfullah al-Maysi.
 62. Jamal al-Din grew up in Jabal 'Amil, emigrated to Mecca, visited Yemen and then moved to Mashhad. From Mashhad, he moved to Haydarabad. See *A'yan*, vol. 4, p. 217.
 63. It is unclear whether it was in the late seventeenth or eighteenth century CE.
 64. Ibid. folio 12b.
 65. Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 5, pp. 210–212ff.
 66. Ibid. pp. 211, 212ff.
 67. Ibid. pp. 209–210.
 68. Ibid. vol. 6, pp. 444–5.
 69. Ibid. vol. 5, pp. 216–217.
 70. Ibid. p. 218.
 71. Floor, 'The sadr or head of the Safavid', pp. 468–471.
 72. See *'Abbasnameh*, p. 89.
 73. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, p. 185; A. K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 106–7. Lambton points to the tendency, at the time of Shah 'Abbas, to recognize private property and 'full rights of disposal', which pushed many to transform their lands into endowments. The interconnection between religious servicemen and financial administration is reflected in the fact that the posts of *sadr al-sudur*, *sadr al-khawas* and *sadr al-mawqufat*, though not dealing directly with the administration of the *shari'a*, were nonetheless categorized under 'spiritual posts' (*manasib-i ruhani*). See *'Abbasnameh*, p. 338.
 74. Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 4, pp. 230–1.
 75. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, p. 186.
 76. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, p. 113; Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, p. 200; see also Foran, *Fragile Resistance*, p. 28.
 77. Fragner, 'Social and Internal Economic', pp. 506–7; Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, p. 186.
 78. Fragner, 'Social and Internal Economic', p. 506; Floor, *A Fiscal History of Iran*, pp. 59–60.
 79. Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 6, p. 65–66; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, pp. 115–6, 126–7; Fragner, 'Social and Internal', pp. 510–11. The small *suyurghals* were not generated exclusively from state land but also from *waqf* and crown land.
 80. Fragner, 'Social and Internal', p. 514; Floor, *Fiscal History*, pp. 46–7. Floor asserts that since the time of Shah 'Abbas, and 'as a result of the practice of transferring rank and assignments to a relative, the *teyul* also became hereditary'.
 81. *Rawdat al-Jannat*, vol. 2, pp. 118–23. Khwansari explains that Mulla 'Azizullah, one of the sons of Muhammad Taqi, who was a distinguished religious scholar and composer of belles-lettres, accumulated so much wealth as to rival the affluent merchant Mirza Muhammad Taqi Astarabadi.

82. John Foran, *Fragile Resistance*, p. 29.
83. Floor, 'The Secular Judicial System', p. 31. See also Chardin's and Kaempfer's observations about *mujtahids*. Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 5, pp. 209–212.
84. *Ibid.* vol. 3, p. 208.
85. Zarrinkoob, 'Persian Sufism', pp. 177–8; 'Ahl-i Malamet va Fityan', in Henry Corbin, *A'ineh Javanmardi*, tr. Ahsan Naraqi (Tehran, 1363/1984), p. 197.
86. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 1, pp. 234–5; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 236. See also Mirza Muhammad Tahir Nasrabadi, *Tadhkirah-yi Nasrabadi*, ed. Vahid Dastgardi (Iran, 1361/1982), p. 15.
87. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 3, pp. 1681–2; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, pp. 1234–5, 1320; 'Abbasnameh, p. 66.
88. *Qisas al-Khaqani*, pp. 286–7, 288. In 1016AH/1607CE, Khalifa Sultan aspired to the governorship of Tabriz but was disappointed. See page 197.
89. 'Abbasnameh, pp. 7–9, 65, 70.
90. *Riyad*, vol. 4, pp. 197–8; *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 6, p. 94. Tehrani does not mention the date of the completion of this work by Khalifa Sultan.
91. Rudi Matthee, 'The Career of Mohammad Beg, Grand Vizier of Shah 'Abbas II (r. 1642–1666)', *Iranian Studies*, 1–4/24 (1991), pp. 21–22. Matthee suggested that the appointment of Khalifa Sultan as grand vizier by Shah 'Abbas II was 'a victory of bureaucratic forces over tribal ones'. In my opinion, the Qizilbash did not disappear from Safavid politics but their alliances took new forms during this period not exclusively defined by Turkoman membership.
92. Floor, 'The Rise and Fall of Mirza Taqi', pp. 258–263.
93. *Ibid.* pp. 261, 265.
94. Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat*, pp. 41–2; Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 4, p. 278; Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 293.
95. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', pp. 293–4.
96. 'Abbasnameh, p. 315; see *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, vol. 1, pp. 314–16.
97. *Qisas al-Khaqani*, p. 212.
98. *Ibid.*
99. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 12, pp. 67–8. Ibrahim al-Mar'ashi al-Amuli al-Isfahani (d. 1098AH/1686CE), the son of Khalifa Sultan, also wrote a commentary on *Al-Rawda al-Bahiyya*, which 'Abd al-Nabi al-Qazvini, author of *Tatmim Amal al-Amil*, found praiseworthy. See *al-Dhari'a*, vol. 6, pp. 90–1; vol. 10, pp. 200–1. 'Ali's personal signature on the first volume reads 1073AH/1662CE, but it was actually completed in 1074AH/1663CE. The second volume of *Al-Zahrat* was completed in 1075AH/1664CE.
100. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-'Amili, 'Hashiya 'ala Sharh al-Lum'a', MS, in M. T. Danishpazhuh, *Fihrist-i Nusakh-i Khatti-yi Kitabkhana-yi Astana-yi Muqaddasa-yi Qum*, collection 2356 (Qum, 1355), folio 1b. It was among the endowments of Ibn Khwatun al-'Amili from 1067AH/1656CE. The 'Hashiyeh' is 109 pages long. 'Ali alludes to Khalifa Sultan as 'one of the verifiers' who made numerous objections to the grammatical and lexicographic comments of al-Shahid al-Thani on *Al-Lum'a*.

101. At the time when 'Ali al-Shahidi was narrating this incident, Zeinab Begum had already passed away.
102. *Al-Durr*, vol. 2, p. 242.
103. *Ibid.* p. 244.
104. *Ibid.* p. 203.
105. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Zayn al-Din al-'Amili, 'Al-Siham al-Mariqa min Aghrad al-Zanadiqa', MS, in Ahmad al-Husayni, *Fihrist-i Nuskhahay-i Khatti-yi Kitabkhana-yi 'Umumi-yi Mar'ashi*, collection 1576 (Qum, 1975), folio 1a. Al-Fayd had argued in *Safinat al-Najat* that the central sources for deriving legal rulings are the Qur'an and the Sunna. Resorting to independent judgment (*ra'i*) or *ijtihad* in jurisprudence is a harmful innovation. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 12, pp. 202–3.
106. 'Ali b. Zayn al-Din al-'Amili, 'Al-Siham al-Mariqa', folio 1a.
107. *Ibid.* folios 1a-1b.
108. *Ibid.*
109. *Ibid.* folio 17a.
110. Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, vol. 1 (London, 1973), p. 48–9. Roemer argued that Muhammad Beg was of a humble background but Willem Floor convincingly argued that by the time Muhammad Beg assumed the position of grand vizier he had a distinguished social standing. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 294. Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, pp. 34–5.
111. Matthee, 'The Career of Mohammad Beg, Grand Vizier of Shah 'Abbas', pp. 17–36, 21.
112. *Abbasnameh*, p. 122. The father of Muhammad Beg held an important function at court as the chief tailor. See Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, p. 35.
113. See Vera B. Moreen, 'The Persecution of Iranian Jews during the Reign of Shah 'Abbas II (1642–1666)', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 52 (1981), pp. 275–303. See also Francis Richard, 'Un Augustin Portugais Renegat Apologiste de L' Islam Chiite au Debut du XVIIIe Siecle', in *Moyen Orient and Ocean Indien, XVIe-XIXe*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1984), p. 73.
114. Erza Spicelander, 'The Persecution of the Jews of Isfahan Under Shah 'Abbas II (1642–1666)', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 46 (1975), p. 331. Vera B. Moreen advanced a well-balanced historical assessment of the persecution of Iranian Jews under Shah 'Abbas II; see Moreen, 'The Persecution of Iranian Jews', pp. 275–303.
115. Spicelander, 'The Persecution', pp. 333–38, based on the work *Kitab-i Anusi*, written by Babai bin Lutf, a Persian Jew; Moreen, 'The Persecution of Iranian Jews', p. 278.
116. Matthee, 'The Career of Mohammad Beg', p. 27.
117. Moreen, 'The Persecution of Iranian Jews', p. 281. See also Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 6, p. 133.
118. Spicelander, 'The Persecution', p. 341.
119. Moreen, 'The Persecution of Iranian Jews', p. 283.
120. This is based on the text of *Kitab-i Anusi*, translated and edited by Moreen, in 'The Persecution of Iranian Jews', p. 298.
121. Floor, 'The sadr', p. 493.

122. See Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, pp. 74, 78.
123. Moreen, 'The Persecution of Iranian Jews', p. 289.
124. *Ibid.* p. 288. See also Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 6, p. 134.
125. See *Tadhkirat al-Muluk*, pp. 14–16.
126. Floor, *Safavid Government*, p. 142. He was a *qurchi-bashi* in 1021–40AH/1612–31CE. Also in *Zubdat al-Tavarikh*, p. 99, it is noted that Fathullah Isfahani was the first Mustawfi who was a *qurchi* and was highly regarded at that.
127. Floor, *Safavid Government*, p. 150.
128. *Ibid.* p. 151.
129. 'Alam-ara-yi, vol. 3, p. 1797; *Zubdat al-Tavarikh*, p. 105.
130. *Zubdat al-Tavarikh*, p. 105.
131. *Qisas al-Khaqani*, pp. 212, 524.
132. 'Abbasnameh, pp. 298–9.
133. Matthee, 'The Career of Muhammad Beg', p. 34.
134. See Muroeh, *Al-Naza'at al-Madiyya*, vol. 1, pp. 615–27, 642. I benefited greatly from Muroeh's assessment of the social and political forces, which led to the evolvement and promotion of ideas of free will and rationalism in the early period of Islam. As a corrective to much of the scholarship on Islamic philosophical thought, Muroeh insists that social reality and 'class' formations underwrite intellectual developments in a given society. Much in the tradition of Marxism and the themes of *The German Ideology*, Muroeh notes that 'there is no contradiction, fundamentally, between the [fact] that thought is connected to objective reality or material conditions, and the relative autonomy of [this thought]'.
135. Hossein Modarressi, 'Rationalism and Traditionalism in Shi'i Jurisprudence', p. 155.
136. *Lu'lu'at*, pp. 117–119; Modarressi, *Shi'ite Law*, p. 52.
137. See Muhammad Amin Astarabadi, *Al-Fawa'id al-Madaniyya* (Iran, 1321).
138. I concur with Norman Calder and Robert Gleave that *akhbarism* emerges as a coherent legal method and gains an 'exclusive meaning' around the time of Astarabadi. I add, however, a corrective to the process of causation. It is not thinkers or jurists like Astarabadi who initiated traditionist ideas or the *akhbari* movement, but rather such thinkers become the expression of the early maturity of the social conditions defining such a movement. See Norman Calder, 'The Structure of Authority in Imami Shi'i Jurisprudence', Diss., London University, 1983, p. 231; Robert Gleave, *Inevitable Doubt: Two Theories of Shi'i Jurisprudence* (Leiden, 2000), p. 7.
139. 'Ali al-Musawi's work was published on the margins of *Al-Fawa'id al-Madaniyya*. It is also known as *Al-Fawa'id al-Makiyya*. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 14, pp. 244–5.
140. Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki, *Hidayat al-Abrar ila Tariq al-A'imma al-Athar*, ed. Ra'uf Jamal al-Din (Najaf, 1396), p. 64.
141. *Ibid.* pp. 135–6.
142. Modarressi, 'Rationalism and Traditionalism', p. 156.
143. Husayn b. Shihab al-Din, *Hidayat al-Abrar*, p. 3.
144. *Ibid.* p. 4.
145. *Ibid.* pp. 6–8.

146. Ibid. pp. 10–11.
147. Ibid. p. 12.
148. Ibid. pp. 34–56.
149. Ibid. pp. 78–9.
150. Ibid. pp. 101–2.
151. Ibid. pp. 102–3, 136, 143.
152. See Gleave, *Inevitable Doubt*, pp. 6–8. Gleave noted that, first, the central debate between *usulism* and *akhbarism* circled around *ijtihad* and, second, that *akhbarism* promoted an alternative form of scholarly and juridical and, as such, political authority for the Shi'ite scholar but did not categorically reject the political activities of the jurists. During the Safavid period this seems to be the case. The careers of both Muhammad Baqir Majlisi and al-Hurr al-'Amili, discussed in Chapter 5, illustrate this point.
153. 'Ali b. Zayn al-Din al-'Amili, 'Al-Siham', folio 14a.
154. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, p. 191.
155. Naturally, doctrinal and legal exchanges and appropriations in both directions, Sunnite and Shi'ite, have occurred at different phases in response to local historical demands. In the case of mid seventeenth century CE Persia, the '*ulama*'s association with Safavid temporal authority set the stage for such adaptations from Sunnism as I explained in Chapter 1.
156. *Al-Durr*, vol. 2, p. 245.
157. 'Al-Siham', folio 7b.
158. Ibid. folio 10b.
159. The spread of traditionism among the '*ulama*' of Bahrain needs to be studied thoroughly in connection with internal historical developments within the society of Bahrain and its relations to the Safavid government.
160. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, pp. 62–82. For an accurate depiction of the diverse intellectual make-up of the '*ulama*' at the time, see Khwaturabadi, *Vaqayi' al-Sinin*, pp. 506–522. Look also through the numerous biographical sketches of seventeenth-century CE scholars in Tehrani, *Al-Kawakib al-Muntashira*.
161. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 302.
162. Nasrabadi, *Tadhkirah-yi Nasrabadi*, p. 168.
163. Muhammad Ma'sum Shirazi, known as Ma'sum 'Ali Shah, *Tara'iq al-Haqa'iq*, vol. 1, ed. M. Ja'far Mahjub (Iran, 1970), pp. 175, 267.
164. Muhammad Ma'sum Shirazi, *Tara'iq al-Haqa'iq*, pp. 175, 177.
165. Sayyid Husayn Nasr, 'Spiritual Movements, Philosophy, and Theology in the Safavid Period', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, p. 690.
166. Ibid. pp. 680, 690.
167. '*Abbasnameh*', p. 184.
168. *Al-Kawakib al-Muntashira*, p. 277.
169. '*Abbasnameh*', pp. 255, 321.
170. *Al-Kawakib*, pp. 146–8; *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, pp. 66–7, 70, 79.
171. *Al-Kawakib*, pp. 671–2.

172. Nasr, 'Spiritual Movements', p. 696.
173. Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyosat*, p. 151; *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 14, p. 252. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, p. 65. Al-Fayd presented his views on Friday prayer in his work *Al-Shihab al-Thaqib*, completed 1057AH/1647CE. See also Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyosat*, p. 151.
174. *Ibid.* pp. 66, 71; Khwatonabadi, *Vaqayi' al-Sinin*, p. 534. Mulla Khalil was a student of Baha'i and Mir Damad. He was opposed to the use of *ijtihad* in Shi'ite jurisprudence.
175. Ma'sum 'Ali Shah, *Tara'iq al-Haqa'iq*, vol. 1, pp. 178–9. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, pp. 69, 72. The treatise was completed in 1069AH/1658CE. Muhammad Tahir Qummi also attacked Mawla Hasan 'Ali b. 'Abdullah Tustari (d. 1075AH/1664CE), one of the few conventional jurists to call for the prohibition of Friday prayer.
176. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15 (Najaf & Tehran, 1384q/1965), p. 68.
177. Arjomand, *The Shadow*, p. 152. See also Ma'sum 'Ali Shah, *Tara'iq al-Haqa'iq*, ed. M. J. Mahjub, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1339/1960), pp. 177–8.
178. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15 (Najaf & Tehran, 1384/1965), p. 81. The treatise, 'Al-Hujja fi Wujub Salat al-Jum'a' by Mawlana Muhammad Muqim Yazdi (d. 1084AH/1673CE), throws light on the legalistic-political debates around Friday prayer. See pages 51–3.
179. Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyosat*, p. 127. See also Muhsin al-Fayd, *Al-Shihab al-Thaqib*, ed. Ra'uf Jamal al-Din (Beirut, 1410/1989), p. 47.
180. See 'Abdol Hosein Zarrinkoob, *Justeju Dar Tasavvuf-i Iran* (Tehran, 1366/1987).
181. *Ibid.* pp. 259–60.
182. Zarrinkoob, 'Persian Sufism', pp. 177–8; 'Ahl-i Malamat', p. 197.
183. Amoretti, 'Religion', p. 648.
184. Zarrinkoob, 'Persian Sufism', pp. 177–8; 'Ahl-i Malamat', p. 197.
185. *Ibid.* pp. 181–4; *Arzesh-i Mirath-i Sufiyyeh* (Tehran, 1344), pp. 105–6; 'Ahl-i Malamat', pp. 196–7. The Qalandaris had become well established during the seventh century CE in Khurasan, India and Syria.
186. *Justeju*, pp. 259–60. These *fatwas* are included in 'Radd al-Sufiyya' by Mulla Mutahhir b. Muhammad al-Miqdadi.
187. Mirza Ahmad b. al-Husayn was the author of 'Al-Tuhfa al-Ithna 'Ashariyya', dedicated to Sultan 'Abdullah Qutbshah. See al-Muhajir, *Al-Hijra*, p. 208; *Ta'liqat Amal al-'Amil*, p. 11.
188. *Amal al-'Amil*, vol. 1, p. 176; *Riyad*, vol. 4, p. 164; *Rawdat*, vol. 7 (Beirut, 1411/1991), p. 85–7; *A'yan*, vol. 5, p. 127. Al-'Aynathi grew up in Jabal 'Amil and migrated to Mashhad during his youth. This is reflected in his *Kitab al-Ithna 'ashariyya fi'l-Mawa'iz al-'Adadiyya*, completed in 1068AH/1657CE, and in *Adab al-Nafs*, which further reveals the author's use of Aristotelian and Avicennan philosophy and the Sufi approach of Ikhwan al-Safa'. See M. Kazim Makki, *Al-Haraka al-Thaqafiyya*, pp. 75–6.
189. Al-Muhajir, *Al-Hijra*, p. 213.
190. 'Al-Siham', folio 11b. 'Ali cites a 'famous' tradition showing that Abu Dhar al-Ghifari had warned against those who wear wool during summer and winter and find in that a virtue. The wool-wearers are cursed by the angels in heaven and earth. See also folio 10a.

191. Ibid. folio 11a.
192. Ni'matullah al-Jaza'iri, *Al-Anwar al-Nu'maniyya*, vol. 3 (Iran, n.d.), p. 343.
193. Ibid. p. 196.
194. Ibid.
195. Ibid. p. 197.
196. *Al-Durr*, vol. 2, p. 245; see al-Muhajir, *Al-Hijra*, pp. 210–11.
197. 'Al-Siham', folio 1a.
198. Ma'sum 'Ali Shah, *Tara'iq al-Haqa'iq*, vol. 1, pp. 176–8.
199. 'Al-Siham', folio 1a.
200. Ibid. folio 12a.
201. Ibid. folio 4a.
202. Ibid. folio 4b.
203. 'Al-Siham', folio 11b.
204. Ibid. folio 7a.
205. Ibid. folio 12b.
206. Ibid. folio 25.
207. Ibid. folios 5a–5b, 6a. As for al-Ghazali's support of the right claims of Imam 'Ali to the Caliphate on the basis of a revealed text (*nass*), 'Ali suggests that this might have been an early opinion from which al-Ghazali later defected in *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, written toward the end of his life.
208. See Abou El-Hajj, *Formation of the Modern State*, pp. 49–51. I have benefited a great deal from the approach and historical questions raised by Abou El-Hajj about the writing of Ottoman history in general.
209. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, pp. 62–82; Modarressi, *Shi'ite Law*, pp. 145–52; Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat*, pp. 126–80.

Chapter 5: The rediscovery of Traditions and the shifting normative

1. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 304.
2. Krusinsky, *The History of the Late Revolutions*, vol. 1, pp. 54–5.
3. Ibid. p. 54.
4. Panahi Simnani, *Shah Sultan Husayn: Tirazhidi-i*, pp. 109–111.
5. Matthee, 'Politics and trade', p. 34.
6. Ibid. pp. 450–2.
7. Ibid.
8. Floor, *The Economy*, p. 62.
9. Ibid. pp. 62–3.
10. *Vaqayi'*, pp. 543–4. Azerbaijan and Tabriz suffered from water shortages.
11. Ibid. pp. 305–7.
12. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 311.
13. Kursinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions*, p. 62.
14. Ibid. p. 64.
15. Ibid. p. 83.
16. Ibid. pp. 100–101; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, p. 65.

17. Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions*, pp. 87–9.
18. *Ibid.* p. 89.
19. *Ibid.* p. 87.
20. Muhammad Ibrahim b. Zayn al-'Abidin Nasiri, *Dustur-i Shahriyaran*, ed. Muhammad Nadir Nasiri Muqaddam (Tehran, 1373/1994), Introduction, pp. 32–3.
21. Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions*, pp. 91–2, 98–9.
22. *Ibid.* p. 116.
23. Nasiri, *Dustur-i Shahriyaran*, pp. 25–6, 36–40, 46–52.
24. Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat*, pp. 241–2; Reid, *Studies in Safavid Mind*, p. 362.
25. Reid, *Studies in Safavid Mind*, pp. 349–64.
26. Reid's examples about peasant revolts cover mostly the sixteenth century CE.
27. Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, *Raj'at*, ed. Abu Dhar Beydar (Iran, 1367/1988), pp. 5–6.
28. Some 'Amilis devoted special treatises for genealogical inquiries, and family branches of prominent 'ulama. Among these were Shaykh-i Baha'i's *Mushajjarat al-Rijal* and *Nasab Nameh va Shajareh* in Persian. It is noteworthy that both Husayn al-Mujtahid and Mir Damad devoted a treatise to *siyada*. Husayn al-Mujtahid composed his treatise 'Risala fi al-Sayyid wa'l-Siyada' for the Great Vizier, Mir Shuja' al-Din al-Safawi al-Haydari al-Musawi, who must have been one of the viziers of Shah Tahmasb. He argued that all the descendents of Fatima were considered *sayyids*. Mir Damad also wrote a treatise affirming the *siyada* status for the descendents of Fatima. See *al-Dhari'a*, vol. 2, pp. 101–2; vol. 12, pp. 275–6; vol. 16, pp. 258–9.
29. Muhammad Ashraf al-Hasani, *Fada'il al-Sadat* (Iran, 1314/1896–7), pp. 3–4. *Fada'il* was completed in 1103AH/1691–2CE. The grandfather of Muhammad Ashraf was the maternal nephew of Mir Damad and had married his daughter.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.* pp. 6–7
32. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, p. 47. Abu'l-Hasan al-Sharif b. Muhammad b. Tahir al-Futuni (d. 1138AH/1725CE) laid down *Kitab al-Ansab* after a few *sayyids* asked him to simplify *Hada'iq al-Albab fi Ma'rifat al-Ansab*, which includes genealogies of kings, *sayyids* and famous men.
33. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, p. 78.
34. *A'yan*, vol. 9, p. 59. The *sayyid* in question was Mirza Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Naysaburi (alive in 1134AH/1721CE).
35. See Momen, *Shi'i Islam*, p. 120.
36. Modarressi, *Shi'i Law*, p. 55.
37. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, p. 76; *Rawdat*, vol. 7, pp. 77–8.
38. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, p. 76; *Rawdat*, vol. 7, pp. 77–8.
39. *Lu'lu'at*, pp. 15–16.
40. Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat*, p. 137.
41. *Al-Kawakib al-Muntashira*, pp. 146–8; *al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, pp. 66–7, 70, 79.
42. *Al-Kawakib al-Muntashira*, pp. 671–2.
43. *Al-Kawakib*, pp. 231, 671–2. Muhammad al-Sarab's son, Muhammad Qasim

- Astarabadi was appointed judge in Mazandaran. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, pp. 74–5; *Vaqayi' al-Sinin*, vol. 1, pp. 516, 536.
44. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, p. 66.
 45. Ibid.
 46. *Al-Kawakib*, p. 277. He dedicated his work, 'Al-Rafiq fi Adab al-Safar' to Shah Sultan Husayn in 1114AH/1703CE. It is not clear from Munzavi's account what form of Sufi order (*tariqa*) Muhammad Rida Qazvini followed. On the other hand, he seemed to have written a treatise against the Sufis!
 47. Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions*, pp. 74–5.
 48. Ibid. pp. 71–2.
 49. See *Dustur-i Shariyaran*, p. 19.
 50. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, p. 38.
 51. Muslih al-Din Mahdavi, *Zindiginameh-yi 'Allama Majlisi* (Isfahan, n.d.), p. 272, Ma'sum 'Ali Shah, *Tara'iq al-Haqa'iq*, vol. 1, p. 163.
 52. *Vaqayi' al-Sinin*, pp. 561–2; *Dustur-i Shahriyaran*, pp. 18–19.
 53. Muslih al-Din Mahdavi, *Zidiginameh-yi*, p. 44. Muhammad Baqir Majlisi's maternal grandfather was Darwish Kamal al-Din Muhammad b. Hasan al-'Amili al-Natanzi al-Isfahani. The scholastic outlook and practices of Majlisi may have led some to mistakenly believe that the Majlisi family came from Jabal 'Amil. See Mahdavi, *Zindiginameh-yi 'Allama*, p. 46.
 54. Ibid. p. 55.
 55. *Zindiginameh-yi*, p. 79–80; Ja'fariyan: *Din va Siyosat*, pp. 441–44.
 56. Floor, 'The sadr', p. 477. The post of *mulla-bashi* came into being under Shah Sultan Husayn in 1124AH/1712CE, occupied first by Mir Muhammad Baqir Khatunabadi 'the first rector of the Chahar-bagh *madraseh* and tutor of the Shah'. Arjomand noted that the rise of the office of *mulla-bashi* was the outcome of a conflict between the Persian clerical estate and the Shi'ite hierocracy, which had grown more autonomous in the late Safavid period. See Arjomand, 'The office of *mulla-bashi* in Shi'ite Iran', *Studia Islamica*, vol. 57 (1983), pp. 135–146.
 57. Floor, 'The sadr', p. 468.
 58. Ibid. p. 469.
 59. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, p. 71.
 60. *Zindiginameh-yi*, p. 272; See also Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyosat*, pp. 261–2. Ja'fariyan includes some of Majlisi writings on philosophers, Sufis and *usulis*.
 61. Floor, 'The sadr', pp. 469–7.
 62. Ibid. p. 468. Outside Isfahan, Yazd, Kashan, Qum, Mazandaran and Astarabad, the *sadr-i mamalik* administered the endowments and overlooked the legal affairs of the provinces. See Floor, 'The sadr,' p. 465.
 63. Floor, 'The sadr', pp. 464–6.
 64. *Zindiginameh-yi*, p. 91; see also Ma'sum 'Ali Shah: *Tara'iq al-Haqa'iq*, vol. 2, pp. 151–2, on the Sufi background of Muhammad Taqi, the first Majlisi.
 65. *Zindiginameh-yi*, pp. 94–5.
 66. Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyosat*, p. 262.

67. Ibid. pp. 263–5.
68. Mahdavi explained against Brown's and Lockhart's observations that the original sources discussed Majlisi's attempt to destroy idolatry but doesn't mention that Majlisi actually killed the 'infidels'. See *Zindiginameh-yi*, pp. 119–20. See also Rasul Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat*, pp. 254–8.
69. Ibid. p. 232.
70. Ibid. p. 229.
71. Ibid. pp. 241–2.
72. See *Zindiginameh-yi*, pp. 138–9.
73. Arjomand, *The Shadow*, p. 191.
74. *Zindiginameh-yi*, pp. 251–2. Strict traditionism would prohibit acts that are not explicitly enjoined by the Qur'an, the Tradition or the Imams.
75. *Zindiginameh-yi*, p. 251.
76. Arjomand, *The Shadow*, pp. 156, 157–8.
77. *Zindiginameh-yi*, p. 203.
78. Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 4, p. 239.
79. Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat*, p. 261.
80. See Majlisi, *Ta'bir al-Ru'ya* (Lahore, 1976).
81. Majlisi, *Raj'at*, pp. 5–6.
82. Ibid. pp. 7–8.
83. Ibid. pp. 9–10.
84. *Zindiginameh-yi*, p. 252.
85. *Lu'lu'at*, pp. 76–7.
86. Al-Hurr's two brothers, Ahmad and 'Ali, remained in Mashghara. See Silsilat Mu'tamarat Hay'at 'Ulama' Jabal 'Amil, *Al-Hurr al-'Amili* (Beirut, 1420/1999), p. 35.
87. *Rawdat*, vol. 7, pp. 92–101.
88. *Riyad*, vol. 3, p. 118; *A'yan*, vol. 9, pp. 167–8.
89. *A'yan*, vol. 9, pp. 167–8; *Rawdat*, vol. 7, p. 99.
90. *A'yan*, vol. 9, p. 168.
91. Floor, 'The sadr', p. 487.
92. Ibid. pp. 489–90.
93. *Lu'lu'at*, p. 78.
94. Modarressi, *Shi'i Law*, p. 54.
95. Ibid. p. 54.
96. Like Majlisi, another prominent scholar, Muhsin al-Fayd was a moderate traditionist.
97. Muhammad al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Al-Fawa'id al-Tusiyya* (Qum, n.d.), pp. 516–7.
98. Muhammad al-Hurr al-'Amili, 'Kashf al-Ta'miya 'an Wajh al-Tasmiya', MS, in 'A. Ha'iri et al, *Fihrist-i Kitabkhana-yi Majlisi-i Shuray-i Milli* (Tehran, 1305–57), collection 3147, folio 32 b. The treatise does not seem to have been commissioned by the Shah.
99. 'Kashf al-Ta'miya', p. 54a–b.
100. Ibid. p. 31b.

101. Floor, 'The Art of Smoking in Iran and Other Uses of Tobacco', *Iranian Studies*, nos 1–3, 35 (Winter–Summer, 2002), pp. 47, 50.
102. *Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia*, introduced by R. Percy Sykes (London, 1927), p. 146.
103. *Ibid.* pp. 145–6.
104. *Zindiginameh-yi*, p. 190.
105. *Ibid.* p. 251.
106. Al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Al-Fawa'id*, p. 230.
107. *Zindiginameh-yi*, p. 251.
108. *Ibid.* p. 252.
109. Al-Muhajir: *Al-Hijra*, p. 211.
110. *Zindiginameh-yi*, pp. 196–7. Mir Lawhi Sabzavari was opposed to the political ascendancy of the Majlisi family. He also criticized Majlisi's father for his moderate Sufi inclinations.
111. Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat*, pp. 234–5. See also *al-Dhari'a*, vol. 18, pp. 101–2.
112. Mir Muhammad Hadi (d. circa 1113AH/1701CE), the son of Mir Lawhi expounded in *Usul al-'Aqa'id* the legal basis for his prohibition of music.
113. Al-Hurr intended initially to compose a work against Sufism but found al-Karaki's writings in this area sufficient.
114. Ma'sum 'Alishah, *Tara'iq al-Haqa'iq*, vol. 1, pp. 254, 257–8.
115. *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 1189.
116. Baha'i, 'A Short Account', folio 1a.
117. *Ibid.*
118. See Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat*, pp. 241–2.
119. *Ibid.* pp. 234–9.
120. *Ibid.* p. 259.
121. State clerics were the center of scrutiny and criticism in the work of Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Sabzavari, written after the Afghan wrested the capital city of Isfahan. See Sayed Muhammad Hussein Sabzavari, *Islamic Political and Juristic Thought in Safavid Iran (Zain al-Arifin)*, tr., intro. & ed. S. H. Amin (Tehran, 1990).
122. Zarrinkoob, *Justeju Dar Tasavvuf-i*, p. 262. *Justeju* remains one of the most insightful and rich accounts of the intellectual exchange between different forms of Sufism and juridical Shi'ism, and its political implications.
123. *Ibid.*
124. *'Alam-ara-yi*, vol. 1, pp. 419–21; vol. 2, pp. 745–50; *Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, pp. 401–6; vol. 2, pp. 646–50.
125. Al-Jaza'iri, *Al-Anwar al-Nu'maniyya*, vol. 2, p. 309.
126. Mawla Muhammad Tahir Qummi (d. 1098AH/1686CE), *Tuhfat al-Akhyar: Bahthi dar Piramon-i Ara'-i va 'Aqayid-i Sufiyya* (Tehran, 1369), pp. 121–2. The *rubaiyyat* promoted the virtues and miracles of jurists.
127. See Tunikabuni, *Qisas al-'Ulama'*, pp. 200–210.
128. Zarrinkoob, *Justeju Dar Tasavvuf-i*, pp. 262–3.
129. Qummi, *Tuhfat al-Akhyar*, p. 119.

130. Ibid. A parallel proverb is included in Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1956–72), p. 208.
131. See Natanzi, *Naqawat al-Athar*, p. 514.
132. Zarinkoob, *Justeju Dar Tasavvuf-i*, p. 311.
133. Ja'fariyan, *Din va Siyasat*, pp. 136–7. See also *al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, p. 63. Agha Ibrahim al-Mashhadi wrote his treatise against the observance of Friday prayer in 1120AH/1708CE.

Conclusion

1. Mir Damad, *Al-Qabasat*, pp. 437, 440–1.

Appendix I: The 'Amili 'ulama of Safavid Iran, 1501–1736CE

1. For more on the use of the term 'Amili', see my article 'The 'ulama of Jabal 'Amil in Safavid Iran, 1501–1736: Marginality, Migration and Social Change', *Iranian Studies*, no.1-4, 27 (1994), pp. 103–22. I am currently examining chronicles dealing with regional and provincial Safavid history alongside cemetery catalogues, which had yielded so far a larger figure of émigré 'Amili scholars in Persia than the one presented in this appendix. The list of 'Amili scholars in this appendix is organized chronologically according to their dates of death. In cases where no accurate death dates are available, I have listed a scholar close to his contemporaries. For scholars difficult to locate chronologically, I have denoted this by writing 'n.d.' next to their names. Appendices I, II and III were formed on the basis of a comprehensive survey of the major biographical dictionaries on the Shi'ite 'ulama in general and the 'Amilis in particular. These were: *Amal al-Amil*; *Al-Durr al-Manthur*; *Rawdat*; *Riyad*; *Lu'lu'at*; *Bihar al-Anwar*; *Takmilat Amal al-Amil*; *Ta'liqat Amal al-Amil*; *Qisas al-'Ulama*; *Al-Fawa'id al-Radawiyya*; *Tara'iq al-Haq'iq*; *Al-Kurna wa'l-Alqab*; *Kashf al-Hujub*; *Rayhanat al-Adab*; *Al-Mashyakha*; *Sulafat al-'Asr*; *Khulasat al-Athar*; *Tabaqat A'lam al-Shi'a*; *Al-Dhari'a*; *Masfa al-Maqal*; *A'yan*; *Mustadrakat A'yan al-Shi'a*; *Tadkhkirat-i Hazin*; *Tadkhkirat al-Qubur*; *Tarajim al-Rijal* alongside *Introduction to Shi'i Law*; *Fihrist-i Kitabkhana-yi Madrasa-yi 'Ali-yi Sipahsalar*; *Fihrist-i Kitabkhana-yi Majlisi-yi Shuray-i Milli*; *Fihrist-i Kitabkhana-yi Ayatullah Mar'ashi Najafi*; *Fihrist-i Kitabkhana-yi Markazi Astan-i Quds-i Radawi*; *Intisharat-i Danishghah-i Tehran*. Additional names were drawn from *Al-Hijra al-'Amiliyya*, pp. 230–70, except for Zayn al-Din 'Ali 'Arab (alive in 928AH/1521CE) who was mistakenly taken for an 'Amili by al-Muhajir. This list would have been longer were we to include the Najafi 'Amili scholars who were within the sphere of Safavid rule.
2. The asterisk refers to the 'Amili scholars on whom no decisive evidence of their emigration to Safavid Iran is provided. Ni'matullah was originally from 'Aynatha in Jabal 'Amil. See *Amal*, vol. 1, p. 189; *Rawdat*, p. 22; *Qisas al-'Ulama*, p. 331; *Fawa'id al-Radawiyya*, p. 694; *Riyad*, vol. 4, p. 247.
3. Zayn al-'Abidin may have migrated with al-Karaki, his father-in-law, to Iran. See *Al-Hijra*, p. 253.
4. He belongs to the Juba'i family of Zayn al-Din. He lived for an uncertain period in

- Isfahan where his children settled, then moved to Mecca where he died. See *Al-Hijra*, p. 261.
5. He could be the same as Najib al-Din 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Makki al-'Amili al-Jubayli.
 6. He is the son of 'Ali al-Shahidi, and died at a young age. See *Al-Durr*, vol. 2, pp. 245–6.
 7. The accurate family name is 'Anqani rather than Faq'ani, in reference to the village of 'Ayn Qana in Jabal 'Amil. See *Amal*, vol. 1, p. 113; *Al-Fawa'id al-Radawiyya*, p. 256.
 8. He was a poet and his pen name was Mehri Arab. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 22, pp. 220–1. He lived in Isfahan and dedicated several poems to Shah Suleiman.
 9. His grandfather was a contemporary of Baha'i.
 10. His children, Muhammad, Ibrahim, and Musa, were born in Iran between 1095AH/1683CE and 1120AH/1708CE. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 8, pp. 70–1.
 11. *Al-Hijra*, pp. 260–1. His great grandfather was the celebrated scholar Zayn al-'Abidin Ahmad al-'Alawi al-'Amili.
 12. He is the author of *Muntakhab al-Akhbar*. 'Abd al-Karim Gazzi Isfahani noted that he was buried in Isfahan in the Takiyyeh-i Haji Muhammad Ja'far Abadeh'i. See Gazzi, *Tadhkirat al-Qubur*, p. 30.
 13. All that we know about him is that he was a virtuous scholar who resided and taught in Mashhad. He had a solid knowledge in mathematical sciences and astrology. See *Al-Hijra*, p. 243.

Appendix II. The posts and activities of the émigré 'Amili 'ulama

1. The same biographical and historical sources listed for Appendix I were utilized for Appendix II, alongside one additional source, namely *Mithalha-yi Sudur-i Safavi: Bar Resi Kutahi darbare-yi Yek Now' az Asnad-i Divani-yi Dore-yi Safavi* (Qum, 1353), by Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i.

Appendix III. The intellectual production of the émigré 'Amili 'ulama

1. 'Al-Nikahiyya' did not carry the author's name but Sayyid 'Ali al-Rawdati attributed its handwriting to al-Karaki.
2. 'Urjuza fi al-Mawarith' was organized by his brother al-Hurr under the title 'Khulasat al-Abhath'.
3. It is unclear whether Ni'matullah copied famous *hadith* works, organized them or collected his own.
4. The polemical works range from internal debates over Shi'ite doctrinal issues to a refutation of Sunnism, Sufism, Christianity and Judaism.
5. It is a work on the life conditions of Abu Muslim al-Khurasani. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 11, pp. 91–2.
6. The copy of *Al-Mikhlat* published in Cairo does not seem to correspond to Baha'i's style of writing or mode of thinking as Dalal 'Abbas convincingly argued in *Baha' al-Din*, pp. 269–73.
7. See *A'yan*, vol. 3, p. 627.

8. 'Amili works of logic were scanty. Previous to the Safavid period, there is one noteworthy work titled, 'Al-Lum'a fi al-Mantiq' completed in 838AH/1434CE by Zayn al-Din b. Muhammad b. Yunus al-Bayadi al-Nabati (d. 877AH/1472CE).
9. It is uncertain whether Mir Damad is its rightful author.
10. The 'Amilis seemed well exposed to *kalam* before their advent to Persia as their legal tracts and *fiqh* works show. An example of that is 'Al-Risala al-Najmiyya' on both *kalam* and *fiqh* by al-Karaki. However, the true *kalam* works composed within a philosophical-theological framework started to surface among the emigrant 'Amilis during the early seventeenth century CE.
11. Sayyid Ahmad al-Husayni, the editor of numerous Shi'ite works and the cataloguer at Mar'ashi Library in Qum, noted that he had never come across medical works for Husayn b. Shihab al-Din al-Karaki and does not believe that such works exist. But we included them here because they are listed in *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 15, pp. 136-7.
12. The few 'Amili history works which appeared in the seventeenth century CE do not seem to be shaped by Persian traditions of historical writing. Zayn al-'Abidin b. al-Hasan al-Mashghari, and his brother Ahmad migrated to Iran at a mature age when they were established jurists. Ahmad spent a long time in Yemen before he left to Mashhad where he became the *shaykh al-Islam* in 1104AH/1692CE. The almost total absence of history works in Jabal 'Amil, even if we were to accept the argument that the Ottoman ruler Jamal Pasha burnt thousands of 'Amili books that left no evidence of history works, calls for further investigation. In my opinion, such works by Shi'ite scholars seemed to have been occasioned by the scholars' close contact to rulers and court life, in this case of Safavid Persia, and consequently by the new emphasis given to a Shi'ite interpretation of history.
13. In 'Al-Durr al-Masluk', Ahmad al-'Amili mentions two additional history works, namely 'Tarikh Kabir' and 'Tarikh Saghir' that are inextant. 'Ali Naqi Munzavi explained in *Al-Kawakib al-Muntashira*, pp. 31-32, that 'Al-Durr al-Masluk' might itself be the 'Tarikh Kabir', and that 'Tarikh Saghir' may be a reference to 'Al-Tibr al-Maskuk', a Persian historical work based on 'Rawd al-Nazirin fi 'Ilm al-Awwalin wa al-Akharin, completed at the Radawi Mahshad in 1087AH/1676CE.
14. Ahmad b. al-Hasan al-Hurr took the title of his work from 'Rawd al-Manazir fi 'Ilm al-Awa'il wa al-Awakhir' by Muhammad b. Shuhna al-Halabi. He changed its parts and added new sections to it and called it 'Al-Durr al-Masluk' which he completed in 1086AH/1675CE. He also relied on fifty additional sources. *Rawd al-Nazirin* is an abridged universal history of 940 pages divided into 4 parts. In the first part, Ibn Shuhna covers the period from the creation of man until the death of the Prophet. The following section covers the history from the Prophet's death until that of the Twelfth Imam in 260AH/874CE. In the same section he mentions the rightly-guided Caliphs, Fatima, the '*ulama*, and the *mujtahids*. The third section highlights the incidents following the death of the Twelfth Imam until Timurid times in 803AH/1400CE. The final part deals with the calamities and upheavals of the end of time and the Day of Judgment. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 11, pp. 277-8.

15. This is a work on the *ghazawat* (battles) of Haydar al-Karrar, possibly the great grandfather of the Safavids. It is mentioned in *A'yan*, vol. 9, p. 364.
16. It is a published work on Shi'ite creed (*usul* and *furu'*), and ethics.
17. It is a work of two parts, the first on *usul al-din*, more specifically *kalam*, and the second on *usul al-fiqh*.
18. It is not clear whether 'Ijaz al-Asnaf' deals with the Qur'an.
19. 'Hada'iq' presents the genealogies of kings, *sayyids* and prominent scholars and men. It was arranged in a somewhat complicated manner, which motivated him to write the simplified version of it, namely 'Kashf al-Niqab'. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 2, pp. 371–2. See also *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 21, pp. 232–3.
20. It was published in *Fada'il al-Sadat*. See *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 5, p. 193.

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