RELOCATING THE CENTERS OF SHİʿĪ ISLAM:
RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY, SECTARIANISM, AND THE LIMITS OF THE TRANSNATIONAL IN
COLONIAL INDIA AND PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This dissertation rethinks the common center-periphery perspective which frames the Middle East as the seat of authoritative religious reasoning vis-à-vis a marginal South Asian Islam. Drawing on 15 months of archival research and interviews conducted in Pakistan, India, Iran, Iraq, and the United Kingdom, I demonstrate how Shi‘ī and Sunnī religious scholars (ʿulamā) in colonial India and Pakistan negotiate a complex web of closeness and distance that connects them to eminent Muslim jurists residing in the Arab lands and Iran. The project attempts to move beyond scholarly paradigms that investigate the transnational travel of ideas in terms of either resistance and rejection, on the one hand, or wholesale adoption, on the other. Rather, I show how local South Asian scholars occupy a creative and at times disruptive role as brokers, translators, and self-confident pioneers of modern and contemporary Islamic thought.

Relying on unexplored sources in Urdu, Arabic, and Persian, the dissertation examines these dynamics through the lenses of sectarianism, reform, and religious authority. It demonstrates how Indian Shi‘īs in the 1940s were haunted by the specter of Pakistan as a potentially exclusively Sunnī state. These substantial cleavages resurfaced in the wake of the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Khomeini’s model of the Rule of the Jurisprudent led sectarian Deobandīs to frame Shi‘īs as detrimental to their vision of creating a model Sunnī Islamic polity which was supposed to fulfil the promise of Pakistan. In the context of internal Shi‘ī debates, I pay close attention to modernist challenges to Lucknow’s Shi‘ī clerical establishment in the late colonial period. Building on this conflict, I discuss how both reformist ʿulamā and their...
traditionalist, esoteric critics sought to appropriate the authority of leading Iranian and Iraqi Ayatollahs in order to emphasize their faithfulness to the Shi‘i mainstream. Both groups advanced their own, diverging vision of how to achieve a rapprochement with the Sunni majority. The question of religious authority also plays a central role during the succession struggle after the death of a major “Source of Emulation” (marja‘ al-taqlid). I highlight the ability of Pakistani scholars to acquire religious clout during such periods of uncertainty. Similar agency is reflected in the unique ways in which Pakistan's Shi‘is gradually made sense of the Iranian Revolution and how they filtered its transnational implications through the prism of their local religious needs.

This study in its transnational scope speaks to historians of South Asia, the Middle East, and Islam, as well as to scholars working in the fields of Islamic thought, transnational history, Shi‘i studies, and religion more broadly.
Acknowledgements

Thankfully, transnational scholarship is no lonely, solely text-focused affair. While dusty rooms, ink-stained fingers, and crumbling pages are the bread and butter of such an endeavor, I was fortunate to receive the help of countless institutions and individuals. They provided me with rare material, open doors, and advice so that the dissertation could stay on track. First and foremost I would like to mention my adviser Muhammad Qasim Zaman who specializes in always asking the right questions. Every single meeting we had over the last couple of years led to new and exciting vistas, went straight to the weak points in my arguments, and established clarity as the center of our debate. Prof. Zaman put his fingers on those issues, time periods, and geographical locations which I initially preferred to avoid. He provided gentle challenges whenever I was bent on taking a short-cut. In hindsight, I regard those chapters and parts which took me beyond the familiar and the accessible as the most rewarding and convincing contributions of my dissertation. Besides raising the important overarching questions, Prof. Zaman payed meticulous detail to the micro-level of my writing and never failed in expressing his excitement and trust regarding my project. In my future career, I hope to be able to navigate the same delicate balance of granting students perfect and stimulating freedom to develop their interest and ideas while also remaining deeply invested, caring, and nurturing. If not for Prof. Zaman's deep wisdom and humanity, my fascination for the Islamic scholarly tradition, modern Islamic thought in South Asia and the Middle East, and the complex life-worlds of the ʿulamā would have never developed.
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Note on Transliteration

This dissertation follows the transliteration guidelines established by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES) for Arabic and Persian words. In order to transliterate Urdu texts, I apply the IJMES rules suggested for Persian. For the sake of simplicity, retroflex consonants particular to Urdu (ሜ, ﬃ, ) are transliterated with one dot underneath (ṭ, ḍ, ṛ), instead of two dots as recommended, for example, by the Library of Congress system of romanization. Even though this gives rise to a certain ambiguity (the letters  and ﬃ are both rendered as ṭ and the (Arabic) transliteration for ض (ḍ) is identical with the transliteration for the Urdu letter ), I am confident that the potential confusion is kept to a minimum. Similarly and in order to make the transliteration not too burdensome, I have decided against transliterating the letter  as kh (as in Persian khūd (self)), which is supposed to clearly distinguish it from the aspirated Urdu form ڪ (as in khānā (food)). Both letters are transliterated simply as kh and it is hoped that the specialist should have no trouble telling them apart in the specific contexts in which they appear. The letter  is given as c (as in cashm (eye)) in order to separate it from the aspirated form ch (as in Urdu chat (roof)).

I transliterate vowels in Persian and Arabic words as a, i, u/ā, ĩ, ū and reserve e and o/ō for constructions specific to Urdu like ke liye (for) or the postposition kō, which denotes a direct object. Nasal vowels are rendered as ū following the vowel in question (as in گاَڑ (village)).

Persian and South Asian Muslim names are transliterated as they are pronounced in Persian and Urdu, e.g. گاَڑ instead of Thanā’ullāh or Abū al-Fažl instead of Abū al-Faḍl.

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For major and well known figures like Khomeini, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, or Zia ul-Haq I use the established Anglicized spelling of their names but fully transliterate less famous figures. The same rule applies to the names of cities and places. Established Arabic religious and legal terms are spelled in the common Arabic transliteration (e.g. fatwā, instead of fatvā). When an Urdu religious work has an Arabic title (a very common phenomenon), this title is transliterated following the IJMES rules pertaining to Arabic. The final hamzah in the word ʿulamā (religious scholars) is usually omitted when the word appears alone but otherwise written out (e.g. ʿUlamāʾ-i Islām). English terms used in Urdu are not transliterated but written in their common, English spelling.

I am grateful to the Department of Iranian Studies at the Free University of Berlin for making the keyboard layout “Deutsch (Orientalistik)” freely available online. In combination with a Unicode font (like Charis SIL Compact, used in this dissertation), this tool with its intuitive keyboard shortcuts for dots, dashes, and hooklets turns transliterating into an (almost) enjoyable exercise.

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Conclusion: Towards an Entangled History of Muslim South Asia and the Middle East

Bibliography
Introduction: Negotiating Shīʿī Islam between the Local and the Transnational

In the early 20th century, the region that today makes up the Pakistani Punjab formed a veritable Shīʿī “periphery.” Looking back on his youth around the years of World War I, the Shīʿī preacher Sayyid Muḥammad ʿĀrif Multānī recalled in 1929 how he was unable to locate even a single Shīʿī religious school (madrasa) near his hometown of Multan. Disappointed, he tossed aside any hope for further formal religious training. His father, however, offered him two crucial pieces of advice: first, he encouraged his son to enroll in a Sunnī school instead. Pious dissimulation (taqiyya) was permissible in such a context. Sayyid Muḥammad ʿĀrif should apply this Shīʿī principle and model his praying and fasting on the Sunnī way. He was also supposed to stay clear of any polemical debate (munāẓara) that might reveal his true allegiance. Second, if his son ever fell into serious doubt about the Shīʿī teachings, he should

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4 In this dissertation, I go beyond scholarship that identifies the “centers” of Islamic authority and scholarship solely with the Middle East. While the dichotomy is still analytically useful for some of the arguments I make, my research pays close attention to the various ways in which “center” and “periphery” are rethought and relocated in Shīʿī and Sunnī Islam in modern and contemporary South Asia. In the following, I am solely concerned with the Twelver branch of Shīʿism. While Ismāʿīlīs form a substantial minority in Pakistan, particularly in the Northern Areas, their structures of religious authority (and hence their debates) are entirely different, given their reliance on a living, approachable Imām, the Āqā Khān. See on the topic Wolfgang Holzwarth, Die Ismailiten in Nordpakistan: zur Entwicklung einer religiösen Minderheit im Kontext neuer Außenbeziehungen (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1994) and also Magnus Marsden, Living Islam: Muslim religious experience in Pakistan’s North-West Frontier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 193-238. On the history of a Fatimid vassal state in Multan during the 10th century and the spread of Ismāʿīlī Shīʿism in Sindh and Gujarāt, see Farhad Daftary, The Ismaʿīlīs: Their history and doctrines (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 180 and 478-485. For a fascinating account of the “syncretism between the Suhrawardi Order and the Ismaʿīli da'wa,” see also Hasan Ali Khan, The History, Beliefs and Architecture of the Suhrawardi Sufi Order in Multan and Uch, 1200-1500 A.D. (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, forthcoming). We will also encounter influences of Ismāʿīlī cosmology on Twelver thought in chapter 2. On the Bohra community, another smaller Shīʿī sect in the Subcontinent, see Jonah Blank, Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and modernity among the Daudi Bohras (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
not hesitate to hasten to the city of Najaf in Iraq. At this global seat of Shi‘ī learning, he would be able to study both Sunnī and Shi‘ī books and would come to realize where the truth lay.

And so, according to Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Ārif’s report, his tribulations began. All his Sunnī teachers knew about his family background and criticized him on a daily basis for clinging to such a despicable interpretation of Islam. They berated him and his fellow Shi‘īs for denigrating the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad and for bowing during their processions in front of horses and mock graves of their Imāms. The employees of the madrasa where he studied threatened to expel Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Ārif if they ever found him praying in the Shi‘ī way. Even switching institutions proved to be of no avail for the Shi‘ī student. A letter from his former principal arrived only three days after his admission to a new school and disclosed his Shi‘ī faith. Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Ārif kept his head down and endured the taunts until the school year was over and he finally obtained his diploma (sanad). His Sunnī teachers felt vindicated. They were pleased that their Shi‘ī student now publicly disassociated himself from his coreligionists. Yet, Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Ārif could not bear it any longer. While his classmates moved on to the famous reformist seminary of Deoband, he knew that he had to seek out a Shi‘ī environment. Even though he felt not yet ready for the journey to Najaf, a remedy for his religious crisis was available in the Subcontinent, too. Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Ārif made all the necessary arrangements and set out for the prestigious Nāẓimiyā seminary in

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5 For a more detailed discussion of these aspects of Shi‘ī worship in South Asia and the concept of taqiyya, see chapters 1 and 2.

6 The seminary had been founded in the town of Deoband (located in the Sahāranpūr district of today’s Indian state of Uttar Pradesh) in 1866. Modeled on European educational institutions, it combined a reformist orientation with a focus on the study of traditions related to the Prophet Muhammad (ḥadīth). While “orthodox” Šūfism (as defined by them) was taken very seriously by Deobandi scholars, they were highly critical of Shi‘ī Islam. The Deobandis accused the Shi‘īs of compromising God’s unicity (tauḥīd) and denying the humanity of the Prophet Muhammad as well as the finality of his mission as the last Prophet (khatm-i nubuwvat). See Barbara Daly Metcalf, Islamic revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).
Lucknow, then India's leading center of Shi'i learning. Writing from there, he lauded efforts under way to improve the bleak educational situation in the Punjab in general and in his hometown in particular. Already in 1925, the Shi'i Bāb al-ʿUlūm school in Multan had opened its gates. Over the next decades – and especially after the founding of Pakistan in 1947 – the expansion of Shi'i education accelerated significantly and put an end to the earlier marginality. In 2004, there existed 374 Shi'i schools for male students and 84 for female students in Pakistan, with 218 and 55 respectively in the Punjab province alone.

This dissertation is concerned with the fundamental transformations of Shi'i thought and conceptions of religious authority that occurred in tandem with the expansion of Shi'i religious educational institutions in Pakistan. Several of the issues that were salient for Sayyid Muḥammad ʿĀrif Multānī also guide my inquiry in the following chapters, which draw on 15 months of archival fieldwork and interviews conducted in Pakistan, India, Iran, Iraq, and the UK. My research is interested in exploring the implications of relegating Shi'i Islam in Pakistan to the periphery of the Shi'i world in both scholarship and often self-perception, even though the country is home to the second largest Shi'i community worldwide after that of Iran. In

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9 Kāẓimī (ed), Imāmiyyah dīnī madāris-i Pākistān, 2 and 533. Unfortunately, I do not have similar figures for India which would allow a comparison with the way Shi'i educational institutions developed there after Partition.
10 Francis Robinson has referred to the paradox that Shi'i is South Asia have been “both highly visible but in scholarly terms largely invisible. Where the Shi'a live in South Asian towns and cities, arguably, no community has been more visible or more audible: visible because of their great processions at Muharram; and audible, certainly at Muharram, but also throughout the year in their majalis, as they recount the events of Karbala, often transmitting them by loudspeaker to the muhalla” (see Francis Robinson, “Introduction: The Shi'a in South Asia,” Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society 24,3 (2014): 353).
Pakistan, a nation of more than 190 million people, Shi‘is constitute around 15% of the population and thus number nearly 30 million individuals.¹¹ In the colonial period, Lucknow was a major Shi‘i center in its own right which produced generations of religious scholars qualified to exercise independent legal reasoning (ijtihād).¹² So far, however, the rich writings of Pakistani Shi‘is in Urdu have not been utilized to illuminate questions of religious authority, the relationship between Islam and modernity, or sectarianism. Instead, existing anthropological accounts tend to focus primarily on the variety of meanings Pakistani Shi‘is attribute to their religious rituals.¹³ Additionally, contributions in the field of sociology have studied the shifting nature of Sunnī-Shi‘i tensions and the impact of the Iranian Revolution in the country. These scholarly works have not considered, however, how these far-reaching developments are reflected and debated in textual sources produced by the Shi‘i community and their Sunnī opponents.¹⁴ While there is an excellent forthcoming monograph on the historically troubled relationship between Shi‘i communal organizations and the Pakistani

¹² The role of Lucknow has been studied in depth by Justin Jones, Shi‘a Islam in colonial India: Religion, community and sectarianism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). I discuss some of his findings in chapters 1 and 2.
state, I am only aware of one short article that aims at analyzing the internal struggle over Shīʿī orthodoxy in Pakistan and its ties to the Middle East.

Given this state of the field, I pay close attention to the impact of transnational flows of thought and transnational religious authority which is a hallmark component of Twelver Shīʿism in the modern period. How have the connections, interactions, and exchanges between South Asia and the Middle East waxed and waned during the 20th and 21st century? What consequences does it have for local religious authority in Pakistan that the most senior Shīʿī scholars, the marājiʿ al-taqlīd (sing. marjaʿ, Source(s) of Emulation) do not reside in the Subcontinent but instead in the shrine cities of the Middle East? Through what networks are these Grand Ayatollahs and the preeminent Shīʿī seminaries connected to Pakistan? In what ways do religious ideas travel between the two regions and how do they become adapted, contested, and reinterpreted in the process? How was the Iranian Revolution of 1979 perceived in Pakistan and how has its impact played out over the last decades? What spaces have local South Asian religious scholars (ʿulamā, sing. ʿālim) carved out for themselves? A further major interest of this study, which is also reflected in Sayyid Muḥammad ʿĀrif's experience, is the evolving nature of Sunni-Shīʿī sectarianism in both colonial India and Pakistan. How have

15 Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan.
17 Every Shīʿī believer who has not himself reached the level of independent legal interpretation (ijtihād) is expected to choose a marjaʿ al-taqlīd whose legal opinions he follows. See especially chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of the concept. Technically speaking, marjaʿ is a defective Arabic form. Yet, the correct marjiʿ (and, consequently, marjiʿiyya as denoting the concept of emulation), is not widely used in either Western scholarship or by Arab-speaking Shīʿīs themselves. Compare, for example, the website of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid ʿAlī al-Sīstānī which labels him a marjaʿ (www.sistani.org; accessed 04 March 2012).
arguments of exclusion changed over the course of time and what role has the Pakistani state played in this context? What is the transnational dimension of such polemics?

**Key arguments: sectarianism, transnational connections, and local authority**

In the following chapters, I make several key arguments that relate to these dimensions of Shi'i Islam in late colonial India and Pakistan. In the context of sectarianism, I hold that the interplay of Pakistan as a homeland for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent and the Iranian Revolution fundamentally altered the thrust of Sunni-Shi'i polemics. Building on recent scholarship on the conceptualization and envisioning of Pakistan, I show how the specter of sectarianism and the possibility of the creation of an exclusively Sunni state were perceived as deeply unsettling by Shi'is in the 1940s. After the partition of India, both reformist and traditionalist Shi'i scholars attempted to find common ground with the Sunnis by either emphasizing a law-based redefinition of Shi'i identity or by propagating a Sufi-Shi'i synthesis grounded in the Subcontinent's Islamic scholarly tradition. Yet, the downfall of the Shah and the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran under the leadership of Shi'i ulama brought the alternative and diametrically opposed Sunni Pakistani and Shi'i Iranian visions of a modern Islamic state into sharp relief. This development led sectarian Deobandi actors in Pakistan to frame Shi'i Islam as an inherent political problem for their vision of creating a model Islamic polity with a claim to global leadership.

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As far as transnational Shi‘ism is concerned, I question trends in the wider literature on modern Islam to either emphasize the wholesale adoption of specific models – imported from the “core lands” – in the periphery, or, in sharp contrast, to point to instances of contestations and outright rejection of the international dimension in various local Muslim contexts. My point is that both approaches are unhelpful in understanding the complex negotiations of closeness and distance we see playing out for Pakistan’s Shi‘is and Sunnis in their relationships to the Middle East. In order to get a better sense of what is happening on the ground, scholars need to take a closer look at how local actors make use of the Islamic scholarly tradition in their arguments, how they tie their claims to centers of scholarship, and how they vow to faithfully uphold such central authority only to subtly rework arguments emanating from

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19 One example of the contestation approach is Laurence Louër’s study about exile politics in the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war and beyond between the two main Shi‘i organizations of the time, al-Da‘wa and the so-called Shirāziyyīn. In her work the actual conflict and the struggle over religious authority remains elusive: we only learn that Najaf’s establishment was unwilling to recognize Muhammad al-Shīrāzī, residing in Kerbala, as a marja‘ī. Tensions intensified later as al-Da‘wa formed a political party whereas al-Shīrāzī rejected any dual political and religious hierarchy, arguing that political action should be placed directly under the supervision of the marja‘īyya. Yet, we are not told on which arguments such a position rested and whether – besides this rivalry – the two groups formed two distinct intellectual communities when competing with each other in Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates (see Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia politics: Religious and political networks in the Gulf* (London: Hurst, 2008)). As far as models of wholesale adoption are concerned, Joseph Alagha has repeatedly made the case that the Lebanese group Hizbullāh has since its inception “fully abided by the ideas and opinions of Imam Khomeini as communicated by Khamenei.” Even though Alagha demonstrates that gradually the party has opened up more autonomous spaces for itself, he does not raise the question whether the original import of the Iranian Revolution might already have entailed elements of localization (see, for example, Joseph Alagha, “Hezbollah’s Conception of the Islamic State,” in Sabrina Mervin (ed), *The Shi‘a worlds and Iran* (London: Saqi, 2010), 89–114, and idem, *Hizbullah’s identity construction* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 45-60). See also Chiara Formichi, “Shaping Shi‘a Identities in Contemporary Indonesia between Local Tradition and Foreign Orthodoxy,” *Die Welt des Islams* 54 (2014): 212–36. For an example from South Asia and the argument that “Hyderabad Shi‘a steadfastly observe the mehndī mourning assembly on 7 Muharram in defiance of pressure from the ‘ulamā’ in Iran and Iraq to eliminate such ‘unauthentic’ and ‘un-Islamic’ (and anti-modern) practices,” see Karen G. Ruffle, *Gender, Sainthood, & Everyday Practice in South Asian Shi‘ism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 167-168.
there.\textsuperscript{20} Ideas, after all, never travel unimpeded.\textsuperscript{21} In this context, I regard the observations by Terje Østebø as quite illuminating. Østebø has formulated a concept of \textit{impetus} and \textit{response} with regard to the transnational flow of Salafī ideas. This method pays attention to the strategies applied by such actors in appropriating and localising the \textit{impetus}, and […] entails an enterprise which integrates the factors and conditions, both local and translocal, relevant for its appropriation within the particular locality. Such an approach implies that the processes of change should be seen as embodied through situated actors, it recognises the active participation of such actors and the creativity of human agency in transmitting and appropriating outside influences.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{20} With respect to related scholarly debates on the relationship between structure/system and individual agency in the field of culture, William H. Sewell, Jr. reminds us that “practice means to utilize existing, cultural symbols to accomplish some end. The employment of a symbol can be expected to accomplish a particular goal only because the symbols have more or less determinate meanings – meanings specified by their systematically structured relations to other symbols. Hence practice implies system. But it is equally true that the system has no existence apart from the succession of practices that instantiate, reproduce, or – most interestingly – transform it. Hence system implies practice. System and practice constitute an indissoluble duality or dialectic: the important theoretical question is thus not whether culture should be conceptualized as practice or as a system of symbols and meaning, but how to conceptualize the articulation of system and practice” (William H. Sewell, Jr., “The Concept(s) of Culture,” in Victoria E. Bonnell, Lynn Hunt, and Richard Biernack (eds), \textit{Beyond the cultural turn: New directions in the study of society and culture} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 47).

\textsuperscript{21} In a different context, Dipesh Chakrabarty has argued that not even the logic of capitalism can have its way unchallenged while transforming relations of labor across the globe in post-colonial settings since “the universal, in that case, can only exist as a place holder, its place always usurped by a historical particular seeking to present itself as the universal” (see Dipesh Chakrabarty, \textit{Provincealizing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 70). See also Edward Said’s observation that the movement of ideas “necessarily involves processes of representation and institutionalization different from those of the point of origin. This complicates any account of the transplantation, transference, circulation, and commerce of ideas.” See \textit{idem}, \textit{The world, the text, and the critic} (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 226.

\textsuperscript{22} Terje Østebø, \textit{Localising Salafism: Religious change among Oromo Muslims in Bale, Ethiopia} (Leiden, Brill, 2012), 21-22. For another argument on the indigenization of transnational flows from the “metropolises,” see Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” \textit{Theory, Culture & Society} 7 (1990): 295. Roschanak Shaery-Eisenlohr also advocates studying how “religious groups with transnational ties” position themselves in a particular local national setting “against the backdrop of a widely held view that national identifications and religious solidarities with transnational dimensions are separate and irreconcilable forces.” She holds that “Hizbullah members selectively choose from the flow of the network those elements that prove useful for their agenda in Lebanon.” Yet, unfortunately her analysis does not go beyond instances of how Hizbullah turned away preachers sent from Iran or how members of the rival Amal movement made fun of Iranians speaking Arabic and ridiculed “exaggerated” emotionalism displayed by Iranian Shi’is. See Roschanak Shaery-Eisenlohr, \textit{Shi’ite Lebanon, Transnational Religion and the Making of National Identities} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 195-213 and \textit{eadem}, “Imagining Shi’ite Iran: Transnationalism and Religious Authenticity in the Muslim World,” \textit{Iranian Studies} 40,1 (2007): 17–35.
Throughout this dissertation we will notice the substantially interrelated character of transnational *impetus* and domestic *response* for the Shīʿī community. Such dynamics manifested themselves inter alia in the ways both reformist scholars and their traditionalist, esoteric-minded opponents since the 1960s have called upon authoritative voices in Iran and Iraq to bolster their own diverging interpretations of Shīʿī cosmology.23 Another example is provided by the intensive debates over the emergence of a new Source of Emulation in the 1970s which provided local Pakistani ʿulamā with an opportunity to substantially redefine the authority such a supreme scholar would hold.24

It is important to note that transnational ties always incorporate translation, too. Pakistani ʿulamā acted as brokers between texts written in Arabic and Persian and the vernacular medium of Urdu.25 This intermediary position enabled them to develop almost two

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23 Since many of the traditionalist scholars, as chapter 2 demonstrates, migrated from other parts of India to Pakistan where they were confronted with a locally grown reformist trend, we might in this context even fruitfully apply the concept of translocality which “assumes a multitude of possible boundaries which might be transgressed, including, but not limiting itself to political ones” and is thus thought of as a more comprehensive category than transnationalism. See Ulrike Freitag and Achim v. Oppen, “Introduction: 'Translocality': An Approach to Connection and Transfer in Area Studies,” in *eidem* (eds), *Translocality: The study of globalising processes from a southern perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1-21.


25 It is important to point out that while Urdu is both Pakistan's national language and the language of Islamic (and Shiʿi) scholarship in the Subcontinent, poetry, music, and popular preaching all can and frequently do happen in Sindhi, Punjabi, Seraiki, Gujarati, or Balti, among many other languages. All these expressions of Shiʿi Islam deserve far more attention in scholarship. For some background information on the local and regional languages mentioned, see Tariq Rahman, “Language policy, multilingualism and language vitality in Pakistan,” in Anju Saxena and Lars
personalities, as I show, among other examples, in the case of the anti-Shi‘i Salafi scholar Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahir. He wrote most of his major works in Arabic but was also prolific in Urdu, a language which his Saudi sponsors were neither able nor interested to understand. This catering to various audiences also proved a useful strategy when Shi‘i scholars referred to the Islamic scholarly tradition of the Subcontinent. In pre-modern India, Qur‘ānic commentaries, works of Islamic law, and Şūfī tracts were usually composed in Persian (and with lesser frequency in Arabic). These texts hence qualify, to a certain extent, as foreign territory to the modern Pakistani reader, too. By claiming to merely provide a summary and faithful translation of the original text into Urdu, Shi‘i and Sunnī ʿulamā had another instrument at their disposal to speak seemingly authoritatively about certain issues while in fact adapting and modifying their sources. Religious scholars also frequently invoked their (imagined) influential standing in the wider Muslim world which endowed them with additional legitimacy back home.26

Intimately connected to these transnational ties is the assertion of local religious authority vis-à-vis the centers of scholarship and learning. Shi‘i ʿulamā underlined the past intellectual glories of the Indian subcontinent which let them speak on an equal footing with Iranians and Iraqis. They also sought to retroactively claim for themselves ownership over the promise of Pakistan as a gift to the world that would enable Islam to come into its own.

Additionally, I discuss instances of scholars seizing opportunities for the local dispensing of

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26 On such a strategy of elevating one’s local standing through claims to influence abroad, see also Pierre-Yves Saunier, Transnational history (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 90.
legal opinions after the death of a leading Middle Eastern marja‘. In the context of Pakistani perceptions of the Iranian Revolution, this dissertation documents accounts of political leadership exerted by Pakistani scholars that set them on a level equal to Khomeini. Pakistani ʿulamā at times even rebuked the Iranians for having strayed from their own revolutionary path which made it necessary that Pakistan’s Shīʿīs rectify this unfortunate situation. Such a self-conception extends to sectarian Sunnī scholars as well, who claimed that they were the first worldwide to have woken up to the danger of Shīʿī proselytization and exporting of the Iranian Revolution. These sectarian actors also advanced a unique understanding of how the Qurʾān confirmed the exalted position of the Prophet Muḥammad’s Companions (ṣaḥāba). Similarly, a shared Sunnī-Shīʿī trait of perceived South Asian superiority manifests itself in the frequently pointed out spiritual gifts and esoteric insights available to Pakistani scholars. Interestingly, these blessings were even incorporated by staunch Salafis who otherwise reject mystical conceptions of authority.

The transnational study of ideas

The main focus of this dissertation will be on ideas instead of on Shīʿī organizations and their conflictual relationship with the Pakistani state. These aspects have been studied in a magistral manner by Andreas Rieck in his groundbreaking forthcoming book. Tracing transnational intellectual debates, as my study does, has its own pitfalls. It is necessary to demonstrate the relevance of the voices unearthed and the thickness of the connections proclaimed. Since Shīʿī Islam in Pakistan is still a very embryonic field with most of the

27 Compare Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan.
28 For a critique of transnational history that merely assumes connections without attempting to map the socio-cultural background, representative character, and impact of the voices discussed, see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, “Transnationale Geschichte – der neue Königsweg historischer Forschung?,” in
protagonists of this dissertation known neither to the specialist nor to the interested reader alike, I had to be selective by necessity. Some choices of authors and journals have also been dictated by the availability of sources, as I discuss in more detail below. Yet, I have tried to present convincing rationales for the inclusion of individual scholars, journals, and viewpoints in the following chapters. I generally provide biographical data for the authors discussed and attempt to demonstrate their standing and authority within the Shīʿī community. The same holds true for my investigation of transnational connections, which I approach with an eye towards instances of palpable and significant influence. I rely on Shīʿī biographical dictionaries and other secondary sources from Pakistan, India, Iran, and Iraq, as well as on interviews and conversations in all of these countries. This does not mean that my selection necessarily agrees with the views of my interlocutors. The often repeated statement, for example, that the reformist author Muḥammad Ḥusayn Najafī Ḍhakkō, who plays a prominent role in chapter 2, lacks a following and does not exert any influence in Pakistan and beyond prompted me to include him all the more. The other side of this coin – and surely also a danger of transnational intellectual history – is the tendency in the field to focus on elite discourses. I hope to have remedied this concern in part by also incorporating many points of view expressed by those Shīʿīs who are not part of the clerical establishment or, at times, are dismissed by their more established colleagues as impostors and “extremists” outside of the fold.


29 The also applies of course to Sunnī figures when they make an appearance in (chiefly) chapters 1, 4, and 5.

30 For an argument about the importance of connecting discussions of transfers to “identifiable actors and institutions,” so that it “should be possible to study intentions, interests, and functions related to the transfers,” see Jürgen Osterhammer, “A 'Transnational' History of Society: Continuity or New Departure?” in Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (eds), Comparative history and the quest for transnationality: Central European approaches and new perspectives (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 46-48.

of Islam (ghulāt, sing, ghālī). I have also relied extensively on recent anthropological studies on
Islam in Pakistan. Yet, in the end my focus on texts, videos, and interviews has its own biases
and blind spots that cannot be completely avoided.

A remark may be necessary regarding my practice of operating with terms like the
“Islamic scholarly tradition” or even the “message” of the Iranian Revolution.32 When I use
these terms, I try to stay clear of “airy and thin” comparisons between concrete Pakistani
examples, on the one hand, and only abstract, idealized generalities or an essentialization of
discourses emerging from Iran and Iraq, on the other.33 Instead, my goal is to put into
conversation concrete texts and specific messages and to explore how arguments and those who
voice them become reshaped during their travel between the Middle East and South Asia. In
order to do so, I try to forge a connection between scholarship produced in Islamic studies and
South Asian history.34

32 For a (slightly dated) account of Iran’s internal complexity, see Wilfried Buchta, Who rules Iran? The
Policy, 2000) and Mehdi Moslem, Factional politics in post-Khomeini Iran (Syracuse: Syracuse
University Press, 2002).
33 For such a danger when comparing historical phenomena, see Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard
Haupt, “Comparison and Beyond: Traditions, Scope, and Perspectives of Comparative History,” in
eidem, Comparative history and the quest for transnationality, 20.
34 For further reflections on the inherent problems of comparing “boundaries fluctuating in the wake
of reciprocal movements between the units of comparison,” and the specific strategies to meet this
challenge suggested by transnational history, the Cambridge School, and New Imperial History, see
Monica Juneja and Margrit Pernau, “Lost in Translation? Transcending Boundaries in Comparative
History,” ibid, 105-129. For a perspective that tackles the “reflexivity deficit” of many comparisons
in historical time, see also Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, “Beyond Comparison:
Defining concepts

Before providing an overview of the individual chapters of this dissertation, I would like to briefly spell out how I use the terms religious authority, transnational Shi‘ism, and sectarianism. I discuss the first two topics, religious authority and transnational Shi‘ism, together because both are to a large degree intertwined.

Scholars have noted the difficulty of pinning down clear and fixed attributes of religious authority in an Islamic context. One suggestion is to consider it as a relational concept that rests on “recognition and acquiescence” and is of an intrinsic contingent quality. The ʿulamā are themselves not a homogenous group but divided into different schools of law, theological camps, and sects. Over the course of Islamic history, they seldom had a comprehensive or institutionalized monopoly in the religious sphere but were challenged by popular preachers, Şūfis, philosophers, and at times the state. Conceptions of orthodoxy and the drawing of


36 The term ʿulamā is a rather broad category, too. It usually refers to experts in the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (ḥadīth) and fiqh, but can also include historians, grammarians, and littérateurs (see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Religion and politics under the early ʿAbbāsids: The emergence of the proto-Sunnī elite Leiden: Brill, 1997), 3). For the modern period, Muhammad Qasim Zaman has argued that what defines the ʿulamā is “a combination of their intellectual formation, their vocation, and, crucially, their orientation, viz., a certain sense of continuity with the Islamic tradition that defines the ʿulama as ʿulama” (see idem, The ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of change (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 10).

37 This is not to say that ʿulamā cannot be Şūfis and vice versa but this is a topic which cannot be discussed here at length. For some examples within a vast field of study that investigates the contested notions of religious authority in Islam, see Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, God’s caliph: Religious authority in the first centuries of Islam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Denis Aigle, “Essai sur les autorités religieuses dans l’islam médiéval oriental,” in idem, Les autorités religieuses entre charismes et hiérarchie: Approches comparatives (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 17-40, Jonathan P. Berkey, “Popular Culture under the Mamluks: A Historiographical Survey,” Mamlûk Studies 9 (2005): 133-46, idem. Popular preaching and religious authority in the medieval Islamic Near East (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001), Ahmed T. Karamustafa, God’s unruly friends: Dervish groups in the Islamic later middle period, 1200-1550 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah
boundaries nevertheless emerged but it was usually up to the ruler's discretion whether he saw it feasible to enforce a certain legal ruling. In the 20th century, the ʿulamā met with new challenges in the shape of nation states that encroached on their former prerogatives in the spheres of education and the formulation of Islamic law. Additionally, modernist thinkers, Islamists, and Salafis, who advocated a radical revisiting of the Islamic scholarly tradition or circumvented it altogether for unmediated access to Qurʾān and ḥadīth, presented themselves as more suitable spokespersons for Islam.

38 Ahmed El Shamsy cautions that in an Islamic context any “history of orthodoxy cannot be simply a history of ideas, but [it has to be] a history of how, in particular situations, claims to the truth came to be enshrined in social practices, such as rituals, and in institutions, such as ‘the community of scholars’” (see idem, “The social construction of orthodoxy,” in Tim Winter (ed), The Cambridge companion to classical Islamic theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 97).

39 In many national contexts, the ʿulamā have successfully managed to meet these challenges to their authority and influence. Thomas Pierret has argued for Baʿthist Syria that “the resources of tradition allowed the ulama to overcome the challenges of social change and Baʿthist authoritarianism.” The country's ʿulamā managed to remain relevant by adopting a flexible political approach, sustaining close relationships with merchants, and conducting informal learning circles (see idem, Religion and state in Syria: The Sunni Ulama from coup to revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). See also Meir Hatina, “The Clerics' Betrayal? Islamists, 'Ulama' and the Polity,” in idem (ed), Guardians of faith in modern times (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 247–64 and Malika Zeghal, Gardiens de l'Islam: Les oulémas d'Al Azhar dans l'Egypte contemporaine (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1996).

40 For an overview, see Zaman, The ulama in Contemporary Islam, 1-17. For attempts by the ʿulamā to develop new mechanisms for sustaining their religious authority by redefining the boundaries of the concept of consensus (ijmāʿ) or institutionalizing the dispensation of legal opinions (fatāwa, sing. fatwā), see idem, Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age, 45-107.
In a Shīʿī context, these processes have seemingly taken a different form. It has been observed that in the modern period religious autodidacts and “petits intellectuels” have managed to make far fewer inroads into the domain of the religious scholars than has happened among the Sunnis:

une autorité religieuse autoproclamée avait peu de chance de se faire entendre sans la reconnaissance des milieux cléricaux.41

One explanation for the comparatively more comprehensive role of the Shīʿī ʿulamā has to do with their ability to gradually appropriate prerogatives of the Imāms since the time of the twelfth Imām's definitive Occultation in 329/941.42 The literature supporting this view emphasizes that modern Shiʿī Islam is distinguished from Sunnī Islam by the fact that it “has a clergy that is hierarchically organized.”43 This relative lack of non-clerical competitors does not mean, however, that modern and contemporary Shīʿī religious scholars have been insulated from popular pressures on their authority.44 Chapters 1, 2, and 3 discuss in more detail how the influence of Shīʿī religious scholars has developed since the mid-19th century and, at the same time, how it became a site of contestation in late colonial India and Pakistan.

Important in this context is the \textit{transnational} character of Shi'i religious authority. Each of the \textit{marāji}' in the centers seeks to project his influence as far away as possible in the transnational geography of Shi'ism. The scope of his reach to believers at a distant horizon is a de facto mark of his authority. Given that most followers will never lay eyes on him, he nevertheless needs to symbolise his presence among them.\footnote{Elvire Corboz, \textit{Guardians of Shi'ism: Sacred authority and transnational family networks} (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 201.}

Transnational Shi'i Islam, if viewed from the periphery, is thus always a mediated form of authority. With a supreme religious scholar in the distance, who usually also seeks to emphasize his political independence from his (temporary or, more often, long-term) host country, a Grand Ayatollah is by definition not engaged directly with local affairs abroad.\footnote{Mervin, “Les Autorités religieuses dans le chiisme duodécimain contemporain,” 70-71. Even in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the most senior Grand Ayatollahs are careful to display their distance from the workings of the state (Amirpur, “A Doctrine in the Making?,” 221-226). For the cautious approaches by the leading Sources of Emulation Muhsin al-Ḥakīm (d. 1970) and Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḵū′ī (d. 1992) to politics in the oppressive Iraqi setting, see Corboz, \textit{Guardians of Shi'ism}, 124-131 and 166-176.} Instead, he is the proponent of a \textit{shari'a} discourse that is difficult for any particular state to dam. In its independence it “leaks out from between the fingers, a sort of 'neo-calligraphic not-state,' or 'anti-state.'”\footnote{Morgan Clarke, “Neo-Calligraphy: Religious Authority and Media Technology in Contemporary Shiite Islam,” \textit{Comparative Studies in Society and History} 52,2 (2010): 351–83.} The task of connecting to local communities is delegated to a \textit{marja}'s representatives (\textit{wukalā'}, sing \textit{wakīl}), and at times his sons, which opens up many spaces for local reformulations of religious authority.\footnote{Dispensation of charity, which is another fundamental role played by each \textit{marja}', is beyond the scope of this dissertation. On this topic, see Corboz, \textit{Guardians of Shi'ism}, 94-121. Sabrina Mervin has likened the role of the \textit{wukalā'} to “tentacles stretching across the Shi'a worlds” (Sabrina Mervin, “Introduction,” in \textit{eadem, The Shi'a worlds and Iran}, 20). Yet, as can be seen throughout this dissertation, those “tentacles” may also develop a life of their own.}

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Shīʿism proper begins with the Iranian Revolution. Before this pivotal event, we mostly glimpse Shīʿī discourses that play out between nations but transcend them at the same time and thus display a more global flavor.  

The last concept to consider is sectarianism. In this dissertation, I adopt a broad definition of sectarianism that includes both texts such as religious polemics, declarations of unbelief, calls for ostracization, pleas to the state to intervene, as well as actions which can take the forms of religious violence, public rituals, or demonstrations. Sectarianism as a tool of analysis always runs the risk of reinscribing monolithic blocks, in our case a unified Sunnī front against the Shīʿīs, and vice versa. Yet, as we are about to see throughout the following chapters, discourses seemingly directed against an out-group may target equally (or primarily) certain actors, concepts, or groups that do not qualify as “the other” but are squarely located within the broader Sunnī or Shīʿī spectrum.

Sources and geographical scope of the dissertation

In this dissertation I rely primarily on sources that have not been utilized by scholars so far and which are to a large extent unavailable in Western libraries. These consist of monographs, pamphlets, collections of speeches, and video recordings of lectures in Urdu. I pay

49 This might also be the reason (even though he never says so explicitly) why Chibli Mallat prefers to speak of a “Shīʿī International” when referring to Najaf (See Chibli Mallat, The renewal of islamic law: Muhammad Bager as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shi'i international (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For reflections in the field of intellectual history on the relationship between the nation, transnational history, and global history, see Christopher L. Hill, “Conceptual Universalization in the Transnational Nineteenth Century,” in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (eds), Global intellectual history (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 134-158.

special attention to Indian and Pakistani Shi‘i journals as well as to the Proceedings of the All India Shi‘a Conference for the pre-Partition period. Interviews with Shi‘i scholars and activists, which I conducted in Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and the UK, inform many of the questions this study raises. I supplement this material with primary and secondary sources in Arabic and Persian for comparative purposes. Even though I make use of British archival records for the colonial period, my arguments are mostly built on texts produced by Shi‘i actors themselves. This choice has to do with the often one-sided ways in which India’s religious traditions as well as their leaders and groups are portrayed in these official documents. If religious issues are mentioned at all, these records are mostly concerned with outbreaks or threatened outbreaks of violence owing to the desecration of religious symbols – proofs in the colonial view […] of the essential religiosity, irrationality and fanaticism of the local people, ingredients that would ensure a return to anarchy if ever the controlling hand of the colonial power were to be withdrawn.

Given the current political climate in Pakistan and the difficulty of gaining access to state institutions, I have not attempted to incorporate unpublished archival government records from the post-1947 period. The country’s instability also prevented me from visiting places such as Quetta, Peshawar, or the Tribal Areas which have a significant Shi‘i presence, too. The

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51 See the bibliography for a list of the journals on which this dissertation draws. I was also planning to consult the magazine Riżākār, published from Lahore, that forms the backbone of Andreas Rieck’s sources. Unfortunately, however, the issues ranging from the 1930s to the 1980s studied by him have in rather mysterious ways disappeared from the holdings of the Punjab University Library in Lahore. Only special issues published on occasions such as Muharram remain. These have only limited analytical value, however, for the purposes of my study. The attention I pay to Shi‘i journals was also inspired by the argument that such publications are a primary representative of a lively public sphere. See Orit Bashkin, “The Iraqi Afghanis and ‘Abduhs: Debate over Reform among Shi‘ite and Sunni ‘Ulama’ in Interwar Iraq,” in Hatina (ed), Guardians of faith, 169. For a recent attempt to mine Islamic journals for statistical purposes and combine these insights with a close scrutiny of the role of their editors and qualitative textual analysis, see Aaron Rock-Singer, “A Pious Public: Islamic Magazines and Revival in Egypt, 1976-1981,” British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (published online 11 February 2015): 1–20. DOI: 10.1080/13530194.2014.1002387 (accessed 13 June 2015).

52 Gyanendra Pandey, The construction of communalism in colonial North India. 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 116-117.
main geographical focus of this dissertation lies on Pakistan’s Sindh and Punjab provinces. The numerically largest Shi‘ī populations are concentrated in these two regions and the most admired popular preachers reside there. The main Shi‘ī seminaries are located in Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi, Multan, and the smaller towns of the Punjab. The Karakorum areas of Gilgit and Baltistan which have been labeled as a “stronghold of Shi‘a orthodoxy,” make an appearance insofar as many of the ʿulamā who later became influential in the “lowlands” were born in this mountainous region. With regard to the late colonial period, my geographical focus is on north India.53

Plan of the dissertation

The present dissertation consists of five chapters that follow a roughly chronological order. Even though the individual chapters are distinct in their thematic focus, the key themes of sectarianism, transnational connections, and local religious authority are discussed in each of them.

My first chapter, “Colonial Modernity, the Specter of Pakistan, and the Many Voices of All-Indian Shi‘ism,” explores the late colonial milieu with its opposing discourses of communalism and nationalism that also left a deep impact on Shi‘ī community formation. Yet, I argue against the claim that this led Shi‘īs to conceptualize themselves as adhering to a “freestanding” religion. Instead, India’s Shi‘īs tended to emphasize their higher spiritual level in contrast to the common (Sunnī) Muslims. Nevertheless, once the All India Muslim League

adopted the creation of Pakistan as its goal, influential Shi'i voices expressed deep and increasing skepticism towards the creation of a state that claimed to create an inclusive homeland for all Muslims of the Subcontinent. Shi'i authors, intellectuals, and 'ulamā referred to widespread Sunnī-Shī'ī riots during the 1930s in Lucknow as an ominous foreshadowing of what Pakistan might entail for their community. They pointed out calls by Deobandī 'ulamā and Muslim League members to implement an Islamic system in Pakistan built exclusively on Ḥanafī law (fiqh). This chapter also demonstrates the substantial links which connected South Asian Shi'īs to major events in the Middle East like the 1926 destruction of Medina's Jannat al-Baqī' cemetery, where four of the twelve Shi'i Imāms lie buried. In noting these connections, I position myself against scholarship that has emphasized how local concerns overshadowed all other orientations for India's Shi'īs during this time period. Finally, I also show that Lucknow's mujtahids were far from secure in their leadership position of the Shi'i community (qaum). The modernist-minded All India Shi'a Conference, whose proceedings are studied here for the first time in a comprehensive manner, was engaged in an open confrontation with Lucknow's 'ulamā. Its members viewed these mujtahids as hopelessly out of touch with the challenges of the time.

The second chapter, entitled “Pressuring the mahdi: Theology, Sectarianism, and the Limits of Reform,” takes us into the first decades after the founding of Pakistan in 1947. Shi'i immigrants from North India became pitted against a local Punjabi trend of reformist Shi'i teaching which maintained close ties with the leading seminaries in Iraq. Young scholars accused the immigrants of being wolves in 'ulamā clothes who held dangerous “extremist” views and subscribed to “superstitious” rituals. In documenting these exchanges, I take issue with a notable bias in studies on modern Shi'i thought, namely the tendency of scholars to
adopt a decidedly modernist perspective that dismisses traditionalist thinkers as dubious “populist” actors who bend religion to their own benefit. Instead, I make the case that the traditionalists defended a coherent and transcendent vision of God that built on important impulses from Ismāʿīlī cosmology and implied a radically contrasting conception of religious authority. This chapter pays attention to the various local and transnational dimensions of these debates because both sides attempted to marshall positions held by Iranian and Iraqi scholars in support of their particular views. Khomeini's writings play a particularly interesting role in this regard. I also argue that both reformist agendas and their traditionalist refutations were driven by the hope of reaching a rapprochement with the Sunnis. While reformist ʿulamā suggested discontinuing “offensive” Shiʿī rituals and rethinking the events of Karbala as a political struggle, traditionalist scholars propagated a Ṣūfī-Shiʿī synthesis and universal access to the Hidden Imām.

In the third chapter, “Tapping Sources: the marājiʿ, their Followers, and Shiʿī Journals in Pakistan,” I investigate the arguments exchanged about a lay believer’s obligation to emulate a high-ranking scholar in his daily conduct (taqlid). My findings question the view of Pakistan as a mere Shiʿī “backwater,” where even fundamental religious concepts have not yet taken root, by focusing on the intensive discussions on the subject in the 20th century. In particular, I am interested in exploring how the leading Grand Ayatollahs, residing mostly in Najaf and Qum, attempted to influence the debate about who should be recognized in Pakistan as the preeminent global scholar and how these claims to authority were received and reinterpreted in the country. I illuminate the crucial moments of succession after the death of one widely accepted marjaʿ, Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm (d. 1970). His demise played into the hands of the decidedly internationally-minded Sayyid Muḥammad Kāẓim Sharīʿatmadārī (d. 1986). The
latter was the founding director of the Institute of Islamic Preaching in Qum which took translation into various Islamicate languages, among them Urdu, very seriously. This accessibility, in combination with a remarkable campaign by his students, ensured that Shariʿatmadāri had acquired the largest following of any marjaʿ in Pakistan by the mid-1970s. This chapter also demonstrates the creativity jurists in the “periphery” can display when arguing about the “centers” by showing how local Shiʿi ʿulamā bolstered their own authority. In particular, I explore instances when a Pakistani scholar would redefine the religious hierarchy by playing up his role as an “exclusive” representative of a leading scholar, which implied that he was acting as the “representative of the representative of the Imām” (nāʾib-i nāʾib-i imām) in Pakistan. Additionally, in my close reading of three Shiʿi journals of the early 1970s, I document various instances of local scholars stepping into the void of leadership during the times of uncertainty when a universally accepted marjaʿ had not yet been recognized. This case study is intended as a contribution to the underdeveloped field of how a Source of Emulation is made and “emerges” in the 20th and 21st century.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 is another outside factor which looms particularly large in Pakistan and which I discuss in chapter four, “Khomeini’s Perplexed Pakistani Men: Importing and Debating the Iranian Revolution.” Existing scholarship has hardly considered the ways in which the revolutionary message was relayed to Pakistan and received in the country. I argue that during the early months and years after the political change in Iran, Pakistani Shiʿi ʿulamā remained primarily occupied with domestic events. Even ardent supporters of Khomeini were not sure what his authority should mean for them outside of Iran. A lack of both available literature and direct contacts with the neighboring country led these religious scholars to make sense of the revolution in familiar South Asian terms like non-violence or the concept of the
“renewer of religion” (mujaddid). Additionally, Pakistan’s Shīʿīs at that time were engaged in their own political mobilization against the military dictator Zia ul-Haq. While the Iranian Revolution constituted an important “background noise” to these efforts, Shīʿī leaders drew more prominently on their community’s own past experiences of activism and made deliberate efforts to appear independent of Khomeini. A second step in the reception can be discerned with the rise of the young cleric Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī to the helm of Pakistan’s most influential Shīʿī organization at the time, the Movement for the Implementation of Jaʿfarī Law, in 1984. Ḥusaynī, who had studied briefly in Iran, clearly and consistently drew on the hallmark themes of the Iranian revolution. Yet, in doing so, he was often forced to bend aspects of the revolutionary message, like Muslim unity or the leadership of the clerics, to his Pakistani context. I also pay attention to the unprecedented embrace of Iranian ideas that is anchored in present-day Lahore. This last group is represented by the influential cleric Sayyid Javād Naqvī who spent nearly his entire adult life in Iran. Naqvī goes to great lengths in promoting the Iranian concept of the direct rule of a cleric (vilāyat-i faqīh) as a viable, desirable option for Pakistan. He even criticizes the Iranians for not doing enough to export their revolution; a role – so much is implied – which he aims to fulfill himself. I contend that these three stages of reception are united by Pakistani attempts to reap benefits and gain authority from their close connection to revolutionary Iran while at the same time making sure to tightly control the message that is distributed to the Shīʿī public.

The fifth and final chapter, “Abu Muʿāwiya’s Longings for the State: the Dialectics of the Local and the Transnational in Shīʿī-Sunnī Sectarianism,” studies the changing discourses of sectarianism since the 1970s. During this decade, anti-Shīʿī rhetoric was the prerogative of Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ scholars with close ties to Saudi Arabia. The polemics of the famous agitator Iḥsān Ilāhī...
Ẓahīr (d. 1987) were centered on doctrinal points. Ẓahīr especially castigated the Shi‘īs for their belief in the “alteration” of the Qurʾān (taḥrīf). I contend, however, that for the ‘ulamā of Pakistan’s most virulent anti-Shi‘ī group, the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah-i Pākistān (The Army of the Companions of the Prophet, SSP), the Iranian Revolution constituted a threatening attempt at world domination and subversion of the fundamentals of Islamic politics. In highlighting this aspect of sectarianism in Pakistan, I challenge conventional accounts that portray anti-Shi‘ī speeches, publications, and violence as directly caused by economic grievances and merely imported from Saudi Arabia. Even though these Deobandī scholars – in the vein of Ẓahīr – still highlighted doctrinal incompatibilities between “real” and Shi‘ī Islam, the Shi‘īs were now primarily framed as a political problem: they were blocking Pakistan from being molded into its true form, namely that of a Sunnī state with aspirations to global leadership. Scholars affiliated with the SSP provided a striking re-reading of the Qurʾān and the Muslim tradition of the Subcontinent and beyond to raise the clout of the ṣaḥāba. Yet, in formulating their answer to Khomeini, these sectarian Sunnī ‘ulamā attempted to reclaim the caliphate as a divinely-sanctioned office that strikingly resembled and transcended Iran’s model of government. The Shi‘īs, in turn, either continued to call for a proper Islamic revolution to do away with these ills of sectarianism or tried to influence public opinion against the SSP. The latter, they claimed, subverted the very foundations on which the God-given polity of Pakistan had been established.
Chapter 1: Colonial Modernity, the Specter of Pakistan, and the Many Voices of All-Indian Shi‘ism

The Annual Meeting of 1940 was an exception for the All India Shi‘a Conference (AISC). Since its foundation in 1907, delegates had usually met in north Indian cities of substantial size like Calcutta, Lucknow, or Lahore. Yet, for the 1940 session, organizers around Navāb Niṣār ʿAlīkhān Qizilbāsh (d. 1944), 54 had set their eyes on unchartered territory. They had decided to gather that fall in the small qaṣba of Dōkōhā in the Punjab, a settlement of predominantly Shi‘ī Sayyids located outside of the city of Jalandhar. 55 The preparation committee was bent on

54 He was a member of Lahore’s most prominent Shi‘ī family, which had not only managed to retain (and significantly enlarge) its wealth and influence by supporting the British in the Rebellion of 1857, but also distinguished itself as the most lavish supporter of Shi‘ī causes in the Punjab. The Qizilbāshes gave money for mourning ceremonies (majālis), Shi‘ī printing presses, mosques, and scholarships while also establishing a waqf for this end in Lahore (see Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 10-11). For some additional information about the Qizilbāshes’ close relations with the British, who praised them for their unquestionable “loyalty,” see W. L. Conran, H. D. Craik, Lepel H. Griffin, and Charles F. Massy, Chiefs and families of note in the Punjab (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010), 253-259.

55 Mushirul Hasan describes these smaller, predominantly Muslim settlements that served as seats of local ta‘alluqadārs (men of substance who acquired hereditary and transferable rights over local revenue extraction) as “involuntary heirs of the once-powerful Indo-Persian Culture”: “If Islam cemented the qasba structure, pluralism and syncretism were the brick with which it was built.” The latter phenomenon extends in his view not only to Muslim-Hindu interaction but specifically also to a “Shia-tinged culture” that was reflected especially in poetry and mourning for Husayn (see Mushirul Hasan, From pluralism to separatism: Qasbas in colonial Awadh (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004),1-51). Justin Jones’s recent study on Shi‘ī Islam in colonial India has attempted to show “the deterioration of this alleged assimilationist culture of Lucknow and the nineteenth-century Muslim qasbas into a series of more rigid, compartmentalized equivalents, those which reflect a heightened consciousness of inner-Islamic sectarian difference taking root in colonial India” (see Justin Jones, Shi‘a Islam in Colonial India, 15-16). For some additional insights into the functioning of north Indian commercial qasbas as “Islamic gentry towns” that developed something of a “corporate identity and self-organisation,” see C. A. Bayly, Rulers, townsmen, and bazaars: North Indian society in the age of British expansion, 1770-1870 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 346-368. For a recent argument about how such settlements took part in broader debates on reform and community formation, see also Justin Jones, “The Local Experiences of Refomist Islam in a ‘Muslim’ Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha,” Modern Asian Studies 43,4 (2009): 871–908. The only other exception to the pattern of AISC meetings organized in cities of substantial size was the convocation held in 1920 in a small town near Bijnūr (UP). See Sayyid Muḥṣīn Mīrzā (ed), Rū’ūd-dād-i ījlās-i sizdahum-i All India Shi‘ah Conference 2, 3, 4 April 1920 bimāqām-i Ilāhījah Dāk Banglah Qasbah Naginah šilā’i Bijnūr (Lucknow: Fakhr al-Maṭābi’, 1920).
staging a splendid affair and relied mostly on the largesse of the Qizilbāshes and another, even more affluent Shi‘i landholding family of Northern India, the Maḥmūdābāds. Accordingly, they erected an entire new, if only temporary, city of tents and canopies next to a pond outside of Dōkōhā, covering approximately five hectares and guarded by an imposing concrete gate. The distance between the entrance and the main canopy was lined with colorful electrical lights, visible not only to conference attendees but even to railway passengers traveling at night on the Jalandhar-Ludhiana line. The flag of the AISC proudly flew at a height of forty feet. It depicted against a green background Imām ʿAli’s famous sword Dhū ‘l-fiqār along with a stylized sun, representing the Prophet Muḥammad (shams al-risāla), and emitting twelve rays that stood for the twelve Shi‘i Imāms. The stage of the conference offered seating space for five hundred delegates who would enjoy precious carpets under their feet. The area below them could accommodate 2000 visitors who would find themselves surrounded by flags and


57 The following description is based on the account of the “reception committee” (majlis-i istiqbāliyya) for the 1940 meeting. See Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), Rūʾidād-i ijlās-i sīyum-i All India Shi‘ah Conference mun‘aqidah 29-30 September ò yikum October 1940 bi-maqām-i qaṣbah-i Dōkōhā Sādāt żīlā‘-i Jālandhar (Panjāb), 25-27.

58 The electrification of rural areas of the Punjab had already begun in 1925 with the development of the Uhl River hydro-electrical project, which also provided power to the district of Jalandhar where Dōkōhā is located. See Shiv Narayan, Indian Water Power Plants. A Companion Volume to Hydro-Electrical Installations of India (Poona: Poona Electrical Supply Company, 1937), 95-96. The AISC had not always embraced electricity in such an enthusiastic fashion. In 1931, the 23th Annual Meeting in Montgomery had issued a note of protest to the UP government with regard to the latter’s electrical scheme for the province. The AISC lamented that hundreds of utility poles installed in Amroha and other places were interfering with the established routes of Muḥarram processions and constituted an obstacle for their ta‘ziyahs (replicas of the Imāms’ tombs) and their ʿalams (standards). See Navāb Mirzā Ahmad Muḥsin ʿAlīkhan, Rūʾidād-i ijlās-i bist ò sīvūm-i All India Shi‘ah Conference bi-maqām-i Montgomery Panjāb mun‘aqidah 4 li-ghāyatah 6 April 1931, 4.

59 Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), Rūʾidād-i ijlās-i sīyum-i All India Shi‘ah Conference (1940), 38-39.

60 During the previous meeting of the AISC in Patna the delegates had adopted the flag as the Shi‘is’ “communal emblem” (qaumī nishān). See Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), Rūʾidād-i ijlās-i bist ò nahum-i All India Shi‘ah Conference bi-maqām-i Patnah mun‘aqidah 29-30-31 December 1938, 3 and 18.
banners of the 128 Shi'i voluntary organizations affiliated with the AISC. The gathering was also an opportunity to showcase the activities of the Conference: Its daily newspaper *Sarfarāz* – named after its former president Navāb Sarfarāz Ḥusayn – was represented by a tent. The Shi'i orphanage in Lucknow had its own showroom that featured handicrafts produced by orphans fostered there and available for sale.

With all these preparations in place, disaster struck. The night before the grand opening of the Dōkōhā session, strong winds and rain lashed the camp. The small pond turned into an unexpected menace. The bamboo structures of the canopy snapped and many of the colorful lights were smashed. While roughly three hundred men of the *qaṣba* were at hand to clear up the most serious mishaps early the next morning, the meeting had lost some of its elaborate luster. And the next disappointment was not far off when it became clear that far fewer participants than expected would come to attend. The organizers tried to make sense of this poor showing, blaming a lack of propaganda activities, the decision to schedule the convocation on a work day, as well as the inclement weather which had rendered traveling difficult.

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61 For this number of Shi'i associations affiliated with the AISC, see Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), *Rūʾidād-i ijlās-i siyum-i All India Shi'ah Conference* (1940), 62-63.


63 In contrast to previous sessions, the 1940s meeting does not include a detailed roster of conference attendees. For an earlier example, see the 1938 report which lists 316 attending members and 186 visitors who purchased a pass to attend the conference. The list can be found in the section “Asmā'-i kharidārān-i ticket dues,” in Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), *Rūʾidād-i ijlās-i bist ā nahum-i All India Shi'ah Conference* (1938), 1-17. The 1924 Annual Meeting in Fayzābād sold 900 member tickets and 400 visitor tickets. See Mīr Vājid ʿAli (ed), *Rūʾidād-i All India Shi'ah Conference bābat-i ijlās-i haftadum mun'aqidah 21 li-ghāyatah 23 March 1924 bi-maqām-i Fayzābād (Awadh) (Rā'e Bareli: Istibṣār Press, 1924), 251.
Yet, far more serious were two other reasons cited by the General Secretary of the Reception Committee, the pleader Sayyid Tājjir Ḫusayn.⁶⁴ He pointed to the infamous *tabarrā* agitation in Lucknow of 1938-1939, one of the most significant instances of Sunni-Shi‘i sectarianism during the colonial period.⁶⁵ In the aftermath of these events, Punjabi Shi‘is had turned their backs on the AISC and refused to come to Dokōhā, accusing the organization of inactivity during this episode of united Shi‘i struggle. According to Tājjir Ḫusayn, Punjab's Shi‘is regarded the gathering as a waste of their time. The Punjabis had also supposedly taken steps to no longer extend invitations for processions and mourning ceremonies to any of those ‘ulamā and ḥākims (popular preachers) who had not wholeheartedly participated in the “battlefront of Lucknow” (*mahāz-i Lakhnau*). Another major problem which drove down attendance at the 1940 conference was, according to its General Secretary, the lack of participation by any ‘ulamā and mujtahids of repute.⁶⁶ Such an open display of Shi‘i disunity came at a most unfortunate time for the AISC. As the organization saw it, the Shi‘i community was in dire need of a representative organization in order to forestall a brewing danger. Only a couple of months earlier in March 1940 the Muslim League had passed its Lahore Resolution which called for “autonomous and sovereign” units in the north-western and eastern zones of India.⁶⁷ Speakers at the AISC meeting found the prospect of Pakistan deeply troubling. They did not shy not away from denouncing it as an oppressive vision of a Sunni Islamic state that would target Hindus, Sikhs, and Shi‘i Muslims alike.⁶⁸

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⁶⁴ This designation marks him as an advocate who has received his education not in England but in India. See John J. Paul, *The Legal Profession in Colonial South India* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1991), 82-101.

⁶⁵ *Tabarrā* is the Persianized form of the Arabic *tabarru*‘, deriving from the root b-r-ʾ, meaning “to be or to become quit of.” In this context, it refers to the Shi‘i practice of disassociating themselves from the first three Caliphs of Islam. I will discuss these sectarian tensions in Lucknow in more detail below.

⁶⁶ Sayyid Kalb-i ’Abbās (ed), *Rū‘idād-i ijlās-i sīyum-i All India Shi‘ah Conference* (1940), 28-29.


⁶⁸ Sayyid Kalb-i ’Abbās (ed), *Rū‘idād-i ijlās-i sīyum-i All India Shi‘ah Conference* (1940), 52.
This vivid account of the 1940 AISC session leads us right into the turbulent late colonial period which is the temporal frame of this chapter. My goal is to explore questions of religious authority, Shi‘i identity, and sectarianism through three specific lenses. First, I map how the internal tensions between the ʿulamā and Western-educated Shi‘is played out within the AISC and beyond. Second, I am interested in how Indian Shi‘is in the late colonial period positioned themselves vis-à-vis Sunni Islam. Such a concern with sectarian identity is intimately connected to the vision of Pakistan as presented by the Muslim League. How did this idea resonate with North Indian Shi‘is at the time, and how was it discussed by them? Third, I explore the international dimensions of Shi‘i thought during the last decades of British rule and investigate to what extent Indian Shi‘is were in conversation with events and Shi‘i scholarship beyond the Subcontinent. In studying these three aspects, I draw extensively on the Annual Proceedings of the AISC which have not yet been studied sufficiently.69

My discussion makes several major interventions with regard to existing scholarship. One contribution of this chapter is my suggestion to rethink the authority enjoyed by leading Shi‘i ʿulamā in the first half of the 20th century. Scholars have hinted at conflicts between modern educated activists and Lucknow’s clerics but have attributed challenges to the standing of the mujtahids primarily to external shocks like the Khilafat movement or sectarian strife. I argue that such a view falls into the trap of reinscribing the colonial gaze on religious developments in the Subcontinent and fails to explore how and why this rift developed. The Proceedings of the All India Shi‘a Conference in particular grant us a unique window into these

69 Justin Jones relied only on proceedings covering the years 1907, 1908, 1910, 1912 and 1914 (see Jones, Shi‘a Islam in Colonial India, 114-125 and 252), whereas Andreas Rieck based his observations not on the Proceedings themselves but instead on the book Ṣaḥīfat al-millat ma‘ruf bi-lakht-i jigar (Lucknow: Niẓāmī Press, 1939) by Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī Ṣafī (1862-1937). Ṣafī was known as “The Community’s Tongue” (lisān al-qaum) and produced in this work a history of the AISC in verse (nazm). See Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 350.
internal Shi'i deliberations, involving personalities from all over north India. As chapter two and three of this dissertation explore in more detail, the modernist critics set the tone for challenging the authority of the jurists by attacking the concept of taqlid, the obligation of a lay Shi'i to follow the authoritative legal rulings of a senior scholar. This contestation partially explains the energetic efforts by Shi'i 'ulamā after the partition of British India to finally establish the duty of taqlid in the midst of the Shi'i community. Assaults on the authority of Lucknow's mujtahids lead me to a related problem in the existing literature, namely its almost exclusive focus on this city as the center of Shi'i Islam in north India. Lucknow undoubtedly was home to the most impressive architectural Shi'i structures in the Subcontinent which it had inherited from its Navābī past.70 It was regarded as the seat of India's leading Shi'i Usūli scholars and boasted the most advanced Shi'i religious seminaries.71 Yet, it is nevertheless

70 Lucknow was the capital of the Shi'i ruled princely state of Awadh from 1722-1856. On its history, see Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, A Fatal Friendship: The Nawabs, the British, and the city of Lucknow (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985).
71 On the expanding positions of Lucknow's mujtahids and the founding of madrasas in the 19th and early 20th century, see Jones, Shi'a Islam in Colonial India, 32-66. Juan Cole credits one man's travel with the emergence of a class of professional Shi'i clerics: Sayyid Dildār ʿAlī Naṣīrābādī (1753-1820) spent only 18 months at the important Shi'i shrine cities of Karbala and Najaf, yet this time period was sufficient to fundamentally rework his Akhbārī outlook. He no longer deemed the traditions (akhbār) of the Imāms to be the ultimate source of religious reasoning, but wholeheartedly embraced Iraq's Usūli convictions which called for a more rational approach in Islamic law. Even more fundamentally, he accepted the division Uṣūlis make among the believers between those who have the ability to exert independent legal reasoning (ijtihād) due to their extensive religious training and the rest of the populace, who were supposed to emulate such a preeminent scholar. Upon his return to Awadh, Naṣīrābādī challenged the traditional religious elite, surrounded himself with disciples, and managed to win over the local rulers of Awadh to endorse a more openly Shi'i character of the state. Yet, Cole's neat narrative about a single scholar who by his own efforts introduced Uṣūli thought into northern India does not sound entirely convincing. His account of Naṣīrābādī's life is based only on a single unpublished, anonymous Persian biography held by Lucknow's Nāṣiriyyah Library. Lacking other sources to verify its claims, Cole largely follows the source's arguments, which leads him to conclude, for example, that Naṣīrābādī turned down offers to establish a Shi'i dominated judiciary because “the Shi'i ulama simply did not trust the nawwabs to let them make rulings according to Islamic law and their own conscience.” While this possibility is of course not entirely unlikely, Cole fails to explore alternative explanations for the fact that until 1840 juridical disputes were still settled by Hanafī jurists in Awadh. Similarly, even though he is concerned with international networks of 'ulamā immigration, pilgrimage, and visitation, these networks remain largely silent in the course of the book. Cole simply suggests that Naṣīrābādī and his successors transferred a somehow stable and clear-cut conception of Uṣūli thought from Iraq to India. We are not told, however, of existing intra-Uṣūli debates, whether
problematic to let the city’s Shi‘i sphere speak with such an almost exclusive voice during the first half of the 20th century. While this chapter can only open some preliminary vistas without being exhaustive, I would like to suggest that the Punjab will constitute a new and potentially exciting frontier for the future study of South Asian Shi‘i Islam.\footnote{As I already mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, this in no way is meant to suggest that other areas of the Subcontinent like the Deccan, Sindh, Pakistan’s Northern Areas, or Kargil have received sufficient attention so far. For a recent study on Kargil, see Radhika Gupta, “Experiments with Khomeini’s Revolution in Kargil: Contemporary Shi‘a networks between India and West Asia,” \textit{Modern Asian Studies} 40,2 (2014): 370–398. Substantial work on Šüfi-Shi‘i overlap, conflict, and interaction in both Pakistan and India is still a desideratum, as is further research on the relationship between Twelver and Ismā‘īlī Shi‘is in the Subcontinent.}

I also take issue in this chapter with the notion of Shi‘ism developing as a “free-standing religion” during this time period. In my view, the Shi‘is of late colonial India were primarily concerned with presenting their practices and beliefs as a faithful expression of the “original” and “essential” nature of Islam. While they did not necessarily exclude the Sunnīs from the fold of religion, they styled themselves as a spiritual elite that transcended the views held by the “common Muslims” (‘āmm musalmān).

My research also calls into question the supposedly ecumenical character of the Pakistan movement which, according to such an understanding, easily appealed to Sunnīs and Shi‘is alike. Instead, I give voice to the deep Shi‘i skepticism regarding the potentially oppressive and Sunnī-dominated future Muslim homeland, concerns that have usually been swept aside in the existing literature. As the debate in the 1940s about the increasingly religious character of Pakistan heated up, Shi‘is expressed fear that a state built on “pure Islam” might be an entity that could not tolerate difference. As I will show in chapter 5, this debate

adjustments occurred in the Indian context, or at least which thinkers should feature prominently in such an Uṣūli context. See Juan R Cole, \textit{Roots of North Indian Shi‘ism in Iran and Iraq: Religion and state in Awadh, 1722-1859} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
over the meaning and the implications of Pakistan was taken up again in the 1980 and 1990s when anti-Shi‘i sectarianism became an increasingly pervasive phenomenon in Pakistan.73

A final topic which I revisit in this chapter is the notion that before Partition Shi‘is in the Subcontinent were almost exclusively focused on Indian concerns because these overwhelmed and drowned out attention paid to the Middle East. My goal is instead to shed light on the substantial and important Shi‘i ties between the Subcontinent and events in Iran, Iraq, and the Arabian peninsula.

As the following pages show, contestations of religious authority, sectarianism, and transnational concerns do not form entirely discrete issues but are to a large extent interrelated. Before discussing these topics, I would like to briefly engage questions of community formation and the sectarian situation in colonial Lucknow in order to set the scene for the following discussion in this chapter.

Late colonial India: Shi‘i Islam and the forces of sectarianism, nationalism, and communalism

The last decades of colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent gave rise to an unprecedented “publicness” of debates over “Muslim self-definition” that played out in

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73 While fleshing out these continuities, I also hope to demonstrate that we encounter a variety of “sectarianisms” in the context of the colonial period and later in Pakistan. Sectarian discourses remained far from stagnant but were crucially shaped through the impact of the Iranian revolution. For such an argument about the fluid, developing character of sectarianism in the Lebanese context, see Max Weiss, In the Shadow of Sectarianism: Law, Shi‘ism, and the making of modern Lebanon (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 9.
newspapers, processions, mass meetings, and elections. Associations on a local, provincial, and national level promoted socio-religious reform and devised new models of educational institutions that combined training in modern sciences with the emphasis to “utilize them according to the will of the Almighty.” Graduates of these institutions formed new generations of Western-educated Muslims who staffed the bureaucracy of the colonial state and administered the Subcontinent’s princely states. Notions of communalist arguments competed in the public arena with diverging visions of Indian society that emphasized nationalism as the only “forward-looking, progressive, ‘modern’ way” out of this downward spiral of increasing compartmentalization. Appeals to nationalist sentiments did not necessarily require, however, that Indians should give up their particular religious identities and opt for secularist worldviews. Most prominently the Khilâfat Movement was able to channel a seemingly exclusively Muslim cause, namely preserving the temporal power of the Ottoman Sultan because it was crucial for fulfilling his spiritual role as “Caliph of Islam,” into a pan-Indian

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77 Most alumni of the Muslim College at Aligarh went into public service, with those practicing as lawyers before British courts forming the second largest category. The Urdu poet Akbar Allāhābādı̄ (d. 1921) put the state of things the following way in a satirical poem:

“What words of mine can tell the deeds of men like these, our nation’s pride?
They got their B.A., took employment, drew their pensions, and then died.”

79 Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious symbolism and political mobilization in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 75. For the participation of Shiʿi members of the Muslim League in the Khilâfat Movement, which Andreas Rieck calls “somewhat artificial, although understandable given the political context,” see Rieck, *The Shias of Pakistan*, 37.
rallying cry espoused by Gandhi. The latter conceived of the Khilāfat Movement primarily as an anti-British issue. For Gandhi, it was a means “to bring the Muslims into the nationalist movement, and a big boost to his plans to reorganize and redirect the Congress into a mass movement.”

Deobandī ‘ulamā affiliated with the Congress attempted to make the case for “united nationalism” (mutaḥḥida qaumiyyat) in India. To do so, they stressed that a nation was not constituted by ties of faith. Religious solidarity was rather the basis of a religious community (milla) and in this regard Indian Muslims were not distinct because they were part of the universal Muslim community. This argument was meant to enable the Muslims of the Subcontinent to live together with their Hindu neighbors as constituting one qaum. Recent scholarship has also suggested that “competitive, obdurate and relentless” communalism did not rule the day in the late 1920.

80 Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement*, 11. For the view that one of the major reasons for the later faltering of the Khilafat Movement (besides Atatürk's abolition of the office of the caliph altogether) was that it meant “entirely different things to different people,” see ibid., 209-210.

81 See Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of change* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 32-37. See also Barbara D. Metcalf, *Husain Ahmad Madani: The Jihad for Islam and India's freedom* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 112-119. The term qaum as used in Indian debates took on a wide variety of meanings that reached from linguistic and regional connotations to caste, religion, and the nation. An example of its contested character is provided in Muhammad Iqbal’s exchange with Husayn Ahmad Madani. Iqbal reversed the hierarchy of qaum and milla as argued for by the ‘ālim. For the poet, qaum meant territorial, linguistic, or racial groups while the milla denoted “a religion, a law and a programme. It carved out a new ‘common party’ from the different qawms.” The milla as a concept was hence superior to the qaum and could not be divided into the latter. See Iqbal Singh Sevea, *The political philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and nationalism in late colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 151-163.

82 Neeti Nair has examined the deliberations in the Indian Legislative Assembly surrounding a section of the penal code which would punish those who “with deliberate and malicious intention, insulted or attempted to insult ‘religious beliefs’ of any class of His Majesty’s subjects.” In Nair's view the debates leading up to the passing of section 295A in 1927 “hearken to a more fluid and shifting politics of legislative pragmatism,” finally enabling a negotiated consensus among lawmakers belonging to different religious communities. See idem, “Beyond the ‘Communal’ 1920s: The Problem of Intention, Legislative Pragmatism, and the Making of Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code,” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 50,3 (2013): 318 and 336-337.
Shīʿī organizations did not stay on the sidelines of this confusing thicket of communalism, nationalism, and pragmatism but waded right into it, as Justin Jones has argued persuasively. The Shīʿīs of colonial India “adapted entirely to the national currents of community-based activism and pressure-group petitioning that characterized public life in the era of elite nationalism.”[^83] The All India Shīʿa Conference with its claim to nationwide representation, its flag, its past history of founding a Shīʿī college[^84] and its focus on defending Shīʿī rights appears to fall squarely into the camp of communalist expressions[^85]. Yet, decidedly nationalist attitudes were represented in the Conference as well, as its political arm, the All India Shīʿa Political Conference (AISPC), demonstrated[^86]. Sayyid Vazīr Ḥasan (1872-1947), a former chief judge at the High Court in Lucknow who had once played an important role in the Muslim League but had been expelled in 1937[^87], presided over the AISPC session in Lucknow.

[^83]: Justin Jones, *Shiʿa Islam in Colonial India*, 118.
[^84]: For a discussion of the back story of its founding, which had to do with especially Shīʿī landed families growing weary of Aligarh as “an attempt by a nascent clique of primarily Sunni activists and professionals to weaken the economic influence and cultural legitimacy of the region’s Shīʿa communities,” see *ibid.*, 156-164.
[^85]: The British authorities, for one, did not take the AISC and its political branches seriously. A memorandum from 1946 stated that the AISC “cannot be said to be fully representative of the Shia community; several prominent Shias, including Jinnah himself, owe allegiance to the Moslem League.” The memorandum advised that demands expressed by this organization should not be taken “very seriously.” British officials were reminded that “we do not want to have to recognise yet another minority body; Shias must sink their fortunes with the Sunnis and be treated as ‘Moslems.’” See “Hag A, Pol. 5380/44,” in *Coll 117/E7; Muslim organisations in India, including All-India Momin Conference, All-Indian Muslim Majlis and All Parties Shia Conference, and their aims and objects, Mar 1942-Jan 1947*, IOR L/PJ/8/693, India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library. I would argue that this attitude has unduly influenced later scholarship.
[^86]: The All India Shīʿa Political Conference had been founded in December 1929 out of the consideration that too overtly political resolutions passed by the AISC mother organization might imperil the position of its many members who held government employment (see Mirzā Jaʿfar Ḥusayn, *Kashmakash-i ĥayāt* (Lucknow: Mirzā Jaʿfar Ḥusayn, 1984), 294 and also ‘Aılıḵān, *Rūʾidād-i ijlās-i bist o sīvūm-i All India Shī‘ah Conference* (1931), 44).
[^87]: The barrister had played an important role in bringing the Muslim League more into line with the Congress by drafting a revised constitution in 1912 which defined the attainment of self-government for India as the Muslim League's goal. Vazīr Hasan is also credited with convincing Muhammad Ali Jinnah to join the League in 1913. Yet, the conflict in 1937 had to do with “venomous propaganda” formulated by Sunni opponents against Ḥasan’s son Sayyid ‘Alī Zahir, who competed in the 1937 provincial elections in the United Provinces. Hasan saw especially Jinnah’s ally Chaudry Khaliquzzaman as implicated in these sectarian moves. See Rieck, *The Shias of Pakistan*, 35-36 and 40, and also *Muslims in India. A Biographical Dictionary. Volume II (K-Z)* (Lahore: 36
on 11 October 1937. In his speech, he deplored that “communalism raised its head at every step that was taken or intended to be taken on the march to the goal of freedom by the Congress or any group of Indian Nationalists.” This accusation was especially aimed at the Muslim League who in the view of the conference “did not represent the entire Muslims of India.” The AISPC held that “the rights of the Shia minority were always crushed by the League,” which had also manifested itself in Lucknow where the League had supposedly stirred sectarian animosity against the Shi’is.

This statement ties in with the vignette at the beginning of this chapter. It underscores the specter of sectarianism that haunted individual Shi’i authors and organizations like the AISC and points to the deeper level of intra-Muslim frictions during this time period. The Shi’is as a double minority were not only forced to choose between the Muslim League and the Congress, they also had to define their relationship with the Sunni majority and, at the same time, answer the question who could speak authoritatively for their grievances.

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88 Vazir Hasan had thus also succumbed to the temptation of Congress rhetoric which worried Jinnah so much that “like Ulysses he not only chained himself to the mast of his political principles in order to resist the siren song of Indian nationalism, but had to ensure than (sic) his associates were protected from its temptations as well. During their talks of 1944, for example, Jinnah indignantly refused to allow Gandhi to address the League's working committee, since both the Mahatma and he seem to have realized the effect of Congress's temptations upon even the highest officials of the Muslim League. And indeed Jinnah had regularly to rein in his men when they appeared to be leaning too closely in Congress's direction.” See Faisal Devji, Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2014), 146.


91 Other, more radical avenues would have been open to them as well, as various fascist-inspired movements during this time period demonstrate. Yet, it seems that for the Shi’is of North India, such “politics of self-expression” that were “based on a will to power, but one that had already half-
unwillingness of Lucknow’s leading mujtahids to throw in their lot with the AISC has to be seen in the light of a rise of new contenders to the claim of Shī‘ī leadership during this time period. Both Western-educated activists and “progressive” ʿulamā, who challenged their peers to catch up with modern realities, devised a new style (and substance) of leadership and presented themselves as “part journalist, part orator, part holy man.”

Since many of my arguments below refer to the tabarrā agitation of Lucknow in the late 1930s, it is necessary also to briefly review this particular instance of Sunni-Shī‘ī sectarianism, which has attracted significant scholarly interest. Lucknow had already witnessed a parting of the ways between Sunni and Shi‘ī Muḥarram processions in 1906. This came as a result of the Shi‘īs complaining to the British authorities that their solemn commemoration of Ḥusayn’s death had been turned into a “carnival” by Sunni participants. Yet, assigning the Sunnis their own burial ground for their ta‘zīyas exacerbated the situation because the latter began to realize its own impossibility” did not catch on during the late colonial period. See Markus Daechsel, The Politics of Self-Expression: The Urdu middle-class milieu in mid-twentieth century India and Pakistan (London: Routledge, 2006), 59. Nor did the Shi‘īs at this time develop a conception of Islamism that was comparable to Maudūdī’s Jamāʿat-i Islāmī. See Jan-Peter Hartung, A system of life: Mawdūdī and the Ideologisation of Islam (London: Hurst & Company, 2013), 61-156. Chapter four of this dissertation discusses how Pakistan’s Shi‘īs came to adopt (and modify) Shi‘ī versions of Islamist thought after the Iranian Revolution of 1979.


94 On this South Asian practice, see Meer Hassan Ali, Observations on the Mussulmauns of India. Descriptive of their manners, customs, habits and religious opinions made during a twelve year residence
utilize this separate space in order to recite praises for all four Caliphs as “equal comrades” (cāryār). The Shi‘īs reacted by publicly cursing the first three Caliphs Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān. They were led by a new generation of vernacular ẓākir who,

due to the demands of the developing public sphere and the occupational need to cultivate a public impression, performed with vernacular fluency and frequent subversion and audacity.

Several observers have interpreted this split as an instance of reconciling “the observance of the murder of Husain with more orthodox Islam” and of drawing boundaries for both the Sunnī and Shi‘ī community. Such an interpretation has been rejected recently on the grounds that it would

insinuate to some degree the internal homogeneity of Shi‘a and Sunni communities, suggesting the coordinated efforts of ʿulama, preachers and patrons on each side and giving little differentiation among them.

The British responded to widespread unrest by enforcing a ban on praising the Companions of the Prophet (madh-i ṣaḥābah). The resolve to uphold this restriction became increasingly tested from the early-1930s onwards by the efforts of the polemicist ʿAbd al-Shakūr, who had already been involved in the events of 1906. Al-Shakūr's attempts to shift devotion from the Shi‘ī Imāms towards the Sunnī Caliphs foreshadowed some of the discourses later employed by the anti-Shi‘ī group Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah in post-Partition Pakistan. The situation came to a head when in 1938 the Allsop Committee, which had been charged with

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98 Jones, *Shi‘a Islam*, 105. I will discuss the implications of this argument in more depth below.
99 Ibid., 191. See also chapter five of this dissertation.
studying the issue, recommended to keep the ban in place.\textsuperscript{100} The Deobandī Jamʿiyyat al-ʿUlamāʿ-ı Hind (JUH) received support from the Punjab-based Majlis-i Aḥrâr organization and together they launched a broad civil obedience campaign.\textsuperscript{101} The Indian National Congress government, which was in power between 1937 and 1939 in the United Provinces, tried to defuse the tensions. Amidst a deteriorating situation of riots and clashes it gave permission on 31 March 1939 for a Sunnī \textit{madḥ-i ṣaḥābah} procession to be taken out on May 2, the Prophet's birthday (known as \textit{bārah vafāt} in Urdu).\textsuperscript{102} While the decision was made “with a view to keep the JUH and the Majlis-i Ahrâr in the Congress camp, deepen intra-Muslim cleavages and thus weaken the Muslim League, […] the vehemence of Shia reactions took everybody by surprise.”\textsuperscript{103} Thousands of Shiʿī volunteers from all over northern India made their way to Lucknow\textsuperscript{104} and up to 14,000 Shiʿīs courted arrest during the first four months of the agitation


\textsuperscript{101} The Majlis-i Ahrâr was founded in 1929 by former Punjabi Khilâfatists who combined socialist leanings with sympathy for the Deobandi school. By 1936, more than 1000 of its members had been arrested in Lucknow during the civil disobedience campaign there. See Awan, \textit{Political Islam in Colonial India}, 10-16 and 91. For their involvement in Lucknow, see also Tahir Kamran, “Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam: religion, socialism and agitation in action,” \textit{South Asian History and Culture} 4,4 (2013): 478-479. For the Ahrâr's earlier activities during the Kashmir agitation, see also David Gilmartin, \textit{Empire and Islam: Punjab and the making of Pakistan} (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 96-99.

\textsuperscript{102} There is some confusion in the secondary literature regarding this date. Jones takes 31 March, the day when the communique was issued, to be the day of the Prophet's Birthday (Jones, \textit{Shi'a Islam in Colonial India}, 194) while Rieck identifies it as 3 May (Rieck, \textit{The Shias of Pakistan}, 21). Yet, it is May 2 that corresponds with the 12 Rabi' al-Awwal of the Islamic calendar, the Prophet's birthday.

\textsuperscript{103} Rieck, \textit{The Shias of Pakistan}, 21. Jones is skeptical about the “split the Muslim” argument since it would have required enormous “manipulative skill” on the part of the Congress Government. He suggests instead that Lucknow's tremendous growth in the 1920s and its transformation from a “provincial \textit{ta'luqdari} (sic) backwater into a city of increased size, commercial and political importance” played a decisive role. See Jones, \textit{Shi'a Islam in Colonial India}, 199-204.

\textsuperscript{104} For discussion of numerical participation in the events, see \textit{Fortnightly reports, Punjab, July – August 1939}, IOR L/PJ/5/242, India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library.
alone. A Sunni eye witness, the advocate and member of the UP Council of State Cōdhrī
Niʿmatullāh, described the situation on 24 June 1939 with the following words:

Those who do not reside in Lucknow cannot have an adequate idea of how the movement manifests itself. It is not merely the case of a Jatha [a gang or a mob, SWF] pronouncing Tabarra, coming out of Imambara Asifia and being arrested. The claim that it is of a non-violent character cannot stand the slightest examination. Tabarra begins from the time when the Jatha is arrested and is lodged in the lorry which takes them to Jail. In transit on the public road Tabarra continues in loud chorus in the hearing of everyone who happens to be on the route. When the Tabarra prisoners are transferred to other districts the railway platform is a scene of Tabarra chorus all the time that the prisoners are waiting for their train, particularly, at the sight of any one suspected to be a Sunni. Once my own presence at the railway platform provoked a most vociferous Tabarra. At night Tabarra is pronounced, through gramophone loud speakers from the topmost roof of many Shia houses so that all the Sunni neighbours may hear it. Tabarra is found to be written on the doors and walls of Sunni houses. Even the bed sheets provided for the Shia prisoners are found to have Tabarra written on them. Very often Tabarra is pronounced not in the conventional form but the names of the three Caliphs and the Prophet’s favourite wife are associated with the filthiest abuses. The only sense in which such movements can be declared non-violent is that Tabarra is mostly pronounced under the protection of the police who see to it that no violence is resorted to by the Sunni hearers.

Among the startling features of this tabarrā agitation were not only its organized character and its appeal that stretched over all of north India. The event is also significant because it cut across boundaries of neighborhood, family, class, and political persuasion. Many Shīʿī ʿulamā were among those arrested, as were landlords, members of the former royal family of Awadh, and politicians.

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107 See the file *Madh-e Sahaba*, MSS Eur IOR Pos 10773, India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library.

Competing claims to Shīʿī authority

It is not surprising that this spectacular manifestation of Sunnī-Shīʿī strife has attracted the sustained interest of scholars. One of the most sophisticated analyses of the sectarian scene in Lucknow and its implications for internal Shiʿī debates has been provided by Justin Jones. In his reading, it was external shocks such as the tabarrā agitaton and the earlier Shiʿī grappling with the Khilāfat movement that provided the space for individuals and organizations to challenge the consolidated authority of Lucknow's mujtahids. A case in point is the Shiʿī Muslim League politician Sayyid Riżā ʿAlī (1882-1949) who protested a joint fatwā by the three mujtahids Nāṣir Ḥusayn (1867-1942), Sayyid Āqā Ḥasan (1860-1929), and Muḥammad Bāqir Riżvī (1868-1928). These religious scholars had called on Shiʿīs in May 1920 not to engage with the question of the Caliphate. Conferring this title to anyone other than ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib implied that such a person would “thereby be totally excluded from the pale of Shiʿīsm.” Sayyid Riżā ʿAlī ridiculed this declaration and pointed out the “complete estrangement” which had come to pass between Lucknow’s leading ʿulamā and the Indian Shiʿīs. Mirzā Muḥammad Rahim Bulbula, a rather obscure preacher from Baku who had come to India in 1917, put

109 Sayyid Riżā ʿAlī obtained his BA and LLB from Aligarh and started practicing law in Murādābād in 1908. In 1924, he presided over the Muslim League’s Bombay Session. See Muslims in India, vol II, 114-116. For brief sketches covering the biographies of the most influential Shiʿī scholars under discussion, see Jones, Shi’a Islam in Colonial India, 245-247.


111 In his Urdu autobiography that was published in December 1943, Sayyid Riżā ʿAlī laid out his modernist convictions. He wrote that “the business (muʿāmalah) of religion (maghab) is only a business between the Creator and the created.” No one else had the right to assume an intermediary position since such a view was contrary to the teachings of Islam. He shared this conviction, as he claimed, with the Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ (is bārāh mey ahl-i ḥadīṣ ke ham khayāl hūṉ). See Sayyid Riżā ʿAlī, Aʾmāl nāmah yaʾnī Sir Sayyid Riżā ʿAlī ke TS, BA, MLL ke savāniḥ-i ḥayāt khūd māṣūf ke qalam se (Delhi: Hindustānī Publishers, 1943), 355-356. Sayyid Riżā ʿAlī propagated global Islamic brotherhood and emphasized that historically the only difference non-Muslim had ever managed to notice between Shiʿīs and Sunnīs was their diverging ways to offer prayer (ibid., 368). It would be a fascinating research project on its own to compare the Urdu writings of modern educated Muslims like Sayyid Riżā ʿAlī with their publications in English that have usually received much more attention.
additional pressure on the clerical leadership. He founded an *anjuman* to investigate the rumored bombing of Najaf by the British in 1920 and to “harmonize Shi’a concerns with the wider Khilafat movement.” Eventually, the Shi‘ī *mujtahids* came around and voiced support for the anti British Khilafat cause. Jones notes with surprise how

a number of activists and *anjumans* only recently apparent in public life managed to trump the networks of magnates, institutions and ‘*ulama* that had for some decades represented the public face of Shi‘ism. [...] After some thirty years of high public visibility and uncontested guardianship of vested authority, the *mujtahids* were reduced by the strength of this new political populism to making concessions to existing public opinion in a bid to maintain their profile.112

Jones identifies a similar dynamic playing out 18 years later during the *tabarrā* agitation. When the *mujtahid* Muḥammad Naṣīr (1895-1966) ordered the Shī‘īs to halt these public denunciations, an *anjuman* from Lucknow, the Tanẓīm al-Mu’minīn, publicly opposed this move:

> It was a bold gesture against a scholar who was by this time one of the country’s most elevated religious authorities and, one may speculate, something that would have been anathema a couple of decades earlier.113

I would caution against such a reading, however, as it places too much stress on certain external shocks and singles out instances of sectarianism as the primary avenue to renegotiate religious authority within the Shi‘ī community.114 Jones’s focus leaves him with the problem that an assumed accumulated, unassailed standing of Lucknow’s leading scholars suddenly got challenged as if out of nowhere. Even more serious, however, is that this account does not question the basic narrative as it emerges from the colonial archive. The British authorities only became involved and developed interest in such exclusively internal Shi‘ī debates when

they were related to disturbances of the public order.\textsuperscript{115} Regaining control of the situation required that the colonial administration identified the participants in such contestations, yet the analysis left behind in the Raj’s archive only provides us with a snapshot of crisis, not with a sense for how the debate evolved over time.\textsuperscript{116} The Proceedings of the All India Shi‘a Conference by contrast show in detail how its modernist members since the 1920s increasingly defied the claimed leadership role of Lucknow’s clerical elite. These barristers, bureaucrats, and landowners presented themselves as the true and progressive center of Shi‘ī Islam in late colonial India.

How did the AISC come to adopt this role? Scholars have noted that the organization had originally been founded in 1907 as an attempt to reconcile “the old religious and aristocratic establishment with the new class of Shia professionals” or even as “yet another vehicle for maintaining the newly established role of the senior clerical families of Lucknow as visible social activists and speakers.”\textsuperscript{117} The organization vowed during its founding session, which was attended by nearly one thousand delegates, to safeguard the moral, social, economic, and religious needs of the Shi‘īs through means that were not in conflict with the shari‘a. It also emphasized in the adopted charter its willingness to work towards unity among the community’s members and to cooperate with other Islamic sects and also followers of other

\textsuperscript{115} As an example of how the colonial analysis of the internal Shi‘ī contestations was shaped, see the article entitled “Greatest Sin – Sectarianism’ Appeal to Leaders to Call of Agitation,” written by ʿAbd al-Vaḥīd Khān, the Joint Secretary of the Provincial Muslim League in the newspaper Pioneer. It is preserved in the file Madh-e Sahaba, MSS Eur IOR Pos 10773, India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library.

\textsuperscript{116} For an additional argument that colonial administrators lost touch with events on the ground from the 1920s onwards due to the “strategy of establishing a headquarters near a telephone and remaining within it,” see Freitag, \textit{Collective Action and Community}, 79-80.

\textsuperscript{117} The first view is expressed by Rieck, \textit{The Shias of Pakistan}, 25; the second by Jones, \textit{Shi’a Islam in Colonial India}, 119.
religions. Yet, it is problematic to deduce from these stated goals that Lucknow's *mujtahids* “jealously guarded the role of president [...] until at least the early 1920s,” after which they “gradually lost interest.” It is incorrect that for at least the first 13 years the office of AISC president was only held by senior clerics from Lucknow. Yet, also a more nuanced explanation of an “alternating” leadership between ʿulamā and notables is misleading. Only one *mujtahid* from Lucknow served as president of the AISC after 1911, namely Sayyid Ibn-i Ḥasan (d. 1949), who took over this position for the 1924 session in Fayżābād. Lahore was more prominently represented than Lucknow with Sayyid ʿAlī Ḥāʾirī acting as the elected president.

119 Jones, *Shi’i Islam in Colonial India*, 119.
121 Jones, *Shi’i Islam in Colonial India*, 119. Compare the table provided by Rieck which lists the AISC presidents from 1907 until 1933. This list shows the growing influence of notables like the ruler of the princely state of Rāmpūr (1912), landlords from the UP, politicians, and civil servants who presided over most of the AISC meetings. In 1935, Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī, a notable and lawyer from Patna, presided over the Annual Meeting. For 1936 and 1937, it was the Rājā of Mahmūdābād, Muhammad Amīr Ahmad Khān. In 1937, the Shiʿī politician and lawyer Sir Sayyid Rīzā ʿAlī was president and in 1940 the younger brother of Mahmūdābād, Amīr Ḥaydar Khān, held this office.
123 His father Sayyid Abū ʿl-Qāsim Ḥāʾirī (1833–1906) had come to Lahore on the insistence of Navāb Qızilbāsh. After studying with his father, Sayyid ʿAlī went to Iraq where he completed his higher religious education with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shirāzī while also attending the study circles of other leading ʿulamā. He completed the *tafsīr* initiated by his father, traveled all over India to speak, and is also said to have had *muqallids* in Burma and East Africa. Unfortunately, his extensive library in Lahore was destroyed in a flood (see Husayn, *Maṭlaʿ-i anvār*, 341-343). Sayyid ʿAlī Ḥāʾirī’s descendants in Lahore told me in the summer of 2012 that the remnants of his library had supposedly been transferred to the Jāmiʿat al-Muntaẓar in Model Town but I was not able to locate books formerly part of Ḥāʾirī’s library there. In the course of my research I have come across references that point out the close relationship which Muhammad Iqbal enjoyed with several Shiʿī scholars, among them Sayyid ʿAlī Ḥāʾirī (see, for example, “Muṣāḥabah bā hażrat Āyatullāh Ḥājj Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Najafī Pākīstānī,” *Hauzah*, 123 (2004): 157-158). Other Shiʿī interlocutors of Iqbal in Lahore were the Iranian emigré and ʿālim ʿAbd al-ʿAlāʾ al-Haravī al-Ṭihrānī (d. 1922) and Mīrzā ʿAbd al-Karīm Zanjāni (d. 1968), a Najafī scholar who traveled extensively in India and met with Iqbal in the late 1920s. To my knowledge, no study has been done on this topic.
in 1914 and Sayyid Ḥashmat ‘Alī occupying this role in the years 1923 and 1932.\footnote{Sayyid Ḥashmat ‘Alī was born in 1858 and studied with Sayyid Abū ‘l-Qasim Ḥāʾirī the dars-i niẓāmī, tafsīr, ḥadīth, and fiqh before entering Lahore's Oriental College. Even though Hāʾirī wanted to see him proceed to Lucknow, Sayyid Ḥashmat preferred to obtain ijāzas from Deobandi scholars first. After doing so, he made his way to Najaf via Karachi, Basra, and Karbala. He also studied for several months with Sayyid Muhammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī in Samarra and spent a total of twelve years in Najaf, interrupted by a yearlong return to India in between. Sayyid Ḥashmat ‘Alī attained the rank of marjaʿiyya. Additionally, he went for a year to Istanbul in order to study the rational sciences (maʿqulāt). Yet, in his native India it was not possible to live out his “scholarly disposition” (ʿilmī mizāj) and to devote himself entirely to research, instead demands were made on him to engage in munāẓara and to work for qaumī iṣlāḥ – something to which he reluctantly agreed (see Ḥusayn, Maṭlaʿ-i anvār, 206-208).} The remaining sessions were chaired by dignitaries, landlords, and Shiʿī politicians.

Relations between the AISC and the clerical leadership in fact had already become strained prior to the organization's Multan session in 1921. Najm al-Ḥasan (1862-1938), a preeminent mujtahid, director of the Madrasah-i Nāṣirīyya in Lucknow, and former president of the AISC, spelt out in a letter the reasons for his conspicuous absence from the Multan convocation.\footnote{Najm al-Ḥasan received several ijāzas from Iraqi jurists but seems to have spent only a limited amount of time in the Middle East and was mostly educated in Lucknow. He gained a reputation for modernizing religious education in the Subcontinent which also manifested itself through the invitation by the Navāb of Rāmpūr to act as the director of education in this princely state. Especially Najm al-Ḥasan's affiliation with the preaching-focused Madrasat al-Wāʿiẓīn was said to have contributed to the spread of his fame in India and beyond through the muballīghs sent out by the school (see ibid., 675-678).} According to him, the original goal of the AISC had been to spread awareness of the rulings of the shariʿa (sharīʿat-i muṭahharah ke aḥkām kō ravāj diyā jāʿye) and to rectify unsuitable and wrong phenomena in society. Yet, its envisioned set up as a pan-Indian body, designed to go with the changing times, had obviously backfired because it had given rise to the idea that the opinions of the ‘ulamā and “of other people of the Shiʿī community” could be treated as equally valid (‘ulamā-i maghab aur digar afrād-i qaum ki rāʾe musāvī ḥaysīyyat men shumār ki jāʿe). Even worse, the attitude prevalent within the AISC had reached the level that...
every suggestion made by the religious scholars was rejected out of hand as impractical (nā qābil-i ‘amal) and even turned into an object of ridicule (istihzā ā tasakhir). Najm al-Ḥasan saw only one way to reestablish his relations with the organization: the AISC had to make sure that it corrected all resolutions and amended individual behavior which was in conflict with the shari‘a. Only by professing its reliance on the ʿulamā could a relationship of trust once again come into being.126

This letter and the open criticism by its religious leaders was a blow for the All India Shi‘a Conference. The delegates denied in their response to Najm al-Ḥasan any wrongdoing or mockery of the ʿulamā and argued that the presidents of the Conference had always been elected by the mujtahids.127 In his presidential address, the landlord Navāb Muẓaffar ‘Ali Khān of Jhansath near Muẓaffarnagar (UP) underlined that it was “a serious mistake” to think that the ʿulamā had no say over mundane matters. It was the pride of the Shi‘īs to follow their ʿulamā in affairs relating both to this world and the next. Unfortunately the ʿulamā themselves had deprived the people of a special blessing, namely to act as AISC president and dispense their guidance in this way.128 The Conference nevertheless tried to mend fences by nominating a delegation that was supposed to travel to Lucknow in order to sort out its differences with the mujtahids.129

127 Ibid., 40. The resolutions passed during the Annual Meetings of the AISC in 1919 and 1920 do not address any objectionable or controversial issues. I would argue, however, that the conflict between the ʿulamā and the modernist AISC members ran deeper than a critique of one particular resolution, as we will see below. See, for example, Sayyid Muḥsin Mirzā (ed), Rūʿīdād-i ijlās-i sīzdahum-i All India Shī‘ah Conference (1920), 1-5.
128 Ibid., 42-43.
129 Ibid., 8.
Yet, the jurists were not willing to meet with these envoys. Instead a potential – if far-reaching – compromise was suggested in 1924 by the Lucknow-based ʿālim Sayyid Abū l-Ḥasan (1881-1937), who encouraged the AISC delegates to accept a supervisory council. Unfortunately, we do not have a record of the scholars’ internal deliberations but it is tempting to speculate that this proposal might have been influenced by the heated debates surrounding the public role of the Shi'i clergy and “shariʿa-based constitutionalism” (mashrūṭah-i mashrūʿah) in Iran during the Constitutional Revolution in the first decade of the 20th century. Article 2 of the Supplementary Fundamental Law, passed in October 1907, had given a council of mujtahids the power to

reject, repudiate, wholly or in part, any proposal which is at variance with the sacred law of Islam. In such matters the decision of this committee of ulema shall be followed and obeyed, and this article shall continue unchanged until the appearance of His Holiness the Proof of the Age [ie, the twelfth, Hidden Imām].

130 See Sayyid Maqbūl Ḥusayn, Rūʿidād-i All India Shiʿah Conference bābat ijlās-i shāhzadahum munʿaqidah 31 March ò yikum ò 2 April 1923 bi-maqaṁ-i Jhang Maghiyānah (Punjāb) (Lucknow: Niẓāmī Press, 1923), 62. Later efforts inter alia in 1925 and 1935 to bring about such a meeting were equally unsuccessful (see Mirzā ʿĀbid Ḥusayn (ed), Rūʿidād-i All India Shiʿah Conference bābat ijlās-i hicdahum munʿaqidah 9 li-ghāyatah 12 March 1925 bi-maqaṁ-i Bombay (Lucknow: 1925) and also Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās, Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ò shishum-i All India Shiʿah Conference munʿaqidah 26, 27, 28 October 1935 bi-maqaṁ-i Rūʿe Barlī (Lucknow: Sarfarāz Qaumī Press, 1935), 5). By 1935, some delegates had lost all faith in the prospects of reconciliation. They called on the AISC to finally give up trying to get the ʿulamā involved (ibid., 44).

131 He was born into a scholarly family in Bombay and studied with Lucknow’s leading Shiʿi scholars before leaving the Subcontinent for Iraq in 1909. After returning to Lucknow in 1913 or 1914, he taught at the Nāẓimiyya school and at the Madrasat al-Wāʿiẓīn. He became the latter’s director in 1935 after the death of Sayyid Sibṭ-i Ḥasan (1878-1935), who was known as khaṭīb-i aʿẓam (The Greatest Orator) (see Ḥusayn, Maṭlaʿ-i anvār, 53-54). On Sibṭ-i Ḥasan and the Madrasat al-Wāʿiẓīn, see also Imamia Mission, Khaṭīb-i Āl-i Muḥammad (Lucknow, 1935). Justin Jones has argued that Sibṭ-i Ḥasan “embodies perfectly some of the transformations taking place in the Shi’a clergy, and the way in which religious authority was designated, through the early twentieth century. While not a formal mujtahid, the fact that he was often declared as such by lay sources is evidence of the extent to which formal clerical authority, and skill as a public orator and narrator of majālis, were becoming increasingly mixed and conflated at the level of popular religion” (see Jones, Shiʿa Islam in Colonial India, 83-84).

132 Cited in Said Amir Arjomand, “Islam and Constitutionalism since the Nineteenth Century: the Significance and Peculiarities of Iran,” in Said Amir Arjomand (ed), Constitutional Politics in the Middle East. With special reference to Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2008), 41. The committee of mujtahids was never formed, however, mostly because “the great majority of Shi’ite jurists selected by the Second Majles (1909-11) in several rounds considered it beneath their dignity to accept” (ibid., 44). See also Mangol Bayat, Iran’s First Revolution: Shi’ism and
The situation in India under colonialism and in a minority situation was obviously very different: Abū l-Ḥasan stated that the ʿulamā had no inclination to get involved with the administrative aspects of the AISC, play a role in politics, or gain any “worldly honor” (dunyāvī ʿizzat). Yet, they also rejected being treated as ordinary participants. The religious scholars saw their role as analogous to the colonial government, which adopted a policy of control and supervision over the AISC (nāẓir nigārānī) in order to make sure that it did not adopt positions that were in conflict with the Indian secular law (khilāf varzī-yi qānūn-i government). The ʿulamā were charged with a different kind of oversight on behest of the “divine kingdom” (salṭanat-i ilāhīyyah) to guarantee compliance with God’s law (qānūn-i ilāhī). Sayyid Abū l-Ḥasan explained that such a committee of mujtahids would scrutinize the proposed agenda ahead of each AISC meeting as well as the published proceedings afterwards in order to determine whether all resolutions adopted complied with the shariʿa. This body was supposed to be self-regulating since only senior scholars would know who was qualified for the task. The mujtahids recognized that there were certain administrative areas, like acting as the Conference's president or electing a secretary, that formed a neutral space from the perspective of the shariʿa. The Shiʿī qaum was not bound in obedience to the Prophet and the Imāms regarding such matters and thus by extension following the rulings of the ʿulamā was not

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133 Mīr Vājid ʿAlī (ed), Rūʾidād-i All India Shiʿah Conference bābat ijlās-i haftadum (1924), 253.
134 Ibid., 253-254. The Shiʿī scholars formulated their proposal in the aftermath of an initiative by “second rank” Sunni scholars “with less sensitivity to and experience of political realities” who were affiliated with the Jamʿiyyat al-ʿUlamāʾ-i Hind. During the organization’s meeting in December 1921, they had suggested electing an Amir-i Hind who was to enforce the shariʿa and to create parallel Muslim institutions like a treasury, courts, and an administration of auqāf, thus establishing an imperium in imperio. See Peter Hardy, Partners in Freedom – and True Muslims: The political thought of some Muslim scholars in British India 1912–1947 (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1971), 32–35 and also Francis Robinson, Separatism Among Indian Muslims: the Politics of the United Provinces’ Muslims, 1860–1923 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 329–330.
135 Mīr Vājid ʿAlī (ed), Rūʾidād-i All India Shiʿah Conference bābat ijlās-i haftadum (1924), 256-257.
required in this context.\textsuperscript{136} Yet, in general the *shari'a*’s reach was universal and also encompassed areas like trade or government and clearly touched upon the topic of internal unity (*ittiḥād*) that was so important to the AISC. In this context, Sayyid Abū ’l-Ḥasan identified a happy division of labor between the ‘*ulamā* and the modern educated conference members: while the jurists lacked knowledge about how to spur progress (*taraqqī*) for the Shī‘īs, the activists of the AISC were equally ignorant (*jāhil*) as to whether their course of action was in compliance with the divine law. Once the ‘*ulamā* had tested their strategies and issued a verdict, obedience became mandatory.\textsuperscript{137}

The proposal to set up such a *majlis-i naẓārat* reportedly found full support from the AISC which modified its constitution accordingly. The wording even included a passage stating that if there was a disagreement among the mujtahids regarding the *shari'a* compatibility of a particular resolution, the AISC would choose the safe path and withdraw this proposal.\textsuperscript{138} The project was off to a promising start: Sayyid Abū ’l-Ḥasan and Sayyid Ibn-i Ḥasan, both present in Fayžābād, agreed to participate right away. The AISC proposed to include ten other leading scholars.\textsuperscript{139} Yet, the Supervisory Council only made a brief appearance the following year.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{136} \textit{Ibid.}, 256.
\item \textsuperscript{137} \textit{Ibid.}, 255. This specific attempt by the ‘*ulamā* at recasting their role in society as “experts” who are equally or more relevant than “experts” in other fields, with religion being turned into a specialization, is by no means a strategy unique to South Asian Shī‘ī ‘*ulamā*. For a discussion of the issue in the broader context of modern Islamic thought, see \textit{Zaman, The ulama in Contemporary Islam}, 98-99 and \textit{idem, Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age: Religious authority and internal criticism} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 105. See also Dhulipala, \textit{Creating a New Medina}, 371-372.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Mir Vājid ‘Ali (ed), \textit{Rū’idād-i All India Shī‘ah Conference bābat ijlās-i haftadum} (1924), 257.
\item \textsuperscript{139} The AISC voted to approach the important Lucknow-based mujtahids Sayyid Āqā Ḥasan, Sayyid Najm al-Ḥasan, Sayyid Nāsir Husayn, Sayyid Bāqir Rīzvī, Sayyid Sībṭ-i Husayn (1867-1952; see Husayn, \textit{Matla‘-i anvār}, 259-261), Sayyid Zuhūr Husayn (1864-1938; \textit{ibid.}, 295-296), Sayyid Ahmad known as ‘Allāmah Hindi (1878-1947; \textit{ibid.}, 71-73 and more on him also below), Sayyid Muhammad ‘Ali (1879-1942, \textit{ibid.}, 582-583), and Sayyid Abū ’l-Ḥasan Rīzvī (1846-1924; \textit{ibid.}, 54-57). They also suggested to include Sayyid Yūsuf Husayn (1885-1933; \textit{ibid.}, 708) who had temporarily moved to the city of Meerut.
\end{itemize}
during the Annual Meeting in Patna and did not leave any additional traces in the pages of subsequent AISC proceedings.\textsuperscript{140}

I would argue that the failure of the Supervisory Council is a direct outcome of efforts by the AISC to further curtail the influence of the mujtahids and to expand the boundaries of the neutral shari‘a space which Abū ʿl-Ḥasan had identified. In 1924, the same year that the Conference seemingly enthusiastically embraced the majlis-i naẓārat, it decided to revoke the privilege of Lucknow’s mujtahids to elect the AISC president. The organization justified this move as attempting to actually strengthen the influence of the ‘ulamā since the existing rule had unfairly privileged senior jurists based in Lucknow, thus excluding their colleagues from the Punjab. A more important argument in the eyes of the delegates, however, was that a president elected by the qaum would be able to fulfill his role with much more self confidence due to this popular backing (is kō tamām qaum-i shī‘ah ne ṣadārat kā ahl samjhā he).\textsuperscript{141} Speeches in the following years repeatedly emphasized a level playing field for all members of the AISC. Everyone could participate with “equal communal rights” (musāvī ḥuqūq-i qaum), be they a “taʿalluqdār, a navāb, a raʾīs, a faqīr, a mujtahid, or an ‘ālim-i din.”\textsuperscript{142} The head of the organizing committee for the 1925 session in Bombay, the businessman Mīrzā Hāshim Iṣfahānī, attempted to claim more room to maneuver for the AISC by arguing that participation in its activities did...

\textsuperscript{140} Mirzā ʿĀbid Ḥusayn, Rūʾidād-i All India Shī‘ah Conference bābat ijlās-i hīcdahum (1925). In this context the Supervisory Council decided that it had no basis to rule on the shari‘a compliance of female education since its members had not been provided with the charter for an envisioned AISC girls school.

\textsuperscript{141} Mīr Vājid ʿAlī (ed), Rūʾidād-i All India Shī‘ah Conference bābat ijlās-i haftadum (1924), 131-132. For an account of the 1924 events and the strained relationship with the ‘ulamā which had led many of the latter to boycott the session in Fāyzābād, see also Ḥusayn, Kashmakash-i ḥayāt, 292-293.

\textsuperscript{142} This list demonstrates of course that the AISC was most of all a forum of the literate and wealthy Shī‘i elite (see Mirzā ʿĀbid Ḥusayn, Rūʾidād-i All India Shī‘ah Conference bābat ijlās-i hīcdahum (1925), 92-93).
not fall under the purview of taqlīd. According to him, unlike Christianity or Hinduism, Islam was not a religion that would restrict the affairs of religion (umūr-i din) to a particular group. Rather, every individual Muslim who was knowledgable about the necessities of his faith could carry them out. Shīʿī Islam would take this conviction one step further since in the view of this sect everyone could be a mujtahid for himself (har shakhṣ apnī zāt ke liye khūd mujtahid ban saktā he). For anyone without religious knowledge, the condition of taqlīd of course still applied but this did not entail that Shīʿīs would be limited to one particular jurist. Rather, whoever an individual believer acknowledged as the most learned would do – and this applied to less well-known (ghayr maʿrūf) mujtahids as well. Even though Ḥasanī did not promote any particular alternative to the leadership in Lucknow he complained in a not so subtle manner that the city’s senior jurists did not seem to have had the opportunity to truly engage with pressing “worldly, societal, and educational concerns.” These were bold words – especially because in 1925 some high ranking ‘ulamā from Lucknow were still in attendance at the Bombay session.

The following years only increased the antagonism: in 1928, the AISC president and landlord Navāb Mīr Fażl ʿAlikhān of Bīgan Pali in Madras spoke of nothing less than “war and

143 He had settled in Britain by the early 1920s and was involved in conveying the viewpoints of the Khilāfat Movement to the British Government but seems to have returned to Bombay later (see M. Naem Qureshi, Pan-Islam in British Indian politics: The politics of the Khilafat Movement, 1918-1924. Revised and updated with new material (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 76-81). Rieck incorrectly lists him as the Bombay session’s president, an office that was instead occupied by Navāb Sarfarāz Husayn (see Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 27).

144 Mirzā ʿĀbid Husayn, Rūʾidād-i All India Shīʿah Conference bābat ijlās-i hīcdahum (1925), 94-95.

145 The proceedings list ʿAllāmah Hindī, Sayyid Abū ʿl-Ḥasan, Sayyid Muḥammad ʿAli and the ‘ālim Sayyid Muḥammad, known as Mīrān Şāhib (1895-1961; Husayn, Maṭṭa-i anvār, 464-465). In attendance were also a preacher from Delhi, Sayyid Muḥammad Dīhlavī (1899-1971; ibid., 465-467), and the Punjab-based scholar Muḥammad Sībṭayn Sārsāvī (1885-1947). Sārsāvī especially would also make a fascinating object of further study. He was educated at a madrasa in Meerut and later obtained a maulvi fāżil degree from the Punjab University. He served as a teacher for Arabic at various colleges and from 1916 published the journal al-Burḥān, which remained in circulation for 35 years (ibid., 543-544). See for more information on the maulvi fāżil degree below.
destruction” (jang ō barbādı) between the Shi‘ī ‘ulamā and the modern educated strata. Not only India was held in the grips of this conflict between the two camps. It played out in similar forms in the entire Islamic world. The ‘ulamā were still caught up in the “darkness of conservatism and ignorance” (qadāmat ō jahālat ki tārīkī). Their modernist opponents, by contrast, rejected the imperial, outward supremacy of Europe but accepted her intellectual and spiritual dominance (ma‘navī istilā’i) and regarded it as their salvation (najāt). European superiority had led to dramatic changes in many countries. It had transformed existing forms of education and questioned existing ideas. Yet, in ‘Alīkhān’s view the ‘ulamā ignored these developments and perceived the educated class as the worst corruptive element of religion (sab se zā‘id fāsid ‘unṣur). This attitude had led the modern-minded to turn away from Islam altogether because they had begun to perceive Muḥammad’s message as an obstacle to progress. The only solution would be that the Shi‘ī ‘ulamā in India should, like their peers in Iran, awake and become familiar with new sciences, technologies, and ways of life. The politician Sayyid Riżā ‘Alī made a similar, if less openly hostile, point when he remembered that back in 1910 while he was attending the AISC for the first time, the question of whether

146 Mirzā ‘Ābid Husayn (ed), Rū‘idād-i ijlās-i bist ō yikum-i All India Shi‘ah Conference mun‘aqidah 27, 28, 29 December 1928 bi-maqām-i Sakhar Sindh (Lucknow: Sarfarāz Qaumi Press, 1929), 28-29. Such a divide was palpable in the Ismā‘īlī Bohra community as well. On 5 July 1947, a group of Bohra lawyers sent a letter to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, complaining about the merely strategic and self-serving support by their religious leader, known by his title as Sayyidnā Sāḥib (Our Lord; he is designated as al-dā‘ī al-muṭlaq, referring to the one who conducts the Imām’s mission) for the Muslim League. They wrote that his only intention was “to ingratiate himself in good books of [sic] all the parties so that he can come to share in political power which he can utilize in maintaining his absolute supremacy over the Bohras and keep them under his heels [sic] for ever.” This stood in contrast to their own position as the “educated young and thinking class of Bohras,” who had already supported the Muslim League “at a time when the priestly class was against [it]” (see Zawwar Husain Zaidi (ed), Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah Papers. On the Threshold of Pakistan, 1 July -25 July 1947. First Series, vol III (Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam Papers Project, National Archives of Pakistan, 1996), 109-110). For a discussion of how Iranian ‘ulamā of the time reacted to modernization initiatives by Reza Shah, see Shahrough Akhavi, Religion and politics in contemporary Iran: Clergy-state relations in the Pahlavi period (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), 32-59 and also Farhang Rajaee, Islamism and modernism: The changing discourse in Iran (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007), 52-89.
only mujtahids could become its president was hotly debated.\(^{147}\) He had always supported the notion of human equality (musāvāt bayn al-afrād) and expressed his satisfaction that this issue was now settled once and for all. The AISC members – and not the religious scholars – were striving for the betterment of the Shi‘i community so that it could play its appropriate role in India’s national life (mulki zindagi).\(^{148}\) Therefore, a reinterpretation even of taqlid was appropriate: in 1936, the head of the organizing committee proclaimed that resolutions adopted by the AISC were binding on every Shi‘i (har fard-i Shi‘ah ke liye vājib al-‘amal hōtī āhen).\(^{149}\) In light of such statements, the Punjabi scholar Ḥashmat ‘Alī had already in 1932 remarked that the relations between the ‘ulamā and the modern educated were damaged beyond repair.\(^{150}\)

The absence of leading mujtahids from the mid-1920s onwards was a problem that the AISC could not simply ignore. We have already seen this reflected in the poor attendance at the 1940s session, discussed in the beginning of this chapter. The AISC Honorary General Secretary Sayyid Kalb-i ‘Abbās (1891-1974) pointed out the dilemma that the organization faced in a speech he delivered in December 1936 in Lucknow.\(^{151}\) Sayyid Kalb-i ‘Abbās recalled how during the preparations for the previous Annual Meeting he had approached a clean shaven fellow Shi‘i, hoping to entice him to become a member in the organization. Yet, the potential recruit

\(^{147}\) See also Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 88.


\(^{151}\) Sayyid Kalb-i ‘Abbās was a lawyer from Rā‘e Bareli who was elected to the U.P. Legislative Council from 1937 to 1946. He was a member of the Central Working Committee of the AISC from 1914 until his death, and served as Honorary Secretary General of the AISC since 1935. He was also involved with the All India Shi‘a Political Conference (see Jain, Muslims in India, vol II, 84).
rebuffed him, citing the lack of ‘ulamā involvement. As long as Sayyid Naṣīr Ḥusayn did not
give him permission, the man insisted, he could not participate in the AISC. A couple of days
later, Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās came across the same individual while he was engaged in a game of
Pachisi. Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās could not refrain from asking whether the mujtahid had also
explicitly condoned such a reprehensible activity. Driving home the lesson of this anecdote, the
Honorary General Secretary implored the delegates assembled in Lucknow not to provide a
pretext to their opponents. They should make it clear that the doors of the AISC were open to
everyone and that all of its resolutions fell within the boundaries of the shariʿa. It was crucial to
once again reach out to the ‘ulamā, even if some were convinced by now that such efforts had
proven to be futile.

A more promising path than chasing after Lucknow’s mujtahids, however, seemed to be
to cultivate ties with alternative ‘ulamā who were more inclined towards the goals of the
organization and saw the pressing need for working towards the reform (iṣlāḥ) of the Shiʿī
community. Most vocal among this group was Sayyid Ibn-i Ḥasan Jārcavī (1904-1973) who
had benefited from the new educational opportunities in the Subcontinent. After receiving his
initial religious training from his father, grandfather, and Shiʿī madrasas in Lucknow, Jārcavī

152 This invocation of Sayyid Naṣīr Ḥusayn’s authority underlines Justin Jones’s finding that he was
“revered as the single most influential Indian Shi’a scholar since Dildar ʿAli and is widely referenced
in much contemporaneous literature as the chosen mujtahid of most north Indian Shi’a, and as
having a transnational network of muqallids” (see Jones, Shi’a Islam in Colonial India, 245).
153 Pachisi is a classic race game during which the players try to get their game pieces home first. Since
it its possible to knock other pieces off the game board and gambling might be involved, too, the
game “is by no means a sedate affair.” See Irving L. Finkel, “Round and Round the Houses: The
Game of Pachisi,” in Irving L. Finkel and Colin Mackenzie (ed), Asian Games: The art of contest (New
154 Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ʾa haftum-i All India Shiʿah Conference (1936), 40-41.
155 Mirzā ʿĀbid Husayn (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ʾa yikum-i All India Shiʿah Conference (1928), 30 and
Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ʾa shastum-i All India Shiʿah Conference bi-maqām-i
studied at the Oriental College in Rāmpūr and obtained a *maulvī fāżil* and *munshi fāżil* degree from the Oriental College Lahore, an MA from the Islamia College in Lahore, and in 1923 a Bachelor's degree from Aligarh.156 In the 1920s and 1930s, the young scholar's fame spread in North West India due to extensive speaking enragements in Sindh, Punjab, and Delhi. He taught from 1930-1938 at the Jamia Millia in Delhi157 and from 1938 until Partition served the Rājā of Maḥmūdābād in various functions, inter alia as tutor to his son.158 Speaking in front of the AISC delegates, Jārcavī declared it unwise to close one's eyes in the face of the religious, civilizational, and economic transformations that lay ahead for the Subcontinent.159 The Shiʿīs as a community had negligently shunned useful occupations like agriculture and trade. Instead, they had given too much weight to securing government and office jobs, thereby willingly surrendering themselves to enslavement by capitalists (*ham ne daftarōn* (sic) *ki naukārī aur sarmāyah dārān ki ghulāmī kō apnā naṣb al-ʿayn banā rakhā he*).160 In order to simultaneously

156 The *maulvī fāżil* degree denoted the highest level of Arabic studies and its examination encompassed rhetoric, literature, prosody, logic, philosophy, laws of inheritance, and composition. The *munshi fāżil* degree was its Persian equivalent with a stronger focus on literature (see Syed Sultan Mahmood Hussain, *History of University Oriental College Lahore, 1870 – 2000* (Lahore: Izharsons, 2007), 787-792). The Oriental College in Lahore had been the vision of the Hungarian-British Orientalist Wilhelm Gottlieb Leitner, who had suggested using Arabic, Sanskrit, or Persian as the basis for an education in the vernacular and in English in order to “teach English thought, English inventions, English science and art, and English civilisation.” See Jeffrey M. Diamond, “The Orientalist-Literati Relationship in the Northwest: G. W. Leitner, Muhammad Hussain Azad and the Rhetoric of Neo-Orientalism in Colonial Lahore,” *South Asia Research* 31,1 (2011): 25–43 and also Jeffrey P. Perrill, “Punjab Orientalism: The Anjuman-i-Punjab and Punjab University, 1865-1888,” PhD Thesis, University of Missouri, 1976. The Islamiya College had been founded in 1907 by the Anjuman-i Ḥimāyat-i Islām as part of its efforts to establish educational institutions in order to counter the activities of both the American Presbyterian Church and the Arya Samaj (see Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, 22).

157 This school had been founded in response to Aligarh Trustees rejecting an ultimatum for joining the noncooperation movement against the British (see Minault, *The Khilafat Movement*, 118).

158 Later he initially did not migrate to Pakistan but instead chose to stay behind in Lucknow, working there as the principal of the Shiʿa College. Due to the shifting political landscape in India he felt forced to move to Karachi in 1951 where he became the first lecturer in Shiʿī theology at Karachi University (see Sayyid Lāʾiq al-Ḥasan Rīзвī Sabzvārī Jārcavī, *Jārcavī Savānīh-i ʿAllāmah Ibn-i Ḥasan Rīзвī Sabzvārī Jārcavī* (Lahore: Lāʾiq al-Ḥasan Rīзвī Sabzvārī Jārcavī, 1981), 8-15 and Ḥusayn, *Maṭlaʿ-i anvār*, 43-46).

turn around the socio-economic fate of the Shi‘i qaum and to stem a tide of irreligiosity within it, Jārcavī challenged the ‘ulamā to support female education, to reform religious customs, and to familiarize themselves with the ‘ulūm-i jadīdah:\footnote{Reforming women ranked high on the agenda of many Muslim reformists of the time due to the perceived female influence over their children and husbands and their social relations that extended well beyond the home. See Gail Minault, Secluded Scholars: Women’s education and Muslim social reform in colonial India (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 63.}

The era of rhetorical or poetical reasoning has come to an end. Today is the time of proofs and demonstrations which are based on philosophy and logic. Therefore, I want this conference to convey to the ‘ulamā and preachers that they should reconsider their way of preaching. Along with mentioning the virtues and afflictions [of the ahl al-bayt] they should also pay attention to the reform of practices (īslāḥ-i rusūm), of morals, and of behavior.\footnote{Sayyid Mu‘jiz Ḥasan (ed), Rū’idād-i ijlās-i bist ō cahārum-i All India Shi‘ah Conference (1932), 18. For other initiatives aimed at reforming customs supported by Jārcavī, like a committee that was supposed to work towards changes within Shi‘i mourning sessions, see Sayyid Kalb-i ‘Abbās (ed), Rū’idād-i ijlās-i bist ō haftum-i All India Shi‘ah Conference (1936), 8.}

Jārcavī openly spoke out against Lucknow. In his view, merely being part of Lucknow’s leading clerical family, known as khāndān-i ijtihād (the family of ijtihād), or having spent time in Iraq was insufficient to qualify that person for the level of independent legal reasoning.\footnote{Ibn-i Hasan Jārcavī, Falsafah-i Āl-i Muḥammad (Karachi: Raḥmat Allāh Book Agency, 1999), 102. I am quoting here from the 1999 imprint of this work because is more readily available. The text is identical with that of the 1940 version, which I was able to photograph in Lahore. Compare idem, Falsafah-i Āl-i Muḥammad (Lucknow: Nizāmi Press, 1940), 96-97.}

I would argue that such provocations and accusations of backwardness could not be ignored by India’s leading Shi‘i jurists. Jārcavī presented himself as a cutting-edge ‘ālim who was familiar with continental philosophy and socialist thought.\footnote{Jārcavī, Falsafah-i Āl-i Muḥammad (1999), 5-9.} He corresponded with Gandhi, pointing out to him that the conventional portrayal of the Prophet Muḥammad as a military commander was wrong. The Prophet had never engaged in unprovoked war but had, at times, been forced to use violence in order to defend religion. Had Muḥammad lived today, he would have surely relied on the League of Nations, international courts, and peace
conferences to deal with his opponents. Likewise, ʿAlī had only taken up the sword to protect the inhabitants of his Ashram (apne āshram wālōn ki ḥifāẓat ke liye). He was a man who promoted social justice, the equality of women, and taught the same message that was today spread by Lenin, Marx, and Tolstoi. All the Shīʿī Imāms, Jārcavī continued, had followed the ideology of passive resistance, bodily labor, and hostility towards capital (ʿadam tashaddud Passive Resistence (sic) khāmūsh muqābalah, muzdūrānah zindagī aur nafrat-i sarmāyah).  

Ḥusayn’s personal example was not meant for the Shīʿīs alone but shone for the whole world. Such a reading of Shīʿī Islam puts into perspective arguments in the secondary literature about Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī’s (d. 1988) “revolutionary” and unprecedented Ḥusaynology as spelled out in his work Shahīd-i insāniyyat (The Martyr of (or for) Humanity, published in 1940), which we will encounter repeatedly throughout this dissertation. Naqvī was a member of the khāndān-i ijtihād and South Asia’s leading Shīʿī scholar in the 20th century, who had portrayed Ḥusayn as a decidedly this-worldly “embodiment of an ethical ideal common to all religions,” engaged in a struggle against injustice. Yet, it seems that many of his thoughts had already been formulated by Jārcavī and we might speculate that Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī strove with this book to regain the initiative for the mujtahids who had been challenged by this junior scholar affiliated with the AISC.

Unconventionally educated ʿulamā were not the only ones who sought to limit the clerical authority of Lucknow. Such an intention was also voiced by a group which has been barely researched at all, namely Shīʿī sajjāda nashīns, the successors of famous Şûfī saints. Tahir

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165 Ibid., 53-62.
166 Sayyid Muʿjiz Ḥasan (ed), Rāʿīdād-i ijlās-i bist ā cahārum-i All India Shiʿah Conference (1932), 18-19.
168 Ibid., 423-424.
Kamran and Amir Shahid have found that colonial gazetteers of the late 19th century noted a rise of Shi'i Islam in some districts of the Punjab, most notably Jhang. According to these reports, a primary cause for this swelling of Shi'i ranks came through the conversion of formerly Sunni Sayyid families. These dynamics, which are unfortunately beyond the scope of this dissertation, warrant much more attention, especially in the context of the question whether a significant portion of those “converts” might in fact have been secretly practicing Shi'i Islam for quite some time. Contemporaneous Shi'i publications at least make the case that British rule enabled the Shi'i population in the Punjab and elsewhere to abandon their long held practice of pious dissimulation (taqiyya) and to confess their faith openly.

Such a perspective was presented during the 1923 AISC session in Jhang by the head of the organization committee, Pir Sayyid Muhammād Ghaṣ Shāh (d. 1970). The pir was the

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170 This is not to say that we should fall into the trap of projecting backwards an exclusively conflictual conception of Sunni-Shi‘i relations or to assume that religious identification as either Sunni or Shi‘i was necessarily clear-cut. Yet, it might be equally problematic to describe Punjab’s religious landscape prior to the 19th century as “syncretist.” Farina Mir has instead suggested that there might have been several areas of converging, “shared piety” which manifested themselves inter alia through the veneration of saints (see Farina Mir, “Genre and Devotion in Punjabi Popular Narratives: Rethinking Cultural and Religious Syncretism,” in Anshu Malhotra and Farina Mir (ed), Punjab Reconsidered: History, culture, and practice (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 221-260).


sajjāda nashīn of Shāh Ismāʿīl Bukhārī (d. 1446 or 47/850), who is buried in Chiniot. In his speech, he put those Shiʿī ʿulamā who had come to Jhang on a seemingly equal footing with the saints buried in the city and its surroundings. He compared these towering figures of the past – whom he also addressed as ʿulamā – with a “torch of guidance” and a “beacon of brightness” for everyone lost in darkness. The saints had been able to draw from “God's repository of hidden realities” (mālik al-mulk ke khazānah-i ghayb se) both the “esoteric light” (nūr-i bāṭin) and the “exoteric affluence” (ṣarvat-i ẓāhirī). In the present, their sajjāda nashīns kept this mission alive, which made it possible for the delegates who had assembled in Jhang to benefit from these “holy spirits” (arvāḥ-i muqaddasah): the AISC members could address the saints with their prayers and concerns while at the same time the ʿulamā present were ready to give advice on how to cling to the straight path. With this speech, Pīr Sayyid Muḥammad Ghaus Shāh attempted to shift the Shiʿī center of the Subcontinent away from Lucknow. This city with its seminaries was nothing more than a recent upstart in comparison to the Punjab's ancient spiritual landscape.

Before we move on to the next section of this chapter, I would like to briefly return to the tabarrā agitation and discuss how the All India Shīʿa Conference struggled to defend its claimed leadership during these turbulent months. As we have seen, the senior mujtahids did not hesitate to commit themselves to this cause. A pamphlet written by the Honorary Secretary of Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī's Imamia Mission consequently credited the events with

173 On the saint, see Bilāl Zubayrī, Taghirah-i auliyāʾ-i Jhang (Lahore: Takhliq Markaz, 1968), 109-111.
174 The comment on “exoteric affluence” strikes the reader as an elegant way to justify the fused role of pīr and large wealthy landowner many sajjāda nashīns occupied (and still occupy today) in the Punjab.
175 Sayyid Maqbūl Ḥusayn (ed), Rūʿidād-i All India Shīʿah Conference bābat ijlās-i shānzahum (1923), 26-27. See for a more detailed discussion of Shiʿī Ṣūfism also chapter 3 of this dissertation.
reestablishing trust between the ʿulamā and the Shīʿī qaum because the former had proven that they were people of action, too. 177 Lucknow had regained its standing through the tabarrā agitation, it had been turned into the pole (qūṭb) around which the entire Indian Shīʿī world (hindustān kā ʿālam-i shīʿīyyat) circled. 178 The city's jails, which had been the site of intensive deliberation by the “prisoners of tabarrā” (asīr-i tabarrā), should be regarded as the real, representative All India Shīʿa Conference. Previous pan-Indian gatherings had only encompassed few people and by no means every stratum (tabaqā) was represented there. 179 Not surprisingly, the AISC did not accept this portrayal of its activities. Rather, it drew a different lesson from the intra-Muslim conflict in Lucknow. The Rājā of Maḥmūdābād's younger brother Amīr Ḥaydar Khān deplored the lack of a palpable organization or leadership during the turmoil in Lucknow. Instead, the whole affair had played out as an amalgam of particular initiatives that were all striving for their own particular goal (be rabṭ shirāzah ke ajzā sab alag alag apne judāgānah maqāsid ke liye kūshān). Yet, no movement could be successful this way, especially because the present time was the era of “organized social forces” (ijtimāʿī ṭaqātōn). The Shīʿī qaum and its existing communal organizations had no other choice but to rally behind one (collective) leader and delegate all their powers to him (apne tamām ikhtiyārāt ek qāʾid kō tafviż kar dete heṃ). This was a role that should ideally be filled by the AISC. 180

178 Naqvī, Shiʿōṉ kī tāzah zindagī, 10. The fact that the city's special character was stressed so explicitly in conjunction with the Sunni-Shīʿī trouble also calls into question the argument of Justin Jones that Lucknow during the first half of the 20th century gained the status of an almost “holy city” for South Asia's Shīʿīs (see Jones, Shiʿa Islam in Colonial India, 122).
179 Ibid., 16.
180 See Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), Rūʾidād-i ijlās-i sīyum-i All India Shiʿah Conference (1940), 18.
The freestanding religion of Shi‘ī Islam?

What deeper impact did such instances of colonial sectarianism have on the self-fashioning of India’s Shi‘ī community? Justin Jones has criticized earlier scholarship that focused primarily on the “generic” Muslim presentation of (elite) Shi‘īs, who tried to do away with all distinctively Shi‘ī markers. Instead, he has argued that Shi‘ī writers and orators in the late colonial period reframed Shi‘ism as its own freestanding, “independent religious community:”

Indeed, the whole language of ‘sect’ and ‘school’ that modern literature often applies to Shi‘ism looks somewhat misleading, in view of the demands of many Shi‘a for the full communal legitimacy and group parity that would abrogate this assumed Muslim minority status. Shi‘ism was gradually articulated as historically, legally and ritually separate from other South Asian Islamic traditions; it was distinct not on individual points of tenet, text or custom, but as an explicit religious system itself.

Undoubtedly, the notion of a total separation was voiced repeatedly in the context of the AISC when passing resolutions on the necessity of independent religious instruction for Shi‘ī students. At the same time, the Proceedings of the Conference also emphasized its commitment to render Shi‘ism into a “solid pillar” and a “strong and valued part” of the house of Islam.

These two positions are not mutually exclusive, however. I would like to argue that many Shi‘ī Indian writings from the late colonial period do not support the notion of Shi‘ī Islam

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181 Jones, Shi‘a Islam in Colonial India, 152.
182 Ibid., 141 and 226.
183 See, for example, Sayyid Mu‘jiz Hasan (ed), Rū‘idād-i ijlās-i bist ō cahārum-i All India Shi‘ah Conference (1932), 3. The AISC demanded from Lahore’s Islamia College to hire a Shi‘ī professor in order to develop a separate syllabus of religious instruction for students adhering to this faith. It was not possible for the Shi‘ī students to continue attending religious instruction that was taught from the Sunni point of view because Sunnis “were in their fundamentals of religion and religious beliefs totally different.”
184 Navāb Mīrzā Ahīsm Muḥsin ‘Alikhān, Rū‘idād-i ijlās-i bist ō sivūm-i All India Shi‘ah Conference (1931), 15.
being turned into its own, independent, and “freestanding” religion. Speaking of an “explicit religious system” strikes me as somewhat anachronistic when describing religious thought in a time period during which Shi‘ī thinkers had not yet developed their own approaches towards Islamist understandings of Islam. Instead, Shi‘ī authors strove to demonstrate that their interpretation of Islamic history and belief should be regarded as the original, unadulterated version of the faith. Consequently, they were eager to present themselves as a spiritual elite vis-à-vis the general (Sunni) Muslim public. Such a strategy comes to the fore in a tract by ʿAllāmah Hindī on the caliphate. The scholar makes the case that the Shi‘īs could only accept ḥadīth handed down through ʿAlī and his descendants. All other paths of transmission had to be regarded as expressions of an inauthentic, self made (khūd sākhtah) version of Islam.

Neither the Prophet nor the Imāms had been interested in empire (mulk dārī) and world domination (jahān bānī) but rather in the purification of the soul, the cultivation of humanity, and spiritual development. By contrast, the Companions of the Prophet and the first Caliphs (with the exception of ʿAlī) had only cared for conquest (mulk gīrī). Such mundane motivations still propelled the Sunnis of ʿAllāmah Hindī’s day. They subjected God’s religion to the shaky and whimsical consensus of the community (ijmāʿ) and thus submitted religion to the

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185 For a discussion of how Abū 'l-A‘lā Maudūdī conceived of Islam as a “well-arranged system, the basis of which had been determined as a number of firm principles,” see Hartung, A System of Life, 83-155. See also Emmanuel Sivan, Radical Islam: Medieval theology and modern politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 83-129.

186 ʿAllāmah Hindī was born into Lucknow’s famed khāndān-i ijtihād in 1878. He received his initial education at the Nāẓimiyya and was very active in tablīgh and munāẓara in northern India before studying and taking up residence in Iraq. He returned to India during WWI but set out again for Iraq after the end of the war. Over the next decades he often traveled between the Subcontinent and Iraq, where he was inter alia charged with the restructuring of the Oudh Bequest. See Ḥusayn, Maṭlaʿ-i anvār, 71-73 and also ‘Ali Fāzīlī (ed) and Sayyid Aḥmad Naqvi Lakhnāvī maʿrūf bih ʿAllāmah Hindī, Warāhat al-anbiyāʾ (Qum: Muʾassasah-i Kitābshināsī-yi Shīʿah, 2010), 19. More research on ʿAllāmah Hindī is required, especially in order to explain his support for the AISIC and AISPC at a time when all other senior ʿulamā had cut their ties with the organization. See Husayn, Khashmakash-i ḥayāt, 299 and Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), Rūʾidād-i ijlās-i bist ō haftum-i All India Shīʿah Conference (1936), 38-42.


188 Ibid., 18-19.
inadmissible workings of democracy. Ibn-i Ḥasan Jārcavī adduced similar points in his letter to Gandhi, which we have already encountered earlier. He argued that the Imāms had denied all worldly power offered to them because they held that their “kingdom is not of this world, we are rulers of spiritual matters” (hamāri salṭanat māddi dunyā ki nahiṅ ham rūḥāniyyat ke bādshāh heṅ).

Additionally, what set the Shīʿīs apart was their insistence on independent legal reasoning (ijtihād). This approach let them appear as following a truly modern version of Islam that was not bound by stale taqlīd or confined to any particular school of Islam. Such an argument is reflected inter alia in the writings of Sayyid Shafīq Ḥasan (d. 1920) and his work Aṣl al-uṣūl where he attempted to establish the polarity of tawallā and tabarrā as the heart of religion. In a thinly veiled critique of the four established Sunni schools of law, Ḥasan argued that if one encountered four people with diverging views, it was impossible to claim that these could all fall as equally valid opinions within the boundaries of the same maslak. Truth could not be plural. This perspective was at times even taken by Shīʿī authors to the point of reading the Qurʾānic verse 36:4 “on the straight path” (ʿalā sirāṭin mustaqīmin) as “ʿAlī is the

190 Jārcavī, Falsafah-i Āl-i Muḥammad, 58. It has to be noted that there exists a tension between these claims and Jārcavī’s emphasis on social justice. For similar points about the spiritual kingdom of the Imāms, see also Sayyid Zafar Ḥasan, Shiʿīn kī be naẓīr qurbāniyān al-maʿrūf bih sarfurūshān-i millat (Murādābād: Shamīm Book Depot, 1939 or 1940), 15. Sayyid Zafar Ḥasan was born in 1890 in Amroha where he received his basic religious education. He continued his more advanced studies at the Nāẓimiyya in Lucknow before returning home to teach Arabic and Persian in local high schools. In 1950, he migrated to Pakistan where he founded the Jāmiʿah-i Imāmiyyah (also known as Madrasat al-Wāʿīzin) in Karachi. He was a very prolific author and sought after speaker and also ran his own publishing house (Naqvī, Taḏkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i imāmiyyah, 147-148).
straight path” (ʿAlī širāṭun mustaqīmun). We can perhaps speculate that Shiʿīs in India never took the self-conception as an independent religion that far because they were not recognized by the British as an independent madhhab – in contrast to what happened, for example, under the auspices of the French mandate in Lebanon.

Whatever might have been the precise cause, such an attitude of superiority made it very difficult for the Shiʿīs to embrace Sunnī initiatives of reconciliation and rapprochement which aimed at leveling the Islamic playing field. Efforts in this regard had been undertaken, for example, by the Ahl-i Ḥadiṣ scholar Ṣanāʾullāh Amritsārī (d. 1948) who had tried to ease Sunni-Shiʿī tensions in Lahore after the Shiʿī profession of faith had supposedly appeared there inscribed in the bark of a tree. The crude Arabic signs visible on the stem comprised the

193 Murtaẓā Ḥusayn, 
Mauʿiẓat-i sajjādiyya maʾrūf bih širāṭ-i mustaqīm (Jaunpūr: Aṣghar Ḥusayn Khān Minjur, 1918), 6. The author makes the case that his reading is backed up by al-Thaʿlabī’s (d. 427/1035) tafsīr, which supposedly was a “respected commentary among the Sunnis.” Both statements are problematic. For one, al-Thaʿlabī has met with a lot of skepticism from the Sunnī side, especially for including Shiʿī and mystical material, which rendered him “too costly a burden on the Sunni camp. Ibn Taymiyah would see to it that the situation was corrected” (Walid A. Saleh, 
The formation of the classical tafsīr tradition: The Qurʾān commentary of al-Thaʿlabī (d. 4271035) (Boston: Brill, 2004), 219). This was surely unfair treatment since al-Thaʿlabī’s goal in incorporating Shiʿī material had been nothing more than “robbing it of any Shiʿī significance and making it part of the Sunni worldview” (ibid., 186). Yet, it was an attitude that stuck. The first edition of al-Thaʿlabī’s commentary was published in 2002 by a Shiʿī scholar in Beirut (ibid., 229). Additionally, Murtaẓā Ḥusayn’s claim seems to originate from a misreading of the Arabic in al-Thaʿlabī’s tafsīr. Instead of mentioning the supposed alternative reading, al-Thaʿlabī only provides a variant of the vocalization for the word tanzīl (sending down, revelation). The version tanzilan (in lieu of tanzila) could, according to al-Thaʿlabī, be traced back to Imām ʿAlī (see Ahmad b. Muḥammad al-Thaʿlabī, al-Kashf wa-l-bayān: al-maʾrūf Tafsīr al-Thaʿlabī. Edited by Abū Muḥammad ibn ʿĀshūr and Nazīr al-Sāʿīdī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2002), vol 8, 121). Other Shiʿī publications also do not mention the possibility of ʿAlī širāṭun mustaqīmun. Compare, for example, Ahmad b. Muḥammad al-Thaʿlabī, Ahl al-Bayt ft tafsīr al-Thaʿlabī: Mā rawiya ʿanhum wa-mā rawiya fihim. Edited by ʿĀdil Kaʿbī (Qum: Dalīl-i Mā, 1423 [2002 or 2003]), 165.

194 Max Weiss regards this recognition and the establishment of a separate Shiʿī Jaʿfārī court as crucial: “As a state creation with no substantial historical precedent in Lebanon or anywhere else, the Jaʿfārī court represented an important innovation in the modern Shiʿī historical experience, marking a turning point in the trajectory of the Lebanese Shiʿa towards sectarian modernity, in which newly bureaucratized and standardized norms of legal procedure institutionally bound the Shiʿa to the state” (see Max Weiss, 
In the Shadow of Sectarianism, 26).

195 See chapter 5 for more information on Amritsārī.
universal Muslim profession that there is no god but God and that Muḥammad was his messenger. Crucially, however, the particularly Shi‘i statement that ʿAlī was God's appointee (waṣī) and friend/viceregent (wali) could reportedly be seen as well.196 Sanā‘ullāh Amritsarī picked up on the events of Lahore in sermons and in his own journal, claiming that both Sunnis and Shi‘is would accept ʿAlī as the waṣī. While for the latter he was the “appointee in the caliphate” (waṣī bi-khilāfa), the former regarded him as “appointee in love” (waṣī bi-muḥabba). According to Amritsarī, in doing this miracle, God had avoided taking sides and declaring openly which view he prioritized in order to unite Sunnis and Shi‘is in their fight against the unbelievers (kuffār).197 Similarly, the high-ranking Congress politician Abul Kalam Azad tried to minimize Sunni-Shi‘i animosity by emphasizing that both groups agreed on the need to obey the Imām. They differed only on the method of choosing him.198

The Shi‘is did not catch on to such harmonizing strategies that aimed at papering over the profound differences of opinion between the two sects. Sayyid Ẓafar Ḥasan (d. 1989) detailed in a book written in either 1939 or 1940 the qualitative difference that existed between the Shi‘is and the “common Muslims” (ʿāmm musalmān). Due to the constant persecution and mistreatment by the Sunni majority the Shi‘is had been refined in the same way as the pressure of a mountain range generated brilliant diamonds.199 The Shi‘is had more love for each other and for the ahl al-bayt than the ordinary adherents of Islam. They freely

196 See the following chapter for internal Shi‘i debates over the implications of this statement.
197 See Sayyid ʿAlī Ḥaydar, “Lāhōr meṅ haqīqat-i mazhab-i shī‘ah kā zabardast mu‘jizah,” Islāḥ 9,32 (December 1932): 2-6. Amritsarī’s view was rejected outright by the Shi‘i journal, which held that the miracle clearly favored ʿAlī since no one else of the first four Caliphs was mentioned on the tree by name.
198 Gail Minault, The Khilafat Movement, 94.
199 Ḥasan, Shi‘ōn ki be naẓir qurbāniyān, 9-10.
disposed of their wealth for the cause of religion. Their understanding of the truths of Qurʾān and ḥadīth outstripped by far the capabilities of the Sunnis.200

The special traits of the Shiʿi qaum were underlined by other arguments as well that extended from their above average levels of literacy to the education and intelligence of their women.201 A fascinating example for such constructions of superiority is the fictional work Jauhar-i Qurʾān in which a literate Shiʿi wife debates and defeats her well-trained Deobandī husband.202 Hidāyat Khātūn (literally: Lady Guidance), the main character of the book, grew up in a mixed Sunnī-Shiʿī family in Hyderabad (Deccan). Her grandfather on her Sunnī mother’s side feared that she might tilt towards the religion of her Shiʿī father who had come to the Deccan from Lucknow. In order to forestall this possibility, Hidāyat’s grandfather hired an anti-Shiʿī munāẓir to oversee the young girl’s education and to teach her the Qurʾān, Arabic, and polemical literature. The maulvī suggested naming the girl Lady Guidance as she might even be

200 Ibid., 17.
201 See Hooseinbhoy Abdoolabhoy Lalljee, Shia Muslims’ Case (Bombay: Jawahir P. Press, 1946), 17. Lalljee, a politician affiliated with the AISC, underlined that in India literacy was significantly less common than in Europe and that Muslims in general underperformed in this regard. Among the Shiʿis, however, “there are more than seventy-five per cent literates which is a percentage as great as to be found anywhere in the world and while the Shia community has produced and has also at present some of the greatest leaders in politics professions [sic], commerce and industry as well as in Zamindari and other walks of life that they should remain suppressed is not only not in the interest of India but is also a sacrifice of the cause of humanity and no such example can be found in any part of the world.”
202 The work was written by Sayyid ʿAli Haydar (1885-1961), who was born into a family of scholars in Khajvā, located in the Saran district of Bihar. He was originally set on an engineering path but physical weakness put an end to his further college career. Instead, he helped his father with his publishing activities. In 1907, his uncle, who served as editor of the Shiʿī journal al-Shams, presented the youth to Lucknow’s leading ʿulamā who developed an instant liking for him, because he “knew modern sciences, was skilled with the pen, and intelligent.” In 1910, Sayyid ʿAli Ḥaydar moved to Lahore and obtained a maulvī fāżil degree in 1912. He continued his education atLucknow, passing the sadr al-afāżīl degree in 1336 (1917 or 1918) and then returned to Khajvā to assist his father with editorial work for the newspaper Iṣlāḥ. After a short stint in Patna he moved in 1921 back to the Sultan al-Madāris school on the invitation of Bāqir al-ʿUlūm. Ḥaydar stayed in Lucknow until 1928 before taking over all responsibilities for Iṣlāḥ (see Ḥusayn, Maṭlaʿ-i anvār, 354-356).
able to direct her father towards the “religion of truth” (mażhab-i ḥaqq). Yet, this elaborate plan came to naught. Hidāyat was eager to learn but increasingly became interested in Shiʿī Islam. The last hope was her husband Rukn al-Dīn who had studied at Deoband and Rāmpūr. Hidāyat’s grandfather had full confidence in his abilities and he saw no reason to be worried: “How difficult can it be after all to turn a woman into a Sunnī?” When husband and wife started debating taqiyya, the role of the ahl al-bayt, the integrity of the Qurʾān, or the physicality of God, it quickly became clear that Hidāyat would be a tough interlocutor. She was entirely at home in the Sunnī scholarly tradition, quick to advance rational arguments, and could deftly navigate the couple’s book shelves to underline her arguments with specific quotations. Finally, Rukn al-Dīn invited 300 educated Sunnis and explained to them how his wife had invalidated all his arguments. He publicly declared his conversion to Shiʿī Islam, which caused widespread consternation since neither members of the Arya Samaj nor Christian missionaries had been able to overcome this talented ʿālim in the past.

Conceptualizing Pakistan

According to most of the secondary literature, however, manifestations of intense Shiʿī-Sunnī rivalry as spelled out in a work like Jauhar-i Qurʾān were nothing more than a tempest in a teapot. Once the Muslims of India had set their sights on the creation of Pakistan, differences took a back seat to the extent that “both Shias and Sunnis buried their hatchets, hitched their fortunes to the Muslim League bandwagon and undertook their long trek towards the promised

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204 Ibid., 18.
205 See, for example, ibid., 20, 36-38, and 74-75.
206 Ibid., 500-501.
'dar al-Islam' (land of Islam).”207 Such a view ties in with the consensus that the Muslim League took a decidedly non-sectarian stance.208 League members like the Bengali surgeon and politician Sir Ḥasan Suhravardi (1884-1946) predicted the demise of all such tensions in the future because this “unfortunate schism is now dying out.” He expressed his satisfaction that “these small differences have with the expansion of liberal education disappeared in Islamic countries and are fast disappearing in India.”209 Scholars also emphasize the prominent role played by Shi‘īs like Jinnah himself.210 Other influential Shi‘īs in the Muslim League were the Rājā of Maḥmūdābād, who acted as treasurer of the League and headed the All India Muslim Students Federation, the Shi‘ī lawyer Isma‘īl Ibrāhīm Cundrīgār (1897-1960), who became head of the Bombay Provincial Muslim League in 1937 and served as Pakistan’s prime minister for two months in 1957, or the Bengali business magnate Mīrzā Abū ‘l-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī (1902-1975).211 Iṣfahānī, for example, expressed the Muslim League line that the “salvation of the Muslim nation in this vast-subcontinent of India lies in its unity.” If divided, “the Muslims will be crushed and the Shias, who constitute a very small minority among them, will suffer

208 See, as a recent example, M. Rafique Afzal, A history of the All-India Muslim League, 1906-1947 (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 442.
211 See Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 39 and for the biographies of Cundrīgar and Iṣfahānī, ibid., 360. A critical biography of the Rājā of Maḥmūdābād is a major desideratum in the modern history of South Asia. Existing publications unfortunately read merely as hagiographies that are focused on the unmatchable personality of Amir Ahmad Khān who is even compared with Jesus in the context of Jinnah’s dependence on him: “And the response from the Raja Saheb belonged to the class of: ‘Ask and it shall be given, Knock and it shall be opened and seek and ye shall find’” (see Syed Ishtiaq Husain, The Life and the Times of Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad (Karachi: Mehboob Academy, 1990), xx).
greatly.” In his view, most of his coreligionists had come around to accepting the Muslim League as the only representative organization, which was “the reason why the majority of the Shias and the most prominent of their leaders are active Muslim Leaguers.” Muhammad Ali Jinnah publicly expressed his disapproval of the AISC and its political arm. In a letter to Sayyid ʿAlī Ẓahīr on 31 August 1944, Jinnah was of the opinion that Shiʿīs who organized outside the Muslim League umbrella were “under some sort of misapprehension.” His party stood for “justice and fair play” and there was “no need for the Shias to think that they will not be justly treated by the All India Muslim League.”

Faisal Devji has recently challenged this dominant portrayal of Sunnī-Shīʿī dynamics during the last years of the still unified Subcontinent, arguing that we should pay attention to how even within the Muslim League Shiʿī leaders strove to draw attention to Shiʿī concerns in the face of Sunnī dominance:

And in this sense the minority protection sought by the League's Shia leaders had to do with their fear of a Sunni majority as much as a Hindu one, something that has been neglected in a historiography marked both by the Muslim League's “ecumenism” in conceiving of a unified Muslim community, and, to be charitable about it, the inadvertent sectarianism of ignoring its internal difficulties in the name of this unity.


214 Devji, Muslim Zion, 66.
Such problematic trends in the historiography even manifest themselves in a recent book that is entirely geared towards providing the reader with the full breadth of pre-Partition Muslim debates about Pakistan. Venkat Dhulipala in his important contribution deems it sufficient to devote merely 12 pages out of 530 to Shiʿī reactions to this envisioned homeland.\footnote{Venkat Dhulipala, \textit{Creating a New Medina: State power, Islam and the quest for Pakistan in late colonial India} (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 206-217 and 445-446.} Moreover, his discussion focuses almost exclusively on the Rājā of Maḥmūdābād even though Dhulipala criticizes existing scholarship precisely for a too narrow focus on Jinnah and the Muslim League elite while neglecting other voices such as the ūlamā.\footnote{Ibid., 11.} Dhulipala comes to the conclusion that after some initial hesitation there was notable “enthusiasm” among the Shiʿīs for the idea of Pakistan, starting in 1945:

\begin{quote}
A new feature of Moharram alams and tazias that year was the prominence of the Pakistan map in front of every group of processions and the mounting of ML flags on elephants. The usual Moharram slogan \textit{Ya Ali} was replaced by the ML war cry ‘\textit{le ke rahenge Pakistan}’.\footnote{Ibid., 445.}
\end{quote}

This account of a smooth Shiʿī acceptance of the concept of Pakistan is unconvincing in light of documented instances of anti-Shiʿī rhetoric and behavior by crucial supporters of the Muslim League. At the forefront were ūlamā affiliated with the Jamʿiyyat al-ʿUlamāʾ-ī Islām (JUI) which had been founded as a breakaway faction of the organization Jamʿiyyat al-ʿUlamāʾ-i Hind (JUH) and countered the latter’s critique of Pakistan. These scholars attacked the concept of “united nationalism” and justified devout Muslims throwing in their lot with the non-practising, grave sinners (fāsiq) of the Muslim League.\footnote{Ibid., 353-357.}

A case in point for my argument is Shabbīr Aḥmad ʿUṣmānī (1885-1949), who “provided the JUI with its ideological moorings,” “campaigned vigorously for the ML through

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\begin{itemize}
\item 216 Ibid., 11.
\item 217 Ibid., 445.
\item 218 Ibid., 353-357.
\end{itemize}
the length and breadth of India,” and later took a crucial role in shaping Pakistan’s Islamic identity. A fellow scholar from Amritsar had asked in November 1945 during the run up to the December general Indian elections how it was possible to support the ML and even term the party “a ship of salvation for the Muslims” as Urdu newspapers had quoted ʿUsmānī as having done. In his reply, ʿUsmānī relied on the reasoning of the early Ḥanafī authority Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 187/803 or 189/805). Al-Shaybānī had allowed Muslims to cooperate with the khawārij if their common fight was against the polytheists (mushrikūn) and for the sake of “manifesting Islam” (iẓhār-i Islām). According to ʿUsmānī, al-Shaybānī had arrived at this reasoning despite the fact that there was no other sect about which so many “unequivocal texts” (nuṣūṣ-i ṣarīha) existed which condemned them and predicted divine punishment similar to that which overtook the pre-Islamic peoples of ʿĀd and

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219 For his biography and an analysis of how he aimed to refute the theory of united nationalism and conceptualized Pakistan as the fountainhead for a return of Islam, see ibid., 357-376. ʿUsmānī was the “most highly placed ʿalim in the ruling hierarchy” and had “direct access to the Prime Minister” of the new country. He played a crucial role in the adoption of the Objectives Resolution and also convened a World Muslim Conference before his death in 1949 (see Leonard Binder, Religion and Politics in Pakistan (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1963), 29-30 and 137-154).

220 Even though ʿUsmānī’s correspondent did not raise the Shīʿī connotations of the term, safīnah-i najāt is a curious choice since it is used by Shiʿis as an appellation for the Imāms who are thus compared in their function to Noah’s Ark. See Raya Y. Shani, “Noah’s Ark and the Ship of Faith in Persian Painting: From the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century,” Jerusalem Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies 27 (2002): 127–203 and also Khalid Sindawi, “Noah and Noah’s Ark as the Primordial Model of Shiʿism in Shiʿite Literature,” Quaderni di Studi Arabi, Nuova Serie, 1 (2006): 29–48. ʿUsmānī only qualified his usage of the term insofar as he had meant to convey that at present the Muslim League was “the boat of salvation for the communal and political independence of the Muslims” (musalmānōṉ ke qaumī ō siyāsī istiqālāl ke liye safīnah-i najāt). See Shabbir Aḥmad ʿUsmānī, Khuṭbāt-i ʿUsmānī. Shaykh al-Islām ʿAllāmah Shabbir Aḥmad ʿUsmānī ke millī, siyāsī aur naẓariyyah-i Pākistān se mutaʿallīq ālmānāh khuṭbāt, maktūbāt aur mukāmalāt kā mukammal majmūʿah. Edited by Muhammad Anvār al-Ḥasan Shirkoti (Lahore: Nazr Sanz, 1972), 134 and 142.


Thamūd. Consequently, for the time being the Shi‘īs as a “false sect” (firqa-i bāṭila) could be relied on.\(^{223}\)

Another founding member of the JUI and Muslim League supporter, Maulānā Ŗafar Aḥmad Ūsmānī (d. 1974), published a similar fatwā a couple of weeks later in the League daily al-Manshūr.\(^{224}\) Both Ūsmānis thus adopted a much more decidedly anti-Shi‘ī stance than their mentor Ashraf ʿAlī Thānavī (d. 1943), who in 1939 had used the same analogical reasoning to justify the cooperation of the ‘ulamā with the (non-observant) ML leaders. Not only had Thānavī hastened to add that the ML leaders “were certainly not as debased as the Khawarij,” he also had nowhere singled out Jinnah as a Shi‘ī.\(^{225}\) The openly anti-Shi‘ī stance of these scholars also implied that the JUI was not even considering including Shi‘ī ‘ulamā in their ranks.\(^{226}\)

It is probably also not too far off to interpret statements that Shabbīr Aḥmad Ūsmānī made in January 1946 in front of members of the Punjab chapter of the JUI in this way, too. The ‘ālim cautioned that Pakistan was not simply welcoming all sorts of Muslims. Rather, it was necessary that the new homeland’s inhabitants worked towards cleansing their “morals, deeds,

\(^{223}\) Ūsmānī, Khuṭbāt-i Ūsmānī, 143-144. For a recent discussion of the punishment of the Thamūd, see Nicolai Sinai, “Religious poetry from the Quranic milieu: Umayya b. Abī l-Salt on the fate of the Thamūd,” Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 74,3 (2011): 397–416. Dhulipala has taken the khawārij analogy to mean the westernized ML leadership without exploring in more detail its specific anti-Shi‘ī thrust and, surely even more pronounced, similar anti-Āhmādī reasoning by the JUI. See Dhulipala, Creating a New Medina, 367-368. For Ūsmānī, the Āhmāδīs were clearly apostates (murtadd, mulḥid). See, for example, Ūsmānī, Khuṭbāt-i Ūsmānī, 144. See also Ali Usman Qasmi, The Ahmadis and the politics of religious exclusion in Pakistan (London: Anthem Press, 2014), 41-49.

\(^{224}\) See Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 56. On Ŗafar Aḥmad Ūsmānī’s biography and opposition to united nationalism, see Zaman, The Ulama in Contemporary Islam, 41-49.

\(^{225}\) Dhulipala, Creating a New Medina, 104.

\(^{226}\) Ibid., 446.
thoughts, and emotions” (akhlāq, aʿmāl, khayālāt aur jażbāt). This task of living up to the challenge of inhabiting the “land of the pure” would of course continue even after the establishment of Pakistan because building a truly Islamic society was an arduous, gradual process. Additionally, ʿUṣmānī relied in an election flyer on the Qurʾānic version of the Golden Calf story in order to buttress the urgent need for intra-Muslim unity. In ʿUṣmānī’s retelling, Aaron justified his lack of action to stop idolatry with the argument that he had feared a splintering of the qaum to an even greater extent. A Shīʿī reader of this Muslim League pamphlet might have wondered what such a reasoning would imply once the pressing need for closing ranks had worn off and Pakistan had been achieved.

This ties in with another major concern for the Shīʿīs, namely statements about the future design of the Muslim homeland and, most importantly, on what sources of fiqh it should draw. The Muslim League-affiliated Deobandī scholar Maulānā Sayyid Naẕīr al-Ḥaqq was quoted in the press on 3 November 1945 with the ruling that according to the Prophet “only those who followed the path of the khulafāʾ-i rāshidūn were on the right path, whereas all other groups, parties or sects would be a work of Satan.” Local Muslim League leaders were busy calling for Pakistan's constitution to be based not only on the Qurʾān but to be a true reflection of the ḥukūmat-i ilāhiyya, the government of the first four Caliphs. Especially in the 1945-1946 elections, the League decided to rely on many pirs and local Sunnī scholars who

227 ʿUṣmānī, Khuṭbāt-i ʿUṣmānī, 212.
229 See Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 51.
formulated their own messages by “fanning communal passions at the base.” Shabbir Aḥmad ‘Uṣmānī tried to dampen enthusiasm by pointing out that initially the expectations could not be more than having a “just government” (ḥukūmat-i ʿādilah) in place. He did not deny, however, that a “rightly guided caliphate” (khilāfat-i rāshidah) and a “purely Qurʾānic and Islamic government” (khāliṣ qurʾānī aur Islāmī ḥukūmat) was Pakistan’s ultimate goal.

In the shadow of these Sunnī claims, Fāżil Mūraj, a Bombay-based Shī‘ī member of the ML, reported to Jinnah on 19 September 1945 that his attempts at building support among the Shī‘īs in the city had been made extremely difficult by certain “influential Muslim League personalities.” At their behest

in the Municipal Urdu schools in Bombay a new Kalima introducing the names of the four Caliphs was made compulsory for the children of all the sections of Islam. It was at the representation made by a deputation of the Shias that the then Mayor, Mr. Nagindas Master, had it discontinued.

All of this did not necessarily mean that India’s Shī‘īs did not have grievances regarding the Congress, too. As we have seen above, the tabarrā agitation loomed large for the Shī‘īs. They blamed the Congress for both encouraging the Aḥrār to become fully involved in the dispute and also for giving free reign to Deobandi scholars affiliated with it. Drawing for his reasoning on Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624), Sayyid Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madani had

231 Ibid., 172.
232 ʿUṣmānī, Khutbāt-i ʿUṣmānī, 86. These comments were published in the newspaper al-Manshūr on 16 November 1945. ʿUṣmānī elsewhere remarked that the “ahl-i ḥall ʿaqd” (the people of loosing and binding) will determine the constitutional and institutional nature of Pakistan at the appropriate time. For him, the ahl al-ḥall wa-lʿaqd were most likely the ʿulamā. For the broader history of the term, see Patricia Crone, God’s rule: Government and Islam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 223-233.
233 “Fazil Mooraj to M. A. Jinnah, SHC (606),” in Zawwar H. Zaidi (ed), The Verdict for Pakistan, 138-139.
234 See, for example, the pamphlet “Who is responsible for the Shia-Sunni dispute?” by Sayyid Akbar ʿAli, a member of the Central Standing Committee of the All India Shi‘a Political Conference, in the file 1958; The Sunni-Shia controversy in Lucknow, 25 Mar 1939-2 Apr 1942, IOR/L/PJ/7/2587, India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library.
proclaimed that the public praise of the ṣaḥāba should be seen as a “distinct mark of the Sunnis” (shiʿār-i ahl-i sunnat). Especially its public character had the advantage of revealing whether someone held wrong beliefs and whether “his heart was sick and his inner life despicable” (dilash marīž va bāṭinash khabiš). Muslims were obliged to openly confess what distinguished them from the kuffār. Praising the Companions of the Prophet became particularly mandatory if such wrong ideas like ʿAlī’s supposed status as the Prophet’s rightful successor were advocated in Imāmbāṛās and mosques. Attributing wrong, baseless, and contemptible events (ghalaṭ aur chūṭe ihānat āmīz vāqiʿāt) to the ṣaḥāba, who were a source of guidance to humanity as a whole, might lead ordinary Sunnis astray.

Yet, quickly and especially after the Muslim League passed its Lahore Resolution on 23 March 1940, Pakistan became the more pressing issue. Doubts about the future state even affected the surroundings of the Rājā of Maḥmūdābād, one of the main Shiʿī backers of the Muslim League and the Pakistan movement. In March 1940, his younger brother Amīr Ḥaydar Khān wrote to Jinnah, requesting safeguards for the Shiʿīs in terms of their representation in elected bodies. He also asked for guarantees that freedom of beliefs and customs would be protected in Pakistan and that Shiʿīs would be exempted from potential future laws that were built on Ḥanafī interpretations of fiqh. If these concerns were adequately addressed, the Shiʿīs

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236 Madani, Maktūbāt-i Shaykh al-Islām, vol III, 172-174. Barbara Metcalf has pointed out that several decades earlier in the context of the Non-Cooperation Movement Madani had urged Sunnis to abstain from confrontations with the Shiʿīs in order to forge a joint front against the colonial government. “His intervention in Lucknow thus seemed a reversal of his earlier role” (see Metcalf, Husain Ahmad Madani, 122-123).
“could whole-heartedly support the struggle for Pakistan.” Jinnah in his reply, which was only made public in 1946, criticized Amir Ḥaydar Khān for “still working in the direction which is not likely to benefit the Shias.” In his view, “the one thing alone that matters is that we are all Mussalmans.” Jinnah did not offer any safeguards but once again underlined the importance of “fair play” and “justice” for the Shiʿīs. He expressed his openness, however, to Shīʿī control of Shiʿī auqāf and tried to alleviate Amir Ḥaydar Khān’s fears of Sunnī domination by stating that if a law was passed according to Ḥanafī fiqh, “the special principles of Shia Shariat must also be taken into consideration.”

The All India Shiʿa Conference embarked on a more public path in voicing its reservations regarding Pakistan. Its journal Sarfarāz referred to speeches by the Muslim League member and president of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation Bashīr Aḥmad (1893-1971). Aḥmad had stated repeatedly that Pakistan was about spreading a version of Islam that was based on the Qurʾān and the example of both the Prophet and the sahāba. The editorial

238 Andreas Rieck mentions that Jinnah’s statements concerning auqāf and fiqh “have been quoted again and again by Shia organisations and journals in Pakistan during five decades to argue for their cause” (see Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 42-43).
239 See “Musalmān-i Hind ki qaumī taʿmīr kā suʿāl,” Sarfarāz 18,260 (5 December 1942): 2. Bashīr Aḥmad had made these remarks in speeches to the All India Muslims Students Association and in the context of the annual meeting of the Anjuman-i Himāyat-i Islām in Lahore. According to Afzal, the “All-India Muslim League and the provincial Muslim Leagues had no direct control on the All-India Muslim Students Federation or provincial Muslim Students Federations but the League leaders on Jinnah’s direction used to advise and guide the All-India Muslim Students Federation and its branches, where needed. Some leaders enrolled themselves as associate members and were formally elected presidents.” See Afzal, A History of the All-India Muslim League, 328-329. Bashīr Aḥmad belonged to this group. After his education in Lahore and Oxford he was called to the bar and also taught as a professor of history at Lahore’s Islamia College. He was a member of the council of the Anjuman-i Himāyat-i Islām and involved with various other associations, served as president of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation in 1941-1942, was a member of the Muslim League’s Executive Committee from 1942 to 1947, and acted as secretary for the Reception Committee of the AIML session in Lahore 1940 (see “Who’s Who Section,” in S. M. Jamil (ed), The Muslim Year Book of India and Who’s Who, with complete information on Pakistan 1948-49 (Bombay: The Bombay Newspaper
explained its goal of drawing attention to such examples in order to open the eyes of India's Shīʿīs:

If our life will be limited to protest and sacrifice (iḥtijāj aur qurbānī), what sort of need do we have for Pakistan? A united Hindustan is way better for us, because the Hindus do not mind if we proclaim that ʿAlī was the immediate successor of the Prophet (khilāfa bi-lā faṣl) or engage in mourning rites.

The journal urged its readers not to accept the argument that Bashīr Aḥmad had only expressed his personal opinion. Pakistan too had originated as the idea of an individual. Yet, the conception of a political system based on the ṣaḥāba will most likely spread like a forest fire (jangal ki āg ki ṭaraḥ ʿāmm hō jāye). Its pull will become unstoppable. Sarfarāz contended that originally it had supported the ML when Jinnah had taken over as its leader and put the organization on “progressive tracks” (taraqqī pasandānah rāstōn par). It still deemed the League necessary to stave off Hindu extremism (taʿaṣṣub). Yet, as far as Pakistan was concerned, they could only lend support to the scheme if it was intended to clearly protect freedom of religion and culture (maẕhab ō tamaddun kī āzādī) as well as the Shiʿīs’ political rights. There was no military dictator in the vein of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk or Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran on the horizon who would solve the problem by imposing on the Sunnīs “free thinking” and acceptance of the Shiʿīs (jō apnī faujī tāqat se kām le kar un kō āzād khayāl aur ravādārī par majbūr kār de). Without such coercion, sectarianism would be openly on display. An example of this issue was a book published by a Sunnī barrister in Lahore who used inappropriate (nāzībā) language about ʿAlī. Sarfarāz accused the Sunnī press in the Punjab of not rallying against this work because it was written by a nominal (nām nihād) Sunnī Muslim. If this is the case

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already now, the paper’s editor asked, how will it be in a future Pakistan? “Won't there be a system of government and society which is exclusively built on the Sunnī point of view?”

Such reasoning is also reflected in speeches made during the All Parties Shi’a Conference, an initiative spearheaded by the All India Shi’a Political Party. It attracted around 800 delegates, among them many representatives of Shi‘ī anjumans, and convened in October 1945 in Lucknow and in December in Poona.242 Sayyid Akhtar Husayn Shā‘iq, the Joint Secretary of the Punjab Shi’a Political Conference, flatly denied any rosy picture of Shi‘ī-Sunnī unity in the Punjab. Such an impression had been given by the prominent Shi‘ī ML member Rājā Ghaţanfar ‘Ali Khān (1895-1963), who had described sectarian relations in the province as “excellent.”243

Let the Shia Muslim Leaguers in the Punjab say that there was no Shia-Sunni conflict in that province! They are great men, they move in high and influential circles and as such they might have been receiving such information. But those who represent the middle and lower classes can well realise the opposite. It is a fact that the Sunni majority in the Muslim League is out to crush the Shias completely in our province. We are no doubt tolerant but there is a limit for everything.244

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243 See Rieck, The Shiias of Pakistan, 50. Ghaţanfar ‘Ali Khān had been a member of the AIML since 1927. He served in several functions within the party, was from 1933 to 1937 a member of the Council of State, from 1937 to 1945 a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, and one of the five Muslim League members in the Interim Government of India (as Minister of Health) (see Muslims in India, vol I, 172-173). In the early 1930s, he had also served as president of the AISPP sessions 1931 in Montgomery and 1932 in Lucknow (see A. M. Zaidi (ed), Evolution of Muslim Political Thought in India: Volume Four. The Communal Award (New Delhi: S. Chand, 1978), 538-539 and 580-582).
The Bombay businessman and president of the All Parties Shi'a Conference Hooseinbhoy Lalljee (1886-1971) put it in even starker terms. In a meeting with the British Parliamentary Delegation that toured India in January and February 1946, he described the League as “fascist body” and accused it of employing methods similar to Hitler's Germany. The AIML aimed to “crush all opposition and capture power to establish the government of a Sunni Junta, by a Sunni Junta and for a Sunni Junta,” inter alia by exclusively enforcing Ḥanafī law. Lucknow's Tanẓim al-Muʾminīn echoed this view to the Delegation members. It claimed that “the Shias fear that with the establishment of Pakistan, the Sunni majority will get ample opportunity to persecute the Shia minority in every possible way as had been their tradition for the last 1300 years.”

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245 For his former affiliation with the Muslim League and his role in municipal politics in Bombay, see Muslims in India, vol II, 29. In 1946, Lalljee contested in the elections against Jinnah and, according to two authors, only lost because “a shrewd Jinnah pulled a trump card out of his sleeve. Just a couple of days before the polling Syedna Mulla Tahir Saifuddin, the spiritual head of the Bohra community, issued a fatwa (religious edict) to vote and support Jinnah. It was a great setback to the hopes of Lalji. Jinnah emerged triumphant” (see Nadeem Hasnain and Sheikh A. Husain, Shias and Shia Islam in India (Delhi: Harnam, 1988), 162-163). Why a Bohra fatwā allegedly should have been the decisive factor for Jinnah's success requires further investigation, however. For the political maneuvering in Bombay ahead of the elections, see also Husayn, Kashmakash-i hayāt, 324-328.

246 See Hooseinbhoy A. Lalljee, Shia Muslims’ Case (Bombay: Jawahir P. Press, 1946), 29 and also “Preliminary Statement RE: Shia Muslims Position, by Mr. Hosseinbhoy A. Lalljee, given to the British Parliamentary Delegation at New Delhi,” in Coll 117/E7, India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library. Andreas Rieck has argued “that Congress tried to play the ‘Shia card’ again” by supposedly arranging for Lalljee to express his views before the Cabinet Mission (see Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 52). Yet, he seems to conflate with this evaluation the Parliamentary Delegation and the Cabinet Mission. The first was meant to “convey the general desire of the British people to see India speedily attaining her rightful position as an independent partner state in the Commonwealth” (see H. V. Hodson, The great divide: Britain-India-Pakistan with an epilogue written in 1985 which sums up the events since partition (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1985), 130). The second was announced by the British Government on 19 February 1946 with much clearer goals: a team of three Cabinet Ministers was supposed “to seek an agreement with the leaders of Indian opinion on the principles and procedures to be followed on the constitutional issue.” The stated goal was that “Indians themselves would frame their constitutional future” (ibid., 133-160). While Lalljee met with the Parliamentary Delegation, he only sent two telegrams to the Cabinet Mission (see Lalljee, Shia Muslims’ Case, 67-68 and 71-72).

247 “Statement regarding the Shia Muslim position in India, made by the Anjuman Tanzimul Mominin to Parliamentary Delegation in Lucknow, February 1, 1946,” in Coll 117/E7, India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library.
The Shiʿī lawyer, journalist, and AISPC activist Jaʿfar Ḥusayn on 25 October 1945 used a private letter to Fāżil Mūraj, the Shiʿī Muslim Leaguer in Bombay, to convey a “frank expression” of his views to him:248

I am a Shia first and a Muslim afterwards. I do not believe in any abstract conception of Islam. We are either Sunnis or Shias. In my very well-considered opinion there lives not one person in this country who is a Musalman pure and simple—neither a Shia nor a Sunni. I may remind you of the famous Hadis of our holy Prophet when he said “Musalmans will stand divided after me in 72 sections and only one out of these 72 will get salvation.” This Hadis clearly shows that out of these 72 sections that exist today only one represents true Islam and according to our belief and faith we are that one section. I rest my arguments on this Hadis and I emphatically say that we represent true Islam and if we are doomed Islam is doomed. Now let me say that the religious, economic, political and social rights of the Shias have never been so much endangered in the country as they are now—not at the hands of the Hindus or the Congress but at the hands of your Muslim League and your Quaid-i-Azam Mr Jinnah.

Ḥusayn continued that he saw on a daily basis “atrocities of the worst kind” being perpetrated by the ML. He pointed out that Shiʿīs in Bihar had to suffer under the League, that Shiʿīs had been fired from the Customs Department in Calcutta by Muslim League officials, and that the battle for the protection of taʿziyadārī in the Punjab was waged against Sunni ML Muslims. He also dismissed oral assurances Jinnah had given to the Shiʿīs about the protection of their rights in a future Pakistan:

What is the value of oral assurances in the body politic of today's world? We have seen the oral assurances given by Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain, Stalin and Churchill. What can be the value of these oral assurances when we see before our own eyes that long standing conventions such as the one that existed in Lucknow for the last thirty-five years in favour of the Shias was broken with the help of the Muslim League, by the Sunnis, during the last Municipal Board elections. We have lost all faith in oral promises and even conventions. Nothing short of statutory safeguards can satisfy us. I really fail to understand if Mr. Jinnah is honest in his profession and he does not want to befool

248 Mirzā Jaʿfar Ḥusayn was born in 1899 into a sharīf family in Fayżābād, studied law at Lucknow University, and started to practice in 1925 as a lawyer. In the late 1920s, the Mahārājā of Mahmūdābād offered him a position as his private secretary. After the latter's death in 1932, he once again took up law as a profession (see his autobiogrophy, Ḥusayn, Kashmakash-i hayāt, 1-288). In 1932, Ḥusayn was elected General Secretary of the All India Shiʿa Political Conference and remained affiliated with it until Partition (ibid., 294-296). He also served as editor of the Shiʿī journal Moonlight. In 1939, he criticized the AISPC for deciding to stay aloof from both the Congress and the League since this would be “harmful” to the Shiʿī community (see Nripendra N. Mitra (ed), The Indian Annual Register. An Annual Digest of Public Affairs of India. Volume II, July-Dec. 1939 (Calcutta: The Annual Register Office, 1939), 355). See also for his praise of Congress leaders, Ḥusayn, Kashmakash-i hayāt, 339-360.

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the Shias. Why should he not agree to statutory safeguards for this important minority community in India?  

A meeting of Shi'i 'ulamā in Lucknow had already in July 1945 declared the League to be “almost entirely a Sunni organisation,” cooperation with which was “highly undesirable from religious (sic) point of view. We feel confident that all Shia Muslims will action (sic) this advice.”

Such bleak views were not shared by all prominent Shi'is to the same degree nor was the acrimonious public nature of the debate condoned by everyone. The Rājā of Maḥmūdābād and Ibn-i Ḥasan Jārcavī both supported Jinnah in his election campaign against Lalljee. Jārcavī even agreed to act as one of two religious scholars chosen by Jinnah to elucidate the “Islamic ideology” (islāmī naẓariyyah) underpinning the demand for Pakistan during a meeting with the Cabinet Mission – the other ʿālim selected being none other than Shabbir Aḥmad ʿUṣmānī.

Yet, Amīr Aḥmad Khān at the same time hoped to privately convince Jinnah to include a Shi'i

249 “Enclosure to No. 233 (Fazil Mooraj to M A Jinnah SHC (682), 29 October 1945), Mirza Mohammad Jafer Husain to Fazil Mooraj SHC (684),” in Zaidi (ed), The Verdict for Pakistan, 290-293. In forwarding this letter to Jinnah, Mūraj commented that people of the ilk of Mirzā Jaʿfar Ḥusayn “are selfish and want themselves fully provided for even at the sacrifice of others. Their bigotry in their religious beliefs can result in their own ruination. Inconsiderate publicity and such statement as made in Mirza Sahib's letter can cause a flare-up and breach between the two sections of Islam which can never be filled up.” He also justified sending along the letter to Jinnah because he did not want it to “fall into hands which may use it indiscreetly after I am gone.” Jinnah replied that he “had nothing more to say” (see ibid., 288-290).

250 Lalljee, Shia Muslims’ Case, 11-12. This meeting on 5 July 1945 was attended by the mujtahids Sayyid Muhammad Naṣir (1895-1966; see Jones, Shi'a Islam in Colonial India, 245), Sayyid Muḥammad Saʿid (1914-1967; see Ḥusayn, Maṭlaʿ-i anvār, 546-550), Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī and Sayyid Muhammad (Mīran Ṣāḥib), along with several lower ranking scholars who taught at religious schools in Lucknow.

ʿālim among the League representatives for the Constituent Assembly of India. The Rājā of Maḥmūdābād never migrated to Pakistan and later pointed darkly to the general sense of gloom and despondency that pervaded the two newly-created states; instead of the joy and expectancy which should have been ours after these years of struggle there were only premonitions of impending conflicts and a promise of future struggle.

Jārcavī only made his way to the new country in 1951 after originally claiming that his task was now to provide Shiʿī education in India. Shiʿīs in the Punjab were wavering until the last minute between the Muslim League and the Unionist Party, repeatedly shifting their allegiances. They were precisely not jumping on the Muslim League bandwagon but found themselves simply overtaken by the sheer pace of events which saw the entrenched power of the Unionist party suddenly “disintegrating like a mud fort in a monsoon.”

The fact that the Muslim League managed to obtain power in the Punjab so quickly and unexpectedly had to do with its weak position in the province. The changing of sides by several leading families, many of them also acting as sajjāda nashīns in the countryside, set an

252 See Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 52.
254 Ḥusayn, Maṭlaʿ-i anvār, 45.
255 Some leaders of the Punjab Shiʿa Political Conference, among them Navāb ʿAli Khān Qizilbāsh had in 1944 declared safeguards offered by Jinnah during a private meeting in Lahore as sufficient to mitigate their concerns about the Muslim League. This announcement led to a strong backlash within the organization, causing Qizilbāsh to adopt a hard line stance against the League when he served as Minister for Revenue in Malik Khızr Ḥayāt Tivānah’s Congress-Panthic-Unionist government that emerged from the February 1946 elections in the Punjab. After the resignation of the Unionist premier in March 1947, however, Qizilbāsh’s “main concern seems to have become mending fences with the League, which he would later join without much difficulties” (see Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 46 and 53).
256 Ian Talbot, Khizr Tiwana, the Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India (Surrey: Curzon, 1996), 129. For a discussion of this sudden collapse of the Unionist Party, attributed to discontent with war time rationing, the death of Chhotu Ram on 9 January 1945, and the failure of the Simla Conference, see ibid., 133-140. See also idem, Provincial politics and the Pakistan movement: The growth of the Muslim League in North-West and North-East India, 1937-1947 (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 82-103.
avalanche in motion. Influential pīrs raised “personal identification with Pakistan to a level that transcended politics,” with the pīr of Gōrlāh Sharīf warning his murīd, Prime Minister Malik Khiźr Ḥayāt Tivānah, “not to separate himself from the Islamic movement lest he become ‘fuel for the fires of Hell’.” When in March 1947 no new government could be formed and the Punjab came under Governor's rule, it set the stage for “Punjab's own midsummer nightmare,” namely methodically planned acts of killing, arson, and sabotage committed by members of the Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim communities. Cities like Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Amritsar were all affected. The violence and massive migration of people crowded out all other concerns for Sunnīs and Shiʿīs alike in the spring and summer of 1947.

The salience of transnational connections

Before closing this chapter, I would like to take a brief look at arguments about the predominance of Indian concerns in Shiʿī thought during the late colonial period. In a similar fashion to Gail Minault, who holds that the reaction of the Khilāfatists in the face of Turkey's decision to abolish the Caliphate demonstrated the movement's “totally Indian character,”


258 Ibid., 218-219.

259 See Neeti Nair, Changing homelands: Hindu politics and the partition of India (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 179-218. Deconstructing a narrative of neat communal lines regarding such instances of carnage, Nair has also found reports on how “some people managed to stay sane, not unmoved by the events that threatened to destroy the closely knit communities, amongst which they lived, but safe, alert, still caring for members of the ‘other’ religious community, perhaps with a new touch of self-consciousness” (ibid., 197). She also assigns much blame to British officials, who “were keenly aware of the possibilities of violence failing agreement and the decreasing powers they had over their almost-free subjects,” yet chose to remain “silent spectators” (ibid., 214).

260 Gail Minault, The Khilafat Movement, 201.
Justin Jones has come to the conclusion that Shīʿī associational life in colonial India displayed an “apparent lack of extensive direct engagement with issues affecting the Shiʿa in the wider world.” In his view, the AISC merely passed “tokenistic resolutions expressing ‘concern’ over events in Persia and Iraq,” but there were “no substantial reactions” to events like the Constitutional Revolution in Iran or the damage done to the shrine of Imām Riżā in Mashhad.

One might attribute this apparent unconcern for the transnational Shiʿa millat to [...] the contemporaneous development in the Urdu ecumene of a qaumi construction of Shiʿism, one which emphasized the autonomy of ‘Indian’ manifestations of religion, and, by extension of its politics, from the wider world.261

We have already encountered several examples in this chapter that run counter to such an evaluation, including the ʿulamāʾ’s interest in an Iranian-style supervisory council or the high regard for the modernization policies of both Atatürk and Reza Pahlavi. I suggest that it is impossible to disentangle the transnational dimension from Shīʿī self-understanding during the late colonial period. I develop my discussion on the complex interactions with the centers of Shīʿī learning and religious veneration in Iran and Iraq more fully in the following chapters, but I would like to point here to M. Naeem Qureshi’s useful corrective to confining the Khilāfat Movement merely to the Subcontinent. Instead, he has written that

“pan-Islam, even though it proved chimerical in the end, played a central role in mobilizing Indian Muslims for mass politics and in so doing contributed decisively to the development of Muslim nationalism in the long run.”262

One major concern for the Shīʿīs in the period under discussion was undoubtedly the (second) destruction of the Jannat al-Baqī cemetery of Medina in April 1926 at the hands of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Āl Saʿūd’s (d. 1928) warriors. No less than four Shīʿī Imāms lie

261 Jones, Shiʿa Islam in Colonial India, 177 and 227-228.
262 Qureshi, Pan-Islam in British Indian politics, xxv.
buried in this oldest Muslim graveyard. Ibn-i Ḥasan Jārcavī was active as a preacher in the Punjab during this time and is credited with having gathered around 40,000 people in Multan to protest the devastation of this holy site. He denounced Ibn Saʿūd (as he was known to the British and in South Asia) as a new Yazīd and called on the Subcontinent’s “Wahhābis” to convey his message to their supposed chief patron, mocking his capabilities in the face of South Asian devotion:

Look around how many replicas (shabiheḥ) of Husayn's tomb exist in the world. After destroying the Jannat al-Baqīʿ, you will see that we will not just be able to construct one or two [graves] but instead reproduce the cemetery thousands of times. A cemetery's bricks and plaster might tumble down but are you not aware that in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Muslims a tomb for Fāṭima has been erected?

Jārcavī cautioned his listeners not to take up swords and set out for the Ḥijāz in order to fight the “savages from Najd.” Instead, they should use their economic weapons and refuse to go on ḥajj, thus depriving Ibn Saʿūd of an important source of income.

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263 Werner Ende, “Baqiʿ al-Gharqad,” in Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/baqi-al-gharqad.COM_23494>, accessed on 14 May 2015. Eldon Rutter visited the cemetery shortly after its sacking and described the scene there in the following way: “When I entered the Bakia the sight which I saw was as it were a town which had been razed to the ground. All over the cemetery nothing was to be seen but little indefinite mounds of earth and stones, pieces of timber, iron bars, blocks of stone, and a broken rubble of cement and bricks, strewn about. It was like the broken remains of a town which had been demolished by an earthquake. [...] All was wilderness of ruined building materials and tombstones – not ruined by a casual hand, but raked away from their places and ground small” (see Eldon Rutter, The Holy Cities of Arabia (London: G. P. Puntam's Sons, 1928), vol II, 256-257). On the consolidation of Saudi rule in the Hijāz and beyond, see Madawi Al-Rasheed, A history of Saudi Arabia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 39-71, as well as Bernard Haykel and Michael Crawford, “Introduction,” in Anita L. P. Burdett (ed), The expansion of Wahhabi power in Arabia, 1798-1932: British documentary records. Volume 1, 1798-1848 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), ix–xxvii.


265 Ibid., 105-106. It remains to be investigated whether these calls for a boycott by Shiʿis and Barelvī groups had any palpable impact. According to British estimates compiled by Nate Hodson, the number of Indian pilgrims indeed decreased from approximately 19,000 (1926) and 27,000 (1927) to 14,000 (1928), 11,000 (1930) and 7,300 (1931). I am grateful to Nate for sharing his findings with me. For the economic importance of the annual pilgrimage in the pre-oil period, see also Michael Barry Miller, “Pilgrim's Progress: The Business of the Hajj,” Past & Present, 191 (2006):
also urged those who attended his speeches to get involved with the Anjuman-i Taḥaffuẓ-i Maʿāṣīr-i Mutabarrakah (The Association for the Protection of the Blessed Memorials). This association had been founded from within the AISC in 1926 and saw itself as a propaganda tool against the Wahhābī threat. The association approached Indian and Iraqi mujtahids for fatwās against Ibn Saʿūd, which it later combined and published, and composed Persian appeals that were printed in Iranian newspapers in Mashhad and Tehran. It sent thousands of letters every year to other Shīʿī organizations and individuals, used the forum of majālis to spread awareness about the situation in the Arabian peninsula, and organized a yearly “Day of Grief” (yaum-i ghamm) in many localities of India and in Iraq. Additionally, the Annual Proceedings of the All India Shīʿa Conference carried a speech which the mujtahid Sayyid Muḥammad (Mīran Şāhib) had delivered at a Ḥijāz Conference in Delhi on 14 April 1933. This lecture demonstrates Shīʿī efforts to build a united and trans-sectarian front against the “clouds of misguidance” (żalālat ke bādil) that had positioned themselves in front of the “sun of Islam.” Sayyid Muḥammad cast the Wahhābīs as a common enemy who labeled both Ḥanafī Muslims and Shīʿīs as unbelievers and regarded their life and property as licit. No other forum for Muslims was as important in order to facilitate “love and solidarity” than their “international gathering” (majlis-i bayn al-aqvām) and “annual convention” (sālānah ijlās), namely the ḥajj.

Sayyid Muḥammad called for a “rain of blood” to fall on the Ḥijāz and destroy the Saudi

189–228.

267 Ḥusayn (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ū yikum-i All India Shīʿah Conference (1928), 91-92.
268 Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ū duvum-i All India Shīʿah Conference bi-maqām-i Allāhābād munʿaqidah 27, 28, 29 December 1929 (1930), 201-205 and Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās, Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ū shishum-i All India Shīʿah Conference (1935), 105-106. The Proceedings list 3,658 written letters for 1928 and 4,729 for 1929, for example.
269 Sayyid Ḥasan ʿAbbās Riżvī (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ū panjum-i All India Shīʿah Conference (Dār al-ṣaltanat Dihlī) munʿaqidah 14, 15, 16 March 1933, 76.
270 Ibid., 78. For attempts in the modern era to promote a Shiʿi-Barelvī alliance, see also chapter 5.
271 Riżvī (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ū panjum-i All India Shīʿah Conference (1933), 80.
kingdom. This could be achieved by sending out delegations across India, who were to unite the existing Muslims organizations, collect funds, and recruit an army of volunteers.

Other signs point to the importance of international concerns as well. The younger brother of the Rājā of Mahmūdābād, Amīr Ḥaydar Khān, commented in 1940 on the international character of anti-Shīʿī propaganda. Publishing houses in both Egypt and the Ḥijāz attacked Shīʿī accounts of the events surrounding Karbala and dismissed their hadīth collections as fabricated. He recommended answering these insults by turning Shīʿī mourning sessions into a “well-structured propaganda” (munaẓẓam propaganda) and to observe “military discipline” (fauji tanẓīm) during the community's processions. Additionally, as we have seen, the modernists held up Iran and Turkey as symbols of progress and as examples to which India's Shīʿīs should aspire. Sayyid Riżā ʿAli, for example, criticized the discrepancy between widespread admiration for the reforms of Reza Shah and Atatürk on the one hand and the lack of willingness to implement universal education, Islamic and national equality (islāmī ya mulktī musāvāt), or proper support for the poor on the other. He singled out the two men as each

272 Ibid., 78.
273 Ibid., 82-83.
274 Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i sīyum-i All India Shīʿah Conference (1940), 18. The AISC – in line with many other Indian organizations of the time – also set up its own paramilitary force, the Rīżākārān-i Jannat al-Baqīʿ. Besides publicly denouncing the Saudis, their purpose was also to act as marshals at AISC convocations and other events. See Mirzā ʿĀbid Ḥusayn (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ō yikum-i All India Shīʿah Conference (1928), 86-90.
275 See, for example, Husayn (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ō yikum-i All India Shīʿah Conference (1928), 19 and also Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ō haftum-i All India Shīʿah Conference (1936), 142-143. This is not to say that the AISC was always uncritical of Iran. During its 1935 meeting, the organization passed a resolution to send a fact finding mission to Iran. This delegation was supposed to explore the background of reports that the shrine of Imām Riżā in Mashhad had been fired upon and protesters arrested (see Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās, Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ō shishum-i All India Shīʿah Conference (1935), 9). On the Mashhad protests, which were partially directed against new laws that demanded the unveiling of women and prescribed brimmed hats for men and during which approximately 100 people lost their lives, see Ervand Abrahamian, Iran between two revolutions. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 152-153. See also Houchang Chehabi, “Dress Codes for Men in Turkey and Iran,” in Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher (eds), Men of order: Authoritarian modernization under Ataturk and Reza Shah (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 209-237.
being a great “warrior” (ghāzi) in both their military and civilian capabilities. While the Shi‘is in the Subcontinent had no use for insights derived from battlefield tactics, both statesmen surely had lessons to teach regarding the successes they had achieved in peacetime.\textsuperscript{276} The rulers of Iran and Turkey had to be credited especially for their attempts to restore “Islam’s pure roots that had become polluted over the course of hundreds of years.” If only the Sunnis had paid attention to Turkey’s “impartial policy” (ghayr muta‘ṣṣib policy) and if the Shi‘is had been aware of the “current trends in religious ideas” (maujūdah maghabi khayālāt ki ravish) in Iran, the whole madḥ-i ṣaḥābah and tabarrā trouble in Lucknow would not have come to pass.\textsuperscript{277}

Finally, it is also necessary to mention the intrinsically international experience of the ʿulamā during this period. The next chapters of this dissertation will explore how the dynamics of studying in the shrine cities of Iran and Iraq later played out in Pakistan. Increasing emphasis by the jurists on the significance of these centers of Shi‘i learning definitely did not forestall the possibility of carving out independent, local space for those who made such claims – quite the contrary. Shi‘i scholars positioned themselves as gatekeepers and brokers of the ideas flowing from the Middle East to South Asia and reworked these in the process. Even though the late colonial period offered an increasing array of alternative educational venues, Lucknow an important one among them, all senior ʿulamā active during the decades under consideration had at least spent some years in the Middle East, as can be gleaned from the biographical notes provided throughout this chapter. ʿAllāmah Hindī used his own frequent travels between the two regions to encourage young Indians to go abroad. He supported an

\textsuperscript{277} Ibid., 18. Sayyid Rizā ‘Ali also mentioned that in comparison to other Muslim countries, the rules pertaining to female seclusion (pardah) in India were probably the most strict, which had extremely detrimental effects on girls’ education in the country (ibid., 10-11).
initiative by the AISC to send South Asia students to Iran on a yearly basis in order to learn “oriental sciences” (ʿulūm-i mashriqi) and Persian. ‘Allāmah Hindī pointed out that they would thus follow in the footsteps of Sayyid Dildār ʿAlī Naṣīrābādī. At the present time, Iran had become the “center of knowledge” for young Indian Shiʿīs.278

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have offered several reinterpretations of Shiʿī Islam in the late colonial period. In my view, the religious authority of Lucknow’s leading mujtahids was by no means challenged only during the flare-up of high profile sectarian tensions in the Subcontinent. Instead, I have shown that the All India Shiʿa Conference since the 1920s attempted to aggressively position itself as a modernist alternative to clerical leadership that was more attuned to the educational and economic needs of India’s Shiʿīs. While younger scholars like Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī were able to reclaim relevance for the Uṣūlī leadership as the Subcontinent’s leading center, contestations over religious authority came into the open even more forcefully following the establishment of Pakistan. The new state’s lacking of a center of learning and scholarship comparable to Lucknow opened up new avenues for esoteric interpretations of the Shiʿī message, as chapter 2 discusses in detail.

Additionally, I hold that Sunnī-Shiʿī sectarianism during these decades has to be understood as a phenomenon operating on several levels. Even in the midst of a general rise of communal consciousness, Shiʿīs did not perceive themselves as divorced from their Sunnī coreligionists but rather framed their interpretation of Islam as both more sophisticated and

278 Sayyid Kalb-i ʿAbbās (ed), Rūʿidād-i ijlās-i bist ŏ haftum-i All India Shiʿah Conference (1936), 147.
more faithful to Muḥammad’s original message. At the same time, they were keenly aware of
the potentially sinister implications of Pakistan, a state that in the mid 1940s became
increasingly charged with exclusivist religious language.

Finally, debating all these complex questions did not entail that India’s Shīʿīs lost sight
of the wider concerns of the Islamic and Shīʿī world. Instead they displayed a clear awareness
of the international scene and interpreted their particular local environment through a
transnational prism. Many questions of course remain to be answered in future research. One of
the problems is that we do not have precise figures as to whether the threat of a Sunnī-
dominated Pakistan significantly impeded Shīʿī migration to the new state. I have suggested
that the large scale of Partition violence against Muslims in places like the Punjab might have
rendered such considerations a rather mute question. But we can at least point to the fact that
many influential Shīʿīs, among them ‘ulamā and landlords, stayed behind in the United
Provinces or only migrated to Pakistan with a significant delay.279

Initially, the alarmist positions on Pakistan were given ample ammunition. The Muslim
League in June 1947 nominated an exclusively Sunnī committee of seven experts to advise
Pakistan’s Constitutional Assembly on the implementation of the shariʿa.280 The Jamīʿat al-
‘Ulamā-i Islām passed in January 1948 a resolution which demanded that the government
appoint a “leading ʿalim to the office of Shaikh al-Islām, with appropriate ministerial and

279 This observation applies to influential Muslim scholars like Ḥusayn Ahmad Madani, too. For a
discussion of the aftermath of Partition which also saw a significant number of Muslims returning to
India before stricter permits and in 1952 passports were required, see Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali
Zamindar, The long partition and the making of modern South Asia: Refugees, boundaries, histories (New
280 Rieck, Shiias of Pakistan, 53.
executive powers over the qādīs throughout the country.” The Lahore daily Iḥsān in November 1948 during Muḥarram called on the Shiʿīs to give up their “irrational” beliefs in the Imāms and urged them to speak and behave only as “Muslims” in Pakistan. In early 1950, about 1,500 Shiʿīs were arrested for defying a ban on a procession in Nārōvāl. Yet, the biggest fears expressed during the pre-Partition period did not materialize. This may well have had to do with the death of Shabbir Ḥāmad ʿUsmānī in December 1949. Other Deobandi scholars like Iḥtishām al-Ḥaqq Thānāvī (1915-1980) followed a more inclusive line. As discussed in chapter 5, Thānāvī had convened an ʿulamā gathering in 1951 which included Shiʿī scholars as well. The meeting passed a resolution that spelled out twenty-two principles of an Islamic state, including a clause that enshrined the right for each “established Islamic sect” to be bound by its particular interpretation of Islamic law. Shiʿī scholars eagerly embraced this initiative and happily made common cause with their Sunnī colleagues in their demands to declare the Aḥmadians a non-Muslim minority. They hoped to show themselves as falling within the Islamic mainstream and as participating in defining the new country’s still fluid Islamic identity that had been conceived as a promise for the renewal of Islam on a world-wide scale. Yet, as the next chapter demonstrates, Sunnī-Shiʿī tensions remained a major issue in internal Shiʿī debates over the next decades and they were never far from the minds of reformist and traditionalist ʿulamā alike. Furthermore, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 once again forcefully pushed the Shiʿīs out of the fragile post-Partition Islamic consensus and labeled them as an element that should have no say in elaborating the religious character of Pakistan.

281 Binder, Religion and Politics in Pakistan, 98.
282 Rieck, Shias of Pakistan, 62.
283 Ibid., 64.
284 Ibid., 68. The Ahmadians regard themselves as Muslims but their belief that Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (d. 1908), the founder of their community, was a prophet puts them at odds with the Muslim doctrine that Muḥammad was the last Prophet sent by God.
Chapter 2: Pressuring the mahdi: Theology, Sectarianism, and the Limits of Reform

Agar ʿAlī kī vilāyat nahīṉ tō phir yeh batā ʿamāmah kyā he, ʿabā kyā he aur qabā kyā he

If ʿAlī had no comprehensive authority, then say what is the point of turban, cloak, and gown? 286

Kehtā hi kōn nālah-i bulbul kō be aṣr parde meṉ gul keh lākh jigar cāk hō gaʾe

Who dares to say that the nightingale’s song remains unanswered when, behind the curtain of their petals, the hearts of hundred thousand roses were slit open? 287

The Pakistani pilgrims did not realize how privileged they were to set their feet on Iraqi soil. When the five-busload strong group arrived in the country in late October 1973, they could hardly have predicted that only two years later Saddam Hussein’s government would clamp down on visas issued to foreign Shiʿīs. Visits to the shrine cities of Karbala, Samarra, and Najaf in pursuit of education or religious tourism became nearly impossible after 1975. 288 The Pakistanis were also completely unaware of the hidden authority exercised by one of the three


287 My own translation. These lines of poetry can be found in Mīrzā Asad Allāh Khān, Dīvān-i Ghālib (Delhi: Maktabah-i Jāmiʿah-i Milliyyah-i Islāmī, 1925), 198. The poem is quoted in Muhammad Ḥusayn al-Najafī Dhakkō, Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm al-ẓāhira bi-kalām al-ʿitra al-ṭāhira al-maʿrūf bih aṣlī islām aur rasmi islām (Sargōdhā: Maktabat al-Sibṭayn, 2009), 43.

288 See Amatzia Baram, Saddam Husayn and Islam, 1968-2003. Baʿthi Iraq from secularism to faith (Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 91. The crackdown on Shiʿī processions and organizations came in the wake of the March 6, 1975 Algiers accord between Iran and Iraq. The Iraqi regime used this breathing space to go against the Shiʿīs with a mixture of carrot and stick. Even though, for example, ʿāshūrā was declared a national holiday, the official calendar placed it on the 9th and not the 10th of Muḥarram “to the chagrin of the Shiʿī religious establishment. The reason for this was simple: the regime did everything it could to dissuade people from participating in the ceremonies and processions, which were often used for antiregime demonstrations” (see ibid., 124-125).
religious scholars who were traveling with them, viewing him as merely responsible for overseeing and facilitating proper ziyārat. Indeed, Muḥammad Ḥasnayn al-Sābiqī had nothing particularly remarkable about him at the time. He was 27 years old, had received six years of religious education in the Madrasat Sulṭān al-Madāris in Khayrpūr,289 and had taught in various religious schools in the country over the last ten years – quite a common trajectory for a young scholar. Only a couple of months earlier he had arrived in Najaf to pursue higher religious education.290 Yet, al-Sābiqī revealed his true qualities on the following Thursday night, 1 November 1973, during a visit to the shrine of the 11th Shiʿi Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (d. 260/873) in Samarra.291 Al-Sābiqī led a majlis right next to the enclosure (ḍarīḥ) around the Imām's tomb, focussing with great emotional vigor on Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī's many afflictions in life. In the midst of his speech, one female pilgrim from ‘Alīpūr in the district of Muẓaffargaṛh suddenly became drenched in sweat despite the cold weather. She started to shake in an uncontrollable manner, wept loudly, and collapsed. Once the woman regained her

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289 This school was founded in 1930 by Muftī Sayyid Khādim Ḥusayn (d. 1953) with support by the Ṭālpūr Mīrs of the princely state of Khayrpūr who donated 150 acres of agricultural land as a source of waqf income for the school (see Sayyid Muhammad Șaqalayn Kāẓimī (ed), Imāmiyyah dīnī madāris-i Pākistān (Lahore: Wifāq al-Madāris al-Shīʿa Pākistān, 2004), 390). No further study exists on the Shiʿi leanings of the Mīr dynasty. For a description of how seriously the ruler and the court took Muḥarram, see Edward Archer Langley, Narrative of a Residence at the Court of Meer Ali Moorad; with Wild Sports in the Valley of the Indus (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1860), vol 2, 177-184. Mufti Sayyid Khādim Ḥusayn, a native of Derah Ismāʿīl Khān, had been sent to Khayrpūr after graduating from Rāmpūr, the Sulṭān al-Madāris, and the Madrasat al-Wāʿiẓīn in Lucknow to propagate Shiʿi Islām in the area (see Sayyid Murtažā Ḥusayn, Maṭlaʿi anvār. Taẕkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i kibār-i barr-i ṣaghīr pāk ō hind (Karachi: Khorasan Islamic Research Center, 1981), 213).

290 There is some disagreement about his exact date of birth. While Naqvī gives it as 1 August 1945, the author of the biographical account on which the following anecdote is based, Naẓr-i ʿAbbās Haydari, principal of the Madrasat al-Imām al-Ḥusayn in the district of Jhang, states that al-Sābiqī was born on 1 August 1946. Even more confusingly, he provides the supposedly matching hijrī date of 8 Dhū ʿl-ḥijja 1365 which corresponds to 3 November 1946 (see Naqvī, Taḵkirah-i ʿulamāʿ-i imāmiyyah, 290 and Naẓr-i ʿAbbās Haydari, “ʿAllāmah Muḥammad Ḥasayn al-Sābiqī kā taʿāruf,” in Muhammad Ḥasayn al-Sābiqī al-Najafi, Rusūm al-shīʿa fi misān al-sharīʿa (Multan: Idārah-i Jāmiʿat al-Thaqalayn, 2000), 5-7).

consciousness, she told the stunned crowd how her gaze had strayed from al-Sābiqī towards the tomb's enclosure. There she suddenly had seen an exalted personality (buzurg shakhṣiyyat) reciting the Qur'an. The stranger addressed her directly, ordering the pilgrim to look away from him but to pay attention to the ʿālim's speech. After this admonition, he promptly vanished from her sight. When her fellow pilgrims realized the implications of this experience, they started a great commotion. All the signs pointed to the fact that the apparition had been none other than the son of Ḥasan al-ʿAskārī, the twelfth, Hidden Imām himself. According to the account in which this particular incident is mentioned, the story still enjoyed widespread currency in the 1990s among pilgrims from the districts of Bahāvalpūr, Multan and Vihāṛī. The encounter was also attested by two other scholars who were present in Samarra that night along with al-Sābiqī, Sayyid Āqā ʿAlī Ḥusayn Qummī and Sayyid Bashir Ḥusayn Shirāzī.

Hence, there could be no doubt that the mahdī himself not only approved of al-Sābiqī's exalted conceptions of Shīʿī doctrine but also that he personally affirmed the ʿālim's scholarly achievements (is se ṣābit hōtā he keh ʿallāmah Muḥammad Ḥasnayn Sābiqī ke ʿaqāʾid-i ʿāliyyah aur un ki ʿilmī taḥqīqāt ʿilmīyyah par sarkār imām vali al-ʿaṣr ʿajjala Allāh ẓuhūrahu ki tāʾid aur khusūṣī ʿināyat he).

For al-Sābiqī's supporters, this cosmological blessing at one of the most significant shrines of Shīʿī imagination was later interpreted as a crucial endorsement in the heated,
intra-Shīʿī struggle over proper orthodoxy and belief in Pakistan, which is the focus of this chapter, al-Sābiqī wholeheartedly stood on the side of truth against falsehood. Regardless of the accuracy of this claim, he was definitely among the most active Pakistani scholars who agitated over the course of several decades against efforts to reform and “rationalize” the community's beliefs and customs. Al-Sābiqī saw himself as a protector of the simple believers who instinctively shunned the authority of those ʿulamā whom they perceived as misguided usurpers: while they were claiming to be reformists, these scholars were in reality conspiring to attack the exalted status of the Imāms.

The incident in Samarra, then, lends itself to the interpretation of being the expression of a strategy to obtain a competitive edge in the contested arena of “marketplace” Shiʿism, where religious authority even for the most senior ʿulamā is highly contingent on being able to “monopolize the academic and nonacademic spheres by having the largest constituency of emulators and agents.” Scholars over the last years have attributed increasing value to conceptualizing religious actors as operating in ways analogous to the logic of economic exchanges. Nile Green has made the case for applying the language of religious firms and the production of religious goods to the scholarly treatment of “traditionalist” and “reformist” arguments. In his view, this approach “gives life to the category of Islam as a ritual and discursive mine of deployable resources used for specific industrial or collective purposes


295 For such a portrayal of reform, see Mariam Abou Zahab, “‘Yeh matam kayse ruk jae?’ (How could this matam ever cease?): Muharram processions in the Pakistani Punjab,” in Knut A. Jacobsen (ed), _South Asian Religions on Display: Religious processions in South Asia and in the diaspora_ (London: Routledge, 2008), 108.


rather than as a set of static ‘traditions’ that once founded are passively handed down until they become ‘reformed’ in a decisive ‘modern’ epoch.” Studying the Islamicate environment of Bombay at the turn of the previous century, Green found that customary, miracle-focused forms of Šūfī Islam managed to find a rather easy fit with the disruptive conditions of modernity:

Despite having roots in the pre-industrial past, the reproductions of custom created by Bombay's Customary Islamic 'firms' spread widely due to their resonance with the working conditions of industrial capitalism and its broken social landscape of individuals uprooted from their ancestral backgrounds. For many Muslims, a world with no helper other than a distant Allah was a lonely world indeed. With their shrines and lodges near the cotton mills of Bombay and the plantations of Natal, the charismatic shaykhs who form the focus of Bombay Islam were infinitely closer to their client than a faceless and absent God.  

Al-Sābiqī portrays himself as such a traditionalist religious leader who is fully attuned to both the emotional and intellectual needs especially of a lay Shi‘ī audience. He appears as a successful religious entrepreneur, not unlike those young Shi‘ī scholars and preachers in late colonial India, described by Justin Jones, who were challenging the authority of the established mujtahids through “an increasingly expressive and contentious tone of public preaching” and the “diversification of popular practice” in order to “secure for themselves a role in an increasingly crowded religious marketplace.” Consequently, Andreas Rieck has labeled al-Sābiqī and other anti-reformist minded scholars and preachers as a “populist” camp that is well versed in utilizing emotionally-charged majālis to further their agenda.

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299 Ibid., 22-23.
300 Jones, *Shi'a Islam in Colonial India*, 110-112.
301 Rieck, *The Shias of Pakistan*, 171 and 176. As I will argue below, I do not regard this classification as helpful for the additional reason that these “populists” held very elitist religious views on their own.
Yet, I would argue that such a framing of the conflict as a replay of the eternal battle between sincere, “high,” orthodox and rational Shi’ism against “extremist” and “superstitious” popular beliefs promoted for ulterior motives, pinning “sagacious and far-sighted ‘ulamā’” against propagandists of “not genuine Shiite beliefs” reflects most of all academic bias in favor of reformist discourses. Such an attitude is even palpable in Sabrina Mervin’s magistral study of Shi’i reformism in Lebanon. Describing mourning sessions in contemporary Damascus that are organized in the example set out by the important Shi’i reformist ‘ālim Muḥsin al-Amīn (d. 1952), Mervin mentions that she witnessed during a visit in 1994 how the participants were engaging in intensive weeping “mais sans pour autant exagérer dans la mortification. Les séances, à al-Ḥarab, se déroulaient dans la sobriété.” Ḥusayn ‘Ārif Naqvī is more explicit in his evaluation of al-Sābiqī’s scholarship, which he dismisses – along with that of other traditionalists – as weak and consisting of baseless heterodox propaganda. Similarly, Andreas

302 Naqvi, “The Controversy about the Shaykhhīyya Tendency,” 136-137. It has to be noted, though, that also within the academic study of Shi’ism there is an ongoing debate between those who side with the idea of rational, sober origins of Shi’ī Islam and those who emphasize its essentially esoteric character. Hossein Modarressi is a representative for the first position. He singles out Qum as a place of learning where early moderate scholars were trying hard to keep a “flow of extremist literature that was spreading fast” at bay. Even though Shi’ī Imāms like Ja’far al-Ṣādiq and ‘Alī al-Riḍā condemned the ghulāt as infidels and the mufawwiḍa as polytheists, “populist authors who tended to put together and offer whatever report in their judgment could strengthen the faith of the people in the Imāms although the authors themselves could never guarantee the authenticity of many reports or many of the sources they quoted” managed to insert their inauthentic material into the authoritative Shi’ī hadith collections (see Hossein Modarressi Tabataba’ī, Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi’ite Islam: Abū Ja’far ibn Qība al-Rāzī and his contribution to imāmite Shi’ite thought (Princeton, N.J: Darwin Press, 1993), 34-47). Mohammad Ali Amir Moezzi, on the other hand, has made the case for “esoteric nonrational Imamism” as being the “original tradition” of Shi’ī Islam that was gradually pushed aside by a “turn toward rationalization and attempts at rapprochement with ‘orthodox’ positions” (see Mohammad Ali Amir Moezzi, The Divine Guide in Early Shi’ism: The sources of esotericism in Islam (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 19).

303 Mervin, Un réformisme chiite, 252. For a recent example of a work that exclusively discusses reformist authors and credits them with the development of an “homogenising version of Islam” and an “enlightened cross-sectarian commitment to Islam” focused on tauḥīd, see Elisexeva Machlis, Shi’ī Sectarianism in the Middle East: Modernisation and the quest for Islamic universalism (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

304 Naqvi, Taẕkirah-i ʿulamā’-i imāmiyyah, 290.
Rieck classifies the polemical responses of scholars in Pakistan to reformist publications as a “gross overreaction” which demonstrated the “low level to which the internal dispute among a section of Pakistani Shias had sunk.”

Ali Rahnema takes such criticism one additional step further in a recent study which aims at establishing the existence of an “ideology” which had been developed in his view by the 17th century editor of the famous collection of Shīʿī traditions Bihār al-Anwār, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1698). The latter, according to Rahnema, managed through a “mass brain-wash” to create an “unquestioning and fatalistic community” among Shīʿī believers in Iran.

Rahnema defines “Majlesism as an anti-rational and pro-superstition school of thought [which was] fostered and promoted as as state ideology” and which is supposedly alive and well in Iran today. Problematic and relevant for our purpose is that Ali Rahnema simply adopts the criticism of “Safavi Shiʿism” in general and al-Majlisī in particular that was formulated by the reformist thinker ʿAlī Sharīʿatī (d. 1977). Sharīʿatī termed such interpretations of Shīʿī Islam as “socially and politically reactionary, despotic, repressive, exploiting and bankrupt,” and charged them with “religious ignorance, misrepresentation, falsification, fabrication and superstition.”

Such one-sided views on reform and its proponents are not exclusive to Shīʿī studies, however. In the Sunnī context, Indira Falk Gesink has made comparable observations. Studying debates revolving around proposed reforms for the al-Azhar University in the late 19th and early 20th century, she holds that the existing literature has paid disproportionate attention to the Arabic journals and

305 Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 129 and 133.
307 Ibid., xi.
308 Ibid., 21.
310 Ibid., 19.
newspapers owned by a “relatively small coterie of intellectuals” who favored the European modernizing project.

“The views of these reformist intellectuals passed down into the canon of authoritative Orientalist works on Islamic intellectual and social history, while the views of their opponents were set aside.”

This unfavorable view of traditionalist authors who rejected reform and their dismissal as half-baked intellectuals and self-interested manipulators has led to a lack of scholarly interest in their responses to reformist arguments. Justin Jones has consequently argued that “academic assessments of sectarianism need to take greater account of discordances among the Shi’a (and, equally, among Sunni communities) subsisting underneath the impression of binary Shi’a-Sunni conflict.”

The perception of a Pakistani battle between an enlightened, sober understanding of Shi’i Islam and various unreasonable deviations from it also does not pay sufficient attention to how deeply various “traditionalist” authors have come to be influenced by reformist ideas and the pressure which these create. Once arguments about proper orthodoxy and reform are released into the open – and are thus no longer confined to intimate and close-knit scholarly circles – even those who are opposed to any changes to doctrines and practices cannot afford

312 Ali Usman Qasmi has made the argument that a focus on “orthodox” Islam can cut both ways. It not only entails relegating all expressions of the faith that do not live up to this bar to the realm of “folk Islam” but also presupposes (Qasmi offers a critique here of both Francis Robinson and Aziz Ahmad) “the existence of a normative or orthodox Islam constituting a pattern of perfection which seems to be an unchanging essence. In doing that both have erred in estimating the dynamism and variety of the scriptural sources themselves and the continuous process of interpretation to which they have been put over the course of centuries” (see Ali Usman Qasmi, Questioning the Authority of the Past. The Ahl al-Qur’an Movements in the Punjab (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13).
313 Jones, Shi’a Islam in Colonial India, 238.
any longer to simply ignore these challenges but rather have to engage the questions at hand.\textsuperscript{314}

Oskar Verkaaik has noticed such dynamics in his study on the Sindhi separatist movement which attempted to define Şūfism as the quintessential tradition of South Asian Islam. As a consequence, “Sufism ceased to be merely a religious practice and became an object of intellectual activity.”\textsuperscript{315} Katherine Ewing has made a similar point regarding the responses by Şūfī masters towards reformist discourses in Pakistan:

> Nearly every pīr I talked to was very sensitive to the parameters that Islam imposes on their practice, a sensitivity that can be attributed to reformist pressure. One pīr, for example, read me a statement of principles of Islam that he had carefully crafted in anticipation of my question about his practice as a pīr. […] The principles of Islam, though presented by this pīr as the timeless Law laid out in the Quran and in the practice of the Prophet (sunnat), were in many respects the outcome of reformist objectifications, manifested in the practice of even those who are resistant to antipīr ideologies.\textsuperscript{316}

For the colonial period, Dietrich Reetz has shown that it was important for the Barelvīs to be perceived as reformers, too. Aḥmad Riżā and his followers defended a conception of reform that put taqlīd and adherence to the sunna of the Prophet center stage and attacked their opponents as innovators (bidʿatīs). While emphasizing the correct character of the ways in which they venerated the Prophet and viewed the spiritual power of saints, they spoke out against practices like musical performances at certain rituals or the participation of women since these would go against the shari‘a:

\textsuperscript{314} Sabrina Mervin has argued that in the context of Lebanon the fact that Shi‘ī ʿulamā started to contribute articles to the journal al-ʿIrfān led to a radical shift in the way knowledge was transmitted: “En jeu, il y avait donc l’instauration d’un nouveau rapport pédagogique avec leur ouaillles. Par ailleurs, si les clerics et les lettrés demeuraient pour un temps encore les gardiens d’une culture qu’ils étaient les seuls à détenir, le fait de la diffuser à un grand nombre par le biais de nouveaux canaux, au moment même où l’Empire ottoman chancelait et où se redéfinissaient leur liens avec les autres groupes confessionnelles, leur ouvrait des perspectives politiques et idéologiques inédites” (Mervin, \textit{Un réformisme chiite}, 193).


The reformist pretensions of Ahmad Raza were underlined by his scholarly bent; he preferred to be seen as a scholar (ʿālim) first and mystic (Sufi) second. This was also how his adherents perceived him. He was devoted to the collection and editing of Prophetic traditions (ḥadīth) […] and ceaseless in answering requests for religious advice (istikfā) by writing fatāwā, or religious decrees […] 317

This chapter explores some implications of these observations for Pakistani Shiʿīs in more detail below. At this point, it might be sufficient to mention that al-Sābiqī, like his reformist opponents, had studied in Najaf, too. He was eager to refer to the ijāzāt he had received from leading Ayatollahs of the time, which designated him as their representative (wakīl) in Pakistan. 318 It is significant in this context that the mahdī in Samarra was explicitly concerned with emphasizing al-Sābiqī’s scholarly standing. The following chapter on debates revolving around taqlīd in particular elaborates in more depth on the issue of transnational Shiʿī religious leadership based outside of Pakistan's borders. Here I would like to emphasize the impact of being cut-off from Lucknow, combined with the seminary's later decline which put an end to the possibility of producing a new generation of mujtahids indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, had for Pakistan's Shiʿīs. This development meant that even for traditionalist scholars the attention shifted to the centers of Shiʿī learning in the Middle East. While ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī’s legal opinions at times were included in their reasoning, 319 Iranians and Iraqis were now called upon as key witnesses to establish opinions opposed to reform. To put it differently: traditionalist scholars, too, had to refer to the leading Grand Ayatollahs and to acknowledge their authority. This phenomenon shows once again the difficulty of clearly distinguishing between supposedly “popular” and “high” forms of Shiʿī Islām, especially also

319 For more information on this last towering Indian Grand Ayatollah, whom we have already encountered in chapter 1, see also the next chapter.
since the monographs produced by traditionalist scholars, brimming with complicated theological debates, were hardly written with only a lay audience in mind. In cases when these scholars referred to the life-worlds of their audiences, it was a distinctive middle-class idiom they used. Sayyid Ja'far al-Zamān Naqvī Bukhārī, whom I discuss at the end of this chapter, likened the appropriate conduct of the Shi‘ī believers during the time of the Occultation to the behavior of a public servant who was actively awaiting and preparing for his “auditing team.” The appearance of the mahdī was “judgement day and audit day” (ḥisāb kā din he, audit kā din he) and it was of utmost importance that one’s “personal records” (a‘māl ke kāghāgāt) should be in order on that occasion.320

In this chapter, I would like to make two major arguments regarding debates over Shi‘ī religious reform since the inception of Pakistan in 1947:

First, these debates revolving around reform are also about radically diverging conceptions of theology that, in turn, condition different visions of religious authority. Both reformists and “traditionalists” (for a lack of a better term) exchanged blows over the nature of God’s unicity (tauḥīd) and the human ability to comprehend such matters. The traditionalists made the case for an utterly transcendent vision of God that required the Imāms to take on an essential intermediary function. This had significant implications for the role of the ‘ulamā. It brought into sharp relief efforts by the reformists to foreground clerical authority based on the emulation of leading jurists (taqlīd) and their opponents’ denial of any role for human leadership during the time of the 12th Imām’s occultation. I would argue against the perception

of Justin Jones that there is “a tangible trend towards emphasizing the humanity of the Imams, demystifying their significance and hence presenting them as worthy temporal guides.” As it will become clear below, those scholars in Pakistan who dared to advocate such ideas and thus “humanize” the Imāms have faced (and continue to face) very hostile reactions from within their own community instead of being part of a successful, tangible, or even sweeping trend.

Second, the question of whether Shi‘ī praxis and beliefs are in need of reform is always tied up with the persistent and constantly worsening problem of sectarianism. Calls for internal change are motivated most of all by the question of how one can remain Shi‘ī in an increasingly hostile environment and, at the same time, devise a way to intra-Muslim unity and for a rapprochement with the Sunnīs. “Traditionalist” scholars who reacted to reformist initiatives often shared the concern of sectarianism. Yet, they presented very divergent conceptions of how Muslim unity could be achieved and gave its conceptualization a particular spin. This argument goes against the position taken by Andreas Rieck who holds that “those preachers and zākirs who propagated exaggerated notions about the ahl al-bait had also a large share in widening the gulf between Shias and Sunnis in Pakistan” since they attempted to “safeguard Shia religious identity in Pakistan at all cost.”

The sources examined in this chapter provide us with a significantly different picture. This surely also has to do with the fact that Shi‘īs could not any longer count on the (relative) aloofness of the colonial British government, which had tried to portray itself after taking over from the East India Company as a “transcendent arbiter in a country divided along religious lines.” In my view, the

321 Jones, Shia Islam in Colonial India, 63-64.
322 Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 133.
traditionalist scholars had the advantage of being able to rather easily subvert the plausibility of reformist arguments by placing the proponents of reform in the same category as their sectarian Sunnī opponents, whom they were quick to label as extremists and bent on destroying Shi‘ī Islam. The traditionalists seized on the overlap between many of the critiques of religious rituals and beliefs voiced by Shi‘ī reformists and sectarian Sunnī ’ulamā alike. These limiting factors for reformist discourses, along with the “dilemma” faced by Shi‘ī ’ulamā that speaking out against popular customs might entail “losing control over the uneducated masses of their community” have also been discussed by Werner Ende in the context of early 20th century Iraq and Lebanon.324 Taken together, then, I would like to argue that we should not credit the reformists alone for the double concern for propagating pure tauḥid and caring deeply for the unity of the Muslims, as Sabrina Mervin has done.325 Rather, these topics are of equal concern for those who are staunchly opposed to reform.326

In the remainder of this chapter, I lay out the Shi‘ī landscape after Partition. This is followed by an investigation of the thought of two of Pakistan’s most committed reformist Shi‘ī scholars. They also provide us with a window onto the changes to reformist discourses brought

324 Werner Ende, “The Flagellations of Muḥarram and the Shi‘ī ’Ulamā’,” Der Islam 55 (1978): 31 and 37. Dietrich Reetz has pointed out a similar “dilemma” faced by reformist and revivalist groups who were setting themselves apart from the “orthodox, uninformed, and unreformed ’ulamā’ of their time.” While going against the latter and calling for their “improvement” to better meet the manifold challenges of the time, “the authority of the ’ulamā could not be challenged” (see Reetz, Islam in the Public Sphere, 111).

325 Mervin, Un réformisme chiite, 119. The same might apply to scholarly characterizations of the Barelvīs as well. Dietrich Reetz, for example, classified them as not being among “those who followed strict monism in their doctrinal teachings” (see Reetz, Islam in the Public Sphere, 5).

326 It has to be pointed out that this chapter does not attempt to be an exhaustive survey of both reformist and traditionalist Shi‘ī thought in Pakistan. I have selected influential scholars from both camps in order to show their diversity. Especially the fascinating topic of contemporary majālis preachers in Pakistan and a careful analysis of the vast amount of audio-visual material produced by this group surely warrants much more scholarly attention. An interesting example is the gākir Ghažanfar ʿAbbās Tunsavī who has often been described to me in Pakistan as the quintessential ghālī preacher. See his website http://www.allamaghazanfar.com for his videos (accessed: 11 December 2014).
about by the Iranian Revolution. The last major section of this chapter then analyzes in detail the backlash these two ʿulamāʾ provoked.

**Partition and the making of the reformist-traditionalist divide**

The debate over religious reform in Pakistan is intimately connected with the experience of Partition and with the shake-up of religious authority and institutions that this shift entailed. Sayyid Ḥusayn ʿĀrif Naqvī has connected controversies among preachers and ʿulamāʾ in Pakistan with the rise of Shaykhism in the new state, a school of speculative theology which he portrays primarily as a “foreign,” Indian import to which few scholars native to the are that later became Pakistan subscribed.\(^{327}\) Shaykhī theology within Twelver Shiʿīsm goes back to Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī (1753-1826) and emerged as a distinctive school after Muḥammad-Taqī Baraghānī (d. 1847) proclaimed takfīr of al-Aḥsāʾī for denying the return of the physical body at the time of the resurrection.\(^ {328}\) The third master of the school, Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1870), developed an idea al-Aḥsāʾī had only alluded to. He supplemented the first three pillars of the Shiʿī profession of faith, namely God’s unity (tauḥīd), the mission of the prophets (nubuwwa), and that of the Imams (imāma), with a fourth. This al-rukn al-rābiʿ was meant to denote the true Shiʿīs, “those initiated into the Imams’ esoteric teachings, the most worthy of whom are in spiritual relation with the Hidden Imam.”\(^{329}\)

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327 Naqvi, “The Controversy about the Shaykhiyya Tendency,” 135–149. A historical precedent for the introduction of new rituals connected with (a much smaller-scale) migration would be the introduction of Iranian-style passion plays in South Lebanon during the course of the 20th century. See Mervin, *Un réformisme chiite*, 245-246.


existence of this spiritual elite is necessary because without it “all humanity would lose the
transcendental meaning of its being and sink into the darkness of impious ignorance.”330 Such
teachings – and Karīm Khān's efforts to establish his own supreme religious authority –
antagonized the leading Shīʿī scholars in Iran and Iraq since their raison d'être was challenged
and their “understanding of the true faith” labeled as “shallow and incomplete.”331

Since no serious institution of higher Shīʿī learning existed in Pakistan at the time of
Partition, nearly all influential scholars who emigrated to the new-born country had received
their training in Lucknow. There, according to Syed Hussain Arif Naqvi, Shaykhī leanings
supposedly had managed to flourish, despite the opposition of the leading scholars teaching in
the seminaries.332 The precise mechanism of the early transmission of Shaykhī ideas to Pakistan
surely warrants further investigation,333 however, especially so because Juan Cole has argued

California Press, (1988), 185-189). Denis MacEoin has argued that although the charges laid against
al-Aḥsāʾī included such matters as his views on the resurrection and the ascension of the Prophet
(miʿrāj), “the real reason for disquiet lay in the fact that the Shaykh had taken rather too far certain
possibilities inherent in the Uṣūlī position itself. In departing from the strict Akhbārī position of
reliance on texts, the Uṣūlis had to rely not only on deductive reasoning but also on non-rational
modes of understanding in religious matters.” Al-Aḥsāʾī, McEoin holds, simply went too far in
stressing kashf (intuitive revelation) in this context (see Denis MacEoin, “Orthodoxy and
Heterodoxy in Nineteenth-Century Shi’ism: The Cases of Shaykhism and Babism,” Journal of the

331 Mangol Bayat, Mysticism and Dissent: Socioreligious thought in Qajar Iran (Syracuse N.Y.: Syracuse
University Press, 1982), 55-56 and 75-77. Especially the concept of the “fourth pillar” came also
under attack from a rival Shaykhi school that formed in Tabriz. This branch accused Karim Khān of
inventing the concept and distorting the teachings of Āhsāʾī and the master's first successor, Sayyid
Kāẓim Rashtī (d. 1844) (see ibid., 68).
332 Naqvi, “The Controversy,” 140. Naqvi identifies Hyderabad in the Deccan as another center of
Shaykhi thought. For a recent endorsement of Naqvi’s portrayal of Lucknow, see Muḥammad Akram
ʿĀrifi, Shīʿʾyān-i Pākistān (Qom, 2007). Sayyid ‘Ali Naqi Naqvi, writing about the Shaykhi school in
1934, remarked on the other hand that the Shaykhis had only a very marginal influence in North
India (see ‘Ali Naqi Naqvi, Bāb ō maẕhab-i Bahāʾī (Lucknow, 1934), 128-129).
333 Reformist authors make the claim that the competing Shaykhī centers in Kerman and Kuwait
(which took over from Tabriz) have been actively trying to obtain a foothold in Pakistan, allegedly
at the behest of the “imperialists” (see Tāhir ‘Abbas Aʾvān, Mard-i ‘ilm maydān-i ‘amal men ya’ni
Sarkār ‘Allāmah Āyatullāh al-Shaykh Muhammad Husayn al-Najafi ke savānih aur ‘ilmī ō ‘amali
kārnāme ō dīgar hālāt (Layya: Jāmiʿat Valī al-ʿĀsr, 2005), 52). The reformist-minded author
Muḥammad Husayn Zaydī Barsatī makes the rather charged claim that Bashīr Anṣārī, a leading

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that the Uṣūlī ʿulamā of Awadh had managed to stamp out what they perceived to be a heresy in the 1830s:

The Uṣūlī approach to religion and law won out over the esoteric charismatic approach of the Shaykhis, perhaps because Awadh bureaucrats and tax-farmers, many of them intellectually formed by the rationalist Niẓāmi method of the Farangi Maḥall, could better appreciate the rational-legal techniques of the mujtahids.334

It also has to be noted that the word “Shaykhi” can be easily (mis)used as a derogatory term to slander opponents who are more inclined to the inherent esoteric potential of Shi'iism and should thus be viewed with caution. What emerges from the existing secondary literature, however, is that the esoterically-minded muhājirs, who also introduced hitherto unknown practices and slogans into processions in Sindh and Punjab,335 did not encounter any real doctrinal opposition due to the relative “unsophistication” of the locals: scholars residing within the boundaries of today’s Pakistan were rather late to establish bonds with eminent mujtahids in Iraq336 or to set up an infrastructure of Shīʿī madrasas and seminaries. None of Lucknow’s leading scholars discussed in the previous chapter migrated to Pakistan. It is remarkable in this context that we can see a clear dividing line between a local, Punjab-based reformist trend in the mold of Sayyid Ṭalḥa Ḥāʾirī and Sayyid Ḥashmat Ṭalḥā rising up against the

traditionalist scholar whom we will study in more depth below, was introduced to Shaykhism while traveling as a spy for the British to Iraq during WWII (see Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Zaydī Barsatī, Pākistān meṉ shaykhiyyat kā shīʿiyyat aur shīʿah-i ʿulamāʾ se ṭakrāʾū (Cinīūṭ: Idārāh-i Nashr ō Ishāʾat-i Haqāʾiq-i Islām, n.d.), 25).

334 Cole, Roots of North Indian Shi‘ism, 189.
335 Rieck, “The Struggle for Equal Rights,” 272-273. Sayyid ‘Alī Naqī Naqvī mentions, for example, that the custom of walking over a fire while beating one’s breast during mourning ceremonies had been current in Burma, Madras, the Decan, and Lucknow before being taken up in Lahore after Partition. See Maulana Syed Ali Naqi Sahib Qibla, Azadari. A Historical Review of Institution (sic) of Azadari for Imam Husain. Translation of “Aza-i-Husaini par Tarikhi Tabsera,” (Karachi: Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust, 1974), 483. Justin Jones suggests that new interpolations into taʿziya processions or vilifications of the Caliphs may be read as a conflict between established native Punjabi or Sindhi Shi‘īs and “those muhajir Shi‘a who used Muharram ritual as a means of assimilating themselves into a new environment and seeking local relevance.” This evaluation speaks to my earlier point about predominantly functional readings of religion in the study of Shi‘i Islam (see Jones, Shi‘a Islam in Colonial India, 237).
new immigrants who were predominantly born in towns that are part of the present-day Indian state of Uttar Pradesh (UP). This becomes clearer if we compare the basic biographical data of some of Pakistan's most outspoken traditionalist scholars – some of whom will be discussed in more detail below – with that of their reformist counterparts. None of those figures who attacked reformist ideas after Pakistan came into being hailed from the new country's territory:

1. Muḥammad Bashīr Anṣārī (1901-1973), born in Shīkārpūr (UP)
2. Mirzā Yūsuf Ḥusayn (1901-1988), born in Lucknow (UP)
3. Muḥammad Ismāʿīl (1901-1976), born in Ṣulṭānpūr Ludhīyāṉ (today Indian Punjab)
5. ʿAlī Ḥasnayn Shīftah (1924-1991), born in Jaunpūr (UP)

By contrast, the reformists, who are in most cases slightly younger, were predominantly born in the (later) Pakistani part of the Punjab:

1. Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Najafī Dhakkō, born 1932 in Sargōdhā, Punjab
3. Sayyid Muḥammad Yār Shāh Najafī (1915-1990), born close to ʿAlipūr, Punjab
5. Husayn Bakhsh Jāṛā (1920-1990), born in Jāṛā, close to Dera Ismaʿīl Khān, today located in the Khyber Pakthunkhwa province of Pakistan
7. Akhtar ʿAbbās (1925-1999), born near Kūṭ Addū Kutadu in the Muẓaffargaṛh district, Punjab

The Punjab, therefore, seems to once again demonstrate its potential as an especially fertile ground for reformist thought. As Kenneth Jones has explained: “The diversity of religious communities in the Punjab led to a greater number of socio-religious movements than in any other region of South Asia.” Its character as a “region in turmoil” filled with “aggressive religious competition” facilitated before Partition the export of attitudes, strategies, and

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337 Large parts of the present-day state were known as the “United Provinces” under British rule from 1902 until independence. See for more information on Shiʿī Islam in North India during the colonial period the first chapter of this dissertation.

338 I have based these two lists on Andreas Rieck's very helpful discussion of the development of internal Shiʿī debates, as well as on various instances in both the reformist and traditionalist literature where the two camps are placed in opposition against each other. See Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 129-133 and 171-180 and, for example, Şafdar Ḥusayn Dōgar, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Dhakkō se 150 suʾāl (Lahore: al-Qāʾim, 1987), 41.

339 Kenneth W. Jones, Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 120.
organizations predominant in this specific locale to other parts of British India. The Shi'i case seems to imply that such a role continued for the Punjab well into the era of Pakistan's independence.

The first tensions between advocates for Shi'i religious reform and their opponents can be dated within the first two decades post-Partition. Journals from the 1950s and early 1960s are full of complaints that not enough action was taken to establish communal life similar to India. An editorial in the Lahore-based journal Asad, which usually did not distinguish itself through reformist proclivities, revealed on 10 May 1959 the “bitter truth” of the Shi'i qaum's total indifference towards spreading the “education and sciences of the Al-i Muḥammad,” even though founding educational institutions was of the “utmost necessity” to ward off a double threat. The truth of Shi'i Islam was under assault not only from the quarter of the so-called “educated” classes who made fun of religion but also from the “sovereigns of the pulpit” (tājdār-i minbar). Due to a severe lack of “exalted clerical leadership,” these preachers deepened the “slavery of the common people” on a daily basis. In countering these threats, only one school, the Dār al-ʿUlūm Muḥammadiyya in Sargōdhā, could so far be designated as an undivided success. It was supported not only by both leading Shi'ī organizations of the time, the All Pakistan Shi'a Conference (APSC, the successor to the AISC) and the Organization for the Protection of Shi'i Rights (Idārah-i Taḥaffuẓ-i Ḥuqūq-i Shī’ā, ITHS), but also amply assisted

340 Ibid., 121.
341 In addition to the quotes from Asad given below, see also, for example, “Ghaur kijīye,” Payām-i Āmal 3,2 (1959): 4 and “Daur-e ḥāżir ke dini taqāže,” Payām-i ʿAmal 5,10 (1961): 4.
342 The journal’s editor was Sayyid Akhtar Ḥusayn (d. 1987) who wrote under the pen name Shāʾiq Anbālavī. He later became the first General Secretary of the Tahrik-i Nifāẕ-i Fiqh-i Jaʿfariyya (TNFJ) (see Muhammad Munir Aḥmad Salayc, Vafayāt-i nāmvarān-i Pākistān. 14 August 1947 se 31 December 2004 tak vafāt pāne vālī aham Pākistānī shakhşiyāt kā mukhtāsar taʿāruf aur mustanad tārīkh-i vafāt (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 2006), 387). For more information on the TNFJ, see also chapter four of this dissertation.
by prominent Shi‘ī doctors and lawyers. The journal also praised the comparatively small Makhzan al-‘Ulūm Ja‘fariyya in Multan as an example of how a madrasa could be run even without relying on an endowment bequeathed by an influential landholder. Instead, this institution depended solely on small contributions in the form of zakāt, khums, and donations. Given these calls on the Shi‘ī community for more financial support for their educational institutions, it is fitting, then, that the first major controversy revolved around the issue of khums. This debate was initiated by Muḥammad Ismā‘īl, a convert to Shi‘ī Islam who had been brought up in an Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ family. He later attended Deobandi madrasas and was known in the Shi‘ī community as “muballigh-i a‘ẓam” (The Greatest Preacher) due to his rhetorical prowess. Ismā‘īl led the charge against using khums for religious schools. In a series of articles published in his journal Ṣadāqat he argued that this religious tax was the exclusive right of needy sayyids.

343 See “Hamāre qaumī idāre 2,” Asad (10 May 1959): 2. The journal continued its series over the next months, introducing to its readers other schools and organizations like the Jāmi‘at al-Muntaẓar in Lahore (2 June 1959), the Jāmi‘ah-i ʿIlmiyyah-i Bāb al-Najaf in Jāṛā (10 September 1959) or the Madrasat al-Wā’īzin in Karachi (2 October 1959). For more information on the history and leadership of the APSC and the ITHS, see Rieck, “The Struggle for Equal Rights,” 271-276.


345 His father was an Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ scholar called Sulṭān ʿAlī. Muḥammad Ismā‘īl went to Deoband where he studied with Anvār Shāh Kashmīrī (d. 1933) and ʿIjāz ʿAlī. He later became a preacher in Ṭōbah Ṭek Singh’s biggest Deobandi madrasa. It was during his tenure there that he converted to Shi‘ī Islam, allegedly after meeting an adherent of the Imāmī faith and intensive personal research (bā ṭahqīq ō justujūyī). As a consequence of his conversion, his family cut all ties with him (see Naqvī, Taẕkirah-i ʿulamā’-i imāmiyyah, 260-261).

346 Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 124-125. Debates over the status of sayyids among Pakistani Shi‘īs would be a fascinating topic to explore in more depth. Unfortunately, however, such a probe is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Juan Cole has identified a “pattern of early settlement, imperial land grants, and later adoption of Shi‘īsm” among Sayyids in Mughal North India (see Juan Cole, Roots of North Indian Shi‘īsm, 72-84). For the arguments that the “last strongholds of both Ašrāf and Syeds in India and Pakistan are the civil service and academia where the intellectual skills of the ‘sacred intelligentsia’ [...] were readily transformable into a modern, secular elite” and that the failure of land-reforms in Pakistan “has perpetuated Syed power in rural and tribal Pakistan longer than in India,” see Theodore P. Wright Jr., “The Changing Role of the Sādāt in India and Pakistan,” Oriente Moderno, Nuova Serie 18,2 (1999): 656-658. See also Arthur F. Buehler, “Trends of ashrafization in India,” in Kazuo Morimoto (ed), Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies. The living links to the Prophet (London: Routledge, 2012), 231-246.
Gradually, however the focus of debates over reform shifted to questions concerning Shīʿī rituals in general and the practices connected with majālis in particular. The early reformist figure Ḥusayn Bakhsh Jāṛā (d. 1990), for example, claimed in his book Lumʿat al-Anwār fi ʿaqāʾid al-abrār (The Glow of Lights in the Creeds of the Pious), that “those people who occupy the minbar are in their outward appearance, actions, and character far removed from religion.” This led to the “constant rise of the smoke of anti-religiosity” (dīnī dushmanī kā dhūāṉ). The popular preachers would consider the propagation of “true Islam” (kalimah-i ḥaqq) as the “death knell to their business” and had managed to turn such teachings into an unpleasant thing for the common people. It was a waste of time to reason with them since they openly took pride in immoral behavior and regarded the minbar as giving them access to “the arena of a luxurious life style” (ʿayyāshi kā akhārāh). From there, it was only a small step until more fundamental concerns of Shīʿī theology took center stage since the battle over rituals was clearly informed by widely diverging views on what should be considered orthodox Shīʿism. The intensification of these debates overlapped with the return of young Shīʿī scholars in the 1960s from Najaf. Pakistani ʿulamā in general had been eager to catch up and take advantage of the intrinsically international Shīʿī experience of learning, flocking in large numbers to Iraq’s prominent scholars. The 1960s were arguably the heyday of Shīʿī religious

347 He was born in 1920 in the village of Jāṛā, not far away from Derah Ismāʿīl Khān. Ḥusayn Bakhsh Jāṛā received his foundational education at Chowk 38 at the hands of Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Naqvi, Sayyid Yār Shāh Najafī, and Mufti Jaʿfar Ḥusayn. After studying the rational sciences (durūs-i maʿqūl) at a Sunnī madrasa in Gūjrānvālah, he passed his fāżil degree in Arabic at the Punjab University in 1945. Jāṛā taught at various schools afterwards, most notably from 1951 onwards at the Dār al-ʿUlūm Muḥammadiyya in Sargōdhā, before leaving for Najaf to pursue higher studies inter alia with the Grand Ayatollahs Sayyid Abū ʿl-Qāsim al-Khūʾī and Sayyid ʿAbdullāh Shirāzī (d. 1984). Jāṛā returned to Pakistan in 1954 and opened a madrasa called Jāmiʿah-i ʿIlmiyyah-i Bāb al-Najaf in his native village while also teaching elsewhere in Pakistan, inter alia at the Jāmiʿat al-Muntazar in Lahore (see Naqvī, Taḏkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i imāmiyyah, 83-85).


students rushing to the shrine cities of Mesopotamia, followed by a steep decline in the 1970s, caused by the Iraqi government's stricter visa policies, as we have already seen.\footnote{Rieck, “A Stronghold,” 292-294. It was only after the Iranian revolution that Qum and Mashhad fully replaced the Iraqi centers of learning.} The reformist voices of the 1960s attacked “superstitious” rituals and accused their colleagues, who had been exclusively trained in the Subcontinent, of deifying the \textit{ahl al-bayt}, the members of Muhammad's household. To one such proponent of reform – and the most influential that is – the next section of this chapter now turns.

\textit{Reformist Concerns I: Muḥammad Ḥusayn Najafi Ḍhakkō and the creation of an alternative, law-based Shi'i identity}

Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Najafi Ḍhakkō (b. 1933) had studied in Najaf from 1954 until \footnote{For a list of his teachers, see Naqvī, \textit{Taẕkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i imāmiyyah}, 295.} 1960\footnote{See Sayyid Ṣaqalayn Kāẓimī, \textit{Imāmiyyah dīnī madāris-i Pākistān}, 185-187.} and upon his return to Pakistan served as the principal of the already mentioned Dār al-'Ulūm Muḥammadiyya in Sargōdhā (founded in 1949), then the most influential Shi'i religious seminary in Pakistan.\footnote{Aʿvān, \textit{Mard-i ʿilm maydān-i ʿamal men}, 66-67. See also Rieck, \textit{The Shias of Pakistan}, 130, for additional examples of Ḍhakkō’s critique.} Ḍhakkō's concerns initially revolved around what he considered “objectionable” customs that had crept into Shi'i mourning ceremonies. He criticized the prevalence of melodies and songs adapted from Bollywood movies, the scheduling of \textit{majālis} that overlapped with the obligatory daily prayers, or the fact that clean-shaven preachers spoke from the pulpit of Ḥusayn.\footnote{For vivid descriptions of various processions in the Subcontinent, see David Pinault, \textit{Horse of Karbala: Muslim devotional life in India} (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 87-132.} Among other things, Ḍhakkō expressed his indignation at undue veneration of Žūljanāḥ, the white horse representing Ḥusayn's steed that is taken out during \textit{ʿazādārī} processions in the Subcontinent.\footnote{A 355} Ḍhakkō lamented that
children would pass under the horse or feed it grains while consuming the leftovers, implying that such contact with the horse would entail a blessing. He ridiculed those who tied pieces of paper with requests to the horse as if it would carry them directly to the Hidden Imām.\footnote{Al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, \textit{Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm}, 175-176. See also Naqvi, “The Controversy,” 141.}

These issues were of grave concern since they pointed to a much deeper problem, namely that Muslims in today’s Pakistan were still the cultural slaves of the (former) Hindu majority and their British colonial masters.\footnote{Al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, \textit{Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm}, 16.} They had developed a habitus of harmful customs that had shaped their consciences, an addiction that was extremely difficult to break.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 35.} It did not help in Ḍhakkō’s view that his coreligionists were under the control of evil scholars (‘ulamā’-i sū’) who proved to be only interested in worshipping their own bellies. They sold Islam to the highest bidder and turned \textit{majālis} into a for-profit business.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 38-39 and 138-140.} These fraudulent ‘ulamā and preachers had taken over Islam’s blessed garden. Like a pest they prevented the growth of its roses and sweet-smelling plants, which were the expression of its original religious form.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 40-41.} Because the common people lacked a moral compass, however, they were not able to distinguish the true from the false scholars.\footnote{Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, \textit{Uṣūl al-sharīʿa fī ʿaqāʾid al-shīʿa} (Sargōdhā: Maktabat al-Sibṭayn, 2006), 19. This books has been reprinted at least seven times since it was published for the first time in 1967. See also Rieck, \textit{The Shias of Pakistan}, 131-132.} According to Ḍhakkō, these tricksters had never made any effort to “render the future of the Shīʿīs in Pakistan brilliant and illuminous” by establishing a religious infrastructure for the community through the opening of \textit{madrasas} and training teachers and prayer leaders. Instead, they had regarded the Shīʿīs of the country as
a “highly valued prize (sōne kī cīriyā) which they have clutched with both hands” and established a front against the ‘ulamā.\textsuperscript{362}

Even in his earliest writings, however, Ḍhakkō made clear that his reformist project aimed at more than removing reprehensible customs because ‘aqīda and ‘amal were always intertwined.\textsuperscript{363} A milestone in this respect was the translation of Ibn Bābawayh al-Ṣadūq’s (d. 991) influential creed work \textit{Risālat al-Iʿtiqādat}\textsuperscript{364} into Urdu, along with a substantial commentary by Ḍhakkō. With this book, Ḍhakkō laid the ground for a controversy that was still continuing more than three decades later. Ḍhakkō “presented his own views on ‘correct beliefs’ about the Shi‘ī Imams and other subjects in a categorical manner” and directly attacked well-established scholars such as Muḥammad Bashīr Anṣārī and Muḥammad Ismā‘īl, accusing them of deliberately twisting the truth.\textsuperscript{365} In Ḍhakkō’s view, in the beginning the message of ‘aqīda had not only been utterly pure but also instantly comprehensible for everyone, be they “a fool or a wise man, a rural camel-driver or an urban philosopher, man or woman, young or old.”\textsuperscript{366} The essence of this original ‘aqīda was tauḥīd, Islam’s “pinnacle of distinction” (ṭurrah-i imityāz), which Ḍhakkō, interestingly, defined in very controversial terms. The unforgivable sin of shirk (polytheism) was committed by a Muslim who infringed on God’s two supreme privileges, namely to acknowledge His right to absolute lordship (rubūbiyya) and His right to being the exclusive addressee of worship (ulūhiyya). This implied that the fire of hell awaited

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{362} Al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, \textit{Uṣūl al-sharīʿa}, 58.
\item \textsuperscript{363} A’vān, \textit{Mard-i ʿilm}, 69 and 177. Ḍhakkō himself claims that his views have not changed over the last fifty years. This feat qualified him, according to a professor of psychology he was acquainted with, to be labeled a “servant (or man) of truth” (bandah-i haqq). Interview with Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, Jāmiʿat al-Muntaẓar, Lahore, 18 July 2012.
\item \textsuperscript{364} For a discussion of this work, see Asif Ali Asghar Fyzee, “The Creed of Ibn Bābawayhi,” \textit{Journal of Bombay University} 12 (1943): 70–86.
\item \textsuperscript{365} Rieck, \textit{The Shias of Pakistan}, 131.
\item \textsuperscript{366} Al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, \textit{Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm}, 49-50.
\end{itemize}
those who either credited anyone besides God with creating life and providing sustenance (shirk-i rubūbi) or worshiped and prayed to anyone besides Him (shirk-i ulūhi). 367 Anyone who termed ʿAlī to be khāliq (creator) was a kāfir and outside the fold of Islam. 368 In advancing this argument, Ḍhakkō’s position is difficult indeed to distinguish from Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb’s (d. 1206/1792) reflections, who made this so-called double tauḥīd a centerpiece of his thought. In doing so, he went beyond Ibn Taymiyya’s (d. 728/1328) deliberations on the subject by emphasizing that confessing tauḥīd with one’s heart and tongue is not enough to render someone a Muslim. Even the early Muslim apostates (ahl al-ridda) and the polytheists (mushrikūn) during the time of the Prophet had confessed outwardly that God alone provided the means of subsistence, had the power over life and death, and ruled the seven heavens and the two worlds. In Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb’s conception of tauḥīd it were devotional acts exclusively directed towards God, like a human being only invoking God, only fearing Him, and only worshipping Him, that confirmed the profession of faith and became crucial in distinguishing between Muslims and kuffār. 369

368 Interview with Muhammad Ḥusayn al-Najafī Dhakkō, 18 July 2012.
369 Esther Peskes, Muḥammad B. ʿAbdalwahhāb (1703 – 92) im Widerstreit: Untersuchungen zur Rekonstruktion der Frühgeschichte der Wahhābiya (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993), 21-27. See also Michael Crawford, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab (London: OneWorld, 2014), 57-58. Dhakkō differs in his explicit usage from the important modernist Iraqi Shiʿī ʿālim Muḥammad Ṣaḥib al-Muẓaffar (d. 1963), for example, who adduced in his ʿAqāʾid al-imāmīyya the terms tauḥīd al-dhāt, tauḥīd al-ṣifāt and tauḥīd al-ʿibāda without, however, relying on the terms ulūhiyya or rubūbiyya. Al-Muẓaffar also stayed clear of any criticism of Shiʿī mourning ceremonies or visiting of graves. He did not aim at establishing boundaries of appropriate behavior but simply remarked that these actions were to be counted among “the pious lawful deeds” (al-aʿmāl al-ṣāliḥa al-sharʿiyya) (see Muhammad Ṣaḥib al-Muẓaffar, ʿAqāʾid al-imāmīyya (Cairo: Maktabat al-Najāh, 1961), 14-15). Muḥammad b. Mahdī al-Khāliṣī by contrast focused in his discussion of tauḥīd on the fact that the whole creation pointed towards its maker (see Muḥammad al-Khāliṣī, Iḥyā al-shariʿa fī madhhab al-shīʿa (qism al-ʿaqāʾid) (Tehran: Al-Shaykh Ḥāshim al-Dabbāgh, 1998), 38-40).
The – pejorative – term “Wahhābi” has of course a long and colorful polemical history in South Asia and beyond.\footnote{For an overview of the different variations this label took on, see Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India. Ahmad Riza Khan and his movement, 1870–1920* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 240–255. See also Martin Rixinger, *Ṣanāʿullāh Amritsari (1868–1948) und die Ahl-i-Ḥadīṣ im Punjab unter britischer Herrschaft* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2004), 138–141 and 523–536.} Given these findings, however, a more nuanced approach might be called for instead of simply following Andreas Rieck’s statement about the “ridiculous term of ‘Wahhabi Shias’” which Ḍhakkō’s opponents used for him and his supporters, as we will see below.\footnote{Rieck, *The Shias of Pakistan*, 129. Ḍhakkō repeatedly denied that there was anything related to the Wahhābi school of thought in his books since their interpretation of Islam was diametrically opposed to Shi‘ism. If anyone understood his words in this way, this only showed that they were ignorant of the “original madhhab of the Āl-i Muḥammad” (see Ḍōgar, *Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ḍhakkō se 150 suʾāl*, 16).} At any rate, Ḍhakkō used his understanding of correct *tauḥīd* in order to go against attributing to the prophets and Imāms any independent knowledge of the unseen world.\footnote{Al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, *Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm*, 86-87.} He not only argued that they were totally dependent on God in order to acquire any *ʿilm* they possessed,\footnote{Idem, *Uṣūl al-sharīʿa*, 387. In comparison with this earlier work, dating to 1967, Ḍhakkō’s positions seem to have crystallized towards an even less sectarian approach in *Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm*, published initially in 1995. In *Uṣūl al-sharīʿa* he still affirmed that the *maṣūmin* obtained their knowledge from a wide range of sources, which included *ilhām* (non-Prophetic inspiration), the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-qudus*), the service of jinn and non-Qur’ānic scripture like the mysterious *Muṣḥaf-i Fāṭimah* (The (Divine) Book of Fāṭimah) and the *Kitāb-i jafr* (The Book of Divination). For more information on the role of these two books in the Shi‘ī tradition, see Rainer Brunner, *Die Schia und die Koranfälschung* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2001), 5 and also Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi‘ī Islam. The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi‘īsm* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 150.} but also that no form of esoteric knowledge (*ʿilm-i ghayb*) per se existed. Instead, God had made known to all believers that truly hidden and unknowable things such as the scales to weigh people’s deeds (*mīzān*), the resurrection, and paradise were all real.\footnote{Al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, *Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm*, 80-82.} The fact that prophets received revelation (*waḥy*) and the Imāms inspiration (*ilhām*) did not render them qualitatively different from other human beings. *Wahy* was not part of the prophets’ essence (*dhātī*). Rather all of them had at one point in their lives existed without this additional quality, as demonstrated by Q42:52:
Even so We have revealed to thee a Spirit of Our bidding. Thou knewest not what the Book was, nor belief; but We made it a light, whereby We guide whom We will of Our servants. And thou, surely thou shalt guide unto a straight path.\textsuperscript{375}

Consequently, the Imāms did not differ intrinsically from other human beings.\textsuperscript{376} They were not made out of light and had no preexistence with God before creation. Dhakkō held that all references in the Shi‘ī tradition which described the Imāms as \textit{nūrānī} (consisting of light) should only be understood in a metaphorical sense (\textit{min bāb al-majāz}). He adduced a \textit{ḥadīth} from the sixth Shi‘ī Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), taken from al-Kulaynī’s \textit{Kāfī}, in which God explained that before creation He brought into being only the spirit (\textit{rūḥ}) of Muḥammad and ‘Ali, which the philosophers have termed the first intellect (\textit{al-‘aql al-awwal}). While human beings had to concede that they were not able to completely penetrate this truth,\textsuperscript{377} \textit{nūr} probably referred to the guidance offered by the Imāms in the midst of the darkness of \textit{shirk} and their acting as God’s repository of knowledge.\textsuperscript{378} The Qur‘ān, the words of the Imāms themselves, Islamic history, and the demands of the original human condition (\textit{fiṭra}) all excluded the possibility that these “holy personalities” would have descended directly from heaven. Only Adam and Eve had no parents, only Jesus was born without a father, but whoever doubted a regular human birth for the Imāms was a “denier of the Qur‘ān and completely devoid of faith.”\textsuperscript{379} The Imāms also did not command any extraordinary powers that would give them authority over life and death or enable them to provide sustenance to human beings. If God had delegated these exclusive prerogatives to them, this would be a serious attack on the Islamic doctrine of \textit{tauḥīd}.\textsuperscript{380}

\textsuperscript{375} Idem, \textit{Uṣūl al-sharīʿa}, 76.
\textsuperscript{376} Dōgar, \textit{Muḥammad Ḥusayn Dhakkō se 150 suʿāl}, 70.
\textsuperscript{377} Al-Najafī Dhakkō, \textit{Uṣūl al-sharīʿa}, 144-146.
\textsuperscript{378} \textit{Ibid.}, 147-149.
\textsuperscript{379} Al-Najafī Dhakkō, \textit{Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm}, 95.
\textsuperscript{380} \textit{Ibid.}, 90-91.
It was thus inconceivable that the *mašūmin* would act as independent intermediary authorities between God and the believers.\(^{381}\) Dhakkō rejected an understanding of *vilāyat-i takvīnī* that attributed powers to the Imāms qua their function (*wažifah*) or which came necessarily in conjunction with their *office* (*farż-i maņšib*).\(^{382}\) All *ḥadīths* that seemed to confirm a cosmological role for the Imāms were unreliable.\(^{383}\) Only because these holy personalities were human, too, could they act as God’s proof (*ḥujjat*) towards us. If they had capabilities beyond our comprehension, we would not be able to appreciate their perfect obedience to God demonstrated by their praying in biting cold, fasting in scorching heat, and bearing all sorts of challenging afflictions with exemplary patience.\(^{384}\) Dhakkō was careful to add that his mission to disenchant the Imāms had limits. They might share our humanity but there were still levels of distinction even within one species (*jiς̲n*). Compared to the Prophet, for example,

we are a stone, but he is a diamond. We are a flint stone, but he is a philosopher’s stone (*paras*). We are a particle, but he is the sun. We are foolish, but he is wise. We are imperfect, but is perfect. He is human but the embodied spirit (*rūḥ-i mujassam*), he is a body, but a body infused with spirit (*jism-i murawwaḥ*).\(^{385}\)

Building on these claims, Dhakkō tried to create an alternative Shiʿī identity that was not focused on a deeply emotional veneration of the Imāms but rather had its basis in a specific approach towards Islamic law, which – he reasoned – would constitute a far lesser obstacle to Sunni-Shiʿī unity. The true greatness of the *ahl-i bayt* lay in the important function they played in the “system of the *sharī‘a,*” namely as “heads and chiefs” of the court that clarified the

\(^{381}\) Dhakkō only conceded a very limited role for a *mašūm* to act as an intermediary (*wasīlah*). He argued that God would bestow favors on the people due to the blessing (*baraka*) of the Imāms. Yet, crucially, they had no active role in this themselves (see Dōgar, *Muḥammad Ḥusayn Dhakkō se 150 su‘āl*, 21).

\(^{382}\) *Ibid.*, 53.


specifications of the divine law (jahān tak niẓām-i sharīʿat kā taʿalluq he is maḥkame ke sarbarāh ō sardār heṇ). Only through them do we have a grasp of the categories of ḥalāl and ḥarām.386 What was specifically Shīʿī in this context, Ḍhakkō said, was that Shīʿīs in their legal reasoning avoided relying on analogy (qiyyāṣ) or al-maṣlaḥa al-mursala (the unattested benefit without a clear indication in Qurʾān or ḥadīth).387 Such approaches would only lead to unlawful innovations (bidʿa) which even in a worldly context were illegal since no Pakistani had the right, for example, to introduce his own currency. These innovations constituted an open rebellion against God and would imply that Islam as a religion was not complete (din-i Islām mukammal nahīn he).388 Instead, Shīʿīs relied only on the Qurʾān and on ḥadīths transmitted from the Imāms.389

This narrow view of what it means to be Shīʿī goes very much against the traditionalists who identify other factors – like the cosmological position of the Imāms, the acknowledgment of their super human powers, and the reliance on their capabilities to provide help to their adherents – as summarizing Shīʿī identity. To be sure, Ḍhakkō was actively trying to accommodate Shīʿī sensibilities by arguing, for instance, that the Shīʿī way to pray with open hands reflected the Prophet’s original custom.390 He condoned the Shīʿī usage of the phrase Yā

386 Dōgar, Muhammad Husayn Dhakkō se 150 suʿāl, 20.
387 Al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm, 98.
388 Ibid., 33-34. The claim that Shīʿī law is traditionally opposed to maṣlaḥa, while factually accurate, is rather difficult to uphold after the Islamic Republic of Iran has come into being. The new state has since its early days based many ordinances (like edicts to limit private ownership of agricultural land or laws on taxation) on this principle, despite the protest of senior clerics like Ayatollah Ibrāhīm Jannātī, who rejected maṣlaḥa because it “could be interpreted as an admission that Islamic legislation suffers from deficiencies, and it establishes the possibility that different opinions may be represented at the same time and that conflicts may break out between them.” Maṣlaḥa officially took center stage with the formation of the Assessment Council shortly before Khomeini’s death in 1988 (see Asghar Schirazi, The Constitution of Iran: Politics and the state in the Islamic Republic (London: Tauris, 1997), 233-244).
389 Al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm, 98.
390 Ibid., 109.
ʿAlī madad (Help, oh ‘Ali!) if those who uttered these words did not replace the phrase al-salām ʿalaykum with it and meant no more than asking ʿAli to implore God on their behalf for assistance. ʿAli and the other Imāms only “caused God to give” (dīlvāna) but did not provide themselves.391 Similarly, he criticized the Sunnī practice of perform additional prayers (tarāwīḥ) during the nights of Ramadan as bidʿa.392 The same applied to turning ʿāshūrā into a day of celebration.393 Ḏhakkō also conceded that there had been a tampering with the call to prayer: right from the beginning it had contained the words “hasten to the best of works” (hayya ʿalā khayr al-ʿamal). It was the second Caliph ʿUmar who replaced this phrase with “prayer is better than sleep” (al-ṣalāt khayr min al-naum). In this decision he was driven by his own whim and thus acted against God’s clear ruling (hukm).394 While Ḏhakkō defined in this context the Shiʿī version of the adhān as the original Islamic one, he did not take the same position with regard to the significantly more important Shiʿī addendum ashadu anna ʿAliyyan wali Allāh (“I confess that ʿAli is the friend/viceregent of God”). The latter was in Ḏhakkō’s view an innovation dating back to the Buyid dynasty.395 In his argumentation, Ḏhakkō’s position is clearly informed by the stance taken by al-Ṣadūq, who likewise rejected the third shahāda as a fabrication.396

Ḏhakkō’s motivation was – similar to the controversial Iraqi scholar Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Khāliṣī (d. 1963) – to suppress the third shahāda in the adhān in order to

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391 Al-Najafī Ḏhakkō, Uṣūl al-sharīʿa, 231-232. In explaining this fine distinction, Ḏhakkō never addressed the question of the effectiveness of the Imāms’ intervention and whether they had a sort of coercing power over God (see Dögar, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ḏhakkō se 150 suʾāl, 31).
392 Al-Najafī Ḏhakkō, Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm, 122-123.
393 Ibid., 135.
394 Ibid., 105.
395 Ibid., 107-108.
396 Like al-Ṣadūq, for example, Ḏhakkō affirmed that he of course stood with the meaning of the third shahāda since ʿAli was without any doubt the wali of God and the rightful Caliph after the Prophet’s death (see Liyakat A. Takim, “From Bid’ā to Sunna: The Willāya of ʿAlī in the Shiʿī Adhān,” Journal of the American Oriental Society 120,2 (2000): 166 and 171).
make room for Sunnī-Shīʿī rapprochement. Yet, it proved difficult for him to back up his ruling with more contemporary scholars because the pendulum had swung back forcefully towards condoning the third shahāda since at least the Safavid period. Đhakkō was eager to make the sweeping case that if we considered the opinions of the “most learned ‘ulamā and greatest fuqahā,” they would all declare the third shahāda to be impermissible. He apologized to his readers that he could at this point only provide a brief summary, but more information was surely available on request. Yet, those rulings by prominent scholars such as Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm (d. 1970) or Sayyid ʿAbdullāh al-Shīrāzī (d. 1984) which Đhakkō was able to mention did not outlaw the third shahāda – they only refused to make it mandatory and to treat it as an integral part of the adhān. Studying the positions held by the leading Shiʿī ‘ulamā regarding this question in the 1960s, Werner Ende thus argued that nearly all leading figures of the time, including Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, opined that the third shahāda

was not only a recommended act, but also the cornerstone (rukn) or secret (sirr) of the true faith, the perfection (kamāl) of religion, the symbol (ramz) of Shiʿism and its distinguishing mark (shiʿār) which must not be abandoned.

397 On al-Khāliṣī, see Werner Ende, “Success and Failure of a Shiite Modernist: Muhammad ibn Muhammad Mahdi al-Khalisi (1890-1963),” in Alessandro Monsutti et al. (eds), The other Shiites: From the Mediterranean to Central Asia (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 230-244.
398 Takim, “From Bidʿa to Sunna,” 175.
399 On Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, see the next chapter. Sayyid ʿAbdullāh b. Muhammad Ṭāhir Ṭāhirī Shīrāzī was born in 1891, studied in Najaf, and taught in Mashhad. Due to his opposition to the Shah, he was put in jail and later left for Iraq. He was one of the leading marājiʿ in Najaf after the death of Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm and opened three religious schools there (see Momen, An Introduction to Shiʿi Islam, 321).
400 Al-Najafī Đhakkō, Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm, 118-119.
401 Werner Ende, “Bidʿa or Sirr al-Īmān? Modern Shiʿi controversies over the third shahāda in the adhān,” in Mohammad A. Amir-Moezzi, Meir M. Bar-Asher and Simon Hopkins (eds), Le Shiʿisme Imāmite Quarante Ans Après. Hommage à Etan Kohlberg (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 213. See also ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Mūsawī al-Muqarram, Sirr al-imān. Al-Shahāda al-thālitha fī ʿl-adhān (n.p.: Dār al-Firdaus, 1986), 57-58. Ende also remarked how al-Khāliṣī lost the battle over the same question in the context of Iraq, Lebanon, and elsewhere since his opinions were challenged by a generation of former students of al-Ḥakīm, Burūjirdī, al-Khūʾī, and others who defended the use of the third shahāda: “Within a few years the opinion that the third shahāda was not bidʿa at all, but a recommended act (mustaḥabb) and, moreover, the symbol of Shiʿism and the esoteric mystery of the faith, had prevailed throughout” (ibid., 215).
Yet, Dhakkō did not pin his hopes of a rapprochement only on the *adhān*. He also expected to attain Shi‘ī-Sunnī unity by forming a “coalition of the willing.” This envisioned alliance was supposed to comprise Barelvi, Deobandi, and Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ ‘ulamā and only excluded scholars affiliated with the anti-Shi‘ī group Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah-i Pākistān (SSP). Dhakkō set out to create an effective organization for this purpose, named Majlis-i Mutaḥhidah ʿAmal (The United Working Committee). For this project to succeed, however, it was necessary to go beyond all those “excesses” which made the Shi‘ī *madhhab* appear unreasonable. Undue veneration of Zūljanāḥ, for example, was prone to disgrace Shi‘ī Islam in the eyes of others and provided the “enemies of the Household of the Prophet” with a pretext to label the community as “worshippers of the horse and taʿziyah” (*ghōṛā aur taʿziyah parast qaum*). By citing Ahmad Rizā Barelvi, Dhakkō underlined the shared Shi‘ī-Barelvi rejection of performing rites associated with *ziyārat* at mock graves that were supposed to represent the shrines of the Imāms. As we have already seen, Dhakkō did not restrain himself when excoriating practices associated with current *majālis*. These in his view could often be mistaken for either pub brawls or other forms of bawdy entertainment that had led the majority of the population to turn away from any scientific presentation (*ʿilmī andāz-i khiṭābat*) in such venues. In order to rectify this situation, those who organized *majālis* should thus transcend any personal preferences and tastes. They should strive only for the goal of educating their audience about the purpose (*maqṣad*) of Ḥusayn. Meritorious and upright speakers should be selected to talk about how the third Shi‘ī

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402 “Muṣāḥabah bā ḥażrat-i Āyatullāh Ḥājj Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Najafī Pākistānī,” *Hauzah* 123 (2004): 170. Dhakkō in this interview accused the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah of attacking and burning his library in the early 1980s in response to his work *Tajalliyāt-i ṣadāqat ba-javāb Aftāb-i hidāyat*. In the 2004 interview, he opposed a new imprint of this “proof-based and logical” work, arguing that he was now striving towards unity and unanimity (*vaḥdat va yigānigī vā yikdilī*) among Muslims and did not want to provide any pretext for the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah to attack the Shi‘īs. For more information on the anti-Shi‘ī discourse of this group, see chapter 5.


404 *Ibid.*, 146-147. See also *idem*, *Uṣūl al-sharīʿa*, 57.
Imām had sacrificed himself to unmask Yazīd’s plan to destroy Islam (and thus humanity) by removing God’s clear standard of demarcating between right and wrong.\textsuperscript{405}

At the same time, Ḍhakkō was deeply concerned with preserving the authority of the ʿulamā. The standing of the clerics was not only undermined by the fact that the opponents of reform resorted to unacceptable \textit{ad hominem} attacks against him personally and spread hatred toward the ʿulamā in general.\textsuperscript{406} Ḍhakkō also took serious issue with their argument that \textit{taqlīd} was forbidden in the “fundamentals of religion” (\textit{uṣūl al-dīn}). This interpretation was absurd, he claimed. How could the simple believers be bound in affairs relating to the minor branches of the law (\textit{furūʿ}) but be at liberty to form their own interpretations in the much weightier matters related to theology? The true meaning of the principle adduced was that in issues concerning creed any \textit{taqlīd} without proof was impermissible.\textsuperscript{407} Higher criteria of certainty applied, too, which were fulfilled only by \textit{ḥadīths} that were \textit{mutawātira} (documented through multiple chains of transmission) and Qurʾānic verses that did not belong to the ambiguous verses (\textit{mutashābihāt}). Consulting the ʿulamā was hence of utmost necessity also in the area of \textit{uṣūl al-}\linebreak[4]
din, otherwise the madhhab would be turned into a “plaything or a nose of wax” (mūm kī nāk) which could be twisted and shaped at will according to one's caprices.\(^{408}\) The influence of the ʿulamā was threatened from another angle as well because Shiʿis claimed that they could hand over their zakāt and khums directly to needy sayyids without channeling this money through the religious scholars.\(^{409}\)

Ḍhakkō saw himself in line with earlier reformist ʿulamā, especially the Lebanese “great reformer” Muḥsin Amīn al-ʿĀmilī. Al-ʿĀmilī had been labeled by his opponents as an “enemy of ʿazādārī who was worse than the Umayyad army” only because he had called for giving up certain flagellation practices and removing “fabricated” traditions from the majālis.\(^{410}\) DHAKKō suggested that the Subcontinent had always been especially prone to undermining reformist efforts, a trait even scholars residing in the centers of Shiʿi learning like Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Taqī al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1902) had to experience. His book al-Lūʾlūʾ wa-l-marjān fī adab ahl al-minbar (The Pearls and the Corals Regarding the Appropriate Behavior of the People of the minbar) was labeled as misguided among Shiʿis in India.\(^{411}\) A similar pushback affected the

\(^{408}\) Al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, Uṣūl al-shariʿa, 19-21.
\(^{409}\) Idem, Iṣlāḥ al-rusūm, 136-137.
\(^{410}\) Aʿvān, Mard-i ʿilm, 11-12.
towering Indian mujtahid Sayyid ‘Ali Naqvi Naqvi. His library was set on fire because he challenged the narrative of the unbearable thirst which Ḥusayn and his company had allegedly suffered during the tragic events of Karbala.412

In the context of Pakistan, Ḍhakkō perceived himself as the victim of a Shaykhī smear campaign. He felt obliged to disclose the “bitter and hidden truth” that his opponents only pretended to be Shiʿīs but were in reality beyond the pale due to their promotion of Shaykhī doctrines.413 Besides establishing these shared trajectories of reform, Ḍhakkō also frequently emphasized his credentials and the special favors God had bestowed on him.414 He displayed a self-conception as a superior religious scholar with immense mental capabilities. He claimed that his books had never been refuted415 and he was not shy to dismiss his opponents as mere maulvi, malang,416 and popular preachers who were only skilled in the art of raużah khānī.417

In an interview with the Iranian journal Hausah, Ḍhakkō boasted that he had astonished everyone during his studies in Najaf by finishing the second level of the cycle of religious education at the seminaries, comprising of the “surfaces of jurisprudence” (suṭūḥ al-fiqh) and the “upper surfaces” (al-suṭūḥ al-ʿulyā), within only one year.418 Harnessing these qualifications,

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413 See Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 131-132 and also al-Najafi Ḍhakkō, Uṣūl al-sharīʿa, 424-430.
414 Interview with Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Najafi Ḍhakkō, Jāmiʿat al-Muntaẓar, Lahore, 18 July 2012. Ḍhakkō stated that after receiving ijāza in Najaf, he stopped doing taqlīd of Muḥsin al-Ḥakim and started to devise his own rulings (see Dōgar, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Dhakkō se 150 suʾāl, 14).
415 Ibid., 17.
416 On the trope of the fraudulent wandering beggar-ascetic, also known as qalandar, see Ewing, Arguing Sainthood, 201-252.
417 Dōgar, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Dhakkō se 150 suʾāl, 41.
418 “Muṣāḥabah bā ḥażrat-i Āyatullāh Ḥājj Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Najafi Pākistānī,” 135. Usually, the suṭūḥ stages take four to five years to complete (see Khalid Sindawi, “Ḥawza Instruction and Its Role in Shaping Modern Shi‘ite Identity: The Ḥawzas of al-Najaf and Qumm as a Case Study,” Middle Eastern Studies 43,6 (2007): 841).
Ḍhakkō made the case that only an ʿālim who commanded knowledge of 70,000 ḥadīths in Arabic had the right to approach the sayings of the Prophet and the Imāms in an unmediated manner.\(^{419}\) Such an elitist attitude was also on display in a letter he wrote in late fall of 1969. Negotiators had tried to broker an agreement between Ḍhakkō and his opponents. Ḍhakkō laid out stringent conditions for such a meeting to take place, which in any case was only the second-best option to submitting the disagreement of the two sides to the leading marājiʿ of the day and abiding by their decision. Ḍhakkō expressed in this letter his rejection of any public form of intra-Shīʿī munāẓara since such an occasion would only play into the hands of the Shīʿīs’ enemies. He suggested instead a private meeting in which he would face all his opponents and their supporters alone with the goal of issuing a shared statement at the end. Moreover, this debate should be an elite conversation held in either Arabic or Persian without any participation of the common people.\(^{420}\)

Reformist concerns II: Sayyid ʿAlī Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsavī ʿAlīābādī and the politicization of Karbala

Ḍhakkō’s reformist and not openly political thought stands in marked contrast to scholars who were indebted to and politicized by the Iranian Revolution, as chapter four explores in detail with regard to Pakistani discussions on the role of Khomeini and the meaning of vilāyat-i faqīh in the local South Asian context.\(^{421}\)

\(^{419}\) Aʿvān, Mard-i ʿilm, 25.

\(^{420}\) Ibid., 91-92. Ḍhakkō’s traditionalist opponents accused him regularly of backing out at the last minute from munāẓarās that had been organized. This behavior in their view only added to the suspicion revolving around Ḍhakkō’s ʿaqāʾid (see “Tabṣīrah-i māhnāmah-i al-Šaqalayn Multān: Ikhtilāfī ʿaqāʾid par munāẓarah,” Żūlfiqār 21,5-6 (16 November 1991): 4).

\(^{421}\) For an Iranian example of a decidedly non-political reformist approach that went further than Ḍhakkō in its rationalizing outlook, see Yann Richard, “Sharīʿat Sangalajī: A Reformist Theologian of the Riḍā Shāh Period,” in Arjomand (ed), Authority and political culture in Shiʿism, 159-177.
attempts that strove to alter the discussion on rituals and theology in order to achieve taqrib is palpable as well. It comes to the fore, for example, in the writings of Sayyid Sharaf al-Din Mūsavī ‘Aliābādī (b. 1942), who hailed originally from the village of ‘Aliābād in Baltistān and received advanced religious training in Najaf and later Qum and Mashhad. After his return to Pakistan, he was active in the pro-Iranian Imamia Students Organisation (ISO) by serving on the group’s Advisory Council and contributing to the ISO’s journal Rāh-i ‘Amal.

Advancing a rationalist reading of the events of Karbala, Sayyid ‘Ali Sharaf al-Din Mūsavī argued that Ḥusayn had declared war on superstitions and won a lasting victory for logic and reason. If most people did not see it that way, this had to do with the fact that the tragedy of ‘āshūrā did not simply speak for itself. It required interpretation in the same way as an entire research institute in Iran was devoted to making sense of the precise meaning of Imam Khomeini’s words even though all of his speeches were available on audio- or videotape. No similar record existed for Karbala, which had caused all sorts of conflicting interpretations in its aftermath. Some people claimed that Ḥusayn's uprising was due to an internal family

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423 See chapters four and five of this dissertation for more information on this group. ‘Ali Sharaf al-Din Mūsavī is inter alia mentioned as a member of the ISO’s Advisory Council in “Report-i ijās-i majlis-i ʿāmilah-i Imamia Students Organisation Pakistan,” Rāh-i ‘Amal 46 (1986): 36.

conflict (khândānī kashmakash), others attributed an esoteric meaning to it (ghaybi tafsīr), or held that Ḥusayn rose up against Yazīd in order to take over the caliphate and win power for himself.\(^{425}\) Yet, if we took into account that Ḥusayn operated always within the four walls of the Qurʾān,\(^{426}\) we would realize that Ḥusayn’s main goal was a political one, namely to establish an Islamic system.\(^{427}\) His uprising was directed against the (worldly) injustice and evil of Yazīd that threatened to sound the death knell for Islam.\(^{428}\) The third Imām never advocated the conceptualization of the Imāmate as an office with a cosmological reach.\(^{429}\) Rather he backed up his decidedly worldly opposition to Yazīd with Qurʾānic verses in the vein of “and do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire and whose affair is ever [in] neglect” (Q18:28).\(^{430}\) Ḥusayn only took up arms after carefully considering his options and after being assured of the support of the Kufans since commanding right and forbidding wrong always required a position of strength and power to do so.\(^{431}\)


\(^{426}\) Ibid., 8.


\(^{428}\) Mūsavī ʿAlīābādī, Tafsīr-i siyāsī, 96.


\(^{430}\) Idem, Tafsīr-i siyāsī, 155.

\(^{431}\) Ibid., 134-141 and 148-150. In the Shiʿi hadīth corpus, Ḥusayn b. ʿAli does indeed figure as a personality with whom forbidding wrong and righteous rebellion are associated (see Michael Cook, Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 259-260). It is interesting to note, however, that Mūsavī with his presentation is more in line with the classical Shiʿi scholarly tradition which emphasized inter alia the conditions of efficacy and the avoidance of mortal danger for commanding right and forbidding wrong (ibid., 276-281). Politicized Shiʿi scholars in the 20\(^{th}\) century like Khomeini, Kāẓim Sharīʿatmadārī (d. 1986), or Murtażā Muṭahharī (d. 1979), however, differed from Mūsavī and adopted a principle of relative weight (ahammiyya) with regard to the danger condition, arguing that there might be certain wrongs (like endangering the Qurʾān or Islam as a whole) which overrode the obligation to avoid harm (ibid., 534-539).
All of this implied that ʿazādārī should be more than an act of worship or an occasion for weeping but should give expression to the essentially political basis of the events at Karbala.\textsuperscript{432} This focus on the political aspects of Ḥusayn’s uprising allowed Mūsavī to rethink Shīʿī majālis as a space that aimed not so much at fostering Shīʿī identity but rather at creating intra-Muslim unity. He argued that nothing should be said or done at such a meeting that would stir up the anger of any other Islamic sect, such as cursing the first three Caliphs. Behavior in this vein would be utterly opposed to the “spirit, philosophy, and wisdom” of ʿazādārī\textsuperscript{433} and was the hallmark of those who supported either the khawārij or Muʿāwiya (shīʿah-i khavārij ō Muʿāviyah).\textsuperscript{434} It was not the Sunnīs that were the enemies of the ahl-i bayt but rather those people who fought and mocked the Prophet, the kuffār and mushrikūn, like the Jews and the Christians.\textsuperscript{435}

The problem in Pakistan today, according to Mūsavī, was, however, that there existed two groups of Shīʿīs in the country, which he termed the shīʿah-i ḥaydar-i karrār (The Shīʿa of the constantly attacking Lion (ʿAlī)) and the shīʿah-i iṣnāʿasharīyya (The Twelver Shīʿa), respectively. It was only the latter that clung to the same confession of faith like all other Muslims, built their lives on Qurʾān and sunna, and regarded self-made laws and ideas that entered their religion as kufr and shirk.\textsuperscript{436} The shīʿah-i ḥaydar-i karrār, on the other hand, despised reason (ʿaql), which formed the basis of all Shiʿī ʿaqīda, and pretended that in religion

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{432} Mūsavī ʿAlīābādī, Miṣāli ʿazādārī, 40 and 74-79.
\bibitem{433} \textit{Ibid.}, 112-115.
\bibitem{435} Sayyid ʿAli Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsavī ʿAlīābādī, \textit{ʿAqāʾid ō rusūmāt-i shīʿah} (Karachi: Dār al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya Pākistān, 2004), 105-109. This line of thought also echoes some of the statements by Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī, as we will see in chapter four.
\bibitem{436} \textit{Ibid.}, 37-38.
\end{thebibliography}
certain things could not be comprehended by ʿaql alone. Mūsavī accused these wrong Shīʿīs of following an entirely different religion that had a deficient understanding of tauḥīd. He criticized the shīʿah-i ḥaydar-i karrār for arguing that the Prophet was in need of ʿAlī and for promoting mātam instead of fasting and breast-beating instead of the prescribed prayers. Mūsavī also denied their claim that the Qurʾān was a deeply esoteric piece of writing which required the Imāms' exegesis by pointing to the mismatch between 77701 words and 6236 āyās of the Qurʾān and only 3352 ḥadīths transmitted from the Imāms that were concerned with Qurʾānic exegesis. The reformist scholar also explained that turning the Imāms into deliverers of worldly needs was a typical strategy to lure people away from God. The wrong Shīʿīs were guilty of this approach because they declared that someone who would not take care of all their material needs did not deserve to be called their maulā. It was this exact ruse that the communists relied on, challenging hungry, thirsty, and unclothed children to ask their God to provide. If the help which the poor requested did not materialize, the communists urged them to call on “Lenin and Stalin” instead – and suddenly the gates of plenty opened for them and they received food and clothing. Likewise, contemporary NGOs made use of this mechanism in order to woo the educated strata of society away from proper belief. These organizations fostered their dependence through the delivery of “packets of biscuits out of the sky” (āsmān se biscuit ke ḍībbōn) and by providing medical services for their wives and children, thus with the syringe which they offered for treatment drawing religion out of the people (jis ke zariʾe un se dīn kō khenc lengi). While we have seen that Dhakkō was trying to straddle the fine line between, on the one hand, acknowledging that the spirits of the Imāms had been

437 Ibid., 60-62. It is interesting to note that Mūsavī chose a rather complimentary term for those Shīʿīs he saw as misguided. We might speculate that he intended to avoid alienating them right away while at the same time emphasizing their “excessive” veneration for ʿAlī.
438 Ibid., 76.
439 Ibid., 98-102.
440 Ibid., 117-118.
created out of light, while, on the other hand, rejecting the view that this feature meant that they were superhuman or took part in *vilāyat-i takvīnī*, Mūsavī dismissed such ideas altogether. For him, *nūr* was nothing special since both heaven and earth were filled with God's light and the term should only be understood as a synonym for belief and guidance.\(^{441}\)

For Mūsavī, *‘aqīda* problems in contemporary Pakistan had been long in the making and did not originate in the country itself. Rather, even the Shi‘ī *‘ulamā* in Iran and Iraq had neglected their duties.\(^{442}\) Faced with rising Wahhābī and Salafī tendencies, they had preferred cooperation with worldly rulers and had accepted that *‘azādārī* was turned into a “mere custom” (*mahž rasm*) in order to protect religion as a whole – or so they thought.\(^{443}\) This had to do with the *‘ulamā* not trusting their own abilities. To them, religion resembled an ugly girl that could be married off only with difficulty. Hence, the *‘ulamā* were reluctant to impose any obligation on the groom’s family (meaning the ordinary believers) because these might turn their backs on them.\(^{444}\) Mūsavī chastised his fellow scholars for capitulating in front of the common people. The ignorant masses could not claim to possess more or deeper love for the *ahl-i bayt* because the quality of love was directly linked to one’s level of knowledge.\(^{445}\) Mūsavī had two pieces of advice for the *‘ulamā*: they should, first, speak up like him and not be afraid of being called a *Wahhābī* since the latter were (hypocritical) Muslims, too.\(^{446}\) Second, the scholars should revamp religious education and equip their students with appropriate *tablīgh* skills so they could tackle the spread of reprehensible customs which painted the Shi‘ī *madhhab*

\(^{441}\) Ibid., 86-87.
\(^{442}\) Mūsavī ʿAliābādī, *Miṣālī ‘azādārī*, 40.
\(^{443}\) Ibid., 53.
in a ridiculous light.\textsuperscript{447} Currently, the graduates from religious schools were as useless as a sixth finger because they only acquired knowledge that was applicable within the four walls of their madrasa. How was this supposed to be medicine for the pains of society (\textit{muʿāshare ke kaysī (sic) dard ki davā heyn})?\textsuperscript{448} Yet, Mūsavī was not entirely pessimistic about the prospects of religious Shi‘ī reform in Pakistan. Writing in May 1995, he saw an unprecedented opportunity for reform arising that should be seized. While similar calls had been utterly unsuccessful in the past, now Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei had issued a clear verdict delineating the acceptable limits of ‘āshūrā customs. This provided the ‘ulāmā with a unique opportunity to publicly present their thoughts (un afkār ō khayālāt kō minaṣṣah-i shuhūd par āne kā mauqa’ \textit{naṣīb hūā}), backed up by the authority of Iran's religious hierarchy.\textsuperscript{449} Mūsavī was wrong, however, to assume that the longstanding controversy over reform could be solved simply by decree.\textsuperscript{450}

\textsuperscript{447} Idem, \textit{Miṣālī ʿazādārī}, 17 and 43.
\textsuperscript{448} Mūsavī ʿAllābādī, \textit{Madāris-i dīnī aur ḥauzāt-i ʿilmiyya}, 9.
\textsuperscript{449} Idem, \textit{Miṣālī ʿazādārī}, 5.
\textsuperscript{450} For a discussion of how Khamenei's \textit{fatwā} did not constitute a game-changer in the context of Shi‘ī populations in Kargil, a region located in the Indian part of Kashmir, see Radhika Gupta, “Experiments with Khomeini’s Revolution in Kargil: Contemporary Shi‘a networks between India and West Asia,” \textit{Modern Asian Studies} 48,2 (2014): 393-396.
The (diverse) traditionalist reaction

The opponents of reforms advocated by Ḍhakkō and Mūsavī did not remain silent. Making fun of Ḍhakkō for playing up his Punjabi credentials as a “local” (maqāmi) scholar in order to win over the “common people” was among the tamer attacks his muhājir opponents launched against him, pointing out his defective use of Urdu grammar. On a more serious note, they accused especially Ḍhakkō of having denigrated the ahl al-bayt and thus destroyed the Shi‘ī ‘aqīda which had remained unified for 1400 years. Once the mahdī reappeared, they promised, he would do away with people like him through the sword. They saw in him a narrow-minded, fanatic Shi‘ī-Wahhābī and a reductionist qishrī ʿālim, a scholar who was only concerned with the exoteric aspects (literally: the husk) of religious teaching. Some opponents consequently suggested a total social boycott of Ḍhakkō while denouncing him as a nāṣibī, an enemy of the Prophet’s household, or called on the Shi‘īs to collectively curse him: Ḍhakkō, they argued, had received guidance but he was stubborn in denying the virtues of the Prophet and the Āl-i Muḥammad in general and the third shahāda as well as ‘azādāri in

452 ‘ʿAlī Ḥasnayn Shīftah, Tāʾyīd-i ḥaq ō tārdīd-i bāṭil (Sargōdhā: Sayyid Akbar Ḥusayn Zaydī, 1978), 11. Shīftah was born in 1924 in Jaunpūr (UP) where he received his education at the Madrasah-i Nāṣiriyya up to the degrees of fāżil and tāj al-fāżil. He also spent a short time at the Madrasah-i Nāẓimiyya in Lucknow and completed his dars-i nizāmī there. Shīftah later received master's degrees in Persian, Arabic, Islamic Studies, and Urdu. The last three were awarded by the University of Karachi after his emigration to Pakistan in 1951. Shīftah taught in government colleges in both Karachi and Sargōdhā. Sayyid Ḥusayn ʿArif Naqvī and Muṭarţā Ḥusayn both accuse him of doing propaganda work for the Shaykhis in Pakistan (see Naqvī, Taẕkirah-i ʿulamā‘i imāmiyyah, 179-181).
453 Letter by Žamir al-Hasan Rizvī, reproduced in A’vān, Mard-i ‘ilm, 97 and 249-250.
455 Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 132-133.
particular. It was thus incumbent on Pakistan’s Shīʿīs to follow the example of the Prophet and his house and initiate a divine judgment in the form of a mutual imprecation (mubāhala) against Ḍhakkō, who was appropriately termed the “Father of Ignorance” (Abū Jahl) and a “Najdī pig” (khinzīr-i najdī). Through such initiatives, his enemies collectively managed to create a climate in which Ḍhakkō’s students were afraid to reveal their ties to him, fearing that they would not find employment as a consequence. The sad state of his (rather grandiosely named) school Sulṭān al-Madāris in Sargōdhā underlines the difficulty his reformist agenda had run into. Similarly, Sayyid ʿAlī Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsavī complained that even moderate figures such as scholars associated with Islamabad’s leading seminar Jāmiʿat al-Kauthar declared from the pulpit that he had become a Sunni.

**God’s incomprehensible transcendence**

As we have seen above, Ḍhakkō dismissed all attacks against himself as efforts by cynical popular preachers to protect their lucrative sinecures. But what becomes obvious in the various texts responding to his call for reform is that the arguments of Ḍhakkō’s opponents were fueled by serious theological differences. The traditionalists set out to defend the conception of an entirely transcendent God that clearly informed their understanding of tauḥīd. In their view, no unmediated connection was possible between the Creator and human beings. Such a conviction comes to the fore in the writings of Muḥammad Bashīr Anṣārī (d. 1983), for

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456 ʿĀbidī, ْTamāncah bar rukhsār, 8-9 and 77. For more information on the mubāhala precedent par excellence, namely the confrontation between the Prophet and the Christians of Najrān, which is also crucial for grounding the Shiʿī concept of the ahl al-bayt in a Qurʿānic verse (Q33:33), see Rudolf Strothmann, “Die Mubāhala in Tradition und Liturgie,” Der Islam, 33 (1958): 5–29 and also Werner Schmucker, “Die christliche Minderheit von Nāgrān und die Problematik ihrer Beziehungen zum frühen Islam,” Bonner Orientalistische Studien, 27 (1975): 214–236.

457 Aʿvān, ْMard-i ʿilm, 171-173.

458 Mūsavī ʿAliābādī, Dār al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya, 2.
example. Anṣārī was born in 1901, obtained a mumtāz al-afāżil degree from Lucknow’s celebrated Madrasah-i Nāżimiyyah, and also for three years studied about various religions at the Madrasat al-Wā’iẓīn in the city.\footnote{Bashīr Anṣārī extolled the uniqueness of this school with its focus on preaching and proselytizing in the Shi‘ī world. According to him, the Madrasat al-Wā’iẓīn even attracted mujtahids from Najaf and Qum who attended the same classes with him (see Muḥammad Bashīr Anṣārī, \textit{Maqām-i ahl-i bayt} (Lahore: Imāmiyyah Kutub Khānah, n.y), lām).} He spent the 1930s as a Shi‘ī missionary in the area that later became Pakistan and is credited with large-scale conversions during public debates (\textit{munāẓarāt}) with Sunnī opponents. After the foundation of Pakistan, he pushed for the establishment of an All Pakistan Shi‘a Conference (APSC) as a successor to the AISC.\footnote{For his role, see Rieck, \textit{The Shias of Pakistan}, 58. According to Rieck, Anṣārī “was most of all interested in the Shi‘a Majlis-i ‘Ulamā’-i Pākistān (SMUP) […] which he envisioned as a ‘supervisor’ of the APSC – following the example fo the Shi‘a Majlis-i ‘Ulamā’ and the AISC in Lucknow.”} Over the next decades he also exchanged letters with pro-Shaykhī figures in Pakistan in which he praised the subtlety of Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsāʾī’s religious reasoning. Anṣārī argued that it was perfectly in line with the thought of established Shi‘ī figures like Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī while publicly denying any leanings towards the Shaykhī school.\footnote{Naqvī, \textit{Taẕkirah-i ʿulamā’-i imāmiyyah}, 276-279. The Shi‘ī community remembers in particular one debate held in 1934 during which a Deobandī ‘ālim called Maḥbūb ʿĀlam conceded his defeat in writing while his colleagues Maulānā ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz and Maulānā Amir Allāh Khān reportedly converted to Shi‘ī Islam. As a result, Anṣārī earned the title “fāṭih-i Ṭīksilā” (Conqueror of Texila), referring to the location of the \textit{munāẓara}. Bashīr Anṣārī himself estimated that his missionary activities over 40 years had converted more than 100,000 people to Shi‘ī Islam (see Anṣārī, \textit{Maqām-i ahl-i bayt}, tā).} When these letters were leaked, Anṣārī attempted to distance himself from the Shaykhīs, claiming that “no books had been available to him to study Shaikhīya doctrine thoroughly.”\footnote{Rieck, \textit{The Shias of Pakistan}, 180.}

Yet, his publications speak a very different language: Anṣārī wrote in a refutation of Ḍhakkō’s works that God’s unicity was beyond human comprehension and that it was not possible for Him to directly establish contact between His divine essence and His creation (\textit{khudāvand-i ʿālam apnī makhlūq tak bi-zāt-i khūd nahiṅ pahunc sakta thā}). The realms of the
servant and the master were two discrete and entirely separate entities, one spiritual (rūḥānī), the other one of filled with matter (māddīyyat). It was only through the Imāms acting as as transmitters (vasīlah) that we could obtain an accessible form of tauḥīd. The maʿṣūmīn, who were themselves manifestations of God's attributes, conveyed knowledge about God's essence to us (aur yehī hażrāt zuhūr-i ʂifāt-i khudā ke vasāʾiṭ heṇ yaʾnī un hī ke žariʾah ʂifāt-i khudā kā zuhūr hōtā he yaʾnī vasīlah-i maʿrifat-i ṣifāt bhī heṇ aur žariʾah-i zuhūr-i ʂifāt bhī). Consequently, it did not make much sense to attribute titles like mushkilkūshā (the remover of difficulties), or ḥājat ravā (the granter of wishes) directly to God, as some ʿulamā argued. Even though the Prophet and his descendants appeared to us in human form, they were nothing less than God's first creation (avval-i makhlūq) and had direct, unmediated access to God's knowledge. Their relationship with God was not based on compulsion (jabr) because this would entail that their conduct could not be called praiseworthy. Rather, the maʿṣūmīn were acting with the full authority (ikhtiyāri hay sīyyat) that God had granted them. This meant that they themselves commanded supernatural abilities such as talking with animals or raising people from the dead. These creational (takvīnī) powers implied not only that these holy personalities could split the moon at will but also that the proper categories of allowed and forbidden (ḥalāl ō
Another traditionalist critic of Ḍhakkō, the preacher and former member of the Council of Islamic Ideology Sayyid ʿIrfān Ḥaydar ʿĀbidī (d. 1998), put it in similar terms: even though God created heaven and earth, the trees and stones greeted not Him but Muḥammād when he passed by them. While God's essence was hidden (makhfī ṭāt us kī), it became manifest through the Prophet and his kin who rightly guided the creation. God surely gave the victory, but it was ʿAlī who won it at Khaybar, Khandaq, and when conquering Mecca. Consequently, there was nothing wrong in turning to the Imāms to ask for help. The traditionalists denied that any kufr would be involved in such an act since God himself had elevated the Imāms to the level of being rulers (ḥākim ō rāʿī).

Bashīr Anṣārī could point out several instances when he himself had experienced the ability of the Imāms to act as mushkilḵūshā. One time his 22-year old son Ẕūlfiqār ʿAlī had fallen ill with gout. Yet, no treatment proved effective. Ẕūlfiqār could no longer move his legs, edging closer and closer to a permanent disability. Anṣārī locked the boy up in the family's own ʿazākhānah, which contained a model of Ḥusayn's tomb and ʿAbbās's standard. While Ẕūlfiqār was imploring his maulā to heal him, all members of the household were engaging in breast-beating and mourning outside. Suddenly the door opened and Ẕūlfiqār slowly emerged from

468 Anṣārī, Ḥaqāʾiq al-wasāʾit, 16.
470 For the account, see Tabari, W. Montgommery Watt, and M. V. McDonald, Muḥammad at Mecca (Albany N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1988), 63-64.
471 ʿĀbidī, Ṭamāncah bar rukhsār, 80-81. See also for another expression of this idea, Shiftah, Tāʾyīd-i ḥaqq, 93. For ʿAlī's military campaigns and credentials on the battlefield, see Najam Iftikhar Haider, Shiʿi Islam: An introduction (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 58.
472 Anṣārī, Ḥaqāʾiq al-wasāʾit, 20.
the hall, walking on his own legs. The whole ‘azākhānah was filled with fragrance and several days later the boy had completely recovered.

In another instance, Anṣārī’s two sons Muẓaffar ʿAbbās and Ghālib ʿAlī were riding a truck not far away from Taxila when their vehicle was frontally hid by another loaded truck and driven off the mountain road. Before loosing consciousness, both boys shouted Yā ʿAlī madad. When locals approached the scene of the accident, Muẓaffar and Ghālib were lying on the ground, wounded but alive. Their truck had been totally twisted from the impact. Yet the two boys had somehow been ejected from their seat behind the driver “through an opening which was not big enough for even a cat to escape.”

Finally, Bashīr Anṣārī himself was diagnosed with a four inches long and three inches wide tumor in his throat which rendered eating, drinking, and breathing utterly difficult. Doctors at several hospitals were uncertain what to do. When Anṣārī finally went to a clinic in Hyderabad (Sindh) that boasted specialists trained in the US, Germany, and the UK, they wanted to commence the surgery right away. Anṣārī was hesitant, however. He preferred to consult with his family first and embarked on the long journey back home to Taxila, ignoring his doctors’ advice. His relatives at once started a program of mātam and recitations. Anṣārī dreamed that night and was told to shed tears for Ḥusayn and to apply earth from Karbala (khāk-i shifā) to his tumor. Within a couple of days the swelling became soft and receded – a miracle that was also confirmed later by one of the surgeons of the hospital in Hyderabad who was himself Shi‘ī. 473

473 Ibid., 118-120. In general, Imāmi theologians have affirmed the possibility of non-prophetic miracles. Yet, they argued that such miracles must fulfill the purpose of verifying the Imām’s claim to the Imāmate – which does not really apply in this case, it seems, since this “definition excludes the possibility of non-prophetic miracles which are not preceded by a claim and which serve simply to honour their receiver” (see Sabine Schmidtke, The Theology of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1991), 162-163).
These arguments are remarkably in line with Shaykhī (and earlier Ismāʿīli) cosmology which opted for an absolute transcendence of God, a pure being which remained “undescribed to the point that its undescription cannot be described.”\textsuperscript{474} This divine entity was beyond existence, yet it brought into being in an incomprehensible mode of creation (\textit{ibdāʿ}) the First Intelligence, which was perfect, eternal, and stood on top of a great chain of cause and effect.\textsuperscript{475} The First Intelligence was also conceptualized as God's created will (\textit{mashiʿa}), which originated \textit{ex nihilo} to preserve God's unity uncompromised because attributing a (changing) will directly to God was seen as problematic in this regard. According to al-Aḥsāʾī this \textit{mashiʿa} constituted the proper object of theology. It was this external, itself created will of God which set the process of creation into motion and to which everything would return on the Last Day.

Interestingly, in this context al-Aḥsāʾī's successor Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī (d. 1844) used the term \textit{ḥaqīqa muḥammadiyya} (the Muḥammadan reality) to single out the specific location where the will or act of God manifested itself in the world (\textit{mahall al-mashiʿa, al-infiʿāl}).\textsuperscript{476} It seems to me that the traditionalist religious scholars and preachers under discussion deliberately tapped into these sophisticated metaphysical speculations and suggested an identity between the \textit{maʿṣumīn} and the First Intellect/the \textit{mashiʿa}.\textsuperscript{477} At times they went even further than al-Aḥsāʾī, who had been careful to point out that the Imāms were the personalized command (\textit{amr}) and action (\textit{fiʿl}) of God but had no will of their own and should be thought of as God's passive tools (“willenlose Werkzeuge”).\textsuperscript{478}

\textsuperscript{475} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{478} Eschraghi, \textit{Frühe Shaiḥi- und Bābī-Theologie}, 85.
The implications of traditionalist discourses for religious authority

These metaphysical debates had clear ramifications for models of religious authority as well. The traditionalists argued that true religious knowledge was dependent on acknowledging the cosmological positions of the Imāms. Promoting them only as worldly rulers and human beings was not enough because non-Muslims also could experience the holy personalities in this way. The concepts of nubuwwa, imāma, risāla, khilāfa and wilāya were all esoteric ranks (bāṭinī marātib) that could be perceived only with the eyes of the heart.481 If the sincere believer accepted the Imāms as rulers of the universe, he might experience his heart being thoroughly cleansed (muʾmin ka dil ṣāf ō shafāf hō jātā he) and the darkness of the veil being lifted (aur tārīkī ke parde haṭ jāte heṅ),482 leading to a higher level of faith (īmān).483 This purification of the heart was necessary in order to comprehend the deeper meaning of certain mysterious ḥadiths.484 Şafdar Ḥusayn Dōgar pointed to a conversation between Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and his disciple Zurārah b. Aʿyan. In this encounter the sixth Imām had likened himself to the

479 ʿĀbidī, Ṭamāncah bar rukhsār, 62-63.
481 Anṣārī, Haqāʾiq al-wasāʾīt, 22. See also al-Zamān, Afkār al-muntaẓārīn, 281-283.
482 Anṣārī, Haqāʾiq al-wasāʾīt, 54.
484 Ibid., 49.
mysterious figure of al-Khiḍr, whom the Islamic tradition identified with the servant of God mentioned in Q:18-62. Al-Khiḍr accepted Moses as a traveling companion and ordered him to remain silent while he committed seemingly outrageous acts like destroying a ship or killing a boy, the profound wisdom of which he only explained later. When Zurārah complained about a large number of ḥadīths which Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq had conveyed to him but which he found troubling to the extent that he felt the urge to destroy and burn them, the Imām explained to him that this was not an unprecedented reaction on his part. The angels had likewise failed to fully comprehend Adam's faḍāʾīl.

By contrast, those who considered the Imāms only as human beings like themselves would only learn from them, the traditionalists argued, but their hearts would not be illuminated by gnostic knowledge (maʿrifat). Anṣārī thus advocated for a different hierarchy of ʿulamā. He ranked the ʿulamā-i ʿamal (the scholars of outward practice), who focused on khums, the alms tax, purity, and pollution, as being inferior to the scholars of the gnosis (ʿulamā-i maʿrifat), who attained the way of truth. Đhakkō and his group should acknowledge that all their knowledge and ijtihād were defective. Their entire teaching was confused (parishān) because they focused on curtailing the virtues and qualities of the Imāms even though the latter were limitless beings (ḥaẓrāt āʾimmah-i ṭāhirīn kī ẕavāt-i muqaddasah kī ḥadd nahīṉ hōtī). These actions reflected the arrogance of the scholars who adopted grandiose

485 On the role of al-Khiḍr in Islamic thought, see the excellent monograph by Patrick Franke, Begegnung mit Khidr: Quellenstudien zum Imaginären im traditionellen Islam (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000).
486 Đōgar, Şahifah-i haqāʾiq, 62-63.
487 Anṣārī, Haqāʾiq al-wasāʾīt, 55. For Ahmad al-Aḥsāʾī’s and Karīm Khān’s critiques of those scholars who are limited to legalistic understandings of religion, see Bayat, Mysticism and Dissent, 49 and 74-75.
488 Ibid., 78. Anṣārī showed some understanding for the reformist ʿulamā since they had chosen a course of caution in the face of the many ḥadīths denouncing the ghulāt (ibid., 122).
titles like *hujjat al-Islām* but in reality betrayed simple folk and inflicted damage on Islam.\(^{489}\)

The fact that someone had reached the level of *ijtihād* was by no means a guarantee that this person could be trusted. Religious scholars – Shi‘is not excluded – at all times had sold their turbans to the highest bidder and had been eager to endorse *fatwās* approving of Ḫusayn’s killing.\(^{490}\) Even Qum and Najaf were no longer immune to the spread of reprehensible forms of *ʿaqīda* by scholars who had used their material capabilities and political influence to seize the centers (*marākiz par qabżah kar liyā*).\(^{491}\) The traditionalists adduced the examples of Mūsā al-Mūsawi,\(^{492}\) Abū ʿl-Fażl b. Rīzā al-Burqaʿī (d. 1991),\(^{493}\) and, most important of all, Muḥammad b. Mahdi al-Khāliṣi. They saw al-Khāliṣi as Dhakkō’s teacher (which he was at pains to deny) and hence labeled the reformist Pakistani scholar the “Khāliṣi of the present age” (*Khāliṣi-yi ʿasr*).\(^{494}\)


\(^{490}\) ‘Ābidī, *Tamāncah bar rukhsār*, 164. For such an argument regarding the involvement of Shi‘i ʿulamā in the deaths of the important Shi‘i scholars Muhammad b. Makkī (734-786/1333-1384), known as *al-shahid al-awwal* (the First Martyr), and Zayn al-Dīn b. ʿĀmilī (911-965 or 966/1506-1557-8 or 1558-9), known as *al-shahid al-thānī* (the Second Martyr), see al-Sābiqī, *Qawāʿid al-sharīʿa*, 6-8.

\(^{491}\) Anṣārī, *Ḥaqāʾiq al-wasāʾiṭ*, 17.

\(^{492}\) Al-Mūsawī was born in 1930 and died sometime during the 1990s. His grandfather Ayatollah al-Sayyid Abū ʿl-Ḥasan al-Mūsawī al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1946) was one of the few supporters of Muḥsin al-Amīn. He received an *ijāza* at the age of 21 from Kāshīf al-Ghiṭā and completed a doctoral degree in Paris on Islamic Philosophy. Later he became a university teacher in Tehran and was also a member of the Iranian Parliament. The Savak made an attempt on his life in 1968 which led al-Mūsawi to leave Iran. He reportedly taught until the revolution in Halle (Saale/Germany), at Harvard, in Tripoli (Libya), and Los Angeles and ran for office in the Iranian presidential elections of 1980. Al-Mūsawi has argued that Shi‘i Islām had been deformed through political power, especially under the Buyids when deviations such as the divine designation of ʿAlī as Caliph, the lifting of the concept of the Imāmate into the rank of *uṣūl-i dīn, taqiyya*, or the belief in the infallibility (*iṣma*) of the Imāms came to be propagated. He called for a purging of Shi‘i *ḥadīth* that was hostile towards the first three Caliphs and rejected the third *shahāda* as well as self-flagellation during Muḥarram. Julian Siddon has thus argued that al-Mūsawi advocated the most radical approach towards Shi‘i reform in the 20th century. His ideas were often identical with Sunni polemics against the Imāmīs which meant that his suggested reforms would have led to the “inevitable destruction of the Shi‘a.” See Julian Siddons, “*Die Korrektur der Irrtümer.* Mūsā al-Mūsawis Versuch, die schiitische Glaubenslehre zu reformieren” (Würzburg: Ergon, 2005), 11-28, 32-33, 36-37, 51-52, 128, 237. See also Rainer Brunner, “A Shiite Cleric’s Criticism of Shiism: Mūsā al-Mūsawi,” in Brunner and Ende (eds), *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times*, 178–187.

\(^{493}\) I am not aware of any academic study that would discuss his thought. For a list of his works and some biographical data, see [http://www.borqei.com/](http://www.borqei.com/) (accessed 09 January 2015).

\(^{494}\) Dhakkō repeatedly stated that while studying in Najaf he and other Pakistani students only visited al-Khāliṣi “three or four times” in al-Kāzimiyah, raising with him some controversial questions (*baʿż-i ikhtulāfī masāʿīl*) (see Dhakkō, *Uṣūl al-sharʿa*, 267). See also Muhammad Ḩasnayn al-Sābiqī,
It was especially due to al-Khāliṣī’s supposedly evil influence that the Shi‘ī qaum could no longer distinguish between a true and a “fake” (ja‘li) mujtahid.495 This problem also affected some Pakistani students who pursued higher religious education abroad. They had developed a liking for the pomp and show (shān ō shaukat) put on by the modernist ‘ulamā (jiddat pasand ‘ulamā’) who promoted innovations in religion in line with the Zeitgeist (zamānah-i jadid ke muṭābiq ‘ilmī jiddaten). Such a strategy was amply reflected in the title (and substance) of al-Khāliṣī’s main fiqh work Iḥyāʾ al-sharīʿa (Revival of the shariʿa).496

Given Ḍhakkō’s clear lack of bāṭini insights, Anṣārī advised him to restrict himself to fiqh questions, to the furūʿ of religion, and be content with discussing khums, zakāt, and issues related to the female period and childbirth. He should not try to exert any authority in the context of kalām and ‘aqāʾid because this would go beyond his limited capabilities.497 Even though Ḍhakkō had spent a long time in Iraq, he clearly did not experience the “spiritual emanations and blessings” (rūḥānī fuyūż ō barakāt) emerging from ʿAlī’s shrine because he had neglected to pay any attention to the bāṭin. Ḍhakkō had only claimed his portions of bread from the public kitchen (langar) of the “Gate to the City of Knowledge” but had not made use of ‘Ali’s Qurʾānic exegesis (taʾwīl).498 Yet, Anṣārī’s most dangerous weapon in the context of Pakistan was to accuse Ḍhakkō and other reformers of violating the principle of the finality of Muḥammad’s prophethood (khatm al-nubuwwat). Such an attack brought Ḍhakkō dangerously

495 Al-Sābiqī, Rusūm al-shīʿa, 42-44.
496 Anṣārī, Ḥaqāʾiq al-wasāʾiṭ, 17.
497 Ibid., 141.
498 Ibid., 267. A famous prophetic ḥadīth refers to ʿAli as the “gate to the city of knowledge,” with the Prophet being the city itself.
close to the Aḥmadīs, who through a constitutional amendment had been officially declared non-Muslims in Pakistan in 1974 for upholding the possibility of continued prophecy after Muḥammad.\textsuperscript{499} Anṣārī argued that the efforts of the reformers to downgrade the Prophet and the Imāms meant eliminating the divide between their exalted position and the mere human. This implied that if an ordinary human being were to try hard enough to study law and obtain the level of of \textit{i}j\textit{t}i\textit{hād}, he could actually reach a stage equal to that of these holy personalities (\textit{har shakhṣ mīḥnat ō mashaqqat aur iktisāb ō ijtiḥād kar keh yeh darajāt hāsil kar saktā he}).\textsuperscript{500}

\textit{Mainstreaming esoteric knowledge}

The traditionalist ‘\textit{ulamā} did not deem it sufficient, however, only to attack Dhakkō and other reformers personally or simply to end the discussion by claiming higher spiritual insights. They clearly reacted to the debate initiated by the reformists and were anxious to demonstrate that their cosmological readings of the Imāms were perfectly in line with the mainstream of Shi‘ī thought. These scholars argued that they defended the same ‘\textit{aqa‘id} that had been core beliefs for hundreds of years and had been held by millions of Shi‘ī ‘\textit{ulamā}, researchers (\textit{muḥaqqiqīn}), saints (\textit{auliyā‘}), \textit{ḥadīth}-transmitters (\textit{muḥaddiṣīn}), and mujtahids.\textsuperscript{501} Dhakkō’s response of indiscriminantly throwing around the Shaykhī label to dismiss essential Shi‘ī beliefs

\textsuperscript{499} See Ali Usman Qasmi, \textit{The Ahmadis and the politics of religious exclusion in Pakistan} (London: Anthem Press, 2014), 185-220 and also chapter 5 of this dissertation.
\textsuperscript{500} Anṣārī, \textit{Ḥaqāʾiq al-wasāʾiṭ}, 184.
\textsuperscript{501} ‘Ābidī, \textit{Tamāncah bar rukhsār}, 15-16.
was simplistic at best\textsuperscript{502} and constituted a corruption of the truth clothed in the language of
reform as Q2:11 emphasized.\textsuperscript{503}

In order to situate themselves within the Shi‘ī mainstream, the traditionalists pursued
two strategies in particular. First, they played up their scholarly credentials by referring to the
\textit{ijāzāt} they had received from prominent scholars and attempted to argue that Khomeini’s view
in particular was perfectly in line with their approach. Second, they seized upon the veneration
of both Sunnī and Shi‘ī scholars for the Prophet Muḥammad and tacitly extended the
agreement about his unique standing as God’s Messenger to the Imāms.

Al-Sābiqī, for example, relied on Ḍhakkō’s discussion of the authority exerted by a jurist
who met all the preconditions during the time of the Occultation (\textit{faqīh jāmi‘ al-sharā‘īt}). Such a
scholar was entitled to fill the position of ḥākim al-shar‘, denoting a jurist “who is well-qualified
to decide on legal matters and supervise the affairs of Muslims in the area of Sharī‘a.”\textsuperscript{504} Al-
Sābiqī concurred that such a \textit{faqīh} was tasked by God to establish the \textit{ḥudūd} and discretionary
punishments (\textit{ta‘zīrāt}), to command right and forbid wrong, and to act as the caretaker for
orphans’ property. He then emphasized that eleven Ayatollahs and Grand Ayatollahs, among
them Sayyid Abū ‘l-Qāsim al-Khū‘ī (d. 1992), Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr (d. 1980), and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{502} Shiftah, \textit{Tā’yīd-i haqq}, 10. Henry Corbin reaches a similar conclusion when relating the Shaykhī
school to the Shi‘ī heritage more broadly. He writes that it required a “certain hâte maladroite” if
one wanted to accuse the Shaykis of ghulūw. Instead, he credited them with the desire to
“maintenir intégralement la tradition. Cette volonté ne mérite pas que l’on porte un jugement
dépréciatif sur une école qui continue de faire partie intégrante du shī’isme” (see Corbin, “L’École
shaykhie,” 211).
\item \textsuperscript{503} The verse reads as follows in Arberry’s translation: “When it is said to them, ‘Do not corruption in
the land’, they say, ‘We are only ones that put things right (\textit{muṣliḥūn}).’” See ‘Ābidī, \textit{Tamāncah bar
ruksesr}, 57.
\item \textsuperscript{504} Abdulazizi A. Sachedina, \textit{The Just Ruler (al-sultān al-ādil) in Shi‘ite Islam: The comprehensive authority
\end{itemize}
Sayyid Muḥammad Kāẓim Sharīʿatmadārī (d. 1986) had appointed him as their wakīl and delegated the above-mentioned functions to him. Bashir Anṣārī could claim similar endorsements inter alios from the Grand Ayatollahs Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā (d. 1953) and Sayyid Shihāb al-Dīn Marʾashī Najafī (d. 1990). These leading scholars in the Shīʿi centers clearly contradicted Ḍhakkō’s views, al-Sābiqī claimed. Al-Khūʾī had stated, for example, that the prophets and Imāms were not affected by the slightest defect during their lifespan (ḥīc ‘aybi va naqṣī dar tamām-i ʿumr dar ū nabāshad). The Grand Ayatollah ʿAbd al-Aʿlā Mūsavī Sabzavārī (d. 1993) was quoted to the effect that the connection the Infallibles had with God and His emanation was of a superhuman quality (ravābiṭ-i ānhā bā khudā va ifāţāt-i khudā bā ānhā khārij az nauʿ-i bashar ast). The traditionalists could refer to 18 modern marājiʿ who had condoned not only the creation of the Imāms from light but also their guardianship over creation (vilāyat-i takvīnī). In these lists, the leading Shaykhī scholar of the school's Tabrizī branch, Mirzā Ḥasan al-Ḥāʾirī al-Iḥqāqī (1900-2003), also shows up frequently, labeled as both Grand Ayatollah and reformer (muṣliḥ). This is not too surprising since the Tabrizīs had adopted a much less controversial outlook than their rival Kirmānī branch. They did not condone the concept of the fourth pillar and, in general, had given themselves the image of rather orthodox mujtahids who accepted the concept of taqlīd. Yet, the biggest trump card of

505 Al-Sābiqī, Rusūm al-shīʿa, 19-21. See chapter three for more information on the senior jurists and the Pakistani debate regarding the authority of the marājiʿ (Sources of Emulation) and their wakīls.

506 Ibid., 39-40.

507 Shiftah, Tāʾyīd-i haqq, 36-37

508 Al-Sābiqī, Qawāʾid al-sharīʿa, 12.

509 Ibid., cover page and idem, Rusūm al-shīʿa, 20. For such a portrayal of al-Iḥqāqī, see also “Āyatullāh al-ʿuzmā Mirzā Ḥasan al-Ḥāʾirī al-Iḥqāqī madda zillahu ki jānib se cand važāḥateṉ,” Žūlfiqār 19,16 (16 April 1990): 7.

510 On the networks of both branches and their leading scholars since the 19th century, see Toby Matthiesen, “Mysticism, Migration and Clerical Networks: Ahmad al-Ahsaʾi and the Shaykhis of al-Ahsa, Kuwait and Basra,” Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs 34,4 (2014): 389-392 and 399. Al-Sābiqī mentions that he acted as wakīl for Iḥqāqī and also translated his writings into Urdu (see al-Sābiqī, Khāliṣiyyatnāmah, 2). Similar to the lack of scholarly work on the early and mid-20th century transmission of Shaykhī ideas between the Middle East and South Asia, there is also no study that would discuss such networks after the establishment of Pakistan. The remaining Shaykhī center in
all for the traditionalists was Khomeini himself who had affirmed in his work Ḥukūmat-i Islāmī (Islamic Government) that the spiritual state of the Imāms is a universal divine vice regency (khilāfat-i kullī-yi ilāhī) that is sometimes mentioned by the Imāms. It is a vice regency pertaining to the whole of creation (khilāfati ast takvīnī), by virtue of which all the atoms in the universe humble themselves before the holder of authority (valī al-amr). It is one of the essential beliefs (ẓarūriyyāt) of our Shīʿī school that no one can attain the spiritual status of the Imāms, not even the cherubim or the prophets. In fact, according to the traditions that have been handed down to us, the Most Noble Messenger and the Imāms existed before the creation of the world in the form of lights situated beneath the divine throne; they were superior to other men (az baqiyyah-i mardum imtiyāz dāshte and) even in the sperm from which they grow and in their physical composition.511

This implied that the “Khāliṣī group” was guilty of raising the voice of discord. These people baselessly labeled the ordinary Shīʿīs, who were thoroughly rooted in the officially condoned orthodoxy, as ignorant and extremist.512

The traditionalist authors partly came to their seemingly strong consensus of Shīʿī authorities by relying on quotes that referred most of all to the Prophet. They seized on these discussions and quietly extended them to encompass all the maʿṣūmīn. ʿIrfān ʿĀbīdī, for present-day Islamabad is connected to the Iḥqāqī branch in Kuwait, as becomes obvious from pictures of al-Iḥqāqī included in their publications. Andreas Rieck refers to some involvement of – and indeed rivalry between – both the Tābrīzī and the Kirmānī branches in Pakistan without, however, providing a deeper exploration of these connections (see Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 175-177).

511 Rūḥallāh al-Mūsavī Khumaynī, Vilāyat-i faqīh (hukūmat-i islāmī) (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1979), 67-68. It is an interesting question to speculate as to why Khomeini had only provided such a short, uncontextualized discussion of creational guardianship. Ali Rahnema argued that the Iranian leader tried to stay clear of this field of Shīʿī beliefs since it had no immediate implication for his political project: “Perhaps Khomeyni felt that such a literature review was inappropriate for his argument on the worldly guardianship of the jurist. To delineate clearly between the two types of individuals, infallible and fallible, one linked to the hidden world and the other to this world in terms of their responsibility to govern, Khomeyni refers to the otherworldly status of the imams and Fatemeh-e Zahra, Imam ʿAlī’s wife, and writes, These [spiritually unparalleled] stations are separate from the duty of government’. As a Shīʿī jurist, Khomeyni seems obliged to touch on the Divine-based spiritual authority of the Imams and separate it from the material responsibility of establishing government in the absence of the Hidden Imam. As a Shīʿī political theorist interested in the conceptualization and realization of an Islamic government, Khomeyni saw no reason to evoke or rely on velayat-e takvini or creational guardianship, as it was inapplicable to the here and the now” (see Rahnema, Superstition as Ideology, 103).

512 Al-Sābiqī, Qawāʿid al-sharīʿa, 12.

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example, took ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī's affirmation that the Prophet had access to “knowledge of the unknown” (ʿilm-i ghayb) to argue that the Imāms were blessed with this capability, too. ʿAlī Ḥasnayn Shiftah attempted to dismantle Ḍhakkō's position that there was no rational counter-argument to the possibility of the Imāms losing their infallibility. Ḍhakkō had opined that this doctrine simply had to be accepted on the authority of the divine law and the tradition of the Shīʿī school. In his response, Shiftah marshaled evidence from the famous theologian Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Yūsuf, called al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325), who had argued that if the Prophet were not maʿṣūm, then the people could not trust him. Al-Ḥillī had indeed taken this stance in reaction to the Muʿtazilī position which rested on the principle of mutual cancellation (iḥbāṭ). The Muʿtazilīs held that punishment which would be the consequence of committing minor sins was canceled out by praiseworthy actions exceeding it. These thinkers thus intended to make room for minor sins committed by prophets while at the same time exonerating them from any blame connected with such lapses. Since al-Ḥillī, like al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044) before him, rejected this mechanism of iḥbāṭ, he could not allow that prophets committed any sin because this would entail blame, punishment, and compromising their status. Al-Ḥillī does not provide a discussion of the Imāms in this context but al-Shiftah makes it appear this way, claiming that the Iraqi theologian had thus demonstrated “in a rational way” that both the Prophet and the Imāms needed to be infallible and that this position was not merely a “school opinion” (maḏhabī ʿaqīdah) as Ḍhakkō had claimed.

Similarly al-Sābiqī adduced the Iranian scholar and philosopher Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī (1904-1981) and his commentary on the Qurʾān al-Mizān fi Tafsīr al-Qurʾān (The Scale in the

513 ʿĀbidī, Ṭamāncah bar rukhsār, 73-74. Compare also ibid., 97-98 for an example of how Qurʾānic verses speaking about the Prophet are extended to the Imāms.


515Shiftah, Tāʾyīd-i haqq, 45–46.
Interpretation of the Qurʾān). Ṭabāṭabāʾī explained that a prophet should be regarded as such even before he started receiving any revelation (waḥy) because he was equipped from his birth with the special ability to do so. Al-Sābiqī takes it for granted that Ṭabāṭabāʾī's reasoning applied to the Imāms as well. Such a strategy also informs Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Ḍōgar's attempt to draw on leading marājiʿ in order to make the uncontroversial point that Shīʿī Islam recognized five usūl-i din, among them the Imāmate. Yet, Ḍōgar then proceeds to fill out the particular meaning of the Imāmate by relying on far more obscure esoteric figures.

Moving even beyond the confines of their own school, the traditionalist authors also sought to appropriate Sunni scholars in their endeavor to establish the orthodox character of their thought. An obvious choice for them was Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 458/1153), an author whom the Sunni tradition remembers predominantly as a Shāfiʿī jurist and Ashʿarī theologian, who is most famous for his heresiography al-Milal wa-l-niḥal. While al-Shahrastānī discussed Ismāʿīlī cosmology in detail in this work as a seemingly neutral and disinterested observer, he revealed in some of his other writings that he himself subscribed to the distinction between the unintelligible world of God (ʿālam al-amr) and our sensual world (ʿālam al-khalq). The latter emanated from the First Intellect and hence originated only in a


517 Al-Sābiqī, Qawāʿid al-sharīʿa, 189-203.

518 Ḍōgar, Ṣaḥīfa al-ḥaqāʾiq, 46.

secondary manner through God. Al-Sābiqī utilized especially al-Shahrastānī’s discussion of prophethood that was presented in *al-Milal* in the form of a supposed *munāẓara* during the time of Abraham between a group of Sabeans and an assembly of monotheists (*ḥunafāʾ*) who opposed them. These monotheists argued that the prophets occupied the “first stage of all stages of existence” (*al-daraja al-ūlā min darajāt al-wujūdāt kullihā*). Their being was superior to that of ordinary humans in terms of “disposition and capability” (*mizājan wa-istiʿdādan*) and went beyond usual angelic qualities as far as “reception and performance” (*qubūlan wa-adāʾan*) were concerned. While al-Shahrastānī’s thought was a synthesis of Ashʿarī, Avicennan, and Ismāʿīlī concepts, al-Sābiqī called on him as a witness to present a universal *ʿaqīda* that was supposedly shared by Sunnīs and Shīʿīs alike. Al-Sābiqī also found an ally in the eminent Sunnī thinker Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), from whom he could adduce quotes that prophets were outwardly human while set apart by their capability to receive revelations. Their intellect resembled the First Intellect and their souls bore some similarity to the Celestial Soul (*al-nafs al-falakiyya*). Additionally, statements on the qualitative difference between prophets and ordinary humans could be gathered from a wide range of Sunnī authors, including Ḥusayn b. Maṣʿūd al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122), the Qāḍī

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524 Al-Sābiqī, *Qawāʿid al-sharīʿa*, 77.  
ʿIyāḍ (d. 544/1149), and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Mubīn Ḥanafī Farangi Maḥallī (d. 1125/1810 or 1811).

Reaching for a higher dimension of rapprochement

These efforts to demarcate a universal Islamic orthodoxy had further implications. The scholars attacked by Ḏhakkō and Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsavī also advocated their own versions of a rapprochement with the Sunnīs. In doing so, they chose different approaches than the reformists who had argued, as we have seen, for an end to controversial practices and beliefs that emphasized a distinct Shiʿī identity.527 By far the most popular taqrīb strategy championed by the traditionalists was to argue for the existence of a Ṣūfī-Shiʿī synthesis. The muballigh-i aʿẓam Muḥammad Ismāʿīl, whom we encountered above, had been a particularly loud – if unlikely – voice in this regard. In 1962 he founded his own school, the Dars-i Āl-i Muḥammad in Fayṣalābād, with the purpose of training Shiʿī preachers, and also ran his own publishing house.528 At first glance, he seemed to fit the picture of an uncompromising sectarian hothead who held public munāẓara with Sunnis even one year before his death and openly celebrated his Shaykhī allegiance.529 Muḥammad Ismāʿīl clearly emphasized the spiritual and charismatic authority (walāya) of the Imāms and held that their interpretation of Islam was decisive because they were nothing less than the talking book (kitāb-i nāṭiq).530 Yet, the “Greatest

527 For a call to unity issued by Bashīr Anṣārī, see Żūlfiqār 11:20-21 (16 June 1982): 1.
528 Ismāʿīl, Kalimah-i vilāyat, 7.
529 Andreas Rieck reports that Muhammad Ismāʿīl came out into the open about his beliefs during the 12th annual convention of his madrasa in Fayṣalābād on 30-31 August 1975. Ismāʿīl unveiled “a huge poster figuring, among other things, words of praise for Shaikh Ahmad Ahsaʿī and his successor S. Kazim Rashti. When questioned about its implications, Muhammad Ismaʿīl came forward with a number of declarations of allegiance to the founders of the Shaikhiya” (see Andreas Rieck, The Shiias of Pakistan, 177).
530 Muhammad Ismāʿīl and Nāṣir Ḥusayn Najafi (ed), Futūḥāt-i shīʿah (Jauharābād: Muballigh-i Aʿẓam Academy, n.d), 6. Maria Massi Dakake has suggested that walāya in Shiʿī thought represented a “principle of spiritual charisma” and denoted “a profound spiritual connection and ontological
Preacher” was careful to broaden the appeal of such a message by relying on eminent Ṣūfis from the Subcontinent who had written about the concept, even though they had mostly utilized the related (but confusingly identically written) term wilāya.

531 In particular, Muḥammad Ismāʿīl quoted at length from the Indian Naqshbandi Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindi (d. 1034/1624), whose collected letters (Maktūbāt-i Imām-i Rabbānī) had been widely influential in their time, spreading Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi teachings throughout the entire eastern Islamic world. Sirhindi had initially been very hostile to the Shiʿīs, penning in his pre-Ṣūfī period an Epistle on the Refutation of the Rejectionists (Risālah dar radd-i rawāfīz). In this work, Sirhindi had argued that anyone who baselessly accused another human being of kufr and enmity to God would himself be subject to this curse. The takfīr which the Shiʿīs were guilty of with regard to the first three Caliphs would therefore fall back on no one but the Shiʿīs themselves. Yet, Yohanan Friedman has argued that Sirhindi later came to mitigate this hostility. In his reading, Sirhindi during the Ṣūfī part of his life conceded a “special spiritual

affinity between the Imāms and their followers, between Shiʿite leadership and Shiʿite community, between the ahl al-bayt and those who made their cause with them” (see Maria Massi Dakake, The Charismatic Community: Shiʿite identity in early Islam (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 7).

531 According to Henry Corbin, walāya for the Shiʿīs is “la qualification qui investit les douze Imāms comme objets de la dilection divine, comme « Amis de Dieu », et leur donne une fonction tutélaire à l’égard de leurs fidèles chez lesquels répond, d’autre part, un sentiment d’amour à leur égard, tel que l’imâmisme se révèle en son fond comme une religion d’amour.” Wilāya, on the other hand, meant “un état d’intimité avec Dieu par renoncement à soi-même, et on a pris l’habitude, en Occident, de le traduire par « sainteté »” (see Henry Corbin, “Rûzbehân Baqlî Shîrâzî (522/1128-606/1209) et le soufisme des fidèles d’amour,” in idem, En Islam iranien III (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 9-10). For the semantic ambiguity of the two terms discussed among Ṣūfis, who also distinguished between wilāya (denoting closeness or love and that “which takes place between the Shaykh and God”) and walāya (meaning authority and that “which takes place between the Shaykh and other people”), see Vincent J. Cornell, Realm of the saint: Power and authority in Moroccan Sufism (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), xvi-xx. According to Cornell, both terms “are best seen as semantic fraternal twins that coexist symbiotically, like yin and yang. Each relies on the other for its meaning” (ibid., xi-x).  

task” to the Twelve Shi‘ī Imāms and endorsed ‘Alī’s wilāya.\textsuperscript{534} Sirhindī termed ‘Alī the leader of those who were traveling on the way of sainthood and claimed that the fourth Caliph had held this position even in his pre-existence, before he came into this world at the time of Muḥammad (qabl az nashā‘-i unṣuri). Every participant in the journey along the way of sainthood received the divine blessing (fayż) through ‘Alī’s meditation (tawassūt ō ḥaylūlat).

After the latter’s death, this task of meditation was given to Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and, later, to the other Shi‘ī Imāms.\textsuperscript{535} These statements do not imply, however, that Sirhindī came to adopt a full-fledged Shi‘ī version of wilāyā/walāyā. Rather, the 17th century Šūfī thinker, who – unlike his spiritual teacher Muḥammad Bāqi bi’llāh Dihlavī (d. 1012/1603) – did not distinguish between these two terms, connected wilāya specifically to the saints who have completed the mystical journey and hence reached the state of “closeness” to or “intimacy” with God (qurb). It was this closeness which set them apart from the masses and turned them into an elite (khawāṣṣ) with God.\textsuperscript{536} Muḥammad Ismā‘īl nevertheless papered over the remaining differences and forcefully made the case for enough common Šūfī-Shī‘ī ground with regard to the slippery term wilāya/walāyā.\textsuperscript{537} To him, the concept demonstrated the existence of a shared Muslim

\textsuperscript{534} Ibid., 53.
\textsuperscript{536} J.G.J. ter Haar, Follower and Heir of the Prophet: Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (1564-1624) as mystic (Leiden: Het Oosters Instituut, 1992), 87-88.
\textsuperscript{537} For reverse efforts of blurring Šūfī-Shī‘ī distinctions in 18th and 19th century Iran from a Šūfī perspective by turning the mahdī into the Šūfī pole and arguing that due “to the Perfect Man, the Imam’s wilāyat is not in occultation but accessible in the person of the Perfect Shi‘a,” see Oliver Scharbrodt, “The qutb as Special Representative of the Hidden Imam: The Conflation of Shi‘ī and Sufi Vilayat in the Ni‘matullāhī Order,” in Denis Hermann and Sabrina Mervin (eds), Shi‘ī Trends and Dynamics in Modern Times (XVIIIth-XXth centuries) (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2010), 40-49. Richard Gramlich, on the other hand, found that those Iranian derwishes that he interacted with only used the pronunciation wilāya and did not make a conceptual distinction between wilāya and walāya. See Richard Gramlich, Die schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1976), 158. For a recent treatment of efforts by Šūfī orders under the Safavids to redefine the (Sunnī) Šūfī past and to show that the mystical path was fully rooted in the teachings of the Imāms, culminating in the argument that a true Shi‘ī is a Šūfī, see also Ata Anzali, “Safavid Shi‘ism,” 133-185.
ʿaqīda which accepted the Imāms’ authority. He consequently called on those Sunnīs and Shīʿīs who held the proper creed of believing in the 12 Imāms and the saints (khūsh ‘aqidah shīʿah sunnī bārah imām aur auliyāʾ-ī kirām ke mānane wāle) to unite against the Wahhābī denial of wilāya/walāya.\textsuperscript{538}

A related strategy by traditionalist authors was to emphasize the essential overlap, exchange, and peaceful coexistence between Sunnī and Shīʿī forms of Islam in Pakistan and to single out certain Deobandī attempts to rock the boat. We have already encountered comparable attempts for the late colonial period in chapter 1. Ṣafdar Ḥusayn 塬ὸGrogar remarked that every day all over Pakistan hundreds of majālis were held. If it was true that at these venues insulting remarks were regularly made about the first three Caliphs or the Companions, as ʿAli Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsavī claimed, then every house in the country would already resonate with Shīʿī-Sunnī fighting (ghar ghar shīʿah sunnī laṛāʾī hōtī). The two sects would no longer intermarry or attend each other’s funerals – all of which precisely did not take place. Instead, at least in the Punjab, Sunnīs frequented Shīʿī mourning sessions and, at times, even took part in ʿazādārī. Demanding from Shīʿīs to reform their ways in order to qualify as proper Muslims had been the essence of the propaganda of the virulently anti-Shīʿī group Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah-i Pākistān (SSP). They had been talking for the past fifteen years about phenomena that simply did not exist in society. When the SSP activists realized their failure to stoke the flames of sectarian discord, they had planted Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsavī as a “hidden enemy” (literally: as a snake in the

\textsuperscript{538} Ismāʿīl, Kalimah-i vilāyat, 20. For a conception of Husayn as forming the center of unity, and an argument about an intimate connection between Ḥusayn and Pakistan since both would stand for the affirmation that there was no God besides God, as advanced by ʿIrfān ʿĀbidī, see “Ḥażrat Imām Ḥusayn ʿalayhi al-salām ummat-i muslimah ke liye mukammal namūnah-i ittiḥād heṉ,” Ṣūlfiqār 13,22 (16 July 1984): 6.
sleeve; āsatīn kā sānp) to render their evil work successful after all.\(^{539}\) Similarly, al-Sābiqī accused Ḍhakkō of attempting to break the strong and ancient Shi‘ī-Barelvī alliance (shī‘īyōn aur barelvīyōn kā qadīm ittiḥād). He felt it in order to issue an apology to his Barelvī brothers that a “so-called” (nām nihād) Shi‘ī mujtahid was using such filthy language and leveling accusations of polytheism that were aimed at them, too.\(^{540}\) Both Shi‘īs and Barelvīs cherished majālis in Muḥarram and in conjunction with the Prophet’s birthday (milād al-nabī). Both acknowledged that Muḥammad was created out of light, that he was blessed with knowledge of the unseen, and that he continued to have a spiritual, active presence in this world (ḥāżir ō nāẓir).\(^{541}\)

Ḍhakkō’s goal, by contrast, was only to please the Deobandīs which was reflected in his reliance on authors adhering to this school. Al-Sābiqī especially took issue with Ḍhakkō for appropriating arguments from Ashraf ‘Alī Thānavī’s (d. 1943) book Islāḥ al-rusūm in order to buttress his criticism of the custom of holding a recitation encompassing the entire Qur‘ān during a single Ramadaṇ evening (shabīnah).\(^{542}\) This proved that Ḍhakkō in reality conspired to promote taqlīd of the Deobandīs, not obedience to the Imāms and emulation of the marāji’.\(^{543}\) The fact that Ḍhakkō’s controversial reformist publication from the 1990s even shared the same title with Thānavī’s work demonstrated beyond any doubt that his reform agenda was entirely built on Deobandi fatwās which were merely given a superficial Shi‘ī labeling.\(^{544}\) This could also be gathered from the way the “anti-Shi‘ī centers” (shi‘ah dushman marākiz) were celebrating the publication of Ḍhakkō’s latest book. According to al-Sābiqī, he had received more than 500

\(^{539}\) Dōgar, Șahīfah-i ḥaqā’iq, vol. 1, 197. For a similar accusation leveled against Ḍhakkō for allegedly conspiring with the SSP, compare ‘Abidi, Ṭamāńcah bar rukhsār, 165. For a detailed discussion of the SSP discourse, see also chapter 5.

\(^{540}\) Al-Sābiqī, Rusūm al-shī‘a, 32.

\(^{541}\) Ibid., 33. For the resemblances (and differences) between Barelvī and Shi‘ī teachings, see Sanyal, Devotional Islam and Politics, 208-216.

\(^{542}\) On Thānavī’s role within the Deobandi school, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Ashraf ‘Alī Thanawi: Islam in modern South Asia (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008).

\(^{543}\) Al-Sābiqī, Rusūm al-shī‘a, 36.

\(^{544}\) ‘Abidi, Ṭamāńcah bar rukhsār, 29.
letters and telephone calls urging him to write a reply to this work since there was the imminent danger that the forces hostile to Shi‘i Islam might make use of its arguments in courts and parliaments as a “reference and proof text” (ḥavālah aur dastāvez ke ṭaur par) against the Shi‘a.\(^{545}\)

Finally, I would like to briefly consider a manifestation of traditionalist Shi‘i thought that strives to make a case for taqrīb by focusing nearly exclusively on the Hidden Imām. These ideas were promoted by Sayyid Muḥammad Ja‘far al-Zamān (d. 2002), a man who allegedly never enjoyed any formal schooling but was educated by his father Sayyid Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shāh Naqvi Najafī, “a spiritualist of higher status.”\(^{546}\) Sayyid Muhammad Ja‘far al-Zamān assumed the role of a Shi‘i pīr and used to hold nightly sessions in the Punjabi village of Jamānshāh which attracted a couple of hundred followers every night.\(^{547}\) Among them were a good number of educated professionals who not only helped al-Zamān set up his own website www.jamanshah.com as early as 2001 but provided editorial assistance with the publication of his final work, *The Last Great Reformer of the World*, which he had deliberately written in


\(^{546}\) S. G. Abbas, “A few words,” in Syed Muhammad Jafar-uz-Zaman Naqvi, *The Last Great Reformer of the World As Highlighted by Prophets* (sic) (Karachi: Al-Qaim Welfare Trust, 2003), II. S. G. Abbas is introduced as “Professor of English, Former Principal Sirajuddaulah Gov. College Karachi,” who was tasked by Ja‘far al-Zamān with reviewing and proofreading *The Last Great Reformer*, which al-Zamān had originally written in English shortly before his death.

\(^{547}\) This can be gathered from the fact that al-Zamān's younger brother Sayyid Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shāh Naqvi continues this function and receives more than 200 visitors every night (see Muhammad Akram ‘Ārifī, *Shi‘i-yān-i Pākistān* (Qum: Intishārāt-i Mu‘assasah-i Shi‘ahshināsī, 1385 [2006 or 2007]), 182-183). ‘Ārifī mentions several other Shi‘i pīrs located all over Pakistan like Pir Sayyid Bāvā Ṣadā-yi Ḥusayn in Lahore, Sayyid Anvar Shāh Miyyān from the Shi‘i section of the Tūrī tribe, Sayyid Miyyān and Pir Sayyid Maḥmūd Mu‘allīm (both located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Pir Sayyid ‘Alamdār Shāh in Attock, and Pir Sayyid Ṣādiq ʿAlī Shāh in Jacobābād. According to ‘Ārifī, all of these figures are engaged in writing special prayers and producing talismans (*ta‘vīz*) for their followers (*ibid.*, 184-185). While these services belong to the staple of pīr activities (see the description in Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood*, 1-2), it would be an intriguing research project to explore to what extent their Shi‘i identity shapes their behavior and role. Such a discussion, however, is unfortunately beyond the scope of the present dissertation.
English.\textsuperscript{548} Ja’far al-Zamān criticized those Shī‘ī reformers who attempted to deceive the Shī‘ī masses by turning their religion into a neatly delineated “package” that was supposedly in line with an “enlightened” (\textit{rūshan khayālī}) understanding of religion.\textsuperscript{549} Yet, this reformist system was also void of any specific Shī‘ī elements like ‘azādārī, the Shī‘ī adhān, or conceptions of the Imāms’ fadā‘īl, in order to achieve an intra-Muslim unity that was based solely on the understanding of a shared revealed book, qibla, Prophet, and God.\textsuperscript{550} Al-Zamān, by contrast, advanced a divergent proposal for real, feasible unity that went beyond such impoverished initiatives.\textsuperscript{551} He argued that all religions were expecting a true, comprehensive reformer and savior who would appear at the end of time, a figure whom both Shī‘īs and Sunnīs identified as the \textit{mahdī}. It was only when the \textit{mahdī}’s face was revealed and, consequently, God’s very own omnipotent countenance (\textit{Allāh ʿazz ō jall kā jabrūtī cihrah}) became known, that weak human beings could expect to fully comprehend God (\textit{Allāh kā mukammal taʿāruf}).\textsuperscript{552} Al-Zamān insisted that it was not up to us to try to expedite the process of the 12\textsuperscript{th} Imām’s reappearance. In a thinly veiled critique of Iran he wrote that including any mortal person in the \textit{mahdī}’s government was nothing else than undue haste (\textit{jaldbāzī}) and an action that would certainly bring about God’s wrath.\textsuperscript{553} In another instance of the adoption of reformist vocabulary by traditionalist authors he was eager to underline, however, that the waiting period, properly understood, was supposed to be filled with “exemplary action and not idleness”:

\textsuperscript{548} Besides the preface by S. G. Abbas, the book also includes an additional introduction written by two followers who are introduced as Professor Zulfiqar Husain Khan and Professor Faqir Shamim Ijaz (see Jafar-uz-Zaman Naqvi, \textit{The Last Great Reformer}, I and VII).

\textsuperscript{549} In his analysis there is some overlap with the notion of an “objectification” of Islam among modernist thinkers as described by Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori. Such authors treat religion as a “self-contained system that its believers can describe, characterize, and distinguish from other belief systems” (see Dale F. Eickelman and James P. Piscatori, \textit{Muslim Politics} (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 38).

\textsuperscript{550} Al-Zamān Naqvi Bukhārī, \textit{Afkār al-muntaẓirīn}, 5-6.

\textsuperscript{551} \textit{Ibid.}, 7.

\textsuperscript{552} \textit{Ibid.}, 19.

\textsuperscript{553} Al-Zamān Naqvi Bukhārī, \textit{Tariq al-muntaẓirīn}, 24.
The waiting that we are stressing is actually a revolutionary school of thought which has no provision for leisure or easy life. It is the name of the life of a soldier or a commando. Many Traditions say that one who waits is like a soldier fighting in the field.\textsuperscript{554}

Like other traditionalist authors, Jaʿfar al-Zamān rejected claims by the \textit{ʿulamā}, whom he called “religious monopolists” (\textit{mażhabi ijārah dār}) and accused of abusing scripture for their own ends,\textsuperscript{555} to be the representatives of the Hidden Imām during his Occultation. Following the commands of a \textit{maulvī}, who was himself a created being, was not compatible with God's greatness.\textsuperscript{556} Yet, al-Zamān limited and delineated the \textit{ʿulamā}'s role even further than other anti-reformist writers whom we have studied in this chapter. In his view, the only acceptable task for the religious scholars could be to teach the people the traditional Shiʿī prayers to hasten the appearance of the \textit{mahdī} and to exhort them to seek direct contact with him.\textsuperscript{557} During the time of Occultation, there was no obligation more important for the \textit{ʿulamā} than to “safely deliver the seekers of truth and sincerity to the Imam of the Age's palace of guidance” (\textit{ṭālibān-i ḥaqq ō ṣadāqat kō imām-i zamānah [...] ke qaṣr-i hidāyat tak amn ō amān se lāyeñ}).\textsuperscript{558}

Due to this priority, the \textit{ʿulamā} should make sure that the Hidden Imām took center stage in all their \textit{majālis} and sermons, that they included the prayer for the \textit{mahdī}'s speedy return even in the obligatory daily prayers, and that they organized nightly vigils during which the believers should plead for the appearance of the twelfth Imām. Likewise, the religious scholars were obliged to instill in the people an urge to meet the Hidden Imām in both dreams and awakened states of mind, and to provide them with the appropriate tools to facilitate a visitation by him.\textsuperscript{559}

\textsuperscript{554}Jafar-uz-Zaman Naqvi, \textit{The Last Great Reformer of the World}, 122-124.  
\textsuperscript{555}Ibid., 60.  
\textsuperscript{556} Al-Zamān Naqvi Bukhārī, \textit{Afkār al-muntaẓirīn}, 36.  
\textsuperscript{557} Al-Zamān Naqvi Bukhārī, \textit{Tariq al-muntaẓirīn}, 5.  
\textsuperscript{558} Ibid., 125.  
\textsuperscript{559} Ibid., 125-129.
Muḥammad Jaʿfar al-Zamān discussed various rigorous spiritual exercises an individual had to undergo before he or she could approach the Lord of the Age (ṣāḥib al-zamān). The seeker had to follow, for example, a strict diet based only on vegetables and fruit. He should put on a loose cotton dress which he himself had washed and which no one else was allowed to touch. The believer should avoid sexual intercourse, refrain from any immoral behavior, and seclude himself from society for at least an entire week.\(^{560}\) This possibility was open to everyone, regardless of his or her religion because no guidance existed in the world anyway during the time of the twelfth Imām’s Occultation. Jaʿfar al-Zamān advised his followers to attempt to establish contact with the mahdī in such a state of ritual purity at midnight on a Thursday. After calling on the Hidden Imām with the Arabic invocation \(Yā hādī nawwîr qalbî bi-hidāyatîka\) (Oh guide, enlighten my heart through your guidance) 313 times,\(^{561}\) the believer should use the following words to pray:

You please guide me. I present my religious matters, faith and worldly affairs before you. I present the blank paper of my mind. Presently I have neither any religion nor belief.\(^{562}\) From today onwards my religion and belief will be that, (sic) which you imprint on this blank paper. I make a covenant with your exalted self that I shall obey your orders. The belief given by you will be my religion. I will consider things allowed by you as lawful and not allowed as prohibited. I offer my assistance (though you need it not) of every kind. Kindly include my name in your assistants and servants. I proffer my life, possessions and honour to your exalted self. You have complete authority of spending the same as you please or wherever you like. […]

Now I present my last request that if you don’t assure me of your entity and presence and don’t guide me in the fields of my religion, beliefs, do’s and don’ts, then I will plainly tell my Creator, when he will question me about my sins that (sic): Your representative did not guide me despite my request. So there is no fault on my part. Kindly ask your representative about my sins.\(^{563}\)

\(^{560}\)Jafar-uz-Zaman Naqvi, \textit{The Last Great Reformer}, 254-255.
\(^{561}\) This invocation does not have any specific currency among the usual Shiʿi prayers. Personal communication from Sajjad Rizvi, October 7, 2014.
\(^{562}\) This sentence is rendered in the Urdu translation of the text as “\(is vaqt nah merā kōʾī maẕhab he, aur nah kōʾī ʿaqīdah he.\)” See Sayyid Muḥammad Jaʿfar al-Zamān Naqvi Bukhārī, \textit{Mauʿūd al-rusul yaʿnī dunyā kā ākhirī muṣliḥ-i aʿẓam} (Karachi: al-Qāʾim Welfare Trust, 2008), 330.
\(^{563}\) Jafar-uz-Zaman Naqvi, \textit{The Last Great Reformer}, 256-257.
If the mahdi did not appear to the seeker within the first week of seclusion, the former should wait for another week before issuing an ultimatum to his savior through the following demand:

I shall wait for your guidance till the next Friday. If it is not received till then, I will never return to you and will believe that your exalted self is not present in this world.564

If contact with the Hidden Imām was established, the believer should remain silent about it and treasure it as a personal gift regarding which dissimulation (taqiyya) was obligatory. This held especially true if the mahdi had given the believer any sort of command or granted him or her a particular revelation. Such a private message should not be divulged publicly. Other people might after all not be able to handle its implications or understand it properly because every individual was different with regard to capability and rational faculty (kyünkhe har shakhš kā žarf ō ‘aql judā judā he, is liye is ke liye šādir hōne wāle aḥkām bhi judā judā hōn ge).565

Ja`far al-Zamān might at first glance be perceived as thus “democratizing” the Shi’ī experience, and indeed his theories go beyond the accessibility most Shi’ī jurists had conceded to the Imām during the ghayba period. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 459 or 460/1066-7) had argued, for example, that the Imām could at times influence a meeting of jurists who were trying to reach a consensus (ijmā’) on a certain question and – unbeknownst to those who participated – steer the decision in the right direction. Shaykh Murtaţā al-Anṣārī (d. 1262/1864) along with leading Imāmī jurists on the other hand had denied even this limited role because it was simply not possible for the Imām to reveal the truth while being in Occultation.566 For the Shaykhs, an encounter with the Hidden Imām required nothing less than a “«technique» initiatique secrète” that was the exclusive knowledge of a spiritual elite

564 Ibid., 258.
565 Al-Zamān Naqvī Bukhārī, Ṭarīq al-muntaẓirīn, 33-34.
(khāṣṣat mawālīh). In the 20th century, cautionary voices remained dominant as well: while the Iranian Revolution occurred against the backdrop of high-running expectation about the return of the Hidden Imam, Khomeini (unlike the Shāh who played up divine favors bestowed upon him) was always careful to emphasize that he had no special connection with the mahdi. He implied instead that the Iranian nation as a collective entity might benefit from a favored status with God as long as Iranians relied on Him and trusted in Him. It was only in the last decade in Iran during the presidency of Mahmud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) that more permissive attitudes towards potential communication with the mahdi surfaced. Ahmadinejad in particular is most notorious for such claims. The politician found himself in the midst of controversy by suggesting that he had enjoyed contact with the Hidden Imam inter alia during the United Nations General Assembly meeting in September 2005, a claim that was ridiculed by many Shi’i scholars in Iran. Even ‘ulamā like Muḥammad Miṣbāḥ Yazdi, who actively tried to create a “theoretical space for positing that a cleric such as himself and those whom he approved of were also acting according to the will and demand of the Hidden Imam,” did not subscribe to the opinion that the mahdi could be forced to appear. While the Hidden Imam was of course at liberty to show himself wherever he saw fit, Shi’i guidebooks usually stipulated that ritual seclusion should be sought at special places like the Sahla mosque in

Najaf, ʿAlī’s mosque in Kufa, the shrine of Ḥusayn in Karbala, or the mosque of Jamkarān near Qum.  

Al-Zamān breaks with this tradition of primacy attributed to Shiʿī places in the Middle East suitable to facilitate an audience with the Lord of the Age. According to him, a rural Punjabi setting is in no way less suitable to witness a visitation. Yet, it seems that it is not just dynamics of “democratizing” and “localizing” access to the Hidden Imām that are at play in his writings. While undoubtedly reducing the ʿulamā to mere handmaidens of a mystical encounter with the mahdī, Jaʿfar al-Zamān still retains the role of a pīr for his followers. We can safely assume that his admonition not to publicly discuss encounters with the Hidden Imām enshrines his own prerogative (or that of his successor) to interpret for his followers the implications of the particular command received.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that Shiʿī religious reformers in Pakistan such as Muḥammad Ḥusayn Najafī Ḍhakkō and Sayyid ʿAlī Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsavī face a dilemma. Their calls to abandon supposedly superstitious rituals and beliefs in order to achieve taqrīb bear an eerie resemblance to anti-Shiʿī polemics advanced by groups such as the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah. At the same time, Ḍhakkō’s focus on a legal-based reinterpretation of Shiʿī identity or Mūsavī’s political reading of Karbala did not gain much currency among Shiʿī believers in the country. This does not mean, however, that their writings did not deeply reshape the discourse about proper Shiʿīsm in Pakistan. The traditionalist opponents of Ḍhakkō and Mūsavī – in themselves


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a diverse group, to be sure – reacted to the challenges of reform by foregrounding theological, Shaykhi-inspired arguments about an utterly transcendent God. This focus on the esoteric aspects of the faith not only enabled them to reconceptualize the precise meaning of tauḥīd but also made it possible to distinguish between the initiated ʿulamāʾ who could comprehend the subtleties of the faith and the scholars of mere ritual. It was not enough for these scholars to make esoteric arguments, however. Instead they were keen on demonstrating that their theological views not only fit squarely into the Shiʿī mainstream and were indeed held by most senior scholars in the centers but also that Sunnī authors, when properly read, would condone their views. This strategy for obtaining an aura of respectability also ties in with alternative solutions advanced by these traditionalists to overcome sectarianism either by suggesting a Ṣūfī-Shiʿī synthesis revolving around the ambiguous term walāya/wilāya or by turning the mahdī into a universal figure who could be approached by adherents of all faiths.
Chapter 3: Tapping Sources: the marājiʿ, their Followers, and Shiʿi Journals in Pakistan

Dr. ʿAqīl Mūsā did not hide his feelings about my suggested research on this hot Karachi morning. I had come to see him in the office of his publishing house, located in the city's Soldier Bazaar. With the Imam Khomeini Library close by and surrounded by a multitude of Shiʿi bookshops, ḥusayniyyas and businesses specializing in selling banners, flagellation chains, and various other accessories used during Muḥarram, it appeared to be an appropriate location to discuss Shiʿi thought in Pakistan.  

Also, I was curious to hear about Dr. Mūsā's unique perspective: a trained medical doctor, he had made a career change in the wake of the Iranian Revolution. After long years of religious studies in Qum, he was now wearing clerical garb and acted as the principal of the Jāmiʿah-i Imāmiyyah, one of the most prestigious institutions of Shiʿi learning in Pakistan. Yet, Dr. Mūsā did not show any patience for his fellow countrymen and dismissed the idea of studying their religious output: “What do you expect? People have nothing to eat, they fight for their survival. You should not be surprised that religious publications from Pakistan are only of inferior quality.” If I was serious about studying Shiʿism, I should focus on the foundational texts available in both Arabic and Persian instead. Similarly, there was, in his view, no benefit to be gained from scrutinizing the speeches delivered by Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī, Pakistan's main Shiʿi leader of the 1980s, whose views feature prominently in chapter 4. The way al-Ḥusaynī presented the concept of vilāyat-i

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574 A ḥusayniyya denotes a building in which Shiʿi mourning sessions (majālis) are held. While such majālis take place year round, their frequency and intensity sharply increases during the first ten days of the Muslim month of Muḥarram in the run-up to the commemoration of the Battle of Karbala on 10 Muḥarram 61 (10 October 680) during which Ḥusayn was killed.


576 Interview with Dr. ʿAqīl Mūsā, 23 July 2012, Karachi.
faqīh (The Guardianship of the Jurist) was identical with Khomeini’s vision and merely a faithful translation of ideas held by the Iranian revolutionary into Urdu.

This anecdote underlines Pakistan’s supposed (and acutely self-perceived) status as a Shi‘i backwater which has nothing to offer the centers of the Shi‘i world. Rather, as Dr. Mūsā was eager to emphasize, Pakistani Shi‘is have been and still are merely on the receiving end of knowledge production which naturally takes place in Iran and Iraq.577 Many Pakistani Shi‘i ‘ulamā share this bleak view. They point to the lack of established educational institutions that are comparable to the pre-Partition role exerted by Lucknow’s seminaries which produced generations of senior mujtahids.578 As we have seen in the two previous chapters, at the time of Partition in 1947 Pakistan had only two functioning Shi‘i seminaries, located in the Punjab towns of Multan and Sargōdhā.579 Yet, despite sustained efforts to establish new schools and upgrade the level of education, the most-advanced cycle of traditional Shi‘i religious learning (dars-i khārij, lit: “external studies,” also known as khārij al-suṭūḥ (“outside the texts”)) is not

577 The Middle East-centered view is also shared by those who reject the Iranian model. In a conversation, Shaykh ‘Ali Najafī, son of the Pakistani-born marja‘ Bashir Ḥusayn al-Najafī, restricted the religiously relevant, foundational texts to Arabic publications alone. In his view, Persian is only good for political readings of Islam, which he rejects (conversation in Shaykh ‘Ālī’s office, Najaf, Iraq, 16 January 2013).

578 See Justin Jones, Shi‘a Islam in Colonial India, 39-44. This is not to say that Iranian publications, for example, do not express deep skepticism about the “scientific” standing of Lucknow as a (historical) ḥauza in its own right. The city’s seminaries are criticized for not subscribing to a proper Uṣūlī stance on Shi‘ism. Instead of focusing on ijtihād and taqlīd, the argument goes, Lucknow restricted itself to emphasizing the virtues (fudā‘il) and afflictions (masā‘ib) of the ahl-i bayt and the importance of the Imāmate (see Muḥammad Akram ŢĀrifī, Shī‘iyān-i Pākistān (Qum: Intishārāt-i Mu’assasah-i Shī‘ahshināsī, 2006-2007), 141-144). This dismissive attitude is not an invention of the 20th and 21st centuries, to be sure. One of the first Indian scholars to pursue advanced religious training in Najaf, Sayyid Dildār ‘Ali Naṣīrābādī (d. 1820), fought quite an uphill battle during his stay in Iraq: “Because of his Indian background, Naṣīrābādī had great difficulty in being taken seriously as a scholar, some Iranian students insisting that there simply were no ulama in India. They found the very thought of an Indian mujtahid absurd, given that only three scholars of the shrine cities were recognized exemplars” (see Juan Cole, Roots of North Indian Shi‘ism in Iran and Iraq (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 65).

yet offered in the country. Likewise – even though a Pakistani citizen is among Najaf’s four leading Grand Ayatollahs – there is not a single marja’ al-taqlid (Source of Emulation) residing in Pakistan today.

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580 Interview with Muhammad Husayn Akbar, principal of Idārah-i Minhāj al-Ḥusayn, Lahore, 15 July 2012. For his madrasa, see http://www.minhaj-ul-hussain.org/ (accessed 23 May 2015). This fact was also corroborated by Muhammad Ḥasan Sharīfī, director of the Kitābkhānah-i ‘Allāmah Iqībāl Lāhūrī, Qum, 23 August 2012. On the efforts of founding new schools in Pakistan, see Andreas Rieck, “A Stronghold of Shi’a Orthodoxy in Northern Pakistan,” In Islamstudien ohne Ende: Festschrift für Werner Ende zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Rainer Brunner (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), 392-398. The term dars-i khārij is derived from the fact that at this stage no textbooks are used and the students are expected to have mastered all the basic works of fiqh and usūl al-fiqh. This final, third cycle of hauza education is devoted to explorations of major areas of Islamic law at the level of “pure disputation.” “A master teacher announces a subject of study and, usually without any books or notes, will cite key passages and contested areas in well-known works on this subject, which he introduces by declaring 'It has been said...' Then he will introduce his own reflections on the subject by adding, 'But I say...' after which the student can respond, 'But it can be said...' At this final level it becomes clear who has the capacity to become a mujtahid, a doctor of the law authorized by some previous doctor of the law to issue an authoritative opinion on Islamic law” (see Roy P. Mottaheh, “Traditional Shi’ite Education in Qom,” in Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (ed), Philosophers on education: Historical perspectives (London: Routledge, 1998), 454 and also Khalid Sindawi, “Hawza Instruction and Its Role in Shaping Modern Shi’ite Identity: The Hawzas of al-Najaf and Qumm as a Case Study,” Middle Eastern Studies 43,6 (2007): 841–842). For an overview of the texts used in hauza education, see Michael M. J. Fischer, Iran: From religious dispute to revolution (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980), 247-251.

581 Interview with Sayyid Ghulām Jābir Muḥammad and Sayyid Ḥusayn Zaydī, Al-Mustafa Open University, Qum, 29 August 2012. The claim by Muhammad Ḥusayn Najafī Ḍhakkō to act as a marja’ does not seem to be widely shared (see “Muṣāḥabah bā hažrat-i Āyatullāh Hājj Muḥammad Ḥusayn Najafī Pākistānī,” Hauzah 123 (2004): 124–181). Currently, four main Grand Ayatollahs reside in Najaf, the most influential of whom is Sayyid ʿAlī al-Sīstānī (b. 1930 in Iran). Besides him, there are Muhammad Ḥusayn Ḍhakkō (b. 1930 in Afghanistan's Ghaznī province), Sayyid Muḥammad Sa’īd al-Ḥakīm (b. 1936 in Najaf), and a scholar from the Subcontinent, Bashīr Ḥusayn Najafī. He was born in 1942 in the city of Jālandhar in today's Indian Punjab before moving with his family to Lahore in 1948. Najafī attended the Jāmiʿat al-Muntaẓar and left for Najaf in 1965 where he completed the highest cycle of Shi’i learning and devoted himself to teaching and writing (see Naqvī, Taṣkirah-i ‘ulamā’i imāmiyyah, 60-61). Bashīr Ḥusayn Najafī's lack of interest in Pakistani affairs is striking and remains to be further investigated. The Grand Ayatollah has never returned to Pakistan since 1965. Currently, he does not have any plans to open a school in this country but is significantly more active in India, where he regularly holds competitions for Shi’i madrasa students. Out of about 2,000 participants every year, 150 to 200 are invited to move to Najaf in order to continue their religious education there, supported by a stipend (interview with Grand Ayatollah Bashīr Ḥusayn Najafī, Najaf, Iraq, 22 January 2013). Najafī has also extolled the unrivaled position of Najaf as a ḥauza (see Bashīr Ḥusayn al-Najafī, Satabqā al-Najaf rā’idat hauzāt al-ʿalam (Najaf: Mu’assasat al-Anwār al-Najafīyya, 2012). For further information on the current
Such notions of center and periphery and the dependence of South Asian Shi‘īs on Najaf and Qum for their religious guidance come to the fore in the available secondary literature as well. Juan Cole has categorized the rising Uṣūlī influence in North India among Shi‘īs since the early 1800s as a direct import from the shrine cities of Iraq. This new “ideology” fiercely attacked local, gentleman-like Shi‘ī scholars who in their literalist Akhbārī proclivities (which, to be sure, were the result of earlier connections to the Middle East) “resembled Pentecostalist ministers, who rejected priesthood and whose training emphasized scriptural knowledge, eschewing rationalist theology.”⁵⁸² The indigenous “egalitarian religious structure” was thus challenged and ultimately transformed by a highly hierarchical form of the faith. During the course of the 19th century, a class of religious specialists took shape and Shi‘īs “moved from a group in which lay-clerical differences were slight to one in which a vast chasm separated the chief mujtahid from a humble Shi‘ī artisan.”⁵⁸³ The fact that either foreign-born or Iraq-educated scholars were the driving force behind sweeping changes like the introduction of communal Friday prayers points to the centrality of the Shi‘ī heartlands. Yet, Cole also alerts us to the complex interactions between the Middle East and the Subcontinent once a genuine

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⁵⁸² Cole, North Indian Shi‘īsm, 124. It has to be said that Cole’s depiction of Akhbārī legal and religious thought in the context of North India strikes the reader as somewhat one-sided and generalized. Robert Gleave, for example, has drawn our attention to the internal diversity of the Akhbārī school which also had room for complex discussions of theology, relying on rational argumentation and philosophical reasoning (see Robert Gleave, Scripturalist Islam: The History and Doctrines of the Akhbārī Shi‘ī School (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 138-139). Additionally, Gleave has called into question the egalitarian aspect of the school, arguing that Akhbārī ‘ulamā were equally concerned with upholding their religious authority: “None of the Safavid and Qajar Akhbāris, to my knowledge, considered the ‘ulamā redundant because the texts were available to the whole community. Scholars were needed, not only to pass on the knowledge found in the texts, but also to perform complex hermeneutic procedures when the texts were silent, contradictory or ambiguous” (ibid., 302-303). Compare also Devin Stewart, “The Genesis of the Akhbārī Revival,” in Michel Mazaoui (ed), Safavid Iran and Her Neighbors, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2003), 169-193.

⁵⁸³ Cole, North Indian Shi‘īsm, 284.
Indian religious hierarchy was firmly in place. Whereas the “lower ranks of mujtahids” showed no hesitation in accepting even controversial juridical decisions made by the leading Iraqi marja' of the age, Luckow's “top mujtahids” never felt obliged to modify their rulings in case they differed in their legal reasoning.\(^{584}\)

Justin Jones has recently expanded on these demonstrations of scholarly independence. Criticizing Cole, he suggests that we should move away “from the idea of an 'Indo-Persian milieu', and the assumption that modern religious developments in Shi‘ism can only be discussed with primary reference to globalization and the enhancement of ties to the Iraqi-Persian heartland.”\(^{585}\) Jones's study attempts instead to chart the emergence of self-consciously “Hindustani” forms of Shi‘ism with their own religious leadership and inventories of practice. The lively public sphere of the time, which was populated by various Shi‘i organizations (anjumans), serves for him – as we have already touched upon in the first chapter of this dissertation – as a prime example for such local manifestations of the faith. The founding of these societies was, according to Jones, almost exclusively inspired by rival efforts at socio-religious reform within India – the opening of colleges, hospitals, and orphanages by Hindu, Sunni, and Christian groups – rather than being dependent on developments in Najaf.\(^{586}\) Similarly, Jones credits the leading Indian Shi‘i ‘ulamā of the 1920s with holding political positions that diverged significantly from those of their peers in the Middle East. In taking their stance against the Khilāfat movement of 1919-1924, these jurists differed from Arab and Persian mujtahids who advocated “pan-Islamic politics during these same months as the best

\(^{584}\) Ibid., 215.
\(^{585}\) Jones, Shi‘a Islam in Colonial India, 20.
\(^{586}\) Ibid., 142. For a recent discussion of the competition between various sects and their affiliated organizations in the context of colonial Mumbai, see Nile Green, Bombay Islam: The religious economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840-1915 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 24-48.
defense against the Anglo-French occupation of Muslim territories.”⁵⁸⁷ The establishment of specifically Indian seminaries confirms in Jones's view that South Asian Shi'ism since the late 19th century has shed the “cultural, religious and psychological leadership located in the wider Perso-Arab world” for a “meaningful and semi-autonomous role” within the wider Shi'ī international.⁵⁸⁸

If we turn to scholarly appraisals of transnational ties since the inception of Pakistan in 1947, the emerging picture is hardly any clearer. There is no agreement in the literature regarding the importance of relations with the Shi'ī heartlands. Accounts on the marāji', their influence, and the importance of taqlīd in Pakistan take two very distinct, antithetical shapes. On the one hand, scholars argue that after the death of Grand Ayatollah Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm in 1970, most Pakistanis accepted Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Khūʾī (d. 1992) as their marja'.⁵⁸⁹ Vali Nasr holds that the decision for Khūʾī must have limited the revolutionary influence of Khomeini

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⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., 179.
⁵⁸⁸ Jones, Shi'ī Islam in Colonial India, 227-228.
⁵⁸⁹ Rièck, The Shi'is of Pakistan, 172. Muḥsin al-Hakīm was probably born in Najaf (or in Bint Jbeil in today's southern Lebanon) in 1889 and reached the level of ijtihād in 1919 after which he started teaching in the hauza. Gradually, his public presence grew with him becoming Friday prayer leader at the al-Hindī mosque in 1920 and leading the evening prayers at the shrine of Imām ʿAlī after 1936. After the death of Sayyid Husayn Burūjirdī in 1961, al-Ḥakīm achieved a marja'iyya that might be categorized as being a primus inter pares. For a pioneering and detailed study on the organizational aspects of al-Ḥakīm's marja'iyya, which involved his sons and representatives and also saw the founding of the World Ahl al-Bayt Islamic League in London (as well as later political activism of family members in Iraq and Iran), see Elvire Corboz, Guardians of Shi'ism: Sacred authority and transnational family networks (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015). Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Khūʾī was born in 1899 in Iran. In the early 1910s his family migrated to Najaf where al-Khūʾī received his education. He made a name of himself as “Teacher of the hauza” and “supervised hundreds of students while thousands of clerics are considered his indirect students.” While twelve senior 'ulamā backed al-Khūʾī after the death of al-Ḥakīm as the new universal marja’, his position never became absolute due to the presence of many other senior scholars at the time (as also discussed below). Elvire Corboz has also carefully studied al-Khūʾī and his family's leadership structures, in particular the philanthropic Al-Khoei Foundation which “helps explain the endurance of the marja'iyya's networks over time” (ibid.).
and the appeal of the Iranian conception of vilāyat-i faqīh in the Subcontinent more broadly.\footnote{Vali Nasr writes that in the late 1980s South Asian Shīʿīs referred to al-Khūʾī with the same lofty titles Iran used to refer to Khomeini. They regarded Khomeini only as a leader in political matters, whereas in religious questions they were followers of al-Khūʾī who also received most of their khums (see Vali Nasr, “The Iranian Revolution and Changes in Islamism in Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan,” in Nikki R. Keddie and Rudolph P. Matthee (eds), \textit{Iran and the surrounding world: Interactions in culture and cultural politics} (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 239.}

Other students of Pakistani Shīʿīs have dismissed such a view altogether, arguing that the concept of \textit{marjaʿīyya} is not meaningful in the context of Pakistan:

Although Pakistani Shīʿah say that they (like Iranian Shīʿah) follow the guidance of a “source of imitation” (\textit{marjaʿ}) or leading clerics (Khomeini and Khūʾī of Iran and Iraq were the two alternatives named to me in 1985-86), I found none who could mention an actual issue or occasion on which they had followed such clerical guidance. The real if often hidden issue for the Shīʿīs of Pakistan is not doctrinal, but the need for a non-Sunnī destination for the payment of religious taxes, since for Shīʿīs these are owed to the ‘ulamāʾ as representatives of the Hidden Imām.\footnote{Nikkie R. Keddie, “Shīʿism and Change: Secularism and Myth”, in Lynda Clarke (ed), \textit{Shīʿite heritage. Essays on classical and modern traditions} (Binghamton, NY: Global Publications, 2001), 400.}

Conducting research on Pakistani Shīʿīs 17 years after Nikki R. Keddie's fieldwork, David Pinault made similar observations in 2002. Many of the Shīʿīs whom he interviewed “seemed altogether unfamiliar even with the concept of the \textit{marjaʿ}.”\footnote{David Pinault, \textit{Notes from the Fortune-telling Parrot: Islam and the Struggle for Religious Pluralism in Pakistan} (London: Equinox, 2008), p. 79.}

These important interventions sit well with other recent anthropological studies of religious reasoning in Pakistan. Magnus Marsden and Naveeda Khan have emphasized local resistance to uniform Islamizing trends and hinted at a certain striving and aspirational tendencies by common believers to explore their faith with a critical eye (and even skepticism) towards religious authority exerted by both the jurists and the state.\footnote{See Magnus Marsden, \textit{Living Islam: Muslim religious experience in Pakistan’s North-west Frontier} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9 and Naveeda Khan, \textit{Muslim Becoming: Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan} (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 145-170. Naveeda Khan's important contribution also plays a more pronounced role in chapter 5.} While this chapter neither attempts to solve this general puzzle of religious literacy among Pakistani Shīʿīs nor to
decisively answer the question about the “quality” of influence which the ʿulamāʾ enjoy in the country, I suggest that internal Shīʿī debates over taqlīd can yield fresh insights into the construction of religious authority by “indigenous” scholars. I am especially interested in exploring how allegiances to a particular Grand Ayatollah are formed and what the affirmation of his marjaʿiyya means for lower-level Pakistani scholars and lay authors affiliated with these high-ranking jurists. In contrast to Justin Jones, my research – building on the argument made in chapter 1 about the salience of concerns beyond the Subcontinent – emphasizes the crucial importance of transnational ties well before the Iranian revolution of 1979. Rather than confining their debates to South Asian issues without any references to the heartlands, it seems that Pakistani scholars follow the opposite strategy by extensively claiming the center’s support for their particular views, as has also been demonstrated at length in the previous chapter. I argue, however, that the supreme position of a specific marjaʿ, even if he is explicitly endorsed as the towering ʿālim of the age, does not necessarily limit the claims to religious authority which local ʿulamāʾ make. By referring to a distant scholar, his representatives might rely on his prestige to boost their own position or, during the interim period when a new, universally accepted marjaʿ has not yet emerged, might step in as legal experts themselves to fill the void.

If we consider the criteria which are seen as the sine qua non for an ʿālim to have reached the status of a “Source of Emulation,” Pakistani debates do not usually diverge from singling out supreme learning (aʿlamiyya) and piety (taqwā) as decisive.594 Yet, a conclusive evaluation and comparison of these characteristics, especially if the lay person (muqallid) is confronted with a group of (nearly) equally qualified candidates, might at times prove elusive. Even fellow scholars may shy away from endorsing any explicit ranking of those Ayatollahs. In the

remainder of this chapter we thus see that in such circumstances secondary criteria like accessibility suddenly take center stage in elevating a particular ālim's standing among his peers. Similarly, in the context of the Shi‘ī periphery, a jurist's outreach and active interest in the Shi‘ī world beyond Iran and the Arab lands can play an equally crucial role, too. The prerogative of local Pakistani scholars in making this choice on behalf of the common people is thereby seen as rather unproblematic, at least as far as the religious specialists under discussion are concerned. By presenting themselves as the “people of experience” (ahl al-khibra), they take a quite elitist approach which attempts to limit the agency that an individual believer at least theoretically enjoys in choosing his or her “Source of Emulation.”

In order to substantiate my claims, I rely throughout this chapter primarily on Pakistani Shi‘ī journals since they enable us to trace shifting debates and diverging opinions – unlike monographs which at times smooth over such occurrences and thus sanitize the historical picture. In particular, I consult the fortnightly al-Ḥujjat published in the northern Pakistani city of Peshawar under the auspices of Mirzā Ṣafdar Ḥusayn al-Mashhādī (d. 1980). I also pay attention to Payām-i ʿAmal, the journal of the Pakistani branch of Sayyid ʿAlī Naqi Naqvi’s Imamia Mission based in Lucknow and Pakistan’s most widely distributed Shi‘ī monthly at the time. Finally, I rely on al-Muntaẓar, the fortnightly magazine of the Jāmiʿat al-Muntaẓar in


596 For such an account, see Ṣāqib Akbar, Pākistān ke dīnī masālīk (Islamabad: al-Baṣīra, 2010), 225-226. Akbar, a former activist and president of the Imamia Students Organisation (ISO) and now the head of a think-tank in Islamabad, provides an account which portrays Pakistan as being perfectly in line with an essentialist version of the marja‘īyya while not acknowledging any local variations during the course of the 20th century.

597 See below for more biographical details on him.
Lahore, Pakistan’s leading Shi‘ī seminary since the late 1960s.\textsuperscript{598} None of these publications have so far been consulted in scholarly writings on Shi‘īs in Pakistan, most likely due to the difficulty of obtaining access to this material.\textsuperscript{599}

In the following, I will discuss the period roughly from 1962 until 1976, thus covering the years when Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, who is credited with a deep personal interest in Pakistan, had attained the position of a nearly universally accepted global marja’.\textsuperscript{600} I pay attention to the ways his status as the most learned scholar is affirmed and discussed. I also look into the ensuing uncertainty in the period following his death in 1970 when the question who could fill the void was heatedly debated and answered in widely diverging ways in the Pakistani journals under discussion. The political background of Pakistan during this decade also enters into the picture, most notably in the shape of the ill-fated war with India in 1965 and the return to democracy in the early 1970s after military rule under the generals Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan. The rise of socialist politics with its call for land reform that is tied to the campaigning of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto left its traces in Shi‘ī writings as well. While evidence of controversies about

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{598} This opinion was often voiced during my interviews, inter alia by the London-based mujtahid Hasan Rizā Ghadiri (Interview in his residence, London, 20 June 2012). See also for a detailed discussion of the school’s origins and its development, Kāẓimī, \textit{Dīnī Madāris}, 237-272.
\item \textsuperscript{599} None of these journals for the time period under consideration are available in any Western library which made it necessary to assemble copies of them from holdings at the Punjab Public Library in Lahore, the Library of the Idārah-i Minhāj al-Ḥusayn in Jauhar Town/Lahore, the Library of the Madrasah-i Sulṭān al-Madāris in Sargōdhā (Punjab), the Library of the Jāmiʿat al-Muntaẓar in Model Town/Lahore, the library of Grand Ayatollah Burujirdī in Qum and the library of Sayyid Muḥsin al-Hakīm in Najaf. Even though the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) in Chicago features Payām-i ʿAmal in its holdings, issues are only available from 1976 onwards.
\item \textsuperscript{600} Muḥammad al-Shaykh Hādī Asadī argues that al-Ḥakīm’s interest was kindled primarily by two reasons. First, he was fascinated by the experiment of Pakistan as a newly-founded Muslim state with a large Shi‘ī population. Second, he frequently encountered Pakistani students in Najaf. Even before 1962 al-Ḥakīm sent representatives to Pakistan and was very supportive of founding new religious schools in the country (see Muḥammad al-Shaykh Hādī Asadī, \textit{Al-Imām al-Ḥakīm: ʿArḍ tārīkhī li-daurihi al-siyāsī wa-l-thaqāfī} (Baghdad: Muʿassasat Afāq lil-Dirāsāt wa-l-Abḥāth al-ʿIrāqī, 2007-2008), 279-281). Elvire Corboz also emphasizes the general importance al-Ḥakīm attached to his representatives. He sent these wakīls even to villages in his native Iraq, whereas his predecessors had only dispatched them to the country’s urban centers (Corboz, \textit{Guardians of Shi‘ism}, 25).
\end{itemize}
taqlīd during the lifetime of the influential marja’ Sayyid Ḫusayn Burūjirdī (d. 1961) remains elusive,601 the discussion in the 1980s and 1990s became increasingly overshadowed by the Iranian Revolution, which is the topic of the next chapter. Before turning to Pakistani debates, however, it might be useful to briefly recapitulate the crystallization of modern Shi’ī reflections on the role exerted by the “Sources of Emulation” and take a look at the processes through which these scholars attained their comprehensive position of authority.

The making of global marāji‘ in the modern period

Already a century after what the Shi’īs describe as the beginning of the “Greater Occultation” in 329/941, Shi’ī treatises of jurisprudence “speak familiarly of taqlīd.” While originally discussed in the context of obtaining fatwās from a Muftī, by the time of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d. 676/1277), “taqlīd had become the corollary of ijtihād” and was increasingly justified by arguments of reason and prophetic precedent.602 With a transfer of accountability at the root of the concept, the (living) mujtahid relieves the lay believer (the muqallid, the one who emulates) of the responsibility for the correctness of his religious actions. The ‘ālim exerts

601 Burūjirdī was born in 1875 in central Iran. After studying in Isfahan and Najaf and teaching for 34 years in his native Burūjird, he assumed the leadership of the hauza in Qum in 1944. His tenure witnessed the expansion of mosques, schools, and libraries and significantly increased the population of students and teachers in the city (Muhammad Sharif Rāzī, Ganjīnah-i dānishmandān (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-yi Islāmiyyah, 1973), vol 1, 344-356). On Burūjirdī’s religious leadership, see also Roy Mottahedeh, The Mantle of the Prophet. Religion and Politics in Iran (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 236-41. We know of two prominent scholars whom Burūjirdī sent to Pakistan as his representatives. Akhtar ‘Abbās (d. 1999), known in Pakistan as Shaykh al-Jāmi‘a, came to Lahore in 1954 to take over as principal of the Jāmi‘at al-Muntaẓar (see Naqvī, Taẓkirah-i ʿulamā’-i imāmiyyah, 31-32). Even earlier, Burūjirdī had ordered Muḥammad Sharīʿat to install himself in Karachi in 1952 (ibid., 313). Unfortunately, however, I have been unable to collect relevant journals from the 1950s which would shed more light on this crucial first decade of Pakistan's independence.

his own powers of *ijtihād* to the best of his ability in order to determine the character and extent of these divinely prescribed duties.\(^\text{603}\) In the pre-modern period, local *mujtahids* dispensed their legal guidance to lay Shīʿīs. The latter were expected to determine whether a scholar qualified for the task in light of their interactions with him and the testimony of reliable witnesses regarding his rank.\(^\text{604}\)

In contrast to these dynamics, the emergence of one towering (and spatially far removed) scholar, the most learned *mujtahid*, is a distinctly modern phenomenon which was facilitated by innovations in transport and communications that rendered a comparatively remote place like Najaf increasingly more accessible to the global Shīʿī community.\(^\text{605}\) Scholars have noted that these new possibilities of outreach coincided with the pressing need felt by the Shīʿī establishment to close ranks against challenges posed by the Shaykhi and Bābi movements.\(^\text{606}\) This transformation of authority is manifested by the rise of the ultimate Shīʿī

\(^{603}\) Clarke, “The Shīʿī Construction of Taqlīd,” 48-49. For Usūli scholars, certainty of religious reasoning that becomes fully identical with God's intentions (*wāqiʿ*) will most likely not be achieved during the absence of the Hidden Imām. The *mujtahid* provides merely a reasoned supposition (*ẓann*). For the Akhbāris, however, certainty (*al-ʿilm or al-yaqīn*) played a central role in their “stratified epistemology” (see Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam*, 61-101). The necessity of emulating a living *mujtahid* is usually justified with the argument that there must always be a scholar available to interpret the law according to changing circumstances. For recent arguments that the Lebanese ʿālim Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Faḍlallah (d. 2010) was so attuned to the latest technological developments and ahead of his time that his legal opinions could be followed for many years after his death, see Morgan Clarke, “After the Ayatollah: routinisation and succession in the marjaʿīyya of Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah,” *Die Welt des Islams* (forthcoming 2015).

\(^{604}\) Clarke, “The Shīʿī Construction of Taqlīd,” 53-54.

\(^{605}\) Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, “The Institutionalization of Marjaʿ-i Taqlīd in the Nineteenth Century Shīʿite Community,” *The Muslim World* LXXXIII,3-4 (1994): 280. Devin Stewart has challenged this notion, arguing that “the condition of aʿlamiyyah is not a recent phenomenon that has arisen in the last few centuries in Twelver Shiite law, but rather a standard feature of Shiite legal theory found in the works of jurisprudence from the early eleventh century until the present” (see Devin J. Stewart, *Islamic legal orthodoxy: Twelver Shiite responses to the Sunni legal system* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998), 230). It seems to me, however, that there does not need to be a contradiction between Stewart's argument about pre-modern jurists defending aʿlamiyya and the 19th century providing the material conditions for putting this idea into practice on a global level.

\(^{606}\) Moussavi, “The Institutionalization of Marjaʿ-i Taqlīd,” 286-287.
mujtahid and “sole marja' al-taqlid for the Shi'i world” Murtażā Anşārī (d. 1864). Already Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥasan Najafī (d. 1266/1850), who nominated Anşārī shortly before his death as the supreme exemplar after him, had started the practice of sending delegates to far-flung Shi'i locales in order to collect the Imām's share of the khums. Anşārī's exalted position and the funds that came with it enabled him to train a substantial number of students who after his death formed the “largest group of competing leaders.” He also reworked the procedural principles of uṣūl al-fiqh and even allowed mujtahids to make legal rulings on cases regarding which they had doubts. This contribution enabled mujtahids to extend the area of law to any matter where there was even a possibility and not just a probability of being in accordance with the Imam's guidance. It thus enabled them to broaden the jurisdiction of their own profession into wider spheres of human activity, thereby further advancing the professionalization of the ‘ulama’.

Even more ambitious, Anşārī also sought to formalize a new system of religious leadership over which the “most learned mujtahid presided.” He argued that emulation was a

608 Moussavi, “The Institutionalization of Marja‘-i Taqlīd,” 290. Khums (the fifth) is payable for Shi‘is on 1) booty, 2) objects obtained from the sea, 3) treasure, 4) mineral resources, 5) gainful earnings, 6) lawful earnings that have become mixed up with unlawful income, and 7) land transferred from a Muslim to a protected non-Muslim (dhimmi). Shi‘is are supposed to pay this to their Imām, who is the proprietor of the whole earth, or, during the Occultation, to a just mujtahid who acts as representative of the twelfth Imām. According to the standard Shi‘i interpretation, half of this amount received by the mujtahid is to be used for activities related to the propagation of the faith (including expenses for students, schools, etc.), while the second half is to be distributed among needy sayyids (Abdulaziz Sachedina, “Al-Khums: The Fifth in the Imāmi Shi‘ī Legal System,” Journal of Near Eastern Studies 39,4 (1980): 275–289 and idem, The Just Ruler in Shi‘īte Islam, 237-245). Juan Cole suggests that Sayyid Muhammad Ḥasan Najafī appointed Anşārī in order to “formalize the selection of the new source for emulation, and to make that selection the prerogative of the preceding holder of the post” (Juan R. I. Cole, “Imami Jurisprudence and the Role of the Ulama: Murtaza Ansari on Emulating the Supreme Exemplar,” in Nikki R. Keddie (ed), Religion and Politics in Iran: Shi‘ism from Quietism to Revolution (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 41).
611 Litvak, Shi‘i scholars and patrons, 72-73.
religious duty without which no religious act could be regarded as valid. Anṣārī delineated an informal hierarchy in which junior mujtahids were only to be emulated if their rulings were identical with those of the supreme marja’. Such processes of consolidation were also helped by the rise of printing which made it possible for jurists to distribute to their followers a legal compendium designed for the use of lay Shiʿis (risāla ‘amaliyya). It was during the course of the 19th and 20th centuries that titles of Shiʿi scholars marking their rank, such as Ḩujjat al-Islām (Proof of Islam), Ayatollah (Sign of God) or Grand Ayatollah, were used for the first time and rapidly gained currency. Yet, despite these attempts by Anṣārī and other scholars, the process of emergence of one dominating marja‘ remains a “quite ill-defined mix of scholarly and social credentials acquired in Shiʿi seminaries.” This holds true for Pakistan as well, as we will see below. The quality of an individual ‘ālim’s scholarship, his reputation for piety and justice, as well as his intensive studies with a former marja‘ are all important, as are his ethnic background, connections to business leaders and the merchant community, and networks of

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612 Moussavi, “The Institutionalization of Marja‘-i Taqlid,” 295. Chibli Mallat has written that the “risala seldom offers real novelties in legal research. It represents an element in Shiʿi education which preceded the turmoil of the twentieth century. The educational structure in the law schools might as well have encouraged the constant renewal of glosses and commentaries over the received Shiʿi fiqh. Yet the renewal remained constrained by the nature of the texts which were out of step with the contemporary age” (see Chibli Mallat, The renewal of Islamic law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shiʿi international (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 48).


patronage that involve his former students.\footnote{Litvak, \textit{Shi'i scholars and patrons}, 8-9 and Amanat, “In Between the Madrassa and the Marketplace,” 118-123. On the competition between Najaf and Qum (and between Persian- and Arabic-speaking Shi‘is), see Devin J. Stewart, “The Portrayal of an Academic Rivalry. Najaf and Qum in the Writings and Speeches of Khomeini, 1964-78,” in Walbridge (ed), \textit{The most learned of the Shi‘a}, 216–29.} If these building blocks that make up a successful bid for the \textit{marja’iyya} play out on several levels, the same applies to the constituencies that might accept a particular scholar for this role. The choice of the \textit{muqallids}, the opinions of junior scholars who have an intimate acquaintance with the contenders, or the leading Grand Ayatollahs who recognize one scholar from among themselves as the \textit{a‘lam} might ultimately tip the balance in this very amorphous process of emergence.\footnote{Mallat, \textit{The renewal of Islamic law}, 57-58. On the \textit{ahl al-khibra}, who are also known as \textit{ahl al-tamyiz} (The People of Discernment), see Robert Gleave, “Conceptions of Authority in Iraqi Shi‘ism: Baqir al-Hakim, Ha‘iri and Sistani on Ijtihad, Taqlid and Marja‘iyya,” \textit{Theory, Culture & Society} 24, 2 (2007): 67-70. See also Linda S. Walbridge, \textit{The Thread of Mu‘awiya. The Making of a Marja‘ Taqlid}. Edited by John Walbridge (Bloomington, Ind: Ramsay Press, 2014), 24-42.} This chapter, then, also contributes to the scanty literature on the negotiations of religious authority underlying the choosing of a \textit{marja‘} in the wider Shi‘i world in general and in the context of Pakistan in particular.

### Embracing the most learned at arm's length: the case of the journal \textit{al-Ḥujjat}

The first case study in this chapter deals with the writings of Mirzā Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Mashhadi (d. 1980), who is counted among the leading Pakistani Shi‘i ‘ulamā of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.\footnote{Akbar, \textit{Pākistān ke dīnī masālik}, 317. See also Payām-i ʿAmal, 20,4 (June 1976): 22.} Born in Bombay in 1901, he received most of his education in Lucknow, intially at the hands of his grandfather. After the latter’s death, Mashhadi also studied with the \textit{mujtahid} Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir (1868-1928) before switching to Qum.\footnote{Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir had spent 10 years in Najaf. He is credited with emphasizing the study of Arabic and Arabic poetry in his role as headmaster of the Madrasat Sultān al-Madāris. He mostly wrote \textit{fiqh} works in Arabic and is buried in Karbala. His network of \textit{muqallids} supposedly extended to both Africa and Europe (see Ḥusayn, \textit{Maṭla‘-i anvār}, 494-499).} Ayatollah Sayyid Abū ‘l-

\footnote{618 Litvak, \textit{Shi'i scholars and patrons}, 8-9 and Amanat, “In Between the Madrassa and the Marketplace,” 118-123. On the competition between Najaf and Qum (and between Persian- and Arabic-speaking Shi‘is), see Devin J. Stewart, “The Portrayal of an Academic Rivalry. Najaf and Qum in the Writings and Speeches of Khomeini, 1964-78,” in Walbridge (ed), \textit{The most learned of the Shi‘a}, 216–29.}


\footnote{618 Akbar, \textit{Pākistān ke dīnī masālik}, 317. See also Payām-i ʿAmal, 20,4 (June 1976): 22.}

\footnote{619 Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir had spent 10 years in Najaf. He is credited with emphasizing the study of Arabic and Arabic poetry in his role as headmaster of the Madrasat Sultān al-Madāris. He mostly wrote \textit{fiqh} works in Arabic and is buried in Karbala. His network of \textit{muqallids} supposedly extended to both Africa and Europe (see Ḥusayn, \textit{Maṭla‘-i anvār}, 494-499).}
Hasan Iṣfahānī (d. 1946) finally sent him to Peshawar where Mashhadī later acted as a representative for both Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm and Khomeini. His biographers credit him with a very outspoken, uncompromising attitude. Such a fearless preference for controversy gained him notoriety for harshly criticizing the moon-sightings announced by Radio Pakistan. Mashhadī frequently objected to the “official” dating of Ramadan and the major holidays of ‘īd al-Ṣaḥr (Feast of Breaking the Fast) and ‘īd al-ʿ adḥā (Feast of the Sacrifice) as inaccurate.620 Unlike other scholars, he did not regard the establishment of a school as his main goal, but rather embarked on several projects to reform the affairs of his coreligionists in Pakistan, the most enduring legacy of which was probably the fortnightly al-Ḥujjat.

In a long series of articles, published in this journal in the early 1960s, Mashhadī expounded on his view that in every age only one overarching Shīʿī mujtahid existed. This scholar was not merely a particularly brilliant jurist but also a leader who held far-reaching spiritual power (rūḥānī quvvat). He should be seen as a ruler without a crown. Since this supreme scholar was seated on the “throne of deputyship of the Hidden Imām,” he exercised authority over the Shīʿī believers (riyāsat-i millat ō mazhab apne āḥth meṣ let hēn). He even took on the position of the “silent Imām” (imām-i ṣāmit ki hāṣiyyat rakhte hēn).621 Despite the fact that the leading marjaʿ would insist that he was not protected from sin (maʿṣūm), in reality his lifestyle approached this ideal, crushing all base desires and complying fully with the requirements of the sharīʿa.622 Such special abilities did not deny the existence of other great mujtahids in the Shīʿī heartlands but only the leading figure had his flag flying all over the world and commanded a truly global presence. He functioned as the general marjaʿ and

620 See Naqvi, Taẕkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i imāmiyyah, 135-136 and also Ḥusayn, Maṭlaʿ-i anvār, 716-717. Mashhadi was also very active in the agitations of the 1970s against the Ahmadiyyas.


emulating him was necessary. This obligation extended to a certain extent even to his fellow Ayatollahs: whoever did not recognize the most learned as such had invalidated his own possible claim to emulation.\footnote{Al-Ḥujjat 2,10 (December 1962): 14. Mashhadī's reasoning here bears some similarity to that of Murtażā Anṣārī who required that junior mujtahids must follow a single supreme marjaʿ (marjaʿ al-taqlīd al-muṭlaq). The supreme mujtahid was dependent on this support because only this way would the ʿulamā form a unified front (see Heern, “Thou Shalt Emulate the Most Knowledgeable Living Cleric,” 338).}

Mashhadī did not stop at simply promoting Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm’s unquestionable superiority. He was also careful to underline his own rank as al-Ḥakīm’s representative in Pakistan. Mashhadī built his argument on a critique of those (contemporary) Iranian and Iraqi scholars who did not accept the credentials of the great Indian mujtahids of the past, thereby forgetting the more appropriate attitude of their ancestors. The “supreme learnedness” (aʿlamiyya) of Sayyid Āqā Murtażā Kashmirī (1852-1905), for example, had been widely acknowledged in Iraq but he had stayed aloof from the marjaʿiyya (marjaʿiyat se kanārah kash) out of his own free choice.\footnote{Born into a Shīʿī scholarly family in Kashmīr, he studied with his father Sayyid Mahdī Shāh Riżvī (d. 1896) and proceeded to Lucknow where his intellect reportedly even astonished the senior teachers. He was in Lucknow during the Rebellion against the British. When as a consequence he felt that the space for scholarship was tightening in the city (ʿilmī fażā tang makhṣūs hōne lagī), he traveled around 1867 with his maternal uncle to Iraq’s “exalted thresholds” (ʿatabāt-i ʿāliyāt) and studied with the major scholars of the time. When the leading Ayatollah Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥasan b. Maḥmūd Shirāzī (1815-95) was asked about whether in his view Kashmirī qualified as an “absolute mujtahid” (mujtahid-i muṭlaq), Shirāzī answered that there was no doubt about this. Kashmirī settled in Karbala where he engaged in teaching and also acted as prayer leader for the congregational prayer each Friday (see Sayyid Muḥsin Husayn Kashmirī, Dānishnāmah-i Shīʿīyān-i Kashmīr (Karachi: Markaz-i Iḥyāʾ-i Āsār-i Barr-i Ṣaghīr, 2011), 247-251). On the role Shirāzī played in the Iranian Tobacco Protest, see Nikki R. Keddie, Religion and Rebellion in Iran. The Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892 (London: Frank Cass, 1966), 65-109.} Similarly, even though the Iraqis had recognized the towering position of Mashhadī’s own teacher Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir, who was also known as Bāqir al-ʿUlūm, this scholar had not stepped forward to claim his deserved global leadership role out of “piety.”\footnote{For more biographical details on Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir, see Husayn, Maṭlaʿ-i anvār, 494-499.} Having thus made the case that South Asian ethnicity was no hindrance to scholarly

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excellence, Mashhadi pointed out the hierarchy which flowed from the mujtahid of the age. His appointed representatives were themselves leaders of the Shi‘is (qā‘id-i macharset). They not only collected the khums but also spread education and prepared the way for the application of the shari‘a. The mujtahids of a particular region who did not serve as representatives of the marja‘i ʿāmm recognized the authority of those who did. Below them in rank we find scholars who had not (yet) reached the rank of ijtihād, which obliged them to restrict their activities to preaching (tablīgh). One rung further down the ladder, Mashhadi located people whom the ‘ulamā could trust in transmitting legal questions. The lowest level in this pyramid was occupied by popular preachers (gākirs), who were indispensable for the holding of majālis and whose influence was discussed in the previous chapter. For Mashhadi, this elaborate hierarchy, which hinges on the centrality of a single Source of Emulation, was so well established and entrenched that it constituted a cause of envy for other Islamic schools of law. It also rendered any attempts on the part of the Shi‘is to elect additional or alternative religious and community leaders impermissible. The existence of representatives nominated by the center entailed that Shi‘is had no business engaging in factionalism and splintering (anjuman sāzi aur party bāzī). Consequently, Mashhadi was highly critical of Shi‘i participation in democratic politics in Pakistan which he linked to the ad hoc meeting after the Prophet’s death that deprived ʿAli of his rightful role as Caliph (saqīfā‘i ʿusūl).

626 Al-Hujjat 2,10 (December 1962): 15.
628 Al-Hujjat 3,2 (March 1963): 8. Andreas Rieck describes these two associations as operating in rather similar ways: “Both organizations were mainly financed by big landlords and wealthy traders, with ‘ulamā, advocates, and some professional agitators trying to mobilize the Shiite rank-and-file to stand up for their rights with conventions and oratory meetings, while at the same time singing the praise of their sponsors” (see Andreas Rieck, “The Struggle for Equal Rights as a Minority: Shia Communal Organizations in Pakistan, 1948-1968,” in Brunner and Ende (eds), The Twelver Shia in modern times, 274). According to Rieck, the APSC and the ITHS “did occupy themselves with numerous minor Shia demands and grievances, including purely local problems and conflicts, but the main issues taken up by these organisations were principal questions regarding the status of the Shia minority in the country. The ITHS attached special importance to constitutional safeguards, to
In his writings Mashhadī thus adopted a tone similar to that of Lucknow's mujtahids of the late colonial period. For him, Shi‘ī organizations such as the All Pakistan Shi‘a Conference (APSC) and the Organization for the Safeguarding of Shi‘a Rights (Idārah-i Taḥaffuẓ-i Ḥuqūq-i Shi‘ah) had lost sight of their original goal of serving religion through their various activities and instead played the political game out of desire for office and in clear imitation of the British.\(^{629}\) Since Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm formed a link in a chain which reached back to the Imāms themselves and had to be considered designated by God (\(mānsūṣ min Allāh hōne ke qā‘il heṇ\)), the Shi‘ī community did not have any right to independently designate representatives of the Imām.\(^{630}\) Rather, the believers had to obey the deputy of the deputy of the Imām (\(nā‘ib-i nā‘ib-i imām\)). Individual scholars, each in his specific local context, exerted such a role of a “particular Imām” (\(imām-i khāṣṣ\)).\(^{631}\) Given this emphasis, it is not surprising that al-Ḥujjat made a conscious effort to portray Mashhadī as al-Ḥakīm’s supreme and singular representative in Pakistan. The journal repeatedly referred to personal communications between the two scholars, as in the case of Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm arguing against the right of women to vote.

Reprinting a letter al-Ḥakīm had sent to the Tehran-based scholar Ayatollah Muḥammad Bihbahānī (d. 1963),\(^{632}\) al-Ḥujjat noted that Mashhadī had received his personal copy directly

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\(^{629}\) Al-Ḥujjat 3,5 (June 1963): 22. To get his point across about the incoherence of religion and politics and in a sharp rebuke of those \(anjumans\) which claimed to pursue only religious goals, Mashhadī also relied on the famous Persian poet Sa‘di (d. 691/1292) as well, quoting the following line: \(ham khudākhāhī va ham dunyā-yi dūn, īn khayāl ast va mūḥāl ast va junūn\) (Our longing for God and striving for this base world simultaneously – this is only an illusion and an impossible and insane state of mind) (see al-Ḥujjat 3,8 (September 1963): 15).

\(^{630}\) Al-Ḥujjat 2,12 (February 1963): 6.


from the marja’i’s office in Najaf. No reference was made to other individuals or organizations who acted as al-Ḥakīm’s representatives in Pakistan or who had the right to collect his khums.

This may be illustrated with an article from May 1967 which argued against the perception of a lack of able, reformist-minded fuqahā’ in the country. To prove the opposite, the editorial listed prominent scholars for each province of Pakistan, but emphasized Mashhadī’s countrywide standing and his unique position as the sole representative (vakil ō numāyandah) of Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm to distinguish him among his peers. Similarly, a contribution from 1961 credited Mashhadī with having taken the initiative of distributing the unabridged Persian version of al-Ḥakīm’s risāla ‘amaliyya in Pakistan.

Beyond underlining this special status gained from speaking on the behalf of the general marja’ (marja’i ʿāmm), Mashhadī also hinted at circumstances when the knowledge of local scholars could take precedence over that of the mujtahid of the age. Several articles in the journal described the sighting of the moon as a task which scholars in faraway Najaf or Qum were not able to carry out for believers in Pakistan. Since the opinion of the former did not attain the rank of a real proof, ‘ulamā’ and fuqahā’ based in South Asia had to step in. It was

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633 Al-Hujjat 2,10 (December 1962): 5.
634 From the early 1960s the Imamia Mission displayed a letter with Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm’s seal on the last page of their journal. Al-Hakīm had granted them the privilege of collecting khums in his name and of using 100,000 Rupees each year for the missionary efforts of the organization. For the original announcement, see Payām-i ʿAmal 9,2 (April 1965): 32. Asadi identifies Sayyid Gulāb ʿAli Shāh (1914-1992) as al-Ḥakīm’s first representative in Pakistan. His letter of nomination dates back to 1949 (Asadi, al-Imām al-Ḥakīm, 281). Gulāb ʿAli Shāh was a teacher of many reformist minded scholars in Pakistan, such as Shaykh Akhtar ʿAbbās, Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Najafī Ḍhakkō, or Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Najafī and attracted criticism from more traditionalist scholars for emphasizing the human nature of the Imāms and prophets (see Naqvī, Taẕkirah-i ‘ulamā’-i imāmiyyah, 240-243).
635 Sayyid Muḥsin is listed for Karachi, Gholām Mahdī for Sindh (see Naqvī, Taẕkirah-i ‘ulamā’-i imāmiyyah, 210-211), Nāṣir Husayn and Muḥammad Ḥusayn for Punjab and Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Najafī for Lahore. Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Mashhadī is credited with a particularly strong following in Rawalpindi (al-Hujjat 8,2 (May 1967): 4).
636 Al-Hujjat 1,3 (August 1962): 5.
only through their crucial intermediary position that the masses were able to carry out taqlid of the most learned at all. From such a view, it was only a short step to attempts at gaining independence from Najaf altogether. In 1966, Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Ḥakīm, a son in law of Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, stayed in Pakistan for several months to instruct the local believers in basic ritual obligations. While the editorial of al-Ḥujjat lauded his efforts as “eyeopening,” it remarked that the old model of scholarly importation was not sustainable in the long run – if only because Iraqis would find it difficult to live in a South Asian setting, forced to consume spicy food. Instead of continuing to bang on the door of Najaf with the urgent plea to send scholars, Pakistanis should take advantage of studying in the holy city in order to become self-sustaining in terms of ‘ilm (tā ke voh apne apne ‘alāqān men kār-i khidmat-i din anjām den aur hidāyat-i ‘āmmah mu‘minin kā ihtimām farmā’eṇ).

Interestingly, this position was taken even further after the death of al-Ḥakīm in June 1970. In the following months, we notice two tendencies in the articles of al-Ḥujjat. For one, Mashhādi was furious about the campaigns waged by various groups which aimed at positioning their favorite candidate as the new supreme marja‘. These people did not shy away from newspaper ads which included pictures of their preferred ‘ālim or from putting up posters all over the country’s cities. As Mashhādi saw it, such initiatives instilled in the masses the wrong notion that the common people would have a role to play in the process of discernment and decision-making. In reality, this prerogative was entirely fulfilled by “God's hand” and

638 Hāżā (sic) āp par vājīb he ke ayse faqīh ō mujtahid ke pāband banen jis ke zarī‘e āp a‘lam kī taqlīd par qā‘ām ō bar qarār rah sakteṇ (sic) (Al-Ḥujjat 10,10 (August 1970): 15).
640 Al-Ḥujjat 7,6 (May 1967): 2.
641 Ibid., 3.
642 Since al-Ḥujjat does not provide any names, it is difficult to identify those groups and individuals who were criticized for pressing ahead with a certain candidate (the exception being the journal al-Muntaẓar, see below). In a rare instance in which a specific name was mentioned, in this case a
the Hidden Imām without need for popular participation or anything that might resemble an election. The mujtahid of the age would eventually emerge through the deliberations of the scholars – but today religion and politics had been turned into a total mess (ab mażhab aur siyāsat ki khichṛī ban gayi he). Many of those who displayed such eagerness to throw their hats into the ring were – according to the opinion of Mashhdā – only on par with al-Ḥakīm’s muqallids.643

Despite this clear-cut rejection of promotion campaigns we nevertheless witness in al-Ḥujjat attempts to claim increased authority for Pakistani scholarship (as defined by the journal). Even though the quest for a supreme marjaʿ continued for the time being, several contributions in the monthly advocated that taqlīd might also be possible at the hands of local jurists, be they based in Bombay or Karachi.644 This did not, however, include, those ʿulamā who were active in the political arena because such polluting activities rendered them unacceptable for emulation.645 While otherwise choosing any mujtahid was permissible, the most righteous (aṣlaḥ al-mujtahidīn) ought to be preferred.646 More striking, however, were attempts by Mashhdā to put a new spin on taqlīd, thus effectively loosening the close ties of the concept with Najaf. The shrine city and its ʿulamā were no longer considered to be essential for emulation, even though Najaf’s leadership and centrality in the field of knowledge (Najaf ke

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645 Al-Ḥujjat 10,11 (September 1970): 27. For Shiʿī political activism during the 1950s and 1960s in Pakistan, which mostly revolved around attempts to secure special Shiʿī rights and safeguards vis-à-vis the state, see Rieck, “The Struggle for Equal Rights”, 268–83 and idem, The Shias of Pakistan, 66-78 and 114-124. See also chapter four of this dissertation. For an earlier critique of ʿulamā who rendered themselves subservient to anjuman-leaders, compare al-Ḥujjat 4,4 (April 1964): 12.
646 Al-Ḥujjat 10,12 (November 1970): 47. The journal does not elaborate any further, however, as to how the “most righteous” could and should be identified.
dār al-ʿilm kī qiyādat aur markaziyyat) had to be upheld at all costs. This emphasis led the journal to suggest a possible bifurcation of the two aspects, dissociating taqlīd from this acknowledgment of centrality.\textsuperscript{647} Al-Ḥujjat repeatedly published lists of all living scholars who might be able to carry out the task of preserving the unity of the Shiʿī world without indicating the journal's preference.\textsuperscript{648} Instead of committing himself to a new marjaʿ, Mashhādī in the early 1970s openly became a legal authority in his own right, issuing fatwās and answering legal questions in al-Ḥujjat. In taking on this position, he occasionally backed up his arguments with references to the opinions of Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm or other markazi ʿulamā like Abū ʿl-Qāsim al-Khūʾī. This was the case, for example, with the burning question of socialism, which came to the fore after the success of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in West Pakistan during the first national elections since independence in 1970.\textsuperscript{649} While al-Ḥujjat frequently printed articles condemning socialism as un-Islamic, the exile of al-Ḥakīm's son Mahdī al-Ḥakīm in Pakistan from spring 1970 to fall 1971 was perceived as boosting Mashhādī's position. In a fatwā for a

\textsuperscript{647} Al-Ḥujjat 10,11 (September 1970): 21.

\textsuperscript{648} See, for example, ibid., 28-29 for a list of the eight leading marājiʿ of the time. A list published in August 1971 lists five of them as being particularly well-known in Pakistan (see ibid., 11,10 (August 1971): 5).

\textsuperscript{649} Ian Talbot, Pakistan: A modern history (London: Hurst, 1998), 101. A couple of days into his 1970 election campaign, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto began to speak of “Islamic socialism.” The party's election manifesto noted that the ultimate goal of its policy “is the attainment of a classless society, which is possible only through socialism in our time. This means true equality of the citizens, fraternity under the rule of democracy in an order based on economic and social justice. These aims follow from the political and social ethics of Islam. The party thus strives to put in practice the noble ideals of the Muslim faith” (quoted in Anwar Hussain Syed, The Discourse and Politics of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 66-67). A directive dating from 3 January 1972 put the country's 22 largest corporations under direct state control. Karl J. Newman has argued that Bhutto established an economic order which was neither capitalist nor socialist but rather “populist” (see Karl J. Newman, Pakistan unter Ayub Khan, Bhutto und Zia ul-Haq (München: Weltforum Verlag, 1986), 97-98). For a more detailed discussion of leftist rhetoric during the 1960s in Pakistan and the important observation that the Bengali politician and leader of the National Awami Party (NAP), ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Khān Bhāshānī (d. 1976), who was also known as “The Red Mawlana,” preceded Bhutto in speaking of “Islamic Socialism,” see Humeira Iqtidar, Secularizing Islamist? Jama'at-e-Islami and Jama'at-ud-Da'wa in urban Pakistan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 55-97.
Shīʿī from Rawalpindi, Mahdi al-Ḥakīm referred to the rejection of socialism by his father.\textsuperscript{650} This document was quickly seized on by the journal to demonstrate that Mashhadi’s position was perfectly in line with the center whereas those who argued differently could be dismissed disparagingly as a “bunch of political conspirators” (\textit{cand siyāsi gath jör karne vāle}).\textsuperscript{651} Even though Muḥammad Kāẓim Shariʿatmadārī in a short note in March 1972 was addressed as the “universal Source of Emulation” (\textit{marjaʿ-i ʿāmm}) who granted al-Ḥujjat the privilege of collecting yearly \textit{khums} of up to 2,000 Rupees in his name, this decision was quickly reversed. An editorial in August 1972 declared that so far no leading scholar had emerged and that the decision should thus be considered suspended (\textit{taʿvīqand ākhtah}).\textsuperscript{652} The journal seems to have stuck to this line while persistently pushing the scholarly credentials of Mashhadi: later issues addressed him as nothing less than \textit{faqīh-i Pākistān} or even Ayatollah.\textsuperscript{653}

It has to be added that the fine line Mashhadi was treading between the authority of the shrine cities and his own claims did not go unnoticed by the audience. A letter to the journal, already published in July 1962, criticized \textit{al-Ḥujjat} for almost exclusively featuring its patron while not providing a similar platform for other scholars. It should not be the goal, the anonymous reader wrote, to turn every Pakistani into a follower of the particular \textit{ʿaqīda} advanced by the magazine. In fact, some damage had already been done: articles published in \textit{al-Ḥujjat} had led some people to declare that they would not follow Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm but rather Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Mashhadi.\textsuperscript{654}

\textsuperscript{650} For Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm’s opposition to communism and his \textit{fatwā} of February 1960 that forbade membership in the Iraqi Communist Party, see also Corboz, \textit{Guardians of Shiʿism}, 126-127.
\textsuperscript{651} \textit{Al-Ḥujjat} 11,6-7 (April-May 1971): 72.
\textsuperscript{652} \textit{Al-Ḥujjat} 12,10 (August 1972): 2.
\textsuperscript{654} \textit{Al-Ḥujjat} 2,6 (July 1962): 34.
The journal Payām-i ‘Amal and local authority in the triangle of Pakistan, India, and the Middle East

An interesting phenomenon similar to what we have seen playing out in the pages of al-Ḥujjat occurred in the case of the magazine Payām-i ‘Amal. This journal was published by the Imamia Mission in Lahore. It served as the Pakistani branch of an organization bearing the same name which was established in 1932 in Lucknow by Sayyid ‘Alī Naqī Naqvī (d. 1988), arguably India’s most influential Shi‘ī scholar of the 20th century. Naqvī was deeply troubled by the effects of the onslaught of modernity on his fellow Muslims, fearing that religion might be pushed to the sidelines. He blamed rising unbelief as the source of every kind of intellectual, social, and cultural corruption and combated empirical outlooks on the world. The tremendous progress of science had in his view led to a dangerous new epistemological arrogance displayed by the secular educated strata of society whose hearts were covered with unprecedented “coatings of doubt.” In order to combat this state of affairs, Naqvī strove to present to the Shi‘ī public an image of Imām Ḥusayn that emphasized “worldly agency rather than intercessionary powers, and a message of temporal action that meant he was a figure to be emulated rather than merely commemorated.” In a conscious decision, after 1937 Sayyid ‘Alī Naqī Naqvī abandoned his former scholarly audience with its seminary-style commentaries in Arabic or Persian to direct himself exclusively to Urdu-speaking Shi‘īs. The founding of his

655 Sayyid ‘Alī Naqī Naqvī belonged to Lucknow’s famed khāndān-i ijtihād and set up the Imamia Mission upon his return from long studies in Najaf. Justin Jones has written that after independence, Naqvī “would remain the most well-known, widely published and widely quoted Shi‘a ‘alim in the country for four decades […] ‘Alī Naqi is commonly said today to have been the final great mujtahid of South Asia.” Naqvī also spent a considerable amount of time teaching Shi‘ī theology at Aligarh (see Jones, Shi‘a Islam in Colonial India, 247).
organization and its fervent publishing activities were meant to provide the necessary tools to demonstrate the indispensability of religion for social reform and a healthy society.\footnote{Zamir, \textit{Ali Naqvi and his Thought}, 21. See also Syed Akbar Hyder, \textit{Reliving Karbala: Martyrdom in South Asian memory} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 102.}

\textit{Payām-i ʿAmal}, in turn, clearly betrayed Naqvi's influence. The journal regularly published articles and excerpts from longer works by the Indian mujtahid, ranging from his \textit{tafsīr} and extensive reflections on the Shi'i Imāms to discussions of the status of women in Islam. Additionally, \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} advertised a broad range of Naqvi's numerous books.\footnote{It would be a fascinating, if daunting, endeavor to compare the literary output of the two sister-missions, given that one senior missionary of the Pakistani Imamia Mission, Mirzā Ḩamd ʿAli, alone was credited with having written over six hundred pamphlets (see \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} 7,1 (March 1963): 17-18).} Yet, even though Naqvi was constantly referred to as the \textit{mujtahid-i ʿaṣr (mujtahid of the age)}, \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} provided hardly any space for the dissemination of his legal decisions.\footnote{This only changed in 1968, when Naqvi answered legal questions in the January and March issues of \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal}.} In this context, Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm clearly took the front seat. He was hailed as the supreme \textit{marja'}, the most worthy deputy of the Imāms and the scholar displaying the most superior morals.\footnote{\textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} (January 1962): 16-17.} The journal published a separate Urdu translation of his \textit{risāla ʿamaliyya} and prominently featured al-Ḥakīm's legal rulings.\footnote{See, for example, \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} 7,11 (January 1964): 23 or \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} 6,7 (August 1963): 23.} Yet, after al-Ḥakīm's demise (and unlike after the death of Burūjirdī), \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} was careful not to endorse one specific candidate.\footnote{The Imamia Mission sent out three letters of condolence after Burūjirdī's death. The first was addressed to Burūjirdī's son, the second to Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, and the third to the Shah of Iran (\textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} 5,3 (May 1961): 13).} The journal even kept featuring a letter by Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, who had granted the Imamia Mission the right to collect and use \textit{khums} in his name in December 1962, placed prominently on its back page. The
magazine continued this practice more than 12 months after the Iraqi scholar had passed away.\textsuperscript{666}

In the early 1970s, \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} continued to send mixed signals as far as the designation of the \textit{aʿlam} was concerned. An article from October 1970, written by Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Najafī (d. 1989), principal of the Jāmiʿat al-Muntaẓar in Lahore and later one of the most important popularizers of the revolutionary Iranian message in Pakistan, claimed that the majority of Shiʿīs in Iran, Iraq, India, and Pakistan would all be followers of Khomeini.\textsuperscript{667} Likewise, he hailed Khomeini in a different piece as the greatest scholar in Najaf, the fortress of Islam.\textsuperscript{668} The same issue also carried legal responsa by Ayatollah Sayyid Mahmūd al-Ḥusaynī al-Shāhrūdī (d. 1974) on issues of the modern banking system.\textsuperscript{669} In September 1971, \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} printed the affirmative answers both Khomeini and Khūʾī had issued in response to an inquiry whether the new office building of the Imamia Mission could have a mosque on its second floor and a hall for \textit{majālis} and shops on the first floor.\textsuperscript{670} A photo series in March 1973 included portraits of al-Shāhrūdī, ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī, Muḥammad Kāẓim Sharīʿatmadārī, and Mahdi al-Ḥakim (the latter depicted while visiting a book exhibition organized by the Imamia Mission).\textsuperscript{671} Finally, a piece in June 1976 identified Khomeini, Khūʾī, and Sharīʿatmadārī as the three most widely followed \textit{marājiʿ} in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{672}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{666} See, for example, \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} 15,8 (October 1971).
\item \textsuperscript{667} \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} 14,8 (October 1970): 8.
\item \textsuperscript{669} \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} 15,6 (August 1971): 21.
\item \textsuperscript{670} \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} 15,7 (September 1971): 39.
\item \textsuperscript{671} \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} 17,1-2 (March 1973).
\item \textsuperscript{672} \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} 20,6 (June 1976): 22.
\end{itemize}

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In a development that seems to parallel the trend we saw play out in the case of al-Ḥujjat, the death of Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm and the lack of a scholarly consensus about his successor opened up even more space for local South Asian ʿulamā. An article in December 1971 pointed out that among 2000 living marājiʿ, not less than 108 were located in the Subcontinent. Even more remarkable, however, was the rise of Sayyid Muḥammad Jaʿfar Zaydī (d. 1980) as a legal authority in Payām-i ʿAmal. Besides serving as the journal’s patron (sarparast), he had been active all his life as a Friday preacher (khaṭīb). Having received no advanced training in his native India, he did not qualify as a mujtahid and was thus much less eligible than Sayyid ʿAlī Naqi Naqvī. Shortly before Muḥsin al-Ḥakim's death, he had nevertheless already provided legal opinions on two occasions but had been careful at that time to limit the scope of his own authority. Asked about whether performing Friday prayer behind a prayer leader of doubtful morals was permissible, Zaydī pointed out that his goal in answering this question was merely to provide legal information. If he were to touch upon controversial issues (ikhtilāfī masāʾil), he implored any muqallid reader to refer the problem at hand to his or her specific marjaʿ. Such a cautious approach was no longer discernible only a couple of months later. By the end of 1970, Zaydī's name, amply embellished by the title “Pride of the Theologians” (fakhr al-mutakallimin), regularly and on equal footing with the leading fuqahāʾ of the age, appeared under the rubric “Sharīʿa Questions and their Answers” (Masāʾil-i sharʿiyyah aur un ke javābāt). Zaydī gave legal rulings on how to perform the ritual prayers while traveling and regarding the

674 Zaydī had earned a maulvi fāżil degree at the age of 18 from the Madrasah-i Manshibiyya in Merūth and later acted as preacher (khaṭīb) for 22 years in Bareli before migrating to Pakistan. In Lahore, he became a preacher at the main Shiʿi mosque of the predominantly Shiʿi Islāmpūrah neighborhood (Naqvī, Taẕkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i imāmiyyah, 280-281).
purity of kitchenware touched by Christians.\textsuperscript{676} Additionally, he also frequently clarified questions on Islamic history.\textsuperscript{677}

\textbf{Pushing ahead: Sharīʿatmadārī and the journal al-Muntaẓar}

As we have seen, \textit{Payām-i ʿAmal} and \textit{al-Ḥujjat} both provide us a with a window into the complex and rather chaotic negotiations of transnational and local Shiʿī religious authority between the Middle East and South Asia. The dynamics at play in the third Pakistani Shiʿī journal under discussion diverge substantially from the first two case studies, at least if we consider the post-Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm period. During the lifetime of the Najaf-based scholar, \textit{al-Muntaẓar} largely resembled the other publications in its treatment of al-Ḥakīm's marjaʿiyya. It hailed his towering role while also making room for the contributions by local Pakistani scholars. The journal promoted al-Ḥakīm's superiority by answering legal questions in light of his rulings and addressed him as “the most knowledgeable of the age” (\textit{aʿlam-i daurān}) or the “undisputed leader of the Shiʿī world.”\textsuperscript{678} In a highly successful initiative, readers were encouraged to order free copies of al-Ḥakīm's main legal treatise in Urdu translation and were only charged the postage.\textsuperscript{679} A special “Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm Number” extolled the late scholar for being both the most influential promoter of the “sciences of Muḥammad's household” and a fearless warrior on the path of God.\textsuperscript{680} Interestingly, al-Ḥakīm's biographer Sayyid Murtaẓā Ḥusayn (d. 1987) also pointed out the Iraqi scholar's remarkable devotion to internal Pakistani scholars.

\textsuperscript{679} This initiative was announced in \textit{al-Muntaẓar} 8,7 (5 June 1966): 5. On August 20, the journal informed its readers that all available copies had been claimed (see \textit{al-Muntaẓar} 8,13 (20 August 1966): 23).
\textsuperscript{680} \textit{Al-Muntaẓar} 12,8-9 (5 and 20 June 1970): 4-5.
affairs. Al-Ḥakīm had stood at the side of the country in its 1965 war with India and had prayed for Pakistan’s victory, which he likened to a victory for Islam itself (Islām kī fath). In a letter to the military ruler Ayub Khan, al-Ḥakīm had expressed his strong condemnation of the acts of sectarian violence which had erupted in the Punjabi village of Ṭherī in 1963, claiming the lives of 118 Shīʿīs. Additionally, the marjaʿ had been at the forefront of supporting religious schools in Pakistan.

Similar intimate, transnational connections proved decisive for the selection of al-Ḥakīm’s successor, as I will demonstrate below. Yet, we also have to briefly consider the curious phenomenon that al-Muntaẓar at times acted consciously against the universal status of al-Ḥakīm by emphasizing the juridical competence of Pakistani scholars in a way that resembles both al-Hujjat and Payām-i ʿAmal. This tension became apparent in early 1965, shortly after Ḥusayn Bakhsh Jāṛā, whom we have already encountered in the previous chapter, had taken over as principal of the Jāmiʿat al-Muntaẓar. In the following months, Bakhsh Jāṛā was called upon to answer legal questions ranging from the validity of a marriage concluded without consent to problems of inheritance. Whereas Muḥsin al-Ḥakim’s rulings printed in al-

683 Ibid. For the letter sent by Muḥsin al-Ḥakim, see ‘Adnān Ibrāhīm Sarraj, al-Imām Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, 1889-1970 (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrāʾ, 1993). In Ṭherī an ʿimāmārgāh had been set on fire amidst a general upsurge of violence against Shiʿī processions that was, according to Andreas Rieck, stoked by renewed anti-Shiʿī propaganda in the wake of the lifting of martial law in June 1962. For a very helpful discussion of Sunni-Shiʿī tensions during this time, see Rieck, The Shiʿas of Pakistan, 109-114. A brief English account of the events in 1963 can be found at http://www.shaheedfoundation.org/tragic.asp?id=13 (accessed 3 January 2013).
684 Al-Muntaẓar 12,8-9 (5 and 20 June 1970): 15. It would also be a very interesting project to analyze the vast amount of data found in Sayyid Muhhammad Ṣaqalayn Kāẓimī’s extensive compilation on Shiʿī seminaries in Pakistan, Imāmiyyah dini madāris-i Pākistān, and to trace the support the marājiʿ provide for particular schools.
Muntaẓar never reflected a real case but consisted merely of translations from his legal treatise,⁶⁸⁶ Bakhsh Jāṛā aimed at demonstrating his familiarity with the actual issues facing Pakistani Shi‘īs. An illustrative example is the 20 June 1965 issue of al-Muntaẓar which featured an inquiry from Khūshāb. The questioner asked about a traveler who embarked on a lawful journey and hence performed a shortened version of the ritual prayer (namāz-i qaṣr). Yet, at some point he was overcome by an impermissible desire (nā jāʾiz gharż), thus perverting the original purpose of his travels. How would this affect the prescribed length of the prayer? Bakhsh Jāṛā stated in his answer that it was no longer permissible for such a person to shorten his prayers. He illustrated his ruling with a visitor who had come to the city of Lahore on some acceptable religious or worldly business, only to give into the temptation of frequenting a cinema. By linking the abstract and general question of proper Muslim conduct on a journey to a real issue which inhabitants of Punjab's countryside might face, Bakhsh Jāṛā showcased an attentiveness to practical concerns of everyday life which no distant authority in Iraq could possibly match.⁶⁸⁷

Such rather open claims to local leadership were undoubtedly the exception, however, in al-Muntaẓar. The journal usually went to great lengths in substantiating the superiority of the marāji‘ who resided in the Shi‘ī heartlands. Yet, this did not mean that Pakistani scholars should necessarily be excluded from transnational debates on leadership. Al-Muntaẓar, in contrast to the two other journals we have discussed, clearly did not feel obliged to wait for any consensus forming in the shrine cities after the demise of Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm. In fact, the magazine did not display any qualms in endorsing the marja‘iyya of Muḥammad Kāẓim

⁶⁸⁶ See, for example, al-Muntaẓar 8,2 (20 March 1966): 18.
⁶⁸⁷ Al-Muntaẓar 7,8 (20 June 1965): 12.
Sharīʿatmadārī already in July 1970, exactly one month after the journal had celebrated al-Ḥakīm's legacy in a special issue.³⁸⁸ Portraying the Ayatollah's life, a long article by Akhtar ʿAbbās underlined the well-rounded personality of this towering figure. Importantly for an audience which might feel threatened by a rise of socialist politics in Pakistan, ʿAbbās hailed Sharīʿatmadārī's indispensable service in reviving the fortunes of the ḥauza in Tabriz and keeping the flame of science (ʿilm) burning when the Russians occupied the scholar's native Azerbaijan province during (and in the wake of) the Second World War.³⁸⁹ After Sharīʿatmadārī had moved to Qum, his penetrating insights were soon recognized by Burūjīrī who used to deliberate challenging legal questions with him, frequently modifying his initial opinion in light of Sharīʿatmadārī's input.³⁹⁰ It was during his relentless efforts for the development of the ḥauza in Qum that his status as a global Source of Emulation had emerged. Consequently, ʿAbbās articulated similar expectations for the advancement of religious training in Pakistan:

> It is our hope that you will assume the patronage of Pakistan's religious schools for ʿulamā and preachers, hence establishing in the country a basis for the appropriate progress of the Shiʿī school of law.³⁹¹

Yet, Sharīʿatmadārī's single most pertinent achievement which truly crowned his exalted position among his peers was – according to Akhtar ʿAbbās – his leading role in the founding and running of the mission-focused Dār al-Ṭablīgh-i Islāmī (House of Islamic Preaching) in Qum. Through it, the Ayatollah had created an “asset” (sārmāyah) for the entire Shiʿī world.³⁹²

Such an evaluation by Akhtar ʿAbbās and his unmitigated favoring of Sharīʿatmadārī is not surprising, given the fact that the former principal of the Jāmiʿat al-Muntaẓar wrote his

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³⁸⁸ For some observations on his role as a teacher in Qum, see Fischer, *Iran: From religious dispute to revolution*, 62-66.
³⁸⁹ Al-Muntaẓar 12,10 (5 July 1970): 4-5.
³⁹⁰ Ibid., 8.
³⁹¹ Ibid., 8-9.
³⁹² Ibid., 11.
lines in Qum, where he acted as the head of the mission's Urdu section. As a result, this article, which was supposed to demonstrate Sharīʿatmadārī’s aʿlamiyya, paid much closer attention to the Dār al-Tablīgh's language classes in Urdu, its vast library, the education of preachers, and the newly established printing press. Given all these achievements in addition to Sharīʿatmadārī's insightful initiatives and his acceptance as a marjaʿ by most believers in Iran, ‘Abbās concluded, it would only take a short while before the overwhelming majority of Pakistani Shīʿīs submitted to his “spiritual leadership” (qiyādat-i rūḥānī) and handed over their khums to him. Other prominent voices in al-Muntaẓar echoed ‘Abbās's view. Sayyid Muḥammad Yār Najafī, principal of the Bāb al-ʿUlūm in Multan, endorsed Sharīʿatmadārī as a much-needed great leader. Moreover, he addressed him as the “father of the Shīʿī community” in the vein of al-Ḥakīm who was especially suited to be recognized as the supreme marjaʿ due to his focus on education. Sayyid Muḥammad Dihlavī (d. 1971), the leading Shīʿī political leader of the day, conceded in a joint letter with a group of eight other prominent Shīʿī ʿulamā that the highest-ranking mujtahids of the time all occupied nearly the same rank in terms of knowledge and piety. Yet, it was because of Sharīʿatmadārī's religious activities (dīnī khidmāt) in Qum that they would choose him for taqlīd in questions of God's law.

Al-Muntaẓar, following in the footsteps of its earlier policies with regard to Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, not only offered free copies of Sharīʿatmadārī's risāla ʿamaliyya but also dismissed

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693 Al-Muntaẓar's readers had already been informed in May 1967 that Akhtar ʿAbbās had taken over this new position at the Dār al-Tablīgh (see al-Muntaẓar 8,6 (20 May 1967): 1.
694 Al-Muntaẓar, 12,10 (5 July 1970): 11-12.
695 Ibid., 12.
696 Ibid., 15.
697 He was known to the community as the “Greatest Preacher” (khaṭīb-i aʿẓam) and also established an important library in Karachi (see Naqvī, Taẕkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i imāmiyyah, 254-256). For his political activities, compare also Rieck, “The Struggle for Equal Rights as a Minority,” 277-281, idem, The Shias of Pakistan, 114-124, and the next chapter of this dissertation.
698 Al-Muntaẓar, 12,10 (5 July 1970): 16.
attempts to promote alternative candidates in the next months.\textsuperscript{699} If such names were floated, they had to be seen as advanced by self-interested media people, politicians, or some low-level scholars. Their announcements lacked any authority, both legally and rationally speaking \((\text{\textit{shar'an} ò 'aqlan}).\) By contrast, the \textit{ahl al-khibra} in Pakistan all agreed on \textit{Sharī'atmadārī}.\textsuperscript{700} Denying rumors that the whole of India would follow Khomeini, one scholar also brought further practical aspects into consideration: even though Najaf had been the religious center in the past, upholding this rank was no longer feasible due to the deteriorating political situation in Iraq. \textit{Sharī'atmadārī}'s greater accessibility in Qum was thus turned into another argument in favor of his towering role.\textsuperscript{701} The \textit{Dār al-Tablīgh} continued to feature centrally in the construction of the new \textit{marja}'s authority, underlined, for example, by the coverage of Mahdī al-Ḥakīm's visit to the institution during which he applauded its global outreach.\textsuperscript{702} When a delegation sent by \textit{Sharī'atmadārī} toured Pakistan in 1971, they deplored the lack of missionary activities in the country. Reiterating the Ayatollah's determination to revamp the religious educational sector in Pakistan, the delegation acknowledged neither the existence of Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī's Imamia Mission nor its offerings of training courses for \textit{muballighs}.\textsuperscript{703}

\textbf{Conclusion}

In this chapter, I have paid attention to the various ways in which the authority of the \textit{marāji} is affirmed, appropriated, and challenged in the context of Pakistan. I have argued that even outspoken acknowledgment of a “Source of Emulation” might not so much diminish as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{699} \textit{Ibid.}, 24.
\item \textsuperscript{700} \textit{Al-Muntaẓar}, 12,19-20 (20 November – 5 December 1970): 12.
\item \textsuperscript{701} \textit{Ibid.}, 36-37.
\item \textsuperscript{702} \textit{Al-Muntaẓar}, 13,9-10 (5-20 July 1971): 68.
\item \textsuperscript{703} \textit{Ibid.}, 27.
\end{itemize}
rather enhance the scholarly standing of indigenous ʿulamā and the marjaʾs representatives who at times carve out their niches of specialized, localized knowledge. The period of uncertainty after the death of one supreme jurist and before the emergence of a new towering figure can open additional avenues of authority for “backwater” scholars, as the cases of both Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Mashhadī and Payām-i ʿAmal demonstrate. Additionally, it seems to me that the embrace of Shariʿatmadārī by leading Pakistani ʿulamā had very much to do with the importance he devoted to his international prestige and the contacts he had fostered with Shīʿīs in regions beyond the Middle East. He promoted and supported translations of his works into Urdu and was the first among the marājiʿ to open an office in Pakistan.704

These findings are in line with the observation of Michael Fischer who noticed that in the mid-1970s Shariʿatmadārī, thanks to the activities of the Dār al-Tablīgh, “was perhaps the marjaʾ best known to non-Persians.”705 Interestingly, Fischer qualifies this claim by arguing that during a visit to Lucknow only the top leadership of the Shīʿī colleges could name a living marjaʾ al-taqlīd to him. Given the intensive debate we have witnessed in Pakistan’s Shīʿī journals, I would like to question the validity of applying this view to Pakistan. As we have seen, these discussions on the necessity of emulation involved ʿulamā and lay Shīʿīs alike and were geared towards positioning certain religious scholars at the pinnacle of authority. Whenever a journal offered to its readership copies of a risāla ʿamaliyya, the demand far outstripped the supply of these legal works.706

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705 Fischer, Iran. From religious dispute to revolution, 91. In a different institutional context and for the argument that the support of the Al-Khoei Foundation in 1992 might have contributed to the rise of ʿAli al-Sistānī, see also Corboz, Guardians of Shiʿism, 66-70.
706 Fisher's statement even seems to be questionable as far as India as concerned. Given the unsettled nature of the question, it might well be the case that those Shīʿī ʿulamā Fischer interacted with in the mid-1970s were simply reluctant to take sides in a conversation with a non-Shīʿī foreigner.
The country’s Shi‘is might not have waged the debate over taqlid in the way the physician-turned-‘ālim Dr. Mūsā would have appreciated – but they were hardly silent about the question either. Neither mere the pawns of transnational forces nor exclusively focused on the South Asian aspects of their religion, Pakistani Shi‘is displayed a remarkable creativity in rethinking their relations with the shrine cities of the Middle East.
Chapter 4: Khomeini's Perplexed Pakistani Men: Importing and Debating the Iranian Revolution

“Why are you silent?” Irfan was gazing steadily at him. “Silence.” Afzal, placing a finger on his lips, signaled Irfan to be silent. “I think we will see a sign.” “A sign? What sign can there be now?” Irfan said with bitterness and despair. “Fellow, signs always come at just these times, when all around—” he paused in the middle of his speech. Then he said in a whisper, “This is the time for a sign—”

Intiẕār Ḥusayn, Bastī (1979)

It was the journey of a lifetime for Sayyid Muḥammad Qamar Zaydī. His travels to revolutionary Iran in late April 1979 deeply impressed the junior Shiʿī scholar. The Baluch city of Zahedan, which he had experienced as a hotbed of crime during a previous stay in 1963, had been transformed within a matter of weeks. Signs of a virtuous society were palpable even in this provincial setting: women donned the cādur, the city's walls were plastered with slogans against America, Russia, and Israel, and, greatest wonder of all, the traffic flowed in a self-regulating manner. The Police were neither visible on the streets, nor required. This did not mean, of course, that authority was absent. Zaydī noted the ubiquitous nature of Khomeini's portrait, even Sikh traders displayed it in their shops. And he himself longed for nothing more than to encounter the Iranian leader face to face. Zaydī had published a biography of Khomeini several months earlier and had finally set out from Karachi as part of a delegation with three Shiʿī scholars who later asked him to prepare a travelogue of their adventures.

707 Sayyid Muḥammad ʿAbbās Qamar Zaydī, Pānc hafte Āyatullāh Khumaynī ke Īrān men (Karachi: Maktabah-i Miʿrāj-i Adab, 1979), 24-26. For a similar account of the country's complete transformation within a matter of weeks from a police state where pork and alcohol were freely available, see Iʿjāz Ḥusayn Malik, “Īrān se wāpasī par Maulānā ʿṢafdar Ḥusayn Najafī se ek inerview,” Rāḥ-i ʿAmal 8 (1979): 11-12.


709 The most influential of these, and one to whom Qamar Zaydī referred frequently, was Ibn-i Ḥasan Najafī who was born in Lucknow in 1928. After receiving his advanced religious education in Najaf, Ibn-i Ḥasan was first employed in the educational bureaucracy of the princely state of
The group was moved by the various acts of kindness and respect ordinary Iranians showed towards them as religious scholars.\footnote{Ibid., 29, 31-32, 50.} They marveled at the lighthearted attitude of Mashhad's inhabitants who only a couple of months earlier had endured bullets and death.\footnote{Ibid., 32.} The travel companions were delighted that nakedness, decadence, and love for illegitimate activities – trademarks of Tehran under the Shah – had all but vanished.\footnote{Ibid., 56.} Every single Iranian ʿālim they encountered was not only well informed politically but also diligently carried out his religious obligations.\footnote{Ibid., 26-27.}

This realized utopia contrasted favorably with the situation back home. In Pakistan, a propaganda war of rumor-mongering and slander (afvāh tarāshi ो buhtān ņarāsī) was being waged against revolutionary Iran, even by certain co-religionists who thereby repeated the evil precedent of first declaring allegiance to ʿAlī only to be drawn by the desires of their bellies to the table of Muʿāwiya (dastarkhvān-i Muʿāviyah).\footnote{Ibid., 12-13.} This negative attitude was even more systemic to the country’s political system which caused the delegation to reject repeated requests by the Pakistani embassy in Tehran for a meeting. Qamar Zaydī explained that he and Hyderabad/Deccan before moving to Pakistan in 1953. Besides being a prolific writer, he was involved with various educational activities for which the Pakistani Government bestowed on him the Sitārah-i Imtiyāz, Pakistan’s third highest civilian award, in 1980 (see Naqvī, Taẕkirah-i ʿulamā’-i imāmiyyah, 11-12). Ibn-i Ḥasan, for his part, praised Qamar Zaydī as a true ʿālim who in his travelogue combined ʿaql (intellect) with trustworthiness (Qamar Zaydī, Pānc hafte, 6).

\footnote{Ibid., 29, 31-32, 50.} \footnote{Ibid., 32.} \footnote{Ibid., 56.} \footnote{Ibid., 26-27.} \footnote{Ibid., 12-13.} One of his fellow Shiʿīs whom Qamar Zaydī might have had in mind was the communist author Sayyid Sibṭ-i Ḥasan (d. 1986) who early on deplored that the Islamic Revolution was far from a revolution in the Marxist sense of the word since it had not done away with oppression (see Sayyid Sibṭ-i Ḥasan, Inqilāb-i Īrān (Karachi: Maktabah-i Dāniyāl, 1980, 8). Instead, the authoritarian regime of the Shah had been replaced with an Ayatūcracy that featured the same sort of personality cult, now directed towards Khomeini (ibid., 21). Sayyid Sibṭ-i Ḥasan specifically criticized the Ayatollah for his declaration that the Iranians “had not sacrificed their sons for the sake of cheap bread.” In his view this cynical statement was an expression of the disdain the new rulers displayed in the face of the plight (dukh dard) of the masses (ibid., 340).
his fellow travelers were aware of the “hypocritical disposition (munāfiqānah mizāj) of many of our countrymen who would have used such a meeting only to make up stories.” In Pakistan, the author pointed out, the establishment of an Islamic system of government under the military rule of General Zia ul-Haq (r. 1979-1988) was fraught with difficulties. While the Islamization of Pakistan's criminal law, for example, had triggered a passionate debate with many publicly criticizing such steps, Qamar Zaydi emphasized the (perceived) unanimity in Iran's public discourse. In Khomeini's realm the citizens understood that any suspension of divinely prescribed punishments would constitute ẓulm (injustice), not their application. Simply pardoning evildoers only appeared to be a superior choice, while in fact such a step destroyed the system of justice. Consequently, even those Iranians who were convicted and sentenced realized their guilt. As the guests from Pakistan one evening witnessed in their hotel room, the culprits happily confessed to their crimes on television and condoned their own punishments as a necessary step on the path of redemption.

This travel account adds to our understanding of the Iranian revolution as a major watershed for modern Shi'i thought. The political change in the neighboring country endowed Pakistan's Shi'is overnight with nothing less than a sudden but ultimately illusory claim to the leadership of Islamism. Initially, both Sunnis and Shi'is around the Middle East and South

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715 Qamar Zaydi, Pānc hafe, 47.
716 Ibid., 16-17. On this phenomenon of televised confessions, see also the exhaustive study by Ervand Abrahamian, Tortured confessions: Prisons and public recantations in modern Iran (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Abrahamian has termed these televised confessions “propaganda by self-denunciation” because the accused had to formulate the charges which the state had leveled against them in their own words. The inmates attested to their own “religious deviation” or “ideological contamination” and described themselves as “fifth column” or workers of the “counterrevolution.” Recantation shows, termed “conversations” or “round table discussions,” were aired during prime-time and often filmed in the auditorium of the infamous Evin prison with inmates serving as the audience (Ibid., 142-144).
Asia were drawn into the excitement. They wanted to get a first-hand account of the unprecedented experiment of Islamically transforming a powerful, quickly industrializing state. Ṭufayl Muḥammad, Amīr of the Jamāʿat-i Islāmī (JI) since 1972 and successor to Maudūdī, received special permission to fly into Tehran's closed airport on 22 March 1979. Muḥammad wrote in a recollection of this trip about the simplicity and down-to-earth attitude of the officials he met. He could not forget the dignified behavior displayed at the capital's vast Bihisht-i Zahrā’ cemetery on the part of those Iranians who had lost their relatives during the Revolution: Muḥammad did not witness any tears, only hands lifted in supplication. The air was full of the word of God and greetings addressed to the Imāms (durūd ō salām) – indeed a powerful spiritual sight (rūḥ parvar manẓar). In an audience with Khomeini, the cleric's profound vision of the future made a deep impression on him. Ibrāhīm Yazdī, at that time Iran's deputy prime minister, personally took care of his Pakistani guests and entertained them in his house. He and Ṭufayl Muḥammad discussed the revolution and the worldwide Islamic movement late into the night, an experience the latter described as a conversation not of tongues, but of hearts (hamāre dil bateṉ karte raheṉ): “We felt like members of the same family, travelers in the same caravan, wayfarers to the same destination who were transporting their provisions to the same place.” These universally “Islamic,” ecumenical credentials of the

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718 This is especially interesting since Vali Nasr describes Ṭufayl Muhammad as General Zia ul-Haq’s “most ardent supporter among the Jama’at’s leaders.” The JI provided Zia with crucial support for his plans to execute Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the deposed Prime Minister, and to suppress any remaining opposition from the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP). The close personal connection between Zia ul-Haq and Ṭufayl Muhammad even survived the falling-out between the JI and the Martial Law Administration when the military ruler backed away from his promise to grant the JI a privileged role in devising the country’s Islamization (see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, The vanguard of the Islamic revolution: The Jama’at-i Islami of Pakistan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 189-195).

719 Quoted in Sayyid Murtaẓā Husayn, Āyatullāh Khumaynī Qum se Qum tak (Lahore: Imāmiyyah Publications, 1979), 527-528.

720 Ibid., 530.

721 Ibid., 535.
Iranian revolution quickly faded and the systemic change took on a less inclusive, sectarian character. Nevertheless, for Pakistan's Shi'is the spell of 1979 proved lasting as the existing literature emphasizes:

As a consequence of the Iranian Revolution and the resultant Shi'i religiopolitical activism, Shi'ism in Pakistan became more centralised, more clericalist, more Iranianised, and more integrated with the international Shi'i community. The revolution especially reinforced the emotional and religious bonds of Pakistani Shi'ah with Iran and its religiocultural centres.

The precise influences of the “Iranian moment” are, however, far more often assumed than actually established. How are we to understand the local manifestations of the “esprit de Qom,” which in Sabrina Mervin's view is not only “a revolutionary spirit, but also a certain concept of Islamic modernity which all can adapt and apply after returning to their own societies”? Studying the aftermath of 1979 and its consequences for Shi'i clerics and organizations in the Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, Laurence Louër holds that “the domestic political structures were more important than Iranian efforts in shaping the various modalities of the Islamic Revolution's impact.” The political change was essentially a “passage to political violence” even though “this violence had different meanings and was perpetrated to achieve different aims.” While her book makes a strong case for the increasing “autonomization” of political groups which once formally pledged allegiance to Iran and their

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722 See, for example, Hanan Hammad, “Khomeini and the Iranian Revolution in the Egyptian Press. From Fascination to Condemnation,” Radical History Review 105 (2009): 39-57. See also chapter five of this dissertation for a further discussion of sectarianism. There, I compare earlier instances of Sunni-Shi'i tensions with those that were aroused during the 1980s in the wake of the Iranian Revolution.


724 Sabrina Mervin, “Introduction,” in eadem (eds), The Shi'a Worlds and Iran, 17.

skepticism towards or outright rejection of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, Louër is not very interested in the content of the revolutionary message, its modifications, or the critique of its opponents. For her, ideas in general and the debate over the rule of the jurisprudent in particular are “first and foremost the expression of a competition for religious and political power.”\(^{726}\) Similarly, Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr paints a nuanced picture of contestation in her rich anthropological study of Lebanese Shi‘ism. Hizbollah, she argues, was eager to limit aspects of the revolutionary package that put them “too obviously in a junior position” vis-a-vis Iran by inter alia rejecting (Arabic-speaking) preachers sent from Iran to Lebanon.\(^{727}\) Hizbollah members “consider some activities to be authentic Islam, while rejecting other Iranian *marja‘* and government activities and labeling them as Iranian rather than authentically Islamic.”\(^{728}\)

Mariam Abou Zahab is among the few authors who hint at the complexity of this process of translation and resistance in the context of South Asia. According to her, nearly four thousand students received scholarships from the Iranian government immediately after the revolution to spend between six months and a year in religious institutions in Iran, mostly in Qum. Upon their return to Pakistan, they toured the Punjabi countryside and the country’s Northern Areas, showing films on the oppression of the Shah’s regime and the success of the revolution:

They criticised the traditional *ulama* and their links to Iraq and accused them of being apolitical, quietist and opposed to the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. Although the traditional clergy welcomed the revolution because it had replaced a secular anti-*ulama* monarchy with a government of the *ulama*, it was opposed to Khomeini’s revolutionary rhetoric and saw the students’ activism as a threat to its own authority.\(^{729}\)

\(^{728}\) *Ibid.*, 207.
\(^{729}\) Mariam Abou Zahab, “The Politicization of the Shia Community in Pakistan in the 1970s and 1980s,” in Alessandro Monsutti, Silvia Naef, and Farian Sabahi (eds), *The other Shiites. From the
Building on Abou Zahab’s insights, in this chapter I am interested in taking a closer look at such different stages of reception which the Iranian Revolution underwent in Pakistan. The first stage covers the initial months and years after the downfall of the Shah. Pakistan’s Shi‘is were rather late in establishing contacts with the Iranian clerical leadership. Even though they strove to rectify this situation, in this first wave of reception they remained primarily occupied with domestic events. The Iranian revolution constituted an important (and energizing) “background noise” to their own conflicts with the Pakistani state. The transformation of their Shi‘i neighbor could not be ignored but even ardent supporters of Khomeini were not entirely sure what the latter’s authority should mean for them outside Iran. Bound by their own local context, they struggled to make sense of such thorny issues as the guardianship of the jurist (vilāyat-i faqīh) and their minority situation. Additionally, most ‘ulamā at this time had received their education not in Qum or Mashhad but rather in either Najaf or pre-Partition Lucknow. Hence they did not have a real “insider-perspective” on Iran’s domestic developments but rather tried to grasp the consequences of the revolution in familiar South Asian terms like non-violence or the concept of the “renewer of religion” (mujaddid).

A second stage of reception can be discerned with the rise of the young Pashtu-speaking cleric Sayyid ‘Ārif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī to the helm of Pakistan’s most influential Shi‘i organization, the Tahrik-i Nifāq-i Fiqh-i Ja‘fariyya (The Movement for the Implementation of Ja‘fari Law, hereafter TNFJ) in 1984. Ḥusaynī, who had studied briefly in Iran, clearly and consistently drew on the hallmark themes of the Iranian revolution in the way Sabrina Mervin describes them, as a flexible, easily applicable doctrine. Yet, in doing so he was often forced to


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bend aspects of the revolutionary message, such as Muslim unity or the leadership of the clerics, to his Pakistani context.

Finally, I will briefly turn to a full-fledged and – at least in Pakistan – unprecedented embrace of the Iranian project that is anchored in present day Lahore. This phase of importing the Iranian Revolution is represented by the influential cleric Sayyid Javād Naqvī who had spent nearly his entire adult life in Iran. In 2009, he returned to his native country after 26 years in Qum and now runs a sprawling new madrasa in Punjab's capital that bears the name Jāmiʿat al-ʿUrwat al-Wuthqā (The Firmest Bond University). Naqvī fully appropriates Iranian rhetoric, domestic politics, and aesthetics in the design of his websites, layout of his magazines, and even in the style of clothing of his followers. He also goes to unprecedented lengths in promoting vilāyat-i faqīh as a viable, desirable option for Pakistan and criticizes the Iranians for not doing enough for the export of the revolution, a role – so much is implied – which he will need to fill.

In each of these three periods we thus find complex negotiations of closeness and distance which, in turn, are influenced by the length of time Pakistani ʿulamā had direct exposure to post-1979 Iran. By emphasizing personal and robust ties to their revolutionary neighbor, Pakistani clerics could hope to siphon off some of Khomeini's luster for themselves, thereby boosting their own positions of authority. Yet, they also felt the need to control the import of Iran's messages and adjust them to the needs of their society. This is not to say that such reluctance or opposition always comes to the fore in an obvious manner but rather to emphasize that even seemingly universal ideas never travel unimpeded across borders but are

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730 See more on the Qurʾānic and historical implications of this name below.
reshaped and modified along the way. Such transformations can occur without those who participate in the processes acknowledging their own altering role. Even though the Iranians tried hard to present the values and implications of their revolution as world-embracing and self-evident, its specific local origin was not lost on Pakistani observers. They brought their own commitments and views to the revolutionary table.

This becomes clearer if we return for a moment to Qamar Zaydi's travelogue. Despite his bleak evaluation of the status of true Islam in Pakistan, it was essential for him to underline abiding, time-tested strengths of South Asian piety that could not be undone by current practical weaknesses. Specifically, he emphasized the profound learning and unique spiritual gifts of Pakistani ʿulamā. Due to these qualities, the Iranians supposedly singled them out among many other Shi'i representatives and decided to treat them as their equals. The mystery of the delegation's approved Iranian visa, for example, was solved when Qamar Zaydi unexpectedly reconnected with an Iranian cleric he had once interacted with in Karachi. Qamar Zaydi at first had difficulties in recognizing the former exile who had constituted his single physical tie (ẓāhirī rābiṭah) to the Iranian Revolution. This personal connection had been disrupted once the man known as Āqā-yi Taqvā returned to his native country shortly after the success of the upheaval.\footnote{Qamar Zaydi, \textit{Pānc hafe}, 21.} In Qum, the Iranian ʿālim was no longer wearing Pakistani clothes and also had changed his name.\footnote{Ibid., 62.} Shaykh Ibrāhim, as he introduced himself, was now working for the office of Ayatollah Ḥusayn ʿAlī Muntasirī, which served as a sort of screening station to determine whether visitors were important enough to meet Khomeini himself.\footnote{Muntasirī, together with Mahdī Hāshimi, the brother of his son-in-law, at that time also coordinated the help for “resistance movements” which took shelter in Iran (see Louër, \textit{Transnational Shia Politics}, 179 and Wilfried Buchta, “Die Inquisition der Islamischen Republik Iran. Einige Anmerkungen zum Sondergerichtshof der Geistlichkeit,” in Rainer Brunner (ed), \textit{Islamstudien} 209.}
process of catching up, Qamar Zaydī mentioned that his group's visa – according to the Iranian embassy – had been personally approved by Khomeini. He speculated that the speedy processing must have had to do with a congratulatory telegram they had sent to the Iranian leader in response to the successful referendum in favor of an Islamic Republic. Shaykh Ibrāhīm was dumbfounded. Since Khomeini had received no less than 70,000 of such messages, he attributed the delegation's unlikely access to nothing less Ibn-i Ḥasan's extraordinary religious devotion. Khomeini's special favors for the Pakistani delegates did not stop here: while Shaykh Ibrāhīm was making some inquiries behind the scenes, they came across a 50 member strong Kenyan delegation, a mission from Libya which included the country's prime minister, and a group from Bangladesh. For over a month, all three of them had tried in vain to obtain an audience with Khomeini. Things played out differently for the Pakistanis who were granted this coveted favor barely three days after they had set foot in Qum. Likewise, the travelogue leaves no doubt about the unmatched language skills of the South Asian ʿulamā. While they waited outside Khomeini's office for their meeting to commence, the delegation from Karachi was approached by clerics from Bahrain. The Arabs attempted to strike up a conversation in very poor Urdu only to be greeted by Ibn-i Ḥasan's flawless Arabic. Even Khomeini audibly showed his appreciation for the “superior” (bihtarīn) Persian that

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Muntaẓirī was later designated Khomeini's successor, only to fall from grace in 1989, shortly before Khomeini's death, due to his increasing criticism of authoritarian tendencies in the Islamic Republic (see Shahrough Akhavi, “The Thought and Role of Ayatollah Hossein'ali Montazeri in the Politics of Post-1979 Iran,” \textit{Iranian Studies} 41,5 (2008): 650-651). Under house arrest until his death in 2009, he later became an important internal critic of the “absolute rule of the jurisprudent” without, however, giving up the idea of a political role for the ‘ulamā. For a discussion of the transformation of his thought as well as of its internal contradictions, see Reza Hajatpour, “Reflections and Legal Analysis of the Relationship between 'Religious Government and Human Rights' from the Perspective of Grand Ayatullah Muntaẓirī,” \textit{Die Welt des Islams} 51,3-4 (2011): 382-408.
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735 \textit{Ibid.}, 64.
736 \textit{Ibid.}, 75.
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distinguished Ibn-i Ḥasan’s introductory speech. Finally, during the Ayatollah’s lecture, it was Qamar Zaydī himself who could not hold back his desire to express admiration for Khomeini’s speech. He loudly exclaimed “subḥān Allāh” (praise be to God), a “sentence that is common in our country to express astonishment while Arabs and Persians use different words.” Khomeini acknowledged this heartfelt demonstration of piety with a smile. The Ayatollah glanced directly at the Pakistani, went on talking, and overran the set time-limit for the meeting by more than an hour, thereby rendering the reception the longest that he had ever granted to a foreign delegation. Not surprisingly, this unusual audience, Qamar Zaydī reports, went viral and became the talk of the town with newspapers, radio stations, Iranian television, and even the BBC covering the episode.

The first years: late contact and South Asian concerns

Before switching to the immediate Pakistani reaction to the Iranian Revolution and further exploring the processes of its appropriation, I will provide some background on the domestic political mobilization among Pakistani Shiʿī ʿulamā and activists. In conjunction with the discussion of Shiʿī reform provided in the previous chapter, this will help to put the later changes and their implications in perspective and provide a deeper understanding of the prevalence of local, specifically Pakistani concerns.

737  Ibid., 77. Khomeini commented on his remarks with “you have excelled” (aḥsant).
738  Ibid., 79.
The character of Shi‘ī activism before 1979

During Pakistan's first three decades as a new state, the chances of political organization along religious, Shi‘ī lines seemed to be a rather remote possibility. Compared to their co-religionists in Lebanon or Iraq, for example, Pakistan's Shi‘ī minority hardly qualified as being counted among the oppressed of the earth.\footnote{See, for example, in the context of Lebanon A. R. Norton, Amal and the Shi‘a (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 13-36.} As I have already briefly discussed in the conclusion of chapter 1, initial fears about Pakistan embracing an exclusive Sunnī interpretation of Islam did not materialize to the extent that the alarmist voices in the pre-Partition period had predicted. The Shi‘ī community was prominently represented among the dominant landholders, the military, the local and federal bureaucracy, as well as in the industrial and entrepreneurial elite. Each successive Pakistani government included Shi‘ī ministers.\footnote{Muḥammad Akram ‘Ārifī, “Shī‘īyān-i Pākistān,” Faṣḥnāmah-i takhassuṣ-yi Shi‘āshināṣī 1,3-4 (2003): 209.} This relative influence has led some observers to conclude that despite occasional riots during the month of Muḥarram, most Shi‘īs did not feel discriminated against.\footnote{Abou Zahab, “The Politicization,” 97. For a similar view, see also Munir D. Ahmed, “The Shi‘is of Pakistan,” in Martin Kramer (ed), Shi‘ism, Resistance, and Revolution (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1987), 280-281.} Mariam Abou Zahab holds that Shi‘ī organizations were in general “apolitical and concerned with rituals and the organization of Muharram processions only.”\footnote{Mariam Abou Zahab, “The Regional Dimension of Sectarian Conflicts in Pakistan,” in Christophe Jaffrelot (ed), Pakistan, Nationalism without a Nation (London: Zed Books, 2002), 116.} Andreas Rieck complicates this picture in his close study of intra-Shi‘ī rivalries, pointing to the mid-1960s as a period of organizational change which highlighted serious Shi‘ī grievances that had nevertheless existed beneath the harmonious surface. The influential ‘ālim Sayyid Muḥammad Dihlavī (1899-1971) managed to bring together 250 Shi‘ī ‘ulamā at a convention in Karachi in 1964 and later

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established Shi‘a Muṭalabāt Committees (Shi‘a Demands Committees) all over the country.⁷⁴³ Dihlavī and his movement called for full freedom and protection for self-flagellation (‘azādārī), separate religious instruction in public schools, and the administration of Shi‘ī auqāf (religious endowments) by Shi‘īs only.⁷⁴⁴ Faced with repeated delaying tactics and bans on public speaking, they issued an ultimatum to the Pakistani government in July 1967 to accept their “apolitical, religious and constitutional demands” within three months.⁷⁴⁵ When finally some 15,000 Shi‘īs gathered in Rawalpindi after the expiration of the deadline to discuss strategy for the suggested civil disobedience campaign, the Ayub Khan government acceded to their demands, only a couple of days before its final downfall.⁷⁴⁶ Given this ‘ulamā-led campaign, it is tempting to agree with Andreas Rieck’s evaluation that “the new wave of Shia mobilization in Pakistan following the Iranian revolution and Zia ul-Haq’s Islamization policy drew on long experiences from the 1950s and 1960s.”⁷⁴⁷ Especially if we consider the role of Dihlavī role, who had received his entire Shi‘ī education in India, Abou Zahab’s argument, widely shared by Iranian authors,⁷⁴⁸ about the apolitical and solely ritual-focused outlook of Shi‘ī scholars before the Iranian revolution, needs to be qualified.⁷⁴⁹ This is not to say, however, that debates on

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⁷⁴³ On his biography, see Naqvī, Taẕkirah-i ‘ulamā-i imāmiyyah, 254-256. A prolific writer and gifted orator, Dihlavī was referred to as the greatest preacher (khāṭib-i a‘ẓam) in the Shi‘ī community.

⁷⁴⁴ For a discussion of Shi‘ī demands during the years from 1947 until 1954 for separate religious education and the modification of syllabi used in the country’s schools, see Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 75-78.


⁷⁴⁶ These rights were conceded gradually by the government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, only to be abolished again under Zia ul-Haq in 1978 (see ibid., 282-283).

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid., 283.

⁷⁴⁸ See, for example, M. A. ʿĀrifī, Junbīsh-i islāmī-yi Pākistān: Barrāsī-yi ‘avāmil-i nākāmī dar ijād-i nīzām-i islāmī (Qum: Būstān-i Kitāb, 2003), 120.

⁷⁴⁹ Such a claim might be especially problematic when intended to cover the whole of Pakistan. Andreas Rieck has shown elsewhere that “the lack of a meaningful political representation of the Northern Areas people, both under British and Dogra rule and ever since their accession to Pakistan (...) has helped the Shi‘a ulamā a lot to win positions of influence within the local society, apparently unmatched in any other part of Pakistan.” See Andreas Rieck, “A Stronghold of Shi‘a Orthodoxy in Northern Pakistan,” in Brunner et al. (eds), Islamstudien ohne Ende, 402.
reform did not play an equally important, divisive role, as as we have seen in chapter 2. A
genuine reconciliation between the feuding camps never took place, as these cleavages haunted
the new Shi'i organizations founded after the Iranian Revolution.\textsuperscript{750} This especially came to the
fore in the mid-1980s under the leadership of Sayyid Ārif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī, as will be shown
in the next section of this chapter.

\textit{Reading Iran through the South Asian looking glass: Gandhi, renewal, and political
activism}

The news of domestic troubles for the Shah reached Pakistani Shi'is while they were
already living in a heated atmosphere. Even though they surely knew of Khomeini as a rising
star on the \textit{ʿulamā} firmament,\textsuperscript{751} they had no direct connection with him until January 1979
when the cleric still resided in Paris. This lack of direct access extended even to groups such as
Pakistan's Imamia Students Organisation (ISO) which distinguished itself as one of Iran's most
faithful ideological allies in the course of the 1980s.\textsuperscript{752} As late as October 1978, the ISO's
journal \textit{Rāh-i ʿAmal} (The Way of Action) did not carry any original material on Khomeini.
Rather, it reprinted an Urdu translation of an interview conducted by the French daily \textit{Le
Monde}.\textsuperscript{753} Pakistan witnessed its first anti-Shah demonstration in Lahore on 18 November 1978
when students took to the streets.\textsuperscript{754} The ISO's sister movement, the Imamia Organisation (IO)
which catered to academics after their graduation, issued a press release that day, condemning

\textsuperscript{750} Rieck, \textit{The Shias of Pakistan}, 180.
\textsuperscript{751} Compare the previous chapter on the topic of taqlīd.
\textsuperscript{752} Abou Zahab, “The Regional Dimension,” 116.
\textsuperscript{753} See “Āyatullāh al-ʿuzma Āghā-yi Rūh Allāh Khumaynī kā interview,” \textit{Rāh-i ʿAmal} 3 (1978), 2-5. The
interview at this time was already rather dated because it had been published originally on May 6.
\textsuperscript{754} In February 1978 they had already put up posters that read “We do not welcome the murdering
Shah” when the Iranian Emperor came to Pakistan on a state visit, but most Pakistanis found
themselves confused by these accusations relating to events they had never heard of (see “Īrān kā
the Shah’s “satanic and yazidic actions” (shayṭānī aur yazīdī ḥarakateṉ). The students were accompanied by Sayyid Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Najafi (d. 1989) and Murtaţā Ḥusayn Najafi (d. 1987), who were among the most outspoken pro-revolutionary, senior clerics of their time. They frequently attended Annual Conventions of the ISO and contributed to its magazine. When in January 1979 Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Najafi traveled to Paris, a large crowd of students gathered at the airport in Lahore to see him off, shouting the Iranian slogan “Our movement is ḥusaynī, our leader is Khomeini.” Yet, Khomeini himself seems to have been unaware of his supposed leadership role in South Asia. The Pakistani ʿulamā who reached his headquarters in Paris were just another anonymous delegation. No preparations had been made for a meeting and no one had been informed about their arrival or interceded on their behalf.

It is not surprising, therefore, that during these first months when the literature in Urdu on the uprising in Iran and its domestic or global implications was scarce, South Asian ʿulamā tried to make sense of the events in terms that were familiar to their audience. Murtaţā Ḥusayn, for example, emphasized the non-violent character of the Iranian Revolution in a way that inevitably reminded his South Asian readers of Gandhi. Listing the most striking features of the political change in Iran, Ḥusayn underlined that the protesters, on Khomeini’s orders,

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756 Sayyid Murtaţā Ḥusayn was born in 1923 in Lucknow. He graduated with a ẓadr al-afāżil degree from the city's Sulṭān al-Madāris seminary and obtained degrees in Urdu, Literature, and Administrative Sciences from Punjab University as well as from the Universities of Lucknow and Allahabad. After migrating to Pakistan in 1950, he taught at both secular and religious institutions and was involved in the founding of various madrasas. Besides publishing on Shiʿī history and literature he wrote important biographical works on Shiʿī scholars of the Subcontinent and the Middle East (see Naqvī, Taẓkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i imāmiyyah, 347-349). Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Najafi was born in 1933 in the Punjabi city of ʿAlīpūr. He received his initial religious training at various madrasas in the Punjab after which he spent the years 1951-1956 in Najaf. From 1968 until his death in 1989 he was the head of Pakistan’s most important Shiʿī religious seminary, the Jāmiʿat al-Muntaẓar in Lahore. In addition to his own writings, he was a prolific translator, inter alia of Khomeini’s Tawḍīḥ al-masāʾil and his Ḥukūmat-i Islāmī (see ibid., 136-139).
remained unarmed (ghayr muṣallaḥ) and willingly sacrificed themselves in the face of state-initiated aggression. They never fell into any of the traps the military had set up in order to provoke a violent response (‘avvām kō ishtiʿāl dilāṭī thī keh un ki ʿtaraf se ḥamlah ḥo) through constant and merciless attacks carried out with canons and tanks. This steadfastness was even more remarkable in Husayn’s view as the Shah was backed by all the existing empires of the time, the US, the British, the Russians, and the “Jews.” Khomeini stunned the world with his decision to rely on non-cooperation and strikes. When he ordered the petrochemical industry shut down after the black Friday massacre of 8 September 1978, everyone in Iran followed suit. The strike spread to electricity providers, waterworks, and the railways. Colleges and universities closed their doors, as did the banking sector, the Ministry of Trade, and the Ministry of Finance. Even the office of the Prime Minister and the feared intelligence service, the Sāvāk, stopped operating. Khomeini achieved all of this despite lacking any official position. He was not the leader of any party or organization and held no political office. This did not prevent the ‘ulamā, youth, and women proclaiming that there was no party besides the party of God (ḥizb Allāh) and that their only leader was Rūḥ Allāh.758

Husayn presented Khomeini here as a superior, Muslim Gandhi, who also achieved the impossible and took on a seemingly invincible opponent. Whereas the Indian was only the Mahatma, the “Great Soul,” the Iranian’s name denoted nothing less than God’s spirit. Like Khomeini, Gandhi celebrated his personal independence which manifested itself in his refusal to become a member of the Indian National Congress. The Indian regarded non-cooperation as an important tool to bring the British colonial government to its knees as this tactic withdrew

the crucial “support it receives from good people.”

Both Gandhi and Khomeini displayed no naiveté about the dire consequences of their struggle as Murtażā Ḥusayn clearly discerned. When faced with increasingly brutal repression on the part of the regime, the cleric still called upon the Iranian people to “broaden its struggle against the Shah with all its strength and to bring down his harmful, disastrous regime.” He called the martyrs of the uprising “an eternal source of pride.” These men and women would proclaim that “truth may triumph over tanks, machine guns, and the armies of Satan,” and show “how the word of truth may obliterate falsehood.”

Similarly, Gandhi cherished the suffering that the violence produced:

> By separating dying from killing and prizing the former as a noble deed, he was doing nothing more than retrieving sovereignty from the state and generalizing it as a quality vested in individuals.

Non-violence, in other words, was not meant to provide some alternative to violence, but instead “to appropriate it and, as the Mahatma himself often said, to sublimate it.” What Murtażā Ḥusayn deliberately overlooks in his portrayal, however, is the fact that Khomeini never expressed any strong, public commitment to non-violence. He only made comments opposed to an armed struggle against the Shah in private, pointing out that the time was not yet ripe.

Gandhi, however, considered it as a cornerstone of his thought, which should not remain a mere ideal but rather be extended to a national and international level.

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764 Devji, *The impossible Indian*, 140.
It is similarly striking that Şafdar Ḥusayn Najafi decided to address Khomeini as the mujaddid of the 15th Islamic century. This labeling is embedded in a book on the fundamentals of Islamic government which, to some extent, remains faithful to established Shi'i views on the authority of the 'ulamā. Najafi wrote that man was not himself able to discern his goal (maqṣad) in life. Instead, he had to rely on an infallible guide, the Imām. The religious scholars, of course, acted as the successors of these luminaries who were in their divinely prescribed, delegated role distinguished from the common people to the same degree as the earth was separated from the sky (‘āmm ‘ibādat guẕār lōgōn aur ‘ulamā’ ō fuqahā’ meñ zamīn ō āsmān kā farq he).

Grafted onto this reasoning are typical Islamist arguments and bits of Khomeini's theory of government with which Najafi was clearly familiar. He adduced, for example, an interpretation of Q5:44 that followed Sayyid Quṭb's reading of this Qur'ānic verse, namely that those who do not rule according to what God has revealed should be killed. As far as the qualifications for a ruler were concerned, Najafi adopted Khomeini's two criteria of "knowledge of the law" (ʿilm bih qānūn) and "justice" (ʿadālat). Sayyid Şafdar Ḥusayn Najafi stated that if an 'ālim could be found who encompassed these qualities and would form a government, it was incumbent on the people to obey him.

766 Ibid., 32. In classical Shi'i thought, this did not mean that the 'ulamā were called upon to rule. Quite to the contrary, the medieval Shi'i Qur'ān commentators al-Tūsī (d. 459 or 460/1066 or 1067), al-Ṭabrīsī (d. 548/1154), and Muqaddas Ardabīlī (d. 993/1585) all asserted that “those in authority (ulu 'l-amr) are neither the secular rulers (amirs), nor the ‘ulama – neither of whom is immune from error and sin – but rather the infallible (ma'sum) Imams, ‘Ali and his eleven descendants” (see Said Amir Arjomand, “Ideological Revolution in Shi'i sm,” in idem (ed), Authority and political culture in Shi'ism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 192.
Khomeini had delivered his lectures on the topic in 1970 while residing in Najaf and hence in a purely theoretical setting. Ḥusayn Najafī, however, could draw on several months of experience with the new Islamic Republic in Iran while writing his book. He was keen to downplay the republican aspects of the new Iranian state. In his view, the non-ʿulamā in the Assembly of Experts had only a very limited role in drafting the new Iranian constitution because they lacked the expertise to determine whether a certain stipulation was in agreement with the shariʿa. Their task was merely to arrange and adjust Islam's truth to the novel way of a constitution, to mold it into this new form (ṣirf ise nayī ṭiknik par murattab karne aur us ki shiqqōṉ kō tartīb dene aur naye sāncōṉ men ḍhālne ke liye heṉ).

Similarly, the fact that Khomeini solicited the people's decision in a referendum on whether they supported the establishment of an Islamic Republic was only done to win over their hearts (taʾlīf-i qulūb), not to ask for their irrelevant opinion. In Pakistan, however, not even such a limited role could be granted to the masses since they had not gone through the same process of education, led by the ʿulamā. Similar to the rhetoric we have come across in the pre-Partition period, Najafī stated that the common (Sunnī) believers were steeped in blind imitation (taqlīd) which only granted the founders of their four schools of law the right to engage in independent legal reasoning (ijtihād).

Quoting Iqbal's line about the proponents of the school stifling any form of fresh inquiry (galā tō ghōnt diywā ahl-i madrasah ne terā) and hence being responsible for the

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769 Ḥusayn Najafī mentioned that the deliberations of the Assembly of Experts, which was charged with devising a new Iranian constitution, were still ongoing. This means he must have written the book between 18 August 1979, when the Assembly convened, and November 15, when it completed its deliberations (see ibid., 60).

770 Ibid.
771 Ibid., 61.
772 Ibid., 62. Murtażā Ḥusayn lamented the lack of education among Pakistan's Shiʿīs as well. He recalled that when a delegation sent by Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm (d. 1970) visited Pakistan, the Iraqis quickly realized that the country was not void of personalities who called themselves ʿallāmah (most learned) or ʿālim but that it lacked knowledge (ʿilm) and libraries (see Ṣayyid Ẓiyāʾ ʿAbbās, “Himmat afzāʾī aur naṣīḥat,” Rāh-i ʿAmal 9 (1979): 15-16.)
afflictions that Muslims faced worldwide, Sayyid Šafdar Ḥusayn Najafi made a bold proposal. Given the fact that it would take the Sunnīs nearly 20 to 25 years to once again groom a scholar capable of legal opinions geared towards the needs of the time, why not ask Khomeini to send a mujtahid to Pakistan who could sort out the thorny social, political, and economic questions of turning the country into a truly Islamic state? This way, Pakistan's citizens would no longer have to rely on those non-mujtahids and non-ʿulamā who currently implemented so-called Islamic laws.

Even earlier in his book on the principles of an Islamic government, Ḥusayn Najafi strove to portray Khomeini as a personality that transcended any particular sectarian affiliation by labeling him the renewer (mujaddid) of the 15th Islamic century, which, quite conveniently, began on 21 November 1979. Ella Landau-Tassaron points out that this designation, based on a ḥadīth reported in Abū Dāʾūd's Sunan that “God will send to his community at the turn of every century someone […] who will restore religion,” did not constitute a major concept in medieval Islamic thought but “was rather an honorific title bestowed on individuals over the ages.” It gained a certain prominence in Shāfiʿī circles in Baghdad and Cairo but had its real breakthrough only in the later medieval and early modern period in South Asia, helped by the fact that its criteria of eligibility proved easily adjustable to the needs of the time. Shaykh

773 Najafi, Mabādiyāt, 63.
774 Ibid., 65.
776 Ibid., 95-96.
777 Yohanan Friedmann points to the lively debate in the 20th century in Indian Muslim literature on the topic. While claims were made on behalf of several religious thinkers, Ghulām Ahmad, the eponym of the Ahmadiyya, also entered the fray and argued that he was the mujaddid of the 14th Islamic century, specifically tasked to counter the ascendance of Christianity in colonial India (see Yohanan Friedmann, Prophecy Continuous. Aspects of Ahmadi religious thought and its medieval background (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 105-109).
Ahmad Sirhindī (d. 1624/1034), for example, is widely known as mujaddid-i alf-i ṣānī (the renewer of the second millennium) and was praised for his mystical insights, his audacity in proclaiming the truth to tyrannical rulers, and his miracles.\textsuperscript{778} Shāh Wali Allāh (d. 1176/1762), the renewer of the 12\textsuperscript{th} century as he is termed in South Asia, by contrast lived through circumstances very different from those of Sirhindī who had experienced Mughal rule at its pinnacle. Shāh Wali Allāh’s surroundings were marked by Sunni decline and the political rise of groups like the Shi‘īs or the Sikhs. These developments made him interested in curricular reforms for the training of ‘ulamā, the “pruning of the shari‘a from spurious traditions and deductions by analogy,” and “proper” rules for Qur‘ānic exegesis.\textsuperscript{779} While it was still unusual for a Shi‘ī ‘ālim to adopt such a clearly Sunni-leaning idea, Ṣafdar Ḥusayn – given the flexibility of the concept – could nevertheless comfortably devise a new set of reasons why Khomeini deserved this title.\textsuperscript{780} He wrote that the Iranian was fighting on behalf of the oppressed masses (maẓlūm ʿavāmm) and had delivered defeats to both the United States and the Soviet Union, thereby demonstrating the invincible power of truth. Khomeini had shown that Islam as a religion was distinguished by its broad horizon and was concerned with both practical and theoretical issues. These feats had turned him into a leader who transcended both Iranian and Shi‘ī confinement and was – like Imam Ḥusayn – a model for the whole world.\textsuperscript{781}

\textsuperscript{778} Sajida S. Alvi, Perspectives on Mughal India: Rulers, historians, ‘ulamā' and Sufis (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 91-93.
\textsuperscript{779} Ibid., 96-97.
\textsuperscript{780} Interestingly, the idea of a mujaddid must have gained some limited currency in Shi‘ī circles as well. Ḥusayn Najafī can rely on a handy list of mujaddids that was compiled by Muḥammad Ḥāshim b. Muḥammad ʿAli Khurasānī (d. 1933) and ranges from Imām Muḥammad Bāqir to the combative ‘ālim Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shirāzī. Ḥusayn Najafī of course ignores Khurasānī’s inclusion of rulers in a separate list of mujaddids but relies exclusively on the afore-mentioned ‘ulamā and simply adds Khomeini to the existing canon (see Muḥammad Ḥāshim b. Muḥammad Khurasānī, Muntakhab al-tawārīkh (Tehran: Muḥammad Ḥasan ʿAlamī, 1960), 90-98).
\textsuperscript{781} Husayn Najafī, Mabādiyāt, 41. In this statement, we can once again see echoes of ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī’s work Shahid-i insāniyyat which speaks to the book’s influence on the Subcontinent’s Shi‘ī sphere during the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.
Ṣafdar Ḥusayn’s insistence on Khomeini’s identity as the renewer is curious since this idea was not part and parcel of the Iranian revolutionary message. The influential scholar, ideologue, and trailblazer of the Islamic upheaval Muṭahārī (assassinated in May 1979) dismissed the ḥadīth since it was not reported in any of the authoritative Shīʿī collections. Even the Sunnis themselves, he contended, could not agree on the precise identity of these supposed renewers and debated whether they were scholars, rulers, or Ṣūfīs. The object of renewal was contested as well, with suggestions ranging from the fundamentals of religion to legal rulings or matters of creed. Muṭahārī argued that the Shīʿīs had a comprehensive, superior understanding of iṣlāḥ (reform) which was based on their belief in the reappearance of the twelfth Imām as the mahdī. To rid society of unlawful innovations (mubārazah kardan bā bidʿathā) was a task to which every individual was called, not just a certain reformer every hundred, two-hundred, or five hundred years.

Ṣafdar Ḥusayn followed a similar South Asian path in regard to his conception of the role of women in society. Revolutionary Iran no doubt tried to discourage female employment and cut back on rights women had enjoyed under the Shah like access to divorce. The new government emphasized their roles as mothers and educators of children and enforced clothing restrictions. Yet, Khomeini also regularly extolled the highly visible role women had played

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783 In his view, the idea of a mujaddid entered Shīʿī thought via Shaykh Bahāʾī (d. 1621) who wrote that Sunni scholars held the Shīʿī traditionist al-Kulaynī (d. 941) in such high regard that they labeled him the renewer of the Shīʿī school of law (see Zuhūr-i mujaddid-i dīn dar har ṣad sāl, retrieved from http://www.mortezamotahari.com/fa/questionview.html?QuestionID=62435, accessed on 16 June 2015). I am grateful to Prof. Hossein Modarresi for drawing my attention to this reference.

during the overthrow of the old order and lauded their role in reforming society at large.\textsuperscript{785} The state initially tried to uphold the image of the Prophet's daughter Fāṭima and his granddaughter Zaynab as revolutionaries at extraordinary times. Both women had – once peace was restored – reverted to their household duties, and so should Iran's contemporary female revolutionaries. Official statements tried to discourage “the average traditional women from drawing larger and more general lessons from their revolutionary experience.”\textsuperscript{786} The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in September 1980 prolonged this supposed temporary phase. Women were required to substitute for men who were fighting at the front, with the consequence, for instance, that the female workforce in Iran's ministries reached its former pre-revolutionary levels in the mid-1980s.\textsuperscript{787} Additionally, the Iranian state in 1985 facilitated the opening of a full-fledged women's religious seminary under the name of Jāmiʿat al-Zahrāʾ which was meant to train female mujtahids.\textsuperscript{788} Ṣafdar Ḥusayn did not display any such ambiguities about the role of women in society or even religious leadership. For him, female seclusion (pardah) was one of

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\textsuperscript{785} See, for example, the reprint of Khomeini's speech at Women's Day on 24 April 1981, “ʿAuratōn kā din,” Rāh-i ʿAmal 18 (1981): 7.

\textsuperscript{786} Nashat, “Women in the Ideology of the Islamic Republic,” 212.


the few issues on which Muslims of all sects and backgrounds were in agreement. If one considered the history of Islam, even non-observant Muslims like Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya (d. 64/683) scrupulously followed this principle. Yazīd denied the basic foundations of religion and the prophethood of Muḥammad but he too sent away the people at his court if one of his cādūr-clothed wives wanted to have a private conversation with him.\(^{789}\) Quoting Q33:32, Ḥusayn Najafī made the uncompromising case that women should not leave their houses before their deaths. This position, he (wrongly) suggested, was supported by Khomeini from whom he then adduced several rulings dealing with pardah. None of Khomeini’s fatwās, however, was intended to confine women to their homes. Instead, the Iranian leader obliged women to cover themselves in front of men to whom they were not closely related (nā mahram) or condemned the female use of nail polish since it rendered proper ablution impossible.\(^{790}\)

As far as political activism was concerned, the initial impact of the Islamic Revolution was also mitigated by prevalent, dominating Pakistani concerns. The Tahrik-i Nifāz-i Fiqh-i Jaʿfariyyah\(^{791}\) under the leadership of Muftī Jaʿfar Ḥusayn (d. 1983)\(^{792}\) seems to have continued to operate according to the time-honored strategy of confronting the state to secure Shiʿi rights

790 Ibid., 8-9. Such a position was obviously embarrassing for the ISO. A later article in their journal, not written by an ʿālim, suggested that women were indeed not restricted to their houses and were also allowed to drive cars as long as all stipulations of Islam were kept (see Maqsūd Ḥusayn Gill, “Haqiqat meṣ kurāfāt khō gayi,” Rāḥ-i Āmal 23 (1982): 17).
791 The term jaʿfari relates to the sixth Shiʿī Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765). Jaʿfari became increasingly used during the twentieth century in the context of energetic efforts to recast Shiʿism as a fifth school of law (madhhab) along with the four established Sunnī schools, culminating in an interview (and later fatwā) given by the Shaykh al-Azhar Maḥmūd Shaltūt in 1959. Shaltūt went as far as declaring that Muslims were free to attach themselves to any of the five schools (see Rainer Brunner, Islamic Ecumenism in the 20th Century: the Azhar and Shiism between Rapprochement and Restraint (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 289-293).
792 Jaʿfar Ḥusayn was born in Gūjrānvālā in 1916 and studied in both Lucknow and Najaf before embarking on a teaching career in Pakistan. In 1949 he was chosen as a member of the Board of Islamic Education, and he served two terms under Ayub Khan on the Council of Islamic Ideology (see Naqvī, Taḡkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i imāmiyyah, 70-72).
without any obvious Iranian ideological input. Mufti Ja’far’s approach manifested itself in the famous, strong Shi‘i backlash in June 1980 after the government had announced its determination to deduct zakāt (obligatory Islamic charity payment) from all bank accounts held by Pakistani Muslims. The Shi‘is – due to far reaching legal differences in this regard – vehemently opposed all these plans.\(^{793}\) The ISO provided enthusiastic organizational support for ensuing protests across the country which openly defied the ban on public gatherings under martial law.\(^{794}\) These demonstrations culminated in a two-day siege of Islamabad’s government district by Shi‘is from all over Pakistan on 5 July 1980. Faced with such strong Shi‘i protests, the Zia regime finally capitulated.\(^{795}\) The events of that day led to the so-called Islamabad Agreement, according to which the Shi‘is were free to administer internal affairs in keeping with their law. This success later became a point of reference for the movement when the unfulfilled promises of the agreement were held up to critique Zia.\(^{796}\) As we will see below, even revolutionary Shi‘i leaders like Sayyid ʿĀrif al-Ḥusaynī saw themselves very much as heirs to this confrontational legacy, which at times even overshadowed their commitment to the specific, transnational slogans of the Iranian revolution. Pakistani publications from this time emphasize the impressive authority that Ja‘far Ḥusayn could wield and which rendered him almost equal to Khomeini. When the masses descended onto Islamabad, their slogans

\(^{793}\) Zaman, “Sectarianism,” 396.

\(^{794}\) The ISO prided itself that its activists spread word of the upcoming convention in every Pakistani village. They also printed 100,000 posters which they put up all over the country and even attached to trains (see Iqbāl Ḥusayn Balūc, “Islāmabād Convention,” Ṭāḥ-i ʿAmāl 13-14 (1980): 5).


\(^{796}\) Shi‘i leaders repeatedly referred to this success, as can be gathered, for example, from issues of Riżākār throughout the 1980s.
proclaimed Muftī Ja‘far as their only guide.\footnote{797}{The slogan is a nice example of the richness of Urdu which can draw on words of both Arabic and Persian origin: \textit{Ek hī qā’id, ek hī rahbar, Muftī Ja‘far, Muftī Ja‘far} (see Balūc “Islāmabād Convention,” 6).} In the midst of all the excitement surrounding him, the Pakistani scholar remained very much in control of the ecstatic crowd: his verbal admonishment caused the people to stay behind while only he and a group of ‘ulamā marched towards the Ministry of Religious Affairs. No riots broke out when a tear gas canister killed Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shād from Shōrkōṭ, turning him into the first martyr of the Movement for the Implementation of Ja‘farī law.\footnote{798}{The ISO later organized the funeral prayers. They had at this point plenty of experience in calling the people to prayer while they were in a state of great excitement. From 1979 onwards, the ISO had gradually begun to make congregational prayer a regular feature of processions during Muḥarram and on other occasions (see “Daurān-i julyās-i ʿazā namāz kā program,” \textit{Rāh-i ʿAmal} 11 (1980): 10 and also “Majālis aur ʿazādārī,” \textit{Rāh-i ʿAmal} 25 (1982): 12.} Similarly, when the protesters later surrounded the Pakistan Civil Secretariat in a successful bid to seal it off, Muftī Ja‘far’s word was enough to ensure disciplined behavior. Despite the absence of police or military personnel, no one entered the unlocked gate. They all behaved as the “civilized” (\textit{muhażţab}) people that the scholar had presented to the media before the commencement of the convention. With him as leader, the people were “honey-bees, not mosquitoes” (\textit{shahd ki makhiyān thiṅ, barsāti makhiyān nahīṅ thiṅ}).\footnote{799}{\textit{Ibid.}, 6-7.} Muftī Ja‘far did not only stand his ground as an independent religious scholar and political activist inside Pakistan. When traveling to Iran in May 1981, he rejected all offers from the neighboring country to cover his expenses and those of his 22 companions by pointing out that Iran was engaged in a war and should not be burdened with such additional responsibilities.\footnote{800}{Ghażanfar Kāẓimī, \textit{Muftī Ja‘far Ḥusayn marḥūm} (1914-1983). \textit{Ayyām-i raftah par mukhtaṣar naẓar} (n.p.: n.p., 1983), 23.} After they had met Khomeini, Muftī Ja‘far faced the Iranian press.

Journalists of the newspapers *Kayhān International, Pars, Jihād,* and *Shahīd* were eager to know why the revolutionary efforts of Pakistani Shi‘īs had as yet come to naught. They also inquired about the real purpose of his trip to Iran and whether it would be possible to compare the Pakistani government to the rule of Shah Reza Pahlavi. Instead of stoking the flames of confrontation, Muftī Ja‘far diligently drew the attention of his interlocutors to the guarantees the Shi‘īs had been able to extract from the government. He and his fellow delegates had come to Iran primarily as pilgrims to visit the shrine of Imām Riḍā in Mashhad, to express their condolences for the martyrs of Iran’s revolution and the current war with Iraq, and to thank the Iranians for all the support they had provided for his movement. Muftī Ja‘far deflected any critique of the Pakistani government. When a journalist brought up a comment by Khomeini who had criticized Zia ul-Haq for extending his personal power under the smokescreen of Islam, Muftī Ja‘far only remarked that he had also “felt certain disagreements between the governments of Pakistan and Iran” (ḥukūmat-i Pākistān aur ḥukūmat-i Īrān men ḵuch ikhtilāf mahsūs kiyā he) which he hoped to resolve upon his return to his native country.801

The ISO was only seemingly less confused about how to relate to the Iranian Revolution. No doubt, they frequently and faithfully echoed Iranian view-points by denouncing, for example, those Pakistani clerics who were opposed to politicizing the *ḥajj.*802

801 Ibid., 28. It is tempting to speculate that the reluctance to lash out against the Pakistani government might have had to do with efforts to finally establish a *ḥauza* in Pakistan that year. The plan, pushed by Šafdar Husayn Najafi at the Jāmi‘at al-Muntazār, was to import a senior mujtahid who could teach ḵāṭār-i khaṇīj. Ḥasan Ṭāhirī Khurramābādī was selected by Khomeini for the job and sent to Pakistan. Yet, due to obstruction by the local authorities, his teaching career did not extend beyond two short stays of three and two months each (see Ḥasan Ṭāhirī Khurramābādī and Muhammad R. A. Ṭalishiyān, *Ḵhāṭār-i Ṭāhirī Khurramābādī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 1377 [1998 or 1999], 48-50). See also Sayyid Khurram Ja‘fari, “Sālānah Convention 1983 ki report ō taṣwīrī jhalāk,” *Rāh-i Āmal* 26 (1983): 9-10.

The group early on published panegyric poetry praising Khomeini, calling on the Pakistanis to close ranks and follow him. They admired the Iranian leader’s comprehensive vision for the implementation of policies pleasing to God on the individual and societal levels, where other countries only pursued programs aimed at material welfare (māddī falāḥ). Yet, they were also still in a process of determining their own priorities and loyalties. They had no desire to repeat the example of revolutionary Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Lebanon by commencing an armed uprising in their home country. Even though they acknowledged that the path to the liberation of Jerusalem led through Najaf and Karbala, they defined their role as denouncing the present Pakistani system in a theoretical, ideological manner (naẓariyāʾī taur par). They praised Qum as a religious center only to emphasize that Pakistan should have its own ḥauza, too. If the oppression of the Shah taught one thing, it was that more than one major seminary should exist in order to minimize the risk that all of them could fall prey to an evil regime. Additionally, the ISO regularly celebrated its own founding day of 22 May 1972 – long before any revolutionary excitement was palpable in Iran – as the first step “on the journey towards the Islamic revolution” and held essay competitions to elaborate on this matter.

Sayyid Ṭāhirī’s inspiration and the heyday of activism

This multifaceted, disorderly choir of voices changed remarkably in the mid-1980s when Sayyid Ṭāhirī (d. 1988) rose to the helm of the TNFJ. He has been described as being “probably the most ardent admirer of Khomeini among Pakistan’s Shia

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805 Ibid., 11.
‘ulamâ’ of his generation and status.” Mariam Abou Zahab credits him with intensifying the “qomization” of the “ulama-class” with regard to the “rationalization” and “ politicization” of rituals, which now focused on the oppression committed by the enemy of the Shi‘is at home and abroad. Iranian publications likewise extol him for spreading the idea of the Iranian Revolution under the leadership of Imam Khomeini, thereby finally breaking the monopoly of influence that wealthy landholders and non-political, conservative circles had enjoyed over the Shi‘i community.

It may be that Sayyid Ārif Ḩusayn al-Ḥusaynī’s status as an outsider fostered his unlikely career. Born into a humble, non-scholarly background in late 1946, he grew up close to Parachinar, the capital of the Kurram agency in North-West Pakistan’s tribal areas. He received his initial religious training locally. In 1967 he traveled to Najaf where he spent six years studying. Al-Ḥusaynī was introduced to Khomeini by Ayatollah Asadullāh Madani (d. 1981), one of the Khomeini’s strongest supporters in Najaf. Al-Ḥusaynī’s biographers credit

808 See Andreas Rieck, The Shiias of Pakistan, 220-221. Ahmed goes even further than Rieck when claiming that “probably single-handedly, Ārif al-Hussaini internationalised Pakistan’s Shi‘i clergy” (see Ahmed, “Political Activism,” 66).

809 This is of course a rather problematic term and reflects first of all Iranian views on the “extreme” (ifrāṭī) forms of traditional Shi‘i ritual in Pakistan. See Žabīḥallāh Nu‘aymīyān, Bāztāb-i inqilāb dar Pakistan, Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī: http://www.irdc.ir/fa/content/5412/default.aspx (accessed 1 June 2012).

810 Unfortunately, Abou Zahab only provides some examples of how Iranian slogans in the vein of Kuluyaum ‘āshurā́, kull ard Karbalā́ (“Every day is ‘āshūrā’, every piece of land is Karbala”) were gaining prominence at Shi‘i gatherings. See Abou Zahab, “The Politicization“, 108-109.


812 None of his biographers discusses whether his sayyid pedigree facilitated his career. His family traces their lineage back to a grandchild of al-Ḥusayn (d. 680), Ḥusayn al-Aṣghar, son of Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (d. 713).

813 Further studies on Shi‘i Islam among the Türi tribesmen in the Kurram Agency would also be a very interesting research project.

him with a very activist stance towards the Iraqi authorities. After traveling to Kufa to pay a
solidarity visit to Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr (d. 1980), he who had just been put under house
arrest, al-Ḥusaynī reportedly attacked a group of policemen who were busy abusing Shiʿī
students. Additionally, he kept on sending protest telegrams to the Shah. This outspoken
attitude most likely cut his stay in Iraq short: in 1973 he was either deported from Iraq or left
the country voluntarily in order to get married. An appointment letter as Khomeini’s
representative (wakīl) in Pakistan was confiscated at the Iranian border. Al-Ḥusaynī only
stayed for a couple of months in his native country before continuing his studies at Qum. Once
again, he was at the forefront of the fight against the Shah, encouraging fellow Pakistani
students to join protests. Abou Zahab holds that he intended to remain in Qum for a longer,
yet was “sent back to Pakistan in 1977 with a mission to mobilise the community on the
pattern of what Imam Musa Sadr had done in Lebanon.” Other accounts argue that he was
expelled from Iran after refusing to sign a document not to mingle with revolutionary clerics.
Back in Pakistan, al-Ḥusaynī earned his first credentials as a community leader in Parachinar in
1980 when he led popular protests after attacks on Shiʿī Muḥarram processions and was
consequently imprisoned for 22 days. Despite these activities, he was still largely unknown

815 On his life and influence in the Iraqi context and beyond, see Chibli Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic
Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shi’i International* (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1995).
816 Khān singles him out as the only Pakistani student to do so (see Khān, *Saftir-i nur*, 41). See also also
817 For the former view, see Zaman, “Sectarianism,” 695, for the latter, Abou Zahab, “The
Politicization,” 105.
818 Khān, *Saftir-i nur*, 43. *Rāh-i ‘Amal* later reproduced a new letter from Khomeini in which he declared
al-Ḥusaynī to be his wakīl (see “Vikālatnāmah-i imām Khumaynī barā’-yi qā’īd-i millat-i ja’fariyyah
821 Khān, *Zindagīnāmah*, 27.
when the TNFJ convention in February 1984 unexpectedly elected him as leader due to his "energy, courage, political acumen and religious learning."\textsuperscript{823}

The broad acknowledgement of al-Ḥusaynī's crucial leadership role within the Shi'i community during the 1980s has so far not been supplemented with a more detailed study of his thought.\textsuperscript{824} To be sure, al-Ḥusaynī as a busy leader with a very active political life never seems to have found the time to put down his thoughts in writing.\textsuperscript{825} This lacuna can be compensated, however. Al-Ḥusaynī delivered numerous speeches and interviews throughout his career in both Urdu and Persian. These were transcribed from recordings after his death.\textsuperscript{826} Many of these also include question and answer sessions which provide us with a feel for the way the audience reacted to his declarations.\textsuperscript{827} Below, this material will be supplemented with information from various detailed biographical dictionaries of Pakistani Shi'i scholars, al-Ḥusaynī's “official” biography published by the al-ʿĀrif Academy in Lahore,\textsuperscript{828} and issues of the Pakistani Shi'i weekly \textit{Rižākār} (The Volunteer).

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\textsuperscript{823} Rieck, \textit{The Shiias of Pakistan}, 220.
\textsuperscript{824} Andreas Rieck in his excellent study mainly discusses the rise of al-Ḥusaynī to the leadership and his confrontational relationship with the government (see \textit{ibid.}, 219-230).
\textsuperscript{825} Al-Ḥusaynī himself referred to a treatise he planned to write in order to counter allegations that Shi'i believed in the corruption of the Qur'anic text (\textit{taḥrīf}), but had to delegate these plans due to his busy schedule (see Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī, \textit{Miṣāq-i khūn. Avā'il-i qiyādat aur ḥauzah-i īlmiyya ke muta'alliq shahid qā'id ke khitābāt} (Lahore: al-ʿĀrif Academy, 1997), 165). There are no written works by al-Ḥusaynī referenced in Sayyid Ḥusain ʿĀrif Naqvī's biographical dictionary \textit{Tażkirah-i 'ulamā'i imāmiyyah-i Pākistān}. The bibliographical collection of Shi'i Urdu texts by the same author, \textit{Barr-i ṣaghiı̄r ke imaı̄miyyah musḥannifiı̄n ki matbū'ah tasḥaı̄niı̄f aur taraı̄jim} (Islamabad: Markaz-i Taḥqiqāt-i Fārsī-yi Irān ā Pākistān, 1997), likewise only lists a couple of short pamphlets on the life of Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī (see vol 1, 484, and vol 2, 453, 512).
\textsuperscript{827} See, for example, \textit{Miṣāq-i khūn}, 65-72, 110-118 and 142-148.

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I argue that al-Ḥusaynī at times sat quite uncomfortably between the two camps of Pakistani Shīʿīs which I have discussed in chapter 2. His positions definitely harkened back to some of the concerns of the reformist camp and were in many respects in line with (the early manifestations) of Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsāvi’s thought. Yet Mūsāvi as a junior scholar in the 1980s was definitely less influential than reformists in the vein of al-Najafī Dhakkō, whom al-Ḥusaynī criticized for embracing a too narrow and overly apolitical Shīʿī outlook. At the same time, al-Ḥusaynī faced serious opposition from more traditionalist-minded ‘ulamā. This group had broken away from the TNFJ and on 21 May 1985 had concluded a separate agreement with the government on the legalization of ‘azādārī processions. Naqvi points out the shaykhī leanings of this group, to which al-Ḥusaynī also repeatedly referred when emphasizing his disagreement with their leader Sayyid Ḥāmid ʿAlī Shāh Mūsāvi regarding attributing extensive powers to the Imāms. The Shīʿī community was obviously highly confused by this open display of conflict which is reflected in the frequency with which al-Ḥusaynī was called upon to prove that he was not a self-made fraud. Given this challenge and in order to make his case as the proper representative of the community, al-Ḥusaynī criss-crossed Pakistan, delivering sermons in Urdu as well as in his native Pashto in a hitherto unknown “revolutionary way” (bah ṣūrat-i inqilābī).

A bloody police crackdown seems to have finally given the decisive impetus that turned al-Ḥusaynī into a “real” leader. When on 5 July 1985 in Quetta 13 demonstrators died and

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829 See Riżākār 49,25 (1 July 1985) for an extensive discussion of this agreement.
831 See, for example, ibid., 199.
832 For a sample of his extensive traveling schedule in 1986, see Naqvī, Taẕkirah-i ʿulamāʾ-i imāmiyyah, 159-160.
833 One year earlier, an article in Rāh-i ʿAmal had still criticized the lack of revolutionary fervor in Pakistan where people had been reluctant to fully (pūrī ṭaraḥ) commit themselves to the world-wide movement started by Khomeini (see “ISO Pākistān kā universityōṉ maqām ō kirdār,” Rāh-i
hundreds were imprisoned while demanding the implementation of the Islamabad Agreement of 1980, al-Ḥusaynī had finally found a cause to rally the Shiʿī qaum behind him. In 1987, al-Ḥusaynī announced that the TNFJ would transform itself into a political party, demanding that each recognized madhhab should be governed by its own interpretation of Qurʾān and sunna. Additionally, Pakistan's various Islamic schools of thought should be given representation in the Council of Islamic Ideology and a “Popular Islamic Army” should be created to help reduce the distance between the military and the people. Muhammad Qasim Zaman suggests that these demands probably disquieted the Sunnis since they could imply that “Islam should mean different things to different people, their call to a popular army stoked fear of Shiʿī sectarianism and freedom of religion would mean freedom to curse.”

Al-Ḥusaynī had no time left, however, to prove himself in the arena of party politics. His assassination in Peshawar on 5 August 1988, in close conjunction with Zia ul-Haq's death and the end of the Iran-Iraq war just some days later, arguably marked “the end of the short heyday of political radicalism among Shias in Pakistan.”

Localizing the revolution

How did this new “revolutionary way” which distinguished him from the scholars we discussed previously manifest itself in al-Ḥusaynī’s rhetoric? The following discussion is structured according to hallmark themes of Iran’s attempted export of the revolution (ṣudūr-i inqilāb), discussing (a) calls for Muslim unity, (b) the centrality of Imam Khomeini and Iran, (c)

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834 The prisoners were finally released in late April 1986 (see Rizākār 50 (1 May 1986): 17).
836 Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 230. Whereas Rieck holds that the murder was carried out by circles tied to Zia ul-Haq, others have rather blamed Iraq and Saudi Arabia (Khān, Zindagi nāmah, 91-93).
authority of the ʿulamā and religious awakening, and (d) political activism. This categorization is intended to help determine what efforts al-Ḥusaynī exerted in trying to adjust the broader Iranian framework to his specific Pakistani context. I argue that such an adaptation definitely took place. It is true that al-Ḥusaynī's language was at first glance a very faithful rendering of Iran's revolutionary rhetoric. If we read his speeches and interviews closely, however, it becomes clear that he, too, felt compelled to modify the universalist message. This was due to the heated internal Shiʿī debates and the specific Pakistani legacy of political activism and confrontation with the government which we have already discussed.

(a) Calling for Muslim unity

One of the major topics of revolutionary Iranian discourse revolved around the call for taqrib, an attempt at rapprochement with the Sunnīs. Such a closing of ranks seemed essential for Khomeini's goal of establishing an ideal, global Islamic system. This new order should encompass the entire Muslim umma and be modeled on the example of Iran, which represented the “pure Muḥammadan Islam” (islām-i nāb-i muḥammadi). The world's Muslims, to be sure, were weak, at odds with each other, and affected by moral corruption. Yet, revolutionary Iran emphasized that it did not hold Sunnī Islam per se responsible for preventing Muslim unity, but rather the conspiring superpowers. In order to show her willingness to come to terms with Sunnīs in practical ways, hostile sectarian publications were banned in Iran after the revolution, along with the public cursing of the first three Caliphs (sabb va laʾn) or the celebration of the murder of the second Caliph ʿUmar (d. 644) (ʿUmar kushān). Additionally,
Khomeini ruled that Shi‘īs should end their habit of praying separately from Sunnīs during the ḥajj.\textsuperscript{837}

This theme of taqrīb ran dominantly through nearly all of Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī’s speeches and took on an importance similar to Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsavī’s revolutionary discourse. Al-Ḥusaynī’s attempts at drawing Sunnīs and Shi‘īs together were clearly situated in the context of sectarian violence and conflict. Underlining that rapprochement with the Sunnīs was no mere theoretical consideration, al-Ḥusaynī repeatedly referred to his personal working relationships even with Deobandi and Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ scholars.\textsuperscript{838}

He was at pains to convince the Sunnīs that the two madhhab were not enemies. Rather, they were both facing a common opponent: polytheism (shirk) and unbelief (kufr) along with global imperialism, which threatened the whole Islamic world irrespective of its sectarian affiliation. Especially in the early 1980s, after these powers had failed to turn back the clock in Iran and Lebanon, they were aiming at Pakistan.\textsuperscript{839} If his organization was calling for the establishment of an Islamic system in Pakistan, they were not advocating sectarianism (firqah variyyat) but instead striving for a system in which all individual creeds were respected.\textsuperscript{840} Al-Ḥusaynī turned the famous (if contested) hadīth ikhtilāf ummatī raḥma (“disagreement among my community is a blessing”)\textsuperscript{841} on its head when he argued that disagreements among Muslims had to be

\textsuperscript{837} Wilfried Buchta, Die iranische Schia und die islamische Einheit: 1979-1996 (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient Institut, 1997), 64-77.

\textsuperscript{838} At one point al-Ḥusaynī approached his fellow Pashto speaker Maulānā Fażl al-Raḥmān of the Jamʿiyyat-i ʿUlamāʾ-i Islām suggesting the formation a united party to advocate the Islamic revolution. At a discussion forum, organized by the newspaper Jang, the TNFJ representative yielded his time to none other than the virulently anti-Shī‘ī author and speaker Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahīr to enable him to continue his critique of the government’s proposed Shariat Bill (see al-Tirmiẕī, Naqīb-i vaḥdat, 39-41). For more information regarding Ẓahīr’s anti-Shī‘ī polemics, see chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{839} Khān, Zindagīnāmah, 102.

\textsuperscript{840} See, for example, al-Ḥusaynī, Uslūb-i siyāsat, 27.

\textsuperscript{841} See Brunner, Islamic Ecumenism, 237. This saying is missing in all major Sunnī hadīth collections but is widely cited in authoritative Shi‘ī sources.
regarded as the soldiers of Satan (ṣayṭān ke junūd). Every single statement which harmed the umma and benefited the superpowers had to be rejected.\(^{842}\) The revolutionary scholar also tried to connect his discourse with “classical” taqrīb efforts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by mentioning the “early heroes” Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (d. 1897), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905), and Maḥmūd Shaltūt (d. 1963).\(^{843}\) He called on all Muslims to form one line in prayer and prostration before God, not before the East or the West.\(^{844}\) Shīʿīs should attend the mosque closest to their home, be it Sunnī or Shīʿī, for Friday prayers.\(^{845}\)

The antagonistic context of Pakistan entered the frame in a rather one-sided way: even though al-Ḥusaynī also called on the Shīʿīs not to insult the Sunnīs for their particular prayers during the month of Ramadan (tarāwīḥ), the latter were supposed to accept ʿazādārī as a custom prescribed by God (shaʿāʾir-i Allāh).\(^{846}\) Additionally, al-Ḥusaynī insisted that sunna was of course not restricted to the deeds and sayings of the Prophet but included the Shīʿī Imāms as well.\(^{847}\) The last question in particular has usually, along with other decisive differences in the field of law and theology, been avoided in Iranian discourse and seriously calls into doubt the feasibility of sectarian harmony.\(^{848}\) Al-Ḥusaynī was obviously forced to lay emphasis on these Shīʿī particularities because his internal opponents accused him of denigrating the ahl al-bayt. In the run-up to the TNFJ-led “Qurʾān and Sunna Conference” on 6 July 1987 in Lahore, they organized a rival “Qurʾān and Ahl al-Bayt Conference,” demanded that the government revoke

\(^{843}\) Al-Ḥusaynī, Guftār-i Ŧidq, 52 and idem, Uslūb-i siyāsat, 33. On these early proponents of intra-Islamic ecumenism, see Brunner, Islamic Ecumenism, 34-36 and 284-337.
\(^{844}\) Khān, Zindagīnamāh, p 110.
\(^{845}\) Al-Tirmīẕī, Naqīb-i vaḥdat, 80.
\(^{846}\) Al-Ḥusaynī, Uslūb-i siyāsat, 80.
\(^{847}\) Ibid., 60.
\(^{848}\) Buchta, Die iranische Schia, 101.
the permission for al-Ḥusaynī’s event, and carried out a bomb attack on the city’s railway station to scare away prospective participants.849

(b) The centrality of Imam Khomeini and the Iranian example

Even while stretching out her hands to the Sunnīs, Iran always emphasized the centrality of its supreme leader (rahbar). Khomeini and his successor Khamenei were hailed as being nearly infallible (qarīb-i maʿṣūm) and addressed as ruler of the world’s Muslims (valī-yi amr-i muslimin-i jahān).850 Al-Ḥusaynī’s ecumenism faced the same limitations when he hailed Khomeini as being the only personality able to break the dominance of the US and the Soviet Union which planned on splintering the Muslim world.851 The fundamentally different, altruistic Iranian approach, according to al-Ḥusaynī, was on display in Afghanistan, where the Islamic Republic was the only outside player to provide disinterested help for the sake of Islam.852 In the same way as the Muslim umma had only one kaʿba, it needed to rally around one single leader (yekī rahbar-i vāḥidī).853 Putting it even more starkly, al-Ḥusaynī insisted that no Islamic movement (ḥarakat-i islāmī) which did not acknowledge Iran’s centrality (markaziyyat) could be accepted as Islamic.854 This overarching importance of Iran and its leader might also have to do with the special access to assistance from the unseen world

849 Al-Tirmiẕī, Naqīb-i vahdat, 19.
851 Al-Ḥusaynī, Guftār-i ṣidq, 73 and 120-122.
852 Khān, Zindagīnamāḥ, 169.
853 Ibid., 156 and 171.
854 Ibid., 158.
(ghaybi madad) with which Khomeini was blessed in al-Ḥusaynī’s view.\footnote{Al-Ḥusaynī, Sukhan-i ʿishq, 71.} After extolling the Shiʿī Imāms with the customary eulogies, Khomeini was addressed by him with distinct, but similar sounding phrases, thus conveying a connection to the audience which went beyond Khomeini being only the rightful representative of the Hidden Imām (nāʿib-i bar ḥaqq-i imām-i zamān).\footnote{Khomeini was \textit{inter alia} addressed as the Destroyer of Unbelief (kufr shikan), the Pounder of East and West (kūbandah-i sharq ō gharb) and the Heir of ʿAlī (wāris-i ʿAlī) (see al-Ḥusaynī, Miṣāq-i khūn, 39).} Given the Iranian leader's superior insights, an Islamic Revolution modeled after the example of Iran was the only thinkable solution for Pakistan's woes, even though Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī constantly denied that his organization had a violent upheaval in mind.\footnote{Khān, Zindagīnamāh, 123 and 129.} On the other hand, al-Ḥusaynī hardly ever explained how he aimed to achieve this lofty goal nor did he elaborate his position on the meaning of \textit{vilāyat-i faqīh} in the context of Pakistan, preferring instead to oppose the government. In an interview with the English-language newspaper \textit{The Muslim} he tried hard to evade the question as to whether he preferred elections over revolution in Pakistan. Similarly, he was at pains to restrict the applicability of the Iranian model to Pakistan's economic sphere only.\footnote{Lodhi, “Pakistan’s Shi’a Movement,” 810-811.} He and the \textit{Tahrīk} would support any real Islamic system worldwide; it was a mere coincidence that Iran was a Shiʿī country.\footnote{Al-Hḥusaynī, Uslūb-i siyāsat, 127-128.}

\textbf{(c) Awakening and the leadership role of the ʿulamā}

In general the leadership of the jurist also meant a new, central role for the ʿulamā in Iranian society,\footnote{See Roy, “The Impact of the Iranian Revolution,” 35.} a topic which was of the utmost importance to al-Ḥusaynī. In the early 1980s, religious scholars still faced stiff competition from popular preachers (zākirs) who
exerted firm control over Shi'i mourning sessions (*majālis*).\(^{861}\) This particular Pakistani challenge found its way into al-Ḥusaynī's arguments when he repeatedly called on his audience to accept *ʿulamā* leadership, lamenting at the same time that many parts of the country were still devoid of their presence.\(^{862}\) While the rank of *marjaʿ al-taqlid* was reserved exclusively for Khomeini, lower ranking scholars in Pakistan could still provide true guidance. They played a crucial role, for example, in identifying the substantial amount of weak *ḥadīth* material in the Shi'i compendia which among other things promoted *tanāsukh*, the transmigration of souls, or displayed influences of errant Christian and Jewish interpretations.\(^{863}\)

It was the *ʿulamā* in general – and not a lone mujaddid – whom al-Ḥusaynī expected to prepare the way for the fundamental reform of fellow Shi'īs and Pakistan at large and to facilitate an Iranian-style awakening (*bīdārī*).\(^{864}\) In his view, “before each revolution, a mental revolution is necessary. If our thinking is not overturned, we remain in ignorant sleep while being faced with conspiracies.”\(^{865}\) On another occasion al-Ḥusaynī compared an awakened society with a house full of lights and its residents alert, giving intruders no chance to break in and steal.\(^{866}\) Awakening also meant preparing Pakistani Muslims to accept the idea of a Muslim world government (*ḥukūmat-i jahānī-yi Islāmī*), a concept which was to be spread by cultural work, books, and conferences.\(^{867}\)

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863 Ibid., 39-40, 110.
864 “Awakening” in this context is contrasted with the “traditional” view which regarded political activism as running counter to the pious acceptance of what God provided (*taqwā*) (see Khān, *Zindagīnamāh*, 32-33).
866 Khān, *Zindagīnamāh*, 103.
867 Ibid., 172.
Emphasizing the need for bidārī, al-Ḥusaynī explicitly criticized non-political reformists and traditionalists alike. He clearly distanced himself from Ḍhakkō as an authority when he argued that the reform project for which this ʿālim stood was useless: the extreme exoteric approach (qishrī gart) of his group neglected to pay attention to the authentic Islamic teachings and did not provide any solution to burning questions like Kashmir or Palestine. Their apolitical stance clearly betrayed their self-identification as reformers: rather they should be called reactionaries (irtijāʿīyūn). Contrary to what these people argued, the Qurʾān was not only a book of law and education, but contained guidance in the fields of politics, society, and economy as well. Since politics was a part of religion, it was impossible for a believer to close his eyes in front of events unfolding both in his own country and on the international level. The idea that scholars had no role to play in the political realm, should only sit in the mosques, lead prayers, and discuss questions revolving around the legal implications of menstruation, was a deliberate lie spread by imperialism (sāmrāj). The contrast between al-Ḥusaynī and other reformist voices appears even starker because, according to the former, the demands of the Shiʿī movement had clearly evolved by 1987: the TNFJ was no longer calling only for a narrow implementation of Shiʿī law, but rather for an Islamic system (islāmī nizām) and an Islamic government.

The traditionalists were of course on an equally wrong path. Such people only spoke according to the wishes of the people, focused on narrow sectarian issues, and did not elucidate

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868 Ibid., 146.
869 Ibid., 107, and al-Ḥusaynī, Guftār-i ʿidq, 138.
870 Al-Ḥusaynī, Uslāb-i siyāsat, 64-65.
871 Ibid., and al-Ḥusaynī, Guftār-i ʿidq, 137.
872 Al-Ḥusaynī, Uslāb-i siyāsat, 63-64. See also Lodhi, “Pakistan’s Shi’a Movement,” 808.
what the Qurʾān and the ahl al-bayt demanded from them. While promoting ʿazādārī, they forgot that the real purpose of ʿāshūrā was not the performance of certain rituals. In its essence, commemorating Imām Ḥusayn meant striving to reform the umma and uniting all downtrodden people (mustasʿāfin). “If I myself am bound by the chains of flagellation (zanjīr), how can I set others free?”, Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī asked. In making such controversial statements, the leader of the TNFJ drew on the authority of the third Shiʿī Imām himself, quoting al-Ḥusayn's proclamation during the battle of Karbala: “I did not go into battle out of impertinence or vanity, nor because I am an evil-doer or morally corrupt, but rather to demand the reform of my grandfather's umma.” If the popular preachers, despite their importance for the Shiʿī community in Pakistan, refrained from educating the people, they betrayed the “pulpit of the martyr for the whole of humanity” (shahīd-i insāniyyat ke minbar). The last reference is a notable one since al-Ḥusaynī thus attempted to broaden the appeal of his message and to link revolutionary Iranian discourse to the leading Indian Shiʿī authority of the twentieth century, Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī. Far from politicizing Karbala, ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī emphasized in his famous book Shahīd-i insāniyyat, originally published in 1940 and which we have encountered repeatedly throughout this dissertation, the universal attributes and the unique display of morals surrounding al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom to which people of all faiths could relate.

Reflecting another concern of the Iranian revolution, a developing one as we have seen before, al-Ḥusaynī repeatedly conceded a much wider role to women than many Sunnī

\[873\] Al-Ḥusaynī, Guftār-i ṣidq, 81-82, and al-Tirmiẕī, Naqīb-i vaḥdat, 86-87. I have presented in chapter 2 an argument which challenges such a reading of the traditionalists' messages and motivations.
\[875\] Al-Ḥusaynī, Miṣāq-i khūn, 191.
\[876\] Idem, Uslūb-i siyāsat, 69.
\[877\] Al-Tirmiẕī, Naqīb-i vaḥdat, 89.
\[878\] Syed Rizwan Zamir, ‘Alī Naqvī and his Thought, 181.
Islamists or his fellow Shi‘ī Šafdar Ḥusayn Najafī. He applauded the contributions of female activists in Iran after the Revolution who, without neglecting their modesty, played a crucial role in reconstructing and advancing their country, including as members of parliament. According to al-Ḥusaynī, women could even dispense religious guidance, provided that they had attained the qualification of independent legal reasoning (ijtihād). Pakīstan should follow this model and finally recognize the neglected half of its population as full, respected members of society. The TNFJ leader’s awakening project also reflected elements of the Shi‘ī heritage which stretched beyond the Iranian Revolution insofar as he emphasized the role of reason and philosophy for believers: if a human being did not develop his rational faculties, perfection was not attainable.

(d) Political activism

Finally, the endeavor to close ranks among Muslims implied that revolutionary Iran lashed out against “global arrogance” (istikbār-i jahāni). Khomeini labeled the US as the main enemy of all the deprived and oppressed people in the world. It needed to be brought to its knees. Islam offered a third path that was allied neither with the East nor the West. Rhetoric against Saudi Arabia was part and parcel of this view, since Saudi princes were seen as morally degenerate, hypocritical rulers who obeyed their American masters rather than

879 Al-Ḥusaynī, Guftār-i ṣidq, 127.
880 Khān, Zindaginamāh, 132.
881 Ibid., 128.
Important in this regard was a speech which al-Ḥusaynī delivered in the aftermath of Muḥarram 1984, following large-scale attacks on Shi‘īs in Karachi, including arson directed at a mosque and dozens of houses in the Liyāqatābād area. Here al-Ḥusaynī adopted a much more internationalized view of Pakistani’s situation that went beyond Muftī Ja‘far Ḥusayn’s predominantly local approach to Shi‘ī grievances. Al-Ḥusaynī declared that the Shi‘īs were aware that “those Wahhābis, who wrap themselves in the mantle of Islam” were behind all these conspiracies. There could be no doubt that Pakistan’s Shi‘īs were being betrayed by their own government which made common cause with the Saudis. The latter were free to construct schools in Peshawar and to run a so-called Islamic University in Islamabad which was not worthy of this title since it accepted neither Shi‘ī students nor Shi‘ī teachers and was only set up to spread hatred among Muslims. These issues served as examples for al-Ḥusaynī of the unchecked spread of deviant ideas (afkār-i munḥarif) and a corrupted version of Islam that was subservient to the United States. Even more deplorable, however, was Saudi Arabia’s anti-Shi‘ī propaganda in Mecca and Medina and the severe restrictions the country placed on pilgrimage for Shi‘īs. These great crimes subjected the Saudis to God’s curse (un par khudā ki la‘nat he).

884 With the exception of a Burgfrieden policy between 1983 and 1987 (see Buchta, Die iranische Schia, 84-85).
885 See Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 223-224.
886 Khān, Zindaginamāh, 120, 171.
887 Al-Ḥusaynī, Guftār-i sidq, 200.
888 Ibid., 73, and Khān, Zindaginamāh, 169, 191.
890 Al-Ḥusaynī, Uslūb-i siyāsat, 327-329.
Saudi Arabia thus constituted al-Ḥusaynī’s main “far enemy” with a lot of leverage in Pakistan.891 Such a view, I hold, downplayed the important local Deobandī dynamics of sectarianism, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Yet, al-Ḥusaynī’s political activism was more frequently directed against the government of his own country, thereby drawing on and expanding a longstanding Shiʿī theme. Al-Ḥusaynī constantly denied that Pakistan under Zia ul-Haq deserved in any way to be termed an Islamic Republic, given that the country was not only allied with the United States but also characterized by of widespread exploitation, immodesty, and a general disregard for Islam.892 The political system itself was immoral (fāsid) and wrong (ghalat) since Western laws and culture dominated.893 The government which had come to power in the name of religion was, in al-Ḥusaynī’s view, nothing more than a disgrace for Islam (Islām kō bad nām kār rahe ḥeṇ).894

It is interesting to note that al-Ḥusaynī remained extremely steady in his anti-Saudi and anti-government rhetoric, even in the years between 1983 and 1987 when Khomeini deliberately toned down any attacks on the kingdom due to the Iran-Iraq war. The Islamic Republic and Saudi Arabia even reached a sort of compromise as far as limited Iranian demonstrations in Mecca during the ḥajj were concerned.895 Sayyid Ṭāhir Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī was obviously unimpressed and continued explicitly to identify Wahhābism as the primary enemy of Shiʿīs worldwide. Al-Ḥusaynī and Iran were likewise at odds with regard to the scholar’s native country as the Iranian government actively reached out to Pakistan, eager to establish

891 For the debate among Islamist and jihadi groups regarding the question as to whether the US or local oppressive rulers (the “near enemy”) should be targeted first, see Fawaz A. Gerges, The far enemy: Why Jihad went global (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
892 Khān, Zindagi namā, 122.
893 Al-Ḥusaynī, Guftār-i ṣidq, 50, and idem, Uslūb-i siyāsat, 136 and 318.
894 Idem, Guftār-i ṣidq, 149.
895 Buchta, Die Iranische Schia, 84-85.
good relations with its neighbors and refraining from any criticism in public. These
diplomatic overtures were actively resisted by al-Ḥusaynī whose anti-Zia stance went as far as
not welcoming Ali Khamenei, then Iran's president, at the airport when he made a state visit to
Pakistan in January 1986. While al-Ḥusaynī justified his decision by pointing out that he
intended not to lend the slightest legitimacy to Zia ul-Haq, Khamenei reportedly strongly
disapproved of his “radicalism.”

Raising the banner of wilāya in present-day Pakistan: Sayyid Javād
Naqī

As we have seen, Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī remained reluctant to even mention
the loaded term vilāyat-i faqih in any of his speeches and interviews. He was active on various
propaganda fronts and promoted select aspects of the revolutionary package against his
opponents. In the midst of these struggles he must either have preferred a cautionary approach
or deemed the rule of a jurist irrelevant for Pakistan's Shi′īs, given their minority situation. The
last ʿālim we are about to discuss in this chapter does not feel deterred by any such constraints.
Rather, Sayyid Javād Naqī adopted the concept of the Guardianship of the Jurisprudent as the
central building block of his thought, rendering it an axis around which nearly all his public
announcement revolve. In doing so, his well-crafted omnipresence conveys the impression of a
man on the rise. His posters, which usually advertise events at his seminary, dominate the Shi′ī
areas of Pakistan's cities. He has opened bookstores in Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi which
exclusively distribute his works and embarked on an aggressive distribution campaign to other

896 Harrop, “Pakistan and Revolutionary Iran,” 125.
897 Rieck, The Shi′as of Pakistan, 226. See also the coverage in Rīzākār 50,2-3 (16 January 1986).
Shi'i outlets as well.\textsuperscript{898} His use of the Internet and social media in terms of both variety of content and production quality dwarfs the efforts of every other Shi'i 'ālim in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{899} One possible explanation for the palpable qualitative shift in rhetoric from the height of revolutionary fervor in the 1980s to present-day Lahore must have to do with Naqvī's uniquely Iran-centered career that distinguishes him from both members of the old guard like Ṣafdar Ḥusayn Najafī and the following generation of which Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī is a representative. Naqvī spent nearly his entire adult life in Iran.

Born in Pakistan's Punjab province, he graduated from a high school in Islamabad in 1979 and was immediately thrown into the revolutionary frenzy of the period. In an interview Sayyid Javād Naqvī described how he impatiently sat next to his brother who attempted to tune into the BBC reporting on Iran to get an update on the latest developments. Naqvī remembers these months as a time when even Sunnī 'ulamā publicly praised Khomeini and put him on a level with the four Rightly Guided Caliphs (keh imām bah khilāfat-i rāshideh rasideh ast). That crucial summer, Naqvī embarked on a short trip to Pakistan's revolutionary neighbor and later enrolled in a Shi'i seminary in Islamabad for the initial stages of his religious training. In 1983, he proceeded to Qum where he first studied and later taught in the city's institutions of higher learning.\textsuperscript{900} After his return to Pakistan in 2009 he established his own seminary in the outskirts of Lahore which became fully operational in 2010.\textsuperscript{901} In a way, the seminary's

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{898} In August 2012, I witnessed how the tiny Shi'i bookshop Imāmiyyah Kutubkhānah in Skardu received a free delivery of Naqvī's latest imprint. The dispatch from Lahore contained so many volumes that the owner visibly had trouble storing all these beautifully bound copies.
\item \textsuperscript{899} See his main website \url{www.islamimarkaz.com} (accessed 25 May 2015).
\item \textsuperscript{901} Even though the Iranian influence seems to be obvious, I have no further information as to the nature and origin of Naqvī's funds. He himself mentioned a group of “four believers from Lahore” who pooled their resources to establish the seminary (see Sayyid Javād Naqvī, “Jāmiʿat al-ʿUrwa al-
name, Jāmiʿat al-ʿUrwa al-Wuthqā, already points to Naqvī's goal for his native country: on the one hand, he cleverly exploits the fact that this Qur'ānic quote carries non-sectarian connotations because it brings to mind the journal of the same name published by the early hero of Pan-Islam, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. On the other hand, and more importantly, Naqvī repeatedly emphasizes that for him “the most firm bond” is nothing less than ʿAlī's wilāya as the Imām, which ties in with his hope that the model of vilāyat-i faqīh should spread over the entire globe. Even though Naqvī is a member of the relatively young Shīʿī party Majlis-i Vahdat-i Muslimin (The Council of Muslim Unity), he is first of all a scholar and has “retreated” to religion as Laurence Louër describes non-politically active ʿulamā in her book. Yet, it is precisely the field of religious thought, free from any “practical” (or rather immediate) involvement with the entanglements of messy politics, where the argument of an increasing autonomization from Iran runs into some complications.

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905 See Louër, Transnational Shia Politics, 188-194.
For one, Naqvi is unique among his Pakistani peers in his interest in the domestic affairs of Iran which form a constant part of his lectures. He was very outspoken against the Green Movement, for example, which he condemned as a foreign conspiracy.\footnote{Sayyid Javād Naqvī, “Īrān meṉ makhmalī inqilāb kī nākāmī,” 2009, \url{http://www.islamimarkaz.com/video/2009others/election.wmv}, accessed 21 September 2013. For more information on the Iranian Green Movement, which emerged after the presidential election in June 2009 with the removal of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad from office as one of its key demands, see Arash Reisinezhad, “The Iranian Green Movement: Fragmented Collective Action and Fragile Collective Identity,” \textit{Iranian Studies} 48,2 (2015): 193–222.} In commenting on the 2013 Iranian presidential elections, Naqvi explained in a speech that the votes for the new president Hasan Ruhani should be understood as a display of faith in the system of \textit{vilāyat-i faqīh} because the voters gave preference to the only clerical candidate running for the office.\footnote{Sayyid Javād Naqvī, “Inqilāb-i Islāmī: Siyāsī tajziyah baʿd az intikhābāt-i Īrān 2013,” 18 June 2013, \url{http://www.islamimarkaz.com/video/2013Others/18062013-HalateHazraAfterElectionsSituaatlion.wmv}, min 01:04:23, accessed 21 September 2013.} Naqvi also used this opportunity in front of his predominantly young audience to denounce Ruhani’s potential but at this time already disqualified contender, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. For Naqvi, this clerical veteran of Iranian politics was nothing more than a power-hungry individual who did not have the slightest reverence for Shi‘ism, Islam, or the Guardianship of the Jurisprudent. His only conviction was that of being a staunch nationalist (Īrān parast) who due to his realpolitik-leanings deserved the title “Ayatollah Churchill.”\footnote{Ibid., min 22:43.} Muhammad Khatami, the former reformist president, however, was identified as the most substantial threat the Islamic Republic had faced since 1979. In Naqvi’s view, the “liberal” Khatami gave precedence to personal freedom over religion (\textit{dīn}) and did not even intervene when speeches were made against the \textit{marājī} or Imām Ḥusayn himself on the campus of Tehran University.\footnote{Ibid., min 44:00.} Naqvi acts in these and many more instances of domestic commentary as
a faithful supporter of Iran's leader Khamenei and constantly warns against threats – to Iran, not to Pakistan – that stem from the country's internal and external opponents.

Naqvi's dominant topic, however, is the need to teach Pakistani society the true meaning of wilāya. In contrast to the reformists we discussed in chapter 2, this ʿālim is in no way opposed to acknowledging the cosmological dimensions of vilāyat-i takvīnī. Rather, in extolling the exalted role of the Imāms, Naqvi gains room – in turn – to claim (political) authority for the religious scholars during the Hidden Imām's Occultation. In this context, Naqvi is much more outspoken than al-Ḥusaynī when attacking the popular preachers. These people are for him nothing more than “illiterates sitting on the pulpits,” who conceal the true ramification of wilāya as the cornerstone of religious thought: “If you want to know about Imamat (sic) then don't go and ask those who don't even know if Imamat in Arabic is written with 'Alif' or 'Ain'.”

These Shīʿī preachers were part of a broader South Asian problem, namely the prevalence of Ṣūfī ideas which led the Shīʿīs to conceptualize their Imāms as analogous to a pīr. They were regarded as mere holy personalities whose support is sought in prayer, but they were not granted any authority (ikhtiyār) over the lives of the believers. This was a fundamental misunderstanding of their role, Naqvi emphasized, since God had delegated to them the government over his creation. This right to rule, in turn, flowed from the Imāms to their chosen delegates, the ‘ulamā. Since Khomeini unearthed “the buried Wilayat” and established it in Iran, commands emanating from the country's leader took on a mandatory nature for every human being. Yet, Pakistan's Shīʿīs had no conception of wilāya as a system

912 Naqvi, The System of Wilayat, 35.
913 Ibid., 94.
which also rendered their political activism since 1947– including Mufti Ja‘far Ḥusayn’s efforts – useless. They had always come to terms with the ruling, corrupt political forces, as long as these parties would permit them to celebrate their rituals in public. Pakistan’s Shi‘is implored the authorities to stop sectarian killings instead of being bold enough to advance their rightful claim of acting as the country’s protector instead.914 If the system of wilāya was not in existence, the Shi‘is should “under no circumstances” ally themselves with any other form of government.915

Naqvi does not see any practical constraints for his sect as a minority which would prevent them from aspiring to the leadership of Pakistan. For him, the Lebanese group Ḥizbullāh had shown the way. In Lebanon, the Shi‘is were neither a numerical majority nor in control of the government, but their self-confident attitude and courageous advancement of the system of vilāyat-e faqīh had endowed them with a dominating role (imāmat) in their local context. Consequently, Sunnīs and Christians also had to accept this.916 Unfortunately, however, Pakistanis could never count on Iran for real support in their struggle. The golden opportunity for exporting the Revolution in the early 1980s was missed due to the war Iran fought with Iraq. Blunders by Iranian officials who had the wrong mindset (tafakkur-i ghalaṭ) and displayed only a lukewarm commitment towards exportation of the Revolution added to this failure.917 Lack of Iranian interest only increased after Khomeini’s death in 1989 when suddenly a normalization of ties with other countries was pursued which inter alia led to the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this regard, Naqvi mentions the comments of a former

915 Naqvi, The System of Wilayat, 106.
916 Naqvi, “Jāmi‘at al-ʿUrwa al-Wuthqā,” min 01:05:50. Since Naqvi made these remarks in 2012, it would be interesting to see how the ongoing conflict in Syria, which caused Ḥizbullāh to lose much of its ecumenical appeal, might modify his tone.
917 Naqvi, “Vārid-i daurān-i nuqrā’i-yi ṣudūr-i inqilāb.”
ambassador of Iran to Pakistan who criticized the Pakistanis for putting up posters of Khomeini and Khamenei everywhere because the Revolution was an internal, Iranian affair and had no relevance for South Asia.\(^{918}\) Needless to say, this sad state of affairs and misconception of the Revolution were never intended by Khomeini. Naqvi sees a special closeness the Iranian leader felt for Pakistan in a declaration Khomeini made after the death of Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusayni, calling him his “true son” (\textit{farzand-i ḥaqīqī}).\(^{919}\) Among the volumes of letters and speeches by Khomeini, Naqvi claims, this personal address stands in an exalted row along with three other short historic texts, including Khomeini’s testament. If a reader only familiarized himself with these four writings, he would have encountered the essence of the \textit{rahbar}'s thought.\(^{920}\) The Jāmiʿat al-ʿUrwa al-Wuthqā, then, was ready to finally realize Khomeini’s wish and achieve the rooting of the message of the Revolution in Pakistan. Under Naqvi’s guidance, the seminary’s syllabus covered the entirety of the true Islamic ideology (\textit{naẓariyyah}) and was designed to groom a new generation (\textit{nasl}) of Shiʿis who were proud of the Imāmate and ready to lead the Pakistani nation (\textit{qaum}) and the world-wide community of Muslims (\textit{umma}).\(^{921}\) They would take Pakistan out of its current status of servitude to outside powers and put an end to poverty, terrorism, and deprivation.\(^{922}\)

Conclusion

These last observations on Sayyid Javād Naqvī’s conceptualization of the Islamic Revolution once again demonstrate the fascinating tensions between closeness and distance which we have already encountered in the travelogue that captured the spirit of 1979. Taken together with Sayyid Ṭāhir Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī’s adaptation of and at times resistance to vilāyat-i faqīh and various other themes emanating from Iran, the thought of these two men underlines the limits of the control that the Iranians could hope to exert over the Pakistani propagators of their mission. Yet, neither of them ever opted for a clear-cut “autonomization,” the breaking of ties with Iran, since their authority directly depended on being Khomeini’s wakil or on having studied for decades at the ḥauza in Qum. Rather, like the ʿulamā of an older generation who had been educated in Najaf, they strove to carve out a niche for themselves as indigenous translators of the Revolution, a task no Iranian ʿālim could ever hope to achieve. In doing so, as we have seen, the supposed universal and rational reformulation of Islam was interpreted for Pakistan in ways that remained intimately tied to the requirements of the time and the realities of personal exposure to the neighboring country. South Asian concepts and successful locally-driven political campaigns and protests shaped the view from Pakistan in the first months and years after the Revolution. The mid-1980s witnessed both the height of Shiʿī activism as well as the realization that neither the idea of rapprochement with the Sunnis nor the reform of rituals could be sold easily to a Shiʿī public which remained influenced by traditional scholars and popular preachers. Finally, being a follower of Khomeini in today’s Lahore means both learning from Lebanon and an attempt to present Pakistan as a potential corrective to a revolutionary neighbor that has deviated from its radical path and has become caught up with conventional politics. Seen from this perspective, arguments about an “Iranization” of Pakistan’s Shiʿīs and
their ʿulamā are not wrong – but they disguise the fact that this revolutionary coating has
glimmered in many different shades over the course of 36 years since the downfall of the Shah.
Chapter 5: Abū Muʿāwiya's Longings for the State: the Dialectics of the Local and the Transnational in Sunnī-Shīʿī Sectarianism

Hō ḥalqah-i yārāṉ tō barīsham ki ṭarāḥ narm.
Razm-i ḥaqq ō bāṭil hō tō fulād he muʿmin.

When among his friends, he is soft as raw silk. But on the battlefield of truth and falsehood, the believer turns into a man of Damascene steel. (Muhammad Iqbal)

When the young Pakistani student Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahīr arrived at the recently opened Islamic University of Medina in 1963, he soon realized that the grass was not always greener on the Saudi Arabian side of things. The reason for Ẓahīr's unease was not so much his academic performance, which according to both Pakistani and Saudi sources was flawless. Rather, he quickly noticed that many of the professors who were supposed to teach classes on comparative religion and (heretical) sects within Islam (adyān ō firaq) lacked a thorough grounding in the subject at hand. The matter was of especially grave concern in his view when it came to lectures on the Aḥmadī movement. Ẓahīr recalled that his teachers had to cut their

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923 My own translation. These lines of poetry constitute another fascinating instance of how Muhammad Iqbal, often regarded as Pakistan's national poet, is appropriated by both Sunnī and Shīʿī sectarian groups. Many of those protagonists and groups discussed below quote this particular verse for their various divergent goals. The poem, entitled Muʾmin (Dunyā meṉ) (The Believer (in the World)), can be found in Iqbal's Žarb-i Kalīm (The Rod of Moses) collection. See Muḥammad Iqbāl, Žarb-i Kalīm (Lahore: Munīrah Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, 1955), 41. On the issue of Iqbal's elusiveness and multi-leveled appropriation, see Naveeda Khan, Muslim Becoming. Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 59.

924 The Saudi king Saʿūd b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Āl Saʿūd (d. 1969) announced his plan to establish the University in May 1961. One of the immediate reasons for its founding was to provide a home to neo-salafī immigrant scholars from other parts of the Arab world. In the long run, however, the goal was a renewal of the propagation of Islam (daʿwa) on an international level (see Reinhard Schulze, Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Islamischen Weltliga (Brill: Leiden, 1990), 156-160).

talks short after offering only superficial remarks on this group, undoubtedly due to their inability to tap into the extensive literature on the subject in Urdu. Eventually, he himself, as the only student from Pakistan present at this time at the Islamic University, had to intervene in order to set the record straight. Ẓahīr began writing op-eds in Arabic newspapers, moved on to lectures on the Aḥmadīs, and finally was encouraged by his professors to compile his thoughts into a book. Navigating the market of academic publishing with such a sought-after topic was a mere formality. The editor of the publishing house which took the project under its wings had only one request. Would it be possible, he asked, for Ẓahīr to appear on the cover with the designation “Graduate of the Islamic University of Medina”? Such a label would definitely boost the sales. Ẓahīr, still far from graduation, hesitated. He consulted with the University’s vice-chancellor, ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz b. Bāz (d. 1999), who would later become Saudi Arabia’s Grand Muftī and was in those early years de facto in charge of the institution. Ibn Bāz took the matter to the University’s governing board which unexpectedly gave its blessing to this unusual move, highlighting the importance they attributed to the book. Yet, Ẓahīr was not completely put at ease. What would happen, he inquired, if he failed his final exams, with a publication out that pretended otherwise? Ibn Bāz waved this concern aside: if things really turned out that way, they might as well close down the entire University.


This episode is highly significant since Ẓahīr later amply fulfilled the hopes of his Saudi patrons. He continued his polemical vision and published 14 books over the next decades mostly focusing on the Shi‘īs and which drew a wide audience. Bernard Haykel has argued that “perhaps no single scholar has been more influential in aggravating Sunni-Shi’a tensions and violence in the South Asian context than Ihsan Ilahi Zahir.” In evaluating Ẓahīr’s influence, however, scholars have mostly viewed him through precisely this Saudi lens, pointing out his strong ties with publishers, ʿulamā, and the ruling family in the Kingdom. Ẓahīr not only composed nearly all his works in Arabic but also received privileged treatment after being wounded in a bomb attack on a rally he was addressing in Lahore in the spring of 1987. Crown Prince Fahd immediately dispatched a private plane to transfer Ẓahīr to the Military Hospital in Riyad. After he died Ibn Bāz personally led the funeral prayers in the Saudi capital before Ẓahīr was laid to rest in a grave close to the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina.

These links are doubtless important but they have tended to obfuscate the Pakistani personality of Ẓahīr. So far, only his output in Arabic has received (minimal) attention and he...
is usually discussed as a mere Saudi client.\footnote{Haykel calls a study of Žahîr’s work a “major desideratum” (see Haykel, “Al-Qaeda and Shiism,” fn. 23, 201).} His op-eds, journal articles, and speeches in Urdu have gone completely unnoticed. Even more problematic is the fact that a substantial number of scholars view the case of Iḥsān Ilāhī Žahîr as the paradigm for how anti-Shīʿī sectarianism made headway in Pakistan more broadly. As a scholar trained in the Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ tradition, Žahîr of course belonged to a school of thought that over time had come to develop close affinities with Wahhābī and Salafī interpretations of Islam.\footnote{Ẓahîr first studied at the Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ affiliated Jāmiʿah-i Muḥammadiyya before transferring to Faysalābād’s Jāmiʿah-i Salafīyya. One of his teachers there, Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Gūndlavī, later became his father-in-law and also took over the chair for ḥadīth from Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī at the Islamic University in Medina. After completing his religious education in Pakistan, Žahîr also went on to obtain various master degrees in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu from Punjab University (see Martin Riexinger, Šanāʾullāḥ Amritsārī (1868-1948) und die Ahl-i-Ḥadīṣ im Punjab unter britischer Herrschaft (Ergon: Würzburg, 2004), 567-569 and Zahrānī, al-Shaykh Iḥsān Ilāhī Žahîr, 84-85).} The towering Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ scholar Šanāʾullāḥ Amritsārī (d. 1948), while applauding Wahhābī activism against polytheism (shirk) and unlawful innovations (bidaʿ), had initially still lumped the (Ḥanbalī) Wahhābīs together with the Deobandīs as being stuck in the idea of the madḥhab. His opinion shifted only in the wake of the Khilāfat Movement when he increasingly identified ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Āl Saʿūd (r. 1932-1953) as an opponent of the British. After Partition, this process of convergence gained even more traction, a development to which Žahîr’s religious opinions amply testify.\footnote{Riexinger, Šanāʾullāḥ Amritsārī, 525-526.} Yet, the attempt has been made to explain even the emergence of the virulently anti-Shīʿī group of the Sipāḥ-i Ṣaḥābah-i Pākistān (The Army of the Companions of the Prophet; in the following: SSP),\footnote{This organization was originally called Anjuman-i Sipāḥ-i Ṣaḥābah (with its acronym ASS a rather unfortunate choice) but for the sake of simplicity I refer to it exclusively by its later name.} which has succeeded Žahîr in dominating the Pakistani sectarian scene since the late 1980s, by simply pointing out that it, too, has received Saudi funding.\footnote{See, for example, Khaled Ahmed’s statement that “with the funding came the Arab (sic) agenda,” Khaled Ahmed, Sectarian War. Pakistan’s Sunni-Shia Violence and its Links to the Middle East (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 107. See also Tahir Kamran, “Contextualizing Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan: A Case Study of Jhang,” Journal of Islamic Studies 20,1 (2009): 73, Saeed Shehabi, “The role of religious ideology in the expansionist policies of Saudi Arabia,” in Madawi Al-Rasheed (ed).} In order to benefit
from the Kingdom's largesse, this argument goes, also the Deoband-affiliated scholars of the SSP were only too willing to overlook points of disagreement with the Wahhābīs and were thus turned into propagators of hatred and, worse, violence. Equally prominent in the literature is a second argument, which portrays these sectarian Sunnī ʿulamā first of all as a group of underdogs who resorted to sectarianism “to stake out their own claim to power and wealth-satiating appetites for power, status and wealth (sic) that Islamization had whetted but left unsatiated.”

This push for influence, scholars have argued, coincided with the emergence of economic and political grievances among Sunnī rural (and recently urbanized) populations who saw sectarianism as a way to counter the dominance of large landholders who identified as Shi‘ī.

These interventions are important insofar as they alert us to the fact that Pakistan's sectarian violence is not primarily the eruption of some fossilized, primordial, or eternal grievances between Sunnis and Shi‘īs. Yet the problem of many of the existing accounts is
that they rely on a very selective reading of the literature produced by the sectarian groups themselves. Only the founder of the SSP, Ḥaqq Navāz Jhangvī (d. 1990), has received significant attention. Scholars have frequently used a limited number of biographical accounts produced by the movement to make sweeping conclusions about the wider nature of sectarianism in Pakistan. Questionable statistics and lack of clear definitions aggravate this issue, leading to conclusions such as that among 2,500 madrasas in the Punjab, “750 were classed as aggressively sectarian” without attempting to unpack such statements. The lack of interest in the textual manifestation of sectarian tendencies might also have to do with a biased view towards religious polemics since supposedly “little new has been added to the centuries-old grievances and accusations of Sunnis against Shias (and vice-versa) by the SSP and like-minded organisations” in the course of these exchanges.

939 Nasr, “Rise of Sunni Militancy”, 142. Nasr’s source, an article in the Pakistani newspaper The Herald, is just as vague: “An investigation recently conducted by a secret agency has discovered that 1,700 of the 2,463 registered religious madrassas in the Punjab are recipients of foreign aid. No less than 750 madrassas are believed to be involved in activities fanning sectarian tension, and some are even training militants and carrying out terrorist activities” (see Zaigham Khan, “The Fanatics Strike Back,” The Herald (October 1996): 54).

940 Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 231-232. Rainer Brunner has remarked about the content of Sunnī-Shīʿī polemics that “Shiite refutations brought just as little new as the Sunni polemical tirades that they in turn caused, whose number increased exponentially after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Whereas the authors of the latter [...] make every effort to outdo even [...] [the most] spiteful tone, from the former come apologetics that are no less persistent, in which standardized rejoinders are leveled at trite Sunni accusations” (Rainer Brunner, Islamic Ecumenism in the 20th Century. The Azhar and Shiism between Rapprochement and Restraint (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 336). Alix Philippon has made similar remarks about religious polemics exchanged between Barelvīs and Deobandīs. In her view, such literature “est répétitive, les mêmes arguments étant inlassablement réitérés d’un texte à l’autre. [...] La polémique n’a guère changé depuis son avènement aux XIXème siècle” (see Alix Philippon, Soufisme et politique au Pakistan: Le mouvement barelwi à l’heure de la guerre contre le terrorisme (Paris: Karthala, 2011), 131-132). Additionally, Sabrina Mervin has described sectarian debates between Sunnis and Shi’is in the Arab world as “fastidieux et, surtout, très répétitif” (see Mervin, Un Réformisme Chiite, 299).
While I do not advocate a monocausal explanation for the rise of sectarianism and religious violence, I deem it important to take a closer look at the intellectual production of sectarian actors in Pakistan. Doing so, I propose, gives us a much clearer idea of what is at stake. In particular, I argue that the scholars discussed below do not see themselves as merely carrying out Saudi Arabia's bidding.\footnote{Laurent Bonnefoy has pointed out comparable dynamics in Yemen where the major Salafi figure Muqbil al-Wādi'i was very careful to appear as an “endogenous and legitimate” actor and not as a Saudi “Trojan horse” (see Laurent Bonnefoy, “Salafism in Yemen: a ‘Saudiisation’?” in Al-Rasheed (ed) \textit{Kingdom without Borders}, 245-262). It has to emphasized that conceptualizing Saudi Arabia's domestic religious scene as monolithic and unified carries its own risk of a myopic perspective on the Kingdom. Especially the 1990s witnessed a gradual increase of the confrontation between the Saudi state and the leaders of a self-styled awakening movement (\textit{sahwa}) who were calling for the “true” application of Islamic law and challenged the worldview “that politics is the prerogative of the ruler and his entourage” (see Madawi Al-Rasheed, \textit{Contesting the Saudi State} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 71). This standoff culminated in imprisonment of the \textit{sahwa} leaders along with many other activists. After being released in 1999, the movement splintered into three distinct wings with certain “neojihadis” aiming at a total confrontation with the United States. This new group backed al-Qā’ida and called for attacks on critical installations of the Saudi state. See Stéphane Lacroix, \textit{Awakening Islam. The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia} (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011), 249-262.} Unlike the Middle East, where in the recent past virulent and violent tracts against the Shī‘īs have been written almost exclusively by Salafi-inspired groups,\footnote{For a discussion of the influence of Salafi-inspired thought in Iraq, see Guido Steinberg, “Jihadi Salafism and the Shi‘is,” in Meijer (ed), \textit{Global Salafism}, 108-111 and Haykel “Al-Qa‘ida and Shiism,” 185-188. For internal tactical debates among Salafi thinkers in Iraq on the strategic benefits of attacking the Shī‘īs, see Joas Wagemakers, \textit{A Quietist Jihadi: The Ideology and Influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 88-93. For the contemporary Syrian case, see Jawad Anwar Qureshi, “Middle-East’s Sectarian Balance Shifts as Syrian Uprising Enters its Fourth Year,” \url{http://divinity.uchicago.edu/sightings/middle-east%E2%80%99s-sectarian-balance-shifts-syrian-uprising-enters-its-fourth-year-%E2%80%94-jawad#sthash.1J5AMSe.dpuf} (accessed 15 June 2015). For sectarian discourses in Syria before the uprising, see Thomas Pierret, “Karbala in the Umayyad Mosque: Sunnite Panic at the ‘Shiitization’ of Syria in the 2000s,” in Brigitte Maréchal and Sami Zemni (eds), \textit{The Dynamics of Sunni-Shia Relationships. Doctrine, Transnationalism, Intellectuals and the Media} (London: Hurst, 2013), 99-115.} local actors steeped in the Deobandī tradition and scholarship in Urdu are at the forefront of such debates in South Asia. Similar to what I have shown in the last chapter with Javād Naqvī claiming for himself the mantle of the Iranian Revolution, we also get a sense of Pakistani actors berating other scholars in the Middle East for having woken up too late to the threat of Shī‘ism. My argument, then, also relates to debates over the influx of a “foreign” Islam.
during the years of the Afghan jihad and supports those observations which have questioned the impact of Arab actors both in the fighting and in the context of the dissemination of ideas.943

More importantly, however, this chapter emphasizes that ʿulamā active in the SSP seem to be less motivated by economic grievances and missed opportunities than by an Islamist-like fixation on the state.944 Even though the SSP followed in the footsteps of Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahīr in highlighting doctrinal incompatibilities between “real” and Shiʿī Islam, the Shiʿīs were now mostly framed as blocking Pakistan from being molded into its true form, namely a Sunnī entity with a claim to global leadership. The Iranian Revolution constituted a clear and marked watershed which pushed aside an Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ focus on proper creed (ʿaqīda). Shiʿī denunciations of the Companions remained no longer a pressing concern only because they were unacceptable from a religious perspective. Rather, the scholars of the SSP located them within a perceived broader Iranian project of world domination and subversion of the fundamentals of Islamic politics. These debates were also informed by internal Sunnī sectarian discourses which reflect attempts to discredit potential rivals like – maybe not so paradoxically – the Islamists in determining the future course of the state. By denouncing (and simultaneously drawing on) the example of the Islamic Republic of Iran and calling for the reinstatement of a divinely-ordained and creatively re-interpreted office of the Caliphate, the

943 Vahid Brown and Don Rassler have emphasized the importance of the Deobandī Ḩaqqānī network in not only recruiting Arab volunteers and turning them from muhājirs (emigrants) into mujāhids (holy warriors). They have also demonstrated that Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥaqqānī’s framing of jihad in Afghanistan as an individual duty (farḍ ʿayn) preceded ʿAbdullāh ʿAzzām’s famous 1984 fatwā by four years (see Vahid Brown and Don Rassler, Fountainhead of Jihad. The Haqqani Nexus 1973-2012 (London: Hurst, 2013), 60-63).

Sipāh-i Ṣaḥāba also demonstrated a dialectic relationship with the Iranian Revolution. Their call for a new Sunnī world-order differed markedly from a more mainstream reaction to the Revolution on the part of other Sunnī ʿulamā who were wary of allocating unlimited power to an individual resembling Khomeini.\footnote{Muhammad Qasim Zaman has argued that the doctrine of vilāyat-i faqīh, which granted Khomeini absolute authority over and above the law, was precisely what most Sunnī ʿulamā perceived as highly dangerous. For “in the guise of upholding Islam the state might make it subservient to its own goals and ultimately absorb it within itself” (Zaman, The Ulama in Contemporary Islam, 107). Wael Hallaq has added that it “is this ‘guise,’ representing no more than a thin veneer, that marks the superficial difference between a self-declared secular state and a self-declared Islamic state” (see Wael Hallaq, Shari‘a: theory, practice, transformations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 488-489).} Finally, this chapter also touches upon the important, albeit ambiguous, links that Pakistani sectarian discourses had with the wider Muslim world. It forms thus the flip-side to my previous discussion of internal Shi‘ī negotiations over the impact and appropriation of the Iranian Revolution.

In the following, I briefly discuss both the extent of the sectarian landscape in Pakistan and scholarly approaches which try to make sense of the phenomenon of at times violent enmity between the various branches of Islam. I then outline Iḥsān Ilāhi Ẓahīr’s understanding of the Shi‘ī problem and contrast his polemical writings with the politicized way leading scholars of the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah have responded to the same question. While the latter have relied on many of the same arguments popularized by Ẓahīr, they have drawn vastly different conclusions, namely that the Shi‘īs are a problem for the Pakistani state. This section of the chapter also illuminates the modes of religious reasoning on which the SSP embarked in order to justify the need for the specific political entity they envisioned. A final section discusses Shi‘ī reactions to these evolving discourses which also, crucially, have centered on the state.
The Pakistani sectarian landscape

As pointed out already in the introduction, I draw in this chapter on a broad definition of sectarianism that includes both texts and actions. As the previous chapters on the late colonial period, contestations over reform, and the reception of the Iranian Revolution have demonstrated, as well as what I attempt to show below, discourses seemingly directed against an out-group might target equally (or primarily) certain actors, concepts, or groups that do not qualify as “the other” but are squarely located within the broader Sunnī or Shi‘ī spectrum. While my discussion focuses primarily on discourses and ideas, it has to be pointed out that these do not remain in the realm of the theoretical. Rather, most of the protagonists discussed below have at some point or other been imprisoned by the Pakistani authorities. All of them have met a violent death. Their positions, expressed during sermons, rallies, or on various Facebook pages, reverberate in the form of very palpable acts of violence. Consequently, Pakistan's Shi‘ī citizens face a very grim reality. Innocent civilians like the Hazārah community in Quetta,946 Shi‘ī lawyers,947 doctors,948 university professors and other well-educated members of the community are routinely targeted.949 The various episodes of carnage seem to blend into each other when yet another instance from Gilgit or Baluchistan is reported during which militants, usually dressed in Pakistani army fatigues, order a bus to stop and its passengers to disembark. The checking of ID-cards follows. If a certain name alone does not give away the traveler's identity as a Shi‘ī, the gunmen ask their victim to lift his shirt so they can check for

the scars which are the remnants of Shi'i mourning ceremonies. Reports of the execution are met with strikes by Shi'i traders, “long marches” to Islamabad, and demonstrations which involve the burning of tires. Yet, the 1990s, which are the main focus of this chapter, present us with a picture that is perhaps equally grim but definitely less one-sided. Tallying official (and thus likely incomplete) data, Andreas Rieck estimates that between 1990 and 1997 208 Sunnis and 289 Shi'is lost their lives during a total number of 1,112 sectarian incidents in Pakistan's Punjab province alone. What this means is that Shi'is were (and are?) perpetrators, too, even though barely anything is known about the violent offshoots of successor organizations to the TNFJ besides the names of their leaders.

Especially this veil of secrecy surrounding many of the sectarian organizations has tempted scholars to speculate about the real, hidden motives for their activism, publications, and, ultimately, violence. Taking a different path and following Faisal Devji, I would like to reaffirm in this chapter the importance of the study of ideas because however “material” they might be, interests are the most transient of things. Ideas invariably exceed them and are the great survivors of history, living beyond the political conjunctures within which they were produced, to shape new futures. Devji problematizes the narrow focus on “criminological” history which aims at retrospectively assigning blame by “providing a blow-by-blow account of what 'actually' happened in a merely belated fashion” instead of laying bare forms of argumentation and lines of reasoning that both transcend and survive such intentionality to decisively impact the process of history.

951 Rieck, The Shias of Pakistan, 260-261.
952 Ibid., 252.
954 Ibid.
As already seen above, it is precisely such a focus on interests which dominates the literature on sectarianism in the Islamic context, in Pakistan and beyond. In particular, the emergence of increasing tensions and violence between Sunnis and Shi’is is frequently connected with the specific situation in the Punjabi city of Jhang where sectarian violence was sparked by “the struggle for political power between the traditional feudal families who are primarily Shia and rural-based and the emergent middle-class which is largely Deobandi or Ahl-i-Hadith and urban-based.” The rise of this middle class, several authors hold, was fueled by the labor migration of rural Pakistanis to the Gulf states who became urbanized after returning to their native country. The recorded figures behind these movements are no doubt impressive: since the mid-1970s, more than 4.59 million Pakistanis have left the country to take up work elsewhere, mainly in the Middle East. While the 1990s witnessed a sharp decline in temporary employment options abroad, this trend was reversed by the mid-2000s. In 2008, approximately 430,000 workers went abroad, sending home remittances of more than $7 billion, an amount that rose to $14.9 billion in 2013. These large-scale socioeconomic

955 Toby Matthiesen, for example, attributes sectarianism in the states of the Persian Gulf to “sectarian identity entrepreneurs” who use this discourse to foster their personal aims (Toby Matthiesen, Sectarian gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring that wasn’t (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), ix). While I agree with him that “political sectarianism […] only arises under certain conditions,” I do not share his view that an analysis of the mere “doctrinal” aspects of these discourses are not worth our attention, too (ibid., xiv).

956 Mariam Abou Zahab, “The Sunni-Shia Conflict in Jhang (Pakistan),” in Intiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld (eds), Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, accommodation and conflict (Delhi: Social Science, 2004), 136. Tahir Kamran has also argued that intra-Shi’i rivalries between leading families of the Sayyid birādarī fanned the flames of sectarianism since 1951 because the two feuding sections attempted each to build alliances with Sunni pīrs and ʿulamā. It is unclear to me how this “ploy” should have led to “Shiʿa-Sunni differences being considerably whipped up in the run-up to the electoral contest” since the strategies under discussion strike me more as efforts to form coalitions that precisely cut across any particular sectarian affiliation (see Kamran, “Contextualizing Sectarian Militancy,” 65). Kamran undoubtedly provides fascinating details about the deliberate manufacturing of controversies during the 1969 Bāb-i ʿUmar incident. Yet, the oral disclosure of the “secret” political motives of those involved to him in 2006, 37 years after the event, remains problematic as an argument (ibid., 69-70).

957 See G. M. Arif, Economic and Social Impacts of Remittances on Households: the case of Pakistani migrants working in Saudi Arabia (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2010), 13) and also the report by the PewResearchCenter, “Changing Patterns of Global Migration and
transformations might indeed have spurred the search for new anchors of identity to which sectarian organizations responded. It is possible that these groups provided an outlet for a frustrated middle class which saw its aspirations hindered by Shi‘i figures who blocked their social climbing. So far, however, we do not have the data to back up such arguments either for Jhang or other areas of Pakistan more broadly. Quite to the contrary, surveys demonstrate that households who send migrants to the Gulf not only report a significant improvement of their economic situation but also find that their social status has improved simultaneously. Claims of Pakistani labor migrants bringing back “a redefined religious identity that was militantly Sunni and regarded Shi‘is as ‘the other’” are problematic since there is barely any study that has looked into manifestations of religious change which might be connected with labor-migration. Instead, scholars have pointed out that Pakistani migrants are often neither exposed to their host societies in the Gulf nor particularly attracted to these. Additionally,

958 For a sophisticated discussion, see Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, 126-127.
960 Kamran, “Contextualizing Sectarian Militancy”, 76. No scholarly work exists that looks into religious change and Saudi “conversion” efforts among guest workers of Pakistani nationality (Personal Communication, Bernard Haykel, 14 March 2014). Attiya Ahmad in her work on conversion to Islam among female domestic workers in Kuwait has emphasized that the process of “becoming Muslim” is a gradual one and often has its origins in the close interaction of these women with their employers. Ahmad’s Indian and Nepalese interlocutors usually started attending classes of Islamic proselytizing (da‘wa) after these personal interactions had instilled in them a deeper interest in Islam. In her account, da‘wa classes focus mostly on piety, the main ritual obligations in Islam, and advice of how (if at all) to convey the new-found faith to families back home (see Attiya Ahmad, “Explanation is Not the Point: Domestic Work, Islamic Dawa and Becoming Muslim in Kuwait,” *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 11,3-4 (2010): 293–310).
961 Studies of international labor migration usually do not pay particular attention to religion. More rigorous anthropological accounts are a major desideratum in this context because the existing literature treats the effects of exposure to the Gulf states rather schematically. This is captured by the following quote, taken from a study on two villages in Northern Punjab: “In other words, from the migrant's point of view, a long absence does not change his relationship with his background. His cultural identity is deep-rooted enough not to be disturbed by the social environment of the receiving countries, especially when they are Arabic (sic). The common Pakistani does not consider the Arabic (sic) society to be as intellectually and culturally developed as the Pakistani society and consequently does not have any desire at all to establish himself there” (see Alain Lefebvre, *Kinship, Honour and Money in Rural Pakistan. Subsistence economy and the effects of international migration*).
economic analysis is often applied rather haphazardly, since the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah is credited with appealing simultaneously to the “Sunni middle-classes,” the “urban bourgeoisie,” the “lower middle-classes,” “businessmen,” “traders,” a “rising commercial class,” the “bazaar merchants,” “transporters,” “shopkeepers,” “industrialists,” “peasants,” the “working-class,” “returned workers from the Gulf,” the “urban-poor,” the “semi-educated, unemployed urban youth,” “new migrants” and “artisan migrants.”

The key to making sense of the virulent and violent animosities between Sunnis and Shiʿīs since the 1980s, I suggest, has to be located within the realm of the political instead. These decades brought contending, grand visions of how to establish an Islamic state on the national and international level into stark relief. Active and not necessarily sectarian engagement with politics has been of course the hallmark of many ʿulamā in Pakistan since 1947. In doing so, they have engaged – along with various parties, the courts, the modernists, military dictators etc. – in a broad process of “striving,” as Naveeda Khan has observed, which is grounded in Pakistan's suspension in a permanent incomplete form since its inception. The country's founders emphasized the sheer unprecedentedness of their vision. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's first Governor General, for example, explicitly did not make any distinction between the British or the Mogul rulers of the past, labeling them all as

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(Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999), 213). Given the fact that Pakistani migrants are predominantly “unskilled” or “skilled” workers who mostly live in segregated communities and do not mingle with Gulf Arabs, it would be interesting to explore to what extent the Saudis and other Gulf states cared about the religious orientation of this group and how the interaction with the broader society in these different locales played out.


“imperialists.” Instead, Jinnah wanted the creation of an entirely new, social contract-based entity without any connection to the colonial state:

To envision the country’s partition and freedom as an inheritance from the Raj, thought Jinnah, reduced this unprecedented event to a mere squabbling after the spoils of empire while at the same time denying the break with history that a social contract implied. Consequently, Pakistan was set on its path guided by “an Islam with an open future and tendency towards experimentation.” Quoting Wilferd Cantwell Smith, Naveeda Khan holds that the whole country, society and the self thus embarked on a “process of becoming,” guided by efforts to render all that had already been established into ever more perfect forms, to be led by the question “what was to become of it.” To Pakistani citizens in 1947, this new beginning was what set them apart from all other Muslim majority states of the time because they were offering Islam

a political existence that otherwise it has not had for centuries. Yet once again, their claim was not based on what the nation had accomplished; rather, on the spirit that it embodied.

To be sure, this embrace of the not-yet realized and the proclamation of Pakistan as a bold, inspiring vision was no inclusive process. Rather, it came with repeated closures to “illegitimate” forms of striving which Naveeda Khan sees culminating in the declaration of the Ahmadians as non-Muslims when the Pakistani state itself tested out its relationship with Islam.

964 Devji, *Muslim Zion*, 96.
965 *Ibid.*, 104. This idealist conception also chose to ignore how many bureaucratic practices, laws, and the system of justice were largely inherited from the colonial legacy, “in some cases intact in their original form, and in most cases molded in the colonial mode and ethos, even if promulgated after independence” (see Osama Siddique, *Pakistan's Experience with Formal Law. An alien justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 43).
966 Khan, *Muslim Becoming*, 7.
968 Smith made these observations during a visit to West Pakistan in 1948 (See Wilferd Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 217).
The ‘ulamā constitute only one group of political actors among many in the early decades of Pakistan's existence, yet the complex politics of Islamization under both the elected “secular” president Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and the “Islamist” military ruler Zia ul-Haq decidedly deepened their influence in society.\footnote{Despite his image as a “socialist,” the 1973 constitution sponsored by Bhutto was the first to recognize Islam as Pakistan's state religion. Additionally, Bhutto acted as a strong supporter for the popular Sindhi saint Lāl Shāhbāz Qalandar in order to cultivate his ties with rural pīrs (see Farzana Shaikh, \textit{Making sense of Pakistan} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 95-96). In contrast to Shaikh, who holds that Bhutto was also eager to strip the Aḥmadīs of their status as Muslims, Ali Usman Qasmi points out that “Bhutto could not afford to yield to the pressure exerted by the ulema and religio-political parties too quickly as it would have indicated his own defeat and credited the religious groups exclusively for resolving this issue. Considering these factors, Bhutto decided to refer this matter to the National Assembly. In making this decision, there might have been a consideration that the parliamentary procedures would slow down the course of the agitations and provide some room for a compromised situation (sic)” (see Qasmi, \textit{The Ahmadis and the Politics of Religious Exclusion}, 177).} In 1976 the Ministry of Education implemented a decision by Pakistan's National Assembly to recognize degrees awarded by \textit{dīnī madāris} (religious seminaries) as equivalent to Bachelor degrees obtained from the country's universities.\footnote{Jamal Malik, \textit{Colonialization of Islam. Dissolution of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan} (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996), 128-130.} This process of opening new career paths for \textit{madrasa} graduates by drawing them into the state bureaucracy accelerated under Zia ul-Haq despite occasional vocal protests by certain ‘ulamā who feared a state takeover of the religious sphere.\footnote{For a critique by Muftī Muḥammad Yūsuf Ludhiānavī, a leading scholar affiliated with the Jāmiʿat al-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyya \textit{madrasa} in Karachi, who feared that the religious schools might thus stray from their “purely religious mission” and be subordinated to Western sciences, see Zaman, \textit{The Ulama in Contemporary Islam}, 78-81.} While the ruling general and state-institutions dominated by his loyalists might have been driven by precisely such considerations of control, their measures empowered and emboldened the religious scholars both quantitatively and qualitatively beyond the confines of the bureaucracy. The percentage increase in \textit{madrasa} graduates by far outstripped population growth in the 1970s and 1980s.\footnote{While Pakistan between 1972 and 1981 experienced a population growth of about 29%, the number of \textit{madrasa} graduates increased by 195% during this time period and by 85% between 1981 and 1984 (see Malik, \textit{Colonialization of Islam}, 230-232).} Additionally, the ‘ulamā have been largely successful in repelling attempts by the
state to reform the madrasa curricula. This surge in status and influence is palpable up to the present day. ‘Ulamā not affiliated with the state have continuously demonstrated their ability to challenge and outflank official organs like the Council of Islamic Ideology by insisting on implementing Islamic law according to their definition.

In this context, then, the military rule from 1977 to 1988 with its emphasis on “Islamization” of the state was not so much a deviation and a clear break with previous Pakistani politics as a continuation of striving with a stronger emphasis on the ‘ulamā. After 1979, those religious scholars who later went on to found the SSP (and are the subject of this chapter) came to see Shi‘ī Islam as an ideology that threatened to undo the very idea of Pakistan as a God-given (khudā dād) Islamic country. In their view, imposing a final solution in the form of vilāyat-i faqīh was a real concern. Keeping Pakistan’s Sunni horizon open by organizing its defenders was seen by them as an effective way to counter this threat. The fact that political parties were banned until the end of Zia ul-Haq’s rule, leaving religious organizations as one of the few alternatives for mobilization, might have helped their efforts in this particular moment of Pakistan’s history. At the same time, however, the hostile relationship to Shi‘ī Islam in general and Iran in particular was much more dialectic than these sectarian authors would be willing to acknowledge. Muhammad Qasim Zaman has pointed out similarities between the veneration of the Companions of the Prophet advocated by the Sipāh-i

974 Ibid., 133-140.
975 I am grateful to Mashal Saif for raising with me these points which are discussed in her recently completed PhD dissertation (see Mashal Saif, “The ‘Ulama’ and the State: Negotiating Tradition, Authority and Sovereignty in Contemporary Pakistan,” Doctoral Thesis, Duke University, 2014).
976 Similar to Khan, Max Weiss has also emphasized the importance of processes in the development of sectarianism. In his work, he holds that sectarian politics, personal status law, and religious culture may simultaneously produce new modes of identification and restrict the prospects for national as well as non- or trans-sectarian political identities (see Max Weiss, In the Shadow of Sectarianism. Law, Shi‘ism and the Making of Modern Lebanon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 9-15).
Ṣaḥābah and Shi‘ī attitudes towards their Imāms. The group also attempted to substitute commemorations of the Companions’ death dates for the powerful Shi‘ī mourning ceremonies of Muḥarram.978 Their effort to turn Pakistan into a Sunnī state “seems, ironically, to be indebted above all to post-1979 Iran.”979

**Pre-revolutionary sectarianism: the case of Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahīr**

As has become apparent in the preceding chapters on pre-partition India and Shi‘ī activism, religious polemics and perceived sectarian grievances were long-standing phenomena in the Subcontinent. In the wider context of Pakistan’s history, the early years of Ayub Khan’s military dictatorship from 1958 to 1962 seem to stand out as a period of calm. Andreas Rieck writes that a combination of martial law, strict censorship, and severe prison sentences provided “enough deterrence to prevent all incidents of sectarian violence until March 1961.”980 The 1970s also live on in Shi‘ī memory as an era entirely different from the situation today. It was a time when Muḥammad ʿAlī Naqvī, an early leader and later important inspirational figure for the Imamia Student Organisation (ISO), could openly sell a calendar promoting the group’s goals in front of King Edward Medical College in Lahore during the early summer of 1972. “Since the poison of sectarianism had not yet spread in the country during this time”, many Sunnī students and passers-by bought the “beautiful” product which made no attempt to hide its specific Shi‘ī provenance: the calendar featured nothing less than a photo of

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979 Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, 123.
980 See Rieck, *The Shias of Pakistan*, 103-104. During the 1950s, the Deobandi organization Tanzim Ahl-i Sunnat was at the forefront of anti-Shi‘ī propaganda. It organized attacks on Shi‘ī ʿazādārī processions and called on the Shi‘īs to give up their madhhab or otherwise to leave Pakistan for Iran (see *ibid*, 88-100).
Imām Ḥusayn's tomb in Karbala, the logo of the ISO, and its slogan ḥayya ‘alā khayr al-ʿamal ("Hasten to the best of works") which is part of the Shiʿī call to prayer (adhān).  

It was only one year later that Iḥsān Ilāhī Žahir, now back in Pakistan, released his first decidedly anti-Shīʿī publication, al-Shīʿa wa-l-Sunna (Shīʿīs and Sunnīs) which became an instant success and witnessed 19 reprints by 1984. His polemical activity went hand-in-hand with the development of a political persona. In 1972 Žahir joined the oppositional Taḥrīk-i Istiqlāl (Independence Movement, hereafter TI). He first was a member of this centrist party's executive committee (majlis-i ʿamal) before rising to the position of General Secretary. Attaching himself to a moderate party which mostly catered to the educated middle-class looks like a surprise move on Žahir's part. A possible explanation is the even greater incompatibility of his religious outlook with either the Islamist Jamāʿat-i Islāmī, the Barelvī Jamʿiyyat-i Ulamāʾ-i Pākistān or the Deobandī Jamʿiyyat al-ʿUlamāʾ-i Islām. Yet, Žahir's animosity towards Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto outweighed even these considerations. The ʿālim later accused Bhutto and the PPP governor of the Punjab, Malik Ghulām Muṣtafā Khar, of torture in prison and the fabrication of bogus murder charges which revolved around the death of a taxi driver. The TI eventually united with the parties mentioned and some additional groups to contest Bhutto's PPP in the 1977 elections under the umbrella of the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). The

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982 Miẏāġ Muḥammad Yusuf Sajjād, “ʿAllāmah Iḥsān Ilāhī Žahir shahīd,” in Rājūvālvī (ed), ʿAllāmah shahīd-i millat number, 25-26. Žahir stated in July 1982 that more than 100,000 authorized and non-authorized copies had been printed in Arabic alone (see Iḥsān Ilāhī Žahir, al-Shīʿa wa-ahl al-bayt (Lahore: Idārat Tarjumān al-Sunna, 1983), 7).
983 Ibid., 23.
984 Žahir had been traveling with fellow Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ members when their taxi driver dosed off, steered the car into a canal, and died as a result of the accident. Khar, according to Žahir, seized on this event, claiming that the driver had been a PPP member (see Maḥbūb Jāved. “ʿAllāmah Iḥsān Ilāhī Žahir se khuṣūṣī interview,” in Rājūvālvī (ed), ʿAllāmah shahīd-i millat number, 363-364).
resulting election manifesto predominantly focused on the Islamization of Pakistan. Their
demands included the banning of co-education, obscenity, alcohol, financial speculation, and
family planning. 985 Ẓahīr left the TI after Zia ul-Haq's coup in 1978, according to his own
testimony, due to his disappointment with the political inexperience of the Taḥrīk's founder,
the retired Air Marshal Asghar Khan, and the party's “naive” stance in the face of Zia ul-Haq's
efforts to splinter the opposition. 986 In the years until his death, Ẓahīr moved from reserved
optimism about the general’s motives, manifested by accepting his invitation to become a
member of his ‘ulamā advisory council, to an increasingly hostile attitude towards the military
dictator. 987 Zia ul-Haq's repeated efforts to get a “Shariat Bill” passed, a bill which was
supposed to make the sharīʿa the law of the land, as well as his attempts to extend the
prerogatives of the Federal Shariat Court to areas like personal or fiscal law, were dismissed by
Ẓahīr as thinly veiled initiatives to consolidate power. 988 Ẓahīr's criticism also applied to those
Deobandi ‘ulamā who supported the Shariat Bill in the hopes of pushing through a purely
Ḥanafī version of Islamic law. 989 Even more abhorrent for him was the potential damage the
general could inflict on Islam with his wrong program of Islamization: In the same way as
Bhutto had effectively acted as grave digger for socialism in Pakistan by merely posing as a
socialist, Zia ul-Haq could set a similar process in motion for Islam by posing as an Islamist. 990

17,7 (1977): 606-609.
986  Jāved, “Ẓahīr kā ākharī interview,” 608-609. Asghar Khan has, on his part, accused the other
parties of the PNA of not being “really interested in democracy.” The TI decided to leave the
alliance after Zia’s coup because his former fellow campaigners against Bhutto were “lacking
political realism” and “have played a role that has provided adventurers with an opportunity to
capture power and rob the people of their rights” (see Mohammad Asghar Khan, Generals in Politics.
987  Jāved, “Ẓahīr se khuṣūṣī interview,” 368.
988  Ibid., 371. For some more background on the domestic dynamics of the mid-1980s in Pakistan, see
990  Jāved, “Ẓahīr se khuṣūṣī interview,” 372.
Ẓahîr already noticed signs that the common people were turning away from religion because they did not perceive any improvement in morals or reduction of crime rates in an outwardly Islamized society.\textsuperscript{991} In countering these dangers, Ẓahîr did not join the left-leaning Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), an alliance of several parties, but rather devoted himself to revamping the troubled Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ organization, giving it more public visibility.\textsuperscript{992} After taking over the position of General Secretary and later Chairman, Ẓahîr embarked on a series of high-profile public speaking engagements across Pakistan and also initiated the purchase of a new property at 53 Lawrence Road in Lahore. Construction soon started for an ambitious religious center with a mosque, hospital, madrasa, and auditorium, but Ẓahîr was killed before this grand project could be completed.\textsuperscript{993}

Yet, Ẓahîr's active political life is strangely absent from his anti-Shīʿī polemics. None of his works, regardless of whether they were written before or after the Iranian Revolution, have any overtly political components to them. This choice puts him in stark contrast to ʿulamā affiliated with the SSP, as I show below. In his 1982 book al-Shīʿa wa-ahl al-bayt (The Shīʿa and the Members of Muḥammad's Household), for example, Ẓahîr touched on neither the Iranian Revolution nor current politics. He mentioned as his main reason for writing the work the realization that the Shīʿīs themselves were deeply ignorant about the true teachings of their sect (fa-hum fi jahl kāmil wa-ghafla ʿamīqa ʿan ḥaqīqat madhhabihim) and misled under the pretext of love for the members of Muḥammad's household (makhdūʿin bi-ism ḥubb ahl bayt al-

\textsuperscript{991} Daskavī, ʿAllāmah Iḥsān Ilāhī Zahīr, 73.
\textsuperscript{993} Sajjād, ʿAllāmah Iḥsān Ilāhī Zahīr shahīd, 23. Ẓahîr denied the receipt of any Saudi funds for this and other projects beyond the royalties for his books. He claimed that his only regular salary consisted of the 50,000 Rupees he received annually as the imām of the Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ mosque in Lahore. If money had been his concern, he suggested, it would have been more lucrative for him to simply stay on at the Islamic University in Medina (Jāved, “Allāmah Iḥsān Ilāhī Zahīr,” 611).
Explaining his motives for penning polemical works, Ẓahīr never referred to current political events either. Rather, he located his own interest for clearly establishing and demarcating the boundaries of orthodoxy within the context of his upbringing in the Punjabi city of Sialkot. There he encountered (in his terminology) Āḥmadīs, Baḥāʾīs, Barelvīs, Deobandīs, Ḥanafīs, Wahhābīs, and Shiʿīs. It was an atmosphere in which ‘ulamā affiliated with one of these various sects were always ready to plunge headlong into a religious debate (munāẓara). Since Ẓahīr himself had a passion for public speaking, this particular environment encouraged him to explore the reason for the emergence of sects. This deep interest and pondering of religious differences, he claimed, consequently enabled him to discern the futility of all efforts of taqrīb, of rapprochement with the Shiʿīs. Demonstrating the impossibility of unity as long as Shiʿīs retained their allegiance to the tenets of their school was the main concern of his first anti-Shiʿī work:

Away with this sort of unity (wabda) which is raised at the cost of Islam. To hell with the harmony (ittiḥād) which is built on aversion (iʿrāḍ) from Muḥammad the Prophet, his Companions, and his wives […]. God […] has taught us in His word [about a similar situation]. We believe that not a single letter of His word has been modified or changed, and not one word has been added and not a letter has been taken away from it. God has taught us in it that the unbelievers (kuffār) of Mecca also demanded from the reliable, trustworthy Messenger that he should do away with the division and dissension (firqa wa-ikhtilāf) of his call to worship God alone […] and the denunciation (ifḍāḥuh) of their goddesses and his rejection of them. He answered them with the command from God: “Say: ‘O unbelievers, I serve not what you serve and you are not serving what I serve, nor am I serving what you have served, neither are you serving what I serve. To you your religion, and to me my religion.’”

This emphasis on the proper Sunnī belief in the integrity of the Qur’ān tied in for Ẓahīr with a lack of respect for the divine book on the part of the Shiʿīs, manifested in their alleged

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994 See Ẓahīr, al-Shīʿa wa-ahl al-bayt, 7-8.  
996 Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahīr, al-Shīʿa wa-l-sunna (Cairo: Dar al-Anṣār, 1979), 5-6. The verses are taken from sūrā 109, al-Kāfûrūn (The Unbelievers).
belief in its alteration (tahrif). ̊\(^{997}\) For Zahir, this tenet was worse than the deification by the Shii’s of their Imams or their machinations against Muslims which had resulted, for example, in the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258 or the breaking away of Bangladesh due to actions of Pakistan’s former Shii military ruler Yahya Khan. ̊\(^{998}\) Tahrif was the “real and fundamental disagreement” (al-ikhtilaf al-`haqiqi al-as asi) between the Sunnis and the Shii’s. A human being who did not believe that the Qur’an recited today was exactly the one that Muhammad had propagated did not qualify as a Muslim. ̊\(^{999}\) Zahir’s argumentation is very much in tune with other polemical writings in the 20th century which identified tahrif as the “disagreement par excellence” (“der Streitpunkt schlechthin”) at a time when among Shi’i ulamā no public voice could be found actively propagating this idea. ̊\(^{1000}\) Zahir repeatedly defended another anti-Shii

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997 Important early Shii Qur’an commentators such as Furāt b. Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī (d. ca. 310/922) and Sa’d b. `Abdalloh al-Qummi (d. end of 4th/10th century) or Muhammad b. Mas'ud al-‘Ayyashi (d. ca. 320/932) held that the names of the Imams had originally been mentioned in the Qur’an. They also provided several alternate versions for individual verses. Other early writings reported the existence of separate revealed scriptures like the Musḥaf Fātimah which was supposedly three times longer than the Qur’an. Al-Kulayni (d. 329/940-41), whose collection al-Kāfī fī ʿilm al-dīn is counted among the foundational works of Shi’i tradition, referred to a report of ʿAlī who said that the Qur’an had been revealed in three parts. The first part discussed the Imams and their enemies, the second the exemplary deeds of the Prophet, and the last one religious commands and obligations. Other authorities tried to counter the idea of tahrif, however: Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummi (d. 381/991-92) stated that whoever claimed that there was another Qur’an beyond the one contained between the book covers was a liar. Similarly, Abū Ja’far Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1066-67) rejected all Shii ḥadīth which pointed to a change of the text because all of these reports were based on one (unreliable) single chain of transmission (akhbār āḥād) (see Rainer Brunner, Die Schia und die Koranfälschung (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2001), 4-8). For the view that only seven Shii scholars from the 4th/10th century to the present have subscribed to the belief in tahrif, see Hossein Modarressi, “Early Debates on the Integrity of the Qurʾān: A Brief Survey,” Studia Islamica 77 (1993): 5-39.

998 Zahir, al-Shī‘a wa-l-sunna, 8.

999 Ibid., 70. See also Zahrānī, al-Shaykh Iḥsān Ilāhī Zahir, 449-450. Zahir differs in his argumentation from Ṣaḥā‘ullāh Amritsari (d. 1948) who, while clearly rejecting the Shi’is, refrained from a final verdict as to whether they were unbelievers. He conceded that the Shi’is also carried out the mandatory prayers but held tat their denunciation of the saḥāba amounted to an act of kufr. Amritsari’s more ambivalent attitude also came to the fore (as discussed in chapter 1) in the context of his efforts to calm sectarian tensions in Lahore. Instead of taqrīb or tahrif, however, Amritsari was primarily interested in the question of ranking the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs. He restricted their equality (Gleichrangigkeit) to their piety whereas he portrayed Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān in their political achievements as superior to ‘Ali (see Rixinger, Ṣaḥā‘ullāh Amritsari, 261-268).

1000 Brunner situates the focus on tahrif in the backlash to efforts to foster inner-Islamic ecumenism in the 1950s (Brunner, Die Schia und die Koranfälschung, 71). He identifies Abū ʿl-Qāsim al-Khū‘i as the
bestseller of the 20th century, Muḥibb al-Dīn Khaṭīb’s *al-Khuṭūt al-ʿarīḍa*, and also shared Khaṭīb’s argument that intimate knowledge of medieval Shīʿī texts was crucial for making sense of contemporary Shīʿism. Like al-Khaṭīb, Ẓahīr was worried about Shīʿī attempts to seize the momentum of taqrīb in the wake of Maḥmūd Shaltūt’s fatwā, as we have seen in the last chapter. Ẓahīr explained in the preface to his book *al-Shīʿa wa-l-tashayyuʿ. Firaq wa-tārīkh* (The Shīʿa and Shīʿism. Sects and History) that the Iranian Revolution had added new urgency to this topic; a fact he had witnessed first hand during a visit to the United States in September 1983. During his interactions with various mosque congregations, Ẓahīr was bombarded with questions on the Shīʿīs and their disagreements with the Sunnīs. He was trying hard during these sessions to convince the brothers to situate Shīʿism where it belonged: far removed from proper Sunnī Islam. Yet, he explicitly did not see the Iranian Revolution as a political threat to Sunnīs in Pakistan and beyond. Commenting elsewhere on the Iran-Iraq war, for example, Ẓahīr did not condone Iraq’s attack as a necessary effort to contain the Iranian danger. Instead, he deplored this rupture in the unity of the Islamic world which promptly came to be exploited

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by the Soviet Union, which otherwise would have not managed to so easily prolong its occupation of Afghanistan.1003

This attitude is also representative of how Ẓahīr is remembered among fellow Salafis: the author of anti-Shīʿī works ʿAbdāllah b. ʿAbdāllah al-Mawṣili1004 related the story that Khomeini himself sent a messenger to Ẓahīr in order to express his approval of the latter’s works on the Bābis and Bahāʾīs and to invite him to Tehran. Ẓahīr declined the offer, fearing for his safety. Instead, he inquired from the messenger why Khomeini had so far not taken any action to purge classical Shīʿī books from insults of the Companions (sabb al-ṣaḥāba). He did not, however, express any critique directed at the politics of Iran.1005 Also, Ẓahīr’s books reprinted after 1979 continued to feature passages that castigated the Shīʿīs for their passivity, lack of practical piety and non-revolutionary outlook, so to speak. During the Occultation of the twelfth Imām and the absence of the Prophet’s mission (risāla) on earth, the Shīʿīs did not deem any prescribed rituals obligatory, Ẓahīr wrote. Their ‘ulamā only demanded from the people “waiting and patience until the appearance of the mahdī who will never appear at all” (fa-l-tawaqquf wa-l-intiẓār ilā an yakhruj al-qāʾim alladhī lan yakhruj abad al-dahr).1006 Due to their belief in the corruption of the Qurʾān, the Shīʿīs did not feel bound by its commandments – for them religion did not extend beyond love for ʿAlī and his descendants (fa-laysa al-dīn ʿindahum illā ḥubban li-ʿAlī waawlādīhi). For this reason, they made up baseless reports (riwāyāt bāṭila), mendacious stories (qiṣaṣ kādhiba), and ridiculous fables (asāṭīr muḍḥika) until there

1003Daskavi, ‘Allāmah Iḥsān Ilāḥi Ẓahīr, 63.
1004The name might by a pseudonym. Zahrānī writes that he met with the author of the work Ḥattā lā nankhadiʿ (So that we may not be deceived) in the year 1419 (1998 or 99) in Kuwait.
1005Zahrānī, al-Shaykh Iḥsān Ilāḥi Ẓahīr, 56-57. As I show below, other anti-Shīʿī writers after the Iranian Revolution always pointed to the same passages in an early work by Khomeini that were perceived as an insult to the Companions.
1006Ẓahīr, al-Shīʿa wa-l-Sunna, 23.
remained no difference between their Imāms and divinity (al-ulāhiyya). Yet, despite his alleged superhuman powers it was under ʿAlī’s caliphate when the Jews managed to penetrate (tasarrub) the thoughts of the original Shīʿis and to increase the lies in the name of the ahl al-bayt. The twelfth Shīʿī Imām did not strike Ẓahīr as a likely candidate to remedy the fact that none of the Imāms after ʿAlī wielded any palpable worldly power. Once the mahdī returned equipped with ʿAli’s legendary sword Dhū ḥ-ḥāliyya, “I don’t know what he will do with this weapon in a time of rockets and nuclear bombs.”

During his polemical preoccupation with the Shīʿīs and others, Ẓahīr adopted the posture of a discerning visionary who was called to a mission beyond the ugly sectarianism other groups were engaged in. In an interview, for instance, he referred to a newspaper article published in England that had used four portraits to illustrate Islam in South Asia. The piece featured a picture of Muhammad Iqbal as the visionary of Pakistan, of Muhammad Ali Jinnah as the realizer of this dream, of Jawaharlal Nehru as a conspirator with the British to bring about the recognition of the Aḥmadīs as Muslim – and of himself, Ẓahīr, who had managed to undo the Aḥmadī damage to Islam. He even expressed skepticism about forming organizations because it was an only too human phenomenon that every maulvi, every group, and organization saw itself to be in the right. Since it was the essential belief of the Ahl-i

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1007Ibid., 104.
1009Ẓahīr, al-Shīʿa wa-l-Sunna, 79. See also Zahrānī, al-Shaykh Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahīr, 512.
Hadīṣ that the system of the madhhab, the school of law, had endowed mere human interpretations with divine authority, he could claim that his movement was not a firqa (sect) or a jamāʿat (party) but rather advocated a system void of firqah bandi, of division into various sects. Pakistanis should leave behind them this sectarianism which their rulers were always quick to take advantage of for their own goals. They should assemble like the inhabitants of Medina during the time of the Prophet, debate, listen, and then make a decision about who was propagating the correct religion. Zahir was at pains to argue that his goal was not to impose a certain version of Islam on his fellow countrymen. Such a view was utterly unrealistic anyway because he did not see a possibility of the Ahl-i Hadīṣ coming to power politically in Pakistan before the Day of Judgment. Instead, he emphasized that Islam was inherently averse to coercion and protected all forms of expression.

Curiously, it may have been precisely this reluctance to boldly claim the single true interpretation of Islam for his group and to devise a political road-map for the solution of the Shi‘i problem in Pakistan which inspired some of his allies to turn Zahir’s death into a new beginning. After the funeral prayers in Medina, Zahir’s corpse was brought to the Jannat al-Baqi‘ cemetery in order to be interred there. Some of his close companions uncovered his “dignified face.” Suddenly, Zahir in his “unique God-given, thunderous voice” conveyed his last

1012 Daskavi, ‘Allāmah Iḥsān Ilāhi Zahīr, 76.
1013 Ibid., 292-294.
1015 Zahir’s remarks in this context have very much an Islamist flavor to them when he argues that Islam is not a madhhab, but a dīn which also guides people in this world. While claiming that parliamentary democracy was the system today which came closest to Islam’s ideal, he nevertheless cautioned that a parliament had of course to operate within the boundaries established by religion which had laid down complete rules (ek mukammal dastūr aur kāmil żābitah) for both spiritual and temporal affairs (see Iḥsān Ilāhi Zahīr, “Niẓām-i ḥukūmat kaysā hōnā cāhiye?”, in Rāǰūvālvī (ed), ‘Allāmah shahīd-i millat number, 466-471).
will (ākhirī vaṣiyyat) to the Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ, both assembled and absent.\footnote{jab shahīd qāʾid ke wajīh cehrah se kafan haṭāyā giyā tō shahīd zabān-i ḥāl se apnī khudādād garajdār āvāz se har ahl-i Ḥadiṣ ke nām yeh payghām de rahe the (see Fażl al-Raḥmān Hazaravī and Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Isḥāq, “ʿAllāmah shahīd kā akharī payghām,” in Rājūvālvī (ed), ʿAllāmah shahīd-i millat number, 89). The accuracy of this whole account was vouched for by two members of the Ahl-i Ḥadiṣ, Fażl al-Raḥmān Hazaravī and Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Isḥāq, who were both based at the Islamic University of Medina at that time.} Žahir demanded from them that they should not lay down their banners (jhande) in confronting the forces of falsehood (bāṭil quvvat) but rather should pledge their souls for this task. The shahāda should be spread in Pakistan and they should aim to give their last drop of blood while waging jihād and adopting the principles of unity (ittiḥād), organization (tanẓīm), and movement (taḥrīk).\footnote{Ibid.} This incident is not only interesting insofar as the dead Žahir gave his own blessing for a more organized, group-based sectarianism which foreshadowed the Sipāh-i Ṣāḥībah. It also demonstrates layers of South Asian veneration for the influence and charismatic powers (baraka) exerted by dead saints and Ṣūfī masters (pīrs) that are at odds with Wahhābī teachings and the crystallized opinion within the Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ school.\footnote{Peskes, Muḥammad B. ʿAbdalwahhāb (1703-92) im Widerstreit, 23-34.} The latter in particular went through a process of “disenchantment” that significantly altered previous positions. The biographical literature attributed miracle-working powers to early proponents of the school like Ghulām Rasūl (d. 1871). Subsequent ʿulamā were still credited with the capability of intercessory prayers (qabūliyyat al-duʿāʾ) but their scope became restricted in the 20th century to cases which were not perceived to contradict everyday reality (Alltagserfahrung).\footnote{Riexinger, Ṣanāʾullāh Amritsari, 249-250. Similarly, David Cook has observed that in martyr accounts of the jihad in Afghanistan we often encounter classical topos like the lack of decomposition of the martyr’s body, visions of the martyr in paradise, or his continued influence in the world helping out his fellow warriors. Cook sees a strong topical relationship to Ṣūfī martyrologies and holds that “it is all the more amazing to find ʿAzzam and his successors creating much the same mythology around the figures of the jihad fighters. Only the element of intercession is yet to be introduced. Already, the complete cult of relics of the martyrs has been resurrected by radical Muslims” (see David Cook, Martyrdom in Islam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 160-161).} The fact,
finally, that Ẓahīr's posthumous testimony took place on Saudi soil points once again to the complicated relationship between a supposedly dominant center and its pliable periphery.

Preparing for the Sunnī Islamic revolution: the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah-i Pākistān

None of these qualms about organizing and venturing into the political field as a decidedly sectarian force are present in the context of the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah. As discussed earlier, the secondary literature portrays the organization as mainly concerned with the danger of a Shi‘īzation of society on the level of the city and district of Jhang. These concerns are clearly reflected in one biography written by a close associate of Ḥaqq Navāz Jhangvī, the founder of the SSP. This work related destructive Shi‘ī propaganda efforts to a prominent family of Shi‘ī landlords. They had converted from Sunnī Islam a generation earlier because only their new sectarian home would serve them as a “safe haven for their luxurious life-styles and free-thinking” (apnī ‘ayyāshīyōṉ aur āzād fikrīyōṉ kī panāh gāh).

Gradually, this elite conversion, so the argument goes, made its way through society, affecting first the peasants whom these landlords controlled and later members of other low-level professions like weavers or shoemakers. Consequently, Shi‘ī customs like mourning processions in Muḥarram and public cursing of the ṣaḥāba became widespread to the extent of eradicating all differences between Sunnī and Shi‘ī Islām. Each time an upright Sunnī scholar came to Jhang to preach proper creed and ritual and elaborated on the differences between the two sects, he would be labeled as a troublemaker (fitnah parvar), narrow-minded sectarian (firqah parast), and an altogether

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unwelcome individual (nā pasandidah ādmī). He would consequently be forced to leave the city.

By contrast, Shi'i preachers were in high popular demand. ¹⁰²¹

Like his more cosmopolitan colleague Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahīr, the entirely Pakistan-educated Ḥaqq Navāz Jhangvī did not turn to this Shi'i danger immediately. ¹⁰²² Rather, he traveled the well-trodden polemical route of making a name for himself in anti-Aḥmadi agitation before focusing increasingly on the Shi'is. ¹⁰²³ He was a gifted orator around whom Sunni youth flocked like “honey bees around the bee-hive or moths around the candle” because he had found the philosopher's stone (pāras) of stirring up emotions at religious gatherings: after leaving the venue of his speech, his followers reported, every participant was filled with love for the ṣaḥāba and hate for their enemies. ¹⁰²⁴ Other Sipāḥ-i Ṣaḥābah members have likened listening to him to the impression of being in the midst of battle (maydān-i kārzār) where Jhangvī was pounding the enemy with attacks like lightning (bijli ki ṭaraḥ). ¹⁰²⁵

¹⁰²¹Balākōṭi, Amīr-i ʿazīmat, 21-22.
¹⁰²²He was born in 1952 in a village about 25 miles northeast of Jhang into a family of farmers.
Jhangvī received his entire religious training locally in Kabirvālā, Multan, and (with a special focus on munāẓara) in Kōṭ Addū. After a short stint at a small madrasa in Ṭobah Ṭek Singh, he was hired to teach the Qurʾān in Jhang before taking over a permanent position in the city as the preacher of a mosque in August 1973 (ibid., 15-18).
¹⁰²³Ḥaqq Navāz was arrested for the first time on May 30, 1974 after he had delivered a very emotional speech against the Aḥmadis (ibid., 29-30).
¹⁰²⁴Ibid., 36.
¹⁰²⁵See Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Nadīm Qāsim, Ḥayāt-i Aʿẓam Ṭāriq: Sānī jarnayl-i Sipāḥ-i Ṣaḥābah (raḍī Allāh ʿanhum), ghāzi-yi Islām, muḥāfaẓ-i nāmūs-i ṣaḥābah ḥażrat Maulānā Muḥammad Aʿẓam Ṭāriq (madda ẓillahu al-ʿālī) ke mufaṣṣal hālat-i zindagi (Fayṣalābād: Ishāʿat al-Maʿaārif, 1998), 60. Especially the metaphor of the candle and the moth is a longstanding Sūfī image which usually denotes the desire of the mystic to become annihilated in God. See, for example, Farid ud-Din Attar, The Conference of the Birds (Penguin: London, 1984), 100, 141, 167. It is not surprising in this context that Ḥaqq Navāz is credited with certain miracles as well: his karāma (saintly charisma) enabled his supporters to slip through checkpoints, for example. During his funeral in Jhang pouring rain was interpreted as the reaction of a lover being robbed of his beloved (see Qāsim, Ḥayāt-i Aʿẓam Ṭāriq, 74).
Jhangvī could have surely continued on this path, calling for the drawing of boundaries between the sects by invoking South Asian stalwarts of anti-Shīʿī discourse like Shāh Wali Allāh Dihlavī or ʿAbd al-Shakūr Lakhnāvī.\textsuperscript{1026} Yet, it was the Iranian Revolution which tipped the balance. Its aftermath entirely reshaped the thrust of Jhangvī’s message and convinced him that a coordinated, organized response was needed to counter this assertive manifestation of Shīʿism.\textsuperscript{1027} A “frightening storm” (\textit{khaufnāk ṭūfān}) of anti-Sunnī literature swept the world. Authors in Pakistan and beyond could even quote passages from Khomeini’s own works which – in their eyes – implicated him in the slander of the Companions, notwithstanding all claims by Iran to work for Muslim unity. In particular, they pointed to pages in Khomeini’s \textit{Kashf al-\textit{asrār}} (The Revealing of the Secrets), his first major political work that was already published in the early 1940s. Discussing why the names of the Imāms were not mentioned in the Qur’ān, Khomeini answered that they must have been removed by power-hungry people who thus corrupted the Qur’ānic text, and also mentioned how Abū Bakr and ʿUmar had acted against the Qur’ān.\textsuperscript{1028}

These statements by Shīʿī authors in pamphlets, books, and journals were now no longer simply outrageous because they slandered figures important to early Sunnī history. Rather, these efforts had to be seen in the light of directly preparing the way for the Iranian system of

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1026}Ibid., 45-46. Justin Jones regards ʿAbd al-Shakūr’s polemics in late colonial Lucknow as a turning point because “his conversion of classical scholarship into more accessible, vernacular confutation, whether spoken or written, set the bedrock for many of the arguments that have become the staple of Shiʿa-Sunni polemics in South Asia today” (see Jones, \textit{Shiʿa Islam in Colonial India}, 70-71).\textsuperscript{1027}I do not share Tahir Kamran’s view about the importance of local concerns like the Bāb-i ʿUmar incident in 1969 since this is not reflected in the writings of leading members of the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah (see Kamran, “Contextualizing Sectarian Militancy,” 75).\textsuperscript{1028}See Brunner, \textit{Die Schia und die Koranfälschung}, 103-105. For examples of how these passages from Khomeini’s work were used in polemical texts in Pakistan, see Qāsim, Ḥayāt-i Aʿẓam Ṭāriq, 118, Ẓiyā al-Rahmān Fārūqī, \textit{Khumaynīizm aur Islām} (Fayṣalābād: Ishāʿat al-Maʿārif, 1984), 140-141, and \textit{idem}, \textit{Sitāre cānd ke Islām meṅ saḥābah-i kirām ki āʿīnī haygiyyat} (Fayṣalābād: Idārah-i Ishāʿat al-Maʿārif, 1994), 114.}
government by undermining the support for the Caliphate among the people. Žiyā al-Raḥmān Fārūqī, who later became the third leader of the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah after the assassination of Jhangvi’s successor Isrār al-Qāsimī, remembered that Ḥaqq Navāz called for an urgent meeting after coming across a work by the Shi‘ī polemicist Ghulām Ḥusayn Najafī (assassinated in 2005) which robbed him of sleep. Jhangvi situated this publication, which accused the second Caliph ʿUmar of having had sexual intercourse with the corpse of his deceased wife Umm Kulthūm, within a new wave of takfīr (declaration of unbelief) directed towards the ṣaḥāba and emerging from Iran.1029 Even the fact that Khomeini did not mention the first three Caliphs in his influential work on Islamic Government Ḥukūmat-i Islāmī was interpreted as a ploy to turn the simpleminded non-Shi‘īs into a “tool” (ālah-i kār) for his sinister goals of exporting the revolution.1030 Abū Muʻāwiya A‘ẓam Ṭāriq, a subsequent leader of the SSP who was assassinated in 2003, put it this way:

The biggest of all obstacles towards the dominance of Islam (Islām kā ghalaba) [...] are the Shi‘īs because the Caliphate is our ideal and our demand whereas for the Shi‘īs it is evil (ẓulm) and a system of tyranny, unbelief, and apostasy (jabr ō kufr aur irtidād kā niẓām). Today, even non-Muslim rulers praise the system of the khilāfat-i rāshida, but the Shi‘īs denigrate it constantly. Putting an end to these filthy Shi‘ī conspiracies (nāpāk sāzish) is, therefore, also a part of Islam’s victory. [...] The Shi‘īs have begun their efforts to change the system’s design (shakl ō hayʾat) by denying Islam’s fundamental belief in God’s oneness (tavḥīd). [...] They claim that the text of the Qurʾān is corrupt. They want the Muslims to be cut off from it and claim that the twelve Imāms are infallible (maʿṣūm) and have received revelations [...] . Similarly, after declaring the Companions of the Messenger – through whom Islam has been rendered victorious in the world - [...] unbelievers, they are busy day and night in cursing and reviling (la’nat ō malāma) them.1031


1031 Abū Mu‘āwiya Muhammad A‘ẓam Ṭāriq, “Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah kā mission kyā he?” in Khutbāt-i jarnayl al-ma‘rūf khutbāt-i jail, eds. Abū Usāmah Ḥakīm Žiyā al-Raḥmān Nāṣir Sardārpūrī (Jhang: Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah-i Pākistān, 2001), 471-472. Ṭāriq’s family migrated from the district of Ludhianah in today’s Indian Punjab. They ran into resistance in their new village near Multan for propagating an
A pressing, worrisome sign for these sectarian Sunnī ʿulamā was – as the previous chapter has demonstrated – the changing attitude of the Islamist Jamāʿat-i Islāmī which allegedly abandoned its once impeccable anti-Shīʿī heritage and embraced Khomeini as the flag bearer of the world-wide Islamic Revolution. Maudūdī’s critical disposition towards both the third Caliph ʿUthmān for his indulgence in nepotism and Muʿāwiya for having turned the Caliphate into a purely worldly kingdom sounded suspiciously close to Shiʿī views of early Islamic history. Thus inspired by the Iranian danger, Ḥaqq Navāz attempted to build a broad anti-Shīʿī coalition which originally included also Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ and Barelvī scholars. Yet, these efforts quickly faltered and he decided to go alone, founding the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah on 6 September 1985. Grounded in his concern about inroads the Shiʿīs had already made in Jhang, his organization actively incorporated Shiʿī symbols and rituals and reframed them in Islam that was deemed “Wahhābī” by the local population. Ṭāriq reports that his grandfather, father, and uncle were later addressed as maulāvī – despite the lack of any formal religious training – due to their initiative in building a mosque and a madrasa in the village. Ṭāriq was born in March 1961 and did not come into contact with Shiʿīsm as a child because there were no Muḥarram processions in his area. He studied first in local madrasas before switching in the late 1970s to Ciniōṭ where he focused on Arabic and munāzara against the Ahmadīs. His teacher Manẓūr Ahmad Ciniōṭī recognized Ṭāriq’s passion for religious polemics and provided him with special training sessions. He also took him to nearby Rabvah, the Ahmadī center in Pakistan, for a munāzara with Ahmadī scholars. In 1983 Ṭāriq spent a year at the famous Jāmiʿat al-ʿUlūm al-Islāmīyya in Banūrī Town, Karachi, to complete his training in hadith. He met Ḥaqq Navāz Jhangvi for the first time in Karachi in 1985 and joined the SSP a year later. In 1988, he was appointed General Secretary for the Sindh chapter of the organization before assuming the same position within the nationwide structure of the SSP in 1991. He became the head of the organization in 1997 and served in this function until his assassination near Islamabad in 2003 (see Qāsim, Ḥayāt-i Aʿẓam Ṭāriq, 26-76).

1032 The author quoted from an op-ed Maudūdī had written in June 1945. In this piece, Maudūdī had accused the Shiʿīs of not being required to carry out ritual obligations during the ghayba. Fārūqī interpreted this position as the Jamāʿat’s original stance (Fārūqī, Khumaynīzīm aur Islām, 14). It would be fascinating to pursue this internal Sunni debate further and to review also the various publications that lumped together Khomeini and Maudūdī like the anonymous work Dō bhāʾī. Abū ʿA-l-ʿĀlā Maudūdī aur Imām Khumaynī sansanī khīz inkishāfāt (Two Brothers: Sensational Revelations about Abū ʿA-l-ʿĀlā Maudūdī and Imām Khomeini (Karachi: ʿĀlamī-yi Majlis-i Taḥaffuẓ-i Islām, n.d.).


1034 Ḥaqq Navāz blamed the Barelvīs for leaving the Taḥaffuẓ-i Nāmūs-i Ṣaḥāba Committee (The Committee for Defending the Honor of the Companions) in the face of pressures that declared this institution to be “Wahhābī” (Balākōṭī, Amīr-i ʿazīmat, 36).
acceptable, Sunnī ways. This extended to the SSP flag which presents the Companions, drawing on a saying of the Prophet, as stars that provide guidance in a way that clearly resembles the Shīʿī Imāms. Jhangvī also adopted a preaching style modeled on the outline of Shīʿī mourning sessions which are commonly divided into a lengthy demonstration of the Imāms’ virtues (faḍāʾil) before they proceed to an emotional account of their afflictions and deaths (maṣāʾib). In an analogous fashion, Jhangvī used to allocate three quarters of a talk to extolling the high rank of the ṣaḥāba while in the remainder of his time he devoted himself to Shīʿī denigrations of these elevated personalities. More importantly, Jhangvī called for Pakistan to be imagined and restructured in a way that mirrored Iran by turning it into a “Sunnī state” which gave the striving over the country’s identity since its inception an entirely new spin. Jhangvī envisioned making slander of the Prophet’s Companions a criminal offense, called for a ban on the public aspects of non-Sunnī worship, and demanded modifications to the syllabi used in the country’s schools so that they exclusively reflected the Sunnī interpretation of Islamic history. He also promoted the idea of declaring the Shīʿīs a non-Muslim minority.

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1035 Zaman, “Sectarianism in Pakistan,” 702-703. It might also be fruitful to connect these observations to the sociological literature on institutional isomorphism. Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell, for example, have referred to the “mimetic processes” of organizations modeling themselves on other organizations (see Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, “The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields,” American Sociological Review 48,2 (1983): 151). The discussion might further benefit from post-colonial insights into conceptions of mimicry which Homi Bhabha likens to “camouflage, not a harmonization or repression of difference, but a form of resemblance that differs/defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically” (see Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” October 28 (1984): 131).

1036 For a detailed description of the various elements of a Shīʿī mourning session in Hyderabad/Deccan (India) and the transition from the faḍāʾil to the maṣāʾib, see Toby M. Howarth, The Twelver Shi'a as a Muslim Minority in India. Pulpit of tears (London: Routledge, 2005), 64-68.

1037 Fārūqī, Fārūqi shahid kā payghām, 15.

1038 For a list of his demands, see Balākōṭī, Amīr-i ʿazīmat, 56 and 69.
It was, however, Ḥaqq Navāz’s successors who elaborated more forcefully on the realization of this goal. While they might be labeled as “peripheral ‘ulamā” in Pakistani society insofar as they did not hold teaching positions in any of the major Deobandī or Barelvī seminaries,1039 their claims (and influence) did not reflect such a modest standing. Instead, they attempted to shed any local connections with Jhang and turn the movement into a pan-Pakistani and even global organization. One of the ways of reaching new audiences was the group’s journal Khilāfat-i Rāshida (The Rightly-Guided Caliphate), published since March 1990 in an attempt to “popularize the honor of the Companions and to openly announce the kufr of the Shiʿīs.”1040 These sectarian ‘ulamā increasingly used their representatives in Pakistan’s National Assembly to make their mission known and to gather support for a bill that would have punished takfīr of the ṣaḥāba with the death penalty.1041 Under the leadership of Žiyā al-Rahmān Fārūqī,1042 the SSP set out to significantly increase its chapters in Pakistan. It established special suborganizations for students, advocates, and women and expanded internationally to places with a significant South Asian diaspora like the Gulf states, the United

1039Zaman, The Ulama in Contemporary Islam, 133. Qasim Zaman has also made the important argument that some of the more established scholars, who refrain from saying that the Shiʿīs should be killed and are engaging with the sectarian issue as a solely intellectual battle, have had an important trickle-down effect with fatwās declaring the Shiʿīs to be infidels.  
1040Fārūqī, Fārūqī shahid kā payghām, 9.  
1041Ibid., 14, and Qāsim, Ḥayāt-i Aʿẓam Ṭāriq, 121-123.  
1042Fārūqī was born in 1953 into a Deobandī immigrant family and early on embarked on a scholarly path. In 1968 he studied the Gulistān with Yūsuf Ludhianvī in the Jāmīʿah-i Rāshidiyya in Sāhivāl. After some time in Multan, he spent three years at the Dār al-ʿUlūm in Kabirvālā where he encountered Ḥaqq Navāz Jhangvī who was one year his senior. Fārūqī was arrested for the first time in 1973 for an anti-Bhutto speech and also imprisoned in 1974 for organizing an anti-Aḥmadi demonstration after Friday prayers during which the slogan khatm-i nubuvvat zindahbād, mīrzāʾiyyat mūrdahbād (“Long live the Movement for the Finality of Muhammad’s Prophethood, Death to the Aḥmadi religion”) was shouted. Fārūqī had been cooperating with Ḥaqq Navāz Jhangvī since 1978 and joined the SSP in 1986 when he delivered a fiercely anti-Iranian speech at the Difāʿ-i Ṣaḥāba Conference (Defending the Companions Conference) in Jhang. Fārūqī was the head of the SSP from 1991 until his assassination in 1997 near Lahore’s Sessions Court (see Shujāʿābādī, ʿAllāmah Žiyā al-Rahmān Fārūqī shahid, 24-59).
Kingdom, and Hong Kong. \textsuperscript{1043} From being merely an enemy of Shi‘i landlords, Ḥaqq Navāz Jhangvī was turned into an ʿālim primarily concerned with the re-establishment of the Caliphate on a world-wide scale. \textsuperscript{1044} In the next section, I examine the hermeneutic moves on which these SSP leaders embarked in order to muster decisive arguments for their reconstituted caliphate and ground it in the Islamic scholarly tradition.

\textbf{Lifting the ṣaḥāba, fusing the caliphate}

The ʿulamā affiliated with the SSP claimed to belong to the first generation in Islamic history to be able to penetrate all the veils of deception intrinsic to Shi‘ism. Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahīr had still been forced to labor hard in order to establish the irrefutable argument of \textit{taqiyya} (pious dissimulation) as one reason why the Shi‘īs could never be trusted, even if they (outwardly) denied the corruption of the Qur‘ān, for example. \textsuperscript{1045} For the scholars of the SSP, there was no longer any need to prove the true character of Shi‘ism theoretically since this was playing out in the open for the whole world to see. \textsuperscript{1046} Aʿẓam Ṭāriq pointed out a worldwide rise of publications against the Iranian Revolution that echoed these views, citing Manzūr Nu‘mānī for India, Dr. Fathi Shiqāqī for Egypt, ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad Gharīb for Lebanon, Dr. Mūsā al-Mūsawī for Iraq and Ḥaqq Navāz Jhangvī in Pakistan. \textsuperscript{1047} The SSP ʿulamā could refer to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1043}Ibid., 16-17. For the voice of the first leader of the women’s chapter of the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah, see Miṣbāḥ Žiyā, \textit{Ghāzī shaykh Ḥaqq Navāz shahīd Miyānvālī jail se ākharī mulāqāt par vaṣīyyat nāmah. Ek mujāhid ki mujāhidīdānah bāṭen} (Faysalābād: Bukhārī Academy, 2001).
\item \textsuperscript{1044}Žiyā al-Raḥmān Fārūqī, \textit{Khilāfat ā ḥukūmat}, 20.
\item \textsuperscript{1045}Ẓahīr, \textit{al-Shī‘a wa-l-sunna}, 141-142.
\end{itemize}
authentic Shi'i works that were made widely available in the Subcontinent for the first time and no longer allowed the Shi'is to pass as Muslims, something they had tried to do for 1,400 years.\footnote{Fārūqī, \textit{Khumaynīizm aur Islām}, 101. Fārūqī relied here primarily on Nu'mānī's \textit{Irānī inqilāb} for this argument. The issue of wrongfully passing as a Muslim echoes similar arguments that were part of Pakistan's Supreme Court ruling in 1993 which found the Ahmadis guilty of infringing on a protected trademark: “The common deception of an unscrupulous trader passing off inferior goods as those of a reputed firm was now both transposed upon the Ahmadi and intensified, such that the Ahmadi's actions constitute a deliberate and shocking deception of the Muslim” (see Khan, \textit{Muslim Becoming}, 114-115).} The SSP devoted itself to extensively extracting and compiling quotes from these Shi'i writings with the expectation that once “these books have reached the public sphere, the trick of \textit{taqiyya} will surely become unsuccessful.”\footnote{Fārūqī, \textit{Tārīkhī dastāvez}, 14. In this book, Fārūqī made a point of excerpting the original pages from 232 Shi'i works.} Aiming beyond Pakistan, these sectarian 'ulamā argued that their organization had been the lonely global pioneer in fully comprehending the danger of the Iranian developments.\footnote{Qāsim, \textit{Ḥayāt-i Aʿẓam Ṭāriq}, 189. For the claim that the SSP managed to open the eyes of prominent Sunni 'ulamā who were originally inclined to coexistence with the Shi'is as Muslims during a meeting with then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on 28 September 1991 as well as during later sessions of the Committee for the Eradication of Sectarianism, see Fārūqī, \textit{Tārīkhī dastāvez}, 30-32.} Steps taken in the neighboring country hardly qualified as merely abstract threats: Iran in their view was systematically persecuting its Sunnī minority. Within the first year after the Revolution, 20,000 Sunnīs had been killed without any trial; they had simply been labeled as supporters of the deposed Shah.\footnote{Fārūqī, \textit{Khumaynīizm aur Islām}, 88.} Sunnīs were not allowed to organize and had no representation in the army, the judiciary, or the Iranian parliament despite constituting 40% of the Iranian population.\footnote{Qāsim, \textit{Ḥayāt-i Aʿẓam Ṭāriq}, 278-279. The percentage of Sunnis in Iran might be closer to somewhere between 5 and 10% of the population. For a fascinating study of the opposition of Iranian Sunni 'ulamā to the Iranian Revolution and the way the most remote area of Iranian Baluchistan has been turned into a springboard for Deobandi outreach to Central Asia and the Middle East, see Stéphane A. Dudoignon, “Sunnis and Shiites in Iran since 1979: Confrontations, Exchanges, Convergences,” in Maréchal and Zemni (eds), \textit{Sunni-Shia Relationships}, 141-161.} Even beyond Iran's borders the new regime was active in killing 'ulamā in Pakistan, helping Christian Armenia in its war against Azerbaijan, hatching conspiracies against Bahrain, and bent on wresting the control over Mecca...
and Medina from the Saudis.\textsuperscript{1053} Pakistan’s state institutions were all in the hands of the Shīʿīs and staffed by bureaucrats eager to please Iran.\textsuperscript{1054} A man like Khomeini, who relied on bullets to remove his opponents, simply could not qualify as a propagator of a prophetic revolution (\textit{Muhammad Muṣṭafā [...] ke inqilāb kā dāʿī}) but must be seen in the same category as Genghis Khan, Hülagü or Nimrod.\textsuperscript{1055} \textit{Taqrīb} or unity, then, were such outlandish terms that they did not even warrant the energy required to refute them as Ḥṣān Ilāhī Ẓahir had devoted himself to do.

To further demonstrate the seriousness of the slander by Shīʿī scholars and to make the case for the divinely-sanctioned nature of the caliphate, SSP scholars elevated the Companions to unprecedented heights. I would argue that their exegetical strategies in this context are quite similar to modern Jihādi authors who focus in their political reasoning on vague terms of the Islamic tradition in order to appropriate them and fill them with their very own, particular meaning. They thus capitalized, for example, on the elusive writings of classical Sunnī theoreticians of the state like ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058). These medieval thinkers chose not to spell out in detail the identity of the \textit{ahl al-ḥall wa-l-ʿaqd} (the people of loosing and binding), who theoretically could depose a caliph who was acting against God’s law, because they

\begin{quote}
wanted to have their cake and eat it. There had to be a point where even a quasi-caliph (not to mention a mere king) forfeited his position, but it was best not to specify where and how, so as not to create an obligation to take action.\textsuperscript{1056}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{1054}See, for example, Balākōṭi, \textit{Amīr-i ʿazīmat}, 82-88 and Muḥammad Aʿẓam Ṭāriq, “‘Ṭālibān’ ḥukūmat kā kirdār hamāre liye mashʿal-i rāh he,” in Sājid (ed), \textit{Jaẕabāt-i asīr-i nāmūs-i ṣaḥābah}, 144.

\textsuperscript{1055}Ibid.

The Sunnī scholarly tradition in a similar fashion displays a comparable vagueness about the precise status and definition of the ṣaḥāba. Taʿdīl as a technical term in ḥadīth criticism originally denoted that Muḥammad's Companions should be seen as collectively free from falsehood in transmitting reports from the Prophet. The concept maintained a difference between this legal probity and more far-reaching concerns about the moral authority of the ṣaḥāba. Medieval authors such as Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463/1071) – possibly in order to counter Shiʿī arguments – expanded on this notion and granted a special status to this group. In attempting to construct a consensus, they awkwardly papered over “abundant evidence that the Prophet himself recognized some hierarchy among the Ṣaḥāba.” Consequently, there are important voices who either argued that Companions could lose their status due to errors, that only Companions very close to the Prophet could be considered just, or that they had to be weighed according to their involvement in the First Civil War (fitna). Referring to legal

1057 On the Shiʿī side, the doctrine of takfīr al-ṣaḥāba, accusing the Companions of collective unbelief due to their failure to recognize ʿAlī’s Imāmate, is associated with Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 183/799). Only a few “good Companions” who had remained loyal to ʿAli were exempted by Shiʿī authors (see Etan Kohlberg, “Some Imāmī Shiʿī Views on the Ṣaḥāba,” Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam 5 (1984): 148-150). This is not to say that Shiʿī authors did not also at times discuss more nuanced and complex conceptions of the ṣaḥāba (see idem, “The Attitude of Imāmī Shiʿīs to the Companions of the Prophet,” DPhil, Oxford University, 1971, 123-124).


1060 See Fuad Jabali, The Companions of the Prophet: A study of geographical distribution and political alignments (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 2. Amr Osman, on the other hand, has argued that Ibn al-Ṣalāh (d. 643/1245) provided a thorough discussion “that would settle all disagreements on the subject once and for all.” According to Ibn al-Ṣalāh, all Companions shared a common characteristic: “their integrity and reliability were not matters of question or scrutiny, for they were secured in the Qurān, the Sunna, and the consensus of ‘those whose consensus matters.’ Because it was the guarantee that religion was properly transmitted, he [Ibn al-Ṣalāh, SWF] argues, God must have made possible this consensus on the necessity of accrediting (taʿdīl) all the Companions, including those who took part in the schisms” (see Osman, “ʿAdālat al-Ṣaḥāba,” 290-290).
debates over the proper punishment for insulting the Companions, Lutz Wiederhold commented that because those found their way into legal manuals comparatively late, this “left a wider field for personal interpretations to the legists dealing with these issues.” Authors affiliated with the salafiyya, on the other hand, emphasized the pre-eminence of all Companions and specifically included Muʿāwiya whom the Prophet had recognized as one of his most trusted confidants.

In the case of the SSP, the group’s ʿulamā utilized the imprecise concept of the ṣaḥāba and presented their highly syncretistic views as being perfectly in line with the Sunnī mainstream, claiming that they only synthesized existing material and provided a fresh, compelling perspective suitable for the requirements of the present age (ʿaṣri ẓarūratōṉ ke muṭābiq). Žiyā al-Raḥmān Fāruqī, for example, numbered the ṣaḥāba as 144,000, going beyond even the most extensive claims by Mamlūk historians, in order to demonstrate the extent of the Prophet’s success in teaching Islam. He insisted – to the utter amazement of

1063 Fāruqī, Ṣaḥābah-i kirām, 64.
1064 While Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) counted more than 100,000 Companions at the time of the Prophet's death, the traditionist Abu Zurʿa al-Rāzī (d. 264/878) had claimed much earlier that there were 114,000 of them. Yet, the most comprehensive attempt to collect their biographies (al-Iṣāba by Ibn Ḥajar) only lists 11,000 (see Jabali, The Companions of the Prophet, 2). Even in this context Nancy Khalek has stressed Ibn Ḥajar’s “sheer exhaustiveness.” The Mamlūk scholar “included biographical entries for people who claimed to have subha but may not have actually been Companions, as well as children who were too young to be considered Companions but may be considered tābīʿīs” (see Khalek, “Medieval Biographical Literature,” 290). Especially early Muslim jurists adopted at times rather strict definitions in the vein that only someone who had been with the Prophet for a substantial amount of time qualified as a Companion. Yet, restricting the number of the Companions in such a way was seen as a problem by the collectors of ḥadīth because many transmitters “would be excluded and the status of their ḥadīth consequently downgraded from al-musnad to al-mursal. And since the majority of the traditionists classified the mursal hadith as weak, this meant that they could not be used as an authoritative source (ḥujja) of law” (see Jabali, The Companions of the Prophet, 47-50).
even his learned audiences, as he reports— that the ṣaḥāba were an essential part of the Qurʾān:
more than 700 verses directly referred to them whereas there were only 27 āyas about Jesus,
19 about Moses, and 9 about Abraham. When Fārūqī discussed these views during a visit to
Bangladesh, the

‘ulamā who were seated [next to me] on the stage all got up and said: “We have never before
taught the Qurʾān in such a way that in it God would declare the community of the ṣaḥāba to be
accomplished (kāmyāb) in their position as a group.’ They expressed their confusion about this
issue.”1065

Even though the Qurʾān may be silent in listing veneration of the Companions as one of the
fundamentals of religion (uṣūl-i dīn) in the vein of the profession of faith (kalimah-i ṭayyiba),
prayer, fasting, the ḥajj, and the alms tax, every time the profession of faith was affirmed, the
“greatness” of the ṣaḥāba was simultaneously (and mysteriously) acknowledged (ṣaḥābah-i
kirām ki ‘aẓamat kā iqrār pūshidah he).1066 Fārūqī compared this process to a marriage contract
in which the husband only commits himself to providing for his wife’s livelihood while it is
implied that he will also cover any additional needs (bīvī kī jumlah ẓarūrīyāt) she may have. In
the same vein, it was also obligatory for every Muslim to submit to the group through which
tauḥīd and the kalimah-i ṭayyiba were transmitted.1067

Fārūqī did not stop, however, with (not uncontroversially) applying certain Qurʾānic
passages like “you are the best community” (Q3:110) in a matter-of-fact tone to the
Companions.1068 He also made the case that God himself felt obliged to defend the honor of the

1065Ziyā al-Raḥmān Fārūqī, “Rufaqā’i payghambar,” in Qārī Shabbīr Ḥaydar Fārūqī Jalālpūrī (ed),
1066Fārūqī, Sahābah-i kirām, 42-43.
1067Ibid., 43.
1068Ibid., 44. The two influential commentators al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) and Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373),
for example, both stated as their preference that this verse refers not to the Companions but to the
Prophet’s umma as a whole (as reflected in the Arabic: kuntum khayra ummatin) (Jabali, The
Companions, 72). See also Osman, “‘Adālat al-Ṣaḥāba,” 284, fn 53.
ṣaḥāba. One striking example in this context is Fārūqi’s rereading of the story of Ibn Umm Maktūm, which the Muslim exegetical tradition unanimously identified as the subject of the first verses of sūra 80. In the Qurʾānic passage God reprimands the Prophet for brushing off this blind Companion after the latter had interrupted a meeting between Muḥammad and a group of visiting chiefs from his tribe Quraysh whom he hoped to win over to Islam. According to many commentators on the Qurʾān, the Prophet thus adopted erroneous worldly criteria to allocate status and importance in violation of God’s diverging ranking of belief and unbelief. Yet, Fārūqi saw the real reason for God’s intervention via a Qurʾānic revelation in the fact that Muḥammad had shown disrespect to one of his Companions:

God could not bear the sight of a blind Companion being removed from the Prophet’s gathering – and today Khomeini says that they all are kuffār (he shall be cursed countless times) (khudā tō nā bine (sic) saḥābī kō nabi ki maḥfil se uṭhā hūʾā nahiṇ dekh saktā... aur āj Khumaynī kah keh ye sāre kāfīr the … (laʿnat be shumār). A similar divine reaction was caused by the father of the first Caliph Abū Bakr: the former had criticized his son for spending his wealth on purchasing and setting free slaves who had converted to Islam. God also acted in order to absolve the Prophet’s wife ʿĀʾisha from rumors about adultery in the famous necklace episode. By contrast, God did not come to the aid of Joseph or Mary when they were in similarly precarious situations of being falsely accused.

Fārūqi concluded that if God was not willing to stay silent when the honor of the Companions

1069 For an in-depth discussion of al-Qurṭūbī’s (d. 671/1272) treatment of the passage, see Jack Tannous, “Frowning in Cordoba (and copying, too)”, unpublished paper. For a similar approach within the Deobandi tradition, see ‘Ashraf ‘Alī Thānavī, Tafsīr bayān al-Qurʾān (Lahore: Maktabat al-Ḥasan, 1978), vol 12, 76-78.
1070 Fārūqi, “Rufaqāʾ-i payghambar,” 358-359.
1071 Ibid., 367-372. When the Medinese caravan returned from a raid on the Banū al-Muṣṭaliq and stopped in the desert, ʿĀʾisha used this opportunity to answer a call of nature and lost her necklace. Because of her frantic search for the precious item she returned late to the camp and found that the whole troop, including the camel with her litter on top, had already departed. A latecomer spotted her by chance and brought her to Medina where immediately rumors began to spread about inappropriate conduct between the warrior and the Prophet’s wife (see Ibn Ishāq, The Life of Muḥammad, trans. A. Guillaume (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), 493-499).
was at stake, Sunnī Muslims today had no right to do so, either. If he, Fārūqī, would refrain from speaking out, this would mean going against God’s own customs (khudā ki sunnat par cal rahā hūṉ):

“it is your obligation to pull out the tongue that will talk foolishly (lit. bark) about Abū Bakr, and to break the pen which will write such things about him” (tō jō zabān šiddiq kō bhaunkegi un kō khincnā tumhārā farż he, jō qalam likhegā use tōṛnā tumhārā farż he).

Building on the existing Pakistani blasphemy laws which already made any defilement of “the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Mohammed” a crime punishable with death or imprisonment for life, Żiyā al-Raḥmān Fārūqī and Aʿẓam Ṭāriq pressed ahead with demanding the death sentence for any insult to the Companions. In order to back up their positions with quotations from the Islamic tradition, these proponents of the SSP utilized vague statements by prominent Sunnī ʿulamā that emphasized the necessity of punishment of a denigration of the ṣaḥāba. Yet, these proof-texts seldom spelled out the context of the insult, what was said, and with which particular motivation. Neither do these snippets reveal the definition of the ṣaḥāba that their authors were operating with, which, in turn, rendered it relatively easy for SSP members to quote these texts while filling them with their own meaning. Fārūqī relied on Ibn Taymiyya’s (d. 728/1328) first major (and polemical) work al-Šārim al-maṣlūl ʿalā shātim al-rasūl (The Unsheathed Sword against the Vilifier of the

1073Ibid., 359.
1074Ibid., 363.
1075The Blasphemy laws date back to the colonial period and were meant to protect the religious sensibilities of adherents of the various faiths of British India. Under Zia ul-Haq this set of laws was significantly revised and came to be primarily concerned with insults against Islam, targeting the Ahmadies in separate clauses. For a detailed discussion of these laws and the view that they should be seen as part of a larger pattern of “subjugation of legislation to political expediency,” see Osama Siddique and Zahra Hayat, “Unholy Speech and Holy Laws in Pakistan – Controversial Origins, Design Defects, and Free Speech Implications,” Minnesota Journal of International Law 17,2 (2008): 303-385.
for a clear cut-purpose: to demonstrate how the Umayyad Caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 101/720) ordered the severe flogging of a man who claimed that his hatred for ʿUthmān had led him to insult the third Caliph.\textsuperscript{1078} The leader of the SSP was not interested, however, in discussing Ibn Taymiyya's far more nuanced viewpoints about the șaḥāba which led him inter alia to clearly differentiate in merit even among the Rāshidūn.\textsuperscript{1079} Similarly, Fārūqī quoted Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767), the eponym of the Ḥanafī school of law, as stating that “someone who denies the Caliphate of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq is a kāfir.” Mālik b. Anas's (d. 179/796) position was given as “anyone who declares the Companions to be unbelievers or misguided” has to be killed, whereas Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) envisioned a “severe punishment” for any suggestion of vice, shame or defect related to the Companions.\textsuperscript{1080}

Pursuing this strategy, a seemingly solid consensus was thus created by the SSP whereas in reality they reduced the complexity of the Islamic tradition and pushed it into an entirely new direction in the context of the nation state.\textsuperscript{1081}

Proceeding with elevating the status of the Companions within the field of practical politics, Fārūqī emphasized that the mere actions of Muḥammad had not been sufficient to set

\textsuperscript{1077}For the background of this work, see Henri Laoust, “La Biographie d'Ibn Taimiya d'après Ibn Kathir,” Bulletin d'Études Orientales, 9 (1942-1943): 118.

\textsuperscript{1078}Fārūqī, Șaḥābah-i kirām, 112. The quotation can be found in Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya, al-Șārim al-maslūl ʿalā shātim al-rasūl (Ṭanṭā: Maktabat Tāj, 1960), 569.

\textsuperscript{1079}See Henri Laoust, Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Takiı̄-d-Diı̄n Ahmad b. Taimiı̄ya (Cairo: Impr. de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1939), 204-225.

\textsuperscript{1080}Fārūqī, Șaḥābah-i kirām, 112-113.

\textsuperscript{1081}Ibn Taymiyya, for example, mentions shortly after the tradition which Fārūqī extracted from him a report quoted by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal on the authority of the famous transmitter ʿĀṣim al-Aḥwal (d. ca. 142/759). Here a rather measured punishment is proposed. Al-Aḥwal reported that he took it upon himself to lash a man ten times for insulting ʿUthmān. When the offender repeated his action, he lashed him again ten times up to a maximum of 70 lashes. For Abū Ḥanifa, on the other hand, even insulting the Prophet meant in a first step not more than that the offender had willingly excluded himself from the umma. Repentance and a return to Islam was called for – only if this was not forthcoming he would advocate killing the person in question (see Tor Andræ, Die Person Muhammeds in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt, 1917), 264).
the Muslim community on its glorious early path. While the goal of a world-wide caliphate had
to be the application of the Prophet’s *shari‘a*, today’s Muslims were obliged to look beyond an
Islam that was only shaped by Qur‘ān and *ḥadīth*. Rather, if their call for an Islamic state was
not inspired by a deep understanding of the successful system of government put in place by
the Rightly Guided Caliphs, it would prove impossible to implement Islam in a practical
way.\(^\text{1082}\) Even Saudi Arabia fell short of this goal and could only claim to be the single country
worldwide that faithfully applied the *ḥudūd* – but little else.\(^\text{1083}\) What the *rāshidūn* clearly
realized was that in their office they had a “special resemblance and connection” (*khāṣṣ
mushābahat aur munāsabat*) with the Prophet.\(^\text{1084}\) Drawing on Shāh Walī Allāh’s *Izālat al-khafā’t
‘an khilāfat al-khulafā’* (Removing the Secrecy regarding the Caliphate of the Caliphs), Fāruqi
identified an exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and an esoteric (*bāṭin*) aspect of the Caliphate. The first denoted
rulership and the authority to give orders (*riyāsat aur farmānravā’t*). The second qualified the
office of the caliph as a “divine institution” (*irādah-i ilāhiyya*) which was on par with
prophethood (*nubuwwa*) in its aim of providing “reform and welfare for the world” (*‘ālam kī
iṣlāḥ ō falāḥ*).\(^\text{1085}\) In making this far-reaching claim, however, Fāruqi deliberately misconstrued
Shāh Walī Allāh’s approach. The latter had considered the realization of the *bāṭin* and *ẓāhir*
aspects of the Caliphate as the distinct prerogative of the immediate successors to the Prophet
for which he coined the term *al-khilāfa al-khāṣṣa* (Extraordinary Caliphate). Only the four
*rāshidūn* (and hence not Mu‘āwiya whom Fāruqi strove to include in his definition of the
*ṣaḥāba*)\(^\text{1086}\) fulfilled the necessary and related criteria that the Prophet had promised them

\(^{1083}\) Ibid., 32.
\(^{1084}\) Ibid., 46.
\(^{1085}\) Ibid. Fāruqi only gives the title of Shāh Walī Allāh’s book as *Izālat al-khulafā’t*.
\(^{1086}\) Shāh Walī Allāh recognized Mu‘āwiya as a rightful ruler within the conceptual framework of
*khilāfat-i ʿāmma* which – while enforcing religion – lacks the tight connection with the Prophet that
protects it from the temptations of property (*māl*) and following reprehensible inclinations (*hawā*)
paradise, singled them out for their trustworthiness and piety, and charged them in his lifetime with some of his duties. The era of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs thus constituted a “remnant” (baqiyya) of the prophetic era with the only difference being that the Prophet no longer uttered explicit verbal statements (taṣrīḥan ba-zabān mi-farmūd) but rather provided guidance to the first four Caliphs in dreams. This model of political rule, Shāh Wali Allāh held, ended with ʿAlī who “deflected the fire of prophethood, of which the flames shot up, in the opposite direction so that its flames vanished into buṭūn (levels of esoteric meanings).” Shāh Wali Allāh has elsewhere pointed out that the esoteric aspects of the caliphate in the post-rāshidūn period are carried out by those

who are concerned with the teaching of the prescriptions of Islamic Law (al-sharāʾiʿ), the Qurʾān, and the traditions relating to the Prophet (sunan), and with commanding right and forbidding wrong; [and] those who through their words obtain a victory for religion, either through disputation like the dialectical theologians (al-mutakallimūn), or through sermons like the preachers of Islam, or through their close companionship (bi-ṣuḥbatihim) like the Šūfī shaykhs and those who establish obligatory prayer or the ḥajj, or who guide the people on the path of the acquisition of doing good (iḥsān), and those who desire devotion to God and asceticism (zuhd).

In once again fusing the two aspects that the Islamic tradition in the Subcontinent had historically separated, Fārūqī was trying to elevate the importance and significance of the office of the caliph. In advancing such a claim, however, he drew quite close to Khomeini’s own

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1087 For a discussion of additional criteria, see Muhammad al-Ghazali, The Socio-Political Thought of Shāh Wali Allāh (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2001), 93-96.
1089 Quoted ibid., 124. While Shāh Wali Allāh still counted ʿAlī as a proper khalīfah-i khāṣṣ, as close to the Prophet as Abū Bakr, he found him lacking in his ability to establish authority throughout the Islamic empire (ibid., 123-124). For a view that ʿAlī is not included in the category of the Extraordinary Caliphate, see Abdur Rashid Bhat, “Shah Wali Allah's Political Theory in General,” in Shah Waliullah 1703-1762. His Religious and Political Thought, ed. M. Ikram Chaghatai (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2005), 251-254.

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conception of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, thus providing another instance of local-transnational dialectics in Sunni-Shi‘ī sectarianism in Pakistan.

**The Shi‘ī reaction**

Faced with these changing sectarian discourses, Shi‘ī authors in the 1980s and 1990s were not inclined to ignore the increasing political connotations of polemics between the two sects. As I have already pointed out in the preceding discussion on Sayyid Ṭāhir Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī, responding to the challenges posed by the SSP could take many forms. This last section of the current chapter briefly looks at two distinct strategies that were advanced by Shi‘ī authors in the 1980s and 1990s. On the one hand, we find the continued call for a proper Islamic revolution which was supposed to do away with the corrupt and rotten structures of the Pakistani state that had given rise to sectarianism in the first place. This approach stands in contrast to a second, prevalent tendency, namely attempts to influence public opinion against the SSP. Shi‘ī authors set out to rally the Pakistani public behind the idea that sectarianism was not so much directed against their particular community but against the continuous existence of their God-given polity itself. What unites these two diverging approaches, however, is that by placing contending visions of the political center stage, those Shi‘ī ʿulamā and activists who reacted to the sectarian discourses of the SSP found themselves deeply engaged in their own striving relationship with the idea of Pakistan.

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1091 As mentioned earlier, Shi‘ī groups and actors should not only be seen as victims in the 1990s since they also perpetrated acts of at times indiscriminate violence. This last part of the chapter is more interested in looking at the Shi‘ī reaction in terms of responding to efforts by the SSP to label the Shi‘īs as being beyond the pale of Islam.
Such efforts to recover the original promise of the country manifested themselves in the journal of the Imamia Students Organisation (ISO) which even after the death of al-Ḥusaynī openly spoke about the necessity of revolutionary change. In an article entitled “Pakistan's most important question and its solution,” Taslīm Riżā Khān, the editor of the organization's journal al-ʿĀrif, dwelt on his country's global mission:

Pakistan came into existence so that Muslims can be free in a particular region and can, drawing on this independence (khūd mukhtāri se), implement an Islamic system. [Pakistan was supposed to enable Muslims] to build a model society (miṣāli muʿāsharah) in economic, political, societal, educational, and cultural terms so that the whole world in witnessing these blessings would embrace Islam and breathe with tranquility (pūrī dunyā Islām kī āghūsh meñ ā kar sukūn kā sāns le).¹⁰⁹²

By contrast, the contribution continued, Pakistan's reality was dominated by corruption, foreign supremacy, imperialism, injustice, and an exploitation of Islam (Islām kā istīḥsāl) for other goals. The country's social system, erected on British political models and infused with western capitalism, was beyond repair.¹⁰⁹³ The dividing wall (divār) between the people and the rulers – regardless of whether they were military dictators or elected presidents – was due to inherent flaws in the system's structure which logically necessitated such an outcome (yeh masāʾil is niẓām kā manṭiqī natījah heñ).¹⁰⁹⁴ Khān added that a new, alternative order could not be constructed in collaboration with the existing religious parties in Pakistan because they split the people along religious lines, thus perverting Islam's unifying power. Only an Islamic revolution could repair these fissures. It would bring people to power whose mindset was above and beyond sectarianism (firqah varānah sōc se buland ō bālā).¹⁰⁹⁵ In order to smooth the way for this post-sectarian utopia of Pakistan, the ISO – like Shīʿī publications as a whole – was

¹⁰⁹² The name of the journal was changed in the aftermath of Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī's death from its previous title Rāh-i ʿAmal (see Taslīm Riżā Khān, “Pākistān kā aham masʾalah aur us ki āhāl,” 2,2 (1991): 41).

¹⁰⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Ibid., 42.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ibid.
at pains to play up the hidden hands of outside actors as the true culprits behind rising instances of sectarianism. The blame for violence and division was squarely placed on the shoulders of the United States, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.\textsuperscript{1096} This was the case, for example, when on 2 May 1986 a bomb blast killed the ISO's Joint Central Secretary Rājah Iqbāl and a former divisional leader in their student dorm at the Lahore Engineering University. \textit{Rāh-i ʿAmal} promptly identified the attack as the work of Iraqi operatives who had acted on the behest of the United States to derail efforts to spread the Iranian Revolution.\textsuperscript{1097}

Despite the ISO's grand visions for Pakistan's Islamic transformation, members of the group displayed a keen awareness of the lack of unity even within their own Shiʿī camp. An article published on the first anniversary of Sayyid ʿĀrif Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī's death implicated Pakistan's Shiʿīs in his murder. In the same way as the Kufans had encouraged al-Ḥusayn to rise against Yazīd only to abandon his cause in the hour of need, so today's Shiʿīs were guilty of entrusting al-Ḥusaynī with leadership without also taking a principled stance with him.\textsuperscript{1098} Instead, his coreligionists had entrapped him in useless debates about Shiʿī markers of identity, questioning him about his understanding of the phrase \textit{Yā ʿAlī madad} or whether he was

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1097] “Sāniḥah-i ʿaẓīm,” \textit{Rāh-i ʿAmal} 46 (1986), 3. This event itself was interpreted by the ISO as propelling them from mere theoretical considerations of the consequences of martyrdom to a deeper, practical understanding of Khomeini's teachings (see ʿAli Riżā Naqvī, “Payghām-i yaum-i taʿṣis,” \textit{ibid.}, 11).
\item[1098] This is a contentious argument to make, especially since it has been used by Sunni scholars to argue that the Shiʿīs themselves bear the actual responsibility for their third Imām's death. For one manifestation of such a line of reasoning, see Žiyā al-Raḥmān Fārūqī, “Ahl-i bayt kōn ḥeṇ?” in Jalālpūrī (ed), \textit{Javāhirāt-i Fārūqī Shahīd}, vol 1, 268.
\end{footnotes}
opposed to ‘azādārī.\textsuperscript{1099} After al-Ḥusaynī’s death, the same people restricted themselves to praising him without applying any of the revolutionary lessons he taught.

Say, how will Islam benefit from this? If a student would [only] stand outside of his college and every day shout the slogan “My curriculum is great, my teachers are capable” - how will he pass the exams? Can we only become the army of the Imām (imām ke sipāhī) through the Imām of the Age (imām-i zamānah) or by grieving for [the tragic events of] Karbala? I wish that we would realize how [through our own actions] gradually obstacles are set up which we should instead tear down and shatter. The first obstacle is that we [are content to] sit in waiting for the mahdī until he comes and himself removes all these hindrances.\textsuperscript{1100}

Most Pakistani Shi‘ī voices in the 1980s and 1990s did not share this maximalist response to sectarianism. Instead of calling for an outright overthrow of the existing structures, they chose to petition the state and to re-claim Pakistan as the inalienable fruit of joint Sunni-Shi‘ī efforts. Tensions between the two communities were framed as a law and order problem and an impediment preventing Pakistan from realizing her true potential. Such a view is predominant in the massive, 1220-page compendium \textit{Tahqiqī Dastāvez} (The Authentic Document), published under a pseudonym in 1997 by a group of Shi‘ī ‘ulamā in response to Fārūqī’s \textit{Tārīkhī Dastāvez}.\textsuperscript{1101} Rebutting his claims, the authors turned the tables on Fārūqī by drawing on the Sunni ḥadīth tradition. The book notices, for instance, that verbal slander among the Companions had occurred frequently in early Islamic history without resulting in

\textsuperscript{1099}See the second chapter for more background on debates over these expressions of Shi‘ī identity.

\textsuperscript{1100}Muqaddas Kāẓimī, “Shahīd qāʾid ke qāţil kōn?,” \textit{Rāh-i ʿAmal} 63 (1989): 3. Interestingly, earlier issues of \textit{Rāh-i ʿAmal} report a decision by the group’s Executive Committee in April 1987 to dissolve the ISO’s Advisory Board which had consisted of ‘ulamā and community leaders. Instead, the ISO decided to submit directly to the leadership of Sayyid ʿArif Husayn al-Ḥusaynī. In this context, the Executive Committee stated that from now on “nothing should be published by the ISO which contravenes Islamic ideologies (islāmī naẓariyyāt), the statutes of the tanẓīm, the fundamental principles (bunyādī uṣūlōṉ) and the institution of Guardianship of the Jurisprudent (idārah-i vilāyat-i faqīh)” (see “Report-i ijlās-i majlis-i ʿāmilah,” \textit{Rāh-i ʿAmal} 53 (1987): 14). This curious statement begs of course the question how unified the ISO actually was with regard to vilāyat-i faqīh.

\textsuperscript{1101}Abū Muṣʿab Javādī, \textit{Vaziı̄r-i Aʿzḥam, vuzaraı̄-yi aʿlā, Qaumiı̄ Assembly, Senate, şuı̄bhaı̄ʾiı̄ Assemblyōnn̲ ke arākiı̄n, ʿadliyah, intizḥaı̄miyyah kō pish kiı̄ jaı̄ne vaı̄liı̄ tahḥqiı̄qiı̄ dastaı̄vez} (Rawalpindi: Markaz-i Muṭaālaʿaāt-i Islāmiā-yi Paākistaān, 1997). Sajjad Rivzi has suggested that the work was produced by a collective which resorted to a pseudonym in order to protect the individual authors (Private Communication, 21 April 2014).
either an intervention by the Prophet or a punishment of those involved. Building on these examples, the authors affirmed the universal Muslim consensus that insulting the Prophet should result in the death penalty, which – as they claimed – did not apply for slandering the Companions. While the anonymous Shi'i writers could adduce supporting evidence for their view from early and medieval authorities and quote modern South Asian Ḥanafī scholars, their exegesis strikes the reader nevertheless as just as one-sided and uncomplex as the treatment of the matter by the SSP.\textsuperscript{1102} In particular, they did not pay attention to attempts by Sunnī authors to synthesize views on the subject, as attempted, for example, by the Shāfī'i jurist Tāqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 755/1355). Subkī held that merely insulting a Companion in a worldly matter (\textit{amr dunyāwī}) would not put the offender beyond the pale whereas \textit{sabb al-ṣaḥāba} that included \textit{takfīr} “may be punished by the death penalty unless the blasphemer repents.” Subkī made it clear, however, that for him the \textit{rāfidis} in their enmity towards Abū Bakr and ʿUmar clearly belonged to the second category.\textsuperscript{1103} The problem of reading certain views into the material also comes up in in a quotation from Ibn Taymiyya's \textit{Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya} (The Method of the Prophetic Precedent) where the Damascene scholar dismissed the “My Companions are like stars” \textit{ḥadīth}, favored by the SSP, as weak.\textsuperscript{1104} Yet, the Shi'i polemicists conveniently overlooked the context of Ibn Taymiyya's evaluation: his Shi'i adversary al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) had used the stars-\textit{ḥadīth}, which addressed all Companions as equal sources of guidance, to argue from Sunnī sources against the preeminence of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. Ibn Taymiyya, consequently, was keen to extol the status of the first two Caliphs – a motivation he

\textsuperscript{1102}Javādī, \textit{Tahqīqi dastāvez}, 86-92.
\textsuperscript{1103}See Wiederhold, “Blasphemy against the Prophet Muḥammad,” 63.
\textsuperscript{1104}Javādī, \textit{Tahqīqi dastāvez}, 116-117. Early Shi'i authors such as ʿAli b. Ahmad al-Kūfī (d. 352/963) and al-Sharīf al-Murtadā (d. 436/1044) dismissed the \textit{ḥadīth} as spurious because it would not make sense for the Prophet (who addressed his Companions when he supposedly uttered it) to urge the Companions to adopt their own conduct as an example of guidance. Additionally, the \textit{ḥadīth} could not apply to a group that was known to have sinners who disobeyed the Prophet and ʿAli in its midst (see Kohlberg, “Some Imāmī Shi'i views on the Ṣaḥāba,” 158).
hardly shared with the Pakistani Shi'i 'ulamā who seized the quote without any regard for its context.¹¹⁰⁵

The main punchline of the Taḥqīqi Dastāvez, however, is the argument that sectarianism was responsible for making Pakistan forfeit its great potential to become “the example of an outstanding Islamic state.”¹¹⁰⁶ The Sunnī entity advocated by the SSP was unable to realize this calling and doomed to fail due to the unbridgeable internal tensions among Deobandīs, Barelvis, Ahl-i Ḥadiṣ, and others.¹¹⁰⁷ Even more so, the SSP only posed as a religious group while it should in fact be seen as a security problem that only warranted the government's fist, not the negotiation table. The SSP was no more than a tiny and criminal splinter group within a larger Deobandī context that had always been opposed to the creation of Pakistan.¹¹⁰⁸ This argument, which contrasted Shi'i sacrifices and leadership for the nation's creation with Deobandī hostility to the Muslim homeland, is echoed in many other writings of the time.¹¹⁰⁹

Yet, the authors of the Taḥqīqi Dastāvez argued that not all hope was lost for Pakistan. The country's initial promise of constituting the true “reflection of Qur'ānic teachings” and acting as the “interpreter of the Prophet's sunna” (qur'ānī ta'limāt kā ā'īnah dār aur sunnat-i nabavi kā tarjumān) could still be grasped.¹¹¹⁰ In order to do so, it was necessary to reach back

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¹¹⁰⁶ Javādī, Taḥqīqi dastāvez, 3.
¹¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 111.
¹¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 142. For a more detailed discussion about the colonial debates over Pakistan, see also chapter 1 of this dissertation.
¹¹¹⁰ Javādī, Taḥqīqi dastāvez, 41.
to the inclusive ʿulamā convention of January 1951 to which the Deobandī ʿālim Iḥtishām al-Ḥaqq Thānavī had invited representatives from all Islamic sects. During their meeting in Karachi, the 33 assembled religious scholars had agreed on twenty-two principles of an Islamic state. For the Shiʿīs, clause nine was particularly important since it enshrined the right for each “established Islamic sect” to be bound by its particular interpretation of Islamic law. The Taḥqiqi Dastāvez also quoted at length Iḥtishām al-Ḥaqq’s remarks in the newspaper Musāvāt:

The terms “minority” or “majority” are purely political terms which are given weight in the collaboration over political rights or in order to decide political questions. If one uses, however, the criteria of minority or majority in the context of the religious rights of Islamic sects, this would mean giving rise to the gravest danger of internal dissent (fīna).

According to Iḥtishām al-Ḥaqq, every Islamic sect was only bound by its own interpretation of the Qurʾān and the sunna according to its most respected and reliable books. Referring to the ʿulamā convention, he expressed the shared agreement that

those people who widen the gulf of sectarianism in an unscholarly and unconstructive manner (ghayr ʿilmī aur ghayr taʿmīrī andāz meñ) […] do not only play with the fate of Pakistan but convey to other nations an image of Islam which shows that in the present age the experience of an Islamic system has failed.

In order to drive home this point about the necessity of closing ranks even further, the Shiʿī authors employed an extensive and highly political definition of tauḥīd. According to them, the “unicity of the Islamic nation” (tauḥīd-i millat-i islāmiyyah) should be considered the “most fundamental basis” (aṣl al-uṣūl) of all Islamic teachings. In the same way Muslims were prohibited from associating any partner with God, they should also not endanger the unity of the Muslims. Only by drawing on this “fountainhead of faith-power” (īmānī ṭāqat kā sarcashmah) could the Muslim community confront the world of unbelief and tyranny.

1111Binder, Religion and Politics in Pakistan, 213-216.
1112Javādī, Taḥqiqi dastāvez, 111. Needless to say, this formulation deliberately excluded the Aḥmadīs.
1113Javādī, Taḥqiqi dastāvez, 40.
Reaching back to Shi‘ī voices of the 1980s and 1990s, then, this chapter and previous discussions of Pakistan's first decades and the colonial period have pointed to the historical depth of such discourses directed against sectarianism. This depth, I would contend, is important in order to make sense of Shi‘ī attitudes to sectarianism today. Covering such debates in contemporary Pakistan, Mashal Saif has observed that the particular “theo-political projects” advanced by her Shi‘ī interlocutors during fieldwork in 2010 and 2011 ranged from the demand for a secular state to a “sectarianly-unaligned Islamic state” and – referring to Javād Naqvī – the implementation of vilāyat-i faqīh. According to Saif, these diverging visions of the state are “all propelled by the same force – the spectre of violence.”

Yet – and crucially for my argument – she also states that the ʿulamā she interviewed all utilized specific aspects of Pakistani history to argue for their preferred polity. They either emphasized that Muhammad Ali Jinnah had envisioned a Muslim, not an Islamic state, stressed that Pakistan's raison d'être was to be precisely such an Islamic entity, or claimed that Muhammad Iqbal's conception of wilāya perfectly aligned with Khomeini's ideas. These (diverging) positions are all bound up with repeated references to Pakistan's promise and potential as the “best of places” – an issue that is noted but not commented upon by Saif. Bringing the notion of “striving” into play and situating these arguments within long-standing efforts by Shi‘ī ʿulamā and activists to reclaim their country, I argue, illuminates why even today Shi‘īs “narrativise Pakistani history in a manner that legitimises and animates their particular theo-political projects.”

1115 Ibid., 74, 80, 86.
1116 Ibid., 74, 77, 87.
1117 Ibid., 68.
1118 Devji, Muslim Zion, 137-138.
Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the Iranian Revolution constituted a crucial watershed for sectarian discourses in Pakistan. It brought to the fore new actors who superseded Iḥsān Ilāhī Zahir’s influential, ‘aqīda-focused polemics. Deobandi scholars relied on many of the arguments popularized by their Ahl-i Ḥadīṣ coreligionists but framed the intellectual and physical struggle against the Shiʿīs as contestations about the future character and ownership of the Pakistani state. By contrast, often-repeated arguments about the importance of local economic grievances or clear-cut Saudi Arabian (or Wahhābī) agendas are not reflected in the literature produced by ʿulamā affiliated with the SSP. Drawing on Naveeda Khan’s important observation on Pakistan as a country suspended in a “striving” relationship with Islam, I contend that for the SSP the possible export of the Iranian model constituted a particular moment of threatening closure to this open-ended process of envisioning their country. In formulating their answer to Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution, they attempted to exclude the Shiʿīs from the Muslim community and thus from partaking in the collective deliberations about Pakistan by drawing on the vague and flexible concept of the saḥāba. They were inspired to reimagine the importance of the Companions as political actors, endowing them with an unprecedented status. Additionally, by creatively reinterpreting the South Asian scholarly tradition they attempted to reclaim the caliphate as a divinely-sanctioned office that resembled and transcended Khomeini’s conceptions of vilāyat-i faqīh. Shiʿī ʿulamā and activists countered these attacks by advancing alternative forms of envisioning Pakistan as a political utopia within reach. Some of them made the case for redoubled efforts to bring about an Islamic Revolution that would do away with all foreign-fabricated dissensions among the Muslims. The more mainstream reaction of the Shiʿī ʿulamā, however, was to urge the Pakistani
public to reach back to its ecumenical early years and to reclaim the squandered promise their polity had originally entailed.
Conclusion: Towards an Entangled History of Muslim South Asia and the Middle East

In this dissertation, I have shown how South Asian Muslims have been engaged in far-reaching attempts at redefining and relocating centers of authority in modern Islam. Shi‘i ʿulamā and intellectuals in the late colonial period conceived of themselves not necessarily as a double minority within a Hindu dominated India but as a spiritual elite vis-à-vis the Sunnis. Shi‘i barristers proclaimed that the All India Shi‘a Conference as a site of modernizing collective deliberation would relegate Lucknow's old-fashioned mujtahids to the qaum's periphery. Esoteric Shi‘i preachers after Partition challenged claims to orthodoxy made by reformist scholars. They pointed out that Khomeini and other leading clerical figures subscribed to their camp, too, and that the Subcontinent was brimming with miracles of the Imāms no less than the shrine cities of Iran and Iraq. Far from rejecting or passively accepting the towering role of the marāji‘, Pakistan's Shi‘is rethought their own position as meditators and brokers of such extra-national authority. In the same vein, the Iranian Revolution was first of all an impetus which provided an attractive discursive foil. Pakistani scholars strove to become associated with the Islamic Republic and the appeal of transnational Shi‘ism. At the same time, they carefully controlled the import of messages emanating from Tehran to their own country. Crucially, these observations hold true for Sunnī thinkers and ʿulamā studied in this dissertation as well. While for Shi‘is the whole-hearted embrace of Pakistan as a model Islamic state remained a stretch, the sectarian thinkers of the Sipāh-i Ṣaḥābah did not face the same constraints. They alerted the public to the perceived political threat of Shi‘ism, called for the establishment of a Sunnī Islamic state, and made the case that they were committed to unearthing Pakistan's buried promise. In their speeches and books, these sectarian figures
referred to debates that had surrounded the founding of a home for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. ʿUlamā affiliated with the SSP held that through the implementation of their program, Islam could finally come into its own in the modern world and thus provide a Deobandi-inspired model to be emulated on a global scale.

These observations have important implications for the study of modern and contemporary Islam. Disciplinary traditions and the modern nation-state system have obscured from our view the intimate and competitive relationship between the Middle East and Muslim South Asia. Muslim scholars in both regions, Sunnīs and Shīʿīs alike, can draw on a rich, often times shared heritage of texts, institutions, and revered personalities. Despite obvious barriers in language, the two regions form a shared discursive space for ideas and religious concepts. This does not mean that we necessarily see generic forms of global Islam emerging that are “valid in any cultural context” and “beyond the heterogeneity of societies and cultures.”

Rather, local and especially national lenses remain crucially important in modifying and reshaping modern visions of Islam. I would like to emphasize, however, that these conceptualizations do not respond exclusively to local questions but are also formulated with an envisioned broader reach. To put it differently, transnational linkages and the forces of globalization increasingly have encouraged South Asian Muslims to “think big.” During the course of this dissertation, we have seen that Sunnīs and Shīʿīs from the Subcontinent do not accept being relegated to the periphery (or semi-periphery in comparison to more far-flung areas of the Muslim world like Central Asia) of a global Islamic system. Instead, they

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1121 In Immanuel Wallerstein's World-systems theory, which aims at explaining the rise and stability of modern capitalism, political, military, and economic might is concentrated in core states which are
emphasize the historical contributions of Muslim thinkers from their region and strive to be
recognized once again as a major center of religious authority and even hermeneutical
hegemony.\textsuperscript{1122}

Similar dynamics of self-assertion are at play with many actors that are located in but
not limited to South Asia. Cishti Śūfis, for example, revere their former Shaykh Žauqi Shāh (d.
1951) as the true spiritual founder of Pakistan whereas Muhammad Ali Jinnah only qualified in
their view as the “outward” facilitator of the state’s inception. The Muslim homeland is thus
understood as the teleological culmination of Cishtī leadership which stretches back as far as
the 11\textsuperscript{th} century Delhi Sultanate. For these mystics, Pakistan is supposed to “assume the
vanguard of a global Islamic renaissance,” a task which their Śūfi brotherhood already prepares
for by expanding transnationally.\textsuperscript{1123} In a similar vein, Ṭāhir al-Qadrī (b. 1951), head of the
neo-Śūfī organization Minhāj al-Qur‘ān that is active in over 50 countries and has its
headquarters in Lahore, lays claims to being not only a “global muftī” but also a “global Śūfī

\textsuperscript{1122}This active striving to establish oneself (once again) as a center of religious learning might be seen
also as an attempt to stem the fragmentation of religious authority and to reorient the
contemporary Islamic landscape. Many scholars describe the latter as an “ambiguous and ever-
changing field” that attracts a growing number of participants. See Carool Kersten and Susanne

\textsuperscript{1123}Robert T. Rozehnal, \textit{Islamic Sufism unbound: Politics and piety in twenty-first century Pakistan} (New

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master.” In contrast to the Qatar-based jurist Yusuf al-Qaradawi, to whom the first label is most commonly applied, al-Qadri is fluent not only in Arabic but in English and Urdu as well.1124 The Indian ‘ālim Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Ali Nadvī (d. 1999) is known for his close ties to the Middle East which led him to become a visiting professor at Damascus University in 1956 on the invitation of the Syrian Muslim Brother and dean of the freshly established Shari‘a Faculty, Muṣṭafā al-Sibā‘ī (d.1964).1125 Nadvī was also one of the founding members of the Saudi-sponsored Muslim World League (Rābiṭat al-‘Ālam al-Islāmī, RAI).1126 He later became marginalized in the League due to his outspoken support for Sūfism and his emphasis on the important contributions of South Asian Muslims towards both the shaping of a global Islamic culture and the Islamic renaissance in the modern Arab world.1127 An especially sour point for the RAI was Nadvī’s staunch support for a major global proselytizing movement that originated in South Asia, the Tablighī Jamā‘at. This organization, which today boasts a global membership of around ten million people, was perceived as a “serious threat” to attempts to spread Wahhābī interpretations of Islam.1128


In light of these examples, I would like to suggest a new research paradigm which pays attention to the bidirectional flows of religious thought between the Middle East and South Asia. In doing so, I draw inspiration from the robust debates in the field of new imperial history which investigate the mutual influences between Britain and her colonies in the 19th and 20th century. Most scholars today agree that imperial encounters and experiments in the colonies shaped perspectives on race, gender, and religion in the “mother country,” too. Differences of emphasis persist primarily about how to measure these impacts, especially given the fact that British society itself was “diverse and pluralistic.”

Such questions have rarely been explored in the field of Islamic Studies for the 19th or 20th century. As we have seen in this dissertation, conventional wisdom understands the Middle East as a center of scholarship and South Asia as its either reluctant or eager periphery. Until now, the reverse transfer of ideas from the Indian subcontinent to Arab countries, Turkey, or Iran has only received limited attention. A notable exception is the discussion of Maudūdī’s influence on the Egyptian Muslim Brother Sayyid Quṭb (d. 1966). Stéphane Dudoignon has

1129 For a maximalist version of this argument, see Catherine Hall, Civilising subjects: Metropole and colony in the English imagination, 1830-1867 (Cambridge: Polity, 2002). Hall argues that English missionaries and abolitionists of the early 19th century initially advocated the substantial equality of Europeans and non-Europeans. Due to violent upheavals against the colonial state, however, such perspectives gave way after the 1860s to an emphasis on unbridgeable racial differences. This, in turn, influenced the domestic self-fashioning of the English as belonging to a distinctly superior race. For a rather isolated attempt at dismissing the claim that Britain’s colonies had any palpable impact on the wider British public beyond a small upper and upper-middle class fixated on the empire, compare Bernard Porter, The absent-minded imperialists: Empire, society, and culture in Britain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).


1131 For the reception of Maudūdī’s thought in Egypt by Sayyid Quṭb, who appropriated the view of Islam as a stable (thābit) and comprehensive (shāmil) system (niẓām) as well as the concept of God’s
also drawn our attention to the ways Persian-speaking Sunnī ʿulamā in the cities of Zāhidān and Sarāvān in Eastern Iran have established themselves as important “intermediaries between the Indian cradle of the School of Deoband and its new horizons in the Middle East and ex-Soviet Central Asia.”

My research has shown the complex negotiations of closeness and distance to and from the Middle East displayed by South Asian Sunnīs and Shīʿīs alike. Combined with their self-perception as being able to provide decisive answers for the most pressing religious questions in the region and beyond, this challenges us to rethink center—periphery relations in modern and contemporary Islam. Many further fruitful avenues of investigation suggest themselves. In the context of Shīʿī Islam in particular, it would be fascinating to gain a better understanding of how scholarly works produced during Lucknow’s zenith as a ḥauza in the late 19th and early 20th century were received and commented upon in Iran and Iraq. Current efforts by South Asian Shīʿī students and scholars in Qom to make many of these works once again available to Middle Eastern audiences could also unleash interesting dynamics in this regard.

Similarly, further explorations of how longstanding South Asian sectarian discourses have shaped Middle Eastern debates might constitute another rewarding line of inquiry. Pursuing these, I propose, would significantly improve our understanding of how authoritative religious centers are made, unmade, and reconfigured in modern Islam.


1133For the website of The Indian Sub-Continental Literal Revival Centre (this is what the Markaz-i Iḥyāʿ-i Ṣaghīr calls itself in English), see www.maablib.com (accessed 18 June 2015).
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