

People of Faith:

Essays on a Historical
and Contemporary Profile
of the Ismailis



Shams Vellani



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Shams Vellani: A Short Biography

Born in Tanga, Tanganyika Territory (now Tanzania) on 13 April 1936, Shams is the youngest of five siblings (four brothers and one sister). At the time of his birth, Tanga, formerly a military post of German East Africa, had become the territory's second-largest city and port after Dar es Salaam (now the commercial capital). Originally from Jamnagar in the Gujarat province of India, Shams's father reached the coast of Tanganyika some time during the 1890s when it was a German colony, and his parents became involved in retail trade in the interior, a difficult undertaking at the time.

Shams's introduction to pluralistic societies and faiths began in early childhood, growing up in a neighbourhood of varied ethnicities and faiths. These were shopkeeper families of modest incomes. This neighbourhood was a melting pot where its people from Africa, Asia and the Arab world with faiths as diverse as Hinduism,



Illustration 1: The Karimjee School, Tanga

Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam from different religious traditions (Ismailis and other Shi'is, Sunnis), lived in harmony. Shams was educated at the Aga Khan Primary School, Tanga and then completed his School Certificate, receiving a First Grade, Distinction



in his Senior Cambridge School Certificate at Karimjee School, a government secondary school named after the local benefactor Karimjee Jivanjee.

He was in the first group of students to pursue education as a career in response to a *farmān* of His Highness Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III. Shams had studied at the Teacher Training College in Nairobi from 1955 to 1956 and then joined the Aga Khan Education Service in January 1957, as a primary teacher at the same school in Tanga. From 1959 to 1961, he worked as the headmaster of the school.

Shams followed this teaching experience by completing his A-Levels in London. He then studied at the London School of Economics and graduated with a BSc. Economics (Hons), fully funded by an Aga Khan bursary.

Immediately after marrying Zarina, a fellow teacher at the same school, in September 1965 he joined the National Development Co-operation, a parastatal development agency in Dar es Salaam. Shams and Zarina now have three children and four grandchildren.

While in Dar es Salaam, Shams was appointed a member of the HH the Aga Khan Ismaili Provincial Tribunal (today's equivalent of the National Conciliation and Arbitration Board). A telling instance of when Shams's pluralist views and his deep know-how of the Ismaili community were called upon was in 1966, when the Ismaili National Council requested him to speak at a seminar in response to a populist politician's public remark that the Ismailis, like other Asians, were *paper citizens*. Held at the Diamond Jubilee Hall in Dar es Salaam, this seminar was chaired by Tanzania's Minister of Finance, who was also a prominent Asian member of Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), the ruling party. Shams drew upon his experiences and views to counter that populist politician's remarks.

From 1966 to 1971 Shams held a senior position in the Tanzanian government. After a two-year stint at the Commonwealth Forestry Institute of the University of Oxford, in 1973 Shams migrated to Vancouver, Canada, where he worked at the Industrial Development Bank, a subsidiary of the Bank of Canada. Shams's service to the

Ismaili community continued in Canada, where about a year after his arrival, he was requested by the Ismaili Regional Council to help start the Ismaili Business Information Service for Western Canada. This service was established by His Highness the Aga Khan to support the resettlement of Ugandan Ismaili refugees there as a viable business community with a Loan Assistance Programme.

Playing an instrumental role in the development of the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS), Shams has been with the IIS since before its inauguration in 1977. He was invited to Nairobi in February 1976 for a meeting with His Highness Aga Khan IV where the roots of the idea of the IIS further developed and subsequently took root. During this process, Shams was involved specifically in determining the level and specifics of the Institute legally as there were no precedents in modern Ismaili history for such an institution to be established with the Jamat's own resources. The initial challenge was for the Imam to ensure quality control for Ismaili studies and to ensure that the Institute of Ismaili Studies abided by the Imam's policy of serving the public good. In this process he worked very closely with Diwan Sir Eboo Pirbhai, Vazir Amir Bhatia and Vazir Anil Ishani, who were among the IIS's first Board of Governors, under the guidance of His Highness to steer the development of this nascent institution.

During his decades of service, Shams met senior clerics in Qom, Mashhad and Tehran as part of the process of acquiring official Iranian support for the Jamat's social governance apparatus under the 1986 global Ismaili Constitution, and implementation of the IIS's religious education curriculum from pre-school to secondary level. Shams, as part of a delegation working under the guidance of the Imam, was also party to the diplomatic protocol pertaining to the use of the Ismaili Centre in Dushanbe as a jamatkhana, as well as the agreement to open other jamatkhanas throughout Tajikistan. In 2005 Shams was involved in the negotiations for a series of diplomatic protocols which led to the establishment, at the invitation of the government of Portugal, of the Diwan of the Ismaili Imam in



Lisbon. He worked in close consultation with the Jamati, and where appropriate, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) leadership, under the overall guidance of the Imam.

In order to understand the complex nature of an independent academic institution, Shams met the leaders of a variety of academic institutions such as Jews' College, Heythrop College and the Institute of Ocean Sciences amongst others, which were part of a parent university such as the University of London and the University of British Columbia. Recommendations were submitted to His Highness and the Institute was established as a not-for profit corporation (the Institute has now been re-constituted as a charity).

Shams also played a vital role in helping the IIS form partnerships with the Institute of Education (IOE), University of London, and McGill University in Montreal, Canada. The IIS started with a faculty team of three members and a librarian and initially had two educational programmes, one in Islamic studies and the other a Waezen and Teacher Training Programme offering an MA degree from McGill University, in Islamic Studies, and credentials in education from London University, which were a result of these partnerships. The research and publication programmes were initiated as recommended by the Ismailia Associations Paris Conference of 1975.

With the help of the late Professor Muhsin Mahdi of Harvard University, Shams identified leading scholars to contribute to the Institute's graduate training programmes in partnership with McGill and London Universities. He also worked with eminent scholars such as Professors Mohammed Arkoun, Wilferd Madelung, Toshihiko Izutsu and Annemarie Schimmel. He coordinated with Dr Farhad Daftary, who from 1984 onwards was in the process of finalising his research for a book relating to the Ismailis, which was published in 1990 by Cambridge University Press as *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*. At the establishment of the Institute's Paris Branch under the guidance of His Highness Aga Khan IV, Shams's coordination and work with various scholars there, including the renowned Iranian thinker Daryush Shayegan, gave the

Institute the benefit of Islamic studies from both Anglo-American and French-European perspectives.

With the governors of the IIS, Shams met Professor Henry Corbin (1903–1978) whose work reflects a deep understanding of the esoteric dimensions of Islam. After Professor Corbin's death, Shams collaborated with Mrs Stella Corbin to publish English translations of some of her husband's works on Ismailism. Armed with this help and the support of Professor Muhsin Mahdi, Shams played a pivotal role in recruiting a strong faculty for the Paris branch. However, as a result of a review of the entire IIS operations which began in 1985, the Paris branch was later closed down. At the Imam's guidance, Shams had also prepared a number of exploratory conceptual papers that led to the establishment of the Aga Khan University (AKU). The first of these papers, submitted in 1981, served as a basis for the Pakistan Government's Charter for the first private university in Pakistan with an international remit i.e. using the Imam's programmes in the field such as education, economic and social development, culture and architecture as potential faculties in different parts of the world. In the overall scheme of things, it was a herculean task undertaken by the Owners Representative Board, Chaired and led by Dr Vazir Shamsh Kassim-Lakha which has contributed to realising the present Imam's vast vision of the University and its role in the Muslim and developing world, a vision which is still unfolding.

Meanwhile Shams's journey of contributing to various educational endeavours continued. In 1995, he was appointed as the Director of Special Projects, in which capacity he was privileged to work on a variety of topics.

At a dinner on 19 October 2003, held at the Natural History Museum, London, to mark the 25th anniversary of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, attended by its well-wishers and supporters and also by the global Ismaili Jamati leadership, His Highness, Aga Khan IV, recognised Shams's work in bringing intellectual rigour to search into the community's strategic development by stating:



‘Shams has been the recipient of all sorts of queries of mine in the past years . . . and he has received in the past decade some of the most difficult ethical and theological questions that I could have put to him within the Ismaili tariqah, and within the general faith of Islam. . . . Shams has been a valiant soldier and a wise intellect to look at issues with the same knowledge, with the same analytical capacity which has marked our own history in time, and so I want to take this occasion to say to Shams that he has been a magnificent soldier in the Institute of Ismaili Studies.’

[This biography has been composed by colleagues at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, following interviews with Shams Vellani.]

Generosity in the Service of *Dīn*: A Historical Overview

﴿We have honoured the Children of Adam . . . and preferred them over many of those We created.﴾¹

﴿We indeed created Man in the fairest stature then restored him the lowest of the low save those who believe and do righteous deeds.﴾²

In Islam's teachings creation—a continuing divine mercy—is a purposive whole within the all-embracing matrix of Divine Oneness, beyond which reality is a meaningless concept. Every aspect of it, including the human self, is an object of quest: ﴿We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves, till it is clear to them that it is the truth﴾.³ Accordingly, Ismaili thought has been dedicated to reading 'the signs of God' in nature and history rather than dwelling on divine essence itself, as the subject of theological discourse.⁴ That gift of being able to read 'the signs of God' elevates the human being to the pinnacle of creation. 'Why do you think of yourself as a small body', says Imam Ali, 'when the great universe is contained within you. You are a speaking book by whose letters the hidden is revealed.'⁵

Man's moral endowment is the overwhelming theme of the Quran's spiritual anthropology. Primordial man, alone in all creation, accepts the challenge of the trust of reason and volition⁶ and readily assents to submission when the Divine question is asked of the human spirit, 'Am I not your Lord?' The joyous response, 'Yes,



we testify', seals the eternal pact of their fealty to Allah.⁷ The sense of faith is, thus, naturally ingrained in human psyche: 'Allah has endeared to you belief, and has decked it fair in your hearts, and He has made detestable to you unbelief and ungodliness and disobedience'.⁸ The faithless 'are deaf, dumb and blind'⁹ who do not reason, their natural disposition to do so being veiled by worldly distractions. The mission of the Prophets, of whom Muḥammad Muṣṭafā is the last and final, has been to help people, 'possessed of minds', beware of worldly delusions. Each Prophet brought a sharia, suited to its own epoch, as a reminder of the primordial covenant of submission which binds human spirits to Allah and to each other.

This principle of fidelity is the well-spring of Islam's notion of community. Those who keep faith are a community 'in a bond of Allah and a bond of the people ...'¹⁰ This bond of empathy sustains the ethic of universal mutual aid and underpins human social institutions. Only when the spiritual suffuses the temporal is human potential fulfilled and does it moderate one's claim to a share of the world and its good things.¹¹ The ethic of self-sacrifice is, thus, at the heart of *dīn*; it ennobles as it weans away from the ephemeral, bestowing a perspective on patience in which current tribulations are seen as passing tests of endurance and, hence, a source of strength.¹²

As the human being is both the immortal soul and mortal flesh, so is Islam *dīn* and *dunyā*. Like the soul, the Divine spark, which is the life source of the human being, *dīn*, is the innermost essence of Islam, its sincere cognition, *ma'rifa*, by virtue of which it has pre-eminence over *dunyā*, but within a balanced harmony. In reply to a question, Imam Ali once explained that the least action by which one becomes a *mu'min* is cognition of, and sincere obedience to, Allah, His Prophet and His Imam, even if one is ignorant of other things. And the least that will make a man misguided is that he does not recognise the Imam of the Time.¹³

Dīn is, therefore, the foundation for a good life; it invests good acts with spiritual significance. Its absence robs even a virtuous deed

of the quality of provision for the life to come: ﴿For he who rejects belief [in Allah], in vain will be all his works, for in the life to come he shall be among the losers . . . As for the unbelievers, ill fortune awaits them. He will let all their works go to waste. This is because they have been averse to what Allah has sent down, so He has made their works fail.﴾¹⁴

This principle is poignantly illustrated in an encounter which followed the defeat of the pagan tribe of Banū al-Tā'ī at the hands of Muslims under the leadership of Imam Ali. Among the battle's captives was Sufāna, the daughter of Ḥātim, the leader of his tribe and well known all over Arabia for his generosity and other worthy deeds. After his death, the tribal leadership passed to his son 'Adi who managed to escape capture by the Muslims. Sufāna was respectfully escorted to the Prophet's presence. Unable to ransom herself, she pleaded for liberty, imploring the Prophet's mercy and recalling her father's generosity. Granting her plea for freedom, the Prophet replied, 'Your father had the virtues of a Muslim. If it were permitted to me to invoke the mercy of Allah on any one whose life was passed in unbelief, I would pray to Allah for the soul of Hatim.'¹⁵

Submission to Allah manifests itself in the giving of oneself for the good of others. When appointing an emissary to a group of Shi'a, Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir instructed him: 'Direct them to visit each other in their homes, for verily the constant association of our followers gives life to our cause. May Allah have mercy on one who gives help and strength to our mission . . . We, the Imams, will not be of any avail to you without good works'.¹⁶ In the contemporary context, the present Imam, Aga Khan IV, has explained that while Islam stands for harmony between spirit and matter 'no man, woman or child can hope to achieve this balance in sickness, illiteracy or squalor'.¹⁷

Acts of social benevolence, thus, strengthen *dīn*, and ennoble the soul of the giver. Deeds of *dīnī* beneficence, which seek to nurture commitment to the faith, also enrich the eternal life of the inner spark. Tradition has always viewed, particularly affectionately, acts to

uphold the Divine mission which, according to the Shi'i interpretation, has devolved from the Prophet upon the hereditary Imams in his progeny.

However, no service, in either sphere, however self-sacrificial, is a favour unto anyone but oneself: ﴿If you do good, it is for your own selves; if you do evil, it is likewise for your own selves.﴾¹⁸ The very act of Islam, of surrender to Allah, is a matter of conscience to tend one's own soul: ﴿They count it as a favour to you (the Prophet) that they have surrendered! Say: Do not count your surrendering as a favour to me; nay, but rather Allah confers a favour upon you in that He has guided you to belief, if it be that you are truthful.﴾¹⁹

An honest believer is, thus, conscious that the ability to do good, to render service, is a blessing for which one must ever be grateful. As Imam Ali has said, the worship of a liberated soul is motivated by nothing but gratitude to Allah. This sense of gratitude is the mark of the pious who persevere in the cause of Allah: ﴿Many a Prophet there has been, with whom thousands manifold have fought, and they fainted not for what smote them in Allah's way, neither weakened, nor did they humble themselves; and Allah loves the patient. Nothing else they said but 'Lord, forgive us our sins, and that we exceeded in our affair, and make firm our feet' . . . And Allah gave them the reward of this world and the fairest reward of the world to come; and Allah loves the good doers.﴾²⁰

Thus, while sincere generosity seeks no *dunyāwī* recognition, yet the Quran, the Prophet and the Imams are never parsimonious in their acknowledgement of believers who serve their cause willingly. This is illustrated through specific historical instances in the sections that follow.

The multiple returns for those who spend in the way of Allah is a resonating theme in the Quran and the traditions. Their parable is ﴿that of a grain of corn: it grows seven ears, and each ear has 100 grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He pleases . . .﴾²¹ ﴿surely those, the men and the women, who make freewill offerings and have lent to Allah a good loan, it shall be multiplied for them,

and theirs shall be a generous wage.﴾²² The rewards for good actions, says a *ḥadīth*, are always at the level of multiples.²³

Part I: the vanguard of Islam: service of *Da‘wa*

In the face of severe persecution and Meccan opposition to his nascent mission, at the Divine command, the Prophet emigrated to Medina. From there he prepared to continue his mission with the help of those Meccans who had obeyed his call to emigrate, the *muhājirūn*, and those Medinans who became their helpers, the *anṣār*. Tradition accords to their self-sacrifices unique approbation.

Of the *muhājirūn*, the Quran says ﴿the poor fugitives who have been driven out from their homes and belongings, who seek bounty from Allah, and help Allah and His Messenger. They are the loyal.﴾²⁴ When the Prophet learned that the house of one of the emigrant clans, the Banū Jaḥsh, had been sold, and the proceeds usurped, by Abū Sufyān, his arch enemy, he replied, ‘Are you not pleased that Allah will give you a better house in paradise?’²⁵

The *anṣār*, on their part, happily shared their own possessions, however meagre, with the *muhājirūn* in whose favour they also forwent what was due to them of the spoils of war which had accrued to Muslims. Hence the revelation in praise of the *anṣār*: ﴿And those who made their dwelling in the abode, and in belief, before them, love whosoever has emigrated to them, not finding in their breasts any need for what they have been given, and preferring others above themselves, even though poverty be their portion. And whoso is guarded against the avarice of his own soul, those—they are the prosperers.﴾²⁶

The cherished wish of those who came to the aid of the Prophet’s mission was to please the Prophet, and after him, for the Shi’a, his *waṣī*, the Imam, as a way of earning Divine pleasure. This is touchingly illustrated by what happened after the battle of Ḥunayn, one of many such poignant occurrences. In the customary division of



enemy possessions, a larger proportion was given to the newly converted Meccans, who had to be won over to the new order of things, than to the loyal *anṣār* of Medina. When some among the latter viewed the allocation as an act of partiality, the Prophet assembled, and spoke to, all of them: ‘Ye *anṣār*, why disturb your hearts because of the things of this life? Are you not satisfied that others should obtain the flocks and the camels, while you go back unto your homes with me in your midst? By Him who holds my life in His hands, I shall never abandon you. If all mankind went one way and the *ansar* another, verily I would join the *anṣār*. The Lord be favourable to them, and bless them, and their children, and their children’s children!’ Hearing these words, the *anṣār* wept, and cried in one voice: ‘Yea, Prophet of Allah, we are well satisfied with our share’.²⁷

The Quran described the *muhājirūn* and the *anṣār* as those to whom Allah has assigned priority among the faithful: ﴿And the foremost are the earliest among the *muhājirūn* and the *anṣār*, and those who followed them in goodness—Allah is well pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.﴾²⁸ Their self-sacrifice has been elevated to an eternal paradigm: ﴿Allah has preferred in rank those who struggle with their possessions and their own selves over the ones who sit at home . . . such are mightier in rank with Allah.﴾²⁹

From this earliest phase, the history of Islam is adorned with acts of people emulating the paradigm, coming forward to the aid of the Prophet and, after him, the Imams in support of their Divine mission. They have offered their lives on the battle front, or their wealth or diverse talents, intellectual and literary, in the service of the pious mission. Their services have been commensurately acknowledged through a variety of gestures, all symbolic of the personal bond between the Prophet or the Imam and the believers concerned.

Voluntary service for the cause of *dīn*

Tradition regards all resources, material or otherwise, as a gift from Allah, but that they become an unbearable burden when selfishly

withheld from service. The gift of knowledge is among the most burdensome of assets, for its function is to bring light where there is ignorance. Tradition equates ignorance of *dīn* to spiritual death. Tradition gives greater importance to the ethic of knowledge than to actual knowledge, as well as giving primacy to knowledge in the service of *dīn*. Thus, the knowledge which remains unshared is considered a girdle of fire round its possessor's neck. Among the worst condemned, said the Prophet, are those who use their knowledge to attract public attention and to show their perceived superiority over others. Such do not deserve leadership.³⁰ Only those who put their learning to appropriate service, says a *ḥadīth*, receive blessings of Allah, His angels and the dwellers of the heavens and the earth. Their ink is more precious than the blood of martyrs. 'If Allah guides a single person through you, it is better than every thing under the sun', is a saying of Imam Ali.³¹

Ka'b b. Zuhayr, the distinguished poet of the tribe of Mozayna, was a later convert to Islam, having previously used his poems to incite hostilities against Muslims. On his brother's advice, he embraced Islam, presented himself to the Prophet and sang a *qaṣīda* in his presence. When he sang the lines: 'Truly the Messenger is a light whence illumination is sought, one of the swords of Allah',³² the Prophet bestowed his own mantle upon him. It came to be called *khirqā-i sharīf*, the noble Mantle.³³ Ka'b thereafter dedicated his poetic talents to the service of Islam.

Salmān al-Fārsī was a stout devotee of the Prophet and his family, whom the Prophet ennobled to the status of his own family, saying: 'Salmān is the Gate of God on earth. Whoever recognises him is a believer, and whoever rejects him is a disbeliever. Salmān is from us, the People of the House (*Ahl al-Bayt*).'³⁴ The Imams have historically followed this Prophetic precedent of acknowledging a closer relationship with *murīds* who have served their cause with exceptional devotion and diligence, and without expectation of any reward.

Thus, for instance, during the rebellion against Imam Ali's caliphate, those who remained loyal to their oaths of fealty were singled

out by the Imam as partisans of truth: 'Whoever is tested by God for piety is surely endowed with love in his heart for us [the Imams. Similarly whoever incurs God's anger will be found to bear hatred towards us.'³⁵ Addressing his loyal companion, 'Ammār b. Yāsir, Imam Ali said, 'May Allah have mercy on you and reward you well for your (adhering to the) truth'.³⁶ Kumayl b. Ziyād, likewise, stood loyally by the side of Imam Ali, and fought against Mu'āwiya and others who were opposed to the Imam's authority. In response to his devotee's request, Imam Ali granted Kumayl a prayer to bring tranquility to his heart. Known as the *Du'ā' Kumayl*, it is recited by Shi'i Muslims as a source of special solace.³⁷ Soon after Imam Ali's martyrdom in 661, Kumayl was also killed by al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, an Umayyad commander. Loyal supporters such as 'Amr b. Zurāra and Mālik al-Ashtar were exiled from their homes and imprisoned for their open support for Imam Ali. Another Shi'i, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī is reported to have addressed the Kufans encouraging them to rally round Imam Ali: 'The cousin of your Prophet has descended among you teaching you religion, guiding you on the right path, and summoning you to where your (ultimate) happiness lies.'³⁸ Reproaching some of his close followers for failing in their duty, Imam Ali said, 'I ask you to safeguard my right which you have squandered before. Therefore read it [Imam Ali's letter] to my followers and be helpers unto truth'.³⁹

The reward of ultimate worth, as Imam Ḥusayn has said, belongs to those devotees of the Imam who stand by his right to authority whatever the worldly risks to do so or temptations to turn away: 'He who loves us with his heart and does jihad with us with his tongue and hands, is with us in companionship-on-high'.⁴⁰

Such pious intimacy is frequently conferred on *murīds* whose deeds seek to foster loyalty to the Imams, which is the essence of *dīn*. 'May God have mercy upon the one who evokes love for us in the people', is a prayer of Imams Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.⁴¹ Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq used to say to his chosen followers, 'You are from us, *Ahl al-Bayt*'. He is also said to have referred to people who, through their learning, sought to enhance the knowledge

of *dīn*, as ‘the tent pegs of the world, the fastest runners and closest associates’ of the Imam.⁴² When, three centuries later, the Fatimid Imam-caliph al-Mu‘izz was informed about a person who, during the rebellion of Abū Yazīd, had defected from the side of the rebel to that of the Imam, he replied, ‘a believer who has patience with us, recognises our right and prefers to be with us in misery and adversity to the company of our enemy in ease and comfort, in the hereafter he will be with us in paradise. He will enter through our entrance and be protected under our shadow.’⁴³

Voluntary service and its recognition: the Fatimid era

A strong element of voluntary service is strikingly discernible in the extraordinary devotion, well beyond anything normally expected, which distinguished the careers of many people who served the Imams as ‘nominal’ subjects and clients, or in various categories of state officialdom.

Among Muslims generally, personal objects associated with the caliph were treated with the reverence that was accorded to the person of the caliph himself.

However, the relationship between the Shi‘i Imam and his *murīds* is much more profound and intimately affectionate. First given to the Prophet, the *bay‘a* which symbolically forges this spiritual link is revered as an earthly correspondent of the primordial compact of human spirits to submit to Divine Will. In the post-Fatimid Indian context, the 14th-century Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn calls this, in a *gīnan*, the promise given in the mother’s womb.⁴⁴

Objects belonging to the Imam were treasured by all ranks of society, not only for the honour they brought but, much more importantly, for their spiritual grace (*baraka*).

Proximity to the Imam was a great blessing. To have sight of him, to live near his residence, to partake of the food from his palace, as on occasions such as Ramadan and Nawroz, or to have in one’s possession his clothing or other personal effects, were all believed to



confer special *baraka* or grace. The Imam's clothing was also used as a funeral shroud because of its *baraka*.⁴⁵

Format of recognition of services: the Fatimid era

The elaborate Fatimid state apparatus⁴⁶ enabled individuals to serve in various capacities: military, administrative, political, legal or personal to the Imam. A standard system was sometimes used to differentiate between 'official' and voluntary services, with behaviour towards top officials having given a higher degree of formality. For example, the distinctive robes of honour designed for specific state functionaries would not be used to honour those rendering services in a non-official capacity. Furthermore, gifts for individuals giving exceptional services were more spontaneous in nature.

The Imams recognised individual services in a number of ways, such as:

- Invoking Allah's blessings upon individuals and praising them.
- Granting freedom from servitude and offering protection to clients.
- Granting honorific titles and promotion in rank and status.
- Bestowing gifts including garments, personal effects and money. Apart from robes of honour, the Fatimid Imams also conferred a garment embroidered in gold and/or silver and known as *ṭirāz*.⁴⁷
- Honouring individuals by asking them to ascend the pulpit, *minbar*, with the Imam on solemn public occasions.
- Granting individuals special proximity and familiarity.
- Making individuals privy to confidential information.
- Honouring individuals posthumously by leading the funeral prayers, and also granting favours to posterity.

An individual could be honoured in more than one way and on different occasions. This is indicated, as illustrated below, in such

extant sources as biographies and writings of people who had served the Imams from close quarters.⁴⁸ Often the recognition was informal and private.

Making Jawdhar privy to matters of utmost confidence, robes of honour and granting proximity

Jawdhar (d. 973) served the first four Fatimid Imams. Starting his career as head servant of the Palace, he became an official of the public treasury and rose to prominence as indisputably a kind of wazir during the reigns of Imam-caliphs al-Manṣūr (r. 946–953) and al-Muʿizz (r. 953–975). Imam al-Mahdī made him an intermediary between himself and his followers and clients. On occasions, the Imams left to his charge the safety of their household. When setting out in pursuit of the rebel Makhlad b. Kaydad (Abū Yazīd), Imam-caliph al-Manṣūr invested Jawdhar with authority over the royal palace, the entire country and the public treasury.

Imam-caliph al-Qāʾim (r. 934–946) favoured Jawdhar as a close confidant, preferring him to all his *dāʿīs* and followers. This was a mark of not only the length and devotion of Jawdhar's service, but also of his merit and capacity to respect confidentiality. At the time of the burial of his father, Imam al-Mahdī, he summoned Jawdhar, to the exclusion of everyone else, and confided to him, while they were alone near the grave, the identity of his heir, the next Imam, and asked Jawdhar to recognise his heir's rights, and to observe complete secrecy about his status until he himself would make it public 'when Allah wills and at the time He will choose'.

Imam-caliph al-Manṣūr freed Jawdhar from the formal bond of slavery and bestowed upon him the honorific title: 'Client of the Commander of the Faithful' (*Mawlā Amīr al-Mu'minīn*), which the Imam asked Jawdhar to use in his correspondence to everyone. Subsequently, Imam-caliph al-Manṣūr instructed Jawdhar's name to be inscribed on embroidery (*ṭirāz*) in golden thread and on carpets thus: 'Made through Jawdhar, client of the Commander of



the Faithful, at al-Mahdiyya the Pleasing (to Allah)'. Imam-caliph al-Manṣūr then honoured Jawdhar with robes of honour and gave him a piebald horse selected from among his mounts. When he arrived at the Imam's palace while food was being served, the Imam invited Jawdhar to sit at the table and dine with him.

Blessings, robes of honour, financial gifts

Once Imam al-Mahdī (r. 909–934) asked a trusted slave to investigate a land dispute between his Kutāma followers to whom he had granted irrigated lands as fiefs. When the slave reported the conclusion of the investigation, the Imam replied; 'You have discharged the task entrusted to you. Retire. May God bless you'.⁴⁹

In this particular case, the recipient of the blessing was not happy with it and expected something tangible in return. Thereupon Jawdhar purchased the blessing from this slave. On hearing what had happened, Imam al-Mahdī met Jawdhar, and said, 'I ask Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, that He bless you for what you have bought and that He bless you until you meet Allah, the Mighty, the Exalted, for devotion to us.' The Imam ordered that Jawdhar be given 100 dinars and a precious robe of honour which Jawdhar, lovingly and humbly, accepted.⁵⁰

Gifts of coins and personal effects

When Imam-caliph al-Manṣūr was presented with the first new coins minted in his name, he sent 1,000 dinars to Jawdhar together with the following letter written in his hand:

'O Jawdhar! May Allah protect you and preserve you in good health!
We send you 4,000 Mansuri quarter dinars minted in our name.
Accept these for yourself as a blessing for you. Avoid sending them
back to the public treasury. I know you and I know how thrifty you
are with our money. No wealth is as pure as the money which we



Illustration 29: *Dīnār* of Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh, minted in Cairo in 969.

Image courtesy ISCU.

place with our hands where we want it and of our own accord. No blessing is more worthy for the one to whom it is given with the best of our heart, because we deem you deserving of our kindness and we would not like to consider the portion which is under your hand to be too much; know this well.⁵¹

Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz, after his successful expedition to Egypt, also sent to Jawdhar, who had remained at al-Mahdiyya, newly minted dinars struck in Miṣr (Egypt) in his name. The Imam also bestowed upon Jawdhar, for his own personal use, a pair of slippers which had belonged to Imam-caliph al-Manṣūr and which Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz himself had used.⁵²

Robes of honour, turbans, swords and personal effects

The biography of Ja'far b. 'Alī al-Ḥājib, the loyal chamberlain of Imam al-Mahdī, describes the honour that Imam al-Mahdi bestowed upon the *dā'ī* Abū 'Abd Allāh and his companions who had successfully striven to liberate the Imam from prison in Sijilmassa:



‘Then he put with his own hand the dress of honour on Abū ‘Abdī’l-lāh, also giving him a turban and a sword, and then did the same to myself. He made me to put on the dress lined with Dabīqī stuff, also a turban, trousers, and boots. He also gave me a sword. Then he gave dresses and swords to all others—Ṭayyib, Muslim, Ṣandal, and Abū Ya‘qūb.’⁵³

The sword is the symbol of the defence of *dīn*; the sword of Imam Ali, Dhū al-*fiqār*, is a cherished symbol for both Shi‘i and Sunni Muslims. The turban, the equivalent of the crown in Arab culture, is a sign of dignity, honour and authority. It acquired the significance as a symbol of investiture through an act of the Prophet who is said to have put a turban on Imam Ali at Ghadīr Khumm, and again when he appointed him governor of Yemen.⁵⁴

Proximity and other special privileges

Ibn Ḥajar, the biographer of Egyptian judges, reports on the privileges enjoyed by al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān and his son ‘Alī b. al-Nu‘mān, who between them served the first five Fatimid Imams. When another son of al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, Muḥammad b. al-Nu‘mān, died, Imam-caliph al-Ḥākim rode out in the funeral and invoked prayers upon him. The *qāḍī*’s grandson ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was called upon by Imam-caliph al-Ḥākim to ascend the *minbar* (pulpit) with him on Fridays and festivals. To him, the Imam delegated the supervision of the *Dār al-‘Ilm*. When the *qāḍī* married his two sons to the two daughters of the commander Faḍl b. Ṣāliḥ, the marriage ceremony was held in the palace and the dowry (*ṣadaq*) was granted by the Imam from the public treasury. The Imam also bestowed upon them two tailor-made robes of honour and 16 pieces of hemmed garments.

When appointing Jawhar al-Ṣiqillī (911–992), the emancipated slave, as his commander-in-chief (*al-qā‘id*), Imam-caliph al-Mu‘izz called him his eyes and ears, a measure of the Imam’s trust that he enjoyed. When Jawhar departed on the expedition to Egypt, all state

officials and members of the Imam's family were asked by the Imam to dismount their horses and walk in front of Jawhar for a short while as a special token of respect. When Jawhar died, Imam-caliph al-'Azīz led the funeral prayer.⁵⁵

Imam-caliph al-Mustaṣṣir (r. 1036–1094) composed a *qaṣīda* in praise of his chief *dā'ī* al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, referring to him as the towering mountain of knowledge, and calling upon him to share his knowledge, as he saw fit, in the service of the *da'wa*: 'And even though you're the last one in our *da'wa*, you have surpassed the compass of the earlier (*dā'īs*).

When the *dā'ī* passed away, he was buried in *the Dar al-'Ilm*, and the Imam himself wrote a *qaṣīda* and led the funeral prayer.⁵⁶

Private, miscellaneous awards

It is reported in the biography of Ja'far al-Hājib that a certain Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Aḥmad from Baghdad, who had dedicated a *qaṣīda* to Imam al-Mahdī, was entrusted by the Imam with some important affairs. For his dedicated services he was rewarded by Imams al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im and al-Manṣūr.

Recognition of service through *alqāb* (titles)

The bestowal of titles upon those who render services of some distinction, and to dignitaries, is an ancient, universal practice. People also attract epithets for their distinctive merit. In the Islamic tradition, one of the best known, earliest epithets is that of *fatā* which honours the memory of Imam Ali than whom there is no nobler knight, '*lā fatā illā 'Alī*'. The titles of *al-Ṣiddīq*, one who testifies to the truth, and *al-Fārūq*, the one who distinguishes between right and wrong, with which the tradition respects the caliphs Abū Bakr and 'Umar respectively 'are probably of early growth but must nevertheless have been applied after the deaths of their owners'.⁵⁷ The *laqab* of *Dhū 'l-Shahādatayn* acknowledges the devotion of its

holder, Khuzayma b. Thābit al-Anṣārī to the Prophet and Imam Ali ('because the Prophet had promised him double the normal martyr's rewards').⁵⁸

The practice of granting honorific titles continued under the various caliphates and sultanates. In the tenth century, compound honorifics with the elements *dīn*, reserved for the learned, or *milla*, religion, and *dawla*, 'secular power', the latter reserved for high state officials, gained in popularity. The *dā'ī* Hibat Allāh Mūsā 'Imrān was dignified with the title *al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Dīn al-Shirāzī*, 'one who has been blessed with spiritual help in the cause of *dīn*'. The Imams granted titles with '*al-dawla*' to wazirs and other state officials. A standard formula for wazirs was *al-wazīr al-ajall* 'most exalted wazīr', awarded, for instance, to Ya'qūb b. Killis by Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz in 979. Some Fatimid wazirs, such as Abū Muḥammad b. Ammar, were honoured as *Amīn al-Milla* while some of their governors and commanders as *Sayf al-Dawla*, sword of the state. The latter epithet was given in 972, for example, to the Zirid Yūsuf Buluggīn, a vassal prince in Maghrib. A distinctive feature of Fatimid titlature for their wazirs was the use of compound titles with *amīr al-mu'minīn*. Thus, the honorific *Ṣaḥī amīr al-mu'minīn* was applied to the wazīr Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Jarjara'ī.⁵⁹ The dignity of this order denoted a special relationship of the holder to the Fatimid sovereign.

A title which expressed a closer personal tie between the Imam and a devotee was *Mawlā amīr al-mu'mimīn* which, as already mentioned, was granted to Jawdhar. Although this and similar titles such as *Walī Amīr al-Mu'minīn* and *Qāsim Amīr al-Mu'minīn* were also available to the Abbasids. In the Fatimid Ismaili context, as noted earlier, the Imam-*murīd* relationship, conveyed by such notations, signified a much deeper, spiritual bond.

The grant of state honorifics was often proclaimed in Cairo, either in front of the Imam's palace or from the pulpit in the mosque. Thus was al-Ḥusayn b. Jawhar honoured by Imam-caliph al-Ḥākim in 1,000, with a robe of honour and his newly acquired title of *Qā'id*

al-Quwwad, supreme commander, read out from the *minbar* of the mosque.⁶⁰

Recognition of service: post-Fatimid

From the information that is available, it seems that in Alamut titles made no distinction between service to the state or to *dīn*, since high state officials, namely the provincial governors, were as much devoted to the service of the *da'wa*. Honourably addressed as *muhtasham*, 'the noble', they held such titles as *Shams al-Dīn*, 'the sun of religion'; *Ḍiyā' al-Dīn*, 'the light of religion'; *Kabīr al-dīn*, 'elder in religion'; *Tāj al-Dīn*, 'the crown of religion'; *Shihāb al-Milla*, 'the shooting-star of religion', or *Mu'ayyad al-Dīn*.⁶¹

Fidā'ī was a highly respected title, signifying a person who had willingly offered to sacrifice his life and possessions for the sake of the Imam's cause. The title of *ra'īs*, 'chief', seems to have been in wide use, perhaps, connected to the hierarchy of *fidā'īs*. Sources, for instance, refer to *ra'īs* Abū al-Faḍl, *ra'īs* Muẓaffar, *ra'īs* Mu'ayyad al-Dīn, and *ra'īs* Ḥasan.

Scholars were also duly honoured. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Ḥasan-i Maḥmud-i Kātib, for instance, were addressed as *sultan al-du'āt*, the king of *dā'īs*, and *malik al-kuttāb*, king of scribes, respectively.

In the South Asian *ginanic* tradition, *sirbandhi*, was one who, like a *fidā'ī*, submitted to the Imam.

A significant source also indicates the prevalence of the practice of *dā'īs* being presented with *khirqas* (garments or mantles). Nizārī Quhistānī, a well-known *dā'ī*, who was born in 1247 (nine years before the fall of Alamut), writes in his *Safar-nāmā* that he and a fellow *dā'ī* by the name of Īrānshāh received a *khirqā* from a *pīr*. The latter could be interpreted to have been a senior *dā'ī* in charge of *da'wa* activities in a large province.⁶² This practice continued in Iran. The Imam would confer a piece of his personal garment on a *murīd* who had rendered some outstanding service. Such items were carefully preserved and affectionately treasured, and whose presence



in a home attested to the family's devotion and service to the Imam and the Jamat. It has also been reported that when *murīds* from India visited the Imam at his residence in Anjudan, Iran, they were awarded, for this act of devotion, a plaque with the world *dargahī*, 'courtier', inscribed in it.

Modes of recognition during the time of Imam Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan III: titles

Waras or wazir

Wazir was one of the highest state officials of the Fatimid caliphate. In its post-Fatimid context, one of the earliest examples of its usage is its grant by Imam 'Abd al-Salām Shāh (Anjudan, late 15th century).⁶³ In the modern period, before the creation of Councils in South Asia and Africa, the title holders might have honorarily performed administrative and executive duties, as the Imam's representatives, in areas of their respective jurisdiction: Waras Ismail Gangji, for instance, in Kathiawar in the time of Imam Hasan Ali Shah Aga Khan I, Waras Amir Chand of Amritsar, Waras Moledina and Waras Basaria in Punjab, Kutch and Sindh respectively during the time of Imam Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan III.⁶⁴

While, in more recent history, the title of *Waras* (*wārith* in Arabic) has been granted for honorary services mainly in the *dunyāwī* field, Pīr Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh (d. 1884), in his *Kitāb-i khiṭābāt-i 'āliya*,⁶⁵ interprets it as corresponding to the status of *ḥujja* in the *da'wa* hierarchy.

Aitmadi

Although thorough research is necessary for any definitive remarks to be made, some of the current titles in the jamati protocol also were part of the Safavid court protocol in Iran. For instance, *I'timād al-dawla* (the trusty support of the state) was an honorific title of a

Safavid *wazīr*, which first appeared towards the end of the reign of Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524–1576). The jamati title Aitmadi, which was originally applied to a person entrusted with the jamat's financial affairs, resembles Safavid usage.

Rai

There is a reference in *Noorum Mubin* to Imam Murād Mirzā (d. 1574) giving the title of *rai* to *murīds* who visited him from India and returned with *taliqas* for the Indian jamats.⁶⁶ The name *rahi*, which also occurs in a *ginan*,⁶⁷ applied to an Imam's appointee who travelled in particular districts to teach and convey guidance of the Imam. Without research, it is difficult to establish whether the current title *rai* is an Indian adaptation of the Farsi word *rahi*.

Alijah

Like *Itmadi*, the title *Ali-jah* (exalted in rank) was also used by the Safavid court. The title was first given by the Safavid ruler to the top fourteen officials of his administration.⁶⁸

Huzur Mukhi

The title originally applied to an officer of the Huzur Department.

Huzur Kamadia

The bearer of this designation, no longer in current practice, was an assistant accountant in the Huzur Department. It was first used by Imam Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan III in 1940 in Bombay.⁶⁹



New titles

Count

The title was created for *murīds* in Africa at the time of Imam Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah's Golden Jubilee in 1937.⁷⁰

Diwan

The title was first awarded at the time of the late Imam's Diamond Jubilee to Gulamhussein Mohamed Nasser Jindani in Africa and to Muhammad Ibrahim Muhammad Rawji in India. It does not seem to have been used in India after the demise of its first holder. In Africa, it was conferred upon the late Sir Eboo Pirbhai after the death of the previous incumbent, during the Silver Jubilee of the present Imam, Aga Khan IV.

Posthumous honours

Several *farmāns* of the previous Imam Aga Khan III speak of the moral challenge to *murīds* of being able to elevate themselves to the spiritual status of *pīrs*, and *Ahl al-Bayt*. In a private *mehmani* (Karachi, 1938), the Imam is said to have referred to Waras Muhammad Rehmu, Waras Basaria and Waras Rahim as having risen to the level of *Ahl al-Bayt*.⁷¹

When Aitmadi Sabzali Ramzanali died in Bombay in December 1938, the Imam posthumously conferred upon him the title of *pīr*, a position which, in recent history, has been accorded only to a member of the Imam's family. The Imam also instructed that Pīr Sabzali's photographs be placed outside the prayer hall of the jamatkhanas at Kandi Mohalla (now Karimabad) in Mumbai, Kharadhar in Karachi and Sialkot in Punjab. The Imam is also said to have called Pīr Sabzali the 'songbird of paradise', *ṭūṭī Bāgh-i Bahisht*.

When al-waez (teacher) Khudabaksh Taalib and two colleagues died in a road accident near Kilosa, Tanganyika, in 1925, Aga Khan III honoured them, through a *taliqa*, as martyrs and heroes for the Imam and religion and asked that their photographs be placed outside the prayer hall of all prominent jamatkhana.s.⁷²

Other Forms of Recognition

- Holders of senior titles were also awarded *jubbahs* (robes) and *pagdis* (turbans), a continuation of the ancient practice of honouring a person's distinguished service with a robe of honour and a turban. Turbans varied in style to reflect the cultures of different regions, such as Badakhshan (Tajikistan and Afghanistan), Yemen, Syria and India.
- The previous Imam, Aga Khan III, also used to grant shawls to honorary workers and servants. A shawl was occasionally given for use as a funeral shroud, as during the Fatimid period.
- Service medals to recognise long and distinguished service.
- Medals, graded according to levels of service, may also be awarded at the time of the jubilees.

Material contributions to the cause of *dīn*

To safeguard, consolidate and spread the Divine message, the Prophet relied on the willingness of the faithful to sacrifice their persons and belongings. Of them the Quran says: ﴿Allah has bought from the believers their selves and their possessions for theirs (in return) is the garden (of Paradise); they fight in the cause of Allah.﴾⁷³

From time to time, the Prophet was in need of material means for the success of his mission. Reports indicate that he personally urged men of wealth to support him, such as when he received contributions of money and mounts for the expedition to Tabūk.⁷⁴ Some of the wealthy, such as his son-in-law 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (a

future caliph), responded generously,⁷⁵ and others more modestly. A man named Ibn Yāmīn b. ‘Umayr b. Ka’b al-Naḍrī came across two people weeping at not having been able to join the expedition to Tabūk for lack of a mount. He gave them a camel and some dates.⁷⁶ A year earlier, on the expedition to Sayf al-Baḥr when food was scarce, Qays b. Sa’d, on three successive days had a camel slaughtered to feed the Prophet’s party. A man of the clan of al-Najjār gave a stronghold to the Prophet.⁷⁷ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf is reported to have contributed large sums during the Prophet’s lifetime:⁷⁸

“‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf gave 4,000 from his wealth in charity during the lifetime of the Prophet. Then he gave in charity forty thousand, then he gave in charity 40,000, then he gave in charity 40,000. Then he gave 500 horses for the sake of God. Then he gave away 1,500 beasts of burden for the sake of God. And the majority of his wealth came from business.’

Every level of assistance, sincerely given in the service of *dīn*, elicited the promise of a beatific return. ‘Whoever helps a seeker of knowledge with a dirham’, says a ḥadīth, ‘will be given glad tidings of paradise . . . and Allah will open a door of light for him in his grave’.⁷⁹

As, after the Prophet, the responsibility of guiding the community devolved upon the Imams, the Quranic call⁸⁰ (9:41) to ‘strive with wealth and life’ came to be interpreted as the struggle to establish and propagate the *da‘wat-i ḥaqq*, the mission of truth, in the name of the Imam of the Time.⁸¹ A later Fatimid source, *al-Mūjaza*, explained that the Imam needed to mobilise material resources ‘to increase the might of his community and strengthen the foundations of the religion’.⁸² In India, the call was conveyed in the *ginans* of the *pīrs*. Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, for instance, enthuses on behalf of the Imam’s *murīds*, ‘We will follow the path of our dīn and give (for it) abundantly’.⁸³ Reports indicate that the response to the appeal was universal.

Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān’s *Iftitāḥ al-da‘wa* is among the earliest extant accounts of the history of the *da‘wa*. In it he writes that the *dā‘ī* of Yemen, Ibn Ḥawshab, used to send periodic reports to the Imam

on the progress of the mission. In reply, he received letters from the Imam. The *dā'ī* then received a letter in which Imam 'Abd Allāh al-Rāḍī announced the designation of al-Mahdī as the next Imam, in whose favour the *da'wa* was instructed to elicit allegiance. With his written response of submission, Ibn Ḥawshab sent offerings in cash and kind, including 'exquisite objects' and embroidered robes (*tirāz*) from Ismailis in Yemen. The Imam handed these over to his heir, al-Mahdī, as '*a blessing of your dominion*'.

A similar account pertaining to the period of concealment, *saṭr*, before the advent of Imam al-Mahdī is given by a trusted servant in the court of Imam-caliph al-'Azīz. In it, the author reports that the Imams, then resident in Salamiyya, Syria, continually received delegations from *dā'īs* of different regions who brought with them religious dues, voluntary gifts and correspondence.⁸⁴

The mission in the Maghreb at the time of Imam al-Mahdī was under the stewardship of the *dā'ī* Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Shī'ī (d. 911). Like other *dā'īs*, Abū 'Abd Allāh strictly adhered to Quranic injunctions in matters of finance and rejected irregularly procured funds. This happened, for example, when riches were brought to him after the conquest of Tobna and Belezma. He refused to accept any wealth which had been acquired without justification in the Quran and the Sunna and ordered its return to the rightful owners.⁸⁵

The Imams also received gifts of large sums directly from individual *murīds*, which the Imams acknowledged through letters. One such letter, from Imam-caliph al-Manṣūr, is preserved in the biography of Jawdhār. The letter refers to a submission of 10,000 dinars from Jawdhār to the Imam. Of this, the Imam accepted only 1,000 dinars, citing the verse of the Quran⁸⁶ that Allah does not burden any person with more than he is able to bear.⁸⁷

Several historical sources also attest to the practice of *najwā*, a voluntary offering to the Imam by *murīds* who attended the teaching sessions on doctrine known as *majālis al-ḥikma*. According to al-Musabbihī, a court chronicler at the time of Imam-caliph al-Ḥākim, the *najwā* was sometimes offered in gold and silver.⁸⁸ Al-Qāḍī



al-Nu'mān reports that a similar practice had prevailed in Ifriqiya. The Egyptian historian, al-Maqrizī (d. 1441) states that at the end of these teaching sessions, male and female participants would approach the chief *dā'ī* to kiss his hands. The *dā'ī* would stroke their head with a hand-written document of the Imam where his personal motto, '*alāma*', was ascribed. The *dā'ī* was authorised to accept *najwā* from believers who lived in Cairo, Old Cairo, their districts and Upper Egypt. The normal amount offered was three and one-third dirhams. There were those among the wealthy congregants who contributed ten times as much, which they submitted with notes on which their names were written. These offerings were distinguished, and each was acknowledged by a letter from the Imam saying, '*May Allah bless you, your wealth, your posterity and your faith*'. The believer would preserve this letter with pride.⁸⁹

The practice of *najwā* dates from the time of the Prophet and is commended by the Quran where the term is used in the sense of consultation with the Prophet: 'O ye who believe! When you consult the Apostle in private, advance a voluntary offering. That will be best for you, and most conducive to purity (of conduct). But if you find not (the wherewithal), Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.'⁹⁰ As is also affirmed in general *tafsīr* literature, after this verse was revealed, the first person to implement the practice was Imam Ali.⁹¹

Monetary contributions: inferences

The following principles may be inferred from the historical practice of offering monetary contributions in support of *dīnī*, and, by extension, *dunyāwī* causes.

Scriptural tradition and the actual practice place a strict ethical onus on a person to ensure that what he submits is from his honest earnings. When evidence is available that a contribution emanates from sources which have accrued by unacceptable means, it is declined.

A person must neither be niggardly nor extravagant in making contributions. When a contribution may evidently overtax the capacity of the contributor, the response suggests a level which will not be burdensome. The principle also applies to contribution in time.

Gradations of contributions were implicitly recognised in that much larger contributions were individually acknowledged by letters of blessings from the Imam. Voluntary services were also differentially recognised.

***Dā'īs'* self-image of their role**

In the previous sections, there is an anecdotal, historical illustration of how services to the *dīnī* cause were acknowledged. An interesting counterpoint is provided by how those, who gave of themselves to this cause, perceived their duty.

- The Fatimid *hujja* al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī wrote in his *Dīwān*: 'Had I lived in the time of the Prophet, I would not have failed to reach the degree of his Salmān, and he would have openly said to me: 'You are from my *Ahl al-Bayt*.'
- Ḥamid al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, who served Imam-caliph al-Ḥākim, considered his intellectual contribution to the service of *da'wa* as his *zakāt* to the Imam on the gift of knowledge bestowed on him.⁹² The Imam described the *dā'ī*'s teaching, the *kalima*, which helps one to understand the faith, as more precious than abundance of material wealth. The latter will not accompany one to the hereafter while the *kalima* sustains the eternal life of the soul.⁹³
- A *ḥadīth* of the Prophet likens the mission of the Imam to Noah's ark: 'My *Ahl al-Bayt* is like Noah's ark. Whoever boards it is saved; whoever fails, drowns'.⁹⁴ In his *Asās al-ta'wīl*, al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān refers to senior *dā'īs* as planks of this ark.⁹⁵ Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn calls it the ark of truth, a voyage which is the safest



way to the destined place. He implores his listeners to build the vessel in the name of Ali, and load it with the weight of truth.⁹⁶

- It is in this metaphorical sense that Nāṣir-i Khusraw refers to himself as: 'I am the plank of Noah's ark in Khorasan . . . the shepherd of knowledge sent by the Moses of his Time'.⁹⁷ His poetry had a noble purpose, that of singing 'the praises of the Prophet's family.' Like al-Kirmānī, Nāṣir-i Khusraw considered his knowledge a blessing in answer to his unswerving loyalty to the Prophet's family.

Nāṣir-i Khusraw had lived a life of comfort as a state functionary, in the Saljuk court, until his conscience stirred him into searching for, so as to serve, the Imam of the Time. In his poems, he brushes aside all the consequential sufferings and misery of lonely exile in remote Yumgan, as a small price to pay for the privilege of serving the Imam. He prided himself of being in the company of such honourable servants of the Imam as Salmān al-Fārsī. Had Salmān not been shunned by those who had opposed the rights of Ali and his family? He himself would rather starve than compromise his integrity:

*I'm not distressed and helpless in my work
Low and high confess to my excellence.
But I'd rather endure hunger
Than accept food from an ignoble hand.*⁹⁸

*Now the free men of the world
seek my company because
I have become the chosen of Ali,
The favourite of Allah.*⁹⁹

*Spread the words of Haydar if you fear not
to be imprisoned in Yumgan!*¹⁰⁰

Women members of the Ismaili *da'wa*

Service in the *da'wa* was not exclusively a male preserve. In early Muslim society, the transmission of Prophetic traditions played a central educational role. Women transmitters of repute were as much an authority as male. This practice began in the Prophet's own family. Fatima al-Zahra is remembered as among the earliest transmitters, as is Hazrat Aisha, the Prophet's youngest wife. Numerous female contemporaries of the Prophet are said to have passed on information about him. Sukayna, or Sakīna, the daughter of Imam Ḥusayn, was respected for her vast learning, while Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, founder of the eponymous *madhab*, was a student of Sayyida Nafisa, the daughter of Imam Ḥasan b. 'Alī.¹⁰¹ 'Ā'isha bint. Ṭalḥa, the granddaughter of the caliph Abū Bakr, and the daughters of Mālik b. Anas and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, also founders of *madhabs* named after them, similarly played an important educational role during the formative centuries of Islamic history. Prominent male scholars such as the great *ḥadīth* authority Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (1772–1449), the litterateur and historian Ibn Khallikān (1211–1282), and the Egyptian polymath Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (1445–1505) counted many women as among their teachers.¹⁰² Among the prominent women scholars of the pre-modern period were Zubayda bt. As'ad b. Ismā'il¹⁰³ whose father and brother both held the office of *Shaykh al-Islām* of the Ottoman Empire. In the sub-continental Ismaili tradition, Sayyida Imām Begum (1785–1866) has many *ginans* attributed to her.¹⁰⁴

As during the Prophet's time, material support was necessary to sustain the work of the *da'wa*. But evidence indicates that for *dā'īs* and *pīrs*, this work was largely an honorary commitment.

Aḥmad al-Nisābūrī was a senior *dā'ī* at the time of Imam-caliphs al-'Azīz and al-Ḥākim. His treatise, *al-Risāla al-Mūjiza*, gives a profile of the *dā'īs* of that age. Some of them belonged to wealthy, prominent families, while many pursued a variety of occupations. For instance, the first *dā'ī* of Iraq, Ḥusayn al-Ahwāzī, earned his living as a tailor



Illustration 30: Asafi Mosque and the Bara Imambara, Lucknow, India, photographed in the 1860s.

Image courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

and guardian of harvested dates.¹⁰⁵ In the mountains of Syria, the *dā'ī* Abū Ya'qūb Ishāq b. Aḥmad al-Sijzī worked as a cotton carder. The first *dā'ī* of Yemen, Ibn Ḥawshab, was a cotton trader in Aden.

Nīsābūrī's treatise describes certain *dā'īs* as *mujāhid*, an indication of their having forsaken their homes and property to make themselves available in the service of the *da'wa*. On the other hand, every *dā'ī* is a real *mujāhid*, a true warrior, ready to sacrifice his person and possessions to the cause of *dīn*. The *dā'ī*'s noblest of duties is to educate the souls of people. He undertakes that duty on behalf of the Imam who inherits it from the Prophet to whom it was entrusted by Allah: 'Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good exhortation'.¹⁰⁶ The benefit that one receives from that call is a Divine grace, and a trust. It behoves the beneficiary, as a mark of gratitude, to pass on that learning to others, generation after generation.¹⁰⁷ 'No mu'min deserves that name unless he prepares and educates another mu'min like himself,' the treatise cites Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz.¹⁰⁸



Illustration 31: The *khānaqāh* complex of Farag b. Barqūq, Cairo, 1400–1411.

Image courtesy IIS, London.

‘Be silent *dā’īs* for us’, says Imam Ja‘far al-Šādiq,¹⁰⁹ an exhortation to each *murīd* of the Imam, age after age, to be an envoy of that Prophetic call which illuminates the spirit and the intellect. Those who give of themselves, in any way, to the service of that call are honoured in tradition as the *vanguard of Islam*, the pious accolade first conferred by the revelation on the *muhājirūn* and *anṣār*. They were the first to heed the call when the nascent message was under severe threat.

Part II: generosity in support of spaces of worship

A historical note

The term *masjid* as it occurs in the Quran, *ḥadīths*, and other early sources, had a generic application to spaces of worship irrespective



of the different religious traditions which they served. As late as the 14th century, Ibn Khaldūn used it in this general sense, applying it also to ‘the fire temples of the Persians and the temples of the Greeks’.¹¹⁰ Within the tradition of Islamic piety, besides *masjids* which began to develop during the Prophet’s time, other complementary institutions began to evolve almost immediately thereafter and subsequently developed under a variety of names, ranging from *ribāt* and *zāwiya* to *khānaqāh*, *tekke*, *jamatkhana* and *imāmbārā*.¹¹¹ All of them drew their inspiration and ‘legitimation’ from such Quranic verses as: ‘houses which Allah has permitted to be raised for the glorification of His name in them’,¹¹² and from the practice of meditation which these verses inspired among the Prophet’s companions.

The rich variety of institutions which complement the *masjid*, itself a varied category, attest to the historical fact that Muslims owe their spiritual allegiances to different religious authorities. The theme of voluntary support in this section applies to *masjids* as well as to these complementary institutions.

Support for spaces of gathering: the articulation of merit and motive—an anecdotal, historical illustration

Tradition attaches special veneration to houses of prayers. Helping to build, maintain and keep them clean has always been considered both a voluntary and an obligatory duty, *farḍ kifā’ī*. This latter notion, which goes back to the very early history of Islam, refers to what may be called socially obligatory duties of sufficiency. They do not devolve upon specific individuals but each capable Muslim is responsible for their satisfactory implementation. When some Muslims perform such duties, the rest are absolved of their responsibility. The onus is on each individual to remain aware whether these duties are being performed satisfactorily. If they are not, then the responsibility rests with the community concerned, where each capable member is answerable for their non-performance. In the Shi’i Muslim tradition,

authority in this respect belongs to the hereditary Imam of the Time. In the Sunni tradition it was once the caliph's and was subsequently assumed by de facto rulers. Ensuring the safety of the community and safeguarding its vital interests, the propagation of the faith, the proper burial of a Muslim, and feeding the poor, are examples of traditionally recognised socially obligatory duties. Groups of volunteers, men, women and children, who help keep houses of prayers clean, and supply water to congregants, are, therefore, as familiar a sight in the Muslim societies of Vancouver and London as they are in the towns and villages of Egypt, West Africa or the subcontinent. In tradition, the merit of the duty with respect to spaces of religious gathering is articulated as poignantly as that relating to other aspects of the *da'wa*. This is illustrated below.

During the Prophet's time

In the face of Meccan hostility, the Prophet and his Companions were driven to secret alleyways and private homes to perform their prayers. Upon his arrival in Medina, one of the first 'public' duties that the Muslims undertook was the construction of a house for the Prophet with a large area for the conduct of many public functions, spiritual, social and political, over which the Prophet presided. In the collective memory of the community, the place came to be revered as the second holiest *masjid*, after the *masjid al-haram* in Mecca.¹¹³ The act of its construction mirrored that of the founding of the new community. The Prophet himself joined in the labour, accompanied by Imam Ali and close companions, notably 'Ammār b. Yāsir. As if to underline the resonance of *dīn* with the piety of their task, the Prophet and his followers sang as they worked:

'There is no life but the life of the next world.

*O Allah, have mercy on the muhajirin and the ansar.'*¹¹⁴

Observing that some Muslims were reluctant to do their share of the work, Imam Ali extemporised:

*'He who labours hard at building a masjid
And he who stands aloof to avoid the dust
Are not on the same footing.'*¹¹⁵

When 'Ammār b. Yāsir, among the most diligent of workers, joined in the singing, he angered the shirkers. But he won the praise of the Prophet who said, 'He ['Ammār] invites them to heaven while they [the shirkers] invite him to hell. 'Ammār is as dear to me as my face'.¹¹⁶

Like its construction, the care of the *masjid* also elicited an intimately felt warm response from the Prophet and Imam Ali. 'Whoever sweeps a masjid, cleaning it of as little as a speck of dust, is forgiven', the Prophet is reported to have said.¹¹⁷ He prayed for the welfare of a woman who removed her husband's spittle at the *qibla* and perfumed the spot. According to another tradition, when the Prophet was informed that a person who used to sweep the *masjid* had died, he went to the grave of the deceased to offer his prayers. 'One who



Illustration 32: Jamatkhana, Zanzibar.

Image courtesy Ismailmail.net, I. I. Dewji.

respects the masjids', said Imam Ali, 'and avoids expectoration will meet his Lord's forgiveness.'¹¹⁸

In the modern Ismaili period, one of the earliest jamatkhana in Africa was established in Zanzibar in 1905 with the help of a donation from Mukhi Kassam Damani. When he pledged his commitment, Aga Khan III, said in a *farmān*:

'You intend to build and offer me a jamatkhana. For that you will be rewarded with a house of noor in the hereafter. A house of noor is far better than a house of diamonds.'¹¹⁹

The Imam similarly acknowledged the services of volunteers who kept *jamatkhanas* clean. In a *farmān* he said that those who clean the Imam's house, would have their own homes purified by the Imam in the hereafter.

As the Prophet's call to Islam gained wider acceptance, *masjids* increased in number and spread. While the textual information is not clear-cut, according to *ḥadīths*, the trend began during his own lifetime. Many of them were tribal *masjids*, built with his consent and encouragement. According to one tradition, on his flight to Medina, the Prophet found a *masjid* in the village of Qubā', just outside Medina, and prayed there.¹²⁰ It belonged to the tribe of Amr b. 'Awf, and had been erected by earlier *muhājirūn* and *anṣār*. According to another tradition, it was during a prayer in the *masjid* of the Banū Salīma that the Prophet received the revelation concerning the change of the *qibla* from Jerusalem to the Ka'ba in Mecca.¹²¹

On the other hand, the hypocrites, *munāfiqūn*, had also erected an 'opposition *masjid*', *masjid al-ḍirār*, in order to sow division and unbelief in the new community.¹²² Their mischief is severely condemned in the Quran, and the Prophet is asked: ﴿You shall not stand up in it, for verily a masjid which is founded on piety from the first day of its existence has more right that you should stand in it. In it are men who desire to purify themselves.﴾¹²³ In the same spirit, the Quran precludes any but the sincere from building and maintaining *masjids*: ﴿He only shall tend Allah's masjids who believes in Allah



and the Last Day and observes proper worship and practises regular charity and fears none save Allah. ﴿﴾¹²⁴ Hence, the sense of pious privilege which tradition attaches to one's contribution towards the building and upkeep of houses of prayers.

Developments after the Prophet: the early phase

During the 7th century, when Islam spread to Iraq, Syria and North Africa, the early *masjids* were built by the caliphs' provincial governors to serve as a civil focus, functioning as a place of prayer, a community centre and a seat of public administration. But other wealthy individuals, men and women, also began to build and set aside resources for maintaining *masjids* since such generosity was viewed as a duty of great piety in the light of the teaching of the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet and the Imams. 'For one who builds a masjid, Allah will build a home in Paradise'¹²⁵ is an oft-quoted *ḥadīth*. A similar version is narrated by Imams al-Bāqir and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. To both Imams is also attributed the saying that love for Allah and building Allah's *masjids* averts Divine punishment. Such pious commendation finds an echo in all ages, among Muslims of all persuasions and cultures. A contemporary example in the African Sufi tradition is a poem composed by Shaykh El-Hadji Malick Sy (1855–1922), founder of the *zāwiya Tijāniyya* of Tivaouane and the chief *marabout* of Gambia, which says: 'Whosoever wishes to enter Paradise without punishment and without the need to give an exact account of his actions at the Resurrection, should build a masjid for Allah the Merciful'.¹²⁶ At the opposite end of the globe, in the interior of a *masjid* in Java are inscribed the names of Allah, the *shahāda* and the *ḥadīth*: 'Allah has built a house in paradise for whoever has built a masjid for Allah'.¹²⁷

From the early decades of Islam's history, therefore, wealthy individuals from different walks of life, including rulers and high state officials acting in their personal capacity, have vied in building and supporting a variety of spaces of worship. In the initial

phase of this pious zeal, they were built at places variously associated with the memory of the Prophet. The *Masjid al-Fath* outside Mecca, for instance, celebrated the victory over the Meccans; the *Masjid al-Bay'a* outside Mecca honoured the site where the Prophet first received the allegiance of the *anṣār*. *Masjids* also became associated with the Prophet's family and companions. The house where the Prophet lived with Hazrat Khadija, also called *Mawlid al-Sayyida Fātima* as Fatima al-Zahra was born there, became a revered site where a *masjid* was built. Some *masjids* were built as a mark of gratitude for seeing a revelation or the Prophet in a dream.

Subsequent developments

With the passage of time, religious edifices became more numerous and varied in response to the pressures of demands of a growing and increasingly diverse population. As different communities of interpretation became gradually established, *masjids* began to be associated with specific schools of law, and to be dissociated from the ruling authority.

As a result, there began a growth of private *masjids* in North Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere to serve the needs of communities which did not subscribe to the state-sponsored *madhhab*. The Sunnis and the Shi'is usually had separate *masjids*. Even among the Sunnis, *masjids* were built exclusively for specific *madhhabs*. The law of *waqf*, as it evolved, recognised the right of the benefactor to found a *masjid* for the *madhhab* to which he belonged, to the exclusion of the others.¹²⁸ The growing diversity in the religious life of the Muslim community is also noted by al-Māwardī (d. 1058) (and later by Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406)) who recorded the existence of 'official' *masjids* under the patronage and control of the caliph or his representatives, and private *masjids* (*'ammiyya*), the responsibility for which rested with their sponsors, be these individuals or groups.

By the 12th century, the physical character of the Muslim city had radically changed, portraying a rich and varied religious architecture.



Significantly, the types and numbers of buildings with a religious purpose, but distinct from the *masjid*, proliferated.

The varied religious architecture, reflecting diverse conceptions of piety and poles of spiritual allegiances, was also a consequence of a widening orbit of affluence among the piety-minded. Both trends encouraged a shift in patronage away from an emphasis on *masjids* to a variety of complementary institutions. Among the main beneficiaries of the rising levels of generosity was the Sufi institution of *khānaqāh* which, after the 12th century, became almost as ubiquitous as the *masjid* in much of the Muslim world. By then synonymous with *ribāṭ* and *zāwiya*, which had earlier remained on the periphery of Muslim lands, the *khānaqāh* also came to be known by local names such as *tekke* in Turkey or *jamatkhana* in India where this term applied to the *khānaqāh* of the Chisti Order.

The building and upkeep of pious institutions has not, historically, been viewed as any part of the duty of the public purse. The diversity within the *umma* and the sheer scale of the commitment would have



Illustration 33: Minaret and helical external staircase of the mosque of Ibn Tulūn.

Image courtesy IIS, London.

made such a policy impractical. Whereas, therefore, a few ‘*Sultani masjids*’ enjoyed state patronage, and rulers might, from time to time, allocate some revenue from *bayt al-māl* (treasury) to religious objects, the responsibility for the construction and upkeep of religious edifices has always fallen primarily on those whose needs they ministered.¹²⁹ The challenge has been traditionally met by the pious.

The benefactors of pious institutions usually created *waqfs* or pious endowments for their upkeep. Ibn Ṭulūn, an Abbasid (r. 868–884) governor of pre-Fatimid Egypt, made over a large number of houses in support of the *masjid* and hospital built by him. The Fatimid Imam-caliph al-Ḥākim created large endowments in favour of a number of congregational mosques (*jāmi*’s) to which he transferred dwelling houses, shops, mills and warehouses. Al-Ḥākim also came to the rescue of previously endowed *masjids* which were in danger of decay for lack of resources. For instance, he helped out the heirs of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, a 7th-century governor of Egypt, who had become so financially distressed that they had sought the Imam’s permission to tear down the *masjid* founded by their ancestor, in order to sell its bricks and stones.¹³⁰ The Imam acquired this *masjid*, as well as that founded by Ibn Ṭulūn, for large amounts paid to their descendants in order to ensure their proper upkeep.

The practice was widespread. Rulers, princes and vizirs, as well as other wealthy individuals, lavished generous patronage on different types of spaces of gathering. By and large they were driven by the desire to act piously, though some were also motivated by political ends which they wished to secure by bringing influential institutions under their control and winning the support of key ‘*ulamā*’.

Like the desire to found a pious institution, the wish to make restorations or additions to religious buildings was often driven by deeply felt religious impulses. The Musta’lian Caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ (r. 1130–1149) built a *maqṣūra*, an enclosed prayer space in the forepart of al-Azhar, and named it after Fatima al-Zahra because she had been seen there in a dream.¹³¹ In 1260, during the reign of Baybars I, the amir ‘Izz al-Dīn Aydamur al-Ḥillī, who had lived near al-Azhar, donated a



Illustration 34: Doorway of the *khānaqāh* of Baybars al-Jāshankīr in Cairo.
Image courtesy IIS, London.

large sum of money for its restoration. His generosity was motivated by the belief that his good conduct as a neighbour of al-Azhar would be rewarded in the next world.¹³²

Extracts of *waqf* deeds were often inscribed on the walls of pious institutions, 'the better to prevent the endowment falling into oblivion'.¹³³ It was not unusual, as time passed, for some institutions to be named after their benefactors. It was also a common practice to inscribe the name of the benefactor, together with some pious texts, on part of a religious edifice. A marble inscription on a doorway of Ibn Ṭulūn's *jāmi'* notes the restoration carried out in 1077 by the Fatimid vizir Badr al-Gamālī. An inscription over the main entrance to the *jāmi'* of Imam-caliph al-Ḥākim records the restoration by Baybars al-Jāshankir (1304). A *minbar*, near the *qibla*, in the *masjid* of al-Ṣāliḥ Ṭalā'i' (1160) carries an inscription acknowledging



Illustration 35: Part of a *waqf* document inscribed on the walls of the Cairo madrasa of the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Barsbay, built in 1424.

Image courtesy IIS, London.



it as a gift from the Amir Baktimur al-Jugandār (1299/1300).¹³⁴ The inscription along the façade and the door of the *khānaqāh* of Baybars al-Jāshankīr in Cairo named him as the founder until it was chiselled away by a later Mamluk sultan. On the lintels of two inner entrance doors of the Dome of the Rock, the Umayyad Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 685–705) and later the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma’mūn (r. 813–833) placed their names as patrons.

Part III: answerability vis-à-vis contributions to the *dīnī* cause

The notion of answerability in a general sense is firmly entrenched in scriptural tradition. Trusts and covenants, due even to enemies, must be fulfilled. The fiduciary duty owed to weaker parties, such as orphans, is forcefully stressed. Muslim law is, thus, very strict in demanding faithful execution of the duty owed by those to whom funds for the care of the weak have been entrusted. The institution of *waqf*, however, came to be treated in a different way under the law; this aspect of *waqf* is discussed later in the section.

Like the *muhājirūn* and *anṣār*, those who came to the aid of *dīn* with their persons and possessions, came to the aid of the Prophet and, after him, the Imams to whom the Divine mission has been entrusted.¹³⁵ The mandate to uphold, defend and promote this mission is personal to the Imam as it was to the Prophet. When challenged by the hypocrites, the Prophet’s unfettered, discretionary authority to determine how to direct and use the support for *dīn*, submitted to him, unconditionally, was emphatically affirmed and re-affirmed by the Revelation.¹³⁶ Similarly, when the faint-hearted opposed the Prophet’s decision to mobilise resources, human and material, to fight the enemies of *dīn*, the Revelation firmly reaffirmed his judgement as Divinely inspired.¹³⁷

It is generally accepted that such verses enunciate the universal principle of the Prophet’s authority, the import of which goes

beyond the specific historical context and is exercisable by its current holder. In Shi'i Islam, this authority vests in the hereditary Imam of the Time. Thus, following the Prophetic antecedents, the Imams expended the resources, offered in support of their mission, in ways which, in their judgement, best served the interests of the *da'wa*.

As it was for the Prophet, so it is for the Imam to direct and utilise, as he wills, whatever support is submitted to him for the cause of his mission. In such support, there is no third-party fiduciary interest. Nor is the Imam answerable to those who submit to him their own selves and property for the cause of *dīn*. Those who hold offerings, made to him, do so at his pleasure; to him they owe their absolute duty of trust. In the past, such permission was granted in a diploma of investiture, a specimen of which is preserved by the Egyptian historian of the Mamluk period, al-Qalqashandī (d. 1418).¹³⁸ At any time, the Imam could revoke this authority. When Imam al-Mahdī was in transit at a place called Ikjan in the Maghrib, he took possession of the funds which had been collected in his name by the *dā'īs* in the region; not all *dā'īs* were happy at being relieved of their custodial function.¹³⁹

The *da'wa* in the past had its code of ethics, an elaborate account of which is given in al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's *al-Himma* and Aḥmad al-Naysābūrī's *al-Mūjiza*.¹⁴⁰ A summary of its relevant aspects is given below. In the contemporary period, jamati leaders and officials abide by the rules and regulations of the Ismaili Constitution which the Imam of the Time ordains and hold their office at the pleasure of the Imam, to whom they owe their allegiance.

Traditionally to serve the *da'wa* is a special privilege which the Imam confers directly or through an intermediary. The *dā'īs*' mission is to help nurture in the jamat affectionate devotion to the Imam. 'One pleases God by pleasing the Imam and obeys God by obeying the Imam.'¹⁴¹ For the sake of the Imam, *murīds* should be ready to sacrifice themselves and their possessions.

The offerings which the believers submit for the Imam's mission are given willingly and without condition, and they are at the Imam's



discretion to deploy. The *dā'ī* must not seek to enrich himself with this money, nor demand more for his tasks than is strictly necessary. To conceal for his personal use any portion of these funds is considered a great sin against *dīn*. The *dā'ī* must also avoid an extravagant life-style unless circumstances demand some level of grandeur for the effective performance of his duties.

The Imam's funds must only be applied to purposes sanctioned by his authority, and that too with scrupulous care. At the same time, the *dā'ī* should not be pennywise and miserly in his disbursements as this may encourage fraud and other unworthy habits among his subordinates.

In selecting candidates to serve the *da'wa* and to help in the governance of the community, the *dā'īs* judgement must be based on the criterion of merit. He must not let material affluence, personal friendship or sub-servience to him or any personal obligation to them or other factors of nepotism influence his judgement.

To ensure transparency and probity, subordinates and the Imam's *murīds* generally must feel able to intervene when irregularities occur, by reporting these to the Imam through his accredited representative.

In sum, answerability is owed absolutely to the Imam.

Answerability: *waqfs* for spaces of gathering and other religious objects

Scriptural exhortations on the sanctity of trust came to shape the general Muslim law, exemplified in the laws governing the institution of *waqf*. The law, as it evolved, sanctioned greater interventions in *waqfs* which supported religious objects than those created for social or public benefits. Thus, while the law empowered the founder of a *waqf* to stipulate how and by whom the institution was to be managed, the *qāḍī*, as the judicial official concerned, was legally able to exercise close influence in its administration. He could set aside, for instance, the founder's choice of the person as the *waqf's* administrator if he was found to be unworthy of that office, even if that

person was the founder himself. Thus, the founder of a *ribāṭ* who had appointed himself as its administrator (*mutawallī*) for the duration of his lifetime, could be relieved of that position for irreligious conduct such as indulging in drink.

The law and practice also imposed greater official control over the appointment of key personnel for *masjids* irrespective of the wishes of their founders. The imams of *jāmi*'s were appointed by the caliph. Those of *masjids* in city quarters were appointed by the caliph, or by him but with the consent of, or directly by, the people of the quarters where the *masjids* were located. It has been suggested that it was in order to side-step any form of local or central control in the appointment of officials that Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 1092), the Saljuk vizir, opted for *madrasas* rather than *masjids* as his network of influence.¹⁴²

Like other *waqfs*, the administrator of the *waqf* for a religious or social purpose was also duty bound to preserve its assets and maximise its proceeds. The 1009 *waqf* deed for al-Azhar, created by Imam-caliph al-Ḥākim, for instance, sought to ensure the institution's proper upkeep from income accrued from rental premises made over to it. The deed put the onus on the administrator to maximise this income: 'Whoever is responsible for the management and control of the wakf in every period shall make lettings in a God-fearing way so as to ensure the best advantage by making the offer known among those desirous of renting the premises'.¹⁴³

We have noted above that the custom of Ismailis gathering in exclusive sessions (*majālis*) dedicated to their *ṭarīqa* practices has prevailed since Fatimid times. Such sessions have been held in spaces designated by the Imam or his accredited representatives. Everything pertaining to such spaces and their functions has historically been the prerogative of, and subject to the authority of, the Imam of the Time. Traditionally a jamatkhana in the Ismaili *tariqa* is a space designated by the Imam of the Time for *ṭarīqa* practices. The jamatkhana is not a *masjid*, and unlike *masjids* its control vests in the Imam of the Time. The principle extends to other *dīnī* related or jamati properties such as burial grounds. Resources which the *murīds* offer for



their construction and upkeep, as for other *dīnī* purposes, are at the Imam's absolute discretionary control. Answerability with regard to such properties and their functions, as for other *dīnī* purposes, is owed exclusively to the Imam of the Time.

Since the time of Imam Ali, the fundamental motive which impels those who readily offer their persons and possessions in aid of the Imam's cause, and the response their deeds evoke, are grounded in the eternal premise of submission, which defines the personal relationship between a *murīd* and the Imam. The protocol of recognition of gifts, whether of material resource or time and knowledge in the service of *dīn* has been specific to the faith, using the language and symbolism of the faith and located clearly within the context and ethos of the faith. Such symbols, reflecting the continuity of the original premises attuned to the age, have been lovingly treasured by the *murīds*.

- 53 Cf. Quran 2:195: *وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ*
- 54 *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, ḥadīth 4415: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَغْلِقْهَا وَأَتَوَكَّلْ أَوْ: اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَغْلِقْهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ. أَطْلُقْهَا وَأَتَوَكَّلْ قَالَ صَلَّى*
- 55 Bekkin, 'Islamic Insurance', pp. 3–34.
- 56 Muhammad Samiullah, 'Prohibition of Riba (Interest) & Insurance in the Light of Islam', *Islamic Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2 (1982), pp. 53–76.
- 57 Murtaḍā Muṭaḥharī, *Mas'ala-yi ribā wa bank, biḥ zamīma-yi mas'ala-yi bīmāh (The Problem of Ribā and Banking with Regard to the Problem of Insurance)* (11th ed., Tehran, 2001), pp. 123–186, esp. pp. 129–131.
- 58 Sheila Nu Nu Htay, Mustapha Hamat, Wan Zamri Wan Ismail and Syed Ahmed Salman, 'Takaful (Islamic Insurance): Historical, Shari'ah and Operational Perspectives', *International Business Management*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2014), pp. 65–69; Vardit Rispler-Chaim, 'Insurance and Semi-Insurance Transactions in Islamic History Until the 19th Century', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 34, no. 3 (1991), pp. 142–158.

7. Generosity in the Service of *Dīn*: A Historical Overview

- 1 Quran 17:70.
- 2 Quran 95:4–6.
- 3 Quran 41:53.
- 4 Landolt et al., ed., *An Anthology of Ismaili literature*, p. 85.
- 5 Charles Malik, *God and Man in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (Beirut, 1972), p. 163.
- 6 Cf. Quran 33:72.
- 7 Cf. Quran 7:171–176.
- 8 Quran 49:7–8.
- 9 Quran 2:18.
- 10 Quran 3:112.

- 11 Cf. Quran 17:70; 2:172; 28:77; 87:16–17; 93:4.
- 12 Quran 2:177.
- 13 Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, *Da‘ā’im al-Islām*, vol. 1, p. 17.
- 14 Quran 5:5; 47:7–9
- 15 Quoted in Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 106.
- 16 Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, *Da‘ā’im al-Islām*, vol. 1, p. 79.
- 17 Public address at Nairobi, 6 October 1982.
- 18 Quran 17:7 ﴿إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا﴾.
- 19 Qur‘ān 49:17.
- 20 Quran 3:146–148.
- 21 Quran 2:261.
- 22 Quran 57:18.
- 23 Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, *Da‘ā’im al-Islām*, vol. 12, p. 324.
- 24 Qur‘ān 59:8–10
- 25 Al-Dāraquṭnī, *al-Mu’talif wa al-mukhtalif*: ألا ترضى يا عبد الله أن يعطيك
الله بها داراً في الجنة؟
- 26 Quran 59:9.
- 27 Quoted in Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, pp. 99–100.
- 28 Qur‘ān 9:100.
- 29 Qur‘ān 4:95; 9:20.
- 30 Al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, ḥadīth 2654: مَنْ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمَ لِيَجَارِيَ بِهِ
الْعُلَمَاءَ، أَوْ لِيَمَارِيَ بِهِ السُّفَهَاءَ، أَوْ يَصْرِفَ بِهِ وَجْهَهُ النَّاسِ إِلَيْهِ أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ النَّارَ
- 31 Shaykh ‘Abbās Qummī, *Safinat al-bihar wa madinat al-ḥikam
wa’l-āthār ma’a taṭbīq al-nuṣūṣ al-wārida fihā ‘alā Biḥar al-anwār*
(Najaf, 1933), vol. 2, p. 700.
- 32 إِنَّ الرُّسُولَ لَنُورٌ يُسْتَضَاءُ بِهِ مُهْتَدٍ مِنْ سَيُوفِ اللَّهِ مَسْلُوكٌ English translation
quoted from Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, *Translations of Eastern
Poetry and Prose* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 22.
- 33 Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 107.
- 34 Rijāl al-Kashshī, ḥadīth 33: إن سلمان باب الله في الأرض من عرفه كان مؤمناً و
وإن سلمان متاً أهل البيت. من أنكره كان كافراً
- 35 Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, *Da‘ā’im al-Islām*, vol. 1, p. 81.
- 36 Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, trans. I.K.A. Howard (London,
1981), p. 182.

- 37 This prayer can be heard online at: <http://www.duas.org/kumayl.htm> (accessed 2 October 2019).
- 38 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, ed. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Maḥmūdī (Beirut, 1974), vol. 2, p. 478.
- 39 W. Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1957), p. 270, quoting al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, vol. 2, pp. 382–383.
- 40 Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, *Al-Himma*.
- 41 Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, *Da‘ā’im al-Islām*, vol. 1, p. 78.
- 42 S. Husain Jafri, *The Origins and Early Development of Shia Islam* (London, 1966), p. 250, quoting al-Kashshī, *Rijāl*, no. 113.
- 43 Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, *Al-Himma*.
- 44 Ginān: *Shet kahe tame saambhro vannotar*, verses 6 and 7. See also *Hojire prānī jyare tun girbhāstan vasaṃto*, verses 1–3.
- 45 Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Policies, and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (New York, 1994), p. 28.
- 46 For an introduction to the rise of the Fatimid state, see Shainool Jiwa, *The Fatimids*.
- 47 A number of these are held by the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto: AKM304; AKM670; AKM673; AKM675; and AKM669.
- 48 Haji, *Inside the Immaculate Portal*; Wladimir Ivanow, ‘Muḥammad al-Yamānī, Sirat al-ḥājjib Ja‘far’, *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts Cairo*, vol. 4 (1936), pp. 6–8, cited in Joseph van Ess, *Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra: A History of Religious Thought in Early Islam*, vol. 4 (Leiden, 2019), p. 134. The biography (*sīrat*) has been translated in English by Wladimir Ivanow in *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids* (Oxford, 1942), pp. 184–223.
- 49 Haji, *Inside the Immaculate Portal*, p. 25.
- 50 Ibid., p. 26.
- 51 Ibid., p. 54.
- 52 Ibid., pp. 120–121.
- 53 Ivanow, *Sirat Ja‘far al-Ḥājjib*, in *Ismaili Traditions concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, p. 218.

- 54 Cf. W. Björkman, 'Turban', *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1913–1936), vol. 8, pp. 885–893.
- 55 Jiwa, *The Founder of Cairo*, pp. 141, 218.
- 56 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz*, vol. 1, p. 460; for the *qaṣīda* written by Imam al-Mustanṣir upon al-Mu'ayyad's death, see al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *Dīwān*, ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn (Cairo, 1949), *qaṣīda* 60, p. 313. The English translation of the *qaṣīda* is from Tahera Qutbuddin, *al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī and Fatimid Da'wa Poetry* (Leiden, 2005).
- 57 C.E. Bosworth, 'Laḳab', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 5, pp. 618–631.
- 58 Ibid., p. 621 citing Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba* (Beirut, 1995), vol. 1, p. 425, and Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba fī ma'rifat al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 2, p. 114.
- 59 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umri, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. Kāmil Salmān al-Jabūrī and Mahdī al-Najam (Beirut, 1971), vol. 24, p. 86, n. 5.
- 60 C.E. Bosworth, 'Laḳab', citing al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz*, vol. 2, p. 15.
- 61 Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī, *Jāmi' al-tawārikh*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhuh and Muḥammad Muddaris Zanjānī (Tehran, 1960); pp. 112, 117, 118, 153, 158; 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā' Allāh Juwaynī, *Ta'rikh-i Jahān-gushā*, ed. M. Qazwīnī (Leiden, 1912–1937), vol. 3, pp. 305, 307–308, 311, 339–340, 365; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, in Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (Tehran, 1957–1959), vol. 1, p. 2.
- 62 Nadia Eboo Jamal, *Surviving the Mongols: Nizārī Qūhistānī and the Continuity of Ismaili Tradition in Persia* (London, 2002).
- 63 Vazīr Ali Muḥammad Jan Muḥammad Chunara (1881–1966), author of *Noorum Mubin*.
- 64 Information by al-waez Rai Abu Ali.
- 65 *Kitāb-i khiṭābāt-i 'āliya*, ed. Hūshang Ujāqī, Ismaili Society Series A, no. 14 (Bombay, 1963).
- 66 Ali Muḥammad Jan Muḥammad Chunara, *Noorum Mubin* (Bombay, 1936).

- 67 Ginān *Shahna Khat aviyya* by Syed Imam Shah. Information provided by Al-waez Rai Abu Ali.
- 68 *Tadhkirat al-Muluk: A Manual of Ṣafavid Administration*, trans. V. Minorsky (Cambridge, 1943, repr. 1980).
- 69 Al-waez Rai Abu Ali.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 *Taliqas* dated 15 and 19 December 1925, Nice.
- 73 Quran 9:111.
- 74 William Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, vol. 4 (London, 1861), p. 184.
- 75 *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *ḥadīth* 3785: قدم عثمان لجيش العسرة في غزوة تبوك تسعمائة وأربعين بعيراً، وستين فرساً أتم بها الألف، وجاء عثمان إلى رسول الله في جيش العسرة بعشرة آلاف دينار صها بين يديه.
- 76 Ibn Ishāq, quoted by al-Wāqidi, *Kitāb al-Tārikh wa'l-Maghāzī*, III, 994.
- 77 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh*, vol. 1, 1528.
- 78 Ibn al-Mubārak al-Marwazī, *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa 'l-raqā'iq*, Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī (Beirut, 1970), pp. 296–297. English translation in Feryal Salem, *The Emergence of Early Sufi Piety and Sunni Scholasticism: Abdallah B. Al-mubarak and the Formation Sunni Identity in the Second Islamic Century* (Leiden, 2016) , p. 127.
- 79 Ḥasan b. Abī 'l-Ḥasan al-Daylamī, *Irshād al-qulūb*, ed. Ḥāshim al-Milānī (Tehran, 1996), p. 170.
- 80 Quran 9:41: ﴿... وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ...﴾
- 81 al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'a'im al-Islām*, vol. 1, p. 425.
- 82 Al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Mūjiza al-Kāfiya*, cited in Wladimir Ivanow, 'The Organization of the Fatimid Propaganda', *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 15 (1939), p. 32.
- 83 Ginān *Sejdiye Sutare raja niuthra dhari*.
- 84 al-Yamānī, Muḥammad, *Sīrat Ja'far al-Hājib*, ed. W. Ivanow, in *Majallat Kullīyyat al-Ādāb bi'l-Jāmi'a al-Miṣriyya*, 4, part 2 (1936), pp. 33–107 English translation: W. Ivanow, *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of Fatimids* (London, 1942), pp. 185–186.

- 85 Ibn 'Idhārī, *Kitāb al-bayān al-mughrib fī ākhbār mulūk al-andalus wa'l-maghrib*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad 'Alī (Beirut, 1971), vol. 1, pp. 141–142. Ibn 'Idhārī was an Arab historian of Andalusia and the Maghrib who flourished in the 14th century.
- 86 Quran 2:286 ﴿لَا يَكْلِفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا . . .﴾
- 87 Haji, *Inside the Immaculate Portal* (London, 2012), p. 37.
- 88 Heinz Halm, *The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning* (London, 1997), p. 48, citing al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz*, vol. 1, p. 391, l. 19 ff.
- 89 See S.M. Stern, *Studies in Early Ismā'īlism* (Jerusalem, 1983), p. 242.
- 90 Quran 58:12.
- 91 See, for example, al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān* (Beirut, 1984), vol. 28, pp. 19–20.
- 92 Al-Kirmānī, ed. M.K. Ḥusayn, *Rāḥat al-'Aql* (Cairo, 1952).
- 93 Walker, *Hamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī*, p. 116.
- 94 al-Ṭabarānī, *Majma' al-baḥrayn fī zawā'id al-mu'jamayn, ḥadīth* 3793: مثل أهل بيتي فيكم كمثل سفينة نوح في قوم نوح من ركبها نجا، ومن تخلف عنها هلك.
- 95 See note 16, page 279 above.
- 96 Ginān, *Saloko Nano*, path 19: *Satgoor kahere, Naav kije Ali ke naamki / Ane maahe saachaa bhariye bhaar, / Pavan jo chaale premkaa, / To satgoor ootaare paar re.* ('The ocean of the world, has indeed a lot of water (one cannot swim across it by himself), and there is a heavy burden (of material responsibilities) on the head. If one sits in the boat of truth, than the True Guide will take you across.')
- 97 Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān-i ash'ār-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw*, ed. M. Minūwī and M. Muḥaqqī (Tehran, 1978), *qaṣīda* 90, line 50 amd *qaṣīda* 97, lines 32–34.
- 98 Annemarie Schimmel, *Make a Shield for Wisdom: Selected Verses from Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Dīwān* (London, 1993), p. 27.
- 99 Faquir M. Hunzai, trans., and Kutub Kassam, ed., *The Shimmering Light: Anthology of Ismaili Poems* (London, 1997), p. 56.

- 100 Schimmel, *Make a Shield for Wisdom*, p. 42.
- 101 Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*; Ruth Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections: From Ibn Sa'd to Who's Who* (Boulder, CO, 1994), p. 60.
- 102 Jonathan P. Berkey, 'Women and Islamic Education in the Mamluk Period', in Nikki R. Keddi and B. Baron, ed., *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender* (New Haven, CT, 1991), pp. 143–158.
- 103 She studied Law, philology and literature and published a *Diwān* of Persian and Turkish verses along with those of her father and brothers. Her poetry was said by her contemporaries to be peerless. Cf. Boris Liebrecht, *Die Rifā'iya aus Damaskus: Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr Kulturelles Umfeld* (Leiden, 2016), p. 356
- 104 Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy, 'Sacred Songs of Khoja Muslims: Sounded and Embodied Liturgy and Devotion', *Ethnomusicology*, vol. 48, no. 2 (2004), p. 267: 'The Kadiwala Sayyids of Kadi, Kacch, were important composers of ginans. They claimed descent from Pir Hasan Kabir ad-Din. The last composer was Sayyida Begum Shah Imam, the second known female author of gināns (the first having been Bai Budhai), who is remembered for accompanying herself on the *sarangi*, and for singing her compositions with the name of her Pir, Hasan Shah. She composed ten ginans still popular today.' Christopher Shackle and Zawahir Moir, *Ismaili Hymns from South Asia: An Introduction to the Ginans* (London, 1992); Zawahir Moir, 'Bibi Imam Begam and the End of the Isma'ili Ginanic Tradition', *Studies in Early Modern Indo-Aryan Languages, Literature and Culture: Research Papers 1992–1993*, ed. A. W. Entwistle and C. Salomon (New Delhi, 1999), pp. 249–265. See also Amrita Shodhan, 'The Entanglement of the Ginān in the Khoja Governance', in Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison, ed., *Gināns: Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir* (New Delhi, 2017), pp. 174–175.

- 105 Halm, *The Fatimids*, p. 18, citing Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. M. Jābir and A. al-Hinī (Cairo, 1984), vol. 25, p. 189.
- 106 Quran 16:125: ﴿ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ﴾
- 107 Ibn Ḥawshab, *Kitāb al-‘ālim wa’l-ghulām*, ed. and tr. James W. Morris as *The Master and the Disciple: An Early Islamic Spiritual Dialogue* (London, 2001), p. 64.
- 108 W. Ivanow, ‘The Organization of the Fatimid Propaganda’, p. 27.
- 109 Ibid., ‘i.e. those people who by mere behaviour in life make their religion so attractive to others that they begin to feel the desire to join it’, pp. 21–22.
- 110 Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Art and Beyond* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 107, citing Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddima*, trans. F. Rosenthal, vol. 2 (New York, 1948), pp. 249–251.
- 111 Mawani, *Beyond the Mosque*, pp. 68–88.
- 112 Quran 24:36: ﴿فِي بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا﴾; Nizami, ‘Some Aspects of Khānqah Life’, p. 6, citing Suhrawardī’s *‘Awārif al-Ma‘ārif* (Urdu translation, Lucknow, 1926), p. 123.
- 113 Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven, CT, 1973), p. 108.
- 114 Al-Bukhārī *Ṣāḥih*, ḥadīth 2872: اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّهُ لَا خَيْرَ إِلَّا خَيْرُ الْآخِرَةِ فَبَارِكْ فِي الْأَنْصَارِ وَالْمُهَاجِرَةِ
- 115 Cf. Hassan ul-Ameene, ‘Ali’s Lineage and Birth’, *Islamic Shi‘ite Encyclopaedia*, vol. 3 (Beirut, 1968), p. 25.
- 116 Ibid.
- 117 Ibn Bābaway, *Thawāb al-a‘māl* (Qum, 1898), p. 31: وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: « من كسب المسجد يوم الخميس وليلة الجمعة فأخرج منه من الزاب ما يذر في العين غفر الله تعالى له.
- 118 Al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 72, p. 56: لا يُنْتَلِ المؤمن في القبلة فان فعل ذلك ناسياً فليستغفر الله عز وجل منه.
- 119 *Kalam-i Imam-i Moobin*, vol. 1., Farman 94, Zanzibar, 16 August 1905.
- 120 al-Bukhārī, ḥadīth 1200: وَيَوْمَ يَأْتِي مَسْجِدَ قُبَاءٍ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ يَأْتِيهِ كُلُّ سَبْتٍ فَإِذَا دَخَلَ

- المَسْجِدِ كَرِهَ أَنْ يُخْرَجَ مِنْهُ حَتَّى يُصَلِّيَ فِيهِ قَالَ وَكَانَ يُحَدِّثُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَزُورُهُ زَاكِيًا وَمَاشِيًا
- 121 Quran 2:144: ﴿فَلَنُؤْيِيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ . . .﴾. See also: *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *ḥadīth* 1204: صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَى بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ سِتَّةَ عَشَرَ شَهْرًا حَتَّى نَزَلَتِ الْآيَةُ الَّتِي فِي الْبَقَرَةِ.
- 122 Quran 9:107: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَازًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ . . .﴾
- 123 Quran 2:108–111; 5:3; 8:34; 22:25; 48:25.
- 124 Quran 9:18 الرَّكَاعَةُ وَأَتَى الصَّلَاةَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَأَتَى الزَّكَاةَ . . . ﴿وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ . . .﴾
- 125 al-Bukhārī, *ḥadīth* 450: مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا . . . يَتَنَبَّئُ بِهِ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ مِثْلَهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ
- 126 A. Samb, 'Masjdjd', *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.), quoting the *Tabshīrat al-murīd* of Cheikh Aliou Faye, chief marabout of the Gambia, p. 705.
- 127 al-Bukhārī, vol. 1, book 8, *ḥadīth* 441: مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ مِثْلَهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ
- 128 Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*, pp. 35–36.
- 129 H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West* (Oxford, 1950), p. 165.
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- 136 Qur'ān 9:58; 59:7.

- 137 Qur'ān 2:216; 4:77–79.
- 138 Aḥmad b. 'Alī Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā* (Cairo, 1916), vol. 10, pp. 434–435.
- 139 Cf. Ivanow, *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, p. 220.
- 140 See also Ivanow, 'The Organization of the Fatimid Propaganda', vol. 15 (1939), pp. 18–35.
- 141 Ibid., p. 27.
- 142 Madkisi, *The Rise of Colleges*, p. 31.
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8. Generosity for Social Development

- 1 Quran 103:2–3.
- 2 Quran 3:112–114.
- 3 Cf. Quran 2:25; 103:2–3, etc.; also see *Nahj al-Balagha*, sermon no. 159.
- 4 Quran 107:1–7.
- 5 *Nahj al-Balagha*, sermon no. 203.
- 6 Quran 68:17–31.
- 7 Quran 81:8–14.
- 8 Qur'ān 93:9–11.
- 9 Quran 90:11–16.
- 10 Quran 53:34.
- 11 Qur'ān 100:6–11.
- 12 Quran 90:17–19.
- 13 For details of the AKDN ethical framework, see Appendix II.
- 14 Quran 80:25–31; 55:9–11; 88:17–20; 2:164; 3:190–191; 30:22; 51:20–21.
- 15 Qur'ān 6:162.
- 16 Qur'ān 2:207; 76:8–9.