Fatimid Approach to the Interpretation of the Qur'ān: Al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī

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ABSTRACT

Al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d.470/1078) held the position of Chief missionary (*dā^cī al-du^cāh*) under the Fatimid caliph-Imām al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh (d.487/1094). He compiled books and delivered lectures related to the religious instructions of the Fatimids also working for them as a political strategist.

The content of al-Mu'ayyad's works includes his expounding on diverse meanings of the Qur'ān, as well as his examining the status of the *Imāmah/Walāyah* of the Imāms from the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the Qur'ān is not only a synthesis of the system of religious doctrines and moral teachings of Islam, but is also the Source of Truths whose application he believes to extend beyond the theological boundary and thus related to the cosmos/creation as well. This is the reason why al-Mu'ayyad utilizes the Qur'ān and nature to substantiate his doctrine of the *Imāmah/Walāyah*. In the first place, al-Mu'ayyad seeks to establish a basis for the necessity of the Imām. Secondly, he interprets the distinctive characteristic of the Imāms and their functions, which they fulfil after the departure of Muhammad, the last Messenger of Allah.

The current research will mainly focus on how al-Mu'ayyad uses the fundamental Islamic Sources, including the Qur'ān and the cosmos to substantiate his arguments for the necessity of the presence of the Imām. Additionally the area of research examines al-Mu'ayyad's understanding of the criteria for the designation of

the Imām and his roles such as interpreting the Qur'ān, particularly its esoteric aspect

and guiding the believers in acquiring knowledge of Allah.

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INTRODUCTION

A.   THE Significance of al-Mu'ayyad's Qur'anic Thought

For Muslims, the Islamic revelation, the Qur'ān is the final message of Allāh/God and the source for acquiring knowledge of the truths, the legal precepts, and guidelines on Islamic learning and civilization. However, in terms of approach to the interpretation of the Qur'ān, Muslim religious authorities expressed diverse views owing to its characteristics, including its esoteric (*ta'wīl*, *bāṭin*), and symbolic (*amthāl)* concepts. The Qur'ān and the Traditions of the Prophet evidently classify the content of the Islamic revelation into more than one category. This classification is, particularly pertinent in terms of the understanding of the diverse aspects of the Divine message. For example, the Qur'ān makes a distinction between "clear revelations" (*muḥkamāt)* and "ambiguous verses" (*mutashābihāt*) which constitute the content of the Qur'ān. The classification of the Islamic revelation became of paramount importance in providing bases for individual interpretations, as well as in formulating the frameworks of the religious thought of the various schools within Islam.

Al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d.470/1078), a Fatimid scholar focuses his attention on such concepts as the *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* of the Islamic revelation, its interpretative aspect, as well as the aims and objectives of the guidance which it

comprises. Al-Mu'ayyad held a prominent hierarchical rank in the Fatimid religious organization, known as *da^{c}wah*. He was responsible for providing religious education on various aspects of Islamic teachings, particularly to those who had already gained a substantial degree of knowledge and understanding. Al-Mu'ayyad wrote several books, including *Al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*, a prominent source on the Fatimid understanding of such themes as the interpretation of the Qur'ān. *Al-Majālis* consists of eight hundred lectures (*majālis*). However, so far, only three hundred *majālis* have been edited. As regards al-Mu'ayyad's approach to the interpretation of the Qur'ān, no substantive research work is available, so far. The proposed area of investigation is thus a step towards the understanding of the religious thought of the Fatimid author. It is most likely that the area of research is a significant contribution to Fatimid thought and is beneficial to the academic community, as well as to those who are interested in acquiring knowledge and understanding of a past heritage. Further academic rationale for the selection of the area of research would be discussed in the literature review, but first a brief description of one of the reasons for my basic interest in al-Mu'ayyad's thought seems to be relevant, as it is one of the factors of my motivation to pursue religious studies on a higher level.

Primarily, it was my family and the community atmosphere that generated a keen interest in me to pursue a course of learning to understand the faith and tradition further. Developing my skills and identifying the future course of my academic quest was due to my late father. My father instilled courage in me and guided me through my early life in enabling me to work successfully towards my education and learning

development. I am always indebted to him for all the help and guidance he provided and pray for his soul to rest in eternal peace. After having completed my early qualifications, I came to Karachi, where I received further training in religious education at the Ismaili Association for Pakistan now known as the Ismaili Tariqa and Religious Education Board (ITREB) for Pakistan, Karachi. During my training, I availed of the opportunity of going through certain Ismaili sources, including those written by and on al-Mu'ayyad. These sources include the first volume of *Al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*. The study of Arabic sources on the Fatimids and particularly on al-Mu'ayyad generated in me further stimulus to enhance my study of the Arabic language and the need for conducting research at a high level. Thus, I successfully completed my M.A. in Arabic; in the wake of that, I built further confidence and began translating material from Arabic into Urdu. The material included parts of the text of *Al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*. At that juncture, I strongly felt the need to continue my study. To accomplish this task, I studied at McGill University for higher education and learning. Although I was due to conduct research on al-Mu'ayyad at McGill University, I had to renounce that plan, as no adequate sources on al-Mu'ayyad were available at that time. However, with the passage of time, I had the opportunity to come across some more works of al-Mu'ayyad and material written about him, particularly the sources on his *Sīrah* and *Dīwān*. However, these sources did not represent the overall thought of al-Mu'ayyad, particularly the Qur'ānic elements included in *Al-Majālis*.

Now it is important to review some of the works, including the primary sources, those which appear to be most important for the study of the life of al-Mu'ayyad and his thought.

B.   Selected Works of Al-Mu'ayyad

Sīrat al-Mu'ayyad

Sīrat al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn Dāᶜī al-Duᶜāh is of paramount importance for the life of the Fatimid author, as it covers all the pertinent phases of his career history, including his religious and political aspirations and undertakings. It is not only the Ismāᶜīlīs who consider the *Sīrah* as one of the works of al-Mu'ayyad, but also some other writers have included it in his works. ᶜImād al-Dīn (d.872/1468), a Ṭayyibī Ismāᶜīlī writer mentions the *Sīrah* of al-Mu'ayyad and quotes substantive extracts from it in his famous book ᶜ*Uyūn al-Akhbār.* One can say that parts of the material in the ᶜ*Uyūn* are a simplified and abridged form of the *Sīrah* itself. Although Ḥusayn has edited the *Sīrah* in its entirety, major parts of the ᶜ*Uyūn* remain unpublished. However, the relevant parts of the ᶜ*Uyūn*, namely, parts of volume Six and volume Seven deal with the life of al-Mu'ayyad and his contributions to the Fatimid *daᶜwah*. Volume Seven has been published by A. F. al-Sayyid, Paul E. Walker, and M. A. Pomerantz with a useful and informative introduction.[1] The published book is entitled *The Fatimids and their Successors in Yaman*, text, and translation series no. 4.

Ḥusayn seems to be the first writer to have evaluated the *Sīrah* somehow in detail. Ḥusayn states that the *Sīrah* is a significant source for more than one reason. One of the reasons for the importance of the *Sīrah* which Ḥusayn envisages is that the *Sīrah* is a historical source for the events which bear closely upon the relations between al-Mu'ayyad and the political and religious authorities of his time. Furthermore, the *Sīrah* discusses the Fatimid doctrinal elements which the political and religious authorities of the time perceived as controversial and threatening to their political system and religious doctrines. These aspects of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad consist in his belief in the *Imāmah* of the *ahl al-bayt* and the commitment which the belief

imposes on the believers. Closely related to this religious obligation is the necessity of the belief in the presence of the esoteric aspect of the Islamic revelation (*al-ta'wīl wa-al-bāṭin).* Al-Mu'ayyad's insistence on the esoteric aspect generated serious debates between him and his opponents.[2]

The other noteworthy characteristic of the *Sīrah* is that it remains a focal point for contemporary writers on al-Mu'ayyad, particularly those who conducted substantive research on this important work of his. These writers include, A Hamdani and Verena Klemm whose works on the *Sīrah* need further discussion shortly.

In brief, in the current area of research, the *Sīrah* of al-Mu'ayyad remained an important source of information not only on the life of al-Mu'ayyad but also on such aspects of his thought as the methodologies of the interpretation of the Qur'ān. These methodologies are particularly enshrined in the texts of al-Mu'ayyad's debates which he held against his opponents. Also, it is important to state that the *ᶜUyūn* of ᶜImād al-Dīn seems to be an abridgment of the *Sīrah* itself. Parts of the text of the *ᶜUyūn* are straightforward and easy to identify text of the *Sīrah*. However, it should be borne in mind that the *ᶜUyūn* on its own may not be adequate for serious research, as it does not discuss the minute details, which the *Sīrah* contains.

DĪWĀN AL-MU'AYYAD

As a prolific author and a religious authority on Fatimid Ismāᶜīlīsm, al-Mu'ayyad composed several other books and treatises, which included both poetry and prose. The content of all these books comprises such religious themes as the *Tawḥīd,*

Nubuwwah, *Imāmah, ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān, religious observances, and many other allied

teachings. These books include the *Dīwān al-Mu'ayyad*. Ḥusayn edited the *Dīwān* with

a comprehensive introduction.[3]

As far as the relevance of the *Dīwān* to the current area of research is concerned,

it is a useful source though my reliance on this work remained minimal. The areas for

which I used this source include correspondence exchanged between the Caliph-Imām

al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh and al-Mu'ayyad. In addition, the introduction, which Ḥusayn

has written is informative in the sense that it prominently locates some of the important

material also, enabling one to explore the view and assessment of this modern writer in

relation to the content of the *Dīwān*.

AL-MAJĀLIS AL-MU'AYYADIYYAH

Al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah is the most outstanding work of al-Mu'ayyad to which

one can rightly refer as an encyclopaedia of the religious thought of al-Mu'ayyad,

particularly of those aspects of his deliberation which are based on the interpretation of

the Islamic revelation. Qur'ānic interpretation, particularly the concept of *ta'wīl* seems

to be at the heart of the Ismāʿīlī instructional system. The paramount significance of

ta'wīl of the Islamic revelation is evident from various verses of the Qur'ān itself which

consider *ta'wīl* to be a highly spiritual, esoteric, and inner meaning of the Qur'ān and of

the universe. These Qur'ānic contexts of *ta'wīl* will follow in chapter three. The Shīʿah,

including the Ismāʿīlīs understand that the Prophet designated Imām ʿAlīy and his

descendants as the masters of the believers by the Divine Command and thus they have the authority to interpret the Qur'ān and particularly *ta'wīl*. This is the major aspect of the current work. The content and methodology of *Al-Majālis* appear to be multi-dimensional. The primary sources of the formulation of al-Mu'ayyad's thought are the Qur'ān, the traditions of the Prophet, and the sayings of the Imāms. As regards al-Mu'ayyad's attitude towards other Muslims schools of thought, he occasionally refers to them and acknowledges their interpretations on an exoteric level only and is critical of them for rejecting the *Imāmah* of the *ahl al-bayt* and the esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān as he and his co-religions understand them.

Major parts of *Al-Majālis* still remain unpublished. At this stage therefore it is difficult to comment precisely on the content of *Al-Majālis* as a whole. However, according to Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī (d. 596/1199), a *dāʿī* of the *Ṭayyibi* branch of Ismāʿīlīsm, *Al-Majālis* discusses the Unity of Allah, *(al-tawḥīd)*, the first originated being *(al-mubdaʿ)*, the Prophet and his progeny, the Imāms, including Imām ʿAlī, the other hierarchical ranks *(al-ḥudūd)* of the Fatimid *daʿwah*, revelation and Divine Help (*al-waḥī, al-ta'yīd*) and the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān and more.[4]

Al-Ḥāmidī arranged the material of *Al-Majālis* according to the topics and divided it into eighteen chapters. He seems not to have added to these Majalis, but it can be said with absolute certainty that he deleted the beginning parts and ending parts of these lectures except for few Majalis which were retained as they are in the original book.   However, I would refer to a source which seems to have explored this issue and drew the attention of the readers like me.[5] One can consider al-Ḥāmidī's

arrangement of *Al-Majālis* as a useful attempt in the sense that he enables readers to identify material under the topics to which they appear to belong. At the same time, however, one can have a sense of losing some valuable texts and contexts, as sometimes introductory and concluding parts have a strong impact on the respective theme.[6]

Al-Majālis remains the most important work during the current research, as it includes all the necessary ingredients of Ismāʿīlī teachings and diverse aspects of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad which he sought to formulate. By looking at *Al-Majālis* thoroughly it becomes evident that al-Mu'ayyad actively engaged himself in examining the religious doctrines and teachings of Fatimid Ismāʿīlīsm, relying on diverse grounds. These bases include the concept of the exoteric aspect and esoteric aspect, particularly under the rubric of *ta'wīl* and *bāṭin*, thereby focusing more on the esoteric aspect. Al-Mu'ayyad not only applies *ta'wīl* to the Qur'ān but also to creation, thus combining theology with intellectual sciences and cosmology. It appears that in al-Mu'ayyad's thought, *ta'wīl* has a broader meaning than what other Muslim schools of thought conceive who perhaps have reserved *ta'wīl* for parts of the Qur'ān only. As regards other Ismāʿīlī writers and thinkers in relation to the concept of *ta'wīl,* it is of paramount importance to their thought as well, including the thought of al-Nuʿmān and of al-Kirmānī. These Fatimid writers utilized *ta'wīl* predominantly in theological spheres, however, their references to *ta'wīl* as such in the context of their discussions of the cosmological doctrines remain vague. The reason for the obscurity is their lack of giving a clear-cut definition of *ta'wīl* and the lack of a precise reference to it as a basis for

their discussions of creation and particularly their cosmological doctrines. However, there is no doubt that they have referred to the Qur'ān and other fundamental sources of Islamic teachings such as the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet in their analyses of cosmology. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad seems to be the only Fatimid *dāᶜī* whose definition of *ta'wīl* as such seems to be all-inclusive and the areas to which he applied *ta'wīl* are well defined. Closely related to the concept of *ta'wīl* is al-Mu'ayyad's utilization of rationality in his applying *ta'wīl,* as according to him, revelation and reason are concomitant. Thus, revelation and reason are far from being in contradiction.[7] The discussion on the synthesis of revelation and reason, however, did not emerge from the works of al-Mu'ayyad for the first time, as it had its roots in religious discourses held by early Ismāᶜīlī thinkers and early Fatimid like al-Sijistānī. However, al-Mu'ayyad appears to be distinctive in his way in relation to the synthesis applicable to revelation and reason, a point, which requires a detailed study later.

Additionally, it is one of the distinctive aspects of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad that he discusses the Imāms' status as the interpreters of the Qur'ān at length, particularly its esoteric aspect. He seems to have expanded on this subject in diverse ways among which is the concept of the "Silent Book" and the "Speaking Book" which appears to be prominent in the thought of al-Mu'ayyad. In view of the level of emphasis which al-Mu'ayyad places on the "Silent Book" and "Speaking Book"[8], one may consider his contribution to be unparalleled not only in the history of Ismāᶜīlīsm but also in the history of Shīᶜīsm generally.

Now it is important to give a description of some other sources which I have used frequently which, as a matter of fact, would enable me to compare them with al-Mu'ayyad's works. However, to begin with, discussing the published parts of *Al-Majālis* is necessary to examine. As alluded earlier, out of eight hundred *majālis*, only three hundred *majālis*, three volumes are available in the published form. Three different individuals conducted the editing, and they are Ghālib, Ḥamīd al-Dīn and al-Nāṣir.[9] By comparing all these editions, one can easily conclude that Hamīd al-Dīn has accomplished the work more professionally, as he has made every effort to make the volumes error free, at the same time paying careful attention to the technical aspect. Furthermore, Ḥamīd al-Dīn's marginal notes and the indexes offer useful information to readers. However, Ghālib deserves the credit for being the first to edit parts of al-Mu'ayyad's *Al-Majālis*. It would not have been possible for me to familiarize myself with *Al-Majālis* at the beginning phase of my academic career if Ghālib's edition had not been available. As far as al-Nāṣir is concerned, he seems to be careful in undertaking the task, and that his introduction is informative. I have used almost all these editions though mostly used Hamid al-Dīn's edited works. Also I used a manuscript copy of *Ta'wīl al-ZaKāh* which a prominent Fatimid *dāʿī* Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman wrote.[10]

Other manuscripts which were relevant to this research, included a manuscript copy of al-Kirmānī's *Thalāthata ʿashara Risālah* may be relevant to our topic.[11] Furthermore, the manuscript of *Jāmiʿ al-ḥaqāiq* became available which I read

either for seeking to discover unexplored aspects of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad or for those texts which may complement the material already chosen for research.[12]

C. THE SOURCES, INCLUDING MODERN SOURCES ON Al-MU'AYYAD EARLIER FATIMID SOURCES

Al-Mu'ayyad must have received a combination of views of previous Fatimid scholars, particularly from those scholars who elaborated upon the Ismāᶜīlī doctrines and teachings formulated according to the guidance provided to them by the respective Imāms. These scholars include al-Qāḍī al-Nuᶜmān (d.363/974) who was associated with four Fatimid Caliph-Imāms, al-Mahdī (d.322/934), al-Qā'im (d.334/946), al-Manṣūr (d.341/953) and al-Muᶜizz (d.365/975) and served them in various capacities. Al-Nuᶜmān's writings include theology, law, *ta'wīl,* and history.

Other Fatimid scholars whose views are important in relation to the current works include Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d.322/934-5), Jaᶜfar Ibn Manṣūr al- Yaman (d.302/914), Abū Yaᶜqūb Sijistānī (d. 971), Abū ᶜĪsā al-Murshid (d. unknown) and Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1020).   The views of these scholars are particularly pertinent to the cosmological doctrines of the Ismāᶜīlīs.

HISTORICAL SOURCES

Other writers who are relevant to the current research are a few authors who wrote on general history. The writers comprise Ibn Balkhī (b.1105 A.D.), Ibn Athīr (d.630/1232-1233), al-Maqrīzī (d.845/1442) and Ibn Taghrībirdī (d.874/1470). We do not know much about Ibn Balkhī as the historical sources do not provide us sufficient information on his overall life. However, what we know is that he wrote his *Fārs-Nāmeh* in which

he discussed the geography of Fars, the people, particularly the kings who ruled that part of the world. The *Fārs-Nāmeh* is the first source which briefly deals with the biography of al-Mu'ayyad in which the former comments on the latter's mission.[13] As far as Ibn Athīr, al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghribirdī are concerned, they discussed the Fatimids in general, including their relationship with others such as the Buyids.

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY SOURCES

Several modern writers became keen on studying Ismāʿīlīsm; these writers include Muslim and non-Muslim authors. However, before discussing the works of these writers, it is important to discuss the role of The Institute of Ismaili Studies in view of its absolute commitment to the study of Ismāʿīlīsm. The Institute of Ismaili studies is an organisation which promotes scholarship and learning on Islam in the historical, as well as contemporary contexts and a better understanding of its relationship with other societies and faiths. The Institute is concerned with a few academic pursuits which include editions and translations, works on Islamic history, and thought. The Institute has many relevant sources in its library, including many manuscripts and published works. These sources comprise those books written by Ismāʿīlī scholars and thinkers in the past. The Institute not only encourages students to conduct research in the field of Islamic studies, including Qur'ānic Studies but also awards scholarships to those who have the relevant potential in diverse fields of Islamic studies. I received a scholarship from The Institute to do an M.A. Programme at McGill University in 1979. As regards, the academic staff members of the Institute, they include a few writers competent in

diverse aspects of Islam and particularly of Ismāʿīlīsm, some of whom need further discussion shortly.

However, brief discussion on the contributions of some of the modern writers is important who have left their impact even before the inception of the Institute. We can refer to only a few of these modern writers. These writers include Ivanow (d.1971), Henri Corbin (d.1978), and Samuel Miklos Stern (d.1969) who were followed by writers like Farhad Daftary, Hermann Landolt, Wilferd Madelung, Paul Walker, and Ian Richard Netton. These are the writers who wrote in Western languages, particularly in English, French and German. W. Ivanow was a most prolific author of Ismāʿīlīsm in modern times and devoted his whole life to that field. Corbin demonstrated a great interest in Islamic mysticism and Shīʿīsm in general. In esoteric teachings, his books include *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*[14] which are indicative of his in-depth approach to the subjects related to Ismāʿīlīsm. Corbin not only left behind his writings but also a group of his students who expanded his heritage. S. M. Stern's writings include his *Studies in Early* Ismāʿīlīsm[15] which examines subjects like the earliest cosmological doctrines of Ismāʿīlīsm and the place of the *Epistles of the Sincere Brethren (Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ)*. As has been said already, other writers who made substantial contributions to the study of Ismāʿīlīsm, Shīʿīsm and general esotericism include Farhad Daftary, Hermann Landolt, Wilfred Madelung, Paul Walker, and Ian Richard Netton. These writers composed books and contributed to academic journals on the doctrines and history of the Ismāʿīlīs, their philosophical thought, esotericism and other aspects of their theology and philosophy in more recent times. The above-mentioned writers have addressed many issues with a new approach and more importantly through the works of

these writers, Ismāᶜīlīsm was introduced into the West more widely. All the works of these writers on Ismāᶜīlīsm are important and relevant.

It is also important to mention Hugh Kennedy, a modern historian, whose works deal with some of the important dimensions of Islamic history, including the life and *sīrah* of the Prophet of Islam.

In addition to the above-mentioned writers, examining the contributions of those writers is desirable who have worked in specific fields of study closely related to the life, works, and thought of al-Mu'ayyad. These writers' works consist of the editions of the works of al-Mu'ayyad, commentaries on his thought, as well as pieces of translation of specific texts from his works. To begin with, al-Mu'ayyad's *Sīrah* attracted some modern researchers and writers, these writers include authors such as Ḥusayn whose great interest in Fatimid Ismāᶜīlīsm is well established. Ḥusayn not only composed books on the Fatimid literature such as *Fī Adab Miṣr al-Fāṭimiyyah*[16] but he also edited more than one book which some of the Fatimid scholars and thinkers wrote. The *Sīrah* is one of these works. Other writers who followed Ḥusayn are equally significant in their expertise as far as the *Sīrah* is concerned. Those writers include Abbas Hamdani and Verena Klemm. Hamdani wrote a PhD thesis on the *Sīrah* of al-Mu'ayyad.[17] Both Ḥusayn and Hamdani analysed historical data surrounding the life of the Fatimid writer, his works, and his thought; they appear to have succeeded in introducing al-Mu'ayyad to the Arabic-and English-speaking parts of the world. Klemm's expertise is also closely related to the autobiography of al-Mu'ayyad. One of her works is entitled *Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismāᶜīlī Scholar, Statesman and Poet*

al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī.[18] The writer has analysed selected themes of the *Sīrah;* she has also examined a few important events chronologically in the life of the Fatimid author, rendering them into English. The language of the book is generally lucid.

Another work connected with the thought of al-Mu'ayyad is a PhD dissertation written by Tahera Qutbuddin.[19] The author has tried to examine aspects of the life of the Fatimid *dāᶜī* and his thought as they are reflected in the *Dīwān*.

A very recent writer on the thought of al-Mu'ayyad is Elizabeth R. Alexandrin. Alexandrin wrote a PhD thesis on the thought of al-Mu'ayyad. In this thesis, the author fundamentally examined the *Walāyah* of ᶜAlīy and the other Imāms from the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet. In examining the *Walāyah,* Alexandrin seems to have made a great effort in examining al-Mu'ayyad's "response to the philosophical and theological debates current in mediaeval Islamic intellectual history".[20] Additionally, Alexandrin discusses the concept of *ta'wīl*, narrowing down its implication to *ta'wīl* of the night of power (*laylat al-qadr*) in the month of *Ramaḍān*, concentrating on al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation of *Sūrat al-Qadr*, i.e., the *sūrah* of Power (97:1-5).[21] In short, Alexandrin's research is a useful contribution to al-Mu'ayyad's general theological and philosophical thought as related to the *Walāyah* of the Imāms.

In the current study, the esoteric aspect of the Islamic revelation in relation to the *Imāmah* has remained the primary aim and objective which is one whose urgency obliged me to undertake the current research.

Lastly, here is the summary statement of the content of the thesis. To begin with, chapter one examines the early life of al-Mu'ayyad, particularly the period when he

was in Fars, Iran. This study will place al-Mu'ayyad in a historical context to explore his status within the Fatimid hierarchical system and to evaluate his contribution to the Fatimid *da^cwah*. Chapter two looks at the life of al-Mu'ayyad after his migration to Cairo, the Fatimid Headquarters. In this chapter, the challenges which al-Mu'ayyad confronted and his religious and political contributions to the Fatimids, need discussing. Chapter three comprises the discussion on *ta'wīl* and *bāṭin* the esoteric and inner meanings of the Qur'ān, i.e. the truths contained in the Islamic revelation. The first part of this chapter consists of the general views of some of the Muslim authorities who include Shī^cī views, including the view of the Ithnā^cashariyyah, as well as the view of the early Fatimids. Part Two focuses on al-Mu'ayyad's view on the esoteric aspect who examines it from diverse angles, namely, his definition of the esoteric aspect, its necessity, and its wider implications. Chapter four comprises diverse views on the Muslim leadership. The first part of the chapter will examine the views of general Muslims, including Shī^cī views on the *Imāmah/Walāyah*. In this part of the chapter, emphasis will be laid on the contributions of the early Fatimid thinkers and scholars to the diverse aspects of the *Imāmah/Walāyah* such as the Imām's role in relation to the Qur'ānic knowledge. The second part of the chapter will address al-Mu'ayyad's view on the *Imāmah/Walāyah*. The aspects of the view of al-Mu'ayyad which will be examined include his understanding of the proofs for the necessity of a divinely designated guide, the criteria of his designation and his function as the source of Qur'ānic guidance. This study will include occasional comparison of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad with that of his predecessors.

Chapter five will examine the cosmological doctrines of the Ismāʿīlīs. Thus, the beginning part of the fifth chapter will look at the thought of the early Ismāʿīlīs based on the works of such Fatimid scholars as Abū ʿĪsā al-Murshid, Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, and Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī. Discussing the thought of the Fatimid scholars is necessary to learn the evolution of the Ismāʿīlī doctrines not only during Fatimid time but also in pre-Fatimid period. However, the main part of the chapter will explore the view of al-Muʾayyad, particularly his understanding of the Unity of Allah (*Tawḥīd)*, the hierarchical ranks and the correspondence of reason to the Islamic revelation. This discussion is necessary to determine al-Muʾayyad's standing amongst the rest of the Fatimid scholars and to identify how his thought is distinctive from that of the other Ismāʿīlī writers.

CHAPTER ONE: Life Sketch of Al-Mu'ayyad

A. FULL NAME AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

Al-Mu'ayyad's biographers have described the different components of his name, for example, his titles as well as his surnames. However, occasionally they are not unanimous in the absolute sense of the word. This is true particularly in the case of the titles. Let us quote some of the religious authorities to know how they used al-Mu'ayyad's titles and surnames. Idrīs ᶜImād al-Dīn quotes Imām al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh who is reported to have used al-Mu'ayyad's name with his titles and surname at the beginning of a letter which the Imām wrote to him. "In the name of Allah the most Beneficent and the most merciful. This (letter) is from the bondsman of Allah and His friend and Master of the believers (*walīy*) Maᶜadd Abū Tamīm, commander of the faithful to the great shaykh (*al-shaykh al-jalīl),* the chief *dāᶜī (dāᶜī al-Duᶜāh)* al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn ᶜIṣmat al-Mu'minīn (protector of the believers) Hibat Allāh (gift from Allah) b. Mūsā.[1] Then the same source refers to al-Mu'ayyad by using more than one title and other names, but this time it is not the Imām but Idrīs ᶜImād al-Dīn who mentions the components of al-Mu'ayyad's name which is slightly different from the previously stated one.   The name is mentioned in this manner: *"Al-dāᶜī al-Ajall* al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn *Ṣafiy Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* meaning, the greatest *dāᶜī,* the one supported (by Allah), the sincere friend of the commander of the faithful, (and) the gift given by Allah".[2]

Some of these components of the name of al-Mu'ayyad can be found in al-Mu'ayyad's own books such as his *Dīwān and Sīrah*. For example, he mentions his surnames Ibn Mūsā and Ibn Abī ᶜImrān in his *Dīwān*.[3] It must be born in mind that among our writer's titles al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn is commonly used not only amongst the Ismāᶜīlīs but also in other circles. There is, however, no clear indication as to when the Fatimid author received this title for the first time. The official Fatimid correspondence and sources include this title, but they are of a later period when he had moved to Cairo. For example, the Fatimid Imām al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh mentions al-Mu'ayyad along with the other titles. Accordingly, the Imām refers to him as *al-shaykh al-jalīl*, (the eminent *shaykh) etc., a* point which we have discussed ab*ove.* Abū Kālījār (d. 440/1048), the Buyid King, addresses him by referring to him as al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn in response to his letter, which he had written to him.*[4]* Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 465/1072-1073), one of the eminent Fatimid *dāᶜīs* who had a meeting with al-Mu'ayyad in Cairo and received some religious training from him, mentions this title when paying homage to his inspiring wisdom.[5] Among others, Abū al-ᶜAlā al-Maᶜarrī, the famous poet, addresses him with his titles which include al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn.[6] However, it appears that the Fatimid author received this title, for the first time, when he was still in Persia, as Abū Kālījār was familiar with this title.

Examining al-Mu'ayyad's native land and his family background, originally, he hailed from Shiraz. The relative adjective "al-Shīrāzī" attributed to him can be taken as an indication of Shiraz to be his native land.

As regards the ancestral background of al-Mu'ayyad, his writings did not include information on this, nor do the writings of others. Although al-Mu'ayyad's description of his family is not exhaustive, he gives a brief account of the services which his father and ancestors rendered to the Imāms for a substantive period. In his *Dīwān*, al-Mu'ayyad pays glowing tribute to his ancestors more than once. According to him, his ancestors' commitments (*ḥuqūq*)[7] to the Fatimids are so extensive that nobody can deny nor reject them. [8] He states that the services which his ancestors rendered related to both the Pre-Fatimid and the Fatimid period.[9] In Ismāꜥīlī history, the Pre-Fatimid period is identified as the Period of concealment when the Imāms and their assistants carried out the *daꜥwah* under unfavourable circumstances. Thus, the respective Imāms sent their missionaries to the various parts of the world. According to Daftary, "The Ismāꜥīlī *daꜥwa* was started in other regions, besides ꜥIraq, around 260s/870s."[10] During the phase of the concealment period, the family of al-Mu'ayyad engaged in the propagation of the Ismāꜥīlī *daꜥwah* in the region of Persia. The hardships and challenges, which this period posed to the Ismāꜥīlī cause, were of grave concern and, at the same time, had a meaningful impact on the doctrinal history of the Ismāꜥīlīs. Al-Mu'ayyad describes the hardships emanating from the frightening situation of this period and refers to it like "a quiet night" (*laylun rākid*).[11] By "a quiet night", the author probably means the period during which the opponents of the Fatimids such as the Abbasids were in power.

In the afore-mentioned situation, al-Mu'ayyad holds that his ancestors sacrificed themselves for the sake of the Imāms. Al-Mu'ayyad also discusses the

rewards, which his ancestors received from the Imāms because of their unshakable

commitment to the Ismāʿīlī cause. In one of his poems, al-Mu'ayyad refers to these

rewards as bounties.[12] These bounties certainly include the noble honour which they

enjoyed in the *daʿwah* by working for the Fatimid cause as 'high-ranking servants'

(*sarāt al-ʿabīd*) and 'best companions' (*khayru al-ṣiḥāb*) of the Imāms.[13]

In the current context, one can raise a question as to whether the

designation of the people, working for the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* under the Imāms always

remains hereditary. The response to this question is in the negative. The hereditary

principle does not appear to be a decisive and an ongoing tenet in selecting members

of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* and there is no guarantee that a family member can

automatically be entitled to his predecessor's rank. This issue was raised by the

father of al-Mu'ayyad who expressed his desire to Imām al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (d.

411/1021), to appoint his sons to the position of the *dāʿī* after his death. However,

al-Ḥākim did not take any decision on that request but proposed to Mūsā to wait

until the advent of an appropriate time and he emphasized to him to refer this

matter to Allah and the Imām of the time. The following is Imām al-Ḥākim's

statement which al-Kirmānī reports:

> "As regards your sons and the wish which you have
> expressed to transfer the office of the *daʿwah* to them
> after you, this is a task on which (a future) Imām will
> decide in his time and age as he would consider
> appropriate. Oh Mūsā, days are numbered, and the
> breath of life is counted, (therefore), it is more
> appropriate and worthier for you to refer this task to
> Allah, the Most exalted and His friend (*walīy*), {that is to

say, the succeeding Imām}. Say nothing about a thing
that I will do that tomorrow, except if Allah wills; and
remember your Lord when you forget and say: it may be
that my Lord guides me unto a nearer way of truth than
this"...[14]

One can conclude from the preceding statement that although al-Ḥākim did

not totally reject the request of Mūsā, he did not approve of it either and referred this

matter to the will of Allah and the decision of the next Imām. It was al-Ḥākim's son,

namely, Imām al-Ẓāhir, during whose period, al-Mu'ayyad received the designation of

the dā'ī. A discussion on the designation of al-Mu'ayyad as a dā'ī will follow but now

a brief examination of the date of birth of al-Mu'ayyad is necessary.

Al-Mu'ayyad's biographers such as ʿImād al-Dīn have not mentioned the date

of birth of al-Mu'ayyad during the description of his life.[15]   However, modern

biographers of al-Mu'ayyad have attempted to surmise this issue. Amongst modern

biographers of al-Mu'ayyad who have discussed the date of birth of al-Mu'ayyad

include Ḥusayn. Husayn sought to infer evidence from a few of the verses of the Dīwān

of al-Mu'ayyad or his date of birth. According to Ḥusayn, al-Mu'ayyad was born about

(ḥawālā) 390/999. In this regard, he refers to verses 37-38 of Qaṣīdah 12, verse 7 of

Qaṣīdah 39, and verse 11 of Qaṣīdah 21.[16] However, Ḥusayn also states that the dā'ī

was born in the last decade of the fourth Islamic century without providing any further

evidence.[17] This means that according to Ḥusayn, al-Mu'ayyad was born at any time

between 390 A.H. and 400 A.H.

It seems that al-Mu'ayyad was born perhaps in 387/997 as some of the above-

mentioned verses of the Dīwān seem to allude to that date. These verses include 37-

38 of *Qaṣīdah* 12, in which al-Mu'ayyad complained that he had not attained his aim and objective yet, and that aim and objective was his visit to the Imām. At this stage he was about forty years of age. Thus, according to Ḥusayn's calculation, the above-mentioned age of al-Mu'ayyad corresponds to year 427/1035 A.H.[18]   It seems that 427/1035-36 is the most probable year in which al-Mu'ayyad composed verses 37-38 of *Qaṣīdah* 12. In this analysis, the year 427/1035-36 is preferable, as al-Mu'ayyad refers to al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh as the Imām by using his first name, that is, Maᶜadd[19], who became the Fatimid Imām and Caliph after 15 Shaᶜbān 427/1036. If al-Mu'ayyad was about forty years of age in Shaᶜbān 427/1036 then he was probably born in the last quarter of 387/997.

B.   AL-MU'AYYAD'S ROLE IN THE FATIMID *DAᶜWAH* IN FARS (IRAN)

Al-Mu'ayyad's role in the Fatimid *daᶜwah* remained exceptionally challenging in Iran, as well as later in Egypt. Al-Mu'ayyad's forbearance in the face of manifold hardships and his determination become manifest from his entire   life that began in Fars, particularly when he took over the religious headship probably, he was a *ḥujjah* after the death of his father sometime during the Caliphate of the -Imām al-Ẓāhir.[20] The specific hierarchical rank of al-Mu'ayyad in the Fatimid *daᶜwah* at that time remains obscure. What one can, however, state is that he was either *ḥujjah* or a Chief *daᶜī* which he probably inherited from his father.[21] Ḥusayn gives his opinion on the rank of the Fatimid *dāᶜī* and states that al-Mu'ayyad progressed gradually in the ranks of the *daᶜwah* until he became the *ḥujjah* of the Fārs, {the same rank as that of the Chief

dā⁽ᶜ⁾ī}. Ḥusayn claims that he drew this conclusion from the books of al-Mu'ayyad though without providing any specific reference in this regard.[22]

The lack of definite source material on the early life of al-Mu'ayyad, particularly in his writings has caused a problem for researchers in the field. The reason for the paucity of data surrounding the early life of al-Mu'ayyad is primarily due to his silence on his early autobiographical details. In his autobiographical book *Sīrat al-Mu'ayyad*, the Fatimid author describes nothing whatsoever relating to his early life such as his upbringing. To begin with, al-Mu'ayyad glorifies Allah and then asks blessings for the Prophet and the Imāms from his progeny. Then al-Mu'ayyad enters the discussion on the religio-political conflicts and tensions, particularly the hostility of Abū Kālījār and that of some other individuals in Shiraz towards the mission, to which he refers as the ᶜAlid related *daᶜwah* (*al-daᶜwah al-ᶜalawiyyah*). The reasons for the hostility of Abū Kālījār and that of other people in Shiraz will be examined in detail shortly. However, presently further examination of his life can be held. Al-Mu'ayyad did not touch upon his life, for example, his education and training, as to how he maintained his relationship with Cairo, the Headquarters of the Fatimid *daᶜwah* and also as to when he acquired the official decree of *dāᶜīship* but immediately after opening his book he started discussing Abū Kālijār, king of that area.[23] It is more likely that al-Mu'ayyad thought that it was not appropriate to include his early life, as he was not writing a private autobiography as such but rather an autobiography covering only his professional dealings with subjects of a serious nature, relating to the *daᶜwah.*

As discussed earlier, al-Mu'ayyad had to face complex political and religious entities because of the leadership issue that had already evolved amongst the Muslims immediately after the departure of the Prophet of Islam. All the Muslims believe that the Prophet of Islam was a spiritual head and a political leader during his lifetime. However, after the departure of the Prophet, the Muslims differed amongst themselves over the leadership of the Muslim *ummah*. As will be discussed in detail in the forthcoming chapters, there emerged two major groups of the Muslims: the Sunnis and the Shīᶜah. According to the Sunnis, the Muslims have the authority to elect a caliph and ruler for themselves but according to the Shīᶜah, there is a divinely designated Imām after the Prophet at every time, who ideally guides the believers as the successor of the Prophet Muhammad. Although the Shīᶜah believe that the Imāms are the sources of guidance on religious and temporal affairs, historically most of the Imāms did not hold temporal authority of the Muslim *ummah* perhaps because the political situations were not favourable to them. According to some Shīᶜī and Sunni authorities, it is possible that a religious leader and guide can conduct his duties as an Imām without possessing a political power.

The reasons for the unfavourable conditions included the controversy which arose over the leadership of the Muslim *ummah* which led to the evolution of persistent debates between the Sunnis and the Shīᶜah. Al-Mu'ayyad's responsibility as a *dāᶜī* and political strategist is perhaps in line with the general Islamic principle that Islam is a complete code of life. Consequently, Islam includes

injunctions for political activities if these activities help the believers to progress in their spiritual and intellectual ideals and restore a social justice system.

Al-Mu'ayyad seems to have made a determined effort to present his ideal concept of the Imām as the spiritual guide of the believers and one who was able to lead them on the worldly aspect of their lives also.

In the current discussion, one must concentrate on the relevant narratives included in the *Sīrah*, as they comprise the overall objectives of al-Mu'ayyad's writings amongst which the leadership discussion emerges to be a most important subject. The other purpose of discussing the narratives is to learn how al-Mu'ayyad exhibits his academic and intellectual skills and expertise by examining diverse aspects of issues, including his interpretation of the methodologies of the Islamic revelation.

C. CHALLENGES FOR AL-MU'AYYAD IN FARS

Al-Mu'ayyad faced challenges of an extremely complex nature. The challenges of great complexity were because al-Mu'ayyad faced people of varied religious and political backgrounds and persuasions who conflicted with each other. As will be seen later, the conflicting political and religious persuasions appear to be the prominent issues which al-Mu'ayyad had to address whilst elaborating on his interest, including the Muslim leadership issue. For example, the rivalry between the Abbasids and the Fatimids grew day by day. In addition to the external conflicts, the Abbasids suffered internal political disintegration, as they lost their religio-political

authority over a period that led to the creation of more than one dynasty. The Buyids became the rulers of one of these dynasties. The Buyid dynasty was subsequently successful in bringing the military power of the Abbasids under their control. The power of the Buyids reached its climax when they finally took over military power in Baghdad.

However, the political change examined just now did not benefit al-Mu'ayyad but paused new challenge for him. Al-Mu'ayyad had to confront Abū Kālījār, Buyid King and all anti-Shī'ī movements, who seem to have been greatly involved in preventing al-Mu'ayyad from propagating his faith and beliefs.

According to al-Mu'ayyad, at the beginning of propagating his mission, Abū Kālījār was hostile to him and so were his close associates and religious authorities. There were more than one reason for the hostility and the *dā'ī* gives those reasons. Firstly, he considers the religious educational background of the King as one of the factors of his opposition to Shī'īsm, particularly the mission led by al-Mu'ayyad in Shiraz. According to our author, a fanatical teacher taught the King deep-rooted hatred against the family members of the Prophet Muhammad and their followers. Secondly, a few courtiers and Turkish soldiers were the archenemies of Shī'īsm. These people would criticize the religious doctrines of the Shī'ah by ascribing to them heretical beliefs and considering them the ones who abandoned Islamic practices such as the ṣalāh. Perhaps more importantly, the opponents portrayed al-Mu'ayyad as a

man who was bitterly opposed to the political establishment of Abū Kālījār, as according to them, he was advocating and promoting the leadership of the Fatimids.[24]

The matter was further inflamed by the news that al-Mu'ayyad was leading the ʿīd prayer two days before the ʿīd feast observed by other Muslims. Abū Kālījār was aware of the extreme opposition of those elements to the mission of al-Mu'ayyad, and he informed his Minister known as al-ʿĀdil about this. The King also told the Minister his perceived threat to the wellbeing of al-Mu'ayyad, who persisted in conducting his mission for the Fatimids. Thus, in the opinion of the King, the only answer to this problem was the departure of al-Mu'ayyad from the country.[25] The minister conveyed the King's concern and his advice to al-Mu'ayyad that he was in danger and that the threat to his life posed by certain people became intense. These people included the *qāḍī* of the city and his associates who, according to the Minister as conveyed to the Fatimid *dāʿī*, were forming an intrigue against him[26]. However, the minister also told al-Mu'ayyad that the qāḍī told the Minister that the opponents had lost their patience and thus they were prepared to burn the house of al-Mu'ayyayd and kill him because of his teachings, which, according to these people were based on innovation in religion and rejection of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet.[27] The Minister informed al-Mu'ayyad that he responded to the threat posed by the qāḍī and his supporters by saying that the matter the qāḍī and others had suggested was not that easy. Because the Minister said that opposing al-Mu'ayyad would make all the Daylamites united with each other against the opponents of al-Mu'ayyad. The Minster continued by stating that as soon as the Dalamites were agitated on this issue then

"the eye of riot would be alert", which would lead to bloodshed, and lawlessness. Then the Minister told al-Mu'ayyad what the qāḍī had told him about his plan against al-Mu'ayyad by stating this: "if al-Mu'ayyad requests Dalamites for assistance then he would ask the Turks to help him".[28] At this point, the Minister tries to be more persistent in attempting to persuade al-Mu'ayyad to leave the country. And he tried to be realistic about the King in relation to the public response. Accordingly, he suggested that the King's most serious concern was the attitude of the people who were scheming to cause destruction in the country. Then the Minister asked al-Mu'ayyad to think over the matter and assess it carefully and decide based on rationality. Your rational assessment would tell you that you should not be the root of this possible riot. Afterwards the Minister advised al-Mu'ayyad on a personal level like a close friend   who would advise his friend to protect himself from a future trouble. But obviously the Minister had his own reasons to convince al-Mu'ayyad to agree to what he was telling him to do. Anyway the Minister advised al-Mu'ayyad to get prepared to leave the country immediately and he offered him to arrange for him a few horsemen to accompany him during the journey and he was given the choice to go to any country that he wanted to go to.[29]

In response to the Minister's advice, al-Mu'ayyad states that he responded to the Minister: "This order is your order, and the country is yours. There can be a solution to any issue but there cannot be a solution to the fact that if somebody comes to my place and claims that this home belongs to me. In this case, there is no answer to the issue". Al-Mu'ayyad continued by saying: "I am thinking about your statement

in which you are asking me to Leave our abodes. It seems that the Government of Abū

Kālijār offended al-Mu'ayyad by ordering the latter to leave the country. Al-Mu'ayyad

complained to the Minister by stating that the deportation order was nothing but an

act of injustice. The content of the complaint is lengthy. Presently, however, one can

only give the gist of the conversation which al-Mu'ayyad had presented. At any rate,

when the Minister asked al-Mu'ayyad to leave Shiraz immediately, the *dāʿī* was still

reluctant to leave Shiraz and at the same time, he was under immense pressure to

obey the authority. Al-Mu'ayyad persistently complained about the deportation order.

He considered the deportation order to be beyond his comprehension, as it was an

invasion of his privacy, a point which was discussed earlier. Al-Mu'ayyad was also

critical of the Government's discriminatory attitude towards him. In this regard, he

pinpointed certain sections of people such as the religious authorities who, according

to him, benefited from the Government for no good reason. According to al-Mu'ayyad,

these beneficiaries did not deserve these positions, as their moral conduct was not up

to the ideal standard. At the same time, he gives the reason why the Government

discriminated against him. According to him, the political authority treated him

differently, because he adhered to Shīʿīsm.[30]

Prior to discussing al-Mu'ayyad's issues further one can address as to who was

leading the opponents of the *dāʿī*? Al-Mu'ayyad's *Sīrah* is not clear on this except that

al-Mu'ayyad may have suspected that it was the *qāḍī* of the city and his followers.

However, the interaction of the Minister with the *dāʿī* appears that somehow the *qāḍī*

had a leading role in attempting to curb the mission of al-Mu'ayyad at this point of

time. The involvement of the *qāḍī* seems to be the reality of the matter, as Ibn Balkhī, a non-Ismāᶜīlī Muslim writer appears to hold that *qāḍī* ᶜAbd Allāh was responsible for upsetting the mission of al-Mu'ayyad. The following statement of Ibn al-Balkhī, however, reflects the *qāḍī*'s determined effort to banish al-Mu'ayyad from Shiraz. According to Ibn al-Balkhī, it was the *qāḍī* ᶜAbd Allāh, who was the prime mover in instigating the King against al-Mu'ayyad. Ibn Balkhī acknowledges that al-Mu'ayyad to whom he refers as Abū Naṣr b. ᶜImrān was the *dāᶜī* and leader of the *Bāṭinīs,* to whom he refers as the Seveners (*sabᶜiyān*) as well and was popular amongst them. Ibn Balkhī describes further the popularity of al-Mu'ayyad and states that he was enormously popular amongst the Daylamīs, and they had faith in him as one has faith in a prophet (*hamchū paighambarī)* and all of them accepted the religion that he preached[31].

Al-Mu'ayyad expresses his dismay over the decision of the deportation, and he was extremely upset and angry. When al-Mu'ayyad received no satisfactory response from the authorities, he requested the Minister to give him more time to consider the deportation order. More importantly he suggested to the Minister that though he would absolutely refuse to leave his country, in case he was ready to go under duress then he would need to pay attention to his personal affairs, for example, he would need to sell his house, etc. And he also demanded that the Government should make for him travel arrangement so that he would travel if he decided to do so. And al-Mu'ayyad insisted that he would never travel on foot and he would never leave the country unless all the conditions   were fulfilled. The Minister listened to al-Mu'ayyad quietly and then said: "(That means) you certainly agree to leave the county

in the way you described. Then you can arrange the travelling the way you have chosen, but your stay in this country should not be more than a week. Al-Mu'ayyad said that he would do whatever the Minister had said, and he stated that he would act in accordance with the details of the programme. However, al-Mu'ayyad still wanted to speak about another important issue. The minister   allowed him to explain the issue. Al-Mu'ayyad explained the issue in this way: "It is well known that the relationship between me and the   Dalamites are good, and the mutual relations between me and the Dalamites are based on trust.   If any man from the Dalamites quarrels with his wife at night, then he would come to me next morning, complaining about the quarrel in details, seeking to resolve the issue".

After having described the background of his relationship with the Dalamites, al-Mu'ayyad now demonstrates a cautious approach in case there was a conflict between the Dalamites and the Government. It seems from the description of al-Mu'ayyad that there was a strong possibility of beginning a conflict between the Dalamites and the Government because of the latter's ill-treatment of al-Mu'ayyad. Al-Mu'ayyad declared his deep concern during his meeting with the Minister about the possible clash between the Dalamites and the Government particularly if the Government's ill-treatment of al-Mu'ayyad was disclosed to the Dalamides.   Al-Mu'ayyad's concern was that if the news surrounding the ill-treatment was spread then the Dalamites would express their anger in a variety of ways that would lead to agitation. Al-Mu'ayyad said to Minister: "Whatever the Dalamites say or act in anger should not be ascribed to me nor should I be held responsible for a crime committed

by others". This is a clear statement of al-Mu'ayyad which indicates that he claims to be free from guilt so far as the Delamites are concerned. The Minister responded to this by saying: "You should prohibit them from meeting you during your stay in this country". Anyway, al-Mu'ayyad said that he never prevented the Dalamites from meeting him. However, he said that he would try his best to do what the Minister had asked him to do. According to him, he left the meeting and felt tired and worried. But still prepared to leave the country. During this period of time, al-Mu'ayyad received news that the Dalamites became depressed and annoyed. The most unacceptable thing which the Dalamites faced was that the Government and the opponents of al-Mu'ayyad demonstrated harshness towards the Dalamites, particularly towards their religious beliefs and practices. They were prevented from practising their faith and belief system.[32]

When the Minister observed that the Dalamites were too agitated that they were on the brink of violence, he communicated with them and tried to assure them that there is no plan to deport al-Mu'ayyad and then he explicitly praised al-Mu'ayyad highly by saying: "There was no reference to the deportation of al-Mu'ayyad, may God protect us from that. (According to the Minister,) al-Mu'ayyad was a person whose standing is great and who is overly modest", Then the Minister said: "There is nothing of that sort {of rules) which one can apply to al-Mu'ayyad. Afterwards, al-Mu'ayyad strove to win over the King by meeting him and explaining to him his faith. Nevertheless, it was extremely difficult for him to meet the King as the Minister refused to arrange a meeting with the King. The reason which the Minister gave was

that the King was opposed to the Fatimid *dāᶜī,* and he did not even like to hear his name.[33] However, al-Mu'ayyad was able to find one of the best friends of the King who agreed to intercede on behalf of al-Mu'ayyad. Yet, the King was not prepared to meet al-Mu'ayyad. The King was, probably offended, as he had perceived that al-Mu'ayyad was attempting to replace his Government with the Fatimid Caliphate. Thus, the King perhaps thought that al-Mu'ayyad's actions would lead to disturbances in his country; therefore, the King was not ready to be in friendly terms with al-Mu'ayyad.[34]

In response to the hostile attitude of the King, al-Mu'ayyad began to discuss his faith, probably trying to convince the King that his school of thought did not teach destruction. To prove his claim, al-Mu'ayyad attempted to discuss the history of Shīᶜism by referring to it as "*hādhā al-amr"* meaning "this affair". Al-Mu'ayyad wanted to convey to the authority that Shīᶜism was not something innovated in recent times, but it existed in the area for many years, suggesting that the Shīᶜah, including the Ismāᶜīlīs never engaged themselves in any destructive affairs. He then said that the Buyid Kings were aware of this *madhhab*. According to him, most of the Kings (*aktharu-hum*) preferred this *madhhab* and they never converted to any other school of thought. In his remark "most of them preferred this *madhhab*", al-Mu'ayyad perhaps refers to general Shīᶜism of which Ismāᶜīlīsm is a branch unless one assumes otherwise. The wording of al-Mu'ayyad, namely, "*aktharu-hum*" needs further elaboration, as its implications seem to be far-reaching and important as far as the relationship between the Fatimids and Buyids are concerned.[35]   However, al-Mu'ayyad's strides to meet the King progressed substantially. The mediator held more

than one meeting to reach a meaningful conclusion. After having lengthy arguments and counterarguments, the authority asked al-Mu'ayyad to write a letter, explaining his side of the story. The mediator was happy with the content of the letter, and he enclosed a letter of recommendation and handed it over to the Minister. This correspondence seems to have paved the way for al-Mu'ayyad to meet the King, though it was difficult for the Fatimid author to meet the man who was too critical of him. However, it seems that the *dāʿī*'s patience had exhausted and he wanted to settle the matter immediately without compromising his principles. He met the King when the latter was on a hunting trip. This time, the Minister seems to be reluctant in preventing al-Mu'ayyad from meeting the King. According to the description of al-Mu'ayyad, the meeting was a good start for strengthening the relations further. Al-Mu'ayyad seems to have convinced the King to demonstrate his willingness to meet al-Mu'ayyad and that the King was ready to listen to his complaints.[36]

In the wake of the meeting, a series of written debates between al-Mu'ayyad and his opponents took place. The King would occupy himself with those debates and would make use of his intellectual skill and expertise to make a judgment on those debates. Al-Mu'ayyad would make the King aware of the content of the debates that took place between him and his opponents. Then the King would make himself available at the sessions of the debates. In short, the content of the debates varied and there seem to be several individuals who were involved in these debates. The content of the debates included diverse methodologies used for the interpretation of the Qur'ān, including discourse on its esoteric interpretation. This subject matter

needs a lengthy treatment and can be a considerable project on its own. However, a brief discussion on these debates will be held in chapter three which will be exclusively devoted to the esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān. Now, it is important to discuss the aftermath of these debates and the strategic move which al-Mu'ayyad made in relation to the mission that he was supporting. The relationship of al-Mu'ayyad with the King improved substantially. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the King was happy, and he abandoned his hatred for the Fatimid writer and his faith. According to al-Mu'ayyad, because of his debates, the King found peace and tranquillity within himself (*sakana ja'shu al-malik*) and he was satisfied (*wa-ṭma'anna qalbuh*). The King then said: "I submitted myself and my faith to you and I am wholly pleased with the religion which you follow". After the conversion of Abū Kālījār to the Ismāʿīlī faith, he agreed to have a meeting with the *dāʿī* every Friday night. They would meet regularly to provide an opportunity for the King to learn from al-Mu'ayyad Fatimid teachings and he would reveal to him esoteric teachings of Ismāʿīlīsm. The discourse would be a well-thought-out process in which al-Mu'ayyad had to present his instructions sequentially. They would occupy themselves with the discussion until late at night. The King had every opportunity to ask al-Mu'ayyad about any of his concerns and al-Mu'ayyad responded to him on a regular basis. During the discourse, the Fatimid writer noticed the King's air of happiness.[37]

As regards the method of the delivery of the discourse, al-Mu'ayyad would start the meeting with the recitation of those parts of the Qur'ān that are referred to as *qawāriʿ* of the Qur'ān those verses which are particularly considered as a heavy blow

to Satan and to any evil influence for that reason. Secondly, al-Mu'ayyad would read

a chapter of the *Daᶜā'im al-Islām* of al-Nuᶜmān to the King and then he would ask the

King to ask him any question if he wanted to do so. Finally al-Mu'ayyad would glorify

Allah followed by a private sermon in the name of the Fatimid caliph to whom he refers

as our lord, the Imām, may Allah perpetuate his kingdom.[38]

However, the relationship of the Fatimid *dāᶜī* with the King did not remain

calm and unchallenged. There came a time when the relationship was threatened by

those friends of the King who became envious of al-Mu'ayyad's growing influence

upon the King. They were particularly worried about the rapidly growing influence of

al-Mu'ayyad's moral teachings, for example, his condemnation of the King's habit of

consuming alcoholic drinks. The friends of the King rightfully thought that al-Mu'ayyad

would eventually take their friends away from them and thus they would be deprived

of the privileges which they had enjoyed before. Therefore, they demonstrated

resentment towards al-Mu'ayyad. One of these people continued demonstrating his

resentment against al-Mu'ayyad and he offended him by accusing him before the King.

The accusations which the person in question levelled against al-Mu'ayyad included

that the latter promoted heretical teachings, and that the intellectual system of his

thought was borrowed from philosophers. It seems that due to that man's strong

opposition and resentment, tension grew between al-Mu'ayyad and the King.[39]

In view of these accusations, al-Mu'ayyad composed a poem, which addresses

all the objections raised by the opponent and which also included al-Mu'ayyad's

complimentary remarks about the King, as well as a warning to him to guard himself against those people who, according to al-Mu'ayyad, were trying to mislead the King. Al-Mu'ayyad refers to this poem as *al-qaṣīdah al-Musammaṭah.* The content of this *Qaṣīdah* includes al-Mu'ayyad's expression of love and reverence for the *ahl al-bayt* and the hardships which he confronted for their sake. In addition, he praised Abū Kālījār and made a determined effort to comfort him. At the same time, al-Mu'ayyad alludes to the tension. One of the causes of the tension was perhaps, the Ismāʿīlī author's proposal to the King to have correspondence with the Fatimids in Egypt. Perhaps the King did not wish to accept al-Mu'ayyad's proposal at that span of time. The lack of response on the part of the King was due to the pressure of the Abbasids thus the King must have blamed al-Mu'ayyad for that reason as well. Al-Mu'ayyad's response to the King reflects arrogance on the latter's part in his relation to the Fatimids. Probably this is the reason why al-Mu'ayyad is insistent on advocating the superiority of the Fatimids over the Abbasids by comparing ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib with ʿAlīy ibn Abī Ṭālib. Based on that comparison, al-Mu'ayyad sees no ground for a descendant of ʿAbbās to be comparable to a descendant of ʿAlīy ibn Abī Ṭālib.[40]

During this period, al-Mu'ayyad pays attention to renovating a mosque in Ahwāz which was in a deteriorating condition. He renovated and decorated it. Then he wrote the name of the Prophet, and the names of all the Imāms including ʿAlīy and up to and including al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh except the names of the Imāms of the period of concealment. Al-Mu'ayyad wrote the name of the Prophet and those of the Imāms in golden letters and on teak panels, and then he fixed them to the wall, around the

prayer niche of the mosque. Furthermore, al-Mu'ayyad mentioned the name of the Caliph-Imām al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh in the *Jumuᶜah* sermon. In addition, he included in the call to prayer (*adhān*) the formula "*ḥayya ᶜalā khayr al-ᶜamal*", that is, "come to the best of deeds" which is a Shīᶜī practice. The Daylamīs began to attend Friday prayer in large numbers. Ibn al-Mushtarī,[41] the qāḍī of the city must have received this news and reported this development to Baghdad. The Headquarters of the Abbasids tried to pressurize the King to arrest al-Mu'ayyad and send him to Baghdad. However, that did not happen, but the King consulted his dignitaries about al-Mu'ayyad because of the pressure mounting on him from the Abbasids.[42]

Opposition to al-Mu'ayyad was growing intensively day by day. Al-Mu'ayyad became the talk of the city and even some people spread the rumour that the King repented his misguidance and al-Mu'ayyad was killed. The King considered the offensive measure and asked al-Mu'ayyad to leave the country, probably to save his life. Although al-Mu'ayyad responded to the King that he would accept the King's proposal, it seems he was not happy with the advice of the King. His displeasure with the situation emerges from the fact that he reminded the King of the earlier days when they would meet on a regular basis. However, it seems that al-Mu'ayyad attempted to consider the King's position as well, who was after all under the reign of the Abbasid caliph. Therefore, the King could not afford to reject the recommendation of the caliph whose minister, namely, Ibn al-Muslimah had already dispatched his emissary to Shiraz to convince the King to hand over al-Mu'ayyad to him. Otherwise the Abbasids threatened that Baghdad would have no choice but to send Tughrul Beg to fight on

their side. Al-Mu'ayyad reacted to the arguments of the emissary, and he gave his own

assessment of the new development. Finally, al-Mu'ayyad had no choice but to leave

his country.[43]

As discussed earlier, in this respect perhaps nobody would ignore the part that

the *qāḍī* ᶜAbd Allāh had played. Although the *dāᶜī* does not refer to him by name in

the current context, it seems the *qāḍī*'s effort to banish al-Mu'ayyad from Shiraz

remained persistent. Ibn Balkhī discusses the role of the *qāḍī* in this context. According

to Ibn Balkhī, *qāḍī* ᶜAbd Allah played a trick (*ḥālatī sāzad*) to get rid of al-Mu'ayyad.

The *qāḍī* requested the King to have a private meeting to persuade him to get rid of

al-Mu'ayyad, considering that the King had enormous respect for al-Mu'ayyad. It is

not clear whether this was the first meeting or a subsequent meeting, as Ibn Balkhī is

silent on this. The *qāḍī* explained to the King the political turmoil that he thought

would follow if the King did not prevent al-Mu'ayyad from continuing his mission. The

qāḍī then warned the King strenuously by saying that if al-Mu'ayyad wished to deprive

the King of his kingdom, the former could do exactly that in a matter of an hour, as he

had full control over the army. At this point the King consulted the *qāḍī* on the issue

and then the latter proposed to the King to banish al-Mu'ayyad from his kingdom.

Thus, the King secretly arranged to send the Fatimid writer away from Fars.[44]

The description given by Ibn Balkhī is partially in agreement with the

description of al-Mu'ayyad, for example, his popularity amongst the Daylamīs and his

friendship with the King. However, Ibn Balkhī and al-Mu'ayyad differ on the identity

and number of the opponents of al-Mu'ayyad in Shiraz. According to Ibn Balkhī, the staunch-enemy of al-Mu'ayyad in Shiraz and the prime mover in turning the King against al-Mu'ayyad was *qāḍī* ʿAbd Allah. However, it seems that according to al-Mu'ayyad, there were at least four people, including *qāḍī* ʿAbd Allāh who showed hostility to al-Mu'ayyad. Al-Mu'ayyad refers to two of them anonymously and he mentions the other two individuals by name. One of the persons whom our author mentions anonymously is the *qāḍī* of the city whom Ibn Balkhī identifies as ʿAbd Allāh and the other one a friend of Abū Kālījār, who was also his drinking mate prior to his conversion to the Fatimid faith. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the *qāḍī* of the city demonstrated hostility at the beginning phase of the mission that the former led, that is to say, immediately after the prayer of *ʿĪd al-Fiṭr* in 429/1038. This is at the time when Abū Kālījār appears to be upset after having received the news that the *qāḍī* of the city and his associates tried to seek permission officially to burn the house of al-Mu'ayyad and to kill him. But that did not happen. As far as the drinking mate of the King is concerned, al-Mu'ayyad harshly criticizes him by describing him as his staunch opponent after Abū Kālījār's conversion to the Ismāʿīlī faith. According to al-Mu'ayyad, these friends of the King were extremely angry, as they were losing their best friend, namely, Abū Kālījār. Al-Mu'ayyad is highly critical one of those persons by considering him extremely dishonest and full of corruption. This man seems to have played a role in turning the King against al-Mu'ayyad.[45]

As regards the other two men, one of them was *qāḍī* al-Mushtarī. Al-Mu'ayyad describes the relationship of Ibn al-Mushtarī with himself as extremely

hostile, as al-Mushtarī enjoyed a friendly relationship with the Abbasid Caliph from whom he received not only a title but also an award of honour, when Abū Kālījār sent him to Baghdad. This man reported al-Mu'ayyad to Baghdad when the former pronounced the name of the Fatimid Caliph in the Friday sermon in Ahwāz. At the same time, the *qāḍī* urged Abū Kālījār to arrest al-Mu'ayyad and send him to Baghdad. Finally, al-Mu'ayyad refers to Ibn Muslimah, minister of the Abbasid Caliph, who, according to the *dāᶜī*, succeeded in his effort to persuade the King to banish al-Mu'ayyad from Fars.[46]

As examined already that the statement of al-Mu'ayyad about his life in Shiraz and the view of Ibn Balkhī overall suggest that al-Mu'ayyad's opponents had religious and political motivations to get rid of him. They made a determined effort to curb the rapidly growing influence of the Fatimid writer whom they thought was not only a bona fide threat to the religious circles of Sunnī Islam but also to the political establishment. Thus, the opponents' unity of purpose in banishing al-Mu'ayyad from Shiraz was not easy to confront. In this regard, Abū Kālījār's own position becomes questionable, as he was a friend of al-Mu'ayyad. The King's order to banish al-Mu'ayyad from his native land signalled a shift in the opinion of the former. Perhaps there were reasons for the reversal of the attitude of the King. The major reason appears to be the overall political situation and rivalry between heads of different dynasties. For example, Abū Kālījār pursued an intense rivalry with his uncle Jalāl al-Dawlah. Consequently, Abū Kālījār gained control over Wāsiṭ and succeeded in convincing the Abbasid Caliph to agree to mention his name in the

khuṭbah in Baghdad. However, later, Jalāl-Dawlah and Abū Kālījār signed a peace treaty, ending the hostility in 438 A.H.[47]

Abū Kālījār's active pursuit to become the King in Baghdad prior to the peace treaty in 438 A.H., understandably shifted his affiliation away from al-Mu'ayyad who had a contrary agenda. One of the types of evidence of the cool relationship is the complaint of al-Mu'ayyad about the King's indifferent attitude mentioned in his *Qaṣīdah* which he had composed. In that *Qaṣīdah*, al-Mu'ayyad mentions the King's rejection of al-Mu'ayyad's recommendation to have correspondence with the Fatimids, a point that has preceded.[48]

Having examined all this, realistically one can have a series of questions as to why the King came under the influence of al-Mu'ayyad in the first place when he accepted the Fatimid faith. Furthermore, did the King accept the Fatimid faith with his heart and mind? If so, was it appropriate for Abū Kālījār to send al-Mu'ayyad away, at the same time, trying to protect him? The lack of uniformity in the actions of the King regarding al-Mu'ayyad leads us to consider that the King was perhaps under immense pressure and that the source of the pressure was the Abbasids. The King was trying not to cause any disturbances to his kingdom by avoiding upsetting the Abbasids, at the same time, maintaining his link with al-Mu'ayyad as far as his faith was concerned. In the light of all of this, the king appears to have behaved as he did to satisfy the people involved and to strike a balance between his political career and his faith.

There is no convincing argument that the King's loyalty to the Fatimid faith became suspicious in the wake of the King's decision of banishing al-Mu'ayyad from Fars. On the other hand, there is an indication of the loyalty of the King to the Fatimids in his correspondence with al-Mu'ayyad after he left Shiraz. The King wrote a letter in response to al-Mu'ayyad's correspondence after he arrived in Egypt probably in 439 A.H. In this letter, the King demonstrates his respect for the Fatimids, including al-Mu'ayyad. The letter begins with the titles of al-Mu'ayyad, including "our *shaykh*" (*li-shaykhinā*), "our aider" (*ẓahīrinā*) and "our trusted one" (*mu^ctamadinā*). In the letter, the King has raised a wide range of topics, for example, he reminded al-Mu'ayyad of the pleasant experience of the company of the latter when he was in Shiraz. In addition, the King reminded the Fatimid author the blessings of the supplications which al-Mu'ayyad had recommended to him; perhaps considering the *dā^cī* as his spiritual master. Politically, he wrote to the Fatimid writer that the Turks, probably referring to Tughrul Beg and his associates would never be able to attack the Fatimid Empire, as he had already taken effective measures to destroy them and to prevent them from expanding their influence any further. Then the King mentions the reason for his order, which he had issued to al-Mu'ayyad to leave Fars which according to the former, was in the latter's best interest. The King's explanation for the deportation order follows his cordial invitation to al-Mu'ayyad to return to Fars.[49]

> One may assume the content of the letter as indicating a shifting position on
>
> the part of the King again. Such an assumption may relate to the King's
>
> reference to his political sympathy with the Fatimids, particularly in the

context of his claim of destroying the Turks' wish to expand their territorial

boundaries and domination.   Some people may consider this assumption to

be close to reality because the King was writing this letter after having signed

a peace treaty with his uncle and thus not feeling any further need for

compromising with the Abbasid caliph. This assumption seems to be in tune

with the views of those writers who express the view that the King accepted

the Fatimid faith as he needed Fatimid assistance. Klemm states:

 "In view of the complete political breakdown beyond the eastern and
southern borders of his territory, one can suspect that Abū Kālījār must have
become   increasingly   worried   about   these   dangerous   developments
threatening the very foundations of his reign and empire.   Searching for
support and protection, he probably dared an imploring look at the Fatimid
imperium in the west.   Hence, al-Mu'ayyad's association with Abū Kālījār,
shortly after the end of winter 430/1039, can be considered as highly authentic
and credible".

{Klemm continues by saying} "Thus, the $dā^c\bar{\imath}$ al-Mu'ayyad only had
to grasp the opportunity offered to him by the favourable political situation.
That he knew how to use this critical moment in a masterly manner is not
only confirmed by his own report, but also by the historian Ibn al-Balkhī who,
as we saw, was horrified at the strong influence the Ismaili missionary exerted
on the Būyid ruler. Soon after, al-Mu'ayyad proposed that the first concrete
steps towards a political alliance with the Fatimids be undertaken. But the
pressure of the Sunni lobby pushed the government to curb the ambitious
mediator".[50]

Despite all the political upheaval and hardships which al-Mu'ayyad went

through since the beginning of his mission, still there remained a bond between al-

Mu'ayyad and the King and that bond seems to be faith-related. Due to this

relationship, perhaps, al-Mu'ayyad was not prepared to hold the King responsible for

the hardships that he faced. On the contrary, al-Mu'ayyad defended the King more

than once by stating that the latter was not the source of the upheaval, but it

emanated originally from certain people who influenced the King. More importantly and following the Fatimid *dā^cī*'s own understanding, one can infer that the King must have realised the extreme danger that the Fatimid *dā^cī* was in. Thus, the King decided to issue a deportation order to al-Mu'ayyad, probably considering that the latter would be safe outside Fars. One can witness the faith-related affiliation of the King to al-Mu'ayyad in the correspondence between the two after the arrival of al-Mu'ayyad in Egypt. The *dā^cī* seems to be far from despondency about his mission, particularly its impact on the King that he had initiated so vigorously in Fars. Nothing could have urged the Fatimid *dā^cī* to write to the King more vigorously than the bond of faith.

Examining the conflicting reports about the journey of al-Mu'ayyad, one needs to examine the description of al-Mu'ayyad, as well as that of Ibn al-Balkhī. Al-Mu'ayyad describes that he went to Jannābah, and then Ḥillah. He stopped on his way at Sābūr, a town away from Shiraz at a three-day journey. Then he went to Ahwāz where he met the Daylamīs. He stayed at Ḥillah with Manṣūr b. al-Ḥusayn, one of the *amīrs* of the Bedouins (*aḥad umarā'i al-badāwī*) for seven months where the latter treated him well. During his stay in Ḥillah, al-Mu'ayyad received the news that the Fatimid Caliph had conferred noble titles and gifts upon Qirwāsh b. al-Muqallad, the Prince of Mawṣil. Therefore, it crossed the mind of al-Mu'ayyad that Qirwāsh abandoned the Abbasids and switched his allegiance to the Fatimids. Although the *dā^cī* did not know the affair for certain, he decided to go to Mawṣil to assess the situation. More importantly, he wished to visit the shrines of Imām ^cAlīy and Imām Ḥusayn in Kūfah and Karbalā. After having visited Qirwāsh, al-Mu'ayyad discovered

that Qirwāsh was not as he had visualized him. Al-Mu'ayyad seems to have understood him on a course of action which, according to his description, "was free from virtues". Al-Mu'ayyad then decided to go to Egypt.[51]

On the other hand, Ibn Balkhī's description of the details of the journey of the Fatimid writer differs from the description of al-Mu'ayyad. According to Ibn Balkhī, al-Mu'ayyad was removed from Fars forcefully and he was threatened not to enter Fars again on pain of death, otherwise he would face death.[52] There is no reason not to believe al-Mu'ayyad's description, as the *dā'ī* did not seem to have a particular purpose to alter the description of his journey. However, the question arises why Ibn Balkhī gave a different description of the journey, considering it to be a forced move. It is possible that Ibn Balkhī's source of information was misleading, or it was a deliberate attempt to portray al-Mu'ayyad as a man whom the authority in Shiraz did not trust to let him leave the country on his own.

D.   CONCLUSION

Al-Mu'ayyad faced numerous challenges in Fars and several hardships engulfed him, perhaps, for only one reason and that was his devotion to his religious ideals and faith that include the spiritual authority and headship of the family of the Prophet. However, the most significant question in the whole episode appears to be as to whether the mission of al-Mu'ayyad was a success or whether it was a failure. Readers of the biography of al-Mu'ayyad may have their own views and conclusions, as the circumstances surrounding the *dā'ī* were complex and manifold. Generally, it seems

that the readers can understand the mission of the Fatimid writer in two different ways. Some of the readers, particularly those amongst the faithful may consider the mission to be a success in the sense of it being a source of inspiration for them in terms of facing hardships for the sake of one's ideals. Furthermore, al-Mu'ayyad's uncompromising attitude enabled him to continue his mission up to the time when he left Fars. Based on what preceded just now, one can argue that the Fatimid *dāʿī*'s mission was a success, particularly since he persuaded the King to consider the Fatimid faith and to accept it. However, on the other hand, some people may hold the view that al-Mu'ayyad failed in completing his mission in Fars and he was unable to succeed in preventing those elements that exerted a great influence on the political authority in banishing him from his homeland. Therefore, it is true that al-Mu'ayyad had no choice but to leave his homeland under immense pressure.

CHAPTER TWO: AL-MU'AYYAD AS A DEFENDER OF THE FATIMID CALIPHATE AND THE CHIEF *DĀ^CĪ* OF THE ISMĀ^CĪLĪS

A. AL-MU'AYYAD'S CHALLENGES AT THE BEGINNING PHASE OF HIS LIFE IN CAIRO, THAT IS, BETWEEN THE DATE OF HIS ARRIVAL AND BETWEEN THE DEATH OF AL-TUSTARĪ (D. 439/1047)

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to examine al-Mu'ayyad's life in Cairo, particularly the challenges that he faced in settling down and harmonizing his relationship with the officials and above all his understanding of the affairs of Fatimid Caliphate, including the Ismā^cīlī *da^cwah*.

To begin with, it seems to be relevant to discuss the date of the arrival of al-Mu'ayyad in Cairo. There is a difference of opinion amongst the biographers of al-Mu'ayyad as to when he arrived in Cairo. The reason for the difference is the silence of al-Mu'ayyad on mentioning the date on which he abandoned Shiraz and all those subsequent dates on which he visited various locations until his meeting with the Imām of his time in Cairo. Due to the lack of information on precise dates, al-Mu'ayyad's biographers have suggested different dates; for example, Ḥusayn has given more than two alternative dates. One of the suggestions of Ḥusayn is that al-Mu'ayyad arrived in Egypt in 438/1045-1046. However, then he expresses a more general view by assuming that al-Mu'ayyad must have arrived in Egypt anytime between 436/1043-1044 and 439/1047-1048. Ḥusayn insisted that al-Mu'ayyad did not arrive in Egypt prior to 436/1043-1044.

According to Ḥusayn, the reason why al-Mu'ayyad arrived after 436/1043-1044 is that he was in Ḥillah on his way to Egypt in 436/1043-1044.[1] Poonawala expresses the view that al-Mu'ayyad arrived in Egypt in 438/1046[2]. From the above discussions it seems that al-Mu'ayyad had left Iran by the end of 434 A.H., or the beginning of 435 A.H., and that there is a gap of at least 3-4 years between al-Mu'ayyad's presence in Ḥillah and his meeting with the Imām in Cairo which, according to his own statement, was the 29th of Shaᶜbān 439/18 February 18, 1048.

As already mentioned, al-Mu'ayyad's most prominent objective was to meet the Imām. Immediately after his arrival in Egypt, al-Mu'ayyad strived to achieve his ambition by meeting the Imām. However, he was unable to achieve his goal immediately. The barrier to his meeting with the Imām was perhaps due to some political reasons, particularly the hostility on the part of some of the dignitaries such as Abū Saᶜd al-Tustarī (d.439/1047), the holder of a position which was, perhaps, equal to the position of a general manager or the Chief Minister of the Fatimid administration at that time. Al-Mu'ayyad's description of al-Tustarī will follow. However, first examining the view of Ibn al-Ṣairafī, a famous historian of Egypt, seems to be important. Although Ibn al-Ṣairafī does not give the life sketch of al-Tustarī under a distinctive topic as he does whilst describing the lives of other dignitaries of the Fatimid Empire, he does mention him in the context of his discussion on Ṣadāqah b. Yūsuf al-Fallāḥī (d.440/1048) who was a Minister under al-Tustarī. Thus, according to al-Ṣairafī, al-Tustarī began his career as an assistant to the mother of the Imām al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh. Then his duties grew immensely until he took the responsibility of all the affairs related to the administration

of the Caliphate. He was so powerful that according to Ibn Ṣairafī, nothing could escape al-Tustarī's regulating authority, and nobody could do his duty without his prescription.[4] Al-Mu'ayyad's description bears upon the description given by the Fatimid historian in spirit, however, he differs from him in letter. According to the metaphorical wording of al-Mu'ayyad, the paramount significance of al-Tustarī's position in relation to the other administrative officials, particularly al-Fallāḥī was "like the meaning to the word (*maḥall al-lafẓ min al-maʿnā*) and he was both the foundation and structure of the Fatimid government," i.e., the most dominating administrative official amongst the other officials. The Fatimid author describes his meeting with al-Tustarī by stating that he found him agitated.[5]

Al-Mu'ayyad then describes how he met the Chief *qāḍī*, al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥmmad b. al-Nuʿmān. It seems that al-Mu'ayyad was not impressed by the appearance and the body language of the Chief *qāḍī*, probably the latter showed resentment to al-Mu'ayyad. However, the Fatimid author describes that these officials were not the ultimate sources of the resentment but there were some other people around them who influenced them to demonstrate that attitude. For example, some of these people asked al-Tustarī not to give al-Mu'ayyad any opportunity whatsoever, as he was non-Arab (*al-aʿjamī*) and foreigner[6] which suggests that there was a section of people who would promote racial hatred and disharmony.

Al-Mu'ayyad on his part, tried to convince the Fatimid officials that his emigration to Egypt was not for any worldly gain but for the audience with the Imām. Al-Mu'ayyad states that the ʿAlid Government was dear to him to much so that he

abandoned his home country for it. He was insistent that because of his association with the ᶜAlid Government, certain sections of people became opposed to him. He elaborates on this and, particularly referred to the strong opposition from the Abbasids. Al-Mu'ayyad's declaration of his unwavering conviction in the Imām and his enormous reverence for him was followed by his direct and bold statement that he was not there in Cairo for the sake of meeting ministers and other dignitaries but for the sake of the audience with the Imām of the time. He appears to be full of anxiety and frustration which he expressed in his consistent complaint about his inability to meet the Imām. From then on, the attitude of al-Mu'ayyad became hardened and confrontational, as he argued harshly with the General Manager over his repeated failure in his first and foremost objective. Consequently, al-Tustarī became increasingly alarmed and the relationship between them deteriorated. After some time, al-Tustarī was killed and al-Fallāḥi's relationship remained steady with al-Mu'ayyad. Al-Mu'ayyad considers al-Fallāḥī to be responsible for providing him the opportunity to obtain his prime aim and objective.[7]

B. AL-MU'AYYAD IN THE PRESENCE OF THE IMĀM

Al-Mu'ayyad was a dedicated Fatimid *dāᶜī* and a firm believer in the Fatimid doctrines and teachings. These doctrines and teachings include love and reverence for the religious authorities, as well as complete submission to them. When al-Mu'ayyad was meeting the Imām, he appears to have reflected not only on all the hardships which he had confronted for the sake of his faith but also a strong sense of realization of his

noblest aim and objective in life. These factors appear to have manifested themselves in the presence of the Imām, despite al-Mu'ayyad's attempt to curb them as he describes in the following paragraph:

According to al-Mu'ayyad, he was overcome by the awe and had tears of joy in his eyes. He felt difficulty in expressing himself. He remained in the presence of the Imām for a while. His tongue was unable to utter anything, nor did it find a word to say. The audience attempted to talk to him, but he found it hard to express himself and he was surprised due to the obstruction in expressing himself. The Imām may Allah perpetuate his kingdom, said": "Let him (al-Mu'ayyad) be as he is until he calms down and accustoms himself (to a new situation). Thereupon, he stood up and held the noble hand of the Imām and kissed it passionately and placed it on his eyes and chest. He then bade farewell and left".[8]

C. Al-MU'AYYAD AND THE FATIMID ADMINISTRATION

Al-Mu'ayyad continues by stating that al-Fallāḥī provided further opportunity to him by appointing him as an officer at the door of the office of the Imām. Al-Mu'ayyad further states that since then he enjoyed many opportunities to be in contact with the Imām. Al-Mu'ayyad was very pleased, but the political situation changed. Al-Yāzūrī (d.450/1058) took the place of al-Tustarī and deprived al-Mu'ayyad of the opportunity of having audience with the Imām. Al-Mu'ayyad says that the unkind attitude towards him was, probably due to al-Fallāḥī's removal from office. According to the Fatimid author, al-Fallāḥī was replaced by Abū al-Barakāt al-Jarjarā'ī whose relationship with

al-Mu'ayyad was not good either. More importantly, al-Mu'ayyad was extremely critical of the growing influence of al-Yāzūrī, as he was appointed to both the Chief judicial position and the position of the Chief *Dāᶜī* in place of al-Qāsim b. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz b. Muḥammad b. al-Nuᶜmān who was dismissed. Al-Mu'ayyad describes that he saw no justification in al-Yāzūrī's holding both top positions, particularly his becoming the Chief *Dāᶜī*. Al-Mu'ayyad considered all this as an innovation, an outrageous and an unprecedented event to happen.[9]

Al-Mu'ayyad did not remain silent but protested against the growing influence of al-Yāzūrī and attempted to leave Egypt but al-Yāzūrī made a determined effort to explain to him the sensitive and critical political situation in the Fatimid *khilāfah*. This explanation was given probably to morally pressurise al-Mu'ayyad to reconsider his intention of leaving the country. Al-Yāzūrī's attempt was due to his understanding that al-Mu'ayyad would be helpful in assisting al-Yāzūrī in successfully facing some of the challenges which the Fatimid caliphate was confronting at that time.[10]

Al-Mu'ayyad decided to stay in Cairo with the aim of helping al-Yāzūrī in the areas of skill he needed. Al-Mu'ayyad discusses al-Yāzūrī's need for an intensive training and expresses his strong feeling and realization of his success. For example, al-Mu'ayyad says that al-Yāzūrī was in darkness in relation to the *daᶜwah* affairs and he neither had the skill of making continuous strides in respect to the tasks nor the boldness to face difficult situations in that regard. In short, in the opinion of al-Mu'ayyad, al-Yāzūrī lacked the basic experience to handle the responsibilities which were entrusted to him.

In that situation, al-Mu'ayyad states that he wanted to guide al-Yāzūrī. In this regard, the task which al-Mu'ayyad had to carry out was to design a clear-cut method within which al-Yāzūrī had to work. According to the Fatimid *dāᶜī,* his help and assistance to al-Yāzūrī was not merely a mark of a superficial demonstration of co-operation but a token of his sincerity. Thus, he unambiguously wishes al-Yāzūrī to be a highly skilful professional person and even a better official compared to those in similar positions in the past. In short, al-Mu'ayyad was helpful to al-Yāzūrī to a great extent and decided to improve his performance, particularly his presentation of the weekly lectures delivered to the believers**.**[11]   As will follow shortly, al-Mu'ayyad seemed to have expressed his dissatisfaction with the reward which he received from al-Yāzūrī for the help which he provided to al-Yāzūrī who appointed him head of the *Dīwān al-Inshā'*, the Chancery of the Fatimids.[12]

There may be questions in the minds of some readers about the *dāᶜī*'s rather changing attitude towards al-Yāzūrī.   On the one hand, al-Mu'ayyad is critical of al-Yāzūrī, considering him to be incapable of performing the task of the office of the *daᶜwah* whilst, on the other hand, he shows foe him sympathy. By looking at the political conditions of the time and considering al-Mu'ayyad's commitment to his faith and the Fatimid Caliphate, it seems that he had no choice but to sacrifice his personal prestige for the Ismāᶜīlī *daᶜwah* and Fatimid state.   Therefore, the attitude of al-Mu'ayyad in the current context can be considered as pure pragmatism and altruistic concern for the *daᶜwah*, as well as the Fatimid Caliphate**.**

The other reason for al-Mu'ayyad's lenient attitude and postponing his journey back to Iran may be due to the *dāʿī*'s understanding of the Fatimid administrative machinery and its hierarchical structure. As a Fatimid thinker and an experienced strategist, al-Mu'ayyad must have realised that a vizier or any other member of the Fatimid management team was unlikely to go against the interests of the state, despite his personal weaknesses. Furthermore, al-Mu'ayyad's decision to abandon his intention of leaving Cairo was, perhaps, due to his careful consideration of the strong possibility of the involvement of a higher member of the government's hierarchy in his affair. He thought that it was not al-Yāzūrī alone but there was somebody else who helped al-Yāzūrī in deciding on the affair relating to him. He understood that the help which al-Yāzūrī received was from the mother of the Imām who was, perhaps, part and parcel of the decision-making processes in the Fatimid administration. Al-Mu'ayyad refers to the mother of the Imām by using the phrase "one of the great authorities" (*baʿḍ al-jihāt al-jalīlah*).[13]

In the current context it seems to be important to address the question also which was already raised concerning al-Mu'ayyad's dissatisfaction with the reward which he received from al-Yāzūrī for the help which the former had extended to the latter. Despite al-Mu'ayyad's disapprobation, the Fatimid minister reminded al-Mu'ayyad of his favours which included an increase in his salary. Al-Yāzūrī's view inflamed the situation and thus al-Mu'ayyad strongly disapproved of the wording of al-Yāzūrī's message. However, al-Mu'ayyad did not deny that al-Yāzūrī provided him employment and increased his salary, at the same time, he expressed his strong disapproval of the

view of al-Yāzūrī for more than one reason.   Perhaps the strongest reason which al-Mu'ayyad gives was that what he had received from al-Yāzūrī was incomparable and incompatible with what he was deprived of. Al-Mu'ayyad states that the opportunity which he did not receive was the position of *dā^cī al-du^cāh* which he considered as the most suitable position for him.[14]

It can be summed up that al-Mu'ayyad's early phase of life in Cairo is marked by a combination of elements of joy and elements of predicament. The Fatimid *dā^cī* appears to be spiritually satisfied and intellectually inspired by his meeting with the Imām, as this was the former's primary objective. It would not be an exaggeration to state that the *dā^cī*'s meeting with Imām remained inspirational throughout the rest of his life. This appears to be the most dominating factor in helping al-Mu'ayyad to maintain his strength and vitality in the face of enormous difficulties and challenges which he had not perhaps conceived prior to his arrival in Cairo.

Al-Mu'ayyad not only persistently conducted his duties associated with the Fatimid *da^cwah* but also worked as a strategist on behalf of the Fatimids. He displayed his strategic skills on several occasions, particularly in Syria and ^cIrāq.

D.   THE RELATIONS OF THE FATIMIDS WITH THE BYZANTINE MPIRE AND TUGHRUL

BEG

The Fatimids were threatened by the Byzantine Empire and their allies, particularly

Tughrul Beg and his supporters to whom al-Mu'ayyad refers as al-*Turkamaniyah,* the

Turkish people.[15]

Ḥusayn is surprised by the view of al-Mu'ayyad that a friendly relationship existed

between the Byzantine Empire and the Turkish people, as according to him, none of

the historical sources refer to such a relationship.   At the same time, Ḥusayn quotes

al-Maqrīzī, who has mentioned the Byzantine Empire and Tughrul Beg to be united

against the Fatimids. Accordingly, in 446/1054 day-to-day commodities became costly

in Egypt and famine broke out.   Al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh requested the Emperor of the

Byzantine Empire that is to say, Constantine X to help the Fatimid Empire by sending

them wheat after the famine of 446/1054. The emperor agreed to do so but died

before dispatching wheat to Egypt. After the death of the emperor, Theodora daughter

of Constantine VIII, took his place as the Queen. She asked the Fatimid Caliph to help

the Byzantine Empire with military aid against any aggressors in exchange for her help

of sending wheat to Egypt.   However, the Caliph turned down this demand.

Consequently, the Queen failed to fulfil the promise of sending wheat to Egypt. The

Fatimids became annoyed by this event and an army was sent against the Byzantine

Empire. However, the army was unsuccessful, and the military leader of the army was

captured. In the wake of this event, Tughrul Beg sent his messenger to the Byzantine Empire with the request to allow his messenger to say the prayer for the Abbasid Caliph al-Qā'im in the mosque of Constantinople thus putting an end to the practice of saying the prayer for the Fatimid Caliph. The messenger was allowed to say the prayer and to pronounce the *khuṭbah* in the name of the Abbasid caliph, namely, al-Qā'im. In 447/1055 when al-Quḍāʿī, a Fatimid ambassador visited Constantinople, he saw for himself that saying the prayer for the Fatimid caliph had stopped. When the Fatimid ambassador reported this to Cairo, the relationship between the Byzantine Empire and the Fatimids became more complex.[16]

At this point of time, Tughrul Beg declared his plan of removal al-Mustanṣir from the power, but he failed in his plan[17]. The reason for the failure of Tughrul Beg in his aim and objective was probably the conflict of the Abbasid Caliph with al-Basāsīrī, leader of Abbasid armed forces. According to Ibn Athīr, al-Basāsīrī had a humble background; he was a slave, *mameluk* of Bahā' al-Dawlah, one of the Buyid Kings. His name was Arsalān and surname Abū al-Ḥārith and he hailed from Basā (Fasā in Arabic).[18] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī gives an account of this event. According to him, the power of al-Basāsīrī was substantially enhanced in the ʿAbbasid Caliphate and no one amongst the Turks was as powerful as al-Basāsīrī. He took possession of many regions, and his good reputation was widely known. As a result of this, the Arabs and non-Arabs became threatened by him. His name was pronounced in the *khuṭbah* not only in ʿIrāq but also in Ahwāz, as well as in some other surrounding areas. The Caliph valued his advice highly and he never took a decision without first consulting him.[19]

Al-Basāsīrī's relations with the Caliph and other officials did not remain friendly for long. There came a time when the Abbasid Caliph became not only suspicious of the loyalty of al-Basāsīrī, but he also demonstrated his displeasure openly to him. According to al-Baghdādī, the Caliph became aware of the intention of al-Basāsīrī who, according to the Caliph wanted to pillage his palace and then to arrest him. Thus, the Caliph invited Tughrul Beg to Baghdad.[20] According to Canard, "The Caliph, his vizier, and al-Malik al-Raḥīm accepted Tughril's, presence, and his name was pronounced in the khuṭba on Friday 15th December 1055; on the 18th, he made his solemn entry into the capital."[21]

The entry of Tughrul Beg and his army to ᶜIrāq does not appear to be an auspicious omen for the people of ᶜIrāq. Tughrul Beg and his army caused disturbances. According to Ibn Athīr, after a couple of days, rioting broke out in the city which entangled all sections of the people of ᶜIrāq. Tughrul Beg imprisoned the Buyid King al-Malik al-Raḥīm who had agreed with the Caliph to welcome Tughrul Beg and his army to the city. The reason for the imprisonment was that Tughrul Beg became suspicious of the King of causing troubles. As a result of this action, the caliph became upset, and he blamed Tughrul Beg for causing the disturbances and the imprisonment of the King. The Caliph was too annoyed, and he asked Tughrul Beg to set the King free; otherwise the Caliph asserted that he would leave the country. Tughrul Beg's action did not help him at all, but it worked against his interests. Thus, al-Basāsīrī went to al-Raḥbah; he wrote to the {Fatimid Caliph and} ruler of Egypt, namely, al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh, informing him about his willingness to join the Fatimids.[22]

One can say that the rivalry between the Abbasids and the Fatimids remained alive even at the time of the Fatimid Caliph. During this period, the Abbasids tried to consolidate and expand their relations with Tughrul Beg and the Roman Empire. Consequently, a serious threat was posed to the existence of the Fatimid Caliphate. Perhaps, the Fatimids availed themselves of the opportunity of benefiting from the Abbasids' internal political upheaval though the Irāqīs were waiting for a change. The revolt of certain elements within the Abbasid Government paved the way for the Fatimids to concentrate on combating their opponents. The measures which the Fatimids took include some strategies and negotiations to which we should turn now.

E. AL-MU'AYYAD'S ROLE AS A STRATEGIST AND NEGOTIATOR IN SYRIA AND ʿIRĀQ

When the Fatimids received the threat, emanating from the Byzantine Empire and Tughrul Beg, the officials consulted amongst themselves to address the matter and al-Mu'ayyad states that he was part and parcel of the consultative people. Al-Mu'ayyad gives a lengthy description of the expedition of negotiation in Syria and ʿIrāq. Al-Mu'ayyad's description of the events begins with his harsh criticism of Ibn Muslimah, Minister of the Abbasid Caliph.[23]

The Fatimid *dāʿī* states that after the consultation, he was authorised to initiate a dialogue with al-Kundurī, Minister of Tughrul Beg and al-Basāsīrī. He wrote

to al-Kundurī in Persian, probably because the latter was more comfortable with that language. In that letter, al-Mu'ayyad states that he tried to ask al-Kundurī and others to join the ᶜAlid *daᶜwah*. According to him, the best method of the correspondence of the summoning would be if he followed the Qur'ānic method of *daᶜwah*, summoning people to the way of Allah with wisdom, a fair exhortation and reasoning in ways that are best" (Qur'ān: 16:125). Al-Mu'ayyad wrote a letter to al-Basāsīrī also, but he did not receive it. Afterwards, the Fatimid *dāᶜī* wrote another letter which he sent to Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan, probably a confidant of al-Basāsīrī. Al-Basāsīrī received this letter after Tughrul Beg's arrival in Baghdad.[24]

According to al-Mu'ayyad, al-Basāsīrī and his people were grateful as the Fatimids were prepared to help them at that critical time and were extremely excited over the news from the Fatimids. Al-Mu'ayyad uses metaphorical expressions for the exultation of the supporters of al-Basāsīrī. The correspondence seems to have provided them with hope and the realization of their perceived aims and objectives and "it made them cheerful and excited like water transforms a barren land to a fertile ground". Al-Mu'ayyad further states that these people were praying for the Fatimids and expressed gratitude to them. They gave their reasons as to why they were unhappy and upset with the ᶜIrāqī rulers. They were despondent and frustrated, as they thought they were deceived. The *dāᶜī* once again uses a metaphorical expression and says: "Tughrul Beg and others fired at the ᶜIrāqīs with a bullet of deception". Then the ᶜIrāqīs reportedly expressed their willingness to support the Fatimid cause on the condition that the latter were prepared to help them in that difficult time by providing them with money

and supplies. Now a complex issue was still to be resolved, namely, who would lead the convoy of supplies to al-Basāsīrī? After a heated debate and careful consideration, al-Yāzūrī requested al-Mu'ayyad, to lead the convoy.   In this regard, al-Yāzūrī quoted the Imām by saying that he had proposed al-Mu'ayyad's name to lead the convoy. Al-Mu'ayyad agreed to the proposal, despite what appeared to be his reservation on this matter earlier.[25]

From some other classical sources it becomes clear that these writings do mention al-Mu'ayyad to be instrumental in taking responsibility of carrying the supplies and monies to Syria and ᶜIrāq, at the same time, portraying al-Yāzūrī to be the one who made the preparation for the task in question. These writers include Ibn Muyassar and Ibn Ṣairafī, historians of the Fatimid period. Ḥusayn examines this matter and refers to these writers who do not discuss the role of al-Mu'ayyad in a greater detail. According to Ibn Muyassar, as discussed by Ḥusayn, al-Yāzūrī sent supplies and monies to al-Basāsīrī through al-Mu'ayyad. As far as al-Ṣairafī is concerned, according to Ḥusayn, al-Ṣairafi said that al-Yāzūrī, the Fatimid Minister not only asked al-Basāsīrī to combat Tughrul Beg but he also assisted al-Basāsīrī through the instrumentality of al-Mu'ayyad and al-Yāzūrī sent monies and supplies through him.[26] This statement of the Egyptian historian vaguely suggests that al-Mu'ayyad was not merely the person in charge of the funds and supplies but he was also responsible for helping al-Basāsīrī in other aspects of the task such as in formulating the policy and undertaking negotiations.

The statements of the Egyptian historians lack clarity in their descriptions of al-Mu'ayyad's duties and responsibilities in the episode in question. On the other hand,

one can witness that modern writers on the Fatimids discuss the role of al-Mu'ayyad in much detail. These writers include Ḥusayn, Canard, Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, ᶜAbd al-Munᶜim Mājid, Hamdani, Qutbuddin and Klemm. Some of these writers can be cited. To begin with, Ḥusayn discusses al-Mu'ayyad's role in ᶜIrāq, attaching to him a very high degree of significance by stating: "Al-Mu'ayyad was the regulating intellect (al-ᶜaql al-mudabbir) and the moving hand (al-yad al-muḥarrikah) behind this upheaval (al-thawrah)" that is, the movement led by al-Mu'ayyad in Syria and ᶜIrāq. In this regard, Ḥusayn considers the Sīrah of al-Mu'ayyad as the only source to include the details of the episode and other aspects of his life. Ḥusayn complains about the general classical Muslim writers for ignoring the details which al-Mu'ayyad has given in his Sīrah.[27]

Canard discusses the expedition in ᶜIrāq that al-Mu'ayyad led. He has fully examined the event and has referred to the Sīrah of al-Mu'ayyad and thus, relying on him regarding the pieces of information on the expedition. Canard examines the part which al-Mu'ayyad had to play in this task:

> "According to the autobiography of the Fatimid missionary al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, who was apparently the instigator of the revolt and a real Fatimid plenipotentiary in the affair, al-Basāsīrī was not the first to approach Mustanṣir; Mu'ayyad had written to him prior to Tughrul's arrival in Baghdad, though the letters did not reach him until after the Saldjūḳid had entered the city. It was Mu'ayyad who brought the money and supplies sent by Cairo to al-Basāsīrī at Raḥba as well as the Fatimid Caliph's patent of investiture".[28]

Ḥasan comments on al-Mu'ayyad's part in the expedition who considers the Imām himself to be the one who sent al-Mu'ayyad to Syria and ᶜIrāq. This

is a piece of information which Ḥasan seems to have derived from al-Mu'ayyad's *Sīrah* which discusses the Imām's keen interest in the expedition and his meeting with al-Mu'ayyayd in person.   According to Ḥasan, al-Mu'ayyad was a bold *dāᶜī* whom the Caliph al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh sent as his envoy, the   mediator on his behalf to assist al-Basāsīrī and his army.[29]

Before departing for Syria and ᶜIrāq, al-Mu'ayyad met the Imām and had the opportunity to talk to him. The conversation included a brief reference to the planning of the expedition and al-Mu'ayyad repeated his willingness to lead the expedition in compliance with the wish of the Imām. At the end of the meeting, the Imām expressed his best wishes and unwavering faith in receiving assistance from Allah and the victory which he hoped for gaining.[30]   After the meeting, al-Mu'ayyad went to the camp where he was presented the convoy of supplies which he was going to lead. In addition, the Fatimid writer mentioned several annoying instances which included discouraging attitude and even criticism from some people   who taunted that the convoy was heading for destruction before meeting its objective.   However, al-Mu'ayyad was able to meet his target in reaching Aleppo and opening a series of negotiations with several influential people in Syria and ᶜIrāq.[31] Now the first and foremost task which al-Mu'ayyad wanted to accomplish was to win over the Mirdāsid prince Thimāl b. Ṣāliḥ, *amīr* of Aleppo.   As a result of the negotiation, Ibn Ṣāliḥ was prepared to provide protection to al-Mu'ayyad and his convoy. However, the Fatimid minister, namely, al-Yāzūrī did not approve of the decision of al-Mu'ayyad, as he held that the *dāᶜī* was putting himself and the convoy in great danger. The Fatimid author

was not prepared to change his plan, as he believed Ibn Ṣāliḥ to be a solid and sincere friend. According to the *dāʿī*, lengthy correspondence was exchanged between him and al-Yāzūrī frequently on this subject. Al-Mu'ayyad claims that he was successful in persuading Ibn Ṣāliḥ to support the Fatimids. Ibn Ṣāliḥ was given the robes of honour in Aleppo which, according to al-Mu'ayyad, signalled the recognition that Ibn Ṣāliḥ was seriously committed to the Fatimid cause. According to al-Mu'ayyad, he received a letter from Ibn Marwān, ruler of Diyār Bakr and Miyāfārqīn. The content of the letter included discussion on the undesireable attitude of the followers of Tughrul Beg. Al-Mu'ayyad responded to Ibn Marwān and persuaded him to support the Fatimid cause.[32]

Al-Mu'ayyad then goes on to describe how he turned his attention to the army that was under the command of al-Basāsīrī. First, he wrote to the army, highlighting his great optimism and his wish to meet them and to confer upon them gifts on behalf of the Fatimid Caliph. The letter also included several reasons which al-Mu'ayyad gave in support of the Fatimid Caliph. These reasons included the attitude of Tughrul Beg and that of his minister. Additionally, al-Mu'ayyad explained the code of practice of warfare in the event of a conflict. For example, he disapproved of any kind of immoderation on the part of the Fatimid army in an action against the opponents, emphasized unity amongst themselves and the need to adhere to justice. Later, the Fatimid *dāʿī* met al-Basāsīrī and his army in al-Raḥbah. He describes the make-up of the army and states that the contingent consisted of people from diverse backgrounds and nationalities, including the Turks, Kurds, Persians, and Arabs.[33]

Al-Mu'ayyad asked all of them to take the oath of allegiance. They complied with the wish of al-Mu'ayyad and then he conferred upon them the robes of honour and allocated money to them. Al-Mu'ayyad appears not to be reluctant in discussing the greed of some of these people. According to him, the oath-taking process was not trouble free. For example, some people were not pleased with what they received. Therefore, al-Mu'ayyad had to renegotiate with them on this matter.[34] Having completed the affair, al-Mu'ayyad asked al-Basāsīrī to take the oath of allegiance. The content of the oath of the allegiance included complimentary remarks on behalf of the Imām. In short, al-Basāsīrī, according to the Imām as reported by al-Mu'ayyad included in those leading people who were in forefront in summoning the people of ᶜIrāq to the emblem of the Commander of the faithful the Fatimid Imām. The other aspects of the good wishes of the Imām for al-Basāsīrī included that according to the Imām, al-Basāsīrī would be able to recite the *khuṭbah* in the name of the descendants of the Prophet (*bi-dhikri āli al-rasūl)*. According to the instruction of the Imām, al-Mu'ayyad specified the realm of the authority of al-Basāsīrī by stating that the Commander of the faithful conferred upon him authority over the people of the region of the *daᶜwah* and he entrusted to him the relevant responsibilities and duties. He also explained to him some of the ethical and moral teachings which included an instruction to al-Basāsīrī to be mindful and fearful of Allah and to consider the material world in the same manner as the friends of Allah considered it. Additionally, al-Mu'ayyad explained to al-Basāsīrī to avoid the evil influence of the material world and that he should take refuge in the *Sharīᶜah* of the grandfather of the Imāms, that is, the Prophet Muhammad. Then, al-

Mu'ayyad conveyed to al-Basāsīrī the message of the Imām to be mindful of saying the prayer as by performing it properly, one can fight against Satan successfully. The other aspects of the message of the Imām included his advice concerning the significance of the *Sharīᶜah* generally by referring to it as a means through which one can reach the abode of peace (*dār al-salām*). Furthermore, the contract comprises the good wishes and prayers of the Imām for the success of the mission.[35]

Al-Mu'ayyad continued to seek to explore more influential people to summon them to the Fatimid cause. Amongst them was Dubays b. Mazyad. Dubays b. Mazyad was one of the supporters of Tughrul Beg but the former found the latter hard to deal with. Al-Mu'ayyad contacted Ibn Mazyad and invited him to join the Fatimid army.   Despite some of the annoying aspects of the behaviour of Ibn Mazyad and his people, al-Mu'ayyad prepared a contract for him.[36]

Al-Mu'ayyad then went to Mawṣil along with others where Quraysh b. Badrān and his supporters, including the army of Tughrul Beg were awaiting to attack the Fatimid army. Even though al-Mu'ayyad wrote to Quraysh b. Badrān, warning him about his attitude towards the Fatimids, his letter did not satisfy al-Mu'ayyad.[37]

The writers are not unanimous on the date of the victory at Sinjār. In this regard most of the views have been examined in the notes.[38]   However, the view of ᶜImād al-Dīn can further be cited on the date of Sinjār. According to ᶜImād al-Dīn, the battle of Sinjār was fought on the day of ᶜĪd al-Fiṭr (the first day of Shawwāl) and it continued even during the Prayer of ᶜĪd was being said and its sermon (*khuṭbah*) delivered.[39]

According to al-Mu'ayyad, the victory at Sinjār was followed by the conquest of Kūfah and the fall of Wāsiṭ to the Fatimids. Al-Mu'ayyad does not give dates for the conquest of Kūfah and Wāsiṭ.[40] As far as other writers are concerned Ibn Athīr mentions that al-Basāsīrī went from Baghdad to Wāsiṭ and Baṣrah and took over them in 450 A.H. But he is silent on Kūfah.   Perhaps Kūfah was taken over at some other time.   According to al-Maqrīzī, Baṣrah and Wāsiṭ fell to the Fatimids in 451/1058.[41]

The Fatimid victories discussed so far did not provide guarantee for the stability of the strength and loyalty of the coalition army. Al-Mu'ayyad became aware within a short period of time that certain segments of the army were unable to maintain their loyalty to the Fatimids to defend them.   Thus, the army began to disintegrate. The reasons for the lack of the loyalty on the part of some of the Fatimid forces included the mounting pressure, emanating from the army of Tughrul Beg. In this regard, al-Mu'ayyad, particularly discusses the incapability of a section of the coalition army in confronting Tughrul Beg's army and thus they were forced to retreat. Al-Mu'ayyad is extremely critical of the situation.   At this period, the Fatimid author had important correspondence with al-Basāsīrī, Ibn Mazyad, Ibn Warām, and Quraysh b. Badrān, expressing to them his deep concern for the retreat and he asked them for their suggestions and help for further action.[42] Al-Mu'ayyad seems to have lacked confidence in these leaders' conduct and their performances.   Klemm presents the view of al-Mu'ayyad on the disloyalty of the army chiefs in this manner: "Al-Mu'ayyad again and again complains that they fulfilled their military obligations only half-heartedly. Not surprisingly, therefore, as soon as Tughrul Beg's military forces were

sent out into the region undergoing upheaval, most of the amīrs again changed sides in favour of the Saljūq".[43]

Furthermore, al-Mu'ayyad confronted some other problems and challenges during this period. According to al-Mu'ayyad, one of the problems was loss of a huge amount of money to ᶜAṭiyyah, brother of Ibn Ṣālih to whom the latter entrusted it to spend it on the army. Al-Mu'ayyad considers this loss as a treacherous act on the part of ᶜAṭiyyah. Due to the loss, al-Mu'ayyad became extremely worried and agitated. He expresses his distressing condition by stating that after having received the terrible news of the loss of money, his day became gloomy, and he became speechless. He understood that the loss of money not only prevented the Fatimids from progressing towards their goals, but it also provided a boost to the army of Tughrul Beg to advance to such territories as Aleppo.[44]

In the meantime, al-Mu'ayyad wrote a letter to al-Kundurī, minister of Tughrul Beg, asking him to persuade Tughrul Beg to reconcile with the Fatimids. However, the correspondence did not prevent al-Mu'ayyad from discussing some of the controversial issues in the letter, including the issue of the legitimacy of the Muslim leadership, preferring ᶜAlid's family to that of the ᶜAbbās b. ᶜAbd al-Muṭṭalib. Al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on the legitimacy of the caliphate in the letter was a strong message for Tughril Beg, whom our author mentioned with a certain degree of respect, at the same time, criticising him for his support for the Abbasids. Al-Mu'ayyad's

expectation of reconciliation between the Fatimids and Tughrul Beg did not come to fruition, as his letter found al-Kundurī engaged in what the former says, was a conspiracy against the people of ᶜIrāq. According to al-Mu'ayyad, al-Kundurī wished to cause disharmony amongst the people of ᶜIrāq, including the leaders of the various tribes.[45]

In the preceding paragraphs, the role of al-Mu'ayyad was examined with reference to the expedition in Syria and ᶜIrāq. The most prominent point emerging from the discussion is that the task in Syria and ᶜIraq involved a few strenuous tasks. It appears that al-Mu'ayyad made a determined effort to conceive comprehensive strategies to achieve his goal. Al-Mu'ayyad's aim was perhaps to establish the Fatimid *daᶜwah* and to transform the then existing system of the Government in the region. One can hold the view that al-Mu'ayyad's effort resulted in a success in a specific sense, meaning a temporary victory. There were perhaps many reasons for failing to establish a permanent Fatimid *daᶜwah* and the Fatimid rule. Those reasons may include imperfect liaison existed between al-Mu'ayyad and the Fatimid administration in Cairo, particularly in the last phase of the expedition when the opponents were regrouping, and they were engaged in strengthening themselves in diverse ways.

F.   Al-MU'AYYAD AS CHIEF *DĀᶜĪ* AND HIS

IMPACT ON OTHERS

Al-Mu'ayyad returns to Egypt, probably with the hope that the Fatimid administration would value what appeared to him an accomplishment, but he was surprised to

observe that some people were still causing obstacles in his relationship with the Imām. According to Idris ᶜImād al-Dīn, al-Mu'ayyad was still put to test and some people maltreated him and did not allow him to meet the Imām. ᶜImād al-Dīn continues his description by giving the reason for the ill-treatment. The reason for the ill-treatment was that the people responsible for the management were unjustifiably fearful that al-Mu'ayyad would interfere with running the administration. According to ᶜImād al-Dīn, al-Mu'ayyad had no reason to interfere, as he had shunned material world and solely concentrated on religious domain.[46] Thus, ᶜImād al-Dīn would suggest that al-Mu'ayyad was not interested in administrative matters of the Fatimids. The allegation that al-Mu'ayyad was attempting to interfere in the administration was therefore baseless. ᶜImād al-Dīn does not suggest any names of those responsible for having hostility towards al-Mu'ayyad. Al-Mu'ayyad remained very patient for a considerable period of time but finally he decided to express his feelings which he wished to articulate in a private meeting between him and his Imām.   In this regard, al-Mu'ayyad wrote a letter to the Imām, asking him for an audience with him. The letter included some verses through which al-Mu'ayyad wished to express his deep-seated devotion and reverence which he had for the Imām.   In these verses al-Mu'ayyad addresses the Imām and expresses a high degree of reverence and love for him. According to al-Mu'ayyad, there was nothing in this world which could ever be as dear and valuable to him as his Imām. He further states that he was prepared to sacrifice everything for his Imām, particularly wishing to meet him. Thus, he says if he owned the kingdom of the East, namely, the kingdom of the king of Fars, for example,

he would sacrifice that for having an audience with the Imām. In the same way, according to al-Mu'ayyad, he would shun anything else for an audience with the Imām even if that audience was for a brief span of time. Finally he states that if the Imām distances himself from him, he would be heartbroken with the hair of his head turning grey.[47]

The letter ideally targeted al-Mu'ayyad's objective, and his request was complied with. The Imām responded in poetry too whose content is this.

The Imām addresses al-Mu'ayyad by saying "oh you *ḥujjah*", which is followed by his complimentary remarks, considering al-Mu'ayyad a well-known person amongst human beings, one who was such a pinnacle of knowledge which nobody was able to reach. According to the Imām, his doors were closed to al-Mu'ayyad only due to a painful, disturbing phenomenon (*li-amrin mu'limin muqliqin*) and the former did not prevent the latter from meeting him out of annoyance. Thus, the Imām advised al-Mu'ayyad to place his confidence in his affection and return to a worthier state of affair. The Imām then said: "We were anxious about your heart, if you learnt about it (the painful, disturbing phenomenon)". Thus, the Imām explained to al-Mu'ayyad that he avoided meeting him like an affectionate father who avoids meeting his son (for a good reason). Afterwards, the Imām discussed the responsibilities which he wished to entrust to al-Mu'ayyad which included provision of religious instructions to the Shīᶜah, who according to the Imām, had lost their true guidance in the East, as well as in the West. Thus, the Imām advised al-Mu'ayyad to unfold his knowledge to his Shīᶜah as he would wish to unfold it to them and be the affectionate father to them. The Imām then

compared the status of al-Mu'ayyad to the positions of others whether they were in the past or whether they were during his time. Thus, according to the Imām, although al-Mu'ayyad was the latest (*dāᶜī* in the series of *dāᶜīs*) in his *daᶜwah* who were in the past, the former overstepped them all. Emphasising and reinforcing his view on the status of al-Mu'ayyad, the Imām further said that there were none like al-Mu'ayyad amongst all the people of the past, nor is anyone there like him amongst the people who were still living.[48]

ᶜImād al-Dīn describes al-Mu'ayyad's direct contact with the Imām and the knowledge and status which he received from him. From then on, al-Mu'ayyad would visit the Imām without any restriction whatsoever. ᶜImād al-Dīn further states that al-Mu'ayyad received from the Imām more than what he hoped for and aimed at. Thus, according to ᶜImād al-Dīn, the Imām raised al-Mu'ayyad's status and elevated his glory. He uplifted the *dāᶜī*'s exaltation and enhanced his reputation. He made al-Mu'ayyad the door to his *daᶜwah* through whose instrumentality, access to the *daᶜwah* became possible. Consequently, al-Mu'ayyad imbibed mysterious and esoteric knowledge from the Imām, and he brought all *daᶜwah*-related duties of other *duᶜāh*, working in the respective areas (*al-jazā'ir*) of the *daᶜwah* under the authority of al-Mu'ayyad. Every *dāᶜī* would consult him and receive advice on any aspect of the *daᶜwah* from him. The Imām considered him to be a paradigm for the followers of his *daᶜwah*.[49]

Some modern writers have elaborated on the duties and responsibilities of the *dāᶜī al-duᶜāh* during the Fatimid period, basing their discussions

on some classical sources. Daftary examines the functions of the *da^cwah* during the

Fatimids and classifies the *da^cwah* activities into two categories: public sessions on the

Sharī^cah interpreted based on the Ismā^cīlī jurisprudence and private *majālis al-ḥikmah*.

A brief account of Daftary's presentation is given here:

> "In Cairo, the public sessions on Ismaili law   were held at al-Azhar and other great mosques there. On these occasions, excerpts from al-Nu^cman's *Da^ca'im* al-Islam and other legal works were read to large audiences.
>
> On the other hand, the private *majalis al-hikma* continued to be held in the Fatimid palace in Cairo for the Ismaili   initiates who had already taken the oath of allegiance and secrecy. Many of these *majalis* normally prepared by or for the chief *da^ci*, were in time collected in writing. This distinctive Fatimid tradition of learning found its culmination in the *Majalis* or collected lectures of al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Din al-Shirazi (d. 470/1078), chief *da^ci* for almost twenty years under al-Mustansir".[50]

Now al-Mu'ayyad's influence upon others needs examining.

There were Ismā^cīlī *dā^cīs* who benefited from al-Mu'ayyad; they include Nāṣir-i

Khusraw. Nāṣir-i Khusraw was one of the most outstanding *dā^cīs* during the time of

Imām al-Mustanṣir bi-AllāhIn one of his poems, Nāṣir-i Khusraw describes the

hardships that he faced for the sake of his faith which include his soul-searching

journey from Iran to Egypt. In this regard, Nāṣir-i Khusraw expresses his reflection as

to how he received inspiration from al-Mu'ayyad's wisdom and knowledge and the

high regard that he had for him. Here is the translation of only one verse of his poems

in which Nāṣir-i Khusraw discusses the status of al-Mu'ayyad by addressing himself: "(O

Nāṣir,) Allah has opened the door of wisdom to you through *khawājah* al-Mu'ayyad.[51]

G.   CONCLUSION

In the preceding paragraphs, an attempt was made to examine al-Mu'ayyad's career as the Chief *dā^cī* under Imām al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh. The following points emerge to be of special significance in evaluating al-Mu'ayyad's career. Although the challenges and the intensive internal rivalry prevented al-Mu'ayyad from benefitting from the opportunity of achieving success at the time of his choosing, he was finally successful in surmounting some of the hardships. Al-Mu'ayyad's resolution in the face of heterogeneous challenges, his strong belief in his religious doctrines and his untiring efforts enabled him to become the Chief *dā^cī* under the Imām of his time.

CHAPTER THREE: THE ESOTERIC ASPECT (*AL-TA'WĪL, AL-BĀṬĪN*)

The concept of *ta'wīl* finds its root in the Qur'ān. It would be desirable to begin the current discussion with an etymological analysis of "*Ta'wi*l". Poonawala defines the word *ta'wīl* and states:

> "TA'WIL (A.), verbal noun of the form II verb *awwala* (derived either from *awl* "return" or from i*yāla* " putting into right condition, managing properly", signifies explanation, exposition, or interpretation as it is literally related to the notion of "returning to its origin or source. The word occurs in the Kurān seventeen times".[1]

These verses would be explained later. However, briefly, these verses discuss in one or the other various aspects of the word *ta'wīl* whose overall and central message is to demonstrate the esoteric and inner meanings of religious instructions. Thus, the word conveys esoteric and closely guarded meanings (3:7; 3: 7; 18:78, 82), the conclusion or the outcome (4:59; 17:35) and the final fulfilment and elucidation of the matter (7: 53; 7:53; 10:39). It also means the interpretation of dreams (12: 6, 21, 36, 37, 44-45, 100-101). The interpretation of *ta'wīl* needs further elaboration and that will follow as the current discussion progresses. The wide-ranging Qur'ānic contexts in which the term *ta'wīl* appears, provide al-Mu'ayyad with a broad scope to manoeuvre in erecting the foundation of the system of his interpretation of the Islamic revelation. However, the multiple definitions which al-Mu'ayyad gives do not contextually constitute a single integrated text, but they are in bits and pieces in the works of the author.

The lack of a unified text consequently caused some difficulty in locating and determining the relevant aspects of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad.

Prior to examining al-Mu'ayyad's understanding of *ta'wīl,* however, it is highly useful to briefly carry out a survey of the general perception of some of the other Muslim commentators on the Qur'ān, philologists and theologians surrounding the concept of *ta'wīl* to provide a general background.

PART ONE: Introduction

A.   Qur'ānic Expression

One can characterise the Muslim view on *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān by the vast diversity in its definitions and a gradual evolution of its theological implications with the passage of time. The *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī (d. 923 A.D.), appears to be an inclusive early source of the lexical and theological definitions of the term *"ta'wīl"*. According to al-Ṭabarī, *ta'wīl* carries the meanings of explaining and revealing *(tafsīr),* as well as the point of return *(marja^c),* and final destination *(maṣīr).*[2]

To explore the Qur'ānic significance of *ta'wīl* further and to discover its manifold implications such as its theological bearing, it is important to examine it with reference to the Qur'ānic content. Broadly speaking, the Qur'ān classifies its verses into two divisions: "clear revelations" (*muḥkamāt*) and "ambiguous verses" (*mutashābihāt*). The Qur'ān reads:

> "He it is Who revealed to you (Muhammad) the Book
> which includes verses which are secured;   they are the
> basis of the Book, {it also includes) ambiguious   verses.

However, those people in whose hearts, there is deviation, they pursue that part of it which is ambiguious, seeking dissension and pursuing the esoteric meaning thereof. And no one knows its esoteric meanaing save Allah and those who are well-rooted in knowledge (who) say: "We believe in it and the whole is from our Lord; only people of understanding can fathom it (3:7)".

The twofold division of the Qur'ānic verse is followed by "*ta'wīluhū*", meaning, *ta'wīl* thereof. In "*ta'wīluhū*", the pronoun is generally understood to be an allusion to "ambiguous verses". The rationale for this view is, perhaps, the sequence of the vocabulary which the Qur'ān uses for the categories of its content. To begin with, the Qur'ān mentions the "Book", then, it alludes to "clear revelations". After referring to "clear revelations", the Qur'ān refers to "ambiguous verses". Finally, the Qur'ān makes a cross reference to "ambiguous verses" by stating, "That which is obscure" (*mā tashābahat*). Nonetheless, it may be that the pronoun in "*ta'wīluhū*" returns to the "Book" the whole text of the Qur'ān. In which case, the entire Qur'ān includes *ta'wīl*. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why some of Muslim writers, particularly some of Shīʿī writers hold that the whole Qur'ān comprises *ta'wīl*.[3] However, they always emphasise *ta'wīl* when discussing "ambiguous verses".

Examining the background of the verse, the Qur'ān uses *ta'wīl* repeatedly; first the Qur'ān uses it in the context of those people whose hearts are in perversity and

who attempt to interpret *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous verses" of the Qur'ān. This part of the verse thus denies the knowledge of *ta'wīl* to those who claim to be possessors of its knowledge without having any divinely granted license and authority. After having made a case for the unsuitability of the people concerned, the verse describes *ta'wīl* as a kind of special knowledge which rests with God, Himself, in Whom all Muslims believe to be the Ultimate Source of everything, including the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān. However, a controversy arose as to whether others can have the knowledge of this aspect of the Islamic revelation. Whether or not others can have the knowledge of "ambiguous verses" became a crucial argument that carried a considerable weight, as this verse refers to "those well-rooted in knowledge" (*al-rāsikhūna fī al-ᶜilm*) immediately next to Allah (3:7). Therefore, there emerge diverse views as to whether "those well-rooted in knowledge" have any share in this knowledge or whether it is God only Who knows this knowledge.

The commentators on the Qur'ān and the theologians have given the rationale behind the two distinctive views. The commentators attempted to furnish the reason for the distinctive opinions about the reading of the Qur'ānic verse (3:7) in two different ways. According to al-Ṭabarī, the interpreters of the Qur'ān, (*ahl al-ta'wīl*) differed in understanding this verse as to whether the phrase "and those well-rooted in knowledge" joins "Allah" or whether it does not join "Allah" (3:7). Those writers who combine the phrase "and those well-rooted in knowledge" with "Allah", hold that it is corroborative evidence that "those well-rooted in knowledge" have knowledge of *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous verses". On the other hand, those people who maintain that the

phrase "those well-rooted in knowledge" is the beginning of the next text, stating that they merely believe in "ambiguous verses" without having knowledge of their interpretation. Al-Ṭabarī inclines to the latter view. The grounds for his holding of this view seem to be the reports emanating from such companions of the Prophet as Ubayy b. Kaᶜb and ᶜAbd Allāh b. Masᶜūd who are reported to have made a pause immediately after "Allah" while reading the verse. However, al-Ṭabarī also gives those reports which support the view that "those well-rooted in knowledge" do have the knowledge of *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous verses". These reports emanate from people like Ibn ᶜAbbās, al-Rabīᶜ and Mujāhid.[4] Al-Ṭabarī even mentions the statement of Ibn ᶜAbbās on the authority of Mujāhid, in which he claims: "I am of one of those who know *ta'wīl* thereof".[5] Al-Ṭabarī, however, totally ignores the reports on the status of ᶜAlīy ibn Abī Ṭālib regarding *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān, though certain other authorities amongst general Muslim writers have mentioned them. These people include those Sunni authorities who preceded al-Ṭabarī such as Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d.855 A.D.). According to Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, the Prophet is reported to have referred to ᶜAlīy as the one who would fight for the sake of *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān as the Prophet fought for the sake of its *tanzīl*.[6]

The concept of *ta'wīl* amongst the general Muslims in later times needs further consideration.

Al-Iṣfahānī (d. 502 A.H.)[7], one of the leading Muslim philologists and theologians has defined *ta'wīl* extensively. Al-Īṣfhānī's definition of *ta'wīl* seems to be more comprehensive than that of al-Ṭababarī. In one of his books, entitled *Muᶜjam Mufradāt alfāẓ al-Qur'ān*, al-Iṣfahānī defines *ta'wīl* as being derived from *a-w-l*,

meaning the "returning of something to the origin" or the "source" (*al-rujūᶜ ilā al-aṣl).*

Furthermore, according to him, "*a-w-l*" is the root of "*al-mau'il*"[8], which means   the

place or source or sanctuary to which somebody or something is taken back. Then he

proposes that "*al-mau'il"* means explanation which he states in these words: To return

something to its aim and objective whether the returning of that thing is based on

knowledge or whether it is based on an action. He quotes more than one verse to

substantiate the diverse meanings of *ta'wīl* which include the following: "Do they await

only the fulfilment? On the day when the fulfilment approachs, those who   forgot it

before will say: Certainly, the messengers of Allah came with the Truth..., ((7:53).

According to al-Iṣfahānī, "*ta'wīl* thereof" means the "interpretation"

(*bayānyhū*), one which is the utmost goal thereof (*ghāyatuhu al-maqṣūdah*).[9] The next

verse that he quotes is this: "...That is more virtuous and the utmost meaning and

interpretation." (4: 59). Acording to al-Iṣfahānī, it is also said that these words carry the

meaning of "utmost reward" (aḥsanu thawābā) [10] Al-Iṣfahānī also discusses how the

exoteric aspect of knowledge or that of an action relates to *ta'wīl*. According to him,

ta'wīl is not required by the exoteric aspect of knowledge nor is it required by the

exoteric aspect of an action (*wa-lā yaqtaḍīhī ẓāhiru-humā*). Thus, it seems that he

understands *ta'wīl* as a reality which remains beyond the scope of the exoteric domain.

It also seems that according to him, the corroborative evidence for *ta'wīl* as a reality of

independent of the exoteric aspect is based on the Qur'ān which refers to the

discussions of Khiḍr and Mūsā (18:78-82). At the end of the discussions, the learned

servant of Allah, namely, Khiḍr states: "This is the interpretation {*ta'wīl*} which you

were unable to bear calmy. (18:82).[11] The quoted verses refer to the anecdote of Mūsā

and the virtuous servant of Allah, namely, Khiḍr who met Mūsā by the command of

Allah in order that Mūsā could share the knowledge of the virtuous man. As preceded,

at the end of the meeting, Khiḍr revealed *ta'wīl* of all the actions which he had

performed during the journey but in each case, Mūsā had been unable to understand

the true meanings of the actions. Al-Iṣfahānī seeks to explore the reason why the

Qur'ān refers to each action of *Khiḍr* as *ta'wīl.* According to al- Iṣfahānī, the Qur'ān

alludes to each action of *Khiḍr* as *ta'wīl* because the exoteric aspects of his actions did

not reveal the utmost goal behind what he did**.**[12]

To understand al-Iṣfahānī's further view, it is important to look at his

classification of "ambiguous verses". Al-Iṣfahānī's discussion is lengthy in which he

classifies allegorical verses into more than one category to demonstrate the

hierarchical levels of *ta'wīl*. He discusses a three-level classification of "ambiguous

verses". One of the categories consists of "ambiguous verses" which, according to him,

are known only to Allah. The content of these verses includes the knowledge

surrounding the Day of Judgment. The next category which al-Iṣfahānī introduces is

those ambiguous parts of the Qur'ān that comprise some strange sets of vocabulary

and complex injunctions. According to him, though these parts of the Qur'ān are

difficult to comprehend, some people can have access to acquiring knowledge of them.

However, in between the two categories, there lies another set of "ambiguous verses".

Those who have the knowledge of "ambiguous verses" are only "those who are well-

rooted in knowledge" who include ᶜAlīy and Ibn ᶜAbbās. Based on his hierarchically

classified sets of definitions, al-Iṣfahānī attempts to interpret the Qur'ānic verse 3:7 by stating that it is permissible to read this verse in both ways. According to him, one can connect the phrase "*al-rāsikhūna fī al-ᶜilm*" to the Name "Allah" and he can also read it without connecting it to "Allah". He explains his point of view further by stating that the former reading would include "those firmly rooted in knowledge" though not the one which only Allah knows such as those indicating the Day of Judgment. Therefore, according to al-Iṣfahānī, the second reading would underline Allah's infinite knowledge of only those parts of "ambiguous verses" which He alone knows.[13]

Al-Iṣfahānī's understanding of the hierarchical nature of the Islamic revelation permeates his general Qur'ānic thought. He evaluates the relevance of the categories of the exoteric and soteric aspects, as well as symbolism. In brief, al-Iṣfahānī studies the categories of the exoteric and esoteric aspects, relying more on the crystallization of the subject matter conducted by those people to whom he refers as "a group of researchers" (*jamāᶜah min al-muḥaqqiqīn*). According to him, there are three levels of Qur'ānic sciences. One of them consists of both exoteric and esoteric aspects that relates to such injunctions of Islam as prayer and other pillars of Islam. According to him, these injunctions are clear enough to a person who knows the language. If any of these texts are not clear, then he suggests one must rely on the explanation of the Prophet. According to al-Iṣfahānī, there is also level two of knowledge and only some people can understand this category of knowledge. According to al-Iṣfahānī, these people include the prophets and other people of diverse categories. However, al-Iṣfahānī fails to discuss specifically who these people are. As regards the final level of

knowledge, according to him, the Prophet alone knows the knowledge appertaining to the final level. Al-Iṣfahānī understands that this is a secret between Allah and the Prophet. He insists on the *bāṭin* and considers common people to fall short of comprehending the esoteric aspect and the truths (*al-ḥaqā'iq*). He furnishes a historical and concrete proof to support the knowledge that he discusses in relation to the secrecy of the esoteric part of the Qur'ān. He cites Ibn ᶜAbbās as having kept hidden from others the meanings of certain verses of the Qur'ān. These verses include 28:85 and 17:85. In the first of these verses Allah says: "Verily, He Who has prescribed for you the Qur'ān, will indeed take you back to the abode of return" (on the Day of Judgment (28:85). As far as the other verse (17:85) is concerned it describs the human soul as it stands in relation to Allah.[14] Al-Iṣfahānī's perception of varying grades of people in comprehending the Qur'ān needs further discussion, particularly with reference to his elaboration of symbolism. He understands that the believers can receive benefits from the Word of God according to their levels of comprehension and knowledge of symbols. To substantiate this, our author refers to the Qur'ān: "He sends down water from the sky, so the valleys flow according to their capacity." (13:17). In the light of this verse, the author attempts to differentiate between the perception of the common people and that of those who have a more profound understanding of the Qur'ān. A common person, he says, can attain the knowledge of the exoteric aspect of water only, for example, rain. On the other hand, according to al-Iṣfahānī, Ibn ᶜAbbās considers water to be a symbol, standing for the Qur'ān and valleys refer to the hearts

of the servants of God, who, in accordance with the capacity of their comprehension, receive guidance from it.[15]

Now it is relevant to briefly discuss the view of the Twelver Shīᶜah for the purpose of comparison.

B. THE VIEWS OF THE EARLY SHĪᶜAH, PARTICULARLY THAT OF THE EARLY FATIMIDS

Shīᶜī views are distinguishable from the other groups of Muslims on points of detail such as the qualifications and distinctive characteristic identity of the interpreters of the esoteric aspect, namely*, the* Imāms from the progeny of the Prophet. The Shīᶜī writers include ᶜAlīy b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. after 307/919), one of the Ithnāᶜasharī Shīᶜī commentators on the Qur'ān, who discusses the distinction between the two kinds of Qur'ānic material, namely *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt*. According to him, both *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* are subject to *ta'wīl*. However, he adds that allegorical verses have more than one esoteric meaning. As regards his view on the legitimacy of the interpretation of *ta'wīl*, he unambiguously characterizes the Prophet and then the Ithnāᶜasharī Imāms as the possessors of the knowledge of the Qur'ān and particularly the *ta'wīl* thereof. In support of his argument, he refers to Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, who is reported to have considered the Prophet as the most distinguished individual amongst "those well-rooted in knowledge", namely, the Imāms. According to al-Bāqir, the Prophet was in possession of everything that was revealed to him such as the exoteric aspect or revelation (*al-tanzīl*) and esoteric aspect

(*al-ta'wīl*). After the Prophet, his legatees (*Awṣiyā'*) have the knowledge of *ta'wīl* in its totality.[16]

The *Waṣīy* has a special connotation in the Shīʿī understanding of the *Imāmah*. The *Waṣīy* carries with him the w*aṣīyah*, the testamentary instruction, which the Imāms receive from the Prophet which comprises certain distinctive characteristics such as the designation of the *Imāmah* and the special knowledge which the Imāms possess for providing guidance.[17]

> Although in principle, all the Shīʿī groups, Share the belief that *ta'wīl* of the
>
> Qur'ān plays a most important factor in their doctrinal system, the Ismāʿīlīs
>
> appear to be particular about learning and teaching the esoteric aspect of
>
> religion. Daftary, looks at the Ismāʿīlī view of the esoteric dimension of
>
> Islam in this way:

"Shīʿī esotericism found its fullest development in Ismāʿīlism, by far the most representative of the Shīʿī sects designated with the term *Bāṭiniyya*; referring to those who give primacy to the inner, esoteric, or *bāṭinī* meaning behind the literal wording of all religious texts and formulations".[18]

Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d.974 A.D.), an early Fatimid jurist and author quotes the above-mentioned tradition of al-Bāqir cited by al-Qummī, as a commentary on the Qur'ānic text (3:7). Al-Nuʿmān furnishes other pieces of evidence for the esoteric aspect of the revelation. For example, he refers to a *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet in which he is reported to have described the Qur'ān to be the embodiment of both the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) aspect

and esoteric (*bāṭin*) aspect by considering *ta'wīl*/*bāṭin* to be beyond the comprehension of ordinary people.[19]

Al-Nuᶜmān also examines the idea of symbols (*amthāl*) and the symbolized meanings (*mamthūlāt*) which according to him, are behind the symbols and which are difficult to comprehend, as they have complex and in-depth meanings.[20]

The works of al-Nuᶜmān bears witness to his commitment to esotericism. His famous book entitled *Daᶜā'im al-Islām* deals with the pillars of Islam as understood by the Fatimids, while his *Ta'wīl al-Daᶜā'im* is an esoteric interpretation of the content of the *Daᶜā'im al-Islām*. In addition, *Asās al-Ta'wīl* is also an esoteric work of al-Nuᶜmān which provides convincing arguments on the necessity of the esoteric dimension also presenting definitions and categories of terms like *ta'wīl* and *bāṭin*. Also it has within itself anecdotes of some prophets, highlighting most important aspects of their life and teaching, emphasising esotericism.[21]

Making a distinction between the *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* remains an ongoing discussion amongst writers on Ismāᶜīlīsm. In his study of the relationship between the *bāṭin*/*ta'wīl* and *ẓāhir*/*tanzīl*, Walker seeks to examine the ways in which these concepts are interpreted. He raises a series of questions at the beginning of his discourse of the function of the Imām as the interpreter of the esoteric aspect. According to our writer, these questions relate to the nature of the interpretation of the *bāṭin*. For example, he discusses how the Ismāᶜīlī Imām derives the *bāṭin* /*ta'wīl* from revelation.[22]

Walker considers the *bāṭin* as a dimension beyond the *ẓāhir* which the Imām interprets. The writer presents the Imām as the source of the interpretation of the *bāṭin* by stating: the Imām is the teacher and source of the knowledge of *bāṭin/ta'wīl*.[23]

The teacher, he states, begins the training with the most obvious and easily grasped things such as models and pictures to trace them back to their theoretical and abstract origin.[24]

Concluding this discussion, the study of the views of general Muslims and those of the Shīᶜah show diverse interpretations of *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān, particularly those of "ambiguous verses". Because of diversity, two distinctive sets of views of the Muslims emerge; one set of views harshly discourage any attempt to acquire knowledge of *ta'wīl*, including that of "ambiguous verses". This was, probably because of the apprehension on the part of many Muslims, including a few companions of the Prophet in relation to *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous verses". Contrary to this point of view, other Muslims consider *ta'wīl* as a distinguishing mark of those people who possess superior knowledge. Thus, according to them, the interpretation of the esoteric aspect is the key to the truths of the Islamic revelation. The latter view lies at the centre of the Ismāᶜīlī understanding of the interpretation of the Qur'ān that requires detailed research, particularly with reference to the thought of al-Mu'ayyad.

PART TWO: AL-MU'AYYAD'S INTERPREATION OF *TA'WĪL*

C. DEFINITION OF *TA'WĪL*

Analysing al-Mu'ayyad's understanding of *ta'wīl* is important, as it relates to

his overall thought. This analysis would consider the scope of the application of *ta'wīl,* and the qualifications needed for its interpreters.

To begin with, it is necessary to discuss how al-Mu'ayyad seeks to explore the meanings and implications of *ta'wīl* in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ānic texts which al-Mu'ayyad quotes in this regard include 3:7 which became one of the major themes of part one of this chapter. This is the verse which, according to al-Mu'ayyad, as will follow, not only indicates that the Qur'ān contains within itself *ta'wīl* but also alludes to those people who, according to him, are truly qualified for interpreting it. Al-Mu'ayyad also refers to the following verses to prove further that the concept of *ta'wīl* exists in the Qur'ān, conveying interrelated diverse meanings:

According to 12:21, the Qur'n discusses Allah's decision to establish Joseph in Egypt and to teach him the knowledge of *ta'wī*l, meaning, the interpretion of events, that isto say, dreams (12:21).

"Nay, they accused of lying that which they did not comprehend nor did its (*ta'wīl*) interpretation become   available to them…, (10:39).

This verse appears to have laid down comprehensive and decisive principles and that are that as long as one's fundamental guidelines for religious education are based on the above-mentioned principles, he/she is protected from things like injustice and oppression.

"O you who believe, obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the

messenger if you are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and most suitable in the sense of "knowledge of the end" and in the sense of bringing the subject-matter to the knowledge in the end (*aḥsana ta'wlīā*)" (4:59).[25]

Overall, al-Mu'ayyad's basic and literal definitions of *ta'wīl* are mostly like the definitions which the general philologists and other writers have proposed. However, he differs from these writers in giving the detailed meanings and implications of *ta'wīl* which will follow shortly. However, first one of the basic definitions of *ta'wīl* which al-Mu'ayyad proposes should be discussed that marks al-Mu'ayyad's distinctive contribution to the domain of *ta'wīl*. The literal definition of al-Mu'ayyad which is different from the definitions of other writers is that he emphasizes that *ta'wīl* is the entity through which one can seek recourse and protection in the face of adversity and calamity.   According to al-Mu'ayyad, the same is true of *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān, as according to him, it is *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān to which one turns in the face of obscurity and perplexity.[26] This is one of the components of the definition which al-Mu'ayyad proposes. Al-Mu'ayyad applies this definition primarily to *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān, probably underlining the complex nature of its meanings, particularly those of "ambiguous verses". Accordingly, *ta'wīl* is to be employed as a resort to comprehend complex meanings and thus it is not a simple linguistic device of acquiring a straight, direct, and literal meaning of the concerned texts of the Qur'ān. However, the process of *ta'wīl* is an approach through which according to al-Mu'ayyad, one may understand the kind of intricate meanings whereby "he can deliver himself from the state of adversity of doubt and bewilderment to certainty and satisfaction". Al-Mu'ayyad also discusses the part

of the intellect in the process of ta'wīl. According to him, "The word requires *ta'wīl* and intellect also requires esoteric interpretation (*ta'wīl*)".[27]

One should discuss those other contexts as well in which al-Mu'ayyad uses *ta'wīl*. Those contexts include the end of the cyclical periods of Divine guidance and its returning to its origin by the end. According to al-Mu'ayyad, *ta'wīl* denotes *al-ʿāqibah* which bears such meanings as the end, result, and reward. Although the end and origin seem to be two different entities, according to al-Mu'ayyad, ultimately the end will join the origin. These concepts need further elaboration.

In one of the components of his definition, al-Mu'ayyad uses *ta'wīl* as a second and governed noun of a genitive construction thus adding "*ʿilm*" as the first noun. According to him, "*ʿilm al-ta'wīl*" means the "knowledge of the end" (*ʿilm al-ʿāqibah*).[28] He clarifies his definition by stating that the knowledge of *ta'wīl* means the entity or the source to which returns the matter in the end. To substantiate this definition, al-Mu'ayyad refers to the Qur'ān which states: "That is best and most suitable in terms of the end (*aḥsana ta'wlīā*)" (4:59). According to him, "*aḥsana ta'wlīā*" means "*aḥsana ʿāqibatan*", namely, "that is best and most suitable in terms of the end, result and reward".[29]

Al-Iṣfahānī takes the Qur'ānic word "*ta'wlīān*" in the verse 4:59 in the same sense as al-Mu'ayyad interprets it. Thus, according to al-Iṣfahānī, *ta'wīlan* means *ʿāqibatan*, meaning, the end, reward, etc., but he does not discuss under the same topic what he means by the "end". By considering the other components of his

definition of *ta'wīl*, however, it seems that by *ᶜāqibatan* al-Iṣfahānī means the Day of Judgment.[30]

According to al-Mu'ayyad, although *ta'wīl* refers to the Day of Judgment in the verse, in this context, he particularly refers to a historical and spiritual event, that includes the epoch of the final Imām, the Imām of Resurrection (*Qā'im al-qiyāmah*). According to the interpretation of al-Mu'ayyad, the Resurrection which will be established through the *Qā'im* is the Resurrection of religion (*qiyāmat al-dīn*). According to him, the *Qā'im*'s declaration of his status will lead to the Resurrection of the world (*qiyāmat al-dunyā*).[31]

By looking at the sources more closely it becomes almost clear that according to al-Mu'ayyad, the epoch of the *Qā'im al-qiyāmah* is not only the culmination of all the cycles of Divine guidance which began with Ādam, but it is also the point of return to the Spiritual and Intellectual World. He discusses this process by considering it as a circle that has its beginning and end. For al-Mu'ayyad, the beginning of this circle is the Word (*Kalimah*) that has more than one title that al-Mu'ayyad and other Fatimid scholars have utilized. However, at the end of the circle, is the *Qā'im al-qiyāmah*, the Imām of Resurrection. He argues his point primarily based on the Qur'ān. For example, the Qur'ān states: "…As We began the first creation, we cause it to return (to its Original Source)" (21:104).[32] According to al-Mu'ayyad, the Imām of Resurrection to whom he also refers as "*ṣāhib al-qiyāmah*" joins the *Kalimah*.[33] Consequently, according to al-Mu'ayyad, a circle takes place. ".[34]

Other meanings of *ta'wīl* which al-Mu'ayyad proposes are like the above-mentioned definition though one of them is more conspicuous in rationalizing the necessity of *ta'wīl* and outlining the outcome of acquiring its knowledge. In this definition, al-Mu'ayyad takes *ta'wīl* in the sense of taking something to its origin in which case he uses *ta'wīl* as a verbal noun. Thus, he explicates that *ta'wīl* means to take something to its origin (*inna al-ta'wīla al-rujūᶜ bi-al-shai'in ilā awwalihī*). Then he proposes a more detailed definition of *ta'wīl*. According to him, taking the thing to its origin means to take things to their real and true meanings (*al-ta'wīlu al-rujūᶜ bi-al-umūr ilā ḥaqīqatihā*). He further explains what he means by taking things to their real and true meanings. According to him, these real and true meanings refer to those Entities of Allah that He originated in the first place. He also states that the rationale behind connecting *ta'wīl* with the "Originated Beings" is that anyone who derives the knowledge of *ta'wīl* acquires the forms of these Originated Beings. Consequently, "he joins the source from which flows the spring of life".[35]

This definition of al-Mu'ayyad complements his previous definition. However, this is more elaborate in the sense that it discusses some of the Intermediaries or the Ranks of the Fatimid Hierarchical System, namely, the Spiritual Entities. Al-Mu'ayyad seems to have referred to these Spiritual Beings when he says the "Originated Beings" (*al-mubdaᶜāt*) and which, according to him, include the "Word" (*Kalimah)* which is the "First Originated Being".[36] In the previous definition, however, al-Mu'ayyad stresses the origin and the end only, but in this particular context, he discusses all the Spiritual Hierarchical Ranks that are pertinent to the concept of Divine guidance that is central

to the thought of al-Mu'ayyad.

Comparing al-Mu'ayyad's definitions of *ta'wīl* with the definitions of other writers, it becomes clear that mostly al-Mu'ayyad does not disagree to the definitions and the general meanings of *ta'wīl* which the lexicons and other sources have suggested and some of which became part of the first section of the current chapter. However, it is necessary to state that al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on the wider implications of *ta'wīl* is more detailed and more specific to the tenets of his esoteric and intellectual discourse. It seems that al-Mu'ayyad's defining *ta'wīl* has formed the foundation of his perceived religious instructions and it penetrates the overall system of his thought. These aspects of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad include the implications of *ta'wīl* which according to him, extend not only to the cyclical history of Divine guidance in its totality but also relates to the Spiritual and the Physical Ranks of the Hierarchical Order of the Ismāᶜīlī *daᶜwah*. Additionally, the diverse components of al-Mu'ayyad's definitions are relevant to the Fatimid concept of the spiritual and intellectual bliss which a believer expects to receive for his true understanding of the doctrinal teachings and conducting the practices through the process of *ta'wīl*. However, one can ask the question with respect to this: how can a believer attain spiritual transformation and everlasting life through the instrumentality of *ta'wīl*? Al-Mu'ayyad seems to be aware of this question and he seems to have responded to it, basing himself on the concept of the necessity of the permanency of Divine guidance on earth. According to him, the sources of guidance are the Qur'ān and the Imām after the Prophet. Through the instrumentality of both, one can return to the end and then to the everlasting life. Thus,

one needs to discuss how al-Mu'ayyad understands the correspondence between the Qur'ān and the Imām in this thesis. Before elaborating on the Qur'an-Imām relationship, it is important to present al-Mu'ayyad's arguments for the necessity of the Qur'ānic concept of *ta'wīl*. This study would include al-Mu'ayyad's view on the wider implications of *ta'wīl*, including his understanding of the distinction between "clear revelations" and "ambiguous verses" of the Qur'ān.

D.   THE NECESSITY OF *TA'WĪL*

Al-Mu'ayyad places *ta'wīl* at the centre of his interpretation of the Qur'ān and he identifies the former as the essence (*al-ḥaqīqah*) of   the latter. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the essence of the Qur'ān stems from his semantic analysis of the content of the Qur'ān itself. Al-Mu'ayyad understands that the Qur'ān consists not only of the linguistic structures such as words, chapters, and verses but it also consists of a combination of meanings relevant to the whole history of Divine guidance.[37]   Thus, these meanings not only relate to the Muhammadan era, but they also relate to the former eras of Divine guidance. The belief in the universal role of the Qur'ānic message is not a view peculiar to al-Mu'ayyad but some other Muslim authorities seem to have a similar understanding. For example, al-Iṣfahānī discusses this subject and obliquely refers to some religious scholars (*al-ᶜulamā'*). According to al-Iṣfahānī, these scholars give the rationale behind the name of the Qur'ān and state that the Qur'ān identifies itself as "*al- Qur'ān*", as its content includes not only the core aspect (*thamarah*) of all

the Books of Allah but also all kinds of knowledge. He cited some Qur'ānic verses in

support of his claim. In which the Qur'ān refers to itself as the Book, which comprises

the detailed exposition of all things under the rubrics of "*tafṣīl*" and "*tibyān*" (6:154;

16:89).[38] However, the other Muslims' references to this essence and the ideological

implications thereof may not be identical to the concept of *ta'wīl* to which al-Mu'ayyad

adheres.

To understand the universal role of the Qur'ānic essence, al-Mu'ayyad

stresses the importance of the *ta'wīl* process by stating that it is only this process

through which one can carry out an inductive inference (*istiqrā'*) of the paradigms

(*amthilah*) appertaining to the previous eras. One of such paradigms is the parenthood

of Adam and Eve, to which the Qur'ān refers in this manner: "O people, fear your Lord,

Who has created you from a single soul and from it (He) created its mate and scattered

from both of them numerous men and women. (4:1).[39]

Al-Mu'ayyad's discussion includes two kinds of parenthood: physical

parenthood which became the origin and source of the procreation of whole humanity.

According to him, there is another parenthood distinctive from that of Adam and Eve

and that is the spiritual parenthood of the Prophet and ᶜAlīy in relation to the believers

of their era.[40]   However, al-Mu'ayyad seems not to have found any basis for

comparison between the two kinds of parenthood in the literal and the exoteric sense

of the word. The reason is that the Prophet and ᶜAlīy did not have physical parenthood

in relation to the members of the community as Adam and Eve had in relation to all human beings in terms of procreating their descendants in the physical sense.

The complex idea of the comparison between the two kinds of parenthood provided the Fatimid thinker with a justification to turn to *ta'wīl* interpretation to reconcile the two kinds of parenthood and to make them comparable for further discussion. According to him, it is because of the process of *ta'wīl* that the parenthood of the Prophet and ᶜAlīy is established. Al-Mu'ayyad exemplifies the spiritual parents, namely, Muhammad and ᶜAlīy with the physical parents, namely, Adam and Eve based on the Qur'ān (4:1). In this scheme, he compares the Prophet with Adam as the spiritual father of the community and compares ᶜAlīy to Eve as the spiritual mother. As regards the spiritual descendants, according to al-Mu'ayyad, they are the Imāms of the later times and their disciples. This is the esoteric alternative meaning to the "scattered countless men and women" (4:1) who were born and continue to be born until the end of the world. Al-Mu'ayyad refers to the "Imāms and their disciples" as the faith-related progeny of Muhammad and ᶜAlīy in comparison with all human beings descended from Adam and Eve as their physical children.[41]

According to al-Mu'ayyad, the spiritual parenthood has its root in the characteristics appertaining to Divine knowledge which ᶜAlīy received from the Prophet. The Fatimid author explains the spiritual parenthood of the Prophet and ᶜAlīy through a figure of speech, namely, *mathal*, whose meanings include symbol, allegory, simile, and parable. The *mathal* that al-Mu'ayyad proposes is that of the heaven and the earth. The symbolized meaning (*mamthūl*) that is to say, the parallel *bāṭinī* meaning

of the heaven and the earth are the Prophet and ᶜAlīy. It is the Prophet from whom

ᶜAlīy received Divine knowledge, including the knowledge of *ta'wīl*. In the physical

domain, it is the heaven, which gives rainwater, and the earth receives it.[42]

Al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on the subject-matter deepens when he identifies

further Qur'ānic texts which, if interpreted without applying *ta'wīl* process and

wisdom, would either make no sense at all or they would stand in sharp contradiction

with some other texts on the same subjects. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the Qur'ān

states that Allah has created the heavens and the earth and all that between them in

six days and then He mounted the Throne" (7: 54). On the other hand, according to al-

Mu'ayyad, some other verses of the Qur'ān describe the process of the creation of

Allah to be beyond the six days' limitation. Accordingly, the creating process of Allah

can be as rapid as He commands something to be (*Kun*) and it is (*fa-yakūn*) (16:40). Al-

Mu'ayyad reconciles the themes of these verses based on *ta'wīl* and *bāṭin* and

according to him, the verse indicating the six days (7:54) symbolize the six Prophets

and the Imām of Resurrection, namely, Adam, Noah, Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Moses

(Mūsā), Jesus (ᶜĪsā), Muhammad and the *Qā'im*. According to al-Mu'ayyad, they are

the symbolized meanings of Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday,

and Saturday respectively. Al-Mu'ayyad concentrates on the perfect and absolute

Omnipotence of Allah by considering that His Supreme Power is not to be subject to a

limitation of space and time, as this would be tantamount to be His incapability of

managing the universe because al-Mu'ayyad argues that human beings have limited

capacity and strength and thus they need space and time.   On the other hand, Allah,

because of His infinite Power and Strength, remains above the weakness of His creatures.[43]

E. *TA'WĪL* AND WISDOM (*ḤIKMAH)*

Al-Mu'ayyad analyses the concept of wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*) which has a broad connotation but whose significance is subject to the contextual relevance. In al-Mu'ayyad's thought, mostly *ḥikmah* is equivalent to *ta'wīl*, standing for subtle meanings of those texts of the Islamic revelation that are exoterically complex. The Fatimid author defines wisdom as a means through which one can quantify the complex aspects of the Islamic revelation and thus, he/she can strike a balance between them. Al-Mu'ayyad continues by saying that Wisdom is a prophetic heritage and thus plays a universal role in the history of Divine guidance. The Qur'ān refers to the family of the prophet Ibrāhīm (4:54), which includes such other prophets of Allah as Jesus and Muhammad as the recipients of wisdom. Al-Mu'ayyad further states that the Qur'ān characterizes wisdom as one of the most primary aims and objectives of the divinely revealed message. According to him, the Qur'ān refers to the statement of Jesus which considers wisdom as a methodology whereby complex things become clear: "…I have come unto you with wisdom and to explain some of that concerning which you differ…" (43:63). Thus, al-Mu'ayyad keenly feels a need for the combination of wisdom with the Book. The reason for this is that through the process of the combination, one can receive guidance on the right path and protects himself/herself from misguidance.[44]

F.   LANGUAGE AND MEANING

Remaining within the framework of the synthesis of the knowledge of the Islamic revelation, now the function of the language vis-à-vis the meaning, particularly *ta'wīl* should be addressed.

The language-meaning discussion also includes the concept of the miraculous character of the Qur'ān (*i*ᶜ*jāz*), as according to al-Mu'ayyad, it intimately relates to the esoteric concept. The question as to how to relate the language of revelation to the meaning and *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān remained a serious theological issue. Al-Mu'ayyad has dealt with it not only in the various chapters of his encyclopaedic work, namely, *Al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah* but also in his other works like his *Sīrat al-Mu'ayyad*. It seems that the theme attracted the interest of other religious writers of varied persuasions from time to time. Both *Al-Majālis* and the *Sīrah* have references to the questioners who put questions relating to diverse religious subjects, including one related to linguistic issues such as whether the language of the Qur'ān can carry its esoteric aspect. The latter source even gives the full texts of the debates which took place under the auspices of Abū Kālījār, the reigning Buyid King between al-Mu'ayyad and his opponent, probably a Sunni Muslim on the question of harmonization between the word and the meaning and some other themes.[45]   The debates are valuable sources of information on the diverse styles of the deliberations, as well as the methodologies that the participants employed and the evidence they furnished surrounding the subject.

Both al-Mu'ayyad and his opponent demonstrated their skills in examining the views of the schools of thought that they represented to get across their points of view. However, they found no common grounds for their views. Both writers totally rejected the other's point of view on some issues and provided alternative interpretations on other issues on which they, however, agreed, in principle. One of the burning issues raised by the opponent of al-Mu'ayyad was about the relationship between the word and its meaning. Although the question seems to be straightforward, it led to further questions and answers resulting in arguments and counterarguments.[46] The following text is the first part of the first question which the opponent of al-Mu'ayyad raised:

> "What is the opinion of the s*haykh*, (al-Mu'ayyad) regarding the exoteric aspects of the Qur'ān (*ẓawāhir al-Qur'ān*)? Do they require meanings which are not indicated by the words (*al-lafẓ)* and language of the Arabs (*wa-lughat al-ᶜarab*)"?[47]

The opponent of al-Mu'ayyad also raises the question as to who can explain those meanings which are not indicated by the words and language of the Arabs. Then the opponent pressed al-Mu'ayyad to tell him who it was according to his own belief and *madhhab*, who could explain those meanings so that from whom one can derive those meanings. Finally the opponent asked al-Mu'ayyad to furnish evidence for the validity of the qualifications of the person who according to al-Mu'ayyad, possessed the knowledge of those meanings.[48]

In response to the view of his opponent, al-Mu'ayyad described the Qur'ānic meanings from his perspective by classifying them into two major categories, i.e., those

that can become clear to everyone and those which need guidance from others so that people can understand them. He describes these categories in these words:

> "There are meanings of the Qur'ān which are other than those meanings that pass from mouth to mouth of the general people (*mā tadāwaluhū alsun al-ᶜāmmah*) and which they can explore with their own educational ability and intellectual capacity".

Therefore, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the generality of the Muslims does not need to consult the "people of exploration (*ahl al-istinbāṭ*)" on those meanings. As far as *ta'wīl* is concerned, al-Mu'ayyad discusses those people who, according to him, are the "people of exploration" and who have the knowledge of the esoteric aspect. Therefore, al-Mu'ayyad holds that the generality of the Muslims needs to receive instructions from the "people of exploration" as far as the esoteric dimension is concerned. Al-Mu'ayyad endeavoured to evince the primary concept of *ta'wīl* as it appears in the Qur'ān. In this regard, he refers to those texts of the Qur'ān which according to him, indicate the necessity of *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān as well as the distinctive characteristics of its interpreters.[49] This point needs further discussion.

Al-Mu'ayyad quotes verse 4:59 and advances his interpretation of *ta'wīl* by arguing against the point of view of his opponent. He also discusses some of the distinctive characteristics of those people who, according to him, are authorized to interpret *ta'wīl.* In short, according to the interpretation of al-Mu'ayyad, the knowledge of *ta'wī*l is comprehensible to those people only who are "deeply rooted in knowledge" (*al-rāsikhūna fī al-ᶜilm*), as the Qur'ān refers to them (3:7). According to

al-Mu'ayyad, these are the people to whom the Qur'ān further refers as "those in authority" (*ulū al-amr*), "those who are able to discover the matter" (*yastanbiṭūna-hu*) (4:83). Al-Mu'ayyad specifically identifies those people by quoting some *aḥādīth* of the Prophet. In one of these *aḥādīth*, the Prophet is reported to have said: "I am the master of the Islamic Revelation and ᶜAlīy is the master of *ta'wīl*". In addition, he quoted another *Ḥadīth* in which the Prophet is reported to have said that he was going to leave behind him two weighty things, the Book of Allah and his *ahl al-bayt*.[50]

Before proceeding to the view of the opponent of al-Mu'ayyad, it is important to refer to a contemporary source on the Ismāᶜīlī view on the Qur'ān and the Imām. Gilliot presents his interpretation of the Ismāᶜīlī view on the Qur'ān-Imām relationship in these words: "The Ismāᶜīlites make a fundamental distinction in religion and knowledge between the exterior (*ẓāhir*) and the interior (*bāṭin*), a distinction also reflected in their interpretation of the Qur'ān. The science of *tafsīr* (exoteric exegesis) is absent from their literature, since true meaning can be obtained only through *ta'wīl* (esoteric interpretation) which originates in the legitimate Imām".[51]

It is important now to consider the view of the opponent of al-Mu'ayyad. The opponent of al-Mu'ayyad remained unconvinced after having received the response from al-Mu'ayyad. He accused al-Mu'ayyad of evading the question which he had put to him regarding the relationship between the word and its meaning. In his response, the opponent rephrased the question and pressed al-Mu'ayyad to clarify his position of the word-meaning relationship. Also the opponent of al-Mu'ayyad interpreted the verses of the Qur'ān and the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet differently which al-Mu'ayyad had

quoted in support of his point of view. For example, according to the opponent, the people who knew *ta'wīl* included those people whom he recognized as religious leaders such as Ibn Abbās and Abū Ḥanīfah, one of the Sunni Imāms, thus disregarding ᶜAlī and the other Imāms of *ahl al-bayt* to be the authoritative sources on the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān. The opponent understood *ta'wīl* to agree with the natural disposition of the Arabs, in tune with all diverse usages of the Arabic language and literature. In his opinion, those individuals who possess these characteristics include intellectuals (*ahl al-ḥijā*), specialists in literature, possessors of knowledge of the Qur'ān and of the Traditions of the Prophet.[52]

In his counterargument, al-Mu'ayyad explained his view on the word-meaning relationship by saying that there are words in the Qur'ān that were determined as the carriers of meanings which are in conformity with those words (*fa-inna li al-qur'āni alfāẓan muqaddaratan ᶜalā maᶜānin mulā'imatin lahā*). According to him, there is considerable significance in the combination of the language with the meaning. He further elaborates on this and states that through words, one can attain the meaning of the Qur'ān. He emphasized this and compared the language-meaning relationship with human existence because according to him, the diverse components of creation reflect and prove each other's existence. He considers the combination of the language and meaning as important and akin to as the body and soul relationship.[53] His categorization of the word-meaning correspondence relates to the post-revelation Arabic and does not relate to the language of the pre-revelation period.

Explaining his definition of the word-meaning correspondence, al-Mu'ayyad discusses the difference between the Pre-Islamic Arabic and Post-revelation Arabic. Al-Mu'ayyad's discourse shows that he believed that the Pre-Islamic Arabic underwent a fundamental transformation after the revelation of the Qur'ān. Thus, the post-Qur'ānic language is more developed and has a far greater capacity because of the Divine message. He exemplifies this by referring to such terms whose meanings are not the same as those which the people of pre-Islamic period understood. For example, the people of pre-Islamic period took *al-zakāh* in the sense of "growth" (*al-ziyādah*) only, suggesting that in the wake of the Islamic revelation, *al-zakāh* began to convey further meanings and implications; by this al-Mu'ayyad probably means such other meanings of the *Zakāh* as "purification". According to al-Mu'ayyad, the linguistic development took place despite the ascendancy of the Arabic language in its literary shape before Islam.[54]

Al-Mu'ayyad recognizes the superiority of the Arabic language and the literary excellence that prevailed before the revelation of the Qur'ān. His study shows diverse aspects of the style of the Arabic language such as its eloquence, the well-balanced and concise order of the structures of the language, as according to him, that period saw people of a high degree of skill in proficiency in the language. The elite had the knowledge of such aspects of the language as symbols and parables, but the common people did not have those distinguishing qualities. Against this background, the Prophet received the Qur'ān. Al-Mu'ayyad suggests that the Islamic message had to address the prevailing conditions of the Arabs, including their cultural aspect of life and

it had to be a source for synthesizing all the distinctive characteristics of the language, as well as the carrier of the divinely revealed message. Consequently, the Qur'ānic language exercised linguistic domination and decisive influence to prove its greatest ascendancy to the people. Al-Mu'ayyad expresses his view in these words:

> "Thus, the Prophet brought the kind of message which he received from his Lord, praise be to Him through revelation, however, the Arabs did not have the capacity, strength, and power to understand the message. This is the message the esoteric aspect thereof rendered them unable to comprehend it in the same way as its exoteric aspect rendered them unable to understand it".[55]

According to al-Mu'ayyad, the content of the new message evoked a critical reaction from the Arabs, and they demonstrated harsh criticism and resentment. The Qur'ān itself makes it abundantly clear that no one has the capacity to produce a speech like the Qur'ān and it challenged the Arabs to produce even a *sūrah* like a *Sūrah* of the Qur'ān (17:88; 2: 23).[56] However, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the wondrous nature of the Qur'ān has two categories: one is word-related, and the other is meaning-related. According to him, the former is restricted to the Arabs, speakers of the language and it is applicable to them.   However, the meaning in general and *ta'wīl* in particular are miracles for all the believers; the Arabs and non-Arabs alike.[57] Al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on the inimitability of the Qur'ān, particularly his stress on *ta'wīl* show that his view on the inimitability of the Qur'ān distinguishes him from other Muslim writers like ᶜAbd al-Jabbar. According to Martin's sources of information, "ᶜAbd al-Jabbār and others had based their theories of *iᶜjāz on* the qualities of

inimitable composition *(naẓm)* of words and phrases in the Qur'an, thus resting the case

for miracle solely on style and linguistics, al-Jurjānī argued that the overall composition

of the Qur'ān, its meaning as well as its wording, was the true miracle (Larkin, Theology

of meaning".[58] Despite al-Jurjānī's definition of the inimitability of the Qur'ān, perhaps,

al-Mu'ayyad's relating the *iᶜjāz* of the Islamic revelation to *ta'wīl* makes him distinctive

from the other Muslim writers.

G. THE EXOTERIC (*ẒĀHIR*) AND THE ESOTERIC (*BĀṬIN*) ASPECTS

Al-Mu'ayyad further discusses the distinction between the esoteric aspect and

the exoteric aspect in more detail. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the Islamic revelation

consists of the categories of the *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*. In his opinion, the *ẓāhir* is evident and

open to anyone. This means that nothing can prevent one from receiving its knowledge

nor is there any kind of barrier against it if one is prepared and have the basic

qualifications for receiving it. On the other hand, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the *bāṭin*

is restricted to those only who deserve to receive it, and this relates to a higher level

of knowledge. In this regard, al-Mu'ayyad explains the distinction between the *ẓāhir*

and *bāṭin* based on two religious duties, namely, the prayer (*al-ṣalāh*) and the alms (*al-*

zakāh). He states that a mere performance of these religious duties and acquiring

knowledge of the methods of their performance render all believes equal because all

of them observe the same practices, using the same methods. Therefore, the

performance on its own cannot establish any mark of distinction. However, according

to him, it is the *bāṭin* which is the criterion for making a distinction between the elite

(*al-khāṣṣah*) and the generality (*al-ᶜāmmah*). According to al-Mu'ayyad, it was the

knowledge of the *bāṭin*, based on which the Prophet referred to ᶜAlīy as the "door" to

the knowledge of which the Prophet considered himself to be the city.[59]

The distinction which al-Mu'ayyad makes between the Muslims in relation to the

understanding of the meanings of the Qur'ān does not seem to be peculiar to him, but

other Fatimid scholars have this idea in their writings. For example, al-Nuᶜmān makes

a distinction between the elite and generality. According to him, the reason for the

distinction is that the generality would not comprehend most of the speech that the

elite would grasp. According to al-Nuᶜmān, this reason led him to compile his books on

the exoteric aspect of Islamic teachings, as well as on their esoteric aspect. These

books comprise different content, as according to him, the levels of comprehension of

the believers are different and each of them should be guided according to the level of

his/her understanding.[60]

Although generally al-Mu'ayyad maintains a balance between the exoteric

aspect and its esoteric aspect, considering them as parallel to each other, he

understands at least one Qur'ānic text to be referring to the *bāṭin* exclusively. This is

the text in which according to him, water exclusively alludes to an esoteric meaning

without having any exoteric significance whatsoever. The Qur'ān discusses Allah's

sending down water from the sky to purify the believers, to remove from them the

stain of Satan and to strengthen their hearts and firm their feet (8:11).[61]

With this verse in mind, al-Mu'ayyad stresses the symbolized or the esoteric

meaning of the verse, applying this to the knowledge-related and esoteric meanings

of purity rather than the meaning of purity in the physical sense because for al-Mu'ayyad, the sequential structure of the verse so requires. Thus, the implications of the elements in the verse cannot logically be reconciled with water as such. The discussion on purification in the verse is followed by the reference to the "removal of Satan's stain" which, according to al-Mu'ayyad, can only be possible through knowledge and not by means of water. If water were to purify that kind of uncleanness, al-Mu'ayyad argues, Satan and his followers could purify themselves from the uncleanness of polytheism and atheism, but they are unable to attain this purity. Likewise, the rest of the components of the verse complement each other in the sense that they are interlinked, indicating knowledge. Thus, it is knowledge and not water which generates certitude and precludes all kinds of intervening doubts and distrust which consequently provides steadfastness as stressed in the verse.[62]

However, al-Mu'ayyad mostly discusses the benefits of water and thus maintaining a balance between the *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* that seems to be his major objective. In the realm of symbol, according to him, it is inconceivable to replace anything else for water, including knowledge. He states that both kinds of purification are prerequisite in view of their distinctive functions within their respective realms. Water cannot replace knowledge-related purification and vice-versa; an idolater cannot purify himself of the impurity of his disbelief even if he washes himself with water. The only thing that will clean him is the profession of faith (*kalimat al-shahādah*). The same is true of the physical purification. An unclean person cannot

clean himself of the uncleanness by means of knowledge. To be physically clean, he must wash himself with water to remove uncleanness.[63]

An enquiring mind may need to know further the rationale for the distinction between the *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* which the Ismāʿīlīs made. Although this subject was discussed earlier with reference to al-Nuʿmān, it needs further examination, particularly with reference to al-Muʾayyad. Al-Muʾayyad appears to be aware of the need to provide an explanation for the distinction under consideration. His response to this seems to be both didactic and psychological. He elaborates on this subject in the light of the methodologies that the prophets employed in propagating their missions which included interacting people according to the levels of their comprehension and backgrounds. According to him, the prophets addressed people not only according to the degrees of their intellects but also the extent to which they were prepared to accept their missions. In doing so, the prophets were particular about communicating with them in ways to which they were accustomed. Therefore, the prophets enabled their communities to attain the level that is in consonance with the requirements of the Divine Will. He puts forward a hypothetical question by stressing his point of view that if the prophets were to begin their missions by revealing to their communities the truths and subtle objects, their aims and objectives would have been lost. The reasons include that the recipients would not be intellectually mature to understand their missions also lacking rectitude and proper management of their actions. According to al-Muʾayyad, thus the *ẓāhir* of the *Sharīʿah* precedes its *bāṭin*.[64]

One can find similar views in the writings of some of other Muslim authors that stress the presence of hierarchical knowledge of the Islamic revelation and that people are of diverse levels amongst themselves in relation to that knowledge. Ibn Rushd appears to be vehemently advocating this view. He corroborates the hierarchy of Qur'ānic knowledge by a saying of ᶜAlīy who is reported to have said: "Tell people what they can understand. {Then he is reported to have said that by telling them otherwise}, do you want them to accuse God and His Prophet of lying"? However, Ibn Rushd holds that the *bāṭin* relates to some parts of the Qur'ān and not to other parts of it.[65]

To discuss the Ismāᶜīlī view on the esoteric dimension of the Islamic revelation further, al-Mu'ayyad's view on "clear revelations" and "ambiguous verses" needs to be discussed. This discussion is important for more than one reason. To begin with, in this discussion, al-Mu'ayyad displays his theological approach to the Qur'ānic *ta'wīl* fully and most vigorously. Secondly by elucidating *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān, al-Mu'ayyad further consolidates his discussion on the *Imāmah*, particularly the qualifications and functions of the Imāms which will follow in chapters four, and Chapter Five.

H. THE *TA'WĪL* OF AMBIGUOUS PARTS OF THE QUR'ĀN

Ta'wīl of "ambiguous verses" remained a controversial subject amongst Muslim writers whose detailed analysis preceded at the beginning part of this Chapter. However, to be concise, this discussion will include some basic points which relate to

"ambiguous verses" with reference to al-Mu'ayyad. Al-Mu'ayyad opens his discussion

about *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous verses" by focusing his attention on the verse (3:7).

Although our author acknowledges that the evidence for the significance of *ta'wīl*

remains beyond the denial of the Muslim community, he is aware of the controversy

over the qualifications of "those well-rooted in knowledge". His classification of

Muslims in this regard is broad "the opponents" (*ahl al-khilāf*) and the "upholders of

ta'wīl" (*ahl al-ta'wīl*). According to him, the former hold that "those well-rooted in

knowledge" have no knowledge of *ta'wīl*, and the view of the latter is the antithesis of

the former view.[66]   However, al-Mu'ayyad's own interpretation of this theme still

needs examining and that will follow shortly. Now his classification of Muslim writers

in the current context needs further discussion. As indicated earlier, it is not only the

Shīᶜah but some other Muslims also who hold that "those well-rooted in knowledge"

have knowledge of *ta'wīl*. Those who hold this view include Ibn ᶜAbbās and Mujāhid.

However, in the current context it is not clear as to whether the appellation "*ahl al-

ta'wīl*" which al-Mu'ayyad uses, is inclusive of people like Ibn ᶜAbbās and other schools

of thought or whether our author uses it in a specific connotation, referring to the

Ismāᶜīlīs only. If al-Mu'ayyad employs this in a specific Ismāᶜīlī sense, he ignores the

views of writers like Ibn ᶜAbbās and Mujāhid.[67]   However, it should be borne in mind

that al-Mu'ayyad discussed this subject previously. In that context, he discussed this

subject without categorising Muslim writers into "*ahl al-khilāf*" and "*ahl al-ta'wīl*", but

he referred to them as "thus, he who says…" (*fa-may yaqūlu*). This is a more general

statement, which may include other Muslim writers whose views are like that of the

Ismāᶜīlīs regarding *ta'wīl*.[68] To support this, there is some internal evidence to show

that al-Mu'ayyad had access to the views of some of these people such as Ibn ᶜAbbās

and also some of the Muslim schools of thought like that of the Muᶜtazilah.[69]

Reverting to the analysis of al-Mu'ayyad surrounding *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous

verses", he discusses this subject in the light of two categories of proofs. One category

of proofs is based on the traditional sources of knowledge whereas the other category

of proofs is based on rationality. This is a premise with which our author sets the scene

of the theme. Although al-Mu'ayyad is not the sole creator of the idea of the proofs

based on the traditional sciences, he seems to be responsible for rephrasing and

formulating them in his own way. His acknowledgement of his predecessors in this

regard is evident in the forthcoming discussion. Al-Mu'ayyad is in complete agreement

with the people to whom he refers as the "upholders of *ta'wīl*" (*ahl al-ta'wīl*) in reading

the Qur'ānic verse (3:7). According to al-Mu'ayyad, the "upholders of *ta'wīl*" connect

"those well-rooted in knowledge" (*al-rāsikhūna fī al-ᶜilm*) with "Allah", considering the

"well-rooted in knowledge" to be sharing *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous verses" with Him.[70]

Referring to like-minded Muslim writers, al-Mu'ayyad is harshly opposed to the idea of

excluding "those well-rooted in knowledge" from the realm of *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous

verses". Al-Mu'ayyad states that the "*ahl al-ta'wīl*" take the word *yaqūlūna* (3:7) in the

sense of *ḥāl* accusative, as according to the upholders of *ta'wīl*, "those well-rooted in

knowledge" say: "We believe therein" based on their knowledge of *ta'wīl*. The reason

which according to al-Mu'ayyad, the "upholders of *ta'wīl*" give, is that belief includes

confirming the thing to be true (*taṣdīq*) that can only be acquired by having the

knowledge of that thing. Al-Mu'ayyad states that the "upholders of *ta'wīl*" conclude

that those who claim to have confirmed the thing without acquiring its full knowledge,

their confirmation (*taṣdīq*) is inconceivable. In support of their argument, according to

al-Mu'ayyad, the "upholders of *ta'wīl*" refer to this verse: "And those whom they

invoke beside Him do not have right of intercession except for he/she who bears

witness to the truth and they are aware of it." (43:86).[71]

Al-Mu'ayyad further elaborates on the view of "*ahl al-ta'wīl*" by analyzing the

prototypical status of the Prophet in relation to the knowledge of *ta'wīl*. Al-Mu'ayyad

quotes the "upholders of *ta'wīl*" and states that according to them, there are only two

possibilities in relation to the Prophet vis-à-vis "ambiguous verses": either the Prophet

was in possession of the knowledge of *ta'wīl* of that which he brought, or he was not.

If he had the knowledge of *ta'wīl*, it is inconceivable to stop at "Allah" (3:7) when

reading this verse. In which case, the Prophet is not only the first of "those well-rooted

in knowledge", but he is the most outstanding among them and he knows *ta'wīl* of

"ambiguous verses" of the Qur'ān. In this regard, al-Mu'ayyad emphasizes the view of

"*ahl al-ta'wīl*" to prove that it is inconceivable to hold that the Prophet lacked

knowledge of *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous verses" of the Qur'ān and that he was unable to

respond to a question concerning any of those verses. Thus, according to "*ahl al-

ta'wīl*", the absence of this knowledge from the message of the Prophet would be

based on other than wisdom. They state that the understanding that the Prophet did

not know the *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous verses" of the Qur'ān would consequently lead to

ascribing absurdity not only to the Divine message of which the Prophet is the bearer

but also to the very Lordship of Allāh Who sent him with the message. According to him, the "upholders of *ta'wīl*" continue by stating that when the Prophet's knowledge of *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous verses" of the Qur'an is established then it is also established that the rest of "those well-rooted in knowledge", are in possession of that knowledge who derived this knowledge from the Prophet.[72]

Al-Mu'ayyad seems to have elaborated on the view of "*ahl al-ta'wīl*" by adding his own argument regarding the necessity of *ta'wīl* and how it is beneficial to the believers. He hypothesises by stating that there can be only two possibilities; either *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān is beneficial to humanity or it has no value. According to al-Mu'ayyad, if it is beneficial, then there should not be any reason for the people not to know it. On the other hand, if it is valueless, there was no need on the part of God to refer to it in the Qur'ān.[73]

Al-Mu'ayyad characterizes "those well-rooted in knowledge" further and evaluates their status in comparison with those to whom the Qur'ān refers as the "possessors of knowledge" (*ulū al-ᶜilm*) in the Qur'ān in these words: "Allah Himself is witness that there is no God save Him and the angels and the "people of learning" {are also witnesses} (3:18). Al-Mu'ayyad explains that the status of "those well-rooted in knowledge" is higher than that of the "possessors of knowledge" (3:18), as according to him, "those well rooted in knowledge" share the knowledge of *ta'wīl* with Allah and thus they are superior to the "possessors of knowledge" but not vice versa.[74] Al-Mu'ayyad stresses "those well-rooted in knowledge" by holding the view that they are far superior in view of their dignity and loftiness with Allah.[75]

Before discussing al-Mu'ayyad's rational arguments for the significance of the esoteric aspect, it is important to discuss the views of some general writers comparing them with the view of the "upholders of *ta'wīl*", who include al-Mu'ayyad.

To begin with, al-Iṣfahānī seems to have differed from the interpretation of al-Mu'ayyad and other Ismāᶜīlī authorities on interpreting "ambiguous verses". Although al-Iṣfahānī acknowledges that there are certain individuals who know the *ta'wīl* of some of "ambiguous verses", he restricts the knowledge of other "ambiguous verses" to God such as the knowledge of the advent of the Day of Resurrection. To prove his view, al-Iṣfahānī allows people to read the verse of the Qur'ān (3:7) in two ways, a point which preceded in the first part of this chapter. Accordingly, al-Iṣfahānī proposes to the readers of this verse of the Qur'ān to stop immediately after "Allah", also allowing them to connect "those well-rooted in knowledge" with "Allah". Al-Iṣfahānī also seems to have differed from the Fatimid position in identifying "those well-rooted in knowledge". Although he recognizes ᶜAlīy as one of "those well-rooted in knowledge", he does not mention other Imāms of the *ahl bayt* to be the possessors of the knowledge of *ta'wīl*.[76] Thus, his discussion surrounding "those well-rooted in knowledge" appears to be vague.

As preceded, al-Mu'ayyad does not restrict the interpretation of any text of the Qur'ān to God as he and his co-religionists hold the view that everything in the Qur'ān is subject to interpretation and   nothing remains outside the pale of the knowledge of the Prophet and the Imāms. Thus, unlike al-Iṣfahānī, al-Mu'ayyad and his co-religionists allow only one way of reading of the verse 3:7; accordingly, they link

"those well-rooted in knowledge" with "Allah". Consequently, al-Mu'ayyad would

reject al-Iṣfahānī's proposal of the two kinds of reading of the verse.

Some other Sunni authorities seem to be divided amongst themselves

regarding the interpretation of *ta'wīl* of "ambiguous verses". One of the modern

writers Kinberg evaluates the views of some general Muslim writers who according to

him, do not agree on one and same point of view regarding interpreting "ambiguous

verses".

> "Some scholars recommended avoiding any examination
> of these verses whereas others encouraged the
> interpretation of them but prescribed caution with
> regard to the steps that need to be taken in this process.
> One precaution is to check the *mutashābih* against the
> *muḥkam*".[77]

Kinberg further examines the views of those people who encourage others for

interpreting "ambiguous verses" on the condition that they are qualified for this task

and that their knowledge is a mark of distinction. In elaborating on his point of view,

Kinberg refers to such writings as the *Tafsīr* of al-Rāzī and the *Ta'wīl* of ibn Qutaybah,

stating their views rationale for the Qur'ānic categories of "clear revelations" and

"ambiguous verses":

> "Had every verse been clear to everyone, the difference
> in people's abilities would not come to the fore. The
> learned (*ᶜālim*) and the ignorant (*jāhil*) would have been
> equal and individual endeavour would cease."[78]

Now it is important to look at al-Mu'ayyad's rational proofs for an interpreter of the *bāṭin.* Our author's analysis begins with a reference to the grounds of justification for rational proofs in religious affairs. According to al-Mu'ayyad, both the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet refer to the correspondence between creation and revelation and that creation leads one to the religion. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the Qur'ān states: "And in the earth, there are signs for those who are certain about their faith. And (there are signs also) wihin yourselves. Then do not you have   insight into them?" (51:20-21)"?   Al-Mu'ayyad holds that there is conformity between the material world and the religious domain, and he insists   on the there similarity of creation with the religious domain.[79] The similarity under consideration needs further discussion to examine how al-Mu'ayyad relates the comparison under consideration in view of the necessity for the interpretation of *ta'wīl*.

According to al-Mu'ayyad, through the combination of the elements of the universe, namely, earth, air, water and fire**,** forms of things like the forms of vegetation and animals exist. According to him, the elements influence the forms by providing them with substances (*mawādd*). He understands that those substances are of two categories: "working substances" (*mawādd fāᶜilah*) and "receiving substances" (*mawādd qābilah*) in creation.[80] By describing this, al-Mu'ayyad stresses the idea that the elements themselves are not forms but they are roots, which activate the forms. For example, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the human voice is the root of the human speech which cannot function appropriately as a faculty of speaking without receiving external help which includes teaching and training. To enable someone to speak, one

must teach and train him/her. According to al-Mu'ayyad, this is not the only instance of evidence for the need of a teacher and guide in the religious domain but there are some other proofs in the universe. Thus, in his opinion, it is inconceivable to deem that the earth can produce foods and fruits and that it does not need human beings to produce them. For him, what preceded just now is based on the Divine system which cannot be changed. From his comparative analysis, al-Mu'ayyad concludes that the Islamic religious system is comparable with creation. For example, the system of religious guidance is based on the patterns of diverse components of creation. He particularly compares the Islamic laws with the elements. The human beings derive hidden things, namely, natural resources from creation. In the religious domain, it is the Imāms after the Prophet who derives truths from the Islamic revelation and creation.[81]

CONCLUSION

The Qur'ān has remained one of the most fundamental sources of religious instructions and ultimate truths whose interpretation remains complex at least partially as it includes esoteric and hierarchical meanings. Thus, the complex nature of the Islamic revelation suggests that *ta'wīl* is a special kind of knowledge and that can be divinely granted. Al-Mu'ayyad as an Ismāʿīlī writer believes in the everlasting and ongoing interpretation of *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān. According to al-Mu'ayyad, *ta'wīl* is characterized by wide ranging aspects of the application processes of this special

knowledge. The Fatimid author links *ta'wīl* process not only to the religious domain but also to creation, which mirror each other and combined constitute a unity of purpose. Al-Mu'ayyad's concept of *ta'wīl/baṭin* is closely related to the Ismāᶜīlī concept of the religious authority, namely, the *Imāmah* of the Imāms from the *ahl al-bayt*, the progeny of the Prophet through ᶜAlīy and Fāṭimah, whose authority as the interpreters of the Qur'ān and creation require a detailed treatment in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FATIMID CONCEPT OF THE *IMĀMAH/WALĀYAH*

PART ONE: PRE-FATIMID VIEWS ON THE *IMĀMAH*

A.   EARLY SHĪʿĪ VIEWS

The supreme Muslim headship or leadership (*Imāmah)* has remained as the most crucial theme of discussion amongst the Muslims immediately after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. However, the different schools of thought in the Muslim *ummah* held diverse interpretations of the necessity of the presence of the leader, his merits, and functions. The current chapter is an attempt to focus on the Fatimid interpretation of the religious head and guide, the Imām, including his status as the interpreter of the Islamic revelation with reference to al-Mu'ayyad. However, prior to examining al-Mu'ayyad's view on the subject matter, a brief but general view of the Shīʿah, particularly its early development in relation to the *Imāmah*, will be discussed. The history of Shīʿīsm, and its diverse doctrinal aspects have attracted not only many of its adherents to express their views, but numerous other writers demonstrated a keen interest in expressing their views on it. To begin with, a general preview should be given which would include some modern writers' thought and their interpretations of the relevant Islamic sources. The writers of these sources include some of the eminent Shīʿī writers. As regards the other part of the preview is concerned, this will be more specific and would be a more detailed exposition of the subject matter. The preview would consist of the view of al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān whose authority on Fatimid

theology and other aspects of religious sciences is, perhaps, well established. Al-Nuᶜmān's view on the *Imāmah* will form the basis for understanding the thought of al-Mu'ayyad, as the latter's theological view appears to be more akin to that of the former.

To elaborate on the doctrinal attitude of the Fatimids, it is important to begin with a discussion on the general views of the Muslims regarding the Muslim leadership immediately after the departure of the Prophet of Islam from this world. In the wake of the departure of the prophet, the Muslims treated the necessity of the presence of the leader of the Muslim *ummah* as a matter of urgency. One can witness the paramount importance of the leadership affair in the rapid measure which certain companions of the Prophet took in making themselves available in the event of *Saqīfat Banī Sāᶜidah* to elect the Caliph or the successor to the Prophet. Although a few of the companions of the Prophet, including ᶜUmar, agreed on the selection of Abū Bakr, a minority group of them believed that ᶜAlīy b. Abī Ṭālib, first cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet was better qualified than anyone else to succeed the Prophet. The minority group originally included some of the friends of ᶜAlīy and his supporters".[1]

However, one can see that ᶜAlīy's expectation of becoming the Caliph of the Muslims did not materialize after the Prophet, as ᶜAlīy was not elected as Caliph. ᶜAlīy became the fourth Caliph. Madelung addresses the attitude of ᶜAlīy towards the Caliphate based on his sources of information.

> "He {ᶜAlī} asserted that he personally had a better right to the succession
> of Muhammad than any other Companions, on the basis of his close

kinship and association with him as well as his outstanding merits in the cause of Islam... It was ᶜAlīy who first gave the *ḥadīth* of *Ghadīr Khumm* [q.v.] publicity by inviting those Companions who had heard the Prophet's statements there to testify on the square in front of the mosque of Kūfa. These statements have traditionally been understood by the Shīᶜa as an implicit appointment of ᶜAlī to the succession in the leadership of the Community. ᶜAlī made plain that he considered the Family of the Prophet to be entitled to the leadership of the Community as long as there remained a single one of them who recited the Kur'ān, knew the *sunna* and adhered to the true faith". [2]

Daftary discusses the Shīᶜī view on the Prophet's nominating ᶜAlīy as his successor and the Imām of the Muslims, through Divine revelation.

"Furthermore, it is the Shīᶜī belief that Prophet had received the designation (*naṣṣ*) in question, nominating ᶜAlī as the imām of the Muslims after his own death, through Divine revelation. This event of the spiritual investiture of ᶜAlī b. Abī Ṭālib continues to be celebrated as one of the most important Shīᶜī feasts".[3]

In the context of the discussion on the *Imāmah*, the Shīᶜī concept of the necessity of Divine guidance for human beings on a permanent basis became one of the primary aspects of their doctrine of the *Imāmah*. The Shīᶜī authorities always underline the importance of Divine guidance to be always available to all human beings. In which case, they do not restrict Allah's responsibility of the providing the guidance to ᶜAlīy, the first Imām but regard it as extended to the other Imāms from his progeny. The aspect of the guidance emanating from the Imāms became one of the most prominent features of the *Imāmah* in the early Shīᶜī discussions. The guidance of the Imām included the elucidation of Islamic teachings and the *Sharīᶜah*. Daftary elaborates the Shīᶜī view on the Imāms' function as I nterpreters of Islamic teachings. He states:

"According to the Shīᶜī view, from the very beginning the

partisans of ᶜAlī believed that the most important question facing the Muslims after the Prophet was the elucidation of Islamic teachings and religious tenets. This was because they were aware that the teachings of the Qur'ān and the sacred law of Islam (*Sharīᶜa*), having emanated from sources beyond the comprehension of the ordinary man, contained truths and inner purposes that could not be grasped directly through human reason. Therefore, in order to understand the true meaning of the Islamic revelation, the Shīᶜa had realized the necessity for a religiously authoritative person, namely the imām".[4]

Daftary considers the Shīᶜī view of the other bases for the legitimacy of ᶜAlīy's authority and, particularly examines the hereditary characteristic of the Imām by stating:

"...ᶜAlī was from the beginning regarded by his devoted partisans as the most prominent member of the Prophet's family, and as such, was believed to have inherited the Prophet's undivulged teachings and religious knowledge or ᶜilm. He was, indeed, held to be the Prophet's *waṣī* or legatee. In the eyes of the Shīᶜa, ᶜAlī's unique qualifications as successor held yet another important dimension in that he was believed to have been nominated by divine command (*amr*) as expressed through the Prophet's testament".[5]

One can look at the role of the transmission of the hereditary attributes more widely with reference to Judaeo-Christian prophets in particular prior to Islam. Madelung discusses the role of families of the prophets in the propagation of their missions. Based on his sources, Madelung states:

"In the story of the past prophets, as it is related in the Qur'ān, their families play a prominent role. The families generally provide vital assistance to the prophets against the adversaries among their people. After the death of the prophets, their descendants become their spiritual and material heirs. The prophets ask God to grant them the help of members of their

family and they pray for divine favour for their kin and their offspring".

Madelung also examines the virtues of the Family of the Prophet of Islam.

An example of virtues of the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet is their purification:

> "The Qur'ān thus accorded the a*hl al-bayt* of Muhammad an elevated position above the rest of the faithful, similar to the position of the families of the earlier prophets. God desired to purify them from all defilement. Certainly the renegades of the prophet's family who opposed his mission were excluded from the divine grace, just like the renegades among the families of the past prophets".[6]

B.   POST-SECTARIAN DISCUSSIONS

At this juncture, it is important to move on to the post-Schism doctrine of the *Imāmah* when the Ithnāᶜashariyyah and Ismāᶜīliyyah remained no more a united Shīᶜah because of their differences over the successor of Imām Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq. The Twelvers claimed that it was the younger son of Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq, Mūsā al-Kāẓim who succeeded his father as the Imām. On the other hand, the Ismāᶜīlīs adhered to the elder son of Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq, namely, Ismāᶜīl who, according to them became the rightful Imām.

Without undertaking a detailed study of the views of these schools of thought this survey will examine only a few aspects of the *Imāmah* with reference to al-Kulaynī's *al-Uṣūl Min al-Kāfī* and al-Nuᶜmān's *Daᶜā'im al-Islām*. The comparison would enable the readers to identify the distinctive features of each of the Shīᶜī schools of thought. At any rate, the rationale for the selection of the writers include that these writers were contemporary and more importantly they are recognized as great

authorities in Ithnā^casharī Shī^cīsm and Ismā^cīlī Shī^cīsm respectively. One of the differences which emerges from the discussions of the Shī^cī writers is the degree of emphasis each of these writers place on certain concepts related to the Shī^cī discussion on the *Imāmah*. In the current context, two concepts are particularly important as the writers underline them and they are *al-Ḥujjah* and al-W*alāyah/al-Wilāyah*. It seems that according to al-Kulaynī, the former concept is more prominent than the latter. On the other hand, the concept of *al-Walāyah/al-Wilāyah* remains predominant in al-Nu^cmān's examination of the *Imāmah*. Let us first discuss al-Kulaynī's concept of the *Imāmah*.

Al-Kulaynī discusses the *Imāmah* of the *ahl al-bayt* under the title of *al-Ḥujjah*, meaning the proof which, according to his belief, refers to the Prophet and the twelve Imāms of the Ithnā^cashariyyah, beginning with ^cAlīy up to and including al-Mahdī. Although he does not explicitly discuss the reason for his choosing the chapter's title, it seems that according to him, certain narrations emphasize the necessity of the presence of the prophets and afterwards the Imāms, particularly at the time of the occultation of the Twelfth Imām of the Twelver Shī^cah. Thus, the alternative term which he employs for the prophets and the Imāms is *al-Ḥujjah*; for example, in one of the reports, he mentions that the earth cannot be without the *Ḥujjah* which seems to be based on sayings of some of their Imāms. Under the same chapter, he gives numerous narrations which include the discussions of diverse aspects of the authority of the *Ḥujjah*, including the necessity of obedience to him.[7] There is no other chapter in *al-Uṣūl Min al-Kāfī* devoted exclusively to the *Imāmah* of the Twelvers' Imāms except for

the chapter on belief and disbelief (*Kitāb al-īmān wa-al-kufr*). The contents of this chapter include a section on the Pillars of Islam which according to most of the narrations given in his work, are five. These are the *Ṣalāh*, the *Zakāh*, the *Ṣaum*, the *Ḥajj* and the *Walāyah/Wilāyah*. It is claimed that most of these narrations emanated from Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir.[8] Despite the fact that al-Kulaynī's *al-Uṣūl* considers the *Walāyah* to be the key to the other Pillars of Islam, one can reiterate that it insists on the concept of *al-Ḥujjah* by allocating to it a considerable lengthy chapter thus probably attaching to it more importance than the concept of *Walāyah*.

On the other hand, al-Nuᶜmān's *Daᶜāʾim* supports the *Imāmah* of the Ismāᶜīlī Imāms and according to Madeung, this was written under the reign of the Fatimid Caliph al-Muᶜizz li-Dīn Allāh.[9] Unlike al-Kulaynī, al-Nuᶜmān does not include any chapter entitled *al-Ḥujjah*, or *al-īmān wa-al-kufr* in his book, namely the *Daᶜāʾim* dealing with the *Imāmah* but instead he includes in it nine sections under one chapter, namely, *al-Walāyah/al-Wilāyah* preceded by two small chapters on belief/faith (*Īmān*) and initial submission (*Islām*). Al-Nuᶜmān's stress on the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* is obvious from the titles which he gave to the two sections on the chapter *al-Walāyah*. The titles of these sections include "Discussion on the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* of the commander of the faithful ᶜAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib", which is followed by another section entitled "Discussion on the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* of the Imāms from the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet". It should be borne in mind that al-Nuᶜmān in his introduction examines amongst other things the Pillars of Islam which according to him, are seven. They are *Walāyah/Wilāyah*, *Ṭahārah* (purification), *Ṣalāh, Zakāh, Ṣaum, Ḥajj* and *Jihād*. The same report also

includes that the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* is the most outstanding Pillar amongst the rest of

the Pillars and that through the *Walī,* the rest of the Pillars can be understood properly.

The author refers to Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir in substantiating the number of the

Pillars of Islam. The addition of *Ṭahārah* and *Jihād* has made the Ismāᶜīlīs distinctive

from other Muslims, as according to the Fatimids, these Pillars like other Pillars of Islam

have both exoteric and esoteric significance. Al-Nuᶜmān has examined the aspects of

Ṭahārah and the *Jihād.* He discusses the exoteric and esoteric aspects of the *Ṭahārah*

by offering several illustrations based on the Qur'ān and the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet.

For example, he refers to the following Qur'ānic verse: "When He made the slumber

fall upon you as a reassurance from Him and sent down water from the sky upon you,

that thereby He might purify you and remove from you the impurity of Satan (8:11).

Al-Nuᶜmān attempts to explain the exoteric meaning and the esoteric significance of

the verse. Thus, according to him, water purifies the impurity of the body from the

exoteric point of view. On the other hand, the knowledge which according to al-

Nuᶜmān, is the esoteric aspect of *Ṭahārah,* purifies the soul. As far as *Jihād* is

concerned, according to al-Nuᶜmān, it has more than one aspect. One of the aspects

of the *Jihād* is to fight against the enemies of Islam if necessary and this seems to be

temporary and situational. However, according to al-Nuᶜmān, this *Jihād* can only be

carried out if the Imām approves of it and if the conditions are such that make it

necessary to wage a war against the enemies.   As far as the other category of *Jihād* is

concerned, it is a permanent process through which one must make a determined

effort to gain the objective of waging war against one's evil commanding soul (*al-nafs*

al-ammārah bi-al-sū'i). Al-Nuᶜmān refers to this *Jihād* as "*Jihād al-hawā*", that is, waging war against evil desires and "*jihād al-shayṭān*" that is, waging war against Satan. He refers to the Qur'ān in explaining the subject: "I do not exculpate myself. Lo! The (human) soul enjoins unto evil, save that whereon my Lord has mercy. Lo! My Lord is Forgiving, Merciful". (12:53). He substantiates the two categories of *Jihād* by a well-known *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet. The Prophet is reported to have addressed his companions by uttering the following words after having returned from a war against the opponents. "You have returned from the minor *Jihād a*nd now you are heading for the major *Jihād*". The companions asked the Prophet: "O Prophet of Allah! Which *Jihād* is the major *Jihād*"? The Prophet replied by saying: "The major *Jihād* is that you wage war against yourselves",[10] meaning your evil commanding soul.

The difference between al-Kulaynī and al-Nuᶜmān seems to be secondary and not primary as far as belief in the *Imāmah* is concerned. However, they differed, as mentioned above, in the identity of the Imāms after Imām Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq. As far as their approaches to reporting the sayings of the Imāms are concerned, al-Kulaynī and al-Nuᶜmān may have relied on the transmitters whom they considered to be most trustworthy and best-informed narrators and ones whose transmitted reports support their doctrines. It is interesting to note that both al-Kulaynī and al-Nuᶜmān refer to the same Imām of the Shīᶜah in substantiating the Pillars of Islam with different versions. As preceded, according to al-Nuᶜmān's version of the statement of the Imām, there are two more Pillars than what al-Kulaynī mentions, and they are *Ṭahārah* and *Jihād.* The Fatimid concept of the seven Pillars seems to be unique when compared with those of

other Muslim schools of thought. The Sunnis have five Pillars of Islam. Numerically they are of the same number as the number of the Pillars accepted in Twelver Shīʿīsm.[11] It should also be noted that although al-Kulaynī, on the basis of the overwhelming majority of reports, mentions the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* of ʿAlīy and that of the rest of the eleven Imāms of the Ithnāʿashariyyah as one of the five Pillars of Islam, following some other reports, he included the profession of faith under the section of the Pillars of Islam also.[12] It can be said that the inclusion of a discussion on the profession of faith in the section of the Pillars of Islam appears to be Twelver Shīʿī attempt to compromise between the Twelver Shīʿī version of the Pillars of Islam and that of the Sunni Pillars of Islam.[13] However, al-Nuʿmān deals with the profession of faith in the chapter on *Īmān*, which he considers the only criterion for the acceptance of all good deeds of human beings to Allah. Thus, according to his description, *Īmān* has a higher level than that of Islam. In this chapter too, the *Imāmah* occupies a primary place. Al-Nuʿmān declares that, in addition to belief in the articles of faith, including the profession of faith, recognition of the Imām of the time, accepting his authority wholeheartedly and obeying him with full submission complete one's faith.[14]

Perhaps it will be useful to look at the definition of the *Walāyah/Wilāyah*, exploring further its meanings and implications. The formulation would be based on the thought of Hermann Landolt.

Primarily Landolt defines these terms in the following words:

"*WALĀYAH* or *wilāyah,* an Arabic verbal noun derived from the root *wly*, carries the basic meanings of "friendship, assistance" and "authority, power".

As regards the difference which Landolt visualizes between *Walāyah* and *Wilāyah*, he appears to have used *Wilāyah* more generally. For example, he uses it in the legal system of the Muslims, as well as in their political thought also in spiritual sense, particularly in the contexts of Shīʿī Imām and Ṣūfī *Shaykh*. Using "*Wilāyah*" our author quotes the Qur'ānic verse 4:59 in which, according to Landolt, the believers are commanded to obey Allah, to obey the Apostle and those who are in authority. According to Landolt, obeying those in authority is called "*wilāyat al-amr*". Elucidating the status of the "*wilāyat al-amr*", Landolt connects this idea with the Prophet's designation of ʿAlīy as the *mawlā* of the believers at *Ghadīr Khumm*. As far as *Walāyah* is concerned, Landolt considers this to be a Shīʿī connotation which, according to him, means devotion to ʿAlīy and the Imāms from the house of the Prophet.   Furthermore, according to Landolt, the Shīʿah hold that "*Walāyah"* includes adhering to the Imāms, recognizing their missions as the true "holders of the Command, and the exclusive possessors of the true meaning of the Qur'ān and the knowledge of the hidden".[15]

PART TWO: AL-MU'AYYAD AND THE *IMĀMAH*

C.   PROOFS FOR THE *IMĀMAH*

In part one of the current chapter, an attempt was made to present the views of some of the Ismāʿīlī predecessors of al-Mu'ayyad, particularly al-Nuʿmān, on the *Imāmah/Walāyah* of ʿAlīy and that of his progeny. In the current part of the chapter, it is important to focus on holding an analytical discussion on the *Imāmah* based on al-

Mu'ayyad's own theological approach. The Fatimid concept of the *Imāmah*, including

its relation to the interpretation of the Qur'ān, seems to be predominant in the thought

of al-Mu'ayyad and one needs to examine this important aspect of the Fatimid religious

system. First, however, it is necessary to discuss al-Mu'ayyad's general outlook on the

necessity of the Imām to provide a foundation for the above-mentioned aspect of his

thought. This discussion will enable us to explore al-Mu'ayyad's contributions to

Fatimid thought. Historically, in al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on the religious headship and

leadership, the primary tenets of the concept of the *Imāmah* upheld in the early

Fatimid Ismāʿīlīsm seems to have remained intact as far as the content of the doctrine

of the *Imāmah* is concerned. However, the time of al-Mu'ayyad seems to have

witnessed a more intensive formulation of the *Imāmah* not only on theological grounds

but also on cosmological bases, an aspect of the discussions of the *Imāmah* which will

be examined in Chapter Five. This kind of extension in the interpretation of the concept

of the *Imāmah* appears to mark a new epoch in Fatimid thought. Al-Mu'ayyad's

methodological approach includes a comparison between creation and the religious

system with reference to both reason and revelation.

To begin with, attention should be paid to al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on the

necessity of the presence of a divinely designated guide which seems to be intimately

related to his overall religious thought. Al-Mu'ayyad seems to have derived the

evidence of the necessity of the presence of an Imām from the material world as well

from the system of religion. As we will see later, al-Mu'ayyad's emphasis throughout

his discussion is on the necessity of human beings' recognition of religious authorities

and their demonstration of absolute commitment to the guidance emanating from them.

As already indicated, al-Mu'ayyad's intended objective of exploring the unity between the universe and the religious domain seems to be a basis for his interpretation of diverse aspects of religion, including the *Imāmah*. Thus, according to the Fatimid writer, the subject matter (*mawḍūᶜ*) of the material world and that of the religious realm are parallel to each other and they are in correspondence with each other. He refers to these domains as "ᶜ*ālam al-jism*" and "ᶜ*ālam al-dīn*" respectively. It seems that our author understands that there exists a basis for the mutual correspondence between these domains in religious sources such as the Qur'ān. Thus, for him, the Qur'ānic terms "*al-khalq*" and "*al-amr*" refer to them respectively (see Qur'an: 7:54). Al-Mu'ayyad further refers to the Qur'ān and to a *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet to prove that creation and the religious domain are in mutual conformity and that they reinforce each other's existence and validity. The texts of the Qur'ān to which he refers include the following verses: "Soon we will show them our signs on the horizon and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth" (41:53). "Have they not then observed the heaven above them, how We have constructed it and beautified it and how there are no rifts therein. And the earth We have spread it out and set thereon mountains standing firm and produced therein every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs)" (50:6-7). "And contemplate the creation of the heavens and the earth" (3:191).   As regards the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet in this context, al-Mu'ayyad refers to the Prophet who is reported to have said: "Allah founded His religion after

the pattern of His creation so that evidence can be obtained (*li-yustadalla*) through His creation with regard to His religion and through His religion with regard to His Unity (*waḥdāniyyatih*)".[16]

Now specifically examining the categories of *al-maḥsūsāt* and *al-maᶜqūlāt,* al-Mu'ayyad employs them for more than one purpose. Two of these purposes are easily identifiable. Firstly, al-Mu'ayyad makes use of the *maḥsūsāt*, considering them as instrumental for the exploration of the *maᶜqūlāt* and thus suggesting that the former are symbols whereby one can grasp the latter. For example, al-Mu'ayyad identifies two kinds of earths: the perceptible earth and the intelligible earth. The former, according to him, refers to the material earth whilst the latter to ᶜAlī, the first Imām of the Shīᶜah, for instance, who received Divine knowledge from the Prophet who is the heaven, according to the Fatimid understanding of the concept of perceptible things and the intelligible truths. Secondly, our author seems to have used these terms to emphasize parallelism in diverse components of creation, including the spiritual and earthly religious hierarchical ranks. This kind of illustration includes a comparison between the "First Originated Being" or the "Intellect" and the Prophet, for example.[17]

Al-Mu'ayyad's analysis of a range of expressions which, according to him, stands for the truths seems to be part and parcel of his understanding of *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān. As discussed in Chapter 3, generally *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān is understood to be solely related to the Islamic Text of the Qur'ān. However, Fatimid thinkers, particularly

al-Mu'ayyad claims *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān to be concerned with creation as well, in addition to theological subjects which have been examined earlier. Comparing al-Mu'ayyad's view on the applicability of *ta'wīl* with al-Nuᶜmān's view, the latter does not apply the term *ta'wīl* to creation but to the Text of the Qur'ān only. However, according to al-Nuᶜmān, the term *bāṭin* embraces both the Qur'ān, as well as creation.[18] At any rate, al-Mu'ayyad used both terms, that is, *bāṭin* and *ta'wīl* for the Qur'ān and for creation. In his further dealing with Qur'ānic *ta'wīl,* the Fatimid writer looks at *ta'wīl* in two slightly different ways. Firstly, al-Mu'ayyad considers *ta'wīl* to be an alternative term to the intelligible truths. To illustrate his view, our writer compares the human soul with the meaning of the Qur'ān in a broader sense. He concentrates on the modality and more importantly the significance of the soul and meaning in comparison with the body and word. According to him, the meaning stands as a symbolized meaning (*ramz*) in relation to word like the soul which stands as a hidden truth in relation to the body. However, he emphasizes the soul and meaning compared to the body and word. The reason he gives in support of his view is that the body and word cannot exist on their own, but they can survive due to the soul and meaning respectively. Al-Mu'ayyad's illustration of the human soul and word may not be the ultimate purpose of his argument but merely a basis for his view on the distinction between the intelligible and the perceptible. It seems from the above illustration that both the human soul and the meaning of the Qur'ān, particularly the *ta'wīl thereof*, are intelligible and not perceptible. The Fatimid author attempts to find a Qur'ānic basis for this and refers to the following verse to substantiate his view on the intelligible:

"They know but the outer things in the life of this world, but they are heedless of the Hereafter *(al-ākhirah)*" (30:7). According to al-Mu'ayyad, the "Hereafter" in this particular context refers to the truths which he identifies with *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān and the intelligible *(al-maᶜqūāt).*[19] Secondly, al-Mu'ayyad finds a wide range of scope for applying *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān in Islamic teachings, including the fundamental tenets and Islamic doctrines with the emphasis that acquiring knowledge of these truths, particularly acquiring knowledge of Allah is essential for a believer. According to him, next to Allah, the truths include the Hereafter, the angels, and the Spiritual and Earthly Ranks of the hierarchy of religion (*al-ḥudūd al-rūḥāniyyah wa-al-jismāniyyah*).[20]

As examined above, the methodologies which al-Mu'ayyad utilises in the formulation of his thought include furnishing evidence from both creation and the religious system. Amongst the components of objects of the material world which al-Mu'ayyad considers to be comparable to certain religious authorities are the sun, the moon, and the stars. In his opinion, the heavenly bodies are responsible for the production and growth of things in the material world, and they are instrumental in creating corporal things. With the above-mentioned heavenly bodies, al-Mu'ayyad compares the Prophet and the Imāms, who according to him, are responsible for creating forms appertaining to the Hereafter (*al-ṣuwar li-al-dār al-ākhirah*) and through their instrumentality, spiritual entities come into existence. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the influence of the heavenly creatures work in the material world; likewise the Prophet and the Imāms have their influence on the entities appertaining to the spiritual domain. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad states that as the universe needs the heavenly

bodies so does the system of religion which he perceives to be comprising of the Prophet, his legatee (*Waṣīy*), namely, ᶜAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and then the Imāms who are like the sun, the moon, and the stars respectively. This is a comparison between this world and the system of religion, which al-Mu'ayyad consistently pursues. In his elucidation of the types of spiritual entities, al-Mu'ayyad proposes a hierarchy which includes the Prophecy (*al-nubuwwah*), the Vicegerency (*al-wiṣāyah*) of ᶜAlīy and the *Imāmah* of the Imāms from his progeny.[21]

Although the thrust of the argument of al-Mu'ayyad seems to be his effort to prove the Shīᶜī view on the *Imāmah* of the *ahl al-bayt*, he also examines the Prophecy of the Prophet of Islam. In doing so, he particularly concentrates on the status of the Prophet as the intermediary between Allah and the believers. There seem to be several reasons for the emphasis in his writings on this status of the Prophet of Islam. One of the reasons that al-Mu'ayyad insists on the Prophet's intermediary position is perhaps to set the scene for the discussion on the *Imāmah*, demonstrating that the *Imāmah* is based on the Prophecy (*al-nubuwwah*) and that it was the Prophet who introduced the *Imāmah* of ᶜAlī and that of his descendants. The discussion on the relationship of the *Imāmah* to the Prophecy permeates al-Mu'ayyad's discussion and this will be explored in the forthcoming parts of the current discussion. Yet al-Mu'ayyad also suggests repeatedly that he has some specific objectives in mind. His elaboration of these objectives seems not only to be strengthened by some of the Fatimid parameters of the discussions on the religious authorities, but it also explores the views of other Muslims who hold a contrary interpretation concerning either the Prophecy or the

Imāmah. These objectives should be addressed in the current discussion. One of those objectives is to compare the views of certain other Muslims with his own view. These Muslims include those to whom al-Mu'ayyad vaguely alludes by stating those people who, according to him, exercise their intellects independently in acquiring knowledge of Allah without the guidance of the Prophet and the Imāms. Al-Mu'ayyad refers to these people individually as "*ṣāḥib al-ra'y*". Al-Mu'ayyad's reference to the "*ṣāḥib al-ra'y*" is vague as it is not clear whether he refers to the general Muslims, including the Sunnis or whether he means a different Muslim group or Muslim individuals. It seems that in this context, al-Mu'ayyad does not refer to the Sunnis but rather to the Muᶜtazilah or the Muslim philosophers or both, probably for their heavy reliance on their reasoning in gaining the knowledge of Allah. Also the wording which al-Mu'ayyad utilises, perhaps for the Sunnis, particularly, the Aḥnāf, is "*ahl al-ra'y*" and not "*ṣāḥib al-ra'y*".[22] At any rate, al-Mu'ayyad compares the Prophet with the sun and claims that the denial of the Prophet's true identity as the means between Allah and His bondsmen is just like the denial of the sun which he seems to suggest is an utter denial of truth.[23]

After having examined the status of the Prophet briefly, al-Mu'ayyad moves on to studying the necessity of the *Wiṣāyah/Walāyah*. It should be borne in mind that in Fatimid Ismāᶜīlīsm there seems to be no conceptual and doctrinal distinction as such between the *Wiṣāyah* of ᶜAlīy and the *Imāmah* of the other Imāms. The *Wiṣāyah*, however, appears to be used to emphasize ᶜAlīy's Vicegerency and his hereditary right in relation to the Prophet and then to transfer these characteristics to the would-be Imāms after him. Al-Mu'ayyad would consider ᶜAlīy to be the Vicegerent of the

Prophet, perhaps in terms of his view on ᶜAlīy as the recipient of the testamentary

instructions of the Prophet directly, particularly the secrets appertaining to his religion

(*asrār dīnih*). It was ᶜAlīy, al-Mu'ayyad would say, to whom the Prophet entrusted all

the characteristics of the institution of the Muslim leadership by designating him as the

master of the believers (*Mawlā, Walī*). It is also to be noted that in his elaboration of

the necessity of the *Waṣīy* our author appears to be an apologist who tries to prove his

point of view emphatically.[24]

Al-Mu'ayyad refers to the objection of the "*ṣāḥib al-ra'y*" who, according to

him, expresses his bewilderment over the Shīᶜī concept of the *Imāmah*. According to

the Fatimid author, the *ṣāḥib al-ra'y* is bewildered over the Shīᶜī view that the Prophet

entrusted the esoteric knowledge of his religion to one person, namely, ᶜAlīy and each

Imām from his progeny, thereby making them in possession of the religious affairs of

the *ummah*. Thus, this view, in the opinion of the "*ṣaḥib al-ra'y*", stands in contrast

with his own view. Al-Mu'ayyad closely studies the view of these people. According to

his understanding, the "*ṣaḥib al-ra'y*" does not accept the Shīᶜī view, as according to

the latter, the Prophet did not specify a particular individual to entrust Divine message

to him. On the contrary, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the "*ṣaḥib al-ra'y*" claims that the

Prophet was responsible for conveying his message to all human beings whether they

were non-Arab or whether they were Arab, for example. The conclusion which the

"*ṣaḥib al-ra'y*" draws from his abovementioned view is that the *Shīᶜī* view is

unacceptable to him, as, according to him, the message of Allah is for all believers and

not for some. So the "*ṣaḥib al-ra'y*" concludes that the Shīᶜah restricted the Divine

message to only one person, namely, ᶜAlīy and then each Imām after him. On his part, al-Mu'ayyad tends to refute this objection by basing his line of reasoning on the Divine designation of the Prophet which according to him, is based solely on Allah's will. God chose His Prophet Muhammad to deliver Divine guidance and did not choose the people at large to entrust to them Divine guidance directly. If Allah wished to convey His message to human beings without having the Prophet in between Him and His creatures, al-Mu'ayyad argues, He would have had an absolute and supreme power to do exactly that. Allah, in His supreme power can reveal to the people directly the knowledge and understanding of all those things which they need to know about, and He would not have sent to them a prophet. On the contrary, Allah, according to our author, chose the Prophet as His Messenger and through his instrumentality, He conveyed His message to the people concerned. Based on the principle just underlined above, al-Mu'ayyad further argues that the Prophet chose ᶜAlīy whom he considered as the "door to his knowledge" and the "source of his mysteries". In the opinion of al-Mu'ayyad, however, there should be no reason whatsoever to deny the status of ᶜAlīy, as the denial of ᶜAlīy's status in the religious system is tantamount to rejecting the moon in the material world. As regards the necessity of the presence of the other Imāms from the progeny of ᶜAlīy, al-Mu'ayyad claims to always have bases for the need for the presence of the Imāms. One such basis is the verse of the Qur'ān wherein Allah refers to the stars: "It is He Who has set for you the stars that you may guide your course by them amid the darkness of the land and the sea" (6:98).[25]

This means that as long as the stars exist in the heaven, the Ismāʿīlī Imāms whom al-Mu'ayyad conceives as the religious-domain related stars will also flourish to guide the believers. These are the entities who, according to our author, will never cease to exist. Anyone who denies the Imāms, al-Mu'ayyad considers him/her to be one who rejects the existence of the stars of the material world.

Al-Mu'ayyad argues for the *Imāmah* further and proposes many other bases for its establishment, including textual bases. These bases will be elaborated on as we progress in examining the diverse aspects of the *Imāmah.* Presently a reference should be made to al-Mu'ayyad's understanding of a *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet. The Prophet is reported to have said: "The likeness of my *ahl al-bayt* among you is the likeness of the Ark of Noah; he who boarded it was saved and he who fell behind was drowned".[26] This is a *Ḥadīth* which al-Mu'ayyad quotes to explain his understanding that the guidance of the Imāms is essential at all times, as there is always a high risk of arising innovations which lead to misguidance. The interpretation of our author is the outcome of his concentration on Noah's Ark as the source of refuge from the flood (*ṭūfān*) which caused destruction at a magnitude that has become a parable for all later generations. There are two points to be noted, which emerge from al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on this *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet. One of the aspects of al-Mu'ayyad's view is that he takes the *Ḥadīth* purely as a parable or as a simile, at least in the case of the Imāms, the family members of the Prophet. Because of his allegorical interpretation of the *Ḥadīth*, al-Mu'ayyad interprets the destructive flood as a factor, signifying misguidance, including innovations. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad holds that it is only the Imāms

who are the source of protection and refuge in the face of any kind of religious misguidance and errors. The second aspect of the thought of the Fatimid writer is that in his opinion, when the Prophet uttered this *Ḥadīth*, he anticipated the presence of an ongoing source of danger therefore warned his community members to be guided by the *ahl al-bayt* so that they can be safeguarded.[27]

To provide further grounds for the necessity of the presence of the Imāms, al-Mu'ayyad examines the Imāms as "those in authority" and their function as intermediaries between Allah and the human beings after the Prophet. He identifies these intermediaries by using terms like "*ulū al-amr*" and "*al-wasā'iṭ wa-al-adillah*", i.e. "those in authority", and the "intermediaries and guides" respectively. In this regard he refers to several Qur'ānic verses which include 2:25 and 66:4. It seems that al-Mu'ayyad takes these verses to be interrelated and that, according to him, they include within themselves some of the parameters of the primary components of the Fatimid doctrine of the *Imāmah*. The verse 2:25 begins with a reference to the believers and the "virtuous deeds" (*al-ṣāliḥāt*) which they perform.[28] Thus, it is necessary to begin the discussion with al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation of faith and belief, as its details are a lengthy discourse. In explaining this verse alone, our author refers to many other verses of the Qur'ān as complementary evidence for his claim. These verses include those revelations which begin with Allah's address: "O you who believe (*yā-ayyuhā alladhīna āmanū*). It appears that the number of verses with this beginning exceeds eighty-five (see for example, 2:153, 172, 178,183, 208, 254, 3:100, 102, 118, 130, 149, 156, 4:59). Al-Mu'ayyad finds these verses to be included amongst those Qur'ānic texts

which, according to him, underpin the *Imāmah* of ᶜAlīy and that of his progeny. To substantiate his interpretation, our writer quotes the Prophet who is reported to have said: "Allah did not mention any verse of the Qur'ān with His address "*yā-ayyuhā alladīna āmanū*" included in it but ᶜAlī is its head and commander" (*amīr)*. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad takes it for granted that the Prophet uttered this *Ḥadīth* concerning the leadership authority (*al-imārah*) of ᶜAlīy. He argues for the other Imāms as well by stating that the *Imārah* of ᶜAlīy was extended to the other Imāms; thus these Imāms, according to him, are in possession of that *Imārah* though his argument carries no specific textual proof in this instance. Yet, he provides a basis for his argument which one could term rational evidence. It is important to explain the implication of the Qur'ānic text "*yā-ayyuhā alladīna āmanū*", as, based on this, al-Mu'ayyad holds that ᶜAlīy's authority denotes an everlasting presence. This means that if the believers are present in this world, the commander of the faithful will have to be present as well with them. In other words, the Qur'ānic command implies an ongoing co-existence between the Imām from the progeny of ᶜAlīy and the people who came and are still to come until the Day of Judgment. By relating the *Imārah* of ᶜAlīy to the other Imāms, al-Mu'ayyad seems to imply that although ᶜAlīy cannot be physically present all the time, the Imāms from his progeny take his place as the commanders of the faithful one after the other.[29]

Additionally, al-Mu'ayyad examines the *Imārah* of the Imāms in the light of the Qur'ānic verse by which the believers are commanded to obey Allah, to obey the Prophet and those also who are in authority (*ulī al-amr*) (4:59). However, there is a

sharp controversy over the definition of "those who are in authority" amongst Muslims. The Shīʿī interpretation has always been that like many other Qurʾānic commands, the command concerning the *ulū al-amr* stands for the Imāms of the *ahl al-bayt*. Al-Muʾayyad follows the Shīʿī line of argument. However, he relates the status of "those in authority" with his interpretation of "*yā-ayyuhā alladīna āmanū*", perhaps, to reconcile the two verses of the Qurʾān. As regards the Twelver Shīʿī sources regarding the interpretation of "those in authority", al-Kulaynī cites Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, who is reported to have said that "those in authority" refer to the *Awṣiyāʾ*, namely, the Imāms from the family of the Prophet. However, Sunni commentators on the Qurʾān have a totally different outlook. The Sunnis have expressed diverse views regarding this matter. For example, al-Qurṭubī has presented the different versions of narrations surrounding "those in authority". According to these narrations and views, "those in authority" refer to more than one kind of people: according to one point of view "those in authority" refer to a political authority such as a king of an Islamic dynasty. However, the Sunnis seem not to be unanimous amongst themselves regarding the level of obedience to the political leader. One of the Sunni interpretations regarding obedience to "those in authority" places certain restrictions on the Muslims. For example, they state that nobody should be obeyed if he is guilty of causing innovations. As far as the holders of the second view are concerned, according to them, "those in authority" refer to the learned people. Yet, there is another group of the Sunni Muslims, who interpret that "those in authority" allude to the companions of the Prophet.[30]

Al-Mu'ayyad further concentrates on the *ulū al-amr,* particularly their functions. According to him, the Imāms' functions in their capacity as the *ulū al-amr* include their part which they play as intermediaries between Allah and the believers by guiding the latter to acquire knowledge of the articles of faith, including the *Tawḥīd* of Allah and the diverse meanings of the Islamic revelation. Al-Mu'ayyad's view on the Imāms as interpreters of the Islamic revelation needs further examining in a later section which will be exclusively devoted to the correspondence which al-Mu'ayyad strongly believes to be in existence between the Qur'ān and the Imāms.[31]

Al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on the definition of faith, particularly his claim of the *Imāmah* to be part and parcel of the articles of faith, is followed by his interpretation of *"al-ṣāliḥāt"*, "virtuous deeds". These good deeds, in his opinion, include not only doing justice, demonstrating kindness, giving to kinsfolk and all other kinds of virtuous deeds but also having a true understanding and acquiring knowledge of diverse components of the religion and obeying the authorities. However, according to al-Mu'ayyad, his definition of good deeds remains incomplete and imperfect until his belief in the *Imāmah* is included in the realm of good deeds. Al-Mu'ayyad even goes one step further by stating that the *Imāmah* is not only one of the components of the good deeds, but it is the most important ingredient amongst them. The simple reason which our author gives for his view is that all the rest of the components of the "virtuous deeds" depend on the *Imāmah* for their validity and recognition.[32]

Al-Mu'ayyad argues for his view on the role of the Imām in all virtuous deeds. In elaborating on this, he associates his definition of *al-ṣāliḥāt* (2:25) with the *"Ṣāliḥ al-*

mu'minīn", that is, the "most virtuous individual among the believers" mentioned in verse 66:4, who, in his opinion, is the Imām after the Prophet. As the consequence of his definition and the prominence that he attaches to the Imām, his interpretation of *"al-ṣāliḥāt"* includes following and obeying the Imām whom he considers to be present at every time and age. Based on 66:4, al-Mu'ayyad attributes to the Imāms certain other distinctive characteristics; these characteristics include that the Imām is one who is responsible for the integrity of the faith of the believers and who is the proof of Allah over his people and the trustee of His rights on earth.   Our author explains the components of virtuous deeds with reference to his methodology of the correspondence which is to be maintained between creation and the religious domain. This time his focus is on the human being, particularly the most vital substance inherent in him the intellect which he uses as a simile for the Imām in the religious realm. Thus, according to him, the Imām is as vital to the religious system as human intellect is vital to a human being. The comparison is immediately followed by his evaluation of the *Imāmah* in relation to the Islamic *Sharīᶜah* and more importantly about acquiring knowledge of the fundamental articles of faith to which he refers as "*al-maᶜārif al-dīniyyah*" in the current context. According to al-Mu'ayyad, obeying (*al-ṭāᶜāh)* means all those Islamic injunctions through which one expresses his obedience to Allah, that is, the Pillars and ethics of Islam whereas by *al-maᶜārif al-dīniyyah,* namely, the diverse branches of religious knowledge, he means acquiring knowledge of Allah's Unity (*maᶜrifat al-tawḥīd*) and that of the prophets and the other articles of faith. According to his claim, nobody can directly understand and perceive the articles of faith and other

aspects of the teachings of Islam without the recognition of the Imāms. He expounds

his argument and links the authority of the Imām to the articles of faith. He claims that

one can truly understand the *Sharīᶜah* and can recognize properly "*al-maᶜārif al-*

dīniyyah" through the instrumentality of the Imām.   He continues by saying that

anyone who has faith in the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* of the Imām and obeys him, will be able

to realize the obligations and ethics of Islam and can acquire knowledge of Allah and

that of other primary doctrines. In this regard, the author quotes the Prophet's *Hadith*

in which he is reported to have emphasized recognition of the Imām of the time.[33]

D.   THE PROCESS OF DESIGNATING *(NAṢṢ)* THE IMĀM

One of the distinctive aspects of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad is his

definition of the principle of designation (*naṣṣ*) in a more developed and

definitive manner compared to the definitions given by the earlier authorities,

including that of al-Nuᶜmān. The definitions of the *naṣṣ* which the earlier

Fatimid authorities such as al-Nuᶜmān gave seem to be somehow indefinite and

obscure.[34] Having said this, it is most likely that the earlier writers may have

understood what later al-Mu'ayyad did, but they did not elaborate on it in the

same way as al-Mu'ayyad did. Our author discusses the concept of the *naṣṣ* in

the *Imāmah* with reference to the Qur'ānic term "Spirit" (*al-rūḥ*). For example,

he quotes the following verse of the Qur'ān, considering it to be an allusion not

only to the *Nubuwwah*-related spiritual substance of the Prophet Muhammad

but also to the *Wiṣāyah*/*Walāyah*-related spiritual substance of ᶜAlīy and thereafter other Imāms. "And thus have We inspired in you a spirit of Our command" (42:52). According to al-Mu'ayyad, the spiritual substance mentioned in the verse is the ultimate reality (*rūḥ al-ḥaqīqah*), as well as the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-qudus*). The prophets and the Imāms to whom al-Mu'ayyad refers as the "friends of Allah", are the recipients of this Spirit through the instrumentality of Allah's help (*min jihat al-ta'yīd*). Therefore, the Prophet, according to our author, explained to the people his will of transmitting the substance to ᶜAlīy. The Fatimid *dāᶜī* considers the transmission of the spiritual substance to be the *naṣṣ* of the *Wiṣāyah* and *Walāyah*. Like his predecessors such as al-Nuᶜmān, al-Mu'ayyad connects the role of the designation with the pre-Muhammadan eras of Divine guidance, particularly that of Adam, thus emphasising the believers' permanent need for a divinely designated guide at every time. Our author finds the role of the spiritual substance to be universal in the history of Divine guidance. In his opinion, it was the same kind of spiritual substance which was breathed into Adam in the wake of the completion of the fashioning of his physical body (38:72).[35] Al-Mu'ayyad is of the view that the all divinely designated guides were all in possession of this spirit, including the Prophet of Islam. The Prophet has divinely   been informed: And thus have We inspired in you a Spirit of Our command. You know not   what the Scripture was, nor what the Faith. But we have made it a light whereby We guide whom We will of Our bondmen. And lo! You verily guide unto a right path". (42:52)

According to al-Mu'ayyad, this is the Spirit which has the ability through which Allah provides the nobility to the Prophet. One of the writers on al-Mu'ayyad, Alexandrin tries to explain the "*rūḥ al-qudus*" in al-Mu'ayyad's thought and states that al-Mu'ayyad is careful to present the transmission of the *rūḥ* from the Prophet Muhammad to ᶜAlīy in connection with the tradition of *Ghadīr Khumm* to avoid elements of *ghuluww*, namely exaggeration and incarnation-related belief *(ḥulūl)* in his Imamology. Our writer further explains that the transmission does not refer to the breathing of the *rūḥ* of natural life*.* The writer continues his analysis by saying that al-Mu'ayyad thereby articulates in clear terms that the transmission of the *rūḥ* is spiritual (through the appointment of *naṣṣ*) rather than through physical or biological descendants.[36]

Al-Mu'ayyad examines the process of the *naṣṣ* and particularly considers the reason for the delay in the declaration of the designation of ᶜAlīy and the historical evolution in it. He understands that the process of the *naṣṣ* was not completed at one time but rather it lasted over a period during which the Prophet designated ᶜAlī as his the *Walī* in two ways to which we should now turn. To begin with, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the Prophet alluded to the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* of ᶜAlīy implicitly; to this designation he refers as the implicit designation (*al-naṣṣ al-khafī*). Although al-Mu'ayyad neither precisely exemplifies the implicit *naṣṣ* nor does he specifically determine when the implicit *naṣṣ* took place, he refers to the Prophet's recognition of

ᶜAlīy to be his Vicegerent (*Waṣīy)*, his hereditary successor (*Walī*) and his brother (*Akh*) at an early stage of the propagation of the mission of Islam. Although al-Mu'ayyad does not explain the designation which the Prophet used in the *Ḥadīth*, it seems that al-Mu'ayyad takes for granted that the implication of the designation is included in the terms *Waṣī*, *Walī* and *Akh*. Thus, it is most likely that al-Mu'ayyad used *Walī* and other expressions of designation in a broad sense, particularly in the sense that ᶜAlīy received Divine knowledge from the Prophet. The Qur'ān has used the word *Walī* in more than one sense. One of the meanings of the Qur'ānic *Walī* is inheritor. For example, the Qur'ān refers to the prayer of the Zachariah who supplicated to God by saying: "Lo, I fear my kinsfolk after me, since my wife is barren. Oh, give me from your presence a successor (*Walī*); who shall inherit of me and inherit (also) of the house of Jacob" (19:5-6). The Fatimid writer quotes the words of the Prophet and seems to be absolutely convinced that the Prophet's recognition of ᶜAlīy as his *Waṣīy*, his hereditary successor and his brother signalled a kind of designation. This may be one of the instances of the implicit designation or the only instance in this regard to which al-Mu'ayyad alludes.37[37] As regards the explicit designation, he mentions it as well and states that the Prophet's final pronouncement of the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* of ᶜAlīy at *Ghadīr Khumm* was the explicit designation of ᶜAlīy as the *Walī* on his behalf for which he uses the term *al-naṣṣ al-jalī*.[38]

In the current discussion, one is justified to pose the question as to why it was that the Prophet employed two diverse methods in the designation of ᶜAlīy as the *Walī*. The answer can be given by looking at al-Mu'ayyad's explanation for the atmosphere

which, according to him, prevailed at that time when the Prophet was in the process of designating the Imām after him. According to al-Mu'ayyad, there was a delay in the pronouncement of the *Walāyah* of ᶜAlīy, as the Prophet was extremely concerned about those people whom he thought were envious of ᶜAlīy at the time when they were devoted to their own partisanship (ᶜ*aṣabiyyah*). The Fatimid author thus holds that the Prophet was not only apprehensive that the above-mentioned people would reject the authority of ᶜAlīy in the wake of its declaration, but he was also concerned that they would forsake the faith of Islam. At any rate, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the designation of ᶜAlīy was not made public without an intervening and a stern warning in the following verse of the Qur'ān. "O Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord, for if you do it not you will not have conveyed His message. Allah will protect you from mankind" (5:67).[39]

Basing himself on the above discussion, al-Mu'ayyad maintains that ᶜAlīy in turn entrusted the *naṣṣ* to the next Imām and thereafter every Imām nominated the next Imām and transferred the spiritual substance to him. Al-Mu'ayyad does not seem to have considered the event of *Ghadīr Khumm* only as one of the proofs for the *naṣṣ* of the *Imāmah* but he also emphasizes the event as a proof for the authority of the Imāms. In this regard, the Fatimid author discusses the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet of Islam in which he is reported to have addressed the believers at *Ghadīr Khumm* prior to declaring the *Walāyah* of ᶜAlīy saying: "Am I not closer to you than yourselves (*alastu awlā bi-kum min anfusi-kum*")? It appears that according to our writer, the content of this part of the *Ḥadīth* has a profound impact on the other dimensions of the entire *Ḥadīth* of the

Ghadīr Khumm. To begin with, al-Mu'ayyad quotes the verse of the Qur'ān which, in his opinion, seems to be the basis of the above-mentioned *Ḥadīth*. Thus, the Qur'ān reads: "The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves" (33:6). According to al-Mu'ayyad, the verse of the Qur'ān and the corresponding *Ḥadīth* carry a command which alludes to the permanency of the institution of the *Imāmah* after the Prophet of Islam. He expresses this view, probably to demonstrate that the office of the *Imāmah* is not restricted to a particular time and circumstance but it is relevant to all times and situations. The above-mentioned text of the Qur'ān which al-Mu'ayyad considers to be an indication of the permanency   related not only to the designation of the Imāms but also to their authority as both entities are intertwined. To establish this, our author appears to identify a link which he holds to exist between the first part of the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet and the second part of it which reads: "Thus, he to whom I am *mawlā* ᶜAlīy is his *mawlā*". Consequently, when the Prophet said the first part of the *Ḥadīth*, al-Mu'ayyad was, probably given to understand that the Prophet was forming a basis for the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* of ᶜAlīy. Based on his understanding of the *Ḥadīth* of *Ghadīr Khumm*, al-Mu'ayyad states that the implication of the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet concerning ᶜAlīy also refers to all other Imāms who follow one after the other until the Day of Judgment. In turn, he concludes that every Imām has a greater authority over their respective followers than what they have over themselves.[40]

E.   THE IMĀM AS INTERPRETER OF THE QUR'ĀN

Al-Mu'ayyad's view on the *Imāmah* of the *ahl al-bayt* and their succession to the Prophet   need further iscussion. The Imām's function as the interpreter of the Qur'ān is one of the prominent aspects of Divine guidance which is based on the presence of an everlasting relationship between the Qur'ān and the Imām.   The relationship appears to be one of the aspects of the *Ismāᶜīlī* belief in the special instructions which the Imām provides to his followers based on the Qur'ān.   The Ismāᶜīlīs have insisted on the provision of the instructions through the institution of the *Imāmah* throughout the history of the elaboration of their doctrinal teachings and they identify it with such concepts as *al-taᶜlīm*. The active participle of *al-taᶜlīm* is *muᶜallim*, one who provides instructions, that is, the Imām and his assistants in the Ismāᶜīlī *daᶜwah* context. In relation to this subject, al-Mu'ayyad discusses human endeavours in understanding the signs of Allah in the universe and the need for the guidance of the Imāms. According to him, human beings have been divinely urged to reflect on the universe, including the wonders in the heavens and the earth to acquire the divinely related branches of knowledge (*al-marᶜārif al-ilāhiyyah*) thus he says they need the guidance of the Imāms. These are the people to whom al-Mu'ayyad refers as the "authorities" under whom Allah brought the responsibility to provide religious instructions. The *dāᶜī* deems it impossible that human beings can attain the divinely related branches of knowledge on their own without receiving the instructions of the Imām, as human beings become perplexed and are incapable of attaining the types of knowledge alluded to earlier on. Our writer further analyses the significance of his

*ta*c*līm c*oncept and elaborates on the giving and receiving of knowledge. In his opinion, the Imām is responsible for giving the knowledge and the believers have the responsibility of receiving it from the Imām. According to him, the giving of religious knowledge and receiving it signify an uninterrupted and ongoing presence of the means of God given wisdom. For him, due to the everlasting presence of the religious guides, "doors of mercy of Allah" remain open until the Day of Judgment. [41]

Al-Mu'ayyad seeks to explore the *ta*c*līm* concept and explains it in the light of certain texts of the Qur'ān and the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet. At this juncture, a prophetic *Ḥadīth* can be referred to which is known as the "*Ḥadīth* on the two weighty objects" (*Ḥadīth al-thaqalayn*), namely, the Qur'ān and the *ahl al-bayt*. Al-Mu'ayyad frequently refers to this *Ḥadīth*, as a well-known *Ḥadīth*, explaining the relationship between the Qur'ān and the Imām and expounds the status of the Imāms as interpreters of the Islamic revelation. The Prophet is reported to have said: "I am about to leave among you two weighty objects: the Book of Allah and my progeny *(*c*itratī)*, the members of my family (*ahl baytī*). If you adhere to both of them, you will never go astray. They will never separate from each other until they come to me on the Pond (on the Day of Judgment)".[42]

In Ismāᶜīlīsm, the descendants of the Prophet mentioned in the *Ḥadīth* are always understood to be the Imāms from the progeny of ᶜAlīy and Fāṭimah. It seems that according to al-Mu'ayyad, this *Ḥadīth* is one of the most important grounds for the concept of the "Silent Book" (*Kitāb Ṣāmit*) and the "Speaking Book" (*Kitāb nāṭiq*) which he stresses throughout his discussion on the *Imāmah*. Although concepts like

the "Silent Book" and the "Speaking Book" seem to be rooted in the works of other

Fatimid Ismāᶜīlī writers,[43] al-Mu'ayyad seems to be the one who is particular about

elucidating the concept of the "Silent Book" and the "Speaking Book" in detail. To be

more explicit, the definition of al-Mu'ayyad entails that there are two kinds of Books

for the guidance of the believers. One of these Books is the Qur'ān which is in between

two covers, and the other is the "Speaking Book" that is the vicegerent (*Waṣīy*) of the

Prophet of Islam, namely, ᶜAlīy and thereafter the Imāms from his progeny. He

compares the two Books by concentrating on their similarities.   According to al-

Mu'ayyad, the Qur'ān is composed of words and speeches and includes within itself

the aims and objectives of Allah. These aims and objectives consist in the injunctions

surrounding religious observances, particularly how one should obey Allah. His

definition also extends to some other aspects of the content of the Qur'ān which

comprise the reward of Allah for those who obey Him and punishment for those who

disobey Him; it also includes information on all those affairs related to the previous

communities, as well as all those affairs which will follow. As regards the "Speaking

Book", according to the Fatimid author, he is the Imām of every time beginning with

ᶜAlī, the *Waṣīy* of the Prophet, whose position he highlights as the first recipient of the

knowledge of the Qur'ān from the Prophet. Al-Mu'ayyad comments on the function

of ᶜAlīy in relation to the interpretation of the Qur'ān. The Fatimid author not only

discusses the status of ᶜAlīy as an interpreter of the Islamic revelation, but he also views

him to be in possession of the key to the meanings of the Qur'ān. In stating this, al-

Mu'ayyad, probably refers to *ta'wīl* and *bāṭin*. Al-Mu'ayyad also uses the words *al-*

muᶜabbir ᶜanhu and *al-mutarjim dūnahū* for ᶜAlīy which means that he interpreted and

explained the meanings of the Islamic revelation, considering him to be in possession

of all-inclusive knowledge of the Qur'ān. In support of his view, the writer has argued

in manifold ways. To begin with he refers to the Qur'ān which reads: "We have not

sent (messengers) before you other than men whom We inspired. Thus, ask the people

of remembrance (*ahl al-dhikr*) if you do not know" (16:43). Al-Mu'ayyad interprets this

verse and like other Shīᶜī writers, he considers the verse to be an allusion to the Imāms

from the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet.[44]

To comprehend the arguments of al-Mu'ayyad fully, it seems to be essential

that one should examine the term *al-dhikr* and its synonyms, particularly those which,

according to our author, refer to the Prophet and the Qur'ān. Al-Mu'ayyad quotes the

following verse before proceeding to the interpretation of the above-mentioned text:

"Now Allah has sent down unto you a *dhikr;* a messenger reciting unto you the

revelations of Allah, made plain" (65:10-11). Al-Mu'ayyad interprets this verse and

considers the Prophet's position as "*al-dhikr*" or a "*dhikr*" which he understands to be

denoting the Prophet's status as the interpreter of the Qur'ān. Al-Mu'ayyad explains

his point of view based on his perception that the Qur'ān is a compendium of the

divinely revealed content, but it is not self-explanatory. He argues that it is the Prophet

who set forth the details of the content of the Qur'ān (*faṣṣala*) and it is he who

explained (*bayyana)* and determined the religious observances along with the relevant

requirements associated with them. In this regard, al-Mu'ayyad seems to substantiate

his claim by the Qur'ān which introduces itself with such titles as "*al-dhikr*" and a

"*dhikr*" and so on and so forth. According to him, when the Qur'ān refers to itself as "*al-dhikr*" or a "*dhikr*", it alludes to the Prophet (*kināyah ᶜanhu*) to be a "*dhikr*" as well. The reasons, which he gives for his interpretation, include the fact that the Prophet derived the divinely revealed benefits from the Qur'ān by making them available and easy. It is he who made them conventionally acceptable to the people concerned. Our writer further explains his point of view by stating that the Prophet is the "*dhikr*" (*al-dhikr*), as he had to decide everything based on the Qur'ān and is responsible for revealing the truths of its sciences and the esoteric implications of its symbols.[45]

At this point, al-Nuᶜmān's view on the function of the Prophet as the recipient of revelation and as its interpreter is necessary to conduct a comparative study between his view and the view of al-Mu'ayyad. Al-Nuᶜmān concentrates on the Qur'ānic terms *al-kitāb* and *al-ḥikmah* in the context of his discussion on the Prophet's elucidation of the Islamic revelation (*bayān al-rasūl*). On the other hand, al-Mu'ayyad's stress seems to be on the "Silent Book" and the "Speaking Book", as well as on "*dhikr*", meaning a "remembrance" and *"ahl al-dhikr"*, that is to say, the "people of remembrance" though he examines *al-ḥikmah* as well. According to al-Nuᶜmān, the Qur'ān has indicated in more than one context the authority of the Prophet and his duties in relation to the interpretation of the Qur'ān. For example, according to him, the Qur'ān describes the functions of the Prophet which include his duty to instruct the believers in the Book of Allah and in Wisdom. The Qur'ān reads: "He it is   who has sent amongst the unlettered ones a Messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the Scripture and Wisdom –

although they were previously in manifest error" (62:2). Al-Nuᶜmān comments on the phrase the "Scripture and Wisdom" and examines them by adhering to the Ismāᶜīlī concept of the categories of exoteric-esoteric dimensions. Thus, he holds that in this verse, "*al-kitāb*" exoterically refers to the Book of Allah and "*al-ḥikmah*" to the Prophet's explanations. In other words, according to al-Nuᶜmān, *al-ḥikmah* means the S*unnah* of the Prophet and his *Ḥadīth*. However, esoterically, al-Nuᶜmān interprets the "Book" to be a reference to the Imām and "Wisdom" to the esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān which the Imāms explain.[46]

One should explore whether al-Mu'ayyad has a similar view as that of al-Nuᶜmān on the "Book" and "Wisdom" or whether he has a different interpretation to offer. To begin with, al-Mu'ayyad examines both the subjects, namely, the "Book" and "Wisdom" but not based on the verse which al-Nuᶜmān cites but on the ground of another verse of the Qur'ān which discusses the "Book" and "Wisdom" to be the entities which the family of Ibrāhīm received from Allah. The Qur'an states: "We have given the family of Ibrāhīm the Book and Wisdom" (4:54). Although the verse does not specifically refer to the family of the Prophet of Islam, al-Mu'ayyad believes that it has implications for the Prophet and his family, probably considering that the Prophet is from the family of Ibrāhīm and thus the verse refers to the Prophet of Islam and his family as well.[47] It must be borne in mind that unlike al-Nuᶜmān, al-Mu'ayyad interprets the "Book" and "Wisdom" without categorizing them into any further classification. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the former comprises the exoteric aspect of Islamic teachings and the latter consists in their esoteric aspect. However, al-Nuᶜmān

considers the added categories as the esoteric aspects of the "Book" and "Wisdom"

and they are the Imām and *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān.[48] Al-Mu'ayyad elaborates on his

interpretation and understands that there is a clear distinction between the "Book"

and "Wisdom". The reason for the difference between the "Book" and "Wisdom"

which al-Mu'ayyad gives, is that the "Book" can be accessible to anyone, but "Wisdom"

is not available to all of them but to some of them and according to him, they are the

Imāms. In attributing "Wisdom" to the family members of the Prophet, al-Mu'ayyad

identifies "Wisdom" as *ta'wīl*. According to him, the Imāms are in possession of

"Wisdom" exclusively. This means nobody else can possess "Wisdom" except through

the Imāms. Al-Mu'ayyad elucidates "Wisdom" and explores its wider implications.

One can explain his view based on his illustrating "Wisdom" in more than one way.

First, according to him, "Wisdom" is not only related to knowledge (*al-ᶜilm*) but also to

practice (*al-ᶜamal*). Al-Mu'ayyad emphasizes the importance of the close affinity

between knowledge and practice. Al-Mu'ayyad holds that the combination between

practice and knowledge is so essential that if one of them is missing in a human being,

wisdom will not be applied. Secondly, al-Mu'ayyad makes use of "Wisdom" as a tool

to relate it to the self-discipline of a believer and then to his submitting himself to his

spiritual master. The ground of al-Mu'ayyad's view is an etymological, namely, "*al-*

ḥakamah". Generally, the word "*al-ḥakamah*" conveys the meaning of the bridle of a

beast thereby the rider manages or controls the animal.[49] According to al-Mu'ayyad,

ḥakamah is used to restrain the animal from walking freely and following his own

inclination and not the inclination of his rider and master. Al-Mu'ayyad applies the

same meaning to "Wisdom" (*al-ḥikmah*), as, according to him, through the instrumentality of wisdom, a wise person restrains his evil commanding soul and fights his way through its aims and objectives. Therefore, a wise person's wisdom does not restrain him from the aims and objectives of his religious leader and head. However, there is an implicit warning in al-Mu'ayyad statement when he emphasizes the restraining of one's evil inclination on a permanent basis. According to him, if one is persistent in restraining his undesirable inclinations, he would truly gain the characteristics of a wise man. Otherwise, he stresses, there is no wisdom, nor is there a wise person.[50]

Further study reveals that al-Mu'ayyad recognizes a system of "Wisdom" also. The system of "Wisdom" emphasizes that all the constituents of the universe consist in duality. He characterizes the duality in creation by allocating to it diverse terms and categorizing them into perceptible and intelligible creatures and entities. Accordingly, he identifies each creature and being as visible (*maḥsūsan*) and intelligible (*maᶜqūlan*) to which he also refers a symbolic thing (*mathal*) and a symbolized entity (*mamthūl*).[51] This means that al-Mu'ayyad uses *ḥikmah* variably though the main area of his concentration on wisdom is, esoteric.

Comparing al-Mu'ayyad's view to the view of al-Nuᶜmān, one can say that in essence, al-Mu'ayyad's deliberation of the "Book" and "Wisdom" is like the overall view of al-Nuᶜmān as far as the esoteric aspect is concerned. However, there are still elements in the views of both these Fatimid scholars, which remain distinctive. For example, according to al-Nuᶜmān, the "Book" applies to both the exoteric and esoteric

aspects of the Islamic revelation, but al-Mu'ayyad takes "Wisdom" mainly in the sense of the esoteric aspect. Additionally, al-Nuᶜmān displays his consistency in believing dual meanings of "Wisdom", as, according to him, the "Book" has dual meanings as well. However, al-Mu'ayyad considers "Wisdom" to be mainly esoteric though he uses it for the exoteric aspect when examining the "System of *al-ḥikmah*". It should be noted further that al-Nuᶜmān's inclusion of the *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah* of the Prophet in "Wisdom" remains distinctive, as this discussion is not included in al-Mu'ayyad's elaboration of "Wisdom" at least in the current context. To explore al-Nuᶜmān's contribution to the interpretation of "Wisdom" as consisting of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet and his *Ḥadīth*, it is important to examine al-Nuᶜmān's concept of *al-ḥikmah* further.

Al-Nuᶜmān appears to be one of those predecessors of al-Mu'ayyad who discussed the *Sunnah* and *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet and the teachings of the Imāms. All Muslims, including the Ismāᶜīlīs emphasize the status of the Prophetic *Sunnah* and his *Ḥadīth.* In his prominent books such as the *Daᶜā'im* and the *Ikhtilāf*, al-Nuᶜmān broaches the importance of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet second to the Qur'ān in establishing doctrinal teachings, particularly the legal precepts of Islam. For example, al-Nuᶜmān refers to the S*unnah* of the Prophet during his discussion on the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* of ᶜAlī and particularly its predominant status which he perceives amongst the rest of the Pillars of Islam. Relying on a saying of Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, al-Nuᶜmān states that after the revelation of all the Pillars of Islam, the believers were unable to understand them. Upon this, Allah asked the Prophet to explain to

them the Pillars of Islam in question. The expressions which al-Bāqir is reported to have used concerning the Prophet's interpretation of the Qur'ān include *bayyana*, *fassara*, and *awḍaḥa*. These words seem to be the terms which establish the primary concept of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet and his Traditions in the evolution of the Fatimid concept of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. The words of the Imām further signify the Prophet's explanation of the Qur'ān, his elucidating its content, particularly the Pillars of Islam, as well as his demonstration of it to his *ummah*.[52]

In his *Ikhtilāf,* al-Nuᶜmān further examines the above-mentioned Prophetic function somewhat in detail concentrating more frequently on *bayyana* and some of its derivative forms, as well as on some allied terms with reference to the Qur'ān. In this regard, al-Nuᶜmān refers to several texts of the Qur'ān. For example, the Qur'ān reads: "And We revealed the Scripture to you as an exposition of all things (*tibyān*) and a guidance and as a mercy and good tidings for those who have surrendered themselves to Allah" (16:89). From this Qur'ānic text, al-Nuᶜmān deduces that Allah made everything plain and unambiguous in the Qur'ān, including what is lawful and what is unlawful. Al-Nuᶜmān emphasizes the word "*al-bayān*" perhaps taking it in the sense of "*tibyān*" mentioned in the above quoted Qur'ānic text. Thus, according to the author, "*al-bayān*" stands for only those things which are evident and most conspicuous. It is to be noted that al-Nuᶜmān's discussion is not clear as to whether the clarity of revelation which he discusses applies to the understanding of the Muslims in general or whether it applies to a special category of people who include the Imāms. However, it seems that according to the Fatimid *qāḍī*, there are two categories of

people in relation to the current discussion, namely, the clarity of the Qur'ān. One of

the categories of people consists of those who have absolute and perfect knowledge

of the Qur'ān and therefore the Qur'ān is totally unambiguous to them as far as the

interpretation of its meanings is concerned. According to al-Nuᶜmān, these are the

people who are divinely authorized and qualified to interpret the Qur'ān and according

to him, they are the Prophet and the Imāms. Consequently, al-Nuᶜmān states that

anything which is difficult and incomprehensible to ordinary believers must be referred

to the Prophet and then to the Imāms. To underline the status of this special group of

people, al-Nuᶜmān substantiates his point of view by the Qur'ān which, according to

him, refers to the authority of the Prophet and his functions, as well as to the authority

and the duties of the Imāms. For example, the Qur'ān reads: "And We have revealed

to you the Remembrance (*al-dhikr*) that you may explain the humankind that which

has been revealed for them" (16:44). "And whatever the messenger gives you, take it

and whatever he forbids, abstain from it" (59:7). "And if they had referred it to the

messenger and such of them as are in authority who are able to think out the matter

would have known it" (4:83). "O believers! Obey Allah and obey the messenger and

those who are in authority amongst you" (4:59). "Today I perfected your religion for

you and completed my favour upon you and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (5:3).

Al-Nuᶜmān revisits his discussion on the subject matter and refers to the interpretation

of the Prophet as *bayān al-rasūl*, a duty which he believes to be included in the

responsibilities of the Prophet in relation to his *ummah*. Thus, according to the Fatimid

author, the believers are commanded to ask the Prophet for his explanation in all those

matters which they need to know concerning the Islamic religion. After the Prophet, according to al-Nuᶜmān, the questions regarding any obscurity should be referred to those in authority *(ulū al-amr)* who, according to al-Nuᶜmān, are the Imāms from the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet. As far as the other category of the believers are concerned, they comprise the ordinary people, who do not have full and absolute knowledge of the sources of Islamic teachings thus according to al-Nuᶜmān, they need the guidance of the divinely designated group of people.[53]

Al-Nuᶜmān's current discussion seems to have least two implications. Firstly, the elucidation of the S*unnah* was of great significance for the Fatimids because it was a most important Islamic source which the Fatimid Muslims used along with the Qur'ān in formulating their religious teachings, particularly the *Imāmah* and Islamic legal precepts. Secondly, al-Nuᶜmān's emphasis on the S*unnah* was to clarify the Fatimid position on the Prophetic authority on the interpretation of the Qur'ān at a time when the views of other Muslim schools of thought on this and other areas of Islamic studies were gaining momentum. Thus, a strategic response from the Fatimids to other Muslims' understanding and interpretations of Islamic sources was necessary in addition to the elucidation of the truths as contained in the Qur'ān which the Prophet was responsible to convey to his community members. The difference between them is that al-Nuᶜman adheres to the exoteric and esoteric aspects of the the word ḥikmah, but al-Shaiᶜī follows its exoteric implication.

Closely related to the above-mentioned discussion is the link which al-Mu'ayyad strongly believes to be in existence between the Prophet and the Imāms, a

link that he examines comprehensively throughout his discussion on the *Imāmah* to substantiate the Imāms' status as the interpreters of the Qur'ān after the Prophet. Al-Mu'ayyad gives prominence to the Imāms' relationship with the Prophet, probably to demonstrate the Prophet to be the bridge between the Qur'ān and the Imāms and to stress the hereditary characteristics of the Imāms which, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the Imāms receive from the Prophet, that include knowledge, kinship (*qarābah)* and infallibility (*ᶜiṣmah*). According to al-Mu'ayyad, these features of the Imāms are amongst those qualifications which distinguish them from the rest of the believers. Thus, according to him, the Imāms are in possession of the inherited knowledge and other characteristics from the Prophet and, ᶜAlīy, and they are the people of remembrance, that is to say, it is they alone who interpret the Remembrance, that is to say the Qur'ān.[54]

Al-Nuᶜmān expresses a similar view on the knowledge of the Imām to which he sometimes refers as the true and transmitted knowledge (*al-ᶜilm al-ḥaqīqī, al-ᶜilm al-ma'thūr*). Al-Nuᶜmān claims that any other kind of knowledge cannot be the same knowledge as that of the Imāms. By looking closely at al-Nuᶜmān's elucidation of knowledge, it appears that he perceived three categories of learned people (*al-ᶜulamā'*). One of the categories of the learned people includes the Imāms who, according to al-Nuᶜmān, are truly learned and they are in possession of the real and transmitted knowledge. According to al-Nuᶜmān, the Imāms always remain above the other learned people, including their disciples. In this regard, our author refers to the Qur'ān: "But it is "clear revelations" in the hearts of those who have been given

knowledge" (29:49). In the view of al-Nu^{c}mān, it is the prophets and then the Imāms in whose hearts are the "clear revelations". He utterly rejects that this verse refers to people generally and that they have the "clear revelations" in their hearts[55] thus claiming to be the sources of Qur'ānic knowledge.

Al-Mu'ayyad's view on the "people of remembrance" (*ahl al-dhikr*) corroborates al-Nu^{c}mān's discussion. Thus, according to al-Mu'ayyad, ^{c}Alīy and the Imāms from his progeny are the worthiest people and most deserving to be the "*ahl al-dhikr*". This seems to be one of the reasons that al-Mu'ayyad expresses the view that each of the Imāms is the Speaking Book, who makes his decisions based on the Silent Book. He stresses his view and refers to the *Ḥadīth al-thaqalayn,* which he considers to be a proof, confirming the position of the Imāms as interpreters of the Qur'ān. To explain his view further, al-Mu'ayyad exemplifies the mutual correspondence between the Qur'ān and the Imām. As we will see shortly, he concentrates on an instance of the Qur'ānic texts with a saying of Imām ^{c}Alīy to compare the former with the latter. According to him, parts of the Qur'ān consist in the knowledge of the past and the knowledge of the future (*mā-kāna wa-mā-yakūnu*). Al-Mu'ayyad compares this aspect of the content of the Qur'ān with the knowledge of the Imām by referring to ^{c}Alī who is reported to have said when he was on the pulpit: "Ask me prior to losing me; ask me about anything whether it appertains to the past or whether it appertains to the present time or the future time until the Day of Resurrection".[55]

In the current context, al-Mu'ayyad also examines the status of ^{c}Alīy's mastery over interpreting the general aspects of the Qur'ān which appear to have been

developed into the diverse sciences in the later periods in the history of the evolution of Qur'ānic thought and teachings. These aspects include the background knowledge of the content of the Islamic revelation. Al-Mu'ayyad refers to ᶜAlīy in this regard; for example, in one of his statements, ᶜAlīy claims to be the one who has the knowledge of the Qur'ān, including the background to all the verses of the Qur'ān in their totality by stating. "No verse was revealed to the Prophet except that I have knowledge of how it was revealed, concerning what it was revealed, when it was revealed and where it was revealed, whether it was revealed on land or whether it was revealed on a mountain. I am the one who introduces to the people that which is between the two covers".[56] Al-Mu'ayyad holds, as we will see shortly, that after ᶜAlīy, it is the Imāms from his progeny who undertake their duties such as they interpret the Qur'ān.

Al-Mu'ayyad elucidates this subject more extensively. In explaining the subject matter, the Fatimid *dāᶜī* interprets the concept of witnesses (*shuhadā'*) which the Qur'ān mentions in the context of Allah's ultimatum which He issued to the deniers of the truth. Al-Mu'ayyad attaches a high degree of significance to the Qur'ānic phrase. "…And call your witnesses…" which, according to him, conveys an "amazing meaning" (*maᶜnan ᶜajīban*), a "unique and peculiar significance" (*amran badīᶜan gharīban*). Although al-Mu'ayyad does not explain to what he refers by this statement, he elaborates on some other verses of the Qur'ān, perhaps, considering them to be illustrative of verse 2:23 in its wider contexts. These verses include within themselves the derivative forms of the verbal noun *shuhūd* or *shahādah*, conveying such meanings as to "bear witness" or "to be witnesses over or against others". The contexts of these

verses are contrary to that of 2:23, as in these verses Allah mentions Himself to be the Witness and those who are in possession of knowledge are witnesses too (see: 3:18; 13:43; 4:166, 22:78, 2:143). However, al-Mu'ayyad awards a high degree of importance to the necessity of the presence of the witnesses in all these verses. In this regard, al-Mu'ayyad particularly concentrates on 22:78 and 2:143. These verses specifically discuss the Prophet as the witness over those people whom He asks to be witnesses over other people. In one of these verses, (2:143) for example, Allah asks those whom He considers to be a middle *ummah* (*ummah wasaṭah*) to be the witnesses over other people. In examining the current theme, the Fatimid *dāʿī* not only gives his own understanding of the above-mentioned verse but also presents other Muslims' interpretations of the Qur'ānic texts. The perception of the general Muslims as al-Mu'ayyad seems to have understood, is that these types of verses refer to the general members of the community of the Prophet. Thus, according to them, they are witnesses over or against the people of other communities such the Christians and Jews. However, this interpretation is unacceptable to al-Mu'ayyad, and he offers an alternative interpretation of the *shuhadā'*. Al-Mu'ayyad's argument revolves around an explanatory statement of Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, who interprets one of the already quoted verses of the Qur'ān: "Thus, We have appointed you a middle nation that you may be witness over humankind and that the messenger may be a witness over you" (2:143). According to Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, the *shuhadā'* which the Qur'ān mentions, refer to the Imāms from the descendants of the Prophet. The exact wording of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq is as follows:

"We are the middle *ummah* and we are the witnesses over the rest of the people; the messenger of Allah is witness over us concerning all that which he conveyed to us from Allah, may He be glorified".[57]

Al-Mu'ayyad totally subscribes to the interpretation which Ja'far al-Ṣādiq gives and argues further for the concept under consideration. He examines the legitimacy of witnessing (*shahādah*) and claims that the Imāms are ideally the witnesses over the people, as according to him, they have the knowledge required for this function. He is emphatic and categorical in claiming that the required attestation cannot be established without knowledge. He seeks a basis for his view in the Qur'an. "Saving those who bear witness to the truth with knowledge" (43:86). The Fatimid *dā'ī* interprets this Qur'ānic verse and concludes that this verse is a proof that attestation can only be established on the ground of knowledge. Al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on the *shuhadā*' is followed by his examining some other aspects of the functions of the Imāms which seem to be rooted in his concept of the ideal witnesses. The aspects of knowledge which al-Mu'ayyad briefly discusses include his understanding that the knowledge of the Imāms comprehends everything that is beyond the comprehension of other people. To exhibit the knowledge of the Imāms, the Ismā'īlī *dā'ī* explains that there are inner faculties associated with the Imāms, on the strength of which, the knowledge of the Imāms functions. He refers to these faculties as divinely related substances (*al-mawādd al-ilāhiyyah*) and the spiritual faculties (*al-quwā al-nafsāniyyah*).[58] Although al-Mu'ayyad's view is generally related to the *Imāmah* as a whole, it seems to have a specific purpose in the contemporary context and that aim,

and objective is to stress the function of the Imāms as the *shuhadā'* based on their knowledge. According to al-Mu'ayyad, as the *shuhadā'*, the Imāms can witness all things, including religious duties which the believers carry out.

Other aspects of al-Mu'ayyad's elucidation of the duties and functions of the Imāms relating to their exploring the Islamic revelation, particularly their status as the *ulū al-amr* should also be examined. Al-Mu'ayyad unreservedly claims that although the Qur'ān includes within itself the summary of all things, its meanings are not detailed. In his opinion, the Imāms are the ones who give a detailed exposition of the Qur'ān; therefore, he refers to them as *ahl tafṣīl al-kitāb*, the ones who elaborate on the content of the Qur'ān. Al-Mu'ayyad substantiates his view and seeks to identify the reason why the Qur'ān stands in need of its interpreters. According to the Fatimid *dāʿī*, the Qur'ān needs interpreters, as it does not explain itself. In this regard, he particularly notes those aspects of the Islamic revelation whose meanings are difficult and incomprehensible to an ordinary Muslim. To resolve the problems relating to the difficult parts of the Qur'ān and to explain the incomprehensible, al-Mu'ayyad insists that the Qur'ān needs its true interpreters. To corroborate his argument, the Fatimid writer refers to the Qur'ān which, in his opinion, discusses the necessity of the interpreter as one who should have a deeper understanding of revelation and creation and an inquiring mind to analyse them. The verse of the Qur'ān which al-Mu'ayyad quotes is one which authorizes the "*ulū al-amr*" to explore things which other people fail to understand and explain. Thus, the Qur'ān reads: "If they had referred it to the messenger and such of them as are in authority (*ulī al-amr*) amongst them, those who

are capable of discovering the task amongst them would have known it" (4:83). Al-Mu'ayyad discusses the subject further by referring to the same verse. The Fatimid author sees no reason in the assumption that the Islamic revelation has no difficult and incomprehensible aspects. According to al-Mu'ayyad, any view of this kind would lead one to the conclusion that certain aspects of the Qur'ān such as the verse 4:83 is redundant, as this text asks the believers to take the matter to the "ulū al-amr" for exploration and explanation[59]. Now it is important to explain how the knowledge of the Imām manifests itself to the believers or how the Imām imparts the knowledge to them.

To begin with this discussion, however, one should consider whether the knowledge of the Imām is open to all the believers, including all the Muslims generally or whether there is some kind of restriction. It seems from the view of the Fatimid $dā^c\bar{\imath}$ that only those who believe in the *Imāmah* of the Imām can receive knowledge from him. By this view, perhaps, al-Mu'ayyad means the esoteric knowledge. Our author seeks to substantiate his view and refers to a Qur'ānic verse. The Qur'ān reads: "There is no virtue (*birr*) if you enter the houses through the back; it is virtue if you guard yourselves against evil. Enter houses through the proper doors. And guard yourselves against evil that you may prosper" (2:189). Al-Mu'ayyad interprets the verse esoterically and thus takes the "houses" in the sense of the Prophet and the Imāms by referring to them as the "living and speaking houses". Therefore, in the opinion of al-Mu'ayyad, the Prophet and the Imams should be honoured more than the houses made of clay and stone one[60]. One of the other reasons which he gives for the religious

authorities to be more relevant in this context, is that they are the means through

whom Allah succours to the creatures and not through houses in which we live.[i]

Consequently, al-Mu'ayyad holds the view that there is no restriction whatsoever on

anyone to approach his/her house, as, according to him, they are available to the

people, anyway. Thus, everybody is aware how to enter his/her house and he sees no

reason for the understanding that Allah disciplines the people about entering their own

homes through the back door. Al-Mu'ayyad insists on his interpretation, suggesting

that the Prophet and the Imāms are the interpretative sources of knowledge and

wisdom one after the other. Thus, the Qur'ānic verse (2:189) refers to the virtues of

the Prophet and then those of the Imāms and thus according to him, the verse does

not refer to the houses in the literal sense of the word, namely, *al-buyūt*.[61]

It seems to be necessary also that the importance of the Fatimid hierarchical

system should be examined, particularly with reference to al-Mu'ayyad's concept of

methods which the Imām uses in imparting knowledge to the believers. One can

visualize at least three reasons for establishing the hierarchical system. The first reason

is one which al-Mu'ayyad unambiguously discusses the necessity for the presence of

intermediaries between Allah and His bondmen.[62] The second reason for the inception

of the hierarchical system seems to be the Fatimid recognition of the diverse

understanding of the people in their response to the Islamic revelation. Thirdly, the

hierarchical channels are necessary for the Fatimids, perhaps, to ensure that the

believers receive the guidance of the Head of the *daᶜwah*, namely, Imām directly or

through the hierarchical ranks, working under him. Although the Fatimids apply the

necessity of the existence of the hierarchical system to the periods of all the Major

Prophets, one can confine this discussion to the period of the Prophet of Islam. In

elaborating on this hierarchical system, al-Mu'ayyad examines the rank of ᶜAlīy in

relation to the Prophet. According to him, as the *Waṣīy* of the Prophet, ᶜAlīy is the gate

to the knowledge of the Prophet and his wisdom. To substantiate this, al-Mu'ayyad

refers to the Prophet who is reported to have said the following *Ḥadīth* to which a

reference was made earlier*:* "I am the city of knowledge and ᶜAlīy is its gate; thus, he

who wishes to obtain knowledge, should approach the gate". This is not the only

evidence for the *Wiṣāyah* of ᶜAlīy which al-Mu'ayyad furnishes but, according to him,

there are some other pieces of evidence that support the authority of ᶜAlīy as the *Waṣīy*

of the Prophet Muhammad. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the characteristics of the

Wiṣāyah of ᶜAlīy include his being one of the pairs of the spiritual parents of the

believers. In this respect, our author refers to another *Ḥadīth* in which the Prophet is

reported to have considered himself and ᶜAlīy to be the parents of the believers. As

mentioned already, after the Prophet, it was ᶜAlīy, the *Waṣīy* who became the "*bayt"*,

namely the source of guidance, including knowledge and wisdom.   After ᶜAlīy, al-

Mu'ayyad considers every Imām of his time to be the recipient of the knowledge and

other characteristics of ᶜAlīy.[63] Although the Fatimid scholars are not in agreement

amongst themselves on everything relating to the ranks below the Imāms, particularly

the titles bestowed upon them, they agreed on the basic tenet of these ranks and their

functions. According to al-Mu'ayyad, every Imām of his time gives his knowledge to

his *ḥujaj*, the plural of *ḥujjah* and the *hujaj* entrust it to the *duᶜāh*, plural of *dāᶜī* which

can be translated as missionaries provided it is understood in the sense of the Fatimid

concept of the tasks of the individuals responsible for the propagation of the *da^{c}wah.*

The *du^{c}āh* transfer the guidance of the Imām to the *ma'dhūnūn,* namely the licensees,

and the licensees are in direct contact with the faithful (*ahl al-īmān*) and provide them

with the guidance of the Imām.[64] Further study shows that al-Mu'ayyad does not use

the same titles for some of these ranks but rather he employs diverse titles. He refers

to the *ḥujjah* as *naqīb*, meaning, the head or the director of his own island (*jazīrah*).

Likewise, the Fatimid writer identifies the *dā^{c}ī* as *bāb*, door. The duties of those ranks,

working in the areas allocated to them, include conveying the message of the Imām

and any other related task, for example, being the witnesses to the beloievers' actions

and duties.hebelievers' actions and duties.[65]

F.   CONCLUSION

By looking closely at al-Mu'ayyad's formulation of the *Imāmah*, Ismā^{c}īlīsm has

consistently upheld the belief that there is a need for a permanent source of guidance,

namely, the office of the *Imāmah* throughout the development of its doctrinal history.

To prove the necessity of the presence of the Imām, al-Mu'ayyad significantly relied on

two kinds of bases. These bases are not only mutually comparable, but they also

complement each other. These bases consist of the creation of Allah and His religious

system. As regards the designation of the Imām, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the concept

of the leadership is fundamentally a religious and spiritual headship which he held to

be a permanent institution of Divine guidance on earth after the departure of the

Prophet of Islam from this world. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the institution of the

Imāmah transcends any political rule and authority. However, it seems that according to al-Mu'ayyad, an Imām's possessing political authority is not subject to any restriction when circumstances demand such a decision. For example, the Fatimid Imāms became caliphs of the Fatimid State. Our study further demonstrates that unlike the political leadership of the Muslims which people establish through the process of an election, al-Mu'ayyad consistently upholds the view that the designation of the Imām is based on Divine intention who, according to him is not only a spiritual guide but also a caliph even if he does not hold political leadership. This aspect of al-Mu'ayyad's view can be witnessed in his examination of the status of ᶜAlīy and each Imām from his progeny as the divinely designated master (*Mawlā* and *Walī*) and that according to him, all of them are included in "those in authority" as referred to in the Qur'ān. Whatever preceded, became one of the most leading aspects of the *Imāmah* and *Walāyah* in general Shīᶜīsm. Thus, the Shīᶜah generally identify the Imām as "caliph" (*Khalīfah*) of Allah and His Prophet irrespective of whether he holds the office of a political government or whether he does not have any political power.

As regards the functions of the Imāms, al-Mu'ayyad mainly concentrates on the concept of guidance and in this regard, he stresses the correspondence which he strongly believes to be in existence between the Islamic revelation and the Imām. The objectives of al-Mu'ayyad's study seem to underline that the Qur'ānic message is not tied to any specific community or to a particular cultural heritage and geographical area, but it is for all human beings. Al-Mu'ayyad's analysis of the distinction between the exoteric aspect and the esoteric aspect appears to be one of the key Shīᶜī doctrinal

teachings which has played a significant part in determining the Fatimid perception of Qur'ānic knowledge in relation to the *Imāmah*. Al-Mu'ayyad's in-depth examination of the correspondence of the Qur'ān with the Imām includes his stressing the "Silent Book" and the "Speaking Book" which, according to him, provide the believers with true guidance. In formulating the concept of the "Silent Book" and "Speaking Book", al-Mu'ayyad gives prominence to the Imām as the one possessing profound knowledge of the Islamic revelation. In undertaking a lengthy analysis of the Qur'ān-Imām correspondence, al-Mu'ayyad seems to have remained distinctive not only amongst Fatimid writers but also amongst all the rest of Shīʿī writers. In view of the stress laid on teaching and learning in Islam, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the believers are required to pay attention to learning knowledge, particularly the esoteric aspect of religion. As a result, it is important that they turn their attention to the members of the House of the Prophet, seeking guidance from them with the understanding that it is not only their blood relationship with the Prophet but also their other distinctive characteristics, which qualified them to become the guides and leaders of the believers after the Prophet. These characteristics include the spiritual substance of the Imāms, which comprises such aspects of the *Imāmah* as knowledge which each Imām inherits from his predecessor. Our discussion also found that the view of al-Mu'ayyad implies that the Imām is not merely a transmitter of religious teachings from his predecessors but also an authoritative figure and the interpreter of these teachings, particularly in terms of relating them to the needs of the time and age and in providing guidance accordingly to his followers.

Finally, according to Fatimid Ismāᶜīlīsm as represented by al-Mu'ayyad, the provision of religious knowledge depends upon the degree of the comprehension of the believers. The hierarchical system examined so far indicates that the Qur'ānic message has more than one aspect. The plurality in the Qur'ān provides a basis for the seekers of knowledge to explore it according to the level of their comprehension

CHAPTER FIVE: COSMOLOGICAL DOCTRINES OF THE ISMĀ^CĪLĪS

A. EARLY ISMĀ^CĪLĪ VIEW ON THE RANKS OF SPIRITUAL HIERARCH

In chapter four, an attempt was made to present the Ismā^Cīlī interpretation of the *Imāmah/Walāyah* of ^CAlīy and that of his progeny with reference to al-Mu'ayyad. The preceded views on the *Imāmah* are primarily of a theological nature. However, in the current chapter, it is important to focus on the *Imāmah* based on the Ismā^Cīlī cosmological doctrines. However the current chapter will analyse the cosmological views of the early Ismā^Cīlīs and Fatimid Ismā^Cīlīsm, including the view of al-Mu'ayyad. The comparison is necessary to explore the similarities and differences between the early Ismā^Cīlī view and that of the Fatimids.

In elaborating on the current study, one needs to refer to the relevant classical and modern writers on Ismā^Cīlīsm. The classical writers include Fatimid scholars, and they are al-Murshid, Ja^Cfar b. Manṣūr al-Yemen, al-Sijistānī, al-Rāzī and al-Kirmānī. One may realise, however, that in the context of the comparison between the thought of early Ismā^Cīlī writers and that of the Fatimid writers, relatively more references have been made to al-Sijsitānī than any other Fatimid writer. The reason for this preference is that al-Sijistani's view concerning some of early Ismāīlī ideas is extensively available, for example, the concept of the "Kūnī" and "Qadr". As far as modern writers are concerned, they include Netton, Halm, Madelung, Daftary and Walker.

Al-Murshid's *Text* appears to be one of the most important sources on the cosmological doctrines of the early Ismāᶜīlīs. This *Text* forms part of Stern's research article, namely, "The Earliest Cosmological Doctrines of Ismāᶜīlīsm" which was subsequently published together with the other writings of Stern on Ismāᶜīlīsm under the title of "Studies in Early Ismāᶜīlīsm".[1] To avoid reader's confusion and to make a distinction between the original *Text* and Stern's commentary and his translation, the original Text will be quoted frequently under such titles as "al-Murshid's *Text*".

Stern seems to have made a genuine effort in undertaking his research to the best of his ability. One cannot deny that Stern's research, particularly his edition of the Arabic Text is useful. However, with regret, his research and his own view cannot be included due to my inability to obtain permission for reproduction of his translation and analysis. But his edited text in Arabic will be used as perhaps the copyright period of the edition has already expired as it is normally relevant for 25 years.

Having the above introduction in mind, a brief examination of the salient features of some of selected concepts of the early Ismāᶜīlī cosmological doctrines need elaboration. These are the aspects of the Ismāᶜīlī doctrines which appear to have an impact on early Ismāᶜīlīsm and on the Ismāᶜīlī doctrines of later times.

It appears that the early Ismāᶜīlīs' fundamental cosmological doctrines comprise a hierarchical structure of Spiritual Beings and Physical Entities. In this hierarchical system, Allah remains beyond His creation as far as His essence (*dhāt*) is concerned. First, one can examine the view of the early Ismāᶜīlīs regarding Allah which

will be followed by an exploration of the early Ismāꜥīlī hierarchical structure. This study

will enable the readers to understand how in early Ismāꜥīlīsm, the hierarchical ranks

function as the intermediaries between Allah and the believers in providing Divine

guidance. Netton has explained al-Murshid's view on the early Ismāꜥīlī concept of

Allah:

> "Human vision cannot perceive Him, nor can the classical attributes nor human reports (*Akhbār*) define or encompass Him. He knows the secrets of His servants and bestows His beneficence both on the town dwellers and the nomad. He is the ruler and director of the whole world (*mudabbir al-ꜥālam*). Thus far the description is fairly traditional, but the section ends, almost mystically, with a reference to God as being veiled in light; and this serves to introduce the emphasis that follows on the hiddenness of God's essence, even though He may be known and invoked by various names, as well as the idea that God has made the Qur'ānic verses a light for the knowledgeable."[2]

Although Allah's Essence is eternally hidden from His creatures in this world,

historically He wished to establish contact with His creatures and wanted to be known

to them. Then He created the world. Halm interprets the relevant parts of al-Murshid's

text which explains the process of the creation:

> According to the untitled treatise of Abū ꜥĪsā al-Murshid, there existed before all space and before all time nothing but God alone. His will calls creation into being, and creation emerges from light, which emanates from God himself. To this light God calls out the creative command *Kun*!: 'Be!' or 'Become!'. Through God's calling and naming, this word *Kun* acquires an existence of its own, it is the first creature, and through it God creates all other creatures".[3]

The early Ismāʿīlī understanding of Allah's Names opens the door to the believers in respect to acquiring knowledge of Him. Thus, according to the *Text* of al-Murshid, Allah is approachable through the instrumentality of His Names. Acquiring knowledge of these Names rests totally with the friends of Allah (*awliyā'i-hi*) who are the prophets and the Imāms,[4] a subject which was perhaps considerably developed during Fatimid time and thus needs somewhat a lengthy discussion in that context. However, the cosmological doctrines which the early Ismāʿīlīs developed appear to have provided a foundation for the principles of the hierarchy in the Fatimid *daʿwah*. During the early period of the doctrinal history of the Ismāʿīlīs, it seems that the Ismāʿīlīs tried to identify and formulate the Qurʾānic concept of creation. For example, the Qurʾānic Command of Allah, namely, *Kun,* meaning "Be" seems to be the root of the Qurʾānic concept of creation as developed by the Ismāʿīlīs, including the Fatimids. In this system the imperative 'kun' has a fundamental role (3:59; 16:40). However, it should be borne in mind that there is no clear-cut explanation for the structure of kūnī, meaning how it became kūnī though it has been derived from *Kun*, which is a Qurʾānic concept. Having said that I can say that this concept was also discussed by al-Sijistānī whose explanation seems to be along the line of the concept of that of the early Ismāʿīlīs but the former tried to have devoted much of his time and energy on the concept. As a result, we can understand his interpretation of the concept is elaborate.[5] This is a point which will be discussed extensively later.

Based on these and some other Qur'ānic verses, al-Murshid's *Text* includes the first and the second Existents and they are "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*". Each of these titles has more than one title, perhaps, alluding to the diverse dimensions of the same reality.[6]

Al-Murshid's *Text* gradually introduces other titles which he describes as the alternative terms for "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*". These terms include the "Preceder" (*al-sābiq*) and the "First" (*al-awwal*) for *Kūnī*, and the "Follower" (*al-tālī*) and the "Second" (*al-thānī*) for "*Qadr*".[7] The *Text* also examines "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" in terms of the numerical value of the alphabet, considering that these letters allude to Spiritual Beings. Accordingly, "*Kūnī*" comprises four letters and "*Qadr*" three letters. "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" together consist of seven letters,[8] a point which has preceded. The *Text* explains that the seven letters denote the seven Cherubim (*Karūbiyyah*) at the same time, stating that they have esoteric names. These were created after the creation of "Qadr" which was brought into existence by "Kūnī" by the command of Allah. According to the *Text*, these names are comprehensible to the friends of Allah only and to those who are loyal to them and thus nobody else can comprehend them. In a sense, these alternative names can be called the exoteric names of "*Karūbiyyah*", as the *Text* mentions the existence of their esoteric names to be hidden from the public. The concept of "*Karūbiyyah*" needs a detailed exposition, as it has diverse interpretations and wider implications. In the wake of the creation of *Karūbiyyah*, the hierarchical ranks were created which were called "Spiritual beings" (*Rūḥāniyyah*) also entitled as the Intermediaries (*al-Wasā'iṭ*).[9]

B. FATIMID INTERPRETATION OF KŪNĪ AND QADR {AND THE SEVEN LETTERS}

At this point, al-Sijistānī's view needs examining as he shares some of the aspects of the system of the early cosmological doctrines with the early Ismāᶜīlīs, at the same time, differing from them on some points of details. Al-Sijistānī uses the concept of "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" and attaches a very high degree of significance to the seven letters. To these letters he refers as the "Seven high domain related letters (*al-ḥurūf al-ᶜulwiyyah al-sabᶜah*). Al-Sijistānī gives a reason why "*Kūnī*" which is feminine comes first and "*Qadr*" which is masculine comes next to "*Kūnī*"; this is an issue that the text of al-Murshid does not address. "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" are alternative names for the "Follower" (*al-Tālī*) and the "Preceder" (*al-Sābiq*) respectively which according to al-Sijistānī, came into existence through the instrumentality of the "Command of Allah" (*amr*). As one can see that al-Sijistānī lists the alternative Names in a reversed order as compared to al-Murshid's *Text* which proposes "*al-Sābiq*" and "*al-Tālī*" as the alternative Names for "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" respectively. Al-Sijistānī's rationalisation of the reversed order is perhaps based on his understanding of the "Soul" which he takes in the sense of "*Kūnī*". One of the reasons for al-Sijistānī's understanding may be that the "Soul", "*al-Nafs*" is feminine in Arabic. According to him, "*Kūnī*" comes before "*Qadr*", as the manifest entity appertaining to the influences of the "Soul", namely, the constituents (*al-tarākīb*) of the world[10] are more visible to human beings than the

hidden which consists in the influences of the "Intellect", namely, Divine Help (*al-Ta'yīd*), which is far and hidden from human beings. Following his argument, he states that the manifest is closer and more accessible to us; thus he concludes that the closer and more accessible to human beings should come first. Consequently, "*Kūnī*" being alternative to the "Soul" is closer and more accessible to humanity than "*Qadr*" which is the alternative term for the "Intellect" and that is far from us and less accessible to us.[11]

The explanation which al-Sijistānī gives for the order in question seems to be a rare explanation for the early Ismāʿīlī concept of "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*". One can consider this explanation as an exceptional case, as al-Sijistānī does not seem to have applied the same rule to the "Intellect" and the "Soul" which were used for the two Original and Primary Principles during Fatimid time.   According to which, the Fatimids, including al-Sijistānī always brought forward the "Intellect" and place it at the top of the rest of the hierarchical members, including the "Soul" which comes immediately after the "Intellect".[12] However, it seems that al-Sijistānī was attempting to justify an early set of terms which, perhaps, remained obscure in al-Sijistānī's time as it remains ambiguous now. One can consider al-Sijistānī's rationalisation as an answer to the issue in question in a specific sense, but he/she may not deem it to be a satisfactory response in a broader sense, namely, in the sense of "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" to be comparable to the Fatimid concept of "Intellect" and "Soul" respectively.

Al-Sijistānī explains the "Seven high domain related letters". The seven letters which he examines are amongst those aspects of the doctrines which, according to the

early Ismāᶜīlīs, are associated with "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*". However, the author of the *Text*

did not reveal their implications and esoteric meanings, stating that only the specially

selected people had knowledge of them. On the other hand, al-Sijsitānī reveals the

meanings and implications of these letters though these meanings and implications

may or may not be identical with those meanings and implications which early

Ismāᶜīlīsm kept hidden from the general people. According to al-Sijistānī, these letters

are attributed to the seven *Nuṭaqā'*, the Enunciators, a point which al-Murshid's *Text*

mentions cursorily but does not elaborate on them nor does it explicitly associate them

with the seven letters. Al-Sijstānī enumerates the *Nuṭaqā'* and says that these *Nuṭaqā'*

are Adam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ᶜĪsā, Muhammad and the *Qā'im,* the riser or

al-Mahdī.[13]

Jaᶜfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman's interpretation of the seven letters is not different

from the interpretation included in al-Murshid's *Text*, and it is not too different from

al-Sijistānī's explanation of these letters. The terminological difference will follow but

first, Ibn Manṣūr Yemen's interpretation of the seven letters needs examining. In his

Sarā'ir wa-Asrār al-Nuṭaqā', Ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman refers to Adam as the first

Enunciator amongst the seven Enunciators by stating that a letter (*ḥarf*) of one of the

seven letters is associated with him. However, in this context, he does not expound

these letters. For example, he does not explain as to whether these letters are the

same letters as those of "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" or whether they are different letters.[14]

However, his *Kitāb al-Kashf* includes the Arabic letters which Ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman

classifies by allocating them to the diverse components of the Ismāᶜīlī cosmology. The

seven letters which he allocated to the seven Enunciators are the *alif*, the *bā'*, the *tā'*, the *thā'*, the *Jim*, the *ḥā'* and the *khā'*. However, he seems to have ignored explaining why he chose these letters for the seven Enunciators.[15]

As regards the origin of Ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman's concept of seven letters, he traces them back to "Chair" (*al-Kursī*) that derived these letters from "Throne" (*al-ᶜArsh*). In this context of the discussion on the Ismāᶜīlī cosmology, Fatimid scholars used "Throne" and "Chair" thus Ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman is not the only Fatimid writer who uses these terms. Other Fatimid scholars who use these terms include al-Sijistānī who employs "Throne" and "Chair" in the same senses as that of "*al-Tālī*" and "*al-Sābiq*". However, al-Sijistānī does not seem to have used them exactly in the same senses as Ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman used them.[16] According to al-Sijistānī, "Throne" stands for the "Soul" (*al-Nafs)*, which is a synonym of the "Next" (*al-Tālī*) but al-Sijistānī does not use "*al-Tālī*" in this particular context, probably taking for granted that "*al-nafs*" is interchangeable with "*al-Tālī*". He uses "Chair" in the sense of "*al-Sābiq*" and thus changing the order of "Throne" and "Chair" as used by Ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman.[17] The difference in the sequential order may be due to the Fatimid writers' understanding of the texts of the Qur'ān which include references to "Throne" and "Chair".

It would be useful to quote the Qur'ānic texts: "Say (O Prophet) Who is the Lord of the Seven heavens and the Great Throne (23:86)? "The Beneficent Allah is firmly established on the Throne" (20:5). "His Chair encompasses the heavens and the earth" (2:255).[18]

Al-Sijsitānī refers to 2:255 about "Chair" but he does not refer to 23:86 and 20:5 concerning "Throne", instead he refers to this verse which Ibn Manṣūr al-Yemen does not quote. "And (O Prophet), you will observe the angels going round about the Throne, glorifying the praise of their Lord" (39:75).[19]

It should be borne in mind that Ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman does not seem to have recognized "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*". Perhaps this means that Ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman does not adhere to the old terms used in early Ismāʿīlīsm, but he uses some other terms such as "Throne" and "Chair".

To expound further the position of the seven Enunciators, it is necessary to examine their status. The Ismāʿīlīs divided the cyclical time into seven periods. Each period, according to the Ismaʿīlī belief was inaugurated by an *Nāṭiq* or Enunciator who remained responsible for conducting the religious affairs of the believers of his era who abrogated the *Sharīʿah* of the previous era and promulgated a new *Sharīʿah*. This course of action would change only in the seventh era of history, that is, the advent of *Qāʾim,* the Mahdī.[20]

As regards the functions of the *Qāʾim/*Mahdī, one of the functions of the Mahdī as the seventh *Nāṭiq* is that he will fully reveal the truths and the esoteric aspect of the *Sharīʿah* of the Prophet of Islam. However, the Mahdī will not bring a new *Sharīʿah*. Al-Sijistānī and other Ismāʿīlī authorities discuss the functions of the Mahdī. Al-Sijistānī's argument can be examined as no contemporary writer seems to have examined the view of al-Sijistānī on this theme. Al-Sijistānī's reasoning is based on the

Ismāᶜīlī concept of the categories of the exoteric and esoteric aspects of the *Sharīᶜah*

and particularly the prostration (*al-sujūd*) and bowing down (*al-rukūᶜ*) which one

performs in every single *rakᶜah* in the daily prayers. According to al-Sijistānī, the

prostration esoterically signifies the exoteric aspect of the *Sharīᶜah* and its master,

namely, the Prophet of Islam and bowing down esoterically alludes to ᶜAlīy who,

according to him, is the master of the *ta'wīl* of the *Sharīᶜah*. Al-Sijistānī explains his

point of view further and states that the Prophet, following the injunction of Allah

determined two prostrations in the *ṣalāh* to demonstrate to his community that

although he and the Mahdī from his progeny are two different individuals, both follow

the same *Sharīᶜah*. Thus, according to al-Sijistānī, the Mahdī is not a messenger of Allah

nor is he a recipient of a new *Sharīᶜah,* but his *Sharīᶜah* and his Book are the same

Sharīᶜah and Book which the Prophet of Islam received.[21]

C. EXAMINATION OF "*KARŪBIYYAH*" AND "*RŪḤĀNIYYAH*" (SPIRITUAL ENTITIES)

So far, the early Ismāᶜīlī view and the views of two Fatimid scholars regarding

the two Original Principles were discussed. This discussion also included the "Seven

letters" particularly their relationship with the two Principles. Now one needs to

survey the views of some other writers concerning "*Karūbiyyah*" and "*Rūḥāniyyah*"

which are also known as the "Intermediaries" (*al-wasā'iṭ*). However, first,

"*Karūbiyyah*" or "*Karūbiyyūn*" need examining in the light of general sources. This is

necessary for the purpose of comparison in a wider sense.

In this regard the views of some general commentators on the Qur'ān need discussing now. It should be borne in mind that the context of these commentators' discussions of the concept of "*Karūbiyyah*" is different from the context in which the Ismāʿīlīs examine this concept. The Ismāʿīlīs, particularly al-Murshid's *Text* studies this concept in a particular frame of reference such as considering them as an aspect of the early Ismāʿīlī cosmological doctrines whilst the commentators on the Qur'ān discuss "*Karūbiyyah*" in isolation with a particular cosmological concept.

Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī examines the status of "*al-karūbīyyah*" in his commentary on the Qur'ānic verse 4:172 which refers to those "angels who are nearest to God (*al-malā'ikah al-muqarrabūn*)". According to the interpretation of al-Zamakhsharī, these are "*al-karūbiyyah*" angels who surround Allah's Throne. He then specifically states that these angels include Jibrā'īl, Mīkā'IL, Isrāfīl and all those other angels who appertain to the group of these angels whom he describes as the most elevated angels.[22] Maḥmūd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Āllūsī expresses the same view except that he mentions Jibrā'īl only to be amongst "*Karūbiyyūn*"[23] thus either missing out Mīkā'īl and Isrāfīl or including them implicitly. However, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī holds that there are diverse categories of angels, but he does not mention "*al-karūbiyyah*" or "*al-karūbiyyūn*" under the commentary of this verse. According to him, the greatest angels amongst all the angels are Jibrā'īl, Mīkā'IL, Isrāfīl and those who carry the Throne (of Allah).[24] This seems that, according to al-Rāzī, the carriers of the Throne of Allah are of the same status as that of Jibrā'īl, Mīkā'IL and Isrāfīl but the latter do not share the responsibility of carrying the Throne of Allah with the former. However, as noted

before, according to al-Zamakhsharī, Jibrā'īl, Mīkā'IL and Isrāfīl are included in the carriers of the Throne. Thus, he refers to all these angels as "*al-karūbiyyah*".

As preceded, the commentators on the Qur'ān understand that there is more than one category of angels, but they do not discuss any categorisation of "*Karūbiyyah*" and that of "*Rūḥāniyyah*" like the Ismāᶜīlīs who appear to have these categories in their system of thought. It is, therefore, important to discuss this subject based on the views of some of the Fatimid authors, comparing their views with the view of the early Ismāᶜīlīs, particularly their concept of "*Rūḥāniyyah*".

The Ismāᶜīlī *dāᶜī* al-Rāzī interprets "*Karūbiyyah*" as the angels of punishment, labelling them as "*al-karūbiyyūn*" as opposed to the angels of mercy, whom al-Rāzī identifies with "*al-rūḥāniyyūn*", that is, Spiritual Beings. Having defined both the categories of the angels, however, al-Rāzī clarifies that all the angels are fundamentally Spiritual Beings.[25]

Al-Rāzī does not allocate any individual or proper names to the angels of mercy (*al-rūḥāniyyūn*) and the angels of punishment (*al-karūbiyyūn*). The interpretation which al-Rāzī gives seems to be close to one of the literal meanings of the word "*karb*" which means to be in a state of grief and sorrow.[26] Al-Mu'ayyad uses the same categorisation of these angels as al-Rāzī but he uses "*al-karūbī*" and "*al-rūḥānī*", the singular forms of the nouns, clarifying and defining them further as *malā'ikah al-ᶜadhāb* and *malā'ikat al-raḥmah*, that is to say, the angels of punishment and the angels of mercy respectively.[27]

Ja^{c}far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman appears to be the only Fatimid *dā^{c}ī* who divides "*al-karūbiyyah*" in more than one category. One of the categories of these angels comprise those angels who carry the Throne of Allah. As far as the other category of "al-karūbiyyah" is concerned it is those angels who, according to the Fatimid *dā^{c}ī* play as intermediaries between Allah and the Prophet of Islam during his highest spiritual experience, namely, the ascension (*mi^{c}rāj*).[28]

According to the Qur'ān, the spiritual intimacy of the Prophet with the Divine was like **"two bows length or even nearer"** (*qāba qawsayni aw adnā*) (53:9). In this context, the Fatimid *dā^{c}ī* refers to a *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet in which he is reported to have said: "*fa-tasallamtu min khamsati ḥudūdin Rūḥāniyyatin Karūbiyyah*" meaning, "thus I received (revelation, etc.) through the "Five Spiritual *Karūbiyyah* Hierarchical Ranks". Thus, Ja^{c}far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman made a distinction between "*al-karūbiyyah*" to whom he refers as the carriers of the Throne and the five spiritual hierarchical ranks whom he mentions as "*al-karūbiyyah*" also and to whom he refers in the context of the Prophet's spiritual journey. The basis on which Ja^{c}far b. Manṣūr al-Yemen makes a distinction is that he does not include the "Carriers of the Throne of Allah" in the category of Spiritual Beings. He refers to them as *al-muqarrabūn*, namely, the nearest angels. However, to the latter he refers as "*Rūḥāniyyah*" with an additional title of "*Karūbiyyah*".[29] From this discussion, one can draw the conclusion that according to Ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman, "*al-karūbiyyah*" are of more than one category.

Now discussing Spiritual Beings with reference to general Ismā^{c}īlī thought is also relevant. Al-Murshid's *Text* refers to them as Spiritual Entities (*rūḥāniyyah*) or

"Spiritual Hierarchical Ranks" (*ḥudūd rūḥāniyyah)*. According to the *Text*, these Entities were created through "*Qadar*" after the creation of "*Karūbiyyah*". One can state it also that according to the *Text* of al-Murshid, the Spiritual Beings play the part of Intermediaries between "*Kūnī*" and the "Enunciators" (*Nuṭaqā'*),[30] a subject which the *Text* does not elaborate on. For example, it does not explain who exactly the Enunciators are. However, later sources, i.e., Fatimid works conduct a detailed study of this subject.

In elucidating the current subject, a discussion on the internal inconsistency in giving the number of Spiritual Entities is important. Thus, in one instance, the *Text* introduces eleven Spiritual Beings by name, preceded by "*Qadr*" which received a command from "*Kūnī*" to create these Spiritual Entities. Then the *Text* reads that they (*hiya*), referring to the Spiritual Beings, are Intermediaries (*al-wasā'iṭ* between "Him" and the Enunciators (*al-nuṭaqā'*). The *Text* then alludes to them again later. Although this time, the *Text* gives the same titles and number of these Entities, these titles are preceded by a clear-cut indication that they are twelve.[31]

One cannot figure out as to whether the author of the *Text* has missed out the name of one of the members of the Spiritual Beings or whether a later authority dropped it out, including the scribe. As discussed earlier, references to number twelve are included in the *Text*. In this context, the author tries to identify the correspondence between the spiritual domain and the material world. To these domains he refers as the upper world (*al-ᶜUlwī*) and lower world (*al-suflī)* respectively.[32]

As far as the Fatimids' view on the "Spiritual Beings" are concerned, they understand that there are only five Spiritual Beings as compared to the early Ismāʿīlī view, to whom they most frequently refer as "*al-wasāʾiṭ*" which is the same term as the early Ismāʿīlīs used.[33]

The early Ismāʿīlī discussion on the cosmological doctrines will not be complete without examining the relationship between the diverse components of creation. To begin with, the spiritual substance, namely, revelation and Divine help need discussing which the "Preceder" receives from Allah and passes it on to other spiritual and earthly religious authorities. The *Text* suggests that the spiritual substance became an instrument for connecting earthly religious authorities with the spiritual and upper domain. Also al-Murshid's *Text* states that the spiritual substance is too significant and too special, therefore, it can be comprehensible to some people only, those who are in possession of certain attributes and good characteristics such as perseverance in the face of trials and tribulations. Probably based on the spiritual substance, the writer promises that he will unveil the truth surrounding the spiritual substance when the believer gains the ultimate and most elevated aim, and objective (alghāyah al-quṣwā), as well as rises to the highest goal; {now} whoever attains this stage, as if he takes and keeps a firm hold. On the other hand whoever refrains from attaining the highest goal he will be ashamed in the hereafter and in this world. According to the early Ismāʿīlīs, comprehending this special entity is the utmost aim and objective of a believer. However, al-Murshid's *Text* warns that the believer should be careful about this utmost aim and objective and keep it hidden and private from

those who do not deserve knowing it. It appears that the *Text suggests that* keeping this substance private is not only important but is a condition for attaining the knowledge of the truths. The source is insistent that acquiring knowledge of the most important goal must not be provided to that person who has not been bestowed upon the spirit of the everlasting life (*rūḥ al-ḥayāt al-abadiyyah*).[34]

In addition to the revelational link between the spiritual domain and physical world, there is another kind of link between them. Discussing the relation under consideration is necessary to learn how early Ismāᶜīlīsm looks at both domains to identify how each of the diverse constituents of these domains provide evidence for each other's existence.

Al-Murshid's *Text* discusses the spiritual domain in relation to the physical world. The *Text* refers to the incorporeal world as the "upper related (world)", namely "*al-ᶜulwī*" and corporeal world as the "lower related (world)", "*al-suflī*"[35]. The *Text* elaborates this theme further by examining parallelism of the hidden world and the visible world. The *Text* considers the visible world as manifest creation which stands as an allegory for the unseen truth. For example, according to the author, the sun, the moon, the seven heavens, the earth and the signs of Zodiac allude to the "Preceder", his "Successor", Seven "*Karūbiyyah*" and "Twelve Rūḥāniyyah". The *Text* further states that the purpose behind this comparison is that the visible world leads one to the invisible domain. The *Text* explains further how there remains similarity between the exterior and interior dimensions of the corporeal objects with the incorporeal truths in the upper world. For example, the moon receives its light from the sun. Similarly, the

"Follower" receives its substance, meaning, revelation and Divine help from the "Preceder".[36]

D. FATIMID COSMOLOGY: A COMBINATION OF MUTI-DIMENSIONAL ELEMENTS

It is important to discuss whether the early Ismāʿīlī cosmological doctrines remained the same or whether they underwent a change in the Fatimid period. Although the early Ismāʿīlī terms "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" seem to be the major aspect of the early Ismāʿīlī cosmological doctrines, they gradually lost their relevance in the Fatimid period, particularly during the time of al-Mu'ayyad. However, some other aspects of the early Ismāʿīlī doctrines remained intact as "*al-Sābiq*" and "*al-Tālī*" which were used not only by early Ismāʿīlīsm but also by the Fatimids in the same sense as those of "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*".[37] At the same time, the Fatimids emphasized the Qur'ānic concept of creation and the significance of rational thought to furnish a basis for their intellectual discourses. The reasons for the amalgamation under consideration include certain external factors to which we shall turn shortly. Halm states:

 "It soon became apparent, however, that Neoplatonic
 philosophy was not the root of the Ismaʿili doctrine, but
 a secondary stage in its evolution".[38]

A most obvious and historical reason for the availability of the philosophical elements is the translation of numerous Greek works into Arabic in the third/ninth century whereby the Muslims became aware of Greek philosophical ideas. In the wake of this development, educated Muslims became interested in studying Greek

philosophy, at the same time, maintaining their dedication to learning traditional subjects such as the interpretation of the Qur'ān.

The Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs* were experts in traditional sciences like the Qur'ān and the aḥādīth of the Prophet, at the same time, they were skilful in understanding other sciences. Daftary states:

> "Al-Sijistani and other Iranian *daʿis* also identified certain basic concepts of their emanational cosmology with Qur'anic terms. Thus, universal intellect (*ʿaql*) and universal soul (*nafs*), the first and second originated beings in the spiritual world, were identified with the Qur'anic notions of the 'pen' (*qalam*) and the 'tablet' (*lawh*)".[39]

Despite the Ismāʿīlī writers' partial recognition of the philosophical approach, they remained critical of philosophers. The most serious point of contention which the Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs* raised, was concerning the status of religious authority from the philosophical perspective as compared to the status of the Prophet and that of the Imāms. As will follow, according to Ismāʿīlī scholars, the upholders of philosophical thought urged to minimize the status of the Prophet and that of the Imāms. In this regard, Walker refers to al-Sijistānī and al-Kirmānī and notes that both Fatimid thinkers were not prepared to accept philosophy as a valid science. He states:

> "Neither al-Sijistānī nor al-Kirmānī accepted philosophy as a valid science as such. For them, the philosophers, even though gifted and astute, nevertheless relied exclusively, by their own claim, on the results of their own personal investigations or that of their predecessors in philosophy. What they had discovered they advocated, but without authority and certainty. Ismāʿīlī thought, in contrast, derived its truthfulness directly from the prophets, their executors and the imams".[40]

E. Al-MU'AYYAD ON FATIMID COSMOLOGY

Prior to proceeding further, it seems highly advisable to pinpoint how the Fatimids, particularly al-Mu'ayyad synthesized certain intellectual elements with the concepts which the Islamic revelation includes. For example, al-Mu'ayyad makes use of three sets of terms and employs them for the same concept though he associates with each of these terms somehow diverse aspects of the concept. Some of these terms include those terms which the Fatimid author defines as the terms utilized in the "language of the *da^cwah* and truth" (*bi-lisān al-da^cwah wa-al-ḥaqīqah*) while to others he refers as the terms used in the "language of revelation" (*bi-lisān al-shar^c)* and yet he identifies other terms with those terms employed in "intellectual language" (*bi-lisān al-^caql*).[41] For example, according to him, the terms the "Preceder" (*al-Sābiq*), and the "Pen" (*al-Qalam*) allude to the language of *da^cwah*/truth and the language of revelation,   Furthermore, according to his description, the term "Preserved Tablet" (*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūẓ*) refers to the "Universal Soul" (*al-Nafs al-kulliyyah*). Then he states that the Universal Soul relates to the language of intellect.[42]

F. THE UNITY (*TAWḤĪD*) OF GOD AND THE INTERMEDIARIES

The Fatimid concept of the Hierarchical Ranks, including the Spiritual Hierarchical Ranks need further examining, as they fundamentally relate to the concept of the system of guidance, including the *Imāmah*. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the Hierarchical Ranks are the "Intermediaries" between Allah and His servants. Prior to examining the status of these Ranks, however, al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on the Unity

of Allah (*Tawḥīd*) is important to understand how Fatimid Ismāʿīlīsm views the Essence of Allah to be transcendent beyond human comprehension, description, and comparison. Also the study of *Tawḥīd* will enable the readers to understand how the Ismāʿīlīs consider the Transcendence of Allah to be of paramount importance for the presence of Intermediaries between Allah and His servants who not only include the Spiritual Hierarchical Ranks but also the Earthly Religious Ranks, for example, the Prophet and the Imāms.

The concept of the Transcendence of Allah beyond human comprehension seems to be one of the most important aspects of the doctrine of *Tawḥīd* not only in Ismāʿīlīsm but also in some other schools of thought. The most prominent view on the Transcendence of Allah is the view of ʿAlīy ibn Abī Ṭālib which he expressed in the following words:

> "The foundation of religion is recognizing Him (Allah). The perfection of His recognition is having faith in Him. The perfection of having faith in Him is His Unity (*tawḥīduh*). The perfection of *tawḥīd* is having purity in relation to Him. The perfection of purity in relation to Him is negating the attributes from Him as each attribute bears witness that it is other than the attributed one and each attributed one bears witness that it is other than the attribute".[43]

Perhaps based on ʿAlīy's interpretation of the *Tawḥīd* of Allah, Ismāʿīlī writers emphasized the Essence of Allah to be beyond human comprehension and description throughout the development of their doctrinal history. As examined, al-Murshid's text gives a passing remark on the Essence and the Attributes of Allah. In doing so, al-Murshid's emphasis seems to be on making a distinction between the Essence of God

and His Attributes.   The Essence of Allah, as noted already in the early Ismāʿīlī

discussion, is unknowable whilst His Attributes are perceptible only through the

instrumentality of the friends of Allah who include the Prophet and the Imāms.

As far as al-Mu'ayyad's interpretation of the Transcendence of Allah is

concerned, his argument for the subject matter remains like those of his predecessors,

the Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs*, such as al-Sijistānī in spirit, but in form, the approach of al-Mu'ayyad

to the current subject remains somewhat distinctive. One of the exemplifications of

the different approaches of the other *dāʿīs* is that al-Mu'ayyad does not seem to be

using the two negations as such but as we will see later, he mostly makes use of general

terms for the Attributes negating them from God. In addition and on a more general

level, al-Mu'ayyad's approach seems to reflect the milieu in which he was writing. This

was the time when al-Mu'ayyad seems to have become aware of the crystallization of

all the Islamic disciplines such as the sciences of *Ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, *Fiqh*, theology and

philosophy. More specifically and as an instance, the concept of anthropomorphism

(*al-tashbīh*) and that of denudation (*taʿṭīl*) in the discourses of a few Muslim authorities

on the concept of the *Tawḥīd* of Allah appears to have remained a prominent aspect

of Muslim doctrinal discussions.   In his *Al-Majālis*, al-Mu'ayyad examines the

significance of acquiring knowledge of *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān and the scope of its

application. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the knowledge of *ta'wīl* includes acquiring

knowledge of Allah (*maʿrifat Allah*) as well. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad states that acquiring

knowledge (*maʿrifah*) of the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān not only relates to the Spiritual and

the Physical Hierarchical Ranks, the Hereafter, the angels but it also relates to acquiring knowledge of Allah which must not be affected by *tashbīh* nor must it be affected by *taᶜṭīl*.[44]

Al-Mu'ayyad does not seem to be offering specific and precise definitions of these two contrary terms. However, it seems that the Fatimid *dāᶜī*'s reference to these terms was probably an allusion to his tacit agreement, in principle, with the definition given by other Muslims, but not in detail, namely, in terms of the esoteric and cosmological interpretations of acquiring knowledge of Allah.

In the context of the current discussion, one can raise the question as to what the Fatimid Ismāᶜīlī explanation for the Attributes would be which the Qur'ān and other sources mention to be the Attributes of Allah. Al-Mu'ayyad seems to be aware of the nature of the question and he seems to have responded to this question. Before discussing this subject, it should be borne in mind that al-Mu'ayyad does not provide a clear-cut and direct explanation for the Attributes of Allah. However, he introduces this theme carefully and gradually probably because of the sensitivity involved. Al-Mu'ayyad's gradual and careful consideration of the subject is perhaps indicative of how serious he is in respect to negating the Attributes from the Essence of Allah. Al-Mu'ayyad advances his arguments about his understanding of the Attributes of Allah on the ground of the knowledge of the Prophet and the Imāms who, according to him, guide believes in acquiring knowledge of these Attributes. In this regard, al-Mu'ayyad looks at the supremacy of the knowledge of the Prophet and the Imāms, particularly the esoteric aspect of their knowledge. Thus, according to al-Muayyad, the Prophet

and the Imāms are in possession of absolute knowledge of the Attributes of Allah. He understands, as will follow that recognizing Allah exclusively rests with the Prophet and the Imāms. In elaborating further the Attributes of Allah, al-Mu'ayyad seems to have believed that the Attributes only known to the above-mentioned individuals. He substantiates his thesis and refers to a Prophetic *Ḥadīth* in which the Prophet is reported to have considered ᶜAlīy as the gate of his knowledge. Thus, ᶜAlīy is the person who can explain all difficult aspects of the Qur'ān. The difficult parts of the Qur'an include the Attributes of God. Our author argues this point in this manner: If these people rely on the (exoteric aspect of) the revelation (*al-Sharᶜ*) and the text of the Qur'ān which describes the Attributes of God such as Allah is knowing, He is Powerful, and He is living, then the Fatimid *dāᶜī* says that he would respond to them in this manner: The topic which they discuss included in the totality of that knowledge whose city is the Prophet and whose gate is ᶜAlīy".[45]

After having discussed the *Tawḥīd* of Allah briefly, one would wish to examine al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on the diverse titles of the Spiritual Hierarchical Ranks, particularly the Highest Rank. Discussing the Highest Rank is important to evaluate its diverse and all-embracing part, including its correspondence with the rest of the Ranks below it. The titles which, according to al-Mu'ayyad, are applicable to the Highest Rank include the "Word" (*al-Kalimah*), the "Pen" (*al-Qalam*), the "Preceder" (*al-Sābiq*), the "First Originated Being" (A*wwalu Mubdaᶜ*), and the "Intellect" (*al-ᶜAql*), that is to say, the "Universal Intellect" (*al-ᶜAql al-Kullī*)[46]

According to al-Mu'ayyad, the "Word" "Kun" is synonymous with the "Pen", the "First Originated Being" also called the "Origination" and the "Intellect". In the opinion of al-Mu'ayyad, all these terms refer to the same Reality, the "First Originated Being". He states that it was not originated from any entity but directly by Allah.

> "Allah caused His "Pen" to record on His "Preserved Tablet" all that which was to be brought into existence until the Day of Resurrection such as the creation of the heavens, the earth and that which is in between them".[47]

Furthermore, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the "Pen" heads not only all other Spiritual Ranks in the "Upper World" or the "Spiritual World" but it also heads the Physical Ranks, in the "Lower World" or the "Physical World" including the Prophet and the Imāms. In this regard, al-Mu'ayyad refers to another *Ḥadīth* to substantiate his point of view. The Prophet is reported to have alluded to these High Ranks in this *Ḥadīth* by saying:

> "Between me and Allah, there are five Intermediaries (*wasā'iṭ*) {and they are}: Jibrā'īl, Mīkā'īl, Isrāfīl, the "Preserved Tablet" (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*) and the "Pen" (*al-qalam*)".[48]

It is not only the revelation-related Intermediaries between the "Upper/Spiritual World" and "Lower/Physical World" which al-Mu'ayyad examines but he also explores the correspondence between the "Upper world" and "Lower World" by analogy. For example, al-Mu'ayyad interprets the significance of the "Word" (*al-Kalimah*), to be "Allah's First origination" (*ibdāᶜuhū)* in the "Upper World (*fi al-ḥadd al-ᶜulwī*). Thus, he compares the Prophet of Islam with the "Word" (K*un*) as according to

him, the former appertains to the "Lower World" (*fī al-ᶜālam al-suflī*) and acts in this world as the substitute for the "Word" in the "Upper World".[49]

The concept of the "Upper World" and "Lower World" seems to be always common amongst Ismāᶜīlī writers. For example, al-Murshid's *Text* includes it within itself. It is most likely that al-Mu'ayyad borrowed these terms from the early Ismāᶜīlīs. At the same time, there is utter silence on the part of al-Mu'ayyad on "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" used in early Ismāᶜīlīsm and in early Fatimid thought formulated by Fatimid thinkers like al-Sijistānī. However, al-Mu'ayyad uses one set of alternative terms, which the earlier Ismāᶜīlīs apply to "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*". Those terms are the "Preceder" (*al-sābiq*) and the "Successor" (*al-Tālī*) though he does not employ these terms as frequently as he uses such other terms as the "Word" and the "Pen". Returning to al-Mu'ayyad's comparison of the "Word" with the Prophet, al-Mu'ayyad considers the "Word" to be the "Face of Allah", as mentioned in the Qur'ān. The Islamic revelation states: "Everything will perish save His Face" (28:88). According to al-Mu'ayyad, the "Face" in this verse alludes to the "First Origination" or the "Word" which is the "First Existent" that Allah originated.[50]

Based on the same verse, al-Mu'ayyad considers the Prophet of Islam as the "Face of Allah". Prior to discussing the position of the Prophet of Islam with reference to the "Face of Allah", al-Mu'ayyad discusses the status of the faces of human beings in general terms, probably to establish a basic link between the human face and the

"Face of Allah" to facilitate the readers to understand his point of view. Thus, according to al-Mu'ayyad, human beings become acquainted with each other by means of their faces. Thus, the faces are marks of distinction between people. As far as the Prophet is concerned, he is the "Face of Allah" in the sense that through his instrumentality, the believers can recognize Allah and the Spiritual beings such as His "Preserved Tablet" His "Pen", His "Throne", and His "Chair".[51]

Al-Iṣfahānī discusses diverse interpretations of some of the Muslim authorities surrounding their perception of the "Face of Allah". The interpretations are based on the Qur'ān. For instance the Qur'ān states: "There remains only the Face of your Lord Possessor of loftiness and honour" (55:27). Under the interpretation of this verse, al-Iṣfahānī gave two diverse points of view which will follow. However, first, one should briefly discuss the sources of these interpretations. Al-Iṣfahānī does not specifically discuss the sources of each of those interpretations but he refers to them anonymously. Thus, al-Iṣfahānī refers to each of the interpretations by just saying, *qīla,* namely, "it is said". The reason for the anonymity may be that al-Iṣfahānī may have had several reports of the interpretations of the verse before him and therefore he must have attempted to abridge them all by saying "*qīla*". At any rate, according to one of these interpretations, "*wajh*" in the verse 55:27 refers to the Essence of Allah (*dhātuh*). As far as the other interpretation of "*wajh*" is concerned, according to al-Iṣfahānī, the "Face of Allah" is understood to mean one's turning to Allah by doing virtuous deeds. Al-Iṣfahānī, then cites Abū ᶜAbd Allāh, son of al-Riḍā, who is reported to have commented on the first of these interpretations by rejecting it utterly. Thus, according

to al-Iṣfahānī, when somebody quoted to Abū ᶜAbd Allāh the interpretation that the "Face of Allah" means His Essence, Abū ᶜAbd Allāh said: "May Allah be glorified (subḥāna llāh)! Those who said these words, have said a grave thing (qālū qawlan ᶜaẓīmā) indeed", meaning, they made a grave mistake. In addition to the already given meaning of the "wajh", al-Iṣfahānī himself suggests a metaphorical meaning of the "wajh". Accordingly, "wajh" can have such meanings as al-madhhab and al-ṭarīq, that is, the road, adopted procedure and school of thought. Al-Iṣfahānī substantiates his interpretation by some Arab sayings. According to our writer, the Arabs say: "So and so is the face of his community members, their eye and their head".[52]

The above-quoted illustration indicates that one can approach the community by means of their face, their eye, and their head, meaning, their leader. It seems, therefore, that it is not only the Ismāᶜīlīs but some other Muslims who have interpreted certain Qur'ānic elements either esoterically or metaphorically. As already examined, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the Face of Allah refers to some of the Hierarchical Ranks, including the Prophet.

So far, al-Mu'ayyad's concept of the "First Originated Being" or the "Origination" under the title of the "Pen" has been examined. Now it is important to focus on yet another term, relating to the same concept. And that term is the "Intellect" (al- ᶜAql), namely, the "Universal Intellect" (al-ᶜAql al-Kullī). Al-Mu'ayyad appears to have examined the "Intellect" and its manifestations in diverse contexts. He understands the ᶜAql to be part and parcel of the Islamic revelation thus the Prophet and his successors to be in possession of intellectual sciences as included in the Qur'ān.

Additionally, al-Mu'ayyad looks at other human intellects, as according to him, they are potentially capable of receiving spiritual/intellectual truths. Let us now examine the "Intellect" in some more detail. As discussed earlier that Allah innovated the "First Originated Being" directly, therefore, according to al-Mu'ayyad, it is perfect in every sense. Al-Mu'ayyad in clear terms identifies the "Intellect" or the Universal Intellect" as the "First Originated Being". In this regard, al-Mu'ayyad, particularly refers to a Ḥadīth of the Prophet in which he is reported to have said:

> "The entity which Allah, first created was al-ᶜAql. Then He asked it" (said the Prophet): "come forward". (The Prophet then said :) "It came forward, then (according to the Prophet), "He (Allah) asked it": "go backward", (the Prophet said): "it went backward". (Thereupon the Prophet stated :) "He (Allah) said": "By my might and glory, I did not create a creature more sublime (ajalla) than you. It is you through which will I reward, and it is you through which will I punish".[53]

Prior to going any further, it is important to discuss that al-Mu'ayyad seems to have elaborated on his cosmology, including his discussion on the "Intellect" under the guidance of a higher authority to whom he refers as the "learned man of the family of Muhammad" (ᶜālim āli Muḥammad). Thus, he is one of the Imāms of the ahl al-bayt. For example, when al-Mu'ayyad begins his formulation of the "Intellect" with particular reference to the above-mentioned Ḥadīth, he seems not to have made a direct reference to the "learned man of the family of the Prophet", but simply says: "fa-naqūl" "thus we hold", or words to that effect.[54] By using "fa-naqūl", al-Mu'ayyad perhaps means that the elaboration of the description of ᶜaql was a joint undertaking though

al-Mu'ayyad appears to have participated in the undertaking fully by being instrumental in the task.

Recommencing the analysis of the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet, as preceded, al-Mu'ayyad appears to have employed the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet in more than one context. To begin with, he considers the *ᶜaql* used in the *Ḥadīth* as the "First originated Being" or the "First Origination" which our author characterizes in more than one way. One of his ways of characterizing is that he examines the status of the "Intellect" by placing it in its hierarchy which can be referred to as the cosmic scheme. Accordingly, the "Intellect" is below Allah and above the rest of the constituents of the cosmic scheme. As one can note that according to al-Sijistānī's thought, Allah is not in the system but beyond it and al-Mu'ayyad seems to have retained that conception. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the "Intellect" is the cause of everything, including the "Soul" (*al-Nafs*), that is, the "Universal Soul" (*al-Nafs al-kulliyyah*). According to al-Mu'ayyad, it is the "Soul" through which the universe was created. He also refers to the universe as the "form" (*al-ṣūrah*) or the "structure of the universe" (*tarkīb al-ᶜālam*). In which case, al-Mu'ayyad compares the "Intellect" with number one which he perceives as the cause of all numbers. In the same manner, according to our author, the "Intellect" is the cause of all thngs below it, in its totality.[55] Al-Mu'ayyad's view on the "Intellect" as the cause of all creatures is in sharp contrast with the view of Muslim philosophers. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the "Intellect" has a fundamental role to play not only in the Islamic revelation, particularly the *Sharīᶜah* but also in human beings' understanding the precepts dictated by Islam. For al-Mu'ayyad, reason relates to the

Islamic revelation, a claim which he always attempts to prove as based on the Qur'ān.

For example, he quotes these verses: "We left out nothing in the Book" (6:38). "Nor

anything wet or dry but is in a Manifest Book" (6:59). In support of his view, al-

Mu'ayyad advances arguments. One of his arguments is concerning the Prophetic

knowledge which according to him, embraces rational evidence for the diverse

components of the Islamic truths and the *Sharīʿah*. Al-Mu'ayyad particularly argues

against those people who, according to him, undermine the significance of the

presence of intellectual role in the Islamic revelation. Thus, in the opinion of al-

Mu'ayyad, *al-awḍāʿ al-sharīʿah*, namely, the Islamic-law-related rules, for example, the

Pillars of Islam are based on rational grounds and therefore, in his opinion, the Prophet

was in possession of rational proofs (*al-burhān al-ʿaqlī*) for the religion of Islam.

Someone may consider this argument of al-Mu'ayyad as circular reasoning but by

looking at the overall argument, it seems that he emphasizes his point of view by

deeming revelation and the Prophet to be mutually in agreement. He elaborates on

his point of view and argues by raising a hypothetical question that if a philosopher had

approached the Prophet, asking him for rational proofs for such Islamic doctrines and

injunctions as angels, the prayer, al-Mu'ayyad asks, would the Prophet have said that

he was incapable of responding to the questions with the relevant answers? According

to al-Mu'ayyad, the Prophet would not have turned down the question of the

questioner but rather he would have provided him with proofs based on rational

grounds (*al-burhān al-ʿaqlī*).[56]

Propounding further his view of the reconciliation between revelation and intellectual sciences, al-Mu'ayyad obliquely refers to his predecessors by identifying them as *al-muḥiqqūn*, that is, the "upholders of truth".[57]   Al-Mu'ayyad seeks to trace back his view and thus seems to have referred to the Imāms, particularly those of his time, as well as some of his predecessors, probably such intellectual *dā^cīs* as al-Sijistānī and al-Kirmānī to substantiate his point of view.   In this regard, we have already discussed al-Mu'ayyad's reference to the "learned man of the family of the Prophet" (^c*ālim āli Muḥammad*) and his view which was discussed in comparison with the views of al-Sijistānī and al-Kirmānī in relation to the "Origination" (*Ibdā^c*).

According to al-Mu'ayyad, his predecessors maintained that all kinds of knowledge, including intellectual sciences (*al-^cAqliyyāt*) are included in branches of knowledge of the prophets. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad holds that the Qur'ān is the source of all kinds of knowledge and no knowledge-based entity remains outside the Islamic revelation. Our writer's above-mentioned understanding leads him to hold the view that the Prophet was in possession of all branches of knowledge which the Qur'ān contains within itself, and that the Prophet had all the answers to the questions. Al-Mu'ayyad would probably acknowledge that the responses to the queries were not simple and straightforward but were beyond the comprehension of ordinary people, as they related to spiritual and intellectual domain.[58] This means that according to al-Mu'ayyad's perception, the prophetic knowledge is not restricted to what is generally understood to be religious sciences alone, but it is extended to other sciences and plays a unique role.   At the same time, it should be borne in mind that al-Mu'ayyad's

conceived intellectual sciences vis-à-vis revelation and the Prophet's unique role have far-reaching implications for the Ismāᶜīlī concept of the *Imāmah*. It appears that according to al-Mu'ayyad, these are the implications for the status of the Imāms as bearers not only of the knowledge of revelation, but also intellectual sciences which in combination with traditional and inherited knowledge enable them to guide the believers. To place al-Mu'ayyad's view in a wider context, a brief discussion on the milieu in which he compiled his books, is important. In this regard, the view of the general Muslims and that of philosophers will particularly be discussed, as al-Mu'ayyad seems to have targeted both in formulating his view on the recompilation of reason with revelation.[59]

It seems that al-Mu'ayyad had access to the views of some of the theologians and philosophers of earlier times such as Mālik ibn Anas and al-Fārābī. He anonymously criticizes people like Mālik b. Anas on the one hand and the philosophers on the other. He is critical of the former for the insignificant level of importance which, according to him, they attached to the intellectual sciences and the latter for their claim of making use of their intellects independently about religious affairs such as the Unity of Allah. He seems to discredit both groups, as according to him, they do not recognize the Ismāᶜīlī Imām who, according to al-Mu'ayyad, is the criterion to ideally strike a balance between reason and revelation.

As already examined, basically al-Mu'ayyad addresses two groups, as there was already a tension in relation to the reconciliation of reason with revelation amongst the Muslims. Further discussion is necessary concerning the view of the

philosophers, as they seem to be the main rival of al-Mu'ayyad as far the question of

the correspondence of reason with revelation is concerned.

Ismāʿīlī thinkers, including al-Mu'ayyad seem to react to the view of the

philosophers for rejecting at least partly the missions of the prophets and then totally

rejecting the views of the Imāms.   Al-Kirmānī seems to be one of the predecessors of

al-Mu'ayyad who took notice of the view of the philosophers seriously by illustrating

as to how they did not believe in Islamic teachings in their totality. According to al-

Kirmānī, the reasons include that the philosophers abandoned the teachings of the

friends of Allah who include the Prophets and the Imāms.[60]

On his part al-Mu'ayyad attempts to examine the subject under consideration

and his discussions come up in his works from time to time, sometimes in bits and

pieces whilst at other times somewhat in detail. As preceded, the burning issue for al-

Mu'ayyad was to identify and explain the balance which he believes to have existed

between reason and revelation and to demonstrate that both elements can only be

represented and combined perfectly by the religious leaders. The forthcoming

discussion on al-Mu'ayyad's view is a further attempt to compare the views of the

philosophers with the views of the religious guides. According to the basic premise of

al-Mu'ayyad, the prophets and their successors have all kinds of knowledge and

sciences and therefore they are superior in every respect to philosophers. In this

regard, al-Mu'ayyad refers to a verse of the Qur'ān which explains the prophet

Ibrāhīm's knowledge, demonstrating that Ibrāhīm's knowledge was not confined to

religious observances and the like but was extended to the entire universe. The Qur'ān

states: "In the same manner, did we show Ibrāhīm the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth that he might be one of those who is in possession of certitute (6:76)". Al-Mu'ayyad's reference to the Qur'ānic verse and his supporting evidence seem to be responses to the claim of the philosophers that intellectual sciences (al-ᶜAqlīyyāt) do not emanate from the prophets, but they emanate from the philosophers thus claiming a superior authority in their own favour as compared to the authority of the religious guides.[61]

Now let us focus on a believer's intellectual status and capacity in relation to the guidance of the Prophet and the Imāms.

Al-Mu'ayyad begins his discourse on the nobility of the human being by considering his intellect to be a created object which Allah raised to an exalted form and crowned it with honour. In this regard al-Mu'ayyad refers to the Qur'ān in order to form a basis for the subject under consideration: "Verily We have honoured the children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea; We have supplied them with good and pure provision and We have preferred them to many of those whom We created with a distinctive preference (17:70)".[62]

Based on the verse of the Qur'an, al-Mu'ayyad discusses the loftiness of the intellect by examining it from two diverse but mutually inclusive and hierarchical domains; the area of the mundane and the territory of the supermundane. To be exact, al-Mu'ayyad refers to the first domain as the "first world" (al-dār al-ūlā) and to the other he refers as the "other domain" or the "realm of the Hereafter" (al-dār al-ukhrā).

According to al-Mu'ayyad, human beings enjoy domination over the first of these domains and they have the capacity to grasp the "other domain" on the ground of their rationality in conjunction with the instructions of the religious authority".[63]

First, al-Mu'ayyad elaborates on the subjugating power of the human being in the material world, namely, his controlling authority over all the rest of creatures, including animal kingdom in air, in sea and on earth. According to al-Mu'ayyad, a human being uses the animal kingdom for his own diverse benefits. In expounding his argument for the intellectual domination of the human being in the material world, the Fatimid author concentrates on the capacity of the human being's contemplative power which, according to him, is far reaching. He understands that a human being's contemplative power has the capacity to include within the range of his vision all-encompassing celestial domain; thus considering the intellect to be capable of exploring all kinds of areas perhaps, including scientific discoveries. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the help which the intellect provides to the human being in this world, is the help related to the mundane[64].

Next, al-Mu'ayyad examines the status of the human intellect as it stands in relation to revelation, a point which was discussed previously. However, presently it needs further discussion due to its importance. Concentrating on the function of the intellect in relation to revelation, al-Mu'ayyad considers the intellect to be potentially capable of leading a human being to eternal existence in the Hereafter. To expound his point of view in detail, he relates the intellect to the Islamic revelation. He considers the intellect to be an entity of paramount significance in a human being's recognizing

and understanding the Divine message. According to writer, a believer will be able to understand the knowledge which appertains to the hereafter[65]. Al-Mu'ayyad says that it is due to his intellect that a human being can perceive the Divine message and its explanations, emanating from the Prophet. Al-Mu'ayyad also sheds light on the instrumentality of the intellect of a human being in enabling his soul to acquire enlightenment which he can receive by means of recognizing the divinely designated authorities. According to him, the recognition, which one acquires through his intellect, gives

Elaborating on the status of reason, al-Mu'ayyad refers to those texts of the Qur'ān which stress understanding. For example, the Qur'an says: "So fear Allah in relation to your duty to Allah, O', people of understanding" (5:100). [66]

Al-Mu'ayyad's argument continues as he enters the discussion on Islamic *Sharī*ah* as based on rationality. Amongst the arguments which he presents is this: according to him, divinely ordained obligations are assigned only to that person who is of sound mind (*dhā* *ᶜaql*). In expressing this view, al-Mu'ayyad refers to certain categories of people who are not legally obliged to undertake religious obligations because of such reasons as mental derangement.[67]

Al-Mu'ayyad's concept of the authority of the *Imāmah* is like that of the other Ismāᶜīlī *dāᶜīs,* particularly al-Kirmānī in considering the intellect of a believer to be subservient to the religious authority. In al-Mu'ayyad's thought, the intellects of the

Imāms relate to the intellects of the people in the sense that the Imāms bring the

intellects of the people from the state of potentiality into the state od actuality.[68]

H.   CONCLUSION

The cosmological and intellectual thought of al-Mu'ayyad appears to be a

reinforcing factor of his theological discourse in which the centrality of the

spiritual/intellectual hierarchical ranks is evident. It should be born in mind that when

one examines the denominational aspects of the Ismāʿīlī doctrines of cosmology, there

appears to be diversity in it. However, the essence of the doctrines seems to have

remained the same though emphasis on the changed circumstances becomes evident

as highlighted in the terminologies used during the early Ismāʿīlī period as compared

to Fatimid period. For example, the terms "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" which synthesized the

core aspects of the cosmological doctrines of early Ismāʿīlīsm were replaced by such

other terms as the "Universal Intellect" and the "Universal Soul" during the time of the

Fatimids.   One can witness these substitutes in the thought of al-Mu'ayyad to be

prominent, as he does not seem to have employed "*Kūnī* and "*Qadar*" in his writings

but frequently makes use of some other terms such as the "Universal Intellect" and

"Universal Soul".

Other points of difference between early Ismāʿīlīsm and Fatimid Ismāʿīlīsm

include the concept of seven heavenly letters known as "*al-karūbiyyah*", as well as the

concept of Spiritual Beings, which are identified with "Intermediaries" also. In early

Ismāʿīlīsm, extreme secrecy prevailed in respect to the esoteric meanings of the seven

letters, probably due to the circumstances of the day which required taking precautionary measures. However, during Fatimid period, some of the Fatimid scholars interpreted the seven letters and revealed their esoteric meanings though they were not unanimous on the grounds on which they based their interpretations of the seven letters. Those scholars were Jaᶜfar b. Man'ṣūr al-Yaman and al-Sijistānī who, in their own ways interpreted the seven letters as signifying the seven Enunciators (*nuṭaqā'*). However, other Ismāᶜīlī thinkers, namely Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and al-Mu'ayyad did not discuss the seven heavenly letters by associating them with the seven Enunciators.

Also according to al-Rāzī and al-Mu'ayyad, the angels of punishment and the angels of mercy are different entities from the "Intermediaries" through which the Prophet received Divine Help and revelation.

It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for the early Ismāᶜīlī cosmological system. But one can say that the early Ismāᶜīlīs used more specialized terms than those employed in Fatimid period, perhaps, to keep the system of the *daᶜwah* esoteric and inaccessible to others thereby confining it to only selected members of the Ismāᶜīlī community. Thus, one can substantiate this idea by the fact that early Ismāᶜīlīsm evolved during the period of concealment when the Ismāᶜīlī *dāᶜīs* had to be extra vigilant by selecting those members of the community who were supposed to be trustworthy and capable of meeting the requirements of the *daᶜwah* its esoteric dimension.

As regards the Fatimid system of the Ismāʿīlī cosmology, it seems to have included within itself elaborate and diverse content and methodologies. Most prominent of them is the Fatimid belief in the transcendence of God. According to the Fatimids, including al-Mu'ayyad, Allah transcends everything else including the most elevated Spiritual and Physical Hierarchical Ranks. Al-Mu'ayyad further holds the view that nobody has the capability to recognize God and describe Him without recognizing the "Intermediaries" and following the guidance, which emanates from them. These "Intermediaries" include the Prophet and the Imāms. Acquiring knowledge of God is only possible through the instrumentality of the Hierarchical Ranks. The other most prominent aspect of Fatimid cosmological doctrines which al-Mu'ayyad perceives is that revelation and reason are not two contradicting entities but are intertwined and serve for one and the same purpose. Furthermore, according to al-Mu'ayyad, the correspondence of reason with revelation is not restricted to a particular domain but rather it has a broad spectrum of spheres, all of which are interrelated. The highest entity of reason, namely, the source of all kinds of knowledge and sciences is the "Universal Intellect" and lowest entity is the intellect of the human being. It seems that al-Mu'ayyad has no reservation whatsoever to uphold the view that although the human intellect has the potentiality to progress to the Higher Spiritual/Intellectual Domain, it cannot attain that Domain without the assistance of the religious authorities. These are the individuals through whose instrumentality, spiritual/intellectual inspiration and help become manifest to the rest of human beings. This view is in contrast with the view of the philosophers who do not seem to

have relied on religious authorities even the Prophet to attain the intelligible, as they

hold that they have the capacity to grasp the source of the Domain, namely, the First

Intellect/Universal Intellect independently.

Although al-Mu'ayyad demonstrated a positive attitude to other legacies

including Greek philosophy by assimilating certain elements of their thought into the

Fatimid intellectual system, revelation remained the criterion for validating his overall

religious system. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad corroborated his intellectual thought by the

Qur'ān, the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet and the teachings of the Imāms.

FINAL CONCLUSION

The current study mainly focused on the interpretation of the Qur'ān as

understood by Fatimid Ismāʿīlīsm with reference to al-Mu'ayyad. Concentrating on the

thought of al-Mu'ayyad, first the study examined the diverse meanings of the Qur'ān,

including its esoteric aspect based on such terms as "*ta'wīl*" and "*bāṭin*". The reasons

for the great interest of the Fatimids, particularly of al-Mu'ayyad in the esoteric aspect

of the Islamic revelation include its relevance to the Ismāʿīlī concept of the *Imāmah*.

According to al-Mu'ayyad, after the departure of the Prophet of Islam, it is the Imām

from the family of the Prophet who can ideally and truly interpret the Islamic

revelation, particularly its esoteric aspect. This discussion will follow but now a brief analysis of the life of al-Mu'ayyad is necessary.

The duties and responsibilities of the Fatimid *da^cwah* seem to be not only a most important task to which al-Mu'ayyad committed himself but it was also the main object of his interest. In his capacity as a religious scholar of Fatimid Ismā^cīlīsm and as the Chief *dā^cī*, al-Mu'ayyad was responsible for conducting the work of manifold dimensions appertaining to the *da^cwah*. Roughly speaking, al-Mu'ayyad's duties related to the mission fall into two classifications. One of them concerned with the core aspect of the *da^cwah* and that includes providing instructions on administrative matters and more importantly on the spiritual and intellectual advancement to all levels of the believers, particularly the hierarchical ranks, working under him. In providing religious training, particular attention would be made to ensure that the guidance of the Imām was followed precisely.

Al-Mu'ayyad's role as an instrument for conveying the teachings of the Fatimid faith to the believers remained an ongoing duty throughout his life. As the Chief *dā^cī,* al-Mu'ayyad's other duties included defending the faith and planning strategies, thereby ensuring that the believers were left in no internal disharmony as far as faith and religious beliefs were concerned. Al-Mu'ayyad had to engage himself in this kind of task more frequently when he was in Iran and remained occupied with holding debates with people of other denominations. Al-Mu'ayyad's works include within themselves illustrations of both categories of the duties and responsibilities related to the Fatimid *da^cwah*. Al-Mu'ayyad's conduct of the Fatimid mission bears

witness that he was the delegated agent of the religious affairs of the Fatimids during his time.

Al-Mu'ayyad also worked as a strategist thus assisting the Fatimid state. In this respect, his role in ᶜIrāq and Syria is well known. However, theoretically, and ideally, al-Mu'ayyad could have made more contributions to the work of the Fatimid *daᶜwah* if he had remained aloof from and uninterrupted by political affairs and internal rivalries. However, al-Mu'ayyad seems to be more pragmatic in serving the Fatimids in the political sphere in addition to his main engagement.

After having given a brief analysis of the life of al-Mu'ayyad, now the main aspect of his thought should be discussed. To begin with, an evaluation of al-Mu'ayyad's discussion on Qur'ānic knowledge and its categories is important.

Although according to the Ismāᶜīlīs, the esoteric and symbolized aspects of the Qur'ān are basically complementary to the symbolic and exoteric aspect of it, they appertain to higher, hierarchical, and enigmatic levels. The overwhelming Ismāᶜīlī interest in the esoteric aspect and the great commitment of the Ismāᶜīlīs to the teachings and learning of *ta'wīl/bāṭin* may be witnessed in the literature written by Ismaᶜīlī scholars. The interpretation of *ta'wīl* dominate all other content included in the works of Ismāᶜīlī scholars compiled on Qur'ānic interpretation and theological subjects. One can judge for oneself that some of these scholars have highlighted the supremacy of *ta'wīl/bāṭin* and they entitled some of their most important works accordingly. For example, as mentioned earlier, two of al-Nuᶜmān's works are referred

as *Asās al-Ta'wīl* and *Ta'wīl al-Da^cā'im*. The other works which also stress the *bāṭin* are identified as *al-Majālis*, which are collections of a series of lectures that a *dā^cī al-du^cāh* or any other authorized individual would deliver to the believers. These lectures too were based on the esoteric aspect of religion. *Al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah* is a collection of the kind of lectures the bulk of which consists of the esoteric aspect of religion.

These and similar other Ismā^cīlī literature clearly show the absolute commitment of the Fatimids to the esoteric aspect. It can be said safely that the Fatimids took a relatively little interest in producing *tafsīr* literature which may be indicative of their attitude of maintaining their identity in promoting the *bāṭīnī* aspect of the Qur'ān more extensively and that, according to them, *tafsīir* literature reflects only the exoteric interpretation of the Qur'ān. Al-Mu'ayyad categorically makes a distinction between *tafsīir* and *ta'wīl* by considering the former to be included in the exoteric interpretation of the Qur'ān. One of the reasons for the distinction between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* is that *tafsīr* is common and *ta'wīl* is restricted to those individuals who can comprehend it, those who are associated with the Imāms of the *ahl al-bayt*. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad would insist that it is only the Ismā^cīlīs who deserve to gain this special knowledge. The reason for al-Mu'ayyad's view would be that the Ismā^cīlīs commit themselves to the Imāms of the Household of the Prophet and demonstrate to them their unconditional loyalty. Al-Mu'ayyad's view that the Ismā^cīlīs are the exclusive beneficiaries from the esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān, can be seen in his analysis of the Qur'ān-Imām relationship and particularly how he sees the Qur'ānic interpretation to

be one of the main reasons for the necessity of the presence of the Imām.

To substantiate his claim of the necessity of the presence of the Imām, al-Mu'ayyad heavily relies on the most fundamental source of Islamic teachings, that is, the Qur'ān. He does not merely deem the Qur'ān to be the Source of proofs for the *Imāmah* of the *ahl al-bayt* but also considers the Imāms to be its rightful interpreters. Most probably on the strength of this view, al-Mu'ayyad has conceived the idea to look at the Qur'ān from the perspective of its diverse objectives and manifold meanings. He examined the categories of the meanings of the Qur'ān, considering its historical development in early Shīʿīsm, including the evolution took place during the early Ismāʿīlī and early Fatimid periods.

Also al-Mu'ayyad extends the application of the term of *ta'wīl* to creation and thus does not restrict the methodology of the interpretation of the Qur'ān to theological subjects only. He seems to have established his claim of the comparison between the universe and the religious system by the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet in which creation and the religious system are depicted as parallel and complementary. Based on this comparison, al-Mu'ayyad seems to have distinguished himself from his predecessors, the theologians like al-Nuʿmān who restricted the use of the term of *ta'wīl* to the Qur'ān alone.

Al-Mu'ayyad's concept of guidance and the necessity of the presence of the Imām seem to be a pivotal point around which other aspects of the *Imāmah* such as the criteria of the Imām, his qualifications and functions, rotate. The pieces of evidence

for these aspects of the *Imāmah* which al-Mu'ayyad furnished include evidence from

creation, as well as from the religious system which include textual references,

particularly from the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet.

Al-Mu'ayyad's stress on the evidence from the components of creation and

the religious system shows that he strongly believes in the correspondence between

these two entities. Based on his understanding of the correspondence between

creation and the religious system, al-Mu'ayyad used some of the constituents of

creation as cosmic evidence for the religious doctrines. For example, the celestial

bodies which seem to be important elements in al-Mu'ayyad's theological and

cosmological spheres, appear to have relevance in his overall thought.

The Fatimid belief in the designation of the Imām as based on Divine will is

another integral aspect of the *Imāmah*. Al-Mu'ayyad seems to have inherited some of

the ideas of the principle of designation, namely, the *naṣṣ* from his predecessors, for

example, from al-Nuᶜmān. However, at times, al-Mu'ayyad remains distinctive in

explaining what the comprises. Both elements need further elaboration.

Al-Mu'ayyad is in complete agreement with al-Nuᶜmān in considering the part

of *naṣṣ* to be crucial in the history of Divine guidance generally. Thus, all the prophets,

including the Prophet of Islam were designated by Divine order and following that

practice, the Prophet nominated ᶜAlīy as the Imām and guide after him. This means

that according to al-Mu'ayyad, there is no deviation from the prophetic practice as far

as designating the Imāms after the termination of the *Nubuwwah* is concerned. Al-

Mu'ayyad's reference to the link between the prophetic designation and the post-prophetic nomination is further confirmation that the principle of the designation remained a primary requirement in the selection of the Imām. Al-Mu'ayyad's view is in line not only with the belief of early Fatimid scholars but also with the early Shīʿī belief. However, al-Mu'ayyad seems to be unprecedented in explicitly describing the spiritual substance which seems to be the foundation of all the elements of the *naṣṣ* examined by al-Mu'ayyad such as the knowledge of the Imām. The spiritual substance is an element that the Imām transmits to his successor by designating him as the Imām after him. The Shīʿī belief of the *naṣṣ* is in sharp contrast with the view of general Muslims, including the Sunnis, who believe that the earliest caliphs of the Muslims and later rulers were elected by the people.

Although ideally and conceptually the Fatimids, including al-Mu'ayyad believe that the Imām is in possession of both spiritual and temporal authorities, historically most of the Imāms did not hold temporal authority for uncongenial political conditions. These conditions, however, did not prevent the Ismāʿīlīs from believing that ideally and conceptually, political authority is not excluded from the spiritual authority of the Imāms. The proofs which al-Mu'ayyad furnished for the overall authority of the Imām seem to have shown that he does not consider that temporal authority lies outside the pale of the spiritual domain but rather, according to him, they both are related to the same sphere, the sphere of the *Imāmah/Walāyah*. Al-Mu'ayyad's analysis of the Prophetic *Ḥadīth* of *Ghadīr Khumm* and other evidence which he furnished, according to him, allude to the *Walāyah* of ʿAlīy to have encompassed everything which the

believers need for guidance after the departure of the Prophet of Islam. Al-Mu'ayyad's view on the *Imāmah/Walāyah* as a combined entity of temporal and spiritual powers also reflects in his interpretation of certain verses of the Qur'ān such as the verse which identifies and supports the concept of the "Commander of the faithful". These texts include the injunction "And obey those in authority amongst you (*wa-ulī al-amri minkum*).

Considering al-Mu'ayyad's view on the functions of the Imāms in relation to the believers, their status as interpreters of the Islamic revelation emerges as the most important function which they undertake as the guides of the community. According to al-Mu'ayyad, the correspondence between the Qur'ān and the Imāms is indispensable for guiding the believers. One of the reasons which al-Mu'ayyad gives for his view is that the Qur'ān is unable to speak to people to explain its meanings to them directly, including its esoteric meanings.

In propounding the idea of the Qur'ān-Imām relationship, al-Mu'ayyad seems to be the first Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* to have extensively elucidated the correspondence which, according to him, exists between the "Speaking Book" and the "Silent Book". It appears that the concept of the "Two Books" was rooted in early Shīʿism, particularly in a *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet in which he is reported to have mentioned that he had left behind him two weighty things: the Book of Allah and his *ahl al-bayt* for the guidance of his *ummah*. Al-Mu'ayyad seems to have understood the *Ḥadīth* in the sense that both the Qur'ān and *ahl al-bayt* are guardians of Islamic teachings and guarantors of the safety and security of the believers from going astray.

It further appears that according to al-Mu'ayyad, this *Ḥadīth* is one of the leading pieces of evidence for the designation of the Imāms which not only specifies them to be the rightful successors of the Prophet and qualified individuals for the office of the *Imāmah* but also the rightful interpreters of the Islamic revelation. In this regard, one can also say that by commenting on the *Ḥadīth*, al-Mu'ayyad further stresses the spiritual and inner connection between the Prophet and the Imāms. This means that the Imāms as the progeny of the Prophet not only have a blood relationship with him but more importantly, they are his spiritual heirs as well and are in possession of his characteristics as necessary for the guidance of the believers, including the knowledge of revelation and intellectual legacy.

If looked at the theological and the judicial evolution of the Muslims in general, it becomes clear that all the sectarian movements within Islam felt the necessity for an authority for guidance based on the interpretation of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. However, a most conspicuous difference between the Ismāʿīlīs and the rest of the Muslims is that the Ismāʿīlīs claim that there are divinely determined criteria and qualifications of their religious guide based on which he provides guidance to them and impart to them Qur'ānic knowledge on an ongoing basis. In addition, like other Ismāʿīlī writers, al-Mu'ayyad believes the Imām to be guiding the believers beyond the theological sphere.

Al-Mu'ayyad understands the domain of religious knowledge and exploration to extend beyond the fundamental doctrine and belief system determined by Fatimid theology. For instance, according to him, Divine knowledge along with its intellectual

connotation does not confine itself to acknowledging certain primary religious doctrines like acknowledging the Unity of Allah (*Tawḥīd*) merely by tongue and conducting certain religious observances such as performing the *ṣalāh*. However, according to al-Mu'ayyad, imbibing Divine knowledge and intellectual sciences are also part and parcel of the Ismāʿīlī faith. This means according to al-Mu'ayyad, learning knowledge and having an enquiring mind are of great significance. Both knowledge and intellectual quest enable one to ponder over the sublunary world not for the sake of itself though but aiming thereby at all those truths which al-Mu'ayyad stresses and which, according to him, remain behind the sublunary world. In this connection, the definition of *ta'wīl* and the scope of its application, as well as the qualifications of its interpreters were elaborated on in chapter three and chapter four. In chapter five, however, al-Mu'ayyad's more extensive approach to *ta'wīl* was discussed which links the application of *ta'wīl* to cosmological truths, as this aspect seems to be part and parcel of the overall thought of al-Mu'ayyad.

Al-Mu'ayyad's further understanding of the *Imāmah* with reference to Ismāʿīlī cosmology can succinctly be examined by discussing his sources of information and his originality about Fatimid thought. To begin with, it is significant to state that mostly al-Mu'ayyad anonymously recognized the contributions of his predecessors, the *dāʿīs* whose works not only include early Fatimid teachings but also the religious beliefs of the early Ismāʿīlīs. These Ismāʿīlī scholars consistently agreed on the necessity of a hierarchical system in the cosmological order throughout their doctrinal history and there was no drastic change in its essence in the writings of these Fatimid authors,

including in the writings of al-Mu'ayyad. For example, the early Ismāʿīlī view and the Fatimid view agree on the presence of Intermediaries between Allah and His bondsmen in a hierarchical order. However, they differed over the number of some of the Spiritual Beings and on the terms which they apply to some of the members of the hierarchy. In this regard, "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadar*" can be given as illustrations which seem to be at the heart of the early Ismāʿīlī cosmology and which are also extant in the writings of some of the Fatimid scholars such as al-Sijistānī. However, al-Mu'ayyad does not seem to have used these terms though he employs some other terms and concepts of the early Ismāʿīlīs such as the "Preceder" (*al-sābiq)* and the "Successor" (*al-tālī*) which the early Ismāʿīlīs used for "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" as the alternative terms. Amongst other elements which al-Mu'ayyad shared with early Ismāʿīlīs are the concept of higher world and lower world.

Al-Mu'ayyad avoided using "*Kūnī*" and "*Qadr*" perhaps to confine himself to those terms and concepts that were more current in his time because of the intellectual development during the Fatimid period up to and including his own time. The evolution under consideration was greater and more intensive as compared to what happened in that regard during the period of early Ismāʿīlīsm. During the period of early Ismāʿīlīsm, more emphasis was placed on the cosmological study and fewer references were made to intellectual elements. In view of their response to diverse heritages, the Fatimids had to amalgamate some elements with their thought to make them unified entities. Therefore, Fatimid thought became a combination of a broad spectrum of ideas. Some of the early Fatimid thinkers, including al-Sijistānī, had begun

to use alternative terms for certain Islamic concepts such as the concepts of the "Pen" and the "Preserved Table". The time relevance seems to be of paramount importance in the system of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad, as his time saw a combination of diverse heritages such as the early Ismāʿīlī cosmological doctrines and the Fatimid intellectual heritage though parts of these heritages were interrelated. Despite al-Mu'ayyad's awareness of a combination of diverse heritages it appears that the earlier Fatimid scholars did not seem to have formulated theological reasons extensively for using the alternative terms that include the "Intellect" and "Soul".

Al-Mu'ayyad seems to have been aware of the absence of an elaborate theological rationalisation of the necessity of amalgamating the elements concerned. Thus, he repeatedly compares cosmological and intellectual elements with Fatimid theological beliefs. In this discussion, the paramount concern of al-Mu'ayyad seems to be exploring the theological grounds for the amalgamation under consideration. This aspect of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad is one of those contributions which he distinctively made to Fatimid thought. For example, in examining the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet concerning the "First Intellect", al-Mu'ayyad seems to have demonstrated his distinctive position as to how theology and particularly the *Ḥadīth* are essential tools in proving his perceived intellectual system. On the other hand, other Fatimid writers such as al-Sijistānī and al-Kirmānī seem to have either ignored the *Ḥadīth* totally or have not quoted it in their most important works like *Kitāb al-Iftikhār*. However, they have discussed other grounds for their theological and intellectual arguments for the *Imāmah*.

Al-Mu'ayyad's emphasis on the *Ḥadīth* and his general tendency towards theological rationalization appear due to two reasons. Firstly, he attempted to make his arguments for the reconciliation between theology and intellectual sciences available to wider circles of Muslim writers, including Muslim philosophers. The reason for the above-mentioned assumption is that during the time of al-Mu'ayyad, probably other Muslim writers, particularly Muslim philosophers were still interested in arguing for this reconciliation. Secondly and probably more importantly, al-Mu'ayyad was addressing the Ismāʿīlīs who were, perhaps, aware of the theological and philosophical developments which had taken place already but who further needed guidance and reassurance about the amalgamation of reason with revelation to be able to resolve those issues which arose under changed circumstances. Al-Mu'ayyad's stress on the reconciliation between reason and revelation is an extension of Fatimid thought and a reflection on his theological and intellectual responses to the instructional inquiries that the Ismāʿīlīs of his time made.

Al-Mu'ayyad's crystallization of the terms which he used synonymously for cosmological and intellectual concepts is closely related to the above-mentioned discussion. Al-Mu'ayyad identified three domains of knowledge and sciences which emerge from his understanding of Fatimid thought as it had evolved up to and including his own time. These domains comprise the "sphere of revelation", the "sphere of rational thought" and the "sphere of the *daʿwah* and truth".

The first of these domains, i.e. the "domain of revelation" comprises those generally accepted terms which are based on the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet. These terms include the "Pen" and the "Preserved Tablet". Following the Ismāʿīlī view on the categories of the exoteric and esoteric aspects, one can view these elements as part and parcel of the

exoteric aspect of the doctrines and teachings which Ismāᶜīlī Shīᶜīsm understands.

The second domain is the "domain of rational thought" which consists of intellectual and philosophical ideas and terms, including all rational arguments that Fatimid thinkers advanced. The domain also includes some philosophical elements which one finds in the thought of philosophers. Al-Mu'ayyad appears to have referred to his predecessors most frequently about intellectual thought of the Fatimids and the views of the philosophers. However, al-Mu'ayyad discusses the views of philosophers sometimes rejecting some aspects of their views and at other times accepting other aspects of their interpretations after having modified them. The aspects of the views of philosophers which al-Mu'ayyad rejects include their claim of the ascendency of the authority of philosophers compared to the supremacy of the authority of the Prophet and the Imāms which, according to al-Mu'ayyad, is overriding compared to the authority of philosophers. As regards those aspects of thought of philosophers, which he accepts with modification, they include the concept of the "intellect in potentiality" and the "intellect in actuality".

The third domain is the "domain of the *daᶜwah* and truth" which, according to al-Mu'ayyad, includes the purely esoteric and exclusive Ismāᶜīlī terms. According to al-Mu'ayyad, this category applies to the terms introduced in early Ismāᶜīlīsm, as well as those which became part and parcel of Fatimid thought. These terms include the "Preceder" (*al-sābiq)* and the "First Originated Being" (*awwal mubdaᶜ*), which, in a specific sense represent early Ismāᶜīlī thought, and Fatimid thought respectively.

Furthermore, in his analysis of the views of his predecessors, including al-Sijistānī and al-Kirmānī, al-Mu'ayyad seems to have exhibited a high degree of neutrality. One can witness his neutral approach to these thinkers in the fact that he does not seem to substantiate his point of view exclusively by the view of any Fatimid thinker of the previous times. What he seems to have done is that he chose specific aspects of the views of his predecessors almost on an equal par without showing a decisive

tendency towards any one of them.

Finally one can say that like his predecessors, al-Mu'ayyad made substantial contributions to Fatimid thought as a whole. Certain aspects of the thought of al-Mu'ayyad such as his definition of *ta'wīl*, and that of the designation in the *Imāmah*, his elaboration of the correspondence between the Qur'ān and the Imām, his arguments for the reconciliation between reason and revelation and his concept of the threefold domains of knowledge and sciences make him distinctive from his fellow Fatimid scholars. Also he will be remembered as a credible source of information and knowledge of the evolution of Fatimid thought, as he appears to be the most prominent Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* during the last phase of the Fatimid period.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1] ᶜImād al-Dīn, *ᶜUyūn al-Akhbār wa-Funūn al-Āthār*, vol. 7 edited with an English summary by A. F. al-Sayyid, Paul E. Walker and M. A. Pomerantz entitled *The Fatimids and their Successors in Yaman*, text, and translation Series no. 4 (London, I.B. Tauris, 2002).

Note: This source was not available to me at the final review of the thesis, therefore, I consulted the manuscript of this source with the permission of the concerned authority. See for the details of the manuscript: ᶜImād al-Dīn, ᶜUyūn al-Akhbār, MS No. (R) 8 and MS No. (R) 9, Hamdani Collection, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. The Manuscript is part of the special collections of the institute of smaili Studies. {Thanks to the Institute of Ismaili Stuides for allowing me to use the manuscript.}.

[2] Al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *Sīrat al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Dīn Dāᶜī al-Duᶜāh,* ed. M. K. Ḥusayn Cairo, Dār al-Kātib al-Miṣrī, 1949), Introduction by Ḥusayn, pp. 21, 18, 20.

[3] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Dīwān al-Mu'ayyad*, ed. Ḥusayn (Cairo, Dār al-Kātib al-Miṣrī, 1949).

[4] The order of all the topics included in *Jāmiᶜ al-ḥaqā'iq* are the following: Chapter one discusses the Unity of Allah (*al-tawḥīd*); chapter two is on the "First Originated Being" (*al-Mubdaᶜ al-awwal*); chapter three examines the Prophet Muhammad exclusively. Chapter four expands further the status of the Prophet of Islam followed by the discussion on the Vicegerent, namely ᶜAlīy ibn Abī Ṭālib. Chapter five is on ᶜAlīy and the Imāms after ᶜAlīy. Chapter Seven examines the rest of the Ranks of religious hierarchy, including Spiritual Ranks. Chapter eight is on revelation (*al-waḥī*) and inspiration (*ta'yīd*). Chapter nine explains the distinctive characteristics of the Prophets their Vicegerents and the Imāms. Chapter Ten describes the necessity of taking oath in respect to *ta'wīl*. Chapter eleven refutes the beliefs and ideas of the extremists and the believers in transmigration. Chapter twelve is devoted to refuting the philosophers, deniers of the Attributes of Allah and of astrologers. Chapter thirteen is on the Muᶜtazila as well as those people who believe in the exoteric aspect of religion only. Chapter fourteen examines the opponents of all the speaking prophets, their vicegerents and the Imāms. Chapter fifteen includes within itself exhortations, private supplications, sermons as well as discussions of trials and tribulations which the friends of Allah experience. Chapter sixteen discusses the Imām of the Resurrection. Chapter seventeen examines the permanency of the life of the Hereafter and the reward. Chapter eighteen is on the punishment. See: Ḥatim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī, *Jāmiᶜ al-ḥaqā'iq,* fols. 7b-8b; MS NO. 96, Institute of Ismaili Studies London. The manuscript is a part of the special collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from the manuscript.

[5] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyah.* vol. 1. Abridged by Ḥ. b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī, ed. M. ᶜA. al-Qādir ᶜAbd al-Nāṣir (Cairo, Dār al-Thaqāfah li al-Ṭibāᶜah wa-al-Nashr, 1975), Introduction, pp. 22-24.

[6] It should be stressed that it is not Ḥātim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī who wrote *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah* himself, but he edited it by doing things like deleting parts of this book and

bringing together all corresponding and resembling parts and renamed it *Jāmi^c al-ḥaqā'iq*. The purpose of this change on the part of al-Ḥāmidī was most probably to make the reading easier. For more information on this, see: Al-Ḥāmidī, *Jāmi^c al-ḥaqā'iq*, fols, 6b. 7b-8b; MS NO. 96, The Institute of Ismaili Studies. The Manuscript is part of the special collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce the quoted material here.}.

[7] Al-Mu'ayyad ,*Al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah* ed*. Ḥ. Ḥ* al-Dīn (Bombay, I975);1:3 Idem *Sīrah*..., p. 17, 39 .

[8] Ibid, pp. 212-213, also pp. 400-401.

[9] See Bibliography under al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī.

[10] Abū al-Qāsim Ja^cfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Ta'wīl al-Zakāh*, MS No. 216. The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. The manuscript is part of the special collections of the institute of Ismaili udies. {Thanks to the Institute of Ismaili Studies for allowing me to use the manuscript}.

[11] Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, *Thalāthata ^cAshara Risālah*; MS No. 218, the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. The manuscript is part of the special collections of the institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks allowing me to use the manuscript}.

[12] Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī, *Jāmi^c al-ḥaqā'iq*, MS No. 95, MS No. 96, and MS No. 97. The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. The manuscripts are part of the special collections of the institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks to the Institute of Ismaili Studies for allowing me to use the manuscripts}.

[13] Ibn Balkhī, *The Fārs-Nāmeh of Ibn Balkhī*, ed. G. G. Le Strange,

and R. A. Nicholson (Shiraz, The Foundation for the Study of the Province of Fars, 1995).

[14] Henry Corbin, Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis, ed. H. Landolt (London; Boston, Kegan Paul, 1983.).

[15] S. M. Stern, *Studies in Early Ismā^cīlīsm* (Jerusalem, The Hebrew University; Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1983.

[16] Ḥusayn, *Fī Adabi Miṣr al-Fāṭimiyyah* (Cairo, Dār al-Fikr al-^cArabī, 1950).

[17] Abbas Hamdani, *The Sīrah of al-Mu'ayyad fi'd-Din ash-Shīrāzī*, PhD Thesis submitted to the School of Oriental and African Studies University of London.

[18] Verena Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission*: *The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2003).

[19] Tahera Qutbuddin, *Al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī and Fatimid Da^cwah Poetry*: *A Case of Commitment in Classical Arabic Literature* (Leiden; Boston, 2005.)

[20] Elizabeth Alexandrin, the "*Sphere of Walāyah*": *Ismā^cīlī Ta'wīl in Practice According to al-Mu'ayyad,* PhD thesis submitted to McGill University in 2006, p. ix.

[21] Ibid, pp. iv-v.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

[1] Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, ʿUyūn al-Akhbār, 7: 60-61; MS (R) 8 and MS (R) 9, Hamdani collection, The Institute of Ismaili studies. The manuscripts are part of the special Collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks for allowing me to use its manuscript. I also thank late Abbas Hamdani and pray for his soul to rest in eternal peace}.

[2] Ibid. p. 64. I acknowledge with thanks for granting me permission to reproduce an extract from the manuscript. {Thanks for allowing to reproduce the relevant parts of the Manuscript.

[3] Al-Mu'ayyad, Dīwān, Introduction, p. 18.

[4] Idem, Sīrah, p. 76.

[5] Idem, Dīwān…, Introduction p. 17, footnote 4.

[6] Ibid, p. 17.

[7] The Arabic word ḥuqūq is the plural form of ḥaqq which has more than one meaning. According to the interpretations given by Lane based on several dictionaries, including Muʿjam Mufradāt alfāẓ al-Qur'ān of al-Iṣfahānī, the primary meanings of ḥaqq include a thing which is in consonance with the requirements of justice, truth, right, reality or fact.   Lane then gives many other shades of meaning of ḥaqq which revolve around the meanings just given above. Thus, the broad meanings of ḥaqq include claim, duty, and obligation. See: Edward William Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon (Bayrūt: Librairie Du Liban, 1997, originally published in the UK (London; Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1863-1893) 2:607. I have translated ḥuqūq as commitments. For the translation of M. Adra see: Al-Mu'ayyad, Dīwān..., a translation entitled Mount of Knowledge, Sword of Eloquence, tr. M. Adra (London; New York, I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011), p. 180, verse 36.

[8] Al-Mu'ayyad, Dīwān…, p. 284.

[9] There are pieces of internal evidence that al-Mu'ayyad's ancestors served the Fatimids prior to the declaration of the Fatimid Empire. These proofs include ones found in the Dīwān; for example, in one of the verses al-Mu'ayyad says:

 fa-qad khadamū-kum wa-mā nashsharat   liwā' al-futūḥi yad nāshir.

        In this verse, al-Mu'ayyad addresses the Fatimid Imāms and says that they (his ancestors) rendered services to the Imāms at a time when no hoister of a banner hoisted the banner of victory yet. See: Al-Mu'ayyad, Dīwān..., p. 287, Qaṣīdah, 41, verse, 30.

[10] Farhad Daftary, The Ismāʿīlīs: their History and Doctrines (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, Reprinted 1992, 1994), p. 118. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: The Ismāʿīlīs: their history and doctrines, Farhad Daftary, Copyright © Cambridge University Press, 1990. "Reproduced with permission of The Licensor through PLSclear." {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce the quotation here.}

[11] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Dīwān…*, p. 285, *Qaṣīdah*, 40, verse, 38; see also: Adra's translation, *Mount of Knowledge*..., p. 180.

[12] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Dīwān…,* p. 213, *Qaṣīdah*, 4, verse, 58.

[13] Ibid, p. 232, *Qaṣīdah*, 11, verse, 42.

[14] Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, *Thalathata ᶜashara risālah,* p. 125, MS NO. 218, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. The manuscript is part of the special collections of the Institute of Ismaili studies. {Thanks to the Institute of Ismaili Studies for granting me permission to reproduce the material quoted here.

[15] Nothing has been quoted.

[16] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Dīwān…,* Introduction, pp. 21-22.

[17] Kāmil Ḥusayn, Fī Adabi *Miṣr al-Fāṭimiyyah*, p. 60*.*

[18] Al-Mu'ayyad*, Dīwān*, p. 22

[19]Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Al-Ishārah ilā man nāla al-Wizārah,* ed. A. Mukhliṣ (Cairo, Al-Maᶜhad al-ᶜIlmī al-Faransī, 1924), p. 36; Ibn Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīkh*, 2ⁿᵈ   edition *(*Bayrūt, Dār al-Kitāb bi-al-ᶜArabī, 1967) 8:10.

[20] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Dīwān…*, Introduction, pp. 22-23.

[21] For further information on this, see: Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission…,* p.2-3, and Introduction, p. 130, note, 2.

[22] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah…*, Introduction, p. 14.

[23] Ibid, p. 3.

[24] Ibid, p. 4.

[25] Ibid, p. 6.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid, p. 6-7.

[29] Ibid, p. 7.

[30] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*, pp.7, 8, 9.

[31] Ibn Balkhī, *the Fārs-Nāmeh*..., pp. 280-281.

[32] Al-Mu'ayyaed, *Sīrah*, p. 9.

[33] Ibid, pp. 11-12.

[34] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah…*, pp. 2-13.

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[35] Al-Mu'ayyad does not mention any Shī'ī sect but vaguely says that this affair (*hādhā al-amr*), which he embraced, had been a longstanding tradition. This may mean general Shī'ism, including Ismā'īlīsm. See: Ibid*…,* p. 13. After having quoted al-Mu'ayyad, Ḥusayn seems to have taken the phrase "most of them" in the sense of "some of them". Ḥusayn's conclusion appears to be based not on al-Mu'ayyad's view but on the view of Ibn Taghribirdī (d. 874/1470) who refers to the correspondence which existed between the Fatimid caliph al-'Azīz bi-Allāh (d. 386/996) and the Buyid King 'Aḍud al-Dawlah. In the correspondence which Ibn Taghribirdī quoted, states that 'Aḍud al-Dawlah expressed his loyalty and submissive attitude towards the Fatimid caliph by recognizing that al-'Azīz was from the pure family of the Prophet. However, Ibn Taghribirdī seems to have rejected the idea that there was genuine loyalty and submissiveness on the part of the Buyid King towards the Fatimid caliph. According to Ibn Taghribirdī, "'Aḍud al-Dawlah was incapable of combating al-'Azīz bi-Allāh" therefore the author suggests that 'Aḍusd al-Dawlah was under duress to show his loyalty to the Fatimid caliph and was fearful of him thus implying that 'Aḍud al-Dawlah was submissive to the Fatimid Caliph for that reason. Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, Maṭba'at Dār al-Kutub, 1933) 4:124-125.

From this discussion one can conclude that 'Aḍud al-Dawlah pretended to be loyal to the Fatimid Caliph as he had no alternative but to give the complimentary remarks in favour of the Fatimids. This is the interpretation of Ibn Taghribirdī. Whether the relationship between the Fatimid Caliph and the Buyid King was genuine or not, one is, however, convinced that there was correspondence between the two individuals.

One can conclude that an isolated chain of events does not lead us to the conclusion that most of the Buyid Kings supported the Fatimid cause. Therefore, it is most likely that the Fatimid *dā'ī* refers to general Shī'ism when he says, "most of the Buyid kings preferred this affair" a point which has preceded. One can, however, assume otherwise which is that the Fatimid writer was, probably in possession of some confidential information, particularly on the Fatimid-Buyid relationship which could be subject to secrecy for several reasons. One of them could be the extreme danger which was likely to catch anyone going against the Abbasid Caliphs and their supporters who were in great majority.

[36] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*, pp. 14-16.

[37] Ibid*…,* p. 43.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid, p.44.

[40] Ibid, p. 48 and particularly, p.51.

[41] Ibid*…,* p. 55. Ibn Athīr states that Ibn Mushtarī was the *qāḍī* of Khūzistān and Fars who, according to the historian died in 436 A.H. Ibn Athīr, *Al-Kāmil*…, p. 41.

[42] Al-Mu'ayyad, p. 55, note 2; p. 56.

[43] Ibid, pp. 62-66.

[44] Ibn Balkhī, t*he Fārs-Nāmeh…*, pp. 280-281.

[45] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*..., pp. 5-6, 44-45.

[46] Ibid, p. 55, footnote 2; p. 56.

[47] Ibn Athīr, *Al-Kāmil…*, pp. 13-14.

[48] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*, pp. 48-54, see particularly p. 51.

[49] Ibid, pp. 76-79.

[50] Klemm, *Memoirs…*, p. 50. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: Memoirs of the Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet, al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Din al-Shirazi, Verena Klemm, Islamic Publications Limited, 2003, I. B. Tauris in Association with the Institute of Isma'ili Studies. Used by permission of Bloombury Publishing Plc. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce the quotation from your publication.}.

[51] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*..., pp. 69-74.

[52] Ibn Balkhī, *the Fāris-Nāmeh…,* pp. 280-281.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

[1] Al-Mu'ayyad*, Dīwān*, Introduction, pp. 22, 35. In one of his books Ḥusayn mentions 437 A.H. to be the year in which al-Mu'ayyad arrived in Egypt. See: Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn, *Fī Adab Miṣr al-Fāṭimiyyah*. Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ᶜArabī, 1950), pp. 61, 114.

[2] Ismail K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography* of Ismaili Literature (California, Undena Publications, 1977), 104.

[4] Ibn Şairafī, *Al-Ishārah ilā man nāla al-Wizārah*, p. 38.

[5] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah…*, pp. 81-82.

[6] Ibid, p. 82.

[7] Ibid, pp. 83-84.

[8] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*, p. 85.

[9] Ibid, p. 88; see for the dismissal of Qāsim b. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz and that he was replaced by al-Yāzūrī: Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Kindī, *The Governors and Judges of Egypt* or *Kitāb al-Wulāt wa-Kitāb al-Quḍāh*, ed. R. Guest (London, Luzac, 1912), p. 613.

[10] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah...*, p. 89.

[11] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*..., (Ḥusayn's edition), p. 89.

[12] Ibid, p. 93.

[13] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah...*, p. 84.

[14] Ibid, pp. 93-94. Al-Mu'ayyad claims to have all the scholarly qualifications and good conduct which a *dāᶜī* needed.

[15] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*...; p. 95, footnote 1 for details.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibn Athīr, ʿIzz al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlīy al-Jazarī, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Taʾrīkh*, 8:17.

[18] Ibid, p. 87.

[19] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* (Cairo, Baghdād, Maktabat al-Khānjī and Maktabat al-ʿArabiyyah, 1931) 9:399-400.

[20] Ibid, p. 400; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Muntaẓam fī Taʾrīkh al-Mulūk wa-al-Umam*, ed. M. ʿA. ʿAṭā and Muṣṭafā ʿA. ʿAṭā (Bayrūt, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1992) 15:348.

[21] Canard, M. "Al-Basāsīrī, Abu ʾl-Ḥārith Arsalān al-Muzaffar" Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; , C. E. Bosworth; . E. van Donzel; and W. P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2011. Brill Online. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). 06 August 2011 http://brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_S1M-1254. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce this quotation in my forthcoming book.

[22] Ibn Athīr, *Al-Kāmil…*, pp. 71-72.

[23] Al-Muʾayyad, *Sīrah…*, p. 95; it was ibn Muslimah who wished Tughrul Beg to come to Baghdad as he wanted an end to the Buyid power. See: Ibn Athīr, *Al-Kāmil…*, p. 71.

[24] Al-Muʾayyad, *Sīrah…*, p. 96.

[25] Ibid, pp. 96-97. It is clear from the explanation of al-Muʾayyad that he submitted to the Imām that he was reluctant to undertake the task. The reasons which he gave included his old age, physical weakness and that the task was strenuous to win. See: Al-Muʾayyad, *Sīrah…*, p. 98.

[26] Ibid, *Sīrah*, Introduction, p. 22.

[27] Ibid…, Introduction, pp. 22-23.

[28] Canard, M. "Al-Basāsīrī, Abu ʾl-Ḥārith Arsalān al-Muzaffar" Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; , C. E. Bosworth; . E. van Donzel; and W. P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2011. Brill Online. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). 06 August 2011 <http://brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_S1M-1254>. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce the quotation in my forthcoming publication.

[29] Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, *Taʾrīkh al-Dawlah al-Fāṭimiyyah*, 2nd edition (Cairo, Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, n.d.), p. 232.

[30] Al-Muʾayyad, *Sīrah…*, p. 99.

[31] Al-Muʾayyad, *Sīrah…*, p. 100.

[32] Ibid…, pp. 100-116, and footnote 2, p. 108.

[33] Ibid…, pp. 122-124.

[34] Ibid, pp.121-122.

[35] Ibid, pp. 122-124.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid, pp.130-131.

[38] Al-Mu'ayyad does not give a date for the battle, but alludes to it by mentioning things like referring to the extraordinary bloodshed because of the intensity of the battle. However, Ḥusayn gives a note on this by referring to the sources quoted on the subject. The sources include *al-Ishārah ilā man nāla al-Wizārah*, *Mir'āt al-Zamān* and *al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīkh*. According to Ḥusayn, the two former sources state that the battle took place at the end of Shawwāl 448/1057. Whilst Ibn Athīr is reported to have expressed two different reports. According to Ḥusayn, one of the views of Ibn Athīr states that the battle was fought on the first of Shawwāl 448/1057while according to the second view, the battle took place at the end of Shawwāl. Kāmil Ḥusayn, editor of the *Sīrah* supports the first of the views attributed to Ibn Athīr which according to him, is more accurate. See: Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah...*, p. 131, note, 2; Ibn Athīr, 8:77.

Ḥusayn's reason is that al-Mu'ayyad mentioned the battle of Sinjār in one of his letters which was a congratulatory response to the Fatimid Capital in Cairo on the occasion of ᶜĪd. See: Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah...*, pp. 131. Idrīs ᶜImād al-Dīn supports this view as well. See for detail note 39.

[39] ᶜĪmād al-Dīn, *ᶜUyūn...*, 7:47, MS No. 9. The Institute of Ismaili Studies. The manuscript is part of the special collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce this quotation from one of your manuscripts.}.

[40] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah...*, pp. 135-137.

[41] Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ᶜAlīy al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Mawāᶜiẓ wa-al-Iᶜtibār fī dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār*, ed. A. F. Sayyid (London, Mu'assasat al-Furqān li al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 2002) 2:197.

[42] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*, pp. 140-151

[43] Klemm, *Memoirs...*, p. 83. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: Memoirs of the Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet, al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Din al-Shirazi, Verena Klemm, Islamic Publications Limited, 2003, I. B. Tauris in Association with the Institute of Isma'ili Studies. Used by permission of Bloombury Publishing Plc. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce a quotation from your publication.}.

[44] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*, p.153.

[45] Ibid, pp.154-157.

[46] ᶜĪmād al-Dīn, *ᶜUyūn...*, pp. 57-58. The Institutef Ismaili Studies. The manuscript is part of the special collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce this quotation from one of your manuscripts.}.

[47] Ibid, p. 58. Same acknowledgement as above is given with thanks.

[48] Ibid..., p. 58. Same acknowledgement as above is given with thanks.

[49] Ibid, pp. 58-59. Same acknowledgement as above is given with thanks.

[50] Farhad Daftary, *Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies* (London; New York, I. B. Tauris in Association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005), pp. 73-74. Copyright Notice and

⁵¹ Nāṣir-i Khusraw, Dīwān-i shʿār-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw, used the late Taqizadeh's edited manuscript. (Tehran, Khiyābān-i Jamhūrī, 1361), p.15.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

¹ Poonawala, Ismail Kurban Husein. "Ta'wīl." Encyclopedia of Islam. Second edition, Editors: P. J. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W. P. Heinriches. Vols. 12. Leiden: Brill, 2000, 10:420. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce a quotation from one of your publications.

² Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar Al-Ṭabarī, Jāmiʿ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān (Bayrūt: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1980) 3:123.

³ Alīy b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, Tafsīr al-Qummī, ed. S. T. al-Jazā'irī (Al-Najaf, Maṭbaʿat al-Najaf, 1966) 1: 96-97. For further Shīʿī view see: Al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī, Majmaʿ al-Bayān fī Tafsīir al-Qur'ān (Qum, Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmā al-Marʿashī al-Najafī, 1403/1983) 1:409-411; also see: Al-Nuʿmān, Daʿā'im al-Islām, ed. A. A. A. Fyzee (Cairo, Dār al-Maʿārif, 1963, 1969) 1:22-23. Al-Ṭabarī refers to a group of people anonymously and states that they say that muḥkamāt of the Book contain only one ta'wīl, whereas mutashābihāt bear more than one ta'wīl. See: Al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr… pp. 115-116.

⁴ Al-ṬabarĪ, Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī, edited by Maḥmūd Shākir al-Ḥirstānī, (Bayrūt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, no date) 3:214-216; Ibn Kathīr, (Mukhtaṣar) Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, ed. Muḥammad. ʿAlīy al-Ṣābūnī (Bayrūt, Dār al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 1981) 1:263-66.

⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr…, Dār al-Maʿārif edition, p. 122; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr…, p. 265; Ibn Qutaybah who preceded al-Ṭabarī supports the idea that ta'wīl is known to some people besides Allah. See: Ibn Qutaybah, Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān, ed. al-Ṣaqr (Cairo, ʿĪsā al-Bāb al-Ḥalabī, 1954), pp. 62-74; (Cairo, Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 2006), pp. 143-144.

⁶ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad (Bayrūt, Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, n.d.) 3:33, 82; also see: Al-Ḥākim al-Nīshābūrī, Al-Mustadrak ʿalā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn fī al-Ḥadīth (Hayderabad, Dār al-Maʿārif al-Niẓāmiyyah, 1915) 3:123.

⁷ No specific date for the death of al-Iṣfahānī has been given by his biographers.

⁸ Hussein Ibn Muḥammad al-Raghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 5ᵗʰ Century/11ᵗʰ Century, Muʿjam Mufradāt al-fāẓ al-Qur'ān, ed. N. Marʿashlī (Dār al-Kātib al-ʿArabī, 1972), p. 27.

[9] Ibid.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] Idem, *Al-Iᶜtiqādāt,* pp. 178-179.

[12]Ibid.

[13] Idem, *Muᶜjam…*, pp. 261-62

[14] Idem, *Al-Iᶜtiqādāt*, pp.184-185. Al-Iṣfahānī's statement about the categories of the people below the prophets who have knowledge of the esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān is vague. He merely states that they are the "friends of Allah" (*awliyā'u Allā*h, the "strictly veracious people" (*al-ṣiddīqūn*) and the "martyrs" (*al-shuhadā'*).

[15] Ibid, p. 177

[16] Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 1:96-97. For another Shīᶜī view see: Al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī, *Majmaᶜ al-Bayān…*, pp. 409-11. Al-Ṭabarsī gives somewhat a comprehensive account of the diverse views on the subject matter, including the view of the Muᶜtazilites. Sayyid al-Murtaḍā (d. 436 A. H.) is another Ithnāᶜasharī writer who analysed the wider implications of the verse 3:7 based on several Qur'ānic verses and Arabic poetry. Although he holds that "those well-rooted in knowledge" share the knowledge of *ta'wīl* with Allah, according to him, they do not know the exact *ta'wīl* and minute details of allegorical verses. Thus, they do not share this particular aspect of the knowledge with Allah. See: Al-Sharīf Al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā*, ed. S. M. B. al-Dīn Naᶜsānī al-Ḥalabī (Cairo, Maṭbaᶜat al-Saᶜādah, 1907) 2:94- 97.

[17] The Fatimid writers do not seem to be unanimous as to whether the term *Waṣīy* exclusively refers to ᶜAlīy ibn Abī Ṭālib or whether it refers the other Imāms as well. Al-Qāḍī al-Nuᶜmān refers to Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir's saying in which he used *Awṣiyā'*, plural of *Waṣīy* for all the Imāms. Al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im al-Islām*, pp. 22-23; however, another Fatimid writer al-Sijistānī employs the term exclusively for ᶜAlīy. See: Abū Yaᶜqūb al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Iftikhār,* ed. M. Ghālib (Bayrūt, Dār al-Andalus, n.d.), pp. 65-84.

[18] Daftary, The Ismāᶜīlīs their History and Doctrines, p. 87. Copyright notice and Acknowledgement: *The Isma'ilis their History and Doctrines*, Fahad Daftary, Copyright © Cambridge Unviversity Press, 1990. Reproduced with permissionof the Licensor through PLSclear.

[19] Al-Kirmānī uses terms *ta'wīl*, *Sharḥ, tafsīr* and *bayān* to be synonyms of the *bāṭin*. See: Al-Kirmānī, *Al-Maṣābīḥ fī Ithbāt al-Imāmāh* ed. Muṣtafā Ghālib (Bayrūt, Manshūrāt Ḥamd, 1969), pp. 66-73; for the secrecy of the *bāṭin/ta'wīl* see: {Averroes} Ibn Rushd, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Kitāb Faṣl al-Maqāl wa-Taqrīr mā bayna al-Sharīᶜah wa al-Ḥikmah min al-Ittiṣāl,* ed. A. N. Nādir (Bayrūt, Dār al-Mashriq, 1986), pp. 36, 38.

[20] Al- Nuᶜmān, *Asās al-Ta'wīl* pp. 30-31; also see the Qur'ān: 2:26, 25:39; 29:43; 39:27.

[21] Al-Nuᶜmān ibn Muḥammad. *Asās al-Ta'wīl*, ed. ᶜĀ. Tāmir. Bayrūt: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1960.

[22] Paul E. Walker, *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, Ismāᶜīlī thought in the age of al-Ḥākim* (London, I. B. Tauris, 1999), p. 62. Coyright Notice and Acknowledgement: Hamid al-Din al-Kirmani: Isma'ili Thought in the Age of al-Hakim, Paul E. Walker, Copyright © Islamic Publications Limited, 1999, I. B. Tauris in Association with Institute of Isma'ili Studies. Used by permission of Bloomsbury Publishing, Plc. (Thanks for allowing me to reproduce parts of one of your publications.}.

[23] Ibid, p. 76. The acknowledgment given just now also applies to the material reproduced under this note.

[24] Ibid, p. 79. The acknowledgment given just now also applies to the material reproduced under this note.

[25] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*..., pp. 16-17.

[26] Ibid, p. 17; Al-Iṣfahānī, *Muᶜjam*..., p. 26. Also see: Lane, *Arabic-English Lexican*, 1:128. These sources are not clear on the definition of *āla* which al-Mu'ayyad has suggested. However, it seems that according to them, *āl* and *āla* have many meanings. One of these meanings which is closer to al-Mu'ayyad's definition of *āla* is one's ultimate state of affair, difficulty, and distress.

[27] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*.p. 17.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Iᶜtiqādāt*, pp. 179, 189.

[31] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., 1:234**.**

[32] Ibid, (edited by Ghālib), 3:8.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid, 3:8.

[35] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., 2:302-303.

[36] Ibid, 303. Al-Ḥāmidī, *Jāmiᶜ al-ḥaqā'iq*, fol. 97; Ms No. 95,   The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce the quotation.}. The manuscript is part of the special collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies.

[37] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., 3:96-97.

[38] Al-Iṣfahānī, Muᶜjam…, p. 414.

[39] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., pp. 100, 97; in this verse, "a single soul" refers to Adam and "from it created its mate" refers to Eve. See: Ibn Kathīr, *(Mukhtaṣar) Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, p**.** 354.

[40] Al-Mu'ayyad alludes to a *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet in which he is reported to have said: "O ᶜAlī! I am and you are the parents of the believers". See: Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., 2:178. Also see: Al-Iṣfahānī, *Muᶜjam…,* p. 3; according to this version, the Prophet addressed ᶜAlīy and said: "O ᶜAlīy, I am, and you are the parents of this community" (*hādhī al-ummah)*.

[41] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*…, 3:97.

[42] Ibid, 2:274.

[43] Ibid, pp. 447- 448.

[44] Ibid, 1:359; also see: (abridged form of *al-Majālis* by al-Ḥāmidī) 1:261.
[45] Ibid, also see: (abridged form of *al-Majālis* by al-Ḥāmidī) 1:261.

[46] Idem, *Sīrah*…, pp. 16-17; the title which Ḥusayn's editon includes is "The debate of al-Mu'ayyad with the religious scholars in the presence of Abū Kālījār". However, this edition further includes another topic which mentions the second debate which was held between al-Mu'ayyad and al-Khurāsānī. See: Ibid, p. 30. Tāmir, another editor of the same source, a relatively abridged form, suggests "The grand learned man (*al-ᶜallāmah*), namely, al-Mu'ayyad in the presence of the King", to be the topic of the first debate. As far as any subsequent debates are concerned, this edition mentions a second dabate by saying "the second debate with al-Khurāsānī" (al-Munāẓarah al-thāniyah maᶜa al-Khurāsānī) which is a vague statement, as it is not clear as to whether this debate was the second debate with al-Khurāsānī or whether the first debate was with some one else or some other individuals. If according to Tāmir, this was the second debate of a series of debates with al-Khurāsānī, then it means that according to him, only one man participated in both debates, see: *Sīrah* (Tāmir's edition); pp. 34, 61. It ppears that it was al-Mu'ayyad who raised a question, first, regarding the prostration of inanimate objects and animals. But the opponent ignored this at that time and put a question to al-Mu'ayyad in relation to the interpretation of the Qur'ān. However, the question surrounding the prostration was dealt with later on along with such other subjects as *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān in the second debate. See: Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*…, (Ḥusayn's edition), pp. 16-17. It can be said that al-Khurāsānī appears to be the prominent figure in the debates. However, it is difficult to establish with absolute certainty that he was the exclusive source of all the points raised and examined in the debates. It is possible that there were some other individuals involved in the debates who agreed amongst themselves to form a united front against al-Mu'ayyad and perhaps al-Khurāsānī represented them or played a major role in the debates. Al-Mu'ayyad states that he met the King several times and he arranged numerous written debates between the former and the opponents *(al-mukhālifīn)*. The King would examine the debates thoroughly. Thus, al-Mu'ayyad had several interactions with other religious authorities. See: Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*…, (Ḥusayn's edition), pp. 15-16.

[47] Ibid, p. 16.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid, Al-Iṣfahānī expresses a similar view but he classifies words of the Qur'ān instead of its meanings as al-Mu'ayyad does. According to al-Iṣfahānī, the Qur'ānic words are of two categories: one kind of words includes those words whose meanings are known to everyone whether he is one of the common people (*ᶜāmmu-hum*) or whether he is one of the elites (*khāṣṣu-hum*). As far as the other category of the words of the Qur'ān is concerned, according to al-Iṣfahānī, this comprises those words whose meanings are known only to the elite. And according to al-Iṣfahānī, the elite include the Prophet and "those who are in authority (*ulū al-amr*), those who are able to think out

[50] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah*…, p. 17.

[51] Gilliot, Claude. "Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval." *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*. General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Brill, 2011. Brill Online. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). 6 September 2011http://brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry=q3_COM-00058 . {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from your publication.}.

[52] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīrah…,* pp. 17-18.

[53] Ibid, p. 23.

[54] Ibid, pp. 26-27.

[55] Ibid, p.17. See for the definition of components of the style of the language such as eloquence, well-balanced and concise order of the structure of the language, Muḥammad b.ᶜAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *The Summa Philosophiae of al-Sharastani/Kitāb Nihāyatu'l-Iqdām fī ᶜIlm al-Kalām*, ed. and tr. A. Guillaume (London, OUP, 1931-1934), pp. 455-56, particularly p. 457. See for a modern Muslim writer's perspective of the style of the Qur'ānic language: Muhammad A S Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur'ān: themes and style* (London, I. B. Tauris, 1999), pp. 184-210.

[56] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Sīra*, p.17.

[57] Idem, *Al-Majālis...*, 1:419-420.

[58] Martin, Richard C. "Inimitability." *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*. General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Brill, 2011. Brill Online. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). 27 June 2011http://brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=q3_COM-00093 {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from your publication.}.

[59] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., 328-329.

[60] Al-Nuᶜmān, *Asās al-Ta'wīl*, p. 32.

[61] Al-Mu'ayyad, Al-Majālis, pp. 272-273; also see 1: 395-397.

[62] Ibid, 2:273.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid, p. 161.

[65] Ibn Rushd, *Kitāb Faṣl al-Maqāl*..., pp. 36, 38, 46.

[66] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., pp. 155-156.

[67] Ibid, p. 156.

[68] Ibid, 1:347.

[69] Idem, *Sīrah*..., p. 24; Idem, *Al-Majālis*..., 3:133.

[70] Ibid..., 1:346-347; also 2:155-156. See on this subject from a modern Sunni point of view: Ismail Albayrak, '*The Notions of Muḥkam and Mutashābih in the Commentary of Elmalı'lı Muḥammad Ḥamdi Yazir*' in *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 5 (2003), pp. 22-29.

[71] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., 1:347; 2:156.

[72] Ibid, 2:156.

[73] Ibid, pp. 156-157.

[74] Ibid, 1:347.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Muʿjam*..., pp. 261-262.

[77] Kinberg, Leah. "Ambiguous. "Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān, General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Brill, 2011. Brill, Brill Online, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). 29 August 2011http://brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=q3_COM-00009 {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from your publication.

[78] Ibid. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce a quotation from your publication.}.

[79] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*, 2:158.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

[1] S. Husain M. Jafri, *Origins* and Early Development of Shīʿa Islam (London and New York; Longman; Bayrūt; Librairie, 1979), pp. 45-50; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, ed. M. al-Saqqā, I. al-Ibyārī, A. H. al-Shalabī (Bayrūt, Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 198-?) 4:306-312, particularly pp. 307, 309; Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿah*, 2ⁿᵈ ed. (Bayrūt, Dār al-Aḍwā', 1974), pp. 2-4; see for the view of the Sunnis on the necessity of the Muslim leader: Al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭānīyah*, (Al-Qāhirah, n.p., 1881), pp. 3-18, particularly pp. 14-15. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. M. A. Ibrāhīm (Al-Qāhirah, ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1959) 2:21-23.

[2] Madelung, Wilfred. "Shīʿa", Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition, edited by C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs and the late G. Lecomte. vol. 12, Lieden: E. J. Brill, 1997, 9:420. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from one of your your publications.}.

[3] Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs Their History and Doctrines* p. 37. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: *The Ismāʿīlīs: their History and Doctrines*, Farhad Daftary, Copyright © Cambridge University Press, 1990. "Reproduced with permission of The Licensor through PLSclear." {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce a quotation here.}.

The most eminent evidence for the designation of ʿAlīy as the Imām of the Muslims is one which the Prophet reportedly demonstrated at *Ghadīr Khumm*. The event of *Ghadīr Kumm* and the *Ḥadīth* which the Prophet is reported to have uttered received serious attention not only from the Fatimids but also the Ithnāʿashariyyah and some of the Sunnis. The *Daʿāʾim* mentions the background to the *Ḥadīth* and then it

mentions the event took place at *Ghadīr Khumm* which will be given below. It is clear from the Daᶜā 'im that the declaration was made based on the presence of the relevant Qur'ānic texts. According to the above-mentioned source, three verses alluded to the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* of ᶜAlīy, namely, 5:55, 5:67 and 5:3. Two of them, namely, 5:55 and 5:67 refer to the Walāyah of ᶜAlīy and the second one 5:67 has a great emphasis on conveying the message of Allah which was urgently needed to tell the people. As far as the third verse is concerned, according to our source, this verse is a confirmation that Islam completed and perfected when this verse was revealed at the end of a series of the revelation of the pillars of Islam. The source tells us that the verse was revealed in the wake of the nomination of ᶜAlīy as Imām at *Ghadīr Khumm*. Examining some of the most salient features of the pronouncement of the Walāyah of ᶜAlīy at *Ghadīr Khumm* is important. However, it should be borne in mind that the *Daᶜā'im al-Islam* gives more than one version of the *Ḥadīth*. I would quote one of the versions whose content goes back to ᶜAlīy himself. Thus, according to the *Daᶜā'im al-Islām*, a group of people asked ᶜAlīy about his outstanding traits. They requested ᶜAlīy by asking him: "Oh, Commander of the faithful, please tell us something about your outstanding traits". In response to this question ᶜAlīy told them about some of his outstanding traits, the group requested him again by stating, "Please tell us more, Oh, commander of the faithful". In response to this request, ᶜAlīy said: "When the Prophet completed the performance of the Farewell Pilgrimage, he reached at *Ghadīr Kumm* on his way to Medinah and asked the people to take care of the trees. The people accordingly cleared the trees. And then the Prophet asked the people to call to a congregational prayer. That was done also, and the people assembled. The Prophet then held my hand and lifted it towards the heaven and then spoke to the audience: "(Oh people,) am I not more entitled to claim on you than you have on your own selves? They responded", "yes, certainly, "Afterwards the Prophet said":"He to whom I am master/ lord (*mawlā*), ᶜAlīy is also his *mawlā*. Oh, Allah, love him who loves ᶜAlīy and be enemy to him who is ᶜAlīy's enemy". See: Al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im al-Islām,* translated into Urdu by Yūnus Shakīb Mubārakpūrī (India, Surat, first edition 1964, revised edition has no date) 1:37-38.

The Ithnāᶜasharī sources consulted discussed the background of the W*alāyah* of ᶜAlīy and his designation at *Ghadīr Kumm*. All pieces of evidence seem to be in complete agreement with what al-Nuᶜmān has furnished in his Daᶜā'im. See for details: Muḥammad ibn Yaᶜqūb al-Kulaynī, *Al-Uṣūl Min al-Kāfi*, ed. ᶜA. A. al-Ghiffārī. Bayrūt: Dār al-Ṣaᶜb; Dār al-Taᶜāruf, 4th edition 1401A.H. {1980 or 1981}1: 199, 288-289.

Some Sunni sources quoted this *Ḥadīth* also. See: Al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Jamiᶜ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, namely, *Sunan al-Tirmidhīy*, edited by I. ᶜA .ᶜIwaḍ (Bayrūt, Dar Ihyā' al-Turāth al-ᶜArabī, no date) 5:633. Also see the following Sources: ᐧAhmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1:84, 118, 119, 152; 4:281, 368, 370, 372-373; 5:347, 366, 419; Ibn ᶜAbd al-Barr, *Kitāb al-Istīᶜāb fī Maᶜrifat al-Aṣḥāb* (India, Hayderabad al-Dakan, Maṭbaᶜat Dā'irat al-Maᶜārif al-Niẓāmīyah) 2:460; Aḥmad b. ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad well known as Ibn Ḥajar {al-ᶜAsqalānī}, *Al-Iṣābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah* (Cairo, al-Kutubkhanah al-Khadīviyyah al-Miṣrīyyah, 1328 A.H) 2: 509.

5 Ibid, pp.38-39. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: Isma'ilis: Their History and Doctrines, Farhad Daftary, Copyright © Cambridge University Press 1990. "Reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear." {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from one of your publications.}.

6 Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad*: *The Study of the early Caliphate* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997 Reprinted 2001, 2004), pp. 8-9, 16. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: The Succesion to Muhammad: The Study of the early Caliphate, Wilferd Madelung, Copyright © Cambridge University Press, 1997. "Reproduced with permission of The Licensor through PLSclear." {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce a quotation here.}.

7 Al-Kulaynī, *Al-Uṣūl…,* 1:168-169.

8 Al-Kulaynī, *Al-Uṣūl*; 2:18-23.

9 Madelung, 'The Sources of Ismāʿīlī Law', *JNES*, 35 (1976), p. 29**.**

10 Al-Nuʿmān, *Daʿāim,* ed. A. A. A. Fyzee (Bayrūt, Dār al-Aḍwā', 1991) 1:2; see on the *Ṭahārah* and *Jihād*: Idem, *Taʾwīl al-Daʿāʾim*, pp. 72-73; also see another edition of the same source (Bayrūt, Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī, 2006) 2:290.

11 Muslim b. Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* tr. A. H. Sidddiqi (Lahore, Ashraf Islamic Publishers, 1990) 1. A: 24-25, 28-29.

12 Al-Kulaynī, Al-Uṣūl 2:20-22.

13 Numerically, according to the Sunnis, there are five Pillars of lam. They are profession of faith, ṣalāh, zakāh, fasting and pilgrimage. Muslim b. Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* 1. A, p. 4.

14 Al-Nuʿmān, Daʿāʾim, p. 4.

15Hermann Landolt, 'Walayah' in the Encyclopaedia of Religion 15 (1987), pp.316, 318-319, 321. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: 'Walayah' in Encyclopaedia of Religion (15), Hermann Landolt, Copyright © Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1987; Collier Macmillan Publishers, London. "Reproduced with permission of the author of the licensed material." {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce the quotation here.}.

16 Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…*, 1:86-87.

17 Ibid, pp. 406, 324.

18 Al-Nuʿmān, *Asās al-Taʾwīl*..., pp. 28-30**.**

19 Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…*, p. 217.

20 Ibid

21 Ibid, p. 87.

22 Ibid, pp. 87, 346.

23 Ibid, p. 87.

24 Ibid, see for further information on prophethood and the vicegerency: Al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Iftikhār…,* pp. 57-69.

[25] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…,* pp. 87-88.

[26] Ibid, pp. 110, 236-237; see for the *Ḥadīth:* Al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im…,* p. 28-50.

[27] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…*, pp. 110, 236-237.

[28] Ibid, pp. 233-234, 499-500.

[29] Ibid, pp. 480, 484.

[30] Ibid, Al-Kulaynī, *Al-Uṣūl Min al-Kāfi*, 1:187, 189 also see: p. 295; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiᶜ li al-Aḥkam al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, n. d.) 5:258-263.

[31] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…*, p. 234.

[32] Ibid, p. 501.

[33] Ibid, 2:4-5; according to Twelver Shīᶜī *tafāsīr* such as *Majmaᶜ al-Bayān*, when the verse 66:4 was revealed, the Prophet took the hand of ᶜAlī and then said: "This is a most virtuous man amongst the believers". See: Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majmaᶜ al-Bayān…*, 5:316. It is to be noted that the belief that the Imām is instrumental for the recognition of God (Allah) seems to be a common belief amongst all the Shīᶜī schools of thought, including the Twelver Shiᶜa.

[34] Al-Nuᶜmān advocates the idea of a divinely designated Imām and not one appointed by the people. In this regard, the Fatimid *qāḍī* discusses the method of the designation, beginning with ᶜAlīy to whom the Prophet is reported to have entrusted the *Imāmah* which our author identifies with expressions like *al-naṣṣ* and *al-tawqīf*. The same principle, according to al-Nuᶜmān is applicable in the designation of every Imām who follows ᶜAlīy.   By studying closely al-Nuᶜmān's definition of *al-tawqīf*, it appears, however, that he takes this term in the sense of the preceding Imām's informing the believers about the identity of the succeeding Imām. Thus, the term *al-tawqīf* appears to convey one aspect of the implications of the designation of the Imām and may not cover all the meanings applied to the principle of the designation. Consequently, according to the Fatimid author, after the Prophet, every preceding Imām nominates his successor and lets his followers know about him. See: Al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im…,* p. 43. Etymologically, the word *naṣṣ* has more than one meaning and implication. According to Lane's interpretation of the lexicons, the meanings of *naṣṣ* include to elevate something and to establish someone's position; for example, it is said: "*nuṣṣa fulānun sayyidan*" such a one was set up as a lord or a chief. The same source also states that *naṣṣ* also means to make a plain statement concerning something. Lane understands that when referring to a text of the Qur'ān and a text of the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet it is said, *naṣṣa ᶜalā shay'in mā*, meaning, he made an unequivocal declaration of something or someone. In addition, Lane understands that the synonym of the above definition can be "*al-tawqīf wa-al-taᶜyīnu ᶜalā shay'in mā*". Lane, *An Arabic–Englsih Lexicon*, 8:2797-2798.

[35] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*…, 2:346-347; see also: Al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im…*, pp. 33-44, particularly pp. 42-43; for further study on this see: Al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Iftikhār,* pp. 65-73; Al-Kirmānī, *Al-Maṣābīḥ…*, pp. 105-108. Also see: Al-Qummī, *Kamāl al-Dīn…*, pp. 211-23.

[36] Alexandrin, *the* Sphere of *Walāyah…,* p. 290.

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[37] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…*, pp. 454-455; 1:21-25. For details on this, see: Al-Nuᶜmān, *Ta'wīl al-Daᶜā'im…* (al-Aᶜẓamī's edition) 2:119-120.

[38] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…*, 1:21-24 and see: 2:346, 454-455.

[39] Ibid, 2:346, 454-455; see also al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im…,* pp.15, 16, 19; Al-Kirmānī, *Al-Maṣābīḥ…,* pp. 111-114.

[40] Ibid, 2:183-184.

To interpret the *Walāyah/Wilāyah* further, al-Nuᶜmān's interpretation of the verse (5:55) based on one of his esoteric works should be examined. The Fatimid author appears to be insistent that it is only ᶜAlīy and the Imāms from his progeny who are those concerning whom the verse was revealed. The Fatimid writer advances more than one argument in this respect. One of his arguments stems from his lexical analysis of the last part of the verse. Although, grammatically, the plural forms, i.e. the verb forms, the forms of the relative pronoun, the detached pronoun, and the active participle in the phrase of the verse (5:55) carry plural meanings, according to al-Nuᶜmān, their implications are specific. Al-Nuᶜmān refers to some other verses of the Qur'ān to prove that the phrase "*wa-alladhīna āmanū*..." in verse 5:55 refers to the Imāms and not to the Muslims generally. The verses of the Qur'ān include verse (3:173) in which, the word *al-nās*, meaning, the people, has been used twice. According to the analysis of al-Nuᶜmān, *al-nās* conveys a specific meaning in this verse, and not a general meaning, therefore it does not refer to all the people but only those people who were involved in the event. The Fatimid author quotes two other verses of the Qur'ān wherein the words "*mu'minīn*" and "*āmana*" are employed for the prophets. One of these verses discusses Prophet Moses who said addressing Allah: "…Glory be unto You   {Oh Allah}; I turn unto You repentant and I am the first of the believers" (7:143). The other verse is concerning the Prophet of Islam which reads: "The Messenger believes in that which has been revealed to him from His Lord and (so do) the believers; each one believes in Allah..." (2:285). Following the line of al-Nuᶜmān's argument, it is comprehensible that according to him, the word *āmanū* in the verse (5:55) refers to the Imāms of the *ahl al-bayt*, including ᶜAlīy. Thus, for al-Nuᶜmān, the implication of the word *āmanū* is not to be taken in the sense of the general believers in every instance, as sometimes it refers to a specific group of people, that is, the prophets and the Imāms. See: Al-Nuᶜmān, *Ta'wīl al-Daᶜā'im*, p. 63.

Thus, according to al-Nuᶜmān, the attributes associated with the "believers" as described in the verse (5:55) are included in the attributes of the Imāms. He claims that these attributes are the attributes of the Imāms, as they truly undertake the injunctions mentioned in the verse 5:55. These injunctions include the *Ṣalāh* and *Zakāh*. To explain his view on the Imām's conduct of the exoteric aspect of the Ṣa*lāh*, al-Nuᶜmān discusses the necessity of a prayer leader in a congregational prayer, including   Ṣalāt al-jumuᶜah and *Ṣalāt al-ᶜīdayn*. The Fatimid writer describes the prayer leader's function in the current context, probably to make it emblematic for the necessity of an ongoing co-existence of an Islamic community with a leader and guide. Al-Nuᶜmān seems to believe that the Ismāᶜīlīs need the guidance of the Imām of the time in a manner like a congregation of the Muslims that needs a prayer leader. Al-Nuᶜmān would say that the prayer leader may not be well-versed in all the aspects of the

religious obligations, including the *Ṣalāh*, but the Imām of the time has the knowledge not only of the exoteric aspect of the *Ṣalāh* but also its esoteric aspect, to which he esoterically refers as *daᶜwah*. In the words of al-Nuᶜmān: "Thus, it is the Imāms who establish the *Ṣalāh* truly (*bi-al-ḥaqīqah*)". Similarly, he interprets the *Zakāh* by relating the Imām's authority to it, on the ground of the categories of the *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*. In his opinion, exoterically, the Imāms accomplish the duty of the *Zakāh* by distributing it to those who need it after collecting it from the believers. As far as the Imam's role in the esoteric aspect of the *Zakāh* is concerned, according to al-Nuᶜmān, the esoteric aspect of the accomplishment of the duty of the *Zakāh* means the provisions of religious instructions to those believers who deserve them. In this regard, al-Nuᶜmān refers to a *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet in which he is reported to have said: "On everything, there is Z*akāh,* and the *Zakāh* on knowledge is propagating it" See: Ibid, pp. 63-64.

[41] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…*; 1:101. The concept of knowledge appears to be one of the prominent aspects of the *Imāmah* throughout the elucidation of Ismāᶜīlī doctrines. For example, al-Nuᶜmān refers to Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq who considers knowledge of the Imām to be included in the most primary components of the *Imāmah*. According to al-Nuᶜmān, Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq is reported to have defined the status of the knowledge in the *Imāmah* by saying: "The *Imāmah* is concerned with all those affairs which the members of the *ummah* need to know about, including what is permissible and what is prohibited for them. Likewise, Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq says that "the *Imāmah* is concerned with the knowledge of the Book of Allah: its general knowledge and its particular knowledge, its exoteric aspect and its esoteric aspect, its clear revelation and its allegorical aspect, its abrogating part and its abrogated part, the meticulous aspects of its knowledge and the abstruse aspects of its *ta'wīl*". Al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im…,* p. 36.

[42] Al-Mu'ayyad*, Al-Majālis…*, pp. 102, 468, 102, 468, see further for the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet: Al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im*..., p. 28; this *Ḥadīth* has been narrated in different versions even in the Fatimid sources. The shortest version appears to be one mentioned by al-Kirmānī, see: Al-Kirmānī, *Al-Maṣābiḥ…*, p. 95; see for the *Ḥadīth* narrated by the Twelver Shīᶜī authorities and their interpretation of it: Al-Kulaynī, *Al-Uṣūl…*, p. 294. As far as Sunni sources are concerned, see: Muslim b. Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* 4. A:168-169; Al-Suyūṭī has mentioned this *Ḥadīth* with several versions and chains of narrations. He has also mentioned the Sunni traditionists and prolific writers who have reported this *Ḥadīth* in their books. In the opinion of al-Suyūtī, the traditionists and others, including Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nisā'ī and al-Ḥākim have this *Ḥadīth* in their works. See: Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī, *Iḥyā' al-Mayyit fī Faḍā'il Āl al-Bayt*, ed. M. ᶜA. ᶜAṭā (Bayrūt, Dār al-Jīl, 1987), pp. 27-29, 39, 48, 56; see: Ibn Athīr, *Al-Nihāyah* Ibn Athīr gives the *fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wa-al-Athar*, eds. T. A. al-Zāwī and M. M. Tanāī (Cairo, Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-ᶜArabiyyah, 1963) 1:216. After having mentioned the *Ḥadīth*, etymological implications of the word "*al-thaqalayn*". According to Ibn Athīr, the Prophet referred to them (the Qur'ān and the *ahl al-bayt*) as "*thaqalayn*", as adherence to them (*al-akhdhu bi-himā*) and acting in accordance with them (*wa-al-ᶜamalu bi-himā*) are burdensome. Ibn Athīr further states that "*thaqīl*" means an important thing. On the basis of the definitions which he suggested, Ibn Athīr concludes that the Prophet identified the Qur'ān and the *ahl al-bayt* as "*thaqalayn*" to attach great importance to their standing (*iᶜzāman li-qadri-himā)* and to emphasise their prestige (*wa-tafkhīman li-sha'ni-him*ā).

[43] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…*, p. 212; Al-Mu'ayyad's concept of the

"Silent Book" and "Speaking Book" as such do not appear to be frequently discussed concepts in the writings of other Fatimid authors. For example, al-Nuᶜmān does not use the terms "Silent Book" and "Speaking Book" exactly in the same sense as al-Mu'ayyad used them. However, al-Nuᶜmān uses "*al-nāṭiq*" and "*al-ṣāmit*" which, according to him, refer to the Prophet and ᶜAlīy respectively. He uses *al-nāṭiq* in the sense that the Prophet is the master of the *Sharīᶜah* (*ṣāhib al-sharīᶜah*), and the interpreter of its exoteric aspect. As regards the status of ᶜAlīy as "*al-ṣāmit*", according to al-Nuᶜmān, he is the foundation of the *Sharīᶜah* (*asās al-sharīᶜah)*. Thus, according to al-Nuᶜmān, ᶜAlīy remained silent on the exoteric aspect of the *Sharīᶜah*, as it was the Prophet who was responsible to convey the exoteric aspect of it and let ᶜAlīy explain its esoteric aspect. See: Al-Nuᶜmān, *Asās al-Ta'wīl*, pp. 40-41.

44 Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…*, pp. 212-213, 400-401; In al-Nuᶜmān's description, Alīy mentions that the believers should ask us (the Imāms) if something becomes dubious to them. In this context, the verse 16:43 has been cited. See: Al-Nuᶜmān, *Ta'wīl al-Daᶜā'im*, p. 58; it seems that non-Shīᶜī commentators on the Qur'ān, do not agree among themselves on interpreting the "people of remembrance" (*ahl al-dhikr*). There are diverse interpretations concerning the "*ahl al-dhikr*" amongst the Sunni commentators. For example, al-Rāzī addressed diverse views in this regard. According to al-Rāzī, one of the interpretations of the "*ahl al-dhikr*" is that they are the "people of the Book", namely, the Jews and Christians. This the view of al-Rāzī. However, al-Rāzī does not accept any other views. Thus, according to al-Rāzī, one group of people interprets that "*ahl al-dhikr*" refer to the "people of the Qur'ān" (*ahl al-Qur'ān*) though the author does not clarify who the "people of the Qur'ān" are. It may be that, according to him, the "people of the Qur'an" refer to the *ummah* generally or it may refer to those people specifically who have in-depth knowledge of the Qur'ān. The second view which al-Rāzī presents is the view of those people who consist of most jurists (*kathīr min al-fuqahā'*) who hold that "*ahl al-dhikr*" refer to the jurists to whom a layman should turn, asking for their opinions on Islamic legal affairs. According to al-Rāzī, this group of people also include those who hold that "*ahl al-dhikr*" refer to legal experts who consult each other on a particular issue. As discussed already, al-Rāzī rejects all these interpretations. He inclined to the view that "*ahl al-dhikr*" refer to the "people of the Book". See: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* or *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (Bulāq, n.p. 1872) 6:128.

45 Al-Mu'ayyad*, Al-Majālis*..., pp. 400-401.

46 Al-Nuᶜmān, *Ta'wīl al-Daᶜā 'im,* p.71.

47 Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., 2:302.

48 Al-Nuᶜmān, *Ta'wīl al-Daᶜā 'im,* p. 71.

49 Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., p. 302. See also: Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 2:616-617.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid, 1:461.

52 Al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im…,* p. 14. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1:286; 6:2397; 8:2946.

53 Al-Nuᶜman, *Kitab Ikhtilaf Usul al-Madhahib*, ed. S.T. Lokhandwala (Simla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1972), pp.11-13.

54 Al-Mu'ayyad*, Al-Majālis…,* pp. 212-213; Al-Nuᶜmān explains the hereditary and other characteristics of the Imām who receives them ultimately from the Prophet and ᶜAlīy.

According to al-Nuᶜmān, the grounds for the hereditary characters of the Imām are in the Qur'ān which consider the descendants of the Prophet Ibrahīm to be the recipients of the Book (*al-kitāb*), wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*) and a mighty kingdom (*mulkan ᶜaẓīmā*) (4:47). Reportedly, according to the interpretation of al-Bāqir, this verse, particularly the phrase "a great kingdom" not only refers to the authority of prophets and the messengers of Allah but it also refers to the authority of the Imāms from the progeny of the Prophet of Islam. Al-Nuᶜmān continuesly discusses the subject further and refers again to al-Bāqir who quotes some other verses of the Qur'ān by considering them as an allusion to the hereditary characters and its constituents, which an Imām receives from his preceding Imām. These verses include verses 35:32 and 4:58. The first of these verses includes within itself a reference to the Book, the Qur'ān as the inheritance of those whom God has selected from amongst the rest of the people. In the second verse, there is the Divine injunction to restore the trusts to their owners. Al-Bāqir claims that the trust refers to the knowledge of the Imām, particularly his knowledge of the Islamic revelation. See: Al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im,* pp. 21-23; also see for the close affinity of the Imāms to the Prophet and their infallibility: Al-Kirmānī, *Al-Maṣābīḥ…*, pp. 126, 96-99.

[55] Al-Mu'ayyad*, Al-Majālis…,* p. 213. Another statement of ᶜAlīy like what al-Mu'ayyad quoted is extant in some non-Ismāᶜīlī sources. For example, see: Ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah…*, p. 509. According to al-ᶜAsqalānī, ᶜAlīy is reported to have said the opening words of his statement "Ask me" (*salūnī)* thrice. After saying *salūnī* for the second time, ᶜAlīy is reported to have said "…Ask me concerning the Book of Allah, Most High; by Allah, there is no verse (*āyah*) in the Qur'ān, but I know whether it was revealed at night or whether it was revealed during daytime". According to al-ᶜAsqalānī, al-Tirmidhīy reported this

statement of ᶜAlīy in his book; Ibn ᶜAbd al-Barr mentioned this saying of ᶜAlīy but in his version, the saying is lengthier than what al-ᶜAsqalānī has mentioned. However, the main theme remains the same. See: Ibn ᶜAbd al-Barr, *Al-Istīᶜāb*..., p. 463.

[56] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*, pp. 401-402.

[57] Ibid, 1:437-438; a Twelver Shīᶜī commentator on the Qur'ān al-Ṭabarsī holds a relatively lengthy discussion on the "middle *ummah"* and their function as the witnesses. In explaining the verse, the commentator cites both ᶜAlī and Muḥammad al-Bāqir and gives their interpretations which include within themselves the same content as mentioned by al-Mu'ayyad whose narration, however, goes to Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq. At any rate both ᶜAlīy and Muḥammad al-Bāqir are reported to have given their interpretation on this verse. ᶜAlīy is reported to have said: "Allah, the Most High means us when He says: 'You bear witness to the

people". Hence, the messenger of Allah is witness to us and we he witnesses to His creation and His proof on His earth". Al-Bāqir is reported to have made a similar statement which reads: "We are the middle *ummmah* and we are the witnesses to the creation of Allah and His proof on His earth". See: Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majmaᶜ al-Bayān*..., 1:225; according to other sources such as al-Ṭabarī, the witnesses mentioned in the Qur'ān refer to all Muslims and not any specific group of Muslims. See: Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, edited by M. M. Shākir and A. M. Shākir (Cairo, Dār al-Maᶜārif, 1907) 3:145-149.

[58] Al-Mu'ayyad, *al-Majālis*, 438

[59] Ibid, p. p.234.

[60] Ibid, p. 193.

[61] Ibid, p.193.

[62] Ibid, 2:18-19.

[63] Ibid, p. 193.

[64] Ibid, 2:19.

[65] Ibid, 1:441.

NOTES TO ChAPTER 5

[1] See, endnote, 15, Introduction.

[2] Ian Richard Netton, *Allāh Transcendent*: *Studies in the Structure and Semiotics of Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Cosmology* (London; New York, Routledge, 1989), p. 204. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: From: 9781138176560, *Allah Transcendan*t, edn. 1, Ian Richard Netton, Copyright © 1989, Routleledge. Reproduced by permission of Taylor & Francis Group. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from your work.

[3] Halm, 'The Cosmology of the Pre-Fatimid Ismāᶜīliyya', in Medieval Ismāᶜīlī History and Thought, ed. Farhad Daftary (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 78. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: 'The Cosmology of the Pre-Fatimid Ismāᶜīliyya', by Heinz Halm in Mediaeval Isma'ili History and Thought, edited by Farhad Daftary, Copyright © Cambridge University Press, 1996. Reproduced with permission of the Licencor through PLSclear. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce two quotations from your publication.

[4] Al-Murshid's Text in Stern's *Studies in Early Ismāᶜīlism.*p. 7.

[5] Ibid, p.8.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid, pp.8, 14

[8] Ibid, p. 9.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Al-Sijistānī, al-*Iftikhār*, p. 48.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid, pp. 40-42.

[13] Ibid, pp. 48-56.

[14] Jaᶜfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Sarā'ir wa-Asrār al-Nuṭaqā'*, ed. M. Ghālib (Bayrūt, Dār al-Andalus, 1984), p. 21.

[15] Idem, *Kitāb al-Kashf*, ed. M. Ghālib (Bayrūt, Dār al-Andalus, 1984), p. 60.

[16] Al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Iftikhār*, pp. 39-40.

[17] Ibid, p. 40.

[18] Jaᶜfar b. Manṣūr al-Yemen, *Kitāb al-Kashf*, pp. 56, 60.

[19] Al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Iftikhār*, p. 40.

[20] Ibid, pp. 48-56.

[21] Ibid, pp.120-121. See: Jaᶜfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Ta'wīl al-Zakāh*, fols. 33, 85-863, 321, 43; Idem, *Sarā'ir al-Nuṭaqā'*, p. 112; Idem, *Kitāb al-Kashf*, pp. 31-32, 105, 125. The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. The manuscript is part of the special collections of The Institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks for granting me permission to reproduce an extract from the manuscript.

[22] Maḥmūd b. ᶜUmar al-Zamakhsharī, Al-Kashshāf ᶜan *Ḥaqā'iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl wa-ᶜUyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta'wīl* (Cairo, Al-Maṭbaᶜah al-Bahiyyah, 1343 A.H.) 1:239-40.

[23] Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-Maᶜānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ᶜAẓīm wa-al-Sabᶜ al-Mathānī* (Bayrūt, Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ᶜArabī, n.d.) 6:38-40.

[24] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb Tafsīr Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Bayrūt, Dār al-Fikr al-ᶜArabī, 1981-1983) 6:121.

[25] Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdān al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Zīnah fī al-Kalimāt al-Islāmiyyah al-ᶜArabiyyah*, second edition, ed. H. F. al-Hamdānī (Cairo, Dār al-Kitāb al-ᶜArabī, 1957-1958) 2:168.

[26] Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon…*, 7:2602**.**

[27] Al-Ḥāmidī, *Jāmiᶜ al-ḥaqā'iq*, fol. 170b; MS No. 96, The Institute of Isma'ili Studies, London.

[28] Jaᶜfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Ta'wīl al-Zakāh*, fol. 277; MS No. 216. The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. The manuscript is part of the special collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks for granting me permission to reproduce an extract from the manscript.}.

[29] Ibid, fols. 80, 196. The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. The manuscript is part of the special collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks for granting me permission to reproduce an extract from the manscript.}.

[30] Al-Murshid's Text, 9, 15.

[31] Ibid, p. 9.

[32] Ibid, p.14.

[33] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*, 2:19.

[34] Al-Murshid's Text, p.15.

[35] Ibid, p.

[36] Ibid. p.14.

[37] Al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Iftikhār*, pp. 39-40, 48.

[38] Halm, 'The Cosmology…, p. 76.

[39] Farhad Daftary, Isma'ilis in Medieval Muslim societies, pp.215-216. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: 'Isma'ilis in Medieval Muslim Societies', Farhad Daftari, Copyright © Islamic Publications Limited, I. B. Tauris in Association with The Institute of Isma'ili Studies. Used by permission of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from one of your publications.}.

[40] Paul E. Walker, Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī…, pp. 91-92. Copyright Notice and Acknowledgement: Hamid al-Din al-Kirmani…, Paul E. Walker, Copyright © Islamic Publications Limited, I. B. Tauris in Association with the Institute of Isma'ili Studies. Used by permission of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from one of your works.}.

[41] Al-Ḥāmidī, *Jāmiᶜ al-ḥaqā'iq,* fols. 39a, 40a; MS No. 96, The Institute of Isma'ili Studies, London. The manuscript is part of the specials collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from one of your manuscripts. Idem, *Al-Mājalis*, 1:169, 207

[42] Ibid. The Institute of Ismaili Studies. The manuscript is part of the special collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduch your manuscript.}

[43] Al-Sayyid M. Taqīy al-Naqawīy, *Miftaḥ al-Saᶜādah fī Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (Bayrūt, Mu'assasat al-Ta'rīkh al-ᶜArabī li-aṭṭibāᶜah wa-al-nashr wa-al-tawzīᶜ, 2015) 1:49.

[44] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*…, p. 217.

[45] Al-Ḥāmidī, *Jāmiᶜ al-ḥaqā'iq*, fols. 37a-38b; Ms no. 95, The manuscript is part of the special collections of the Institute of Isma'ili Studies. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from the manuscript.}.

[46] Al-Ḥāmdī, *Jāmiᶜ al-ḥaqā'iq*, fol. 97b; MS No 95; fol. 165a; MS No 96, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. The manuscripts are part of the special collections of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, for further information see this source. Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis…*, pp. 31, 169, 206, 207. {Thanks for granting me permission to reproduce an extract from the manuscript.}

[47] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis* 1:206-207

[48] Al-Ḥāmidī, *Jāmiᶜ al-ḥaqā'iq*, fol. 116b; MS No. 96. The Istitute of Isma'ili studies, London. The manuscript is part of the special collections of the Institute of Isma'ili Studies, London. {Thanks for allowing me to reproduce an extract from the manuscript.}.

[49] Al-Ḥāmidī, *Jāmiᶜ al-ḥaqā'iq,* fols. 94b, 97b; MS No. 95, The Institute of Isma'ili Studies, London. The manuscript is part of the special collections of The Institute of Isma'ili Studies. {Thanks for granting me permission to reproduce an extract from the manuscript.}.

[50] Ibid. I acknowledge with thanks the permission given to me to produce an extract from the manuscript.

[51] I acknowledge with thanks your permission to produce an extact from the manuscript.

[52] Al-Isfahani, Muᶜjam, pp. 550-551.

[53] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., 3:43. Edited by M. Ghālib.

[54] Ibid. 3:44-45.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid, 1:3-4.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid. Ibid; 2:32-34.

[60] Al-Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ᶜAql*, ed. M. K. Ḥusayn (Dār al-Fikr al-ᶜArabī, 1953), p. 437.

[61] Al-Mu'ayyad, Al-Majalis, 2:33.

[62] Ibid, 1:1.

[63] Ibid, pp. 1-2.

[64] Ibid.[65] Ibid, p. 2.

[65] Ibid, p. 2.

[66] Ibid, pp. 2-3; also see the following Qur'ānic texts wherein intellect has been mentioned in diverse contexts.: 2:179,197, 269; 3:7, 190; 12:111; 13:19; 14:52; 38:29, 43; 39:9, 18; 40:54; 65:10.

[67] Al-Mu'ayyad, *Al-Majālis*..., p. 3; Al-Qāḍī al-Nuᶜmān, *Daᶜā'im…* (1951 edition), 1:233. According to ᶜAlīy, the Prophet said: "The pen of the recording angels is withheld from three persons: from the person who sleeps until wakes up; from the insane until regains sanity and from the child until attains to puberty.

[68] Ibid, p. 438.