

'Indian Money' and the Shi'i Shrine Cities of Iraq, 1786-1850

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Little is yet known of the political economy of the extremely important Shi'i shrine cities of Iraq in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Adherents of the Shi'i branch of Islam held holy these cities, including Najaf, Karbala and Kazimayn, making them theological and pilgrimage centers. The towns grew up around the tombs of Imams, early Islamic figures who Imami Shi'is believed should have been the political and spiritual heads of the Islamic community.

The economic position of Shi'i clerics at the shrine cities was clearly an element in their great power. But much remains to be discovered about the precise roots of that economic position and the impact of phenomena such as the rise of modern capitalism. Below, the economic importance for the leading Iraqi clerics of funds donated by the Shi'i rulers of Awadh (Oudh) in North India is explored in order to illuminate the influence on clerical institutions of foreign donations and projects.

Until the sixteenth century Imami Shi'ism was a minority branch of Islam everywhere, usually lacking political power. Even during early Islamic times, however, the Iraqi shrine cities were important Shi'i centers. From the sixteenth century the Shi'i Safavid dynasty in Iran converted the population from Sunnism to Shi'ism, establishing an Imami state. For most of the Safavid period, however, the shrine cities in Iraq remained under the rule of the Sunni Ottoman Empire, and Shi'is in Iraq remained a minority. Still, the existence of a neighboring Shi'i state greatly changed the position of the shrine cities.

The Safavid kings bestowed great patronage on the shrines and religious scholars in Iraq. Pilgrim traffic from Iran greatly increased and it was often combined with trade, so that the shrine cities began to serve as desert ports. Given the expensive gifts proffered by newly Shi'i Iranian notables, the pilgrim traffic, and increased commerce, cities like Najaf and Karbala became centers of wealth as well as of law and theology. They also grew in political importance. Iranian clerics critical of the Safavid government could flee to the shrine cities, where they could subsist in a Shi'i atmosphere and yet escape the wrath of the Iranian government.

The sixteenth century also witnessed the establishment of Shi'i-ruled states in South India, the rulers of which often sent contributions to the shrine cities. Indeed, even Sunni rulers in the subcontinent, who had a special regard for the prophet's grandson Imam Husayn, sent substantial gifts to his shrine at Karbala.

In the eighteenth century the Safavid dynasty in Iran was overthrown by Sunni Afghan tribespeople, who sacked the capital, Isfahan.¹ Hundreds of Iranian families, many of them Shi'i clerics fled for refuge to the shrine cities of

Iraq, adding new, ethnically Iranian quarters to the Arab towns.

The eighteenth century witnessed crucial political and ideological developments in the Shi'i world.² At the time, the major competing schools of jurisprudence were the Akhbari and the Usuli. The Akhbaris were strict constructionists of the Qur'an and the oral reports from the Prophet and the Imams, so conservative in their approach to law as to disallow the use of syllogistic reasoning in deriving legal judgments. Many Akhbaris felt strongly that since the last Imam had disappeared a child centuries before, and there would be no more divinely-guided leaders from the House of the Prophet until the Twelfth Imam supernaturally returned from his millennial occultation, the central functions of the Islamic state had lapsed.

During the absence of the Imam, many Akhbaris argued, there could be no Friday prayers, no collection and disbursement of certain religious taxes and charities, no holy war (*jihad*). There was not a strong division between religious specialists and lay persons in the Akhbari system, as all believers were bound to emulate the Imams.

The Usulis, on the other hand, were rationalist in their approach to jurisprudence. They accepted the consensus of the Imami jurists and limited kinds of syllogistic reasoning as sources of Shi'i law. They called this more dynamic, liberal approach to deriving legal judgments *ijtihad*, and the practitioner a *mujtahid*. The rationalist Usulis were also more elitist in regard to lay-clerical relationships. They strongly believed that all laymen were obliged to emulate a mujtahid in his legal rulings on all but the most basic aspects of religious and ritual law.

The religious scholars, or mujtahids, they held, were the general representatives of the Hidden Imam until his parousia. As such, they could by proxy legitimate state functions within the Imami community. By their sanction, congregational Friday prayers could be held, holy war fought, religious taxes gathered and distributed. Indeed, they wished to monopolize the reception and disbursement of religious charities in their own hands.³

Although the shrine cities of Iraq had traditionally been centers for the conservative, strict constructionist approach to jurisprudence, the post-1722 influx of Iranian Usulis from Isfahan set the stage for a change. From the 1760s Iranians led a battle to establish Usulism as the reigning orthodoxy in Karbala and other Iraqi holy cities. A leader of this movement was Aqa Muhammad Baqir Bihbahani (d. 1790), originally from an Usuli family in Isfahan, who fled to Karbala in 1722 and became an Akhbari for a while. He ultimately reverted to Usulism however. He came to Karbala in the early 1760s after spending 30 years in the small southern Iranian town of Bihbahan. In the city of Imam Husayn he attracted other Iranian clerics away from Akhbarism to his band of Usulism. By the late 1770s even prominent Arab jurists in Najaf considered themselves Usulis.⁴

This rising popularity of the Usuli school in the Iraqi shrine cities occurred as a Mamluk (slave-soldier) dynasty arose in Iraq, owing only loose fealty to the Istanbul-based Ottoman Empire.⁵ In the late eighteenth century the Sunni Mamluks ruled the shrine cities with a light hand, allowing local urban notables to come to the fore. These included Sayyid Arab landholders, city-

based mafiosi who practiced extortion on shopkeepers and pilgrims, and the religious scholars, with their control of shrines, pious endowments, and lands. The relative autonomy of the shrine cities gave the Shi'ī clerics a power that could be better justified by the activist Usuli than by the conservative Akhbari school. In Iran, meanwhile, the Shi'ī Zand dynasty had established itself and patronage was once again available to the high *ulama* or clergy after the long period of disestablishment under the Afghans and Nadir Shah.

In the late eighteenth century two new Shi'ī states emerged. One, the Qajar, subdued Iran. The other, the Nishapuri, presided over a post-Mughal successor state in North India called Awadh or Oudh.⁶ In both Qajar Iran and nawabi Awadh the Usuli school came to be the dominant approach to jurisprudence. In Awadh, there is good reason to think this was because local Akhbaris, then the majority, opposed Friday congregational prayers, while Usulis allowed them. The Nishapuri nawabs, involved in a process of state formation, needed Friday prayers and the Friday prayer mosque as legitimating symbols of their Shi'ī rule.

One channel of Usuli influence into North India was pilgrimage to Iraq. The young Shi'ī scholar Sayyid Dildar 'Ali Nasirabadi set out from the Awadh capital of Lucknow in 1779 for a two-year trip to the shrine cities during the time of Nawab Asafu'd-Dawlah (r. 1774–97) and his Chief Minister Hasan Riza Khan. An Akhbari, he found the atmosphere of Najaf and Karbala to be overwhelmingly Usuli at that time. He pursued a brief course of studies with Aqa Muhammad Baqir Bihbahani and his leading disciples. After much struggle and study he embraced Usulism before returning to Lucknow. On his return he became the Friday prayer leader and served as a conduit for Usuli ideas in the region.⁷ He also spread respect for Bihbahani and the Usuli mujtahids among Awadh's growing class of Shi'ī high notables.

This Indian connection proved highly lucrative for the Usuli clerics in the shrine cities. In the late 1780s Awadh Chief Minister Hasan Riza Khan remitted Rs.500,000 to Najaf through the Iranian firm of Hajji Karbala'ī Muhammad Tihrani for the construction of a canal in the middle Euphrates that would bring water to perpetually dry Najaf. The project, aimed at sparing inhabitants and pilgrims inconvenience, was completed in 1793. It became known as the Asafiyah or Hindiyah canal, after its patron.

The Awadh government also had a Shi'ī mosque at Kufa rebuilt in 1786 and endowed a hostel for Indian pilgrims and a library in Najaf with 700 autograph manuscripts. Later Nawab Asafu'd-Dawlah sent another Rs.200,000 to the mujtahids in Iraq.⁸ The nawab's channeling of such large sums to the chief Usuli *ulama* in the shrine cities, on the advice of Sayyid Dildar 'Ali, strengthened them and further contributed to Usuli dominance. While he was chief minister 1795–98, Tafazzul Husayn Khan Kashmiri remitted a great deal of money to Bihbahani's successor Aqa Sayyid 'Ali Tabataba'ī for the poor and the *ulama* in Karbala.⁹

The financial intermediaries for these transactions were Shi'ī long-distance trading houses with outlets in Lucknow and in the shrine cities. However, their willingness to transfer and loan funds to notables engaged in ostensibly pious projects left them exposed to great risks. An example was the case of Mirza Riza, the son of Hajji Karbala'ī Muhammad Tihrani, versus the heirs of

Hasan Riza Khan, the former chief minister of Awadh. In the late 1780s Hajji Karbala'i lent Chief Minister Hasan Riza Khan Rs.228,436 as part of the Rs.700,000 Awadh government donation for the building of the canal to Najaf.

Mirza Riza presented letters in court appearing to be from the chief minister promising to repay the loan in November of 1792. On 8 September 1798 he allegedly again undertook to settle his account, writing to his creditor, 'The accounts of the stoppage of your mercantile concerns, the importunity of the schroffs and others, and your pecuniary embarrassments have, God is my witness, distressed me . . .'¹⁰ Both debtor and creditor died before any further transaction could take place, so Mirza Riza attempted to recoup the loss from the late chief minister's estate through the government courts of Nawab Sa'adat 'Ali Khan (r. 1798-1814) in 1806. He asked the Iranian ruler Fath-Ali Shah to intervene with Awadh's nawab on his behalf, and the Qajar monarch wrote to his fellow Shi'i ruler supporting Mirza Riza's claims.¹¹

In India, Nawab Sa'adat 'Ali Khan turned the case over to the mufti of the religious court, probably the Sunni Mawlawi Zuhuru'llah (d. 1840).¹² Mirza Riza claimed the principal of Rs.228, 436, plus Rs.150,010 interest. The mufti of the court rejected the claim on several grounds. First, he said, the dates of the copies of the letters and the replies presented as evidence were confused and therefore they were of suspect authenticity. Second, the precise kind of money loaned was not specified in the suit, making it difficult to appraise the value of any damages. Third, the taking of interest on loans was prohibited according to Islamic law.¹³

The episode demonstrates the importance at this point of Iranian long-distance merchants in the transfer of huge sums from Awadh to Iraq. That they were able to handle the transmission of several hundred thousand rupees with no apparent difficulty, and even to sustain substantial losses of principal, attests to the mercantile importance of these Shi'i Iranian mediators between India and Mesopotamia. That the firm of Hajji Karbala'i even considered suing in a Muslim court for interest and interest penalties speaks clearly of Iranian business practice of the time.¹⁴

The other philanthropical concerns of Awadh's rulers continued to make the Indian connection important to the Usuli mujtahids in Iraq. Nawab Sa'adat 'Ali Khan sent large sums to the shrine cities after Karbala was sacked in 1801 by Arabian tribesmen of the fundamentalist Sunni Wahhabi sect, fierce enemies of the Shi'is.¹⁵ He also had a silver and velvet canopy for the shrine of Imam Husayn at Karbala made in Lucknow and sent via Bombay to Iraq under British auspices. To the dismay of the outraged British, ulama in Karbala demanded a Rs.8,000 offering in cash before they would agree to accept the canopy.¹⁶ This sort of demand demonstrates one source of clerical wealth. The pious rich could not deposit gifts in the form of immovable wealth at the shrines unless they also contributed some liquid wealth to the clerics in control of the shrines.

In addition to strengthening the position of the Usuli mujtahids against remaining Akhbari rivals by putting huge sums of money in their hands for patronage, the Asafiyah canal at first had a dramatic effect on the tribal power balance within Iraq, since it unexpectedly caused the Shatt-al-Hillah to

dry up, hurting the Khaza'il tribe and its dependencies. The area near Najaf grew more productive agriculturally, attracting new tribes that clashed with the cultivators already established there.¹⁷

The new canal was not properly kept in repair, gradually silting up, so that from 1816 the Nawab Ghaziyu'd-Din Haydar of Awadh considered attempting to have it dug out. But the Mamluk government led by Da'ud Pasha, by now aware of the possible political and ecological effects of the undertaking, attached too many conditions. Da'ud Pasha was willing to have the canal revived only if it could be so routed as to benefit groups other than Shi'is. This aroused the suspicions of the Awadh nawab, who was primarily concerned with succoring the Shi'is. Another difficulty facing the project was that neither Awadh nor the British could arrange for the continued upkeep of the canal, something that the Mamluks would have to undertake. Ghaziyu'd-Din Haydar envisaged endowing lands for this purpose in Iraq, but the Iraqi government was unlikely to allow large amounts of land to be alienated in a foreign endowment.¹⁸

CAPITALISM AND RELIGIOUS DONATIONS TO IRAQ

The remission of substantial sums of money to the shrine cities of Karbala by the rulers and notables of Awadh established a long term tie between them and the leading Shi'ī ulama in Iraq. The brokers in this relationship, Awadh's own clerics, often went to Iraq on visitation and grew personally acquainted with the chief mujtahids of Karbala and Najaf. Because Sayyid Dildar 'Ali Nasirabadi had studied briefly under Bihbahani and his major disciples a special tie of sentiment existed between the clergy of Awadh and the Usuli heirs of Bihbahani in Iraq. While between 1786 and 1815 very large sums flowed from Awadh to the Iraqi shrine cities, thereafter the amounts declined, partly because of the pressure huge loans to the British East India Company [EIC] placed on the Lucknow treasury.

In December, 1815, Ghaziyu'd-Din Haydar sent Rs.100,000 to Najaf and Karbala through the British government. The increasingly powerful EIC supplanted the Iranian long-distance merchants as the banker of choice in such transactions.¹⁹ Nawab Ghaziyu'd-Din's grandmother, Bahu Begam, left Rs.90,000 in her British-guaranteed will to the shrines in Iraq, specifying that the EIC transmit the sum to Sayyid Muhammad, the son of Sayyid 'Ali, and to Mirza Muhammad Husayn Shahrstani, the son of Muhammad Mihdi Shahrstani, both of Karbala.²⁰ Mirza Muhammad Mihdi had visited India himself and Sayyid Dildar 'Ali held a diploma from him gained in Karbala 1779-80, so that the Shahrstani family had strong ties with the pious Shi'is of Awadh.

Grants from Awadh not only demonstrated a recognition of the position of leadership attained by the individual named, it further strengthened that leadership by putting enormous sums at his disposal. While Ghaziyu'd-Din Haydar's hopes for rebuilding the Asafiyah canal to Najaf never materialized, and his son Nasiru'd-Din Haydar put the money into a local hospital instead, some wealth, in the form of contributions and lapsed stipends, continued to be sent to the shrine cities in the 1820s and 1830s.

In the period 1815–30 developments occurred among the landed Shi'is in Awadh that impelled them to accept interest on loans to Europeans. These developments were also to structure Awadh contributions to the Shi'i clerics of Iraq. The changes in the relationship between the British economy and that of India brought about by the Industrial Revolution, creating a world-dominating textile industry, strengthened the hand of the EIC. The Company, formerly merely a government-backed enterprise of circulating merchant capital, evolved into an instrument in the expansion of industrial imperialism. The terms of the game radically changed. Awadh's landed classes, sensitive to this evolution, began to perceive the insecurity of their traditional landholding forms of wealth in the new environment.

At the same time, the EIC began its costly war in Nepal, 1814–16. The Nawab Ghaziyyu'd-Din Haydar succeeded his father, Sa'adat 'Ali, acquiescing in November of the same year to the Company's request for a loan of ten million rupees to help defray the expenses of the war. Ten individuals or families, mostly relations of the nawab, received the Rs.600,000 in interest payments each year. Four months later Ghaziyyu'd-Din Haydar agreed to a second loan of ten million rupees, on similar terms. In 1825 the same ruler responded favorably to the governor-general's request for yet another loan of ten million rupees at the low rate of five per cent interest, again payable by the resident to notables and relatives of the court.²¹

These arrangements began the creation of a class of rentiers depending on payments from interest to supplement the income from their less stable landed wealth (which took the form of land grants or *jagirs* that could be expropriated at will by later Awadh rulers). The British government guaranteed the stipends to the recipients and their descendants. The creditors hardly demonstrated much business sense by the low, fixed interest rates they charged. The recipients, transformed into a strange mixture of Mughal-style nobility and new bourgeoisie, passively subsisted on the periphery of the growing world market.

While Ghaziyyu'd-Din Haydar earlier showed no scruples about making the loans, when his treasury got low he suddenly evinced pangs of conscience. In May 1826, Lord Amherst informed the resident in Lucknow that yet another five million rupees would be needed to wind up the Nepal war. Rickett's talks proved successful, but Amherst felt he was doing the nawab a favor in any case.²² Ricketts wrote on 25 July, 'Your remark that the money has been drawn from unproductive coffers is strictly correct, and so far His Majesty in point of fact is a gainer by the transaction; but the Sacrifice of his Religious tenets, which forbid interest being received, throws this advantage completely into the Shade in His eyes . . .'²³

Both the move of the Awadh ruling class into the role of banker for the EIC and the involvement of some notables in the British-ruled Ceded Provinces in capitalist agriculture created a new economic atmosphere, presenting difficulties for the Shi'i ulama who served these classes in transition. Sayyid Dildar 'Ali, writing before most of these developments, had cautioned against taking interest on loans to Europeans.²⁴

But in the early 1830s his son Sayyid Muhammad Nasirabadi, the chief mujtahid in Lucknow, resolved the issue by reversing his father's ruling.

Asked if interest might be taken from Jews, Christians, Hindus and Sufi Muslims, Sayyid Muhammad replied that interest could be taken from polytheists by consensus and that Sufis could be considered ritually polluted and polytheists. As to Jews and Christians, he added, there were differences of opinion, but the clearest view in his opinion was that they could be charged interest.²⁵ Since most Sunnis were Sufis in Awadh, according to this ruling wealthy Shi'is could loan on interest to almost the entire population of the country, excluding only a small minority of other Shi'is. Like Christianity in Europe's own age of commercial expansion, Imami Shi'ism demonstrated an ability to adapt itself to modern capitalism. As the patrons of the jurists became more bourgeois, so too did the social ideology proclaimed by the clerical establishment.²⁶

These developments directly affected the Indian finances of the Iraqi Shi'ī mujtahids. The deeds bestowing guaranteed stipends on Ghaziyyū'd-Dīn Haydar's dependants often provided funds for Najaf and Karbala where the recipient died without heirs. The deed of 17 August 1825 for one of the king's wives, Mubarak Mahall, gave her an allowance of Rs.120,000 per year from interest on the loan to the EIC.²⁷ It stipulated that upon her demise one-third of the allowance would be paid to whomever she appointed in her will, the remaining two-thirds being split between the chief mujtahids in Najaf and Karbala. In case of intestacy, the mujtahids in Iraq received the whole stipend of Rs.120,000 per year.

As Awadh's guaranteed pensioners began dying off, such stipends began to provide high incomes for the two chief mujtahids in the pre-eminent holy cities, becoming known in Iraq as the 'Indian Money' (*pul-i Hindi*) and as a prize worth contending for by the rivals for religious authority. Ironically, leading Shi'ī clerics were receiving funds gained from loaning on interest, involving them directly in an important overseas institution in the growth of British capitalism.

One example of rivalry involving the 'Indian Money' concerned the leaders of the Usuli and Shaykhi schools in Karbala. Although Usulism had generally won out against Akhbarism in the early nineteenth century, another Shi'ī school had appeared. Founded by Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'ī (1753–1826), who studied with Usuli greats at the shrine cities in the late eighteenth century, Shaykhism emphasized the importance of esoteric, intuitive knowledge and denied the resurrection of the physical body.

Al-Ahsa'ī's chief disciple, Sayyid Kazim Rashti (d. 1844), succeeded him in Karbala upon his death, and developed his teacher's doctrines into a new school of Imami Shi'ism that differed somewhat from Usulism. An important Shaykhi doctrine insisted that there was always present in the Shi'ī community a perfect Shi'ī. The suggestion of such a charismatic leader's existence challenged the claims of the Usuli jurists to leadership based on the rational derivation of law from the divine texts. Usulis began virulently attacking Shaykhism. In 1828 Sayyid Kazim Rashti met twice with a group of Usulis who attempted to clarify Shaykhi doctrine and to force Rashti to renounce some of his teachings. Shi'is in Karbala became polarized between the minority Shaykhis and the majority Usulis (led by Sayyid Ibrahim Qazvini.) In the 1830s several attempts were made on Sayyid Kazim's life, but

the school and its leader doggedly survived.²⁸

Because of the links of pilgrimage and study that bound the shrine cities to the rest of the Shi'i world, Shaykhism had an impact on North India as well. The most vigorous advocate of Shaykhism in Awadh, Mirza Hasan 'Azimabadi (d. 1844), came of a Delhi family settled in Patna.²⁹ He pursued his study of Shi'i sciences as a young man with one of Sayyid Dildar 'Ali's eminent sons, Sayyid Husayn Nasirabadi, in Lucknow.

Mirza Hasan went on pilgrimage to Mecca and then on visitation to the shrine cities of Iraq. He elected to reside in Karbala, where he gradually became a close follower of Sayyid Kazim Rashti. In 1836 'Azimabadi returned to Lucknow, where he worked as a preacher, promulgating the doctrines of Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i and Sayyid Kazim Rashti. He translated one of al-Ahsa'i's doctrinal works from Arabic into Persian and wrote an original composition on Shaykhi theology. When 'Azimabadi succeeded in gathering a sizeable following, his former teacher Sayyid Husayn Nasirabadi felt compelled to refute him and to attack his positions.

In the 1830s Sayyid Kazim Rashti, the Shaykhi leader, was in charge of the 'Indian Money' for a while.³⁰ But after his student, Hasan 'Azimabadi, came into conflict with Sayyid Husayn Nasirabadi in Lucknow it began being given to Rashti's nemesis Sayyid Ibrahim Qazvini. The loss of this resource to the Usulis injured the Shaykhi cause. At that time the other possible source of royal patronage, the Iranian monarch Muhammad Shah Qajar (1836-48), was bestowing his largesse on Sufis rather than mujtahids. The wealth pouring in from Awadh may have taken on exaggerated importance.

PUBLIC WORKS IN IRAQ

With the accession in Lucknow of Muhammad 'Ali Shah, who took a keen interest in religious public works, the treasury of Awadh once again began providing substantial funds to the mujtahids in Najaf and Karbala. In a letter dated 1839 (1255) the North Indian clerics informed the ulama in Iraq that the new Awadh monarch, having a great love for the holy shrines and all who dwelt in their vicinity, had heard that the Asafiyah canal was dry and wished to have it repaired. He ordered that Rs. 150,000 be sent to each of the two cities through the British resident via the Political Agent in Turkish Arabia. The letter instructed the ulama to let Lucknow know the money arrived and to ensure it was spent for the purpose stipulated.³¹

British records show that in June 1839, the Awadh government remitted Rs. 30,000 to Iraq for the repairs to the canal, and the following summer sent another Rs. 250,000 to complete the work. In November 1841, the king of Awadh sent Rs. 26,000 to Karbala for religious purposes, the total coming to just over Rs. 300,000 split two ways.³² The ulama grew so comfortable in using the British diplomatic pouches to communicate between Lucknow and the shrine cities that they began sending religious manuscripts and letters by British post. This process was facilitated, not only by EIC power in India, but by the growing power and influence of the British political agent in Iraq in the 1830s and 1840s.³³

In the summer of 1841 Sayyid Ibrahim Qazvini, the leading Usuli mujtahid

of Karbala, wrote to Muhammad 'Ali Shah, signing himself the agent (*vakil*) of the 'just king' (*as-sultan al-'adil*) and mentioning that Rs.150,000 had arrived through the British agent in Baghdad. The phrase 'just king' meant the Twelfth Imam in Shi'ī law books but in political discourse the ulama often used it for secular monarchs. Noting that work had already begun, Qazvini said that the water was badly needed, as the gardens and fields where pilgrims pitched their tents were entirely desiccated. He boldly suggested further projects to the Awadh ruler, writing that the tombs of Imam Husayn and of 'Abbas needed Rs.50,000 worth of gilding.³⁴

The project to bring more water to the Shi'ī shrine cities was not without its opponents in the Ottoman government. In 1831 the Ottomans had reasserted direct rule over Iraq, and Ali Riza Pasha, the new governor who supplanted the Mamluks, had already once come into conflict with the semi-autonomous Shi'ī city-states. The new governor was not as conscious as had been the old that more water for irrigation would strengthen the peasant cultivators and Shi'ī tribesmen in the vicinity of the rebellious holy cities, but there were those around him who worried about these things. Ali Riza Pasha also faced great pressure from the British, who wished to maintain themselves as the sole means for the Awadh government to communicate with the outside world. British Agent Robert Taylor reported from Baghdad early in 1842:

I also found it necessary to request his [the Pasha's] permission to complete two canals to the holy towns of Kerbalah and Najaf, now under repair and improvement for the purpose of conducting the water of the Euphrates to those places, the expences of which were borne by the King of Oude, and the Ameer Naseer Khan of Sind, to which request he has assented, though under considerable opposition from interested persons about him.³⁵

On 17 May 1842 Muhammad 'Ali Shah died and was succeeded by his more pro-clerical son Amjad 'Ali. Sayyid Ibrahim Qazvini sent his condolences, stating he needed more money for the canal and other projects and wanted to know if, with the change of administration, he still had a mandate for his work. He said Kazimayn needed a dam and Rs.5,000 was required for the shrine of Salman Farsi near Baghdad. As for work already commissioned, the canal had been sufficiently dug out in the Karbala vicinity that water was plentiful for both farmers and pilgrims. In addition, he was undertaking repairs to the tomb of 'Abbas and gilding the ante-room of Imam Husayn's shrine.³⁶

The Lucknow mujtahids informed the chief cleric in Imam 'Ali's shrine city, Shaykh Muhammad Hasan an-Najafi, that Amjad 'Ali Shah had mounted the throne, praying God would render his sovereignty eternal.³⁷ They explained that the new king was much less generous than his father, and that the ulama in Iraq should account more conscientiously for sums remitted. The Nasirabadis' secretary, Sayyid Muhammad 'Abbas Shushtari, admonished Shaykh Muhammad Hasan at one point, saying he had sent Rs.100,000 for Najaf through the British agent (*al-balyuz al-kabir*), but no receipt had been returned. Finally a receipt for only Rs.46,000 arrived from an-Najafi. He wondered if the Iraqi was being cautious, pondering whether to accept the

donation. The young secretary added sharply, 'but it is hoped of you (*al-ma'mul minkum*) that you will make haste in informing us of its receipt in full, insofar as we assumed you had decided to proceed.'³⁸ The imperious tone, bracketed with flowery expressions of admiration, reveals something of the superiority the Lucknow mujtahids felt as the paymasters of their more prestigious colleagues in Iraq.

From October 1842 to January 1843, Karbala was under seige by Ottoman forces at the command of the new, hardline governor, Najib Pasha, who was determined to reduce the defiant city. In January 1843, Ottoman troops entered the town in a bloody occupation that left at least 5,000 persons dead and wrought extensive damage to buildings and shrines.³⁹ The new political climate brought the Awadh-sponsored building works to a grinding halt. An-Najafi wrote to Lucknow, explained that the Ottoman military maneuvers had delayed repairs to the canal but that he was now preparing to resume work.⁴⁰ Sayyid Husayn Nasirabadi replied with sympathy for the victims of the Karbala disaster but grumbled that he still had no receipt for the Rs.150,000 he had remitted to Najaf, and he wanted a detailed report on the progress of work on the Asafiyah canal.⁴¹

Shaykh Muhammad Hasan replied that he had received the entire amount for the canal repairs and had prepared the groundwork, but that the Ottoman military action in the canal vicinity had resulted in a postponement (apparently Shi'i laborers living near the canal had fled). He said that three farsakhs needed to be dug out, the sum received allowing completion of only half the project since the Ottoman rulers were now charging imposts that drove the cost up to Rs.100,000 per farsakh. In view of the mujtahids' statements that Amjad 'Ali Shah declined to send more funds, he had not thought it wise to embark on a project that might be impossible of accomplishment.

He optimistically suggested that if any money were left over when the canal was finished, there were many mosques and shrines that needed to be repaired, to which it could profitably be applied. An-Najafi clearly did not believe that the money had dried up and attempted to force more remittances by claiming the job could not be done with the amount already sent. He also reminded Nasirabadi of the multitudes of poor and refugees from devastated Karbala thronging Najaf, seeking the succor of the ulama.⁴²

Sayyid Husayn Nasirabadi posted a letter to an-Najafi stating that he was pleased at the state of the various construction projects, but that Amjad 'Ali refused to send another Rs.5,000 to complete the building of the shrine of Muslim. He did, however, remit that amount for the relief of the poor and stricken who survived the Karbala ordeal.⁴³ Shaykh Muhammad Hasan later corresponded again with Lucknow, addressing Sayyids Muhammad and Husayn Nasirabadi with their court titles of Sultanu'l-'Ulama' and Sayyidu'l-'Ulama'. He said their last missive mentioned that the Just King was now inclined to provide funds for the completion of the canal but noted that no money had yet arrived. He admonished them to fulfill their pledge, informing them that he had placed his son, Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Husayn, in charge of the project, as he was his heir apparent in expounding the Law of Islam.⁴⁴

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO IRAQ AND CHARGES OF CORRUPTION

The river of Indian rupees flooding into the Iraqi shrine cities included a small but steady branching stream fed by direct philanthropy. Muhammad 'Ali Shah in 1841 assigned promissory notes worth Rs.300,000 as an endowment originally separate from local building funds, dedicating the interest of Rs.12,000 per year to the support of 200 indigent Indian Shi'is in Iraq at Rs.5 per month each.⁴⁵ As with the other Awadh monies, the charity was paid out to the two leading mujtahids, of Karbala and Najaf, by the British Political Agent in Baghdad.⁴⁶

In a missive to Sayyid Ibrahim Qazvini probably written in the middle of 1843 the Awadh clerics noted that although the king had put aside a certain amount of the money sent for food for the poor, Qazvini was his general agent and it all depended on his judgement. They nevertheless suggested that the money should be divided three ways, one-third for the poor, one-third for disaster relief, and one-third for needy ulama and students in the shrine cities.⁴⁷

While the 'Oudh bequest' later became a political tool in the hands of British administrators in the quest to influence the ulama, in the 1830s and 1840s they seemed more interested in proving they could be honest brokers. Sometimes they were more scrupulous than the Shi'is themselves. Mirza Khalil, the Iranian ambassador to Bombay killed in an affray in 1832, had asked the British government to donate Rs.10,000 per year to the mujtahids and poor of Karbala. When his heirs claimed the stipend for themselves the British government insisted on giving it to the shrines in accordance with the dead man's will.⁴⁸

In the 1840s the British role in the remission of charities to the shrine cities became an embarrassment for them. Rawlinson wrote to the governor-general in 1844 to express his growing concern:

I have been repeatedly solicited by the heads of the Sheeah population of this Pashalic to bring to the notice of the right Hon^{ble} the Govr. Gen^l of India, with a view to its being communicated to H.M. the King of Oude, through the British Envoy at his Court, the gross misapplication to which are subjected his Majesty's munificent donations to the Holy Shrines in the vicinity of Bagdad. Nearly four lakhs of Rupees have been remitted by H.M. through the Bagdad treasury within the last few years, with a view of providing for the comfort and security of the Sheeah pilgrims at Nejef, Kerbela & Samarra, but it is stated and generally believed, that owing to the total want of surveillance in the distribution of the funds, but a very small portion only of the bequest has been appropriated to the purposes of charity.

In the event therefore of His Majesty making any similar donation in future, it would seem almost indispensable, in order to give effect to his wishes, that a trustworthy agent should be deputed by him from India to superintend the disbursements in the country. It may indeed, I think, be questionable whether, if this precaution be neglected the sums should be remitted through a British Treasury; for I perceive that, so notorious has been the speculation the part of the Chief Priests of Kerbelah & Nejef

in whose favour the money has been remitted from India that our own credit has suffered from having been in any way connected with the transaction.⁴⁹

The governer-general acted upon Rawlinson's advice, incurring the subsequent displeasure of the Court of Directors, who instructed him to abstain from entering into any communication with the Awadh ruler on such matters. The political agent in Baghdad remained anxious, protesting in 1846 that a bill arrived for Rs.18,000 endorsed by an Awadh government official in favor of Sayyid Ibrahim Qazvini rather than the Political Agent, which he said was irregular and might subject him to embarrassment.⁵⁰ Qazvini's behavior as the agent for Awadh philanthropies in Karbala grew so unsatisfactory that he was finally replaced. A decade after the 1856 British annexation of Awadh, Iqbalu'd-Dawlah, a member of the Nishapuri former ruling family with extensive contacts in London, endeavoured to have the funds put in the hands of a resident Indian mujtahid in 1866-67. But the British government balked because the wording of the bequest excluded this step.⁵¹

Letters from the ulama in Lucknow give some credence to British complaints, in that the Iraqi mujtahids were suspiciously slow in returning receipts for the hundreds of thousands of rupees received, they reported cost overruns of 100 per cent in three years, and Indian pilgrims had difficulty sharing in the Awadh cornucopia. On one occasion Sayyid Muhammad Nasirabadi sent Rs.4,211 to Shaykh Muhammad Hasan an-Najafi for distribution to the believers and Sayyids, noting that he had heard from several sources, including Mirza Hasan 'Azimabadi, that Sayyid Musa Hindi was not getting any relief funds.⁵² That some information on the maldistribution of funds by Usuli mujtahids at the shrine cities derived from Shaykhi sources points to the way factional disputes helped unearth such practices.

Even had the high ulama spent the funds from Lucknow in an entirely efficient and upright manner, the very delivery into their hands of Rs.400,000 from 1839 to 1844 would have greatly strengthened their local political position. They could use the money to mobilize major urban social groups, endowment supervisors, merchants, builders' guilds, and gangsters providing protection, behind programs of urban renewal that vastly extended the range of their patronage. Large numbers of stipends could be offered as scholarships to students, creating a huge following and helping undermine support for rivals like the Shaykhis and Babis.⁵³

ATTITUDES TO AUTHORITY: 'WOULD THAT THERE WERE NO KING!'

The major actors in the gargantuan philanthropic donations of the 1840s, the Awadh notables and their clergy, the British, the Ottomans and the Shi'i ulama of the shrine cities were linked by the transactions in a network of relationships. Often the letters from that period reveal with startling frankness the attitudes of the clergy to the other actors. The most important single piece of correspondence of this nature was a letter from the minor Usuli scholar Muhammad Yusuf Astarabadi at Karbala in the spring of 1843 to Sayyids Muhammad and Husayn Nasirabadi in Lucknow.⁵⁴

Astarabadi barely survived the sack of Karbala by the Ottomans in January 1843. He was wounded in the head, made to carry booty for his captors, lost his eldest son and saw his entire library and lifework burned. As he sat amidst the debris in the shell of a house in the martyred city of Husayn, he penned an anguished cry of radical purport: 'Would that there were no king ruling over us, and none over Iran!' If there had to be a king, he declared, he should be a pious defender of Shi'is from their enemies. Astarabadi's letter represents an inchoate expression of republican sentiments, even if it contained more hyperbole than politics. He implicitly blamed the Ottoman sultan for ordering the invasion and the Iranian monarch for not coming to the aid of his fellow Shi'is.

A similar letter reached Sayyid Husayn Nasirabadi from Sayyid 'Ali Naqi Tabataba'i (1809–81), a grandson of Bahru'l-'Ulum.⁵⁵ Sayyid Husayn in reply expressed grief over the happenings in Karbala, saying he hoped God would continue the old friendship between their two families. He did not blame the incident on the Sunnis as one might have expected, but remarked that one seldom found notables (*umara*) or magnates (*'ama'id*) with hearing ears.⁵⁶ Like Astarabadi, Sayyid Husayn Nasirabadi saw the Karbala disaster as an indictment of the ruling classes, both Sunni and Shi'i, whom he excoriated as corrupt.⁵⁷ Clearly, when the clerics felt the Shi'i notables had failed them they were willing to class them together with Sunni noblemen as godless.

On the other hand, we have seen that the ulama often referred to the Awadh monarch as a just king, implicitly accepting the legitimacy of his government. Both Sayyid Ibrahim Qazvini and Sayyid Husayn Nasirabadi referred to Amjad 'Ali Shah as the 'helper of the ulama'. The Awadh scholars cared more for flattering the monarchs, however, and strove constantly to persuade their counterparts in Iraq to write in flowery Persian thanking the kings in Lucknow and their notables for the contributions. The mujtahids in Iraq, however, tended to write in incomprehensible Arabic in a straightforward manner that offended Indian protocol.⁵⁸ The 1840s, a decade of power and wealth for the Shi'i ulama, ended with ominous signs of declining court patronage for them. Amjad 'Ali Shah died in 1847, and while his son Wajid 'Ali continued many clericalist policies for a while he was far less generous. Shushtari lamented in 1848, 'gone are the grandees who donated philanthropy, and the kings who aided the ulama and the Sayyids.'⁵⁹

MUJTAHIDS AND SUPREME EXEMPLARS

The relationship of the high ulama in North India to the mujtahids in the shrine cities remained a complex one. They all addressed each other as the 'best of the mujtahids', the 'exemplar of the people', the 'heir of the prophets', indiscriminately and in a manner calculated to debase the coin of the superlatives, rendering them no more than pleasantries. A story from Sayyid Husayn Nasirabadi's biography illuminates the relationship. Shushtari wrote that Sayyid Husayn allowed the deputation of judicial authority (*al-istinaba fi'l-qada*), considered a very minority opinion that seemed to contradict Shi'i consensus. After Muhammad Hasan an-Najafi took the same stance in his *Jawahir al-kalam* others in Awadh changed their views, agreeing that such

deputation was permissible. Sayyid Husayn, on the other hand, not once changed his mind on a major position.⁶⁰ The story demonstrates that an-Najafi's authority as a mujtahid and source for emulation (*marja' at-taqlid*) carried weight with many North Indian ulama in the 1840s, but that the Nasirabadis maintained a degree of pride and independence.

While mujtahids were forbidden from practicing emulation (*taqlid*) of other jurists, the Usuli emphasis on the greater authority of the most learned (*al-a'lam*) jurist led to the emergence of a small number of pace-setters whose judicial opinions widely commanded respect and around whom a new consensus often formed. In the mid-nineteenth century each of the major centers of Shi'i learning possessed one or two leading mujtahids who, through their reputation for erudition and their control of pious endowments and charitable contributions, dominated the religious establishment. Shaykh Muhammad Hasan in Najaf, Sayyid Ibrahim Qazvini in Karbala, Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Shafti in Isfahan and Sayyid Muhammad Nasirabadi in Lucknow, among others, formed a select group of exemplars whose rulings were not only emulated by large numbers of laymen but were often deferred to by other mujtahids.

In the 1840s a convention existed that of all the great centers Najaf was preeminent, so that the head of the religious establishment in that city was considered the leader (*ra'is*) of all the Shi'is. In a biographical notice of Shaykh Muhammad Hasan an-Najafi, one of his students wrote in 1846 (1262), 'upon him devolved the leadership of the Imamis, both Arabs and non-Arabs, in this, our own time'.⁶¹ The anecdote from the life of Sayyid Husayn recounted above, however, indicates that while many ulama in India accepted even an-Najafi's controversial rulings as authoritative, the top mujtahids in Awadh never changed their views on someone else's authority. Deference to Shaykh Muhammad Hasan as the most learned exemplar may have been more common among the lower ranks of mujtahids everywhere than at the very top. It is unlikely that Sayyid Muhammad Nasirabadi in Lucknow or Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Shafti in Isfahan considered an-Najafi more learned than themselves or more authoritative in his rulings. Nasirabadi maintained that he was esoterically taught his knowledge by the Twelfth Imam himself.

In 1849 or 1850 (1266), Shaykh Muhammad Hasan convened a gathering of mujtahids at Najaf where he named as his successor one of his close students, Shaykh Murtaza Ansari. He reportedly introduced his nominee to the other jurists, saying 'This is your exemplar (*Hadha marja'ukum*)'.⁶² Ansari, who controlled 200,000 tumans per year in charitable donations, emerged as the most widely recognized jurisprudential source for emulation in the Shi'i world. Later in the nineteenth century Muhammad Mihdi Kashmiri of Lucknow wrote of Ansari, 'His cause attained renown throughout all horizons, and he was mentioned in the pulpits in a manner unparalleled before him. He was an exemplar to the Shi'is in their entirety, in their religion and in their worldly affairs'.⁶³ Again, while such sentiments in favor of Ansari clearly existed in Awadh, it is unlikely that any of the leading members of the Nasirabadi family acknowledged anyone else as more learned than themselves.

For their part the jurists in the shrine cities did not simply dismiss the

Indian mujtahids as rustic bumpkins, at least to their faces. Shaykh Muhammad Hasan an-Najafi constantly asked the Lucknow mujtahids to send copies of their compositions to Najaf, where they were read and circulated, early Awadh use of the printing press making Shi'ī authors there accessible to readers in the Middle East. When he read Sayyid Muhammad Nasirabadi's *ad-Darbāh al-Haydariyyah* in defense of temporary marriage, he called it the 'crown of Shi'ism', referring to the author's father, Sayyid Dildar 'Ali, as 'the seal of the mujtahids'.⁶⁴ Elsewhere he noted that Sayyid Dildar 'Ali's long work on the principles of religion entitled 'Mirrors for Minds' had arrived, upon which he lavished effusive praise, attributing the brilliance of the family's compositions to their descent from the Imams.⁶⁵

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE SHI'IS

The other partner in the endowment transactions was the British, whose ability to transfer large amounts of money safely to the Middle East the ulama appreciated. The alliance between the British Government of India and Awadh, and the role of the Political Agent in Baghdad as paymaster for the Iraq mujtahids, suggested to some Shi'īs that they ought to pursue a British policy.

In 1849 the Imam-Jum'ah of Tehran wrote to the governor-general of India, Dalhousie, urging that he extend the special protection of his government to the Shi'īs in India:

. . . it is evident that no one can in that Country do anything illegal, but, at the same time as it frequently happens during the ten days of Mohurrum, fights and disputes arise among the young and ignorant low people of the Sheeah and Soonee persuasions, this servant of the holy law hopes that an order will be given by that illustrious Government to the Governor-General of India that numerous instructions shall be given by him for the protection of the Sheeah wherever they may be, and more particularly with regard to the people of Lucknow, and in a more especial manner, His excellency the Chief Priest of the time, Seid Mohamed Sahib and the Sheeahs of Moorshedabad and Calcutta and Madras and Hyderabad and Bombay and that the learned people of that sect should be treated with respect and consideration. This will not only be an obligation granted to this servant of the holy law but also a cause of rejoicing to the great and the whole people of Persia . . .⁶⁶

The dour Dalhousie was an unlikely protector for the partisans of Imam 'Ali. While the British on the ground may have been willing to promote themselves with Iran as representatives of a partially Shi'ī power, the policies of the governor-general and the Lucknow resident brought them into ever more bitter conflict with the mujtahids of Awadh in the 1850s.

CONCLUSION

In the absence of overall figures for contributions to the shrine cities from Iran and elsewhere, it is impossible to assess the exact significance of the money

coming from Awadh. Even the precise sums involved in the 'Indian money' are difficult to specify, though British records are explicit on some projects, such as the 1840s canal work.

There can be little doubt, however, that the 'Indian money' was important. In designating certain individuals its recipients, the Awadh notables and ulama helped shore up the leadership positions of Usuli mujtahids against Akhbari and Shaykhi rivals from the late eighteenth century on. Moreover, projects like the Asafiyyah canal had a discernible impact on the ecology of Iraq in the area around the shrine cities, on population movements and agriculture.

Beyond these considerations, however, the case of the 'Indian money' illustrates in part the importance of monetary contributions made to the clerical establishment by Shi'i governments and high notables. One conclusion that can be suggested on the basis of the evidence presented here is that the mujtahids were far more closely tied to, and beholden to, Shi'i governments than has generally been recognized.

The Usuli clerics in the nineteenth century are often seen as highly independent of the Iranian government, in contrast to the Sunni ulama in the Ottoman Empire. But money is influence, and to the extent that Shi'i mujtahids received gifts, stipends, and other wealth from governments and high officials, they were beholden to them. Of course, Awadh was too far away to demand much in return from the clerics in Najaf and Karbala. But an investigation of financial support from the Iranian government and its high officials for the clerical establishment in nineteenth-century Iraq might yield similar conclusions.

Because India was one of the first areas to take the full brunt of European industrial imperialism, modern capitalism affected Shi'i finances first there. In the 1830s and 1840s substantial sums deriving from interest on loans to the East India Company were being disbursed to the Iraqi mujtahids by the British Agent in Baghdad on behalf of the Awadh government. The principal, originally extorted from Hindu peasants by Awadh's Shi'i tax-collectors, financed further EIC imperial expansion in the subcontinent, while the interest supported both the Awadh ruling class and its clients, the Shi'i ulama in India and Iraq. Shi'i jurists in Lucknow, and presumably in Iraq as well, quickly reinterpreted Imami law so as to allow the charging of interest on loans to Christians. Armed with this ideological justification, the mujtahids entered the ranks of the capitalist rentiers.

It has long been recognized that religious leadership in the Shi'i world grew somewhat more centralized in the course of the nineteenth century. The magnitude of the sums involved in the 'Indian money' and in the charitable contributions forwarded from Iran suggests that the emergence of the 'supreme exemplar' in Najaf may have been facilitated by an expanded economic base.

The British role in helping transfer funds and in providing the mechanism for interest-bearing loans was conspicuous. Interestingly enough, the increasing British presence at first provoked some conciliatory moves on behalf the prominent ulama. The British were allies of the Shi'i kingdom of Awadh (Oudh), and their agent in Baghdad had become the distributor of

Awadh largesse to the chief mujtahids in Najaf and Karbala. The prayer leader of Tehran apparently wished to strengthen the British–Shi'ī alliance as a means of furthering Shi'ī interests and the interests of the ulama. But the 1840s were the high point of this relationship. The 1856 annexation of Awadh and the resultant revolt ('mutiny'), increasing British presence in south Iran, and British attempts to use the 'Indian money' to manipulate the ulama in Iraq, were ultimately to sour the embryonic alliance.

NOTES

1. Lawrence Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).
2. See Hamid Algar, 'Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century', in T. Naff and R. Owen, (eds.), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), pp.288–302.
3. For this struggle in the Safavid period, see A.K.S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory. The Jurists*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), Chapter XV and Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). For eighteenth-century developments see Juan Cole, 'Shi'ī Clerics in Eighteenth Century Iraq and Iran: The Akhbari–Usuli Controversy Reconsidered', *Iranian Studies*, 18,1 (1985): 394, and G. Scarcia, 'Intorno alle controversie tra Akhbari e Usuli presso gli Imamiti di Persia', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 33 (1958): 211–50; for issues in jurisprudence see Harald Löschner, *Die dogmatischen Grundlagen des šī'itischen Rechts* (Cologne: Karl Heymans Verlag, 1971); for religious taxes see A. Sachedina, 'Al-Khums: The Fifth in the Imami Shi'ī Legal System', *Journal of Near East Studies* 39 (1980): 276–89.
4. For Bihbahani see Aqa Ahmad Bihbahani, 'Mir'at al-ahwal-i jahan-nama', Persian MS add. 24,052, foll. 45a ff., British Library, London; and 'Ali Davvani, *Ustad-i kull Aqa Muhammad Baqir b. Muhammad Akmal ma'ruf bih Vahid-i Bihbahani* (Qumm: Chapkhanah-i Dar al-'Ilm, 1958).
5. For the Mamluks in eighteenth-century Iraq see 'Abdu'r-Rahman as Suwaydi, in 'Imad A. Ra'uf (ed.), *Tarikh hawadith Baghdad wa'l-Basrah min 1186 ila 1192 H./1772–1778 M.*, (Baghdad: Wizarat ath-Thaqafah wa'l-Funun, 1978); A.M.K. Nawras, *Hukm al-mamluk fi al-'Iraq, 1750–1831* (Baghdad: Wizarat al-'Ilm, 1975); S. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925).
6. For the political history of North India in this period see Richard B. Barnett, *North India Between Empires: Awadh, the Mughals, and the British, 1720–1801* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).
7. For basic materials for the biography of Sayyid Dildar 'Ali Nasirabadi see 'A'inah-i haqq-nama', Rijal Shi'ah, Persian MS 1, Nasiriyah Library, Lucknow; for analysis see Juan R.I. Cole, *Roots of North Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq: Religion and State in Awadh* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, forthcoming).
8. Muhammad Muhtashim Khan, 'Tarikh-i Muhtashim Khani', Persian MS H.L. 156, foll. 129b–130a, Khodabakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna; Kamalu'd-Din Haydar Mashadi, *Savanihat-i salatin-i Avadh* (Lucknow: Naval Kishor, 1897), p.113; Sayyid 'Abbas Ardistani, 'al-Hisn al-matin fi ahwal al-wuzara' wa's-salatin', 2 vols., New Delhi, National Archives of India, Arabic MSS 235a, 235b, 1: 70; Ja'far Al-Mahbubah an-Najafi, *Madi an-Najaf wa hadiruha* (Sidon: Matba'at al-'Irfan, 1353/1934), p.131 and note.
9. Aqa Ahmad Bihbahani, 'Mir'at al-ahwal-i jahan-nama', foll. 58a–59b.
10. Hasan Riza Khan to Hajji Karbala'i Muhammad, 26 Rabi' I 1213, enclosure no.55 in Resident to Vazir, 22 November 1806, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 22 November 1806, No.53, National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi.
11. King of Iran to Vazir of Oudh, n.d., enclosure in Persian Secretary to the Government of

- India to the Resident, Lucknow, 14 October 1806, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 16 October 1806, No.25.
12. See Rahman 'Ali, *Tazkirah-i 'ulama-yi Hind* (Lucknow: Naval Kishor, 1914), pp.99-100; Qiyamu'd-Din Muhammad 'Abdu'l-Bari Farangi-Mahalli, *Athar al-awwal min 'ulama' Faranji Mahall* (Lucknow: Matba'-i Mujtaba'i, 1321/1903), p.16.
 13. Decision of the Mufti of the Adawlut, enclosure No.54 in Resident to the Vazir, 22 November 1806.
 14. On Iranian merchants and trade in this period, see A.K.S. Lambton, 'The Case of Haji 'Abd al-Karim: A Study in the Role of the Merchants in Mid-Nineteenth Century Persia', in C.E. Bosworth (ed.), *Iran and Islam, in Memory of the late Vladimir Minorsky*, (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1971); and her 'Persian Trade under the Early Qajars', in D.S. Richards (ed.), *Islam and the Trade of Asia*, (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1970).
 15. Resident to Secretary to the Government in the Political Department, 14 August 1802, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 2 September 1802, No.15.
 16. Vazir to Resident, 7 September 1811, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 20 September 1811, No.27; Deputy Persian Secretary to the Government to Resident, 12 August 1816, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 4 January 1817.
 17. Tom Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and Society in Early Modern Iraq: Mamluk Pashas, Tribal Shayks and Local Rule between 1802 and 1831* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p.130.
 18. Vazir to Resident, 11 September 1816, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 20 February 1818, No.47; Political Agent, Baghdad, to Chief Secretary to the Government, Bombay, 10 September 1817, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 20 February 1818, No.53. For Iraqi political leadership in this period see Nieuwenhuis, *Early Modern Iraq* and 'Abdu'l-'Aziz S. Nawwar, *Da'ud Basha Wali Baghdad* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-'Arabiyyah, 1968).
 19. Secretary to the Government of India to Resident, 30 December 1815, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 30 December 1815, No.32. For growing European influence in Awadh in the first half of the nineteenth century see John Pemble, *The Raj, the Indian Mutiny and the Kingdom of Oudh 1801-1859* (London: Harvester Press, 1977)
 20. Resident to Secretary to the Government of India in the Political Department, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 9 November 1816, No.17. For Mirza Muhammad Husayn Shahristani (d. 1840) see Muhammad 'Ali Mu'allim Habibabadi, *Makarim al-athar dar ahwal-i rijal-i dawrah-i Qajar*, 2 vols. (Isfahan: Matba'-i Muhammadi, 1958), 2: 613, where he is described as Mirza Muhammad Mihdi's grandson through a daughter. By Sayyid Muhammad, Bahu Begam almost certainly meant the son of Sayyid 'Ali Tabataba'i, who inherited his father's position of leadership in Karbala, passing away in 1826-27 while accompanying Fath-'Ali Shah's expedition against the Russians; see Muhammad Baqir Khvansari, *Rawdat al-jannat fi ahwal al-'ulama' wa's-sadat*, 8 vols. (Tehran: Maktabat-i Isma'iliyan 1390/1970), 7: 145-7. For the political significance of Bahu Begam's will, see Barnett, *North India*, pp.237-8.
 21. Resident to Secretary to the Government, 21 November 1814, For. Dept. Pol. Dept., 13 December 1814, No.10; Resident to Secretary to the Government in the Secret Department, 18 April 1815, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 18 April 1815, No.58; Resident to Secretary to the Government in the Political Department, 12 August 1825, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 16 September 1835, Nos.35-7.
 22. Governor-General to Resident, Lucknow, 6 May 1826, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 23 June 1826, No.6; Resident to Governor-General, 18 and 20 May 1826, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 23 June 1826, Nos. 7-8.
 23. Resident to Secretary to the Government in the Political Department, 25 July 1826, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 18 August 1826, No.8.
 24. Nasirabadi. 'Najat as-sa'ilin', Fiqh Shi'ah, Persian MS 256, fol. 23b, Nasiriyyah Library, Lucknow.
 25. Musharraf 'Ali Khan Lakhnavi (ed.), *Bayaz-i masa'il*, 3 vols. (Lucknow: n.p., 1251/1835-36), 3:26; the fatwa is signed by Sayyid Muhammad.
 26. Cf. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958) and R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Penguin Books, repr. 1947), esp. pp.91-115. For ideological accommodation to merchant capitalism in Muslim countries see S.D. Goitein, 'The Rise of the Middle Eastern Bourgeoisie in Early Islamic Times', in idem., *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), pp.217-41; Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism*, trans. Brian Pearce (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978); and Peter Gran,

The Islamic Roots of Capitalism (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979).

27. Proposed Deed between King and Company, 17 August 1825, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 16 September 1825, No.37; other deeds have similar clauses.
28. See Sayyid Kazim Rashti, 'Dalil al-mutahayyirin', Curzon Collection, Persian trans., MS 831, Asiatic Society Library, Calcutta; and Muhammad 'Ali Kashmiri, *Nujum as-sama' fi tarajim al-'ulama'* (Lucknow: Matba'-'i Ja'fari, 1302/1884-85), pp.367, 397. For recent published scholarship on the Shaykhis see Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, Vol.4 (Paris: Gallimard, 1972) and Mangol Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent: Socioreligious Thought in Qajar Iran* (Syracuse University Press, 1982).
29. For Usuli views of 'Azimabadi and his teachings see Muhammad Mihdi Lakhnavi Kashmiri, *Nujum as-sama': takmilah*, 2 vols. (Qumm: Maktabat-i Basirati, 1397/1977) I:42-3; Sayyid Muhammad 'Abbas Shushtari, 'al-Ma'adin adh-dhahabiyah, Adab 'Arabi, MS 4446, pp.76-77, Raza Library, Rampur; and Sayyid Husayn Nasirabadi, 'Al-Fawa'id al-Husayniyyah', 'Aqa'id Shi'ah, Arabic MS 101, Nasiriyyah Library, Lucknow.
30. Murtaza Mudarris Chahardihi, *Shaykhigari va Babigari: az nazar-i falsafah, tarikh, ijtima'* (Tehran: Kitabfurushi-yi Furughi 1966), p.177; see Denis M. MacEoin, 'From Shaykhism to Babism'(Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1979), p.111.
31. Sayyid Muhammad 'Abbas Shushtari, ed., 'az-Zill al-mamdud', Arabic MS in the Library of the Raja of Mahmudabad, Lucknow, pp.274-9 (an important collection of letters between the ulama in Najaf and Karbala and those in Awadh, compiled in 1849). For the policies of the Awadh government in the 1840s see Safi Ahmad, *Two Kings of Awadh: Muhammad Ali Shah and Amjad Ali Shah (1837-47)* (Aligarh: P.C. Dwadash Shreni & Co., 1971).
32. Acting Resident to Secretary to the Government of India, 15 June 1839, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 26 June 1839, Nos.41-3; Acting Resident to Officiating Political Secretary to the Government of India, 13 August 1841, For. Dept. For. Cons., 24 August 1840, No.65; Resident to Secretary to the Government of India, 30 November 1841, For. Dept. For. Cons., 13 December 1841, No.69, NAI.
33. Political Department, Ft. William, to the Resident, Lucknow, 23 October 1841, For. Dept. For. Cons., 25 October 1841, Nos.25-6. For the British in Iraq see M.G.I. Khan, 'British Policy in Iraq 1828-43', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh* 18 (1973): 173-94.
34. Sayyid Ibrahim al-Musawi al-Ha'iri [Qazvini] to Muhammad 'Ali Shah, Rabi' II 1257/June-July 1841, Persian MS 271, Regional Archives, Allahabad.
35. Political Agent in Turkish Arabia to Secret Committee, 27 January 1842, For. Dept. Secret Cons., 30 March 1842, Nos.34-5.
36. Sayyid Ibrahim al-Musawi al-Ha'iri [Qazvini] to Amjad 'Ali Shah, Persian MS 272, Regional Archives, Allahabad.
37. Muhammad Hasan an-Najafi (d. 1850), the author of *Jawahir al-kalam*, was widely recognized toward the end of his life as the preeminent leader of the Imami community; see Khvansari, *Rawdat al-jannat*, 2: 304-6 and M.M. Kashmiri, *Nujum as-sama': takmilah*, I: 71-84.
38. Shushtari (ed.), 'az-Zill al-mamdud', pp.145-6.
39. J.G. Lorimer, *Gazeteer of the Persian Gulf, 'Oman and Central Arabia*, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1908-1915, reproduced, London, 1970), I: 1348-58; for further sources on this rebellion and analysis see Juan R.I. Cole and Moojan Momen, 'Mafia, Mob and Shi'ism in Iraq: the Rebellion of Ottoman Karbala, 1824-1843', *Past and Present*, 112 (August 1986): 172-430.
40. Shushtari (ed.), 'az-Zill al-mamdud', pp.126-37.
41. *Ibid.*, pp.139-44.
42. *Ibid.*, pp.316-27.
43. *Ibid.*, pp.328-34.
44. *Ibid.*, pp.398-422.
45. Officiating Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Oudh, to Secretary to the Government of India, 27 April 1874, with enclosed note dated 30 August 1861, Board of Revenue, Lucknow File 6 Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow.
46. Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department to Political Agent in Turkish Arabia, 8 October 1852, For. Dept. For. Cons., 22 December 1852, No.5.
47. Shushtari (ed.), 'az-Zill al-mamdud', pp.74-7.
48. Note by Secretary to the Government in the Political Department, 11 April 1839, For. Dept. Pol. Cons., 8 May 1839, Nos.13-14.

49. Political agent in Turkish Arabia to Secretary to the Government of India, 21 March 1844, For. Dept. For. Cons., 8 June 1844, Nos.28-9.
50. India Political Dispatches from the Court of Directors, No.11 of 1845, 19 March, National Archives of India, New Delhi; Political Agent in Turkish Arabia to Officiating Resident, Lucknow, 26 June 1846, For. Dept. For. Cons., 17 April, No.97.
51. Note dated 30.8.61 enclosure with Off. Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Oudh, to Secretary to the Government of India, 27 April 1874; Lorimer, *Gazeteer of the Persian Gulf*, 1: 264-5.
52. Shushtari (ed.), 'az-Zill al-mamdud', pp.199-203.
53. For Sayyid Ibrahim Qazvini's very large classrooms, partly a function of the resources at his disposal, see Muhamad Tunikabuni, *Qisas al-'ulama'* (Tehran: Kitabfurushi-yi 'Ilmiyyah-'i Islamiyyah, n.d.), pp.4 ff.
54. The letter is in Shushtari (ed.), 'az-Zill al-mamdud', pp.87-101. For a brief biographical notice of Astarabadi see M.M. Kashmiri, *Nujum as-sama': takmilah*, 1: 395; he later became a student of the great Shi'i leader Murtaza Ansari in Najaf.
55. In Shushtari (ed.), 'az-Zill al-mamdud', pp.105-10; for Sayyid 'Ali Naqi see Sayyid Muhammad Hadi al-Kazimi, *Ahsan al-wadi 'ah fi tarajim mashahir mujtahidi ash-Shi'ah*, 2 vols. (Najaf: al-Matba'ah al-Haydariyyah, 1968), 2: 223-6.
56. In Shushtari (ed.), 'az-Zill al-mamdud', pp.111-14.
57. In *ibid.*, p.487.
58. See *ibid.*, pp.200, 489.
59. *Ibid.*, p.492.
60. Shushtari, 'al-Ma'adin adh-dhahabiyyah', p.14.
61. Khvansari, *Rawdat al-jannat*, 2: 305.
62. Murtaza al-Ansari Al-Shaykh, *Zindigani va shakhsiyyat-i Shaykh Ansari*, (Ahwaz?: n.p., 1380/1960-61), pp.72-4; see Juan R. Cole, 'Imami Jurisprudence and the Role of the Ulama: Mortaza Ansari on Emulating the Supreme Exemplar', in Nikki R. Keddie (ed.), *Religion and Politics in Iran: Shi'ism from Quietism to Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp.33-46; and Hamid Algar *Religion and State in Iran 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), pp.162-5.
63. M.M. Kashmiri, *Nujum as-sama': takmilah*, 1: 123.
64. In Shushtari (ed.), 'az-Zill al-mamdud', p.408.
65. In *ibid.*, pp.67-8.
66. Imam-Jum'ah of Tehran to Lord Palmerston and to the Governor-General of India, enclosure from F. Farrant, near Tehran, 15 May 1849, For. Dept. Secret Cons., 25 August 1849, Nos.23-4.