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A View from the Periphery: The *Ijāza* as Polemic in Early 10th/16th-Century Twelver Shi'ism

Andrew J. Newman

In earlier research on the exchanges between Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān al-Qaṭīfī (d. after 945/1539¹) and 'Alī al-Karakī (d. 940/1534) it was concluded that the composition and increasingly forthright and distinctly Akhbārī-style aspects of al-Qaṭīfī's criticisms of al-Karakī were most usefully understood in the context of the changing fortunes of the Safavid polity during the years these exchanges took place.²

The present paper examines al-Qaṭīfī's *ijāzāt* as preserved in *Biḥār al-anwār* of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1699),³ to examine whether such a contextual approach also sheds light on the style and substance of these texts and thereby further contributes to the understanding of the al-Qaṭīfī/al-Karakī 'debates' and to the extant discussions on Twelver Shi'ī *ijāzāt* more generally.

The paper first addresses some of this literature and then discusses each of the extant *ijāzāt* in turn. Of the five texts in *Biḥār*, three are

¹ The editor of Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī's (d. 1186/1772) *Lu'lu'ā*, on which see further below, says al-Qaṭīfī was alive in 951/1544, when he completed *al-Firqa al-nājiyya*. Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī says this work was completed in 945/1538. See al-Baḥrānī, *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn* (Manama, 1429/2008), p. 154, n. 3; Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī'ā ilā taṣānīf al-shī'a* (Beirut, 1403/1983), vol. 16, p. 177; al-Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-lām al-shī'a*, vol. 7 (Beirut, 1430/2009), p. 5.

² A. Newman, 'The Myth of the Clerical Migration to Safawid Iran: Arab Shi'ite Opposition to 'Alī al-Karakī and Safawid Shi'ism', *Die Welt des Islams*, 33 (1993), pp. 78ff.

³ On other dates for al-Majlisī's death, see our 'The Idea of Bāqer al-Majlesī in 'The Idea of Iran: The Safavid Era', in C. Melville, ed., *Safavid Persia in the Age of Empires* (*The Idea of Iran*, vol. X) (London, 2021), pp. 157 n. 1, 166 n. 56.

dated to 915/1509, 920/1514 and 944/1537 respectively, and the larger historical contexts of each will be discussed before the texts themselves. Of the two undated texts, the very short one merits only passing notice. The second, longer, undated *ijāza* is discussed and, on the basis of its style and substance, a relative date for its composition is offered.⁴

Al-Karākī's presence looms large, if indirectly, across the four. The complex blend of al-Qaṭīfī's jurisprudential criticisms in these texts – documents not necessarily intended for widespread circulation – complement his open critique of al-Karākī as discussed elsewhere even as al-Qaṭīfī's personal reflections attest to a sense of being an 'outsider' of lesser stature in comparison with al-Karākī, based on fewer opportunities, ill health and personal slights, all leading to a lack of self-confidence. As such, the paper suggests that in the context of the Western-language discussion of Shi'i *ijāzāt* to date the combination of the jurisprudential with the personal on offer in al-Qaṭīfī's *ijāzāt* is distinctive.

The Extant Literature on Twelver *Ijāzāt*

With a few exceptions, the limited Western-language academic discussion in works dedicated specifically to Twelver *ijāzāt* has not generally recognised these documents as having the potential for an 'agenda' above and beyond that of the function for which they were, ostensibly, intended. Most focus on the information on scholarly networks contained in these texts and refer to post-Safavid *ijāzāt*. Al-Qaṭīfī's *ijāzāt* have been given little or no attention.

Vajda and others in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.) discuss the *ijāza* as the form in which an 'authorized guarantor of a text or of a whole book (his own work or a work received through a chain of transmitters going back to the first transmitter or to the author) gives a person the authorisation to transmit it in his turn so that the person

⁴ Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-anwār*, ed. S. Ibrāhīm al-Miyānījī, et al. (n.p., 1403/1983), vol. 105, pp. 85–123. Four of the five *ijāzāt* can also be found in *Mawsū'at al-fāḍil al-Qaṭīfī*, ed. Ziyā' Āl Sunbul (Qum, 1429/2008), vol. 4, pp. 205–270. For al-Qaṭīfī's seven *ijāzāt*, see al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dhari'a*, vol. 1, pp. 134–135.

authorised can avail himself of this transmission.’ They note ‘the pre-eminent value attached to oral testimony’ and note, therefore, the value ‘contained in the *isnāds* . . . in the *samā*’s (“certificates of hearing”) and in the *idjāzas* —often having indications of dates and places and details of the names of the persons who formed links in the transmission’. Thus, ‘Separate from the texts there appear the systematic lists of authorities.’ They note that ‘among the ‘Twelver’ *Shī*’ is the *idjāza* obtains its authority from the infallible imāms whose *ḥadīth*s are scrupulously transmitted by their faithful supporters.’⁵

More recently Stewart noted ‘three main types of certificate developed in the medieval period’: 1. The certificate of audition (*samā*’ or *ijāzat al-samā*’) or the certificate of transmission (*ijāzat al-riwāya*); 2. the certificate of memorisation (‘*ard*, ‘*irāḍa*); and, 3. the license to teach law and issue legal opinions (*ijāzat al-tadrīs wa’l-iftā*) and discusses each in turn. He notes while in Sunni circles use thereof ‘seems to have lapsed’, in Twelver circles the practice survives as *ijāzat al-ijtihād*, not extant in the Safavid period but prevalent by the mid-19th century.⁶

Gleave’s detailed discussion of an *ijāza* of the Akhbārī Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186/1772), written between 1175/1761 and 1182/1768, delineates the main sections of the text – introductory prayers; an introduction to the text, to the *mujīz* (the giver of the *ijāza*) and to the *mujāz* (the recipient); a list of 35 *isnād*; a list of 19 works whose transmission is being authorised; closing prayers and praise for the *mujāz*. Here the shaykh refers to the different forms of transmission – *qirā’a*, *samā*’ and *ijāza*. Citing Goldziher and Vajda, Gleave argues this text represents ‘a late stage in the development of the *ijāza* system’ and suggests it as a ‘prototype’ for al-Baḥrānī’s *Lu’lu’at al-Baḥrayn*,

⁵ G. Vajda et al., ‘Idjāza’, *EI*2. In *EI*, Goldziher defines the term as ‘Permission. . . granted to any one by a competent “carrier” of a text or even a whole book — whether it is the latter’s own or an older text which he is able to trace back by a reliable chain of transmitters to the original transmitter or to the author — to transmit further the work, and to quote the transmitter as an authority. The *idjāza* does not require immediate contact between the person receiving the permission and him who grants it.’ *Shī*’i variants are not discussed. See I. Goldziher, ‘Idjāza’, *EI*.

⁶ D. Stewart, ‘Ejāza’, *EIr*, vol. 8, pp. 273–275.

which Gleave describes as a biographical work with 'the external form of an *ijāza*'. As discussed, the text appears devoid of polemic.⁷

Schmidtke, discussing an 1128/1716 *ijāza* by the Akhbārī scholar 'Abd Allāh b. Ṣāliḥ al-Samāhijī (d. 1135/1722), highlights the attention the latter gives, as *mujīz*, to scholarly networks, contemporary and older. She does not note any particular polemical tone in the text, beyond the author's reproaching two named 10th/16th-century scholars who were, in fact, Akhbārīs.⁸

Discussing a 1168/1755 *ijāza* composed by 'Abd Allāh al-Tustarī (d. 1173/1759), Schmidtke refers to the several kinds of *ijāzāt*, *al-riwāya* ('to transmit') and *al-samā* 'or' *al-qirā'a*, the latter based on the 'kind of instruction', and describes the al-Tustarī *ijāza* as 'comprising the whole literature of a certain scholarly tradition (*ijāza kabīra* or *ijāza 'amma*)', these often issued by a 'scholar more advanced

⁷ R. Gleave, 'The *Ijāza* from Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186/1772) to Sayyid Muḥammad Maḥdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm (d. 1212/1797-8)', *Iran*, 32 (1994), esp. p. 115. On al-Baḥrānī, see E. Kohlberg, 'Baḥrānī, Yūsuf', *Elr*, vol. 3, pp. 529–530; Newman, 'al-Baḥrānī, Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad', *EI3*.

The *Lu'lu'a*, composed in Karbala in 1182/1768 was, in fact, an *ijāza* given to al-Baḥrānī's two sons in the form of a biographical dictionary. See al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dhārī'a*, vol. 18, pp. 379–380, and al-Baḥrānī's introductory comments to the text (5f).

Elsewhere we have noted the polemical nature of such biographical dictionaries in general and Gleave has noted these in the case of the *Lu'lu'a*'s biographical entries. See A. J. Newman, 'The Nature of the Akhbārī/Uṣūlī in Late-Safawid Iran. Part Two: The Conflict Reassessed', *BSOAS*, 55 (1992), pp. 252–253, 260; idem, 'Anti-Akhbārī Sentiments among the Qajar 'Ulamā', The Case of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī (d. 1313/1895)', in R. Gleave, ed., *Religion and Society in Qajar Iran* (London, 2005), p. 124; R. Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam. The history and doctrines of the Akhbārī Shī'ī school* (Leiden, 2007), s.v., esp. p. 56f.

On al-Baḥrānī, see also R. Gleave, 'The Akhbārī-Uṣūlī Dispute in *Ṭabaqāt* Literature: An Analysis of the Biographies of Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī and Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bihbihānī', *Jusūr*, 10 (1994), pp. 79–109.

⁸ S. Schmidtke, 'The *ijāza* from 'Abd Allāh ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Samāhijī to Naṣīr al-Jārūdī al-Qaṭīfī: A Source for the Twelver Shi'i Scholarly Tradition of Baḥrayn', in F. Daftary and J. Meri, ed., *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung* (London, 2003), pp. 64–85, esp. 74. On al-Samāhijī, see also Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam*, s.v. and our contributions ad nn. 7, 66.

In passing Schmidtke (pp. 67, 67n7, 76n36) refers to al-Qaṭīfī's inclusion, in his 915/1509 *ijāza*, of the text of an *ijāza* of al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī's (d. 726/1325) son Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn Muḥammad (d. 771/1369-70). The 915/1509 *ijāza* is discussed below.

in age'. Most *ijāzāt al-riwāya*, she says, 'follow a more or less fixed pattern': an opening prayer, an introduction on the *mujīz* and *mujāz*, a listing of 'the contents and extent of the *ijāza*', often with extensive coverage of the donor's own shaykhs, and an ending with a statement of 'conditions'. Al-Tustarī's text is typical of such 'text-independent', i.e. *ijāza kabīra* or *ijāza 'amma*, *ijāzāt*. The 'special features' she mentions include the author's many 'theoretical reflections', in one of which she notes he addresses 'the admissibility of transmission by means of licences . . . in comparison with other ways of transmission, particularly the *samā'*, and concludes the former are admissible 'beyond doubt'.⁹ He does, she notes, criticise some of his contemporaries as having made little, if any, advancement beyond 'mere imitation (*taqlīd*)'.¹⁰ Schmidtke does note, without unpacking it, al-Tustarī's discussion of conditions attached to receiving a licence.¹¹

Kondo also focuses on post-Safavid period texts, discussing developments in the 12th/18th and 13th/19th centuries in *ijāzāt* and the practice of *ijāzāt al-ijtihād* and *riwāya*. He presents two such texts of each type, all from the 19th century but notes the forms are basically the same as those of the 12th/18th and 11th/17th centuries.¹²

⁹ S. Schmidtke, 'Forms and Functions of "Licenses to Transmit" (*Ijāzas*) in 18th-Century-Iran: 'Abd Allāh al-Mūsawī al-Jazā'irī al-Tustarī's (1112-73/1701-59) *Ijāza Kabīra*', in G. Kramer et al., ed., *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies* (Leiden, 2006), esp. pp. 96-97, 101-103, 109f, 111. See especially p. 109, citing *Ijāzat al-kabīra li'l-'Allāma . . . 'Abd Allāh al-Mūsawī al-Jazā'irī al-Tustarī*, ed. Muḥammad al-Samāmī al-Ḥā'irī (Qum, 1409/1988-89), pp. 7-9. See, also, further below.

¹⁰ Schmidtke, 'Forms', pp. 112-113.

¹¹ Schmidtke, 'Forms', p. 111, citing *Ijāzat al-kabīra*, pp. 212-215. See also below.

¹² N. Kondo, 'Shi'i 'Ulama and *Ijāza* during the Nineteenth Century', *Orient*, 44 (2009), esp. pp. 63-64. Kondo references Gleave, above, for the 12th/18th century text, and Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī (d. 1070/1659-60)'s *ijāza* to his son, Muḥammad Bāqir, cited in M. M. Tunikābunī, *Qiṣaṣ al-'ulamā'*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā Barzīgar Khāliqī et al. (Tehran, 1383 Sh./2004), pp. 266-281, as his 11th/17th-century example. Kondo refers (pp. 56, 59-61) to M. Litvak's discussion of *ijāzāt al-ijtihād* in the latter's *Shi'i Scholars of Nineteenth-century Iraq: The 'Ulama' of Najaf and Karbala* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 41-42 (that the *ijāza riwāya* was less prestigious and could be given to 'not direct disciples. . . primarily as a token of esteem'), pp. 104-106. Kondo references (p. 59, n. 4) Stewart on *ijāzat al-ijtihād* as not extant in the Safavid period but prevalent by the mid-19th century.

To date then, the dedicated Western-language literature on Shi'i *ijāzāt* has mainly been interested in the aspects of these texts concerning scholarly networking, has highlighted these texts' tendency to exhibit a 'fixed pattern' in their organisation, has – aside from instances in respect of individuals specifically named by the *muǰīz* – not noticed/highlighted any particularly polemical dimensions, and has mainly discussed late-Safavid and/or, especially, post-Safavid *ijāzāt*. In the process, across these works 10th/16th-century Twelver *ijāzāt* have received relatively little attention and the texts of al-Qaṭīfī's *ijāzāt* none at all.¹³

¹³ Although, as Litvak, not a bespoke work on *ijāzāt*, Gleave (*Scripturalist Islam*, pp. 145–146), cites the introduction in Taqī al-Majlisī's *Lavāmi 'i šāḥibqirānī* in which he lists the seven forms of transmission: 1) the teacher reads a work to his pupil from beginning to end; 2) the teacher reads part of a work to his pupil – these being *qirā'a* – and then 3) the pupil reads the work to the teacher; 4) the pupil is present when another pupil reads the work to the teacher; 5) the teacher gives a copy of the work to the pupil, telling him to relate this work to the teacher; 6) the teacher gives the pupil permission to relate a particular book on his authority; 7) the pupil finds a work in the possession of his teacher, and then relates the work with qualification. Gleave suggests this list reflects al-Majlisī's 'order. . .of preference'. See further below, ad n. 69.

See also Gleave's general remarks on Safavid-period *ijāzāt* (143f) though he seems especially interested in their information on scholarly networks (142f, 215).

Although also not *per se* a study of *ijāzāt*, in her *Formation of a Religious Landscape, Shi'i Higher Learning in Safavid Iran* (Leiden, 2018), M. Moazzen does discuss *ijāzāt* generally (pp. 128–129) and Safavid-period *ijāzāt* (pp. 136ff, 208, 209 (where she says: 'The *ijāza* also guaranteed the integrity of a manuscript copy used by a scholar.'). p. 243 and s.v.). Moazzen is particularly interested in scholarly networking (p. 25) and what the texts reveal of Uṣūlī dominance of 'higher learning', especially in the 10th/16th century (pp. 28, 133, 136f, 244) and the next century (p. 153f), and of the *madrasa* curriculum and study processes (pp. 24–25, 142f, 153f, 161f, 168f, 206f, 243). Although Moazzen notes (146–147) Muḥammad Ṭāḥir al-Qummī's (d. 1098/1687) refutation of philosophy in an *ijāza* to Bāqir al-Majlisī who, she notes also (p. 165, n. 10), taught the rational sciences to his students, she does not otherwise explore the potentially polemical nature of these texts. Al-Qaṭīfī and his *ijāzāt* receive but passing attention (p. 22, citing Bāqir al-Majlisī's student Afandī's biographical dictionary on al-Majlisī's apparent poor opinion of al-Qaṭīfī, pp. 133, 133, n. 24, 136, 165, n. 11). See also pp. 11–13, 29. See 'Abd Allāh Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-'ulamā'*, ed. A. Al-Ḥusaynī (Qum, 1403/1982), vol. 1, esp. 19.

On al-Qummī see A. J. Newman, 'Glimpses into Late-Safavid Spiritual Discourse: An 'Akhbārī Critique of Sufism and Philosophy', in R. Tabandeh and L. Lewisohn, ed., *Sufis and Mullas: Sufis and Their Opponents in the Persianate World* (Irvine, CA, 2020), pp. 259–307.

Al-Qaṭīfī's 915/1509 Ijāza

The earliest dated *ijāza* of al-Qaṭīfī in *Bihār* was composed in Najaf in 915/1509, the year after the Safavid conquest of the region.

By this point, al-Karakī's Safavid connections were well established. In 908/1503, he was present at Ismā'īl I's capture of Kāshān. Al-Karakī settled in Najaf in 909/1504 with some financial support from the court. In 910/1505 he was in Iṣfahān with Ismā'īl. Having returned to Iraq, he was imprisoned, with Baghdad's Shi'ī *naqīb*, by the Aq-Qoyunlu. When in 914/1508 Ismā'īl took Baghdad they were released and joined him in touring al-Ḥilla and the shrine cities. Al-Karakī received land grants of several villages in Iraq in these years.

As early as 908/1503 or 909/1504 Arab clerics, probably based in Iraq, were voicing disquiet at his ties to court.

Al-Qaṭīfī himself arrived in Iraq in 913/1507 from al-Qaṭīf. He settled in Najaf, went to al-Ḥilla but then returned to Najaf. Between 914/1508 and 916/1510, he journeyed to Mashhad and there debated with al-Karakī on the matter of al-Qaṭīfī's refusal to accept gifts from Ismā'īl.¹⁴

At eighteen pages, this is the longest of al-Qaṭīfī's *ijāzāt* in *Bihār*.¹⁵ Indeed, *Bihār*'s editor cites the biographical dictionary of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī (d. 1313/1895) calling it an *ijāza kabīra*.¹⁶

¹⁴ Newman, 'Myth', p. 78f. On the date of al-Qaṭīfī's arrival, see al-Baḥrānī, p. 160; Shaykh 'Alī al-Bilādī al-Baḥrānī, *Arwār al-badrayn* (Qum, 1407/1986), p. 282. al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī'a*, vol. 1, p. 134, n. 56. On Persian Gulf scholars moving to Iraq in these centuries, see A.J. Newman, *Twelver Shiism: Unity and Diversity in the Life of Islam, 632 to 1722* (Edinburgh, 2013), pp. 148, 166. These included Aḥmad b. Fahd al-Ḥillī (d. 841/1437), from whom al-Qaṭīfī narrated via intermediaries. On al-Karakī's 909/1504 *ijāza* received in Najaf, see n. 67. As noted below, al-Qaṭīfī composed the 915/1509 and 920/1514 *ijāzāt* in Najaf.

¹⁵ Al-Majlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 105, pp. 89–106; Āl Sunbul, *Mawsū'at*, vol. 4, pp. 209–242. See also al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī'a*, vol. 1, p. 134.

¹⁶ Al-Majlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 105, p. 83, n. 9. On this term, see ad n. 9; Moazzen, pp. 129, 133, n. 23.

Afandī (vol. 1, p. 15) and al-Baḥrānī (p. 159) do not use the term in reference to this work, but al-Ṭīhrānī (*Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7, p. 4) does. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍat al-jannāt* (Tehran, 1390 Sh./2011), vol. 1, pp. 25–29) also applies the term *kabīra* to al-Qaṭīfī's *ijāzāt* to Shāh Mahmūd and al-'Tustarī, but not that to al-Astarābādī, discussed below.

The *ijāza* is written to Shaykh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Turk.¹⁷ It comprises one page of introductory prayers; one page of opening remarks; a three-page introduction with three *masā'il* (sing. *mas'ala*; issues, matters); and a seven-page listing of the materials for which the *ijāza* is being given – the longest part of the text. It concludes with a one-page *fā'ida* (benefit) and a four-page *waṣiyya* (admonition).

In his opening, al-Qaṭīfī recounts the promulgation of *al-sharā'i* and the role of the angels and *al-rusul* (prophets). When, he says, creation started to splinter and it was no longer possible for the *sufarā* (His envoys) to reach people directly, God commanded the *ḥifẓ* (memorisation) of *al-athār* (the words and actions of the Prophet), *al-aḥādīth al-sharī'a* (the legalistic *ḥadīth*), and the Prophetic *sīra* (biography). Those who knew these were to hand them down to those who did not, he says. Those who understood these were to help those who did not.

The Qur'anic verses 16: 43¹⁸ and 9: 122,¹⁹ he says, are confirmed by *al-akhbār al-mutawātira*.²⁰ He cites two texts from Imam Ja'far (d. 148/765), the Sixth imam. In the first al-Ṣādiq says, 'It is to us [i.e. the imams] to set forth the *uṣūl* (sing., *aṣl*, the core statements) and to you *tafarr'ū*' (pl., to derive/deduce – put forth branches, i.e. of the law).²¹ In the second, partially quoted, he says, 'Look to a man from

¹⁷ The name is 'Turk' on vol. 105, p. 89, but 'Turkī' on vol. 105, p. 101. *Bihār's* editor (vol. 105, p. 89, n. 3) cites al-Khwānsārī (p. 27) as giving 'Turkī', as does al-Ṭīhrānī (*al-Dharī'a*, vol. 1, p. 134).

¹⁸ 'Ask Ahl al-Dhikr if You Do Not Know.' The imams explain the term as referring to themselves. See al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, ed. 'A. A. al-Ghaffārī (Tehran, 1365 Sh./1986), vol. 1, pp. 210–212/1–9.

¹⁹ 'If a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion and admonish the people when they return to them that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil).' Not all of al-Qaṭīfī's Qur'anic citations in these texts are noted. Qur'anic translations are from <https://quran.com/>

²⁰ That is, a *ḥadīth* narrated by many narrators, not *khabar al-wāḥid*, a text narrated via but one narrator. See Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam*, s.v.

²¹ *Furū'* referring to branches/ancillaries of the law, e.g. ritual cleanliness, prayer, fasting. On the text, see Muḥammad b. Manṣūr, Ibn Idrīs (d. 598/1202), *Mustarafāt al-sarā'ir* (Qum, 1411/1990), p. 575.

among you who knows something of our *qaḍāya* (judgements).²² The *akhyār* (superior) *salaf* (forefathers) did this and, says al-Qaṭīfī, the imams assured them of *al-najāt* (salvation).

This process, he says, turns on *al-riwāya*. It is the path to truth and *dirāya* (understanding) and the path revealed by the Prophets and the Infallible imams. The only path to that is by *naql* (transmitting) from those of earlier generations who are trustworthy back to the ‘successors of the progeny’ [i.e. the imams]. *Ḥifẓ al-riwāya* (memorising/protection of the transmission) insures that the lowest (*al-adna*) and the highest equally understand.

In the first *mas’ala*, al-Qaṭīfī says that *ijtihād* is *bāṭil* (false) except in time of *ḍarūra* (necessity), such as the *ghayba* (absence) of the imam. It is not a *ṭarīq mustaqil* (independent path) but is to be traceable to the specific issue to hand, as the Prophet’s companions would do.²³

This is not *jāriy* (permitted) for all matters. This mandates that *istidlāl* (deduction) is based on the *dalāla* (evidence) of the *ḥadīth*, and its ‘*umūm* (generality), *ijmāl* (conciseness) and *bayān* (clarity), *iṭlāq* (not being restricted) and *taqyīd* (restriction) and what most people do by it.

Absent *naṣṣ* (specific designation), there is *al-barā’a al-aṣliyya* (the principle of presumed permission), *istiṣḥāb* (continuance of past practice) or derivation from suitable issues where there is an *aṣl* (original statement of an imam) or *athār* in the *ḥadīth* or a *fatwā* from one of the best of the *aṣḥābūn*.²⁴ Then *al-ẓann* (speculation), based on *sabab* (a cause, reason), prevails because the imams’ statements are *ḥujuj* (proofs) in the *dalāla*.

All this is incumbent on one seeking a *fatwā* from a mufti who possesses *sharā’iṭ al-istiftā* (conditions of issuing a *fatwā*).²⁵

²² This was not the well-known narration cited via Ibn Ḥanẓala but that cited via Abū Khadija. See al-Kulaynī (vol. 7, p. 412/4) in which the imam cautions believers against seeking recourse to the *qāḍīs* of *al-jawr* (tyranny, oppression). The Ibn Ḥanẓala text is 412/5. See A.J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Shi’i Law: Hadith as Discourse Between Qum and Baghdad* (Richmond, 2000), pp. 107–108, 180–181.

²³ Al-Qaṭīfī cites the example of the Prophet’s companion ‘Ammār b. Yāsir and *al-tayammum* (dry ablution). See al-Kulaynī, vol. 3, p. 62/4.

²⁴ On these Uṣūlī-style principles and exegetical pair of analysis, see Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam*, pp. 183–185, 269–270, 279, 290.

²⁵ This refers to the skill set and training on which, according to Uṣūlīs, the mufti’s competence must be based. See Newman, *Twelver Shiism*, pp. 129, 136, 142.

The *fatwā* is acted upon as long as the mufti lives. At his death, one must refer to another mufti²⁶ because the latter might discover a *wajh* (aspect) of the Qur'an or the Sunna in which there is a *dalāla*, or whose *dalāla* is stronger. Ignoring the Qur'an and following the *fatwās* of *ahl al-ijtihād* is not the path to salvation.

The second *mas'ala* addresses the levels or degrees (*al-marātib*) of *al-riwāya*. The highest of these is that of *qirā'a* (reciting) to the shaykh. Then there is *qirā'a* to him, *samā'* (listening) to his reading, then *mukātiba* (exchanging of correspondence). 'The last', says al-Qaṭīfī, is the *ijāza*. Even then, he says, the *ijāza* is most common in terms of benefit (*naḥ'*), the most widespread, the most in terms of *fā'ida* and the strongest in terms of *'ā'ida* (advantage).

The *ijāza* may be *mursala* (transmitted with an interruption) from an *'adl* (just person) to another *'adl* or to a *mamdūh* (praiseworthy person) from a *mamdūh* to someone like him, or to an *'adl*. It might also be transmitted from [one who is] a *thiqa* (trustworthy person) from a *ḍa'if* (weak person); this based on *iqsām* (divisions) of *al-riwāya*.

If the *riwāya* is to books of *fatwās*, then the transmission ends at their authors. If it relates to *ḥadīth*, then this line of transmission ends with the imam, then the Prophet.

In the last *mas'ala* al-Qaṭīfī says *al-riwāya* has *marātib*, but it absolutely does not mandate *'amal* (action). It is based on what is being transmitted, so if action is being permitted then act, but if not, then do not.

This limits the authority of the *mujāz* to that for which he is authorised by the *riwāya* and *ijāza*. Al-Qaṭīfī notes it can be that someone who transmits acts on it without the latter having actually been transmitted to him. After all, he says, 'someone *ḥāmil* (bearing) *fiqh* (jurisprudence) may not be a *faqīh*.'²⁷

An *ijāza* is from a *mujtahid* or ends with him. The *riwāya* stops with him. It is not continuous. The *mujtahid* is not authorising action except based on what he has shown of *dalīl* (proof) for it. This is so even if the

²⁶ On Uṣūlī opposition to *taqlīd al-mayyit* (following rulings of a dead *mujtahid*), see Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam*, pp. 188, 195, 296.

²⁷ For a fuller version of the text, see al-Kulaynī, vol. 1, p. 403/1, 2. Al-Qaṭīfī cites the text again in his 920/1514 *ijāza*.

ijāza comprises an authorisation of all writings; because the *ijāza* can contain what the *mujīz* himself may not do, he cannot permit that to someone else.

Because the *ijāza* is only *riwāya*, it is not invalid at the death of the *mujīz*, because *akhbār* are not invalid at the death of the person narrating them.

The longest section of the *ijāza*, at seven pages, delineates the items and/or authors being authorised.

This *ijāza* comprises books of ‘our companions’, what ‘our ‘*ulamā*’ compiled from the *akhbār* of the *muḥaddithīn* and their *ijāzāt* and that whose *naql* stands out from various *riwāyāt* in the works *mansūba* (ascribed, traced) to the Imāmī Shi‘a.

Al-Qaṭīfī says he approves narrating from his own shaykh Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥasan al-Dhirāq, from other *thiqāt* from such as ‘Alī b. Hilāl, back through Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Fahd²⁸ and, via the same *ṭarīq* – and others are also cited – to yet others, including al-‘Allāma ‘and all of his [unnamed] writings’ on *uṣūl*, *al-furū*’, *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr*, and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) and all of his, also uncited, works in *fiqh*, *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*. Also cited, via various links, are Muḥammad b. Makkī, al-Shahīd al-Awwal (d. 786/1384), Muḥammad b. Muḥammad, al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413/1022), whom he calls *ra’īs al-madhhab* (master of the faith), the works of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, Ibn Bābawayh (d. 381/991) and al-Kulaynī’s *al-Kāfī*. Al-Qaṭīfī also cites such figures and their works as Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Najāshī (d. after 463/1071), and his *rijāl* work and other, named works of this genre and now names *fiqh* works of al-‘Allāma.

Here al-Qaṭīfī includes the 758/1357 *ijāza* given by al-‘Allāma’s son, Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn, to one Muḥammad b. Ṣadaqa.²⁹ At four pages, this is longer than al-Qaṭīfī’s three-page listing of his own *ṭuruq* to items and authors. Al-Qaṭīfī says he also authorises Turkī (sic) with all that is in Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn’s *ijāza*, so Turkī can narrate all this from him, i.e. al-Qaṭīfī, and can then himself pass it on.

²⁸ On these three, see al-Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7, pp. 3 (where the name is ‘al-Dirāq’), 169; 6: 9–10. Others (Afandī, vol. 1, p. 15; al-Bahrānī, p. 159; al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍa*, vol. 1, p. 16; al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī‘a*, vol. 1, p. 135) call the first al-Warrāq. See n. 67 on his 909/1504 *ijāza* to al-Karakī.

²⁹ Al-Majlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 105, pp. 97–101; n. 8.

The one-page *fā'ida*³⁰ addresses a question about an *ijāza*'s worth, that there could be no references to specific works or specific authors or there might be errors in the works being transmitted.

The 'āqil (wise person), al-Qaṭīfī replies, has no doubts that a specific text is that of its author. *Ijtihād* depends on *al-riwāya* and if there are doubts about the *isnād* of a transmission, then one cannot make a deduction (*yastadal*) or undertake an action based on it. If someone says he found something in al-Ṭūsī's *Tahdhīb*, his first of two collections of the imams' *aḥādīth/akhbār* – that would be the 'weakest' of *al-murāsīl* (transmissions). Absent its being traced back to the imams, one cannot act on it.

If there is a *ḥadīth* that is *mutawātir* based on *sharā'it* of *tawātūr* (successive transmission) then one can act on the basis of it. Absent successive transmission of meaning from the Qur'an, however, it cannot be acted upon without *tashīḥ* (verification) of the transmission as being from the imams. Anyone who does not proceed in this manner is an apostate, and he cites Qur'an 3: 85.³¹

The four-page *waṣiyya* is the *ijāza*'s second longest section.³²

Here al-Qaṭīfī refers to a Muslim who, he says, knows the faith and repeats the great verses of the Qur'an but without these finding a place in his soul, owing to the *ḥijāb* (barrier) of his citing himself and his love of the world. Although he denies this, says al-Qaṭīfī, in fact, he is *makhḍū'* (misled).

Al-Qaṭīfī then offers words on piety and what this love of the world should entail. Qur'an 2: 165,³³ he says, refers to the *mushrikūn* (polytheists) and one should remember God is always with him

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 101–102.

³¹ 'And whoever desires other than Islam as religion – never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.'

³² Al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 105, pp. 102–106.

³³ 'And [yet], among the people are those who take other than God as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love God. But those who believe are stronger in love for God. And if only they who have wronged would consider [that] when they see the punishment, [they will be certain] that all power belongs to God and that God is severe in punishment.'

and then cites 57: 16.³⁴ These remarks, he says, are *fi'l-'umūm* (in general).

As for *al-khuṣūs* (specifically, i.e. to Shams al-Dīn), al-Qaṭīfī tells him to look out after his time and when he completes something then *idhkir* (invoke) God. He should not look to *hājāt al-dunyā* (the desires of the world) and should take care not to say something he would not want to see written down for judgment on *Yawm al-qiyāma*. ‘What you do not like,’ says al-Qaṭīfī, ‘leave it off.’ He should not give over to *ḥubb al-riyāsa* (love of being in a leading position). ‘This is of the great things that God opposes.’

Finally, says al-Qaṭīfī, ‘Do not hasten to *al-futyā* (legal opinion).’ There is, he says, a *khabar* that the person reaching Hell the quickest is the speediest person to the *fatwā*.³⁵ He then cites Qur’an 69: 44–46,³⁶ 16: 116³⁷ and part of 10: 59.³⁸

This, he says, is his admonition to himself and to his fellow-believers.

The First Undated Ijāza

The nine-line second *ijāza* in *Biḥār* is written to Maṣṣūr, the son of ‘Shaykh Muḥammad b. Turkī (sic)’, for whom al-Qaṭīfī wrote the aforementioned 915/1509 *ijāza*.

³⁴ ‘Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of God and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient.’

³⁵ Although Āl Sunbul traces this text (*Mawsū‘at*, vol. 4, p. 241, n. 1) to *al-Sunun al-kubra* (vol. 6, p. 402) of Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), a version is found in Ibn Bābawayh’s *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faḥīh* (Qum, 1413/1992), vol. 4, p. 286.

³⁶ ‘And if Muhammad had made up about Us some [false] sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand; Then We would have cut from him the aorta.’

³⁷ ‘And do not say about what your tongues assert of untruth, “This is lawful and this is unlawful”, to invent falsehood about God. Indeed, those who invent falsehood about God will not succeed.’

³⁸ ‘Say, “Has God permitted you [to do so], or do you invent [something] about God?”’

Here al-Qaṭīfī says he gives him an *ijāza* for all that he cited in the *ijāza* to his father. There is no date or place of composition.³⁹

Al-Qaṭīfī's 920/1514 Ijāza

This text is dated Muḥarram 920/March 1514, in Najaf, about four months before the battle of Chaldiran at which the Ottomans decisively defeated the Safavids.⁴⁰

In the interim between the 915/1509 *ijāza* and this text, al-Karakī had been present at Ismā'il's seige of Herat which took place the following year. The same year al-Karakī authored 'Nafaḥāt al-Lāhūt', a tract approving the open anathematising of the first three caliphs; Twelver clerics in the Hijaz later complained they were 'chastised' as a result. In these years, also, he replied for Ismā'il to the Ottoman sultan Selim's questions as to why Ismā'il had destroyed the tomb of the Sunni jurist Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) in Baghdad when he took the city. The year 916/1510 also saw al-Karakī receive additional administrative authority in Arab Iraq and a large stipend he is said to have distributed among his students. In 916/1510 al-Karakī completed his 'Qāṭi'at al-Lajā', defending his receipt of *kharāj* land as a gift from Ismā'il by arguing that, as a *faqīh*, he possessed *ṣifāt al-niyāba* (the qualities of deputyship) and that based on the principle of *niyāba 'amma* (general deputyship – the general authority possessed by a *faqīh* as deputy of the Hidden imam), he was permitted to accept *kharāj* land from *sulṭān al-jawr* (a tyrannical ruler). In an essay composed the next year, al-Karakī argued that in the absence of the imam the Friday prayer could be led by a *faqīh* possessing *al-sharā'it* (the qualifications for practising *ijtihād*).⁴¹

³⁹ Al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 105, p. 107; Āl Sunbul, *Mawsū'at*, vol. 4, p. 245. *Biḥār's* editor notes (p. 107, n. 2) he found no further information on Manṣūr. See also al-Ṭihri, *al-Dharī'a*, vol. 1, p. 135.

⁴⁰ Al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 105, pp. 108–115; Āl Sunbul, *Mawsū'at*, vol. 4, pp. 249–258; al-Ṭihri, *al-Dharī'a*, vol. 1, p. 134. On Chaldiran (Rajab 920/August 1514), see Michael J. McCaffrey, 'Čalderān', *Elr*, vol. IV, pp. 656–658. See also A. J. Newman, *Safawid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London, 2006), pp. 20f, 24.

⁴¹ Newman, 'Myth', pp. 78f, 82–85, 88. Al-Karakī's argument concerning the *ajāz* was perhaps first offered by al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044). See W. Madelung, 'A Treatise of the Sharīf al-Murtaḍā on the Legality of Working for the Government ("Masāla fī l-'Amal ma'al-sulṭān")', *BSOAS*, 43 (1980), pp. 28–29.

The seven and-a-half page *ijāza* is written for one Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Astarābādī. It is comprised of the standard opening prayers; two pages of prefatory remarks; a nearly three-page *muqaddima* (introduction), with five *fawā'id*; a two-page listing of items and authors being authorised; and a one-page conclusion.

In his preface al-Qaṭīfī refers to the divisions and fighting which appeared in Islam. Each group adhered to different *wujūh* (aspects) of the Qur'an. 'We', he says, 'took recourse to the Prophetic Sunna and the narrated *ḥadīth*.' These include the *ḥadīth* of the 'two precious things' that the Prophet said he left to the *umma*, referring to the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt – a text, he says, narrated by numerous narrators in various forms that mandated holding fast to the Ahl al-Bayt.⁴² The Ahl al-Bayt must, therefore, be followed just as the Prophet, and he cites Qur'an 25: 27 in respect of those who do not.⁴³

However, al-Qaṭīfī continues, the people of *ḍalāl* (error) took over, and *fiṣād* (corruption) and *ẓulm* (oppression) spread. The Ahl al-Dhikr [the imams] and *dalāla* were hidden, and the muftis became confused by ignorance.

Al-Astarābādī was one who remained true to the faith, al-Qaṭīfī says. In Najaf, he says, where the recipient came on *ziyāra*, they studied the entirety of *al-Sharā'ī* (of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī, Ja'far b. Ḥasan, d. 676/1277). At his return to Najaf, al-Astarābādī contacted al-Qaṭīfī to ask for an *ijāza* in what al-Qaṭīfī had by way of *al-riwāya* from the imams and to connect to the narration of *fatwās* to narrate to students as he wishes. Here al-Qaṭīfī cites the text in his 915/1509 *ijāza* saying that not everyone who is a scholar of *fiqh* understood it.⁴⁴

In his *muqaddima*, al-Qaṭīfī says the faithful take the *aḥkām* (legal rulings) only from *ṣādiq* (someone truthful) and that truthfulness is known by his being infallible [i.e. an imam].

Those who took the place of the Prophet, i.e. the imams, allowed their Shi'a to act based on what which was narrated from them. They

On the Shi'i concept of the *faqīh* as *nā'ib* of the Hidden imam, see Newman, *Twelver Shiism*, s.v.

⁴² The version of this text cited here is particular to this *ijāza* (vol. 105, p. 109). See, however, Newman, *Twelver Shiism*, p. 19.

⁴³ 'And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, "Oh, I wish I had taken a path with the Messenger."'

⁴⁴ n. 27.

commanded the *tafīrī* (derivation) of the *aḥkām* from the *uṣūl*. The Shi'a did this owing to necessity, i.e. the absence of the imam.

If there is an *aṣl* on the issue in question, he says, then there is nothing to be derived. They agreed on the falseness of acting on the statement of a dead person. The *'āqil* then turns to another of the heirs of al-Dhikr so as not to break from the Prophetic *athār* or abandon acting based on the Qur'an and the narrated Sunna.

And this was custom of the *salaf* and on this there are, he says, clear *adilla* in the *uṣūl*.

This process depends on *sharā'it*. These include acquaintance with the *uṣūl al-'aqā'id*, *sharā'it* of *al-ḥadd* and *al-burhān*, *al-uṣūl*, *al-adab* and grammar. Using these, the *masā'il* can be derived. The process needs a *ṭarīq* connected to the Ahl al-Bayt. The majority of *furū'*, he says, are down to their *uṣūl*. That is, there is present in the *ḥadīth* an *aṣl* on which one relies and with an *isnād* that is known.

There are many *ṭuruq* (paths) to the *isnād*. The *ijāza* is the most general of these in terms of *naf'* and the easiest in term of *tanāwul* (comprehension).

Here al-Qaṭīfī offers five *fawā'id*. First, he says the *ijāza* is *idhn* (permission) for the *naql* of *ḥadīth* or a *fatwā* from a person himself or someone who narrates from him via *wāsiṭa* (an intermediary) or intermediaries. Secondly, the *fā'ida* (of the *ijāza*) is the *tasalluṭ* (authority) of the *mujāz* over that which is authorised to him and its *isnād* to its author or to the narrator of the *ḥadīth*. Its *riwāya* from him is based on the *ṭarīq* being *ṣaḥīḥ* (correct), or *mawwathaq* (confirmed), or *ḥasan* (good) or something else.

Thirdly, if a *ḥadīth* lacks a *mu'arid* (contradiction/objection) or a preference as to what is being objected, then action on it and reliance on it is *wājaba* (mandated), if it is one of the [above-mentioned] three categories. If the *ḥadīth* is weak, *mursil* or cut off (*maqtū'*, i.e. in its link to the imam), then one must seek recourse from the *'umūm* of the Qur'an, the Sunna, or what is well known among the *ashāb*, or a *dalīl 'āqilī* (rational proof) or the reasons for preponderance on it, and act on this. One cannot act on the basis of anything else.

Fourth, if there are two opposing *amāratān* (signs) and there is no preference, then, citing Qur'an 17: 36,⁴⁵ al-Qaṭīfī says *waqf* (hesitation) is mandated, given the absence of *'ilm*.

⁴⁵ 'And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge.'

Finally, the *ijāza*'s *fā`ida* is clear. A written work is confirmed in its attribution to its speaker and author, and so too is the *ḥadīth*. This is because it is *mutawātir*. So, in the *ijāza* there must be knowledge of that. If not, then *naql* is not permitted. Each *mujīz* must certify that the works in question are Imāmī.

As to the attributing of the book to its author, there is no problem in permitting it. But this is not part of *al-riwāya*. Action and *al-naql* depend on *al-riwāya* and the *adna* (lowest form) of this is the *ijāza*. Absent *al-riwāya* the item cannot be narrated. Otherwise, it would be as if one found a book that someone else wrote: even if he knows who wrote it is not correct to narrate it from him.

The *ijāza* of a scholar relates to the writings of all the 'ulamā'. Since these include contradictory *fatwās*, he says, how could one give an *ijāza* to act on these? How, he asks, can Ibn Idrīs (Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr, d. 598/1202) give an *ijāza* of the books of al-Ṭūsī for action?⁴⁶ Indeed, the *ijāza* is given from one *mujtahid* to another.

Al-Qaṭīfī then offers a one-page enumeration of items and authors for which he is giving authorisation. These include *al-Sharā`i* and its *ḥawāshī* (marginalia) that he and al-Astarābādī read, *al-Alfiyya* of al-Shahīd and its *ḥawāshī*, al-Qaṭīfī's own *al-Rasā`il al-najafiyya*, the books of Shi`i *fatwās* that he narrated from his shaykhs, including al-`Allāma's *Qawā`id al-aḥkām*, and other named texts. These included the *ḥadīth* and non-*ḥadīth* works of al-Ṭūsī, and books of other of 'our *aṣḥāb*' such as al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), Ibn Bābawayh, al-Mufid and al-Kulaynī.⁴⁷

Al-Qaṭīfī closes this section saying that he authorises al-Astarābādī to give his *ijāza* to others as he wishes, based on the *sharā`iṭ* of the *ijāza* and *al-riwāya*.

In his conclusion al-Qaṭīfī says the *ṭuruq* of his own *fuqahā`* are well known. They include those noted by al-`Allāma in his *rijāl* work, *Khulāṣat al-aqwāl*, and those figures whom al-Ṭūsī names at the end of his *al-Istibṣār* (his second collection of the imams' *ḥadīth* after

⁴⁶ Ibn Idrīs's criticisms of al-Ṭūsī were well known. See A.J. Newman, *Twelver Shiism*, p. 109.

⁴⁷ On *Qawā`id* as the Twelver Shi`i text supposedly available to Ismā`il I, see A.J. Newman, *Safawid Iran*, p. 151, n. 3. On al-Qaṭīfī's 927/1521 *al-Rasā`il* and his 939/1532 *sharḥ* (commentary) on *al-Alfiyya*, see al-Ṭihirānī, *al-Dharī`a*, vol. 11, p. 227; vol. 2, p. 296.

Tahdhīb), and Ibn Bābawayh at the end of *al-Faqīh*. He says his *ṭuruq* to these are many and include what had been authorised to him from his own teachers. The *awthāq* (most trustworthy) of these is Ibrāhīm al-Dhirāq from 'Alī b. Hilāl al-Jazā'irī from Aḥmad b. Fahd al-Ḥillī through to al-Shahīd. He cites other *ṭuruq* linking him to al-Ṭūsī to al-Murtaḍā and al-Mufid to Ibn Bābawayh and al-Kulaynī and, thence, to the best of 'our *fuqahā'* whose *ṭuruq* end in the imams and thence the Prophet himself. This includes their *fatwās* and, for the *ḥadīth*, links to the Prophet, to the angel Gabriel and thence to God.

Al-Qaṭīfī's 944/1537 Ijāza

In 924/1518, four years after Chaldiran, as the fate of the Safavids, and Ithnā 'asharī Islam, in Iran continued to be uncertain, al-Qaṭīfī composed his 'al-Sirāj', rebutting al-Karakī's 916/1510 essay on *kharāj*, arguing that receipt of any items from a tyrannical ruler was illegal as these had certainly been taken improperly from their owner. Al-Karakī, said al-Qaṭīfī, should have hesitated to accept these but, in any case, gifts from a tyrannical ruler should be avoided. In 926/1520, al-Qaṭīfī composed an essay on *al-riḍā'* (wet-nursing), replying to 916/1520 al-Karakī's essay on the subject. Al-Qaṭīfī's essay rebutting al-Karakī's ruling that the *faqīh* might perform Friday prayer during the Imam's continued absence might also have been completed in these post-Chaldiran years.

Ismā'īl I died in 930/1524. The year after his son Ṭahmāsp's accession, al-Karakī returned to Iran. There he became embroiled in two confrontations, first with the two co-*šadrs* – one of whom was a student of both himself and al-Qaṭīfī – with one of the points of dispute being al-Karakī's view that the *faqīh*, as *nā'ib al-Imām* (deputy of the imam), might lead the Friday prayer and the second regarding al-Karakī's formulations on the direction of the *qibla*.

Ismā'īl's death, however, unleashed a civil war lasting over ten years, not regarding the legitimacy of the Safavid house but among Qizil-bāsh tribal elements and their Tajik associates over a new hierarchical alignment around the ten-year-old Shah Ṭahmāsp. The turmoil encouraged invasions by the Uzbeks from the East and the Ottomans from the West. The Ottomans seized Tabrīz and Kurdistān, and attracted support in Gilān.

At the height of the civil war, around 936/1529, al-Karakī ‘won’ both confrontations: both his opponents were dismissed. Al-Qaṭīfī, in Iraq, was also formally admonished to cease his criticisms of al-Karakī.⁴⁸ In 939/1532 Ṭahmāsp issued the famous *firmān* appointing al-Karakī *nā’ib al-imām* with authority over the realm’s religious affairs. He was also given additional holdings in eastern Iraq and other western Safavid lands. Al-Karakī subsequently issued a series of rulings including the appointment of a prayer-leader in every village to instruct the people in the tenets of the Ithnā ‘asharī faith and the changing of the *qibla* direction throughout the realm.

Al-Karakī died in 941/1534. That year Baghdad and all of Arab Iraq, including the shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala, surrendered to the Ottomans. Basra surrendered four years later, the year after al-Qaṭīfī composed this *ijāza*. In Iran, although two of al-Karakī’s students subsequently served as *ṣadr*, the observance of the Friday prayers that he had promoted was discontinued.⁴⁹

If the Safavid project, and its support for the Twelver faith, had not collapsed with Chaldiran, as al-Qaṭīfī wrote the present text, the fall of the one and, in consequence, of the other, may well still have seemed possible.

The *ijāza* is written to Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn b. Nūr Allāh b. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh al-Ḥusaynī al-Tustarī. No place of composition is cited.⁵⁰

The eight-page text contains no formally delineated sections. More than a page is devoted to opening prayers, about two pages to preliminary remarks, and four pages to a ‘discussion’. Six lines concern that for which authorisation of transmission is being given.

After the prayers, al-Qaṭīfī, in what is likely to have been a reference to al-Karakī’s death, notes that God decreed the *faqd* (loss) of

⁴⁸ Newman, ‘Myth’, pp. 84–91, 99. On al-Qaṭīfī’s *al-riḍā’* and Friday prayer essays, see also al-Baḥrānī, p. 155; al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī’a*, vol. 11, p. 188; vol. 15, pp. 62, 75–76.

⁴⁹ Newman, ‘Myth’, pp. 96–105; Newman, *Safawid Iran*, pp. 26f, 38.

⁵⁰ Al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 105, pp. 116–123; Āl Sunbul, *Mawsū’at*, vol. 4, pp. 261–270. Al-Ṭīhrānī’s entry on the *ijāza* (*al-Dharī’a*, vol. 1, p. 134) is cited by *Biḥār*’s editor, who notes that the recipient’s name is given there as Ziyā’ al-Dīn b. Nūr Allāh and that he is the father of Qāḍī Nūr Allāh al-Tustarī, killed in India in 1019/1610. See Newman, *Twelver Shiism*, p. 194.

'the *'ulamā'* and *ahl al-faḍl* (people of virtue)', and refers to Qur'an 13:41.⁵¹

Al-Qaṭīfī says he noted that he was a *muta'akhir* (late-comer), owing to the paucity of his *biḍā'a* (resources) and many *iḍā'a* (lost opportunities). But, he says, he was also fearful of the Lord of the *sharī'a* and of such of the Prophetic *ḥadīth* as

When *al-bad'* (innovation) emerges in my community,
it is obligatory for the scholar to make his knowledge
public, otherwise, God will condemn him.⁵²

Although al-Qaṭīfī says he also tended to be withdrawn from people, he therefore embarked on much reading and study. He remained without resources and weak in health and, he says, probably also referring to al-Karakī, he faced much resistance from *ahl al-ḍalāl*, *al-ḥāsidiṅ* (the jealous), widespread *fitna* (strife) and *al-qīl wa'l-qāl* (idle talk).

Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn's reading of al-'Allāma's *al-Irshād* showed al-Qaṭīfī that this man was of *ahl al-'ilm*. He asked al-Qaṭīfī for an *ijāza* in the text and the *ḥawāshī*. Al-Qaṭīfī gave him an *ijāza* in the *riwāya*, for him and whoever narrated from him via al-Qaṭīfī.

⁵¹ 'Have they not seen that We set upon the land, reducing it from its borders?'

As noted in *Āl Sunbul (Mawsū'at*, vol. 4, p. 262, n. 1), in *al-Kāfī* the verse refers to *faḡd* as the 'death' of the *'ulamā'*. See the six texts cited in al-Kulaynī, vol. 1, p. 38, esp. 2, 6; the latter referencing this verse.

⁵² Al-Kulaynī, vol. 1, p. 54/2, citing the Prophet. Al-Qaṭīfī refers to, but does not cite, other, similar texts. See also ad n., 57.

Although the poetry cited by al-Qaṭīfī across these texts is not discussed here, here he cites the verse

I was late to keep life and I did not find
a life for myself that is like progressing.

by the Syrian poet Abu Tamām (d. ca. 845/1441), author of *al-Ḥamāsa*. The text can be found in 'Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī, *Khazānat al-adab*, vol. 7, p. 465, for which see: http://www.shiaonlineibrary.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A8/4655_%D8%AE%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%AC-%D9%A7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%81%D8%AD%D8%A9_o?pageno=4650p, (accessed 13.8.20).

This *ijāza*, al-Qaṭīfi says, entails both the teaching of the work but also the *taqrīr* (determination) of its meaning, since the sayyid had mastered both. He was authorised to do likewise for those who read it with him who were of such people, in all of this observing *al-iḥtiyāt* (caution); the one who does not *ḍalla* (stray from) the *ṣirāṭ* (the path), he says, is he who follows the path of *al-iḥtiyāt*.

An *ijāza*, al-Qaṭīfi says, is of the *iqsām* (parts) of *al-riwāya*, being the last of the *marātib* in strength although the most common in terms of *fā'ida* and the most complete with respect to *'a'ida* (benefit).

It is last because the highest degree of transmission was for the *rāwī* (transmitter) to hear his shaykh reading, to insure against errors. The second is the *rāwī* reading and hearing what is being read. Then there is the reading of someone other than the two of them and the *rāwī* hearing the reading. Then, there is the *ijāza*.

The *mujāz* has authority over what he narrates from the person who gave him authorisation. This, says al-Qaṭīfi, refers to the narration of *lafz* (the words). The *mujīz* is not establishing the meaning. The meaning might be *mawkūl* (assigned) to something on which there is *al-'itimād* (reliance) in relation to knowledge of the three *dalālāt* and its associated *mafḥūmāt* (understandings)

The *ijāza* is not *mufīda* (useful) for action by the *mujāz*. It is not relevant to what rulings the *mujīz* had issued. If he was a *mujtahid* who was in substantial disagreement with another *mujtahid*, then the *ijāza* would be giving permission in relation to all the *fatwās* of his opponent. If the *ijāza* allowed for action, then the *mujtahid* would be permitting action in accord with what his opponent had demonstrated to be true.

The *ijāza* covers only *al-riwāya* (the transmission) of that for which an individual had been given an *ijāza*, so the recipient might master that field and become associated with the transmitters. If the *ijāza* refers to written works composed by a scholar, the latter is at the end of the line of transmission. If the *ijāza* is for transmission of books of *ḥadīth*, the line of transmission must end with the imam who made the statement, from the Prophet, from the angel Gabriel and from God.

As to works being authorised that the *mujīz* corrected and gave to the recipient, there is no discussion on the *tasalluṭ* of these being related. The recipient can only narrate that which is corrected in books of *fatwās*.

As for the *ijāza* in what was read and the 'ilm of its meaning from a specified shaykh, this is an *ijāza* of *riwāya* and action. So, that which he read and understood of its meaning is in books of *ḥadīths*. The *ḥadīths* are *thābita* (affirmed) and there is no intrusion of the life of the *mujīz* in their being correct or corrupt. Thus, the statement that so and so said this is not made false by his death.

Rather the matter turns on the probability of truthfulness or lying. If he was 'adl then the *riwāya* is *ṣaḥīḥ*. If there are *wasā'it* and all are 'adl, then it is also correct. If they or one is *mamdūh*, which does not relate to justness, the *riwāya* is *ḥasan*. If there is among them a transmitter who is *mukhālīf al-dīn* (non-Imāmī) but a just individual and 'adl in his *madhhab* (belief) and *mawthūq* in his *amāna* (reliability), and there is no lying, then the *riwāya* is *mawthūqa*. If not, it is weak. A *khabar* is *ḍa'if* if the transmitter is *majhūl* (unknown) or *majrūḥ* (unworthy of trust) even if other narrators are 'adl.

If the *ijāza* relates to books of *fatwās*, if there is *ijmā'* (scholarly consensus) on the *fatwā*, the transmitters gain authority over the *riwāya* and action on it based on the *ijāza*. What is disputed in the *ḥukm* is *shādh* (anomalous) and not regarded or *munqariḍ* (outdated) owing to later *ijmā'*.

If, al-Qaṭīfī says, a *fatwā* is the source of well-known disagreement from two sides, or what was not known did not reach the point where we noted it, acting on it is correct for one who receives it from him and about him, either orally or by intermediary/ies. When the *mujtahid* dies, he says, no action is permitted because a dead man's ruling is invalid. So, even if the giver was a *mujtahid* there is no *taqlid* (emulation), as al-'Allāma said in *al-Irshād* and elsewhere.⁵³

The *ijmā'* comes together after his death if there was no agreement with him in the *fatwā* of living *mujtahids*. If there was disagreement there is no *ijmā'* with his death as there was none when he was alive.

Al-sirr al-zāhir (the presenting issue) here is the necessity of considering (*murā'āh*) the Qur'an and the Sunna. This is because a person, being fallible, can err. Even if the word of the *mujtahid* is reliable, not reconsidering the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet is of the greatest religious corruptions.

⁵³ Āl Sunbul (*Mawsū'at*, vol. 4, p. 268, nn. 3, 5) references *Irshād* and al-'Allāma's *Mabādi' al-Wuṣūl ilā 'ilm al-uṣūl*, but without citing editions.

Ijtihād among Imāmīs, he says, is not a permitted *ṭarīq* (path) by *bi'l-aṣāla* (in principle). It is permitted by necessity owing to the absence of the imam and the impossibility of knowing his *fatwā*. It is permitted to the *mujtahid* as long as he safeguards the Qur'anic proofs, the Prophetic *aḥādīth* and the divine *athār*. If the *mujtahid* dies and someone else takes his place, then recourse to the other on the disputed issue is necessary.

If, al-Qaṭīfī says, any age is devoid of a *mujtahid*, reliance on the *fatwā* of a dead *mujtahid* is permissible as long as all who have the capacity (*qābiliyya*) for that strive day and night to attain *ijtihād*. *Ijtihād*, he concludes, is a word based on *tashkīk* (doubt/scepticism/questioning) and *yatajazi* (limited/specific) in the chosen faith to the Uṣūlis.⁵⁴

In the few lines in which he ends the *ijāza*, al-Qaṭīfī says he authorises the *riwāya* of all the writings of the Imāmī 'ulamā' on the *ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, *fiqh* and others. Everything except the *ḥadīth* is traced to him and his shaykhs and thence to the author. The *ḥadīth* are narrated from him through to the imams. He cites no names of his shaykhs and their *isnād*, nor does he name any works.⁵⁵

Al-Qaṭīfī's Second Undated Ijāza

The four-page *ijāza* to Khalīfa Shāh Maḥmūd, also lacking any place reference, comprises three lines of prefatory prayers; one page of introductory remarks; three *fawā'id* over two pages, including one page on items and authors for which the *ijāza* is being given; and a four-line *khātima* (conclusion).⁵⁶

Al-Qaṭīfī commences saying that looking about him he saw that those embracing the faith were either a *mudda'in* (a pretender) who

⁵⁴ Āl Sunbul (*Mawsū'at*, vol. 4, p. 269, n. 2) references al-'Allāma's *Mabādi'*.

⁵⁵ The citation here (vol. 105, p. 123) of al-Qaṭīfī's *ṭarīq al-riwāya* from al-Dhirāq (sic) from 'Alī b. Hilāl to Muḥammad b. Makkī and to his shaykhs is a later addition, possibly by the copyist. See also Āl Sunbul, *Mawsū'at*, vol. 4, p. 270.

⁵⁶ Al-Majlisī, vol. 105, pp. 85–88. This *ijāza* is not cited in Āl Sunbul's *Mawsū'at*. Al-Ṭīhrānī (*al-Dhari'a*, vol. 1, p. 134) only notes there that al-Qaṭīfī arrived in Iraq in 913/1507. Unusually, *Bihār's* editor does not cite this *al-Dhari'a* reference. See also n. 14.

has no *'ilm* or a *nāqil* transmitting from someone from whom it is not correct to transmit.

Al-Qaṭīfī says that although he saw he was neither, he had faced issues of *biḍā'a* and many *iḍā'a*. He then cites the same text as he had in the 944/1537 *ijāza*, that when *al-bad'* emerged, the learned man had to act.⁵⁷

While in Najaf, he says, Khalīfa's study of some works of *fiqh* with him proved his astuteness. He requested, and al-Qaṭīfī wrote, an *ijāza*. Khalīfa sought, says al-Qaṭīfī, a path to the Prophet referenced in Qur'an 34: 18.⁵⁸ The Ahl al-Bayt, al-Qaṭīfī says, explain that the 'blessed' cities referred to Prophet's family and the 'visible' cities to those who narrated from them.⁵⁹

In the first *fā'ida*, he says the *ijāza* does not include the authorisation of action. It is the last of the *marātib* of *al-riwāya* and its most general in terms of benefit. It gives the recipient authority to transmit that for which he was given an *ijāza*, whether a book of *fatwās* – which he narrates from its author – or a work which he narrates back to the imam and thence to the Prophet and thence to God.

Citing Qur'an 53:3,⁶⁰ al-Qaṭīfī says the Prophet did not undertake *ijtihād*. The imams are *ḥafāza*, he says – that is, they know the Qur'an by heart – from the Prophet.

If it were said, if this were so then there would not be differences 'among the Imāmīs' and their transmissions, al-Qaṭīfī says he would say that correctness does not prove clarity of meaning, such that something else is not probable. Even if it did, it does not necessitate the lack of the possibility of the opposite, given that the Arabic language and its *dalāla* are not devoid of differences.

The meaning turns on *al-ḥaqīqa* (the truth) and the *ḥikma* (rationale) requires the presence of the *'umūm* (generality) and the *khuṣūṣ*

⁵⁷ In his only use of verse in this *ijāza*, al-Qaṭīfī then cites the same line of poetry from Abū Tammām as cited above. See n. 52.

⁵⁸ 'And We placed between them and the cities which We had blessed [many] visible cities. And We determined between them the [distances of] journey, [saying], "Travel between them by night or day in safety?"

⁵⁹ See, for example, Ibn Bābawayh, *Kamāl al-dīn* (Qum, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 395; vol. 2, p. 483.

⁶⁰ 'He did not speak of his own desire, it is an inspiration which inspires him.'

(specificity), *ijmāl* (abridged) and *bayān* (clear, obvious), *itlāq* (not being restricted) and *taqyīd* (restriction) (together, loosening and tying), and *al-nusukh* (abrogation), all present in the Qur'an. He then cites Qur'an 16: 43⁶¹ and explains that 'Dhikr' refers to the Prophet, as in Qur'an 65: 10⁶² and that his Ahl are the Ahl al-Bayt.

In the second *fā'ida*, al-Qaṭīfī says it is inevitable that there be both correctness and error in the transmission of a work if it is not *maqrū'* (read) personally.

It might be said that, since the Imāmīs hold that the dead person's word cannot be followed, what is the *fā'ida* of narrating their writings?

Al-Qaṭīfī replies there are many. These include knowledge of where there is *ijmā'* and where *khilāf* (disagreement) and *tasalluṭ* over the narration of *masā'il* (issues) on which there is no disagreement. There is no disputing, he says, that one does not follow the dead in that in which there is dispute. As for that on which there is no *khilāf*, the statement is not based on him at all but on the *madhhab*, and, he says, there are other benefits.

What is the benefit of an *ijāza* if the book is correct and its *tawātur* and the author are well known?

Al-Qaṭīfī says the *ijāza* allows its recipient to narrate the book. There is a difference, he says, between narrating the work from the author and *isnād* (tracing it to the author). Among the conditions of *ijtihād*, he adds, is the tracing of *al-riwāya*.

The one-page third *fā'ida* addresses his own *ṭuruq*. He says he narrates from many *thiqāt* orally, calling al-Dhirāq (sic) *awthaq*, thence from 'Ali b. Hilāl, from his shaykh through Aḥmad b. Fahd, via Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn (sic) to his father, al-'Allāma. Via Aḥmad b. Fahd he has links to al-Shahīd and via 'Ali b. Hilāl also to al-'Allāma. Fakhr al-Dīn said he had 'more than 100' *ṭuruq* to Imam Ja'far. There also are *ṭuruq* from the latter's father, al-'Allāma, to al-Ṭūsī, to al-Mufid, to al-Kulaynī through to Imam Mūsā, from Imam Ja'far. These all end in God.

Khalifa's *ijāza*, he says, entails *riwāya* of all the works he has mentioned including the *ḥadīth* collections of *al-Kāfī*, *al-Faḥr*,

⁶¹ 'Ask *ahl al-dhikr* if you do not know.'

⁶² 'O ye who believe! Now God hath sent down unto you a *Dhikr* (messenger).'

Tahdhīb and *al-Istibṣār*.⁶³ These *ṭuruq*, he says, are via Fakhr al-Dīn via his father and the aforementioned *ṭarīq* to al-Ṭūsī and thence al-Mufid as well as, via another *ṭarīq*, from Fakhr al-Dīn's grandfather Shaykh Yūsuf via a different path that, however, also ends in al-Ṭūsī, al-Mufid and thence to the imams. These *ṭuruq* are enumerated in the *ḥadīth* collections he has cited.

In the four-line *khātima* al-Qaṭīfī, citing part of Qur'an 3: 83⁶⁴ and 16: 53⁶⁵ says one is to seek only the face of God and not to forget prayer. He apologises for the *ikhṭiṣār* (brevity) and says there may soon be a *taṭwīl* (elaboration).

Summary and Conclusions

Al-Qaṭīfī's discourse across these *ijāzāt* might be described as one of limits, both jurisprudential and personal.

First, across all four al-Qaṭīfī argues for limits on the *ijāza* and the authority it bestows. He acknowledges the various *marātib* of the *ijāza* and that, in this hierarchy, the *ijāza* is the last even as, he adds, it is the most beneficial and the most common. In the process, he also consistently notes that the *ijāza* does not grant authority to act or, similarly, authorise the transmission of meaning. In the first instance, it only traces the chain of transmitters back to the author of the text, if it is work of *fatwās*, or, in relation to the imams' *ḥadīth*, back to the imam, the Prophet and, finally, God himself.

He refers also to the rules for categorising the named transmitters of the works authorisation for the transmission of which is being given and to the skills and learning needed to qualify as a *mujtahid*.

His references to the processes associated with *fiqh* and the *aḥkām/furū'* also highlight limits. Al-Qaṭīfī rejects the absolute legitimacy of *ijtihād*. He acknowledges that in the Imam's absence its exercise may be necessary and, in the process, refers to the various

⁶³ Although not named as such, these are the 'four books' of the imams' *ḥadīth* compiled before the Saljūq's arrival in Baghdad in 447/1055. See Newman, *Twelver Shiism*, pp. 62, 75, n. 30, 87, 179, 209.

⁶⁴ 'So is it other than the religion of God they desire'.

⁶⁵ 'And whatever you have of favour – it is from God. Then when adversity touches you, to Him you cry for help.'

exegetical pairs and principles of textual analysis generally associated, he notes, with the Uṣūlī school of Twelver jurisprudence. The latter, he carefully cautions, must be grounded in the Qur'an, the Sunna and the imams' narrations. The resulting *fatwā* is valid only during the lifetime of the mufti/*mujtahid*. At the latter's death, recourse to a living mufti is mandated. The latter must start the process afresh, making sure to ground any resulting *fatwā* in recourse to the above sources. In all these discussions, however, he stresses the virtues of practicing *waqf* and *iḥtiyāt* – a very Akhbārī reference.⁶⁶

As to the relevance of historical context, across the dated *ijāzāt*, these 'polemical' jurisprudential discussions receive approximately the same attention – seven, five and six pages respectively. Four pages are devoted thereto in the undated Khalifa Shāh *ijāza*.

There are also personal limits in evidence in these texts and here context seems to play a role: that al-Karakī's presence looms large, if indirectly, here suggests that al-Qaṭīfī's jurisprudential and personal concerns with al-Karakī as an associate of the Safavid court were of a piece.

Al-Qaṭīfī's 915/1509 *ijāza* was composed two years after his arrival in Iraq, by which time, as noted, both al-Karakī's connections to Ismā'īl's court and also his standing in Iraq were well established. Al-Qaṭīfī's *waṣīyya* in it, condemning over-attention to the Qur'an by those whose souls are untouched by the faith, *ḥubb al-riyāsa* and hasty recourse to *fatwās* certainly intends to refer to al-Karakī.

Al-Qaṭīfī's citing of Qur'an 13:41 in his 944/1537 *ijāza* to refer to the death of the '*ulamā*' clearly references al-Karakī's recent death. Al-Qaṭīfī's care to note, separately, that the verse also refers to the loss of the *ahl al-faḍl* implicitly excludes al-Karakī from their number.

It is only after al-Karakī's death, in the 944/1537 text, that al-Qaṭīfī makes reference to clearly still-painful memories of the distinct contrast between his situation and that of al-Karakī after his own arrival in Iraq three decades earlier, his lack of self-confidence, health issues and numerous personal slights.

⁶⁶ A. J. Newman, 'The Nature of the Akhbārī/Uṣūlī Dispute in Late-Safawid Iran. Part One: 'Abdallāh al-Samāhijī's "Munyat al-Mumārīsīn"', *BSOAS*, 55 (1992), pp. 19, 46.

Secondly, as to those works for which transmission is being authorised in these *ijāzāt*, al-Qaṭīfī's lists include a wide range of material across such different genres as *fatwās*, *tafsīr*, *rijāl* and *ḥadīth*. His naming of individuals here demonstrates that his own *ṭuruq* to the works in question are *mutawātir* through his own shaykhs.

This said, across these texts, in comparison with those discussed in the field, al-Qaṭīfī offers quite limited reference to his own immediate network of teachers. While he alludes to having studied with others, of these only al-Dhirāq/al-Warrāq, cited as *awthaq*, is named as his 'direct' shaykh. Only via al-Dhirāq does al-Qaṭīfī trace his own *ṭuruq* back through generations of named scholars, to the earliest well-known works and figures of the faith. Perhaps, knowing that al-Karakī himself had studied with al-Dhirāq/al-Warrāq years before al-Qaṭīfī's arrival coupled with awareness that the pedigrees of others of his shaykhs were more limited drove al-Qaṭīfī to seek out al-Karakī's teacher. Indeed, al-Qaṭīfī's references to him in his two early dated texts stand as statements of, if not pleas for, equal status with al-Karakī, attesting all the more to al-Qaṭīfī's lack of self-confidence.⁶⁷

Further attesting thereto is that al-Qaṭīfī's devoted four of the seven pages on his *ṭuruq* in his 915/1509 text to a verbatim citation of the 758/1357 *ijāza* of Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn.

This said, al-Qaṭīfī's attention to his *ṭuruq* markedly diminishes, from seven pages in the 915/1509 text, to two in the 920/1514 text, to – after al-Karakī's death – six lines in the 944/1537 text, the latter lacking any names at all.

⁶⁷ On al-Dhirāq (sic)'s *ijāza*, see al-Bahrānī, p. 159; al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī'a*, vol. 1, p. 133.

In the undated *ijāza* to Khalīfa Shāh, al-Qaṭīfī refers to his shaykhs as al-Dhirāq, 'orally', and one Shaykh 'Alī b. Ja'far b. Abī but the latter as among the *awthaq* who narrated from al-Dhirāq. Al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī'a*, vol. 1, p. 133; al-Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7, p. 5, notes that he narrates from 'al-Warrāq' directly and indirectly, the latter via Shaykh 'Alī. Afandī (vol. 1, p. 18) refers to other '*ulamā'*' of Bahrain. See also al-Bahrānī, pp. 155, 159. The latter suggests al-Qaṭīfī studied with al-Karakī himself, but al-Khwānsārī (vol. 1, p. 29) suggests al-Karakī also studied with al-Dhirāq/al-Warrāq. See the 909/1503 *ijāza* given to al-Karakī referenced in al-Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7, p. 3; n. 28.

In the aftermath of al-Karakī's death in 941/1534 al-Qaṭīfī could reflect on, and commit to paper, in a document not immediately intended for widespread circulation, the painful memories of his early situation. Indeed, the recollections on offer in the 944/1537 *ijāza* may have been further stirred up by a sense that the impact of his discourse was perhaps limited, even if across the century, in and outside Iran, others also had had reservations about the Safavid association with the faith and al-Karakī's connections therewith.⁶⁸ The absence of a detailed *ṭuruq* in it suggests he felt the argument for equal status with al-Karakī was now less of a requirement. Al-Qaṭīfī's briefer references to his early situation in the Khalīfa Shāh *ijāza* and to those pretending to embrace the faith, his devotion of but a page in the text to his own *ṭuruq* and his apology for its brevity all intimate that this *ijāza* also post-dates al-Karakī's death, perhaps even the 944/1537 text.

By contrast, none of the Shi'ī *ijāzāt* discussed by the field to date suggest their authors expand on discussions in them to address such other associated jurisprudential issues as did al-Qaṭīfī, let alone to offer also such personal reflections.

Taqī al-Majlisī's listing of the seven forms of transmission in his 1066/1655 *Lavāmi'*, a Persian-language commentary on Ibn Bābawayh's *al-Faqīh*,⁶⁹ in a separate *fā'ida*, precedes a discussion of, in order, the necessity for recourse to the imams and their narrations and for verifying the texts in question, his own *ṭuruq* – citing the same *ḥadīth* as al-Qaṭīfī concerning the 'bearer' of *fiqh*, his caution that the

⁶⁸ In al-Qaṭīfī's post-Chāldirān 924/1518 'al-Sirāj' essay, there is the sense that he was, or at least perceived himself to be, not without allies (Newman, 'Myth', p. 87). His connection with one of the co-*šadrs* involved in the early Ṭahmāsp-period disputes with al-Karakī and his admonishment by the Safavid court in the aftermath of al-Karakī's 'win' in these years both attest to his having had some standing in Iran in these later years and also to the ending of it. Indeed, perhaps indicative of relative popularity over the period, Dirāyatī lists six copies of 'al-Sirāj', as extant today; only two are dated, to 1116/1704 and 1321/1903. Nearly 70 copies of al-Karakī's *al-kharāj* essay are extant; nos eleven and seven date to the 10th/16th and 11th/17th centuries respectively. See M. Dirāyatī et al., ed., *Fihristvāri-yi dastnivishtihā-yi Īrān* (Mashhad, n.d.), vol. 6, pp. 81–82; vol. 8, pp. 7–9. On later unease with Safavid Shi'ism, see also Newman, 'The Myth', pp. 91f, 104f.

⁶⁹ See Gleave (n. 13) citing Taqī al-Majlisī, *Lavāmi'-yi šāhibqirāni* (Qum, 1414/1993), vol. 1, pp. 65–76, esp. pp. 65–67.

ḥadīth must be narrated in their original Arabic and recorded accurately, perhaps out of place in a commentary on *al-Faqīh*, bespeak Akhbārī-style concerns; indeed, elsewhere he does denounce *ijtihād*.⁷⁰

Al-Tustarī's post-Safavid comments on *ijāzāt* seem relatively perfunctory – stressing the care to be used in the texts' transmission and the *isnād*, for example – and certainly not overly/overtly polemical.⁷¹ Like al-Majlisī, al-Tustarī does not immediately address such related issues as the question of action on the basis on an *ijāza* and *taqlīd al-mayyit* that were addressed by al-Qaṭifī.

Reference might be made to works in *dirāyat al-ḥadīth*, the discipline of criticism of the text and narrative chains of *ḥadīth* evolving in the early 10th/16th century. In his *Wuṣūl*, Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-Ṣamad, (d. 984/1576), the father of Shaykh Bahā'ī (d. 1030/1620), divides the *ijāza* into seven sections.⁷² Ḥusayn's own teacher Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn b. 'Alī al-Āmilī (d. 966/1559), al-Shahīd al-Thānī, had, in fact, written on *'ilm al-dirāya* and, briefly, the various forms of the *ijāza*.⁷³ Nevertheless, Shaykh Ḥusayn, born in 918/1512, apparently composed *Wuṣūl* after arriving in Iran,⁷⁴ after Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn's death. Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn was born in 911/1506, before al-Qaṭifī arrived in Iraq.⁷⁵ Interestingly both, like al-Qaṭifī, were mainly based to the west of Iran.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Taqī al-Majlisī, vol. 1, pp. 68–71, 45. On this text, see al-Ṭihirānī, *al-Dharī'a*, vol. 18, pp. 369–370.

⁷¹ Al-Tustarī, *Ijāza kabīra*, pp. 7–9, 212–215; nn. 9–11.

⁷² Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-Ṣamad, *Wuṣūl al-akhyār ilā Uṣūl al-akhbār*, ed. J. al-Mujāhidī (Karbala, 1436/2015), pp. 201f.

⁷³ 'Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī, *Introduction to Ḥadīth, including Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth by al-Shahīd al-Thānī*, tr. N. Virjee (London, 2002), pp. 35–36, 227–228. See al-Khwānsārī's reference to *'ilm al-dirāya* ad n. 75.

⁷⁴ Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-Ṣamad, pp. 13, 17–18, 35 (some copies are said not to have the reference in question).

⁷⁵ In this same discipline, in the next century, Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631) in his *al-Rawāshih* also, briefly addresses the *iqsām*. See Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ḥusaynī, Mīr Dāmād, *al-Rawāshih al-samāwiyya*, ed. Gh. Qaysariha et al. (Qum, 1422/2001), pp. 157–160. Al-Khwānsārī (*Rawḍa*, vol. 1, pp. 25–29) notes al-Qaṭifī's *ijāza* to al-Tustarī is very useful on *funūn al-dirāya* and *al-rijāl* (biography) and cites from it.

⁷⁶ On the continued vitality of the western centres of the faith across the period, see Newman, *Twelver Shiism*, pp. 163f, 190f; n. 68.

By the ‘standards’ of al-Samāhijī’s later evaluation of the state of the Akhbārī/Uṣūlī debate,⁷⁷ al-Qaṭifī’s jurisprudential reservations here together with those in other works of his, as discussed elsewhere, render it difficult to affix a label to him. His disavowal of *taqlīd al-mayyit* and references to exegetical pairs of analysis, *istiṣhāb* and *al-barā’ a al-aṣliyya*, and *sharā’iṭ al-istiftā*, for example, suggest Uṣūlī sympathies. His disavowal of absolute *ijtihād*, the *faqīh* as *nā’ib al-Imām* and association with the court/*ḥubb al-riyāsa*, with his insistence on recourse to the revealed ‘texts’ and references to *waqf* and *iḥtiyāt*, for example, all suggest Akhbārī proclivities. Nevertheless, it was precisely this combination of concerns and criticisms that al-Qaṭifī deployed against al-Karakī as the ‘face’ of Safavid Shi‘ism in these years.

Taken together, al-Qaṭifī’s contributions reflect both a profound unease with the directions in which the faith, as being carried forward by al-Karakī, seemed to be headed now that it had found official favour in Iran – an unease which others shared. On offer here, as well, is a profound sense of his own status as an outsider, coming from the Twelver periphery to the centres of the faith in Iraq.

Al-Qaṭifī may not have been overly popular in his own century or – *pace* Bāqir al-Majlisī – the next. But his sentiments offer a different perspective on, and something of a corrective to views of, developments in Safavid-period Twelver thought and practice based on the privileging of scholarly works produced in Safavid Iran.

⁷⁷ See our ‘The Nature’.

