

z.B. A'zam Tālaqānī die Übernahme höchster politischer Ämter durch Frauen fordert oder das Recht der Frau auf Kontrolle ihres Körpers, d.h. auf Familienplanung, als grundlegendes Menschenrecht bezeichnet,<sup>136</sup> so steht sie damit eher in der Tradition der säkularen Frauenbewegung als in derjenigen der angefüllten, vom iranischen Staat geförderten, weiblichen Vorbilder oder der genannten Beispiele weiblicher Gelehrsamkeit.

<sup>136</sup> DUBAI: MURSHADAM (1993): 203; AFSHAR (1996b): 136 f.; ASHRAF in SZ, 7./8.3.98. — A. Tālaqānī benutzte die Bevölkerungsdebatte auch zu einer Kampfansage an die Polygamie. Zu Ursache in der Bevölkerungspolitik in Iran seit 1989 s. BARRY, R. (1999): *Ausweg aus der „demographischen Falle“ oder „Verzweiflung gegen den Islam“? Zur zeitgenössischen iranisch-islamischen Diskussion über Geburtenkontrolle und Familienplanung*. Hamburg (DOI, Mitteilungen, 56), S. 53.

THE FINANCES OF THE 'ULAMĀ COMMUNITIES OF  
NAJAF AND KARBALĀ, 1796-1904<sup>1</sup>

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"Money is the nerve of life in Najaf," was the sober observation of 'Alī Khaqānī, a twentieth century compiler of Shī'ī poetry, expressing a truism about the indivisible link between scholarship and finance in any scholarly community.<sup>2</sup> However, the nature of these ties in the 'ulamā' communities in the Shī'ī shrine cities of Najaf and Karbalā', where the first and third Shī'ī Imāms, 'Alī and Husayn, are buried, and which emerged as the two leading centers of Shī'ī learning during the nineteenth century, was significantly different from that in contemporary Sunnī religious establishments and in Iran. The purpose of this study is to examine the evolution of the financial system in the shrine cities during that time, and to analyze its social ramifications.

Unlike other centers of learning in the Muslim world, the communities in the shrine cities were not set up or sustained on a regular basis by political elites in order to provide them with legitimacy and juridical manpower. Rather, because the shrine cities were Shī'ī centers inside a Sunnī state, they developed from below through the efforts of the 'ulamā' themselves, serving first and foremost as centers for teaching and scholarship. In contrast to the hierarchical Ottoman establishment, they were characterized by an amorphous structure with no overall formal organization and by the absence of regulatory bodies. Such a situation shaped the

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank my two PhD advisors Professors Abbas Amanat and Roy Motahedeh as well as my colleagues, Dr. Yitzhak Nakash and Professor Gad Gilbar for their comments on my various drafts. I also wish to thank Professor Juan Cole for providing me with one of the most important sources for this study and Elena Lashnick for great technical help in producing the manuscript. Needless to say, responsibility for all errors is mine alone.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Khaqānī, *Shu'arā' al-Charīf*, 12 vols. (Qum, 1988), 12:478.

nature of the financial system in the shrine cities, causing it to center around individual *mujtahids* who gave their own classes and established networks of patronage comprising of students, former disciples and lay followers.

Since the eleventh century Muslim institutions of learning in the Middle East were sustained primarily by charitable landed endowments (*awqāf*). The *awqāf* provided a continuous and secured income for teachers' salaries at the same time cementing the relations between rulers and 'ulamā' in the Sunni world as well as in Shi'i Iran. Sunni 'ulamā' in the Ottoman Empire were also engaged in a variety of state positions such as judges and *muftis*, and received direct subsidies from the government.<sup>3</sup>

According to one estimate, the yearly income from *awqāf* property in Iran amounted to 4,000,000 *tūmāns* toward the end of the nineteenth century, nearly half the annual revenues of the state. In addition, the 'ulamā' in Iran drew a substantial income as trustees of *awqāf*, enjoying considerable discretionary power as to expenditure.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike the Ottoman and Qājār religious establishments, the shrine cities' main source of income was contributions from believers. As shown by the thorough surveys conducted by the British following their occupation of the cities, landed *awqāf* played a relatively minor role in sustaining the 'ulamā' community. The direct governmental financing that emanated from Qājār Iran was channelled mainly to the shrines in order to promote the rulers' reputation for piety among Shi'i pilgrims. Qājār officials and wealthy Iranian merchants did build or endow madrasas in the

<sup>3</sup> For the role of *awqāf* in the Ottoman Empire, see John R. Barnes, *An Introduction to Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire* (Leiden, 1986). For Egypt, see Christopher Eccel, *Egypt, Islam and Social Change: Al-Azhar in Conflict and Accommodation* (Berlin, 1978), 72, 121-22.

<sup>4</sup> Abi Reza Shicikholeslami, "The Patrimonial Structure of the Iranian Bureaucracy in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Iranian Studies* 11 (1978), 204; Abbas Amanat, "In Between the Madrasa and the Marketplace: The Designation of Clerical Leadership in Modern Shi'ism," in Sa'id A. Arjomand (ed.), *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism* (Albany, 1988), 105. On the importance of *awqāf* in the Shi'i state of Awadh, see Juan R.I. Cole, *Roots of North Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq: Religion and State in Awadh, 1722-1859* (Berkeley, 1988), 58, 127, 178-83.

shrine cities—amounting to fourteen in Najaf and eleven in Karbalā' by the turn of the twentieth century—as well as some other public buildings. However, most of these were maintained by rented shops and bathhouses in the shrine cities themselves and not by landed *awqāf*. In addition, such madrasas supported only a small number of teachers and scholars.<sup>5</sup>

Although at least one madrasa in Karbalā' was sustained by Iranian *awqāf*, the latter were usually designated to support 'ulamā' based in Iran itself, rather than in the shrine cities. Only a limited amount of such income was remitted to the shrine cities. Shaykh Fadallāh Nūrī, for instance, used to send Muḥammad Kāzīm 'Akhund' Khurāsānī (d. 1329/1911) 2,000 *tūmāns* annually prior to the 1906 Constitutional Revolution from the endowed lands of the late chief minister Qā'im Maqām, which were under his control.<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to judge how common this practice was. Even in the few known cases when Iranian *awqāf* were specifically assigned for the shrine cities, they required the supervision of an *'ālim* based in Iran.<sup>7</sup>

The absence of significant *waqf* property in the shrine cities was caused by several factors. Due to their bitter rivalry with Iran, going back to the Safavid period, and ongoing fears of Iranian designs to regain control of the shrine cities, the Ottomans regarded the Shi'i population, and the 'ulamā' in particular, as potential or actual agents and allies of Iran. Consequently, the government in Baghdād never set up any *awqāf* property to benefit the Shi'i 'ulamā', focusing instead on their Sunni counterparts.

In Iran wealthy landowners could easily establish *awqāf*, but in Iraq government control during the first half of the century hardly

<sup>5</sup> Administration Report for 1918, Karbalā', *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932* (London, archives edition, 1932) vol. I: Ja'far al-Khalili, *Mawṣū'at al-'Atabāt al-Muqaddasa, Najaf*, 10 vols. (Baghdād and Beirut, 1965-1970), 137, 146, 152-53; Muḥammad Mahdi Kashmurī, *Najm al-Sunnā: Takwīn* (Qum, 1397/1977), 1:470; Muḥsin al-Amin, *A'yān al-Shi'a*, 60 vols. (Sidon, 1957), 44:208; Ja'far al-Mahabbā, *Mādī al-Najaf wa-Hādrahā*, 3 vols. (Najaf, 1955-1958), 1:128 and 1:131.

<sup>6</sup> Nāzi' al-Islām Kirānī, *Ta'rīkh-i Bidā'iyi Hānīn* (Tihān, 1357s/1978-9), 1:637.

<sup>7</sup> Mahlūba, *Mudr* 1:131; Aqā Buzurg Tihānī, *al-Kirām al-Bārān fi al-Qarn al-Thalāth wa-'d al-'Ashara* (Najaf, 1954-1968), 626; idem., *Nuqabā' al-Bashar fi al-Qarn al-Rābi' 'Ashar* (Najaf, 1954-1968), 1299; Khaqānī, *Shu'ara'*, 7:4.

extended to the countryside, which was dominated by the tribes. Consequently, landowning by urban dwellers and with it the ability to set up *awqāf* was confined to "the vicinity of the main towns and in the areas irrigated by lift or perennial canals where the tribes had disintegrated."<sup>8</sup> As a result of the Ottoman Tanzimāt, and particularly the implementation of the 1858 Land Code, large-scale private landownership developed in Iraq, usually of merchants, former tax-farmers and tribal leaders. Whereas members of the first two categories were mostly Sunnis, tribal leaders preferred to sustain the local *sayyids*, who helped them dominate their tribes, rather than set up *awqāf* for the 'ulamā' in the shrine cities.<sup>9</sup>

Under these circumstances, the main source of revenue for the 'ulamā' in the shrine cities was from donations by believers, which came in several forms:<sup>10</sup>

The first source was the obligatory religious dues of the Imām's share (*sahm-i Imām*) i.e. one half of the fifth (*khums*) of the annual income which every Shi'i owed to the Imām, as well as alms (*zakahāt*). The juridical process under which the 'ulamā' appropriated to themselves the right over these two taxes, which had originally belonged to the Hidden Imām, evolved in the course of several centuries. It was one of the points of contention during the Uṣūlī-Akhhārī dispute in the eighteenth century, and contributed to the victory of the Uṣūlīs since they could mobilize such donations and attract students away from their rivals. It seems that the process became fully established only after the Uṣūlī victory, and reached full fruition with Shaykh Ja'far Kāshif al-Ghīṭā' in 1813. In his *fatwa* authorizing Fath 'Alī Shāh to wage a *jihād* against the Russians, Shaykh Ja'far made the gesture of putting the *sahm-i*

<sup>8</sup> Sa'ih Haidar, "Land Problems of Iraq" (Unpublished thesis, London University 1942) cited in Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914* (Chicago, 1966), 154.

<sup>9</sup> Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, "The Transformation of Land Tenure and Rural Social Structure in Central and Southern Iraq, c. 1870-1958," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 15 (1983), 491-93. Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, 1994), 39-41.

<sup>10</sup> For a summary of the various financial resources, see I/P&S/11/165 Reports on Administration for 1918 of Divisions and Districts of the Occupied Territories in Mesopotamia, *Iraq Administrative Reports*, vol. 2 (1918), 86-87.

*Imām* at the king's disposal for the duration of the war. He thereby extracted from the Shāh the acknowledgment of the 'ulamā's exclusive claim to the appropriation of the *khums* once the war ended. According to Muḥammad Tunakābunī, Shaykh Ja'far even went so far as to consider anyone who withheld the payment of *khums* as a rebel against the Imām and his viceregent, the Faḡīh.<sup>11</sup>

The 'ulamā' also developed a legal device called "absolution of wrong-doing" (*rudd al-mazālim*), which was designed to exculpate "unlawful money" (*mābi' ḥarām*), obtained by illegal taxes and speculation. Since the original owners of such funds could not be traced, the funds were regarded as the property of the Hidden Imām. However, on payment of the Imām's share to the 'ulamā', the funds were deemed lawful again. By receiving the money the 'ulamā' perceived themselves as returning it to the rightful owners.<sup>12</sup>

The second category of funds was composed of three voluntary types of payments. The first was the "right of inheritance" (*ḥaqq al-waṣiyya*) or to use the more popular term, the "third" (*thulth*) paid to *mujtahids* from the heritable property of deceased persons. It was usually allocated to a specific religious purpose as well as to the upkeep of the graves of the deceased in the shrine cities' cemeteries, with the *mujtahid* acting as a trustee. One such trust fund for which there are some data consisted of Rs. 10,000 allotted by the British East India Company "to the *mujtahids* and *mullās* of Najaf and Kerbela in charitable and religious ceremonies at the tomb" of Ḥājī Muḥammad Khalīl, the Iranian Ambassador at Bombay who was accidentally killed in 1802.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, "The Just Ruler or the Guardian Jurist: An Attempt to Link two Different Shi'ite Concepts," *JACS* 111:3 (July-September 1991) 549-62; Sa'id A. Arjomand, *The Shadows of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1980* (Chicago, 1984), 230-231.

<sup>12</sup> Mirzā Muḥammad Tunakābunī, *Qiwās al-'ulamā'* (Tihān, 1378/1967), 193; Arjomand, *The Shadows*, 231.

<sup>13</sup> India Political Consultations nos. 13-14 of May 8, 1839—Fort Williams, Secretary to the Government with the Governor General to Officiating Secretary to the Government Secret Department April 11, 1839. *Ibid.* no. 14 of September 21, 1840—Baghdad no. 62 Taylor to Resident of Persian Gulf June 21, 1840. Ḥājī

The second type of voluntary funds—*ṣawm wa-ṣalāt*—was a fee paid by believers to the *mujtahids* who were to arrange prayers and fasting, usually by a student on behalf of deceased relatives for periods that varied according to the amount paid. The annual fee which Shi'is paid at the turn of the twentieth century ranged from three to six Turkish pounds (£2,14s-£5,8s). The third type of voluntary funds came from vows made to *mujtahids* in return for recovery from sickness or extrication from danger.

The third category of funds channelled to the shrine cities was that of contributions donated to the shrines directly, either to distribute water to the poor or for illuminating the tombs.<sup>14</sup> It appears that the *mujtahids* did not receive anything from these funds.

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The economic base of the community of '*ulamā*' was not yet secured at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as it took time and organizational effort to set the flow of the various charities in motion. Consequently, at this early period most '*ulamā*', including senior *mujtahids*, were reportedly living in poverty. For example, in order to pay his debts, Sayyid Ridā Bahr al-'Uḥm (d. 1253/1838), a scion of one of the leading '*ulamā*' families in Najaf, resorted to "selling" a pillar from Paradise to Muḥammad 'Alī Mirzā, the Governor of Kirmānshāh, for a thousand *ṭumān* so that when the latter died, his place in heaven would be assured.<sup>15</sup> During that period *mujtahids* often had to travel in person to Iran to solicit contributions since networks of patronage for the transfer of funds were not yet established.<sup>16</sup>

A major relief for the shrine cities at the time was the flow of 'Indian money' (*ḥulī Hindī*), the large remittances from the

Muḥammad Khāhī's heirs demanded the disbursements to be made to them, claiming they had maintained the deceased's tomb at their own expense.

<sup>14</sup> See also the will of an Indian aristocrat residing in Karbalā' signed in Dhū al-Hijja 1298/October 1881 where she specifies the fees of Rs. 4.5 a month for Qur'ān readers on tombs of members of her family. FO 195/1885 Baghdad no. 424/71 Muckler to Currie August 3, 1895.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Amīn, *A'yān* 42:46; Tunakābunī, *Qisās*, 36.

<sup>16</sup> Tunakābunī, *Qisās*, 191ff; al-Amīn, *A'yān*, 5:24, 45:233, 42:46.

rulers, ministers and various notables from the Shi'i kingdom of Awādh amounting to more than one million rupees during the years 1786-1844. During the first half of the century a larger share of the Indian money was spent on public projects for the benefit of the entire community. Sayyid Mahdī Musāwī Shahrastānī (d. 1216/1801-2), the chief *mujtahid* of Karbalā', received Rs. 500,000 from Assāf al-Dawla, the Nawwāb of Awādh, for the construction of the Hindiyya canal in the Middle Euphrates to bring water to Najaf and Karbalā'. Likewise, Sayyid 'Alī al-Tabāṭabā'ī (d. 1231/1815-16) built a wall around Karbalā' for protection from Wahhābī raids.<sup>17</sup>

Control of the Indian money played an important part in the struggle for leadership in Karbalā'. Sayyid Ibrāhīm Qazvīnī (d. 1264/1848) who assumed the role of distributor used the funds to attract a large number of students to his classes, while he discriminated against his personal enemies.<sup>18</sup> Qazvīnī's use of the funds for self-aggrandizement elicited resentment in Karbalā' and probably in Awādh as well. While the Shi'i biographical dictionaries are reluctant to dwell on such issues, discontent over corruption is explicit in the British correspondence. Concerned with the implications on British reputation in Iraq and Awādh, the British Political Agent in Baghdād wrote to the Governor General of India that he had received repeated complaints from "the heads of the Sheeah population of this Pashalic" of "the gross misapplication" of the Indian money. Nearly Rs. 400,000 had been remitted from Awādh to the shrine cities during the preceding several years for the benefit of the pilgrims, he added, but "it is stated and generally believed," that only "a very small portion of the bequest has been appropriated to the purpose of charity."<sup>19</sup> It seems that for

<sup>17</sup> Sayyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Iḥwān al-Ḥaqqīyīn in India* (Cambridge, 1986), 2:96. *Majallat al-Murshid* 1 (1929):203. For a detailed discussion of the Indian money, see J.R.L. Cole, "Indian Money and the Shi'i Shrine Cities of Iraq, 1786-1850," *Middle Eastern Studies* 22:4 (October 1986).

<sup>18</sup> Tihānī, *Kitāb*, 710; Sayyid 'Abbas Shūsūtārī, *al-Zill al-Mumtadīl* (Arabic MS. in the Library of the Raja of Mahmdāhād, Lucknow), 144a-146a.

<sup>19</sup> Indian Government Foreign Department (hereafter IGFD); Political Consultation nos. 28-29, June 8, 1844. Political Agent in Turkish Arabia no. 99 March 21, 1844.

Karbala' at least the Indian money exceeded donations from Iran as a source of income during the early period.

The flow of funds to the shrine cities increased considerably with the consolidation of networks of patronage in Iran beginning from the 1840s. These networks linked the *mujtahids* in the shrine cities with their constituents through agents (*wakīl* pl. *wakāla'*) and former students who served as local '*ulamā'*' in various towns and cities in Iran. Thus, Murtaḍa Ansārī (d. 1281/1864), the leading *mujtahid* in Najaf at mid-century, reportedly received ca. 150,000 or 200,000 *tūmāns* a year (£66,000-88,000) at a time when the entire annual revenue of the Iranian government was estimated as ranging between 3,200,000 *tūmāns* (£1.5 million) in 1851-52 to 4,900,000 *tūmāns* (£1,970,000) in 1867-68.<sup>20</sup> His various disciples and successors also received considerable amounts. Prior to Mirzā Hasan Shirāzī's death in 1312/1895 one agent alone from Qazvin reportedly brought him the considerable amount of 1000 Turkish Pounds (ca. £810). Muhammad Fādīl Sharabīyānī (d. 1322/1904) is said to have distributed ca. 4000 Turkish Pounds (ca. £3240) a year among his students. Unfortunately, it is impossible to calculate the annual or overall amounts reaching the shrine cities from these sources.<sup>21</sup> These remittances enabled various *mujtahids* to build several madrasas to house their students and bolster their own position.

#### *The Oudh Bequest*<sup>22</sup>

One of the largest and most famous legacies that channelled funds to the shrine cities was the Oudh Bequest, whose story sheds light on the interaction between scholarship, finances, religious

<sup>20</sup> Muhammad Hasan Khān 'Utmād al-Saltana, *Khāb al-Ma'āthir wal-Athar* (Fihra'n, 1306/1888), 136. For the revenues of the Iranian government, see Sa'id A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown, The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (Oxford, 1988), 212 Table 4.

<sup>21</sup> 'Abdallāh Māmaqānī, *Makḥm al-Maghānī* (Najaf, 1315/1926), 258; Muhammad Mirz al-Dīn, *Ma'ārif al-Nijaf fī Tarājim al-'Ulamā' wal-Latā'if*, 3 vols. (Najaf, 1904-05), 2:374.

<sup>22</sup> Oudh is the British version of the name of the kingdom of Awādh. I used both terms interchangeably depending on the source and the context.

leadership, and British involvement in Shi'i affairs.<sup>23</sup> The Oudh Bequest originated in the Third Oudh Loan which the British East India Company (EIC) extracted in 1825 from Ghāzī al-Dīn Haydar [Ghāzī-u-Dīn], king of Awādh, in order to finance its war in Nepal. The principal of ten million Rupees (ca. £1,000,000) was never to be repaid; and the interest, fixed at 5% a year (i.e. Rs. 500,000), was to be applied by the Government of India in perpetuity to particular specified purposes. Among other things, the agreement stipulated monthly allowances for life of Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 2,500 respectively to Nawwāb Mubarak Mahal Sahiba and Sultan Maryam Begum Sahiba, both wives of Ghāzī-u-Dīn. Each of them was empowered to bequeath one third of her allowances to any purpose she desired. The remaining two thirds, together with any portion of the one third not bequeathed by will, were to be transferred in two equal shares to the *mujtahids* resident in Najaf and Karbalā' to be distributed "to deserving persons ... for the acquirement of religious merit."<sup>24</sup>

The Bequest became operative when the two widows died in April and June 1849, and annual installments of Rs. 8664 began to accumulate at the EIC's treasury. Starting from 1850 the two leading *mujtahids* of Najaf and Karbalā', Murtaḍa Ansārī and Sayyid 'Alī Naqī al-Jabātabā'i (d. 1289/1873), drew the money from the British Bombay government through their agents in India. As the leader of the '*ulamā'*' community Ansārī reached an agreement with the British Consul Rawlinson on the mode of distribution of the Oudh Bequest funds in Najaf, which sought to balance between the various groups in the community: junior *mujtahids*, low-ranking indigent '*ulamā'*', Persian and Arab students, the custodians of the shrines; and the poor.<sup>25</sup>

Ansārī withdrew from the distribution in 1860, presumably be-

<sup>23</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the Bequest, see Meir Litvak, *The Shi'i Ulama of Najaf and Karbala, 1791-1904: A Sociopolitical Analysis* (PhD Diss., Harvard University, 1991), chapter 5. For a discussion of the Bequest during the 1904-1958 period, see Nakash, *The Shi'is*, 215ff.

<sup>24</sup> John Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, 2 vols. (Calcutta, 1908-15, reproduced London, 1970), 1:18:1409-11.

<sup>25</sup> P/437/7) Political proceedings no. 122 June 1867- Baghdad Kumbal to Under Secretary of State, India Office April 7, 1867.

cause he did not want to be associated too closely with the British. After his withdrawal, the British chose Sayyid 'Alī Bahr al-'Ulūm (d. 1298/1880-81) as the distributor for Najaf. Henceforth, the Talā'abā'i and Bahr al-'Ulūm families controlled the distribution until 1903.<sup>26</sup>

A major change in the administration of the Bequest took place in 1867 following complaints by the British protégé Nawwāb Iqbāl al-Dawla, who resided in Kāzīmāyn, of misuse of the funds and of discrimination against Indians in the distribution. In contravention of the Bequest deed, a third of the monthly allowance ca. Rs. 3,300 was set aside as an 'Indian fund' to be distributed by the Nawwāb to Indian 'ulamā', residents and paupers, and partly to remunerate him for past services to the British. The reputation of the Indian fund attracted a growing number of Indian paupers to the shrine cities throughout the century.<sup>27</sup>

There is scant evidence on the detailed distribution of the Bequest but from its inception there were incessant complaints by rival *mujtahids* and notable laymen about misappropriation of funds. The controversies sometimes degenerated into violence as members of the urban gangs in both towns sought to lay their hands on the funds.<sup>28</sup> According to the common belief held in both towns, the distributors compensated themselves for the loss of donations from emulators by greater abuse of the Bequest. In 1891 the British Political Agent reported that the distributor Sayyid Muḥammad Bahr al-'Ulūm (d. 1326/1908-09) had made himself a rich man out of the Bequest. The distributors evaded successive attempts by the British to secure orderly lists of recipients.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> P/437/71 ICFD Political proceedings no. 122 June 1867—Baghdād Keṣbāl to Under Secretary of State, India Office April 7, 1867; Mahmūd Mahmūd, *Ta'rīkh i Rawābiṭ i Siyāsi-yi Irān wa Inghis dar Qarn-i Nuzulihān Millīdī* (Tīhrān, 1949-50), 6:1343-44; Ismā'il Ra'īm, *Ḥuqūq i Bīstūrān i Inghis dar Irān* (Tīhrān, 1347/1968), 104.

<sup>27</sup> P/3742 ICFD-External Baghdad no. 123 Tweedie to Thornton, Secretary of State to the Government of India Foreign Department March 12, 1890; P/3743 ICFD-External proceedings no. 177 Tweedie to Thornton no. 376 July 3, 1890.

<sup>28</sup> ICFD-General P/1026 proceedings no. 36, 40, 49-50 for September 1876 Baghdad no. 9, Nixon to Thornton, February 14, 1876.

<sup>29</sup> P/3996 ICFD External Baghdad no. 123 Tweedie to Thornton March 12

The most important change in the Oudh Bequest took place in 1903, under the initiative of the newly-appointed British Resident Major Newmarch. A scrutiny of the accounts of distribution supplied by the distributors revealed that large amounts were allotted to numerous members of their respective households including women, children and servants. A suspiciously large number of women were registered as recipients of grants, but "not a single one ever appeared before the distributor to receive her stipend." Moreover, many of the alleged recipients were in fact fictitious names or names of deceased persons and their shares were taken by the distributors. Many of the poor had actually received smaller amounts than those recorded, but were threatened with forfeiting any grant should they disclose the fact.<sup>30</sup>

Newmarch obtained the India Government's approval to a new system of distribution under which the British Resident distributed the funds of the Bequest among several *mujtahids* in each town at his own discretion. The 'Indian Fund' was abolished at the same time. Although corruption was cited as the immediate cause for the change, growing British awareness of the importance of the 'ulamā' of the shrine cities in Iranian politics, and the need to exert some influence on them, was an additional important factor. However, most first-rank *mujtahids* in Najaf abstained from partaking in the Bequest under the new arrangement, presumably because they did not want to be associated with the British at a time of growing political tension in Iran. In 1904 ten *mujtahids* in each town received Rs. 500 each.<sup>31</sup>

During the first fifty years of its operation, the Oudh Bequest channelled more than six million Rupees to Najaf and Karbalā'. Its economic impact at the beginning of its operation was substantial

1890 and appendixes; P/3742 ICFD-Internal Proceeding no. 43 September 1890 Simla no. 17321 Barnes to Tweedie May 24, 1890.

<sup>30</sup> P/6652 ICFD-Internal Proceedings no. 70—Baghdād no. 300 Newmarch to Barnes Secretary to the Government of India at the Foreign Department September 20, 1902.

<sup>31</sup> P/6652 ICFD Proceedings no. 70 Newmarch to Barnes no. 300 Newmarch to Barnes September 20, 1902; Proceedings no. 75—Baghdād no. 206 Newmarch to the Secretary to the Government of India at the Foreign Department May 6, 1903; Proceedings no. 80—Baghdād no. 313 Newmarch to Dore June 15, 1903.

compared with other sources of revenue flowing to the shrine cities. The highest annual amount that the two towns could attain from the Bequest was Rs. 186,148 (ca. £15,512 under the mid-nineteenth century exchange rate). The changes introduced in 1903 resulted in smaller grants of Rs. 6000 (ca. £400) annually for each *mujtahid*, which diminished the fund's value for patronage building but did not render it unimportant. The fact that the Bequest was a steady source of income immune from economic and political fluctuations added to its importance compared with other financial sources. It is conceivable that the steady flow of such large amounts to the shrine cities was very helpful in consolidating their status as the leading centers of learning for the Shi'a during the nineteenth century.

It is impossible to determine the number of *'ulamā'* benefiting from the Bequest during each period of its operation, since the money was not distributed evenly. During the early 1890s, the British mentioned 600 persons in Najaf and 500 in Karbalā' as direct beneficiaries. Undoubtedly, some of those recipients sustained other persons as well, thereby multiplying the number of beneficiaries under the indirect patronage of the distributors. The financial weight of the Oudh Bequest notwithstanding, its impact on the leadership issue was more limited, since leadership required other qualifications as well.<sup>52</sup> The changes in the administration of the Bequest became part of a broader British involvement in the affairs of the Shi'i *'ulamā'* which reached its peak after the First World War.

#### *Additional sources of Income*

Sunnī *'ulamā'* in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt controlled landed property in addition to *awqāf*, both as tax farmers and, from the mid-nineteenth century, as full fledged landowners. In Iran, the Qajars bestowed land presents on individual *'ulamā'*, and many of the latter acquired landed property on their own initia-

<sup>52</sup> On the Bequest and the British, see Litvak, *The Shi'i Ulama*, chapter 5; Nakhsh, *The Shi'is*, 215ff.

tive.<sup>53</sup> By contrast, due to the circumstances prevailing in Ottoman Iraq, few of the leading *mujtahids* in the shrine cities owned land.

Most of the *'ulamā'* in the shrine cities who either owned or lived off land were Arabs from landowning families, rather than *'ulamā'* who purchased the land themselves. Some *'ulamā'* of recent tribal origin received plots of land from their tribes.<sup>54</sup> The difficulty of protecting landed property in Iraq is evident from the fact that at least three *'ulamā'* are known to have been dispossessed of their landed property by tribesmen.<sup>55</sup>

A few prominent *'ulamā'* families did acquire some lands. Shaykh Mūsā Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' (d. 1243/1827-1828), the leader of the *'ulamā'* community in Najaf, received the title to the village al-Basira from the grateful governor of Baghdad, Dā'ūd Pāshā, following his 1821 mediation between the Pashā and Fath 'Alī Shah. The Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' family also owned most of the lands of the Jinājiyya village whence they had originated. Mūsā's brother, 'Alī (d. 1253/1837-38), reportedly lived off the revenues of the village, channelling to charity all the religious dues brought to him. The leading *mujtahid* Muhammad Hasan Najafī (d. 1266/1850) inherited a plot of date trees from his mother.<sup>56</sup>

Apparently Iranian *'ulamā'* hesitated to buy land in Iraq since that would have forced them to adopt Ottoman nationality, and because most of them were still oriented towards Iran. The two prominent *mujtahids* 'Abdallāh Māmaqānī (d. 1323/1905) and 'Jabāllāh Rashī (d. 1312/1895) came from landowning families in Iran and lived off revenues from their property. However, when

<sup>53</sup> Hujjat al-Islam Muḥammad Bāqir Shāhī (d. 1260/1844), the chief *mujtahid* of Isfahān reportedly owned many villages in the regions of Burūjird, Yazd and Shirāz, in addition to shops and caravanserais, see Tunakabunī, *Qisās*, 101-03. Mullā 'Alī Kamī (d. 1306/1888), the chief *mujtahid* of Tihān, was also a wealthy landowner, cf. Hamīd Algar, "Alī Kamī" *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

<sup>54</sup> Hīrz al-Dīn, *Mu'awij*, 1:43, 1:203-204, 1:285ff., 1:336-38 2:96-100, 1:348-51; 5: 32-39, 3:64-65, 3:228-31; Mahbūba, *Mādh*, 3:293-94, 3:356.

<sup>55</sup> Mahbūba, *Mādh*, 2:196-97; 2:312-13; Hīrz al-Dīn, *Mu'awij*, 3:32-33; Hasan al-Sadr, *Takmilat Amal al-Amīl* (Qum, 1985), 441.

<sup>56</sup> Muḥammad Kalantar, "Muḥadditha," in Murtada Ansārī, *Kitāb al-Makāshif*, vol. I (Najaf, 1392/1972), 36-37n; Mahbūba, *Mādh*, 3:170; Muḥammad Ridā al-Muzaffar, "Tarjamat al-Mu'allif," in Muḥammad Hasan Najafī, *Jawāhir al-Kalām fi Sharḥ Sharā'ī' al-Islām*, ed. 'Abās Quṣṣānī-Najafī (Najaf, 1958), 1:4.

his father died, Rashtī gave up his share to his relatives in Iran. When 'Abdallāh Māmaqānī died in 1246/1830-31, his son, the future *mujtahid* Hasan Māmaqānī (d. 1323/1905), was dispossessed of his property by his Tabriz relatives. It was probably difficult for 'ulamā' residing in the shrine cities to supervise and control landed property in Iran.

The Bahr al-'Ulum family is the most notable exception to the above description. A highly respected but impoverished Iranian 'ulamā' family at the beginning of the century, they grew wealthy largely thanks to their control of the Oudh Bequest. Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Bahr al-'Ulum received land near Dhu al-Kifl from the pro-Shi'ī Ottoman Governor 'Alī Riqā Pashā sometime during the 1830s. He even took a break from his studies in order to look after the property. His brother, Sayyid 'Alī, the distributor of the Oudh Bequest, was accused in 1875-76 of having purchased considerable landed property with funds from the Bequest which he was supposed to have given to students and charity. Members of the family consolidated their position as wealthy notables by marriage alliances with tribal leaders and custodians of the shrines. Sayyid Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm Bahr al-'Ulum (d. 1345/1926-7), married the daughter of Shaykh Sautār, leader of the Banī Hasan tribe. In order to secure the marriage, Sautār gave Sayyid Muhammad large plots of land and orchards in the region between Karbalā' and Tuwayrij. After the marriage, Sayyid Muhammad left Najaf, devoting himself to supervising his new property and to teaching among the tribesmen, ordinarily a task delegated to low-ranking 'ulamā'.<sup>37</sup>

Several of the leading *mujtahids* in Iran combined trade as well as food-hoarding and speculation with scholarly work. Although a few Arab 'ulamā' are mentioned as being engaged in trade, the vast majority of 'ulamā' in the shrine cities confined themselves to scholarly activity or to providing religious services for a fee. Disdain for overt worldliness was at least a partial cause for such conduct at variance with that of their counterparts in Iran, since

<sup>37</sup> Muhammad Sa'dīq Bahr al-'Ulum, "Muqaddima," in Muhammad Mahdī b. Murtadā al-Tabātabā'ī, *Kifāyat al-Sayyid Bahr al-'Ulum al-Ma'ūnūh bil-Faḍl al-Rijālīyya* (Najaf, 1967), 157-58.

the shrine cities were prosperous pilgrimage markets, and more 'ulamā' could have engaged in trade had they wished.

Students and low-ranking 'ulamā' received stipends from their teachers, sometimes from several teachers simultaneously. Hasan Quchānī, who studied in Najaf at the beginning of the twentieth century, says that Akhund Khurāsānī's students, who were among the poorest in Najaf, received only 3 *tīmān* (ca. 12 shillings) a year in addition to bread rations. Though he himself received an additional 18 *tīmāns* (£8, 12) a year from Hasan Māmaqānī, he was still constantly short of money. Muhsin al-Amin, who also studied in Najaf at the time, claimed he received five Turkish Pounds (£5) annually from his family. According to the Persian traveller Pirzādeh, Habiballāh Rashtī's students received a minimum stipend of 180 Krān a year (ca. £5.2) and an additional 26 Krān (14-15 shillings) for each year of study.<sup>38</sup> Considering that in 1908 the price of one loaf of bread was 1.24 piaster (100 piasters=one Turkish Pound),<sup>39</sup> all of these stipends were no more than the bare minimum.

Many resident 'ulamā' as well as students earned their living serving as *naẓẓhāns* (narrators of the Karbalā' tragedy), copying books and providing other religious services. In one case, the wife of a Lebanese 'ālim supported her husband by copying books. Others performed the pilgrimage to Mecca on someone else's behalf (*isīmābat al-Hajj*), a very hazardous task considering the dangers on the road and the occasional outbreaks of epidemics in the Hijāz. The few 'ulamā' who are mentioned in this respect undertook this task as a last resort.<sup>40</sup> Some students were personally

<sup>38</sup> Hasan Najafī Quchānī, *Siyāhat-i Sharq-yā Zudigānīnūmah-yi Apā Najafī Quchānī* (Mashhad, 1351/1972), 297, 315; al-Amin, *A'yan*, 40-64. In another passage, however, al-Amin says that he lived off 3 Turkish Pounds for half a year, *ibid.*, 40-54; Muhammad 'Alī Pirzādeh Nā'īm, *Safarnāmah-yi Hajj Pirzādeh*, ed. Hāfiz Fārudū-Fārmayān, (Tehran, 1345), 332.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Issawi, *The Middle East, 1800-1914: A Documentary Economic History* (Oxford, 1983), 476. Unfortunately Issawi does not provide prices for the 1890s, when al-Amin stayed in the shrine cities. In 1858 the price for the same bread fluctuated between 1.25 to 1.5 piasters, and it may be assumed to have stayed within that range during the interim.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Amin, *A'yan*, 33-396; Tibrānī, *Kifāyat*, 184-85; *idem*, *Nuqūlah*, 792-93 and 1209; Hīz al-Dīn, *Mu'āraf*, 3:23-24; Sadr, *Takmilat Amal al-'Amil*, 102.

supported by wealthy individuals. Occasionally residents from Iranian towns collected money to finance the studies of a particular student from their town, apparently in order to have him back as the local *'ālim*. Wealthy families supported those of their numbers who went to study. Such practices continued well into the twentieth century.<sup>41</sup>

The increasing flow of donations to the shrine cities notwithstanding, not all *mujtahids* accumulated wealth, and many lower-ranking *'ulamā'* languished in poverty. Yahyā Dawlatābādī, who studied in Najaf at mid-century, gives a moving description of the living conditions of his fifty year-old teacher at the Muqaddamāt (preliminaries) stage. This Persian *mūllā* lived in a room in Madrasat al-Mu'tamid, the crumbling walls of which were black with smoke from an oil lamp. All the teacher had was a mattress, a few cooking utensils and a small stove made of crude bricks on which he used to boil tea and cook for himself. Since the stove had no chimney, the smoke which spread in the room was occasionally so thick that the students and teacher could not see each other.<sup>42</sup> One can surmise that most students did not fare much better.

#### *Visitations and Burial Activity*

The visitation to the tombs of the Shi'ī Imāms played a major role in the socioeconomic development of the shrine cities as a whole, and of the community of *'ulamā'* in particular. It grew in scale from the mid-eighteenth century, when Mashhad, ruled by Nādir Shāh's successors, was not accessible to Iranians living in Zand territories. It was also greatly encouraged by the 1746 Kurdān treaty between Nādir Shāh and the Ottomans, which allowed Iranian pilgrims free passage to the shrine cities.<sup>43</sup>

The journey to the shrine cities from Tihiran lasted four to five months. While in Iraq, the pilgrims were subjected to various ex-

actions devised by the government as well as various tolls on bridges and boats.<sup>44</sup> Worst of all, due to the weakness of the central government in Baghdad, the pilgrims were left to the mercy of the plundering Bedouin tribes in the desert. These hardships and expenses notwithstanding, the annual number of pilgrims to the shrine cities grew continuously throughout the nineteenth century, reaching c. 100,000 a year in the late 1890s. The growth was partly aided by the stabilization in Ottoman-Iranian relations after the signing of the first treaty of Erzerum in 1823.

The visitations provided the opportunity for personal contact between the *mujtahid* and his followers, and served as an important channel for soliciting donations from believers. They also provided the platform for the dissemination of ideas as in the case of the shaykhi movement. The pilgrims' donations became a cause of serious competition among the *mujtahids* who were aided by their disciples for that purpose. Muhsin al-Amīn recalled how his father who was visiting Najaf was persuaded by a local *'ālim* not to proceed to pilgrimage in Mashhad, which competed with Najaf and Karbalā', but to devote his money to the sustenance of his relatives who were studying in Najaf. Still stronger competition over the donations developed between the *mujtahids* and the custodians of the shrines as each party sought to win over wealthy pilgrims.<sup>45</sup>

Quchānī gives a vivid description of how various students used to descend upon the pilgrims on arrival and "in every trick and guile" take their money and even food. Such students "pose as Akhund, as Amin al-Shari'a, Muwaththaq al-Shari'a and even Pu'uz (good-for-nothing) al-Shari'a." Only after a while do the unfortunate pilgrims realize that these impostors "have fleeced them from everything they had, worse than any Turkoman." Quchānī then goes on to describe other ways in which dishonest students extracted money from the pilgrims. Adib al-Mulk, for instance, complained that the people of Sāmarrā' cheat the pilgrims, and if

<sup>41</sup> Yūhānī, *Kisāb*, 120; idem, *Nuqaba'*, 188; al-Amīn, *A'yān*, 40:53 and 46:96; Māmoqānī, *Makhsan al-Maghani*, 225-27; Hītz al-Dīn, *Ma'ārij*, 1:43.

<sup>42</sup> Yahyā Dawlatābādī, *Hayāt i Yahyā*, 4 vols. (Tihiran, 1341s/1963), 1:30.

<sup>43</sup> John R. Perry, *Kamran Khan Zand: A History of Iran, 1747-1779* (Chicago, 1979), 172; Lawrence Lockhart, *Nadir Shah* (London, 1938), 285.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. FO 195/142 Baghdad no. 30 Remball to Musrey November 22, 1855.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Amīn, *A'yān*, 40:279. On the competition between the *mujtahids* and custodians, see Nakash, *The Shi'is*, 252.

a pilgrim dies, they take his money, and leave nothing to his heirs.<sup>46</sup> More honest 'ulamā' and students could earn money from the pilgrims by undertaking to recite prayers on their behalf, and by providing various religious services such as praying at funerals and arranging temporary marriages (*zawāj mut'ā*).

The 'ulamā' also benefited from the Shi'i custom of burying the dead in the sacred cemeteries of Najaf and Karbalā' (*naql al-janā'iz* or *naql al-amwāt*). In Shi'i Islam the shrine cities emerged as the preferred burial grounds for the faithful who believed that vicinity to the huāns would ensure their intercession on the day of resurrection. The practice of burial in the shrine cities assumed a massive scale only after the conversion of the population of Iran during the Safavid period. The most sacred cemeteries were Wādī al-Salām in Najaf, and Wādī al-Imān in Karbalā'.<sup>47</sup> The 'ulamā' of the shrine cities encouraged the practice which reinforced the status of their towns. Shaykh Ja'far Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' issued a *fatwa* permitting the burial of parts of a corpse in the shrine cities if transferring the entire body was impractical, arguing that a loss in this world is preferable to a loss in the next.<sup>48</sup>

Proximity to the Imām's grave determined the prestige, and with it the fee of burials. The highest prices were paid for burial in the courtyard itself, which was reserved for the most distinguished *mujtahids* and very wealthy believers. Under the Mamluks, for instance, "the regular fee for interment at Nejeff was ... 15 Kerans (ca. 14 shillings) for the poor classes, while persons of mark who selected particular spots for the burial of their relatives were frequently required to pay as much as 5,000 Kerans" (£232.11). Since the 1830s when they reasserted direct control over Iraq, the Ottomans lowered the minimum charge to 6-7 Krans (5-6 shil-

<sup>46</sup> Quchām, *Siyāhat* 327-29; Adīb al-Mulk, *Safarnāmah-yi Adīb al-Mulk bih 'Atā-bād (Dā'ir al-Za'imin)* 1273h.q. ed. Mas'ūd Golzāri (Tihān, 1364s), 119; Hājī Sayyāh, *Khāṭirāt-i Hājī Sayyāh* eds. Hamid Sayyāh and Sayfallāh Gulkāri (Tihān, 1346/1967-68), 281.

<sup>47</sup> For a full discussion of this custom, and particularly the controversy around it during the early twentieth century, see Nakash, *The Shi'is*, 184ff.

<sup>48</sup> Muhammad Hasan Najafī, *Jam'ah al-Kalām*, 4:348; Tunkaburi, *Qiyās*, 198.

lings), but dignitaries still had to pay 600-700 krans (£30-35) for preferred sites in Wādī al-Salām near Najaf.<sup>49</sup>

The burial traffic increased since the mid-eighteenth century, parallel to the rise of the shrine cities as major centers of learning and visitation. The oppressive expenses of the journey notwithstanding, the number of bodies brought to the shrine cities grew continuously throughout the nineteenth century, amounting to 7,245 corpses registered by the Ottomans in 1903-04, although the number was probably higher. The large number of corpses transferred over great distances and in great heat posed the danger of epidemics in an already plague-ridden area. During his 1870 visit to the shrine cities, Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh agreed to the Ottomans' request to allow the transfer of bodies only a year after death. Pious Shi'is, however, found ways to smuggle their deceased despite the ban.<sup>50</sup>

The visitations and 'burial industry' were the major mainstay of the local economy of the shrine cities which was largely geared to catering to the needs of the pilgrim. Many social and religious service occupations were closely connected with the visitations such as kham owners, various servants, and shrine attendants. The latter assisted the pilgrims at every stage of their journey, conducting them finally to the shrines and reciting prayers on their behalf.<sup>51</sup> The burial traffic supported various professions both inside

<sup>49</sup> Statement and Explanations of the Persian Complaints Contained in Col. Sheil's despatch to H.E. Sir S. Canning, Dated Tehran February 10, 1846 enclosure in FO 195/237 Baghdad no. 70 Rawlinson to Canning April 8, 1846. See also Robert Mignan, "Journal of a Tour Through Georgia, Persia and Mesopotamia," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 3(1834):325; J.W. Peters, *Nippur, or Explorations and Adventures on the Euphrates, 1888-1890* (New York, 1897), 325. During the 1920s the charge for burial in the courtyard of Husayn's shrine was Rs. 500, see Dwight M. Donaldson, *The Shi'ite Religion: A History of Islam in Persia and Iraq* (London, 1933), 97.

<sup>50</sup> India Office: LPS-10823, "Sanitary Report, 1916"; 'Alī al-Wardī, *Lamāhāt 'Ijmā'iyā min Ta'āhh al-ḥaq al-ḥodith*, 3 vols. (Baghdad, 1969), 2:259-261. In some Iranian cities people separated the flesh from the skeleton carrying the former in sacks and the latter in boxes into Iraq. This act was deemed permissible since the body of Imām Husayn's son, 'Alī Akbar, was also cut to pieces by the Umayyads. Ahmad Kasravi, *On Islam and Shi'ism*, trans. M. R. Ghanoomparvar (Costa Mesa, 1990), 179, 196.

<sup>51</sup> Nakash, *The Shi'is*, 166.

and outside the shrine cities: muleteers who transferred the corpses, professional smugglers who managed to avoid the payment of fees to the Ottomans, grave diggers, shroud makers, tomb makers, and servants of the shrines. Many students and junior 'ulamā' earned fees for conducting funerals, and for reciting prayers and the Qur'an at the graves.<sup>52</sup>

The manufacture of religious relics was the major local industry in Karbalā', particularly clay tablets (*turbas*) from the soil of the city on which the believer's forehead could rest whenever he prostrated himself for prayer. The objection by some 'ulamā' that selling the clay taken from the area made sacred by the blood of Husayn was tantamount to selling Husayn's very flesh could not overcome this popular practice. Rosaries, necklaces for the deceased, rings on their forefingers and amulets on each arm, all made of this sacred clay, as well as some dust swept from the shrine were also very popular items of trade.<sup>53</sup> "Though the majority of [the] pilgrims are very poor," the British Consul Mockler reported, "they purchase many commodities in the bāzārs, and consequently stimulate the trade of the lower classes of shopkeepers considerably." According to another British estimate, the amount generated by the 100,000 Iranian pilgrims towards the local economy of the shrine cities each year reached 2,000,000 *liḥmans* annually "exclusive of pontage at the bridge of Bakouba, Bagdad and Moosayb and the sums levied by the Turkish Government on passports and Customs dues." The pilgrimage also affected the international trade of the Pāshālik of Baghdād and Iran.<sup>54</sup>

Due to its importance for the local economy, prohibiting the pilgrimage was the only effective means the Iranian government

could use to force the Ottomans to reduce their exorbitant exactions from the pilgrims.<sup>55</sup> On one such occasion, the British Resident Nixon stated that "our trade cannot thrive as it ought to do as long as the prohibition remains," blaming Russia for instigating it in order to prevent British goods from competing with Russian goods in Central Asia.<sup>56</sup>

Owing to the pilgrimage and the burial activity, Karbalā' became perhaps the most prosperous town in the Vilayet of Baghdād. New neighborhoods were built during the 1860s and the town was described by one supercilious British traveller as "almost worthy of some second rate parts of Alexandria." Both Hillā and Baghdād profited from the transit of pilgrims to the shrine cities. During Mīrzā Hasan Shirāzi's residence in Sāmarrā' that town too prospered from the enormous influx of pilgrims.<sup>57</sup>

#### *Social Implications*

The reliance on charities entailed important social and political ramifications in the 'ulamā's relations with donors, particularly government officials and merchants. Whereas *awqāf* were occasionally appropriated by the state, as was the case in nineteenth century Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, the broad base of the donor pool could not have been controlled by any government, thus sheltering the 'ulamā' from depredations by the latter.

Shī'i merchants in Iraq remitted the fifth to the *mujtahids*. Most notable among them was Mahammad Sāliḥ al-Kubba, who was the benefactor of several 'ulamā'.<sup>58</sup> However, the Shī'i merchant com-

<sup>52</sup> Nakash, *The Shi'as*, 191; "Sanitary Report, 1916" (LPSHO23).

<sup>53</sup> Vital Guinet, *La Turquie d'Asie* (Paris, 1891-95), 202; Cowper, *Through Asiatic Arabia*, 367; Habib Chihā, *La Province de Bagdad* (Cairo, 1908), 180; Donaldson, *The Shi'ite*, 89-90.

<sup>54</sup> FO 60/373 Thomson to Derby, 30 September 1875 cited in Charles Issawi (ed.), *The Economic History of Iran 1800-1914* (Chicago, 1971), 129; IGFD-External A Proceedings no. 70 August 1896—Baghdad no. 288 Mockler to Secretary to the Government of India Foreign Department June 1896; *ibid.* proceedings nos. 108-109 September 1894—Baghdad no. 2304; Mockler to Foreign Secretary (London) May 26, 1894.

<sup>55</sup> Throughout the nineteenth Century the Iranian government launched numerous official complaints to the Ottoman government, through British mediation, regarding the extortionate fees levied on the pilgrims and their abuse by Ottoman officials. The correspondence is too vast to be listed here.

<sup>56</sup> IGFD-Political October 1879 proceedings nos. 11-12—Baghdad no. 50 Nixon to Layall June 10, 1879.

<sup>57</sup> Peters, *Nippur*, 334; John Ussler, *A journey from London to Persepolis, including Wandering in Daghestan, Georgia, Armenia, Kurdistan, Mesopotamia and Persia* (London, 1865), 457, 468; J. S. Cowper, *Through Asiatic Arabia* (London, 1894), 574.

<sup>58</sup> For the Kubba family and the 'ulamā', see Subh, *Takmilat Amal al-Awāl*, 325.

munity in Iraq was not powerful enough economically to be a major source of sustenance of the shrine cities. Not only was trade in Iraq significantly less developed than in Iran, but, more importantly, it was controlled by non-Arabs and local Jewish merchants. Even many *mujtahids*, despite their rancorous feelings toward Jews, needed the services of Jewish moneychangers.<sup>59</sup>

Unlike the merchant community in Iraq, the *bāzār* in Iran was by far the most important source of support for the '*ulamā*' in Iran and the shrine cities since the early part of the nineteenth century. The *bāzār* and the mosque have been often described as "inseparable twins," serving for many centuries as the primary arena of public life in urban Iran. The religious sentiment and traditional orientation of the *bāzārīs* were reinforced by their ties with the '*ulamā*', by the physical setting of the *bāzār*, and by its communal character. While commercial action is the *raison d'être* for the existence of the *bāzār*, "the religious idiom is the basic common denominator in the *bāzār* and functions to create cross-cutting ties and bonds among *bāzārīs* of different guilds and professions."<sup>60</sup>

In the *bāzār* all commerce was imbued with the personae, in the emotion—as distinct from the pure money economy of modern capitalism. Pre-capitalist "moral economy" regarded with ambivalence wealth made at the others' expense rather than from one's own productive efforts. To avoid the suspicion of unfair gain at the expense of others wealth had to be recycled thereby confronting the pre-capitalist merchant with the "traders dilemma." The dilemma arose out of the moral obligation to share proceeds

<sup>59</sup> Nakash, *The Shi'is*, 233. On Shi'i-Jewish relations, see Bahr al-'Ulūm, "Muqaddima," 50-65; Sadr, *Takmilat Amal al-Āmil*, 394, and the clash between Shi'is and Jews in 1860 over the Kifl, or tomb of the prophet Ezekiel, in France CPC Baghdad vol. 5 no. 31 May 9, 1860, and no. 32 May 23, 1860; FO 195/624 Baghdad no. 15 Hyslop to Bulwer May 9, 1860 and enclosures, *ibid.* Baghdad no. 23 Hyslop to Bulwer July 4, 1860. On the *mujtahids*' need for Jewish moneychangers, see P/6652 IGFD-Internal Proceedings no. 70—Baghdad no. 390 Newmarch to Barnes Secretary to the Government of India at the Foreign Department September 20, 1902.

<sup>60</sup> Gustave Thaïss, "The Bazaar as a Case Study of Religion and Social Change," in E. Yarshater, (ed.), *Iran Faces the Seventies* (New York, 1971), 193-94; Nakash, *The Shi'is*, 231-32.

with kinfolk and neighbors, and the opposing necessity to make profits and accumulate capital. Contribution to religious purposes thus served as a perfect solution to this "traders dilemma."<sup>61</sup> The urge to be active and influential not only in matters of business but also in civic, religious and political affairs of the community has long been a dominant trait of the leading *bāzārī* character." To be successful in the long term a *bāzār* merchant needed "the capital of good reputation as much as he needed material capital."<sup>62</sup> Again, a major means of attaining such reputation was to make generous donations both to local '*ulamā*' and to the shrine cities.

Deriving from the communal ties was an active alliance between the *bāzār* and the '*ulamā*', with major political significance. The '*ulamā*' needed the mass support of the *bāzārīs* for their own political power. When confronting the arbitrary and oppressive domination of the governing authority, the *bāzārīs* needed the canopy of the '*ulamā*'s protection. The support of the *bāzārīs* was a key factor in determining the leadership status of various *mujtahids*. The *mujtahids*' dependence on the *bāzārīs* required them to be attuned to the needs and grievances of the *bāzār*.<sup>63</sup>

Concurrently, dependence on the *bāzār* and other donors occasionally forced the '*ulamā*' to toe the line of their supposed followers, be it in political matters, but also in compromising on religious practices of which they disapproved.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, there were '*ulamā*' who resented their dependence on their constituents. Various *mujtahids*, e.g. 'Alī Kāshif al-Ghitā' and Ḥabiballāh Rashtī took pride in avoiding taking donations. Others, such as Ḥasan al-Sadr's father, did not want the donors to feel proud of

<sup>61</sup> On the concept of the "traders' dilemma," see Tilman Schiel, "The traders dilemma: A theory of the social transformation of markets and society," in Hans Dieter Evers and Heiko Schrader (eds.), *The Moral Economy of Trade: Ethnicity and Developing Markets* (London, 1994), pp. 15-16.

<sup>62</sup> Ahmad Ashraf, "Bazaar-Mosque Alliance: The Social Basis of Revolts and Revolutions," *Politics, Culture and Society* 1:4 (Summer 1988), 540; Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran* (New York, 1985), 346.

<sup>63</sup> Ashraf, "Bazaar-Mosque," 542.

<sup>64</sup> See for instance the disapproval and failure of various '*ulamā*' to abolish the custom of the mass transfer of corpses from Iran to Najaf and Karbalā', in Nakash, *The Shi'is*, 155-57.

doing something that they were ordered to do by God. Nor did he take money from suspicious sources, but he did take money from vows. The highlighting of these attitudes suggests that they were not very common among the 'ulamā'.<sup>65</sup>

Close ties with the *bāzār* were an essential prerequisite for attaining leadership status in the shrine cities. Both Muhammad Baqir Khibhāni (d. 1205/1791), and Mirzā Hasan Shirāzi enjoyed an advantage in expanding their patronage of students thanks to the links their families had with merchants in Iran.<sup>66</sup> Merchants also acted as Shirāzi's agents in various towns, channelling to him the fifth and other religious dues. In some cases, Shirāzi allowed his merchant agents to invest such funds in trade, and the profits were used to sustain his students. He also set up a trust fund to support and bail out merchants in need.<sup>67</sup>

The peculiar nature of the financial system in the shrine cities had a major impact on the nature of patronage relations between teachers and students. In the absence of secured stipends from a madrasa endowment the students were totally dependent on stipends from their teachers. Quchānī, who was a sympathetic insider in the community, criticized most students for going wherever money and connections were available. Akhund Khurāsānī, for one, refused to distribute money among his students for the first three years of his independent career in order to ascertain that they had indeed come to his classes for the sake of learning alone.<sup>68</sup>

Without secured income from *awqāf*, each *mujtahid* needed a large following among the students in order to dispatch them as his representatives to various communities. Former students served as the crucial link between their teacher and the *bāzār* community, collecting the religious dues for him, and referring new students to him. Dependence on the patronage relationships thus switched sides in favor of the students.

<sup>65</sup> Al-Amin, *A'yān*, 40:27; Sadr, *Takmilat Amal al-Āmil*, 426.

<sup>66</sup> Amanat, "Madrasa," 116.

<sup>67</sup> Jibrānī, *Nuqubā'*, 638; al-Amin, *A'yān*, 23:267.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Amin, *A'yān*, 40:55; 824-25; Quchānī, *Siyāhat*, 160, 212-13, 367-69; See similar criticism by Hājī Sayyāh, *Khāṣṣat*, 281, and Pirzādah, *Safarnāmah*, I:333-34.

The competition for funds sharpened ethnic rivalries in the shrine cities.<sup>69</sup> With almost every donation sent from Lucknow during the 1830s and 1840s, the Indian *mujtahids* emphasized the need to allocate special funds to the Indians residing or studying in the shrine cities, implying that Indians were not getting their fair share.<sup>70</sup> The Arab students of Shaykh Mahdi Kāshif al-Ghitā', were discriminated against in the distribution of stipends due to his concerted efforts to cultivate a following among Iranian students. A delegation of the students extracted a commitment from Hājī Muhammad Sālih al-Kubba, the wealthiest Shi'ī merchant in Baghdad, to distribute a large amount of his own funds among the Arab students.<sup>71</sup> Likewise, the Turkish students of Shaykh Hasan Mānaqānī argued that it was his duty to provide for the Turks first, since most of the money he received had come from Turks. They complained that Persian and Arab *mujtahids* distributed stipends only among members of their own groups. Mānaqānī, however, rejected their demand as incompatible with the Shari'a. Clashes over funds correlating with ethnic and regional rivalries, exacerbated in times when the flow of money began to dwindle during the twentieth century.<sup>72</sup>

Finally the minor role of *awqāf* compared with the importance of direct contributions from believers had an important impact on the evolution of religious leadership in the shrine cities. Describing the situation in Cairo under the Mamluks, Berkeley notes that the tendency for—and later the provisions in endowment deeds allowing—sons to inherit their fathers' teaching posts had contributed to a restriction of social movement and the concentration of career opportunities in the hands of particular families.<sup>73</sup>

Whereas fathers could pass on endowed chairs to their sons, in the absence of large-scale *awqāf*, as was the case in the shrine

<sup>69</sup> Jibrānī, *Nuqubā'*, 13-14; Quchānī, *Siyāhat*, 330.

<sup>70</sup> Shustarī, *al-Zill al-Masadid*, 82a-85a, 85a-88b, 95a-100a, 142a-144a and 95a-100b.

<sup>71</sup> Hirz al-Din, *Ma'ārif*, I:311.

<sup>72</sup> 'Abdallāh Mānaqānī, *Makhran al-Maghānī*, 237-38. For such clashes during the twentieth century, see Nakash, *The Shi'is*, 249.

<sup>73</sup> Jonathan Berkeley, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton, 1992), 127.

cities, they could not pass on to them their popularity as teachers and their networks of patronage, which had been forged on a personal basis. Consequently, every *mujtahid* had to attract students and create his patronage networks based on his own merits as scholar and teacher. Descent from an illustrious father, although helpful, was not sufficient for that purpose opening the ranks of leadership to people from all levels of society.<sup>74</sup>

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In conclusion, the flow of funds and the entire financial administration in the shrine cities were never managed under one roof regularizing aid to the students. Rather it was a diffused system centered around individuals, who took care of their own protégés. Because of the absence of such an overall system, extracting a living depended on the ability of each student to fend for himself. This became a major preoccupation among both teachers and students, and a source of rivalry among *mujtahids* who vied for leadership.<sup>75</sup> As such it had a major impact on the nature of clientalism in the shrine cities as well as on leadership.

Finally, the dependence on contributions from abroad was one of the major causes of the decline of the shrine cities during the twentieth century, as shown convincingly by Yitzhak Nakash. Economic hardships in Iran since the outbreak of the 1906 Constitutional Revolution, and more importantly, the policies of Riḍā Shāh (1921-1941), which sought to divert the flow of funds and pilgrimage from the shrine cities to Iranian centers, undermined their financial basis and their ability to sustain a large number of students. The hardships encountered by the shrine cities enabled rival towns in Iran, Qum in particular, to emerge as the major centers of learning and religious leadership in the Shī'ī world.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> For an analysis of the Shī'ī leadership ranks, see Litvak, *Shi'ī Scholars Nineteenth Century Iraq: The 'Ulamā' of Najaf and Karbalā'* (Cambridge, 1998), Chapter Five.

<sup>75</sup> In 1964 Āyatallāh Muhsin al-Hakīm established the first roof organization, *al-marja'iyya al-dīniyya al-'amma* (the general religious marja'iyya) in Najaf, which gave students monthly stipends, each according to his social position; see Chibli Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law, Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shi'ī International* (Cambridge, 1993), 38.

<sup>76</sup> Nakash, *The Shi'īs*, pp. 229ff.