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CHAPTER 1

THE GOLDSMITH OF MARW

In the year 131/748 f. the rebellion which was to overthrow the Umayyad dynasty had already been launched. The ’Abbāsid army was advancing on Iraq, while the architect of the revolution, Abū Muslim (d. 137/755), remained in Marw, effectively ruling Khurāsān. His exercise of his power was nevertheless challenged – if only morally – by a local goldsmith (ṣā’iḥ), one Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn. This goldsmith went into the presence of Abū Muslim and addressed him in these words: ‘I see nothing more meritorious I can undertake in God’s behalf than to wage holy war against you. Since I lack the strength to do it with my hand, I will do it with my tongue. But God will see me, and in Him I hate you.’ Abū Muslim killed him. Centuries later, his tomb was still known and visited in the ‘inner city’ of Marw.

1 This incident, and its significance, were first discussed in W. Madelung, ‘The early Murji’a in Khurāsān and Transoxania and the spread of Ḥanafism’, Der Islam, 59 (1982), 35f. Madelung based his account on the entry on Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn in Ibn Abī l-Wafā’ (d. 775/1373), al-Jawāhir al-mudīyya fi tabaqat al-Ḥanāfiyya, Hyderabad 1332, 1:49.11, citing also Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-muṭlaḳ, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al., Leiden 1879–1901, series II, 1919.1. In the addenda to the reprint of his article in his Religious schools and sects in medieval Islam, London 1985 (item III, 39a), he added a reference to the entry in Ibn Saḍ (d. 230/845), al-Ṭabaqat al-kabīr, ed. E. Sachau et al., Leiden 1904–21, 7:2:103.6. In what follows, I have extended this documentation; however, my findings lead me to modify Madelung’s conclusions only on one point (see below, note 19). The goldsmith was first mentioned by Halm, who however stated erroneously that he was qādi of Marw (H. Halm, Die Ausbreitung der sˇaʾfiʿiṭischen Rechtsschule von den Anfängen bis zum 8./14. Jahrhundert, Wiesbaden 1974, 88). More recently van Ess has discussed him in his monumental history of early Islamic theology (J. van Ess, Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert, Berlin and New York 1991–7, 2:548f.), with some further references of which the more significant will be noted below. See also M. Q. Zaman, Religion and politics under the early ’Abbāsids, Leiden 1997, 71 n. 6, 72 n. 7.


3 Sam’āni (d. 562/1166), Anāh, ed. ‘A. al-Muʿallimī al-Yamānī, Hyderabad 1962–82, 8:267.9, for the ‘inner city’ of Marw, see G. Le Strange, The lands of the eastern caliphate, Cambridge 1905, 398f. It should be noted that Sam’āni’s tarjama of the goldsmith comes to us in two very different recensions. There is a short form, for which Sam’āni borrowed the entry in Ibn Hibbān (d. 354/965), Thiqāt, Hyderabad 1973–83, 6:19.7, adding an
We do not need to concern ourselves with the origins or historicity of this story. It suffices that Abū Muslim killed the goldsmith, or had him killed, and that it was the religio-political stance of the goldsmith that brought this upon him. Nor need we concern ourselves with Abū Muslim’s side of the story, except to note that a certain irritation on his part is understandable – this was, we are told, the third such visit he had to death.

Footnote 3 (cont.) explanation of the niḥa and the detail about the grave; this is found in the British Library manuscript of the Anṣāb published in facsimile by D. S. Margoliouth (Leiden and London 1912, f. 348v 15). Secondely, there is a long form marked by the insertion (very likely by Sam‘ānī himself) of much extra material (but without the detail about the grave); this long recension is that of the Istanbul manuscript used by Mu‘allimī as the basis of his edition (see his introduction to the first volume of his edition, 33).

Footnote 4 The account given by Ibn Abī ‘l-Wafī’ appears already in Jaṣṣās (d. 370/981), Abhām al-Karīm, Istanbul 1335–8, 2:53:18, with a full īsād (and cf. ibid., 1:70:22, drawn to my attention by Patricia Crone). The key figure in this īsād is one ‘Ahmad ibn ‘Arīya al-Kūfī, an altīs of Ahmad ibn Muḥammād ibn al-Salt al-Himmānī (d. 308/921), (for his biogrophy, see E. Dickson, ‘Ah·mad ibn Muh·ammad ibn al-S·alt (d. 921), Journal of the American Oriental Society, 116 (1996), 409f., and for the altīs, ibid., 415). Traditionist circles had a low opinion of his probity as a scholar, particularly in connection with his transmisions on the virtues of Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767f.) (in his biography, see A. Ma·dīrī, ed. A. D·. al-Ola·mī, Cairo 1959, 1:285.25). Fāsid, ed. A. D. al-Umārī, Baghdad 1974–6, 1:350.8 (noted by van Ess); Ibn Hibbān (d. 965), al-Ma‘ṣūma‘a‘ wa‘l-ta·rīkh, ed. F. Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, Leiden 1967–, 2:410, 438 no. 16), but I owe to Adam Sabra the information that it does not contain our anecdote. There is a parallel version from ‘Abī ibn Ḥarmala, a Ku·fan pupil of Abu·Ḥanīfa, in Ibn Ḥamdu·n, d. 1166, ‘Ab·bās, ed. A. M. al-Hulw, Cairo 1970–, 1:285.17); and an altīs to Adam Sabra the information that it does not contain our anecdote. There is a parallel version from ‘Abī ibn Ḥarmala, a Ku·fan pupil of Abu·Ḥanīfa, in Ibn Ḥamdu·n, d. 1166, ‘Ab·bās, ed. A. M. al-Hulw, Cairo 1970–, 1:285.17). The story does not seem to have caught the attention of the historians; Tabārī mentions the goldsmith only in an earlier, and unrelated, historical context (see above, note 1), and occasionally as a narrator.

Footnote 5 In addition to the works cited above, see particularly Bukhārī (d. 256/870), al-Ta‘rīkh al-Taba‘īr, Hyderabad 1360–78, 1:325.6 no. 1016 (whence Mizzi (d. 742/1341), Tabāqāt al-Kamālī, ed. B. A. Mā‘rūr, Beirut 1985–92, 2:224.6, and Ibn Ḥaṣar al-Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), Tabāqāt al-Tabaqāt, Hyderabad 1325–7, 1:173.3; Fāsawī (d. 777/980), al-Ma‘ṣūma‘a‘ wa‘l-ta·rīkh, ed. A. D. al-Umārī, Baghdād 1974–6, 1:350.8 (noted by van Ess); Ibn Hibbān (d. 965), Masāhbār ‘almā‘al-almā‘a‘, ed. M. Flischhammer, Cairo 1959, 195 no. 1565; Abū Nu‘ām al-Islāhānī (d. 1038), Dā‘ik khāṣṣ al-Islāhānī, ed. S. Dedering, Leiden 1931–4, 1:171.24 (noted by van Ess). Ibn Sa‘d knows an account similar to that given above (‘Ab·bās, 7:2.102.12), but gives pride of place to one in which the goldsmith is a friend of Abū Muslim. When Abū Muslim brings the ‘Ab·bās out into the open, he sends an agent to ascertain the goldsmith’s reaction, which is that Abū Muslim should be killed; Abū Muslim reacts by having the goldsmith killed (ibid., 103.7).

Footnote 6 According to a report preserved by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023), he was beaten to death (al-‘asār ‘alā al-dhakhīr, ed. W. al-Qādī, Beirut 1988, 6:213 no. 756). Our sources indicate that the goldsmith’s dislike of Abū Muslim did not arise from affectation for the Umayyads. He indicates that his allegiance to the Umayyad governor Ṣa‘r ibn Ṣayyār had not been voluntary (‘Ab·bās, 7:2.106.10), and an account transmitted from ‘Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767f.) suggests that he was a disappointed revolutionary who had initially believed in Abū Muslim’s promises of just rule (ibid., 286.3). Jaṣṣās states that the goldsmith rebuked Abū Muslim for his oppression (za‘lma) and wrongful bloodshed (Abhām, 1:70.27; similarly Ibn Hibbān (d. 965), Kitāb al-majrūhān, ed. M. I. Zāyid, Aleppo 1395–6, 1:157.12, cited in Zaman, Religion and Politics, 72 n. 7).
received from the goldsmith. The image of Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn as he appears in our sources is, however, worth some attention. A man of Marw, he was, in the first instance, a child of Islam. When asked his descent, his reply was that his mother had been a client of the tribe of Hamdān, and his father a Persian; he himself was a client (mawla) of God and His Prophet. He was also that familiar figure of the sociology of religion, a craftsman of uncompromising piety and integrity. He would throw his hammer behind him when he heard the call to prayer. While in Iraq he was too scrupulous to eat the food which Abu Hanīfa (d. 150/767f.) offered him without first questioning him about it, and even then he was not always satisfied with Abu Hanīfa’s replies. His politics were of a piece with this. His temperament was not receptive to counsels of prudence, as his discussions with Abu Hanīfa will shortly underline. Indeed, his death was little short of a verbal suicide mission – in one account he appeared before Abu Muslim already dressed and perfumed for his own funeral. The goldsmith was a man of principle, in life as in death, and it is his principles that concern us here.

The principle that informed his last act, in the eyes of posterity and perhaps his own, was the duty of commanding right and forbidding

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7 A variant tradition has him originally from Iṣbahān (Abū l-Shaykh (d. 369/979), Taḥqīq al-muḥaddithīn bi-Iṣbahān, ed. ‘A. al-Balūshī, Beirut 1987–92, 1:449.2, whence Abū Nuʿaym, Diwān akhībār Iṣbahān, 1:171.24, 172.3, whence in turn Mīzīrī, Taḥdīthī, 2:224.8). Van Ess, who notes two of these references in a footnote (Theologie, 2:549 n. 15), states in the text that the goldsmith came from Kūfah, citing a Kūfan Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn, a client of the family of the Companion Samura ibn Jundab (d. 59/679), mentioned in an isnād quoted by Fasawī (Maʿrifat, 3:237.1). This latter is, however, a Kūfan tailor (see, for example, Bukhārī, Kāfīr, 1:1:325f. no. 1018), and there is no reason to identify him with our Marwāzī goldsmith (ibid., no. 1016).

8 Cf. his name and kūnāya: Abū ʿIṣḥāq Ibrāhīm. Khalīfa ibn Khayyat (d. 240/854f.), however, has the kūnāya Abū l-Munaẓīl (Tabaqāt, ed. S. Zakkar, Beirut 1993, 596 no. 3,120).

9 Elsewhere we learn that his father was a slave (Samāʿī, Ansāb, 8:266.13), as the name Maymūn suggests.


11 Samāʿī tells us that he modelled his life on that of the Successors he had met (Ansāb, 8:266.9).

12 Ibid., 266.10; cf. al-Khaṭṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), Mīṣāb anbāl am-jamʿ wa-l-tafrīq, Hyderabad 1959–60, 1:575.11, and Ibn Ḥajar, Taḥdīthī, 1:173.5.

13 Jāṣṣāṣ, ʿAḥlām, 2:33.8; Ibn Abī l-Wafāʾ, Jawāhir, 1:49.16. Such conduct on the part of a guest was not approved by the Ḥanafī jurists unless there was at least specific reason for doubt (see Shaybānī (d. 189/805), Azhārī, ed. M. Tēgh Bāhādūr, Lucknow n.d., 155.4 (bāb al-daʿwa), mentioning the concurrence of Abū Hanīfa). It is not clear whether the questions related to the provenance of the food itself or to that of the money that paid for it.

14 Ibn Saʿīd, Taḥqīq, 7:2:103.13 (taḥṣannāta . . . wa-takaffūna). In this account his body is thrown into a well.
wrong.\textsuperscript{15} The goldsmith was known as a devotee of commanding right,\textsuperscript{16} and it was one of the topics he had brought up in his discussions with Abū Ḥanīfah.\textsuperscript{17} More specifically, we can see him in death as having lived up to a Prophetic tradition which states: ‘The finest form of holy war (jihād) is speaking out (kalimat ḫaqāṣ) in the presence of an unjust ruler (sultān ḫāʾir), and getting killed for it (yuqtal ʿalayhā).’ This tradition is attested in a variety of forms, usually without the final reference to the death of the speaker, in the canonical and other collections.\textsuperscript{18} But we also find it transmitted from several Companions with a variety of Kūfī and Basrī inādā. For entries on the tradition (without inādā) in post-classical guides to the budūth collections, see Majd al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArīf (d. 606/1210), Jāmīʾ ʿal-awṣāl, ed. ‘A. al-ʿArāʾīʾ, Cairo 1969–73, 1:333 nos. 116f.; Haythamī (d. 807/1405), Tāfsīr al-Mutāʾālī, ed. M. B. Zaghluṭūl, Beirut 1990, 6:93 nos. 7,510–12, 5,514, 3:10. In none of these cases does the tradition include the final reference to the death of the speaker (a fact pointed out to me with regard to the classical collections by Keith Lewinstein). However, such a version appears in a Syrian tradition found in the Musnad al-Bazzār (d. 292/904f.; al-Bayr al-zakkābīr al-muʿṣaf bi-Musnad al-Bazzār, ed. M. Zayn Allāh, Medina and Beirut 1988–, 4:110.3 no. 1285; cf. Ghaizzālī (d. 505/1111), Ṭayyār ʿulūm al-dīn, Beirut n.d., 2:284f., 284f. Moreover, the Muʿtazilī exegete Rummānī (d. 384/994) in his commentary to Q3:21 seems to have added a version transmitted by Ḥasan (sc. al-Baṣrī) which included this ending (see Abū Ḥanūf al-Ṭāṣārīf (d. 460/1067), al-Tāṣārīf fī āṯār al-ʿQurʾān, Nāṣif 1957–63, 2:422.17, and Tābrīzī, Majmaʿa, 1:423.32 (both to Q3:21)), and the same form of the tradition appears in the Koran commentary of the Muʿtazilī al-Ḥākim al-Jashūmī (d. 494/1101) (see the quotation in ‘A. Zaytūn, al-Ḥākim al-Jashūmī wa-manḥūdūn fī āṯār al-ʿQurʾān, n.p. n.d., 195.3). The budūth is not a Shīʿī one, although there is an Imāmī tradition in which it is quoted to Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), who seeks to tone...
mitted by our goldsmith – complete with the reference to the speaker’s death – from Abū Ḥanīfa. A variant version likewise transmitted to the goldsmith by Abū Ḥanīfa makes explicit the link between this form of holy war and the principle of forbidding wrong, and one source relates this to his death.

As mentioned, the goldsmith had discussed this duty with Abū Ḥanīfa. They had agreed that it was a divinely imposed duty (farīd a min Allaḥ). The goldsmith then gave to this theoretical discussion an alarmingly practical twist: he proposed then and there that in pursuance of this duty he should give his allegiance (bay‘a) to Abū Ḥanīfa – in other words, that they should embark on a rebellion. The latter, as might be expected, would have nothing to do with this proposal. He did not deny that the goldsmith had called upon him to carry out a duty he owed to God (hāqq min hāquq Allaḥ). But he counselled prudence. One man acting on his own would merely get himself killed, and achieve nothing for others; the right leader, with a sufficient following of good men, might be able to achieve something. During subsequent visits, the goldsmith kept returning to this question, and Abū Ḥanīfa would repeat his view that this duty (unlike others) was not one that a man could undertake alone. Anyone who did so would be throwing his own blood away and asking to be killed. Indeed, it

down its implications (Kulaynī (d. 329/941), Kāfī, ed. ’A. A. al-Ghaffārī, Tehran 1375–7, 5:60.7 no. 16; Tūsī (d. 460/1067), Tadbīr al-akhbār, ed. H. M. al-Kharsān, Najaf 1958–62, 6:178.6 no. 9); cf. also al-Hurr al-Aṣāmilī (d. 1104/1693), Wasa‘il al-Shāhī, ed. A. al-Rabbānī and M. al-Rāzī, Tehran 1376–89, 6:1:406.8 no. 9. It is, however, known to the Ibaḍīs (Rābi‘ ibn Ḥābīb (d. 170/786f?) (attrib.), al-Jāmi‘ al-sāghir, n.p. n.d., 2:17 no. 455). The link between the tradition and al-amr bi-l-ma‘ruf is made explicit by the commentators to Suyūtī’s al-Jāmi‘ (see Munāwī (d. 1031/1622), Tāyir, Būlāq 1286, 1:182.6; ‘Aṭṭī (d. 1070/1659f.), al-Sīraj al-munir, Cairo 1357, 1:260.20).

19 Samā‘ī, Anābī, 8:267.1, with a typically Ḥanāfī idiosyncrasy reservations about Abū Ḥanīfa’s food, and the way in which they argue on equal terms, we cannot confidently classify the goldsmith as a disciple of Abū Ḥanīfa; this in turn means that we have no compelling ground for classifying him as a Murji’ite (contrast Madelung, ‘The early Murji’īs’, 55, and van Ess, Theologie, 2:548f.).

20 Abū Ḥanīfa relates that he had transmitted to the goldsmith the Prophetic tradition: ‘The lord of the martyrs (sayyid al-shuhadā’) is Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīl and a man who stands up to an unjust ruler, commanding and forbidding, and is killed by him’ (Jasṣās, Abhām, 2:34.17, and similarly 1:70.24; see also Ibn Abī ‘l-Wafā’, Jawāhir, 1:193.3, and Ta‘āmī, Tābāqāt, 1:285.13). (This tradition appears also in Hākim, Mustadrak, 3:195.7; Ḥaftīb, Muḥāṣ, 1:371.20; Haythamī, Zuwar‘ id, 7:266.3, 272.4; and cf. ibid., 272.6.) The Kūfī Ṣā‘īd al-A‘mash (d. 148/765) states that this tradition motivated the goldsmith’s death (Ibn Hibbān, Majrūḥin, 1:157.13, cited in Zaman, Religion and politics, 72 n. 7). There is even a version of this tradition that makes a veiled reference to the goldsmith (Ibn Hamdūn, Tadbīr, 9:280 no. 530; I owe this reference to Patricia Crone).

21 In what follows I cite the text of Jassās, for the most part leaving aside that of Ibn Abī ‘l-Wafā’. 22 Jassās has l‘ṣaww. Ibn Abī ‘l-Wafā’ omits the phrase.
was to be feared that he would become an accomplice in his own death. The effect of his action would be to dishearten others. So one should wait; God is wise, and knows what we do not know. In due course the news of the goldsmith’s death reached Abū Ḣanīfa. He was beside himself with grief, but he was not surprised.

Abū Ḣanīfa, to judge from his relations with the goldsmith, was not a political activist. His cautious attitude to the political implications of forbidding wrong finds expression in rather similar terms in an apparently early Ḥanafi text. This work begins with a doctrinal statement of which forbidding wrong is the second article. Then, at a later point, Abū Ḣanīfa is confronted with the question: ‘How do you regard someone who commands right and forbids wrong, acquires a following on this basis, and rebels against the community (jama‘a)? Do you approve of this?’ He answers that he does not. But why, when God and His Prophet have imposed on us the duty of forbidding wrong? He concedes that this is true enough, but counters that in the event the good such rebels can achieve will be outweighed by the evil they bring about. The objection he makes here is more far-reaching than that with which he deflected the dangerous proposal of the goldsmith: it is not just that setting the world to rights is not a one-man job; it is not even to be undertaken by many. The imputation of such quietism to Abū Ḣanīfa may or may not be historically accurate. There are also widespread reports that he looked with favour on the

23 Abū Ḣanīfa cites Q2:30, where the angels protest at God’s declared intention of placing a khalīfa on earth, on the ground that he will act unjustly, and are silenced with the retort that He knows what they do not know.

24 Abū Ḣanīfa (d. 150/767f.) (attrib.), al-Fiqh al-‘abāṣ, ed. M. Z. al-Kawtharī, in a collection of which the first item is Abū Ḣanīfa (attrib.), al-‘Ālim wa-l-muta‘allīm, Cairo 1368, 44.10.

25 Abū Ḣanīfa, al-Fiqh al-‘abāṣ; 40.10; and see Māturīdī (d. c. 333/944) (attrib.), Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-akbar, Hyderabad 1321, 4.1, and A. J. Wensinck, The Muslim creed, Cambridge 1932, 103f., art. 2. For an elegant analysis of the relationship between these three texts, showing Wensinck’s ‘Fiqh Akbar I’ to be something of a ghost, see J. van Ess, ‘Kritisches zum Fiqh akbar’, Revue des Etudes Islamiques, 54 (1986), especially 331f.; for his commentary on the second article, see ibid., 336f. (For a briefer treatment, see his Theologie, 1:207–11.) A possibility van Ess does not quite consider (‘Kritisches’, 334) is that articles 1–5 may represent an interpolation into the text of al-Fiqh al-‘abāṣ; Abū Ḣanīfa’s distinction between al-fiqh fi l-dīn and al-fiqh fi l-ahkām, of which the former is the more excellent (ibid., 40.14, immediately following the passage), looks suspiciously like the answer to the disciple’s request to be told about ‘the greater fiqh’ (al-fiqh al-‘abāṣ, ibid., 40.8, immediately preceding the passage). The commentary ascribed to Māturīdī mentioned above has now been critically edited by H. Daiber, who argues that its author was Abū ‘l-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983) (see below, ch. 12, note 22, and, for our passage, note 24).

26 Abū Ḣanīfa, al-Fiqh al-‘abāṣ, 44.10.

27 In the same text Abū Ḣanīfa states that, if commanding and forbidding are of no avail, we should fight with the b’na ‘adila against the b’na bāghyra (cf. Q49:9), even if the ruler (imām) is unjust (ibid., 44.16; see also ibid., 48.2, where the term used is sultan). Van
use of the sword\textsuperscript{28} and sympathised with 'Alid rebels,\textsuperscript{29} and an activist disposition would not be out of line with the Murji‘ite background of Ḥanafism.\textsuperscript{30} But even if ʿAbū Ḥanīfa was not a political activist, what is significant for us in the texts under discussion is not what he in practice denies, but what he in principle concedes: he agrees with both the goldsmith and his questioner in the early Ḥanafi text that forbidding wrong is a divinely imposed obligation, and one whose political implications cannot be categorically denied. The goldsmith, for all that he is mistaken, retains the moral high ground.

What we see here is the presence, within the mainstream of Islamic thought, of a strikingly – not to say inconveniently – radical value: the principle that an executive power of the law of God is vested in each and every Muslim. Under this conception the individual believer as such has not only the right, but also the duty, to issue orders pursuant to God's law, and to do what he can to see that they are obeyed. What is more, he may be issuing

\textsuperscript{28} 'Abdallāh ibn ʿAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 290/903), Ṣunna, ed. M. S. S. al-Ḳaṭṭānı, Dammām 1986, 181f. no. 233, 182 no. 234, 207 no. 325, 213 no. 348, 218 no. 368, 222 no. 382 (and cf. 217 no. 363); Fasawī, Māʾrīfā, 2:788.13; ʿAbū Zaʿaẓa ʿal-Dumashqī (d. 281/894), Ṭaʾrīkh, ed. S. N. al-Quwārī, Damascus n.d., 506 no. 1331; Jassās, Ḏabbām, 1:70.19 (I owe this reference to Patricia Crone); ʿAbū Tammām (fl. first half of the fourth/tenth century), Shajara, apud W. Madelung and P. E. Walker, An Ismaili heresiography, Leiden 1998, 85.3 – 82, and cf. 85.19 – 83 on the followers of ʿAbū Ḥanīfa (this material is likely to derive from the heresiography of ʿAbū ʾl-Ḳāsim al-Balkhī (d. 319/931), see 10–12 of Walker's introduction; these and other passages of ʿAbū Tammām's work were drawn to my attention by Patricia Crone); Khatīb, Ṭaʾrīkh Baghdād, 13:384.6, 384.11, 384.17, 384.20, 385.19, 386.1, 386.6. In this last tradition, as in ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAḥmad's second, ʿAbū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) dissociates himself from his teacher's attitude; compare the half-dozen quietist traditions he cites in his treatise on fiscal law (Kharṣ, Cairo 1352, 9f.), including that which enjoins obedience even to a maimed Abyssinian slave if he is set in authority (ibid., 9.12).


\textsuperscript{30} See M. Cook, Early Muslim dogma: a source-critical study, Cambridge 1981, ch. 6, and cf. my review of the first volume of van Ess's Théologie in Bibliotheca Orientalis, 50 (1993), col. 271, to 174. For a rather different view of the politics of the early Murji‘a, see Madelung, 'The early Murji‘a', 32 (but cf. his position in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition, Leiden and London 1960– (hereafter *EI*), art. 'Murdji‘a', 606a). The question has also been discussed by Athamina with considerable erudition (see his 'The early Murji‘a', 115–30); however, he does not take into consideration the testimony of the Sīrat ʿAllūm ibn Ḏahirwān, and his evidence does not seem to support his conclusion that there existed a quietist stream among the early Murji‘ītes alongside an activist one (ibid., 129f.). See also below, ch. 12, note 5.
these orders to people who conspicuously outrank him in the prevailing hierarchy of social and political power. Only Abū Ḥanīfa’s prudence stood between this value and the goldsmith’s proposal for political revolution, and in the absence of prudence, the execution of the duty could easily end, as it did for the goldsmith, in a martyr’s death. Small wonder that Abū Ḥanīfa should have squirmed when his interlocutors sought to draw out the implications of the value.

There were others, however, who were less willing to concede a martyr’s crown to the likes of the goldsmith. Zubayr ibn Bakkār (d. 256/870) preserves a remarkable account of a confrontation between the caliph al-Ma’mūn (r. 198–218/813–33) and an unnamed zealot. The caliph was on one of his campaigns against the infidel, presumably in Anatolia, and was walking alone with one of his generals. A man appeared, shrouded and perfumed, and made for al-Ma’mūn. He refused to greet the caliph, charging that he had corrupted the army (ghūzāt) in three ways. First, he was allowing the sale of wine in the camp. Second, he was responsible for the visible presence there of slave-girls in litters (‘ammārīyāt) with their hair uncovered. Third, he had banned forbidding wrong. To this last charge al-Ma’mūn responded immediately that his ban was directed only at those who turned commanding right into wrongdoing; by contrast, he positively encouraged those who knew what they were doing (alladhī ya’mur bi’l-ma’ruf bi’l-ma’rifā) to undertake it. In due course al-Ma’mūn went over the other charges levelled at him by the zealot. The alleged wine turned out to be nothing of the kind, prompting the caliph to observe that forbidding the likes of this man to command right was an act of piety. The exposure of the slave-girls was intended to prevent the enemy’s spies from thinking that the Muslims had anything so precious as their daughters and sisters with them. Thus in attempting to command right, the man had himself committed a wrong.

The caliph then went onto the attack. What, he asked the man, would he do if he came upon a young couple talking amorously with each other here in this mountain pass?

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32 The presence of ‘Ujayf ibn ‘Anbasa makes the Anatolian campaign of 215/830 a plausible setting for the story (see Tābārī, Ta’rīkh, series III, 1103.12).
33 For mutakhabbīt mutakaffīn read mutulonnīj mutakaffīn, as in Ibn ‘Asākir’s parallel (and cf. above, note 14).
34 Zubayr, Akhbar, 52.15.
36 Ibid., 55.9.
THE ZEALOT: I would ask them who they were.

THE CALIPH: You’d ask the man, and he’d tell you she was his wife. And you’d ask the woman, and she’d say he was her husband. So what would you do with them?

THE ZEALOT: I’d separate them and imprison them.

THE CALIPH: Till when?

THE ZEALOT: Till I’d asked about them.

THE CALIPH: And who would you ask?

THE ZEALOT: [First] I’d ask them where they were from.

THE CALIPH: Fine. You’ve asked the man where he’s from, and he says he’s from Asfījāb. The woman too says she’s from Asfījāb – that he’s her cousin, they got married and came here. Well, are you going to keep them in prison on the basis of your vile suspicion and false imaginings until your messenger comes back from Asfījāb? Say the messenger dies, or they die before he gets back?

THE ZEALOT: I would ask here in your camp.

THE CALIPH: What if you could only find one or two people from Asfījāb in my camp, and they told you they didn’t know them? Is that what you’ve put on your shroud for?

The caliph concluded that he must have to do with a man who had deluded himself by misinterpreting the tradition according to which the finest form of holy war is to speak out in the presence of an unjust ruler. In fact, he observed, it was his antagonist who was guilty of injustice. In a final gesture of contempt, he declined to flog the zealot, and contented himself with having his general rip up his pretentious shroud. The caliph’s tone throughout the narrative is one of controlled fury and icy contempt: it is he, and not the would-be martyr, who occupies the moral high ground.

That the political implications of forbidding wrong would give rise to controversy is exactly what we would expect. And yet the strategy adopted by al-Ma’mūn is not to expose the zealot as a subversive. Rather, his charge is that the man has made the duty into a vehicle of ignorance and prejudice. The effect is enhanced when the caliph goes onto the attack. By the answers he gives to the hypothetical questions put to him by al-Ma’mūn, the zealot reveals himself not as a heroic enemy of tyrants, but rather as a blundering intruder into the private affairs of ordinary Muslims. With men like him around, no happily married couple can go for a stroll in a mountain pass without exposing themselves to harassment on the part of boorish zealots.

The contrasting moral fates of the goldsmith of Marw and the nameless zealot can help us mark out the territory within which the doctrine of the

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37 Asfījāb was located far away on the frontiers of Transoxania.
38 Ibid., 56.12. For the tradition, see above, note 18.
duty must operate. At one edge of this territory, a thin line separates forbidding wrong from culpable subversion. At the other edge, the frontier between forbidding wrong and the invasion of privacy is no thicker. Away from these tense borders we shall encounter few stories as dramatic as those of the goldsmith and the zealot, and the bulk of this book will be taken up with the description and analysis of scholastic arguments and distinctions. But subversion and intrusion are themes that will often recur in the course of this study. Though not quite the Scylla and Charybdis of forbidding wrong, they represent significant ways in which the virtuous performance of the duty can degenerate into vice, and they are accordingly major foci of the scholastic thought we shall be examining.

As we shall see, scholasticism comes into its own within the framework of the sects and schools of classical Islam; it is here that systematic doctrines of the duty are eventually to be found. However, many of the ideas elaborated in this scholastic literature appear already in earlier contexts. The following chapters will accordingly consider, in turn, the Koran and its exegesis, traditions from the Prophet and his Companions, and biographical literature about early Muslims.
CHAPTER 2

KORAN AND KORANIC EXEGESIS

1. THE KORAN WITHOUT THE EXEGETES

In the course of a call for unity among the believers, God addresses them as follows: ‘Let there be one community of you (wa-l-takun minkum ummatun), calling to good, and commanding right and forbidding wrong (wa-yâ‘urūnâ bi’t-ma‘rūf wa-yanhawna ‘âni ’l-munkar); those are the prosperers’ (Q3:104).1 This conjunction of ‘commanding right’ and ‘forbidding wrong’ is found in seven further Koranic verses (Q3:110, Q3:114, Q7:157, Q9:71, Q9:112, Q22:41, Q31:17);2 the two phrases scarcely appear in isolation from each other.3 It is clear, then, that the phrase ‘commanding right and forbidding wrong’ is firmly rooted in Koranic diction. But what, on the basis of the Koranic material, can we say about the actual character of the duty? Who performs it, who is its target, and what is it about?

It is reasonably clear who performs it in Q3:104. The context of the verse is an appeal for the unity of the community of believers, with contrasting reference to earlier communities;4 the believers, according to this verse, are to be (or at least include) a community (umma) which commands right and forbids wrong. Some of the other passages referring to the duty invite

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1 All Koranic quotations follow the Egyptian text; my translations are based on those of Arberry, but frequently depart from them (A. J. Arberry, The Koran interpreted, London 1964). Throughout, I use ‘right’ to translate ma‘ruf and ‘wrong’ to translate munkar. For a discussion of some of the questions addressed in this chapter, see A. A. Roest Crollius, ‘Mission and morality’, Studia Missionalia, 27 (1978), 258-73 (drawn to my attention by Noha Bakr).

2 We also find in Q9:67 the transposition ‘commanding wrong’ and ‘forbidding right’; the reference is to the hypocrites (munāfīqûn), in contrast to the believers of Q9:71.

3 A possible reference to ‘commanding right’ is found in Q4:114: man amara bi-yadqatin aw ma’rūfīn aw sīlabhin bayna ’l-nās. Here Arberry translates ma’ruf as ‘honour’, which is his standard rendering of the term. There are two references to ‘forbidding indecency (al-fahshâ)’ and wrong’ (Q16:90, Q29:45; and cf. Q24:21). Q5:79 (kânu la yatanhawna ’an munkarin fa’alabn) will be discussed below, notes 11f.

4 Q3:105, and cf. Q3:100.
a similar interpretation (Q3:110, Q3:114, Q9:71); in other words, the obligation seems here to be one discharged by the collectivity of the believers.5 There are, however, two verses (Q9:112 and Q22:41) where the context suggests that those who perform the duty are the believers who engage in holy war (and therefore not all believers?). The first is syntactically problematic; but the believers have been mentioned in the previous verse for their commitment to holy war.6 The second verse seems to pick up an earlier reference to ‘those who fight because they were wronged’ (Q22:39).7 There are also two verses in which the duty appears as one performed by individuals: in Q7:157 it is the gentle prophet (al-rasūl al-nābi al-ummī) who executes it, and in Q31:17 Luqmān tells his son to perform it.

Who is the target of the duty? The only verse that specifies this is Q7:157, where the gentle prophet commands and forbids those who follow him. In no case does the duty appear as something done to an individual, or to particular individuals. In general we are left in the dark.

What is the duty about? In none of the verses we have considered is there any further indication as to what concrete activities are subsumed under the rubric of commanding right and forbidding wrong. We might suspect from this that we have to do with a general duty of ethical affirmation to the community, or to the world at large, but this is by no means clear.

5 In Q3:110, God tells the believers that they, as opposed to the people of the Book, were (kuntum) the ‘best community’ that has come forth, commanding right and forbidding wrong; while in Q3:114, He concedes that among the people of the Book there exists an ‘upstanding community’ which commands right and forbids wrong. Whereas in Q9:67 the hypocrites ‘are as one another’, commanding wrong and forbidding right, in Q9:71 the believers ‘are friends one of the other’, commanding right and forbidding wrong. In Q22:41, the believers are those who, if established in the land, will command right and forbid wrong.

6 The verse speaks, in a string of present participles in the nominative case, of ‘those who repent, those who serve, those who pray, . . . those who command right and forbid wrong (al-‘amirun bi t-ta‘raqi‘ ma‘l-nāhib num al-munkaari‘), those who keep God’s bounds’. There is no obvious predicate, so that it is natural to see the participles as in apposition to a previously mentioned subject; and the previous verse appropriately offers ‘the believers’ – but in the genitive case (‘God has bought from the believers (al-mu‘minun) their selves and their possessions against the gift of Paradise; they fight in the way of God; they kill, and are killed’ (Q9:111)). The syntactic problem is resolved in a textual variant in which the participles appear in the genitive. This variant is quoted from Ibn Mas‘ūd (d. 32/652f.), Ubayy ibn Ka‘b (d. 22/642f.), and A‘mash (d. 148/765) (see A. Jeffery, Materials for the history of the text of the Qur’an, Leiden 1937, 45, 134, 319; the attribution to Ibn Mas‘ūd appears already in Farrā‘ (d. 207/822f.), Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān, ed. A. Y. Najjār and M. ‘A. al-Najjār, Cairo 1980–, 1:453.8). Imāmī sources also ascribe this variant to Muhammad al-Bāṣīr (d. c. 118/736) and Ja‘far al-Sādiq (d. 148/765) (Tabrīsī, Mas‘ūd, ed. A. Y. Najjār, and see Ayyāshī (early fourth/tenth century), Taṣrif, Qumm n.d., 2:112f. no. 140).

7 Or, just possibly, ‘those who believe’ in Q22:38. What binds the passage together syntactically is the series of relative pronouns in verses 38, 39, 40 and 41.
We can seek to shed a little more light on the Koranic conception of commanding right and forbidding wrong by looking at some related material from the Koran.

First, the term ‘right’ (ma‘ruf) often appears elsewhere in the Koran, usually but not always in legal contexts (Q2:178, 180, 228, 229, etc.). There is, however, no indication that it is itself a technical, or even a legal term. Rather, it seems to refer to performing a legal or other action in a decent and honourable fashion; this finds some confirmation in the synonymy with ‘kindliness’ (ihsan) which is suggested by certain verses (Q2:178, 229 and cf. 236). Just what constitutes such conduct is never spelled out. Thus it seems that we have to do with the kind of ethical term that passes the buck to specific standards of behaviour already known and established.

Secondly, there are locutions elsewhere in the Koran of the form ‘commanding X’ and ‘forbidding Y’, where X and Y are similarly broad-spectrum ethical terms. These parallels reinforce the impression that the Koranic conception of forbidding wrong is a vague and general one. Thirdly, it is worth noting the kinds of themes that appear in conjunction with commanding right: performing prayer (Q9:71, Q9:112, Q22:41, Q31:17); paying alms (Q9:71, Q22:41); believing in God (Q3:110, Q3:114), obeying Him and His Prophet (Q9:71), keeping His bounds (Q9:112), reciting His signs (Q3:113); calling to good (Q3:104), vying with each other in good works (Q3:114); enduring what befalls one (Q31:17). Here again, there is nothing to narrow the concept of the duty.

Finally, there are two passages that are worth particular attention.

One is Q5:79. Having stated that those of the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by David and Jesus for their sins, God continues: kānu lā yatanāhawna ‘an munkarīn fa‘alihānu. This is the only Koranic occurrence of the verb tanāha. If we care to interpret it etymologically in

8 Normally it appears as a substantive, occasionally as an adjective modifying qaww (e.g. Q2:235, 263; Q4:5, 8) or ta‘a (Q24:53). The term munkar is rarer (Q22:72, Q29:29, Q58:2). For an introduction to both terms, see T. Izutsu, Ethico-religious concepts in the Qur‘ān, Montreal 1966, 213–17.

9 Thus X may be bīr (Q2:44), qis (Q3:21, and cf. Q7:29), ‘urf (Q7:199), ‘adl (Q16:76), ‘adl and ihsān (Q16:90), tawfīq (Q96:12) or, with reversal, ihsān (Q12:53) and falsūfi (Q24:21); Y may be su‘ (Q7:165), tālāq (Q11:116), falsūfi (Q29:45), falsūfi and baqī (Q16:90), or hawā (Q79:40). The only one of these verbs in which ‘commanding X’ and ‘forbidding Y’ are conjoined is Q16:90. The only cases where the verbs have an object are Q2:44 (al-nās) and Q79:40 (al-nās).

10 I leave aside the rather different themes that appear in Q7:157 (where it is the Prophet who commands right) and Q9:67 (where the hypocrites command wrong).
a reciprocal sense, the meaning might be that the Children of Israel ‘forbade not one another any wrong that they committed’; in this case we would have here a Koranic basis for the conception of forbidding wrong as something that individual believers do to each other. But there seems to be no independent attestation of such a sense of the verb. In the Arabic of ordinary mortals, *tanāhā* is usually synonymous with *intahā*, itself a common Koranic verb with the sense of ‘refrain’ or ‘desist’ (as in Q2:275 and Q8:38). In this case the sense would merely be ‘they did not desist from any wrong that they committed’; and in fact this understanding of the verse is explicit in a variant reading with *yantahūna* for *yatanaḥawna*. If we either read *yantahūna*, or understand *yatanaḥawna* in the same sense, then the verse is of no further interest to us.

The other passage is Q7:163–6. These verses tell a story of the divine punishment of the people of an (Israelite) town by the sea who fished on the Sabbath. We have to understand from the context that a part of this community had reproved the Sabbath-breakers; another part (*ummatun*) then asked the reprovers why they bothered to admonish people whom God was going to punish anyway. In due course God saved those who forbade evil, and punished those who acted wrongly. Here again, we have a conception of a duty of forbidding evil as one performed by members of a community towards each other; and here, for the first time, we have a concrete example of the performance of such a duty.

Yet neither case is unambiguously connected with our duty of ‘commanding right and forbidding wrong’. Neither verse makes any reference

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11 Wensinck’s concordance of hadith literature contains six entries for the sixth form of the root *nhy* (A. J. Wensinck et al., *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, Leiden 1936–88, 7:13b.51); none of these would bear a sense of ‘forbid one another’. The concordance omits a well-known Prophetic tradition in which *tanāhaw* clearly does mean ‘forbid one another’; but in this case the context makes it clear that the diction is Koranic (see below, note 68, and ch. 3, note 40). See also Ibn Abi ‘l-Dunyā (d. 281/894), *al-Amr bi ‘l-ma’ruf wa ‘l-nahy an al-munkar*, ed. S. ‘A. al-Shalahī, Medina 1997, 61 no. 18, for a tradition in which *tanahaw* is clearly used in the sense of ‘refrain from’ (and cf. the use of the verb *intahah* in the parallels in Ḥajjām, *Abā‘īn*, 2:33.27, and Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab*, 6:89 no. 7,570). I am grateful to Avraham Hakim for sending me a copy of Ibn Abi ‘l-Dunyā’s *Amr*. The Concordance of Pre-Islamic and Umayyad Poetry of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem contains some dozens of entries for the sixth form of the root; but here again, I can find no example of *tanahah* used in a sense of ‘forbid one another’. I am much indebted to Etan Kohlberg for transcribing these entries for me, and to Albert Arazi and Andras Hamori for further assistance.

12 This reading is ascribed to Ibn Mas‘ūd (Jeffery, *Materialis*, 40), to Ubayy ibn Ka‘b (ibid., 129), and to Zayd ibn ‘Ali (d. 122/740) (A. Jeffery, ‘The Qur`ān readings of Zaid b. ‘Ali’, *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 16 (1957), 258).

13 For the sake of completeness it should be added that Q65:6 offers an eighth form of *amara* with *ma‘raf*: wa‘tamārū baynakum bi-ma‘ra‘if. The context is reasonable conduct in divorce where the ex-wife suckles the ex-husband’s child. Arberry’s plausible translation is ‘and consult together honourably’; there is nothing here to suggest *al-amr bi ‘l-ma‘raf*.
to ‘commanding right’. Whether Q5:79 refers to ‘forbidding wrong’ turns on the sense of the verb *tanāḥā* (not to mention the variant reading); and Q7:165 speaks of ‘forbidding evil’ (*ṣū*) rather than ‘forbidding wrong’ (*munkar*). The precision that these verses might bring to our conception of the duty is thus qualified by the uncertainty as to whether they actually refer to it at all. In short, scripture on its own has relatively little to tell us about the duty of forbidding wrong – apart, that is, from its name.

2. KORANIC EXEGESIS

What does Koranic exegesis have to tell us about the meaning of these verses? As will appear in the course of this book, the exegetes are often more concerned to set out the school doctrines on forbidding wrong to which they happen to subscribe than they are to elucidate what is there in scripture. Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī (d. 745/1344) in his commentary to Q3:104 is a refreshing exception to this trend: he observes that the verse says nothing about the conditions of obligation and other such matters, and refers the reader to the appropriate literature on these questions.14 I shall take my cue from him, and defer consideration of all such material – including the strongly sectarian variety of Imāmī exegesis – to later chapters. Much exegesis, again, is concerned with points of difficulty which, for all that they arise from the relevant Koranic verses, have little or no bearing on forbidding wrong; such material will not be considered at all. What answers, then, do the exegetes provide to the questions raised by our examination of the Koranic data in the previous section?

With regard to the question who performs the duty, the focus of exegetical attention is an ambiguity in Q3:104: does the ‘of’ (*min*) in ‘of you’ impose the duty on all believers, or only on some of them?15 Some exegetes held the first view: as the philologist Zajjāj (d. 311/923) put it, ‘Let there be one community of you’ meant ‘Let all of you (*kullukum*) be a community’.16 This,
however, was a minority view. The more common view was that God was requiring only that there be a group (a firqa, as Zajjāj put it) among the believers performing the duty. This looks like a major disagreement, and one arising directly out of the understanding of the verse: the second view would seem to lay a foundation for a partition of the community which would restrict the duty to a specially qualified elite. There are in fact three types of restriction which come into play in these arguments. First, supporters of the duty to a specially qualified elite. There are in fact three types of people are incapable of performing the duty – such as women and invalids. Secondly, they are occasionally quoted as pointing out that some one member of the community discharges it, others are thereby dispensed from it. Thirdly, they stress that not all are qualified to perform it. In particular, it

17 It was nevertheless adopted by the celebrated Imām scholar Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī (Ṭibyān, 2:548.5, setting out the two views, and ibid., 549.9, making clear his adoption of the minority view; see further below, ch. 11, notes 156–61). Ṭūsī also mentions the Mu’tazilite Jubbâ’ī (presumably Abū ‘Alī, d. 303/915f.) as a proponent of this view (ibid., 548.14, but see below, ch. 9, note 33). To these we can add Māturīdī (d. c. 333/944), Wāḥiḍī (d. 468/1076), and Baghawī (d. 516/1122) (Māturīdī, Tawīlāt al-Qurṭān, ms. British Library, Or. 9,432, f. 44b.15 (where both views are stated but only one is supported with proof-texts); Wāḥiḍī, al-Wasīf fi taṣfīr al-kisāb al-‘azīz, ed. S. ’A. Dāwūdī, Damascus and Beirut 1995, 226 to Q3:104; Wāḥiḍī, Taṣfīr al-basīt, ms. Istanbul, Nuru Osmanîye 240, I, f. 4.232.2 (I owe all references to this manuscript to the kindness of Michael Bonner) and cf. Wāḥiḍī, al-Wasīf fi taṣfīr al-Qurṭān al-maḍjīd, ed. ’A. ’Abd al-Mawjūd et al., Beirut 1994, 1:474.16); Baghawī, Mā‘ūn al-tanzil, ed. M. ’A. al-Namīr et al., Ryūd 1993, 2:84.22).

18 Zamakhšārī, Kashshāf, 1:396.8 (adding a brief mention of the alternative view at 397.1); Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273), al-jāmī‘ li-ṭabī‘īn al-Qurṭān, Cairo 1967, 4:165.11; Abī Hayyān, Bahr, 3:20.6; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), Taṣfīr, Beirut 1966, 2:86.17; Muḥṣin al-Fayḍ (d. 1091/1680), Taṣfīr al-ṣajh, Mashhad 1982, 1:338.21. Ṭabarī’s position is unclear, unless we are to infer his acceptance of the majority view from his glossing of umma as jam`a‘a (Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), Taṣfīr, ed. M. M. and A. M. Shāhīr, Cairo n.d., 7:90.4; cf. Abī Hayyān, Bahr, 3:20.6, where Ṭabarī is cited as a proponent of this view); indeed his commentary to Q3:104 is so brief as to suggest that the text as we have it may be defective. Muṣṭūṭ Ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767f.) does no more than gloss umma as ‘a‘ib (Taṣfīr, ed. ’A. M. Shīhāta, Cairo 1979–89, 1:293.18). Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī offers an elaborate account of the competing views (Taṣfīr, 8:177.14), but concludes only that God knows best (ibid., 178.12). Baydāwī merely states the alternatives (Anwār, 2:35.7).

19 Zamakhšārī, Kashshāf, 1:396.8; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Taṣfīr, 8:178.10; Qurṭubī, Jāmī‘, 4:165.14; Baydāwī, Anwār, 2:35.7; Abī Hayyān, Bahr, 3:20.13; and for Rummānī, see below, ch. 9, note 38. Cf. also the reporting of this view in Wāḥiḍī, Basīt, I, f. 432.8a, Ṭūsī, Ṭibyān, 2:548.7, and Ṭabarī, Majma‘, 1:483.23.

requires (or may in some instances require) knowledge that not everyone posses-ses; an ignorant performer may make all sorts of mistakes. From here it is but a short step to speaking of the duty as one for scholars to perform, or even to seeing it as something like a prerogative of the scholarly estate. This last view suggests a strongly elitist construction of the duty, but it is a

21 Zamakhsharı, Kastubaf, 1:396.9; Tabristi, Jawami', 1:230.20 (a passage not found in his Majma' and clearly borrowed from the Kashshaf, cf. Jawami', 1:12.1); Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Tajrif, 8:178.3; Baydawi, Anwar, 2:35.8; Abi Hasyan, Bafr, 3:20.7; also Abi ‘l-Layth al-Samarqandi (d. 373/983), Tajrif, ed. ‘A. M. Mu’awwad et al., Beirut 1993, 1:289.19. A rather similar argument is advanced by Zajjaj in presenting this side of the question: since the verse speaks of those who ‘call to good’ (yad’un ilâ l-bhayr), it refers to propagandists for the faith (al-du’ut ilâ l-imân), who need to be learned (‘ulamâ) in that which they are propagating, as not everyone is (Ma’ani, 1:463.3). But note that exegetes who advance this argument can still speak of the obligation as universal (see Baydawî, Anwar, 2:35.10; Zamakhsharı, Kadshaf, 1:396.8, noting that anyone is qualified to rebuke someone who fails to pray).

22 Such language is used by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi in the passage just cited (which does not necessarily represent his own view): the obligation would be restricted to the scholars (mukhtasris bi‘l-‘ulamâ) (Tajrif, 8:178.3). Similarly Qurṭubî says that those who command right must be scholars (‘ulamâ) (Jami', 4:165.12). Ibn Quṭayba (d. 276/889) glosses umma in Q3:104 as ‘the community of scholars’ (jamâ‘a at-al-‘ulamâ) (Ta’wil musâbil al-Qur’ån, ed. A. Saq, Cairo 1954, 345.13). The Imamî Miqdad al-Suyu’ri (d. 826/1423f.), the scholars, and the just ruler (sulta‘n), while those who forbid wrong are the counsellors (ghâ‘ir), the scholars, and the just ruler (sulta‘n, al-Mu‘azzam, 1:355.9; both limit this division of labour to cases of persistent wrong).

23 Thus Ibn ‘Anuya (d. 541/1146) (in setting out one view) and Tha‘alibi (d. 873/1468f.) (without qualification) interpret the verse as a divine command that there should be scholars in the community, and that the rest of the community should follow them, in view of the extensive learning required by the duty (Ibn ‘Anuya, al-Mubarrar al-wajiz, Rabat 1975-, 2:186.18 (I am grateful to Maribel Fierro for supplying me with copies from volumes of this work which were inaccessible to me); Tha‘alibi, al-Jawâhir al-husn, ed. ‘A. al-Talibî, Algiers 1985, 1:354.13; and cf. the view they proceed to develop about the distinctive roles of scholars, rulers and others (Ibn ‘Anuya, Mubarrar, 3:188.4, and Tha‘alibi, Jawâhir, 1:355.9; both limit this division of labour to cases of persistent wrong). A Persian exegete writing in 520/1126 holds similar views on this last point (Maybûdî, Kashf, 2:234.16); and he quotes the view that those who command right are the scholars (‘ulamâ) and counsellors (nasabat-kumandânîn), while those who forbid wrong are the warriors (jibâzûnîn), the scholars, and the just ruler (sulta‘n-i ‘abdî) (ibid., 2:354.4; on this work, see G. Lazard, La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane, Paris 1963, 110, and 119 no. 54). On the roles of scholars, rulers and others, see also below, ch. 6, note 166. But note that even Tha‘alibi does not in the end attempt to confine the duty to scholars (or rulers) (Jawâhir, 1:355.12). For an explicit rejection of the view that the duty is restricted to the scholars by an Ilbâ’i exegete, see Aftâyish (d. 1332/1914), Himayûn al-zâd, ed. ‘A. Shalâbi, Oman 1980-, 4:203.18 (the author’s name is given on the title-page as Muhammed ibn Yusuf . . . al-Mu‘âbbî).
relatively uncommon one. Whatever their understanding of the verse, the commentators at large show little interest in interpreting it in a substantively restrictive sense.

The exegesis of other verses has less to offer on this question. Thus in Q3:110, the exegeses discuss a number of views as to whom God is addressing when He says: ‘You were the best community brought forth.’24 One of these views, ascribed to Dāhḥāk ibn Muzāḥim (d. 105/723f.), is that the addressees are the Companions in their roles as the transmitters (ruwāt) and propagandists (dš‘ūţ) to whom God has enjoined obedience;25 another, ascribed to Qatā‘a ibn Dīţ‘āma (d. 117/735f.), identifies the addressees as those who wage holy war, bringing people to Islam by fighting them.26 On the other hand, prominent exegeses stress that the verse applies to the members of the community at large.27 Yet these differences are never related to the question who should or should not forbid wrong. Moving on to Q9:112, the commentators entertain a variety of ingenious hypotheses with regard to its syntax,28 and tend to the view that ‘those who command right and forbid wrong’ are to be identified with the believers who commit themselves to holy war in the previous verse.29

24 See, for example, Ṭabārī, Ṭašfīr, 7:100.16; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/935f.), Ṭašfīr al-Qur‘an al-ţaţīm, ed. A. ‘A. al-‘Ammārī al-Zahrā‘ī and H. B. Yāsin, Medina 1408, 2:469–74 nos. 1156–71; Tust, Ṭibyā‘īn, 2:557.16; Tabāsī, Majma‘a, 1:486.18; Abī Hayyān, Ṭafh, 3:27.33; Khāzin (d. 741/1341), Lubāb al-ta‘wil, Cairo 1328, 1:288.6.

25 See, for example, Zajjāj, Ma‘āni, 1:466.17; Ṭabārī, Ṭašfīr, 7:106.1; Tust, Ṭibyā‘īn, 2:557.2; Ibn ‘Aţīyā, Muhābarrā, 3:194.15; Baydawī, Anwar, 2:36.15; Abī Hayyān, Ṭafh, 3:28.9; Fakhri al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ṭašfīr, 8:189.13. The view that the tense of the verb has no temporal connotation here is nicely reflected in one translator’s rendering of kuntum as budūd u shudūd u hastūd (Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 557/1162), Ṭašfīr (in Persian), ed. A. Juwaynī, n.p. 1353–4 sh., 1:95.5).

26 Ṭabārī, Ṭašfīr, 7:102 no. 7:613, Khāzin, Luhāb, 1:288.10; Abū ‘l-Fūţīḥī Rāzī (first half of sixteenth century), Rawd al-jawāīn (in Persian), ed. A. A. Ghaffārī, Tehran 1382–7, 3:148.6 (on the author, see the editor’s introduction, esp. 7–10; also Lazard, Languer, 120 no. 57); Abū ‘l-Maḥāsin al-Jurjānī (ninth or tenth/fifteenth or sixteenth century?), Jīlā‘ al-adhībīn (in Persian), n.p. 1378, 2:102.9; and cf. Wāţadī, Bastī, 1, f. 433b.4. (The two Imāmī authors find here an invitation to identify the addressees with the imams.) A similar interpretation of Q3:104 is likewise attributed to Dāhḥāk (Ṭabārī, Ṭašfīr, 7:92 no. 7:597; see also Ibn ‘Aţīyā, Muhābarrā, 3:186.14; Ibn Kathīr, Ṭašfīr, 2:86.14 (with the explanation ‘this means those who wage jihād and the ‘ulāma’); Suyūtī (d. 911/1505), al-Durr al-manṣūrī, Cairo 1314, 2:62.10; and cf. Fakhri al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ṭašfīr, 8:178.13).


28 Zajjāj, Ma‘āni, 1:467.1 (reporting this view); Fakhri al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ṭašfīr, 8:191.1 (quoting the view as that of Zajjāj); Abī Hayyān, Ṭafh, 3:28.7; Ibn Kathīr, Ṭašfīr, 2:89.9. Cf. also Wāţadī, Bastī, 1, f. 433b.5.

29 For a neat presentation of these views, see Ibn al-Sanā‘ī al-Ḥalabī (d. 756/1355), al-Durr al mansūrī, ed. A. M. al-Kharrāṭ, Damascus 1986–7, 6:129.4. Most major commentators mention several of them.

20 See Fārā‘ī, Ma‘āni, 1:453.7; Ṭabārī, Ṭašfīr, 14:500.8; Fakhri al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ṭašfīr, 16:202.8. Maybudī holds the unusual view that the verse refers back to ‘the believers’ of Q9:71 (Kashf, 4:220.8).
they do not consider (and would doubtless have rejected) any suggestion that the duty is restricted to those engaged in holy war. In the case of Q22:41, the exegetes again offer several views as to the identity of the performers: the community at large,\textsuperscript{30} the Companions of the Prophet,\textsuperscript{31} the Muhājirūn,\textsuperscript{32} the Orthodox caliphs,\textsuperscript{33} rulers (\textit{wulāt}).\textsuperscript{34} But again, there is no attempt to restrict the duty on this basis.\textsuperscript{35} It may be noted in passing that the activities of the officially appointed censor of morals and commercial practice (\textit{mubātisib}) are almost universally ignored by the exegetes.\textsuperscript{36}

As to who is the target of the duty, the exegetes have almost as little to tell us as do the verses themselves. Occasionally they supply the vague object ‘people’ (\textit{al-nās}) for the verb ‘command’.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{30} Wāhūdi, \textit{Wasit}, 3:247.8 (citing Ḥasan al-Brāṣī (d. 110/728) and ‘Ikrima (d. 107/725f.);

\textsuperscript{31} Qurtūbī, \textit{Jāmi‘}, 12:73.3, citing ‘Ikrima, Ḥasan al-Brāṣī and Abū ‘l-‘Ayyā (d. 90/708f.). Wāhūdi adds that the conjunction of forbidding wrong with prayer and the alms-tax in this verse shows it to be obligatory.

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.} (citing Qatāda);

\textsuperscript{33} Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī,

\textsuperscript{34} Qurtūbī, \textit{Jāmi‘}, 12:73.5, and Abū Hayyān, \textit{Bahār}, 6:376.11 (both citing Ibn Abī Najīḥ (d. 131/748f.), and adding a saying of Dāhāk’s); Nahhās (d. 338/950), Mu‘āṣir ‘l-Qur’ān al-karīm, ed. M. ‘A. al-Sābūnī, Mecca 1988–, 12:73.5, and Abu‘l-‘Ayyān, \textit{Manhaj Tawḥid}, 7:322.16

\textsuperscript{35} Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, \textit{Tafṣīr}, 23:41.24;

\textsuperscript{36} Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, \textit{Tafṣīr}, 23:41.21; and cf. Tūsī, \textit{Tebān}, 7:322.16

With regard to the question of the scope of the obligation, the most interesting phenomenon in the exegetical literature is an early approach which tends to present the duty as simply one of enjoining belief in God and His Prophet. This approach is first firmly attested in the works of Muqta'il ibn Sulayma'n (d. 150/767f.), especially in one on the meanings (wujud) of Koranic terms. According to this work, ‘commanding right’ in Q3:110, Q9:112 and Q31:17 means enjoining belief in the unity of God (tawhīd), while ‘forbidding wrong’ in these verses means forbidding polytheism (shirk); at the same time, in Q3:114 and Q9:71, ‘commanding right’ refers to following (ittibā') and affirming belief (taṣdiq) in the Prophet, and ‘wrong’ refers to denying (takdīb) him. This analysis is repeated in later works of the same genre. There are also examples of this type of thinking in the mouths of even earlier authorities. There is a sweeping view ascribed to Abū l-ʿĀliya (d. 90/708f.) according to which, in all Koranic references to ‘commanding right’ and ‘forbidding wrong’, the former refers to calling people from polytheism to Islam, and the latter to forbidding the worship

Footnote 37 (cont.)
al-Jurjānī (d. 976/1568f.) in his paraphrase of Q3:110 speaks of the believers commanding and forbidding each other (Tafsīr-i shāhī, ed. W. al-Ishrāqī, Tabrīz 1380, 2:102.6; cf. Muqātil, Kanz, 1:405.15). Q66:6 tells the believers to ‘guard yourselves and your families’ from hellfire; Tūsī remarks that this verse requires that the duty be performed in the first instance towards those closest to us (lit-agrab fa'lab-agrab) (Tabrīz, 10:50.9).

On the rare occasions when we encounter this approach outside exegetical and related literature, it tends to remain tied to the relevant Koranic verses. A case in point is the treatment of Q9:67 and Q9:71 by Waqīdī (d. 207/823) in his chapter on scripture revealed during the Tabūk expedition of the year 9/630 (Muqātil, ed. M. Jones, London 1966, 1067.12, 1068.6). For an exception, see below, ch. 8, note 96. This exegetical trend is perceptively noted by van Ess (Theologie, 2:389).

Muqta'il ibn Sulayma'n (d. 150/767f.), al-Asbab wa-l-nuzūl, ed. 'A. M. Shihāta, Cairo 1975, 118f. no. 13 (cited in van Ess, Theologie, 2:389 n. 23; on the work and the genre in general, see ibid., 524–7). (There is no reference here to Q3:104, Q7:157, Q9:67, or Q22:41.) The exegeses of Q3:114, Q9:71, Q9:112 and Q31:17 also appear in his Tafsīr (1:296.12, 2:181.13, 199.2, 3:435.8 (where for al-sharr read al-shirk)). The exegesis of Q31:17 appears further in Muqta'il's Tafsīr al-khams ma'at 'aya, ed. I. Goldfeld, Shfaram 1980, 278.15 (also cited in van Ess, Theologie, 2:389 n. 23). However, at Q3:110 Muqta'il in his Tafsīr glosses ma'ārif as imān, and muskhar, it seems, as zuhl (Tafsīr, 1:295.5). Turning to the exegeses given in the Tafsīr for verses ignored in the Asbab, Q3:104 is unglossed (Tafsīr, 1:293.18); to Q7:157 we are offered the glosses imān and shirk (Tafsīr, 2:67.9); Q9:67 is glossed similarly to Q3:114 and Q9:71 (ibid., 180.9); and Q22:41 is glossed similarly to Q3:110, Q9:112 and Q31:17 (ibid., 3:130.7). I am grateful to Uri Rubin for giving me access to many of these passages through his copy of the manuscript of Muqta'il's Tafsīr; this was in the days before Shihāta's full publication had become available.