

## Absent yet at All Times Present: Further Thoughts on Secrecy in the Shī'ī Tradition and in Sunnī Mysticism

Ausente pero siempre presente: reflexiones sobre el secreto en la tradición šī'í y en el misticismo sunní

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Este artículo analiza el *ḥadīṭ* que se encuentra tanto en las fuentes šī'ies como sunníes que retrata al creyente ideal como un hombre escondido que elige practicar su religión apartado de los ojos de los otros. Según el autor, esta tradición tiene su origen en las luchas político-religiosas (*fitnas*) del siglo II/VIII, que propiciaron una actitud piadosa de retiro de la sociedad y no participación en tiempos de lucha civil. En las versiones šī'ies del *ḥadīṭ* el elemento de secreto, *taqīyya*, se añade a la descripción del creyente ideal. Estos motivos habrán de desempeñar un papel importante en movimientos místicos como el de *malāmatiyya*. Aunque el esoterismo šī'í y el misticismo sunní incorporaron hadices similares a su elaboración del santo escondido, la tradición šī'í contribuyó particularmente al desarrollo de este tema tanto en términos ético-psicológicos como esotéricos.

*Palabras clave:* *Taqīyya*; secreto; misticismo; esoterismo; *Šī'a*; *Malāmatiyya*; santidad; *walī*; *awliyā'*; el santo oculto; *Fitna*; *Ā'far al-Šādiq*; *Dū-l-Nūn al-Miṣri*.

The article analyzes a tradition (*ḥadīth*) that is found in Sunnī and in Shī'ī sources alike and which portrays the ideal believer as a hidden man who chooses to practice his religion away from the eyes of others. According to the author's analysis, this tradition has its origins in the religious-political conflicts (*fitnas*) of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. These conflicts gave rise to a pietistic attitude of noninvolvement and withdrawal from society in times of civil strife. In Shī'ī versions of the tradition, the element of secrecy and *taqīyya* is added to the description of the ideal believer. These various motifs were to play an important role in Islamic mysticism, particularly in the teachings of movements such as the *malāmatiyya*. The author argues that while both Shī'ī esotericism and Sunnī mysticism incorporated similar, early *ḥadīths* in their discussions of the figure of the hidden saint, the Shī'ī tradition contributed much to the development of this theme in its ethical-psychological and esoteric aspects.

*Key words:* *Taqīyya*; Secrecy; Mysticism; Esotericism; *Shī'a*; *Malāmatiyya*; Sainthood; *Walī*; *Awliyā'*; The Hidden Saint; *Fitna*; *Ja'far al-Šādiq*; *Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣri*.

### Introduction

*Taqīyya* (prudence, the concealment of true beliefs, or dissimulation) plays a double role in the Shī'ī tradition. To begin with, *taqīyya*

serves the Shī'ī believers as a means of self-protection against their Sunnī rivals. Given that the Shī'īs were (and still are) a minority in the Islamic world and that the Shī'ī claims have always posed a religious-political threat to the very foundation of the Sunnī worldview, the Shī'īs were compelled early on in their history to devise a mechanism that would allow them to maintain their faith while living under (often hostile) Sunnī rule. At the same time, *taqīyya* entails an important esoteric aspect: it is designed to safeguard the secrets of the Shī'ī faith and to hide them from the uninitiated, be they Sunnī Muslims or the common Shī'ī believers, who are unable to comprehend the subtle mysteries of their own religion. From this perspective, the Shī'ī faith may be perceived as an esoteric tradition. In fact, it seems that from a relatively early stage in their history, the Shī'īs, or more precisely, Shī'ī *imāms* such as Muḥammad al-Bāqir (died circa 114/732) and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (died 148/765) as well as their close followers viewed their faith in just this way. It comes as no surprise that in many Shī'ī sayings, concealing Shī'ī beliefs and, at times (depending on the circumstances), manifesting non-Shī'ī doctrines are presented as a religious obligation of the utmost importance.<sup>1</sup>

A similar phenomenon is found in Sunnī mysticism. In order to protect himself, the mystic, who is often confronted by fierce opponents – the religious scholars ('*ulamā'*) who firmly adhere to the exoteric dimensions of the Qur'ān and the *sharī'a* (the religious law), the theologians who view the human intellect ('*aql*) and human consideration (*nazar*) as the sole means of understanding religion, and the rulers with whom the former two groups tend to cooperate – is obliged to conceal his mystical experiences and mystical knowledge from the eyes of others. However, this concealment is also meant to guard the divine, mystical secrets from the common Muslims, who are unworthy of them. Secrecy in Sunnī mysticism thus functions both as a self-defense mechanism and as an esoteric device.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Ebstein, "Secrecy in Ismā'īlī Tradition and in the Mystical Thought of Ibn al-'Arabi", pp. 303-329; to the references given there add now De Smet, "L'alphabet secret des Ismaéliens ou la force magique de l'écriture" and Clarke, "The Rise and Decline of *Taqīyya* in Twelver Shī'ism". On the esoteric nature of the early Shī'ī tradition, see mainly Corbin, *En Islam iranien: aspects spirituels et philosophiques*; Amir-Moezzi, *La religion discrète: croyances et pratiques spirituelles dans l'Islam Shī'ite*; Amir-Moezzi, *Le guide divin dans le Shī'isme originel: aux sources de l'ésotérisme en Islam*.

<sup>2</sup> See Ebstein, "Secrecy", pp. 311-312, 329-343.

Elsewhere I have discussed the relation between the Shī'ī-Ismā'īlī concept of *taqiyya* and the notion of secrecy in the writings of the well-known Sunnī mystic Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī (560/1165-638/1240). I have also alluded to the possibility of earlier historical links between Shī'ī esotericism and Sunnī mysticism.<sup>3</sup> More specifically, in various Shī'ī traditions (*ḥadīths*) contained in Ithnā-'Asharī (Twelver) and in Ismā'īlī sources, the ideal Shī'ī believer is portrayed as a hidden saint who worships God piously and assiduously, maintains an ascetic lifestyle, and, above all, conceals the secrets of his faith from the profane eyes of others. The combination of these traits grants the believer mystical abilities and miraculous powers. The figure of the hidden saint that emerges from such Shī'ī traditions is quite reminiscent of the ethical-psychological ideals espoused by various Sunnī mystics and particularly by the *malāmatiyya*, those who follow “the path of blame” (*malāma*). According to the *malāmatiyya*, the mystic should internalize his spirituality and hide his mystical achievements in order to prevent his lower self or ego (*nafs*) from taking pride in them. Consequently, the *malāmatiyya* disapproved of performing religious, ascetic, and mystical activities in public, and some *malāmatīs* even took to openly commit sins so as to attract criticism and condemnation.<sup>4</sup>

In what follows I shall attempt to analyze an early tradition (*ḥadīth*) which is found in Shī'ī and in Sunnī sources alike and which depicts the ideal believer as a hidden saint. The aim of this analysis is twofold: first, to illustrate the way in which both the Shī'ī tradition and Sunnī mysticism incorporated similar, early *ḥadīths* in their discussions of the hidden saint; and second, to emphasize the significant role of the Shī'ī tradition in the development of this theme in Islamic mysticism.

## **Trials and Tribulations**

In a tradition attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad, the latter is reported to have said:

Blessed are the strangers and the hidden ones who if present, are unknown, and if absent, are not sought after. Every grey and dark trial (*fiṭna*) will be removed from

<sup>3</sup> Ebstein, “Secrecy”, pp. 307-312, 329-343.

<sup>4</sup> On the *malāmatiyya* see Sviri, “Ḥakīm Tirmidhī and the *Malāmatī* Movement in Early Sufism”.

them. They are the lamps [that light] the right path; Allāh loves and admires them more than those who are admired [by men].<sup>5</sup>

The term *fitna* (plural: *fitan*) may denote any temptation or affliction whereby one's faith is put to the test by God. However, the specific *fitna* to which this tradition seems to refer is that of discord or civil conflict among the believers. As is well known, such *fitnas* had erupted during the first two centuries of Islamic history; they were often perceived by the members of the nascent Muslim community as signs of the looming end of time, as eschatological trials and tribulations that only the true believers could endure.<sup>6</sup> In a slightly different version of the tradition, it is said that

the most fortunate one during trials is the hidden, God-fearing man: if he appears, he is unknown, and if he is absent, he is not sought after. The most wretched one during [trials] is the loud-voiced [or: eloquent] preacher, or he who rides [his beast] at a gentle pace.<sup>7</sup>

This tradition, which appears in other versions as well in different Sunnī sources,<sup>8</sup> can be dated at least to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> cen-

<sup>5</sup> Al-Mawṣilī, *Kitāb al-zuhd*, pp. 218-219 (Ibn Lahī'a < 'Abd al-Karīm b. al-Ḥārith < the Prophet: Ṭūbā lil-ghurabā' al-akhfiyā' al-ladhīna in ḥaḍarū lam yu'rafū wa-in ghābū lam yu'faqadū tanjalī 'anhum kull fitna ghabrā' muzlima hum suruj al-hudā hum aḥabb ilā llāh wa-a'jab min al-ladhī yu'jabūna lahum). On the theme of the *ghurabā'* ("strangers"), see Fierro, "Spiritual Alienation and Political Activism: The Ḡurabā' in al-Andalus during the Sixth/Twelfth Century".

<sup>6</sup> See Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, pp. 20-22, 38-41 and index, s.v. "fitna".

<sup>7</sup> This version ends with the following statement: "Only he who invokes God sincerely like one who is drowning in the sea will be saved from the evil [of these trials]". See Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-ḥitan*, p. 150 (Uthmān b. Kathīr < Muḥammad b. Muḥājir < Junayd b. Maymūn < Ḍirār b. 'Amr < Abū Hurayra < the Prophet: As'ad al-nās fi l-ḥitan kull khafī naqī [read: taqī] in zahara lam yu'raf wa-in ghāba lam yu'faqad wa-ashqā l-nās fihā kull khaṭīb miṣqa' [read: miṣqa'] aw rākib mūḍī' lā yakhlūṣu min sharrihā illā man akhlaṣa al-du'ā' ka-du'ā' al-ghariq fi l-baḥr); see also al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'ummāl fi sunan al-aqwāl wa-l-af'āl*, vol. XI, p. 144; and cf. Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, p. 144. In other versions, the statement "Only he who invokes God sincerely [...]" appears as a separate tradition; see Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, p. 139; al-Tuwayjiri, *Ithāf al-jamā'a bi-mā jā'a fi l-ḥitan wa-l-malāḥim wa-ashrāṭ al-sā'a*, vol. I, pp. 26, 88.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn al-akhbār*, vol. II, p. 352: "Allāh loves the hidden, God-fearing, and innocent ones who when absent, are not sought after, and when present, are unknown. Their hearts are the lamps [that light] the right path; they will be extricated from [or: will extricate themselves from] every grey and dark [trial]" (Ishāq b. Sulaymān < his brother [Talḥa b. Sulaymān] < al-Fayyāḍ [b. Ghazwān] < Zubayd al-Yāmi < Mu'adh b. Jabal < the Prophet: Inna llāh yuḥibbu al-akhfiyā' al-atqiya' al-abriya' al-ladhīna idhā ghābū lam yu'faqadū wa-idhā ḥaḍarū lam yu'rafū qulūbuhum maṣābiḥ al-hudā

tury – a period that witnessed several *fitnas*.<sup>9</sup> One may assume therefore that this tradition reflects an early attitude of neutrality and noninvolvement in religious-political disputes; rather than actively participating in them, the true believer should withdraw from society and remain hidden from his fellow man.

Moreover, it seems that this attitude also entailed a strong anti-governmental sentiment. The tradition analyzed here appears in a letter that Salama b. Dīnār – an ascetic from al-Madīna, who died sometime between 130-140/747-758 –<sup>10</sup> is said to have written to Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, the well-known *muḥaddith* and scholar (died 124/742).<sup>11</sup> In his letter, quoted by Abū Nu‘aym al-Isfahānī in *Hilyat al-awliyā’*, Salama b. Dīnār severely criticizes al-Zuhrī for his close contacts and collaboration with the “oppressive” and “unjust” Umayyad regime:

Know that there are two kinds of dignity: one that Allāh, may He be exalted, effects by means of His friends (*awliyā’ihi*) for His friends who are unknown and concealed. They have been described by the messenger of Allāh, may Allāh’s prayers and blessings be upon him: ‘Allāh loves the hidden, God-fearing, and innocent ones who when absent, are not sought after, and when seen are unknown. Their hearts are the lamps [that light] the right path; they will be extricated from [or: will extricate themselves from] every black and dark trial’. These are the friends of

yukhrajūna/yakhrujūna min kull ghabrā’ muzlima); Ibn Qutayba, *Ta’wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, p. 277; al-Ājurri, *Kitāb al-ghurabā’*, p. 50 (al-Firyābī < ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ibrāhīm al-Dimashqī < Ibn Abī Fudayk < Yahyā b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Qatāda < Nāfi’ b. Mālik < ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb < Mu’adh b. Jabal < the Prophet: min kull fitna ‘amyā’ muzlima instead of min kull ghabrā’ muzlima); al-Isfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā’ wa-ṭabaqāt al-asfiyā’*, vol. I p. 15: “The servants whom Allāh, may He be exalted, loves the most are the God-fearing and hidden ones who when absent, are not sought after, and when seen, are unknown. Those are the leaders [who guide in] the right path and the lamps of knowledge” (‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad and Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad b. Aḥmad < al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥubāb < Shādh b. Fayyād < Abū Qaḥdham < Abū Qilāba < ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar < ‘Umar < Mu’adh b. Jabal < the Prophet: aḥabb al-‘ibād ilā llāh ta’ālā al-atqiyā’ al-akhfiyā’ al-ladhīna idhā ghābū lam yuṣṭaqadū wa-idhā shuhidū lam yu’rafū ulā’ika hum a’immat al-hudā wa-maṣābiḥ al-‘ilm; note that the phrase “when seen” [*wa-idhā shuhidū*] can also be rendered “when present” [*wa-idhā shahidū*]); al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-‘ummāl*, vol. III, p. 153.

<sup>9</sup> For this early dating, see the discussion below concerning the letter of Salama b. Dīnār to al-Zuhrī. The tradition is likewise quoted by al-Mu‘āfā b. ‘Imrān al-Mawṣilī (see above n. 5), who died circa 184/800 (see Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. I, p. 348). Among its transmitters are Ibn Lahī‘a, who died in 174/790 (see Rosenthal, “Ibn Lahī‘a”, in *EP*, vol. III, pp. 853-854), and ‘Abd al-Karīm b. al-Ḥārith, who died in 136/753-754 (see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol. VI, p. 331).

<sup>10</sup> Or shortly thereafter; see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol. IV, p. 127.

<sup>11</sup> On him see Lecker, “Biographical Notes”; Lecker, “Al-Zuhrī, Ibn Shihāb”, *EP*, vol. XI, pp. 565-566.

Allāh concerning whom Allāh, may He be exalted, said: ‘Those are Allāh’s party; verily, they are the successful ones [Q 58: 22]’. As to the second kind of dignity, Allāh, may He be exalted, effects it by means of His enemies for their friends. He casts love for the [latter] in the hearts [of the former, or: He casts love for the former in the hearts of the latter]; people honor the [friends of Allāh’s enemies] because [Allāh’s enemies] honor them; and people desire what they possess because they desire it. ‘Those are Satan’s party; verily, they are misled [Q 58: 19]’.<sup>12</sup>

In Salama b. Dīnār’s view, the true friends of God are anonymous; attaining fame and dignity by serving the ruler is a clear sign that one belongs to “Satan’s party”. This anti-governmental stance is likewise echoed in other versions of the tradition.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to its political implications, this tradition also reflects an ethical-psychological ideal according to which religious activities should be performed in private, away from the eyes of others. In one version that addresses the issue of *jihād* – a religious obligation closely linked to asceticism and piety in the early history of Islam –<sup>14</sup> it is stated that

<sup>12</sup> Al-Isfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā’*, vol. III, pp. 248-249 (Wa-‘lam anna al-jāh jāhāni jāh yujrihi llāh ta’ālā ‘alā yaday awliyā’ihi li-awliyā’ihi al-khāmil dhikrum al-khāfiya shukhūshuhum wa-laqaq jā’ a na’tuhum ‘alā lisān rasūl allāh shallā llāh ‘alayhi wa-sallama inna llāh yuḥibbu al-akhfiyā’ al-atqiyā’ al-abriyā’ al-ladhīna idhā ghābū lam yuḥtaqadū wa-idhā shuhidū lam yu’rafū qulūbuhum maṣābiḥ al-hudā yukhrajūna/yakhrujūna min kull fitna sawdā’ muẓlima fa-hā’ulā’i awliyā’ Allāh al-ladhīna qāla llāh ta’ālā fihim ulā’ika ḥizb allāh alā inna ḥizb allāh hum al-muflīḥūna wa-jāh yujrihi llāh ta’ālā ‘alā yaday a’ḍā’ihi li-awliyā’ihi [*read*: li-awliyā’ihim, and see Ibn ‘Asākir’s version below] wa-miqa yaqdhifuhā llāh fi qulūbihim lahum fa-yu’azzimuhum al-nās bi-ta’zīm ulā’ika lahum wa-yarghabu al-nās fimā fi aydihim li-raghat ulā’ika fihī ilayhim ulā’ika ḥizb al-shayṭān alā inna ḥizb al-shayṭān hum al-khāsirūna); cf. Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rikh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. XXII, p. 44; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘azīm*, vol. XIII, pp. 469-470; see also Lecker, “Biographical Notes”, p. 34 n. 56.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Ibn Abi al-Dunyā, *al-Awliyā’*, p. 12: “Among the kings of the world to come is one who [is characterized by the following:] if he speaks, he is not listened to; if he is absent, he is not sought after; if he asks a woman in marriage, he is not married [to her]; and if he asks to enter in the presence of a ruler, he is not permitted [to do so]. Were his light on the day of resurrection to be set over the inhabitants of this world, it would fill them with light” (al-Qāsim b. Hāshim < Muḥammad b. Sa’id al-Qurashī al-Baṣrī < Abū Ḥātim ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd Allāh < ‘Awf < al-Ḥasan < the Prophet: Inna min mulūk al-ākhirā man in nataqa lam yunṣat lahu wa-in ghāba lam yuḥtaqad wa-in khaṭaba lam yuzawwaj wa-in ista’dhana ‘alā sulṭān lam yu’dhan lahu law yuj’alu nūruhu yawm al-qiyāma ‘alā ahl al-dunyā la-mala’ahum nūran).

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage*, p. 66 n. 76; Livne-Kafri, *Jerusalem in Early Islam: Selected Essays*, pp. 118-123 (in Hebrew); Livne-Kafri, “Early Muslim Ascetics and the World of Christian Monasticism”, p. 110.

may Allāh have mercy on a servant who is on His path: if there is a military expedition, he participates in it, and if there is an army unit, he sets off with it; if he is absent, he is not sought after, and if he is seen, he is unknown. Blessed is he, blessed is he.<sup>15</sup>

Fighting and perhaps dying anonymously “on the path of Allāh” or “for Allāh’s sake” (*fi sabīl allāh*) merit divine mercy. Evidently, this version of the tradition aims at encouraging Muslims to perform the duty of *jihād* and (by doing so) to avoid participating in religious-political disputes within the Muslim community. Yet the emphasis on anonymity implies that the desire for fame reduces the value of *jihād*, or of any other religious action for that matter. This is clearly the case in other versions that link the tradition to the concept of *riyā’* (“hypocrisy”), i.e. when one performs a religious deed ostentatiously so that others may witness it and praise him for it:

[Even] a little hypocrisy is polytheism (*shirk*); Allāh loves the God-fearing, hidden, and innocent ones who if absent, are not sought after, and if present, are unknown. Their hearts are the lamps [that light] the right path; they will be saved from every grey and dark [trial].<sup>16</sup>

The concept of *riyā’* and the assertion that it constitutes polytheism (at least to a certain extent) were to play an important role in the psy-

<sup>15</sup> Al-Khaṭṭābī al-Bustī, *al-'Uzla*, pp. 40-41 (Ibn al-A'rābī < Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Thābit b. Muḥammad al-Zāhid < Sufyān al-Thawrī < al-Awzā'ī < 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Yamān < Abū Hurayra < the Prophet: Ruḥīma 'abd fi sabīl allāh in kāna ghazw ghazā fihi wa-in kānat sariyya kharaja fihā wa-in ghāba lam yuṭfaqad wa-in shuhida lam yu'raf tūbā lahu thumma tūbā lahu). Among the transmitters of this tradition are the well-known 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-century figures Sufyān al-Thawrī (died 161/778) and al-Awzā'ī (died 157/774; see Schacht, “al-Awzā'ī”, *EP*<sup>2</sup>, vol. I, p. 773, and Raddatz, s.v. “Sufyān al-Thawrī”, *EP*<sup>2</sup> vol. IX, pp. 771-772). Note also the ascetic Thābit b. Muḥammad (died 215/831), on whom see Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol. II, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Awliyā'*, p. 11 (Muḥammad b. Sahl al-Tamīmī < Ibn Abī Maryam < Nāfi' b. Yazīd < 'Ayyāsh b. 'Abbās < 'Īsā b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān < Zayd b. Aslam < Zayd's father < 'Umar < Mu'ādh b. Jabal < the Prophet: Inna al-yasīr min al-riyā' shirk wa-inna llāh yuḥibbu al-atqiyā' al-akhfiyā' al-abriyā' al-ladhina in ghābū lam yuṭfaqadū wa-in ḥaḍarū lam yu'rafū qulūbuhum maṣābiḥ al-hudā yanjūna min kull ghabrā' muzlīma). See also al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-ṣaḡhīr*, vol. II, pp. 45-46 and al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-awsaṭ*, vol. VII, p. 187 (Muḥammad b. Nūḥ b. Ḥarb al-'Askarī < Ya'qūb b. Ishāq al-Qaṭṭān al-Rāzī < Ishāq b. Sulaymān al-Rāzī < his brother, Ṭalḥa b. Sulaymān < al-Fayyāḍ b. Ghazwān < Zubayd al-Yāmī < Mujāhid < Ibn 'Umar < 'Umar < Mu'ādh b. Jabal < the Prophet: yakhrujūna/yukhrājūna min kull fitna sawdā' muzlīma instead of yanjūna min kull ghabrā' muzlīma); al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-awsaṭ*, vol. V, p. 284 and al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, vol. XX, pp. 36-37 (Inna adnā al-riyā' shirk [...], with the same tradi-

chological theories of Islamic mysticism, especially in the teachings of the *malāmatiyya*.<sup>17</sup> In several sources, the statement “[Even] a little hypocrisy is polytheism” (or similar statements) appears as a separate *ḥadīth* and is not linked to the main body of the tradition examined here.<sup>18</sup> It seems therefore that the original version of this tradition did not refer to the concept of *riyā’*, though the ethical-psychological ideal of conducting one’s religious life in secret is indeed implicit in the notion of anonymity and withdrawal from society.

## Secrecy

Let us now turn to the Shī’ī sources. In a tradition treating of the *fitnas* and the eschatological events at the end of time, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is quoted as saying:

tion and *isnād* as in al-İşfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*, vol. I, p. 15, see above n. 8); cf. Ibn Māja, *Sunan ibn Māja*, pp. 903-904: “[Even] a little hypocrisy is polytheism. Whoever shows enmity towards a friend of Allāh, [it is as if] he has waged war against Allāh [Himself]. Allāh loves the pious, God-fearing, and hidden ones who when absent, are not sought after, and if present, are not summoned and are unknown. Their hearts are the lamps [that light] the right path; they will be extricated from [or: will extricate themselves from] every grey and dark [trial]” (Harmala b. Yahyā < ‘Abd Allāh b. Wahb < Ibn Lahī’a < ‘Isā b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān < Zayd b. Aslam < Zayd’s father < ‘Umar < Mu’adh b. Jabal < the Prophet: Inna yasīr al-riyā’ shirk wa-inna man ‘ādā li-llāh waliyyan fa-qad bāraza llāh bi-l-muḥābara inna llāh yuḥibbu al-abrār al-atqiyā’ al-akhfiyā’ al-ladhīna idhā ghābū lam yuftaqadū wa-in ḥaḍarū lam yud’aw wa-lam yu’rafū qulūbuhum maṣābiḥ al-hudā yakhrūjūna/yukhrājūna min kull ghabrā’ muzlīma); al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-ṣaḥīḥayni*, vol. I, p. 148 (similar to Ibn Māja’s tradition, with the following *isnād*: Abū al-‘Abbās Muḥammad b. Ya’qūb < al-Rabī’ b. Sulaymān < ‘Abd Allāh b. Wahb < al-Layth b. Sa’d < ‘Ayyāsh b. ‘Abbās al-Qitbānī < Zayd b. Aslam < Zayd’s father < ‘Umar < Mu’adh b. Jabal < the Prophet), vol. IV, p. 306, vol. V, pp. 467-468 (the same as Ibn Māja’s tradition, but with the *isnād* that appears in Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Awliyā’*, p. 11, see above in this note); al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-‘ummāl*, vol. III, pp. 156, 472.

<sup>17</sup> See Sviri, “Ḥākim Tirmidhī”, p. 599; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 54-55, 108; Van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥarīṭ al-Muḥāsibī: anhand von Übersetzungen aus seinen Schriften dargestellt und erläutert*, index, s.v. “Riyā’”; Deladrière, “Riyā’”, in *EP*, vol. VIII, p. 547.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi’ al-ṣaḥīḥ wa-huwa sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. IV, pp. 110-111; al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-uṣūl fī ma’rifat aḥādīth al-rasūl*, p. 1203; al-İşfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*, vol. IX, p. 243; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr fī l-tafsīr al-ma’tḥūr*, vol. IV, p. 462; al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-‘ummāl*, vol. III, p. 515. Note in addition that in the early work *Kitāb al-zuhd* by al-Mawṣilī (p. 215), the saying “[Even] a little hypocrisy is polytheism” is separated from the main body of the tradition by the phrase “and I heard him [the Prophet] say” (al-Awzā’ī < an anonymous transmitter

There will be a time when no one will be saved except for the unheeded believer:<sup>19</sup> if he is seen, he is unknown, and if he is absent, he is not sought after. Those are the lamps [that light] the right path and the waymarks during the night journey. They do not go about spreading calumnies and divulging secrets.<sup>20</sup> Allāh will open for them the gates of His mercy and will dispel from them the harm of His revenge [or, according to another version: through them Allāh will open the gates of His mercy and through them He will dispel the harm of His revenge].<sup>21</sup>

In this version, a new element is added to the themes hitherto discussed: that of secrecy. In times of religious-political turmoil, the Shī'ī believer ought to retreat from society and hide the secrets of his faith. These secrets presumably pertain to the *imāms* and perhaps also to various messianic beliefs. Avoiding “spreading calumnies [concerning the *imāms*] and divulging secrets” is meant to protect the *imāms* and their followers and safeguard the Shī'ī faith itself. At the same time, the secrecy in which the believer cloaks himself entails an ethical-

< 'Umar < Mu'ādh b. Jabal: Qalīl al-riyā' shirk wa-sami'tuhu yaqūlu inna khiyār 'ibād Allāh al-atqiyā' al-akhfiyā' al-ladhīna in shuhidū lam yu'rafū wa-in ghābū lam yuftaqadū qulūbuhum maṣābiḥ al-hudā yunajjihim allāh min kull ghabrā' muẓlima).

<sup>19</sup> *Mu'min nuwama*, literally: “a believer who sleeps a lot”, i.e. an obscure person who is unnoticed by others. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, vol. VI, p. 4584 (s.v. n.w.m.); cf. Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wil mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, p. 277; Ibn Qutayba, *'Uyūn al-akhbār*, pp. 352-353; al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. LXVI, p. 273.

<sup>20</sup> *Laysū bi-l-masāyih wa-lā al-madhāyī' al-budhur*. *Budhur* can also be translated as “slanderers”, though it seems that the meaning here is “divulging secrets”; see also Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, vol. VII, p. 110. Cf. the version in Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wil mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, p. 277 and Ibn Qutayba, *'Uyūn al-akhbār*, p. 353 (*Laysū bi-l-'ujul al-madhāyī' al-budhur*).

<sup>21</sup> Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha*, vol. I, p. 198 (Wa-dhālika zamān lā yanjū fīhi illā kull mu'min nuwama in shuhida lam yu'raf wa-in ghāba lam yuftaqad ulā'ika maṣābiḥ al-hudā wa-a'lām al-surā laysū bi-l-masāyih wa-lā al-madhāyī' al-budhur ulā'ika yaftaḥu llāh lahum abwāb raḥmatihī wa-yakshifu 'anhum ḍarrā' naqmatihī); Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, vol. VII, p. 113 ([...] ulā'ika yaftaḥu llāh bihim abwāb al-raḥma wa-yakshifu bihim ḍarrā' al-naqma wa-ruwiya ulā'ika yaftaḥu llāh bihim abwāb raḥmatihī wa-yakshifu bihim ḍarrā' naqmatihī ay bi-barakātihim yakūnu al-khayr wa-yandafī'u al-sharr); see also al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabī' al-abrār*, vol. I, p. 774; Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, *al-Taḥṣīn*, p. 18; al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. LXVI, pp. 273-274. Cf. the version in al-Mawṣilī, *Kitāb al-zuhd*, p. 216: “Blessed is the unheeded servant who knows men but they do not know him; Allāh informs him that He is pleased with him. Those are the lamps [that light] the right path; every grey and dark trial will be dispelled from them. Allāh will open for them the gates of His mercy. They do not go about divulging secrets. They are not rude nor do they act hypocritically” (al-Ḥasan b. 'Umāra < al-Minhāl b. 'Amr < 'Abbād b. 'Abd Allāh < 'Alī: Ṭūbā li-kull 'abd nuwama ya'rifu al-nās wa-lā ya'rifūnahu yu'arrifuhu llāh minhu bi-riḍwān ulā'ika maṣābiḥ al-hudā tujlā 'anhum kull fitna ghabrā' muẓlima wa-yaftaḥu llāh lahum abwāb raḥmatihī ulā'ika laysū bi-l-madhāyī' al-budhur wa-lā al-jufāt al-murā'ina).

psychological dimension: the hidden believer practices his religion in private and consequently his high spiritual status is known only to God.

Other Shiʿī traditions convey a very similar notion. For instance, one saying attributed to Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq asserts that

blessed is the unheeded servant who knows men and accompanies them with his body, yet within his heart does not accompany them in their actions; they know him externally (*fī al-zāhir*), whereas he knows them internally (*fī al-bāṭin*).<sup>22</sup>

In this tradition, one may discern a remarkable shift from the external, social-political sphere to the inner, spiritual-psychological realm. Rather than physically withdrawing from society, the believer is portrayed as retiring internally from human vices. In respect of his body, he is simply one anonymous man among many; yet within his heart he is different and unique, standing apart from other human beings.

There is reason to believe that these ideas were already prevalent in the early Shiʿī milieu of the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century, among the circles of Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.<sup>23</sup> It was in this period which witnessed the decline of the Umayyad dynasty and the transition to the ʿAbbāsī regime that several *fitnas* arose. One may mention in particular the unsuccessful revolt of Zayd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn against the Umayyads in the year 122/740, as well as other revolts carried out by the Ḥasanī branch of the *Shiʿa*. These tumultuous events led Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, and their followers to adopt an attitude of noninvolvement in religious-political conflicts and of quietism (*quʿūd*).<sup>24</sup> Such an attitude involved the practice of *taqiyya* and, in addition, the development of an ethical-psychological ideal according to which one must conceal his unique religious status from the eyes of others. The combination of these various elements – neutrality in civil conflicts, *taqiyya* as both a mechanism of survival and an esoteric

<sup>22</sup> Al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXVI, pp. 272-273 (Ibn al-Mutawakkil < al-Ḥimyarī < Aḥmad b. Muḥammad < Ibn Maḥbūb < ʿAbd Allāh b. Sinān < Abū ʿAbd Allāh: Ṭūbā li-ʿabd nuʿama [sic] ʿarafa al-nās fa-ṣāḥabahum bi-badanihi wa-lam yuṣāḥibhum fī aʿmālihim bi-qalbihi fa-ʿarafūhu fī al-zāhir wa-ʿarafahum fī al-bāṭin).

<sup>23</sup> See the traditions attributed to these two *imāms* in al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXVI, pp. 274-275, 278; al-Reyshahri, *Mizān al-ḥikma*, vol. II, pp. 820-821; al-Maḥmūdī, *Nahj al-saʿāda*, vol. VIII, pp. 96-105.

<sup>24</sup> See also Hodgson, M.G.S., “Djaʿfar al-Ṣādiq”, in *EF*, vol. II, p. 374; Clarke, “The Rise and Decline”, pp. 50-55.

tool meant to protect the secrets of the faith, and, finally, the ethical-psychological ideal of hiding one's spirituality – seems to be a specifically Shī'ī innovation that perhaps in turn influenced various Sunnī circles. Do such statements as the one quoted above – “the most wretched one during [trials] is the loud-voiced [or: eloquent] preacher” –<sup>25</sup> reflect the Shī'ī notion of secrecy? Were ascetic, pious Sunnī scholars such as Salama b. Dīnār, whose letter to al-Zuhrī I have mentioned above,<sup>26</sup> instrumental in passing this and other Shī'ī notions into the Sunnī world? Salama b. Dīnār resided in al-Madīna in the same period as Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, and according to Shī'ī sources, he was in contact with him as well as with his grandfather, the *imām* 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn.<sup>27</sup>

Be that as it may, it is impossible to determine whether or not the tradition analyzed in this article originated in Shī'ī circles, in al-Madīna or elsewhere. Its *isnāds* in various sources include transmitters from Egypt, Syria, Baṣra, and Kūfa, Shī'īs and Sunnīs alike.<sup>28</sup> All we can say is that this tradition reflects certain pietistic attitudes that were most likely formed during the religious-political upheavals in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Their roots perhaps go back even earlier, to the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century and its *fitnas*. It appears though that the Shī'ī milieu played a significant role in the formation of these attitudes and in the development of their ethical-psychological and esoteric dimensions.

<sup>25</sup> See above n. 7.

<sup>26</sup> See above n. 12.

<sup>27</sup> He was one of their many “companions” or “students” (*aṣḥāb*); see al-Tūsī, *Rijāl al-Tūsī*, p. 114; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib al Abī Tālib*, vol. III, pp. 312, 400; al-Khū'i, *Mu'jam rijāl al-ḥadīth*, vol. IX, p. 215.

<sup>28</sup> Egyptians: 'Ayyāsh b. 'Abbās (above n. 16; on him see Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol. VIII, pp. 176-177 and al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. IV, p. 449), 'Abd al-Karīm b. al-Ḥārith (above n. 5; on him see Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol. VI, p. 331); Ibn Lahī'a (above n. 5, 9, 16; on him see Rosenthal, F., “Ibn Lahī'a”, in *EP*, vol. III, pp. 853-854). Baṣrians: Shādhdh b. Fayyād (above n. 8; on him see Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol. IV, pp. 262-263), Abū Qaḥḍham (above n. 8; on him see Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, vol. VII, p. 763), Abū Qilāba (above n. 8; on him see Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol. V, pp. 197-198). Kūfians: Iṣḥāq b. Sulaymān (above n. 8, 16; on him see Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol. I, p. 205), al-Fayyād b. Ghazwān (above n. 8, 16; on him see al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh al-islām*, vol. IX, p. 253), Zubayd al-Yāmī (above n. 8, 16; on him see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. IX, pp. 289-292). Syrians: al-Awzā'ī (above n. 15, 18; on him see Schacht, J., “al-Awzā'ī”, in *EP*, vol. I, p. 773).

## Later Developments

In both Sunnī and Shī'ī sources, the *ḥadīth* examined above was elaborated on and incorporated into lengthier traditions aimed at portraying the figure of the hidden saint. In these traditions, the ideal believer is depicted not only as one who shuns religious-political disputes, worships God in private, and (in the Shī'ī case) keeps the secrets of his faith hidden, but also as a wandering, pious, and ascetic man who maintains an austere lifestyle and spends his days and nights praying, reciting the Qur'ān, fasting, and crying. Furthermore, the figure of the hidden saint is juxtaposed with that of the profane and unjust ruler: whereas the latter symbolizes the decadent aspects of man and the defilement of his role as God's vicegerent on earth (*khalīfa*), the former is viewed as the true "friend of God" (*walī*) whose presence in the world, albeit hidden, guarantees its very existence and the wellbeing of mankind. The hidden saints thus form a 'shadow cabinet' – a clandestine, spiritual alternative to the corrupt political leadership of the Muslim community. From this perspective, the descriptions of the hidden saint in Sunnī and Shī'ī sources are rather subversive, although the supreme status of the *awliyā'* is presented as spiritual, not political, and is said to be fully revealed only at the end of time.

A long tradition treating of Uways al-Qaranī will serve to illustrate these themes as they were developed in the Sunnī world. Uways, who was to become an important figure in Ṣūfism, was allegedly a contemporary of Muḥammad who hailed from the Yemen.<sup>29</sup> According to the tradition, upon a visit of Uways to the Prophet's mosque,<sup>30</sup> Muḥammad said to his famous companion, Abū Hurayra:

Oh, Abū Hurayra, the inhabitants of Paradise have kings and chiefs, and this black man [Uways al-Qaranī] has become one of them. Oh, Abū Hurayra, Allāh, may

<sup>29</sup> According to the Ṣūfī tradition, Uways enjoyed 'telepathic' communication with the Prophet, and, accordingly, is the prototype for mystics who receive their spiritual instruction from an invisible master – either from the spirit of a dead prophet or saint, from a living but physically absent teacher, or from God Himself. Often, these 'Uwaysi' mystics are presented as hidden saints. See Baldick, J., "Uways al-Qaranī" and "Uwaysiyya", in *EP*, vol. X, p. 958; Hussaini, "Uways al-Qaranī"; Zakharia, "Uways al-Qaranī".

<sup>30</sup> Thus according to Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī's *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*; however, according to the version found in *Kitāb al-futūḥ* by the earlier Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī (died. 314/926), Uways did not visit the Prophet's mosque (see the references below in notes 32-33). Indeed, most sources assert that Uways was a *tābi'ī* and did not meet the Prophet in person, although the Prophet was familiar with him and recognized his high spiritual status.

He be exalted, loves from among His created beings the pure, hidden, and innocent ones whose heads are disheveled, whose faces are dust-colored, and whose stomachs are empty [...] When they ask to enter in the presence of rulers, they are not permitted [to do so]; if they ask delicate [women] in marriage, they are not married [to them]; if they are absent, they are not sought after; if they are present, they are not summoned; if they appear, their countenance does not cause joy; if they are sick, they are not visited; and if they die, they are not seen.

The Prophet declared that Uways al-Qaranī belongs to this group of hidden saints, and went on to enumerate his spiritual qualities and physical features. Uways is described, *inter alia*, as wearing a lower wrapper (*izār*) and an upper garment (*ridā'*) made of wool (*ṣūf*), as being “anonymous among the inhabitants of earth yet known among the inhabitants of heaven”, and – like the Prophet himself! – as enjoying the right of intercession (*shafā'a*) on judgment day.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, according to the tradition, the Prophet advised 'Umar b. al-Khattāb and 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb – two of the future four “rightly-guided Caliphs” – to seek Uways out and to have him beg Allāh's pardon for them.<sup>32</sup> The tradition then describes how, for many years, 'Umar and 'Alī searched for Uways and how, when finally meeting him and conversing with him at length, they came to realize his spiritual superiority over them.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> In this tradition, the spiritual status of Uways is linked to and perhaps even equated with that of the Prophet; see also Zakharia, “Uways al-Qaranī”, especially pp. 233, 244-246, 254-256.

<sup>32</sup> See al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. II, pp. 80-82 (Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī's father < Ḥāmid b. Maḥmūd < Salama b. Shabīb < al-Walid b. Ismā'il al-Ḥarrānī < Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Ubayd < Mujālid [according to al-Kharkūshī and Ibn 'Asākir: Makhlad] b. Yazīd < Nawfāl b. 'Abd Allāh < al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim < Abū Hurayra < the Prophet: [...] Yā Abā Hurayra inna li-ahl al-janna mulūkan wa-sāda wa-inna hādhā al-aswad aṣḥāba min mulūk al-janna wa-sādātihim yā Abā Hurayra inna llāh ta'ālā yuḥibbu min khalqihī al-aṣfiyā' al-akhfiyā' al-abriyā' al-shā'itha ru'ūsuhum al-mughbarra wujūhuhum al-khamiṣa buṭūnuhum illā [the latter word is lacking in other versions] min kasb al-ḥalāl al-ladhīna idhā sta'dhanū 'alā al-umarā' lam yu'dhan lahum wa-in khaṭabū al-mutana'imāt lam yunkaḥū wa-in ghābū lam yuftaqadū wa-in ḥaḍarū lam yud'aw wa-in ṭala'ū lam yufraḥ bi-ṭal'atihim wa-in mariḍū lam yu'ādū wa-in mātu lam yushhadū qālu yā rasūl allāh kayfa lanā bi-rajul minhum qāla dhāka uways al-qaranī [...]; [...] muttazir bi-izār ṣūf wa-ridā' ṣūf majhūl fi ahl al-arḍ ma'rūf fi ahl al-samā' [...] alā wa-innahu idhā kāna yawm al-qiyāma qīla lil-'ibād udkhulū al-janna wa-yuqālu li-uways qif fa-shfa' fa-yashfa'ū llāh 'azza wa-jalla fi mithli 'adad rabī'a wa-muḍar yā 'umar wa-yā 'alī idhā antumā laqitumāhu fa-ṭlubā ilayhi an yastaghfira lakumā yaghfir allāh ta'ālā lakumā [...]).

<sup>33</sup> See al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. II, pp. 82-83; cf. the versions in Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, vol. II, pp. 451-456; al-Kharkūshī, *Manāḥil al-shifā'*, vol. VI, pp. 110-114; Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. IX, pp. 423-425; al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār*

In this tradition, ‘Umar and ‘Alī may be regarded as symbolizing the ideal ruler in accordance with the Sunnī and Shī‘ī worldviews: ‘Umar represents the just Sunnī caliph and ‘Alī the Shī‘ī *imām par excellence*. The tradition thus places the hidden saint above the ruler in terms of their spiritual status, and in so doing, reflects a critical approach towards both the Sunnī and Shī‘ī conceptions of political-religious power. Notwithstanding the God-given right of the caliph or *imām* to rule the Muslim community – nowhere in this tradition does Uways challenge the political authority of ‘Umar and ‘Alī – the saint occupies a higher rank in the spiritual hierarchy of mankind, to such a degree that even the caliph or *imām* must seek his intercession before God. Furthermore, as stated above, the presence of the hidden saint guarantees the very existence of creation and the wellbeing of mankind: it is through him rather than through the ruler that divine benefits are bestowed on the world and divine chastisement is averted.<sup>34</sup>

In contradistinction, the Shī‘ī sources naturally uphold the supreme status of the *imām*, who is perceived as the only rightful ruler and the sole mediator between man and God. Nevertheless, the *imām*’s true followers and supporters, his close *shī‘a* (“party”), are presented as hidden saints who, in addition to leading an ascetic and pious life, practice *taqīyya* and avoid divulging the secrets of their faith. In a tradition attributed to Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, the latter is quoted as saying:

*al-bilād wa-akhbār al-‘ibād*, pp. 46-47; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣīfat al-ṣafwa*, vol. III, pp. 45-48; see also the text attributed to al-Ghazālī, translated and analyzed in Zakharīa, “Uways al-Qarānī”, pp. 238-240, 257-258.

<sup>34</sup> See also the words of the Prophet to Usāma b. Zayd, in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī, *al-Muntakhab min kitāb al-zuhd*, pp. 118-119: “[...] Through them the earthquakes and trials are averted” ([...] *bihim tuṣrafu al-zalāzil wa-l-fitan*); “Know, Usāma, that the closest ones to Allāh on the day of resurrection are those whose grief, thirst, and hunger in this world have lasted long, the hidden and innocent ones who when seen, are unknown, and when absent, are not sought after. They are known among the inhabitants of heaven and are concealed from the inhabitants of earth [...]” (Wa-‘lam yā Usāma anna aqrab al-nās ilā llāh yawm al-qiyāma man tāla ḥuznuhu wa-‘aṭashuhu wa-jū‘uhu fī al-dunyā al-akhfīyā’ al-abrār al-ladhina idhā shuhidū lam yu’rafū wa-idhā ghābū lam yuṭfaqadū yu’rafūna fī ahl al-samā’ yakhfawna ‘alā ahl al-arḍ [...]); “The earth weeps when it loses them, and any town that does not have [at least] one of them suffers the wrath of Allāh. Usāma, if you see them in a village, know that they guarantee the safety of its inhabitants; Allāh will not chastise any people among whom they are present” (Tabkī al-arḍ idhā faqadathum wa-yaskhaṭu llāh ‘alā kull balad laysa fīhi minhum aḥad yā usāma idhā ra’aytahum fī qarya fa-‘lam annahum amān li-tilka al-qarya fī ahl al-qarya lā yu’adhhibu llāh qawman hum fīhi); cf. the versions in Ibn ‘Asākīr, *Ta’rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. VIII, pp. 76-80; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, vol. II, pp. 278-279; al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’ ulūm al-dīn*, vol. III, p. 81.

Our party consists of those whose voices do not exceed their ears,<sup>35</sup> whose hatred does not exceed their own bodies,<sup>36</sup> who do not praise us in public,<sup>37</sup> who do not sit in company with those who charge us with vices, and yet do not quarrel with those who hate us.<sup>38</sup> If they meet a believer [i.e. a Shī'ī], they show him respect, and if they meet an ignorant one [a Sunnī], they shun him [...]  
 Our party consists of those who do not howl like dogs nor covet like crows,<sup>39</sup> who do not beg our enemy even when dying of hunger.

When asked where these believers might be found, Ja'far al-Šādiq replied:

[They are to be found] at the ends of earth. Those are the ones whose lives are serene and who wander from one abode to another; if they are seen, they are unknown; if they are absent, they are not sought after; and they are not anxious about dying [...].<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> In other words, their voices are soft and quiet, testifying to their gentle, modest character (see al-Māzandarānī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, vol. IX, p. 174), or alternatively, to their discretion as regards the secrets of their faith. Cf. the version in al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-islām*, vol. I, p. 80: "those whose knowledge does not exceed their ears" (*man lā ya'dū 'ilmuhu sam'ahu*) – i.e. they are discrete, or alternatively, their knowledge is solely based on what they hear from the *imāms* – on their teachings.

<sup>36</sup> That is, they are able to control their hatred (see al-Māzandarānī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, vol. IX, p. 174; and cf. the version there: "whose hatred does not exceed their hands"), or alternatively, they are critical only of themselves and do not show hatred towards anyone else.

<sup>37</sup> *Wa-lā yamtadiḥu binā mu'linan*; see also al-Māzandarānī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, vol. IX, p. 174; cf. al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXV, p. 165: "who do not praise us excessively" (*wa-lā yamdaḥu binā ḡhāliyan*). Perhaps one can also translate here: "who do not praise those who show open [enmity] to us"; and see the version in al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-islām*, vol. I, p. 80 (*man lā yamdaḥu lanā mu'ayyiban*).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXV, p. 165: "and yet do not quarrel with those who are loyal to us" (*wa-lā yukhāsimu lanā wāliyan*).

<sup>39</sup> That is, they remain quiet and do not contend with the Sunnis, thereby revealing the secrets of their faith. Alternatively, they are in control of their carnal desires (see al-Māzandarānī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, vol. IX, p. 175).

<sup>40</sup> Al-Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-kāfi*, vol. II, pp. 238-239 (1. 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm < Muḥammad b. 'Isā < Yūnus < Mihzam al-Asādī; 2. An anonymous companion of al-Kulaynī (*Ba'd aṣḥābinā*) < Muḥammad b. 'Alī < Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Kāhili [< Mihzam]; 3. Abū 'Alī al-Ash'arī < al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Kūfī < al-'Abbās b. 'Amir < Rabī' b. Muḥammad [< Mihzam]: Qāla Abū 'Abdillāh 'alayhi al-salām yā mihzam shī'atunā man lā ya'dū ṣawtuhu sam'ahu wa-lā shahnā'uhu badanahu wa-lā yamtadiḥu binā mu'linan wa-lā yujālisu lanā 'ā'iban wa-lā yukhāsimu lanā qāliyan in laqiya mu'minan akramahu wa-in laqiya jāhīlan hajarahu [...]; shī'atunā man lā yahirru harīr al-kalb wa-lā yaṭma'ū ṭama' al-ghurāb wa-lā yas'alu 'aduwwanā wa-in māta jū'an qultu ju'iltu fidāka fa-ayna aṭlubu hā'ulā'i qāla fī aṭrāf al-arḍ ūlā'ika al-khafīḍ 'ayshuhum al-muntaqila diyāruhūm in shuhidū lam yu'rafū wa-in ḡhābū lam yuftaqadū wa-min al-mawt lā yajza'ūna [...]). Cf. the versions in al-Shaykh al-Šādūq, *Ṣiḡāt al-shī'a*, pp. 13-14 (attributed to Muḥammad al-Bāqir); Ibn Shu'ba al-Ḥarrānī,

The hidden saint of the Shī'ī type maintains utter loyalty to his *imām*, yet is careful not to reveal the secrets pertaining to this loyalty and to his faith. From an ethical-psychological perspective, he is a quiet, introverted, and anonymous person; his spiritual energies are turned inward and are focused on his own self and its blemishes rather than on the imperfections of others.

### Conclusions and a Few Remarks Concerning Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī

The tradition analyzed in this article seems to have its origins in the *fitnas* of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and perhaps even the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> centuries. The religious-political conflicts that tore the Muslim community apart gave rise to a pietistic attitude of noninvolvement and withdrawal from society in times of civil strife, an attitude that also entailed a strong anti-governmental sentiment. Early versions of the tradition, which can be dated at least to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, portray the ideal believer as a righteous, hidden man who retires from the company of men and chooses to practice his religion in solitude. In the course of time, from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries onwards, additional elements were added to these features of the ideal believer. The latter was described as a pious, ascetic, and wandering man – as a true saint in the full sense of the word, whose mere presence in the world ensures its existence as well as the physical and spiritual wellbeing of mankind. The ethical-psychological ideal of hiding one's religious accomplishments from the eyes of others – an ideal that was to gain much importance in Sunni mysticism, particularly for the *malāmatiyya* – was likewise pro-

*Tuḥaf al-'uqūl*, p. 279; al-Nu'mānī, *Kitāb al-ghayba*, p. 136 (and compare the phrases [...] al-ladhīna in shuhidū lam yu'rafū wa-in ghābū lam yuftaqadū wa-in maridū lam yu'ādū wa-in khaṭabū lam yuzawwajū wa-in mātu lam yushhadū [...] to the tradition treating of Uways al-Qarānī in al-Iṣfahānī's *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, see above n. 32); al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. LXV, pp. 164-166, vol. LXVI, pp. 402-403; al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-islām*, vol. I, pp. 73-74 (Ja'far al-Ṣādiq; see also Ebstein, "Secrecy", pp. 307-309), 80-81 (Muḥammad al-Bāqir). See also the sermon that 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is reported to have delivered to his *mawlā* Nawf, in Jarrār (ed.), *Majmū' fihī 'asharat ajzā' ḥadīthiyya*, pp. 211-212 (Ḥadīth ibn makhlad al-bazzāz 'an shuyūkhīhi); Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh madinat Dimashq*, vol. LXII, p. 306 (note that Muḥammad al-Bāqir appears as one of the transmitters of this tradition); cf. al-Tūsī, *Amālī al-shaykh al-Tūsī*, vol. II, pp. 188-189; al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. LXXV, pp. 25-26, vol. LXVI, pp. 275-277; al-Karājaki, *Kanz al-fawā'id*, pp. 87-88. In this sermon, the ascetic lifestyle of the ideal believer is particularly emphasized.

nounced. Moreover, the hidden saint was presented as an alternative, albeit not in the political sense, to the spiritually inferior rulers of the Muslim community.

In the Shī'ī tradition, probably from a relatively early stage in its formation (the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century), these themes were closely linked to the concept of secrecy. In Shī'ī *ḥadīths* attributed, among other *imāms*, to Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, the ideal believer is depicted as an ascetic, pious, anonymous, and wandering man who practices *taqiyya* and is careful not to divulge the secrets of his faith. The practice of *taqiyya* is meant to guarantee the safety of the *imāms* and their followers and to conceal the sacred Shī'ī teachings from the profane eyes of the uninitiated. From an ethical-psychological point of view, it is designed to maintain the believer's modesty and humility.

Both Sunnī mysticism and the Shī'ī tradition incorporated similar, early *ḥadīths* in their discussions of the hidden saint, and can therefore be seen as two branches deriving from the same roots. To these common roots one may add various pre-Islamic traditions in which the notion of the hidden saint figures as well.<sup>41</sup> However, the motif of secrecy in this context seems to be unique to the early Shī'ī milieu; it resurfaces later on in Sunnī mystical writings.<sup>42</sup> Accordingly, one may conclude that the early Shī'ī milieu contributed much to the development of the idea of the hidden saint, particularly in its ethical-psychological and esoteric aspects.

Further evidence for this Shī'ī contribution may be gleaned from the sayings attributed to Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī, the well-known Sunnī mystic who lived in Egypt and died circa 245/859-860.<sup>43</sup> One of the main themes in the sayings ascribed to Dhū al-Nūn is the figure of God's friends (*awliyā'*). They are typically described as maintaining an ascetic and devotional lifestyle and as being anonymous; they pas-

<sup>41</sup> For example, the idea according to which the existence of the world depends upon a fixed number of righteous men who live in every generation is already found in Rabbinical literature of the Talmudic era; see *The Babylonian Talmud, Yomā*, 38:b and *Ḥaḡīgah* 12:b; Ginzberg, *The Legends*, vol. I, pp. 250-253, vol. V, p. 239 n. 164; Svirī, "The Emergence of the Holy Man and the Spiritual Hierarchy in Islamic Mysticism: Biblical (and other) Echoes in a Muslim Woman's Dream"; see also Fenton, "The Hierarchy".

<sup>42</sup> For instance, in the works of Ibn al-'Arabi; see the reference above in n. 3.

<sup>43</sup> On him see Smith, M., "Dhū'l-Nūn, Abu'l-Fayḍ Thawbān b. Ibrāhīm al-Miṣrī", in *EP*, vol. II, p. 242; Arberry, "A Biography"; Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen zur islamischen Theologie. 8. Der Kreis des Dhū n-Nūn"; and Ebstein, "Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī".

sionately love God and enjoy intimacy with Him. Although the *awliyā'* are physically present in the corporeal world, their hearts, spirits, or concentrated intentions (*himam*) travel in the upper, spiritual realms. The *awliyā'* are God's loved ones (*aḥbāb*, *aḥibbā'*), His elect (*ṣafwa*, *aṣfiyā'*, *khaṣā'is*, *khāṣṣa-khawāṣṣ*, *khīra/khiyara*), and were chosen by Him prior to the creation of the world.<sup>44</sup> Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī seems to have been one of the first mystics in the Sunnī tradition who developed the idea of the hidden saint, and may be seen as a precursor to such movements as the *malāmatiyya*.<sup>45</sup>

In one tradition that tells of his audience with the 'Abbāsī Caliph al-Mutawakkil (232/847-247/861),<sup>46</sup> Dhū al-Nūn is reported to have said:

Allāh has servants who have worshiped Him in sincere secrecy, and so He has honored them with His sincere gratitude.<sup>47</sup> They are the ones whose leaves<sup>48</sup> pass empty with the angels, and, when reaching Him, He fills them with the secret of what

<sup>44</sup> For these various motifs, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. I, pp. 13-15, vol. IX, pp. 332, 335-336, 339-343, 346, 349-350, 354-355, 358-360, 364-372, 374, 378-386, 391, vol. X, pp. 227-228; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'riḫ Baghdad*, vol. VIII, pp. 394-395; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat dimashq*, vol. XVII, pp. 406-407, 411, 417-418, 431, 434; al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, vol. IV, p. 15; al-Suhrawardī, *'Awāriḫ al-ma'arīf*, pp. 71, 498; al-Kalābādī, *al-Ta'arruf*, pp. 20-21, 109; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, pp. 54, 87, 90, 93-97, 160-161, 172, 176-185, 187-188, 190, 211, 214, 253-254, 256-257, 265-266; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, vol. IV, pp. 341, 353, 360, 418, 431; al-Yāfi'ī, *Rawḍ al-rayḥīn*, pp. 22, 38-40, 42, 111, 116, 126-127, 156, 219; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Mukhtār*, vol. I, pp. 491-494, 497, 502; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 41; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn fī manāqib Dhī al-Nūn*, pp. 78, 80-81, 116, 124, 143-145, 160-161, 163.

<sup>45</sup> Nicholson ("A Historical Enquiry", p. 311), perhaps basing himself on al-Hujwīrī (see al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, *Kaṣḥf al-mahjūb*, p. 125; see also Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, vol. I, p. 114), writes that Dhū al-Nūn "was a Malāmatī, i.e. he concealed his piety under a pretended contempt for the law [...]". Indeed, according to the teachings attributed to Dhū al-Nūn, the ideal mystic conceals his religious and ascetic activities so as not to give himself unwarranted publicity (*shuhra*); see, for example, al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, vol. II, p. 109; al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, vol. IV, pp. 337, 360; Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, vol. I, p. 123. Moreover, the term *malāma* appears in one statement attributed to Dhū al-Nūn, though it is impossible to know whether he actually employed this very term; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. IX, p. 356: "[...] slay [or: subdue, chastise] your *nafs* with the weapon of blame" (*qāla Dhū al-Nūn li-fatā min al-nussāk yā fatā khudh li-nafsika bi-silāh al-malāma*); see also Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, pp. 169, 255-256.

<sup>46</sup> On the historical questions related to this meeting, see Ebstein, "Dū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī".

<sup>47</sup> Or: "the utmost secrecy" and "His utmost gratitude" (*bi-khālīṣ min al-sirr*, *bi-khālīṣ min shukrihī*).

<sup>48</sup> *Ṣuhufuhum*. *Ṣuhuf* (single: *ṣahīfa*) signifies, *inter alia*, the celestial books in which the good and bad actions of men are recorded; see, for example, Q 81:10.

they [themselves] have revealed to Him in private. Their bodies are of this world, whereas their hearts are celestial, containing such knowledge as if they were worshipping Him together with the angels in those spaces and heavens.<sup>49</sup>

These righteous servants are God's "friends and loved ones" who enjoy His protection against their enemies. They are appointed by God to cure the spiritual diseases of mankind and are responsible for reminding human beings of their duties towards their Lord. The *awliyā'* guarantee the existence of the world and the wellbeing of its inhabitants:

They are the pegs<sup>50</sup> through whom the [divine] gifts are bestowed, the gates are opened, the clouds rise and appear, the punishment is averted, and both man and land are given water.<sup>51</sup>

The statement "Allāh has servants who have worshiped Him in sincere secrecy [...]" is in fact a Shī'ī *ḥadīth*, which is attributed in Shī'ī sources to various *imāms*, including Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.<sup>52</sup> Judging by other

<sup>49</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. IX, p. 337 ([...] Inna li-llāh 'ibādan 'abadūhu bi-khāliṣ min al-sirr fa-sharrafahum bi-khāliṣ min shukrihi fa-hum al-ladhīna tamurru ṣuḥufuhum ma'a al-malā'ika firghan ḥattā idhā ṣārat ilayhi mala'ahā min sirr mā asarrū ilayhi abdānuhum dunyāwiyya wa-qulūbuhum samāwiyya qad iḥtawat qulūbuhum min al-ma'rifa ka-annahum ya'budūnahu ma'a al-malā'ika bayna tilka al-furaj wa-aṭbāq al-samawāt [...]); see also Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 75; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 115.

<sup>50</sup> *Al-awṭād*, that is, the pegs on which the earth rests. In Islamic mysticism, this term would come to designate one of the highest levels in the hierarchy of the *awliyā'*.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. IX, p. 338 ([...] Ūlā'ika hum al-awṭād al-ladhīna bihim tūhabu al-mawāhib wa-bihim tuftaḥu al-abwāb wa-bihim yansha'u al-ṣaḥāb wa-bihim yudfa'u al-'adhāb wa-bihim yastaqī al-'ibād wa-l-bilād); cf. the versions in al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. I, pp. 12-13; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'riḫ Baghdad*, vol. VIII, pp. 394-395; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq*, vol. XVII, pp. 411-412; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, pp. 75-76, 179-180; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Mukhtār*, vol. I, pp. 486-487; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, pp. 238-240; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, pp. 210-213.

<sup>52</sup> See Ibn Shu'ba al-Harrānī, *Tuḥaf al-'uqūl*, p. 160 ('Alī b. Abī Ṭālib: "Allāh has servants who have dealt with Him in His sincere secrecy, and so He has shown them His sincere gratitude. Their leaves pass empty on the day of resurrection, and, when they stand before Him, He fills these leaves for them with the secret of what they [themselves] have revealed to Him in private", Inna li-llāh 'ibādan 'amalūhu bi-khāliṣ min sirrihi fa-shakara lahum bi-khāliṣ min shukrihi fa-ūlā'ika tamurru ṣuḥufuhum yawm al-qiyāma firghan fa-idhā waqafū bayna yadayhi mala'ahā lahum min sirr mā asarrū ilayhi); see also al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, LXXV p. 64. Cf. Ibn Fahd al-Hillī, *Uddat al-dā'ir*, p. 241 (Ja'far al-Ṣādiq), where this tradition is followed by the phrase: "The angels who record [the actions of men] do not know what is between Him and these [servants], for the latter are too great" (ajallahum an taṭṭali'a al-ḥafāza 'alā mā baynahu wa-baynahum); see also al-'Āmilī, *al-*

sayings that are ascribed to the latter and to his father and which convey similar ideas,<sup>53</sup> it stands to reason that this tradition has its origins in the early Shī'ī milieu of the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century. To be sure, it is impossible to know whether this or many other sayings attributed to Dhū al-Nūn were actually uttered by him, at least in their present form. Still, the links in this context between Shī'ī esotericism and Sunnī mysticism are significant.

It is noteworthy that in the aforementioned sermon Dhū al-Nūn is said to have delivered to al-Mutawakkil, the supreme status of the *awliyā'* is particularly emphasized: they are the true mediators between God and creation and as such, their spiritual guidance of mankind is superior to the leadership of al-Mutawakkil and his ilk. This conception is of course common to the Shī'ī tradition as well.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, other sayings ascribed to Dhū al-Nūn which treat of the hidden *awliyā'* likewise reflect conceptions that are characteristic of the Shī'ī worldview.<sup>55</sup> Certainly, Dhū al-Nūn was by no means a Shī'ī; nevertheless, he seems to have been familiar with Shī'ī teachings and appears in the sources as a transmitter of several *ḥadīths* that go back to the Shī'ī *imāms*, in-

*Kashkūl*, vol. II, p. 59; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXVII, p. 252, vol. LXVIII, p. 369; al-Reyshahri, *Mizān al-ḥikma*, vol. II, p. 756. A similar phrase appears in a saying attributed to Dhū al-Nūn; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. IX, p. 339: “[...] They have dealt with Him in His sincere secrecy, so that their works were concealed from the angels who record [the actions of men]” ([...] Wa-‘āmalūhu bi-khāliṣ min sirrihi ḥattā khafiyat a-māluhum ‘an al-ḥafāza [...]).

<sup>53</sup> See above notes 22-23, 40.

<sup>54</sup> Compare also the tradition attributed to ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidin in Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī, *al-Da‘awāt*, p. 212, to Dhū al-Nūn’s sermon in al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. IX, pp. 337-338.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 143: “Allāh has unique ones among His servants, noble and chosen ones among His created beings. They accompany this world with their bodies, while their spirits are hanging in the kingdom [of heaven]. Those are Allāh’s noble ones among His servants and His trustees in His land; they summon [men] to His knowledge and are the means of [reaching] His religion. How far [they are]! They have gone far and are unattainable, hidden in the lowlands and in the mountain roads. Yet the earth will never be vacant and free from one who establishes Allāh’s argument against His created beings, so that, Allāh’s arguments will never cease to be [...] Those are the ones whom [Allāh] has veiled from the eyes of His created beings and whom He has hidden from the evils and trials of this world [...]” (Wa-qāla dhū al-nūn inna li-llāh khāṣṣa min ‘ibādīhi wa-nujabā’ min khalqīhi wa-ṣafwa min bariyyatihi ṣaḥībū al-dunyā bi-abdānihim wa-arwāḥuhum fi al-malakūt mu‘allaqa ulā’ika nujabā’ allāh min ‘ibādīhi wa-umana’ allāh fi bilādīhi wa-l-du‘āt ilā ma‘ri-fatīhi wa-l-wasila ilā dīnīhi hayhāta ba‘udū wa-fātū wa-wārathum buṭūn al-arḍ wa-fijājūhā ‘alā annahu lam takhlu li-arḍ ‘an qā’im li-llāh bi-ḥujja ‘alā khalqīhi li-allā tabṭula ḥujaj allāh [...] ulā’ika qawm ḥajabahum ‘an ‘uyūn khalqīhi wa-akhfāhum ‘an āfāt al-dunyā wa-fitanihā

cluding Ja'far al-Šādiq.<sup>56</sup> Thus, the early Shī'ī tradition contributed much to the development of the notions of secrecy and the hidden saint in Islamic mysticism.

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[...]. *Hujja* (“argument”, “proof”) is an important Shī'ī term that designates, *inter alia*, the *imāms*. The meaning of this designation is that the *imāms* constitute both a proof of God's existence and an argument against mankind on judgment day, for men then will be unable to claim that they had been unaware of the true path. See Hodgson, M.G.S., “Hudjdja: in Shī'ī Terminology”, in *EP*, vol. III, pp. 544-545; Daftary, “The Concept of *Hujja*”.

<sup>56</sup> See al-İşfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. IX, p. 356 (“Ja'far b. Muḥammad was asked who is vile. He said: ‘He who does not pay attention to what he says nor to what is said about him’”, Su'ila Ja'far bnu Muḥammad 'an al-safila fa-qāla man lā yubāli mā qāla w-lā mā qīla fihi; cf. Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 155; for this tradition in Shī'ī sources, see al-Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-kāfi*, vol. II, pp. 323-324; Ibn Shu'ba al-Ḥarrānī, *Tuhaf al-'uqūl*, p. 291, where the tradition is attributed to the *imām* Mūsā al-Kāzīm, Ja'far al-Šādiq's son; al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. I, p. 149, vol. LXXV, p. 310); al-İşfahānī, *Kitāb dhikr akhbār İshbahān*, vol. I, pp. 341-342 (“On the day of resurrection, when the bridge is raised over the midst of hell, only he who has a pass through loyalty to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib will pass and cross over it”, *Idhā kāna yawm al-qiyāma wa-nuṣiba al-širāt 'alā zahrānay jahannam lā yajūzuhā wa-lā yaqṭa'uhā illā man kāna ma'ahu jawāb bi-wilāyat 'Alī bni Abī Ṭālib*; cf. al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-i'tidāl*, vol. I, p. 147; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, vol. I, pp. 74, 108; for Shī'ī sources, see al-Ṭabarī, *Bishārat al-muṣṭafā*, pp. 144-145; al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. XXXIX, p. 208; and cf. al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām*, vol. I, p. 429); al-Suyūṭī, *Tamhīd al-farsh fi al-khiṣāl al-mūjiba li-zilāl al-'arsh*, p. 67 (“Blessed are the ones who are the first to reach the shadow of [God's] throne on the day of resurrection”. The messenger of Allāh was asked: ‘who are they?’ to which he replied: ‘they are your party, oh 'Alī, and those who love you’”, *Al-sābiqūna ilā zill al-'arsh yawm al-qiyāma tūbā lahum qīla yā rasūl allāh wa-man hum qāla hum shī'atuka yā 'alī w-muḥibbūka*); Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, vol. III, p. 80 (“A shooting star was seen. The messenger of Allāh, may Allāh's prayers and blessings be upon him, said: ‘Observe over whose house it falls – for he will be my successor’. We observed, and behold, it fell over 'Alī's house [...]”, *Inqāḍa kawkab fa-qāla rasūl allāh ṣallā llāh 'alayhi wa-sallama nzurū fa-man inqāḍa fī dārihi fa-huwa al-khalīfa ba'dī fa-naẓamā fa-idhā huwa fī manzil 'Alī [...]*); for Shī'ī sources, see al-Kūfī, *Manāqib*, vol. I, p. 556; Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr*, vol. II, p. 451; al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. XXXV, p. 280). Massignon (*Essay*, pp. 138-147) has claimed that Dhū al-Nūn was the first editor of Ja'far al-Šādiq's *Tafsīr*, but this claim is unfounded; see Böwering, “The Major Sources”, p. 56 n. 151. On Ja'far al-Šādiq's influence on Sunni mysticism, see also Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique*, pp. 156-207; Nwyia, “Le tafsīr mystique”; Taylor, “Ja'far al-Šādiq” and “Man's Knowledge of God”.

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