2. The Volunteer Warriors for the Faith (*Mutaṭawwiʿa*)

> He who the sword of heaven will bear
> Should be as holy as severe;
> Pattern in himself to know,
> Grace to stand, and virtue go;
> More nor less to others paying
> Than by self-offences weighing.
>
> – *Measure for Measure*

The central task of the early Islamic state was to establish God's rule on earth through the two complementary coercive duties of *al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf* within the Islamic polity, and Jihad outside of its borders. This chapter explores how, in the eighth and ninth centuries, control over this dual obligation, particularly the Jihad component of it, was transferred from the government to private, volunteer religious warriors. The transference of authority and leadership in these key governmental functions to the non-state sector led, first, to the rise of private militias, among them the *ʿayyārs*; and, second, to the weakening of ʿAbbāsid authority and the subsequent passing of actual political power into the hands of volunteer warriors such as the *ʿayyār* Ṣaffārids.[1]

According to Islamic tradition, the early Islamic body politic was, from the beginning, built around the Qurʾānic duty of "*al-jihād fī sabīl allāh*" – military striving in the path of God. Verses enjoining battle upon the believers are quite unambiguous and abundant: "Let those fight in the path of God who sell the life of this world for the hereafter; and whoever fights in the path of God, whether he is killed or triumphs, we shall give him a great reward;"[2]

> Allāh has bought from the believers their lives and their wealth in return for Paradise; they fight in the way of Allāh, kill and are killed. That is a true promise from Him … and who fulfills his promise better than Allāh? Rejoice then at the bargain you have made with Him; for that is the great triumph;[3]

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1 This dynasty is dealt with in subsequent chapters.

2 Qurʾān 4:74. For a discussion of the Qurʾānic injunction see R. Firestone, *Jihād: The Origin of Holy War in Islam*, Oxford, 1999, especially Part II. In Vecchia Vaglieri's words, "Islam … instilled into the hearts of the warriors the belief that a war against the followers of another faith was a holy war, and that the booty was a recompense offered by God to his soldiers." (L. Veccia Vaglieri, "The Patriarchal and Umayyad Caliphates," *The Cambridge History of Islam. Volume 1a: The Central Islamic Lands from Pre-Islamic Times to the First World War*, ed. P. M. Holt *et alii*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 60) See also Fred Donner's thoughtful refutation of the tendency of some Western scholars to dismiss the traditional Muslim view of the religious motivation underlying the Islamic Conquests (Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, Princeton, 1981, p. 270).

3 Qurʾān 9:110.

Or:

> Those believers who stay at home while suffering no injury are not equal to those who fight for the cause of Allāh with their possessions and persons. Allāh has raised those who fight with their possessions and persons one degree over those who stay at home; and to each Allāh has promised the fairest good. Yet Allāh has granted a great reward to those who fight and not to those who stay behind,[4]

and so forth. This injunction to fight against the unbelievers was put into effect from the time of the Prophet onwards, and resulted in the creation of a vast Islamic Empire by the end of the seventh century.[5]

The chief enemy of the early Muslim state during the seventh through ninth centuries was unquestionably the Byzantine Empire, which was not only the major military opponent of the Muslims, but also posed the only serious ideological and religious challenge to Islam.[6] Thus, an important element in the classical apocalyptic literature of Islam is the capture by the Muslims of both New Rome – and Old Rome – as one of the signs of the Last Days.[7] Likewise, there exist traditions extolling warfare against the Byzantines above all other infidels, even pagan ones.[8] Moreover, the Islamic state by the end of the seventh century seemed – at least to the Muslims – well on the way toward realizing this goal of Roman conquest: it had taken from the Roman Empire in a space of less than seventy years all of Syria, Egypt and North Africa, in addition to having swallowed virtually the entire Sasanian Empire.[9]

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4 Qurʾān 4:95. The translation for these verses is Majid Fakhry's, *The Qurʾān: A Modern English Version*, Reading, U. K. , 1996.

5 On the religious elaboration of the idea and its early practical execution see David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley, 2005), Chapter 1.

6 Hugh Kennedy therefore rightly characterizes "the campaigns of the Muslims against the Byzantines" as "the focus of the military activities of Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid Caliphs." (Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State*, New York and London, 2001, p. xiv). See also D. Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (1996), p. 83.

7 *Vide* Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād b. Muʿawiya b. al-Ḥārith al-Khuzāʿī al-Marwazī, *al-Fitan*, Beirut, 1418/1997, pp. 295-301, the chapter entitled "*al-Aʿmāq wa-fatḥ al-Qustantīniyya*," particularly the long tradition #1163; Abūʾl Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. Jaʿfar b. al-Munādī, *Malāḥim*, ed. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-ʿUqaylī, Qumm, 1418/1998, pp. 145-148; 210. One alternative apocalyptic vision (e. g. Ibn al-Munādī, *Malāḥim*, pp. 105, 242) simply envisions the conversion of "the Romans" (and the "*saqāliba*") to Islam.

8 E. g. Abū Dāʾūd Sulaymān b. al-Ashʿath al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Sunan*: *Sunan Abī Dāʾūd*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAwwāma, Beirut, Jidda, and Mecca, 1998, vol. 3, pp. 204–205, in the section "*Kitāb al-jihād*," chapter 8, "In praise of fighting the Byzantines above all other nations," tradition #2480.

9 For accounts of the conquests, see Fred Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, *passim*; for Africa, M. Brett, "The Arab Conquest and the rise of Islam in North Africa," *Cambridge History of Africa. Volume 2: From 500 BC to AD 1050*, ed. J. D. Fage, Cambridge, 1978, pp. 505-513; and for central Asia H. A. R. Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, London, 1923, pp. 15-58.

The Muslim wave of expansion met with a real check only at the Siege of Constantinople of 717, some ninety years after the first conquests. This check effectively resulted in a halt to the centrally-directed, massive warfare that had been the hallmark of the Islamic state virtually from the time of its inception.[10] The expansionist campaigns on the Byzantine front subsequently assumed a somewhat different form from before. Instead of the large-scale wars conducted by whole armies, the Jihad now focused solely on the smaller-scale state-sanctioned raid known as the *ghazw*, and in particular the summer raid, or *ṣā'ifa*, both of which had been in existence since early Islamic times.[11]

While these resulted in some notable successes, they were campaigns that seemed to have relinquished the hope of an immediate conquest of the Byzantine Empire, and focused on a long-term war of attrition instead.[12] Moreover, this policy collapsed entirely in the 740s due to the internal disorders of the Caliphate and the huge Berber revolt that marked the end of effective caliphal rule

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10 See Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State: The Reign of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads*, Albany, 1994, *passim*. In the Byzantine context, Bosworth notes the fixing of the frontier in the wake of 717: "After the high point of Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik's abortive attack on Constantinople in 97-99/715-717, the frontier became stabilized." ("Byzantium and the Syrian frontier in the early ʿAbbāsid period," reprinted in *The Arabs, Byzantium, and Iran: Studies in Early Islamic History and Culture. Variorum Collected Studies Series*, Aldershot, 1996, Article XII, p. 56) That the conquests had a centralized nature even before the establishment of Umayyad rule is persuasively argued by Fred M. Donner, "Centralized Authority and Military Autonomy in the Early Islamic Conquests," *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East. Vol. 3: States, Resources and Armies*, ed. Averil Cameron, Princeton, 1995, pp. 337-360.

11 On this change in tactic see Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State*, p. 118. On the Eastern front the state of things was even worse from a Muslim standpoint; from 724 until circa 740 the Muslims were in a precarious defensive position (H. A. R. Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, pp. 65-86). As for the raids: The Prophet himself conducted raids (see Abū ʿAmr Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ b. Abī Hubayra al-Laythī al-ʿUṣfurī, *Taʾrīkh Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ*, ed. Muṣṭafā Fawwāz *et alii*, Beirut, 1415/1995, e. g. pp. 38, 60), as did the representatives of the Rāshidūn caliphs-e. g. Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī's *ghazw* during ʿUthmān's caliphate (*ibid.* p. 113). In fact, ʿUthmān is the first caliph for whom we have a list of the commanders appointed to lead the *ṣā'ifa* raids upon Byzantium (*ibid.* pp. 134-135). *Pace* Bonner's assertion (Michael Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier*, American Oriental Series, vol. 81, New Haven, 1996, p. 57) that ʿAbbāsid interest in the summer raids – and in particular the appointing of ʿAbbāsid princes to lead them – was something novel, we see the Umayyads sending their relatives on *ghāzī* raids – and particularly the *ṣā'ifa* – constantly; e. g. Muḥammad b. Marwān's leading of the *ṣā'ifa* in the years 75/694 (Khalīfa, p. 209) and 83/702 (*ibid.* p. 256, where it is also mentioned that al-ʿAbbās b. al-Walīd raided); the raids of the year 114/732, one of which was led by Muʿāwiya b. Hishām, and which joined up with the forces of the legendary *ghāzī* ʿAbdallāh al-Baṭṭāl, and the other of which was commanded by Sulaymān b. Hishām (*ibid.* p. 271).

12 Apart from Blankinship, it seems that only Byzantinists, ironically, have fully appreciated this point (e. g. W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival 780-842*, Stanford, 1988, p. 18: "Fortunately for the Byzantines, the caliphs no longer showed much interest in trying to conquer the whole empire.")

in North Africa west of Tunis.[13] The immediate result of this collapse was that the Byzantines went on the offensive: in 740 the Emperor Leo defeated and killed the famous *ghāzī* ʿAbdallāh al-Baṭṭāl and broke the Muslim siege of Akroinon; and in the following years the Byzantines repeatedly brought the conflict into Muslim territory, capturing several towns.[14] The ʿAbbāsid Revolution further distracted the central authorities; even after the official establishment of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate, for many years the numerous ʿAlid – and other – revolts kept the Caliphal armies tied up within the Dār al-Islām itself.[15] As a result, throughout the 750s as well, "the Arabs were generally on the defensive."[16]

The effective halting of the Jihad – and, even worse, the reversal of the offensive into Muslim territory – must have posed an unprecedented crisis for the Faithful; for one of the central tenets of their faith, which had constituted the main focus of the Caliphate's endeavours from the very beginning, was now in abeyance. Obviously, such a situation, with its moral and military vacuum at the frontier, could not last – and, indeed, it did not. Into this vacuum there stepped a new force with a new and militant leadership: the *mutaṭawwiʿa*.[17]

The *mutaṭawwiʿa* were volunteer border warriors for the faith. Fiercely religious Sunnis (or proto-Sunnis),[18] they hailed mostly from the eastern Iranian world, but migrated to the Byzantine frontier in order to uphold the Jihad and pursue the spiritual life generally – and, incidentally, purely as a natural outcome of their activity, snatched the moral and religious highground from the Caliphate. The privatized, independent nature of the *mutaṭawwiʿa*, together with their uncompromising piety and total disregard for worldly trappings and glory, was one of the elements which served to exert pressure on the caliphs and caliphal policy, and helps explain why caliphs from al-Manṣūr through Hārūn al-Rashīd

13 On the Berber Revolt see M. Brett, "The Arab Conquest and the rise of Islam in North Africa," pp. 516-521. For an account of the internal turmoil in the central lands of the Caliphate see Moshe Sharon, *Black Banners from the East II. Revolt: The Social and Military Aspects of the ʿAbbāsid Revolution*, Jerusalem, 1990, chapter 1.

14 Bosworth, "Byzantium and the Syrian frontier," p. 56; also, for this period of Byzantine advantage, R. -J. Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber: Studien zur Strukturwandlung des byzantinischen Staates im 7. und 8. Jahrhunder*, Munich, 1976, pp. 143-162. On the various reforms and developments which facilitated the Byzantine resurgence, see both Lilie, *ibid.* , chapter 6 (pp. 287-338), and Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival*, *passim*.

15 Thus Bosworth ("Byzantium and the Syrian Frontier in the Early ʿAbbāsid Period," p. 58) notes that it was not until the 760s, when "the ʿAbbāsid caliphate, under the vigiorous direction of al-Manṣūr, achieved a greater degree of internal stability … [that] a more activist policy along the frontier was … pursued." On the ʿAlid rebellions, *vide* H. Kennedy, *The Early ʿAbbasid Caliphate: A Political History*, London, 1981, pp. 198-213.

16 *Ibid.* , p. 57.

17 For a concise exposition of the phenomenon, *vide* D. G. Tor, "Privatized Jihad and Public Order in the Pre-Saljuq Period: The Role of the *Mutaṭawwiʿa*," *Iranian Studies* 38:4 (2005), pp. 555-574.

18 Perhaps best defined during this period as strict-constructionist Qurʾān-revering Traditionists who abhorred speculative theology. For a fuller discussion of the term, and for more on their integral role in the early Ḥanbalite movement, *vide infra*, chapter 4.

were so concerned with leading members of the movement; it is no accident that Hārūn al-Rashīd's pattern of Jihad one year, Hajj the next mirrors exactly the behavior attributed to the greatest volunteer warrior of this type, ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak.[19] As one of our sources tells us, the volunteer warriors were known for "speaking/defending the truth, not fearing the authority [or power] of the great;"[20] and indeed, we shall encounter several stories demonstrating *mutaṭawwiʿ* indifference to Caliphal rank and to established governmental authority generally.

This independence of conscience is captured in Samʿanī's definition of the *nisba* "*al-muṭṭawwiʿī*" :

> This is the *nisba* for the *muṭṭawwiʿa*. They are a group who have devoted themselves entirely to the *ghazw* and the Jihad [*farraghū anfusahum li'l-ghazw wa'l-jihād*], stationed themselves on the frontiers [*rabaṭū fi'l-thughūr*] and supererogated [*taṭawwaʿū*] in the *ghazw*, and sought the *ghazw* in the lands of the infidels when it was not incumbent upon them and present in their land.[21]

Another work defines the *muṭṭawwiʿa* as "those who supererogate in the Jihad."[22] Yet a third well-known author defines the *muṭṭawwiʿa* as "those who set themselves aside for the Jihad [*arsadū anfusahum li'l-jihād*].[23] These definitions, of course, all stem from authors who were writing much later than the eighth and ninth centuries, and they were writing about the phenomenon as it developed after the great transformation of the mid-eighth century had taken place.

The term *mutaṭawwiʿ* does appear sporadically in reference to earlier, seventh-century volunteer Jihad forces.[24] Those early volunteers differ fundamentally

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19 Thus Farouk Omar notes that "A great part of al-Rashīd's fame was due to his interest in the wars against the Byzantines. In waging *Djihād* against the infidels, Hārūn was in fact fulfilling one of the important duties of the Caliph in the eyes of Muslims. Border attacks and counter-attacks occurred with almost annual regularity, but the interesting aspect of al-Rashīd's expeditions was his personal participation in a number of them." Omar also notes the apparent ineffectuality of these campaigns, which we shall presently examine: "It might seem surprising that by the end of al-Rashīd's reign the situation on the frontiers was virtually unchanged …" Farouk Omar, "Hārūn al-Rashīd," *ʿAbbāsiyyāt: Studies in the History of the early ʿAbbāsids*," Baghdad, 1976, p. 25.

20 Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyāʾ*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, Beirut, 1418/1997, vol. 6, p. 146.

21 ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Samʿanī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, Beirut, 1419/1998, vol. 5, p. 213.

22 Jārallāh Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-balāgha*, ed. Mazyad Nuʿaym *et al.* , Beirut, 1998, p. 514.

23 Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Lubb al-lubāb fi taḥrīr al-ansāb*, ed. Petrus Johannes Veth, Leiden, 1851, p. 247.

24 Although it is debatable whether or not the sources which mention such groups are not anachronistically projecting the term back in time, since the earliest of those sources dates to the ninth century. The earliest references this author has been able to find occur in the late-ninth century, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, ed. Maḥmud al-Firdaws al-ʿAẓm, Damascus, 1997, vol. 6, pp. 420-422; and the tenth-century works of Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-Ṭabarī*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, Beirut, no date,

from the movement which arose in the late Umayyad/early ʿAbbāsid period in several essential respects, however: First, they seem to have received state stipends, and to have worked in close cooperation with the government. Second, they are found mainly on the Eastern Iranian border and, interestingly, in Spain – not on the Byzantine frontier. Nor are there, before the late Umayyad period, any biographies of individual *mutaṭawwiʿa*, *mutaṭawwiʿ* chains of *ḥadīth* transmission from one generation to the next, or any special religious ideology; religious volunteering in the Jihad, like the Jihad itself, was still a state enterprise. All of this changes dramatically in the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid period when, in the process of their assuming leadership in the Jihad, the *mutaṭawwiʿa* came to signify a religious movement with its own ideology.

The founding figures of the movement – men such as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿUmar al-Awzāʿī, ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak, Ibrāhīm b. Adham, and Abū Isḥāq al-Fazārī[25] – were those figures whom Michael Bonner has referred to as "scholars and saints of the frontier."[26] They were much more than a group of pious individuals, however; for under the influence of these figures, *mutaṭawwiʿa* became a term denoting a socio-religious movement; that is, a group unified by both social ties and, above all, a cohesive ideology, a shared religious outlook and lifestyle, and the joint pursuit of common goals. Among the many religious and ideological characteristics the *mutaṭawwiʿa* shared were the following: They were deeply ascetic, both in their behavior[27] and in their associa-

vol. 6, p. 532, and the anonymously composed *Akhbār majmūʿa fī fatḥ al-Andalus wa-dhikr umarāʾihā*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, Cairo and Beirut, 1989, p. 14, which ends with the reign of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Nāṣir (d. 961). ʿAlī b. Hāmid b. Abī Bakr al-Kūfī, *Fatḥ-nāmah-i Sind*, ed. N. B. Balūch, Islamabad, 1403/1983, poses a special dilemma. The surviving Persian version is an early thirteenth-century translation of – and avowed embroidery upon – a far earlier (eighth – or ninth-century) Arabic text dealing with the Umayyad era. Thus, although the text overflows with supposed Umayyid-age *mutaṭawwiʿa* (e. g. pp. 22, 27, 28, 36, and so forth) one cannot even be certain in which century the original text was composed – let alone when the term appeared in the version we now possess.

25 Most of the leaders of this groups came from the Iranian East, with the possible but notable exception of al-Awzāʿī; it is unclear where he was born. The number of conflicting traditions that al-Mizzī reports (ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Yūsuf b. al-Zakī al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl*, Beirut, 1418/1998, vol. 11, pp. 314–315) regarding the *nisba* would suggest that the attempts to explain its origin were simply guesswork on the part of the biographers; although, significantly, one of the traditions claims that his origins were to be found in Sind (p. 315). This, of course, would mean that, like nearly all the other founding figures, he, too, came from the Iranian East.

26 Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence*, Chapter 4, 107–130.

27 Thus, to give just a few of the more spectacular examples, Ibrāhīm b. Adham is said to have subsisted on clay alone for 20 days while on the Hajj (al-Imām Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, vol. 7, p. 435); at another point, during Ramaḍān, he tormented himself by hard physical labor and sleep deprivation: "[He] harvested the crop during the day and prayed at night, so that he lived for thirty days, sleeping neither at night nor during the day."(*Ibid.* , p. 439).

tions;[28] they were profoundly committed to the *ahl al-ḥadīth* Traditionist camp; loathed speculative theology; and played a crucial role in the consolidation of Sunnism at this time. In short, in their religious world-view they belonged to what has been termed "Islam's first orthodox, or proto-Sunnites."[29] Indeed, many of these figures taught Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and some of his closest associates, and a large proportion of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* of the next several generations who appear in the biographical literature are directly traceable back to these founders. Indeed, many of Ibn Ḥanbal's associates engaged in such warfare themselves; apart from the figures treated at length *infra* in succeeding chapters, note that Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī is said to have been seen off to the *ghazw* by 50,000 persons (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, Cairo, 1349/1931, 4:424). The author is indebted to Christopher Melchert for this reference.

There was one additional and most salient religious feature of the *mutaṭawwiʿa*, though, which was not present among the proto-Sunna in general: an unwavering commitment to what they viewed as one's personal obligation to engage in warfare for the faith, irrespective of the directives of the caliph or the government. In this respect, one can classify these people as a very specific and militant subset of the proto-Sunna; their hallmark activity was pursuing the Jihad while keeping themselves free of worldly encumbrances and ties with those whom they considered to be impure – first and foremost, the government.

Religiously, the *mutaṭawwiʿa* movement brought about a revolution regarding the proper role of the political authorities in the Jihad. Certain scholars have already noted that the concept of Jihad being formulated by these proponents of border warfare was fundamentally different from the concept of Jihad being articulated at the same time in the Hijaz (most notably by Mālik).[30] In the ideological conflict between these two views – i. e. do political leaders have religious control over the Jihad or is it, rather, a religious obligation incumbent upon all believers, irrespective of the political authority – it was the latter view, the view of the *mutaṭawwiʿa*, which won (at least in ʿIrāq), and was adopted by both the Shafiʿite and Ḥanbalite schools.[31]

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28 Associating, for instance, with such proto-Sufis as Junayd, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Shaqīq al-Balkhī. Note that they they composed not only the first books of Jihad in Islam, but also the first books of *zuhd*; e. g. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-zuhd waʾl-raqāʾiq*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-Aʿẓamī (Beirut, no date).

29 G. H. A. Juynboll, "An excursus on the *ahl al-sunna* in connection with Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. IV," *Der Islam* 75 (1998), p. 330. Juynboll points out (p. 321) that the first definition of a *ṣāḥib sunna* is given by ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak in Ibn Abī Yaʿlā's *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ al-Ḥanābila*.

30 J. Chabbi, "Ribāṭ," *EI²*, vol. 8, p. 495, although she is not able to identify who was advocating this new understanding of Jihad; Chabbi refers, rather, to "circles yet to be identified, [which] began to stress the meritorious aspect of military service on the frontier", and calls this a "new type of activism."

31 See Roy Mottahedeh and Ridwan al-Sayyid, "The Idea of *Jihād* in Islam before the Crusades," in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki

The consequences of this *mutaṭawwiʿ* victory were immense. The *mutaṭawwiʿ* emphasis on the individual responsibilities of the believer before God – particularly concerning the Jihad – and on guidance by the Prophetic Sunna weakened the religious role of the Caliph; it marked, if not the beginning, certainly one of the most significant steps in the process Crone and Hinds have described as the transition from Caliphal to Prophetic *sunna*, and also accords well with the timeline they present.[32] Thus, the *mutaṭawwiʿa*, the militant arm of the proto-Sunni Traditionists, played a significant role in Sunnism's victory through the religious prestige they acquired in their role in leading the Jihad.[33]

To examine all the ramifications of the activities of the founders of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* movement, unfortunately, is beyond the scope of this study. What is important for our aims is to understand the religious values and milieu from which the *ʿayyārs* grew; for many of the *ʿayyārs* we shall examine, and all of the *ʿulamāʾ* who supported the Ṣaffārid *ʿayyār* dynasty, were connected to the leading figures of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* movement. Let us, then, turn to examine the values of this movement and of the men who founded it.

As mentioned before, all of the founding figures were ascetics, but Ibrāhīm b. Adhām[34] was possibly the most extreme in his asceticism, and there are many

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Laiou and Roy Mottahedeh, Washington, D. C., 2001, pp. 26-27. On one important point the present author disagrees with the article: Mottahedeh and Sayyid attribute the obvious doubt manifested in the questions to Mālik regarding the legitimacy of participating in border warfare led by the Umayyads to reservations about the legitimacy of Umayyad rule. The present author believes, rather, that the question at that time – particularly in light of the ideological competition, which we shall explore presently – was whether or not it was legitimate *at all* for a volunteer warrior to place himself under the political establishment. This would recast the debate from being one about the nature of Umayyad rule into one about the nature of *taṭawwuʿ*, which seems a far more likely topic for religious discussion in the context of this time.

32 P. Crone and G. M. Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious authority in the first centuries of Islam*, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 82-93.

33 Some idea of the religious stature of these people can be gleaned from the following tradition: "Whoever acts as vanguard before the Muslims in the path of God as a *mutaṭawwiʿ*, without a ruler [*sulṭān*] having taken him [i. e. voluntarily, not as part of an official campaign], shall never see the Fire with his own eyes except [enough] to satisfy the conditions of the [Qurʾānic] oath; for God, may He be praised, who has no partner, says: 'There is none of you but he is coming to it. '" Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. al-Muthannā Abū Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī al-Ḥanbalī, *Musnad Abī Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī*, ed. Ḥusayn Asad, Damascus, 1404/1984, vol. 3, #1490. In the translation of the phrase *taḥillata al-qasami* the author has followed Lane's explanation (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 620). See also #1486, "Whoever fasts one day in the path of God while a *mutaṭawwiʿ*, without its being Ramaḍān, is kept away from the Fire for a hundred years …"

34 Whose biography can be found, for example, in the following works, beginning on the pages listed: Abū'l-ʿAbbās Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyan wa-anbāʾ abnāʾ al-zamān*, ed. Yūsuf ʿAlī Ṭawīl, Beirut, 1419/1998, vol. 1, pp. 58-59; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 56; ʿUmar b. al-Ḥasan Samarqandī, *Muntakhab-i rawmaq al-majālis va bustān al-ʿārifīn wa-tuḥfat al-murīdīn*, ed. A. Rajāʿī, Tehran, 1354/1975, p. 71; Muḥammad b. Mukarram b. Manẓūr, *Mukhtasar taʾrīkh Dimashq*, Beirut, 1996, vol. 4, pp. 17, 18; al-Balkhī's *Faḍāʾil Balkh* repeats Qushayrī (Abū Bakr ʿAbdallāh b.

traditions demonstrating how deeply committed he was to that ideal. Poverty was an important value for him; he is said to have stated: "Poverty is stored up in Heaven; it is on a par with Martyrdom in God's eyes, [who] does not bestow it except upon him whom He loves."[35] His penchant for self-torment through work and sleep deprivation, particularly during Ramadan, has already been mentioned, as has his spectacular feat of living off clay alone for weeks on end while on the Hajj.[36]

In fact, he was generally quite sparing regarding food, and preferred to "eat of the labor of his [own] hands."[37] One (unintentionally) rather humorous anecdote recounts what appears to be an ascetic match between al-Awzāʿī and Ibrāhīm regarding who could eat less food when at dinner together; and, just as Ibrāhīm refrained from eating more than the bare minimum, so he refrained from speech, according to the ascetic Bishr the Barefoot. Some of Ibrāhīm's other ascetic practices are described by others who knew him:

> He would wear in the winter a skin without a shirt, and in the summer two pieces of a four-dirham garment [*shiqqatayn bi-arbaʿ dirāhim*], putting on one and wrapping himself in the other, and fasting both while journeying and while abiding, and not sleeping at night … When he was finished harvesting he used to send one of his friends to settle the account with the owner of the crop; [the friend] would bring the dirhams but [Ibrāhīm] would not touch them with his hand.[38]

Like all the other *mutaṭawwiʿ* figures, Ibrāhīm devoted much of his life to the Jihad on the Byzantine border. Time and again we see Ibrāhīm adding difficulties to his Jihad experience in order to enhance its religious merit. In one such episode, a mounted raiding expedition was being conducted, with Ibrāhīm on foot. The leader of the expedition, Abū'l-Walīd, swore an oath that he would not ride until Ibrāhīm sat upon a saddle. Ibrāhīm promptly complied, then stated "you have fulfilled your oath," got down again, and proceeded to walk thirty-six miles with the military expedition. Other highlights of Ibrāhīm's jihad-cum-asceticism include his spending the night outside in a blizzard while his raiding compan-

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ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. Dāʾūd al-Balkhī, *Faḍāʾil Balkh*, tr. into Persian by ʿAbdallah Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī Balkhī, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī, Tehran, 1350/1971, pp. 113-115; Abū'l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya fī ʿilm al-tasawwuf*, Beirut, 1419/1998, p. 30); Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi'l-wafayāt*, *Biblioteca Islamica, Das Biographische Lexikon des Ṣalāḥaddīn Ḫalīl ibn Aibak aṣ-Ṣafadī*, vol. 5, ed. Sven Dedering, Wiesbaden, 1970, pp. 209-210; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Yūsuf b. al-Zakī al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl*, Beirut, 1418/1998, vol. 1, p. 313; al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, vol. 10, p. 44; cf. Sirāj al-Dīn Abū Ḥafs ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Maṣrī b. al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, Beirut, 1419/1998, p. 38.

35 Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 39.

36 *Vide supra.*

37 Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣufiyya*, p. 35.

38 Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, vol. 10, p. 49.

ions stayed in a tent;[39] dedicating his entire patrimony to the Jihad;[40] and his refusal to accept any earthly reward – or even to touch with his own hands any such remuneration – as compensation for his efforts in Jihad.

Ibrāhīm practiced this latter precept to such a degree that he even extended it to include food:

> Aḥmad b. Bakkār told me: Ibrāhīm b. Adhām raided with us two raids, each one more difficult than the other … He did not take any portion [of the spoils] or loot, and he would not eat of the good of al-Rūm; even when we came upon rare things [*al-ṭarā'if*] and honey and fowls, he would not eat of it, but said: 'It is permitted, yet I shall renounce it;' he would eat from what he had brought with him, and he would fast …"[41]

One final point we must note about Ibrāhīm is that he did not have much use for the established political authorities; according to one tradition, one of the three signs by which Ibrāhīm claimed one could recognize the End Time approaching was "the speaking of truth in the presence of a Caliph." [or: "ruler" – *sulṭān[in]*][42] He died while on the course of a raid and was, according to some sources, buried in Tyre in 161/777f. ;[43] according to a different version, he died (also *fī sabīl Allāh*) in the following exemplary fashion:

> He raided by sea with his companions, but had to frequent the bathroom twenty-five times during the night in which he died; every time [he relieved himself] he would restore his ritual purity. And when he sensed death [approaching] he said: "String me my bow," took hold of it, and died with it in his hand. He was buried on an island in the sea in the land of Rūm.[44]

According to the hagiography, then, he died as he had lived: bow in hand, ritually pure, ready to do battle for the Faith with his last breath. We begin to obtain, then, a profile of a leading volunteer holy warrior of the late Umayyad/early ᶜAbbāsid period: devout, ascetic, hailing from Eastern Iran, transmitting *ḥadīth*, and uncompromisingly devoted to the battle against the Infidel, particularly the Christian one, free of any governmental oversight.

As we have just seen from the contest over who could eat less, one associate of Ibrāhīm b. Adhām's was another prominent founder of the *mutaṭawwiᶜ* tradition: ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān b. ᶜAmr Abū ᶜAmr al-Awzāᶜī, "the non-pareil of his time, the imam of his age and his era. He was among those who do not fear any critic's

39 Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. 7, pp. 444-445.
40 Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtasar*, vol. 4, pp. 24-25.
41 Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. 7, p. 446. This culinary aspect was surely also part of what can only be called Ibrāhīm's obsession with "the true Ḥalāl."
42 Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 1, p. 316.
43 Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyā'*, p. 39.
44 Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi'l-Wafayāt*, vol. 5, p. 310; Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 1, p. 317.

blame before God,[45] a speaker/defender of the truth, not fearing the authority [or power] of the great."[46]

Born in the year 80/699f. ,[47] al-Awzāʿī transmitted *ḥadīth* from an extremely long list of people – among them al-Zuhrī – and transmitted in turn to such luminaries as Abū Isḥāq al-Fazārī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak.[48] He is described as having been "of the *fuqahāʾ* of the people of Syria, and among their *qurrāʾ*, their ascetics [*zuhhādihim*] and their fighters stationed on the enemy frontier [*murābiṭīhim*]."[49]

The disregard of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* for earthly authority and power can be clearly seen in al-Awzāʿī's relationship to the caliph Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr. Al-Awzāʿī does not hesitate to take the Caliph to task religiously; when al-Manṣūr refuses to redeem Muslim captives from the Byzantines, al-Awzāʿī sends him a letter excoriating his behavior; "And when his letter reached [al-Manṣūr] he ordered the redemption [of the captives]."[50] Al-Manṣūr, of course, was the ruler who really established the ʿAbbāsid dynasty (among other measures, by brutally quelling any threat, actual or potential); it was in his interest to maintain good relations with pious and widely revered Sunni figures, particularly in view of the ʿAbbāsid need at this time to distance themselves from their original Shiʿite *daʿwa*.[51] Also, at least one associate of al-Awzāʿī's, Sulaymān b. Mihrān Aʿmash,

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45 A reference to Qurʾān 5:54 regarding the Muslim's behavior in the Jihad: " … humble toward believers, stern toward unbelievers, fighting the Jihad in the path of God and not fearing any critic's blame …"

46 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, vol. 6, p. 146.

47 Muḥammad b. Saʿd al-Zuhrī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, Beirut 1417/1995, vol. 7, p. 226. As noted above, it is unclear where he was born.

48 Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 11, p. 313.

49 Al-Samʿanī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 1, p. 237; Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 11, p. 317. He died in the year 157/773f. as the result of an unfortunate fall in the bathtub. Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, ed. Tharwat ʿUkashah, Cairo, 1960, p. 497, states merely that "he died in Beirut in the year 157, when he was seventy-two years old." If the latter statement is correct, then al-Awzāʿī was obviously born in the year 85/704 rather than the year 80/699f. According to Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubra*, vol. 7, p. 226, al-Awzāʿī was born in the year 88/707.

50 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, vol. 6, pp. 146-147.

51 The revolt of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya had made clear that there was no way the ʿAbbāsids could beat the ʿAlids on Shiʿite grounds, such as those of the original Hāshimiyya movement which the ʿAbbāsids had ridden to victory. For a discussion of this problem *vide* D. G. Tor, "An Historiographical Re-examination of the Appointment and Death of ʿAlī al-Riḍā," *Der Islam* 78: 1 (2001), pp. 1-26. Cf. Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*, Albany, NY, 1988, pp. 23-24: "It must seem most striking that a religious movement arising among the descendants of the revolutionaries who had brought the ʿAbbasids to power and who continued to back their caliphate most solidly repudiated the religious motives of that revolution … Political considerations soon led the ʿAbbasid caliphs to distance themselves more and more from the small ʿAbbasid Shīʿa that remained loyal after the schism of the supporters of Abū Muslim."

from whom al-Awzāʿī related traditions,[52] was declaiming *ḥadīths* stating that obedience, even to legitimate political authority, was owed only so long as that authority was "commanding the right."[53] Obviously, such a doctrine would make it highly expedient for a caliph to win over to his side the charismatic figures espousing it.

Perhaps this helps explain why al-Manṣūr was so willing to accept censure and personal disrespect from someone such as al-Awzāʿī. According to one anecdote, al-Manṣūr summoned al-Awzāʿī to come to him and instruct him. At a certain point, one of al-Manṣūr's people was so offended by al-Awzāʿī's attitude towards the caliph that he drew his sword against the *ʿālim*, but was stopped by the caliph, who then sat patiently through a rather long homily delivered by the cleric.[54]

Al-Awzāʿī's influence upon the caliphate continued, moreover, long after his own death in 157/774, during the caliphate of al-Manṣūr.[55] After the death of the caliph al-Hādī in the year 170/786f. (some 13 years after al-Awzāʿī's own death)

> … al-Khayzurān[56] said: "We were already informed that on this night a caliph would die, a caliph would be raised, and a caliph would be born;" for al-Hādī died, al-Rashīd became ruler, and al-Maʾmūn was born. Al-Khayzurān had obtained [this] knowledge from al-Awzāʿī.[57]

ʿAbbāsids were, of course, not the only people who had relations with al-Awzāʿī. We have already seen the links between al-Awzāʿī and Ibrāhīm b. Adham; but al-Awzāʿī also had close relations with another of the founding figures of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* movement; namely, Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī. This relationship is particularly intriguing because several of the traditions adumbrating al-Awzāʿī's personal credo are transmitted by al-Fazārī, and also shed some light on the nascent idea of Sunnism at this time, particularly of Sunnism as a performance-based creed.[58] Additionally, al-Fazārī transmits traditions about al-Awzāʿī showing not only the crystallization of the Sunni ideal,[59] but also al-Awzāʿī's strong emphasis upon both the emulation of the *Saḥāba* and the value of Jihad:

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52 *Vide* Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, Beirut, ed. Shuʿayb Arnāʾūṭ, 1419/1998, vol. 6, p. 227.

53 Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, ed. A. M. Shakir, Cairo, 1950-1956, vol. 2, pp. 47-48, no. 622. In this tradition, the Prophet himself has appointed a particular commander over a group of the Anṣār, and enjoined that they obey him. When the commander orders the troop to cast themselves into a fire, however, they balk and inquire of the Prophet, who says to them: "If you had entered [into] it you would never have left it forever, for obedience is only in [what is] good [*al-maʿrūf*]."

54 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, vol. 6, pp. 147-151.

55 Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 7, p. 226.

56 Mother of the caliphs al-Hādī and al-Rashīd.

57 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 99. On the role of Khayzurān in ensuring that this prediction would be fulfilled, see R. Kimber, "The Succession to the Caliph Mūsā al-Hādī," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121 (2001), pp. 433-437.

58 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, vol. 6, pp. 154-155.

59 Juynboll, "Excursus," p. 324, notes al-Awzāʿī's contribution to early Sunnism.

> … Abū Isḥāq al-Fazārī related to us about al-Awzāᶜī, saying: He used to say: In five good deeds the Companions of Muhammad, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and the Followers were expert: cleaving to the community [*luzūm al-jamāᶜa*], adherence to the Sunna [*ittibāᶜ al-Sunna*], building mosques, reciting the Qurʾān, and the Jihad in the path of God."[60]

Even more strongly militant is the tradition which al-Awzāᶜī related on the authority of al-Zuhrī, according to which someone asked the Prophet: "'O Messenger of God, which is the best of works?' He replied: 'The Jihad in the path of God …'"[61]

Like the other figures we are here examining, al-Awzāᶜī was considered "*Imām* of the people of Syria in his time in *ḥadīth* and fiqh."[62] One tradition even claims that al-Awzāᶜī was used as a litmus test for religious acceptability or orthodoxy: " … Whoever mentioned [al-Awzāᶜī] to the good, we knew that he was a *ṣāḥib sunna*; and whoever calumniated him, we knew that he was a *ṣāḥib biḍᶜa*."[63] Other traditions about al-Awzāᶜī are related through ᶜAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, demonstrating the high regard in which the *mutaṭawwiᶜa* figures were held in early Ḥanbalite circles.[64]

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60 Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣbahānīʾ, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, vol. 6, p. 153. An older source (which does not relate the tradition through al-Fazārī, however) lists the five in a slightly different order: "adherence to the Sunna, reciting the Qurʾān, cleaving to the community, the building of mosques, and the Jihad in the path of God." Abū Yūsuf Yaᶜqūb b. Sufyān al-Fasawī, *al-Maᶜrifa waʾl-taʾrīkh*, ed. Khalīl al-Manṣūr, Beirut 1419/1999, vol. 2, p. 227.

61 Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān al-Bustī, *Rawḍat al-ᶜuqalāʾ wa-nuzhat al-fuḍalāʾ*, al-Shāriqah, United Arab Emirates, 1416/1995, p. 101. The tradition continues with the questioner further inquiring: "'Then what [after jihad]?' [The Prophet] responded: A man on a mountain path fearing God, and calling the people to put aside their wickedness. '" This tradition in praise of Jihad appears in all the Sunni canonical *ḥadīth* works as well.

62 Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 11, p. 311. Additional traditions state that "The *imāms* in *ḥadīth* were four: al-Awzāᶜī, Mālik, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Ḥammād b. Zayd," and "There was no one in Syria more learned in the *sunna* than al-Awzāᶜī" (*Ibid.* , p. 315).

63 Al-Fasawī, *al-Maᶜrifa waʾl-taʾrīkh*, vol. 2, p. 238.

64 Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, vol. 6, p. 154. Al-Awzāᶜī is also most interesting to us because the name of one of his pupils involved the first known use of the term *al-ᶜayyār* as an epithet – and it is very significant for our argument that this occurs in relation to the known *mutaṭawwiᶜ* milieu. This pupil, called one "of the greatest of the companions of al-Awzāᶜī," [*min kibār aṣḥāb al-Awzāᶜī*] is named as "Salama b. al-ᶜAyyār b. Ḥiṣn b. ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān Abū Muslim al-Fazārī al-Dimashqī: And *'al-ᶜayyār'*" is a *laqab*; his name is Aḥmad." (Ibn ᶜAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 22, p. 109) At another point in the text, we are told more clearly that his name was "Abū Muslim Salama b. Aḥmad al-Fazārī; he settled in Damascus, and in it his offspring and his house were known as Ibn al-ᶜAyyār; and 'al-ᶜAyyār' is a *laqab*. He heard from Mālik b. Anas and Abū ᶜAmr al-Awzāᶜī." (*Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 22, p. 111, restated on p. 112). Ibn al-ᶜAyyār is given a sterling religious reputation: " … The companions of al-Awzāᶜī who heard [traditions] from him … are: Yazīd b. al-Simṭ, and Salama b. al-ᶜAyyār, and those two were pious [*wariᶜayn*], superior [*fāḍilayn*] …" Another tradition confirms Ibn al-ᶜAyyār's pious reputation: "Abū'l-Faḍl al-Muqaddasī related about Abū Ḥātim b. Ḥibbān that he said [of Ibn al-ᶜAyyar]: He was of the best of the people of Syria [*min khiyār ahl al-Shām*] and their pious ones [*ᶜubbādihim*]; however, although he died when he was old, [of] everything he related in the

Our next founding figure, Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥārith b. ʿUthmān b. Usāma al-Fazārī,[65] was a Kufan who moved to al-Miṣṣīṣa to station himself on the frontier [*murābiṭ*^{an}],[66] and produced a work on Jihad.[67] He both heard from and transmitted to Sufyān al-Thawrī, ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak, and al-Awzāʿī.[68] As a transmitter he is termed "*thiqat*^{un} *thiqat*^{un}"[69]; and "among the imams of *ḥadīth*,"[70] although according to another source

> He was reliable [in hadith transmission], excellent [*fāḍilan*]; a master of sunna and raiding against infidels [*ṣāḥib sunna wa-ghazw*];[71] but prone to many errors in his *ḥadīth*. He died in al-Miṣṣīṣa in the year 188 [804], during the caliphate of Hārūn.[72]

Here again we see the special double interest of the early *mutaṭawwiʿa*: the Sunna and the Jihad.[73] Al-Fazārī practiced both Jihad against the infidel and *al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf* among the Muslims;[74] we shall see later in this chapter that the complementary duty of concern with proper order inside the *Dār al-Islām* appears, too, to have been characteristic of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* – quite reasonably so; after all, the whole idea behind *taṭawwuʿ* is that it is incumbent upon every Muslim to ensure that God's rule is universally upheld.

Like the other figures here examined, al-Fazārī had scant use for the government; Bonner notes that he would eject all Qadarites and "all those who had dealings with the government" from his *majlis*.[75] Although Bonner views al-

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world there do not exist 10 traditions." (*Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 22, p. 112) According to Ibn ʿAsākir he died in the year 168/784f. Ibn Mākūlā, *al-Ikmāl*, vol. 6, pp. 287-288, elaborates on Ibn al-ʿAyyār's longevity, stating that he lived more than one hundred years.

65 Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 7, p. 227; the names are given slightly differently in Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 1, p. 403.

66 Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi'l-Wafayāt*, vol. 6, p. 69, although according to some sources he was born in Wāsiṭ and grew up in Kūfa (*vide* M. Muranyi, "Das *Kitāb al-Siyar* von Abū Isḥāq al-Fazārī," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 6 [1985], p. 67).

67 Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Fazārī, *Kitāb al-siyar*, ed. Fārūq Ḥamāda, Beirut, 1987.

68 His uncle Marwān b. Muʿāwiya al-Fazārī transmitted to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal; "Imams such as Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn considered him trustworthy [*waththaqahu*] … reliable [*thiqa*] in what he transmitted from well-regarded people [*al-maʿrūfīn*], but weak in what he transmitted from unkown ones [*al-majhūlīn*]." (Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 4, p. 357, #7918) The elucidation of the family relationship is in al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 1, p. 405.

69 Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 1, p. 405.

70 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 540. For further encomia, *vide* Muranyi, "Das *Kitāb al-Siyar*," pp. 68-69.

71 Called merely "*ṣāḥib sunna*" in al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 1, p. 405 – but, then again, al-Mizzī was apparently completely uninterested in the military exploits of any of these figures; he never once mentions their *ghazi* activities.

72 Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 7, p. 227. According to al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi'l-Wafayāt*, vol. 6, p. 69, however, he died in the year 185/801.

73 For further documentation of al-Fazārī's holy warrior credentials, *vide* Muranyi, "Das *Kitāb al-Siyar*," p. 69.

74 Bonner (*Aristocratic Violence*, p. 110) notes that he used to have thrown out of the *thaghr* anyone guilty of *biḍʿa*.

75 Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence*, p. 110.

Awzāʿī's and al-Fazārī's attitudes towards the government as fundamentally contrasting (al-Fazārī in his view was the founder of the view that authority resides in the *ʿulamāʾ* rather than the government or the caliph, whereas al-Awzāʿī was supposedly more respectful of Caliphal authority),[76] what we have just seen of al-Awzāʿī's irreverence toward al-Manṣūr, and of Ibrāhīm b. Adham's expressed critical stance toward the central authorities, contradicts this theory. All of the early *mutaṭawwiʿa* figures, concerned as they were with the individual's responsibility before God and with strict adherence to the ways of the Prophet, belonged to the new proto-Sunni trend and its individualized view of the Jihad.[77] Moreover, as we have seen, al-Fazārī's name is closely associated with al-Awzāʿī's; several traditions even explicitly compare them: "al-Ḥarbī said: al-Awzāʿī was the most excellent of the people of his time, and after him Abū Isḥāq al-Fazārī …"[78] Arguably the most important associate of al-Fazārī's, however, was the greatest of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* founders: ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak, the man who "united *ʿilm* and *zuhd*."[79]

ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak b. Wāḍiḥ is described as "Champion [*alīf*] of the Qurʾān, the Hajj, and the Jihad"[80] – or, in more high-flown language:

> that adornment of the age [*zayn-i zamān*], that pillar of shelter, that Imam of the Sharīʿa and the Way, that master of the Two Jihads in truth,[81] that prince of the pen and the Indian sword [*balārak*], ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak-God's mercy be upon him – whom they call the emperor of religious clerics [*shāhanshāh-i ʿulamāʾ*][82]

He was born in the year 118/736 and began seeking religious knowledge when he was twenty years old.[83] His birth was humble; according to the (lost) history of Marv, "The mother of ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak was a Khwarazmian, and his father [was] a Turk, a slave of a merchant from Hamadhān, of Banū Ḥanẓala." Despite his parents' humble status, Ibn al-Mubārak never became too proud or fa-

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76 Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence*, pp. 115-119.

77 In this there is an interesting parallel with the 16th and 17th century Puritan and other more radical Protestant movements in England.

78 Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi'l-Wafayāt*, vol. 6, p. 69.

79 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyan*, vol. 3, p. 22.

80 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, vol. 8, p. 172. Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, vol. 8, pp. 378-379, calls him: "the *imām*, Shaykh al-Islām, the cleric of his time [*ʿālim zamānihi*], and the prince of the God-fearing [*amīr al-atqiyāʾ*] of his era, … al-Marwazī, *al-Ḥāfiẓ*, *al-Ghāzī* …"

81 Either referring to the Jihad against the Byzantines and against the Turks; or, since this is a Sufi source dating from a later period, when the concept of *jihād al-nafs* had already developed, referring to the Jihad of the Sword and the Jihad of the Spirit.

82 Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyāʾ*, ed. Reynold A. Nicholson, *Persian Historical Texts*, vol. 5, Leiden, 1907, p. 211.

83 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 32, pp. 300-301; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, vol. 8, pp. 378-379. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal is later (p. 382) given as the authority for this date.

mous for them, but remained imbued with filial piety.[84] After hearing *ḥadīths* from his first teacher, Ibn al-Mubārak began journeying in the year 141/758f. , and kept up a wandering life "until he died in pursuit of religious knowledge (*al-ʿilm*), and the *ghazw*, and commerce [*al-tijāra*], and supporting the brethren in God [*al-infāq ʿalā al-ikhwān fi'llāh*] …"[85]

The list of those to whom Ibn al-Mubārak transmitted covers several pages, and includes many of the most illustrious names in both Traditionist Islam and Sufism.[86] One source notes, regarding Ibn al-Mubārak's *ḥadīth*, that "Sufyān al-Thawrī transmitted from him, and Abū Isḥāq al-Fazārī … and ʿAffān … His *ḥadīths* [are classified as] proof according to the consensus ("*ḥujja bi'l-ijmāʿ*"), and he is in the *musnads* and the *uṣūl*."[87] His *ḥadīths* are repeatedly said to be *ṣaḥīḥ*; he is held to have been not only an impeccable transmitter, but even "the Caliph in the field of *ḥadīth*" [*amīr al-muʾminīn fi'l-ḥadīth*].[88]

He is also lauded in the sources for his outstanding moral and spiritual qualities, to the point where it is said of him "There is none on the face of the Earth like unto ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak; I do not know of any good qualities God has created that he has not placed in ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak."[89]

Like his colleagues whom we have already examined, Ibn al-Mubārak also practiced asceticism. Ibn al-Mubārak, however, is called the "Lord of Ascetics"

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84 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 32, p. 402; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, vol. 8, p. 381. According to an alternative story, surely legendary, Ibn al-Mubārak's father was indeed a slave, but his master was so impressed with his bondsman's honesty and integrity that he gave his own daughter in marriage to the slave (Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyan*, vol. 3, pp. 22-23). Note that the authority for this story is given as Ibrāhīm b. Adham.

85 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, vol. 8, p. 378. Later on Dhahabī elaborates, stating (p. 381) that "Ibn al-Mubārak traveled to the Two Holy Places, and Syria, and Egypt, and ʿIrāq and the Jazīra, and Khurāsān." There is a tradition to the effect that he kept up his cloth trade only in order to be able to go visit Sufyān al-Thawrī, Sufyān b. ʿUyayna, al-Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ, and others on a regular basis (Abū'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. Abī Yaʿlā al-Baghdādī al-Ḥanbalī, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ al-Ḥanābila*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad ʿUmar, Cairo, 1419/1998, vol. 1, p. 153). On the use of the term "brother" in a metaphorical, religious sense, see Roy Mottahedeh, "Brother and Brotherhood," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Leiden, 2001, vol. 1, especially pp. 261-263.

86 *Vide* e. g. al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 10, pp. 469-471; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 32, pp. 397-398. It is very interesting to note that many early Sufis and Sufi works are prominent in traditions in praise of Jihad: e. g. Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 93. Aḥmad b. al-Hawwārī, a famous ascetic closely associated with Sufyān b. ʿUyayna and al-Fazārī's uncle Marwān b. Muʿāwiya, is reported to have said: "In *ribāṭ* and *ghazw* lie the blessings of the one who is resting. When the servant tires of service/worship, he can take a rest [through *ribāṭ* and *ghazw*] without disobedience."

87 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, vol. 8, p. 380.

88 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, vol. 8, pp. 391-392; 397; similarly, p. 384. On the Sunni import of the term *vide* Juynboll, "Excursus," p. 320. Abū'l Qāsim Ḥamza b. Yūsuf al-Sahmī, *Taʾrīkh Jurjān*, Hyderabad, 1950, p. 283, calls him "The treasurer of *ḥadīth*" [*ṣirāf al-ḥadīth*].

89 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, vol. 8, p. 384; the speaker is Ismāʿīl b. ʿAyyāsh.

[*sayyid al-zuhhād*],[90] and is also credited with having authored one of the earliest Islamic works on asceticism.[91] Whereas al-Awzāʿī seems to have wanted others to adopt his own rigorous practices, Ibn al-Mubārak seems to have demanded more of himself than of others. On a journey from Egypt to Mecca, for example, "he would give [his companions] to eat *khabīṣ*,[92] but the whole time he [himself] was fasting."[93] He is depicted as deploring the love of the sinful world,[94] stating that worldly people [*ahl al-dunyā*] leave the world without ever having "'tasted the best of what is in it. ' It was said to him: 'What is the best of what is in it?' He replied: 'The knowledge of God most high. '" He is also said to have remarked that "If a man knew his own measure [*qadr nafsihi*] he would become humbler than a dog."[95]

He seems, though, to have believed in some level of moderation in ascetic practices; we never hear of his eating clay like Ibrāhīm b. Adham, for example, and one tradition shows him encouraging *darwīshes* not to starve themselves utterly:

> It is related that one year he would make the Hajj, one year a *ghazw*, and one year he would trade [*tijārat* {*kardī*}], and he would distribute his profit among [his] companions. He would give dates to the *darwīshes* and count the pits. Whoever had eaten the most, for each pit he would give a dirham.[96]

This last tradition is also important for highlighting the way in which Ibn al-Mubārak balanced his life among the three duties of *ḥajj*, *jihād*, and *zakāt*, to which (along with *ḥadīth*, of course) he appears to have completely devoted himself.[97] There are, indeed, many stories which relate his acts of charity and generosity,[98] including remitting 100,000 dirhams annually to the poor, and anony-

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90 Al-Hujvīrī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, p. 117.

91 ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-zuhd wa'l-raqā'iq*, *op. cit.* He is also cited in various Sufi works as an authority on *zuhd*; *vide* e. g. al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, p. 184, where he defines *zuhd* as "Trust in God together with love of poverty."

92 A sweet made of dates, cream, and starch.

93 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, pp. 384-385.

94 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. 8, p. 177; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 399.

95 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. 8, pp. 177 and 179 respectively.

96 Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, p. 212.

97 Note that this order of priorities is echoed in at least one of the traditions of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal: "The Prophet … was asked: 'What is the most praiseworthy of works?' He replied: 'Faith in God and His Messenger.' [The inquirer] said: 'Then what?' He responded: 'The Jihad in the path of God.' It was said: 'Then what?' [The Prophet] replied: 'Then the righteous Hajj [*ḥajjun mabrūrun*].'" (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 14, pp. 23-24, tradition #7580)

98 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, pp. 385-386. Ibn al-Mubārak was very wealthy; he was not only a trader himself (when not fighting the Jihad or making the Hajj), but had also inherited 100,000 dirhams from his father (Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā' al-Ḥanābila*, vol. 1, p. 72).

mously getting debtors out of jail.[99] He was, moreover, scrupulously honest with other people's possessions. One story claims that he borrowed a pen in Syria, with the understanding that he would return it; when he reached Marv and realized that the pen was still with him, he returned to Syria forthwith, solely in order to restore the pen to its proper owner.[100]

Ibn al-Mubārak, like the other figures we have examined, also exemplifies the new attitude toward Prophetic *sunna*, which exalted Prophetic tradition, incidentally magnifying the religious authority of the Traditionists and scholars at the expense of Caliphal authority.[101] In one tradition regarding Ibn al-Mubārak's reverence toward the Prophet and his companions we are given a glimpse of the emotional attitude of the Traditionists:

> Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād[102] said: "ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak used to sit in his house a lot, and it was said to him: 'Do you not get lonely?' He replied: 'How could I get lonely, when I am with the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and his Companions?'"[103]

Given that Ibn al-Mubārak spent his time in such exalted company, it comes as no surprise that his opinion of worldly authorities and princes was correspondingly low: "It is said that Ibn al-Mubārak was asked: 'Who are the notables [*al-nās*]?' He replied: 'The *ʿulamā'*'. It was said: 'And who are the kings [*al-mulūk*]?' He replied: 'The ascetics [*al-zuhhād*]. '"[104] In another tradition, he contrasts the importance of the *ʿulamā'* with that of worldly leaders – to the detriment of the latter: "Ibn al-Mubārak said: 'Whoever scorns the *ʿulamā'*, loses his Next World, while whoever scorns princes, loses this world; and whoever scorns the Brethren [*al-ikhwān*], loses his *muruwwa*. '"[105]

The implications this outlook had for Ibn al-Mubārak's relationship with the caliph are made fairly explicit. One tradition, for instance, relates how an ad-

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[99] Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 10, p. 476; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, pp. 386-387. Cf. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī, *al-Muqaddima fi'l-taṣawwuf*, ed. Ḥusayn Amīn, Baghdad, 1984, p. 337.

[100] Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, p. 213; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 395.

[101] Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, p. 58.

[102] This famous apocalyptist was also important in the consolidation of early Sunnism (*vide* Juynboll, "Excursus," p. 325). Interestingly, Ibn al-Mubārak is found relating traditions of doom, gloom and *fitna* in apocalyptic works as well (*vide e. g.* Ibn al-Munādī, *al-Malāḥim*, pp. 155, 196).

[103] Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 382.

[104] Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 399.

[105] Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 408. *Muruwwa* was, of course, one of the terms later used to describe the chivalric code of the *ʿayyārūn*. On p. 397 Dhahabī describes how a group of prominent *ʿulamā'* got together and enumerated a broad range of areas in which Ibn al-Mubārak excelled: "*ʿilm*, *fiqh*, *adab*, grammar, vocabulary [*lugha*], *zuhd*, eloquence [*faṣāḥa*], poetry, night vigils [*qiyām al-layl*], worship [*ʿibāda*], the Ḥajj, *ghazw*, courage, horsemanship [possibly "knighthood" *-furūsiyya*], strength [*quwwa*] …" This tradition is also found in al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 10, p. 474.

mirer of Ibn al-Mubārak was so afraid of the caliph's being offended by what Ibn al-Mubārak would say that he was willing to lie and besmirch the latter's reputation in order to prevent a meeting from transpiring between the two of them:

> Ibrāhīm b. Nūḥ al-Mawṣilī said: "al-Rashīd came to ʿAyn Zarba, and ordered Abū Sulaym to bring him to Ibn al-Mubārak." He said:" … I did not feel safe lest he hear Ibn al-Mubārak in something that he hates and kill him, so I replied: 'O Commander of the Faithful, he is a churlishly tempered man [*ghalīẓ al-ṭibāʿ*], boorish [*jilf*]. ' So al-Rashīd refrained [from meeting Ibn al-Mubārak]."[106]

Apparently, the admirer was justified in trying to forestall such a meeting; according to one Ḥanbalite tradition, Ibn al-Mubārak's nephew, Ismāʿīl, while visiting with Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, began to speak with the latter about visiting the caliph. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal said to him: "your maternal uncle – that is, Ibn al-Mubārak – already said: 'Do not go near them, for if you come to them you must speak the truth to them; and I, I fear [the consequences of] speaking the truth to them."[107] Obviously, Ibn al-Mubārak did not have much good to say of the ʿAbbāsid government.

The counterpart of this disrespectful attitude on the part of Ibn al-Mubārak can be found in the stories which imply that Hārūn and his officials were, for their part, deeply concerned about what Ibn al-Mubārak might be saying about the caliph, and how the caliph's subjects might regard him in consequence. Hārūn's vizier, in fact, was at one point convinced that Ibn al-Mubārak was completely opposed to Hārūn, and Hārūn had to reassure him that Ibn al-Mubārak helped bolster the legitimacy of the Caliphal government by emphasizing its necessity to the Islamic religion. According to this story, a letter arrived from Hārūn's chief of intelligence, reporting that ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak had died (on his way back from a *ghazw*, naturally).[108] When Hārūn's vizier expresses astonishment at the caliph's regarding Ibn al-Mubarak as an important prop of the regime, Hārūn replies:

> "You dimwit! For it is ʿAbdallāh who says:
> 'God repels disaster from our faith by means of the ruler / out of mercy and grace on His part
> If not for the *imāms*, the roads would not be safe for us/ and the weaker among us would be prey for the stronger. '
> Who could hear such speech from the likes of Ibn al-Mubārak, with his excellence, [his] asceticism, and his stature in the minds of the people [*fī ṣudūr al-ʿāmma*], without acknowledging our right [to rule]?"[109]

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106 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 406.

107 Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā' al-Ḥanābila*, vol. 1, p. 162.

108 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyan*, vol. 3, p. 24; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 32, p. 403.

109 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. 8, p. 174. The author thanks both Wolfhart Heinrichs and David Cook for their suggestions regarding the translation of this passage.

This is a somewhat ambiguous text, but the meaning appears to be that Ibn al-Mubārak regarded government as a necessary evil, as it were, although his other statements make clear that he held the *ʿulamā'* to be far more important to the general populace as instruments of salvation. Hārūn, for his part, considers Ibn al-Mubārak's endorsement of the government as politically significant. That is, while Ibn al-Mubārak was indifferent toward the government and the caliph, Hārūn and his officials, on the contrary, placed great weight on the attitudes and pronouncements of Ibn al-Mubārak.

One can understand why al-Rashīd would be uneasy regarding the high esteem in which ascetic warrior-scholars were held; first, because their primary allegiance obviously did not lie with the government, and they were willing to defy, confront, or ignore the government rather than vitiate their principles. Second, they were held in great popular esteem; at least one story contrasts the reverence and love people felt toward Ibn al-Mubārak and toward their caliph:

> al-Rashīd came to al-Raqqa, but the people ran away after Ibn al-Mubārak, so that their shoes were cut up and the dust was raised. Umm Walad [Khayzurān] was watching the Commander of the Faithful from a tower of the wooden fortress [*qaṣr al-khashab*], and she said: "What is this?" They replied: "A Khurāsānī *ʿālim* has arrived." She said: "This, by God, is kingship [*mulk*], not the kingship of Hārūn, for whom the people do not gather except by means of the police and guards [*bi-shuraṭ^{in} wa-aʿwān^{in}*]."[110]

This attitude, which demonstrates a diminution of the religious stature and role of the caliph, was to culminate in the kinds of traditions we find rampant in the latter part of the ninth century, as well as in the disregard many pious people – particularly in the two categories of *mutaṭawwiʿ* associates and Ḥanbalites (not surprising, considering the *miḥna*) – showed for Caliphal opinion. One such tradition recounts how Hārūn al-Rashīd exclaimed to Ibn al-Mubārak's friend Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ one day:

> "What an ascetic you are!" [Fuḍayl] replied: "You are more of an ascetic than I!" [Hārūn] said: "How so?" [Fuḍayl] said: "Because I renounce pleasure in this world [only], whereas you renounce pleasure in the Next World; this world is transitory, whereas the Next World is eternal."[111]

Obviously, a certain religious contempt and feeling of superiority toward the caliph is being expressed here; the Commander of the Faithful is in no way any longer a religious *imām* in the eyes of these figures.[112]

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[110] That is, they do so only under compulsion, when prodded by armed troops. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyan*, vol. 3, p. 23; Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 10, p. 476; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 384.

[111] Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyā'*, p. 206.

[112] For this last point see also e. g. the anecdote in Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā' al-Ḥanābila*, vol. 1, pp. 136-137, according to which the caliph al-Muʿtaḍid sent the Ḥanbalite figure Ibrāhīm b. Isḥāq al-Ḥarbī 10,000 dirhams. Ibrāhīm refused to accept this money, and sent the Caliphal messenger back. The messenger returned, saying, "The Commander of the Faithful asks that you distribute this among your neighbors

The reservation, verging at times on disdain, felt by the traditionist *ʿulamā'* toward their ruler was not, however, reciprocated. We already noted above al-Rashīd's preoccupation with Ibn al-Mubārak's pronouncements regarding the government. Hārūn also acknowledges Ibn al-Mubārak's religious stature in the statements he is said to have made after Ibn al-Mubārak's death, calling him the "lord of the *ʿulamā'*"[113] In fact, Ibn al-Mubārak's stature was fairly universally acknowledged, particularly among the many religious figures with whom he fraternized[114] -some of whom we have already examined. Thus he is called by al-Fazārī the "Imam of the Muslims" [*Imām al-muslimīn*][115] and by another "an *imām* to emulate; he was of the most reliable of people in the *sunna*; if you see someone slandering Ibn al-Mubārak, then suspect [that person]'s Islam."[116] Islamic religious luminaries who praise him include Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, Shaqīq al-Balkhī,[117] and al-Awzāʿī;[118] Ibn ʿUyayna even goes so far as to state: "I have looked into the matter of the *Ṣaḥāba*, and the matter of ʿAbdallāh, and I have not seen that they had any advantage over him except their companionship to the Prophet, and their fighting [*ghazwihim*] together with him."[119]

In fact, his only rival in reputation seems to have been the great ascetic Sufyān al-Thawrī. Several traditions debate the relative merits and stature of the two,[120] though the issue seems to be finally resolved by producing traditions in which Sufyān himself pronounces Ibn al-Mubārak's superiority. There is one, for instance, in which Sufyān is made to declare that his wish is to be like Ibn al-Mubārak for just one year, but that he is not capable of emulating him for even three days.[121]

[*jīrānuka*]." Ibrāhīm, however, again refused to touch the money, charging the messenger: "Say to the Commander of the Faithful: Leave us alone, for we turn away from your protection."[*jiwārika*]

113 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, pp. 390 and 418.

114 Al-Hujvīrī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, p. 117, although the assertion on the following page that he associated with Abū Ḥanīfa seems highly unlikely, and probably designed by someone who was trying to impart extra religious legitimacy to the Ḥanafis.

115 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. 8, p. 173; Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 10, p. 473. Hujvīrī (*Kashf al-maḥjūb*, p. 117) calls him "*imām-i vaqt-i khūd*." Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 390 has the even more emphatic "*Imām al-muslimīn ajmaʿīn.*"

116 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 395.

117 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, pp. 397, 398 and 405. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's praise appears also in al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 10, p. 473.

118 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. 8, p. 172.

119 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 390. Ibn Ḥanbal himself is reported by his son and biographer, Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, to have tried to attend Ibn al-Mubārak's majlis, but was told upon his arrival there that Ibn al-Mubārak had just left for Tarsus (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 5, p. 265).

120 Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, vol. 8, pp. 173-174; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 10, p. 472; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 388.

121 An even stronger version has it that Sufyān al-Thawrī made his best effort to be like Ibn al-Mubārak for just one day, but that he was unable to do so (al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 10, p. 472). There are also variant traditions in which either someone declares in Sufyān's

The tradition that would have been really difficult for Sufyān al-Thawrī's partisans to outdo, however, is the one which makes Sufyān al-Thawrī appear posthumously to reveal his and Ibn al-Mubārak's relative fates in heaven:

> They saw Sufyān al-Thawrī – May God have mercy on him – in a dream. They said: "What did God most High do with you?" He said: "He was merciful." They said: "What is the state of ʿAbdallāh-i Mubārak?" He replied: "He is of that group who twice daily go into the presence of God."[122]

In another tradition, ʿAbdallāh himself is stated to have appeared posthumously[123] to several people in their sleep in order to reveal his august heavenly position in the good graces of both the Prophet and God Himself:

> al-ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī said: "I heard Abū Ḥātim al-Barbarī saying: 'I saw Ibn al-Mubārak standing at the gate of Heaven with a key in his hand, so I said: 'Why are you standing here?' He replied: 'This is the key to Heaven, which the Messenger of God, may the prayers and peace of God be upon him, gave to me, saying: 'In order that I can go visit the Lord, be [now] my trustworthy one [*amīn*] in heaven, as you were my faithful one on earth. '"'
>
> Muḥammad b. al-Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ said: "I saw Ibn al-Mubārak in my sleep, and I said: 'Which work is the best?' He replied: 'The matter in which I was engaged. ' I said: '*al-ribāṭ wa'l-jihād*?' He replied: 'Yes. ' I said: 'What has your Lord done with you?' He responded: 'He forgave me [with such] a pardon that there is no pardon after it … '"[124]

This last tradition brings us to Ibn al-Mubārak's role in the Jihad, to which he devoted a great deal of his time and energies. Ibn al-Mubārak, of course, like al-Fazārī and al-Awzāʿī, also authored one of the earliest books of Jihad.[125] His preoccupation with Jihad began almost immediately after his initial repentance as a youth; after journeying in pursuit of the religious life, he returned to Marv, where the people would ask him about both *fiqh* and *ḥadīth*: "And he at that time made two *ribāṭs*: one for the sake of Ahl-i Ḥadīth, and one for Ahl-i Ra'y."[126]

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presence, or Sufyān al-Thawrī himself proclaims Ibn al-Mubārak to be the nonpareil of "the East, the West, and everything that lies between," Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 389; Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, p. 211, has Sufyān al-Thawrī declare him the most exalted in the East, and Fuḍayl [b. ʿIyāḍ] add "and the Maghrib and that which is between the two."

122 Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, p. 221.

123 More alarmingly, it is stated that ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak opened his eyes after his own death, spoke, and gave directives. (Muʿīn al-Dīn Abū'l-Qāsim Junayd al-Shīrāzī, *Shadd al-izār fi ḥaṭṭ al-awzār ʿan zawwār al-mazār*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī and ʿAbbās Iqbāl, Tehran, 1328/c. 1950, p. 17)

124 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 419.

125 ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, Beirut, 1409/1988.

126 Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'* pp. 211-212. The story seems more indicative of Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār's values than of Ibn al-Mubārak's, however, in at least one respect: it is difficult to imagine Ibn al-Mubārak wanting to do anything for the benefit of *Ahl al-Ra'y*. He was, to state the case mildly, not a theological pluralist. He harboured violently anti-Jahmiyya sentiments, and is reported to have said that "whoever thinks this [the Qur'an] is created [*makhlūq*], has already blasphemed God almighty." (Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 8, pp.

Many of the legends regarding Ibn al-Mubārak's life accordingly focus on his prowess or role in the Jihad, and the beneficial effects which his participation had, including inspiring Infidels to convert by his own personal example of piety and probity,[127] and defeating in single combat hitherto undefeated Byzantine champions.[128] Ibn al-Mubārak's own writings show us that Jihad held pride of place in his theology, and that martyrdom – when undertaken for pure motives – was considered the expiation for sins:

> The slain [in *jihād*] are three [types of] men: a believing man, who struggles (*jāhada*) with himself and his possessions in the path of God, until when he meets the enemy he fights them until he is killed. This is the tested *shahīd* [*al-shahīd al-mumtaḥan*]; [he is] in the camp of God under His throne; the prophets do not surpass him except by the dignity of prophecy. [The second type of] believing man has ill-treated himself [*qaraſa ʿalā nafsihi*] with offenses and sins, [yet] struggles with himself and his possessions in the path of God, to the point where when he meets the enemy he fights until he is killed. This cleansing erases his offenses and his sins – for lo! the sword is the eraser of sins; and he will be brought into heaven from whichever gate he desires ... [And the third type is] a hypocritical man who struggles with himself and his possessions in the path of God, until when he meets the enemy [in battle] he fights until he is killed. This one is in the Fire, for the sword does not erase hypocrisy.[129]

Although Ibn al-Mubārak, as noted above, died during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, the *mutaṭawwiʿī* spirit by no means ended with the death of Ibn al-Mubārak and the founding generation. The literature recording the questions being asked of religious scholars of the succeeding generation show that the private-enterprise Jihadist spirit was common at the time, particularly among the most Traditionist of the proto-Sunnis.[130] One purportedly eyewitness account, for example, relates how Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was consulted by a Khurāsānī man regarding the latter's desire to fight for Islam:

> I was with Abū ʿAbdallāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal when a Khurāsānī man asked him: "My mother has permitted me to go on a *ghazw*, and I want to go out to Tarsus. What do

402-403) In any case, it would seem from what we are told elsewhere that Ibn al-Mubārak built only one *ribāṭ* in Marv; we are told of his student, "Abū Muḍar Muḥammad b. Muḍar b. Maʿn al-Marwazī al-Ribāṭī, from among the people of Marv, author of *akhbār* and stories [*ḥikāyāt*]. He was called al-Ribāṭī because he dwelled in Marw in the Ribāṭ of ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak …" (al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 3, p. 44).

127 Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, p. 217.

128 Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 8, p. 394.

129 Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-jihād*, pp. 17-18, no. 7.

130 This attitude was not limited to responsa literature only. We catch glimpses of strong religious support for the *mutaṭawwiʿa* being expressed generally in Traditionist writings: Abū Ṣāliḥ Shuʿayb b. Ibrāhīm b. Shuʿayb al-Bajli al-Bayhaqī, for example, a pupil of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's close friend Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Dhuhlī (*vide infra*, chapter 4) and a renowned *ʿālim* in his own right, had a son, Imam Abū'l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Shuʿayb al-Bayhaqī (d. 324), "muftī of the Shāfiʿīs", who wrote a work praising the *muṭṭawwiʿ* life. (Abū'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Zayd Bayhaqī [Ibn Funduq], *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī, Tehran, 1960, p. 158)

> you think?" [Ibn Ḥanbal] replied: "Raid the Turks," and I reckon that Abū ʿAbdallāh went to the words of God, may He be honoured and exalted: "Fight those of the infidels who are near you."[131]

This anecdote reveals two important developments taking place in the early ninth century. First – and this development was to have a decisive impact on the *ʿayyārān* when, as we shall see later in this chapter, they emerged as a sub-group within the volunteer holy warrior movement – the Jihad in the East was assuming increasing importance. In the previous century, one finds the opposite ruling to that of Ibn Ḥanbal being issued to an aspiring freelance Jihadist: There is a tradition according to which al-Fazārī asks ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak the opposite question; namely, why did he have to come all the way to the Byzantine border to battle Infidels when there were plenty of Turkish ones close at hand in Eastern Iran? Ibn al-Mubārak answered that whereas the Turks were only fighting about worldly power, the Byzantines were battling the Muslims over their faith, "So which is the more worthy of defense: our world or our faith?"[132] Obviously, volunteer holy warrior attention had finally been turned to the East at this point – although, as we shall presently see, this attention was at least as focused upon combating the Kharijites within the Dār al-Islām as it was toward conquering the Infidels without.

The second development one can glean from the above anecdote is the emergence of the city of Tarsus during the eighth and ninth centuries as a kind of headquarters of *mutaṭawwiʿa* activity on the Byzantine frontier. The city had been rebuilt as a Muslim fortress, on the orders of al-Mahdī, by Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba in 181/797, "with an army of the men of Khurāsān and the men of Mawṣil and Syria, troop reinforcements from Yemen and *mutaṭawwiʿa* from ʿIrāq and the Ḥijāz."[133] It became an ever-stronger magnet for *mutaṭawwiʿa* until its capture by the Byzantines in the tenth century, and we find traces of the attraction it exerted upon Khurāsānī holy warriors not only in the tradition cited above, but throughout many other different kinds of sources. The local history of Bayhaq, for instance, speaks of the prominent family known as the Salāriyān, founded by "the Salār Abū'l-ʿAbbās al-Muḥassin b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Muṭṭawwiʿī … *salār* of the ghāzīs," who used frequently to accompany "the *muṭṭawwiʿa*" to Tarsus in order to go raiding.[134] One geographer's glowing description of the city – and its warm support of volunteer warriors – also emphasizes the religious pull it exerted on volunteer border warriors from across the Empire:

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131 Qurʾān 9:123. The source of the anecdote is Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ al-Ḥanābila*, vol. 1, p. 87.

132 Cited in D. Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihad*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (1996), p. 98; the source is Ibn al-ʿAdīm's *Bughyat al-ṭalab*.

133 Cited in Bosworth, "The city of Tarsus and the Arab-Byzantine frontiers," *The Arabs, Byzantium and Iran: Studies in Early Islamic History and Culture. Variorum Collected Studies Series*, Aldershot, 1996, Article XIV, p. 271.

134 Ibn Funduq, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*, p. 124.

> … there was no great city from the borders of Sīstān, Kirmān, Fars, Khūzistān, Khurāsān, al-Rayy, Iṣfahān, al-Jibāl, Ṭabaristān, the Jazīra, Azerbaijān, Iraq, the Hijaz, Yemen, the Syrias, Egypt and the Maghrib but in [Tarsus] it had for its citizens a dwelling and a *ribāṭ* in which the *ghāzīs* of that place would dwell, stationing themselves [as border warriors] [*yurābiṭūna*] in it. …[135]

Tarsus was not alone in serving as a locus of the Jihad in this period, of course; volunteer warriors – particularly Traditionist-minded ones – flourished and multiplied virtually everywhere in the next several generations following that of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* founders. We shall examine just a few of the individual *mutaṭawwiʿa* of the next generation before turning to the larger historical role and manifestations of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

One of the most obvious places in which to search for early volunteer warriors for the faith is among the students and friends of the four founders whom we have examined – without including those who are described as *ghāzīs* rather than *mutaṭawwiʿa*.[136] One such student was Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr b. Manṣūr Abū Isḥāq al-Sūrīnī, known as al-Sūrīnī al-Faqīh al-Muṭṭawwiʿī al-Shahīd. Sūrīn was a locale in Nishapur, and this *mutaṭawwiʿ* journeyed from Iran to Syria, in typical *mutaṭawwiʿ* fashion, to pursue the spiritual life of the *sunna* and the Jihad. While in Syria he heard *hadith* from such *mutaṭawwiʿa*-affiliated luminaries as Sufyān b. ʿUyayna, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak, and al-Fazārī's uncle Marwān b. Muʿāwiya.[137] He is also called in one tradition "Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr the Sunnī the martyr," which is particularly interesting, in view of the connection we are positing between the *mutaṭawwiʿa* and the coalescence of Sunnism.

His values are exemplified in a tradition related by him, according to which a Jew was so taken with an answer that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib gave him to a theological question, that he became a Muslim on the spot, "made the Ḥajj once, and went on a *ghazw* once, until he was killed in the land of Rum in the time of Muʿāwiya."[138] These two activities – Hajj and Jihad, the two favorite activities of Ibn al-Mubārak – obviously constituted for Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr (or at least for the narrator of the tradition) the essence of Islam.

Also in typical volunteer warrior fashion, Ibrāhīm was a good pious collector of *ḥadīth* to boot. One of the projects Ibrāhīm apparently tried to undertake was the gathering of a *musnad* that he thought should be included among the writings of his teacher ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak. According to another tradition, "I heard Abū Zurʿa lauding Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr, saying: He was a man famed [for being] vera-

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135 Abū'l-Qāsim Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed. J. H. Kraemers, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, vol. 2, Leiden, 1939, vol. 2, p. 184.

136 Al-Awzāʿī, for instance, had a pupil who was both a *ghāzī* and one of the important religious figures in Spain – "*al-imām shaykh al-Andalus*," Abū Muḥammad al-Andalusī al-Ghāzī (al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 9, pp. 322-323).

137 Al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 3, p. 358; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 7, pp. 236, 238.

138 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 7, p. 237.

cious … Abū Muḥammad said: I saw his knowledge, and I did not see in him any *munkar*, and he was of little error [in hadith transmission – *qalīl al-khaṭa'*]."[139] Most importantly, Abū ʿAmr al-Mustamlī[140] is one of the transmitters of a tradition crediting Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr with being "The first who proclaimed *madhhab al-ḥadīth* in Nishapur."[141] Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr was killed in the year 210/825f., fighting against the heretic Bābak.[142] As we shall soon see, there was a *mutaṭawwiʿ* contingent fighting alongside the anti-Bābak forces sent by the caliph.

Another student and emulator of Ibn al-Mubārak was Aḥmad b. Tawba al-Ghāzī al-Muṭṭawiʿī al-Zāhid,

> … of the people of Marv … He is one of the *zuhhād*, and he transmitted from ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak … and it was said that he was one whose prayers are answered.[143] He conquered Isfījāb with 40 men;[144]in the town their children, known as "the children of The Forty," are pointed out … He settled in Paykand, and died in it, transmitting [traditions] from Ibn al-Mubārak, Ibrāhīm b. al-Mughīra, [and Sufyān] b. ʿUyayna …[145]

Another early *mutaṭawwiʿ* was one of the companions of Ibn al-Mubārak: "Rizām b. Abī Rizām al-Muṭṭawwiʿī al-Rizāmī, who raided together with ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak, and became a martyr [*ustushhida*] several years before the death of Ibn al-Mubārak…"[146] In fact, among the more religiously prominent *mutaṭawwiʿa* Traditionists of the next few generations we find many who studied either with the founders or with the students of the founders.[147] Usually, we do not possess much information about them: for example, about al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Makhlad al-Naysābūrī al-Muṭṭawwiʿī (again, a Khurāsānī), we know only that he died in the year 299/911f. , and that one of his teachers was Abū Yaʿqūb Isḥāq b. Ruhawayh, who studied in turn with ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak.[148]

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139 Abū Zurʿa in turn also transmitted from Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr (Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 3, p. 358).

140 Who will be figuring prominently in chapter 6 below.

141 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 7, p. 238.

142 *Ibid.* , vol. 7, p. 239. On Bābak's revolt *vide* G. Sadighi, *Les Mouvements religieux iraniens au IIe et IIIe siecle de l'hegire*, Paris, 1938, pp. 229-286.

143 Amending the text to read "*mustajāb*."

144 Amending *fataḥa istījāb* to *fataḥa Isfījāb*. On the location of Isfījāb see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, vol. 1, pp. 179-180.

145 al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 5, p. 213.

146 al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 3, p. 64.

147 We find students of students as well continuing the tradition; e. g. Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān b. Muḥammad b. Ḥamdawayh al-Mutaṭawwiʿī al-Marwazī (ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *al-Qand fī dhikr ʿulamā' Samarqand*, ed. Yūsuf al-Hādī, Tehran, 1999, p. 495). One should also note that although Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was not a *mutaṭawwiʿ* himself, he did hear traditions from one of Ibn al-Mubārak's students; vide e. g. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā' al-Ḥanābila*, vol. 1, p. 177.

148 On al-Ḥasan, *vide* Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, vol. 22, p. 129; on Isḥāq b. Ruhawayh, the lengthy biography in *idem. Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 11, pp. 358-383, where he is lauded as "the great Imām, *shaykh al-mashriq, sayyid al-ḥuffāẓ*."

About one such student of a student, however, we possess abundant data. This figure, Ibrāhīm [b. Muḥammad] b. ʿArʿara al-Mutaṭawwiʿī[149], is perhaps the clearest and most outstanding example of connections between the *mutaṭawwiʿa* and the Sunni tradition, since not only did he study with many students of an early *mutaṭawwiʿ*, but he himself taught many important Sunni Traditionist figures. An unusually large number of Ibrāhīm's major teachers studied directly with ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak: ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām; Muʿtamir b. Sulaymān; Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān[150]; Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān al-Ḍubaʿī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī[151] in fact, out of the ten names listed in Dhahabī as having taught Ibn ʿArʿara, fully half of those named studied with Ibn al-Mubārak. Ibrāhīm b. ʿArʿara died in the year 231/845f.,[152] but before his demise he taught many important early Sunni religious figures: Muslim, Abū Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī, Abū Bakr ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Dunyā, Abū Zurʿa ʿUbaydallāh b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Rāzī; and Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Rāzī.[153] He is rated "*ṣadūq*" as a traditionist; and, although Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was not convinced that one of the ḥadīths he reported was genuine, at least one source claims that Ibn Ḥanbal slandered Ibrāhīm.[154]

Not all *mutaṭawwiʿa* Traditionists, naturally, studied with one of the four founding fathers or their students. Even among those who did not, however, we see the same hallmark characteristics of the progenitors of the movement: strong proto-Sunni Traditionist connections, a tendency toward asceticism, and ties with proto-Sufis. One outstanding example of such a person is "Ḥamsh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Rutakī [also listed as "al-Turaykī" or "al-Turkī"] al-Zāhid, Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Mutaṭawwiʿī al-Naysābūrī,[155] master of the monk's cell and the mosque [*ṣāḥib al-ṣawmaʿa wa'l-masjid*], by means of which he is blessed."[156] He studied with Aḥmad b. Yūnus al-Yarbūʿī,[157] a student of Sufyān al-Thawrī, who also taught traditions to al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Zurʿa, Yaʿqūb al-Fasawī, and Abū Ḥātim.[158] Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Mutaṭawwʿī in turn taught Abū ʿAmr Aḥmad b. al-Mubārak

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149 Thus termed by Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 13, p. 385.

150 Ibrāhīm reported as having transmitted from them: al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, vol. 1, p. 413; Ibn al-Mubārak reported as having taught them: *ibid.* , vol. 10, pp. 470-471.

151 Ibn ʿArʿara is listed as having studied with them in Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 11, p. 480; they are listed as Ibn al-Mubārak's students in al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 10, pp. 469, 470.

152 Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 7, p. 173.

153 Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, v. 17, pp. 69-70 for Ibn ʿArʿara's death date and a partial list of his students; *idem.* , *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, vol. 11, p. 480; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 1, pp. 413-414; death date on p. 415.

154 Al-Mizzī, *ibid.* , vol. 1, pp. 414-415; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, vol. 17, p. 70.

155 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 54, p. 116; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, vol. 20, p. 342.

156 Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Nīsābūrī, *Tārīkh-i Nīshāpūr*, ed. M. Rezā Shāfiʿī Kadkanī, Tehran, 1375/1996, p. 85, #373.

157 According to Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, vol. 20, p. 342.

158 *Ibid.* , vol. 10, p. 457.

al-Mustamlī.[159] Abū ʿAbdallāh is called an ascetic by every author who accords him an entry (not to mention his "monk's cell"), and was closely associated both with other ascetics and with Sufis, including one Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṣūfī, who was himself a pupil of Ibrāhīm b. ʿArʿara al-Mutaṭawwiʿī.[160]

Unfortunately, his military activities for the faith are not described in any detail; the most specific description of his *mutaṭawwiʿī* endeavours states merely that "He was among those who go to Byzantium as frontier warriors [*murābiṭūn ilā al-Rūm*] and his time of abode in Tarsus was long …"[161] The one biographer who does not call him "*al-mutaṭawwiʿī*" describes him as "*mujāhidᵃⁿ ghāzīyᵃⁿ ʿābidᵃⁿ*."[162] Abū ʿAbdallāh died in Shawwāl of the year 275/889, at around eighty years of age.[163]

By the mid-ninth century, some of the most prominent figures among the proto-Sunni Traditionists were producing *mutaṭawwiʿ* students. Ibn Māja, for instance, author of one of the canonical Sunni hadith collections, studied in Nishapur with Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Dhuhlī, a very close associate of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal from the days when both studied with Saʿīd b. Manṣūr, himself a student of Ibn al-Mubārak, and whom we shall be examining at some length in chapter four. Ibn Māja numbered among " … the most famous [of his students] … Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿIsā al-Muṭṭawwiʿī.[164] There were, unsurprisingly, many known *mutaṭawwiʿa* connected with the circles around Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, that staunchest of *ahl al-ḥadīth* Sunnis.[165] One such person, who died in the year 287/900, was Abū Bakr Yaʿqūb b. Yūsuf b. Ayyūb al-Mutaṭawwiʿ, a student of Aḥmad.[166] This exceedingly devout person is supposed to have stated that in his youth it was his custom to recite "Say: He is God" 31,000 – or even 41,000 – times a day.[167]

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159 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 54, p. 114. As mentioned previously, this last individual plays an important role, *infra*, in Chapter 6.

160 Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, p. 584; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 54, pp. 114-115. On Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṣūfī's connections with Ibrāhīm b. ʿArʿara, see the entry on the latter in al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, and Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, both cited *supra*.

161 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 54, p. 115.

162 Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, vol. 20, p. 342.

163 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 54, p. 116; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, vol. 20, p. 342.

164 ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Rāfiʿī al-Qazwīnī, *al-Tadwīn fī akhbār Qazwīn*, Beirut, 1408/1987, vol. 2, pp. 49-50.

165 This connection among Sunni traditionists and the *mutaṭawwiʿa* founders is particularly evident when we examine the Ḥanbalites. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal himself had numerous connections going back to the early *mutaṭawwiʿa*. The list of his teachers includes, in addition to al-Fazārī's uncle Marwān b. Muʿāwiya, many prominent people who heard hadith from ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak, including Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, Muʿtamir b. Sulaymān al-Taymī, ʿAffān b. Muslim, ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī.

166 Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā' al-Ḥanābila*, vol. 1, p. 548; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, vol. 21, p. 338.

167 Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rīkh Baghdad*, Beirut, no date, vol. 14, p. 289; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vol. 12, pp. 414-415.

So organized and established were the *mutaṭawwiʿa* by the late ninth century that when they set forth in companies to battle we hear that they brought their own resident *faqīh* with them: under the biography of Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Yazdādh al-Mudhakkir al-Muṭṭawwiʿī al-Khabbāz al-Rāzī, for instance, we are told the following:

> … He settled in Bukhārā and transmitted there, and many heard from him. Abū Isḥāq heard from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī … and Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Nāṣiḥ al-Dāmghānī, and he journeyed to remote lands. Al-Ḥākim Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥāfiẓ … and Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ghunjār al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Bukhārī heard from him, and al-Ḥākim Abū ʿAbdallāh mentioned him in the History, and said: Abū Isḥāq al-Khabbāz, came to us in Nīshābūr among the army of the *muṭṭawwiʿa* going out to Tarsus; their amīr was ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ashkam al-Khwārizmī, and Abū Isḥāq was their *faqīh* and their preacher …"[168]

Similarly, we know that by the mid-third/ninth century there was a *raʾīs al-muṭṭawwiʿa* in Bukhārā; thus implying a very organized, perhaps even officially recognized presence there – and Bukhārā may not have been the only city with a person so titled.[169]

We noted previously that *mutaṭawwiʿ* activity flourished in the ninth century on the eastern borders against "the Turks." One exemplar of this type, Abū'l-Qāsim ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Idrīs al-Salār al-Mutaṭawwiʿī al-Nasafī, who died in the year 264/877f. , may or may not have had a connection to the figures we have already examined, but is in any case said to have "set a fine example [*la-hu āthar jamīla*] in the paths of goodness and Jihad."[170] Abū'l-Qāsim's son apparently followed in his father's holy warrior footsteps; he was taken prisoner by the Turks "and his traces were never found."[171] Characteristically for this group, Abū'l-Qāsim appears in our source as a transmitter of Prophetic *ḥadīth* – about the holiness of ascetic behaviour, no less. He quotes the Prophet as having said "Behold, the people of paradise [*ahl al-janna*] in this world have disheveled heads [and] soiled clothing; … they do not enter [into the presence of princes]; and … they do not marry …"[172]

In summation, our sampling of individual *mutaṭawwiʿa*, both from the founding generation and from that of their students and students' students, reveals certain shared characteristics, apart from their devotion to Jihad: they were overwhelmingly of Khurāsānian origin; most of them practiced some form of asceti-

168 Al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 2, p. 365.
169 Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, vol. 18, p. 33; Ibn Mākūlā, *al-Ikmāl*, vol. 1, p. 21.
170 Al-Nasafī, *al-Qand fī dhikr ʿulamāʾ Samarqand*, p. 329. The author was unable to locate this figure in any of the standard biographical dictionaries. There are other examples of individual *mutaṭawwiʿī muḥaddithūn* in Samarqand at this time – e. g *ibid.* , pp. 386, 400 (no dates given but the list of transmitters is of the right length).
171 *Ibid*, p. 329.
172 *Ibid.*

cism; and they all belonged firmly to the Traditionist camp. There is a limit, however, to what information about specific individuals – however valuable and informative that information might be in enriching one's understanding of the personal, religious and social characteristics of volunteer warriors – can reveal about the historical role of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* in the aggregate in Islamic society; for this one must examine the accounts, not of individuals, but rather of groups of *mutaṭawwiʿa*, acting as a concerted body. This is particularly important for ascertaining how and when *ʿayyār* groups arose in connection with this phenomenon.

Historical Manifestations of the Mutaṭawwiʿa

It is not easy to gather information about the *mutaṭawwiʿa* from the time of the founders until the mid-ninth century, the relevant years for our purposes; for we are not told of every raid they undertook. Worse, even when a particular raid is mentioned in our sources, the forces taking part are not necessarily identified – but this does not, of course, mean that no *mutaṭawwiʿa* participated in the raid.[173] It is not until the time of the caliph al-Mahdī (r. 775-785) that the *mutaṭawwiʿa* either suddenly begin to interest writers deeply or, alternatively, their activity became important enough and massive enough to draw the attention of the chroniclers. At this time, in the wake of al-Awzāʿī, Ibn al-Mubārak, and their friends, *mutaṭawwiʿa* activity on the Byzantine frontier becomes important enough to be included among the main events of the chronicles.

In this the chroniclers were simply following the lead of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs, who obviously must have felt at this time that one important way of confirming their own religious legitimacy and manifesting religious leadership was through holy warfare against Christian infidels. While, as we have seen, the Umayyads (at least until decline set in) did make a practice of appointing their relatives to conduct raids against the Infidel, the scale of such raids, their frequency, and the prominence of the people involved – including the caliph himself – was something new and qualitatively different from what came before.

This intensity of caliphal involvement in the *ghazw* is especially marked in the period extending from the caliphate of al-Mahdī through that of Hārūn al-Rashīd (al-Maʾmūn notoriously looked elsewhere for religious legitimacy).[174]

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[173] See for example below, in the episode of the Afshīn fighting Bābak – the *mutaṭawwiʿa* are not mentioned except when they become relevant, well into the anecdote.

[174] Although al-Maʾmūn campaigned as well, he seems to have realized that he was fighting a losing battle to reclaim the lost religious luster from the *ʿulamāʾ*, hence his courting of groups that he thought would counterbalance the Traditionists: first the Shiʿites and then the Rationalists. For his Shiʿite experiment, *vide* D. G. Tor, "A Re-examination of the Appointment and Death of ʿAlī al-Riḍā," *op. cit.*

Thus we read, in the biography of one Damascene who commanded various Jihadi raids, that during the 150s/mid-760s-mid-770s

> al-Mahdī, the Commander of the Faithful, entrusted his son Hārūn with the *ṣā'ifa*, and there were [on this raid] people from Syria and Khurāsān, and Kūfa and al-Baṣra, and the *muṭṭawwiʿa* of the people of the Ḥijāz [*al-muṭṭawwiʿa min ahl al-Ḥijāz*] …"[175]

This is not to say, of course, that *ghāzī* – and *mutaṭawwiʿ* -activities in the East were completely absent; but in the late-eighth century the attention of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs, like that of the leading *mutaṭawwiʿa*, was definitely focused on Syria; no ʿAbbāsid prince joins expeditions against the Zunbīl, for example.[176] That they did not neglect the eastern border of Dār al-Islām entirely, however, can be seen from the large raid al-Mahdī sent to India in the year 159/775f.

> In this year al-Mahdī sent ʿAbd al-Malik b. Shihāb al-Mismaʿī by sea to the land of India [*bilād al-Hind*]. He allocated to him 2,000 of the people of Baṣra from among all the soldiers, and dispatched them with him, and sent with him 1,500 men from among the *muṭṭawwiʿa* who were permanently manning [*yalzamū*] the frontier companies [*al-murābaṭāt*]. He also sent with him a commander … called Ibn al-Ḥubāb al-Madhḥijī with 700 of the people of Syria; and 1,000 men of the *muṭṭawwiʿa* of the people of Baṣra went out with him on their own money [*bi-amwālihim*] … And ʿAbd al-Malik b. Shihāb appointed al-Mundhir b. Muḥammad al-Jārūdī over the 1000 *muṭṭawwiʿa* from among the people of Baṣra.[177]

Al-Mahdī also appointed Ghassān b. ʿAbd al-Malik over the Baṣran conscripts, "set ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. ʿAbd al-Malik over the 1500 *mutaṭawwiʿa* of the frontier companies [*muṭṭawwiʿa al-murābaṭāt*], and set apart Yazīd b. al-Ḥubāb [al-Madhḥijī] with his companions and they set out … until they reached the Indian city of Bārbad in the year 160 [/776f.]."[178]

This account would seem to imply that al-Mahdī had control over one of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* groups (otherwise, he could not have 'sent' them), but not over the Baṣran *mutaṭawwiʿa*, who obviously decided on their own to "go out with him" and to contribute all their resources to their Jihad – although even in the Baṣran case, it should be noted that al-Mahdī's commander was able to appoint a subcommander over the *mutaṭawwiʿa*. Perhaps this unusual case – of a caliph having control over volunteers – arose due to the fact that they manned a fixed station in existing frontier positions {*yalzamū al-murābaṭāt*). Alternatively, it is possible that al-Mahdī commissioned the India raid from ʿAbd al-Malik b. Shihāb al-Mismaʿī simply because the latter *already was* a powerful *mutaṭawwiʿ* figure, one

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175 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 59, pp. 444-445.

176 Note also the intense preoccupation of Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ's chronicle with *ghāzī* affairs in Syria, to the total exclusion of the eastern front, *Ta'rikh Khalīfa*, e. g. pp. 346-357, including the entire reign of al-Mahdī.

177 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 8, pp. 116-117. Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vol. 8, p. 227, states: "al-Mahdī sent ʿAbd al-Malik b. Shihāb al-Mismaʿī by sea to India with a large company and they arrived in India in the year [1]60."

178 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 8, p. 117.

perhaps whom al-Mahdī wished to either co-opt or see well out of his own dominions.

Moreover, in another account of the same events, it is not explicitly stated that al-Mahdī also sent the *mutaṭawwiʿa* who accompanied the army; merely that he sent "an army by sea, commanded by ʿAbd al-Malik b. Shihāb al-Mismaʿī, to the land of India [*bilād al-Hind*], with a large army comprised of both soldiers and *mutaṭawwiʿa* [*jamʿ kathīr min al-jund wa'l-mutaṭawwiʿa*], among them al-Rabīʿ b. Ṣabīḥ."[179] Yet another report contains only an abbreviated version of these events, but should be noted because it gives marked prominence to the role of the *mutaṭawwiʿa*, thus stating that "ʿAbd al-Malik … reached the land of the Infidels with a great company of the *muṭṭawwiʿa* and others …"[180]

At any rate, whatever the precise degree of *mutaṭawwiʿa* prominence in the expedition, they were part of the Muslim force that successfully reached India:

> They went until they alighted at Bārbad [?], and when they had landed there they encompassed it from its surrounding districts. Some of the people urged the others to *jihād*,[181] and they besieged its people [*wa-ḍāyaqū ahlahā*]. Allah gave to them in this year the victory over [the city] by force; its population defended themselves in the temple of the Buddha [*budd*] which they had, but the Muslims burned it down upon them. Some of them were burned, and the remainder were killed.[182] Of the Muslims, twenty-odd men became martyrs …[183]

After the victory, however, the expedition suffered disaster. The sea was too rough for the Muslims to return home, so they had to remain in India, where they became sick with scurvy and about a thousand of the fighters died, including al-Rabīʿ b. Ṣabīḥ. Then, after they had finally managed to set sail, and were already off the coast of Fārs, a gale struck them, their vessels foundered, and many more of the men were lost.[184]

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[179] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 46. al-Rabīʿ b. Ṣabīḥ's *mutaṭawwiʿ* credentials are confirmed in a different source, which states the following "ʿAbbād b. Kathīr and al-Rabīʿ b. Ṣabīḥ came to me with a group of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* who were raiding by sea; they were *wujūh al-nās*, they had wealth and station [*la-hum aqdār wa-akhṭār*] …" and also remarks on their great devotion to the *sunna* (Abū ʿUbaydallāh Muḥammad b. ʿImrān al-Marzubānī al-Khurāsānī, *Akhbār al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī*, ed. Muḥammad Hādī al-Amīnī, Najaf, 1385/1965, p. 26. This account is particularly interesting because al-Rabīʿ b. Ṣabīḥ transmitted hadith to both Sufyān al-Thawrī and ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak; see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 6, p. 143). Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, according to Ibn Ḥanbal's son, said of al-Rabīʿ that "There was no harm in him; he was an upright man [*rajulᵘⁿ ṣāliḥᵘⁿ*] (*Ibid.*, p. 144; cf. Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*).

[180] Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vol. 8, pp. 236-237.

[181] Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh*, vol. 6, p. 128) says that they "urged one another on with the Qurʾān and the remembrance of God [*tadhkīr*]."

[182] Cf. the raid on Qandahār in the year 53/672f. , when the Muslims gathered the Hindus into their temple and killed them there (Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 166).

[183] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 46.

[184] Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 8, p. 128; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 46.

In any case, the *mutaṭawwiʿa* needed no caliphal command in order to fight Infidels wherever they found them. Masʿūdī's description of the relationship between Qazwīn and Daylam, for instance, makes clear that in any border area during the mid-eighth through tenth centuries there was constant volunteer Jihad activity going on;[185] this was the very nature and essence of *taṭawwuʿ*:

> Islam came, Allah conquered the land for the Muslims, and Qazwīn became for the Daylam a border area [*thaghr*], she and other [places], of [those] which surrounded the country of Daylam and al-Jabal. The *muṭṭawwiʿa* and the *ghāzīs* headed for it, and *rābaṭū* [i. e. stationed themselves (there)] and raided [*ghazaw*] … from it.[186]

Over the next several years, al-Mahdī continued to vie with the border warriors by sending out border raids into Byzantium.[187] These government-appointed raids, as we have already seen in previous episodes, at least occasionally joined forces with the *mutaṭawwiʿa*. In 162/779, for instance,

> Al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba raided the *ṣā'ifa* raid with thirty-thousand salaried soldiers, apart from the *muṭṭawwiʿa*, reaching the hot springs of Adhrūliyya, and brought much destruction and burning into the land of Byzantium, without [however] capturing any stronghold.[188]

One of the best indications of the moral pressure that *mutaṭawwiʿī* activities exerted on caliphal policy is the aforementioned participation of ʿAbbāsid princes and heirs apparent, with great fanfare, in the summer raids. In 163/780, for instance, the Caliph al-Mahdī sent his son Hārūn on the summer raid.[189] In 165/782, Hārūn returned to the Byzantine theater of operations, launching a spectacular raid that reached the Sea of Marmara, and succeeding in extracting tribute payments (which the Muslims interpreted as the *jizya*) from the Empress Irene and the Byzantines. In this raid, obviously important for the great symbolic significance the imposition of the tribute payment must have held for the Muslim psyche, we are told specifically that *mutaṭawwiʿa* also took part:

> [al-Mahdī] sent to raid the summer raid [*ṣā'ifa*] his son Hārūn b. al-Mahdī with 100,000 of the salaried soldiers apart from the *muṭṭawwiʿa*, the camp followers [*al-atbāʿ*], *ahl al-*

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185 Thus Ibn Funduq's *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq* (p. 220) laconically mentions under the biography of al-Imam Abū Dharr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Muṭṭawwiʿī al-Nīshābūrī, who died in the year 401/1010f. , that "all of the ancestors of this Abū Dharr were *ʿulamā'* of the *ghāzīs* and *muṭṭawwiʿa*" [*jumla-i islāf-i īn Abū Dharr ʿulamā-ī ghuzāt u muṭṭawwiʿa būdand*].

186 Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. 4, p. 424. We see again the pressure this kind of volunteer warrior activity exerted on the ʿAbbāsid caliphs to compete with them in the Jihad, if the caliphs wished even to attempt to wrest back religious leadership from the volunteer warriors: al-Mahdī's sole visit to Qazwīn took place in the course of raids against Daylam (Ḥamdallāh b. Abī Bakr b. Aḥmad b. Naṣr Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i guzīda*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Navā'ī, Tehran, 1339/1960, p. 789).

187 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 8, pp. 116, 128, 136.

188 *Ibid.* , p. 146; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 58; a less informative version can be found in Khalīfa, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 355; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, vol. 10, p. 11, dates the raid to the year 161/778, calling it "a raid whose like had never been heard of [before]."

189 Khalīfa, *loc. cit.* ; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 8, p. 148; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, vol. 10, p. 14.

> *aswāq*[190] and the *ghāzīs*, and they killed 45,000 of the Byzantines. They acquired so much spoil [*māl*] that the price of a workhorse was one dirham, [as was the price] of a hauberk [*dirʿ*] and of twenty swords [i. e. each of these items was supposedly obtainable for one dirham]. And they forced [the Byzantines] to pay as the *jizya* every year 70,000 dīnārs …"[191]

Here we clearly see the *mutaṭawwiʿa* and the *ghāzīs* listed as two separate, discrete groups. This tends to confirm the conjecture that the double *nisba* "*al-ghāzī al-mutaṭawwiʿī*" is actually two separate *nisbas*, awarded to someone who engaged, at different points in time, in two different, albeit related, types of activities, one governmentally sanctioned and the other a private sector initiative.

Serious caliphal preoccupation with the Jihad continued when Hārūn became caliph. One should note here that, coming as it did at the height of Ibn al-Mubārak's career, Hārūn's reign was notably preoccupied, not only with the Jihad, but with projecting an aura of proto-Sunni piety generally. It has been remarked by previous researchers that "al-Rashīd stressed the religious character of the Caliphate," by taking a hard-line against ʿAlids and *dhimmis*, destroying churches along the Muslim-Byzantine frontier, and so forth.[192] The heart of this proto-Sunni piety, however, was Jihad, and it was there that Hārūn focused his primary efforts.

There is, for instance, Hārūn's dedication of his son al-Qāsim to God in the year 188/804, apparently through pledging him to border warfare: "In [this year] Hārūn al-Rashīd sent his son al-Qāsim to raid the summer raid [*ṣā'ifa*]; and he gave him to God, making him a sacrifice [*qurbān*^{an}] to Him and an entreaty

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190 On the face of it, this phrase should mean "the merchants," presumably referring to the mercantile suppliers who tended to congregate around army encampments; however, since the phrase "*sūq al-ḥarb*" refers to the thick of battle, there may perhaps have been some military significance to the term.

191 Al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-bad' wa'l-Ta'rīkh*, vol. 6, p. 96; repeated in Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 8, pp. 152-153; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vol. 8, pp. 277-278; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islam*, vol. 10, pp. 18-19. .

192 Farouk Omar, "Hārūn al-Rashīd," p. 24. Michael Bonner also noted Hārūn's Jihad preoccupation in his article "Al-Khalīfa al-Marḍī: The Accession of Hārūn al-Rashīd," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 108:1 (1988), pp. 79-91. It should be noted that al-Rashīd cultivated an ostentatious public piety despite his apparently dissolute private practices. Farouk Omar, for one, is puzzled by this, stating: "Opinion on [al-Rashīd's] character are contradictory. He has been represented by various chroniclers as pious and dissolute … at the same time." [*Ibid*, p. 26] The solution the present author is positing here is that Hārūn cultivated in public a religious image based upon Ibn al-Mubārak's, in the hope of countering the latter's religious prestige and accruing something of the same aura himself. It is therefore also unsurprising that one finds poetry in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* being written for al-Rashīd which awards him the quasi-messianic title of "al-Riḍā b. Muḥammad." (cited by Farouk Omar, "A Note on the Laqabs (Epithets) of the Early ʿAbbāsid Caliphs," *ʿAbbāsiyyat: Studies in the History of the early ʿAbbāsids*," Baghdad, 1976, p. 146) For the significance of the term "al-Riḍā," *vide* Patricia Crone, "On the Meaning of the ʿAbbāsid Call to al-Riḍā," ed. C. E Bosworth *et. al.* , *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 95-111.

[unto Him], and appointing him governor over the frontier districts [*ʿawāṣim*]."[193] Raids on Byzantium were continually led from the frontier districts from the beginning of al-Rashīd's reign,[194] but the *mutaṭawwiʿa* are not mentioned until Hārūn's conquest and destruction of Heracleia in the year 190/806: "He had besieged it for thirty days, and took its populace captive. He had entered the country with 135,000 salaried soldiers [*murtaziqa*], in addition to the camp followers [*al-athāʿ*], the *mutaṭawwiʿa*, and those who do not have a dīwān [*man lā dīwān la-hu*]."[195]

Confirmation of the presence of *muṭṭawwiʿa* in Hārūn's raid on Heracleia is found in a detailed anecdote in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, recounted by an anonymous "shaykh from among the shaykhs of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* and those stationed in the marchlands [*shaykh min shuyūkh al-muṭṭawwiʿa wa mulāzimī'l-thughūr*], called ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh." This story, while almost certainly legendary and literary rather than historical, seems to preserve the memory both of *mutaṭawwiʿa* participation in the raid and, more important, a glimpse of what the *mutaṭawwiʿa* were actually like. Our anonymous shaykh relates that during the siege of Heracleia, the Muslims were on the verge of victory, and had already won the gate to the city, when a man from among the besieged "like the most perfect of men, came out with perfect weapons," challenging the Muslims to engage in combat with him, two against one. He kept increasing the number of men he was willing to fight single-handedly, "until he reached twenty men, but none answered him, so he went in and closed the gate of the fortress."[196]

Al-Rashīd, we are told, had been asleep at the time all this took place; when he discovered what had transpired he furiously rebuked his attendants and slaves for not having awakened him, but was told that the man had announced that he would reappear and repeat his challenge upon the morrow. Al-Rashīd accordingly awoke the next morning "like someone who is waiting for it [to arrive]," and witnessed the man reissuing from the gate and challenging the Muslims afresh, twenty to one. Hārūn then asked for volunteers – but

> before any of the great ones from among his commanders, such as Harthama [b. Aʿyan], Yazīd b. Mazyad, ʿAbdallāh b. Malik, Khuzayma b. Ḥāzim [*et alii*] … could decide upon going out [to fight], the *mutaṭawwiʿa* raised a clamour, so that [al-Rashīd] heard their clamour, and permitted twenty of them [to come to him]; they asked permission for a consultation [*al-mashūra*],[197] and he allowed it. Their spokesman said: "O Commander of the Faithful, your commanders are famous among the important people

[193] Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 8, p. 302; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 189. Khalīfa (*Taʾrīkh*, p. 375) and al-Yaʿqūbī (*Taʾrīkh*, vol. 2, p. 297) do not speak of the dedication to God and sacrifice.

[194] For a summary of the raiding activity between 170/786 and 189/804, see Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence*, pp. 89-95.

[195] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 196.

[196] Abū'l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, Beirut, 1412/1992, vol. 18, p. 251.

[197] Thus vocalized in the text.

> [*al-nās*] for bravery, high renown, and skill in wars [*mudāwasat al-ḥurūb*],[198] such that if one of them should go out and kill this Infidel [*ʿilj*], it would not be significant [for him]; but if the Infidel were to kill him, the ignominy upon the army would be great, and a gap that could not be closed up. We are commoners [*ʿāmma*], none of us shall gain prestige except as is fitting for commoners. If the Commander of the Faithful were to decide to allow us [to fight], we would choose a man and send him out [alone] to fight [the *ʿilj*]; if he is victorious the people of the fortress will know that the Commander of the Faithful defeated their mightiest with a commoner … but if the man is killed then he has become a *shahīd*, and his going will neither affect the army nor sully it[s honour].[199]

Hārūn agreed to this plan, so the *mutaṭawwiʿa* chose from among themselves a man named Ibn al-Khazarī, "known in the borderlands [*thaghr*] for strength and courage." Al-Rashīd then ordered that Ibn al-Khazarī be given "a horse, a spear, a sword and a shield," to which the *mutaṭawwiʿī* responded that "I [already] have my trustworthy horse, and my strongest spear is in my hand; however I hereby accept a sword and shield." Ibn al-Khazarī accordingly battled the Infidel, and in the end used a stratagem [*ḥīla*] to defeat the enemy, feigning flight and then turning upon and beheading the man.[200] There are many intriguing aspects to this story. First, of course, the fact that the *mutaṭawwiʿa* define themselves as "commoners." We see from the story, however, that this certainly does not mean poor people, any more than the word "commoner" did in the pre-twentieth-century English House of Commons; no poor person could have owned a battle horse and been adept at riding it. Another point that immediately grabs one's attention is the *mutaṭawwiʿī*'s use of a trick – *ḥīla* – to gain the advantage; this, as we shall presently see, is a characteristic practice of the *ʿayyārīn*.[201]

Before leaving the *mutaṭawwiʿa* of the Byzantine frontier, we should note that their activities continued unabated throughout the ninth century. In the year 283/896, for example, we see them involved with warfare and ransom negotiations on the Byzantine frontier; the Muslim commander rides out with "the important people of the area [*wujūh al-balad*], the *mawālī*, the commanders [*quwwād*], and the *mutaṭawwiʿa*;"[202] and in the year 290/903 when the new governor of Tarsus went out to the city to assume his duties, "there went out with him a group of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* to the *ghazw*."[203]

198 The editor defines this as "*al-mirān ʿalayhā*."
199 Al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 18, pp. 251-252.
200 *Ibid.*
201 *Vide* e. g. Farāmarz b. Khudādād, *Samak-i ʿayyār, passim*; also Ibn al-Layth's use of stratagems, *infra*, chapter four. M. Canard, "La Prise de Héraclée et les relations entre Hārūn ar-Rashīd et l'empereur Nicéphore Ier," *Byzantion* 32 (1962), p. 365, in his brief summary of this passage, does not mention the *mutaṭawwiʿa*.
202 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 10, p. 46.
203 *Ibid.* , p. 98.

Mutaṭawwiʿa during the ninth century, moreover, were active not only in the northern and eastern parts of *Dār al-Islām*, but also in its uttermost west. Thus we read that in the year 191/806f.,

> … Louis the Pious[204] [written: Ludhriq= Hludovic], King of the Franks, fitted out [an army] in Spain, and gathered his armies in order to march to Ṭarṭūsha and besiege it. [News of] this reached [the Spanish Umayyad ruler] al-Ḥakam, so he gathered the armies and sent them with his son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. They gathered into a mighty army, and many of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* followed them; they went and met the Franks on the border of their land before they had taken anything from the land of the Muslims. They battled, and each one of the sides bestowed its efforts, and spent all its strength; but Allah, may He be exalted, bestowed his victory upon the Muslims. The Infidels were routed; there was great killing and taking prisoner amongst them, their goods and their baggage were plundered, and the Muslims returned, victoriously plundering.[205]

Our area of interest, however, lies not with Spain but rather with the ʿAbbāsid provinces, particularly the Eastern ones, and there we see that the *mutaṭawwiʿa* were important players in Eastern affairs throughout the reign of Hārūn's son al-Maʾmūn as well. In the year 205/820f. al-Maʾmūn appointed Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn governor over the entire eastern Caliphate, "from Baghdad to the furthest provinces of the Mashriq."[206]

> It is said that the reason for his appointment was that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muṭṭawwiʿī gathered many troops in Naysābūr in order to fight the Kharijites [*al-Ḥarūriyya*] with them,[207] without the command of the governor of Khurāsān, and they [i. e. the power players in al-Maʾmūn's court – Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn, Aḥmad b. Abī Khālid, *et alii*] were scared that this would be the foundation of [the bestowing of] the vicegerency upon him …[208]

The court figures therefore manipulated al-Maʾmūn into appointing one of their own, instead of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān.

Here we note several characteristics of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* as they existed in the ninth century – characteristics which the *ʿayyārūn* were to share when they begin to appear in our sources shortly before this time. First, the volunteer warriors operated with apparent complete disregard for established authority (in this case the governor of Khurāsān); they had a mandate from on high, and obviously felt that they needed no other. Note that this did not, as we have already seen, preclude cooperation with governmental armies in a common pursuit of the Jihad; but this

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204 Carolingian Emperor (r. 814-840), son of Charlemagne. On his reign see R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms Under the Carolingians, 751-987*, New York, 1983, pp. 106-139 (his Spanish campaigns while King of Aquitaine are discussed on pp. 107-108). He had been anointed king of Aquitaine in 781; originally, his older brother Pippin III was supposed to have inherited the bulk of Carolingian lands.

205 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 202.

206 *Ibid.* , p. 360.

207 Ḥarūra was the name of the place where, according to tradition, the Kharijites disavowed ʿAlī. See L. Veccia Vaglieri's article "Ḥarūra," *EI²*.

208 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 361.

cooperation should not be mistaken for subordination to governmental aims or unconditional control. Second, the *mutaṭawwiʿa* were very active in fighting the Kharijites, particularly at this time. Third, this ideological position must have held widespread appeal – for the most prominent figures in al-Maʾmūn's court are worried that pursuing such a course will win ʿAbd al-Raḥmān the most powerful role in the government.

In fact, from the time of al-Maʾmūn we see the energies of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* increasingly prominent in two areas of endeavour, apart from the Byzantine frontier: the infidel East, and the commanding of the good and enjoining of the forbidden inside Muslim society. Both of these aspects, of course, can be seen from the earliest days of the founding figures of the movement; but they become ever stronger, and the *mutaṭawwiʿa* seem to be far more important in these two arenas from the later years of Hārūn's reign onward. Also, this element of disregard for figures in authority, from the caliph on down, when their injunctions seem not to be in accordance with religious dictates, becomes increasingly noticeable.

During the war against the heretic Bābak the Khurramī,[209] for example, in the year 222/837, the Caliphal general, the Afshīn, was annoyed with one of the Muslim commanders, Jaʿfar b. al-Khayyāṭ, for a comment he had made, and therefore deliberately refrained from going to Jaʿfar's aid in battle. A "group of the *mutaṭawwiʿa*," however, when they saw what was happening, simply went to Jaʿfar's aid, "without the command of Afshīn."[210] In other words, the *mutaṭawwiʿa* were determined to fight their heretics and succour the Muslims even against the direct orders of legitimately constituted authority.

This *mutaṭawwiʿī* obedience to religious imperative over political authority held true even when the caliph was the authority in question. In several reported cases, the conflict between a *mutaṭawwiʿ*'s religious position and caliphal authority led to the death of the former. We read, for instance, that in 231/845f.

> Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzāʿī al-Shahīd was killed. He was among the descendants of the *amīrs* of the ʿAbbāsid state [*min awlād umarāʾ al-dawla*]. He rose in religious knowledge and godliness, wrote [traditions] from Mālik and a group [of others] … and used to disparage himself. Al-Wāthiq killed him with his own hand because he refrained from saying that the Qurʾān was created, and because of his speaking rudely to al-Wāthiq in public addresses … He was a leader in commanding the good and forbidding evil. There arose with him a group of the *muṭṭawwiʿa* and their power became excessive [*istafḥala amruhum*]. The ʿAbbāsid state feared [*fa-khāfathu al-dawla*] that a schism would be accomplished by this.[211]

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209 On the Khurramiyya and Bābak's revolt *vide supra*; and also B. S. Amoretti, "Sects and Heresies," *Cambridge History of Iran*, *op. cit.* , vol. 4, pp. 503-509. Amoretti describes what is known of Bābak's doctrines as "Bābak shall seize the earth, kill the tyrants, and restore the religion of Mazdak." (p. 506)

210 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, pp. 465-466.

211 Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī, *al-ʿIbar fi khabar man ghabar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Munjjid and Fu'ād Sayyid, Kuwait, 1960, vol. 1, p. 408. In this same year,

This is a truly revealing statement, one which combines all of the elements we have been discussing – the growing disorders inside the Dār al-Islām, particularly with regard to the Caliph's position; the religious independence of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* and their insistence upon adhering to religious principles and positions as they understood them; and the newly found power of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* themselves and the political challenge that this constituted. The outcome of this ideology was the following:

> Waging war against the "infidels" was the concern not only of rulers and their military apparatus, but also an endeavour which Muslims could voluntarily choose to participate in, particularly in order to gain the other-worldly rewards connected with it. This alone should suggest that activity in this field was not an affair controlled by the state to the exclusion of others, was not a monopoly of the ruler; on the contrary, conflicts over control of volunteer armies and legitimizing purposes seem much more likely.[212]

It comes as no surprise, then, when we see that by the mid-ninth century many *mutaṭawwiʿa* had for all intents and purposes begun to ignore the caliphs, who had fallen from "God's shadow on earth" to mere shadow figures controlled by their Turkish handlers. The most outstanding example of this trend is how the *mutaṭawwiʿa*, whenever we read of them, are fighting for rulers such as Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn and Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth, virtually autonomous rulers, rather than for the caliphs. Thus in the case of Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn, for instance, when he set out from Egypt in the year 264/878 for the *ghazw* on Byzantium (since the caliph had virtually abandoned this task), we hear that he is accompanied by *mutaṭawwiʿa* and *ghāzīs*.[213]

Another, related issue highlighted by the aforementioned incident of Aḥmad b. Naṣr, the volunteer warrior *shahīd* of 231/845f. , is the extent to which the *mutaṭawwiʿa* took upon themselves the responsibility of commanding right and forbidding wrong – "*al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf wa'l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*,"[214] always irrespective of the political authorities and sometimes in direct opposition to them.[215] This anti-caliphal trend becomes most prominent in the aftermath of the Fourth Fitna, which had shaken the ʿAbbāsid government to its foundations. During the

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231845f., a ship full of *mutaṭawwiʿa* broke up in the Persian Gulf and some of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* were injured. (Khalīfa, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 395)

[212] J. Paul, *The State and the Military: The Sāmānid Case. Papers on Inner Asia*, 26, Bloomington, 1994, p. 13.

[213] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. 4, p. 239. Note once again that *mutaṭawwiʿa* and *ghāzīs* constitute two separate groups.

[214] This aspect of a *mutaṭawwiʿ*'s activities is frequently mentioned in the biographies; *vide* e. g. Al-Qazwīnī, *al-Tadwīn fī akhbār Qazwīn*, vol. 2, p. 2, where the three activities mentioned in this category are the learning of *hadīth* and *fiqh*, *al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf*, and the defense of Qazwīn.

[215] This independent upholding of the right has long been considered an important duty of Muslims. As Gardet notes, "Chaque musulman dans sa sphère, et en tant que musulman, sera donc, lui aussi, un homme qui 'commande le bien et interdit le mal,' *amīr bi'l-maʿrūf wa nāhin ʿan al-munkar*;'" L. Gardet, *La cité musulmane: vie sociale et politique*, Paris, 1961.

several succeeding years (813-819), al-Maʾmūn remained in the remote eastern part of the Muslim empire, experimenting with various religio-political innovations and leaving the central lands to deal with an unending succession of revolts and disturbances as best they could.[216]

Baghdad was left to the apparently inept misrule of various members of the ʿAbbāsid family, who, according to our sources, failed to provide even minimal public order. Therefore, in the year 201/816f. , so we are told,

> … the *mutaṭawwiʿa* devoted themselves to commanding the good and forbidding evil. The reason for this was that the dissolute of Baghdad [*fussāq Baghdād*] and the *shuṭṭār* troubled the people greatly, manifested evildoing [*aẓharū al-fisq*], cut off the road, and seized women and youths openly. They would seize a man's son and his family, without his being able to prevent them from doing this; and they would plunder the villages without there being any ruler to prevent them and take them in hand, for he [i. e. the ruler] would egg them on, and they were his intimate associates. They would seize passersby on the road, and no one aided against them, so that the people were in great affliction because of them.[217]

Note that al-Maʾmūn's governor was considered in this case to be part of the problem rather than the solution: it is his cronies and henchmen who are terrorizing the populace.

Finally, in the face of the aforementioned outrages, the law-abiding[218] began discussing how they should join together in order to restore some order. A man called Khālid al-Daryūsh

> summoned his neighbours, his household, and the people of his quarter, to aid him in commanding the good and forbidding evil, and they responded to him in this [matter]. He [then] attacked whomever was near him of the evil-doers and the *shuṭṭār*, restrained them from their doing [evil deeds] … and jailed them, and delivered them to the authorities, but he was not looking to force any change upon the authorities [*Annahu kāna lā yarā an yughayyira ʿalā al-sulṭān shayʾan*].[219]

Several days later,

> … there arose after him a man from al-Ḥarbiyya[220]called Sahl b. Salama al-Anṣārī from among the people of Khurāsān, with the *kunya* of Abū Ḥātim. He summoned the people to command the good, and forbid evil, and to act according to the Qurʾān and the *sunna*. [He] hung a copy of the Qurʾān around his neck, commanded the people of his

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216 On this period and its numerous disturbances see D. G. Tor, "An Historiographical Re-Examination of the Appointment and Death of ʿAlī al-Riḍā," *op. cit.*

217 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 324; with slight variations, Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 8, p. 551; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, vol. 10, pp. 92-93.

218 Ibn al-Jawzī calls them *al-ṣulaḥāʾ* – note the earlier connection we saw, *supra*, between *mutaṭawwiʿa* and *ṣulaḥāʾ*.

219 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 8, p. 552; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 325.

220 One of the northern quarters of Baghdad, originally settled by the Khurāsānī supporters of the ʿAbbāsids and containing the barracks of al-Manṣūr's domestic slaves (*vide* Le Strange, *Baghdad During the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate*, pp. 108-135).

> quarter [to do good] and prohibited them [from evil], and they obeyed him. He summoned all the people, [both] the noble and the plebeian, from among the Banū Hāshim and others, and a great crowd arrived at him and pledged allegiance to him in this [*fa-bāyaʿūhu ʿalā dhālika*], and on fighting with him against those who opposed him …[221]

> He roved about in Baghdad and its markets … making sure that everything functioned properly and that no protection money was imposed by ruffians and unscrupulous operators.
> When news of these risings reached Manṣūr b. al-Mahdī and ʿIsā b. Muḥammad b. Abī Khālid, "this shattered them [*fa-kasarahumā dhālika*], for most of their companions were the *shuṭṭār* and those who had no good in them [*man lā khayra fihi*]."[222]

According to the sources, there were a number of further intrigues against and assassination attempts upon Sahl by the ʿAbbāsid authorities, but the (temporary) outcome of all this was that "the people of Baghdad wanted what was good [ruling] over them [*fa-raḍiya ahl Baghdād bi-mā ṣāliḥ ʿalayhi*], so Sahl remained responsible for that which was [already] upon him of commanding the good and prohibiting the forbidden."[223]

Sahl b. Salama did not fare so well during the time of the revolt of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, however.[224] In 202/817f. , Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī "was victorious over

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221 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 325.

222 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 8, pp. 552-553; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 326. Madelung, on the basis of one eleventh-century Zaydī work, claims that Sahl b. Salama was a Muʿtazilite Zaydī (W. Madelung, "The Vigilante Movement of Sahl b. Salama al-Khurāsānī and the Origins of Ḥanbalism Reconsidered," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 14 [1990] pp. 331-337). The present author finds Madelung's argument thoroughly unconvincing, for several reasons: 1) No other source knows anything of any Zaydī conspiracy in Baghdad at this time, let alone of Sahl b. Salama's being part of one. 2) Sahl b. Salama, by Madelung's own admission (p. 335) does not appear in any other Zaydī work, *ṭabaqāt* or otherwise. 3) His known affiliations (with the Ḥarbiyya quarter and Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn) and actions (his call to follow the Qurʾān and the *Sunna*, his refusal to recognize ʿAlī al-Riḍā, and his declaration that he was not trying to overthrow the ʿAbbāsids) seem much more in accordance with Lapidus's placement of Sahl within the context of proto-Ḥanbalism (M. Lapidus, "The Separation of state and religion in the development of early Islamic society," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 6 [1975], pp. 372-378), particularly in view of the fact that all the other *mutaṭawwiʿa* we have seen have clear Sunni, particularly proto-Ḥanbalite, connections. It also seems most peculiar that the people of Baghdad would have chosen a Muʿtazilite Zaydī when looking for a pious leader, and while in a righteous uproar over the appointment of the Shiʿite ʿAlī al-Riḍā as heir apparent. Finally, even if Madelung is right to give credence to this sole Zaydī source, one must ask oneself what the significance of Sahl's alleged "secret" beliefs really was. That is, if Sahl managed to masquerade as a good pious Sunni for such a long period, maintaining so well his proper *mutaṭawwiʿ* pose to the point where no contemporary, but only one secret Zaydi work, ever uncovered the "truth" about his hidden beliefs, then his behaviour and stated beliefs should still be examined for what they show about ***mutaṭawwiʿa***, not what they show about crypto-Zaydīs: his external life, even according to Madelung, was not Zaydī at all.

223 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 326.

224 This revolt was the direct result of al-Maʾmūn's decision to appoint ʿAlī al-Riḍā, who became the eighth Shiʿite Imam, as his heir to the throne. For a treatment of Ibrāhīm b. al-

Sahl b. Salama al-Mutaṭawwiʿī, and jailed him and punished him."[225] Despite – or, rather, because of – Sahl's having won – and kept -the allegiance of the people of Baghdad by "summoning to command the good and prohibit evil," Ibrāhīm's general ʿIsā b. Muḥammad b. Abī Khālid and his cronies felt a compelling need to get rid of Sahl b. Salama, "because he used to remind them of the vilest of their deeds, and term them the evil-doers [*al-fussāq*];" finally, with the help of a little judicious bribery, they managed to seize him. When accused by the ʿAbbāsid Isḥāq b. al-Hādī of incitement against the ʿAbbāsids, Sahl replied: "My *daʿwa*[226]has been ʿAbbāsid; indeed, I was summoning to action in accordance with the Qurʾān and the *Sunna*; and I, being [in authority] over that which I was over, shall summon you to it at this very moment." After Sahl refused to renounce his program publicly, Isḥāq b. al-Hādī and his cronies beat Sahl, shackled him "and reviled him," then sent him to Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī in al-Madāʾin, who further abused him and had him jailed. Interestingly, Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī gave out that Sahl had been killed, "from fear of the people [*aẓhara annahu qutila, khawfan min al-nās*], lest they find out his location and bring him forth."[227] This statement indicates that Sahl must still have enjoyed very strong popular support.

Ibrāhīm eventually released Sahl in an attempt to buy Baghdad's loyalty when al-Maʾmūn's forces were approaching the city; it is noteworthy that people still felt allegiance to Sahl, even after his many months of absence.[228] The story of this particular *mutaṭawwiʿ* ends with al-Maʾmūn's rewarding him with approval and gifts – and commanding him to remain at home.[229] Al-Maʾmūn apparently best appreciated an upright and zealous conscience when it acted as watchdog over others, but not over him.

This whole episode is significant because it is our first detailed account of what pious, orthodox people did when the government failed them in the most basic way. It shows us that, while theories of authority and how to behave toward political authorities are all very well, most human beings, when faced with physical threat, economic ruin, and a situation of rampant lawlessness and injus-

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Mahdī's revolt in its political context see, again, D. Tor, "An Historiographical Re-examination of the Appointment and Death of ʿAlī al-Riḍā."

225 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 8, p. 562; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 345.

226 For an elaboration of the meaning of this term, and particularly its meaning in ʿAbbāsid ideology, see Moshe Sharon, *Black Banners from the East: The Establishment of the ʿAbbāsid State – Incubation of a Revolt*, Jerusalem, 1983, chapter 1, *passim*.

227 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 8, pp. 562-564; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, pp. 345-346. Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. 4, p. 34, has only a very abbreviated account of these doings, in which he, interestingly, conflates the evil-doers with the *mutaṭawwiʿa*: "Baghdad was in turmoil in the days of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, and the wicked [*ruwaybiḍa*] became stirred up, and they called themselves *mutaṭawwiʿa* – they are the leaders of the commonalty [*al-ʿāmma*] and the followers [*al-tawābiʿ*]." The conflation seems rather impossible, given the details of Ṭabarī's story, in which we clearly see the *mutaṭawwiʿa* opposing the evil-doers.

228 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 8, pp. 571-572.

229 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 8, p. 573.

tice abetted by those same legitimate political authorities, will throw theory to the wind and do whatever they must to protect their possessions, their families, and their lives. If the government was not going to uphold the basic Islamic precepts for the right ordering of the world, through Jihad outside of the Islamic oecumene and *al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf* within it, the Muslim community was not thereby absolved of the obligation to do so; good Muslims would simply have to enforce God's rule themselves. As we shall presently see, this development was precisely what led to the political prominence of the *ʿayyārān*.

The Mutaṭawwiʿa *in the East and the Emergence of the* ʿAyyārān

One of the most fertile fields for the practice of *al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf* for *mutaṭawwiʿa* inside the Abode of Islam was among the heretical Kharijites of eastern Khurāsān. We know of *mutaṭawwiʿa* in eastern Khurāsān, of course, from the time of the founders of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* movement, although we are not informed what the scope of *mutaṭawwiʿa* activities were there. Thus we read, among the accounts of those who died in the years 161-170/777-787, of one of ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak's fellow citizens of Marv, Shaybān b. Abī Shaybān, "al-Mutaṭawwiʿī al-Marwazī al-Ghāzī," who was both a hadith transmitter, and "… among the chiefs of the holy warriors in Khurāsān."[230] We see once again from the *nisbas* that the *mutaṭawwiʿ* and the *ghāzī* were not identical – although the two forms of Jihad were closely related, and sometimes the same people would, at different points in their career, function in both capacities; but the *mutaṭawwiʿ* was, apparently, much more privatized than the *ghāzī*.[231]

It is clear that there were throughout the ninth century – and beyond – volunteers against the "Turks" on the borders,[232] but our concern here is with the internal Islamic function of *mutaṭawwiʿa* activity in the East, beginning in the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd, against the proliferation of Kharijite revolts,[233] since it is during these struggles against the Kharijites that the *ʿayyārān* first appear in our sources.

In the year 176/792f. , Hārūn replaced his governor of Sīstān, who had been unable to quell the serious Kharijite revolt of al-Ḥuḍayn in the province (but who had been extremely active with the *ghāzīs* against the Turks), with Dāʾūd b.

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230 "*kāna min ruʾūs al-mujāhidīn bi-Khurāsān*," Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, vol. 10, pp. 267-268.

231 This is also Lapidus's point in "The separation of state and religion," *passim.*

232 E. g. during the early Sāmānid period, in the year 291/904, we read that Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad together with "*min al-muṭṭawwiʿa nās kathīr*" attacked a huge Turkish army on the march against the Muslims (Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 10, p. 116).

233 Note that the problem of heretics – and *mutaṭawwiʿa* efforts to combat this problem – were not limited to the eastern borders of the Empire, however; in the year 287/900 the *mutaṭawwiʿa* of Baṣra go out to fight the Qarmatians – unsuccessfully (Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 7, p. 499; Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 10, pp. 77-78).

Bishr al-Muhallabī; and Dāʾūd accordingly advanced in the following year to fight al-Ḥuḍayn and the Kharijites with "a large army of the soldiers of the *muṭṭawwiʿa* and the *ghāzīs*" and defeated them.[234]

There followed a respite from Kharijite activity of barely a year, during which time the next governor of Sīstān could happily occupy himself with campaigning against the Turks, then raiding Kabul. While he was away raiding, however, another Kharijite arose at home and the governor returned to fight him "with the *ghāzīs*."[235] The next governor appointed by Hārūn al-Rashīd, Sayf b. ʿUthmān al-Ṭārābī (appointed 196/811f.), was literally unable to enter the city of Zarang, which was barred against him by the Kharijite Muḥammad b. al-Ḥuḍayn, son of the erstwhile rebel.[236] Sayf thereupon retired to Bust, where he assembled an army and came to Sīstān, together with one "Abū al-ʿUryān … and this Abū al-ʿUryān was an *ʿayyār* [*mardī ʿayyār būd*] from Sīstān, one of the troop commanders, and the commonalty were his friends [*va-ghawghā' yār-i ū būdand*]."[237] Thus, the first time *ʿayyārān* appear in the sources – in the year 191 or 192/807, during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd and not, as commonly thought, in Baghdad during the Fourth Fitna – they appear in exactly the same context in which we have already seen *ghāzīs* and *mutaṭawwiʿa*: namely, fighting the Kharijites.

In the event, this army was defeated by the Kharijites, as was a subsequent Caliphal army sent by Hārūn al-Rashīd's favorite general, Harthama b. Aʿyan, at which point Hārūn determined he would have to come to Khurāsān himself.[238] Hārūn first, however, sent the most important Kharijite leader, Ḥamza, a letter, which was rejected offhand by Ḥamza; but Hārūn's death in Ṭūs and the return of the army to Baghdad cut short any campaign he might have contemplated. Upon hearing the news, Ḥamza the Kharijite said:

> "'God battled for the believers.'[239] Since it was thus, it has become incumbent upon us that we go attack the idolaters in India [*Sind u Hind*], China [*Chīn u Māchīn*], and [the land of] the Turks, Byzantium and [the land of] the blacks." [Ḥamza's followers] re-

234 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, pp. 153-154. As Bosworth points out (*Sistan Under the Arabs*, p. 85), while the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* claims that al-Ḥuḍayn was killed, Ibn al-Athīr states that he was merely defeated, and fled to the Kharijite stronghold of the Herāt region (on the Kharijite tendencies of this area, *vide infra*, chapter 4). Note that, once again, the *mutaṭawwiʿa* and the *ghāzīs* are listed as two separate bodies.

235 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 154.

236 He was only one of the Kharijite rebels active at this time; the great Ḥamza b. ʿAbdallāh was the main Kharijite leader in Khurāsān during this period. See Bosworth, *Sistan Under the Arabs*, pp. 91-104.

237 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 161. While in Arabic the term "*ghawghā'*" possesses the negative connotation of "riffraff" or "lowlife," in Persian, as Bahār notes, it invariably means simply "commonalty," the equivalent of the Arabic term *ʿāmma* (*vide Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 179, note 1).

238 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, pp. 161-162.

239 Qurʾān 33:25.

plied: "That which God Almighty utters through your tongue, that is the right way for us."[240]

Accordingly, some of Ḥamza's troops set off to "protect the weak from the tyrants" in Khurāsān, Sīstān, Fārs and Kirmān, while he himself sallied forth to India, took to sea in Ceylon, "and carried out many raids" [*bisyār ghazvhā kard*], supposedly in China, Turkestan, and Byzantium, finally returning to Sīstān by way of Makrān; "and in all of these places he made *ghazwas*."[241] Obviously, militant zealots – both Sunnī and heterodox – were not lacking in Sīstān.

Perhaps also we can begin to understand the lure of Kharijism for many in Sīstān at this time; a man such as Ḥamza, for instance, is specifically portrayed as having practiced many of the virtues that would have appealed to orthodox Muslims as well: asceticism, piety, respect for the Qurʾān and "the *Sunna* of [God's] Prophet,"[242] and a great deal of *ghāzī* activity. This pious persona must have contrasted strongly with the Caliph's representatives – the often venal strongmen sent from Baghdad. It is therefore not surprising that when a Sunnī figure appeared on the scene who matched heresiarchs such as Ḥamza in piety and *ghāzī* zeal, he was able to attract many of the former admirers and adherents of Ḥamza and his successors to his cause.[243] The mass of the Kharijite followers were most probably, if one looks at the evidence, not joining the cause due to any deep-seated theological beliefs, but rather to the force and charisma of pious personal example.

We next read about *ʿayyārs* in Sīstān during the governorship of al-Maʾmūn's appointee, the extremely pragmatic al-Layth b. al-Faḍl, known as Ibn Tarassul, who arrived in Zarang in the year 200/815; instead of fighting the Kharijites, he made peace with both sides of the religious divide, treating the Kharijites well on the one hand, and spending all the revenues of the province in order to invite the *ʿayyārān* to banquets on the other.[244]

We read nothing further about Sīstānī *ʿayyārān* in the sources until shortly before the accession of al-Mutawakkil in the year 232/847, with the exception of a very brief episode around the year 211/827, at which time – we do not know why or for what reason – one of the *ʿayyārān* led a revolt in Bust, which was joined by the common people. This revolt was put down by one of a long line of governors who followed swiftly upon one another's heels at this time.[245] It is impossible to comment on or contextualize this revolt, its nature or reasons, justification or lack thereof, since we know nothing further about it.

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240 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 169.
241 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, pp. 169-170.
242 See the supposed text of Ḥamza's extraordinary letter written in reply to Hārūn al-Rashīd, *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, pp. 164-168. Ḥamza employs the phrase '*sunnat nabiyyihi*' on p. 165.
243 *Vide infra*, chapter 3. Bosworth notes that Kharijism all but vanished as a problem in Sistan from the time of Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth.
244 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, pp. 175-176.
245 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 179.

It is worth noting, however, that if the *ʿayyārān* had indeed been merely brigands, as is commonly supposed by modern scholars, one would have thought that conditions were excellent during these confused years of ephemeral governorships for their engaging in destabilizing or brigandish activities; yet we have no record that they did so. On the other hand, in these nascent years of the *ʿayyārān* there are not many generalizations one can make, except that these earliest appearances of the *ʿayyār* warriors in the East take place within religious contexts; in fact, within the same context in which we have already seen *mutaṭawwiʿa* operating. That the *ʿayyārān* grew out of the *mutaṭawwiʿa* milieu – possibly as sworn brotherhoods of *mutaṭawwiʿa* – becomes much clearer when we examine the most famous historical *ʿayyār* of all, Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth al-Ṣaffār. When investigating Yaʿqūb's case, we must keep in mind that

> ... leaders of *ghāzī* troops enjoyed varying, but mostly significant degrees of independence; they felt responsible to the groups of fighters rather than to the dynasty. Their loyalty was to their community and to the purpose of fighting the infidels, not to the state, not even to an individual ruler.[246]

As we shall see in the following chapter, the ʿAbbāsids were no exception to this rule.

In conclusion: in both the Eastern and Western marcher lands of the early ninth century there was a culture of volunteer warfare for Islam. This particular type of Islamic military volunteerism, moreover, operated independently of any government; it saw its mandate as coming from a higher authority, and its primary allegiance belonged to that higher authority. The independent, private nature of religious military volunteerism (*taṭawwuʿ*), whether directed toward imposing God's rule outside the Dār al-Islām (through Jihād) or inside of it (through *al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf*), was frequently perceived by governmental figures as undermining their authority, and even resulted in violent clashes between the *mutaṭawwiʿa* and the political authorities. The *ʿayyārān* first appear in the early ninth century in the Iranian border region of Sīstān, where heretical Kharijite groups were extremely active. In the next chapter, we shall see that they were, in effect, *mutaṭawwiʿ* bands.

246 Paul, *The State and the Military*, p. 15.