

53b, 56b; E. Masqueray, *Chronique d'Abou Zakaria*, Algiers 1878, 53-80, 226-51, 268, 270-8, 289, 290; Abu 'l-Rabi' Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Sallām al-Wisyanī, *Ta'rif*, ms. no. 277 in the library of the Islamic Institute of the university of Lwów, fols. 27, 28, 30, 31, 33-8, 46, 73, 102, 125, 128, 129, 145, 189; an anonymous Ibādī chronicle contained in the same ms., fols. 218, 221, 249, 257, 265, 275, 276; Abu 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Sa'īd al-Dardjīnī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-mashā'ikh*, ms. no. 275 of the Islamic Institute of Lwów, fols. 16a-20a, 35a-37b, 77b, 144a-b; Abu 'l-Faḍl al-Barrādī, *Kitāb al-Djawāhir al-muntakāt*, Cairo 1302, 171-2, 174; Abu 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, Cairo 1301, 104-5, 109-10, 119-20, 145-54, 280-2, 338, 345, 358, 359, 368, 370, 376, 381, 395, 416, 432, 458, 480, 502-4, 530, 557, 590; A. de C. Motylinski, *Chronique d'Ibn Saḡhir*, in *Actes du XIV^{ème} congrès international des orientalistes*, Algiers 1905, 16-20, 72-7; Ibn al-Aḡḡir, *Annales du Maghrib*, tr. E. Fagnan, Algiers 1901, 325, 338, 345, 367; Ibn 'Iḡḡārī, *al-Bayān al-muḡrib*, tr. Fagnan, Algiers 1901, i, 277, 311, 314-16; Tidjāni, *Riḡla*, tr. A. Rousseau, in *JA*, ser. 4, vol. xx (1852), 112, 167, 171, ser. 5, vol. i (1853) 123; Ibn Kḡhaldūn, *Histoire des Berbères*, tr. de Slane, Algiers 1852-6, i, 232, 277, 285, ii, 530, 531, 537, iii, 201-12, 278, 286, 291, 301; Fournel, *Les Berbères*, ii, 225; Motylinski, in the *Bulletin de Correspondance Africaine*, iii, 16, no. 2; idem, *Le Djebel Nefousa*, Paris 1898-9, 69, 114; Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*², Leiden-Paris 1927, ii, 722; M. Vonderheyden, *La Berbérie orientale*, Paris 1927, 48; R. Strothmann, *Berber und Ibāditen*, in *Isl.*, xvii (1928), 274, n. 4, 275. (T. LEWICKI)

AL-NUKRA, a plain west of the Djabal Hawrān on the border of Trachonitis in Transjordan. The name *al-Nukra* ("the cavity") is quite modern. It is applied to an area which includes the two districts of al-Baḡhaniyya (with its chief town Adḡri'āt) and Hawrān (west of the hills of the same name), i.e. the whole northern half of modern Jordan. In the wider sense, *al-Nukra* includes all the country from al-Ladja³, Djaydūr and al-Balkā³ to the foot of the Djabal Hawrān, in the narrower sense only the southern part of this; in any case it stretches from al-Ṣanamayn to the Djabal al-Durūz (Hawrān). To *al-Nukra* belong Mū'atbīn or Mū'tabīn, Tubnā (now Tibne), al-Maḡadǧīja, Oḡra³, 'Olmā, al-Musayfira and al-Faddayn already mentioned in Syriac texts of the pre-Muslim period.

Bibliography: Nöldeke, in *ZDMG*, xxix, 431, n. 1; F. Buhl, *Geographie des alten Palästina*, Freiburg i. B. and Leipzig 1896, 15, 43-4, 84; R. Dussaud, *Topographie de la Syrie*, Paris 1927, 323.

(E. HONIGMANN)

NUQTAT AL-KĀF, an early work on the Bābī [q.v.] movement.

In 1910, E.G. Browne published a work entitled *Kitāb-i Nuqtatu 'l-Kāf*, a Persian history of the early Bābī movement, based on a "unique" manuscript (Suppl. persan 1071) in the Bibliothèque Nationale. This manuscript had been bought by the library in 1884, in a sale of books belonging to the late Comte de Gobineau. Authorship of the history was ascribed by the Bābī leader Ṣubḡ-i Azal [q.v.] to Ḥāǧǧī Mīrzā Djānī, a Kāshānī merchant killed in 1852.

Browne's text soon became the centre of a controversy that still continues. The Bahā'ī leader, 'Abbās Effendi 'Abd al-Bahā³, maintained that the work was a forgery produced by the Azalī Bābīs. This thesis was developed by the Bahā'ī scholar Mīrzā Abu 'l-Faḍl Gulpāyǧānī and his nephew Sayyid Mahdī in

their *Kaṣḡ al-ǧḡiā³* and, more recently, by H.M. Balyuzi. While this conspiracy theory is clearly unfounded, internal evidence suggests that the history was not written by Mīrzā Djānī. Recent conjectures favour authorship by his son or nephew, possibly in collaboration with a brother, using notes prepared by him. Some version of the *Nuqtat al-kāf* served as the basis for the later Bahā'ī *Tāriḡh-i Dǧadīd* and its recensions. In spite of the controversy, there can be no doubt that the *Nuqtat al-kāf* remains one of the most important sources for the early history of Babism.

A full discussion of the problems of authorship, provenance, and dating may be found in MacEoin, together with a list of the twelve or so manuscripts now known to be in existence (Appendix 8).

Bibliography: H.M. Balyuzi, *Eduard Granville Browne and the Bahā'ī faith*, London 1970, ch. VII; E.G. Browne (ed.), *Kitāb-i Nuqtatu 'l-Kāf, being the earliest history of the Bābīs, compiled by Ḥāǧǧī Mīrzā Jānī of Kāshān between the years A.D. 1850 and 1852*, Leyden and London 1910, Gibb Memorial Series, vol. XV; idem (ed. and tr.), *The New History (Tāriḡh-i Jadīd) of Mīrzā 'Alī Muḡammed, the Bāb*, Cambridge 1903, repr. Amsterdam 1975; Mīrzā Abu 'l-Faḍl Gulpāyǧānī and Sayyid Mahdī Gulpāyǧānī, *Kaṣḡ al-ǧḡiā³ 'an ḡiyāl al-a'dā³*. Tashkent n.d. [1919?]; D. MacEoin, *The sources for early Bābī doctrine and history: a survey*, Leiden 1992, chs. 6 and 7, Appendix 8; Muḡḡī Ṭabāḡabā'ī, *Kitābī bī nām bā nāmī tāza*, in *Gawhar*, Year 2, parts 11-12 (1353/1974), 952-61; idem, *Tāriḡh-i kaḡīm wa dǧadīd*, 2 parts, in *Gawhar*, Year 3, parts 5-6 (1354/1975), 343-8, 426-31. (D. MACEOIN)

NUQTAWIYYA, an offshoot of the Hurūfiyya sect [q.v.] that after an incubation lasting a century emerged as a significant movement of politico-religious opposition in Ṣafawīd Persia and, in India, played some role in the origination of Akbar's *Dīn-i Ilāhī* [q.v.]. Given its similarities not only with Hurūfism but also with Nizārī Ismā'īlism, it may be regarded as one more link in the long chain of Persian heresies.

The designation *Nuqtawiyya* is said to be taken from the doctrine that earth is the starting point (*nuqta*) of all things, the remaining three elements being derived from it; the term may also refer, however, to the use of two, three, or four dots, variously arranged, as cryptic abbreviations in the writings of the sect. The designation *Maḡmūdīyya* is also encountered, this being derived from the name of the founder, Maḡmūd Paṣīkḡhānī. Born at the village of Paṣīkḡhān near Fūmān in Gīlān, Maḡmūd followed Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī (d. 796/1384), the founder of Hurūfism, until he was expelled from the movement for alleged arrogance (hence the epithets *Maḡmūd-i mardūd* "Maḡmūd the rejected" and *Maḡmūd-i maṣṣūd* "Mahmud the banished"). He is said to have proclaimed himself the Mahdī and the bringer of a new dispensation in 800/1397, i.e. at the beginning of the 9th Islamic century. Virtually nothing is known of his life other than that he was still residing in Astarābād in 818/1415 when he finished the writing of one of his books, *Dǧawāz al-sā'irīn*. He died in 831/1427-28, supposedly a suicide, having cast himself into the waters of the Aras, but this is dismissed as a calumny by the *Nuqtawīs* themselves.

Maḡmūd Paṣīkḡhānī is said to have written sixteen books and 1,001 treatises (*nushḡa*) in exposition of his doctrines; none of these has ever been published in full (for extracts from his principal work, *Mizān*, see, however, Raḡīm Riḡā-zāda Malik's notes to his edition of Kayḡhusraw Isfandiyār, *Dabistān-i madḡhīb*, ii,

233-6, and Šādīk Kiyā, *Nuqtawīyān yā Pasīkhāniyān*, Tehran 1320 Šh./1941, 73-132).

Nuqtawī works were composed in an extremely opaque style and are marked by frequent recourse to abbreviations and special signs similar to those found in Hurūfī literature, but the main themes of Maḥmūd Pasīkhānī's teaching can easily be comprehended. They consist in the first place of a peculiarly materialist type of metempsychosis according to which the particles of the body do not disintegrate on death but are absorbed as a single mass into the soil. They then re-emerge in vegetable or solid form, possibly to be consumed by animals or men, the level of existence on which they are finally reintegrated being dependent on the degree of virtue and knowledge attained by their previous owner. When a being rises or descends from one level of existence to another, the traces of his former existence are still visible and can be discerned by the insightful, a process known as *iḥsā'* "enumeration" (whence yet another designation for the sect, *iḥsā'iyya*). Thus dogs can be recognised as having been Kīzīlbāsh Turks, their tails being a trace of the swords they once carried and the word used in Persian to shoo away a dog, *čīk*, being identical with Turkish *čik*; and waterfowl should be identified as transmogrified clerics, still obsessed in their new existence with making ablutions. Maḥmūd Pasīkhānī himself claimed to be the reincarnation on a higher plane both of the Prophet Muḥammad (something allegedly indicated in Qur'ān, XVII, 79 "your Lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station", *makām maḥmūd*) and of 'Alī, citing a *hadīth* in which the Prophet is reported to have said that he and 'Alī were of one flesh. Other personal reincarnations are those of Moses in Ḥusayn b. 'Alī and the Pharaoh in Yazid; it was because Yazid remembered being drowned in the Red Sea at the hands of Moses when he was the Pharaoh that he took care to keep Ḥusayn away from the water of the Euphrates.

Pasīkhānī is reputed never to have married, and his doctrine recommends celibacy. The celibate are said to have reached the rank of *wāḥid* (a word which has the crucial numerical value of 19) and to be capable of advancing to the rank of *Allāh*, this being none other than man in his ultimate essence, termed "the manifest compound" (*al-murakkab al-mubīn*); the Nuqtawīs therefore summarised their creed as *lā ilāha illā 'l-murakkab al-mubīn*. Nuqtawīs disinclined to celibacy (who for some reason are designated as *amin*, "trustworthy") are advised to copulate not more than once a week. This disdain of marriage earned the Nuqtawīs accusations of incest, promiscuity and pederasty from their opponents.

Also central to Nuqtawī doctrine was a cyclical concept of time, one clearly influenced by Ismā'īlī antecedents. The total life of the world is said to consist of 64,000 years, divided into four periods of 16,000 years that are known respectively as *zuhūr* "outwardness", *buḥūr* "inwardness", *sirr* ("concealment") and *alāniyya* ("manifestation"). Each of these periods is divided in turn into an 8,000-year "Arab epoch" (*dawra-yi isti'rāb*), during which the guidance of humanity is entrusted to a "perfected Arab messenger" (*mursal-i mukammal-i 'Arab*), and an 8,000-year "Persian epoch" (*dawra-yi isti'djām*), presided over by a "perfected Persian expositor" (*mubayyin-i mukammal-i 'adjām*). The emergence of Maḥmūd Pasīkhānī signified the beginning of one such "Persian epoch". This exaltation of Persian-ness is apparent also in the assertion that Gīlān and Māzandarān have now superseded Mecca and Medina.

It was during the reign of Šhāh Ismā'īl I that the Nuqtawī movement first surfaced, significantly enough in the village of Anđjudān near Kāshān, a principal centre of post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismā'īlism. Šhāh Tāhīr, thirty-first Imām of the Muḥammad-Šhāhī Nizārī line, is reported to have so angered Šhāh Ismā'īl by gathering around him in Anđjudān Nuqtawīs and other religious deviants that he had to flee precipitately to India (Ma'sūm 'Alī Šhāh Šhīrāzi, *Tarā'īk al-hakā'īk*, ed. Muḥammad Dja'far Maḥdžūb, Tehran 1339 Šh./1960, iii, 136). Another instance of Nuqtawī-Ismā'īlī symbiosis is provided by Murād Mīrzā, thirty-sixth Imām of the Kāsim-Šhāhī Nizārī line, whose combined Nuqtawī and Ismā'īlī following in Anđjudān was broken up by Šhāh Tahmāsp in 981-2/1573-4 and who was himself put to death (Ahmad Thattawī, *Tarīkh-i Alfī*, cited in Kiyā, 36). Mention may also be made of two poets: Wuḳū'ī of Nīshāpūr whose beliefs are said to have been intermediate between Nuqtawism and Ismā'īlism (Kiyā, 35), and Abu 'l-Kāsim Muḥammad Kūhpāya'ī Amrī Šhīrāzi, who praised two of the Kāsim-Šhāhī Nizārī Imāms in his *Dīwān* and may have been a crypto-Ismā'īlī (W. Ivanow, *A guide to Ismā'īlī literature*, London 1933, 108).

Amrī Šhīrāzi first came to the fore in the time of Šhāh Tahmāsp, who entrusted him with the administration of *awḳāf*, belonging to the Ḥaramayn but located in Persia, and who also employed his brother, Mawlānā Abū Turāb, famed as a master of the occult sciences, as court calligrapher. Denounced for heresy in 972/1565, the brothers were blinded and went into seclusion. In 984/1576, the last year of Tahmāsp's reign, still more Nuqtawīs were apprehended in Kāshān; they included the poet Ḥayātī, who was jailed for two years in Šhīrāz before making his way to India.

Other centres of Nuqtawī activity were developing meanwhile in Sāwa, Nā'īn, Isfahān and—most importantly—Kāzwin. Nuqtawism was propagated in Kāzwin by Darwīsh Khusraw, the son of a well-digger, who had gone to Kāshān to learn the Nuqtawī doctrines and established his headquarters in a mosque on his return. Denounced by the *'ulamā'*, he was interrogated by Šhāh Tahmāsp but giving suitably evasive answers was released with instructions no longer to hold forth in the mosque. On the death of Tahmāsp, he resumed his public preaching with such success that he was able to build a *takya* which came to house two hundred of his followers. Despite a further round of executions of Nuqtawīs in Kāshān in 994/1586 which numbered among its victims two musicians, Afḍal Dū-tāri and Mīr Bīghamī, Darwīsh Khusraw remained unmolested throughout the reigns of Ismā'īl II and Khudābānda into the early years of rule by Šhāh 'Abbās.

Šhāh 'Abbās began by establishing a friendly and even intimate relationship with Darwīsh Khusraw, and was even initiated into the Nuqtawīyya, with the grade of *amin*, by Darwīsh Turāb and Darwīsh Kamāl Iklīdī. The Šafawid chroniclers (e.g. Iskandar Beg Munshī, *Alam-ārā-yi 'Abbāsī*, Tehran 1350 Šh./1971, i, 444), followed by most later historians, maintained that Šhāh 'Abbās cultivated the Nuqtawīs only as a means of surveillance. It is, however, possible that he had a genuine interest in their teachings. They had already attempted to proclaim Šhāh Tahmāsp as the Mahdī, and when they made a similar connection between their chiliastic theories and the person of Šhāh 'Abbās, he may well have contemplated the possibility of using Nuqtawism as a new ideological basis for the Šafawid state. It seems probable at the

very least that his lifelong disregard for religious proprieties should have been in part the result of his exposure to Nuqtawī teachings ('Alī Riḍā Dhakāwātī Karāgūzlū, *Nagāhī digar ba Nuqtawīyya*, 59-60).

The Nuqtawī movement was, however, not without its dangers for Shāh 'Abbās. In 999/1591, a Nuqtawī insurrection centred on Iṣṭihbānāt broke out in Fārs; he had it mercilessly repressed, and the blinded poet Amrī was arrested in Shīrāz and torn to pieces at the bidding of the 'ulamā'. Shāh 'Abbās's relations with Darwīsh Khusrav began to sour two years later when he was presumptuously warned by the Nuqtawī leader, on the eve of a campaign against rebels in Luristān, that unless he returned to Kazwīn by 1 Muḥarram 1302/27 September 1593, a Nuqtawī adherent, other than the Shāh himself, might be compelled for astrological reasons to seize the throne. When Shāh 'Abbās was camped at Kharrakān, he was brought a similarly patronising message by Darwīsh Kūčik Bahla-dūz ('gauntlet-maker'), a principal lieutenant of Darwīsh Khusrav, warning him again to return as quickly as possible and offering to send 50,000 armed Nuqtawīs to aid in the suppression of the rebellion. By now thoroughly alarmed, Shāh 'Abbās ordered Malik 'Alī the *djārībāshī* back to Kazwīn to attack the Nuqtawī *takya* and arrest its inmates in advance of his own return to the capital. The stealth employed in executing this command suggests that there was indeed the potential for a full-scale Nuqtawī insurrection in Kazwīn. The *djārībāshī* surrounded the *takya* before dawn and sought an audience with Darwīsh Khusrav on the pretext of presenting him with a robe of honour. As he was draping the cloak around his shoulders, he suddenly felled him with a powerful blow to the head, and the soldiers rushed in, killing many Nuqtawīs and arresting the others. Among those captured was Darwīsh Kūčik; he committed suicide by ingesting a large amount of opium, promising to return swiftly in a new incarnation. Darwīsh Khusrav himself was interrogated by the 'ulamā' and publicly tortured to death over a period of three days, after which his body was exhibited on the gibbet for a week.

It happened that soon after these events a comet appeared in the heavens. This was interpreted by Djalāl al-Dīn Yazdī, the court astrologer, to mean that the king would be in mortal danger during 7-10 Dhu 'l-Ka'da 1002/25-8 July 1594. He therefore proposed that a substitute ruler worthy of death be placed on the throne for the duration of the critical period. Shāh 'Abbās then asked one of the Nuqtawī captives, Darwīsh Yūsufī Tarkīsh-dūz ('quiver-maker') for his interpretation of the comet, and he replied that it was a sign that one of the Nuqtawīs would soon assume rule. The monarch countered that Darwīsh Yūsufī was the most suitable Nuqtawī for the throne, and immediately divested himself of the paraphernalia of monarchy and seated Darwīsh Yūsufī on the throne. At the end of the three days, during which Darwīsh Yūsufī made use of his glory only to have himself surrounded by handsome youths, he went straight from the throne to the scaffold, and Shāh 'Abbās took back his regalia. This curious episode, illustrative both of Shāh 'Abbās's imaginative sadism and of his superstitiousness, has inspired at least two literary treatments: a short story by the Aḡhar-bāydjānī writer Faṭḥ 'Alī Akhūndzāda (= Akhundov, d. 1878: *Aldanmīsh kāvakib: hekayati Yusufshah*, in *Āsārīnī*, Bākū 1987, i, 209-34, Russian tr. Aziz Sharifov, *Obmanuyemye zvezdy, rasskaz o Yusuf-shakhe*, in Akhundov, *Izbrannoye*, Moscow 1956, 29-57) and a novel by Djalāl 'Alī Aḡmad (d. 1969: *Nūn wa 'l-kalam*, Tehran 1340 *Sh.*/1961).

Mass arrests and executions of Nuqtawīs then ensued in other cities, including once again Kāshān, where the discovery of a list of leading Nuqtawīs among the papers of the poet Mīr Sayyid Aḡmad Kāshī permitted the sect to be uprooted from the area once and for all. Shāh 'Abbās personally beheaded Kāshī when he was in the midst of reminiscing concerning a previous existence, and then deftly bisected his headless trunk before it fell to the ground. He had a further confrontation with Nuqtawīs during his pilgrimage to Mashhad in 1010/1600-1; he discovered that his caravan had been infiltrated by his erstwhile initiators into the sect, and they were accordingly put to death in the caravanserai at Kūsha. The last Nuqtawī to be executed during the reign of Shāh 'Abbās was the astrologer Mullā Ayāz, put to death in 1020/1611.

Although curiously enough the Nuqtawīs continued to regard Shāh 'Abbās as one of their own, discounting his hostility to them as a sign of immaturity, many of them found it prudent to take refuge in India. These refugees included an impressive number of poets: Wukū'ī Nīshāpūrī, Ḥayātī Kāshānī, 'Alī Akbar Taṣhbīhī Kāshānī, Mullā Šūfī Māzandarānī (Āmulī), Ḥakīm 'Ibād Allāh Kāshānī and 'Abd al-Ghanī Yazdī. Adjusting their calculations to make Akbar yet another candidate for millennarian rule, the Nuqtawīs found favour with the Mughal emperor and assisted him in the formulation of his imperial cult, the *Dīn-i Ilāhī*. One of their number, Mīr Sharīf Āmulī, even sat on the nineteen-member committee that elaborated the cult. It is possible, too, that Akbar's chief confidant, Abu 'l-Faḍl 'Allāmī, had Nuqtawī sympathies; a letter from him was found among the papers of Mīr Sayyid Aḡmad Kāshī, and it was he who moved Akbar to write a letter to Shāh 'Abbās, fruitlessly urging on him the merits of religious tolerance. The emperor Djahāngīr did not entirely turn his back on the Nuqtawīs, but their visible presence in India did not last long.

A brief resurgence of the Nuqtawī movement took place in Persia during the reign of Shāh Šafī I. In Kazwīn, a certain Darwīsh Riḍā who claimed alternately to be the Mahdī and his deputy gathered a vast following that allowed him to seize control of the city. The movement was bloodily suppressed and Darwīsh Riḍā was beheaded in 1041/1631-2. His followers expected him to return from the dead, and when the following year they discovered an obscure farrier who resembled him, they renewed their uprising, with the same result as before.

This marked the end of the Nuqtawīyya as a movement with insurrectionary capabilities. Some thirty years later, Raphaël du Mans remarked on the presence in Iṣfahān of a ragged group of dervishes known as Maḡmūdīs (*Estat de la Perse en 1660*, ed. Ch. Schefer, Paris 1890, 87-8), but they were evidently too insignificant to warrant suppression. Despite its impressive longevity in the face of repression, the Nuqtawī movement never had a chance of long-term success, being composed almost entirely of artisans and literati in an age when the application of tribal power was decisive (the Ustādjlū chieftain Būdāk Dīnoghli was the sole member of the Šafawid military aristocracy whom the Nuqtawīs were able to recruit).

A few vestiges of the Nuqtawīyya can nonetheless be traced in post-Šafawid Persia. According to Muḡammad 'Alī Nāzīm al-Sharī'a, Sayyid Muḡammad 'Alī the Bāb was taught the doctrines of Nuqtawism during his confinement in Mākū and incorporated them directly in his *Bayān (Hadīda muḡammā*, quoted in Karāgūzlū, *Nagāh-i tāza'ī ba manābī'-i Nuqtawīyya*, 38). This is unproven, but there

are undeniable similarities between Nuḳṭawism and Bābism: a belief in metempsychosis, extravagant interpretations of Qurʾān and *hadīth*, a claim to have abrogated the Islamic *shariʿa*, and a fixation on the number nineteen. Also in the early nineteenth century, the Niʿmatullāhī Ṣūfī Zayn al-ʿAbidin *Shirwānī* (d. 1253/1837-38) reports having met Nuḳṭawīs who concealed themselves in the guise of Ṣūfīs (*Bustān al-siyāha*, reprint, Tehran n.d., 182). A contemporary researcher, Nūr al-Dīn Mudarrisi Čahārdihī, mentions having met in Bihbahān a certain Bābā Muḥammad who regarded himself as a Nuḳṭawī, but he seems to have been nothing more than an isolated eccentric (*Sayri dar taṣawwuf, dar sharḥ-i ḥāl-i mashāyikh wa aḳṭāb*, 320-1).

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(H. ALGAR)

AL-NU‘MĀN B. ABĪ ʿABD ALLĀH MUḤAMMAD B. MAṢŪR B. ḤAYYŪN, famous *kādi* of the Fātimid caliph al-Muʿizz li-dīn Allāh [q.v.], of whose origins and early life little is known. This small amount of information is insufficient to explain the exceptional rise and fortune of this obscure jurist of

Ifrikiya after he had entered the service of the new masters of this province, the Fātimids. As a connection of the Banū Tamīm, to which the line of Aghlabid *amīrs* were attached, al-Nu‘mān rose rapidly in the hierarchy of the Shīʿī state to the high position of judge-in-chief (*kādi ʿl-kuḍāt*) of the community.

Hence the date of his birth is unknown, as is likewise his social position and the calibre of his intellectual training at Kayrawān at the moment when, towards the end of the 3rd/9th century, the Shīʿī Berber rebellion broke out, first of all in Little Kabylia, which was to sweep away the orthodox dynasty of the Aghlabids [q.v.] and end in the foundation, in Ifrikiya, of the Fātimid anti-caliphate. However, our sources agree on placing in 313/925 his nomination to the service (*khidma*) of the first Fātimid caliph, al-Mahdī bi ʿllāh [q.v.] in an office whose exact nature is unknown. The speed of his adherence to the doctrine of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and also his *kunya* of Abū Ḥanīfa make one think that he belonged to the Ḥanafī law school, solidly represented at Kayrawān and less hostile to Shīʿism than that of Mālik. It is more plausible that he joined the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* before the foundation of the Fātimid caliphate, as I.K. Poonawala has shown; referring, in particular, to an old Sunnī source, the *Tabaqāt ʿulamāʾ Ifrikiya* of al-Khushanī, one of Nu‘mān’s contemporaries, he has had the pertinent idea of identifying a certain Muhammad b. Ḥayyān, mentioned as being among the jurists of Kayrawān professing the doctrine of *tashrīk*, sc. that of the *mashāriḳa*, the eastern Ismāʿīlīs, as being undoubtedly the father of al-Nu‘mān and of consequently correcting Muḥammad b. Ḥayyān into Muḥammad b. Ḥayyūn.

Thus al-Muʿizz’s famous judge seems to have been raised and educated in the doctrine of the *Ahl al-Bayt* by a father who had already long been won over to Shīʿism, before the proclamation of the Fātimid caliphate in 297/310. This would, moreover, explain his rapid rise from being the modest *kādi* of a province, Tripoli, to the highest office of supreme *kādi* in 336/948. It was in fact from that town that the Fātimid caliph Ismāʿīl al-Manṣūr [q.v.] summoned him to his new capital, al-Manṣūriyya, just after his triumph over the Khāridjite rebel Abū Yazīd [q.v.], the famous “man on the donkey”, in order to appoint him to this high office, in conditions which al-Nu‘mān himself describes in his *Kitāb al-Maḍjālīs wa ʿl-musāyārāt*: “Al-Nu‘mān, as soon as he had arrived in al-Manṣūriyya, was solemnly invested one Friday by the caliph, who awarded him robes of honour woven in the royal workshops and ordered him to proceed immediately to Kayrawān, since al-Manṣūriyya had not yet got a mosque which could allow him to lead the Friday worship in a *masjid djamīʿ* and to give the *khutba* there. Al-Manṣūr had him escorted by the officers of the guard, who accompanied him, with drawn swords, all the way along both the outward and the return journey. Some days later, the caliph sent a written mandate (*tawḳīʿ*) to the chancery where a nomination patent (*ʿahd*) was made out appointing him *kādi* of al-Manṣūriyya, al-Kayrawān, al-Mahdiyya and other towns and provinces of Ifrikiya.”

Al-Nu‘mān’s elevation to the most coveted position amongst the body of *fakīhs* thus coincided with the consolidation of the state and of Fātimid power, after the crushing of Khāridjism, as also with the enfeeblement of the Sunnī party and the deterioration of relations between the central organisation of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* at al-Manṣūriyya with the Ḳarmaṭīs of Bahrayn. The reform of Fātimid doctrine undertaken by al-Mahdī immediately on proclamation of the