

Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-‘Āmilī’s draft letter to his teacher: The culture of scholarly correspondence and the Islamic republic of letters in the sixteenth century

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Abstract

This study focuses on a draft letter by Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-‘Āmilī (d. 984/1576) for his teacher Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Āmilī (d. 965/1558); both were prominent Twelver Shiite jurists from the region of Jabal ‘Āmil in what is now Lebanon. Yūsuf Ṭabājah, who first published the text, argued that Ḥusayn wrote the letter while he was in Iraq c. 957/1550 and that it describes Zayn al-Dīn’s legal work *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*. It is argued here that the book in question is more likely Zayn al-Dīn’s work *Tamhīd al-qawā’id*, on legal and grammatical maxims, and that the letter dates to c. 958/1551. The text provides insight into the relationship between Ḥusayn and Zayn al-Dīn and the culture of scholarly correspondence.

Keywords: Lebanon, Iraq, Correspondence, Shiism, Islamic education

Renowned Sufi writer and Damascene intellectual ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731) wrote many works on religious and literary topics, including *Wasā’il al-tahqīq wa-rasā’il al-tawfīq* (The Means of Determining the Truth and Epistles of Providential Guidance), a collection of 72 letters by al-Nābulusī and his contemporaries dating from 1675 to 1703. In a recent edition and study, Samer Akkach analyses this correspondence, showing that in his letters al-Nābulusī strove to address the fervently debated topics of his day, both those that were prevalent in intellectual circles and those that had wider social purview, such as the controversy over the consumption of coffee. Writing such missives was not an idiosyncratic or unusual practice. Rather, in doing so, al-Nābulusī was participating in a culture of correspondence common among the learned elite.¹ Roughly a century earlier, Darwīsh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṭāluwī (d. 1014/1605–06) had embedded many examples of similar correspondence in an extended travelogue, giving the work the title *Sāniḥāt dumā al-qaṣr fī muṭāraḥāt banī al-‘aṣr* (Fleeting Thoughts of the Dolls of the Palace, on the Witty Exchanges of the Sons of the Age).² These are but two

1 Samer Akkach, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar: The Correspondence of ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641–1731)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

2 Darwīsh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṭāluwī al-Urtuqī al-Dimashqī, *Sāniḥāt dumā al-qaṣr fī muṭāraḥāt banī al-‘aṣr*, 2 vols, ed. Muḥammad Mursī al-Khōlī (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kitāb, 1983); Julia Bray, “Starting out in new worlds: under whose empire? High tradition and

examples among masses of scattered evidence that correspondence among scholars provided an important forum for the exchange of ideas. At the same time, letters played crucial social and professional roles, helping scholars maintain camaraderie, seek employment opportunities, obtain positions, and foster ties among peers and among students and their teachers.³ In recent years, scholars have discovered several texts belonging to this category of correspondence by Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-ʿĀmilī (d. 984/1576), all addressed to his teacher Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī (d. 965/1558). Both scholars were leading Twelver jurists of the sixteenth century from the region of Jabal ʿĀmil in what is now southern Lebanon.⁴ Two of these texts, letter-cum-travel accounts, have been addressed elsewhere.⁵ The focus of this study is the draft of a third letter, which has been discussed by the Lebanese scholar Yūsuf Ṭabājah.⁶ The following study corroborates Ṭabājah’s interpretation of the text, revising and expanding it in some respects and providing an English translation of the original.

subaltern tradition in Ottoman Syria, 16th and 19th/20th centuries”, *Annali di Ca’ Foscari* 48/3, 2009, 199–220.

- 3 Other examples of scholarly correspondence from various periods include the following: Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm, *Rasā’il al-Ṣābī wa-l-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (Kuwait: Dā’irat al-Maṭbū’āt wa-l-Nashr, 1961); David Samuel Margoliouth, *The Letters of Abū ‘l-ʿAlā of Ma’arrat al-Nu’mān. Edited from the Leyden Manuscript with the Life of the Author by al-Dhahabi, and with Translation, Notes, Indices, and Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898); ʿAlī Muḥammad Khallūf, *Aḍwā’ alā al-rasā’il al-mutabādalah bayna dā’i al-du’āh al-fāṭimī Hibat Allāh al-Shīrāzī wa-Abī al-ʿAlā al-Ma’arrī* (Damascus: Dār Ḥawrān, 1996); Gudrun Schubert (ed.), *al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī* (Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1995); Hermann Landolt, *Correspondence Spirituelle échangée entre Nūrōddīn Esfarāyeni (ob. 717/1317) et son disciple ʿAlā’oddawleh Semnāni (ob. 736/1336)* (Paris: Bibliothèque Iranienne, 1972); Kūrķīs ʿAwwād and Mīkhā’il ʿAwwād (eds), *Adab al-rasā’il bayna al-Ālūsī wa-l-Karmalī wa-hiya al-rasā’il al-mutabādalah bayna ʿallāmatay al-ʿIrāq al-Sayyid Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī wa-l-ab Anastās Mārī al-Karmalī* (Beirut: Dār al-Rā’id al-ʿArabī, 1987). For a discussion of private letters as documents, see Werner Diem, *Arabische Privatbriefe des 9.–15. Jahrhunderts aus der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek in Wien* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996); Diem, *Arabische Briefe des 7. bis 13. Jahrhunderts aus den Staatlichen Museen Berlin* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997).
- 4 On Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-ʿĀmilī in general, see Devin J. Stewart, “The first Shaykh al-Islām of the Safavid capital Qazvin”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, 1996, 387–405; Stewart, “Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-ʿĀmilī’s treatise for Sultan Suleiman and the Shīʿī Shāfiʿī legal tradition”, *Islamic Law and Society* 4, 1997, 156–99, and the sources cited there. On al-Shahīd al-Thānī, see Devin J. Stewart, “The Ottoman execution of Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī”, *Die Welt des Islams* 48/3–4, 2008, 289–347, and the sources cited there.
- 5 Yūsuf Ṭabājah, “Tatimmat al-Riḥlah al-ʿIrāqīyyah”, *Kitāb-i Shīʿa* 3, Spring–Summer 1390 AH sh./2011, 47–59; Yūsuf Ṭabājah, “Risālat al-Shaykh Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-ʿĀmilī, wālid al-Bahā’ī, ilā ustādhihi al-Shahīd al-Thānī (makḥṭūṭah): taḥqīq wa-dirāsah”, *al-Minhāj* 29, 2003, 152–95; Devin J. Stewart, “Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad’s flight from Lebanon to Iraq”, *Shii Studies Review* 3, 2019, 59–106; Stewart, “An episode in the ʿĀmilī migration to Safavid Iran: Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad’s travel account”, *Iranian Studies* 39, 2006, 481–508.
- 6 Yūsuf Ṭabājah, “Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad (wālid al-Shaykh al-Bahā’ī) yaruddu fihā ʿalā risālah min ustādhihi al-Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī (al-Shahīd al-Thānī)”, *al-Minhāj* 19 (no. 73), 2014, 174–83.

Ṭabājah discovered the autograph draft of this letter by Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Şamad al-ʿĀmilī in a collective manuscript (*majmūʿah*) in Qum, Iran, and he published an edition and analysis of the text in 2014.⁷ The Iranian scholar Riḍā Mukhtārī published the same text in 2016, along with a very short presentation and photographic plates of the original manuscript.⁸ Both identify it as the draft of a letter Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Şamad wrote to his teacher Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī, who is known as al-Shahīd al-Thānī “the Second Martyr” in Twelver Shiite tradition. Ṭabājah adds that Ḥusayn wrote this draft in response to a letter that Zayn al-Dīn had sent to him, accompanied by a book he had recently authored. The text thus supplements the two travel accounts Ḥusayn sent to Zayn al-Dīn, which tell the story of the author’s journey from Baalbek in Lebanon to Karbala in Iraq, and then from Iraq to Isfahan in Iran. While Mukhtārī states that the date and place of the letter’s composition are not known, Ṭabājah argues that Ḥusayn must have written the letter while he was in Iraq, that the book Zayn al-Dīn had sent to Ḥusayn was the legal commentary *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah* (The Splendid Garden), and that the letter dates to c. 957/1550, when Zayn al-Dīn completed that work. Ṭabājah’s assessment that Ḥusayn wrote the work while he was in Iraq is correct, in my view, but the exact date of the letter and the work described therein are open to question. It is proposed here that the book was likely not *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*, but instead *Tamhīd al-qawāʿid* (Paving the Way to [Legal and Grammatical] Maxims), Zayn al-Dīn’s work on legal hermeneutics, and that the letter dates to 958/1551.

The draft of the letter appears on a single folio, fol. 38r–v of MS 7355 in the Library of Āyat Allāh al-Marʿashī in Qum, Iran. The collective manuscript in which it was found consists of notes and copies by Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Şamad. The draft, which does not bear a signature or a colophon, consists of two blocks of text, one of six lines and one of nine, while a note on the left-hand margin of fol. 38r in another hand announces, *katabahu li-l-Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī* “He wrote it to Master Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī”.⁹ The text is apparently a draft, for it does not include a *basmalah*, a heading, or an opening salutation, nor does it include a closing statement. Analysis of the content suggests that the text comprises four paragraphs, which, Ṭabājah remarks, must have represented the bulk of the letter’s import.¹⁰ In the first paragraph, Ḥusayn informs his master that the book arrived and that he read and appreciated it. He describes the book’s merits in a series of flattering statements that pun on the titles of famous works in various fields of Arabic and Islamic learning. In the second paragraph, Ḥusayn explains that he has been suffering because he misses his teacher desperately and that he harbours tremendous affection for him, yet, despite the strength of his feelings, he will not dwell on those topics. In the third paragraph, Ḥusayn confesses that he is incapable of describing his master’s

7 Ṭabājah, “Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn”.

8 Riḍā Mukhtārī, “Nāmāh-ī az pedar-e Shaykh Bahāʿī khetāb beh Shahīd-i Thānī”, *Nushkah-Pazhūheshī* 3, Fall 1385 sh./2016, 625–6.

9 Ṭabājah, “Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn”, 175–6; Mukhtārī, “Nāmeh-ī az pedar-e Shaykh Bahāʿī”.

10 Ṭabājah, “Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn”, 177. Mukhtārī divides it into just three paragraphs, Mukhtārī, “Nāmāh-ī az pedar-e Shaykh Bahāʿī”, 625.

qualities and achievements adequately. In the fourth paragraph, he asks his teacher to pray for him in the hope that his requests might be fulfilled and that his problems might be resolved. An English translation of the text appears in the Appendix to this article.

Ḥusayn's initial reference to *sayyidī wa-sanadī* "my master and my support" is an unambiguous reference to Zayn al-Dīn, his teacher and companion of many years as well as his main authority in the religious sciences. Ḥusayn's only other significant Shiite teacher was al-Ḥasan b. Ja'far al-Karakī, who had died in 936/1530, while Ḥusayn was still in Lebanon. The phrase *lammā waṣala kitāb sayyidī wa-sanadī* "When the book of my master and my support arrived" suggests that the letter was a response to a previous missive from Zayn al-Dīn, along with which he had apparently sent Ḥusayn a book.¹¹ Even though the marginal note stating that he wrote the letter to al-Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī was not penned by Ḥusayn himself, it must be correct.

Ṭabājah deduces that Ḥusayn wrote the letter when he was in Iraq, before entering Iran, while Zayn al-Dīn was in hiding in Jabal ʿĀmil.¹² This interpretation is plausible. Zayn al-Dīn was in hiding for the last nine years of his life, 956–965/1549–58, mainly in the Lebanese town of Jizzīn. Ḥusayn must have written the letter after he parted ways with Zayn al-Dīn, for he complains of the pain of separation. They had been nearly constant companions throughout their careers, up to and including the time they had spent teaching at the Nūriyyah Madrasah in Baalbek together, in 953–955/1546–48. Ḥusayn left Baalbek just after 10 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 955/10 January 1549 and travelled to Iraq, probably arriving in February or March 1549. After residing in Iraq for nearly five years, Ḥusayn migrated to Iran in the spring of 961/1554.¹³ The fact that the draft letter mentions nothing about Persia or the Safavids, even in allusive terms, suggests that Ḥusayn had not yet left Iraq when he wrote the letter. Therefore, the text probably dates to the period 956–60/1549–53.

The third paragraph suggests that Zayn al-Dīn, in his letter, had asked Ḥusayn to write an assessment of the book he had sent.¹⁴ In my view, Ṭabājah correctly interprets the intended meaning behind this paragraph, noticing the strategy to avoid making a direct statement in Ḥusayn's insistence that he is unable to do justice to the master's qualities and achievements. It would have been presumptuous on his part to do so, given his teacher's exalted status. Ḥusayn thus adopts a humble posture towards his teacher, engaging in a type of deferential flattery.¹⁵ The paragraph does not present general praise of Zayn al-Dīn but rather makes specific laudatory comments. The opening phrase – which reads, *wa-ammā al-tanwīh bi-bayān lum'ah min muḥaṣṣal maḥākhirikum al-'aliyyah * wa-l-kashf 'an mukhtaṣar min ṭarā'if lawāmi' ma'āthirikum al-'ulwiyyah* "Regarding hinting at an exposition of one gleam from a detailed account of your sublime and

11 Ṭabājah, "Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn", 176–7.

12 Ṭabājah, "Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn", 176–7.

13 Ṭabājah, "Ṭatimmat al-Rihlah al-'Irāqīyyah"; Ṭabājah, "Risālat al-Shaykh Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-'Āmilī"; Stewart, "Ḥusayn b. 'Abd Al-Ṣamad's flight from Lebanon to Iraq"; Stewart, "An episode in the 'Āmilī migration".

14 Ṭabājah, "Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn", 177.

15 Ṭabājah, "Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn", 177, 179 n. 24.

glorious qualities, and revealing a summary account of entertaining anecdotes regarding your celestial deeds” – suggests that the topic had been mentioned earlier in the conversation, namely, in Zayn al-Dīn’s letter. Zayn al-Dīn would obviously not have asked Ḥusayn simply to praise him, so he must have solicited Ḥusayn’s opinion of the book. In his response to this request, Ḥusayn alludes to Zayn al-Dīn’s work with the flattering terms *mafākhīr* “points of pride” and *ma’āthīr* “renowned deeds” and describes what was supposed to be his own critical appraisal of the work as a laudatory exposition. Therefore, it seems correct that Ḥusayn was responding to a request for his opinion regarding a recent book by Zayn al-Dīn. One may also interpret his response as a use of the rhetorical figure of *praeteritio* – pretending to “pass over” something while actually addressing it. He suggests that he is in no position to judge Zayn al-Dīn’s book, but by referring repeatedly to famous works of the past, he is in fact implying that Zayn al-Dīn’s work belongs among the great textbooks of the Islamic learned tradition.

Ṭabājah sees the same strategy of avoidance at play in the second paragraph, but this is incorrect in my view. Apparently, Ṭabājah takes Ḥusayn’s announced decision to speak about other topics as an additional indication that he will put off giving a direct assessment of Zayn al-Dīn’s work.¹⁶ He understands Ḥusayn’s use of the term *dhuyūl*, which ordinarily means “tails” but can also mean “sequels”, as an expression of an intention to write a commentary on Zayn al-Dīn’s work.¹⁷ Ḥusayn’s statement probably means something different altogether. He is merely claiming that he has decided not to dwell on the two topics that he has just mentioned – that he is suffering a great deal from being away from his teacher and that he harbours a great deal of love and affection for him – but will move on to discuss other topics instead. The term *dhuyūl* does not mean commentaries here but rather the tails of one’s robes. The idiomatic expression “dragging one’s coat-tails” (*jarr al-dhuyūl*) means to follow a certain path, and refers here figuratively to the direction of the discourse in the letter.

Ṭabājah identifies the book Zayn al-Dīn sent Ḥusayn as *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*.¹⁸ This conclusion merits reconsideration. Particularly since Ḥusayn’s draft does not include an explicit reference to that work, the identification is not certain. At the outset, there appear to be three main possibilities. First, Ḥusayn’s remarks might actually be an assessment or description of Zayn al-Dīn’s letter itself, which could have included a substantial text. Second, they might be a description of *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*, as Ṭabājah claims. And third, they might refer to a book other than *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*.

The term *kitāb* in Arabic very frequently means “book”, but is also a standard term for “letter”. Ḥusayn’s statement *lammā waşala kitāb sayyidī wa-sanadī* could thus mean simply “When the letter of my master and support arrived . . .”, and his remarks about Zayn al-Dīn’s work could refer to the letter itself. The main argument against this view is that Ḥusayn’s draft includes an extensive series of puns based on the titles of famous books. These include such works as al-Faḍl

16 Ṭabājah, “Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn”, 177, 179 n. 23.

17 Ṭabājah, “Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn”, 177, 179 n. 23.

18 Ṭabājah, “Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn”, 176, 178 n. 11.

b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī's (d. 548/1154) *tafsīr*, *Majma' al-bayān* (The Confluence of Eloquence); al-Fāḍil al-Miqdād al-Suyūrī's (d. 826/1423) work on Quranic law, *Kanz al-'irfān* (The Treasure of Knowledge); *al-Shifā'* (The Cure) and *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbīhāt* (Remarks and Admonitions), works on philosophy by Avicenna (d. 429/1037); *Miftāḥ al-'ulūm* (Key to the Sciences) by al-Sakkākī (d. 626/1229) and *al-Īdāḥ* (The Clarification) by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/1338), both well-known manuals of rhetoric; and many others. The titles of these works, which belong to a great variety of genres, do not reliably identify the topic of the original work, merely suggesting its value as part of the Islamic learned tradition. Ḥusayn's many punning references to book titles suggest that he was not referring to a letter but to a book. They also imply, collectively, that the work is a textbook or manual rather than a literary composition or an occasional or topical work in one of the Arabic linguistic or Islamic religious sciences.

Ṭabājah's interpretation that the book in question is *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah* appears reasonable initially. It is clear from Ḥusayn's draft letter that Zayn al-Dīn had just written the book and that Ḥusayn had not seen it earlier. Ḥusayn was in Iraq c. 955–960/1549–53, and *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah* fits, because the work was completed during that period. Zayn al-Dīn's *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah* (The Splendid Garden), a commentary on the legal manual *al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqiyyah* (The Gleam from Damascus) by Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī, known as al-Shahīd al-Awwal "the First Martyr" (d. 786/1384), has remained a standard textbook in the Twelver Shiite legal curriculum from the sixteenth century until the present. Zayn al-Dīn began writing the work on 1 Rabī' 956/30 March 1549 and completed the first volume on 6 Jumādā II 956/2 July 1549. He completed the second and final volume on 21 Jumādā I 957/7 June 1550. Extant *ijāzahs* and manuscript colophons show that he taught *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah* intensively between 956/1549 and 960/1553.¹⁹ Zayn al-Dīn evidently viewed *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah* as one of his foremost contributions to Twelver legal scholarship. It is likely that he was particularly proud of the work, and he would likely have sent a copy to Ḥusayn, his foremost student and colleague. If the work described in the letter was indeed *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*, the letter could be dated to 956/1549 or 957/1550.

Manuscript copies of *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah* usually comprise two large volumes. It is certainly within the realm of possibility that Zayn al-Dīn had a relatively large two-volume work delivered to Ḥusayn in Iraq, but Ḥusayn's draft reveals nothing about the size of the work, and if it were a multiple-volume work, one might expect him to have given some indication of its size. It is also possible, however, that Zayn al-Dīn sent only the first volume, before he completed the remainder of the work.

Consideration of the language Ḥusayn uses suggests that the identification of the work as *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah* may be mistaken. The specific terms Ḥusayn uses in his description fit a work devoted to rhetoric more than they do a legal manual. Legal manuals present rulings on the specific points of the law following the generally accepted order of chapters of the law and of topics within each chapter. Ḥusayn does not refer to any of the standard legal chapters,

19 Stewart, "The Ottoman execution", 323–4.

but he mentions at the outset that the work would benefit eloquent men (*bulaghā'* and *fuṣahā'*). This might be interpreted as general praise of a well-written work on any topic, but Ḥusayn's paragraph includes many more specific references to rhetoric: *durar al-bayān* "pearls of eloquent expression"; *kunūz al-balāghah* "treasures of rhetoric"; *kashshāf li-sarā'ir badā'i' al-lisān* "a revelation of the mysteries of the adornments of the tongue"; *bayān li-tahdhīb 'ilmayī al-ma'ānī wa'l-bayān* "an exposition of the orderly arrangement of the two sciences of tropes and eloquent expression"; *khulāṣat 'ilm al-ma'ānī* "the essence of the science of tropes"; *īdāh li-rumūz al-balāghah* "clarification of the symbols of rhetoric". While these phrases are clearly intended to describe the book in question as extremely eloquent, they seem too specific to refer to a standard legal manual.

One must admit, though, that scholars of this period often discussed the rhetorical excellence of what appear to modern investigators to be dry, technical manuals of law and other topics in the religious sciences. For example, another of Zayn al-Dīn's students, Ibn al-'Awdī (d. after 970/1563), describes Zayn al-Dīn's first major legal work, *Rawḍ al-jinān* (Garden Meadows), a commentary on *Irshād al-adhhān* (The Guidance of Minds) by al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325), in glowing terms:

Early on in his career, he was extremely circumspect. He began working on his commentary on *The Guidance* but did not show it to anyone. When he had written a portion of it, without a soul having seen the text, I witnessed the master one night in a dream, standing high on a pulpit intoning a sermon the like of which had never been heard in its eloquent oratory. When I narrated my dream to him, he immediately entered the house, came out with a quire in his hand, and handed it to me. I examined it, and – to my surprise – it was the commentary on *The Guidance*. It included the work's well-known prologue, which grabs hold of the combined reins of brilliance and eloquence, and which is unparalleled²⁰ in its beautifully paired phrasing and elegant locution, especially in its example of a superb opening, which explains the topic of the book and presents the chapters of the law in the most concise phrases and the most graceful²¹ formulations. He – may God raise his level high! – said, "This is the sermon that you saw [in your dream]", He commanded me to read the quire in secret. Whenever he finished a quire, he would bring it to me so that I could read it. The Shiites have never written the equal of this book. He interwove the text and the commentary, and he was the first among our companions to adopt this method. One large volume, containing the chapter on ritual purity and the chapter on prayer, was published. Had it been completed, the wish behind the dream would have

20 The published text reads *taradat*, which seems to have no meaning, or perhaps *taraddat* which means "to fall, to deteriorate" and so does not fit the context. The word is evidently corrupt. I propose *tafarradat* "to be unique, peerless", which would go with the following preposition *bi-* in the text, but the reading remains uncertain. A similar possibility is *farudat* "to be unique".

21 Reading *arshaq* for *arshaf* in the text.

been fulfilled, but God's wisdom most often dictates the opposite of what worshippers' minds produce.²²

Ibn al-ʿAwdī thus boasts of the eloquence and high literary qualities of Zayn al-Dīn's legal commentary *Rawḍ al-jinān*. It is thus not farfetched that Ḥusayn would tout the rhetorical excellence of *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*.

If the book was not *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*, then what could it have been? Ḥusayn's descriptive terms fit a work on rhetoric most readily, but Zayn al-Dīn is not known to have written a work on rhetoric per se.²³ Moreover, it seems unlikely that he could have authored a substantial rhetorical treatise without the subsequent Twelver Shiite biographical tradition, including accounts by his direct students and his descendants, preserving any mention thereof. In other words, Zayn al-Dīn's bibliography as it is known today is probably nearly complete. Other possibilities are the other works Zayn al-Dīn authored during this same period: *Tamhīd al-qawāʿid* (Paving the Way to [Legal and Grammatical] Maxims), on legal hermeneutics, which he completed on 1 Muḥarram 958/9 January 1551, and *al-Bidāyah fī al-dirāyah* (The Beginning, on *ḥadīth* criticism), which he completed on 5 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 959/22 November 1552, as well as a number of short treatises on legal issues.²⁴ None of Ḥusayn's descriptions apply readily to a work on *ḥadīth* criticism, for they do not mention the Prophet, the Companions, *ḥadīth* transmitters, collections of *ḥadīth*, chains of transmission (*isnāds*), or any of the other technical terms associated with *ḥadīth* transmission. So, the work was likely not *al-Bidāyah*. In my view, the work Ḥusayn described was more likely *Tamhīd al-qawāʿid*.

Tamhīd al-qawāʿid belongs to a genre that focuses on legal maxims, pithy sayings that present legal principles. Rather than giving the ruling on a particular point of law, they apply to many distinct areas of the law, like the English legal maxims, "Possession is nine-tenths of the law"; "Ignorance of the law is no excuse"; *caveat emptor*, etc. Typical Islamic legal maxims include *lā ḍarar wa-lā ḍirār* "Do not inflict harm, and do not repay harm with reciprocal harm"; *al-ḍarūrāt tubīḥu l-maḥzūrāt* "Dire needs make forbidden matters licit", and so on.²⁵ One of the first major works of this type was *al-Qawāʿid fī furūʿ al-Shāfiʿīyah* (Legal Maxims, in the Points of Law according to the Shāfiʿīs) by Muʿīn al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Jājirmī (d. 613/1216). The genre became extremely popular among Sunni jurists in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when such works as *Qawāʿid al-aḥkām fī maṣāliḥ al-anām* (The Rules Governing Legal Rulings, on the People's Welfare) by ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 660/1262) and *al-Majmūʿ al-mudhhab fī qawāʿid al-madhhab* (The Gilded Collection, on the Rules Governing Law according to [the Shāfiʿī] School) by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn

22 ʿAlī al-ʿĀmilī, *al-Durr al-manthūr min al-maʿthūr wa-ghayr al-maʿthūr*, 2 vols (Qum: Maṭbaʿat Mihr, 1978), 2: 183–4.

23 See the bibliography of Zayn al-Dīn in ʿAlī al-ʿĀmilī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 2: 183–90.

24 Stewart, "The Ottoman execution", 325.

25 On legal maxims in general, see Intisar A. Rabb, *Doubt in Islamic Law: A History of Legal Maxims* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Khalīl b. Kaykaldī al-'Alā'ī (d. 761/1359) were produced.²⁶ Twelver Shiites began writing works on legal maxims in the fourteenth century. Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī wrote a major work in this genre, titled *al-Qawā'id wa-l-fawā'id* (Legal Maxims and Instructive Notes), probably modelled on al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām's *Qawā'id al-aḥkām fī maşāliḥ al-anām*. Zayn al-Dīn's work certainly belongs to the genre, but it differs somewhat from other works of *qawā'id*. The book has two parts, each presenting 100 "rules" (*qā'idah, qawā'id*); the first part is devoted to rules related to *uşūl al-fiqh* "jurisprudence", or "legal hermeneutics", while the second part is devoted to rules of grammar. Zayn al-Dīn evidently based the work on the paired works of the Shāfi'ī jurist Jamāl al-Dīn al-Isnawī (d. 772/1371), *al-Tamhīd* (Paving the Way), on jurisprudence, and *al-Kawkab al-durrī* (The Pearl-like Star), on grammar.²⁷ Both halves of *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* focus on the hermeneutics of scriptural texts and include rhetorical topics. In the first half of the work, rules 18–92 discuss the interpretation of scriptural texts, covering many of the rubrics typically found in manuals of *uşūl al-fiqh*: synonyms, technical terms, literal and figurative texts, commands and prohibitions, texts of general and particular scope, exceptions, determinate and indeterminate referents, restricted and unrestricted referents, and so on. The second half of the work treats a wide variety of grammatical topics, along with examples of the application of grammatical rules to issues of legal interpretation.²⁸ These fit the description of rhetorical issues somewhat better than the text of *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*, suggesting that Ḥusayn was probably referring to *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* instead.

Another possible indication that the work to which Ḥusayn refers is *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* is his pointed use of the term *qawā'id* in the letter. He writes that the work is *irshād ilā tanqīḥ qawā'id al-mabānī* "a guide to the careful revision of the rules governing constructions", which describes very well the contents of *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, while also referring to the chief units of the text with the explicit term *qawā'id*. Suggestive as well is Ḥusayn's statement that the work presents *qānūn muhadhdhab li-dhawī al-nabāhah* "a well-ordered law for those endowed with cleverness", in which the term *qānūn* "law" is parallel to and nearly synonymous with *qā'idah* "rule". The reference to *qawā'id* does not appear to refer to the contents of *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*; it makes more sense to interpret the unnamed work that Ḥusayn describes in his draft letter as *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*.

If this identification is indeed correct, then Zayn al-Dīn could not have sent the work before early in the year of 958/1551. As mentioned above, Zayn al-Dīn completed *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* on 1 Muḥarram 958/9 January 1551. In all likelihood he would have sent the work, and Ḥusayn would have replied, later that same year.

26 Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa-l-funūn*, 2 vols (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1941), 2: 1357–60.

27 Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A'yān al-shī'ah*, 10 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Ta'āruf, 1984), 7: 155. Muḥsin al-Amīn reports that al-Shahīd al-Thānī states explicitly in the introduction to *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* that he was inspired by the works of al-Isnawī, but such a statement does not appear in the introduction of the published work.

28 Zayn al-Dīn al-'Āmilī, *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* (Mashhad: Būstān-i Kitāb, 2009).

Other evidence that Zayn al-Dīn's *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* was being propagated during this period is provided by another of his students, Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan Ibn al-'Awdī al-Jizzīnī (d. after 970/1563). Ibn al-'Awdī reports in *Bughyat al-murīd* (The Student's Desire), his hagiography of Zayn al-Dīn, that *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* was one of his teacher's best works. He describes it as follows:

Among them [Zayn al-Dīn's works] is *Tamhīd al-qawā'id al-uṣūliyyah wa'l-'arabiyyah li-tafri' qawā'id al-aḥkām al-shar'iyyah* (Paving the Way to Jurisprudential and Arabic Grammatical Maxims for the Derivation of Subsidiary Legal Rulings), one volume. In it he adopted a wondrous method and followed an extraordinary and unprecedented path. He arranged it in two parts, one devoted to a summary²⁹ of jurisprudential rules and to the derivation of subsidiary rulings that ensue from them, and the second devoted to a reasoned exposition of the topics of Arabic grammar and the arrangement of subsidiary rulings of the law that accord with them. In each part, he selected one hundred maxims, divided into³⁰ various chapters, in addition to unparalleled introductions, instructive asides, and discussions of issues related to the attachment of subsidiary legal questions to their fundamental topics, a task which is determined by one's sacred aptitude (*al-malakah al-qudsiyyah*), the chief support for the solution of problems of independent legal interpretation (*al-masā'il al-ijtihādiyyah*). He composed for it an index containing a splendid table from which the student may extract any question he desires.

We described this book to a certain learned Persian in Qazvin, who remarked, "So, it is like the *Qawā'id* (The Book of Legal Maxims) by the Martyr". "Even Better!"³¹ we responded. When he accused us of making an outlandish claim, we remonstrated, "But the proof is right here!" We handed him the book, and he took it home with him. The next day he sent a message, asking permission to cut apart the quires and divide them up among several copyists so that they might copy them quickly. He had the book copied in just a few days, and he praised it.³²

Ibn al-'Awdī presents *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* as one of Zayn al-Dīn's most prominent works, along with his legal works *Rawḍ al-jinān*, a commentary on 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī's (d. 726/1325) *Irshād al-adhhān*; *al-Rawḍah al-bahiyyah*, a commentary on Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī's (d. 786/1384) *al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqiyyah*; and *Masālik al-afḥām*, a commentary on al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī's (d. 676/1277) *Sharā'ī al-Islām fī masā'il al-ḥalāl wa'l-ḥarām* (The Laws of Islam, on Licit and Prohibited Matters).³³ The anecdote Ibn al-'Awdī

29 Reading *talkhīṣ* for *talakhkhuṣ* in the text.

30 Reading *fī* for *min* in the text.

31 That is, the work *al-Qawā'id wa'l-fawā'id*, by al-Shahīd al-Awwal Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī (d. 786/1384).

32 'Alī al-'Āmilī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 2: 185–6.

33 'Alī al-'Āmilī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 2: 184–5.

describes took place in Qazvin, then the Safavid capital and the main centre of religious learning in the Empire. Ibn al-ʿAwdī left Jabal ʿĀmil to travel to Safavid territory on 10 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 962/26 September 1555.³⁴ Though it is not known how long he stayed in Iran, the interaction he describes likely took place a year or two later, during the lifetime of Zayn al-Dīn. Here he claims that *Tamhīd al-qawāʿid* is superior to Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī's work *al-Qawāʿid wa'l-fawāʿid*, a claim met with initial disbelief on the part of his interlocutor. Ibn al-ʿAwdī is seen here not only singing the praises of his teacher but also promoting the use of *Tamhīd al-qawāʿid* in particular. His description is less flowery and rhetorically extravagant than Ḥusayn's, but it is at least possible that the two are parallel in referent and intent.

The learned elite and the culture of correspondence

As Samer Akkach points out, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī divides the letters exchanged among scholars into two basic types: *murāsālāt adabiyyah* "literary correspondence" and *murāsālāt sharʿiyyah* "religious correspondence". The former category was "of no benefit and inconsequential" in Akkach's view, while the latter category was beneficial and involved the provision of advice and guidance on religious matters. Akkach reports that students' letters to al-Nābulusī took an inordinate amount of prose and numerous rhetorical flourishes to convey the simple message that they felt deep affection for him and missed him a great deal.³⁵ Ḥusayn's letters to Zayn al-Dīn – unfortunately we do not have any of the letters Zayn al-Dīn must have written to him – certainly fall into this category of "literary correspondence". They refer to the teacher in flattering, emotional terms and stress the pain of separation from him. Ḥusayn's account of his journey to Iraq c. 956/1549 includes two substantial poems that focus on Zayn al-Dīn and describe him in highly emotional terms.³⁶ The letters help to maintain bonds of friendship and attachment. They are also intended to display rhetorical and compositional skill and are replete with hyperbole, paronomasia, extended metaphors, and other rhetorical figures. As Akkach notes, such letters are intended in part to entertain and in part to serve a social function.³⁷

The correspondence in which Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Šamad and Zayn al-Dīn engaged was part of a complex discourse of the learned elite that embodied a number of cultural rules. In particular, three broad frames help the reader to understand the system within which Ḥusayn's letter and others like it operated. The first was what one may term the Islamic republic of letters, the second the competition for patronage, and the third the relational hierarchy of Twelver Shiite jurists.

Muhsin J. al-Musawi has argued that the post-classical age in the Islamic world was not a period of decadence but rather one of exuberant intellectual activity. The learned elite of the time managed to maintain regular communication and engage in a remarkably unified discourse over vast distances, from the

34 ʿAlī al-ʿĀmilī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 2: 151.

35 Akkach, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar*, 27.

36 Stewart, "Flight from Lebanon to Iraq", 99–103.

37 Akkach, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar*, 27.

Andalus to Indonesia. They prized polymathy and particularly appreciated the ability to combine learning in the Islamic religious sciences, such as law, theology, Quran, and *ḥadīth*, with accomplishment in the linguistic and literary sciences, such as grammar, prosody, lexicography, rhetoric, poetry, and elegant prose. They were often polyglot, using Arabic and Persian especially, but also other languages such as Turkish, in their learned discourse. They often shared substantial elements of their education, having studied the same standard textbooks, along with the same or similar commentaries, in many fields. This shared learned discourse established what al-Musawi terms *the medieval Islamic republic of letters*, a realm of shared ideas, concepts, experiences, disputation, and debate. Scholars who aspired to participate in this republic strove to do so by acquiring the necessary cultural capital, studying the well-known textbooks in many fields, internalizing grammatical and rhetorical traditions, engaging in commentary, debate, and disputation, and writing their own scholarly works.³⁸

When Ḥusayn puns repeatedly on the titles of famous works, he dramatically invokes the Islamic republic of letters. The fundamental trope of his letter is the rhetorical figure of *tawjīh*, the device of creating a pun by employing a technical term in its non-technical sense – to be distinguished from *tawriyah*, which refers to an ordinary double entendre.³⁹ In this case, the technical terms are book titles, which stand in metonymically for learning in general. Ḥusayn is doing more than simply flattering Zayn al-Dīn; this is clear from the particular works that he invokes. One might have expected a Twelver Shiite jurist writing to another to invoke Twelver Shiite legal works exclusively. It is true that some of the titles that Ḥusayn cites refer directly to Twelver Shiite legal manuals and other Shiite works. Unambiguously Shiite works mentioned are the Quranic commentary *Majmaʿ al-bayān* by Abū al-Ḥaḍḍ al-Ḥabībī and *Kanz al-ʿirfān fī fiqh al-Qurʾān*, by al-Fāḍil Miqdād al-Suyūrī. Of course, some ambiguity lies in many of the puns, because the referents to the titles in question are abridged and incomplete. Though they could refer to other works with similar titles, the *Lumʿah* Ḥusayn mentions in all likelihood is meant to invoke *al-Lumʿah al-Dimashqiyyah*, the famous legal manual of Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī, the *Sarāʿir* probably refers to the legal work *al-Sarāʿir al-ḥāwī li-taḥrīr al-fatāwī* (Hidden Secrets, Containing a Careful Revised Presentation of Legal Rulings) by Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī (d. c. 598/1201), and the *Mabādiʿ* probably refers to *Mabādiʿ al-uṣūl*, one of al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī's works on jurisprudence or legal hermeneutics.

However, explicitly Shiite works constitute only a fraction of the titles Ḥusayn invokes. Non-Shiite works include *al-Ishārāt* (Remarks), *al-Qānūn* (The Canon), and *al-Shifāʿ* (The Cure), by Avicenna. Others are the exceedingly popular grammatical treatises *al-Shāfiyah* (The Salutary Treatise) and *al-Kāfiyah* (The Sufficient Treatise), both by Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 646/1249), and al-Zamakhsharī's (d. 538/1144) grammatical compendium, *al-Mufaṣṣal* (The Detailed Exposition). Yet others are rhetorical texts such as the *Miftāḥ*, that

38 Muhsin J. al-Musawi, *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters: Arabic Knowledge Construction* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015).

39 On *tawjīh* see al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Ḥāshimī, *Jawāhir al-balāghah fī al-maʿānī wa-l-bayān wa-l-badīʿ* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), 281.

is, *Miftāḥ al-'ulūm* (The Key to the Sciences) by al-Sakkākī; *al-Talkhīṣ* (The Abridgement), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī's abridgement of *Miftāḥ al-'ulūm*; *al-Muṭawwal* (The Longer Commentary) of Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390) on the *Talkhīṣ*; and *al-Īdāḥ* (The Clarification), also by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī. Because Ḥusayn invokes such a large constellation of general, Sunni works, when a title could refer either to a Shiite work or to a general work, the latter usually appears more probable. Thus, when Ḥusayn uses the term *Tahdhīb*, one might assume that this refers to the Twelver Shiite *ḥadīth* collection *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām* (The Orderly Arrangement of Legal Rulings), but here it seems more likely that it refers to *Tahdhīb al-mantiq wa-l-kalām* (The Orderly Arrangement of Logic and Theology), a standard textbook of logic and theology by Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī. Or when he uses the term *Tanqīḥ*, it could refer to al-Miqdād al-Suyūrī's *al-Tanqīḥ al-rā'ī li-mukhtaṣar al-Sharā'ī* (The Splendid Revision of the Abridgement of *The Laws*), a commentary on the legal manual of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī, but it seems more likely that he intended *Tanqīḥ al-fuṣūl fī ikhtiṣār al-Maḥṣūl fī l-uṣūl* (The Careful Revision of Chapters, an Abridgement of *The Harvest, on Jurisprudence*), a commentary by the Mālikī jurist al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285) on the *Maḥṣūl* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), which treats legal hermeneutics, or *Tanqīḥ al-uṣūl* (The Revision of Jurisprudence), a Ḥanafī work on legal hermeneutics by Şadr al-Sharī'ah 'Ubayd Allāh b. Mas'ūd al-Bukhārī (d. 747/1346–47). The term *Irshād* could refer to *Irshād al-adhhān ilā aḥkām al-īmān* (The Guidance of Minds to the Legal Rulings of Belief), a well-known book on Twelver Shiite law by al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325), or perhaps to *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā qawā'ī al-adillah fī uṣūl al-i'tiqād* (The Book of Guidance to Decisive Indicators of Fundamental Doctrines), a work on theology by Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085).

Ḥusayn also cites major works from the religious sciences that are explicitly Sunni, including both Shāfi'ī and Ḥanafī works. In theology, the term *Mawāqif* alludes to the famous theological work *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fī 'ilm al-kalām* (The Book of Stances, on the Science of Theology) by 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1356), and the term *Maqāṣid* alludes to *Maqāṣid al-tālibīn fī uṣūl al-dīn* (The Aims of Students, on Religious Doctrine), a well-known manual of theology by Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī. Ḥusayn uses the terms *Muhadhdhab* and *Tanbīh*, referring to famous Shāfi'ī legal works by Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī. The term *Minhāj* calls to mind the Shāfi'ī legal manual *Minhāj al-tālibīn* (The Students' Path) by al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277). In legal hermeneutics (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), Ḥusayn mentions the term *Talwīḥ*, in all likelihood referring to *Kitāb al-Talwīḥ* (The Book of Allusion), Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's commentary on *Tanqīḥ al-uṣūl* (The Revision of Jurisprudence), the Ḥanafī work on legal hermeneutics by Şadr al-Sharī'ah mentioned above. Such citations show that the cultural framework in which Ḥusayn and his teacher viewed and presented their activities was not narrowly sectarian. They belonged to the wider Islamic republic of letters, and they had expended tremendous efforts to acquire familiarity not only with general grammatical and rhetorical works but also with the well-known works of Sunni law and theology, including those of the Shāfi'ī and Ḥanafī legal schools and the Ash'arī theological school.

By indulging in relentless puns on book titles, Ḥusayn is sending two related messages. The first is analogical. Zayn al-Dīn merits recognition as an outstanding figure in the Islamic republic of letters, for his works are similar to and belong in the category of the other famous works invoked. The second is rhetorical. Ḥusayn exhibits great skill in creating clever allusions, displaying not only thorough knowledge of the learned tradition but also an unusually high level of mastery of Arabic grammar, lexicon, and rhetoric. The ability to use language in this way was not a basic requirement for jurists or theologians, many of whom wrote in plodding, technical language, but it demonstrated that Ḥusayn had acquired an unusually ample store of cultural capital that was highly regarded by his peers. He was not merely a passable religious official or bureaucrat; he had attained the very highest levels of educational polish, giving his learning an extra cachet. As al-Musawī points out, Arabic rhetoric constituted a crucial science underpinning the Islamic republic of letters.⁴⁰ Moreover, particularly from the fourteenth century on, double entendre emerged as the primary rhetorical device among elite poets and epistolographers, such as Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366), al-Şafadī (d. 764/1363), and Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (d. 837/1434).⁴¹ Ḥusayn's text shows that he has mastered the rhetorical tradition and therefore merited a particularly exalted rank among the scholars of his age.

Ḥusayn is certainly not the only author in Islamic tradition to have used the conceit of extended punning on book titles. The fourteenth-century litterateur Ibn Abī Ḥajalah (d. 776/1375) wrote a *maqāmah* devoted to the book-market of Cairo, included in his work *Mantiq al-tayr* (The Speech of Birds), in which the central rhetorical feature is the use of scores of similar puns. Maurice Pomerantz has translated and analysed this text, arguing that it stresses the centrality of books and the book market to the maintenance of society and their importance for the production of the educated elite. The *maqāmah* portrays the standard learned works that accomplish this task as under threat from bad books that have the potential to corrupt and undermine learned culture. This latter category includes erotic books, works on magic and the occult, popular literature such as the folk epics of 'Antar and al-Baṭṭāl, and works on monist Sufism by Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240), Şadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274), and others.⁴² Though Ḥusayn's text does not focus on works that ought to be excluded from learned discourse, it shares with Ibn Abī Ḥajalah's *maqāmah* the message that books are the foundation of elite learned culture.

A second key framework that looms in the background of Ḥusayn's letters is that of the system of patronage in the learned professions. Ḥusayn's attestations of devotion to his teacher not only express an emotional tie with a dear companion but also strengthen a crucial professional bond between the student and the

40 al-Musawī, *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters*, 2–3, 67, 141–6, 259–60.

41 al-Musawī, *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters*, 137–41, 145.

42 Maurice A. Pomerantz, "A *Maqāmah* on the Book Market of Cairo in the 8th/14th century: the 'Return of the Stranger' of Ibn Abī Ḥajalah (d. 776/1375)", pp. 179–207 in Nefeli Papoutsakis and Syrinx von Hees (eds), *The Sultan's Anthologist – Ibn Abī Ḥajalah and His Work* (Baden-Baden: Ergon Verlag, 2017).

teacher, parallel to the ties between clients and patrons in other contexts.⁴³ To a large extent, Ḥusayn owed his scholarly reputation to his relationship with Zayn al-Dīn, and his letters represent a form of service to his patron, strengthening that bond.⁴⁴ An unspoken, implied aspect of the letters is an overriding concern with success in the academic system. This success is envisaged in terms of scholarly production and reputation for posterity, but also in more practical terms including employment opportunities, regular stipends, endowed positions, and so on, even if to state this bluntly would be considered uncouth. The terms that appear explicitly have to do with ambition, recognition, rank, quality, and excellence.

Ṭabājah notes that Ḥusayn's draft letter refers several times to "goals" without specifying what they are. Ḥusayn even asks his teacher to pray that his goals be realized.⁴⁵ Ṭabājah believes that these are references to lofty spiritual or religious goals and states that Ḥusayn is determined to pursue them, despite obstacles.⁴⁶ Ṭabājah also claims that Ḥusayn was not interested in material gain, citing as an example the fact that, decades later, he left a materially successful life in Iran, apparently for good. After performing the pilgrimage to Mecca in 983/1575, he ended up in Bahrain, where he died in 984/1576.⁴⁷ This is something of an exaggeration, and it risks mischaracterizing Ḥusayn's probable motivations. While social conventions would have prevented Ḥusayn from referring to material gain in blunt terms, his goals most likely had to do with his scholarly career, including the desire for recognition both by the public and by other scholars, as well as access to patronage, positions of authority, and a stable income.

An understanding of the competition for patronage helps to explain Ḥusayn's remarks here. He was conscious of operating within a general system of competition for relatively scarce resources. Aspiring scholars endeavoured to acquire cultural capital and to use their skills, accomplishments, and connections to convert that capital into tangible wealth. The quest for financial and social success, including economic stability that could potentially last many generations, produced a system in which competition and rivalry were constant features. Competition may have enhanced intellectual production as scholars sought to outdo each other, but it had negative effects. Scholars often sought to undermine their peers, denouncing them for sin, incompetence, veniality, or heresy in order to compete with them for the favours of rulers, judges, and other high officials, or to oust them from stipendiary positions and acquire those positions for themselves. Scholars bribed officials to obtain appointments or to pass on their

43 On patron–client relationships in Islamic societies, see the classic study of Roy P. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). See also Bilal Orfali, "Employment opportunities in literature in tenth-century Islamic courts", pp. 243–50 in Sabine Schmidtke (ed.), *Studying the Near and Middle East at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 1935–2018* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2018).

44 On hierarchy among both Sunni and Shiite jurists, see Devin J. Stewart, "Islamic juridical hierarchies and the office of *Marji' al-Taqlid*", pp. 137–57 in Linda Clarke (ed.), *Shi'ite Heritage: Essays on Classical and Modern Traditions* (Binghamton, NY: Global Publications, 2001).

45 Ṭabājah, "Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn", 178.

46 Ṭabājah, "Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn", 176.

47 Ṭabājah, "Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn", 178.

positions to unqualified relatives.⁴⁸ Scholars regularly complained of “enemies” and “enviers” – often unqualified rivals – as causes of setbacks, misfortune, and frustrated ambitions.⁴⁹ Against this background, it becomes evident that the goals which Ḥusayn mentions are the acquisition of adequate patronage and a stable income, rather than lofty spiritual status.

Recourse to Ḥusayn’s other letters to Zayn al-Dīn helps the investigator interpret his unelaborated references to “goals” in this short draft. Ḥusayn’s first letter to Zayn al-Dīn, which presents the account of his travels from Baalbek in Lebanon to Karbala in Iraq, begins the opening prayer with a reference to God’s providence:

Praise be to God, Who favored movement over standing still, deposited in travel guarded mysteries that neither the eye can see nor speculation reach, and appointed for his worshipers their daily bread in regions that He has chosen for them, without their being aware: “For His practice is, when He desires a thing, to say to it, ‘Be!’ and it is.” (Q 36: 82). I praise Him for making wishes possible and hopes attainable, for providing the means to success and for removing obstacles.⁵⁰

It is both fitting and telling for Ḥusayn to invoke providence at the outset of a travel account. This passage suggests that one of the salient reasons behind Ḥusayn’s trip is the desire to earn a living, or at least God’s plan for him to do so. When he refers in this passage to wishes and hopes that God makes possible, one concludes that they have to do with earning a living or finding an appropriate position. Similarly, his mention of “removing obstacles” evidently refers to removing obstacles to obtaining such employment. Ḥusayn concludes this travel account with two poems, the first of which refers obliquely to the issue of employment. In its final section, Ḥusayn uses metonymy to invoke Safavid Iran: he mentions Ṭūs, referring to the shrine of the Eighth Imam ‘Alī al-Riḍā in Mashhad. Ḥusayn describes Ṭūs as a spring for the thirsty, suggesting that it will rescue and restore him. He adds, “There the chaste and clever one will be helped, and misery will not follow him. / He will see that the content one is held in esteem, while the greedy one is despised.”⁵¹ These verses allude to the hope that he will be rewarded on the grounds of his learning and accomplishments, presumably by being granted opportunities and success in a scholarly career in Iran. The passage characterizes Safavid Iran as a place where scholars are rewarded fairly, in accordance with their rank in learning. The implication is that in Ottoman territory, the opposite is true.

48 On this system from several centuries earlier in Damascus, see Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

49 One of the main motivations behind a number of medieval works denouncing the employment of Jews and Christians by Islamic governments was precisely the idea that they were preventing the employment of more qualified Muslim candidates. See ‘Uthmān b. Ibrāhīm al-Nābulusī, *The Sword of Ambition: Bureaucratic Rivalry in Medieval Egypt*, trans. Luke Yarbrough (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

50 Stewart, “Flight from Lebanon to Iraq”, 94.

51 Stewart, “Flight from Lebanon to Iraq”, 89, 102.

Ḥusayn similarly refers to his ambitions in the account of his journey from Iraq to Iran. He boasts of his scholarly potential and states that he could not realize his ambitions in Lebanon or in Iraq. However, he has hopes – and reason to believe – that the environment in Safavid Iran will fulfil his desires. He reports that his enemies may, on account of envy, accuse him of having material motives, but he insists that he is not concerned with material wealth and is only concerned with scholarship.⁵²

Ḥusayn’s other letters thus suggest that the goals he mentions and that have been frustrated have to do with his scholarly career. Certainly, Ḥusayn believed that he and his teacher were pursuing religious scholarship for their own spiritual fulfilment and for the good of society, but he was not opposed to earning a good living, and several years later he was willing to accept the position of *shaykh al-islām* of the Safavid capital, Qazvin, a post that must have come with substantial material rewards. In order to attain that position, he must have spent a number of years working assiduously, writing, teaching, dedicating treatises to Shah Tahmasb, and making connections with wealthy patrons and influential figures at court and elsewhere.⁵³

The third framework that one may detect behind Ḥusayn’s letter is that of the narrower section of the learned elite in which he operated, the relational hierarchy of Twelver Shiite jurists. It is perhaps unremarkable that students of a prominent scholar engaged in spreading their teacher’s influence. What is interesting in this particular case are the distances involved, Zayn al-Dīn’s own reluctance to travel to Safavid Iran, and the fact that he was in hiding and presumably in grave danger during this period. In the sixteenth century, with the rise of officially Shiite states in Iran and the Deccan, Twelver Shiite scholars had established an international network that cut across political borders and included Lebanon, southern Iraq, Iran, the Hejaz, Bahrain, and India. Zayn al-Dīn’s students spread his works and teachings throughout that network. He evidently chose not to enter Safavid territory, even though that would have meant personal safety, guaranteed patronage by Shah Tahmasb (1524–76), and access to lucrative positions. Nevertheless, students such as Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd al-Şamad and others spread Zayn al-Dīn’s influence within Safavid territory, and circumstantial evidence implies that Zayn al-Dīn encouraged this. For example, Ibn al-‘Awdī travelled to Iran not long after Zayn al-Dīn had completed a treatise on Friday prayer, on 1 Rabī’ I 962/24 January 1555, and he must have brought the treatise with him to Iran. Not long after, c. 963/1556, Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd al-Şamad wrote a treatise on Friday prayer that is essentially a reworked version of his master’s treatise on that subject. This contact seems to have been intentional: Zayn al-Dīn, by writing the treatise, intended to enter the ongoing Safavid debate regarding the status of Friday prayer, in support of his student, though he did not state this explicitly.⁵⁴ Similarly, Ḥusayn’s treatise on *hadīth* criticism, *Wuṣūl al-akhyār ilā uṣūl al-akhbār* (The Path for the Elite to the

52 Stewart, “An episode in the ‘Āmilī migration”, 501–2.

53 Stewart, “The first Shaykh al-Islam”.

54 Devin J. Stewart, “Polemics and patronage in Safavid Iran: the debate on Friday prayer during the reign of Shah Tahmasb”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 72/3, 2009, 425–57, esp. 431–41.

Sources of Oral Reports), completed c. 961/1554, soon after Ḥusayn entered Safavid territory,⁵⁵ again resembles his teacher's treatise on the same topic, *al-Bidāyah fī al-dirāyah* (The Beginning, on Hadith Criticism), completed on 5 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 959/22 November 1552, very closely. One may argue also in this latter case that by writing the work, Zayn al-Dīn intended to bolster the position of Ḥusayn as a leading Twelver jurist in Iran. At the same time, Ḥusayn's teaching of Zayn al-Dīn's works and his authorship of works that upheld the same opinions augmented his teacher's reputation. The patron–client relationship worked both ways. The example of Ibn al-ʿAwdī's promotion of *Tamhīd al-qawāʿid* in Qazvin is similar. It is striking that the composition of these works and their delivery over tremendous distances and across political borders took place quite quickly, even at a time when Zayn al-Dīn was in danger of being arrested by the Ottoman authorities.

Ṭabājah emphasizes moral qualities that he detects in Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad's treatment of his former teacher, calling attention to Ḥusayn's loyalty and attachment to Zayn al-Dīn and to the fact that he shows him respect and affection.⁵⁶ Indeed, he stresses that in all three of the extant letters that Ḥusayn wrote to Zayn al-Dīn, he adopts a humble attitude and shows deference to his teacher, despite his own status as a scholar of some renown. This, in his view, is *qimmat al-akhlāq al-islāmiyyah* “the pinnacle of Islamic morals”.⁵⁷ There is some reason to be surprised at the degree of Ḥusayn's deference, given that Zayn al-Dīn was only about six years older than Ḥusayn and not a member of the preceding generation: he was born on 13 Shawwāl 911/9 March 1506, and Ḥusayn on 1 Muḥarram 918/19 March 1512. Indeed, they had studied together under most of the same teachers, in Karak Nūḥ, Damascus, and Cairo, and had read most of the same books. Nevertheless, Zayn al-Dīn was Ḥusayn's teacher and the senior scholar, and Ḥusayn's reputation rested on the fact that he was Zayn al-Dīn's student. Ḥusayn's expressions of deference to his teacher are not merely reflections of his excellent morals. Certainly, he felt sincere affection for his longtime companion and respect for his teacher, but his behaviour also adhered to the rules governing the learned profession. The deference and loyalty that he showed his teacher served to maintain the known relational hierarchy among scholars and particularly jurists. Ḥusayn recognized his teacher's superior rank, and association with his teacher enhanced his own rank, particularly since Zayn al-Dīn was arguably the foremost Twelver jurist alive after the demise of ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAl al-Karakī in 940/1534.

This short draft letter forms part of the story of Ḥusayn's sojourn in Iraq, an extended stop in the course of his migration from Lebanon to Iran in the mid-sixteenth century. It attests to the close contact he maintained with his teacher Zayn al-Dīn despite their separation. Even though Zayn al-Dīn was living in concealment in Jabal ʿĀmil and Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad was maintaining a low profile in the Shiite shrine cities of Iraq, they continued to exchange letters and books clandestinely, presumably through contacts among pilgrims and

55 Stewart, “An episode in the ʿĀmilī migration”, 495–6.

56 Ṭabājah, “Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn”, 176, 177, 179 n. 24.

57 Ṭabājah, “Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn”, 178.

traders. It is one small indication of the network through which Zayn al-Dīn continued to spread his influence, works, and teachings, despite the difficulties he faced during the last nine years of his life.

Appendix: Draft of Ḥusayn's letter

When the book of my master and my support arrived, I received it as a good omen and kissed it, and I cut its throat and opened it up, making it a cause of joy for my heart and a path for my eyes to follow. I perused it and found in every splendid passage (*Lum'ah*)⁵⁸ thereof an insight (*Tabşirah*)⁵⁹ sufficient (*Kāfiyah*)⁶⁰ for eloquent masters and an example of guidance (*Hidāyah*)⁶¹ fit to restore (*Shāfiyah*)⁶² the banquets of brilliant orators. It encompassed so many pearls (*Durar*)⁶³ of eloquence (*Bayān*)⁶⁴ that it surpassed *Majma' al-Bayān* (The Confluence of Eloquence),⁶⁵ and it showed the way to such treasures of rhetoric that it surpassed *Kanz al-'Irfān* (The Treasure of Knowledge).⁶⁶ By my life, it was a revelation (*Kashshāf*)⁶⁷ of the mysteries (*Sarā'ir*)⁶⁸ of the marvels (*Badā'i'*)⁶⁹ of the tongue, and an exposition (*Bayān*)⁷⁰ of the orderly arrangement (*Tahdhīb*)⁷¹ of the two sciences of poetic tropes and eloquent expression. How many indications (*Ishārāt*) of the cure (*Shifā'*) for the disease

- 58 A reference to *al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqiyyah*, a Twelver Shiite legal manual by Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī.
- 59 A reference to *al-Tabşirah fī uşūl al-fiqh*, a work on legal hermeneutics by the Shāfi'ī jurist Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1083).
- 60 A reference to *al-Kāfiyah*, a work on syntax by the famous grammarian and Mālikī jurist Ibn al-Ḥājjib (d. 646/1249).
- 61 A reference to the famous manual of Ḥanafī law, *al-Hidāyah*, by Burhān al-Dīn al-Marghīnānī (d. 593/1197).
- 62 A reference to *al-Shāfiyah*, a work on morphology by the famous grammarian Ibn al-Ḥājjib.
- 63 A reference to any of a number of works with *al-Durar* "pearls" in the title, such as Ibn Ḥajar's biographical work *al-Durar al-kāminah fī a'yān al-mī'ah al-thāminah*.
- 64 A reference to *al-Bayān*, a work on law and *ḥadīth* by Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī (d. 786/1384), or perhaps to the famous rhetorical work *Kitāb al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, by al-Jāhiz (d. 255/868).
- 65 This is a reference to al-Faḍl b. al-Hasan al-Ṭabrisī's (d. 548/1154) *Majma' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, a major Shiite *tafsīr* work, as Ṭabājah notes: "Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn", 178 n. 12.
- 66 This is a reference to *Kanz al-'irfān fī fiqh al-Qur'ān*, by Miqdād al-Suyūrī (d. 826/1423), a student of al-Shahīd al-Awwal, as Ṭabājah notes: "Min Risālah li-l-Shaykh Ḥusayn", 178 n. 13.
- 67 An allusion to the title of al-Zamaksharī's (d. 538/1144) famous *tafsīr*, *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl*.
- 68 Perhaps an allusion to *Kitāb al-Sarā'ir al-ḥāwī li-taḥrīr al-fatāwī*, a Twelver Shiite work on law, by Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī (d. 598/1202).
- 69 Perhaps an allusion to the title *Kitāb Badā'i' al-şanā'ī fī tartīb al-sharā'ī*, a work on law by the Ḥanafī jurist al-Kāsānī (d. 587/1191).
- 70 Perhaps an allusion again to *al-Bayān*, a work by Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī (d. 786/1384).
- 71 An allusion to *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq wa-l-kalām*, a short text on logic and theology by Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), or perhaps an allusion to al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's (d. 460/1067) *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, one of the four canonical *ḥadīth* collections of the Twelver Shiites.

of the tongue-tied did it comprise?! And how many expressions of a well-ordered (*Muhadhdhab*)⁷² law (*Qānūn*) for those endowed with cleverness did it contain?!⁷³ It was a guide (*Irshād*)⁷⁴ to a careful revision (*Tanqīh*)⁷⁵ of the rules (*Qawā'id*)⁷⁶ of constructions (*Mabānī*),⁷⁷ and a clarification (*Tawdīh*)⁷⁸ of the path (*Minhāj*)⁷⁹ of the essence (*Khulāṣah*)⁸⁰ of the science of tropes. Indeed, it was an excellent (*Rā'iq*) elucidation (*Īdāh*)⁸¹ of the secret signs of rhetoric and a surpassing (*Fā'iq*)⁸² key (*Miftāh*)⁸³ to the gate of the quintessence (*Lubāb*)⁸⁴ of splendour, or a means (*Wasīlah*)⁸⁵ to remove misery (*Kashf al-ghummah*)⁸⁶ from souls, or a lamp (*Miṣbāh*)⁸⁷ that outshines the rays of suns.⁸⁸

There is no need to explain (*Īdāh*)⁸⁹ the various types (*Jumal*)⁹⁰ of pain that we suffer⁹¹ from being far away, and there is no use in bringing up

- 72 An allusion to *al-Muhadhdhab*, a standard manual of Shāfi'ī law by Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1083).
- 73 This passage puns on several of the works of the famous philosopher Avicenna (d. 429/1037), the *Shifā'*, his major compendium of philosophy, the *Qānūn*, his work on medicine, and *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*.
- 74 Perhaps an allusion to the title *Irshād al-adhhān ilā aḥkām al-īmān*, a well-known book on Twelver Shiite law by al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325).
- 75 Perhaps an allusion to *Tanqīh al-fuṣūl fī ikhtisār al-Maḥṣūl fī l-uṣūl*, a commentary by the Mālikī jurist al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285) on the *Maḥṣūl* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), or to *Tanqīh al-uṣūl*, a Ḥanafī work on legal hermeneutics by Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah 'Ubayd Allāh b. Mas'ūd al-Bukhārī (d. 747/1346–47).
- 76 A reference to any number of works devoted to *qawā'id* or legal maxims, such as *Qawā'id al-aḥkām fī masāliḥ al-anām* by 'Izz al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Salām (d. 660/1262), or to *Qawā'id al-aḥkām*, a work on law by al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325).
- 77 Perhaps an allusion to *al-Mabānī fī al-ma'ānī* by Ibn al-Ṣā'igh al-Ḥanafī (d. 776/1375).
- 78 Perhaps an allusion to a famous manual of Ḥanafī *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *al-Tawdīh*, by Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah (d. 747/1347).
- 79 An allusion to the standard Shāfi'ī legal manual, *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn*, by al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277).
- 80 Perhaps an allusion to al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī's biographical work, *Khulāṣat al-aqwāl fī aḥwāl al-rijāl*.
- 81 An allusion to the famous rhetorical manual, *al-Īdāh* of al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/1338).
- 82 Probably an allusion to *al-Fā'iq fī gharīb al-ḥadīth* by al-Zamakhsharī.
- 83 An allusion to the title of the most famous manual of Arabic rhetoric in the late middle ages, al-Sakkākī's (d. 626/1229) *Miftāh al-'ulūm*.
- 84 Perhaps an allusion to *Lubāb al-fiqh*, a work on Shāfi'ī law by Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085).
- 85 Perhaps an allusion to the title *al-Wasīlah ilā nāyl al-faḍīlah*, a work on Twelver Shiite law by Abū Ja'far 'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥamzah al-Ṭūsī (fl. 13th c.).
- 86 Perhaps an allusion to a famous work devoted to the Shiite Imams, *Kashf al-ghummah 'an ma'rifaṭ al-'immah*, by Bahā' al-Dīn 'Alī b. 'Isā al-Irbilī (d. 692/1293).
- 87 Perhaps an allusion to the title *al-Miṣbāh fī 'ilm al-ma'ānī wa'l-bayān wa'l-badī'* by Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Mālik (d. 686/1287).
- 88 Ṭabājah notes that “suns” here might refer to earlier ‘*ulamā'* “scholars of the religious sciences” (Ṭabājah, 178 n. 17).
- 89 Perhaps a reference to *al-Īdāh fī 'ulūm al-balāghah*, a work on rhetoric by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/1338).
- 90 Perhaps a reference to the concise legal work *Jumal al-'ilm wa-l-'amal*, by al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044).
- 91 Reading *nukābiduhu*, with Mukhtārī. Ṭabājah has *nukāyiduhu*.

(*Talwīh*)⁹² a reminder (*Tadhkirah*)⁹³ of the sincere affection contained in my conscience (*Sarā'ir*).⁹⁴ In truth, I considered it more fitting to fold the page of discourse over the carefully penned presentation (*Tahrīr*)⁹⁵ of those aims (*Maqāsid*),⁹⁶ and more appropriate⁹⁷ to pass over hints (*Ishārāt*)⁹⁸ at a detailed account (*Mufaṣṣal*)⁹⁹ of those paths (*Masālik*).¹⁰⁰ I hereby remove all of that completely from the discussion at hand and set forth to drag my coattails¹⁰¹ along courses other than those two.

Regarding hinting at (*Tanwīh*)¹⁰² an exposition (*Bayān*)¹⁰³ of the shining beam of light (*Lum'ah*)¹⁰⁴ from a detailed account (*Mufaṣṣal*)¹⁰⁵ of your sublime and glorious qualities, and a revelation (*Kashf*)¹⁰⁶ of a summary account (*Mufaṣṣal*)¹⁰⁷ of the intriguing points (*Ṭarā'if*) of the shining examples (*Lawāmi'*)¹⁰⁸ among your celestial deeds, my tongue's abilities (*Mawāqif*)¹⁰⁹ fall short of summarizing (*Talkhīṣ*)¹¹⁰ their mere beginnings

92 Perhaps an allusion to *Kitāb al-Talwīh*, Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's commentary on *Tanqīh al-uṣūl*, a Ḥanafī work on legal hermeneutics by Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah 'Ubayd Allāh b. Mas'ūd al-Bukhārī (d. 747/1346–47).

93 Perhaps an allusion to *Tadhkirat al-fuqahā'*, a legal work by al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī.

94 Perhaps an allusion to *Kitāb al-Sarā'ir al-ḥāwī li-tahrīr al-fatāwī*, a Twelver Shiite work on law, by Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī (d. 598/1202).

95 An allusion to *Tahrīr al-aḥkām al-shar'iyah 'alā madhhab al-Imāmiyyah*, a legal manual by al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī.

96 An allusion to *Maqāsid al-tālibīn fī uṣūl al-dīn*, a well-known manual of theology by Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390). He wrote his own commentary on the text, known as *Sharḥ al-Maqāsid*.

97 Mukhtārī has *'ukhrā* here for *'ahrā*, apparently a typographical error.

98 An allusion to Avicenna's philosophical compendium *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*.

99 Perhaps an allusion to *al-Mufaṣṣal*, a well-known grammatical work by al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144).

100 Perhaps an allusion to any of a number of works termed *Masālik al-mamālik*, and dealing with geography, topography, and travel routes, such as *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (d. 749/1349).

101 Mukhtārī has *intaṣabtu ijrā' al-dhuyūl* here. I believe the correct text is *intaṣabtu ajurru l-dhuyūl*, as Ṭabājah has it.

102 Probably a reference to *Kitāb al-Tanwīh bi-faḍl al-Tanbīh*, by 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. Muḥammad al-Mawṣilī (d. 671/1272–73), a commentary on the Shāfi'ī legal manual *al-Tanbīh*, by Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1083).

103 Perhaps an allusion to *al-Bayān*, a work by al-Shahīd al-Awwal Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī (d. 786/1384).

104 Perhaps an allusion to *al-Lum'ah al-dimashqīyyah*, a legal work by al-Shahīd al-Awwal Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī (d. 786/1384).

105 A reference to *al-Mufaṣṣal*, a well-known grammatical work by al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144).

106 A reference to *Kashf al-ghummah 'an ma'rifat al-'immah*, by Bahā' al-Dīn 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-Irbilī (d. 692/1293).

107 Perhaps an allusion to *al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfi'*, a standard manual of Twelver Shiite law by al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d. 676/1277), or to the *Mukhtaṣar* of Ibn al-Ḥājib, a standard text on legal hermeneutics.

108 Perhaps an allusion to *Lawāmi' al-asrār fī sharḥ Maṭāli' al-anwār*, a well-known work on logic by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 766/1364).

109 A reference to *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fī 'ilm al-kalām*, by 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1356), the most studied manual of theology in pre-modern times.

110 A reference to Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī's work on rhetoric *Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ*, and abridgement of al-Sakkākī's *Miftāḥ al-'ulūm*.

(*Mabādi'*),¹¹¹ and the rank (*Maqāmāt*)¹¹² of my eloquence (*Bayān*)¹¹³ is insufficient to spread (*Nashr*)¹¹⁴ even a summary account (*Khulāṣah*)¹¹⁵ thereof. No wonder if¹¹⁶ I have turned the reins aside from presenting a carefully revised (*Tanqīh*)¹¹⁷ and summary report (*Mujmal*)¹¹⁸ of them, and have chosen not to dwell on a lengthy account (*Muṭawwal*)¹¹⁹ of those courses (*Masālik*).¹²⁰

And so, I beg of your efficacious (*Kāfiyah*)¹²¹ benevolence and your salutary (*Shāfiyah*)¹²² and abundant (*Wāfiyah*)¹²³ generosity¹²⁴ that you grant this supplicant the succour of your prayers, so that my requests (*al-Maṭālib*)¹²⁵ might be

111 A reference to al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī's work on legal hermeneutics, *Mabādi' al-uṣūl*.

112 A reference to the *Maqāmāt* of Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim b. 'Alī al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122), a tremendously popular literary work known for its demonstration of rhetorical skill.

113 Perhaps a reference to *al-Bayān*, a work on law and *ḥadīth* by Muḥammad b. Makkī al-Jizzīnī (d. 786/1384).

114 An allusion to *al-Nashr fī al-qirā'āt al-'ashr*, a work on the variant readings of the Quran by Abū al-Khayr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Jazarī (d. 833/1429).

115 Perhaps an allusion to al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī's biographical work, *Khulāṣat al-aqwāl fī ahwāl al-rijāl*.

116 Both Ṭabājah and Mukhtārī supply 'in "if" after *lā gharwa* "no wonder".

117 Perhaps an allusion to *Tanqīh al-fuṣūl fī ikhtisār al-Maḥṣūl fī l-uṣūl*, a commentary by the Mālikī jurist al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285) on the *Maḥṣūl* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), on legal hermeneutics, or to *Tanqīh al-uṣūl*, a Ḥanafī work on legal hermeneutics by Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah 'Ubayd Allāh b. Mas'ūd al-Bukhārī (d. 747/1346–47).

118 A reference to *al-Mujmal fī al-lughah*, a well-known lexical work by Aḥmad b. Fāris (d. 395/1004).

119 A reference to Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's longer commentary on Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī's *Talkhīṣ*, on rhetoric.

120 Perhaps an allusion to any of a number of works termed *Masālik al-mamālik*, and dealing with geography, topography, and travel routes, such as *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (d. 749/1349). Ṭabājah states that this paragraph indicates an apology on the part of Ḥusayn for not responding at greater length regarding his master's book (Ṭabājah 179 n. 24).

121 A reference to *al-Kāfiyah*, a work on syntax by the famous grammarian and Mālikī jurist Ibn al-Ḥājjib (d. 646/1249).

122 A reference to *al-Shāfiyah*, a work on morphology by Ibn al-Ḥājjib (d. 646/1249).

123 Perhaps a reference to *al-Risālah al-wāfiyah li-madhhab ahl al-Sunnah fī al-i'tiqādāt wa-uṣūl al-diyānāt*, a work on doctrine by Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd al-Dānī (d. 444/1053).

124 Ṭabājah suggests *al-shāfiyah* for what he judges to be *al-sāmiyah* in the text, to match the preceding rhyme-word, *al-kāfiyah*, and the immediately following word *al-wāfiyah*. Mukhtārī reads the word in the manuscript as *al-shāfiyah*, and not *al-sāmiyah*, as do I. Ṭabājah has *shihābikum al-shāfiyah al-wāfiyah* "your curing, abundant shooting star", while Mukhtārī has *shufa'ā'ikum al-shāfiyah al-wāfiyah* "your curing, abundant intercessors". Neither can be correct. The masculine singular noun *shihāb* "meteor, shooting star" should not be modified by a feminine adjective. The correct word must be a plural, but *shufa'ā'* "intercessors" would apply to humans so usually requires a plural masculine adjective. What is required is an inanimate plural referring to some quality of Zayn al-Dīn, to be parallel with *al-tāf* "kindnesses". I believe the intended word is *sha'fatikum* or *sha'afatikum* "your light rains", the plural of *sha'fah* "light rain". This would refer figuratively to Zayn al-Dīn's generosity, and so form a fitting pair with *al-tāf* in both form and meaning.

125 Perhaps a reference to *al-Maṭālib al-'āliyah bi-zawā'id al-masānīd al-thamāniyah*, a work on *ḥadīth* by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449).

fulfilled (*Taysīr*)¹²⁶ and that the covering of affliction might be removed (*Kashf al-Ghummah*)¹²⁷ from the faces of my desires, as is the regular practice (*Qānūn*)¹²⁸ of God's servant on diverse (*Mukhtaliḥ*)¹²⁹ occasions and as is his utmost wish (*Muntahā Maṭlabihī*)¹³⁰ throughout the passing moments. And in consequence, perhaps, the ascendants (*Ṭawāli'*)¹³¹ of our goals (*Maqāṣid*)¹³² might rise up from the points on the horizon (*Maṭāli'*)¹³³ that indicate an affirmative answer, and the lamps (*Maṣābīḥ*)¹³⁴ of hope might shine forth from the niche (*Mishkāt*)¹³⁵ of a favourable response.

- 126 A reference to *al-Taysīr fī al-qirā'āt al-sab'*, a work on Quranic readings by Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd al-Dānī (d. 444/1053).
- 127 A reference to *Kashf al-ghummah 'an ma'rifaṭ al-a'immaḥ*, by Bahā' al-Dīn 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-Irbilī (d. 692/1293).
- 128 A reference to *al-Qānūn*, on medicine, by Avicenna (d. 428/1037).
- 129 A reference to *Mukhtaliḥ al-shī'ah*, a work on disputed points of the law by al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325).
- 130 A reference to *Muntahā al-maṭlab fī taḥqīq al-madhhab*, a work on Twelver Shiite law by al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325).
- 131 A reference to *Ṭawāli' al-anwār min maṭāli' al-anzār*, a work on theology by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. 685/1286).
- 132 A reference to *Maqāṣid al-ṭālibīn fī uṣūl al-dīn*, a manual of theology by Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390).
- 133 A reference to *Maṭāli' al-anwār*, a work on logic by Sirāj al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Abī Bakr al-Urmawī (d. 682/1283).
- 134 A reference to *Maṣābīḥ al-sunnah*, a collection of *ḥadīth* by al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd al-Baghawī (d. c. 516/1122).
- 135 A reference to *Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ*, an expanded version of al-Baghawī's *Maṣābīḥ al-sunnah*, by Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī (d. 741/1340–41).