

From *bid'a* to *sunna* - The case of the *wilaya* of 'Ali in the Shi'i *adhan*

Liyakat A. Takim
 Vanderbilt University
 Presented at the AAR Conference, New Orleans
 24th November 1996

One of the most debated points in Shi'i *fiqh* (juridical) works is the profession of the *wilaya* (spiritual and temporal authority) of 'Ali b. Abu Talib in the *adhan*. This paper will examine the pronouncements of the early Shi'i jurists on this issue and will compare and contrast their views with the verdicts of later Shi'i authors. It will be seen that polemical and social considerations necessitated the insertion of the *wilaya* of 'Ali¹ in the Shi'i *adhan*.

Although Kulayni (d. 328-9/939) examines the various segments of the *adhan* in his *al-Kafi*, he does not mention the *wilaya* of 'Ali at all.² In fact, some traditions in this work indicate that Gabriel had dictated the *adhan* to the Prophet, 'Ali, in turn, had heard and dictated it to Bilal. However, there is no mention of the *wilaya* in any of these traditions.³

Furthermore, there is no mention of the *wilaya* of 'Ali in al-Mufid's (d. 413/1022) *Muqni'a*⁴, nor in *al-Intisar* of Sharif al-Murtada (d. 436/1044).⁵ Infact, it is correct to say that no scholar before al-Saduq (d. 381/991), Shi'i or otherwise,

¹ Hereafter referred to as the *wilaya*.

²Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, 3/302.

³ *ibid*.

⁴al-Mufid, *Muqni'a*, pg. 97.

⁵*al-Murtada, al-Intisar*, pg. 39.

discusses the *wilaya* in the *adhan*. After stating the different parts of the *adhan*, al-Saduq states in his *Man La Yahduru*

"This is the correct *adhan*, nothing is to be added or subtracted from it. The *mufawwida*⁶, may God curse them, have fabricated traditions and have added to the *adhan* "Muhammad and the family of the Muhammad are the best of mankind" twice. In some of their traditions, after uttering "I bear witness that Muhammad is the prophet of Allah, [they add] I bear witness that 'Ali is the *wali* (friend) of God" twice, among them are others who narrate instead of this "I bear witness that 'Ali is the true commander of the faithful" twice. There is no doubt that 'Ali is the *wali* of God and that he is the true Commander of the faithful and that Muhammad and his family, peace be upon them, are the best of [God's] creatures. However, that is not [part] of the original *adhan*. I have mentioned this so that through this insertion [in the *adhan*], those accused of concocting [the doctrine of] *tafwid* amongst us should become known".⁷

It is clear that al-Saduq regards those reciting the *wilaya* as being heretical and belonging to the *mufawwida*, an extremist group. Furthermore, he unequivocally curses and condemns them for their act. For al-Saduq, the recitation of the *wilaya* in the *adhan* is one of the distinguishing marks of the *mufawwida*, not of the Shi'as, of his era. They are known for and to be distinguished from the mainstream twelver Shi'is by this practise.

In his *Tahdhib*, Tusi (d. 460/1067) is mainly concerned with citing *hadith* reports on various jurisprudential issues. In spite of this, he does not cite a single

⁶ The term *mufawwida* refer to those who espoused the doctrine of *tafwid*, i.e., the belief that after creation, God delegated all matters pertaining to worldly affairs to the Prophet and the Imams. That the doctrine had permeated the Shi'i ranks can be discerned from several traditions on this in Shi'i *hadith* literature. See Kulayni *al-Kafi*, 2/2-5, al-Saffar, *Basa'ir*, p. 378-9 where several traditions justify the doctrine of *tafwid*.

hadith report on the *wilaya* of ‘Ali in the *adhan*. This is surprising in view of the fact that in his other works (to be discussed presently), Tusi mentions that peculiar or rare (*shadhdh*) reports on the *wilaya* of ‘Ali in the *adhan* have been narrated.⁸

In all probability, the traditions on the *wilaya* were not available to him.⁹

Alternatively, because they were *shadhdh*, he did not deem them to be authentic or worthy of consideration.¹⁰ However, in his *Mabsut*, Tusi states:

“As for uttering “‘Ali is the Commander of the faithful and the family of Muhammad is the best of mankind” in accordance to what has been narrated in rare reports, this is not to be practiced (*falaysa bi ma‘mul ‘alayhi*) in the *adhan*. If a person does it then he does not commit a sin due to it (*ya'thamu bihi*). It is not amongst the *fadila* (recommended parts) of the *adhan* and neither does it make them complete”.¹¹

In his *Nihaya*, Tusi even states that one who utters the *wilaya* has erred (*mukhti*).¹² The foregoing evinces a clear prohibition by scholars like al-Saduq and Tusi on professing the *wilaya* in the *adhan*.

Juridical works of subsequent scholars like Abu Mansur Muhammad b. Idris (d. 598/1201) contain detailed discussions on the *adhan* and *Iqama*.

Later Shi‘i theologians distanced themselves from this doctrine. See al-Saduq, *A Shi‘ite creed*, translated by A. Fyze pg. 100-1; Mufid, *Awa‘il al-Maqalat*, pg. 240-1.

⁷al-Saduq, *Man la Yahduru*, 1/188.

⁸He does not cite these in his *Khilaf* either. See Tusi, *Khilaf*, 1/83.

⁹ There is no trace of any of these *wilaya* traditions in any of the Shi‘i juridical manuals. They are only casually referred to by early authors like al-Saduq and Tusi.

¹⁰The same can also be stated for the lack of *wilaya* traditions in his *al-Istibsar*. See Tusi, *al-Istibsar* 1/299, 1/305.

However, no mention is made of the *wilaya*. It is to be further noted that although Ibn Idris appends a separate section on the recommended parts (*fada'il*) of the *adhan*, contrary to the practice of later scholars, he does not mention the *wilaya* in this section either.¹³

Similarly, in his *Mukhtasar al-Nafi'*, Muhaqqiq al-Hilli (d. 676/1277) does not mention the *wilaya* at all.¹⁴ After enumerating the segments of the *adhan* in his *Mu'tabar*, Muhaqqiq declares: "Anything added to this is *bida'*".¹⁵

However, his contemporary, al-Hadhali (d. 690/1291) states in his *al-Jami' Li'l Shara'i* that although the *wilaya* has been narrated in rare traditions it is not to be practiced (*falaysa ma'mul 'alayhi*).¹⁶

'Allama al-Hilli (d.736/1335) also explicitly forbids the recitation of the *wilaya* in his *Nihaya al-Ahkam*, stating that it is not permissible to recite it as it has not been legislated for in the *shari'a* (*li 'adami mashru' iyyatihi*).¹⁷

The preceding discussion indicates that the *mutaqaddimun*¹⁸ either prohibited or were silent on the question of uttering the *wilaya* in the *adhan*.

¹¹Tusi, *al-Mabsut*, 1/99.

¹²Tusi, *Nihaya*, 69.

¹³ See *Silsila al-Yanabi' al-Fiqhiyya*, 4/660 citing Ibn Idris' *Sara'ir*.

¹⁴al-Hilli *Mukhtasar al-Nafi'*, pg. 27.

¹⁵In an interesting article on the *wilaya* in the *adhan*, Rida Ustadi examines the rulings on the *wilaya* of diverse Shi'i jurists from the time of al-Saduq to the present times. I am indebted to Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi of Toronto for making the article available to me. See Ustadi, *Kalimat al-A'lam hawl Jawaz al-Shahada bi'l-Wilaya*, pg. 384.

¹⁶ *Silsila*, 4/867

¹⁷al-Hilli, *Nihaya al-Ahkam fi ma'rifa al-Ahkam*, 1/412. Quoting Tusi, al-Hilli also prohibits the *wilaya* in his *al-Muntaha* and *al-Tadhkira*. See Ustadi p. 384-5. There is no mention of the *wilaya* in Hilli's *Shara'i*. See *Shara'i al-Islam*, 1/75-6

In his *al-Lum‘a*, Muhammad b. Jamal al-Din (also called Shahid I (d. 786/1384)) follows the pattern of his predecessors in prohibiting the utterance of the *wilaya* in the *adhan* or the *iqama* even though, he adds, the *wilaya* is a reality (*wa in kana al-waqi‘ kadhalik*).¹⁹ In his *al-Durus*, Shahid I further adds that the *wilaya* is a credal issue, not a part of the *adhan*.²⁰ He repeats al-Saduq’s proscription, saying that the *wilaya* in the *adhan* is a concoction of the *mufawwida*. As a matter of fact, Shahid I is consistent in prohibiting the *wilaya* in all his four major *fiqh* works (*al-Lum‘a*, *Dhikra*, *al-Bayan* and *Durus*). However, despite the initial prohibition by the early Shi’i jurists, the *wilaya* in the *adhan* was continuously discussed in subsequent *fiqh* works.

In his *Rawda al-Janan* Shahid II (d. 966/1558) unequivocally states that the insertion of the *wilaya* or anything of that nature in the *adhan* is *bida'* (innovation) and that the reports on it are fabricated. The issue at stake, Shahid II reminds us, is not whether they (the family of the Prophet) are the best of creatures or not. Rather, the question is whether the *wilaya* can be inserted in segments of an act of worship which has been divinely revealed. Not every correct [article of] belief is worthy of insertion in acts of worship (*ibadat*) which have been imposed by the

¹⁸ In Imami biographical literature, scholars before to ‘Allama al-Hilli are referred to as ‘early’ (*mutaqaddimun*) . See Takim, “The *rijal* of the Imams as depicted in Imami biographical literature”, Ph.D. Thesis, SOAS p. 226.

¹⁹ *al-Lum‘a*, 1/573

²⁰Ustadi, *Kalimat*, pg. 385. Shahid I also quotes Tusi and al-Saduq’s prohibition in his *al-Dhikra*.

Lawgiver.²¹ In his *al-Masalik*, Shahid II even maintains that it is forbidden (*haram*) to add anything to the *adhan*.²²

In his commentary (*sharh*) of the *Lum'a*, Shahid II further maintains that the *wilaya* pertains to a matter of belief. It is not to be enumerated as a part of the *adhan*. He repeats his previous assertion that this is tantamount to *bida'*. It is as if one was to add a *rak'a* (unit of prayer) or the *tashahhud* (the *shahada*) in the prayer.²³

Al-Muqaddas al-Ardabili (d. 993/1585) initially quotes al-Saduq's prohibition on citing the *wilaya* and agrees with him. Al-Ardabili further states that pronouncing the *wilaya* is tantamount to following the precedence set by 'Umar who had altered the *adhan* recited in the morning by inserting the *tathwib* (prayer is better than sleep). Since the Shi'is condemn 'Umar for adding an extraneous element to the *adhan*, they should not themselves emulate the same act.²⁴ It is to be noted that al-Ardabili permits the sending of blessings (*salawat*) on the Prophet and his family when his name is mentioned in the *adhan*. This, explains al-Ardabili, is because of the narration of general traditions (*'umum al-akhbar*) recommending this act. However, he does not quote a tradition from Tabarsi's *al-Ihtijaj* which was used by later jurists to argue for the *wilaya* in the *adhan*.

²¹ Ustadi, *Kalimat*, pg. 385

²² *ibid.*

²³ See *Sharh al-Lum'a*, 1/573.

²⁴ Ustadi, *Kalimat*, pg. 386.

The recitation of the *wilaya* in the *adhan* is explicitly allowed and even justified for the first time by al-Majlisi al-Awwal (d. 1070/1659) in his *Rawda al-Muttaqin*. Commenting on al-Saduq's statement, al-Majlisi I states: "It is difficult to be certain that these traditions [on the *wilaya*] are due to their (*mufawwida*'s) fabrications". He further argues for accepting rare *wilaya* traditions by claiming that these genre of traditions may be authentic but not well known. Moreover, he adds,

"just because the *mufawwida* or the Sunnis perform an act does not mean that we can be certain that the truth lies in it's contrary or that they (the traditions on the *wilaya*) have been fabricated unless there are [traditions transmitted] from them (the Imams) which clearly indicate this. This has not been transmitted [from them]. Moreover, the Shi'as used to perform it in the olden times and still do so. It is also clear that if one was to act upon it (pronouncing the *wilaya*) he would not be a sinner."²⁵

Majlisi I cautions that the *wilaya* should be pronounced as a part of belief, not as a part of the *adhan*. He then speculates as to the possible reason for it's prohibition by the erstwhile jurists. It is possible, he states, that it was forbidden due to "*taqiyya* (dissimulation), just as many *ahadith* urge the omission of *hayya 'ala khayri'l 'amal* (hasten to the best of deeds) from the *adhan* due to *taqiyya*". He then adds:

²⁵*ibid*, pg. 387.

“It is not clear who al-Saduq meant by the *mufawwida*, it seems that anyone who did not accept the *sahw* (acts of inadvertence) of the Prophet was a *mufawwida*,²⁶ or anyone who believed in inserting [anything] in acts of worship [which are different] from those practiced by the Prophet is a *mufawwida*. On this basis, all Shi‘is, apart from al-Saduq and his teacher, would be [classified as the] *mufawwida*”.

A close study of *Man La Yahduru* indicates that Majlisi’s I’s claim that al-Saduq had prohibited the *wilaya* due to *taqiyya* cannot be substantiated. As a matter of fact, just before he prohibits the *wilaya* in the *adhan*, al-Saduq addresses the question as to whether “*hayya ‘ala khayr al-‘amal*” (hasten to the best deeds) can be omitted from the *adhan*. This, he states, can be done if one has to dissimulate.²⁷ Al-Saduq clearly indicates parts of the *adhan* which can be omitted or altered under *taqiyya* conditions. The fact that he unequivocally rules that the *wilaya* should not be mentioned at all and ascribes this practise to the *mufawwida* suggests that *taqiyya* was not a factor in his ruling on the issue.

Majlisi I turns the argument on it’s head. First he refutes the contention that the paucity of *wilaya* traditions implies they are not authentic. Having argued on the possibility of their authenticity, Majlisi I then claims that according to both Tusi and al-Saduq, traditions allowing the pronouncement of the *wilaya* are available. Due to this, the *wilaya* can be recited but not as a part of the *adhan*.

²⁶On this see al-Saduq, *Man la Yahduru*, 1/234-5. See also the discussion in McDermott, “The Theology of Shaykh al-Mufid” pg. 356. Al-Saduq labels those who reject the *sahw* of the Prophet to be amongst the *mufawwida*.

²⁷ al-Saduq, *Man La Yahduru*, 1/188.

A statement made by Majlisi I in his Persian commentary of al-Saduq's *faqih* alludes to the possible reason why the Shi'i jurists were now willing to allow the recitation of the *wilaya* in the *adhan* thus challenging the rulings of the earlier *fuqaha*'. With the establishment of the Safavid state, it was essential that the Shi'i identity of the nascent state be fostered. The religious affiliations of the political entity needed social expression. One way of doing this was through the *adhan*. Henceforth, the role of the *adhan* was not to be confined to calling the faithful to prayer, rather, it was to be used to avow the Shi'i identity of the Safavid state.

The *adhan* was also used for polemical purposes i.e., to remind the newly converted Shi'is of their allegiance to 'Ali and to refute the arguments of the Sunnis. Thus Majlisi I states that in most parts of the country, the *wilaya* was recited in the *adhan* in his time. When people omitted the *wilaya* they were accused of being Sunnis. Ironically, in this tract, Majlisi I invokes the doctrine of *taqiyya* (what I call inverse *taqiyya*) to recite the *wilaya*. Stated differently, *taqiyya* was used to assert rather than hide Shi'i identity, i.e., the *wilaya* was to be recited so as to avert accusations of being affiliated to the Sunnis. Majlisi I goes on to cite the example of his own teacher, Mawlana 'Abd Allah, who, at Majlisi's instigation, had stopped uttering the *wilaya* in the *adhan*. He adds that his teacher was accused of being a Sunni. Majlisi then asked his teacher to recite the *wilaya*

due to *taqiyya*, i.e. to defend himself against accusations of having Sunni penchant. This was his practise for as long as he lived.²⁸

The new role envisaged for the *adhan* can be further discerned from the writings of Ahmad Zanjani, a contemporary scholar. In his “*Khayr al-Umur*” he initially relates how Mu’awiya stirred up the feelings of the masses by wearing the blood stained shirt of ‘Uthman and by commanding his governors to curse ‘Ali from the pulpits. Zanjani adds that when the Shi‘is came to power, the king (Zanjani does not identify him) decided to mention the *wilaya* five times every day in order to repudiate (*raghm anf*) the adversaries. He also declared that greetings and blessings be invoked on ‘Ali and his infallible descendants in the sermons after the name of God and the Prophet. The *wilaya*, according to Zanjani, was a response to the curses invoked on ‘Ali in Mu’awiya’s time. However, this was not done with the intention of it being a part of the *adhan*, rather, it was to embellish the *adhan* and to refute the arguments of the adversaries.²⁹

Despite al-Majlisi’s efforts at accommodating the *wilaya* in the *adhan*, his contemporary Shi‘i jurists did not explicitly allow the *wilaya*. Thus al-Muhaqqiq Sabzawari (d. 1090/1679) states: “The companions have clearly stated that it is an innovation (*bida'*) and that inserting it in the *adhan* is dependent on *tawqif al-shari'* (divine legislation), a fact which has not been established”.³⁰ Fayd al-

²⁸ Ustadi, *Kalimat*, pg. 388.

²⁹*ibid*, pg. 407.

³⁰*ibid*, pg. 389.

Kashani (d. 1091/1680) states in his *Mafatih al-Shara'i* that reciting the *wilaya* is an abominable (*makruh*) act, contrary to the *sunna*.³¹

In *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, al-Hurr al-Amili (d. 1104/1692) has collected a number of traditions on the *adhan*. Although he quotes traditions from diverse sources on issues pertaining the *adhan*, not surprisingly, al-Amili does not quote a single *hadith* on the *wilaya* of 'Ali in the *adhan*.³²

Like his namesake, 'Allama al-Majlisi (d. 1110/1698) also twists the discussion on the *wilaya* on its head. It is not impossible, he states, that the *wilaya* be amongst the *mustahabb* (recommended) parts of the *adhan*. This is because Tusi, al-Hilli, Shahid I and others have testified that rare reports on it have been narrated. In essence, by citing the opinions of preceding scholars, he declares that reports on it, although rare, are available. The very point which al-Saduq and Tusi invoked to prohibit the *wilaya* (reports being rare) is used by Majlisi II to permit it.³³

To further justify the *wilaya* in the *adhan*, Majlisi ingeniously divides segments of the *adhan* into obligatory and recommended parts. The *wilaya*, he declares, may be uttered as a recommended part of the *adhan*. By this neat bifurcation, he was able to undermine the objections of those arguing against inserting an extraneous element to an act of worship. He was also able to finally accommodate the *wilaya* as a recommended segment of the *adhan*.

³¹*ibid.*

³²See al-Hurr al-Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, 4/643-4

‘Allama Majlisi also introduces a new element to the debate. Besides the rational proof on citing the *wilaya* as a *mustahabb* act, he adduces scriptural proof to vindicate his juridical ruling on the issue, a point which was utilized by most subsequent jurists to allow the recitation of the *wilaya* in the *adhan*. Majlisi II quotes a *hadith* cited in al-Tabarsi's (d. 588/1192) *al-Ihtijaj*. Al-Tabarsi narrates a tradition from al-Qasim b. Mu'awiya who is quoted as saying: "I said to Abu 'Abd Allah (Ja'far al-Sadiq) that they transmit a tradition in their [books on the] *mi'raj* [indicating] that when the Prophet was taken on the night ascension he saw written on the throne: "There is no god but God, Muhammad is the Prophet of God and that Abu Bakr is the truthful one". Al-Sadiq is reported to have responded: "Glory be to God, they have altered everything, including this?" Al-Qasim replied: "Yes". Al-Sadiq then reportedly said: "When God, the Almighty, most glorious, created the throne he wrote on it there is no god but God and Muhammad is the Prophet of God and 'Ali is the Commander of the faithful.....". The long tradition ends with Ja'far al-Sadiq telling al-Qasim that "whenever one of you recites the *shahada* he should also say 'Ali is the Commander of the faithful".³⁴

Since the tradition does not define the parameters under which the *wilaya* is to be recited, it is construed by Majlisi II to be general, not restrictive. Hence the *wilaya* in the *adhan* is subsumed under and justified by this tradition. Al-Majlisi adds that if the *mu'adhdhin* utters the *wilaya* not as a part of the *adhan* but for

³³Bihar, #84, pg. 111.

³⁴ Tabarsi, *Ihtijaj*, pg. 158.

baraka then he is not a sinner, for the community has allowed any form of speech during the *adhan* and *iqama*. This, al-Majlisi adds, is the best supplication and *dhikr*.³⁵ What was considered to be *bida'* by preceding jurists becomes, for Majlisi II and subsequent Shi'i jurists, a *sunna*. Majlisi II needed scriptural support for his ruling on the *adhan*. This was provided by Ja'far al-Sadiq's *hadith* in *al-Ihtijaj*.

The tradition, which is evidently polemical in nature, is transmitted to reject a Sunni claim on the *mi'raj*. Rather than dealing with the question of the *wilaya* in the *adhan*, it purports to repudiate a Sunni claim by offering a Shi'i version of the same event. That Tabarsi's tradition is not germane to the *wilaya* can be discerned from the fact that although it was reported by Tabarsi in the sixth century (400 years before al-Majlisi II), Shi'i scholars before Majlisi II did not consider it as providing sufficient proof for inserting the *wilaya* in the *adhan*. In fact, no proponent of the *wilaya* before Majlisi II has referred to it in a discussion on the *wilaya*. Thus, despite al-Majlisi's continuous reference to Tabarsi's tradition, the fact remains that it did not occur to previous jurists to refer to it since it did not evidently point to the *wilaya* in the *adhan*.

Moreover, the tradition has not been reported by any scholar before Tabarsi. As a matter of fact, he does not cite the source of this tradition. Most of the traditions cited in his *al-Ihtijaj* are *mursal* i.e., they do not have any *isnad* appended. In the introduction to his work, Tabarsi claims that he did not append

³⁵Bihar, vol. #84, pg. 111-2.

isnads in his work either because there was an *ijma'* on [narrating] most traditions reported in his book or because the traditions agree with reasoning or because they were well known.³⁶ However, the tradition of al-Qasim b. Mu'awiya was certainly not known to the likes of al-Saduq or Tusi or scholars before Tabarsi since none of them has cited it. Moreover, even though most Shi'i *hadith* scholars are agreed that *marasil* traditions cannot be considered approbative, this tradition has been acted upon based on a recommended practice.³⁷ This is the only tradition which is continuously reported by subsequent Shi'i scholars in vindicating the *wilaya* in the *adhan*.

The post Majlisi era shows a clear evolution in the thinking of Shi'i *fuqaha'* on the issue. Whereas Shi'i jurists before him were generally agreed on not reciting the *wilaya*, jurists after were him were generally agreed (with a few exceptions) on it's pronouncement. Subsequent *fiqh* works evince more arguments vindicating it's insertion in the *adhan*.

Most scholars after al-Majlisi follow his line of reasoning, quoting al-Sadiq's tradition as cited by Tabarsi. For example, after quoting Tabarsi's tradition, al-Wahid al-Bihbihani (d. 1205/1790), states that the *wilaya* in the *adhan* is like sending blessings on Muhammad. Just as the blessings (*salawat*) are sent to

³⁶ Tabarsi, *Ihtijaj*, p. 14. See also Tihrani, *al-Dhari'a* 1/281

³⁷ See Muhsini, *Buhuth fi 'ilm al-rijal*, pg. 136. Shahid II, *Sharh al-Bidaya fi 'ilm al-Diraya*, pg. 140. There are certain conditions when *mursal hadith* are acceptable. See the discussion on this in Shahid II, *Sharh al-Bidaya* pg. 141.

the Prophet's family after professing his prophecy in the *adhan*, the *wilaya* can be uttered on the same basis .³⁸

In his *Mafatih al-Fayd*, Bihbihani states that to pronounce the *wilaya* with the intention of it being a part of the *adhan* is forbidden as this is *bida'*. However, to recite it for the sake of *baraka* is allowed. Just as after stating "God is great" in the *adhan* many *mu'adhdhin* state: "the most lofty, sublime" (*jalla jalala*) and after bearing testimony to Muhammad's prophecy, it is recommended to invoke God's blessings on the Prophet (although these are not part of the *adhan*) similarly, it is recommended to recite the *wilaya* after the *shahada* based on the *hadith* cited in *al-Ihtijaj*. Bihbihani asks poignantly: "Is there an obstacle to ruling that this be a recommended act? Just because a report is rare (*shadhdh*) does not mean it cannot be practiced as a *mustahabb* (recommended) act". As a matter of fact, Bihbihani adds, this was Tusi's normal practise. Whenever he comes across a rare report, he recommends that it be acted upon. For example, Tusi rules, based on a report from Ibn Yaqtin, that it is recommended to repeat a prayer if one forgets to recite the *adhan* and *iqama* at the beginning.³⁹ In any case, he adds, to speak during the *adhan* and *iqama* is permissible. If futile speech does not

³⁸Ustadi, *Kalimat*, pg. 391.

³⁹ See *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*, vol. #4/656. The fact that Tusi contravenes his normal practise (i.e., he does not recommend the citing of *wilaya* based on rare reports) suggests that he did not find the reports on it to be reliable. This is not pointed out by Bihbihani.

invalidate the *adhan*, then what about an auspicious act (*tayammun*) which bestows blessings?⁴⁰

Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita (d. 1228/1813) initially repeats al-Saduq's and Tusi's views on the issue. However, he adds, if one remembers the Commander of the faithful with the intention of exhibiting his status, manifesting his preponderance or to refute the views of the opponents or to defy the obstinate ones then he will be rewarded for it.⁴¹ Given the favorable ambiance which the Shi'is now found themselves in, the *wilaya* was to be used as a polemical weapon to demonstrate the preponderance of the Shi'i faith. For Kashif al-Ghita, the polemical function that the *wilaya* performed could override the objections of the likes of Tusi and al-Saduq. As a matter of fact, Kashif al-Ghita further declares that mentioning the *wilaya* of 'Ali in the *adhan* is not sufficient to indicate his preponderance because the term *wilaya* could be used in different ways. Moreover, all believers are friends (*awliya*) of God. In order to differentiate and elevate 'Ali from all other friends of God, he says it is better to state that 'Ali is the *khalifa bila fasl* (the successor [to the Prophet] without any interruption) or the Commander of the faithful or the best of creation after the Prophet. Moreover, he adds, by doing this, there will be no doubt in the minds of the masses that this statement is not a part of the *adhan*. For Kashif al-Ghita, the *wilaya* was not a mere declaration of faith or statement of a cardinal doctrine. It was to be used a badge of identity, of showing

⁴⁰ Ustadi, *Kalimat*, pg. 392.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, pg. 394.

the superiority of ‘Ali over the other Caliphs and asserting his immediate succession to the Prophet.

The Shi‘i jurists were clearly responding to the polemical and political needs of the time. Given the favorable milieu which the Shi‘is found themselves in, they had to assert their identity. The *wilaya* in the *adhan* was just one way of doing so.

Al-Fadil al-Naraqī refutes the argument stated by his erstwhile scholars by saying that the *wilaya* is neither a *bida'* nor an abominable act. This is especially so due to the tradition reported in Tabarsi’s work. Moreover, he maintains, *tawalli* (the view that the segments must follow in sequence without interruption) is not a stipulation of the *adhan* or *iqama*. Neither is it specified that the parts should not be separated. So pronouncing the *wilaya* does not contravene the conditions of the *adhan*. How can one be permitted to utter futile words during the *adhan* and yet not be allowed to state the truth? The fact that the reports on it are rare, Naraqī adds, is not an impediment in ruling that the *wilaya* is a *sunna* and a recommended practise. This is so because many times jurists act according to rare reports and rule that it is recommended to undertake an act.⁴²

The jurists foresaw the possible danger that lay for the Shi‘i laity, i.e., through continuous practise, the *wilaya* could appear to many to be an integral part of the *adhan*. Despite the continuous reminder that the *wilaya* was not a part of the

⁴²*ibid.*, pg. 396.

adhan, the *mu'adhdhin* could recite it without being aware of this distinction. The Shi'i *fuqaha* countered this by disclaiming themselves from the responsibility. Jurists like Fadil Naraqī stated that the fault lies with the ignorant masses who, despite several reminders, were not aware of the ruling on the issue. Others recommended that the *wilaya* be recited in a different manner so that it becomes evident that it was not a part of the *adhan*. Others said it should be uttered once compared to the other *shahada* which were recited twice. However, for the Shi'i laity, the *wilaya* has come to form an integral part of the *adhan*. Few, if any, distinguish it from the other *shahada*.

This can be corroborated by statements made by the afore-mentioned Ahmad Zanjani. He complains that for most Shi'is, the *wilaya* has become a part of the *adhan*. Thus anyone who changes the format of the *wilaya* in the *adhan* is criticized for having fallen short in his recognition of the rights of 'Ali. He narrates a personal experience in which a person from Tabriz claimed that the *wilaya* was a part of the *adhan*. Zanjani showed him seven volumes of *fiqh* works to demonstrate the truth to him. However, despite this, he was not convinced. On the contrary, he criticized Zanjani.⁴³

To ensure that what is not a part of the religious rulings not be confused with the essential rulings, Zanjani recommends that when reciting the *wilaya* it should be distinguished from the other *shahada* either by reciting it only once or

⁴³*ibid*, pg. 407

by not reciting it at all. In short, he says that it should be recited in a distinctive way so that it should not be construed as being a part of the *adhan*.

Sayyid 'Ali Bahr al-'Ulum (d. 1298/1880) initially states that in performing recommended acts, one can depend on reports deemed to be rare. He then addresses the problem of the prohibition of the *mutaqaddimun*. The verdict of al-Saduq, Tusi and other jurists that it is an error to pronounce the *wilaya* in the *adhan* is a product of their own *ijtihad*. The fact that there are general traditions (like the one cited in *al-Ihtijaj*) is enough to obviate the need for a special report recommending the *wilaya* i.e., even though there are no specific reports recommending pronouncing the *wilaya*, Tabarsi's general tradition is enough to rule that it is a recommended practise. Just as there are reports suggesting that whenever the name of the Prophet is mentioned, it is recommended to send blessings on him, similarly Tabarsi's tradition indicates that whenever the *shahada* is recited, it is recommended to recite the *wilaya*. The *adhan* and *iqama*, says Bahr al-'Ulum, both fall under this category.⁴⁴

Despite the emerging consensus that the *wilaya* could be recited as a recommended part of the *adhan*, other dissenting views were expressed. Mahmud b. Mirza 'Ali-Naqi (d. 1300/1882), the author of *al-Mawahib al-Sunniyya* for example, refutes the arguments of Majlisi II and other Shi'i jurists. He declares that the *wilaya* cannot be cited as a recommended part. The tradition in *al-Ihtijaj*

⁴⁴*ibid*, pg. 399.

cannot be used as proof for permitting the *wilaya* as a recommended act since it, like many other traditions, merely mentions the excellencies of ‘Ali, indicating his general virtues. It is similar to the Prophet’s tradition “adorn your meetings with the remembrance of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib”. This tradition, like other traditions on the merits of ‘Ali, merely indicates the preponderance of ‘Ali, it is not linked to the *adhan* or the *iqama*, he states.

As for the *wilaya* traditions referred to by erstwhile scholars, they are not to be acted upon, because the scholars considered them to be rare and fabricated. The author states that past Shi‘i jurists had maintained that rare and weak reports could be acted upon as a recommended practise . The fact that they did not do so in this case shows that they had concurred on abandoning their normal practice on this issue. However, he then adds, one who recites the *wilaya* should do it in such a way that people should not be led into thinking that it is a part of the *adhan*. He should pronounce it at times and omit it at others. He should not repeat it twice as is done with the testimony [of God’s unity and the Prophecy of Muhammad] and he should omit the words “I bear witness” when reciting the *wilaya*.⁴⁵

Once it was accepted that the *wilaya* could be recited in the *adhan*, reversing the trend was always going to be difficult. Subsequent discussion focused on the basis on which it could be recited and on whether it was a recommended part of the *adhan* or not. The question of whether it should be

⁴⁵*ibid.*, pg. 400

recited at all was hardly addressed. Most scholars approbated the practice by quoting the arguments of al-Majlisi and al-Sadiq's tradition in *al-Ihtijaj*.

It is also to be noted that just as the *mutaqaddimun* agreed on prohibiting the *wilaya*, the *muta'akhkhirun* concurred on permitting it. Stated differently, the agreement of most later jurists was in stark contrast to the agreement of their predecessors who had concurred on prohibiting the practice.

Shi'i jurists of the present century like Hasan al-Sadr, 'Abd Allah Mamaqani and Abu al-Hasan Isfahani have generally ruled that it is recommended to recite the *wilaya*. The late Ayatullah Muhsin al-Hakim (d. 1390/1970) goes further in his *al-Mustamsik* and states:

...in this era it (the *wilaya*) is counted amongst the symbols of [true] faith and a sign of Shi'ism. In this regard, it becomes preponderant *shar'an*, in fact, it could be obligatory [to recite it] but not with the intention of it being a part of the *adhan*. From this, the reason stated in *al-Bihar* becomes clear i.e., it is not improbable for the attestation of the *wilaya* be counted as a recommended part of the *adhan*. This is due to the testimony of Shaykh (Tusi) and 'Allama (al-Hilli) and Shahid I and others that traditions have been reported in this regard. This is further supported by the tradition [reported] by al-Qasim b. Mu'awiya cited in *al-Ihtijaj* of al-Tabarsi from al-Sadiq....⁴⁶

Al-Hakim indicates that the purpose for reciting the *wilaya* wasn't mere attainment of reward. The *wilaya* symbolized Shi'i ideals, identity and aspirations. Depending on the circumstances, reciting the *wilaya* could even be made obligatory on the faithful even though, as he cautions, it should not be

⁴⁶Al-Hakim Muhsin, *al-Mustamsak*, 5/438. The view that the *wilaya* is merely to perform the polemical function of indicating the belief in the Imamate of 'Ali and his preponderance over the first three caliphs is also indicated by other jurists like Abu'l Hasan al-Qazwini in his *Hidayat al-Anam*, pg. 91

recited as a part of the *adhan*. Significantly, when referring to the *wilaya* as a Shi'i symbol, al-Hakim links it to al-Majlisi II's statement thus corroborating my earlier contention that Majlisi's era marks the *adhan* taking on a polemical tenor, serving as a means of defiance and a badge of identity for Shi'is living now under the aegis of the Safavid state.

Sharaf al-Din (d. 1377/1957) also disagrees with his predecessors stating that:

“those who declared the *wilaya* as prohibited had erred and given an isolated ruling (*shahdhdha*). They [even] said it was an innovation. Every *mu'adhdhin* in Islam recites a few words before the *adhan* which he connects with it. Like his saying: "Praise be to God who did not take a son..." or other [words] like these.... This has not been legislated by the Lawgiver (*Shari'*) in the *adhan* yet it is not considered an innovation, neither is it certainly prohibited to do so, because the callers to prayer do not see them as being parts of the *adhan*. They merely recite it based on general proofs which include these [words]. Similarly, the attestation of 'Ali's *wilaya* after the two *shahada* in the *adhan* is an act based on general proofs which allow it. Moreover, a few words does not invalidate the *adhan* or the *iqama* neither is it prohibited (*haram*) to recite in their midst, so where did [the question of] innovation and prohibition come from...?"⁴⁷

Some students of the late Ayatollah Araki (d. 1415/1994) transcribed notes of his lectures. In a treatise entitled "Guidance in the *shahada* of the *wilaya* in the *adhan* and *iqama* being a part of them like other parts" he writes:

"The eight proof: What the author of *Kitab al-Salafa fi amr al-Khilafa li'l-'Alam* Shaykh 'Abd Allah al-Muraghi al-Misri, a Sunni, says that Salman al-Farisi attested to the *wilaya* of 'Ali after the

⁴⁷Sharaf al-Din, *al-Nass wa'l Ijtihad*, 243-4 check

attestation of the prophecy during the time of the Prophet. A man entered [to see] the Prophet of God and said: “O Prophet of God, I have heard a thing which I have not heard before”. He (the Prophet) said: “And what is this?” He said: “Salman bore witness in his *adhan* after the *shahada* of the *risala* the *shahada* of the *wilaya* of ‘Ali”. He replied: “You have heard a good thing”⁴⁸

Thereafter, it is claimed that the eminent companion Abu Dharr al-Ghifari also bore testimony to the *wilaya* of ‘Ali after the testimony to the prophecy of Muhammad in the *adhan*.

A new argument is now added to the debate, i.e., this was practiced at the time of the Prophet who did not object to it. The Prophet's approval of this practice makes it a *sunna*. It is noteworthy that prior to this time, although many arguments in favour of the *wilaya* in the *adhan* were advanced, there was no mention of the *wilaya* of ‘Ali being uttered in the *adhan* at the time of the Prophet or during the lives of any Imams.

Recent scholars like Burujardi (d. 1381/1961), Khumayni (d. 1410/1989), Khu'i (d. 1413/1992) and Golpaygani (d. 1414/1993) all consider the *wilaya* to be a recommended act in the *adhan*.⁴⁹ The late Ayatullah Milani states that the *wilaya* makes the *shahada* complete so it should be recited [in the *adhan*].⁵⁰

⁴⁸Ustadi, *Kalimat*, pg. 405.

⁴⁹*ibid* 405-6.

⁵⁰ *ibid* 406. See also Milani, *Tawdhih al-Masa'il*, pg. 127.

Conclusion

Through different lines of arguments, what was previously considered to be *bida'* later became *sunna*. The reason probably lies in the desire to establish a separate Shi'i identity. In all probability, with the establishment of the Safavid dynasty, there was a concurrent need to sanction a sectarian identity through which the Shi'is could be distinguished from non-Shi'is and the *wilaya* be intertwined with the *shahada*. Various arguments were advanced to inexorably link the two. In fact, the *wilaya* is frequently referred to as the third *shahada* (*al-shahada al-thalitha*). Henceforth, the *adhan* was to perform a wider function than the hitherto restricted liturgical role of calling the faithful to prayer. It was to avow the religious affiliations of the State.

Paradoxically, what distinguished the Shi'is from the *ghulat* at the time of al-Saduq (**not reciting** the *wilaya* in the *adhan*) was reversed and was now used to distinguish the Shi'is from non-Shi'is (**reciting** the *wilaya*). Stated differently, the distinctive mark of the *mufawwida* in al-Saduq's time became, for Majlisi I and subsequent *fuqaha'*, a distinctive emblem of the Shi'is. This was done initially by interpreting a tradition cited in al-Tabarsi's *al-Ihtijaj*, a tradition which was certainly unknown to the likes of Tusi and al-Saduq. No Shi'i scholar earlier than Tabarsi has cited this report. Furthermore, Tusi's report that rare (and presumably inauthentic) reports have been narrated on the *wilaya* was seized on by the likes of

Majlisi I and II to indicate that traditions from the Imams were available on the subject, traditions which, although no longer extant, could be used to vindicate the practice.