Introduction

In 1966, four years after the September revolution that ended the reign of the last imam in Yemen, bulldozers were clearing Sanaa’s famous Khuzayma cemetery to build an Officers’ Club. When the scholar Muhammad al-ʿAmrānī happened to be passing by the site he realised that the graves of the city’s most eminent scholars were being destroyed, including that of the jurist ʿAlī al-Shawkānī (d. 1250/1834). Al-ʿAmrānī immediately informed the minister of education. They located Shawkānī’s grave and had his remains exhumed. This done, an official procession and reburial ceremony took place and Shawkānī was interred next to the Filayhī mosque in the old city, where his present grave-site is precisely indicated as lying to the west of the westernmost dome. So, whilst Republican officers would now mingle over the concrete and asphalt covered remains of past generations of Sanaa’s ulema, only Shawkānī was spared this indignity.¹

Considered to be one the greatest scholars of Islam at the dawn of the modern age, Shawkānī is a towering figure in both Yemeni Islam and modern Islamic reformist thought. His encyclopaedic oeuvre is studied and referred to throughout the Sunnī world today, from Nadwāt al-ʿUlamāʾ in north India to the madrasas of Kanō in Nigeria. One of the most widely used legal texts among contemporary Sunnīs, Sayyid Sābiq’s Fiqh al-sunnna, is essentially an abridgement of Shawkānī’s hadith-based legal commentary, Nayl al-awtār, a text that is itself also universally referred to. His popularity cannot be attributed merely to the synthetic quality and clear exposition of his writings. Rather, it is his formulation of the problems facing the community of Muslims (umma) and the solutions he proffered for solving these – his intellectual project – as well as his attempt to put these into practice in his own lifetime that account for his enduring appeal. When describing eighteenth-century Islam, modern studies invariably mention Shawkānī as an important member of a network of reformist scholars that spanned the entire Muslim world, one that included such scholars as Shāh Wālī Allāh of Delhi, Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥḥāb of Najd and ʿUthmān dan Fodio in northern Nigeria.² A reading of these scholars’

¹ Cf. al-Thawra (Sanaa, 1966), no. 142, p. 2 and no. 150, p. 2.
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Shawkānī's grave (author)

writings with the aim of creating well-defined typologies may lead one to believe that terminological similarities among these scholars justifies subsuming them under one label. Voll and Levtzion, for example, describe them as operating within a ‘fundamentalist mode’. Such generalisations can be misleading. This is because they ignore genuine intellectual differences between the scholars as well as the varied local contexts in which they were elaborating and promulgating their teachings. And, more importantly, the relationship that these scholars maintained with the political authorities of their day and the ways in which this effected their ideas is touched upon in a perfunctory manner. Rather than presenting Shawkānī’s ideas interregionally or on the plane of the Muslim world as a whole, this study aims at providing detailed analysis of a specific project initiated by a reformist scholar. Understanding the intellectual and political history of eighteenth-century Yemen and its formative relationship to the present is the proper backdrop for appreciating the importance of Shawkānī and the reformist ideals he so clearly formulated.

This study is an intellectual biography of Shawkānī that is woven through the political history of the Qāsimī imamate (1635–1850s CE) he was born into and which he served. It delineates two fundamental transformations which took place from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries in the realm of the state and in the intellectual world of scholars in the period, culminating in the thought and political work of Shawkānī. The first shift pertains to the transformation of Qāsimī structures of rule from their initial charismatic style into dynastic and
patrimonial modes of domination. The second, and simultaneous transformation, relates to the rise within the institutions of the imamate of scholars who subscribed to Sunní Traditionist ideas, men who had abandoned the inherited teachings of the Zaydī-Hadawī school of law (madhhab) upon which the imamate in Yemen was founded, preferring instead a non-madhhab identity. The imamate patronised the Traditionists, who in turn set about reforming Yemeni society in accordance with their religious ideas. The details of this reformist project are addressed here as well as the intellectual and political reactions it engendered from those who clung to the teachings of the Zaydī-Hadawī school. Finally, the study traces Shawkānī’s intellectual legacy into the modern period.

Geography

Yemeni historical works divide the country into well-defined geographical regions one of which, Upper Yemen, coincides with the area in which Zaydīs predominate demographically. Upper Yemen is the highland plateau that stretches from Najrân in the north down to the Sumārā pass south of Ya‘m and includes all the major Zaydī centers of learning, such as Sa‘da, Sanaa and Dhamār. In Upper Yemen live the farming tribesmen in whose territories Zaydī imams and scholars have based themselves and who have provided the imams with the military power with which to establish their claim to rule. An elective affinity existed between the tribesmen and the imams and this was displayed robustly when the imams waged campaigns against outside invaders, such as the Ottomans, or when they led wars of conquest into outlying regions such as Lower Yemen. The relationship, however, was always fraught with tensions and as often as not, tribes turned against an imam, supported a contender, or simply refused to acknowledge any imam.

Below the Sumārā pass lies Lower Yemen, a mountainous region and the richest agricultural area in the country. Here lay the tax-base from which surplus could be extracted on which to run a state. The prosperous medieval dynasties, e.g., the Rasīlids and Ṭāhirids, were centered on this region. Lower Yemen includes the

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3 The concepts of charisma and patrimonialism are drawn from a Weberian typology of forms of authority (cf. Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), vol. I, pp. 1010f., 1111f.). Weber defines charisma as ‘a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as leader’. Weber also saw the charismatic leader as disrupting tradition. The Zaydī imam fits certain aspects of this definition, and it is apt to use the concept to define those among the imams who fulfilled the institution’s rigorous qualifications. Patrimonialism, by contrast, was defined by Weber as a form of political domination in which authority rests on the personal and bureaucratic power exercised by a royal household. This power is formally arbitrary and under the direct control of the ruler. Domination in patrimonial states is secured by means of a political apparatus staffed by mercenaries, conscripts, slaves, administrators and, as in our case, jurists and scholars. These groups do not have an independent power-base and are therefore at the mercy of the ruler’s whim.
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important towns of Ibb, Dhī Jibla and Tāʾizz; its inhabitants, other than the non-Muslims, are Shāfiʿīs whose social affairs are best described as relations between landlords and peasants. A third region is the Western Mountains. This abuts the highland plateau on the west and consists of numerous villages involved in terraced agriculture where, most notably, coffee was grown and from which tax revenue was also generated but never in the amounts extracted from Lower Yemen. The population of the Western Mountains is mixed between Zaydīs, Shāfiʿīs and some Ismāʿīlīs, and though these inhabitants are organized in tribes, these are not as militarily significant as those in Upper Yemen. Finally, there is the Tiḥāma, the hot sandy plains along the coast of the Red Sea. Here the population is overwhelmingly Shāfiʿī, enjoying strong links with Africa, the Hijaz as well as the wider world of the Indian Ocean. From the perspective of the Qāsimī imamate, the Tiḥāma was important primarily because of the revenues generated from the trade that took place in such port towns as Mocha and Lūḥayya.

Social stratification

In the period under consideration (from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries), the society of Upper Yemen was hierarchical and stratified into a number of social groups or estates, each being associated with a professional occupation. The ṣāfa (sing. sayyid), who claim descent from the Prophet Muḥammad, see themselves as being at the top of the social hierarchy and are engaged ideally in affairs of politics and the interpretation of God’s law. Being related to the Prophet, they are descendants of the eponym of the Northern Arabs, ʿAdnān. Only sayyids can become imams, and learning, piety, humility and courage are all attributes ascribed to the sayyids. Below the sayyids are the qūdāt (‘the judges’, sing. qaddī), the qādīs claim descent from South Arabian tribes – they are the descendants of Qaḥṭān, the eponym of the Southern Arabs – and had attained their status either by dint of individual scholarly accomplishment in the religious sciences, or by claiming descent from ancestors who were learned and/or had been in some way associated with the rule of a Zaydī imam. The qūdāt cannot aspire to the imamate, but can otherwise hold ministerial, judicial and administrative posts.

The qādīs, along with the sayyids, are the purveyors of the religious sciences and often lived in towns or villages called hijar (sing. hijra). These are ‘protected

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5 All the other regions of Yemen that are not described here, such as Yāfiʿ, Aden and Ḥaḍramawt were Shāfiʿī, and in the case of Yāfiʿ also tribal. However, since these only fell under Qāsimī rule for a very short span of time, their histories are not within the purview of this study.

6 For a more detailed description of the social structure of Yemeni society, see the works that are mentioned in the bibliography by Caton, Dresch, Messick, Mundy, Serjeant and Weir.

enclaves’ in otherwise tribal territories in Upper Yemen. Some of the hijras were associated with markets and centres of learning. Shawkānī’s nisba denotes that he was originally from such an enclave, Shawkān.

The next group in the hierarchy are the tribal armed peasants (qabā‘īl), constituting the numerical majority of Upper Yemen’s society, and under whose armed protection the other estates live. Below the tribesmen are a number of lowly estates whose members provide a variety of menial and service-oriented jobs for society – such professions as barbers, heralds, butchers, tanners, bloodletters, weavers, musicians – and these are collectively referred to as the Banū al-Khums, some of whom (depending on one’s professional occupation) are also known as the mazāyina (sing. muzayyin). The Jews of Yemen, as dhimmis (protected non-Muslim subjects) of an Islamic state, or as ‘protected clients’ (jirān) of the tribes, inhabit a social space that is properly outside this hierarchy, though they were associated with the Banū al-Khums since they often were engaged in the service professions, e.g., silversmiths, cobblers, ironmongers, potters.

Members of these estates could be distinguished sartorially. Among the Muslims, ‘two elements, the dagger and the headgear, were of particular significance in social differentiation’. The sayyids and the qādis, for instance, wore a distinctive slightly curved dagger called the asib as well as white flowing robes (with long sleeves) and large turbans. Dress, however, was not the only marker of sayyid or qādir identity. A code of conduct and a particular mode of speech were associated with the learned estates, and these were assumed to inhere in their innate dispositions. According to Shawkānī, the sayyids and qādis, ‘as people of nobility (ahl al-sharaf) and elevated households (al-hanāfī al-rafi‘a)’, have a pre-disposition to love learning, an aptitude for the religious sciences and the requisite manners and habits of men of learning. For instance, the sayyids were not expected to enter the market-place since engaging in the fray and commotion of trade was considered demeaning and might result in loss of probity (ṣadīqa). As descendants of the Prophet, the sayyids had an historical, religious and eschatological role to play as guides to the Muslim community.

Zaydis and the Imamate in Yemen

The Zaydis are a sect of Shi‘ī Islam who supported the revolt of Zayd b. ‘Alī in 122/740 against Umayyad rule. In 284/897, Zaydis managed to establish a

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8. The tribesmen did not necessarily accept the social hierarchy in the terms presented here since they were the ones who offered protection to the other estates. Nonetheless, the tribesmen did acknowledge and accord a special place and role for the sayyids and the qādis as men of learning and noble ancestry.


community in Yemen. The main emphasis of their teachings is their insistence on righteous rule through the Ahl al-Bayt (i.e., the descendants of 'Ali b. Abi Ṭalib from either al-Hasan or al-Ḥusayn) who have a guiding role in both religious and secular affairs. The founder of this community in Yemen was the imam al-Ḥādī Ḭālā Ḥaqq Yāḥya b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 298/911) whose collected legal teachings and judgements are the basis for the Zaydī-Hādī’ī school of law which has dominated the Yemeni highlands until modern times. His main legal works are the Kitāb al-Ahkhām and Kitāb al-Muntakhab, in which he supports characteristic Shi‘ite opinions such as the mention of ḥayya ‘alā khayr al-‘amal in the call to prayer and the rejection of the wiping over the shoes (mash‘ ‘alā al-kuffayn) in the ritual ablation. In addition, many of his views are based on the principle of the consensus (ijmā‘) of the Ahl al-Bayt. Al-Ḥādī’s works were commented on by successive generations of scholars and it was finally with al-Mahdī ʿAbd Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā al-Murtada (d. 840/1436), in his Kitāb al-Azhār, that an authoritative collection of the Hādī’ī school’s doctrine was established. With respect to theological questions, al-Ḥādī subscribed to the teachings of the Mu‘tazīlī school of Baghdaḍ.

Unlike Sunnīs, Zaydīs have continuously insisted on having a just ruler who must fulfill rigorous qualifications and duties. They believe that ʿAlī was the most excellent of men after the Prophet, and that he and his sons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, were invested by the Prophet as his executors (waṣī) through designation (nasīh), but that the designation was covert (khafī) and could only be ascertained after investigation. Zaydīs also contend that after the supreme leadership (imāma) of al-Ḥusayn any descendant of his or of his brother, al-Ḥasan, who has the requisite qualifications could become imam after making a ‘summons’ to allegiance (da‘wa) and then ‘rising’ (khurūj) against illegitimate rulers. According to some Zaydīs, the imam was not chosen by anyone but God. This teaching is already clearly enunciated by al-Ḥādī, who traces it back to earlier imams. The people are obliged to support the one whom God has chosen. However, other Zaydī theologians are said to have claimed that the selection of the imam is accomplished by consultation (shūrā) among the descendants of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn; this restricted shūrā is the one that counts. Unlike the Twelver Shi‘ite imam, the Zaydi imam was not considered impeccable or infallible (ma‘ṣūm) and therefore his religious authority could be challenged. He was, however, considered a mujtahid, and later Zaydīs accepted the doctrine that every mujtahid is correct ( kull mujtahid muṣīb), which in fact allowed for divergence of opinions, especially in matters of law (furū‘).

14 EI², art. ‘Imāma’ (Wilferd Madelung), vol. III, p. 1166. By contrast, the Imāmī Shi‘is claim an explicit designation (nasīh jalī) of the imams.
Zaydīs did not recognize a hereditary line of imams and were prepared to support any member of Ahl al-Bayt who claimed the imamate by ‘rising’, and it became incumbent on every Muslim to acknowledge the imam after he had issued his ‘summons’ to allegiance. The imamate was envisaged in universal Islamic terms and was never presented as being confined to Yemen or the Zaydī community. The imam assumed the title of Commander of the Faithful (amīr al-mu‘minīn), and Yemen was seen as the base from which the ‘summons’ would spread to the Muslim world.

In addition to being a member of the Ahl al-Bayt, it was necessary for the imam to have other qualifications: knowledge of religious matters, piety, moral and physical integrity, courage, and an ability to render independent judgement (ijtihād) in law. His duties are similar to those envisaged by the Sunnīs and Muʿtazilīs: he had to ‘order the good and prohibit the evil’ (al-amr bi’l-maʿrūf wa’l-nahy ‘an al-munkar), impose the legal punishments (ḥudūd), appoint judges, supervise religious endowments, look after orphans, collect the legal alms and other taxes, lead the congregational Friday prayer, ‘raise the banner of faith’, defend the territory of Islam, and conduct the jihād. If after assuming the post the imam was to come to lack one or more of these qualifications or fall short in the performance of his duties, his imamate was forfeit and he was expected to cede it to a more qualified candidate, who in turn would make his ‘summons’ and ‘rise’. Even the loss of a finger, for example, would in theory have meant forfeiture of the post. The imam, in short, had to be an upstanding person, a scholar-warrior of untainted character who acted as an overlord of the Holy House and who judged impartially.

Late Yemeni Zaydism recognized imams who were ‘restricted’ (muḥtasibīn), when no one could be found to fulfill the high requirements of ‘full’ imams (ṣābiqūn). The muḥtasib was expected to defend the community against external aggression, protect the rights of the weak and ‘order the good and prohibit the evil’. This constituted a doctrinal compromise allowing for periods in which a full imam could not be found. It should be noted, however, that in Yemeni history it was not always the most qualified contender for the imamate who was given allegiance, but rather, the most powerful. For example, al-Mahdī Aḥmad b. Yāḥyā al-Murtada eventually had to forgo his bid because of the more powerful al-Manṣūr ʿAlī b. Muḥammad ʿAlā al-Dīn (d. 840/1436), despite being more qualified than the latter. Moreover, in historical practice it was the ahl al-hall wa’l-ʿaqd (‘the people who loose and bind’, understood to mean the community of scholars and notables) who gave their bayʿa (oath of allegiance) to the imam, and this oath was

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what de facto legitimated his rule. De jure one could lack this recognition and still be Imam.

In his pathbreaking work on al-Hādi’s grandfather, al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 246/860), Wilferd Madelung has described in fine detail the intellectual history of Zaydism until the early sixteenth century, ending with the teachings of al-Manṣūr al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad (d. 1029/1620). The early Zaydis, in the Kūfīan period, were composed of two currents, the Jārudīyya and the Batriyya. The former upheld robust Shi‘ite views, rejecting the imamates of the three caliphs preceding Abū Bakr while condemning most of the Companions for abandoning Abū Bakr’s rightful claims as well as rejecting the legal teachings of the Sunnī Traditionists. The Batriyya, by contrast, were more moderate in that they accepted the imamates of the first three caliphs, since Abū Bakr had done so, and did not restrict religious knowledge to the Ahl al-Bayt. Ultimately, however, the Jārudī teachings prevailed within Zaydism, as attested by al-Hādi’s unequivocal condemnation of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar as usurpers.

By the early tenth century CE, the Zaydis were able to establish communities in the Caspian region but these were divided into two rival schools: the Qāsimiyā (followers of al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm’s teachings) and the Naṣiriyya (followers of al-Naṣir al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Uṭrūsh, d. 301/914). In terms of law, al-Qāsim’s teachings were consistent with a Medinan moderate Shi‘ī tradition and in matters of theology his views, while distinct from the Muʿtazila, were anti-determinist and anti-anthropomorphist. However, Madelung has argued that his theological stance enabled later followers to adopt Muʿtazilī doctrines. Al-Naṣir, unlike al-Qāsim, held legal opinions closer to the Kūfīan Zaydis and the Imāmīs, and in matters concerning theology was polemically anti-Muʿtazilī though he also upheld views similar to those of al-Qāsim. A reconciliation took place in the course of the fourth/tenth century on the basis that the legal doctrines of both schools were equally valid. The community in the Caspian, however, declined considerably in the sixth/twelfth century and ultimately disappeared in 933/1526–7 when the last Zaydi ruler converted to Imāmī Shi‘ism.

Strong links were maintained between the Caspian Qāsimiyah and the Zaydis in Yemen. In this connection, two imams in particular are worth mentioning: al-Muʿayyad Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 411/1020) and al-Nāṭiq Abū Ṭālib Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 424/1033). These two brothers were both followers of the Muʿtazilī al-Qādī ʿAbd al-Jabbār and accepted the doctrines of his Baṣrī school. In matters of law, they adhered to the teachings of al-Qāsim and his grandson al-Hādi, which they expounded in important works, most notably the recently published Kitāb al-Tāhirī by al-Nāṭiq. The Yemeni imam al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad b. Sulaymān (r. 532–566/1137–1170) was a strong unifying figure for Zaydism, a staunch supporter of Baṣrī Muʿtazilī doctrines and an advocate of the transfer of Caspian Zaydi books to Yemen. His successor al-Manṣūr ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza

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(t. 583–614/1185–1217) followed in al-Mutawakkil’s footsteps, achieving significant doctrinal consolidation of the Zaydi community and establishing dominance for Mu’tazili theology. This theological tendency, however, was challenged by a number of prominent Zaydi scholars who harked back to the teachings of the early imams, viz., al-Qāsim and al-Hādī. Perhaps the first to do this was the sayyid Ḥumaydān b. Yahyā (fl. seventh/thirteenth century) and, later, al-Manṣūr al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, founder of the Qāsimī state, followed the same trajectory. Though admitting that the Zaydis and Mu’tazilīs agreed on basic tenets, al-Manṣūr ‘maintained that the early imams had confined their teaching to what could be safely established by reason, the unambiguous texts of the Qurʾān and the generally-accepted Sunna. They had not followed the Mu’tazila in their abstruse speculation and absurd fantasies’. Al-Manṣūr views represent a strong reassertion of Shi’ī views among the Zaydis as evinced also by his Jārūdī stance with respect to the imamate.

During the imamate of al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad b. Sulaymān, in the sixth/twelfth century, Zaydi began citing from the Sunnī canonical hadīth collections, as can be seen, for example, in al-Mutawakkil’s own work entitled Uṣūl al-ahkām fi al-ḥalāl wa’l-ḥarām.23 By the time of his successor, al-Manṣūr ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥaṃza, many Zaydi ulema were using the Sunnī collections extensively while continuing to cite Zaydi collections such as the Amālī of Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā or Kitāb al-Jāmi‘ al-kāfī by Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-ʿAlawī (d. 445/1053).24 This trend culminated with such works as Aḥmad b. Yahyā al-Murtaḍa’s al-Bahr al-zakkhūr, a comparative legal work across the madhhīb, and later with al-Manṣūr al-Qāsim’s al-Iʿtiṣām bi-ḥabī Allāh al-matān. Careful reading of these texts, however, indicates that these scholars were using Sunnī hadīths selectively to bolster established Zaydi-Hadawī views. Al-Manṣūr himself uses these sources despite his belief, which he attributes to al-Hādī also, that the Ṣāḥīḥayn of Bukhārī and Muslim are devoid of sound traditions. This is what is reported about his view.

Imam al-Mahdī li-Dīn Allāh Aḥmad b. Yahyā – peace be upon him – relates that the great imam, the lofty and noble, the Guider to the Clear Truth Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn – God’s blessings and peace be upon him and his noble fathers – said: ‘A great distance and divide lies between soundness and the Ṣāḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Muslim’. Our lord al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad said: ‘This is correct’. By this he meant that most of the ḥadīths in the two books are defective (mu’talī).25

This assertion is based on the fact that many of the traditions contained therein are transmitted by those who showed enmity to ʿAlī – men such as Muṭawwīya whom al-Manṣūr curs – and therefore are not to be trusted. The early Qāsimī

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Imamate therefore represents a moment of traditional Zaydi-Shi'i assertiveness, one that refers back to the teachings of al-Hadi. This is the backdrop against which Shawkani's views must be understood.

Shawkani and Traditionist Islam

Shawkani rejected unequivocally the Zaydi-Hadawli school he was born into and saw himself more properly as the intellectual heir of the Sunni Traditionists of highland Yemen, scholars who argued that the Sunni canonical hadith collections were unconditionally authoritative in matters of religion. The first Traditionist scholar in this lineage was Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Wazir (commonly known as Ibn al-Wazir, d. 840/1436), later followed by al-Hasan b. Ahmad al-Jalil (d. 1084/1673), Saliha b. Mahdi al-Maqbali (d. 1108/1696), Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Amir (commonly known as Ibn al-Amir, d. 1182/1769) and finally Shawkani. These scholars adopted Traditionist views because they argued greater certainty of God's will could be obtained therein. They felt that the texts of revelation and the science of hadith criticism for evaluating their soundness were more authoritative than the views of the imams or those of the scholars of theology and law. The epistemology and methods of the Sunni hadith scholars enabled them to identify a more reliable corpus of Traditions on which to base law and theology. Ibn al-Wazir, for instance, states that his distress at becoming an infidel were he to blindly follow the opinions of others in matters of creed, compounded by his disappointment with the arguments of the kalim scholars, was what led him to investigate the Qur'an and the canonical collections of hadith. In these, he found solace and certainty of his belief in Islam.26

In his biography of Ibn al-Wazir, Shawkani clearly identifies himself with the Yemeni Traditionists and laments that they had been ignored by those outside Yemen. He says:

There is no doubt that non-Yemeni scholars do not pay attention to the people of this country [Yemen]. This is because their perception of the Zaydis is based on those unfamiliar with the conditions [here], [I say] to those who do not investigate the situation, that in the country of the Zaydis one can find a limitless number of imams of the Book and the Sunna. These confine themselves to following evidentiary proof-texts (nusus al-adilla) [from the Qur'an and Sunna], and rely on sound Traditions in the canonical hadith collections and other accompanying Islamic compilations which contain the Sunna of the Lord of Mankind [the Prophet Muhammad]. They do not practise taslih at all and do not corrupt their religion with reprehensible innovations, which can be found in the other schools. Indeed, they are in the manner of the Pious Ancestors (al-salaf al-ghalih), in practising what the Book of God and the sound Sunna of His Messenger have