

COMMANDING RIGHT AND  
FORBIDDING WRONG IN  
ISLAMIC THOUGHT



MICHAEL COOK

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, VIC 3166, Australia  
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Michael Cook 2000

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without  
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2000

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Galliard 10/13pt System QuarkXPress™ [SE]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Cook, M. A.

Commanding right and forbidding wrong in Islamic thought / Michael Cook.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 66174 9

1. Islamic ethics.
2. Religious life – Shi'ah.
3. Religious life – Islam.
4. Islam – Doctrines. I. Title.

BJ1291.C66 2000 297.5-dc21 99-054807

ISBN 0 521 66174 9 hardback

# CONTENTS

---

•

Preface	page ix
Acknowledgements	xv

## PART I: INTRODUCTORY

---

•

1. THE GOLDSMITH OF MARW	3
2. KORAN AND KORANIC EXEGESIS	13
1. The Koran without the exegetes	13
2. Koranic exegesis	17
3. TRADITION	32
1. The 'three modes' tradition	32
2. Other traditions of positive tendency	35
3. Traditions of negative tendency	39
4. Conclusion	44
4. BIOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE ABOUT EARLY MUSLIMS	46
1. Introduction	46
2. Confronting the state	50
3. Confronting society	67
4. Defending privacy	80
5. Final remarks	82

## PART II: THE ḤANBALITES

---

•

5. IBN ḤANBAL	87
1. Introduction	87
2. Varieties of offence	90

3. Contexts of offences	93
4. Responses to offences	94
5. The state	101
6. Conclusion	105
6. THE ḤANBALITES OF BAGHDAD	114
1. Introduction	114
2. Ḥanbalite practice	115
3. Ḥanbalite theory	128
4. Theory and practice	138
7. THE ḤANBALITES OF DAMASCUS	145
1. Introduction	145
2. Ibn Taymiyya and forbidding wrong	151
3. Ibn Taymiyya's politics	156
4. The Damascene Ḥanbalites after Ibn Taymiyya	158
5. Conclusion	163
8. THE ḤANBALITES OF NAJD	165
1. Introduction	165
2. The first Sa'ūdī state	166
3. The second Sa'ūdī state	175
4. The third Sa'ūdī state	180
5. Conclusion	191

PART III: THE MU'TAZILITES AND SHĪ'ITES

9. THE MU'TAZILITES	195
1. Introduction	195
2. Early Mu'tazilite doctrine	196
3. Classical Mu'tazilism: the doctrine of Mānkḍīm	204
4. Classical Mu'tazilism: rival doctrines	217
5. Conclusion	224
10. THE ZAYDĪS	227
1. Introduction	227
2. Early Zaydī doctrine	228
3. Zaydī activism	231
4. The Zaydī legal tradition	237
5. The Zaydī–Mu'tazilite symbiosis	242
6. The Sunnisation of Zaydism	247

11. THE ĪMĀMĪS	252
1. Introduction	252
2. Imāmī tradition	253
3. The classical Imāmī scholars	262
4. The later Imāmī scholars	282
5. Excursus: the Ismā‘īlis	301

PART IV: OTHER SECTS AND SCHOOLS

— • —

12. THE ḤANAFĪS	307
1. Introduction	307
2. The Ḥanafīs before the Ottomans	308
3. The commentators of the Ottoman period	316
4. Birgili and his heirs	323
5. The Ḥanafīs in the late Ottoman period	330
6. Conclusion	333
7. Excursus: Jaṣṣāṣ	334
13. THE SHĀFI‘ITES	339
1. Introduction	339
2. The Shāfi‘ites before Ghazzālī	340
3. The Shāfi‘ites after Ghazzālī	348
14. THE MĀLIKĪS	357
1. Introduction	357
2. Early Mālikī doctrine	358
3. Later Mālikī doctrine	362
4. Mālikī practice	381
5. Conclusion	391
15. THE IBĀḌĪS	393
1. Introduction	393
2. The western Ibāḍīs	397
3. The eastern Ibāḍīs	404
4. Conclusion	425
16. GHAZZĀLĪ	427
1. Introduction	427
2. The doctrine of Ghazzālī: a summary	428
3. The achievement of Ghazzālī	446
4. The legacy of Ghazzālī	450
5. Excursus: the Ṣūfis	459

17. CLASSICAL ISLAM IN RETROSPECT	469
1. Introduction	469
2. The politics of forbidding wrong	470
3. Privacy and forbidding wrong	479
4. The social context of forbidding wrong	487
5. The scholars and the wider society	494

PART V: BEYOND CLASSICAL ISLAM

— • —

18. MODERN ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENTS	505
1. Introduction	505
2. Developments in Sunnī Islam	506
3. Developments in Imāmī Shī‘ism	530
4. Sunnīs and Imāmī Shī‘ites compared	549
19. ORIGINS AND COMPARISONS	561
1. Introduction	561
2. The Jāhiliyya	563
3. Monotheist parallels	569
4. Non-monotheist parallels	579
5. The distinctiveness of the Islamic case	582
20. CONCLUSION	585
1. Introduction	585
2. Rescue and forbidding wrong	587
3. Right and wrong	590
APPENDIX 1: Key Koranic verses and traditions	597
APPENDIX 2: Barhebraeus on forbidding wrong	600
Bibliography	604
Postscript	660
Index	661

## CHAPTER 1

---

# THE GOLDSMITH OF MARW

In the year 131/748f. the rebellion which was to overthrow the Umayyad dynasty had already been launched. The ‘Abbāsīd army was advancing on Iraq, while the architect of the revolution, Abū Muslim (d. 137/755), remained in Marw, effectively ruling Khurāsān. His exercise of his power was nevertheless challenged – if only morally – by a local goldsmith (*ṣā’ighh*), one Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn.<sup>1</sup> This goldsmith went into the presence of Abū Muslim and addressed him in these words: ‘I see nothing more meritorious I can undertake in God’s behalf than to wage holy war against you. Since I lack the strength to do it with my hand, I will do it with my tongue. But God will see me, and in Him I hate you.’ Abū Muslim killed him.<sup>2</sup> Centuries later, his tomb was still known and visited in the ‘inner city’ of Marw.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This incident, and its significance, were first discussed in W. Madelung, ‘The early Murji’a in Khurāsān and Transoxania and the spread of Ḥanafism’, *Der Islam*, 59 (1982), 35f. Madelung based his account on the entry on Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn in Ibn Abī ‘l-Wafā’ (d. 775/1373), *al-Jawābir al-muḍīyya fī ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafīyya*, Hyderabad 1332, 1:49.11, citing also Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa’l-mulūk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje *et al.*, Leiden 1879–1901, series II, 1919.1. In the addenda to the reprint of his article in his *Religious schools and sects in medieval Islam*, London 1985 (item III, 39a), he added a reference to the entry in Ibn Sa’d (d. 230/845), *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. E. Sachau *et al.*, Leiden 1904–21, 7:2:103.6. In what follows, I have extended this documentation; however, my findings lead me to modify Madelung’s conclusions only on one point (see below, note 19). The goldsmith was first mentioned by Halm, who however stated erroneously that he was *qāḍī* of Marw (H. Halm, *Die Ausbreitung der šāfi’itischen Rechtsschule von den Anfängen bis zum 8./14. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 1974, 88). More recently van Ess has discussed him in his monumental history of early Islamic theology (J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, Berlin and New York 1991–7, 2:548f.), with some further references of which the more significant will be noted below. See also M. Q. Zaman, *Religion and politics under the early ‘Abbāsīds*, Leiden 1997, 71 n. 6, 72 n. 7.

<sup>2</sup> See Madelung, ‘The early Murji’a’, 35, citing Ibn Abī ‘l-Wafā’, *Jawābir*, 1:50.7.

<sup>3</sup> Sam’ānī (d. 562/1166), *Ansāb*, ed. ‘A. al-Mu’allimī al-Yamānī, Hyderabad 1962–82, 8:267.9; for the ‘inner city’ of Marw, see G. Le Strange, *The lands of the eastern caliphate*, Cambridge 1905, 398f. It should be noted that Sam’ānī’s *tarjama* of the goldsmith comes to us in two very different recensions. There is a short form, for which Sam’ānī borrowed the entry in Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965), *Thiqāt*, Hyderabad 1973–83, 6:19.7, adding an

We do not need to concern ourselves with the origins or historicity of this story.<sup>4</sup> It suffices that Abū Muslim killed the goldsmith, or had him killed,<sup>5</sup> and that it was the religio-political stance of the goldsmith that brought this upon him.<sup>6</sup> Nor need we concern ourselves with Abū Muslim's side of the story, except to note that a certain irritation on his part is understandable – this was, we are told, the third such visit he had

Footnote 3 (*cont.*)

explanation of the *nisba* and the detail about the grave; this is found in the British Library manuscript of the *Ansāb* published in facsimile by D. S. Margoliouth (Leiden and London 1912, f. 348b.15). Secondly, there is a long form marked by the insertion (very likely by Samʿānī himself) of much extra material (but without the detail about the grave); this long recension is that of the Istanbul manuscript used by Muʿallimī as the basis of his edition (see his introduction to the first volume of his edition, 33).

<sup>4</sup> The account given by Ibn Abī ʿl-Wafāʾ appears already in Jaṣṣāṣ (d. 370/981), *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, Istanbul 1335–8, 2:33.18, with a full *isnād* (and cf. *ibid.*, 1:70.22, drawn to my attention by Patricia Crone). The key figure in this *isnād* is one ʿAḥmad ibn ʿAṭīyya al-Kūfī, an alias of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣalt al-Ḥimmānī (d. 308/921) (for his biography, see E. Dickinson, 'Aḥmad b. al-Ṣalt and his biography of Abū Ḥanīfa', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 116 (1996), 409f., and for the alias, *ibid.*, 415). Traditionist circles had a low opinion of his probity as a scholar, particularly in connection with his transmissions on the virtues of Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767f.) (*ibid.*, 412, 414f.). *A faṣl fī manāqib Abī Ḥanīfa* in a Cairo manuscript has been ascribed to him (*ibid.*, 413 n. 34; F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Leiden 1967–, 1:410, 438 no. 16), but I owe to Adam Sabra the information that it does not contain our anecdote. There is a parallel version from ʿAlī ibn Ḥarmala, a Kūfan pupil of Abū Ḥanīfa, in Ibn Ḥamdūn (d. 562/1166), *Tadhkira*, ed. I. and B. ʿAbbās, Beirut 1996, 9:279f. no. 529 (I owe this reference to Patricia Crone; for ʿAlī ibn Ḥarmala, see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), *Taʾriḫ al-Baghdād*, Cairo 1931, 11:415.6). The story does not seem to have caught the attention of the historians; Ṭabarī mentions the goldsmith only in an earlier, and unrelated, historical context (see above, note 1), and occasionally as a narrator.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the works cited above, see particularly Bukhārī (d. 256/870), *al-Taʾriḫ al-kabīr*, Hyderabad 1360–78, 1:1:325.6 no. 1016 (whence Mizzī (d. 742/1341), *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, ed. B. ʿA. Maʿrūf, Beirut 1985–92, 2:224.6, and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, Hyderabad 1325–7, 1:173.3); Fasawī (d. 277/890), *al-Maʿrifā waʾl-taʾriḫ*, ed. A. Ḍ. al-ʿUmārī, Baghdad 1974–6, 3:350.8 (noted by van Ess); Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965), *Mashābir ʿulamāʾ al-amṣār*, ed. M. Fleischhammer, Cairo 1959, 195 no. 1565; Abū Nuʾaym al-Iṣbahānī (d. 430/1038), *Dhikr akhbār Iṣbahān*, ed. S. Dederig, Leiden 1931–4, 1:171.24 (noted by van Ess). Ibn Saʿd knows an account similar to that given above (*Tabaqāt*, 7:2:103.12), but gives pride of place to one in which the goldsmith is a friend of Abū Muslim. When Abū Muslim brings the ʿAbbāsīd cause out into the open, he sends an agent to ascertain the goldsmith's reaction, which is that Abū Muslim should be killed; Abū Muslim reacts by having the goldsmith killed (*ibid.*, 103.7). According to a report preserved by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023f.), he was beaten to death (*al-Baṣāʾir waʾl-dhakhāʾir*, ed. W. al-Qāḍī, Beirut 1988, 6:213 no. 756).

<sup>6</sup> Our sources indicate that the goldsmith's dislike of Abū Muslim did not arise from affection for the Umayyads. He indicates that his allegiance to the Umayyad governor Naṣr ibn Sayyār had not been voluntary (Taḳī al-Dīn al-Tamīmī (d. 1010/1601), *al-Tabaqāt al-saniyya fī tarājīm al-Ḥanafīyya*, ed. ʿA. M. al-Ḥulw, Cairo 1970–, 1:285.17); and an account transmitted from Aḥmad ibn Sayyār al-Marwazī (d. 268/881) suggests that he was a disappointed revolutionary who had initially believed in Abū Muslim's promises of just rule (*ibid.*, 286.3). Jaṣṣāṣ states that the goldsmith rebuked Abū Muslim for his oppression (*ẓulm*) and wrongful bloodshed (*Aḥkām*, 1:70.27; similarly Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965), *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, ed. M. I. Zāyid, Aleppo 1395–6, 1:157.12, cited in Zaman, *Religion and politics*, 72 n. 7).



received from the goldsmith. The image of Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn as he appears in our sources is, however, worth some attention. A man of Marw,<sup>7</sup> he was, in the first instance, a child of Islam.<sup>8</sup> When asked his descent, his reply was that his mother had been a client of the tribe of Hamdān, and his father a Persian;<sup>9</sup> he himself was a client (*mawlā*) of God and His Prophet.<sup>10</sup> He was also that familiar figure of the sociology of religion, a craftsman of uncompromising piety and integrity.<sup>11</sup> He would throw his hammer behind him when he heard the call to prayer.<sup>12</sup> While in Iraq he was too scrupulous to eat the food which Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767f.) offered him without first questioning him about it, and even then he was not always satisfied with Abū Ḥanīfa's replies.<sup>13</sup> His politics were of a piece with this. His temperament was not receptive to counsels of prudence, as his discussions with Abū Ḥanīfa will shortly underline. Indeed, his death was little short of a verbal suicide mission – in one account he appeared before Abū Muslim already dressed and perfumed for his own funeral.<sup>14</sup> The goldsmith was a man of principle, in life as in death, and it is his principles that concern us here.

The principle that informed his last act, in the eyes of posterity and perhaps his own, was the duty of commanding right and forbidding

<sup>7</sup> A variant tradition has him originally from Iṣbahān (Abū 'l-Shaykh (d. 369/979), *Ṭabaqāt al-muḥaddithīn bi-Iṣbahān*, ed. 'A. 'A. al-Balūshī, Beirut 1987–92, 1:449.2, whence Abū Nu'aym, *Ḍabīr akhbār Iṣbahān*, 1:171.24, 172.3, whence in turn Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 2:224.8). Van Ess, who notes two of these references in a footnote (*Theologie*, 2:549 n. 15), states in the text that the goldsmith came from Kūfa, citing a Kūfan Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn, a client of the family of the Companion Samura ibn Jundab (d. 59/679), mentioned in an *isnād* quoted by Fasawī (*Ma'rifat*, 3:237.1). This latter is, however, a Kūfan tailor (see, for example, Bukhārī, *Kabīr*, 1:1:325f. no. 1018), and there is no reason to identify him with our Marwazī goldsmith (*ibid.*, no. 1016).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. his name and *kunya*: Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm. Khalīfa ibn Khayyāt (d. 240/854f.), however, has the *kunya* Abū 'l-Munāzil (*Ṭabaqāt*, ed. S. Zakkār, Beirut 1993, 596 no. 3,120).

<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere we learn that his father was a slave (Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, 8:266.13), as the name Maymūn suggests.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), *al-'Ilal wa-ma'rifat al-rijāl*, ed. W. M. 'Abbās, Beirut and Riyāḍ 1988, 2:379 no. 2,693. This is why Bukhārī (d. 256/870) describes him as *mawlā 'l-nabī* (*Kabīr*, 1:1:325.4; Bukhārī, *al-Ta'rikh al-ṣaḡhir*, ed. M. I. Zāyid, Aleppo and Cairo 1976–7, 2:27.1).

<sup>11</sup> Sam'ānī tells us that he modelled his life on that of the Successors he had met (*Ansāb*, 8:266.9).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.10; cf. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), *Muḍīh awbām al-jam' wa'l-tafriq*, Hyderabad 1959–60, 1:375.11, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:173.5.

<sup>13</sup> Jaṣṣās, *Alḥkām*, 2:33.8; Ibn Abī 'l-Wafā', *Jawābir*, 1:49.16. Such conduct on the part of a guest was not approved by the Ḥanafī jurists unless there was at least specific reason for doubt (see Shaybānī (d. 189/805), *Āthār*, ed. M. Tēgh Bahādur, Lucknow n.d., 155.4 (*bāb al-da'wa*), mentioning the concurrence of Abū Ḥanīfa). It is not clear whether the questions related to the provenance of the food itself or to that of the money that paid for it.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7:2:103.13 (*taḥannaṭa . . . wa-takaffana*). In this account his body is thrown into a well.

wrong.<sup>15</sup> The goldsmith was known as a devotee of commanding right,<sup>16</sup> and it was one of the topics he had brought up in his discussions with Abū Ḥanīfa.<sup>17</sup> More specifically, we can see him in death as having lived up to a Prophetic tradition which states: ‘The finest form of holy war (*jihād*) is speaking out (*kalimat haqq*) in the presence of an unjust ruler (*sulṭān jā’ir*), and getting killed for it (*yuqṭal ‘alayhā*).’ This tradition is attested in a variety of forms, usually without the final reference to the death of the speaker, in the canonical and other collections.<sup>18</sup> But we also find it trans-

- <sup>15</sup> As pointed out by Madelung (‘The early Murji’a’, 35f.). An account of the goldsmith’s death preserved by Tamīmī has him go in to Abū Muslim and ‘command and forbid’ him (*fa-amarahu wa-nahāhu*) (Tamīmī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1:285.11, and cf. *ibid.*, 286.3); likewise al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī states that he was killed in performing the duty (*Mūḍib*, 1:375.8).
- <sup>16</sup> Thus Ibn Ḥibbān describes him as *min al-ammārin bi’l-ma’rūf* (*Thiqāt*, 6:19:10; see also Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashābir*, 195 no. 1565). Aḥmad ibn Sayyār remarks on his devotion to *al-amr bi’l-ma’rūf* (*apud* Tamīmī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1:286.12; and cf. Tamīmī’s own summing-up, *ibid.*, 287.5).
- <sup>17</sup> Madelung, ‘The early Murji’a’, 35, citing Ibn Abī ‘l-Wafā’, *Jawābir*, 1:49.17; Jaṣṣās, *Aḥkām*, 2:33.9.
- <sup>18</sup> For the classical collections, see Ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855), *Musnad*, Būlāq 1313, 3:19.16, 61.24, 4:314.28, 315.2, 5:251.8, 256.18; Ibn Māja (d. 273/887), *Sunan*, ed. M. F. ‘Abd al-Bāqī, Cairo 1972, 1329 no. 4,011, 1330 no. 4,012; Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 275/889), *Sunan*, ed. ‘I. ‘U al-Da‘ās and ‘A. al-Sayyid, Ḥimṣ 1969–74, 4:514 no. 4,344 (whence Jaṣṣās, *Aḥkām*, 2:34.15); Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. ‘I. ‘U al-Da‘ās, Ḥimṣ 1965–8, 6:338f. no. 2,175; Nasā’ī (d. 303/915), *Sunan*, ed. Ḥ. M. al-Mas‘ūdī, Cairo n.d., 7:161.7. (Neither Bukhārī nor Muslim include the tradition.) For other collections, see Ḥumaydī (d. 219/834f.), *Musnad*, ed. Ḥ. al-A‘zamī, Cairo and Beirut n.d., 331f. no. 752; Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971), *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥ. ‘A. al-Salafī, n.p. c. 1984–6, 8:281f. no. 8,081, and cf. no. 8,080 (I owe these references to Etan Kohlberg); al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1014), *Mustadrak*, Hyderabad 1334–42, 4:506.7; Qudā’ī (d. 454/1062), *Musnad al-shihāb*, ed. Ḥ. ‘A. al-Salafī, Beirut 1985, 2:247f. nos. 1286–8; Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), *Shu‘ab al-imān*, ed. M. B. Zaghlūl, Beirut 1990, 6:93 nos. 7,581f., and cf. Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, Hyderabad 1344–55, 10:91.3. The tradition is transmitted from several Companions with a variety of Kūfan and Baṣran *isnāds*. For entries on the tradition (without *isnāds*) in post-classical guides to the *ḥadīth* collections, see Majd al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr (d. 606/1210), *Jāmi‘ al-uṣūl*, ed. ‘A. al-Arnā’ūt, Cairo 1969–73, 1:333 nos. 116f.; Haythamī (d. 807/1405), *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id*, Cairo 1352–3, 7:272.2; Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, Cairo 1954, 1:49.20; Suyūṭī, *Jam‘ al-jawāmi‘*, n.p. 1970–, 1:1155–7 nos. 3,724, 3,728f., 3,734; al-Muttaqī al-Hindī (d. 975/1567), *Kanz al-‘ummāl*, ed. Ṣ. al-Saqqā *et al.*, Aleppo 1969–77, 3:66f. nos. 5,510–12, 5,514, 3:80 no. 5,576. In none of these cases does the tradition include the final reference to the death of the speaker (a fact pointed out to me with regard to the classical collections by Keith Lewinstein). However, such a version appears in a Syrian tradition found in the *Musnad* of Bazzār (d. 292/904f.) (*al-Baḥr al-zakḥkhār al-ma‘rūf bi-Musnad al-Bazzār*, ed. M. Zayn Allāh, Medina and Beirut 1988–, 4:110.3 no. 1285); and cf. Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111), *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, Beirut n.d., 2:284.25, 284.27. Moreover, the Mu‘tazilite exegete Rummānī (d. 384/994) in his commentary to Q3:21 seems to have adduced a version transmitted by Ḥasan (sc. al-Baṣrī) which included this ending (see Abū Ja‘far al-Tūsī (d. 460/1067), *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur‘ān*, Najaf 1957–63, 2:422.17, and Ṭabrisī, *Majma‘*, 1:423.32 (both to Q3:21)), and the same form of the tradition appears in the Koran commentary of the Mu‘tazilite al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī (d. 494/1101) (see the quotation in ‘A. Zarzūr, *al-Ḥākim al-Jushamī wa-manhajuhū fī tafsīr al-Qur‘ān*, n.p. n.d., 195.3). The *ḥadīth* is not a Shī‘ite one, although there is an Imāmī tradition in which it is quoted to Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), who seeks to tone

mitted by our goldsmith – complete with the reference to the speaker’s death – from Abū Ḥanīfā.<sup>19</sup> A variant version likewise transmitted to the goldsmith by Abū Ḥanīfā makes explicit the link between this form of holy war and the principle of forbidding wrong, and one source relates this to his death.<sup>20</sup>

As mentioned, the goldsmith had discussed this duty with Abū Ḥanīfā.<sup>21</sup> They had agreed that it was a divinely imposed duty (*farīḍa min Allāh*). The goldsmith then gave to this theoretical discussion an alarmingly practical twist: he proposed then and there that in pursuance of this duty he should give his allegiance (*bay‘a*) to Abū Ḥanīfā – in other words, that they should embark on a rebellion. The latter, as might be expected, would have nothing to do with this proposal. He did not deny that the goldsmith had called upon him to carry out a duty he owed to God (*ḥaqq min ḥuqūq Allāh*). But he counselled prudence. One man acting on his own would merely get himself killed, and achieve nothing for others; the right leader, with a sufficient following of good men, might be able to achieve something.<sup>22</sup> During subsequent visits, the goldsmith kept returning to this question, and Abū Ḥanīfā would repeat his view that this duty (unlike others) was not one that a man could undertake alone. Anyone who did so would be throwing his own blood away and asking to be killed. Indeed, it

down its implications (Kulaynī (d. 329/941), *Kāfī*, ed. ‘A. A. al-Ghaffārī, Tehran 1375–7, 5:60.7 no. 16; Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), *Tabdhīb al-ahkām*, ed. H. M. al-Kharsān, Najaf 1958–62, 6:178.6 no. 9); cf. also al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī (d. 1104/1693), *Wasā’il al-Shū‘a*, ed. ‘A. al-Rabbānī and M. al-Rāzī, Tehran 1376–89, 6:1:406.8 no. 9. It is, however, known to the Ibadīs (Rabī’ Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 170/786f?) (attrib.), *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, n.p. n.d., 2:17 no. 455). The link between the tradition and *al-amr bi’l-ma’rūf* is made explicit by the commentators to Suyūṭī’s *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ* (see Munāwī (d. 1031/1622), *Taysīr*, Būlāq 1286, 1:182.6; ‘Azīzī (d. 1070/1659f.), *al-Sirāj al-munīr*, Cairo 1357, 1:260.20).

<sup>19</sup> Sam‘ānī, *Ansāb*, 8:267.1, with a typically Ḥanafī *isnād* (and cf. Abū Ḥanīfā (d. 150/767f.), *Musnad*, Beirut 1985, 370.6, without *yūqṭal* ‘*alayhā*). This tradition, Sam‘ānī tells us, is the only one the goldsmith transmitted from Abū Ḥanīfā. If we set this detail alongside his idiosyncratic reservations about Abū Ḥanīfā’s food, and the way in which they argue on equal terms, we cannot confidently classify the goldsmith as a disciple of Abū Ḥanīfā; this in turn means that we have no compelling ground for classifying him as a Murjī’ite (contrast Madelung, ‘The early Murjī’a’, 35, and van Ess, *Theologie*, 2:548f.).

<sup>20</sup> Abū Ḥanīfā relates that he had transmitted to the goldsmith the Prophetic tradition: ‘The lord of the martyrs (*sayyid al-shuhadā*) is Ḥamza ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and a man who stands up to an unjust ruler, commanding and forbidding, and is killed by him’ (Jaṣṣās, *Ahkām*, 2:34.17, and similarly 1:70.24; see also Ibn Abī ‘l-Wafā’, *Jawābir*, 1:193.3, and Tamīmī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1:285.13). (This tradition appears also in Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, 3:195.7; Khaṭīb, *Muḏīb*, 1:371.20; Haythamī, *Zawā’id*, 7:266.3, 272.4; and cf. *ibid.*, 272.6.) The Kūfān A‘mash (d. 148/765) states that this tradition motivated the goldsmith’s death (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 1:157.13, cited in Zaman, *Religion and politics*, 72 n. 7). There is even a version of this tradition that makes a veiled reference to the goldsmith (Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkira*, 9:280 no. 530; I owe this reference to Patricia Crone).

<sup>21</sup> In what follows I cite the text of Jaṣṣās, for the most part leaving aside that of Ibn Abī ‘l-Wafā’. <sup>22</sup> Jaṣṣās has *l’ yḥwl*. Ibn Abī ‘l-Wafā’ omits the phrase.

was to be feared that he would become an accomplice in his own death. The effect of his action would be to dishearten others. So one should wait; God is wise, and knows what we do not know.<sup>23</sup> In due course the news of the goldsmith's death reached Abū Ḥanīfa. He was beside himself with grief, but he was not surprised.

Abū Ḥanīfa, to judge from his relations with the goldsmith, was not a political activist. His cautious attitude to the political implications of forbidding wrong finds expression in rather similar terms in an apparently early Ḥanafī text.<sup>24</sup> This work begins with a doctrinal statement of which forbidding wrong is the second article.<sup>25</sup> Then, at a later point, Abū Ḥanīfa is confronted with the question: 'How do you regard someone who commands right and forbids wrong, acquires a following on this basis, and rebels against the community (*jamā'a*)? Do you approve of this?' He answers that he does not. But why, when God and His Prophet have imposed on us the duty of forbidding wrong? He concedes that this is true enough, but counters that in the event the good such rebels can achieve will be outweighed by the evil they bring about.<sup>26</sup> The objection he makes here is more far-reaching than that with which he deflected the dangerous proposal of the goldsmith: it is not just that setting the world to rights is not a one-man job; it is not even to be undertaken by many. The imputation of such quietism to Abū Ḥanīfa may or may not be historically accurate.<sup>27</sup> There are also widespread reports that he looked with favour on the

<sup>23</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa cites Q2:30, where the angels protest at God's declared intention of placing a *khalīfa* on earth, on the ground that he will act unjustly, and are silenced with the retort that He knows what they do not know.

<sup>24</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767f.) (attrib.), *al-Fiqh al-absaṭ*, ed. M. Z. al-Kawtharī, in a collection of which the first item is Abū Ḥanīfa (attrib.), *al-'Ālim wa'l-muta'allim*, Cairo 1368, 44.10.

<sup>25</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa, *al-Fiqh al-absaṭ*, 40.10; and see Māturīdī (d. c. 333/944) (attrib.), *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-akbar*, Hyderabad 1321, 4.1, and A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim creed*, Cambridge 1932, 103f., art. 2. For an elegant analysis of the relationship between these three texts, showing Wensinck's 'Fiqh Akbar I' to be something of a ghost, see J. van Ess, 'Kritisches zum *Fiqh akbar*', *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 54 (1986), especially 331f.; for his commentary on the second article, see *ibid.*, 336f. (For a briefer treatment, see his *Theologie*, 1:207–11.) A possibility van Ess does not quite consider ('Kritisches', 334) is that articles 1–5 may represent an interpolation into the text of *al-Fiqh al-absaṭ*. Abū Ḥanīfa's distinction between *al-fiqh fi'l-dīn* and *al-fiqh fi'l-ahkām*, of which the former is the more excellent (*ibid.*, 40.14, immediately following the passage), looks suspiciously like the answer to the disciple's request to be told about 'the greater *fiqh*' (*al-fiqh al-akbar*, *ibid.*, 40.8, immediately preceding the passage). The commentary ascribed to Māturīdī mentioned above has now been critically edited by H. Daiber, who argues that its author was Abū 'l-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983) (see below, ch. 12, note 22, and, for our passage, note 24). <sup>26</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa, *al-Fiqh al-absaṭ*, 44.10.

<sup>27</sup> In the same text Abū Ḥanīfa states that, if commanding and forbidding are of no avail, we should fight with the *fi'a 'ādila* against the *fi'a bāghiya* (cf. Q49:9), even if the ruler (*imām*) is unjust (*ibid.*, 44.16; see also *ibid.*, 48.2, where the term used is *sultān*). Van

use of the sword<sup>28</sup> and sympathised with ‘Alid rebels,<sup>29</sup> and an activist disposition would not be out of line with the Murji’ite background of Ḥanafism.<sup>30</sup> But even if Abū Ḥanīfa was not a political activist, what is significant for us in the texts under discussion is not what he in practice denies, but what he in principle concedes: he agrees with both the goldsmith and his questioner in the early Ḥanafī text that forbidding wrong is a divinely imposed obligation, and one whose political implications cannot be categorically denied. The goldsmith, for all that he is mistaken, retains the moral high ground.

What we see here is the presence, within the mainstream of Islamic thought, of a strikingly – not to say inconveniently – radical value: the principle that an executive power of the law of God is vested in each and every Muslim. Under this conception the individual believer as such has not only the right, but also the duty, to issue orders pursuant to God’s law, and to do what he can to see that they are obeyed. What is more, he may be issuing

Ess is inclined to ascribe the relative quietism of this text to Abū Muṭī‘ al-Balkhī (d. 199/814), the disciple who transmits Abū Ḥanīfa’s answers to his questions (‘Kritisches’, 336f.; *Theologie*, 1:210). This may be right, but it should be noted that early Ḥanafism in Balkh, and perhaps north-eastern Iran in general, was marked by a sullen, and sometimes truculent, hostility towards the authorities of the day (see Madelung, ‘The early Murji’a’, 37f.).

<sup>28</sup> ‘Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 290/903), *Sunna*, ed. M. S. S. al-Qaḥṭānī, Dammām 1986, 181f. no. 233, 182 no. 234, 207 no. 325, 213 no. 348, 218 no. 368, 222 no. 382 (and cf. 217 no. 363); Fasawī, *Mu‘rifa*, 2:788.13; Abū Zur‘a al-Dimashqī (d. 281/894), *Ta‘rīkh*, ed. S. N. al-Qawjānī, Damascus n.d., 506 no. 1331; Jaṣṣās, *Alkām*, 1:70.19 (I owe this reference to Patricia Crone); Abū Tammām (*fl.* first half of the fourth/tenth century), *Shajara*, *apud* W. Madelung and P. E. Walker, *An Ismaili heresiography*, Leiden 1998, 85.3 = 82, and cf. 85.19 = 83 on the followers of Abū Ḥanīfa (this material is likely to derive from the heresiography of Abū ‘l-Qāsim al-Balkhī (d. 319/931), see 10–12 of Walker’s introduction; these and other passages of Abū Tammām’s work were drawn to my attention by Patricia Crone); Khaṭīb, *Ta‘rīkh Baghdād*, 13:384.6, 384.11, 384.17, 384.20, 385.19, 386.1, 386.6. In this last tradition, as in ‘Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad’s second, Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) dissociates himself from his teacher’s attitude; compare the half-dozen quietist traditions he cites in his treatise on fiscal law (*Kharāj*, Cairo 1352, 9f.), including that which enjoins obedience even to a maimed Abyssinian slave if he is set in authority (*ibid.*, 9.12).

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, C. van Arendonk, *Les débuts de l’imamat zaidite au Yémen*, Leiden 1960, 307, 315; van Ess, ‘Kritisches’, 337; K. Athamina, ‘The early Murji’a: some notes’, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 35 (1990), 109 n. 1.

<sup>30</sup> See M. Cook, *Early Muslim dogma: a source-critical study*, Cambridge 1981, ch. 6, and cf. my review of the first volume of van Ess’s *Theologie* in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 50 (1993), col. 271, to 174. For a rather different view of the politics of the early Murji’a, see Madelung, ‘The early Murji’a’, 32 (but cf. his position in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, Leiden and London 1960– (hereafter *EI*<sup>2</sup>), art. ‘Murdji’a’, 606a). The question has also been discussed by Athamina with considerable erudition (see his ‘The early Murji’a’, 115–30); however, he does not take into consideration the testimony of the *Sirat Sālim ibn Dhakwān*, and his evidence does not seem to support his conclusion that there existed a quietist stream among the early Murji’ites alongside an activist one (*ibid.*, 129f.). See also below, ch. 12, note 5.

these orders to people who conspicuously outrank him in the prevailing hierarchy of social and political power. Only Abū Ḥanīfa's prudence stood between this value and the goldsmith's proposal for political revolution, and in the absence of prudence, the execution of the duty could easily end, as it did for the goldsmith, in a martyr's death. Small wonder that Abū Ḥanīfa should have squirmed when his interlocutors sought to draw out the implications of the value.

There were others, however, who were less willing to concede a martyr's crown to the likes of the goldsmith. Zubayr ibn Bakkār (d. 256/870) preserves a remarkable account of a confrontation between the caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 198–218/813–33) and an unnamed zealot.<sup>31</sup> The caliph was on one of his campaigns against the infidel, presumably in Anatolia, and was walking alone with one of his generals.<sup>32</sup> A man appeared, shrouded and perfumed,<sup>33</sup> and made for al-Ma'mūn. He refused to greet the caliph, charging that he had corrupted the army (*ghuzāt*) in three ways. First, he was allowing the sale of wine in the camp. Second, he was responsible for the visible presence there of slave-girls in litters (*'ammāriyyāt*) with their hair uncovered. Third, he had banned forbidding wrong.<sup>34</sup> To this last charge al-Ma'mūn responded immediately that his ban was directed only at those who turned commanding right into wrongdoing; by contrast, he positively encouraged those who knew what they were doing (*alladhī ya'mur bi'l-ma'rūf bi'l-ma'rifa*) to undertake it. In due course al-Ma'mūn went over the other charges levelled at him by the zealot. The alleged wine turned out to be nothing of the kind, prompting the caliph to observe that forbidding the likes of this man to command right was an act of piety.<sup>35</sup> The exposure of the slave-girls was intended to prevent the enemy's spies from thinking that the Muslims had anything so precious as their daughters and sisters with them. Thus in attempting to command right, the man had himself committed a wrong.<sup>36</sup>

The caliph then went onto the attack. What, he asked the man, would he do if he came upon a young couple talking amorously with each other here in this mountain pass?

<sup>31</sup> Zubayr ibn Bakkār (d. 256/870), *al-Akhhār al-Muwaffaqiyyāt*, ed. S. M. al-Ānī, Baghdad 1972, 51–7. The passage is quoted in full in F. Jad'ān, *al-Miḥna*, Amman 1989, 256–60, whence my knowledge of it. There is a parallel in Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1176), *Ta'rikh madīnat Dimashq*, ed. 'A. Shīrī, Beirut 1995–8, 33:302–5 (I owe this reference to Michael Cooper). I shall return to this narrative (see below, ch. 17, 497f.).

<sup>32</sup> The presence of 'Ujayf ibn 'Anbasa makes the Anatolian campaign of 215/830 a plausible setting for the story (see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, series III, 1103.12).

<sup>33</sup> For *mutakhabbiṭ mutakaffīn* read *mutaḥanniṭ mutakaffīn*, as in Ibn 'Asākir's parallel (and cf. above, note 14). <sup>34</sup> Zubayr, *Akhhār*, 52.15. <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.13.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.9.

THE ZEALOT: I would ask them who they were.

THE CALIPH: You'd ask the man, and he'd tell you she was his wife. And you'd ask the woman, and she'd say he was her husband. So what would you do with them?

THE ZEALOT: I'd separate them and imprison them.

THE CALIPH: Till when?

THE ZEALOT: Till I'd asked about them.

THE CALIPH: And who would you ask?

THE ZEALOT: [First] I'd ask them where they were from.

THE CALIPH: Fine. You've asked the man where he's from, and he says he's from Asfijāb.<sup>37</sup> The woman too says she's from Asfijāb – that he's her cousin, they got married and came here. Well, are you going to keep them in prison on the basis of your vile suspicion and false imaginings until your messenger comes back from Asfijāb? Say the messenger dies, or they die before he gets back?

THE ZEALOT: I would ask here in your camp.

THE CALIPH: What if you could only find one or two people from Asfijāb in my camp, and they told you they didn't know them? Is that what you've put on your shroud for?

The caliph concluded that he must have to do with a man who had deluded himself by misinterpreting the tradition according to which the finest form of holy war is to speak out in the presence of an unjust ruler.<sup>38</sup> In fact, he observed, it was his antagonist who was guilty of injustice. In a final gesture of contempt, he declined to flog the zealot, and contented himself with having his general rip up his pretentious shroud. The caliph's tone throughout the narrative is one of controlled fury and icy contempt: it is he, and not the would-be martyr, who occupies the moral high ground.

That the political implications of forbidding wrong would give rise to controversy is exactly what we would expect. And yet the strategy adopted by al-Ma'mūn is not to expose the zealot as a subversive. Rather, his charge is that the man has made the duty into a vehicle of ignorance and prejudice. The effect is enhanced when the caliph goes onto the attack. By the answers he gives to the hypothetical questions put to him by al-Ma'mūn, the zealot reveals himself not as a heroic enemy of tyrants, but rather as a blundering intruder into the private affairs of ordinary Muslims. With men like him around, no happily married couple can go for a stroll in a mountain pass without exposing themselves to harassment on the part of boorish zealots.

The contrasting moral fates of the goldsmith of Marw and the nameless zealot can help us mark out the territory within which the doctrine of the

<sup>37</sup> Asfijāb was located far away on the frontiers of Transoxania.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.12. For the tradition, see above, note 18.

duty must operate. At one edge of this territory, a thin line separates forbidding wrong from culpable subversion. At the other edge, the frontier between forbidding wrong and the invasion of privacy is no thicker. Away from these tense borders we shall encounter few stories as dramatic as those of the goldmith and the zealot, and the bulk of this book will be taken up with the description and analysis of scholastic arguments and distinctions. But subversion and intrusion are themes that will often recur in the course of this study. Though not quite the Scylla and Charybdis of forbidding wrong, they represent significant ways in which the virtuous performance of the duty can degenerate into vice, and they are accordingly major foci of the scholastic thought we shall be examining.

As we shall see, scholasticism comes into its own within the framework of the sects and schools of classical Islam; it is here that systematic doctrines of the duty are eventually to be found. However, many of the ideas elaborated in this scholastic literature appear already in earlier contexts. The following chapters will accordingly consider, in turn, the Koran and its exegesis, traditions from the Prophet and his Companions, and biographical literature about early Muslims.



## KORAN AND KORANIC EXEGESIS

## 1. THE KORAN WITHOUT THE EXEGETES

In the course of a call for unity among the believers, God addresses them as follows: 'Let there be one community of you (*wa-l-takun minkum ummatun*), calling to good, and commanding right and forbidding wrong (*wa-ya'murūna bi'l-ma'rūfi wa-yanhawna 'ani 'l-munkar*); those are the prosperers' (Q3:104).<sup>1</sup> This conjunction of 'commanding right' and 'forbidding wrong' is found in seven further Koranic verses (Q3:110, Q3:114, Q7:157, Q9:71, Q9:112, Q22:41, Q31:17);<sup>2</sup> the two phrases scarcely appear in isolation from each other.<sup>3</sup> It is clear, then, that the phrase 'commanding right and forbidding wrong' is firmly rooted in Koranic diction. But what, on the basis of the Koranic material, can we say about the actual character of the duty? Who performs it, who is its target, and what is it about?

It is reasonably clear who performs it in Q3:104. The context of the verse is an appeal for the unity of the community of believers, with contrasting reference to earlier communities;<sup>4</sup> the believers, according to this verse, are to be (or at least include) a community (*umma*) which commands right and forbids wrong. Some of the other passages referring to the duty invite

<sup>1</sup> All Koranic quotations follow the Egyptian text; my translations are based on those of Arberry, but frequently depart from them (A. J. Arberry, *The Koran interpreted*, London 1964). Throughout, I use 'right' to translate *ma'rūf* and 'wrong' to translate *munkar*. For a discussion of some of the questions addressed in this chapter, see A. A. Roest Crolius, 'Mission and morality', *Studia Missionalia*, 27 (1978), 258–73 (drawn to my attention by Noha Bakr).

<sup>2</sup> We also find in Q9:67 the transposition 'commanding wrong' and 'forbidding right'; the reference is to the hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*), in contrast to the believers of Q9:71.

<sup>3</sup> A possible reference to 'commanding right' is found in Q4:114: *man amara bi-sadaqatin aw ma'rūfin aw islāhin bayna 'l-nās*. Here Arberry translates *ma'rūf* as 'honour', which is his standard rendering of the term. There are two references to 'forbidding indecency (*al-fahshā'*) and wrong' (Q16:90, Q29:45; and cf. Q24:21). Q5:79 (*kānū lā yatanāhawna 'an munkarin fa'alūhu*) will be discussed below, notes 11f. <sup>4</sup> Q3:105, and cf. Q3:100.

a similar interpretation (Q3:110, Q3:114, Q9:71); in other words, the obligation seems here to be one discharged by the collectivity of the believers.<sup>5</sup> There are, however, two verses (Q9:112 and Q22:41) where the context suggests that those who perform the duty are the believers who engage in holy war (and therefore not all believers?). The first is syntactically problematic; but the believers have been mentioned in the previous verse for their commitment to holy war.<sup>6</sup> The second verse seems to pick up an earlier reference to ‘those who fight because they were wronged’ (Q22:39).<sup>7</sup> There are also two verses in which the duty appears as one performed by individuals: in Q7:157 it is the gentile prophet (*al-rasūl al-nabī al-ummī*) who executes it, and in Q31:17 Luqmān tells his son to perform it.

Who is the target of the duty? The only verse that specifies this is Q7:157, where the gentile prophet commands and forbids those who follow him. In no case does the duty appear as something done to an individual, or to particular individuals. In general we are left in the dark.

What is the duty about? In none of the verses we have considered is there any further indication as to what concrete activities are subsumed under the rubric of commanding right and forbidding wrong. We might suspect from this that we have to do with a general duty of ethical affirmation to the community, or to the world at large, but this is by no means clear.

<sup>5</sup> In Q3:110, God tells the believers that they, as opposed to the people of the Book, were (*kuntum*) the ‘best community’ that has come forth, commanding right and forbidding wrong; while in Q3:114, He concedes that among the people of the Book there exists an ‘upstanding community’ which commands right and forbids wrong. Whereas in Q9:67 the hypocrites ‘are as one another’, commanding wrong and forbidding right, in Q9:71 the believers ‘are friends one of the other’, commanding right and forbidding wrong. In Q22:41, the believers are those who, if established in the land, will command right and forbid wrong.

<sup>6</sup> The verse speaks, in a string of present participles in the nominative case, of ‘those who repent, those who serve, those who pray, . . . those who command right and forbid wrong (*al-āmirūna bi’l-ma’rūfi wa’l-nāhūna ‘an al-munkari*), those who keep God’s bounds’. There is no obvious predicate, so that it is natural to see the participles as in apposition to a previously mentioned subject; and the previous verse appropriately offers ‘the believers’ – but in the genitive case (‘God has bought from the believers (*al-mu’minīna*) their selves and their possessions against the gift of Paradise; they fight in the way of God; they kill, and are killed’ (Q9:111)). The syntactic problem is resolved in a textual variant in which the participles appear in the genitive. This variant is quoted from Ibn Mas’ūd (d. 32/652f.), Ubayy ibn Ka’b (d. 22/642f.), and A’mash (d. 148/765) (see A. Jeffery, *Materials for the history of the text of the Qur’ān*, Leiden 1937, 45, 134, 319; the attribution to Ibn Mas’ūd appears already in Farrā’ (d. 207/822f.), *Ma’ānī al-Qur’ān*, ed. A. Y. Najātī and M. ‘A. al-Najjār, Cairo 1980–, 1:453.8). Imāmī sources also ascribe this variant to Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. c. 118/736) and Ja’far al-Šādiq (d. 148/765) (Ṭabrisī, *Majma’*, 3:74.12; Ṭabrisī, *Jawāmi’ al-jāmi’*, Beirut 1985, 1:633.16; and see ‘Ayyāshī (early fourth/tenth century), *Tafsīr*, Qumm n.d., 2:112f. no. 140).

<sup>7</sup> Or, just possibly, ‘those who believe’ in Q22:38. What binds the passage together syntactically is the series of relative pronouns in verses 38, 39, 40 and 41.

We can seek to shed a little more light on the Koranic conception of commanding right and forbidding wrong by looking at some related material from the Koran.

First, the term 'right' (*ma'rūf*) often appears elsewhere in the Koran, usually but not always in legal contexts (Q2:178, 180, 228, 229, etc.).<sup>8</sup> There is, however, no indication that it is itself a technical, or even a legal term. Rather, it seems to refer to performing a legal or other action in a decent and honourable fashion; this finds some confirmation in the synonymy with 'kindliness' (*ihsān*) which is suggested by certain verses (Q2:178, 229 and cf. 236). Just what constitutes such conduct is never spelled out. Thus it seems that we have to do with the kind of ethical term that passes the buck to specific standards of behaviour already known and established.

Secondly, there are locutions elsewhere in the Koran of the form 'commanding X' and 'forbidding Y', where X and Y are similarly broad-spectrum ethical terms.<sup>9</sup> These parallels reinforce the impression that the Koranic conception of forbidding wrong is a vague and general one.

Thirdly, it is worth noting the kinds of themes that appear in conjunction with commanding right: performing prayer (Q9:71, Q9:112, Q22:41, Q31:17); paying alms (Q9:71, Q22:41); believing in God (Q3:110, Q3:114), obeying Him and His Prophet (Q9:71), keeping His bounds (Q9:112), reciting His signs (Q3:113); calling to good (Q3:104), vying with each other in good works (Q3:114); enduring what befalls one (Q31:17).<sup>10</sup> Here again, there is nothing to narrow the concept of the duty.

Finally, there are two passages that are worth particular attention.

One is Q5:79. Having stated that those of the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by David and Jesus for their sins, God continues: *kānū lā yatanāhawna 'an munkarin fa'alūhu*. This is the only Koranic occurrence of the verb *tanāhā*. If we care to interpret it etymologically in

<sup>8</sup> Normally it appears as a substantive, occasionally as an adjective modifying *qawl* (e.g. Q2:235, 263; Q4:5, 8) or *ṭā'ū* (Q24:53). The term *munkar* is rarer (Q22:72, Q29:29, Q58:2). For an introduction to both terms, see T. Izutsu, *Ethico-religious concepts in the Qur'ān*, Montreal 1966, 213–17.

<sup>9</sup> Thus X may be *birr* (Q2:44), *qist* (Q3:21, and cf. Q7:29), *'urf* (Q7:199), *'adl* (Q16:76), *'adl* and *ihsān* (Q16:90), *taqwā* (Q96:12) or, with reversal, *sū*' (Q12:53) and *fahshā*' (Q24:21); Y may be *sū*' (Q7:165), *fāsād* (Q11:116), *fahshā*' (Q29:45), *fahshā*' and *baghy* (Q16:90), or *hawā*' (Q79:40). The only one of these verses in which 'commanding X' and 'forbidding Y' are conjoined is Q16:90. The only cases where the verbs have an object are Q2:44 (*al-nās*) and Q79:40 (*al-nafs*).

<sup>10</sup> I leave aside the rather different themes that appear in Q7:157 (where it is the Prophet who commands right) and Q9:67 (where the hypocrites command wrong).

a reciprocal sense, the meaning might be that the Children of Israel ‘forbade not one another any wrong that they committed’; in this case we would have here a Koranic basis for the conception of forbidding wrong as something that individual believers do to each other. But there seems to be no independent attestation of such a sense of the verb.<sup>11</sup> In the Arabic of ordinary mortals, *tanābhā* is usually synonymous with *intabā*, itself a common Koranic verb with the sense of ‘refrain’ or ‘desist’ (as in Q2:275 and Q8:38). In this case the sense would merely be ‘they did not desist from any wrong that they committed’; and in fact this understanding of the verse is explicit in a variant reading with *yantabūna* for *yatanāhawna*.<sup>12</sup> If we either read *yantabūna*, or understand *yatanāhawna* in the same sense, then the verse is of no further interest to us.<sup>13</sup>

The other passage is Q7:163–6. These verses tell a story of the divine punishment of the people of an (Israelite) town by the sea who fished on the Sabbath. We have to understand from the context that a part of this community had reproved the Sabbath-breakers; another part (*ummatun*) then asked the reprovers why they bothered to admonish people whom God was going to punish anyway. In due course God saved those who forbade evil, and punished those who acted wrongly. Here again, we have a conception of a duty of forbidding evil as one performed by members of a community towards each other; and here, for the first time, we have a concrete example of the performance of such a duty.

Yet neither case is unambiguously connected with our duty of ‘commanding right and forbidding wrong’. Neither verse makes any reference

<sup>11</sup> Wensinck’s concordance of *ḥadīth* literature contains six entries for the sixth form of the root *nby* (A. J. Wensinck *et al.*, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, Leiden 1936–88, 7:13b.51); none of these would bear a sense of ‘forbid one another’. The concordance omits a well-known Prophetic tradition in which *tanāhaw* clearly does mean ‘forbid one another’; but in this case the context makes it clear that the diction is Koranic (see below, note 68, and ch. 3, note 40). See also Ibn Abī ‘l-Dunyā (d. 281/894), *al-Amr bi’l-ma‘rūf wa’l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*, ed. Ṣ. ‘A. al-Shalāḥī, Medina 1997, 61 no. 18, for a tradition in which *tanāhaw* is clearly used in the sense of ‘refrain from’ (and cf. the use of the verb *intabā* in the parallels in Jaṣṣāṣ, *Alḥkām*, 2:33.27, and Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab*, 6:89 no. 7,570). I am grateful to Avraham Hakim for sending me a copy of Ibn Abī ‘l-Dunyā’s *Amr*. The Concordance of Pre-Islamic and Umayyad Poetry of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem contains some dozens of entries for the sixth form of the root; but here again, I can find no example of *tanābhā* used in a sense of ‘forbid one another’. I am much indebted to Etan Kohlberg for transcribing these entries for me, and to Albert Arazi and Andras Hamori for further assistance.

<sup>12</sup> This reading is ascribed to Ibn Mas‘ūd (Jeffery, *Materials*, 40), to Ubayy ibn Ka‘b (*ibid.*, 129), and to Zayd ibn ‘Alī (d. 122/740) (A. Jeffery, ‘The Qur’ān readings of Zaid b. ‘Alī’, *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 16 (1937), 258).

<sup>13</sup> For the sake of completeness it should be added that Q65:6 offers an eighth form of *amara* with *ma‘rūf*: *wa-‘tamirū baynakum bi-ma‘rūfin*. The context is reasonable conduct in divorce where the ex-wife suckles the ex-husband’s child. Arberry’s plausible translation is ‘and consult together honourably’; there is nothing here to suggest *al-amr bi’l-ma‘rūf*.

to ‘commanding right’. Whether Q5:79 refers to ‘forbidding wrong’ turns on the sense of the verb *tanāḥā* (not to mention the variant reading); and Q7:165 speaks of ‘forbidding evil’ (*sūʿ*) rather than ‘forbidding wrong’ (*munkar*). The precision that these verses might bring to our conception of the duty is thus qualified by the uncertainty as to whether they actually refer to it at all. In short, scripture on its own has relatively little to tell us about the duty of forbidding wrong – apart, that is, from its name.

## 2. KORANIC EXEGESIS

What does Koranic exegesis have to tell us about the meaning of these verses? As will appear in the course of this book, the exegetes are often more concerned to set out the school doctrines on forbidding wrong to which they happen to subscribe than they are to elucidate what is there in scripture. Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī (d. 745/1344) in his commentary to Q3:104 is a refreshing exception to this trend: he observes that the verse says nothing about the conditions of obligation and other such matters, and refers the reader to the appropriate literature on these questions.<sup>14</sup> I shall take my cue from him, and defer consideration of all such material – including the strongly sectarian variety of Imāmī exegesis – to later chapters. Much exegesis, again, is concerned with points of difficulty which, for all that they arise from the relevant Koranic verses, have little or no bearing on forbidding wrong; such material will not be considered at all. What answers, then, do the exegetes provide to the questions raised by our examination of the Koranic data in the previous section?

With regard to the question who performs the duty, the focus of exegetical attention is an ambiguity in Q3:104: does the ‘of’ (*min*) in ‘of you’ impose the duty on all believers, or only on some of them?<sup>15</sup> Some exegetes held the first view: as the philologist Zajjāj (d. 311/923) put it, ‘Let there be one community of you’ meant ‘Let all of you (*kullukum*) be a community’.<sup>16</sup> This,

<sup>14</sup> Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī (745/1344), *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, Cairo 1328, 3:21.4.

<sup>15</sup> Or, in the technical language of the exegetes, is its function *tabyīn* (specification) or *tabḥīḍ* (partition)? (See, for example, Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), *Kaṣṣhāf*, Beirut 1947, 1:396.8, 397.1; Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ*, 1:483.23, 483.25; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), *al-Taḥfīr al-kabīr*, Cairo c. 1934–62, 8:177.14, 177.19; Bayḍāwī (d. c. 710/1310), *Anwār al-tanzīl*, Cairo n.d., 2:35.7, 35.11.)

<sup>16</sup> Zajjāj (d. 311/923), *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān wa-iʾrābuhū*, ed. ʿA. ʿA. Shalabī, Beirut and Sidon 1973–4, 1:462.5. In support of this view, Zajjāj adduces the *min* of Q22:30: *fū-ʾjtanībū ʾl-rijsa min al-awṭhāni* – which is not, he points out, an order to avoid some idols rather than others. He then quotes a verse of the pre-Islamic poet Aʿshā Bāhila (for which see R. Geyer (ed.), *Gedichte von ʾAbū Baṣīr Maimūn ibn Qais al-ʿAʿšā nebst Sammlungen von Stücken anderer Dichter des gleichen Beinamens*, London 1928, 267, verse 17), in which the *min* refers to a single individual, and therefore cannot have the function of partition. Finally, he finds confirmation in Q3:110.

however, was a minority view.<sup>17</sup> The more common view was that God was requiring only that there be a group (a *firqā*, as Zajjāj put it) among the believers performing the duty.<sup>18</sup> This looks like a major disagreement, and one arising directly out of the understanding of the verse: the second view would seem to lay a foundation for a partition of the community which would restrict the duty to a specially qualified elite. There are in fact three types of restriction which come into play in these arguments. First, supporters of the majority view emphasise the corollary (or at least closely related view) that the duty is a ‘collective’ one (*farḍ ‘alā ‘l-kifāya*), in the technical sense that when one member of the community discharges it, others are thereby dispensed from it.<sup>19</sup> Secondly, they are occasionally quoted as pointing out that some people are incapable of performing the duty – such as women and invalids.<sup>20</sup> Thirdly, they stress that not all are qualified to perform it. In particular, it

<sup>17</sup> It was nevertheless adopted by the celebrated Imāmī scholar Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī (*Tibyān*, 2:548.5, setting out the two views, and *ibid.*, 549.9, making clear his adoption of the minority view; see further below, ch. 11, notes 156–61). Ṭūsī also mentions the Mu‘tazilite Jubba‘ī (presumably Abū ‘Alī, d. 303/915f.) as a proponent of this view (*ibid.*, 548.14; but see below, ch. 9, note 33). To these we can add Māturīdī (d. c. 333/944), Wāḥidī (d. 468/1076), and Baghawī (d. 516/1122) (Māturīdī, *Ta‘wīlāt al-Qur‘ān*, ms. British Library, Or. 9.432, f. 44b.15 (where both views are stated but only one is supported with proof-texts); Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-‘azīz*, ed. Ṣ. ‘A. Dāwūdī, Damascus and Beirut 1995, 226 to Q3:104; Wāḥidī, *Tafsīr al-basīṭ*, ms. Istanbul, Nuru Osmaniye 240, I, f. 432a.2 (I owe all references to this manuscript to the kindness of Michael Bonner) (and cf. Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ fī tafsīr al-Qur‘ān al-majīd*, ed. ‘A. A. ‘Abd al-Mawjūd *et al.*, Beirut 1994, 1:474.16); Baghawī, *Ma‘ālim al-tanzīl*, ed. M. ‘A. al-Namir *et al.*, Riyāḍ 1993, 2:84.22).

<sup>18</sup> Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī*, 1:463.3; Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, 1:396.8 (adding a brief mention of the alternative view at 397.1); Qurtubī (d. 671/1273), *al-Jāmi‘ li-ahkām al-Qur‘ān*, Cairo 1967, 4:165.11; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:20.6; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), *Tafsīr*, Beirut 1966, 2:86.17; Muḥsin al-Fayḍ (d. 1091/1680), *Tafsīr al-ṣāfi*, Mashhad 1982, 1:338.21. Ṭabarī’s position is unclear, unless we are to infer his acceptance of the majority view from his glossing of *umma* as *jamā‘a* (Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Tafsīr*, ed. M. M. and A. M. Shākīr, Cairo n.d., 7:90.4; cf. Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:20.6, where Ṭabarī is cited as a proponent of this view); indeed his commentary to Q3:104 is so brief as to suggest that the text as we have it may be defective. Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767f.) does no more than gloss *umma* as *‘uṣba* (*Tafsīr*, ed. ‘A. M. Shihāta, Cairo 1979–89, 1:293.18). Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī offers an elaborate account of the competing views (*Tafsīr*, 8:177.14), but concludes only that God knows best (*ibid.*, 178.12). Bayḍāwī merely states the alternatives (*Anwār*, 2:35.7).

<sup>19</sup> Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, 1:396.8; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 8:178.10; Qurtubī, *Jāmi‘*, 4:165.14; Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, 2:35.7; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:20.13; and for Rummānī, see below, ch. 9, note 38. Cf. also the reporting of this view in Wāḥidī, *Basīṭ*, I, f. 432a.8, Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, 2:548.7, and Ṭabrisī, *Majma‘*, 1:483.23.

<sup>20</sup> See Tha‘labī (d. 427/1035), *al-Kashf wa‘l-bayān fī tafsīr āy al-Qur‘ān*, ms. British Library, Add. 19,926, f. 67a.3; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 8:178.2; Nizām al-Dīn al-Naysābūrī (fl. early eighth/fourteenth century), *Gharā‘ib al-Qur‘ān*, ed. I. ‘A. ‘Iwaḍ, Cairo 1962–71, 4:28.10. The placing of women in this category may seem surprising, since God explicitly includes the female believers (*al-mu‘mināt*) among those who command right in Q9:71 (on the question of women forbidding wrong, see below, ch. 17, 482–6).

requires (or may in some instances require) knowledge that not everyone possesses; an ignorant performer may make all sorts of mistakes.<sup>21</sup> From here it is but a short step to speaking of the duty as one for scholars to perform,<sup>22</sup> or even to seeing it as something like a prerogative of the scholarly estate.<sup>23</sup> This last view suggests a strongly elitist construction of the duty, but it is a

<sup>21</sup> Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, 1:396.9; Ṭabrisī, *Jawāmiʿ*, 1:230.20 (a passage not found in his *Majmaʿ* and clearly borrowed from the *Kashshāf*, cf. *Jawāmiʿ*, 1:12.1); Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 8:178.3; Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, 2:35.8; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:20.7; also Abū ʿl-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983), *Tafsīr*, ed. ʿA. M. Muʿawwaḍ *et al.*, Beirut 1993, 1:289.19. A rather similar argument is advanced by Zajjāj in presenting this side of the question: since the verse speaks of those who ‘call to good’ (*yadʿūna ilā ʿl-khayr*), it refers to propagandists for the faith (*al-duʿāt ilā ʿl-īmān*), who need to be learned (*ʿulamāʾ*) in that which they are propagating, as not everyone is (*Maʿānī*, 1:463.3). But note that exegetes who advance this argument can still speak of the obligation as universal (see Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, 2:35.10; Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, 1:398.3, noting that anyone is qualified to rebuke someone who fails to pray).

<sup>22</sup> Such language is used by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in the passage just cited (which does not necessarily represent his own view): the obligation would be restricted to the scholars (*mukhtaṣṣ biʿl-ʿulamāʾ*) (*Tafsīr*, 8:178.3). Similarly Qurṭubī says that those who command right must be scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*) (*Jāmiʿ*, 4:165.12). Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) glosses *umma* in Q3:104 as ‘the community of scholars’ (*jamāʿat al-ʿulamāʾ*) (*Taʿwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*, ed. A. Saqr, Cairo 1954, 345.13). The Imāmī Miqdād al-Suyūrī (d. 826/1423) describes ‘commanding and forbidding’ as ‘one of the duties (*waḍʿʿif*) of scholars’ (*Kanz al-ʿirfān*, ed. M. B. al-Bihbūdī, Tehran 1384–5, 1:407.3 (to Q3:104), followed by Faṭḥ Allāh Kāshānī (d. 988/1580f.), *Manhaj al-ṣādiqīn* (in Persian), Tehran 1336–7 sh., 2:294.23 (likewise to Q3:104)). Cf. also the reporting of such a view in Wāḥidī, *Basīf*, 1, f. 432a.7 (to Q3:104, speaking of *takḥṣiṣ al-ʿulamāʾ waʿl-umarāʾ waʿl-ladhīna hum aʿlam fi ʿl-amr biʿl-maʿrūf*). The restrictive overtones of such statements are perhaps not to be taken too seriously. Thus Qurṭubī has already laid down (in his commentary to Q3:21) that commanding right is incumbent on everyone (*ʿamm fi jamīʿ al-nās*) (*Jāmiʿ*, 4:47.19); and it is generally possible to take *ʿulamāʾ* in the sense of ‘those who know’, who need not in every case be professional scholars. It is by no means the case that Koranic exegesis at large restricts the performance of the duty to scholars (contrast Athamina, ‘The early Murjīʿa’, 122f.).

<sup>23</sup> Thus Ibn ʿAṭīyya (d. 541/1146) (in setting out one view) and Thaʿālibī (d. 873/1468f.) (without qualification) interpret the verse as a divine command that there should be scholars in the community, and that the rest of the community should follow them, in view of the extensive learning required by the duty (Ibn ʿAṭīyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, Rabat 1975–, 3:186.18 (I am grateful to Maribel Fierro for supplying me with copies from volumes of this work which were inaccessible to me); Thaʿālibī, *al-Jawābir al-ḥisān*, ed. ʿA. al-Ṭālibī, Algiers 1985, 1:354.13); and cf. the view they proceed to develop about the distinctive roles of scholars, rulers and others (Ibn ʿAṭīyya, *Muḥarrar*, 3:188.4, and Thaʿālibī, *Jawābir*, 1:355.9; both limit this division of labour to cases of persistent wrong). A Persian exegete writing in 520/1126 holds similar views on this last point (Maybudī, *Kashf*, 2:234.16); and he quotes the view that those who command right are the scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*) and counsellors (*naṣiḥat-kunandagān*), while those who forbid wrong are the warriors (*ghāziyān*), the scholars, and the just ruler (*sulṭān-i ʿādil*) (*ibid.*, 235.4; on this work, see G. Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane*, Paris 1963, 110, and 119 no. 54). On the roles of scholars, rulers and others, see also below, ch. 6, note 166. But note that even Thaʿālibī does not in the end attempt to confine the duty to scholars (or rulers) (*Jawābir*, 1:355.12). For an explicit rejection of the view that the duty is restricted to the scholars by an Ibāḍī exegete, see Aṭfayyish (d. 1332/1914), *Ḥimṣyān al-zād*, ed. ʿA. Shalabī, Oman 1980–, 4:203.18 (the author’s name is given on the title-page as Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf . . . al-Muṣābī).

relatively uncommon one. Whatever their understanding of the verse, the commentators at large show little interest in interpreting it in a substantively restrictive sense.

The exegesis of other verses has less to offer on this question. Thus in Q3:110, the exegetes discuss a number of views as to whom God is addressing when He says: ‘You were the best community brought forth.’<sup>24</sup> One of these views, ascribed to Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muẓāḥim (d. 105/723f.), is that the addressees are the Companions in their roles as the transmitters (*ruwāt*) and propagandists (*du‘āt*) to whom God has enjoined obedience;<sup>25</sup> another, ascribed to Qatāda ibn Di‘āma (d. 117/735f.), identifies the addressees as those who wage holy war, bringing people to Islam by fighting them.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, prominent exegetes stress that the verse applies to the members of the community at large.<sup>27</sup> Yet these differences are never related to the question who should or should not forbid wrong. Moving on to Q9:112, the commentators entertain a variety of ingenious hypotheses with regard to its syntax,<sup>28</sup> and tend to the view that ‘those who command right and forbid wrong’ are to be identified with the believers who commit themselves to holy war in the previous verse.<sup>29</sup> But

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 7:100.16; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938), *Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān al-‘aẓīm*, ed. A. ‘A. al-‘Ammārī al-Zahrānī and Ḥ. B. Yāsīn, Medina 1408, 2:469–74 nos. 1156–71; Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, 2:557.16; Ṭabrisī, *Majma‘*, 1:486.18; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:27.33; Khāzin (d. 741/1341), *Lubāb al-ta’wīl*, Cairo 1328, 1:288.6. The problem arises in part from the puzzling use of the past tense in the verse (*kuntum khayra ummatin . . .*); on this see, for example, Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī*, 1:466.17; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 7:106.1; Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, 2:557.2; Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar*, 3:194.15; Bayḏāwī, *Anwār*, 2:36.15; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:28.9; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 8:189.13. The view that the tense of the verb has no temporal connotation here is nicely reflected in one translator’s rendering of *kuntum* as *būdū-u shudū-u hastū* (Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142), *Tafsīr* (in Persian), ed. ‘A. Juwaynī, n.p. 1353–4 sh., 1:95.5).

<sup>25</sup> Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 7:102 no. 7.613; Khāzin, *Lubāb*, 1:288.10; Abū ‘l-Futūḥ-i Rāzī (first half of sixth/twelfth century), *Rawḍ al-janān* (in Persian), ed. ‘A. A. Ghaffārī, Tehran 1382–7, 3:148.6 (on the author, see the editor’s introduction, esp. 7–10; also Lazard, *Langue*, 120 no. 57); Abū ‘l-Maḥāsīn al-Jurjānī (ninth or tenth/fifteenth or sixteenth century?), *Jilā‘ al-adhbhān* (in Persian), n.p. 1378, 2:102.9; and cf. Wāḥidī, *Basīṭ*, I, f. 433b.4. (The two Imāmī authors find here an invitation to identify the addressees with the imams.) A similar interpretation of Q3:104 is likewise attributed to Ḍaḥḥāk (Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 7:92 no. 7.597; see also Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar*, 3:186.14; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 2:86.14 (with the explanation ‘this means those who wage *jihād* and the ‘*ulamā*’); Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), *al-Durr al-manthūr*, Cairo 1314, 2:62.10; and cf. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 8:178.13).

<sup>26</sup> Abū ‘l-Futūḥ-i Rāzī, *Rawḍ*, 3:150.14; and cf. Abū ‘l-Layth al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, 1:291.11.

<sup>27</sup> Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī*, 1:467.1 (reporting this view); Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 8:191.1 (quoting the view as that of Zajjāj); Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:28.7; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 2:89.9. Cf. also Wāḥidī, *Basīṭ*, I, f. 433b.5.

<sup>28</sup> For a neat presentation of these views, see Ibn al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī (d. 756/1355), *al-Durr al-maṣīn*, ed. A. M. al-Kharāṭ, Damascus 1986–7, 6:129.4. Most major commentaries mention several of them.

<sup>29</sup> See Farrā‘, *Ma‘ānī*, 1:453.7; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 14:500.8; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 16:202.8. Maybudī holds the unusual view that the verse refers back to ‘the believers’ of Q9:71 (*Kashf*, 4:220.8).



they do not consider (and would doubtless have rejected) any suggestion that the duty is restricted to those engaged in holy war. In the case of Q22:41, the exegetes again offer several views as to the identity of the performers: the community at large,<sup>30</sup> the Companions of the Prophet,<sup>31</sup> the Muhājirūn,<sup>32</sup> the Orthodox caliphs,<sup>33</sup> rulers (*wulāt*).<sup>34</sup> But again, there is no attempt to restrict the duty on this basis.<sup>35</sup> It may be noted in passing that the activities of the officially appointed censor of morals and commercial practice (*muḥtasib*) are almost universally ignored by the exegetes.<sup>36</sup>

As to who is the target of the duty, the exegetes have almost as little to tell us as do the verses themselves. Occasionally they supply the vague object ‘people’ (*al-nās*) for the verb ‘command’.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Wāhidī, *Wasīf*, 3:274.8 (citing Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī) (d. 110/728) and ‘Ikrima (d. 107/725f.); Qurṭubī, *Jāmi’*, 12:73.3, citing ‘Ikrima, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Abū ‘l-‘Āliya (d. 90/708f.). Wāhidī adds that the conjunction of forbidding wrong with prayer and the alms-tax in this verse shows it to be obligatory.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* (citing Qatāda); Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, Cairo 1323–9, 17:126.24; Wāhidī, *Wasīf*, 3:274.7 (also citing Qatāda); Hūd ibn Muḥakkam al-Hawwārī (third/ninth century), *Tafsīr*, ed. B. S. Sharīfī, Beirut 1990, 3:120.16 (for this work and its author, see J. van Ess, ‘Untersuchungen zu einigen ibādītischen Handschriften’, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 126 (1976), 42f. no. 5; for its heavy dependence on the *Tafsīr* of Yaḥyā ibn Sallām (d. 200/815), see 23f. of Sharīfī’s introduction; also M. Muranyi, ‘Neue Materialien zur *tafsīr*-Forschung in der Moscheebibliothek von Qairawān’, in S. Wild (ed.), *The Qur’an as text*, Leiden 1996, 228). <sup>32</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 23:41.21; and cf. Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, 7:322.16.

<sup>33</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 23:41.24; Qurṭubī, *Jāmi’*, 12:73.1; Maybudī, *Kashf*, 6:380.18; and the early Persian commentary (second half of the fourth/tenth or first half of the fifth/eleventh century) preserved in Cambridge (anon., *Tafsīr-i Qur’ān-i majīd*, ed. J. Maṭīnī, n.p. 1349 sh., 1:162.17) (for this text, see Lazard, *Langue*, 56–8 no. 9).

<sup>34</sup> Qurṭubī, *Jāmi’*, 12:73.5, and Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 6:376.11 (both citing Ibn Abī Najīh (d. 131/748f.), and adding a saying of Ḍaḥḥāk’s); Naḥḥās (d. 338/950), *Ma’ānī ‘l-Qur’ān al-karīm*, ed. M. ‘A. al-Ṣābūnī, Mecca 1988–, 4:420.1 (citing Ibn Abī Najīh). Another Persian commentary mentions a view that the reference is to the Orthodox caliphs and just rulers (*amīrān-i ‘ādil*) (anon. (fourth/tenth or first half of fifth/eleventh century), *Tafsīrī bar ‘usbrī az Qur’ān-i majīd*, ed. J. Maṭīnī, Tehran 1352 sh., 263.4; for the dating, see the editor’s introduction, xxii). An exegesis transmitted by Kalbī (d. 146/763f.) refers the verse to the Banū Hāshim (sc. the ‘Abbāsids), past and future (Khaṭīb, *Ta’rīkh Baghdād*, 14:69.3; I owe this reference to Nurit Tsafir).

<sup>35</sup> Qurṭubī, however, invokes the verse in discussing the restriction of the duty to the scholars in his commentary to Q3:104 (*Jāmi’*, 4:165.15; as this passage confirms, *yumakkan* is to be read for *yakun*, *ibid.*, 12:73.2).

<sup>36</sup> I know only one exception: Nizām al-Dīn al-Naysābūrī, who devotes a large part of his commentary on Q3:104 to the role of the official *muḥtasib* (*Gharā’ib*, 4:28.17). Where other exegetes use the term *iḥtisāb*, the reference is simply to *al-amr bi’l-ma’rūf* in general (Bayḍāwī makes occasional use of the term, see *Anwār*, 2:35.9 (to Q3:104), 38.9 (to Q3:114); whence Abū ‘l-Su‘ūd al-‘Imādī (d. 982/1574), *Irshād al-‘aql al-salīm*, Riyāḍ n.d., 1:528.14 (to Q3:104); Fayḍ, *Ṣafī*, 1:344.4 (to Q3:114); Kāshānī, *Mambaj*, 2:305.23 (to Q3:114)). This usage is borrowed from Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111), see below, ch. 16, 428f.

<sup>37</sup> So Muqātil to Q3:110 (*Tafsīr*, 1:295.5), Ṭabarī to Q3:104 (*Tafsīr*, 7:91.1), and Abū ‘l-Su‘ūd to Q3:104 (*Irshād*, 1:529.4); in the case of Q3:110 this echoes the occurrence of the word earlier in the verse. Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, in his analysis of the view that Q3:104 is addressed to the community at large, states that in this view the verse would be a command for the community to call the whole world (*jāmi’ al-‘ālam*) to good – the unbelievers to Islam, the sinners to obedience (Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar*, 3:187.12). Abū ‘l-Faṭḥ

With regard to the question of the scope of the obligation, the most interesting phenomenon in the exegetical literature is an early approach which tends to present the duty as simply one of enjoining belief in God and His Prophet.<sup>38</sup> This approach is first firmly attested in the works of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767f.), especially in one on the meanings (*wujūh*) of Koranic terms. According to this work, ‘commanding right’ in Q3:110, Q9:112 and Q31:17 means enjoining belief in the unity of God (*tawhīd*), while ‘forbidding wrong’ in these verses means forbidding polytheism (*shirk*); at the same time, in Q3:114 and Q9:71, ‘commanding right’ refers to following (*ittibāʿ*) and affirming belief (*taṣdīq*) in the Prophet, and ‘wrong’ refers to denying (*takdhīb*) him.<sup>39</sup> This analysis is repeated in later works of the same genre.<sup>40</sup> There are also examples of this type of thinking in the mouths of even earlier authorities. There is a sweeping view ascribed to Abū ʿl-ʿĀliya (d. 90/708f.) according to which, in all Koranic references to ‘commanding right’ and ‘forbidding wrong’, the former refers to calling people from polytheism to Islam, and the latter to forbidding the worship

Footnote 37 (*cont.*)

al-Jurjānī (d. 976/1568f.) in his paraphrase of Q3:110 speaks of the believers commanding and forbidding each other (*Tafsīr-i shāhī*, ed. W. al-Ishrāqī, Tabrīz 1380, 2:102.6; cf. Miqdād, *Kanz*, 1:405.15). Q66:6 tells the believers to ‘guard yourselves and your families’ from hellfire; Ṭūsī remarks that this verse requires that the duty be performed in the first instance towards those closest to us (*lil-aqrab faʿl-aqrab*) (*Tibyān*, 10:50.9).

<sup>38</sup> On the rare occasions when we encounter this approach outside exegetical and related literature, it tends to remain tied to the relevant Koranic verses. A case in point is the treatment of Q9:67 and Q9:71 by Wāqidī (d. 207/823) in his chapter on scripture revealed during the Tabūk expedition of the year 9/630 (*Maghāzī*, ed. M. Jones, London 1966, 1067.12, 1068.6). For an exception, see below, ch. 8, note 96. This exegetical trend is particularly noted by van Ess (*Theologie*, 2:389).

<sup>39</sup> Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767f.), *al-Ashbāh waʿl-nazāʿir*, ed. ʿA. M. Shihāta, Cairo 1975, 113f. no. 13 (cited in van Ess, *Theologie*, 2:389 n. 23; on the work and the genre in general, see *ibid.*, 524–7). (There is no reference here to Q3:104, Q7:157, Q9:67, or Q22:41.) The exegeses of Q3:114, Q9:71, Q9:112 and Q31:17 also appear in his *Tafsīr* (1:296.12, 2:181.13, 199.2, 3:435.8 (where for *al-sharr* read *al-shirk*)). The exegesis of Q31:17 appears further in Muqātil’s *Tafsīr al-khams miʿat āya*, ed. I. Goldfeld, Shfaram 1980, 278.15 (also cited in van Ess, *Theologie*, 2:389 n. 23). However, at Q3:110 Muqātil in his *Tafsīr* glosses *maʿrif* as *imān*, and *munkar*, it seems, as *zulm* (*Tafsīr*, 1:295.5). Turning to the exegeses given in the *Tafsīr* for verses ignored in the *Ashbāh*, Q3:104 is unglossed (*Tafsīr*, 1:293.18); to Q7:157 we are offered the glosses *imān* and *shirk* (*Tafsīr*, 2:67.9); Q9:67 is glossed similarly to Q3:114 and Q9:71 (*ibid.*, 180.9); and Q22:41 is glossed similarly to Q3:110, Q9:112 and Q31:17 (*ibid.*, 3:130.7). I am grateful to Uri Rubin for giving me access to many of these passages through his copy of the manuscript of Muqātil’s *Tafsīr*; this was in the days before Shihāta’s full publication had become available.

<sup>40</sup> It appears, with little change, in works of Yahyā ibn Sallām (d. 200/815), Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Dāmaghānī (fifth/eleventh century?), Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201), and Ibn al-ʿImād (d. 887/1482) (Yahyā ibn Sallām, *Taṣāwīf*, ed. H. Shalabī, Tunis 1979, 203 no. 42; Dāmaghānī, *al-Wujūh waʿl-nazāʿir*, ed. A. Bihruz, Tabrīz 1366 sh., 113.3 (on this work and its author, see E. Kohlberg, *A medieval Muslim scholar at work: Ibn Ṭāwūs and his library*, Leiden 1992, 387f. no. 658); Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nuzhat al-ʿayn*, ed. M. ʿA. K. al-Rāḍī, Beirut 1984, 544 no. 270, 574 no. 286; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Kashf al-sarāʿir*, ed. F. ʿA. Aḥmad and M. S. Dāwūd, Alexandria n.d., 145 no. 38).