

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD. FACULTY OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

The life and work of a Grand Ayatollah in historical context

The contribution of Ayatollah Ḥājj Āqā Ḥusayn Burūjirdī (1875-1961) to Shi‘i Theology and to the Development of the Religious Institution in 20th Century Iran

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The life and work of a Grand Ayatollah in historical context: the contribution of Ayatollah Ḥājī Āqā Ḥusayn Burūjirdī (1875-1961) to Shi'i Theology and to the Development of the Religious Institution in 20th Century Iran.

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Abstract

This thesis intends to explore the development of the Shi'i religious institution in 20th century Iran through a case study of the life and work of Grand Ayatollah Burūjirdī (1875-1961), who was the head of the Qum Seminary for seventeen years (1944-1961) and was the pre-eminent *marja' al-taqlīd* of Iran from 1947 until his death. No serious academic study has been undertaken on Burūjirdī in English. This thesis draws on a range of primary sources (both written and oral), most of which are as yet unpublished and are used in this thesis for the first time.

Burūjirdī's own life illustrates the traditional career path of a senior cleric, passing through several stages of education in Burūjird, Isfahan and Najaf before establishing himself as the *marja'* of his home city, a position he held until his move to Qum. The thesis discusses how Burūjirdī was recognised as the pre-eminent *marja'* for the world's Shi'is and the sole *marja'* for Iranian Shi'is, although throughout the recent history of the *marja'īyat*, it has been normal for several individuals to hold this position simultaneously. The findings suggest that family and local ties as well as excellent education and intellectual achievement were central factors in Burūjirdī's success.

Burūjirdī's contribution to the institutional and intellectual development of the Qum Seminary is also studied in this thesis. Particular attention is paid to questions such as the expansion of the seminary, the attraction of substantial funds for its administration, the increase in the seminary's financial income and the establishment of Shi'i centres in not just the Islamic world, but in Europe and North America. The thesis also discusses the reforms in the intellectual tradition of the clerical educational curriculum and their part in allowing the Qum Seminary to become the main Shi'i religious school in the world. It argues that Burūjirdī's management style, which relied on working closely with a small number of long-standing and trusted associates allowed him to lead the seminary effectively over a long period. The Qum Seminary's role in Iranian politics is discussed, in particular, the numerous difficulties for Burūjirdī in dealing with the state as well as with Islamist parties in the country who also sought the support of the faithful. Some debates between Burūjirdī and other important Shi'i clerics are discussed including fundamentalist and radical Shi'is who held different views to him on matters such as Muḥammad Musaddiq's government, the *coup d'état* of 1953 and the ideological assassinations carried out by Fidā'īyān-i Islām. The thesis proposes that the established pattern for his relationship with the state, which was mutually beneficial and helped the seminary to develop in a satisfactory way, constituted a middle ground between quietism and radical activism. In this it departs from the widespread view that Burūjirdī was a quietist, arguing that he did engage with political issues and actors, but only when so doing helped to reinforce the religious institution.

The thesis also illuminates Burūjirdī's policy regarding the common social problems of the Shi'i community in their relations with other Muslims in the Islamic world as well as their clashes with the Baha'is inside Iran. In this too, Burūjirdī had his own approach, which was clear and focused, even if not a radical departure from previous approaches. He emphasised proximity: bringing Shi'is and Sunnis closer together, and in relation to the Baha'is he sought to minimise clashes and co-operate with the state.

Overall, the thesis concludes that the nature of religious authority in Iran as well as the wider pattern of social relations were such that a study of the life and work of the pre-eminent *marja' al-taqlīd* of the mid 20th Century provides a useful lens through which to analyse the development of the Qum seminary in this period.

Introduction

The purpose of this introduction is to offer a justification for carrying out this piece of research by way of historical enquiry. What motivates a piece of writing is as important as any other consideration in connection to research in the field of history.¹ There are less well-defined research paradigms for the humanities and the social sciences than in the natural sciences. The historian of science, Thomas S. Kuhn, who developed the concept of paradigm for the first time in his famous book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, refers to paradigms as “universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners”. However, he mentions:

Spending a year in a community composed predominantly of social scientists confronted me with unanticipated problems about the differences between such communities and those of the natural scientists among whom I had been trained. Particularly, I was struck by the number and extent of the overt disagreements between social scientists about the nature of legitimate scientific problems and methods. Both history and acquaintance made me doubt that practitioners of the natural sciences possess firmer or more permanent answers to such questions than their colleagues in social sciences.... Attempting to discover the source of that difference led me to recognize the role in scientific research of what I have since called paradigms.²

Therefore, it is important to explain one's incentives for carrying out a piece of historical research in order to make its problems and methods more clear.

The introduction also sketches an intellectual landscape, not just for the context of Burūjirdī's achievements in his life, but also the context of this research as well. In addition to these functions, it also aims to situate this research among existing literature in order to emphasise its original contribution to the field. Finally, this introduction outlines the research's chapters.

¹ For a piece of historical research it is important to say something about the writer's approach to history. The work which has most influenced me in this regard has been the famous introduction of Ibn Khaldūn to his Islamic history, where he explains his approach to the history. Although that introduction is a sociological manifestation, it properly explains the writer's position regarding active forces in making historical events, see 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, taḥqīq Darwīsh al-Juwaydī (Ṣaydā; Bayrūt: al-Maktabah al-‘Aṣriyah, 1995). Mentioning Ibn Khaldūn here is to clarify that it is good for any historian to discuss his own theoretical framework prior to examining a historical topic. However, by no means do I intend to follow Ibn Khaldūn's classic method of historiography which belongs to the 14th Century.

² Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), x.

Our knowledge of Shi'ism

Shi'ism is a religion which is not so widely known outside academia and the Shi'i community. For the majority of non-Muslims, Islam is synonymous with Sunnism.³ Likewise, for the majority of Iranians inside the country who have never encountered Sunnism, Islam is synonymous with Shi'ism. When they travel to another Muslim country, traditionally to Saudi Arabia for the pilgrimage, it becomes clear to them that the majority of Muslims are Sunnis, at which point one starts to think that there is a serious need to explain the nature of Shi'ism. The Shi'i identity is long established, with intellectual as well as cultural roots reaching back to the first centuries of the emergence of Islam.⁴ Western scholars have been interested in working on classical Shi'ism by writing on the succession dispute, Isma'ilism etc.⁵ When it comes to the modern period, although there has been a great deal of attention paid to Shi'ism as a part of Iranian identity, thanks to the Iranian Revolution of 1979, there has been less interest in studying Shi'ism from a global religious perspective.⁶ For example, studies of Shi'is in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula have been extremely limited up to now.⁷ However, it seems that recent developments in international relations, such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a majority Shi'i country (now with a predominantly Shi'i government as well), Western engagements with Pakistan and Afghanistan in relation to terrorism (as Shi'is were the main target for extremist terrorist activities by the Taliban and other fundamentalist groups), the position of the Shi'is of south Lebanon in relation to Israel and finally Shi'i protests in Bahrain, Yemen and Saudi Arabia have given Shi'ism greater prominence in Western scholarship. It has been frequently argued that the West has been hypocritical in dealing with the rights of Shi'is in

³ For a comprehensive guide to Shi'ism (and its differences to Sunnism), see Rizā Husaynī'nasab, *Shī'ah pāsukh mī'dahad zir-i naẓar-i Ja'far Subḥānī* (Tihṛān: Mash'ar, 1995).

⁴ For more information about the history of Shi'ism see Rasūl Ja'fariyān, *Tashayyu' dar 'Irāq, marja'īyat va Irān: yak murūr* (Tihṛān: Mu'assasah-i Muṭāla'āt-i Tārīkh-i Mu'āṣir-i Irān, 2007); Rasūl Ja'fariyān, *Tārīkh-i Tashayyu' dar Irān: az āghāz tā ṭulū'-i dawlat-i Ṣafavī* (Qum: Anṣariyān, 2006); Hamid Dabashi, *Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap, 2011), 101-202; Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Heinz Halm, *The Shi'ites: A Short History* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007); M. H. Tabatabai, and Seyyed H. Nasr, *Shiite Islam* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975).

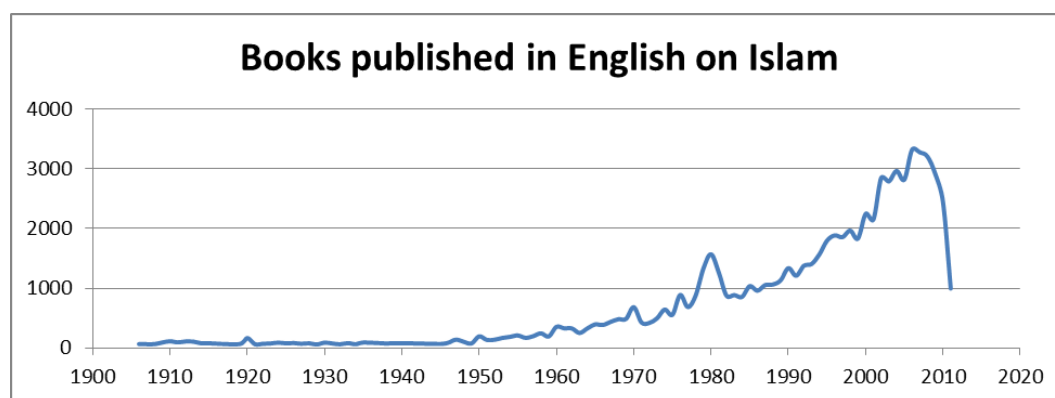
⁵ For example see works written by Wilferd Madelung and Farhad Daftari such as Madelung, Wilferd, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A History of Early Islam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and Daftari, Farhad, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge [England: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁶ See for example Duhnkrack's short essay: Sophie Duhnkrack, *The History of Shi'ism and Iranian Shi'ism* (München: GRIN Verlag GmbH, 2010) 1-28.

⁷ To know more about limitations of research in these areas see Juan R. Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War: The Politics, Culture and History of Shi'ite Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 31-33.

the Western allied countries such as Bahrain.⁸ Nevertheless, these events have encouraged a great deal of academic interest in the social and political dimensions of Shi‘ism as a global religious identity, rather than simply as a part of the Iranian national identity. Most recent academic publications on Shi‘ism cover a wider geographical area than just a well-known Shi‘i country like Iran.⁹

Since 1901 there have been a total of 74,516 books published on Islam, with a peak for an individual year of 3321 items in 2006, while, in the same period, there have been a total of 394 books published on Shi‘ism, with a peak of 43 items in 2008. Therefore, books exclusively on Shi‘ism in general form less than half a per cent of books on Islam, with occasional exceptions such as 2008, when books on Shi‘ism accounted for a little over one per cent of the books on Islam.¹⁰ This is significantly less than the proportion of Shi‘is in the world, since they form between ten and fifteen per cent of the world Muslim population of 1.3 billion.¹¹ Although one may argue that usually books related to Islam would cover Shi‘ism as well, they would not cover specialised Shi‘i problems as the main question and focus of the research.

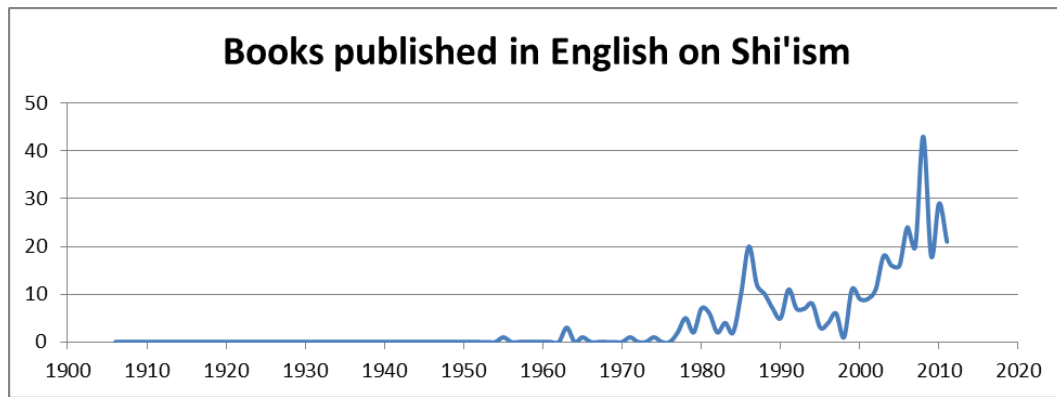


⁸ See for example Haydar Al-Khoei, ‘Shia Muslims must beware of hypocrisy’ in *Guardian*, 25 April 2011.

⁹ See for example Juan R. Cole, and Nikki R. Keddie (eds.), *Shi‘ism and Social Protest* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986) which covers different geographical areas with Shi‘i inhabitants such as Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Gulf etc. Vali Nasr’s recent work makes it clear that he has a wider sense of Shi‘ism as a political actor in the Middle East. See Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: Norton, 2006).

¹⁰ For detailed table of book statistics see the appendices. This table has been made using data from WorldCat.

¹¹ The percentage of Shi‘i population in some Muslim countries is as follows: Iran (90), Iraq (65), Azerbaijan (75), Bahrain (75), Lebanon (45), Kuwait (30), Afghanistan (20), Pakistan (19), Qatar (16), Saudi Arabia (10), UAE (6). For more information See Dan Caldwell, *Vortex of Conflict: U.S. Policy Toward Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq* (Stanford, California: Stanford Security Studies, 2011), 12.



Why study the *hawzah*?

In order to arrive at an accurate and balanced understanding of any religious tradition, it is essential to rely mainly on that tradition's own sources and perspectives, while subjecting them to critical analysis. The element which has maintained a continuity in Shi'i identity is the traditional method of education which is referred to as the *hawzah* education. At present, the main Shi'i religious school in the world is the Qum seminary (the *Hawzah* of Qum), which has also been the central religious institution in contemporary Iran.

In Sunni literature they usually refer to a similar concept as *madrasah*.¹² The same term is used in Shi'i literature as well, but in Shi'i literature the word *madrasah* usually denotes the college rather than the whole concept of the educational institution, which is referred to as the *hawzah*.¹³ Focusing on the *hawzah* education provides a thorough understanding of the anthropological aspect of the clerical class in Shi'ism alongside with focusing on the highest religious authority, whose function is to lead the Shi'i community (Burūjirdī in the case of this research) as well as the *hawzah* education.

The nature of the *hawzah* and its members

Hawzah education is significantly different from forms of religious education familiar to the Western tradition such as the Jewish *yeshiva* (where people sometimes spend their entire life studying and interpreting traditional writings on Jewish law and theology) or the Catholic medieval *studium*,

¹² For more information on the Shi'i *madrasah* see Michael Fischer, *Iran from religious dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2003) 61-103.

¹³ For more information see 'Hawza al-'Ilmiyya' in Reeva S Simon, Philip Mattar, and Richard W. Bulliet, *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1996), 788.

institutions which some Western writers have categorised under the general title of “scriptural school”.¹⁴ Contrary to the general belief of people outside the *hawzah* (including people who are followers of Shi‘ism and even some *hawzah* students themselves), it is primarily an intellectual rather than spiritual centre.¹⁵ It is true that in most cases, every *hawzah* is associated with a religious site, such as a shrine or a religious endowment, but this is not pertinent to the system of education. People who are graduates of the *hawzah* are usually expected to attend religious meetings or give sermons, as a result of which people tend to think that students of the *hawzah* receive special religious training.¹⁶ People who are outside a religious institution have a different understanding of the nature of the institution from people who are inside it. This may be because the seminary is not yet a well-defined institution, as it is normally known for the people who teach there rather than the institution itself (in contrast with modern institutions which are normally more important and well-known than their individual professors). Every seminary derived its status from its principal (the head teacher), and its success is essentially an outcome of his efforts. While non-clerical education in Iran has largely been borrowed from modern Western practice, education in general has not been a Western import or a product of modernity. It remains the case in Iran that in humanities subjects, seminaries are more reputable than modern universities in subjects they share, such as Islamic studies.¹⁷ This may be because people who go to the seminary are generally considered to be more devoted to their studies and enjoy greater funding than those who study in secular universities. Therefore, while the majority think that *hawzah* students learn the art of preaching and focus on developing themselves as religious people, in reality the emphasis is on the academic aspect. In the beginners’ courses there are many

¹⁴Fischer, *Iran: from religious dispute*, 12. For an example of different competing educational institutions to the *hawzah* (current alternatives to the *hawzah* education) see chapter 11 of Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Q. Zaman, *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 242-270. For more information about Jewish *Yeshiva* and an example of that see William B. Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva: An Intimate Portrait of Orthodox Jewry* (Hoboken, N.J: Ktav, 2000).

¹⁵ In general it is important to differentiate between a mosque and madrasah. In some cases a madrasah and a mosque are associated together (i.e. are led by the same cleric). But a mosque is a religious place while a madrasah is a scholarly place. Evidence for this claim is the thousands of mosques in every corner of Iran, which are places for religious sermons including daily prayers, funeral sermons, etc. A graduate of a madrasah has to lead the mosque and this is the linkage point. For example, the Jumhūrī Mosque in Tehran is led by Ayatollah Akhtari. The mosque has no activity in terms of education, but is active in religious services. While the Marvī madrasah is more or less the most important centre for religious education and research in Tehran and no regular religious service takes place there. Having said that, people who are attached to that madrasah lead religious services in a lot of the mosques in Tehran.

¹⁶ For a comprehensive work on teaching methods in the Qum Seminary see Muḥammad ‘Alī Rizā’ī Iṣfahānī, *Shivah’hā-yi taḥṣīl va tadrīs dar ḥawzah’hā-yi ‘ilmīyah* (Qum: Daftar -i Tabliḡhāt-i Islāmī-i Ḥawzah-i ‘Ilmiyah-i Qum, 1997).

¹⁷ An example of that is Pazhūhishgāh-i Ḥawzah va Dānishgāh with branches in Qum and Tehran, which is a highly respected academic institution in Islamic Studies. See: <http://www.rihu.ac.ir>

students, but at more advanced levels most students leave the *hawzah* and go to other jobs or general preaching positions. Those who stay are the most talented and committed to their studies, though there is no guarantee that even they will stay until the end.

Although each Shi'i seminary has a distinctive character in terms of its curriculum, management and goals (unlike Iranian modern universities and schools which share considerable similarities in terms of character) all of them have some elements in common. In short, in each seminary, there are some important posts, which are classified as follows: founder (*mu'assis*, *bunyān'guzār*), supervisor (*sarparast*, *āqā*), donor (or sponsor, *vāqif*, *bānī*), principal (*mudīr*), custodian (*khādim*), professor (*ustād*), student (*ṭalabah*, pl. *ṭullāb*), and casual (informal) students (*ṭullāb-i ghayr-i rasmī*). Among these the supervisor, who is a prestigious ayatollah, is the most important position as it gives status to the seminary. Sometimes the founder is the same as the supervisor. Donor(s) and sponsor(s) have different roles. Sometimes a big donation has been made, and sometimes a foundation is sponsored by the supervisor by means of gifts and religious taxes from his followers as well as money from the *marja' al-taqlīds*. The Principal is normally a senior and experienced cleric who is responsible for registering students, corresponding with state officials and other executive duties within the seminary.

In every *hawzah*, as in every other educational establishment, there are several categories of students.¹⁸ There is no formal way of differentiating between them, except by looking at either their academic contribution (teaching or research) or social status. In some cases, special appointments by a supervisor or a donor would distinguish some from others. The most important category comprises students who are talented enough to excel academically and are potentially capable of becoming *mujtahids*. These people are usually the centre of the supervisor's attention. It is worth clarifying that the word (and the position) of *mujtahid* is understood differently inside and outside the *hawzah*. While outside the *hawzah* this connotes religious authority, inside the *hawzah* it also connotes scholarly authority and achievement indicating that the individual(s) who are in this position are the most

¹⁸ The evidence indicating different categories of students could be letters from Khomeini when he addresses different clerics with different titles such as *Shiqat al-Islām*, *Hujjat al-Islām*, *Āyat Allāh*.

learned and the most knowledgeable person(s) of the *hawzah*, who have done substantial teaching and research.

The *Hawzah* of Qum and Shi‘i authority

At present, the main Shi‘i religious school in the world is the Qum Seminary (the *Hawzah* of Qum), which has also been the central religious institution in contemporary Iran since the second half of the twentieth century. Qum has been an important Shi‘i town since the first centuries of Islam, when a few Shi‘i tribes such as Banī Asad and Banī Qays emigrated from Iraq to this region for political reasons.¹⁹ The shrine of Imam Riẓā’s sister, Ḥaẓrat-i Ma’sūmah, is also located there, and is one of the main Shi‘i pilgrimage sites in Iran. The city is known as the centre of Shi‘i education, as it has many religious institutes and numerous scholars in its theological colleges. However, until the twentieth century Qum was not known as a major centre of scholarship and teaching and its rise was closely connected with the leadership of Burūjirdī.

Marja‘ al-taqlīd

Although Shi‘ism is based on numerous theological, historical, philosophical and political foundations, the characteristic which stands out among all of these for Twelver Shi‘is is the question of authority known as *marja‘ al-taqlīd*. The faith gives the ultimate authority to the Hidden Imam, who will return one day. But since that date is unknown, the secondary class of authority is given to someone on behalf of the Hidden Imam.²⁰ Reference is made to tradition to argue that people must obey this authority.²¹ Here we encounter a fundamental difference between the ‘*ulama* in Shi‘ism and in other Muslim schools of thought. In Shi‘ism authority is imputed to a certain number of highly

¹⁹ Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu‘jam al-Buldān li-Shihāb al-Dīn Abī ‘Abd Allāh Yāqūt Ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥamawī al-Rūmī al-Baghdādī*: taḥqīq Farīd ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jundī (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1990), VI, 397.

²⁰ To know more about Shi‘i Imams see chapter VI of ‘Allamah S. M. H. Tabatabai and Seyyed H. Nasr, *Shi‘ite Islam* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975), 172-215.

²¹ For a comprehensive historical work in this area see Arjomand, Said A., *Authority and Political Culture in Shi‘ism* (Albany: State Univ. of New York 1988).

learned clerics who are known as *marja*'s of *taqlīd*.²² For various reasons, Qum has been the home to significant number of *ulama*, *mujtahids* and *marja*' *al-taqlīds* in the last few decades.

The phrase *marja*' *al-taqlīd* (or *marja*'-i *taqlīd*) literally means 'the source of emulation' and shows the high degree of influence which the *marja*' exerts on his followers. These *marja*'s are a handful of individuals who are the most knowledgeable of all the 'ulama. Each has his own circle of teaching and his own students. Achieving this position is not entirely dependent upon personal effort. It is a complicated process subject to various factors and the presence or absence of competitors for the position. Interestingly, the candidate himself is normally reluctant to be appointed as a *marja*', most famously in the case of Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī (1815-1895) who was weeping when he accepted the position in 1862.²³ Others must insist that Islam needs that person for this position and he has the obligation to accept this responsibility. Generally, a few people simultaneously hold the position of the *marja*'*īyat*. In the short history of *marja*'*īyat*, it has always been the case that numerous individuals have been qualified for the position at the same time. This happens for two main reasons: firstly, every great *marja*' will normally have a number of top clerics among his students who are qualified for the position and there is no procedure (such as a formal examination or assessment process) to indicate which one is the most knowledgeable when the time comes for succession.²⁴ Secondly, in *fiqh* there is something known as *irjā*'-i *iḥtiyāt* (referral of caution) which means that when a *marja*' himself cannot issue any concrete and obligatory fatwa, he issues another

²² For a short account of *marja*' see A. K. S. Lambton, 'A Reconsideration of the Position of the Marja' Taqlid and the Religious Institution', *Studia Islamica*, 20 (1964), 115-135. Gleave's work about Iraqi Shi'ahs also helps to develop our understanding of the authority: Robert Gleave, 'Conceptions of Authority in Iraqi Shi'ism', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24.2 (2007), 59-78. There is a short but good discussion about *marja*' and his authority in Shi'ism in Linda S. Walbridge, 'Shi'ism and Authority' in Linda S. Walbridge (ed.), *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: the Institution of the Marja' Taqlid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3-13. For a comprehensive work in English see part three of Heinz Halm and Allison Brown, *Shi'a Islam: from Religion to Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997). For a comprehensive work in Persian see Ṭāliqānī, Hidāyat Allāh, *Marja' īyat* (Qum: Dār al-Ḥikmah, 1395).

²³ Pazhūhishkadah-i Bāqir al-'Ulūm, *Gulshan-i Abrār: khulāṣah ī az zindagī-i usvāh'hā-yi 'ilm va 'amal* (Qum: Ma'rūf, 1385), II, 388.

²⁴ It is not always the case that knowledge alone gives a cleric credibility in the eyes of the people. Rather, it is related to how other people react to a cleric. For instance, a very important factor in shaping a positive reaction is the cleric's family and family tradition. In fact, the followers of a *marja*' or a cleric, extend their respect to his family, if the son of that *marja*' is also a cleric, then people would expect him to fill the vacancy left by his father. An additional source of prestige for the family is when the cleric is a descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad. In the case of Burūjirdī, both his mother and his father were *sayyids*, from famous families, and this gave him special status. (Even today, his family is highly respected by people. Just a few years ago, someone falsely claimed that he was one of Burūjirdī's descendants and thereby acquired many followers in a very short period of time. Eventually, the government intervened and stopped his activities by imprisoning him). For more information see BBC report on the following website (last viewed on 30 December 2010.): http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/6032217.stm.

type of fatwa called *iḥtiyāt*.²⁵ Then, his followers will have an option to either follow that fatwa or else to refer to someone else's fatwa about this issue. By issuing the *iḥtiyāt* fatwa, the *marja'* acknowledges that his research has not reached any definitive conclusion on a particular topic, and thus he is unable to issue a concrete fatwa and effectively recognises the authority of other *marja'*s by encouraging his followers to refer to them. Therefore, ordinarily a few people are required to be recognised as *marja'*s in order to fill the gap. *Marja'*s normally belong to the same generation, as they must be the senior students of a famous *marja'* (normally the first circle of his students) and people generally gain recognition as *marja'* only when they are in their 60s or 70s. For this reason, they are all of advanced age and in most cases only hold the position for a relatively short period of time before their deaths.²⁶ As long as a member of the older generation is alive, the nominated people of the next generation do not accept the position.²⁷ Even if the younger generation were to claim their *marja'īyat* status, people would not follow them, as age confers status on a *marja'* and younger people are less likely to find followers.²⁸

Although the process of recognizing someone as a *marja'* is complicated, it follows certain general rules. Some people, including Burūjirdī himself, believe that it is God alone who appoints the *marja'* and no one can do anything in favour or against it, the idea being that humans merely acknowledge God's appointment. Although there is no formal application process or way of showing interest in taking the position, there is always subtle competition to become a *marja'*. The competitive

²⁵ Normally a *marja'* does not specify any particular *mujtahid* or another *marja'* for that purpose. Because if he does so, it means that he believes that after him a particular person is the most knowledgeable man in the area and could be nominated for the *marja'īyat* after himself. While *marja'*s are normally reluctant to do this it has happened in some cases, such as when Ayatollah Khomeini referred his *iḥtiyāts* to Muntazirī, which brought him tremendous credibility and created the assumption that Muntazirī would be Khomeini's successor.

²⁶ Jāmi'ah-i Mudarrisīn-i Ḥawzah-yi 'Ilmiyah-yi Qum, which is the most recognized clerical organization, issued a statement on 2 December 1994 (following Ayatollah Arākī's death), introducing its recognition of 7 new *marja'*s as follows: Muḥammad Fāzil Lankarānī (b. 1931), Muḥammad Taqī Bahjat (b. 1917), Sayyid 'Alī Khāminah'ī (b. 1939), Ḥusayn Vahīd Khurāsānī (b. 1924), Javād Tabrīzī (1926), Sayyid Mūsā Shubayrī Zanjānī (b. 1928), Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī (b. 1927). Apart from Khāminah'ī, who is believed to have been introduced for political rather than scholarly reasons, all of the others are on an age, born in or around the 1920s.

²⁷ See the Jāmi'ah-i Mudarrisīn-i Ḥawzah-yi 'Ilmiyah-yi Qum's statement on 10 December 1993 following Ayatollah Guypāygānī's death, where they emphasized that they were not introducing a new *marja'* because Ayatollah Arākī was still alive.

²⁸ The *marja'* must be the most learned person among all *mujtahids*. Usually people by default believe that someone who is older has spent more years reading, teaching and writing and is therefore more knowledgeable than a younger person. For more information on *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* see Muḥammad H. Gharavī, *al-Ijtihād wa-al-taqlīd* (Najaf: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1957) and also see 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uqaylī, *al-Ijtihād wa-al-taqlī, abḥāth: silsilat dirāsāt fī al-fiqh al-Imāmī* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Maḥajjat al-Bayḍā', 2006).

element is best seen when one speaks to young clerics who are eager for their professor to become the next *marja'*. These young clerics are convinced that the professor who teaches them, typically the supervisor of their college, is worthy of attaining this lofty rank, which in turn confers credit upon students as well. However, when somebody attains the rank of *marja'īyat*, his life changes dramatically. Instead of needing funds, the holder of the position has money to distribute to others through his receipt of the religious taxes of his followers. Although he is not held financially accountable to anyone, he needs to be prudent and spend the money reasonably in order to be successful. Sound financial management also brings positive publicity, which is an important tool for a new *marja'* to consolidate his authority.

Burūjirdī

Ayatollah Burūjirdī (1875-1961) was the head of the Qum Seminary for approximately two decades (1944-1961) and played a major role in the institutional, intellectual and socio-political development of the seminary. Apart from his usual role as the Shi'i leader of his time, there are a lot of other characteristics in Burūjirdī which make him an interesting subject for academic scrutiny.

Before Burūjirdī, the main Shi'i school was in Najaf in Iraq. Burūjirdī established an intellectual and educational environment significantly different from Najaf, and the result was that a new generation of Shi'i clerics appeared who played the guiding role in the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the Islamic Republic of Iran. It seems that Burūjirdī's policies and leadership of the Qum Seminary exerted a very important influence on every aspect of the Iranian religious institution: intellectual, social and political. Before Burūjirdī, the Qum Seminary was a very small Islamic theological college as compared with the Najaf Seminary, and its financial resources were limited. Burūjirdī expanded the school and attracted substantial funds for the administration of the seminary. By 1947 he was virtually the pre-eminent *marja' al-taqlīd* of the Twelver Shi'ah (the highest position for Shi'i clerics) and his followers from all over the world were sending him money (the payment of religious taxes to one's *marja'* being an obligation for all Twelver Shi'is). During this period, clerics established a religious journal for the first time. Many branches of the Qum seminary were established

in cities throughout Iran, centres which served in a more advanced role after Burūjirdī's death (such as their essential role as part of an organizational network in the Islamic Revolution of 1979).

It was a considerable achievement to transfer the *marja*'s physical location for the first time from Najaf to Qum. In addition, Burūjirdī reformed the intellectual tradition in Qum and adjusted the old pattern of the clerical educational curriculum. Philosophy was taught in Qum and some clerics were sent to modern secular universities to study western thought and ideas, though this was not directly supported by Burūjirdī himself. However, this changed the paradigm of education and research in Shi'i seminaries.

Burūjirdī had some success in persuading other Muslims to recognize Shi'ism as a formal sect of Islam and his negotiations with the Shaykh of the al-Azhar seminary in Egypt and his efforts for Islamic unity were both inventive and pioneering. He also established the first branch of the Qum Seminary in Europe.

Nowadays, the offices of the *marja*'s are normally attached to a *hawzah* and play the role of a public relations office as well as a management centre for financial matters. In a typical *marja*'s office, there is a reception room in which people are sitting (among them normally a few clerics). There are many people coming and going. A courteous old man offers the visitors tea. People wait to enter the other room which is the *marja*'s room. There are a few other clerics who are sitting behind the desks and answering telephones. The lines are so busy that some of them answer two telephones simultaneously. After a few minutes, the *marja*' comes and people will have only a few seconds to kiss the *marja*'s hand and pay their respects to him as the highest religious authority. Some people carry a huge amount of money for paying to the *marja*' as their religious taxes (mainly *khums* and *zakāt*).²⁹ The office is tiny, but very busy and there is never enough time for all business to be completed.³⁰ But here we see the difference of Burūjirdī's system. He had much a simpler office. Indeed the office was just an external room in his house. In other words, there was not any independent building called an office. It was just the *bīrūnī* (an external room for visitors) of his

²⁹ For more information about *khums* and *zakāt* see Sachedina, Abdulaziz, 'Al-khums: the Fifth in the Imāmī Shī'ī Legal System', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 39.4 (1980): 275-289; and Calder, Norman. 'Zakāt in Imāmī Shī'ī Jurisprudence, from the Tenth to the Sixteenth Century A.D.', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 44.3 (1981): 468-480.

³⁰ This is my own observation in my visits to Qum during 1997-1998.

house. There were only a few people working as regular staff there and people occasionally had the opportunity to kiss Burūjirdī's hands.³¹ In a nutshell, Burūjirdī himself was the institution. Although he was much more popular than a lot of the current *marja*'s, his institution was materially much smaller as it essentially consisted of his own personality and thoughts. However, the management was something related to his character rather than the established structure of the seminary. Thus it is important to focus on Burūjirdī in order to be able to understand his management pattern. In other words, having no constitution for management of the Qum Seminary, one may be able to understand that through serious critical study of the individual who held the full authority there, whose words and deeds were seen as an unwritten constitution for the management of the *hawzah*, as well as for religious leadership.

Apart from his own personal achievements in *marja*'*tyat*, Burūjirdī helped Qum's development as well. During this time, the Qum seminary developed to a great degree. The number of clerics increased dramatically, as did the seminary's financial income, eventually reaching the point where Qum could afford to establish Shi'i centres in Europe and North America. This was in addition to offering financial support to the Najaf Seminary and other Iraqi seminaries. The money was a significant (the main) part of the income of the Najaf Seminary, covering the salaries of students and professors. In short, the necessary cultural and institutional groundwork for creating a religio-educational renaissance was laid.³²

Before Burūjirdī, the Shi'i *marja*'s were mainly based at Najaf in Iraq. In fact the Najaf Seminary had boasted the best theological school of the Shi'i world for several centuries. Najaf is important for many reasons. First of all, the holy shrine of the first Shi'i Imam, 'Alī, is in Najaf. Imam 'Alī is the most important figure in Shi'ism after Muḥammad. Proximity to the shrine along with the spoken language in Najaf, which is Arabic, helped establish the school as a good place for learning Islamic theological knowledge.

³¹ This description is taken from my interview with Ḥujjat al-Islām va al-Muslimīn 'Abd al-Majīd Ma'ādī'khāh on 28 October 2010.

³² For more information about the history of Qum Seminary see Rasūl Ja'fariyān, *Barg'hāyī az tārikh-i ḥawzah-i 'ilmīyah-i Qum* (Tih-rān: Intishārāt-i Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2002); and 'Alī Shīrkhānī and 'Abbās Zāri', *Tahavvulāt-i ḥawzah-yi 'ilmīyah-yi qum: pas az pīrūzī-i inqilāb-i Islāmī* (Tih-rān: Intishārāt-i Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2005).

By contrast, the *madrasah* (a general Islamic term) or *hawzah* (a more specifically Shi'i expression) of Qum was not always as big as it is today. Before Burūjirdī's arrival at the Qum seminary, it had fewer than 800 theological students. Therefore, we may claim that during the period in which Burūjirdī was the head of the *hawzah*, there were several changes at different levels. First and foremost was the improvement in quality and the standardization of seminary education. Although it is hardly possible to claim that all of those changes are the result of Burūjirdī's own policies, one can truly make the claim that these changes happened during his period of administration. By the time of Burūjirdī's death in 1961, Qum was no longer a simple *madrasah*, but had been transformed into an academy of knowledge with a new intellectual paradigm for its courses, as well as a socio-political weight.

Burūjirdī and Iranian politics

Religious authorities in Iran have traditionally been highly respected among all social classes.³³ Having attracted so much attention, the Qum Seminary was important in Iranian political equations. As a social phenomenon, Burūjirdī was a considerable source of authority. It is worth remembering that political events in modern Iran (as such in anywhere else) have shown that having social support has been a means to political fortune. Not just the Shah but all of the other political forces could have not ignored such an important social power and they had to think of ways to interact with it.³⁴ Burūjirdī as the sole leader of the faith, as well as the heir of the religious tradition in Iran, could bestow great popularity or unpopularity on politicians, and this was the cause of the continuous competition to gain his support throughout his *marja'īyat*. That, in its turn, caused numerous difficulties for Burūjirdī, who was the centre of attention and obliged to respond to such approaches. Examples of which will be the topic of discussion in the remainder of this thesis, historical illustrations at every stage giving a concrete basis to the conclusions of my research.

³³ See Davaran's work, where she discusses about the fact that some aspects of Persian society and identity have been always the same since antiquity especially in the areas of religion and literature which have had some influence on practices in Islamic Iran. See Fereshteh Davaran, *Continuity in Iranian Identity: Resilience of a Cultural Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2010).

³⁴ The reaction of the religious authority in Qum is still playing a role in Iranian politics, as it was the main concern for the Assembly of Experts (Majlis-i Khubrigān), when they were to appoint Khāminah'ī as the supreme leader after Khomeini's death in 1989.

In addition, his debates with Khomeini and some other important Shi'i clerics including fundamentalist and radical Shi'i movements like Fida'iyyān-i Islām and Ayatollah Kashani, are interesting to consider for further research. It should be noted that Burūjirdī's period coincides with some important Iranian historical events like the national oil movement led by Muḥammad Musaddiq and the coup d'état of 1953. Although many people believe that he took a quietist approach to political issues, his actions showed that he had his own particular methods for intervening in political and social issues, and that his interventions were sometimes far from quietist. At the same time, his method had little in common with the radical activism of clerics such as Kashani or Khomeini. For a lot of people, political issues are paramount. Nevertheless, it seems that in his thinking, Burūjirdī never considered that political issues could take priority over his position as a *marja'*.³⁵ Failing to appreciate the fundamental difference between Khomeini's method and Burūjirdī's, one initially may not believe that political actions had priority in Burūjirdī's eyes, but when one considers the case very carefully it is apparent that he was not ready to risk or endanger his position over political issues (in absolute contrast to Khomeini and Sharī'atmadārī, both of whom risked their position to achieve their political ambitions). This concern formed Burūjirdī's structure of political thought and action. In any case, Burūjirdī made the Qum Seminary and its educational function so important that he had no choice but to walk away from political matters, as it was too risky for the religious establishment, let alone when there were concerns about continuity in religious practice as a result of authoritative governments or foreign threats against the religious establishment. However, it was essential for him to establish a relationship between the clerical establishment and the state which benefited both of them and helped the seminary to develop in a satisfactory way, and that seems something significantly different from quietism. It seems better seen as a cooperative method or symbiotic relationship between religion and the state.³⁶ While quietism connotes calm acceptance of things as they are without attempts to resist or change them, symbiosis refers to a mutually beneficial relationship between different people or groups, something which corresponds very well with Burūjirdī's actions.

³⁵ A very interesting difference between Burūjirdī and his successors like Khomeini and Sharī'atmadārī, who were rivals, the latter finally losing his position as a *marja'* through his political conflict with Khomeini. For more information see Heinz Halm, *The Shiites: a Short History* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007), 122-123; Misagh Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 293.

Therefore, politics had priority for Burūjirdī, though the pattern of his political action was not apocalyptic, something different from the general mainstream of relations between *marja*'s and the state in Modern Iran. In the general discourse of the political history of modern Iran, one may easily identify the role of clerics as a powerful resistance base to the state, rather than as a co-operative hand to the state which nevertheless demands its own interest at the same time.

This research will approach the historical question from the religious point of view. Instead of following political matters as a primary research question and looking at the religious institution as the secondary question, this research will put the religious question in the centre and the political matters as the secondary concern. In other words, instead of looking to Qum (as the religious capital) from Tehran (as the political capital), this research will look at Tehran from Qum. Throughout Burūjirdī's life, the state looked after him, both during his lifetime and after his death. The Pahlavi state had to work with him and he had to work with them. After the appearance of the Islamic Republic, the case of Burūjirdī was reopened (it is not a surprise in the case of historical topics which are related to recent history, which always has links to the contemporary political situation). In the course of defending the Islamic Republic, people would try to justify Khomeini's actions based on the argument that Burūjirdī would have ideologically supported such actions, but was unable to implement them himself as he felt weak in comparison to the Shah (an argument which looks like a political statement rather a scholarly conclusion). Certainly, as an established *marja* ', if he had really wanted, he would have been capable of competing with the government more efficiently than was Khomeini before he had properly established himself. On the other hand, he was not a quietist, as on a number of occasions he intervened in political issues. All of this suggests that he had his own method based on mutual cooperation with the state in the form of symbiotic relations. Nevertheless, people have argued that Burūjirdī was a quietist, perhaps so blinded by the social and political and international dimensions of Khomeini's radical action that they could not see the subtleties of Burūjirdī's political method. The following excerpts are demonstrative of the widespread academic assumptions about Burūjirdī's political quietism:

Shahrugh Akhavi in his work *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi Period* says:

The leading Shī'ī religious dignitary in this century, Āyatullāh Muhammad Husayn Burūjirdī (d. 1961) maintained a cool aloofness from political involvement (at least at the national level), an aloofness from which he deviated only at the end of his life over the question of land reform.³⁷

In his other work, Akhavi writes: "The main group of the Iranian clergy, led since 1946 by Ayatullah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Burujirdi (d. 1961) was more connected with strengthening Shi'i institutions than trafficking in politics."³⁸ Hamid Algar, in his work, *Iman Khomeini 1902-1962: the Pre-Revolutionary Years*, says: "Burujirdi proved more thoroughly apolitical than Ha'iri, and his achievements were restricted to an expansion of the religious institution in Qum and its material base."³⁹ Then he continues "Now, Burūjirdī as we have seen, was essentially quietist."⁴⁰ In his introduction to *Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist*, Algar says "... history regards him [Būrujirdī] as a religious leader of great piety and administrative ability, but almost totally inactive in political matters."⁴¹ Other scholars in the field also, more or less, wrote in the same way.⁴²

³⁷ Shahrugh Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi Period* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), 24.

³⁸ Shahrugh Akhavi, 'The role of the Clergy in Iranian Politics 1949—54' in James Bill and William Louis (eds.), *Musaddiq, Iranian Nationalism and Oil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 93.

³⁹ Algar, Hamid, 'Iman Khomeini, 1902-1962: the pre-revolutionary years' in Edmund Burke and Ira M. Lapidus, *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 278.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 279.

⁴¹ Algar, Hamid and Imam Khomeini, *Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist* (UK: Alhoda, 2005) xii.

⁴² Vanessa Martin in *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*, says: "He [Burujirdi] and Muhammad Reza Shah came in practice to an agreement that the clergy would stay out of politics, as long as the Shah did not interfere in religious matters... Throughout the 16 years that he was marja', Burujirdi maintained this position. He strictly forbade engagement in politics..." Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran* (I.B.Tauris, 2003), 53.

Mansoor Moaddel in his *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution* says "Ayatollah Burujirdi went as far as prohibiting the *ulama* from joining parties and trafficking in politics." Mansoor Moaddel, *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 11.

Moojan Momen in his entry for Burūjirdī in *Holy People of the World: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia* says: "Burujirdi was scrupulous in avoiding involvement in political affairs, except where the interest of the clerical class or Islam were directly involved. ... He kept a tight rein on those junior clerics, such as Khomeini, who wanted to stir up opposition to the Shah..." Moojan Momen, 'Burūjirdī, Ayatollah' in Jestic, Phyllis G., *Holy People of the World: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 150.

John Esposito in *Islam and Politics* says "The religious leadership had been divided over the question of direct involvement in politics. ... Muhammad Husayn Burujirdi (d. 1961) had been against political activism. In 1949 Ayatollah Burujirdi had held a conference of two thousand *ulama* in Qum and issued an injunction banning clergy from joining political parties or acting in politics." John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 128.

Glenn Perry in his article says: "The immediate post-1945 period clearly exemplified the quietist stance of the Iranian religious establishment that paralleled that of its Egyptian counterpart. This was the period when Ayatollah Burujirdi was the sole Marja'." Glenn E. Perry, 'The Islamic world: Egypt and Iran' in Moyser, George, *Politics and Religion in the Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1991), 119.

To understand Burūjirdī's intellectual world, one needs to consider various factors. To begin with, as the *marja'* is an extremely authoritative position, his intellectual development is really important in determining his subsequent actions. The best source of information about a *marja'*'s intellectual world is to look either at his teachings or his practical behaviour. Referring to the general belief of Muslims about the *ḥadīṣ* makes sense here. In their definition of *ḥadīṣ* as the key way of understanding the prophet's (and in Shi'ism, the Imams' as well) life, Muslims believe that any kind of saying, practice, or endorsement of someone else's practice is to be considered as a tradition.⁴³ In short, the best way to understand Burūjirdī's ideas is through understanding his own intellectual world by analysing his actions and the way he responded to different problems of his time. Therefore, the serious question in this research is what Burūjirdī's method was in his contribution to the world of religion, religious education and religious society, and answering this question requires identifying the practical methods used by Burūjirdī in the different aspects of his life. My answer is thus going to take the form of a biography of Burūjirdī based on historical sources.⁴⁴ Perhaps it is important to mention that this research is not going to emphasise some particular aspect of his life such as politics or the development of religious institutions in his time. This research will discuss those issues, but only as secondary issues in his life, as any of those questions would require a separate piece of research. In other words, this research is neither going to be an episode of history of Shi'ism nor an episode of the political history of the religious forces in Iran, it will rather be an historical account of the life of an individual who has been a serious actor in the world's Shi'i community in general and the Iranian Shi'i community in particular. Writing biographies is a very old practice in Islamic history and therefore a good way of approaching social and political problems as well, as the first historical works written by Muslims were about the lives of notable people, known as either *sīrahs* or *ṭabaqāt*.⁴⁵

However, to understand in a more analytical way, I tried to use a combined method, consisting of

⁴³ For more information about Shi'i tradition in *ḥadīṣ* see Mudīr Shānah'chī, Kāẓim, *'Ilm al-ḥadīṣ*, (Qum: Jāmi'ah-i Mudarrisīn-i Ḥawzah-i 'Ilmiyah-i Qum, 1381).

⁴⁴ I found Alun Munslow's work useful in producing a good biography. See Alun Munslow, *Discourse and Culture: the Creation of America, 1870-1920* (London: Routledge, 1992). In his book Munslow discusses the relationship between ideology and cultural formation. The book draws upon the ideas of Althusser, Gramsci and Hyden White and tries to focus on lives of six major American historical figures.

⁴⁵ For a Shi'i example of *sīrah* see *Kitāb al-siyar wa-al-maghāzī li-Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq al-Muṭṭalibī*, taḥqīq Suhayl Zakkār (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, 1978). The most famous of *ṭabaqāt* is Ibn Sa'd, Muḥammad, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā li-Muḥammad Ibn Sa'd Ibn Manī 'al-Hāshimī al-Baṣrī al-ma'rūf bi-Ibn Sa'd*, taḥqīq Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1990).

concentrating on the individual (as an Islamic tradition of history writing in the form of *sīrah*) and having a critical view to sources and narrations (as a modern historical method). The advantage of the Islamic tradition is that the historian would concentrate on an individual in details, an approach which provides a huge amount of details. The advantage of modern historical method is to criticise narratives and challenge the authenticity of the sources in order to produce a historical research. Therefore, I think a combination of the two methods would make a more comprehensive and precise account, compared to following just one of the approaches.⁴⁶

To have a deeper understanding of Burūjirdī as a religious authority, it seems much better to take an internal approach (from the *hawzah* point of view) than an external approach.⁴⁷ While admitting that the past has gone, and every trace of its existence must be interpreted as a text, this research is an effort to reconstruct the past treating any single piece of evidence as the text.⁴⁸ Every text needs to be studied and understood within its historical context to make sense. Apart from that, there is usually more important information implied between the lines than what has been explicitly expressed by historical sources, including people's narrations and memoirs. This is in particular important for a research about the modern religious institution in Iran. Therefore, an approach based on hermeneutics is essential in order to undertake a serious scrutiny in historical sources related to this topic. My emphasis of the hermeneutics is very important here, especially in relation to oral history

⁴⁶ Forming an historical account of the life of someone who played a comprehensive role in developing the religious institution can constitute social and political history as well. In the case of Burūjirdī, as someone who was significant not just in the context of modern Iran, but in the whole history of Shi'ism, this research will certainly offer information about his social and political positions as well. But the form of presentation is an account of someone's life who has been engaged with politics or society, and thus different from using a primarily political approach in the research. There are a number of good books on historical method. As a very good introduction, I can refer to Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From reliable Sources: an Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca, N.Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 2001) which is translation from German.

Theorists of history and historiography, especially semi-postmodernist theorists such as Ludmilla Jurdanova have complained about modern history being polluted by political influence. See Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in Practice* (London: Arnold, 2000). While her argument is mainly about funding policies in the history departments of western universities, it is not thoroughly irrelevant to my argument here. I do not agree with the postmodernists in terms of denying History as a discipline. However, I think the kind of critique they offer against history has helped very much in forcing professional historians to respond to them and explain their methods. In particular See Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta, 1997), and Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History : Knowledge, Evidence, Language* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001) which provide a comprehensive discussion about historical method and the place of evidence in historiography.

⁴⁷ There is a biography of Khomeini by Baqir Moin; Baqir Moin, *Khomeini: life of the Ayatollah* (London, I.B.Taurus, 1999). My method for writing Burūjirdī's biography is rather different from his method though there are similarities as well. Mainly because he is a journalist and sees the question from external point of view, while I am a historian and see the question from internal point of view.

⁴⁸ In chapter five of his work, Callum Brown offers a very good discussion of text which in short says that everything in the course of historiography must be treated as a piece of text (including human beings) and therefore it is necessary for a historian to read between the lines. Callum G. Brown, *Postmodernism for Historians* (Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 2005) 93-116.

materials which are produced by the clerics. Most people who were my sources in oral history had been clerics. They studied and practised religion from their adolescence. Exposure to the religious texts and practice for a long time has affected their own way of expression. Therefore, whatever they express in their interviews must be treated with a hermeneutic approach. So, to achieve a proper understanding of the questions, this research presents an argument based on careful assessment of sources and evidence.

Research literature and method

This research is the first academic biography of Burūjirdī and uses many unpublished and hitherto unused (by scholars) documentary and memoir sources. However, there have been other non-academic works published about Burūjirdī. In 1962, after Burūjirdī's death, his son-in-law Ḥujjat al-Islām 'Alavī wrote a memorial for him, which was a general account about him and his funeral.⁴⁹ After that, in 1963, one of Burūjirdī's students, 'Alī Davānī, wrote a biography about him for his memorial service.⁵⁰ In 2000, another of his students, Muḥammad Vā'iz'zādah Khurāsānī, wrote another biography of him.⁵¹ There are a few works of oral history available which contain chapters about Burūjirdī's period. The most important ones have been produced by the *Majallah-i Hawzah*, Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī and the Iranian oral history project at Harvard University.⁵² Recently Professor Ali Rahnema of the American University of Paris has published a work in Persian, where he discusses Burūjirdī's political positions.⁵³ Apart from that, there are many published memoirs of people who were young students in the Qum seminary during Burūjirdī's period. Using primary sources is the decisive factor of any historical research in forming an accurate narrative. I will make substantial use of the primary sources in this research including the personal archive of

⁴⁹ 'Alavī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Muḥammad Ḥusayn, *Khāṭirāt-i zindagī-i Āyat Allāh al-'uzmā Āqā-yi Burūjirdī* (Tih-rān: Ittīlā'āt, 1962).

⁵⁰ Davānī, 'Alī, *Zindagānī-i za'im-i buzurg-i 'ālam-i Tashayyu'* 'Allāmah-yi 'ālīqadr ḥazrat-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī. The first edition of this publication has no date or other information, but the second edition was published in Tehran by Nashr-i Muṭahhar in 1993.

⁵¹ Vā'iz'zādah Khurāsānī, Muḥammad, *Zindagī-i Āyat Allāh al-'uzmā Burūjirdī: va maktab-i fiqhī, uṣūlī, ḥadīṣī va rijālī-i vay* (Tih-rān: Majma'-i Jahānī-i Taqrīb-i Mazāhib-i Islāmī, 2000).

⁵² Ahmadi, Muṭṭabā, *Chashm va charāgh-i marja'iyat: muṣāḥabah'hā-yi vīzhah-i majallah-yi hawzah, bā shāgirdān-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī* (Qum: Daftar-i Tablīghat-i Islāmī-i Hawzah-'i 'Ilmiyah-'i Qum, 2000); Karbāschī, Ghulām Rīzā, *Tārīkh-i shifāhī-i inqilāb-i Islāmī: tārikh-i hawzah-yi 'ilmīyah-yi Qum* (Tih-rān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2001); Ladjevardi, Habib, *Memoirs of Mehdi Hairi-Yazdi* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University, Center For Middle Eastern Studies, 2001).

⁵³ Rāhnamā, 'Alī, *Nirū'hā-yi mazhabī bar bistar-i ḥarakat-i nahzat-i millī* (Tih-rān: Gām-i Naw, 2005).

Burūjirdī's family. My main source in this research will be the archive of the Foundation for the History of the Islamic Revolution of Iran where I used to work and initially decided, seven years ago, to conduct research about Burūjirdī. Since 1985, the aforementioned foundation has collected more than 5,000,000 pages of historical documents. For my research, the archive contains about 2000 pages of the unpublished memoirs of Burūjirdī's students as well as 300 pages of weekly newspaper *Khvāndanīhā* which contains a selection of newspapers from the period. During the time that I had the good fortune to work with the foundation, I located documents which are relevant to my research and made copies of them. People who were interviewed, a lot of whom have passed away now, were those who worked with Burūjirdī and knew him well. As these documents have historical value, I will include facsimiles of some sample pages of those documents in my appendices. The memoirs are hand written so reading them took time and effort. However this did not pose an insurmountable problem because I was educated in the seminary as well as in a modern school in Iran, which helped me to decipher handwritten Persian. A basic point to bear in mind for any study related to the seminary or religion in Iran in general is the need to analyse the language in order to clarify obscurities in the sources. When clerics are interviewed, they do not like to speak plainly or directly for religious reasons.⁵⁴ They prefer to speak by implication and inference using the special linguistic skills which are gained from studying logic and more importantly *'ilm al-'uṣūl*, which both form part of the basic curricula of the *hawzah* education. The latter is a way to understand *fiqh* and to learn how to generate and regenerate ideas in *fiqh* by doing textual studies of the Qur'an and tradition (*sunnah*) and then making a legitimate inference. One important part of this knowledge is directly related to the use of language (*mabāḥiṣ al-alfāz* = philosophy of language). This area is the study of denotation of textual proof of literal sense of words and phrases (semantics).⁵⁵ As an example of the type of questions in the field one may consider the following questions: when in a verse of Quran God speaks of praying (*ṣalāt*) does it mean the kind of specific prayer that Muslims do or does it include any type

⁵⁴ It is worth noting that in the clerical culture, there is always a serious concern for publicising information or ideas which could potentially harm the holiness of people. There is always a subtle concept of *'avāmm* and *khavāṣṣ* which means that not everything which is suitable for *khavāṣṣ* (specialists, those who have expertise and wisdom, clerics in this regard) is suitable for *'avāmm* (the public) to know, as it may damage their beliefs or dissolve the sacred concept of the religious authorities for them.

⁵⁵ For more information see Muhammad Mujtahid Shabistari, 'Religion, Reason and the New Theology', in Lynda Clarke, *Shī'ite Heritage: Essays on Classical and Modern Traditions* (Binghamton, N.Y: Global Publications, 2001), 243-259.

of praying such as Christian or other people's worship? The word covers everything; therefore, there must be some implicit method to identify the actual meaning of the word. From this point, clerics are trained to use others' words including those from the Quran and tradition. Naturally, they apply those rules to their own words as well, in case in the future someone else for any reason decides to use or quote their words. The point is more sensitive still when we are aware of the Iranian social and political situation and the generally conservative attitude of clerics. As the nature of the topic is historical research, a combination of historical methods and historical analysis will shape the main body of the research to explain the problem and examine the hypothesis. While the use of surviving primary sources and available secondary sources is a routine process, as the topic is a topic of contemporary history, the use of oral history materials and interviews will be essential. Working through oral history materials requires a careful attention to the narrators, their character, their biased or neutral mind and their potential interests. To identify those, it will be necessary to speak about the narrators' character with some of their contemporary friends. Regarding the context of the subject and the current political situation in Iran, a comparative survey of the sources, especially oral history material, to discover accurate information and Burūjirdī's political attitude is essential. There will be a potential problem of accuracy in working with such materials. To overcome the problem, I will compare all the available sources on a particular point, giving greater weight to those that are closer to the point under consideration (e.g. eyewitnesses, close associates, friends, family members, others who were closely involved in the same event) and to those which I have found to be more reliable in general. For Burūjirdī's teaching and his original contribution to Shi'i scholarship, as this is a matter of history of (religious) science rather than pure religious history, I will use my knowledge of the subject, gained during my studies in the seminary, to analyse his writings. So, in a nutshell, my method for using the oral history materials will be to classify them, compare them against each other and against available written sources, conduct interviews with some people to clarify the obscurities and to draw a final conclusion.

Research Outline

Apart from the introduction, conclusion, bibliography and appendices, the main body of this thesis consists of three chapters, as follows:

Chapter I: The young cleric on the road to becoming an ayatollah

The chapter considers Burūjirdī's early life, taking into account his background and emphasizing the clerical scholarly position of his family. The chapter also details Burūjirdī's education in Burūjird, Isfahan and Najaf and finally his position in Burūjird, a small town in Iran, as the local religious authority for the people of Burūjird and the Lurs (the main ethnic group in the area).

Burūjirdī started his education in Burūjird at the age of seven by attending a traditional Iranian school called a *maktab* (literally: a place of writing) to learn the Quran, literature and logic. Then at the age of 18 he went to Isfahan and spent 10 years acquiring Islamic knowledge and teaching *fiqh* and *uṣūl* to a number of students there. His professors in Isfahan were Mīrzā Abū al-Ma'ālī Kalbāsī (1247-1315), Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Mudarris (1856-1914), Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Durcha'ī (1846-1923), Mullā Muḥammad Kāshānī (1833-1914) and Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'ī (1827-1910). Around 1902 he went to Najaf to attend classes which were taught by Mullā Muḥammad Kāzīm Khurāsānī (1839-1911), Shaykh al-Sharī'ah Iṣfahānī (1850-1920) and Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Yazdī (1831- 1919). After a short while he won the admiration of the people of Najaf and became a famous scholar there, at which point he came back to his hometown to undertake religious duties.

Chapter II: The rise of the ayatollah and the development of the seminary

This chapter discusses Burūjirdī's coming to Qum as the senior teacher and the process by which he was designated as a *marja'* (the highest authority in Shi'ism) and placed in charge of the Qum Seminary. Burūjirdī became the most significant authority for the global Shi'i community and the chapter will discuss the historical factors which allowed him to attain his pre-eminent status. Apart from that, the chapter will discuss the development of the Qum Seminary during the time of Burūjirdī's administration and explain how the small theological college in Qum became the world's

largest and most influential Shi‘i theological college. The chapter will also present a case study of Burūjirdī’s teaching as well as his writings and his original contributions to Shi‘i scholarship in the areas of *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, *ḥadīṣ* and *rijāl*. The chapter explains the particular methods which he pioneered in all of the above areas.

Chapter III: The grand ayatollah in politics and society

The chapter will consider Burūjirdī’s interaction with the political sphere and his role in the development and consolidation of the domestic and international Shi‘i community. During the different stages of Burūjirdī’s life, the political sphere in Iran underwent numerous changes. When he was young, Iran experienced the Constitutional Revolution (1905-11), in which clerics played a very active role. After that, clerics suffered significantly during the reign of Riza Shah Pahlavi (1925-1941) as a result of his anti-Islamic secular policies. When Burūjirdī came to Qum, the new government of Muhammad Riza Shah Pahlavi (1941-1979) was relatively weak and witnessed Dr. Muḥammad Musaddiq’s nationalization of the oil industry and the coup of 1953. The chapter mainly discusses Burūjirdī’s methods for coping with the changing political situation in Iran, emphasizing the period (1944-1961) during which he held the position of authority in Qum and demonstrating how he was able to manage the seminary so as to minimise the harm to clerics during times of political crisis.

As the highest authority in Shi‘ism, Burūjirdī was a major participant in philanthropy for the Shi‘i community, the development of the international Shi‘i network and inter-sect conflict mediation, all of which are considered very important for Shi‘ism and the Shi‘i community around the world. The chapter will discuss examples of his social works such as the construction of public buildings in Qum, Najaf, Karbalā, etc., the development of the religious network in Iran and outside, coping with the Baha’ism in Iran and dealing with the traditional conflicts between the Baha’i and Shi‘i communities, his dedication to developing the discourse of Islamic Proximity (*taqrīb*) and his successful negotiations with the Shaykh of al-Azhar of Egypt, Maḥmūd Shaltūt (1893-1963), which led to the latter’s fatwa recognising Shi‘ism as the fifth legitimate school of thought in Islam.

Word Choice and Transliteration scheme

The word Shi‘ism is used to describe the religion. The words Shia or Shi‘a are used to refer to both the religion as well as a member of the Shi‘i community. Shi‘i, Shiite or Shi’ite are used interchangeably as an adjective. However, for the sake of simplicity, in this piece of writing, whenever I refer to the religion, I have chosen Shi‘ism (e.g. Shi‘ism is a branch of Islam); whenever I mean a member of the faith or an adjective, I have chosen Shi‘i (e.g. Burūjirdī was a Shi‘i. He substantially contributed to development of the Shi‘i institution). I would like to mention that whenever I use the word Shi‘ism or any of its derivatives in this research, it is a reference to modern Twelver Shi‘ism as it is practised in Iran as opposed to other forms of Shi‘ism.

For all the transliterated Persian words and phrases in this thesis, I use the Library of Congress scheme. As some names are commonly transliterated in a different way from the Library of Congress, in the interest of simplicity, I use the most widely known transliteration form. For example, the word ‘Khumaynī’ is the Library of Congress transliteration equivalent for the common transliteration ‘Khomeini’. However, there are not too many such words: ayatollah, Azerbaijan, fatwa, Imam, Iran, Isfahan, Islam, Kashani, Khomeini, Muhammad Riza Shah, Musaddiq, Pahlavi, Qajar, Quran, Shi‘ah, Shah, Shi‘i, Riza Shah, Tehran, Tudeh, *‘ulama*.

Occasionally I have cause to use a purely Arabic word or phrase, such as a verse of Quran. For the sake of consistency, here too I have used the Library of Congress Persian transliteration scheme, which does not differ significantly from the Arabic. It is worth noting that most clerics in Iran recite the Arabic verses of Quran using the Persian pronunciation.

When the silent h in Persian is followed by ezafah, there are three possible ways of writing it in Persian writing style, any of which will come with a different transliteration in English. For example, Risālah-i tawzīh, Risālah-yi tawzīh, and Risālah-‘i tawzīh. My preferred variable is generally the first one, unless any other variation is specifically used by the author or publisher, in which case I used their version.

The main reason that I used Library of Congress transliteration is the fact that for some time libraries in the UK and elsewhere have used that system as their preferred system and in the future if

somebody decides to do any type of research about any of the figures who are mentioned in this thesis, they can easily search for them and their works and works related to them. In fact, many figures who are mentioned in this thesis are introduced to a western reader for the first time and I consider it a necessity to facilitate chasing up their work or works related to them.

I. The young cleric on the road to becoming an ayatollah: Burūjirdī's family and education

The importance of family and education in the making of an ayatollah

The chapter looks at Burūjirdī's roots in the Shi'i clerical establishment by studying his family background as well as his educational background.

The Quran clearly states that Muḥammad implored his fellow Muslims that the only reward he sought from them was kindness to his family, a family which was held up by the Quran as the exemplars of perfection and the absence of evil.⁵⁶ Shi'i Imams are privileged for being the immediate members of this family (*ahl al-bayt*). Shi'i clerics take pride in their identity as successors to the Imams and seek to maintain the tradition of Muhammad's family.⁵⁷ Hence, the '*ulama* who are descendants of Muḥammad enjoy a double benefit, being descendants of Muḥammad's family as well as having a position in maintaining the traditions of Muḥammad's family.⁵⁸ Therefore, Muslim people offer them respect and deference.

⁵⁶ See Quran, 42:23, and Quran, 33:33. It is not limited to Shi'i Muslims. Other Muslims also respect Muḥammad's family, especially those Muslims who are interested in Sufism. See Valerie J. Hoffman-Ladd, 'Devotion to the Prophet and His Family in Egyptian Sufism', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 24.4 (1992): 615-637; and Paulo G. Pinto, 'Pilgrimage, Commodities, and Religious Objectification: the Making of Transnational Shiism between Iran and Syria', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27:1 (2007), 109-125.

⁵⁷ For a short but informative account see an introduction written by Khomeini in the beginning of his will where he discusses the importance of Muḥammad's family, much more than any other matter in his will. Khumaynī, Rūḥ Allāh, *Ṣaḥīfah-i inqilāb: vaṣīyat-nāmah-yi siyāsī-ilāhī-i rahbar-i kabīr-i inqilāb-i Islāmī va bunyānguzār-i jumhūrī-i Islāmī-i Irān* (Vāshīngtun: Daftar-i Hifāẓat-i Manāfi'-i Jumhūrī-i Islāmī-i Irān, 1989). This is the origin of the idea of *vilāyat-i faqīh* (the government of the jurist) as a position which serves the Shi'i community in the absence of the hidden Imam. The Iranian constitution also emphasises that during the period of the absence of the hidden Imam, the '*ulama* are responsible for taking control of the political affairs (legitimate authority), see Olivier Roy, 'The Crisis of Religious Legitimacy in Iran', *The Middle East Journal*, 53.2 (1999): 201-216; and also see Andrew J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 37.

⁵⁸ Clerics who are descendants of Muḥammad wear a black turban while those who are not wear a white turban.

Importance of family background for a successful religious education

In the Shi'i religious system the family is very important for a child's future in the clerical profession. The importance of the family stems from three factors. Firstly, when a child is raised in a clerical family, he is immersed in the tradition, scholarship and profession of his father and other clerical family members from childhood, which often inspires him to become interested in this area. Secondly, both the family and family friends and acquaintances would consider the child as an heir to his father's position and would encourage him to follow his father by studying diligently and behaving in a manner which befits a man who will assume responsibility for the religious affairs of other people (including collection of religious taxes which would provide a financial source for developing his plans). Thirdly, the child's clerical family background brings him to the attention of the professors and other dignitaries in the seminary and religious establishment such that if they are asked to provide someone for a teaching position or another religious or clerical post, they would nominate him, which would provide him with the best opportunities for his social and professional development.⁵⁹

Professors have a significant role not just in teaching the student but in providing him with a stipend and social standing. From the scholarly point of view, a professor influences his students to study diligently and efficiently, imparting both knowledge as well as other professional advice (such as ways of behaving with people and delivering sermons etc.). Given the importance of trust in faith related matters, a young cleric can only succeed if he receives the backing of a professor who is trusted by the community of believers. Until the student gains his own followers, the professor would support him financially so the student can live modestly and focus on his studies and skills. Finally, the student will automatically inherit some of his professor's reputation, akin to having a qualification from a well-known western university. Outstanding students of a well-known professor may receive a written permission for *ijtihād* from him, a document which is reserved for a select group of

⁵⁹ For a work related to a different dimension of Shi'i religious families and the exercise of clerical authority see Elvire Corboz, 'Negotiating Loyalty Across the Shi'i World: The Transnational Authority of the Al-Hakim and Al-Khu'i Families', D.Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, Wadham College, 2010.

distinguished students and authorises them to act as religious leaders and implies their potential for succession to the *marja'iyat*, the highest level of religious leadership. Nevertheless, the most important element of teaching is the intellectual influence of a teacher on his students' mentality.

Burūjirdī's family

In the case of Burūjirdī, it is quite obvious that he had significant potential for becoming an eminent cleric, given that his ancestors were highly respected clerics during the Safavid period, and this clerical family persisted while numerous royal dynasties rose and fell, including the Safavids themselves.⁶⁰ This gave Burūjirdī a more prestigious status, as he was a descendant of Muḥammad, from one of the most well-known scholarly families.

Burūjirdī's family were known as one of the Shi'i families who were descendants of Muḥammad from both the paternal and maternal side, known as Ṭabāṭabā'ī Sayyids. Members of the family had substantially contributed to Shi'i scholarship and had produced a number of great scholars such 'Allāmah Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī (1594-1659), 'Allāmah Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (1627-1699), Mullā Ṣāliḥ Māzandarānī (d. 1671), Sayyid Mahdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm (1742- 1797), Sayyid Muḥammad Mujāhid (1766- 1826), Sayyid Muḥammad Kāẓim Yazdī (1831- 1919) and others.

According to Davānī, Burūjirdī is the thirtieth generation descendant of Imam Ḥasan, though the careful study of Burūjirdī's genealogy shows that he was in fact the thirty third generation descendant of Imam Ḥasan, son of Imam 'Alī:

(33) Ḥusayn, (32) 'Alī, (31) Aḥmad, (30) 'Alī Naqī, (29) Muḥammad Javād, (28) Murtaẓā, (27) Muḥammad al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, (26) 'Abd al-Karīm, (25) Murād, (24) Shāh Asad Allāh, (23) Jalāl al-Dīn Amīr, (22) Ḥasan, (21) Majd al-Dīn, (20) Qavām al-Dīn, (19) Ismā'īl, (18) 'Abbād, (17) Abū al-Makārim, (16) 'Abbād, (15) Abū al-Majd, (14) 'Abbād, (13) 'Alī, (12) Ḥamzah, (11) Ṭāhir, (10) 'Alī,

⁶⁰ For more information on Majlisī in Safavid Iran see chapter four of C. Turner, *Islam Without Allah?: The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000), 148-187; and Said A. Arjomand, 'The Office of Mulla-Bashi in Shi'ite Iran', *Studia Islamica*, 57 (1983): 135-146.

(9) Muḥammad, (8) Aḥmad, (7) Muḥammad, (6) Aḥmad, (5) Ibrāhīm al-Ṭabāṭabā, (4) Ismā‘īl al-Dībāj, (3) Ibrāhīm al-Ghamar, (2) Ḥasan Muṣanná, (1) Ḥasan, (0) ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib.⁶¹

On the last days of April 1875 Ḥujjat al-Islām Sayyid ‘Alī Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1836-1911), who had been living in Burūjird for many years, was blessed with a baby boy.⁶² He called the baby Ḥusayn, a prestigious name in Shi‘i religious families taken from the third Shi‘i Imam known as ‘the master of the martyrs’.⁶³ Sayyid ‘Alī was one of the local clerics of Burūjird.⁶⁴ He was a grandson of a great grandson of Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1679-1746), through his father Aḥmad (1796-1793) son of ‘Alī Naqī (1774-1833) son of Muḥammad Javād (1747-1826), son of Murtaẓá (d. 1789), all of whom were religious authorities and contributed to Shi‘i scholarship.⁶⁵

Burūjirdī’s mother was Sayyidah Āghā Bīgum, daughter of Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Alī Ṭabāṭabā’ī one of the merchants of Burūjird, who was a granddaughter of the great grandson of Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā’ī.⁶⁶ So, both Burūjirdī’s grandfathers were great great grandsons of Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā’ī, which means both of Burūjirdī’s parents were descended from the ‘Sādāt-i Ṭabāṭabā’ī’.⁶⁷

Through his mother, Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā’ī was a grandson of ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī (1594-1659).⁶⁸ Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā’ī married his cousin who was a granddaughter of Abū al-Ma‘ālī Kabīr, and great granddaughter of Mullā Šāliḥ Māzandarānī (d.

⁶¹ ‘Alavī Burūjirdī, Sayyid Javād, ‘Khāndān va nasab-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī’ in *Hawzah*, Farvardīn va Urdībihisht 1370, 43-44.

⁶² Burūjirdī’s exact birthday is not known, but as Davānī claims in his book, Burūjirdī himself said that “I went to a traditional school (*maktab*) at the age of seven and it was on 1299 of the lunar calendar.” Davānī, ‘Alī, *Zindagānī-i za‘īm-i buzurg*, 93-94.

⁶³ The master of the martyrs or *Sayyid al-shuhadā’* is the title of Imam Ḥusayn son of ‘Alī who was killed in the battle of Karbalā on Wednesday 10 October 680.

⁶⁴ Burūjird is a town in central Iran located in Luristān province. The distance from Burūjird to Tehran is 533 KM and the population was about 400,000 in 2006.

⁶⁵ Āqā Buzurg Ṭihirānī, *Ṭabaqāt a‘lām al-Shī‘ah* (Mashhad, Dār al-Murtaḍā lil-Nashr, 1983), II, 605.

⁶⁶ The word “āghā” comes from Turkish origin and when it is used as a title for ladies equals Persian words like “khātūn” and Arabic words like “sayyidah”.

⁶⁷ Ṭabāṭabā’ī is the name for a special kind of *sayyid* given to someone whose father as well as mother both are descendants of Muḥammad, giving them double credit compared to ordinary sayyids.

⁶⁸ Mullā Muḥammad Taqī Ibn Mas‘ūd ‘Alī Isfahānī, well-known as the first Majlisī or Majlisī the father, was one of the great Shi‘i scholars of the Safavid period who wrote substantial works on *fiqh*, *ḥadīṣ*, Qurān interpretation and *rijāl*. For more information see Ḥamīd Mīr‘khandān, *Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī bar sāhil-i ḥadīṣ* (Tihirān: Sāzmān-i Tabliḡhāt-i Islāmī, 1995); and Juan Cole, ‘Shi‘i Clerics in Iraq and Iran, 1722-1780: the Akhbari-Usuli Conflict Reconsidered’, *Iranian Studies*, 18.1 (1985): 3-34; and Muḥammad ‘Alī Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab fī tarājim al-ma‘rūfīn bi-al-kunyat aw al-laqaḥ* (Tihirān: Intishārāt-i Khayyām, 1995), IV, 198-201.

1671).⁶⁹ Burūjirdī himself, referred to the first Majlisī as his grandfather and to Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (1627-1699) as his uncle, on the basis of this marriage.⁷⁰

Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī who was born in Isfahan emigrated to Najaf. However, he had regular visits to his family in Isfahan. In one of his visits, during his way back from Isfahan to Najaf, he stayed in Burūjird, where he was welcomed by local people and was invited to stay there and offer religious services to the local community. The date of this visit is not known, but must have been some time around 1740, as he died shortly after that and was buried in Burūjird.⁷¹ Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī was a serious scholar and contributed substantially to Shi'ī scholarship in the areas of *fiqh*, theology and Quran commentary.⁷²

Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī's grandfather, Murād, had four sons, as follows:

1. 'Abd al-Karīm: he was the great ancestor of Ṭabāṭabā'ī Sayyids of Burūjird and was the father of Sayyid Muḥammad Burūjirdī. The most famous member of this family (before Burūjirdī) was Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī's grandson, Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm (1742- 1797).⁷³
2. Abū al-Ma'ālī Kabīr: he was the great ancestor of Ṭabāṭabā'ī Sayyids of Karbalā. One of the most famous scholars of this family was 'Allāmah Sayyid 'Alī Ṭabāṭabā'ī

⁶⁹ Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Ibn Mullā Aḥmad Sarvī (d. 1671) was a famous Shi'ī scholar of the Safavid period who wrote on *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, and *ḥadīṣ*. Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, III, 424. Māzandarānī's most considerable contribution is his commentary of *al-kāfī* which is very well-known to Shi'ī *mujtahids* and is a reference book to them. Muḥammad S. A Māzandarānī, Abū H. Sha'rānī, and 'Alī 'Ashūr, *Sharḥ-i Uṣūl al-kāfī lil-Māzandarānī: al-ma'rūf bi-kitāb al-kāfī fī al-uṣūl wa-al-rawḍah li-al-thiqat al-Islām Abī Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī : ma'a sharḥ al-kāfī al-jāmi'* (Bayrūt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2000). Māzandarānī himself was son-in-law of Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī. So, Burūjirdī's 5th generation grandmother was a great grand-daughter of Māzandarānī and great great grand-daughter of Majlisī. For more information on Māzandarānī see Juan Cole, 'Shi'ī Clerics in Iraq and Iran...'.
⁷⁰ The second Majlisī or Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī Ibn Mullā Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī is known as the one of the most famous Shi'ī scholars of the Safavid period. During the reign of Shāh Sulaymān and Shāh Sultān Ḥusayn he was the Shaykh al-Islām. He wrote more than 60 books, the most famous being *Bihār al-anwār fī akhbār al-a'immat al-aṭḥār*. He is known as the second Majlisī and Majlisī the son, as he is the son of Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī. Some of Majlisī's works are now available in English such as Muḥammad B. M. T. Majlisī, *Essence of Life: a Translation of Ain al-Hayat* (Qum: Ansariyan, 2005). For more information about Majlisī's life see Muḥammad Bāqir Khvānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt fī aḥwāl al-'ulamā' va al-sādāt: zindigānī-i mashāhīr va dānishmandān-i Islāmī az ṣadr-i Islām tā zamān-i mu'allif* (Tih-rān: Kitāb-furūshī-i Islāmīyah, 1977), I: 180-124.

⁷¹ 'Alavī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Muḥammad Ḥusayn, *Khāṭirāt-i zindagī-i Āyat Allāh*, 13.

⁷² A selection of his works has been published in Muḥammad Bāqir Sultānī, *Majma' al-fawā'id min muṣannafāt Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī* (Qum, 1985).

⁷³ Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī Ibn Murtazā Ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥasanī Ṭabāṭabā'ī Burūjirdī (1741-1797) known as Sayyid-i Baḥr al-'Ulūm (sea of knowledge) was one of the great Shi'ī scholars and was the student of Vaḥīd Bihbahānī (1706-1791) and Shaykh Yūsuf Baḥrānī (1695-1772), among others Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Shafī (1761-1844) was one of his students. He wrote many books such as his work on the History of Mecca and Masjid al-Haram. For an English work related to him see Robert Gleave, 'The Ijāza from Yūsuf Al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186/1772) to Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī Baḥr Al-'ulūm (d. 1212/1797-8)' in *Iran*, 32 (1994): 115-123.

(1747- 1815) author of *Riyāz al-masā'il* which is an important text book in the Shi'i seminary.⁷⁴ His son, Sayyid Muḥammad Mujāhid (1766- 1826) author of valuable works of *al-Mafātīḥ fī al-uṣūl* as well as *al-Manāhil fī fiqh-i āl al-rasūl* was also a distinguished figure.⁷⁵ Sayyid Muḥammad Mujāhid has a particular importance in Iranian history as he was very active in issuing fatwas and forcing the government to support *jihād* against Russian military aggression against Iran (1826-1828).⁷⁶

3. 'Alī Ḥakīm: he was the great ancestor of the Ṭabāṭabā'ī Ḥakīm family of Najaf. The most famous scholar of this family was Sayyid Muḥsin Ṭabāṭabā'ī Ḥakīm (1888-1970), who was the Shi'i *marja'* in Najaf.⁷⁷

4. Nūr al-Dīn: he was the great ancestor of the Ṭabāṭabā'ī Sayyids of Yazd. The most famous member of this family was Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Ṭabāṭabā'ī Yazdī (1831-1919) who wrote the seminal work '*Urvat al-vuṣqā*'. This book in particular is very important as anyone who is going to claim that he is a potential *marja'* would usually write a critical commentary (*hāshiyah*) on this book. Sayyid Kāzīm Yazdī is important in Iranian history, because of his opposition to the 1906 Constitutional Revolution and eventually issued a fatwa against the constitution. He is considered to be the most scholarly figure who opposed the constitutional system.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Vaḥīd Bihbahānī was Sayyid 'Alī Ṭabāṭabā'ī's maternal uncle. He also married Vahid Bihbahānī's daughter. Abū 'Alī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, *Muntahā al-maḡāl fī aḥwāl al-rijāl* (Bayrūt: al-Mu'assasat, 1998), 224 and Amīn, Muḥsin, *A'yān al-Shī'ah* (Dimashq, 1935), VIII, 314.

⁷⁵ Tunukābunī, Muḥammad S., *Qīṣaṣ al-'ulamā'* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Muḥajjat al-Bayḍā', 1992), 175. Sayyid Muḥammad Mujāhid married Sayyid Maḥdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm's daughter. See Davānī, 'Alī, *Vaḥīd Bihbahānī: sar-āmad-i muḥaqqiqin va dānishmandān-i Shī'ah dar sadah-i davazdahum-i hijrī* (Qom, 1958), 178.

⁷⁶ See 'Aḥvāl-i Āqā Sayyid Muḥammad' in Burūjirdī, Muḥammad Shafī', *al-Rawḍat al-bahīyah fī ijāzāt al-Shafī'iyyah* (Tih-rān, 1863); Sipīhr, Muḥammad T, and Muḥammad B. Bihbūdī, *Nāsikh al-tavārīkh: salāfīn-i Qājārīyah* (Tih-rān: Kitābfurūshī-i Islāmīyah, 1965), I, 357; Amīn, Muḥsin, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, IX, 443; Mīr Khvānd, M. K, and Rizā Qulī Khān Hidāyat, *Tārīkh-i rawḍāt al-ṣafā* (Tih-rān: Markazī-i Khayyām Pīrūz, 1959), IIIV, 642. Also See Algar, Hamid, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 73-103.

⁷⁷ For more information on Sayyid Muḥsin Ḥakīm's position see Batatu, Hanna, 'Iraq's Underground Shī'a Movements: Characteristics, Causes and Prospects', *The Middle East Journal*, 35.4 (1981): 578-594.

⁷⁸ Khurāsānī, Muḥammad K, and Muḥsin Kadīvar, *Sīyāsāt-nāmah-i Khurāsānī: qīṭa'āt-i sīyāsī dar āṣār-i Ākhūnd Mullā Muḥammad Kāzīm Khurāsānī ṣāhib-i Kifāyah (1255-1329 hijrī qamarī)* (Tih-rān: Kavīr, 2006), 303. For a comprehensive work on Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Yazdī's political thought see Sharī'atī, Rūḥ Allāh, *Andīshah-i siyāsī-i Āyat Allāh Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Yazdī* (Qum, Būstān-i Kitāb, 2010). For English works related to Sayyid Kāzīm Yazdī, see Hairī, Abdul-Hadi, 'Why Did the 'Ulamā Participate in the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909, in *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 17, Issue 1/4 (1976 - 1977), 127-154; Arjomand, Said A, F. Adamiyyat, and A. H. Hairī, 'Religion and Ideology in the Constitutional Revolution' *Iranian Studies*, 12.4 (1979), 283-291; Kelidar, Abbas, 'The Shii Imami Community and Politics in the Arab East, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 19.1 (1983), 3-16; and Arjomand, Said A, 'The Ulama's Traditionalist Opposition to Parliamentarianism: 1907-1909', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 17: 2 (1981): 174-190.

There were many other people in Burūjirdī's family who were famous for their works in the clerical establishment, traditional theological education and research and contribution to Shi'i scholarship.⁷⁹ Having been brought up in such a religious as well as scholarly family, it was widely expected by all that Burūjirdī must be educated to a high level and be a worthy successor to his scholarly forbears.

Burūjirdī's wives and offspring

In 1896, when Burūjirdī was studying in Isfahan, his father wrote him a letter and asked him to return to Burūjird, feeling that it was the appropriate moment for his son to get married.⁸⁰ He was initially reluctant to get married, but finally accepted it. The first marriage was not as fruitful as was expected. Although the wife gave birth to sons and three daughters, all of the boys and two of the girls died immediately after birth. The only surviving daughter was named Āghā Nāzanīn, who married her cousin Sayyid Bahā' al-Dīn Ṭabāṭabā'ī and herself died giving birth to her first child. Burūjirdī's wife suggested that he take another wife so he could have some descendants. He accepted the proposal and married the second wife who was the daughter of Hājj Muḥammad Ja'far Rawghanī Iṣfahānī, one of the respected merchants of Burūjird. The second wife brought him two sons and two daughters. He remarried for the third time to the daughter of Sayyid 'Abd al-Vāḥid Ṭabāṭabā'ī. The first wife died in 1947 in Qum and was buried in the shrine of Ḥaẓrat-i Ma'sūmah. The second wife died in 1985 in Burūjird and the third wife died in Qum.⁸¹

Burūjirdī's older son, Ḥujjat al-Islām Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥasan Ṭabāṭabā'ī Burūjirdī (1925-1977) was born in Burūjird. He was educated as a Shi'i cleric and helped Burūjirdī in fatwa related matters. He married in 1948, the result of which was five children, three of whom were boys called

⁷⁹ For a comprehensive work on Burūjirdī family and genealogy see a work which was done by himself: Burūjirdī, Ḥusayn, and 'Alī Davānī, *Khānadān-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī* (Tih-rān: Intishārāt-i Anṣāriyān, 1992)

⁸⁰ According to a tradition of Muḥammad, it is the duty of parents to find an appropriate spouse for their children to be able to form a successful family. In his tradition, Muḥammad says that parental duties include choosing children a good name, teaching them reading and writing and finding them an appropriate spouse to be able to get married. See Al-'Āmilī, Hurr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, *Tafṣīl-i wasā'il al-Shī'ah ilā taḥṣīl masā'il al-sharī'ah* (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā' al-Turāth, 2003), XXI, 134.

⁸¹ Davānī, 'Alī, *Mafākhir-i Islām*, XII, 538.

Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq, Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir and Sayyid Muḥammad Riḏā. He died in Qum and was buried in Ḥaẓrat-i Ma‘šūmah’s shrine.

Burūjirdī’s younger son, Ḥujjat al-Islām Sayyid Aḥmad Ṭabāṭabā’ī Burūjirdī (1937-1973), was born in Burūjird and died relatively young in Qum, four years earlier than his older brother. However, he left five children, four of whom are boys called Muḥammad Riḏā (Majīd), Mahdī, Ḥusayn and Riḏā. Sayyid Majīd, who is known as Muḥammad Riḏā and is currently a young professor in Qum, was born in 1965. He is formally in charge of management of Mu’assasah-’i Ayatollah Burūjirdī.

One of Burūjirdī’s daughters, Āghā Sakīnah, married Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn ‘Alavī Ṭabāṭabā’ī Burūjirdī (1922-1989), and gave birth to Sayyid Muḥammad Javād ‘Alavī Ṭabāṭabā’ī Burūjirdī in 1951. He is now called Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥammad Javād ‘Alavī Burūjirdī and has contributed substantially to Shi‘i scholarship. He is currently a respected senior professor in Qum and is formally known as Burūjirdī’s heir after his father.

Scholarly publicity and quality assurance tools in the Shi‘i religious institution

Education in Burūjird

Burūjirdī started his education in a *maktab* (traditional school in Iran) in Burūjird, where he later studied *Jāmi‘ al-muqaddamāt* with his father.⁸² After that, his father sent him to Madrasa Nūrbakhsh which was built by Burūjirdī’s maternal grandfather. Apart from Arabic declension and

⁸² This the first text book in Shi‘i seminaries which contains a few smaller textbooks and covers Arabic language and some other basics as well as practical manual for young clerics: Mudarris al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ‘Alī, *Jāmi‘ al-muqaddamāt* (Qum: Mu’assasah-’i Intishārāt-i Hijrat, 1988). For more information of the traditional curriculum in Persian madrasahs see Nasr, Seyyed H, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (London: KPI, 1987), 165-182.

syntax, he studied logic, rhetoric, *fiqh* and *uṣūl*. During this period he studied the *muqaddamāt*, which is the foundation for doing serious study in Shi'i scholarship. By the time that Burūjirdī finished his education in Burūjird, he was educated up to the level of the *Riyāz al-masā'il fī bayān-i aḥkām-i al-shar'-i bi-al-dalā'il* textbook.⁸³

Education in Isfahan

At that time, Isfahan had a good theological college as well as knowledgeable professors. So, in 1892, Burūjirdī went to Isfahan to continue his education at a higher level. In Isfahan he spent his time in Madrasah Ṣadr.⁸⁴ He studied seriously with well-known professors of Isfahan, including Mīrzā Abū al-Ma'ālī Kalbāsī (1832-1897), Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'ī (1827-1910), Muḥammad Taqī Iṣfahānī (1846-1913), Mullā Muḥammad Kāshānī (1833-1914), Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Mudarris (1856-1914) Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Durchā'ī (1846-1923) and others.

Muḥammad Mahdī Kalbasī (1832-1897), known as Mīrzā Abū al-Ma'ālī Kalbāsī, was the son of Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, son of Muḥammad Ḥasan Khurāsānī (sometimes he is called Karbāsī instead of Kalbāsī, as his grandfather immigrated from Khurāsān to the Karbās district of Hirāt and from there to Isfahan). He was one of the great Shi'i scholars who contributed substantially to *fiqh*, *uṣūl* and *rijāl*. Kalbāsī was taught by Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Dihkurdī, Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad Shahshahānī (d. 1861), Mir Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris Iṣfahānī (1793-1856) and others. He taught a lot of students who later became prominent Shi'i scholars such as Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Durchah'ī (1846-1923), Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥusayn Nā'inī (1850-1936), Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Dihkurdī (1856-1935), Shaykh Ḥasan 'Alī Nukhudakī (1863-1942), Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī (1867-1946) and others.⁸⁵ He

⁸³ For more information about Maktab education see Rassool, N., 'Theorizing Literacy, Politics and Social Process: Revisiting Maktab Literacy in Iran in Search of a Critical Paradigm', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 15: 4 (1995): 423-436. *Riyāz al-masā'il fī bayān-i aḥkām al-shar' bi-al-dalā'il*, is a book which discusses different areas of Islamic jurisprudence: Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 'Alī I.-M., *Riyāḍ al-masā'il fī bayān fl-aḥkām bi-al-dalā'il* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Hādī, 1992).

⁸⁴ For more information on Madrasah Ṣadr see Hunarfar, Luṭf Allāh, *Ganjīnah'-i āṣār-i tārikhī-i Iṣfahān: āṣār-i bāstānī va alvāh va ganjīnah'hā-yi tārikhī dar ustān-i Iṣfahān* (Iṣfahān: Ṣaqafī, 1971), 57.

⁸⁵ For more information on Kalbāsī see Kalbāsī, Ḥāyirī M., Kalbāsī M. A. Najafī, and 'Alī Karbāsī, *Khāndān-i Kalbāsī: sharḥ-i aḥvāl-i faqīh va marji'-i nāmī Āyat Allāh 'Allāmah Ḥājī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Karbāsī, mashhūr bih Kalbāsī, pidar va awlād va aḥfādash* (Iṣfahān: Kānūn-i Pizhūhish, 2002); Ṭihirānī, Āqā Buzurg, *Ṭabaqāt-i a'lām al-*

wrote more than 80 books, the most important of which was *al-Rasā'il al-rijālīyah*.⁸⁶ Burūjirdī himself describes Kalbāsī as a man of special spirituality whose teaching resembled Prophet Muḥammad's teaching.⁸⁷

Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'ī (1827-1910) used to teach philosophy, mysticism, *Nahj al-balāghah*, mathematics as well as *fiqh* and *uṣūl* at the Madrasah Ṣadr and Jārchī mosque.⁸⁸ His most famous professor was Muḥammad Riḏā Qumshah-'i (1825-1888) known as Ḥakīm-i Ṣabā, who contributed substantially to Mullā Ṣadrā philosophy.⁸⁹ Qashqā'ī had many students in Isfahan who later became prominent figures such as Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī and Shaykh Ḥasan 'Alī Iṣfahānī Nukhudakī. He was from the Qashqā'ī tribe and he never adopted the clerical dress code and maintained his Qashqā'ī customs.⁹⁰ Qashqā'ī is in particular important as he introduced the sharia compliant teaching of philosophy (a tradition of philosophy teaching which was acceptable to clerics) in the seminary.⁹¹

Muḥammad Taqī Iṣfahānī (1846-1913) known as Āqā Najafī son of Muḥammad Bāqir, the grandson of the famous *faqīh*, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Rāzī Najafī Iṣfahānī (1771-1833) who wrote a text book called *Hidāyat al-mustarshidīn fī sharḥ-i uṣūl-i ma'ālim-i*

Shī'ah; nuqabā' al-bashar fī al-qarn al-rābi' 'ashar', I, 79; Mudarris Tabrīzī, Muḥammad 'Alī, *Rayḥānah al-adab*, V, 175; Mahdavi, Muṣlih al-Dīn, *Taḥkirat al-qubūr, yā, dānishmandān va buzurgān-i Iṣfahān* (Iṣfahān: Kitāb-furūshī-i Ṣaḡaffī-i Iṣfahān, 1969), 156; Karbāsī Zādah-i Iṣfahānī, 'Alī, Mashāhīr-i mazār-i 'Allāmah Mīrḏā Abū al-Ma'ālī Kalbāsī (Iṣfahān, Kānūn-i Pazhūhish, 2005).

⁸⁶ Kalbāsī, Muḥammad Mahdī, *Al-rasā'il al-rijālīyah* (Qum: Dār al-Ḥadīth lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 2001)

⁸⁷ Muḥaqqiq, Ḥaydar 'Alī, 'Muṣāḥabah bā Āyat Allāh Shaykh Ḥaydar 'Alī Muḥaqqiq', *Ḥawzah*, Āzar va Day 1371, (Qum, 1991), 53.

⁸⁸ Hunarfar, Luṭf Allāh, *Iṣfahān* (Tih-rān: Ibn Sīnā, 1967), 320.

⁸⁹ For information on Muḥammad Riḏā Qumshah'ī and his role in transferring Mullā Ṣadrā philosophy see Bahrāmī Qasr-chamī, Khalīl, Ḥamid Nājī Iṣfahānī, and Muḥammad Riḏā Qumshah'ī *Zindagī'nāmah-i 'arīf-i ilāhī Āqā Muḥammad Riḏā Qumshah'ī (Ḥakīm Ṣaḥbā)*, 1241-1306 H.Q. (Iṣfahān: Kānūn-i Pizhūhish, 1999).

⁹⁰ For more information on Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'ī see Qaraqānī, Mahdī, *Zindagānī-i Ḥakīm Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'ī* (Iṣfahān: Umūr-i Farhangī-i Shahrdārī-i Iṣfahān, 1992) and Iḥtishāmī, Khusraw, *Az mīzrāb tā mīhrāb* (Tih-rān: Bahīnah, 1991); and Litvak, Meir, 'Continuity and Change in the Ulama Population of Najaf and Karbala, 1791-1904: a Socio-Demographic Study', *Iranian Studies*, 23: 4 (1990): 31-60.

⁹¹ Humā'ī, Jalāl al-Dīn, *Dū risālah dar falsafah-i Islāmī* (Tih-rān: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhī-i Falsafah-i Irān, 1978), 18. However, Humā'ī's account does not corroborate Burūjirdī's narrative when he says that he went to Qashqā'ī's classes hidden, fearing other clerics. See Ḥusaynī, Tih-rānī Muḥammad Ḥusayn, *Mīhr-i tābān: yād-nāmāh va muṣāḥabāt-i talmīz va 'allāmah 'ālim-i rabbānī, 'allāmah sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī Tabrīzī* (Mashhad: Intishārāt-i 'Allāmah-'i Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1997), 61. It seems that it is fair to say that Qashqā'ī taught philosophy alongside with *fiqh* and *uṣūl* and that gave more credibility to philosophy, as it was not taught separately. See Ṭarab Iṣfahānī, Abū al-Qāsim, and Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī, *Dīvān-i ṭarab* (Tih-rān: Kitāb-furūshī-i Furūghī, 1963), 70.

al-dīn.⁹² Āqā Najafī was born and educated in Isfahan before his going to Najaf to study with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī, Shaykh Mahdī Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’ (1811-1872), Sayyid ‘Alī Shushtarī (1807-1864) and others. He contributed substantially to Shi‘i scholarship and taught many students including Shaykh Asad Allāh Faḥr al-Bīdābādī (d. 1941) and Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī (1884-1943).⁹³ Āqā Najafī had a lot of influence in Isfahan and was able to challenge Isfahan’s authoritative governor Zill al-Sulṭān (1850-1917) son of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Qājār.⁹⁴

Ākhund Mullā Muḥammad Kāshānī (1833-1914) known as Ākhund-i Kāshī was one of the professors of the Isfahan Seminary teaching at the Madrasah Ṣadr. He taught *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, wisdom (*ḥikmat*) and philosophy as well as mathematics. His most famous professors were Āqā Muḥammad Rizā Qumsha’ī and Mīrzā Ḥasan Nūrī son of Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī (d. 1832).⁹⁵ He trained many students including Ayatollah Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī, Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Mūsavī Gulpāygānī (1878-1957), Āqā Sayyid Ḥasan Qūchānī Najafī (1878-1944), Ḥājj Mīrzā Bāqir Imāmī (d. 1944), Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Mu’ayyid al-Islām Kāshānī (1863-1930), director of *Ḥabl al-matīn* newspaper of Kolkata, Ḥājj Āqā Raḥīm Arbāb Iṣfahānī (1879-1976), and Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris (1870-1938).

⁹² Tīhrānī, Muḥammad Taqī ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Hidāyat al-mustarshidīn fī sharḥ uṣūl ma‘ālim al-dīn* (Qum: al-Mu’assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1999)

⁹³ See ‘Salik-i Mujahid’, in *Khulūq*, Bahman and Isfand 1386, No.3.

⁹⁴ For more information see Martin, Vanessa, ‘Aqa Najafi, Haj Aqa Nurullah, and the Emergence of Islamism in Isfahan 1889-1908’, *Iranian Studies*, 41: 2 (2008): 155-172; and Moaddel, Mansoor, ‘Shi’i Political Discourse and Class Mobilization in the Tobacco Movement of 1890-1892’, *Sociological Forum*, 7: 3 (1992).

⁹⁵ Some writers made a mistake and mixed up Mīrzā Ḥasan Nūrī with Mīrzā Ḥusayn Muḥaddiṣ-i Nūrī (1839-1902). However, Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nūrī has never taught Ākhund-i Kāshī. Ākhund-i Kāshī born in Kāshān and went to Isfahan where he stayed until his death. So, it is a mistake in Burūjirdī’s official website see <http://broujirdi.org/content/view/429/68/>, viewed on 26 June 2011. Mīrzā Ḥasan Nūrī’s father, Mullā ‘Alī was highly respected by Fath ‘Alī Shāh of Qajar who invited him to teach in Tehran after establishing of Madrasah Marvī by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khān Marvī in 1816. Mullā ‘Alī refused to accept the proposal on the ground that there were 2000 students in Isfahan, 400 of whom were qualified to attend his teaching and his going to Tehran would have a negative effect on Isfahan Seminary. He instead sent one of his students Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zanūzī to undertake the teaching in Tehran. See Muṭahharī, Murtaḏā, *Khadamāt-i mutaḥabbil-i Islām va Īrān* (Tīhrān, Intishārāt-i Ṣadrā, 1983), 559; Zanūzī, ‘Abd Allāh, and Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtīyānī, *Anvar-i jalīyah* (Tīhrān: Mu’assasah-i Muṭāla‘āt-i Islāmī Dānishgāh-i Makgīl, 1976), 2-3. Mudarris, Muḥammad ‘Alī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, V, 160.

Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Mudarris Iṣfahānī (1856-1914) was the son of Ayatollah Mīr Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris Iṣfahānī.⁹⁶ Apart from his education in Isfahan, he went to Najaf, where he was taught by Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī (1814-1894). He had local authority in Isfahan.

Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Durcha'ī (1846-1923) was educated in Isfahan by Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Chāhār Sūqī (d. 1895), Āqā Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Najafī (1821-1899), Ḥājj Shaykh Muḥammad Bāqir Najafī (d. 1884) and Mīrzā Abū al-Ma'ālī Kalbāsī before his going to Najaf to study with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī, Sayyid Ḥusayn Turk Kūh Kamarah'ī (d. 1874) and Ḥājj Mīrzā Ḥabīb Allāh Rashtī (1822-1894). He eventually left Najaf and came back to his home town Durchah which is a small village near Isfahan, where he taught until his death. He contributed substantially to Shi'i scholarship especially in the field of *ḥadīṣ*.⁹⁷ According to Ayatollah Muḥammad Vā'iz'zādah Khurāsānī, one of the few living students of Burūjirdī, at that time, Isfahan was considered the most important centre for the study of the Quran and tradition. Burūjirdī at that time had been highly influenced by Ayatollah Durcha'ī.⁹⁸ There is other evidence which suggests Burūjirdī had been influenced by Durcha'ī. For instance, Burūjirdī followed the pattern of Durcha'ī in his education by starting from Isfahan, going to Najaf and returning to his home town. Working on tradition and valuing the contributions in tradition, is also another example of Durcha'ī's influence on Burūjirdī.

Burūjirdī spent about a decade of his life in Isfahan. Having studied enough with the great professors of the Isfahan seminary, he was thinking of making a change in his life by going to a bigger and more prestigious institution. There were options for him such as

⁹⁶ For more information see Davānī, *Maḥākhir-i Islām*, XII, 162.

⁹⁷ For more information about Durcha'ī see Durcha'ī, Taqī, *Sitārah'ī az sharq: sharḥ-i ahvāl va vaqāyi'-i 'aṣr-i 'allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Durcha'ī*, (Tihān: Ittilā'āt, 2004).

⁹⁸ Vā'iz'zādah Khurāsānī, Muḥammad, lecture in 'The workshop for Burujirdi's methodology of *ḥadīṣ* and *rijāl*' held in Mashhad on 18 January 2010 by Daftar-i Tabliḡhāt-i Islāmī.

going to the Mashhad Seminary in Iran or going to the Iraqi seminaries of Najaf, Sāmarrā, and Karbalā, of which Najaf was the oldest and the most prestigious one. The Najaf Seminary was seen as the centre of Shi‘i scholarship and authority, not just because of the Imam ‘Alī shrine and the old seminary, but for the presence of great *mujtahids* and Shi‘i authorities as well.

Education in Najaf

According to Davānī, in 1901 Burūjirdī’s father called him back to Burūjird, intending to send him to Najaf, which at the time was the dominant seminary in the Shi‘i world. When Burūjirdī was 27 years old, he was already a *mujtahid*. He stated that before going to Najaf, he had his own principles in *ijtihād*, *uṣūl* and *fiqh* by which he meant that he no longer needed any education under the supervision of a professor. However, he was keen to know whether going to Najaf and meeting great professors would change his principles or not, but ultimately his experience in Najaf produced no change in his principles. Davānī’s account attributing Burūjirdī’s incentives for going to Najaf to a letter from his father does not seem to be a very precise account. Although this may have been the fact that Burūjirdī’s father desired that one day his son would go to Najaf, Burūjirdī at that point was a *mujtahid* and was able to make his own decision. Looking at historical events, it seems that Burūjirdī’s main incentive for going to Najaf was the fact that the great professor of the Isfahan seminary, Abū al-Ma‘ālī Kabīr, died in 1897 and Burūjirdī did not think that other professors had something more interesting to offer him. Hence, he decided to go to Najaf, hoping that he would enjoy the teaching of prominent *marja* ‘s such as Ākhund-i Khurāsānī.

Having made his big decision to move from Isfahan, he prepared to leave for Najaf. Burūjirdī’s younger brother, Sayyid Ismā‘īl, also accompanied him to Najaf. Burūjirdī attended the classes of Ākhund-i Khurāsānī for nine years. The situation of the new school was much different than in Isfahan, as the school had both more and better students and professors.⁹⁹ In Khurāsānī’s

⁹⁹ For more information about the Najaf Seminary see Muḥammad Gharawī, *al-Hawzah al-‘ilmīyah fī al-Najaf al-Ashraf: dirāsah tārikhiyah mutawāḍi‘ah tabḥathu ‘an bidāyat al-jāmi‘ah al-‘ilmīyah al-dīnīyah fī al-Najaf al-ashraf wa-al-*

classes there were nearly 1200 students and Burūjirdī was the youngest among them. Nevertheless, the young scholar raised critiques of his professor which were highly appreciated by Ākhund-i Khurāsānī and secured a special status for him in the eyes of his professor. Based on Burūjirdī's own testimony, relations between him and Ākhund-i Khurāsānī were very good and, they went on a few trips together. Apart from that, he was a member of the fatwa committee of Ākhund-i Khurāsānī, which showed his scholarly competence for issuing fatwas.¹⁰⁰

Ākhund Mullā Muḥammad Kāzīm Khurāsānī (1839-1911) was the youngest son of Mullā Ḥusayn Vā'iz-i Hirāfī. He was born in Mashhad, where he finished his early education. Later he went to Sabzavār to study philosophy with Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī (1797-1873) following which he went to Tehran to continue his philosophical education with Mīrzā Abū al-Ḥasan Jilvah (1823-1896).¹⁰¹ In 1862 he went to Najaf to continue his education in *fiqh* and *uṣūl* with Ayatollahs Shaykh Murtaẓā Anṣārī (1800-1864), Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī, Sayyid 'Alī Shūshtarī, Shaykh Rāzī Najafī and others. Khurāsānī contributed substantially to Shi'ī scholarship by his research as well as his teaching. Following Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī's death in 1894, he was known as the *marja' al-taqlīd* and the leader of the Shi'ī world. His most important writing which is still a principal textbook in Shi'ī seminaries is called *Kifāyat al-uṣūl*.¹⁰² He taught many students who later became prominent figures in the Shi'ī world including Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī (1867-1946), Ḥājj Āqā Ḥusayn Qumī (1866-1947), Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī Yazdī (1850-1937), Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Khvānsārī (1888-1952), Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris, Sayyid Ṣadr al-Dīn Ṣadr (1882-1953), Sayyid 'Abd Allāh Bihbahānī (1840-1910) and Sayyid Muḥsin Ṭabāṭabā'ī Ḥakīm among others. Khurāsānī's special position in Iranian

adwār allatī marrat bi-hā wa-manāhijihā al-dirāsīyah wa-madārisihā al-sakanīyah wa-kāffat shu'ūnihā al-ukhrā al-mālīyah wa-al-ijtimā'īyah wa-al-tarbawīyah (Bayrūt: Dār al-Aḍwā' lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 1994); and A. R. Norton, 'Al-Najaf: Its Resurgence as a Religious and University Center', *Middle East Policy*, 18.1 (2011): 132-145; and Christoph Marcinkowski, *Thinking Ahead: Shi'ite Islam in Iraq and Its Seminaries (hawzah 'ilmiyyah)*, Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, RSIS working paper, 2007, no. 125.

¹⁰⁰ Davānī, 'Alī, *Za'im-i buzurg*, 97-99.

¹⁰¹ For more information about Sabzavārī see Sajjad H. Rizvi, 'The Revival of Gnostic Philosophy (ḥikmat-i ilāhī) in Nineteenth Century Qājār Iran: A Study of Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī (d. 1873) and His Sharḥ al-Manẓūmah', M. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1996. For more information about Mīrzā Abū al-Ḥasan Jilvah see G. R. Gulī Zavvārah, *Mīrzā Abū al-Ḥasan Jilvah ḥakīm-i furūtan* (Tihārān: Sāzmān-i Tablīghāt-i Islāmī, Mu'āvanat-i Pizhūhishī, 1993).

¹⁰² Khurāsānī, Muḥammad Kāzīm, *Kifāyat al-Uṣūl* (Tihārān, 1923).

history is the result of his active role in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906 in support of the constitution.¹⁰³

Burūjirdī also attended the classes of other professors in Najaf such as Ayatollah Sayyid Kāzīm Ṭabāṭabā'ī Yazdī and Ayatollah Sharī'at-i Iṣfahānī who was known as Shaykh al-Sharī'ah. Mullā Faṭḥ Allāh Shīrāzī (1850-1920), known as Shaykh al-Sharī'ah Iṣfahānī, son of Muḥammad Javād Namāzī Shīrāzī, was born and studied in Isfahan, before going to Najaf in 1878.¹⁰⁴ His professors were Shaykh 'Abd al-Javād Khurāsānī (d. 1864), Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Iṣfahānī (1818-1883), Shaykh Ḥusayn 'Alī Tuysirkānī (d. 1869), Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Hiravī (1802-1881), Shaykh Muḥammad Raḥīm Burūjirdī (1809-1891), Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kāzīmāynī (1809-1890) and Mīrzā Ḥabīb Allāh Rashtī (1818-1894), among others. Shaykh al-Sharī'ah substantially contributed to Shi'ī scholarship by his teaching as well as his research in the fields of *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, *rijāl*, Quran interpretation, philosophy, theology and other fields. He wrote many books including *Qā'idat lā ẓarar va lā ẓirār* and *Kitāb ifāẓāt al-qadīr fī aḥkām al-'aṣīr*.¹⁰⁵ He taught many students who later became the most important people in the Shi'ī clerical world such as Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī, Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khū'ī (1899-1992), Sayyid Shahāb al-Dīn Mar'ashī Najafī (1897-1990), Sayyid Muḥsin Ṭabāṭabā'ī Ḥakīm, Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥujjat Kūh Kamarah'ī (1892-1953) and Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Khvānsārī. Shaykh al-Sharī'ah is in particular important in Iraqi history because of his active role in the Iraqi revolt of 1920.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ For more information on Ākhund-i Khurāsānī see Muḥammad K. Khurāsānī and Muḥsin Daryā'baygī, *Ḥayāt-i siyāsī, farhangī va ijtīmā'ī-i Ākhund-i Khurāsānī: majmū'ah-'i guftār* (Tihārān: Intishārāt-i Mu'assasah-i Taḥqīqāt va Tawṣī'ah-'i 'Ulūm-i Insānī, 2007); Khurāsānī and Kadīvar, *Sīyāsāt-nāmah-'i Khurāsānī*; Muḥammad Ḥasan Najafī Qūchānī and Ramaẓān A. Shākirī, *Bargī az tārikh-i mu'aṣīr: ḥayāt al-Islām fī aḥwāl-i āyat al-mulk al-'allām : pīrāmūn-i shakhṣīyat va naqsh-i Ākhund Mullā Muḥammad Kāzīm Khurāsānī dar pīshburd-i nahẓat-i mashrūṭīyat* (Tihārān: Nashr-i Haft, 1999); Gurūh-i Pizhūhish'hā-yi Tārikhī-i Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i Qalam, *Zindagī-nāmah, afkār va mubārizat-i Ākhund Muḥammad Kāzīm Khurāsānī* (Tihārān: Qalam, 2003); Muḥammad Muḥsin Āghā Buzurg Tihārānī, *Hadīyat al-rāzī ilā al-imām al-mujaddid al-Shīrāzī* (Tihārān: Mīqāt, 1403), 145.

¹⁰⁴ For more information on Shaykh al-Sharī'ah see Muḥammad Mahdī al-Kāzīmī, *Aḥsan al-wadī'ah fī tarājim mashāhīr mujtahidī al-Shī'ah: kitābun yabḥasthu 'an āthārihim wa-ma'āthirihim 'an marākiz al-'ilm li-al-Shī'ah, aw tatmīm rawḍāt al-jannāt* (Najaf: al-Maṭba'ah al-Haydarīyah, 1968), I, 171.

¹⁰⁵ For Shaykh al-Sharī'ah's research contribution see Faṭḥ Allāh Shaykh al-Sharī'ah Shīrāzī, *Qā'idat lā ẓarar wa-lā ẓirār* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Adwā', 1986); Faṭḥ Allāh Shaykh al-Sharī'ah Iṣfahānī Shīrāzī and Ḥusayn G. Ghulāmī, *al-Qawl al-ṣurāḥ fī al-Bukhārī wa-ṣaḥīḥihī al-jāmi': dirāsah fiqhīyah wa-uṣūlīyah fī al-ḥadīth wa-al-rijāl wa-'aqā'id ahl al-Sunnah ḥawla al-Bukhārī wa kitābihī al-ṣaḥīḥ* (Qom: Mu'assasat al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, 2001); Faṭḥ Allāh Shaykh al-Sharī'ah Iṣfahānī Shīrāzī, *Kitāb ifāḍat al-qadīr fī aḥkām al-'aṣīr* (Qum: Chāpkhānah-i Qum, 1951).

¹⁰⁶ See 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Hillī, Kāmil S. Jubūrī, and Shaykh al-Sharī'ah Iṣfahānī, *Shaykh al-Sharī'ah: qiyādatuhu fī al-sawrah al-'Irāqīyah al-kubrā wa-waṣā'iquhu al-siyāsīyah: ḥaqā'iq wa-waṣā'iq wa-muzakkirāt min tārikh al-'Irāq al-siyāsī lam tunshar min qabl* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Qāri', 2005).

Apart from studying with the great professors of Najaf, Burūjirdī was looking for more opportunities to contribute to scholarship in terms of teaching as well as research. Having had teaching experience in Isfahan, he was looking for teaching opportunities. However, teaching in Najaf was not as easy as teaching in Isfahan. There were other clerics in Najaf and students had more options. Nevertheless, he was in a strong position as his teaching was supported by his research competence as well as by his professors. These were initial steps for Burūjirdī to become an active contributor in Najaf, rather than a passive student who just participates in classes.

Teaching, research and permissions

When Burūjirdī was in Isfahan, he taught classes in *fiqh* and *uṣūl*. He had about 100 students there.¹⁰⁷ However, his serious contribution in teaching took place during the period in which he was in Najaf, when he continued his teaching with great success. In spite of his age, he was qualified to teach a textbook in *uṣūl* called *al-Fuṣūl al-Gharavīyah fī al-uṣūl al-fiqhīyah* by Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Iṣfahānī (1771-1845) in a very critical way.¹⁰⁸ In his book, Iṣfahānī, who had taught at Karbalā Seminary, after his education in Tehran, Isfahan and Najaf, raised critiques of an older textbook in *uṣūl* called *Qavānīn al-uṣūl* by Mīrzā Abū al-Qāsim Qumī (1738-1815), son of Mullā Muḥammad Ḥasan Jīlānī. *Qavānīn* has been taught as a standard textbook in Shi‘i seminaries for several years.¹⁰⁹ Qumī who himself studied with great professors such as Vaḥīd Bihbahānī (1706-1791) and Sayyid Maḥdī Baḥr al-‘Ulūm, among the others, had written many works in Shi‘i scholarship and had taught many students including Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Shafī (1761-1844) and Ḥājj Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī (1766-1845). Based on Burūjirdī’s own testimony, the main agenda for his class was to discuss the critiques raised in Iṣfahānī’s book against Qumī’s book.¹¹⁰ Burūjirdī believed that none of those critiques were valid and basically he tried to defend the original book. Burūjirdī was so

¹⁰⁷ Davānī, ‘Alī, *Za‘īm-i buzurg*, 96.

¹⁰⁸ Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Iṣfahānī, *al-Fuṣūl al-Gharawīyah fī al-uṣūl al-fiqhīyah* (Qum: Dār Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm al-Islāmīyah, 1983).

¹⁰⁹ Qumī, Abū al-Qāsim, *Qavānīn al-uṣūl* (Tīhrān: al-Maktabat al-‘Ilmīyah al-Islāmīyah, 1958).

¹¹⁰ For an introductory work on Shi‘i *uṣūl* in English see Hossein Modarressi, ‘Rationalism and Traditionalism in Shi‘i Jurisprudence: a Preliminary Survey’, *Studia Islamica*, 59 (1984): 141-158.

successful in this demanding task that around 200 people enthusiastically attended his class on a regular basis, among them Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Khvānsārī.¹¹¹

It was at this time that Burūjirdī showed his capability to challenge the ideas of his own professor by writing a *ḥāshiyah* (critical commentary) on Khurāsānī's most famous contribution called *Kifāyat al-uṣūl*. *Ḥāshiyah* is an expression for a book which is written by seminary scholars based on a previous book in the field. In other words, the purpose of writing such a book is to further develop the original book by raising criticism based on the more advanced research and the opinions of the new writer. So, generally when somebody writes a *ḥāshiyah*, it shows that he is in a high scholarly position and competing with the famous contributors in the field. Writing *ḥāshiyah*, in which the scholar challenges the main book and adds his ideas and commentary to that, is considered the first step in making an original contribution and claiming the capability of *ijtihād*. *Kifāyat al-uṣūl* is a highly complex textbook and is normally the base for the highest level of *uṣūl* classes in the seminary. Thus, writing a *ḥāshiyah* on that book showed Burūjirdī's talent as well as his eagerness to conduct research and contribute to Shi'i scholarship, which were highly appreciated by Ākhund-i Khurāsānī.

Burūjirdī's successful studying, teaching and research in Isfahan and Najaf led him to attain the highest level in the Shi'i scholarship and tradition for which he was honoured by a number of written permissions for *ijtihād* by the *marja*'s of the time. These documents are known as the highest qualification in Shi'i scholarship and confer upon the holder the right to issue fatwas.

Burūjirdī was granted the permission of *ijtihād* from his professors in Najaf, Ākhund-i Khurāsānī and Shaykh al-Sharī'ah Iṣfahānī as well as Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Dihkurdī in Isfahan. Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Dihkurdī (1856-1935) was educated in Madrasah Ṣadr of Isfahan as well as Sāmarrā and Najaf, where he studied with great professors such as Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Najafī, Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Fishārakī (1833-1896), Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī and Mīrzā Ḥabīb

¹¹¹ Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Khvānsārī (1850-1951) son of Sayyid Asad Allāh, was the student of Ākhund-i Khurāsānī, Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Ṭabāṭabā'i Yazdī, Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nā'inī and others. Khvānsārī was one of the prominent clerics and professors in Qum, before Burūjirdī's residence in Qum.

Allāh Rashtī. He wrote substantially in tradition and other areas of Shi‘i scholarship.¹¹² He is the one who gave permission for narrating tradition (authority of narrating oral tradition from Muḥammad and Shi‘i Imams as the sources of jurisprudence) to many prominent figures such as Ayatollah Rūḥ Allāh Khomeini (1902-1989) and Ayatollah Sayyid Shihāb al-Dīn Mar‘ashī Najafī.¹¹³ In fact, Dihkurdī issued his permission for Burūjirdī before his going to Najaf, showing that he was already a qualified *mujtahid* at that time. However, Dihkurdī did not have the position of Ākhund-i Khurāsānī and Shaykh al-Sharī‘ah, from whom Burūjirdī obtained permissions later, after his presence in Najaf. These permissions are very personal both for the professor who issues them as well as the person who receives them. As each permission contains important information about the scholarly competence of the holder as well as the chain of narrators of tradition to an infallible Shi‘i Imam, a translation of three permissions (from Arabic) for Burūjirdī issued by Ākhund-i Khurāsānī, Shaykh al-Sharī‘ah and Ayatollah Dihkurdī has been provided below.

Translation of Ākhund-i Khurāsānī’s permission¹¹⁴

In the name of God the compassionate the merciful!

Thanks to Allah who gave knowledge as a means for going to paradise. Knowledge is a way in which people can be closer to God and benefit from his kindness. Knowledge is a measurement of his greatness and his almightiness. Distinguished is the position of people who possess knowledge. And may peace and greetings be upon the best of human beings and God’s most respected prophet towards the people of the world, Muḥammad, who is respected by God and upon his pure and infallible family and his offspring. Then, knowledge cleansed human hearts of ignorance, blindness and misguidance. Knowledge is the light which guides people to enlightenment. Through knowledge human beings can advance and reach the best spiritual position and overcome dangers and

¹¹² For more information on Dihkurdī see Majīd Jalālī Dihkurdī, *Āftāb-i ‘ilm: zindagī-nāmah-i ‘ifaqih-i ‘arif Āyat Allāh al-‘uzmā Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Ḥusaynī Dihkurdī Isfahānī* (Qum: Daftar-i Tablīghāt-i Islāmī-i Ḥawzah-i ‘Ilmiyah-i Qum, 2000).

¹¹³ Muḥammad Bāqir Kitābī, *Rijāl-i Isfahān (dar ‘ilm va ‘irfān va adab va hunar): shāmil-i rijāl-i fiqh va uṣūl va ḥadīṣ va tafsīr, rijāl-i ḥikmat va falsafah va ‘irfān va taṣavvuf* (Isfahān: Gulhā, 1996), 200; ‘Alī Ibn Muḥammad Bāqir Janāb Isfahānī and Riḍvān Pūr ‘Aṣṣār, *Rijāl va mashāhīr-i Isfahān: al-Isfahān* (Isfahān: Sāzmān-i Farhangī-i Tafrīḥī-i Shahr-dārī-i Isfahān, 2006), 248-249.

¹¹⁴ In translations of these permissions from Arabic to English, I followed an interpretive approach emphasising context over literal translation for the sake of clarity for the English reader.

temptations. As almighty God says in the Quran only the most erudite people would fear God. And as the infallible Imam says the most erudite people are the heirs of prophets. And again as the infallible Imam says the ink of the most erudite people is more valuable than the blood of martyrs. And other unlimited praise for erudite people. For the same reason in every era there are people who follow this path. They are people who have the most serious motives, their eyes are perceptive, they have critical intellectual ability and their essence is pure. Acquiring knowledge makes those people alive and they spend their life in short and long scholarly discussions. They spend their time to find and announce the revival of God's signs. And their spirits follow in the best way. Therefore, God would thank their masterful efforts and their serious striving. And one of those most erudite people is the master of masters, the one who is fair in his research, the very precise scholar, who knows all streams in the jurisprudence of Islam, who understands the rules and regulations of religions, who promotes Islamic jurisprudence, whom Islam can trust, who has the main elements of all the most erudite people, the sum total of all Islamic jurists and *mujtahids*, to whom one can ascribe all of the noblest qualities al-Āghā Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Burūjirdī, may God extend his blessing and abundance upon him. Undoubtedly he has spent many years to understand Islam and followed the path to reach this destination. May the best blessing and thanks be for his serious efforts and his masterful endeavours which were fruitful and led him to a particular position in a godly manner by studying religious knowledge, by knowing and having the ability to understand all of the fundamental as well as peripheral problems. He is knowledgeable enough to argue openly in public and to give concrete opinions instead of hypotheses. His opinions are the best scholarly opinions in the field and his arguments are always supported by concrete proofs. His methods for forming arguments and his supporting evidence are like those of all the great scholars in this field who have made great contributions towards scholarship, those who were knowledgeable enough to pass the phase of emulation and reach the apex of absolute *ijtihād*. Therefore, he is entitled to have the position and the rights of an absolute *mujtahid* in all areas including issuing fatwas and judgement and other things. And it is obligatory for people to obey his opinions and any denial of his opinion or refusal to accept it is forbidden, as any refusal will be considered as an effort to undermine almighty God's order

which is in the form of his fatwa. Indeed here is the appropriate place for mentioning the tradition from our Imam Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Šādiq, peace be upon him, when he told ‘Umar Ibn Ḥanẓalah to look at the man among you who narrates our tradition and gives opinions on our permitted actions and forbidden actions and pronounces rulings on different matters. Accept him as your ruler and as I hereby appoint him as your ruler. Therefore when he issues an order and gives his opinion, if his opinions are not accepted it means that almighty God’s opinion has been undermined and ignored. And anyone who disobeys and denies that [i.e. his order and opinion] has already disobeyed and denied almighty God and this is considered as disbelief. He is permitted by me to narrate on my behalf all of the traditions which I have heard from my professors as the true traditions issued by our infallible authorities, may peace be upon all of them. And I recommend to him the same values that my previous professors recommended to me, to be conservative and stop when there is a case where the truth and untruth is not certain, and may he follow the righteous path in his heart. And may peace be upon him who follows the straight path.

Issued by the smallest person before God, Muḥammad Kāẓim al-Khurāsānī

Translation of Shaykh al-Sharī‘ah’s permission

In the name of God the compassionate the merciful!

Praise to God for all of his blessings and giving us plenty of gifts. The earth is full of thanksgiving to him. And peace and praise be upon his highest ambassador and his best prophet Muḥammad who guides people towards reclaiming the good way. He was the person who cleaned up the tyranny of doubt and ignorance by God’s light and enlightenment. May peace be upon the infallible members of his family, his deputies and his offspring and his designated successors. They are those who devoted their lives to proclaim the religion and promote it. Then, the truth seeking scholar and the precise knowledgeable man, the sea of knowledge and the visible light, master of famous religious scholars and the best of great clerics and jurists, a highly knowledgeable man who has eternal knowledge and the ink of the sea of knowledge, the light of the garden of felicity, the light of piety, a trustworthy fair man who is worthy of all of the great epithets, a respectable man Āghā

Ḥusayn al-Burūjirdī al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī (may his contributions endure) the great and noble son of Āghā 'Alī, grandson of my brother 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī. Anyone who leaves his motherland and emigrates from his home and is far away from those who are close to him, is a great man, especially if his destination is the highest possible destination which is near Imam 'Alī's shrine, which is the entrance to the city of knowledge of God's messenger. Having this opportunity provides a suitable pretext for asking for help from Imam 'Alī's blessings and having the support of great scholars who are here. Apart from all the good things that he had brought with himself, he has an intelligent mind and a critical approach in his understanding. He used his ability based on the school of thought in which education and studies are considered serious. He was enthusiastic to increase his level of knowledge and understanding. He spent his time in a way that he was awake most nights in order to study more. He never relied on the things that he heard, only accepting them after doing research about them. He never gives any opinion except one which is grounded in concrete research. In this situation, one is to be promoted from the stage of emulation to the stage of the apex of *ijtihād* and making inferences from God's orders. In this situation, the one who has this high position does not need to be described on the basis of his character, as he is already known through his books and scholarly works. Then based on the trust that people have in me and as the duty which has been bestowed on me by people who lived before us to protect the almighty religion, he has asked permission from me to narrate traditions which I have heard from my predecessors and found them true, including religious books and scholarly works especially the books of *Nahj al-balāghah* and *al-Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādīyah* and *al-Kutub al-arba'ah* which is written by the three Abū Ja'fars, sons of Muḥammads, who were the centre of knowledge in all times and cities. By the *Kutub al-arba'ah* I mean *al-Kāfī* and *al-Faḥr* and *al-Tahzīb* and *al-Istibṣār* and the three recent books of *Javāmi'* which are as famous and as clear as the sun in the middle of the day. By those three I mean *al-Vāfī* and *al-Vasā'il* and *Biḥār al-anvār*. I have permissions from different chains of narrators to narrate these sources and to research about their authenticity. I only mention the most straight forward chain of narrators which is through my professor who is one of the great scholars. Indeed this includes all the traditions which I have narrated from my most learned professor, the unique man in the area of the

knowledge, the consummate researcher in rational as well as narrated knowledge, the one who has written substantially on principal issues as well as marginal issues. He is Sayyid Maḥdī al-Qazvīnī. He is originally from the city of Ḥillah and he is associated with the city of Najaf as he lived there and was buried there. He narrated from his uncle, the most learned man, al-Sayyid Bāqir al-Qazvīnī who himself narrated from his uncle the master of all the erudite and *mujtahids*, may God bless him in this world and the other world, al-‘Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī Baḥr al-‘Ulūm who narrated from his great and erudite professors, a few of whom have been mentioned in his various famous permissions. Among them, is the unique and most respected man, al-‘Allāmah Āghā Muḥammad Bāqir al-Iṣfahānī known as al-Bihbahānī who narrated from his father who was knowledgeable, respected, the perfect master who narrated from a respectful group of great scholars such as al-‘Allāmah al-Shīrvānī and al-‘Allāmah Jamāl al-Dīn al-Khvānsārī and ‘Allāmah al-Majlisī and all of them narrated from the great erudite and respectful and knowledgeable narrator of tradition al-Mawla Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī who narrated from the one who caused amazement to the world by his knowledge our professor al-Bahā’ī, may God promote his position, who narrated from his father who was a respectful *faqīh* al-Shaykh Ḥusayn al-‘Āmilī who narrated from the summit of religious knowledge who is higher than any *faqīh* and *mujtahid*, our professor Zayn al-Dīn al-Shahīd al-Ṣānī through all of his permissions from chains of narrators, some of which are oral and some of them have been mentioned in the introduction of the book *Ma ‘ālim al-uṣūl*. Among those chains of narrators are the precise scholar and the prescient researcher, the narrator of the tradition al-Baḥrānī who has written the book *al-Ḥadā’iq al-nāẓirah* which is an invaluable book especially in mentioning its various chains of narrators and their permissions for narrating in the introduction of the book. And among them are those traditions that I have narrated from the precise scholar and the prescient researcher, the one who made rational arguments, the pious man who always worshipped God in all of his time, al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Kāẓimī who is originally from Najaf, lived there and was buried there. He was the one who has written the book *Hidāyat al-anām fī sharḥ-i sharā’i ‘al-Islām* in twenty-seven thick volumes who himself narrated from a group of scholars including the most learned, skilful man in his field, the one who was always aware of all conclusions in academic discussions, al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan

Şāhib al-Javāhir who narrated from two of his erudite professors who were full *mujtahids* firstly al-
 ‘Allāmah Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’ the owner of *Miftāḥ al-karāmah* narrated from al-Vaḥīd al-Mujarrad al-
 Bihbahānī and secondly, the leader and the most learned of people who always understands in the best
 way, the head who consolidated Shi‘i jurisprudence in the best possible way and who dominated the
 scholarship and his area in the best possible way by teaching, writing, researching and dictating the
 knowledge to everyone, the professor of all contemporary erudite scholars, al-Shaykh Murtaẓā al-
 Dizfūlī an-Anṣārī, who narrated from the precise scholar and the sea of knowledge and research the
 most learned scholar and the one who is promoted and privileged among others by having more
 knowledge, and the one who has the most advanced knowledge in its highest position, al-Ḥājj al-
 Mawlā Aḥmad al-Narāqī. He in turn narrated from a number of his great and respected professors
 such as his knowledgeable father and al-‘Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī and al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥā’irī the author
 of *al-Riyāḏ* and the *faqīh* of his time, Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’ and the well-informed scholar al-Sayyid
 Muḥammad Mahdī al-Shahristānī all of whom narrated from al-Vaḥīd al-Mujarrad al-Bihbahānī.
 Narāqī also narrated from the unique scholar and truth seeker al-Shaykh Ḥasan, the writer of *Anvār*
al-fiqāhah who narrated from the two of his most learned and respectful brothers, al-Shaykh Mūsā
 and al-Shaykh ‘Alī who narrated from their father Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’. And among my permissions are
 those traditions which I have narrated from the erudite scholar, the great narrator of tradition, the one
 who knows the best forms of knowledge, al-Āghā Muḥammad Bāqir al-Mūsavī al-Khvānsārī al-
 Iṣfahānī, the writer of *Rawḏāt al-jannāt* narrated from a group of scholars of whom the most famous
 and the greatest of them is Ḥujjat al-Islām va al-Muslimīn al-Ḥājj Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Gīlānī
 al-Iṣfahānī the writer of *Maṭāli‘ al-anvār va tuḥfat al-abrār* and other people who narrated from Şāhib
al-Riyāḏ and Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’ who narrated from Vaḥīd al-Mujarrad by hundreds of chains of
 narrators in connection to great books from people of our Shi‘i school as well as other schools in
 Quran interpretation, tradition, in *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, *rijāl*, theology, Arabic, linguistics, history and other
 fields of the knowledge. And I recommend the owner of this permission to spend the remainder of his
 noble life in research and writing and spreading of the almighty religion and to strive to rationally
 oppose the people who are going to mix the pure religion with other things and to stop the deceitful

and atheists from importing doubt into religion. And I recommend him to reinforce the beliefs of believers. And I cordially ask him to offer prayers for me during my life and to pray that I die as a free man. Fath Allāh al-Garavī al-Shīrāzī al-Iṣfahānī known as Shaykh al-Sharī‘ah al-Najafī may God forgive him for his serious sins. The first day of Rabī‘ al-Ṣānī 1327 of the holy migration.

Translation of Ayatollah Dihkurdī’s permission

In the name of God the compassionate the merciful!

Thanks to God who made the streams of knowledge in the heart of his friends by blessing them with the sources of wisdom and privileged them over other people of the world by giving them knowledge and understanding. And peace be upon the person who has been sent from God to all mankind with the light and blessing and peace be upon all the stars of the sky of guidance. And then, as the will and wish of the almighty God is that this eternal religion and this straight way and this noble way and this enlightened school of thought be protected from any change, distortion and fault, it is a duty for some people to be educated and study God’s orders in the form of religion by separating the permitted actions from the forbidden actions, through which means God promoted and privileged these people. For the same reason it is said that the scholars are the heirs of the prophets and the ink of their pen is more valuable than the bloods of the martyrs. And looking at them is like worshipping God and befriending them is a fortune. And this great fortune and this blessed position has been opened in all of the previous centuries in which a group of erudite people who were pious and chosen people, strove to learn and spent their life until they finished the way of salvation and the fortune was offered to them. They have always been followed by some other people and this is their virtue. So, may God give them the best reward. And among those who followed the scholarly path is the erudite person who applies his knowledge in his life, and the one who has made a perfect contribution. He is the one with the best character. He is the one whose writing is firmly supported by research and concrete rules. He thinks in depth about secondary problems in jurisprudence. He is now to be considered as someone who has moved beyond emulation and is now independent in his principles and people can

rely on him. And thanks to God he is now in the position of *ijtihād* and is able to make inference to resolve contested issues, and this is the greatest desire of everyone who follows this way and the end of the way for those who are finishing their studies. May God increase the number of erudite people like him and may God offer him his wishes. And he is our spiritual brother and our friend in the faith, our beloved friend and master Āghā Ḥusayn who is the pious and the righteous descendant of the great master and the noble evidence of the light as a descendant of Muḥammad, and the light of the garden of wisdom, the one who is valuable in the eyes of erudite people, our master and our friend Ḥājji Āghā ‘Alī who has been living in his city Burūjird. He, may his successes continue for ever, has tolerated difficulties and tribulations and being isolated from his home in order to finish his religious education and complete his scholarly training. He has kept himself occupied with studying and research in the most efficient possible way. He devoted his time to serious study. So, he attained the apex of *ijtihād* and achieved the position wherein he is authorised to issue fatwas which is the exclusive province of the religious authorities. I hereby give him the permanent permission to narrate all of the works which have been done by myself including the book of *Manābi’ al-ḥikmah* and *al-Vasīlah* and *al-Vajīzah* and the other works which may God make me successful to complete them and all the things which I have written in the Book of Practices. And I give him the permission to narrate all of the traditions which I found to be true from the books of the three original Muḥammads which are *al-Faqīh* and *al-Kāfi* and *al-Tahzīb* and *al-Istibṣār*. These works are the main works on which all of the scholarship in different cities and schools is based, along with the books of *al-Vāfi* and *al-Vasā’il* and *al-Biḥār* which are written by the three recent Muḥammads, and other important books in Shi‘i scholarship including traditions, special recitations, religious incantations, and prayers. All of these are referred to and documented by my own great professors and they have heard it from their professors in an ordered and trustworthy chain back to my ancestors who are our infallible Imams, those who are masters of all human beings. In this permission, for the sake of brevity, I only mention a few of them. So, among them is my permission from the master of pen and paper, the valuable pearl in the crown of erudite people and *mujtahids*, the head of truth seeking scholars our master Muḥammad Hāshim al-Iṣfahānī, may God give his noble soul a fresh blessing, who narrated

from the apex of knowledge and practice, the obvious manifestation of God Al-Shaykh Murtaẓá al-Anṣārī al-Dizfūlī who narrated from our well-informed professor, our master Aḥmad al-Narāqī, who narrated from his professor and his master Baḥr al-‘Ulūm al-Sayyid Maḥdī Ṭabāṭabā’ī al-Najafī, who narrated from the greatest of *mujtahids* al-Āqā Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bihbahānī, who narrated from his most learned father Muḥammad by all of its documented chains of narration. And among them are those traditions which he has narrated from ‘Allāmah al-Majlisī by all means narrated from the documented chains and his permission which has been explained in the book *Biḥār*. And among them are the traditions which I have narrated based on my permission from the most learned of the erudite scholars, the luminous sun of all *faqīhs* and *mujtahids*, owner of the highest position, the master of teaching and research, the trainer of great erudite people and the highest person of all distinguished knowledgeable people our master and our professor al-Mawlá Muḥammad Kāẓim al-Khurāsānī al-Najafī, who narrated from the most learned and most educated man, the sea full of waves and the owner of noble status and the owner of obvious skills and expertise al-Sayyid Maḥdī al-Qazvīnī who narrated from his uncle the master, the obvious evidence of truth, the most learned man al-Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Qazvīnī who narrated from his professor the great erudite man al-Shaykh Ja‘far the owner of *Kāshif al-ghīṭā’* who narrated from two of his professors who strove to promote religion, al-Āqā Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bihbahānī and the Baḥr al-‘Ulūm Sayyid Muḥammad Maḥdī al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī who narrated from the higher master Muḥammad Bāqir by all of the chains of narration connected to infallible Imams. And I recommend to him to make a serious effort as well as to consider the necessity of prudence, as it is the way of salvation. I also recommend to him to avoid issuing any fatwa without knowledge and research. And I recommend to him to follow the way of piety and to care for the worship of God. And I recommend to him to keep himself away from suspicious situations and to discipline himself in the best of disciplines and civility and to behave in the best way, and to fight against worldliness, resisting immoral desires, and ignoring the material life of this world. And I recommend to him to critically think about God’s signs. All of the righteous things are gathered here in these recommendations. I permanently wish him success. And I ask him to not forget me in his good praying especially in the occasion of granting of the things that I mentioned. This is a note from

the most sinful of people who hopes that God, the creator of worlds, will forgive him. Al-Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Dihkurdī al-Iṣfahānī al-Najafī. The night of Laylah al-Raghā'ib [the first Friday of Rajab] in the month of Rajab in the year 1320, one thousand and three hundred and twenty with thousands of salutations and praise. And thanks to God in the beginning and the end and in the inner and outer aspects of life.

These permissions are significant markers of Burūjirdī's status as it is not the case that all *mujtahids* receive such permissions, especially in written form. Thus, owners of such permissions are considered to be candidates for assuming important positions. Although clerics did not hold any formal political offices at the time, such permissions would confirm that the owner is qualified to issue a fatwa which was a means for clerics to influence not only private individual issues but also wider social and political issues. So, one could say that this is a form of delegating power and authority from a higher to a lower position. The text of the permission is unique to each recipient. So when a permission is written by a great professor, it gives a comprehensive account of the individual's situation using carefully chosen words.

Apart from permissions in *ijtihād*, Burūjirdī was granted permissions in narrating the tradition. This type of permission is also very important, since it is a documented connection to the chains of narrators of the tradition. In fact every tradition must be connected to an authentic chain of narrators originating in an infallible Imam. So, the chain is the essential structure which makes the source authentic and one can only be granted the permission through trust by one of the members of the chain. This is the way that any chain is transferred to the next generation. Apart from his narrating permissions from Ākhund-i Khurāsānī, Shaykh al-Sharī'ah Iṣfahānī and Ayatollah Dihkurdī, Burūjirdī was granted permissions in narrating tradition by other people including Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Iṣfahānī known as Āqā Najafī and 'Allāmah Shaykh Āqā Buzurg-i Tihrānī, among which the permission from Āqā Buzurg Tihrānī is considered very important due to Tihrānī's status in the eye of scholars and his immense contribution to the scholarship.

Muḥammad Muḥsin Tihrānī known as Shaykh Āqā Buzurg Tihrānī (1876-1969) was born in Pāmanār in Tehran. He is the son of Ḥājj ‘Alī Tihrānī, the author of *Tārīkh al-dukhānīyah* which is a book about the Tobacco movement in Iran.¹¹⁵ He was educated in Tehran before his going to Najaf to study with Ḥājj Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nūrī (1839-1902) known as ‘Allāmah Muḥaddiṣ-i Nūrī, Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Yazdī, Muḥammad Kāzīm Khurāsānī, Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Shīrāzī (1840-1920) and others.¹¹⁶ He has written substantially, including a reference book called *al-Zarī‘ah ilā taṣānīf al-Shī‘ah* which is a descriptive bibliography about scholarly works in Shi‘i scholarship, and *Ṭabaqāt-i a‘lām al-Shī‘ah* which is a book about individual Shi‘i clerics.¹¹⁷

The tradition of local management as a pathway to success in the religious establishment

Leaving Najaf and coming back to Burūjird

After spending nine years studying, teaching and researching in Najaf, in 1910 Burūjirdī left Najaf for Burūjird. He planned to go to Burūjird temporarily to visit family and friends. He remained there longer than expected and his great professor, Ākhund-i Khurāsānī, missed him. During this time, he wrote a letter to Burūjirdī's father and asked him to send his son back to Najaf. It is not surprising that Ākhund-i Khurāsānī deemed him a suitable candidate to be nominated for the position of the highest authority in Shi‘ism after himself, as he had seen how Burūjirdī spent his time in Najaf engaged with teaching and research, which in turn provided him with the necessary background, capabilities and qualifications for such a position.

However, six months after his arrival in Burūjird, a tragedy befell Burūjirdī and his family, as Sayyid ‘Alī, his father, passed away. Burūjirdī was the appointed executor of his father's will and as

¹¹⁵ Ḥasan Karbalā‘ī and Rasūl Ja‘fariyān, *Tārīkh-i dukhānīyah, yā, tārīkh-i vaqāyi‘-i taḥrīm-i tanbākū* (Qum: Daftar-i Nashr-i al-Hādī, 1998).

¹¹⁶ For more information on Āqā Buzurg-i Tihrānī see Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī Jalālī, *Zindagī va aṣār-i Shaykh Āqā Buzurg-i Tihrānī: 1293-1389 Q* (Tihrān: Kitābkhānah, Mūzah va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shawrā-yi Islāmī, 2003).

¹¹⁷ Muḥammad M. Āqā Buzurg Al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharī‘a ilā taṣānīf al-Shī‘ah* (Qum: Ismā‘īliyyān, 1986); Muḥammad M. Āqā Buzurg Al-Ṭihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i a‘lām al-Shī‘ah* (Mashhad, Dār al-Murtaẓā li al-Nashr, 1983).

he had an underage brother and sister, he had to stay in Burūjird and abandon his plans to return to Najaf. Alas, he was not to see his professor again either, as soon after in 1911 Ākhund-i Khurāsānī passed away. Burūjirdī experienced the bitterest occasion of his life by losing his two greatest supporters, saying that “the consecutive deaths of my two fathers caused me great grief.”¹¹⁸

Burūjirdī was to start a new life in Burūjird. He had fewer teaching and research responsibilities and more family and social responsibilities. It is quite usual for theology students to study for a few years in a well-established school and then come back to their home town and contribute to their local community by taking charge of religious affairs. In this period, Burūjirdī stayed in Burūjird for more than three decades, and in 1926 he went to Mecca on the pilgrimage.¹¹⁹ Apart from his usual job of acting as a local religious authority for the Lur tribe, he was teaching in Burūjird, where he eventually established a theological college. He also spent a large proportion of his time doing research. His research soon came to fruition when he wrote a critical commentary, *ḥāshiyah*, on the famous book of Sayyid Kāẓim Yazdī called *al-‘Urvat al-vuṣqā* and a few other works in tradition, *uṣūl* and *rijāl*. In fact, writing these commentaries, as a result of persistent requests from his students, cemented his reputation in the world of Shi‘i seminaries. By writing his *ḥāshiyah* on *al-‘Urvat al-vuṣqā*, Burūjirdī, who had already shown that he was capable of challenging Ākhund-i Khurāsānī in *uṣūl* (by writing a *ḥāshiyah* on *Kifāyat al-uṣūl*), proved that he was capable of challenging Sayyid Kāẓim Yazdī in *fiqh* as well. During these years, in a series of lectures during Ramaẓān, Burūjirdī discussed the issue of the hidden Imam by using exclusively Sunni sources (rather than Shi‘i sources) about the hidden Imam.¹²⁰ By this he demonstrated his knowledge and awareness not only of Shi‘i sources but also of Sunni sources. That was an obvious sign of his vast understanding and command of the source of tradition. That in turn promoted Burūjirdī’s scholarly reputation in the clerical world.

After his father’s death, Burūjirdī was seen as a respected source of emulation for the people of Burūjird and had a limited number of followers in Burūjird and surrounding areas, mainly among

¹¹⁸ Davānī, ‘Alī, *Za‘īm-i buzurg*, 101.

¹¹⁹ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 15, No. 13, p. 20.

¹²⁰ This book was translated into English as Luṭf A. Šāfi, *Traditional Reports on the Hidden Imam: a Translation of Muntakhab al-Asar* (Mumbai: Abaqat Publications, 2003).

Lurs. He was happy with his job, and had a successful career as a local source of emulation. Dealing with the religious affairs of a big tribe, which involved religious taxes and social responsibilities, provided him with administrative experience, through which he gradually learnt how to attract followers, how to manage money and how to deal with the local political authorities.

In context: family and education

In Burūjirdī's family, his father was somebody who was aware of the value of knowledge and studying and accumulated considerable experience from his family tradition as well as his personal life. He could have kept Burūjirdī in Burūjird and taught him by himself. However, in order to allow him to benefit from a quality education, he decided to send him to bigger schools. However, he didn't send him to Isfahan prior to the age of 18. It is quite common for clerics to start their education before the time that they are 18, but Burūjirdī's father was probably concerned that sending a young boy to Isfahan might cause him to be unsuccessful in the long-term. Considering the situation of that time, one may suppose that Burūjirdī's father was thinking that when people are so young and impressionable they may become unbalanced in their behaviour or in the way that they study. For instance, they may be attracted to professors or schools which promote isolation from the world in general or the clerical world in particular, or be attracted to a Sufi lifestyle, which could be harmful for their future career. Thus, Burūjirdī's father decided to send him to Isfahan after the age of 18 so he could have the chance to form some social and intellectual structure before encountering great professors or intellectual trends. On the other hand he didn't send him to Najaf, which was a wise decision. Although the Najaf Seminary was more prestigious than the Isfahan Seminary, going to Najaf was not a good plan while Burūjirdī was still young, inexperienced and not prepared to present himself in such a prestigious place. In Isfahan there were more opportunities for Burūjirdī to present himself and make an impression given the relative absence of competition. This shows how Burūjirdī's father was very attentive to his son's education. In short, Burūjirdī's father made a plan to build up Burūjirdī's reputation locally, until the time that he was qualified for *ijtihād*.

The support of Burūjirdī's father was not just limited to planning and advisory issues. Burūjirdī's financial resources in Isfahan were secured by his father; during the time that he was in Isfahan, his father asked a merchant to pay him a monthly maintenance. The money was not a large amount but it was enough to have a simple life.¹²¹ Thus it can be seen how in Burūjirdī's family the father invested in his child's education and supported the child so he could devote himself to his studies and be free of financial concerns. The support continued when Burūjirdī was in Najaf as well, as there is no evidence which shows Burūjirdī had any financial difficulty in his life.

Because of his family status, Burūjirdī always had opportunities to introduce himself to great professors. However, he knew that he must be careful, as these opportunities were limited, meaning that he should only present himself when he had some serious contribution to offer. That was the main reason for him to decide against going to Najaf before the time that he was a *mujtahid*. On the other hand, he didn't want to stay in Isfahan, as he knew that the school could not offer anything new for him.

Going to Najaf was a difficult start for him and he was very careful how to introduce and present himself for the first time. He decided to focus on *uṣūl* rather than *fiqh* in order to distinguish himself. This was a strategic choice, as firstly, Ākhund-i Khurāsānī who was the greatest professor in Najaf was very much interested in *uṣūl*. Secondly, discussions in *uṣūl* were complicated and not many students were capable of understanding them, as they were based on methodological, epistemological and logical concepts which were more difficult than *fiqh*. Whereas in *fiqh*, it is sufficient to read and memorise materials, in *uṣūl* one needs to have great powers of inference and logic. Thirdly, Burūjirdī, in particular was stronger in *uṣūl* compared with other students, as he had studied philosophy in Isfahan and had already taught *uṣūl* there. One may assume that he established his academic reputation in Najaf by teaching and research in *uṣūl*, which was admired by his professors and consolidated Burūjirdī's position as a young scholar and professor. Burūjirdī took advantage of this opportunity by asking for permissions to practise *ijtihād*. Whereas many other students dismissed the value of these permissions and thought that requesting a formal qualification would show their

¹²¹ Davānī, 'Alī, *za'im-i buzurg*, 97.

worldly ambitions and detract from their spirituality, Burūjirdī was aware that permissions were a formal show of appreciation of his abilities, teaching and research and of the trust invested in him by the issuing authority.

After he had received his education and presented his abilities, he decided to return to his home town, as he could have more considerable authority there (but also a less serious audience for teaching and research) than in Najaf or Isfahan. His return to Burūjird did not cause any interruption in Burūjirdī's research and teaching and he continued his contribution in the same capacity, by which he confirmed his position as a serious well-known scholar. Thus he became a local authority as well as a well-known scholar through his publications.

Burūjirdī's background was balanced. Unlike many other clerics he studied philosophy, which was perceived by some clerics as an unorthodox discipline, but did not bury himself in philosophy and become isolated from the mainstream clerical world. He temporarily left his hometown and attended the prestigious seminaries of Isfahan and Najaf, but did not permanently stay there in a professorial capacity. When he returned to Burūjird in 1910 and became a local authority, he maintained a balance between teaching and research. One may assume that he never thought that his teaching and research might be too sophisticated or would go unappreciated by the people of Burūjird, in spite of the lack of an expert audience for his teaching and research there. Such a balance secured Burūjirdī's status in the Shi'i clerical world, as somebody who possessed knowledge (through studying with great professors), rationality (through studying philosophy), authority (through practising as a local *marja'* in Burūjird), credibility (through his family), qualifications (through his permissions from great *marja'*s and narrators of tradition), and scholarship (through his research contributions). These combined elements placed Burūjirdī in the centre of attention of the religious as well as social and political authorities, although he was not based in any of the well-known centres of Shi'i scholarship such as Najaf, Sāmarrā, Karbalā, Mashhad, Isfahan, and Qum.

II. The rise of the ayatollah and the development of the seminary

Overview

This chapter discusses Burūjirdī's coming to Qum as the senior teacher and the process by which he was designated as a *marja'* (one of the highest authorities in Shi'ism) and placed in charge of the Qum Seminary known as *Hawzah-i 'Ilmiyah-i Qum* from his arrival to Qum in 1944 to his death in 1961, during which time Burūjirdī was the most significant authority for the global Shi'i community. The chapter shall consider the factors which allowed him to attain his pre-eminent status.

During the time in which Burūjirdī was in Burūjird, Hājj Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Hā'irī Yazdī established the Qum Seminary in 1922, and it became known as a new centre for teaching theological knowledge. Although the school was new, it was highly recognised by people, as Hā'irī was a respected figure in the eyes of public as well as religious and political authorities. However, after Hā'irī's death in 1937, the school faced serious social, political and financial problems. The religious community had already suffered from Riza Shah Pahlavi's anti-clerical policies, especially the incident at Mashhad's Gawharshād mosque in 1935 (following a new regulation about the dress code which mainly targeted clerics), the unveiling of women in 1936 as well as the assassination and forced exile of clerics. In particular, the Gawharshād Mosque suppression (known as the massacre of Gawharshād Mosque, where corpses were carried out by trucks) was significant as it was the bloodiest urban confrontation of Riza Shah's reign and was a symbol of resistance to his anti-clerical policies.¹²² The massacre took place after demonstrations led by Mashhad clerics and was a clear sign

¹²² For more information on Gawharshad incident see Muhammad Taqī Buhlūl, *Khāṭirāt-i siyāsī-i Buhlūl: bā nigāhi bih qiyām-i masjid-i Gawharshād* (Qum: Intishārāt-i Huzūr, 2006); Sīnā Vāḥid, *Qiyām-i Gawharshād* (Tih-rān: Vizārat-i Farhang va Irshād-i Islāmī, 1988); Ismā'īl Rā'īn, and Sīmā Rā'īn, *Vāqī'ah-i Gawharshād bih rivāyat-i dīgar: az majmū'ah-i asnād-i chāp nashudah-i ravānshād Ismā'īl Rā'īn* (Tih-rān: Nashr-i Rā'īn, 2000); Dāvūd Qāsim'pūr, *Qiyām-i masjid-i Gawharshād bih rivāyat-i asnād* (Tih-rān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2007); Camron M. Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman: Gender, State Policy, and Popular Culture, 1865-1946* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 85-90;

of the government's zero-tolerance policy in dealing with clerics and religious authorities. On the other hand it clearly showed the high price of religious resistance against the state. Furthermore, as a result of problems between Qum and Najaf which led to the termination of financial support from Najaf, the Qum Seminary was in a very difficult financial situation and was in danger of closure. Riza Shah's abdication from power in 1941 provided the opportunity for clerics in Qum to think about reviving the role of religion and the seminaries by inviting Burūjirdī to join the Qum Seminary in a teaching and managerial capacity. Iranian Shi'i clerics in general were thinking of ways to reinforce the clerical establishment, evidence of which is seen in the *Kashf-i asrār*, written by Khomeini around 1944.

This chapter will also address the development of the Qum Seminary during the time of Burūjirdī's administration and explain how the small theological college in Qum became the world's largest and most influential Shi'i theological college and was the home of the pre-eminent Shi'i *marja'*.

This chapter shall also offer a case study of Burūjirdī's teaching as well as his writings and his original contributions to Shi'i scholarship in the areas of *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, *ḥadīṣ* and *rijāl*. The chapter explains the particular methods which he pioneered in all of the above areas. Burūjirdī was groundbreaking in his original contribution in Shi'i scholarship in terms of his research method as well as the content of his works.

Covert competition for the marja'īyat **Qum, a new site for universal Shi'i authority**

Burūjirdī's *marja'īyat* was distinctive in that he not only attained a position of pre-eminent authority but also shifted the centre of influence from Najaf to Qum. Initially Burūjirdī faced strong competition in Qum from well-established senior seminary professors. When Burūjirdī came to Qum for the first time, there were others who seemed much more likely to be recognized as the *marja'*: three eminent ayatollahs who were known as *Āyāt-i Ṣalās* (triple signs of God). However, they

Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Conceiving Citizens: Women and the Politics of Motherhood in Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 155.

voluntarily withdrew their candidacies for the *marja'iyat*, feeling that Burūjirdī was the preferable candidate. Burūjirdī was distinctive in that he virtually monopolised the *marja'iyat*; currently, in comparison there are more than 50 *marja*'s in Qum, Najaf and other cities of the Islamic world. Burūjirdī was one of the very rare examples in the short history of *marja'iyat* who occupied the position almost without any serious competitor. There were many different social, political, religious and scholarly factors that helped him to gain recognition as the pre-eminent *marja'* of the time. It is interesting to compare this with the recent *marja'iyat* of Ayatollah Khomeini, since, although Khomeini held full power and authority as the head of state in Iran (with a high level of domestic and international publicity), his religious authority was rivalled by others such as Ayatollahs Sharī'atmadārī (1906-1986), Gulpāygānī (1899-1993), Mar'ashī Najafī (1897-1990), Arākī (1894-1994), Khū'ī (1899-1992) and others, who had their own followers. None of these *marja*'s voluntarily withdrew from their positions in recognition of Khomeini's pre-eminence, although Sharī'atmadārī was forcibly striped of his position.

Burūjirdī entered Qum as a scholar to teach and manage the school as a replacement for Hājj Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Hā'irī. At that time Burūjirdī was already a *marja'* for a limited number of people. Within a few years, however, the deaths of several of his peers (see below) left him as the sole survivor of that generation of *marja*'s, and eventually allowed him to become the leading *marja'* by default. Therefore, Burūjirdī was exceptional in becoming the most influential *marja'* of his age, if not in the whole Shi'i world, at least in the majority of it.¹²³ Although there were other *marja*'s, he was undoubtedly the recognised leader of Shi'ism at the time. Considering the socio-political conditions of Iran at the time, it was crucial for the religious institutions to be united behind a single leader. Interestingly, this situation was not the deliberate work of any one person but rather emerged as a fortuitous result of contemporary historical conditions. In order to form a historical narrative of Burūjirdī's *marja'iyat*, one needs to take all of the above factors into consideration.

¹²³ Burūjirdī was not the only *marja'* of his time as there were a few other people in Najaf such as Ayatollah Iṣṭahbānā'ī (1879-1958) and Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥsin Ḥakīm (1888-1970). But he was recognized as the highest *marja'* as he paid salaries to students of seminaries in Qum and Najaf and other cities.

Burūjirdī's medical operation in Tehran's Fīrūzābādī Hospital

There is a common belief among Shi'ī Muslims that an accident is a manifestation of God's will and can change a human being's destiny or even a nation's destiny.¹²⁴ It is important to bear this in mind when considering Burūjirdī's rise to the *marja'īyat*. During one of Burūjirdī's visits to Tehran something happened which accelerated his rise to the *marja'īyat*. This account will be explored in detail below.

Burūjirdī was a local well-respected cleric in his home town of Burūjird, and even after studying for years in Isfahan and Najaf, he retained a strong attachment to his hometown throughout his life. Suffering from a chronic illness at the age of 68 in 1943, Burūjirdī was taken to the Fīrūzābādī hospital in Tehran, as the town of Burūjird lacked adequate hospital facilities.¹²⁵ Burūjirdī himself recounts the story as follows "I had a very serious illness and I was unconscious. When I became conscious I realized that I was in a car like an ambulance and I was told that we were in Qum and I was carried to Tehran for a hernia operation."¹²⁶ After the operation he preferred to spend his convalescence period in Qum instead of in Tehran.¹²⁷ There is no evidence showing that at that point Burūjirdī had decided to stay in Qum for any reason other than his convalescence period as well as pilgrimage. At this point he did not appear to be seeking a teaching position in Qum.

The situation in Qum

The Qum Seminary was established in 1922 by Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī Yazdī, and had been suffering from weak leadership ever since his death in 1937.¹²⁸ At this time, the school and

¹²⁴ See Tabataba'i and Nasr, *Shi'ite Islam*, 133-135.

¹²⁵ A very important element in the relationship between an Ayatollah and his followers is that followers always want the best thing for the Ayatollah, even if he himself refuses. Followers insist as they believe it is their duty. For instance in this example followers told Burūjirdī frequently that they can take him to Tehran for medical facilities, but he didn't accept.

¹²⁶ Ḥusayn Budalā, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, Tihrān, Ḥusayn Budalā, 33. In his account, Budalā does not mention the date, but according to an account published in a newspaper in Burūjirdī's life the date was 1943. See *Khvāndanīhā*, year 15, No. 13, p. 20. Qum is on the road between Burūjird and Tehran.

¹²⁷ Ḥusayn Budalā, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 35.

¹²⁸ There are a number of good books written about Ḥā'irī such as 'Imād al-Dīn Fayyāzī, *Zindagīnāmah va shakhshīyat-i ijtimā'i siyāsī-i Āyat Allāh al-'uzmā ḥājj shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī: mu'assis-i ḥawzah-i 'ilmīyah-i Qum* (Tihrān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 1999); Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Shams, 'Abd al-Hādī Ashrafi, and Javād Āhangar, *Mu'assis-i ḥawzah: yādnāmah-yi ḥazrat-i Āyat Allāh ḥājj shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī* (Qum: Būstān-i Kitāb-i Qum, 1383); Farzānah Nikū Burish, *Barrasī-i 'amalkard-i siyāsī-i Āyat Allāh ḥājj shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī Yazdī: az sāl-i 1301 tā sāl-i 1315* (Tihrān: Shirkat-i Chāp va Nashr-i Bayn al-Milal, vābastah bih Mu'assasah-i Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr,

clerics across the country in general were under pressure from the government of Riza Shah Pahlavi. The main clerical representative in the political system Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris had been exiled and allegedly assassinated on the order of the government in Kāshmar in 1937.¹²⁹ Ḥā'irī initially started his school in Arāk, but later, with the support of some 'ulama and merchants from Tehran, he decided to transfer the school along with his students to Qum. The merchants agreed to pay the sum of 10,000 Rls monthly to fund the school, but Ḥā'irī sometimes complained that this amount was not always duly paid.¹³⁰ When he died, the school had 900 students.¹³¹ The spiritual, administrative and scholarly functions of the seminary had been divided between the three distinguished ayatollahs of Qum known as the *Āyāt-i Ṣalās* (Ayatollahs Khvānsārī, Ṣadr and Ḥujjat).¹³² They were managing the seminary on a cooperative basis.¹³³

The leadership of the Qum Seminary needed to project an image of piety in order to attract the public's trust and convince them to send religious taxes. Khvānsārī was mainly responsible for cultivating this pious image, Ṣadr was in charge of administration (including serving as the representative of the seminary to the government) and Ḥujjat, an excellent teacher, was charged with scholarly and pedagogical responsibilities.¹³⁴ Hence, they divided the seminary duties in an unwritten

1381). There is recent PhD on the Qum Seminary in terms of teaching: Arun Wyrmuttoo Rasiah, 'City of Knowledge: the Development of Shī'ī Religious Learning with Particular Attention to the Ḥawzah 'Ilmiyah of Qum, Iran' PhD Thesis in Education (University of California, Berkeley, 2007).

¹²⁹ For a comprehensive work on 'ulama's activities during the period see Ḥamīd Baṣīrat'manish, '*Ulamā va rizhūm-i Riṣā Shāh: naẓarī bar 'amalkard-i siyāsī-farhangī-i rūḥānīyūn dar sālhā-yi 1305-1320*' (Tih-rān: Mu'assasah-i Chāp va Nashr-i 'Urūj, 1997). For a scholarly article in English see M. Faghfoory, '*Ulama-stats Relations in Iran 1921-41*', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19.4 (1987), 413-432; Also see Touraj Atabaki and Erik Jan Zürcher, *Men of order: Authoritarian Modernization under Ataturk and Reza Shah* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004) 44-64. Mudarris was assassinated by Ḥabīb Allāh Khalaj on 1 December 1937. See Mu'assisah-yi Pazhūhish va Muṭālī'āt-i Farhangī, *Mudarris va majlis, namah'hā va asnād* (Tih-rān: Mu'assisah-yi Pazhūhish va Muṭālī'āt-i Farhangī, 1994). For more information about Mudarris in English see Forough Jahanbakhsh, *Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris (1870-1938)*, Thesis (M.A.) (McGill University, 1989) and Vanessa Martin, 'Mudarris, Republicanism and the Rise to Power of Riza Khan, Sardar-i Sipah', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 21.2 (1994), 199-210.

¹³⁰ Although the school was established by that monthly budget, the regular expenses of the school in later years were 100.000 Rls. See Javād Gharavī, 'muṣāḥabah', *Ḥawzah*, Daftar-i Tabliḡhāt-i Islāmi-yi Ḥawzah-yi 'Ilmiyah-yi Qum, No. 62, p. 47.

¹³¹ Muḥsin Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, VIII, 42. In his memoirs, Muntazirī says that the number of students were 800. But I prefer Amīn's (1865-1952) account because it was written nearer to the event, as Muntazirī's memoirs is a recent book, published in 2000.

¹³² The phrase *Āyāt-i Ṣalās* means triple ayatollahs. They were known as triple ayatollahs as they worked co-operatively to manage the seminary's administration.

¹³³ 'Īrfān Karīmī, 'Āyāt-i Ṣalās va ḥifẓ-i sangar-i ḥawzah', *Risālat* (Tih-rān, 24 February 2010) 18.

¹³⁴ Khvānsārī was known as a holy man especially because of his successful prayers for rain in 1944, when he relieved the city of Qum from drought with his rain-inducing prayers. Ṣadr had good connections with government and was the main liaison of the Qum Seminary to liaise with government officials. Ḥujjat's teaching was very precise and

agreement, though in Qum senior professors considered amalgamating the functions of Ṣadr and Ḥujjat, who had some disagreements.¹³⁵ In addition to these three, Ayatollah Fayṣ-i Qumī (1976-1951) was another respected senior local cleric in the Qum Seminary, but had no official responsibility in the administration of the seminary.¹³⁶ Sayyid Aḥmad Zanjānī (1890-1973) also was considered one of the top clerics in Qum and was in a similar position.¹³⁷ This situation continued until the fall of Riza Shah in 1941, which led to a sudden increase in the level of intellectual freedom and political liberalization.¹³⁸ Clerics also wanted to take advantage of the newfound freedom by consolidating their establishment.¹³⁹

In the years following Riza Shah's abdication from power, young religious scholars such as Maḥmūd Ṭāliqānī (1911-1979), Murtaṣā Muṭahharī (1920-1979) and Ḥusayn 'Alī Muntazirī (1922-2009) were actively thinking about establishing a single office of religious leadership in Qum, not just on religious grounds but also for political reasons as a means of consolidating their position vis-à-vis state anti-clericalism and burgeoning atheist movements such as communism.¹⁴⁰ They concentrated their energies on Khomeini (at the time known as Ḥājj Āqā Rūḥ Allāh) to gain his support and to convince him to use his influence to unify the religious leadership. Although apparently this group had no problem with the *Āyāt-i Ṣalāṣ*, they thought it would be better if a sole leadership were to be established. In 1942 Muṭahharī and Muntazirī went to Burūjird to audit Burūjirdī's classes.¹⁴¹ They

sophisticated and was considered suitable only for advanced students close to *ijtihād*. According to Muntazirī, Ḥujjat had the biggest number of students, about 100 people. See Ḥusayn 'Alī Muntazirī, *Bakhshī az khāṭirāt-i faqīh va marja'-i 'ālīqadr Āyat Allāh al-'uẓmā Muntazirī*, (Qum, 2000), I, 101.

¹³⁵ Muḥammad Bunakdār, Tihṙān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Muḥammad Bunakdār, 6.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 12.

¹³⁷ 'Abd al-'Alī Bāqī, Tihṙān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 'Abd al-'Alī Bāqī, 19.

¹³⁸ For two different accounts of clerics and Reza Shah see Heinz Halm, *Shiism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 117-120, and Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 88-104. Halm's account is shorter, but specifically about Shi'i clerics. Keddie's account is longer, but it includes all aspects of the country during that time, including clergy-state conflicts. Also see M. Faghfoory, 'Ulama-stats relations in Iran 1921-41', 413-432.

¹³⁹ See Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 98-99.

¹⁴⁰ Khomeini in his introduction on *Kashf-i asrār* implies the dire situation of religion and clerics at that time where he uses the phrase "rawḥānīyat-i nīmah'jān= the fading clergy" which is quite strong in linguistic terms, see Khumaynī, Rūḥ Allāh, *Kashf-i asrār* (unknown publication information), 3. In the same introduction he seems eager about the necessity of having the unity in the country.

¹⁴¹ Muṭahharī and Muntazirī used to live in the same room in the Qum Seminary, they were very close to each other and they presented the idea to Khomeini jointly. There are no memoirs surviving from Muṭahharī, but there is a section in Muntazirī's memoirs, although he does not give any date. See Ḥusayn 'Alī Muntazirī, *Khāṭirāt faqīh*, I, 107. It is understood from the context that the date must be 1942, a year before Burūjirdī's coming to Qum.

liked his teaching and thought he could be a good candidate for the post. In fact in 1941, Muṭahharī had been to Burūjird for the summer and stayed with Burūjirdī and found him to be a suitable person to hold such a position. Upon their return to Qum, they raised the proposal with Khomeini, who welcomed it and devoted himself actively to gaining support for Burūjirdī among senior clerics in Qum and other centres.¹⁴² In 1943 during the time that Burūjirdī was in Fīrūzābādī hospital in Tehran, Khomeini visited him several times, not just as a matter of courtesy but in order to ask Burūjirdī to come to Qum. At the same time, Khomeini spoke to other people both inside and outside Qum to prepare for Burūjirdī's arrival. He sent a telegram to one of his close friends Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī, the respected son of Ayatollah Ḥā'irī, who was visiting Najaf, telling him about the proposal and asking him for help. Khomeini also sent 400 telegrams to other 'ulama of Najaf and other cities to gain support for Burūjirdī and to consolidate his *marja'īyat*.¹⁴³

Perhaps the biggest obstacle facing Burūjirdī's accession to the helm in Qum was the potential rivalry of the existing religious authorities in Qum. There is some evidence which clearly shows that Burūjirdī's installation in Qum faced opposition. The objections were not directly expressed but neither were they wholly concealed. For example, around the time, one of the preachers of Qum who was famous for giving good sermons, recited the following poem of *Alfīyah-i Ibn Mālīk* in one of his sermons, where there were clerics as well as members of the public in attendance: "*Va lā yajūz al-ibtidā bi-al-nakirah*" which means that it is not permissible to start following someone who is new and who is unknown to people.¹⁴⁴ This clearly showed that some people were unhappy with Burūjirdī's arrival in Qum, and it made Khomeini's job more difficult.¹⁴⁵

Perhaps Khomeini's intentions in inviting Burūjirdī to Qum consisted of more than establishing a sole leadership or managerial role in the Qum Seminary. Khomeini approved of Burūjirdī as he perceived him to be a brave man with a propensity for political activism who enjoyed

¹⁴² Although Khomeini liked the idea of having a sole authority in Qum, he initially was not eager to invite Burūjirdī, as he had concerns about increasing the three existing authorities (*Āyāt-i Ṣalās*) to four. It was Muntazirī who convinced Khomeini that they would not be four and gained Khomeini's support for that. See Ḥusayn 'Alī Muntazirī, *Khāṭirāt-i faqīh*, I, 111.

¹⁴³ Muḥammad Bunakdār, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 20. Although he says 400 telegrams, I think it is not an exact number. It would be better if we interpret it as many telegrams.

¹⁴⁴ *Alfīyah-i Ibn Mālīk* is a book by Ibn Mālīk who has compiled the rules of Arabic grammar in the form of a 1000-line work of poetry. As a part of the seminary curriculum, students read this book in their 2nd and 3rd year.

¹⁴⁵ 'Abd al-'Alī Bāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 20.

great support amongst the Lurs.¹⁴⁶ Khomeini had an ambitious role in mind for Burūjirdī, though he soon became disappointed. As Khomeini himself points out, Burūjirdī taught very well and could train students to a high level, however, “He [Burūjirdī] was a strong person and we wanted to use his power to attack the Shah, but unfortunately we couldn’t do so.”¹⁴⁷ It is clear that Khomeini wanted to use Burūjirdī as a vehicle for opposition towards the government as well as for the other traditional functions of a *marja*’, hence his energetic efforts to enlist other people’s support for Burūjirdī.

The government’s desire for a sole religious leader

Although the state during the time of Riza Shah was anti-clerical, it seems as if the new regime of his son was ready to support a powerful religious establishment. Two factors combined to encourage the government’s desire to establish a sole national religious authority. Firstly, the weak young Shah and his new government needed support to consolidate their positions of power; and secondly, they were afraid that the increasing influence of Marxist thinking might lead to the spread of Communism in Iran.¹⁴⁸ Those two factors made a strong case for the government to support the idea of having a powerful religious establishment based inside Iran at Qum, near Tehran (rather than far away in Iraq).¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ The Lur tribe was very powerful and they could potentially make trouble for the government, if they felt unhappy with something. There was potential for rebellion by Lurs as they had disagreements with Riza Shah’s policy towards them which led to a serious confrontation. For more information see Sekandar Amanolahi, ‘Reza Shah and the Lurs: The Impact of the Modern State on Luristan’ in *Iran & the Caucasus*, 6.1/2 (2002), 193-218. For more information about tribal conflicts at the time see Stephanie Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran: Rural Conflict and the New State, 1921-1941* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007) 16-88.

¹⁴⁷ Faḡl Allāh Maḡallātī, Tihṛān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Faḡl Allāh Maḡallātī, 15.

¹⁴⁸ For a very short account of general weakness in political conditions (both internally and externally) see Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: Iran from Autocracy to Religious Rule: With a New Introduction and Preface by the Author* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009) 25-29, and also see Gholam R. Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 61-109. Although Afkhami believes that Communism “was generally disliked because it is Godless”, it seems that the Marxist ideas were very appealing to the Iranian intellectuals and that was one reason for even having two different Communist parties in Iran. See Ervand Abrahamian, ‘Communism and Communalism in Iran: the Tudah and the Firqah-i Dimokrat’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1.4 (1970), 291-316. Considering the internal and external problems with having a weak central state, there were different ideas for the form and the content of the political system. See Ervand Abrahamian, ‘Factionalism in Iran: Political Groups in the 14th Parliament (1944-46)’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 14.1 (1978), 22-55. In any case, it is absolutely clear that at the time, clerics and the central state had common interest in forming an alliance against Communism.

¹⁴⁹ For more information see Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 99, where he says: “The British legation reported that the propertied classes as well as the Shah and the government, were eager to forge an alliance with the clergy so as to turn men’s minds away from communism to religion”.

It seems that this governmental thinking was known to the clerics of Qum including Maḥmūd Ṭāliqānī (1911-1979) who was a young cleric at that time and was aware that the new government might also be interested in supporting the establishment of a sole religious national authority. So, one day, when Ṭāliqānī was at the shrine of Ḥaẓrat-i Ma‘ṣūmah (the principle shrine in Qum and a destination for pilgrims), he came across Ṣadr al-Ashrāf, who was a highly respected statesman, and asked him about the government’s position on having a sole religious leader in Qum.¹⁵⁰ Ṣadr al-Ashrāf smiled knowingly and said that the government would have no objection towards that.¹⁵¹ It seems probable that this astute man, who served for many years in several different political positions from the Qajar period, immediately worked out a plan of action. He was respected both in political and religious circles. He had an educational background as a cleric, but was now a statesman. Thus he was intimately acquainted with the secrets of the clerical establishment and its internal elements. One may even imagine that upon returning to Tehran, he mentioned the proposal to the Shah. There does not appear to be any surviving document chronicling this event, but it seems too much of a coincidence that the Shah’s interests would converge spontaneously with those of relatively junior clerics.

We can reconstruct the probable sequence of events as follows: After reaching an agreement on the issue, the Shah and his court initially nominated Ḥujjat for this position. This was the easiest option for him, as Ḥujjat was famous enough to be introduced as the sole *marja’* of Qum. He was as well-known as the other two of the *Āyāt-i Ṣalās* and just needed a little more weight to be recognized as the *marja’*. There ensued an unsuccessful attempt to prepare Ḥujjat for a meeting with the Shah when Ḥujjat was staying in the village of Shaghalu near Qum, but Ḥujjat ultimately refused to meet the Shah, commenting, “What has he done for us that we should meet with him?”¹⁵² Thus the Shah was disappointed and realised that he could not use Ḥujjat for his purposes. Instead of Ḥujjat, the

¹⁵⁰ Sayyid Muḥsin Ṣadr (1871-1962) known as Ṣadr al-Ashrāf was a state-man in several levels, at the highest, the Iranian Prime Minister (from 6 June 1945 til 30 October 1945) and the speaker of the Senate (1953).

¹⁵¹ ‘Abd al-Majīd Ma‘ādīkhah, Tihṙān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, ‘Abd al-Majīd Ma‘ādīkhāh, 8. Although he wasn’t in the meeting, but he himself heard that from Ṭāliqānī.

¹⁵² Muḥammad Ṣādiq Tihṙānī, Tihṙān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Muḥammad Ṣādiq Tihṙānī, 52. It is worth noting that Tihṙānī is the father of Ghulām Ḥusayn Karbāschī, the ex-mayor of Tehran. His father was a trustworthy man in Tehran’s bazaar.

Shah could have selected either Ṣadr or Khvānsārī for the position, but he preferred not to choose them, as Ayatollah Ṣadr had connections with the opposition forces (who later formed the first National Front [1949-1953]), and Khvānsārī was notoriously anti-British and there was the potential risk of his alliance with Ayatollah Kashani.

When Burūjirdī came to Tehran for his medical operation in 1943, the Shah reconsidered his options. Burūjirdī was considered a fitting and suitable alternative. When the Shah wanted to discuss the idea in a meeting with Burūjirdī, not only did the latter accept a meeting with the Shah in Fīrūzābādī hospital in Tehran, but he even tried to stand up in the Shah's presence as a sign of respect in spite of his illness, leading the Shah to believe that Burūjirdī would be considerably more amenable to his interests than the intransigent Ḥujjat. In return, the Shah also showed Burūjirdī respect by kissing his hand. This was the first meeting between Muhammad Riza Shah and Burūjirdī. Despite a lack of formal discussion between them, the meeting left both the Shah and Burūjirdī satisfied with the outcome, at the very least garnering positive publicity for both of them. The event demonstrated that although Burūjirdī was a local religious authority in a relatively unimportant city, Burūjird, he was important enough to be visited by the highest authority in the country, the Shah, and not many clerics had a chance of gaining such publicity. It is important to appreciate that the Shah's position at that time was considered extremely weak, and he needed support. So, the meeting could be considered as the first step towards forming a successful mutually beneficial relationship between the Shah and Burūjirdī. Later the relationship broadened into other areas but, as Mihdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī says in his memoirs, Burūjirdī's relationship with the Shah's administration, was a mutually beneficial arrangement for both parties but was not necessarily friendly.¹⁵³

A picture was taken of this first meeting. Also in the photograph was another cleric, who was well-known to the residents of Tehran, Ḥājj Sayyid Rizā Fīrūzābādī (1874-1965), the founder of Fīrūzābādī hospital. It is likely that Sayyid Rizā had informed the Shah of Burūjirdī's plan to stay in his hospital, which demonstrates that Tehran's religious activists had endorsed Burūjirdī. Sayyid Rizā was known as a religious and charitable man in Tehran who had been representative of Tehran in the

¹⁵³ Habib Ladjevardi, *Memoirs of Mehdi Hairi-Yazdi* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University, Center For Middle Eastern Studies, 2001). Ḥā'irī says there was always something beneath the surface in Burūjirdī's mutual relationship with the Shah.

parliament for several terms (the first one was the 3rd parliament and the most recent one was the 14th parliament) and was arrested and sent to exile by Riza Shah.¹⁵⁴ The weekly newspaper *Khvāndanīhā* published this photo as the cover page on 12 November 1946, three years after the event. This was around the time that Ayatollah Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī died (26 October 1946) when people were discussing the succession of a new *marja*‘. This was an especially sensitive succession, as Iṣfahānī had been the leading *marja*‘ in Najaf and the foremost *marja*‘ in the whole Shi‘i world. It would seem that the photograph was designed by the newspaper to link Burūjirdī and the Shah together in implicit alliance against the Tudeh party, as at the same time Tudeh party was active in organizing demonstrations, and the Azerbaijan crisis was at its peak.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, in the following week’s issue, *Khvāndanīhā* published an article discussing the funeral and mourning ceremonies of Ayatollah Iṣfahānī and presenting them as evidence of the Iranian people’s opposition to the Tudeh party.¹⁵⁶ The same paper also reported that in Azerbaijan province (then still under Soviet occupation and with a pro-Soviet local leadership) they had banned mourning for Ayatollah Iṣfahānī on the national day of mourning announced by the central government in Tehran.¹⁵⁷ In the next issue, the paper published an article with the title “After the death of Ayatollah Iṣfahānī, who will be chosen as the new *marja*‘?”¹⁵⁸ and discussed the two possible candidates, Ayatollah Burūjirdī in Qum and Ayatollah Ḥājj Āqā Ḥusayn Qumī in Karbalā. Although Qumī was considered senior to Burūjirdī and had already been recognised as the *marja*‘ during the time of Iṣfahānī, the paper mentioned Burūjirdī’s name first, which indicates its intention in promoting Burūjirdī.

Several months later, the title page of the same journal on 11 February 1947 published a picture of Burūjirdī with two other *marja*‘s thereby giving significant support to Burūjirdī’s claim to *marja*‘īyat and to his elevation to the position as sole religious leader.¹⁵⁹ The fact that the two other

¹⁵⁴ For more information about Ḥājj Sayyid Riṣā Firūzābādī see Muḥammad Turkmān, *Yādnāmah-yi Āyat Allāh sayyid Riṣā Firūzābādī* (Tihṙān: Intishārāt-i Kavīr, 1997).

¹⁵⁵ This is the time that Azerbaijan was under occupation. For more information about that see Ali M. Ansari, *Modern Iran since 1921: the Pahlavis and after* (Harlow: Longman, 2003), 121-127 and also Gary R. Hess, ‘The Iranian Crisis of 1945-46 and the Cold War’, *Political Science Quarterly*, 89.1 (1974): 117-146. For a clerical account of the crises see Ayatollah Muḥtashidī’s memoirs in ‘Abd Allāh Muḥtashidī and Rasūl Ja‘fariyān, *Buḥrān-i Āzarbāyjān: sālahā-yi 1324-1325 sh: khāṭirāt-i marḥūm Āyat Allāh mūrṣā ‘Abd Allāh Muḥtashidī* (Tihṙān: Mu‘assasah-i Muṭāla‘āt-i Tārīkh-i Īrān, 2002).

¹⁵⁶ ‘Nazarī bih iḥsāsāt-i mardum’, *Khvāndanīhā*, year 7, No. 25, p. 5.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Az lābilāy-i rūznāmah’hā’, *Khvāndanīhā*, year. 7, No, 24, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Ba‘d az fawt-i Āyat Allāh Iṣfahānī marja’-i taqlīd chigūnah intikhāb khāhad shud’, *Khvāndanīhā*, year 7, No. 26, p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ *Khāndanīhā*, No. 50, year 7, 22 Bahman 1325.

marja 's (Iṣfahānī and Qumī) in the photograph were no longer alive at the time further reinforced the message. Qumī had died on 5 February 1947, and the weekly newspaper took advantage of this event to introduce Burūjirdī as the only surviving senior *marja* '.

The arrival of Burūjirdī in Qum

After his hernia operation in 1943, Burūjirdī decided to visit Qum and stay for a short period of convalescence. Indeed, his longer term plan was to go to Mashhad on pilgrimage, as during the time of his illness he had made a vow for the sake of God (*naẓr*) to visit Imam Riẓā's shrine in Mashhad. In early 1944 Burūjirdī arrived in Qum and resided there for the month of Muḥarram of 1363.¹⁶⁰ The welcome ceremony was of great significance as it was Burūjirdī's first public appearance in Qum. Khomeini was thoroughly aware of the importance of this event. He knew that holding an impressive welcoming ceremony could show the eagerness of the people and professors of Qum to receive Burūjirdī and encourage him to stay there. On the other hand, it could show to other professors and potential competitors for the *marja* 'īyat that Burūjirdī was respected by everybody. Thus, there were three target audiences for the welcoming party: first, Burūjirdī himself; second, potential candidates for the *marja* 'īyat (*Ayāt-i Ṣalās*); and third, potential future followers. In order to achieve the goal, Khomeini had already met all of the top clerics in Qum and spoken to them about Burūjirdī and what he could do for Qum and had secured their support for Burūjirdī and his *marja* 'īyat.¹⁶¹

When Burūjirdī arrived, all the clerics went to welcome him. An exceptionally large number of cars were present at the event, (considering the limited number of cars in Qum at that time).¹⁶² At the same time (in the welcoming ceremony), Muḥammad Taqī Ishrāqī who was the most famous *vā 'īz* (preacher) in Qum gave a speech welcoming Burūjirdī to Qum. In his speech, he referred to the great welcoming ceremony and recited this verse of the Quran “*Yā ayyuhā al-naml udkhulū masākinakum*

¹⁶⁰ Karbāshchī believes that he came to Qum on 9th of Day 1323 (29 Dec 1944). *Khāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 56, p. 9 says that he resided in Qum in 1943, which is different from Karbāshchī's account. But the account of Karbāshchī seems more accurate, because *Khāndanīhā* says the same in the issue of year 15 (No. 13, p. 20). 6 years later, *Khāndanīhā* (in the issue of year 21, No. 56, p. 9) says something different. So, it is obvious that the correct year is 1944 not 1943.

¹⁶¹ Fazl Allāh Maḥallātī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 16.

¹⁶² Muḥammad Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, Tihirān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Ḥujjat al-Islām Duktur Ṣādiqī, 53.

lā yaḥṭimannakum Sulaymān va junūduh” which means “Oh ants, be wary of Sulayman and his army”.¹⁶³ This was a thinly veiled warning to the *Ayāt-i Ṣalāṣ* that they should withdraw from the competition for the *marjaʿiyyat* as someone much more powerful had arrived in Qum. In actual fact, Ḥujjat, Ṣadr and Khvānsārī were extremely modest and generous in their reaction to Burūjirdī and as a consequence the feared controversy over Burūjirdī’s recognition as the preeminent *marjaʿ* in Qum did not materialise.¹⁶⁴

Ayatollah Ṣadr, in particular, was instrumental in establishing Burūjirdī in Qum, by offering Burūjirdī the prestigious position of prayer leader in the holy shrine, a post formerly occupied by himself, which brought Burūjirdī great credibility as Ṣadr had not offered this place to the other candidates for the *marjaʿiyyat*. From the point of view of the general public, this action gave a special position to Burūjirdī. Ayatollah Ṣadr’s sacrifices were not just limited to ceding his prayer post; subsequently, Ṣadr gradually delegated the entirety of his duties to Burūjirdī, which helped immensely to boost the newcomer’s prestige.¹⁶⁵ It seems that Khomeini was closer to Ṣadr (and gained his support for the plan more) than the other two members of the ‘triumvirate’. It is worth noting that the person who was instrumental in fostering Ṣadr’s cooperation with Burūjirdī was Ayatollah Sulṭānī, as he was Burūjirdī’s cousin as well as Ṣadr’s son-in-law. He was also very close to Khomeini, as his daughter married Khomeini’s son, Sayyid Aḥmad.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ ‘Abd al-Majīd Maʿādhīkhāh, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 17-19. Ishrāqī was very close to Khomeini to the extent that his daughter married Khomeini’s son.

¹⁶⁴ Niʿmat Allāh Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī, *Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, Niʿmat Allāh Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī, 37.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 25-26.

¹⁶⁶ Sulṭānī is a key figure in understanding the context of that time, as he was familiar with Burūjirdī, before his arrival at Qum. Apart from his important family ties, he had the advantage of spending different periods of study in Burūjird, Qum, Najaf and Mashhad before he eventually settled in Qum to teach. According to Sulṭānī, Burūjirdī’s teaching and research was famous many years prior to his residence in Qum. According to Sulṭānī, apart from Burūjirdī’s teaching in Isfahan and Najaf, for a period of eight months he had a daily teaching circle in Mashhad as well. He does not specify any date but it seems as if it has to be in 1928 because this teaching happened in Burūjirdī’s trip to Mashhad immediately after his release from Tehran’s prison by Riza Shah. Sulṭānī mentions that when he himself was in Mashhad, the Khurāsān’s ‘*ulama*’ were discussing nominating Burūjirdī as the successor *marjaʿ* to Ḥāʾirī (he does not specify any date but that must be in 1937, when Ḥāʾirī died). That clearly shows that Burūjirdī had a successful teaching spell in Mashhad that caught the attention of Mashhad’s ‘*ulama*’. Sulṭānī also notes an invitation letter to Burūjirdī written by the *Āyāt-i Ṣalāṣ*, when Burūjirdī was in Fīrūzābādī hospital. He also mentions Khomeini’s concerns about Burūjirdī’s possible decision to leave Qum as a result of lack of financial resources. Khomeini believed that if Burūjirdī were to leave Qum, the Qum Seminary would lose its credibility. So it seems clear that Burūjirdī had the fame and profile for occupying the *marjaʿ* position in Qum. See Muḥammad Bāqir Sulṭānī Ṭabāṭabāʾī, ‘Muṣāḥabah bā Āyat Allāh Sulṭānī Ṭabāṭabāʾī’, *Ḥawzah*, No. 43-44.

As soon as Burūjirdī settled in Qum, he started to have a small circle of teaching there, in Masjid-i Bālāsar, which was enthusiastically welcomed by people.¹⁶⁷ Some of the top professors such as Khomeini and Dāmād attended Burūjirdī's teaching to show their support for him.¹⁶⁸ It could be argued that they attended his class only to show his importance as a scholar and to attract other students to his classes, but that seems unlikely given what we know about Khomeini's other efforts in support of Burūjirdī's *marja'iyat*.

Gradually, many people were attracted to Burūjirdī's prayers and his teaching. During this time, representatives of the people of Burūjird came to Qum to persuade Burūjirdī to return home. Although he did not explicitly refuse, he refrained from giving them a concrete answer. Ayatollah Khvānsārī, who was there, told the people from Burūjird that, "We cannot let the master of Burūjird remain only the master of Burūjird. He must be the master of the world."¹⁶⁹ It seems that at this point, there was a consensus among the prominent professors of Qum that Burūjirdī should stay in Qum. Prior to this he had been invited to come to Qum many times and Khvānsārī's persistence shows the determination of Qum's professors in keeping him in Qum.¹⁷⁰ In short, Khomeini's efforts in convincing the Qum clerics to support Burūjirdī's *marja'iyat* had ultimately proved successful.

Pilgrimage to Mashhad

After staying for a few months in Qum, Burūjirdī went to Mashhad on a pilgrimage. Everywhere *en route* to Mashhad, people gave him an enthusiastic welcome and showed him respect.¹⁷¹ The reason for going to Mashhad was to fulfil his vow (*nazr*) to visit Imam Riḏā's shrine after surviving his hernia operation. Burūjirdī's fame was gradually increasing, due to Khomeini's telegrams to the 'ulama for the purpose of establishing his *marja'iyat* as well as his new position in Qum. Furthermore, when people, especially the local 'ulama, saw how he was welcomed by the

This is worth noting that Ayatollah Sulṭānī is father of Dr. Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ṭabāṭabā'i who was one the people who wrote a draft of Islamic Republic constitution.

¹⁶⁷ Ḥusayn Budalā, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 35. Masjid-i Bālāsar is a part of Ḥazrat-i Ma'sūmah's shrine in Qum.

¹⁶⁸ Ni'mat Allāh Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 31.

¹⁶⁹ Ḥusayn Budalā, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 8.

¹⁷⁰ Muḥammad Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 47.

¹⁷¹ Ḥusayn Budalā, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 21.

clerics of other cities, they competed to welcome him even more lavishly, and the result was the generation of huge publicity for Burūjirdī on his pilgrimage.

During Burūjirdī's stay in the city, Mashhad's clerics prepared a suitable house for him, his family and his companions. In fact, they prepared three attached houses which belonged to a famous merchant of Mashhad, Mr. Kūzah Kanānī Āzarbāyjānī. The preparation was made by Mīrzā Aḥmad Āqā'zādah, son of the great Ākhund Mullā Kāẓim Khurāsānī (1839-1911), who was highly respected by Khurāsān's 'ulama. Indeed, Burūjirdī himself didn't inform Āqā'zādah of his visit to Mashhad. It was the clerics of Khurāsān who let Āqā'zādah know about Burūjirdī's visit by their frequent telegrams. In response to the telegrams of Nayshābūr's clerics, Āqā'zādah asked them to delay Burūjirdī in Nayshābūr, as the accommodation in Mashhad was not ready yet.¹⁷²

When Burūjirdī arrived in Mashhad, again the issue of prayer leadership in the holy shrine was raised. This time it was Kalbāsī who gave his position as prayer leader at Imam Rizā's shrine to Burūjirdī. Following that, clerics who led prayers in Mashhad temporarily suspended their prayer leadership and asked their congregations to join Burūjirdī's prayers in the holy shrine. This also helped Burūjirdī to garner publicity. It was the first time that he had led such a huge congregation in prayer session in the shrine of a Shi'i Imam, which further enhanced his prestige.

During his visit to Mashhad, he had numerous different visitors every day. At this time, he met with 'Alī Sharī'atī's father, Muḥammad Taqī Sharī'atī, who came to visit Burūjirdī for the first time. During the meeting, some people recommended that Sharī'atī returns to wearing clerical dress, a proposal which Burūjirdī rejected as he believed that Sharī'atī could serve Islam and the faith in his current situation (without observing the clerical dress code) better than if he wore clerical dress.¹⁷³ Sharī'atī's visit to Burūjirdī was very important as he was a famous writer and very active in intellectual and religious activities in Mashhad. Furthermore, he was the founder of Kānūn-i Nashr-i

¹⁷² Ḥusayn Budalā, 'Khāṭirāt-i Ḥusayn Budalā' in Ghulām Rizā Karbāschī, *Tārīkh-i shifāhī-i inqilāb-i Islāmī: tārikh-i ḥawzah-i 'ilmīyah-i Qum* (Tīhrān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2001) 88-87. The management of this visit shows how the clerics of Khurāsān managed their affairs through a telegraph network. As Sayyid Ḥusayn Budalā mentioned in his memoirs, when he saw Āqā'zādah at that time, he had several telegrams in his hand from the clerics of Simnān, Dāmghān, Shāhrūd, etc.

¹⁷³ Ṭāhir Aḥmad'zādah, 'Khāṭirāt-i Ṭāhir Aḥmad'zādah' in Ghulām Rizā Karbāschī, *Tārīkh-i shifāhī inqilāb-i Islāmī*, 90. Muḥammad Taqī Sharī'atī used to wear the clerical dress, but was forced to abandon in by Riza Shah's order.

Ḥaqāyiq-i Islām which was one of Mashhad's most important Islamic intellectual organizations established after 1941.¹⁷⁴

The development of Burūjirdī's *marja'īyat*

The academic year of 1946-1947 was tragic for the Najaf Seminary, as the school lost two of its most renowned professors. On 26 October 1946, Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī passed away and on 5 February 1947, Ḥājj Āqā Ḥusayn Qumī, the second most prominent Shi'ī authority in Iraq after Iṣfahānī, also died. This event was important for establishing Burūjirdī's *marja'īyat* as the two consecutive deaths left thousands of people looking for a new *marja'* to follow.¹⁷⁵ In Najaf, Sayyid Muḥsin Ḥakīm was a potential candidate, but he lacked Burūjirdī's fame and level of public recognition.

In other words, after the passing of Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī and Ḥājj Āqā Ḥusayn Qumī, there was no absolute *marja'*. In such circumstances, the Qum Seminary had the advantage of possessing in Burūjirdī someone who was simultaneously more famous than the average professors of Qum and also more distinguished than the Najaf professors. In short, the plan was either to transfer the *marja'īyat* from Najaf to Qum or at least to give Qum some independence from Najaf.¹⁷⁶ At that moment, there were three people who could be nominated as *marja's*; Ayatollah Ḥujjat who had been recognised as a *marja'* in Azerbaijan, Ayatollah Khvānsārī and Ayatollah Ṣadr, who did not possess *marja'īyat* status but had the potential for it. Khomeini insisted on nominating Burūjirdī. The reason for that, apart from Burūjirdī's scholarly position, was that Burūjirdī had angered and been arrested by Riza Shah.¹⁷⁷ Riza Shah had feared Burūjirdī's power and that was a positive sign for Khomeini who

¹⁷⁴ For more information about Kānūn-i Nashr-i Ḥaqāyiq-i Islām see Parvīn Manṣūrī, *Tārīkh-i shifāhī-i Kānūn-i Nashr-i Ḥaqāyiq-i Islāmī* (Tihārān: Intishārāt-i Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2005).

¹⁷⁵ 'Abd al-'Alī Bāqī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 10.

¹⁷⁶ Muḥammad Ṣādiqī Tihārānī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 47.

¹⁷⁷ According to Ayatollah Muḥammad Bāqir Sulṭānī's memoirs, when Burūjirdī was returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca, he stayed a few months in Najaf and on his way back to Burūjird, was arrested at the Iranian border town of Khusravī and was sent to Tehran for further questioning (he doesn't give any date, but it must have been in 1928 as Burūjirdī went on the Hajj in 1927 and the trip took a few months). The Iranian government had received reports that Burūjirdī had held a meeting with Ayatollahs Iṣfahānī and Nā'inī in Najaf where they agreed to topple Riza Shah's regime through Burūjirdī's influence in Luristān and Khūzistān. (That seemed quite a potential danger as those two provinces were mainly inhabited by Lurs who respected Burūjirdī as their religious leader.) During the same time Riza Shah wanted to visit Burūjird. Before his visit, one of Riza Shah's ministers, 'Abd Allāh Khān Ṭahmāsbī, was assassinated *en route* to Khurram'ābād and Burūjird. Following that, Riza ordered a glorious memorial ceremony to be

was impressed that Burujirdi's power and status was great enough to inspire consternation in the likes of Reza Shah.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, nominating someone new for the position was easier than nominating any of the three aforementioned ayatollahs because those three were equally respected and choosing between them was sure to engender competition and potential conflict. The situation was likely to result in all three eventually being nominated for the position, which would defeat the original purpose of having a sole religious leader in Qum.

Perhaps Khomeini's letter about Burujirdi to Hājji Āqā Murtazā Hā'irī, who was in Najaf when Burujirdi resided in Qum was also important, as Murtazā Hā'irī could speak to clerics in Najaf as well as Qum in order to request their support for Burujirdi's *marja'iyat*.¹⁷⁹ As the eldest son and heir of Ayatollah Hā'irī, he was respected by people and they would not easily refuse his requests. Apart from that, the *Āyat-i Salās* did not think that anybody outside of the 'Atabābat-i 'Āliyāt (Shi'i Shrines in Iraq) would really be able to take up the position, which was an encouraging element for them to leave the competition. In their view, the competition was not over the position of *marja'iyat*, it was on the management of Qum which required the winner of the competition to pay students' salaries and deal with administrative and financial problems of the seminary. If the *Āyat-i Salās* had felt differently, perhaps they would have been reluctant to honour Murtazā Hā'irī's requests. This suggestion is supported by the story of Ayatollah Khvānsārī and his followers, who took Khvānsārī to Hamadān and planned to have a lavish welcome ceremony for him upon his return to Qum, though fate intervened again and Khvānsārī died during his journey on 28 August 1952, leaving Burujirdi's claim to the *marja'iyat* unrivalled.¹⁸⁰

held for him in Burujird and the local governor of Burujird asked the Ṭabāṭabā'ī family (Burujirdi's extended family) to participate in the ceremony, as they were the most well-respected clerical family in Burujird. The family took advantage of the occasion by raising Burujirdi's case, hoping to reach an agreement to release Burujirdi from prison in Tehran. Riza Shah also participated in the ceremony, where finally, as a result of the family's tactful negotiations, Riza Shah ordered Qā'im Maqām-i Rafī' who was accompanying him to call Tehran and ask for Burujirdi to be released. On his return to Tehran, Riza Shah visited Burujirdi and expressed his regret for his arrest (Muḥammad Bāqir Sulṭānī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 'Muṣāḥabah bā Āyat Allāh Sulṭānī Ṭabāṭabā'ī', *Hawzah*, No. 43-44).

¹⁷⁸ Muḥammad Ṣādiqī Tihrānī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 50.

¹⁷⁹ Muḥammad Muḥammadī 'Īrāqī, *Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, Muḥtabā Muḥammadī 'Īrāqī, 13.

¹⁸⁰ Muḥammad 'Alī Girāmī, 'Khāṭirāt-i Muḥammad 'Alī Girāmī', in Ghulām Riṣā Karbāschī, *Tārīkh-i shifāhī inqilāb-i Islāmī*, 99.

The historical conditions in the decades since 1921 helped to persuade people of the need for a powerful *marja'* in Qum. In the view of the devout believers, it was essential to restore the prestige of the religious establishment. This was a result of the bitter experience with Riza Shah's government and the way he undermined religion, religious authorities and religious practices. The effort to salvage religious authority was initially unsuccessfully pursued by Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris who was the representative of the Najaf clerics in the Iranian parliament and who campaigned to revive the second article of the appendix to the 1907 constitution. This article stipulated that a committee of five *mujtahids* had to oversee and approve parliamentary legislation to ensure that it was not contrary to the shariah. Riza Shah had promised to Ayatollahs Nā'inī and Iṣfahānī (of Najaf) that he would enforce the second article of the appendix; but he did not honour his promise and Mudarris was imprisoned in 1928 and murdered in 1937.¹⁸¹ After Riza Shah's abdication, young clerics used the liberalization of the political and intellectual spheres to form a powerful religious base. The idea was appealing to the old traditional clerics as well, as they were experiencing difficulties in managing the finances of the Qum Seminary and there was a serious risk of closure, as the financial support from Najaf had stopped. The communist Tudeh party and its activities in this same period intensified the religious demands of the public outside of the seminary for creating a strong religious leadership. The perceived threat of the Tudeh was a common concern for both the Shah and the clerical establishment and ensured the royal court's support for the initiative as well. In sum, there was consensus among a number of elite and popular factions of the necessity of creating a powerful *marja'īyat* in Qum.

Given the lack of any *marja'* to rival him, most Shi'is of Iran and the world now looked to Burūjirdī. He thus rapidly established himself as a prominent *marja'* with millions of followers in Iran and abroad who sent him their religious taxes. This was indeed the final stage of his recognition as the pre-eminent *marja'* and the beginning of his universal *marja'īyat* among the Shi'i Muslims of the world. This final stage began circa 1952 or during the first half of the 1950s.

¹⁸¹ See Halm, *Shiism*, 118.

Burūjirdī's administration and the leading clerics of Qum

With the arrival of Burūjirdī, the Qum Seminary would flourish and expand in an unprecedented manner. The new political atmosphere in the country following Riza Shah's resignation on 15 September 1941, allowed for a climate of greater intellectual freedom. The situation was conducive to a religious revival, led by a renaissance in religious education which was centred in Qum. Burūjirdī did not have any previous experience in Qum's educational environment. After his hernia operation, Burūjirdī came to Qum to assess the situation of the Qum Seminary at Khomeini's behest. It is likely that Khomeini had spoken about his plan with him and they agreed that he would come to Qum for a pilot period to see how the arrangement would work out. Khomeini's efforts in establishing Burūjirdī in Qum were obvious in terms of using his network and contacts as well as his active presence in the plan. There is other evidence suggesting that Burūjirdī's agreement to the plan could be seen as proof of the very good relationship between Burūjirdī and Khomeini. In short, it seems that the plan for staging a religious renaissance in Iran needed someone at the helm, who was Burūjirdī, and someone as the second-in-command, who was Khomeini. The evidence suggests both clerics agreed on their respective roles.

During the pilot period, when Burūjirdī went to Mashhad, he appointed Khomeini as his deputy to act in his absence. Khomeini was also given the role of prayer leader in the Shrine and was asked to pay the students' salaries.¹⁸² Indeed, he effectively appointed Khomeini to administer the seminary.¹⁸³ The appointment showed that the interest between Burūjirdī and Khomeini was mutual and Khomeini secured a distinguished position in Burūjirdī's establishment. Furthermore, it showed that there was a secure and trusting relationship between Khomeini and Burūjirdī, which was not the case between other top clerics in Qum. In the long term, this close cooperation produced competition and resentment from other clerics in Burūjirdī's administration and ultimately led to Khomeini's departure from Burūjirdī's circle and his loss of status within Burūjirdī's administration.

¹⁸² Faḡl Allāh Maḡallātī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 17.

¹⁸³ Faḡl Allāh Maḡallātī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 15.

In the early years of his administration, Burūjirdī consulted with prominent figures such as Ayatollah Ḥujjat.¹⁸⁴ Ḥujjat was a respected figure who had considerable experience and was highly regarded in his teaching. However, when it came to making important decisions, Khomeini had a special place among Burūjirdī's advisors.¹⁸⁵ Burūjirdī had other advisors as well. According to Bāqī, they were Shaykh Muḥammad Bāqir Muḥsinī Malāyirī (1906-1995), Rūḥ Allāh Kamāl'vand Khurram Ābādī (1901-1964) and Sayyid Jalāl Āshtiyānī (1925-2005).¹⁸⁶ In his memoirs, Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī mentions Sayyid Muḥammad Muḥaqiq Dāmād (1307-1969) and Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī (1916-1986) as Burūjirdī's advisors.¹⁸⁷ Muḥāmī also mentions Fāẓil Qafqāzī Lankarānī (1891-1972) and Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim Iṣfahānī.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, a handful of senior professors were Burūjirdī's advisors, and among them Khomeini was the most important one, not just because of his traditional position in Qum, but because of his plan to bring Burūjirdī to Qum as well as his political astuteness, which was

¹⁸⁴ Muḥammad Ṣādiq Tihrānī, Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Muḥammad Ṣādiq Tihrānī, 8.

¹⁸⁵ Ṣādiq Khalkhālī, Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Ṣādiq Khalkhālī, 8.

¹⁸⁶ 'Abd al-'Alī Bāqī, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 1; Muḥammad Bāqir Muḥsinī Malāyirī (1906-1995), was born and educated in Najaf with Ākhund-i Khurāsānī before going to Mashhad to study with Āqā'zādah Khurāsānī. He was granted a number of *ijtihād* permissions. After the establishment of the Qum Seminary, he resided in Qum. For more information see Shihāb al-Dīn Ḥusaynī, *Dar mahẓar-i yak 'arīf ḥaẓrat-i Āyat Allāh ḥājj shaykh Muḥammad Bāqir Muḥsinī Malāyirī* (Qum: Naṣr, 1999); Rūḥ Allāh Kamāl'vand Khurram Ābādī (1901-1964), was born and studied in Khurram Ābād before his going to Burūjird to study with Burūjirdī. He later moved to Arāk and Qum to continue his education, where he encountered Burūjirdī and attended his classes again. For more information see Kungirah-yi Buzurdāsh-ti Āyat Allāh Kamāl'vand, *Zindagināmah-i ḥaẓrat-i Āyat Allāh al-'uzmā ḥājj āqā Rūḥ Allāh Kamāl'vand* (Qum, Fiqh, 2005); Sayyid Jalāl Āshtiyānī (1925-2005), was born and educated in Āshtiyān before his going to Qum in 1944. He is known as one of the recent prominent figures in Islamic Philosophy who contributed substantially to the field. A number of his works have been translated into English. According to Āshtiyānī himself, he attended Burūjirdī's classes for eight years, which means that he started to go to Burūjirdī's classes in 1953. So, it is unlikely that in 1944 Āshtiyānī was an advisor to Burūjirdī, therefore, the account is not accurate. See Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, and Dāwūd M. Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddamah-i 'i qayṣarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam-i shaykh akbar Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, M. 638 H.q. (1240 M.)* (Qum: Daftar-i Tabliḡhāt-i Islāmī, 1992), 92. For more information about Āshtiyānī see Anjuman-i Āṣār va Mafākhir-i Farhangī, *Zindagī'nāmah va khadamāt-i 'ilmī va farhangī-i marḥūm ustād sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī* (Tihrān: Anjuman-i Āṣār va Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 2006).

¹⁸⁷ Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 30. Sayyid Muḥammad Muḥaqiq Dāmād (1307-1969), was born in Ardakān, Yazd. He was known as Dāmād, as he married Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī's daughter (the word Dāmād means son-in-law). He contributed substantially and taught a considerable number of students including Ḥusayn 'Alī Muntazirī, Murtaẓā Muṭahharī and Ayatollah Bihishtī; Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī (1916-1986), was the eldest son of Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī and a close friend to Khomeini. He contributed substantially to the teaching, research and administration of the seminary. His writings in *fiqh* are highly appreciated. Because of his father, he was highly respected by clerics. For more information on Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī see S. Ḥusaynī Yazdī, *Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i ḥaẓrat-i Āyat Allāh mu'assis, va farzand-i barūmandishān Āyat Allāh ḥājj shaykh Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī (rah)* (Qum: Almas, 2002).

¹⁸⁸ Muḥāmī, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 25; Ayatollah Fāẓil Qafqāzī Lankarānī (1891-1972) was born in Lankarān (of Azerbaijan Republic) and educated in Ardabīl, Zanjān and Mashhad before his going to Qum in 1923. His son, Muḥammad Fāẓil Lankarānī was a recent Shi'i *marja'*. For more information see chapter one of Ḥasan Fāṭimī Muvahḥid, *Simā-yi fiqāhat, ḥayāt-i ṭayyibah-i marja'-i 'aẓīm al-sha'n ḥaẓrat-i Āyat Allāh al-'uzmā Muḥammad Fāẓil Lankarānī* (Qum, Intishārāt-i Markaz-i Fiqhī-i A'immaḥ-i Aṭhār, 2008), 21-32.

appreciated by Burūjirdī. This is illustrated well by an incident in 1951, when Burūjirdī introduced Khomeini as his spokesman to a journalist who sought an interview with him.¹⁸⁹ While the main reason for sending the journalist to Khomeini was Burūjirdī's reluctance to be interviewed by a newspaper, it nevertheless shows the degree of trust and the special relationship between the two men as the newspaper had national circulation. Thus the reporter was sent to Khomeini's house to conduct the interview and Khomeini was interviewed by the journal *Taraqḡī* as Burūjirdī's exclusive spokesman.¹⁹⁰

The good relationship between Burūjirdī and Khomeini was not ideal for everybody. Inside Burūjirdī's administration, there was rivalry and jealousy. Perhaps the most important figure was Ḥājj Aḥmad Khādimī, Burūjirdī's special secretary who disliked Khomeini not just personally, but also professionally. Sometimes he ignored Khomeini by failing to greet him when he came to visit Burūjirdī. Ḥājj Aḥmad had served Burūjirdī as his special secretary and personal assistant since the time that they were both in Burūjird. He, like Burūjirdī, owned properties in Burūjird and they trusted each other. Apart from that, Ḥājj Aḥmad's daughter was Burūjirdī's wife which provided him with a special position. Later events clearly showed that he was much more successful than any other cleric, even people like Khomeini and Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī, in maintaining Burūjirdī's attention and trust. Nevertheless, the Qum clerics' view of Ḥājj Aḥmad Khādimī was generally negative.

Ḥājj Aḥmad was a "tall man who had a beard and moustache which, if it were a bit longer, would have made him seem like a dervish". People believed that he was a supporter of the monarchy and was linked to the Shah's court. It was always said that Ḥājj Aḥmad told Burūjirdī what to do and what not to do, but this was mostly hearsay as there is no evidence to support this claim.¹⁹¹ On the contrary, there is evidence which shows that Ḥājj Aḥmad did not give orders to Burūjirdī. However, Burūjirdī delegated some very important duties to him. In fact, Ḥājj Aḥmad Khādimī's influence was

¹⁸⁹ Maḥallātī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 14 -18.

¹⁹⁰ It seems that this must be the *Taraqḡī* newspaper published by Luṭf Allāh Taraqqī in Tehran. In Iranian press history, there are at least three journals with the title *taraqḡī*. One was managed by Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī Khān Tihrānī Istānbulī which was established on 10 June 1933. The other one was established on 20 July 1924 and managed by Mīrzā Luṭf Allāh Dānismānd. There was another *taraqḡī* which was established by Luṭf Allāh Taraqqī in March 1929. See Samīrā Afrāsyābī, 'Rūznamah-i Taraqqī' in *Risālat*, No. 7175, 9 January 2011, 18.

¹⁹¹ Muḥāmī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 24-25.

not on Burūjirdī but on Burūjirdī's administration. All of Burūjirdī's meetings and appointments had to be carried out through him. He was a rich man and was trusted and respected in Tehran's bazaar to the degree that he sometimes collected money without issuing a receipt.¹⁹² He delivered Burūjirdī's most important and private messages, which gave him a unique position in Burūjirdī's circle. On the other hand, Ḥājj Aḥmad was rigid in his manner of administration and blocked attempts by other clerics to influence him and his practices and to gain access to Burūjirdī. While such rigidity antagonised many clerics, it pleased Burūjirdī who felt that Ḥājj Aḥmad was capable of minimising irrelevant disruptions to his usual scholarly business, and as a result Ḥājj Aḥmad was seen by Burūjirdī as indispensable and continued in the same capacity throughout his life.

The top clerics in Qum were not happy with the situation, and led by Khomeini and Ḥājj Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī, they devised a way to circumvent Ḥājj Aḥmad and influence Burūjirdī. They knew that Burūjirdī wanted a better educational administration in the seminary and would welcome a plan for this. Their plan provided an opportunity to exclude Ḥājj Aḥmad, as he was not an expert in this field as they were. The plan was to appoint some people on the administrative board of the Qum Seminary so Burūjirdī would delegate the administrative responsibilities of the seminary to them. Burūjirdī initially welcomed and agreed with the proposal and appointed a committee for it. In the initial stage, the committee would take responsibility for administering the seminary on Burūjirdī's behalf. It is difficult to identify the precise list of members of that committee. According to different sources, the committee members were Khomeini, Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī, Ḥājj Sayyid Aḥmad Zanjānī (1890-1973), Ḥājj Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Iṣfahānī, Ḥājj Sayyid Abū Ṭālib Mudarrisī, Ḥājj Āqā Sayyid Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Kāshānī, Fāẓil Qafqāzī, Ḥājj Āqā Ḥusayn Qumī, Sayyid Muḥammad Dāmād, Ḥājj Mīrzā Maḥmūd Rawḥānī, Muḥammad Bāqir Sulṭānī, Mīrzā Muṣṭafā Ṣāḥib al-Dārī and a few other people. Meetings were held every Thursday evening at the Madrasah Fayẓīyah and Mīrzā Muṣṭafā Ṣāḥib al-Dārī hosted the meetings in his room.¹⁹³ Burūjirdī presumed that the committee would seek only administrative and not managerial powers regarding teaching but Khomeini and Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī in particular would seek managerial powers. Therefore on Friday 5 October 1949, the committee

¹⁹² Bāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 191-192.

¹⁹³ Karbāschī, *Tārīkh-i shifāhī inqilāb-i Islāmī*, 203.

provided a comprehensive proposal for reforms in the seminary, asking for full managerial powers including financial authority. There is evidence that people who were in Burūjirdī's existing administration, mainly Ḥājj Aḥmad, made trouble for Khomeini and the committee when they raised the proposal.¹⁹⁴ In fact, one may suppose that Ḥājj Aḥmad was uncomfortable with the committee and his exclusion from their meetings. He was not a qualified professor and couldn't ask to become a member. Even if he had been a member, he would have had no authority over the committee, as the majority of professors would oppose him and support the ideas of Khomeini and Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī which were closer to their interest. Ḥājj Aḥmad was thinking about a way to either destroy the committee or its relationship with Burūjirdī, and the full managerial proposal was exactly the moment that Ḥājj Aḥmad was waiting for. The proposal requested more freedom for professors in administrative duties in the school, thus limiting Burūjirdī's influence and authority and Ḥājj Aḥmad managed to convince Burūjirdī that the professors were conspiring against him. Upon receiving the proposal, Burūjirdī strongly disagreed and abruptly terminated his meeting with Khomeini and Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī to show his disapproval meaning that not only was the proposal refused, the committee lost its position as well.

Gradually the relationship between Khomeini and Burūjirdī was cooling off. However, Khomeini and Murtaẓā Ḥā'irī were still hopeful that they would get Burūjirdī's approval for reforms in the seminary. They thought that Burūjirdī's main concern was managing the finances, for which in 1952, with the support of Ayatollah Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Kashani, who was the speaker of the parliament, they prepared a plan to ensure considerable financial resources for the Qum Seminary. In fact, it was Kashani's idea to present a bill in parliament proposing to spend the endowment money to support seminaries. According to their plan, a bill was put forward in parliament called "bill for the income of endowments" and prepared a scheme for the government whereby the state should pay the endowment income to Burūjirdī, as the Shi'ī *marja'*. The income amounted to about 50,000,000 Rls, which was very considerable for that time. When Kashani introduced his plan to spend the national endowments to finance the seminaries, Burūjirdī initially agreed that Khomeini and Ḥā'irī would

¹⁹⁴ Muḥammad 'Alī Girāmī, Tihṙān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Girāmī, 34.

prepare a draft for the bill and offer it to Burūjirdī for his signature.¹⁹⁵ Kashani said that he would see that it was approved in parliament. Khomeini and Ḥā'irī enthusiastically wrote the draft and prepared it for Burūjirdī to sign and send to Kashani. When Khomeini and Ḥā'irī went to Burūjirdī, they were shocked when he refused to sign the draft. In fact, Burūjirdī had changed his mind, and consequently the bill never materialised. Khomeini and Ḥā'irī became incensed during their visit, the latter throwing his turban on the ground and the former smashing his tea cup against the wall before storming out of the house.¹⁹⁶ This was the last confrontation between Burūjirdī and Khomeini, after which they suspended their relations.

Burūjirdī's refusal was apparently the result of Ḥājj Aḥmad's recommendation who had warned him not to become swayed by Khomeini and Kashani's ambitious scheming. Furthermore, Khomeini was always supportive of Kashani and probably this angered Burūjirdī.¹⁹⁷ Perhaps Kashani's political activities impressed Khomeini, an element which was missing from Burūjirdī's character. One must bear in mind that Kashani at that point represented Islamic political activism in its clerical form. At any rate, Burūjirdī showed that he was too conservative to allow dramatic reforms to be carried out in his administration and he preferred Ḥājj Aḥmad's traditional system to Khomeini's new system. Later, though no bill was sent to the parliament, the government paid 2,000,000 Rls annually to Burūjirdī, from the same financial source (endowments).¹⁹⁸ One may assume that some arrangement was made by Ḥājj Aḥmad with the state to propose an alternative plan to Kashani and Khomeini's plan. Ḥājj Aḥmad convinced Burūjirdī that he would be able to ask the government to pay this money in a more discreet way than a bill in the parliament.

Khomeini was frustrated and thwarted in his effort to reform the traditional structure and role of the seminary, a sentiment which he openly expressed to Burūjirdī, yet the latter clearly felt that they could not work together. Nevertheless, Burūjirdī was careful to keep some avenues open for Khomeini in terms of teaching and other activities in Qum. In other words, he didn't let people abuse his bad relationship with Khomeini by forcing him to leave Qum or preventing him from teaching.

¹⁹⁵ Muḥammadī 'Irāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 45.

¹⁹⁶ Muḥammadī Īrāqī, *Tārīkh-i shifāhī inqilāb-i Islāmī*, 45.

¹⁹⁷ Ja'farī, *Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, Ja'farī, 23.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

The friction between them was not caused by political issues; rather it was Burūjirdī's belief that Khomeini was going to upset the Qum Seminary with his dramatic plans for reform.¹⁹⁹ Soon after Burūjirdī's death, in a private meeting with Maḥallātī, Khomeini told him that he had invited Burūjirdī to Qum for several reasons including his knowledge as well as his courage "We wanted to use his power to attack the Shah but unfortunately this idea didn't come into practice."²⁰⁰ The statement clearly shows that Khomeini was not able to use Burūjirdī as he had initially intended. He stopped going to Burūjirdī's house until the latter's death in 1961. Even, when Burūjirdī died, Khomeini did not immediately observe the usual clerical tradition, failing to hold a memorial service for him. Šādiq Khalkhālī and 'Abd al-'Azīm Muḥaṣṣilī told Khomeini that people were attributing his failure to hold a memorial for Burūjirdī to the fact that he had been on bad terms with the late Ayatollah. Khomeini protested, and, to prove the point, proceeded to give him a memorial ceremony.²⁰¹

Personal management and institutional success

Personal management

It is extremely difficult to separate Burūjirdī's personal and institutional (professional) affairs. This is inherent in the nature of *marja'īyat*, as the institution is contained in one person. This requires a special method of management to be able to provide a balance between personal and institutional (professional) matters. The most important part of this management is the financial aspect. Financial issues are always interesting as they can highlight other issues which are not directly related to finances. The administration of an educational as well as a religious organisation such as the Qum Seminary was strongly influenced by its finances and financial resources available for developing the establishment. However, Burūjirdī, as the *marja'*, was not held accountable to anyone for his expenditures, meaning that he theoretically had absolute financial freedom. Having said that, he considered himself spiritually responsible to the Hidden Imam, and therefore needed certain

¹⁹⁹ Muḥammad Šādiqī Tihrānī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 20.

²⁰⁰ Faḏl Allāh Maḥallātī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 14-15.

²⁰¹ Šādiq Khalkhālī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 24.

justifications for spending the money. Most of the money that was collected by Burūjirdī was to be spent either to support Shi‘i scholarship or to develop the faith and theological seminaries. The most common expenditures were the salaries of students and professors who were studying or teaching in the seminary, funding research projects and funding institutional projects such as building a mosque or a seminary. As he received huge sums of money every year, financial management was very important, not only in terms of careful spending, but how and where to spend as well.

In terms of personal finance, unlike some other *marja*‘s, Burūjirdī was a self-funded *marja*‘, meaning that his personal and family expenses were not funded by the religious taxes that he collected. He did not use the money for his own salary or household as he was wealthy enough to finance his own life as he had properties in Burūjird which produced all of the necessary funds to maintain his household and guests. That in turn made him different from those *marja*‘s who had less independent means and had to fund themselves and their households with religious taxes. The fact that he was self-funded gave him a better public image, as his followers could rest assured that their money was not being used to finance him or his household. Since he did not use the money for himself, he could easily afford to pay many more people such as his students, which gave him greater publicity and legitimacy. One must consider the fact that the amount of money needed to maintain a *marja*‘s household is usually much greater than that needed to maintain a number of students. That was a key issue, as at the beginning of *marja*‘īyat when the followers were few and hence the revenues from religious taxes were low, this could dramatically affect financial management in terms of the ability to finance students and provide a livelihood for them.

Burūjirdī’s lifestyle differed from that of ordinary religious scholars or seminary students. It was similar to that of a merchant who had servants to maintain his household. The wife managed the servants, who prepared meals. Burūjirdī used to leave home early in morning for his teaching came back home at noon and went back to work again in the afternoon.²⁰² At the same time, he himself had a simple life and always wore clothes made from domestically produced Iranian textiles, normally from “Barak of Mashhad”, a well-known Iranian textile company. On occasions when he received a

²⁰² Muḥammad Ṣādiq Tihrānī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 40.

present, he gave it to someone else, rather than taking it for himself. At the same time both he and his household ate simple food which saved him a lot of money.²⁰³ In Ramazān, before dawn, he ate 150 grams of yogurt and a nibble of bread and in the afternoon he broke his fast with a cup of milk.²⁰⁴ The simplicity of his life was not restricted to food or clothing – it extended to include medical aspects as well. A contemporary newspaper reported that he eschewed the use of glasses and a hearing aid in spite of his doctor's recommendations.²⁰⁵ This was evidence of how important it was for him to show people that their *marja'* does not use something different from them.

Generally any *marja'* is supposed to live in a very simple house, like a poor man rather than a member of the nobility. It is still a critical issue and *marja'*s try to keep the same tradition by living in very simple houses in theory, but not all of them could make it happen in practice. Living in a simple house does not mean that they are short on money, as many of them fund the students of theological colleges. I remember when years ago on a religious occasion, I visited the house of the prestigious *marja'*, the late Ayatollah Bahjat, in Qum, where I saw a few holes in the carpet. People were showing the holes to each other and praising him for living so cheaply. According to an account by a magazine at the time, Burūjirdī's house was very simple. Based on the description which the reporter gives, the alley in which the house was located was only two meters wide. The reporter said: "although I already knew that he lived in a very simple house, I did not expect such a simple house." The door of the house was so small that only one average sized person could pass at a time.²⁰⁶

However, the simplicity of the house belied the complexity of the functions and transactions performed therein. The house was Burūjirdī's office as well. Ḥājj Aḥmad Khādimī, Burūjirdī's personal secretary and father-in-law, whom Burūjirdī had trusted for 40 years, was always in the house. Apart from him, there was a cleric who had the appearance of a well-educated *faqīh*. There was a small waiting room of only seven or eight square meters in which people from different cities

²⁰³ 'Bīst-u chahār sā'at-i zindagī-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 76, pp. 10-11, taken from *Āzhang* newspaper. There is a lack of sources which describe Burūjirdī's life style, restricting the historian to judge and comment on a newspaper source. However, looking at some other primary and secondary sources about other *marja'*s the historian can conclude that there is a standard way of describing a *marja'*'s life as a simple life (equal to those of poor classes of people or at least avoiding waste and wealthy lifestyle) and to rely on domestic products (as opposed to foreign western products) to show his support for the products made by the Iranian Muslims.

²⁰⁴ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 75, p. 13.

²⁰⁵ *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 58, p. 56.

²⁰⁶ Ziyā' al-Dīn 'Allāmah, 'Muṣāḥabah bā ḥazrat-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', *Khvāndanīhā*, year 7, No. 32, pp. 5-6.

waited for the Ayatollah. The room was connected to another room which had a door to the internal part of the house, where the Ayatollah came to meet his visitors. This is the traditional way for a *marja'* to keep his residence. As documents show, Burūjirdī did not have any separate office for his professional engagements (which is now usual for *marja'*s). In the house there were three different committees: first was the committee for reading and proof reading his writings; second, the committee for letters and telegrams; and third, the committee for religious questions and answers.²⁰⁷ The gist of the reporter's account was that a huge amount of work was accomplished in a tiny house, which implied that his management was both efficient and highly cost-effective.

An Egyptian journalist, who wrote another report a few years later, saw his house in a totally different way. Acknowledging the small size of his house, he emphasized the sense of inferiority which people felt when they visited the place. Based on his report, in Burūjirdī's modest house, representatives of people from different classes would go to see him. His visitors included highly respected authorities and great politicians. However, all of these great visitors were humbled when visiting the Ayatollah. They were obliged to stay one to three days to have the honour of meeting him. The Egyptian journalist emphasized that the Shah would go there to seek Burūjirdī's blessing, whereas Burūjirdī would not reciprocate and visit the Shah in his palace. The door of his house was dark in colour and above the door the following sentence was carved in wood: "*Imāmat 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ḥiṣnī, lā ilāha illā Allāh, fa man dakhala ḥiṣnī amina min 'azābī*" which means "the leadership of Ali, peace be upon him, is my castle; there is no god except Allah, and whoever enters my castle is free from suffering".²⁰⁸

The description of Burūjirdī's everyday life is as disciplined as his finances and material life. An hour before dawn he went on foot from his house to the holy shrine. Then he prayed privately before leading the morning prayers for a wider audience. On religious holidays, he gave a twenty-minute sermon for the audience, who were members of public. Around sunrise he came back home and ate breakfast. Then he took a nap for around an hour before returning to the seminary to teach. He sat on the small pulpit which was for his teaching, which took 45-60 minutes. It was a high level class

²⁰⁷ This is a description which was written a few weeks after the death of Ayatollah Iṣfahānī.

²⁰⁸ 'Qavītarīn va Muḥtaramtarīn Mard-i Irān', *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 79, p. 9.

and only the students who were close to attaining the status of *ijtihād* were allowed to participate.²⁰⁹ Then he went to one of the corners of the shrine and conducted scheduled meetings with several people. Following that, he led the noon prayers before returning home for lunch and a short rest. In the afternoon, he met people who were coming to Qum to pay their religious taxes. In the room where he sat, there was a fireplace in front of him. All of his visitors sat on the ground out of respect for him. Everyone, after explaining the reason for their visits, gave him a sum of money and Burūjirdī gave a receipt in return and they left very quickly. In the meantime, he answered his letters as well. Most of the answers were very short and were often simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers.

A secretary also accompanied the Ayatollah throughout the visiting process, mainly because it was reputed that the Ayatollah had some hearing problems and relied on his secretary to facilitate answering his visitors’ questions.²¹⁰ Around sunset, the bank’s manager along with one of his colleagues came over and counted the money. The Ayatollah supervised the process but he never actually touched the money. Then before sunset he went to the shrine to prepare for the night prayers before returning home.²¹¹ In the course of a full day and night (24 hours), he only slept for two hours.²¹² This was his usual life in Qum, but in the course of the summer, he spent his time in a village near Qum called Vushnavah where he followed a slightly different schedule.²¹³ There he spent most of his time resting and conducting research along with a few of his close companions. A car belonging to the post office brought his post once a week.²¹⁴

Every day he received a different number of letters ranging from 600 to 1,500 letters.²¹⁵ His assistants were required to read and answer them and eventually he himself read the questions and the

²⁰⁹ Indeed this is not true, because there is evidence which shows that even members of public sat in on this class. It seems that the more accurate account is that the teaching was planned for high level students and it was obligatory for them to attend. However, as Burūjirdī taught in very simple language, it was understandable by the public.

²¹⁰ Burūjirdī’s personal assistant (Hājj Aḥmad Khādīmī) said that Burūjirdī was “selectively deaf” and if he wants to, he listens and hears. See Tavakkulī’zādah, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārikh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 39.

²¹¹ ‘Bīst-u chahār sā’at zindagī-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī’, *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 76, pp. 10-11, taken from *Āzhang* newspaper.

²¹² *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 58, p. 56. This seems to be a standard description for a *marja*. I saw that in many sources about other *marja*’s. The interesting thing is that they usually say two hours for sleeping which seems improbable.

²¹³ Vushnavah is a village 60 Kilometres away from Qum.

²¹⁴ *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 75, p. 13.

²¹⁵ ‘Dīdanīhā-yi Qum’, *Khvāndanīhā*, year 27, No. 22, p. 44, taken from *Rawshanfikr*; and *Khvāndanīhā*, year 15, No. 69, p. 14.

given answer and if he was satisfied, he signed and stamped the letter. He had carefully chosen his assistants for this purpose, as they could have marred Burūjirdī's image if they ignored some letters. There were many letters which were never answered, but this was a deliberate policy taken by Burūjirdī. As Burūjirdī himself explained to Sayyid Fakhr al-Dīn Fāl Asīrī (1929-2008) who had not received any answer to one of his letter, it was not because he didn't read the letters, as some people thought, but rather because he believed these letters could have no satisfactory answer, thus he preferred not to respond.²¹⁶ In this way, both he as well as the members of his administration demonstrated their trustworthiness. Burūjirdī's trust in the members of his administration was so high that even a burglary in his house couldn't convince him to involve the police as he was concerned about the reputation of his administration. Burūjirdī once had a big suitcase full of money which was stolen when he wanted to go to Vushnavah. The police were informed of the theft and told Burūjirdī they would have to investigate and interrogate members of his administration if they were to be involved in the case.²¹⁷ He initially agreed to police intervention, but changed his mind when he realized the implications for his administrators and ultimately asked the police not to investigate and forgot about the money. This is clear evidence that Burūjirdī was not only very careful in choosing members of his administration, but was also willing to defend them and make sacrifices for them if it was necessary. He was aware that his office was an important and powerful place and must not be open to anyone who sought to abuse their position. On the other hand, he was very careful to not destroy the office's reputation among the seminary students and the public. He recognised that his own power and that of his administration was grounded in popular trust and goodwill, which was his real capital. Thus he went to great lengths to maintain the reputation of his administration, discontinuing his relations with Khomeini and some other top professors in order to defend it.

He received different types of letters. Perhaps the most important letters, in Burūjirdī's opinion, were letters of *istiftā'* (religious questions), which were questions raised by followers about their religious duties. These questions were answered by a team of experts in jurisprudence, who were supposedly his most knowledgeable students and were called members of the fatwa committee.

²¹⁶ Sayyid Fakhr al-Dīn Fāl Asīrī, 'Khāṭirāt' in Ghulām Rizā Karbāschī, *Tārīkh-i shifāhī inqilāb-i Islāmī*, 269-271.

²¹⁷ Khalkhālī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 17-18.

Members of Burūjirdī's fatwa committee were Āqā Mīrzā Mahdī, Sayyid Ḥusayn Budalā and Āqā Muḥammad Ḥassan Burūjirdī.²¹⁸ Shaykh 'Alī Ṣāfi and Ḥā'irī Kirmānī were also members.²¹⁹ According to 'Irāqī, Muḥammad 'Alī Ḥā'irī, Sayyid Muṣṭafā Khvānsārī, Luṭf Allāh Ṣāfi and 'Irāqī himself were also members of the fatwa committee.²²⁰ The meetings took place in the outer room of Burūjirdī's house. Burūjirdī himself was present in the meetings, but did not participate in the discussions. In fact, during the meeting, he was writing his *ḥāshiyah* on *Vasīlat al-najāḥ*. Khomeini, Gulpāygānī and Sayyid Muḥammad Dāmād Yazdī also attended those meetings.²²¹ However, one must bear in mind that Khomeini could not have been in the meetings after 1952, when he suspended his relations with Burūjirdī. Burūjirdī had a special notebook for questions and answers about religious issues called an *istiftā'* notebook. When he received a question, he took a note of the question and answer in the notebook. In case in the future someone else asked the same question, he referred to the previous answer.²²²

Burūjirdī's personal life was a successful example of efficient budget management as well as time management. Through such a system, he carried out his religious leadership duties efficiently, using a small team of people whom he trusted. He did not let others interfere in or influence his management system, welcoming people's cooperation but specifying that anyone who wanted to work with him had to accept his authority and work within his prescribed boundaries. By maintaining a simple and economical system of administration, Burūjirdī was able to free up financial resources which he put to use outside of his administrative circle.

Introducing modern management in the Qum Seminary **Management of the Qum Seminary**

The circulation of money (cash flow) shows the potential of every institution. However, it is nearly impossible to determine the level of cash flow in an institution like the Qum Seminary. Money came from a multitude of different sources. In some cases there was a receipt, in some other cases

²¹⁸ Sayyid Ḥusayn Budalā, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 7-8.

²¹⁹ Ḥusayn Budalā, *Haftād sāl khāṭirah* (Tīhrān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 1999), 156.

²²⁰ 'Irāqī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 13.

²²¹ Ṣādiqī Tīhrānī, Muḥammad, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 1.

²²² *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 58, p. 56.

there was no receipt. Some money was paid to people whom the *marja*‘ trusted, and others were authorised by the *marja*‘ to receive money and even to spend the money. Thus the issue was complicated. In such an institution, because of the importance of personal relationships, there was a tendency to keep financial issues secret as money was a very sensitive issue which could easily create problems for the institution if discussed too publicly.

In 1947, Burūjirdī received around 500,000 Rls every month which produced him a total of 6,000,000 in the course of year.²²³ The money dramatically increased in later years, as by 1953 he was receiving 3,000,000 Rls monthly of which 2,500,000 was sent by merchants of Tehran.²²⁴ That means the total annual income for 1953 was 36,000,000. In 1954 he received 1,000,000,000 Rls.²²⁵ This dramatic increase between 1947 and 1954 was likely a result of the deaths of the two prominent *marja*‘s of Najaf, Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī in 1946 and Ḥājj Āqā Ḥusayn Qumī in 1947 as well as the death of *Āyāt-i Ṣalāṣ* in Qum; Khvānsārī in 1952, Ḥujjat in 1953 and Ṣadr in 1953. In addition, Ayatollah Mīrzā Muḥammad Fayḏ-i Qumī died in 1951. In other words, the religious taxes which would have been given to these clerics were sent to Burūjirdī after their deaths.

The annual income in 1955, was approximately 730,000,000 Rls, as Burūjirdī’s office received around 1,500,000-2,000,000 Rls every day that year, all of which was spent. The total income for 1955 decreased slightly from 1954, as a likely result of the new *marja*‘īyat of Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥsin Ḥakīm in Najaf. During the same year, the daily cost of running the Qum Seminary was 500,000 Rls which included the hospital, expenses of the seminary and monthly stipends for students.²²⁶ It means that the annual cost of running Qum Seminary was 182,500,000 Rls. The rates of student salaries were different and ranged from 300 Rls to 600 Rls monthly, depending on the level of the student’s education, with higher level students receiving higher salaries. When students decided to marry, they received an extra family allowance.²²⁷ However, not all of the students received salaries. To be qualified for the salary, the students must have obtained satisfactory results in their

²²³ The Newspaper *Kasrā*, taken from *Khvāndanīhā* year 8, No. 12, Tuesday 21 Mihr 1326,

²²⁴ *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 75, p. 13.

²²⁵ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 15, No. 69, p. 14.

²²⁶ ‘Bīst-u chahār sā’at zindagī-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī’, *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 76, pp. 10-11, taken from *Āzhang* newspaper.

²²⁷ Ibid.

examinations and have been recommended to the salary office. This was one of Burūjirdī's innovations, as previously all the students had automatically received a salary. This new regulation gave students an added incentive to study diligently and behave responsibly and prevented less motivated students from receiving salaries. Students with adequate financial means to fund themselves were asked to refrain from claiming a salary, but there was no formal test to ascertain their financial situation.

Every day in 1955, a sum of around 1,500,000 Rls was sent to Mashhad, Isfahan, Yazd and other cities which had seminaries as well as to other countries.²²⁸ There is no evidence of the total sum of money sent to other sources in 1958, but in a document of the same year concerning the finances of the Najaf Seminary, a donation known as the "bread of students" was sent every month by Burūjirdī and totalled 1,000,000 Rls every month.²²⁹

In 1960, a year before Burūjirdī's death, Tehran's merchants paid him total of 5,000,000 Rls monthly and Indian and Pakistani merchants paid him 200,000-400,000 Rupees monthly.²³⁰

Finally, in 1961 when Burūjirdī died, the sum of 3,000,000 Rls credit was in his account and he owed 6,000,000 in expenses.²³¹ Interestingly, and to the people's surprise, instead of designating someone as his successor, the only important part of Burūjirdī's will was about delegating this debt to an Isfahani merchant. An official will for Burūjirdī was found in a lawyer's office, where he had specified that the monies after him must be spent on the expenses of the seminary and on settling his debts with Naṣr Allāh Khalkhālī (his financial representative in Najaf) and that a lump sum of 10,000 Rls should be paid to each of Burūjirdī's children.²³² This is evidence of Burūjirdī's special attention to financial issues.

These accounts were documented in two private books with leather covers. One was for income and the other one was for expenditures. When he received financial requests and funding applications from other theological colleges, he made a note in the notebook and when he received

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 34, p. 5.

²³⁰ *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 56, p. 11.

²³¹ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 57, p. 2.

²³² Daftar-i Asnād-i Rasmī Shumārah-i Hasht-i Qum, singed by Hājj Aḥmad Khādimī, 29 December 1961, No. 53263.

money, it was dispatched to its destination and the transaction was duly recorded in his book. He personally recorded all of the financial transactions.²³³ After his death, Muḥammad Ḥasan, Burūjirdī's son found the notebook and discovered that his father supported Ayatollah Kashani by sending him a monthly salary of 2,500 Rls.²³⁴ Apart from that, in another section of the notebook, it showed that he contributed a sum of 12,500 Rls towards buying a house for Kashani in Tehran.²³⁵

Burūjirdī was highly sensitive about the privacy of financial issues. In fact, one of the reasons that he opposed Khomeini's plan for reforms in the seminary was on this point. Based on the reform proposal, everyone who had a financial request would have had to raise it with the committee first and the committee would then approve or reject the request, which would have destroyed Burūjirdī's financial privacy. For many reasons, he was reluctant that anyone else, even his son, be aware of his beneficiaries.

Outside Qum, in Najaf, there were five *marja*'s who had some followers and therefore had access to funds paid by their followers. They were Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥsin Ḥakīm, the maternal grandson of Sayyid Kāzīm Yazdī, who had some followers in Azerbaijan, Khurāsān, Turkey and Afghanistan; Ayatollah Shāhrūdī who had some followers in Shāhrūd and Khurāsān; Ayatollah Iṣṭahbānātī, who had some followers in Fars; Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khū'ī who had some followers in Rizā'īyah and Mahābād; and Ayatollah Sayyid 'Abd al-Hādī Shīrazī, the greatest of them all, who had a medical problem and came from Iraq to an Iranian hospital at the Shah's invitation and expense.²³⁶ But none of them could have Burūjirdī's fortune in terms of funding, except Ḥakīm who took Burūjirdī's position after the latter's death. At the time of his death, Burūjirdī was paying a total of 1,300,000 Rls in salaries to theological students inside and outside the Qum Seminary. People were concerned about salaries and finally an agreement was reached that Ayatollah Gulpāygānī was to pay 400,000 and Ayatollah Sharī'atmadārī 300,000 Rls to compensate the loss of support from

²³³ 'Bīst-u chahār sā'at-i zindagī-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 76, pp. 10-11, taken from *Āzhang* newspaper.

²³⁴ Muḥammad 'Alī Girāmī, 'Khāṭirāt' in Ghulām Rizā Karbāschī, *Tārīkh-i shifāhī-i inqilāb-i Islāmī*, 121.

²³⁵ Muḥsinī Malāyirī, 'Khāṭirāt', in Ghulām Rizā Karbāschī, *Tārīkh-i shifāhī inqilāb-i Islāmī*, 136.

²³⁶ 'Bīst-u chahār sā'at zindagī-i āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', in *Khvāndanīhā*, 16, 76, pp. 10-11.

Burūjirdī.²³⁷ However, this sum was substantially less than Burūjirdī's financial contribution for the clerical establishment and the Shi'i community around the world.

Burūjirdī's management of the Qum Seminary highlights some interesting aspects of his overall policy. It seems that in his financial management he followed a policy of targeted expenditures, meaning that instead of making general payments, he made specific payments for specific targets. Within the seminary itself, he established a system of differentiated pay based on a person's rank. Those in a higher rank were more important for the scholarly functions of the seminary than those who were in a lower rank. This produced an important change in the seminary in that those with a higher grade, and by extension a larger salary, could stay in the seminary and study and research during the vacation, while those with a lower grade had to go to other cities and work (e.g. performing religious sermons during Muḥarram and Ramaẓān) and earn more money. This was an important advantage for serious scholars who wanted to stay in Qum and research. Apart from this general ranking system, Burūjirdī had a system of personal ranking which conferred some special financial benefits on certain people (such as Kashani), as demonstrated by the evidence in his confidential notebooks.

Outside of the seminary, he generously distributed funds to other cities and countries. Although the money there would not necessarily be put to the same scholarly use as in Qum, it would help to consolidate Shi'i religious communities, which in turn would create publicity for him. In the long term, members of those religious communities would pay him religious taxes, thus giving him a good rate of return on the investment. Therefore, his generous distribution of funds outside of the Qum Seminary would eventually have a positive effect on Qum, as well as himself.

Educational administration

At the beginning of Burūjirdī's administration, the number of students was around 300.²³⁸ After Burūjirdī's arrival in Qum the number of students gradually increased. By 1953, there were

²³⁷ See 'Abbās Dūzdūzānī, Tihṙān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Dūzdūzānī, 21.

²³⁸ *Hawzah*, No. 44, p. 43-47.

more than 4,000 students at the seminary.²³⁹ It was claimed that Burūjirdī himself knew all of those students by name as well as the location of their rooms, their exact salaries and their educational situation.²⁴⁰ By 1955, the number of students had increased to 10,000.²⁴¹ Managing such a large number of students was facilitated by the introduction of *hawzah* examinations. Burūjirdī attended all of the examinations and personally appointed the examiners.²⁴²

The examination had three main purposes. Firstly, it was essential to assess the educational attainment of students. Secondly, it was essential to establish a benchmark for academic achievement which would entitle a student to receive a salary and thirdly, it helped to separate the serious students from those who were merely using their time at the seminary as a cover for other activities. The immediate effect of introducing these examinations was the departure of the less serious students to other cities and other jobs. Most of them went to small towns and villages and earned a living by becoming prayer leaders and giving holding religious congregations.

Burūjirdī himself supervised the examination committee, which was composed of people like Sayyid Muḥammad Dāmād Yazdī, Muḥammad Bāqir Sulṭānī and Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim Iṣfahānī, and Fāẓil Lankarānī (Qafqāzī).²⁴³ Burūjirdī himself looked at all of the written papers and attended the oral examinations sessions.²⁴⁴ Students who were unable to pass or failed to participate in the examinations were removed from the payroll. Burūjirdī was pioneering in introducing the modern examination in the *hawzah* and wanted to carry out examinations in Najaf as well. He told his representative in Najaf, Shaykh Naṣr Allāh Khalkhālī that he should carry out examinations and remove the names of the people who failed to participate from the payroll. Introducing examinations in Najaf was not as easy as Qum. Iṣṭahbānātī, one of the top clerics of Najaf (one of the *marja* 's) had banned examinations, calling them *bid'ah* (illegitimate innovation in religious tradition) as he believed that examinations could not easily be reinstated in a seminary which had not held

²³⁹ *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 75, p. 13.

²⁴⁰ *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 58, p. 56. The account seems to be exaggerating about Burūjirdī's awareness. This seems to be another standard way of describing the perfection of a *marja* ' who knows everybody.

²⁴¹ 'Bīst-u chahār sā'at zindagī-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 76, pp. 10-11, taken from *Āzhang* newspaper.

²⁴² *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 75, p. 13.

²⁴³ Ṣālīḥ Najaf Ābādī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 2.

²⁴⁴ Muḥāmī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 12.

examinations since the time of Shaykh-i Ṭūsī.²⁴⁵ Although Burūjirdī was in a position of institutional as well as financial authority, he respected the opinion of the Najaf *marja* 's and exempted that school from examinations. While examinations generally successfully distinguished between good, mediocre and poor students, the idea failed in Najaf and the old system and its accompanying disorder continued.²⁴⁶ His exemption for Najaf seems even more interesting when we take into account that even high level clerics who participated in Burūjirdī's own classes had to sit the examination, and were entitled to receive a salary provided they passed.²⁴⁷ It was another symbol of Burūjirdī's deference to the top clerics of Najaf.

Apart from the usual salary, there was a special hardship fund available to needy students. Burūjirdī had appointed some special undercover employees to help him have a better understanding of the *hawzah*'s general environment from below, to carry out investigations about students' and professors' finances and to help those who were in a situation of financial need. At the same time, if observers noticed a moral problem with any of the students, it would be reported to Burūjirdī who would then discuss the issue with the student and try to alter his behaviour.²⁴⁸

While at the beginning people received equal salaries, gradually salaries became linked with education and level of academic achievement, as those who received higher stipends were formally recognised as serious students. There were also some other conditions for receiving a salary. For instance, those clerics who later decided to go to a secular university were no longer eligible to receive a salary. This even applied in the case of students who participated in the philosophy classes of Ṭabāṭabā'ī within the seminary. Receiving a salary was basically a sign that Burūjirdī's educational system was happy with the student and formally recognised him as a serious and responsible individual. Therefore, receiving a salary was not just a means for maintenance, as it was also a means for upgrading or downgrading someone's status, and if necessary, a means for humiliation.

Giving prizes to good students was a tradition in Burūjirdī's educational practice. This option was even open to very young clerics. When Akbar Hāshimī Rafsanjānī was a very young cleric, he

²⁴⁵ Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 27.

²⁴⁶ Ziyā'ī, Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Ziyā'ī, 14.

²⁴⁷ Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 2.

²⁴⁸ Bāqī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 14-16.

wrote a letter to Burūjirdī and told him that he had memorised 1000 lines from the poem *Alfīyah-i Ibn Mālik*. Burūjirdī examined him and gave him a prize of 90 Rls and a second hand clerical robe.²⁴⁹ The prize for distinction was much higher for senior students such as Muḥāmī, who passed his exam with an excellent mark and was offered a prize of 2,000 Rls. This was a considerable sum at that time, when by comparison the highest salary of a married student was 460 Rls.²⁵⁰ Prizes for good students covered research work as well. For example, Muntazirī had transcribed Burūjirdī's *uṣūl* classes and added his own commentary on it. He gave his writings to Burūjirdī, who in appreciation of his work gave him a prize of 500 Rls.²⁵¹ There were also prizes for oratory. People who could deliver good sermons were given a huge prize of 60,000 to 70,000 Rls. This became the reason that many people endeavoured to give good sermons. Indeed prior to Burūjirdī, according to the Najaf tradition, giving sermons (*manbar*) was considered to be a low class activity, but after him the culture in Qum changed and there was serious competition among students for oratory prizes which gradually improved the religious network of preachers in Iran.²⁵²

While Burūjirdī's educational reforms were not radical, they gradually improved the administration of the seminary. The main problem in administration was disorder and lack of a solid system to supervise people and monitor their activities. Burūjirdī understood that the best way to implement reforms in a traditional educational system was to have a gradual approach and the best means for that was to carefully prioritise expenditures. In fact, through his sound financial management, Burūjirdī introduced a new financial management system in the Shi'ī seminary which directly linked finances to education and abilities and minimised financial waste. In the first stage, through examination, Burūjirdī excluded the non-serious students from payroll, meaning that he saved a substantial amount of money. In the second stage he increased the salaries of high level students and professors. And finally he introduced a new method by paying financial rewards to those who could show their abilities in religious-related areas such as performing sermons and memorising the Quran.

²⁴⁹ Akbar Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, Tihṛān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, 7.

²⁵⁰ Muḥāmī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 14.

²⁵¹ Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, p. 11.

²⁵² Z̤iyā'ī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 16.

Considering the social and economic situation of the county, these plans were well-conceived. As a matter of fact, the establishment of new institutions in the country, such as the new civil code by Minister of Justice ‘Alī Akbar Dāvar in 1928 and University of Tehran in 1935, could potentially lure good students away from the seminary with lucrative career opportunities. Burūjirdī’s introduction of a targeted financial system was intended to provide good students with incentives to stay in the seminary. Nevertheless, he could not always compete with the new opportunities offered by the judiciary and the University of Tehran.

Modern education and its influence in Qum

Qum is quite close to Tehran and many clerics had regular contact with the capital. Gradually they became interested in familiarizing themselves with modern secular (Western) education. This interest was mainly in the more casual form of learning western languages or in more serious cases, of attending a secular university. By that time, most theological students, like other sectors of Iranian society, were interested in acquiring a minimum understanding of the West, especially in learning the basics of a western language to be able to read the alphabet and easy sentences. Those with more serious interests in modern education usually wanted to go to a secular university.

People were interested in attending a secular university and acquiring a modern education either from curiosity or for financial reasons. Some clerics were interested in studying Western philosophy. This type of interest was more common in clerics who were aware of public opinion and more advanced in their intellectual development, such as Ayatollah Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Bihishtī, who discussed his intention of acquiring a modern education in a secular university. It is interesting to know that although Burūjirdī generally was reluctant to give people permission to attend university, he gave permission to Bihishtī. Burūjirdī was unhappy with students who went to university, because he believed that they would acquire a secular education at the expense of Islamic knowledge. For example, undergraduates could study law and qualify as judges with insufficient knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, which was a calamity from Burūjirdī’s perspective. However, he let Ayatollah

Bihishtī go to university, as he promised that he would not become a secular judge.²⁵³ In Islam, judges are held to a very high standard, so Burūjirdī believed that they must be *mujtahids*. Another example of this type was Ayatollah Ṣādiqī, who was granted permission from Burūjirdī to study and teach at university. According to Ṣādiqī, Burūjirdī asked him who would teach at university if he did not? Thus he eventually went to teach at university.²⁵⁴

On the other hand, some other clerics were interested in going to university for financial and professional reasons. Following judicial reforms in Iran by the famous Iranian justice minister ‘Alī Akbar Dāvar, the main problem was finding capable individuals to become judges. Before that, the judiciary used *maḥākīm-i shar‘* and *maḥākīm-i ‘urf*, of which clerics could be members. But after the dissolution of those courts and the aforementioned reforms, it was necessary to be a graduate of a secular law school in order to be a judge. Many clerics who were in need of jobs were thus barred from acquiring well-paid and prestigious judgeships. So a large proportion of clerics showed their interest in modern education by getting formal high school diplomas and an undergraduate degree.²⁵⁵ They participated in the examinations held by the Ministry of Culture and many of them were accepted into the Faculty of Law at Tehran University, where indeed many students were clerics from the Qum Seminary.²⁵⁶ Having studied in the seminary, the students had a good background in (classical) Persian and Arabic, which were important in courts as well as in canon law and jurisprudence; thus they had a good chance to be accepted at the law school.²⁵⁷ Burūjirdī was very

²⁵³ Bāqī, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 29.

²⁵⁴ Ṣādiqī Tihrānī, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān 26.

²⁵⁵ There have been several legislative attempts to integrate clerical and state education systems, for instance see *Mashrūḥ-i muṣākarāt-i Majlis-i Shawra-yi Millī*, session 71 and 90 of 9th term and; session 27 of 17th term and session 29 of 24th term.

²⁵⁶ ‘Bih dastūr-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī Ṭullāb Ingilīsī Yād Mi’gīrand’, *Khvāndanīhā* year 19, No. 42, pp. 22-23 taken from *Dunyā* Newspaper.

²⁵⁷ In his work, Michael Fischer, considers the madrasa as less important than university. His main argument is that “no longer does the madrasa supply the teachers, notaries, judges, lawyers, scientists, or physicians of society; all these professionals are recruited now from universities, domestic and foreign”. See M. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980) 38. It seems that the system was unclear to him when he wrote his work. In fact, many national officials and civil servants both pre- and post-revolution were educated in *madrasahs*. Some of them were directly educated in a madrasa and others were connected to a madrasa through their family background. Of course, a madrasa was not capable of training physicians, but some of them were connected to the madrasa. I would like to emphasize government officials and civil servants. A large number of judges, lawyers and notaries, having been educated in a *madrasah*, had passed a short training course to make them qualified for undertaking their professional responsibilities. The same story applies for teachers and university professors. There is historical evidence showing that many madrasa students had to leave (or at least were considering leaving) the madrasa and look for jobs to earn a living. A famous example of that kind was Murtazā Muṭahharī, who left Qum after being appointed as a lecturer (and later full professor) in Tehran University.

unhappy with this type of student, as he was concerned that they would produce a pattern in Qum whereby good students would abandon the seminary in favour of the law school in Tehran and weak students who were unable to gain acceptance to the law school would remain in Qum. This was a very real concern about how to retain good potential professors and ensure the future success of the Qum Seminary. Therefore, Burūjirdī ordered that students who went on to secular universities were no longer entitled to receive a monthly salary, as he did not consider them to be serious and responsible members of the seminary.

At the time, the government had a scheme whereby any theological student from a seminary could get a certificate from his professor and participate in an exam and if they could pass the exam, then they were allowed to have the high school diploma which was the necessary prerequisite for applying to university. Apart from that, the same high school diploma allowed them to apply for jobs as civil servants and similar jobs in the judiciary and other state departments or ministries. When a theological student from the seminary decided to go there, Burūjirdī ordered that his stipend must be suspended. It also meant that the student would lose all of his credibility within the seminary.²⁵⁸ Burūjirdī's other source of concern regarding those who went to university and especially those who got government jobs was that they often abandoned their traditional Islamic appearance, shaving their beards and trading in their clerical garb for a Western suit. In some cases, this was an obvious and dramatic change and Burūjirdī considered it a shame on the faith. This kind of sociocultural engineering also influenced the public into thinking that a seminary education held less value than a modern secular education.

In short, the reasons for Burūjirdī's discontent with students leaving the seminary for university were twofold. Firstly, he feared a 'brain drain' of all the good *ṭalabas* (seminary students) to university because of the lucrative opportunities for those with a university (especially legal) education. Secondly, students who entered secular university and government posts often adopted a Western appearance and abandoned their Islamic garb and beards. This was widely perceived as an

²⁵⁸ Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, p. 21.

insult to the clerical class and had a negative impact on the class as a whole from public point of view.²⁵⁹

There were some other people, perhaps a tiny minority, who wanted to go to university in order to be able to penetrate and influence the administrative system of the country, especially in the education sector. As he mentions in his memoirs, Akbar Hāshimī Rafsanjānī was one of these, and he was especially interested in entering the areas of education and the judiciary. However, support for this view was not widespread in Qum as it was a conservative place. As Rafsanjānī says in his memoirs, although he and others held this view, they shrewdly opted not to take the risk of going to university as it might be interpreted as an act of defiance to Burūjirdī or a sign of objection to his opinions. However, this was not the case for other clerics, such as Murtaẓā Muṭahharī, who were from poorer families than Rafsanjānī. Muṭahharī was under significant financial pressure and requested that Burūjirdī pay him more money to be able to continue his teaching and research in Qum. He was even indebted to the local bakery and had to sell some of his books to repay his debts.²⁶⁰ He eventually angrily decided to go to Tehran and find a job there, firstly by giving religious sermons and later by teaching in the Theology Department of the University of Tehran as a faculty member. In the view of many scholars in the Qum Seminary, Muṭahharī served the faith by contributing in teaching and research at the University of Tehran while continuing to observe the clerical dress code. Although the majority of clerics who left the seminary for the university incurred disrespect by abandoning their clerical dress code and shaving their beards, there were others who were associated with the secular universities and at the same time served the clerical class and Islamic beliefs very well by writing in support of Islamic philosophy and ethics. However, the latter's number was very limited.

Once Burūjirdī had given his approval, many young and old clerics in the seminary learned western languages. The reason for learning those foreign languages was to become familiar with the modern world. As professors were not familiar with western languages, there were not any formal examinations and the school accepted language learning as an optional course. 80 percent of the

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ In the case of Muṭahharī there were political problems as well, mainly related to his support of Fidā'iyyān-i Islām, because of which Muṭahharī was barred from even seeing Burūjirdī. See Davānī, *Za'im-i buzurg*, 322.

students in Qum preferred to learn English and 10 percent preferred to learn German. Around 15 percent of the students in Qum were able to speak in English or translate articles from and into English. Apart from that, clerics were permitted to read foreign newspapers, except those which contained inappropriate pictures.²⁶¹ To better understand the importance for clerics of learning even the very basic points of a western language, we can look to an example which illustrates the clerics' poor knowledge of the outside world. One of them recounts in his memoirs "when I came to Qum, I had already finished my primary school in Isfahan. And for instance I knew that London is the capital of England. But most *tullāb* were not aware of that and were politically ignorant."²⁶²

Intellectual developments and the rise of modern political ideologies had an indirect effect on the *hawzah* education as well. This was shown by the development of philosophy teaching in the *hawzah* in order to equip students with rational arguments against non-Islamic and atheist schools of thought as well as Western philosophies, mainly Marxism. Burūjirdī opposed the teaching of philosophy in Qum, even by a great professor such as 'Allāmah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, while those who supported philosophy teaching, such as Muntazirī, argued that philosophical knowledge was essential in order to be able to critique Marxism and other atheist philosophies of the West. The argument was considered sufficient to allow for a limited provision of philosophy teaching in Qum, but this did not last for long, as Burūjirdī sent his first and last friendly message to 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, who was the principal philosophy teacher, implying a polite but serious request to suspend his teaching. To deliver that message, Burūjirdī sent Ḥājj Aḥmad to 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī and complained that he had not visited Burūjirdī upon arriving in Qum. Ṭabāṭabā'ī answered that he had been in Tabrīz at that moment and had sent a welcome letter to him. Apart from that Ḥājj Aḥmad conveyed Burūjirdī's concerns that from the day that Ṭabāṭabā'ī had started to teach philosophy, he had received many complaint letters from the Najaf Seminary that philosophy was being taught. Ṭabāṭabā'ī responded that when he came to Qum he noticed that the only thing missing in the

²⁶¹ 'Bih dastūr-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī tullāb Ingilīsī yād mīgīrand', *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 42, pp. 22-23 taken from the Newspaper *Dunyā*.

²⁶² Aḥmad Tavakkulī'zādah, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*. 23.

seminary was a philosophy class, as he was concerned about the influence of Marxists in the area.²⁶³ Soon after that, upon realising that Ṭabāṭabā'ī was not going to suspend his philosophy teaching, he took a new course of action. Instead of dispatching Hājī Aḥmad, he summoned Muntazirī, who was one of the most serious supporters of philosophy teaching in Qum, to his office. In this meeting, he informed Muntazirī of his decision to take disciplinary action against students who went to philosophy class by suspending their salaries. This showed Burūjirdī's determination to suspend the teaching of philosophy.

Burūjirdī's disapproval of teaching philosophy was not limited to Qum. Later, he even sent a telegraph to the Shah asking for the dissolution of Dānishkadah'i Ma'qūl va Manqūl (the faculty of rational and narrated knowledge) in Tehran. The case was supported and followed up on by Ayatollah Bihbahānī, as in his Ghadīr celebration meeting with Shah, when he mentioned that teaching philosophy was against the endowment deed of the late Sipahsālār and requested that the Shah expel the students and *ṭullāb* who were doing philosophy from Dānishkadah'i Ma'qūl va Manqūl.²⁶⁴

In fact, Burūjirdī didn't oppose the teaching of philosophy in general, but he was against teaching the *Asfār* of Mullā Ṣadrā. He believed that the *Shifā'* of Avicenna ought to be taught at Qum but not other philosophies. Ṭabāṭabā'ī used to teach the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā and it was the main reason that Burūjirdī requested that he discontinue teaching *Asfār*. Burūjirdī's argument was that seminary students were not capable of distinguishing between right and wrong in intellectual disputes and that he could not pay religious taxes to those students, because of the Sufi element in the teachings. He was concerned that the Qum Seminary would turn to be a hub for Sufism rather than orthodox Islam based on *fiqh*. Therefore, to the collection of Burūjirdī's disagreements with Khomeini we may add the issue of teaching philosophy.²⁶⁵ However, Burūjirdī himself had read philosophy privately in Najaf and Isfahan and thus does not entirely deserve his reputation as an opponent of philosophy.²⁶⁶ Having said that, subsidising the teaching of philosophy was not a legitimate usage of religious taxes in Burūjirdī's opinion. Burūjirdī argued "I receive religious taxes to support and

²⁶³ Burqah'ī, Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Burqah'ī, 5.

²⁶⁴ 'Shāyi'āt' in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 7, Saturday 23 Ābān 1326, taken from the newspaper *Nāqūs*, No. 21, p. 2.

²⁶⁵ Ṣādiqī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, p. 5.

²⁶⁶ Ṣālīhī Najaf Ābādī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, p. 25-26

encourage people to study and research *fiqh* and *uṣūl*”, not philosophy.²⁶⁷ However, this did not represent everyone’s opinion, especially those who were more active and in effect were forming the next generation of *marja*’s and top professors.

The expansion of modernity into different aspects of society caused some serious concerns in the clerical community. Qum was very close to Tehran and clerics normally went to Tehran on various occasions, especially for religious ceremonies. There they could witness the impact of modernity on Iranian society. In addition to some general aspects of the western lifestyle, the new and important challenge was the spread of western ideologies, especially Marxist ideology, which were encroaching on the grounds of religion in general. However, there were also similar activities in the *hawzah*, but not under the supervision or with the support of Ayatollah Burūjirdī. Traditionally every scholarly activity in the Qum Seminary was needed Burūjirdī’s approval, otherwise it would not succeed. Nevertheless, this wasn’t the case in teaching philosophy, as in spite of all the limitations imposed on its teaching, some clerics understood the threat posed by Marxism in the universities and they thought a solution to deal with the problem could be reached through intellectual discussion with people who criticized the principles of belief in Islam. While Burūjirdī was not happy with philosophy being taught at the *hawzah*, he did not use all of his means to stop it either. There were some philosophical circles, where not only veterans such as Ṭabāṭabā’ī and Khomeini but also young teachers such as Muntazirī enthusiastically defended the teaching of philosophy.

The effect of modernity on seminary students was not just limited to intellectual matters such as philosophy. There were other modern means for cultural influence such as newspapers and press which were more attractive for seminary students than studying philosophy. Although the press was a very important tool of publicity for Burūjirdī, in general, he disliked newspapers as he believed that they mainly used opportunities to garner publicity for their own ends.²⁶⁸ Not just Burūjirdī but the majority of religious people at that time were suspicious of the press. However, Makārim Shīrāzī and few other people held a meeting and came to the conclusion that it was necessary that they have a

²⁶⁷ Khalkhālī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 10.

²⁶⁸ Budalā, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 42.

religious journal.²⁶⁹ Although there were many young clerics who strongly supported the idea of a religious press, the idea did not appeal to Burūjirdī. Finally, the young clerics ran out of patience and decided to establish a kind of religious press for the *hawzah*. Before them, the al-Azhar of Cairo, which was the most important religious centre for Sunni Muslims, had produced a religious journal called *Risālat al-Islām*. Some people tried to use that as an argument to persuade Burūjirdī of the necessity of having a similar journal for Qum. They finally decided to raise the idea with Ayatollah Sharī‘atmadārī, who was supportive of these kinds of activities. Sharī‘atmadārī provided them with the necessary funds with the help of some merchants, and finally they established a journal called *Maktab-i Islām*. Although most people believe that this was the first religious journal in Qum, evidence shows that the first journal was in fact *Majmū‘ah-i hikmat* which was published by three brothers of the Burqah’ī family, Sayyid Fakhr al-Dīn, Sayyid Yahyā and Sayyid Šadrā by the Hikmat Publishing House.²⁷⁰ The date of the first issue of *Majmū‘ah-i hikmat* was April 1952, which predates the first issue of *Maktab-i Islām* by six years.

Although Sharī‘atmadārī supported the idea of having a religious journal, and was in practice funding it, he was reluctant to formally accept the responsibility for having supported and funded the journal, fearing Burūjirdī’s reaction. So, *Maktab-i Islām* was initially licensed under the name of Āqā Mūsā Šadr. There was a disagreement among the members of the board and they applied for another licence under the name of Nāšir Makārim Shīrāzī.²⁷¹ Members who wrote for the *Maktab-i Islām* were ‘Abd al-Karīm Mūsavī, Nāšir Makārim Shīrāzī, Muḥammad Vā‘iz’zādah Khurāsānī, Murtaẓā Jazāyirī, Majd al-Dīn Maḥallātī, Ja‘far Subḥānī Tabrīzī, ‘Alī Davānī, and Ḥusayn Nūrī.

Less than a year after the publication of the first issue of *Maktab-i Islām*, in November 1958, another journal called *Maktab-i Tashayyu‘* was established in September 1959, showing that there are always intellectual disagreements in a Shi‘i seminary. The new journal’s contributors included ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, Aḥmad Ārām, Kamarah’ī, Anjuman-i Tablīghāt-i Islāmī, Āzarī Qumī, Falsafī, Nāẓir Zādah Kirmānī, Šadr al-Dīn Balāghī, Mūsā Šadr, Hā’irī Tihrānī, Sayyid Maḥmūd Ṭāliqānī,

²⁶⁹ Nāšir Makārim Shīrāzī, Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Makārim Shīrāzī, 13.

²⁷⁰ See Sayyid Hādī Khusraw Shāhī, *Vijhah-i buzurgdāsh-ti maqām-i muvarrikh va muhaqqiq ustād ‘Alī Davānī*, (Tihrān, Sazman-i Farhangī Hunarī Shahr-dārī-i Tihrān: 2001), pishguftār.

²⁷¹ Tavakkulī’zādah, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 26.

Akbar Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, Ḥā'irī Yazdī, Sa'īdī, Rāshid Yazdī, Ḥājī Sirāj Anṣārī, Muṭahharī, Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī, Sayyid 'Izz al-Dīn Zanajānī, Ḥusayn Khurāsānī, Sutūdah, Aḥmad Tavakkulī Kirmānī, Bahrām Javānmard, Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī Ja'farī, 'Alī Ḥujjatī Kirmānī, and Muḥammad Javād Bāhunar.

While both journals were religious journals from Qum, each of them represented different intellectual streams present in the *ḥawzah*. *Maktab-i Islām* more or less represented a traditional Islamic view. *Maktab-i Tashayyu'* more or less represented more active Islamic social and political ideas. Perhaps this was the reason that *Maktab-i Islām* was authorised to be published continuously while *Maktab-i Tashayyu'* had its licence reviewed and stopped by the government authorities. The interesting point is that all of the members of *Maktab-i Islām* who are alive have become *marja' taqlīd*, except one of them, Vā'iz'zādāh Khurāsānī, who left Qum and became a university professor. This shows the type of people who contributed to *Maktab-i Islām*. Those who contributed to *Maktab-i Tashayyu'* were mainly people who took part in religious activities which had social and political dimensions. *Maktab-i Tashayyu'* had a greater number of contributors than *Maktab-i Islām*. Apart from that, the first issue of *Maktab-i Tashayyu'* was approximately triple the size of the first issue of *Maktab-i Islām*, which itself was major work of 416 pages. This demonstrates to what extent the *Maktab-i Tashayyu'* would be a serious and influential journal in the future.

Although Burūjirdī seemed happy with these journals and sometimes even gave them financial support, he took care to distance himself from any responsibility for or connection with the journals, which shows to what extent he was careful to avoid any type of activity which could arouse suspicion among his traditionalist conservative supporters. In practice Burūjirdī did not formally support religious journalism which was considered a new activity. However, he did not openly disagree either and kept quiet. That quietism in fact could be interpreted to mean that while he was not unhappy with the establishment of religious journals, he did not want to undertake any responsibility for them either. It was in line with the general sense of caution and conservatism in Burūjirdī's position, though one must differentiate between Burūjirdī's negative position about going to university or studying philosophy and Burūjirdī's equivocal position regarding journalism. In any

case, there were other areas within the *hawzah* where Burūjirdī was interested in innovation. These were the primary duties of theological students to study *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, *rijāl* and tradition, where he himself made innovations and original contributions. Hence, he was clearly and actively supportive of innovations which could fit in the traditional curriculum of the *hawzah*.

Introducing new research methods in Shi‘i scholarship **Burūjirdī’s original contributions to Shi‘i scholarship**

In Shi‘ism, the most important element for the *marja‘īyat* is the scholarly function. A senior cleric has to have published many scholarly works to be nominated for the position of *marja‘īyat*. In Burūjirdī’s case, apart from his scholarly records in writing and publication, he had a very specific advantage over other potential candidates which was his special method of research in Shi‘i scholarship. In other words, he did not just continue the same tradition of previous scholars, he innovated to develop new research methods for *mujtahids*.

Burūjirdī’s teaching was very simple and understandable compared to that of most other professors at his level. This was the reason that apart from his usual students, there were many ordinary people who attended his lectures. When a student asked a question, he thought about it for a few minutes and then answered. Around a thousand people attended his class.²⁷² Burūjirdī’s vision was not limited to the common methods of his time, but was rather a thoughtful way of teaching and research which took into account the potential needs of the future. When he was teaching *Kitāb al-qazā* (Islamic law for judges), some students questioned the usefulness of *qazā* in the present situation, as the government was doing whatever it liked and giving it legal justification. The comments angered Burūjirdī, who explained that Islam must be protected forever and that even if such principles could not be applied in the current situation they could be useful for future

²⁷² Muḥammad Ṣādiq Tihrānī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 43.

purposes.²⁷³ That is to be taken as evidence that Burūjirdī believed that things which were right in theory would not always necessarily be applied in practice at the present time.

Burūjirdī's teaching was appreciated by people who attended the lectures there. Many people who were Burūjirdī's students became successful in their future careers in the Shi'i religious establishment, such as the majority of recent and current *marja*'s, including Ayatollah Sīstānī in Najaf and Ayatollah Khāminah'ī (the Supreme Leader of Islamic Republic of Iran) and many other *marja*'s in Qum such as the late Muḥammad Riẓā Gulpāygānī, the late Ḥusayn 'Alī Muntazirī, Ḥusayn Nūrī, 'Abd al-Karīm Mūsavī Ardabīlī, the late Mīrzā Javād Tabrīzī, the late Muḥammad Fāẓil Lankarānī, the late Muḥammad Taqī Bahjat, Makārim Shīrāzī, Mūsā Shubayrī Zanjānī, Luṭf Allāh Šāfī, Yūsuf Šānī'ī, Ḥusayn Maẓāhirī, Ja'far Subḥānī, Muslim Malakūtī, Yad Allāh Dūzdūzānī, Sayyid Muḥammad Šādiq Rawḥānī, the late Muḥammad Šādiqī Tihrānī, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Jannātī, Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī 'Alavī Gurgānī, Sayyid Muḥammad 'Izz al-Dīn Ḥusaynī Zanjānī (in Mashhad) and many others. Perhaps this remarkable legacy was the result of Burūjirdī's recommendation to his students that they should be independent in their opinions rather than follow established authorities. When Burūjirdī taught at Qum, he always reminded his students that they should not be imitators but rather should draw on their own opinions and not just depend on Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and other great figures.²⁷⁴ Burūjirdī also asked professors to recite a *ḥadīṣ* at the beginning of their classes. Khomeini was the only professor who opposed the practice and said that he wasn't going to waste the students' time and they could go and read the *ḥadīṣ* by themselves.²⁷⁵

Burūjirdī's teaching method secured a special position for the Quran. He always started with a verse of the Quran to introduce a chapter about a rule.²⁷⁶ Burūjirdī's teaching was appreciated by the professors of Qum. Even Khomeini considered his teaching to be something similar to the teaching of Shaykh-i Mufīd and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, who were considered the founders of Shi'i scholarship.²⁷⁷ Burūjirdī contributed substantially in different fields of Shi'i scholarship. However, the emphasis

²⁷³ Muḥāmī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 46-48.

²⁷⁴ Šālīḥī Najaf Ābādī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 7.

²⁷⁵ Muḥāmī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 20.

²⁷⁶ Muḥammad Vā'iz'zādah Khurāsānī, his speech in the workshop for Burūjirdī's methodology of *ḥadīṣ* and *rijāl*, held in Mashhad, Daftar-i Tablīghāt-i Islāmī, 28 Day 1388.

²⁷⁷ 'Sitārah-'i Furūzān-'i Ālam-i Islām' in *Maw'ūd*, <http://old.mouood.org/content/view/8383/3/>, 30 Bahman 1387, 93.

must be given to Burūjirdī's innovative works in *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, tradition and *rijāl*. The content of Burūjirdī's teaching and research, and his general pedagogical and research approach was based on a few fundamental elements which are discussed below.

Particularities of Burūjirdī's research method

Burūjirdī wrote many works, most of which went missing over the course of Burūjirdī's moves from Najaf to Burūjird and later to Qum. Like other *marja*'s he has written substantially on the subjects of *fiqh* and *uṣūl*. His first serious work, which was probably the source of his good reputation as a scholar was the *ḥāshiyah* on *Kifāyat al-uṣūl*.²⁷⁸ Apparently, he wrote this book when he was only 30 years old.²⁷⁹ His later works in *uṣūl* are as follows: *Ḥāshiyah 'alā farā'id al-uṣūl lil-Shaykh al-Anṣārī* and *Taqrīrāt mabāhiṣ uṣūl al-fiqh*.²⁸⁰

By writing his *Ḥāshiyah 'alā al-'Urvat al-vuṣqā*, he became renowned as a highly learned *mujtahid*.²⁸¹ This work is one of the most important works of Sayyid Kāzīm Yazdī and more than 40 people have written an *ḥāshiyah* on him up to now. Ayatollah Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī published his *ḥāshiyah*, in 1925, about a decade before Burūjirdī. It was one of the reasons that Burūjirdī became so famous when he was a young cleric. Burūjirdī's contribution in *fiqh* consists of the high quality works of *Taqrīrāt baḥṣ ṣalāt al-jumu'ah va ṣalāt al-musāfir*, *Taqrīrāt baḥṣ al-ṣalāh* and *Taqrīrāt baḥṣ al-khums*.²⁸² He also wrote some other valuable works in *fiqh*.²⁸³

²⁷⁸ Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, *al-Ḥāshiyah 'alā Kifāyat al-uṣūl* (Qum: Mu'assasah Anṣārīyān, 1992).

²⁷⁹ Riḏā Ustādī, 'Aṣār va ta'lifāt-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', *Hawzah*, Farvardīn va Urdībihisht-i 1370 (1991), No 43 and 44.

²⁸⁰ R. Mūsavī Tihrānī, *Majma' al-favā'id fī sharḥ al-farā'id: taqrīrāt-i dars-i rasā'il-i ustād Mūsavī Tihrānī* (Qum: Mu'assasah-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī, 2004).; Ḥusayn Burūjirdī and 'Alī P. Ishtihārdī, *Taqrīrāt fī uṣūl al-fiqh: li-baḥṥ sayyidinā al-ustādh Āyat Allāh al-'uẓmā al-ḥājj al-sayyid āqā Ḥusayn al-Burūjirdī* (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī al-tābi'ah li-Jamā'at al-Mudarrisīn, 1996); Ḥusayn 'Alī Muntazirī, and Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, *Nihāyat al-uṣūl: taqrīran li-abḥāṣ-i samāḥat al-marḥūm Āyat Allāh al-'uẓmā al-ḥājj āqā Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Burūjirdī* (Qum: Nashr Tafakkur, 1994).

²⁸¹ Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, *Hāshiyah 'alā al-'Urvat al-wuṭḥā* (Tihrān, Chāp'khānah-i Islāmīyah, 1946).

²⁸² Ḥusayn Burūjirdī and Ḥusayn 'Alī Muntazirī Najaf'ābādī, *al-Badr al-zāhir fī ṣalāt al-jum'ah wa-al-musāfir* (Qum: Maṭba'ah al-Ḥikmah, 1958); M. Fāzil Lankarānī and Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, *Nihāyat al-taqrīr fī mabāhiṥ al-ṣalāh* (Qum: al-Markaz Fiqh al-A'imma al-Aṥḥār, 1999); Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, *Zubdat al-maqāl fī khums al-rasūl wa-al-āl*, taqrīr abḥāth: al-Ḥusaynī al-Qazwīnī al-mulaqqab bi-Abī Turābī (Qum: al-Maṭba'ah al-'Ilmīyah, 1961).

²⁸³ His other works in *fiqh* are as follows: *Ḥāshiyah 'alā Nihāyat al-shaykh al-Ṭūsī* in which he compared the manuscript which he himself owned against the manuscript which was owned by 'Allāmah Ḥillī; *Ḥāshiyah 'alā mabsūṭ li-al-shaykh al-Ṭūsī* in which he compared the manuscript of this book against the published copy and wrote his own *Hāshiyah*; *Ḥāshiyah 'alā Khilāf li-al-shaykh al-Ṭūsī*. He worked on the manuscript and then with the help of Ayatollah Sayyid Aḥmad Zanjānī he published this book. Since that time the book has been frequently re-published under various titles: *Al-*

Persistence in seeking the true *ḥadīṣ* was an important principle of Burūjirdī's behaviour. This was important for him also in Imam Ḥusayn's mourning. Once when one of the religious singers (*maddāḥs*) of the martyrdom tragedy of Imam Ḥusayn said something about Imam Ḥusayn's daughter, Sakīnah, which was not true (authenticated on the basis of good source), Burūjirdī mentioned this to him and asked him not to sing something without having a document to back up his words.²⁸⁴ This was his principle for writing *Risālah ḥawl al-Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādīyah* where he defended the accuracy and verified the documentation of the chain of narration of *al-Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādīyah*, which is an important prayer book in Shi'ism attributed to the fourth infallible Shi'i Imam.

Traditionally, in Shi'ism, traditions have been classified into four canonical collections known as *al-Kutub al-arba'ah*, *Vasā'il al-Shī'ah*, *Mustadrak vasā'il al-Shī'ah* and *Biḥār al-anvār*. Although these works are good and Shi'i scholars had been using them as a basis for centuries, Burūjirdī realized that there were a few disadvantages such as the large number of traditions listed, the fragmentation of a single tradition into multiple varying traditions narrated by different chains of narrators, and a substantial number of redundant elements throughout the works.

Research method in *ḥadīṣ* and related fields to *ijtihād*

In his research method for traditions, he believed that many traditions which appeared to be independent and distinct from one another were in fact from the same source. In fact, they formed part of a single tradition which gradually drifted apart and became fragmented. In Burūjirdī's opinion, this was one of the weaknesses of *Vasā'il al-Shī'ah*.²⁸⁵ Earlier, by writing *Ḥāshiyah 'alā Vasā'il al-Shī'ah*, Burūjirdī showed his eagerness to write something about *Vasā'il al-Shī'ah* to show its flaws. The idea developed over the years and eventually led to one of Burūjirdī's most important written works, *Jāmi' aḥādīṣ al-Shī'ah*, which was based on showing the fragmentation of a single tradition. There were many suggestions for the title of the work but the book was finally called *Jāmi' aḥādīṣ al-*

Fiqh al-istidlālī; *Risālah fī al-muwāsa'ah wa al-muṣāyaqah*, *Risālah fī munjazāt al-marīd* etc. For more information See Riḏā Ustādī, 'Āṣār va ta'līfāt-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī'.

²⁸⁴ 'Dar 'Ālam-i rawḥānīyat, darbarh-i Sakīnah', in *Istakhr-i Shīrāz* newspaper, taken from *Khvāndanīhā*, year 7, No. 50, p. 7.

²⁸⁵ Muḥammad Vā'iz'zādah Khurāsānī, his speech in the workshop for Burūjirdī's methodology.

Shī'ah fī aḥkām al-sharī'ah.²⁸⁶ He was interested in undertaking such a work as a revision and completion for the traditional source of *Vasā'il al-Shī'ah*. The first volume was published during his lifetime and the other volumes were published after his death and are still in print.²⁸⁷ Burūjirdī appointed a committee of three of his students to prepare the drafts of *Jāmi' al-aḥādīs*. They were Shaykh Ismā'il Malāyirī, Shaykh 'Alī Panāh Ishtihārdī and Muḥammad Vā'iz'zādah Khurāsānī.²⁸⁸ Vā'iz'zādah believes that today no *faqīh* can work in the field of jurisprudence without going to *Jāmi' al-aḥādīs al-Shī'ah*.²⁸⁹ According to Shaykh 'Abd Allāh Māmaqānī in *Tanqīḥ al-maqāl*, the number of narrators of tradition since the beginning of Shi'ism amounts to 16000 people.²⁹⁰ Before Burūjirdī, in the whole of Shi'i scholarship, there were only four works which dealt with the field of *rijāl*, which involves tracing the chain of narration of the *ḥadīṣ* and providing short biographies of the narrators in the form of some reference works, as follows: *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, *Rijāl Najāshī*, *Rijāl Shaykh al-Ṭūsī* and *Rijāl 'Allāmah Ḥillī*.²⁹¹ The usual method of teaching *rijāl* scholarship is that people discuss these four above-mentioned sources against each other. Burūjirdī decided that Shi'i scholarship needed some refining in order to provide a better source for *rijāl*. So, in the first stage, he invented his own method in which he amalgamated all of the traditions and isolated the chain of narrators and the name of the narrator. In the second stage, he compared similar traditions to identify the gaps in the tradition. Through this comparison, the mistaken names and incorrect chains of narration could be identified and eliminated. By using this rigorous approach, Burūjirdī created a new method of *rijāl* for future scholars.

²⁸⁶ H. Ṭabātabā'ī Burūjirdī, *Jāmi' al-aḥādīth al-Shī'ah: fī aḥkām al-sharī'ah* (Ṭihrān: Maṭba'at al-Misāḥah, 1961).

²⁸⁷ Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, *Jāmi' al-aḥādīth al-Shī'ah* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Awliyā', 2010).

²⁸⁸ In fact, for writing *Jāmi' al-aḥādīs al-Shī'ah* a number of people co-operated, as noted in the introduction: Ḥusayn 'Alī Muntazirī, Ismā'il Mu'izzī Malāyirī, 'Abd al-Raḥīm Rabbānī Shīrāzī, Muḥsin Ḥaram'panāhī, Sayyid Ḥusayn Kirmānī, Sayyid Muṣṭafā Kāshifī Khvānsārī, 'Abd al-Raḥīm Burūjirdī, 'Alī Panāh Ishtihārdī, Jalāl Ṭāhir Shams Gulpāygānī, Ḥusayn Nūrī Hamadānī, Ibrāhīm Amīnī Najaf Ābādī, 'Alī Ṣābitī Hamadānī, Muḥammad Vā'iz'zādah Khurāsānī, Muḥammad Bāqir Abṭāhī Iṣfāhānī, Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī Abṭāhī Iṣfāhānī, Muḥammad Taqī Sutudah Arakī, Sayyid Bihishtī Burūjirdī, and Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Durchah-'ī.

²⁸⁹ Muḥammad Vā'iz'zādah Khurāsānī, his speech in the workshop for Burūjirdī's methodology.

²⁹⁰ 'Abd A. Māmaqānī, and Muḥyī D. Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-maqāl fī 'ilm al-rijāl* (Qom: Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā' al-Turāth, 2002).

²⁹¹ Muḥammad H. Ṭūsī, M. Mīr Dāmād, Abū A. Kashshī, and Mahdī Rajā'ī, *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl al-ma'rūf bi-rijāl al-Kashshī* (Qum: Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt, 1984); Aḥmad A. Najāshī, *Fihrist asmā' muṣannifāt al-Shī'ah al-mushtahar bi-rijāl al-Najāshī* (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī al-ṭābi'ah li-Jāmi'at al-Mudarrisīn bi-Qum al-Musharrafah, 1986); Muḥammad -H Ṭūsī, and M. S. Baḥr al-'Ulūm, *Rijāl Ṭūsī* (al-Najaf: al-Maktabah va-al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydarīyah, 1961); Ibn al-Muṭahhar Ḥillī, *Tartīb khulāṣat al-aqvāl fī ma'rifat al-rijāl* (Mashhad: Majma' al-Buḥūth al-Islāmīyah, 2002).

Burūjirdī's contribution in *rijāl* improved Shi'ī research methods and brought them more in line with Sunni research method in tradition. In Sunnism, Sunni scholars have the custom of writing *musnads*, which are accounts of tradition organised according to the narrator. By contrast, in Shi'ism they had the custom of *Uṣūl-i arba'umi'ah*, which are accounts of tradition organized thematically and written by trusted writers. Burūjirdī invested much effort into producing a few works in *rijāl* to give a system of organisation to the narrators in Shi'ism in a manner which reflected the Sunni custom of *musnads*.

The most important *rijāl* works of Burūjirdī are the books of *Murattab al-asānīd* and *Murattab rijāl al-asānīd*.²⁹² In fact, he was going to write a series of narrators of tradition, but was unable to do so. Later, after Burūjirdī's death, Grand Ayatollah Khū'ī wrote a book called *Mu'jam rijāl al-ḥadīṡ* which covered the same area.²⁹³ Burūjirdī's work on *Murattab al-asānīd* for the most important Shi'ī sources of tradition (the books of *Kāfī*, *Tahẓīb*, *Faqīh*) and a few more books were created specifically to provide a structure for the field.²⁹⁴ His method was to create an alphabetical table for any narrator who was the source (narrator) of tradition and then in the same section he mentioned all the chains which referred to him. So, at a glance, people could easily understand who used this narrator as a source for narration. In short, in his work, he classified the narrative based on the first narrator.

Another of Burūjirdī's works, *Murattab rijāl al-asānīd*, was an attempt at clarifying the sources of narration of every tradition based on narrators. In this work, he created a table to identify a chain of people who had narrated a tradition. In other word, he prepared a genealogy of narration by classifying the narrators of traditions and people who narrated to them and received a narration from them. In Burūjirdī's special methodology of tradition, it was important to specify the number of traditions which each individual narrator had narrated. It meant that, for instance, in the book of *al-Kāfī* by Ṣiqat al-Islām Kulaynī where many narrators were mentioned, one could determine how many

²⁹² Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, and H. Nūrī al-Hamadānī, *al-Mawsū'ah al-rijālīyah* (Qum: Majma' al-Buḥūṡ al-Islāmīyah, 1992).

²⁹³ Abū al-Qāsim Khū'ī, *Mu'jam rijāl al-ḥadīṡ: wa-tafṣīl ṭabaqāt al-ruwāḥ* (Qum: Madīnat al-'Ilm, 1983).

²⁹⁴ Ḥusayn Burūjirdī and Maḥmūd D. Najafī, *Asānīd kitāb al-Kāfī* (Qum: Mu'assasat Āyat Allāh al-'Uzmā al-Burūjirdī, 2006); Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, Muḥammad H. Ṭūsī, and Maḥdī T. Šādiqī, *Tanqīḥ asānīd al-Tahẓīb* (Qum: Maḥdī al-Tabrīzī, 1990); Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Burūjirdī, *al-Mawsū'ah al-rijālīyah wa-rijāl asānīd aw ṭabaqāt rijāl kitāb-i Man lā yaḥẓuruhu al-faqīh wa-tartīb asānīd kitāb al-Amālī li-al-shaykh al-Šadūq* (Mashhad: Bunyād-i Pazhūhishā-yi Islāmī-i Āstān-i Quds-i Raẓavī, 1994).

traditions had been narrated by any of the individual narrators. This helps the *mujtahid* to have a better understanding of narrators of traditions. Furthermore, it helps people to understand who narrated to whom (how the narrations were related to one another) and indirectly helps the *mujtahid* to see whether the tradition is connected in a trustworthy chain or if it has a missing link. Apart from that, when the *mujtahid* knows about the narrator's source, he or she will have a better understanding of the narrator's sect or school of thought. There are many narrators of traditions who are missing from traditional books of *rijāl*. By undertaking his classification, Burūjirdī produced a list of all narrators and helped people to identify the lack of *rijāl* works about them. The list helps the *mujtahid* to determine which narrations are impossible, because the narrators and the person from whom he is narrating must, within reason, have lived in the same time period.

Burūjirdī followed the following steps to produce his special methodology:

1. *Tajrīd al-asānīd*: in the first stage, he isolated the narrative chain of the individual traditions and produced a huge list of different narrators of the individual traditions. Burūjirdī's subsequent written works were initial attempts at doing so. They are as follows: *Tajrīd asānīd al-Kāfī* which originally contained 16,000 traditions, *Tajrīd asānīd al-Faqīh* which originally contained 5000 traditions, *Tajrīd asānīd al-Amālī* which originally contained 1000 traditions, *Tajrīd asānīd al-Khiṣāl* which originally contained 1300 traditions, *Tajrīd asānīd 'Ilal al-sharāyī'* which originally contained 1500 traditions, *Tajrīd asānīd al-Tahzīb* which originally contained 1300 traditions, *Tajrīd asānīd al-Istibṣār* which originally contained 5000 traditions, and *Tajrīd asānīd Rijāl al-Kishshī* which originally contained 1150 traditions.²⁹⁵

2. *Tartīb al-asānīd*: in the second stage, he put the lists of narrators in an alphabetical order based on the period in which they lived. By doing that, he was able to eliminate many duplicate chains which were narrations by the same person from the same source and to the same person. Burūjirdī used a similar method in his written works such as *Tajrīd asānīd al-Fihrist lil-Shaykh-i al-Ṭūsī* which originally contained discussions about 900 narrators of the traditions and *Tajrīd rijāl al-Najāshī* which contained 1300 narrators.

²⁹⁵ In fact, all the chain of narrators in *Istibṣār*, are the same as those of the *Tahzīb*.

3. Tanqīḥ al-asānīd: In this phase, he realised that some chains were very similar to each other and only differed in terms of one or two narrators, which was likely a case of mistaken copying (*taṣḥīf*). By comparing that chain against similar chains, he identified the correct name and consequently the correct chain.

4. Ṭabaqāt al-ruvāt: in the last stage, he formed a type of classification for all of the narrators. Based on his classification, there were limited conditions of possibility for narration. For instance, a student could narrate something from his professors, but the same student could not have narrated something directly from a professor who had died before the student's birth. By applying these criteria, many flawed chains appeared.²⁹⁶ This was a great contribution to centuries of research in tradition, as it greatly facilitated the job of researchers and identified some invalid chains as well as repetitions and gaps in narration. Previously, scholars had to conduct research projects to identify any individual tradition or its chain of narrators, but Burūjirdī's method created a platform which was useable for all future researchers in tradition.

Burūjirdī's improvement in Shi'i research methods to bring them in line with Sunni research methods were not undertaken in a competitive spirit, as he sought to implement Sunni research methods in order to improve research in Shi'i scholarship. This spirit of tolerance for Sunnism was evident in the principles of Burūjirdī's school of *fiqh* for issuing fatwas, as apart from the importance that he gave to recognising precedents set by Shi'i 'ulama, he also valued the fatwas of Sunni scholars. This pioneering approach was at variance with the approach of Shi'i *mujtahids* who usually didn't give any value to fatwas of Sunni 'ulama. Based on Burūjirdī's method, he divided the problems of *fiqh* into two different categories called *al-fiqh al-mutalaqqá* and *al-fiqh al-mashrūḥ*. In his terminology, *fiqh al-mutalaqqá* includes the kind of *fiqh* issues which have been explained either

²⁹⁶ Burūjirdī also wrote a few critical works about the narrators of the tradition, as follows: *Ṭabaqāt al-ruvāt*, *Ḥāshiyah 'alá Rijāl al-Najāshī*, *Ḥāshiyah 'alá 'Umdat al-tālib*, *Ḥāshiyah 'alá Mustadrak-i fihrist-i Muntakhab al-dīn* (*Mustadrak-i fihrist-i Muntakhab al-Dīn* is a book written as an addition to the *Fihrist-i shaykh al-Ṭūsī*), *Ḥāshiyah 'alá Rijāl Shaykh al-Ṭūsī* and *Ḥāshiyah 'alá Minhāj al-maqāl* (*Minhaj al-maqāl* is a *hashiyah* on the book *Rijāl-i kabīr* by Mīrzā Muḥammad Astar'ābādī). In his work, Shaykh Āqā Buzurg-i Tīhrānī called the same book *Tartīb rijāl shaykh al-Ṭūsī*. Burūjirdī was interested to have a copy of *Rijāl-i al-Ṭūsī*, but he was unsuccessful in gaining access to that book. So, he conducted serious research on *Minhaj al-maqāl* and identified all of the parts which the author took from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in order to reconstruct the original source. Later in his life, he travelled to Mashhad where he surprisingly found a manuscript of *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*. He used the opportunity to compare his research with the manuscript and according to its result, wrote some *Ḥāshiyah* on his research. For further information go to 'Alī Davānī, *Zindagānī-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī*, 123.

by Muḥammad or the Shi‘i infallible Imams. These sorts of issues are simple and few in number and it is not possible to change them; for instance, injunctions such those requiring Muslims to pray towards Mecca. *Fiqh al-mashrūḥ* includes the sorts of arguments and discussions that later ‘*ulama* had about those issues. For instance, in the same example, later ‘*ulama* raised the question of what exactly “towards Mecca” means and discussed the implications of the direction of prayer. Most Shi‘i ‘*ulama* believe that if somebody prayed towards Mecca, with a margin of directional error of 30 degrees or less, the prayers were valid. For errors of greater than 30 degrees, the person must redo his prayers. Considering the fact that currently most of the *fiqh* problems are about details like that, we can easily understand the importance of Burūjirdī’s method for his fatwas. In his teaching, Burūjirdī gradually emphasised the point that for a Shi‘i *mujtahid* it is not good practice to rely exclusively on Shi‘i traditions and opinions but rather to incorporate Sunni traditions and opinions into one’s repertoire as well.²⁹⁷ His intention in fact was to develop the *fiqh al-mashrūḥ* from exclusively Shi‘i sources to Sunni sources as well in order to have a wider diversity of sources.

In short, Burūjirdī’s special method in *fiqh* rested on two bases: firstly, taking into account the opinions of previous ‘*ulama*, as he believed that if there were traditions which previous ‘*ulama* had not paid attention to, it meant that those traditions were not valuable; secondly, paying attention to the traditions and opinions of Sunnis in issuing fatwas.²⁹⁸ Indeed, Burūjirdī was interested to find the origins of the theological disagreements between Shi‘i and Sunni scholars, rather than relying on Shi‘i fatwas, as it helped him to make his own fatwa better and closer to the truth. To do so, he tried to avoid a biased approach to problems and checked the Sunni as well as Shi‘i traditions against the verses of the Quran to make his final conclusion. According to Shaykh ‘Alī Ṣāfī, who was a member of Burūjirdī’s fatwa committee, Burūjirdī was so open in considering Sunni opinions that in the fatwa committee it was suggested that in some cases, especially concerning new problems, the committee seek some fatwas from Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt, the Sunni authority in al-Azhar of Cairo and compare them with their own fatwas. The suggestion never came into practice, as there were many concerns about the potential reaction of the clerics of Najaf to the inauguration of such a

²⁹⁷ Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 5.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 51-54.

correspondence between Burūjirdī and Shaltūt. It was obvious that Burūjirdī's actions were carefully watched by those clerics and he was not interested in jeopardising his traditional position. Burūjirdī had previously shown sensitivity to the possible reactions of the Najaf clerics when Muntazirī had prepared the book of *Taqrīrāt uṣūl* for publication, and Burūjirdī stopped it because he felt it might antagonise them.²⁹⁹ However, there is evidence that Burūjirdī's effort was appreciated from the Egyptian side, as in 1957 in Cairo, they published one of the important sources of the Shi'i *fiqh*, *al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfi' fī fiqh al-Imāmīyah* by al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī with an introduction by Shaykh Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bāqūrī, the Egyptian Islamic Endowments (*awqāf*) minister of the time.³⁰⁰

Burūjirdī was genuinely interested in Sunnis for purely scholarly rather than strategic reasons. Many years earlier when he was still in Burūjird, he had already shown his scholarly interest when he wrote *al-Mahdī 'alayh al-salām fī kutub ahl al-Sunnah*. This book is a collection of 30 of Burūjirdī's lectures about the Hidden Imam in Sunni sources which were delivered in Burūjird mosque. Later in his life, Burūjirdī asked Ayatollah Ṣāfi Gulpāygānī to write a book about this subject, which was entitled *Muntakhab al-aṣar*.³⁰¹

The simplicity of Burūjirdī's writing method

In addition to his innovations in research methods, Burūjirdī pioneered a new style of writing and tried to write clearly and make his work accessible to both experts and the general public. Burūjirdī's writing style deserves to be recognised as one of the most inventive styles of religious writing in Iran and the Shi'i world. His writing was chiefly characterised by its clarity and ease of being understood. There are many points in religious and clerical writings which are considered to be marginal issues, and the tradition is that people write works to showcase their erudition. In other words, they think that if they do not discuss marginal issues in the scholarship, people will not see them as legitimate writers in the field. Perhaps one must bear in mind that Burūjirdī's most famous professor, Ākhund-i Khūrāsānī, believed in this style of writing. Although Khurāsānī made some effort to write clearly in his famous book *Kifāyat al-uṣūl*, it is still known for being a notoriously

²⁹⁹ Ṣāliḥī Najaf Ābādī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Irān*, 13.

³⁰⁰ Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī, *al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfi' fī fiqh al-Imāmīyah* (Tīhrān: Asadī, 1967). This is a re-print of Cairo edition of 1957.

³⁰¹ Luṭf A. Ṣāfi, *Muntakhab al-athar fī al-imām al-thānī 'aṣhar* (Tīhrān: Maktabat al-Būdhirjamharī, 1954).

obtuse text and people still spend much time reading and discussing its labyrinthine arguments.³⁰² Basically, Khurāsānī's idea was to gather all of the important problems of *uṣūl* in this book in a classified form. Burūjirdī later followed the same course of classification in his works. His special methodology in his research projects, whether he was working alone or supervising someone, was centred on the idea of classification and making compendiums. However, Burūjirdī introduced a clearer style of technical religious writing in comparison to his professor Khurāsānī, which made the final product more fruitful and accessible for people.

Perhaps Burūjirdī's most important achievement in this regard was his contribution to writings which were intended for public consumption. During Burūjirdī's time, his *Risālah-i 'amalīyah* (practical guidelines for practising Muslims) was published in different languages. The most important one was the Persian language version called *Tawzīh al-masā'il*, which had a dramatic impact on the next generation of scholars and it is now standard practice for all *marja's* to issue such a manual. Although it was not the first practical manual for worshippers, the level of the Persian language in previous works such as *Majma' al-furū'* was too high for a general audience and it was only an accessible source for educated clerics. Burūjirdī's innovation was that for the first time, the *Risālah-i 'amalīyah* was published in the standard Persian language at a level suitable for the general public. In fact, previous similar works, though published in Persian, were mixed with complicated Arabic phrases and were not understandable to a layman. The problem was not just with the vocabulary, as the grammar was influenced by Arabic. Therefore, it was essential to produce something with Persian vocabulary and grammar.

The project was managed by Shaykh 'Alī Aṣghar Karbāschiyān and Shaykh Javād Khāndaq Ābādī. In this project, 'Alī Aṣghar Faqīhī (who was an expert in linguistics and literature and had published works on Persian grammar) helped to produce a suitable level of Persian. Following the success of this project, the same process was followed for the work *Manāsik al-ḥajj* which was a practical guide for those undertaking the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca and was published for the

³⁰² Sometimes young clerics spend hours to discussing and trying to understand a few paragraphs of this book. During my visit to Qum in 1998, I met a young cleric who had to take special medicine which doctors prescribe for people who suffer from mental distress. People told me that he was a very talented student and wanted to understand all of the arguments in Khurāsānī's book, but unfortunately he ran out of concentration and had to be taken to the doctor.

first time in 1949 in a 140-page edition and re-printed many times afterwards. Karbāschīyān published a revised version of the same work entitled *Tawzīh al-manāsik* using a level of Persian even more suitable for the general reader.³⁰³

The above-mentioned works were the culmination of previous efforts to make practical religious guidelines available for the public. In fact, looking at previous works done by religious scholars, it is clear that they were seriously trying to make religious works accessible. However, Burūjirdī in particular gave an important priority to this area and made a series of efforts over time to make practical religious guidelines accessible to the public. In 1937, Burūjirdī published *Hāshiyah vasīlat al-najāh* which was originally published based on Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzim Yazdī's fatwas as Persian language practical guidelines for practising Muslims.³⁰⁴ Apparently the first *Vasīlat al-najāh* was published in 1895 according to the fatwas of Muḥammad Sharībānī (1829-1904). In 1946 Burūjirdī published *Hāshiyah-i muntakhab al-rasā'il* which was originally published in 1911 by Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Iṣfahānī according to Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzim Yazdī's fatwas.³⁰⁵ In 1946 Burūjirdī published *Anīs al-muqallidīn* which was originally published in 1926 according to Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī's fatwas.³⁰⁶ In 1948 Burūjirdī published *Hāshiyah majma' al-rasā'il* which was originally a book published by Muḥammad Ḥasan Jāzī Iṣfahānī in 1900 who had compiled practical guidelines for practising Muslims according to the fatwas of Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī. *Jāmi' al-furū'* was also published in 1948 which is a work written in Persian according to Burūjirdī's fatwas.³⁰⁷ In sum, there have been great efforts to make practical guidelines for practising Muslims available and accessible to the general public. Burūjirdī was very active in this regard and it is not surprising that eventually he produced *Tawzīh al-masā'il* which is known as the best work in the field and eventually became a template for other *marja'*s up to the present.

³⁰³ Ḥusayn Burūjirdī and 'Alī Aṣghar Karbāschīyān, *Risalah-i tawzīh al-manāsik*, (Tihirān).

³⁰⁴ Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, *Vasīlat al-najāh* (Tihirān: Kitābchī, 1947).

³⁰⁵ Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, *Risālah-i sharīfah-i muntakhab al-rasā'il* (Tihirān: Iqbāl, 1946).

³⁰⁶ Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, *Anīs al-muqallidīn fī ahkām al-dīn* (Tihirān, Kitāb'chī, 1946).

³⁰⁷ Ḥusayn Burūjirdī and Muḥammad Ākhundī, *Majma' al-rasā'il: va dar muqaddimah risālah-i minhāj al-rashād dar uṣūl-i dīn* (Tihirān: 'Ilmī, 1947); See also Ḥusayn Burūjirdī, *Risālah-i sharīfah-i jāmi' al-furū': muṭābiq bā fatāwī-i ḥājj āqā Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'i Burūjirdī* (Tihirān: A. Kitābchī, 1949).

Burūjirdī's contributions were not limited to above mentioned areas, as he wrote works in other areas as well, which are considered less important.³⁰⁸

In context: Burūjirdī and the Qum Seminary

Following the decades of challenges to the religious establishment, the general objective of the religious community in Iran during the 1940s was to find a way to consolidate the faith and the institution of Shi'ism. Qum was an important place as it had potential to be a powerful centre for consolidating religion. The three top clerics in Qum known as *Āyāt-i Ṣalāṣ* prevented the establishment of a unified authority in Qum. At that point the Qum Seminary was so small that division between three clerics greatly weakened it. Professors in Qum were thinking of a way to make a united leadership in Qum in order to consolidate the faith. Khomeini in particular was very much interested to bring such an authority to Qum but knew that it would not be so easy to ask the *Āyāt-i Ṣalāṣ* to withdraw their candidacy for the *marja'īyat*. Instead, he resorted to promoting Burūjirdī as a more suitable candidate for the *marja'īyat* and he implied that none of them could rival Burūjirdī's level of knowledge. On the other hand the weak government saw that the establishment of a unified religious leadership in Qum would help the state to consolidate itself in general and against Communism in particular. For the state it was very much desirable to be supported by a religious authority. It must also be taken into account that the state would prefer to have that religious authority in Qum rather than Najaf which was in a different country and beyond its jurisdiction. Furthermore, the state helped to establish the authority in Qum, and thus could influence it more easily than in Najaf, which was an old established institution. And finally, the religious authority in Qum was considered more culturally Persian and thus more in line with Pahlavi nationalistic ideology compared with religious leadership in Iraq, which had a more Arabic nature, though it was dominated by

³⁰⁸ For example, in history, he wrote *Buyūt al-Shī'ah*, which is a book about the scholarly families who have been important in Shi'i scholarship, and *Risālāh-i tarjumah-i ba'z-i a'āzīm-i usratihī va ajdādih* which was written about his own ancestor. In Islamic philosophy and logic, he wrote *Risālāh fī al-manṭiq*, *Ta'līqah 'alā al-asfār li-Mullā Ṣadrā al-Shīrāzī*, and *Hāshiyah 'alā Minhaj al-rishād* which was originally written by Shaykh Ja'far Shūshtarī, and a chapter of this book is about the principles of belief in Islam (*uṣūl al-'aqā'id*). Burūjirdī's *hāshiyah* on this chapter was published as an appendix to another book, *Majma' al-rasā'il*. He also wrote a book called *al-Aṭhar al-manẓumah*, based on *A'yān al-Shī'ah*. Apart from that, he wrote some poetry in Arabic and Persian. For more information see Rīzā Ustādī, 'Āṣār va ta'līfāt-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī'.

Iranians. Therefore, although there was friction between the state and the religious establishment in Iran during the reign of Riza Shah, during Muhammad Riza Shah's early reign both the state and the religious institution had a mutual interest in establishing Burūjirdī's *marja'īyat* in Qum.

People inside the Qum Seminary who hoped that Burūjirdī would use his influence for more ambitious goals proposed some fundamental reforms to him which he was reluctant to pursue. He was concerned those reforms could either threaten the existence of the seminary (fearing the government reaction) or its credibility (from traditional believers in the Bazaar and the Najaf clerics). When it became clear to Khomeini that Burūjirdī was not going to make any fundamental change in the traditional function, administration and curriculum of the *hawzah*, they suspended their relations. Burūjirdī who was established firmly in Qum and did not need Khomeini's support any more and Khomeini did not see any point to have his relations with Burūjirdī when he could not use him to conduct any serious reforms in the seminary.

In general Burūjirdī's management and administration in Qum was a solid and continuous way of traditional administration and management of a Shi'i seminary. He never sought any fundamental reforms in the *hawzah* education or administration, as was desired by some younger professors of the Qum Seminary. However he supported some minor reforms in the *hawzah* education and administration. He took a neutral stance on students' extracurricular activities, provided that those activities would not prevent them from carrying out their principal duties and would not discredit them in the eyes of traditional believers or people of Najaf Seminary. Nevertheless, Burūjirdī believed in introducing administrative reforms in the *hawzah* in terms of its teaching or research method and was pioneering in introducing new methods for financial aid for students, examinations, research method, etc., which helped the seminary to consolidate itself. Both Burūjirdī and Khomeini agreed that there would need to be reforms in the seminary. However, Khomeini's view was that the reforms must be radical and the seminary must be transformed from its traditional function, administration and curriculum, to a new independent system which would enable the seminary to compete with the state as well as traditional views which limited the seminary functions. It seems that in Burūjirdī's view, there would not need to be any radical reforms in the seminary. Burūjirdī thought that the seminary

would need an educational revival, for which he had the full support of the state as well as the traditional believers of bazaar and the Najaf Seminary.

III. The Grand Ayatollah in politics and society

An Overview of Burūjirdī's socio-political vision

During the period in which Burūjirdī was in Qum, Iran was experiencing political instability. This chapter mainly discusses Burūjirdī's methods for coping with the changing political situation in Iran, emphasizing the principles he followed in his position as the highest religious authority in Qum, and demonstrating how he could manage the seminary so as to minimise the harm to clerics and the faith during a time of political upheaval in the country.

As the highest authority in Shi'ism, Burūjirdī was a major participant in philanthropy for the Shi'i community, the development of the international Shi'i network and inter-sect conflict mediation, all of which are considered very important for Shi'ism and the Shi'i community around the world. This chapter will also discuss examples of his social works such as the construction of public buildings in Qum, Najaf, Karbalā, etc., the development of religious networks in Iran and outside, coping with the issue of Baha'ism in Iran and the Shi'i community's clashes with them, his dedication to developing the discourse of Islamic Proximity (*taqrīb*) and his successful negotiations with the Shaykh of Egypt's al-Azhar which led to Sunni recognition of Shi'ism as the fifth official legitimate school of Islamic jurisprudence (*Ja'farī fiqh*).

It seems that Burūjirdī's ultimate goal, or his socio-political vision, was to consolidate Shi'ism nationally and internationally. One may classify Burūjirdī's social and political actions to achieve such a goal in four different arenas, as follows: 1. De-politicising Shi'ism, 2. Religiously-targeted civil development, 3. Supporting the Shi'i community, 4. Establishing a global Shi'i presence. Using historical documents to reconstruct examples of Burūjirdī's activities, this chapter will provide an account of Burūjirdī's socio-political vision in consolidating Shi'ism. To achieve a comprehensive account, it is essential to provide a historical framework so as to enable a proper

understanding of Burūjirdī's political method. In each part, I will provide a historical example to support my claims. Before entering that discussion, we need to look at the historical context of Shi'i political thought and the place of Burūjirdī in this context.

The role of the research tradition in forming political theory in Shi'ism

The place of Burūjirdī's political thought in Shi'i tradition

Due to the traditional nature of religious issues and the authority of the *marja' al-taqlīd*, it is very important to be able to find Burūjirdī's place within the tradition of Shi'i clerical authority. Burūjirdī, as a *mujtahid* who held a well-established and well-recognised leadership position for Shi'is of the world, had his own principles, though they may not have been as overtly expressed as some others, such as Khomeini. However, due to his importance, his method became a pattern for later Shi'i clerical authorities. Therefore, by way of conclusion, it makes sense to try to describe not just Burūjirdī's position in the context of the traditional clerical authorities, but to look at its influence on current and future Shi'i clerical authorities. In order to achieve that, one needs to outline a brief history of accommodation of political power in Shi'i political thought, with particular attention to the attitude of Shi'i clerical authorities towards existing powers. Burūjirdī in particular was strongly influenced by the jurisprudence as it was practised in the early period of Islam, when the Imam went to occultation. Therefore, this section will discuss various historical points from the early period of Islam, and demonstrate how they influenced Burūjirdī's thinking. Ideologies are usually the product of social and political experiences (historical conditions) which form someone's mentality. It is an important concept in Shi'i jurisprudence known as 'conditions of time and place' (*sharā'it-i zamān va makān*). Thus to be able to understand Burūjirdī's political method, one needs to look at his intellectual formation as well as the conditions of his time and place.

Sunnis argued for the necessity of the caliphate in the works of *Uṣūl al-dīn* by Baghdādī (d. 1037/8) and Māvardī (d. 1058).³⁰⁹ In Shi‘i culture this was discussed by Sharīf al-Murtaẓā in *al-Shāfi fī al-imāmah*.³¹⁰ In general the position of Shi‘i clerical authorities has been to maintain the status quo, as a logical and reasonable response to the necessity of having a political system for the country whilst acknowledging the fact that achieving an ideally just system is not possible, as long as the Imam is absent. However, acceptance of the actual system in reality versus the ideal system in theory caused some controversies in clerical patterns of action. Although the clerical class had no power to influence the political affairs of the Sunni Caliphate, they held judicial authority, which theoretically gave them a source of possible resistance against the state.³¹¹ Although the acknowledgment of *de facto* powers has been usually promoted in Sunni political thought, in Shi‘i tradition denial of the legitimacy of rulers has been promoted.³¹² This happened mainly because the ideal state in Shi‘i political thought was possible but only if the Imam leads the state. As it is a fixed belief in Shi‘i theology, even a ruler who acts according to justice would not be accepted as legitimate, as the position of leadership is a divine appointment, offered by God to Muḥammad and to the Shi‘i Imams after him.³¹³

Following the unsuccessful experience of the caliphate of ‘Alī between 656-661, and the unfulfilled conditions of the peace agreement of Imam Ḥasan in 661 which was broken by Mu‘āviyah, early Shi‘i authorities took a confrontational approach in dealing with the state and tried to remove unjust governors. This approach was started by Imam Ḥusayn who was brutally suppressed in 680 and was followed by the Shi‘i revolts under the Umayyads. However, gradually Shi‘is understood that although they had a great potential in mobilising forces and encouraging radical changes, such as the replacement of the Umayyads by the Abbasids in 750, they didn’t have enough power to manage their own government, mainly due to poor logistics and insufficient number of true followers.

³⁰⁹ For more information on Sunni political thought see H. A. R. Gibb, Stanford J. Shaw, and William R. Polk, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1982), 151-165.

³¹⁰ Sharīf al-Murtaẓā, Abū J. M. H. Tūsī, and A. B. A. Asad Ābādī, *Kitāb al-shāfi fī al-imāmah wa-al-naqḍ ‘alā Kitāb al-mughnī* (Tihṙān, 1882).

³¹¹ Norman Calder, ‘Judicial Authority in Imami Shi‘i Jurisprudence’ *Bulletin*, British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, 6.2 (1979), 104-108.

³¹² Nikki R. Keddie, ‘The roots of the ulama’s power in modern Iran’, *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Joseph Eliash, ‘The Ithna’Ashari-Shi‘i Juristic Theory of Political and Legal Authority’, *Studia Islamica*, 29 (1969): 17-30.

³¹³ For more information about Imams see Heinz Halm, *Shiism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 33-36.

Therefore, gradually they stopped active opposition, as may be seen in Imam Ja‘far Ṣādiq’s (702-765) behaviour in burning the support letter from Abū Salamah Khallāl (d. 750) who was known as *Vazīr-i Āl-i Muḥammad*, who expressed his allegiance to Imam Ṣādiq in order to overthrow the Abbasid caliphate.³¹⁴ The situation became worse, as the last Shi‘i Imams were killed in prison when they were very young. Finally it was impossible for the last Imam, who was only five years old to live normally and therefore he went into occultation and managed the Shi‘i community through his special representatives known as *niyābat-i khāṣṣ* (special deputation).

The minor occultation (*ghaybah ṣuḡhrā*) of the last Imam, which started in 872 and ended by the death of his last *nā‘ib*, ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Samarī, in 939 also caused the Shi‘i clerics to expand their authority.³¹⁵ During the minor occultation the Shi‘i community enjoyed the indirect support of the Imam through his correspondence with his representatives. However, a few days before Samarī’s death, an order issued by the Imam indicated that the special deputation would come to an end, at which point the major occultation commenced (which continues to the present day).³¹⁶ As time passed, Shi‘i clerics were gradually seen as the general representatives of the Imam and were recognised as the source of authority in all affairs except for *jihād* for the sake of expansion.³¹⁷ Having the position of general representative of the Imam provided the opportunity for the clerics to claim religious taxes and to achieve economic independence. However, they would need to be supported by the public, as they had no executive means to force people to pay their religious taxes. In fact, as there was no formal appointment process by which the government appoints the religious authority, there would need to be a degree of public informal support in order to ensure continuing recognition of the religious establishment.³¹⁸

³¹⁴ Murtazā Muṭahharī, *Majmū‘ah-i āṣār-i ustād-i shahīd Muṭahharī* (Tihārān: Ṣadrā, 2001), 142-146.

³¹⁵ For more information about the absence of Imam see Joseph Eliash, ‘Misconceptions Regarding the Juridical Status of the Iranian ‘ulama’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 10.1 (1979), 9-25.

³¹⁶ For more information see Seyyed H. Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed V. R. Nasr, *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi‘ism in History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 8.

³¹⁷ See N. Calder, ‘The Structure of Authority in Imami Shi‘i Jurisprudence’, Ph.D. thesis (University of London, 1980), chapters 4-6.

³¹⁸ According to Lambton the *faqih* frequently follows rather than leads public opinion. However, it seems that they were sympathetic to public, as oppressed members of society. A. K. S. Lambton, ‘A Reconsideration of the Position of the Marja‘ Taqlid and the Religious Institution’, *Studia Islamica*, 20 (1964), 115-135.

The absence of the Imam was the reason that the Shi'i clerics withdrew from political activity.³¹⁹ During the early period of major occultation starting from 939, great Shi'i authorities such as Muḥammad Ibn Nu'mān known as Shaykh Mufīd (948-1022), Sharīf al-Murtaẓā (965-1044), Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (995-1067) and Ibn Idrīs Hillī (1148-1201) gave qualified approval for cooperation with an unjust ruler. Shaykh Mufīd believed that providing support for an unjust ruler is permissible if it is in support of a good action, and is not permissible if it is for an unjust action.³²⁰ Sharīf al-Murtaẓā in his work *Fi al-'amal ma'a al-sulṭān*, which was written in 1024, states that this is a conditional permission (or obligation) on the condition of enjoining right, forbidding wrong, implementing justice and removing injustice.³²¹ His justification for this was the consideration that although political authority was a right which was offered to the Shi'i clerics by the unjust ruler, however, in fact, it had already been a right from God and the Imams to Shi'i scholars. Sharīf al-Murtaẓā himself accepted the responsibility for managing the affairs of the Shi'is and was recognised as the leader of Shi'is of Baghdād.³²² However, unlike his father, Sayyid Ḥusayn Mūsavī Baghdādī, he did not accept the formal position of judge, which was appointed by the state.³²³ Shaykh al-Ṭūsī had similar opinions.³²⁴ It seems that Sharīf al-Murtaẓā was particularly influential, thanks to his rational approach.³²⁵ Although he acknowledged the necessity of political authority for society, he emphasised that this was an exclusive concern of the Imam. In addition, he believed that in those areas where there are rational or traditional (*naqlī*) grounds for believers to follow an action, there is no need for a leader to command them.³²⁶ The interesting point in Sharīf al-Murtaẓā's opinion is that he insisted that the importance of the Imam staying safe from his enemies made it necessary (*vājib*) for him to hide and

³¹⁹ Muḥammad H. Ṭūsī, 'Abbād A. Tihrānī, and 'Alī A. Nāṣih, *Kitāb al-ghaybah* (Bayrūt: Manshūrāt al-Rizā lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2008), 18.

³²⁰ Muḥammad M. Mufīd, *Awā'il al-maqālāt fī al-madhāhib wa-al-mukhtārāt* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Mufīd, 1993), IV, 120-121; Muḥammad M. Mufīd, *al-Muqni'ah* (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, Jāmi'at al-Mudarrisīn, 1989), 180.

³²¹ See A. H. Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, and Aḥmad Ḥusaynī, 'Mas'alat fī al-'amal ma'a al-sulṭān' in *Rasā'il al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā* (Qum: Dār al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 1989), 87-97; For a Persian translation see Maḥmūd Shafī'ī, 'Risālah fī al-'amal ma'a al-sulṭān', *Ulūm-i Siyāsī*, No. 14, 1380, 255-272; For an English version see Wilferd Madelung, 'A treatise of the Sharīf al-Murtaḍā on the legality of working for the government', *Bulletin*, School of Oriental and African Studies, 43.1 (1980), 18-31.

³²² See 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr: fī al-kitāb wa-al-sunnah wa-al-adab* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1967), IV, 205.

³²³ See A. H. Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, and Aḥmad Ḥusaynī, *al-Dhakhīrah fī 'ilm al-kalām: ta'līf al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā 'Alam al-Hudā 'Alī Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī al-Baghdādī*; taḥqīq Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1990), 8-20.

³²⁴ Abū Ja'far Ṭūsī, *al-Nihāyah fī mujarrad al-fiqh wa-al-fatāwī* (Qum: Quds Muḥammadī), 301.

³²⁵ Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Dhakhīrah fī 'ilm al-kalām*, 607.

³²⁶ Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Rasā'il al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā*, I, 294-315.

abandon political responsibilities.³²⁷ However, true believers always feel a degree of loyalty and obligation to the Imam which encourages them to do fair actions and avoid unfair actions.³²⁸ In regard to cooperation with an unjust government, Sharīf al-Murtaẓá insists that undertaking a responsibility under the unjust ruler is necessary (*vājib*) if the person knows that if he abandoned cooperation, good actions would fail to be done.³²⁹ Therefore, it is not just legitimate to work with the unjust ruler, it is positively necessary, as it enables the person to do good actions for the benefit of the Shi‘i community. Although Murtaẓá considers that enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong is necessary for people, he had nothing to say about the practical implementation of judicial sentences and criminal punishments.³³⁰

In the tenth century, when the Shi‘i dynasty of the Buyids (934-1055) achieved power over Sunni territories, they were not recognised as the legitimate government by the Shi‘i clerical authorities. Therefore in effect the Shi‘i clerics accepted the notion of the unjust ruler and ignored parts of their theoretical principles. When in 945 Aḥmad Mu‘izz al-Dawlah of the Buyids occupied Baghdād, the Buyids did not appoint any Shi‘i caliph there and allowed the Sunni Abbasid Caliph to continue in office, though they developed Shi‘i traditions in Baghdād. In fact, Shi‘i clerics believed that only the Imam could legitimately implement justice.³³¹ That meant that certain duties of the government could not possibly be fulfilled such as criminal punishments and *jihād*. Thus, in practice the doctrine meant that during the period in which the Imam is absent, governments are illegitimate, but Shi‘i clerics could not do anything about this situation, and the religion in its political aspect would not take any practical action. This does not deny that religion has a political dimension; it rather insists on the lack of a suitable and qualified executive body. On the other hand, it was permissible for Shi‘is to actually work with the *de facto* power, no matter whether it was a Sunni state or a Shi‘i one. Furthermore, they had the opportunity of working with non-Muslim governments, as

³²⁷ See Sharīf al-Murtaḍá, *Kitāb al-shāfi‘ī fī al-imāmah*, III, 149; and Aḥmad Kātib, *Taṭawwur al-fikr al-siyāsī al-Shī‘ī min al-shawra ilā wilāyat al-faqīh* (London: Dār al-Shūrā lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-‘Ilām, 1997), 165.

³²⁸ Sharīf al-Murtaḍá, *Rasā’il al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍá*, II, 297; and Sharīf, al-Murtaḍá, *al-Dhakhīrah fī ‘ilm al-Kalām*, 417-461.

³²⁹ Sharīf al-Murtaḍá, *Rasā’il al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍá*, II, 90-93.

³³⁰ See A. H. Sharīf al-Murtaḍá, and Muḥammad R. Khurasān, *al-Intiṣār* (Najaf: Manshūrāt al-Maṭba‘ah al-Ḥaydarīyah, 1971), 237; and Aḥmad Kātib, *Taṭawwur al-fikr al-siyāsī al-Shī‘ī*, 344.

³³¹ A. H. Sharīf al-Murtaḍá, *Kitāb al-shāfi‘ī fī al-imāmah*, 40-41; Muḥammad H. Tūsī, *Kitāb al-ghaybah*, and N. Calder, ‘The Structure of Authority in Imami Shi‘i Jurisprudence’, chapters 4-6.

Mongols enjoyed the cooperation of the Shi‘i *faqīh*, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī in 1258, when they entered Baghdād, for which he has been strongly criticised by the Sunni Muslims.³³²

During the Safavid period in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Iran was ruled by a dynasty that adhered to twelver Shi‘ism for the first time since the Buyids, and established this as the state religion. Although Shi‘i clerics were influential in the government and cooperated with the state, they never claimed that the Safavids had established a just, legitimate government.³³³ Therefore, the government was *de jure* illegitimate while *de facto* it was accepted by the clerics. In other words, the *de jure* illegitimacy would not make it illegitimate for clerics to accept and cooperate with the *de facto* power. In the case of Shah Tahmasp’s government, a Shi‘i cleric ‘Alī Ibn Ḥusayn al-Karakī (1460-1534) acknowledged Tahmasp’s partial legitimacy in the collection of taxes.³³⁴ However, this must not be understood as Karakī’s acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the unjust ruler, as he believed in influencing the Shah in order to make the government friendlier to the principles of justice.³³⁵ It seems that Karakī and other clerical authorities of the Safavid period such as Muqaddas Ardabīlī (d. 1585), Muḥaqqiq Sabza‘vārī (1608-1679) and others thought in the same way as Sharīf al-Murtazā had centuries before.³³⁶ Nevertheless, there was disagreement among the Shi‘i clerical authorities regarding the Safavid state and whether or how far it was legitimate to cooperate with it.

The particular way in which the Shi‘i clerics dealt with the Safavids, a Shi‘i dynasty, was slightly different from the Buyids, as the preference of some clerical authorities was to appoint the Safavid monarch as caliph and cooperate with him more closely. This cooperation in fact was very important for the consolidation of Shi‘ism. However, having a relationship with the government gave

³³² Shīrīn Bayānī, *Mughūlān va ḥukūmat-i Īlkhānī dar Īrān* (Tihṛān: Sāzmān-i Muṭāla‘ah va Tadvīn-i Kutub-i ‘Ulūm-i Insānī-i Dānīshgāh’hā Samt, 2000), 158.

³³³ The clerics usually delegated the responsibility to the Safavid king, see Rizā Qulī Khān Hidāyat, *Tazkirah-i riyāz al-‘arīfīn* (Tihṛān, 1937), 316.

³³⁴ For more information about Karakī see Muḥsin -H ‘Āmilī, and Ḥasan Amīn, *A ‘yān al-Shī‘ah* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ta‘āruf lil-Maṭbū‘āt, 1986), VIII, 209; and ‘Abd al-Hādī Ḥā’irī, *Shi‘ism and Constitutionalism in Iran: A Study of the Role Played by the Persian Residents of Iraq in Iranian Politics* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 61-62; Norman Calder, ‘Judicial Authority in Imami Shi‘i Jurisprudence’ *Bulletin of British Society for Middle Eastern Studies*, 6.2 (1979), 104-108.

³³⁵ Rasūl Ja‘fariyān, *Tārīkh-i Īrān-i Islāmī: Ṣafavīyah az zuhūr tā zavāl, sālha-yi 905 tā 1135 hijrī* (Tihṛān: Mu‘assasah-i Farhangī-i Dānīsh va Andīshah-i Mu‘āṣir, 2000), 105.

³³⁶ See Aḥmad M. Ardabīlī, Muḥtabā ‘Irāqī, and Ibn al-Muṭahhar Hillī, *Majma‘ al-fā‘idah wa-al-burhān fī sharḥ irshād al-adhhān* (Qum: Jam‘at al-Mudarrisīn fī al-Ḥawzah al-‘Ilmiyah, 1981), XII, 18-28 and IX, 10, and VIII, 160-161.

scope for Shi'i clerics to influence the government and try to make it more compatible with theoretical legitimacy.

The whole idea and method of recognition of a *de facto* power while it remained *de jure* illegitimate protected the Shi'i clerics and their followers and helped them benefit from governmental help. As this was a practical approach rather than a theoretical approach, the degree of support for or cooperation with the ruler would depend on the Shi'i clerics' decision, taken with a view to the particular conditions of time and place. And it is evident that there were different degrees of support for Safavids and Qajars and even for any individual king. There were moments during the Qajar dynasty when the Shi'i clerics gave their full support to the holder of power. For instance, during the time of *jihād* the clerics increased their support for the ruler.³³⁷ Thus the government enjoyed the support of the clerical authority, as Shaykh Ja'far Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' (1741-1813) delegated the *jihād* responsibility to the Qajar monarch. Therefore not only was active opposition to the government not essential for Shi'i clerics, providing support for the government was in fact seen as essential at times.³³⁸ By contrast, developments in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century caused Shi'i clerics to oppose the government.³³⁹ However, these approaches are to be understood as theoretical resistance, rather than active opposition in practice. There were certain concerns for Shi'i clerics such as the level of Western influence on the government or the proposed alternative constitutional forms to monarchy. Clerics wanted to determine which pattern would be more advantageous for them and would make them better able to exert their influence, as well as strengthen the government against foreign influence or invasion. This was a tangible concern in the late Qajar period when the royal court was no longer an independent power and became subject to foreign non-Muslim influence. In sum, clerics had a flexible range of options, to either oppose or try to influence a government or be neutral if they were not sure about something (*qif 'inda al-shubhah*= stop, when things are uncertain). This pattern has been practised by Shi'i clerical authorities in different periods

³³⁷ For example see Ann K. S. Lambton, 'A Nineteenth Century View of Jihād' in *Studia Islamica*, 1970.32, 181-192.

³³⁸ Hamid Algar, 'The Oppositional Role of the 'Ulama in Twentieth Century Iran', in Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972), 231-256.

³³⁹ See A. K. S. Lambton, 'The Tobacco Regie: Prelude to Revolution', *Studia Islamica*, 1965.22, 119-157 and 1965.23: 71-90.

of time and in different ways. Thus, there is a similarity in the pattern of action for the Shi'i authorities, which is the consideration of conditions of time and place. However, from a theoretical point of view, there have been disagreements over clerical authority in political affairs during the absence of the Imam.

Following Shaykh Ja'far Kāshif al-Ghiṭā's opinion in support of clerical responsibility for political affairs, Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī (1771-1829) had worked hard to establish and formulate the necessity of political authority for the *faqīh*.³⁴⁰ Then Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan Iṣfahānī known as Ṣāḥib Javāhir (1785-1849) established a strong basis for the necessity of the political authority of the *faqīh*.³⁴¹ Ṣāḥib Javāhir believed that *faqīh* should have the political authority and in some cases the *faqīh* must make efforts to achieve his political authority.³⁴² According to him, political authority has been eternally given to the *faqīh* by the Shi'i Imam.³⁴³ Ṣāḥib Javāhir's idea is the original idea which was later taken by 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Lārī (1847-1924) and developed by Khomeini and known as the *vilāyat-i faqīh*.³⁴⁴

However, following the challenges raised to the *faqīh*'s political authority by Mīr 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Marāghī (d. 1834), Shaykh Murtaẓā Anṣārī (1800-1864), who was Ṣāḥib Javāhir's successor in the *marja'īyat*, strongly disagreed with the political authority of the *faqīh* and formulated a firm theoretical basis for his opposition.³⁴⁵ Murtaẓā Anṣārī is particularly important as he is known as the founder of the new system of clerical authority in Shi'ism.³⁴⁶ He was highly educated and his contributions, known as *Rasā'il* and *Makāsib*, are still high level textbooks of the Shi'i seminary. He is known as the pioneering figure in *uṣūl* in Shi'ism. His students Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī and Ākhund Mullā Muḥammad Kāẓim Khurāsānī were active in the political events of Iran in the late Qajar period. He also worked hard to foster the unity of Shi'i and Sunni. In 1849, after the death of

³⁴⁰ Aḥmad Narāqī, *Kitāb 'awā'id al-ayyām fī bayān qawā'id istinbāt al-aḥkām* (Qum: Daftar-i Tabliḡhāt-i Islāmī, 1996), 537.

³⁴¹ Muḥammad Ḥasan Najafī, *Jawāhir al-kalām: fī sharḥ sharā'i al-Islām* (Bayrūt: Dār Iḥyā'-i Turāth al-'Arabī, 1981), XXI, 395.

³⁴² Ibid, XXII, 156.

³⁴³ Ibid, XXI, 395-401.

³⁴⁴ 'Abd H. Lārī, and A. Karīmī Jahrumī, 'Ta'līqah 'alā makāsib', *Kungrīh-i Buzurgdāsh-t-i Āyat Allāh Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Lārī* (Qum: Daftar-i Kungrīh, 1997), IV, 138-158.

³⁴⁵ For information about Marāghī's ideas in this regard see 'Abd F. A. Marāghī, *al-'Anāwīn* (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī al-tābi'ah li-Jamā'at al-Mudarrisīn bi-Qum al-Musharrafah, 1996), II, 557-574.

³⁴⁶ For more information on Murtaẓā Anṣārī see Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 162-5.

Şāhib Javāhir, he was recognised as the *marja'*. Anşārī argued for his political ideas in the *bay'* (legalities of commercial transactions) section of his *Makāsib*, a tradition which was later followed by Ḥusayn Nā'inī and Kāzīm Khurāsānī among others, including Khomeini to discuss their political views under the *bay'* section of jurisprudence.

Anşārī rejected the possibility that clerics could hold political power in the period in which the Imam is absent. Although Anşārī acknowledged the *faqīh*'s authority for issuing fatwas and court sentences, he denied his political authority over people's lives and property. In fact, Anşārī argued that the authority of the *faqīh* in social and political affairs would be only valid if in principle accepted and permitted by the shariah.³⁴⁷ The idea was later followed and developed in different forms by Nā'inī (Iran), Bāqir al-Şadr (Iraq) and Shams al-Dīn (Lebanon) as their proposed preferred form of government for the Shi'i communities.³⁴⁸

Therefore, there were two intellectual camps, the school of Şāhib Javāhir who encouraged the political authority of *faqīh*, and the school of Murtaẓā Anşārī who discouraged the political authority of the *faqīh*. It seems that the origin of the disagreement between Shi'i clerical authorities rested on their sympathy with either Murtaẓā Anşārī or Şāhib Javāhir. It must be mentioned that among these two schools, some Shi'i clerics were more resistant to the state than others and some would aspire to influence the state more than others, alongside those who kept quiet and neutral. In the case of Burūjjirdī, it seems that he belonged to Murtaẓā Anşārī's school. However, as we know, in his *fiqh* method, Burūjjirdī had a great sympathy with the early Shi'i *faqīhs* such as Sharīf al-Murtaẓā. Therefore, it seems that in his political method, he followed Sharīf al-Murtaẓā's method, the necessity of working with an unjust ruler, alongside Murtaẓā Anşārī's view of the denial of any political authority for the *faqīh*.

During the Pahlavi period, Shi'i clerics hoped to be able to work with Riza Shah, before he started to exclude them from major decisions, to undermine their opinions and subsequently to suppress their opposition, at which point clerical authorities lost their influence totally. However,

³⁴⁷ Murtaḍā Ibn Muḥammad Amīn Anşārī, *Kitāb al-qaḍā' wa-al-shahādāt* (Qum:Majma' al-Fikr al-Islāmī, 1999), III, 545-560.

³⁴⁸ For more information see M. Harandī Ja'farī, *Fuqahā va ḥukūmat: pizhūhishī dar tārīkh-i fiqh-i siyāsī-i Shī'ah* (Tih-rān: Rawzanah, 2000); and Muḥsin Kaḍīvar, *Naẓariyah'hā-yi dawlat dar fiqh-i Shī'ah* (Tih-rān: Nashr-i Nay, 1997).

Muhammad Riza Pahlavi changed his behaviour and operated like previous kings in terms of respecting clerical authority. And for as long as he respected clerical authority, Burūjirdī saw no point in doing anything against him. However, he always tried to influence the Shah over controversial matters. This was very similar to the method of Safavid clerical authorities. Isfahan, the Safavid capital, where Burūjirdī studied his principles, has a very long history as a centre of Shi‘i scholarship, dating back to the Safavid period. Although the Safavid dynasty collapsed, the city did not lose its status as a centre of Shi‘i scholarship. During the Safavid period special attention was paid to the study of *ḥadīṡ* and clerics such as Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, who produced a great collection of Shi‘i sources, were active. Therefore the educational environment was suitable for a young student as far as theological knowledge was concerned. It is interesting that although Burūjirdī later went to Najaf, which was then home to the dominant school of Shi‘i scholarship, he believed that he had acquired his main principles in *fiqh* and *uṣūl* from Isfahan rather than Najaf. Indeed one could simply claim that Burūjirdī’s place in Shi‘i tradition was a continuation of the Isfahan school. It is important to mention that the Isfahan school was slightly different from the Najaf school in terms of professors as well as educational curriculum and intellectual perspective. For instance, teaching philosophy was taken seriously in Isfahan and Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā’ī used to teach philosophy there. He was undoubtedly one of the great scholars who influenced the manner of teaching Islamic philosophy in Iran as well throughout the Shi‘i world. However, in his political views, Qashqā’ī was sceptical. He opposed the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 believing the Constitutional Movement to be an insidious movement initiated and backed by colonial powers. Qashqā’ī’s position regarding the Constitutional Revolution was controversial as he disagreed with it on the grounds that it was a case of “stealing people’s religion”.³⁴⁹ He was not sure that the constitution would provide a more religious friendly system than the old system. After the constitution in 1906, in the meeting held by the clerics of Isfahan, generally known as the meeting of clerics of the Shāhī Mosque, he spoke against the constitution. Finally he concluded that neutrality was the best option.³⁵⁰ Burūjirdī was taught and influenced by Qashqā’ī when he was young. Later in his life, when he was in a position of authority,

³⁴⁹ Khusraw Iḥtishāmī, *Az miḡrāb tā miḡrāb*, 34.

³⁵⁰ Sayyid ‘Abd al-Rasūl Ḥijāzī (1260-1358 H.Q./1844-1939), taken from *Zindagīnāmah ḥakīm Jahāngīr Khān-i Qashqā’ī*, <http://noorportal.net/951/1254/1304/6009/13332.aspx>.

Burūjirdī followed the same path of neutrality during crises such as the Iranian national oil movement of 1951 and the coup of 1953 against Musaddiq. It seems that Burūjirdī acquired his principles from his time in Isfahan, not just in the study of *ḥadīṣ*, Shi'i jurisprudence and the epistemology of jurisprudence but even in political philosophy. However, it did not stop him from intervening in political cases in order to make peaceful changes for the benefit of the Shi'i community.

In short Burūjirdī's political method was based on Murtaẓā Anṣārī's idea in combination with the method of the Safavid clerics, who were in support of cooperation with the state, with the justifications of Sharīf al-Murtaẓā. On the one hand, he did not claim political authority over people's lives and properties for himself. On the other hand he had to work cooperatively with the state in order to be able to influence the government and act in the interests of the Shi'i community. This idea would offer state support for cultural and educational development on the one hand and would make minimal political responsibilities for the *faqīh* on the other. This was dramatically different from Khomeini's ideas which were a continuation of Ṣāhib Javāhir ideas of demanding political authority and making active efforts to claim it. However, he was far from being passive vis-a-vis the state.

At the end of his *Risālah fī al-'amal ma'a al-sulṭān*, Sharīf al-Murtaẓā raises some questions and clarifies answers to them. He concludes that insofar as doing just actions for the benefit of the Shi'i community depends on acceptance of a post offered by an unjust ruler, acceptance of the post is permissible and may be even necessary. The other point is that bloodshed is unacceptable in any case and it is a condition that anyone who accepts a post offered by an unjust ruler is not allowed to cause any bloodshed. When there is an ambiguous situation the cleric should take a neutral stance. Finally he refers to a tradition narrated by Imam Ṣādiq that the acceptance of a position offered by an unjust ruler and cooperation with him is to do good for the Shi'i community.³⁵¹ These exact questions were relevant during the time in which Burūjirdī had his position in Qum. He accepted the position of *marja'īyat* and sought to implement principles of early Shi'i *faqīhs*, that is enjoining the right, forbidding the wrong, implementing justice, and removing injustice, as well as doing beneficial actions for the Shi'i community.

³⁵¹ See Sharīf al-Murtaẓā, 'Mas'alah fī al-'amal ma'a al-sulṭān', 87-97.

Shi'i political theorists have been always interested in defining the gap between the ideal and the actual in the issue of government. Khomeini sought to influence the government through the parliamentary method promoted by people such as Mudarris and Kashani before him. However, Burūjirdī was not sure about the outcome of that approach and perhaps thought that Khomeini was younger and lacked experience and therefore did not support him.

During the different stages of Burūjirdī's life, the political sphere in Iran underwent numerous changes. When he was young, Iran experienced the Constitutional Revolution, in which the clerics played a very active role. Ākhund-i Khurāsānī who was the leading *marja'* of that time and supported the constitutional Revolution, lost his authority to great degree after majority of believers turned against the revolution, feeling it was not Islamic. For example, when the prominent cleric Shaykh Faḡl Allāh Nūrī was executed by revolutionaries, the number people who attended Khurāsānī's prayer in Najaf drastically dropped to only 15 people. After that, clerics suffered significantly during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi as a result of his anti-Islamic policies. When Burūjirdī came to Qum, the new government of Mohammad Riza Shah Pahlavi was relatively weak and was followed by Musaddiq's nationalization of the oil industry and the coup of 1953. So, Burūjirdī had a lengthy experience of political affairs. Burūjirdī's assessment of the conditions of time and place was that it was necessary for him to support the Pahlavi state not just in order to be able to influence it (a Safavid principle), but to be able to protect the state from being the target of both Western influence and dissolution by communism. Due to Burūjirdī's principle of the denial of the *faqīh's* political authority, he did not see himself in a legitimate position to undertake any oppositional activities, beyond theoretical resistance.

Burūjirdī had a consistent method in dealing with the state and succeeded in influencing government policy on several occasions, whereas Khomeini's method was inconsistent. His original method of pressuring the state into compliance ultimately failed when he was exiled in 1964, hence he was compelled to adopt a more confrontational method. It seems that there is inconsistency in Khomeini's view of the constitution.³⁵² Khomeini frequently changed his ideas about how best to

³⁵² Hamid Algar, 'The Oppositional Role of the 'Ulama in Twentieth Century Iran', 246-255.

confront the government,³⁵³ starting with a preference for parliamentary methods, followed by pressure tactics, encouraging tax evasion and civil disobedience and eventually active revolt and revolution, which caused bloodshed. Khomeini's idea was that clerics must participate actively in the political life of Iranian society. For him, parliamentary methods (such as those of Kashani and Mudarris) as well as violent methods to pressure the government (such as those of the *Fidā'īyān-i Islām* and later *Ḥizb-i Milal-i Islāmī*) were a legitimate and necessary means of influencing the government to follow Islamic principles.

It seems that after the Revolution, and Khomeini's rise to power, the majority of the clerical class would have preferred Burūjirdī's method, although they did not openly admit this. Amendments to the Iranian Islamic Republic Constitution in 1989, which removed the requirement of *marja'īyat* from the qualifications of the supreme leader, showed that the majority of the clerical class would prefer not to have a *marja'* as the *faqīh*, the highest political authority. Therefore, it is expected that the majority of the clerical class in Iran and in the Shi'i world would continue the sort of approach which Burūjirdī followed: to work with the *de facto* power in order to be able to influence the government while acknowledging its *de jure* illegitimacy. As ruling the people in the absence of the Imam is necessarily associated with injustice, for example in issues such as capital punishment, it seems that the most expedient approach taken by the clerical authorities is to be able to work with a government whose existence is a necessary evil. In this regard, Burūjirdī's approach is to be assessed as a successful one, thanks to his achievements, and an acceptable one, thanks to his universal leadership over the Shi'is. It is expected that this pattern will be developed and followed in Shi'i countries with a Shi'i government.

Principles of Burujirdi's socio-political actions

³⁵³ Rūḥ Allāh Khumaynī, *Vilāyat-i faqīh dar khuṣṣ-i ḥukūmat-i Islāmī: Islām dīn-i siyāsāt ast* (Tih-rān: 1979).

1. De-politicising as a means of strengthening Shi‘i establishment

The word *marja‘* is an Arabic word which means “referring” or “reference”, a status requiring widespread public legitimacy and general acknowledgement of authority. According to Ḥā‘irī’s sources, the institution of *marja‘ al-taqlīd* has been traced back to the fourth century of the Islamic era with Muḥammad Kulaynī (d. 940) being the first *marja‘*.³⁵⁴ Hairī’s source for this is Davānī’s introduction to his work on Burūjirdī.³⁵⁵ However, it seems highly unlikely that around that time, Kulaynī was considered as a *marja‘ al-taqlīd*. Careful exploration of the evolution of the Shi‘i *fiqh*, *ijtihād* and the institution of *marja‘ al-taqlīd* clearly shows that Kulaynī belonged to the narrator’s period (the beginning of the longer occultation in 939 to the middle of 5th Islamic century) when religious authority was more or less narrating the tradition. The first period of *ijtihād* began a generation later with Ibn ‘Aqīl ‘Umānī and Ibn Junayd Iskāfī and was followed by Shaykh Muḥid and Sharīf al-Murtaẓā. Eventually following the contributions of Shaykh Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī, Shi‘i *fiqh* and *ijtihād* was established as an independent scholarly tradition.³⁵⁶ The erudition of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī inspired people (including other *ulama*) to emulate him, thereby somewhat restricting *ijtihād* because clerics were reluctant to express opinions contrary to his own.³⁵⁷ Therefore, the *marja‘ al-taqlīd* institution must have been formed sometime between the time of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī, a scholar who revived the practice of *ijtihād* after Shaykh al-Ṭūsī. Therefore, if we were to propose someone as the first *marja‘ al-taqlīd* he ought to be Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, rather than Kulaynī as Ḥā‘irī and Davānī claimed.

Burūjirdī’s *marja‘īyat*, given the size of his following, was a real source of influence. His activities in dealing with political cases showed that he was acutely aware of his important role as an authority for a wide range of people. He did not believe that the *marja‘* should be monopolised by those who claimed to be his supporters, meaning that a *marja‘* is only responsible for the interests of those who follow him. He felt that a *marja‘* must speak for everybody within the faith. Given the

³⁵⁴ ‘Abd al-Ḥādī Ḥā‘irī, *Shi‘ism and Constitutionalism in Iran*, 62-63.

³⁵⁵ ‘Alī Davānī, *Zindagānī-i za‘īm-i buzurg-i ‘ālam-i Tashayyu‘, Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī* (Qum: 1961), 18-34.

³⁵⁶ For more information about different periods in the evolution of the Shi‘i *fiqh* see Abū al-Qāsim Gurjī, *Tārīkh-i fiqh va fuqahā* (Tīhrān: Sāzmān-i Muṭālī‘ah va Tadvīn-i Kutub-i ‘Ulūm-i Insānī-i Dānishgāh‘hā SAMT, 2000), 126-146.

³⁵⁷ Abū al-Qāsim Gurjī, *Tārīkh-i fiqh va fuqahā*, 217-230.

severity of the political disputes during the period in which Burūjirdī was in Qum, one can easily imagine how perilous it would be for him to favour one faction over another.³⁵⁸ In such circumstances, Burūjirdī had to follow a neutral policy which would keep him, as well as the religious establishment, safe. However, the enormous power of Burūjirdī in mobilizing public forces, if he chose to, created two different sources of threat for him. Burūjirdī, as representative of the religious establishment was a potential target for manipulation by religious factions such as Fidā'īyān-i Islām or Islamist political activists like Kashani, who sought either his explicit support or at least tried to prevent him from taking any position against them.³⁵⁹ This was in particular very important, as Burūjirdī's support was the easiest way for them to mobilise the population and put pressure on the government. From the state's point of view, given Burūjirdī's enormous public influence, he was an asset for maintaining order in the country, and thus he was always a target of attention.³⁶⁰ Therefore, he was targeted by both the state and the opposition. Furthermore, any political figure, however great or small, would benefit from an offer of support by Burūjirdī. However, Burūjirdī strove to maintain a position of strict neutrality, a policy which was especially irritating for religious activist forces who felt that Burūjirdī should support their political plans. Thus, his policy was one of de-politicising Shi'ism.

Effective public relations and administration are the missing element in the offices of most *marja's*, due to a lack of managerial expertise in clerical community. In Burūjirdī's case, the administrative structure was very simple, but functioned smoothly and enabled him to deal with the government from a position of strength. A *marja's* office in which the administrative structure is either missing or is disorganized cannot carry any weight in dealing with external bodies (especially the state), because it is too susceptible to outside influence. Burūjirdī's administration and public relations were carried out using the following three elements: Firstly, an executive representative, Hājj

³⁵⁸ After 1941, Iranian parties re-established themselves and there were many parties and newspapers which shows the significant amount of political polarisation see L. P. Elwell-Sutton, 'Political Parties in Iran: 1941-1948', *Middle East Journal*, 3.1949, 45-62; L. P. Elwell-Sutton, 'The Iranian Press, 1941-1947', *Iran*, 6.1968, 65-104; Sāzmān-i Chāp va Intishārāt, Vizārat-i Farhang va Irshād-i Islāmī, *Asnādī az aḥzāb-i siyāsī dar Īrān (1320-1340 H. Sh.)* (Tihṛān: Sāzmān-i Chāp va Intishārāt, Vizārat-i Farhang va Irshād-i Islāmī, 2000).

³⁵⁹ In His work, Rahnamā offers a very good discussion on the type of clashes that Burūjirdī and the religious forces have had. See 'Alī Rahnamā, *Nīrūhā-yi maḡhabī bar bastar-i ḥarakat-i nahḡat-i millī* (Tihṛān: Gām-i Naw, 1384).

³⁶⁰ See Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2003), 53.

Aḥmad Khādimī; secondly, a number of MPs in the parliament; and thirdly senior religious orators who served not only as political advisors but also conducted public campaigns on Burūjirdī's behalf, a function similar to a newspaper or a TV channel which supports a particular party. Each of these three elements had their own, clearly defined functions, and worked well together.

Burūjirdī's executive representative: Ḥājj Aḥmad Khādimī

Ḥājj Aḥmad Khādimī's political function in Burūjirdī's administration was even more important than his internal function in the *ḥawzah*. Ḥājj Aḥmad, who had been living with Burūjirdī for a long time, was a Lur like him, and as a consequence he had more sympathy with Burūjirdī.³⁶¹ There was a remarkable degree of mutual trust between Burūjirdī and Ḥājj Aḥmad. He also had a very close relationship with many important political figures such as Manūchir Iqbāl, the Prime Minister from 1957-1960.³⁶² Burūjirdī was the type of cleric who was only minimally influenced by the people who worked closely for him in his administration.³⁶³ However, Ḥājj Aḥmad was not entirely without influence and authority.³⁶⁴ He was more than a mere messenger or a simple spokesman for Burūjirdī, though these too were part of his responsibility. Rather he was Burūjirdī's representative with a significant degree of authority which was endorsed by Burūjirdī himself.

Burūjirdī certainly benefited from Ḥājj Aḥmad's efforts on his behalf. Ḥājj Aḥmad screened out many visitors and issues which he knew Burūjirdī disliked. However, in the eyes of outsiders, it was Ḥājj Aḥmad who blocked their requests by placing obstacles between them and Burūjirdī. This protected Burūjirdī from criticism, as it was known to people that it was Ḥājj Aḥmad who had been

³⁶¹ Although Iran is no longer a tribal country, tribal bonds can still be important. That is in particular more important in the case of clerics, as a result of local loyalty to them. As far as we can see, in Burūjirdī's administration, Lurs had a very special position. For example, Ayatollah Rūḥ Allāh Kamālīvand, who himself played a mediating role between Burūjirdī and the government. See Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrāy-i Millī, 24th term, Meeting No. 186, p. 11. Or people who used to live in *ḥujrah*-i Khuram'ābādīhā had so much power that they attacked *Fidā'iyyān-i Islām* openly, without any resistance from any other person. Now it is very obvious to us that *Fidā'iyyān* were very popular among the students of the Qum Seminary, but they knew that it was not wise for them to fight with the Khuram'ābādīhā, as they were very close to Burūjirdī. However, apparently Khuram'ābādīhā did not even have any authorization from Burūjirdī. See Muḥammad Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, *Tihirān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārikh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī*, Muḥammad Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, 64-65.

³⁶² Muḥammad Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, *Tihirān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārikh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī*, Muḥammad Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, 54.

³⁶³ Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārikh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 76.

³⁶⁴ It is easily seen in a great deal of memoirs that people were unhappy with Ḥājj Aḥmad, especially in the memoirs of people who were close friends to Khomeini. However it doesn't seem that they are right. In fact, as Ḥājj Aḥmad was an obstacle towards Khomeini's influence on Burūjirdī, Khomeini's friends and students were angry at Ḥājj Aḥmad and would continuously criticise him.

obstructive. This was an intelligent way for Burūjirdī to evade issues he disliked and therefore to protect himself from making any comment about them. On many issues Burūjirdī was happy to leave the final word to Ḥājj Aḥmad, who was so authoritative that no-one could approach Burūjirdī without getting past him. It has been a common weakness of the clerical authorities that people (usually other high ranking clerics) will approach them to ask for help.³⁶⁵ However, the high ranking clerics couldn't influence Burūjirdī that way, as Ḥājj Aḥmad stopped them.

As this privilege was unique to Ḥājj Aḥmad, and Burūjirdī himself could come across as unapproachable, it was not surprising that people tried to build networks with Ḥājj Aḥmad. Apart from that, Ḥājj Aḥmad was able to project a respectable and well-mannered image for himself. For example, on one occasion in 1948, when he and the famous preacher Muḥammad Taqī Falsafī went to meet the Shah in order to deliver a message from Burūjirdī, Falsafī was unsure how to proceed.³⁶⁶ Specifically, he was concerned that saying “Burūjirdī ordered this” would be presumptuous behaviour towards the Shah and saying “Burūjirdī requested this” would diminish Burūjirdī's position relative to the Shah. Finally, Ḥājj Aḥmad used his quick wits to solve the dilemma, impressing Falsafī by saying, “Burūjirdī ordered ME to request this of you.” At this same meeting, the Shah gave some money to Falsafī and Ḥājj Aḥmad. Falsafī accepted the money, but Ḥājj Aḥmad refused, saying that he had no need for money because Burūjirdī always took care of him.³⁶⁷ This was a clear indication that he was absolutely loyal to Burūjirdī and as a consequence (over the course of many years) Burūjirdī found him to be a most trustworthy man and preferred him to many other people, with the result that Burūjirdī would be subjected to a series of endless critiques by others who were opposed to Ḥājj Aḥmad, including Khomeini.

Ḥājj Aḥmad's networks were not just limited to political figures, as he had the same relationship with many people in the bazaar regarding commercial issues. He also had a good

³⁶⁵ For example, according to Rafsanjānī, this has been the main issue of disagreements between Khomeini and Muntazirī, which eventually led to Muntazirī's resignation. See Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, 'Intiqād-i Hāshimī Rafsanjānī az Jafā-yi Aṭrāfiyān Muntazirī bih Ḥājj Sayyid Aḥmad Khumaynī' in *Kayhān*, No. 19765, Sunday 25 Mihr 1389, p. 3.

³⁶⁶ See Muḥammad Taqī Falsafī, 'Alī Davānī, and Ḥamīd Rūhānī, *Khāṭirāt va mubārazāt-i Hujjat al-Islām Falsafī* (Tihṛān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2003), 183-185. The content of the message is probably related to Burūjirdī's discontent with using fire (which was considered a sign of Zoroastrianism) in some official meetings such as sport competitions. See Rūh Allāh Ḥusayniyān, *Bīst sāl-i takāpū-yi Islām-i Shī'ī dar Īrān, 1320-1340* (Tihṛān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2002), 410.

³⁶⁷ Murtaẓā Burqah'ī, Tihṛān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, Murtaẓā Burqah'ī, 4-6.

relationship with General Sajjādī, who was the chief of police in Qum.³⁶⁸ Somebody who had such wide-ranging networks could wield a lot of influence and create a strong impression on people. So, although some people such as Fazl Allāh Maḥallātī believed that Ḥājj Aḥmad was connected to the Shah and the government, this wasn't necessarily true.³⁶⁹ Rather, it is closer to the truth to say that in every system, it is in the interest of those who are obliged to work together to get along, because otherwise the system will collapse. Maḥallātī's background and his closeness to Khomeini could be certainly a reason for him to be so critical of Ḥājj Aḥmad, who played the essential role in restricting Khomeini's activities and blocking his access to Burūjirdī. It is worth noting that Maḥallātī represented a school of thought which was supportive of the Fidā'iyyān-i Islām, who were angry at Ḥājj Aḥmad for his active role in the disciplinary action against them. Therefore, it is not surprising if they criticise Ḥājj Aḥmad for his actions as well Burūjirdī's support for him. People who resented Ḥājj Aḥmad said in veiled reference to him that "Burūjirdī was surrounded by a few people who had a secret relationship with the Shah's court."³⁷⁰ They were either jealous of him and his position, or were disappointed in their attempts to influence Burūjirdī to act according to their views.

Ḥājj Aḥmad's network in Qum was so effective that he achieved complete control. His core network in Qum included Abū al-Fazl Tawlīyat, the custodian of the Ḥaẓrat-i Ma'sūmah's shrine as well as the MP for Qum, and General Sajjādī, the head of Qum's police.³⁷¹ They collaborated closely and supported each other when in need.³⁷² For example, when in 1952 Musaddiq unsuccessfully attempted to sack Tawlīyat from his position as the custodian of Ḥaẓrat-i Ma'sūmah's shrine, Tawlīyat took advantage of his alliance with Sajjādī and Ḥājj Aḥmad, and eventually successfully used Burūjirdī's influence to put pressure on Musaddiq to allow Tawlīyat to retain his position, and to

³⁶⁸ For more information about Sajjādī and his relations with Ḥājj Aḥmad see Muḥammad 'A. Girāmī, and Muḥammad R. Aḥmadī, *Khāṭirāt-i Āyat Allāh Muḥammad 'Alī Girāmī* (Tihṛān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2002), 141.

³⁶⁹ Fazl Allāh Maḥallātī, Tihṛān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, Fazl Allāh Maḥallātī, 16.

³⁷⁰ Maḥallātī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān.

³⁷¹ On the other hand, when General Sajjādī was the chief commander of the Qum police, two students of the seminary protested against the forced unveiling of women and they were arrested by police. A huge gathering went to Burūjirdī and asked for help. He told them that he did not need their support and would do something by himself. He told them that "I have ostracised the chief commander from myself". Most clerics were not happy with this and wanted some sort of punishment to be meted out to the police. So, top clerics sought a meeting with Burūjirdī, but he declined to meet them, after which they decided to have a meeting amongst themselves and inform Burūjirdī of the outcome (Muḥammad 'Alī Girāmī, Tihṛān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, Muḥammad 'Alī Girāmī, 34). It showed that there were some red lines in Burūjirdī's administration that even a gathering of *ulama* could not compel him to cross.

³⁷² Muḥammad Šādiq Tihṛānī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 52.

sack the manager of the department of national endowment who proposed this change (and was apparently an enemy of Tawliyat).

In the confrontation over the custodianship at the Shrine, one can easily see how Hājj Aḥmad facilitated Burūjirdī's intervention in the case. All he said was that if the government wanted his help for maintaining order in the country, they must respect him. This was Burūjirdī's formal position after the unrest in the city. In November 1952, following the forced resignation of Abū al-Faḥl Tawliyat as custodian (administrator) of the shrine in Qum and his replacement with a certain Mishkvāt, a professor of law at the University of Tehran, ordered by Dr Maḥmūd Shirvīn, a favourite of Ayatollah Kashani, who was in charge of Department of National Endowments, there were protests and rumours began to circulate that Burūjirdī was going to leave Qum for Najaf to express his displeasure with Musaddiq's government.³⁷³ In fact demonstration started when Dr Maḥdī Āzar who was Minister of Culture and had authority over the shrines, went to Qum and broke into the shrine to forcefully appoint Mishkvāt there, an action which could be understood as disrespect for the religious community.³⁷⁴ At this time in Qum, a tiny demonstration had stirred up trouble and had resulted in one death and five wounded, which displeased Burūjirdī.³⁷⁵ He sent a message to Aḥmad Firaydūnī, who was formerly deputy Ministry of the Interior, and now served as the special go-between for Musaddiq and Burūjirdī.³⁷⁶

Musaddiq designated Ḥusayn Makkī as his special representative to tackle the disturbance in Qum. Makkī's main condition for undertaking the mission was that he must have command of the army, to which Musaddiq consented, so Makkī proceeded to Qum. According to Makkī, there were many army troops stationed in Qum to control the demonstrators, who were armed, angry, and ready to fight. When Makkī reached Qum, the shrine was surrounded by the army. In the streets of Qum, there were groups of armed soldiers stationed every 20 to 30 metres. Many soldiers could be seen on the rooftops of buildings. It clearly shows that the government policy up to that point was to use force

³⁷³ See Shahrough Akhavi, 'The role of the Clergy in Iranian Politics 1949—54', in James Bill and William Louis (eds), *Musaddiq, Iranian Nationalism and Oil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 91-117.

³⁷⁴ For more information in this regard see Akhavi, Shahrough, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavī Period* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), 70-72.

³⁷⁵ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 39, No. 7, pp. 72-73.

³⁷⁶ *Mard-i Āsiyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 32, p. 3.

in order to disperse demonstrators. Makkī asked the demonstrators to send four people as their representatives for negotiation. Then he went to Qum's police headquarters (Shahrbānī), following which Makkī ordered that all of the troops should come back and the siege be terminated. This was a clear change in the government's position and one may not ignore General Sajjādī's influence on Makkī, as the new decision was made in the police headquarters of General Sajjādī. As Makkī himself says the army was reluctant to comply, but he informed them that if they disobeyed, there would be a tragedy similar to the incident at the Gawhar Shād Mosque, where many people had been killed in 1935. Finally, they accepted, the siege was lifted and the troops left.

Makkī then gave assurances to the representatives of the demonstrators that the newly appointed custodian of the shrine would be dismissed and that Abū al-Faḍl Tawliyat would be reinstated as custodian. Then Makkī sent a telegram to Musaddiq and asked him to dismiss Shirvīn from his post and to broadcast the news on the radio. Around ten o'clock in the morning, Makkī went to meet Burūjirdī, who declared that "Dr. Musaddiq and Ayatollah Kashani have decided to disturb and overturn the Qum seminary. And I will not be staying in this country anymore. Tell them to give me a passport right now so I can leave Iran. Is it right that a group of people call for my death in my house?" Makkī attempted to mollify Burūjirdī by explaining the action he had taken to solve the crisis, and it was effective. He instructed Makkī to pass the message to Musaddiq that he should "first deal with the question of British interests and then start to discuss custodianship and similar issues" and he prayed for Musaddiq and the government.

When Makkī came back to Tehran, he asked Musaddiq to send two telegrams to Qum; one to Ayatollah Burūjirdī and the other to Ayatollah Ṣadr. The letters were prepared very quickly. At the beginning of the letter the phrase used was "*biḥ 'arḡ-i 'ālī mī'rasānad*", which Musaddiq changed to "*biḥ sharaḡ-i 'arḡ-i 'ālī mī'rasānad*" to make it even more polite. Makkī requested Musaddiq to use his special executive powers (*lāyihah-i ikhtiyārāt*) to approve a law in which the severity of the punishment for insulting a *marja'* would be equal to the sentence for insulting the Shah. Musaddiq agreed and it became law. Following this, the Ayatollah sent a message to Musaddiq and thanked

him.³⁷⁷ Makkī says, “from that point on, whenever Burūjirdī wanted to deliver a message, he entrusted it to me.”³⁷⁸ But it is difficult to believe Makkī since Burūjirdī generally avoided endorsing politicians. Furthermore this was an area monopolised by Ḥājj Aḥmad, not undertaken by other people in the *ḥawzah* or outside, except for occasional cases.

Following that, in his parliamentary speech, Tawliyat denied that Burūjirdī had been angry with Musaddiq’s government and had intended to leave Qum because of it.³⁷⁹ In his speech, he mentioned that the city of Qum must be protected from political rivalries as it was a religious city where such skirmishes had no place. Finally, he reassured the audience that Burūjirdī was happy with Musaddiq and that Musaddiq had taken all the necessary actions to satisfy him, including the punishment of officials who were engaged in the issue.³⁸⁰ This was because Musaddiq’s political opponents tried to create tension between him and Burūjirdī by denouncing his government on Islamic grounds. However, these attempts were largely unsuccessful because Burūjirdī always reacted with restraint to provocation and took care not to issue statements which could be abused by others – unlike Ayatollah Kashani whose statements were often fodder for abuse. In any case the outcome shows how efficiently Ḥājj Aḥmad’s network could work in order to realise Burūjirdī’s demands, even at a national level.

Burūjirdī’s MPs

In each session of parliament, there were MPs in place who were generally known as Burūjirdī’s ambassadors in parliament. In fact, there was no formal appointment process. These were people who themselves wanted to be close to Burūjirdī in order to attract voters’ attention. They reported parliament affairs regularly, which kept Burūjirdī updated on what was going on in the

³⁷⁷ Compared with the previous and following governments, Musaddiq’s government treated Burūjirdī totally differently. This was not because of a change in Burūjirdī’s position, but rather because of Musaddiq’s political successes. Having said that, Burūjirdī kept his general policy of non-intervention in political affairs. Indeed he had his red lines for everyone, whether Shah, Musaddiq, Kashani or an MP.

³⁷⁸ ‘Mu’jizah-’i zabān-i khush dar jilaw’gīrī az tashannuj dar Qum’, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 38, No. 52, pp. 83-84.

³⁷⁹ Tawliyat, in general, was an opposition MP to Musaddiq. However, after Musaddiq’s action for the custodianship of the shrine, he expressed his gratitude to Musaddiq in emotional terms. Tawliyat was originally from Lebanon and his ancestors, who were Shi’i *mujtahids*, immigrated to Iran at the invitation of Shah ‘Abbās Ṣafavī and were offered this position. According to Nuṣrat Allāh Khāzanī who was very close to Musaddiq, when Tawliyat met Musaddiq, he was crying and wanted to kiss Musaddiq’s hand. See Nuṣrat Allāh Khāzanī, ‘Muṣāḥabah bā Nuṣrat Allāh Khāzanī darbarah-’i Muṣaddiq’, *Inqilab-i Islāmī dar hijrat*, No. 611. Khāzanī also gives more details about this case in Musaddiq’s office.

³⁸⁰ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawray-i Millī, 17th term, Meeting No. 58, p. 3.

political establishment. As one might expect, he was not as interested in finance or everyday disputes in the parliament, as much as in religious affairs, since he believed that he should protect the principles of Islam and take action on that count if it was necessary.³⁸¹ These MPs were Burūjirdī's vehicle for speaking indirectly in parliament at a time when parliament was enjoying a moment of power.³⁸² However, Burūjirdī was cautious enough not to do anything that might further the personal interest of these MPs, or could be interpreted as Burūjirdī's support for any particular MP.

This was Burūjirdī's red line - he was not going to directly interfere in the political affairs of the country, no matter which politicians were engaging in political disputes. For example, Burūjirdī's behaviour in the case involving Tawliyat is a good example of his selective willingness to intervene in political affairs when he thought it was necessary. Although Burūjirdī supported Tawliyat in the case of the shrine custodianship, he was less supportive when it came to purely political issues. When General Razmārā was the Prime Minister (1950-1951), it was said that Burūjirdī was in favour of Tawliyat's election as MP for Qum. Burūjirdī dispelled this rumour by writing a letter to Razmārā clearly stating his non-intervention in the political affairs of Qum.

In his letter to Razmārā on 12 July 1950, Burūjirdī said:

"...I do not interfere in any of the affairs of Qum or its people at all. I have isolated myself from these affairs. And if people have been under the impression that I have had positive opinions about this particular person, it was only because I have seen his courage and benevolence. Otherwise I have no involvement in the affairs of Qum, neither in a positive way or in a negative way and I have no agreement or disagreement with the people of Qum..."³⁸³

Occasionally MPs wanted to use their position in order to gain Burūjirdī's direct support, an effort which was not successful in most cases.³⁸⁴ For example, Ghulām Rizā Fūlādvand, who used to

³⁸¹ See Moojan Momen, 'Burūjirdī, Ayatollah' in Phyllis G. Jestice, *Holy People of the World: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 150.

³⁸² See M. I. Marcinkowski, *Religion and Politics in Iraq: Muslim Shia Clerics between Quietism and Resistance* (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 2004), 35.

³⁸³ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 54, p. 15.

³⁸⁴ Requests for support and recommendation were not restricted to clerics. Muḥammad Sā'id's meeting with Burūjirdī in Qum in December 1948 (Day 1327) was another example of trying to get either a recommendation or at least some partial support, when he was about to lose his position as Prime Minister. After meeting the Shah, he said that the Shah did not support him against his opponents in parliament and that he had better withdraw. There were other people who were discussing possibility of giving the office to either Musaddiq or Qavām al-Saltānah. In the day of Arba'īn, Sā'id, the Prime Minister, went to Qum to meet Burūjirdī. Before the meeting, there was an assassination attempt as the Prime Minister

be an MP from Shāhrūd and close to Burūjirdī (as he himself was originally from Burūjird), was unsuccessful in gaining the latter's direct support (in the form of a letter to Musaddiq or a message through Ḥājj Aḥmad) and finally just referred to his meeting with Burūjirdī as a sign of Burūjirdī's support. This was typical as whenever having a face-to-face meeting or getting a direct message or letter of support was impossible, people tried to make publicity and exploit their connections with Burūjirdī. The case of Ghulām Riẓā Fūlādvand and the parliamentary Elections in Shāhrūd should be considered in more detail. As far as we can see, Fūlādvand was certainly one of those few members of parliament who were giving Burūjirdī reports of the parliamentary proceedings. He represented Shāhrūd in 15th and 16th parliaments.³⁸⁵ In the election of the 17th session of the Parliament (1952), Shams Qanāt'ābādī, ran for election in Shāhrūd. Qanāt'ābādī, lived in Tehran, and was very close to Ayatollah Kashani, as he was leading the Majma'-i Musalmānān-i Mujāhid (Mujāhīdīn-i Islām), an important Islamist party.³⁸⁶ We know that the 17th parliamentary elections were not free and fair, and Shāhrūd was one of the contested cities. There is evidence that not just Musaddiq but others (including the interior minister, who was responsible for the election) accused Ayatollah Kashani of irresponsible interference in the election.³⁸⁷ In fact, the competition was between Qanāt'ābādī, a candidate explicitly supported by Ayatollah Kashani, and Fūlādvand, a candidate implicitly supported by Burūjirdī.³⁸⁸ Furthermore, during this election period, the nationalist movement held sway and authority was in the hands of the nationalist forces, including Ayatollah Kashani. Qanāt'ābādī used violent means to pressurise the people of Shāhrūd and the election supervisory board to gain votes for

Sā'id's car was hit by a bullet, but he emerged unscathed and the meeting with Burūjirdī went ahead. It was said that he was carrying a special message from Shah for Burūjirdī. ('Shāyi'āt az lā bih lāy-i rūznāmāh'ha', *Khvāndanīhā*, year 9, No. 21, Saturday 11 Day 1327, p. 2.) The attack on Sā'id's car shows that different people were watching Burūjirdī's house and attempting to control his relationships with people. In fact, the attack may have been an open threat to Burūjirdī rather than Sā'id, as there were many places where Sā'id could have been targeted other than Burūjirdī's house. Conversely, the intent of the attack may have been a signal to Sā'id that he was disliked by the religious establishment. Whatever the motive was, the ultimate intention was to interfere in Burūjirdī's relationship with Sā'id. However, Sā'id, undeterred by the gun attack, continued as Prime Minister for quite a while after that. He was prime minister from 9 November 1948 until 23 March 1950, when he left the office for Ḥasan 'Alī Manṣūr.

³⁸⁵ Tīhrān, Ārshīv Markaz-i Pāzhūhish'hā-yi Majlis-i Shawrā-yi Islāmī, Namāyandagān-i Majlis-si Shawrā-yi Millī, 'Fūlādvand, Ghulām Riẓā, Simnān, Shāhrūd'.

³⁸⁶ For more information on Qanāt'ābādī and his organization see Shams Qanāt'ābādī, *Khātirāt-i Shams Qanāt'ābādī: sayrī dar nihzat-i millī shudan-i ṣan'at-i naft* (Tīhrān: Markaz-i Barrasī-i Asnād-i Tārīkhī-i Vizārat-i Ittīlā'āt, 1999); Muhammad Hassan Faghfoory, *The Role of the ulama in twentieth century Iran with particular reference to Ayatullah Haj Sayyid Abul-Qasim Kashani* (Mīch: University Microfil International, 1981), 211.

³⁸⁷ Amīr T. Kalālī, and Habib Ladjevardi, *Khātirāt-i Amīr Taymūr Kalālī = Memoirs of Amirteymour Kalali: Tribal Leader, Majles Deputy, Cabinet Minister* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Iranian Oral History Project, 1997).

³⁸⁸ For close relations between Qanāt'ābādī and Kashani see Homa Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1999), 171.

him, which prompted Fūlādvand to complain about the situation in Shāhrūd and desperately request help from parliament. During his speech in the 16th parliament, when Fūlādvand was MP for Shāhrūd, he said that he was an MP who was trusted by Ayatollah Burūjirdī and was proud that they shared Burūjird as their hometown.³⁸⁹ Finally, he asked the parliament to intervene in the Shāhrūd election by taking action against the illegal activities of Qanāt'ābādī. However, the parliament took no action and he ultimately lost his seat to Qanāt'ābādī. Thus, he was evidently unable to use Burūjirdī's influence to affect the outcome of the election. There is no doubt that if Burūjirdī had wanted to, he would have been able to influence the government which ignored Qanāt'ābādī's illegal actions on the ground of Kashani's support for him. This is a good example of Burūjirdī not taking any action in order to keep himself away from regular political affairs.

From another perspective the example shows how Burūjirdī's approach to dealing with people was different from Kashani's. Although both of them were from the religious sector of Iranian society, they had disagreements about members of parliament. This had been Burūjirdī's method not just since arriving in Qum, but years before that when he was in Burūjird. In fact, many years before that in 1942, when Burūjirdī still was in Burūjird, 'Abd al-'Alī Bāqī was sent to Burūjird by Ayatollah Kashani to supervise the election.³⁹⁰ He says that "when I arrived in Burūjird, Ayatollah Burūjirdī told me that I could stay at his cousin's house. In the meantime he asked me to not interfere with the election and to not support any one. He only asked people not to speak badly about rival candidates. If the election is free, he said, I am sure that people will make the right decision."³⁹¹ The policy of Burūjirdī was thus very clear. He did not endorse or give open support to any candidate. Rather, whoever sought election had to demonstrate his closeness to Burūjirdī in order to gain the people's vote. This was Burūjirdī's general policy and people gradually decided to approach him this way.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrāy-i Millī, 16th term, meeting No. 216, p.3.

³⁹⁰ It must be the election for the 14th parliament which sat in 1943.

³⁹¹ Bāqī, 'Abd al-'Alī, Tihārān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 'Abd al-'Alī Bāqī, 11.

³⁹² This was a fixed policy for Burūjirdī to avoid giving people grounds to provoke him in order to gain any support and put him in a campaign. For instance, the discontent which followed the 20th round of parliamentary elections provided further grounds for some other unsuccessful candidate to try to use Burūjirdī's power in order to attract attention to their cause. The twentieth election was a contested election. A group of election protesters went to a religious gathering which was held in Burūjirdī's house and was open to public and sought help from him on the issue of the election. Burūjirdī got angry and left the meeting (Akhbār va Shāyī'āt darbārah-'i Intikhābāt, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 20, No. 95. P. 6). Before that, Burūjirdī had called Ṣadr al-Ashrāf, the speaker of the Senate to Qum for a meeting to discuss the election (Bad Nīst

Even in 1952 when some MPs were actively working on a bill for prohibiting the consumption of alcohol, Burūjirdī approached them cautiously.³⁹³ His policy in practice was cautious enough to prevent giving any advantage to people who were working on the bill. In fact, not everyone supported the bill for religious reasons, as many of them were consumers of alcohol. In fact it was a means for them to put more financial and religious pressure on Musaddiq's government by passing a special bill in parliament with a view to limiting the sale of alcohol in the country. In this way, apart from showing some respect to religion, those MPs could put Musaddiq's government under financial pressure because of the loss of taxes from alcohol. Ayatollah Sayyid Kāzīm Sharī'atmadārī wrote a letter on the issue to Ayatollah Mīlānī and an MP, Ṣafā'ī, read the letter out in the parliament. In his letter, Sharī'atmadārī, who was a distinguished professor in the Qum Seminary, conveyed Burūjirdī's message about his eagerness to see the bill approved. He mentioned Ayatollah Burūjirdī's admonishment that members of the parliament should not take this Islamic regulation lightly. His expectation of the members of parliament in an Islamic country was that they understood to be different from non-Muslim countries by acknowledging that the issues which are addressed in the holy Quran and in the jurisprudence of Islam must be taken seriously. Thus he expected all members of the parliament and the government of Musaddiq to support stricter regulations about alcohol usage and its sale. He concludes the letter by wishing everyone success.³⁹⁴ In short, although Burūjirdī was supportive of the bill, he did not want to be seen as backing any particular MP by writing a letter or giving a command directly to him.

There are at least two interesting points about the letter. First of all, the letter was not directly addressed to the members of parliament. As the highest authority in Shi'ism, he could have written the letter directly, as had been the case for many other *marja*'s. But it seems that to distance himself from direct interference in political affairs, he wrote his letter through Ayatollah Sharī'atmadārī and

bidānīd, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 20, No. 91, p. 9.). It was another example in which Burūjirdī again showed that he was reluctant to let people use his influence for their personal benefit. However, he was aware of the political issues and his meeting with Ṣadr al-Ashrāf clearly shows that he wanted to have information about what was going on. Due to irregularities in the election, they had to re-run the election and the 20th parliament opened on 21 February 1961. See the introduction of the minutes of the 20th parliament.

³⁹³ To know more about the complications of the case see Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power*, 161; and Bill and Louis (eds), *Musaddiq, Iranian Nationalism, and Oil*, 96, 128.

³⁹⁴ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrāy-i Millī, 17th term, meeting No. 69, p.5.

addressed it to Mīlānī. The second point is about the language and tone of the letter, which was friendly and tactful, showing how Burūjirdī took care to raise controversial issues in such a way that there was less risk of rejection or alienation among his audience, or else potential grounds for religious attacks on Musaddiq's government. Indeed, this reserved approach was one of Burūjirdī's particularities, as he never took actions based on emotions and anger, something which is important when managing a large institution. In this way, Kashani was his polar opposite, as his letters were always radical and laden with emotion.³⁹⁵ Burūjirdī was wise enough to know that raising requests by relying on others' political power would leave him indebted to them to some degree, and that they would come swiftly back to reclaim the debts owed to them in their time of need.

However, this does not mean that in general he didn't need anyone to support him in the political and social environment of the country. In fact, he realised that although he did not make direct requests to MPs, certain MPs needed to get publicity through supporting Burūjirdī. Burūjirdī's serious disagreement with women's suffrage is to be taken as evidence of his direct interest in political matters, and he knew that MPs would support him.³⁹⁶ This issue was particularly important for him.³⁹⁷ On one hand, it was seen by him as an essential article of the Islamic faith to keep women away from politics. On the other hand, there was heavy pressure from international organizations as well as internal social movements in favour of women's suffrage.³⁹⁸ So this was clearly a struggle for Burūjirdī which could have placed him in confrontation with several different groups in the country. So, he used all of his power to resist such a policy, while at the same time he was reluctant to directly confront the people who were active in support of women's suffrage. In such a case, MPs could have played an important role in realising Burūjirdī's unspoken desires. In any case, in 1953 when the

³⁹⁵ See Abū al-Qāsim Kāshānī, and M. Dahnavī, *Majmū'ah 'ī az maktūbāt, sukhānrānīhā va payāmhā-yi Āyat Allāh Kāshānī: az sāl-i 1299 tā shahrivar-i 1330* (Tih-rān: Chāpakshsh, 1982).

³⁹⁶ Issues related to women have always played a very important role in the relations between the religious establishment and the state in Iran. On the other hand, it has been an important element in forming relationships between the religious establishment and dynamic social forces. Even in the past years, the Iranian president, Maḥmūd Aḥmadī'nizhād, has faced serious criticism from the religious authorities for appointing women as his ministers. See 'Jihat-i iṭṭilā'' in *Jumhūrī Islāmī* newspaper, 9 September 2009.

³⁹⁷ For more information see Shahrūgh Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran*, 63; John Foran, *Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Revolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 365; and Anthony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004), 325.

³⁹⁸ See Hamideh Sedghi, *Women and Politics in Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 95-98.; Nikki R. Keddie, *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) 109-110; Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge [England: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 126-129.

parliament was debating the issue of female suffrage, Burūjirdī wrote a letter announcing that this was not acceptable in Islam. The letter, which was read by the MP Jalālī, had not been issued to the parliament and was in fact addressed to Ayatollah Bihbahānī. It was short and tactful and only referred to the issue at hand in an oblique manner. In his letter Burūjirdī said: "... considering the necessity of removing grounds for future abuse and rumours which can influence people, I would like to ask you to remember that in Islamic countries acts which are in conflict with the necessary rules of Islam cannot come into practice. I wish the continuation of your success from the almighty God. Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Burūjirdī."³⁹⁹

After the reading of the letter, it was the right time for those MPs to strongly support Burūjirdī by speaking against women's suffrage. The MP Ṣafā'ī made a very strong speech in opposition to women's participation in elections.⁴⁰⁰ A number of MPs supported him during his speech. Apart from that, the speech was supported and documented by many petitions and telegrams from clerics and religious people of different cities such as Qum, Mashhad and rather smaller cities such as Jahrum (in south Iran). The organisation of Ṣafā'ī's speech and his attributions to Burūjirdī showed to what extent he was relying on the influence of Burūjirdī's opinion on the issue. Logically speaking, such a speech should have started with the real issue. Instead, the speech started with an account of Burūjirdī's importance in Iran, how the Shi'ī institution was managed by him, how he was the symbol of religion in Iran and how people who insulted him and his opinions (a veiled reference to the issue of female suffrage) must be punished. He especially accused newspapers and some other people of insulting Burūjirdī, following which one of the other MPs, Shabistari, protested and denounced the behaviour of newspapers.

In actual fact, there is no document to show that any newspaper had ever insulted Burūjirdī. It is very unlikely that any newspaper (or individual) would have done so openly by using Burūjirdī's name.⁴⁰¹ However, it is natural that like every other matter being debated in parliament, newspapers

³⁹⁹ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrā-yi Millī, 17th term, Meeting No. 55, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁰ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrā-yi Millī, 17th term, Meeting No. 57, p. 3.

⁴⁰¹ It was not an easy task to criticise Burūjirdī, even for more important issues such as taxation. Religious opposition to government taxation is another case demonstrating that even when people were displeased about religious regulations, they were not capable of criticising Burūjirdī. Like people everywhere, Iranians were reluctant to pay tax to the

discussed the bill and the possibility of its approval in parliament. So, indeed Šafā'ī and other people who supported Burūjirdī used his authority as a weapon against those who supported the bill. In short, they used his power as a means to bolster support for their side. It is obvious that this was not a matter in which Burūjirdī preferred to intervene, otherwise he could have issued a fatwa or addressed parliament directly. At the same time, he did not seem to object to his authority being used to intimidate people who were in support of the bill. There is no doubt that these MPs, as Burūjirdī's parliamentary spokesmen, played an essential role in this matter. One can certainly imagine that if those MPs were not supportive of Burūjirdī, there would have been a different outcome for the bill.

Even later, when the issue of women's rights resurfaced again in Iqbāl's government (1957-1960), the Prime Minister followed the same policy to gain some support from Burūjirdī, although he lost support from a considerable number of female suffrage activists.⁴⁰² For a while, there were many discussions about women's rights. Issues related to women's right to initiate divorce were particularly problematic, as this was at odds with Islamic family law regulations. Women's rights activists were highly active and successful on this issue. In one case, the Iranian High Court of Appeal overturned the ruling of a lower court, and issued a ruling which gave the right of divorce to a newly-wed woman. This became grounds for women's right campaigners to argue in support of this ruling. Apart from that, they were planning a celebration to commemorate the anniversary of Riza Shah's unveiling policy.⁴⁰³ The main cause for all of these events was debates in the parliament regarding the approval of the UN Charter. Based on the women activists' plan, the government was supposed to make a public holiday on that day and a girl's school was to perform a special programme.⁴⁰⁴ When the

government. MP Buzurg Ibrāhīmī complained in his speech that people paid religious taxes very easily and willingly yet were reluctant to pay their taxes to the government. He mentioned someone who had paid 9140000 Rls in religious tax yet only 8300 Rls in government tax. He then blamed some clerics for sanctioning government tax evasion on the grounds that it was not a religious duty, as religious taxes inevitably were. But interestingly, he refrained entirely from mentioning Burūjirdī in the same vein, declaring "I do not want to speak about Ayatollah Burūjirdī as he holds such a high position and I cannot say anything about him" (Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrāy-i Millī, 19th term, Meeting No. 201, p. 7.). This level of respect for a clerical figure is unparalleled in Iran, past or present. Even after revolution of 1979 when clerics assumed full power in Iran, much invective has been directed against prominent *marja*'s.

⁴⁰² See Lawrence Ziring, *Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan: A Political Chronology* (New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1981), 68.

⁴⁰³ 17 Day.

⁴⁰⁴ 'Alī Davānī, *Mafākhir-i Islām* (Tihārān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2000), XII, 291.

programme was being prepared, Iqbāl's Minister of Education and Culture made a sudden announcement that the anniversary would not be a holiday and there would be a normal celebration.⁴⁰⁵

This last minute change of plans was the result of bowing to the pressure of adamant opposition from the religious establishment. Ayatollah Bihbahānī wrote two letters to the speakers of both parliaments and stated that "in Iran, no power will have the ability to follow women's rights taken from the UN Charter which are against the Islamic faith". There were MPs in parliament who objected to the UN Charter arguing that sufficient rights for women were already enshrined in Iranian civil law. Famous religious preachers such as Falsafī and Mūsavī also made strong speeches against the extravagances of women's rights campaigns. Finally, Iqbāl went to Qum to meet Burūjirdī and gave him the assurance about issues related to women.⁴⁰⁶

The event showed that when neither the clerics of Tehran nor the religious MPs of the parliament were capable of stopping such a decision, there was a source of authority which the Prime Minister himself was obliged to consider. On the other hand, Iqbāl needed support against his rivals, such as Matīn Daftārī, who was going to run for prime minister, though the latter's chance to become Prime Minister diminished as clerics reacted against women's rights which he supported.⁴⁰⁷ The event showed that Matīn Daftārī's policy, which involved leveraging the support of more reform-minded people, had no weight compared to the influence of Burūjirdī's side. However, no one could then become prime minister without the Shah's support, and he disliked Matīn Daftārī strongly. From a social point of view, those who were supportive of women rights campaigns had far less power than those who were against it. Perhaps this was the main reason that Iqbāl even went further and formally ordered that in official government parties and meetings related to cabinet members in cities and towns, alcoholic drinks were not to be served and women must not be invited.⁴⁰⁸

However, the Prime Minister's decisions did not put an end to women's rights campaigns. In the social sphere, there was publicity about a nation-wide beauty contest in which the winner would receive an air ticket to Paris. Then one of the women's associations announced that they had sent a

⁴⁰⁵ For more information about the women human right campaigns during this period see Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Conceiving Citizens: Women and the Politics of Motherhood in Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 175-179.

⁴⁰⁶ 'Mubārazah bar sar-i huqūq-i zanān', *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 32, p. 11.

⁴⁰⁷ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 34, p. 5 taken from the Newspaper *Sahar*.

⁴⁰⁸ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 34, p. 5 taken from the Newspaper *Vāhimah*.

proposal to the government to ban the wearing of traditional dress for women (*chādur chāqchūr*) on the main streets in Tehran.⁴⁰⁹

In the political sphere, they decided to use Princess Ashraf Pahlavi's influence, who was known as the second most influential figure in the royal family. In fact Qamar Nāšir, who was the wife of 'Alī Aṣghar Nāšir, the Minister of Finance and president of "the Association of 17th Day" invited the Shah's sister, Princess Ashraf to assume the presidency of the association, at which point the clerics began to actively think of ways to block further demands for women's rights by holding gatherings in Ayatollah Bihbahānī's house.⁴¹⁰ Ayatollahs Ḥājj Mīrzā 'Abd Allāh Tihrānī (Chilsutūnī) and Ḥājj 'Alī Aṣghar Khū'i were those who reacted more strongly than others. In their meeting, they agreed to write a letter to the upper and lower houses of parliament announcing their non-acceptance of the UN Charter, which was fuelling the demands of women's rights campaigners to recognize women's right to hold elected office and initiate divorce.⁴¹¹ Finally, Sardār Fākhir (Riḡa) Ḥikmat, the speaker of the parliament, who promised the clerics that he would sort out the issue, forbade any discussion in parliament of the 17th Day Event in order to appease them.⁴¹²

Women's rights activists deeply resented this. So, they established a thinking room (a committee to find solutions) in which "Mrs Tarbiyat", one of the women's rights activists, suggested that in response to Tehran's clerics' opposition to women's rights, they should go to Qum and meet Burūjirdī face to face to discuss what could be done. Her proposal was approved in the meeting, which was held in the house of the wife of one of the ministers.⁴¹³ Reports do not tell us who this person was, perhaps to protect her and her husband from possible political attacks. However, it seems very likely that she was Qamar Nāšir. In fact the suggestion was not original, as a few years earlier before the 16th parliamentary elections, a women's rights group called "the United Association of Iranian Women's Societies" decided to write a letter to Ayatollah Burūjirdī and ask about the validity

⁴⁰⁹ Chādur Chāqchūr is traditional female dress which consists of trousers which cover the lower parts of the body and a chādur which covers the remainder of the body. 'Bi qarār-i itṭila' in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 34, p. 5 taken from the Newspaper *Āzhang*.

⁴¹⁰ the Association of 17th Day = Jam'īyt-i 17 Day.

⁴¹¹ 'Mubārazah-i 'ulama bā āzādī-i zanān' in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 33, p. 4.

⁴¹² *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 34, p. 5, taken from the Newspaper *Saḥar*.

⁴¹³ 'Shikāyat bih ḥazrat-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 34, p. 7, taken from the Newspaper *Āzhang*.

of women's suffrage in the election.⁴¹⁴ Their hope was to get a positive answer from him and on that basis to get the law passed in parliament allowing them to participate in elections.⁴¹⁵ The women's rights activists again concluded that the only way of getting any positive result was by approaching Burūjirdī, although, for obvious reasons, their attempts did not meet with any success.

Later, a few politicians decided to seek reconciliation with the clerics. Although the clerics were adamant in rejecting the articles of the UN charter concerning women's rights, they were happy to accept other articles which were compatible with Islamic guidelines.⁴¹⁶ The dispute resulted in practically no positive outcome for women's right activists, showing how Burūjirdī's political tactics could work efficiently.

Senior religious orators

There were a couple of well-known clerics in Tehran who played important roles in Burūjirdī's political activities, Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥammad Bihbahānī and Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥammad Taqī Falsafī. While Bihbahānī mainly fulfilled the role of a senior advisor giving expert and trusted advice to Burūjirdī, Falsafī's main role was as a religious messenger to transmit Burūjirdī's messages to the public, using them to mobilise people when it was necessary.⁴¹⁷

Sayyid Muḥammad Bihbahānī (1871-1963) had a very established position in Tehran not just as a religious leader, but as an experienced conservative politician as well as a social leader. He was benefiting from his family status as his father, Sayyid 'Abd Allāh Bihbahānī (1840-1910), was a leading cleric in Tehran during the constitutional revolution, and his grandfather Sayyid Ismā'īl (1829-1895), was invited in 1870 by Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Qajar from Najaf to Tehran to undertake teaching and preaching. Sayyid Muḥammad Bihbahānī was educated and qualified for *ijtihād* in Najaf, before he settled in Tehran to take charge of the Tehran Seminary in 1910, following the assassination of his father. Sayyid Muḥammad was Tehran's MP in the second term of parliament and was nominated as a member of the parliament's clerical supervisory board (*'ulamā-yi ṭarāz-i avval*) to

⁴¹⁴ Hay'at-i Mu'talifah-i Jam'iyat'hā-yi Bānuvān-i Īrān.

⁴¹⁵ The Newspaper *Millat-i Īrān*, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 9, No. 62, p. 2.

⁴¹⁶ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 42, pp. 22-23.

⁴¹⁷ For more information about the pattern of clerical behaviour in Iran during the period, see Majid Yazdi, 'Patterns of Clerical Political Behavior in Postwar Iran, 1941-53', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 26.3 (1990), 281-307.

supervise and approve parliament's decisions, in the third term of parliament. His family status, his moderate policies, his education and his contacts with politicians and the Shah, all made him an important advisor to Burūjirdī. In fact, Bihbahānī represented traditional Islam in Tehran, which made him a respected figure among religious people and a trustworthy man in Burūjirdī's eyes. Bihbahānī's function in Burūjirdī's political system was mainly to provide him with specialized consultancy, as somebody who was close enough to Tehran and had a decent understanding of Islamic jurisprudence as well as current political affairs. When it was necessary, Bihbahānī used his political contacts as well as his social influence to support Burūjirdī's opinions.⁴¹⁸

Muḥammad Taqī Falsafī (1908-1998) was from a famous clerical family. He was the son of Ayatollah Muḥammad Rizā Tunkābunī (1865-1966) who had studied with Ākhund Mullā Muḥammad Kāzīm Khurāsānī and was qualified for *ijtihād* by him, as a result of which he was one of the clerics who could wear clerical dress under Riza Shah. Tunkābunī had studied '*irfān* (mysticism) and *akhlāq* (ethics) with Ākhund Mullā Ḥusayn Qulī Hamadānī (1823-1894). Falsafī was known as one of the best religious orators in Iran.⁴¹⁹ With the support of his father, he started giving sermons in Tehran at the age of fifteen. Benefiting from a clerical background as well as his knowledge of mysticism ('*irfān*) and ethics (*akhlāq*), Falsafī was recognized as the best *vā'iz* (religious preacher) in Tehran. Apart from usual clerical techniques for giving speeches, Falsafī had a special interest in psychology as well.⁴²⁰ All this qualified Falsafī to be able to present himself very well and attract a large audience. Burūjirdī appreciated Falsafī's social influence and his intellectual and moral character and informally appointed him as a mediator between himself and the Shah and the public. He was sufficiently religiously and socially qualified to be able to attend a meeting with the Shah to deliver Burūjirdī's messages. On the other hand, he had a huge audience in his public sermons which Burūjirdī could use to deliver his message to the public. During Ramaẓān, Falsafī's speeches were broadcast on Iranian

⁴¹⁸ See more about Bihbahānī in Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the Twentieth Century* (London: I B Tauris, 1995), 75; and Seyyed Hossein Naṣr, *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thought and Spirituality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 242.

⁴¹⁹ For more information about Falsafī see Michael Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980), 101; and Said Amir Arjomand, *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 163.

⁴²⁰ See Muḥammad Taqī Falsafī, *Javān az naẓar-i 'aql va iḥsāsāt* (Tihrān, Daftar-i Nashr-i Farhang-i Islāmī, 1378); and also Muḥammad Taqī Falsafī, 'Rāh'hā-yi parvarish-i shakḥṣiyat dar kūdakān', in *Majallah-i Muballighān*, No. 34, 16 Mihr- 14 Ābān 1381, pp. 77-91.

National Radio and that gave him more publicity in the national community.⁴²¹ Falsafi was so loyal and obedient to Burujirdi that the latter could trust him to refrain from abusing his position to say anything which was not endorsed by him (Burujirdi). In effect Falsafi fulfilled the role of the media for Burujirdi. Given Falsafi's large audiences as well as the effective way that he presented his speeches, his activities met Burujirdi's needs better than any newspaper or any other type of media. Apart from that, Falsafi's mode of communication, oral and emotional, met the needs of the day and was an important, influential and efficient way of delivering messages to public at that time. One must bear in mind that members of Iranian society at that time were largely illiterate and were very much influenced by oratory, especially from a religious source.

Burujirdi's strategies for increasing political influence

Principles of political thought

The intellectual structure of Burujirdi's socio-political system drove his decisions and actions. In fact, Burujirdi's actions were based on a very precise theoretical structure, rather than a personal or emotional response to social and political events. This structure was based on prioritising serious *hawzah* education, and prioritising a united faith over political partisanship. These intellectual principles provided the basis for Burujirdi's ultimate goal of consolidating the religious establishment and de-politicising Shi'ism.

Prioritizing serious *hawzah* education over political involvement was a very firm policy for Burujirdi. For him, as the head of the seminary, the most important function was to provide a suitable environment for current and future scholars of Shi'i jurisprudence to study the traditional religious curriculum.⁴²² Religious education had been suffering for a long time due to several difficulties in the seminary in the years before Burujirdi's administration in Qum. Burujirdi's experience over the years had proven to him that any unwise political involvement, especially in the form of involvement in an

⁴²¹ Nine month after Burujirdi's death, Falsafi was arrested in winter 1963, following his critical speech on Asad Allāh 'Alam's reform bill in 1962. That was a clear message to Falsafi that he could no longer claim the immunity which he used to have during Burujirdi's lifetime. See Markaz-i Barrasi Asnad-i Tarikh-i Vizarat-i Ittिला'at, *Zaban-i gūyā-yi Islām* (Tihriān, Markaz-i Barrasi Asnad-i Tarikh-i Vizarat-i Ittिला'at, 1999), 11-15; And 'Alī Davānī, and Hamīd Rawhānī, *Khāṭirāt va mubārāzāt-i Hujjat al-Islām Falsafi* (Tihriān, Markaz-i Asnad-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 1382), 190-199.

⁴²² One may easily refer to a *ḥadīṣ* which says 'midād al-'ulamā' afzal min dimā' al-shuhadā' which means the pen of 'ulama is higher than the blood of martyrs. For more information on Burujirdi's education-centred policy see Farhang Rajaei, *Islamism and Modernism: the Changing Discourse in Iran* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007), 67-72.

opposition movement, could put the seminary in a very difficult situation, in confrontation with the government. He was certainly reluctant to do anything which would put the seminary and clerical establishment in a similar situation to what it had been under Riza Shah.⁴²³ This rather conservative strategy did not necessarily represent the position of the majority of scholars in Qum, especially the young clerics who had less experience and were more energetic in political matters.⁴²⁴ Political involvement had two negative consequences for the seminary. Firstly, those who were involved in political affairs were distracted from their studies. Secondly, the *hawzah* was fertile ground for many potential critics of the non-religious aspects of the current government.⁴²⁵ This could provoke the young clerics to take radical action, which could lead to retribution from the state. Burūjirdī certainly did not consider this good for the *hawzah*. However, he had to deal with the Fidā'īyān-i Islām whose ideas were appealing to both young clerics and a group of influential professors in Qum.⁴²⁶ Apart from their radical beliefs, the Fidā'īyān-i Islām certainly prioritised political involvement over *hawzah* education and openly challenged the traditional function of religious authority, which led to serious confrontations with Burūjirdī, following which disciplinary action was taken against them.

The Fidā'īyān-i Islām in Qum appeared as a group of young clerics who wanted to protest in the Fayzīyah College in Qum and campaign against the state. They were incompatible with Burūjirdī's political view about the prioritizing education in the *hawzah*, as they believed in radical action, including using violence to achieve their political goals.⁴²⁷ They wanted to carry out some changes in the Qum Seminary to make it more active in political affairs.⁴²⁸ It seems likely that Kashani gave them encouragement in taking this radical action, though later they criticised Kashani as

⁴²³ For a short account of Burūjirdī's method in this regard see Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, 48-57.

⁴²⁴ See Ervand Abrahamian, 'Ali Shari'ati : ideologue of the Iranian Revolution' in Edmund Burke and Ira M. Lapidus (ed.), *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 278.

⁴²⁵ For more information about the causes of the clerical opposition to the state, which happened after Burūjirdī, see Willem M. Floor, 'The Revolutionary character of the Iranian Ulama: Wishful Thinking or Reality?' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 12.4 (1980), 501-524.

⁴²⁶ For more information on Fidā'īyān-i Islām see Sohrab Behdad, 'Islamic Utopia in Pre-Revolutionary Iran: Navvab Safavi and the Fada'ian-e Islam', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 33.1 (1997), 40-65; Majid Yazdi, 'Patterns of Clerical Political Behavior...'; Farhad Kazemi, 'State and Society in the Ideology of the Devotees of Islam' *State, Culture, and Society*, 1.3 (1985), 118-135; H. E. Chehabi, 'Religion and Politics in Iran: How Theocratic Is the Islamic Republic?' *Daedalus*, 120.3 (1991), 69-91.

⁴²⁷ See Farhad Kazemi, 'The Fada'īyan-e Islam : Fanaticism, Politics and Terror' in Said A. Arjomand, (ed.), *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 158-175.

⁴²⁸ See Barry M. Rubin, *Political Islam: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies* (London: Routledge, 2007), 63.

well and parted company with him.⁴²⁹ With his lengthy life experience, in one of his lectures in 1949, Burūjirdī told his audience “I am now 75 years old and would not like to see the Shi‘i seminary destroyed for the second time. The first time Riza Khān destroyed it. We have more important issues at hand now and have to maintain this seminary.” This was Burūjirdī’s response to the assassination of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Hazhīr, the Court Minister, by a member of Fidā’iyyān-i Islām and the implication was that he was not going to support the Fidā’iyyān-i Islām as he believed it would be harmful for the seminary. When Burūjirdī was giving his lecture, he had raised a rhetorical question about the Fidā’iyyān-i Islām: “are they Muslims at all?”⁴³⁰ This implied that assassination and violent action is not allowed in Islam. Therefore, not only did he find their programme incongruous with the educational objectives of the *hawzah*, he even fundamentally challenged their ideology and their character. This needs to be understood as a very strong criticism from Burūjirdī.

After the lecture, a group of people from Khurram Ābād, without having any authorization from Burūjirdī, held a meeting in one of the seminary rooms, known as “ḥujrah-’i Khurram Ābādīhā” and discussed the necessity of punishing the Fidā’iyyān-i Islām.⁴³¹ Finally, they decided to prepare some wooden bats with which to beat them.⁴³² This was an unusually violent action in the seminary, and the Fidā’iyyān were beaten and thrown out of Qum. Members of ḥujrah-’i Khurram Ābādīhā were of Lur tribal origin and were very close to Ḥājj Aḥmad Khādīmī. Everybody knew that and they took Burūjirdī’s speech as encouragement to carry out their operation against the Fidā’iyyān. People even believed that Ḥājj Aḥmad had created a negative perception in Burūjirdī’s mind about the Fidā’iyyān-i Islām.⁴³³ However, it seems that Ḥājj Aḥmad was in some way concerned that the way in which the Fidā’iyyān were attracting the young clerics could generate a crisis in Qum, which in the long term could increase the number of Fidā’iyyān to a degree that they would become out of control. Apart from the political risks, it makes sense that Ḥājj Aḥmad was concerned that sooner or later an ideology in Qum would be popular enough to challenge Burūjirdī’s authority. Ḥājj Aḥmad understood that there

⁴²⁹ See H. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini* (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1990), 116.

⁴³⁰ Muḥammad ‘Irāqī, Tihṛān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh, Muḥammad Irāqī, 15.

⁴³¹ This means ‘The room for people from Khurram Ābād’, which is in Luristan territory.

⁴³² Muḥammad Ṣādiqī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 64- 65.

⁴³³ Muḥammad Rizā Muḥāmī, Tihṛān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh, Muḥammad Rizā Muḥāmī, 24.

were people such as Khomeini who were supporting the Fidā'īyān, therefore, in some way he knew that it was essential for Burūjirdī's establishment to take serious action against such attitudes in Qum.

This was not just an internal issue in Qum. The Fidā'īyān had considerable prominence outside Qum and a national paper called *Nabard-i Millat*, managed by 'Abd Allāh Karbāschīyān, represented them.⁴³⁴ The impression outside the *hawzah* was that politically inclined or radical students would be expelled from studying in the *hawzah*, as Burūjirdī expelled 180 such students from the Qum Seminary, because they tried to interfere in Qum's affairs and were obliged to leave for Tehran.⁴³⁵ It was a clear internal message to students as well as to top clerics who were thinking about using Burūjirdī's power to endorse their political leanings or to carve out a political career for themselves, using people's religious sentiments as a means of mass mobilisation. He clearly showed it made no difference to him even if they were supported by a powerful cleric such as Ayatollah Kashani. Having Burūjirdī's support was a necessity for success, even survival, in Qum, as exemplified by the cases of both the Fidā'īyān-i Islām and Ayatollah Kashani. They were more or less supported by the top clerics of Qum, people such as Ayatollah Khvānsārī, and many young clerics, but without Burūjirdī's approval their prospects in Qum would always be limited.⁴³⁶

The origins of the disagreement between Burūjirdī and the Fidā'īyān were profound. Both Kashani and Fidā'īyān were disrespectful to Burūjirdī. Even when Burūjirdī was the *marja'*, Kashani sometimes openly criticised him when Burūjirdī failed to give his support for a political action by Kashani. In such a situation, Kashani would snidely remark, "what is he doing, this Sayyid-i Lur".⁴³⁷

The Fidā'īyān played the role of an internal pressure group in Qum. Although the Fidā'īyān in general disobeyed Burūjirdī, there were people among them who respected him. When Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Vāḥidī, who was the second-in-command of the Fidā'īyān-i Islām, was giving an anti-Pahlavi speech in the shrine, he said, "last night I have written my will and I have appointed Burūjirdī as my executor, in case the Pahlavi regime kills me."⁴³⁸ However, this may be easily taken as

⁴³⁴ For more information on *Nabard-i Millat* see Nikola B. Schahgaldian, *The Clerical Establishment in Iran* (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 1989), 67.

⁴³⁵ The Newspaper *Kawakab*, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 12, No. 55, p. 4.

⁴³⁶ Akbar Hāshemī Rafsanjānī, Tihṛān, Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh, Akbar Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, 18.

⁴³⁷ Šādiqī Tihṛānī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 62.

⁴³⁸ Muḥāmī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 16.

evidence of the Fidā'īyān's efforts to gain support amongst Qum's clerics by showing their respect for Burūjirdī. On the other hand, appointing Burūjirdī as the executor of his will could give the impression that Vāhidī was more important than he actually was. Vāhidī was in fact not important enough to appoint Burūjirdī as his will executor; nor did he have enough wealth for Burūjirdī to manage after his death. Burūjirdī was not happy with them and never showed any friendly inclination towards them.

In 1952, Burūjirdī refused to meet Khalīl Ṭahmāsbī who was another Fidā'īyān-i Islām second-in-command and the self-confessed assassin of General Razmārā, though he was pardoned by the parliament on 15 November 1952. Even Musaddiq's government was very helpful in assisting Ṭahmāsbī to leave the country, as they believed that it was in his best interests.⁴³⁹ This was a clear sign that Burūjirdī's refusal was not a diplomatic move in order to minimise political risk, but a sign that Burūjirdī did not believe in their methods at all. Ṭahmāsbī went to Qum to meet Burūjirdī, but the latter excused himself for being unwell and refused to meet him.⁴⁴⁰ In the clerical tradition, when an Ayatollah cites illness as a justification for missing a meeting, it is an implicit sign of discomfort or disagreement with the other party.

A few weeks later, some people claimed that Burūjirdī was seriously considering leaving Iran and going to Najaf because so many people were trying to engage him in political issues in which he was reluctant to get involved. He ultimately changed his mind at the Shah's behest.⁴⁴¹ There is clear evidence that Burūjirdī was continuously showing everybody, including the Shah, that he was not pursuing any political agenda or supporting any radical action against the monarchy, in order to get the Shah's assurance that the seminary would stay safe and students would continue the Islamic tradition of religious training.

When Navvāb Ṣafavī, the Fidā'īyān's leader, was arrested in 1955, the authorities asked him to remove his clerical dress, as he had ordered the killing of innocent Muslim people. It was claimed

⁴³⁹ 'Shāyi'āt az lābilāy-i rūznāmah'hā-yi dākhilī', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 25, p. 2, taken from the Newspaper *Parkhāsh*.

⁴⁴⁰ 'Shāyi'āt az lābilāy-i rūznāmah'hā-yi dākhilī', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 20, p. 2 taken from The Newspaper *Mard-i Āsiyā*.

⁴⁴¹ 'Shāyi'āt az lābilāy-i rūznāmah'hā-yi dākhilī', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 20, p. 2, taken from the Newspaper *Mard-i Āsiyā*.

that Şafavī's defrocking was carried out at Ayatollah Burūjirdī's request, as his actions were not considered appropriate for a Muslim cleric.⁴⁴² There is no evidence that Burūjirdī asked the authorities to defrock Navvāb Şafavī, however, he was reluctant to openly defend the Fidā'īyān. Burūjirdī disagreed in principle with the assassinations carried out by the Fidā'īyān. Burūjirdī even asked Kashani if he had issued any fatwa authorising the assassinations, to which Kashani responded in the negative. So, Burūjirdī proclaimed "if Navvāb is a *mujtahid*, we should ascertain whether he is qualified for issuing fatwas or not; if he is not a *mujtahid*, he must say which *mujtahid* has issued this fatwa" for killing the victims.⁴⁴³ This is probably the reason why some people who were close to the Fidā'īyān, such as Muḥammadī 'Irāqī, refused to recount any of their memories about the Fidā'īyān-i Islām and their relationship with Burūjirdī, because it recalled the lack of sympathy between the two parties.⁴⁴⁴ In actual fact, political and radical activism was welcomed by the majority of young clerics who did not have Burūjirdī's experience as well as his longer term concerns.⁴⁴⁵ Although Fidā'īyan were popular in Qum, without support of Burūjirdī no activity could survive in Qum.

⁴⁴² *Āzhang* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 39, p. 11.

⁴⁴³ Bāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 29-32.

⁴⁴⁴ Muṭabā 'Irāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 15.

⁴⁴⁵ Looking at the later, post-revolution consequences of opposing the Fidā'īyān-i Islām makes the point clear, as the issue of the Fidā'īyān-i Islām became totally different after the revolution of 1979. At that time, the people who supported Fidā'īyān were in power, allowing them to carry out retribution against the Fidā'īyān's old opponents. An example of that was one of the meetings of the first term of Parliament after the revolution in 1980, when the members of parliament were discussing the approval of the credentials of Ismā'īl Mu'izzī Malāyirī to be confirmed as a member of parliament. He had been one of the people who had reacted against the Fidā'īyān, by beating them after Ayatollah Burūjirdī's speech against the Fidā'īyān. During that time, he had the full support from Burūjirdī and other influential people in Qum and he took the advantage of the situation to punish the Fidā'īyān. But now many ardent Fidā'īyān supporters were in the parliament. So, they raised the issue to the parliament and objected to the approval of his credentials. Mu'izzī, who was about to lose his seat in the parliament, gave an account of what happened at that time. In his argument, he raised a few important points. Firstly, he believed that Burūjirdī did not have any problem with the Fidā'īyān nor did the Fidā'īyān have any problem with him. He also mentioned that he personally did not have any problem with them. The only issue was that Burūjirdī was given incorrect information by members of his administration about a few groups who were going to make trouble for the seminary. Indeed by this they meant anti-Islamic groups such as Marxists. So, Burūjirdī ordered that such activities were not permitted in Qum and that those who engage in them must be banished. But in practice people who were against the Fidā'īyān abused this and attacked the Fidā'īyān and ejected them from Qum. Mu'izzī even goes further and says Burūjirdī generally was unaware of the Fidā'īyān and even on the issue of their executions he was only informed three days after the event. These were clearly fabricated claims on Mu'izzī's part. Finally, he argued that even if he (Mu'izzī) had done something wrong, it had been in obedience to the *valī-i faqīh* of the time who was Burūjirdī.

Shaykh Muḥammad Yazdī, who is now a member of Guardian Council and the chairman of "The Society of Professors of Qum Seminary (Jāmi'ah-i Mudarrisīn-i Ḥawzah-i 'Ilmiyyah-i Qum)" the most influential collective body in Qum, defended Mu'izzī and made the argument that during that time, the environment in Qum was different and people's past actions may not be judged based on current conditions. (Society of Professors of Qum Seminary or Jāmi'ah-i Mudarrisīn-i Ḥawzah-i 'Ilmiyyah-i Qum is the most important high level clerical organization in Qum. They normally nominate qualified people for *marja' īyat*. In the case of Ayatollah Sharī'atmadārī, they disqualified him from this post by issuing a clear statement on Tuesday 20 April 1982.) There is a contradiction here. On the one hand, the Fidā'īyān-i Islām disobeyed the *marja'* of the time. But on the other hand, they were popular among the young clerics, although it was obvious that Burūjirdī was against them and considered them a threat to the existence of the *hawzah*. Therefore, Mu'izzī's account was certainly distorted in order to save his parliamentary seat. That was also very obvious to people in the meeting, and eventually Yazdī offered a solution with his argument about the situation in Qum at that time. In fact, after the Revolution, Mu'izzī was very close to

Burūjirdī's main concern about the Fidā'īyān-i Islām was that their type of radical action would bring calamities for the *hawzah*. Indeed this was his general belief about any form of radical political action, even in such controversial issues as the unveiling of women, as he openly discussed his concern about taking radical political action in response to the unveiling of women in 1936. When Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Khvānsārī asked Burūjirdī why he didn't protest against the forced unveiling of women, Burūjirdī said that he feared that this might lead to further problems and lead the *hawzah* of Qum to destruction.⁴⁴⁶ Burūjirdī's policy was clear, as he neither considered himself a supporter for any prime minister or political figure nor a martyr who would make sacrifices for the sake of religion. Rather, he considered himself responsible for maintaining and improving the *hawzah* educational system and safeguarding the principles of Shi'ism. In an unwritten agreement with the state, he had agreed to cooperate with the government and avoid any radical action, provided that the Qum Seminary was safe. This policy was not acceptable to radical groups such as the Fidā'īyān-i Islām, who were not happy with compromises of this kind and were brave enough to criticise Burūjirdī.

Burūjirdī even showed a relatively cooperative face to the state on sensitive issues such as relations with Israel. When the Iranian government initiated the relationship with Israel on 14 March 1950, Burūjirdī complained.⁴⁴⁷ The government responded to him that it was a *de facto* recognition and he accepted this response, although most people in the *hawzah*, including the Fidā'īyān, wondered how this could be acceptable to him. The clerical community had expected that he would ask for the immediate termination of the relationship with Israel.⁴⁴⁸ That shows how Burūjirdī's policy, in general, was not compatible with the Fidā'īyān's policy. Perhaps the first open criticism by the Fidā'īyān of Burūjirdī was in 1950, concerning Riza Shah's funeral. Unlike some other radical clerics who showed no respect to the Shah or royalty, Burūjirdī was cooperative in this regard. In May 1950, General Amīr Aḥmadi met Burūjirdī for an hour and a half and discussed the programme for Riza

Grand Ayatollah Gulpāygānī in Qum and Yazdī was aware that if the parliament with the majority of supporters of Khomeini refused the credentials of Mu'izzī on these grounds, it would cause a serious response and animosity from Gulpāygānī. Thus Yazdī tried his best to justify Mu'izzī's action. See Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrā-yi Islāmī, 1st term, Meeting No. 15, p. 13-36).

⁴⁴⁶ Muḥammad Ḥusayn Masjīd Jāmi'ī, Tihārān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh Inqilāb Islāmī Īrān, 33.

⁴⁴⁷ Iran gave a quite *de facto* recognition to Israel, see Thomas R. Mattair, *Global Security Watch-Iran: A Reference Handbook* (Westport, Conn: Praeger Security International, 2008), 15; William Shawcross, *The Shah's Last Ride: The Fate of an Ally* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 80.

⁴⁴⁸ Sayyid Ḥusayn Nāshirī, Tihārān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh Inqilāb Islāmī Īrān, Sayyid Ḥusayn Nāshirī, 14.

Shah's funeral procession.⁴⁴⁹ He agreed that the late Shah's coffin could be carried into the city. That gave a pretext to the Fidā'īyān to attack Burūjirdī as well as disturbing the general educational environment in Qum. The Fidā'īyān used the political event as a means of putting pressure on Burūjirdī and criticised him frequently. They continued in this fashion until the time that Burūjirdī, who had kept quiet at the beginning, thought that it was necessary to restrain them.

It seems that in Burūjirdī's political thought, Shi'i people must be treated equally by the highest religious authority in their internal disputes. This is because the faith must be responsible for everybody who is member. Furthermore, the faith must not succumb to internecine conflict. However, political parties and political activists always benefit from creating divisions in the country, in order to form campaigns and suppress their rivals. As the highest religious authority in Shi'ism, Burūjirdī was a target for politicians trying to gain his support. However, his wise responses to political provocations helped him to maintain a united faith and to avoid political partisanship. He really believed that his protection must include everybody and provide equal support to all members of the faith. He knew that his position as an informal, but a very powerful agent of reconciliation, was much more important than partisanship in political affairs.

In hotly contested socio-political issues, he never became the official representative of one side or another. The religious side had its own representatives. For instance, Sayyid Muḥammad Bihbahānī was the representative of conservative Islam in Tehran, which was the stance closest to Burūjirdī's.⁴⁵⁰ However, this did not mean that Burūjirdī was represented exclusively by Bihbahānī. In fact Burūjirdī, more so than any other religious authority, acted as a sort of national leader who commanded universal respect. In this regard he was unique as no *marja'* or religious leader before him had held such a lofty position. Even the Shah who was meant to represent all Iranians, did not have this position. Likewise, after the revolution of 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini did not have this type of all-encompassing position either, and could not even be considered the leader of the entire religious community but rather only the leader of the radical faction.

⁴⁴⁹ Newspaper *Ustvār*, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 7, No. 72, Tuesday 8 Urdībihisht 1326. p. 2.

⁴⁵⁰ See Baqer Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah* (London: Tauris, 1999), 85.

Burūjirdī was aware of the fact that political streams would not necessarily go in the directions that they intend at the beginning. That was one of the reasons that he never showed any inclination to support any political activity, fearing its consequences. Even when in 1950 Kashani requested Burūjirdī to prepare bills for the parliament to make Islamic laws for the country, in spite of his initial agreement, Burūjirdī declined to contribute. When Kashani was in power as the Speaker of Parliament, he went to Qum and met with Burūjirdī along with a few more top clerics and they discussed various issues. Kashani told him that now he had power and it was possible for them to prepare some important things in the form of a bill to be approved by the parliament as law. By that he meant addressing the grievances of clerics at the time such as unveiled women appearing in public, inappropriate music being played and other such issues. At first, Burūjirdī liked the idea. A committee was appointed to do research and provide a basis for those bills. They did so and Burūjirdī was pleased with the results, but he ultimately decided against the idea, feeling it best not to make trouble for the government.⁴⁵¹ Thus, the prepared bills never were sent to parliament.⁴⁵² Perhaps when he thought more profoundly about Kashani and his behaviour, it seemed wiser to him not attach himself to Kashani.⁴⁵³ There were many negative aspects to Kashani's political method which could have harmed Burūjirdī if they shared any task. In fact, Burūjirdī considered himself to be someone who could maintain the faith, not by relying on the short term results of political means, but by following the traditional practices in the *hawzah*. This was a totally different perspective to Kashani, who was seeking political leadership of the world's Muslims, or the Fidā'iyyān-i Islām whose raison d'être was to make sacrifices for the sake of the faith.

At the same time, Burūjirdī's moderate policy was not totally in support of the government, as sometimes it benefited Islamist political people as well. For instance, in one of his first political actions in Qum, in November 1946, Ayatollah Burūjirdī invited 'ulama from different cities including

⁴⁵¹ Kashani and Khomeini were close and this may have caused Burūjirdī's unhappiness. For relations between Kashani and Khomeini see Burke and Lapidus, *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*, 279; Edward Willett, *Ayatollah Khomeini* (New York: Rosen Pub. Group, 2004), 37.

⁴⁵² Bāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 206- 207.

⁴⁵³ See more about Kashani in Yann Richard, 'Ayatollah Kashani: precursor of the Islamic Republic?' in Nikki R. (ed.) Keddie, *Religion and Politics in Iran: Shi'ism from Quietism to Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 101-124.

Tehran, Shīrāz, Isfahan etc. to come to Qum to participate in a special meeting.⁴⁵⁴ Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ṭabāṭabā'ī also was in the meeting.⁴⁵⁵ On the agenda for the meeting was the release of Ayatollah Kashani.⁴⁵⁶ It is likely that Burūjirdī held that meeting under outside pressure, as Kashani's supporters had some influence over him. Burūjirdī's later attitude towards Kashani showed that he disagreed in principle with Kashani's political methods. However, it did not mean that he would do nothing for Kashani and let him be kept in jail. Kashani had some strong connections in Najaf. Apart from Kashani's father's reputation there, his cousin also supported him and encouraged Najaf's clerics to send telegrams to Burūjirdī and persuade him to lend support to Kashani's cause.⁴⁵⁷ Kashani's relationship with Burūjirdī could be separated into two distinct phases. When Kashani was in a position of authority, he maintained his independence and freedom of action. But whenever he lost this position, it was Burūjirdī who received many telegrams from Najaf and other cities requesting him to intervene on Kashani's behalf. Kashani and his supporters truly understood that although Burūjirdī was not going to give them any support for political activities, his help was essential when Kashani was in trouble.

Perhaps Kashani was the only member of the clerical class who made trouble for Burūjirdī, and even after the latter's intervention, he continued to be disobedient to Burūjirdī and created further problems. Following the unsuccessful assassination attempt on the Shah on 4 February 1949, Kashani was arrested and was sent to Falak al-Aflāk in Khurram Ābād.⁴⁵⁸ A group of around 70 people was sent by the Fidā'iyyān-i Islām to Qum to take *bast* (sanctuary) in Burūjirdī's house and agitate for the release of Kashani. The incident lasted for several days and the police tried unsuccessfully to break up the gathering.⁴⁵⁹ During the *bast*, the group was constantly reading the Quran. Their main request was that Burūjirdī should do something in support of Kashani.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁴ About Kashani's arrest see Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton University Press, 1982), 234; Barry M. Rubin, *Guide to Islamist Movements* (Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 2010), 253.

⁴⁵⁵ Azar 1325.

⁴⁵⁶ 'Az lābilā-yi rūznamah'hā', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year, 7, No. 27, Sunday 2 Azar 1325, p. 1.

⁴⁵⁷ See Hamid Algar, 'The Oppositional Role of the 'Ulama in Twentieth Century Iran', in Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972), 241-242; and Abbas Milani, *Eminent Persians: The Men and Women Who Made Modern Iran, 1941-1979* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 343-349.

⁴⁵⁸ 15 Bahman 1327. See Bill and Louis (eds), *Musaddiq, Iranian Nationalism and Oil*, 99.

⁴⁵⁹ 'Khāṭirāt-i Fidā'iyyān-i Islām', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 9, pp. 15, 29.

⁴⁶⁰ See Shahrugh Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran*, 68.

After three days, Burūjirdī emerged from the quarters of his house and commented wryly that he thought he had died and that the Quran was being read over his corpse, in reference to their continuous Quran reading.⁴⁶¹ It showed the high level of Burūjirdī's disapproval. A member of the group responded impertinently to Burūjirdī, expressing incredulity that even the representative of the Hidden Imam (a reference to Burūjirdī) believed that the Quran should only be read at cemeteries, rather than acting as a constitution.⁴⁶² The implication in this comment was that Burūjirdī held overly simple and traditional beliefs about the place of the Quran, in stark contrast with Islamist groups such as the Fidā'īyān, who believed that the Quran should serve as a constitutional guideline for a Muslim's everyday life. The comment angered Burūjirdī, but the tense situation was dispelled by another member of the group, who dealt tactfully with the issue and requested Burūjirdī's help to free Kashani. According to another account, the Fidā'īyān even insulted Burūjirdī.⁴⁶³ When they gathered in Burūjirdī's house, he pointed to them and asked "have they come here to kill me?"⁴⁶⁴ The result was that Kashani returned from Falak al-Aflāk and was then exiled to Lebanon.⁴⁶⁵

Burūjirdī's actions concerning Kashani were mainly a response to people who requested his help. However, before he was approached by the Fidā'īyān, a group of merchants and clerics in Qum went to Burūjirdī and asked him to send a telegram to the Shah recommending Kashani's release. Mr. Ḥakīm al-Mulk, a former prime minister, also went to meet the Shah to mediate in Kashani's case. A special representative was sent by the Shah to investigate the arrest of Kashani and his son-in-law, and to punish officers who had overreacted against Kashani. As a result of requests about Kashani's case and his return from Khurram Ābād, authorities agreed with this proposal and they prepared to send him to Lebanon.⁴⁶⁶ Finally, when Kashani was in Lebanon, Burūjirdī sent a telegram to the Shah requesting that he allow Kashani to return from exile. The Shah agreed and promised to review

⁴⁶¹ This refers to the traditional Islamic practice of reading the Koran at funerals. This is the same critique that Khomeini raises against the authorities in Saudi Arabia. See the introduction of Rūh Allāh Khomeini, *Ṣaḥīfah-i inqilāb: vaṣṣiyat'nāmah-yi siyāsī'ilāhī-i rahbar-i kabīr-i inqilāb-i Islāmī va bunyānguzār-i Jumhūrī-i Islāmī-i Īrān* (Vāshington: Daftar-i Ḥifāzāt-i Manāfi'-i Jumhūrī-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 1989).

⁴⁶² In reference to Burūjirdī himself

⁴⁶³ Bāqī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 212.

⁴⁶⁴ 'Abd Allāh Ziyā'ī, Tihān, Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh, 'Abd Allāh Ziyā'ī, 52.

⁴⁶⁵ 'Irāqī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 1.

⁴⁶⁶ 'Shāyī'āt az lābilā-yi rūznāmah'hā', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 9, No. 35, Saturday 30 Bahman 1327, p. 2.

Kashani's situation.⁴⁶⁷ In general Burūjirdī's actions concerning Kashani were his responses to requests for help from other people. However, he clearly expressed his policy that he was not going to respond to the provocations of supporters of Kashani. It was clear that they were trying to force Burūjirdī to involve himself in political action in the form of issuing a fatwa or a similar action with social consequences. It was desirable for the Fidā'īyān as well as Kashani to mobilise great numbers in support of Kashani and make trouble for the government. Although Kashani and the Fidā'īyān could mobilise great numbers on their own account, it was much easier for them to mobilise the people by a fatwa from Burūjirdī. This was the main reason that they were so active in trying to cajole Burūjirdī, by all possible means, into supporting them.

When Kashani was in power, the new problem was his disagreements with Musaddiq and his, as well as his supporter's, demands to Burūjirdī to support them. In disagreements between Musaddiq and Kashani, provocations related to the Tudeh party were potentially effective for Burūjirdī. This was the most successful strategy of Musaddiq's political opponents who wanted to create propaganda about his relationship with the Tudeh party in order to discredit him in the eyes of the religious authorities by claiming that Musaddiq was supporting the Tudeh.⁴⁶⁸ This strategy worked very well, aided by the activities of the Tudeh party. Following a ceremony to mark the return of the Iranian delegation from a Marxist Peace Congress in Vienna, held in December 1952, and struggles between leftists and their opponents in Tehran, Burūjirdī called Makkī to Qum and sent a message to Musaddiq through him.⁴⁶⁹ Apparently, at that point, Kashani was supportive of the Congress and of the Association as he signed the campaign's petition with a reference to a phrase of the Koran which says "peace is better".⁴⁷⁰ Kashani sent his representatives to the congress, but as *Ārām* newspaper wrote, the reason for this was that there was no hope of Kashani coming to terms with Musaddiq. So, he decided to approach leftist agents and use their support against Musaddiq.⁴⁷¹ There were many

⁴⁶⁷ *Khvāndanīhā*, taken from *Newspaper Pārs*, year 9, No, 44, Tuesday 2 Farvardīn 1328, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁸ P. M. Holt, and Ann K. S. Lambton, *The Cambridge History of Islam Vol 1b: the Central Islamic Lands Since 1918* (S.l.: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 625; Fakhreddin Azimi, *Iran: The Crisis of Democracy: from the Exile of Reza Shah to the Fall of Musaddiq* (London: Tauris, 2009), 329; Bill, and Louis (eds), *Musaddiq, Iranian Nationalism, and Oil*, 330.

⁴⁶⁹ 'Īrān dar sih rūz-i guzashtah', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 30, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁰ Bāqī, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 14.

⁴⁷¹ *Ārām* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 33, p. 3.

rumours in the press that Kashani was going to continue opposing Musaddiq until the latter was toppled from power. It was even claimed that Kashani promised the Tudeh attractive positions in the cabinet, should he take power.⁴⁷²

These circumstances prompted Ayatollahs Burūjirdī and Bihbahānī to send a message to Musaddiq expressing their annoyance with Kashani's machinations and recommending that Musaddiq take whatever action he feels would benefit the nation regarding the issue of oil, pledging that both of them would react decisively against Kashani if he were to try to undermine Musaddiq.⁴⁷³ One may suppose that Kashani, having lost hope of getting any support from Burūjirdī, was tempted to form a sort of temporary alliance with the Tudeh party in order to mobilize people, at the time when he did not have the support of Musaddiq and the majority of the national movement anymore. The action was stopped by Burūjirdī's support for Musaddiq. In fact, Burūjirdī made it clear to Kashani that if he wanted to form any alliance with the Tudeh party, Burūjirdī would support Musaddiq openly, in which case Kashani would certainly have lost all of his religious credibility in standing against Musaddiq. On the one hand, it shows to what extent Burūjirdī was unhappy about Kashani and his potential to undermine religious principles in the process of fulfilling political ambitions. On the other hand, Musaddiq acted in a way that gave assurance to Burūjirdī in this regard.

Like in other parts of Iran, the Tudeh party was active in Qum. Sayyid 'Alī Akbar Burqa'ī was the head of a Marxist-friendly organization in Qum with a strong propensity towards Marxism and leftist groups in general as well as being the prayer leader in the Imam Mosque.⁴⁷⁴ When he came back from the Vienna peace congress in December 1952, his followers welcomed him in Qum and in one of his meetings they shouted "death to Burūjirdī" and "long live Stalin". A demonstration in Qum started against the Tudeh.⁴⁷⁵ The people of Qum, especially the Fidā'īyān-i Islām who were looking for any opportunity to mobilise people, were outraged and attacked the Tudeh supporters.⁴⁷⁶ The Fidā'īyān had become public enemies of both Musaddiq and Kashani a couple of weeks after

⁴⁷² *Dād* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 32, p. 3.

⁴⁷³ *Mihrgān* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā* year 13, No. 36, p. 3.

⁴⁷⁴ Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 24-25.

⁴⁷⁵ See Michael Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, 257.

⁴⁷⁶ Bāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 15.

Musaddiq became prime minister.⁴⁷⁷ The attackers were commanded by a man called Turkamānī.⁴⁷⁸ In retaliation, many theological students (*talabahs*) were beaten by those servants of the shrine who were connected to Tudeh party, and when *talabahs* fought back the police intervened.⁴⁷⁹ The day after that, *talabahs* went to the police headquarters and more clashes and demonstrations took place.⁴⁸⁰ The demonstrators wanted the police to send Burqa'ī away from the city of Qum, and an angry mob threatened to destroy Burqa'ī's house.⁴⁸¹ However, police stopped them outside his house and calmed them down by stating they would contact Tehran to solve the problem. At the same time a message came on behalf of Burūjirdī that demonstrations were acceptable but violence was not. So they went to the police headquarters and continued their demonstration there.

The police finally pledged to solve the problem within 24 hours. The protesters duly returned after 24 hours and when they realized that nothing had been done they resumed their demonstration and the police prepared to defend its headquarters by force. Tear gas was used, shots were exchanged and more bloodshed ensued. Police took control of the situation. At this point, the angry group of demonstrators went to Burūjirdī's house and asked for help.⁴⁸² Burūjirdī had already closed down his house to the public, but he was finally obliged to intervene by sending a message to Musaddiq, who sent Dr Malik Ismā'īlī to sort out the issue.⁴⁸³ Meanwhile, when the people of Burūjird became aware of the insults used against Burūjirdī and Islam, they decided to move to Qum and Tehran. When Musaddiq realised this, he contacted Burūjirdī and asked him to halt the group's advances from Burūjird (which he did) and in return Burqa'ī would be exiled to Yazd.⁴⁸⁴ Police announced that there was only one fatality as a result of the scuffles, but demonstrators believed the death toll was higher. Burūjirdī introduced Faḡl Allāh Maḡallātī as his representative to the police for leading the inquest into the deaths resulting from the demonstration. In addition, the head of Qum's hospital also

⁴⁷⁷ For more information about Fidā'iyyān's disagreements and disappointment with Kashani and Musaddiq see Fereydoun Hoveyda, *The Broken Crescent: The "threat" of Militant Islamic Fundamentalism* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2002), 34-35.

⁴⁷⁸ Mūsā Shubayrī Zanjānī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, Mūsā Shubayrī Zanjānī, 3.

⁴⁷⁹ Hashimī Rafsanjānī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 24-25.

⁴⁸⁰ Šādiq Khalkhālī, *Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, Šādiq Khalkhālī, 12.

⁴⁸¹ This was Burūjirdī's demand expressed by Khomeini in his interview as Burūjirdī's spokesman with *Taraqī* newspaper on Day 1331 (Dec 1952), No. 32.

⁴⁸² Maḡallātī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 5-21.

⁴⁸³ Khalkhālī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 12.

⁴⁸⁴ Shubayrī Zanjānī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 3.

accompanied the mission. They searched all the police headquarters and found no corpse, but some demonstrators maintained that the police had buried the bodies secretly. So, they were authorised by the Chief Judge of Qum to search for the body by digging up new graves, but only found a single corpse. Thus the result of the investigation was that 11 people were injured and one individual was killed.⁴⁸⁵ Finally, the government exiled Burqa'ī to Yazd.⁴⁸⁶

Having refrained from any violent involvement, Burūjirdī showed Musaddiq that he would be supportive of him and would help him to maintain order, so long as Musaddiq agreed to his requests. In Burūjirdī's view, there was no difference between Musaddiq and Kashani, or any other politician, as they were equal members of the faith. Anyone who supported the Tudeh party would lose Burūjirdī's support and anyone who wanted to punish the Tudeh party, would have Burūjirdī's support. However, in order to stop the abuse of the situation by groups such as the Fidā'īyān-i Islām, Burūjirdī preferred to sort out the issue by negotiation with Musaddiq. It was very clear to Burūjirdī that people could easily mobilise in his name, but the problem was monitoring and regulating the activities of such a crowd after it formed, especially as he was aware that people such as the Fidā'īyān would attempt to hijack such a crowd for their own ends. He was sure the Fidā'īyān were not really loyal to him, as their political thought was fundamentally dissimilar, even though they came from a clerical background.

Burūjirdī's moderate action in the case of the Tudeh needs to be understood as evidence of his deep understanding of provocation by the monarchy against political activists and parties in order to gain the support of the religious forces. For example, it is claimed that the Shah and his court had a policy of depicting the Tudeh Party as a threat to Islam and Burūjirdī (who was the symbol of Islam), which successfully influenced the young clerics of Qum. Fazl Allāh Maḥallātī in his memoirs gives a political analysis of the Tudeh party, using the example of the protest against 'Alī Akbar Burqa'ī. He says "at that time we revolted according to our simple religious beliefs. But in secret, I think the Shah's court seriously tried to put Burūjirdī in confrontation with Kashani and the National Front in order to strengthen the Shah." He continues that "we didn't analyse the issue at the time. We only

⁴⁸⁵ Maḥallātī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 5-21.

⁴⁸⁶ Bāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 15.

heard that they (the Tudeh) had offended the Quran, Islam and Ayatollah Burūjirdī. So, we got angry and revolted against them.”⁴⁸⁷

However, Musaddiq’s policy of dealing respectfully with Burūjirdī guaranteed him his support. And again here I should clarify the meaning of support as Burūjirdī practised it, which meant apparent quietism and very low-key assistance in maintaining order. Later, when Kashani and other religious forces were deploying their supporters against Musaddiq by accusing him of cooperating with the Tudeh Party, he reconfirmed his relationship with Burūjirdī by sending his Justice Minister to meet Burūjirdī in Qum. This is to be taken as evidence that Musaddiq was a politician who had truly understood how to deal with Burūjirdī in order to gain his support. The level of negative propaganda against Musaddiq’s government was very high.⁴⁸⁸ This is clear if we look at some religious newspapers of the time, whose editorials were regularly critical of Musaddiq, accusing him of links with the Soviet Union.⁴⁸⁹

In fact, religious forces which were in opposition to Musaddiq’s government were making energetic efforts to enlist further support for their side. The most important tactic for them was to convince the religious community of Iran that Musaddiq’s government was supportive of the Tudeh party, which was contrary to Islamic principles. They tried to approach Burūjirdī as well. Musaddiq and his supporters were aware of the importance of Burūjirdī’s opinion on this issue. So he sent ‘Abd al-‘Alī Luṭfī, who was his justice minister and who had a clerical background, to Qum to speak to Burūjirdī.⁴⁹⁰ As the newspaper *Fārs* reported, the main agenda of this meeting was to give an assurance to Burūjirdī that, contrary to opposition propaganda, Musaddiq’s government did not have any agreement or links with the Soviet Union.⁴⁹¹ This type of behaviour from Musaddiq showed not just that he was aware of Burūjirdī’s sensitivities, but also that he knew what to do to satisfy Burūjirdī

⁴⁸⁷ Maḥallātī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 7.

⁴⁸⁸ Tudeh activities made warnings for the religious establishment, see Homa Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1990), 80-87.

⁴⁸⁹ For example see the editorial of *Millat-i mā* newspaper, where the author says: “Everybody in the world knows that Musaddiq has change the direction of his government in sympathy with Communism.” *Millat-i mā* 10 Tīr 1332.

⁴⁹⁰ ‘Abd al-‘Alī Luṭfī (1885-1955) was the Justice Minister in Musaddiq’s cabinet. He was a well-known judge and *mujtahid*. After the coup of 1953, he spent some time in the prison. But later, when he was at home he was attacked by unknown forces commanded by Sayyid Maḥdī Pīrāstah, Buyūk Šābir and their hirelings, and later died from complications related to the assault. ‘Abd al-Rizā Hūshang Maḥdāvī, *Sarnivisht-i yārān-i duktar Muṣaddiq* (Tīhrān: ‘Imī, 2005).

⁴⁹¹ *Fārs* Newspaper, take from *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 86, p. 3.

and persuade him to ignore the propaganda against Musaddiq. Perhaps it was a result of Musaddiq's successful policy of dealing with Burūjirdī that the latter never took up any position against Musaddiq, though the provocations against Musaddiq were really much greater than usual, especially when the confrontation between Musaddiq and the Shah was at its peak, as a result of which provocations to Burūjirdī increased as well. However, as usual Burūjirdī was reluctant to give any sort of support to one side or the other, and this is to be taken as evidence that he was not influenced by those provocations, as they influenced many other clerics. Burūjirdī preferred to emphasise the maintenance of the status quo for everybody. This was an important issue, as for quite a while it was said that Musaddiq was on the verge of forming a coalition with the Tudeh party.⁴⁹² It was a response to the message that Burūjirdī had sent to Musaddiq, as a while before that, Ayatollah Bihbahānī had sent two representatives to Qum to discuss the issue with Burūjirdī. In his meeting, Burūjirdī instructed them to pass a message onto Musaddiq via Bihbahānī who was anti-Musaddiq. In this message, he mentioned "the government's agents in coalition with the Tudeh Party and the government's position towards the Shah is incompatible with principles of the religion and as Iran is an Islamic country, any action which leads to the weakening of the position of Shah is against Islam". In the meantime he mentioned that in the event that the government did not change its behaviour, he would be compelled to leave Iran.⁴⁹³ It was a threat to Musaddiq, but in Burūjirdī's political language it was clear to Musaddiq that he was sending him his demands, and by no means it was an action against him. On the other hand it was clear to Burūjirdī that Musaddiq would certainly follow his instructions. The whole event was described by an Egyptian journalist in his report for an Egyptian newspaper called *Akhhār al-yawm*.⁴⁹⁴

The title of the report is "The most powerful and the most respected man in Iran, the one who is even more powerful than Shah, Musaddiq and Kashani" where Ṣabrī, the Egyptian journalist who had unsuccessfully tried to meet Burūjirdī in Qum, gives descriptions about him:

⁴⁹² Musaddiq's decision to release Tudeh members from prison caused the Tudeh demonstration in support of Musaddiq. See Kristen Blake, *The U.S.-Soviet Confrontation in Iran, 1945-1962: A Case in the Annals of the Cold War* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2009), 82.

⁴⁹³ *Mard-i Āsiyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 60, p. 4.

⁴⁹⁴ 'Qavītarīn va Muhtaram'tarīn Mard-i Īrān' in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, NO. 79, p.7.

“He never speaks about anything. He hasn’t given any opinion on the political crisis in Iran. Whenever Iranian politicians have tried so much as to get his indirect thoughts about political issues, they have failed. They know that a tiny suggestion in favour of one side or another from his side is enough to make an order which no one can disobey. He only gives his opinion if he feels there is a serious danger to Iran. Even in such a case, he never gives his opinion publicly, as he only sends his message secretly at night, through his special representative to the authorities. Now for the first time it is disclosed that he was the person who stopped the Shah from travelling abroad. Neither Kashani’s letter nor the pro-Shah demonstration could change the situation as the pro-Shah demonstration was followed by the pro-Musaddiq demonstration the next day. Even parliament could not do anything to influence the stubborn Prime Minister. It was only Burūjirdī who could stop Musaddiq as at that point, he accepted the secret, oral message from Burūjirdī which was carried by Ayatollah Bihbahānī, and withdrew from his strong confrontational position. Thus, the Iranian Prime Minister kept quiet.”⁴⁹⁵

Burūjirdī had already expressed the view that he did not like any irregular change in the balance of the power in the country. Pro-Musaddiq forces arranged a political meeting and a huge demonstration in support of Musaddiq on 4 December 1952, following which disturbances took place in Tehran and a number of offices of the newspapers which were anti-Musaddiq were attacked and set on fire. The incident caused a great deal of criticism of Musaddiq, though he personally did not have any role in it. Burūjirdī wrote a letter to the Shah showing his sorrow for the incident.⁴⁹⁶ He also wrote a letter to the clerical authorities in Tehran and recommended that they avoid interference in affairs as it might cause assassination and general civil unrest.⁴⁹⁷ He reiterated his position of being clearly against any radical change in the country, believing that if the Shah were to leave, the country’s security and stability would be undermined and that it would provide an opportunity for communists to take power.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ 14 Azar 1331. See Katouzian, Homa, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, 157.

⁴⁹⁷ *Zarrih'hā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 12, No. 32, p. 4.

⁴⁹⁸ Maḥallātī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 16.

Later, when the Shah was opposed to Musaddiq's desire to call a referendum on the question of dissolving parliament in July 1953 and was considering leaving the country, it was very likely that clerics would issue a statement indicating the necessity for the Shah's support and blocking him from going abroad.⁴⁹⁹ Ayatollah Kashani and Ayatollah Bihbahānī had already issued statements in support of the Shah.⁵⁰⁰ Furthermore, they had a meeting and agreed to discuss the issue with Ayatollah Burūjirdī and other high clerics.⁵⁰¹ One may suppose that they decided to take serious religious action against Musaddiq and that their incentive for meeting Burūjirdī was to ask him to issue a fatwa against Musaddiq in order to have a universal religious means to fight Musaddiq. However, Burūjirdī believed that the current situation must be maintained and they did not succeed in wrenching a fatwa from Burūjirdī on the issue, which was the reason that Bihbahānī himself as well as Kashani issued fatwas against the referendum, which was not as effective as they had expected.⁵⁰² Although clerical authorities such as Kashani and Bihbahānī as well as religious newspapers had poisoned Burūjirdī's view of Musaddiq, they were ultimately unsuccessful in getting a direct statement against Musaddiq from him. Before that, Kashani had tried to gain Burūjirdī's support for his political ambitions several times by different methods, including offering financial and administrative advantages as well as putting pressure on him. This time, he planned to use Bihbahānī's influence on Burūjirdī in order to gain more support, as Bihbahānī was the person who gave political advice to Burūjirdī's administration.⁵⁰³ But the plan didn't work out as he had wished. In fact, it wasn't the first time that religious forces were unsuccessful in co-opting Burūjirdī's influence for their own political ends, as before that, the Fidā'īyān-i Islām had actively but unsuccessfully tried to put Burūjirdī under pressure to support their actions. Burūjirdī proved to them that his concern over Tudeh activities in the country was not enough for him to respond to provocations made by religious forces asking for a fatwa. He was aware that a fatwa from him would mobilise great crowds and would cause great upheaval in the

⁴⁹⁹ About clerical concerns over Musaddiq's power, see Gavin Hambly, 'The Pahlavī autocracy: Muhammad Rizā Shāh, 1941-1979' in Harold W. Bailey, Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles P. Melville, *The Cambridge History of Iran: Volume 7* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 262.

⁵⁰⁰ Homa Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, 156-157.

⁵⁰¹ *Al-ʿAmal* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 48, p. 5.

⁵⁰² For more information about Kashani and Bihbahānī's positions against Musaddiq's controversial referendum see Mark Gasiorowski, 'Why did Mosaddeq fall?' in M. Gasiorowski, and M. Byrne (eds), *Mohammad Mossadeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 265; and Misagh Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 192.

⁵⁰³ 'Alī Ḥujjatī Kirmānī, Tihrah, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārikh Inqilāb Islāmī, 'Alī Ḥujjatī Kirmānī, 7.

country. At the same time, he was fully aware that he would lose control of such a crowd. Apart from that, he really felt no preference for Kashani over Musaddiq. So, the safest position for him and for the Qum Seminary was to stay away from any involvement and try to maintain the *status quo* and the balance of power.

Following the coup of 1953 the balance of power changed. When the Shah returned, Burūjirdī sent a telegram welcoming him.⁵⁰⁴ According to Major Khātām who accompanied the Shah, during the time that Shah was in Iraq, after he had fled Iran, Muhammad Riza Shah praised Burūjirdī.⁵⁰⁵ Burūjirdī's special position in maintaining the balance of power between existing political forces worked to the Shah's advantage and the Shah was satisfied with Burūjirdī as he did not consider him to be someone who supported the Shah's leaving the country. Burūjirdī's position was not ideal for the Shah, but it was acceptable. There is evidence that many people, particularly Ayatollah Bihbahānī, tried to get a fatwa from Burūjirdī in support of a coup against Musaddiq. For instance, 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Miftāḥ's account is one such piece of evidence. Although in his account, he claims that a fatwa was issued, there is no evidence that Burūjirdī had issued such a fatwa. The account was published many years after Burūjirdī's death and if there was such a fatwa, it seems very unlikely that it was not revealed earlier.⁵⁰⁶ However, the account does reveal that they had tried to extract a fatwa from Burūjirdī. Burūjirdī was exceedingly careful in issuing the fatwas that and even on the issue of the Oil Nationalization Movement he expressed no opinion although he implicitly endorsed the Iranian nation's struggles against British imperialism by indicating his support for the fatwas issued by Ayatollahs Ḥujjat, Ṣadr, Khvānsārī and Rawḥānī in March 1951 in favour of the Oil Nationalization Movement.⁵⁰⁷ So, Miftāḥ's statement does not seem to be compatible with Burūjirdī's general policy and his principles in responding to provocations. Rather, the account reveals to a historian that although they tried to get a fatwa, Burūjirdī disappointed them.

⁵⁰⁴ See Farhang Rajaei, *Islamism and Modernism*, 69.

⁵⁰⁵ 'Khātīrāt-i Sargurd Khātām' in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 100, p. 9.

⁵⁰⁶ The account was published many years after the coup, in 27 Shahrivar 1357 (18 Sep 1979), 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Miftāḥ in a letter to the editor of *Khvāndanīhā*.

⁵⁰⁷ *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 75, p. 13. For fatwas related to the oil nationalization movement see Mostafa Elm, *Oil, Power, and Principle: Iran's Oil Nationalization and Its Aftermath* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 74.

As Miftāḥ says in his account, on 18 August 1953 he went to Burūjirdī and explained the efforts of Lavrentiev, the Soviet ambassador in Tehran at the time, to annex Iran to the Soviet Union. He told Burūjirdī, “when you leave your house, look at the wall. See what they have written in bold red colour. They have written ‘the Tudeh is victorious’. They are addressing you. Have you paid attention to the meaning of that? It means that it is the end of clerical society along with the loss of Iranian independence.” After that, Burūjirdī said: “I took my action on the 9th of Isfand”, to which Miftāḥ replied: “The situation today is much worse than at that time and needs your attention. Do not forget that they are so impertinent that they rudely write these absurd words on the walls of this holy city.”⁵⁰⁸ It does not seem to be a false account as prior to the 1953 coup some letters allegedly from the Tudeh party were sent to clerics, who feared that the Tudeh were preparing to execute them.⁵⁰⁹ On the other hand, Maḥallātī, who himself was a member of Fidā’īyān-i Islām and was related to Kashani, says “later we realized that the Shah instructed a group of people to write letters to mujtahids and ‘ulama, which bore imprints of the author’s blood and threatened to slaughter them. The Shah’s intention was to destroy Kashani and Musaddiq”.⁵¹⁰

Burūjirdī had showed before that he was not going to change his political approach because of intimidations or provocations. Although communism and the Tudeh Party was one of the red lines of Burūjirdī’s politics, he did not see that as sufficient justification to take any action against Musaddiq, in terms of issuing a fatwa. Burūjirdī’s later actions showed that he was not so displeased with Musaddiq, as he tried to save him from death or a similar fate.⁵¹¹ When Musaddiq was in prison, Ayatollah Banī Ṣadr approached Prime Minister Zāhidī on Burūjirdī’s behalf to help Musaddiq. Although his message was not announced publicly, it was believed that Burūjirdī asked for forgiveness for Musaddiq.⁵¹² Zāhidī ignored the request, as a result of which Ayatollah Bihbahānī’s

⁵⁰⁸ ‘Tā Īrān Shāh dārad kumūnīst namīshavad’, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 29, No.2, p. 18.

⁵⁰⁹ Shubayrī Zanjānī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 14.

⁵¹⁰ Maḥallātī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 5-22.

⁵¹¹ Musaddiq was arrested on 20 August 1953 and his interrogation began on 17 September and ended on 29 September. He was too popular to be executed. See Homa Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power*, 194; and Mehran Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East: A Political History Since the First World War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 146.

⁵¹² *Sitārah-i Islām* Newspaper, *Khvāndanīhā*, year 13, No. 101, p. 2.

relationship with Zāhidī became critical, while Bihbahānī mentioned that he was loyal to the Shah as well as Ayatollah Burūjirdī.⁵¹³

If Burūjirdī had believed that Musaddiq's government was illegitimate and must be overthrown, he wouldn't have taken any action in order to save Musaddiq after that. Burūjirdī actively continued his efforts in favour of Musaddiq by meeting with Ḥusayn 'Alā' to discuss the case of Musaddiq. He mentioned the issue in his meeting with Ḥusayn 'Alā' a few months before his meeting with the Shah himself. After his meeting with 'Alā', and apparently as a result of that meeting, the Army Prosecutor took a noticeably milder position vis-a-vis Musaddiq and Tehran's radio stopped broadcasting negative propaganda about him.⁵¹⁴

The Shah finally went to Qum to meet Burūjirdī at the shrine. It was his fourth meeting with him, lasting about an hour, and was devoted entirely to discussing the fate of Musaddiq. The Ayatollah had been suffering for some time with hearing problems and the Shah had to address him very slowly and loudly. In the meeting, Burūjirdī told the Shah:

“During my life, especially from the time that I have been in charge of the Qum Seminary, I have never interfered in politics and have kept quiet. Of course in some problems, I gave my negative opinion. Even in the issue of oil nationalization, as the issue was mixed with politics, I did not give any opinion as God is happier this way. In the course of the last seven months, I have received many letters and questions about Musaddiq. I have not responded to any of them. Because if I gave a negative answer and somebody made publicity out of it, then I have crossed the line of neutrality; if I gave a positive answer, it would be a shame on religious and ethnic zeal. So, I kept quiet in this regard. Now I would like the Shah to provide grounds for the nation's happiness.”⁵¹⁵

The meeting produced a change in the Shah's position and Musaddiq did not face capital punishment, as people had feared.

Before that, during the oil nationalization movement, Burūjirdī maintained a neutral stance, which was surprising to many *ṭalabāhs*. This was allegedly because he had had a bitter experience of

⁵¹³ The Newspaper *Dunyā*, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 86, p. 38.

⁵¹⁴ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 59, p. 9.

⁵¹⁵ 'Mawzū'ī 'afv-i duktur Muṣaddiq', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 59, pp. 9-10.

the Constitutional Revolution and its consequences.⁵¹⁶ It shows that Burūjirdī saw the case of Musaddiq in this situation differently and felt that he had a religious responsibility to help Musaddiq. After the coup, the balance of power changed as the Shah emerged as an increasingly authoritative figure. The situation was critical, not just for Musaddiq, but for Kashani as well.⁵¹⁷ There were concerns about Kashani, who had been arrested on suspicion of connection to the assassination of former Prime Minister Razmārā. Burūjirdī and Kashani had a lot of disagreements, but as an Ayatollah, it would not be very comfortable for Burūjirdī if something bad were to happen to Kashani. To avoid that, Burūjirdī wrote a letter to the Shah and asked for help for Kashani. In response, the Shah reassured Burūjirdī that nothing bad would happen to Kashani and that he would be released very soon. Based on that, Kashani was to be released from prison and sent to his house in Pāmanār, where he would be placed under house arrest.⁵¹⁸ A few weeks later, Kashani's relatives were informed that he was not going to be released soon and would be held in prison until his trial was concluded. Following that, his relatives frequently went to Burūjirdī and asked for help. Consequently, Burūjirdī wrote a memorandum to Senator Qā'im Maqām Rafī' and gave some advice and recommendations about Kashani.⁵¹⁹ In addition the letter was sent along with another letter from Ḥujjat al-Islām Shawravī, which he had written to Burūjirdī about the situation of Muslims in the Soviet Union.⁵²⁰

The situation of Kashani did not improve and Burūjirdī sent his second message to the Shah via Senator Rafī'. In the hour-long meeting with Rafī', the Shah reaffirmed his commitment to helping Kashani. In his message, Burūjirdī stated that if the assassination dossier of Razmārā had private plaintiffs (members of the Razmārā family), they should be sent to Qum so he could give them justifications based on Islamic jurisprudence and convince them.⁵²¹ It seems that by this Burūjirdī meant that he would convince them to not pursue the case, not to convince them that it was right to kill Razmārā. Apart from that, he stressed the strong support of Kashani for the Shah at the end of

⁵¹⁶ Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, Tihṛān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, 4-10.

⁵¹⁷ See Abbas Milani, *Eminent Persians*, II, 348.

⁵¹⁸ 'Nāmāh-i ḥaẓrat-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī bih Shāh qabl az 'azīmat bih Hind', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 65, p. 9.

⁵¹⁹ 'Kāshānī bih īn zūdī'hā az zindān khalāṣ nakhāhad shud', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 73, p. 8.

⁵²⁰ 'Nāmāh-i ḥaẓrat-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī bih Shāh qabl az 'azīmat bih Hind', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 65, p. 9.

⁵²¹ 'Pust-i Tihṛān', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 56. P. 5.

Musaddiq's period and his resistance to Musaddiq.⁵²² Previously, when Ayatollah Bihbahānī was disappointed in his attempts to have Kashani released, Sayyid Muḥammad, one of Kashani's sons, went to Qum to meet Burūjirdī and discuss the issue. When he met Burūjirdī, he cried and said "I will not leave your house". Then Burūjirdī sent Ḥājj Aḥmad to Tehran to give his message to Qā'im Maqām al-Mulk Rafī', requesting him to approach the Shah and ask for his consideration regarding Kashani. At the same time, Sayyid Muḥammad Kashani asked all the members of Kashani's family to send telegrams to Kashani's relatives who were leading clerics in Najaf. When they sent these telegrams, including telegrams from Najaf about the case, to Burūjirdī, Sayyid Muḥammad Kashani again met with Burūjirdī and implored him to help. Based on that and the telegrams from Najaf, Burūjirdī sent his second letter to Qā'im Maqām al-Mulk Rafī' and formally asked for the release of Kashani.⁵²³ Kashani's family was concerned about him so they went to meet Burūjirdī and insisted that he write yet another letter – the third so far - to the Shah.⁵²⁴ A few days later, Nūr al-Dīn Imāmī, the deputy speaker of the parliament, went to Qum and reassured Burūjirdī that the Shah had paid special attention to his mediation in Kashani's case and would use his own authority and take action in due course in the interests of the clerical society of Iran.⁵²⁵ Finally, Kashani's sentence was thereafter commuted to exile based on the Shah's forgiveness.⁵²⁶

Apart from writing three letters to the Shah pleading Kashani's case,⁵²⁷ Burūjirdī also held a memorial service for Kashani's wife in the A'ẓam Mosque after her death to show his respect.⁵²⁸ Burūjirdī's saving Kashani was his second intervention to save the political leader's life. But later, the execution of members of the Fidā'īyān-i Islām showed that Burūjirdī's intervention was not successful in more sensitive cases. The issue of Fidā'īyān is a very complex one and needs to be discussed. The Fidā'īyān were desperate for any possible opportunity to save themselves.⁵²⁹ They gained supporters amongst some young clerics in Qum, who petitioned Burūjirdī to try and help free

⁵²² 'Āzādīgān-i sharq', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 56, p. 5.

⁵²³ *Āzhang* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 57, pp. 10-11.

⁵²⁴ *Vāhimah* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 64, p. 6.

⁵²⁵ *Āzhang* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 63, pp. 9-10.

⁵²⁶ 'Sitārah-i Islām', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 56, p. 5.

⁵²⁷ 'Alī Ḥujjatī Kirmānī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Irān, 1.

⁵²⁸ Ḥujjatī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Irān, 22.

⁵²⁹ Navvāb Ṣafāvi and three other members of Fidā'īyān were executed in January 1956. For more information see Baquer Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, 67; and Gholam R. Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 365.

the Fidā'īyān from prison. The petition was delivered to him by a young cleric called Sa'īdī, and its signatories included well-respected young clerics of Qum such as Makārim Shīrāzī, Sayyid Mahdī Rawhānī, Azārī Qumī, Mūsā Zanjānī, Mūsā Šadr, 'Abd al-Karīm Ardabīlī, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Bihishī and Aḥmadī Miyānājī among others, many of whom became Ayatollahs under the Islamic Republic.⁵³⁰

Even when in prison, the Fidā'īyān asked Falsafī to speak about them in his sermon in order to rouse the public and put the government under pressure to release them. Falsafī used to give sermons on the radio and it was an ideal opportunity to gain publicity for their situation. He told them that their request would have to be discussed with Burūjirdī first, and Burūjirdī didn't support the idea although he did send several messages to the government about them.⁵³¹ Meanwhile, his administrative personnel hid information about them, and by the time he realized this it was too late as the Fidā'īyān members had been executed.⁵³² In fact, his administrative personnel were actively spreading negative propaganda about the Fidā'īyān-i Islām. For example, they accused the group of assassinating Razmārā, despite the fact that he owned a necklace inscribed with a verse of the Quran, which established his credentials as a good Muslim. On the one hand, Burūjirdī did not want any people who were descendants of the Prophet (meaning the Fidā'īyān, as they were Sayyids) to be killed. At the same time he doubted that their executions would be carried out so soon. So, he was thinking what to do and finally was informed that they had in fact been executed. After that he reduced his relationship with the government and in one of his meetings he commented ironically "in this country, the descendants of Muḥammad are executed". Sayyid Ibrāhīm Abṭahī, the head of administration at Bihbahānī's house had told Burūjirdī's administration of his certainty that the Fidā'īyān would be sent into exile, but only later realised that they had already been executed.⁵³³ Ayatollah Dr Muḥammad Šādiqī, who was Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥammad Bihbahānī's neighbour, says that on the day that Navvāb Šafavī was executed, Navvāb's wife went to Bihbahānī's house.⁵³⁴ Although Burūjirdī was unhappy with the Fidā'īyān-i Islām and disagreed with their methods, he did

⁵³⁰ Makārim Shīrāzī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 3.

⁵³¹ Muḥammad 'Abā'ī Khurāsānī, Tihrān, Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh, Muḥammad 'Abā'ī Khurāsānī, 13-17.

⁵³² Ziyā'ī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 7.

⁵³³ Bāqī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 29-32.

⁵³⁴ Šādiqī Tihrānī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 70.

not agree with their execution either. Later, it was one of the factors which led Burūjirdī to limit his relationship with the Shah and the government, without actually terminating it. He expressed his views more bluntly in his meetings with the government authorities and when Taymūr Bakhtiyār, the military governor of Tehran, was visiting him, he indirectly criticised the execution of the Fidā'īyān.⁵³⁵ In the same meeting, when Taymūr Bakhtiyār was going to sit in a more relaxed position, Burūjirdī rebuked him by saying “sit politely in front of *ulama*”.⁵³⁶ That was a message from Burūjirdī to the effect that he was not as friendly as he was before, an indication of his anger, therefore Jahanbegloo's account is not acceptable when he says: “The execution of the leaders of Fada'ian-e Islam was carried out without any expression of opposition or attempt at intervention by the clerical establishment.”⁵³⁷

Although some people claim that “Burūjirdī took no action to rescue the Fidā'īyān from capital punishment”, the real reason seems to be that he was powerless to do so.⁵³⁸ Burūjirdī did not take any serious action to help the Fidā'īyān, as serious as the action he took to save Kashani, perhaps as he did not have enough justification for doing so. Maybe the Shah had thought that the Fidā'īyān were not so important to Burūjirdī. The Court knew that he would not be happy for the Fidā'īyān to be executed. At the same time they knew that the Fidā'īyān's supporters in Qum and Najaf were not as influential as Kashani's supporters. Apart from that, the threat of the Fidā'īyān, who believed in violent resistance, was more serious for the government. In any case, after the execution of members of the Fidā'īyān-i Islām, Ayatollah Ṣadr terminated his relationship with Burūjirdī.⁵³⁹ Khomeini, on the other hand, made a special effort to save the Fidā'īyān. Perhaps the most accurate accounts are those of people who were close to Khomeini, who, according to Muḥammad Bāqir Sulṭānī, was most

⁵³⁵ Taymūr Bakhtiyār was the military governor of Tehran who had arrested Navvab and other members of Fidā'īyān in Tehran. He was appointed as the first chief of SAVAK. For more information about Taymūr Bakhtiyār see Stephanie Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran: Rural Conflict and the New State, 1921-1941* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 201; and Farhad Kazemi, ‘The military and politics in Iran’ in Elie Kedourie, and Sylvia Kedourie, *Towards a Modern Iran: Studies in Thought, Politics, and Society* (London: Cass, 1980), 236.

⁵³⁶ Maḥallātī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 14.

⁵³⁷ Ramin Jahanbegloo, *Iran between Tradition and Modernity* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2004), 81.

⁵³⁸ Sayyid Ḥasan Nāṣirī, Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Sayyid Ḥasan Nāṣirī, 8; also see Ṣādiq Khalkhālī, *Khāṭirāt-i Āyat Allāh Khalkhālī: az ayyām-i ṭalabagī tā dawrān-i ḥākīm-i shar‘-i dādghāhā-yi Inqilāb-i Islāmī* (Tihrān: Nashr-i Sāyah, 2000), I, 48.

⁵³⁹ Bunakdār, Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Bunakdār, 14.

active in his efforts to save the Fidā'īyān.⁵⁴⁰ According to Khomeini's wife, he went to Burūjirdī and came back disappointed, saying that Burūjirdī was not going to take any action as he was not concerned with such affairs. This was an important issue for her as she was a close friend of Vāḥidī's mother.⁵⁴¹ Khomeini's son Ḥājj Sayyid Aḥmad also says that Khomeini was extremely angry at Burūjirdī's reaction in this matter, as he knew that the government would execute the Fidā'īyān if Burūjirdī didn't do anything for them.⁵⁴² And Khomeini's daughter, Zahrā Muṣṭafavī, who was watching the conversation between her father and mother after his meeting with Burūjirdī, describes that Khomeini came home angrily, threw his gown on the ground and said that he couldn't do anything, as Burūjirdī said that he would not interfere in such cases.⁵⁴³ Khomeini's daughter, in a recent interview said again that Burūjirdī himself told Khomeini that he would not intervene in the Fidā'īyān-i Islām's case, the result of which, she concludes, was the execution of Navvāb Ṣafavī.⁵⁴⁴ He alongside with Khalīl Ṭahmāsbī, Zūlqadr and Muḥammad Vāḥidī were executed on 17 January 1956. Looking at these accounts, it seems that Burūjirdī did not use the power he had to save the Fidā'īyān from capital punishment. However, he might have thought that the government was not going to execute them so soon, and that was the reason that he showed dissatisfaction with the government after the event. This could be considered as evidence that Burūjirdī could have done more for the Fidā'īyān, if he had really wanted to. Although the situation left Burūjirdī somewhat disillusioned, he didn't change his overall cooperative policy with the government, which he continued to believe was in the best interests of the clerical class. He continued mediating between clerics who were in trouble and the government, using his influence on the Shah. Yet another example of Burūjirdī's successful mediation was in the case of Abū al-Qāsim Khaz'alī's exile. He was a young cleric who had been ordered into exile following his criticism of the Shah in one of his speeches. After Burūjirdī intervened on his behalf, the Shah rescinded the sentence and he went back home.⁵⁴⁵ It would certainly have been very difficult for Burūjirdī to justify using all his resources to challenge the

⁵⁴⁰ Muḥammad Bāqir Sulṭānī, *Hawzah*, No. 43-44, pp. 37-38.

⁵⁴¹ *Iṭṭila'āt* newspaper, 2 June 1994, p. 12.

⁵⁴² Aḥmad Khumaynī, *Majmū'ah-i Āṣār-i yādgār-i Imām* (Tihṙān: Mu'assasah-i Tanzīm va Nashr-i Āṣār-i Ḥazrat-i Imām Khumaynī, 1996), I, 660.

⁵⁴³ *Iṭṭila'āt* newspaper, 7 June, 1988.

⁵⁴⁴ Interview with Zahrā Muṣṭafavī, www.Entekhab.ir, published on 4 July 2011.

⁵⁴⁵ Abū al-Qāsim Khaz'alī, Tihṙān, Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh, Abū al-Qāsim Khaz'alī, 7.

government in order to save the Fidā'īyān. Burūjirdī did not seem to be so interested in political involvement, though he was happy to partially intervene in some cases, mainly in the form of saving people from punishment or a similar action. However, the Fidā'īyān were not a usual political case, as they employed violent and homicidal methods. Nevertheless, there were areas which he considered as his main area of authority and responsibility, and if anyone, including the authoritative Shah after the coup, wanted to pass these red lines, Burūjirdī would react seriously, as he had no tolerance in this regard. He was cooperative with the state provided that the state did not transgress his red lines representing certain fundamental principles of the faith. Although social and political fluctuations caused temporary discontent for Burūjirdī, and as a result, a temporary suspension of relations with the guilty party, the case was much different if a serious principle of the religion was violated. This was the main reason for his objection to the Shah's land reform policies.

Burūjirdī heard about land reforms from his own sources in the parliament as well as land owners.⁵⁴⁶ In addition, various people also came and complained to him about the reforms.⁵⁴⁷ Finally he issued a fatwa against the reform law of 16 May 1960.⁵⁴⁸ Sardār Fākhīr Ḥikmat went to parliament several times to read the negotiations on the land reform law when it was faced with Burūjirdī's fatwa.⁵⁴⁹ Sayyid Jalāl Tihirānī who formerly was a cleric and a government official and served as the custodian of Imam Riḏā's shrine, along with Sulaymān Biḥbūdī from the Shah's court and Ṣadr al-Ashrāf and Qā'im Maqām-i Rafī' went to meet Burūjirdī to determine his level of support for land reform. He told them that if they were going to carry out reforms, they should start from more serious points such as the constitution, and this they found surprising. He told them that the current monarch was an imposed Shah and an imposed Shah ignored people and could not do anything to support them.⁵⁵⁰ This was a clear message that Burūjirdī had the potential to oppose the state, if he decided

⁵⁴⁶ For more information about the landowners' appeals to the 'ulama see Mohammad Gholi Majd, *Resistance to the Shah: Landowners and Ulama in Iran* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 194-224.

⁵⁴⁷ Sayyid Husayn Budalā, Tihirān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 46, 53.

⁵⁴⁸ See A. K. S. Lambton, 'A Reconsideration of the Position of the Marja' Taqlid', 115-135; John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 129; Homa Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power*, 160; Hellmut Braun, 'Iran in the 19th and 20th centuries', in *The Muslim World a Historical Survey* (Leiden: Brill 1969), IV, 122.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ittihad-i Millī* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 22, No. 39, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁰ Bāqī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān 23.

to.⁵⁵¹ The Shah sent a representative to him to negotiate about the reform, indicating that in many Islamic countries these reforms had been carried out. In response, Burūjirdī told the Shah's representative that "it has now been years since those countries have also ceased to be monarchies".⁵⁵² By this, he intelligently implied that if there were to be reforms, many things would have to change. During the same period when his relationship with the Shah was rocky, Burūjirdī manoeuvred very carefully. In one of his messages to the Shah, Burūjirdī warned him "I am concerned that I will lose my turban and that you will lose your crown." Nevertheless, he was careful in his dealings with the Shah because there was general concern in Qum that the government was likely to take the same action against clerics that Riza Shah had taken in previous decades.⁵⁵³ This illustrates how Burūjirdī tried to maintain his relationship with the state by emphasising the benefit of having mutual relations between the clerical establishment and the state and supporting the landlords.⁵⁵⁴

However, Burūjirdī told the Shah that "it would be better if you keep our disagreement confidential as I wouldn't like the Iranian nation to know about it."⁵⁵⁵ In fact, Burūjirdī used different means to try to reduce the level of confrontation with the Shah. In his words to the Shah, he always implied that there were certain things which were not beneficial for either party. Burūjirdī's last meeting with the Shah finished on a less amicable note than usual. At this meeting which was only a few minutes and took place on the street outside the shrine in Qum, when the Shah kissed Burūjirdī's hand, Burūjirdī told him "you should behave like a Muslim". In response, the Shah said "I am a Muslim". Burūjirdī repeated himself and the Shah gave exactly the same response. Burūjirdī repeated himself angrily for the third time and the Shah again responded the same way, thus finishing the meeting on a sour note. After that, Burūjirdī never held another meeting with the Shah.⁵⁵⁶ This was in

⁵⁵¹ For more information on Burūjirdī's opposition to Shah's plan see Erik A. Claessen, *Stalemate: an Anatomy of Conflicts between Democracies, Islamists, and Muslim Autocrats* (Santa Barbara, Calif: Praeger, 2010), 66; Mansoor Moaddel, *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 140; Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran*, 91.

⁵⁵² *Khvāndanīhā*, year 29, No. 27, p. 12.

⁵⁵³ Šādiqī Tihirānī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 9. In general it is important to note that Burūjirdī's behaviour made the government softer in its policy towards the clerics see Abū al-Qāsim Khaz'alī, and Ḥamīd Karamī'pūr, *Khāṭirāt-i Āyat Allāh Abū al-Qāsim Khaz'alī* (Tihirān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2003), 59.

⁵⁵⁴ Later clerical opposition to the Shah caused the Qum Seminary to be attacked by the security forces. See H. Algar, 'The Oppositional Role of the 'Ulama in Twentieth Century Iran', in Nikki Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972), 246.

⁵⁵⁵ Sayyid Ḥusayn Budalā, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 30.

⁵⁵⁶ Sayyid Ḥasan Nāṣirī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 11.

stark contrast to their very first meeting in Qum which had taken place in Burūjirdī's house, when Burūjirdī sat on a mattress and the Shah modestly sat beside the mattress to show his respect and had left Qum with the same respectful feeling.⁵⁵⁷

The Shah was trying to get Burūjirdī on his side, but the old Ayatollah, upon realising that the Shah was serious about going ahead with land reform, showed reluctance to meet him as he believed that the Shah could use the meeting to attribute some opinion or comment to Burūjirdī.⁵⁵⁸ However, the Shah needed his agreement with (if not his endorsement of) the land reforms. So he went to Qum to try and meet him anyway. As one of the clerics says, the Shah was in Qum and they followed him. The Shah made his way towards Burūjirdī's house, waited there for a few minutes and came back, as some people believed that Burūjirdī had refused to meet him.⁵⁵⁹ Here, Burūjirdī stood his ground and made it clear that the issue of land reform was non-negotiable.

Following that, Burūjirdī's decision to leave the country aggravated the situation. Already dissatisfied with the government, the issue of land reform angered him to the point where he decided to leave Iran for Najaf. He submitted his passport as well as his companions' passports to the authorities and applied for a visa. The government was happy to let him go, but gradually demonstrations in different cities forced government officials to come to Qum and request that he stay in order to avoid further disturbances.⁵⁶⁰ When people realised that Burūjirdī had decided to leave Qum and go to Iraq, they staged a huge demonstration. The shops in the city of Qum closed down and a few more cities such as Arāk, Burūjird and Khurram Ābād were in a similar situation. Many telegrams were sent from Tehran and other Iranian cities requesting that the Ayatollah remain in Qum. Finally, he relented and agreed to stay.⁵⁶¹ Although many people claimed that his decision was as a result of his unhappiness with a number of problems in the country, Burūjirdī himself announced that his intention had been to go on a pilgrimage and as the current situation was not ideal, he had changed his mind.⁵⁶² Burūjirdī again showed that as long as the government respected him, he would

⁵⁵⁷ Khalkhālī, Tihṙān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Khalkhālī, 15.

⁵⁵⁸ Sayyid Ḥusayn Budalā, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 21.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibrāhīm Raḥīmī, Tihṙān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, Ibrāhīm Raḥīmī, 2.

⁵⁶⁰ Bāqī, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 34.

⁵⁶¹ Newspaper *Nidāy-i Haqq* in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 16. p. 10.

⁵⁶² Newspaper *Parcham-i Khāvar-i Miyānah* in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 15. pp. 5-6.

be happy to work cooperatively. Otherwise, he cared little what would happen in the country, as a result of his actions. The Shah had to recognise this agreement, although it was the last agreement between the Shah and Burūjirdī. The two men never met again as both of them stood stubbornly by their positions. On the other hand, both of them had to keep quiet for their mutual benefit. The Shah needed Burūjirdī's support and quietism in order to maintain order in the country. Burūjirdī had to keep quiet in order to protect the seminary from any possible pressure from the government. This uneasy peace continued until the death of Burūjirdī, at which point the Shah formally started his reform programme through Asad Allāh 'Alam. The Shah later in his book *the White Revolution* attributed his reform's lack of success to Burūjirdī's opposition by stating that "with the intervention of a irresponsible person who was not aware of advanced developments of the world" supported by the parliament, the reform had to stop.⁵⁶³ Although the Shah did not mention Burūjirdī's name in his book, from the context we understand that the phrase is a reference to Burūjirdī.

Burūjirdī's opposition to the Shah's land reform is a manifestation of Burūjirdī's principles for intervening into political matters. It was not a matter of any political party against another one or a political group in trouble. It was something which Burūjirdī understood as a danger to the faith in its entirety. Therefore, Burūjirdī used all of his power to prevent the Shah from carrying out his reform programme. However, he initially gave the Shah the option of respecting him or losing his support. Although at the beginning the Shah had thought it was easy to ignore Burūjirdī, at the end he realised that it was better for him to postpone his reforms rather than disrupt Burūjirdī's much-needed quietism. This was Burūjirdī's initial advice to the Shah to which both sides eventually agreed in practice.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶³ Muḥammad Rizā Pahlavī, *Inqilāb-i siḥd* (Tihṛān, Chāpkhānah-i Bānk-i Millī, 1967), 16.

⁵⁶⁴ For more information about the 'ulama and land reform see Willem M. Floor, 'The Revolutionary character of the Iranian Ulaṃe: Wishful Thinking or Reality?' in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 12.4 (1980), 501-524; John Foran, *Fragile Resistance*, 336, 365; Nikki R. Keddie, and Farah Monian, 'Militancy and religion in contemporary Iran' in Martin E. Marty and R. S. Appleby, *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 511-518; Fatemeh E. Moghadam, *From Land Reform to Revolution: The Political Economy of Agricultural Development in Iran, 1962-1979* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996), 45-47 and 201-202.

2. Civil development

Philanthropic projects and consolidating the religious establishment

Construction of public Buildings alongside other institutional activities is to be taken as evidence of Burūjjirdī's special interest in civil development as a means of consolidating Shi'ism. He was extremely active in building and funding mosques, *ḥusaynīyahs* (a place devoted to the Shi'i tradition of the annual mourning of Imam Ḥusayn), theological colleges, libraries, hospitals, public baths, cemeteries etc., not just in Qum but, in many big and small cities of the Shi'i world such as Najaf, Karbalā, Sāmarrā, Baghdād, Īrānshahr, Durūd, Kirmanshāh, Shāhrūd, Nūr Ābād Luristān, Burūjjird, etc. He regularly sent people to distant towns to teach religion and manage theological colleges there. In addition, he sent good professors to various small cities such as Ābādān, Kirmānshāh and Nayshabur to teach and manage theological colleges, because he didn't want that these colleges to suffer from a lack of good professors.⁵⁶⁵ In addition, he paid attention to modern Islamic Schools as well, as the development of modern education in Iran was a problem for religious families. Shaykh 'Abbās 'Alī Islāmī developed the scheme of an Islamic Modern School and Muḥaqqiqī and Bihishtī also discussed the establishment of Dīn va Dānish School, Hadaf School and 'Alavī School.⁵⁶⁶ This was in addition to his regular representatives in different cities, who occupied full-time positions dedicated to issues of education.⁵⁶⁷

Qum, as Burūjjirdī's headquarters as well as being the main site of the Shi'i seminary, had a particular importance in Burūjjirdī's eyes. He was very interested in the civil development of Qum, which was not as well-equipped as it should be. During the period in which Burūjjirdī was in Qum, he made serious efforts to develop infrastructure as well as improve the standard of living there. The city was usually very crowded during the pilgrimage season in autumn, when farmers had finished their summer work and stayed on for two weeks in Qum. In addition, people also went there for the

⁵⁶⁵ Sa'īdī, Tihirān, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, Sa'īdī, 22-23. 'Abd al-Majīd Ma'ādīkhāh, Tihirān, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī Īrān, 'Abd al-Majīd Ma'ādīkhāh, 9.

⁵⁶⁶ Ḥusayn Budalā, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 33.

⁵⁶⁷ For more information on Shaykh 'Abbās 'Alī Islāmī and Jāmi'ah-i Ta'limāt-i Islāmī and similar institutes see Samih K. Farsoun and Mehrdad Mashayekhi, *Iran: Political Culture in the Islamic Republic* (London: Routledge, 1992), 62; Farhang Rajaei, *Islamism and Modernism*, 72-73; Keiko Sakurai and Fariba Adelkhah, *The Moral Economy of the Madrasa: Islam and Education Today* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 105.

Nawrūz festival and the city became seriously crowded. Although the city was connected to the national rail network, most people preferred to go there by coach, as it was cheaper and more comfortable. There weren't many taxis in Qum and one had to take a hansom cab into the city from the rail station. Guest houses and hostels generally lacked adequate sanitary facilities and were unhygienic. Only the Iram guest house was suitable for comfortably accommodating visitors, with twenty rooms, two bathrooms and a canteen, but the cost for any single guest was 150 Rls, which was beyond most people's means. Unveiled women were not allowed to enter the guest house and alcoholic drinks were not served. Pilgrims normally went to the shrine and there one could see women clutching their babies.⁵⁶⁸

One of Burūjirdī's goals to improve the standard of living for Qum's inhabitants was to bring modern sanitation and running water to the city. His efforts to this end were even considered by the parliament. Manūchihr Iqbāl, who was the Prime Minister at the time, was criticised in parliament by the MP Ṭabāṭabā'ī for paying insufficient attention to the Qum sanitation project. Although legally Iqbāl was supposed to answer on the issue directly to the MP Ṭabāṭabā'ī, he defended himself by mentioning that he had discussed the issue with Burūjirdī, who was aware of the government's financial limitations for the project, which needed a total funding of 400 Million Rls.⁵⁶⁹ Iqbāl's reaction showed how a mere MP could be discounted when Burūjirdī was mentioned in the same breath. The more interesting point here was that Iqbāl was quick to acknowledge Burūjirdī's high position and asserted that he was honoured to be one of his followers. Altogether, this is clear evidence how the presence of Burūjirdī in Qum had made it important for the government to develop the city, which would normally be far from a priority for the government because of its small population.

MPs traditionally were very active in securing funding from the government to develop their cities, as it brought support for them and helped to secure votes for the next election. It was not surprising if MPs tried to use Burūjirdī's name as a means to pressure the government to allocate more funding for Qum, as in the case of MP 'Allāmah Vaḥīdī, who believed that Burūjirdī's efforts in

⁵⁶⁸ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 15, No. 13, pp. 21-22.

⁵⁶⁹ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrāy-i Millī, 18th term, meeting No. 386, p. 6.

Qum should be appreciated and that the government should try to maintain the Qum Seminary as it was a symbol of civilization.⁵⁷⁰ The same strategy was followed by the MP Qāsim Fūlādvand, who was from Burūjirdī's hometown of Burūjird, and asked for special attention to the city of Burūjird in parliament on the grounds of its attachment to Burūjirdī.⁵⁷¹

However, Burūjirdī himself did not rely on the financial support from the government, either in his religious activities, or even in the civil development of Qum, which was primarily a governmental concern. His support for the construction of an ice factory in Qum in 1950 by 'Alī Pūriyā'ī and his recommendation that the ice should be accessible to the poor at low prices, made a significant contribution to the welfare of Qum's inhabitants.⁵⁷² Burūjirdī himself funded a hospital building project in Qum. The hospital was intended for the seminary students and medical services in the hospital were free not only to students of the Qum seminary, but to seminary students from all over Iran and other Shi'ī countries. The head of the hospital was Dr. Mudarrisī, who was asked by Burūjirdī to not seek any financial help from the government for the affairs of this hospital in order to maintain its independence.⁵⁷³

Burūjirdī's most significant institutional legacy in Qum was the establishment of the prestigious Mosque of A'zam. In 1954, on the birthday of Imam Riḏā, work began on the Mosque of A'zam. After five years of construction and more than 50,000,000 Rls in expenditure, the building was still incomplete. The total area of the mosque was 11,000 square meters and it was made from iron and concrete. It included two libraries and some special reading rooms. The roof was made from reinforced concrete so it could be used for mass group prayers. Like other projects, financial independence was an important consideration for Burūjirdī's administration in this project, to the extent that he even refused a financial donation from the Shah when he was building the A'zam

⁵⁷⁰ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrā-yi Millī, 20th term, meeting No. 10, pp. 3-6.

⁵⁷¹ Fūlādvand stated in his speech that the town of Burūjird merited special attention but had in fact been neglected and was relatively under-developed. He mentioned that the city's population was 50,000 but was serviced only by a single hospital with only ten beds, and was lacking in modern sanitation and paved streets. The surrounding countryside had a population of 550,000, but lacked a single hospital facility. In neighbouring 'Alīgudarz county, a population of 250,000 was serviced by a single high school. Minutes of negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrā-yi Millī, 16th term, meeting No. 149, p. 2.

⁵⁷² 'Alī Pūriyā'ī, Tih-rān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 'Alī Pūriyā'ī, 3.

⁵⁷³ 'Bīst-u chahār sā'at-i zindagī-i ḥaẓrat-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 76, pp. 10-11.

mosque.⁵⁷⁴ The mosque provided the opportunity for teaching and giving speeches in which a large audience was expected to participate.⁵⁷⁵ Great crowds of pilgrims attended the mosque during the Nawrūz holidays when Ḥujjat al-Islām Falsafī delivered the sermons and Burūjirdī led the congregation in prayer. It was the best place to witness the Ayatollah's dignity.⁵⁷⁶

Through civil development, Burūjirdī sought material ways to consolidate the faith and the tradition of teaching in the seminary. Providing special facilities such as theological colleges, Islamic schools, mosques, hospitals, libraries etc., provided a special advantage for those who followed the Islamic tradition of teaching and research. It was important for Burūjirdī to maintain the financial independence of such places and limit income to religious taxes and donations from believers, rather than surrender its independence to the state. Burūjirdī understood that having a material presence was essential for consolidating the faith, as it provided a refuge for people who were in the clerical class or believers in general. This was in a period when the government was filling the country with modern institutions of social life, such as universities, schools and hospitals. It was vital for the religious community and the clerical class to develop their own institutions in order to maintain their traditional position of authority.

3. Supporting the Shi'ī community

National security concerns and the role of religious leadership

The complaints office: a refuge for people

Burūjirdī's high position and influence created another social function for him. Considering his special position as a spiritual father and source of succour for millions of Shi'ī Muslims, people wrote to Burūjirdī on various matters complaining about their difficulties and asking for his help. Burūjirdī was well-known to everyone as a figure to whom people could seek redress for their grievances and complain about various injustices. In fact, raising a complaint with him was considered virtually on a par with raising a formal complaint in a government office. In an article

⁵⁷⁴ Ḥujjatī, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 1.

⁵⁷⁵ Today, it is a sign of dignity to teach in this mosque. Currently, Grand Ayatollah Vahīd Khurāsānī teaches there. When a respected Ayatollah dies, the Supreme Leader normally holds a mourning ceremony for him in the mosque.

⁵⁷⁶ Sayyid Ḥusayn Budalā, Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 46.

published in *Khvāndanīhā* weekly which was about offices for complaining about various injustices, the writer counted state offices such as the Parliament, the Senate, National Broadcasting Corporation, the Royal Organization for Inspection as well as the Judiciary. The writer added that there was another office based in Qum which was no less important than the Royal or Prime Ministerial organizations. This was Ayatollah Burūjirdī's office. "People send their complaints to Ayatollah Burūjirdī and they are sure that he will consider all of those complaints. There are two members of staff in this office who receive 50 complaint letters every day and respond to them."⁵⁷⁷ This statement is corroborated by other evidence, the MP Shāhkār's speech about the problem of the people of Shīrāz with an aggressive man who abused his power, took over their lands and in a few cases raped their families.⁵⁷⁸ The government did not take any action against that person.⁵⁷⁹ So, people decided to complain to their *marja* Burūjirdī so he would intervene into the case and ask the government to restrain this aggressive individual. Again it is interesting that a member of the parliament mentions a telegram that they have written to Burūjirdī in order to show the importance of the case. Traditionally, the *'ulama* and *marja*'s were one of the places that people could go to complain about their difficulties and ask for help.⁵⁸⁰ However, considering the wide community that Burūjirdī headed, he was unusually active in this regard. Burūjirdī's authority even extended to members of the royal family. Once the mother of Muhammad Riza Shah went to Qum and sent a message asking Burūjirdī to advise the Shah against airplane travel because of the potential dangers of flying. He accepted and wrote a letter to the Shah, reminding him that he belonged to 15 million Iranians and that it would be better if he didn't use an airplane.⁵⁸¹ Although from the perspective of a western audience the incident seems absurd, it nevertheless showed the magnitude of Burūjirdī's spiritual power and stature as someone who could credibly mediate between members of the royal family. It seems that Burūjirdī paid special attention to the value of motherhood as when one of his good students was in Mashhad and Burūjirdī asked him to come to Qum, his mother disagreed. The student finally wrote a letter to

⁵⁷⁷ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 86, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁷⁸ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrā-yi Millī, 19th term, meeting No. 153, pp. 9-10.

⁵⁷⁹ As it is said in the minutes of the parliament this person's name is Ḥusayn Qulī Rustam.

⁵⁸⁰ For more information about the *'ulama*'s role in public grievance see Nikki R. Keddie, *Iran: Religion, Politics, and Society: Collected Essays* (London: F. Cass, 1980), 97-99; and Joanna De Groot, *Religion, Culture and Politics in Iran: from the Qajars to Khomeini* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 173.

⁵⁸¹ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 7, No. 66, p. 5.

Burūjirdī and asked for advice. Burūjirdī responded that it was obligatory that the man's mother be kept happy, and advised him to remain in Mashhad and work there.⁵⁸²

These examples are all manifestation of people's faith in Burūjirdī. Burūjirdī knew how important it was in consolidating Shi'ism for people to trust religious authority and trust in him. People's trust in Burūjirdī was so extensive that it was even subject to abuse by criminals, who forged Burūjirdī's signature. Once, when a Tehran merchant was at home, two clerics along with two other men appeared at his door and gave him a letter with a box of dates, telling him they had come from Qum and would return tomorrow for his response to the letter. When the merchant opened the letter, he saw that it was from Ayatollah Burūjirdī and requested the merchant to pay his religious tax to the carrier of the letter. By chance, the merchant was supposed to meet a cleric from Mashhad who used to be a student of Burūjirdī's that evening. The cleric verified that the handwriting was in fact not Burūjirdī's. The next day, when the phony clerics came to get the response to the letter, they were arrested and after investigation were revealed to be a team of criminals who had already scammed two people with the forged signature; one of them had paid 3,000 Rls and the other one 2,000 Rls.⁵⁸³

The public's confidence in Burūjirdī was sometimes used to tackle social problems. For instance, the prohibition of opium and other drugs was an example of his cooperation with the state in charitable activities.⁵⁸⁴ Being addicted to drugs was considered a social problem and a symbol of personal corruption. In his meeting with Burūjirdī, the Health Minister received a fatwa from him decreeing that the usage of drugs was forbidden in Islam.⁵⁸⁵ Here is a clear example of how Burūjirdī worked closely with the government on issues of mutual interest. Indeed, this was the benefit of having a good relationship with the state. Undoubtedly he was unhappy with many other government issues of the time, but cooperated whenever they shared goals. Needless to say, these sorts of effort were appreciated by everyone in the country. Burūjirdī gained a society-wide trust which brought the religious establishment long-term benefits, based on the general perception that he kindly took care of everybody and did not ignore them.

⁵⁸² Muḥāmī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 15.

⁵⁸³ 'Ja'l-i imzāy-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', taken from *Āftāb-i Sharq* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā* year 8, No, 86, p. 15.

⁵⁸⁴ For more information about the prohibition of opium see chapter one of Chouvy, Pierre-Arnaud, *Opium: Uncovering the Politics of the Poppy* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010), 13-22.

⁵⁸⁵ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrā-yi Millī, 19th term, meeting No. 266, Sunday 12 Bahman 1327, p. 2.

His policy of taking care of everybody was not limited to Iranians.⁵⁸⁶ Apart from sending representatives to various countries, Burūjirdī had regular meetings with the authorities of the countries in order to monitor the situation of Shi‘i people there. For instance, when Ghazānfar ‘Alī Khān was the Pakistani ambassador to Iran, he used to go to Qum every month and give a report to Burūjirdī about the situation of Shi‘i people of Pakistan. He stated that it was sometimes very interesting for him to see how the Ayatollah knew exact information about the villages of Pakistan and the number of Shi‘i Muslims who were resident there and was able to discuss their demands and their problems.⁵⁸⁷ As another example, it is worth noting the visit of Shaykh Jābir Al-Ṣabāḥ the Prince of Kuwait to Qum and meeting Burūjirdī to discuss issues related to the Kuwaiti Shi‘i population.⁵⁸⁸

Among all the countries, Iraq had a very special position as it was home to the holy Shi‘i places of ‘Atabāt-i ‘Āliyāt as well as clerics of the Najaf Seminary. However, political instability in Iraq made Burūjirdī’s job very difficult. On 31 July 1958, the Iranian government recognised the government of ‘Abd al-Karīm Qāsim, which had links to Communism.⁵⁸⁹ The critical situation in Iraq and ensuing difficulties for Shi‘i Muslims led them to write to Ayatollah Burūjirdī and ask him to help them.⁵⁹⁰ In their letter, they asked him to intervene in Iraqi problems, especially concerning the condemnation of Dr. Fāẓil Jamālī, the foreign minister in the cabinet of Nūrī al-Ṣa‘īd and the ex-Prime Minister of Iraq. Jamālī, Burhān al-Dīn Bash, General Rafīq ‘Arīf and General Dāghistānī were all sentenced to death by the Military Court of Iraq.⁵⁹¹ Jamālī was a Shi‘i Muslim which made the case difficult for Burūjirdī. Apparently Burūjirdī did not pay attention to this request and after that, Iranians who lived in Iraq wrote a letter to Burūjirdī and asked for help on the same issue. Before that, when Ayatollah Zanjānī who lived in Iraq encountered difficulties with the new government, he wrote a letter to Burūjirdī and complained about the situation.⁵⁹² It was even said that because of the communist influence in Iraq, a few of the high level *mujtahids* were going to leave Iraq and immigrate

⁵⁸⁶ For more information about Shi‘i Muslims of Pakistan, Iraq and the Arab countries see Martin S. Kramer, *Shi‘ism, Resistance, and Revolution* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1987).

⁵⁸⁷ *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 58, p. 56.

⁵⁸⁸ The Newspaper *Rawshanfīr*, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 80, p. 38.

⁵⁸⁹ ‘Irān va ḥukūmat-i ‘Abd al-Karīm Qāsim dar Irāq’, in website of Political Studies and Research Institute, Tehran, Iran. <http://www.ir-psri.com/Show.php?Page=ViewArticle&ArticleID=256> view on 10 October 2010.

⁵⁹⁰ *Vāhimah* newspaper in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 6, p. 3.

⁵⁹¹ For more information on Iraqi events in this regard see chapter two of Julia C. Strauss, and D. B. Cruise O’Brien, *Staging Politics: Power and Performance in Asia and Africa* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 39-48.

⁵⁹² *Khvāndanīhā*, year 18, No. 99, p. 3.

to Iran. Based on the plan, Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥsin Ḥakīm would relocate to Mashhad and Ayatollah Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khu‘ī would relocate to Qum.⁵⁹³

The Iranian government sent Ambassador Amān Allāh Ardalān to Qāsim in Iraq and the agenda of their first meeting included delivering the message of Ayatollah Burūjirdī. The main body of the message was about the problems of the Iraqi Shi‘i population.⁵⁹⁴ Before leaving Iran, Ardalān and the Prime Minister met Burūjirdī and he gave his recommendations for the Shi‘i ‘*ulama* in Iraq. In the same meeting they agreed that Ardalān would carry out his mission and come back to Qum to give a report to Burūjirdī.⁵⁹⁵ That is to be taken as evidence that Burūjirdī had been actively negotiating with the Iranian government concerning the Iraqi Shi‘i Muslims.

In the parliament, the MP Fakhr Ṭabāṭabā’ī, in his speech, expressed his displeasure on behalf of the Iranian nation that Iraq was under the control of communist agents.⁵⁹⁶ He mentioned that Iran shared a bond with the Iraqi nation and Burūjirdī had spent a lot of money taking care of Najaf and the Iraqi religious sites. He also mentioned Burūjirdī’s funding of the construction of public facilities, such as bathhouses, for the Iraqi people. So, generally he tried to encourage MPs to be more sensitive and energetic about issues related to Iraq with the justification that this is a country for which Burūjirdī had a special concern.

The Iranian government was still wary of allowing its citizens to go on pilgrimages to Iraqi holy sites and it meant that Iraqi merchants lost a big potential market. However, it was important for Iranians to go on pilgrimages, so the issue of Iranian relations with Iraq surfaced again later. The MP Abū al-Faḥl Ḥaḏīqī argued that the nations of Iran and Iraq should maintain friendly relations as they share many of the same *marja*’s.⁵⁹⁷ He expressed the view that political relations should improve because of religious and cultural reasons and that politics was a marginal issue in the relations between the two nations. Following that, Ḥasan Jamīl, the Iraqi ambassador in Iran, went to Qum and met with Burūjirdī for two hours. One of the reasons for that meeting was so the Iraqi ambassador

⁵⁹³ “‘Ulamāy-i darajah avval-i ‘Irāq biḥ Ṫrān muḥājirat mīkunand’, taken from the Newspaper *Mard-i Mubāriz*, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No, 34, p. 5,

⁵⁹⁴ ‘Bih qarār-i ittīlā’, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No, 27.

⁵⁹⁵ Newspaper *Ittīḥād-i Millī*, in *Khavandaniha*, year 19, No. 39, P. 3.

⁵⁹⁶ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrāy-i Millī, 19th term, Meeting No. 376, p. 3.

⁵⁹⁷ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrāy-i Millī, 21th term, Meeting No. 345, p. 13.

could use Burūjirdī's influence with the Iranian government on the issue of Iranian Pilgrims to Iraq.⁵⁹⁸ In fact he wanted Burūjirdī to recommend that the Iranian government send pilgrims to Iraq, as it was important for the Iraqi economy. Burūjirdī used the opportunity to raise the problems of Iraqi Shi'i Muslims. This was in fact Burūjirdī's response to letters from Iraqi Shi'i clerics who asked him to recommend that the Iraqi government treat Shi'i Muslims in a better way. As a consequence, the behaviour of the Iraqi government towards Shi'i Muslims, including Iranian pilgrims, improved significantly.⁵⁹⁹ Burūjirdī's deep social roots, which crossed political borders, made him an ideal figure to mediate between not just people, but governments as well. This was his exclusive position as someone who was trusted by a wide range of people at all different levels. Burūjirdī was careful to use this influence to deal with the complaints of the Shi'i community in Iran and outside.

Baha'is

Among all of the complaints which were a regular part of Burūjirdī's work, complaints related to Baha'is were the most crucial ones in the social arena. Tensions and occasional clashes between Baha'is and Muslims in this period were one of the major problems for religious policy. Sometimes when violence was involved, the issue became more critical. Burūjirdī's policy towards clashes between Baha'is and Muslims was an example of acting wisely and trying to sort out the issues peacefully, in spite of the fact that he was angered by the Baha'is' provocation of Muslims. The anti-Baha'i sentiments in Iran have demonstrated the social power of Islamism in Iran.⁶⁰⁰

In this research, I do not aim to focus specifically on the topic of Muslim-Baha'i confrontation, since this topic is worthy of a thesis in itself and has already been discussed in other studies.⁶⁰¹ Rather I intend to focus on Burūjirdī's approach and methods in dealing with this issue. There has always been a strong social prejudice against the Baha'is in Iran, which in turn pressurised

⁵⁹⁸ Newspaper *Firdawsī* in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 88. p. 7.

⁵⁹⁹ Newspaper *Farmān* in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 19, No. 94. p. 3.

⁶⁰⁰ For a good discussion about the Anti-Baha'ism around the period see M. Tavakoli-Targhi, 'Anti-Baha'ism and Islamism in Iran' in Dominic P. Brookshaw and Seena Fazel et al., *The Baha'is of Iran: Socio-historical Studies* (London: Routledge, 2008), 200-231.

⁶⁰¹ See M. Tavakoli-Targhi, 'Anti-Baha'ism and Islamism', 212-216.

the state to take actions against them in order to appease the public.⁶⁰² The purpose of this section is to study the Muslims's understanding of Baha'is' activities (through the Islamist media) and the role of Burūjirdī during the crisis. Therefore, to give an accurate portrayal of the Muslim mentality of the time, I included only Muslim historical sources, and excluded the Baha'i sources, to which a Muslim audience would not have had exposure.

Burūjirdī's first confrontation with the issue of the Baha'is came about when he was in Burūjird and the government appointed a few Baha'is to official posts. He cordially asked the government to remove the Baha'i civil servants, but his request was ignored. As a consequence, he suspended his teaching and his speeches and announced that he was going to leave the city. Following that, a huge group held a demonstration and the shops went on strike in protest. Finally, the government had to close down the Baha'is' propaganda activities in Burūjird and terminate the employment of the Baha'i civil servants.⁶⁰³ Burūjirdī did not believe in the use of violence to achieve political or religious aims, contrary to some of his clerical and religious contemporaries. Years later, when he came to Qum and became the *marja'*, he was receiving many petitions as well as letters from Muslims who complained about the Baha'is' activities. In some letters, it was mentioned that the government appointed Baha'i managers or even in some cases Baha'i governors for towns.⁶⁰⁴ Occasionally, violent clashes aggravated the situation and made it more sensitive. Following the murder of a few Muslims in one of the villages near Yazd by Baha'is, the Muslims' ire was raised. In Kāshān, they killed one of the Baha'is. There were similar problems in Abarqū, where on 3 January 1950 five Muslims were killed by Baha'is, and other cities such as Sarvistān, 'Alīgudarz, Kirmān. Apart from all of the usual activities, Muslims were continuously writing letters to Burūjirdī and expecting his help. On 4 August 1950, Burūjirdī wrote a letter to Muḥammad Taqī Falsafī asking him to meet Prime Minister, Razmārā to discuss the Baha'i issues in order to prevent further clashes and

⁶⁰² For more information on social attitudes against Baha'is see H. Chehabi, 'Anatomy of prejudice : reflections on secular anti-Baha'ism in Iran' in Dominic P. Brookshaw, and Seena Fazel et al., *The Baha'is of Iran: Socio-historical Studies* (London: Routledge, 2008), 184-199.

⁶⁰³ Daftar-i Tablighāt-i Islāmī-i Hawzah-i 'Ilmiyah-i Qum, *Shukūh-i Fiqāhat: Yādnāmah-i Marḥūm Āyat Allāh Ḥājī Āqā Husayn Burūjirdī* (Qum: Daftar-i Tablighāt-i Islāmī-i Hawzah-i 'Ilmiyah-i Qum, Markaz-i Intishārāt, 2000), 242.

⁶⁰⁴ Muḥammad Taqī Falsafī, 'Alī Davānī, and Ḥamid Rūḥānī, *Khāṭirāt va mubārāzāt-i Hujjat al-Islām Falsafī* (Tihārān: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 2003). 194.

bloodshed.⁶⁰⁵ Although the tone and language used in the letter was mournful, his argument was not confrontational as he emphasized the importance of avoiding bloodshed. On 2 June 1954, Burūjirdī wrote a letter to Falsafī, asking him to meet with the Shah and discuss the issue of the Baha'is.⁶⁰⁶ Following that, Burūjirdī and Falsafī agreed that Falsafī would openly criticise the Baha'is in his Ramazān speeches which were broadcast on Iranian radio.⁶⁰⁷ Burūjirdī had asked Falsafī to get the Shah's agreement for that prior to delivering the speech and the Shah had agreed with the proposal.⁶⁰⁸ Falsafī normally mentioned Burūjirdī's name in his speeches but that year, following the emergence of Baha'i-related issues, he mentioned the name of the Shah instead and it was widely believed that Burūjirdī had ordered him to do so.⁶⁰⁹

Following Falsafī's speeches and similar speeches, a large group of Muslims converged upon the Ḥaẓīrat al-Quds, the most important Baha'i centre in Tehran and occupied the building. By this point, the government decided that intervention was necessary and sent its military forces to evict the Muslim groups and then occupy the building themselves.⁶¹⁰

In parliament, in one of the meetings, the MP Ṣafā'ī made a very strong speech against Baha'is.⁶¹¹ He explicitly referred to Burūjirdī's unhappiness with the situation and mentioned that he had sent messages to that effect. When he ran out of speaking time, the majority of the parliament members agreed that he should continue to speak for 20 more minutes, which showed the high level of parliament support for his speech. He accused the government of treating Baha'is too leniently and his main argument was that their existence was a violation of the Iranian constitution, based on paragraph (article) 21 of the constitutional appendix which stated that groups and associations which present a threat to national security and unity are not allowed to work openly. He supported the

⁶⁰⁵ *Khāṭirāt va mubārazāt-i ḥujjat al-Islām Falsafī*, 198.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid, 199.

⁶⁰⁷ Hamid Algar, 'Iman Khomeini, 1902-1962: the pre-revolutionary years' in Edmund Burke and Ira M. Lapidus, *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 277-288; Glenn E. Perry, 'The Islamic world: Egypt and Iran' in Moyser, George, *Politics and Religion in the Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1991), 119; Erik A. Claessen, *Stalemate: An Anatomy of Conflicts between Democracies, Islamists, and Muslim Autocrats* (Santa Barbara, Calif: Praeger, 2010), 66.

⁶⁰⁸ *Khāṭirāt va mubārazāt-i ḥujjat al-Islām Falsafī*, 200.

⁶⁰⁹ 'Abā'ī Khurāsānī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 1-2.

⁶¹⁰ For more information see Douglas Martin, *The Persecution of the Bahá'is of Iran, 1844-1984* (Ottawa, Ont., Canada: Association for Bahá'í Studies, 1984), 22- 34; Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran*, 76-90; Barry M. Rubin, *Guide to Islamist Movements*, I, 256; Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1986), 239.

⁶¹¹ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrāy-i Millī, 18th term, meeting No. 121, pp. 2-3.

government's ban on the Tudeh party and justified it based on the same paragraph (article). He also mentioned that such an action was not contrary to the UN Charter of Human Rights, as based on the Charter only the heavenly religions are permitted to be freely practised.⁶¹² He also justified action against the Baha'is by pointing out the repressive measures taken by Western governments like England and United States against Communist groups. Although he appreciated the government's effort in sorting out some Baha'i related issues, mainly thanks to Burūjirdī's requests to the Shah on the subject, he did not consider them to be satisfactory. In short, he used Burūjirdī's name and influence to try and coax the government into implementing further restrictions on Baha'is. Having said that, the speaker of the parliament seemed reluctant to approve a new law against Baha'is, as he believed the current law was sufficient and that it was the responsibility of the government (the Prime Minister Ḥusayn 'Alā') to bring forward new bills for approval. After his speech, they called for the government's representatives to come to discuss the issue. Intizām, Dr. Amīnī and 'Alam went as the government representatives to a meeting with Nūr al-Dīn Imāmī who was the deputy of the speaker of parliament. In the meeting, Imāmī emphasised Burūjirdī's point of view about Baha'is and asked the government to solve the issue either with the current regulation or by bringing a new bill to the parliament for approval.⁶¹³

In Qum, Burūjirdī didn't attend his teaching duties and decided to leave Iran.⁶¹⁴ At that time, a few government officials went to Qum to meet Burūjirdī and reassure him about the issue of the Baha'is. The most important part of those meetings was to convey the message to Burūjirdī that the Shah cared about the issue. On the other hand they also sought Burūjirdī's assistance in restoring order and pacifying the Muslim masses.⁶¹⁵ Burūjirdī's special representative, Ayatollah Rūḥ Allāh Kamālvand Khurram Ābādī, met the Prime Minister 'Alā' and discussed Burūjirdī's dissatisfaction.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹² It is obvious that his awareness of UN charter was poor.

⁶¹³ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 16, No. 69, p. 9.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 15, No. 69, p. 21.

⁶¹⁶ Kamālvand played an excellent role in mediating between Burūjirdī and the state in this matter. Later, the case of Kamālvand became a pattern to show how 'ulama and the state can work cooperatively, as years later, one of the MPs of the time revealed that it was Ayatollah Kamālvand who played a role in reconciling Burūjirdī and the Government. In his speech, MP Muḥammad Pārsāniyā stated that there had been friction between Burūjirdī and the government and Ayatollah Kamālvand had helped to solve the problem. Generally Pārsāniyā's argument was that unity between religious and national forces under the Shah's leadership made Iran stronger and better able to defend itself against colonial

As a consequence of the meeting, ‘Alā’ issued an official command to the Minister of the Interior stipulating that ministries should gradually terminate the employment contracts of employees who mentioned in their application form that their religion was not one of the heavenly religions in order to avoid the possibility of further clashes with Muslims. He sent a copy of the letter to all the mayors in the country, including provincial capitals as well as small towns. Immediately after that, in some government departments, they terminated the employment of staff who were subject to the new regulations. For instance in the “tobacco department” of a government ministry they terminated a few contracts and the report of these actions was sent to Burūjirdī by his special representative. Finally, one of the clerics gathered the people of Qum in the mosque and gave a speech mentioning the favours of the Shah on the issue. After that, the Ayatollah announced that he had changed his mind and would continue teaching in Qum.⁶¹⁷ The news restored peace to the city and Qum came back to normal.

At that time, the month of Muḥarram was approaching and it intensified government concerns about the possibility of clashes in the country, as traditionally Muḥarram has provided a pretext for sectarian disturbances to take place. There were rumours that Ayatollah Burūjirdī would issue an important statement about Muḥarram, appreciating the government’s efforts to deal with the Baha’i question and urging the public not to instigate clashes or hold demonstrations against Baha’is.⁶¹⁸ A few days later, General Bakhtiyār, the military governor of Tehran went to Qum to meet Burūjirdī and discuss the issue of religious speeches during the mourning ceremonies of Muḥarram. He asked the Ayatollah to advise some religious speakers to control their emotions, as emotionally rousing speeches could instigate unrest.⁶¹⁹ It was part of a series of negotiations with Burūjirdī to help the government pacify the population. Finally, they agreed that one of the clerics would give a speech in the Shah’s Mosque to reassure Muslims and it would be broadcast on national radio. Initially, they wanted Falsafī to give the speech, but he declined. Finally Sayyid Muḥammad Mūsavī, one of the other high clerics, took this responsibility. Around the same time, one of the foreign governments

interests. So, he asked the Prime Minister of the time, Sharīf Imāmī to try to bring unity to the various factions in the country. Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawray-i Millī, 24th term, Meeting No. 186, p. 11.

⁶¹⁷ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 15, No. 90, p. 8.

⁶¹⁸ *Vāhimah* newspaper in *Khvāndanīhā* year 15, No. 93, p. 5.

⁶¹⁹ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 15, No. 96, pp. 13-14.

suggested that the Iranian government should recognise Baha'ism as a proper religion, which incensed Tehran's clerics.⁶²⁰ They subsequently met with the Prime Minister in his house and he gave them prompt assurance that the Iranian government would never entertain such proposals.⁶²¹ This was firm re-assurance for the Iranian Muslim community that the government was doing its best to deal the Baha'i question. Through supporting members of the faith against any sort of damage, Burūjirdī re-affirmed the position of the faith in the society. This had a great impact in the eyes of believers and promoted his position, from an internal point of view, while making Shi'ism more consolidated from an external point of view.

4. Establishing a global Shi'i presence

Global presence as a means of sustainability

The Shi'i world outside Iran was always at the centre of Burūjirdī's attention. Although he was physically distant from the Shi'i community outside of Iran, he nevertheless felt full responsibility for them. Burūjirdī's representatives in other countries were his means of communication with this distant community. For instance, Ḥājj Shaykh Muḥammad Shaykh al-Sharī'ah, the son of Shaykh al-Sharī'ah Iṣfahānī, was Burūjirdī's representative in Pakistan.⁶²² It was a usual practice of *marja*'s to have representatives in other Shi'i countries. However, for the first time, Burūjirdī sent clerics who knew foreign languages to western countries to establish liaison offices. His first representative outside Iran was Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥaqqiqī in Hamburg, Germany, followed by Ayatollah Zādah Khurāsānī in London and then Dr. Maḥdī Rawḥānī in Paris and Ḥujjat al-Islām Miḥdī Ḥā'irī in Washington. Apart from that, he was considering establishing offices in Austria, Spain, Finland, Greece and Yugoslavia.⁶²³ He wanted to train clerics with knowledge of foreign languages to spread the Shi'i religion around the world.⁶²⁴

⁶²⁰ The Shah in general was under international pressure about Baha'is. See Baqer Moin, *Khomeini*, 66.

⁶²¹ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 15, No. 98, p. 8.

⁶²² He was respected by *'ulama* and after Burūjirdī, he became Khomeini's representative there (Iṣālat, Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, Iṣālat, 32).

⁶²³ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 56, p. 10.

⁶²⁴ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 59. P. 9.

Burūjirdī was in regular contact with Shi‘i people everywhere. Even in the Soviet Union, Radio Moscow broadcast a piece of news about the invitation letter which was sent by Ākhund Shaykh ‘Alī Ḥakīm’zādah, the leader of the Shi‘i of Azerbaijan to Burūjirdī and ten of Iran’s high clerics to stay 20 days in the Soviet Union and see the situation of Shi‘i people living there. The Ayatollah himself did not accept the invitation as he was old and sick, but he sent a mission there.⁶²⁵

Burūjirdī’s most significant work in Europe was establishing the first Shi‘i centre there. In 1953 a group of Iranians who were in Germany wrote a letter to Burūjirdī mentioning the necessity of a religious centre for Muslims there and proposing establishing a mosque for the local community, to which Burūjirdī agreed and sent them 100,000 Rls in response. A group of Tehran’s merchants came to Burūjirdī and raised the issue with him about the lack of a base for Shi‘i Muslims in Europe. They proposed that if Burūjirdī were to establish a centre there, they would cover all of the costs.⁶²⁶ Burūjirdī agreed and sent Muḥaqqiqī to Hamburg, Germany which was the intended site for a mosque and Islamic centre of Hamburg. Muḥaqqiqī went in Germany in 1955, but only spent two years there because of the linguistic obstacles he encountered while away. In addition, there were some financial problems as well. On behalf of Burūjirdī, he bought a 3800 square meter piece of land in one of the best districts of Hamburg for 270,000 Marks, paid by Ḥājī Qāsim Hamadāniyān, a Tehrani merchant, on a recommendation from Burūjirdī. In 1960 a German company called Chram & Elingius was offered a contract to build the mosque starting from 13 February 1960. At Burūjirdī’s death, the building of the mosque was still incomplete and they faced financial problems. They eventually got a loan from the German Bank Brinkman Virtez. The total area of the mosque and courtyard covered 700 square meters and cost a total of 1,400,000 Marks, of which 1,200,000 were paid. The Mayor of Hamburg asked them to finish the mosque as soon as possible, but they still needed 720,000 Marks to complete the work. Burūjirdī’s representative left Germany because of financial difficulties. The German newspaper *Hamburger Abendlat* published an article entitled “The Forgotten Mosque”. They gave an account number in a bank and asked for public donations.⁶²⁷ After that, Ayatollah Bihishtī went there and stayed for five years to oversee the completion of the mosque and establish the Islamic

⁶²⁵ The Newspaper *Rūh-i Āzādī* in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 18, No. 86, p. 4.

⁶²⁶ Bāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 212.

⁶²⁷ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 25, No. 18, p p. 5-6.

Centre of Hamburg within the mosque.⁶²⁸ He also arranged for a halal butcher to provide meat for the local Shi'i community affiliated with the mosque.⁶²⁹ These activities were important in providing for everyday needs in the Shi'i diaspora. Burūjirdī was pioneering in this regard and this tradition was later continued by the *marja*'s who established Shi'i centres in non-Muslim countries for the diaspora.

Recognition of Shi'ism in the Islamic world

Burūjirdī was significant not only in Iran but also for Shi'i Muslims around the world. He was not the first to have such global recognition, as before him there had been great *marja*'s who were recognised as such by Shi'is. However, Burūjirdī was a pioneer in establishing connection with Sunni Muslims in order to secure formal recognition for Shi'ism as the fifth legitimate Islamic school of thought.⁶³⁰ This was an important issue as Shi'i Muslims are a minority population in most countries which they inhabit. Unlike some other Shi'i *marja*'s, Burūjirdī believed that Shi'i Muslims and Sunnis could have a good relationship, noting that a bad relationship with Sunni Muslims led to the isolation of Shi'is within the Islamic world. Still, most *marja*'s had not grasped his point and as a result their activities led to the continued isolation of Shi'i Muslims in the Islamic world. Burūjirdī was the first person who approached Shi'ism from an international perspective as opposed to a limited regional perspective. Burūjirdī succeeded in developing a relationship with al-Azhar of Cairo through cultural means, which had fruitful results for Shi'ism from the general Islamic point of view.

Muslim reformists have been advocating Islamic unity for centuries now. They have occupied different levels of authority in society and have ranged from kings such as the militant Nādir Shāh, to Islamist intellectuals such as Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī, 'Alī Sharī'atī and *marja*'s such as Kāshif al-Ghiṭā'.⁶³¹ However, none of them had achieved Burūjirdī's level of success in practice. He formally

⁶²⁸ For more information about the history of Islamic Centre of Hamburg see <http://fa.izhamburg.com/Ueber-das-Islamische-Zentrum-Hamburg/Baugeschichte>.

⁶²⁹ Bāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khātirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 212.

⁶³⁰ For debates on Shi'i and Sunni beliefs see *Shabhā-yi Pīshāvar* by Sulṭān al-Vā'izīn Shīrāzī. He was a Shi'i scholar and the whole book is about the various theological debates he engaged in with Sunnis. Despite his emerging victorious in all of the debates, the Sunnis refused to convert to Shi'ism. Sulṭān al-Vā'izīn Shīrāzī, *Kitāb-i shab'hā-yi Pīshāvar: dar difā' az ḥarīm-i Tashayyu'* (Tīhrān: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1973).

⁶³¹ For more information about Taqrīb see John O. Voll, *Islam, Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1982), 67; Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, 53; Kate Zebiri, *Maḥmūd Shaltūt and Islamic Modernism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 25-26; Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 166.

sent Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Qumī as a representative to the al-Azhar in Cairo. In 1945, Qumī established a centre in Cairo called Dār al-Taqrīb, an Arabic word which means “the House of Proximity” or “House of Closeness”. The centre was supported by Burūjirdī as the Shi‘i authority and by Shaykh Maḥmūd Shatūt (1893-1963), as the Sunni authority. The centre was active until 1970.⁶³²

As a result of Burūjirdī’s efforts, Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt finally issued a fatwa in 1959 acknowledging Shi‘ism as one of the legitimate Islamic schools of thought.⁶³³ The fatwa was of immense significance, as before that the holiest place for Muslims, the *Ka‘bah* in Mecca, was reserved for the four Sunni schools of thought and Shi‘i Muslims had no place (*rukn*) there. That caused serious problems for Iranian pilgrims over the years. For instance, On 17 December 1943, an Iranian Shi‘i pilgrim, Abū Ṭālib Yazdī, was unjustly executed by Saudi authorities who accused him of offending the *Ka‘bah* and they published a statement in the *Umm al-Qurá* newspaper.⁶³⁴ During that time, Iran had no embassy in Saudi Arabia and the Iranian embassy in Egypt was in charge of Saudi Arabian affairs. Following the incident, the Iranian government stopped sending pilgrims on the Ḥajj until 1948. However, Ḥajj is one of the most important obligations in Islam, so Burūjirdī took it upon himself to facilitate and improve Shi‘is’ ability to carry out their religious duties.

Following Burūjirdī’s negotiations with Shaltūt, Egyptian clerics showed their interest in Ayatollah Burūjirdī and they sent a mission to Iran to discuss some general programmes for Muslims.⁶³⁵ As a result of the good relationship with Burūjirdī, al-Azhar University was keen to publish one of Burūjirdī’s books called *‘Ilm al-rijāl* but unfortunately Burūjirdī died before finishing the book and the opportunity was lost.⁶³⁶ During the same period al-Azhar published *Majma‘ al-bayān li-‘ulūm al-Qur‘ān*, a Shi‘i book on Quranic interpretation by Ṭabrisī. Shaltūt himself wrote an introduction to the book. It was a great step forward in Shi‘i-Sunni relations for a prestigious Sunni institution to publish a Shi‘i book.

⁶³² The centre was reopened in 2006 and Qumī’s son, Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh Qumī is the authority on the Shi‘i side and Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ashūr from the Sunni side is the Secretary-General.

⁶³³ See Nikki R. Keddie and Rudolph P. Matthee, *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 306.

⁶³⁴ See Michael M. J. Fischer, and Mehdi Abed, *Debating Muslims: Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 1722.

⁶³⁵ The Weekly *Iṭtilā‘āt-i Haftagī*, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 14, No. 82, p. 4.

⁶³⁶ *Dunyā* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 58, p. 56.

Burūjirdī in general was very serious in his respect for Sunnis. Apart from the fact that he was opposed to the Shi‘i practice of repudiating the Sunni’s holy people, such as the Caliphs, he believed that Shi‘i Muslims must compare and contrast their own works with the scholarly output of Sunnis. Burūjirdī’s genuine belief in proximity to Sunnis as well as his strenuous efforts led to the recognition of Shi‘ism as a legitimate sect in Islam and this was his most important achievement in consolidating Shi‘ism from a strictly religious perspective.⁶³⁷

Burūjirdī’s death and its social consequences

Burūjirdī’s efforts in consolidating the Shi‘i religion brought him great respect and appreciation from people. When Burūjirdī died, his funeral and memorial services for him were a social demonstration of Burūjirdī’s influence on different strata of society in big cities as well as small villages. The A‘zam Mosque was finally ready to use and Falsafī gave a sermon for the congregation. During the sermon, Burūjirdī felt unwell and shortly afterwards he suffered a heart attack. For a few days he was unwell and the Shah sent a French doctor to attend to him. People were anxious to know what would become of him. His brief recovery was celebrated, but just a short time after that, he lapsed back into illness and this time there was to be no recovery. The Grand Ayatollah, the world’s foremost Shi‘i authority who for decades had commanded an unprecedented level of reverence and devotion from kings, statesmen and the masses alike, was suddenly nothing more than a corpse.

People hoped that Burūjirdī had written something in his will about his successor to the position of *marja‘iyyat*. However, when they opened the will in the presence of a few people including his son Muḥammad Ḥasan, they found nothing except references to a few family affairs. Ayatollah Bihbahānī opened his safe and they realized that Burūjirdī had assigned a merchant called Ḥājj ‘Abd al-Razzāq Khvānsārī from Isfahan as executor to pay his debts. Burūjirdī was in debt over the A‘zam Mosque and his executor came and duly paid all the debts.⁶³⁸ A copy of the will was submitted to the

⁶³⁷ See Ashk Dahlén, *Islamic Law, Epistemology and Modernity: Legal Philosophy in Contemporary Iran* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 109-11.

⁶³⁸ Bāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 27.

Prime Minister Ja'far Sharīf Imāmī.⁶³⁹ The funeral prayers were led by Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥammad Bihbahānī.⁶⁴⁰ This was a conscious decision on Bihbahānī's part as if any of the seminary professors had led the prayers, he would have been perceived as Burūjirdī's successor.

Gradually the news spread across the country. People everywhere paid tribute to the late Ayatollah. In Tehran, the British Embassy was the first embassy to send its condolence letter to the Iranian Foreign Ministry. The Soviet Embassy kept their flag at half mast and Radio Moscow broadcast a condolence message to Muslims.⁶⁴¹ Burūjirdī's funeral as well as the ensuing mourning ceremonies demonstrated his importance and social power for different groups of people. The Memorial (mourning) ceremony in Qum was the most important one. Mourners from Tehran and other cities went to Qum. The city was full of people and it was difficult to move.⁶⁴² The Prime Minister, a few members of the cabinet and around 200,000 people participated in the funeral and they buried him in the A'zam Mosque.⁶⁴³ The mourners recited a piece of Arabic poetry:

Aṣḥab al-Islām yabkī badal al-dam ' dimā'

*Lil-faqīh kāna lil-dīn 'imād va imām*⁶⁴⁴

This translates as follows: "Islam started this morning crying blood instead of tears, for a *faqih* who was a base for the faith and an Imam as well".

The great demonstration at Burūjirdī's funeral became a turning point, as radical *ṭalabāhs* thought that such power could be used in a revolutionary way.⁶⁴⁵ It was the first time that clerics had participated in a demonstration like that. Normally clerics stayed in the front line and people from other classes followed them.⁶⁴⁶ It was also a turning point in the state policy vis-à-vis religion, as Qum had lost its most powerful protector.

The Shah was in Bābul at the time of Burūjirdī's death, but he flew out to participate in Burūjirdī's memorial.⁶⁴⁷ In fact, he himself held a memorial ceremony for Burūjirdī in the Sulṭānī

⁶³⁹ *Ittiḥād-i Millī* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 63, p. 7.

⁶⁴⁰ Ma'ādīkhāh, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 141.

⁶⁴¹ *Dīplumat* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 57, p. 6.

⁶⁴² *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 57, p. 6.

⁶⁴³ 'Zāyī 'ah-'i 'aẓīm, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 56, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁴ Ma'ādīkhāh, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 120.

⁶⁴⁵ Faẓl Allāh Ṣalavātī, Tihṙān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, Faẓl Allāh Ṣalavātī, 7.

⁶⁴⁶ Mahdavi, Tihṙān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, Mahdavi, 15-16.

Mosque of Tehran. Ṣadr al-Ashrāf, the head of the Senate who was at the memorial ceremony said it was the biggest memorial ceremony that he had seen since the memorial ceremony of Ayatollah Shīrāzī which Nāṣir al-Dīn Shah of Qajār attended.⁶⁴⁸ Two weeks later, the Shah and his wife the Queen went to Qum to visit Burūjirdī's grave and pay tribute to him.⁶⁴⁹

A few days after his death, parliament held its first meeting after the new Persian year on 5 April 1961 but the entire session lasted only 10 minutes and was mainly taken up with the Speaker of Parliament paying tribute to Burūjirdī and lavishing praise upon him.⁶⁵⁰ There were other MPs such as Mujtahidī, Mardūkh and 'Allāmah Vahīdī who discussed Burūjirdī's efforts in Qum and the necessity for maintaining this centre (the Qum Seminary) by supporting it as a centre of learning and culture.⁶⁵¹ Burūjirdī's duty had been to provide a livelihood for around 7000 theology students in Qum. They also referred to the Shah's participation in Burūjirdī's memorial meeting and expressed their appreciation of that. The meeting finished with members of parliament paying their last respects to the late Ayatollah.

Memorial ceremonies were held not just in big cities but even in the very small villages. For instance, a memorial ceremony was held in a small village near Zanjān. Abū al-Faḍl Shakūrī who later became a revolutionary and a reformist MP in the parliament was in that village. In his memoirs he says that "I was a child and when I saw the great ceremony in our tiny village for Ayatollah Burūjirdī, I decided to become a cleric".⁶⁵²

After Burūjirdī's death, the most important issue for people was the successor to the *marja'īyat*. Potential high level clerics who were considered as candidates for the *marja'īyat* were Ayatollahs Sayyid Muḥsin Ḥakīm (in Najaf), Sayyid Kaẓīm Sharī'atmadārī (in Qum), Sayyid Rūḥ Allāh Khomeini (in Qum), Sayyid 'Abd al-Hādī Shīrāzī (in Najaf) and Sayyid Muḥammad Riẓa Gulpāygānī (in Qum).⁶⁵³ In addition, there were a few other people such as Ayatollahs 'Abd al-Nabī Arākī (in Qum), Sayyid Muḥammad Muḥaqqiq Yazdī Dāmād (in Qum), 'Abbās 'Alī Shahrūdī (in Qum),

⁶⁴⁷ 'Zāyī'ah-'i 'aẓīm', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 56, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁸ 'Mīguyand', in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 57, p. 7.

⁶⁴⁹ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 57, p. 6.

⁶⁵⁰ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrāy-i Millī, 20th term, meeting No. 9, Thursday 17 Farvardīn 1340. p. 1.

⁶⁵¹ Minutes of the negotiations of Majlis-i Shawrāy-i Millī, 20th term, meeting No. 10, Sunday 20 Farvardīn 1340. p. 1.

⁶⁵² Abū al-Faḍl Shakūrī, Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, Abū al-Faḍl Shakūrī, 31.

⁶⁵³ *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 57, p. 6.

Shahāb al-Dīn Najafī Mar‘ashī (in Qum), Sayyid Murtaẓá Langrūdī (in Qum), Hādī Mīlanī (Mashhad), Sayyid Aḥmad Khvānsārī (Tehran), Sayyid Maḥmūd Shāhrūdī (Najaf), and Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Khū‘ī (Najaf).⁶⁵⁴

Khomeini and some others thought that it was a good idea to nominate just one person for the position, as he had thought before Burūjirdī’s arrival at Qum, withdrawing his own candidature and nominating Ayatollah Sayyid Aḥmad Khvānsārī, and hoping that others would withdraw as well and they would have a sole *marja’*.⁶⁵⁵ However, Khomeini’s plan failed this time, as neither Sharī‘atmadārī nor Gulpaygānī withdrew. The Iranian government was also no longer interested in establishing a powerful and universal Shi‘i *marja’* in Qum. Ayatollah Ḥakīm was more or less chosen as the leader of the Shi‘is of the world, while Sharī‘atmadārī, Gulpaygānī and Mar‘ashī Najafī were recognised as Qum *marja’*s. The Iranian government also was happy with this choice and expressed its happiness by sending its condolences (for Burūjirdī’s death) only to Ḥakīm and no one else.⁶⁵⁶ Qum no longer had a sole master, and the management was divided between different people who considered themselves to be each other’s equals. It became obvious to everybody that after Burūjirdī it was no longer possible to have a sole leadership.⁶⁵⁷

In Context: Burūjirdī’s role in consolidating Shi‘ism

Looking at Burūjirdī’s political method shows that inside the country, he was careful enough to be able to satisfy all the demands of the different classes in Iranian society, and was careful to avoid entanglement in factional disputes. While this cautious approach meant that he lost political opportunities, supporting one faction against the others risked alienating some members of the faith. In practice, Burūjirdī preferred to not alienate anyone, even if that meant foregoing some short term political gains.

⁶⁵⁴ *Kayhān* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 21, No. 56, p. 11.

⁶⁵⁵ Muḥammad Rizā Fākir, *Huẓūr*, Spring 1991, No. 35, 70.

⁶⁵⁶ *Bāmshād* newspaper, in *Khvāndanīhā*, year 23, No. 59, p. 7.

⁶⁵⁷ For more information about Shah’s telegram to Ḥakīm and the *marja’-īyat* after Burūjirdī see Shahrouh Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran*, 100; Forough Jahanbakhsh, *Islam, Democracy and Religious Modernism in Iran: (1953 - 2000): from Bāzargān to Soroush* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 61; Denis MacEoin and Ahmed Al-Shahi, *Islam in the Modern World* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983), 306.

Iran is a big country and its social, economic and intellectual world is even larger than its landmass. Uniting the entire population, who considered themselves members of the faith, was a challenging task. Even within the spectrum of Islam, there were many variations: people who were not serious Muslims, people who were activist and hard line Islamists such as the *Fidā'īyān-i Islām*, traditional scholars in the *hawzah* (both from Qum and Najaf), the bazaar and the mass of people who believed in traditional Islam. Out of all of these groups, traditional clerics and the bazaar were the most important ones. Although Burūjirdī, as the head of the central religious institution in Iran, had a special relationship with all these different groups of Iranian believers, he secured a stronger place for traditional believers and scholars. It is not difficult to justify this approach, as none of the political activists, including Islamist groups, were prioritising religious affairs. In fact, the priority for them was to obtain political power, rather than protect religion. Although the ultimate goal for Islamist groups was to apply Islamic values in the wider arena of politics and society, their short term goal was to obtain power. That was the point which discouraged Burūjirdī from supporting them, as for him all of the members of faith were equal at the stage at which they are seeking political power. Perhaps one might also argue that he did not have any assurance that, even if an Islamic group held power, they would act according to Burūjirdī's will. Therefore, Burūjirdī avoided any factional entanglements within the faith and consequently he enjoyed nationwide popularity. For Burūjirdī, as the head of the central religious institution, it seemed reasonable to expect to balance his relationship with different groups by giving them equal support as long as they acted reasonably within religious principles. He knew that only by maintaining such a balance would he keep his position secure, even if it meant that he was accused of being conservative. This was desirable for the government as keeping this balance would help to maintain order in the country and curtail fundamentalist and radical activities, by means of a respected religious authority rather than pressure from the state. Thus, by following a de-politicising policy he provided political consolidation for Shi'ism, which meant that powerful factions would all receive equal treatment. Religious authority would not give support to any government, but would keep quiet so long as the government acted in accordance with Islamic principles and fulfilled the demands of the religious authority.

Since becoming an authority in Qum in 1944, Burūjirdī showed a rather friendly and cooperative face to the government. It seems that it was a thoughtful policy chosen by Burūjirdī rather than an accidental measure. When he came back from Najaf to live in Burūjird in 1910 and developed his authority in Burūjird and among the entire Lur tribe, he followed a moderate and conservative course of political action. But when he came to Qum, it was slightly different from his previous stance when he was a young cleric and just a local authority. Having had the experience of being arrested and released by Riza Shah in 1928, this time he acted more wisely on the political scene.⁶⁵⁸ At that time, he was delivering a letter from Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī from Najaf to Iran, when he was arrested at the Iranian border and the authorities confiscated the letter and sent him to Tehran for further investigation.⁶⁵⁹ When he was young he was willing to die defending women's right to wear the veil, but later he had become more moderate.⁶⁶⁰ Perhaps this was because he had attained a position of leadership in the faith and he believed that this position required more tolerance and patience.⁶⁶¹ There is evidence he believed that it would be against the religion for him to take an action which could endanger or cause him to lose his position, as this would be a waste of a blessing and therefore forbidden in Islam.

In 1943 his idea came into practice for the first time when Ayatollah Ḥājj Āqā Ḥusayn Qumī who was in Karbalā asked Burūjirdī for his support in his revolt against the Shah. At that time Qumī was in a more important position than Burūjirdī, as he was known as a *marja'*, which was not yet the case for Burūjirdī. In fact, Qumī's action was the immediate effect of the more open political environment after 1941 which had emboldened clerics to seek political reforms on issues related to religion, such as the ban on the veil. After Riza Shah's abdication from power in 1941, Ayatollah Ḥājj

⁶⁵⁸ Apparently when Burūjirdī was in Najaf, he hosted some meetings in his house where top clerics attended and discussed Iranian affairs. Perhaps, Burūjirdī was coming from Iran and knew about the situation in Iran better than anyone else. For more information see See Muṭtabā Aḥmadī, *Chashm va charāgh-i marja'īyat: muṣāḥabah'hā-yi vīzhah-yi majallah-yi ḥawzah, bā shāgirdān-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī* (Qum: Daftar-i Tablīghat-i Islāmī-i Ḥawzah-i 'Ilmiyah-i Qum, 2000), 350-351; Sayyid Javād 'Alavī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 'Khānivādah va nasab-i Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', *Ḥawzah*, No. 43-44, p. 356.

⁶⁵⁹ Bunakdār says that Burūjirdī was arrested and exiled to Najaf, which is not correct, as there is obvious evidence that he was in Tehran and eventually was released by Riza Shah and went to Mashhad for pilgrimage and then came back to Burūjird. See Bunakdār, *Ārshiv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 5.

⁶⁶⁰ *Shukūh-i fiqāhat*, 329.

⁶⁶¹ This is a common belief among many *marja's* supporters to carry out radical actions in his name, which they believe is not suitable for the *marja'* himself to carry out. In fact they see it as their duty to do radical actions as this might harm the *marja's* highness. It is easily seen in the case of supporters of Khomeini or Khamenei who sometimes attack other people, though the *marja'* disagrees.

Āqā Ḥusayn Qumī, who was in exile in Karbalā during the time of Riza Shah, decided to come back to Iran on the pretext of a pilgrimage to Mashhad. In the same trip, after assessing the political situation and sensing the weakness of the new government, he demanded that the government undertake five reforms on the issue of veiling for women, more freedom for clerics and Islamic seminaries, having prayers and Islamic education in the schools and some economic reforms regarding restrictions on the import and export of goods.⁶⁶² Although during this time Burūjirdī was not in Qum (he was still in Burūjird), he had influence over the Lur tribe who were his followers. Thus he had the potential to incite the Lurs against the government and Qumī realised this. So, he sent a telegram to Burūjirdī requesting him to relocate the Lurs to Tehran so they could fight the Shah.⁶⁶³ Burūjirdī was reluctant to do that, showing his moderate leanings, and argued that such a move presented insurmountable logistical difficulties. Finally, the problem was resolved and the government agreed to the requests of Ḥājj Āqā Ḥusayn Qumī. Perhaps Burūjirdī's reluctance to support that movement was the unsuccessful experience of Ayatollah Qumī, about 10 years ago, when he came from Mashhad to Tehran, hoping to put pressure on Riza Shah, but failed to achieve anything and was eventually sent to exile by Riza Shah in 1935. None of Qumī's requested reforms were against Burūjirdī's ideology, but he was probably reluctant to follow Qumī's revolutionary method, as he believed the cost was much higher than the possible gain. Otherwise, Burūjirdī's influence among the Lurs was a major issue which had already caused problems for him with Riza Shah, as the Shah believed that "the situation of this Lur [Burūjirdī] is such that he might be able to move Luristan against us."⁶⁶⁴

Although he was in a position of authority, critiques of Burūjirdī did not remain unanswered by him as he explained his arguments for accommodating the Shah. Some people criticised Burūjirdī's policy, accusing him of quietism and arguing that he could easily take action against the new, inexperienced Shah given the level of power and influence which he held. He responded as follows: "it is the beginning of Shah's career and he still has not done something which merits my

⁶⁶² 'Aqīqī Bakhshāyishī, *Fuqahā-yi nāmdār-i Shī'ah* (Qom: Kitābkhānah-i Āyat Allāh al-'Uzmā Mar'ashī Najafī, 1993), 400.

⁶⁶³ Maḥmūd Abū al-Ḥasanī, *Tihrān, Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī*, Maḥmūd Abū al-Ḥasanī, 19.

⁶⁶⁴ Ṣādiqī Tihrānī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 53.

reaction. Even Satan lived 6000 years with the angels and they tolerated him because he didn't show his evil.” He said that he did not believe that one should be either quietist like Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karīm Ḥā’irī or a radical revolutionary like Zayd Ibn ‘Alī Ibn Ḥasyan. “Even Imam Ḥasan had to continue in peace with Mu‘āviyah, because Imam Ḥasan’s followers were not resistant and very loyal to him. So, I act like Imam Hasan”.⁶⁶⁵ This is a manifesto of Burūjirdī’s political method, which means that there will be an agreement between the religious and political establishment in the country. The agreement, though it is an unwritten one, is valid as long as neither side violates it.

Considering the social and political instability in that period, it seems that Burūjirdī’s approach to political issues was a wise reflection of the political atmosphere of the time. In fact, the most interesting aspect of Burūjirdī’s life and administration was his thoughtful and methodical approach towards different political cases, an element which is normally missing from the religious establishment’s approach to politics. This may be because there is always a degree of emotion tied up with religious issues. In any case, Burūjirdī believed that it would not be so difficult to remove the Shah. The difficulty lay rather in finding someone suitable to replace him, and failing to find such a suitable replacement could be harmful to Islam.⁶⁶⁶ There were several intellectual grounds for him to come to this conclusion. He intelligently realised that any sort of harsh reaction from a religious authority at that level would expose the whole religious establishment to dangers such as Marxism and communism, liberalism in social and political aspects, suppression of the religious establishment or abusing the religion and people’s religious sentiments in order to destroy a political establishment and establish an unknown system. In such circumstances he preferred to follow his special policy. One may call this policy “mutually independent relations between the religious institution and the state”. The only way that he could maintain this policy, and benefit from it in the long term, was to maintain a balance in his behaviour with different political groups within the faith.

However, maintaining this balance was always a problematic issue for different people, with different ambitions, as the range and intensity of their beliefs could diverge greatly. The religious authority’s policy toward them was not identical and it occasionally caused some serious criticism of

⁶⁶⁵ Ṣādiqī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 57, 61.

⁶⁶⁶ Bāqī, *Ārshīv-i Khāṭirāt-i Bunyād-i Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, 188.

Burūjirdī. For Burūjirdī it was clear that the long term existence of the faith was based on peaceful management of the faith, so he did his utmost to keep the balance, though many other people did not like this idea. Although this balancing act was easy to justify for the majority of religious students, because on the basis of their custom they trust in the *marja*'s competence to make an optimal decision, there were active minorities who were not sympathetic with Burūjirdī's line. However, in the case of the larger population, the situation was more complicated, because Burūjirdī faced the people (including the bazaar) who were the main source of his financial support. While he as the *marja*' was pursuing a kind of diplomacy toward the middle and popular classes, he had to satisfy the public especially when there are connections with business. Burūjirdī financially was independent of the government but very much more dependent on religious taxes and donations from the middle and working classes. He was the ultimate source of authority for all of these disparate groups.⁶⁶⁷ Furthermore, he felt responsible he had to continue the tradition of *marja*'s before him and to curtail unauthorised innovations in social and political methods on behalf of the faith. To satisfy these many types of followers, Burūjirdī had to develop his social profile through civil development as well as supporting the Shi'i community domestically and internationally. Burūjirdī's role in the development and consolidation of the domestic and international Shi'i community was vital for the Shi'ism in the twentieth century. Followers were inspired by Burūjirdī's level of activity in civil development in the form of religious and charitable activities and this encouraged them to increase their support to Burūjirdī and to create publicity for him. Burūjirdī's protection for his followers, in the form of listening to their complaints and helping them in difficult moments of life, provided a common feeling of transnational Shi'i identity and that helped to further consolidate the faith. This was more important in issues related to Baha'ism which was considered a serious danger to the faith by all the members. So, Burūjirdī used all of his potential to protect the faith against such dangers. This was the area which again helped Burūjirdī to balance his relations with followers, as all sought to protect the faith against Baha'ism. These activities all provided a social consolidation for Shi'ism.

⁶⁶⁷ After Burūjirdī, although Ayatollah Khomeini commanded respect from Islamists, he was less respected by people who believed in traditional Islam.

Burūjirdī was equally aware of the fact that being a globally recognized authority requires a much wider perspective for forming one's opinions. The most important issue for him in this regard was to provide a firm intellectual base for Shi'ism in the eyes of other Islamic schools of thought. In fact, by gaining religious legitimacy within the global Islamic community, Burūjirdī secured the independence of Shi'ism as a recognised religious entity, thereby allowing Shi'i Muslims to achieve religious consolidation.

There is no written constitution or convention for a clerical authority in Shi'ism. It means that the decision must be made by the authority himself, though he might consider decisions made by previous *marja*'s or similar cases. Hence, the best way to understand the political method of a clerical authority is to study his actions in the course of his life and make a general statement about him. Thus, understanding Burūjirdī's behaviour would help us to understand his mentality. Looking at Burūjirdī's behaviour, it seems that he was aiming to consolidate the Shi'i faith in its political, social and religious aspects, in which he was highly successful. Maintaining a balance in his behaviour as well as moderation in his action was key to Burūjirdī's long term standing, which helped him to attain his ultimate goal of consolidating Shi'ism domestically and internationally.

Conclusion

Studying Burūjirdī's life and work in this research illuminated some fundamental points about traditional Shi'i clerical authority. I offer partial conclusions at the end of each chapter to answer the questions set out in my introduction, but my final conclusion here seeks to situate the findings of my research in the current social, political and religious context of Iranian society, indicating other potential areas for further research. This raises an important methodological concern in research related to the *hawzah* and its dynamic nature. In undertaking any future research which leads from my conclusion, researchers should use a concrete methodology and an interdisciplinary base. Although my research and methodology was historical in nature, there are areas where the researcher needs to follow a different methodological approach, e.g. anthropological, sociological, psychological, political etc. Only by using such a wide interdisciplinary approach can one attain a good understanding of the traditional but dynamic nature of *hawzah* education as well as the institution of *marja' al-taqlid*.

There have been certain changes in modern Iranian life which have created new questions with regards to the *marja' iyyat*. These new problems are mainly the result of factors stemming from the 1979 revolution in Iran, the establishment of an Islamic state in the country, the institutionalisation of the *vilāyat-i faqih* and a shift in the sources of military power in the country from a secular army and police to a religious army and police under the general command of the Supreme Leader. Thus, this conclusion intends to offer an analytical view of how the current situation in Iran interacts with the traditional (historical) pattern of the *marja' iyyat* as was presented in this research.

This dissertation examined how Burūjirdī as a young cleric progressed through different phases before becoming a pre-eminent Shi'i authority. Since he began his education in Burūjird, where the seminary was not a first rank or even second rank institution, Burūjirdī's intellectual approach was tailored to appeal to the public rather than just to elite scholars who were isolated from the general public. The next seminary he attended in Isfahan had a number of serious professors; however, it was still not a first rank school like Najaf.

One may expect that it would be more beneficial for a cleric to receive his education in a first rank seminary. On the contrary, I would argue that by spending his adolescence and youth in Isfahan, Burūjirdī managed to keep a balance between being a popular cleric who had connections with the public and a serious elite scholar. When he went to Najaf, he gained scholarly recognition from the elite Shi‘i authorities by receiving permission for *ijtihād*. The cycle of progression was complete when he came back to Burūjird, acting as a leader in his local community as well as producing high quality research in order to gain scholarly recognition.

Burūjirdī did not consciously follow this pattern of career progression, and did not assume that one day he would be in the position of a *marja’*. Instead, he was merely expected to fill his father’s position in Burūjird. This claim is supported by the letters which were sent by Ākhund-i Khurāsānī to Burūjirdī’s father, which showed a disagreement between the two over Burūjirdī’s position and his future. While his father wanted him to work as a cleric in Burūjird, Khurāsānī wanted him to contribute to religious scholarship in Najaf. Nevertheless, changing circumstances in Iran suddenly made him a suitable candidate for the *marja’īyat*, due to his balanced background.

However, as a result of social and political changes in Iran, this traditional pattern of progressing through the ranks is no longer followed by current *marja’*s. Current patterns of religious progression are not covered in this study, but could form the basis of future research. For doing such research, one must study the biographies of current *marja’*s and compare them with Burūjirdī to determine how the pattern has changed since his time. For instance, some opportunities which help current *marja’*s gain recognition are as follows: giving speech in particular meeting which are televised, sending public messages in support of the state and its Islamic goals, participating in interviews for the purpose of religious documentaries, working with organisations which are responsible for religious affairs in the country, having access religious funds which are managed by the state, holding prestigious positions offered by the state which required the holder to be a *mujtahid*, etc.

Through this research we understood that clerical families are held in high esteem by the faithful. Burūjirdī’s descent from Muḥammad and his relation to a number of clerical families going

back to the Safavid period was an important factor of his success in the clerical world. Having access to financial support, familiarity with the clerical system, and capitalising on public trust in his family's reputation aided and accelerated Burūjirdī's rise. While clerical families still have the influence to promote a young member of their family to be recognised as a trusted cleric, the state and its apparatus have effectively rendered it impossible for a clerical family to successfully do so without some form of state sanction. On the other hand, the expansion of secular primary and secondary education (as opposed to traditional madrasah education) in Iran relative to some other countries in the region has made it socially impossible for a child to receive no secular education. Therefore, even clerical families have to send their children to secular primary schools where the social environment as well as methods of education are more appealing to a young person. This decreases the likelihood for future generations from those families to follow the clerical profession, as many prefer to become doctors, engineers or lawyers because of the higher level of income, better life style and fewer social restrictions. This provides an interesting area of future anthropological research on clerical families from both an internal and external point of view. From an internal point of view, the research could examine common reasons for members of such families for preferring non-clerical profession to a clerical profession. From an external point of view, such research could examine state activities to weaken clerical families and to demolish their influence by creating and supporting rival clerics who are not from a famous clerical family. For instance, one could study the appointment of Friday prayer leaders in different areas. While in the past, these leaders were traditionally from influential clerical families, now they are appointed from virtually unknown backgrounds.

Burūjirdī began his clerical profession in his small hometown of Burūjird. As a young cleric, he established his reputation in a small city where he was known through his family, before gradually progressing to larger centres. The state has now adopted a new system as the path of career progression for young clerics. Most applicants for places in the Qum Seminary are from smaller cities and towns to begin with, since in larger cities with a more westernised life-style, there is less interest in pursuing a clerical career. The historical pattern of encouraging clerical migration to small towns is still followed, not by the clerical families (due to lack of candidates in the family) but by the Islamic

state. The state publically denies that this constitutes state interference into religious affairs, explaining it as part of the duty of a responsible religious state to facilitate believers' access to clerics and religious services. In reality, however, this is a way for the state to increase its ideological influence among the citizens. Clerics start their job as a Friday prayer leader of a small village, then a town, at which point they are employed for more important roles.

In this study, the process of Burūjirdī's recognition as a *marja'* was explained in detail. Historical circumstances during Burūjirdī's time helped him to gain his pre-eminent position quickly. Apart from the particular political situation in Iran, some very basic social and economic factors played a role in his recognition as the *marja'*. The position was less appealing to many of Qum's top clerics because of their lack of financial resources and reluctance to compete with top clerics in Najaf. One must also take into consideration the role of the state's support in Burūjirdī's establishment in Qum. However, the role of state in the recognition of a *marja'* is now significantly different from what it was during Pahlavi-era Iran. This is another possible area for further research – to examine differences in the role of state in the recognition of the *marja'* before and after the Islamic Republic.

There is a more important aspect of the new system, concerning competition for the position of *marja' ʿīyat*. In the traditional system, potential candidates attracted publicity in more or less the same manner, by contributing to high level teaching and research. The state was limited to exerting its influence through endorsing a candidate. However, after Ayatollah Khomeini's death and the deaths of two senior *marja'* in Qum Ayatollahs Gulpāygānī and Arākī, the position of *marja' ʿīyat* had a new applicant from a totally different background. For the first time, the head of state himself was a candidate in the competition. His relatively weak background in *hawzah* teaching and research was criticised by his rivals, who had stronger academic credentials. Nevertheless, modern state media, compared to traditional religious means of communication such as clerical circles, was more powerful in convincing the public that the Supreme Leader was the most appropriate candidate for *marja' ʿīyat*. In fact, as a result of newly established administrative systems in the Qum seminary and state-run religious organizations which were recognised as a substitute for the traditional clerical circles, the

other competitors had absolutely no means for even introducing themselves as a *marja'*, let alone making publicity for themselves.

In terms of publicity, the state media plays the role of traditional religious media, but to make publicity for the Supreme Leader, not others. The state has taken over the administrative role in the Qum Seminary. The *marja'*s are no longer in full control of the Qum Seminary or its students. They are no longer in a position to take disciplinary action against wayward students. The role of personal management is also affected by the new arrangement. In fact the management of a *marja'*s office is now greatly reduced, as the seminary is managed by the administrative board and the income in the form of religious taxes which was once received and managed by the *marja'*s office is now mostly sent to the Supreme Leader.

Burūjirdī's introduction of reforms into the *hawzah* educational system was not an easy task for him. Although it is unlikely that Burūjirdī was the first person who thought of reforming the traditional educational system, he was the only person with the necessary influence to put this idea into practice, due to his position as the pre-eminent *marja'* in Qum.

After the Islamic revolution, the close relationship between the state and the Qum Seminary influenced and indeed re-structured the traditional method of recognition of religious authority. Permissions from *mujtahids* are not recognised by the public, employers and state regulatory bodies anymore. Instead, official certificates issued by the central board of the Qum Seminary (a newly established organisation whose members are appointed by the Supreme Leader) are recognized as undergraduate degrees, master's degrees or doctorates, making it impossible for those without these degrees to undertake any religious activity including performing religious services such as marriages etc. This will make life difficult, both financially and socially for young clerics, forcing them to either accept these terms and conditions or leave the clerical profession and move to another sector.

Currently, the traditional method of education in the *hawzah* is still different from modern secular education. However, social, political and economic changes in Iran have accelerated the pace of reform in the *hawzah* education. In the current system of *hawzah* education in the Qum Seminary, the curriculum and its focus is being modernised, while the methods in teaching, training and

behaviour remain traditional. This is the result of interaction between the Qum Seminary and the Islamic state in Iran. The current content of the curriculum emphasises social and political issues and is designed to respond to the needs of the state. This is different from the traditional pattern where the purpose of training was to respond to the needs of the faithful and provide clerics for the community, and the curriculum promoted rote learning and discouraged questioning in fundamental areas. This will be a documentary research based on the written curriculum for the current students and interviews with the professors.

One of the major obstacles towards reform in Burūjirdī's time was potential resistance from the community of the faithful who financially supported the *marja'*, but this is no longer the case as since the Islamic revolution, *marja's* have gained access to state funds and hence are no longer financially dependent on their supporters. While old conservative supporters generally dislike any reform in the *hawzah*, younger supporters tend to encourage reforms, thus facilitating the overall process of reform in the *hawzah*. For example, Burūjirdī's opposition to teaching philosophy led to the termination of teaching of some types of philosophy, but later many institutes in Qum were established and funded specifically to work on philosophy. This raises an interesting research topic for future scholars to investigate the correlation between a *marja's* popularity and his attitude towards the system of education in the *hawzah*. Using an empirical method one could investigate the foundations, organisations and projects which are funded by the *marja's* and compare them with those of funded by previous *marja's*. Through such research, one could determine how different supporters of a *marja'* and their social ideologies will affect the *marja's* attitude to reforms in the *hawzah* education.

Modern secular education has influenced traditional education in the Qum Seminary. However, instead of the traditional pattern in Burūjirdī's time in which some seminary students went to a secular university, learnt modern secular methods and upon returning to Qum, adapted them for the *hawzah*, now there are colleges as well as research institutions which are established in Qum for this purpose. These colleges use a modern method and a secular curriculum in teaching and research. However, their goal is to train people who can create modern ideologies for the Islamic state. These

institutions are all controlled and financed directly or indirectly by the Supreme Leader. Therefore, there is extremely limited scope for a *marja'* to compete with the Supreme Leader. This opens up a new area for research to look into the role of these non-traditional colleges in Qum. Such research should focus on theoretical changes in the traditional concept of authority within Shi'ism.

This study has shown that Burūjirdī's approach in dealing with political issues and taking a political stand was based on de-politicising Shi'ism. This strategy was important for his success in an era of a secular modernising state. Now, by contrast, *marja's* have to take a stand (directly or indirectly) on political disputes. In the past, the *marja'* gained the support of different political groups if he avoided supporting one political party. Now, if he avoids doing that, he will lose everyone's support, as there are other *marja's* who will attract his followers. In this matter, the Supreme Leader is in a much stronger position. *Marja's* by default cannot support certain political parties, they are limited to supporting only legitimate Islamic parties which may either be supported or opposed by the Supreme Leader. It is better for the *marja's* to support those parties which are not close to the Supreme Leader, as this will not only exclude the Supreme Leader as a competitor, but also because those political parties are prepared to give respect, concessions and publicity to *marja's* in order to reduce the Supreme Leader's publicity, religious influence and even legitimacy. Nevertheless, the Islamic state media always attempts to discredit the parties who are not in support of the Supreme Leader by portraying them as opposed to the social and philosophical principles of religion. For instance, this is done by showing youth in their public campaigns who do not observe correct Islamic dress, thus implicitly associating the corresponding *marja's* with immodesty and non-Islamic behaviour. In fact, a *marja'* will risk losing his followers if he is perceived to be supporting non-Islamic parties. *Marja's* are fully aware that their real supporters in public are those who respect religious obligations (including paying religious taxes). They need their financial support as they cannot continue to be a *marja'* if the funds are not paid to them. Therefore, from the public point of view, a *marja'* is either supporting the Islamic parties (parties in support of the Supreme Leader), or non-Islamic parties. The public will not understand that there are *marja's* who do not like to interfere in politics at all. Thus, these types of *marja's* will not find followers due to lack of publicity and

information. A potential research project here is to look into the political ethics of *marja*'s. There are considerable research materials for this topic, such as correspondence and communications between the *marja*'s and the state over political matters in the recent years and *marja*'s speeches and statements on political matters.

In the traditional pattern which was practised by Burūjirdī, the *marja*' had advisors and MPs chosen from his followers whom the *marja*' trusted. Now, educating *marja*'s on political affairs has become a constant task for the state. Consultants, advisors and experts are sent regularly to *marja*'s to educate them and warn them that political parties which are not endorsed by the Supreme Leader may be using the *marja*'s influence to achieve their own ends. *Marja*'s know that these people are not loyal to them but they rely on these advisors' expertise, as they are sent by the state and have access to confidential information. Ultimately, most *marja*'s are swayed to make a decision in favour of the Supreme Leader. Needless to say that there are not any means by which *marja*'s can evaluate the accuracy of the information provided by these advisors. This identifies another potential area of research to look into methods of information gathering for *marja*'s and how these affect the *marja*'s statements to their followers.

Burūjirdī gained much publicity through his charitable activities. The traditional way of gaining publicity by philanthropy and the construction of public buildings as pursued by Burūjirdī is no longer possible, not only because *marja*'s now receive less in the way of religious taxes, but also because philanthropy and public construction is now largely the province of the Supreme Leader, financed by religious taxes and state resources. In practice, even if a *marja*' successfully finances a project, it is not sufficiently impressive to capture people's attention. Nevertheless, *marja*'s have been active to garner publicity in ways which are off limits to the Supreme Leader because of official restrictions, for example by using social networks such as Facebook. A possible area of future research is to investigate ways in which *marja*'s try to build their profiles and attract publicity outside of the official state-sanctioned means of communication.

Burūjirdī supported the Shi'i community in its clashes with Baha'is (like all the other *marja*'s who traditionally supported their Shi'i communities in case of clashes with non-Shi'is, typically

Baha'is in the past, and now Sunnis and newly-converted Christians). This traditional role continues and is now practised to an even greater degree by one *marja'* in particular, the Supreme Leader. This gives more publicity and legitimacy to the Supreme Leader and therefore strengthens his followers' beliefs in him, as a *marja'* who can defend religion and block those who are deemed to be harmful to the faith. All state bodies in Iran have to follow the Supreme Leader's commands. Therefore, if he decides that members of a religion are harmful for Shi'ism he will ask the executive bodies within the state to stop them. However, other *marja'*s do not have such power, as they cannot take effective action against perceived harm to the religion unless they request the support of the Supreme Leader, a request which highlights the pre-eminence of the Supreme Leader compared to all other *marja'*s.

The Supreme Leader has spread his publicity through a global presence as well. Most Shi'is outside Iran have not heard about other *marja'*s who are in Iran, due to lack of information. Political media (both Iranian media as well as foreign media) creates publicity for the Supreme Leader through political news. In addition to that, Iranian cultural attachés around the world promote the Supreme Leader as the best *marja'*. There are also many other organizations which promote the Supreme Leader. These organisations are either financed directly by the Iranian state or indirectly as branches of Islamic organisations which are based either in Qum or Tehran and are controlled and financed by the Supreme Leader.

The diversity of the organisations linked to the Supreme Leader is such that they sometimes pursue opposite agendas. For instance, the Global Association of Ahl al-Bayt promotes Shi'ism in the world and supports it against Sunnism. The main task is to support Shi'i minorities in the world, and promote conversion of Sunnis to Shi'ism. The International Association of Proximity on the other hand promotes unity in the Islamic world by attempting to convince Sunni Muslims to recognise Shi'ism as a legitimate and benevolent sect in Islam. The latter association seeks to appease Sunni anxiety about the growth of Shi'i Islam within their societies.

In 20th century Iran, the idea of sole leadership in religion, which was introduced by clerics in Qum in the early 1930s, was developed into the idea of an alliance between the state and the religious establishment in the 1940s and 1950s. During the 1960s, the religious establishment found itself in a

weaker position relative to the state, concluding that it was more expedient to form an alliance with the masses than with the monarchy and political elite. This last idea gradually developed in its religious, social and political contexts leading to the emergence of the sole leadership of the *marja'* not just in religion but, following the establishment of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, in politics as well. Religious and clerical authorities who oppose the concentration of the *marja'īyat* in the person of the Supreme Leader are pressured by the state authorities, who attempt to convince their followers to take their allegiances elsewhere. It is possible to foresee a time when future potential *marja'*s who oppose this idea will be unable to present themselves as competitors for the *marja'īyat*, because they lack the means to promote themselves against ubiquitous state publicity. In these circumstances, the traditional method of religious authority will be used in order to build a modern religious authority by restricting the position of *marja'* to the Supreme Leader only. Writing in 2012, it seems likely that this will continue to be the dominant trend in the evolution of religious authority in Iran. Only a significant shift in the Iranian political system appears likely to restrict the role of *vilāyat-i faqīh* and allow for a revival of multiple *marja'*s and of the separation of religious and political leadership.

Glossary

Bid'ah

Illegitimate introduction of a new practice involving a change to the tradition. Though innovations are normally illegitimate, there are permitted innovations as well, called *bid'ah ḥasanah* (good innovation).

fatwa

A formal opinion issued by a *mujtahid* in a broad range of issues, including theology, Islamic rituals, legal and social issues. The *mujtahid* usually gives a fatwa in response to a question from an individual. Applying the fatwa is the obligation of followers of the faith. However, as any fatwa is issued according to specific conditions of time and place, this may not be an obligation for all followers at all times.

Fiqh

A rational attempt by a *mujtahid* to identify the position taken by the shariah in individual cases, using the sources of the Quran, tradition (*ḥadīṣ*) and consensus. It explains the details of Islamic rituals, such as the performance of prayer, fasting during Ramaḏān and so on as well as commercial and social transactions such as marriage, criminal and civil law.

Faqīh

A scholar who has carried out substantial study in *fiqh* and has obtained an advanced knowledge of the subject.

Ḥadīṣ

The oral tradition of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad and other Shi'i Imams as was recorded by their companions. As there are so many true and false *ḥadīṣ* mixed together, any *ḥadīṣ* needs to be studied carefully by a *mujtahid* in order to be validated as an authentic tradition.

Ḥāshiyah

An expression for a book which is written by a scholar based on an existing well-recognised book in the field. The purpose of writing such a book is to further develop the original book by raising criticism based on the more advanced research and the opinions of the new writer.

Ḥawzah

A scholarly community for education and religious research. While in the past it was usually in the vicinity of the shrines of Shi'i Imams, now most Shi'i cities have an *ḥawzah* in various locations.

Ḥikmah

A logically and morally correct way of thinking, according to Quranic terminology. It is a method of formulating arguments in support of religious beliefs.

Ijtihād

The process of engaging in Qu'ranic interpretation leading to the issuing of a fatwa.

Irjā‘-i ihtiyāṭ

A process by which, if a *mujtahid*’s research has not yet produced any definite opinion for him, he refers his follower to the another *mujtahid* who he believes is the most knowledgeable.

Istiftā’

A process by which a follower formally raises a question and asks for a fatwa from a *mujtahid*.

Mujtahid

A religious scholar who has been training in a recognized seminary to the highest level and acquired extensive knowledge of the Quran, *ḥadīṣ*, *fiqh* and *uṣūl* and is qualified for issuing fatwas, regardless of the size of his following.

Nazr

A vow to fulfil a promise conditional upon obtaining the desired outcome, such as “If God heals my disease, I will go on a pilgrimage”. Failure to fulfil a *Nazr* is seen as a grievous offense for which expiation must be carried out, for example, by feeding or clothing the poor or fasting.

Rijāl

The biographical study of people who narrated the *ḥadīṣ* from one generation to another in order to clarify the value as well as the authenticity of their narrations. Each narrator is known as a member of a narrating chain, which makes the link between him and the source of the *ḥadīṣ*.

Sanad

A continuous chain of narrators who have narrated a *ḥadīṣ* from one generation to the next. There may be gaps in the *sanad* of a *ḥadīṣ* which make it inauthentic or less authentic.

Sayyid

Somebody who is a descendant of Muḥammad through his father.

Taqrīrāt

Refined and annotated fair copy of notes taken by a serious student of a famous *mujtahid*’s teaching. They are usually published by the student under the supervision of the famous *mujtahid*.

Uṣūl or uṣūl al-fiqh

A set of principles and the investigative methodology through which *fiqh* is derived from the tradition.

Vā‘iḏ

A preacher who gives public religious sermons and advises people on ethics and other religious values.

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