

COMMANDING RIGHT AND  
FORBIDDING WRONG IN  
ISLAMIC THOUGHT

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

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

## CHAPTER 2

### KORAN AND KORANIC EXEGESIS

#### 1. THE KORAN WITHOUT THE EXEGETES

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

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

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

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

<sup>3</sup> A possible reference to 'commanding right' is found in Q4:114: *man namr bi-sadagatin aw ma'rufin aw idhabin bayn 'ama*. Here Arberry translates *ma'ruf* as 'honour', which is his standard rendering of the term. There are two references to 'forbidding indecency (*al-fuhshā*) and wrong' (Q16:90, Q29:45; and cf. Q24:21), Q3:79 (*kāna fā'wina mā'na 'm minkarin fa'atibin*) will be discussed below, notes 11f. + Q3:105, and cf. Q3:100.

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

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

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

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

<sup>6</sup> The verse speaks, in a string of present participles in the nominative case, of 'those who repent, those who serve, those who pray, . . . those who command right and forbid wrong (*al-amr bi'l-iḥsān ṭiḥf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*), those who keep God's bounds'. There is no obvious predicate, so that it is natural to see the participles as in apposition to a previously mentioned subject; and the previous verse appropriately offers 'the believers' – but in the genitive case ('God has bought from the believers (*al-mu'minīn*) their selves and their possessions against the gift of Paradise; they fight in the way of God: they kill, and are killed' (Q9:111)). The syntactic problem is resolved in a textual variant in which the participles appear in the genitive. This variant is quoted from Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/652E), Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (d. 22/642E), and A'mash (d. 148/765) (see A. Jeffery, *Matters for the history of the text of the Qur'ān*, Leiden 1937, 45, 134, 319; the attribution to Ibn Mas'ūd appears already in Ferrāḥ (d. 207/822E), *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, ed. A. Y. Najāt and M. A. al-Najāt, Cairo 1980–, 1:453, 8). Imānī sources also ascribe this variant to Muḥammad al-Baqir (d. c. 118/736) and Ja'far al-Sādiq (d. 148/765) (Tabrīzī, *Majma'*, 3:74, 12; Tabrīzī, *Jawānib al-jihāt*, Beirut 1985, 1:633, 16; and see 'Ayyāshī (early fourth/teventh century), *Taḥfīḥ*, Qumm n.d., 2:112E, no. 140).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>8</sup> Normally it appears as a substantive, occasionally as an adjective modifying *ḡmī* (e.g. Q2:255, 263; Q4:3, 8) or *ta'ā* (Q24:53). The term *nuḥayrin* is rarer (Q22:72, Q29:29, Q58:2). For an introduction to both terms, see T. Trause, *Ethico-religious concepts in the Qur'ān*, Montreal 1966, 213–17.

<sup>9</sup> Thus X may be *ḥurr* (Q2:44), *ḡiṣ* (Q3:21, and cf. Q7:29), *ḥarf* (Q7:199), *ḥafī* (Q16:76), *ḥafī* and *ḥisān* (Q16:90), *anḡmā* (Q9:6:12) or, with reversal, *ḥf* (Q12:53) and *faḥiḥā* (Q24:21); Y may be *ḥf* (Q7:165), *faḥiḥā* (Q11:116), *faḥiḥā* (Q29:45), *faḥiḥā* and *ḥarfī* (Q16:90), or *ḥarfī* (Q79:40). The only one of these verses in which 'commanding X' and 'forbidding Y' are conjoined is Q16:90. The only cases where the verbs have an object are Q2:44 (*al-nān*) and Q79:40 (*al-nafī*).

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. KORANIC EXEGESIS

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

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

<sup>11</sup> Wensinck's concordance of *ḥaṣīḥ* literature contains six entries for the sixth form of the root *nḥr* (A. J. Wensinck *et al.*, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, Leiden 1936–88, 7:13b.51); none of these would bear a sense of 'forbid one another'. The concordance omits a well-known Prophetic tradition in which *imānān* clearly does mean 'forbid one another', but in this case the context makes it clear that the dictation is Koranic (see below, note 68, and ch. 3, note 40). See also Ibn Abī 'l-Dunayā (d. 281/894), *al-Aḥwā bi'l-ma'rifa wa'l-ḥikma 'an al-munkar*, ed. S. 'A. al-Shalāḥī, Medina 1997, 61 no. 18, for a tradition in which *imānān* is clearly used in the sense of 'refrain from' (and of the use of the verb *imānā* in the parallels in Jaṣṣāṣ, *Alfihārī*, 2:33.27, and Bayhaqī, *Shi'ah*, 6:89 no. 7.570). I am grateful to Avraham Haskin for sending me a copy of Ibn Abī 'l-Dunayā's *Aḥwā*. The Concordance of Pre-Islamic and Umayyad Poetry of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem contains some dozens of entries for the sixth form of the root; but here again, I can find no example of *imānā* used in a sense of 'forbid one another'. I am much indebted to Eran Kohlberg for transcribing these entries for me; and to Albert Azaizi and Andras Hamon for further assistance.

<sup>12</sup> This reading is ascribed to Ibn Ma'sūd (Jeffery, *Manẓūh*, 40), to Ubayy ibn Ka'b (*Iḥd*, 129), and to Zayd ibn 'Alī (d. 122/740) (A. Jeffery, 'The Qur'ān readings of Zayd b. 'Alī', *Rivāḥ al-ḥadīṣ*, 16 (1937), 258).

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

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

<sup>15</sup> Or, in the technical language of the exegetes, is its function *taḥrīm* (specification) or *raḥṭā* (partition)? (See, for example, Zamaksharī (d. 588/1144), *Kaṣṣabī*, Beirut 1947, 1:396.8, 397.1; Tabarī, *Majma'*, 1:483.23, 483.25; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, Cairo c. 1934–62, 8:177.14, 177.19; Bayḍawī (d. c. 710/1310), *Aḥwān al-munīr*, Cairo n.d., 2:33.7, 35.11.)

<sup>16</sup> Zajjājī (d. 311/923), *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān wa'l-ṣūrah*, ed. 'A. 'A. Shalāḥī, Beirut and Sidon 1973–4, 1:462.5. In support of this view, Zajjājī adduces the *min* of Q22:30: *fa-jānūhūn ʾi-ṣiḥā min al-nabātāt* – which is not, he points out, an order to avoid some idols rather than others. He then quotes a verse of the pre-Islamic poet Ḍakāḥ Bahlīla (for which see R. Geyer (ed.), *Gedichte von Abū Sa'īd Manūh ibn Qays al-'Aṣā nakaḥ Saḥmīn* von *Schicksal anderer Dichter des glibchen Bishnans*, London 1928, 267, verse 17), in which the *min* refers to a single individual, and therefore cannot have the function of partition. Finally, he finds confirmation in Q3:110.

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

<sup>17</sup> It was nevertheless adopted by the celebrated Imāmi scholar Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī (*Tibyān*, 2:548.5, setting out the two views, and *ihdā*, 549.9, making clear his adoption of the minority view; see further below, ch. 11, notes 156–61). Ṭūsī also mentions the Muṣṭafī Jubbā'ī (presumably Abū 'Alī, d. 303/915f.) as a proponent of this view (*ihdā*, 548.14; but see below, ch. 9, note 33). To these we can add Māturūdī (d. c. 333/944), Wāhidī (d. 468/1076), and Baḡhawī (d. 516/1122) (*Māturūdī, Ṭa'wīl al-Qur'ān*, ms. British Library, Or. 4.432, f. 44b.15 (where both views are stated but only one is supported with proof-texts); Wāhidī, *al-Maḡīz fī taḡfīr al-ḥādīth al-'aṣṣā*, ed. S. 'A. Dāwūdī, Damascus and Beirut 1995, 226 to Q3:104; Wāhidī, *Taḡfīr al-ḥādīth*, ms. Isṭanbul, Nuru Osmaniye 240, I, f. 432a.2 (I owe all references to this manuscript to the kindness of Michael Bonner) (and cf. Wāhidī, *al-Ḥasīf fī taḡfīr al-Qur'ān al-muḥḥid*, ed. 'A. 'A. 'Abd al-Mawṣūd *et al.*, Beirut 1994, 1:474.16); Baḡhawī, *Ma'nām al-tanzīh*, ed. M. 'A. al-Namir *et al.*, Riyāḍ 1993, 2:84.22).

<sup>18</sup> Zaijāj, *Ma'nām*, 1:463.3; Zamaksharī, *Kaṣṣhāf*, 1:396.8 (adding a brief mention of the alternative view at 397.1); Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273), *al-Jāmi' bi-sharḥ al-Qur'ān*, Cairo 1967, 4:165.11; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:20.6; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), *Taḡfīr*, Beirut 1966, 2:86.17; Muḥsin al-Fayḍ (d. 1091/1680), *Taḡfīr al-ṣāḡif*, Mashhad 1982, 1:338.21. Ṭabarī's position is unclear, unless we are to infer his acceptance of the majority view from his glossing of *innama* as *jamā'a* (Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Taḡfīr*, ed. M. M. and A. M. Shākir, Cairo n.d., 7:90.4; cf. Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:20.6, where Ṭabarī is cited as a proponent of this view); indeed his commentary to Q3:104 is so brief as to suggest that the text as we have it may be defective. Muḡāḥid ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767f.) does no more than gloss *innama* as *ṣaḡīra* (*Taḡfīr*, ed. 'A. M. Shihāna, Cairo 1979–89, 1:293.18). Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī offers an elaborate account of the competing views (*Taḡfīr*, 8:177.14), but concludes only that God knows best (*ihdā*, 178.12). Bayḍawī merely states the alternatives (*Aḥmād*, 2:35.7).

<sup>19</sup> Zamaksharī, *Kaṣṣhāf*, 1:396.8; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Taḡfīr*, 8:178.10; Qurṭubī, *Jāmi'*, 4:165.14; Bayḍawī, *Aḥmād*, 2:35.7; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:20.13; and for Rummānī, see below, ch. 9, note 38. Cf. also the reporting of this view in Wāhidī, *Baṣṭ*, I, f. 432a.8, Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, 2:548.7, and Ṭabrisī, *Majma'*, 1:483.23.

<sup>20</sup> See Thaḡabī (d. 427/1035), *al-Kaṣīf wa-l-bayān fī taḡfīr āy al-Qur'ān*, ms. British Library, Add. 19.926, f. 67a.3; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Taḡfīr*, 8:178.2; Niḡām al-Dīn al-Naysabūrī (*ḡ*, early eighth/fourteenth century), *Ghāṣṣa 'ib al-Qur'ān*, ed. I. 'A. 'Iwād, Cairo 1962–71, 4:28.10. The placing of women in this category may seem surprising, since God explicitly includes the female believers (*al-mu'mināt*) among those who command right in Q9:71 (on the question of women forbidding wrong, see below, ch. 17, 187–61).

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

<sup>21</sup> Zamaksharī, *Kaṣṣhāf*, 1:396.9; Ṭabrisī, *Jāmi'*, 1:230.20 (a passage not found in his *Majma'* and clearly borrowed from the *Kaṣṣhāf*; cf. *Jāmi'*, 1:12.1); Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Taḡfīr*, 8:178.3; Bayḍawī, *Aḥmād*, 2:35.8; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:20.7; also Abū Ḥ. Lath al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983), *Taḡfīr*, ed. 'A. M. Muḡawwad *et al.*, Beirut 1993, 1:289.19. A rather similar argument is advanced by Zaijāj in presenting this side of the question: since the verse speaks of those who 'call to good' (*ad-dīnā ilā 'l-biḡar*), it refers to propagandists for the faith (*al-dīnīl ilā 'l-ḡimār*), who need to be learned (*ḡilmanā*) in that which they are propagating, as not everyone is (*Ma'nām*, 1:463.3). But note that exegetes who advance this argument can still speak of the obligation as universal (see Bayḍawī, *Aḥmād*, 2:35.10; Zamaksharī, *Kaṣṣhāf*, 1:398.3, noting that anyone is qualified to rebuke someone who fails to pray).

<sup>22</sup> Such language is used by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in the passage just cited (which does not necessarily represent his own view): the obligation would be restricted to the scholars (*muḡallimīn bi'l-ḡilmanā*) (*Taḡfīr*, 8:178.3). Similarly Qurṭubī says that those who command right must be scholars (*ḡilmanā*) (*Jāmi'*, 4:165.12). Ibn Qutaiba (d. 276/889) glosses *innama* in Q3:104 as 'the community of scholars' (*jamā'at al-ḡilmanā*) (*Ṭa'wīl musṣhif al-Qur'ān*, ed. A. Ṣāḡr, Cairo 1954, 345.13). The Imāmi Muḡadd al-Sayrūt (d. 326/1423) describes 'commanding and forbidding' as one of the duties (*waḡā'if*) of scholars (*Kanz al-ḡifān*, ed. M. B. al-Bihbūdī, Tehran 1384–5, 1:407.3 to Q3:104), followed by Faṭḥ Allāh Kashānī (d. 988/1580f.), *Mamlah al-ḡilmanā* (in Persian), Tehran 1336–7 sh., 2:294.22 (likewise to Q3:104). Cf. also the reporting of such a view in Wāhidī, *Baṣṭ*, I, f. 432a.7 (to Q3:104, speaking of *taḡfīr al-ḡilmanā wa'l-ḡimār wa-lḡalīlīn ḡimā 'l-ḡimār bi'l-ḡimār*). The restrictive overtones of such statements are perhaps not to be taken too seriously. Thus Qurṭubī has already laid down (in his commentary to Q3:21) that commanding right is incumbent on everyone (*ḡimār fī jamā' al-ḡimār*) (*Jāmi'*, 4:47.19); and it is generally possible to take *ḡilmanā* in the sense of 'those who know', who need not in every case be professional scholars. It is by no means the case that Koranic exegesis at large restricts the performance of the duty to scholars (contrast Athama, 'The early Muḡī'a', 122f.).

<sup>23</sup> Thus Ibn 'Ayyya (d. 541/1146) (in setting out one view) and Thaḡālibī (d. 873/1468f.) (without qualification) interpret the verse as a divine command that there should be scholars in the community, and that the rest of the community should follow them, in view of the extensive learning required by the duty (Ibn 'Ayyya, *al-Muḡallimīn al-ḡifān*, Rabat 1975–, 3:186.18 (I am grateful to Maribel Ferrero for supplying me with copies from volumes of this work which were inaccessible to me); Thaḡālibī, *al-Jāmi'īn al-ḡilmanā*, ed. 'A. al-Ṭālibī, Algiers 1985, 1:354.13); and cf. the view they proceed to develop about the distinctive roles of scholars, rulers and others (Ibn 'Ayyya, *Muḡallimīn*, 3:188.4, and Thaḡālibī, *Jāmi'īn*, 1:355.9; both limit this division of labour to cases of persistent wrong). A Persian exegete writing in 520/1126 holds similar views on this last point (Mābūdī, *Kaṣṣhāf*, 2:234.16); and he quotes the view that those who command right are the scholars (*ḡilmanā*) and counsellors (*naḡībat-kunānāt*), while those who forbid wrong are the warriors (*ḡalīlīn*), the scholars, and the just ruler (*ḡalīlīn-i 'ādil*) (*ihdā*, 235.4; on this work, see G. Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane*, Paris 1963, 110, and 119 no. 54). On the roles of scholars, rulers and others, see also below, ch. 6, note 166. But note that even Thaḡālibī does not in the end attempt to confine the duty to scholars (or rulers) (*Jāmi'īn*, 1:355.12). For an explicit rejection of the view that the duty is restricted to the scholars by an Ḥādīf exegete, see Aḡḡayish (d. 1332/1914), *Aḡḡayish al-ḡifān*, ed. 'A. Shalābī, Oman 1980–, 4:203.18 (the author's name is given on the title-page as *Abū-ḡayyath al-ḡifān*).





they not infrequently mention it among competing views.<sup>45</sup> But Tabarī (d. 310/923) in his commentary to Q9:112 explicitly states his disagreement, observing that 'commanding right' refers to *all* that God and His Prophet have commanded, and 'forbidding wrong' to *all* that they have forbidden.<sup>46</sup> Elsewhere his formulations tend to take up the terms of Muḡaḡil's exegesis, but to indicate in one way or another that the duty has a wider range.<sup>47</sup> Other commentators rarely take as strong a stand as Ṭabarī,<sup>48</sup> but likewise tend to indicate the broad scope of the duty, even when giving pride of place to Muḡaḡil's terms.<sup>49</sup> This, of course, goes well with the generalised character of 'right' and 'wrong' (*ma'rif* and *munkar*) as ethical terms elsewhere in the Koran.

As Ṭabarī clearly perceived, if the scope of the duty is restricted to enjoining belief in God and His Prophet, then it has nothing to do with reproving other Muslims for drinking, wenching and making music. Yet the implication that was obvious to Ṭabarī is never spelled out by the early exegetes themselves when they propound their view. This silence is doubtless related to the fact that the whole approach, though widely attested in Koranic exegesis, is virtually unknown elsewhere.

<sup>45</sup> Thus some commentators to Q7:157 mention the equation of *ma'rif* with *imān* and of *munkar* with *shirk* among other interpretations of the terms (Abū Ḥayyān, *Bayn*, 4:403-31, citing Muḡaḡil; Abū Ḥ-Faḡh-ī-Rāzī, *Kamf*, 5:306-12; Khāzin, *Lubāb*, 2:147-27, giving this view pride of place, as he also does in his commentary to Q9:112, *ibid.*, 2:285, 16). See also Ibn 'Aḡyva, *Muḡāḡirāt*, 3:188-17 (to Q3:104, spelling out the implication that the verse would then refer to *jihad*); Khāzin, *Lubāb*, 1:291-9 (to Q3:114); Abū Ḥ-Faḡh-ī-Rāzī, *Bayn*, f. 83a, 24 (to Q9:67); Aḡḡaysh, *Ḥimayn*, 4:229-20 (to Q3:114).

<sup>46</sup> Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 14:507-8. Cf. also his generalising exegesis of the injunction *ma'mur bi'l-ḡayb* in Q7:199 (*ibid.*, 13:331-13).  
<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 7:105-4 (to Q3:110), 130-8 (to Q3:114), 13:165-12 (to Q7:157), 14:338-2 (to Q9:67), 347-7 (to Q9:71), 506-8 (to Q9:112); Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, 17:126-26 (to Q2:41). A view he quotes from Ibn 'Abbas makes the point nicely: affirmation of the unity of God is the highest good (*aḡḡam al-ma'rif*), and its denial (*taḡḡdhīb*) is the worst evil (*ankar al-munḡar*) (*Tafsīr*, 7:105 no. 7, 624 (to Q3:110); similarly Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr*, 2:474f. nos. 1172, 1174 (to Q3:110); Suyūḡī, *Dirr*, 2:64-18 (to Q3:110), 3:255, 13 Ṭabarī, f. 83a, 24 (to Q9:67); Aḡḡaysh, *Ḥimayn*, 4:229-20 (to Q3:114)).  
<sup>48</sup> One exception is Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in his commentary to Q3:114, where he emphasises that the terms *ma'rif* and *munkar* must be taken without restriction, and comprehend all *ma'rif* and all *munkar* (*Tafsīr*, 8:202-26). See also Abū Ḥayyān, *Bayn*, 3:20-33 (to Q3:104), for a less forcible statement to the same effect.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, Wāḡhid, *Baḡf*, II, f. 449b, 6 (to Q7:157), citing Kalbī; Ibn 'Aḡyva, *Muḡāḡirāt*, 3:189-2 (to Q3:104), 8:287-2 (to Q9:112); Maḡḡūfī, *Kasf*, 5:760-17 (to Q7:157), 4:220-21 (to Q9:112); Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 15:24-15 (to Q9:112), 10:126-11 (to Q9:67), 204-26 (to Q9:112); Bayḡḡawī, *Anwār*, 2:298-16 (to Q9:112); Abū Ḥayyān, *Bayn*, 3:29-31 (to Q3:110); Najm al-Dīn al-Nasāfi, *Tafsīr*, 1:95-6 (to Q3:110); Ḥusayn Waḡīz Kaḡhāfi (d. 910/1504f.), *Mawāḡib-i 'alāyān*, Tehran 1317-29 sh., 1:174-17 (to Q3:114); Kāshānī, *Mamāhib*, 2:305-19 (to Q3:114); Cf. also such translations of *ma'rif* as *kātibā-yi pasandīdān* (to Q3:110) (Mūsā in al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī sixth/tweelfth century), *Tafsīr-i baḡḡar-i ḡamān*, n.p., 1359-sh., 1:364-4), *shāḡar-i ḡā ma' ḡāwḡr-shā'* (to Q3:114) (*ibid.*, 366-3), *kātibā-yi nik* (to Q3:104) (Najm al-Dīn al-Nasāfi, *Tafsīr*, 1:94-7).

What do the commentators have to say about the more significant elements in the peripheral Koranic material we looked at above?

The glossing of the term 'right' (*ma'rif*) in the numerous Koranic passages in which it occurs has relatively little to offer us. Such explanations tend to vary widely with the context,<sup>50</sup> yielding a proliferation of meanings formally recognised in the literature on the meanings of Koranic terms.<sup>51</sup> But as might be expected, 'right' and 'wrong' (*munḡar*) also attract attempts at more formal definition. Many of these definitions make reference to both revelation and reason; thus for Rāḡhib al-Isḡahānī (fl. later fourth/tenth century), right can be defined as 'any action the goodness (*ḡusn*) of which is known by reason (*'aql*) or revelation (*shar'*)'.<sup>52</sup> Still more of them refer only to revelation; thus for Zayjī, right means 'everything recognised (*'arfīn*) by revelation (*shar'*)'.<sup>53</sup> A few definitions refer only to reason (*'aql*).<sup>54</sup> This variation, whatever its

<sup>50</sup> An indication of the ways in which Muḡaḡil deals with occurrences of the term in his commentary to the first four Sūras will suffice here. He offers as synonyms *rifq* (*Tafsīr*, 1:158-7 (to Q2:178)) and *ilḡān* (*ibid.*, 196-9 (to Q2:229), 196-9 (to Q2:231), 364-18 (to Q4:19)), etc. He glosses *qanḡ ma'rif* as *'ada ḡasana* (*ibid.*, 199-11 (to Q2:235)), 358-2 (to Q4:5), 359-14 (to Q4:8)) or *ḡanḡ ḡasana* (*ibid.*, 220-1 (to Q2:263)). Elsewhere he repeats the term *ma'rif* in his exegesis (as at *ibid.*, 159-10 (to Q2:180)), ignores it (as at 194-15 (to Q2:228)), or gives it a behavioural specification appropriate to the context (as at *ibid.*, 197-9 (to Q2:232), *ibid.*, 358-9 (to Q4:6), *ibid.*, 406-16 (to Q4:114)).

<sup>51</sup> Muḡaḡil, *Asḡḡāb*, 114f. no. 14 (where *ḡanḡ* is to be read for *ḡanḡ*); Ḥayḡān ibn Sulaym, *Tamāḡif*, 204f. no. 43; Dāmāḡhānī, *Wurūḡ*, 766f.; Ḥabḡḡaysh ibn Ibrahim al-Tifḡī (writing 558/1163), *Wurūḡ-i ḡur'ān*, ed. M. Muḡaḡiqā, Tehran 1340 sh., 272f.; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Niḡmā*, 574f.; Ibn al-'Imād, *Kasf al-sarā'ir*, 146f. no. 39 (again read *ḡanḡ* for *ḡanḡ*).

<sup>52</sup> See al-Rāḡhib al-Isḡahānī (fl. later fourth/tenth century), *al-Miḡḡidat fi ḡharīb al-ḡur'ān*, ed. M. A. Khatib Allāh, n.p., 1970, 2:496b-4. See also Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, 3:299-10 (to Q9:71), 8:279-17 (to Q3:117, defining *munḡar*); Ṭabḡrī, *Majma'*, 3:50-3 (to Q9:71), 4:319-16 (to Q3:117); Abū Ḥ-Faḡh-ī-Rāzī, *Kamf*, 5:306-15 (to Q7:157); Mūsā in al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, *Bayn*, 1:362-8 (to Q3:104); Khāzin, *Lubāb*, 1:285-22 (to Q3:104, but contrast the following note); Abū Ḥ-Faḡh-ī-Rāzī, *Bayn*, f. 155a, 25 (to Q29:45, defining *munḡar*, but cf. below, note 54). Ṭūsī has a different definition in his commentary to Q3:104 (*Tibyān*, 2:549-3; similarly Abū Ḥ-Faḡh-ī-Rāzī, *Kamf*, 3:141-3).

<sup>53</sup> *Apud* Abū Ḥayyān, *Bayn*, 4:403-31 (to Q7:157). See also Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 7:105-12 (to Q3:110), 9:201-14 (to Q4:114); Wāḡhid, *Baḡf*, II, f. 449b, 8 (to Q7:157, citing Kalbī's definition of *munḡar* as what is not recognised in *shar'* or *sunna*); Ibn 'Aḡyva, *Muḡāḡirāt*, 7:179-17 (to Q7:157, subsuming *ma'rif* under *shar'*); Abū Ḥ-Faḡh-ī-Rāzī, *Kamf*, 6:68-10 (to Q9:71, defining *munḡar*); Khāzin, *Lubāb*, 2:147-28 (to Q7:157, mentioning rather than adopting the definition), 2:260-4 (to Q9:71, with a definition of *munḡar* which refers also to *ḡud*); Ṭāḡḡūrī, *Jawāḡir*, 2:77-20 (to Q7:157), following Ibn 'Aḡyva); Kāshānī, *Mamāhib*, 1:171-15 (to Q3:104), Kāshānī, *Mamāhib*, 2:299-7 (to Q3:110).  
<sup>54</sup> Such formulations appear in Jassās, *Alḡḡām*, 3:38-10 (*al-ma'rif ḡayḡan ma' ḡasana fi 'l-'aql fiḡḡān*), Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, 3:596-10 (to Q5:79, defining *munḡar*), 4:594-6 (to Q7:157), Abū Ḥ-Faḡh-ī-Rāzī, *Kamf*, f. 83a, 24 (to Q9:67, defining *munḡar*), and Ṭabḡrī, *Majma'*, 2:231-29 (to Q5:79, defining *munḡar*), 487-29 (to Q7:157), and cf. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201), *Zād al-ma'āḡir*, Damascus and Beirut 1964-8, 3:272-20 (to Q7:157), and Māwārī, *Makrāt*, 2:368-20 (to Q7:157), 379-11 (to Q9:67). Māwārī presents both views within a framework of three possible interpretations (*ḡurūḡ*), without expressing a preference (*Iḡ witr*, f. 46a, 22, to Q3:110). Abū Ḥ-Faḡh-ī-Rāzī al-Sāmānḡādī cites both views anonymously, and offers no comment (*Tafsīr*, 1:289-17 (to Q3:104)). Cf. also below, ch. 7, notes 69, 108, and ch. 15, note 59.

doctrinal significance,<sup>55</sup> has no real implications for the character of the duty, and the upshot is to confirm 'commanding right' and 'forbidding wrong' as second-order duties which have no determinate content in themselves.<sup>56</sup>

With regard to the Koranic expressions 'commanding X' and 'forbidding Y', the tendency of the exegetes is to assimilate them to 'commanding right' and 'forbidding wrong' with little if any reflection. Thus Tabarī has no difficulty equating the term *ʿurf* in Q7:199 with 'right' (*maʿrūf*),<sup>57</sup> while Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) goes so far as to pin his main discussion of forbidding wrong to the reference to 'those who command justice (*qisf*)' in Q3:21.<sup>58</sup> Commentators to Q7:165 regularly assume that the whole passage to which it belongs is concerned with the duty,<sup>59</sup> but they rarely bother to comment specifically on the locution 'forbid evil (*šāʾ*)'.<sup>60</sup>

We come now to the two verses that, despite their lack of unambiguous reference to the duty, alone give support to the idea that it is to be performed by members of the community to each other.

With regard to the *yatawāḥḥanna* of Q5:79, the commentators ignore the variant reading *yatawāḥḥanna*, and favour the interpretation of *yatawāḥḥanna* as 'forbid each other', rather than 'desist'. Thus Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī

<sup>55</sup> It does not seem to be very great, despite the disagreement between Muʿtazilites and Ashʿarites as to whether good and evil are so by nature or by divine fiat (see M. J. McDermott, *The theology of al-Shāriḥ al-Mufīd*, Beirut 1978, 63f.). Tabarī in his commentary to Q3:104 quotes alternative definitions, one appealing to revelation alone, and the other to revelation and reason; he comments that there is no real difference in meaning (*maʿnā*) between them (*Majmaʿ*, 1:483, 30 (to Q3:104)); and cf. Abū ʿI-Barakāt al-Nasāʾī (d. 701/1301), *Madhārik al-tanzīl*, Cairo 1936–42, 1:240 n. 1f. (to Q3:104)).

<sup>56</sup> As one Ashʿarite scholar puts it, the details of the duty are tantamount to the entire law of Islam (*tafṣīl al-sharʿ min maṣṣalāt al-muḥimamāt*) (Iḥwāyātī (d. 478/1085), *al-ʿishāʾ al-ghaibīʿ al-ʿadilla fī usūl al-ʿirgād*, ed. M. Y. Mūsā and ʿA. ʿA. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo 1950, 370, 9).

<sup>57</sup> Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 13:331, 8 (despite some inhomogeneity in the views of earlier exegetes, see *ibid.*, 330f. nos. 15, 547–51); and see ʿAbd al-Razzāq Ibn Hammām al-Ḥanbalī (d. 211/827), *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, ed. M. M. Muḥammad, Riyāḍ 1989, 1:245, 15.

<sup>58</sup> Qurṭubī, *Jāmiʿ*, 4:47–9. His precursor Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 543/1148) had already taken the verse as an invitation to plunge straight into a major discussion of *al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf* (*Al-Jāmiʿ al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿA. M. al-Bajāwī, Cairo 1957–8, 2:66, 5). This states explicitly that the verse refers to 'those who command right and forbid wrong' (*Tibyan*, 2:423, 13; cf. also Abū ʿI-Furūḥ al-Rāzī, *Ramḍ*, 2:483, 9; Abū ʿI-Layḥ al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, 1:256, 1; Māwardī, *Nihāyat*, 1:381, 17). The equation of commanding justice with commanding right is already implicit in the Prophetic tradition quoted by the commentators from Abū ʿUbayd al-Dīn al-Jarrahī (d. 18/639) (*Iḥd*, 381, 18; Qurṭubī, *Jāmiʿ*, 4:46, 17; *Tibyan*, 2:422, 10; Tabarī, *Majmaʿ*, 1:423, 16; Abū ʿI-Furūḥ al-Rāzī, *Ramḍ*, 2:483, 12; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 7:229, 13; Suyūṭī, *Ḍurr*, 2:13, 24).<sup>59</sup> See below, note 69.

<sup>60</sup> Muḡallī glosses *šāʾ* with *maʿrūf* (*Tafsīr*, 2:71, 2). Ibn ʿAṭīya comments that *šāʾ* is a general term for all sins, though in this context referring specifically to fishing (on the Sabbath) (*Muḥibbat*, 7:189, 14); this is repeated by Abū Ḥayyān (*Baḥr*, 4:412, 21) and Th al-Ḥabībī (*Jamāhīr*, 2:82, 12).

(d. 606/1210) notes both interpretations, but describes the first as that of the mainstream (*jumhūr*).<sup>61</sup> Of other commentators who refer to both, a few give no indication of preference,<sup>62</sup> or even combine the two meanings,<sup>63</sup> but most in one way or another relegate 'desist' to a secondary position.<sup>64</sup> Commentators who confine themselves to only one interpretation almost always choose 'forbid each other',<sup>65</sup> the only significant exception is Wāḥidī (d. 468/1076) in one of his works.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, several commentators treat the verse as an invitation to rail against laxity in the performance of the duty.<sup>67</sup> It is clear, then, that Koranic exegesis has put most of its weight behind the interpretation of Q5:79 as a reference to the mutual forbidding of wrongs committed within the community.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 12:64, 12; so already Wāḥidī, *Baḥr*, II, f. 221a, 19, 221b, 11.

<sup>62</sup> So Bayḡāwī and Muḥsin al-Fayḍ (Bayḡāwī, *Amnīr*, 2:164, 8; Fayḍ, *Ṣūf*, 2:75, 7).

<sup>63</sup> So Tabarī, Abū ʿI-Layḥ al-Samarqandī, Ḥusī, and Ḥabīb in his major commentary (Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 10:496, 4; Abū ʿI-Layḥ al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, 1:453, 5; Ḥusī, *Tibyan*, 3:595, 21; Tabarī, *Majmaʿ*, 2:231, 25 (and cf. 231, 5)). Tabarī's commentary to this verse is again surprising: brief – a few lines and a single short tradition.

<sup>64</sup> So Zamakhsarī, Tabarī in his minor commentary, the Khazn, and Abū Ḥayyān (Zamakhsarī, *Kaṣbīf*, 1:667, 3, 667, 11; Tabarī, *Jamāʿī*, 1:397, 1; Khāzān, *Luḥūḥ*, 1:516, 22; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:540, 14, 540, 26). Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1311f.) follows this line in his lexicon (*Lisān al-Arab*, Beirut 1968, 15:344a, 5).

<sup>65</sup> This seems to be the view taken by Muḡallī (*Tafsīr*, 1:496, 14), and is unambiguously that adopted by Tuḥfī (d. 419/1028), Thāḥibī, Wāḥidī in his *Wāḥid*, Bayḡāwī, Ibn al-Jawzī, Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, Bigāʿī (d. 885/1480), and the two Jalāl al-Dīns, Mahallī (d. 864/1459) and Suyūṭī (Tuḥfī, *Muḥibbat min Tafsīr al-tamīm al-Ḥabībī*, Cairo 1970–1, 1:152, 7; Thāḥibī, *Kaṣbīf*, f. 204b, 23; Wāḥidī, *Wāḥid*, 2:215, 12; Bayḡāwī, *Muḥibbat*, 3:84, 10; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-nasāʾī*, 2:406, 9; Qurṭubī, *Jāmiʿ*, 6:253, 7; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 2:618, 13; Bigāʿī, *Nasab al-durr*, Hyderabad 1969–84, 6:265, 10; Mahallī and Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-karīm* (= *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*), Cairo 1966, 121, 2). The Persian exegetes follow suit, as in the translations of the (fourth/tench century?) *Qurʾān-i Quds* (Najm al-Dīn al-Nasāʾī and Ḥusayn Wāʿiz Kāshīf, and the commentaries of Abū ʿI-Furūḥ al-Rāzī, Abū ʿI-Maʿāṣin Jurḡān, and Faḥ al-Ḥabīb Kāshānī (anon., *Qurʾān-i Quds*; *kuḥūmatu bur-gandān-i Qurʾān baḥ Farsī*, ed. ʿA. Riwāqī, Tehran 1364 sh., 60; Najm al-Dīn al-Nasāʾī, *Tafsīr*, 1:171, 5; Kāshīf, *Manāḥik*, 1:345, 20; Abū ʿI-Furūḥ al-Rāzī, *Ramḍ*, 4:301, 15; Jurḡānī, *Jilāʾ al-nadhbān*, 2:417, 12; Kāshānī, *Mānib*, 3:300, 12).

<sup>66</sup> Wāḥidī, *Wāḥid*, 331 (*lā yurāḥūhū*). Cf. also the anonymous *Tarjuman-i Tafsīr-i Ḥabībī* (third quarter of the fourth/tench century), ed. H. Yashnāʾī, Tehran 1339–sh., 421, 9 (*nah bāz iḥādīḥ az ʿishāʾ*) (for this text, see Lazard, *Lanḡiq*, 41–5 no. 3).

<sup>67</sup> Zamakhsarī is particularly eloquent on this theme (*Kaṣbīf*, 1:667, 5); see also Maḥallī, *Kaṣbīf*, 3:197, 4 (and cf. *ibid.*, 2:234, 10 to Q3:104); Kāshīf, *Manāḥik*, 1:345, 22; Kāshānī, *Mānib*, 3:300, 17. Ibn Kathīr takes the verse as an occasion to introduce a long series of *ḥādīḥ*s regarding *al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf* in general (*Tafsīr*, 2:619, 28–622, 9).

<sup>68</sup> Compare the tendentiousness of Tabarī's understanding of *maʿrūf* (*ḥayyūn bayn al-maʿrūf*) in Q65:6 (see above, note 13) as 'accept from one another, oh people, that right which you command each other' (*maʿrūf amr al-maʿrūf bi-shayn min maʿrūf*) (Tabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 28, 96, 4; similarly Ḥusī, *Tibyan*, 10:57, 15; Wāḥidī, *Wāḥid*, 11:08; Zamakhsarī, *Kaṣbīf*, 4:559, 10; Tabarī, *Jamāʿī*, 2:708, 15; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 30:37, 10 (quoting Muḥammad (d. 286/900)): Qurṭubī, *Jāmiʿ*, 18:169, 3; Bayḡāwī, *Amnīr*, 4:207, 26; Khāzān, *Luḥūḥ*, 7:94, 19; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 8:283, 20; Maḥallī, *Kaṣbīf*, 10:145, 20; Abū ʿI-Furūḥ al-Rāzī, *Ramḍ*, 11:188, 7; and cf. Rāḡhib al-ʿIshāḥānī, *Muḡallī*, 1:30a, 19). These interpretations of Q5:79 and Q65:6 are neatly brought

Turning to the Sabbath-breakers of Q7:163-6, the exegetes seem to have had no doubts that the reproof of the Sabbath-breakers was an instance of 'commanding right and forbidding wrong'.<sup>69</sup> What troubled them was rather an apparent discrepancy of divine accounting.<sup>70</sup> There appear to be three distinct groups involved in the story: the Sabbath-breakers themselves, those who reproved them, and those who could see no point in such reproof. Yet God specifies only two faces: the reprovers (*alladhīna yanbanūna 'ani y-sū*) were saved, and the evil-doers (*alladhīna 'alamū*) were damned. What then became of the third group? Were they too among the evil-doers by virtue of their failure to reprove the Sabbath-breakers? Or could deft exegesis extricate them from this fate? We need not examine the responses of the exegetes to this dilemma, except to note that a considerable confusion prevailed. For example, we have discordant traditions from Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687f.) to the effect that the third group were damned, that they were saved, and that he did not know their fate.<sup>71</sup>

It will be instructive to end by looking at what the exegetes have to say about some verses which bear (or are seen by them to bear) on the high-risk performance of the duty, and the adverse consequences that are likely to afflict those who engage in it.

In Q31:17 the sage Luqmān is said to have admonished his son as follows: 'O my son, perform the prayer, and command right and forbid wrong, and bear patiently whatever may befall thee (*wa-ṣbir 'alā mā asfahak*). The exegetes have two interpretations of Luqmān's injunction

Footnote 68 (cont.)  
together in the wording of a Prophetic tradition which urges on the believers that they mutually command right and forbid wrong: *ṭamirū bi'l-mā ḥifẓ wa-samānān 'ani y-munkar* (for references, see below, ch. 3, note 40). The phrase *al-i-timār bi'l-mā ḥifẓ wa-l-mukar* for references, see below, ch. 3, note 40). The phrase *al-i-timār bi'l-mā ḥifẓ wa-l-mukar* occurs in a Syrian tradition (Ibn Hābal, *Musnad*, 3:187.5).

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, the following commentaries to Q7:164: Zaijī, *Mā āni*, 2:426.11; Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 13:185.3; Wāḥidī, *Waḥīd*, 418, and *Wāḥīd*, 2:420.11; Zamakhsharī, *Kashshaf*, 2:171.18; Tabarī, *Majma'*, 2:492.7; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 3:239.10.

<sup>70</sup> For a succinct account, see Zaijī, *Mā āni*, 2:427.3.

<sup>71</sup> Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 13:194.9 no. 15,278, 187 no. 15,269, 194 no. 15,279. All three are translated by Ikrama, the *maṣābiḥ* of Ibn 'Abbās. (In another tradition, Ibn 'Abbās labels the reprovers the 'righteous' (*zaynāt*) and those who saw no point in reproof the 'leftists' (*ḡayrāt*) (*ibid.*, 189.5 no. 15,272; cf. also Qumrān [alive in 307/919], *Tafsīr*, ed. T. M. Rāzāq, *Najāt* 1386-7, 1:244.20).) Tabarī gives no statement of his own view in the text at *Ḥaḍrat*, *Najāt* 13186-98), though this could be deduced (at of his commentary as we have it (*Tafsīr*, 13:186-98), and still more nos. 15,283-6, do not *ibid.*, 193-8, it is noteworthy that nos. 15,279-82, and still more nos. 15,283-6, do not speak to the rubric at *ibid.*, 193.15). An unusual view quoted at length from Kaḥḥān in an *ibid.* source has it that only two groups were involved, namely the sinners and the reprovers, it being the former who address the latter in Q7:164 (Hūd ibn Muḥakkam, *Tafsīr*, 2:54.8, as part of a long citation; Kaḥḥān's view is cited in a short form in 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, 1:339.10, in Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 13:195.5 no. 15,280, in *Tibyan*, 5:16.17, and elsewhere, while Hūd also knows the usual view that there were three groups: *Tafsīr*, 2:54.16, 55.6).

to fortitude: it may pertain to life's afflictions in general, or it may refer more particularly to unpleasant reactions met with in the course of forbidding wrong. The weight of exegetical opinion inclines strongly to the second. Some commentators mention both,<sup>72</sup> but the majority refer only to one, and this is always the interpretation linking fortitude to commanding right.<sup>73</sup> In a similar vein, there is a variant reading to Q3:104 which adds 'after forbidding wrong' the words 'and they seek God's help against whatever may befall them (*wa-yastā'īnna 'ilāhā/bi-'ilāhī 'alā mā asābuhum*)'.<sup>74</sup> Some exegetes are not above drawing the same moral from this textual variant, even while rejecting it.<sup>75</sup> There are also a couple of verses which, though they make no mention of forbidding wrong, are often interpreted to refer to incurring death in the course of it. One is Q2:207. Here, in a contrast between sincere and insincere adherents of the Prophet (Q2:204-7), the sincere follower is described as one 'who sells himself desiring God's good pleasure (*man yashirī nafsihū 'irghā'a marḡābi 'ilāhī*)'.<sup>76</sup> Among the traditions that are quoted regarding the circumstances in which this verse was revealed, there is one from 'Umar (d. 23/644) according to which it referred to a man who engaged in commanding right

<sup>72</sup> Bayḍawī combines them, with emphasis on the second (*Aṣṣūṭ*, 4:31.10). Māwardī, *Zamakhsharī*, Qurṭubī and Abū Ḥayyān mention both without indicating a preference (*Māwardī*, *Nuḥūr*, 4:338.12; Zamakhsharī, *Kashshaf*, 3:496.13; Qurṭubī, *Jāmi'*, 14:68.17; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 7:188.11). Tabarī and Māyūḥādī give precedence to the second (Tabarī, *Majma'*, 4:319.17; Māyūḥādī, *Kashshaf*, 7:493.19).

<sup>73</sup> Muḡāḍil, *Tafsīr*, 3:435.9; Muḡāḍil, *Khams mi'n*, 278.16; Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, 21:47.12 (and the tradition to the same effect from Ibn Jurayj) (d. 150/767), *ibid.*, 47.161; Jaṣṣaṣ, *Albāḥiṭ*, 2:486.6; Abū 'Layḥ al-Samrānī, *Tafsīr*, 3:22.23; Ibn, *Tibyan*, 8:279.17; Wāḥidī, *Wāḥīd*, 3:444.1; Tabarī, *Jāmi'*, 2:395.22; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 25:149.11; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 5:385.11; Thā'libī, *Jāmi'ihī*, 3:326.16; Suyūṭī, *Ḍurr*, 5:166.20 (from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr); also Strāḥādī (d. 494/1101), *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, n.p. 1345 sh. 269.15 (for this Karrānī text, see Lezard, *Lanque*, 91-4 no. 29, and J. van Ess, *Ungewöhnliche Texte aus Karrahīn*, Heidelberg 1980, 73f.). For an anecdote that assumes this interpretation of the verse, see below, ch. 4, note 190. Cf. also Ibn 'Ayyūb, *Majma'*, 3:188.13 (to Q3:104).

<sup>74</sup> *Majma'*, *Material*, 34 (Ibn Mas'ūd), 227 (Ibn al-Zubayr (d. 73/692)); Ibn Abī Dāwūd (d. 316/929), *Mashāḥif*, ed. Jeffery in his *Material*, 39.3 ('Uthmān (d. 35/656)), 82.18 (Ibn al-Zubayr); Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 7:91 no. 7,595 ('Uthmān), 91f. no. 7,596 (Ibn al-Zubayr); anon. (writing 425/1034), *al-Mabāḥiṭ al-nazm al-mā'ānī*, in A. Jeffery (ed.), *The Mabāḥiṭ al-nazm al-nazm al-nazm*, Cairo 1954, 102.3 (Ibn al-Zubayr), 102.9 ('Uthmān); Qurṭubī, *Jāmi'*, 4:165.16 (Ibn al-Zubayr), 165.20 ('Uthmān); Suyūṭī, *Ḍurr*, 2:62.1 (Ibn al-Zubayr). This reading was among those that carried Ibn Shanabūdhī (d. 328/939) a hogging (see Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990), *Fihrist*, Beirut 1978, 48.7, and for the incident, *Er*, art. 'Ibn Shanabūdhī' (R. Parcy)).

<sup>75</sup> Ibn 'Ayyūb, *Majma'*, 3:188.9; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, 3:21.6; Thā'libī, *Jāmi'ihī*, 1:355.14 (read *wa-ta'īnna 'ilāhā* for *wa-ta'īnna*).

<sup>76</sup> The insincere adherent, by contrast, does not accept reproof (Q2:206); it is thanks to this, no doubt, that Q2:207 has attracted exegesis in terms of forbidding wrong. The relevance of this verse, and Tabarī's commentary on it, were drawn to my attention by Eran Kolthoff.

and forbidding wrong, and was killed.<sup>77</sup> Tabarī takes the wider view that the scope of the verse includes both commanding right and holy war.<sup>78</sup> The other verse is Q3:21, which refers to those who 'slay those who command justice (*al-ḡaṣīṣ*)'; this again is taken to refer to death incurred through commanding right and forbidding wrong.<sup>79</sup> Thus the exegetes display a fairly consistent tendency to enhance the standing of forbidding wrong by relating it to Koranic material which does not require such an interpretation.

As might be expected from all this, the exegetes are much concerned with the apparent negation of the duty in Q5:105: 'O believers, look after your own souls (*alalaykum anfyusakum*). He who is astray cannot hurt you, if you are rightly guided.'<sup>80</sup> Their tendency here is in one way or another to minimise the erosion of the duty that this verse might suggest to the unwary Muslim. Thus Tabarī presents two main views. The first is that the verse refers to some future time when forbidding wrong will cease to be effective, so that the duty will lapse,<sup>81</sup> in other words, the verse has no application in the present. The second view does not deny the relevance of the verse to our own times, but sees a catch in the clause 'if you are rightly guided': those who fail to forbid wrong are *ipso facto* not rightly guided.<sup>82</sup> Tabarī himself opts for the second view.<sup>83</sup> Elsewhere we even encounter talk of abrogation within Q5:105.<sup>84</sup> Overall, the sources abound in vague references to men of straw who misconstrue the verse in a sense antithetical to

forbidding wrong, but it is extremely rare to find an author who actually adopts such a position.<sup>85</sup>

The general conclusion from this account of the activity of the exegetes is that their detailed understanding of the verses and their wider conception of the duty do not have very much to do with each other. As we have seen repeatedly, their reading of scripture tends to be informed by an understanding of forbidding wrong which cannot be derived directly from the verses themselves. They understand the duty primarily as one to be performed by individual believers to each other, and not, say, by the community as a whole towards the world at large; and they see its scope as in the first instance response to specific misdeeds, rather than vague and general ethical affirmation.<sup>86</sup> This perspective is by and large one that they simply assume; they do not generally expend much energy in forcing it on an unwilling scripture. The overall effect is to insert the duty into the daily life of the community in a far more concrete way than the Koran, read as naked scripture, would seem to require. It is this concrete understanding of forbidding wrong that will be the central concern of this book.

<sup>85</sup> The verse is invoked to play down the duty by Jāhiz (d. 255/868f.) (*Kitāb al-ṣiṭṭa wa-ḥifz al-ḥimn*, in 'A. M. Hārūn (ed.), *Riṣā'at al-Jāhiz*, Cairo 1964-79, 1:163-6), and again by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071) (*Tamhīd*, ed. M. A. al-Ahwā'ī et al., Rabat etc. 1967-16, 161-12; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istidhkar*, Damascus and Beirut 1993, 6:363f. nos. 9, 388, 9, 393). I owe these references to Larry Conrad, Fran Kohlberg and Maribel Ferrero respectively.

<sup>86</sup> The narrow view of the scope of forbidding wrong discussed above, 22-4, is an interesting exception; but as we have seen, as a theory of the duty it was stillborn.

<sup>77</sup> Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 4:250 no. 4,007; Wāhidī (d. 468/1076), *Alabāh nuṣūl al-Qur'ān*, ed. A. Saqr, Cairo 1969, 59-7; Ibn al-'Arabī, *Alḥikām*, 144-21; Qurṭubī, *Jāmi'*, 3:21-5; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, 1:241-15. The Imāmī exegetes, who cannot bring themselves to quote 'Umar, allude to other traditions to the same effect from 'Alī (d. 40/661) and Ibn 'Abbās (see, for example, Tūsī, *Tibyān*, 2:183, 19); such traditions are also known to the Sunnis and Zaydis (see, for example, Qurṭubī, *Jāmi'*, 3:212, and Māwardī, *Nihāya*, 1:267-3; Abū 'l-Faḥr al-Dawānī, *Burhān*, t. 24a, 14).

<sup>78</sup> Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 4:251, 1 (but cf. *ibid.*, 250-7); compare the view of Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī) quoted by Tūsī (*Tibyān*, 2:183-20). Tabarī seems to take the view that the reference is exclusively to *al-amr bi-l-i-mā'ruf* (*Maḥma'*, 1:301-26). For Ibn al-'Arabī the verse tends to support the view that it is good to risk one's life in forbidding wrong (*Alḥikām*, 145, 14).

<sup>79</sup> Qurṭubī sees the verse as a proof of the permissibility of commanding right even when one risks getting killed (*Jāmi'*, 4:48, 19; and cf. Ibn al-'Arabī, *Alḥikām*, 266-5). Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī quotes from Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī) the view that the verse highly commends performance of the duty in the face of risk (*Tafsīr*, 7:230, 13). Tūsī likewise quotes a view to the effect that the verse permits commanding right even at the risk of one's life, but he goes on to refute it (*Tibyān*, 2:422, 16; similarly Tabarī, *Maḥma'*, 1:423, 31).

<sup>80</sup> For an extended account of the problem, see Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 11:138-53.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 138-46 nos. 12,848-63.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-51, supported by Tabarī with nos. 12,869-78, although only nos. 12,869f. do so explicitly.

<sup>83</sup> See Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Salām (d. 224/838f.), *al-Nāziḥa wa'l-mansūkh*, ed. J. Burton, Cambridge 1987, 98, 11; Hibatallah ibn Salāma (d. 410/1019), *al-Nāziḥa wa'l-mansūkh*, Cairo 1960, 42-4; Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 543/1148), *Arīdat al-nihāziyyin bi-sharḥ Ṣūḥb al-Tirmidhī*, Cairo n.d., 9:13-18). Jaṣṣaṣ reports that some consider the verse to abrogate or limit the duty (*Alḥikām*, 2:486-17), and proceeds to refute this view.

## TRADITION

## 1. THE 'THREE MODES' TRADITION

There are numerous Prophetic and other traditions on the subject of forbidding wrong,<sup>1</sup> several of them well known; but one, a Kufian tradition, is far more prominent in our sources than any of the others. For reasons that will appear, I shall call it the 'three modes' tradition. It is encountered in two main forms. Either the Prophetic core of the tradition occurs on its own, or it is found within the framework of an anecdote relating to a later period. We can best begin with the anecdote.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This abundance is explicitly noted by some Koranic exegetes (Qurṭubī, *Jāmi'*, 4:48, 6 (to Q3:21, quoting Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071)); Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 2:87, 2 (to Q3:104); *ibid.*, 6:19, 28 (to Q5:79)).

<sup>2</sup> Abū Dawūd al-Tayālīsī (d. 204/819), *Musnad*, Hyderabad 1321, 292 no. 2, 196 (whence Q3:21, quoting Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071)); Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 2:87, 2 (to Q3:104); Jaṣṣaṣ, *Alhikām*, 2:30, 7; 'Abd al-Razzaq ibn Hammām al-San'ānī (d. 211/827), *Muṣannaf*, ed. H. al-A'zamī, Beirut 1970-2, 3, 285 no. 5, 649; Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), *Muṣannaf*, ed. K. Y. al-Hūt, Beirut 1989, 1:492f, nos. 5, 686f (both lacking the Prophetic tradition); Ibn Hābal, *Musnad*, 3:10, 12, 20, 8, 49, 10, 52, 29, lacking the Prophetic tradition); Ibn Hābal, *Musnad*, in the *Munṭaḥab* of his pupil Ibrāhīm ibn Khuzaym al-Shāshī, ed. Š. al-Badr al-Sāmarrā'ī and M. M. K. al-Šā'idi, Beirut 1988, 284 no. 906; Muslim ibn al-Hajjājī (d. 261/875), *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. M. F. 'Abd al-Bāqī, Cairo 1955-6, 69 no. 49; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 406 no. 1275, 1330 no. 4, 013; Abū Dawūd, *Sunan*, 1:677f, no. 1140; Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 6:337 no. 2, 173; Ibn Abī 'l-Dunyā, *Amr*, 115 (d. 739/1339), ed. 'A. M. 'Uthmān, Medina 1970-, 1:311f, nos. 301f; Bayhaqī, *Shr'ah*, 6:85f, no. 7, 559; and cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi'*, 1:324f, no. 107 (without *isnād*). The tradition is partly paraphrased and partly translated in Weisnick, *The Muslim creed*, 106f. The *isnāds* of these versions (together with those referred to below, note 6) point strongly to a Kufian provenance for the tradition. One group of *isnāds*, characterised by the presence of Ismā'īl ibn Rajā' al-Zubaydī (fl. first half of the second/eighth century), remains solidly Kufian into the late second/eighth century (see, for example, Ibn Hābal, *Musnad*, Kufian into the late second/eighth century), marked by the presence of Qays ibn Muslim al-Jadali (d. 120/737), 3:52, 29). The other, marked by the presence of Qays ibn Muslim al-Jadali (d. 120/737), is mainly non-Kufian into the mid-second/eighth century (of four transmitters of this vintage, the only non-Kufian is the Basran Shu'ba ibn al-Hajjājī (d. 160/776)); thereafter non-Kufian transmitters (all Iraqi, and mostly Basran) become more prominent (see, for example, *ibid.*, 3:54, 23; Abū Dawūd al-Tayālīsī, *Musnad*, 292 no. 2, 196; Ibn Abī 'l-Dunyā's *isnād* is defective).

The scene is set on a feast-day in Medina during the governorship of the future Umayyad caliph Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam (r. 64-5/684-5).<sup>3</sup> Marwān, presiding over the congregation in his role of governor, commits two ritual improprieties: he brings out the pulpit (*minbar*) on a feast-day, and he begins with the sermon (*khutba*) before the prayer (*ṣalāt*).<sup>4</sup> A man then arises and rebukes him: 'Marwān, you've gone against the proper custom (*sunna*)! You've brought out the pulpit on a feast-day, when it used not to be, and you've started with the sermon before the prayer!' At this point the Companion Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693) intervenes: he inquires the identity of the author of the rebuke, and pronounces that the man has done his duty. Here, then, we have a concrete example of the practice of rebuke within the community. Somebody had done something wrong – something quite specific – and someone else thereupon took it upon himself to upbraid him for it.

The Prophetic tradition that Abū Sa'īd then proceeds to relate provides a succinct theory of this practice. 'Whoever sees a wrong (*munkar*),<sup>5</sup> says the Prophet, "and is able to put it right with his hand (*an yuḥabbayyihāhu bi-yadhi*), let him do so; if he can't, then with his tongue (*bi-lisānihi*); if he can't, then with [or in] his heart (*bi-qalbihi*),<sup>6</sup> which is the bare minimum of faith.'<sup>7</sup> This tradition is referred to, quoted and commented upon with great frequency in subsequent literature.<sup>8</sup> It owes this distinction to the fact

<sup>3</sup> That Marwān is governor in Medina, not caliph in Syria, is clear from the presence of the Companion Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693), and explicit in a related tradition (Bukhārī (d. 256/870), *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. L. Krehl, Leiden 1862-1908, 1:244, 2; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 3:280, 9). Marwān was twice governor of Medina, once in the 40s/660s and once in the 50s/670s (see *Et'*, art. 'Marwān I', 621b (C. E. Bosworth)).

<sup>4</sup> For the ritual issues, see *Et'*, art. 'Khutba' (A. J. Weisnick). The details of Marwān's innovations vary slightly in some versions; in these and other particulars, I follow Abū Dawūd's version.

<sup>5</sup> The problematic character of the idea of putting something right with (or in) the heart was clearly seen by Nawawī (d. 676/1277) in his commentaries on the tradition (see his *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Beirut 1987, 1:384, 25, and his commentary on his own selection of forty traditions published as *Sharḥ maṭn al-Aḥbā' in al-Nawawīyya*, Damascus 1966, 92, 7).

<sup>6</sup> For versions of the tradition that include the frame-story, see above, note 2 (but note that Ibn Abī 'l-Dunyā's version is defective). For versions in which the Prophetic tradition appears on its own, see Abū Dawūd, *Sunan*, 4:511 no. 4, 340 (whence Jaṣṣaṣ, *Alhikām*, 2:486, 12); Ibn Abī 'l-Dunyā, *Amr*, 51 no. 10; Nasī'ī, *Sunan*, 8:111, 6, 112, 3; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 6:95, 1, 10, 90, 13, and, for versions without *isnāds*, Muṭraqī, *Kanz*, 3:68 no. 5, 324, 75 no. 5, 556; Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid (d. 1206/1792), *Nawādir al-muḥimmīn bi-ahkāmihī biḥikām al-murawā'īn*, Cairo n.d., 65, 2. Later writers felt free to omit the frame-story. Thus an unframed version quoted by Jaṣṣaṣ (*Alhikām*, 2:30, 14) derives from Abū Dawūd's framed version (for which see above, note 2); and Nawawī, in adopting the tradition from Muslim for his selection of forty traditions (see the following note), likewise left the frame-story aside. For the hierarchy of hand, tongue and heart, compare, for example, Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 70, 5, 50.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, below, ch. 5, note 76; ch. 6, note 125; ch. 7, note 60; ch. 8, 173, and notes 32, 101. The tradition also owes some of its celebrity to Nawawī's inclusion of it

that it provided later generations with a fundamental building-block for their scholastic doctrines of forbidding wrong. Whereas the Koranic diction of 'commanding' and 'forbidding' suggests a purely verbal duty, this Prophetic tradition spells out a hierarchy of modes of response to wrong: deed, word and thought.

There is, however, one thing about this tradition that is unsettling. At no point does the Prophet – or anyone else – refer explicitly to 'commanding right' or 'forbidding wrong'. What the diction of the tradition and the Koran have in common is the term 'wrong' (*munkar*). Yet in speaking of what is to be done about the wrong, our tradition uses a term of its own, namely to 'put right' (*ghayyara*).<sup>8</sup> The literal meaning of this verb is to 'change', whether for better or for worse.<sup>9</sup> But in the usage that doubtless lies behind that of the tradition, it seems rather to have the sense of putting things to rights in the context of a personal injury.<sup>10</sup> The upshot is that

without the unthinking unanimity of the scholastic tradition, we would not know for sure that the Prophet and Abū Sa'īd were talking about 'forbidding wrong'.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. OTHER TRADITIONS OF POSITIVE TENDENCY

We can deal more briefly with the rest of the traditions on forbidding wrong transmitted from the Prophet, since these have much less to offer in doctrinal terms.

The largest group consists, predictably, of sayings which in one way or another exhort believers to perform the duty. A widely quoted example is a further Kūfān tradition with a structure similar to the 'three modes' tradition.<sup>12</sup> In the frame-story, the caliph Abū Bakr (r. 11–13/632–4) quotes Q5:105, with its suggestion that the righteous believer need not concern himself with the misdeeds of others,<sup>13</sup> implicitly or explicitly, he tells the community that this is a misinterpretation. He makes his point by quoting a saying of the Prophet (although there are other versions in which it is ascribed to Abū Bakr himself).<sup>14</sup> This saying threatens people with collec-

Footnote 7 (cont.)

In his popular selection of forty traditions (published as *Manā al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawīyya*, Beirut 1977, 76 no. 34 (from Muslim)), whence its discussion in the numerous commentaries on this little work, starting with his own (*Sharḥ maʿnā al-Arbaʿīn*, 91f. no. 34; Ibn Daqīq al-ʿId (d. 702/1302), *Sharḥ al-Arbaʿīn* in *ʿIlm al-Nawawī* (sic), Istanbul 55–7 no. 34; Tafsīr al-Qurʾān (d. 793/1390), *Sharḥ ḥadīth al-Arbaʿīn* (sic), Istanbul 1316, 105 no. 34; Ibn Kayyāl (d. 795/1393), *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm wa-l-ʿUlūm*, Beirut 1987, 346–52 no. 34; Ibn Hajar al-Ḥayrāmī (d. 974/1567), *ʿAḥḥ al-muḥīn li-sharḥ al-Arbaʿīn*, Cairo 1352, 244–8 no. 34; Alf al-Qāfī (d. 1014/1606), *al-Muḥīn al-muḥīn li-ʿIlm al-Arbaʿīn*, Cairo 1910, 188–94 no. 34; Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī Brūṣī (d. 1137/1725), *Sharḥ al-Arbaʿīn* in *ʿIlm al-ʿUlūm* (in Turkish), Istanbul 1253, 336–41 no. 34; and many others).

<sup>8</sup> A few versions of the tradition use *amkara* in place of *ghayyara* (Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayfīsī, *Musnad*, 292 no. 2, 196; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3, 92, 22; Tirmidhī, *Saḥīḥ*, 6, 337 no. 2, 173; Bayhaqī, *Shūʿab*, 6, 85f. no. 7, 559); the distribution of this variant does not correlate with the lines of transmission. The verb *ghayyara* appears frequently in other traditions (see, for example, below, notes 16, 18, 54, 60).

<sup>9</sup> The Koran uses *ghayyara* only where the change is for the worse (see Q4:119, Q8:53, Q13:11, and cf. Q47:15). The lexicographers, however, report usages referring to the casing or repairing (the verb employed is *asfaha*) of camel-saddles, where the change is clearly for the better, and they illustrate these usages from poetry (E. W. Lane, *Arḥ* Arabic-English Lexicon, London 1863–93, 2, 315a; Azharī (d. 370/980), *Taḥḥīḥ al-lughā*, ed. A. M. Ḥarūn *et al.*, Cairo 1964–7, 8, 189b, 16, 190a, 1; Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān*, 5, 40a, 26, 40b, 3, 42b, 1; Murraqāʾ al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791), *Taj̄ al-ʿArṣ*, ed. A. A. Farrāḥ *et al.*, Kuwait 1965–, 13, 2289, 13, 289, 18).

<sup>10</sup> Note, for example, the verse of the pre-Islamic Tāʾī poet Qays ibn Jurwa (for whom see W. Gaskel, *Gannimari an-nasab: Das genealogische Werk des Ḥiṣṣān ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbi*, Leiden 1966, index, *ca.*) in which he makes a dire threat should his enemy not put right some of what his tribe have done: *In ʿin lam tuḥḥayyir ba ʿānā mā qad fa ʿānām (ʿānū* A. A. Beyan (ed.), *The Nahḥīʾ of Jarir and al-Farrāzdaq*, Leiden 1905–12, 1082, 13, appendix XI, and see Abū Zayd al-Anṣarī (d. 215/830f.), *al-Nawāḥīʾ fī ʿY-ḥigā*, ed. M. A. Ahmad, Beirut and Cairo 1981, 266, 6; Ḥāfiḥ al-Ṭāʾī, *Dīwān*, ed. A. S. Jannal, Cairo n.d., 170 no. 16, line 4; Muḥarrad (d. 286/900), *Kaḥmī*, ed. W. Wright, Leipzig 1864–92, 364, 8. I owe these references to the Concordance of Pre-Islamic and Umayyad Poetry of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem). When ʿAbdallāh ibn Ubayy interceded for the Jewish Banū Qaynuqāʾ in the events leading to their expulsion in the year 2/624, he was slightly wounded in the face; his Jewish confederates then protested that they would

not reside in a place where their protector had suffered this injury without their being able to put things right (*lā nuḥḥayr an nuḥḥayyiruhū*, *In nasraʾi lahu ghayyaru*, Wāqidi, *Maghāzī*, 178, 10). The crucified Māhān al-Ḥanāfī (d. 83/701f.) rebukes ʿAmmār al-Duhānī (d. 133/750f.) for watching the scene and doing nothing about it (*wa-lā nuḥḥayyir*, Fasaḥī, *Maʿrif*, 2, 615, 4).

<sup>11</sup> Compare the cases of Q5:79 and Q7:165 (see above, ch. 2, 15–17, for the verses themselves, and 26–8 for their exegesis).

<sup>12</sup> This tradition has pride of place in Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), *Musnad*, ed. A. M. Shākir, Cairo 1949–58, 1, 153 no. 1; also 163 no. 16, 168f. nos. 29f., 176 no. 53; Abū ʿUbayd, *Nasāʾih*, 99, 21; Ibn Abī Shaybā, *Muḥammad*, 7, 504f. no. 37, 583; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1, 327 no. 4, 005; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 4, 509f. no. 4, 338 (whence Jassās, *Aljāmiʿ*, 2, 31, 6); Tirmidhī, *Saḥīḥ*, 6, 335f. no. 2, 169, 8, 221 no. 3, 059; Ibn Abī ʿUbayd, *Aḥw*, 37 no. 1; Abū Yūsuf, *Kiḥān*, 10, 18; Ḥumaydī, *Musnad*, 3f. no. 3; Abū Bakr al-Murrazī (d. 292/905), *Musnad Abī Bakr al-Siddīq*, ed. S. al-ʿArnāʿūt, Beirut n.d., 134–6 no. 86; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 11, 150f. nos. 12, 876, 12, 878 (to Q5:105); Ibn Ḥilbān, *Saḥīḥ*, in the arrangement of Fārisī, 1, 310f. no. 300; Jassās, *Alkām*, 2, 486, 25; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 10, 9, 121; Bayhaqī, *Shūʿab*, 6, 82 no. 7, 550 (where the text is corrupt, cf. Abū Dāwūd's version); for versions without *innādh*, see Ibn al-ʿAthīr, *Jāmiʿ*, 1, 330f. no. 111; Ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥab, *Maʿrif*, 65, 22. The common link of most of these versions is the Kūfān *ismāʿīl* and Ibn Abī Kāhūd (d. 145/762f.); the transmitters from Ismāʿīl are a mixture of Kūfāns and others from lower Iraq. That the provenance of the tradition is Kūfān finds confirmation in the *ismāʿīs* of the non-Prophetic versions cited below, note 14. At the same time, two brief traditions adduced by Ṭabarī to the same effect have Kūfān *ismāʿīs* (Ṭafsīr, 11, 148 nos. 12, 869f.; in the first, the authority quoted is the Meccinese Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab (d. 94/712f.), while in the second, it is the Kūfān Companion ʿUdayyān ibn al-Yamān (d. 36/656f.)). There is also a parallel in a letter of Umar ibn al-ʿAḍī (r. 99–101/717–20) in which he makes no mention of Abū Bakr or any other early authority (ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (d. 214/829), *Sifr ʿUmar ʿibn ʿAlaʿ al-ʿAsāʿ*, ed. A. ʿUbayd, Damascus 1964, 162, 11).

<sup>13</sup> See above, ch. 2, note 80.

<sup>14</sup> These other versions are to be found in Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 11, 148–51 (nos. 12, 871f., 12, 874f.,

tive punishment from on high if they do not take action to right wrongs – according to one version, if they see a wrongdoer (*ẓālim*) and do not restrain him;<sup>15</sup> according to another, which more directly concerns us, if they see a wrong (*munkar*) and fail to put it right (*ghayyara*).<sup>16</sup> Thus the same disparity appears here between the wording of the tradition and the Koranic terminology of commanding and forbidding.<sup>17</sup> This time, as it happens, neither version of the saying of the Prophet seems to appear independently of the frame-story, though a somewhat similar saying is transmitted by another Companion.<sup>18</sup>

Another much-quoted example of such exhortatory traditions urges the believers to perform the duty (usually with the wording *la-ta'imurinna bi-'ma'rif wa-la-tanhabunna 'an al-munkar*) or be visited with unpleasant consequences.<sup>19</sup> Just what these consequences will be varies in the different

Footnote 14 (cont.)

12.877); cf. also Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 1:168 no. 29, and Tirmidhī's comments to both his versions. The common link of all but one of Tabarī's versions is the Kūfian Qays ibn Abī Hāzim (d. 97/75f.). (He in turn is the transmitter from whom Ismā'īl ibn Abī Khālid relates most of the Prophetic versions cited above, note 12.) The *imāds* remain predominantly Kūfian into the later second/eighth century.

15 So, for example, Tirmidhī's versions.

16 So, for example, the versions of Ibn Māja and Abū Yūsuf; cf. also Murtazaqī, *Kanz*, 3:67 no. 5.317, and 83 no. 5.595, both lacking the frame-story. It should be noted that none of the non-Prophetic versions is of this type. Another variant (Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 1:176 no. 53) uses *an-kariz* in place of *ghayyara*.

17 By contrast, in two of the non-Prophetic versions quoted by Tabarī (see above, note 14), Abū Bakr enjoins: 'By God, you will command right and forbid wrong. . . .' (nos. 12.874, 12.877).

18 See, for example, Abū Dawūd al-Tayālisī, *Musnad*, 92 no. 663; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 11:348 no. 20,723; Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 4:361.4, 363.8, 364.15, 366.4; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1:329 no. 4,009; Abū Dawūd, *Sunan*, 4:510f. no. 4,339; Ibn Abī 'l-Dunayr, *Amr*, 47 no. 6; Ibn Hibbān, *Sahih*, in the arrangement of Farsi, 1:308f. nos. 296, 298; Baihaqi, *Sunan*, 10:91.31. All versions use the term *ghayyara*; some (as that of Abū Dawūd al-Tayālisī) speak of collective punishment. The Companion who transmits the tradition is the Kūfian Jari' ibn 'Abdallāh al-Bajafī (d. 51/671f.); the common link of the *imāds* is the Kūfian Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'ī (d. 127/744f.), and subsequent transmitters are mostly Kūfians or Basrans. Compare also Haythamī, *Zamā'ir*, 7:269.13, and Murtazaqī, *Kanz*, 3:85 no. 5.601 (from the Syrian Companion Abū U'nāma al-Bāhilī (d. 86/705)).

19 Abū 'Ubayd, *Nasāih*, 100.14; Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 5:388.28, 390.1, 391.18; Tirmidhī, *Sahih*, 6:336 no. 2,170; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 7:460 no. 37,221; Ibn Abī 'l-Dunayr, *Amr*, 54 no. 12; Jassās, *Al-kāfi*, 2:488.32; Baihaqi, *Sunan*, 10:93.22; Baihaqi, *Shr'ah*, 6:84 no. 7.558; and for versions without *imāds*, see Ibn al-Athīr, *Jami'*, 1:352 no. 113; Murtazaqī, *Kanz*, 3:70 no. 5.529, 76 no. 5.562; Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *Nasāih*, 65.16. All these versions are transmitted by the Companion Hūdhayfā (except that in Ibn Abī 'l-Dunayr's version, the saying appears as Hūdhayfā's own); the *imāds*, where given, are Mū'adh or Kūfian. Other versions are transmitted by 'Āisha (d. 58/678) (Ibn Hanbal, *Muṣannaf*, 6:159.3; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1:327 no. 4,004; Ibn Abī 'l-Dunayr, *Amr*, 48 no. 7; Baihaqi, *Sunan*, 10:93.26), 'Alī (d. 40/661) (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 7:504 no. 37.576), Hāsan ibn 'Alī (d. 49/669f.) (Nu'aym ibn Hāmmād (d. 228/843), *Fitan*, ed. S. Zakkār, Mecca n.d., 141.22, whence Murtazaqī, *Kanz*, 3:77 no. 5.563), Abū Bakr (see the references given above, note 17), and others (see, for example, Ibn Abī 'l-Dunayr, *Amr*, 49

versions of the tradition. One formulation is that God will bestow power on the worst of them and then ignore the prayers of the best of them;<sup>20</sup> a more colourful one is that He will send the Persians ('*Ajām*) against them to smite their necks and eat their spoils (*fa'y*).<sup>21</sup> This tradition, or at least its opening injunction, can also appear as a component of more complex traditions.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the other traditions we have considered so far, the injunction is also at home among the Shi'ites, who transmit it from their own authorities.<sup>23</sup>

It would be unprofitable to attempt to cover all traditions that in one way or another make favourable reference to forbidding wrong. What follows should give a fair idea of the character of the remaining material in this category:

no. 8; Haythamī, *Zamā'ir*, 7:266.15, 266.19). Overall, the *imāds* are Meccanese or Kūfian. For Zaydī versions, see below, ch. 10, note 9.

20 So Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 5:390.1.

21 So Nu'aym ibn Hāmmād's version. The Zaydī 'Abdallāh ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Qāsim (fl. later third/ninth century), brother of the Imām al-Ḥadi' ʿAlī 'l-Ḥaq (d. 298/911), quotes a version (without *imād*) in which the threat runs: 'or you will assuredly turn into miserable peasants' (*aw la-takūnūna asāgimā' zanā'ira*) (*al-Nāsib* wa-'l-*imān*, ed. Berlin, Gieser 128, f. 45b.7, for this manuscript, see W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnisse der arabischen Handschriften der Königl. Preuss. Bibliothek zu Berlin*, Berlin 1887–99, 9:574 no. 10,226). For the reference to miserable peasants, compare the activist tradition quoted in Abū Bakr al-Khāliqī (d. 311/923), *al-Miṣnā' min ma'ā'ir Abī 'Abdillāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Hanbal*, ed. Z. Ahmed, Dacca 1975, 18.18.

22 For one case see above, note 17. In another case the initial injunction appears in some versions of a Kūfian tradition describing the misdeeds of the Isrā'īlites, in particular their habit of socialising with offenders whom they had previously rebuked, a practice which led to their being cursed in the manner described in Q5:78–81 (Abū Dawūd, *Sunan*, 4:508f. no. 4,336; Ibn Abī 'l-Dunayr, *Amr*, 45 no. 4; Muḥammad ibn Waddāh (d. 287/900), *Kināh al-bāda*, ed. and trans. M. I. Ferrro, Madrid 1988, 230 = 359f. no. 58; Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 10:491 no. 12,306; Baihaqi, *Sunan*, 10:93.5; Baihaqi, *Shr'ah*, 6:80 no. 7.345; and for versions without *imāds*, see Ibn al-Athīr, *Jami'*, 1:327–9 no. 109; Haythamī, *Zamā'ir*, 7:269.17; Murtazaqī, *Kanz*, 3:69 no. 5.527, 79 no. 5.573). This tradition is more widely attested without the injunction (see for example Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 5:268 no. 3,713; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1:327f. no. 4,006; Tirmidhī, *Sahih*, 8:215f. nos. 3,050f.; Ibn Waddāh, *Bāda*, 229 = 359 no. 57; Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 10:492–4 nos. 12,307–9, 12,311; Baihaqi, *Shr'ah*, 6:79f. no. 7.544); it is generally transmitted by the Kūfian Companion Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/652E).

23 For the Imāmī, see Kulaynī, *Kaḥf*, 5:56 no. 3, and Tūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:176 no. 1. The tradition is here a saying of Abū 'l-Ḥasan, who is presumably 'Alī al-Riḍā (d. 203/818). (The transmitter is listed among the latter's companions, see Tūsī (d. 460/1067), *Riḥāl*, ed. M. Š. 'Alī Bakr al-Ullm, Najaf 1961, 388.2, and cf. the editor's footnote thereto; cf. also the *imād* of Kulaynī, *Kaḥf*, 5:59 no. 13, and Tūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:177 no. 7.) For the Zaydīs, see Zayd ibn 'Alī (d. 122/740) (attrib.), *Majma' al-bayh*, ed. E. Grifflin, Milan 1919, 294 no. 995 (where the saying is ascribed to 'Alī); Abū Ṭālib al-Nāḥiq (d. 424/1032f.), *Amānīh* (in the recension of Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Salām (d. 573/1177E), *Tawṣīf al-maḥabb* fī *Amānīh* Abī Ṭālib), ed. Y. 'A. al-Fadhil, Beirut 1975, 293.15 (from the Prophet). In this chapter, I make reference to Shi'ite traditions only to indicate parallels to Sunnī traditions; I cite Imāmī parallels only from Kulaynī's *Kaḥf* and Tūsī's *Tahdhīb*, and leave aside versions found in Zaydī sources with mainstream Sunnī *imāds*.

The high standing of the duty in Islam is emphasised. Commanding right and forbidding wrong are two religious obligations (*farā'idh*) which God has inscribed in His book;<sup>24</sup> they are two of the shares that, taken together, make up Islam.<sup>25</sup> The most pious (*amrā' al-'imān*) are those most zealous in performing the duty (*amrūnukum bi'l-ma'rūf*) and most loyal to their kinsfolk;<sup>26</sup> he who commands right and forbids wrong is God's deputy on earth (*khalfat Allāh fī 'arṣi*), and the deputy of His book and of His Prophet.<sup>27</sup> Conversely, 'a dead man among the living' is explained as one who fails to perform the duty;<sup>28</sup> one who abandons it is no believer.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time an activist tone is often in evidence. The Prophet tells his followers that victory and conquest lie ahead; if they live to see them, they should fear God, command right and forbid wrong.<sup>30</sup> The duty may be explicitly linked to holy war. According to one saying of 'Alī (d. 40/661), the finest form of holy war is commanding right;<sup>31</sup> another of his sayings has it that the duty comprises two of the four parts of holy war.<sup>32</sup> As

<sup>24</sup> So Dabḥak Ibn Muẓāhim (d. 105/723f.) (Abū 'Ubayd, *Nāṣihah*, 101.4; Jassās, *Al-kān*, 2:489.5; the transmitter from Dabḥak is Kāfān).

<sup>25</sup> So Umar (d. 23/644) (Abū 'Ubayd, *Nāṣihah*, 100.29; Jassās, *Al-kān*, 2:489.2; the *isnād* is Basran or Kūfān). Cf. also the saying of Hādḥaythā referred to below, ch. 5, note 173.

<sup>26</sup> So the Prophet (Ibn Abī Shayḥa, *Muṣannaf*, 7:504 no. 37, 580; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Muṣannaf*, 6:432.4; Ibn Abī 'Ubayd, *Amr*, 65 no. 21; Hayṭhamī, *Zawā'id*, 7:263.17). The *isnād* is Kūfān.

<sup>27</sup> P. Cronje and M. Hinds, *God's calligraph*, Cambridge 1986, 98, citing Nu'aym Ibn Ḥannān, *Fitra*, 57.10 (from anonymous authorities); also Ibn 'Adī (d. 365/976), *Kāmil*, Beirut 1984, 2:104.5; Shīrawayḥ Ibn Shāhīdār al-Daylāmī (d. 509/1115), *al-Firdaws bi'l-ma'rifat al-khāṣa*, Beirut 1986, 3:586 no. 5, 834, whence Murtaqī, *Kanz*, 3:77 no. 5, 564; *ma'rifat al-khāṣa*, Beirut 1986, 3:586 no. 5, 834, whence Murtaqī, *Kanz*, 3:77 no. 5, 564; Najm al-Dīn al-Nasāfī (d. 537/1142), *al-Qanḍ fī akhṭar 'ulamā' Samarqand*, ed. N. M. al-Fayṣal, Saudi Arabia 1991, 233.18; 'Abd al-Ghānī al-Maqḍisī (d. 600/1203), *al-ʿAmr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*, ed. S. A. al-Zuhayrī, Riyāḍ 1995, 42 no. 53, 56 no. 80. Apart from Nu'aym's version, all are from the Prophet. The provenance seems to be Syrian or Egyptian. For a Zaydī version, see below, ch. 10, note 43.

<sup>28</sup> So Hādḥaythā (Bayhaqī, *Shū'ab*, 6:96 no. 7, 590; contrast the version given with the same Kūfān *isnād* in Ibn Abī Shayḥa, *Muṣannaf*, 7:504 no. 37, 577, where it is all a matter of the heart). The Imānīs transmit a similar saying from 'Alī (Tūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:181 no. 23).

<sup>29</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201), *al-Mīḥal al-muṣannaf*, Beirut 1983, 791f. no. 1, 322; Murtaqī, *Kanz*, 3:67 no. 5, 516 (Kūfān?); Ibn al-Jawzī is citing this Prophetic tradition to condemn it as inauthentic.

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal, *Muṣannaf*, 5:257 no. 3, 694, 305f. no. 3, 801; 6:96 no. 4, 156; Tirmidhī, *Sahīh*, 7:37 no. 2, 258; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 10:94.19; Bayhaqī, *Shū'ab*, 6:84 no. 7, 557; Ibn al-Akṭar, *Jam'ī*, 1:332 no. 1.4. The tradition is Kūfān.

<sup>31</sup> Zannakhshār, *Kashshaf*, 1:397.6; Maybūdi, *Kashf*, 2:234.6; Abū 'I-Furūḥ al-Rāzī, *Ram'at*, 3:142.6; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, 8:179.13; Abū 'I-Nasāfī, *Maḥabir*, 1:240 no. 3; Nizām al-Dīn al-Naysābūrī, *Gharā'ib*, 4:29.24; Abū 'I-Sūdī, *Jarḥat*, 1:529.20; Aḥmadīyish, *Himān*, 4:204.3 (all to Q3:104). I have not seen this saying outside the latter.

<sup>32</sup> 'Abd al-Ghānī al-Maqḍisī, *Amr*, 51 no. 68; Murtaqī, *Kanz*, 3:66 no. 5, 513. Cf. also Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, 7:91.3 (to Q3:104); Hayṭhamī, *Zawā'id*, 7:275.22; and, for the Zaydīs, Zayd Ibn 'Alī, *Majmū'at*, 235f. no. 831, 273 no. 942.

we have seen, the Prophet declares that the finest form of holy war is speaking out in the presence of an unjust ruler<sup>33</sup> – and, in some versions, being killed for it.<sup>34</sup> He likewise urges that respect of persons – or more precisely, fear of them (*hay'at al-nās*) – should not inhibit anyone from taking action when he sees something wrong.<sup>35</sup> No community, he warns, can be deemed holy which fails to secure the rights of the weak against the strong.<sup>36</sup>

3. TRADITIONS OF NEGATIVE TENDENCY

Against the considerable body of traditions that urge the performance of the duty there is a smaller number that tend to downplay it. These, of course, are more interesting, since they go against the rhetorical grain. We can best approach them through the eschatology of forbidding wrong. At first sight this might seem a strange place to look. Traditions linking forbidding wrong to eschatology are nevertheless quite common – sufficiently so to account for the choice made by the compilers of three of the classical collections and one major pre-classical collection to place their traditions on forbidding wrong among those concerned with eschatology.<sup>37</sup> What concerns us in these traditions is the bad times that lie ahead, not the good ones. As might be expected, those will not be propitious times

<sup>33</sup> See above, ch. 1, note 18, and cf. also Hayṭhamī, *Zawā'id*, 7:265.15.

<sup>34</sup> See above, ch. 1, notes 18–20.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn 'Abd al-Wahāb, *Nāṣihah*, 66.19; and cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Muṣannaf*, 3:529, 19.15, 53.13, 71.14; Ibn Mā'īna, *Sunan*, 1328 no. 4, 007; Tirmidhī, *Sahīh*, 6:351 no. 2, 192 (all versions with Basran *isnād*). The transmitter, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, laments that the opposite has been the case.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Mā'īna, *Sunan*, 810 no. 2, 426, 1329 no. 4, 010; Ibn Waddāh, *Bihā'*, 234 = 305 no. 81; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 6:95.8, 10:93.30, 94.7, 94.9, and of 94.1; Bayhaqī, *Shū'ab*, 6:81f. no. 7, 549; Murtaqī, *Kanz*, 3:74 nos. 5, 544–9. The tradition does not refer explicitly to *al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf* but, as these references show, it is associated with it by the collectors. The *isnād*s are Meccan, Kūfān or mixed. The tradition is also current among the Shī'ites. Imānī sources sometimes ascribe it to Ja'far al-Sādiq (d. 148/765) (Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, 5:50 no. 2; Tūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:180 no. 20). The Zaydīs know a variant form (with explicit mention of *al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf*) as a Prophetic tradition (Zayd Ibn 'Alī, *Majmū'at*, 294 no. 996).

<sup>37</sup> Thus Abū Dāwūd's *ḥabib al-amr wa'l-nahy* (*Sunan*, 4:508–15 nos. 4, 336–47) falls in his *kitab al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf*; the relevant chapters of Tirmidhī (*Sahīh*, 6:335–9 nos. 2, 169–75) are to be found in his *kitab al-ḥajj*, as are those of Ibn Mā'īna (*Sunan*, 1327–32 nos. 4, 004–17). Ibn Abī Shayḥa devotes no chapter to *al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf*, but includes a series of traditions about it in his *kitab al-ḥajj* (*Muṣannaf*, 7:504f. nos. 37, 575–83). Muslim, by contrast, places his versions of the 'three modes' tradition (*Sahīh*, 69f. nos. 49f.) in his *kitab al-ḥajj*. Nāsāfī devotes no chapter to *al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf*, but similarly includes his versions of the 'three modes' tradition in his *kitab al-ḥajj wa-sharḥ 'alī* (*Sunan*, 8:111f.). Here the concern is clearly with the implication of the phrase *ad'af al-ḥimān* for the concept of faith. Bukhārī, *Darīnī* (d. 255/869), and 'Abd al-Razzaq neglect the subject altogether. Overall, these facts strongly suggest that the collectors were not much interested in *al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf* as such.

for the duty. Thus the Companion Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/652f.) foretells that the Hour will come when people are at their worst, neither commanding right nor forbidding wrong.<sup>38</sup> This disarray may be presented as a shortcoming of the believers, to be visited with divine displeasure; thus another Companion, 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar (d. 73/693), holds that the eschatological beast which God will bring forth from the earth (Q27:82) will emerge when people no longer practise forbidding wrong.<sup>39</sup> But these conditions may also be seen as a context in which it will be appropriate for the believers to desist from performing the duty at all.

There are several examples of this trend. One is a well-known Syrian tradition in which the Prophet is asked about the implications of Q5:105, with its advice to the believers to look to their own souls.<sup>40</sup> In response he enjoins them to command right and forbid wrong until they find themselves confronted with the utter corruption of values;<sup>41</sup> they should then look to themselves and forget the populace at large.<sup>42</sup> Likewise the Companion Ibn Mas'ūd is present during a dispute as to whether Q5:105

<sup>38</sup> Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād, *Fitan*, 395.6 (Kūfān); I owe this reference to Nurit Tsafir. For further predictions of the decay of *al-amr bi'l-iḥsān* and *al-nahy 'an al-jabr*, see Ibn Abī Shāriba, *Muḥarrar*, 7:475 no. 37.349 (also Kūfān, from Ḥudhayfā); Ibn Waddāh, *Bida'*, 203 = 327 no. 5 (Egyptian, *muḥarrar*), 211 = 337f. no. 38 (Basran, *muḥarrar*); Bayhaqī, *Shi'ab*, 6:94 no. 7.584 (Egyptian Kūfān, from Ibn Mas'ūd); Ibn Abī 'Umayr, *Amr*, 69 no. 25 (= 128 no. 96), 74 *bi'* (also Kūfān, from Ibn Mas'ūd); Ibn Abī 'Umayr, *Amr*, 69 no. 25 (= 128 no. 96), 74 no. 29 (similarly, 122 no. 87), 77 no. 33, 121 no. 86; Ḥaythamī, *Zamā'ir*, 7:270.23, 280.9, 280.19; Muṭraqī, *Kanz*, 3:68 no. 5.519. For a prediction shared by Sunnī and Imānī sources, see Ibn Abī 'Umayr, *Amr*, 76 no. 31; Ḥaythamī, *Zamā'ir*, 7:280.22; Kulaymī, *Kaḥf*, 5:59 no. 14; Tūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:177 no. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād, *Fitan*, 402.8, 404.8 (in the first, a *ḥan* has dropped out before *bi'n* 'Umar, and in the second, the *man* which the editor has appended to 'Umar belongs in the Koranic quotation that follows: I owe these references to Nurit Tsafir); Ibn Abī Shāriba, *Muḥarrar*, 7:504 no. 37.575; Ibn Abī 'Umayr, *Amr*, 75 no. 30; Tabarī, *Annals*, 20:10.4, and the two traditions there following; cf. also *ibid.*, 10.10. The *ḥanās* are Kūfān. In an Imānī tradition, Muḥammad al-Baqir (d. c. 118/736) foretells that in the last days (*fi ākhīr al-ʿamān*) there will be those who regard *al-amr bi'l-iḥsān* and *al-nahy 'an al-jabr* as obligatory only if it will cost them nothing, and invoke excuses of all kinds for not performing it; God will punish them collectively (Kulaymī, *Kaḥf*, 5:55f. no. 1; Tūsī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:180f. no. 21; see further below, ch. 11, 256). On the other hand, those who do practise *al-amr bi'l-iḥsān* and *al-nahy 'an al-jabr* under eschatological conditions may earn a greatly increased reward (Ḥaythamī, *Zamā'ir*, 7:261.23, 271.6).

<sup>40</sup> Abū 'Ubayd, *Nāziḥ*, 98.20; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1330f. no. 4014; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 4:512 no. 4.341 (whence Jassās, *Alkām*, 2:31.153, 487.10); Tirmidhī, *Saḥīḥ*, 8:221f. no. 3.060; Ibn Abī 'Umayr, *Amr*, 41 no. 2; Ibn Waddāh, *Bida'*, 218f. = 345 no. 11; Tabarī, *Taḥfīf*, 11:145f. nos. 12.862f. (to Q5:105); Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 10:92.5; Bayhaqī, *Shi'ab*, 6:83f. nos. 7.553f.; and, for versions without *ḥanās*, Muṭraqī, *Kanz*, 3:71 no. 5.531 (and 6:83f. nos. 7.553f.; and, for versions without *ḥanās*, Muṭraqī, *Kanz*, 3:71 no. 5.531 (and 6:83f. nos. 7.553f.); Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *Nasāih*, 66.10. The tradition is transmitted with a Syrian *isnād* from the Companion Abū Thālab al-Khushānī (d. 75/694f.). On the wording, cf. also above, ch. 2, note 68; for Q5:105, cf. above, ch. 2, note 80.

<sup>41</sup> In Abū Dāwūd's version: *ḥatā'ā tāhū wa' aḥwā' shāhīn minā' an wa' shāhīn minā' shāhīn an wa' dāhī' minā' shāhīn an wa' yāhū hūlī' dhī' ra' yūn bi' ra' yūn, compare Tabarī, Taḥfīf*, 11:143.2 no. 12.858.

<sup>42</sup> In Abū Dāwūd's version: *fa' 'alawka - wa' in bi' mufāka - wa' tū' 'ahka' bi' sanānīm*.

overrides the duty of commanding right. He intervenes to insist that the conditions of moral disorder to which the verse refers have not yet come, and accordingly instructs his hearers that until that time they should continue to perform the duty.<sup>43</sup> Similar interpretations of the verse are ascribed to other authorities.<sup>44</sup> Thus the young Syrian Jubayr ibn Nu'aym (d. 80/699f.) finds himself in a gathering of Companions and others in which forbidding wrong is under discussion. He foolishly quotes Q5:105, and is reproved by those present, who afterwards tell him that, since he is so young, he may in fact live into the time to which the verse refers.<sup>45</sup> Ka'b al-Aḥbar (d. 34/654f.) holds that the verse will only apply when (among other things) the church of Damascus has been demolished and replaced with a mosque; the Damascene transmitter Abū Musḥir (d. 218/835) identifies this building activity with the works carried out by the caliph Walīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik (r. 86-96/705-15).<sup>46</sup> In yet another Syrian tradition, the Prophet is asked when forbidding wrong is to be abandoned; he answers in different terms, but to similar effect.<sup>47</sup> Even more striking is an Egyptian tradition transmitted by Ibn Lahī'a (d. 174/790), in which the

<sup>43</sup> Tabarī, *Taḥfīf*, 11:143f. nos. 12.859f.; Abū 'Ubayd, *Nāziḥ*, 99.8; Jassās, *Alkām*, 2:488.13; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 10:92.11; Bayhaqī, *Shi'ab*, 6:82f. no. 7.552. Although Ibn Mas'ūd is a Kūfān Companion, the *ḥanās* are not Kūfān; their common link is Abū Ja'far al-Rāzī, a traditionist of the second/eighth century. In another transmission, Ibn Mas'ūd similarly states that the verse does not refer to the present, and that the duty is to be performed as long as those against whom it is directed are receptive to it (Tabarī, *Taḥfīf*, 11:138-41 nos. 12.848-50, 12.855, of which the last is the most explicit; cf. also Nāḥās, *Ma'ānī 'l-Qur'ān*, 2:374.3; Abū 'Ubayd, *Nāziḥ*, 99.18; and Jassās, *Alkām*, 2:488.26). This time, the *ḥanās* are Basran, with Ḥasan al-Basrī (d. 110/728) as the common link.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn 'Umar states that it applies neither to himself nor to his companions, but to people (*agaynā*) who will come after (Tabarī, *Taḥfīf*, 11:139 no. 12.851; contrast *ibid.*, 140f. no. 12.854). In a Basran transmission from Qatāda (d. 117/735f.) an anonymous Companion or Companions again take the view that the verse refers to a future time (*ihdā*, 140-2 nos. 12.852f., 12.856f. (where the time is referred to as *ākhir al-ʿamān*)). Another such view is reported from an anonymous Companion by Ḥasan al-Basrī (*ihdā*, 144f. no. 12.861). See also Ibn Waddāh, *Bida'*, 218 = 344f. nos. 9f. None of this material has Kūfān *isnāds*.<sup>45</sup> Tabarī, *Taḥfīf*, 11:142f. no. 12.858. The *ḥanās* indicates a Syrian provenance (for the identity of the 'Ibn Fadāl' who appears in the *ḥanās*, see M. I. Ferrero, 'Mu'awwā b. Sa'īd al-Ḥadramī al-Himṣī: historia y leyenda', in M. Marín (ed.), *Estudios orientales-biográficos de al-Andalus*, vol. 1, Madrid 1988, 346).

<sup>46</sup> Abū 'Ubayd, *Nāziḥ*, 98.26; Jassās, *Alkām*, 2:487.22; as might be expected, the *ḥanās* is Syrian. For Walīd's building works, see K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture: Umayyad*, Oxford 1969, esp. 188-91.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal, *Muḥarrar*, 3:187.5; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1331 no. 4.015; Ibn Waddāh, *Bida'*, 213 = 339 no. 43; Bayhaqī, *Shi'ab*, 6:84 nos. 7.555f.; and the parallel cited in van Ess, *Theological*, 1:81 n. 13. In what seems to be a Syrian tradition, the Prophet predicts a time of troubles (*ḥanz*) in which the believer will be unable to perform the duty by hand or tongue; but this will not detract from his faith more than the smallest leak from a waterskin (Ibn Rajab, *Tamī' al-ʿulūm wa' l-ḥikam*, 3:47.10; Ḥaythamī, *Zamā'ir*, 7:275.6; Muṭraqī, *Kanz*, 3:78 no. 5.571).

Prophet tells his followers to cease forbidding wrong at the beginning of (the year) 200/815.<sup>48</sup>

For those who transmitted such traditions (not to mention those who may have put them into circulation by placing them in the mouths of earlier authorities), the bad times could readily be understood to have begun already. These traditions thus lend themselves to the unusual view that the duty has lapsed. Such an attitude, which is scarcely represented in the doctrines of the legal and theological schools, can best be seen as an expression of the quietist tendencies often found among the traditionists (*ahb al-ḥadīth*). We will encounter examples of this kind of thinking in the following chapter,<sup>49</sup> and a similar tone is in evidence in the thought of Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855).<sup>50</sup>

There are also non-eschatological traditions which can be seen as expressions of the same tendency to draw the teeth of the duty, though the picture they present is far less coherent and consistent.

Some traditions suggest that failure to forbid wrong need not be damning. In one, Ibn Mas'ūd is confronted with the view that one who does not command right and forbid wrong is damned (*ḥalākā*); he replies that this is rather the fate of one who fails to approve of right and disapprove of wrong in his heart.<sup>51</sup> The Prophet describes how, on the day of the Resurrection, God will ask a man what had prevented him from righting the wrongs he had seen; the answer 'I relied on you and was afraid of people' apparently suffices to exculpate him.<sup>52</sup>

Other traditions seek to discourage tendencies to heroism. There is a Prophetic tradition that the believer should not court humiliation by exposing himself to an ordeal he cannot endure,<sup>53</sup> and this is adduced in

<sup>48</sup> Abū Bakr al-Maḥlikī (tenth/eleventh century), *Riḥāʾ al-nuḥfā*, ed. H. Monea, Cairo 1951, 1:74.11; Abū Zayd al-Dabbāgh (d. 696/1296f.), *Maʾālim al-imān fī maʾrifat al-ḥayrāt*, in the recension of Ibn Nafī (d. 839/1436), ed. I. Shabībū *et al.*, Cairo and Tunis 1968, 1:212.8. Unfortunately the transmitter from Ibn Laḥfā is not mentioned. I owe my knowledge of this tradition to Nurit Tsafrir. <sup>49</sup> See below, ch. 4, 76f.

<sup>50</sup> See below, ch. 5, notes 184f.  
<sup>51</sup> Nuʿaym ibn Hammād, *Firm*, 89.14 (the fullest version); Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muḥammad*, 7:564 no. 37.581; Tabarī, *Jāmiʾ al-ḥayrāt*, 27:132.4 (to Q57:16; I owe this reference to Ehan Koshbar); Bayhaqī, *Shūʿab*, 6:95 no. 7.588; Haythamī, *Zamʿīyah*, 7:275.19; and cf. Muḥallī, *Kulliyat*, 279.16; Ibn Waddāh, *Bidaʾ*, 230 = 360 no. 62; and Abū Bakr al-Khāliḍī (d. 311/923), *al-ʿAḥad bi-l-maʾrifat* 'an al-munkar', ed. 'A. A. Aḥā, Cairo 1975, 87 no. 12. The *isnād* is Kufān.

<sup>52</sup> Ḥumaydī, *Musnad*, 324 no. 739 (I owe this reference to Nurit Tsafrir); Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 3:27.8, 29.23; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1332 no. 4.017; Ibn Abī 'ī-Dunayr, *Aḥad*, 53 no. 11; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 10:90.27; Bayhaqī, *Shūʿab*, 6:90f. nos. 7.574f.; and for versions without *isnāds*, see Murtaqī, *Kanz*, 3:73 no. 5.542, 78 no. 5.569. The Companion who transmits the tradition is Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī; the *isnāds* are Ḥijāzī.

<sup>53</sup> Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 5:405.22; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 1332 no. 4.016; Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 7:35 no. 2.255; Ibn Abī 'ī-Dunayr, *Aḥad*, 131 no. 100 (all from Ḥudhayfā); Ibn Waddāh, *Bidaʾ*,

the context of forbidding wrong.<sup>54</sup> Cold water is poured on the idea that it is necessarily a fine thing to speak out in the presence of an unjust, or any, ruler.<sup>55</sup> Thus Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687f.) takes the view that one should not command and forbid those in authority if there is a risk of getting killed for it.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, there are traditions that – perhaps quite innocently – dwell on the ifs and buts of the duty. One ought to start by putting oneself to rights before venturing to command and forbid others.<sup>57</sup> One should likewise take no action if one fears bringing upon oneself a calamity worse than the evil one is forbidding.<sup>58</sup> In any event, one has to be suitably qualified. Thus the Prophet states that one should not forbid wrong unless one possesses 'three qualities': civility, knowledge and probity.<sup>59</sup> At the same time one must respect privacy.<sup>60</sup> One should not seek to expose people: a well-

233 = 364 no. 77; and cf. Haythamī, *Zamʿīyah*, 7:274.20 (from Ibn 'Umar, 275.2 (from 'Abī). The *isnād* is Baḥarī. The tradition is also ascribed by the Imānīs to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (Tustī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:180 nos. 17f.).

<sup>54</sup> Haythamī's version from Ibn 'Umar is framed in an anecdote in which the latter disapproves of something Ḥajjāj has said, and wishes to do something about it (*ʿan nighayr*); he then remembers this saying of the Prophet, and thinks better of it. Ibn Māja's version appears in his chapter on the duty. Later authors likewise cite the tradition in the context of *al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf* (see, for example, below, ch. 6, note 141, but contrast ch. 5, note 125).

<sup>55</sup> Compare the Imānī tradition from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq that there is no reward for suffering incurred through exposing oneself to (the anger of) an unjust ruler (Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, 5:60f. no. 3; Tustī, *Tahdhīb*, 6:178 no. 12); contrast the tradition cited above, ch. 1, note 18.

<sup>56</sup> See below, ch. 4, note 52. There is also a tradition transmitted by Ibn 'Abbās in which a man comes to the Prophet proposing that he should engage in *al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf* only to be told that this is not for him, rather for the ruler (Abū Yāla Ibn al-Farā'ī (d. 458/1066), *al-ʿAḥad bi-l-ma'rūf ma'l-ma'rūf* 'an al-munkar, ms. Danassus, Zāhiriyya, Majmūʿ no. 3.779 = Majmūʿ 42, item 7, f. 104a.22, without *isnād*, for this work, see below, ch. 6, note 116).

<sup>57</sup> So Ibn 'Abbās (Bayhaqī, *Shūʿab*, 6:88f. no. 7.569; the *isnād* is problematic). A Prophetic tradition describes the grim punishment meted out in hell to those who commanded right while themselves acting wrongfully (see, for example, Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 5:205.13, 207.7, 209.13; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:319.10; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:290f. no. 2.989; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 10:95.2; Bayhaqī, *Shūʿab*, 6:88 no. 7.568; and cf. Ḥumaydī, *Musnad*, 250 no. 547; the *isnāds* are Kufān). Yet another Prophetic tradition urges that one should command right even if one's own conduct is not fully righteous (see, for example, Ibn Waddāh, *Bidaʾ*, 234 = 365 no. 83; Jassās, *Al-Ikhtār*, 2:33.27; Bayhaqī, *Shūʿab*, 6:89 no. 7.570; also Haythamī, *Zamʿīyah*, 7:277.4; the *isnāds* would seem to be Meccan or Syrian).

<sup>58</sup> Ibn Waddāh, *Bidaʾ*, 230 = 360 no. 59; Murtaqī, *Kanz*, 3:76 no. 5.559.  
<sup>59</sup> Daylamī, *Firāʾid*, 5:137f. no. 7.741; Murtaqī, *Kanz*, 3:76 no. 5.561. The transmitter is the Baḥarī Companion Anas ibn Mālik (d. 91/709f.), who in turn transmits to the Baḥarī Abūn (Ibn Abī 'Ayyūsh) (d. 138/755). This saying is well known, though it is rarely attested, as here, as a Prophetic tradition (cf. below, ch. 5, note 74; ch. 6, note 126; ch. 8, note 102). Another tradition states that one should not command right until one is knowledgeable (*ʿālim*) and knows what one is commanding (Murtaqī, *Kanz*, 3:76 no. 5.560).

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, the Kufān tradition from Ibn Mas'ūd cited below, ch. 4, note 261, with implicit reference to the Koranic prohibition of spying on people (Q49:12). A Prophetic tradition avers that a hidden sin harms only the sinner, whereas one that is public knowledge, and is not put right (*ʿan nighayr*), harms people at large (Ibn Abī 'ī-Dunayr, d. 281/894),

known Prophetic tradition states that he who keeps concealed something that would dishonour a Muslim (*man satara Musliman* or the like) will receive the same consideration from God.<sup>61</sup> All in all, if one cannot perform the duty, then one cannot, and it is enough that God should know that one disapproves in one's heart.<sup>62</sup>

On the other hand, just as in Koranic exegesis, there is little attempt to confine the duty to an elite.<sup>63</sup> The one tradition that bears directly on this question states that God will not punish people at large (*al-ʿammah*) for the sins of the elite (*al-ḥanās*), until the point is reached at which they see wrongs all around them which they are in a position to put right; at that point, if they fail to act, He will punish the lot of them.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Two things are worth attention in conclusion. The first is the geographical provenance of the material. In presenting the traditions, I have attempted where possible to indicate where they come from, and we can now review this evidence. As might be expected, relevant traditions reach us from all the major centres of traditionist activity: Kūfa, Basra, Syria and

the Hijāz. There are, however, a couple of features of the geographical distribution of our traditions which are striking. One is the disproportionate role of Kūfa in the provenance of those traditions (the majority) that do not attempt to play down the duty: Kūfa is the source of about twice as much of this material as all other centres put together.<sup>65</sup> The other feature is the relative prominence of Syria in the provenance of the traditions that work to play down the duty: here Syria is as productive as all other centres taken together.<sup>66</sup> Such a contrast between the roles of the Kūfian and Syrian traditionists must surely be a reflection of the political geography of Umayyad times, with Kūfa as the leading centre of provincial opposition and Syria as the focus of metropolitan government. This in turn suggests that the material is often implicitly political even when not explicitly so.

The second aspect of the material that merits attention is its nature. It does not share the vague and general character of the Koranic references to the duty; but neither does it do much to elaborate a precise code of conduct. Most of the traditions are concerned to encourage believers to forbid wrong, or alternatively to discourage them from it; in other words, their purpose is to convey a mood, and the primary means through which they seek to achieve this is rhetoric. Here and there, however, we encounter potential building-blocks for later scholastic doctrines. The prime instance of this is, of course, the 'three modes' tradition, with its triad of deed, word and thought.<sup>67</sup> A few other traditions are couched in what might be described as a proto-scholastic idiom, though none achieved the same success; an example is the tradition according to which one should refrain from forbidding wrong if one fears subjecting oneself to something worse than the wrong itself.<sup>68</sup> A final point worth emphasising is that, just as in the context of Koranic exegesis, it is the consensus of the later scholarly tradition that establishes that we are talking about forbidding wrong even when this is not evident from the wording of the traditions themselves.

#### Footnote 60 (cont.)

*Uyūbān*, ed. M. K. R. Yūsuf, Beirut 1996, 43 no. 40, and the editor's references thereto; *Muttaqī*, *Kanz*, 3:73 no. 5,539, 81 no. 5,582). Neither of these traditions refers explicitly to *al-ʿamr bi'l-ḥayr*, but both are found in pages devoted to the duty.

- 61 Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 8:46 no. 5,646, 13:161 no. 7,421, 15:86 no. 7,929, 2:514,26, 5:22,3, 4:62,20, 10:4,3, 10:4,7, 5:375,17; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:98,13; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1996 no. 2,580, 2,074 no. 2,699; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 82 no. 225, 850 nos. 2,544, 2,546; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 5:234f. no. 4,946; Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5:113-15 nos. 1425f., 6,175 no. 1931; Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871), *Furūḡ Miṣr wa-nabḥatihā*, ed. C. C. Torrey, New Haven 1922, 275,8; and cf. Humaydī, *Musnad*, 189f. no. 384; Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 2:389,1, 4:04,30, 5:00,20, 4:159,7; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2002 no. 2,590. In a striking variant, one who covers the shame of a believer (*man satara min imān*) is as one who brings to life a buried infant (*man ʿada*) from her grave (cf. Q81:8) (Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad* 4:147,26, and cf. *ibid.*, 147,29, 153,26, 158,14; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 5:200f. no. 4,891). All major centres of transmission are represented in the *imānās*. Again, these traditions make no mention of *al-ʿamr bi'l-ḥayr* but their relevance is clear, and they are quoted in this context (see below, ch. 5, note 135; ch. 6, notes 152f.).

62 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 7:504 no. 37,582; Bukhārī, *Kalīl*, 2:1,278 no. 991; Ibn Waddāh, *Bidaʿ*, 2:32 = 362 no. 70; Ibn Abī ʿI-Dunayr, *ʿAmm*, 136 no. 105; Haythamī, *Zawāʿid*, 7:275,14; *Muttaqī*, *Kanz*, 3:75 no. 5,553. The tradition is Kūfian.

- 63 For Koranic exegesis, see above, ch. 2, 18-20.
- 64 Nur aym ibn Hammād, *Fitan*, 378,20 (I owe this reference to Nurī Taṣfī); Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 4:192,13; Ibn Abī ʿI-Dunayr, *ʿAmm*, 101 no. 62; Haythamī, *Zawāʿid*, 7:267,9, 268,10; *Muttaqī*, *Kanz*, 3:67 no. 5,515; Ibn ʿAbd al-Walīhāb, *Nasīḥa*, 67,15. This tradition is also attested as a saying of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 101/720) (see Abū Yūsuf, *Khārīj*, 11,2, and Ibn Saʿd, *Tabaqāt*, 5:282,13), or as an anonymous saying transmitted by him (see Malik (d. 179/795), *Muwattaʿa*, ed. M. F. ʿAbd al-Bāqī, Cairo 1951, 991 no. 23, and Ibn Abī ʿI-Dunayr, *ʿAmm*, 102 no. 63). The *imānās* are Hijāzī.

<sup>65</sup> Note particularly the Kūfian provenance of the 'three modes' tradition (see above, note 2), and the role of Kūfians in the transmission of all other major traditions in this category (see above, ch. 1, note 18, and above, notes 12, 19). By contrast, Kūfa plays only a limited role in the transmission of traditions of negative tendency (for two clear cases, see above, notes 51, 62; cf. also notes 57, 60). At the same time, Kūfa is the source of some predictions of the decay of *al-ʿamr bi'l-ḥayr* (see above, notes 38f.).

<sup>66</sup> Note particularly the Syrian provenance of Abū Thālab's tradition (see above, note 40), and of the Syrian role in the transmission of minor traditions of this eschatological type (above, notes 45-7). By contrast, Syria plays little role in the propagation of traditions of positive tendency (but cf. above, notes 27, 57).

<sup>67</sup> See above, section 1.

<sup>68</sup> See above, note 58.