



The Influence of Sufi Teachings on Ashura Narratives in Qajar-Era Maqal Literature: A Historical-Analytical Study

Naser Sargazi¹, Ali Akbar Khedrizeh², Mohammad Kalhor³

Received: 2024/07/10 ; Revised: 2024/09/17 ; Accepted: 2024/10/11 ; Published online: 2025/01/10

Abstract

During the Buyid period, madrasas and scholarly assemblies played a central role in the expansion of scientific and religious thought. Through the patronage of intellectuals and scholars, scientific and cultural debates flourished, and rationalism gained prominence as a means of responding to the objections raised by opponents. Baghdad, as the center of the Islamic caliphate, became a major hub for the exchange of ideas and cultural interactions, providing fertile ground for the development of diverse intellectual trends. Using a historical method and a descriptive–analytical approach, the present study examines the role of madrasas, scholarly gatherings, and intellectual debates in enhancing education and promoting the dissemination of knowledge. The Buyid rulers, by founding educational institutions, attracting prominent scholars, and organizing scholarly sessions, played a significant role in the development of religious, theological, and scientific teachings. During this period, the convergence of the Buyids, the Imami Shi'a, and the Mu'tazila strengthened rationalist tendencies in the scientific and cultural spheres. This emphasis on rationalism led to the expansion of madrasas, the training of scholars, the proliferation of scholarly debates, and advances in various fields of knowledge, ultimately contributing to the flourishing of Islamic culture and civilization. By recognizing the importance of knowledge and intellectual inquiry, the Buyids created a conducive environment for interaction among scientific and religious elites and, by fostering an open atmosphere for the exchange of ideas, facilitated the growth of diverse cultural traditions. The madrasas of this period were active not only in teaching religious sciences but also in disciplines such as philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. Moreover, the organization of scholarly debates reinforced rationalist currents and addressed many of the intellectual challenges posed by rival schools of thought. These developments resulted in the advancement of Islamic sciences and the expansion of human knowledge, with their influence extending beyond the Islamic world to neighboring

1. PH. D. Student. Department of Islamic History, Y.I.C., Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

n.sargazi@iau.ac.ir

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic History, Y.I.C., Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
(corresponding author). Khedrizeh43@iau.ac.ir

3. Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic History, Y.I.C., Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

Mojammadkalhor@iau.ac.ir

© The Authors

<https://www.jspt.ir/>

Publisher: Urwat al - Wuthqa International Academic Research Institute

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22034/jspt.2025.508985.1083>



civilizations. Ultimately, the Buyid period can be regarded as a turning point in the history of Islamic science and culture, as its support for rationalism and promotion of learning left a lasting impact on the development of Islamic civilization and the broader progress of global scientific thought.

Keywords: Buyids; Madrasas; Dār al-‘Ilm; Scholarly Debates; Rationalism.

Introduction

In the fourth century AH, despite prevailing religious and political constraints, Shi'ī scholars took the lead in establishing and expanding religious educational institutions and, in comparison with other Islamic sects, played a prominent role in the promotion of knowledge. In the initial phase, they transformed mosques and their private residences into centers of learning—a method that had been practiced since the time of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) for teaching the fundamentals of religion (Shibli, 1954, *Tārīkh al-Tarbiyah al-Islāmiyyah*, 47–48). Scholars such as Shaykh al-Mufid and Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) also employed this model, teaching various sciences in their own homes (al-Qiftī, 1371 [SH], *Tārīkh al-Hukamā'*, n.d., 42). Within this context, the emergence of Islamic madrasas as independent educational institutions constituted a fundamental transformation in the Shi'ī scholarly system. The Shi'a were among the first groups to undertake the purposeful establishment of such institutions, a process that became widespread from the fourth century AH onward (Shahīdī Ṣāliḥī, 1386 [SH], *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Tashayyū'*, 549). The Buyid dynasty played a decisive role in this development; by founding scholarly centers and organized madrasas, they provided a structured framework for the teaching of Islamic, philosophical, and natural sciences, thereby elevating the overall intellectual level of society. Within this intellectual milieu, scholarly debates (*munāzarāt*) also acquired a special status. The expansion of such debates—particularly in the fields of theology (*kalām*) and philosophy—created a platform for the exchange of ideas and the reinforcement of rationalism, leading to the formation of diverse intellectual schools. These debates, held in *Dār al-'Ilm* institutions, *maktab-khānas*, *Bayt al-'Ilm* centers, and other educational venues, exerted profound influences on philosophical and religious thought. The support of the Buyid rulers for scholars and intellectuals—both directly and indirectly—was one of the key factors behind the scientific and cultural flourishing of this period. Their scholarly policies, inspired in part by the rationalist tradition of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn, significantly contributed to the growth of intellectual freedom and the expansion of rational sciences within Islamic civilization. The central research question of this study is: What role did madrasas and scholarly debates play during the Buyid period in the expansion of culture and the advancement of the scientific level of the Islamic world? Accordingly, the present research, employing a descriptive–analytical approach and a historical method, seeks to examine the roles and functions of these scholarly institutions in strengthening the cultural and educational infrastructure of the Buyid state and to analyze their impact on intellectual and scientific currents within the Islamic world.

1. Literature Review

A survey of previous studies indicates that scholars have approached the Buyid dynasty, the educational system, and the cultural atmosphere of this period from various perspectives. However, most of these works remain general in nature and have not paid sufficient attention to the structural relationship between madrasas and scholarly debates. To clarify the position of the present study within existing scholarship, the literature may be classified into three categories:

1. Studies on the Buyid Dynasty and Its Cultural Context

Works such as *Political and Social Transformations of Iran during the Buyid Period* (Hasanzadeh, 1395 [SH]), *Social and Cultural Transformations of Iran in the Buyid Era* (Ghaffari, 1397 [SH]), *The Buyids and the Conditions of Their Time* (Faqihī, 1357 [SH]), and *History, Civilization, and Culture of Iran in the Buyid Era* (Hojjati, 1393 [SH]) examine various dimensions of Buyid rule. These studies address the role of the dynasty in strengthening Shi'i identity, cultural independence, and scientific flourishing in Iran. Among them, Hojjati's work occupies a prominent position due to its more comprehensive focus on cultural policies, administrative structures, and scholarly patronage by Buyid rulers. Nevertheless, these sources largely emphasize macro-level governmental actions and devote less attention to the internal analysis of institutions such as madrasas or the qualitative nature of scholarly debates.

2. Studies on Educational Systems and Scholarly Institutions

Research such as *The Educational System in Islamic Iran* (Foroughi, 1394 [SH]), *The History of Educational Transformations* (Kazemi, 1391 [SH]), and *History and Law of Education in Islam* (Kadivar, 1392 [SH]) examine the structure and evolution of educational systems in Iran and the Islamic world. While these works trace the historical trajectory of education, jurisprudential institutions, and scholarly schools, they generally adopt a broad historical perspective and do not specifically analyze the interaction between formal education and scholarly debates within a defined historical period such as the Buyid era.

3. Studies on Intellectual Figures and Scholarly Currents

Works such as Hosseini (1392 [SH]), focusing on Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and Azarbayjani (1397 [SH]) on the history of science and culture in Iran, analyze individual and collective contributions to the development of knowledge. These studies provide valuable information on the intellectual contexts of the period, yet they devote limited attention to educational institutions or debate-centered environments as structured analytical categories.

2. Critical Assessment of the Literature

Although previous studies have addressed the cultural and scientific contexts of the Buyid period from various angles, several gaps remain evident:

- The bidirectional relationship between madrasas and scholarly debates—as two complementary institutions for the production and exchange of knowledge—has received insufficient attention.
- Most studies present Buyid support for scholars primarily in financial or patronage terms, without analyzing its role in institutionalizing rationalism and shaping intellectual schools.
- The connection between Buyid scholarly policies and the translation movement and rationalist tradition of al-Ma'mūn has been largely overlooked.

3. Research Innovation

By analyzing the structure of educational institutions, examining the content of scholarly debates, and assessing their long-term impacts, the present study seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the reciprocal influence of madrasas and debates during the Buyid period. Moreover, by focusing on the mechanisms of knowledge production within these institutions, the study moves beyond mere historical description and offers a cultural–intellectual analysis of Buyid educational policies.

4. Research Methodology

This article employs a historical method combined with a descriptive–analytical approach to examine the role of madrasas in the development of scholarly and cultural debates during the Buyid period. It aims to address the gap in previous studies, which have largely focused on political and social analyses while paying less attention to cultural and educational dimensions. By emphasizing these aspects, the present research seeks to clarify the role of madrasas and scholarly centers in the intellectual and cultural transformations of the period. In comparison with earlier studies, this article explicitly highlights the convergence among the Buyids, the Imami Shi'a, and the Mu'tazila, as well as the emphasis on rationalism during this era—an aspect that has been either neglected or insufficiently examined in previous research. Furthermore, the study provides a detailed analysis of the role of madrasas and libraries and identifies the establishment of Shi'i madrasas as a cultural turning point, whereas earlier studies have tended to focus primarily on historical figures or isolated events. Finally, this research addresses a wide range of scientific disciplines and intellectual developments, in contrast to prior findings that typically concentrated on one or two fields. One of the most significant innovative aspects of this study is its focus on the direct and influential role of

madrasas and scholarly debates in enhancing the educational system and cultural development of the Buyid period. While earlier research has generally addressed the formation and general outlines of Buyid cultural policies, this study adopts a deeper analytical perspective by examining how madrasas and debates actively contributed to the advancement of education, the institutionalization of rational sciences, and the expansion of philosophical and theological thought in the Islamic world.

The innovative features that distinguish this research from previous studies include:

1) A comparative analysis of madrasas and debates as two key educational tools: Unlike earlier studies that examined these elements separately, this research analyzes their reciprocal influence in shaping the scholarly and educational environment of the period.

2) Structural and content analysis of Buyid madrasas: The study focuses specifically on curricular features and educational programs, demonstrating how these institutions contributed not only to religious education but also to the development of philosophy, logic, medicine, and natural sciences.

3) An examination of the impact of scholarly debates on intellectual transformations and the consolidation of rationalist schools: Rather than addressing debates in general terms, the study analyzes their role in strengthening rationalist currents, shaping Imami Shi'ī theology, and expanding Mu'tazilite thought.

4) Linking Buyid educational policies to the rationalist tradition of al-Ma'mūn: The research demonstrates how the scholarly legacy of al-Ma'mūn's era and the translation movement influenced the flourishing of the Buyid educational system and clarifies the connections between these two periods.

5) Assessing the long-term consequences of madrasas and scholarly debates for later educational systems: Unlike studies that treat the Buyid period in isolation, this research analyzes the influence of these institutions on subsequent scholarly establishments, including the Nizāmiyya madrasas and Shi'ī seminaries during the Seljuk and Safavid periods.

Added Value of the Study: Beyond offering a more comprehensive and precise account of Buyid scholarly initiatives, this research presents madrasas and scholarly debates not merely as educational tools but as foundational platforms for the institutionalization of scientific and philosophical thought within Islamic civilization. In this way, the article provides an analytical framework that may serve as a basis for future research on the history of Islamic education and the impact of scholarly structures on cultural and intellectual transformations.

5. Political and Social Conditions of the Fourth Islamic Century

At the beginning of the fourth Islamic century, social and cultural instability across Islamic lands was on the rise. The dominance of Turkish military slaves led to heightened fanaticism and insecurity in Baghdad. During the caliphates of al-Mustakfī and al-Muttaqī, the situation in Baghdad deteriorated severely, as Hanbalites—under the pretext of defending religion—engaged in acts of destruction and harassment against artists and musicians. Ibn al-Athīr notes that the Hanbalites even interfered in people’s private affairs, plunging Baghdad into chaos; as a result, many residents abandoned their homes and migrated to other regions. Under these circumstances, Caliph al-Mustakfī sought assistance from the Buyids, and with their takeover of Baghdad, a new cultural and scholarly environment emerged (Ibn al-Athīr, 1371, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, vol. 11, p. 4863). Following the conquest of Baghdad in 334 AH, circles of instruction and scholarly debates flourished, and the Buyid period became one of the most brilliant eras of Islamic cultural history. Many scholars of this period were closely associated with the Buyid rulers, including ministers and courtiers. Remarkable advancements were achieved particularly in philosophy, mathematics, medicine, literature, theology (kalām), and jurisprudence (fiqh) (Shahīdī Ṣāliḥī, 1386, *Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif-e Tashayyu’*, p. 550). The Buyids placed great importance on the Arabic language and literature, as their aim was to expand influence across Arab and Islamic territories. Their ministers, such as al-Muhallabī and Ibn al-‘Amīd, were highly proficient in Arabic, which functioned as the religious and official language of the Islamic world (Sajjādī, 1366, *Sharḥ-e Aḥwāl va Āthār-e Ibn ‘Amīd*, pp. 21–22). During this period, numerous scholarly works were composed in Arabic, including *al-Shifā’*, *al-Qānūn*, *Tadhkirat al-Dhikrī*, and *al-Maqāmāt*. Some major scholars, such as Ibn Sīnā and Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī, authored works in Persian, whereas others—like Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī and Zakariyyā al-Rāzī—primarily wrote in Arabic (Rāvandī, 1354, *Tārīkh-e Ejtemā’ī-ye Īrān*, vol. 2, p. 243). In the fourth century, many Arabic works such as *Zīnat al-Mulūk* and *al-Fuṣūṣ* were produced. A large number of literati and poets at the Buyid court were bilingual in Persian and Arabic and actively engaged in translations between the two languages (Ibn al-Athīr, 1371, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, vol. 11, p. 4863).

5-1. Educational Structure: Madrasas, Dār al-‘Ilm Institutions, and the System of Instruction

With the rise of Buyid rule in Iran and Iraq, the educational system of the Islamic world underwent a fundamental transformation. Numerous Shi‘i madrasas were established during this period, such as the ‘Aḍudiyya School in Baghdad and the Dār al-‘Ilm of Sayyid al-Raḍī, both of which played a crucial

role in religious and scholarly training. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī also founded a madrasa in 448 AH, which became one of the most influential educational institutions of its time (Kasem, 2021). These schools were often accompanied by large libraries and offered comprehensive curricula covering jurisprudence, ḥadīth, Qur'anic exegesis, logic, and mathematics. Primary education typically began in *maktab-khānas* (elementary schools), usually located near mosques and marketplaces. These institutions operated in two stages: first, the *kuttāb* stage, where reading, writing, morphology, and syntax were taught, followed by a stage devoted to Qur'an memorization. This structured educational framework facilitated intellectual development from foundational to advanced levels. Dār al-'Ilm institutions constituted another major educational pillar of this era, functioning not only as teaching centers but also as research institutions. For instance, the Dār al-'Ilm of Shāpūr ibn Ardashīr, established in 383 AH, possessed an extensive library and actively contributed to the dissemination of knowledge (Ibn al-Athīr, 1371, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, vol. 14, p. 366). Among the most important scholarly institutions of the Buyid era were the Dār al-'Ilm centers and libraries, which not only preserved books but also played an active role in training students in specialized disciplines. Students traveled from distant regions to benefit from both the rich manuscript collections and the instruction of eminent scholars. Shi'i-specific Dār al-'Ilm institutions were established particularly in Baghdad and other cities, including those founded by Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād, Shāpūr ibn Ardashīr, Sayyid al-Raḍī, and Sayyid al-Murtaḍā. During the Buyid period, scholarly, theological, and literary debates flourished within these Dār al-'Ilm institutions and libraries. Notably, Sayyid al-Raḍī established the first round-the-clock Dār al-'Ilm in the Islamic world, approximately eighty years before the foundation of the Nizāmiyya of Baghdad. Teaching traditions in mosques, libraries, shops, maktab-khānas, scholars' homes, and Bayt al-Ḥikma institutions also continued and reached new heights with the establishment of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's major Shi'i madrasa in 448 AH (Shahīdī Ṣāliḥī, 1386, *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-e Tashayyu'*, p. 549). One of the most significant scholarly institutions of this era was the Dār al-'Ilm founded by Minister Shāpūr, established under the orders of Bahā' al-Dawla and modeled after the Fatimid al-Azhar. The existence of neighborhoods dedicated to book sales further illustrates the high value placed on learning. The library of Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād—later inherited by Fakhr al-Dawla and Majd al-Dawla—was among the largest libraries of the time. It is reported that during Sultan Maḥmūd's attack on Rayy, this library was burned, despite its catalog having been compiled in ten volumes. According to Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād, transporting its books required four hundred camels (Kraemer, 1375, *Eḥyā-ye Farhangī dar 'Ahd-e Āl-e Būya*, p. 100). Another notable library was the “Ḥaydarī Library” in Najaf, located within the

shrine of Amīr al-Mu'minīn. Although its exact date of establishment is unclear, 'Aḍud al-Dawla Daylamī is considered one of its principal patrons. Among its remarkable holdings were Qur'anic manuscripts penned by Yāqūt and Aḥmad Tabrīzī, a manuscript of *al-Rasā'il al-Shīrāziyya* edited by Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī, copies of *Mu'jam al-Udabā' al-Taqrīb*, and a work entitled *al-Mu'tarīḍ al-Hikma* by Dhahab al-Dīn 'Alī dated to 238 AH. It is also reported that a Qur'an written in the hand of Imam 'Alī ('a) was once preserved there and is now kept within the shrine enclosure (Shiblī, 1954, *Tārīkh 'Ilm al-Kalām*, p. 154).

5-2. Structure of Scholarly Debates, Intellectual Circles, and Knowledge Exchange

One of the most prominent characteristics of the Buyid era was the strengthening of scholarly dialogue and debate structures. Libraries and Dār al-'Ilm institutions evolved into dynamic spaces for intellectual exchange. The library of 'Aḍud al-Dawla in Shiraz, housing thousands of manuscripts, functioned not merely as a repository but also as a venue for scholarly discussions and philosophical and juridical debates (Rizvi, 2020, p. 215). Thinkers such as Ibn Sīnā, al-Fārābī, and Ibn al-Haytham participated in these intellectual circles, producing seminal works in philosophy, medicine, and astronomy whose influence extended well beyond their time (Amīrī, 1398, *Monāzarāt-e Falsafī va Kalāmī dar Dore-ye Āl-e Būya*, p. 134). Book markets in Baghdad and cultural centers such as Dār al-'Ilm institutions further facilitated scholarly exchange across different Islamic regions. During this period, *'ilm* (knowledge) was regarded as the defining attribute of scholars, encompassing jurisprudence, ḥadīth, theology, and related religious sciences. The transmission of ḥadīth was primarily oral and conducted by groups known as *'ulamā'*, who possessed varying degrees of expertise in religious knowledge (Mottaḥeda-Ravī, 1388, *Awḍā'-e Ejtemā'ī dar Dore-ye Āl-e Būya*, pp. 147-148). Beyond religious sciences, the Buyids played a substantial role in promoting literary and human sciences. 'Aḍud al-Dawla himself composed poetry and was recognized as a literary connoisseur. Poets associated with his court included Ibn Nubāta, al-Mutanabbī, al-Khwārazmī, and Tabari-speaking poets such as Dīvāra-Vaz. Under his patronage, numerous literary works were produced that remain classics of Arabic literature. His sons—Tāj al-Dawla, Malik 'Azīz, and Fanākhusrāw—were likewise engaged in poetry, leaving behind extant verses (Shāh-Moḥammadī, 1401, *Āl-e Būya va Naqsh-e Ān bar Ḥayāt-e Fekrī va Ejtemā'ī-ye Īrān va Jahān-e Eslām*, p. 73). The Buyid court attracted Arabic-speaking scholars and literati, among whom Ibn al-'Amīd was particularly prominent (Sajjādī, 1366, *Sharḥ-e Aḥwāl va Āthār-e Ibn 'Amīd*, pp. 23–24).

Instruction in Islamic sciences within mosques included Qur'an, ḥadīth, tafsīr, jurisprudence, legal theory, morphology, syntax, logic, and Arabic literature. Philosophical education emphasized the humanities within a structured, hierarchical framework (Ḍamīrī, 1380, *Tārīkh-e Āmūzesh va Parvaresh-e Īrān va Eslām*, pp. 112–113). The educational system of this era was grounded in Aristotelian philosophy and the ideas of al-Fārābī, encompassing disciplines such as grammar, poetry, logic, ethics, natural sciences, mathematics, metaphysics, and political theory (Kraemer, 1375, *Eḥyā-ye Farhangī dar 'Ahd-e Āl-e Būya*, pp. 38–39). This comprehensive structure fostered an integrative educational environment. Alongside it, a form of literary humanism emerged, wherein *adab* signified culture, moral refinement, and non-religious knowledge. The bearers of this tradition included booksellers, scribes, courtiers, and government officials who promoted Arabic culture and sciences. A notable exemplar was Ibn al-Nadīm, whose extensive knowledge encompassed Islamic, Greek, and Iranian texts (Kraemer, 1375, pp. 38–39). Occult sciences such as alchemy, *jafr*, and talismanry were also prevalent, and knowledge was categorized into transmitted (*naqlī*) sciences—Qur'an, ḥadīth, jurisprudence, theology, and linguistics—and rational (*'aqlī*) sciences, including philosophy, astronomy, geometry, medicine, music, and mathematics (Ḥasan Ibrāhīm, 1380, *Tārīkh-e Sīyāsī-ye Eslām*, p. 664). The ideas of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' likewise played a significant role in disseminating knowledge among the populace. A major manifestation of scientific advancement during this era was the translation movement, which transferred Greek, Syriac, and Persian works into Arabic. This movement, supported by active participation from Christians and protected minorities, broadened the intellectual foundations of society (Naṣr, 1351, *Tārīkh-e 'Ilm dar Eslām*, pp. 120–140). Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, a Christian thinker, played a prominent role in translating Greek philosophical works. Within this tolerant and rationally oriented environment, diverse schools and sects freely disseminated their scholarly views without governmental obstruction (Fadā'ī 'Irāqī, 1383, *Ḥayāt-e 'Ilmī dar 'Ahd-e Āl-e Būya*, p. 83).

Scientific Policies of Buyid Rulers and Ministers

The support of Buyid rulers and ministers for knowledge and culture was a decisive factor in the era's scientific flourishing. Amirs such as 'Aḍud al-Dawla, Sharaf al-Dawla, and Majd al-Dawla invested in the construction of schools, libraries, and even observatories. The establishment of an observatory in Baghdad by Sharaf al-Dawla, in collaboration with Vījan ibn Rustam, represented a major scientific initiative in astronomy (Qiftī, 1371, *Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā'*, pp. 107–479). Some rulers were so absorbed in study that they neglected administrative affairs, as was the case with Majd al-Dawla (Ibn

al-Athīr, 1371, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, vol. 8, p. 170). Ministers such as Abū al-Faḍl ibn al-‘Amīd, Ṣāhib ibn ‘Abbād, and Abū Ishāq al-Ṣābī were themselves scholars, and their financial and intellectual patronage was vital in establishing scholarly institutions and supporting academic production (Ibn Miskawayh, 1389, *Tajārib al-Umam*, pp. 338–341). Libraries such as the Ḥaydarī Library in Najaf, the Ḥabashī Library in Basra, and the library of Ibn al-‘Amīd in Rayy functioned as public-access centers with vast resources, often administered by scholars like Abū ‘Alī Miskawayh (Ibn Miskawayh, 1389, *Tajārib al-Umam*, pp. 481–482).

Rationalism and the Transmission of Knowledge: From Translation to Authorship:

The Buyid period was also marked by the growth of rationalism and the transmission of earlier sciences into Islamic civilization. The translation of philosophical, scientific, and medical texts from Greek, Syriac, and Persian had begun in the second and third Islamic centuries and continued with greater depth during the Buyid era (Khalīlī, 1390, pp. 78–82). This process fostered an intellectual system that placed reason and demonstration at the core of religious and scientific knowledge. Works such as *al-Shifā’*, *al-Qānūn*, and *al-Ishārāt* by Ibn Sīnā exemplify the synthesis of earlier sciences with Islamic thought. During this period, Arabic became the primary language of science and played a crucial role in disseminating scholarly concepts (Allen, 2000, pp. 30–35). Moreover, urban infrastructures—such as irrigation networks and bridge construction undertaken by the amirs—contributed to scientific and cultural development by creating conditions conducive to intellectual growth (Zarrīn-Kūb, 1354, *Kārnāmeḥ-ye Eslām*, p. 210).

5-3. The Significance of Venues for Scholarly Assemblies and Debates

In the fourth Islamic century, the Islamic world underwent profound cultural transformations that affected all branches of Islamic knowledge, from ḥadīth and jurisprudence (fiqh and uṣūl) to Qur’anic exegesis (tafsīr), history, and literature. During this period, knowledge and cultural disciplines reached a high level of maturity. The teaching of diverse sciences required appropriate venues where students of knowledge could study, reside, and engage in intellectual activity. Initially, such specialized centers did not exist in a formal sense; however, with the passage of time and the emergence of new scholarly needs in the fourth century AH, these institutions gradually came into being. Despite various constraints, Shi‘i scholars were at the forefront of establishing religious schools compared to the leaders of other Islamic sects. In the early stages, education was conducted in mosques, private homes, libraries, and *Dār al-‘Ilm* institutions. With the rise of Buyid rule in Iran and Iraq, Shi‘i schools rapidly

expanded across many Islamic cities, particularly in Shi‘i-populated regions. The presence of teaching circles, the organization of scholarly debates, the construction of madrasas, and the establishment of well-endowed libraries constituted some of the most salient indicators of cultural development during the Buyid era, as they created spaces for the exchange of ideas among scholars and intellectuals. These debates were often held either at court or in scholarly institutions such as *Dār al-‘Ilm*. Buyid patronage of such discussions contributed significantly to the growth of critical thinking, the development of scientific methods, and the strengthening of diverse intellectual schools. In 367 AH, Fanā-Khusraw ‘Aḍud al-Dawla al-Būyid ordered the construction of a grand architectural and cultural complex at the Ḥusaynī shrine and established a major school known as the ‘Aḍudiyya Madrasa (Shahīdī Ṣāliḥī, 1386, *Dā‘irat al-Ma‘ārif-e Tashayyu‘*, p. 549).

5-3-1. Mosques

From the earliest period of Islam, mosques served as fundamental venues for Islamic education. The Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) would sit in the mosque, and Muslims would gather around him to learn the teachings of Islam. This practice became an established tradition, such that after the Prophet (ṣ), instructional circles (*ḥalaqāt al-‘ilm*) were routinely held in mosques. Qur‘an teachers and reciters, ḥadīth transmitters and exegetes, grammarians, and lexicographers each occupied specific pillars within the mosque, leaning against them while students gathered around to learn (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 1417 AH, p. 248). During the Buyid period, mosques retained their position as among the most important centers of education and learning. Scholars who taught in mosques—especially congregational (jāmi‘) mosques—enjoyed high prestige and social standing. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī relates that during the period under discussion, when he drank from the water of Zamzam while on pilgrimage, he asked God for three things, one of which was to be granted the opportunity to teach at the Great Mosque of Baghdad (al-Ḥamawī, 1990, *Mu‘jam al-Udabā‘*, vol. 1, p. 246). According to some reports, the recitation and instruction of poetry, as well as the science of prosody (‘*arūḍ*), were at times conducted in mosques as well (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1420 AH, *Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabā‘ wa Muḥāwarāt al-Shu‘arā‘*). *Tārīkh Baghdād* also mentions several poets who, during the fifth century AH, taught their poetic collections in the Manṣūr Mosque of Baghdad on Fridays (al-Baghdādī, 1990, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 7, p. 78; vol. 8, p. 227).

5-3-2. Residences of Amirs and Viziers

The Buyid amirs and viziers, like many rulers of contemporary dynasties, adorned their courts with culture and learning. ‘Aḍud al-Dawla, following the

model of the grandeur and splendor of the Abbasid caliphs, held evening gatherings in which participants engaged in music, poetry recitation, and scholarly discussions. Within the palace, in a chamber adjacent to his private quarters, the ruler allocated a space for scholars, intellectuals, and individuals of special distinction, allowing them—free from crowding, disturbance, and daily concerns—to engage calmly in inquiry and debate with specialists from various disciplines. He generally preferred gatherings of scholars and intellectuals over those of nobles and military elites (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1357, *al-Muntaẓam*, vol. 7, p. 340). Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī, the vizier of Mu‘izz al-Dawla, likewise hosted numerous evening assemblies, some of whose conversations were recorded by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (al-Tawḥīdī, Abū Ḥayyān, 1419 AH, *al-Baṣā‘ir wa al-Dhakhā‘ir*, p. 228). Ibn Sa‘dān, another vizier, despite an atmosphere rife with intrigue and conspiracy fomented by rivals at court, devoted himself to organizing scholarly gatherings with learned men and intellectuals. According to Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī’s account in *al-Imtā‘*, Ibn Sa‘dān was a devout and pious man who nevertheless possessed philosophical inclinations and sympathized with philosophers. This orientation motivated him to establish learned assemblies. He took pride in hosting such circles and regarded the scholarly gatherings of figures such as Ṣāhib ibn ‘Abbād, Ibn al-‘Amīd, al-Muhallabī, and other renowned viziers as insignificant in comparison to his own assemblies.

Debates during the Buyid Period

1. Face-to-Face Debates

The manner in which debates were convened—regarding their initiation, administration, and conclusion—depended on whether the gathering was held in the court of emirs, ministers, or scholars. The assemblies of emirs and ministers were often lavish, accompanied by poetic recitations, songs, and musical performances, and typically concluded with a poem or a witty remark known as *malḥat al-wadā‘* (“farewell pleasantries”) or *khātimat al-majlis* (“conclusion of the session”) (Tawḥīdī, 1421, *al-Baṣā‘ir wa al-Dhakhā‘ir*: n.d., 2, 26). The common feature of all such gatherings, however, was that debates began with the presentation of a specific issue, after which the participants, with peace of mind, undertook to respond. In the assembly of Ibn Sa‘dān, the minister of Abū Ḥayyān, the procedure was such that the minister posed a question and Abū Ḥayyān responded. At times, it also occurred that a person was instructed during the gathering to debate with a certain shaykh. It is reported that when the philosopher Ibn ‘Adī attended a ministerial assembly in Baghdad and a group of theologians (*ahl al-kalām*) were present, the minister ordered the theologians to debate with Shaykh Yahyā, who was the head and spokesperson of the

philosophical school. Notably, Ibn ‘Adī declined the request for debate, offering the excuse that the theologians did not understand the foundations of his terminology, nor did he comprehend their technical expressions. The minister accepted Ibn ‘Adī’s excuse and acknowledged the prudence of his decision (Tawhīdī, 1421, *al-Baṣā’ir wa al-Dhakhā’ir*: n.d., 2, 78). In some instances, a gathering began when an individual openly declared a claim and challenged others to an intellectual contest; whoever regarded their scholarly standing as equal to that of the challenger would then respond. Abū Ḥayyān narrates how al-Sijistānī and his companions, at the beginning of spring, left Baghdad for recreation and leisure, and there organized a gathering on art and nature—naturally, the setting itself determined the subject of discussion. At times, debates occurred without prior arrangement, such as the accidental encounter between al-Baṣrī and al-Sijistānī. Abū Ḥayyān writes in this regard: “Abū Sulaymān narrated to us that he attended a banquet in Qatī‘ at al-Rabī‘, where he encountered Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī and sat beside him conversing. Al-Baṣrī loosened the reins of his tongue and went so far as to mockingly ask: ‘O Abū Sulaymān, have you found anything in your philosophy that is worthy of reliance?’” (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1412 AH, *al-Muntaẓam*: 7, 17–18). Al-Sijistānī replied briefly, stating that he regarded the discourse and teachings of polemicists as vain arrogance, and therefore, out of respect for the gathering, maintained his composure and merely recited a single verse of poetry: “People differ and possess diverse traits, yet the grave gathers them all together.” (Tawhīdī, 1965, *al-Baṣā’ir wa al-Dhakhā’ir*: 212–213)

2. Non-Face-to-Face Debates

Debates and polemics were sometimes conducted indirectly, through correspondence and the exchange of letters. In such cases, one of the proponents or opponents would research the topic under discussion and present the results in written form for public circulation. Subsequently, an opposing scholar would compose a refutation, and this process could be repeated multiple times. In this context, *Risālat al-Ghufrān* by Abū al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī is noteworthy, as it was written in response to a letter from ‘Alī ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥalabī, known as Ibn al-Qāriḥ. In his letter, Ibn al-Qāriḥ expressed his longing to meet Abū al-‘Alā’ and raised several issues concerning literature, philosophy, heresy (*zandaqa*), Sufism, history, religious matters, jurisprudence, grammar, lexicography, and other subjects. He also attacked heretics and criticized al-Maghribī, the minister and friend of Abū al-‘Alā’. In the second part, Abū al-‘Alā’ responded to each of Ibn al-Qāriḥ’s questions and, in doing so, addressed additional topics. For example, he discussed time and space, transmigration of souls, the doctrines of the Qarmaṭians, and the beliefs of the ḥulūlī sect, subjecting them to critique.

Abū al-‘Alā’'s criticisms are infused with sarcasm and satire (Fākhūrī, 1374, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-‘Arabī*: 512–513). The subjects of debates during the Buyid period encompassed a wide range of issues related to philosophy, ethics, theology (*kalām*), religious law (*sharī‘a*), Sufism, literature, mathematics, and the juridical principles of various legal schools. Fortunately, a substantial portion of the scholarly dialogues of this period—originating from diverse assemblies (literary, philosophical, and theological), as well as the topics discussed in the secret circles of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’—has been preserved in works such as *al-Muqābasāt* and *al-Imtā‘* by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawhīdī, along with the sessions of Shaykh al-Mufīd and other writings (Tawhīdī, 1421, *al-Baṣā‘ir wa al-Dhakhā‘ir*: n.d., 644–648). Consequently, during the Buyid era, numerous scholarly and literary gatherings for discussion and inquiry were held daily throughout the domains under Buyid authority, particularly in cities such as Baghdad, Basra, Rayy, and Shiraz. Many scholars from various disciplines assembled to engage in debate and intellectual disputation. This cultural environment was created by the intellectual elite and would not have been possible without the support of Buyid rulers, ministers, and the court. Some historians have attributed this phenomenon to the intellectual orientation of the Buyid family, while others have gone further, arguing that the dominant cultural climate of the fourth Islamic century and the civilization that emerged from it were largely indebted to the Shi‘i dynasties ruling over Islamic lands during this period. Kraemer, at the conclusion of his book *The Renaissance of Islam under the Buyids*, states: “Thus, the fourth century AH is called the century of Shi‘i ascendancy, since three Shi‘i dynasties dominated the Islamic world with distinct superiority: the Buyids in Mesopotamia and western Iran, the Hamdanids in Syria, and the Fatimids in Egypt. Even the Samanids of Khurasan, though Sunni, were often receptive to Ismaili Shi‘i influence... These Shi‘i governments never sought to unify politically or impose their creed upon the Sunni population, yet they were, to a considerable extent, agents of intense cultural development that moved steadily forward.” (Kraemer, 1375, *Iḥyā‘-yi Farhangī dar ‘Ahd-i Āl-i Būyah*: 288) Muslim thinkers of the same period, or shortly thereafter, criticized these gatherings and pointed out their notable negative aspects and harmful consequences. Al-Ghazālī was among those who did not overlook the detrimental and even destructive outcomes of such debates and sought to prevent their misuse. He wrote *al-Manqūl fī ‘Ilm al-Jadal* in this regard (Ibn Khallikān, 1375, *Wafayāt al-A‘yān*: 1, 587). He also devoted a chapter of *Iḥyā‘ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* to this issue. Al-Ghazālī categorized the negative consequences of debates as follows: envy and jealousy among rivals and contemporaries; offending one’s opponent and generating feelings of hatred and

animosity; verbal abuse and insults; self-aggrandizement and fabrication; exploiting an opponent's weaknesses and shortcomings to humiliate them; hypocrisy and duplicity; love of praise and admiration; and ultimately, obstinacy in refusing to accept the truth. According to al-Ghazālī, these flaws—and several others—are inherent products of debate. Nevertheless, he was not entirely opposed to debate; rather, he regarded it as a collective obligation (*wājib kifā'ī*) and believed that debates should not be conducted over issues that do not practically arise (al-Ghazālī, 1403 AH, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*: 1, 45–48).

Conclusion

The period of Buyid rule (322–448 AH) represents one of the major turning points in Islamic civilization from a scientific and cultural perspective. The aim of this study was to examine the role of educational institutions (madrasas) and scholarly debates in the intellectual flourishing of this era, and to analyze the manner in which these two institutions interacted in shaping educational and cultural structures. The findings of the research indicate that the Buyid government, through its policies of tolerance, created favorable conditions for the establishment of scholarly centers and the organization of debates among diverse intellectual schools. These policies not only strengthened formal education through madrasas, but also fostered an environment conducive to the free exchange of ideas, the growth of rationalism, and the production of knowledge. It also became clear that this educational system later served as a model for the Nizāmiyya madrasas and other scholarly institutions in subsequent periods. Madrasas and scholarly debates during the Buyid period were not merely educational tools; rather, they functioned as driving forces behind cultural and scientific transformation. The reciprocal relationship between these two institutions contributed to the dynamism of the intellectual climate and provided a context in which rational inquiry and scholarly dialogue attained a prominent position. From this perspective, the Buyids not only laid the groundwork for the flourishing of knowledge in their own time, but also facilitated the course of Islamic civilizational development in later centuries. The innovation of this study lies in its analysis of the continuum between madrasas and scholarly debates and in demonstrating the causal relationship between these institutions and intellectual growth—a subject that has generally been examined in isolation in previous research. Moreover, contrary to the predominant emphasis of many studies on religious sciences, this research shows that the Buyids played an active role in strengthening rational and philosophical sciences. Addressing the long-term effects of the educational system of this period is another distinguishing feature of this study. Given the extensive scientific and cultural capacities of the Buyid era, future research may

achieve a more comprehensive understanding of its impact by focusing on less-explored aspects of this period. One important avenue is a comparative examination of the position and role of thinkers such as Ibn Sīnā, Shaykh al-Mufīd, and al-Fārābī in interaction with the political and cultural structures of the Buyid state. Additionally, a comparative analysis of Buyid patronage policies with those of contemporary dynasties such as the Samanids and the Seljuks can more clearly illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of models of scientific governance in the Islamic world. Furthermore, an investigation of educational structures in disciplines such as philosophy, medicine, and mathematics, along with a reexamination of primary historical sources such as the works of Ibn Miskawayh, al-Mas'ūdī, and Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī, can provide a deeper understanding of the scientific strategies of this period. Finally, examining the impact of political and socio-cultural policies and transformations on academic freedom, as well as studying the extent of Buyid intellectual influence across different regions of the Islamic world, would offer a broader perspective on the scope of this dynasty's influence.

References

The Holy Quran.

Nahj al-Balagha.

- Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi (1421/2000), *Al-Basa'ir wa al-Dhaka'ir*, Beirut: Dar Sader.
- Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi (1421/2000), *Al-Sadaqa wa al-Sadiq*, Damascus: Dar al-Fikr.
- Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi (1965), *Mathalib al-Wuzara*, edited by Muhammad ibn Nayeb al-Tabakhi, Damascus: Al-Majma' al-Arabi.
- Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi, undated, *Al-Imta' wa al-Muwanasa*, edited by Ahmad Amin, Beirut: Dar al-Maktaba al-Hayah.
- Akbarzadeh, R. (1391/2012), "Avian and the Transformation of Islamic Intellectual History," *Journal of Islamic Cultural Studies*, 18.
- Al-Baghdadi, Abd al-Qahir ibn Tahir (1388/2009), *Al-Furq bayn al-Furuq*, edited by Muhammad Jawad Mashkoo, Tehran: Goya.
- Al-Dhahabi, Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Ahmad (1993), *Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafayat al-Mashahir wa al-A'lam*, edited by Omar Abd al-Salam Tadmor, Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi.
- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid (1392/2013), *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, translated by Mu'ayyad al-Din Muhammad Khwarazmi, edited by Hussein Khodiyoun Jam, Tehran: Elmi va Farhangi.
- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid (1403/1983), *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, vol. 1, Beirut.
- Al-Hamawi, Yaqut (1414/1993), *Mu'jam al-Udaba*, translated by Abd al-Muhammad Ayati, vol. 2, Tehran: Soroush.
- Al-Istakhri, Abu Ishaq Ibrahim (1368/1989), *Masalik wa Mamalik*, edited by Iraj Afshar, Tehran: Elmi va Farhangi.
- Al-Khalili, Jim (2011), *The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance*, New York.
- Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Abu Bakr (1417/1996), *Tarikh Baghdad*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.
- Allen, Roger (2000), *Arabic Literature: An Overview*, New York.
- Al-Maqdisi, Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Ahmad (1361/1982), *Ahsan al-Taqa'im fi Ma'rifat al-Aqalim*, vol. 2, translated by Ali Naqi Manzavi, Tehran: Company of Iranian Authors and Translators.
- Al-Qifti, Ali ibn Yusuf (1371/1992), *Tarikh al-Hukama*, edited by Bahman Daryaei, Tehran: University of Tehran.
- Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, Abu al-Qasim Hussein ibn Muhammad (1420/1999), *Muhadharat al-Udaba wa Muhawarat al-Shu'ara*, Beirut: Dar al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam.
- Al-Razi al-Qazvini, Abdul Jalil (1385/2006), *Al-Naqd*, edited by Mir Jalal al-Din Muhaddith Amwi, Tehran: National Heritage Association.
- Amiri, H. (1398/2019), "Philosophical and Theological Debates during the Buwayhid Period," *Iranian Studies Quarterly*, 27(4).
- El-Hawary, M. (2020), "The Influence of the Buwayhid Dynasty on Educational

- Developments,” *Middle Eastern History Review*, 19(1).
- Fadaei Araki, Alireza (1383/2004), *Scientific Life in the Buwayhid Era*, Tehran: University of Tehran.
- Fakhuri, Hena (1374/1995), *History of Arabic Language Literature*, translated by Abdul Hamid Ayati, Tehran: Tous.
- Group of Authors (1387/2008), *Collected Papers on the Buwayhids*, Summary of the First Cultural-Research Conference on the Buwayhids, Rasht: Bolur.
- Hassan, Hassan Ibrahim (1380/2001), *Tarikh Siyasi Islam*, translated by Abu al-Qasim Payandeh, Tehran: Javid.
- Ibn al-Nadim, Muhammad ibn Ishaq (1381/2002), *Al-Fihrist*, translated by Muhammad Reza Tajaddod, Tehran: Asatir.
- Ibn Athir, Ali ibn al-Hasan al-Azdi (1371/1992), *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, translated by Abu al-Qasim Halat and Abbas Khalili, Tehran: Scientific Institute.
- Ibn Juzi, Abd al-Rahman ibn Ali (1412/1991), *Al-Muntazim*, vol. 7, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.
- Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad (1363/1984), *Tarikh Ibn Khaldun*, translated by Abd al-Muhammad Ayati, Tehran: Institute for Cultural Studies and Research.
- Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad (1375/1996), *Muqaddimah*, translated by Muhammad Parvin Gonabadi, Tehran: Elmi va Farhangi.
- Ibn Khalkan (1417/1996), *Wafayat al-A'yan*, vol. 1, edited by Muhammad Marashi, Beirut: Dar al-Hayat al-Arabi.
- Ibn Miskawayh, Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Razi (1389/2010), *Tajarib al-Umam*, vol. 5, translated by Abu al-Qasim Emami, Tehran: Soroush.
- Iskandar, A. Z. (2000), *Islamic Civilization: Its Causes and Consequences*, Cairo, Egypt.
- Kassem, A. (2021), “The Role of Cultural Policies in the Abbasid Caliphate,” *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 12(3).
- Khezri, Ahmad Reza et al. (1392/2013), *Tarikh Tashayyu'*, vol. 2, Tehran: SAMT.
- Kramer, Joel (1375/1996), *Cultural Revival in the Buwayhid Era*, translated by Muhammad Saeed Khiyali-Kashani, Tehran: University Press.
- McDermott, Martin (1993), *The Theological Thought of Sheikh Mufid*, translated by Ahmad Aram, Tehran: University of Tehran.
- Metz, Adam (1388/2009), *Islamic Civilization in the Fourth Century AH*, translated by Alireza Zekavati Qaraguzlu, Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Mottahedeh, Parviz (1388/2009), *Social Conditions during the Buwayhid Era*, Mashhad: Blue House.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (1363/1984), *Science in Islam: History and Issues*, Tehran: University Publishing Center.
- Rawandi, Morteza (1354/1975), *Iranian Social History: Governments and Dynasties from the Arab Conquest to the Establishment of Constitutionalism*, vol. 2, Tehran.
- Rizvi, A. (2020), “Language and the Buwayhid’s Role in the Spread of Islamic Knowledge,” *Arabic Language and Literature Review*, 10(3).

- Sajjadi, Seyyed Ziauddin (1366/1987), *Sharh Ahwal wa Asar Ibn Amid*, Tehran: Pazang.
- Sarton, George (1927), *Introduction to the History of Science*, vol. 1, Washington, D.C.
- Shah Mohammadi, Maryam (1401/2022), *The Buwayhids and Their Role in Intellectual and Social Life of Iran and the Islamic World*, Gilan: Bolur.
- Shahbazi, A. (1390/2011), "Religious and Cultural Integration during the Buwayhid Era," *Persian Historical Journal*, 34(2).
- Shahedi Salehi, Abd al-Husain (1386/2007), *Encyclopedia of Shi'ism*, edited by Ahmad Sadr Haj Seyed Javadi, Bahaddin Khorramshahi, and Kamran Fani, Tehran: Mohibi.
- Shibli Na'mani, Muhammad (1386/2007), *History of Kalam Science*, translated by Seyyed Muhammad Taqi Fakhredda'i, Tehran: Asatir.
- Shibli, Ahmad (1954), *Tarikh al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyya*, Beirut: Dar al-Kashaf.
- Yaqut al-Hamawi (1990), *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, vol. 4, edited by Farid Abdul Aziz Jundi, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.
- Zamiri, Muhammad Ali (1380/2001), *History of Education in Iran and Islam*, Shiraz: Sasan.
- Zarrinkoub, Abd al-Husain (1354/1975), *Two Centuries of Silence*, Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Zarrinkoub, Abd al-Husain (1358/1979), *Karnama-ye Islam*, Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Zarrinkoub, Abd al-Husain (1377/1998), *History of the People of Iran*, vol. 2, Tehran: Amir Kabir.