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- 1 This article contextualizes the debate among the Usuli and Akhbari schools of law regarding the validity of congregational prayer-leading in the Twelver Shi'ite community in the late Safavid era. Newman begins with the foundational Usuli arguments of 'Alī al-Karakī (d. 1534) and his relatively controversial position that prayer was *wujūb taḥyīrī* (obligatory) and that learned *faqīhs* could be appointed to lead congregational prayer sessions. Newman provides a systematic overview of the 16th and 17th century debates on this matter, and towards the end of the article turns to the Arabic writing of one Surāb Tanukābunī (d. 1712-13) regarding obligatory/non-obligatory prayer. Debate had emerged among Shi'ite scholars in the late 17th century, and Tanukābunī produced a series of lively essays in defense of Muḥammad Bāqir Sabzivārī (d. 1679) who had advocated a position of *wujūb 'aynī* (individual obligation) regarding prayer and who had been roundly condemned as a result by contemporary arch-conservatives. Tanukābunī profiled his rationalization of Sabzivārī's position by narrating a juridical debate between himself and opposing clerics in the presence of the grand vizier, Šayḥ 'Alī Ḥān Zangana. Newman argues effectively that these debates over prayers and prayer-leading were

inherently political since the status of an obligatory prayer-leader (i.e. *wujūb taḥyirī*) was an implicit challenge to the central authority of the Safavid shah. Thus, those scholars like Tanukābunī who supported the *wujūb ‘aynī* argument – seen as promoting a “pro-court” position” – were in turn recognized and rewarded by the Safavid authorities for their loyalty.

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Thèmes : 4.2.1. Safavides et Qājárs

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