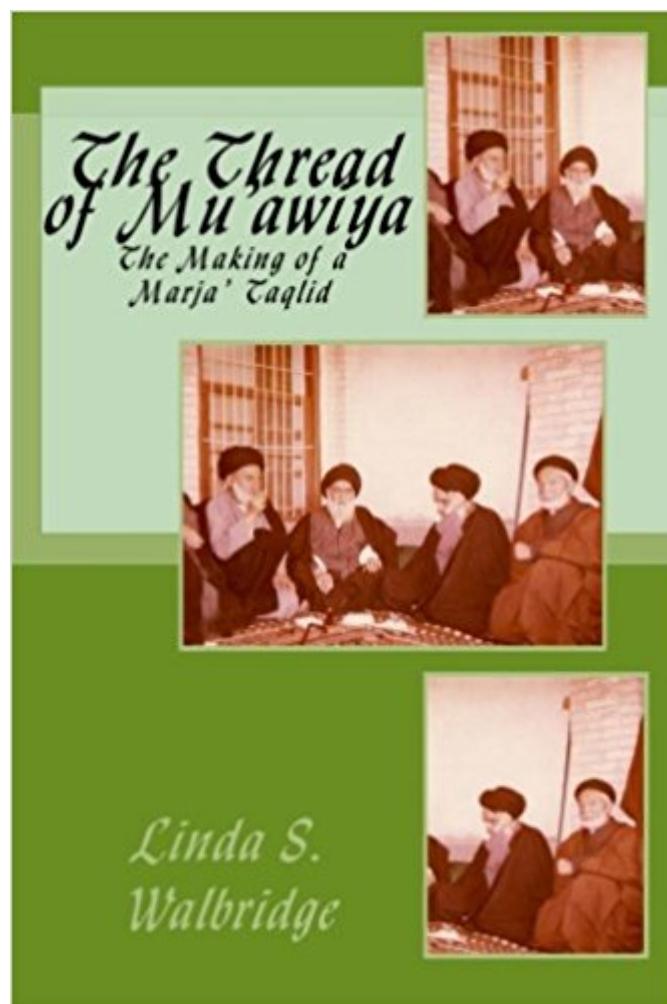


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# The Thread Of Mu'awiya: The Making Of A Marja' Taqlid



## Synopsis

The marjaâ ^s or grand ayatollahs are the scholars who sit at the pinnacle of the Shiâ ^a religious hierarchy. Normally learned and reclusive men, they nonetheless wield enormous authority through their religious prestige and the funds generated by religious taxes. From their modest homes in the Shiâ ^ite shrines cities of Iraq and Iran, their influence reaches across the Shiâ ^a world carried by networks of sons, sons-in-law, students, and local clerics. This book reveals the process by which a handful of religious scholars become recognized as grand ayatollahs, the way their influence is exercised, and how they relate to other Shiâ ^a clerics and to ordinary believers. Based on scores of interviews with Shiâ ^a clerics, this book gives a detailed and human portrait of the inner world of the Shiâ ^ite clerical hierarchy. The late Linda Walbridge was an anthropologist of religion specializing in minorities in the Islamic world. Her other works include *Without Forgetting the Imam: Shiâ ^ism in an American Community*, *The Most Learned of the Shiâ ^a: The Institution of the Marjaâ ^ Taqlid*, and *The Christians of Pakistan: The Passion of Bishop John Joseph*.

## Book Information

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John Walbridge is a Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Indiana University. He is the author of nine books on Islam and Arabic culture, including four books on Islamic philosophy, including *The Wisdom of the Mystic East: Suhrawardi and Platonic Orientalism* (2001) and *Suhrawardi: The Philosophy of Illumination* (with Hossein Ziai, 1999).

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