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THE SYRIAN ISMĀ‘ĪLĪS
AT THE TIME OF THE CRUSADES

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Ph.D.
(in Oriental Studies)

in

the University of Durham

by

NASSEH AHMAD MIRZA

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August 1963
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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART ONE - AN OUTLINE OF THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE AMIRATE OF MISHYAF.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>THE PRINCIPALITY OF MISHYAF UNDER SINAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Introductory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) The Early Life and Career of Sinan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) The Death of Abū Muḥammad and the Accession of Sinān; Sinān's Efforts to Consolidate the Ismāʿīlī Position; Relations with Alamūt; The Episode of the Ṣufāt; Sinān's Relations with Alamūt; Two Abortive Attempts on the Life of Saladin; The Siege of Mīṣyāf; The Murder of Conrad of Montferrat; Sinān and the Crusaders; The Negotiations with Amalric I; &quot;Sinān's Offer to Embrace Christianity&quot;; The Death of Sinān.</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>THE SYRIAN ISMĀʿĪLĪS FROM THE DEATH OF SINĀN TO THE FALL OF ALAMUT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) The Situation Confronting Sinān's Successors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) The Repercussions in Syria of the Rapprochement between the Persian Ismāʿīlīs and the Caliphate; Al-Nāṣir's Ambassador in Aleppo; A Test for Ismāʿīlī-Ayyūbid Friendship; The Other Side of the Coin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) The Ismāʿīlīs and the Leaders of the Sixth and the Seventh Crusades; Majd al-Dīn Receives the Envoys of Frederick II (A.D. 1194-1250); Effects of Over-Confidence; Consultation with Aleppo; The Ismāʿīlī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## IV

Mission to St. Louis at 'Akkā; A Friar among the Ismā'īlīs.

(d) The Fall of Alamūt and its Effects on the Syrian Ismā'īlīs; The Disheartened Syrian Ismā'īlīs.

### IV

**THE SYRIAN ISMĀ'ILĪS UNDER THE EARLY MAMLUKS**

| (a) | The Internal Situation; A Successor for Raqqī al-Dīn; How many Strongholds? |
| (b) | The Last Ten Years of Precarious Independence; A Prejudicial Step; The Ismā'īlīs become Tributary to Baybars; Najm al-Dīn's Costly Misjudgment; The Appointment of Şarim al-Dīn; Şarim al-Dīn Overplays his Hands. |
| (c) | The Final Subjugation of the Ismā'īlīs; The Fall of al-'Ullayqa; The Surrender of the Remaining Castles. |
| (d) | In the Service of the Mamlūks. |

### PART TWO - BELIEFS AND ORGANIZATION.

**THE UNIVERSAL DIVINE ORDER**

| (a) | Introductory; The Ismā'īlī System of Philosophy; The Ismā'īlī Theory of Creation; The Belief in the Seven Cycles (al-Adwār al-Saba') Al-Kirmānī's Ten Intellects. |
| (b) | Spiritual Trends in Syrian Ismā'īlīsm under the Alamūt Imamate; The Initiation of a New Cycle; Popular Leanings Towards Metempsychosis. |

### VI

**THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DAWWA**

| (a) | Alamūt and the Militant Nizārī Revolutionary Organization. |
(b) The Autonomy of the Syrian Da'wa under Sinān.

VII CONCLUSION .................................................. 174

APPENDICES

I - NOTES ON FOUR ISMĀ'ILĪ MANUSCRIPTS .......... 175
II - FOUR BIOGRAPHIES FROM JANNAT AL-ĀMĀL ...... 186

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................. 194

ILLUSTRATIONS

(1) GENEALOGY OF THE NINARI IMAMS AT ALAMŪT ................................ facing page 40

(2) MAP OF THE SYRIAN ISMĀ'ILĪ AMIRATE AT THE TIME OF THE CRUSADES ...... after page 201
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION.

After the conquest of Northern Syria and Damascus by Sunni Saljuqs, which was completed between A.D. 1071 and 1079, and the collapse of the Ismā'īlī Fātimid Empire in Egypt in A.D. 1171, the followers of the Bāṭinī İslām in Syria no longer had a powerful government to protect them. The most vigorous branch of the Ismā'īlīs now came to be that of the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs, who under the leadership of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ founded a community and a state at Alamūt in Northern Iran whence they challenged the political domination of the Saljuqs and the spiritual domination of the Sunni Muslims. From Iran fearless and highly intelligent dā'īs (propagandists) carried the Nizārī teaching to Syria and quickly won over the local Ismā'īlī communities to the new movement.

These communities will form the subject of this thesis. They are well-known in the history of the Crusades under the name "Assassins". (1) The medieval Arabic historians called

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(1) The term "Assassin" was not used until the fourteenth century. It is believed that it was derived from ḥashshāsh which is an Arabic word meaning a person who consumes ḥashīsh, (a narcotic drug); see, Bernard Lewis, "The Sources of the History of the Syrian Assassins" in Speculum 1952, p.475; Sylvestre de Sacy, "Memoir of the Dynasty of the Assassins and on the Origin of their Name", contained in Joseph von Hammer, History of the Assassins, tr. from German by O.C. Wood, London 1835, pp.227-240.
them "Hashīshiyun" or more usually "Bātinīs". (1) Before these communities are discussed something must be said about their origins.

Ismā'īlism is one of the branches of the Shī'a, the movement in support of 'Alī which goes back to the time when Prophet Muḥammad died without designating his successor. The Muslims were divided on the question who should be the leader of the community of the believers after the Prophet. The problem had a largely political aspect but later on gave rise to religious differences. The party led by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb who became the second Caliph after Abū Bakr believed that only the believers themselves had the right to decide who should be the Imam (leader) of the community and the successor (Khalīfa) of Prophet Muḥammad as its political and religious head. The decision must be taken in accordance with the Ijmā' (Consensus of the community). To the Muslims, Muḥammad was Prophet, Prince, Judge, Legislator and Temporal and Spiritual Leader. The supporters of the most generally accepted traditions or "Sunna" came to be known as the Sunnīs and were able to enforce their point of view.

The election of Abū Bakr to succeed Muḥammad deprived the

(1) A Bātinī in Arabic means the one who believes in the bāṭin (inner, esoteric) meaning of the apparent text. According to the Ismā'īlīs the sacred books have both exoteric and esoteric meanings. In most cases they attribute more value to the bāṭin (esoteric), which led them to be called Ahl. al-Bāṭin (the people who believe in the esoteric interpretation).
latter's cousin and son-in-law 'Ali ibn Abī Ṭalib of the Caliphate. 'Ali's supporters were to be known as Ahl al-Naṣṣ wa al-Taʿyīn (the people of designation and appointment) or as 'Ali's Party (Shīʿat 'Ali). They believed that the leadership belonged to 'Ali who, they said, had been designated by Muḥammad to be his successor.

The institution of the Imamate (al-Imāmah) or spiritual and temporal leadership also raised intricate problems for the ShiʿIs (Shīʿa) themselves and later on led to many divisions and subdivisions among them. Some of the ShiʿIs did not consider it necessary that the Imām after 'Ali should be a son of Fāṭima, the wife of 'Ali and the beloved daughter of the Prophet. They were known as the Ḥanafiya. The Alī himself held the Imamate from A.D. 656 to 661 when he was murdered. His eldest son al-Ḥasan waived his right to the Caliphate which had passed into the power of the Umayyad ruler of Syria Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān. The ShiʿIs consider al-Ḥasan to have been the second Imām after 'Ali. However, the second son

(1) The Ḥanafiya were the followers of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiya (d. A.D. 700–1), a son of 'Ali by another wife and half-brother of his sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn by his wife Fāṭima.

(2) In most of the Ismāʿīlī sources al-Ḥasan's name is mentioned in the genealogical charts of the Imāms as the second Imām. In recent Ismāʿīlī works al-Ḥasan is not mentioned as the second Imām and he is considered as being only one of the Ashbāḥ al-Khamsa (the five shadows), namely the Prophet, 'Ali, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Fāṭima. This means that the seventh Imām and the Qāʿim al-Muntagār (seventh and last Imām of the Cycle) was Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl and not his father Ismāʿīl ibn Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq – see, Bernard Lewis, The Origins of Ismāʿīlīsm, (Cambridge 1940), pp.37–41.
of 'Ali, al-Ḥusayn, rose to defend his right to the Caliphate against Muṭawiya's son al-Yazīd. It was al-Ḥusayn's name that history has immortalised as the Martyr of Karbalā'. He was killed while fighting with a small band of loyal supporters against al-Yazīd's troops. To the Shiʿīs the date of his death, namely 10th Muḥarram A.H. 61 (October A.D. 680) is a day of intense grief and sorrow. Al-Ḥusayn was succeeded by his son ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (A.D. 680-713), who was followed by his son Muḥammad al-Bāqir who held the Imamate for nineteen years.

It was during the Imamate of Jaʿfar al-Qādiq, who succeeded his father Muḥammad al-Bāqir in A.D. 732, that the first main split among the Shiʿīs took place. Jaʿfar is well-known in the annals of Islamic history as a philosopher and an authority on jurisprudence. After his death in A.D. 765 his son Ismāʿīl was not recognised by a large group of the Shiʿīs who held that Ismāʿīl had been disinherited by his father, and they proclaimed his younger brother Mūsā to be the successor of Jaʿfar in the Imamate. The followers of Mūsā are well known as "Ithnāʿasharīya" or Twelver Shiʿīs. They were given this name because they believe that their twelfth Imām from the line of Mūsā named Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī disappeared about A.D. 874 without leaving a successor. They furthermore believe that their Imām Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī will
"return" as Mahdi again to fill the earth with justice. They are known also as Ahl al-Ghayba wa al-Raj' a (i.e. Believers in the "Absence" and "Return" of the Imam).

The followers of Ismā'īl who came to be known later as the Ismā'īlis held to the principle that the Imamate could not go from one brother to another and that it should remain only in the 'Uq̱b (progeny of the Imam). After Ismā'īl ibn Ja'far al-Ṣādiq the Imamate thus passed to his son Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, the first of those who are known as Hidden Imāms. From the general literature nothing is known about Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl beyond the fact that he existed. The known facts about the period of the Hidden Imāms and especially its later stages can be interpreted in so many different ways, that contradictory inferences may be drawn.

As the ʿAbbāsids tightened their grip, the Imāms found it necessary to go into hiding while their followers began to practise what was called among the Shi'īs al-taqīya (suppression or concealment of one's religious beliefs). During the Imamate of the Hidden Imāms, the Ismā'īlī dā'īs (propagandists) began to extend their activities to Persia, Syria, al-Yaman and over North Africa. The Hidden Imāms chose Salamīya in Syria as a place where they might hide from the eyes of the ʿAbbāsid authorities. In A.D. 902 the
Imám 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī(1) was invited to come to North Africa where Abū 'Abdullāh al-Shī'ī, an Ismā'īlī dā'ī from al-Yaman, had been paving the way for the first Ismā'īlī Caliphate, known in the annals of history as the Fātimid Caliphate. 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī left Salamiya just before it was pillaged by members of the fanatical sect of the Qarmatians (Qarāmīṭa),(2) whose precise relationship with the Ismā'īlīs is

(1) a. The 'Abbāsids attempted to prove that the genealogical descent of al-Mahdī from the line of 'Alī and Fāṭima was not genuine. In A.D. 1011 the Manifesto of Baghdād was published by a group of Jurists and others, denouncing the falsehood of Fātimid claims. B. Lewis arrived at the conclusion that 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī was not a Fātimid, while his "son" Muḥammad al-Qā'īm and the rest of the Fātimid Imāms were of genuine genealogical descent. Al-Mahdī was, according to B. Lewis, an Imām Mustawda' (trustee Imām) who handed the Imamate to the Imām Mustaqqarr (a real or innate Imām) Muḥammad al-Qā'īm. See B. Lewis The Origins of Ismā'īlism, pp.72.


(2) The Qarmāṭians were able to seize power in Bahrain, and from there they conducted a series of raids on the lines of communications of the 'Abbāsid Empire. It is quite possible that they took their name from that of one of their leaders, ʻAmrān Qarmat. See von Wilferd Nadelung's article, "Fatimiden und Bahraingarmaten" in Der Islam, Band 34 September 1959), pp.44-52; Ṭārīm, "al-Ismā'īliya wa al-Qarāmīṭa", in al-Machriq, (July-October, 1959), pp.566-569.
uncertain but who were separate from and, for the most part, hostile to the Fatimids.

Setting out for North Africa, ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī experienced many difficulties in Egypt, but overcame them and went further south and then further west where he was captured by some Berbers. Then another tribe of Berbers, the Kitāma, who had already been mobilized by Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Shīʿī against the Sunnī rulers, the Aghlabids of al-Qayrawān, rallied to his cause and rescued him, after several years captivity in A.D. 909. Al-Mahdī then proceeded to the City of al-Raqqāda, which had been founded by the Aghlabids, six miles south of al-Qayrawān. In A.D. 910 he proclaimed himself Caliph. During his reign he made two attempts in A.D. 914 and 920 to conquer Egypt, where his troops were able to occupy al-Fustāṭ and Alexandria; but they were forced later to withdraw. (1)

During the reign of the next Fatimid Caliph, Muḥammad al-Qāʻīm, (A.D. 934-945) the Fatimids made another assault on Egypt and also conquered Morocco from the Idrīsids. Al-Qāʻīm's reign was marked by a large number of revolts. He was

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(1) In A.D. 926 ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī had taken up his residence in the new city that he had founded on the Tunisian coast and named after himself, al-Mahdīya. It was founded in 300/912 and took four years to build. The date of its completion is reported by the well-known geographer Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī in his Mu'amal al-Buldān, Beirut, 1955, Vol. 5, p.231 to be Dhū al-Qa‘da 303/July 916.
succeeded by his son al-Manṣūr (A.D. 945-952) who was able to re-establish the Fāṭimid rule over the provinces which had been under the Fāṭimid sovereignty during the reign of ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī and Muḥammad al-Qāʾīm. In A.D. 951 al-Manṣūr ordered the Qarmatians to return the celebrated Black Stone, al-Ḥajār al-Aswāḍ, which they had removed from Makka after sacking the Holy City in A.D. 930.

During the reign of the fourth Caliph al-Muʿizz li Dīn-i-Allāh al-Fāṭimī (A.D. 952-975), the Fāṭimids conquered Egypt and also annexed Sicily. After conquering Egypt, al-Muʿizz founded (the great City of Mars) al-Qāhirah, or Cairo. The circuit of Cairo was traced by Jawhar al-Ṣiqīllī, the valiant and devout Commander of the Fāṭimid army, and the walls were completed before the arrival of the Imām al-Muʿizz from al-Mahdiya. Al-Muʿizz is described, even by historians inimical to his dynasty, as a wise, energetic and chivalrous sovereign.

(1) a. Jawhar al-Ṣiqīllī known as Abū al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd Allāh, was born in Sicily. His father brought him to al-Qayrawān where he sold him as a slave to the fourth Fāṭimid Caliph al-Muʿizz li Dīn-i-Allāh. See the article on "Ghāzi Jawhar Fāṭih Mīqr" (invader Jawhar, the Conqueror of Egypt) in the Ismāʿīlī periodical Jannat al-Āmāl (the Paradise of Hopes) presented to H.H. Aghā Khān III in Bombay January 1936, probably written in A.D. 1886.

and an accomplished scholar, well versed in science and philosophy and a munificent patron of arts and learning; and it was he who founded the well-known College-Mosque of al-Azhar as a centre of the Ismāʿīlī missionary activity (daʿwa). (1)

Al-Muʿizz was succeeded in A.D. 975 by his son al-ʿAzīz who was known also as Nizār. (2) Al-ʿAzīz improved the conditions of the army left by al-Muʿizz. It was divided into two main sections: the eastern army, mainly composed of the Turkish and Daylamite (Persian) elements, and the western army composed of tribes from North Africa, mostly Kitāma Berbers. Later on, differences between the Turkish and Berber elements led to the weakening of the Fatimid army. Al-ʿAzīz was able to annex Damascus after defeating its Turkish Commander, Aftagīn, and his Qarmatian allies.

Under the sixth Fatimid Caliph, al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh (A.D. 996-1021), Aleppo submitted to the rule of a Fatimid governor. Before the end of his reign, however, the Fatimid army split into two hostile groups. One was known as the Maghāriba (those from the west) and led by Ibn ʿAmmār, the chief of Banū Kitāma tribe; the other as the Mashāriqā (those from the east, mainly Turks and Daylamites) and led by the Grand Wazīr Burjuwān. The latter had been appointed to be Grand Wazīr during the reign of al-Ḥākim's father, the Caliph al-ʿAzīz.

(1) During the reign of al-ʿAzīz (A.D. 975-996) al-Azhar Mosque was turned into a great centre of learning.

(2) In two Syrian Ismāʿīlī MSS. borrowed from a modern Ismāʿīlī historian, Mr. ʿArif Tāmīr, the name of the fifth Fatimid Caliph is given as al-ʿAzīz Nizār, or Nizār al-Manṣūr. See Appendix I.
Burjuwān was later accused of trying to stage a "coup d'etat" against al-Ḥākim and was consequently dismissed. After a night tour in the mountain al-Muqatṭam near Cairo in A.D. 1021, al-Ḥākim disappeared in mysterious circumstances. His sister Sitt al-Mulūk ordered the name of his son al-Ẓāhir to be proclaimed as heir to the throne. She herself took charge of the Caliphate because al-Ẓāhir was under age.

The disappearance of al-Ḥākim led to a serious split among the Ismā'īlīs. A large number of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs withdrew from the main Ismā'īlī da'wa, and came to be known as the Druzes (Arabic, al-Durūz), after the name of a Persian missionary, al-Darazī. Most of their beliefs were based on the teachings of another missionary, Ḥamza ibn 'Alī.(1) The Druzes claimed that the divine spirit was lodged in al-Ḥākim (al-ḥulūl), and that he was only temporarily in a state of "Concealment".(2)

Al-Ẓāhir 'Alī, the seventh Fātimid Caliph, succeeded al-Ḥākim, but did not live long and died in the thirty-first year of his age. He was succeeded by his son al-Mustanṣir, who was then only seven years old, and whose reign of 60 years

(1) Hamza ibn 'Alī was the missionary who brought with him what is known as Ẓīthāq Wālī al-Zamān, (the covenant of the ruler of the world); this Ẓīthāq contains a number of pledges of allegiance to the new da'wa. See, The Druze MSS. in the British Museum, Or. 6852, 1435, 5634.

was the longest of any Muslim ruler. In it came the culminating point of the power and glory of the Fatimid dynasty, which, despite the loss of almost the whole of North Africa, still included Tripoli and Barqa (Cyrenaica), Egypt, Sicily, various portions of Syria, and the shores of the Red Sea. For forty weeks in the year A.D. 1060 Baghdad itself, under the command of a Shi‘i general, al-Basāsīrī, acknowledged al-Mustansīr as Caliph. A powerful new Sunnī empire, however, had been founded in Iran by the Saljūq Turks, who conquered 'Irāq, Aleppo (A.D. 1070), much of Asia Minor (A.D. 1075). Meanwhile the Fatimid regime had been weakened by famines and by factional strife in the army; but order was restored by an energetic Army Commander (Amīr al-Juyūsh), Badr al-Jamālī, by origin an Armenian slave, who held office from A.D. 1073 till his death in A.D. 1094 and effectively controlled the government of Egypt.

After the death of the Caliph al-Mustansīr, there were two parties, one following Nizār, the eldest son of al-Mustansīr, and the other following al-Mustaʿlī, the second son. The latter was supported by his brother-in-law al-Afdāl, who was the Commander-in-Chief (Amīr al-Juyūsh) having succeeded his father Badr al-Jamālī in that office. Al-Afdal was able to raise al-Mustaʿlī to the Caliphate. He pursued Nizār to Alexandria and was able to arrest him and put him in prison with his family. There were many who thought that Nizār died in prison at Alexandria. A section of the Ismāʿīlīs, however, recognised the Imamate of Nizār and his successors and refused to recognise the Imamate of al-Mustaʿlī; they came to be known as
the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs. They quickly developed a powerful movement under the leadership of the Persian dāʿī Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāh, and refused to submit to the authority of the Sunni Saljuq rulers of Persia, ʿIrāq and Syria. In A.D. 1090 Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāh established himself on the craggy peak of Alamūt (Eagle's nest) in the Elburz mountains of Daylam in Northern Persia, whence he ruled the surrounding district and other Ismāʿīlī communities in Persia (especially in Qūhistān in south eastern Persia). From Alamūt the Nizārī movement spread to Syria.

The activities of the Fāṭimids in Syria had not been merely military. Salamiya in Syria had been one of the chief centres of the earliest Ismāʿīlī movement (see p. 5 above), and the Ismāʿīlī beliefs had continued to win many Syrian supporters. It is reported that al-Mustansir had in A.D. 1051 sent his chief dāʿī (dāʿī al-ṣuʿūd) al-Muḍayyad fi al-Dīn al-Shirāzī to Aleppo (Halab) to carry on the preaching of the daʿwa and various activities against the ʿAbbāsids. (1)

The first emissaries from Alamūt arrived in Syria at the beginning of the twelfth-century A.D. to find the general situation there quite favourable for their activities. The Muslim world was divided internally and threatened with dangers from within as well as from without. The Saljuqs were no longer a unified strong power, and their empire was disintegrating into several petty states. There were perpetual rivalries between the Great Saljuqs, the Dānishmands, the

(1) ʿĀrif Ṭāmir, ʿAlā Abwāb Alamūt, Ḥarīsa, Lebanon 1959, p.7.
Artuqids of Diyar Bakr, the house of Tutush son of Alp Arslan and ruler of Syria, and between the latter's two sons, Riḍwān at Aleppo and Duqāq at Damascus. Moreover the Frankish Crusaders had established themselves in Syria and Palestine in A.D. 1098–99, and minor Arab dynasties such as Banū ʿAmmār of Tripoli and the Banū Munqidh of Shayzar were able in this general situation to maintain a precarious independence. (1)

During the Caliphate of al-Mustaʿlī and his son al-Āmir, the Fāṭimids continued to be an effective force in the Muslim world, and still had followers in Syria. Abū al-Fidāʾ, prince of Ḥamā in the early fourteenth-century, tells us that in the year 490/1107 Riḍwān, the Saljuq ruler of Aleppo, pronounced the khutba (Friday Sermon) in the name of al-Mustaʿlī, (2) but later, perceiving the serious repercussions of accepting Fāṭimid suzerainty, again pronounced it in the name of the ʿAbbāsid Caliph. After the murder of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Āmir in A.D. 1130, alleged to have been perpetrated by the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs, the Fāṭimids in Egypt suffered from another

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internal split which helped the Nizārīs to win more followers in Syria. (1) But although the Nizārī daʿwa in Northern Syria became effective during the reign of the local Saljūq ruler RiḤwān (A.D. 1095-1113), and later in Southern Syria during the rule of Tughtīgin (A.D. 1104-1128) the Turkish atābeg of the Saljūq prince Duqāq at Damascus, the Nizārīs were not able to gain permanent control over any territory till many years later when they transferred their activities to the highlands between Latakia (al-Lādhīqīya) and Ḥamā.

Under the leadership of the dāʿī al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjīm (the physician-astrologer), who appeared in Aleppo at the beginning of the twelfth century A.D., the Ismāʿīlīs successfully carried on their daʿwa in Aleppo under the protection of RiḤwān. Probably this ruler was influenced by motives of political expediency; he wished to use them against hostile neighbouring Amīrs. Most of the sources state that the murder at Ḥimṣ in May, A.D. 1103 of Ḥanāf al-Dawlah, a former guardian

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(atābeg) of Riḍwān, was perpetrated by Ismāʾīlīs working for him.\(^{(1)}\) Riḍwān is said by some to have had some Ismāʾīlī convictions, but this on the whole seems unlikely.\(^{(2)}\) However, the Ismāʾīlīs were able to establish a dār al-daʿwa (house for preaching), and Aleppo became their centre and base for further activities.

Al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjim died in A.D. 1103 and was succeeded by another Persian dāʾī (missionary) Abū Ṭāhir al-Sāʿīgh, the goldsmith. Abū Ṭāhir followed the policy of the Persian Ismāʾīlīs in trying to seize and acquire strongholds in districts inhabited by sympathetic populations. From Aleppo he concentrated his activities in the highlands between the Orontes (al-ʿAṣī river) and Aleppo known as Jabal al-Summāq, which had been affected by Ismāʾīlīsm and other Shīʿī elements.\(^{(3)}\)

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Political authority in the upper Orontes valley was then shared between Janāḥ al-Dawlah of Ḫimṣ, (murdered in May, A.D. 1103), the Munqidhites of Shayzar, and Khalaf ibn-Mulāṭib of Afāmiya (Qal‘at al-Muḍīq), who had been appointed governor by the Fāṭimids. The latter, who was probably a Musta‘lī Iṣmā‘īlī, seems to have refused to cooperate with Abū Tāhir, and he too was murdered on Feb. 3, A.D. 1106 after some sort of "coup d'état" in the town itself. The murder of Khalaf and the subsequent seizure of the citadel and the town of Afāmiya by Abū Tāhir were achieved with the help of an Iṣmā‘īlī dā’ī from Sarmin near Aleppo who was residing in Afāmiya and was called Abū al-Fath. (1)

Shortly after the capture of the citadel and town, Abū Tāhir arrived to take charge of the place. This attempt on the part of the Iṣmā‘īlīs to make Afāmiya their stronghold

did not succeed. The Frankish regent of Antioch, Tancred, chose the occasion to besiege Afāmiya. Abū al-Fath, however, was able to keep things under control; and the rulers of Shayzar and Ḥamā promised him help. Tancred had to lay off the siege. A few months later, Tancred got a promise from Nuṣṣab ibn Mulā'ib, brother of the murdered Khalāf, that he would attack Afāmiya again, and they captured it in September A.D. 1106. Abū al-Fath and three of his companions were put to death, while Abū Tāhir ransomed himself from captivity and returned to Aleppo.(1)

Before the death of their patron Riḍwān, the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs succeeded in eliminating the powerful Saljūq amīr of Mosul, Mawdūd, who commanded a force which had been sent from the east to assist the Muslims in Syria. Most of the sources are agreed that he was murdered by Ismāʿīlī fidāʿīs (devotees). In the general Arabic sources we find almost identical information about the arrival of Mawdūd in Syria, why he came, and what happened between him and the Franks; they state that the murder took place in 507/1113 at Damascus, Mawdūd being stabbed to death while he was entering the Great Mosque with his host Ṭughtīgīn. There is no clear evidence to show

who was responsible for the murder and what was the motive behind it; but Ibn al-Āthīr and William of Tyre suggest that Tughtigīn had a hand in it. There was more than one reason to make the rulers of Damascus and Aleppo jealous of an ambitious, powerful leader coming from the east. At the same time the Syrian Ismā'īlīs also had their reasons to try to eliminate the Amīr Mawdūd. Ibn al-Qalānisī tells us that Tughtigīn gave Mawdūd too lavish a welcome and this might perhaps give another clue to the case. Tughtigīn might have tried to raise the jealousy of Riḍwān in Aleppo by giving the Saljūq general a big welcome. (1) Already Tughtigīn had been trying to belittle the importance and prestige of Riḍwān. By behaving in that way he probably succeeded in planting seeds of jealousy in the heart of Riḍwān, who could count on the Ismā'īlī fida'īs. Jealousy and fear of the influence of the newcomer from the east undoubtedly influenced the Muslim rulers in Syria; though it looks as if most of the general Arabic sources try to conceal the differences and enmities among the Muslim rulers themselves by blaming the Ismā'īlīs for most of the murders. This and other murder cases need to be carefully

investigated in the light of the possible benefits which the murder of a particular individual might have brought to other individuals. The general tendency among the medieval Arabic sources is to attribute most murders to the Bāṭinīs. This tendency should be borne in mind by historians in their researches into the events of that period.

The death of Riḍwān on Dec. 10, A.D. 1113, deprived the Ismāʿīlīs of a strong friend. Although he did not give his Ismāʿīlī friends any castle, Riḍwān was always ready to protect them in Aleppo, in spite of the pressure put on him by the Great Saljūq Sultan Muḥammad ibn Malik Shāh (A.D. 1105–1118), who strongly disapproved of Riḍwān's friendly relations with the Ismāʿīlīs. An abortive attempt on the life of a wealthy Persian, Abū Ḥarb ʿĪsā ibn Zayd, in A.D. 1111, caused a wave of anger among the Sunnī and Shīʿī inhabitants of Aleppo against the Ismāʿīlīs which was followed by a general attack on them. Riḍwān could not overlook the popular outburst (against the Ismāʿīlīs), especially as he himself was suspected of having a hand in the attempt to assassinate Abū Ḥarb. Riḍwān, who was permanently on bad terms with his Saljūq cousins, died a natural death in A.D. 1113, and was succeeded by his young son Alp Arslān, whose inexperience led him to fall completely in the hands of his eunuch attendant Luʾluʿ. During the short reign of Alp Arslān the Ismāʿīlīs were able to acquire another fortress outside Balis on the road from Aleppo to Baghdād. Alp Arslān seems at first to have followed his father's policy
in his relations with the Ismā'īlīs, but later he was induced by the Saljuq Şultan Muḥammad's envoy Saʿīd ibn Bādī to take action against the Ismā'īlīs. Ibn Bādī was also the prefect (raʾīs) of Aleppo and commander of the militia. A warrant for the execution of Abū Ṭāhir and other leaders of the Ismā'īlīs was issued and the populace of Aleppo set about massacring all whom they could catch. The Ismā'īlīs either went underground or, as ibn al-Qalānīsī says, fled to the protection of the Franks. However, they were still powerful in Northern Syria and began to turn their attention to the south.\(^1\)

Although the Ismā'īlīs had been banished, the new authorities in Aleppo were considered by their neighbours to have Shī'ī tendencies on account of the influence of Persians in the city. The lack of a strong prince with a strong army left Aleppo powerless to do more than defend its own walls.

It was when Aleppo was seized by the Artuqid\(^2\) prince


\(^2\) The Artuqids were a Turkish dynasty which ruled the whole of Diyār Bakr, either independently or under Mongol protectorate, from the end of the eleventh century to the fourteenth century A.D. See C. Cahen's article, "Artuqid" in Encycl. of Islām, 2nd ed.
named Balik (Belik) in A.D. 1123 that the Ismā'īlī power in the city began to decline. The new ruler arrested the agent of Bahrām, the chief dā'ī, and ordered the expulsion of the Ismā'īlīs in A.D. 1124.

Under the leadership of another Persian chief dā'ī, Bahrām of Astarābād, the Ismā'īlīs continued their vigorous efforts to consolidate their position, this time in Southern Syria. Although this Bahrām enjoyed the support of Īl-Ghāzī, the Artuqid ruler of Mardin (A.D. 1102-1122), he was obliged to look for another centre for his activities instead of Aleppo where the people were hostile to the Ismā'īlīs. Īl-Ghāzī provided Bahrām with a recommendation to Tughtigin of Damascus who received him graciously. More than one reason made Tughtigin treat Bahrām well. Damascus was being threatened by the Franks in A.D. 1125, and even before Bahrām's appearance in that city towards the end of A.D. 1126, Ismā'īlī warriors from Ḫimṣ and other places had taken part alongside of Tughtigin's troops in an unsuccessful attack on the Franks.

Bahrām who, in the words of ibn al-Qalānīsī, stayed secretly as an Ismā'īlī chief dā'ī in various parts of Syria, was able to acquire a position of power in Damascus where he carried on many activities. Ibn al-Qalānīsī, who is our main source on the Ismā'īlī activities in Damascus, goes on to say that Bahrām was helped by the wazīr Abū ʿAlī Ṭāhir ibn Saʿīd al-Mazdaghānī who was not himself an Ismā'īlī. Tughtigin was
persuaded by his wazir to hand over to the Ismā‘īlīs in November, A.D. 1126, the frontier fortress of Bānyās (Banū Ṭāṣ), which was menaced by the Franks. Tughtigin hoped to make good use of the Ismā‘īlī energies on the one hand, and to avoid any danger from them on the other. Bahrām re-fortified the castle and gathered all his followers around him. In 522/1128, according to ibn al-Qalānīsī, the activities of Bahrām and his followers became so formidable that nobody dared to say a word about it openly. Soon the Ismā‘īlīs began to terrorize the neighbourhood. Tughtigin became anxious about their activities, but could not find a suitable opportunity to take action against them.

Ibn al-Qalānīsī always puts the blame on the wazir al-Mazdaghānī, whereas ibn al-Athīr puts it squarely on Tughtigin, attributing his action in large measure to the influence of Il-Chāzī who had helped Bahrām in Aleppo.

From Bānyās, Bahrām and his followers raided extensively, and may have captured some other places. But Bahrām, who was suspected of having killed Barq ibn Jandal, one of the tribal chieftains in Wādī al-Taym, was unlucky this time. In an attack against the tribes living in the region of Ḫāṣbayyā at the western front of Mount Hermon which was inhabited mostly by Druzes, Nuṣayrīs and Bedouin tribes, Bahrām was surprised by a counter-attack led by Ḍāḥḥāk, the brother of Barq ibn Jandal,
in the course of which he was killed and his head and hand were sent to Egypt. (1)

The death of Bahrām was the beginning of the downfall of the Ismāʿīlī movement in Damascus. He had played the most important role in organizing the Ismāʿīlīs in various parts of Syria, especially in the south. He is alleged to have had a hand in the murder of Aqsunqur al-Bursuqī at Mosul in November A.D. 1126, who was stabbed to death on the day of his return from Aleppo where he had installed his son ʿIzz al-Dīn Masʿūd as governor of the city. (2)

Bahrām's position in Bānyās was taken over by another Persian called Ismāʿīl al-ʿAjamī, who was also supported by the wazīr al-Mazdaḥānī. The two main personal enemies of al-Mazdaḥānī were the chief of the police (raʾīs al-Shurṭa), Yūsuf ibn Fīrūz, and the chief of the security forces (raʾīs al-Shīḥa), ibn al-Ṣūfī. These two were always encouraging

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Tāj al-Mulūk Būrī, the son and successor of Tughtigīn, to rid himself of the Ismāʿīlīs. Būrī's first step in September A.D. 1129 was suddenly to have their protector al-Mazdaghānī murdered as he sat in council at Damascus. This was followed by chaotic disorders; the militia (al-aḥdāth - youth-brigades) together with the mob are said to have killed ten thousand of the Ismāʿīlīs and their supporters. A manumitted slave, Shādhili al-Khādim, was among those who were crucified. Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī says that in 523/1129 al-Mazdaghānī had even entered into relations with the Ismāʿīlīs of al-Qadmūs. (1) The accounts given by other sources are nearly similar to that of ibn al-Qalānīsī except that ibn al-ʿĀthīr claims that al-Mazdaghānī was negotiating with the Franks to betray Damascus and obtain Tyre in its stead. They had agreed, he says, on a Friday when the Ismāʿīlīs were to rise and help the Franks to capture Damascus. Ibn al-ʿĀthīr goes on with his unconfirmed story to say that Būrī heard of the conspiracy, summoned al-Mazdaghānī and killed him. This was followed by a general attack on the Ismāʿīlīs in Damascus during which six thousand people were slain. (2)


After the massacre of the Ismā'īlīs in Damascus, Būrī and his chief supporters took rapid precautions against possible retaliatory assassination. The Ismā'īlī da'wa under Ḥāfiz ibn Wafā', who succeeded Bahrām in Damascus became very weak. However, Būrī was attacked by two Persian Ismā'īlī fīḍā'īs, who according to ibn al-Qalānīsī were believed to have been sent from Alamūt for that purpose. The two men, he says, arrived in Damascus disguised as Turkish soldiers and later were able to enter the service of Būrī. Their opportunity to do what they had come for occurred when Būrī was on his way home from the bath. His bodyguards left him, and the two men attacked him on Thursday, 5 Jumādā al-akhirā 525 / 7 May 1131 wounding him in two places. The two fīḍā'īs were killed immediately. Būrī lived till 21 Rajab, 526 / 9 June 1132, when he died of a festering wound.

Most of the sources agree that the fīḍā'īs came from the east. The Ismā'īlīs in Syria were in no position to take action against Būrī, and it is of course possible that this murder was planned at Alamūt. Ibn al-Athīr, however, does not state that the fīḍā'īs came from the east, but merely says that the Bāṭīnīs took vengeance against Būrī. Ibn al-Qalānīsī does not even discuss the possibility that the fīḍā'īs might have come from any place other than Alamūt. It is possible, however, that the Ismā'īlīs in Damascus in spite of their weakened position after the massacre were still able to organize the
murder of Būrī, and the motive of avenging the massacre would be strongest in the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. Būrī could not know or detect every Ismā'īlī in the city; some of them may have survived the massacre to take vengeance on him.

Admittedly Ibn al-Qalānīsī had the best opportunities to collect information about conditions in Damascus, but it may be asked whether or not he is sincere in his reports. Was there anything for the Sunnī authorities to gain from accusing the Ismā'īlīs of Alamūt of organizing the plot? Was it their policy to convince the Muslim rulers that the main centre of danger was Alamūt? The explanations of the historians cannot be accepted without question.

Būrī's rule in Damascus had not been without troubles and signs of unrest. He even arrested his wazīr Ibn al-Ṣūfī in 525/1131. More than one source says that Būrī began his reign following the steps of his father, but shortly afterwards went astray. He was doubtful about the loyalty of his supporters. It is outside the sphere of this study to analyse the internal situation in Damascus in Būrī's time, but there is more than one reason to believe that Alamūt was not the only source of danger to his authority. (1)

After their two setbacks, in Aleppo and Damascus, the Syrian Ismā'īlīs turned their attention towards Jabal Bahra', between Ḥamā and the sea, where they had been quietly trying to consolidate their position. In less than twenty years after the massacre of A.D. 1129 at Damascus, they were able to secure a number of strongholds which gave them virtual control over extensive territories between Miṣyāf in the east and al-Kahf in the west. Although Miṣyāf was not always the permanent residence of the chief dā'i, nevertheless it was the most important Ismā'īlī stronghold, being situated not far from the main Syrian cities.

The acquisition of Qadmūs in A.D. 1132-1133, and Miṣyāf in A.D. 1140-1141, provided the Syrian Ismā'īlīs with a territorial nucleus for the Amirate which they were soon to establish and which was to last more than a century, reaching its peak under the leadership of their greatest chief.

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(1) Miṣyāf is about 25 miles west of Ḥamā and was the capital city of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. It is known under different spellings - Miṣyād, Miṣyāf, Miṣyāt ... See, E. Hönigsmann, article "Maṣyād" in the Encyclopaedia of Islam O.E.; Van-Berchem, in J.A. ser. 9, IX, (1897), pp.455-457; P.K. Ḫittī, Kitāb al-Iʿtibār by Usāma ibn Mungīd, Princeton, 1930, p.149.

dāʾī, Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, known as the Old Man of the Mountain (Shaykh al-Jabal). (1)

Although little is known of the period preceding the arrival of Sinān as the viceroy sent by Alamūt in or about A.D. 1162, we have information that Sinān succeeded Ṣārim al-Dīn known as Abū Muḥammad. (2)

Abū Muḥammad is said to have arrived from Alamūt during the last years of the reign of Riḍwān of Aleppo (A.D. 1105-1113). It is doubtful whether Abū Muḥammad lived so long. However, we can safely say that Abū Muḥammad played the most important part in the successful Iṣmāʿīlī attempts to establish themselves in Jabal al-Summāq, and later in Jabal Bahraṯ to the north-west of the first.

The following chapters will be concerned with the history of the Iṣmāʿīlīs after they had established themselves in Miṣyāf and the other neighbouring strongholds. An outline of the political history of the Amirate of Miṣyāf, especially under the leadership of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, is given in Part One, and an attempt is made to survey their beliefs and

(1) The full name of Sinān, and other biographical details of him, will be discussed in the next chapter. See W. Ivanow, article, "Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān", in E.I., 1st ed.

organization in Part Two.

Adequate information is available in the general Arabic sources about the political and military history of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs in this period. A considerable amount of research has been done in recent years by Prof. B. Lewis, W. Ivanow, Dr. S. Stern, Dr. M.G.S. Hodgson, Prof. Muhammad Kāmil Husayn and other scholars into the origins, beliefs and organization of the Ismā'īlīs in North Africa and Egypt and in Iran (the so-called "Assassins" of Alamūt). The Ismā'īlīs in Syria, however, have formed the subject of only one specific work, namely an article by Stanislas Guyard about Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, entitled "Un Grand Maître des Assassins", which was published in the Journal Asiatique (Paris, 1877).(1)

Practically all those who have done research on the Syrian Ismā'īlīs relied mainly on non-Ismā'īlī sources, which are in general hostile to the Ismā'īlīs. Many causes make it difficult to rely on Ismā'īlī sources. These are not readily available and even scholars who are Ismā'īlīs have not had full access to them. Moreover, the Shi'ī sources in general, and the Ismā'īlī sources in particular, are mostly doctrinal and not historical. The Shi'ī Muslims did not in general enjoy political protection as the Sunnīs did, and this was a very important factor in the lagging of the Shi'īs behind the Sunnīs in historical writing. The only period when a Shi'ī sect did

(1) For the sources of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs, see B. Lewis, "Sources for the history of the Syrian Assassins" in Speculum, XXVII, Oct. 1952.
enjoy full political protection was during the Fāṭimid Caliphate, under which most of the Ismā'īlī literature was written.

In the following chapters, and especially when dealing with the beliefs and organization of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs, a number of Syrian Ismā'īlī writings are made use of. Brief summaries of the content of four manuscripts are given in a separate appendix. One of these manuscripts, treated in Appendix I, is one of our main sources on the doctrines of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. The original copy was written by the well-known Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās, author of the Manāqib of Sinān. Its title is Kitāb Sullam al-Ṣu'ūd ila Dār al-Khulūd (the ladder of ascent to the house of eternity). Its views, though influenced by some Ṣūfī ideas, are still generally accepted by both the Nizārī Syrian Ismā'īlīs in Salamīya and al-Khawābī, and by the other Ismā'īlī groups in Miṣyāf and Qadmūs.

Before this introductory chapter is concluded, it must be mentioned that the Ismā'īlī religious beliefs cannot be understood without an understanding of the meaning of the Imamate (al-Imāmah - the office of the Imām) and the true position of the Imāms. These are treated in more detail in the chapter concerning the beliefs and organization of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. For the time being it is enough to say that in spite of the changes in Ismā'īlī doctrines which took place in Iran and Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D., the fundamental ideas about the Imamate remained unchanged.
For the Ismā'īlīs the existence of the manifest Imām in person is indispensable for the existence of the world. The succession of the Imāmate, which is treated as a Nūr (divine light) passing from one Imām to the other, is eternal, and it will endure till the day of judgment. (1) This Imāmate must remain in the Ahl al-Bayt (House of the Prophet), and the Imāms, according to the Ismā'īlīs, are the Īlū al-Amr (holders of authority) (2) mentioned in the Qur'ān, IV: 59.

The other important point in the Ismā'īlī doctrines is their belief that the Sharī'ah (divinely revealed law) has both zāhir (exoteric) and bātin (esoteric) meanings. To believe in the esoteric interpretation of the Sharī'ah does not mean to abandon the Sharī'ah as it was revealed by the Prophet. Under the rule of the Fāṭimid Caliphate, the zāhir of the Sharī'ah was regularly enforced. In a country dominated by Sunnī Muslims, like Egypt, it was necessary to keep to the zāhir. But, in Irān, or in Syria, where the Ismā'īlīs had to live with other extreme Shī'ī elements, certain changes were introduced into the Ismā'īlī doctrines, and the bātin of the religious doctrines was adopted accordingly. This made the Ismā'īlī religious ideas more difficult for the public to understand, but thanks to the spiritual attractions of their appeal and the efficiency

(2) Qur'ān, IV: 62, "Obey God, His Apostle and those amongst you who hold authority".
of their organization, they were able, nevertheless, to win more and more followers to their side. Isma'iliism has always survived because of its flexibility and power of adaptation to the process of historical evolution.
PART ONE

AN OUTLINE OF THE POLITICAL HISTORY
OF THE
AMIRATE OF MIŞYAF
CHAPTER II

THE PRINCIPALITY OF MIŞYĀF(1) UNDER SINĀN

(a) Introductory

After the death of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mustansir in A.D. 1094, the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs were divided into two main divisions:

1 - the Mustaʿlis and 2 - the Nizārīs.

1 - The Mustaʿlis or Western Ismāʿīlīs differed from the Nizārīs concerning the succession to al-Mustansir (A.D. 1035-1094), the former recognizing his son Aḥmad al-Mustaʿlī (A.D. 944-1101) and the latter recognizing Nizār, his elder brother. After the murder of their second Imām, al-Āmir ibn al-Mustaʿlī in A.D. 1130, the Mustaʿlis split into two main groups. Those who followed al-Ḥāfiẓ, a cousin of al-Āmir, were known as the Ḥāfiẓīs, and Ḥāfiẓī Imāms remained in power in Egypt until the overthrow of the Fāṭimid dynasty by Saladin.

The second group of the Mustaʿlis, known as the Ṭayyibīs, were to become the more important. They held that the 21st Imām, al-Ṭayyib ibn al-Āmir, went into hiding in A.D. 1130 and

(1) Miṣyāf here is the form of Excess (Mubālagha) derived from the second form verb Șayyafa (to pass the summer).

The generality of the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs of today differ in the way they pronounce Miṣyāf, but practically all of them give the relative adjective (Nisbah) to Miṣyāf as Miṣyāṭī and the name of its inhabitants as Maṣāṭīyitah. Cf. Yaqūt (b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Rūmī), Muṭjam al-Buldān (Beirut, 1955, Vol. 5, p.144; Max von Berchem - "Epigraphie des Assassins de Syrie", in J.A., Mai-Juin, 1897, p.458.)
was succeeded by an unknown number of Hidden Imāms who were represented by dāʿīs. The sub-sects of the Mustaʿlis differ on questions about the legitimacy of the dāʿīs, the virtual heads of the community. One of these Tayyibi sub-sects is known nowadays as Dawūdī Bohoras (1) and has become numerous and influential in Western India.

The Bohoras recognized the succession of the Fātimid Imāms up to al-Tayyib ibn al-Āmir, and consider that since his occultation (istitār) in A.D. 1130, the Imāms have been represented by a Dāʿī Muṭlaq ("absolute" dāʿī). Although a dāʿī cannot have the same religious status as the Imām, he is infallible (maṣūm) in all matters of doctrine and law. The 51st dāʿī of the Dawūdīs (called the Mullajī Šāhib) is Abū Muḥammad Ṭahir Sayf al-Dīn, who lives in Bombay. (2) The authorized legal text of the Mustaʿlis is the Daʿāʾim al-Islām of Ṣāḥib al-Mustaʿāsī, d. 363/974, the chief Qādī of the

(1) The Dawūdīs chose Dawūd ibn Ḥusayn as dāʿī in Gujarāt in A.D. 1588. The term Bohora, by which they are generally known, was originally a Hindu caste designation, said to be derived from "trade"; but the Bohora tradition is that they are so-called because they consisted of several sects or paths, in Gujarātī, bahu rah.

Fatimid Imam (Caliph) al-Mu'izz (d. 365/976). They follow the religious teachings as handed to them through the works of Qāḍī al-Nuw'mān and other great Ismā'īlī writers of the Fatimid period. This is why the Musta'lis were to be referred to as Aḥāb al-Daʿwa al-Qādima, (the followers of the Old Preaching). (1)

2 - The Nīzarīs, also known as the Eastern Ismā'īlīs, regarded Nīzar ibn al-Mustansir and his descendants as their legitimate Imāms; but in fact, up to the appearance of the Imam Ḥasan Ālā Dhikrihi al-Salām (peace be on his mention) in Alamūt in A.D. 1162, the authority among them was exercised by their chief dāʿīs, Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ and his successors.

Under the leadership of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ (A.D. 1090-1124) (2) who acted as the ḥujjat (proof or evidence) of the Imām, and his two successors Buzurg-Ummīd (A.D. 1124-1138) and the latter's son Kiyā Muḥammad (A.D. 1138-1162), the Nīzarī daʿwa assumed several new features. These changes were shown in


the extent to which use was made of the ta'wil al-bāṭini (allegorical interpretation) of the sacred sources. This did not represent a complete break with the old teachings of the Ismā'īlī da'wā, since the bāṭini interpretation had long been one of the fundamental Ismā'īlī doctrines; but the ways in which they put into practice both the bāṭin and the zāhir (esoteric and exoteric meaning) of their religious beliefs was modified to a great degree by the new circumstances.

Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāh's doctrine of taʿlīm (instruction) and the need for a muʿallim (instructor) in the person of the Imām led to severe criticism among Muslim theologians, especially the well-known theologian al-Ghazzālī (A.D.1058-1112). This new doctrine of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāh transformed the early Ismā'īlī "rational" attitude in interpreting and independently deducing the meaning of the sacred sources into what might be called a "guided "rationalism". (1) Thus the way was prepared for the appearance of the new Imām to guide his followers in both their spiritual and their temporal lives.

The uncertain circumstances which accompanied the accession of Ḥasan ʿAlā Dḥikrihi al-Salām to the Imamate have raised many doctrinal problems. The stories given in non-Ismā'īlī...

sources range from aspersions that he was the illegitimate son of a descendant of Nizār named Ḥasan, to the suggestion that he was the real son of the chief dāʿī Kiya Muḥammad, who up to his death in 558/1162 was ruling in Alamūt in the name of the Imām of the line of Nizār. (1)

Such allegations about the authenticity of the Imamate of Ḥasan ‘Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām were similar to those which had been made about ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī, the founder of Ṣafīmīd Caliphate.

"The two main reasons that confused the simple-minded people about Ḥasan's accession to the Imamate" states the author of Jannat al-Āmāl, "were the following: first, the three Imāms after Nizār were given the same title, with the result that they were thought to be one Imām. The second reason, and perhaps the more important, was that the chief dāʿī Kiya Muḥammad did have a son called Ḥasan and that this Ḥasan claimed to be an Imām during the lifetime of his father, but, after being rebuked by his father, he repented and asked the real Imām, Ḥasan ‘Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām, for forgiveness which was granted."

(1) Due to the secretive nature of the Ismāʿīlī daʿwā in Persia and the lack of Ismāʿīlī sources dealing with the Qiyāma period, one is bound to consult non-Ismāʿīlī sources which tend to be hostile to the Ismāʿīlīs. ʿAṭā Makī Juwaynī, had full access to the Ismāʿīlī sources after the capture of Alamūt by the Mongols, but was objective enough not to stray from the path of the true facts recorded in the sources that were at his disposal. See Juwaynī's story about Ḥasan ‘Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām in The History of the World Conqueror, ... pp.686-694.
But the fabricated stories about the authenticity of the Imamate of Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām implied two things which no believing Nizārī would have admitted: firstly that a devoted Ismā'īlī da'i was conspiring against his Imām, while the other Ismā'īlīs were ignorant of the situation; or, secondly, that the Ismā'īlīs were ready to accept an infringement upon the most fundamental principles of their religion and Imāmate. Both possibilities are categorically denied by early and modern Ismā'īlī sources. (1)

Most of the Syrian Ismā'īlī sources make no mention of the name of Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām in their genealogical trees of the Nizārī Imāms. This gives us an explanation of the different course the Syrian Ismā'īlīs began to adopt under Sinān which ultimately led either in A.D. 1310 or 1320 to the first grave split in the ranks of Nizārī Ismā'īlī movement. (2)

In the year 559/1164, Ḥasan 'Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām exercised his rights as the Imām of the Ismā'īlīs to proclaim


(2) After the death in A.D. 1310 or 1320 of the Nizārī Imām Shams al-Dīn Muhammad, his followers split into two groups. One followed his son Qāsim Shāh, and became known as Qāsim-shāhīs, in modern time as Aghā Khānis, and the other group followed his other son Mu'mīn Shāh and were to be known as Mu'mīnis (al-Mu'miniyya). Cf. Ğārīf Tāmīr, "Furū' al-Shajara ... " al-Machriq, 1957, pp.590-594; W. Ivanow, "A Forgotten Branch of the Ismā'īlīs," J.R.A.S., 1938, pp.57-79.
GENEALOGY OF THE NIZĀRĪ IMĀMS AT ALAMŪT

'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq

Mūsā al-Kāẓim  Ismā'īl

The Imāms of the Twelver Shi'ā

The Hidden Imāms of the Ismā'īlīs

'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī (Founder of the Fāṭimid Caliphate in North Africa).

al-Mustanṣīr bi Allāh al-Fāṭimī

Ahmād al-Musta‘lī

Nizār

The Musta‘lī Imāms

Genealogical tree B - based on Mu‘āminī sources

Genealogical tree A - based on Qāsim Shāhī sources

(Hasan al-Murtada
  Muhammad al-Kiyā
  Hasan Jalāl al-Dīn
  Muhammad ‘Alā’ al-Dīn
  Maḥmūd Rukn al-Dīn
  Muhammad Shams al-Dīn
  Mu‘āmin Shāh

Hādī
  Muhtādī
  Qāhīr
  Hasan ‘Alā’ Dhikrihi al-Salām
  A‘lā Muhammad
  Jalāl al-Dīn Hasan
  ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muhammad
  Rukn al-Dīn Khayr Shāh
  Shams al-Dīn Muhammad
  Qāsim Shāh
the Qiyāma ("resurrection") in Alamūt. The proclamation of the Qiyāma gave the Ismāʿīlīs the right to cease observing certain rules of the Shariʿa which according to them were no longer binding on the Ahl al-Bāṭin (the followers of the esoteric interpretation of the sacred laws). This move by the Imam Ḥasan ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām had serious repercussions, not only among the Sunnī and Shīʿī Muslims of Persia, but also the Ismāʿīlīs of Syria, as will be seen later.¹

The other important step taken by Ḥasan ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām was his decision to send one of the most powerful and energetic dāʿīs to be his deputy in Syria. This new representative of Alamūt was able to reorganise the Ismāʿīlī daʿwa in Syria which had been seriously weakened by both internal and external factors. It was thanks to him that the Ismāʿīlīs were able to stand on their feet again and force the Sunnī Muslims and the Crusader Christian leaders to acknowledge the Ismāʿīlī daʿwa as a power to be reckoned with. This great leader, whose personality dominated the scene in Syria and who will be the main figure in the rest

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¹ For the names of the Imāms between Nizār ibn al-Mustaḥṣir and Hasan ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām, see the two main genealogical trees A and B of the Nizarī Imāms of Alamūt, facing this page. See also the Syrian Ismāʿīlī MS. II, Appendix I, which so far as I know is one of the very few Syrian Ismāʿīlī MSS that agree with the present official genealogical tree of the Imāms of Alamūt. For a non-Ismāʿīlī point of view see, ʿAtā-Malik Juwaynī, The History of the World Conqueror, tr. Boyle, p.694; M. Defremery, "Histoire des Seljoukides ..." J.A. 4e Ser. T. XIII, Jan. 1849, pp.39-43.
of this chapter, was Rashid al-Dīn Sinān.

(b) The Early Life and Career of Sinān

Although precise details of the early life of Sinān and the circumstances of his appointment as chief dā'ī, first in 'Irāq and later in Syria, are still difficult to establish, they are no longer a complete mystery since a certain amount of information can be pieced together from various sources.

Reading through the literature on Alamūt, one finds ample information about the activities of the Ismā'īlīs in Persia, but very little about Sinān and the Syrian Ismā'īlīs except short passages in Arabic chronicles and cursory allusions from the Western Crusader Chronicles.

The Syrian Ismā'īlī sources give some useful historical material about Sinān's early life and about the Syrian Ismā'īlīs in general, but their dates are generally not correct. Any researcher into this field has to try to reconcile the different versions as stated by Ismā'īlī and non-Ismā'īlī sources. The recent researches of Bernard Lewis have, however, thrown some new light on this problem. (1)

W. Ivanow states in his article in the Encyclopaedia of Islam: (1st ed.), that Abū al-Ḥasan Sinān ibn Sulaymān ibn

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Muḥammad was born at a place near Baṣra, educated in Persia and appointed by the Imām Ḥasan ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām in 588/1163 as head of the Syrian Ismāʿīlī (Nizārī) community; and the available Ismāʿīlī and non-Ismāʿīlī sources do not disagree on this point. The famous historian, Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-ʿAdīm, provides some brief but valuable information about Sinān's life and quotes a story believed to have been told by Sinān himself describing his journey to Syria. (1)

As regards the date of Sinān's birth and the question of whether his appointment as "deputy" in Syria took place before or after his arrival in Syria, there seems to be no certain information. Fortunately, however, a number of Syrian Ismāʿīlī manuscripts have recently been brought to light and these give Sinān's age at the time of his death as 58 or 60 years; i.e. he was born either in 530/1135, or 528/1133, the latter date being the more probable. (2)

For it was a traditional Ismāʿīlī rule that appointments


(2) ʿArif Tāmir, who relies on an unpublished MS. in his possession entitled Fuṣūl wa Akhbār (chapters and traditions) and also on other Syrian MSS., states that Sinān lived 58 years. This MS., which is believed to have been compiled by an Ismāʿīlī writer called Nūr al-Dīn Aḥmad, either in the 7th or 8th century A.H., seems to be of a considerable historical value, and will be published by ʿArif Tāmir. See his novel Sinān and Salāḥ al-Dīn (Beirut 1956), pp.32-33; Mustafā Ghālib in Taṣārikh al-Dāʿwa al-Iṣmaʿīliyya (Damascus 1953) p.210, gives the date of Sinān's birth as 528/1133; but does not specify his sources. However, it seems that he drew his materials on Sinān from the following three Ismāʿīlī MSS., Kitāb al-Bustān, by al-Dāʿī Ḥasan ibn Shams al-Dīn, pp.263-264; Kitāb al-Miṭḥāq, by the Syrian dāʿī ʿAbd al-Malik, pp.14-16; and Kitāb Bayt al-Dāʿwa, pp.102-103.
to the "higher grades" (Ar. marātib 'ulyā) were preferably made from among those who were not less than forty years old. This customary rule was not based solely on the consideration that leaders ought to possess maturity and experience; but also on the fact that the Ismā'īlīs regard the numbers forty, twelve, seven, five and four as having certain symbolical meanings.

Only scanty information is available about Sinān's birth place and parents. The geographer Yaqūt (ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Rūmī) states that he was a native of 'Aqr al-Sūdān, (1) a village between Wāṣiṣṭ and Baṣra which was inhabited mostly by extreme Shi'ī sects. The statements from the non-Ismā'īlī sources about the environment in which Sinān spent his early years suggest that his parents were Twelver Shi'īs. Syrian Ismā'īlī sources confirm that Sinān was in charge of the Ismā'īlī da'wā in 'Irāq up to the time of his appointment as deputy of the Imām of Alamūt in Syria, but do not give any hint that he was a Twelver Shi'ī by origin. Some of these sources state that he had family connexions with the Ismā'īlī Imāms; whilst others go so far as to suggest that he was himself the real Imām. (2)

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(1) Yaqūt (ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Rūmī) al-Ḥamawī, Mu'jam al-Buldān (Beirut 1374/1955) Vol. 4, p.137; M.G.S. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins. .... p.186; A History of the Crusades .... Vol. 1, p.120.

Before his first appointment as dāt in the district of Baṣra in ʿIrāq, Sinān is reported to have taken a full course on Ismāʿīlī theology and philosophy at the madrasa (centre for religious teaching) of the Imām Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, surnamed al-Qāhir (the conqueror) at Alamūt. (1)

What Sinān did in Alamūt besides studying Ismāʿīlī doctrines and what was really happening at that time in the heart of that great Ismāʿīlī stronghold cannot be ascertained. The only thing that is almost certain is that during his stay in Alamūt he met the future Imām Ḥasan II (ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām), who later sent him to Syria to succeed the chief dāt Abū Muḥammad. (2)

Sinān was transferred to Syria not long after his first appointment as dāt in the district of Baṣra, believed to have taken place around 556/1160. Kamāl al-Dīn gives an interesting

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(1) Al-Qāhir is generally referred to as Ḥasan I. For further detail on his genealogical tree see Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Tahrīkh al-Daʾwā ... pp.203-208; The Syrian Ismāʿīlī MS. No. 1 in Appendix 1, entitled Asāmī Khulafāʾ Faṭima Ṭidwān Allāh ʿAlayhim ... p.249; On madrasa, see Ernest Diez's article, "Masjid," in the New Encyclopaedia of Islām, pp.383-388.

(2) There is a possibility that Sinān was appointed by the Imām Ḥasan I (Al-Qāhir), and that the appointment was later confirmed by his son Ḥasan II (ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām), after the latter's succession to the Imamate. Sībṭ ibn al-Jawzī, Mirʾat az-Zamān (A.H. 495-654), ed. J.R. Jewet, Chicago 1907, p.269, states that Sinān came to Syria during the Imamate of Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad II (A.D. 1166-1210).
description of the various stages of Sinan's journey to Syria. Sinan is reported to have travelled via Mosul in northern Iraq and Raqqa on the border between Syria and 'Iraq, until he reached Aleppo, then under the rule of Nur al-Din Mahmud ibn Zangi (541-570 / 1146-1174).

Aleppo was at that time still accessible to Isma'ilis who used to enter the city often disguised as merchants. Sinan did not have any difficulty in finding his contacts in the capital of the Zangids, and if 558/1162 was actually the date of his arrival he probably had the good fortune to arrive when Nur al-Din was absent from the city warring against the Franks. Sinan may have stayed for some time familiarizing himself with the affairs of the Isma'ilis in Northern Syria, until fresh orders reached him from Alamut to move to the Isma'il strongholds in central Syria. (1)

Abu Firas ibn Qa'ida Nasr ibn Jawshan, a native of al-Maynaqa (2) writing in 724/1324, states that Sinan arrived in


(2) Al-Maynaqa is also pronounced al-Maniqa. The Arabic script confuses the reader, because the letter (n) could be taken either preceding the letter (t), in which case the word is al-Maniqa, or following the letter (t), making it al-Maynaqa. Even at the present time the Syrian Isma'ilis are not unanimous about the name. Those of Misyaf and Qadmus spell it al-Maniqa (with shaddah on the 'n'), while the Isma'ilis of Salamiya and al-Khawabī spell it al-Maynaqa (with a fatha on the 'n' and sukun on the ā). For further explanations of the word consult, S. Guyard, "Un Grand Maître," J.A. 1877, p.389; A.M. Mohl, "Lettre de M. Catafago", J.A. Ser. IV, 1848, pp.489,493.
Mişyāf where he stayed for some time without revealing his real identity; and that later he went to Baṣṭirūn, a village near al-Kahf, the castle which was the residence of the Ismāʿīli chief dāʿī, Abū Muḥammad. According to Abū Firās, Sinān had to wait seven years, at the end of which, while Abū Muḥammad on his deathbed, Sinān forwarded to him his credentials as the new leader.

If Abū Firās's account of Sinān's arrival at Mişyāf and the incidents which preceded his ultimate assumption of the leadership is correct, the possibility arises that Sinān was sent to Syria by the father of Ḥasan II ('Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām) and subsequently confirmed or appointed as chief dāʿī by his son. This would lead to the assumption that Sinān arrived in Syria earlier than 558/1162; say some time around 552/1157, a date coinciding with an earthquake during which Sinān was injured. Many sources for this period report that a grave earthquake took place in Syria around 551/1156 destroying the main Syrian cities. But having no evidence to show how far the Imāms of Alamāt were exercising their powers before 558/1162, we are inclined to accept the possibility that Sinān was only appointed after the succession of Ḥasan II ('Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām) in 558/1162. The earthquake, however, may have taken place not in 552/1157 (as stated by the Arabic sources of the time), but later when Sinān had already assumed the leadership. Abū Firās may have committed a mathematical error in stating that Sinān stayed seven years in Syria before declaring his true mission. The
problem arises as to whether Sinān was appointed prospective chief dāʿī in Syria before he went there. The fact that he did not report to Abū Muḥammad on arrival of his visits to the Ismāʿīlī groups is suspicious. Was he waiting for further developments in Alamūt? Or, wisely, was he only secretly making some preliminary study of the situation in Syria? At any rate, it would seem probable that Sinān arrived in Syria in 558/1162, and that after his preliminary investigations he took over from Abū Muḥammad in 560/1164.(1)

(c) The Death of Abū Muḥammad and the Accession of Sinān

The death of Abū Muḥammad brought to an end the life of a leader whose name and activities remain obscure in the history of the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs. Presumably he played a leading part in the endeavours of the Ismāʿīlīs to consolidate their position in Aleppo and Jabal al-Summāq(2) - endeavours which had not been notably successful, whence the lack of information about him and the mission of Sinān whose energy and strength of character had recommended him to the Imām as likely to be a successful missionary. Even when, after the massacre of the Ismāʿīlīs at

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(2) On Jabal al-summāq, see Yaqūt (b.ʿAbd Allāh al-Rūmī), Muʿjam al-Buldān, ed. Wüstenfeld, 1278/1866, Vol. 4, p.816.
Damascus in 523/1129, the Ismāʿīlīs launched their third and successful attempt to seize castles in central Syria, only the names of apparently junior Ismāʿīlī daʿīs are mentioned by the sources, while Abū Muḥammad seems to remain behind the scenes. (1)

During the last decade of Abū Muḥammad's leadership, weakness, disorganization and disunity manifested themselves in the Syrian Ismāʿīlī community. Many Ismāʿīlīs emigrated to the neighbouring cities of Ḥamā, Ḥims, and Aleppo, not only in order to strengthen their daʿwa, but also to earn a living; for the Ismāʿīlī territory was not fertile, and they lived mostly on their cattle. This situation was worsened when, around 546/1151, the Frankish Count of Tripoli, Raymond II, was murdered, in consequence of which the Templars, a militant Christian Order

(1) The non-Ismāʿīlī sources are unlikely to have known the activities of the chief Ismāʿīlī agents. The following are the four main fortresses that were either captured or bought by the Ismāʿīlīs.

1. Al-Qadmūs. This fortress was sold by Sayf al-Dīn ibn Ṭāmūn to the Ismāʿīlī dāʿī Abū al-Fāṭīm in 527/1132.
2. Kharibah. It is about 12 miles north east of al-Qadmūs, and was captured from the Franks in 531/1136.
3. Al-Kahf. One of the most important Ismāʿīlī strongholds. It was acquired in 530/1135/6.
4. Miṣyāf. It was captured in 535/1140 from a governor appointed by Banū Munqidh.

On the other Ismāʿīlī strongholds see:
S. Guyard, "Un Grande Maître" ... J.A. 1877, pp.350-351;
M.C. Defremery, "Nouvelles Recherches sur les Ismaéliens"... J.A. (May - June 1854), pp.411-417;
C. Cahen, La Syrie de Nord à l'époque des Croisades, (Paris, 1940), pp.353-354;
founded in A.D. 1117, raided Ismāʿīlī territory and compelled the inhabitants to pay a tribute.(1) Another factor which weakened the Ismāʿīlī daʿwa was the personal disputes among the Ismāʿīlīs, which added to the complexity of the problem to be faced by the successor of Abū Muḥammad.(2)

The most important events after Sinān's assumption of the leadership arose from his efforts to consolidate the position of the Ismāʿīlīs and to solve their manifold internal problems. The principle aim of his external policy was to defend Ismāʿīlī territory against hostile Muslim and Frankish neighbours. Another question which needs consideration is that of Sinān's relations with Alamūt, especially after the proclamation of the Qiyāma by Ḫasan II ('Alā ʿDhikrihi al-Salām) in 560/1164; there may have been some connexion between this and an episode involving a group of Ismāʿīlī extremists in Northern Syria called the Ṣufāt ("pure").

(1) The annual tribute exacted from the Ismāʿīlīs by the Templars is estimated to have been 2000 gold pieces. For the sources dealing with the murder of Raymond II, see A History of the Crusades, ed. K.M. Setton, (Phil. 1955), p.120. Abū Muḥammad's burial place is believed by the local Ismāʿīlīs to be 5 miles east of al-Qadmūs.

(2) The Ismāʿīlī sources do not indicate clearly the differences among the Ismāʿīlīs, but an indirect hint to that effect is reported in the form of letters or instructions being sent by the Imāms of Alamūt, asking their followers to unite and to drop their differences ... etc. One of these letters is reported by an Ismāʿīlī daʿī named as Ibrāhīm ibn al-Fawāris. The manuscript was compiled in 890/1485. See M. Ghālib, Tarīkh al-Daʿwa ... pp. 199-201, where the letter is reproduced.
Sinān's Efforts to Consolidate the Ismāʿīlī Position

After his accession to the leadership, Sinān found himself facing many grave problems. To protect his people was not so easy as to win their love and admiration during his early years in Syria. The pious ʿIrāqī Shaykh (al-Shaykh al-ʿIrāqī) of yesterday, the teacher of the children, the renderer of medical treatment for sufferers, and the austere and ascetic man of religion living by prayer and meditation, had now to concentrate on the practical needs of his people and save them from becoming an easy prey to their enemies.

In order to meet the dangers from outside, Sinān began reorganizing his men and choosing the most eligible and devoted to form the core of his fidāʾīs. (devotees). Thanks to his strong personality and incisive intellect, he was able to smooth away the internal dissension which had been jeopardising Ismāʿīlī unity at the beginning of the second half of the twelfth-century A.D.

In almost all these objectives, and in securing his own position, Sinān was successful. He had his fidāʾīs trained in various languages and in the art of collecting secret information from the courts of kings and princes. He organized an elaborate communication system, making full use of pigeons and coded messages by which the commanders of the various Ismāʿīlī strongholds were kept informed about his plans and about possible threats to any of the widely scattered
Ismāʿīlī fortresses. (1)

Besides organizing and training the various groups of his fidāwīs, Sinān also rebuilt two Ismāʿīlī castles which had fallen into ruin, either through natural calamities or through assaults by enemies. These were at al-Raṣāfah, which is less than four miles south of Miṣyāf, and al-Khawābī, which is about four miles south of al-Kahf. Sinān also looked to the north and by a military stratagem captured al-ʿUllayqa, which is less than eight miles north east of the impregnable and well known Frankish castle al-Marqab. (2)

The key strongholds which gave Sinān an excellent strategic position were Miṣyāf, al-Kahf, al-Qadmūs and al-ʿUllayqa. Miṣyāf, being on the eastern fringe of Jabal Bahrāʾ, (3) served as a window on the Muslim principalities of Ḥamā and Ḥims. As for al-Kahf, the centre of the previous chief dāṭī, it became the fortress from which Sinān was able to keep an eye on Ṭartūs (Tortosa or Antartus), and other Frankish strongholds to the

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(1) Pigeons for delivering both urgent and ordinary messages were widely used by the Fāṭimids. See Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, Tārīkh al-Dawla al-Fāṭimiya, Cairo, 1958, p.295.

(2) Al-Marqab was in the hands of the Hospitallers, and was used by the Franks as a key point for staging their attacks on the Muslim principalities. For the exact geographical locations of the Ismāʿīlī and Frankish castles, consult the attached map.

(3) On Jabal Bahrāʾ, see René Dussaud, Topographie Historique ... Paris, 1927, p.146ff.
south west of his territory. Al-Qadmūs was his forward post in the west and al-‘Ullayqa that in the north west. (1)

Relations with Alamūt

Neither in the internal problems of the Syrian Iṣmā‘īlīs under Sinān, nor in the relations with Saladin and the Franks, does it appear from the available evidence that Alamūt played any important role. There is a report that Sinān received direction from Alamūt regarding the case of Khawājā ‘Alī, who tried to take over the leadership in succession to Abū Muḥammad without having been designated by the Imam of Alamūt, and the subsequent murder of Khawājā ‘Alī at the instigation of two prominent members of the community, Abū Mansūr ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Shaykh Abū Muḥammad, and al-Ra‘īs Fahd. Later Alamūt sent instructions to Sinān to put the murderer to death and to release Fahd. It is also reported that Ḥasan II (‘Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām) instructed Sinān to abide by the rules of the Qiyāma and to watch the activities of the Muslim princes. (2)

(1) The Syrian Iṣmā‘īlī dā‘ū Nūr al-Dīn Aḥmad (717-749/H1317-1348), in his Fuṣūl wa Aḥbār, p.164, reports that Sinān used to spend his weekdays moving between the four castles, namely, al-Kahf, Miṣyāf, al-Qadmūs and al-‘Ullayqa, and also that Sinān used to pay secret visits to Shayzar, Ḥama, Ḥims, and other Syrian districts. See ‘Ārif Tamīr, Sinān wa Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, (1956), p.33, and his article, "Haqīqat Ikhwān al-Ṣafa‘", in al-Machriq (March - April 1957), pp.132-133.

(2) These reports are quite probable since Sinān was at the beginning of his career in Syria. Cf. M.C. Defrémery, "Recherches sur les Ismaéliens," J.A. (Janvier 1955), pp.7,11,38.
The sources say practically nothing about the role of Alamūt in Sinān's relations with the Muslims and the Franks, but it cannot be inferred from this silence that there was a serious separatist movement against Alamūt on the part of the Syrian Ismā'Ilīs. This silence could be interpreted in various ways. The authorities at Alamūt might have had full trust in Sinān's ability to run the affairs of the Syrian Ismā'Ilīs, and consequently have seen no need to intervene. Alternatively the reason might simply be that the chroniclers lacked information, since secretiveness was the rule among the Ismā'Ilīs.

But the question which puzzled the chroniclers and still confronts the Ismā'Ilī student is not that of Sinān's political relationships to Alamūt, but that of his religious status among his Syrian followers. Abū Firās's Manāqib, in which he pours lavish praise on Sinān's heroism, telepathic powers and wisdom, do not justify the inference that Sinān was regarded as an Imām. In fact Abū Firās refers to him as the "deputy" (nā'īb) of the Imām of Alamūt, and if he ascribes to Sinān certain miraculous actions, this may be explained by the Ismā'Ilī belief that a trusted servant of the Imām, who stands as his evidence, could become a recipient of al-ta'yyīd (spiritual help from the Imām) which would confer upon him some of the Imām's supernatural

(1) According to the Ismā'Ilīs, the Imām is the sole spiritual and temporal head of the community and he can interpret the Qurʾān and the Shari'a in general. He combines all the qualities of Plato's philosopher king and al-Fārābī's Chief of the Virtuous City. See Chapter V in Part Two.
powers. As for the Ismāʾīlī sources which contain aphorisms (fuṣūl) or "noble utterances" attributed to Sinān, it must be borne in mind that practically all these sources were compiled during the fourteenth and fifteenth century A.D., when the Syrian Ismāʾīlīs followed a different line of Imāms of that of the Persian Ismāʾīlīs, and had become influenced by the Ṣūfī writings of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn Ṭarabī (d. 638/1240), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (d. 672/1273), Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235) and others. Although some Ṣūfī ideas are criticized by Ismāʾīlī writers, Ṣūfī terms and phraseology were nevertheless widely used by the Syrian Ismāʾīlīs. Abū Firās, in his book Sullam al-Ṣū'ūd ilā Dār al-Khulūd, states that the Ṣūfīs should be recognized as wise men and recipients of the "light" of the Prophet. (1) Another point which might have added to the confusion regarding the status of Sinān was the title mawla (lord), which was not necessarily given exclusively to Imāms; great poets and philosophers - such as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī - and other chief ḍā'īs who came after Sinān also received this

(1) In the Syrian Ismāʾīlī MS. three aphorisms or chapters (Fusūl) are headed as "the noble words", with the first one clearly indicated to be from the "noble words" of Sinān and the others are without any reference to Sinān. For the first chapter (Faṣl), see: S. Guyard, Fragments Relatifs ... XXII (1874) pp.17-19; by same author "Un grand maître", J.A. 1877, anecdotes, 7, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23, where Abū Firās' views on Sinān are studied; Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās, Sullam al-Ṣū'ūd .... chapter 1, Bk. 3, pp.208-213 (excerpts from the MS. in Appendix 1).
honorific appellation. The fact that Sinān was addressed as al-mawlā is not necessarily an indication that he was an Imām.

Recently, however, the Iṣmāʿīlī historian ʿArif Tāmir has published several articles in support of the view that Sinān was considered by his followers to be an Imām, and even to be the "Seventh Imām" of the series of Imāms beginning with the Fāṭimid Imām al-Muʿizz (A.D. 952 - 976). Besides the fourteenth and fifteenth century A.D. Iṣmāʿīlī writings, ʿArif Tāmir has made use and published in these articles works of a poet named Mazyad al-Ḥillī al-Asadī, who is believed to have been the friend and the poet-laureate of Sinān, and who in his panegyrics addresses Sinān with titles usually reserved for the Imāms. To quote ʿArif Tāmir, "Sinān is considered to be one of the Imāms who lived in Syria and took Miṣyāf as their "house of emigration" (dāran li-hijratihim: c.f. ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī in Ifrīqīyā). He was variously called Abū al-Ḥasan

(1) The great Sūfī poet, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (604-672/1207-1273) who is revered by the Iṣmāʿīlīs, was given the title mawla. See ʿArif Tāmir, "Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī."nal-Adīb, (March 1956), p.47.

(2) The doctrine of the Seventh Imām and his special status belongs to the pre-Fāṭimid period. The Iṣmāʿīlīs believe that our worldly life is divided into seven epochs, each being started with a prophet and his asās (base or foundation). Between one epoch and the other there are seven Imāms, and the last Imām of the last epoch is believed to be the one who proclaims the Great Qiyāma (Resurrection). For more details see Chapter V in Part Two.
Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Nizārī, or Rāshid al-Dīn, or Sinān, or Ra’s al-Umūr, and he was the son of the Imām Ḥasan al-Alamūtī the master of the castles of Ṭāliqān in Persia.” 'Arif Tāmir continues, "Sinān said that he had received the office of Imamate from Ḥasan and he would hand it over to Ḥasan."(1)

This means that in the opinion of 'Arif Tāmir the Imām of the Qiyama, Ḥasan II (‘Alā Dhikrihi al-Salām, A.D. 1162-1166), and his successor Muḥammad II (known as ‘Alā Muḥammad or Nur al-Dīn Muḥammad, A.D. 1166-1210), were only "trustee" Imāms (ʾImmah Mustawdaʿīn) like Maymūn al-Qaddāh and his son ‘Abdallah during the period of the Hidden Imāms. According to 'Arif Tāmir, the successor to Sinān in the Imamate was Ḥasan III (Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan, A.D. 1210-1221).(2)

The non-Ismā‘īlī sources do not provide any help on the question whether Sinān was considered to be an Imām; and with a few exceptions such as the Spanish Muslim traveller Ibn Jubayr, who alleges that Sinān was treated as God, and the biographer Ibn Khallikān, who calls the Ismā‘īlīs of Syria...


(2) In the genealogical tree (B), which in large represents the Syrian Ismāʿīlī genealogical trees until the second half of the 19th century A.D., the names Ḥasan II and Muḥammad II, do not appear. It is only at the time of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III, that the genealogical tree of the Muʿminī and Qāsim Shāhī Ismāʿīlīs meet again.
"Sinānīs", the other Arabic sources give him the title of Mugaddam (Commander), Ra'īs (chief) or Șāhib (master) of the da'wa or of the Ḥashīshīya. (1)

In general both the Arabic and the Western sources share the opinion that the Syrian Ismā'īlīs did remain dependent on Alamūt. In theory, Sinān was the deputy of Alamūt; in practice, he was probably quite independent.

The Episode of the Šuľaṭ

The Šuľaṭ (plural of Șāfī "pure") has a wide meaning in Arabic and evokes historical memories - e.g. of the Ikhwan al-Šaďā' (Brethren of purity). "Purity" may mean purity of thought, or sincerity as regards fellowmen, or resignation and purity of intention. Among the early Ismā'īlīs, and also among the Qarmatians, the terms Šuľaṭ ("Pure"), Asfīā (chosen), and Šaďā' ("purity" or "sincerity") were widely used. (2)

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(2) 'Arif Tamir, "Haqiqat Ikhwan al-Šaďā'," in al-Maqrīq (March-April 1957) p.135; M.C. Défrémery, "Essai sur l'Histoire des Ismaéliens en Batiuniens de la Perse, plus connus sous le nom d'Assassins," Journal Asiatique, Tome VII, (Sept. - Oct. 1856), p.372, where it is reported that the Qarmatians did commit certain actions similar to those (discussed further) of the Šuľaṭ.
These motives of "purity", "sincerity" and "brotherhood" led to the composition of the Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (Treatises of the Brethren of Purity), whose teachings based on reconciling philosophy and religion had challenged by implication the claim of the 'Abbāsids to polico-religious supremacy. The ideas of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' concerning human relations probably retained great influence among the later Ismā'īlīs; and these ideas together with the changes in the Ismā'īlī da'wa after the proclamation of the Qiyāma by Ḥasan (ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām) in 560/1164 must have caused a great deal of religious confusion among the unprepared followers of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī movement in Syria.

Some of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs followed the opinion which was adhered to during the Fāṭimid period that mere knowledge of the bāṭin (esoteric or inner meaning) of the Sharī'a does not necessarily absolve the believers from its zāhir (exoteric obligations). (1)

On the other hand among the Syrian Ismā'īlīs in Jabal al-Summāq were some who did take an extreme line and adhered to the belief that the exoteric rules of the Sharī'a were no longer to be observed after the abrogation of the taqīya (dissimulation) resulting from the proclamation of the Qiyāma at Alamūt, ignoring

(1) Often we find in the Syrian Ismā'īlī writings questions and answers on the problem whether fasting should be observed in Ramadān. Precedents from early Ismā'īlī practices are given for or against.
that it was more of a spiritual Qiyāma than a physical one; and to celebrate this new freedom these extremists, the non-Ismā'īlī sources tell us, held festivities alleged to have been accompanied by unrestricted licence.

The sources mentioning the episode of the Ṣufāt ("pure") state that the Ismā'īlīs committed all sorts of forbidden actions; but with the exception of Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-ʿAdīm, they do not state that Sinān was responsible for the alleged orgies in Jabal al-Summāq. Nor is there in these sources any mention of the role of Alamūt in this matter.

Kamāl al-Dīn relates that a certain Shaykh from the district of al-Jazr said that Sinān had told the Ismā'īlīs to live together in "purity" to help one another, and to co-operate in the full sense of the word. The people of al-Jazr went to Jabal al-Summāq and said that they had been ordered to live together in "purity" ... and so on. Kamāl al-Dīn ends his account with a statement that Sinān summoned these people to the fortresses where he punished them and put some of them to death.

The anonymous chronicle al-Bustān al-Jāmiʿ, and Ibn Jubayr in his travels (Rihla), also mention these events, and the Bustān gives the date as 561/1165. It certainly appears that the Ṣufāt must have committed some actions forbidden by the Sharīʿa,

but the accounts and explanations of hostile historians should not be accepted without caution.

The date 572/1176/7 which Kamāl al-Dīn gives for the episode of the Šufāt seems more probable than the date 561/1165 given by the Bustān. In 572/1176 Sinān was preoccupied with external problems, and he must have wanted to settle this internal Ismāʿīlī dispute before any outside power could intervene. Probably at the request of Sinān the regent of Aleppo, Saʿd al-Dīn Gümüşhtigīn, who was friendly with the Ismāʿīlīs, dissuaded Nūr al-Dīn Zangī's young son and successor al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ to withdraw his army which he had already sent on a punitive expedition against the Ismāʿīlīs, and Sinān was able to settle the problem without outside intervention.

**Sinān's Relations with Saladin**

During a siege of Jaʿbar (1) in A.D. 1146, the Turkish ruler of Mosul and Aleppo, ʿImād al-Dīn Zangī, had been murdered by his slave-troops (mamlūka), and had been succeeded by his son, Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd Zangī, who had maintained his father's efforts to defend Syria against the Crusaders.

After the fall of Edessa to ʿImād al-Dīn Zangī in December A.D. 1144, the Crusaders had launched their second Crusade (A.D. 1146 - 1149), which had ended in a complete failure.

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In March A.D. 1154, Nūr al-Dīn had captured Damascus, and from then onwards Egypt had been the decisive factor in his relations with the Crusaders.

In Egypt, the wobbling Fāṭimid regime had reached its final stage. The death of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Fā'iz in 556/1160 had been followed by a disastrous struggle for the Wazirate during which the Fāṭimid commander Shāwar had sought help from Nūr al-Dīn, who had sent the Kurdish governor of Ḥims, Shīrkūh, on his first Egyptian campaign. Shīrkūh, who was the uncle of Saladin, had restored Shāwar to power (May A.D. 1164), but Shāwar had refused to pay the promised tribute, and had appealed to the Franks for help. Shāwar had been able to continue his vacillating policy for a few years, but in A.D. 1167 Nūr al-Dīn had made a second intervention in the affairs of Egypt, followed by a third in A.D. 1168; and on this occasion the Fāṭimid territories had been overrun by Shīrkūh, who had died soon afterwards leaving his nephew Saladin (Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn) ibn Yusif as the Wazīr of Egypt.

While his master Nūr al-Dīn was living, Saladin had been mainly occupied in establishing control over Egypt, eradicating the Fāṭimid power and planning continued war against the Crusaders.

Although the relations between Sinān and Nūr al-Dīn had been tense, both on account of Nūr al-Dīn's suspicions that
the Syrian Ismā'īlīs were collaborating with the Crusaders, and on account of their unfriendly activities in Aleppo and their ceaseless efforts to seize more strongholds, Nūr al-Dīn had not undertaken any major offensive operation against the Ismā'īlīs, though there are reports that threatening letters were exchanged between him and Sinān, and rumours that he was planning shortly before his death to invade the Ismā'īlī territory.(1)

The deaths of Nūr al-Dīn and the King of Jerusalem Amalric I, son of Fulk, in A.D. 1174, gave Saladin his opportunity; and on an urgent appeal from the commandant at Damascus, he entered Damascus on Tuesday, 30 Rabī' II 570/27 Nov., 1174, claiming to have come to protect Nūr al-Dīn's eleven year old son and successor al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, against aggression from his cousins who ruled Mosul (al-Mawsil). (2)

(1) Ibn Khallikan, Biographical Dictionary ... Vol. 3, p.340-341, where he gives a threatening letter from Sinān to Nūr al-Dīn in answer to a previous letter from the latter. It is more probable that this letter was sent to Saladin, but this does not discount the probability that there were threatening letters between the two leaders. The Arabic sources state that Nūr al-Dīn was preparing before his death to march against Saladin. See: Ibn al-ʿAdīm ... Zubdat al-Ṭalab ... ed. Sāmī Dāhhān ... 1954, p.340; Abū Shāma (Shihāb al-Dīn ...) Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn ... Cairo 1287/1870-71, Vol. I, pp.228-230; B. Lewis, "Three Biographies," p.338.

Two Abortive Attempts on the Life of Saladin

From Damascus Saladin marched northward to Ḫimṣ which he captured without its castle, and proceeded to Aleppo which he besieged for the first time.

It was during this siege that Sinān, in answer to an appeal from the Regent of Aleppo Saʿd al-Dīn Ǧumūštigīn, sent his fidāʾis to kill Saladin. This attempt which took place in Jumādā II 570/Dec. - Jan. 1174/5 was foiled by an Ṭāhir named Naṣīḥ al-Dīn Khumartakīn whose castle of Abū Qubays (1) was close to the Ismāʿīlī territory and who was able to recognize the desperados.

The second attempt took place more than a year later on 11 Dhū al-Qaʿda 571/22 May, 1176, when Saladin was besieging ʿAẓāz, north of Aleppo. Thanks to his armour of chain-mail, Saladin escaped with only slight injuries. (2)

The question arises as to the motive for these two attempts on Saladin's life. Was it, as most of the general Arabic sources state, that Ǧumūštigīn had instigated Sinān to take action against Saladin? It seems unlikely that Sinān would have acted merely as a protégé of the rulers of Aleppo, obeying

their orders or accepting their bribes to commit an act which might have endangered the whole safety of his people. On the other hand they may well have been influenced by consideration of Saladin's general policy, which from the time when he overthrew the Fāṭimid Caliphate was quite probably biased against all the Ismāʿīlīs.

Although the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs to whom Sinān belonged considered the Fāṭimid Caliphs after al-Mustanṣir (d.1094) to be usurpers, Saladin's gross ill-treatment of the Fāṭimid family caused indignation and anger among all the Ismāʿīlīs, whether Nizārīs or Mustaʿlīs. Saladin had also embarked on a systematic campaign to suppress Ismāʿīlīsm in Egypt, destroying the rich Fāṭimid libraries, exterminating the Ismāʿīlī system, and introducing Sunnī institutions. Moreover, it was Salādīn's manifest ambition to recreate a Syro-Egyptian state under his rule; and the rise of a strong anti-Ismāʿīlī ruler in Syria was bound to be a source of anxiety to the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs.

The unknown author of Bayt al-Daʿwa states that Sinān had earlier sent one of his fidāʾīs named Ḥasan al-ʿIkrimī al-ʿIrāqī to Egypt where he left a knife with a threatening letter near Saladin's bed. Such reports in the Ismāʿīlī sources about fidāʾīs being sent to threaten Saladin shed a light on a letter from Saladin to Nūr al-Dīn (drafted by al-Qāṭī al-Fāḍil) concerning a pro-Fāṭimid plot against him in Egypt, in 569/1173. The

(1) See Muṣṭafā Ghalīb, Tārīkh al-Daʿwa, ... p.211.
letter also adds that the conspirators in this plot appealed to Sinān for help. (1)

B. Lewis has suggested that Sinān's attempted assassination of Saladin was prompted by the latter's aggression against the Ismā'īlīs in 570/1174-5. In that year, according to Sībṭ ibn al-Jawzī, a militant Sunni order called the Nabawīya raided the Ismā'īlī centres of al-Bāb and Buzā'ah, and Saladin took advantage of the resultant confusion to send a raiding party against the Ismā'īlī villages of Sarmīn, Maṭarrat Maṣrīn and Jabal al-Summāq, which were looted.

That this action stimulated Sinān to attempt the assassination seems unlikely, since Sinān's decision must have been made before these events took place (1st attempt - Jumādā II 570/ Dec. 1174 - Jan. 1175). No doubt they confirmed Sinān's belief that Saladin was a menace to Ismā'īlī existence in Syria, and they may have led to the second attempt on 11 Dhū al-Qa'da 571/ 22 May 1176. (2)

Abū Firās mentions the raid of the Nabawīya on the Ismā'īlīs, but adds that they were soundly defeated. (3) For

(3) S. Guyard, "Un grand maître" ... J.A. 1877, anecdote X, pp.418-419.
all these reasons Sinān would have had strong motives to join hands with the rulers of Aleppo and Mosul against Saladin.

The Siege of Misyāf

Having twice defeated the rulers of Mosul and forced the rulers of Aleppo to seek a peace treaty, Saladin, after capturing 'Azāz on 14 Dhū al-Ḥijja 571/24 June 1176, marched against the Ismā'īlī territories. On his way to Misyāf, he encamped near Aleppo, where the daughter of Nūr al-Dīn came out to see him; and on her demand he presented her with the town of 'Azāz. Saladin entered Ismā'īlī territory during the summer which was the best time to attack such inaccessible places. The actual siege of Misyāf most probably took place in Muḥarram 572/July 1176, but does not seem to have lasted more than one week. Apparently Sinān was out of Misyāf during the siege, and this absence of the defending leader might have been expected to make the other's task easier; but surprisingly Saladin withdrew after only a few minor skirmishes with the Ismā'īlīs.

The reasons for Saladin's withdrawal from Misyāf are explained differently by the sources. But practically all the chroniclers agree that the withdrawal was brought about through the good offices of the Prince of Ḥamā, the maternal uncle of Saladin, Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Takash; though it is not clear whether Saladin or Sinān requested the mediation of the Prince of Ḥamā. According to the Ismā'īlī author, Abū Firās,
Saladin woke up suddenly to find on his bed a dagger with a threatening letter; and partly out of fear, partly out of gratitude to Sinân for not having killed him when he could, and partly on the advice of his uncle "Taqî al-Dîn" (sic: ? Shihāb al-Dîn), Saladin sought peace with Sinân. (1)

Among the other sources dealing with Saladin's withdrawal from the Ismā'īlī territories, Ibn Abî Ṭayy, quoted by Abû Shāma, gives the most reasonable explanation of Saladin's withdrawal from Miṣyāf. He states that Frankish military movements in the south near Baḥlabak in the Biqā' valley convinced the Sunnī leader that the threat from the Franks was more urgent and important. At the same time, the prince Shihāb al-Dîn al-Ḥārimî of Ḥamā must have had good reasons to avoid provoking the anger and enmity of his Ismā'īlī neighbours in the west; and some sort of a settlement which might qualify to be called a peace treaty between Sinân and Saladin may have been arranged on Saladin's initiative. (2) Whatever were the real

(1) Abû Firâs tells stories showing the telepathic powers of Sinân and how miraculously he was able to evade being captured by Saladin's forces etc. See S. Guyard, "Un grand maître" ... J.A. (1877) pp.458-62. Earlier Hasan al-Ṣâbbān actually did introduce a knife by the bed of the Saljūq Sultān Sanjar. See; M. Defrémery, "Histoire des Seldjoukides. Ext. du Tarīkh-Guzideh," J.A. 4e ser. T. 13, pp.32-34; M. Ghâlib, Ta'rlkh al-Da'wa, ... p.213.

reasons for the withdrawal, it is clear that Saladin, probably under the influence of his uncle Shihāb al-Dīn, and as Ibn al-Athīr says because of the weariness of his troops, did decide to reach some sort of an agreement or a settlement with the Ismā‘īlīs.

Although the sources have not recorded the terms of the settlement, it seems almost certain that the two leaders must have agreed to some form of "peaceful-co-existence".

The Ismā‘īlī sources go so far as to say that Ismā‘īlī fīdā‘īs took part in the historic and glorious battle of Ḥittīn near Ṭiberias (Ṭabarayyā) in 583/1187 when Saladin won his most celebrated victory over the Franks. Following this victory Jerusalem and other important Frankish strongholds surrendered.

It is not known in what capacity the Ismā‘īlīs took part in the battle of Ḥittīn; but the 17th century Christian Patriarch and chronicler al-Duwayhī in his Ta‘rīkh al-Azminah covering the period A.D. 1095-1699, states that the Frankish leaders captured in Jabal Ḥittīn were taken to the Ismā‘īlī castles. (1)

Although hostilities between Sinān and Saladin appear to have ceased after the latter's withdrawal from Miṣyāf, the

(1) Le Patriarche Stéphane al-Duwayhī, "Ta‘rīkh al-Azminah (A.D. 1095-1699)" translated into Arabic by Ferdinand Taoutel, S.J. in al-Machriq, 44, (1950) p.83; Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Ta‘rīkh al-Dā‘wa ... p.213, where the author says that Saladin's nephew Muḥammad was in command of the Ismā‘īlī "contingent" (firqah) that took part in the battle of Ḥittīn.
relations between the Ismāʿīlīs and the rulers of Aleppo entered upon a difficult period. A wazīr of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, called Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ṣāliḥ ibn al-ʿAjamī, was assassinated on August 31, A.D. 1177, and this murder was attributed to the Ismāʿīlīs. Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ held an inquiry in which it was alleged that Saʿd al-Dīn Gümüşhtigīn had sent forged letters to the Ismāʿīlīs urging them, in the name of al-Ṣāliḥ, to perpetrate the murder. Gümüşhtigīn was found guilty and ultimately ruined by his enemies.

The other main event affecting the relations between Sinān and the rulers of Aleppo was the burning of the markets at Aleppo in 575/1179-80. The fires broke out in several places and were attributed to arson by the Ismāʿīlīs in revenge for seizure of their stronghold al-Hajīrah by al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in A.D. 1179/80. (1)

The Murder of Conrad of Montferrat

The assassination of the Marquis Conrad of Montferrat in April A.D. 1192 was one of the most important murders of which the Ismāʿīlīs were accused during the period of Sinān’s leadership. For not only Sinān, but, according to most of the sources, (1) On the murder of Shihāb al-Dīn ... ibn al-ʿAjamī see: Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Histoire D'Alep, tr. Blochet, in Revue de l'Orient Latin, Paris, 1895, Tome IV, p.148; ʿAlī al-Taʾārikh al-Manṣūrī - by Abū al-Fadāʾīl Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Hamawī - published in facsimile by P. Gryaznevich, Moscow 1960, p.88(b); A History of the Crusades, Vol. 1, ed. K.M. Setton, Phil. 1955 p.125.
also Saladin and Richard I Coeur de Lion, had a hand in it. The Marquis was attacked twice, first when he was leaving a friend's house and again fatally in the Church of Tyre. The two murderers, who were disguised as Christian monks and well trained to speak the Frankish language, confessed (according to the chronicler Bahā‘ al-Dīn ibn Shaddād) that they had been sent by the King of the English to assassinate Conrad, who by virtue of being the husband of Isabella daughter of Amalric I, had been chosen as the successor to the kingdom of Jerusalem. The Syriac chronicler Bar Hebraeus also mentions this confession, but gives the Franks an implied rebuke for having believed that the King of the English was the instigator; he and the Frankish chroniclers put the blame squarely at the door of Sinān. Ibn al-Athīr states that Saladin wrote to Sinān asking him to kill the King of the English, and adding that if Conrad were also killed then a sum of 10,000 dinars would be paid; but Sinān did not find it in his interest to assassinate both Frankish leaders and only had Conrad murdered.

Imād al-Dīn denies Saladin's responsibility on the ground that Conrad was the enemy of the King of the English and had been in communication with Saladin. It is conceivable that the murder of Conrad and the resultant increased suspicion among the Franks towards the Ismā‘īlīs may have been advantageous to Saladin, and it is possible that the two fidā‘īs may have named
the King of the English as the instigator in order to whitewash Sinān and Saladin. (1)

A possible indication of Saladin's complicity in this murder is the fact that when King Richard I Coeur de Lion entered into negotiations with Saladin, the truce terms on which they agreed were extended at Saladin's request to cover the Ismāʿīlī territories. (2)

Abū Firās relates that Sinān helped Saladin when he needed help, and sent two fidā'īs to murder Conrad. (3) The interests of the Ismāʿīlīs was to sow suspicion in both the Muslim and the Christian camps, and as Bernard Lewis says, "the murders of Ibn al-ʿAjamī and of Conrad of Montferrat are good examples. (4)


(2) Abū Shama (Shihāb al-Dīn ... ), in Recueil des Historiens des Croisades - Historiens Orientaux, Paris, 1808, Tome V, p.77; B. Lewis, Saladin and the Assassins, ... p.244.

(3) S. Guyard, "Un grand maître" ... J.A. 1877, (Arabic text), pp.463-465.

Sinān and the Crusaders

Most of the strongholds which the Ismāʿīlīs seized or bought in Jabal Bahrāʾ had previously been in the hands of the Crusaders; and many of the most important Frankish castles were situated very close to the Ismāʿīlī fortresses.

In A.D. 1142 or 1145, the lord of Tripoli gave to the Hospitaller Order the fortress known in the medieval Arabic sources as Ḥiṣn al-Akrād or Qalʿat al-Ḥiṣn (Krak des Chevaliers), 25 miles south of Miṣyaf, and a few years later there are reports of fighting between the Ismāʿīlīs and the Franks over the fortress of Maynaqa. (1)

Although Defrémery suggests that the Frankish raids on the Ismāʿīlī territories were in reprisal for the murder of the Count of Tripoli in A.D. 1151 (mentioned on page 48) and that they ceased after the Ismāʿīlīs had agreed to pay a yearly tribute to the Templar Order, it is quite possible that when Sinān succeeded Abū Muḥammad, the Ismāʿīlīs had been fighting with the Franks somewhere in the county of Tripoli. (2)

Realizing the danger of being nearly surrounded by both Muslim and Frankish hostile forces, Sinān attempted to reach a settlement with the Franks. His efforts were made difficult by the fact that the two Frankish Orders, and especially the

(1) C. Cahen, La Syrie du Nord ... pp.179,511.
(2) M. Defrémery, "Recherches sur les Ismaéliens," ... J.A. May-June 1854, pp.420-21; The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, by A. Asher, London 1840-1, p.50.
Templars, more often than not conducted their affairs independently of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The Negotiations with Amalric I

Sinān sought a rapprochement with the Frankish kingdom of Jerusalem hoping to be absolved from paying the yearly tributes to the Templars. The negotiations with the King of Jerusalem, Amalric I, son of Fulk, (A.D. 1163-1174), began some time in A.D. 1172 or 1173, and they were successful. Amalric agreed that the tribute to the Templars should be cancelled. But this did not please the Templars, who caused Sinān's ambassador to be murdered on his way back from Jerusalem. (1)

"Sinān's Offer to Embrace Christianity"

The chronicler William of Tyre, in attempting to blame the Templars for depriving the Franks of a strong ally, states that Sinān's embassy proposed to embrace Christianity. (2)

(1) "Ta'rikh al-Azminah," Arabic tr. by Ferdinand Taoutel, S.J., in al-Maghrib, 44, 1950, p.67; Thomas Keightley, The Crusaders, (London, 1833), Vol. II, pp.140-141, where the author states that Amalric was engaged to reimburse the Templars out of his own revenues.

It is probable that the Isma'īlī embassy mentioned to the King something about the relationship between their religious views and Christian beliefs. They would have emphasized their high regard for Jesus ('Isā) as being both a Prophet and a Nātiq ("speaker or addresser").(1) For as will be seen later, the Isma'īlīs believe that God has been sending, since the beginning of the human world, a succession of prophets for the guidance of human beings who are always in need for such guidance. According to them, religions evolve from one another and each represents a certain stage in the chronic evolution.

After the death of Amalric I, in A.D. 1174, and the withdrawal of Saladin's army from their territories, the Syrian Isma'īlīs seem to have thrown their weight on the side of Saladin in his wars against the Franks. The reason for this was that the hostile attitude of the Templars and the Hospitallers towards the Isma'īlīs in disregard of the official policy of Jerusalem, and the aggressiveness of the Hospitallers who in A.D. 1186 set up their military headquarters at al-Marqab, less than 13 miles northwest of al-Qadmūs, left Sinān with no alternative other than to ally himself with Saladin.(2)

(1) According to the Isma'īlīs, Muḥammad, Jesus and Moses were Nātiqs ("Speakers") and each had an Asās (base or foundation). Concerning these terms see Part Two, Chapter V and Appendix I.

(2) C. Cahen, La Syrie du Nord ... pp.514ff.
Only after the death of Sinân was a new move made towards improving relations between the Ismā'īlīs and the Franks. It is reported that the successor to the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the husband of the widow of Conrad of Montferrat, Henry of Champagne, then visited the Ismā'īlīs on his way from Acre to Antioch. (1)

The Death of Sinân

The great Ismā'īlī leader Râshid al-Dīn Sinân, whose nickname Shaykh al-Jabal used to be mentioned in frightened whispers at the courts of kings and princes, died in 589/1193. The well-known Sunni author Sibt ibn al-Jawzī gives the date of his death as 588/1192 and describes him as a man of knowledge, statecraft and skill in winning men's hearts. The Bustān al-Jāmiʿ states that the Chief of the Ismā'īlīs Sinân died in 589/1193 and was succeeded by "an ignorant person" named Naṣr al-ʿAjamī. Bar Hebraeus also relates than Sinân died in A.D. 1193 and was succeeded by a certain man whose name was Naṣr. He adds that the Sinân's followers did not believe that he was really dead. Other sources state that Sinân had been treated by his followers as God, and Ibn Khallikān, as already mentioned, refers to his sect being called by his name, namely al-Sinānīya. (2)

Although the Ismā'īlī sources are mostly doctrinal, they contain certain clues to the history of the movement. Some of these sources include Sinān in the genealogical tree of the Imāms.\(^{(1)}\) The Syrian Ismā'īlī dā'ī Nūr al-Dīn Aḥmad (d.749/1384), after giving a description of the way in which Sinān used to spend his days and of his physical characteristics, continues: "he was handsome, middling in height, having wide black eyes, set in a ruddy face tending to brown, eloquent in expression, powerful in argument, sharp of vision, swift in improvisation, and unmatched in the principles of philosophy and in the sciences of allegorical interpretation, poetry and astronomy (al-falak)".\(^{(2)}\)

In the non-Ismā'īlī sources, there are indications that Sinān was buried at al-Kahf or al-Qadmus; but ʾArif Tāmīr states in an article that his grave is in Jabal Mashḥad, where Sinān used to spend much of his time praying and practising astronomy.\(^{(3)}\)

Among the Syrian Ismā'īlīs of today, echoes of Sinān's miracles still reverberate, especially at Misyāf and al-Qadmus,

\(^{(1)}\) MS.2, p.96, Appendix 1; ʾArif Tāmīr, "Sinān Rāshid al-Dīn"... in al-Adīb (May 1953), pp.43-46.

\(^{(2)}\) ʾArif Tāmīr, Sinān wa ʾAlāh al-Dīn, ... p.23, where he quotes from the Ismā'īlī MS. Fusūl wa Akhbaru ... p.164.

\(^{(3)}\) M.C. Defrémery, "Recherches sur les Isma'iliens" ... pp.9, 31-33; S. Guyard, "Un grand maître" ... p.372; ʾArif Tāmīr, "al-Amīr Mazyad al-Ḥillī al-Asadī," al-Adīb, August 1953, p.55.
whose inhabitants, unlike the majority of the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs, regard Sinān as an Imām.
CHAPTER III

THE SYRIAN ISMĀ'ILĪS FROM THE DEATH OF SINĀN TO THE FALL OF ALAMUT.

Sinān died leaving his people with ample memories of his greatness, wisdom and heroism. A very capable successor was needed to fill his place, but it seems from the scanty materials recorded by historians on the post-Sinān period that the Ismā'īlīs did not again enjoy strong leadership like that of Sinān. This did not, however, seriously handicap their efforts to preserve their independence for more than half a century to come. The main objective of the Ismā'īlīs was to maintain some sort of balance of power between the Franks and the Muslims, which they were able to do until finally they were obliged to submit to the Mamlūk Sultān al-Ẓāhir Baybars. Among the sources that deal with the activities of Sinān's successors, the general Arabic histories are mainly occupied with the many problems which followed the death of Saladin arising from internal difficulties in the Ayyūbid kingdom and from the revival of the power of the Franks and their new attempt to consolidate their grip on the Syrian coast-lands; consequently they hardly mention the activities and names of Sinān's successors. Fortunately the names of some of them have come to us through a new source, namely inscriptions found on buildings in the various Ismā'īlī centres. These inscriptions and the general Arabic histories, especially a historian from central Syria known as Ibn Wāsîl and the author of al-Ta'rîkh
al-Manṣūrī, provide us with the bulk of the available information on this period. (1)

(a) The Situation Confronting Sinān's Successors.

The immediate successor of Sinān on whose identity the sources are not unanimously agreed, but whose name most probably was Naṣr al-ʿAjami, (2) had as mentioned in the previous chapter to face a difficult and intricate situation. The Syrian Ismāʿīlīs needed to continue their balancing acts between the Muslim and the Frankish powers, who always constituted a potential threat to the existence of their relatively small principality. (3) Adding to the complexity of the situation was that both the Ayyūbids and the Franks were disunited among themselves; and this led the Ismāʿīlīs to follow a piecemeal policy in their relations with the two powers.


Ibn Wāṣil, Mufarrīj al-Qulūb fi Akhār Banī Ayyūb - the materials of this source are scattered in various MSS. found in Paris (Bibl. Nat., Arabe, 1702 and 1703), Camb. no. 1709), Istanbūl in Mullā Chalabi library no. 119.

(2) Abū Mansūr ibn Muhammad is named as Sinān's successor by Mufaddal ibn Abī al-Fadāʾil, "Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks, ..." par E. Biochot, in Patrologia Orientalis, XII, XIV, Paris 1919-1920, vol. XII, part l, p.516. See also M. Defrémyer, in J.A. V, p.31, n.2. There is no doubt that this Abū Mansūr is the same man as Naṣr al-ʿAjami. In a letter dated 1/9/62, ʿArif Tamir states that Abū Mansūr was the nephew (on the mother's side) of Sinān's predecessor Abū Muḥammad.

When Sinān died the Ismāʾīlīs were on cordial terms with the Ayyūbids; but after the death of Saladin and the partitioning of the Ayyūbid empire among his sons and his brother al-Ḥādīl (596-615/1200-1218), Sinān's successors seem to have found that the Ayyūbids were in no position to come to their rescue in the event of serious conflict with their neighbours, the Franks. The Ismāʾīlīs therefore played for time in their relations with the Franks and especially with the two Orders, the Hospitallers and the Templars. This state of affair may explain the obscure circumstances under which the Ismāʾīlīs became tributaries to the Hospitallers. According to a report, the Hospitallers attacked the Ismāʾīlīs in 624/1226/7 in consequence of the Ismāʾīlīs' refusal to pay tribute to them. (1) However, the Ismāʾīlīs seem to have become involved in the internal quarrels of the Franks, for as soon as they settled a problem with a Frankish power, a rival Frankish power would try to retaliate against the Ismāʾīlīs on the ground that they were used by the former power. A good example of this is the story found in the Crusader sources of how the French King Philip Augustus sent in A.D. 1195 fifteen assassins to kill Richard Coeur de Lion at Chinon. This story might well be considered to have nothing to do with

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the Ismāʿīlīs; but there are other stories blaming the Hospitallers for the murder of Raymond son of Bohemond IV of Antioch by the Ismāʿīlīs in A.D. 1213, and alleging that Ismāʿīlīs were used by the Emperor Frederick II to murder Duke Ludvig of Bavaria in A.D. 1231. All these stories indicate that the Ismāʿīlīs were not able to keep out of the internal rivalries among the Franks.(1)

As regards relations with the Ayyūbids, it can be said that the post-Sinān period is characterized by peaceful relations between the Ismāʿīlīs and the generally tolerant Ayyūbid rulers. Whenever a Muslim leader questioned the tactics of the Ismāʿīlīs in their dealings with the Franks, the Ismāʿīlī reply was generally as follows. It was the Muslim prince of Ḥims who during the first decade of the sixth century A.H. had followed a policy of appeasement with the Franks in Tripoli, the result of which had been the loss of many strategic strongholds to the Franks such as Ḥīn ʿAkkār, and the district of Buqayʿah, and the virtual abandonment of Miṣyāf, al-Kahf and Ḥiṣn al-Ṭūfān to Frankish domination. This had continued until 535/1140 when the Ismāʿīlīs seized Miṣyāf from the Munqidhites. Nobody except the Ismāʿīlīs had ever seriously challenged the Franks in Jabal Bahrāʾ, and if the Ismāʿīlīs were sometimes obliged to make concessions or friendly overtures to the Franks, only the divided Muslims

could be blamed for that, and not the Ismā'īlīs who were unable to afford a major military conflict with their powerful neighbours. With their limited manpower, the Ismā'īlīs had to rely on threatening their potential enemies with political assassination, or on paying tribute when such threats were of no avail, as was the case with the Templars and later also with the Hospitallers. (1)

The most important development in this period was the move made by the Imam in Alamūt towards establishing friendly relations with the Sunni Muslim world and especially with the Caliphate in Baghdad. Before this move and its effects on the status of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs vis-à-vis the Ayyūbids are discussed, a brief word must be said about the identities and dates of Sinān's successors. Not much can be added to the scanty information gathered by the nineteenth century researchers.

A young Syrian Ismā'īlī historian of today, Muṣṭafā Ghālib, gives the names of some dā'īs not mentioned by the non-Ismā'īlī sources, but these may possibly be names either of junior dā'īs or of dā'īs belonging to a later period with which we are not

(1) M. Kurd ʿAlī, Khīṭat ... Damascus 1927, Vol. 1, p. 294;  
al-Taʿrīkh, al-Mansūrī, ... Moscow 1960, p. 226a where the  
Ayyūbid ruler of Hims, al-Malik al-Mujāhid Shīrkūh II (581-  
639/1185/6-1239/40), is reported to have marched against the  
Ismā'īlīs and the Franks.  
The murder of the ruler of Khilāt, Sayf al-Dīn Bektīmūr,  
by the Ismā'īlīs in Jumādā 1 589/May 1193 is an indication  
that the Ismā'īlīs were very anxious to keep on good  
relations with the successors of Saladin. Sayf al-Dīn is  
reported to have taken advantage of Saladin's death to annex  
Mardīn and Taroṭash. See, Abū Shāma (Shihāb  
concerned. They are Shaykh Dabbūs, Hasan al-Mu‘addil, Shams al-Dīn ibn ʿAlī, Muḥammad al-Ramnah and ʿAbū Yazīd al-Sarmīnī. (1)

The names of the dāʿīs who followed Sinān's immediate successor Naṣr al-ʿAjamī and the approximate dates of their reigns can, however, be ascertained by collating al-Taʾrīkh al-Mansūrī, Ibn Wāṣil, al-Nasawi and, as mentioned above, the various inscriptions found in the Ismāʿīlī strongholds. The author of al-Taʾrīkh al-Mansūrī states that in 619/1222 the master (ṣāhib) of the Ismāʿīlī strongholds in Syria, Asad al-Dīn, died and was succeeded by his brother ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn; and that the latter on his death was succeeded by his brother Tāj al-Dīn who was later dismissed (ʿuzūla) and recalled by Alamūt to be replaced by Majd al-Dīn, who according to the author was "of a good character". (2)

Unfortunately, the picture given by the author of al-Taʾrīkh al-Mansūrī is somewhat confusing, for it does not state on what date this Tāj al-Dīn was recalled to Alamūt.

All we know is that the deaths of Asad al-Dīn and of his

(1) M. Ghalib, Taʾrīkh al-Dawa ... Damascus, 1953, p.216, where the author states that he found in the ms. al-Mithāq, a letter sent by Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III to his followers in Jabal al-Summāq confirming the appointment of Shams al-Dīn ibn ʿAlī as his chief dāʿī in Syria. The names of the other dāʿīs mentioned in the text were given in a letter from M. Ghalib dated 13/1/1961. See Ārif Tamir's article on Sinān in al-ʿAdīb, May 1953, p.45, where he also mentions Shams al-Dīn ibn ʿAlī as the dāʿī of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III in Syria.

(2) Al-Taʾrīkh al-Mansūrī ... Moscow 1960, pp.143a, 143b.
successor and brother Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn followed by the recall of their brother and successor Tāj al-Dīn must have taken place before 624/1226-7, when, according to the same author, the Syrian Ismā'īlīs were under Majd al-Dīn. (1) Thus at least we can be sure that Tāj al-Dīn who, as we know from other sources, was the chief dā'ī in A.D. 1239-40, is unlikely to be the same Tāj al-Dīn mentioned in al-Ta’rīkh al-Manṣūrī; this leaves the possibility that the author may have meant Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn Masʿūd who, as known from the inscription of Mīṣyāf, was the Ismā'īlī chief dā’ī in Syria in 620/1222-3 and is stated by Nasawī to have been in Persia in 624/1226. (2) Kamāl al-Dīn, as the inscription of Mīṣyāf states, was therefore the chief of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs during the early years of the reign of the Imām ‘Alā’al-Dīn Muḥammad III (A.D. 1221-1255). The Syrian Ismā'īlī leaders who came after Kamāl al-Dīn were Majd al-Dīn, reported to have been in power in A.D. 1226/7; Sirāj al-Dīn Muẓaffar ibn al-Ḥusayn A.D. 1227 and 1238; Tāj al-Dīn Abū al-Futūḥ ibn Muḥammad A.D.

(1) Al-Ta’rīkh al-Manṣūrī .... Moscow, 1960, p.164a.

1239/40 and 1249; and the contemporary of the fall of Alamūt, Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Maṭāli A.D. 1258—(1) 61 (?) (b) The Repercussions in Syria of the Rapprochement between the Persian Ismāʿīlīs and the Caliphate.

After the death in 607/1210 of Ālā Muḥammad II, who during his Imamate of forty-four years had followed his father's teachings of the "Great Qiyāma", emphasizing the theory of taʿwīl at the expense of formal worship, the Imamate of Alamūt passed to his son Jalāl al-Dīn Hasan III. (2) He did not wait long before attempting in 608/1211-12 to patch up the differences between the Ismāʿīlīs and the Sunni Muslim world. Jalāl al-Dīn's action, which took the shape of ordering his followers to observe the fundamental religious rites and external ceremonies of Islām, appears to have been primarily a tactical move


(2) On account of lack of Ismāʿīlī sources on the "Great Qiyāma", scholars have had to rely on non-Ismāʿīlī sources, which despite bias and prejudice are useful for those knowledgeable in esoteric Ismāʿīlī teachings. No authentic Ismāʿīlī account of the Qiyāma has yet come to light, nor indeed any genuine Ismāʿīlī work belonging to that period except for the supposed epistle of Muḥammad II to be edited by W. Ivanow at some future date, and some materials believed to belong to that period produced in M. Hodgson's Order ..... App. I, pp.279-324.
necessitated by the political circumstances of the period. (1)

The news of the changes in Alamūt was generally welcomed in the Muslim world and especially at the court of ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Nāṣir (A.D. 1180-1225), who not only had Shiʿi sympathies but also his own political reasons for accepting Ismāʿīli friendship at a time the ambitious Khwārizmīṣ were trying to dominate him and to acquire a position like that held by the Saljūqs before them. Moreover, the fearful shadow of Jingź Khan (A.D. 1162-1226) loomed threateningly from the east, and although the common danger did not bring all the conflicting powers to end their differences, it did contribute to the mutual desire of the Ismāʿīlis and the Caliphate to bury their old grievances. (2)


(2) Besides being mentioned as pro-Shiʿī, al-Nāṣir is known to have been tolerant in matters of religion. See: Sībṭ ibn al-Jawzī, Mirʿāt ... ed. Jewet, Chicago 1907, p.363, where it is stated that in 607/1210/11 al-Nāṣir issued to every religious sect a licence written by his own hand; M. Nasawi, Histoire du Sultan Djelal ed-Dīn Mankbīrī, tr. O. Houdas, Paris, 1891-95, pp.11-12, al-Taʾrīkh al-Mansūrī .... (Moscow 1960), p.132b; Ibn Wāṣīl also states that al-Nāṣir was pro-Shiʿī and sympathetic to the Imamīs, i.e. Twelvers; M. Van Berchem ... in J.A. 1897, p.492.
How far the policy of Jalāl al-Dīn, who was called "Naw-Musulmān," represented a genuine conviction, and what were his real feelings when he replaced the bāṭinī teachings with formal ones, are still subjects of mystery and controversy. It is important to note that there were several good reasons beside the political motive for Jalāl al-Dīn to bring his community out of its isolation from the Muslim world. Jalāl al-Dīn may well have considered that no matter how justified Hasan al-Ṣabbāḥ had been in putting his trust in the dagger as well as the pen, the practice of assassination, together with the changes which had taken place in the Ismāʿīlī movement after it had come under the control of revolutionary-minded leaders, and the proclamation of the Qiyāma which Jalāl al-Dīn may very probably have regarded as premature, had all tended to diminish the appeal of both the social and religious ideas of Ismāʿīlism, which under the Fāṭimids had been on the verge of replacing the rigid dogmatic tenets of Sunnism. He must have perceived the vulnerability of Ismāʿīlism to hostile propagandists who found it an easy object for all sorts of accusations, associating Ismāʿīlī ideas with the extreme beliefs of the Qarmāṭians and of anti-Muslim sects such as the Khurramites, and bluntly asserting that Ismāʿīlism had deviated from the path of Islam.

(1) Most of the Muslim sources associated the Ismāʿīlī movement in Persia with practically all the heresies of pre-Islamic and early Islamic Persia, i.e. the Manichaeans, Mazdakites, Zindīqs, Rawandīs, Khurramites, Qarmāṭians, etc. e.g.

Continuation of footnote 1 on p.88
Thus, Jalāl al-Dīn may have believed that in shifting towards greater use of the ḥādir of the Shari‘a, he would not breach the fundamentals of Ismā‘īlism in the ḥādir or the bātin; and that by utilizing the principle of taqiyya he would be able to avoid introducing any innovation into the established Ismā‘īlī religious beliefs when he called upon his followers in Persia and Syria to give up the exemptions allowed to them after the proclamation of the Qiyāma. In order that the Ismā‘īlīs might reap the maximum political advantage from this move, Jalāl al-Dīn sought recognition by the Caliph al-Naṣir who was the symbolic head of the Sunnī Muslim community. Al-Naṣir was willing to respond. (1)

Continued from p. 87


(1) Although it is evident that Jalāl al-Dīn modified the teachings of the Qiyāma and restored the ḥādir of the Ismā‘īlī beliefs in his move towards Orthodoxy, the stories that he burnt some Ismā‘īlī books and cursed his predecessors to satisfy the doubting ‘Ulamā‘ (learned men) of Qazwīn seem to be somehow exaggerated. It is true that armed with the taqiyya an Ismā‘īlī can pretend to practise some rites which he inwardly considers valueless, but the practise of taqiyya would not go so far as to have an Imām like Jalāl al-Dīn attack the fundamental Ismā‘īlī belief in the eternal institution of the Imamate and in the divinely sanctioned nature of every act of an Imām. See ‘Aṭā M. Juwainī .... tr. J.A. Boyle, 1958, pp.698-99. “The Ta‘rīkh-i Guzida of Hamdullāh Mustawfī-i-Qazwīnī” compiled in 730/1330, ed. E.G. Brown and R.A. Nicholson in E.J.W. Bibb Memorial Series, XIV, 2, London 1930, P.129; M.D. Defremery, “Ismā‘īllens de Syrie”, in J.A. 1855, pp.38-41.
Al-Nāṣir's Ambassador in Aleppo

Besides giving to the mother of Jalāl al-Dīn and her retinue precedence over other Muslim princes when on her pilgrimage to Makka, the Caliph blessed the marriage of Jalāl al-Dīn himself to the sister of Kaikāšūs, the governor of Jīlān (Gīlān); it is reported that the celebrations for the marriage were continued for a whole week in all parts of his country, by order of al-Nāṣir. (1)

Having helped Jalāl al-Dīn to establish good relations with various neighbouring Muslim princes, al-Nāṣir now sent his ambassador to accompany Jalāl al-Dīn's special emissary to Syria. They called at the court of the son of Saladin and ruler of Aleppo, al-Malik al-Zāhir Ghāzī (582-613/1186-1216), and according to al-Dhahabī they asked him to kill the resident Ismā'īl dā'ī in Aleppo and install Jalāl al-Dīn's emissary in his place. Unfortunately this story is not confirmed by any other sources, and indeed the circumstances surrounding the mission of Jalāl al-Dīn's delegates to his Syrian followers are still shrouded with mystery. It is certain, however, that the Syrians did in some way or other receive orders from their Imām at Alamūt to abide by the formal rules of the Sharī'a, and that there was a noticeable amelioration of their relations with

(1) H. Mustawfī, "Histoire des Seldjoukides, Extraite du Ta'rikh-i Guzideh" ... Traduite et accompagnée de notes, par M. Defrémery, in J.A. 1849, 4e ser. T. XIII, pp.43-45; 'Āta Mālik Juwainī ... tr. J.A. Boyle 1958, pp.701-705; Jannat al-Āmāl, article, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III in Appendix II.
the Ayyūbids and especially with al-Ẓāhir Ghāzi of Aleppo. (1)

It appears that even before the accession of Jalāl al-Dīn to the Imamate the Ismāʿīlīs had friendly relations with the successors of Saladin, who at the time of his death was still maintaining his entente cordiale with their great leader Sinān. There was a difference, however, between having a peaceful agreement with the Ayyūbids and being considered to have rejoined the Muslim world. After Jalāl al-Dīn's change of policy with regard to the Muslim world, not only could the Ismāʿīlīs count on military help from the Ayyūbids when in distress, but their leaders began to be called by titles usually held by orthodox Muslim leaders. (2) A further proof of the new place held by the Ismāʿīlīs in Syrian affairs is the report of Ibn Wāṣil that the Qāḍī of Sinjār, Badr al-Dīn, in 637/1239-40 took refuge with the Ismāʿīlīs while they were under the leadership

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(1) M. Defrémy, "Ismaéliens ..." in J.A. 1855, pp.38-40. The author makes use of both Abū al-Mahāsin and al-Dhahabī. Dhahabī mentions the order to kill the resident Ismāʿīlī dāʿī in Aleppo. The statement deserves consideration, for it is possible that some Ismāʿīlīs there did not want to put the wheel back and give up the exemptions permitted during the Qiyāma - a possibility which recalls the episode of the Ṣufāt (see p.57-60 above). Furthermore, M. Ghālib suggests that Jalāl al-Dīn may have visited his followers in Syria, and if he really did, this may well indicate that there was some resistance to his new move by Ismāʿīlī extremists in Northern Syria. See M. Ghālib, Taʾríkh al-Dawlāwa ... Damascus, 1953, p.216.

(2) M.V. Berchem, "Epigraphie ...." in J.A. 1897, p.499, where the author suggests that the words al-dunya and al-dīn in titles held by Ismāʿīlī chiefs after 608/1211-12 are a sign of rapprochement between them and Baghdād.
of the chief dāʾī Tāj al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Abū al-Futūḥ ibn Muḥammad. (1)

A Test for Ismāʿīlī-Ayyūbid Friendship.

With the exception of the reported raid on the Ismāʿīlī territory in A.D. 1210 by the King of Jerusalem(2) and the murder of Raymond son of Bohemond IV (A.D. 1187-1223), the Ismāʿīlīs seem to have kept themselves aloof during the three Crusades which followed Saladin's capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 1187. This is not surprising when we consider that two of these Crusades, the fourth A.D. 1202-04 and the fifth A.D. 1218-1221, had no great local significance. The fourth Crusade was diverted to Constantinople and the fifth ended in a series of truces with the Ayyūbids, especially al-Mālik al-Ṭādil who had been able to re-unite almost the entire realm of his brother Saladin.

Thus the murder of Raymond in A.D. 1213 in Ṭartūs (already mentioned on page 48 ) came as a sudden breach of the peace which the Ismāʿīlīs had been enjoying in their territory. Bohemond IV, father of the murdered prince, laid siege to their fortress al-Khawābī in 611/1214-15, and the Ismāʿīlīs appealed

(1) M.V. Berchem, "Epigraphie ..." in J.A. 1897, p.467.

(2) M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, 1955, p.220, where it is reported that in A.D. 1210 the King of Jerusalem was raiding the Ismāʿīlī territory.
for help to the ruler of Aleppo al-Mālik al-Ẓāhir (d. 613/1216-17). An army was sent and the Ismāʿīlīs were rescued. (1)

Unfortunately the general Arabic sources do not explain the motives behind the murder of Raymond, nor the evident reluctance of Bohemond IV to fight a general war with al-Ẓāhir, the Ayyūbid ruler of Aleppo. Some information, however, is available in Western sources which, despite the inconclusive nature of their stories, give clues to the circumstances of the murder. They say that the murder was arranged by the Knights Hospitallers, who were then friendly with the Ismāʿīlīs but hostile to Bohemond IV, and that the latter was not ready to come into a major conflict with al-Ẓāhir, who was a useful ally to Bohemond in his Armenian wars. (2)

(1) Ibn al-ʿAdīm, "Histoire d'Alep.", tr. Blochet, in Revue de l'Orient Latin 1897, Tome V, p.48, states that al-Ẓāhir sent a force 200 strong to help the Ismāʿīlīs and at the same time sent another force to Latakia to keep the Franks occupied and stop the Count of Tripoli from attacking al-Khawābī. He also adds that al-Ẓāhir's force was ambushed and 30 of its horsemen were captured. For other versions of this incident see Abū Shāma (Shihāb al-Dīn ...) in Rec. Hist. 1808, Tome V, p.159; Defrémery, "Ismaéliens de Syrie ..." in J.A. 1855, pp.41-43; A History of the Crusades, Vol. I, p.128.

(2) It is noticeable that in their series of raids on the districts of Ḫamā and Ḫims between 600/601-1203/1204, the Hospitallers converging on these districts from Ḫiṣn al-Akrād and al-Marqab do not seem to have had any conflict with the Ismāʿīlīs whose castles must have overlooked the movements of the Hospitallers towards the two main cities in central Syria. See al-Duwayḥī, "Taʾrīkh al-Azminā" in al-Machriq 1950, p.99; Al-Taʾrīkh al-Manṣūrī ... Moscow 1960, p.123a; W.B. Stevenson, The Crusaders in the East, Cambridge 1907, p.300; Ibn al-Athir, Rec. Des Hist. ... Paris 1887, Tome II, part 1, p.105, where he reports incursions by the Franks of Tripoli and Ḫiṣn al-Akrād in the district of Ḫims in 604/1207-08.
Al-Zahir's enthusiastic response to the Isma'ili call for help may be an indication that Jalal al-Din's reversion to orthodoxy did not pass unrewarded. At the same time his policy was not wholly beneficial to the Isma'iliis.

The Other Side of the Coin.

Jalal al-Din's move, as has been seen, was welcomed by the Caliph of Baghdad al-Nasir and by most of the Muslim rulers of the time, and it strengthened the Isma'ili diplomatic position. On the other hand, it contributed to the weakening of the cohesive force ('asabiyah) of his followers in both Persia and Syria, who must have been confused by the reversal of the teaching of the Qiyama. It cannot be taken for granted that all the contemporary Isma'iliis would understand the subtleties of taqiyah, which means believing in something while practising something else. Most of them could certainly not differentiate between a tactical and a strategic move. This confusion was probably one of the factors which caused dissension among the Isma'iliis regarding the doctrine of zahir and batin and subsequently brought about the split among the Nizari Isma'iliis during the first decade of the thirteenth-century A.D. For the split was not only a matter of following two different lines of Imam, but was centred from the beginning on religious doctrines and practices. One branch, the Mu'minis (see p.39), believed in the necessity of adhering to the zahir of the datwa
and they followed the Shāfi‘ī (Sunnī) school of law and still do so today.(1)

The other branch, the Qāsim Shāhīs, who till the second half of the nineteenth-century were of little significance, held firmly to the belief that the taqiya is only a method of self-protection and remained secretly attached to the teachings of the Qiyāma throughout the long periods of Mamlūk and Ottoman rule in Syria.

It would be interesting to know what were the immediate reactions of the Ismā‘īlis to Jalāl al-Dīn's policy of introducing external observance of the Shari‘a. Were there any signs of opposition to it among the Syrian Ismā‘īlis? Unfortunately there is no adequate documentary evidence. All we know is al-Dhahabī's story (discussed on page 99) in which it is stated that Jalāl al-Dīn's ambassador asked al-Zāhir of Aleppo to kill the resident Ismā‘īli dā‘ī so that he himself might take his place. While not much reliance can be placed upon such an unconfirmed story, it perhaps suggests that the Syrian Ismā‘īlis did not unanimously approve the virtual

(1) Ibn Wāsil states that following the orders of Jalāl al-Dīn the Syrian Ismā‘īlis upheld the rules of the Shari‘a and followed the Shāfi‘ī school. This is interesting in view of the fact that those modern Syrian Ismā‘īlis who do not recognize the Imamate of the Aghā Khān follow the Shāfi‘ī school. See Max von Berchem, "Epigraphie ...." in J.A. 1897, p.475 where a passage from Ibn Wāsil is reproduced.
annulment of what may have seemed to many of them as their due reward after the proclamation of the Qiyāma in 559/1163-4. The Ismā'īlis must have faced a serious dilemma. How could they reconcile the order of the Imām to give up privileges conferred on them by another Imām with the belief in the infallibility of both? It is true that highly learned Ismā'īlis will make use of esoterism to find a solution, but they only constituted a small fraction of the Ismā'īli community. Moreover, it is not likely that every Ismā'īlī was farsighted enough to see the political advantages of Jalāl al-Dīn's efforts to find a modus vivendi with Orthodox Islām as symbolized by the Caliphate in Baghdād. Besides these considerations, which on account of the lack of information can only be conjectural, it seems probable that the easing of relations between the Ismā'īlīs and the other Muslim communities opened the way to many Ismā'īlīs to move from their secluded castles to the main cities, where they became absorbed and assimilated into the mass of the Muslim population. This did not take place during the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn, but began at the turn of the thirteenth century A.D. and continued during the following centuries when the Ismā'īlīs ceased to possess the sense of unity which had earlier been promoted by their life in castles surrounded by hostile elements. (1)

(1) From the fourteenth-century onwards the Ismā'īlīs suffered at the hands of their neighbours the Nuṣayrīs with whom they shared similar views on many doctrinal questions. By then they were no longer independent and had to rely on the Mamlūk and later on the Ottoman rulers of Syria for protection against Nuṣayrī attacks.
(c) The Ismā'īlīs and the Leaders of the Sixth and the Seventh Crusades.

With the exception of King Louis IX of France (St. Louis, A.D. 1226-1270), who led the seventh Crusade and was defeated and captured in Egypt at the battle of al-Manṣūra, the leaders of the thirteenth-century Crusades resorted to diplomatic manoeuvres and negotiations rather than warfare. In these manoeuvres the Ismā'īlīs were not forgotten, or rather they did not forget to take advantage of favourable circumstances. They sought new sources of income and, as in their negotiations with St. Louis which are discussed below, tried to find ways of throwing off the burdens of tribute imposed on them by the Orders.

Majd al-Dīn Receives the Envoys of Frederick II
(A.D. 1194-1250)

When Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, King of Sicily, and by virtue of his marriage to Isabella in A.D. 1225 King of Jerusalem, set out in A.D. 1228 for the Holy Land, the leadership of the Ismā'īlīs had already passed from Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Mas'ūd, who was recalled by Alamūt some time before 624/1226, to Majd al-Dīn. (1) (See pages 83-84).

(1) While Kamāl al-Dīn is mentioned in the inscription of Miṣyāf and fixed by al-Nasawi to have been the leader of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs around 620/1222, Majd al-Dīn is only mentioned by the author of al-Ta'rikh al-Manṣūrī as the leader of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs in 624/1226. See Max von Berchem, "Epigraphie ...." in J.A. 1897, pp.482, 486-487; al-Ta'rikh al-Manṣūrī .... Moscow 1960, pp.164a-164b.
According to al-Ta'rikh al-Manṣūrī, a messenger from Frederick II, who was then still in Italy, arrived in the Ismā'īlī territories in 624/1226-7, following the receipt of a message from them. The messenger brought with him a gift of approximately 80,000 dinars which was supposed to be sent on to the Persian Ismā'īlīs, but when Majd al-Dīn declared that the road to Alamāt was unsafe because of the presence of the Khwarizmīs and other hostile elements, the gifts were left to Majd al-Dīn, who following the Ismā'īlī custom gave the messenger his shirt as a sign of protection and friendship. (1)

Frederick's initiative in seeking the friendship of the Ismā'īlīs was part of the policy which he adopted in his Crusade. For in his dealings with the Muslims he preferred diplomacy to battle, and he was able to achieve the return of Jerusalem to the Christians through a treaty (signed on the 18th Feb. 1229) with the Ayyūbid al-Malik al-Kāmil ibn al-Ḥādīl (615-635/1218-1238). (2)

Effects of Over-Confidence.

Frederick II's gifts and friendly overtures to the

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(1) Al-Ta'rikh al-Manṣūrī .... Moscow 1960, pp.164a-166b, where it is stated that Majd al-Dīn had already sent emissaries to the Saljūq Sultān of Rūm, 'Alā' al-Dīn Kai Kubād (616-643/1220-1258) demanding 2,000 dinars which had formerly been sent to Alamāt ...

Ismā'īlīs in 624/1226-7 did much to promote Ismā'īlī self-confidence. Naturally this did not please the Hospitallers, who kept a watchful eye on Frederick II's activities. Thus again the Ismā'īlīs had to suffer as a result of the constant tug of war between rival Christian powers. The new Pope Gregory IX (A.D. 1227-1241) objected to Frederick II's policies and excommunicated him just three weeks after he had sailed from Brindisi on 8 Sept. A.D. 1227 for the Holy Land. The Hospitallers did not wait long to show the Ismā'īlīs that friendship with Frederick II would not give effective protection. They sent a demand for tribute which was rejected by the Ismā'īlīs, who found it absurd to pay a mere military Order when they were receiving gifts from a great Emperor like Frederick II. An attack was then launched by the Hospitallers, who captured a great deal of booty without occupying any Ismā'īlī castle. The author of al-Ta'rifh al-Manṣūrī, which is our main source on this incident, does not state whether the Ismā'īlīs were already paying tribute before the Hospitallers' attack. Indeed the text reads as if the Ismā'īlīs had already ceased paying tribute to the Hospitallers after their deal with Frederick II, and that this had led the Hospitallers to ask for the resumption of payments.\(^1\) Moreover, the fact that the

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Hospitallers during their raids into the Ḫamā and Ḫimṣ districts made no incursions into the land of the Ismāʿīlīs suggests that there may have been some sort of an agreement between the two neighbouring powers.

As for their relations with Frederick II, the Ismāʿīlīs were not able to take advantage of their friendship with this great Emperor, who by the standards of his time may be loosely described as an enlightened liberal. His affairs in Europe did not leave him much time for the Holy Land, and the only further mention of his name in connection with the Ismāʿīlīs is not a very authenticated accusation that he employed Ismāʿīlī fidaʿīs to murder the Duke of Ludwig of Bavaria in A.D. 1231. (1)

Consultation with Aleppo.

The Ismāʿīlīs evidently did not wish to keep their relations with Frederick II secret from the ruler of Aleppo al-ʿAzīz (d. 634/1236-7), son and successor of their previous ally al-Ẓāhir. The author of al-Taʿrīkh al-Manṣūrī states that in 625/1227-8 they sent to Aleppo a messenger named Abū Manṣūr ibn al-Zubad, who informed al-ʿAzīz about Frederick's friendly overtures and added that the Ismāʿīlīs would be ready to fight on the side of the Aleppines against Frederick II in case they wanted to go to war against him; but if they were unable to take any action against the Franks, then the Ismāʿīlīs would like

to know so that they might improve their relations with Frederick II. (1)

This report makes the foreign policy of the Ismāʾīlīs at that time more intelligible. Their purpose was evidently to maintain peaceful relations with both the Franks and with the neighbouring Muslim powers, on the understanding that they were ready to side with the Muslims if and when they could count on their help. In other words, the Ismāʾīlīs would only seek to make arrangements with the Franks as long as the Muslim powers were not ready to enter into any major conflict with the Franks.

The Ismāʾīlī Mission to St. Louis at 'Akka.

It is quite probable that when St. Louis returned to 'Akka in May A.D. 1250, after ransoming himself from his captors in Egypt, the Ismāʾīlīs were still under the leadership of Tāj al-Dīn, whose name is mentioned in the inscription on the enceinte of Miṣyāf dated Dhū al-Qaʿda 646/Feb. - March 1249. He had succeeded Sirāj al-Dīn Muẓaffar, who according to Nasawī had in 626/1228 sent a letter to the Sultan of Rūm ‘Alāʾ al-Dīn Kaikubād telling him that Jalāl al-Dīn Munkubirtī had been defeated and killed (which was not the case) . (2) This Sirāj al-Dīn Muẓaffar was still the leader of the Ismāʾīlīs in Ramaḍān 635/ Aug. - Sept. 1237, when according to the inscription

(1) Al-Taʿrīkh al-Manṣūrī .... Moscow 1960, p.170b.

(2) Sirāj al-Dīn must have been the successor of Majd al-Dīn who (as stated in page ) received the envoys of Frederick II, in 624/1226-7. See M. al-Nasawī, Histoire du Sultan Djalal ed-Dīn Mankubirtī, tr. C. Houdas .... Paris 1891-95, Vol. 9, pp.167-168.
of al-Kahf he ordered the building of a bath-house there. (1)

By putting out feelers to St. Louis for finding a solution to his difficulties with the two military Orders at this time, the Ismā‘īlī chief dā‘ī must have reckoned how much St. Louis would be in need of new allies after his defeat at al-Manṣūrā. (2) But, as St. Louis's biographer and secretary De Joinville, who is our main source, tells us, the Grand Masters of the two Orders succeeded in foiling the attempts of the Ismā‘īlīs to persuade St. Louis to assume responsibility for providing the Hospitallers and Templars with the amounts levied upon the Ismā‘īlīs by these neighbouring Christian Orders as tribute. De Joinville states that when St. Louis received the Ismā‘īlī mission, he was asked whether he was acquainted with their leader, and replied that he was not but had heard about him. The Ismā‘īlīs then asked St. Louis why he did not follow the example of the Emperor of Germany, King of Hungary, and Sultān


(2) It is reported in the western sources that in A.D. 1236-7 the chief dā‘ī of the Syrian Ismā‘īlīs sent agents to kill King Louis IX, but later changed his mind and sent new agents to warn the French King, who sent them back with gifts to their chief dā‘ī. If this is true, then it would have been another factor encouraging the Ismā‘īlīs to present demands to St. Louis whom they had already tested. See M. Defrémery, "Ismaéliens de Syrie ....." in J.A. 1855, p. 42; Charles E. Nowell, "The Old Man of the Mountain" in Speculum, Oct. 1947, p.512.
of Babylon (Egypt) in paying them subsidies, or alternatively order the Hospitallers and the Templars to stop exacting tribute from the Ismā'īlīs. St. Louis, perhaps partly out of fear, partly in order to have time to consult the two Orders, asked the Ismā'īlī delegate to come back later in the evening, and when they did so they found the two Grand Masters of their redoubtable neighbours waiting for them. They were forced to promise that they would repudiate what they had said in the morning, and this they reluctantly did. When they came for another meeting the next morning, they were rebuked by the two Grand Masters on the ground that their message had been hostile in its meaning, and were ordered to return with letters and gifts to the King. This they did after fifteen days, bringing with them their leader's shirt and ring which he sent as a token of friendship and sincerity, together with other gifts.\(^{(1)}\)

**A Friar among the Ismā'īlīs.**

In response to this friendly step by the Ismā'īlīs, St. Louis sent an envoy to them, the friar Yves le Breton, who is reported to have been able to speak and read Arabic. His report on the mission and on what he saw and heard while staying among the Ismā'īlīs is the most important source of information about the relations between the Ismā'īlīs and St.

Louis. The friar and the returning Ismāʿīlī ambassadors carried with them gifts sent by St. Louis, which were of such a nature that it may be inferred that the Ismāʿīlīs did after all get some reward for their venture, even though they failed to rid themselves of the tributes paid to the Orders. Friar Yves took advantage of his meetings with the Ismāʿīlī chief dāʿī to discuss with him various doctrinal questions. The conclusions reached by Yves about Ismāʿīlī religious beliefs bear some truth as far as generalities are concerned; but he seems to have become confused on the subject of their doctrines regarding Prophet Muḥammad and his cousin ʿAlī. He simply says that they followed the religion of ʿAlī as if each had a religion of his own. It is true that by the middle of the thirteenth-century A.D. the Ismāʿīlīs were beginning to be influenced by views of their Nuṣayrī neighbours concerning rebirth or metempsychosis, but as regards Muḥammad and ʿAlī the Ismāʿīlīs, whether during the Faṭimid period or in the later stages of their history, held to the view that the Prophets were the medium of revelations and the Imāms the interpreters of these revelations. They were thus complementary to one another, and there is no point in discussing who is above the other, the Prophet or the Imam. One important development in the beliefs of the Ismāʿīlīs which ought to be mentioned is that with the passing of the years, and after the declaration of the Qiyāma in Alamūt, the doctrine of the Imamate
had come to hold a more central position in their religious literature and thought; but this has nothing to do with choosing between Muḥammad and ʿAlī. Friar Yves, however, is unlikely to have been able to grasp the Ismāʿīlī concepts of Muḥammad and ʿAlī, especially when according to his own statement he doubted the authenticity of Muḥammad's mission.\(^{(1)}\)

This does not impair the value of the information which he brought as an eye witness. Yves tells about the reverence which the contemporary Ismāʿīlīs accorded to St. Peter as one of the series of Abel, Noah and Abraham. This belief, with some modification, is no doubt in accord with the Ismāʿīlī doctrine which states and reaffirms the Qurʿānic belief that religions, and particularly the Semitic ones, are a chronological extension of one another.\(^{(2)}\)

Yves's mission had considerable political significance; for as already mentioned, St. Louis was interested in finding new allies for his next attempt to realize the objectives of his Crusade. He had already opened negotiations with the

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\(^{(1)}\) Dante (A.D. 1265-1321) speaks in similar terms about Muḥammad and ʿAlī, who according to him, sow scandal and schism in the world. See Dante's *Vision of Hell*, tr. by Rev. Henry Francis Cary, 1906, p.150.

\(^{(2)}\) Ismāʿīlī doctrines regarding Muḥammad's mission vis-à-vis the missions of the other prophets are discussed in more detail in Chapter V.
Mongols in the winter of A.D. 1248-49, and in A.D. 1252 he sent the friar William of Rubruquis to the Court of the Great Khan hoping to profit from the work of the early Nestorian Christian missions in the Far East. His efforts, however, produced no substantial results. He was unable to realize the dream of forming a Mongol-Crusader alliance. Had he been successful in establishing a military link with the Mongol armies which were soon to face the new emerging power of the Mamlûks in Egypt, the course of Middle Eastern history would have been changed. In A.D. 1254, partly because of domestic affairs in France, and partly because of the unwillingness of the rival Christian powers to join him in his efforts to consolidate the Christian position in the Holy Land, St. Louis sailed back from Akkâ to France. The Ismâ’îlîs and the local Christian powers whom he left on their own behind him were very weak and in no position to resist by themselves the future victor in the struggle between the Mamlûks and the Mongols.

(d) The Fall of Alamût and its Effect on the Syrian Ismâ’îlîs.

More than two and a half centuries before Hûlagû crossed the Oxus on his way to give the final blow to the Persian Ismâ’îlîs, Hasan al-Šabbâḥ had completed the organization of a body of fidâ’îs who had frustrated the attempts of powerful enemies to crush their movement. Their final collapse at the hands of the Mongols came after nearly half a century of negotiations with the threatening forces of the Mongols.
The alliance between Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III (d. A.D. 1221) and the Ābbāsid Caliph al-Ḥāṣir (d. A.D. 1225) might have led to a unified Muslim front strong enough to face any Mongol threat; but the ambitious Sulṭān of Khwārizm, Muḥammad al-Ḥālī al-Dīn ibn Tukush (d. 617/1220), caused the Ismāʿīlī Imām and the Ābbāsid Caliph to look towards establishing good relations with the Mongols, despite their reputation for brutality and ruthlessness.(1)

After the death of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III in 618/1221, the Imamate passed to his young son al-Ḥālī Muḥammad III (618-653/1221-1255). During the first decade of his reign the Ismāʿīlīs were involved in quarrels with the new and vigorous Khwārizm Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Mankobirtī (617-628/1220-1231), which were enhanced by the murder of a Khwārizmī governor named Urkhān in 624/1226 and by the Ismāʿīlī action in giving refuge to the Khwārizmī prince Ghīyāth al-Dīn when he fled from his brother Jalāl al-Dīn Mankobirtī. These disputes were eventually settled in a peace treaty between the two powers.(2)

(1) Ḥasan III is reported to have been the first ruler to have sent ambassadors to Jingīz Khān (d. 624/1227) proclaiming his respect to the formidable nomad Emperor. See Juwainī (ʿAṭā Mālik), The History of the World Conqueror, tr. J.A. Boyle, 1958, pp. 701-704.

(2) On the circumstances of the murder of Urkhān in 624/1226, and the consequences of the Ismāʿīlī refusal to hand back to Jalāl al-Dīn his brother Ghīyāth al-Dīn to whom they had given refuge, see al-Naṣāwī, Histoire Du Sultan Djelal ed-Dīn .... French tr. by O. Houdas, Tome 9, p. 27; M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, pp. 251-256.
With the crushing of the Khwārizmī power by the Mongols and the death of Jalāl al-Dīn Mankobīrī in 628/1231, Khurāsān and much of northern Persia became virtually a province of the Mongol empire, and the eyes of the Ismā'īlīs were henceforward focussed upon the Mongols. During the next two decades the Mongols did not pursue a vigorous policy in Persia, though they extended their influence into Asia Minor and sent a powerful army under Bātū Khān which conquered Russia (A.D. 1237-1242) and laid the foundation of the future empire of the "Golden Horde". (1)

Following the accession of the Great Khān Mangū in 649/1251, however, the Mongols decided in a general council to complete their conquests by sending two expeditions, one to the east and the other to the west. The western expedition was entrusted to Hūlāgū, brother of Mangū Khān. After a lengthy march which

(1) Under 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad III, who witnessed the early Mongol incursions but did not live to see the final collapse of Alamūt, the Ismā'īlīs are reported to have in 636/1238 sought the help of the Kings of Europe, to avert the gathering storm of the Mongols, but without avail. See L. Lockhart, The Legacy of Persia, ed. by Reuben Levy, Oxford 1953, p.340; Cambridge Medieval History, p.641.
started in A.D. 1252, Hūlagū crossed the Oxus in A.D. 1256. All local princes paid homage to him except the new Ismāʿīlī Imām Rūkn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, who had succeeded in 653/1255. The Mongols then attacked the Ismāʿīlī strongholds and besieged the fortresses Alamūt and Maymūnīz; but after long negotiations with the Mongols Khūrshāh surrendered himself to Hūlagū, who is said to have treated him well.

It was agreed that he should be allowed to set out on a journey to see the Mongol Great Khān and that Rūkn al-Dīn Khūrshāh should give orders to the commanders of all the Ismāʿīlī castles in Persia and in Syria to surrender to the Mongols. Rūkn al-Dīn set out on his journey, but in 654/1256 was murdered by his Mongol guards.(1)

(1) Various reasons may explain the Mongol attack against the Ismāʿīlīs: the instigation of the Supreme Qādī of Qazwīn Shams al-Dīn, the reports of an Ismāʿīlī attempt in 652/1254 to assassinate Mangū Khān, together with the intention of the Mongols to crush any force which might stand in their face once they had begun their march. See Juwainī (ʿAṭā Mālik ....) tr. J.A. Boyle, who was charged by Hūlagū to inspect the library of Alamūt (surrendered in Nov. A.D. 1256) before setting fire to it. An interesting story perhaps derived from folklore tells how the Mongols hated all words beginning with the letter R, but this, even if true, may have had nothing to do with their decision. Rūkn al-Dīn Khūrshāh only saw the last stage of the Mongol invasion. See Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb (Faḍl Allāh), "Introduction à l'histoire des Mongols ...." par E. Blochet, E.J.W. Gibb. Series XII, Leyden 1910, p.61.
almost all the once impregnable strongholds— with the exception of a few such as Girdkūh and Lammašar— were falling after hardly any resistance into the hands of the Mongols, must have had a tremendous impact upon the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs and have greatly weakened their morale. They were now deprived of the moral leadership and occasional practical guidance formerly given to them from Alamūt; they entered now into another period of concealment during which their Imāms lived under a Šūfī garb moving between Ādhārbāyjān and Qūnya. This vacuum in leadership was one of the main reasons why the Ismāʿīlīs henceforward often allowed the office of chief dāʿī to be held by more than one leader. Moreover, these leaders were apparently selected by the local elders of the community instead of being appointed by the Imām, and the result was that the office of chief dāʿī became a bone of contention among rival aspirants for the post. It was this situation, together with the existence of different views regarding various religious beliefs and practice, which led to the split of the Syrian

(1) The local commanders of Girdkūh and Lammašar refused to abide by their Imām's orders to surrender. Al-Juwainī accuses Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh of having secretly encouraged the remaining strongholds to resist the Mongols. It is thought that Mangū Khān refused to see Rukn al-Dīn and that the strongholds held out for a period lasting between six months and one year. See Juwainī (ʻAlī Mālik) tr. J.A. Boyle .... p.723; M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, pp.269-70; Freya Stark, The Valley of the Assassins, London 1934, p.230; F.A. Ridley, The Assassins, London, n.d., p.106.
Isma'īlīs into two groups each following a separate line of Imāms. The Syrian Isma'īlīs, however, escaped the fate which their Persian brethren had suffered at the hands of the Mongols. The sources report the surrender of four Isma'īlī castles in Syria including the principal one Miṣyāf. These reports, despite many loose ends, probably contain some truth; for it is not improbable that a few local Isma'īlī governors acted on their own initiative and surrendered their castles. After all even the powerful Ayyūbid prince of Ḫamā had to flee the city, while the prince of Ḫimṣ declared himself for the Mongols when the latter were approaching central Syria from Aleppo. Thus, weakened by the fall of Alamūt, and apparently not having a fully united front, the Syrian Isma'īlīs had soon to face the new emerging power of the Bahri Mamlūks of Egypt, whose greatest Sulṭān, Baybars, rose to power after the defeat of the Mongols in the battle of ’Ayn Jālūt in northern Palestine in 658/1260 as the unchallenged leader of Egypt and Syria.

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(1) At the time of the Mongol invasion the Syrian Isma'īlīs were under Radī al-Dīn Abū al-Ma‘ālī, who is reported to have been the Isma'īlī ambassador in Egypt in 655/1257. Ibn Muyassar reports the surrender of four Isma'īlī castles to the Mongols, who evacuated them after their defeat at ’Ayn Jālūt in 658/1260. The local Isma'īlī rulers who collaborated with the Mongols are said to have been put to death by their leaders. See M. Defremery, "Ismaéliens de Syrie ...." in J.A. 1855, pp.48-49, who makes use of ibn Muyassar and al-Nuwayri; S. Guyard, "Un Grand Maître ...." in J.A. 1877, pp.373-374, where Abū Firās in Anecdote 14 reports the return of Miṣyāf to the Isma'īlīs after the battle of ’Ayn Jālūt; M. Kurd 'Alī, Khiṭat .... Damascus, 1927, Vol. 2, p.119.
CHAPTER IV

THE SYRIAN ISMĀ'ILĪS UNDER THE EARLY MAMLŪKS

The decisive defeat of the Mongol invaders who had earlier crushed the Ismā'īlī power in Persia (653/1256), sacked and occupied Baghdād (656/1258), and occupied Aleppo and Damascus (658/1260), was naturally welcomed by the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. They moved quickly after "Ayn Jālūt to offer their friendship and help to the victorious Mamlūks under the new Sultan al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars (658-676/1260-1277). (1)

(a) The Internal Situation

Towards the end of the reign of Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Mu‘ālī (d.A.D.1261/2?) (2) the Syrian Ismā'īlī chief dā’ī contemporary with the fall of Alamūt, certain reports begin to suggest that there was now a joint leadership of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs. This may

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(1) At the battle of "Ayn Jālūt, the Mamlūk Sultan al-Ṭāhir Qūṭūz (d. 658/1260), while Baybars was in command of the Mamlūk vanguard. After chasing the Mongols, Baybars caused Qūṭūz to be murdered by the Mamluk amīrs. With his power not yet consolidated in Syria, Baybars must have welcomed the help of the Ismā'īlīs, at least in this early stage of his career.

not have been an entirely new development, because the Ismā'īlī sources in their narratives of events after Sinān's times often bring more than one Ismā'īlī protagonist on to the scene. Such reports might be explained on the ground that these sources, which probably date from the 14th century A.D., could not differentiate between the leader and his aides or those dā'īs who were possibly sent by Alamūt as inspectors corresponding to the "Visitors" who were sent by the Grand Masters of the Hospitallers and Templars. (1)

A Successor for Raḍī al-Dīn

Following the death of Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Maṭāli sometime during the years 659-660/1261-62, the post of the Syrian chief dā'ī passed to an aged dā'ī who probably was then more than eighty years old, a fact which in itself indicates that there was a division of opinion on the question who should be the leader. He is believed to have shared power with his predecessor for some time. He was to lead the Ismā'īlīs during a time when they were struggling to preserve their independence, which lasted only as long as the power threatening them was engaged on other fronts. The ḥaqab (title) of this

(1) Cf. Ārif Tāmir, "Furūʿ al-Shajara ..... " in al-Māchriq, 1957, p.603 where the author makes use of the Ismā'īlī source Fugūl wa Akhbār and other sources; he states that during the reign of Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh the leadership of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs was held by al-Ḥasan al-Muṭṭadā al-Shīrāzī and his rafīq (comrade) Ābd al-ʿAzīz al-Zinjānī.
aged leader is variously given in the Arabic sources; in this present work he will always be designated as Najm al-Dīn al-Shaṭrānī. (1) He was later helped in his leadership of the Ismā'īlīs by his son Shams al-Dīn and by his son-in-law Ṣārim al-Dīn Mubārak who is believed to have been the son of Raḍī al-Dīn Abū Mā'ālī. (2)

How Many Strongholds?

It is very difficult to ascertain exactly how many strongholds the Syrian Ismā'īlīs possessed. The castles scattered through the mountains stretching between Tripolī in the south and Latakia in the north were continually changing hands among Ismā'īlīs, Franks and Muslim princes. The sources

(1) Makrizī (Taṣī-Eddīn Ahmad), Histoire des Sultans Mamelouks tr. M. Quatrèmere, Paris 1837-45, Tome I, part II, p.78; Mufaḍdal ... Histoire .... Vol. XII, pp.433-34; al-Duwa'yhi, "Ta'ārikh ..." in al-Maḍriq, 1955, p.137, where the leader's names are given as Najm al-Dīn Ḥasan ībn al-Mashgharānī, a nisba referring to a small village near Ṣaida in the Lebanon called Mashghara; M. Defremery, "Ismaéliens de Syrie ..." in J.A. 1855, p.49; M. Van Berchem ... J.A. 1897, pp.495-97.

include as Ismāʿīlī strongholds temporarily held fortresses which had some Ismāʿīlī inhabitants, and raise the total number to seventy. It would appear, however, that from the time of Sinān and his successors right up to the time of Najm al-Dīn, the permanent Ismāʿīlī strongholds which figured prominently in the course of events did not exceed nine. These were Miṣyāf, al-Qadmūs, al-Kahf, al-Khawābī, al-Raḍāfa, al-Maynaqa, al-ʿUllayqa, al-Qulayʿa, and Kharība. (1) With the exception of Kharība, all the other strongholds were involved in the negotiations between the Ismāʿīlīs and Baybars, which suggests that the Ismāʿīlīs had already lost Kharība at an earlier date, some time after the death of Sinān; and they had probably likewise already lost various other castles which were too far inside the Frankish or the Muslim territories to be still tenable by the now weakening Ismāʿīlī principality. Thus, as the prospect grew darker, the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs found themselves divided, weakened and disheartened by the fall of Alamūt. Their tactics when faced with the might of Baybars appear confused. Some of them endeavoured to seek accommodation with the Muslim principalities in Syria under the wing of Baybars, while others, mostly centred in al-Kahf and al-Khawābī,

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insisted on a last-ditch struggle.

(b) The Last Ten Years of Precarious Independence

Baybars did not fail to exploit the internal weakness in the Ismāʿīlī ranks. During the second year of his reign he took a step which served as an assertion of suzerainty over the Ismāʿīlīs and also helped to make the split among the Ismāʿīlīs wider; he appointed one of their messengers to be his deputy and to be successor to Raḍī al-Dīn as head of the Ismāʿīlīs. Baybars is reported to have told the Ismāʿīlī emissaries, who beside presenting gifts handed him a threatening letter from their leaders demanding restoration of the fiefs which they had held under the Ayyūbids, that their leader Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Māʿālī had already died. One of the emissaries named Jamāl al-Dīn Thābit was given a diploma conferring on him the authority; he went back, to find Raḍī al-Dīn still alive. He kept his assignment secret for ten days, at the end of which Raḍī al-Dīn in fact died and he took his place; but the Ismāʿīlīs refused to recognize his leadership, and consequently he was killed. (1) Ismāʿīlī sovereignty was again challenged by Baybars in 659/1260-61 when he assigned their territories to the Ayyūbid prince of Ḥamā, al-Malik al-Manṣūr II (642-683/1244-1285). (2) These early steps taken by Baybars at


(2) M. Defrémery, "Recherches ..." J.A. 1855, p.49.
a time when he was still busy chasing the Mongols out of Syria, reducing the Ayyūbid princes to vassalage and getting ready for his offensives against the Franks, were a clear indication to the Ismāʿīlīs of what lay ahead. However, they seem to have persisted in a policy alternating between blandishment and occasional protestations that they would not be an easy prey. This policy appears to have worked as long as Baybars was preoccupied with more direct threats to his domination. The Ismāʿīlīs were at first able to retain their fiefs and certain privileges which they held under the Ayyūbids.

In an effort to ease their tense relations with Baybars, the Ismāʿīlīs sent in 661/1262-3 a delegation to him headed by two sons of their leaders. They brought with them gifts, and Baybars, who was then busy dealing with the Franks in Palestine and the Ayyūbids in al-Karak, gave them a fair welcome. (1)

A Prejudicial Step

In 664/1265 Baybars ordered that customs duties be levied on gifts to the Ismāʿīlīs from kings of the Franks and the Yaman landed from ships entering ports in his (Baybars's) territory. His purpose in taking this prejudicial step against the Ismāʿīlīs was not only to acquire more revenues for his expensive wars but also to show, both to the Ismāʿīlīs and

(1) The two sons are believed to have been Shams al-Dīn ibn Najm al-Dīn al-Shaṭrānī and Ṣārīm al-Dīn ibn Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Maʿālī. See M. Defremery, "Recherches ..." in J.A. 1855, p.50; M. Van Berchem, "Epigraphie ..." in J.A. 1897, p.497.
to the kings who sent them presents, that he was powerful enough
to ignore IsmāˈʿIli threats. (1) Although not the first nor the
last anti-IsmāˈʿIli measure taken by Baybars before the final
showdown, this move was of considerable importance. Perhaps
at this stage the question may be raised, what were the motives
of Baybars's drive to reduce the power of the IsmāˈʿIlīs? At
first these would appear to have been mainly economic and
strategic. This opinion is strengthened by the fact that
Baybars was not a champion of Islām like Saladin with whom
historians often compare him. But it must not be forgotten
that although Baybars may not have had any religious zeal
against the IsmāˈʿIlīs, he probably foresaw that by crushing their
power he would gain the sympathy of the Sunnī Muslims, who
already admired him for his victories against the Mongols and
the Franks. After all, Baybars's first move on taking power
had been to gain legality for his régime by recognizing the
ʿAbbāsid Caliph in Cairo as supreme head of the Muslims. As a
shrewd leader he would not overlook the advantages of gaining
the support of the conservative religious circles even if he was
not necessarily a religious man himself. Moreover a powerful
ruler like Baybars would not be expected to tolerate the
existence of an IsmāˈʿIlī principality inside what he considered
to be his own dominions.

Vol. I, p.258; Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, "Extracts from the Book
II, part 1, p.223.
It has been alleged that the Isma'īlīs provoked him either by sending threatening letters or by helping the Franks, but this was probably a reaction on their part to Baybars's challenge to their independence. Although the Isma'īlīs may have foolishly tried to intimidate Baybars, they did their best to win his friendship. They helped him against the Mongols, and they showed their readiness to attack the Franks whenever Baybars's armies were in their neighbourhood to support them if necessary.\(^{(1)}\)

**The Isma'īlīs Become Tributary to Baybars**

Following the truce concluded in 664/1265-6 between Baybars and the Hospitallers, the terms of which stipulated that the latter must renounce the tribute which they used to levy upon the Isma'īlīs and other Muslim rulers in the districts of Ḫamā and Ḫimṣ, the Isma'īlīs hastened to show their gratitude to Baybars for having comprised them in his truce with the Hospitallers. The sources report the arrival of their emissaries in March A.D. 1267 carrying with them tributes to Baybars which they said had previously been paid to the Hospitallers.\(^{(2)}\)


\(^{(2)}\) Most of the Arabic sources report how the Isma'īlīs became tributary to Baybars, but Maqrīzī strikes a different note in suggesting that the Isma'īlīs were genuinely interested in playing a part in Baybars's Jihad against the Franks, while the other sources picture the Isma'īlīs as only doing what they were forced to do in order to escape the wrath of the Sultan. See Maqrīzī (Ṫakī-Eddīn ...) *Histoire ...* Tome I, part 2, p.40; M. Defremery, "Recherches ..." in *J.A.* 1855, p.56.
This occurred after the time when Baybars is reported to have reproached the Ismāʿīlīs, who sent emissaries to him while he was besieging Ṣafad in 664/1266, for having helped the Franks by paying to them tributes which ought to have been paid to the Muslims. (1)

By consenting to pay tribute to Baybars, the Ismāʿīlīs moved far towards passing under the suzerainty of the Mamlūk Sulṭān, while retaining a semi-autonomous status. Throughout the few years which preceded their final subjugation, Baybars tried to secure more control over them, while they awaited any chance to relax his grip on them.

Najm al-Dīn's Costly Misjudgment

Early in 668/1270 Baybars passed through the Ismāʿīlī territory on his way from the Hospitallers' castle al-Marqab to another of their castles Ḥiṣn al-Akrād. Najm al-Dīn, possibly encouraged by the knowledge that Baybars was now occupied with the movements of the Mongols in northern Syria, and by the news of St. Louis's fresh efforts to organize another crusade which might threaten Egypt and give effect to the dreams of a Frankish-Mongol alliance, did not follow the example of other amīrs in paying homage to Baybars when he was encamped in the vicinity of Ḥiṣn al-Akrād. Such action on the part of Najm al-Dīn at a time when Baybars was at the zenith of his power was bound to lead to serious consequences. The great Mamlūk Sulṭān

considered it an act of defiance to his authority and reacted
by depriving Najm al-Dīn and the latter's son Shams al-Dīn of
his recognition as the chiefs of the Ismāʿīlīs. In theory
this meant that the Ismāʿīlī chiefs were deposed, but in fact
Baybars was at this stage more interested in keeping the
Ismāʿīlīs as dependent vassals rather than in resorting to an
outright conquest of their lands. Moreover, by taking this
formal step Baybars left the door open for negotiations with
the deposed leaders and the local commanders of Ismāʿīlī
strongholds who might be prepared to come under his wing
voluntarily. (1)

The Appointment of Sarim al-Dīn

Although, as Maqrīzī states, Sarim al-Dīn Mubārak, the
governor of Ullayqa, had been incurring the dissatisfaction
of Baybars by his friendly relations with the Franks, arrangements
were made through the good offices of either the governor of
Ṣahyūn or the Ayyūbid ruler of Ḥamā, al-Manṣūr, for a visit of
Sarim al-Dīn to Baybars; and on his arrival at the court of
the latter he was provided with a Ṭablkhāna (salute of drums to
show that he was being treated with great honour). (2)

(1) Maqrīzī (Takī-Eddīn...), Histoire ... Tome I, part 2, p.79;
states that besides not presenting himself at the court of
Baybars, Najm al-Dīn sent a mission demanding from the Sultan
a reduction in the tributes imposed on the Ismāʿīlīs. See
M. Defrémery, "Recherches ..." in J.A. 1855, p.57.

(2) It is likely that the ruler of Ḥamā played the main role in
bringing Sarim al-Dīn into favour with Baybars; for he is
known to have enjoyed the respect both of the Ismāʿīlī leaders
and of Baybars. It is interesting to remember that almost a
century earlier another ruler of Ḥamā, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥarīmī,
(discussed on p.67) had succeeded in settling the conflict
between Sinān and Saladin. See, Maqrīzī, Histoire ... Tome I
part 2, p.79; M. Defrémery, "Recherches ..." pp.57-58.
Sārim al-Dīn was designated as Baybars's deputy, and the title sahib was conferred on him. He was to rule over the Ismā'īlī strongholds with the exception of Miṣyāf, which Baybars wanted to be entrusted to one of his amirs ʿIzz al-Dīn al-ʿAdīmī.\(^{(1)}\)

As to Najm al-Dīn, he refused for a while to surrender his castles but later became convinced that it would be useless to face the consequences of remaining adamant; he therefore presented himself at Baybars's court asking for forgiveness. Baybars evidently felt sympathy for the ninety year old leader and appointed him co-ruler with Sārim al-Dīn; both Ismā'īlī leaders were to pay an annual tribute to the Sultan's treasury; and Najm al-Dīn's son Shams al-Dīn was kept in Baybars's court as a hostage.\(^{(2)}\) The aged Najm al-Dīn must have been satisfied with the results of his visit to Baybars, who for his part won another success in his policy of bringing the Ismā'īlīs under his domination through negotiation rather than by force.

**Sārim al-Dīn Overplays his Hand**

The arrangement did not, however, last long. The first to fall into disfavour with Baybars was Sārim al-Dīn. The

\(^{(1)}\) Makrīzī, Histoire ... Tome I, part 2, pp.79-80 states that the Ismā'īlī strongholds left under Sārim al-Dīn were al-Kahf, al-Khawābī, al-Maynaqa, al-Ullayqa, al-Qadmūs, and al-Raṣāfa.

\(^{(2)}\) According to Makrīzī, ... Histoire ... Tome I, part 2, p.80: the annual payment by Najm al-Dīn was to be 20,000 (silver pieces), and that of Sārim al-Dīn 2,000 (dīnārs).
Ismāʿīlī governor of Miṣyāf refused him entrance while declaring willingness to surrender this once a great fortress, the principal stronghold of the Ismāʿīlīs, to the deputy of Baybars. Burning with anger on account of this slight, ʿĀrīm al-Ḏīn found a chance of having the gates of Miṣyāf opened to ʿIzz al-Ḏīn, and then stormed into the place where he massacred those who had decided to reject him in favour of Baybars's deputy. On hearing this news Baybars ordered al-Manṣūr, the prince of Ḥamā, to move against Miṣyāf and install ʿIzz al-Ḏīn as its governor. He made it clear to the Ayyūbid prince that he would not tolerate any leniency in punishing the defiant ʿĀrīm al-Ḏīn, whose withdrawal made it possible for the ruler of Ḥamā to take the fortress without any resistance. He was also able to have ʿĀrīm al-Ḏīn seized and sent to Baybars who banished him to Cairo. All these events - Najm al-Ḏīn's re-instatement, ʿĀrīm al-Ḏīn's attempt to establish himself in Miṣyāf around the middle of Rajab 668/8 - 10 March, 1270, and finally ʿĀrīm al-Ḏīn's withdrawal and capture - must have taken place during the same year. (1)

(c) The Final Subjugation of the Ismā'īlīs

With the capture of Șārim al-Dīn Mubārak, it seemed as if the Ismā'īlīs would enjoy the sole leadership of Najm al-Dīn, who almost succeeded in reaching a settlement with Baybars. However, a foolish attempt by the Ismā'īlīs of al-'Ullayqa. to join hands with Bohemond IV of Tripoli, and the arrest in February A.D. 1271 of two Ismā'īlī fīdāḥīs believed to be planning to assassinate Baybars, put an end to all hopes that Najm al-Dīn might remain the deputy of the Mamlūk Sulṭān in the Ismā'īlī territories. Baybars took swift action, ordered that al-'Ullayqa should be besieged, and held Najm al-Dīn and his son Shams al-Dīn responsible for the behaviour of the Ismā'īlīs of 'Ullayqa.

The Fall of al-'Ullayqa

The death of St. Louis in August A.D. 1270, while preparing in Tūnis for another attempt to regain the Holy Land, enabled Baybars to turn his attention towards settling accounts with the Ismā'īlīs as well as with the Templars and the Hospitallers and the Mongols. It is nevertheless remarkable that he kept up the policy of trying to bring the Ismā'īlīs under his domination by methods which were essentially peaceful, though often accompanied by threats, and by promiseā and rewards for those Ismā'īlīs who proved amenable.

Most of the sources suggest that the fall of 'Ullayqa was preceded by negotiations between its inhabitants and Baybars. Ibn Kathīr goes so far to state that Baybars did not honour his
word when the Isma'ilis finally surrendered their stronghold. The author states that Baybars promised the inhabitants of al-'Ullayqa to grant them fiefs in Cairo and to free "their father" (possibly meaning Ṣārim al-Dīn); also that when they agreed to surrender on the 11 Shawāl 669/23 May 1271, Baybars had them arrested and sent to Cairo as prisoners. (1) From now on the Isma'ilis either agreed to surrender to Baybars's deputies, or had to face military assaults on their castles.

The Surrender of the Remaining Castles

Najm al-Dīn al-Shafrānī made a last attempt to save his position as Baybars's deputy in the fortresses of al-Kahf, al-Qadmūs, al-Maynaqa, al-'Ullayqa, al-Khayābī, and al-Rūṣāfa which he was governing in the name of the Mamluk Sulṭān against an annual payment of 100,000 dirhams. (2) He visited Baybars while the latter was laying siege to the renowned Hospitallers's castle, Ḥīṣn al-Akrād, and pleaded for his suspected son Shams al-Dīn. Najm al-Dīn succeeded in obtaining the release of his son, but not in regaining the autonomous independence of the

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Ismā'īlīs under his own leadership. He was made to accompany Baybars to Egypt, while Shams al-Dīn was entrusted with the task of persuading the remaining Ismā'īlī castles and especially al-Kahf to surrender to Baybars. (1)

With the single exception of al-Kahf, all these castles did surrender to Baybars with hardly a fight, mainly because they were now deprived of a strong leadership, while Baybars was scoring victory after victory against both the Franks and the Mongols. The local Ismā'īlī governors accordingly found it prudent to accept whatever promises were given to them by Baybars in return for their submission.

Within less than one month from the fall of al-Ullayqa on 23 May 1271, al-Raṣāfa fell to the deputies of Baybars. During the same year the inhabitants of al-Khawābī were persuaded to surrender to the Mamlūk authorities by two leading Ismā'īlī officials (the wāli of the da'wa and the nāṣir) who had been arrested by the amīrs of Baybars in Sarmin. (2)

(1) The date of Najm al-Dīn's visit to Baybars while the latter was besieging Ḥiṣn al-Akrād must have been some time between the beginning of the siege on 9 Rajab 669/21 Feb. 1271 and the fall of the castle on 24 Sha'ban 669/7 April 1271. See Makrīzī, Histoire ..., Paris 1837-45, Tome I, part 2, pp. 87-99; Abū al-Fīdā' (Ismā'īl ibn ʿAlī ...) Taʾrīkh ..., Cairo 1286/1869, p. 6; al-Duwayhī, "Taʾrīkh ..." in al-Maḥrīq, 1950, p. 137.

In the meantime, Shams al-Dīn seems to have entertained the idea of regaining some power. Before he had brought about the surrender of the castles, al-Qulayṭa, al-Maynaqa, and al-Qadmūs, he wrote to Baybars demanding certain territorial privileges, including the possession of al-Qulayṭa, in return for the surrender of the other Ismāʿīlī castles. His demands seem to have been initially accepted; but when he ordered al-Kahf to surrender, its inhabitants refused. This angered Baybars, who held Shams al-Dīn responsible for the intransigence of the inhabitants of al-Kahf and laid siege to the place. Shams al-Dīn, seeing no hope in his dreams of power, again surrendered himself to Baybars on 26 Ṣafar 670/30 October 1271, and was apparently well received at first. Before long, however, Baybars learnt of a plot by the inhabitants of al-Kahf to assassinate his amīrs and he then caused Shams al-Dīn to be arrested and deported to Egypt. Meanwhile, on 30 Ṣafar 670/7 October 1271, four days after Shams al-Dīn had given himself up to Baybars, the latter's deputies took possession of al-Qulayṭa, leaving only three strongholds in the hands of the Ismāʿīlīs; and the prince of Ḫamā, al-Mansūr II (d. A.D.1284-5), soon persuaded them to surrender these. During the first

week of Dhū al-Qa‘da 671/20-26 May 1273, al-Maynaqa and al-Qadmūs capitulated to Baybars; and less than two months later, on 22 Dhū al-Ḥijja 671/9 July 1273, the gates of the once redoubtable Ismā‘īlī stronghold al-Kahf were opened to Baybars’s troops led by the amīr Jamāl al-Dīn Aqūsh. The whole of the Ismā‘īlī territories in Syria were now under Mamlūk control. (1)

(a) In the Service of the Mamlūks

Unfortunately, insufficient materials remain to give a clear view of the terms of the Ismā‘īlī surrender to Baybars. All we can do is peer myopically into the scantly data and try to find links between the few reported events. One thing which is certain is that the Ismā‘īlīs, whether willingly or unwillingly, began to serve the Mamlūks; this is not only substantiated by near-contemporary historical sources, but also corroborated by stories still current among the Syrian Ismā‘īlīs. These stories have been transmitted through books of a folkloric character, which try to glorify the heroic actions of those Ismā‘īlīs who worked for Baybars as informers in the camps of

(1) Although the sources give a rather vague indication that the surrender of the Ismā‘īlīs was unconditional, it is possible that certain rights and privileges were left to them. The very fact that they were allowed to remain in their castles constituted a major concession which probably carried with it other rights. See A. Khowaiter’s thesis, A Critical... London 1960, Vol. 3, pp.1215-1217; Abū al-Fīda‘ (Isma‘īl ...) Ta‘rīkh ... Cairo 1325/1907, Vol 4, p.7; al-Qalqashandī, Subh al-‘aṣba‘, Cairo 1924, pp.146-147; M. Defremery, "Recherches ..." in J.A., 1855, pp.64-65.
the Franks and Mongols, or who took part in battles between the Mamlūks and their enemies and especially in the capture of the remaining Frankish fortresses such as al-Marqab (taken in 684/1285 by al-Malik al-Mansūr Qalawūn A.D. 1279-90), and ʿAkkā (taken in 690/1291 by al-Ashraf Khālīl A.D. 1290-93). Such glorification is certainly exaggerated, but these stories corroborate the reports that the Ismāʿīlīs entered the service of Baybars and his successors. (1)

On the other hand, the more reliable sources state that Ismāʿīlī fidāʾīs were used by Baybars and his successors as an instrument with which to threaten their enemies with assassination. In some cases attempts to eliminate particular rulers may have been motivated by the mutual interest of both the Ismāʿīlīs and the Mamlūks. An example is the attempt made in A.D. 1271 on the life of the governor of Baghdad ʿAṭā Mālik al-Juwaynī who was then serving the Mongols, and with whom the Ismāʿīlīs had an account to settle. It is not clear, however, whether there was any such mutual interest in the celebrated attempt by the Ismāʿīlīs to assassinate another of Baybars's enemies, namely Prince Edward of England. He had landed at ʿAkkā on 9 May 1271 with hopes of strengthening the local Franks and reviving St. Louis's dream of a military alliance between

(1) See Ibn al-Shiḥnah, Rawḍat ... Cairo, 1884-85, Vol. 12, pp.159-161; M. Ghālib, Taʾrīkh al-Daʿwa ... Damascus 1953 pp.224-25; Michael Labbād, al-Ismaʿīliyūn ... Damascus 1962, p.105.
the Franks and the Mongols. On 16 June 1272 a "fida'i" disguised as a native Christian made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the English Prince, who escaped death by the skin of his teeth.\(^1\)

Other cases of assassinations and adventurous actions undertaken by the Ismā'īlīs during the early Mamlūk period are cited in the histories of the time. Some of these cases would appear to have been independent moves by the Ismā'īlīs, others to have been sponsored by the Mamlūk Sultāns. Beside accounts of these sporadic actions, there are reports indicating that the Mamluk Sultan Qalawūn in his peace treaty with the Frankish Princess of ʿSur and Beirut in 684/1285 stipulated that Ismā'īlī fida'iṣ in his service should not be bound in the same way as his regular forces to desist from hostile action; but he promised that they would not threaten the Princess's life.\(^2\)

Among the sources which threw light on the tangled relations between the Ismā'īlīs and the early Mamlūks, the most comprehensive and illuminating is the account given by the celebrated Moroccan traveller Ibn Baṭūṭa. He names the castles


that were still in the hands of the Ismāʿīlīs at the time of
his visit in the early part of the fourteenth-century A.D., and
after mentioning that nobody was allowed to enter their castles
states that "they", i.e. the fidāʾīs were the "arrows" (sihām)
used by the Mamlūk Sulṭān al-Malik al-Nāṣir (who ruled inter-
mittently between A.D. 1293 and 1340; 1293-4, 1298-1308,
and 1309-40) against his enemies in 'Irāq and other places.
Each fidāʾī entrusted with the task of assassinating one of the
Sulṭān's enemies "would receive his blood money (dīya) which
would be paid to him personally if he should return safely or
to his children if death should befall him."(1)

Although the later destiny of the Ismāʿīlīs is outside the
sphere of this study, it may be stated here that during the rest
of the Mamlūk period and almost the whole of the Ottoman period
they seem to have played no significant role on the political
scene. As already mentioned (see p.93-94), in the early
fourteenth-century A.D. they split into two groups, each follow-
ing a different line of Imāms. Numerically preponderant were
the followers of Muʿāmin Shāh, son of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, the

(1) The castles that Ibn Batūtā claims were in the possession of
the Ismāʿīlīs were al-Qādūs, al-Maynaqa, al-ʿUllayqa,
Misyāf, and al-Kahf. See Voyages D'Ibn Batoutah, Texte Arabe
Accompagné d'une Traduction, par M.C. Defrémery et Dr. B.R.
Sanguinetti, Paris, 1853, Tome I, pp.166-176; M. Defrémercy,
"Recherches," in J.A. 1855, pp.70-73.
first Imam after the fall of Alamut in A.D. 1256. (1) Towards the end of the nineteenth-century, however, several factors led most Mu'minis to seek the leadership of the other line of Imams descending from Qasim Shāh. One of these, Ḥasan ʿAlī Shāh entitled Aghā Khan, was obliged to leave his native Iran in 1842 for India, where he settled permanently. He and his successors attained considerable influence in their new land of refuge (dār al-Hijra). (2) One of the main factors which led to the weakening of the Syrian Ismā'īlīs was their tendency to become dispersed in the country's main cities, where most of them were assimilated into the predominant Sunni communities. This tendency resulted from the recurrent attacks launched against them by their numerically stronger neighbours the Nuṣayrīs, who on more than one occasion occupied Miṣyaf and al-Qadmūs and did not withdraw until ordered to do so by the

(1) A view which has considerable support among modern researchers on the Ismā'īlīs is that all the Syrian Ismā'īlīs broke away from the general movement which was still active in various parts of Persia, Adharbayjān, and Asia Minor. See Ārif Tāmir, "Furūʿ al-Shajara ..." in al-Machriq 1957, pp. 581, 591, 595.

(2) For a more detailed view on the circumstances which led the first Aghā Khan, Ḥasan ʿAlī Shāh, to leave Persia for India see John N. Hollister, The Shi'a of India, London, 1953, pp. 364-77; M.S. Guyard, "Un Grand Maître", in J.A. 1877, pp. 378-86.
Ottoman authorities. (1) The most devastating Nuṣayrī attacks took place between 1803 and 1809; they led to the virtual evacuation of most of the Ismāʿīlī villages. Moreover, since 1210/1795, there had been a complete loss of contact between the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs and the Imām of the Muʿmini line Muḥammad Bāqir Shāh, who was living in India and was thought to have gone into concealment. In the course of the nineteenth-century the position of the Ismāʿīlīs improved considerably, and with the permission of the Ottoman authorities

(1) The first important Nuṣayrī attack on the Ismāʿīlīs took place in A.D. 1569 when many of their castles were occupied by the invaders. During the second attack in A.D. 1703 the Nuṣayrī tribe of Raslān known as al-Rasālīn occupied Miṣyāf for about 8 years and perpetrated widespread massacres. In both cases the Ottoman authorities helped the Ismāʿīlīs to regain their castles. In A.D. 1591 we hear of the Ismāʿīlīs driving the Nuṣayrīs from al-Qādmūs with their own forces. Another important series of Nuṣayrī attacks on the Ismāʿīlīs took place between A.D. 1803 and 1809 when the Ismāʿīlī amīr of Miṣyāf, Muṣṭafā Mulhim, was killed by the Nuṣayrīs; the chief dāʾī al-Shaykh Sulaymān Ḥaydar, then left with many of the Ismāʿīlīs of the territory to settle in Himṣ, Ḥamā, Aleppo and Damascus. For more details see Muḥammad Amin Ghālib al-Tawīl, Tāvīkh al-ʿAlawīyīn, Latakia, 1924, pp.276-77, 370; Arif Tāmīr, "Furūʿ al-Shajara ..." in al-Maṣārīq, 1957, p.591.
they rebuilt in 1845 the town of Salamiya, (1) which once again became their chief centre: but they still lacked the guidance of an Imam. This led them to send a delegation in 1885 to India, where they gave allegiance to the then young Imam of the line of Qāsim Shāh, Muḥammad ʿAlī Shāh al-Ḥusaynī known as Aghā Khān III, whose Imamate lasted from 1885 until 1957. On his death Aghā Khān III left a written will designating his grandson Karīm ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī, known as Aghā Khān IV, to succeed him as the 49th Imam. Today about 40,000 Syrian Ismāʿīlīs give allegiance to Aghā Khān IV, while about 10,000

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(1) Following some internal strife among the Ismāʿīlīs of Miṣyāf and al-Qadmūs which resulted in the murder by some Ismāʿīlīs from Miṣyāf of a certain Tāmir Mīrzā cousin of the leader of the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs, amīr Ismāʿīl, the latter in 1843 applied for and secured a permission from the Ottoman authorities to rebuild Salamīya. He was also allowed to search all over Syria for Ismāʿīlī families and to encourage the Ismāʿīlīs to return to Salamīya. In 1850 the Ottoman authorities declared that all those who returned to Salamīya would be exempted from military conscription and that their amīr, i.e. Ismāʿīl, was free at any time to seek the return of any Ismāʿīlī who might wish to settle in Salamīya. What is interesting is that most of the early settlers carried the name (nisba) of the district from which they came. Among the founding families whose descendants are still living in Salamīya are the Ṭākkāris, Ṣāḥyūnīs, Jandalīs ... etc. (nisba to Ṭākkār, Ṣāḥyūn and al-Jandalīya). At present the population of Salamīya, which is predominantly Ismāʿīlī, exceeds 16,000.
belong to other Ismāʿīlī denominations, namely the Muʾminīs and the Tayyibīs. (1)

(1) Concerning the return of the Ismāʿīlīs to Salamīya, my main materials come from interviews with several elderly Ismāʿīlīs in the town and its dependent villages who belong to the third generation since the resettlement and still have the stories of their fathers' and grandfathers' returns fresh in mind.

ʿArif Tamir states that the original motive of the Syrian Ismāʿīlī delegation to India was to search for a descendant of the Imam Muhammad Bāqir, and that it was after arriving in India that they decided to recognize a descendant of Qāsim Shāh as their Imām. See his article "Furuʾ al-Shajara" in al-Machriq, 1957, pp.590-593.
PART TWO

BELIEFS AND ORGANIZATION
CHAPTER V

THE UNIVERSAL DIVINE ORDER

(a) Introductory.

Throughout the mediaeval history of Islām, it is difficult to distinguish between political and religious movements. Two categories of movements, however, are clearly recognizable: the first concerned primarily with achieving political power but using religion as a cover, and the second concerned primarily with religious belief, but involved in politics on account of persecution by more powerful groups and on account of the need for political protection to ensure free propagation of that particular doctrine. It is to the second category that the Ismā'īlī movement belongs; for although political considerations and human circumstances exercised considerable influence upon the development of the doctrines of the Ismā'īlī movement, which like other Shi'I movements appears, from the historical point of view, to have had its origin in the constitutional problem after the death of the Prophet, nevertheless Ismā'īlīsm was able to provide in its early period a religious philosophy based on the belief in an Eternal Order, which itself springs from their belief in One God, His Apostles, and their revealed Books. This might appear very similar to the traditional Muslim view, were it not for the Ismā'īlī doctrine that obscure passages in the Qur'ān, and irrational forms of worship, must have some inner sense; and that this inner sense was revealed to 'Alī
as the Wasi (Executor) or the Asās (Foundation) of the Prophet Muḥammad, and was transferred after ʿAlī's death by a chain of hereditary Imāms descending from ʿAlī and his wife Fāṭima, the Prophet's beloved daughter. Each of these Imāms is believed to have passed on the ʿilm, which in the terminology of the Ismāʿīlīs means the divine science of religion and is to them the only right and reliable version of Islam. Moreover, the Ismāʿīlīs asserted that the revelation sent down through the Prophet Muḥammad was only one of the series of revelations already sent down through the previous great Prophets who are called Nāṭiqs (Speakers or Revealers): namely Adam, Noah, Moses, Abraham and Jesus, each of whom had an Asās to succeed him.

This meant, in the belief of the Ismāʿīlīs, that no one religion can claim the monopoly of truth, and that the works of the Great Prophets who are mentioned in the Qurʿan and the Christian and Jewish scriptures are complementary to one another; if they seem to have some differences, this will be explicable as the result of the different circumstances under which each of these

(1) A study of Ismāʿīlī semantics shows that Imāms contemporary to any of the Prophets are designated in the sources by several names: Asās, sāmit ("silent") during the life of the Prophet, and frequently during the Fāṭimid period wasī (executor). Throughout the present work the term Asās is used, unless it is necessary to quote the others. Cf. W. Ivanow, A Brief Survey of the Evolution of Ismāʿīlism, Leiden, 1952, pp.50-58, who states that the term sāmit was dropped during the Fāṭimid period and replaced with the term wasī.
Prophets came to reveal his particular šari'ā, i.e. religious path appropriate for his time. This basic doctrine, from which spring all the beliefs and philosophy of Ismā'īlism, will be referred to in this chapter as the doctrine of the universal divine order. In the remaining two chapters the principles which the Ismā'īlīs derived from it will be discussed.

It will first be necessary, however, to examine briefly the important links between Ismā'īlī and Greek thought. The Ismā'īlīs considered that the Greek philosophers had taken important steps towards reaching the desired knowledge and truth; from them the Ismā'īlīs drew most of their technical terms, the use of dialogues in preaching their doctrines, and the foundations of their own philosophical system. Philosophy helped the Ismā'īlīs to expound a universal belief, and played a major rôle in the building up of their doctrine of the existence of a universal divine order into an elaborate theory which combined the views of their own and of the pre-Islamic religions, mainly Judaism and Christianity, with ethics, logic and other human sciences. (1)

(1) During the last hundred years more and more Ismā'īlī materials have come to light, making it possible for several Islamists to give a fairer and more objective view of the Ismā'īlī movement, which had previously been known only through materials collected from works of authors hostile to it. The comprehensiveness and universal outlook of the Ismā'īlī teachings made it easy for such hostile authors to associate Ismā'īlism with any "heretical" movement showing traces of analogous opinions.
The Ismā'īlī System of Philosophy.

Although the philosophy of Ismā'īlism was developed in conjunction with their doctrine of the Imamate, to such an extent that the Ismā'īlī sources associate their philosophy with the inner meaning of the Qur'ān and other religious scriptures, the circumstances of the time favoured the growth of philosophical thought among Muslims generally, and not only among the Ismā'īlīs.

In the pre-Islamic era the two Empires, the Byzantine and the Persian, had been centres of considerable philosophical activity influenced mainly by the works of ancient Greek philosophers, especially the Neo-Platonists, and also, it would seem, by philosophical ideas which reached Persia from India. Philosophical thought was stimulated by the controversy among the Christians regarding the nature of Jesus Christ. Nestorian and Jacobite Christians, living mainly in Mesopotamia and Syria, took the most active part in these theological arguments, which spread through various parts of the Byzantine Empire. (1) Such was the state of these countries when they were conquered by armies of Arabs only recently converted to the new religion of Islām. Moreover, it was not long before the Muslims themselves began to form differing views on various questions concerning the nature of God, the creation and nature of the world, and the problem of evil.

In the early period of theological controversy among the Muslims, conservative elements, i.e., the Traditionists, were able to contain the differing views within limits set by the literal interpretation of the ḥadīth; but with the wave of translations of Greek philosophical works promoted by the early 'Abbāsid Caliphs and especially al-Ma'mūn (A.D. 786-833), the gate of philosophical thought was opened, and Islām, like Christianity and Judaism in earlier times, had to face its challenge. The efforts of the Muslim 'ulamā' to stem the spread of philosophical ideas only achieved partial success. Progress in Islamic theology was slowed down but not stopped; at the same time the legal side of Islām was developed on a fuller scale.

As for the philosophers of Islām, their achievements cannot be studied here; but they may be divided into categories in accordance with the main conclusions which they reached. Those of the first category, among whom the outstanding figure is al-Kindī (d. 257/870), studied philosophy and came to the conclusion that the Sharī'a is superior to philosophy. Those of the second category, notably al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), while not rejecting the Sharī'a, went on to the task of reconciling the wisdom revealed by God to man through the Prophet with the wisdom achieved through human reasoning. (1)

(1) Al-Fārābī's Ārā' Ahl al-Madinat al-Fādila (Opinions of the inhabitants of the Virtuous City) is the best example of his attempt to reconcile between the Islamic teachings

Continuation of n. 1 on p. 40
ideas of the second category that Ismā'īlī philosophical thought has much in common. However, the view of the Ismā'īlīs differed from that of the other Muslim philosophers, in that it sprang from their belief in a universal divine and moral law governing the universe. Philosophy to them was not merely an individual pursuit of knowledge, undertaken independently from pure love of wisdom; nor was it to be used solely as a weapon in their polemical arguments with their opponents, though one can easily find evidence to show that in the charges and counter-charges exchanged between the Fāṭimids and the ʻAbbāsids philosophical interpretations were often used by Ismā'īlī dā'īs in support of their views on doctrinal issues. The main purpose of their philosophical endeavour was to work out not only the allegorical interpretation (ta'wīl) of the revelations of the series of Prophets, but also a complete religious system which would make intelligible the ḥaqāʾiq (truths) of the missions of the Prophets and thereby open the only way to salvation.

Having come to the conclusion that the revelations of the Prophets were interconnected, and that this stemmed from the fact that God has always been willing to give more opportunities

Continuation of footnote from p.139

(mainly from the Shī'ī viewpoint) and Greek philosophy. His description of the Chief of his Virtuous City synthesizes Shī'ī views of the Imām with Plato's view of the Philosopher King. Al-Fārābī presented his views with great ability. Although he was strongly influenced by Plato's ideas, his Virtuous City is superior to Plato's Republic in the sense that it is a Universal City, and not a mere Greek city-state divided into classes.
to human beings for seeing the truth, the Ismā'īlīs proceeded to draw a parallel between what they call ḥudūd ʿalam al-dīn (principles of religious obligation, or ranks of the Ismā'īlī hierarchy in this lower world), and the heavenly or cosmic principles; and it is here that they were inspired by Greek philosophy. For the first heavenly principle initiated by God's command (al-amr), which the Ismā'īlīs equated with the Nāṭiq or Prophet, had already been enunciated by Greek philosophers. The poet-philosopher Xenophanes (about 536 B.C.) is said to have been the first to express the idea of a divine intellect regulating the world. This was later affirmed by the philosopher-teacher of Pericles, Anaxagoras (500-428 B.C.), who put forward clearly the idea that the affairs of the world are arranged by a supreme intellect. These ideas about the cosmos were later developed by other Greek philosophers, especially the Neo-Platonists who during the period from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. came to form the most influential school of thought in the Greco-Roman world. Translations of some of their works played a major role in the development of both Christian and Islamic theology. (1)

(1) Although ideas derived from Plotinus (c.205-262 A.D.) and his Neo-Platonist successors had more influence than those of Plato himself on the Ismā'īlī philosophy, Plato's name is more often mentioned and praised in most of the Ismā'īlī MSS. This similarity between his world of Ideals and the Ismā'īlī belief in the existence of heavenly principles is apparent. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās, in his Sullam al-Ṣuṣūd ... (c. 14th century A.D., Syrian MS. described in Appendix 1), allocates a whole section to praising Plato and endorsing the opinion of the Druzes that Plato was able to see the divine light. See M.K.

Continuation of n. 1 on p.142.
Having reached the conclusion that there is a parallelism between the higher cosmic principles and the spiritual hierarchy of Nāțiq, Asās and Imām, the Ismā'īlis centred their discussions on the status and functions of these various figures, ḥūdūd al-dīn (holders of religious ranks) as they are called, and their relations to one another. This caused great intellectual difficulty to the Ismā'īli authors, as can be seen in the occurrence of inconsistencies and obscurities in their texts. However, the Ismā'īlis never ceased their efforts to develop their doctrine of the universal divine order; since God is beyond the comprehension of the human mind, it was essential that believers should be able to take hold of the rope (ḥabl) of God, i.e. attach themselves with the strong bond of faith to the guidance of the Prophet and the Imāms, which will lead them towards the absolute truth and enable them to see the light of the eternal divine wisdom. (1)

Continued from p.141

Ḥusayn, Sirat al-Ustādh, Jawzar, Cairo 1954, pp.176-177; Ibn Taymiya (Ahmad Taqī al-Dīn), al-Nubūwāt, Cairo 1346/1927, pp.80-84.

(1) The items of evidence drawn from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth in the support of the Ismā'īli beliefs not only refer to the designation of 'Alī and his descendants as custodians of the Shari'a left by the Prophet, but also indicate that the revelations of Islam formed a continuation of the previous ones. Although the historicity of some of the sayings ascribed to the Prophet may be questioned, they are very valuable because they attest the universalism of the Ismā'īli teachings. The following Qur'ānic verses are valued highly by the Ismā'īlis: III:33-34, "Verily God has chosen Adam and Noah; and Abraham's descendants and 'Imrān's descendants above the people of the world one after another ... etc." Also, II: 156; XXI: 73, and many other passages. On the sayings of the Prophet in which he indicated that 'Alī was his executor and the holder of a

Continuation of n. 1 on p.143
The Isma'ili Theory of Creation.

Although the origin of the evolution of the universe had already been discussed by earlier Isma'ili da'is, much more developed views were formed under the Fatimids; and these will be taken here as the starting point of a study of Isma'ili teachings on this vital subject. During the Fatimid period there arose a group of the best and most learned da'is in Isma'ili history, who not only provided the Fatimid Caliphate with works on Law and Jurisprudence, but also produced excellent treatises on the philosophy of the Fatimid da'wa. The importance of these writings is enhanced by the fact that their authors used to secure the permission of their very scholarly Fatimid Imāms before releasing their works for the use of the public or for reading in private assemblies held in the Hall of Wisdom (Dār al-Ḥikma). These works accordingly have an official and authoritative character unlike works from other periods of Isma'ili history, where the possibility that certain authors may be expressing individual opinions complicates the task of scholars. The writings of the Fatimid period possess clarity and precision, in contrast with the obscurity which clouds the literature ascribed to da'is of the earlier period of Satr (occultation or concealment), when authors often deliberately confused issues by position in relation to him similar to that of Hārūn to Muses, see M.A. al-Ṭawīl, Ta'rikh al-'Alawīyīn, Latakia 1924, pp.59-61, 71.

Continued from p.141
veiling their real meaning with vague metaphorical and philosophical terms, in order to avoid attracting the attention of their enemies. Lucidity of expression, on the other hand, characterizes the Fatimid authors led by the Golden Triangle, al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/974), Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 410/1019?) and al-Muʿayyad fi al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1077), whose efforts both in organizing the daʿwa and in expounding its ideas played a major part in enabling the Fatimid Caliphate to bring most of the Muslim world under its banner.

The Belief in the Seven Cycles (al-Adwar al-Sabṭa).

According to the Ismāʿīlīs, the religious history of mankind dates from the first Prophet, Adam, and is divided into seven recurring cycles (adwār) in all of which the zāhir (outer meaning) of the respective Prophet's Shariʿa has been in force, culminating in the zāhir of the Shariʿa of Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets. (1)

The first cycle was started by Adam, who is considered to be the first Nāṭiq (Revealer of a Shariʿa) and is equated with the first cosmic principle, i.e. the Universal Intellect. He and each of the successive Nāṭiqs had an Asās (Foundation), who

(1) The first seven cycles or epochs form a sort of an introduction to the coming of the great Qiyāma ("resurrection") whose upholder, the Qāʿīm, will embody both the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul.
is equated with the second cosmic principle, the Universal Soul, and is believed to have been in charge of the interpretation of the religion revealed through the respective Nāṭiq. (1) Between each Nāṭiq and the next Nāṭiq there were seven Imāms, who could be either "actual" (mustaqarr) or "trustee" (mustawda') Imāms. While each of these cycles is considered to be complete in itself, yet they are connected with each other by the last Imām of each group of seven, who is generally called Imām Qā'īm or muqīm (i.e. he who prepares the way for the coming new cycle). The functions and status of the three highest ranks in the Ismā'īlī hierarchy, i.e. the Nāṭiq, Asās and Imām, in relation to one another are of great importance; for they represent and stand for intelligent and creative principles, not abstract and static ideas. The Ismā'īlī dā'īs, and especially those of the Fāṭimid period, devoted most of their efforts in expounding this theory of the seven cycles; they seem to have succeeded only in clarifying the general principles of the theory, but not its further implications. Besides conflict of views concerning the identity of the closest disciples and companions of the first five Nāṭiqs (which being a pre-Islamic issue does not matter very much),

(1) In the Ismā'īlī sources the first, second and remaining cosmic principles receive various names. The Universal Intellect is generally referred to as al-ʿaql al-kull, al-qalam (the pen), al-sābiq (the Preceder), and other names. The Universal Soul is called al-nafs al-kull, al-lawh, (the Tablet), al-munbaʿath al-awwal (the first emanation).
there was the problem of the status of the seventh Imam of the post-Islamic group of seven, who is supposed to be the seventh Nāṭiq.

This problem gave rise to serious differences among the early Ismā'īlīs; differences which may have had a role in the secession of the Qarmatians who are believed to have considered the seventh Nāṭiq, i.e. Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, as the Qā'im al-Muntaẓūr (the expected Messiah). (1)

The Fāṭimid elements always resisted pressure by extreme elements to adopt their view that since the end of the seven cycles the Imāms participate in the Universal Soul. (2)

(1) The Ismā'īlī sources differ as to the identity of the last Nāṭiq. This arises from the problem whether to begin counting the list from ʿAlī himself or from his successor. However, there is a wide measure of agreement that Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl (d. 198/813?) was the seventh Imām and was consequently given the name of the seventh Nāṭiq. See W. Ivanow, "Ismā'īlīs and Qarmatians", in B.B.R.A.S. 1954, pp. 78-80.

(2) The movement led by Ḥamza ibn ʿAlī and Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Darazī, who were among the dāʿīs of al-Ḥākim (A.D. 996-1020), called for the elimination of the Intermediaries between God and the Imām, i.e. al-Ḥākim. This was because Ḥamza considered al-Ḥākim to be the epitome of both the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul. The Druze sources elevate Ḥamza himself to the rank of the Intellect (qāl), and

Continuation of n. 2 on p. 147
To facilitate comprehension of the theory of the seven cycles, a table is given below showing the names of the Natīq and Asās of each cycle based on a collation of various Ismā'īlī sources. (1)

**Table One**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Natīq</th>
<th>Asās</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>ADAM</td>
<td>ABEL (succeeded by Seth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>NOAH</td>
<td>SHEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>ABRAHAM</td>
<td>ISHMAEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>MOSES</td>
<td>AARON (succeeded by Joshua)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>JESUS</td>
<td>PETER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>MUHAMMAD</td>
<td>'ALI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Seventh</td>
<td>MUHAMMAD IBN ISMĀ'ĪL NO: ASĀS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) The names of the muqīms are not included because the sources are very confused on this subject. However, it is worth mentioning that 'Arif Tāmir, in a letter dated 18.2.1963, says that most of the Ismā'īlī sources state that Abū Tālib, the father of 'Alī, was the Imām muqīm of the sixth cycle.
Applying their doctrine of allegorical interpretation (ta'wil), the Isma'iliis attempted to interpret the accounts of the expulsion of Adam, the Forbidden Tree, Noah and the Deluge ... etc., as passed to us through the Scriptures, in an effort to give plausible explanations of what they considered to be symbolic stories. This method of allegorical interpretation helped them to find out the baṭin (esoteric meaning) of the sacred Books, which was used to support their belief in the interdependence of the missions of the Prophets, who were not accidentally chosen as the media of revelations, but were particular men sent by God to deal with particular situations. The allegorical interpretation of the story of Noah is most interesting, for in it the Isma'ili sources try to show that what is meant by the Ark of Noah is simply his mission and its interpreter, the Asās, whose descendants, the Imāms, not only led the believers but also served as a link connecting the missions of all the Prophets and prepared the way for the Qā'im.

Continued from p.146.

Isma'īl ibn Muḥammad al-Tamīmī (one of their principal authors) to the rank of Soul (nafs). See Ḥamza's Mithqāl Wāli al-Zamān, MS. Or. 6852 (B.M.), Fol. 154; M.K. Ḥusayn, Sirat al-Ūsādī Jawzār, Cairo 1954, pp.19-22, 90; Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, Taḍrīk ... Cairo, 1958, pp.350-54.

(1) Allegorical interpretations of the stories of the pre-Islamic Prophets are found in most of the Isma'īli sources. Cf. Manuscript 3, al-Risāla ... pp.228-230 (described in Appendix I); B. Lewis, "An Isma'īli Interpretation of the Fall of Adam", B.S.O.S., IX, 1938, pp.692-94; S. Guyard, Fragments ... p.28; Reuben Levy; "The Account of the

Continuation of n. 1. on p.148.
'Ārif Tāmir, however, states that after Abraham the da'wa took a new line, those in charge of the da'wa being not the "actual" Imāms descended from Ishmael but the "trustee" Imāms descended from Isaac, whose descendants remained in charge of the da'wa right down to the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad, when the last "trustee" Imām Bahīrā (the Nestorian Monk whom Muḥammad is said to have met) handed the affairs of the da'wa to the actual Imāms represented in the muqīm Abū Ṭālib and his son ʿAlī, the Asās of the Prophet. (1)

At this stage, we might ask ourselves why certain numbers like seven, twelve .... etc. hold special significance in the eyes of the Ismāʿīlīs. Although there may be certain connections with pre-Islamic doctrines that give importance to particular numbers, the direct answer lies in the cardinal Ismāʿīlī religious belief that nothing has been created without purpose, and that God or the Supreme Originator has left us the chance to see the truth by examining and studying the universe, the

Continued from p.


(1) The Imām muqīm is the one who prepares the way for the coming of the new cycle, the Imām mustaqarr is the one who is able to name his "real" or "actual" successor, while the Imām mustawda' is only a "trustee" Imām who represents the "actual" Imām, i.e. the mustaqarr, under circumstances when the Imām mustaqarr is in a state of concealment. See al-Juwainī, The History ... tr. J.A. Boyle, 1958, pp.646-647; A. Tāmir, "Ḥaqīqat ..." in al-Machriq 1957, pp.143-44; M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, 1955, pp.161, 169-72, 230.
elements of which are in complete harmony with one another, thus indicating that there is a coherent plan in the creation of the universe. Thus the Ismā'īlīs found a recurrence of number seven in the number of the heavens, the planets, the days of the week, the openings in the human head (i.e. eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth) and regarded it as a phenomenon of great importance. This contributed much to their interest in astronomy, mathematics and music, which were essential subjects for their high-ranking dā'īs who were in charge of preaching and spreading the teachings of the dā'ī wa.\(^{(1)}\)

\(\text{Al-Kirmānī's Ten Intellects.}\)

The Ismā'īlī dā'ī, al-Kirmānī, ḥujja of the Fāṭimid Imām al-Ḥākim, may be considered to have played the most important role in giving precision to Ismā'īlī philosophical doctrines and religious teachings. In expounding the Ismā'īlī belief that nothing was created by accident and that all creations whether the heavenly or worldly have a sense of purpose, al-Kirmānī provides elaborate theories in which he attempts to explain the Ismā'īlī doctrines on the origin of the world. He first of all sets about proving the exclusive unity of God by following the

\(^{(1)}\) It is probable that all the Muslim authors who were interested in astronomy, and especially the Ismā'īlīs and Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', made use of the works of Ptolemy and other ancient astronomers. See R. Levy, The Social Structure of Islām, Cambridge, 1957, pp.474-78; W. Ivanow, Brief Survey ..., 1952, pp.48, 56, 59, where the author states that the special significance given to certain numbers by the Ismā'īlīs might be of Persian origin.
line that He is not to be measured in earthly terms, nor to be compared with any power known to human beings. When al-Kirmānī states that God is above all definitions of existence (ays) and non-existence (lays), he simply means that God is beyond human minds. Consequently a way is needed to lead humanity to God, and al-Kirmānī's Ten Intellects constitute the medium through which one can seek the recognition of those religious truths which centre around the divine secret (sirr) received by ʿAlī from Muḥammad. (1)

The first Intellect, which is also the "first cause" (al-ʿillā al-Ūlā), came into being not by the process of fayd ("grace", literally "overflowing") as the philosophers say, but by what he calls the power of al-ibdāʿ (origination), and God is its Mubdiʿ (Originator). From the first Intellect, which is

(1) Together with the Shīʿīs, some of the early Sūfīs adhered to the belief that the Prophet disclosed certain divine secrets (sirr) to ʿAlī. See Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. A.D. 1234), Kitāb ʿĀwarif al-Maṭārif, contained on the margin of al-Ghazzālī's Iḥyāʿ ʿUlūm al-Dīn, Cairo 1939, Vol. I, pp. 220-225, where the author quotes various prominent Sūfī Shaykhs such as Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 298/910) and a tradition ascribed to the Prophet stating that the word udhn, mentioned in the Qurʾān (69:12), meaning ear or perception, was none but the attentive ear of ʿAlī which received the divine knowledge or secret from God through His Prophet Muḥammad.

(2) This term fayd, which is used by al-Fārābī, suggests the outpouring or emission of sunlight and not the overflowing of water from a vessel. Al-Kirmānī seems to have avoided this term because of its ambiguity, since it might imply the incapacity of that vessel to contain the "light" or the water.
equated with the Nāṭiq or Prophet, the second Intellect proceeded by means of the faculty of emanation (bi quwwat al-inbi'ath), and thus it is called by al-Kirmānī "the first emanation" (al-munba'ath al-awwal). The following eight Intellects, which emanated successively one from another and are thus called the second munba'ath and so forth, are equated with the rest of the huḍūd of the world of religion, namely the Imām, bāb, ḫujja and four ranks of dā'īs, starting with the dā'ī who possesses powers to preach and ending with the dā'ī whose powers are limited. Each of these huḍūd aspires to reach the perfection of the one higher to him, who is the cause of his existence. (1)

In attempting to find in what way al-Kirmānī's theory of the Ten Intellects differs from that of the earlier Ismā'īlī dā'īs, we find that besides substituting the first, second and third Intellects for what the earlier dā'īs knew as Universal Intellect, the Universal Soul, and the Primal Matter, he applies the word qalam (pen) to both the first and second Intellect and reserves the word lawh (tablet) for the third Intellect, thus

(1) For more details on the functions of the bāb (gate to the da'wa or the Imām), ḫujja and other members of the Ismā'īlī hierarchy, see the following chapter. A table of the Ten Intellects may be consulted in al-Kirmānī's Rahat al-'Aql, ed. M.K. Ḥusayn, Cāiro 1952, p.24, where the author draws a parallel between the fourth-ninth Intellects and the six planets, namely Jupiter, Mars, The Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon.
differing from the earlier Ismā‘īlī dā‘īs who equated the
Universal Intellect with the qalam and the Universal Soul with
the lawh. Such slight differences in terminology do not
necessarily mean that there are major differences between
al-Kirmanī and the earlier dā‘īs, for it is evident that in
the Ismā‘īlī sources such terms as qalam, sābiq, first mubdi‘,
Universal Intellect etc. have the same meaning and are equated
with the Prophet. The same could be said about the Universal
Soul which is called variously first munbahath, lawh, tāli‘ etc.,
all these being equated with the executor of the Prophet, ‘Ali.(1)

The main aim of all Ismā‘īlī dā‘īs is to prove the existence
of the universal divine order, with the purpose of affirming
their doctrine that the question of the succession to the
Prophet is a pre-determined divine act which is above tribal or
communal differences or allegiances. It was their belief that,
after the death of the Prophet, Muslims must seek the guidance
not only of the silent Qur‘ān, but also of the "speaking" Qur‘ān,
that is ‘Ali and his descendants who hold the office of the
Imamate in unbroken succession. (2)

(1) Al-Kirmanī, Raḥat al-Aql, ed. M.K. Husayn, Cairo 1952, pp.24-
26; ‘Arif Tāmīr, "Haqīqat ..." in al-Machriq 1957, p.143;
"al-Aqīda fī Shi‘r Mazyad ..." in al-Machriq 1956, pp.477-482.

(2) As to how the universe was created, an earlier great Fātimid
dā‘ī, al-Qādī al-Nu‘mān, states that it was created at once
when God uttered the command "Be" (kun). Al-Nu‘mān adds that
the Qā‘īm existed before time, space, heaven and earth, implying
that the Qā‘īm is above everything in the physical world.
Al-Nu‘mān’s theory of creation is contained in his treatise
called al-Mudhiba, pp.225-247, 278-281, (see MS.3 in Appendix
I, pp.180-182); Jawad Muscati, Life and Lectures of al-Mu‘ayyad
(b) Spiritual Trends in Syrian Isma’īlīm under the Alamūt Imamate.

Although Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāh’s military leadership was an important factor in the establishment of the Nizārī daʿwa in Alamūt, its success was mainly due to his work in revitalizing the Ismaʿīlī doctrine of the Imamate after the split in the movement following the death of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mustanṣir (pp. 34-36 above). While the Fāṭimid Caliphate under the Mustaʿlīs tended to become a merely secular power and lost much of its spiritual force, the Nizārī Imamate emerged with a powerful spiritual appeal. Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāh now turned to use not only the historical, philosophical, religious and exegetic arguments of earlier dāʿīs demonstrating the necessity of an ʿImām descended from ‛Alī, but also logical propositions in support of the doctrine of al-taʿlīm (necessity of infallible teaching or instruction by an ʿImām). He argued that since God is just, He must (logically) in every age send an infallible "teacher", i.e. the ʿImām, whose teachings are the only way to truth and will lead ultimately to unification of the various faiths. As regards the function of reason, Ḥasan implied that its main use is to help the seeker of truth to know or "recognize" the true ʿImām descended from ‛Alī through Nizār. Naturally many orthodox Muslim heresiologists and theologians set out to disprove Ḥasan’s doctrines; but the question who came off better in these controversies is immaterial. What matters is that the campaign directed from Alamūt by Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāh won over the
Persian and the Syrian Ismā'īlīs to his cause. His achievement, when he had to face the powerful and hostile Saljūqs and at the same time compete with the Musta'li Fātimids in Egypt, is most impressive, not only from the political and military but also from the religious viewpoints; for the secession of the Nizārī da'wa from the main Fātimid da'wa was essentially a religious movement. It was not merely the matter of following different lines of Imāms that distinguished the dynamic and revolutionary Nizārī da'wa from the frozen Fātimid da'wa under the Musta'li Imāms; Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ went further and pushed the Ismā'īlis doctrines another step forward, without caring what would be the reaction of the orthodox Muslims as did the Fātimids. It must not be thought, however, that the new trend adopted by the Nizārī da'wa meant relinquishing the basic and essential principles of Ismā'īlism; for although the name of Alamūt conjures up a revolutionary image, the Ismā'īlis in both Persia and Syria continued under Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ and his two successors to practise Islām in the same way as it was practised by the Fātimids. All that Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ did, besides uniting and safeguarding the Nizārī Ismā'īlis, was to prepare the way for the coming of the new Imām who would proclaim the Qiyāma.(1)

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(1) According to the Ismā'īlīs, one of the main purposes of the Prophets was to pave the way for the appearance of the Qā'īm of their respective cycle. This belief may account for the comparison made between the mission of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ and that of Jesus. See al-Ṣahrastānī, al-Milal wa al-Nīḥal, ed. Rev. W. Cureton, London 1846, part I, pp.150-152; M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, pp.170-292.
The Initiation of a New Cycle.

While certain changes have been introduced into the Ismāʿīlī daʿwa under Hasan al-Sabbāh and his two successors, the proclamation of the great Qiyāma by Ḥasan ʿAlā ʿAla Dhikrihi al-Salām on the 17 Ramaḍān 559/8 August 1164 meant the beginning of a new era in its religious development. This Qiyāma(1) meant that Ḥasan ʿAlā ʿAla Dhikrihi al-Salām initiated a new cycle (dawr) and uncovered additional doctrines, hitherto hidden under the veil of taqiya. These new doctrines emphasized the theory of tawīl at the expense of formal worship. By taking this step, Ḥasan ʿAlā ʿAla Dhikrihi al-Salām seems to have assumed the role of an Imām who not only interprets the revelations sent to the Prophet, but also carries his interpretations from the realm of theory into that of practice. Thus, as the initiator of the Qiyāma and the doctrines ensuing from it, Ḥasan ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām was to become the custodian of human salvation and what may be called the visible expression of the two cosmic principles, the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul, which are equated with the Prophet and the Asās.

But what did the introduction of these doctrines mean in practice to the Ismāʿīlīs in Persia and particularly in Syria? From the limited information which is available, it appears that the Qiyāma was considered to be strictly spiritual, signifying that those who accepted it would henceforth receive the ḥaqāiq

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(1) Not to be confused with the Sunnī meaning of the term, which is "bodily resurrection".
of Ismā'īlīsm directly from their infallible source, the Imam who possesses the knowledge of the highest sciences. Gone were the days when one of the essential duties of the Ismā'īlīs was to refrain from divulging their religious secrets; for they had entered the period of al-Kashf (unveiling of religious truths by the Imam). This put an end to ritual duties such as fasting, which had hitherto been considered obligatory, even though their true significance had been allegorical. Here lies the fundamental clue to the understanding of the teachings of the Qiyāma, which emphasized the inner spiritual rather than the outer material aspect. If the Ismā'īlīs literally ate and drank on the 17 Ramaḍān A.H. 559, they did this to celebrate the great event in their history which had elevated them to such a high spiritual level that the outward obligations of the Sharī'a had become secondary to the much more advanced obligations of the Qiyāma. (1)

Among the Syrian Ismā'īlīs who lived far away from Alamūt

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(1) See Āṭā Mālik al-Juwaiti ... pp.695-96; Ḥamdullāh Mustawīq-Qazwīnī ... Vol. XIV, p.129; M.C. Defrémerié, "Récit de la ..." in J.A. 1860, pp.197-98. As regards Ismā'īlī sources on the Qiyāma, we can rely only on the Haft Bāb-i-Bābā Sayyidnā, which is believed to have been written about A.D. 1200. See MS. 5, pp.14-15; M. Hodgson, The Order of Assassins, p.197.
in a different environment, the teachings of the Qiyāma were probably not fully understood by all. It is reported, however, that Rashid al-Dīn Sinān, in his role as the representative of the Imam, held festivities a few years later to celebrate the occurrence of the Qiyāma. This may perhaps even been after the death of Hasan al-Dhikrihi al-Salām in 561/1166. (1) Although no known Syrian Ismāʿīlī source directly refers to the Qiyāma, traces of its teachings are found in most of the Syrian Ismāʿīlī writings, especially when they are concerned with Ismāʿīlī eschatological ideas. Moreover, a certain emphasis on self-knowledge, self-purity and self-discovery, as constituting important steps towards seeing the truth in the person of the Imam, is noticeable in all of the Syrian Ismāʿīlī manuscripts, which categorically and repeatedly assert that the Imam, being guided by divine providence and being the visible expression of God's Will on earth, presents the only direct road leading to absolute truth and final salvation. (2)

A clearer and a more specific indication of the influence of the Qiyāma teachings on the Syrian Ismāʿīlī writings is to be seen in their attempts to justify - and it almost seems, apologize for - the abolition of the outward (zāhir) rituals of the Sharīʿa.

(1) See Chapter 2, pp. 52-53; M.G. Hodgson, The Order .... p.197.
(2) M.S. Guyard, Fragments relatifs .... p.204.
In one of the Syrian manuscripts, the author, after giving the spiritual or allegorical interpretation of fasting, ablution etc. states that the abolition (naskh) of the ḥāhir of the Shariʿa does not belittle, but enhances, its importance. (1) Another sign of the influence of the Qiyāma teachings on the Syrian writings is the apparent multiplicity of the views expressed in them. Although the Qiyāma may have helped to simplify the Ismāʿilī hierarchy, it had certainly brought forth deeper and more complicated religious doctrines which were bound to be interpreted in several different ways by the Ismāʿīlīs, thus widening the gap between the religious views of the learned ṭalīms and those of the ḡalīmīn. It is quite possible that such a divergence of views lay at the root of the episode of the Sufāt (pp. 57–60 above), who may have wanted to see the reward of the Qiyāma realized in terms of the material needs of their daily life. This misunderstanding of the spiritual aims of the Qiyāma, which very likely were only understood by the most learned dāʾīms, may together with political considerations have been the factor which prompted the grandson of Ḥasan ʿAlā Dhikriḥī al-Ṣalām to reinstate the observance of the ordinary

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(1) Although the original date of the second and the third of the following manuscripts cannot be precisely determined, it seems almost certain that they were compiled after the Qiyāma: Shīhāb al-Dīn Abū Fīrās, Ṣullām al-Ṣuʿūd ... p. 238; Kitāb Tāj al-ʿAqāʾid, pp. 56–65; MS. 5, p. 14; MS. 6, p. 98.
rituals of the Sharī'a. (1)

Popular Leanings Towards Metempsychosis.

While the new doctrines which came in with Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ's da'wa and the proclamation of the Qiyāma may be viewed as no more than independent interpretations of certain basic Ismā'īlī theological beliefs, differing from the traditional Fāṭimid doctrines only in degree and in application but not in essence, some but not all of the Syrian Ismā'īlī sources tell stories of a wholly new phenomenon, namely the existence of belief in metempsychosis or transmigration of souls. These Syrian Ismā'īlī authors must have been influenced by interpretations widely held among the Ismā'īlī common people as regards the purpose of human existence and the fate of the soul after death. These popular interpretations, though not exactly the same as those of the Nuṣayrīs and the Druzes, share one common characteristic. All these Muslim groups were dissatisfied with the orthodox beliefs of the three great Semitic religions concerning the after-life and the future destiny of the soul, and sought to quench their thirst for answers to these human questions by searching in this present life instead of relying on the usual stories about the after-life which only state that it is there but do not elaborate on it. Thus to the Druzes

(1) See above, chapter III, pp.85-88. For a detailed view of the teachings of the Qiyāma and its effects on the Ismā'īlī hierarchal order, M.G. Hodgson's The Order ... pp.172-79, may be consulted.
the answer to the question why an infant is born crippled or otherwise disabled is not to be found simply by saying that it is because of human sins or faults as the Christian believes, nor by merely saying with resignation that it is God's Will as the orthodox Muslim does. To reconcile their beliefs in predestination and God's intervention in our affairs with their belief in the justice of the punishment we receive, the Druzes state that an infant's being born crippled is to be explained as a penalty for past evil deeds in a previous life; he is thus justly punished for his own deeds, and not merely as a lesson for others on account of his parents' faults or those of humanity at large. However, the Druzes imply in their writings that after a series of births there will ultimately be a time when the soul, having undergone full purification, will be raised to a higher world where it will receive final judgment. This, briefly, is an example of the Druzes' way of answering these questions. (1) As for the Nuṣayrīs, their views on questions

(1) The Druzes found in rebirth, or what is generally referred to as reincarnation, a rational explanation for the state of new born infants. They tend to give empirical, rather than theological or metaphysical, arguments in support of their views. Although reincarnation is a central belief in all ancient religions of India - Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism - the Druzes seem to have adopted it independently as a tangible answer to their queries about the soul after death, punishment for evil deeds, reward of good deeds etc. See Rev. J. Wartabet, Researches into the Religions of Syria, London 1860, pp. 301-307, where he makes use of the following Druze sources: Kitāb Kashf al-Ḥaqāʾiq; Kitāb Sabab al-Asbāb; Majrā al-Zamān.
of the soul's destiny, future reward and punishment appear naive and unsupported by any philosophical theory. To them wicked souls simply degenerate and will be restored to life after death in the form of brutes, while righteous souls will be embodied in the form of humans enjoying a better status and environment.

The Syrian Ismā'īlīs, on the other hand, do not seem to have held uniform opinions on the above mentioned questions. Looking at a number of their sources which are ascribed to periods ranging from that of Sinān until the fourteenth century A.D., one discerns a rather indecisive attitude towards the question of rebirth. Most of these sources, when speaking of the souls of those who recognized the Imām of their time, seem to take a view similar to that of the Fāṭimid chief dā'ī al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Dīn al-Shirāzī, who asserts categorically the doctrine of the non-existence of another form of earthly life beyond death. Even Abū Firās, who in his Manāqib tells several anecdotes which suggest a belief in the return of certain souls to earth in one form or another, dismisses the theory of rebirth in his more serious work Sullam al-Suṭūd, where he states that human bodies deserve only one soul, thus contradicting the reincarnation theory which implies that one human being may have two souls. (1) It is when they speak of the destiny of the souls

of those who failed to recognize the Imam, and are thus qualified as living the life of ignorance, that the Isma'ili sources seem to vary in their explanations, which range from giving these souls a chance to recognize the Imam by being born again after death to simply treating them as non-existent or as not deserving that their destiny should be examined. Abū Firās admits that wicked souls share some common characteristics with the souls of animals, but he does not indicate clearly that they will return after death to become animals. These wicked souls, he states, will settle in dark heavenly bodies which lie between the luminous and noble heavenly bodies and the earth. (1) In this belief that wicked souls have a chance to reform themselves the Isma'ilia differ from the Druzes, who came to the conclusion that those who refused to follow the da'wa of al-Ḥakim in its early years would never have a chance to rectify their mistakes. (2) In Isma'ili sources which have any bearing on this question, stories suggesting a belief in transmigration are generally of a symbolic nature with only peripheral value; (3) whereas in

(1) S. Guyard, Fragments . . . . p.71; Abū Firās, Sullam al-Su'ūd, p.179.


(3) It is interesting to compare what al-Dhahabi (Muḥammad . . .) in Ta'rikh al-Islām, Cairo 1947-49, Vol. I, pp.195-199, says about the souls of the prophets and how they are lodged by God in green birds, with Abū Firās's ninth anecdote in which Sinān in reported to have conversed with the soul of al-mawlū (lord) Hasan which appeared in a form of a green bird. See S. Guyard, "Un Grand Maître", pp.437-38, 482.
the Druze sources belief in metempsychosis is clearly of cardinal importance. The Isma'ili sources seem to be most concerned with that which lies beyond this life. The soul to them is only passing a test in this life before qualifying to merge with the Universal Soul, or according to some of them with the Universal Intellect. In fact the Isma'ili authors take a rather optimistic view of human life, and while not minimizing the severity of future punishment of evil deeds, they often seem to imply that vengeance could not be compatible with God's mercy. If wrong-doers are to be exposed and humiliated, this will be done primarily in order that evil may be defeated and that the world may thus become a better place. (1)

(1) In his Sullam al-Su'ud, pp. 148-49, Abū Firās gives the views of what he calls the men of wisdom, i.e. Plato and some learned Muslims, on the transmigration of souls (tanāsukh). He quotes several Qur'ānic verses (IV: 59, VI: 38, XL: 11) which are used by certain Muslims in support of their belief in metempsychosis. Abū Firās then quotes the Qur'ānic verse (XLIV: 56), which cancels the previous verses, in justification of his own rejection of metempsychosis.
CHAPTER VI

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DA'WA

The Ismā'īlī movement undoubtedly owed much of its success to its efficient and competent missionaries, who are referred to in the general Arabic sources as dā'īs and in some of the Ismā'īlī sources as 'ulamā' (sing. wālim; learned man or teacher). However, these terms were loosely used, and the word dā'ī could be applied to any active supporter of the rights of ʿAlī's heirs to the spiritual and temporal leadership of the Muslims.

How much is known about the activities of these dā'īs whose main task was to spread and preach the Ismā'īlī doctrines considered by the ʿAbbāsids and the Saljūqs as a threat to their domination? By whom were these dā'īs appointed, and what were the status and functions of their various ranks? Unfortunately most of the Ismā'īlī sources tend to give a rather ideal or Utopian picture of the Ismā'īlī organization, which they consider to be the embodiment of history; and all that is available to supplement them is very scrappy information provided by the general Arabic sources. All these Ismā'īlī sources, irrespective of the periods in which they were written, give similar descriptions of the top level of Ismā'īlī leadership and of the officialdom of the da'wa, in which the Imām, who does not himself usually preach, is assisted by twelve of his disciples who should be fully qualified to carry on the propaganda in
the twelve "climes" (Jazīra, pl. Juzur).(1) The number of these twelve disciples was sometimes increased to twenty four, divided evenly between those who preach the zāhir of the daʿwa and those who have custody of its bātin. Among these twelve or twenty four, the Ismāʿīlī sources mention two high dignitaries who together with the Nāṭiq, Asās and the Imām constitute the five "ranks of the religion" (ḥudūd al-dīn).

The first of the two high dignitaries is the one who receives instructions directly from the Imām; he is usually given a title held by the Imām. Thus he is called in the pre-Fāṭimid sources the ḥujja, or "evidence", of the Imām, who in his turn is the ḥujja of God. The Fāṭimid sources call him the bāb (gate) of the Imām, who in his turn is considered to be the bāb of the City of Knowledge, i.e. of the Prophet Muḥammad.(2) In fact these two terms are quite interchangeable and need not constitute a serious hindrance to understanding the order of the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy. However, it is noticeable that the term

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(1) Literally "island". Apparently the Ismāʿīlī authors meant by "jazīra" a region comparable with an ecclesiastical province. The regions were delimited in accordance with the language or race of their inhabitants - Persians, Arabs, Berbers, etc. See: S.M. Stern, J.R.A.S., 1961, pp.24,28.

(2) Jawād Muscati ... Selections from Qazī Noaman's Kitāb al-Himma ... Karachi 1950, p.42; Life and Lectures of Al-Muʿayyad-Fid-Dīn ... Karachi 1950, p.162. According to a Shiʿī hadīth (tradition), the Prophet Muḥammad said: "I am the City of Knowledge and ʿAlī is its bāb".
bāb was used in the Fāṭimid period when the Imāms were acknowledged rulers of a great sovereign state, while the term ḥujja was used when the Ismāʿīlī Imāms were somehow behind the scene; a state of affairs in which the term ḥujja, meaning "evidence" or "proof", may have been more appropriate for the trusted first auxiliary of the Imām. Thus during the period of satr preceding the rise of the Fāṭimids it is reported that each one of the Imāms had three or four ḥujjas(1) who used to argue and act for them, while under the Fāṭimids the term bāb was given to the head of the daʿwa known in the general historical works as the chief dāʾī. The bāb was then assisted by a council of twelve ḥujjas and had representatives in all the regions where the Fāṭimid daʿwa was active. Whenever the bāb did not simultaneously hold the office of chief qāḍī, he was considered under the Fāṭimids as second in rank to the chief qāḍī.(2)

(a) Alamūt and the Militant Nizārī Revolutionary Organization

Although Ismāʿīlī dāʿīs had been active in north west Persia and in Khurāsān and Transoxania since the ninth-century A.D.,(3) those who worked for Ḥasan al-Šabbāb's daʿwa found

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(1) Ibn Khaldūn (ʿAbd al-Rahmān...) al-Ibar ... Būlāq 1867, Vol. 4, p.50; ʿArif Tāmīr, Ḥaqqāqat... in al-Maḥriq, 1957, p.135.

(2) Al-Maqrīzī, Khīṭat ... Vol. 2, p.226. For the various ranks of dāʿīs working for the bāb, see Al-Kirmānī, Raḥḥat al-ʿAql, ed. M.K. Ḥusayn ... p.24.

themselves facing quite different problems. With the Ismāʿīlīs becoming established in various strongholds surrounded by much more numerous enemies, most dāʿīs now had to act also as military commanders, ready to repulse any invading army sent by the powerful Saljūq Sultāns and other enemies. Consequently, in appointing dāʿīs, Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ took account of their potentialities not only as persuasive preachers but also as military commanders. He also, it seems, sought to make use of the abilities of his followers generally; and the task of assessing these abilities was facilitated by the nature of their life in castles. Drawing into his hands all the reins of his immense office as the representative of the Imam, Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ completely re-organized the daʿwa, making sure that every individual possessing desired qualifications should take some part in his new organization. He himself ranked as the head of the daʿwa, with titles such as shaykh, ḥujja, sayyidnā (our master), etc. Second in rank came three senior dāʿīs, who were in charge of the three main outlying districts, namely Khūzistān, Qūhistān and Syria. These three dāʿīs were in principle responsible to Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ, although in practice, and especially in later periods, they often acted on their own initiative rather than on any standing orders or dispatched instructions. A good example is Sinān, who himself was provincial chief dāʿī in Syria, the only difference being that he represented an Imam holding actual control of the daʿwa (see
whereas Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ had acted in the name of the hidden ʿImām. The great dāʿīs were highly qualified men, capable of administering the affairs of their districts, preaching the ʿIsmāʿīlī principles, and understanding the minds of the people with whom they had to deal. As a rule they were chosen by the ʿImām or his representative, but we have no records showing how they were appointed.

Third in the officialdom of the daʿwa ranked the ordinary dāʿīs, who must have been quite numerous. From them Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ and his successors drew those dāʿīs whose responsibility was to preach and also those who were sent on special political missions, e.g. to negotiate with a ruler or to try to convert a prince. They were divided into first and second grades, dāʿīs in the first grade having a better chance to be promoted by the head of the daʿwa to a higher rank. (1)

The fourth rank of the daʿwa consisted of the rafīqs (comrades). Having joined the ʿIsmāʿīlī daʿwa, they received a substantial degree of indoctrination before taking the oath in the presence of the chief dāʿī, to whom they owed absolute obedience in both religious and temporal matters. Their

(1) It is quite possible that they included the various ranks of dāʿīs mentioned in the ʿAlīmīd sources, such as the maʿdhūns (authorized preachers), and the junior dāʿīs who were not authorized to preach but were charged with attracting prospective converts to their senior dāʿīs.
promotion would depend on how much progress they had made in learning the religious secrets of the da'wa.

Following the rafīqs in rank came a section of the Ismā'īlīs whose name left fearful echoes in the courts of the most powerful rulers. These were the fidā'īs, who pledged themselves to strike against any actual or potential threat to their da'wa. They were directly responsible to the Imām or his ḥujja, to whom absolute obedience was essential if they were to prove their devotion and loyalty to the da'wa as personified in its head, who initially was Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāh himself. Although they were not initiated in the da'wa as were the dā'īs and the rafīqs, they were aware of basic Ismā'īlī principles, e.g. that this present life is nothing but short dreams during which the soul passes what may be considered as a test determining its position in the after-life. It is thus quite intelligible that they became inflexibly devoted to their cause and ready to dedicate their lives to fulfilling the orders of their leader. They were well trained in the art of accomplishing their tasks; the course which they had to take in the training centre at Alamūt included the study of foreign languages and of other peoples' religious beliefs, so as to enable them to fit into the environment in which their targets lived. (1) These fidā'īs did not need to be drug-crazed

before obeying their leader absolutely. They served as the
guardians of their fellow-believers and as deterrents to enemies
wishing to take advantage of the Ismā'īlīs's lack of great
armies. Their incredible bravery has led interested historians
to see a clue to what is called their blind obedience to their
leader. On the ground that they are referred to in some of
the general Arabic sources as ḥashīshīya— which may not
necessarily have meant "eaters of ḥashīsh" (narcotic herb), the
term "Assassins" came to be applied in histories of the Crusades
to the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs in both Persia and Syria.\(^{(1)}\)

The sixth and seventh classes of Ḥasan al-Šabbāh's
da'wā are sometimes treated as one. They consisted of the
beginners or aspirants (laṣiqs), who were not permitted to
preach, and the rest of the community such as the peasants and
the businessmen. Among the sixth class were the mustajībs
(those who had "responded" sufficiently to proceed into the
stages of indoctrination). The mustajībs came second to the
laṣiqs, and it seems as if they were themselves divided into
senior and junior mustajībs, the former belonging to the sixth
class and the latter to the seventh class, i.e. the rest of

\(^{(1)}\) The term has already been discussed briefly on pp.1-2. It
may possibly have originated from other, somewhat similar
Arabic names by which the Ismā'īlī fidā'īs were known, e.g.
hassāsūn ("perceptive ones"), asṭāsūn ("night patrols" or
"watchmen"), or simply from their association with Ḥasan al-Šabbāh or one of the Ismā'īlī Imāms called Ḥasan. "See Ārif Tāmir, Sinān \(\ldots\) pp.27-28; "The Ismā'īlites and the
the community.

This division of the Nizārī Iṣmā'īlīs into seven classes seems to have been in use under the successors of Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ. During the post-Qiyāma period there was a tendency to divide all living humans into three categories, namely the people of the spiritual unity (ahl al-waḥda or al-Qiyāma), the people of order (ahl al-tarātub), and the people of contradiction (ahl al-ṭaḍāḍ). Possibly the people of the spiritual unity included the top people in the officialdom of the Nizārī da'wa. This levelling of human beings had only a symbolical character, however, and did not alter the basic system under which Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ organized his followers. (1)

(b) The Autonomy of the Syrian Da'wa under Sinān

Up to the time of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, the Syrian Iṣmā'īlī da'wa was run by provincial dā'is such as al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjim, Abū Tāhir, Bahram and Abū Muḥammad. These dā'is seem to have been completely dependent upon Alamūt; for example, to avenge the massacre of the Iṣmā'īlīs in Damascus in A.D. 1129 (discussed earlier on p.25), two fidā'īs were sent from Alamūt to assassinate Tāj al-Mulūk Būrī, the Turkish aṭābeg.

(1) The main sources for the post-Qiyāma period is Rawḍat al-Taslīm ascribed to Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, which has been studied by W. Ivanow in J.R.A.S. 1931. See particularly p.546, where the three categories of people are mentioned, and p.556, where new names are given for functionaries in the Nizārī da'wa, such as bāb al-bāṭin (gateway to the esoteric meaning), zabān-i-ṭilm (tongue of knowledge), al-ḥujja al-aṭzar (the greatest ḥujja) and dast-i-qudrat (hand of power).
of Damascus, who was held responsible for the massacre.

Sinān, who possessed outstanding abilities as an organizer and leader, was the ḥujja of the Imam of the Qiyāma who had sent him to lead the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs. He successfully transformed the Syrian daʿwa from a weak one, depending mainly on the help of Alamūt and the occasional patronage of a local ruler, into a powerful agency having its own fortresses and its own corps of fidājis, who were trained in a special centre believed to have been situated in the renowned Ismāʿīlī castle al-Kahf. Sinān had also his own daʿis to assist him and a large number of rafīqs who used to accompany him on his frequent visits to the various Ismāʿīlī castles. The Syrian daʿwa under his leadership was no longer just a branch. It could be classified as a virtually autonomous daʿwa, with its territory and headquarters and its own hierarchy of dignitaries headed by Sinān.

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(1) This may account for the elevation of Sinān's spiritual status. It is interesting to recall here how the chief daʿī of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākim, Ḥamza ibn ʿAlī, assumed the title of al-ṭaql (intellect) when al-Ḥākim was elevated to a higher status.

(2) Michael Labbād, al-Ismāʿīlīyūn ... pp.61-62.

(3) The inadequate materials on the organization of the daʿwa given in the Syrian Ismāʿīlī sources can only be supplemented to a small extent by the also meagre information found in the general Arabic sources. However, the general shape of the organization is clear, as it was based on the mother organization in Alamūt. See S. Guyard, "Un Maître ..." pp.358,366,370; ʿArif Tāmīr, Sinān ... pp.25,33.
Sinān's successors seem to have turned again to Alamūt, even though they inherited from Sinān a well organized daʿwa, which had firmly established itself in Syria. Until A.D. 1256 they were appointed by the Imām in Alamūt and were responsible directly to him, which suggests that they held the rank of ḥujja, a rank second to that of the Imām. These ḥujjas or chief daʿīs were assisted by a number of daʿīs who carried such titles as naqīb (officer), janāh ("wing") and nāzir (keeper or inspector); during the post-Sinān period a daʿī appointed to be commander of a castle would be called wālī. (1)

(1) S. Guyard, Fragments ... pp. 37-38; M. Max van Berchem, "Epigraphie ..." pp. 456, 488, 495, where the names of the chief daʿīs appear on the inscriptions preceded by the title al-Mawla al-Ṣāhib and other honorific titles such as Tāj al-Dīn (crown of religion), Majd al-Dīn (glory of religion) etc. On the term nāzir, which is incidentally still used in the present day Syrian Ismāʿīlī hierarchy, see text, p. 125.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters an attempt has been made to throw some light on the political history, beliefs, and organization of the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs. The reader will have remarked the frequent recourse to anti-Ismāʿīlī sources, which despite the biased picture they present are quite indispensable.

Such a situation makes one wonder whether wholly objective historiography can ever be realized, or whether it is an unattainable ideal of perfection. There can be no doubt that simply to assemble materials and assess them at their ostensible value is not enough. No historian who aims at truth can afford to neglect the constant factor of human predilection and prejudice in his sources. Contemporary sources, in particular, are nearly always more biased than later ones, because their writers were actively or emotionally involved in the events which they describe. A methodology whereby the influence of human factors can be estimated is essential, because uncritical and unimaginative use of sources will give only an imperfect approximation of the truth. Such a methodology, without losing itself in vague conjecture, would have to admit the validity of a reasoned use of a priori criteria in the assessment of source-materials. Lack of insight resulting from failure to use such criteria has been responsible for much misrepresentation of history - including the history of the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs.
APPENDIX I

NOTES ON FOUR SYRIAN ISMĀ'ILI MANUSCRIPTS

(a) First Manuscript

Description

The MS., which is 5\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches long by 4\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches broad, is written in a naskhī script and begins on page 417. More than one copyist seems to have taken part in writing it, and it contains several different works. The first, covering pages 110-201, begins with a poem praising the Fātimid Imāms and ends with stories concerning the life of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Then on page 202 there is a sermon for the ʿĪd al-Fiṭr (Breaking the Fast), which ends on page 217 where the copyist gives the date of the writing as 1263/1846. On pages 218-239 there is another sermon, the copyist of which gives his name as al-Shaykh Khīr ibn al-Shaykh Ḥaydar and states that it was completed in 1262/1845. Pages 240-252 contain what the author calls the "blessed genealogical tree from Adam until al-ʿQāʾīm", with a brief biographical note on each of the Imāms from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib down to the first of the Imāms after the fall of Alamūt in A.D. 1256. This is followed by a work entitled Kitāb al-Dustūr wa Ṭalab al-Muʾminīn ilā al-Ḥuḍūr, which begins on page 263 and ends on page 366 and contains a statement by the copyist, Muḥammad ibn al-Shaykh ʿAlī al-Ḥāj, giving the date of writing as 1211/1796.

There are no mentions of the dates of the original works.

(1) These manuscripts belong to Mr. ʿĀrif Tāmir and could be consulted. Refer to the Secretary, Ismāʿīlī Supreme Council, Salamīya, Syria.
The only clues that can be obtained are from the literary style and from the biographical work on the Imāms. These suggest that the date may be taken as sometime during the second half of the 14th century A.D. The manuscript ends with a poem in the rajaz metre in which the author traces the lineage of the Imāms back to the beginning of Human life; he calls this poem Urjūzat al-Nasab (the rajaz poem of the lineage).

Observations:

Among the works in this manuscript, the biographical notes on the Ismaʿīlī Imāms (pages 240-252) contain more historical material than the others, which are mainly doctrinal and very largely duplicated in other Ismaʿīlī MSS. The author, whose name and date of writing are unknown, follows his account of the Fāṭimid period with a brief biographical note on each of the Nizārī Imāms whose identity until the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Ģasan III (A.D. 1210-1221) remains a subject of much controversy. On pages 249-50 the author gives the names of three mastur (concealed) Imāms who came between Nizār and Ģasan Ğalā Dhiṭīrī Ḥal-Salām (d. A.D. 1166). They are, the author states, al-Hādī, al-Muḥādī and al-Qā'im. This is the only available Syrian MS. which gives the same genealogical tree of the Nizārī Imāms as the one adopted by the modern Ğāḥē Khānī Ismaʿīlīs; for most of Syrian Ismaʿīlī MSS. have been copied by Muʿminī Ismaʿīlīs, who believe that between Nizār and Jalāl al-Dīn Ģasan III there were only two Imāms (Ḥasan and Muḥammad).
Second Manuscript

Description

This manuscript of 251 pages is entitled *Kitāb Sullam al-Ṣu‘ūd ilā Dār al-Khulūd* (The ladder of ascent to the house of eternity). The author is the well known *Isma‘īlī dā‘ī* Shihāb al-Ḏīn Abū Fīrās, the same who wrote the *Manāqib* of Sinān Rāshid al-Ḏīn which is dated 724/1324. The copyist's name and his date of writing are missing because the last page of the MS. is lost; it could be presumed, however, that the copy dates from the nineteenth-century, as do most of the Syrian Isma‘īlī manuscripts. It is written in a clear *naskhī* script and has an average size of 9 by 6½ inches.

Observations:

The author divides his work into three books, with each book containing a number of chapters (*faṣl*). Each book corresponds to one stage which the believer must pass in order to reach ultimately through the second grade to the highest grade, where the human soul is raised through knowledge of the *Imāms* to the nearest position to the "eternal light", which results in the possession of eternal happiness. This third "grade", which corresponds to the third book in the manuscript, is described by the author as the highest of the three grades; the first two books or two "grades" are said to serve only as an introduction to the third.

The first book, which is divided into twelve chapters, is called *Kitāb al-Nufūs* (The Book of Souls, pages 1-76). Here the
author discusses the nature of the soul and describes how it is always striving to free itself from the body and thus draw nearer to the divine light (there is an evident affinity with Sūfi ideas). Then the author goes on to discuss al-ıdrāk (perception) connecting it with the functions and nature of al-nafs al-nāṭiqa (the "speaking" or rational soul) and al-nafs al-mujarrada (the "pure soul, or soul in itself").

In the second book, which is called Kitāb al-Anwār (The Book of Lights, pages 76-201), there is a much more conspicuous affinity with Sūfi ideas, indicating that by the 14th century A.D. the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs, having virtually lost contact with their Imāms, became more and more influenced by the Sūfi tendencies then prevailing in the general Muslim environment. In Kitāb al-Anwār, which is divided into 22 chapters, the author discusses the heavenly "lights" (nūr), stating that the luminous heavenly bodies have only temporal "lights" and like other higher "lights" are in need of the "first nūr" whose existence is self-evident (wājib al-wujūd).

In the third chapter Abū Fīrās discusses al-ıaql ("intellect"), al-nafs (the soul), al-hayūlā (primordial matter) and the rest of the ḥudūd ʿulwīya (heavenly or cosmic principles). The author equates these ḥudūd ʿulwīya with the ḥudūd ʿālam al-dīn (the principles of religious observance, in our human world), i.e. the Prophet, Imāms .... etc. Study of the various ḥudūd is always held by Ismāʿīlī and Druze authors to be of great importance, for on it they build their argument that there
must be a universal divine order, the understanding of which is essential for anyone seeking the truth about human life in both worlds.

The rest of the second Book is devoted to a detailed study of the heavenly bodies treated in a similar manner to that of the Ikhwan al-Safar (Brethren of Purity), with special stress on the influence of these heavenly bodies on the souls of human beings.

The third Book, called by the author Kitāb ʿIlm al-Ḥudūr (i.e. knowledge of ways in which the soul may come into the presence of the divine light), deals with the qualifications that the soul must possess before it can be eligible to receive the divine light through which eternal happiness is obtained. In the eight chapters which constitute the book various branches of this ʿilm are discussed. On pages 205-208, the ʿilm of the prophets is compared with the ʿilm of other men; here the author criticises the meanings given by the ʿUfīs to the terms al-fanā ("obliteration" of the self), and al-ḥulūl (incarnation). He then discusses several more ʿUfī terms and practices, rejecting some and praising others. Some of the ʿUfīs, he says, followed the road of ahl al-ḥikma (i.e. the ancient philosophers) and thus were able to reach the "source of the light" namely God. The concluding chapters expound the Ismāʿīlī doctrine regarding passage from "darkness" to "light" which is not possible without knowledge of the Imam of the time,
this knowledge being the only safe path to paradise and the proximity of the Napar al-Anwar, i.e. God.

Third Manuscript

Description

This manuscript of 293 pages is 7 inches long by 4½ inches broad and is written in a clear naskhi script. It contains three separate works, each transcribed by a different copyist. The first, on pages 1-154, is entitled Risala: Majmu'a min Zubdat Rasail Ikhwan al-Safwa Khillan al-Wafa'. On page 154 it is stated that the work was copied by al-Amir Hasan ibn 'Umar on Saturday, 24 Rabii' II 1241/5 December 1825. From the bottom of page 154 to page 201, there is a qasida ascribed to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and copied by the same Hasan ibn 'Umar on Wednesday, 5 Jumada I 1241/15 Dec. 1825. The third work (pages 201-293), al-Risala al-Mudhiba fi Funun al-Hikma wa Gharabib al-Tawil attributed to al-Qadi al-Nu'man (d. 363/973) and copied by 'Ali ibn al-Shaykh Haydar in 1241/1825. It consists mainly of sayings and discourses attributed to various Isma'ili Imams and their chief dajis.

Observations:

Believing that the well-known Rasail of Ikhwan al-Safwa were composed by one of their Imams of the Satr period during the ninth-century A.D., the Isma'ili Is have always attached great importance to that treatise; it is outside the sphere of this study to consider how much truth there may be in this belief.
Whatever their origin, the writings and teachings of Ikhwan al-Šafā' bear many similarities to those of the Ismā'īlīs, especially in their method of expounding principles on the two bases of esoteric interpretation of the religious texts and attestation by the Imāms and the Ahl al-Bayt (descendants of the Prophet).

Many studies have been made of the Rasā'il Ikhwan al-Šafā', and the contents of this Risāla need not be reviewed here. It does not introduce any new ideas but lays stress on those which lend support to the Ismā'īlī belief in the necessity and inevitability of leadership by the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt who alone can guide human beings to the ultimate truth. (See: Ismā'īl R. al-Fārūqī, "Ethics of The Brethren of Purity" in The Muslim World, Oct., 1960, pp.254-255; 'A. Tāmir, "Haqīqat Ikhwan al-Šafā'" in Al-Maḥriq 1957, pp.129-135).

Following the qasīda attributed to Āl (pages 154-201), the most important work in this manuscript is the Risāla al-Mudhiba fī Funūn al-Ḥikma wa Gharāʾib al-Taʿwīl (pages 207-293), stated by the copyist to have been written by al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān in answer to some questions put to him by certain Ismā'īlī officials. There is no trace of this Risāla, however, either in the list of works by this celebrated Fāṭimid jurist and author in A.A. Fayzee's article, "Qāḍī an-Nuʿmān ..." published in the J.R.A.S. 1934, pp.132, or in W. Ivanow's
If this Risāla is really the work of al-Nuʿmān, then it deserves to rank among the best of his writings. It is an elaborate treatise in which all the controversial tenets of Ismāʿīlīsm are discussed and the ḥudūd al-dīn (i.e. the functions of Nāṭiq, ʿImām, ʿuangfa etc. are put into perspective with clear indications of the status and functions of each. The Risāla contains, as do most of the Ismāʿīlī manuscripts, a description of the creation and the universe, understanding of which is essential to students of Ismāʿīlīsm.

The Risāla ends with a discussion of the organisation of the Ismāʿīlī daʿwa, a subject which is usually kept strictly confidential and only revealed to high-ranking Ismāʿīlī officials.

**Fourth Manuscript**

**Description**

This manuscript is six and a half by four and a half inches in size, is beautifully written in a naskhī script with the title, names of the Imāms and praises of God all in red ink while the text is in dark ink. It is entitled "Risālat al-Sayyid Muḥammad ibn ibn (son of the son of Zahra) dāʾī Sarmin. It begins on page 10 and occupies 50 pages, with a qaṣīda in the remaining 43 pages written by the same copyist. On pages 61 and 62 the copyist gives his name as ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn and his date of writing as 20 Rabīʿ II
1206/15 Dec. 1791. The date of the original work can only be surmised; Sarmin is known to have been one of the centres of Ismaili activity during the 12th and 13th century A.D., but there is no mention in the sources of any Ismaili da'i carrying the name of Zahra. Among the early settlers of Salamiya were the family of Zahra, whose descendants still live in Salamiya; they have not been able to give me any clue as to the date of the author's life, but they affirmed that they descend from his family. There is, however, another author from the Zahra family who wrote during the 6th/12th century (see Section B in this Appendix), and this might indicate that the work may have been compiled some time during the 12th or 13th century A.D.

Observation:

The author opens his Risala with the basmala and praises of God. From page 19 onward he expounds the Ismaili belief, that God is beyond our comprehension in a way which gives proof of his ability to write on matters of Ismaili theology with a clear and far-reaching understanding. The functions and status of the Prophets and Imams are explained with illustrations taken mostly from events after the advent of Islam. This is quite helpful because most of the Ismaili manuscripts are concerned mainly with pre-Islamic prophetic revelations, which although they help to understand the motives of the Ismailis, do not have any historical value.

The author ends with discussions of the act of the Pool
of Khum (Ghadir Khumm), where in the belief of all Shi'is, the Prophet Muhammed designated 'Ali as his successor; and of the Khutbat al-Wadā', in which Muhammed is believed to have implicitly and explicitly enjoined the Muslims to take 'Ali as their leader after his death.

(b) A List of other Syrian Isma'ili Manuscripts

A = Title, B = Author, C = Date, D = Number of pages.

First Manuscript
(A) Sullam al-Irtiqā' ilā Dār al-Baqā'
(B) Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās al-Maynaqī
(C) 8th/14th century
(D) 300 pages.

Second Manuscript
(A) Risālat al-Asābi'
(B) Qays ibn Manṣūr al-Dādikhī
(C) 6th/12th century
(D) 110 pages

Third Manuscript
(A) Al-Usūl wa al-Ahkām
(B) Abū al-Ma'tālī Ḥātim ibn Zahra
(C) 6th/12th century
(D) 80 pages.

Fourth Manuscript
(A) Risālat al-Nafs al-Nāṭiqa
(B) Ḥasan al-Maṭaddīl
(C) 7th/13th century
(D) 50 pages.
Fifth Manuscript
(A) Fuṣūl wa Akhbār
(B) Nūr al-Dīn Aḥmad
(C) 8th/14th century
(D) 890 pages

Sixth Manuscript
(A) Ṣūrat al-Ṭilāwa
(B) Ascribed to Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān
(C) 6th/12th century
(D) 250 pages

Seventh Manuscript
(A) Al-Alfāz al-Sharīfa
(B) Ascribed to Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān
(C) 6th/12th century
(D) 180 pages

Eighth Manuscript
(A) Al-Qānūn
(B) Muḥammad Abū al-Makārim
(C) 9th/15th century
(D) 310 pages
APPENDIX II
FOUR BIOGRAPHIES FROM JANNAT AL-ĀMĀL(1)

(1) ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn ʿAṭṭāsh

Ibn ʿAṭṭāsh was one of the greatest Ismāʿīlī dāʿīs and possessed remarkable knowledge of religion and philosophy. His date of birth is unknown, but it is certain that he came in Ramdān 484/1091 to Ray, where he met the dāʿīs Abū Naṣm, Abū Muʾammad ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn ʿAṭṭāsh

His date of birth is unknown, but it is certain that he came in Ramdān 484/1091 to Ray, where he met the dāʿīs Abū Naṣm, Abū Muʾammad ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn ʿAṭṭāsh, ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn ʿAṭṭāsh, and ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn ʿAṭṭāsh, who were able with his help to spread the Ismāʿīlī beliefs in the various Persian regions and other countries. Besides his skill in propaganda, he was a great military leader and was able to capture many important places in Ḥarbāʾyjān and Syria. He also seized the castle of al-Firdaws (in Qūhistān) where he founded a school for the Ismāʿīlīs from which more than 30,000 are said to have graduated; this castle had been built by one of the Saljūq Sultāns. In the early years of the sixth century A.H., his dāʿīs took possession of a number of castles in Syria, among them al-Qadmūs and Bānyās, and in Persia Shīrḵūh, Qāʾīn and others. During his life many Persian princes embraced Ismāʿīlīsm, and when the Saljūq Sultān Malik Shāh saw that Ismāʿīlīsm had spread through the "length and breadth" of the country, he feared for his sovereignty and began warring

(1) Concerning the source Jannat al-Āmāl, from which these articles were taken, see pp. 8, 36.
against the Isma'īlīs. The war continued under Malik Shāh's successors and in the course of it 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Aṭṭāsh met his death.

(2) Ḥasan al-Šabbāḥ

The most famous of all Ismā'īlī dā'īs, Ḥasan ibn 'Ali b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. al-Šabbāḥ claimed descent from the Ḥimyarite rulers of al-Yaman. He was born in 432/1040 at Ray where in his early childhood his father provided him with elementary learning which he perfected by the time he was twelve years old. After that he devoted himself to studying the various sciences and arts. He lived during the reign of the Saljūq Sultān Malik Shāh who is said to have offered Ḥasan a good position in his court; but his chief minister Niẓām al-Mulk, who is said to have been a friend of Ḥasan's school days, estranged Malik Shāh from Ḥasan. He left the service of the Sultān and at Iṣfahān met the great Ismā'īlī dā'ī Abū Naṣr whose eloquence and lucidity made a great impression on Ḥasan. As a result of his meetings with Abū Naṣr, Ḥasan acknowledged the primacy of the Ismā'īlī (Fāṭimid) Imamate and the truthfulness of the Ismā'īlī beliefs. Not long afterwards Ḥasan fell sick and was attended by Abū Naṣr. During his sickness he took a vow that if he were cured he would visit the Fāṭimid Imām al-Mustanṣir billāh, peace be on him; and after his recovery, he left for Egypt, meeting on his way al-Muballigh ("preacher") ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAṭṭāsh, who gave
him a letter of introduction to Abū Dāwūd al-Miṣrī.

Hasan stayed eighteen months in Egypt, during which he was cared for by Abū Dāwūd. He had great difficulty in getting an audience with al-Mustanṣir, but at last he was granted the chance to see the Imām. After several meetings Hasan became fully initiated into Ismā'īlism and gave allegiance to al-Mustanṣir; then, with the Imām's specific authority to propagate Ismā'īlī doctrines in Iran, he returned from Egypt to his native country. Hasan was well qualified to preach Ismā'īlism, having learnt the Ismā'īlī principles and inner doctrines and successfully mastered the various branches of Ismā'īlī science. In Iran he directed his efforts towards bringing about an ideological revolution in all parts of the country; but his efforts were disrupted by the death of al-Mustanṣir and the dissensions which broke out among the Ismā'īlīs over the succession to the Imamate. Some supported the succession of his son Nizār, others that of another son al-Mustaʿlī. The latter succeeded to the Caliphate with the aid of the troop-Commander al-Afdal, and his followers were called the Mustaʿlīs (al-Mustaʿliya). Nizār's supporters were not strong enough to uphold his claim, even though he was in all probability the rightful future Imām, having been so designated by his father.

Hasan opposed the pretensions of al-Mustaʿlī and worked vigorously in support of what he believed to be the rightful
claim of Nizār whose headquarters were in the castle of Dimyāt. As a result of his activities he was arrested and cast into prison, from which Nizār helped him to escape. He then set out from Egypt to Qazwīn, calling the Ismā'īlīs on his way to support the Imamate of Nizār; and from Qazwīn he gained possession of the Daylamite fortress of Alamūt (in the neighbouring district of Rūdbār deep in the Alburz mountains). Ḥasan's aim was to conquer Irān, Baghdaḍ and Aleppo.

It is related that Ḥasan used to drink in Alamūt a drink known as kanzūkīn which was compounded of almonds, walnuts and other herbs. This drink was of a great help in stimulating the brain and strengthening the body, and in that period was only available at Iṣfahān.

While at Alamūt, Ḥasan secretly dispatched a letter to the devoted dāʿī Abū al-Ḥasan Sayyidī asking him to help in bringing to Alamūt the Imām al-Ḥadī (son of Nizār) and his mother, which he successfully accomplished. Apart from wars with the Saljūqs, Ḥasan devoted the rest of his life to spreading Ismā'īlīsm and teaching its laws and the details of its principles. Infraction of any of the Ismā'īlī laws deserved, in his view, severe punishment.

His victories in the wars were won because of his political insight and great wisdom and sublety. He continued to strengthen the Ismā'īlī daʿwa and carried his piety and righteousness to such an extent that he ordered death for his son for
deviating from the true path. He made all the contemporary rulers realize that they should respect the Isma'ili movement. His reign at Alamut lasted thirty-three years; he died in 518/1124 after having accomplished all his duties to the Isma'ili cause.

(3) Ḥasan II, ʿAlā Dhikrihi al-Salām

Following the death of his father in A.D. 557/1162, Hasan succeeded to the Imamate in accordance with his father's designation. He made Alamut the seat of his authority. Hasan was famed both as an unquestioned ʿālim and as a philosopher who had mastered all branches of the Qur'anic sciences and the depths of philosophy of religion. He was particularly well versed in esoteric learning and in allegorical interpretation (taʾwīl) as well as in logic; grammar, jurisprudence and the ordinary Qur'anic interpretation (tafsīr). He used to hold regular meetings to deal with issues according to the text of the Qur'ān, and to elucidate doctrinal questions in a subtle and truthful form. He also made great efforts to purify corrupt beliefs. He was sought out by savants and missionaries who desired to listen to his pearls of discourse and elegant pronouncements.

During his reign Ismāʿīlism spread in an unprecedented way. He possessed excellent human qualities in addition to his divine powers.

During his happy Imamate, his followers in Persia used to
hold a yearly celebration in commemoration of his ascent to the Imamate, and that day was called Yawm al-Qiyāmā. History shows us that there was rarely an Ismā'īlī Imam in office who did not acquire enemies during his term of office; this being a characteristic since creation. During his reign his enemies spread false rumours that he was not a genuine descendant of Nizār, but these slanders were received by his followers with disgust and dissatisfaction. As for the Imam himself, he paid no attention to such slanders but continued to send orders (farmāns) to his governors and dā'īs under his seal and signature which includes his family tree, thus ignoring the propaganda of his calumniators.

In 561/1166 he was stabbed in Lāmmasar by the traitor Ḥasan Nāmūr who was his brother-in-law. This Ḥasan Nāmūr was employed and paid by the Imam's enemies, who promised the murderer with a high rank if he could carry out the task of murdering the Imam, which he did on 6 Rabī' I, 561/10 Jan. 1166. The Imam left behind him a son named Aṭā Muḥammad who succeeded him in the Imamate. Some people suppose that the Imāms Muhtadī, Qāhir and Ḥasan were one and the same Imam because all three held the same title (lagab), but the truth is that each of the above mentioned held the Imamate for a certain time.

(4) Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III Ḥasan III, became an Imam in 607/1210. Immediately after
his accession to the Imamate he turned his efforts to promoting ties of friendship between the Ismāʿīlīs and the other Muslim sects. During the second year of his reign he sent his mother and members of his household on pilgrimage to Makka, and on their way they were met with great honour by the governors of the provinces. In Baghdād they were much welcomed by the 'Abbāsid Caliph (al-Nāṣir) and were accommodated in the official guest house and other distinguished dwellings. Ḥasan III married the full-sister of Kaikāʾūs, the governor of Jīlān who became the mother of his son 'Alāʾ al-Dīn. This marriage was celebrated for a week by order of the Caliph al-Nāṣir in all parts of his country. This demonstrative affection he inspired in the hearts of all royalty. He tried his best to strengthen the bonds of friendship with his neighbours. Whenever he heard of any dissension taking place in an Islamic country, he went himself to try to reconcile it. He used to send his ambassadors to make peace between the quarreling Muslim leaders. He was very fond of building and of improving the cultural life of cities, hence his concern to found mosques, takīyas (Ṣufi hospices), baths and caravansarais. He improved both the internal and external roads. His age was a golden age during which the Ismāʿīlīs lived in tranquility and happiness, and possessed a considerable influence in Aḏharbāyjān, Jīlān, Māzandarān, Qaẓwīn, Khūzistan, Luristan, Kurdistān, Kirmān, Shīrāz, Tabrīz, Baghdād, and Syria. He
had friendly relations with Uzbak the ruler of Adharbāyjān, whom he supported against the ruler of Persian 'Irāq, Naṣir al-Dīn Minkullī, believing the former to be in the right.

In 618/1221 Ḥasan III was invited to a dinner party where some traitors conspired against him and put poison in his food. So he died leaving behind his 10 year old son 'Alāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad III.
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195

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