THE ORIGINS OF ISMĀʿĪLISM

A study of the historical background of the Fāṭimid Caliphate

BY

BERNARD LEWIS, B.A., PH.D. (*London*)

Lecturer in Islamic History,
School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Et, une heure, je suis descendu dans le mouvement d'un boulevard de Bagdad où des compagnies ont chanté la joie du travail nouveau .

ARTHUR RIMBAUD,
Les Illuminations

CAMBRIDGE
W. HEFFER & SONS LTD

FIRST PUBLISHED - - MARCH, 1940

Printed and Bound in Great Britain at the Works of
W. HEFFER & SONS LTD, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

Preface

In every civilisation there are certain movements of social and intellectual revolt, indicative of the reaction of the suppressed and dissatisfied elements in that civilisation to prevailing conditions. The history of these movements, usually written exclusively by their opponents, is at once of peculiar difficulty and peculiar value to the historian.

In a predominantly religious society like that of mediaeval Islam, where State and Church were fused and treason and apostasy were synonymous terms, such movements necessarily assumed a theological colour, and appeared as heretical sects, revolutionary in doctrine and insurrectionary in habits. In the early centuries of Islam we find a whole series of sects which, by their simultaneous challenge to the Islamic faith and state, brought upon themselves the concentrated wrath of rulers and theologians.

Of these sects, most of which are known to us only from the writings of their enemies, by far the most significant is that of the Ismā'īlīya, or Ismā'īlīs (also called Bāṭinīs, Ta'līmīs, etc.). This sect rapidly acquired an importance far exceeding that of its competitors, and soon constituted a really serious threat to orthodox Islamic society. For several centuries Ismā'īlī missionaries in all parts of the empire stirred up rebellion against the 'Abbāsid Caliphs, and Ismā'īlī philosophers elaborated a detailed system of religious thought, offering a seductive alternative to orthodoxy. The importance of the sect is enhanced by its connection with the rise of the Fāṭimid dynasty, the most powerful in mediaeval Egypt. This connection raises many problems, most of which have not yet been properly elucidated.

Since the appearance of De Goeje's *Mémoire sur les Carmathes* in 1886, no detailed study has been published on the origins of the Ismā'īlī movement, from the historical viewpoint. A considerable amount of new material, of various kinds, has become available since then, and although many works still lie unknown in the Ismā'īlī libraries of

Yemen and India, enough have come to light to render necessary a restatement and reconsideration of the problems involved.

I wish to record my indebtedness to Professor Louis Massignon, of the Collège de France, whose advice and assistance were of inestimable value to me throughout the course of my work. My thanks are also due to Professor H. A. R. Gibb, now of Oxford, for much help and encouragement. I am grateful to the following for useful suggestions and aid of various kinds:—Professor A. S. Tritton (who in addition undertook the painful task of reading my proofs); Professor N. H. Baynes; Dr. P. Kraus; Dr. J. Heyworth-Dunne; Dr. G. H. Sadighi, M. Abbas Eghbal; Mr. M. H. A'ẓamī.

I should also like to place on record my gratitude to the librarians of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London; the Ecole de Langues Orientales Vivantes, Paris; and the Egyptian Library, Cairo, for their unfailing courtesy and assistance. Finally, a word is due to my Ismā'īlī friends in Masyaf, Salamiya and elsewhere, for their useful, if somewhat reticent, co-operation.

This monograph is a revised version of a thesis accepted for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of London. My special thanks are due to the University of London Publications Committee for a grant that rendered its publication possible.

CAMBRIDGE,
January, 1940.

To My Parents

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THE HOUSE OF 'ALĪ

THE ORIGINS OF ISMĀ'ĪLISM

Introduction

DURING the central period of Mediaeval Islāmic history, the lands of the Caliphate were convulsed by a movement at once religious, philosophic, social and political, which, for a time, threatened the very existence of Islāmic civilisation, and which, at its height, succeeded in establishing a schismatic anti-Caliphate which was at least the equal in power and prosperity of the orthodox Caliphate of Baghdād.

The Ismā'īlī or Bātinī movement, to mention two of the chief names applied to it—there are many others—begins in the second century of Islām as an amalgam of several mystic and extremist heretical sects, mainly from the Shī'ī wing of Islām, some perhaps of pre-Islāmic Persian and Syrian gnostic origins. During the many centuries of its growth, its triumph and its decline, Ismā'īlism expressed itself in an infinity of forms, both doctrinal and organisational. If, on the one hand, it was constantly incorporating within itself new sects—and consequently new ideas—on the other it remained highly fissiparous in character, always splitting up into new sub-sects and factions, often in mutual conflict.

The dreaded Carmathian bands, which, from their base in Baḥrain, carried out a series of daring and sacrilegious raids during the fourth century A.H. which horrified the Islāmic world—the Fāṭimid Caliphate of Cairo, with its highly civilised capital and its advanced intellectual life—the encyclopaedist brotherhood of the Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā which, in the fifth century, attempted to popularise learning and philosophy among the masses—the dreaded Assassins of Syria and Persia in the fifth and sixth centuries A.H., are all different facets of one same movement which, by the catholicity of its doctrines and the simplicity of its purposes, attempted and almost succeeded in uniting the whole population of the Islāmic orient, irrespective of creed and social status.

With 'Alid legitimism as political programme (with what important modification we shall see later), a syncretist hotch-potch of all faiths and philosophies, with a strong undercurrent of pure rationalism, as doctrine, and social grievances and organisation as an important part of its activities, the movement stood a good chance of canalising the whole social and religious discontent that was rife in the mediaeval caliphate.

The characteristic Ismā'īlī combination of syncretism and esoterism render the investigation of the history of the sect a task of tremendous difficulty. This is not simplified by the prejudices and animosities of the hostile sources upon which we are forced to rely for most of this history. For the annals of the Ismā'īlī movement, at least in its earlier stages, must still be based largely on the records of non-Ismā'īlīs, with the defects involved by way of ignorance and bias.

The fault does not lie wholly with the Sunnī and Twelver Shī'ī writers who tell the story. The secretive character of the movement, its quasi-masonic organisation, and the haze of mystery concealing both doctrines and personalities from the uninitiated, did not facilitate the task of the historian, and have prevented until modern times a clear and accurate understanding of Ismā'īlī origins.

With the discovery of new documents, and the consequent revaluation of old ones, a critical study of early Ismā'īlī history has at last become possible, and scholars like Massignon, Kraus, Ivanow, Hamdani and others have made notable contributions. The line of study, however, has hitherto been mainly doctrinal and literary, and, save for one or two special questions, the historical side has remained substantially as De Sacy and De Goeje left it. The following pages constitute an attempt to clear the ground for a general historical survey of the beginnings of Ismā'īlism.

SURVEY OF SOURCES

It has seemed best to start this study with a survey of the primary sources at our disposal. Although many of

these sources have been studied before, it is necessary to attempt a revaluation of them in the light of the new sources available, several of which are here used for the first time.

Our first group consists of the Sunnī historical writings. Here we can trace the successive stages in which the true knowledge of Ismā'īlī doctrines and the early, secret history of the sect filters through to the Sunnī world. It is in order to illustrate the stages of this highly important process that I have considered these sources in some detail. The penetration of this knowledge can be classified in three stages—the first, where the historian knows of nothing but the public activities of the sectaries—the second, in which some inklings of what is at stake have begun to penetrate, but no general conception is as yet possible—the third, when detailed, though not always accurate, knowledge of the sect, its doctrines and its origins, reach the Sunnī world. The third stage is marked by the famous Baghdād manifesto, denouncing the Fāṭimid caliphs as impostors and schismatics.

SUNNĪ HISTORICAL SOURCES

The First Stage.

The earliest account we possess is that of the great Sunnī historian Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr aṭ-Ṭabarī (d. 311/922). Ṭabarī obviously represents the earliest stage of Sunnī knowledge regarding the Bāṭinī movement. He has little acquaintance with the doctrines of the sects, or with their inner differentiations. In spite of his noting that the Carmathian leaders in Syria claimed descent from Muhammad b. Ismā'īl, he does not think of connecting them with the Fāṭimid pretender whose appearance he mentions in N. Africa. His viewpoint on the whole may be taken as representing that of the average Baghdādī of his day, possessing little information beyond the actual reports of events and occasional scraps of doctrine. Ṭabarī's account, which begins in 278/891, with the first Carmathian mission in 'Irāq, and ends in 294/906 with the suppression of the Carmathian revolt in Syria, is purely factual, and, except

for a brief notice of an alleged Carmathian book, makes no attempt to discuss the doctrines of the sect.

Ṭabarī's history was resumed and continued till 320/932 by 'Arīb b. Sa'd of Cordoba (d. 370/980). Under the years 291, 293, and 294, 'Arīb recapitulates the events of those years as set forth in Ṭabarī, and continues the story with an account of the activities of the Carmathians in Baḥrain under Abū Sa'īd and Abū Ṭāhir. Quite separately from this, 'Arīb gives a detailed history of the Fāṭimid *da'wa* in N. Africa, and the final victory of the Mahdī 'Ubaidallah. It is to be noted that he too makes no connection between the two movements.

Mas'ūdī (d. 344/956), in both his *Tanbīh* and his *Murūj*, devotes a few pages to the Carmathians, carrying their history on to the death of Abū Ṭāhir in 332/944. Mas'ūdī obviously represents a later stage of Sunnī knowledge regarding the Carmathians than does Ṭabarī. He has read Ibn Rizām,[1] he is acquainted with Bāṭinī doctrine to the point of knowing about the esoteric system of interpretation and the grades of initiation. Finally, he is aware of the connections between the Carmathians and the Fāṭimids in Yemen and N. Africa.[2]

Unfortunately, Mas'ūdī does little more than mention these things, the passages in the *Tanbīh* being merely a recapitulation of his own more detailed works on the subject. These, alas, are lost. Nor is it possible to determine exactly the sources of Mas'ūdī's knowledge, though it would seem, from his general tone and from one or two remarks, that much of it was obtained at first hand, from conversations with the Carmathians themselves.

Although, therefore, in knowledge, Mas'ūdī goes beyond the other historians of the first stage, and even beyond some of the second, we must place him here owing to the paucity of detail that he gives us, and to the fact that his work does not go beyond the year 332/944.

The only other important historian of this period is Ḥamza of Isfāhān (fourth/ninth century). His account of the Carmathians is limited to their military exploits, and

[1] *V. infra*, p 6. [2] *Tanbīh*, 389 Tr. 495

makes no reference either to their beliefs or to their connections. It is interesting, however, for the picture it gives us of the disturbed state of Baghdād and the Empire during those troublous years, of the continuous discord and civil war, the grave social and economic crisis, and the acute conflict of classes between the *Khāṣṣa* (aristocracy) and the *'Āmma* (common people) of the capital. This picture does much to explain the atmosphere of discord and discontent in which revolutionary Carmathianism emerged and flourished.

The Second Stage.

For the period after 320, De Goeje was forced to rely on later sources like the *Kitāb al-'Uyūn* and Ibn al-Athīr (d. 631/1234). Since then, however, a number of late 'Abbāsid chronicles have been published, notably those of Hilāl aṣ-Ṣābī (d. 447/1055) and Miskawaih (d. 421/1030), both of which contain much useful information.

During a recent visit to Cairo I had the good fortune to acquire a manuscript of what appears to be a fragment of the lost history of Thābit b. Sinān the Ṣābian (d. 365/974), the grandson of the famous physician Thābit b. Qurra.[1]

I shall reserve a more detailed discussion of the manuscript for an edition of the text which I hope to publish shortly. Suffice it to say here that the manuscript is dated 1057/1647, and was made from a copy written in 577/1181, which in turn was made from a copy of the author's own manuscript. There seems to me to be no good reason for doubting the authenticity of the manuscript.

Thābit gives the history of the Carmathians in Baḥrain, Syria and Mesopotamia from their origins until the year of his death. His account of the war between the Fāṭimid Caliph Mu'izz and the Carmathians is particularly detailed, and bears every sign of being a contemporary record. Thābit's account is followed closely by Miskawaih and Ibn al-Athīr, of which it seems to have constituted the main source for the period.

Thābit represents a more advanced stage of knowledge

[1] On Thābit and his history see Chwolsson, *Ssabier*, I, 579

than does Ṭabarī. In several ways he shows himself to be aware of a connection between the Carmathians and the N. African Fāṭimids. Yet he does not say anything of their doctrine, nor is he aware of the earlier history of the sect, before its public eruption. The names of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ and 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ are not mentioned, and it does not occur to him to question the Fāṭimid legitimacy of 'Ubaidallah, to whom he invariably refers as *"al-Fāṭimī al-'Alawī."*

Before passing to the third stage, a word is necessary in justification of the inclusion of Thābit b. Sinān among the Sunnī sources. As is well known, the author's family were all Ṣābians, and he himself was of that faith. Like other Ṣābian writers, however, he assimilates himself completely to the Sunnī point of view, and is not distinguishable from them, as are, for example, the Twelver Shī'īs, in his choice of sources and his method of approach. His history was much appreciated and frequently utilised by Sunnī scholars, and cannot be separated from the Sunnī historical tradition.

The Third Stage.

In the third stage, the knowledge of Ismā'īlī doctrines possessed by Sunnī writers has reached a far greater degree of development. Fairly detailed information on Ismā'īlī doctrines is available, and, notably, what we may term the proto-history of the sect—the history of its early secret development, before its propaganda first burst upon public notice—is far better known.

The earliest known writer of this third stage is Abū 'Abdallah b. Rizām (or Razzām), who lived probably in the early part of the fourth/tenth century. Although he would seem to have been a theological rather than an historical writer, he may be included among the historical sources, owing to the fact that his account is preserved in works which belong rather to the historical group of writings, and to the fact that he does mark the beginning of a definite trend of historiography on the Carmathians. Among the historians who follow the lines laid down by him in their

accounts of the Carmathians, we may mention the Niẓām al-Mulk, Ibn Shaddād, Abū'l-Fidā and Rashīd ad-Dīn.

The original work of Ibn Rizām is lost, but it was utilised extensively by one Akhū Muḥsin, an 'Alid who was roughly contemporary with Mu'izz.[1] It is to Maqrīzī that we owe the knowledge that Akhū Muḥsin's account was copied from that of Ibn Rizām.[2] Maqrīzī adds that he himself does not believe Ibn Rizām's account of Fāṭimid origins. In view of this harsh judgment on Ibn Rizām and his follower Akhū Muḥsin, it is curious that Maqrīzī makes such extensive and frequently unacknowledged use of it in his various writings.[3]

The text of Akhū Muḥsin is preserved for us in two versions. The first of these is in Maqrīzī, who gives the doctrinal part in his *Khiṭaṭ*[4] and the historical part in his *Muqaffā*.[5] The other, and better, version is contained in the *Nihāyat al Arab* of Nuwairī (d. 732/1331), an encyclopaedia of literature and history. Nuwairī's account is in the part that has not yet been published, and is preserved in two manuscripts, one in Paris and one in Istanbul.[6] The version of Akhū Muḥsin is also given briefly by Maqrīzī in his *Iṭṭi'āẓ*. Ibn Rizām is quoted directly by the *Fihrist*.[7] He is mentioned in the list of writers on the Carmathians of whom Mas'ūdī[8] speaks so slightingly. Casanova[9] regards this as "la condamnation formelle" of Ibn Rizām.

On the whole, however, one must judge the general reliability of Ibn Rizām in a rather more favourable light. As has been already remarked, Maqrīzī's censure of him loses greatly in effectiveness by the fact that Maqrīzī himself makes extensive use of him. Casanova,[10] too, has noticed that despite Mas'ūdī's criticism of Ibn Rizām, his own account differs little from that which he condemns. The discovery of actual Ismā'īlī documents has tended on the whole to confirm Ibn Rizām's statements. Ivanow[11]

[1] Sacy, I, *Intro*, 74, *Iṭṭi'āẓ* 11 Casanova, *La Doctrine Secrète*, p 9, note 1.
[2] *Iṭṭi'āẓ*, 12 Quatremère, 117. Fagnan, 39 [3] E g in the Khiṭaṭ.
[4] I, 391. Tr. Casanova, *La Doctrine Secrète*.
[5] Trans. Quatremère and Fagnan [6] See Bibliography. [7] 186
[8] *Tanbīh*, 395 Tr 501 [9] *La Doctrine Secrète*, 36.
[10] *Ibid*, 37. [11] *Creed*, 14.

notes that the formula of oath given by Ibn Rizām corresponds closely with that still in use among the Ismā'īlīs of India, and that the doctrines he attributes to the Ismā'īlīs "fit very well" with those of an Ismā'īlī treatise by Naṣīr ad-Dīn Ṭūsī,[1] though, it should be observed, there is no trace there of the nine degrees of initiation mentioned by Ibn Rizām, and also to be found in other writers.

Of the historical defects of Ibn Rizām we shall speak later.

With Ibn Rizām, the names of Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son 'Abdallah appear in Sunnī history books, the Fāṭimid movement is traced back to its origins in their côterie, the relationship between Fāṭimids and Carmathians is established, and the pedigree of the Fāṭimid caliphs called into doubt, all for the first time.

In 402/1011 was published in Baghdād the famous anti-Fāṭimid manifesto, in which some of the assertions of Ibn Rizām were publicly proclaimed. 'Ubaidallah, the first Fāṭimid caliph, is asserted to have been in reality one Sa'īd, a descendant of Daiṣān, founder of the Daiṣānī (Bardesanian?) sect, and himself a dualist and an infidel. 'Abdallah b. Maimūn and his father are not, however, mentioned.

This manifesto, supplemented by the extra details given by Ibn Rizām, remained the basis of most anti-Fāṭimid writing.

Among the later Sunnī sources only one need be noticed here, as it is utilised for the first time in this study. In the Yemenite chronicles published and translated by H. C. Kay, there is a brief account of the Carmathians in Yemen, extracted from the *Kitāb as-Sulūk* of Bahā ad-Dīn al-Janadī (d. 732/1331). Al-Janadī quotes as his sole authority one Abū 'Abdallah Muḥammad b. Mālik b. Abī'l-Qabā'il, "a jurist of Yemen and a learned Sunnī. He was one of the persons who joined the Carmathian sect in the days of the Ṣulaiḥī,[2] and he acquired a thorough knowledge of its

[1] *An Ismailitic Work by Nasir*, 534

[2] The Ismā'īlī dā'ī 'Alī b. Muḥammad (429–483/1037–1080), founder of the Ismā'īlī Ṣulaiḥid dynasty in Yemen.

character. On becoming convinced of the depravity of the Carmathian doctrines, he abjured them, and he composed a celebrated treatise, in which he has described the principles upon which they are founded, he demonstrates their wickedness, and warns his readers against their deceptions."[1]

Early in 1939 a work was published in Cairo which would appear to be the treatise in question. It is called *Kashf Asrār al-Bāṭinīya wa-Akhbār al-Qarāmiṭa*, and the author's name is given as Muḥammad b. Mālik b. Abī'l-Faḍā'il al-Ḥammādi al-Yamānī. From the text it would seem that the author was a contemporary of the Fāṭimid Caliph Mustanṣir (427–87/1035–94).

We have thus concluded our survey of the main trends in Sunnī historiography. There are, of course, many important historians whose names have not been mentioned. These will be referred to where necessary.[2]

Before proceeding, however, to a more detailed discussion of the specific points at issue, it will be necessary to extend our survey to include other groups of sources, namely, (1) the Sunnī non-historical sources; (2) the Twelver Shī'ī sources; (3) the Ismā'īlī and near Ismā'īlī sources.

SUNNĪ THEOLOGICAL SOURCES

As is to be expected, a movement as widespread and as subversive as Bāṭinism occupies an important place in Sunnī theological literature. A considerable quantity of polemic writings was produced by orthodox theologians, from which it is possible to gain, if not a knowledge of Bāṭinī doctrines, at least an impression of the effect they had on Sunnī observers.

Slightly less prejudiced are the works on the history of religions, a science that reached a high degree of development in mediaeval Islām.

For obvious reasons, the greater part of this literature deals with the theological and doctrinal aspects of Bāṭinism rather than with the history of the movement, and thus falls beyond the scope of the present study. There are, however,

[1] Kay, 191

[2] For a survey of sources on the rise of the Fāṭimids, see Becker, *Beiträge*, I, 2–11

scattered bits of historical information in these sources which make an examination worth while.

The main historical value of these works is that they describe not only the Ismā'īlī movement in the strict sense of the word, but the whole welter of extremist Shī'ī sects from which Ismā'īlism as an organised system evolved, with a wealth of detail which we cannot hope to find in the strictly historical sources. The theologians, it is true, have many defects which vitiate their reliability. They are violently prejudiced against the sects they describe, and have no interest in presenting a clear and accurate picture of their development. Often enough they are ill-informed, and attribute to the sectaries doctrines which the latter themselves would reject in horror. Mas'ūdī[1] speaks with scorn of the polemists, of their unwillingness to understand and their readiness to condemn. How then should one expect them to distinguish accurately between conflicting groups of heretics? Then again, many of them are bound by a tradition attributed to the prophet, according to which the Islāmic community would break up into seventy-three sects.[2] This number is the Procrustean bed into which most Islāmic heresiologies have been fitted, by more or less violent means.

In spite of these faults, however, it is possible, by a careful comparison of the different versions, and—most important of all—by means of the Twelver Shī'ī and Ismā'īlī sources now available, to establish a critical account of the growth of the early extremist sects, and their culmination in the Ismā'īlī *da'wa*. This task will be attempted in our first chapter. For the moment let us review briefly the most important of the Sunnī theological sources, including one not hitherto known.[3]

The earliest extant classification of Islāmic sects is the *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn* of the great scholastic Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 321/933), a work which attempts a detailed, and on the whole reasonable, survey of the subject. Ash'arī was followed by Malaṭī (d. 377/987), who is concerned with

[1] *Tanbīh*, 395, Tr 501 [2] Abū Da'ūd, 259.
[3] For a survey of early polemic literature, see Goldziher, *Ghazālī*, 14 ff

refuting rather than with explaining, but who nevertheless supplies a few interesting details.

More detailed than either of these is the theologian Abū Manṣūr 'Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), an Ash'arite scholastic who, in his *Farq bain al-Firaq*, provides us with a detailed survey of the Shī'ī sects, their separate histories and their doctrines. In his chapter on the Bāṭinīya, Baghdādī gives a lengthy historical account, apparently based, with some variations, on the Ibn Rizām version.

Brief accounts of Bāṭinī origins and doctrines are also to be found in the *Bayān al-Adyān* of Abū'l-Ma'ālī (completed in 485/1092) and in the first great Muslim history of religions, the *Faṣl fī'l-Milal wa'n-Niḥal* of Ibn Ḥazm (d. 459/1064).

Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), the successor of Ibn Ḥazm in religious history, also surveys the field. His attitude is surprisingly tolerant, and he has clearly made use of Ismā'īlī sources. Shahrastānī's work, however, is concerned almost exclusively with doctrine, and supplies very little historical information.

In a passage recently edited and commented by Dr. P. Kraus,[1] Fakhr ad-Dīn Rāzī, the great Qur'ānic commentator, makes an extremely interesting analysis of Shahrastānī's work. It is, he says, a piece of shameless plagiarism from beginning to end, being merely a copy of a number of other works. The part with which we are concerned, namely, that dealing with the Islāmic sects, is, he says, based on the *Farq* of Baghdādī, who, owing to his extreme fanaticism, did not bother to reproduce faithfully the ideas of his opponents. The only passage worthy of note is that dealing with Ḥasan i Sabbāḥ, for there Shahrastānī used an authentic document, translating it into Arabic from the Persian original.

As Dr. Kraus points out, Rāzī's strictures on Shahrastānī are in the main justified, though in a number of passages, and notably that dealing with the Kayyālīya sect, Shahrastānī does appear to have used other sources. His

[1] *Les "Controverses,"* 205 ff. and 212 ff.

general attitude, too, is more liberal than that of Baghdādī, and his acquaintance with Ismā'īlī doctrine far more detailed. It may be mentioned in passing that Shahrastānī was himself accused of being an Ismā'īlī.[1]

One of the most important Sunnī works dealing with the Bāṭinīya is the "Refutation" of Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), analysed and partly published by Goldziher. This work, too, deals mainly with doctrine, and falls beyond our purview. The references to the general character of the Bāṭinī movement will be considered later. We may note in passing that Fakhr ad-Dīn Rāzī, in the passage quoted above, accuses Ghazālī of having misunderstood the Ismā'īlī thesis, and finds his refutation very faulty. There is extant an Ismā'īlī reply to Ghazālī's work by a Yemenite *dā'ī* of the seventh/thirteenth century.[2]

Among the theologians we may include the Ḥanbalī polygraph Jamāl ad-Dīn b. al-Jawzī (d. 577/1200), who in two passages gives us a short account of the Bāṭinī movements, based in the main on Ṭabarī, Ibn Rizām and Ghazālī.

To this list of theological sources must be added one which is still in manuscript, and is here utilised for the first time.

The author was the Qāḍī'l-Quḍāt 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār, a Mu'tazilī divine who died in 415 or 416/1024–5. He was a pupil of Ibn 'Ayyāsh, and he was the head of the Mu'tazila during his period.[3]

Professor H. Ritter[4] has already called attention to a manuscript copy of a work entitled *Kitāb Tathbīt Dalā'il Nubuwwat Sayyidnā Muḥammad*—"Establishment of the Proofs of the Prophethood of our master Muḥammad"—by this author, contained in the Şehid Ali Paşa Library in Istanbul. The manuscript contains 294 folios, of which folios 143–153 deal with the Bāṭinī movement. 'Abd al-Jabbār made use of Ibn Rizām, to whom he refers by name, but his version is in many respects original, and

[1] Guillaume, *Nihāyat*, p. xi. [2] Ivanow, *Guide*, p 56, No 220
[3] Subkī, III, 114 Arnold, Mahdī Ahmad, 66
[4] *Philologica*, p 34, No. 18.

contains much new information. His work is quoted as an authority by several later historians.[1]

This, then, concludes our survey of the two main groups of Sunnī sources, illustrating the gradual growth of Sunnī knowledge about the Bāṭinīya. There are, of course, others. In travel-books, literary and philosophic writings, and other works, we shall find much valuable information, which will be utilised in the following chapters. None of these, however, warrants a separate consideration. It remains for us to review briefly the non-Sunnī sources for our subject.

TWELVER SHĪ'Ī SOURCES

Apart from the above-mentioned, there is also available a considerable mass of material relative to the early history of the sects in the biographical and bibliographical compendia of the Twelver or moderate Shī'a. This literature was quite unknown to De Sacy, De Goeje and other early investigators, and indeed its importance has only recently been pointed out by M. Massignon.[2]

Naturally enough, the moderate Shī'a were in closer contact with the Ismā'īlīs than were the orthodox Sunnīs and had a more detailed knowledge of their history and tenets. Abū'l-'Alā al-Ma'arrī[3] tells us that the Twelver Shī'a still respected the memory of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, and quoted him as an authority for traditions related by him before his "apostasy." This statement is amply borne out by a study of Shī'ī biographical works, where 'Abdallah b. Maimūn and other notorious extremists (*ghulāt*) are cited as traditionists, and many valuable details given regarding them which cannot be found elsewhere.

The earliest and most interesting of these works is the *Ma'rifat Akhbār ar-Rijāl* of Abū 'Amr Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Kashshī, which has come down to us in a later abridgement by Ṭūsī. Kashshī, who lived at some time in the fourth/tenth century, was a pupil of the renowned Shī'ī scholars Abū'l-Qāsim Naṣr b. Sabbāḥ

[1] *Nujūm*, II, 443–6 Abū Shāma, II, 201. Suyūṭi-*Ta'rīkh*, 3 Fagnan, Maqrīzī See further, Becker, *Beiträge*, 5 Brockelmann, I, 411 and 418
[2] *Esquisse* and art *Karmatians* in EI. [3] *Ghufrān*, 156

al-Balkhī and Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd al-'Ayyashī as-Samarqandī, the former of whom was himself an extremist. Kashshī's work, which is a collection of traditions about great men of the Shī'a sect, is a mine of information.[1]

Supplementing Kashshī we have a number of later works, all biographical and bibliographical compendia, among which the most important are those of Najāshī (d. 450/1058), Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192) and Astarābādī (d. 1028/1618).[2]

Apart from these compilations, there are two books by Twelver Shī'ī authors which also shed some light on our subject. These are two works on sects and religions, and are the only works on the subject by Shī'ī authors that are extant. They reveal a closer knowledge of the subject than is possessed by Sunnīs, and are free from some, though not all, of the latter's prejudices.

The first of these is the *Firaq ash-Shī'a*, a work on Shī'ī sects, ascribed to Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā an-Nawbakhtī (d. before 310/922). This book is a survey of Shī'ī and related sects from the death of 'Alī until the disappearance of the twelfth Imām of the Twelvers. It is written in a remarkably dispassionate style, and contains much information on the early history of the Ismā'īlīs.

The author is a rather lukewarm Shī'ī, and appears to use Sunnī sources as much as Shī'ī ones. In some respects he is no better informed than his Sunnī contemporaries, and he does not make any mention of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn. He does, however, provide us with a detailed picture of the pre-Ismā'īlī sects clustering around Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya, Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, thus giving us a historical framework into which we may fit the biographical material in Kashshī and his followers.

It should be mentioned in passing that Abbas Eghbal, in his brilliant monograph, *Khānedāne Nawbakht*,[3] rejects the authorship of Nawbakhtī, whose book of the same name is, he says, lost. The true author was one Sa'd b. 'Abdallah

[1] On Kashshī, see Eghbal, *Khānedāne*, 140, and *Hadīyat*, 226.
[2] For further details on these and other Twelver Shī'ī authors, see Rieu, Brit. Mus. Suppl Cat of Arabic MSS., p 422 ff.
[3] P. 140 ff.

al-Ash'arī (d. 299 or 301/911–913). M. Eghbal bases his assertion on a number of passages in Kashshī and others, where texts identical with the Firaq are referred to Ash'arī.

The other book is the *Tabṣirat al-'Awāmm*, a Persian work, of uncertain authorship, but ascribed to Sayyid Murtaḍa b. Dā'ī Ḥusnī Rāzī (early seventh/thirteenth century).

ISMĀ'ILĪ SOURCES

For a long time the Ismā'īlīs were judged exclusively on the evidence of their bitterest opponents, their own literature, thanks to Sunnī censorship and Ismā'īlī secrecy, having almost completely disappeared in the Near East. A few fragments collected among the Ismā'īlīs of Central Syria were published by Guyard, one or two others found among the Ismā'īlīs of Central Asia were noticed in Russian periodicals. In 1905 Griffini found a number of Ismā'īlī works in the Yemen, some of which he reviewed briefly in an article. During the following years, thanks to the efforts principally of W. Ivanow and H. F. Hamdani, the treasures of the Ismā'īlī libraries of India were made known, a number of Ismā'īlī works in European libraries were identified and others acquired. By now a fair amount of this literature is available, in private and public collections, and a number of texts have been published, translated and studied by various scholars.

By far the greater part of the new Ismā'īlī material is, however, religious and philosophical in character, and surprisingly little has been added to our knowledge of the early history of the sect. Moreover, no book earlier than the reign of the first Fāṭimid caliph has yet been found (with the possible exception of the *Umm al-Kitāb* of the Ismā'īlīs of Central Asia), and the point of view they represent is that of the emasculated official Fāṭimid *da'wa* rather than the earlier revolutionary period.

The principal Ismā'īlī historical work is the *'Uyūn al-Akhbār* of the *dā'ī* Idrīs of Yemen,[1] a seven-volume history of Ismā'īlism from the marriage of 'Alī until the

[1] Ivanow, *Guide*, 62

author's own day (ninth/fifteenth century). This work, except for a few extracts published by Hamdani in *Der Islam*, is still in manuscript, and I have not been able to consult a copy.

An earlier work is the *Iftitāḥ ad-Da'wa wa ibtidā ad-Dawla*, by the Qāḍī Nu'mān (chief Qāḍī of Mu'izz).[1] This work, a history of the Fāṭimid *da'wa* in Yemen and N. Africa until the establishment of the caliphate, is of considerable value. It is still in manuscript, but I have a copy in my personal possession, and am preparing an edition of it.

Directly or indirectly based on these and other Ismā'īlī historical books are two modern works by Ismā'īlī writers, both in the Arabic language, but one written in India and the other in Syria. The first of these is the *Riyāḍ al-Jinān* of Sharaf 'Alī Sīdhpūrī, printed in Bombay 1277/1860. This work is addressed to the general Islāmic public, and the author makes no reference to his being an Ismā'īlī. The work, however, is strongly Ismā'īlī in tendency, and the historic chapters are based on Ismā'īlī sources. There are some interesting passages, though the exoteric character of the work prevents any serious revelations from being made.

The other is *al-Falak ad-Dawwār fi Samā al-A'imma al-Aṭhār*, a general survey of Ismā'īlism published in Aleppo in 1356/1933 by Shaikh 'Abdallah b. Murtaḍā, an Ismā'īlī functionary in Khawābī. The author has apparently had access to Bohra books, but the historical part is based mainly on Sunnī sources and is not of great value.

Apart from the professedly historical works, there are also occasional historical notes and references in dogmatic and theological works. These, where they occur, are probably more reliable than the directly historical writings, because whereas the historical books are considered to be *Ẓāhir*, or exoteric, the secret books on *Ḥaqā'iq* and *'Aqā'id* are often esoteric, reserved for the chosen few, and thus may contain information withheld from the masses. A striking example of this is the short historical note in the *Ghāyat al-Mawālīd*, a secret work on doctrine, in which it is admitted that 'Ubaidallah al-Mahdī was not an 'Alid.

[1] *Ibid*, 40.

(See below.) This is, of course, strongly denied in the historical writings of the Qāḍī Nu'mān (it is even possible that the Qāḍī, who was never initiated into the highest ranks of the *da'wa*, was himself unaware of this), in the *'Uyūn al-Akhbār*, and in modern Ismā'īlī writings.

Among the Ismā'īlī sources we must include two travellers both strongly pro-Fāṭimid, and the latter at least a profoundly convinced Ismā'īlī. In the travel-records of Ibn Ḥawqal (late fourth/tenth century) and Nāṣir i Khusraw (d. 481/1088), we have interesting first-hand descriptions by unprejudiced observers of the Carmathian state in Baḥrain and its internal organisation.

A fair amount of information may be gathered also from the books of groups which, if not actually Ismā'īlī, are closely related to Ismā'īlism. The most notable of these is the *Rasā'il Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā*, a store of information on doctrinal and philosophic matters, containing quite a few hints of historic value. More immediately useful are the Druze scriptures, representing as they do an early and relatively pure Ismā'īlī current, and, owing to their special character as the scriptures of a secret revolutionary sect, less reserved than the official Fāṭimid literature.

Such, then, are the sources that tell the story of the Bāṭinī movement. It is a story bristling with inner contradictions and inconsistencies, full of unanswered questions. The task before us is to attempt, by means of a critical evaluation and confrontation of these sources, to give a clear and connected account of the events they describe.

Before proceeding to an enumeration of the problems involved and an attempt at their solution, it is perhaps useful to mention briefly the main difficulties that block our path. The first of these, already referred to, is the ignorance and sometimes deliberate bad faith of the anti-Bāṭinī writers who form one of our main sources of information. The second is the secret and esoteric character of the movement itself, concealing its doctrines and its personalities, not only from its opponents, but even from a large part of its own adherents—those who are not initiated into the inner mysteries. Many of the Bāṭinī works thus deliberately

conceal and even falsify certain vital facts, if they are intended for general consumption. A third is the fact that owing to the conditions of difficulty and persecution under which the movement lived, a large number of its most important leaders were constantly in hiding, and appeared in different places under a variety of aliases, which makes their very identity uncertain. Finally, there is the curious doctrine of *tafwīḍ*, or spiritual adoption, according to which words like *Abū* and *Ibn* (father and son) may connote a relation of teacher and pupil rather than physical father and son. This, as will readily be seen, renders most Bāṭinī genealogies suspect, and increases the difficulty of establishing the true identity of various persons.

Our problem is largely one of classification and identification. During the centuries of its activity, the Bāṭinī movement, owing to the wide dispersion and secret character of its missions, was split into a large number of fairly distinct groups, with different names and local traditions. Some of these form part of the central core of organisation—others are offshoots, dependent on the main centres, but, owing to the distance and the difficulty of communications, diverging in character under local influences. Others, too, are sects, originally unconnected with the Bāṭinī movement, which have, however, thrown their lot in with it and accepted its central authority. This authority, however, is often merely nominal, and the groups go on very much in their old way. Yet another group is composed of sects which have little or no actual connection with the Bāṭinīya, and which have quite a separate origin and character. Though there may occasionally have been a limited kind of co-operation, the connection of these with the Bāṭinīya is largely a figment of anti-Bāṭinī imagination. In this group we can almost certainly place such sects as the Khurramīya and other strictly Iranian heresies.

This regional and doctrinal diversity has given us a host of names, which are applied by most authorities indiscriminately to one sect or another, thus causing great confusion. Long lists of such names, with their regional applications, will be found in the *Siyāsat Nāme* and Ibn

al-Jawzī. In order to avoid confusion, the word Bāṭinī is here used to designate the whole group of movements under consideration, as being the widest and most generally accepted. Other terms used will be strictly defined.

In the welter of sects and sub-sects revealed to us by our sources, it is possible to distinguish four chief groups, each of which forms a distinct unity, with a more or less homogeneous character and a separate tradition and history, to be found in most or all sources. It is the relation between these movements that constitutes the crux of the problem. They are as follows:—

(1) The early Ismā'īlī *da'wa*—i.e. the movement which, in the second century A.H., centred on Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, his son Muḥammad and the côteric immediately surrounding them. This is the group revealed to us by the Twelver Shī'ī sources.

(2) The *da'wa* which, beginning in the Yemen under the famous Manṣūr, and continuing in N. Africa under Abū 'Abdallah ash-Shī'ī, culminated in the establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate.

(3) The Syro-Mesopotamian, movement sometimes called Carmathian, which, under the leadership of Zikrawaih b. Mihrawaih and his sons, ravaged Syria from 289–294 A.H. (901–906).

(4) The Qarāmiṭa, or Carmathians properly so-called, i.e. the movement in Baḥrain, under Abū Sa'īd, Abū Ṭāhir and their successors.

These four groups appear in all our sources. Where authorities, both ancient and modern, differ is in the determining of the relationships between them, and the allocation to one or another of prominent personalities such as 'Abdallah b. Maimūn. Upon the correct answer to these questions depends also the vexed problem of Fāṭimid legitimacy. In the following pages the four groups will be referred to respectively as Ismā'īlī, Fāṭimid, Syro-Mesopotamian, and Carmathian.

Before stating our own answer to the question, it is perhaps useful to review briefly the answers given by others. The Arabic sources we have already seen. For Ṭabarī the

Fāṭimids are what they claim to be, i.e. by implication, the successors of group 1. Groups 3 and 4 are one and the same—quite unconnected with 1 and 2. Ṯhābit suspects a connection, but follows Ṭabarī on the whole. Ibn Rizām, and all who follow him, identify the Fāṭimids with the Carmathians, place 'Abdallah b. Maimūn among the latter, and make him the true ancestor of the Fāṭimid Caliphs. They thus deny the Fāṭimids or the Carmathians any connection with group 1, or at best regard them as usurpers of Ismā'īl's family claims. Most argument since has been along these lines, and those who accept the legitimacy of the Fāṭimids usually do so by denying them any connection with the Carmathians or with 'Abdallah b. Maimūn.

Among European scholars opinion has been divided.[1] Earlier writers—De Sacy, Dozy, Hammer, Quatremère, Guyard, Blochet and De Goeje—all tended to base themselves mainly on the Ibn Rizām version in its broad lines. Ismā'īlīs, Fāṭimids and Carmathians were all different names for one single movement. It began with the creation of a separate group supporting the claims of the Imām Ismā'īl as against his brothers, but was completely reorganised and given its specific doctrinal and organisational character by the evil genius of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, an anti-Islāmic infidel who flourished some time during the third century A.H. Thus far there is unanimity. Sacy and Blochet are inclined to allow despite all this that the Fātimid Caliphs were really 'Alids—a claim which is rejected by Dozy, Quatremère, Guyard and De Goeje.

The appearance of new source materials has caused a certain change of front among Orientalists. The first serious divergence is to be found in Casanova. He, while recognising the identity of the Ismā'īlī and the Fāṭimid movements, regards the Carmathians as a separate group of earlier origin, which was later won over to Ismā'īlism. He places the life and activities of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ in the second century, A.H., and credits him with the creation of the united Bāṭinī movement by welding together the two great wings of the 'Alid movement, the

[1] For these general references see the Bibliography

Fāṭimīya, or followers of the descendants of Fāṭima, and the Ḥanafīya, or followers of the line of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya. The Carmathians *stricto sensu* belonged to the latter group.

Ivanow, following the modern Ismā'īlī apologists, rejects all contact between the Fāṭimid-Ismā'īlīs on the one hand and the Carmathians on the other. The latter, he asserts, were as hateful to the Fāṭimids as to the orthodox, and there was considerable doctrinal difference. The names of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn, Dindān, etc., are unknown in Ismā'īlī literature, thus showing that they can have had no connection with early Ismā'īlism. Ivanow has no hesitation in accepting the legitimacy of the Fāṭimid Caliphs.

For Massignon, Ismā'īlīs, Fāṭimids and Carmathians all form one and the same movement, which was founded in the second/eighth century by the Imām Ismā'īl, his teacher and guide Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ and other contemporaries. The Fāṭimid Caliphs were descended from Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ. Massignon, however, stresses the importance of the Ismā'īlī doctrine of spiritual adoption (*v. infra*), according to which the pupil, not the physical son, is the true heir. The Fāṭimid Caliphs were thus 'Alids in a spiritual sense, 'Abdallah b. Maimūn having been adopted as son and heir by Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl the Imām.

For Guidi, the first impulse came from Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, a follower of Ja'far and Ismā'īl, who was strongly influenced by the Khurramdīnān and other Iranian heresies. It was he who was the true founder of Ismā'īlism. One of his followers, 'Abdallah b. Maimūn, founded the Carmathian sect. The Fāṭimid Caliphs were descendants of 'Abdallah, and their *da'wa* a part of the Carmathian movement. Once the dynasty was established, however, the Carmathian doctrines were moderated to some extent, and conflict ensued with the purists in the East.

One other view which may briefly be mentioned here is that of Prince Mamour. He admits the descent of the Fāṭimid Caliphs from Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, but claims that the latter himself was an 'Alid, none other than Muḥammad b.

Ismā'īl. The Carmathians were a heretical offshoot of the Ismā'īlī *da'wa*. It has already been pointed out by Prof. H. A. R. Gibb[1] that by making this the last defence of Fāṭimid legitimacy Mamour has put his case in a very weak position.

It remains then to sketch my own answer to the problems involved. The following propositions, it will be seen, owe much to the work of Massignon, Casanova, Ivanow, Hamdani and others, and also to a number of new sources. The following chapters of this study constitute an attempt to prove them.

(1) The Ismā'īlī movement began in the personal côterie of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, with the active co-operation of Ismā'īl himself and his son Muḥammad. Among the companions of Ismā'īl and Muḥammad, and the first organisers of the sect, were Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ and the latter's son 'Abdallah.

(2) The Fāṭimid movement in Yemen and N. Africa was the direct continuation of that organised by Ismā'īl, Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ. 'Ubaidallah al-Mahdī was the direct descendant and successor in leadership of Maimūn. The Fāṭimid Caliphs were nevertheless genuine 'Alids, the first of them being al-Qā'im, descendant of the hidden Imāms for whom 'Ubaidallah and his Qaddāḥid progenitors were working.

(3) It does not necessarily follow from this that Carmathian ≡ Ismā'īlī. 'Abdallah b. Maimūn was one of the founders of Ismā'īlism. It is his connection with the Carmathians which remains to be proved.

(4) The Syro-Mesopotamian Carmathians were part of the Ismā'īlī *da'wa*.

(5) The Carmathian movement in Baḥrain was separate in origin—possibly Ḥanafī, or dissident Ismā'īlī—but later adhered as a group to the Fāṭimid Caliphs, while retaining its separate identity. The name Carmathian probably dates from after their conversion to Ismā'īlism.

(6) The later conflict between the Carmathians and the Fāṭimids was due to a split between moderates and extremists after the establishment of the Fāṭimid state.

[1] B S O.S., VII, 984.

Chapter I

ISMĀ'ĪLI ORIGINS

(*a*) *Introductory.*

Before examining in detail the origins of the Ismā'īlī movement, it is necessary to attempt a preliminary survey of the Shī'a sects and tendencies from which it grew. The history of first century Shī'ism is a subject still requiring much investigation, and the following account must be regarded as tentative and provisional. It is based in its detail on the *Firaq aṣh-Shī'a* of Nawbakhtī—at once the fullest and the most reliable source. Other sources have been used, however, and full use made of the work of Van Vloten, Wellhausen, Guidi and others.

Shī'ism began with the death of Muhammad, as a purely political movement, demanding that 'Alī be the successor of the Prophet. During its first period it was an Arab movement, expressing legitimist aspirations and untouched by the social and religious ideas and problems of the Near Eastern world. For the first half century of the Islāmic era Shī'ism retained this non-religious character. The supporters of 'Alī and the 'Alids—the *Ahl an-Naṣṣ wa't-ta'yīn*, as they were called—differed in no way from the rest of the community as regards religious beliefs, and their party was considered a *tashayyu' ḥasan*, a lawful partisanship. The faction was purely Arab, and made no attempt to gain the sympathy or the support of the subject races.[1]

After several decades of Islāmic settlement and dominion in the more cultured lands of the Near and Middle East, new conditions were created, and the Shī'ī movement was transformed into something entirely different. Having failed as an Arab faction, the Shī'a strove to obtain victory as a Muslim sect. The discontents and grievances of the

[1] Van Vloten, 34 ff Guidi, *Storia*, 307 ff, and R S O, 3, 14, etc

mawālī, the non-Arab converts to Islām, provided a fertile recruiting ground for any revolutionary movement, and, once it had turned decisively towards them, the Shī'a sect soon had a large *mawlā* following in many parts of the empire. But the entry of large numbers of superficially Islāmised Persians, Aramaeans, Syrians and others necessarily worked a fundamental change in Shī'ism as a doctrine and as a purpose. Soon a welter of strange beliefs, brought over from Christian, Iranian and Old Babylonian heresies, found their way into Shī'ī theology. The movement came to be dominated by the *mawālī* and other oppressed classes, and became the instrument of their social and religious revolt against the oppression of the orthodox state.

Later, however, as the distinction between Arab and *mawlā* came to correspond less and less with the economic distinction between privileged and unprivileged, the revolutionary Shī'a ceased to represent the *mawālī* as such, and became the mouthpiece of all the oppressed classes. The orthodox Persian Zoroastrians of the upper classes became Sunnī and retained their privileges.[1] The impoverished Arabs of 'Irāq, Syria and Baḥrain came under the influence of extreme Shī'ī ideas.

One of the characteristic marks of the change from Arab to *mawlā* Shī'ism is the appearance of the Mahdī idea. From being a political candidate for power, the Shī'ī Imām became a mysterious figure of great religious importance, at first a Messiah and later an avatar of divinity. This introduction of eschatological ideas has been ascribed to various sources. Darmesteter[2] attributes a Persian origin to the doctrine. It was, he says, imported into Islām by the masses of imperfectly Islāmised Persian converts, who brought with them the Indo-Aryan idea of a chosen, God-begotten family, transmitting the Glory of God (*Farri Yazdān*) from generation to generation, and eventually producing a *Saoshyānt* or Messiah. This conception was transferred to the family of the prophet and the personality of 'Alī. Snouck[3] prefers a Christian origin, based on the

[1] Sadighi, G. H., p. 61 [2] *Le Mahdi*, p. 15 ff.
[3] *Verspr. gesch.*, I, 152

idea of the return of Jesus and the end of the world. Guidi[1] follows Darmesteter, and goes still further in ascribing the growth of extreme ideas to a *deliberate* Iranian dualist propaganda. Massignon[2] finally regards Mahdism as an autochthonous Muslim development, growing out of the Qur'ān, the Muslim tradition and Arab folklore, and stimulated by social conditions.

Many of the Muslim historians ascribe the beginnings of revolutionary Shī'ism to one 'Abdallah b. Saba, a Yemenite Jewish contemporary of 'Alī, who preached the divinity of 'Alī during the latter's lifetime and was burned for his pains. The beginnings of extreme Shī'ism are thus ascribed to him and through him to a Jewish origin.[3] Modern research, however, has shown that this is an anticipation, a projection into the past by second-century traditionists of the conditions and ideas of their own day. Wellhausen[4] and Friedländer[5] have shown by a critique of sources that the conspiracy and mission ascribed to Ibn Saba are a later invention. Caetani,[6] too, in a well-argued chapter, has shown that a conspiracy with the ideology and organisation ascribed to Ibn Saba was inconceivable in the tribal, patriarchal Arab world of 35 A.H., and obviously reflects the conditions of early 'Abbāsid times. It required the murder of 'Alī, the dramatic martyrdom of Ḥusain and his followers at Karbalā, and a considerable social change before Shī'ism of the revolutionary, messianic type could appear.

The word Mahdī may have been used in a purely honorific and political sense to describe 'Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusain,[7] but its first indisputable use in a messianic context is in the revolt of Mukhtār in 66/685, who preached that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya, a son of 'Alī by a Ḥanafī woman, was Messiah. The revolt began in Kūfa—a city well fitted by circumstances to be the starting point and centre of such a

[1] R S O, 4
[2] Lectures at Collège de France, 1936–37
[3] Kashshī, 70–71 Van Vloten was misled by his sources into ascribing an important rôle to the Sabā'īya
[4] *Skiz*, VI, 124–5 and 133 *Rel Pol*, 91
[5] Z.A., XXIII, 296, and XXIV, 1. [6] *Annali*, VIII, 36 ff
[7] Snouck, 150 Macdonald, EI, Art *Mahdi*.

movement. A new and growing town, with a population composed of men of innumerable creeds and races, all turbulent and discontented, hating the government, the religion it represented, and the oppressing class which maintained it—such was Kūfa when Mukhtār began his revolt. It was an admirable breeding ground for syncretist, messianic movements of social revolt, and Mukhtār, by appealing to the *mawālī* for support, began a movement of far-reaching significance. As there was no 'Alid of the Fāṭimid line of suitable age available, Mukhtār selected as his Imām-Mahdī Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya, whom he made supreme representative on earth of the divine wisdom, divinely ordained successor of 'Alī and the Prophet. Despite the suppression of Mukhtār and the death of Muḥammad, the movement spread rapidly, and many of its adherents preached that Muḥammad was not really dead, but was in hiding, and would eventually return and "fill the world with justice and equity as it was full of injustice and oppression."[1] Thus appear for the first time the Messianic doctrines of *Ghaiba* (absence, concealment) and *Raj'a* (return), which are characteristic of almost all later Shī'ī sects.

For the 70 odd years intervening between the revolt of Mukhtār and the beginnings of Ismā'īlism properly so-called, there are two main trends among the revolutionary Shī'ī sects. These may conveniently be termed the Fāṭimīya and the Ḥanafīya (not to be confused with the later legal school of that name). The first of these were the followers of the various Imāms through the line of 'Alī by Fātima, i.e., Ḥasan, Ḥusain and their offspring—the second were the followers of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya and his descendants. These distinctions were never very firm, and groups of followers seem to have flitted easily from one side to the other. In the earlier period the Fāṭimīya seem to have represented the conservative wing, and were always throwing off small groups which gravitated towards the more extreme Ḥanafīya. When the latter disappeared, the Fāṭimīya, after absorbing the Ḥanafī remnants, became themselves

[1] A messianic tradition frequent in Shī'ī works.

the more extreme section, and carried on the old rivalry with the new moderate group of the Twelvers.

After the accession of the 'Abbāsids, the Ḥanafī group lost its *raison d'être*, and it was left to Ismā'īl, the seventh Fāṭimid Imām, and his associates, to unite and consolidate the different, warring factions into one great movement, professing allegiance to one Imām and one doctrine.

This survey, it should be noted, deals only with the revolutionary Shī'a, the *Ghulāt*, and does not cover those who, like the Zaidīya, continued, albeit in a much modified form, the traditions of early, political Shī'ism. The later moderate, or Twelver Shī'a are also excluded.

During the formative period mentioned, the sects are too numerous to be counted. Again and again various pretenders of 'Alid descent rise in revolt, and, on their failure, pass into mythology. Again and again does some too zealous missionary forget his 'Alid master and begin to preach on his own account. The story is further complicated by a number of Iranian, Christian and Jewish sects, quite outside Islām, which nevertheless share certain doctrines with the Shī'ī *Ghulāt*, and are often confused with them by Sunnī historians. Particularly important among these are the Khurramdīnān, the Mazdakīs and the neo-Jewish 'Isawīya.

Let us begin with a brief survey of the Ḥanafī line, which is of some interest as showing the pre-Ismā'īlī origin of several characteristically Ismā'īlī ideas. This begins, as we have seen, with the Mukhtārīya, also called the Kaisānīya (after Kaisān, another name for Mukhtār).[1] On the death of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya, they split into three groups, viz.:

(1) Karbīya[2]—followers of Ibn Karb and Ḥamza b. 'Umāra al-Barbarī.[3] These declared that Muhammad b. al-Ḥanafīya was not dead but was concealed, and would return and establish the kingdom of God on earth. Later Ḥamza declared that Muhammad b. al-Ḥanafīya was God and that he himself was his prophet. Among the followers

[1] This is one of several suggested etymologies for the name
[2] Naw, 25. Ash, I, 19 Bagh, 27 [3] Naw, 25. *Minhāj*, 126

of this sect were Ṣā'id and Bayān,[1] the latter of whom later created a sect around himself.

(2) Those[2] who believed that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya was hidden in Mount Raḍwa, in the Ḥijāz, and would return to establish justice. Among them was the poet as-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, who later turned to Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq.

(3) Hāshimīya[3]—those who said that the Imāmate had passed to Abū Hāshim, the son of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya. Some said that he was Mahdī. On his death in 98/716 his followers split into four groups, viz.:

(*a*) He was succeeded by his brother 'Alī b. Muhammad, who in turn bequeathed his title to the 'Abbāsid family.

(*b*) He was succeeded by 'Abdallah b. Mu'āwiya, a descendant of Abū Ṭālib, the father of 'Alī. This group were known as Ḥārithīya, after 'Abdallah b. al-Ḥārith, a heretic of Madā'in who at first founded a sect of his own but later joined 'Abdallah b. Mu'āwiya. They would seem to be the same as the Ḥarbīya and the Janāḥīya [4]

(*c*) He was succeeded by Muhammad b 'Alī, of the house of 'Abbās, to whom he bequeathed the Imāmate in Syria. These are the Rawandīya, and are intimately connected with the rise of the 'Abbāsid dynasty.[5]

(*d*) He was Qā'ım and Mahdī, and would "return." Bayān (*v. supra*) joined these, and later claimed to be the successor of Abū Hāshim. He was arrested and crucified in 119/737.[6]

All these sects, according to our sources, preached extremist doctrines, attributing supernatural powers and

[1] Naw, 25 and 30 Bagh, 227 Tr 46 Shahı, 113 (Tr 171) Ibn Ḥazm Fried, I, 60 Ijı, 344 Malaṭī, 118 Ash'arī, I, 5 Kashshī, 188 and 195 ff *Mınhāj*, 76 On Sā'id see Kashshī, 185 and 197, and *Mınhāj*, 181.

[2] Naw, 26 Ash, I, 19–20 Mas'ūdī *Murūj*, V, 182 Shahr, I, 168

[3] Naw, 27 Ash, I, 20

[4] Ash'arī, I, 6 and 22 *Mınhāj*, 201 Bagh, 223, Tr 56 and 235/59 Naw, 29 Ibn Ḥazm Fried, I, 45, and II, 125–6 Shahr, 113, Tr 170 Ijı, 345. Eghbal, *Khanedane*, 253 and 4 See also Tritton, *Miscellany*, 924

[5] Naw, 29 and 41 Ash'arī, I, 20–21. See further Van Vloten, *Opkomst* passım

[6] Naw, 30.

functions to the Imām, and some of them, e.g. the Karbīya, going so far as to divinise him. To many *Ibāḥī*, i.e. libertine theories, are attributed—e.g. Ḥamza b. 'Umāra is said to have married his own daughter and to have taught that all forbidden things were permitted, the sole religious duty being knowledge of the Imām.[1] *Ghaiba* and *Raj'a* doctrines play an important part. Of interest is the idea that the Imāmate can be bequeathed. Thus, Abū Hāshim bequeathed his rights to the 'Abbāsids, and Bayān claimed to have been appointed successor by the Imām. This idea received a great development in the Ismā'īlī system.

These, then, are the main sects of the Ḥanafī line. On the accession to power of the 'Abbāsids, whose movement was itself an offshoot of Ḥanafī Shī'ism, the sect, after a few last nervous twitches, disappeared. Those who remained active were absorbed by the Fāṭimid *da'wa*.

Before passing on to consider the Fāṭimid Ḥusainid line, we may note briefly the sects attached to the descendants of a third son of 'Alī, namely Al-Ḥasan. The line comes into prominence with Muḥammad b. 'Abdallah b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī (100–145/718–762), known as An-Nafs az-Zakīya, the Pure-Soul. Muhammad An-Nafs az-Zakīya, already at the age of 19, claimed to be Mahdī. His claims were advanced by Mughīra b. Sa'īd al-'Ijlī, founder of the Mughīrīya sect. These preached that Muḥammad An-Nafs az-Zakīya was Mahdī and Mughīra a prophet. On the death of Muḥammad they claimed that he was in *Ghaiba* and would return. Mughīra himself was killed in 119/737 by Khālid al-Qasrī, whose freedman he was. This sect seems to have had great influence in the development of Bāṭinī ideas, and is sometimes listed as a sub-sect of the Khaṭṭābīya (*v. infra*). It should be noted that Muḥammad an-Nafs az-Zakīya himself was not disposed to recognise Mughīra.[2]

After the tragedy of Karbalā, the Fāṭimid line was in temporary eclipse, owing to the absence of adult pretenders.

[1] Naw, 26

[2] Naw, 37, 52, 54–5, 57 Shahr, 134, Tr. 203 Bagh, 229, Tr 49 Malaṭī, 122. Ash, I, 6 Ibn Ḥ Fried, I, 50 Iji, 344. Kashshī, 145 *I'tidāl*, II, 191. Egh Kh, 264

The first serious movement is that of Zaid, son of 'Alī Zain al-'Ābidīn, and his two sons Yaḥyā and 'Īsā. Zaid gave his name to the Zaidīya wing of Shī'ism, which until to-day carries on the tradition of Arab, political Shī'ism, differing very little from the Sunnīs as regards religion.

During the life of Muḥammad al-Bāqir, the fifth Fāṭimid Imām, the number of followers of the Fāṭimid line increased greatly, and at least one important sub-sect, the Manṣūrīya, was given off. These were the followers of Abū Manṣūr al-'Ijlī, who preached the Imāmate of Muḥammad al-Bāqir and then of himself.[1] This group is believed to have preached philosophic materialism, and libertinism (except by Nawbakhtī), and to have advocated the use of terroristic methods in dealing with opponents. In several important aspects this movement anticipated Ismā'īlī developments. It is listed by Ibn Ḥazm as a sub-sect of the Khaṭṭābīya. Abū Manṣūr himself was killed in about 125/742 by order of Yūsuf b. 'Umar ath-Thaqafī, governor of 'Irāq, and severe repressive measures taken against the sect.[2]

On the death of Muḥammad al-Bāqir, some of his followers seceded and supported the claims of Muḥammad an-Nafs az-Zakīya. These were denied by Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, the sixth Fāṭimid Imām, who, with his followers, refused to aid the pretender.[3] The rest supported the Imāmate of Ja'far, and continued to obey him. Prominent among the supporters of Ja'far is one Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, who founded a sect of his own which in turn split into several sub-sects.

On the death of Ja'far in Madīna in 148/765, a serious split occurred. Nawbakhtī[4] describes six groups, which fall into three important classes:—

(1) Nāwūsīya—these believed in the immortality of Ja'far, who was Mahdī, and would return.[5]

(2) Those who followed Mūsā al-Kāzim, son of Ja'far, and

[1] According to Nawbakhtī, Abū Manṣūr claimed to be the successor of Muhammad an-Nafs az-Zakīya

[2] Naw, 34 Shahr, 135, Tr 205 Bagh, 234, Tr 57 Ibn H Fried, I, 62 Ijī, 345. Malaṭī, 120 Kashshī, 196 Ash, I, 9 Goldziher Z A, XXII, 339, N 4

[3] Naw, 54 Note the explanation of the term Rāfiḍī—from *Rafaḍū*, they refused, i e the refusal of Ja'far to aid an-Nafs az-Zakīya.

[4] 57 [5] Ash, I, 25 *Fihrist*, 198.

through him the Twelver, or moderate Shī'a group. Their further sub-divisions fall beyond the scope of our study.

(3) Ismā'īlīya—those who supported the claims of Ismā'īl, eldest son of Ja'far, and, after his death, of his son Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl.

The first of these groups soon disappeared. The second grew into the Twelver, moderate Shī'a. The third, which resumed within itself the main tradition of revolutionary Shī'ism, is the subject of our further studies.[1]

(*b*) *The Birth of Ismā'īlism.*

In the second quarter of the second century of the Muslim era, conditions were ripe for a reorganisation and re-orientation of the revolutionary movements. The accession to power of the 'Abbāsid dynasty in 132/750 had marked—and caused—several significant changes. In the first place, as already noted, the success of the Hāshimīya faction, of which the 'Abbāsids were the representatives, and the consequent officialisation of the sect, finally ended the line of Ḥanafī pretenders, and left the field clear for the Fāṭimid line of which Ja'far was the chief figure. Then again, the 'Abbāsid revolution marked a new stage in the social and economic history of Islām. The assimilation of the non-Arab ruling classes to the Arab, Sunnī state, and the growing

[1] In the above, I have not dealt with non-Islāmic sects. Two of these, one of them pre-Islāmic, however, should be noted, in view of the significant way in which they anticipated and perhaps influenced Ismā'īlī developments.

The first of these, the Mazdakīya, was an Iranian heresy which preached a kind of religious communism. Those writers who attribute communist doctrines and practices to the Ismā'īlīs usually attribute them to Mazdakī origins (see G. H. Sadighi, *Les Mouvements*, etc.). The second is the neo-Jewish sect of the 'Īsawīya. Their founder, Abū 'Īsā, was an illiterate Jewish tailor of Iṣṭahān, who gave himself out as Messiah during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik (65-86/685-705). He was a vegetarian and a prohibitionist, and attempted many reforms. In particular he recognised both Jesus and Muḥammad as true prophets for the peoples among whom they appeared, and recommended to his followers the reading of the New Testament and the Qur'ān. He thus anticipated at that early date the later Ismā'īlī doctrine of the relativity of religions and prophethood (*v. infra*, Chapter IV). On his defeat his followers declared him to be in *Ghaiba*.

(See Art. in *Jewish Encyclopaedia* and Dubnov, *History of the Jews*, III, 238.)

identity of Arab and *mawlā* subject classes, resulted in a new alignment of classes, on economic rather than, as in the first century, on racial lines. This process was accentuated by the gradual transformation of the caliphate from an agrarian, military state to a commercial, cosmopolitan empire. This change was taking place throughout the second century, and by the third was very far advanced. So far-reaching a change in social conditions and alignments naturally resulted in a reorganisation and expansion of those movements which expressed the revolt of the oppressed classes and peoples. The crisis conditions of the third and fourth centuries produced a series of revolutionary outbreaks. The second century is what one might term a period of revolutionary incubation.

Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb.

The majority of our sources seem to point to Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb as having been the first to organise a movement of specifically Bāṭinī type. He is known as Muḥammad b. Abī Zaīnab, also as Miqlāṣ b. Abī'l-Khaṭṭāb, and was a *mawlā* of Asad.[1] He was a close associate of the Imāms Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, and was apparently one of their most intimate disciples until his rejection by the latter.[2] The disavowal of Abū'l Khaṭṭāb by Ja'far seems to have caused great consternation among the Shī'a, and many pages of Twelver Shī'ī works are devoted to explanations of it.[3]

The fullest and most reliable account of the activities of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb is that given by Nawbakhtī.[4] According to Nawbakhtī, Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb began as a *dā'ī* of Bāqir and Ja'far, and as such made a number of extravagant claims—e.g. that he was a prophet, that he was heir to Ja'far, etc. He also taught a number of new, heretical doctrines, including *Ibāḥa* (libertinism) and *taqīya*,[5] or secrecy, the right to lie and bear false witness in the interests of religion. He and his followers taught also that the Heaven and Hell

[1] Kashshī, p. 187. Ibn Ḥ. Fried, I, 69
[2] Kashshī, 191–2
[3] Kashshī, *Minhāj*, etc., under Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb
[4] 37 and 57–60
[5] Goldziher, Z D.M.G., LX, 1906, p 222

mentioned in the Qur'ān were merely persons, and had no super-terrestrial meaning. They introduced also the old oriental "Light" theory of successive incarnations.[1] This is given in detail by Nawbakhtī, and corresponds closely with later Ismā'īlī writings. A number of them, under the leadership of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb himself, concentrated in Kūfa, and seventy of them were killed in the mosque there by order of the governor, 'Īsā b. Mūsā. Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb was captured and crucified (138/755).[2] Before that Ja'far had already publicly denied Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, and dissociated himself from all his activities.

On the death of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, his followers transferred their allegiance to Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, the grandson of Ja'far. The Ismā'īlīya sect was actually identical with the Khaṭṭābīya.[3]

Such, then, are the main lines of Nawbakhtī's account of the Khaṭṭābīya. As regards doctrine it is corroborated and amplified by most of the Sunnī heresiographers. Baghdādī[4] and Shahrastānī[5] give more details than Nawbakhtī as to the sub-sects of the Khaṭṭābīya movement after the death of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb. They were (1) Mu'ammarīya, (2) Bazīghīya, (3) 'Umairīya, (4) Mufaḍḍalīya. They differed on minor points of doctrine and on the personality of the leader.

Although most of the Sunnī heresiographers do not mention any direct contact between the Khaṭṭābīya and the Ismā'īlīya, yet the accounts they give of Khaṭṭābī doctrines are such as to corroborate Nawbakhtī's statement of the identity of the two movements. Thus Baghdādī[6] and Ash'arī[7] attribute to the Khaṭṭābīya the characteristically Ismā'īlī doctrine of "Silent and Speaking Imāms" (*Ṣāmit* and *Nāṭiq*).[8] This is supported by Maqrīzī.[9] Again, the Ismā'īlī method of *Ta'wīl*, or allegoric interpretation of the scriptures is attributed to the Khaṭṭābīs by Ibn Ḥazm,[10]

[1] Also in Shahr, 136, Tr 206

[2] This is the date given by Kashshī, 191 His testimony is more reliable than that of Nuwairī, who gives the date 145/762 (Sacy, I, *Intro*, 440)

[3] P 58 [4] 236, Tr 62 [5] 136, Tr. 206 [6] 236, Tr. 63 [7] I, 10

[8] S De Sacy, I, *Intro*, 103 ff, and *Kalām i Pīr*

[9] *Khiṭaṭ*, II, 352 [10] Ibn Ḥ Fried, II, 112

Shahrastānī,[1] Maqrīzī[2] and others, as well as by Nawbakhtī. So, too, with the "Light" theory.

Further information on Khaṭṭābī doctrines is to be found in the Twelver Shī'ī works. Kashshī[3] relates a number of traditions, telling of the claims of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and the reasons for Ja'far's denial of him. A few examples may be noted.

Ja'far wrote to Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, saying: "It has reached me that you believe that adultery is a man, wine is a man, prayer is a man, fasting is a man and sin is a man."[4]

'Anbasa b. Muṣ'ab[5] said: "Ja'far asked me, 'What did you hear from Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb?' I answered: 'I heard him say that you (Ja'far) had placed your hand on his breast and said to him: 'Remember and do not forget! You know that which is hidden,' and that you told him he was 'the hidden thing of our knowledge, the place of our secret, responsible for our living and our dead.' " All this Ja'far denied emphatically.[6]

Other traditions describe how Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb preached that Ja'far was divine and possessed occult powers, how he taught reincarnation (*tanāsukh*) and defied the express commands of Ja'far.

Historical, as distinct from doctrinal evidence, of the connection between the Khaṭṭābīya and the Ismā'īlīya is provided by a number of sources. Ibn Rizām[7] says that the Maimūnīya, or followers of Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, were disciples of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb. Ibn al-Athīr[8] mentions Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb as the first of the sect (*awwal man fa'ala dhālika*), and Maimūn al-Qaddāh as his follower. Nuwairī, on the authority of Ibn Shaddād,[9] also describes Maimūn as a follower of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, and ascribes to the Khaṭṭābis the doctrines of *Ta'wīl*, *Bāṭin*, etc. The movement spread by Maimūn and his son 'Abdallah was substantially that of

[1] 136, Tr 206 [2] *Khiṭaṭ*, II, 352 [3] 187–199 [4] 188
[5] This person is mentioned as one of the Nāwūsīya by Majlisī (*Biḥār*, IX, 175) See also Kashshī, 233
[6] Kashshī, 188 See also Massignon, *Salmān*, p 44, for a similar claim in a Nusairī text
[7] *Fihrist*, 186. [8] VIII, 21
[9] De Sacy, I, *Intro*, 437 ff Maqrīzī, Quatremère, 131, and Fagnan, 47.

Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb. Rashīd ad-Dīn[1] also mentions Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb as founder, and considers Maimūn and 'Abdallah as his disciples. Finally we may note a reference in a Zaidī work, the *Kitāb Haqā'iq al-Ma'rifa*, of the Imām al-Mutawakkil, Zaidī Rassī Imām of Yemen, 532–566/1137–1170. He speaks of the "Ismā'īlīya, *who are* the Mubārakīya and the Khaṭṭābīya."[2]

At this point we may well ask ourselves what references to Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and the Khaṭṭābīya are to be found in Ismā'īlī writings. Here we are at a disadvantage. Almost all the Ismā'īlī documents at our disposal belong to the later, officialised period of the *da'wa*, when the apologists were interested in denying all connection with such disreputable persons as Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb. There is, of course, a general confirmation—as Ismā'īlī—of the doctrines ascribed to Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, but direct references are few and far between. He is mentioned by the Fāṭimid *dā'ī* Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, who, in his *Kitāb az-Zīna* (early fourth/ninth century), briefly describes his activities and his martyrdom.[3] Abū Ḥanīfa Nu'mān (d. 363/974) the Qāḍī of Mu'izz, also mentions the Khaṭṭābīya among the heretical sects, in his *Da'ā'im al-Islām*.[4] The *Da'ā'im* is, however, an exoteric work intended for general consumption, and is therefore not wholly reliable in such matters.

The name and doctrines of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, and full reference to his decisive role, are, however, preserved in two groups of writings. The first of these is the famous *Umm al-Kitāb*, a secret holy book of the Ismā'īlīs of Central Asia. As its learned editor remarks, this represents a very early stage in the development of revolutionary Shī'ī ideas. The *Umm al-Kitāb* gives a central position to Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, making him founder of the religion, and placing

[1] Lewi, 512 and 519. A similar statement is to be found in Juvainī, III, 152.

[2] MS Yamānīya. Text in Appendix I.

[3] Ivanow, *Guide*, 32 and *Notes on 'Umm'l-Kitāb*, 430. I have not been able to consult any manuscript of this work.

[4] MS SOS Library, 25735, p. 31b ff. Qāḍī Nu'mān refers briefly to the doctrines of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb (his own prophethood, the divinisation of Ja'far, *Ibāha*, etc.) and his repudiation and malediction by Ja'far. His account of Mughīra and the other heresiarchs also follows closely on Sunnī sources.

him on a par with Salmān. The statement is clear and unequivocal:—"The Ismā'īlī religion is that which was founded by the descendants (disciples?) of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, who gave their lives in love of the descendants of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq (and) Ismā'īl.[1]

Similar statements and doctrines are to be found in the Nuṣairī writings studied by Massignon. These, too, make Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb a founder of the sect and Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ a disciple of his. They attribute to him most of the characteristically Ismā'īlī doctrines.[2]

The denial of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb by Ja'far, and the violent death of the former, seem to have caused much perturbation. Kashshī and the other Twelver Shī'ī compilers relate numerous traditions explaining and justifying this denial. The following are particularly noteworthy.

'Abdallah ar-Rijānī said: "I spoke to Ja'far of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and his death. While doing so I was touched with compassion and wept. Ja'far asked: 'Do you mourn him?' I answered: 'No. But I have heard it said that after 'Alī had killed the men of the river,[3] his companions began to weep. He asked them: "Do you mourn them?" They said: "No, but we remember the friendship that we had and the disaster that has befallen them. Therefore we weep." And he said: "It is not wrong." ' "[4]

'Īsa Shalqān[5] said that he had asked Abū'l-Ḥasan, when the latter was still a boy, why his father Ja'far had ordered them first to be friendly to Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and then to renounce him. The answer, later approved by Ja'far, was as follows: "There are some whom God has created for prophecy, and they cannot be anything but prophets. There are some created for belief, and they cannot be anything but believers. Some God has *entrusted* with belief. If He wish He may perfect and if He wish He may withdraw it. Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb was of those to whom God *lent* belief,

[1] Text 97, *Notes* 428
[2] Massignon, *Salmān* and Art *Nusairīs* in EI.
[3] *Ahl an-Nahr*. Probably for *Ahl an-Nahrawān*, i.e., the Khawārij.
[4] Kashshī, 189
[5] 'Isā b. Abī Manṣūr Shalqān was one of the most trusted followers of Ja'far (Kashshī, 211)

and when he falsified my father's words God withdrew it."[1]

Qāsim aṣ-Ṣairafī said: "I heard Ja'far say: 'There are people who think that I am their Imām. By God, I am not their Imām, may God curse them. Whenever I have hidden anything they have revealed it. May God reveal their hidden things. I say thus, and they interpret it thus. I am the Imām of those who obey me.' "[2]

All the Twelver Shī'ī and most of the Sunnī sources agree in relating the repudiation of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb by Ja'far,[3] and it would seem that serious doctrinal differences did exist between the two. The subsequent deposition of Ismā'īl by Ja'far, the close association between the descendants of Ismā'īl and the disciples of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, and the fundamental doctrinal split between the followers of Ismā'īl and those of Mūsā al-Kāẓim, the seventh Twelver Imām, would all seem to point in the same direction, and so place Ismā'īl himself among the rebels against Ja'far's authority.[4]

Ismā'īl.

This brings us to another, and difficult question. What was the part played by Ismā'īl himself in all these activities? Unfortunately, our knowledge about Ismā'īl is extremely limited. In the Ismā'īlī sources, Ismā'īl is the Imām, of semi-divine status, absolute Lord (*az arbāb i iṭlāq*),[5] and is thus placed on so high a pedestal that any information given regarding him is of little historical value. Moreover, there is a considerable amount of contradiction between the Ismā'īlī sources themselves, presumably corresponding to the varying degrees of secrecy of the books in question. Thus, in the Kalām i Pir[6] we read: ". . . after him (Ja'far) Mūsā al-Kāẓim, on the same conditions as Imām Ḥasan after (Imām) 'Alī,—he had not the privilege of transmitting the

[1] Kashshī, 191 The distinction between *Mustawda'* and *Mustaqarr* plays an important part in later Ismā'īlī doctrines See *Kalām-i-Pir*, 78

[2] Kashshī, 194 This outburst of indignation has a ring of truth.

[3] Among those who do not is Ibn Ḥazm Fried, I, 69.

[4] Among modern scholars who place Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb among the first founders of the Ismā'īlīya, we may mention Massignon (Bibl and EI. Art. Karmatians and Nusairis), Margoliouth (EI Art Khaṭṭābīya), and Friedländer (Ibn Ḥazm, II, 106)

[5] *Kalām i Pīr*, 75 [6] P. 75

Naṣṣ, or heritage. After him Imām Ismā'īl, who was absolute Lord. . . . Since Ismā'īl knew that the Imāmate was to remain with his descendants, he agreed to the *naṣṣ* of Mūsā al-Kāẓim, so that they were not opposed to each other." This story obviously contradicts the numerous other works according to which (1) Ismā'īl died before Ja'far, (2) Mūsā al-Kāẓim was not recognised by the Ismā'īlīs as Imām at all.[1]

The Sunnī and Twelver sources regard Ismā'īl as a reprobate, and an unworthy son of his father. The latter in particular seem to adopt an attitude of "the less said the better." The following two points constitute almost all the information that can be gathered from them. Upon these points all are agreed. They are (1) Ismā'īl died before his father. (2) Ismā'īl was deprived of his right of succession to the Imāmate by Ja'far, because of his evil habits.

Most authorities confine themselves to the simple statement of these facts. Juvainī[2] adds that Ismā'īl died in 145. A Shī'ī work[3] places his death in 138. Rashīd ad-Dīn[4] and Juvainī[5] both say that Ja'far ordered the body of Ismā'īl to be publicly exposed and his death attested by numerous witnesses—presumably to prevent the spread of legends. These measures were unsuccessful. Both Rashīd ad-Dīn[6] and Juvainī[7] attribute to the Ismā'īlīs the statement that Ismā'īl did not die, that he was alive years after his father's death, and that he performed several miracles. This is confirmed by the pro-Fāṭimid *Dustūr al-Munajjimīn*,[8] according to which Ismā'īl was the first hidden Imām. His concealment began in 145, but his death did not occur till seven years later.

The general statement is that Ismā'īl was deposed by Ja'far because of his excessive inclination to drink.[9] There are, however, in our sources two statements which would

[1] *Falak*, 125 *Taqsīm* (Druze MS), fol 117v Fyzee, *List*, p 8
[2] 146
[3] *'Umdat aṭ-Ṭālib*, p. 223. Quoted in Ivanow, *Ismailitica*
[4] Levi, 521 [5] 146 [6] 521 [7] 146
[8] De Goeje, 203 Blochet, 57–8
[9] Levi, 519. Juv., 145. Ṭabarī, III, 154 and 2509

seem to imply that there were more serious reasons for the change.

The first of these, the importance of which was first pointed out by Massignon,[1] occurs in Kashshī.[2]

" 'Anbasa said: 'I was with Ja'far b. Muḥammad at the gate of the Caliph Abū Ja'far (≡ Manṣūr) in Ḥīra when Bassām[3] and Ismā'īl b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad were brought and taken before the Caliph. Bassām was brought out dead. Then Ismā'īl was brought out. Ja'far raised his head towards him and said, "You have caused it to be done, O evil-doer. I consign you to Hellfire." ' "

From this it is clear that Bassām and Ismā'īl were associated in some seditious enterprise of which Ja'far disapproved strongly. This will explain the second passage, in which Juvainī attributes to Ja'far a phrase which, it must be admitted, is very much out of proportion if Ismā'īl's sole offence was his lack of sobriety. "Ja'far said: 'Ismā'īl is not my son, but a devil who has assumed his form.' "[4]

Massignon has gone as far as to suggest that the *kunya* "Abū Ismā'īl" which Kashshī[5] gives to Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb refers to Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, and that Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb was the adoptive, "spiritual" father of Ismā'īl.[6]

In his account of Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar al-Ju'fī, Kashshī[7] relates a number of traditions which would also seem to imply a close association between Ismā'īl and the Khaṭṭābīs, and express the resentment of Ja'far against those who were leading his son into heresy and danger. "Ja'far said to Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar: 'O unbeliever, O idolater, what is there between you and my son?' meaning Ismā'īl."[8] And later, "What do you want from my son? You want to kill him. . ."[9]

[1] *Plan de Kūfa*, 350–351. [2] 159, also in *Minhāj* 56
[3] A banker of Kūfa, of Shī'ī sympathies *Ījtidāl*, I, 144
[4] Juvainī, 145 [5] 187 and 208 [6] Massignon, *Salmān*, p 19.
[7] P 206–211 Mufaḍḍal was a banker of Kūfa and a prominent supporter of Ja'far He supported Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, and after the latter's execution founded a small sect of his own Already during Ja'far's lifetime he advanced the claims of Ismā'īl to the succession, despite his deposition by Ja'far. Later he returned to Shī'ī orthodoxy, made his peace with Ja'far, and served both him and Mūsā al-Kāzim. See also Baghdādī, 236, Tr. 65. Shahrastānī, 137, Tr. 207 Ash'arī, I, 13. Ṭūsī-*Fihrist*, 337 *Minhāj*, 341. Ivanow, *Guide*, p 30 (which incorrectly states that Mufaḍḍal was executed with Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb)
[8] Kashshī, 206. [9] Kashshī, 207.

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In view of all this there would seem to be a strong *prima facie* case for the hypothesis that Ismā'īl was closely associated with the extremist, revolutionary circles that founded the sect that bears his name, and that his deposition by Ja'far was due to this association. This impression is confirmed by the close relation which, as we shall see, existed between Muḥammad, the son and heir of Ismā'īl, and the extremist disciples of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son 'Abdallah.

We can now turn to consider the course of events on the death of Ja'far. For it is at this stage that the great split occurs between the two wings of the Shī'ī movement. Most of our sources confine themselves to the simple statement that one group followed Mūsā al-Kāẓim, whereas another supported the claims of Ismā'īl and his son Muḥammad. For practical purposes we may ignore the minor groups that followed other sons of Ja'far, as these were of no great importance, and failed to perpetuate themselves.

Some of our sources, however, provide us with a more detailed account, and of these we must make a closer examination.

Nawbakhtī[1] divides those who accepted the claims of Ismā'īl on the death of Ja'far into two groups. (1) Those who denied the death of Ismā'īl during Ja'far's lifetime, saying that he had been hidden by Ja'far. They preached that Ismā'īl was *Qā'im*, that he was hidden (*Ghaiba*) and would return (*Raj'a*). These were the *Ismā'īlīya* properly so called, the pure Ismā'īlīya (*Al-Ismā'īlīya al-Khāliṣa*).

(2) Those who accepted the Imāmate of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. According to them Ismā'īl succeeded to the Imāmate during his father's lifetime. On Ismā'īl's death the Imāmate passed to his son Muḥammad. The Imāmate, they said, cannot fall from brother to brother after the case of Ḥasan and Ḥusain. This group was called *Mubārakīya*, after a leader of theirs called Mubārak, a *mawlā* of Ismā'īl. These were joined by the Khaṭṭābīs. They then split into several sub-groups. One of them, the Carmathians, began by preaching the doctrines of the Mubārakīs, but then

[1] P. 57 ff.

diverged. They were named after a Sawādī, Nabataean leader called Qarmaṭūya. They said that the spirit passed from Ja'far to Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and from him to Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and his descendants. Later they developed a system of their own, according to which Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was *Qā'im*, Mahdī, immortal, and the seal of the prophets. Nawbakhtī gives some details regarding their doctrine, and mentions that in his own day they numbered some 100,000 souls, and were especially strong in Yemen and in the region of Kūfa.

Majlisī,[1] quoting an early authority, mentions three groups.

(1) Ismā'īl was *al-Qā'im al-Muntaẓar*. His "death" was a ruse.

(2) Ismā'īl died during his father's lifetime, but had already appointed his son Muḥammad, who succeeded him as Imām. These are the Carmathians, or Mubārakīya, "*Al-Qarāmiṭa wa-hum al-Mubārakīya.*" The name "Carmathian" derives from a Sawādī called Qarmaṭūya, and "Mubārakīya" from Mubārak, a *mawlā* of Ismā'īl. The Carmathians are the successors of the Mubārakīya, "*Wa'l-Qarāmiṭa akhlāf al-Mubārakīya wa'l-Mubārakīya salafuhum.*"

(3) Muḥammad was appointed by Ja'far himself.

These three form the Ismā'īlīya.

Mutawakkil, the Zaidī Imām, as we have already seen,[2] says that the Ismā'īlīya consisted of the Khaṭṭābīya and the Mubārakīya.

These three versions may with little difficulty be reconciled and made to form one consistent narrative. It will readily be seen that a role of crucial importance is assigned to Mubārak. To him is ascribed the organisation of the sect around Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, which by its absorption of the greater part[3] of the Khaṭṭābīya and the dissident pro-Ismā'īl groups, created the united Ismā'īlī *da'wa* from which such important historic developments ensued. Unfortunately very little is known about this Mubārak. From

[1] *Biḥar*, IX, 175 [2] V, p. 35 *supra*

[3] Apparently not all A remnant survived as a distinct sect, and groups of Khaṭṭābīya are mentioned until much later (e g Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir, V, p 137) Some developed the Nusairī sect.

Sunnī sources we can add a little to the above narrative, which is compiled exclusively from Twelver and Zaidī Shī'ī sources.

According to the *Siyāsat Nāme*,[1] Mubārak was a Ḥijāzī and a servant of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. He was expert in calligraphy of the type called "Muqarmaṭ," thanks to which he was given the name Qarmaṭūya, by which he was known. Mubārak was seduced by 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, and with him founded and propagated the sect which was known as Mubārakī or Carmathian, after the two names of Mubārak.

In view of the earlier and more reliable evidence to the contrary, this identification of Mubārak and Qarmaṭūya must, I think, be rejected.

Ash'arī,[2] Baghdādī,[3] Shahrastānī,[4] and Maqrīzī[5] all mention Mubārak, and in the main corroborate our Shī'ī sources.

In view of his importance, there is surprisingly little about Mubārak in the Ismā'īlī sources. The only reference to him that I have been able to find occurs in the *Dustūr al-Munajjimīn*, which mentions him as a client of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, who recognised him as Imām.[6] It is possible that he was known in Ismā'īlī circles by another name.

We may now attempt a brief recapitulation of the origins of the Ismā'īlīya, as revealed by the documents we have studied.

During the lifetime of Ja'far, Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and Ismā'īl, probably in collaboration, elaborated a system of doctrine which served as the basis of the Ismā'īlī religion of later days. They also worked for the creation of a revolutionary Shī'ī sect which should gather all the minor Shī'ī groups together, around the Imāmate of Ismā'īl and his descendants. On the death of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, Ismā'īl and Ja'far, their organisation split into several sub-sects, with conflicting ideas and leaders. These were rallied around the person of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, who succeeded, with the aid of various supporters, notably Mubārak and 'Abdallah b.

[1] P 183, Tr. 269 [2] 27. [3] 47
[4] 16 and 128, Tr 24 and 193. [5] *Khiṭaṭ*, II, 351
[6] De Goeje, 203 Blochet, 58

Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, in welding into one movement most of the followers of Ismā'īl, including the greater part of the Khaṭṭābiya, whose doctrine was taken over with some modifications.[1] Around Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was created the historical Ismā'īlī movement.[2]

[1] Questions of doctrinal evolution and change fall beyond the scope of the present work A discussion of them will be found in Massignon, Art. Karmatians EI

[2] Maimūn, 'Abdallah b Maimūn, Muhammad b Ismā'īl and the Carmathian sect will all be discussed in later chapters

Chapter II

THE HIDDEN IMĀMS AND THEIR HELPERS

BEFORE proceeding to investigate the line of hidden Imāms and the validity of Fāṭimid genealogical claims, it is necessary to make a digression in order to examine two peculiarly Bāṭinī doctrines which are especially relevant to these questions.

The first of these is the doctrine of spiritual parenthood, or, as it is sometimes termed in Arabic, *nikāḥ rūḥānī*, spiritual marriage. The Bāṭinī movement, with its strong gnostic tendencies and its overwhelming stress on the spiritual esoteric aspects of things, as against the material, exoteric side, easily and naturally reached a position in which the material relationship between father and son, affecting only the insignificant and transitory body, was regarded as less important and less real than the spiritual relationship between teacher and pupil, which springs from the immortal soul. From this doctrine it follows that the disciple, rather than the physical offspring, is the true son and heir. It has thus even been suggested that the words "Abū" and "Ibn" ("father of" and "son of") in Ismā'īlī names are sometimes used in this sense.[1]

This principle receives its most detailed exposition in the *Rasā'il Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā*, a work the Bāṭinī inspiration of which is no longer in question.

Here we read:[2] "Know that the teacher and master is the father of your soul, the reason of its growth and the cause of its life, just as your parent is the father of your body and was the cause of its existence For your parent gave you physical form and your teacher gave you spiritual form. This is because the teacher nourishes your soul with knowledge, feeds it with wisdom, and leads it in the path of pleasantness, pleasure, joy, eternity and unending rest—

[1] Massignon, *Salmān*, p. 16–19, and *Mutanabbī*, p 6
[2] Cairo Edition, IV, 113.

just as your parent was the reason for the existence of your body in this world, and your educator and guide in the seeking of a livelihood in it. . . ."

". . . It[1] does not befit the teacher to reproach the pupil for what money he may spend on him, nor to humble him, for he should know that it is the same God that denied his brother that gave it to him. Just as he would not reproach a physical son of his because he had brought him up and spent money on him, and would bequeath to him after his death whatever wealth he had accumulated, so it behoves him not to reproach his spiritual son, for surely, if the one is his physical son, the other is his spiritual son. Thus it is related that the prophet said to 'Alī: 'You and I are the father of this community (*Umma*),'[2] and that he said: 'The believer is the brother of the believer by both father and mother.'[3] And Abraham said: 'Whoever follows me is mine' (i.e. my descendant),[4] and when Noah said: 'My son is of my people,' God said to him: 'He is not of thy people—he has done a wrong deed.'[5] God also said: 'When the trumpet will be sounded, there shall be no bond of kinship between them, and they shall not seek each other's aid.'[6] From all this it is clear that physical pedigree is of no avail in the other world.

"With the same meaning Christ said to the disciples: 'I have come from my father and yours,'[7] and God said: 'The religion of your father Abraham.'[8] This is spiritual fatherhood, the pedigree of which is not cut off, as in the Prophet's sayings: 'Every pedigree will be cut off on the day of Resurrection except mine' (i.e. that which derives from me)[9] and, 'O sons of Hāshim, let not men come to me on the day of Resurrection with their good deeds and you with your pedigrees, for I shall exempt you from nothing before God.'[10] In this he meant only the physical pedigree,

[1] IV, 115–6 [2] I have not been able to identify this tradition.
[3] Cf Abū Da'ūd, *Sunan*, Bāb al-Adab, 49 [4] Qur'ān, XIV, 39
[5] Qur'ān, XI, 47–49 [6] Qur'ān, XXIII, 103
[7] Also quoted in R I S, IV Asin Palacios connects this with John's sermon at the Last Supper (*Logia and Agrapha*, 127).
[8] Qur'ān, XXII, 77. [9] *Mishkāt*, V, 593.
[10] Cf *Ṭabarī*, I, 2751, where a similar saying is attributed to 'Umar

for it is cut off and the bodies pass away, and the spiritual pedigree remains. . . ."

Similar ideas are to be found in various Ismā'īlī works. Thus Naṣīr ad-Dīn Ṭūsī says:[1] "The offspring of the Imām are of four kinds, i.e. 'spiritual' (*rūḥānī*), or 'in reality' (*dar ma'nī*), like Salmān Fārsī[2]; bodily (*jismānī* or *bā shakl*), like Musta'lī; both in spirit and in body, Ḥasan (the second Imām of the Shī'ites); and bodily, spiritually and in truth (*dar ḥaqīqat*) as Imām Ḥusain." The first of these categories obviously admits the adoption of one who is not of 'Alid blood as a kind of honorary 'Alid, or spiritual heir.

It is curious how Sunnī writers, and, following them, most European scholars, have failed to observe this doctrine and its relevance to the problem of Fāṭimid origins. Of non-Ismā'īlī writers on Ismā'īlism, only two, one Twelver Shī'ī and one Sunnī, have come anywhere near an appreciation of it. The author of the *Tabṣirat al-'Awāmm* remarks:[3]

"They (the Ismā'īlīs) say that Jesus was the son of Joseph the Carpenter, and the Qur'ānic saying that Jesus had no father means that he had no *ta'līmī* father" (i.e no teacher).

Rashīd ad-Dīn, the great Persian historian, says:[4] "Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq had sent his grandson Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl with Abū Shākir Maimūn ad-Daiṣānī, known under the name of Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, to Ṭabaristān; after the death of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ entrusted his son 'Abdallah to Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, saying, 'Physical parenthood results only from the material birth of the child, whereas spiritual parenthood results from the attachment one has for a certain person; you say that someone is the son of a man because he is born of his deeds, yet is not the man who has received from another the knowledge and

[1] Ivanow, *An Ismailitic Work*, p. 555 For another similar passage see Ismailitica, p 15.

[2] The adoption of Salmān by Muḥammad—*"Salmān minnā ahl al-Bait"* —is the starting-point and keystone of the whole doctrine For a full discussion, see Massignon, *Salmān*, p 16–19 M Massignon, in this work and in EI. Art. *Ḳarmaṭians*, was the first to draw attention to this doctrine.

[3] Teheran ed., p. 181 The reading of Schefer (*Chrest Pers*, I, 180) is less satisfactory.

[4] Blochet, 89 *Polemics*, 78.

intelligence which are the essence of spiritual life, his son in a still closer sense? As for me, I was born spiritually of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, and, through the secrets of knowledge which he revealed to me, it is fitting that I declare myself his son.' In short, he ended by saying: ' 'Abdallah is the son of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, his heir apparent. He entrusted him to me to bring him up and save him from the snares of his enemies.' When 'Abdallah reached the age of 17, Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ proclaimed him Imām, and the Shī'ites made no objection to recognising him as such."

This passage makes clear the practical application of the doctrine by the Ismā'īlīs, and its importance for the establishment of the Fāṭimid pedigree.

The doctrine is also to be found among the sects related to the Ismā'īlīs, such as the Nuṣairīs and the Druzes. Among the former in particular it has had a wide development. Dussaud, who believes that the Nuṣairīs took over this doctrine from the Ismā'īlīs, gives the following interesting details.[1]

"A father cannot initiate his son, nor any relative. Initiation creates between the initiator and the initiated a spiritual relationship, identical with real relationship. The initiate becomes the son of the initiator to the point of no longer being able to marry the latter's daughters, who now become his own sisters."

Dussaud then gives in detail the ceremonies of initiation, concluding with a kind of sermon by the Imām, in which the comparison is made, in a rather confused manner, between coitus, pregnancy and birth on the one hand, and instruction and initiation on the other. The three grades of initiation thus correspond to the stages of embryonic development, and are timed accordingly. This conception is found also among the Ismā'īlīs in Syria.[2]

Among the Druzes, too, the idea is to be found.[3] According to the epistle of Ḥamza called *as-Sīra al-Mustaqīma*

[1] *Histoire et Religion des Nuṣairīs*, p 105 ff

[2] Guyard, *Fragments*, 210 During a recent visit to the Ismā'īlī village of Maṣyāf in Central Syria I had myself the pleasure of listening to a lengthy exposition of *Nikāḥ Rūḥānī* by the Imām of the community.

[3] De Sacy, II, 578.

bi Sha'n al-Qarāmiṭa,[1] the succession of Imāms and *Ḥujjas* depends purely on spiritual, not physical parenthood. Thus Adam Ṣafā (the first of the three Adams of Druze cosmology) had both father and mother . . .

> "and it was said that he had no father and no mother because he was Imām in his own right" (i.e. not appointed by any predecessor).

The relationship of the third to the second Adam is described as follows:

> "and he was a religious, not a physical child."[2]

The Druzes even go so far as to reject as absurd the literal statement that Adam had no parents.[3]

In the same way, the Ismā'īlī secret book *Kitāb al-Iḍāḥ wa'l-Bayān* (thirteenth century A.D.) explains that the Garden of Eden means the *da'wa*, the expulsion of Adam means his degradation to a lower rank thereof, and the descendants of Adam (*Dhurrīya*) are merely his disciples.[4]

To what extent could the succession to the Imāmate be affected by adoptive filiation?

Among some of the pre-Ismā'īlī revolutionary Shī'ī sects, succession by *tafwīḍ*, or appointment, was permitted. Some of these sects made Salmān an Imām, and others raised a whole line of pretenders to the Imāmate with claims based on "appointment" by 'Alid predecessors. Such are the claims of Abū Manṣūr, Mughīra, Bayān b. Sam'ān, and of the first 'Abbāsids, who claimed to have been "appointed" by Abū Hāshim, son of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya.[5]

Among the Ismā'īlīs, the passage above-quoted from Naṣīr ad-Dīn Ṭūsī would seem to suggest that "sons" of the

[1] Fol 74 ff Cf De Sacy, *Exposé*, II, 112 ff [2] Fol 79v.

[3] Fol 74v An oral tradition still extant among the Ismā'īlīs of India attributes to 'Alī the saying that there were many men before Adam These doctrines find an interesting echo in a line of Abū'l-'Alā al-Ma'arrī (Luzūmīyāt)

[4] Lewis, *Ismaili Interpretation*, p 694 In a later Ismā'īlī work, the Kalām i Pīr, this interpretation is no longer to be found, and the Adam story is taken in a sense more closely related to that of orthodox Islām The *Dhurrīya*, or progeny of Adam and the other prophets is also taken in a literal and physical sense, and great stress is laid on this It cannot, however, be doubted, in view of other evidence, that the *Iḍāḥ* represents an earlier and purer stage of Ismā'īlī doctrinal development

[5] See Chapter I, *passim*.

Imāms by spiritual appointment were recognised. This would serve to explain the passage in the Druze books[1] where the list of hidden Imāms between Ismā'īl and 'Ubaidallah al-Mahdī is given, with the remark *"Min walad al-Qaddāḥ"*—of the race of Qaddāḥ—attached to some. It would thus seem that the succession described is a spiritual one, the word *"ibn"* merely meaning pupil. The phrase *"Min walad al-Qaddāḥ"* is added to those descended from Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ to indicate their physical ancestry—a matter of secondary importance. Such an interpretation would tally closely with the above-quoted passage from Rashīd ad-Dīn, and in fact no less an authority than Massignon accepts it, making 'Abdallah b. Maimūn the adoptive, or spiritual son of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, and thus the physical ancestor of the whole line of Fāṭimid Caliphs.[2] Prince Mamour[3] also accepts the statement of Rashīd ad-Dīn, and endeavours to justify the 'Alid legitimacy of the Fāṭimids by identifying Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ with Muhammad b. Ismā'īl. Unfortunately for this, Maimūn is a historical character whose historicity is well authenticated by Shī'ī and even Ismā'īlī sources.

Yet certain difficulties present themselves in the acceptance of M. Massignon's theory. Even if we admit that Ibn al-Qaddāḥ could succeed Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl by spiritual adoption, does it necessarily follow that all the Imāms after him are physically of Qaddāḥid race? The note "of the race of Qaddāḥ" is applied to some but not all of the hidden Imāms in the Druze list. It is true that among those to whom it was applied is Sa'īd, or 'Ubaidallah al-Mahdī, the first Fāṭimid Caliph. But it is not yet certain that the rest of the Fāṭimid caliphs were *his* physical descendants.

Our problem may be simplified by the examination of another aspect of the Ismā'īlī doctrine of the Imāmate, namely, the distinction between the *Imām Mustawda'* (acting or trustee Imām) and the *Imām Mustaqarr* (permanent or necessary Imām).

[1] MS., Paris, 1415, fol 118–119 Cf De Sacy, *Exposé*, II, 578.
[2] Art Karmatians EI. [3] *Polemics*, 78 ff

The Kalām i Pīr says:[1] "The 'personal' Imām, *mustawda'*, is a son of the Imām, the oldest if there are several of them, who also knows all the mysteries of Imāmate, and so long as he discharges his duty he is the greatest of all people of his time. But he is not endowed with the privilege of transmitting his Imāmate to his descendants, who can never become Imāms, only *Sayyids*. The ordinary Imām, *Mustaqarr*, is endowed with all the privileges of Imāmate, and transmits them to his successors."

The doctrine of a trustee-Imām, with whom the Imāmate is placed as a "deposit" (*wadī'a*) is well-known among the pre-Ismā'īlī extremist sects. Prof. A. S. Tritton[2] has pointed out several cases of trustee-Imāmate. The Ismā'īlī division between *Mustawda'* and *Mustaqarr* is thus merely a systematisation of an already established principle.

Closely related with this is the doctrine of a kind of protective Imāmate, during periods of danger.[3] According to this, certain *dā'īs* may assume the titles and functions of the Imām, while the true Imām remains unknown and hidden, in order to direct operations and test the direction of public opinion, without exposing the *Imām Mustaqarr* to danger. Thus, in several Ismā'īlī books[4] we read that the Imām Aḥmad, the reputed author of the *Rasā'il Ikẖwān aṣ-Ṣafā*, authorised the *dā'ī* at-Tirmiḏhī to appear publicly as Imām, and to suffer martyrdom in that capacity, as an experiment to decide whether or not to declare himself.

It would perhaps not be rash to assume that adoptive sons of the Imāms, and the Qaddāḥids in particular, may, at various times have fulfilled the functions of *Imām mustawda'* or "protective" Imām. Thus, in the Druze list, those names which have the note "of the race of Qaddāḥ" would refer to these Imāms "*mustawda'*," while the rest would be the Imāms *Mustaqarr*. This would explain also why the Druze list of hidden Imāms is longer by several

[1] P. 75. Cf. Hamdani, *Some Unknown Authors*, 361
[2] *Miscellany*, 925
[3] My remarks on this doctrine are based on oral communications from a learned Indian Ismā'īlī
[4] Hamdani, *The Rasail, Der Islam*, 20, p 292–3

names than all other Ismā'īlī lists.[1] Sa'īd 'Ubaidallah, the last Imām of the period of danger, was the last Qaddāḥid, and on his death was succeeded by Abū'l-Qāsim Muḥammad al-Qā'im—not his son, but the Imām *Mustaqarr* for whom he worked.

For such an explanation there is no authority whatsoever in the Ismā'īlī historical works. The official history of the foundation of the Fāṭimid caliphs, of Qāḍī Nu'mān, the *'Uyūn al-Akhbār* of the *dā'ī* Idrīs, and, among modern works, *al-Falak ad-Dawwar* and *Riyād al-Jinān*, all strongly maintain the 'Alid legitimacy of Sa'īd himself.[2] Yet, it should be remembered, all historical works, by their nature, are ẓāhir, or exoteric, intended for general consumption, and do not reveal the inner secrets of the sect.

It is upon other evidence that I base my suggestion. I am indebted to my friend Mr. M. H. A'zamī for having called to my attention and allowed me to copy a passage of great interest and importance from a secret Ismā'īlī religious work, the "*Ghāyat al-Mawālīd*" by Sayyidnā al-Khaṭṭāb b. Ḥasan (or Ḥusain) b. Abī'l-Ḥaffāẓ al Ḥamdānī, a Yemenite *dā'ī* (d. 533/1138).[3]

This passage is so important that it is here reproduced in full:

"This is what is related on the authority of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, concerning his entrusting the Imāmate (*al-Amr*) to his son Ismā'īl, and the concealment (*Ghaiba*) of Ismā'īl and *his* son Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl during the latter's childhood. For the Imāmate did not revert back from him (as the Twelver Shī'a say), nor does it ever revert back from anyone else. He (Ismā'īl) placed in charge of his son Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, his *Ḥujja* who was with him. He put him as a protection (*satr*) to the child, and placed him in his care, entrusting him to him until he should attain manhood. When he attained manhood he (Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl) resumed his charge (*wadī'a*).

The Imāmate continued in his line, passing from father

[1] E g in the *Dustūr al-Munajjimīn*, the *'Uyūn al-Akhbār*, etc

[2] Fyzee (*List*, p 8) mentions three hidden Imāms after Muḥammad b Ismā'īl, and makes Mahdī the first Fāṭimid caliph

[3] Ivanow, *Guide*, XXXIX

to son, until it reached 'Alī b. Ḥusain b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, through whom the sunrise (i.e. the establishment of Fāṭimid authority in the west) was achieved. For when the light began to shine in the Yemen and in N. Africa, 'Alī b. Ḥusain, the *Walī* of God on earth, set out for N. Africa. When he had got as far as Syria on his way, he went into concealment, and appointed as delegate his *Ḥujja* Sa'īd al-Khair, known as al-Mahdī. He (Sa'īd) published the principles of the *da'wa*. Then there happened to them that which happened to them at the hands of their enemy in Sijilmāsa, from among the rulers of N. Africa, and God saved his plan by his Walī. And when the transfer took place in Mahdīya, he (Sa'īd) returned the charge (*wadī'a*) to its necessary holder (*mustaqarr*), and Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Qā'im bi amr Allāh assumed it, and the Imāmate continued in his line. . . ."[1]

To this I may add that Mr. A'zamī tells me that similar statements are to be found in other esoteric Ismā'īlī works in his possession, some adding the statement that Sa'īd himself was a Qaddāḥid.

It will readily be seen that the contents of this passage place the question of Fātimid legitimacy on an entirely new basis. By admitting openly that Mahdī was not an 'Alid, it invalidates at a stroke all those arguments which attempt to prove the justice of Fāṭimid claims by finding an 'Alid pedigree for Mahdī, and reduces the alternatives to two:— the acceptance or rejection of its own version, making Qā'im, the second Fāṭimid caliph, the ward, not the son of Mahdī, and making *him* an 'Alid.

It must be admitted that there are strong arguments against the acceptance of this version. If the Ismā'īlīs really possessed so good a case, why did they conceal it, and attempt to justify themselves by concocting false 'Alid pedigrees for Mahdī? Again, the *Ghāyat al-Mawālīd* is a twelfth century work, representing a late, conventionalised stage of the *da'wa*. Might it not be the attempt of a historian, shocked by the clear admission of Mahdī's non-'Alid origin, to find another basis for Fāṭimid claims?

[1] Text in Appendix, II.

Strong as they may seem, these objections fall away when we compare our text with the Druze scriptures. For here we find complete correspondence.

The Druze scriptures give a list of seven Imāms from Ismā'īl to 'Abdallah, father of Mahdī. Some of these are described as being "of the race of Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ." The list would thus seem to include both the Imāms *Mustaqarr*—the permanent, 'Alid Imāms,—and the Qaddāḥid protective or trustee Imāms. The Druze scriptures make it clear that Mahdī himself belonged to the latter class. De Sacy[1] remarks: "Hamza, chef de la secte des Druzes, parlant du Mahdī qu'il nomme Sa'īd, fils d'Aḥmad, dit qu'il y avait *une chose déposée en lui* et que Hākim a reprise; et une glose interlinéaire du manuscrit nous instruit que cette chose c'est la dignité d'Imām." I have not the Arabic text of this passage, but it seems clear that "une chose déposée" must be "*wadī'a*." For Ḥākim we may read Qā'im, as the Druzes believed all the Imāms to be identical.

More striking confirmation is to be found in the *Risālat Taqsīm al-'Ulūm*.[2] Here speaking of Sa'īd-Mahdī, the author says:

"He is the one with whom our Lord Mu'ill placed the charge (*istawda'ahu'l-wadī'a*), and whom he ordered to remain in the service of Al-Qā'im. For the first manifestation of our Lord on earth was under the name of Qā'im. It was then that he appeared for the first time with royal dignity."

The difference in rank between Mahdī and his successor Qā'im did not escape the notice of De Sacy. He says:[3] "Il est bien digne de remarque qu'Obeïd-allah, le même que Said, fondateur de la puissance des Fātimis, qui fut le premier khalife de cette famille, et qui se donna pour Mehdi et fut reconnu pour tel, n'est point, dans le système des

[1] I, *Intro.*, 253.

[2] Fol 119 Cf De Sacy, I, 38 A similar statement in another Druze epistle is quoted by de Sacy, I, 80–81.

[3] I, p 38, Note 2 (see also p 84). Cf Blochet, 94 "Dans la théorie ismailienne, le Mahdi n'est point lui-même une incarnation de la Divinité, mais seulement son fils el-Kaim, le deuxième Khalife Fatimide, le Mahdi n'est lui-même qu'Abou'l-Kaïm ou Huddjet al-Kaim "la preuve du Kaim.' "

Druzes, une des personnifications de la divinité. Cet honneur est réservé à son fils et son successeur, Kaïm. Je pense qu'on peut rendre raison de cela, en supposant que le personnage nommé Moïll avait vécu en même temps que Sa'īd, mais était mort avant la naissance de Kaïm. La divinité étant personnifiée dans Mu'ill, on ne put pas supposer qu'elle eut résidé en même temps dans Saïd."

Interpreting the Druze passages in the light of our Ismā'īlī source, only one interpretation is possible. The mysterious Mu'ill, the predecessor of Qā'im in the Imāmate, is none other than the 'Alī b. Ḥusain mentioned in the "*Ghāyat*," the physical father of Muḥammad b. 'Alī, al-Qā'im. Sa'īd-Mahdī, whose inferior status is well attested by the Druze sources, was an Imām *Mustawda'* or trustee Imām, of Qaddāḥid race, sent out to prepare the ground and suffer dangers for the 'Alid Imām *Mustaqarr*, who succeeded him on his death. There would thus seem to have been a double line of Imāms, one 'Alid *Mustaqarr* and one Qaddāḥid *Mustawda'*, throughout the period of concealment, starting with Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and 'Abdallah b. Maimūn Qaddāḥ, and ending with Sa'īd al-Khair and the first truly Fāṭimid Caliph, al-Qā'im.

We may now pass to a more detailed examination of some of the more important personalities of this troublous epoch.

Maimūn and 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ

Among the most prominent and important figures of the *da'wa* at this period are Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son 'Abdallah. Regarding these two figures a mass of conflicting evidence is available. The following constitutes an attempt at the collection and classification of the chief information at our disposal.[1]

The Sunnī Legend. We turn first to what may be termed the Sunnī legend of Maimūn and 'Abdallah—the story of

[1] Most of the material for this section had already been collected when Muḥammad Khān Qazvīnī published the third volume of his Juvainī, the notes of which (p 312–343) contain a useful collection of material on 'Abdallah b Maimūn Due attention has been paid to this collection, and several corrections made in my own.

these two persons as it appears in most Sunnī works, and after them, in the writings of the earlier European orientalists. The earliest form of the Sunnī traditional version is to be found in the work of Ibn Rizām (fourth century, A.H.), preserved in the *Fihrist*,[1] the *Itti'āẓ* and the *Muqaffā* of Maqrīzī, and the encyclopaedia of Nuwairī. The following summary of Ibn Rizām's version is collected from the relevant passages in these works.

Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ was the son of one Daiṣān, a dualist. He was a believer in extremist doctrines (*ghālī*) and the sect called Maimūnīya was named after him. He was a follower of Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb. Both he and his son 'Abdallah were Bardesanians.[2]

His son 'Abdallah was worse then he was. 'Abdallah was possessed of great learning in all religions and theologies, and was also extremely cunning. He claimed to be a prophet, and supported his claims by conjuring tricks and by use of pigeons, which enabled him to foretell events in distant lands. He arranged a system of beliefs, in seven graduated stages,[3] the last of which was complete atheism and libertinism. He tried to organise a community, over the resources of which he would have control. Externally, he pretended to preach on behalf of the Imām Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, and he affected Shīism and religious learning.

He came originally from a place in Ahwāz called Qūraj al-'Abbās. He settled in 'Askar Mukram, whence he was driven to Sābāṭ Abī Nūḥ. There he built two houses. He was, however, discovered to be an impostor, and was driven by the Shī'a and the Mu'tazila to Baṣra, where he took refuge with the descendants of 'Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib,[4] and preached the cause of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. He was accompanied to Baṣra by an associate called Ḥusain Ahwāzī. In Baṣra he was sought by soldiers, and fled with Ḥusain to Salamīya, where he remained in hiding till his death.

[1] *Fihrist*, 186. *Itti'āẓ*, 11 ff. De Sacy, I, *Intro.*, 438 ff Also in Maqrīzī's *Muqaffā* Quatremère, 117, and Fagnan, 39.
[2] The last two statements are in *Fihrist* but not in *Itti'āẓ*
[3] The seven stages are in *Itti'āẓ*, but not in *Fihrist*
[4] Thus *Fihrist*. *Itti'āẓ* says "claimed to be a descendant of 'Aqīl."

From Salamīya *dā'īs* were sent to 'Irāq, one of whom converted one Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ.[1] 'Abdallah, writing from Ṭaliqān in 261/874, attached one of his sons to Qarmaṭ as collaborator.[2] Shortly after 'Abdallah died. The *da'wa* continued under the leadership of his descendants, and eventually one of them, called Sa'īd, established himself as Mahdī in N. Africa and claimed to be a descendant of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Ja'far.

Such, briefly, is the story according to Ibn Rizām. The Fihrist, without stating its authority, adds the following detail.[3] One of the chief supporters of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn was a Persian called Muḥammad b. Ḥusain Zaidān of Karkh, a secretary of Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Abī Dulaf.[4] Zaidān was a false philosopher, an astrologer, a *Shu'ūbī* and a hater of Islām. By the stars he prophesied the fall of the Arabs and the return of empire to the Persians and their faith. It was his wish to be the instrument of this. Therefore he aided and encouraged the Qaddāḥī *da'wa*, and made 'Abdallah b. Maimūn his heir.

The story of Zaidān (sometimes called Dindān) is taken up and elaborated by later writers, and, with the account of Ibn Rizām, forms the basis for almost all later Sunnī discussion of the subject.

It will be seen that there are several minor differences between the two versions of *Fihrist* and *Itti'āẓ*, and one major contradiction, on the question of chronology. The *Fihrist*, although it makes Maimūn a contemporary of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb (killed in 138/755), mentions his son 'Abdallah as living in 261/874—surely a highly improbable contingency. The *Itti'āẓ* gives no chronological indication. The story of Zaidan would seem to confirm the later date, as, according to the *Fihrist*, he must have lived in the third century. Later Sunnī writers differ as to whether the life and activities of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn should be put in the second or in the third century. Among European scholars,

[1] *Fihrist* places the conversion of Qarmaṭ during the life of 'Abdallah. *Itti'āẓ* puts it under his successor

[2] Thus *Fihrist*. Not in *Itti'āẓ*.

[3] P. 188 Cf. De Goeje, 15

[4] An 'Abbāsid governor of Kurdistan Ruled 265–280/878–893.

De Sacy[1] and De Goeje[2] support the latter view, Casanova[3] and Massignon[4] the former. We shall see later that there is now no doubt that Casanova and Massignon are right.

We may now examine some of the other Sunnī sources. A very full account is given by the Amīr 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Shaddād, a N. African ruler of the seventh/twelfth century, in his history of N. Africa. I have not been able to consult the original text of this work, although manuscripts of it are known to exist in Egypt and Syria. It is, however, preserved in part in Nuwairī,[5] Maqrīzī[6] and Abū'l-Maḥāsin.[7] It is also quoted by Ibn al-Athīr.[8] An English translation, with comparison of the different versions, will be found in Mamour's Polemics.[9]

The following is a brief summary. Maimūn b. Daiṣān b. Sa'īd Ghaḍbān was an associate and collaborator of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb. He was author of a book called "The Balance,"[10] in support of Materialism. With them was a third called Abū Sa'īd, a native of Ram Hormuz in Ahwāz.[11] These three taught extremist doctrines, and their sect prospered. When their real tenets became known, Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and many companions were executed. Meanwhile Maimūn, with several disciples, went to Jerusalem. There they practised witchcraft, magic, alchemy, astrology and conjuring, and affected great piety. Maimūn had a son called 'Abdallah al-Qaddāḥ, whom he instructed in his doctrines and trained as his successor. He advised him to affect Shī'ism.

During the reign of the 'Abbāsid Caliph Ma'mūn (198–218/813–833) 'Abdallah b. Maimūn, with several others, organised Shī'ī revolts in Karkh and Isfāhān. Among his followers was Muḥammad b. Ḥusain Dindān, a wealthy Persian who aided him. On the death of Dindān he went

[1] *Exposé*, I, *Intro*, 67 and 165. [2] *Mémoire*, 13 ff
[3] *Une Date Astronomique*, J A, 1915 [4] Art. *Ḳarmatians*, EI.
[5] Leiden MS. De Sacy, *Exposé*, I, *Intro*, 440
[6] *Muqaffā* Quatremere, J A Aug, 1836, p 131–142 Fagnan, 77 ff.
[7] *Nujūm*, II, 446 [8] VIII, 21 [9] P. 45
[10] *Kitāb al-Mīzān*. Thus Athīr and *Nujūm* Maqrīzī reads "*Maidān*"—hippodrome.
[11] Abū Sa'īd is not mentioned in this connection by Nuwairī or Abū'l-Maḥāsin.

to Baṣra, where he organised the *da'wa*. On his death he was succeeded by his descendants, from whom sprang the Fāṭimid caliphs.

This version, which is followed by Ibn al-Athīr, makes Maimūn a contemporary of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, and thus places him well in the second century. It adds one or two details to the biography of Maimūn.

Baghdādī[1] mentions 'Abdallah b. Maimūn b. Daiṣān al-Qaddāḥ as a freedman of Ja'far and a native of Ahwāz. Among his disciples was Dindān, whom he met in prison in 'Irāq. There 'Abdallah and Dindān jointly formulated the Bāṭinī faith which they propagated after their release. 'Abdallah went to N. Africa, where he claimed to be a descendant of 'Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, and later of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. Sa'īd, the first Fāṭimid caliph, was a descendant of his.

'Abd al-Jabbār[2] mentions 'Abdallah b. Maimūn b. Daiṣān b. Sa'īd Ghaḍbān as having been, with Dindān, the founder of the Carmathians and the originator of their doctrines. He says that this knowledge was revealed by the Carmathians during the period of rule of the mysterious Zakarīya in Baḥrain,[3] when all their secrets were published by them.

Abū'l-Ma'ālī[4] relates that the Bāṭinī sect was founded by three infidels, one of them called Ibn Maimūn Qaddāḥ, who together elaborated a set of doctrines and organised a *da'wa*. They set up a son of Ibn Maimūn as Imām, and faked an 'Alid ancestry for him.

Jawbarī[5] describes 'Abdallah as Ibn Maimūn b. Muslim b. 'Uqail (or 'Aqīl), apparently a confusion due to 'Abdallah's alleged 'Aqīlid claims. He appeared, says Jawbarī, during the reign of Ma'mūn, and was imprisoned by him. He died in prison. He claimed to be a prophet, and supported his claims by conjuring tricks. He came from the Sawād of Kūfa.

[1] P. 16, Tr. 35, p. 266, Tr. 108, p 277, Tr. 131. See also *Mukhtaṣar*, 170. It is not clear whether we are to read 'Abdallah b. Maimūn or just Maimūn.
[2] Fol. 147v. [3] V De Goeje, 129 ff.
[4] Ed Eghbal, p. 36. Masse, 57. Schefer, 158. [5] P. 11.

Ibn Jawzī[1] mentions a leader elected by the Bāṭinīs, called 'Abdallah b. 'Amr or Ibn Daiṣān al-Qaddāḥ al-Ahwāzī, a conjurer and a liar. He organised the *da'wa* in all parts of the caliphate, affected piety, and claimed to be a descendant of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl.

Sam'ānī[2] says that 'Abdallah was with Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and served both him and his father. On the death of Ismā'īl he claimed to be his son. He was really the son of Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ.

The *Sīyāsat-Nāme*[3] speaks of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, a native of Ahwāz, who won over Mubārak, a freedman of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl,[4] and with him founded the sect and organised the *da'wa*. 'Abdallah preached in Qūhistān of 'Irāq, and practised magic and witchcraft. After appointing one Khalaf as his lieutenant, 'Abdallah found himself to be in danger, and fled to Baṣra, accompanied by his son Aḥmad. There he carried on secret propaganda until his death. Aḥmad then left Baṣra, and, after visiting N. Africa, settled in Salamīya.

Abū'l-'Alā al-Ma'arrī,[5] the poet, in a curious passage, describes 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ as a Bāhilī, and as one of the most honoured disciples of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq. Later he apostasized. Despite this the Shī'a respect him as a traditionist, and quote many traditions on his authority previous to his apostasy. Abū'l-'Alā then quotes some verses attributed to 'Abdallah, proclaiming his rejection of Ja'far.

Dhahabī[6] mentions 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ al-Makkī (!) as a traditionist, and a freedman of Ja'far. He quotes various opinions as to the reliability of 'Abdallah as a relator of traditions, and mentions the names of several people who narrated traditions on his authority.

Shihāb ad-Dīn ibn al-'Umarī,[7] in his manual for secretaries, gives an Ismā'īlī formula of oath, according to which the Ismā'īlīs say: "(If what I say is untrue), then I have denied the transfer of the Imāmate from Ja'far to Ismā'īl,

[1] Somogyi, R S O, p 256 and 264 [2] *Ansāb*, 443.
[3] 183, Tr 269 [4] *V. supra*. Chapter I.
[5] *Ghufrān*, 156 Nicholson, J R A S, 1902, p. 353.
[6] *I'tidāl*, II, 81. [7] *Ta'rīf*, 157–8.

master of the rightly-guided, illustrious *da'wa*. I have reviled al-Qaddāḥ, and vilified the first *dā'ī*. . . ."

Rashīd ad-Dīn and Juvainī both add a few details to the material derived from the above-mentioned authorities. Rashīd ad-Dīn,[1] after naming Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb as founder of the Bāṭinīya, mentions Maimūn Qaddāḥ and his son 'Abdallah as being among the *dā'īs*—"both of them were accounted amongst the learned and the aristocracy of the sect." In 295/907–8, 'Abdallah, making an outward show of piety and asceticism, but secretly professing the extremist tenets of the sect, settled at 'Askar Mukram, at a place called Sābāṭ Abī Nūḥ. There he prospered, but on being discovered fled to Baṣra, where he settled in the quarter of the Banū 'Uqail (or 'Aqīl). Thence he went to Persian Qūhistān and Ahwāz, where he carried on his propaganda and sent dā'īs to various places. On the death of his father Maimūn, 'Abdallah went to Syria and settled in Salamīya, where he remained until his death. He was succeeded by his son Aḥmad. We have already noticed the passage in Rashīd ad-Dīn according to which Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq sent Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ with his grandson Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, and the latter became the adoptive father of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn. The account of Juvaini[2] tallies almost exactly with that of Rashīd ad-Dīn.

Further references, along these lines, are to be found in Ibn Khallikān,[3] Jamāl ad-Dīn of Aleppo,[4] Maqrīzī,[5] Suyūṭī,[6] and others. They add, however, nothing to our knowledge.

It remains for us to note the famous manifesto of Baghdād, published in that city in 402/1011, by a group of prominent 'Alids, jurists and others, denouncing the falsehood of Fāṭimid genealogical claims, and describing as their ancestor one "Daiṣān b. Sa'īd, from whom the sect of Daiṣānīs received their name." The manifesto makes no mention of Maimūn or his son 'Abdallah. The text is

[1] Levi, J R.A.S., 1930, pp. 512, 517, 519, 522 Blochet, 67–69.
[2] *Jahān Kushā*, III, 152, and Blochet, 67–69, 889
[3] I, 342. Slane, II, 77. [4] Wustenfeld, 3–4
[5] *Khiṭaṭ*, I, 348. [6] *Tarīkh al-Khulafā*, 3.

preserved by Abū'l-Fidā,[1] Maqrīzī,[2] Abū'l-Maḥāsin,[3] and Juvainī,[4] with slight variations.

Such, then, is the traditional story of Maimūn and 'Abdallah al-Qaddāḥ, as it is to be found in the Sunnī sources. It will be seen that the story is substantially that of Ibn Rizām, with certain additions and variations. The few divergences can be rejected out of hand, as being due to obvious confusions, and as having the overwhelming weight of evidence against them. It would thus seem fairly certain that the family originally came from Ahwāz, and that 'Askar Mukram, Sābāṭ Abī Nūḥ, Baṣra and Salamīya were successively the headquarters from which Maimūn and his son conducted the *da'wa*. Most sources agree in describing Salamīya as the last resting-place of 'Abdallah.

Certain contradictions should be noticed, however. Baghdādī and Jawbarī, unlike the others, both observe that 'Abdallah was at one period imprisoned in 'Irāq, and the latter, indeed, makes him die in prison. While it is possible that at one stage in his career 'Abdallah may have been imprisoned, we may confidently reject the latter statement in view of the mass of evidence to the contrary. Similarly the *Siyāsat Nāme's* testimony to the death of 'Abdallah in Baṣra may be discounted.

It is possible that, as Ibn Shaddād says, Maimūn may have resided for a while in Jerusalem. We may, however, reject Baghdādī's mention of a voyage by 'Abdallah to N. Africa. This seems intrinsically unlikely, and is contradicted by all other sources, which speak of only two expeditions to N. Africa—that of Abū Sufyān and al-Ḥalwānī[5] in 145/763, and that of Abū 'Abdallah ash-Shī'ī. The error is easily explained as a projection into the past of later events.

Some difference also exists on the question of the 'Aqīlid connections of 'Abdallah. According to the *Fihrist* version of Ibn Rizām and Rashīd ad-Dīn, 'Abdallah took refuge with the Banu 'Uqail or 'Aqīl. According to the

[1] III, 14–17. [2] *Itti'āẓ*, 22 [3] II, part 2, 112–3
[4] III, 174. Translation in De Sacy, I, *Intro*, 253
[5] *Itti'āẓ*, 31. *Ifṭitāḥ*, 23. Blochet, 69 De Sacy, I, *Intro*, 450

Itti'āẓ version of Ibn Rizām, Ibn al-Athīr, Baghdādī and Nuwairī,[1] he claimed to be a descendant of 'Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, brother of the Caliph 'Ali.[2] Jawbarī simply refers to him as a descendant of one 'Uqail or 'Aqīl—not 'Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, however.

According to Akhū Muḥsin, preserved in Nuwairī,[3] 'Abdallah took refuge in Baṣra with the Arab tribe of Bāhila, among the clients of 'Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, where he pretended to be a descendant of 'Aqīl. Abū'l-'Alā al-Ma'arrī also describes 'Abdallah as a Bāhilī.

The evidence here is in conflict, and it is difficult to reach a decision. Some confusion has obviously crept in. In view, however, of the absence of any mention of 'Aqīl in the Druze and Ismā'īlī references to Maimūn available to us, we may conclude, pending the appearance of further evidence, that claims to 'Aqīlid descent were probably not made.

A rather more serious contradiction exists between the mention of 'Abdallah by Dhahabī and Abū'l-'Alā as a respected Shī'ite traditionist, and the statements of our other authorities to the effect that he and his family were notorious heretics, Bardesanians, dualists, etc., and that his father Maimūn was the author of a book in support of materialism. We shall see later that the testimony of Abū'l-'Alā and Dhahabī is amply borne out by Shī'a sources.

Last, and perhaps most important, there is the conflict of chronologies. While some of our sources speak of Maimūn and his son as contemporaries of Ja'far, Ismā'īl and Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, others mention 'Abdallah as living in the latter part of the third century. Some, like the Fihrist and Rashīd ad-Dīn, with a woeful disregard of probability, do both.

We have already referred to the arguments of De Goeje, Casanova and others. We shall see from an examination of the Shī'ī and Ismā'īlī sources that there can no longer be any doubt as to the correctness of the first thesis—namely,

[1] De Sacy, I, *Intro.*, 197.
[2] For an account of 'Aqīl and his descendants see Ibn Qutaiba. *Ma'ārif*, Cairo, 1935, p 88.
[3] De Sacy, I, *Intro.*, 445

that 'Abdallah and his father lived in the second century. Any reference to actions in the late third century must be, as Muḥammad Khān Qazvīnī observes, in fact applied to the later descendants of Maimūn Qaddāḥ.

Twelver Shī'ī Sources.

The importance of the Twelver Shī'a literature as a source of Ismā'īlī history and particularly of the biography of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn was first pointed out by Massignon,[1] and it was partially utilised by Casanova.[2] The first fairly complete survey of the material is to be found in the notes to the third volume of Juvainī of Muḥammad Khān Qazvīnī.[3]

References to 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, as a traditionist, are to be found in almost all the biographical and bibliographical compendia of the Twelver Shī'a. They are unanimous in making him a contemporary and companion of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq. The following are a few of the earliest of such references.

Kashshī[4] (fourth/tenth century) quotes a tradition on the authority of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ al-Makkī,[5] according to which Muḥammad al-Bāqir said: "O Ibn Maimūn, how many are you in Mecca?" 'Abdallah answered: "We are four." Muhammad said: "You are a light in the darkness of the world." This tradition is reproduced by Astarābādī[6] and Ḥillī,[7] the latter with the remark that it is not to be trusted, as it is a tradition related by someone in his own favour.

Najāshī[8] (372–450/982–1058) mentions 'Abdallah b. Maimūn b. al-Aswad al-Qaddāḥ, a *mawlā* of Makhzūm, who was an optician. His father was a *rāwī* of Bāqir and Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq and he himself a *rāwī* of Ja'far

[1] Art *Karmatians* EI, *Esquisse*, etc
[2] *Une Date Astronomique*, JA, 1915 [3] III, 313 ff.
[4] 160 and 257. Juvainī, 315 Another tradition in Kashshī accuses 'Abdallah of "*Tazayyud*," a word the meaning of which is not clear The tradition is impugned by Ḥillī
[5] Cf. Dhahabī, *supra*, who also refers to him as *Makkī*
[6] *Minhāj*, 212. [7] 152 Juvainī, 316
[8] 148 Juvainī, 315 Najāshī's notes are quoted and confirmed by *Ḥillī* (*A'lām*, 53, *Juv*, 312) and Astarabādī (*Minhāj*, 212).

aṣ-Ṣādiq. He was a reliable authority, and wrote several books, two of which Najāshī refers to by name, namely, the *Mab'aṯh an-Nabī* and the *Kitab Ṣifat al-Janna wan-Nār*.[1]

Ṭūsī[2] (d. 460/1067) also mentions 'Abdallah as author and traditionist, and gives a list of persons who related traditions on his authority.

Ḥillī[3] (648–726/1250–1325) mentions him as a *rāwī* of Ja'far, and observes that his father Maimūn was a *rāwī* of Muḥammad al-Bāqir. He cites one Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallah as having been a *rāwī* of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn.

Ibn Shahrāshūb[4] (d. 588/1192) also refers to him as a companion of Ja'far and an author. He describes him as "*al-Makkī*"—the Meccan.

Among the many Shī'ī divines who quote traditions on the authority of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ we may mention Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb Kulīnī (d. 329/940).[5]

From all this it is clear that many of the assertions of the Sunnī sources are false. The following facts emerge as indisputable.

(1) Maimūn and his son were contemporaries of Ja'far, i.e. they lived in the second, not the third, century.

(2) They were, at least during the beginning of their lives, known and respected Shī'ī traditionists, and not Bardesanians, dualists, or anything of the kind.

The Shī'ī sources also seem to be in agreement in making Maimūn or his son a Makkī—a native or inhabitant of Mecca. This would seem to contradict the consensus of Sunnī sources which describe them as being Ahwāzī origin. Owing, however, to the looseness with which local designations are used in Arabic, the two versions are not necessarily contradictory.

It has been suggested[6] that the 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ mentioned in the Twelver works was throughout his life a devoted Twelver Shī'ī, who had no connection with the Ismā'īlīs. If there was an Ismā'īlī of that name, he was an entirely different person, but more probably, the

[1] Cf Ivanow, *Guide*, p. 29. [2] 197. Juv, 316.
[3] Juv. 316. Tūsī, 197 [4] 65.
[5] Juv 319. For other Shī'ī references see Juv, 341.
[6] Muḥammad Khān Qazvīnī in Juv. 310 ff.

Ismā'īlī Qaddāḥ was a fiction, invented either by the Ismā'īlīs themselves or by their detractors. The suggested motive is a desire on the part of the Ismā'īlīs to lend a certain air of respectability to their movement by associating with it the name of a known and esteemed companion of the Imāms.

In view, however, of the overwhelming confirmation from Ismā'īlī sources of the activities of Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ *as an Ismā'īlī*, this view is no longer tenable. And, in fact, the mention of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn as a Twelver traditionist is in no way incompatible with his subsequent going over to the Ismā'īlīs. As Abū'l-'Alā tells, he is quoted by the Shī'a as an authority only on traditions related by him previous to his "apostasy." Even the notorious heretic Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb is admitted on these terms. (*V. supra*, Chapter I.)

We may conclude our survey of Shī'ī sources with a brief reference to the account of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn given by the unknown Twelver Shī'ī author of the *Tabṣirat al-'Awāmm*.[1] According to him, 'Abdallah was an associate of both Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq and Ismā'īl. On the death of Ja'far, 'Abdallah abducted his grandson Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and went with him to Egypt. Muḥammad died there, leaving a pregnant concubine. 'Abdallah killed her, and substituted a pregnant concubine of his own. She bore a son, whom 'Abdallah brought up in his own doctrines, and passed as the son of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, and therefore the Imām.

This story may be discounted as another hostile misinterpretation of the true relations between the Qaddāḥids and their wards. It is interesting, however, as containing a *Shī'ī* description of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, the Ismā'īlī.

Ismā'īlī References.

Until a larger amount of Ismā'īlī literature becomes available, it is impossible to attempt any detailed discussion of the Ismā'īlī sources for the life of Maimūn Qaddāḥ and his son—particularly in view of the fact that

[1] P. 186. Schefer, *Christomathie*, I, 181

their story would seem to belong to the esoteric tradition, and is almost completely excluded from Ismā'īlī historical works of a general character.

We have already noticed the highly significant references to Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ as guardian and *Mustawda'* of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl contained in the Druze scriptures and in the Ismā'īlī work *Ghāyat al-Mawālīd*. It remains only to add a few details from other sources.

According to the Druze writings, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was the seventh *Nāṭiq* (speaking prophet) and Maimūn Qaddāḥ, also called *Ta'wīlī*, his *Asās*.[1] 'Abdallah is mentioned as a son of Maimūn. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ was the ancestor of Sa'īd-Mahdī.

The *Dustūr al-Munajjimīn*,[2] an early Ismā'īlī work, mentions Maimūn as a companion of Bāqir, and 'Abdallah as a companion of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq.

The *Kalām i Pīr* and the *Haft Bāb Abū Isḥāq*[3] both mention 'Abdallah b. Maimūn Qaddāḥ as a *Ḥujja* during the first period of *Satr* (concealment), i.e. the period after the death of Ja'far.

The *Zahr al-Ma'ānī*[4] describes 'Abdallah as a descendant of Salmān Fārisī—presumably in a spiritual sense.

Finally, *al-Falak ad-Dawwar*,[5] a modern Ismā'īlī work, gives a brief account of 'Abdallah which is obviously based on Sunnī sources.

We may now briefly recapitulate the story of Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son 'Abdallah as it emerges from our various sources.

Maimūn and his son were known and respected Shī'īs, of the entourage of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq. At some time Maimūn came to be associated with the extremist wing of the Shī'a, led by Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, and himself played an important part in the elaboration of the doctrines of the sect and the organisation of its propaganda. After the death of Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, Maimūn took charge, and became the guardian and tutor of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, who was brought up in the Bāṭinī faith. Maimūn's own son,

[1] De Sacy, I, 84–5. [2] De Goeje, 206. [3] *Kalām i Pīr*, 68.
[4] Ivanow, *Guide*, p. 63. *Kalām*, Tr 63, Note. [5] P. 137–8.

'Abdallah, was similarly educated, and succeeded him in the rôle of chief *dā'ī* of the Imām. The death of 'Abdallah may be placed at the beginning of the third century A.H. For the details of their activities and movements, we must continue to rely, pending the appearance of more material, on the version of Ibn Rizām.

The Jewish Legend.

Before leaving this subject, there is one other aspect which may conveniently be considered here. It is the attempt by several Sunnī historians to attribute a Jewish origin to the Fāṭimid dynasty. "The Jewish Legend," as Lacy O'Leary calls it,[1] appears in four forms.

(1) The earliest mention of this theory occurs in the tract of Muḥammad b. Mālik,[2] and is copied thence, in an abbreviated form, by al-Janadī.[3]

According to Muḥammad b. Mālik, 'Abdallah b. Maimūn was a Jew, of the family of Shala'la', of Salamīya. He was a rabbi, and was learned in philosophy and religion. He feigned Shī'ism in order to disrupt Islām from within, and formulated a set of doctrines really based on unbelief. He was a goldsmith, and served Ismā'īl b. Ja'far in that capacity. Finally, he was the true ancestor of the Fāṭimid caliphs, who were thus of Jewish descent.

(2) The second version is to be found in numerous works, and runs briefly as follows. When Ḥusain, one of the descendants of Qaddāḥ, was staying in Salamīya, he married the widow of a Jewish smith, and adopted her son by her first (Jewish) husband. The boy, Sa'īd, inherited the claims of Ḥusain to the Imāmate, and later became the first "Fāṭimid" Caliph. This story is given by Ibn Shaddād,[4] and is also referred to the Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Baṣrī.[5]

(3) The grandfather of Sa'īd was the son of a slave-girl of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq by a Jewish lover.[6]

[1] *Fāṭimid Caliphate*, 33-4 See also Becker, *Beiträge*, I, 5–8
[2] P. 17 ff [3] Kay, 140, Tr. 192
[4] Maqrīzī. Quatremère, 115. (Fagnan, 56.) De Sacy, I, *Intro.*, 452. Athir, VIII, 27–8 Abū'l-Fidā, II, 309 ff.
[5] *Nujūm*, II, 44 and 86 Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh*, 3.
[6] *Bayān-Mughrib*, 1, 158.

(4) Sa'īd was killed in prison in Sijilmāsa. In order not to destroy all his own work, the missionary Abū 'Abdallah concealed this fact, and produced in his place a Jewish slave, whom he proclaimed as Caliph.[1]

Goldziher[2] has already pointed out a general tendency of Muslim genealogists to attribute a Jewish ancestry to those whom for some reason they disliked. In the present case, the variety of forms the accusation takes makes it quite clear that the suggestion has no real historical ground, but is purely an attempt to discredit the dynasty. The details were unimportant. The essential thing was to show that the Fāṭimids were Jewish.

This attitude is easier to understand in view of the unusual position of prominence attained by the Jews under the Fāṭimid Caliphate. Already in N. Africa a group of Jews gathered around Mu'izz, supporting him in his claims and activities.[3] The work of Jews like Ya'qūb b. Killis, the vizier of Mu'izz and 'Azīz, the brothers Ibn Sahl of Tustar, Ṣadaqa Fallāḥī and others during the long reign of Mustanṣir is well-known. The wave of anti-Jewish feeling generated by these persons expressed itself in a number of ways,[4] and it is no accident that Ibn Mālik, the first to attribute a Jewish ancestry to the Fāṭimids, lived during the reign of Mustanṣir, when Jewish influence was at its height. To quote Ibn Mālik's own words: "The proof that they are of Jewish descent is their employment of Jews in the vizierate and in governorships, and their delegation of the administration of affairs to Jews. They continue to place Jews in authority over the lives and property of the Muslims. This is well-known concerning them and all bear witness to it."[5]

Concerning the persons and activities of the various *dā'īs* attached to the Ismā'īlī mission, very little is known. The names of 'Abdān,[6] Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ and Aḥmad

[1] Maqrizi. Quatremère, 108 Cf Ibn Khallikān, I, 342, Tr II, 77, where the same story is told, but the slave is not referred to as Jewish.
[2] *Muh Studien*, I, 204 [3] Fischel, *Jews*, 51.
[4] *Ibid.*, 88 [5] P. 19
[6] An Ismā'īlī friend of mine claims to have in his possession several works by 'Abdān. On 'Abdān in the Ismā'īlī tradition see Ivanow, *Guide*, p 31.

al-Kayyāl at once come to mind. Very little, however, has appeared by way of new material, and there is nothing of importance to add to the studies of De Goeje and Massignon concerning these. There is one, however, among the *dā'īs* regarding whom much uncertainty exists, and in view of the important role assigned to him by many Sunnī sources, it may not be out of place to consider him briefly here.

Dindān

In dealing with 'Abdallah b. Maimūn we have already noticed some of the chief Sunnī notices on Dindān. Their account of him is briefly as follows.[1]

Muḥammad b. Ḥusain, surnamed Dindān,[2] was a wealthy person living in the neighbourhood of Karaj[3] and Isfāhān. He was a secretary of Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Abī Dulaf (d. 280/893).[4] He was a Persian, a *Shu'ūbī*, and a hater of the Arabs. 'Abdallah b. Maimūn heard of him, and won him over to his movement, which assumed a strongly anti-Arab character. Dindān, thoroughly approving of 'Abdallah's aims and methods, gave him two million dināṛs, which were spent in the furtherance of the da'wa. Dindān made 'Abdallah his heir. According to Baghdādī, Dindān and 'Abdallah met in prison in 'Irāq, and there together formulated the Bātinī faith, which they promulgated on their release. Dindān worked in the district of Al-Jabal, where he converted many of the Kurds.

Several sources give also the name of Dindān's grandfather, with considerable variations. The names given are Jihān-Bakhtār (Maqrīzī), Ḥayyān-Najjār (Nuwairī—De Sacy, with the note "la manière de lire ces deux derniers mots est fort incertaine"), Jahār-Bakhtān ('Abd al-Jabbār). It would not perhaps be too hazardous a suggestion to regard these names as corruptions of an unfamiliar Persian name by Arabic authors, and to take as original Chahār

[1] *Fihrist*, 188. Athir, VIII Maqrīzi, Quatremère, 132 De Sacy, I, *Intro*, 442. Baghdadi, 266, Tr 108 Mukhtasar, 170 Abū'l-Ma'āli, Ed. Eghbal, 36 (Masse, 57; Schefer, 158) 'Abd al-Jabbār, F, 147v.

[2] Sometimes Zaidān, Dhaidhān, Bandār.

[3] Some texts read Karkh

[4] *Fihrist* only.

Lakhtān, mentioned by Abū'l-Ma'ālī as one who, with Dindān and 'Abdallah b. Maimūn, founded the Bāṭinī sect. According to Abū'l-Ma'ālī, Chahār Lakhtān was the wealthy man who financed the sect.

These statements, it will be seen, entail a certain contradiction. If Dindān was secretary to Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Aziz (d. 280/893), he could not have been an associate of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn. The version of Abū'l-Ma'ālī, which makes Dindān and Chahār Lakhtān contemporary, adds to the confusion.

Fortunately, we have at our disposal a number of references to Dindān in Twelver Shī'ī sources, which clear up some of these difficulties. According to the Shī'ī works,[1] Dindān, or, to give him his full name, Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. Ḥusain b. Sa'īd b. Ḥammād b. Sa'īd b. Mihrān, was a *mawlā* of 'Alī b. Ḥusain, and an Ahwāzī. He related traditions on the authority of his father's masters. He was regarded as a *ghālī*, an extremist heretic, and his authority as a traditionist was impugned. He wrote several books, among them *K. al-Iḥtijāj*, *K. al-Anbiyā*, *K. al-Mathālib*, and *K. al-Mukhtaṣar fī-d-da'wāt*. He died and was buried in Qumm. His father Ḥusain was a reliable authority who related traditions of 'Alī Riḍā (d. 202/817), Muḥammad Jawād (d. 220/835) and 'Alī Hādī (d. 254/868). He was originally from Kūfa, settled for a while in Ahwāz, where Aḥmad was born, and finally moved to Qumm, where he died. He was the author of thirty books on religious subjects.[2]

In view of this Twelver Shī'ī testimony, the more extravagant Sunnī statements concerning Dindān must be discarded, as also the attempt to make him a contemporary of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn. He was thus, as Massignon[3] observes, a follower, not an associate of 'Abdallah, and died about the middle of the third century.

It is curious that no mention of his name or of any of his books should have been preserved by the Ismā'īlīs.

[1] Ṭūsī, 26 and 104. Shahrāshūb, 10 and 35 *Minhāj*, 34 and 113. *Dharī'a*, 281.
[2] List in Ṭūsī, 104–5. [3] *Esquisse*, 3.

Two other points may be noticed briefly. Nuwairī refers to Zikrawaih as Dindānī—implying descent from Dindān. Further, most of our sources, both Sunnī and Ismā'īlī, include among the ancestors of the famous Yemenite *dā'ī* Ibn Ḥawshab one Zādān or Dādān, who is identified by De Sacy with Dindān.

The Hidden Imāms

We may now turn to consider the hidden Imāms themselves. What little is known of Ismā'īl has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Some of the material concerning Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl has been dealt with in the earlier pages of this chapter. Very little can be added to it from other sources.

Rashīd ad-Dīn[1] tells us that on the death of Ismā'īl, "Muḥammad left for 'Irāq and alighted at Rayy. Thence he went to Demāvand, to the village of (?) Samala. Muḥammadābād at Rayy is called after him. He had several sons in concealment. They established themselves in Khurāsān and the frontier region of Qandahār, in Sind-territory, whence their propagandists attacked the cities and persuaded men to their cause. . . ."

The *Dustūr al-Munajjimīn*[2] partly corroborates this, mentioning that Muḥammad found a refuge in India, and naming his sons.

We have already noticed the guardianship of Maimūn and the adoption by Muḥammad of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn, as related by the *Ghāyat al-Mawālīd*.

The line of Imāms between Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and Sa'īd Mahdī has long been one of the knottiest problems of Islāmic history. Innumerable versions have been given by different Sunnī writers, and even the Ismā'īlīs and those outside the Ismā'īlī camp who accept the legitimacy of the Fāṭimids do not seem to agree among themselves. The question has been carefully discussed by several of the classical historians and by De Goeje and Blochet among the moderns, and it is not my purpose here to enter into a detailed examination of the various genealogies offered.

[1] Levi, 516 and 522. [2] De Goeje, 203

It does seem, however, that the key to the problem may be found in the doctrines of spiritual fatherhood and trustee Imāmate, which were considered at the beginning of this chapter.

In the light of these doctrines, and the lists illustrated by them, it is possible to discern not one but *two* lines of hidden Imāms—one 'Alid, *Mustaqarr*, by physical as well as spiritual filiation, one Qaddāḥid, *Mustawda'*, by spiritual filiation only. It is submitted that the confusion that has arisen in both pro- and anti-Fāṭimid works is due to the intermingling of these two.

From the Druze books and the *Ghāyat*, we can construct the following two lines.

(1) 'Alid, *Mustaqarr*.

Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl
|
Aḥmad
|
Ḥusain
|
'Alī (Mu'ill)
|
Muḥammad (Al-Qā'im)[1]

(2) Qaddāḥid, *Mustawda'*.

Maimūn
|
'Abdallah
|
Muḥammad
|
Ḥusain
|
Aḥmad
|
Sa'īd[2]

With these two lists it is possible to understand the list

[1] *Ghāyat*. [2] De Sacy, I, 85.

of seven "skies" contained in the Druze epistle *Taqsīm al-'Ulūm*,[1] which are as follows:

(1) Ismā'īl
(2) Muḥammad
(3) Aḥmad
(4) 'Abdallah
(5) Muḥammad
(6) Ḥusain
(7) Aḥmad (father of Sa'īd)

All except the first three are described as being "of the race of Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ, and are thus Imāms *Mustawda'*.[2] The first three are 'Alid *Mustaqarr*. They are thus the ancestors, through 'Alī al-Mu'ill, of the Fāṭimid caliphs. The fact that the two lines were spiritually related caused later writers to confuse and mix them, and thus gave rise to the infinite variety of genealogies. The truth was apparently known to the author of the *Dustūr al-Munajjimīn*,[3] who speaks of only three hidden Imāms, after Muhammad b. Ismā'īl, namely, Raḍī, Wafī and Taqī. These three words are not names but honorific titles, and are associated by Ismā'īlī tradition with the Aḥmad, Ḥusain and 'Alī of our list.

The Da'wa

The progress of the *da'wa* and the military exploits of its adherents in the different lands of the Caliphate are fairly well known to us, and have with the exception of that in Yemen and N. Africa been fully discussed by De Goeje and others. It remains merely to add one or two brief remarks with reference to the connections between the various regional movements and the central organisation.

(1) *The Syro-Mesopotamian Movement.*

It would seem to be fairly certain that the Syro-Mesopotamian movement of 289–294/901–906, and the

[1] MS. 1415, fol 117 ff De Sacy, II, 578
[2] "Les ancêtres de Sa'īd sont nommés *les Khalifes en qui reposait le dépôt*." De Sacy misunderstood the meaning of this statement.
[3] De Goeje, 203–4.

years of preparation that preceded it, were part of the main Ismā'īlī *da'wa*, under the aegis and in the interests of the hidden Imāms. Ṭabarī,[1] although not realising the implications of his statement, remarks that Zikrawaih and his sons claimed to be descendants of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, and advanced themselves as Mahdīs and Imāms. He quotes Yaḥyā b. Zikrawaih[2] as claiming to have followers in N. Africa—a claim which can only refer to the Fāṭimid da'wa in that country. Thābit, in an interesting passage,[3] gives the *Khuṭba* read in Ḥimṣ during its occupation by Yaḥyā ash-Shaikh in 290. It is here reproduced in full. "O God, guide us with the Caliph, the heir, the awaited one, the Mahdī, the Master of the Time, the Commander of the Faithful, the Mahdī. O God, fill the earth with justice and equity and destroy his enemies. O God, destroy his enemies."[4]

The Ismā'īlī character of this text is unmistakeable.

In view of the fact that the hidden Imāms were known to be resident in Salamīya during this period, it is extremely improbable that any such movement should have taken place without their connivance. We may thus accept the statement of Ibn Rizām and those who follow him, that the *dā'īs* were first sent to 'Irāq and Syria by the Qaddāḥids. Zikrawaih and his sons were either themselves Qaddāḥids, or, more probably, were persons authorised by the Imāms to pass themselves as Imāms in order to test the ground and remove the preliminary difficulties.[5]

(2) *The Yemenite and Maghrabī Movement.*

The history of the *da'wa* in Yemen and N. Africa is yet to be written. Owing to its auspicious outcome, and to the long survival of the Ismā'īlī sect in Yemen, it is provided with a far fuller documentation than any other, and a wealth of sources, Sunnī, Zaidī and Ismā'īlī, awaits its

[1] 2218 Confirmed by Thābit

[2] Ṭabarī, 2218 He also mentions (2219 and 2257) that the Syrian Carmathians called themselves Fāṭimīs

[3] P. 14. [4] Text in Appendix III.

[5] Cf. the example of the *dā'ī* Tirmidhī. Hamdani in *Der Islam*, XX, 292–3 (above, p. 50).

historian. For the present we may confine ourselves to the observation that the *da'wa* in Yemen was, from beginning to end, in close contact with the Imāms themselves, and did not at any stage diverge from the main Ismā'īlī sect. The despatch of the two Dā'īs, 'Alī b. Faḍl and Ibn Ḥawshab, by the Imām himself, is fully described in the Ismā'īlī sources, and a wealth of details and legends illustrate their historic interview with the Imām and their subsequent activities in the land to which they were sent.[1] To this, and to the mission that went from Yemen to N. Africa, I hope to return on some later occasion.

The *da'wa* in Baḥrain requires a separate chapter.

[1] The chief Ismā'īlī source is the *Iftitāh ad-Da'wa* of Qādī Nu'mān (Ivanow, *Guide*, p. 40), of which I am preparing an edition

Chapter III

THE CARMATHIANS OF BAḤRAIN

THE Carmathians of Baḥrain seem, according to the accounts of most of our sources, to constitute a separate movement, differing in several important aspects from other sections of the Ismā'īlī *da'wa*. They had separate leaders of their own, a distinct local tradition and history, and, in later times, peculiar local forms of organisation.

The external history of this group is fairly well known, and there is little we can add to the studies of De Goeje on the subject. Our purpose here is to investigate the problem of their relationship with the central Ismā'īlī Fāṭimid *da'wa*. Ibn Rizām and those who follow him assert the complete identity of the two movements. Contemporary Muslim historiography, as represented by Ṭabarī, 'Arīb, Thābit and others, takes up no definite stand on the subject. The modern Ismā'īlī tradition strongly denies any contact between Ismā'īlīs and Carmathians.[1]

For a long time the names of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn and his father Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ were associated with the Carmathians, and it was assumed that once the connection between these men and Ismā'īlism was proved, the identity of the two movements followed. Ivanow[2] has accepted this position, and, in denying the identity of the two, rejects any connection between the Qaddāḥid family and the Ismā'īlīs. We have, however, already seen that Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son are, on the contrary, two of the leading figures of the main Ismā'īlī *da'wa*. It is their connection with the Carmathians of Baḥrain which remains to be proved. For none of the early historians of the Carmathians, besides Ibn Rizām, mention their names at all.[3]

The problem must then be restated in new terms. It is *not* for us to consider, as do De Goeje, Massignon and

[1] Ivanow, *Guide*, 1, note 1; and 15, note 1 [2] *Guide*, 15
[3] See Ṭabarī, Mas'ūdī, 'Arīb, Ḥamza, Thābit, Miskawaih, etc., *passim*.

Ivanow, whether or not Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ the Carmathian had anything to do with Ismā'īlism. Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ was one of the founders of Ismā'īlism. It is for us to consider whether or not the Carmathians had any connection with the Ismā'īlī movement of which Maimūn al-Qaddāḥ was a pioneer.

Origins.

The obvious starting-point for such an investigation is the question of Carmathian origins. How did the *da'wa* in Baḥrain begin—who were its creators—what were its original tenets?

Here we are confronted with several conflicting accounts. The following are the chief versions.

(1) *Ibn Ḥawqal.*[1]

Abū Sa'īd, after some experience elsewhere, was sent to Baḥrain as *dā'ī* by Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ. He was thus the creator of the movement there. The movement was the same as that of Zikrawaih in 'Irāq, Zikrawaih himself having been appointed by 'Abdān, the brother-in-law and close collaborator of Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ. To the above, which was used by De Goeje, we may add the reference in the new edition, mentioning Abū Zakarīya aṭ-Ṭamāmī as one of the pioneers of the *da'wa* in Baḥrain.

(2) *Thābit b. Sinān.*[2]

The first *dā'ī* in Baḥrain was one Yaḥyā b. al-Mahdī, who preached on behalf of "the Imām." Abū Sa'īd, a resident of Baḥrain, was one of his converts.

(3) *Ibn Rizām.*[3]

Abū Sa'īd was sent to Baḥrain as *dā'ī*, but was preceded there by one Abū Zakarīya aṣ-Ṣamāmī (or aṭ-Ṭamāmī), who had been sent by 'Abdān. Abū Sa'īd had his predecessor murdered.

[1] P. 210, and New Edition, 27
[2] MS. p. 6 ff. Reproduced by Athīr, VII, 340 ff, and thence utilised by Sacy, I., *Intro.*, 211 ff., and De Goeje, 34
[3] Sacy, I, *Intro*, 214.

(4) *'Abd al-Jabbār.*[1]

A *dā'ī* (unnamed) was sent to Baḥrain on behalf of the Imām. Among his converts was Abū Sa'īd, a resident of Baḥrain. Abū Sa'īd and an associate, one Yaḥyā b. 'Alī (the *dā'ī*?) were expelled, but having gathered considerable forces, returned in triumph. Among the associates of Abū Sa'īd were Ḥamdān and 'Abdān. With him in Baḥrain was the *dā'ī* Yaḥyā aṭ-Ṭamāmī, whom eventually he had murdered, taking charge himself. He claimed to represent the Imām-Mahdī who, he said, would appear in 300/912. The Imām was Muḥammad b. 'Abdallah b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya.

(5) *Nawbakhtī.*[2]

The Carmathians, so named after the founder of their sect, were an offshoot of the Mubārakīya, and were thus dissident Ismā'īlīs. They differed from the main Ismā'īlī group in that they regarded Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as Mahdī and Qā'im, and immortal, thus rejecting his successors, the hidden Imāms.

In view of the new material that has appeared since the publication of De Goeje's monograph—the new edition of Ibn Ḥawqal, with its reference, missing in the first, to Abū Zakarīya aṭ-Ṭamāmī, the manuscript of Thābit, which brings Ibn al-Athīr's version back to the fourth/tenth century, and the new testimony of 'Abd al-Jabbār—we may, I think, reject De Goeje's reasoning, and make the following assertions.

(1) Yaḥyā b. al-Mahdī, Abū Zakarīya aṣ-Ṣamāmī (or Ṭamāmī), Yaḥyā aṭ-Ṭamāmī, and probably Yaḥyā b. 'Alī, are all one and the same person, whose full name was presumably Abū Zakarīya Yaḥyā b. al-Mahdī aṭ-Ṭamāmī (or Ṣamāmī).

(2) This person was a contemporary and probably a predecessor of Abū Sa'īd. He was not the same person as Zakarīya the Persian[3] who appeared in Baḥrain during the

[1] 144 *recto* ff [2] 51 ff do in Majlisī, IX, 175. See Chapter I.
[3] Mentioned separately by 'Abd al-Jabbār as Zakarīya al-Isfāhānī al-Majūsī, and by Thābit as "The Isfāhānī." See De Goeje, 129–136

rule of Abū Ṭāhir. The confusion of the two is due to later historians.

Whether Abū Sa'īd was sent to Baḥrain from outside, or was converted there, is impossible to say, in view of the conflict of evidence. The question must be left open pending the appearance of further sources.

Of far greater interest and importance is the problem raised by 'Abd al-Jabbār's assertion that the Imām for whom the first Carmathians in Baḥrain fought was of the Ḥanafī line. This passage forms a striking confirmation of Casanova's[1] hypothesis that the Carmathian sect was originally Ḥanafī, and was later converted *en bloc* to Ismā'īlism. Further evidence in support of this is to be found in the Carmathian book quoted by Ṭabarī,[2] Thābit,[3] Ibn al-Athīr,[4] and others, which expounds doctrines of a markedly Ḥanafī character, including an invocation of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya, and the proclamation of a Ḥanafī Imām. In view of the Ismā'īlī claims which Ṭabarī himself attributes to the Syro-Mesopotamian Carmathians, the book can only refer to the Baḥrain *da'wa*.

Against this we have the testimony of Nawbakhtī, an author who is extremely well-informed on Shī'ī sects, to the effect that the Carmathians were a direct offshoot of the Mubārakīya, and thus a dissenting Ismā'īlī group.

Here again the conflict of evidence poses a problem to which it is difficult to find a definite solution. The Ismā'īlī sources offer very little assistance. The *Iftitāḥ* of Qāḍi Nu'mān[5] makes the simple statement that Manṣūr al-Yaman sent dā'īs from Ṣan'ā to Baḥrain. No details at all are given. It is significant that the Carmathians of Baḥrain did not at any time throw up 'Alid or Ismā'īlī pretenders, as did for example those of Syria, nor have they the place in Ismā'īlī historiography that one would expect from so important a group. For this last omission, however, there may be other reasons, as we shall see later.

Whether the Carmathians of Baḥrain were of Ismā'īlī or

[1] *La Doctrine Secrète*, 3 ff [2] 2128–2129 [3] 4–6.
[4] VII, 311ff. Translated by De Sacy, *Exposé*, I, *Intro.*, 178.
[5] Fol. 15. Quoted by Maqrīzī. Quatremère, 131, and Fagnan, 47.

Ḥanafī origin must for a while remain uncertain. Both our versions, however, unite in regarding them as a separate group, distinct from the main Ismā'īlī *da'wa*. There are strong grounds for believing that at some date, probably about the beginning of the fourth/tenth century, the Carmathians were won over *en masse* to the Fāṭimid cause. We may now examine briefly the evidence in support of this statement. It may also be mentioned in passing that this double conversion would serve to explain the vagueness of our sources as to the origins of the *da'wa*.

Carmathians and Fāṭimids. (1) *Identity.*

Our earliest source supporting the identification, or at least the collaboration, of Carmathians and Fāṭimids is the Ṣābian Thābit b. Sinān. Thābit can scarcely be accused of prejudice, or of attempting to discredit the Fāṭimids by associating them with disreputable heretics such as the Carmathians. For Thābit shows no hostility to the Fāṭimids. He does not question the legitimacy of 'Ubaidallah, to whom he refers invariably as *Al-'Alawī al-Fāṭimī*, nor does he assert in general terms the identity of the two groups. His testimony is indirect, and therefore more convincing.

The first passage[1] is one where Thābit reports the cross-examination by the vizier 'Alī b. 'Isā of a Baghdādī accused of being in treasonable correspondence with the Carmathian Abū Ṭāhir. On being questioned, the man asserted that he believed in the rightness of Abū Ṭāhir and his sect, and said: "You and your master (the Caliph) are unbelievers. You take what is not yours. God must have a *Ḥujja* in this world. Our Imām is the Mahdī Muḥammad b. Fulān b. Fulān b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, *who is in N. Africa*, etc."

This story is reproduced almost verbatim by Ibn al-Athīr,[2] and with some variations by Miskawaih.[3] It would seem that Miskawaih used a source other than Thābit.

In his account of the events of the year 315/927, Thābit[4] mentions the accusation made by Ibn Khalaf, then secretary

[1] P. 43. [2] VIII, 127. [3] *Eclipse*, I, 181–2. [4] P. 44.

of Ibn Abī-s-Sāj, against his master, charging him with being a Carmathian. The form of the accusation is interesting: "He is a Carmathian, believing in the Imāmate of the 'Alid in Ifrīqiya,"—an obvious reference to 'Ubaidallah. This incident is mentioned by both Ibn al-Athīr[1] and Miskawaih,[2] the latter being rather more detailed. "He (Ibn Abī-s-Sāj) had revealed to him that according to his system he owed Muqtadir no allegiance, and the world in general owed the 'Abbāsids none; the "Expected Sovereign" being the 'Alid who was in Qairawān, of whom Abū Ṭāhir the Carmathian was an adherent. He (Ibn Khalaf) had ascertained that his chief was a Carmathian at heart, and that this was the reason why he had made the 'Alid prince ('Ubaidallah) his friend and acquainted him with all his secrets." Later Ibn Abī-s-Sāj is quoted as saying: "Abū Ṭāhir has received a letter from the sovereign at Qairawān forbidding him to tread the soil whereon I am to be found."

Under the year 317, Thābit[3] gives a brief account of the Carmathian attack on Mecca and the capture of the Black Stone. "When this reached the Mahdī Abū (!) 'Ubaidallah al-'Alawī al-Fāṭimī in Ifrīqiya, he wrote to Abū Ṭāhir reproaching him for his actions, and saying, 'You have marked down for us a black spot in history, which you will not erase, and which the passing of days will not erase . . . you have brought on our dynasty, our sect (Shī'a) and our *dā'īs* the name of unbelief and *Zandaqa* and heresy by your shameful deeds.'" The letter concludes by ordering Abū Ṭāhir to return the stone. It was returned, albeit many years later. This letter is also quoted by Ibn Rizām[4] and Ibn al-Athīr,[5] the latter reproducing Thābit's text almost verbatim.

Under the year 363—and here he is describing events as they occur—Thābit[6] tells of the Carmathian attack on Egypt, and the letter sent by the Fāṭimid Caliph Mu'izz to the Carmathian leader, advancing his various claims and

[1] VIII, 129. [2] *Eclipse*, I, 167–8 [3] P. 48.
[4] Nuwairī MS, Paris, fol 78, 7.8v.
[5] VIII, 158 De Sacy, I, *Intro.*, 220. [6] P 52

reminding the Carmathians that their *da'wa* was for him and that all their struggles had been for him and his predecessors.

The full text of this letter is preserved by Akhū Muḥsin, in Maqrīzī[1] and Nuwairī.[2] It is a characteristically Ismā'īlī document, and, in view of the contemporary evidence of Thābit, there is no longer any reason for doubting its authenticity.

Far more striking evidence of the association of Carmathians and Fāṭimids is to be found in two Druze epistles quoted by De Sacy.[3]

The first of these, *as-Ṣīra al-Mustaqīma bisha'n al-Qarāmiṭa*,[4] is by Ḥamza himself, and dates from the year 409/1018. After describing the establishment of the *da'wa* in Hajar (Baḥrain) by one Shaṭnīl b. Dānīl (the Druze Adam), the author says:

"The inhabitants of Laḥsā often went to Ṣirna (≡Hajar) to buy and sell. There came there one of the learned men of Laḥsā, called Ṣarṣar. One of the *dā'īs* converted him, took his oath immediately, and led him to Adam, who is Shaṭnīl. Adam appointed him *dā'ī* of Laḥsā and its surroundings. The man left at once for Laḥsā and its territory. There he received the oaths of many people and recommended them to attach themselves firmly to the doctrine of the unity of our Lord and to his cult, to recognise Shaṭnīl and his Imāmate, and to renounce Iblīs and his adherents. He also said to them: 'When you enter Hajar, frown and look angrily[5] at the people there, for there is in that town a man called Ḥārith b. Tirmāḥ, of Isfāhān, who has many adherents. They are all rebels against our omniscient Lord, and they do not recognise the pre-eminence of the Imām. Do not speak to any of the inhabitants of the Knowledge (of the *da'wa*), except those who are with you in the presence of the wise Shaṭnīl.' They obeyed the orders of the *dā'ī* Ṣarṣar, and assumed, as he had told them, a hostile and grave manner. For that reason they were

[1] *Itti'aẓ*, 133 [2] De Sacy, I, *Intro*, 227 [3] *Ibid.*, 240.
[4] MS., Paris, 1408, fol 74 ff. Muqtabas, 1910, V, 304–6. De Sacy, II, 112 ff.
[5] *Waqarmitū anfakum.*

called Carmathians,[1] a name which they still retain. This name became usual in Persia and Khurāsān; when they recognise a man as a Unitarian,[2] they say: 'He is a Carmathian,' and thus they gave the name 'Carmathian' to the Ismā'īlī sect. Abū Ṭāhir, Abū Sa'īd and several others were praiseworthy dā'īs of our Lord. They served him, recognised his unity, adored his majesty and his greatness, and professed to believe that he had nothing in common with his creatures. The Lord gave them the title of *sayyid*. They did what no other *dā'īs* have done for the propagation of the unitarian faith, and they killed more polytheists than any other *dā'ī*; but our Lord did not permit his manifestation to be established through them on account of the opposition which he knew would arise among them, and because he knew that the doctrine of unity would be lost, that errors would arise, the children of 'Abbās would follow their passions, and they would fall into error and pitfalls.

"But the time of manifestation is near, the moment of the sword, the upheaval, the massacre of the impious and their forcible annihilation, is approaching rapidly. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of Laḥsā, Hajar and Persia will return to the knowledge of the unity of our Lord and his cult, as in the past, that they will adore the Lord, his majesty and his greatness, that they will profess that he has nothing in common with his creatures, and that they will become defenders of the unitarian doctrine, as were once their ancestors. I shall send among them preachers of the doctrine of unity, I shall reassemble the scattered remnants of friends and servants, and, by the sword of our Lord, I shall triumph over every rebel. . . ."

The intention expressed in these last lines was apparently fulfilled, for we have also an epistle of Muqtana', written in 430/1058, and addressed to the *sayyids* of Baḥrain, summoning them to return to their allegiance to the unitarian religion and the Imām.

Muqtana'[3] addresses the *sayyids* in a tone of great

[1] *"From Qarmata—to frown"* (De Sacy).
[2] The term usually applied by the Ismā'īlīs to themselves.
[3] MS., Paris, fol 108 ff

respect, clearly recognising the former identity of the two movements, and recalling to the *sayyids* the glorious deeds of their predecessors in the service of the *da'wa*. He reproaches them for having seceded, and appeals to them to return.

The evidence of these two Druze epistles, following as it does on the testimony of our Sunnī sources, can leave no doubt as to the association of Carmathians and Fāṭimids, at least for a while. In the epistle of Ḥamza it is not difficult to recognise, albeit in a somewhat mythological form, the usual account of the establishment of the Carmathians in Baḥrain. The mysterious Ḥārith b. Tirmāḥ was probably the Persian Zakarīya of whom we shall speak below.[1]

From Ḥamza's account it would seem that the name "Carmathian" was applied to the sectaries of Baḥrain *after* their mass conversion to the Ismā'īlī cause. This is supported by the fact that they shared that name with the Carmathians of Syria and Mesopotamia, who were undoubtedly Ismā'īlī, and with the Ismā'īlīs of Persia. In that case it would be possible to reconcile the two versions of 'Abd al-Jabbār and Nawbakhtī, by accepting the former's account of the Ḥanafī character of the Baḥrain *da'wa*, and regarding that as the pre-Carmathian state of affairs. Nawbakhtī's "Carmathians" would thus refer to the Syro-Mesopotamian *da'wa*, and to the Baḥrain *da'wa* after its conversion from Ḥanafism. The later assimilation of Carmathianism to pure Ismā'īlism is a relatively simple matter.

Carmathians and Fāṭimids. (2) *Conflict.*

From the Druze epistles we see that if the Carmathian and Fāṭimid movements were at first closely allied, later differences of a serious character arose between them. Confirmation of this is to be found in other sources, and indeed, at the moment of the Fāṭimid occupation of Egypt, we find them in armed conflict with their erstwhile allies.

In his discussion of the war between Mu'izz and the

[1] P. 87 ff. *infra.*

Carmathians, De Goeje[1] has made an admirable analysis of the circumstances leading to the adoption of an anti-Fāṭimid policy by the sectaries in Baḥrain. In 358/968, only a few years before the Fāṭimid conquest of Egypt, the Carmathian state was shaken by a severe internal crisis, ending in what was virtually a revolution. As a result of this struggle of factions, a new leadership emerged, which was hostile to the N. African Caliphs.

Such is the version which De Goeje was able to reconstruct from the Sunnī historians. He could, however, find no motive for the struggle and the change beyond personal ambition and a conflict of personalities. To-day, with the greater knowledge of Ismā'īlī history that is at our disposal, it is possible to find deeper causes, and to discern in the inner struggle in Baḥrain a clash of tendencies, of ideas.

Dr. H. Hamdani, a modern Ismā'īlī writer, says:[2] "At this particular period of Islāmic history (the early fourth/tenth century), the revolutionary activities of the Ismā'īlīs were undergoing a gradual but remarkable transformation. With the establishment of the Fāṭimid state by al-Mahdī in N. Africa, the Ismā'īlī movement, which aimed at a politico-intellectual upheaval in Islām, assumed a graver and more conservative attitude towards the then existing institutions of Islām. The Da'wa, which once aimed at the destruction of the 'Abbāsid Khilāfa, now defended the claims of the Fāṭimids. With the assumption of power, we notice in the works of the dā'īs of this period a tendency towards drifting from their revolutionary and eclectic principles to a liberal yet conventional conservatism . . . it became then the duty of the Da'wa to assume the task of defending the faith as well as to help the State."

So fundamental a change must have aroused hostility among the more intransigent extremists, and indeed there are many signs of serious doctrinal conflict at this period.[3] It would thus not be too hazardous a conjecture to ascribe the struggles of the period to the inevitable clash between the supporters of the much-modified, officialised

[1] *Mémoire*, 183 ff. [2] *Some authors*, 365.
[3] Ivanow, *Kalam i Pir*, XIII.

state-religion of N. Africa and the purer, revolutionary tradition of the early *dā'īs*. And if, on the one hand, the revolutionary purists refused to accept the changes of the compromisers, the Fāṭimids, on the other, found that their association with the disreputable and universally hated Carmathians did not square with the maintenance and furtherance of state and dynasty.

Signs of such a conflict are not lacking in our sources. We have already noticed the doctrinal controversies of the period, typified by the argument between Sijzī and Nasafī, the latter of whom apparently represented the revolutionary idea.[1]

Another signal is the defection of the *dā'īs* 'Abdān and Ḥamdān, related to Nuwairī[2] and Ibn Ḥawqal.[3] De Goeje has shown[4] that Nuwairī's account is not to be trusted, and that the defection of these two, if it took place at all, is to be placed at the moment when Sa'īd-'Ubaidallah was proclaimed as Mahdī, and Abū 'Abdallah ash-Shī'ī executed. According to De Goeje, it was the proclamation of Sa'īd, whom they knew to be a Qaddāḥid, as Mahdī, that disillusioned and alienated the two. We have already seen, however, that in their secret writings the Ismā'īlīs did not claim Sa'īd as anything but a Qaddāḥid. The secret Imām was in fact in existence, and shortly to appear. It was more probably the murder of Abū 'Abdallah, in itself an expression of the deep inner cleavage of the Ismā'īlī *da'wa*, that horrified the two *dā'īs* and provoked their secession. As De Goeje has shown, they did not revert to orthodoxy, but founded a sort of Ismā'īlī opposition, which maintained uneasy relations with the Fāṭimids until the open break in 361/971.

This opposition, which came to a head in the armed conflict between Mu'izz and the Carmathians, must have begun almost immediately after the establishment of 'Ubaidallah as Caliph. The revolt and murder of the devoted *dā'ī* Abū 'Abdallah ash-Shī'ī is already an ominous sign. The dangerous revolt of the Zanāta Berbers under

[1] On these two *dā'īs* see Ivanow, *Guide*, 33 and 35. The difference between them could not have been fundamental, however, for Nasafī remained a Fāṭimid *dā'ī*

[2] De Sacy, I, *Intro.*, 193 ff. [3] 210. [4] 59 ff.

Abū Yazīd, which came near ending the dynasty, seems to have impressed on the Fāṭimids the dangers of an unqualified application of Ismā'īlī doctrines. There was a good case for the application of the well-established Shī'ī doctrine of *taqīya*—concealment.[1]

In an interesting passage, which is unfortunately not very clear in the text, 'Abd al-Jabbār[2] relates that after the final defeat of Abū Yazīd, Ismā'īl al-Manṣūr, the third Fāṭimid Caliph, "pretended to return to Islām. He killed the *dā'īs*, banished some of them to Spain and other countries, and said to the common people: 'If you hear anyone curse the prophet, kill him, and I am behind you.' He listened to jurists and traditionists and deceived the common people. He pretended that 'whoever was of the *da'wa* and preached libertinism did so without the knowledge of my father or of my grandfather.' He lightened the taxes and affected an interest in jurisprudence (*fiqh*)."

'Abd al-Jabbār goes on to relate the activities of Abū Ṭāhir, his revolt against the Fāṭimids, his publication of doctrinal secrets, and his welcoming of the impostor Zakarīya the Isfāhānī. 'Abd al-Jabbār notes that "*dā'īs* like Abū'l-Qāsim 'Īsā b. Mūsā, Abū Muslim b. Ḥammād al-Mawṣilī, Abū Bakr and his brother, Abū Ḥātim b. Ḥamdān ar-Rāzī al-Kallā'ī[3] and others almost died of sorrow and regret at Abū Ṭāhir's revelations of the *da'wa*. . . ."

Another episode illustrating the dissensions between Baḥrain and N. Africa is the mysterious affair of the Persian impostor. Thābit b. Sinān,[4] followed almost verbatim by Ibn al-Athīr,[5] gives the following account of the events, which, he says, took place in 326/937.

A certain Ibn Sanbar, one of the Carmathian leaders, had among them an enemy called Abū Ḥafṣ ash-Sharīk. Ibn Sanbar summoned a friend of his from Isfāhān, called aṣ-Ṣafawī dhū'n-Nūr, and promised to reveal to him the secrets of the Carmathians and make him all-powerful, if he would kill Abū Ḥafṣ. This was agreed. The Isfāhānī

[1] On Taqīya see Goldziher, *Taqīya* Z D M G Lx. 213 ff.
[2] Fol 150.
[3] On Ibn Ḥammād and Abū Ḥātim, see Ivanow, *Guide*, 31 and 32.
[4] P. 54. [5] VIII, 263.

was then instructed in Carmathian esoterics, and advanced as the one for whom Abū Ṭāhir was campaigning. He was accepted as such. Having assumed control, he put Abū Ḥafṣ to death, and indulged in a general orgy of executions, until Abū Ṭāhir himself took fright, and, after testing him, proclaimed him to be an impostor, and killed him.

Miskawaih[1] and the *Kitāb al-'Uyūn*[2] give a version tallying closely with that of Thābit. They record the episode under the year 332/943, but mention that it occurred during Abū Ṭāhir's lifetime.

Another version is that of 'Arīb,[3] followed by Bīrūnī,[4] who names the Persian Zakarīya al-Khurāsānī and puts the episode in 319/931. 'Arīb does not mention Ibn Sanbar or his feud. His account, however, leaves off *in medias res*, and does not constitute a complete version.

'Abd al-Jabbār[5] follows 'Arīb in the main. He gives no date, but places the episode soon after the sack of Mecca, which occurred in 317/929. He refers to the impostor as Zakarīya al-Isfāhānī al-Majūsī, and also makes no mention of Ibn Sanbar and his feud. Under the rule of Zakarīya, the Carmathians denounced all their previous teachings about the Mahdī and the prophetic chain as nonsense. They revealed all the secrets of their sect, and told for the first time the story of 'Abdallah b. Maimūn, Dindān and others, and of their plans to deceive the Muslims. They cursed all religions and burned all religious books, and proclaimed Zakarīya as god, with a programme of complete libertinism. Finally, however, they repented. Zakarīya was killed, Abū Ṭāhir resumed control, and they returned to their allegiance to the Mahdī.

From all this it will be seen that we are confronted with two distinct versions, each consistent within itself and each based on reliable authorities. It does not therefore seem to be possible to make any decision as to the points of difference between them. What is, however, clear from both of them is that at some time in the first thirty years of the fourth century A.H. a serious revolt occurred among the

[1] II, 55 [2] Quoted in De Goeje, 133 [3] 162.
[4] *Chronology*, 213. [5] Fol 147, 2.

Carmathians in Baḥrain, which meant for a while the rejection of Fāṭimid authority and the return to a more violent and more revolutionary faith.

The break does not seem at any time to have been permanent. As we have seen, the Carmathians eventually disposed of Zakarīya, and returned to their allegiance. In 339/950 they restored the Black Stone, apparently acting under Fāṭimid instructions. Even after the struggle with Mu'izz, there are signs that at times they recognised the Fāṭimids, and Ibn Ḥawqal mentions in 367/977 that they sent an annual tribute to the Imām.[1]

[1] New Edition, 27. Old Edition, 23.

Chapter IV

THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ISMĀ'ĪLISM

ONE of the many questions regarding the Ismā'īlī movement which have not yet been satisfactorily answered is—what is, ultimately, its historic significance? For it is obvious that a movement of such scope and of such power must have given expression to some deep-rooted historic force, must have answered some powerful need at the period, in order to attain such dimensions.

Already in early days, writers like Ghazālī, Baghdādī and Ibn Jawzī ask themselves why the movement spread so rapidly, and adduce reasons of varying plausibility. The general conclusion of the early Sunnī sources is that Ismā'īlism represents the efforts of the faiths superseded by Islām to insinuate themselves into Islām and thus eventually to destroy and replace it, either by pre-existing faiths or by pure atheism. The tendency reveals itself in the effort to make the founders of Ismā'īlism Zoroastrians, Manichaeans, Bardesanians, etc.

"Most (of the theologians) lean to the view that the object of the Bāṭınīya was to convert the Muslims to the religion of the Magians with the aid of the method of allegorization by which they interpret the Qur'ān and the Sunna. . . ."

"The most plausible explanation to my mind is that they are *Zindīq* Materialists who profess a belief in the eternity of the universe, and disacknowledge the apostles and all the precepts of the Law, because they are disposed to permit everything to which one's natural desires incline."[1]

"Their longed-for goal is the removal of all positive religion. They took counsel from Magians, Mazdakites, heretical dualists and many followers of the old philosophers, with whom they worked out a method, through which they would be able to free themselves from the rule of Islām. . . .

[1] Baghdādī, 277–278, Tr 130–131.

"'Not through open war,' they thought, 'can the Muslims be overthrown, but only by deceit. People would refuse out of hand an open demand to adhere to our doctrines. The best way to approach them is to pretend to join the most stupid of their sects, that which is most disposed to lend credence to every possible buffoonery—namely, the *Rawāfiḍ*.' "[1]

The earlier modern orientalists tended to regard Ismā'īlism as a national or racial rather than a religious movement, a revolt of Aryan Persia against the semitism of Islām. This is the view advanced in the writings of Carra de Vaux, Blochet and others. The arguments against it, which have been admirably formulated by Wellhausen and Goldziher, are too strong for it to be acceptable. In the first place, the movement was far from being restricted to the Persians—in fact, until a relatively late period it was strongest in the Arab or Semitic lands of 'Irāq and Syria. The tendency, moreover, of recent research has been to increase the significance of gnostic and mystic sects among the Semites and the Egyptians. Again, if on the one hand the depressed classes among the Aramaeans and Arabs tended to adopt the various heretical teachings, the orthodox Zoroastrian ruling classes of Persia lost little time in adopting Sunnī Islām and in assimilating themselves as quickly as possible to the Arab ruling classes. Even those who remained true to Zoroastrianism detested the Iranian heresies no less than did the Arabs.[2]

From this it would appear that the movement, if it had at all a material basis underlying its philosophic and doctrinal character, was determined by social factors. This, it will be seen, follows the lines laid down by the researches of Van Vloten and Becker, according to which Islām was, in its early stages, not so much a religion as the distinguishing

[1] Goldziher, Ghazālī, 38–39 For similar statements in other authors see Ibn Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs*, 108–9 and 112–3, and R.S O., 253–5 and 261–2. "Most of their doctrine conforms to the dualism of the Magians and to the philosophers secretly and to the heretics openly." See also Sacy, I, *Intro*, 74 ff.

[2] Sadighi, *Les Mouvements*, 61, 88, 121 The Ṣābian Thābit b Sinān denounces the Carmathians no less violently than do his Sunnī contemporaries (Thābit MS, p 28).

mark of the conquistador aristocracy and the official credo of the state that represented them. Revolutionary Shī'ism was thus the natural expression, in a theocratic milieu, of the revolt of the depressed classes, Persian and Semite alike. This class-character is well brought out in the verses quoted by Blachère:[1]

"No, certainly, I shall not pray to God, as long as I shall be poor. Let us leave prayers to the Shaikh al-Jalīl, to Fā'iq. . . .

To the chief of armies, whose cellars bulge with measures. But why should I pray? Am I mighty? Have I a palace, horses, rich clothes and golden belts?

To pray, when I do not possess a single inch of earth, would be pure hypocrisy.

No, I leave these practices to those I have named, and whoever blames me is stupid or mad."

In the late ninth and tenth centuries, with the growth of commerce and industry in the 'Abbāsid empire, the social problem became more acute, and the movements representative of social distress and social idealism more prominent. The first danger-signal was the revolt of the Zanj, the negro slaves working in the salt-marshes of Mesopotamia. And then, in 279/892, came the first news of the Carmathian conspiracy against Islāmic society. Ṭabarī,[2] our earliest source, is far from realising the scope or the implications of the events he describes, yet it is significant that according to his account the first protest against the peaceful Carmathian preaching came from a local landowner who complained that the fifty prayers a day ordered by the preacher interfered with the work of his labourers. In view of the well-known Carmathian attitude to prayer in general, it is perhaps not extravagant to regard the fifty prayers as a deliberate interference with the hours of labour. Ṭabarī[3] also makes the very interesting observation that the Carmathians consisted mainly of peasants and tillers.

[1] *Mutanabbi*, p. 6. Abbreviated from the original in Yāqūt, *Irshād*, II, 81.

[2] III, 2126. [3] III, 2198–2202.

Later writers grasp more clearly the social character of Ismā'īlī preaching and the social composition of its following. Ibn Rizām[1] stresses at many points that the Ismā'īlīs taught that laws were merely enacted in order to hold down the masses, and to maintain the worldly interests of those who rule. For those who understand there is no need to obey. Baghdādī[2] also attributes to the Ismā'īlīs doctrines of a similar character, and the famous letter of 'Udaidallah which he cites is a merciless attack on the social basis of orthodox Islāmic society. Ghazālī[3] realises clearly the special appeal of Ismā'īlī doctrines for the *'awāmm*, the common people, and addresses himself specially to them in his refutation. Finally Ibn Jawzī,[4] an acute observer of heresies, notes the peculiar susceptibility of the *'awāmm* to heretical teachings, and the expropriatory character of Bāṭinī preaching.

It may be argued that all these sources are anti-Ismā'īlī, and violently prejudiced, and that their evidence is therefore of little value. Yet this is not a valid objection. Though the specific accusations—e.g. communism—revelled against the Ismā'īlīs may be false, the very fact that the writers shift the issue from the theological to the economic plane shows in what direction they felt themselves to be menaced. And Ghazālī indeed is perfectly frank about this, admitting that the chief danger of the heresy lay in its attraction for the labouring and artisan classes.[5]

Through its connections with the craft guilds, Ismā'īlism was able to exercise considerable influence over the working classes of mediaeval Islām, and to leave a deep imprint which many centuries of oppression failed to erase.[6]

Interconfessionalism

Appealing as it did to men of a multiplicity of races and religions—Mazdakites, Manichaeans, Mandaeans, Ṣābians,

[1] De Sacy, I, *Intro*, 115–7 (=Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 304), 133–135 (=Maq. *Kh.*, 395).
[2] 281–282, Tr. 136–7 [3] Goldziher, Extracts 2, 14, 15, 16.
[4] *Talbīs*, 111, 113, 116 [5] Goldziher, 23–24.
[6] It has been suggested that the Ismā'īlīs were actually responsible for the creation of the Islāmic guilds Though this is questionable, their close connection with them is beyond dispute For a fuller discussion see my article on the Islāmic Guilds in the *Economic History Review*, Nov., 1937.

Shī'īs, Sunnīs, Christians and Jews of every kind, the Ismā'īlī mission necessarily developed a strong strain of interconfessionalism, verging at times on complete rationalism. In this they were preceded and perhaps influenced by the 'Isawīya of Isfāhān, a Jewish sect which, during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik, preached that both Jesus and Muḥammad were true prophets, relative to the countries and peoples among whom they appeared. This was developed and elaborated by the Ismā'īlīs into a coherent system in which the relative truth of all religion was freely recognised and fanaticism definitely renounced. The best expression of this is to be found in the *Rasā'il Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā*, from which the following passages may be quoted as examples of the general tone of religious freedom:

". . . It befits our brothers that they should not show hostility to any kind of knowledge or reject any book. Nor should they be fanatical in any doctrine, for our opinion and our doctrine embrace all doctrines, and resume all knowledge."[1]

" . . . There are some men who think and believe, by their religion and doctrine, in pity and sympathy for all men. They lament those who are guilty and seek forgiveness for them. They have pity on all living creatures and wish well to all. This is the religion of the pure ones, the ascetics and the well-doers among the believers. Such, too, are the doctrines of our noble brothers."[2]

"Know, O brothers, that it is part of your well-being to find a teacher who is intelligent, good-natured, of fine character, clear-minded, a lover of knowledge, a seeker of truth, and not a fanatical adherent of any religious doctrine."[3]

". . . Do not occupy yourself with the reforming of old men who have kept since their childhood false ideas, bad habits and evil qualities, for they will weary you and will not be changed. If they do change, it would be very little, and of no avail.

"Your concern is with young men of sound heart, who incline towards letters, begin to study the sciences, seek the path of truth and the other world, believe in the day of

[1] IV, 105. [2] IV, 108. [3] IV, 114.

reckoning, make use of the religious codes of the prophets, study the secrets of their books, renounce passion and polemic and are not fanatical in matters of doctrine."[1]

Jewish and Christian scriptures were studied, and Ismā'īlī methods of interpretation applied to them. The great Fāṭimid philosopher Ḥamīd ad-Dīn Kirmānī (d. after 408/1017), who was apparently acquainted with both Hebrew and Syriac, made extensive use of Old and New Testament texts.[2] So, too, did the Druze scriptures.[3] There is even extant a Persian version of the Sermon on the Mount with Ismā'īlī commentary. Benjamin of Tudela, noted that in Syria the Druzes were very friendly to the Jews, and that in Persia there was a Jewish community living under the rule of the Ismā'īlīs, which accompanied them whenever they went to war.[4]

Another example of Ismā'īlī latitude is the concession made to the Yemenite local tradition that a Mahdī would rise in Yemen, called al-Manṣūr.[5] The use of this title by the Ismā'īlī *dā'ī* Ibn Ḥawshab is well-known, and is almost certainly an attempt to exploit this tradition to Ismā'īlī advantage. According to 'Abd al-Jabbār, the *dā'ī* promised the Yemenites that the Mahdī would rise in Yemen.[6]

Perhaps the most far-reaching statement is made in the Druze epistle *Risālat as-Safar ilā-s-Sāda*, where it is claimed that the Druze faith supersedes *all* others, viz., Islām, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and a host of minor sects.[7] From including to superseding is after all but one step.

Many similar expressions are to be found in Ismā'īlī writings. As an example we may quote the *Shawāhid* of Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, which speaks of the Ṣābians as believers in God, and says that Jews, Christians and people *of any other religion* who believe in God and in an

[1] IV, 114 [2] Kraus, *Heb. and Syr Lit*, Der Islam, XIX.
[3] De Sacy, I, 489 and 498.
[4] 62 and 120. Ed. Asher, New York, I.
[5] Frequent references are to be found in Yemenite local literature to a Ḥimyaritic Messiah, to be called Manṣūr Ḥimyar or Manṣūr al-Yaman. See D. H. Müller, *Burgen und Schlösser*, 367–8 and 407–8 Also Ḥamdānī, Iklīl, 71–72. Maqdisī, Huart, II, 183 (Tr 164)
[6] Fol. 143b. [7] MS., Paris, 172 and 173r.

after-life, who do good and obey God, have a place in heaven.[1]

This interconfessionalism did not fail to impress and horrify Sunnī jurists. Ibn Rizām[2] expatiates at length on the catholicity of the Bāṭinī *da'wa* and its attempt to enrol people of all faiths by offering them that which is likely to prove most attractive to them. Ghazālī[3] too notes and deplores this indiscriminate appeal.

This latitudinarian spirit did not die out with the decline of revolutionary Carmathianism. It left its mark in the tolerant religious policy of the Fāṭimid caliphs, in the religious freedom of the guilds, at least during the earlier period, in the strong current of interconfessionalism in later Ismā'īlī literature, and, finally, in the influence it exercised on a number of talented individuals, notably Ma'arrī and 'Umar-i-Khayyām.[4]

Communism

One of the charges regularly brought against the Carmathians and the Ismā'īlīs by their Sunnī opponents was that they preached and practised communism of goods and of women. The author of the *Siyāsat-Nāme* regards Ismā'īlism as a direct continuation of the Mazdakite movement of Sāsānid Persia, and precedes his account of Ismā'īlī doctrines and activities with a lengthy and detailed description of Mazdak's movement. The keynote of the religio-communist programme of Mazdak is to be found in the saying attributed to him by the *Siyāsat-Nāme*:[5] "Riches must be shared and distributed according to need." That Mazdak introduced communism of property may be taken as certain. That he introduced communism of women is questionable.[6]

The link between Mazdak and the Ismā'īlīs is provided, according to the *Siyāsat-Nāme*,[7] by Khurrama, the widow

[1] MS., Cairo, 42–43 [2] De Sacy, I, *Intro*, 133, 148, etc
[3] Goldziher, 44 and Extr. 6.
[4] Both are claimed as Ismā'īlīs by *Al-Falak ad-Dawwār* (p. 170 and 177). [5] 168, Tr. 248.
[6] On the whole question of Mazdak see Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*. [7] 182, Tr 255.

of Mazdak, who founded the secret sect of the Khurramdīnīya, of which both Abū Muslim and Sindbād the Guebre were adherents. The assimilation of this movement to Shī'ism, which was carried out for purely opportunist reasons, is expressed in the phrase "Mazdak has become a Shī'ī!"[1]

The whole episode of the Khurramdīnīya, and their links with pre-Islāmic Iranian movements on the one hand and with Ismā'īlism on the other is still uncertain, and we cannot enter into a discussion of it here. An analysis of the source material will be found in the valuable study of Dr. G. H. Sadighi.[2]

We are on firmer ground when we read the actual history of the Carmathian and Ismā'īlī sects. Here the *Siyāsat-Nāme* gives a fairly accurate account of the rise and spread of the sects, and the activities of their missionaries in various lands. The general account tallies with most Sunnī sources. Of special interest is the repeated assertion of the identity of Mazdakism and Carmathianism, and the statement that atheism, communism and libertinism were general in Baḥrain.

A more detailed and, on the whole, more convincing account of Carmathian communism is given by Ibn Rizām. The passage in question is preserved in Nuwairī, and describes the establishment of a communist colony in the neighbourhood of Kūfa.[3] According to this account, the *dā'ī* Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ, having converted the inhabitants of some 'Irāqī villages to his doctrine, imposed on them an ever increasing series of taxes and levies, and finally "imposed on them the *ulfa* (union)," which consisted of collecting all their property in one place, in order to enjoy it in common. The *dā'īs* chose in each village a trustworthy man, who was to receive all that the inhabitants of the village had by way of cattle, jewellery, furniture, etc. In return, this manager supplied clothes to the naked, and satisfied all the other needs of the people, so that there were

[1] 173, Tr. 268 [2] *Les Mouvements Réligieux Iraniens*
[3] Nuwairī, MS., Paris, fol 48v Cf De Sacy, I, *Intro*, 186 De Goeje, 29.

no longer any poor people among the sectaries. Everyone worked with diligence and emulation, in order to deserve high rank by the benefit he brought to the community; the women brought whatever they earned by weaving, and even the children gave the money they earned by frightening birds away from the crops. Nobody retained any personal property beyond his sword and his arms. When this institution was well established, Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ ordered the *dā'īs* to collect all the women one night, so that they might mix indiscriminately with all the men. For this, he said, was the perfection and the last degree of friendship and brotherhood."

Apart from these two passages, both coming from enemies of the Carmathians, and both strongly prejudiced against them, we have no evidence beyond a few general assertions.[1] The literature of the Ismā'īlīs themselves bears no trace of communist doctrine. Yet this does not justify us in rejecting out of hand the evidence of the *Siyāsat-Nāme* and of Ibn Rizām, in view of the fact that all extant Ismā'īlī literature dates from after the establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate, when the revolutionary doctrines of the preceding period were toned down to suit the requirement of a state and a dynasty. It is thus possible that some form of communism was preached by the early *dā'īs*, and perhaps actually put into practice by the Carmathians of Baḥrain, who, as we have seen, were not affected by the doctrinal changes in N. Africa.[2] Here two sources are of special value—namely, the notes of two travellers, both strongly pro-Fāṭimid, who visited the Carmathians in Baḥrain and placed their impressions on record. From

[1] Ibn Ḥazm (Friedländer, I, 37, II, 19–20) mentions communism as a basic and vital element of the doctrines of the Ismā'īlīs, Carmathians and Fāṭimids. Ibn Ḥawqal (210) mentions semi-communist activities by Abū Sa'īd in S. Persia. Ar-Ru'inī, the disciple and successor of the pro-Ismā'īlī philosopher Ibn Masarra (ninth/tenth centuries) is known to have preached communism of property and possibly free love (Asin Palacios, 99–103).

[2] We may, I think, reject without hesitation the suggestion that the Ismā'īlīs practised communism of women. From the Druze writings we learn that the Ismā'īlīs allowed to women a far higher and freer status than did their Sunnī contemporaries. The relative freedom of Ismā'īlī women may well have appeared to be complete debauchery in the eyes of bigoted Sunnī beholders.

these we can get some idea of Carmathian political and social ideas and administration.

The earlier and less detailed of the two accounts is that of Ibn Ḥawqal, who visited Baḥrain in the latter half of the tenth century. Ibn Ḥawqal says very little concerning the social system of the Carmathian state, but makes some interesting observations on its political structure. According to his account,[1] the Carmathian state was a sort of oligarchic republic. The ruler was in no sense absolute, but rather a first among equals, ruling with the aid of a kind of committee consisting of his close associates and relatives by both physical and initiatory bonds. This ruling body was termed the *'Iqdānīya*.[2] Ibn Ḥawqal gives the names and functions of some of these oligarchs. The two ruling families were those of Abū Sa'īd al-Jannābī and Ibn Sanbar. The latter, it seems, was a leading local family in pre-Carmathian days. Ibn Ḥawqal also describes the various taxes and tolls by which the Carmathian state raised its revenue, and the distribution of funds among the *'Iqdānīya*, after the deduction of one-fifth for the Imām. The revenue, he says, exceeded one million dīnārs.[3]

A more detailed description is to be found in the *Safar-Nāme* of Nāṣir-i-Khusrau, a Persian Ismā'īlī who visited Baḥrain some time in the eleventh century, on his return journey from Egypt to Persia. The following is a summary of his remarks on Laḥsā, the Carmathian capital.[4]

There were in Laḥsā more than 20,000 inhabitants capable of bearing arms. The former ruler was Abū Sa'īd, who had abolished fasts and prayers. The inhabitants called themselves Abū Sa'īdīs after him. Though they admitted the prophethood of Muḥammad, they observed neither fasts nor prayers. On the death of Abū Sa'īd (*sic*) the government passed to a council of six of his disciples,[5] who ruled with equity and justice. This council was still

[1] New Edition, p 25–27 Old Edition, 21–22.
[2] Those who have the power to bind and to absolve (De Goeje, 151).
[3] See further De Goeje, 150 ff., where this and other sources are discussed.
[4] 82 ff, Tr 225 ff
[5] I translate thus the Persian word *farzand* (son), which must be understood here in the spiritual sense (see Chapter II).

functioning when Nāṣir-i-Khusrau visited them. The council owned 30,000 negro slaves, who did agricultural labour. There were no taxes or tithes. If anyone was impoverished or indebted, he was re-established with the aid of others. On debts, creditors claimed only the capital. Any foreign artisan coming to Laḥsā was given, on his arrival, sufficient money to establish himself. Repairs for poor house-owners were executed at public cost. At Laḥsā Nāṣir found mills, owned and maintained by the state, in which corn was ground free of charge. The rulers were called *Sayyids* and their viziers *Shaira*.

There were no mosques, prayers, *khuṭbas* or Friday services. There was, however, a mosque built at private cost for orthodox pilgrims. Commercial transactions were carried on with token money, which was not exportable. The natives did not pray, but did not prevent anyone else from doing so. They did not in any circumstances drink wine. Whenever one or other of the *Sayyids* gave an audience, he spoke in tones of softness and modesty.

Animals of all kinds were eaten at Laḥsā—cats, dogs, donkeys, etc. The law demanded, however, that the head and skin of an animal be exhibited by the side of the meat offered for sale, so that purchasers might know what they were taking.

Such, then, was Laḥsā as Nāṣir saw it. And though his pictures may be idealised in one or two respects, it would seem to be on the whole reliable. The régime he describes is obviously not communism, but it is one with a system of society and of government very different from anything known elsewhere in the Islāmic world, and one well calculated to arouse the apprehension and hostility of the possessing classes.

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BIE.	Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte.
BIFAO.	Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale.
B.S.O.S.	Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies.
EI.	Encyclopaedia of Islam.
J.A.	Journal Asiatique.
J.A.O.S.	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
J.B.B.R.A.S.	Journal of the Bengal Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

J.R.A.S.	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
M.A.S.B.	Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
R.H.R.	Révue de l'Histoire des Religions.
R.E.I.	Révue des Études Islamiques.
R.S.O.	Rivista degli Studi Orientali.
Z.A.	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie.
Z.D.M.G.	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

Appendix

I وفرقة منهم يقال لهم الاسمعيلية وهم المباركية والخطّابية فقالت المباركية بامامة محمد بن اسماعيل وقالت الخطابية بالهية جعفر تعالى الله عن ذلك علوا كبيرا ونسبوا الى رئيس لهم يقال له ابو الخطّاب

II وذلك ما روى عن الامام جعفر بن محمد الصادق صلع فى تسليمه الامر الى ولده اسماعيل صلع وغيبة اسماعيل وولده محمد بن اسماعيل فى حد الطفولية ولم تكن الامامة ترجع القهقرى (١) منه كما لم ترجع من غيره فاودع حجّته المنصوبة بين يديه ميمون القدّاح مقامه لولده واقامه سترا عليه وقدمه بين يديه واستكفله اياه الى بلوغه اشده ولما بلغ اشده تسلم وديعته ثم جرى الامر فى عقبه خلفا عن سلف حتى انتهى الامر به الى على ابن الحسين بن احمد بن محمد بن اسماعيل . . بن على بن ابى طالب وكان على يديه طلوع الشمس وذلك انه لما ظهر النور باسقا باليمن وبلاد المغرب سار ولى الله فى ارضه على بن الحسين بريد بلاد المغرب حتى كان فى بعض طريقه من الشام واظهر الغيبة واستخلف حجته سعيد الخير الملقب بالمهدى عليهم السلام فبثّ قواعد الدعوة وجرى عليهما من ضدهما بسجلماسة من العمال بالمغرب ما جرى ووقى الله بوليه كيده . . . . . .

ولما حضرت المهدية النقلة سلم الوديعة الى مستقرها وتسلمها محمد ابن على القائم بامر الله وحرت الامامة فى عقبه حتى انتهت الامامة الى مستقرها وهدنها واطمأنت بموضعها وموطنها

III اللهم اهدنا بالخليفة الوارث المنتظر المهدى صاحب الوقت امير المؤمنين المهدى اللهم املا الارض به عدلا وقسطا ودمر اعداءه (٢) اللهم دمر اعداءه (٣)

(1) Cf Shahr I 146
(٢) In text أعداؤه

Glossary

THE following glossary of Arabic words is intended to aid readers not acquainted with the Arabic language. It should be borne in mind that the meanings given often refer to the technical, theological sense of the words, and not to the normal Arabic sense. Many of the Ismā'īlī terms are explained at greater length in the body of the book.

asās — foundation, the first of a series of silent Imāms after the speaking Imām.
bāṭin — esoteric.
Bohra — Indian Ismā'īlī sect.
dā'ī — missionary, propagandist.
da'wa — mission, propaganda.
ghaiba — absence, concealment (of a messianic personage).
ghālī — (*pl.* ghulāt)—extremist (in heresy).
ḥujja — proof (of God). A person in the Ismā'īlī hierarchy, appointed by the Imām.
ibāḥī — libertine.
Imām — leader, religious and secular head of the Islamic community.
Imām mustaqarr — permanent or innate Imām.
,, mustawda' — delegated or trustee Imām.
Mahdī — divinely guided one, messianic Imām.
mawlā — (*pl.* mawālī)—client, freedman, non-Arab Muslim.
naṣṣ — designation (of a successor).
Nāṭiq — speaking or Prophetic Imām.
nikāḥ rūḥānī — spiritual marriage.
Qā'im — seventh and last Imām of a cycle.
,, muntaẓar — awaited (or messianic) Qā'im.
raj'a — return (of a messianic personage).
rāwī — one who relates traditions.
Ṣāmit — silent Imām (one who maintains the tradition between one *Nāṭiq* and the next).
satr — concealment (of the Imām).

Shu'ūbī	one who advances the claims of the non-Arabs as against the Arabs.
tafwīḍ	delegation of authority, adoption of a spiritual heir.
ta'lim	instruction, mystic knowledge.
taqīya	dissimulation (of religious beliefs).
ta'wīl	esoteric interpretation.
wadī'a	trust, deposit
ẓāhir	exoteric.
zandaqa	originally Manichaeism, extended by Sunnī theologians to describe any belief of which they disapproved.
zindīq	one who professes *zandaqa*.

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