The Ismāʿīlīs: their history and doctrines

Farhad Daftary
To Fereshteh
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Map
Near East, Persia and adjoining lands in mediaeval times
The study of the history of the Isma'ili religion, which for long had depended largely on the polemical and often distorted accounts of its opponents, has been transformed since the time of the First World War by the discovery of large private collections of authentic Isma'ili works in the Soviet Union and India. Many of the original texts, previously kept secret from outsiders by the Isma'ili communities, have now been published or are accessible in manuscript to scholarly research. Although a relatively small number of scholars in East and West have actively pursued such research, progress in uncovering the story of the Isma'ili movement in its various branches and the development of Isma'ili religious thought has been steady. The major aspects and characteristics of this thought and its transformations in the course of often catastrophic events affecting the scattered Isma'ili communities have become evident. There are, to be sure, still large gaps left in our knowledge of these developments, some of which may prove difficult to fill because of a lack of sources. Moreover, on some fundamental questions, especially concerning the early stages of Isma'ilism, consensus has not yet been reached among scholars. Yet these problems must not obscure the remarkable advances made in the study of Isma'ilism, which provide both a general outline of the history of one of the major branches of Shi‘ite Islam and a sound basis for further detailed research.

In the present volume, Dr F. Daftary offers a first comprehensive and detailed synthesis of the complex history of Isma'ilism. His presentation fully reflects the progress of recent research, widely scattered in editions of texts, monographs and articles, and integrates it into an evenly readable account. In some areas, especially on the modern developments, entirely new ground is covered. The book will no doubt be widely appreciated as a
general reference work by students and by all readers interested in aspects of Isma'ili history from a scholarly point of view.

Wilferd Madelung
*Laudian Professor of Arabic*
*The University of Oxford*
The Ismāʿīlīs constitute the second largest Shiʿī community after the Twelvers in the Muslim world and are now scattered in more than twenty countries of Asia, Africa, Europe and America. This book traces the history and doctrines of the Ismāʿīlī movement from its origins to the present time, a period of approximately twelve centuries.

The origins of Sunnism and Shiʿism, the two main divisions of Islam, may be traced to the crisis of succession faced by the nascent Muslim community following the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, though the doctrinal bases of these divisions developed gradually in the course of several centuries. In time, Shiʿī Islam, the minoritarian view, became subdivided into different groups, many of which proved short-lived. But Imāmī Shiʿism, providing the common early heritage for several Shiʿī sects, notably the Twelvers and the Ismāʿīlīs, was a major exception.

The Ismāʿīlīs have had a long and eventful history. In mediaeval times, they twice established states of their own and played important parts for relatively long periods on the historical stage of the Muslim world. During the second century of their history, the Ismāʿīlīs founded the first Shiʿī caliphate under the Fāṭimid caliph-imāms. They also made important contributions to Islamic thought and culture during the Fāṭimid period. Later, after a schism that split Ismāʿīlism into its two major Nizārī and Mustaʿlian branches, the Nizārī leaders succeeded in founding a cohesive state, with numerous mountain strongholds and scattered territories stretching from eastern Persia to Syria. The Nizārī state collapsed only under the onslaught of the all-conquering Mongols. Thereafter, the Ismāʿīlīs never regained any political prominence and survived in many lands as a minor Shiʿī Muslim sect. By the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the spiritual leaders or imāms of the Nizārī majority came out of their obscurity and actively participated in certain political
events in Persia and, then, in British India; later they acquired international prominence under their hereditary title of Āghā Khān (Aga Khan).

The Ismā'īlīs have almost continuously faced the hostility of the majority of Muslim dynasties and groups. Indeed, they have been amongst the most severely persecuted communities in the Islamic world. As a result, the Ismā'īlīs have been obliged for the most part to live clandestinely, also guarding secretly their religious beliefs and literature.

Under such circumstances, the Ismā'īlīs were until a few decades ago studied and judged mainly on the basis of the hostile accounts produced by their enemies, including the writings of the majority of the mediaeval Muslim historians, theologians, heresiographers and polemists as well as the fanciful stories related by the occidental chroniclers of the Crusaders. Having had confrontations with the Nizāris of Syria, the Crusaders were also responsible for making these sectarians, followers of the Old Man of the Mountain, known in Europe as the Assassins; an unfortunate misnomer that is still occasionally applied by some writers to the entire Nizārī branch of Ismā'īlism. The same anti-Ismā'īli sources provided the basis for the studies of the nineteenth-century orientalists on different aspects of the Ismā'īli movement.

However, Ismā'īli studies have been revolutionized in the present century, especially since the 1930s, mainly by the discovery and study of a large number of Ismā'īli manuscripts preserved in India, Central Asia and Yaman. Many of these Ismā'īli texts, including the classical treatises of the Fāṭimid period, have been gradually edited and published. The new availability of genuine Ismā'īli sources has enabled a small group of specialists, initially led by the late Wladimir Ivanow, to produce important studies in the field. As a result of the modern progress in Ismā'īli studies, we have now acquired a much better understanding of the true nature of the Ismā'īli movement, necessitating a drastic revision of previously held ideas on the subject.

This study aims to present, in a connected manner, the results of modern scholarship on the history and doctrines of the Ismā'īlīs. Drawing on a large number of Ismā'īli texts and other primary sources, as well as the contributions of the modern authorities, it seeks to cover all the major phases and events in the development of Ismā'īlism.

The genesis of this book dates back to more than two decades ago when I was a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, and began to correspond with Wladimir Ivanow, who was the original inspirer of my interest in Ismā'īli studies. The bulk of the manuscript was,
however, written in Tehran between 1979 and 1987, the turbulent years of the Islamic revolution in Iran. Subsequently, some sections were revised and many additions were made to the notes and references. In conducting my research, I utilized, over the years, the collections of several private and public libraries in Tehran, Paris, London and elsewhere. I am particularly indebted to the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, for placing at my disposal their Ismā‘ili manuscripts.

Professor Wilferd Madelung of the University of Oxford read the entire typescript of the book and made many valuable suggestions for its improvement, also saving me from several errors and inaccuracies; I owe him a very special debt of gratitude.

A number of friends accompanied me on field trips to Alamūt, Lamasar, Girdkūh, Anjudān, Dizbād, and other Ismā‘ili sites in Iran, or in different ways contributed to the completion of this book; I am grateful to all of them. I am particularly indebted to Mithra Razmjoo for her literary judgement and keen editing; to Mohammad R. Moghtader for preparing an earlier draft of the map; to Azizeh Azodi for letting me benefit from her profound knowledge of the German and Russian languages; and to Susan van de Ven for carefully preparing the final typescript for the Press. Iraj Bagherzade, extremely busy with his own publishing schedule in London, always found time to advise me on publishing matters; I should like to express my warm thanks to him. And I am deeply thankful to Farideh Agha Khan, who has been a constant source of inspiration and assistance over the years.

Finally, there is Fereshteh who not only encouraged the writing of this book and then bore with me while I was writing it, but who also photographed many Ismā‘ili sites for me, at times with great risk to her safety, and typed the various drafts of the book. I can never thank her adequately; this book is dedicated to her as a token of my deep sense of appreciation.
The system of transliteration used in this book for the Arabic script is essentially that of the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, with two modifications, namely, \( j \) for \( dj \), and \( q \) for \( k \). To maintain consistency, the same system is utilized for transliterating Persian names and terms, except that \( j \) is replaced by \( ch \), and sometimes \( v \) is used for \( w \). Furthermore, an attempt has been made to reproduce the more elaborate vowel system of Turkish and Mongol names, thus Hülegü and not Hūlāgū. Common geographical names and certain Islamic terms which have acquired standard usage in the English language have not been transliterated.

The lunar years of the Islamic calendar are generally followed throughout the text and the endnotes (with the exception of chapter 1) by the corresponding Gregorian solar years (e.g., 6th/12th century). The years of the Islamic era, initiated by the emigration (hijra) of the Prophet Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina in July 622, commonly abbreviated in the Latin form A.H. (= *Anno Heginae*), have been converted to the corresponding dates of the Christian era, abbreviated as A.D. (= *Anno Domini*), on the basis of the conversion tables given in Greville S. P. Frceman-Grenville, *The Muslim and Christian Calendars* (London, 1963). In Iran (Persia), a solar Islamic calendar was officially adopted in the 1920s. The Islamic dates of the sources published in modern Iran are, therefore, solar, coinciding with the corresponding Christian years starting on 21 March.

A few standardized abbreviations have been used in this book, notably, b. for *ibn*, and less frequently for born, ca. for *circa*, indicating an approximate date; d. for died; ed. for editor or edition; fl. for flourished, and tr. or trans. for translator or translation. The list of the abbreviations used for certain frequently cited periodicals and other sources appears at the head of the endnotes to the text of the book.
Introduction: Western progress in Ismāʾīlí studies

The Ismāʾīlis, or al-Ismāʾiliyya, constitute a major sect of Shiʿi Islam. The origins of Islam's two main divisions, namely Sunnism and Shiʿism, date back to the crisis of succession to the Prophet Muḥammad. The varying viewpoints of the then nascent Islamic community on the important question of succession in effect became crystallized into two different interpretations of the same Islamic message. The Muslim majority developed and supported what eventually became characterized as the Sunni perspective of Islam, while a minority partisan group worked out the Shiʿi interpretation that had its own distinctive doctrinal features. In time the Shiʿis themselves, upholding particular conceptions of leadership and religious authority in the community, were further subdivided into a number of sects; not only because they disagreed on who was to be their rightful imām or leader from amongst the members of the Prophet's family, but also because divergent trends of thought and policy were involved. The Ismāʾīlis, or more correctly the proto-Ismāʾīlis, were one such Shiʿi sect, coming into existence in the middle of the 2nd/8th century. From its earliest beginnings, the Ismāʾili movement, which derived its name retrospectively from Ismāʾīl, the son of the Shiʿi Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), represented the most important revolutionary wing of Shiʿism. As such, the Ismāʾīlis had separated from the moderate Shiʿīs whose central body eventually became known as the Twelvers or the Ithnāʾashariyya.

The first century of Ismāʾīli history remains rather obscure. But starting in the second half of the 3rd/9th century, following the emergence of Ismāʾilism as a centrally organized and dynamic movement, the Ismāʾīlis rapidly acquired a prominence far exceeding that of any other Shiʿi movement of mediaeval times. For several centuries thereafter, the Ismāʾīlis played an important part in the historical events of the Muslim
world, also making noteworthy contributions to Islamic thought and culture.

By the opening decades of the 4th/10th century, the Ismāʿīlī movement had already succeeded in establishing a powerful state, the Fāṭimid Caliphate, which for almost two centuries challenged the position of numerous dynasties in the Islamic world. During this ‘golden age’ of Ismāʿīlism, when the Ismāʿīlī religious propaganda activity or mission (daʿwa) with its secret hierarchical organization was successfully spreading from North Africa to Sind, Ismāʿīlī thought and literature attained their fullest developments. The celebrated Ismāʿīlī authors and missionaries (singular, dāʿī) of this period produced numerous theological and theosophical treatises, which also represented important efforts towards synthesizing various Islamic and Hellenistic trends of thought. In particular, the Ismāʿīlī cosmology of the Fāṭimid period came to contain elements adapted from Neoplatonism. Indeed, from the earliest times in their history, the Ismāʿīlīs, with their distinctive esotericism and allegorical exegesis, concentrated on offering a comprehensive view of the universe, as well as a cyclical interpretation of religious history. These endeavours found their full expression during the Fāṭimid period, in an elaborate gnostic system, the so-called haqāʾiq, embodying the unchangeable truths of religion. Simultaneously, Cairo, the capital city founded by the Fāṭimids, was developed into a renowned centre of intellectual activity in the Muslim world.

Subsequently, at the end of the 5th/11th century, when the Fāṭimid state had already begun to disintegrate, Ismāʿīlism witnessed its greatest internal conflict, as a result of which the movement was split into its two major branches, the Nizāriyya and the Mustaʿlawiya. The Mustaʿlīans or the Western Ismāʿīlīs continued the traditions of Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism, never acquiring any particular political prominence. But the Nizāris or the Eastern Ismāʿīlīs, who were to become known as the Assassins to the mediaeval Europeans, under the capable leadership of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ (d. 518/1124), founded a vigorous state in Persia. This territorially scattered state, with its seat at the mountainous fortress of Alamūt, posed a serious challenge to the powerful and ardently Sunni Saljuqīd empire. At the same time, an affiliated Nizārī state in Syria confronted the Christian Crusaders. The Nizārī state in Persia, which had played a perceptible role in the cultural life of the time, collapsed in the middle of the 7th/13th century, only under the assault of the all-conquering Mongols; shortly afterwards, the Syrian Nizārīs were finally subdued by the Mamlūk Turks.
Following the collapse of the Fatimid and the Nizârî states, Ismâ‘îlism never regained its earlier prominence, and the Ismâ‘îlîs took refuge in the remotest corners of the Muslim world, especially in Yaman and in the Indian subcontinent. At present, the Ismâ‘îlîs, the second largest Shi‘î group after the Twelvers, are to be found mainly in India, Pakistan, and East Africa where Indian Ismâ‘îlîs settled in the nineteenth century; smaller numbers of Ismâ‘îlîs live in Yaman, Syria, Persia (Iran), Afghanistan, the Soviet Central Asia and the Chinese Pamir. Since the 1970s, an increasing number of Ismâ‘îlîs have also immigrated to several countries in the West, notably Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. Today’s Nizârî Ismâ‘îlîs, including those better known in India as the Khojas, mostly recognize H.H. Karim Āghâ Khân IV as their 49th imâm; while the Musta‘lian Ismâ‘îlîs, represented in India by the Bohras, continue to await the reappearance of their hidden imâm.

Students of Ismâ‘îlism are well acquainted with the numerous dark periods and obscure issues regarding the origin, history and doctrines of the Ismâ‘îlî movement. Some of the research problems in this complex field of study stem from the very nature of the Ismâ‘îlî movement, while others have been due to the fact that at least until recent times, study of the Ismâ‘îlîs was limited mainly to anti-Ismâ‘îlî sources. The Ismâ‘îlîs have been almost continuously treated as heretics by the Sunnî and most Shi‘î Muslims. As a result, they have been among the most ruthlessly persecuted minorities of the Muslim world, being frequently subjected to massacre. In such hostile surroundings, the Ismâ‘îlîs have been obliged from the earliest times in their history, to adhere rather strictly to the Shi‘î principle of taqiyya, the precautionary dissimulation of one’s true belief in the face of danger. Consequently, the Ismâ‘îlî movement, in particular its important religious hierarchy and propaganda organization, evolved under utmost secrecy. The Ismâ‘îlîs were, in effect, coerced into what may be termed an underground existence; understandably, they categorically refused to disclose their sectarian beliefs to the uninitiated. It should be noted, then, that the adverse circumstances under which Ismâ‘îlism has evolved, together with the esoteric nature of Ismâ‘îlî teachings, have not permitted the production of any substantial volume of sectarian literature. The so-called ‘classical’ Fatimid period is the major exception. Nevertheless, as shall be seen, the breakthrough of modern scholarship in Ismâ‘îlî studies came to be based on the discovery and study of this meagre literary heritage.

Other distinguishing features of Ismâ‘îlism, too, have contributed to
research difficulties of this field. The forced underground survival of the Ismāʿīlī movement has been sustained mainly in the form of a fairly large number of local communities dispersed over a wide region. Thus, pronounced socio-economic as well as linguistic and ethnological differences have combined to further separate the Ismāʿīlī communities from one another. There have also been interruptions in the history of many an Ismāʿīlī community, with some communities like that of the Druzes even drifting away from the movement. Moreover, in the course of its long history, stretching over some twelve centuries, Ismāʿīlism has undergone several major and minor schisms, with all that these developments imply in terms of causing still greater differentiations in the Ismāʿīlī tenets. In sum, the Ismāʿīlī communities have not evolved in any uniform manner or with strict historical continuity; and numerous factors have been at work to prevent the consolidation of Ismāʿīlī doctrines into what might readily be regarded as the orthodox or representative form during any extended period of time. Considerations of temporal and locational factors and peculiarities are, indeed, of utmost importance in any specific investigation of Ismāʿīlism.

It was under such circumstances that the Ismāʿīlīs were, until about the 1920s, studied and judged almost entirely in the light of evidence collected, or often fabricated, by their adversaries. It is therefore not surprising that the orientalists of the nineteenth century, in line with the Crusaders and the majority of Muslim theologians, historians, and heresiographers of the mediaeval times, painted such a distorted picture of the Ismāʿīlīs. In particular, the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of Persia and Syria had come to be viewed as a scheming secret band of depraved assassins, and numerous hostile and legendary accounts were fabricated in an aura of mystery and misconception to explain the various facets of their existence. This distorted image of the Ismāʿīlīs has, however, now undergone drastic revision, as modern scholarship has shed light on the true nature of their movement.

The investigation of progress made in the study of Ismāʿīlism is an interesting subject in its own right. Here, it will suffice to review the main highlights of Western scholarship in this field, attained prior to the recent breakthroughs. This review is indispensable for any meaningful appreciation of the achievements of modern scholarship in Ismāʿīlī studies. Indeed, it is due to these very achievements that it has at last become possible to convey an overall view of the evolution of Ismāʿīlism.

Westerners first became aware of the existence of the Ismāʿīlīs in the
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opening decades of the twelfth century, when the Christian Crusaders, setting out to liberate the Holy Land from the domination of the Muslims, or the so-called Saracen infidels, came into contact with the Nīzārī branch of the sect. But it was not until the second half of that century that occidental travellers and chroniclers of the Crusades began to collect information and write about these strange sectarians, the followers of a mysterious ‘Old Man of the Mountain’, or, ‘le Vieux de la Montagne’.

These Ismā‘īlīs, first encountered in the Levant, were to become designated in different European languages by the variant forms of the word Assassin.

Benjamin of Tudela, the Spanish rabbi and traveller who was in Syria in 1167, is one of the very first Europeans to have written about the Ismā‘īlīs. He noted that in Syria there existed a people strongly devoted to their chief or elder, whom they also regarded as their prophet. These people, whom he called the Hashishin, had their principal seat at Kadmus and were dreaded by their neighbours, he added, because they would kill even kings at the expense of their own lives. Benjamin also referred, again for the first time, to the Persian Ismā‘īlīs who, according to him, lived in the mountainous district of Mulhet; obviously a corruption of the Arabic mulhīd (plural, malāhīda), a Muslim term of abuse for a religious deviant or heretic and the most common anti-Ismā‘īlī epithet. It is interesting to note, however, that though recognizing the existence of some connection between the Syrian and Persian branches of the sect, Benjamin failed to realize that the people he was describing were actually Muslims.

Another early description of the sect is contained in a diplomatic report dated 1175, of an envoy sent to Egypt and Syria by the Holy Roman emperor Frederick I Barbarossa. The envoy, a certain Burchard or Gerhard, reports that ‘on the confines of Damascus, Antioch and Aleppo there is a certain race of Saracens in the mountains, who in their own vernacular are called Heyssessini and in Roman seignors de montana. This race of men live without laws... They dwell in the mountains and are quasi impregnable, because of their fortified castles... They have among them, a lord who inspires the greatest fear in the Saracen princes near and far, and also in the neighbouring Christians, because he is accustomed to killing them in a strange manner.’ The report then goes on to explain how the chief of the sect trained the many sons of his peasants, raised from childhood in his mountain palaces, in strict obedience to his commands for the exclusive purpose of carrying out these killing missions.

William, archbishop of Tyre, the famous historian who spent the
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greater part of his life in the Latin East and died in Rome in or about 1186, is the first occidental chronicler of the Crusades to have described the Ismāʿīlīs. He included a general account of the sect in his history of Palestine, which also covers the Crusader events from their very inception in 1095 to 1184. He states that these sectarians, living in the diocese of Tortosa, numbered some 60,000 and possessed ten castles with their surrounding villages. Emphasizing the high degree of obedience of these people towards their non-hereditarily selected chief, William of Tyre further notes that both the Christians and Muslims called these sectarians Assīssīnī, the origin of which name admittedly remained unknown to him.⁵

In 1192, Conrad of Montferrat, the titular king of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, fell victim in Tyre to the daggers of two Christian monks who were allegedly Nizārī emissaries in disguise, sent by the Old Man. This event, occurring just before the death of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān himself, the original Old Man of the Mountain who ruled the Syrian Nizārīs for some thirty years, greatly impressed the Frankish circles. It came to be discussed, usually with some explanatory notes on the sect, by most of the occidental historians of the Third Crusade (1189–1192).⁶ The narrative of the German chronicler Arnold of Lübeck (d. 1212) is of particular interest because it also seems to be the earliest Western source referring to an intoxicating potion administered by the Old Man to the would-be killers from amongst the Syrian sectarians; Arnold adds that these Saracens are called Heissessin in their own language.⁷ Soon afterwards in 1194, a meeting reportedly took place between count Henry of Champagne (d. 1197), the effective ruler of the kingdom of Jerusalem after Conrad, and the Old Man who had just succeeded Sinān in the latter’s castle at Kahf. The most impressive story, first related by the continuators of William of Tyre and repeated by many later European writers, such as the Venetian historian Marino Sanudo Torsello and the Dominican friar Francesco Pipino of Bologna, of how the Ismāʿīlīs would leap to their deaths from high towers in a show of loyalty to their chief, dates back to this meeting.⁸

Gradually, the Crusaders and their chroniclers acquired more information about the Ismāʿīlīs. Official contacts increased between the Franks and the sectarians, including those arising from the payment of tributes by the Syrian Ismāʿīlīs to the Templars and the Hospitallers. However, Western historians of the first half of the thirteenth century added few new details to the knowledge of the sect then held by the Europeans. James of Vitry (d. 1240), who became bishop of Acre in 1217 and also participated in the Fifth
Western progress in Isma'ili studies

Crusade (1217–1221), while discussing the Syrian Isma'iliis and putting their number at 40,000, merely noted that the sect had originated in Persia. Thus, in contrast to Benjamin of Tudela, James had now correctly recognized the dependency of the Syrian Isma'iliis on the Persian branch of the sect. But he committed an error of his own by contending that the Isma'iliis descended from the Jews. The same point was repeated by Thietmar, a German traveller who visited the Holy Land in the first quarter of that century. Shortly thereafter, Matthew Paris (d. 1259), the English monk and historian who is noted for his knowledge of European events between 1235 and 1259, made several references to the Isma'iliis. Of particular importance is his account of the arrival in Europe in 1238 of a mission sent by the Old Man of the Mountain to ask assistance of Louis IX and Henry III, the kings of France and England, against the imminent threat of the Tartars, as the Mongols were to be called for a long time to come.

By the middle of the thirteenth century, however, more direct information began to appear about the Isma'iliis of both Syria and Persia, mainly as a result of the activities and the diplomatic designs of Louis IX, better known as Saint Louis (d. 1270). St Louis, the same king who had been approached earlier in Europe by an Isma'ili mission, now led the Seventh Crusade (1249–1250) to the Holy Land. But after his early defeat in Egypt, he went to Acre and remained in Palestine for almost four years (May 1250–April 1254). It was during this period that the French king exchanged embassies with the Old Man of the Mountain and established friendly relations with the Isma'iliis. We have an invaluable account of his dealings with the Syrian Nizâris from the vivid pen of the French chronicler Jean de Joinville (d. 1317), who accompanied the king on his Crusade and became his intimate companion in the Holy Land.

Joinville, who interestingly enough refers to the Nizâri Isma'iliis as both the Assacis and the Bedouins, relates that 'during the king's residence at Acre, there came likewise to him ambassadors from the prince of the Bedouins, called the Old Man of the Mountain', demanding of him gifts, 'in like manner as the emperor of Germany, the king of Hungary, the sultan of Babylon, and many other princes, have yearly done; for they know, that they would not be allowed to exist or reign, but during his good pleasure'. The ambassadors made it known, however, that their chief (seigneur) would be equally satisfied if the king were to 'acquit him of the tribute he pays annually to the grand master of the Temple, or the Hospital'. On the intervention of the said grand masters, the Nizâri
emissaries failed to win the king's approval for either of their requests, notwithstanding a second meeting which took place a fortnight later. St Louis, in his search for new alliances, encouraged these contacts and reciprocated by sending his own envoys, accompanied by an Arabic-speaking friar, Yves le Breton, to the Nizārī chief. During their meetings, which probably took place in 1250 and at the main Nizārī stronghold of Masyāf in northern Syria, Yves conversed with the sectarian chief on 'the articles of his faith'. According to Joinville, Yves later reported to the king some details on the religious beliefs of the Nizāris, as he had understood them. The Old Man, he said, 'did not believe in Mahomet, but followed the religion of Aly'. They also maintained, Yves related, that 'when any one is killed by the command or in the service of his superior, the soul of the person so killed goes into another body of higher rank, and enjoys more comforts than before'. Yves cited this belief in metempsychosis as the main reason why the Nizāris were eager to be killed in the service of their chief. Joinville himself collected some information about the Ismā'īlis, and notes that 'their numbers are not to be counted; for they dwell in the kingdoms of Jerusalem, Egypt, and throughout all the lands of the Saracens and infidels'.

The main diplomatic ambition of king Louis IX of France, however, was to secure an alliance with the Mongols against the Muslims. In pursuit of this objective and encouraged by the news of the Mongols' tendencies towards Nestorian Christianity, the king entrusted William of Rubruck (Rubruquis), a Franciscan friar at his court, with an informal mission to the Great Khan in Mongolia. We have several references to the Persian Ismā'īlis in William's account of his journey, which he embarked upon in 1253. He took the northern route to Mongolia, and passed north of the Caspian Sea which, he notes, 'has the Caspian mountains and Persia to the south, the Mulihec mountains, that is the mountains of the Axasins to the east'. The word Mulihec, which he also writes as Mulidet and which in some versions appears as Muliech or Musihet, is obviously a corruption for the Arabic mulhīd or malāhīda. By placing the sectarians to the east of the Caspian, William might actually have been referring to the Nizāris of Girkūh, in the district of Qūmis, or some other strongholds in eastern Persia. He also seems to have been amongst the first Europeans to have designated the Persian Ismā'īlis by names such as Axasins and Hacsasins, hitherto used only in connection with the Syrian Ismā'īlis. Doubtless, William had heard these terms from the Crusaders and was himself aware of the ties between the Syrian and the Persian Nizāris.
William of Rubruck passed the first half of 1254 at the court of the Great Khan Möngke (d. 1259), in and near his capital at Karakorum. There, he noticed strict security measures against foreigners, because 'it had been reported to Mangu Chan that forty Hacsasins had entered the city under various guises to kill him'. This, as William learned, might have been in reprisal for the fact that the Great Khan had already sent one of his brothers 'to the country of the Hacsasins, whom they call Mulidet, and he ordered him to put them all to death'. The brother in question, it will be recalled, was Hülegü, who had left Mongolia in 1253 at the head of a major expedition. While Hülegü was proceeding westward at a leisurely pace, William himself had started on his homeward journey in 1254 and on reaching Acre in August 1255 learned that St Louis had returned to France the previous year.

Hülegü finally crossed the Oxus in January 1256, and in the course of that year managed to destroy the Nizârî state in Persia. The efforts of the Mongols to conquer Syria in 1260, however, proved abortive, in spite of initial victories in Aleppo and Damascus. After the collapse of the Nizârî state in Persia, the Syrian Nizâris at first maintained their independence and joined other Muslims to repel the Mongol invaders from Syria. But the Nizârî fortresses in Syria survived the Mongols only to be taken by the Mamlûks of Egypt. In 1270, Baybars I (1260–1277), the strong Mamlûk sultan who withstood the Mongols and inflicted decisive defeats on the Crusaders, conducted negotiations with the Old Man of the Mountain, forcing him to pay tribute. By 1273, he had seized all the fortresses of the Syrian Nizâris. Henceforth, the Syrian Nizâris became the obedient subjects (though as an autonomous community) of the Mamlûks, and later, after 1517, of the Ottoman Turks.

Meanwhile, the most celebrated of all the mediaeval European travellers, the Venetian Marco Polo (1254–1324), had embarked on his famous journey to China. According to his travel accounts, the youthful Marco accompanied his father and uncle in their second journey to the court of Qubilai (1260–1294), Möngke's brother and successor. The Polos started from Acre in 1271, and on their way passed through Persia in 1272, about fifteen years after the collapse of the Nizârî state there. Marco Polo, who committed his itinerary to writing through a scribe in 1298, after having spent some seventeen years in China and finally returning to Venice in 1295, relates what he had heard in Persia from several natives of that country concerning the Old Man of the Mountain and the Persian Ismâ'ilis, whom he calls the Mulehet, Mulcete, etc.
The Old Man was called in their language Aloadin. He had caused a certain valley between two mountains to be enclosed, and had turned it into a garden, the largest and most beautiful that ever was seen, filled with every variety of fruit. In it were erected pavilions and palaces the most elegant that can be imagined, all covered with gilding and exquisite painting. And there were runnels too, flowing freely with wine and milk and honey and water; and numbers of ladies and of the most beautiful damsels in the world, who could play on all manner of instruments, and sung most sweetly, and danced in a manner that it was charming to behold. For the Old Man desired to make his people believe that this was actually Paradise. So he had fashioned it after the description that Mahommet gave of his Paradise, to wit, that it should be a beautiful garden running with conduits of wine and milk and honey and water, and full of lovely women for the delectation of all its inmates. And sure enough the Saracens of those parts believed that it was Paradise!

Now no man was allowed to enter the Garden save those whom he intended to be his Ashishin. There was a Fortress at the entrance to the Garden, strong enough to resist all the world, and there was no other way to get in. He kept at his Court a number of the youths of the country, from 12 to 20 years of age, such as had a taste for soldiering, and to these he used to tell tales about Paradise, just as Mahommet had been wont to do, and they believed in him just as the Saracens believe in Mahommet. Then he would introduce them into his garden, some four, or six, or ten at a time, having first made them drink a certain potion which cast them into a deep sleep, and then causing them to be lifted and carried in. So when they awoke, they found themselves in the Garden.

It is then related, in respect to the training of these Assassins or Ashishin, which is the English rendering of Asciscin adopted by Sir Henry Yule (1820–1889), the learned translator and commentator of Marco Polo, that

Now this Prince whom we call the Old One kept his Court in grand and noble style, and made those simple hill-folks about him believe firmly that he was a great Prophet. And when he wanted one of his Ashishin to send on any mission, he would cause that potion whereof I spoke to be given to one of the youths in the garden, and then had him carried into his Palace. So when the young man awoke, he found himself in the Castle, and no longer in that Paradise; whereat he was not over well pleased. He was then conducted to the Old Man’s presence, and bowed before him with great veneration as believing himself to be in the presence of a true Prophet. The Prince would then ask whence he came, and he would reply that he came from Paradise! and that it was exactly such as Mahommet had described it in the Law. This of course gave the others who stood by, and who had not been admitted, the greatest desire to enter therein.

So when the Old Man would have any Prince slain, he would say to such a youth: ‘Go thou and slay So and So; and when thou returnest my Angels shall bear thee into Paradise. And shouldst thou die, nathless even so will I send my Angels to carry thee back into Paradise.’ So he caused them to believe; and thus there was no order of his that they would not affront any peril to execute, for the great desire
they had to get back into that Paradise of his. And in this manner the Old One got his people to murder any one whom he desired to get rid of. Thus, too, the great dread that he inspired all Princes withal, made them become his tributaries in order that he might abide at peace and amity with them.

At the end of his narrative, Marco Polo states that the Old Man had had his deputies in the territories of Damascus and Curdistan, who copied him exactly in the same manner. And, that the end of the Old Man came when, after being besieged for three years, he and all his men were put to death by the Mongols who also destroyed his castle with its garden of paradise. Several points are noteworthy in connection with Marco Polo’s narrative which has been read and often repeated by generations of Westerners during the last 700 years.

Marco Polo’s description of the Old Man’s castle may appear to refer to one of the Nizārī fortresses in the Alamūt valley. But, as Yule was perhaps the first person to point out, ‘there is no reason to suppose that Polo visited Alamūt, which would have been quite out of the road that he is following’. The then eighteen-year-old traveller may actually have heard some details about the locality of Alamūt, as his entire account of the Persian Ismā’īlīs is admittedly not based on personal observation. It is almost certain, however, that he did visit a ruined Nizārī castle somewhere in Persia, although it has not been possible to identify the site. It is in eastern Persia, around Tabas and Tūn in Qūhistān, the barren region in the south of Khurāsān, that Marco Polo interrupts his itinerary to discuss the Old Man; a digression probably triggered by seeing a Nizārī fortress. It may, therefore, be inferred that the castle in question was either the mountainous stronghold of Girdkūh near Dāmghān, which had finally surrendered to the Mongols in 1270, about two years before the Polo party crossed Khurāsān into northern Afghanistan; or, more probably, some fortress in eastern Qūhistān. It will be recalled that the Nizārī Ismā’īlīs had previously controlled several main towns in that region where they had also developed an elaborate network of fortresses.

Marco Polo, like William of Rubruck before him, uses various forms of the name Assassin in reference to the Persian Ismā’īlīs. However, he adopts this name only in connection with those sectarians selected for the murderous missions, as distinct from the Ismā’īlīs in general, whom he designates by the corrupted forms of mulhīd and malāhīda. In this exclusive sense, the term Assassin denotes those sectarians who were called fidā’īs, or fidāwis, by the Nizārī Ismā’īlīs. Furthermore, Marco Polo is responsible
for putting into circulation the most developed version of the tale of the Old Man's garden of paradise in relation to the training of the special Nizārī devotees or fidā'īs who risked their lives to kill the enemies of their sect. Finally, it may be noted that Marco Polo also uses, perhaps in the first instance of its kind, the Syrian title 'Old Man of the Mountain' in reference to the chief of the Persian Ismā'īlīs whose supremacy over their Syrian co-religionists he had distinctly acknowledged. Needless to add that 'Alā' al-Dīn Muhammad III (d. 653/1255), Marco Polo's Old Man Aloadin, was only the penultimate ruler of the Nizārī state centred in Persia. The last ruler was his son Rukn al-Dīn who surrendered to the Mongols in 1256 and was killed by them shortly afterwards on Mūngke's orders.

As noted, the political prominence of the Nizārīs was finally brought to an end when the last of their strongholds in Syria surrendered to the Mamlūks. The Franks of the Levant met a similar fate at the hands of Baybars I who, by 1277, reduced the dominion of the Crusaders to a small strip of coastland in Syria. Subsequently in 1291, Acre, the last remaining stronghold of Christendom in the Holy Land, was stormed by the Mamlūk troops. These developments also marked the end of relations between the Crusaders and the Syrian Nizārīs. By that time, however, the name Assassin in its different forms, and the stories about the sectarians who bore it, had been carried to Europe by the Crusaders and European travellers returning from the Holy Land. Indeed, by the turn of the thirteenth century, Provençal poets already made comparisons between their own romantic devotion and the fanatical loyalty of the Assassins to the Old Man of the Mountain. But it was the murderous method of struggle of the Nizārīs against their enemies, rather than self-sacrificing devotion to their chief, that eventually impressed the Europeans and gave the word Assassin a new meaning. By the first half of the fourteenth century, instead of signifying the name of a sect in the Near East, the word had come to mean a professional killer. The earliest European examples of this usage, retained to the present day, apparently occurred in Italy. The great Italian poet Dante (1265–1321), in his La Divina Commedia, speaks of the treacherous assassin (Le perfido assassin). The Florentine historian Giovanni Villani (d. 1348) relates how the lord of Lucca sent his assassins (i suoi assassini) to Pisa to kill an enemy. The occidental observers of the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs had thus introduced a new common noun to most Western European languages.

When the Crusaders spoke of the Assassins, they originally referred to the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs of Syria. Later, the term was also commonly applied to
the Persian sectarians by European travellers and chroniclers. It should be noted, however, that the Persian Nizāris had also been called hashishis by some of their contemporary Muslim opponents, notably the Caspian Zaydis. The title ‘Old Man of the Mountain’ has a similar history. It was initially used by the Crusaders only in respect to the Syrian leader of the sect. Bernard Lewis, who has investigated these terminological matters more thoroughly than any other modern scholar, has observed that it would not be unnatural for the Ismāʿīlīs to use the common Muslim term of respect shaykh, also meaning ‘Old Man’ or ‘Elder’, in reference to their leader. However, the Crusaders misunderstood the term shaykh, rendering it on the basis of its secondary meaning into Latin as *Vetus*, *Vetulus* or *Senex*, rather than by its more relevant equivalents *Senior* or *Dominus*. In any event, the meaning of this title was also linked with the mountainous fortresses in which the Syrian Nizāri leaders lived. It should be added, however, that the Syrian title ‘Old Man of the Mountain’ seems to have been used only by the Crusaders and other occidental sources, since thus far it has not come to light in any contemporary Arabic or Persian sources. Consequently, the full Arabic equivalent of this title, *Shaykh al-jabal*, may represent a later translation from the Latin forms used by the occidental chroniclers of the Crusades, forms such as *Vetus de Montanis*.

Europeans then, continued to maintain an interest in the Ismāʿīlīs. Marco Polo particularly stirred the imagination of his contemporaries, and his garden of paradise story was adopted by several writers in the early fourteenth century. Mention should be made of the romance of Bauduin de Sebourc, and also of friar Pipino, who, having produced a Latin translation of Marco Polo, cannot be excused for thinking that the Mongols destroyed the Syrian Nizāris as well. There is also Jacopo d'Acqui, a Dominican friar who confusingly mixes Marco Polo's narrative with a number of unrelated events about the Tartars. Of greater fame, however, is the account of the traveller Odoric of Pordenone (d. 1331), the Franciscan missionary from northern Italy who visited China during 1323–1327. On his return, Odoric apparently passed, around 1328, through northern Persia along the coast of the Caspian Sea where he visited a certain country called *Melistorte* or *Millistorte* (probably corruptions of *malāḥīda*).

In his account, which may refer to the Alamūt valley, Odoric repeats Marco Polo's narrative almost in its entirety.

And in this country there was a certain aged man called Senex de monte, who round about two mountains had built a wall to enclose the said mountains. Within this wall there were the fairest and most crystal fountains in the whole world: and
about the said fountains there were most beautiful virgins in great number, and
goodly horses also, and in a word, everything that could be devised for bodily
solace and delight, and therefore the inhabitants of the country call the same place
by the name of Paradise. The said old Senex, when he saw any proper and valiant
young man, he would admit him into his paradise. Moreover by certain conduits
he makes wine and milk to flow abundantly. This Senex, when he hath a mind to
revenge himself or to slay any king or baron... And therefore all the kings of the
East stood in awe of the said old man, and gave unto him great tribute.

A few years later in 1332, a treatise was submitted to King Philip VI of
France who was then preparing for a new military expedition into the
Holy Land. This work, which meant to serve as a guidebook, offered the
French king detailed recommendations based on the prolonged stay of its
author in Armenia and other parts of the Near East. The author, variously
said to have been a certain Brocardus, the French Dominican Raymond
Étienne, or perhaps William Adam (Guillelmus Adae), the second arch-
bishop of Sultāniyya in northwestern Persia during 1322–1324, includes
the Assassins amongst the dangerous peoples of the region. Admittedly,
the author had had no direct contacts with these sectarians who would kill
the innocent for a price, nor does he place them in any specific locality.
After being told of their innumerable crimes, however, the king was
cautioned to protect himself against them by requiring ample security
clearances from the staff of his royal household.33 These advices, however,
had no chance of implementation since the planned Crusade never took
place.

By the sixteenth century, when the centres of the Ismā'īlī movement
had moved farther away to Yaman and India, the greatly reduced number
of Nizārīs of the Near East were now either living in secrecy, as in Persia,
or had become obedient subjects of the Ottoman empire. As a result,
European documentation of the Ismā'īlīs during the Renaissance, became
few and far in between. They were now referred to mainly by an
occasional missionary or traveller to the Holy Land. But, Western
scholarship continued to be based on the earlier impressions of the
Crusaders. For instance, the Dominican friar Felix Fabri, who visited the
Holy Land twice between 1480 and 1484, mentions the Assassins amongst
the peoples of the region,34 and fancifully repeats that

their captain causes their young men to be taught diverse languages, and sends
them out into other kingdoms to serve the kings thereof; to the end that, when the
time requires it, each king's servant may kill him by poison or otherwise. If after
slaying a king the servant makes good his escape to his own land, he is rewarded
with honors, riches and dignities; if he is taken and put to death, he is worshipped
in his own country as a martyr.35
Soon, first-hand accounts came to be supplemented by more scholarly investigations. The first Western monograph devoted entirely to the subject of the Ismā'īlīs seems to be that of Denis Lebey de Batilly, a French official at the court of Henry IV. The author had become deeply concerned about the revival of political murders in Europe, after the 1589 stabbing of Henry III of France at the hands of a Jacobin friar, whom he refers to as ‘un religieux assassin-porte-couteau’. Apprehensive about the existence of would-be assassins in the religious orders of Christendom, he set out in 1595, to compose a short treatise on the true origin of the word assasin, which had acquired new currency in France, and the history of the Muslim sect to which it originally belonged, calling these sectarians ‘les premiers et anciens assassins d’entre les Sarrasins et Mahometans’. This work, however, was based almost exclusively on the occidental chronicles, the accounts of which were combined in a confusing manner with Marco Polo’s narrative, and it did not add any new detail to what had been known on the subject in Europe some three centuries earlier.

The next important publication appeared in 1659, when Henricus Bengertus produced his edition of the Chronicle of Arnold of Lübeck. In his explanatory notes, the learned German editor briefly discusses the sect and enumerates the name of almost every Latin author who, to his knowledge, had mentioned the Assassins. However, Bengertus, too, thought that it was the Mongols who destroyed the power of the Syrian Nizārīs. For some time, this error was repeated by many scholars, including the prodigious Johann Philipp Baratier (1721–1740). But in his French translation of Benjamin of Tudela’s itinerary, he rectified that traveller’s wrong notion of making the Persian Nizārīs subservient to the chief of the Syrian sectarians. It should be added that, by the seventeenth century, the etymology of the word Assassin had long been forgotten in Europe. Consequently, an increasing number of philologists and lexicographers now started to collect the variants of this term used in occidental sources, such as Accini, Arsasini, Assasi, Assassin, Assissini, Hesesin, Heyssessini, etc., as well as the form Hashishin mentioned only by Benjamin of Tudela. Many additional etymologies were also proposed. Charles du Fresne du Cange (1610–1668), who discussed Assassin in his glossary of mediaeval Latin first published in 1678, is one of the most famous pioneers in this respect; he was joined by several contemporaries, such as Gilles Ménages (1613–1692), and a host of later scholars who included similar entries in their etymological dictionaries.

The first important advance in the study of the Ismā’īlīs appeared in 1697, with the posthumous publication of the encyclopaedic work of
Barthélemy d’Herbelot (1625–1695). This pioneer work of Western orientalism, which covered all fields of the Muslim East, was to remain the standard reference work in Europe until the early nineteenth century. The noted French orientalist d’Herbelot, who never visited the orient, had read and utilized in his encyclopaedia a variety of Arabic, Persian and Turkish sources. As a result, he now offered details on the history and religion of Islam hitherto unknown to Europeans. He was also able to identify the Ismā’īlis more correctly, studying them within the broader context of Islam. In a number of entries, such as ‘Bathania’, ‘Carmath’, ‘Fatḥemiah’, ‘Ismaelioun’, ‘Molahedoun’, and ‘Schiah’, d’Herbelot showed clearly that the Ismā’īlis were in fact one of the main sects of Shi‘i Islam, and that they themselves had been further subdivided into two main groups: the Ismā’īlis of Africa and Egypt (Fatémites) and those of Asia (also called Mahomedah Kouhistan). The latter group, he noted, had its seat at Alamūt and was founded by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ who was succeeded by seven more princes.

During the eighteenth century, European scholarship made little further progress in the field beyond what d’Herbelot had presented. Thomas Hyde of Oxford, whilst discussing his own etymology of Assassini, assured his readers that the Mount Lebanon used to be inhabited by many sectarians coming from the region of Kurdistan, and that the so-called Assassins were in fact of Kurdish origin. Joseph Simonius Assemani (1687–1768), belonging to the famous Syrian Maronite family of orientalists and a custodian of the Vatican Library, made brief references to the Assassins and suggested his own peculiar etymology. There were other incidental references to the sectarians by the European missionaries, travellers and historians of that century. A more detailed account was produced by Pierre Alexandre de la Ravalière (1697–1762), a French bishop who, however, concerned himself exclusively with the murder of Conrad of Montferrat and the two unsuccessful assassination plots alleged to have been planned by the Syrian Nizārīs against kings Philip II Augustus and St Louis of France. The Druzes, an offshoot of the Ismā’īlis, were now also investigated for the first time. But the most important contribution of the eighteenth century was contained in two memoirs read in 1743 by a French non-orientalist, Camille Falconet (1671–1762), to the Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres. In these memoirs, published in 1751 in the previously cited article, Falconet, after reviewing the works of his Western predecessors, presented a summary account of the history and religion of the Persian and Syrian Nizārīs with
references to the origins of the Ismāʿīlīs and yet another etymology of the name Assassin. Knowing no oriental languages, Falconet relied mainly on d’Herbelot and on translations of some Eastern sources.

By the early years of the nineteenth century, the Ismāʿīlīs were still being investigated almost strictly from the limited and biased viewpoint of the Crusaders, mainly because Eastern sources had not yet started to be utilized on any meaningful scale in Europe. Joseph’s grandnephew abbot Simone Assemani (1752–1821), who had spent the earlier part of his life in Tripoli where he had heard about the contemporary Syrian Ismāʿīlīs, and who later became a professor of oriental languages at a seminary in Padua, published in 1806 a hostile article on the sect. He also proposed an etymology for Assissana, which he believed to be the original name of the Nizārī sectarians. According to him, the word Assassini, a corruption of Assissani, was connected with the Arabic word assissath (al-ṣīṣa), meaning rock or fortress; thus, Assissani (al-ṣīšānī) referred to someone who dwelt in a rock fortress. Assemani also favoured an earlier etymological explanation which connected the word Assassini, a corruption of Hassassini, to the name of the sect’s founder, Hasan. This was followed first by another so-called historical memoir on the Assassins, a confused account which again traced the Nizārīs as descendants of the Kurds, and then by what was to be the last unsuccessful attempt at proposing an explanation for the name Assassin.

Meanwhile, scientific orientalism had begun in France with the establishment in 1795 of the École des Langues Orientales Vivantes in Paris. Baron Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838), the most distinguished orientalist of his time, became the first professor of Arabic in the newly founded School of Oriental Languages and was appointed in 1806 to the new chair of Persian at the Collège de France; later, he became the director of both these institutions as well as the president and permanent secretary of the Académie des Inscriptions. With an ever-increasing number of students and a wide circle of correspondents and disciples, de Sacy also acquired the distinction of being the teacher of the most prominent orientalists of the first half of the nineteenth century. At the same time, oriental studies had received an important boost from the Napoleonic expedition of 1798–1799 to Egypt and Syria. In the aftermath of these developments there were significant increases in the number of orientalists, particularly in France and Germany, and oriental chairs in European universities. This enhanced interest in orientalism found expression also in the publication of specialized periodicals, beginning in
1809 with the *Fundgruben des Orients*, and also in the foundation of learned societies. The Société Asiatique was formed in 1822 with de Sacy as its first president, and was followed by other societies which played important roles in facilitating the research activities of the orientalists.

It was Silvestre de Sacy, who maintained a life-long interest in the religion of the Druzes, who finally solved the mystery of the name *Assassin*. Utilizing the collection of Arabic manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, de Sacy prepared an important memoir which he read before the Institut de France in May 1809. In this memoir, he examined and rejected previous explanations and showed, once and for all, that the word *Assassin* was connected with the Arabic word *hashish*; referring to the Indian hemp, a narcotic product of *cannabis sativa*. More specifically, he suggested that the main variant forms (such as *Assissini* and *Assassini*) occurring in base-Latin documents of the Crusaders and in different European languages were derived from two alternative Arabic forms, *hashishi* (plural, *hashishiyya* or *hashishiyyin*) and *hashshash* (plural, *hashshashin*). While de Sacy was able to cite Arabic texts, notably by the Syrian chronicler Abū Shāma (599–665/1203–1268), in which the sectarians are called *hashishi*, he was unable to do the same for the second Arabic form of his suggested etymology. Nor have any texts come to light since then, employing the form *hashshash*, the common epithet for a *hashish*-consumer. Therefore, as Lewis has argued, this part of de Sacy's theory, with all that it implies, must be abandoned; and it would seem that all the European variants of the name *Assassin* are corruptions of *hashishi* and its plural forms.

De Sacy also made some conjectures on the reason for the application of the name to the Nizāris. He had no doubt that *hashish*, or rather a *hashish*-containing potion was, in some manner, used by the Nizāris. But, unlike some other orientalists, he did not subscribe to the opinion that the sectarians were called the Assassins because they were addicts to the euphoria-producing potion. Similarly, he excluded the possibility of any habitual use of this debilitating drug by the Nizāri *fidāʾis* to whom alone he thought the term originally applied. De Sacy believed that *hashish* was, at the time, the secret possession of the Nizāri chiefs who used it in a regulated manner on the *fidāʾis* to inspire them with dreams of paradise and blind obedience. In other words, while not necessarily accepting the reality of a garden of paradise into which the drugged devotees would be led, de Sacy nevertheless linked his own interpretation to the famous tale told by Marco Polo and others about the alleged practices of the Nizāris.
The tale of how the Nizārī chiefs secretly administered ḥashīsh to the fidāʾīs in order to control and motivate them has been accepted by many scholars since Arnold of Lübeck. But the fact remains that neither the Ismāʿīli texts which have come to light in modern times nor any serious contemporary Muslim source in general attest to the actual use of ḥashīsh, with or without gardens of paradise, by the Nizāris. Therefore, as Lewis and Hodgson have summed up the relevant arguments, it would seem that the various versions of this once popular tale should now be dismissed as fictitious.⁵⁴

The use and effects of ḥashīsh were known at the time, as best witnessed by the existence of the name ḥashīshiyya. Therefore the drug could not have been the secret property of the Nizārī chiefs, as suggested by de Sacy. Furthermore, the name is rarely used by the Muslim authors who, in contrast to the Crusaders and other Europeans, prefer to designate the sectarian by religious names such as Bāṭiniyya and Taʿlimiyya, or simply as the Ismāʿīliyya and Nizāriyya, if not using terms of abuse like malāḥida. However, few contemporary Muslim historians, mainly from the thirteenth century, occasionally use the term ḥashīshiyya in reference to the Nizāris of Syria (al-Shām); while the Nizāris of Persia are also called ḥashishīs in some Caspian Zaydī texts.⁵⁵ Evidently, the term has been used only once in any known Ismāʿīli source; namely, in the second half of the highly polemical epistle issued in the 1120s, by the Fāṭimid caliph al-Āmir against his Nizāri adversaries who eventually assassinated him in 1130. But in this epistle too, the word ḥashīshiyya is used of the Syrian Nizāris without any derivative explanation.⁵⁶

In all probability, the name ḥashīshiyya was applied to the Nizāris as a term of abuse and reproach. The Nizāris were already despised by other Muslims and would easily qualify for every sort of contemptuous judgement on their beliefs and behaviour. In other words, it seems that the name ḥashīshiyya reflected a criticism of the Nizāris rather than an accurate description of their secret practices. And it was the name that gave rise to the imaginative tale which supplied some justification of the behaviour that would otherwise seem rather irrational to Westerners. Even abstracting from the ascetic morality of Hasan-i Šabbāh, the obedience and devotion of the Nizārī fidāʾīs is not without its equivalents amongst the earlier Shiʿī groups such as the Mughiriyya and the Mansūriyya, who were similarly imbued with elitism and a strong sense of devotion. In modern times, similar behaviour has been displayed by certain Muslim groups thriving on Shiʿī martyrology, notably the Persian Fidāʾiyyān-i Islām.
Despite its deficiencies, de Sacy's memoir was a landmark in Ismā'īlī studies in Europe, and it paved the way for more systematic endeavours based on Eastern sources and a number of more strictly historical studies during the next few decades. Étienne Marc Quatremère (1782–1857) published a few short works on the Fāṭimids and the Nizāris. This great orientalist, it will be recalled, also made available for the first time in printed form a portion of Rashīd al-Dīn's famous history which, together with that of Juwaynī, represents the earliest Persian historical sources on the Nizāris. Another French orientalist, Jourdain, who in 1813 had edited and translated the section on the Persian Nizāris contained in another important Persian history by Mirkhwānd, produced a summary account of the Nizāris. Meanwhile, de Sacy had continued his broader investigation of the Ismā'īlis. In what was to be his final work, and the result of over thirty years' study of the Druze religion, he devoted a long introduction to the origins and the early history of the Ismā'īli movement. It was there that de Sacy also discussed at some length Ismā'īli doctrine, including a so-called nine-degree initiation process for the adepts, and presented the controversial 'Ābd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh as the real 'founder' of Ismā'īlism, basing his case mainly on the lost anti-Ismā'īli polemical work of Akhū Muḥṣin as preserved in excerpts by al-Nuwayrī. Indeed, de Sacy's treatment of early Ismā'īlism continued to be maintained by the bulk of the subsequent orientalists until more recent times.

Of all the Western works on the Ismā'īlis produced during the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the most widely read came from the pen of the Austrian orientalist diplomat Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856). Like many other orientalists of his time, especially in Germany and Austria under the Habsburg monarchy, von Hammer had started his career in the diplomatic service, as a dragoman in Istanbul and a consul in the Balkans. In 1818, by utilizing the various chronicles of the Crusades as well as the Eastern manuscript sources in the Imperial Library, Vienna, and in his own private collection, he published a book in German devoted entirely to the Nizāris of the Alamūt period. This book traced for the first time, in a detailed manner, the entire history of the Nizārī state in Persia, with briefer references to the Syrian Nizāris. Von Hammer's book achieved great success; it was soon translated into French and English and continued to serve, until as recently as the 1930s, as the standard interpretation of the subject.

It should be noted, however, that von Hammer was strongly biased against the Nizāris, and had accepted Marco Polo's narrative in its
entirety, together with all the criminal acts attributed to the Nizâris. Thus, he treated the Nizâris as 'that union of imposters and dupes which, under the mask of a more austere creed and severer morals, undermined all religion and morality; that order of murderers, beneath whose daggers the lords of nations fell; all powerful because, for the space of three centuries, they were universally dreaded, until the den of ruffians fell with the khalifate, to whom, as the centre of spiritual and temporal power, it had at the outset sworn destruction'. This view, in turn, reflected a tacit purpose. Writing not too long after the French revolution, von Hammer apparently wanted to use the Nizaris as an example to produce a tract for the times that would warn against 'the pernicious influence of secret societies in weak governments, and of the dreadful prostitution of religion to the horrors of unbridled ambition'. In line with this scheme, he drew close analogies between the 'order of the Assassins' on the one hand, and the European secret orders of his time, which he detested, such as the Templars, the Jesuits, the Illuminati, and the Freemasons, on the other. He emphasized parallels in terms of their 'various grades of initiation; the appellations of master, companions, and novices; the public and the secret doctrine; the oath of unconditional obedience to unknown superiors, to serve the ends of the order.'

With a few exceptions, European scholarship made little further progress in Ismâ‘îli studies during the second half of the nineteenth century. The outstanding exception was provided by the contributions of the French orientalist Charles François Defrémery (1822–1883) who collected a large number of references from various Muslim chronicles on the Nizâris of Persia and Syria. Having already translated the section on the Persian Nizâri state, contained in the fourteenth-century Persian history of Ḥamd Allâh Mustawfî, Defrémery then published the results of his Nizâri studies in two long articles. A few years later, Reinhart Dozy (1820–1883) investigated the early history of the Ismâ‘îlis, a subject that was more thoroughly pursued, especially with respect to the Carmatians or Qarmâtîs, by another famous Dutch orientalist, Michael Jan de Goeje (1836–1909). There also appeared for the first time a history of the Fâṭîmids, which was, however, a compilation from various Arabic chronicles; several new works on the Druzes also appeared.

De Sacy's treatment of early Ismâ‘îlism and von Hammer's interpretation of the Nizâris continued to set the perspective within which European orientalists collected any reference to the Ismâ‘îlis. As a result, though some progress was slowly being made, the distorted image of Ismâ‘îlism,
reflecting the earlier impressions, was nevertheless maintained through the opening decades of the twentieth century by anyone interested in the subject, including even the eminent Edward Granville Browne (1862-1926) who summarized the contributions of his predecessors. This should not cause any particular surprise since very few Ismā‘ili sources had been available to the orientalists of the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The earliest Ismā‘ili-related sources known to the West were the Druze manuscripts which found their way in the eighteenth century from the Levant to the Bibliotheque Royale and then to other major European libraries. Similarly, the first Ismā‘ili manuscripts to become known to orientalists came from Syria, the first area of Western interest in the Ismā‘ilis. Jean Baptiste L. J. Rousseau (1780-1831), the French consul-general in Aleppo from 1809 to 1816 and a long-time resident of the Near East, who was also interested in oriental studies and maintained a close professional relationship with Silvestre de Sacy, was the first person to draw the attention of European orientalists to the existence of the contemporary Ismā‘ilis as well as to their local traditions and literature. In 1810, he prepared a memoir on the Syrian Nizāris of his time, which contained many interesting historical, social and religious details obtainable only through direct contact with the Nizāris themselves. This memoir, which also underlined the miserable conditions of the Syrian Nizāris especially after their 1809 massacre at the hands of their neighbours and arch-enemies, the Nuṣayrīs, was published in Paris in 1811. It immediately received much publicity in Europe, mainly because of de Sacy’s association with it. Rousseau also supplied information to Europe about the Persian Nizāris. He had visited Persia in 1807-1808 as a member of an official French mission sent to the court of the second Qājār monarch Fath ʿAlī Shāh (1797-1834), and whilst there he had enquired about the Ismā‘ilis of that country. Rousseau was surprised to find out that there were many Ismā‘ilis in Persia and that they still had their imām (thought to be a descendant of Ismā‘il b. Ja‘far), whose name was Shāh Khalil Allāh. This imām, he was further told, resided at Kahak, a small village near Mahallāt, and was revered almost like a god by his followers, including those Indian Ismā‘ilis who came regularly from the banks of the Ganges to receive his blessings. Rousseau also mentions that this imām was detested by the Persian clergy, meaning the Ithnā‘asharī clergy, but protected and respected by the Qājār king because of the annual revenues brought to the country by the Ismā‘ili pilgrims from India. In 1825, Rousseau’s account
Western progress in Ismā'īlī studies

was confirmed, and new details were added to it by James Baillie Fraser (1783–1856), the Scottish traveller who in the course of a journey through Persia had heard, in 1822, about the Ismā'īlis. Fraser notes that every one is acquainted with the devotion of his followers to Hussun Soubah, and his successors; and even at this day the sheikh or head of the sect is most blindly revered by those who yet remain, though their zeal has lost the deep and terrific character which it once bore. It is but lately that one of these, by name Shah Khuleel Oollah, resided at Yezd... He was a person of high respectability, and great influence, keeping an hundred gholaums of his own in pay; but he was put to death by the inhabitants of Yezd, in a riot... The Bhoras, from India, were particularly devoted to their saint; and many that day sacrificed themselves in his cause.

Shāh Khalil Allāh, whose Indian followers in this passage are wrongly believed to have been the Bohras instead of the Khojas, was in fact murdered in 1817 in Yazd, where he had transferred his residence about two years earlier from Kahak. Fraser concludes his remarks by relating that these sectarian devotees were 'so eager to pour in presents upon their ghostly chief, that he had accumulated great riches. He was succeeded in his religious capacity by one of his sons, who meets with a similar respect from the sect.' The son and successor in question, it may be noted, was to become known as the Āghā Khān, properly Āqā Khān, the first of the Nizārī Imāms to bear this title and the one who eventually led an unsuccessful revolt in Persia and then left for India in the early 1840s.

Rousseau played another pioneering role in supplying direct evidence of the Ismā'īlis to contemporary Europe. This diplomat, who was an avid collector of oriental manuscripts and who, in the 1820s, sold 700 such manuscripts from his private collection to the newly-founded Asiatic Museum in St Petersburg, had obtained an anonymous Ismā'īli work from Maşyāf, one of the main Ismā'īli centres in Syria. This Arabic manuscript, containing a number of fragments bearing on the religious doctrines of the Nizārīs, had been actually procured for Rousseau soon after the pillage of the Ismā'īli villages in 1809 by the noted Swiss orientalist and explorer John Lewis Burckhardt (1784–1817), who produced some travel notes of his own on the Syrian sectarians. In 1812, as the first instance of its kind, some extracts from this manuscript, as translated by Rousseau and communicated to de Sacy, were published in Paris. Rousseau later sent this Nizārī source to the Société Asiatique and the full text of it was, in due course, printed and translated into French by Stanislas Guyard (1846–1884). A few years later, this young orientalist published, together with a
valuable introduction and notes, the text and translation of yet another Nizārī work, which was the first sectarian source containing historical information to find its way to Europe. This Arabic manuscript on the life and the miraculous deeds of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, composed around 1324, had been discovered in Syria in 1848 and then donated to the library of the Société Asiatique, where it was re-discovered some thirty years later by Guyard himself. Meanwhile, a few other Ismā‘īlī texts of the Syrian provenance had been sent by a missionary to distant America, where they were translated into English and published in 1851–1852. These early discoveries of Ismā‘īlī sources were, however, few and far between, and it was largely scholars in Paris, the capital of orientalism in the nineteenth century, who had access to them.

Direct information about the Ismā‘īlīs reflecting their viewpoint continued to become available. The travelogue of Nāṣir-i Khusraw was published for the first time, accompanied by a French translation, as were some other Persian works of this famous traveller, poet, theosophist and Ismā‘īlī dā‘ī of the 5th/11th century. In 1898, Paul Casanova (1861–1926) announced his discovery at the Bibliothèque Nationale of a manuscript containing the last section of the famous encyclopaedic work, Rasā‘il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā‘ (The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity). This French orientalist, who later made some important studies on the Fāṭimids and had already published some numismatic notes on the Nizārīs, was the first European to recognize the Ismā‘īlī origin of this work. Before this, several copies of the Epistles had been known to Europe, and the German orientalist Friedrich Dieterici (1821–1903) had published some portions of the Rasā‘il, without realizing their Ismā‘īlī character.

Other types of information about the Ismā‘īlīs now started to appear. Earlier in the nineteenth century, some brief notes had been published on Alamūt by British officers who had visited the ruins of the fortress or its vicinity, but Max van Berchem (1863–1921), while travelling in Syria in 1895, read and studied almost all of the epigraphic evidence of the Syrian Nizārī fortresses. Different types of archaeological evidence from the Fāṭimid period had already been presented by van Berchem himself. Much information on the Khojas and the first Āgā Khān also became available in the course of a peculiar case investigated by the High Court of Bombay, culminating in the famous legal judgement of 1866. All these developments, together with progress in the publication of new Muslim sources and the reinterpretation of the old ones, were paving the way for a revaluation of the Ismā‘īlīs.
In the opening decades of the twentieth century, Ismāʿīlī manuscripts began to be discovered from other regions and, though still on a limited basis, more systematically. In 1903, Giuseppe Caprotti, an Italian merchant who had spent some thirty years in Yaman, brought a collection of sixty Arabic manuscripts from Sanʿāʾ to Italy. Between 1906 and 1909, he sold these and more than 1,500 other manuscripts of south Arabian origin to the Ambrosiana Library in Milan. While being catalogued, the Caprotti collection was found by Eugenio Griffini (1878–1925), the famous Milanese Islamist, to contain several works on Ismāʿīlī doctrine. Of greater importance were the efforts of some Russian scholars and officials who, having become aware of the existence of Ismāʿīlī communities within their own domains in Central Asia, now tried to establish direct contacts with the sectarian. The Central Asian Ismāʿīlīs, it may be noted, belong to the Nizārī branch of the sect and are to be found mainly in western Pāmīr, an area lying north and east of the Panj River, a major upper headwater of the Āmū Daryā (Oxus). Since 1895, this area had come under the effective control of Russian military officials, although an Anglo-Russian boundary commission in that year had formally handed the region on the right bank of the Panj to the Khanate of Bukhārā, while designating the left-bank region, or Badakhshān proper, as Afghan territory. Indeed, in the 1860s the Russians had secured a firm footing in Bukhārā and other Central Asian Khanates and this was officially recognized during the reign of ʿAbd al-Aḥad (1885–1910) who, as the amīr of Bukhārā, had to submit to Russian imperial power.

It was under these circumstances that Russians travelled freely in the upper Oxus region. Count Alexis A. Bobrinskoy, a Russian scholar who studied the inhabitants of Wakhān and Ishkāshim, and visited these districts of western Pāmīr in 1898, published in 1902 a short account of the Ismāʿīlīs living in the Russian and Bukhārā districts of Central Asia. In the same year, A. Polovtsev, an official in Turkistān who was interested in Ismāʿīlism and later became the Russian consul-general in Bombay, while travelling in the upper Oxus, acquired a copy of the Umm al-kitāb, the most secret book of the Central Asian Ismāʿīlīs. A second manuscript copy of this enigmatic work written in Persian was obtained, in 1911, from Wakhān by J. Lutsch, another Russian official in Turkistān. Photostats of both these copies were taken to St Petersburg and deposited in the Asiatic Museum of the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences, an institution which by that time, despite its name, had become a library. Carl Salesmann, the director of the Museum and a renowned specialist in Iranian
languages, was preparing an edition of this work when he died in 1916. This task was later accomplished by Wladimir Ivanow, of whom we shall have more to say.

Meanwhile in 1914, Ivan I. Zarubin (1887–1964), the well-known Russian ethnologist and specialist in Tājik dialects (which are spoken in the Pāimir), acquired a small collection of Ismāʿīlī manuscripts from the western Pāimir districts of Shughnān and Rushān, which in 1916 he presented to the Asiatic Museum. In 1918, the Museum came into the possession of a second collection of Nizārī Ismāʿīlī texts written in the Persian language. These manuscripts had been procured a few years earlier, again from districts in the upper Oxus region, by the orientalist Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Semenov (1873–1958), the Russian pioneer in Ismāʿīlī studies from Tashkent. He had already investigated certain beliefs of the Shughnānī Ismāʿīlīs whom he had first visited in 1901. It is interesting to note that the Zarubin and Semenov collections of the Asiatic Museum, though altogether comprising less than twenty genuine items, represented the then largest holding of Ismāʿīlī manuscripts in any Western library. The generally meagre number of such sectarian titles known to orientalists by 1922 is well reflected in the first Western bibliography of Ismāʿīlī works, both published and unpublished, which appeared in that year. Little further progress was made in Ismāʿīlī studies during the 1920s, aside from the publication of some of Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s works, including his Wajh-i din from the manuscript in the Zarubin collection, and a few studies by Semenov and Ivanov. Indeed, by 1927, when the article ‘Ismāʿīliya’ by Clément Huart (1854–1926) appeared in the second volume of the Encyclopaedia of Islam, European orientalism on the subject still displayed the negative biases of the Crusaders. But Ismāʿīlī studies were now about to witness a breakthrough, as the work of discovering the sectarian manuscripts was gaining momentum, and a new generation of scholars led by Ivanov and some Indian Ismāʿīlīs were preparing to make their contributions.

Remarkable modern progress in Ismāʿīlī studies began in the 1930s. This progress has already necessitated a drastic revision of our ideas concerning the history and doctrines of the Ismāʿīlīs, as well as the significance of Ismāʿīlīsm within the general context of Islamic civilization. This long-awaited breakthrough, arising from the discovery of genuine Ismāʿīlī sources on a scale unknown before, has been made possible through access to the secretly-guarded private collections of
manuscripts preserved in Yaman, the greater Badakhshan and above all, India. In 1931, a small number of Ismā‘ili manuscripts was procured by the School of Oriental Studies in London. Since then, the discovery of Ismā‘ili manuscripts has proceeded at an astonishing pace. More libraries, including those at the American University of Beirut, the Tübingen University and, most importantly, the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, have come to hold Ismā‘ili collections. The largest single success to date in this respect was perhaps attained during the period 1959–1963, when a Soviet expedition discovered some 250 Ismā‘ili manuscripts in the Gorno-Badakhshan region, which has since 1925 formed part of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Tājikistān. These manuscripts had been preserved by the Nizāris of Shughnān in western Pāmir, mainly in the valleys of Ghund, Bartang and Shākh-dara on the right bank of the Panj. The photostats of these Persian manuscripts, thirty of which are evidently unique, are presently kept at the Department of Oriental Studies of the Tājik Academy of Sciences in Dushanbe. The recovery of a substantial portion of the surviving Ismā‘ili literature, although rather disappointing in terms of historical information, has also dispelled the once popular belief that Ismā‘ili texts had been totally destroyed upon the collapse of the Fātimid Caliphate in Egypt and the Nizārī state in Persia with its celebrated library at Alamūt.

The acquisition of Ismā‘ili manuscripts by public libraries, as well as the reader access of scholars to private collections where such works are mainly found, are in turn reflections of a drastic change in the mentality of many modern-day Ismā‘ilis. These liberal sectarian no longer subscribe to the traditional view that the community needs to protect its literature from uninitiated outsiders, not only non-Ismā‘ilis but also Ismā‘ilis belonging to different branches and groups. Fortunately for the students of Ismā‘ilism, increasing numbers of Ismā‘ilis, especially in India, the main literary storehouse of the sect, are becoming agreeable to divulging the contents of their spiritual riches and to entrusting these possessions to the hands of scholars and researchers. The most noteworthy instance of this new outlook was manifested in 1957 in the generous donation of some 200 Ismā‘ili manuscripts to the library of the Bombay University by Asaf Ali Asghar Fyzee, a Sulaymānī Ismā‘ili and the foremost modern authority on Ismā‘ili jurisprudence. Furthermore, some Ismā‘ilis, notably in India and Syria, have taken the initiative of publishing their sectarian sources and doing research on the subject. This change in attitude of contempor-
ary Ismā’īlis is well accounted for in the prefatory acknowledgements appearing in the editions of the many Ismā’īli texts published over the last three decades.

It should be noted at this juncture that modern progress in Ismā’īli studies, perhaps more so than in any comparable field of Islamic studies, has been due to the efforts of a small group of scholars. The Western pioneers of this group include Rudolph Strothmann (1877-1960), Louis Massignon (1883-1962), Marius Canard (1888-1982), Henry Corbin (1903-1978), Paul Kraus (1904-1944), Bernard Lewis, and more recently Samuel Miklos Stern (1920-1969), Marshall G. S. Hodgson (1922-1968) and Wilferd Madelung. Notable Eastern pioneers have been Zāhid ʿAlī, Ḥusayn ibn Fāyḍ Allāh al-Ḥamdānī (1901-1962), Asaf Ali Asghar Fyzee (1899-1981), Muhammad ʿĀrifī Ḥusayn (1901-1961), and more recently ʿĀrifī Tāmīr, Muṣṭafā Ghālib and Abbas Ḥamdānī; all except Ḥusayn being Ismā’īlis themselves. Finally, there is Vladimir Alekseevich Ivanov (1886-1970), better known as W. Ivanow, who belongs in a special category by himself; not only because he was the foremost pioneer in Ismā’īli studies, but also because he was the only Westerner in the field who spent his entire scholarly life in the East.

Ivanow studied Arabic and Persian at St Petersburg. Later he specialized in modern Persian dialects and Ṣūfism, pursuing his studies under the greatest Russian scholars of the time, Victor Rosen (1849-1908) and Valentin A. Zhukovsky (1858-1918). In 1915, Ivanow became associated with the Asiatic Museum as an assistant keeper of oriental manuscripts. He travelled widely in Central Asia and procured more than a thousand Arabic and Persian manuscripts for the Museum. It was also at the Asiatic Museum that, on examining the Zarubin collection, he had his first major contact with Ismā’īli literature. Ivanow left his native Russia, never to return, in 1918. Henceforth, he devoted his life exclusively to Ismā’īli studies, mainly in India and Persia.

It was in Bombay, starting in the 1930s, that Ivanow acquired a multitude of Ismā’īli friends and found access to their collections of manuscripts. Ivanow’s close relations with the sectarians expanded rapidly and reached out to the remotest corners of the Ismā’īli world in Badakhshān and in the adjoining Chitral, Gilgit and Hunza districts, where the Nizārī Ismā’īlis are known as Mawlā’īs. It was also in Bombay that, together with some of his Ismā’īli friends including Fyzee, Ivanow founded in 1933 the Islamic Research Association, which produced a series of publications devoted mainly to Ismā’īli works. Similarly, he played a
major part in the creation of the Ismaili Society of Bombay in 1946, under the patronage of the late Āghā Khān III, Sir Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh (1877–1957), with the aim of promoting independent and critical studies of all matters Ismāʿīlī. The library of the Ismaili Society, mainly through the efforts of Ivanow, came to possess a large number of Ismāʿīlī manuscripts. The Society’s series of publications, a landmark in modern Ismāʿīlī studies, were edited by Ivanow and came to be devoted mainly to his own works which included the publication of first editions of numerous Nizārī texts. In the same series also appeared, in 1963, Ivanow’s magnum opus, a bio-bibliographical survey of Ismāʿīlī literature which was the amplified edition of a work published thirty years earlier. This survey work remained indispensable through its two editions for more than four decades for students of Ismāʿīlism. Many of the titles described, especially those relating to the Nizārī branch, were actually discovered by Ivanow himself. Ivanow’s survey was superseded only in 1977 by the more comprehensive bibliography of Ismāʿīlī Qurbān Ḥusayn Poonawala, an Indian Ismāʿīlī scholar who has had direct access to many private collections of manuscripts preserved by the Ismāʿīlīs of India.

Ivanow’s work was indeed his life, and, as Fyzee observed, in every branch of Ismāʿīlism his work constitutes the basis for further studies. Nevertheless, it was Nizārī Ismāʿīlism, especially as developed in Persia, that occupied the centre of his research efforts. Ever since his first major publication on the subject in 1922, Ivanow indefatigably recovered, studied, edited and translated into English most of the extant literature of the Persian Nizārīs; a literature written entirely in the Persian language. It is, therefore, to his publications that reference is commonly made by anyone investigating the Nizārīs. In no small measure, it is also due to his contributions that the Nizārīs are no longer groundlessly judged as a detestable order of drugged assassins. As Hodgson, another authority on the Nizārīs, has observed, Ivanow stands unchallenged as the founder of modern Nizārī studies.

The main objective of this survey is to present the results of modern scholarship on the origins, history and doctrines of the Ismāʿīlī movement. As already noted, it is rather difficult to select any specific order of phases in the history of Ismāʿīlism. It is, however, possible on the basis of a mixture of chronological, doctrinal, geographical as well as literary and ethnological considerations, to distinguish five phases, some running parallel to others. These major phases, which will provide the framework for our survey, are as follows:
1 Early Ismāʿīlīsm; or, the initial phase of the movement, from its earliest proto-Ismāʿīlī origins in the middle of the 2nd/8th century until the foundation of the Fāṭimid Caliphate in North Africa.

2 Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīsm; or, the so-called ‘classical’ Fāṭimid period, from 297/909 until the death of the eighth Fāṭimid caliph-imām al-Mustanṣir in 487/1094, and the ensuing Nizārī-Mustaʿlī schism in the movement. This phase also covers the history of some dissident Ismāʿīlī groups, especially the Qarmaṭīs of southern ʿIrāq and Baḥrayn.

3 Mustaʿlīan Ismāʿīlīsm; or, the phase of development of one of the two major branches of Ismāʿīlīsm, from the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī schism to the present time. This phase, which is essentially the continuation of the traditions of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs, can be traced in terms of an initial period and the subsequent histories of the Ḥāfiẓī and Ṭayyibī factions of the Mustaʿlīyya. While the Ḥāfiẓīyya disintegrated soon after the fall of the Fāṭimid dynasty in 567/1171, the Ṭayyibīyya survived through their Yamanī and Indian periods and are currently represented by the Dāʿūdīs and the Sulaymānīs, residing chiefly in India where they are commonly known as the Bohorās (Bohras).

4 Nizārī Ismāʿīlīsm of the Alamūt period; or, the phase of Ismāʿīlīsm of the Nizārī tradition, from around 483/1090 until the destruction of the Nizārī state in Persia by the Mongols in 654/1256. This phase also covers the history of the Syrian Nizārīs. The Ismāʿīlīs of the Saljūq territories and Syria succeeded, mainly through the initial efforts of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, to establish a vigorous state, stretching from Syria to eastern Persia. These Ismāʿīlīs, who came to uphold the rights of Nizār and his descendants to the imāmate, launched an open revolt throughout the Saljūq realm even before the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī schism; a revolt based on the seizure of mountain fortresses and the assassination of prominent political enemies. On al-Mustanṣir’s death, the Nizārīs severed their ties with the Fāṭimid headquarters in Cairo. The Nizārīs also introduced or elaborated several important doctrines.

5 The post-Alamūt phase of Nizārī Ismāʿīlīsm, from the second half of the 7th/13th century to the present time. This phase covers three distinct periods; namely, the obscure early post-Alamūt, the so-called Anjudān, and the modern periods. With the collapse of the Nizārī state, the Nizārīs
soon reorganized themselves and, after experiencing a schism, survived in Persia mainly under the guise of Şüfism. Later, the Nizārīs achieved new successes in the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia. Starting in the 9th/15th century, Nizārī Ismā‘īlism experienced a revival, which lasted almost two centuries. This renaissance of Nizārī Ismā‘īlism, led by the imāms of the so-called Qāsim-Shāhī line, has been designated as the Anjudān period by Ivanow. In the second half of the 12th/18th century, while the line of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms was nearing its end, the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imāms who by then had acquired some ties with certain Şüfī orders, emerged from their underground existence in Persia. Subsequently in the nineteenth century, while the seat of the Nizārī Imāmate was transferred from Persia to India, the Nizārī Ismā‘īlis entered the modern period of their history under the leadership of the Āghā Khāns.

The plan of our study follows the above-mentioned classification scheme. But before taking up the subject of early Ismā‘īlism, it is necessary to review certain developments of early Islam and, more specifically, early Shi‘ism. This review of the formative period of Shi‘i Islam is indispensable as the proper perspective, not only because the Ismā‘īlis adopted much of the heritage of the early Shi‘is but also because it explains the religio-political milieu within which proto-Ismā‘īlism originated.
Origins and early development of Shi‘ism

It was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that Islamic studies was established as a separate field within general orientalism in the West. Since then, much progress and specialization has occurred in the field, and recent works have particularly enhanced our knowledge of the formative period of Islam. This rather gradual progress has resulted from the publication and study of numerous Islamic sources, and from the cumulative contributions of a large number of Islamists, such as Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918), Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921), Carl H. Becker (1867–1933), and Leone Caetani (1869–1935), to name but a few of the greatest pioneers of the last generation; as well as Sir Hamilton A. R. Gibb (1895–1971), William Montgomery Watt and Laura Veccia Vaglieri, amongst others of the present generation. The study of Shi‘ism, however, whether viewed as a major Islamic perspective or as a heterodoxical religious movement, has not received its deserved share of modern scholarship. This shortage becomes more evident when the overall meagre studies devoted to different aspects of Shi‘ism are compared with the investigation of studies of Sunnī Islam, which continues to occupy the focus of attention of the majority of Eastern and Western Islamists.

The study of Shi‘ism was indeed, until recent times, one of the most neglected branches within Islamic studies. In this century, Israel Friedlaender was perhaps the first person to have noted that ‘we have a very imperfect notion of the rise and development of the religious tendencies in Shiism and the sources from which they were derived’.1 Edward G. Browne, too, writing in 1924, once again deplored the lack of knowledge concerning the Shi‘ī creed and its evolution, and rightly added that ‘we still possess no comprehensive and authoritative statement of the Shi‘ī doctrine in any European language’.2 Still later, in 1934, Rudolph Strothmann, an important European authority on Shi‘ī studies, found it
necessary to re-state that 'there is no thorough account of the Shi'a'.

Similar statements have continued to be made, especially with respect to early Shi'ism, despite the progress of more recent scholarship in certain aspects of the subject.

However, during the last few decades, an extremely selective group of scholars have sought to devote more serious and specialized efforts towards the study of Shi'i Islam. Louis Massignon, the multi-dimensional dean of modern French Islamists, should be regarded as the pioneer and guide of this group in the West, while the untiring efforts of Henry Corbin, his student and successor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, at the Sorbonne in Paris, occupy a unique place in the modern annals of Shi'i studies. The contributions of Corbin, who devoted a lifetime to the study of Shi'ism, especially to its two major Twelver and Ismâ'îli branches, are invaluable in understanding Shi'i thought in general, and its theosophical and metaphysical aspects as developed in Persia in particular. Corbin's works, reflecting the benefit of his close association with several leading Twelver Shi'i religious scholars, or 'ulama', of Persia, undoubtedly provide the most important single source in any Western language on many intellectual aspects of Shi'ism. The bulk of Corbin's major works, including his editions of numerous texts, appeared in his own well-known Bibliothèque Iranienne series, published by the Département d'Iranologie of the Institut Franco-Iranien, Tehran, where he lectured every fall during the last twenty-five years of his life. Meanwhile in Persia, where Twelver Shi'ism has predominated as the state religion for almost five centuries, a number of contemporary Shi'i authorities, notably 'Allâma Ṭabâṭabâ'i (1903–1981), have taken the initiative of elaborating their religious views on a more systematic, though still traditional, basis. These scholars, by holding classes at the religious institutions of the country, especially in the holy cities of Qumm and Mashhad, or at their homes, have trained a number of younger disciples and students, such as Sayyid Jalâl al-Din ʿAshtiyânî, who are making contributions to the study of Shi'ism.

In spite of recent researches, the early history and doctrinal development of Shi'ism, especially during the first century of Islam, continue to be obscure and controversial. This review, then, is based on what should rightly be regarded as the tentative and fragmentary results of modern scholarship concerning the origins and early development of Shi'ism. More specifically, we shall trace the early development of Shi'ism, with special reference to the Shi'i tendencies and movements that eventually evolved, in the middle of the 2nd/8th century, into what retrospectively
came to be designated as the Ismā‘īli movement. Needless to add that in a similar retrospective sense, the earliest history of Shi‘ism, until the death of the Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq in 148/765, is shared by the Ismā‘īli Shi‘is who recognize the same first six imāms as the Twelver Shi‘is, although with a somewhat different enumeration.

Muḥammad, the Messenger of God (rasūl Allāh), between his emigration (hijra) from Mecca to Medina in the September of 622 which marks the initiation of the Islamic era (Latin, Anno Hegirae) and his death on 13 Rabi‘ I 111/8 June 632, succeeded in founding a state of considerable power and prestige according to Arabian standards of the time. During this short ten-year period, most of the desert-dwelling bedouin tribes of Arabia had pledged their allegiance to the Prophet of Islam, who thus laid the foundation for the subsequent expansion of the new faith (imān) in God beyond the Arabian peninsula. The death of the Prophet after a brief illness, however, confronted the nascent Islamic community (umma) with its first major crisis. This crisis of succession marks the beginning of what was eventually to develop into a permanent Sunnī–Shi‘ī division in the Islamic community.

As long as the Prophet was alive, Muslims had taken it for granted that he would provide them the best guidance according to the revealed message of Islam. However, aside from delivering and guarding his Prophetic message, Muḥammad had also acted as the head of the Muslim community. His death in Medina left the Muslims in a state of serious confusion, because, at least in view of the majority, the Prophet had left neither formal instruction nor a testament regarding his successor. In the ensuing discussions, there was immediate consensus of opinion on one point only. The successor to the Prophet could not be another prophet or nabi (although soon several persons were to appear with such claims), as it had already been made known through divine revelation that Muḥammad was the Seal of the Prophets (khitim al-anbiyā‘). However, it was still essential to choose a successor in order to have effective leadership and ensure the continuation of the Islamic community and state. Consequently, amidst much debate, mainly between the Meccan Emigrants (Muhājirūn) and the Medinese Helpers (Anṣār), Abū Bakr, one of the earliest converts to Islam and a trusted Companion of the Prophet, was elected as the successor. Abū Bakr’s election was effectuated on the suggestion of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, himself another of the Muhājirūn, and by the acclamation of other leading Companions of the Prophet, the Ṣaḥāba, who accorded Abū Bakr their oath of allegiance (bay‘a).
Abū Bakr, as the new leader of the Islamic community, took the title of Khalīfat Rasūl Allāh, Successor of the Messenger of God, a title which was soon simplified to khalīfa (whence the word caliph in Western languages). Thus, by electing the first successor to the Prophet, the unique Islamic institution of the caliphate was also founded. From its very inception, the caliphate came to embody both the religious and the political leadership of the community. This unique arrangement was to be expected from the very nature of Islam’s teachings and the limited experience of the early Islamic community under the leadership of the Prophet. The early Muslims recognized neither distinction between religion and state nor between religious and secular authorities and organizations, distinctions so familiar to modern-day Westerners. Indeed, a strictly theocratic conception of order, in which Islam is not merely a religion but a complete system ordained by God for the socio-political as well as the moral and spiritual governance of mankind, had been an integral part of Muḥammad’s message and practice.

Abū Bakr’s caliphate lasted just over two years, and before his death in 13/634, he personally selected ‘Umar as his successor. This selection, however, was preceded by an informal consultation with several of the leading Muslims and followed by the acclamation and bay’a of the community. ‘Umar, who was assassinated in 23/644, introduced a new procedure for the election of his successor; he had decided that a council (shūrā) of six of the early Companions was to choose the new caliph from amongst themselves. In due time, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, a member of the important Meccan clan of the Banū Umayya, was selected, and, upon receiving the customary bay’a, became the third caliph.

In the meantime, immediately upon the death of the Prophet, there had appeared a minority group in Medina who believed that ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib, first cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet and bound in matrimony to his daughter Fātima, was better qualified than any other candidate, including Abū Bakr, to succeed the Prophet. This minority group, originally comprised of some of ‘Ali’s friends and supporters, in time came to be known as the Shi’at ‘Alī, or the party of ‘Alī, and then simply as the Shi’a. But ‘Alī eventually succeeded as the fourth caliph, instead of fulfilling the aspiration of the Shi’a in becoming the immediate successor to the Prophet. In any event, the powers of authority exercised by the first four caliphs, known as al-khulafa’ al-rāshidūn or the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, also called the Orthodox Caliphs, essentially seem to have consisted of the implementation of the all-embracing regulations of the message of Islam,
as expressed in the revelations contained in the Qur’ān. When necessary, however, the Qur’ān, the standard written text of which came to be issued during ’Uthmān’s caliphate, was to be supplemented in the governing affairs of the community by the *sunna*, or practice, established in the nascent Islamic community during the lifetime of the Prophet.

It is not known what role ‘Ali played in the succession claim put forth on his behalf by his partisans. Matters are particularly vague in that after a delay of about six months, ‘Ali finally recognized Abū Bakr’s caliphate; a lapse of time also coinciding with Fāṭima’s death. It should be added parenthetically that Fāṭima had been involved in a rather complicated inheritance dispute with Abū Bakr over an estate held by the Prophet.9 Regardless, ‘Ali’s candidacy continued to be supported by his partisans in Medina, both among the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār; in due time, the Shiʿa developed a doctrinal view and their cause received wider recognition. According to non-Shiʿi sources, the chief consideration initially underlying the position of the Shiʿa was basically related to the special significance they attached to ‘Ali’s being the foremost member of the Ahl al-Bayt or the People of the House, referring to the Prophet’s family.

The view on the origins of the caliphate and Shiʿism outlined above is essentially that held by the Sunnī Muslims and accepted by the majority of Western Islamists. But there is also the Shiʿi version which significantly differs from that of the Sunnīs. However, Shiʿism, or the minority position, should not be regarded as a ‘heterodoxy’, a late revolt against, or a deviation from, an established ‘orthodoxy’. In fact, both Sunnism and Shiʿism constitute an integral part of Islam; and they should more correctly be regarded as different interpretations of the same Islamic message.9 Needless to say that the objective validity of one or the other perspective, as in most religious controversies, is hardly a debatable matter. The differences cannot be resolved on the basis of the various categories of primary sources, notably the theological, historical and the so-called heresiographical works. This is not only because these sources reflect Sunnī or Shiʿi biases, but also because according to the Shiʿa, the possibility of the Shiʿi perspective in Islam existed, as we shall see, from the very beginning.

There are, however, those Western Islamists who are of the opinion that the Shiʿi point of view, in time, led to a re-writing of the early history of Islam. They argue that the Twelvers in particular, from the last quarter of the 3rd/9th century onwards when Twelver Shiʿism started to acquire its now familiar form, attempted to present a version of events relating to the
period from the death of the Prophet until 260/874, the date of the occultation of their twelfth imām, which supported their doctrinal position but was not necessarily in accordance with the facts. Our purpose does not hold in delving into polemics or defending either of the two major divisions of Islam; after all, the main points have already been debated throughout the centuries, leading to an abundancy of theological treatises supporting one view or refuting the other. Rather, our purpose here is to present the Shi‘ī view on the origins of Shi‘ism, irrespective of the possibility that some of the beliefs involved might not have been entertained by the earliest Shi‘īs.

The Shi‘īs, on the basis of specific Qur‘ānic verses and certain hadīths, have maintained that the Prophet did in fact appoint a successor, or an imām as they have preferred to call the spiritual guide and leader of the umma. The central Shi‘ī evidence of ‘Ali’s succession legitimacy is, however, the event of Ghadir Khumm. On 18 Dhu‘l-Ḥijja 10/16 March 632 when returning from his Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet stopped at a site by that name between Mecca and Medina to make an announcement to the pilgrims who accompanied him. Taking ‘Ali by the hand, he uttered the famous sentence man kuntu mawlihu fa-‘Alī mawlāhu (He of whom I am the patron, of him ‘Ali is also the patron), which, according to the Shi‘a, made ‘Ali his successor. Furthermore, it is the Shi‘ī belief that the Prophet had received the designation (nass) in question, nominating ‘Ali as the imām of the Muslims after his own death, through divine revelation. This event of the spiritual investiture of ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib continues to be celebrated as one of the most important Shi‘ī feasts.

As a result, after the Prophet’s death, a number of pious Muslims, including especially Salmān al-Fārisī, Abū Dharr al-Ghīfārī, al-Miqdād b. al-‘Aswād al-Kindī and ‘Ammār b. Yāsir, four of the Ṣaḥāba who came to be known collectively as the four pillars of the early Shi‘a, zealously maintained that the succession to the Prophet was the legitimate right of ‘Ali. This contention was opposed by the Muslim majority who supported the caliphate of Abū Bakr. The latter group, while refusing to concede that the Prophet had specified a successor, considered the decision on the caliphate to be a matter for the ijma‘ or consensus of the community. Consequently, ‘Ali and his partisans became obliged to protest against the act of choosing the Prophet’s successor through elective methods. It was this very protest, raised by the pious circle supporting ‘Ali, which separated the Shi‘a from the majority of Muslims.

As the case of the Shi‘a was ignored by the rest of the community,
including the majority of the Companions, the Shi'a persisted that all religious matters should be referred to 'Alī, who in their opinion was the sole person possessing religious authority. Indeed, the Shi'a did hold a particular conception of religious authority; a conception that occupies a central position in Shi'i thought, but which should not be taken to imply any intended separation between the religious and political domains in Shi'i Islam. Such a distinction, as noted, was meaningless to the early Muslims. According to the Shi'i view, from the very beginning the partisans of 'Alī believed that the most important question facing the Muslims after the Prophet was the elucidation of Islamic teachings and religious tenets. This was because they were aware that the teachings of the Qur'ān and the sacred law of Islam (Shari'a), having emanated from sources beyond the comprehension of the ordinary man, contained truths and inner purposes that could not be grasped directly through human reason. Therefore, in order to understand the true meaning of the Islamic revelation, the Shi'a had realized the necessity for a religiously authoritative person, namely the imām. According to this view then, the very possibility of a Shi'i perspective existed within the message of Islam, and the possibility was only actualized by the genesis of Shi'ism.

It was due to such Shi'i ideas that there eventually arose in the Muslim community two different conceptions of succession to the Prophet. The majority came to consider the khalīfa as being the administrator of the Shari'a and leader of the community. The Shi'a, on the other hand, while also holding that the successor must rule justly over the community, saw in the succession an important spiritual function, a function connected with the interpretation of the Islamic message. As a result, the successor would for them also have to possess legitimate authority for elucidating the teachings of Islam and for providing spiritual guidance for the Muslims. A person with such qualifications, according to the Shi'a, could come only from amongst the Ahl al-Bayt, as they alone possessed religious authority and provided the sole channel for transmitting the original message of Islam. There were, of course, differences regarding the precise composition of the Ahl al-Bayt, later defined to include only certain members of the Prophet’s immediate family, especially 'Alī and Fāṭima and their progeny. Nevertheless, 'Alī was from the beginning regarded by his devoted partisans as the most prominent member of the Prophet’s family, and as such, was believed to have inherited the Prophet’s undivulged teachings and religious knowledge or 'ilm. He was, indeed, held to be the Prophet's wasī or legatee. In the eyes of the Shi'a, 'Alī’s
unique qualifications as successor held yet another important dimension in that he was believed to have been nominated by divine command (*amr*) as expressed through the Prophet’s testament. This meant that ‘Ali was also divinely inspired and immune from error and sin (*ma’sūm*), thus making him infallible both in his knowledge and as a teaching authority after the Prophet. As a result of such beliefs, the Shi‘a maintained that the two ends of governing the community and exercising religious authority could be accomplished only by ‘Ali.

The Shi‘i point of view on the origins of Shi‘ism contains distinctive doctrinal elements that admittedly cannot be attributed in their entirety to the early Shi‘is, especially the original partisans of ‘Ali. Needless to say that many Western Islamists are of the opinion that Shi‘ism, during its first half-century when it was a purely political movement, did not maintain any religious beliefs different from those held by the non-Shi‘i Muslims. The fact remains that very little is known with historical certainty concerning the earliest Shi‘i ideas and tendencies. But, taking once again the Shi‘i sources and traditions as points of reference, it may be said that perhaps the earliest Shi‘i ideas centred broadly around a particular notion of religious knowledge connected with the Prophet’s own ‘ilm. There were probably also ideas on the possession of this knowledge regarded as a qualification for leading the community. Moreover, it may be added that the partisans of ‘Ali, by contrast to the majority, seem to have been more inclined in their thinking towards the hereditary attributes of individuals. The idea that certain special qualities were hereditary was of course in line with the pre-Islamic Arab notion that outstanding human attributes were transmitted through tribal stock. It was, therefore, rather natural for ‘Ali’s religiously learned followers, who also had special respect for the Prophet’s family, to believe that some of Muḥammad’s special attributes, notably his ‘ilm, would be inherited by the members of his clan, the Banū Hashim, and his immediate family. Such beliefs might have been particularly held by those Shi‘is with south Arabian origins, since they had been accustomed to the Yamani traditions of divine and semi-divine kingship and its hereditary sanctity.

The earliest Shi‘i currents of thought, whatever their precise nature, developed gradually over time, finding their full expression and consolidation in the doctrine of the imāmate. The stages through which this doctrine passed remain rather obscure. But it is generally known that the basic conception of this distinctive Shi‘i doctrine, which embodies the fundamental beliefs of Shi‘i Islam, came to be postulated in the time of the
Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. Later on in this chapter, more will be said on certain aspects of this doctrine; for now we shall commence our discussion of the early development of Shi'ism.

After their initial defeat, the Shi'a lost much of their enthusiasm. Shi'ism remained in a practically dormant state during the caliphates of both Abū Bakr and 'Umar, when 'Ali himself maintained a passive and secluded attitude. During this early period (11–23/632–644), 'Ali's behaviour is best illustrated by his lack of participation in the affairs of the community and in the ongoing wars of conquest. This was a marked departure from his earlier active role in the community, and his appearance in the forefront of all the battles fought in the Prophet's time, except the battle of Tabūk. He actually retreated, during this period, to his house in Medina. This behaviour should not however be taken as an indication of 'Ali's reluctance to be involved in public affairs, since the first two caliphs did in fact attempt to exclude him from any position of importance. He was, nevertheless, appointed along with 'Uthmān, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, to the six-member council of the Companions that was to select 'Umar's successor.13

These stagnating conditions changed rather drastically for 'Ali and his partisans in the caliphate of 'Uthmān (23–35/644–656). During this period of strife and discontent in the community, the turn of events was such as to activate Shi'i aspirations and tendencies. The mounting grievances against 'Uthmān, which related mainly to economic issues, evolved around the opposition of the provincials and the Medinese Anṣār whose earlier position of influence had now been curtailed.14 'Uthmān distributed the governorships of all the major provinces as well as the important garrison towns (singular, miṣr) of Kūfa and Baṣra amongst his close relatives. These governors, in turn, adopted policies aimed at enhancing the power and financial interests of the Umayyads and their wealthy Meccan allies. As a result, the tribal leaders whose claims were mainly based on the strengths of their tribes, having been kept in control under 'Umar's caliphate, were now restored to positions of influence in the provinces. As a corollary to this, many of the early Muslims who lacked tribal stature came to be displaced by the so-called traditional tribal aristocracy or the ashrāf al-qabā'īl. This policy created discontent among the Anṣār and the lesser tribal groups of the provinces; groups which had developed claims of their own based on the principle of Islamic sābiqa or priority; viz., priority in acceptance of and service to Islam.

The provincial grievances against 'Uthmān's rule had other causes too.
By the time of 'Uthmân, Islam's period of rapid expansion had effectively terminated. But the Arab soldier-tribesmen (muqāṭila) of the garrison towns that had hitherto served as military bases for numerous conquests, were now to remain permanently in their encampments, even though the booty on the battlefield no longer provided any lucrative source of income. These changed realities of the post-conquest period, by themselves created dissatisfaction with the regime. To make matters worse, the central authority of the caliphate in Medina, itself no longer satisfied with the diminishing size of its customary one-fifth of the movable booty (ghanîma), became compelled to seek new provincial sources of revenue to compensate for the falling receipts of the Muslim-state treasury, the bayt al-mâl.

Another particular grievance related to the abandoned Sâsânid lands in Mesopotamia. Of the various groups aspiring to the ownership of these agriculturally rich lands in the Sawâd district of Kûfa, the so-called qurra' posed the strongest claim. The qurra' evidently represented those participants in the early wars (ahl al-ayyâm) against the Sâsânid empire who had occupied the vacated estates of southern 'Irâq; but some later Muslim historians referred to these groups of villagers as 'reciters of the Qur'ân', which in time became the widely adopted definition of the term qurra'. 'Uthmân's policy of gradually allocating the disputed lands to those enjoying his favour, therefore, came to be particularly resented by the qurra', whose leaders had furthermore lost their positions of influence to the strong tribal leaders of Kûfa. The Kûfan qurra', in response to this double assault, generated the first provincial opposition to 'Uthmân's caliphate.

As noted, the provincial opposition was centred in the garrison towns, especially in Kûfa and Başra. Kûfa soon came to acquire also a special place in the annals of early Shi'ism. It would, therefore, be in order to say a few words on certain aspects of these garrison towns. The Islamic empire, during its phase of rapid expansion in the caliphate of 'Umar, came into possession of many ancient cities within the domains of the former Byzantine and Sâsânid empires. Numerous new towns were also founded by the conquering Arabs. These towns were originally conceived as military camps for the invading Arab warriors, who were not allowed to settle in the old cities of the conquered lands and mingle with the non-Arab natives. As the main advances of the Arab armies had been directed towards the Sâsânid territories, the most important garrison towns had now come to be located in the eastern lands of the caliphate, particularly in
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\`Ir\`aq. K"ufa, in the region of Ctesiphon (Mad\={a}'in), the capital of the S\={a}s\={a}nids, and Ba\={s}ra, situated strategically between the desert and the Persian Gulf ports, were the two main garrison towns in that region, both having been founded in or about 17/638. It was, therefore, to these two towns that the bulk of Arab migration from all parts of northern and southern Arabia, later supplanted by non-Arabs, had gone to join the victorious armies, especially after 20/641 when the conquest of Mesopotamia had been assured.

The organizations of K"ufa and Ba\={s}ra were strongly based on the tribal pattern prevailing in the Arab society. This meant that their inhabitants were divided into a number of tribal groups, each having its own separate military district and tribal leader. In K"ufa, in contrast to Ba\={s}ra, the tribal composition of the population was extremely heterogeneous with a predominance of southern Arabs, or Yamani tribal groups. This was among the chief factors that made K"ufa an important recruiting ground for the Shi\`a, while non-Shi\`i sentiments prevailed in Ba\={s}ra. The soldier-tribesmen of the garrison towns, aside from receiving booty of conquest, lived on stipends allotted to them on the basis of an elaborate system of distribution created under 'Umar. According to this system, itself based on a registry or stipend-roll (diwan), the size of the stipend ('a\={a}r) would be determined by the already-noted criterion of s\={a}biqa, reflecting 'Umar's desire to displace traditional Arab claims, based on tribal affiliation and authority, by Islamic ones.

As the opposition to 'Uthm\={a}n's policies gained momentum during the latter years of his caliphate, the partisans of 'Ali found it opportune to revive their subdued aspirations. The Shi\`is were still led at this time by some of the original partisans of 'Ali, such as Ab\={u} Dharr who died in 31/651–652 in exile under 'Uthm\={a}n, as punishment for his protests; and 'Amm\={a}r who would be killed soon afterwards in 37/657 in the battle of \={S}iffin. But, a number of new partisans were now appearing and the Shi\`a drew general support also from the Banu H\={a}shim, whose interests had been ignored by the Umayyads. Simultaneous with the emergence of the Shi\`a as a more active party, 'Ali found himself approached by the various discontented provincials; groups that started becoming more systematically organized around 34/654, and, as such, needed an effective and acceptable spokesman in the capital. The Shi\`a and the discontented provincials, two groups differing in the nature of their opposition to 'Uthm\={a}n's rule but with similar objectives, joined forces unintentionally. As a result of this complex alliance, the unpopularity of 'Uthm\={a}n grew
side by side with the pro-Shi‘i sentiments and the partisanship for ‘Ali, who at the same time mediated with the opposition on behalf of the distressed caliph. The situation deteriorated rapidly, soon exploding into open rebellion, when rebel contingents from Kūfā, Baṣra and Egypt converged on Medina under the overall leadership of the Kūfan qurra‘. The chaos finally culminated in the murder of ‘Uṯmān in 35/656, at the hands of a group of mutineers from the Arab army of Egypt.

In the aftermath of this regicide, the Islamic community became badly torn over the question of ‘Uṯmān’s guilt and hence on the justification of the mutineers’ action. In an emotionally tense and confused atmosphere, ‘Alī was acclaimed as the new caliph in Medina. This was a notable victory for the Shi‘a whose imām had now succeeded, though with a delay of some twenty-four years, to caliphal authority. ‘Alī drew support from virtually every group opposed to conditions under ‘Uṯmān. The emergence of the new coalition of groups supporting ‘Alī, together with the austere state of affairs expected under his rule, were naturally alarming to the traditional tribal aristocracy, particularly the Banū Umayya and other influential Meccan clans. Due to such conflicts of interest, ‘Alī was confronted from the start with difficulties which soon erupted into the first civil war in Islam, lasting through his short-lived caliphate. He never succeeded in enforcing his caliphal authority throughout the Islamic empire, especially in the territories of ‘Uṯmān’s relative Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, who had governed Syria for almost twenty years.

The first challenge to ‘Alī came in the form of a revolt led under the pretext of demanding vengeance for ‘Uṯmān, by Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, two of the most influential of the Companions. They were joined by ‘A‘isha, Abū Bakr’s daughter and the Prophet’s widow who nurtured a long-felt hatred for ‘Alī. The three rebel leaders, along with a contingent of the Quraysh, went to Baṣra to organize support for their rebellion. ‘Alī reacted swiftly and left Medina to gather support for his own forces at Kūfā, whose inhabitants had shown their inclinations towards him. The rebels were easily defeated in 36/656, at the so-called battle of the Camel (al-Jamal) near Baṣra, in which Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr were killed. This rebellion had some significant and enduring consequences, however. Henceforth, the Muslims were to fight amongst themselves and the central authority of the caliphate came to be transferred from Medina to the provinces, ‘Irāq and Syria, where the military effectiveness of the empire was now concentrated. It was in this new setting that the Umayyad challenge to ‘Alī’s authority unfolded.
Almost immediately upon 'Ali's rise to power, Mu'awiya, at the head of a pro-'Uthmān party, had launched a campaign against the new caliph to whom he refused to give his allegiance. He, too, particularly as 'Uthmān's kinsman, had found the call for avenging the slain caliph a convenient pretext for covering his real intention of seeing Umayyad rule established throughout the empire. 'Ali was trapped in an unenviable situation. The actual murderers had fled Medina, while many of the qurra' surrounding him were equally implicated. As 'Ali was either unable or unwilling to punish those directly responsible, Mu'awiya rose in rebellion and challenged the very legitimacy of his caliphate.

'Ali had, in the meantime, entered Kūfa to mobilize support for the anticipated confrontation with Mu'awiya. As an important measure towards consolidating his power base there, 'Ali reorganized the Kūfan tribal groups with a two-fold result. First, by reshuffling tribes and clans from one group to another, he changed the composition of the then existing seven tribal groups in favour of the Yamanis who, unlike the northern or Nizārī Arabs, were more disposed towards him and the Shi'i ideal of leadership. Second, and more important, through this very reshuffling he in effect attempted to re-establish the Islamic leadership in Kūfa at the expense of the tribal leadership that had emerged there under 'Uthmān. Accordingly, men like Mālik al-Ashtar, Ḥujr b. 'Adī al-Kindi and 'Adī b. Ḥātim, leaders of the early Kūfan qurra' who had been eclipsed by the ashrāf al-qabā'il, were restored to positions of authority. These men, with similarly situated Kūfans, along with their following, provided the backbone of 'Ali's forces and became the new leaders of the Shi'a. The Shi'i leaders urged 'Ali to attack Mu'awiya's forces without any delay. On the other hand, the Kūfan ashrāf advised against such haste since they were more interested in seeing a stalemate between the contending parties. Doubtless, 'Ali's victory and egalitarian policies would undermine their privileged positions, while Syrian domination would deprive them of their independent status in Irāq. It was under such circumstances that, after the failure of lengthy negotiations, 'Ali eventually set out from Kūfa and encountered the Syrian forces at Şiffin on the upper Euphrates, in the spring of 37/657. A long battle ensued, perhaps the most controversial one in the history of early Islam.

The events of the battle of Şiffin, the Syrian arbitration proposal and 'Ali's acceptance of it, and the resulting arbitration verdict of Adhruh issued about a year later, have all been critically examined by a number of
modern scholars; as have the intervening circumstances leading to the secession of different groups from 'Ali's forces, the seceders being subsequently designated as the Khawārij. These events irrevocably undermined 'Ali's position. His popularity was particularly damaged when he finally decided to check the growing menace of the Khawārij by attacking their camp along the canal of al-Nahrawān in 38/658, inflicting heavy losses on the dissenters. This action, far from destroying the Khawārij, caused large scale defections from 'Ali's already faltering forces. Failing in his efforts to mobilize a new army, 'Ali was compelled to retreat to Kūfah and virtually ignore the mounting campaign of Mu'āwiya. During the final two years of the civil war, while many Muslims continued to be hesitant in taking sides, 'Ali rapidly lost ground to his arch-enemy. Finally, 'Ali b. Abī Talib, Commander of the Faithful (Amīr al-Mu'minīn), fourth caliph and first Shi'i Imam, was struck with the poisoned sword of a Khārijī in the mosque of Kūfah. He died a few days later, on 21 Ramadan 40/25 January 661.

The Islamic community emerged from its first civil war severely tested and split into factions that were to confront one another throughout subsequent centuries. The main factions had already begun to take shape during the final years of 'Uthmān's rule. But they crystallized more explicitly into two opposing parties in the aftermath of the murder of 'Uthmān and the battles of the Jamal and Ṣiffin. Henceforth, these parties acquired denominations which, in an eclectic sense, revealed their personal loyalties as well as their regional attachments. The supporters of 'Ali came to be called the Ahl al-'Irāq (People of 'Irāq) as well as the Shī'at 'Alī (Party of 'Alī), while their adversaries were designated the Shī'at 'Uthmān (Party of 'Uthmān), or more commonly the 'Uthmāniyya. The latter party, after Ṣiffin, constituted mainly the Ahl al-Shām (People of Syria), also referred to as the Shī'at Mu'āwiya (Party of Mu'āwiya). From the time of the first civil war onwards, the partisans of 'Ali, the Shi'a par excellence, also referred to themselves by terms with more precise religious connotations such as the Shī'at Ahl al-Bayt or its equivalent the Shī'at ʿAlī (Party of the Prophet's Household). Starting with the battle of Ṣiffin, a third faction, the Khawārij, appeared in the community. The Khawārij, seriously opposed to the other two factions, were initially also called the Ḥarūriyya, after the locality Ḥarūrā' to which the first seceders from 'Ali's forces had retreated, as well as the Shurāt (singular, shārī, the vendor), signifying those who sold their soul for the cause of God. As we
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know, they managed to organize a rapidly spreading movement that many times in the later history of Islam challenged any form of legitimacy and dynastic privilege.¹⁸

It was during 'Ali's caliphate that important changes occurred in the composition and influence of the Shi'a. At the time of 'Ali's accession to power, the Shi'a still represented a small personal party comprised chiefly of the original partisans. But during the next few years, the Shi'a expanded by absorbing some of the most pious Muslims, such as the leaders of the early Kūfān qurra' who were to persist in their devotion to 'Ali. The new partisans were not numerically significant, but they made much difference, as subsequent events showed, to the cause of the Shi'a, in terms of their unwavering loyalty to 'Ali and his descendants the 'Alids. These devout partisans are, indeed, amongst those reported to have sworn to 'Ali that they would be 'friends of those he befriended, and enemies of those to whom he was hostile';¹⁹ reminiscent of the very words used by the Prophet himself with regard to 'Ali at Ghadir Khumm.

As a possible explanation of this deep devotion, W. M. Watt has suggested an interesting hypothesis, arguing that the attachment of the Shi'a to 'Ali had acquired a more strictly theological dimension precisely during this same period of his caliphate. The civil war, according to this hypothesis, was a period of crisis and general insecurity in the community, when the nomadic tribesmen of Arabia were experiencing the strains of their new lives in the unstable conditions of Kūfā and other rapidly growing garrison towns. These displaced and insecure Arabs naturally tended to search for salvation which could be attained through different channels. In the case of the Shi'a, they were already exposed to the idea of the hereditary sanctity of the Prophet's family, while the Yamani partisans amongst them were particularly familiar with the tradition of divine kingship and the superhuman qualities of kings. It was, therefore, not difficult for them to develop the distinct feeling that their salvation and delivery from distress might best be guaranteed by following a so-called charismatic leader, a person possessing certain superhuman, or divinely ordained, attributes. Thus, the Shi'a came to find the charismata of inerrancy and infallibility in 'Ali, and he became a charismatic leader to whom his partisans were deeply attached for their salvation.²⁰

The very existence of this zealous party of supporters largely explains how Shi'ism managed to survive 'Ali's death and numerous subsequent tragic events and defeats. The Shi'a proper should, however, be distinguished from the other groups in 'Ali's following. In the confusing
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milieu of the civil war, several heterogeneous groups, devoid of any particular devotion to 'Ali, had rallied behind him. They were united in their opposition to 'Uthmān and other mutual adversaries and in the hope of receiving a variety of politico-economic benefits. As a result, the Shi'at 'Alī came to be loosely and temporarily aligned with all those more appropriately considered the pro-Shi'i or non-Shi'i supporters of 'Alī. It was in this broader sense that Shi'ism was established among the mixed population of southern 'Irāq, especially in Kūfa. In effect, 'Alī portrayed the symbol of the 'Irāqī opposition to Syrian domination, and for a long time the 'Irāqīs continued to consider his brief rule as a 'golden age', when Kūfa and not Damascus was the capital of the caliphate. But, starting with the events of Siffin, the situation changed against the hitherto spreading form of broad Shi'ism. Different non-Shi'i groups in 'Alī's following, including the Kūfān ashrāf who had earlier found it expedient to support him after a dubious fashion, now began to desert him. However, by the time of his murder, the Shi'a still drew support from certain non-Shi'i groups. Furthermore, while the 'Irāqīs in general had remained hesitant in taking sides during the civil war, the Arab settlers of Kūfa, being dominated by the Yamanīs, remained sympathetic towards the Shi'i ideal of leadership. As we shall see, the Persians too, who soon came to account for an important proportion of Kūfa's non-Arab population, were to express similar pro-Shi'i inclinations.

It was in these circumstances that al-Hasan b. 'Alī, the elder son of 'Alī and Fāṭima, was acclaimed as caliph by some forty thousand Kūfans, immediately after his father's death. But the young grandson of the Prophet was no match for the shrewd Mu'awiya who had endeavoured for many years to win the office for himself. Indeed, Mu'awiya's power had now become quite unchallengeable, and he easily succeeded in inducing al-Hasan to abdicate from the caliphate. The chronology of the events and the circumstances surrounding the brief struggle between al-Hasan and Mu'awiya, as well as the terms under which al-Hasan abdicated and retired to Medina, remain rather obscure.24 The fact remains, however, that after al-Hasan's withdrawal, the caliphate easily fell to the Umayyad contender, who was speedily recognized as the new caliph in all provinces and by the majority of the Muslims, except the Shi'i and the Khawārij. Having skilfully seized power under the pretext of avenging 'Uthmān, Mu'awiya also succeeded in founding the Umayyad Caliphate that was destined to rule the Islamic empire on a dynastic basis for nearly a century (41–132/661–750). With these developments, Shi'ism entered into the
most difficult period of its early history, being severely persecuted by the Umayyads.

With Mu'awiya's final victory, the remnants of the non-Shi'i supporters of 'Ali and his family either defected to the victorious party, or else scattered. Consequently, eclectic Shi'ism of 'Ali's time was now reduced to the true Shi'is who continued as a small but zealous opposition party in Kufa. On the other hand, it was the expanding party of Mu'awiya that eventually came to represent the central body of the community, also called the 'assembly of the believers' (jama'a at al-mu'minin). By the early 'Abbasid times, the majority of the Muslims upholding the caliphates of the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids, became known as Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a (people of the sunna and of the community), or simply as the Sunnis. This designation was used not because the majority were more attached than others to the 'sunna of the Prophet', but because they claimed to be the adherents of correct Prophetic practice and as such, they stood opposed to those who deviated from the common ways and principles of the Jama'a.22

The acquiescent attitude of al-Hasan must have been a source of disappointment to many Shi'is in whose eyes his abdication from the caliphate did not invalidate his position as their imam. The Shi'is continued to regard him as their leader after 'Ali, while the 'Alids considered him the head of their family. However, now the spokesman for the Shi'a was not to be al-Hasan, who in accordance with his treaty with Mu'awiya, abstained from all non-personal activities, but rather Hujr b. 'Adi al-Kindi. This loyal 'Alid partisan became the moving spirit behind Shi'i sentiments in Kufa and never ceased to protest against the official cursing of 'Ali from the pulpit after the Friday prayers, a policy instituted by Mu'awiya. On a few occasions, the Shi'is from Kufa visited al-Hasan in Medina, the permanent domicile of the 'Alids, attempting in vain to persuade him to rise against Mu'awiya. The latter, who was ruling with an iron fist, had meanwhile taken various precautionary measures, including his own reorganization of the Kufan tribal groups, to prevent any serious Shi'i insurrection. On the whole, the Shi'i movement remained subdued during the period between al-Hasan's renouncement of caliphal authority and his early death in 49/669.

After al-Hasan, the Shi'is revived their aspirations for restoring the caliphate to the 'Alids, now headed by al-Hasan's younger and full-brother, al-Husayn b. 'Ali. They invited their new imam to rise against the Umayyads. However al-Husayn made it known that, in observance of his
brother’s abdication agreement, he would not respond to such summons so long as Mu‘awiya was still alive. Yet the most zealous Shi‘is could no longer remain inactive. In 51/671, soon after Mu‘awiya’s adopted brother Ziyād b. Abihi had become the governor of both Kūfa and Baṣra, Hujr and a handful of die-hard Shi‘is attempted to instigate a revolt in Kūfa. The revolt never actually materialized as the Shi‘is were not yet sufficiently numerous and organized, and as the Kūfan tribal support they had relied on was not forthcoming. Hujr and his associates were arrested, and they chose to sacrifice their lives rather than denounce ‘Ali and be pardoned. The tragedy of Hujr in effect initiated the Shi‘i martyrology and became the prelude to that of the principal Shi‘i martyr al-Ḥusayn, called Sayyid al-Shuhada’, or Lord of the Martyrs.

Mu‘awiya died in 60/680, and according to his unprecedented testament for which he had previously obtained the consent of the notables of the empire, his son Yazīd succeeded to the caliphate. The Shi‘i leaders of Kūfa, such as Sulaymān b. ʿSurad al-Khuzā‘i, Ḥabīb b. Muẓāhir and Muslim b. ʿAwsaja, loyal partisans who had fought on ‘Ali’s side at the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffin, wrote to al-Ḥusayn inviting him to lead his Kūfan followers in wresting the caliphate from Yazīd. Similar invitations were sent out by other Kūfans, especially the Yamanīs, in the hope that al-Ḥusayn would organize a revolt against Umayyad rule and end the Syrian domination of ‘Irāq. Before making a decision, however, al-Ḥusayn, who had already refused to accord the bay’a to Yazīd and had withdrawn to Mecca, thought it prudent to assess the situation through his cousin Muslim b. ʿAqil. On his arrival in Kūfa, Muslim soon collected thousands of pledges of support, and, assured of the situation, advised al-Ḥusayn to assume the active leadership of the Shi‘is and their sympathizers in Kūfa. Finally, al-Ḥusayn decided to respond to the pressing summons.

Yazīd, on his part, having become weary of mounting Shi‘i sentiments, reacted swiftly. He appointed his strongman ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād, then governing Baṣra, to also take charge of Kūfa, with strict orders to crush the pro-Ḥusayn disturbances there. Ibn Ziyād’s severe retaliatory measures and punishments soon terrified the Kūfans, including the Yamanīs and other Shi‘i sympathizers. This is not surprising, since the Kūfans had time and again shown a characteristic lack of resolve. Thus abandoned by the Kūfans, and failing in his efforts to start an immediate uprising, Muslim was arrested and executed. Kūfa was once again brought under the full control of the Umayyads. But al-Ḥusayn had already embarked on the route to Kūfa.
On his fatal journey, al-Husayn was accompanied by a small group of relatives and companions. Before reaching their destination, they were intercepted in the plain of Karbalā', near Kūfa, by an Umayyad army of 4,000 men. It was there that, refusing one last time to yield to Yazid, al-Husayn and his company of some 72 men were brutally massacred on 10 Muḥarram 61/10 October 680. Only women and some children were spared. 'Ali b. al-Husayn, who was to receive the honorific title Zayn al-ʿAbidīn, being sick and confined to his tent, was one of the survivors. Amongst the 54 non-ʿAlid martyrs of Karbalā', there were only a few of the Kūfī Shiʿīs who had somehow managed to penetrate Ibn Ziyād's tight blockade of Kūfa to be with their imām in his hour of need. The Shiʿīs have particular reverence for these martyrs, notably the aged Muslim b. 'Awsaja, 'Ābis b. Abī Ḥabīb, Saʿīd b. 'Abd Allāh al-Hanāfī, and Ḥabīb b. Muẓāhir, who commanded the left flank of al-Husayn's company, the right one having been held by Zuhayr b. al-Qayn, a faithful companion. Thus concluded a legend of heroism, the most tragic episode in the early history of Shiʿism, and indeed, of Islam. This event is still commemorated devoutly in the Shiʿī world, by special ceremonies and a type of popular religious play (taʿziya).

The heroic martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson infused a new religious fervour in the Shiʿa. This event, solidly establishing the Shiʿī martyrology, was destined to play a significant role in the consolidation of the Shiʿī identity. In the immediate aftermath of Karbalā', the Shiʿīs and many other Kūfān who had so persistently invited al-Husayn into their midst, were deeply moved. A sense of repentance set in, and they felt the urge to avenge the murder of al-Husayn and to expiate their own failure to support him. Hence, these people called themselves the Tawwābūn or the Penitents. Towards the end of 61/680, they formally began to organize a movement, with an original membership of one-hundred die-hard Shiʿīs of Kūfa, none of whom was under sixty years of age. Old and devoted, these partisans were doubtless reacting on the basis of their conscience. The Tawwābūn did not openly proclaim any of the ʿAlīds as their imām. Sulaymān b. ʿṢurad, then in the forefront of all the Shiʿī activities in Kūfa, was selected as their leader; and for three years, while Yazīd was alive, the movement proceeded with extreme caution and secrecy.

With Yazīd's sudden death in 64/683, the Tawwābūn found it opportune to come into the open and expand their recruiting efforts. This was mainly because the unrest of Yazīd's rule had now erupted into outright civil war, the second one for Islam. Yazīd was succeeded by his sickly son,
Muʿāwiya II, and when the latter died some six months later, the aged Marwân b. al-Ḥakam (d. 65/685), the most prominent member of the ruling family, became the new caliph. This immediately led to a serious conflict between the two major rival tribes of Syria, Kalb and Qays, making it impossible for the Umayyads to maintain their control over ʿIrāq. Meanwhile, in the Ḥijāz,ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, who like al-Ḥusayn had refused to pay homage to Yazīd and had revolted, was now successfully claiming the caliphate for himself. In particular, he had gained general recognition by the ʿIrāqīs who were attempting to acquire their independence from Syria. They expelled Ibn Ziyād, the Umayyad governor of both Kūfa and Baṣra, who bore chief responsibility for the massacre at Karbalāʾ. In the prevailing chaos, the Tawwābūn managed to solicit pledges of support from some 16,000 persons, not all of whom were Shiʿīs. Sulaymān b. ʿSurad, contrary to the advice of some of his associates, decided to attack the Umayyad forces of Ibn Ziyād, who was then near the Syrian border in order to reconquer ʿIrāq for Marwân. The Tawwābūn congregated at Nukhayla, near Kūfa, in Rabiʿ II 65/November 684, as planned. But to their disappointment, only 4,000 men showed up. Regardless, they proceeded, and some two months later met Ibn Ziyād’s much larger army at ʿAyn al-Warda. By the end of the three-day battle, the majority of the Tawwābūn, including Sulaymān himself, fulfilled their pledge of sacrificing their lives for al-Ḥusayn.

The movement of the Tawwābūn, representing yet another defeat for the Shiʿa, marks the end of what may be regarded as the Arab and the unified phase of Shiʿism. During its first half-century, from 11/632 until around 65/684, Shiʿism maintained an almost exclusively Arab nature, with a limited appeal to non-Arab Muslims. The Tawwābūn who fell in battle were all Arabs, including a significant number of the early Kūfan qurraʾ who provided the leading personalities of the movement. These Arabs belonged mainly to various Yamanī tribes settled in Kūfa, although northern Arabs were also amongst them. In addition, during this initial phase, the Shiʿī movement consisted of a single party, without any internal division. These features were to change drastically with the next event in the history of Shiʿism, the revolt of al-Mukhtar.26

Al-Mukhtar b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafi was an ambitious and controversial man devoted to the cause of the ʿAlīds. He had participated in the premature insurrection of Muslim b. ʿAqil. He had then gone to the Hijāz, hoping in vain to collaborate with Ibn al-Zubayr. Subsequently, with the rising Shiʿī sentiments in Kūfa, he again appeared there in 64/684, a few
months after Yazid’s death. There, he strove to acquire a leading position among the Shi‘is, who lacked an active imām. However, he did not have much success while Sulaymān b. Șurad was still alive. The latter refused either to join forces with al-Mukhtār or to pay heed to his warnings against the futility of any poorly-organized entanglement with the Umayyads.

With the demise of the Tawwābūn, the long-awaited opportunity finally arose for al-Mukhtār’s own plans. He launched a vigorous campaign, again with a general call for avenging al-Ḥusayn’s murder, in the name of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, ‘Ali’s son by Khawla, a woman from the Banū Ḥanīfah. Al-Mukhtār tactfully claimed to be the trusted agent and representative, amin and wazīr, of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya. It is not clear to what extent such claims had the prior approval of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, who resided in Medina and remained a mere figurehead in the unfolding revolt. Of greater consequence was al-Mukhtār’s proclamation of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya as al-Mahdi, ‘the divinely guided one’, the saviour imām who would establish justice on earth and thus deliver the oppressed from tyranny (ẓulm). This title had already been applied in a purely honorific sense to ‘Ali, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, but its first use in a messianic sense now derived from al-Mukhtār. The concept of the Imām-Mahdi was a very important doctrinal innovation, and it proved particularly appealing to the non-Arab Muslims, the so-called mawālī who constituted the bulk of the oppressed masses of Kūfa.

Al-Mukhtār soon won the support of the Shi‘i majority, including the survivors of the Tawwābūn and the influential Ibrāhīm b. al-Ashtar (d. 72/691), the leader of the hard-core Shi‘is who, like his father, was a loyal ‘Alid partisan. Having collected a sufficient army, the open revolt took place in Rabī’ I 66/October 685. Without much bloodshed, al-Mukhtār speedily won control of Kūfa. The ashrāf who had not sided with the revolt surrendered and paid homage to al-Mukhtār, as did other Kūfans. Initially, al-Mukhtār adopted a conciliatory policy. He chose his officials primarily from amongst the Arab ruling class, while concern for the weak and the oppressed, which in fact meant the mawālī, constituted an important part of his socio-economic programme. For instance, he accorded the mawālī rights to booty and also entitled them to army stipends. But the Arab Muslims were reluctant to see their privileged positions curbed for the benefit of the mawālī whom they considered to be of an altogether inferior status. Consequently, the Arabs, especially the Kūfan tribal chiefs who were never inclined towards Shi‘ism in the first place, soon came to resent al-Mukhtār’s policies, and began to desert him.
Subjected to a triple assault by the Kūfān ashraf, the Umayyads, and eventually the Zubayrids, al-Mukhtār’s victory was to be short-lived.

The Syrian forces, now in the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65–86/685–705), the most celebrated member of the Umayyad dynasty, were once again directed against ‘Irāq towards the end of 66/685. But Ibrāhim b. al-Ashtar, leading al-Mukhtār’s army, succeeded in defeating them in a fierce battle in Muharram 67/August 686, in which their commander, the famous Ibn Ziyād, was slain. In the meantime, the Kūfān ashraf had risen against al-Mukhtār; they, too, were easily defeated by Ibn al-Ashtar. After this episode, al-Mukhtār gave free rein to the hitherto restrained Shi’is to take their revenge on the ashraf. Most of those guilty for the tragedy of al-Ḥusayn, including Shamir b. Dhi’l-Jawshan and ‘Umar b. Sa’d, were routed out and beheaded. Many of the ashraf, however, managed to flee to Başra, seeking protection from its governor, Muḥammad, the younger brother of the Meccan anti-caliph. With these developments, many of the Kūfān Arabs who until then had supported al-Mukhtār, defected to the side of the ashraf. The tribal leaders, on their part, were now openly aligning themselves with Ibn al-Zubayr in order to re-establish their position vis-à-vis al-Mukhtār and the Syrians. Henceforth, al-Mukhtār was forced to rely almost completely on the mawāli, who called themselves the Shi’at al-Mahdi.

The ashraf finally induced Muḥammad to fight against the Kūfān Shi’is. The Başran forces, in the company of the Kūfān tribal leaders, defeated al-Mukhtār’s army in two encounters, the second one taking place in Jumādā I 67/December 686 in which many mawāli were killed. Al-Mukhtār retreated to the citadel of Kūfā where he and the remnants of his mawāli soldiers were besieged by Muḥammad’s troops for about four months. Finally, al-Mukhtār and a group of his most devoted supporters, refusing to surrender unconditionally, were killed whilst attempting a sortie, in Ramaḍān 67/April 687. Kūfā was brought under the control of Ibn al-Zubayr to the satisfaction of the ashraf who took their own revenge on the mawāli.

With al-Mukhtār out of the way, the two claimants to the caliphate, ‘Abd al-Malik and Ibn al-Zubayr, found themselves in direct confrontation. ‘Abd al-Malik’s most trusted lieutenant, al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūṣuf, after defeating Muḥammad in 72/691, conquered Mecca and killed Ibn al-Zubayr in battle in 73/692. The collapse of the Zubayrid anti-caliphate also ended the second civil war, and unity was again restored to the Islamic state. In 75/694, al-Ḥajjāj became the governor of ‘Irāq and ruled that province and
its eastern dependencies with an iron fist for the next twenty years, using Syrian troops when necessary. He built the fortified garrison town of Wāṣīṭ, midway between Kūfa and Bāṣra, in 83/702, as the new provincial seat of government where he stationed his loyal Syrian militia. Al-Ḥajjāj’s efforts brought peace and economic prosperity to ʿIrāq and also resulted in new Islamic conquests in Transoxiana and the Indus valley, during the caliphate of ʿAbd al-Malik’s son and successor al-Walid (86–96/705–715), who gave still greater authority to this most able Umayyad governor. Al-Ḥajjāj died in 95/714, almost a year before al-Walīd’s own death. This brief digression explains why there were no Shiʿī revolts in Kūfa during al-Ḥajjāj’s long rule. Indeed, with the solid control of the Umayyads re-established in ʿIrāq in 72/691, the Shiʿis, who now lacked effective leaders, were deprived of any opportunity for open activity for about the next fifty years. Nevertheless, Shiʿī ideas and tendencies continued to take shape, especially amongst the mawālī. It is, therefore, useful to take a closer look at the mawālī and their grievances, which provided the necessary motivation for their effective participation in the Shiʿī movement.

The mawālī (singular, mawlā) essentially comprised of the non-Arab Muslims who, in early Islam, represented an important intermediary class between the Arab Muslims and the non-Muslim subjects of the empire.27 By the third Islamic century, however, with their greater integration within the Islamic society under the ʿAbbāsids, the mawālī could no longer be identified as a distinct social class, and consequently the term lost its significance and disappeared.

In the wake of the Islamic conquests, a need had been felt for a term to describe the new converts from amongst the Persian, Aramaean, Berber and other non-Arab natives of the conquered lands. For this purpose, the old term mawlā, which was originally used in Arab society in reference to certain types of kinship as well as relationship by covenant particularly between individuals and tribes, was adopted. In its new sense, mawlā meant a Muslim of non-Arab origin attached as client to an Arab tribe; because, non-Arabs on embracing Islam were expected to become affiliated as clients to Arab tribes. This requirement was indicative of the fact that the tribal pattern characterizing the pre-Islamic Arab society had continued to shape the social structure of the Islamic state. According to this type of clientage, or wala’, a special relationship would be established between the protected client, often a liberated prisoner of war or slave, and his protector, normally his former patron or an influential Arab.
The mawālī represented different cultures and religious traditions. In 'Irāq, they were comprised mainly of Aramaeans, though Persians and other non-Arabs representing the older strata of the province's population were also amongst them. Upon the destruction of the Sāsānid empire, Aramaeans and Persians had flocked in large numbers to the 'Irāqi garrison towns, as these were the most rapidly growing administrative, economic and urban centres of the new Islamic empire. Kūfa in particular, as the foremost of such centres in the east, was the recipient of the bulk of these uprooted emigrants who came from different socio-economic backgrounds and, in due course, formed various mawālī categories. First, there were those craftsmen, tradesmen, shopkeepers and other skilled persons, who had swarmed into the prospering new towns to offer their services to the Arab garrisons. These mawālī, probably the largest mawālī category in Kūfa, were subject to a special type of clientage whereby they were almost independent members of the tribes with which they were associated. Second, there were the freed slaves, the original non-Arab mawālī, who had been brought to the garrison towns in successive waves as prisoners of war and as part of the Arabs' spoils. They had acquired their freedom upon conversion to Islam, but as mawālī they continued to be affiliated to their former patrons. In Kūfa, these freed slaves constituted the second largest mawālī category. In the third largest category were those petty landowners and cultivators who, with the collapse of the Sāsānid feudal system and the destruction of their villages by the invading Arabs, had found the cultivation of their lands no longer economical. The problems of these rural people, including those engaged in the villages and estates around Kūfa, were further aggravated due to the high level of the land tax, or kharāj. Consequently, an increasing number of them were continuously obliged to abandon the fields in search of alternative employment in the garrison towns. Finally, there was the numerically insignificant group of Persian mawālī who claimed noble extraction and were permitted to share some of the privileges reserved for the Arab ruling class.

In line with the spread of Islamization, the total number of the mawālī increased very rapidly. In fact, within a few decades, they came to outnumber the Arab Muslims. As Muslims, the mawālī expected the same rights and privileges as their Arab co-religionists. After all, the Prophet himself had declared the equality of all believers before God, despite possible differences stemming from descent, race and tribal affiliation. But the Islamic teaching of equality was not conceded by the Arab rulers under
The Umayyads, although in the earliest years of Islam and prior to 'Umar's caliphate, when the mawāli were still a minority group, the precepts of Islam had been observed more closely.

In all its categories, a mawālā had come to represent a socially and racially inferior status, a second-class citizen as compared to an Arab Muslim. The mawāli were, however, set apart from the non-Muslim subjects of the empire who were accorded an even more inferior status. These so-called people of protection, ahl al-dhimma or simply dhimmīs, were the followers of certain recognized religions, notably Judaism, Christianity and, later, Zoroastrianism. They received the protection (dhimma) of the Muslim state in return for the payment of a distinguishing tribute called jizya, which later developed into a precise poll-tax. A dhimmī, who was subject to certain social restrictions as well, would acquire mawālā status by converting to Islam and becoming duly attached to an Arab tribe. The Arabs discriminated, in various ways, especially economically, against the mawāli. The mawāli were often deprived of any share of the booty accruing in wars to the tribes with which they were associated; nor were they entitled to the customary army stipends. More significantly, the taxes paid by the new converts were often similar to the jizya and kharāj, required of the non-Muslim subjects. This provided perhaps the most important single cause of their discontent, since many of them had converted precisely in order to be less heavily taxed.

As a large and underprivileged social class concentrated in the urban milieus, and aspiring for a state and society which would be more sensitive to the teachings of Islam, the mawāli provided a valuable recruiting ground for any movement opposed to the exclusively Arab order under the Umayyads. They did, in fact, participate in the Khārijī revolts and some 100,000 of them joined Ibn al-Ash’ath’s unsuccessful rebellion against al-Ḥajjāj in 82/701. But above all, they were to be involved in the more important Shi’i opposition centred in Kūfa, not only because Shi’ism proved to have a greater appeal to the oppressed masses but also because the backgrounds of some mawāli made them more inclined towards the Shi’i ideal of leadership. For instance, the Persian mawāli of southern ‘Irāq had had a religio-political tradition of divine kingship and hereditary leadership almost similar to that of the Yamanis. Consequently, they were readily responsive to the summons of the Shi’a and to their promise to overthrow the impious Umayyads and install the Ahl al-Bayt to the caliphate, so as to fulfil the egalitarian teachings of Islam.29

As noted previously, al-Mukhtār was the first person who identified the
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growing political importance of the mawāli and their potential receptivity to the cause of the Shi'a. By attempting to remove their grievances, and through the appeal of the idea of the Mahdī, he easily succeeded in mobilizing them in his revolt. But more significantly, al-Mukhtar had now drawn these discontented non-Arabs into the Shi'i movement, whereby Shi'ism acquired a much broader base of social support. As a result of this development, representing a vital turning point in the history of Shi'ism, the superficially Islamized mawāli brought many ideas into Shi'i Islam from their old Babylonian, Judaeo-Christian, and Irano-Zoroastrian backgrounds, including those derived from the Iranian religious heresies such as Manichaeism and Mazdakism, ideas foreign to early Islam. In terms of their numbers, ideas and revolutionary zeal, the mawāli played a major role in the transformation of Shi'iism from an Arab party of limited membership and doctrinal basis into an active sectarian movement.

For the sixty-odd years intervening between the revolt of al-Mukhtar and the 'Abbāsid revolution, Shi'ism did not represent a unified and coherent movement. During this period, different Shi'i groups co-existed, each having its own imām, and developing its own doctrines, while individuals moved freely and frequently between them. Furthermore, the Shi'i Imāms now came not only from amongst the 'Alids who had become quite numerous by this time, but also from other branches of the Prophet's clan of Hāshim. There were also those Shi'i leaders who, like al-Mukhtar, claimed to have derived their authority from various imāms. Thus, Shi'ism of this period, by contrast to the previous half a century, did not accord general recognition to any single succession of imāms, from which various dissident groups would diverge in favour of alternative claimants.

An important factor responsible for the internal division of the Shi'a revolved around differences of opinion on the composition of the Ahl al-Bayt. As noted, the Shi'a from the beginning believed in the sanctity of the Prophet's family and the special hereditary attributes of its members. These very attributes distinguished the Shi'i Imām from the Ahl al-Bayt, and qualified him to lead the Muslims under divine guidance along the right path. But in this formative period, though the imāms who succeeded al-Ḥusayn continued to come chiefly from amongst the 'Alids, the Prophet's family was still defined more broadly in its old tribal sense. It covered the various branches of the Banū Hāshim, the leading Quraysh clan, regardless of direct descent from the Prophet Muḥammad himself.
The Ahl al-Bayt, then, included the progeny of Muhammad through Fatima and Ali as well as those of his two paternal uncles; not only the Ṭalibids, the descendants of Abu Ṭalib (d. ca. 619) through his sons Ali and Ja'far (d. 8/629), but even the 'Abbāsids, the descendants of al-'Abbās (d. ca. 32/653) who had embraced Islam only in 8/630. For analogous reasons, 'Ali's family was the centre of much diversity in allegiance, with Shi'is rallying to the side of all its three major branches: the Hanafids, the Husaynids, and the Hasanids. In other words, the Fāṭimid and non-Fāṭimid 'Alids as well as many non-'Alid Hāshimids, all descendants of the Prophet's paternal grandfather Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim, apparently qualified for being members of the Ahl al-Bayt.

It was later, after the accession of the 'Abbāsids, that the Shi'is came to define the Ahl al-Bayt more restrictively to include only the descendants of the Prophet through Fatima, known as the Fāṭimid (covering both the Hasanids and the Husaynids); while the bulk of the non-Zaydi Shi'is had come to acknowledge chiefly the Husaynid Fāṭimids. The latter definition was the one adopted by the Twelver and Ismā'ili Shi'is. The lack of consensus on the composition of the Prophet's family had not created any disagreements amongst the Shi'is until al-Ḥusayn's death, whilst the 'Alids had readily accepted al-Hasan and al-Ḥusayn as the heads of their family after 'Ali. But now, prevailing circumstances led to diversity.

In this confusing setting, the development of Shi'ism took place in terms of two main branches or trends. First, and until the accession of the 'Abbāsids the more predominant of the two, there was a radical branch comprised of several inter-related groups which, beginning with al-Mukhtar's movement, recognized the Hanafids, and later other Hāshimids (notably the 'Abbāsids) deriving their claims from Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya's son, as their imāms. This trend, designated by Lewis also as mawla Shi'ism, drew mainly on the support of the mawali in southern 'Irāq and elsewhere, who upheld extremist doctrines and revolutionary objectives, though many Arabs were also amongst them, often in leading positions. There was, secondly, a moderate branch which remained essentially removed from any anti-regime activity. This branch, later known as the Imāmiyya, followed a Husaynid line of imāms. Eventually, both trends converged, though each one maintained its own identity, in the latter part of the imamate of the Husaynid Ja'far al-Ṣadiq who succeeded in consolidating Shi'ism to a large extent. However, the radical trend was once again retrieved mainly by the proto-Ismā'ili Imāmis, while the moderate trend ultimately crystallized into Twelver Shi'ism, represen-
ting the majority body of the Shi'a. A few words are required now regarding the circumstances under which these two trends originated.

After Karbalâ’, the young Zayn al-‘Âbidin, al-Âhusayn’s only surviving son and the progenitor of all the Husaynids, retired to Medina and adopted a quiescent attitude towards the Umayyads and the Zubayrid anti-caliphate, and later towards al-Mukhtâr’s movement and the Hanafis. He kept aloof from all political activity, a policy which was to be maintained and in fact justified doctrinally by his successors in the moderate branch. The later Shi‘î supporters of the Husaynîd line claimed that al-Âhusayn had personally designated Zayn al-Âbidin as his successor. But the fact remains that after al-Âhusayn’s death, Zayn al-Âbidin did not acquire any following. On the other hand, al-Mukhtâr’s campaign for Ibn al-Hanafiyya as the Mahdi, had an unprecedented popular appeal among the Kufan masses. As a result, the overwhelming majority of the Shi‘îs, both Arabs and mawâli, joined his active movement and recognized the imamate of Ibn al-Hanafiyya. It should also be recalled that Ibn al-Hanafiyya now enjoyed a particular position of honour and seniority amongst the ‘Alids. Some Islamists have even argued that as ‘Ali’s eldest surviving son and the eldest ‘Alid, being some twenty years older than his nephew Zayn al-Âbidin, Ibn al-Hanafiyya was considered as the shaykh or head of the ‘Alid family; a position which was never publicly challenged by Zayn al-Âbidin.33 With these beginnings, the moderate trend came to be eclipsed for some time by the radical branch of Shi‘ism, to which we shall now turn.

The movement started by al-Mukhtâr survived the suppression of his rule in Kufa. It rapidly spread under its own mawla dynamism, as witnessed by a state founded in Nişibin by some of al-Mukhtâr’s adherents shortly after his death, and which collapsed in 71/690 under the attacks of the Umayyad forces. The followers of al-Mukhtâr, upholding the imamate of Ibn al-Hanafiyya, were initially called the Mukhtariyya. But they were soon more commonly referred to as the Kaysâniyya. The origin of this designation, like the names of some other Shi‘î groups, can be traced to the heresiographical works written about the internal divisions and the sects of Islam; notably those by al-Ash‘ari (d. 324/935–936), al-Malaṭî (d. 377/987), al-Baghdâdi (d. 429/1037), and Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064), who were devout Sunnîs; al-Shahrastâni (d. 548/1153), and the earliest sources on Shi‘î sub-sects produced by Shi‘î authors al-Nawbakhtî (d. between 300 and 310/912–922) and al-Qummi (d. 301/913–914).34 At any rate, the name Kaysâniyya seems to have been based either on the
kunya of al-Mukhtar himself or, more probably, on the highly controversial figure of Abū 'Amra Kaysān, a prominent mawlā and chief of al-Mukhtar's personal guard. The latter etymology emphasizes the role of the mawāli in the movement.

The Kaysānis were left without active leadership and organization after al-Mukhtar, while Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya maintained some contacts with them and, though submitting to the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik in 73/692, did not openly dissociate himself from the movement. But when Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya died in 81/700, the Kaysāniyya split into at least three distinct groups, commonly designated as sects (singular, firqa) by the heresiographers who use the term indiscriminately for an independent group, a subgroup, a school of thought, or even a minor doctrinal position.

One group, refusing to acknowledge Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya's death, believed he was concealed (ghā'ib) in the Raḍwān mountains near Medina, whence he would eventually emerge as the Mahdī to fill the earth with justice and equity, as it had formerly been filled with injustice and oppression. These partisans were called the Karibiyya or Kuraybiyya, after their leader Abu Karib (Kurayb) al-Ḍarīr. Initially, the renowned extremist Ḥamza b. 'Umāra al-Barbarī also belonged to this group, and was a disciple of Abu Karib. Later, while asserting divinity for Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya and prophethood for himself, Ḥamza separated and acquired some supporters in Medina and Kūfa. Among the other original adherents of the Karibiyya, the heresiographers also mention Bayān b. Samān al-Tamīmī, the controversial extremist Shīʿi who later headed a group of his own in Kūfa. The views of the Karibiyya have been vividly preserved in the poetry of Kuthayyir (d. 105/723), and al-Sayyid al-Himyārī (d. 173/789) who subsequently turned to the Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. A second group, apparently under the leadership of a certain Ḥayyān al-Sarrāj, while affirming Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya's death, maintained that he and his partisans would return to life in time, when he would establish justice on earth.

In these early Kaysāni beliefs, circulated mainly amongst the mawāli, we have the first Shīʿi statements of the eschatological doctrines of ghayba, the absence or occultation of an imām whose life has been miraculously prolonged and who is due to reappear as the Mahdī; and raj'a, the return of a messianic personality from the dead, or from occultation, sometime before the Day of Resurrection (qiyāma). The closely related concept of the Mahdi had now also acquired, for the first time, an eschatological meaning, with the implication that no further imāms would succeed the Mahdi during his period of ghayba. It is not clear why the title al-Mahdī,
to which the participle 'expected' (al-muntazar) was sometimes attached, came to be adopted for the messianic deliverer in Islam. As the term does not occur in the Qur'an, the origin of this eschatological idea has been the subject of varied explanations. Some modern scholars, citing the ultimate Zoroastrian saviour (Saoshyant) who is destined to carry out what in Zoroastrian eschatology is called the final transfiguration or renovation of the world (frashkart), ascribe its origins to Iranian sources. Still others have attributed its roots to the Judaeo-Christian messianic teachings. Regardless, henceforth the idea of a future deliverer who would eventually appear before the end of time, became a doctrinal feature common to most Muslim groups. This included the early Ismā'īlīs and the Ithnā'asharīs who are still awaiting the parousia of their twelfth imām.

The majority of Ibn al-Hanafiyya's followers, however, accepting his death, now recognized the imāmate of his eldest son Abū Ḥāshim 'Abd Allāh, whom they believed to have been personally designated by Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya as his successor. This probably marks the first instance of the important Shi'i principle of nassū imāmate, whereby an imām is appointed through the explicit designation (nass) of a preceding imām. Abū Ḥāshim, who was slightly younger than his cousin Zayn al-‘Abidin, thus became the imām of the Shi'i majority. He was also regarded as the head of the Ḥanafīs, though he did not exert undisputed authority over the entire ‘Alid family who could no longer agree on the selection of a shaykh. There exist no details on the nature of the doctrines held by Abū Ḥāshim and his partisans, known as the Ḥāshimiyya. All that may be inferred is that there was continuity from al-Mukhtār's movement to the Ḥāshimiyya. It is also known that from their base in Kūfa, the Ḥāshimiyya managed to recruit adherents in other provinces, especially among the mawāli in Khurāsān.

Abū Ḥāshim died in 98/716, in the village of Ḥumayma on the border separating Palestine and Arabia, on his return from a visit to the court of al-Walid's brother and successor Sulaymān (96–99/715–717). On Abū Ḥāshim's death, his partisans split into four main groups. One group, adhering to the belief that the then-approaching second Islamic century would be a turning point in the realization of the Shi'i messianic expectations, professed that Abū Ḥāshim remained alive and concealed, and would soon reappear as the Mahdi. Bayān b. Sam'an now joined this group and acquired a leading position among them. He taught many extremist ideas and also speculated on the nature of God in crudely anthropomorphic terms, maintaining that God is a man of light. His followers, later forming a group known as the Bayānīyya, at first affirmed
that Abū Ḥāshim would emerge as the Mahdi. Subsequently, they asserted that Abū Ḥāshim had in fact conferred prophethood on Bayān on behalf of God, while some of them regarded him as an imām. Indeed, the Bayāniyya, as a separate group, came to hold a multitude of extremist views, such as ascribing prophethood to the imāms on the basis of an indwelling divine light transmitted through them. A second group maintained that Abū Ḥāshim, who left no male progeny, had appointed his younger brother ʿAlī as his successor. They recognized this Ḥanafid ʿAlī as their new imām, after whose death they traced the imāmate through his son al-Ḥasan and then the latter’s son and grandson, ʿAlī and al-Ḥasan respectively. This group, called the ‘pure Kaysāniyya’ by al-Nawbakhti, affirmed that the imāmate belonged exclusively to the descendants of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, from amongst whom the Mahdi would eventually arise. When the last-mentioned al-Ḥasan died without leaving any sons some members of this group separated, claiming that Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya himself would return as their awaited Mahdi.

The bulk of the Ḥāshimiyya, however, recognized Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās, the great-grandson of the Prophet’s uncle, as their imām after Abū Ḥāshim. They held that Abū Ḥāshim, shortly before dying in Ḥumayma, then the residence of the ʿAbbāsid, had bequeathed his rights to the imāmate to this ʿAbbāsid. But as he was a minor at the time, the testament had been entrusted to his father ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 118/736), the head of the ʿAbbāsid family in whose house Abī Ḥāshim had died, apparently of food poisoning. On the death of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī in 125/743, his partisans accepted the imāmate of his son Ibrāhim, the brother of the first two ʿAbbāsid caliphs. This party, supported by the majority of the extremist Shīʿis until the accession of the ʿAbbāsids, continued to be known as the Ḥāshimiyya and later also as the Rāwandiyya, after an obscure sectarian leader, ʿAbd Allāh al-Rāwandi.

The matter of Abū Ḥāshim’s testament in favour of the ʿAbbāsid Muḥammad b. ʿAlī has been the subject of much controversy throughout the centuries. Some scholars believe that the testament in question was fabricated by the ʿAbbāsids themselves, so as to win the support of the Shīʿis who normally favoured the ʿAlid candidates; they have also argued that Abū Ḥāshim may actually have been poisoned by the ʿAbbāsids, rather than on the alleged orders of the Umayyad caliph Sulaymān. On the other hand, certain modern Islamists, notably Cahen and Lewis, have rightly stated that the determination of the authenticity of this testament, even if it were possible, is not a question of vital importance. The
undisputed fact remains that the majority of Abū Hāshim’s partisans did transfer their allegiance to Muḥammad b. 'Ali; and more significantly, with this transference the 'Abbāsids inherited the party and the propaganda organization of the Hāshimiyya. In sum, it was the utilization of the testament rather than its authenticity that is of historical relevance, since it was the party of the Hāshimiyya which became the main instrument of the 'Abbāsid movement, and eventually of the overthrow of the Umayyads.

Finally, there was another distinct group, the special partisans of 'Abd Allāh b. Muʿāwiya, the great-grandson of Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib, ‘Ali’s brother. Jaʿfar, known as al-Ṭayyār and Dhuʾl-Janāḥayn, and his son ‘Abd Allāh and grandson Muʿāwiya were highly respected figures for the Shiʿis. No special partisans, however, were attached to any of these individuals belonging to the Jaʿfarid branch of the Ṭalibid family. But on the death of Abū Hāshim, a certain faction of the Hāshimiyya maintained that the deceased imām had designated his distant cousin Ibn Muʿāwiya as his successor and, since the latter was a minor, the testament had been consigned to a certain Sāliḥ b. Mudrik. This group became known as the Ḥarbiyya or Ḥārithiyya, after a leader whose name is variously mentioned as ‘Abd Allāh (b. ‘Amr) b. al-Ḥarb (or al-Ḥarīth) al-Kindī. Ibn Ḥarb, who had previously founded a group of his own and taught antinomianism, had now joined Ibn Muʿāwiya and later expressed many extremist ideas about him. The heresiographers ascribe a prominent role to this somewhat enigmatic personality for introducing some key doctrines, including metempsychosis and a cyclical history of eras (adwār) and aeons (akwār), into the radical trend of Shiʿism. The Ḥarbiyya and the pro-'Abbāsid Hāshimiyya disputed over Abū Hāshim’s testament, each party claiming its own candidate to be the true beneficiary of the bequest. The disputing parties finally agreed to submit the matter to the arbitration of one of their trusted leaders, Abū Riyāh. The latter decided in favour of the 'Abbāsids, and thereupon, the bulk of Ibn Muʿāwiya’s supporters seceded and joined the 'Abbāsid party, the seceders becoming known as the Riyāhiyya. Those who continued to recognize the imāmate of Ibn Muʿāwiya from amongst the former Ḥarbiyya, subsequently became known as the Janāḥiyya.⁴⁹

These, then, were the main groups in the extremist branch of Shiʿism evolving out of al-Mukhtār’s movement. By the end of the Umayyad period, some of these groups comprising the majority of the radical Shiʿis had already fallen captive to the successful 'Abbāsid movement, while others were rapidly disintegrating as separate bodies. In the aftermath of
the 'Abbāsid revolution in southern 'Irāq the remnants of the groups that had branched out of the Kaysāniyya came to be absorbed by the various Shi'i sects formed after the imāmate of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. In Persia and Transoxiana on the other hand, such survivors, especially from amongst the Ḥarbiyya-Janāḥiyya, gradually merged into various syncretic sects, often generically termed the Khurramiyya or Khurramdīniyya.\(^5^0\) The radical Shi'i of the Umayyad period, however, had made a lasting contribution to the development of Shi'i thought.

It was due to their free religious speculations that many of the early radical Shi'i leaders and groups, such as the Bayāniyya and the Ḥarbiyya, retrospectively came to be termed as the so-called Ghāliya or Ghulāt (singular, ghālī, exaggerator).\(^5^1\) This was a general term of disapproval, probably coined by some early Shi'i authors and adopted by the heresiographers, in reference to those Shi'i accused of exaggeration (ghuluww) in religion and in respect to the imāms and other Shi'i personalities. The criteria of ghuluww were determined by the Shi'i themselves, since the Sunnis remained basically uninterested in the divergencies within Shi'ism. Furthermore, these criteria changed in time. But practically all the early speculative Shi'i whose doctrinal innovations (singular, bid'a) came to be rejected by the Twelver or the Imāmī Shi'i of the end of the 3rd/9th century and thereafter qualified for the designation; although some of the ideas of these Ghulāt, who were to be found also in the moderate branch of Shi'ism, had by that time become accepted as proper Shi'i tenets. Accordingly, the earliest Shi'i heresiographers who also belonged to the Imāmī sect categorized as ghuluww much of the strictly religious speculations of the radical Shi'i of this formative period. This applied in particular to the first half of the second Islamic century. The Sunni heresiographers, with their general hostility towards the Shi'a, used the Shi'i criteria of ghuluww even more harshly, often treating the Ghulāt as unbelievers and excluding them from the Muslim community.

The common feature of the earliest ideas propagated by the Ghulāt was an exaggerated reverence towards the imāms on whom superhuman attributes were conferred. The heresiographers usually trace the origins of the Shi'i Ghulāt to a certain 'Abd Allāh b. Saba' whose object of exaltation was 'Ali.\(^5^2\) The basic ghuluww of this highly controversial figure, and his followers known as the Saba'iyya, seems to have consisted of the denial of 'Ali's death and the belief that he would remain alive until he had driven out his enemies.\(^5^3\) Ibn Saba' is also alleged to have preached 'Ali's divinity, which would qualify him more readily as a ghālī. Modern scholarship,
however, has dismissed this allegation as a later attribution. In any event, Ibn Saba' was banished to Madā‘in on 'Ali's orders, probably for his public condemnation of the first two caliphs. Subsequently, he and some of his followers are said to have been burned to death. The survivors of the Saba'iyya later joined al-Mukhtār's movement in Kūfa, which may explain why in some sources the Mukhtāriyya are sometimes identified with the Saba'iyya.

In the opening decades of the second Islamic century, following Abū Hāshim's death, the Shi‘is became still further divided in their allegiance, as pretenders to the imāmate had become quite numerous. Under such circumstances, when the identity of the rightful imām was a disputed matter, it became necessary for each of the relatively closed Shi‘i groups to seek additional justification, other than just 'Alid or even Hāshimid descent, to legitimize their imāms. Some adhered to the principle of naṣṣ imāmate which proved ineffective during this period, when several candidates claimed to be the recipients of the naṣṣ of the same imām, with similar claims generating in respect to the heritage of other imāms. Consequently, the more radical Shi‘is, especially the Ghulāt theorists who had already established the tradition of conferring superhuman qualities on their imāms, began to think even more freely about the person and authority of the imām. Simultaneously, they found themselves speculating on wider issues of religious importance, such as the nature of God, the soul and afterlife. The speculations of the Ghulāt soon brought about many more doctrinal innovations. As a result, the earlier eschatological doctrines of ghayba, raj‘a, and Mahdism, which in any case were to become accepted Shi‘i views, in themselves no longer represented ghuluww. Thus the Ghulāt became delineated from other Shi‘is on the basis of more pronounced divergencies, the accounts of which are related with much variation and confusion by the heresiographers. Here, we can only take note of some of the more important of these ideas attributed to the Ghulāt of the first half of the second Islamic century, which is the period of our concentration.

The Ghulāt speculated on the nature of God, often with strong tendencies towards anthropomorphism (tashbīh) inspired by certain Qur‘ānic passages. Several of them, notably al-Mughīra b. Sa‘īd and Abū Maṣūr al-‘Ijlī, are particularly known for their descriptions of God in terms of human features. More commonly, many of the Ghulāt maintained that Allāh, in His essence (dhat), is the divine spirit or light, which may be manifested in diverse forms and creatures. Consequently, they
believed in the infusion or incarnation (*hulul* of the divine essence in the human body, especially in the body of the imāms. They also allowed for *bada‘*, or change in God’s will; a doctrine first expounded by al-Mukhtār to rationalize the failures of his predictions.

The Ghulāt were equally interested in thinking about divination and the various types of divine inspiration. Accordingly, they revived the notion of prophecy (*nubuwwa*) and conceived of the recurrent possibility that God may continue to speak to man through other intermediaries and messengers after the Prophet Muḥammad. Therefore, they often ascribed a prophetic authority to their imāms, though one secondary to that of Muḥammad’s and without expecting a new divine revelation replacing the message of Islam. Indeed, the imām above all others, was the focus of much of these speculations, though he himself did not directly encourage them. According to a multitude of extremist ideas, expressed to legitimize the imām’s authority, he was thought to have a special relation to God. While some believed in the *hulūl* of the divine spirit in his person, others went so far as to deify him, perhaps as a lesser god on earth. More frequently, the Ghulāt, if not attributing a prophetic authority to the imām, felt that he received at least some form of divine guidance and protection. As a result, the imām was thought to be innately endowed with some divinely bestowed attributes, such as sinlessness and infallibility (*‘isma*).

These notions provided a perspective for the speculations about the soul and its relation to the body, death and afterlife, as well as the status of the true believer and the Day of Judgement. Many of the Ghulāt thought of the soul in terms of the doctrine of metempsychosis or transmigration (*tanāsukh*), namely the passing of the soul (rūḥ or nafs) from one body to another, presupposing the belief in the independent existence of the soul from the body. Some further maintained that this process of the transmigration of souls would take place in cycles, perhaps indefinitely; each cycle (*dawr*) consisting of a specific number of thousands of years. Due to these new ideas, for many the doctrine of raj‘a, the return from the dead in the same body, was now replaced by that of *tanāsukh*, the reincarnation of the soul in a different human body or in a different creature. The Ghulāt also conceived of the spirit of one imām transmigrating into the body of his successor. This belief provided an important justification for legitimizing a candidate’s imāmate, while simultaneously making it unnecessary to await the emergence (*zuhūr*) of an Imām–Mahdī.

By ascribing an exclusive role to the soul, which was capable of
transmigration, some of the Ghulat advocated the eternity of life, or rather the successive lives of a person. As a corollary, they did not believe in corporeal death, or afterlife, and denied the resurrection of the dead at the end of time. For similar reasons, they refuted the existence of Paradise, Hell, and the Day of Judgement, in their conventional sense. Instead, by emphasizing the idea of an immortal soul, they believed in a purely spiritual resurrection in this world, whereby reward and punishment would fall on the soul. According to one's goodness or evil then, his soul would be reincarnated into the bodies of pious persons, or lower and sub-human creatures (maskh). The main criterion by which the piety or sinfulness of a person was judged related essentially to his recognition or ignorance of the rightful imam.

In such a perspective, when the ma'rifat or knowledge of the imam was held to be the most essential religious obligation of the true believer, the role of the developing Shari'a became less important, especially for the Ghulat who were excessively concerned with loyalty to the Shi'i cause. These fervent Shi'is seem to have regarded the details and the ritual prescriptions of the sacred law of Islam, such as prayer, fasting and pilgrimage, as not binding on those who knew and were devoted to the true imam. They were equally cited for dispensing with the prohibitions of law and morality. Consequently, the Ghulat were often accused of advocating ibâha or antinomianism, and of endorsing libertinism. These and many similar charges, however, may well reflect the inferences and hostilities of the heresiographers, both the Sunni and the Twelver ones. No doubt such accusations were encouraged by the fact that the early Ghulat did venerate their imams as almost superhuman beings who alone were destined by divine ordinance to lead the believers. It was during this period of oppressive Umayyad rule that the radical Shi'is, out of their exaltation of the 'Alids, began to curse not only 'Uthmân and other Umayyads, but also Abû Bakr and 'Umar, as usurpers of 'Ali's rights. This public condemnation of the Companions (sabb al-Săhâba), especially of the first two caliphs, which probably originated with Ibn Saba' but in due time was to be adopted by almost all Shi'i groups, has always remained the chief offence of Shi'ism in the eyes of Sunni Muslims.

Certain points should be singled out with respect to the early Ghulat and their heritage. Practically no Shi'i group of this formative period, especially in the first half of the second Islamic century, remained completely free of some Ghulat thinkers, although the radical branch attracted the greatest number. Initially, many of the Ghulat leaders were Arabs and it is
possible that some of their ideas had pre-Islamic Arab origins; the expectation that a dead hero might return to life being one probable instance. A few of their notions may even be traced to Islamic teachings and the Qur'ān. However, the Ghulāt soon arose also from amongst the mawāli, who then comprised the bulk of the radical Shi‘īs. The non-Arab Ghulāt, along with the mawāli in general, brought with them a multitude of ideas from their varied backgrounds. The speculations on the soul and the nature of its reward and punishment probably originated from Manichaeism which, in turn, might have derived them from earlier sources. Another point is that the Ghulāt initially devoted their efforts solely to religious speculations. Subsequently, however, as the Umayyad Caliphate began to show signs of disintegration, some of the leaders of the Ghulāt embarked on political activities against the regime. Finally, the spiritual independence of the early Ghulāt and their daring ideas contributed significantly to giving Shi‘īsm its distinctive religious basis and identity.

By the middle of the 3rd/9th century, with the gradual formation of the various Shi‘ī sects which were acquiring their own sectarian names, the term Ghulāt began to lose its earlier importance. In the 'Abbāsid period, religious deviations which posed political dangers to the state stemmed from the more widespread and sectarian movements, such as the one organized by the Ismā‘īlis. At any rate, the heresiographers use the term Ghulāt sparingly in reference to individuals or groups appearing after the imāmate of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, although this usage of the term was maintained by the later Muslim authorities producing bio-bibliographical works. For instance, al-Nawbakhtī mentions as the last of the Ghulāt groups the Kathṭābiyya, identified by some authorities as the earliest Ismā‘īlis. These were the followers of Abu‘l-Khaṭṭāb, the leading ghālī in Ja‘far’s entourage. The fact, however, remains that much of the heritage of the early radical Shi‘īs, especially the Ghulāt amongst them, was in due time absorbed into the main Shi‘ī sects. In particular, their ideas on the imāmate and on eschatology were adopted and elaborated by the Twelvers and the Ismā‘īlis. On the other hand, those of their teachings which implied any compromise of the unity of God, such as their belief in hulāl and in the divinity of the imāms, were disciplined, especially in the Imāmī branch of Shi‘ism. But such doctrines were maintained by the Nuṣayris and some other extremist Shi‘ī circles; and in later centuries, these and other notions of the early Ghulāt found new expression in the doctrines of the Druzes and other Muslim groups.
Origins and early development of Shi'ism

We shall now resume our discussion of the moderate branch of Shi'ism. The Husaynid Zayn al-'Abidin persisted in his quiescence and did not claim the imamate for himself. However, after Ibn al-Hanafiyya's death, Zayn al-'Abidin, now as the eldest 'Alid, began to enjoy a more influential position within the 'Alid family. In addition, due to his renowned piety, which had won him his honorific title 'the Ornament of the Pious', he had gradually come to be held in great esteem, especially by the pious circles of Medina. But since he refrained from any form of political activity and devoted his time mainly to praying (whence his additional title al-Sajjād), he did not acquire any following. By the closing years of his life, Zayn al-'Abidin had, however, developed an entourage, consisting of some relatives and a few piety-minded Arabs. In sum, during Zayn al-'Abidin's lifetime, the moderate Imaami branch was clearly eclipsed by the radical branch, then represented mainly by the Hishimiyya.

Having survived his father by some thirty-four years, 'Ali b. al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin died in 951/744, shortly before the death of his cousin and rival, Abū Hāshim.

According to the later Twelver and Isma'ili Shi'is, Zayn al-'Abidin had designated his eldest son Muhammad, later called al-Baqir, as his successor. Some modern Islamists, too, have argued that it was evidently in al-Baqir's time that the idea of nass imamate became more widespread amongst the Shi'is. At any event, al-Baqir seems to have considered himself the sole legitimate 'Alid authority, and he acquired followers who regarded him as such. Al-Baqir continued his father's quiescent attitude towards the Umayyads and contented himself, as a matter of policy, with the religious aspects of his authority. Nevertheless, from the very beginning, his authority was challenged by some of his close Fatimid relatives. The new claimants to the imamate provided yet more diverse outlets for the allegiance of the Shi'is, who were already divided into numerous groups. Of particular importance was the movement started by al-Baqir's half-brother Zayd b. 'Ali. There also started at this time the movement of 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali, with whom the Ḥasanid branch of the 'Alid family came into prominence. This Ḥasanid movement, which like that of Zayd acquired its importance after al-Baqir's imamate, was in effect launched in the name of 'Abd Allāh's son Muḥammad, known as al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (the Pure Soul). We shall now turn to the background of Zayd's movement which eventually resulted in the separate Zaydiyya sect of Shi'ism.

Few details are available on the ideas held by Zayd and his original followers. According to some later and unreliable reports, Zayd was an
associate of Wāsīl b. ‘Aṭā’ (d. 131/748–749), one of the reputed founders of the theological school of the Mu’tazila, originally a religio-political movement. The Mu’tazilis, as far as we know, initially aimed at reuniting the Muslim community on a compromise solution of the disputes among the various religio-political parties; however they focused their attention on theological principles with only a secondary interest in the doctrine of the imāmate. Modern scholarship has increasingly shown that the doctrinal positions of the early Shi‘īs and the Mu’tazilis were rather incompatible with one another during the 2nd/8th century; and it was only in the latter part of the 3rd/9th century that Zaydism, as well as Imāmī Shi‘ism, came under the influence of Mu’tazilism. Therefore, it can no longer be maintained that the earliest Zaydis were influenced by Mu’tazili ideas.

Zayd appears to have emphasized the need for a just imām and the community’s obligation to remove an unjust one. He also paid special attention to the Islamic principle of ‘commanding the good and prohibiting the evil’ (al-amr bi‘l-ma‘rūf wa‘l-nahy ‘an al-munkar). Furthermore, he is reported to have stated that if an imām wanted to be recognized, he had to assert his rights publicly, sword in hand if need be. In other words, Zayd was not prepared to accept the idea of a concealed Mahdī or a quiescent imām; nor did he attach any significance to hereditary succession and to nasī imāmate. Accordingly, the Zaydis originally maintained that the imāmate might legitimately be held by any member of the Ahl al-Bayt, though later restricting it to the Fāṭimids. This was under the condition that the claimant possessed the required religious learning along with certain other pious qualities; he would also have to be able to launch an uprising (khurūj), as Zayd was to do, against the illegitimate ruler of the time. The combination of Zayd’s activist policy and his otherwise conservative views, appealed to many Shi‘īs, preventing them from joining the Imāmī branch of Shi‘ism. At the same time, Zayd had realized that in order to be successful against the Umayyads, he would need the support of the main body of the Muslims. To this end, and reflecting the position of the moderate Shi‘a in Kūfā, he made an important doctrinal compromise. He asserted that, though ‘Ali was the most excellent (al-afdal) to succeed the Prophet, the allegiance given to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar who were less excellent (al-mafdal) was, nevertheless, valid. This view, it may be noted, was repudiated by the later Zaydis. Zayd’s recognition of the rule of the first two caliphs, or of the imāmat al-mafdal, which was repellent to the radical Shi‘īs who were then condemning these Companions, won him the
general sympathy of all those Muslims upholding the *Jamā'a* principle of unity. 61

Meanwhile, al-Bāqir contented himself with teaching and thinking about the rudiments of some of the ideas which were to become the legitimist principles of the Imāmi branch. Above all, he seems to have concerned himself with explaining the functions and the divinely bestowed attributes of the imāms. He is also credited with introducing the principle of *taqiyya*, dissimulation of one’s true belief under adverse circumstances; a principle which was quite alien to Zayd’s thinking but was later adopted by both the Twelvers and the Ismā’īlīs. In spite of many difficulties, al-Bāqir did manage in the course of his imāmate of almost twenty years to expand his circle of partisans. He also acquired a number of adherents from amongst the famous traditionists and jurists of Kūfa, notably Zurāra b. Aʿyan who had initially supported Zayd, and Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Ṭāʾīfī. The renowned poet al-Kumayt b. Zayd al-Asadi (d. 126/743) was another follower of al-Bāqir. The names of the adherents of al-Bāqir and other imāms of the Husaynid line have been recorded in the earliest biographical compendium of Shi’ī personalities, by the Imāmī traditionist al-Kashshi who flourished in the first half of the 4th/10th century.62 Later works, belonging to the same category of the *kutub al-rijāl* (bio-bibliographical books), compiled by other prominent Twelver Shi’ī scholars al-Najashi (d. 450/1058), al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), one of the leading Shi’ī authorities who has preserved an abridged version of al-Kashshi’s work, and Ibn Shahrāshub (d. 588/1192), also contain valuable information on the Imāmī Shi’īs. 63

It may be pointed out here that al-Bāqir’s imāmate also coincided with the initial stages of the Islamic science of law (*ʿilm al-fiqh*). It was, however, in the final decades of the second Islamic century that the old Arabian concept of *sunna*, the normative custom or the established practice of the community, which had reasserted itself under Islam, came to be explicitly identified by the piety-minded Muslims with the *sunna* of the Prophet. This identification, in turn, necessitated the collection of those *ḥadīths* or traditions which claimed to be the reports on the sayings and actions of the Prophet, handed down orally through an uninterrupted chain of trustworthy authorities. The activity of collecting and studying *ḥadīth*, which had initially arisen mainly in opposition to the extensive use of human reasoning by the Islamic judges (singular, *qādi’*), and for citing the authority of the Prophet to determine proper legal practices, soon became a
major field of Islamic learning, complementing the science of Islamic jurisprudence. In this formative period of the Islamic religious sciences, al-Baqir has been mentioned as a reporter of hadith, particularly of those supporting the Shi'i cause and derived from 'Ali. The imams al-Baqir and al-Sadiq, however, interpreted the law mostly on their own authority, without much recourse to hadith from earlier authorities. It should be added that in Shi'ism, hadith is reported on the authority of the imams and it includes the sayings of the imams in addition to the Prophetic traditions. Al-Baqir was also the first imam of the Husaynid line to attract a few Ghulat theorists to his side. The most prominent of these Ghulat who were originally in al-Baqir's following were al-Mughira b. Sa'id, mentioned variously as a mawla or an Arab from the tribe of 'Ijl, and Abu Mansur al-Ijli. It is useful to consider the highlights of their ideas, some of which anticipated certain distinguishing aspects of early Isma'ilis.

The heresiographers provide many details on the ideas propagated by al-Mughira. According to these sometimes contradictory accounts, he seems to have combined a variety of pre-Islamic beliefs of the Near East into his teaching, reflecting particularly the influences of Mandaean and Manichaean gnostic doctrines. Indeed, al-Mughira, with his spiritualism and pronounced dualism, has been credited for being the first Shi'i gnostic. One of the most distinctive features of his teaching was his anthropomorphic description of God. He asserted that God is a man of light with a crown of light on his head, a concept closely resembling the Mandaean doctrine of their deity, referred to as the 'king of light'. He further added that God has limbs which correspond to the letters of the Arabic alphabet, and that these letters (huruf) themselves derived from the Greatest Name of God, spoken at the time of creation. These ideas are clearly reminiscent of the teaching of Marcus the Gnostic, one of the leading exponents of Valentinian Gnosticism, for whom the body of the 'supreme truth' (Aletheia) was composed of the letters of the Greek alphabet. Al-Mughira may, in fact, be considered as the first Shi'i, or the first Muslim for that matter, who thought about the mystical and symbolic nature of the alphabet and thus, anticipated the more elaborate views of the early Isma'ilis. It was probably also due to al-Mughira's ideas, further developed by others, that the extremist Shi'is came to attribute certain occult properties to the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet. Al-Mughira is equally noted for his theory of the creation of the world and the first beings. His cosmogony, too, reflects the influence of ancient gnostic systems and, like his anthropomorphism, seems to have
been inspired by the allegorical interpretation or *ta’wil* of certain Qur’anic passages; a method distinctively associated with the Ismā’īlis. The fundamental aspect of this cosmogony is its gnostic dualism, characterized by the eternal conflict between light and darkness which, in close affinity with the basic tenet of Manichaeism, symbolize good and evil.

In time, al-Mughira acquired followers of his own in Kūfa, from amongst both the Arabs and the *mawāli*ī. They became known as the Mughirīyya, representing one of the most important of the Ghulāt groups. Al-Mughira imbued his followers with a sense of exclusiveness and devotion to his leadership, which may explain why they were also referred to as the Wuṣafā’, the Servants. The origins of religious elitism among the extremist Shi’īs may, indeed, be traced to the Mughirīyya.71 The elitist feelings of the Mughirīyya, which made them hostile towards their enemies, in turn, laid the foundation of religious militancy. The sources do, in fact, attest to the use of terrorist methods by the Mughirīyya; methods of struggle which were more characteristic of Abū Mansūr’s group, and which, some four centuries later, became an established practice with the Nizārī Ismā’īlis of Persia and Syria.

Abū Mansūr, who interestingly enough was illiterate, also preached the imāmāte of al-Bāqir and, like al-Mughira, founded his own group, the Mansūrīyya.72 He advocated, now as a matter of policy, the use of assassination in dealing with adversaries.73 After al-Bāqir’s death, Abū Mansūr asserted that the imāmāte had been bequeathed to him by al-Bāqir, whose legatee he claimed to be. Still later, he claimed prophethood, maintaining that he had ascended to Heaven where God patted him on his head, addressed him in Syriac, and charged him with delivering a prophetic message. Abū Mansūr, too, speculated about the creation,74 and certain aspects of his teaching anticipate, in embryonic form, important Ismā’īli parallels. He held the belief in the uninterrupted succession of prophets; adding that, after himself, prophethood would continue in his progeny for six generations, the last of whom (the seventh one counting from Abū Mansūr) would be the Mahdi. Furthermore, he resorted to the allegorical interpretation of the Qur’ān and maintained that whereas Muḥammad had delivered the message of Islam, it was now his own divinely inspired duty to explain it allegorically. He also denied the resurrection and interpreted Paradise and Hell symbolically in terms of the experiences of this world.

It has been reported that al-Bāqir disavowed both al-Mughira and Abū Mansūr, though each one later claimed his heritage. Ja’far al-Ṣādiq, too,
renounced the most prominent of the Ghulāt in his entourage. But the undisputed fact remains that from the time of al-Bāqir, the Ghulāt were drawn into the following of the Ḥusaynid Imāms. This was a significant event causing a lasting influence on the doctrinal basis of the Imāmī branch of Shi'ism. Having taken important preliminary steps towards establishing the identity of Imāmī Shi'ism, the Imam Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir died around 114/732–733, one century after the death of the Prophet. In the meantime, after the short reigns of Sulaymān, the pious 'Umar II (99–101/717–720) who paid greater attention to the precepts of Islam and was more friendly towards the 'Alids, terminating also the condemnation of 'Alī from the pulpits, and Yazid II (101–105/720–724), the caliphate had passed to the capable Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (105–125/724–743). One of Hishām's first acts was to appoint the skilful Khālid b. 'Abd Allāh al-Qasri as the governor of Irāq, in which post he remained for almost fifteen years (106–120/724–738), longer than any other Umayyad governor with the exception of al-Hajjāj. Khālid maintained a strict surveillance over the Kūfan Shi'is who were continuing their clandestine activities. As it soon became apparent, however, Hishām's long caliphate was to mark the final period of stability of Umayyad rule.

On the death of al-Bāqir, his following split into several groups. One group, the Bāqirīyya, awaited his reappearance as the Mahdi, while another group went over to the Hasanid al-Nafs al-Zakiyya. There were also those who transferred their allegiance to al-Mughira and Abū Mansūr. But a faithful group of al-Bāqir's partisans now recognized his eldest son Abū 'Abd Allāh Ja'far, later called al-Šādiq (the Trustworthy), as their new imām designated by nāṣṣ. This group of Imāmī Shi'is continued to support Ja'far and in time expanded significantly. Ja'far al-Šādiq's long imāmate of some thirty odd years, coinciding with the most turbulent epoch of early Islamic history, may best be studied in terms of two periods. During the first period, lasting until shortly after the accession of the 'Abbāsids, he remained overshadowed by certain other claimants to the imāmate, while the 'Abbāsid movement was successfully unfolding. It was during the second period, covering roughly the final decade of his imāmate, that Ja'far acquired a unique prominence. We shall now turn to the events of the first two decades of Ja'far's imāmate; events which also resulted in the elimination of his most active Hāshimid rivals.

By the time of Ja'far al-Šādiq, the movement of Zayd b. 'Alī was already well-established. Ja'far continued his father's passive policy towards his elder uncle, and even displayed public reverence for him. Soon after-
wards, however, some of Zayd's followers abandoned him and joined the Imam Ja'far, probably due to the attraction of the latter's nasīr imāmate. According to one account, Zayd designated these deserters as Rawāfid or Rejectors, because of their refusal to support his revolt, a term subsequently applied abusively to other Shi'i groups and in particular to the Imāmiyya. The movement of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya also began to gain momentum during the earlier years of Ja'far's imāmate. This movement, as noted, had been launched by Muḥammad's father ʿAbd Allāh who, being a Hasanid through his father and a Ḥusaynid through his mother Fāṭima bint al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, had earned the by-name of al-Mahdī (of Pure Blood). ʿAbd Allāh was the shaykh of the Ḥasanids and was also held in high esteem within the entire 'Alid family. He had ambitious designs for his son, Muḥammad, whom he had designated from the time of his birth, supposedly in 100/718, for the role of the expected Mahdī. This was probably encouraged by a tradition circulated by the Shi'is, to the effect that the Mahdī who in time would arise from amongst the Aḥl al-Bayt would carry the same name, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh, as the Prophet himself.

Meanwhile, the Umayyad regime had begun to show signs of collapse during the final years of Hishām's rule. The Shi'is, quick in noticing the changed conditions and having refrained from all open activity for almost half a century, staged a number of risings in Kūfā. All these attempts ended in failure since they lacked sufficient organization and support. In 119/737, al-Mughīra and Bayān, who had apparently joined forces after al-Bāqir's death, were arrested together with a handful of their followers and burned in Kūfā on the orders of Khalīd b. ʿAbd Allāh. It is not clear whether this action was taken to suppress a premature rising or to bring the suspected rebels into the open. In 124/742, Abū Mansūr met a similar fate at the hands of Khalīd's successor Yūṣuf b. ʿUmar al-Thaqafi, who governed 'Irāq from 120/738 to 126/744. The bulk of the supporters of these three martyred Ghulāt, from amongst the Bayāniyya, the Mughīriyya and the Mansūriyya, subsequently joined al-Nafs al-Zakiyya.

More significantly, in Ṣafar 122/January 740, Zayd b. ʿAli staged his open revolt in Kūfā, which was actually the first Shi'i attempt of its kind since that of al-Mukhtār's and the second one led hitherto by an 'Alid after Karbalā'. The revolt proved abortive, not only because the Kūfans had once again displayed their unreliability and failed to recruit 100,000 armed men for Zayd as promised, but also because Yūsuf b. ʿUmar had
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discovered the plot in time and took severe measures to repress it. Zayd and the small band of the zealous partisans who fought with him were massacred by the Syrian troops; a tragic end reminiscent of that of Zayd’s grandfather al-Ḥusayn. Soon afterwards, the caliph Hishām commanded that all prominent Ṭalibids should publicly condemn Zayd and dissociate themselves from all anti-Umayyad activities. ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahdī and Ibn Mu‘āwiya, amongst others, complied; the Imām Ja‘far was apparently spared the ordeal, as his name does not appear in connection with this episode in any known source. This may indicate that by the time of Zayd’s revolt, the Imām Ja‘far had already been explicit about his opposition to any militant Shi‘i activity. Zayd’s movement, however, was continued by his son Yahyā, whose Ḥanafid mother was one of Abū Hāshim’s daughters. Yahyā concentrated his activities in Khurāsān, where many Kūfān Shi‘is had been exiled by the governors of ‘Iraq. But after three years of futile efforts, he was overtaken by the troops of the governor of Khurāsān, Naṣr b. Sayyār. Yahyā was killed in battle near Jūzjān in 125/743. The Zaydis were later led by al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, Yahyā’s brother Ḥisā b. Zayd (d. 166/783), and then by Aḥmad b. Ḥisā (d. 247/861) and others whom they recognized as their imāms.

The disintegration of the Umayyad regime accentuated upon Hishām’s death in 125/743. Scarcely a year had passed when the caliphate of Hishām’s nephew and successor al-Walid II was brought to an end in 126/744, by a coup d'état engineered by the Syrian army and with the cooperation of the Umayyad family. This event, which amounted to political suicide for the ruling dynasty, marked the imminent end of what Wellhausen has called the ‘Arab Kingdom’. The rule of the next caliph, Yazīd III, the choice of the rebellious generals, lasted less than six months, and on his sudden death further dynastic rivalries led to a civil war. Ibrāhīm b. al-Walid I was acknowledged as the new caliph only in southern Syria, and during his short reign of some three months, general conditions deteriorated into complete chaos. The ambitious Marwān, known as Marwān II al-Ḥimār, from an offshoot of the Umayyad family, was now the only person with sufficient military power to enforce some semblance of order in the empire. Consequently, he marched to Damascus, deposed Ibrāhīm and proclaimed himself the new caliph in 127/744. By that time, however, the task of rescuing Umayyad rule had become all but an impossibility, as revolts were raging in almost every province.

The prevailing chaos encouraged the Shi‘is of Kūfā and elsewhere to
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make yet bolder efforts towards wresting the caliphate. At a gathering of the Hāshimids held at al-Abwā’ near Medina in 126/744, ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahd succeeded in persuading all the participants to accord their oath of allegiance to al-Nafṣ al-Zakiyya and to recognize him as the most suitable candidate for the caliphate. Amongst those who complied were Ibrāhīm b. Muhammad, the head of the ‘Abbāsids, and his two brothers Abūl-‘Abbās and Abū Ja’far, future ‘Abbāsīd caliphs, who complied under false pretences. Only the Imām Ja’far, the most respected Ḥusaynīd after Zayd’s martyrdom, is reported to have withheld his approval. While ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahd may have attributed Ja’far’s opposition to the then existing rivalries between the Ḥasanīds and the Ḥusaynīds, it should be recalled that Ja’far was not prepared to accept the claims of his Hasanīd cousin or any other ‘Alid since he clearly regarded himself as the rightful imām of the time. After this family reunion, al-Nafṣ al-Zakiyya and his brother Ibrāhīm embarked on a vigorous campaign, which received the support of many Mu’tazilis and Zaydīs, as well as several Ghulāt groups. Their movement, however, lacked foresight and organization and was easily overtaken and then crushed by the ‘Abbāsids.

The last unsuccessful revolt of the Umayyad period, which was Shi’ī in the broadest sense, was launched by the Ṭalibīd ‘Abd Allāh b. Mu‘āwiya who, as noted, had his own extremist Shi’ī partisans, the Janāḥiyya. But now Ibn Mu‘āwiya was to lead a movement of much greater social significance, supported by a multitude of Shi’ī and non-Shi’ī groups. In the confusing aftermath of al-Walid II’s murder, the Kufran Shi’īs had urged Ibn Mu‘āwiya, then sojourning in their city, to rebel against ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar, the son of the pious Umayyad caliph, who governed Iraq under the caliphs Yazīd III and Ibrāhīm. However, Ibn Mu‘āwiya’s open revolt, which took place in Muḥarram 127/October 744, was easily suppressed by Ibn ‘Umar, as the Kufans turned out to be as unreliable as ever. Only the Zaydīs in his following fought bravely for a few days, until Ibn Mu‘āwiya was given a safe-conduct out of Kūfa. He withdrew to western Persia, where he soon acquired a large number of supporters, especially from amongst the Persian mawālī. In 128/745, he established himself at Iṣṭahkhār in the Fars province, from where he ruled for a few years over a vast territory in Persia.

Ibn Mu‘āwiya gathered an extremely varied coalition of groups around himself. In fact, the outstanding feature of his rebellious movement was the peculiar diversity of its composition. Aside from the mawālī, it included several Shi’ī groups, many Khārijīs, the notable ‘Abbāsids, and
even some discontented Umayyads. This reveals how widespread the anti-regime sentiments had now become; it also indicates that Ibn Mu‘awiya’s movement did not have any particular ideological basis, Shi‘i or otherwise. Ibn Mu‘awiya himself seems to have been more concerned with political power than with doctrinal issues, as attested by his willingness to receive support from heterogeneous religio-political factions. The lack of ideology proved to be a fundamental shortcoming of this movement. Ibn Mu‘awiya was finally defeated in 130/748, by a large army sent after him by Marwân II who, having established his authority in Syria and ‘Iraq, had now turned his attention to the eastern provinces which were no longer controlled effectively by the Umayyads. ‘Abd Allah b. Mu‘awiya fled from his enemies and sought asylum in Khurâsân, where he was killed in 131/748–749 by his friends, probably on the orders of Abû Muslim al-Khurâsânî, the chief architect of the ‘Abbâsid victory.

The ‘Abbâsids had, meanwhile, learned important lessons from the many abortive Shi‘i revolts of the Umayyad period. Consequently, while awaiting their own turn to make a bid for power, they paid particular attention to developing the organization of their movement, concentrating their activities in the remote eastern province of Khurâsân. As noted, the ‘Abbâsid Mu‘âammad b. ‘Alî took over the claims of the Ḥanafid Abû Ḥâshim and his propaganda organization, and party, the Ḥâshimiyya. With these valuable assets, the active propaganda or mission, da‘wa, of the ‘Abbâsids seems to have begun around the year 100/718, soon after Abû Ḥâshim’s death. From headquarters in Kûfâ, numerous emissaries were sent to Khurâsân, where there was widespread support for Shi‘ism among both the Arab settlers in the province and the native Persian mawâli. Khurâsân, with its capital at Marw, soon became the main recruiting ground for, and the revolutionary base of, the ‘Abbâsid movement. The ‘Abbâsid da‘wa was cleverly preached in the name of al-ridâ min al Mu‘âammad, a phrase which spoke of an unidentified personage belonging to the Prophet’s family. Aside from being a precautionary measure, this aimed at drawing maximum support from the Shi‘îs who upheld the leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt.

Initially, the ‘Abbâsid da‘wa in Khurâsân was organized mainly in the form of small clandestine groups, but still many of the ‘Abbâsid da‘îs were discovered and killed by the Umayyads. Therefore, it soon became necessary to create a more formal organization. A supreme council of twelve chiefs, the so-called nuqâba’, was set up at Marw to direct the activities of a large number of newly appointed da‘îs; a method of
organization adopted by the Ismāʿīlīs. These changes proved successful, especially when 'Ammār b. Yazid, better known as Khidāsh, was sent to Khurāsān to head the new daʿwa organization. He was apparently inclined towards the 'Alīds and taught extremist doctrines, which may explain why he was later disavowed by the 'Abbāsids. Khidāsh, who was arrested and executed in 118/736, was succeeded by Sulaymān b. Kāthīr. Contact between the partisans in Khurāsān and the imām, who resided in Ḥumayma but remained nameless, continued to be maintained through the leader of the 'Abbāsids' Kūfān organization, a post held by Bukayr b. Māḥān from 105/723.

Muḥammad b. 'Alī died in 125/743, and his son Ibrāhīm, known as al-Imām, became the new imām of the Hāshimiyya-'Abbāsiyya party and, hence, the leader of the movement. Ibrāhīm intensified the 'Abbāsid daʿwa and initiated its more militant phase. In the prevailing confusion and in the aftermath of the defeats of Zayd and of his son Yahyā, the movement began to meet with increasing success. In 128/745–746, Ibrāhīm sent his Persian mawlā, Abū Muslim, the celebrated personality with an obscure background who earlier had apparently followed al-Mughira and had also in vain offered his services to the Imām Jaʿfar, as his personal representative to Khurāsān to organize and lead the final phase of the movement. Meanwhile, Abū Salama al-Khallaṣ, a prominent Shiʿi leader, had become the new head of the Kūfān organization, following the death of Bukayr in 127/744. Abū Muslim’s success was astonishingly rapid, and by 129/747 he had unfurled the black banners that were to become the emblem of the 'Abbāsids, signifying open revolt. His revolutionary army, the Khurāsāniyya, comprised of both Persian mawlā and Arabs, especially Yamanīs, expanded significantly in a short period. It was also in Abū Muslim’s army that complete integration of Arab and non-Arab Muslims was attained for the first time.

In 130/748, Abū Muslim entered Marw and then seized all of Khurāsān, driving out the aged Umayyad governor Naṣr b. Sayyār. In the same year, the Khurāsānī army under the command of Qaḥṭaba b. Shābīb, one of the original nuqaba', started its swift advance westward, defeating the Umayyad armies along the way. In Muharram 132/August 749, the forces of Ibn Hubayra, the last Umayyad governor of Ḥiraq, were defeated in a battle near Kūfā, in which Qaḥṭaba lost his life. A few days later, the victorious Khurāsānīs entered Kūfā. Thereupon, power was handed to Abū Salama who was immediately acknowledged as wazīr al Muḥammad. The idea of wazīr, first introduced with a vague connotation to the Arab
Muslims by al-Mukhtar, was now about to develop into an important administrative office under the `Abbāsids.

The time had finally come for disclosing the name of al-ridā from the Prophet's family, who would be acceptable to all. Just before the fall of Kūfa, Ibrāhīm al-Imām died in Marwān II's prison in Harrān, where he had been confined for several months upon the Umayyad caliph's discovery of his role in the `Abbāsid da'wa. It was now left to Abū Salama to reveal the identity of Ibrāhīm's successor, who was to be installed as the new caliph. Abū Salama personally favoured seeing an `Alid succeed to the caliphate. He contacted three of the leading `Alids of the time, amongst them the Imām Ja'far and 'Abd Allāh al-Mahd. Abū Salama's offer of caliphal authority was rejected by them, as was his request for the formation of an `Alid council to select a suitable candidate. Finally, after two months of waiting watchfully, the Khurāsāniyya took matters into their own hands and decided on Ibrāhīm's half-brother Abu'l-'Abbās, as the new caliph. He and other members of the `Abbāsid family had shortly before moved from Ḥumayma to Kūfa, where they had remained in hiding on Abū Salama's instructions. The whereabouts of Abu'l-'Abbās was, however, discovered by the loyal agents of Abū Muslim, who himself had stayed behind in Khurāsān. On 12 Rabi' II 132/28 November 749, Abu'l-'Abbās was proclaimed as the first `Abbāsid caliph, with the title al-Saffāh, in the mosque of Kūfa. Abū Salama was obliged to pay homage and continued as wazir. Soon afterwards, he was executed on the caliph's orders and with Abū Muslim's complicity.

In 132/750, the Khurāsāni troops achieved their final victory, in the battle of the Greater Zāb, against the Umayyad forces. The defeated Marwān II fled towards Egypt, where he was killed in the same year. Thus, after more than thirty years of meticulous planning, the `Abbāsids had finally succeeded in sealing the fate of the Umayyads. They installed their own dynasty to the caliphate and ruled over a varying portion of the Islamic world for five centuries, until they were overthrown in 656/1258 by the Mongols. The struggle between `Irāq and Syria, an important factor in the anti-Umayyad activities of the Shi'īs since `Ali's time, had now also ended in the defeat of the Syrians. The early `Abbāsids, who relied on the Persians and their Sāsānid models of centralized administration in the governing affairs of the state, established the seat of the caliphate in `Irāq, at first in the small town of Ḥāshimiyya and other localities near Kūfa and later, after 145/762, in the new city of Baghdad.

The `Abbāsid revolution marked a turning point in the history of early
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Islam, representing not only a change of dynasty but other important changes as well. With the fall of the Umayyads, their social order, which assigned a privileged position to the Arabs, also collapsed. The ‘Abbāsids distributed political power more widely and removed the distinction between the Arabs and the mawāli, many of whom no longer had any affiliation with an Arab tribe. During the first half-century of ‘Abbāsid rule, the hegemony of the Arab aristocracy rapidly came to an end, and those privileges derived from birth, race or tribal affiliation, ceased to have their earlier significance. Now, a new multi-racial ruling class, with Islam as its unifying feature, emerged to replace the Arab ruling class of the Umayyad period. With the emancipation of the mawāli and the new alignment of classes on non-racial grounds, some of the most pressing demands of the opposition movements, notably those of the radical Shi‘is, were satisfied. As a result, revolutionary Shi‘ism henceforth ceased to be identified with the aspirations of the mawāli, who had at last acquired their equality and were soon to disappear as a distinct social class. Instead, it came to provide a suitable outlet for a wider spectrum of the oppressed and economically underprivileged masses.

The ‘Abbāsid victory, however, was to be a source of disappointment in other respects, especially for the Shi‘is, who had remained loyal to the ‘Alid cause. The ‘Abbāsids had conducted their secret propaganda in the name of the Ahl al-Bayt and on a largely Shi‘i basis. Their success, therefore, was expected to bring about the long-awaited Shi‘i triumph. But from the very beginning of ‘Abbāsid rule, the Shi‘is became greatly disillusioned when the hitherto unnamed al-ridā, now installed to the caliphate, turned out to belong to the ‘Abbāsid branch of the Banū Hāshim instead of being an ‘Alid Hāshimid. The Shi‘i disappointment was further aggravated when the ‘Abbāsids chose to adhere to the Jamā‘a, the community as a body, and became staunch supporters of Sunnī Islam. The ‘Abbāsids realized that in order to be accepted as legitimate rulers by the majority of the Muslims, they had to renounce their extremist past. Consequently, almost immediately upon their accession, they began to sever all ties with their more strictly Shi‘i supporters and the revolutionary leaders who had brought them to power. Abū Salama and Sulaymān b. Kathīr were summarily executed; and, in 133/750–751, a Shi‘i revolt led by a certain Sharīk b. Shaykh al-Mahrī, the first of its kind in the ‘Abbāsid times, was ruthlessly suppressed in Bukhārā. Soon afterwards in 137/755, Abū Muslim was lured to ‘Irāq and murdered on the orders of Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr (136–158/754–775), the elder and stronger brother and
successor of Abu'l-'Abbās who consolidated 'Abbāsid rule and established the permanent capital of the Islamic empire in the newly founded city of Baghdād, built near the ruins of Ctesiphon, the capital of the Sāsānid empire.

The caliph al-Manṣūr adopted still more repressive measures against the 'Alids and the Shi'īs. In 141/758, he massacred a group of the Rāwandiyya who besieged his palace and hailed him as the incarnation of divinity. A few years later, he had many of the 'Alids, notably from the Hasanid branch, imprisoned or killed. The 'Abbāsids' breach with their Shi'ī origins and their efforts to legitimize their own rights to the caliphate were finally completed by the caliph Muhammad al-Mahdi (158-169/775-785), who abandoned the 'Abbāsid claim to Abū Hāshim's inheritance and instead declared that the Prophet had actually appointed al-'Abbās as his successor. This, of course, implied the repudiation of the analogous claims of the 'Alids. With these adverse developments, those of the extremist Shi'ī followers of the 'Abbāsids who did not scatter became alienated. Some of them in Persia and Central Asia found an outlet in a series of religio-political movements termed the Khurramiyya. Still others in 'Irāq rallied to the side of the Fāṭimids, who were now the leading 'Alids, and later many joined the Ismā'īlī movement, which was to resume the interrupted development of revolutionary Shi'ism.

Under these circumstances, the time had come for the rise to prominence of the imāmate of Ja'far, now called al-Ṣādiq, which occurred roughly during the last decade of his life and the first decade of al-Manṣūr's caliphate. There are diverse reasons for this phenomenon. As noted, the extremist mawla Shi'īsm of the Umayyad times, upheld by the various Kaysānī groups which supported the Ḥanafid line of imāms or others deriving their claims from these imāms, had finally aborted mainly in the 'Abbāsid cause; and those who survived were ready to join other 'Alid claimants. At the same time, with the Ḥanafids out of the way, the 'Alid family had been reduced to its Ḥusaynid and Hasanid branches, of which Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya were, respectively, the chief figures. In other words, the bulk of the Shi'īs were now obliged to follow either one of these two Fāṭimid Imāms. It was as of then that increasing stress was laid on direct descent from the Prophet through Fāṭima and 'Alī, and Fāṭimid ancestry acquired its special significance for the Shi'īs, being also used as the criterion for determining the composition of the Ahl al-Bayt. No doubt, the messianic claims and militant attitude of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, who had refused to render homage to al-Manṣūr and
had subsequently gone into hiding to prepare for a rebellion, held greater attraction for at least some of the more activist Shi'is. But this Hasanid movement soon ended in defeat. The open revolt of Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in the Hijaz and that of his supporting brother Ibrāhim in 'Irāq were subdued and the two brothers were killed in 145/762–763, by the forces of the Abbāsid 'Īsā b. Mūsā, who governed Kūfa for fifteen years from 132/750 to 147/764. With the removal of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq emerged as the main rallying point for the allegiance of the Shi'is, especially in southern 'Irāq; and his imāmate provided the basis for the most important Shi'i sects, the Twelvers and the Ismā'ilis, while the Zaydis continued to follow their own imāms. By that time, however, the Imam Ja'far had already become prominent, which, aside from the aforementioned factors, may be attributed to his own personality and fame for learning, and to the appeal of certain ideas taught by him and his associates.

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, of superior intellectual quality to his 'Alid relatives and predecessors, had gradually acquired a widespread reputation for religious learning. He was a reporter of hadīth and is cited respectfully as such in the chains of authorities (isnāds) accepted by the Sunnis. Additionally, he taught fiqh and is credited with founding, after the work of his father, what was to become the Shi'i school of religious law or madhhab, which differs somewhat from the four Sunni schools. Hence, the Twelvers, when referring to their madhhab, have called it the Ja'fari. It is important to note that Ja'far al-Ṣādiq was accepted as a teaching authority not only by his own partisans, but by a much wider circle, including the piety-minded Muslims of Medina and Kūfa. For instance, Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān (d. 150/767) and Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), the famous jurists and eponyms of the Ḥanafī and Mālikī Sunni schools of law, reportedly studied or consulted with him. In time, Ja'far collected a noteworthy group of thinkers around himself, and became the object of more Ghulāt speculations than any other 'Alid. He is, indeed, one of the most respected Shi'i Imāms and religious authorities both among the Twelvers and the Ismā'ilis.

Throughout the tumultuous years preceding the Abbāsid revolution, and also following it, when as a result of the great Shi'i disappointment a fundamental re-orientation in Shi'ism was called for, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq was quietly propounding his views regarding the imāmate. Some of these views had already been formulated in rudimentary form by the Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir, but it remained for Ja'far and his associates, notably
the eminent Imāmī authority Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795–796), to develop them more precisely and systematically into the basic conception of the doctrine of the imāmate. Here we are concerned only with certain principles embodied in this central Shi'i doctrine; principles that were emphasized by Ja'far in response to the challenging needs of the time and, as such, proved effective in strengthening his imāmate.94

The first principle was that of imāmate by naṣṣ, defined as a prerogative bestowed by God upon a chosen person from the Ahl al-Bayt, who before his death and with divine guidance, transfers the imāmate to his successor by an explicit designation or naṣṣ. As noted, others too had claimed a naṣṣ imāmate; but the distinguishing feature of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's teaching was its emphasis to the effect that, on the authority of the naṣṣ, the imāmate remained located in a specific individual, whether or not he claimed the caliphate. Thus, Ja'far maintained that there was always in existence a true imām designated by naṣṣ who possessed all the authority of the sole legitimate imām, whether or not he was at the time ruling over the community. Furthermore, the antecedence of the Imām Ja'far's own naṣṣ was traced back to 'Alī, who was believed to have been appointed as the Prophet's wasī and successor. This first naṣṣ, initiated by the Prophet under divine command or inspiration, had remained in the Husaynid line of imāms, having been transmitted successively from 'Alī to al-Ḥasan, and then to al-Ḥusayn, Zayn al-'Ābidīn, and al-Bāqir until it had reached Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, now the only claimant to a naṣṣ imāmate within the 'Alid family.

The principle of the naṣṣ had two important results. First, it made it no longer necessary for an imām to rebel against the established regimes in order to become the actual ruler. In other words, the institutions of the imāmate and the caliphate were separated from one another, by allowing for a non-ruling imām who was not required to seize the caliphal authority if circumstances did not permit it. This explains why Ja'far al-Ṣādiq himself remained so non-committal in all the 'Alid risings of his time, while the Husaynids were largely spared the persecutions of al-Mansūr against the Hasanids.95 Secondly, as noted by Hodgson, naṣṣ imāmate provided an important basis for the sectarian continuity of Shi'ism, since 'it made possible a continuing dissident body of people attached to a continuing line of imāms regardless of the fate of particular political movements. It also encouraged a systematic development of special religious ideas which could gain acceptance among such dissident bodies without competing for the attention of all Muslims generally'.96

The second fundamental principle embodied in the doctrine of the
imāmate, closely related to the nāṣṣ principle and emphasized by Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, was that of an imāmate based on 'ilm or special religious knowledge. In the light of this 'ilm, which is divinely inspired and transmitted through the nāṣṣ of the preceding imām, the rightful imām becomes the exclusively authorized source of the knowledge on how to decide points of conscience for the Muslims and lead them along the right path. Consequently, the imām will acquire the all-important functions of providing spiritual guidance for his adherents and explaining the inner meaning and significance of the Qur'ān and the religious injunctions, even when he is not occupied with the temporal function of ruling over the community. As Hodgson has observed, 'this was the time of the rise of ḥadīth, and the attempt to construct total systems of the pious life – which eventually issued in the full shari'a law'.

In this context, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, by virtue of his nāṣṣ imāmate and Fāṭimid descent, had acquired a unique position amongst all the authorities who were then concerned with working out the details of a pious life. His followers, too, attributed to him a uniquely authoritative 'ilm, necessary to guide the conscience and the lives of the true believers. As in the case of the nāṣṣ, the Imām Ja'far's 'ilm was traced back in the Husaynid line to 'Ali, who had acquired it from the Prophet.

It may be added that, in line with his passivity and prudence, the Imām al-Ṣādiq refined the closely-related principle of taqiyya, or precautionary dissimulation, and made it an absolute article of Shi'i faith. No doubt, it must have been dangerous for the imāms and their followers to openly propagate their minoritarian beliefs, and to publicly announce that certain individuals, other than the ruling caliphs, were the divinely appointed religious leaders of the Muslims. The practice of taqiyya conveniently protected the Shi'is, especially the later Ismā'ilis, from persecution, and served in the preservation of their sectarian existence under hostile circumstances. In sum, by placing emphasis on an imāmate based on nāṣṣ and 'ilm, and recommending the use of taqiyya, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq had presented a new interpretation of the imām's attributes and functions. This interpretation, which concerned itself with a non-ruling imām who until such time as God desired it, would solely act as spiritual guide and religious teacher, proved invaluable in preventing the absorption of Shi'ism into the Sunnī synthesis of Islam that was simultaneously being worked out by the representative groups of the Jamā'a. At the same time, by underlining the hereditary and the divinely-bestowed attributes of both nāṣṣ and 'ilm, the Imām Ja'far had now restricted the sanctity of the Ahl al-Bayt not only to the 'Alids and especially the Fāṭimids amongst them, to
the exclusion of the 'Abbâsids and all other non-'Alid Hâshimids, but more specifically to his own Hûsaynid line of imâms. This was because al-Hûsayn had inherited the imâmât from al-Hasan, whose progeny had never claimed a nassimâmât.

The fundamental conception of the Imâmî doctrine of the imâmât is embodied in numerous traditions reported mainly from Ja'far al-Ṣâdiq, preserved in the earliest corpus of Shi'i hadith by Abû Ja'far Muḥammad b. Ya'qûb al-Kulaynî (d. 329/940–941). This conception, also retained by the Ismâ'îlîs, is founded on the permanent need of mankind for a divinely guided, sinless and infallible (ma'sûm) imâm who would act as the authoritative teacher and guide of men in all their religious and spiritual affairs. However, the imâm can practise taqiyya, and, unlike Muḥammad who was the Seal of the Prophets, he does not receive divine revelation (wahy), nor does he bring a new message and sacred law as did a messenger prophet. Although the imâm is entitled to temporal leadership as much as to religious authority, his mandate does not depend on his actual rule or any attempt at gaining it. It is further maintained that the Prophet Muḥammad had designated 'Alî b. Abî Ṭâlib as his wasî and successor, by an explicit designation (nass) under divine command; but the majority of the Companions apostatized by ignoring this testament. After 'Alî, the imâmât was to be transmitted from father to son by nass, among the descendants of 'Alî and Fâtimâ; and after al-Hasan and al-Hûsayn, in the progeny of the latter until the end of time. This imâm, who is also the inheritor of Muḥammad's secret knowledge, is endowed by God with special 'ilm, and has perfect understanding of the outward or exoteric (zâhir) and the inward or esoteric (bâtin) aspects and meanings of the Qur'an and the sacred law of Islam. Indeed, the world cannot exist for a moment without an imâm, the proof (hujja) of God on earth. Even if only two men were left upon the face of the earth, one of them would be the imâm. And there can only be a single imâm at one and the same time, though there may be a silent one (sâmî), his successor, beside him; an idea reflecting the influence of Abu'l-Khaytâb's teaching. In sum, the imâm's existence in the terrestrial world is so essential that his recognition and obedience is made the absolute duty of every believer; hence, the famous hadîth reported from the Imâm al-Ṣâdiq that 'whoever dies without having acknowledged the true imâm of his time dies as an unbeliever (kâfir)'.

In Shi'i thought, the imâm's all-important spiritual function of interpreting the inner meaning of the revelations announced by the Prophet is known as ta'wil. The term walâya (Persian, walâyat), meaning devotion to
the imāms, is sometimes also used in this sense. No adequate equivalent exists in any of the Western languages for this sense of the term walīya, adopted in modern times especially by Corbin, but it may roughly be translated as ‘initiation’. According to the Shi‘īs, the cycle of prophecy (da‘irat al-nubuwwa), representing the deliverance of new sacred laws by different prophets who thus discharged an exoteric prophetic function, came to its end with the Prophet Muḥammad; but then, there arose the permanent need for the initiatic function connected with explaining the secret meaning of the Islamic message. And the person whose duty it is in every age to fulfil the function of ta‘wil (or walāya), inseparable from imāmate, is the rightful imām. It is through this function that the imāms become the awliya’ Allāh, or the friends of Allāh. As we shall see, the notion of ta‘wil affirms the Shi‘ī belief in the existence of the separate exoteric and esoteric dimensions in all religious scriptures and teachings, necessitating the spiritual comprehension of, and initiation into, their hidden and true meaning. Herein lies the essence of the imām’s role, and the justification for the importance assigned to esotericism and gnosis (‘irfān) by some Shi‘ī groups. Shi‘ī esotericism found its fullest development in Ismā‘ilism, by far the most representative of the Shi‘ī sects designated with the term Bāṭinīyya; referring to those who give primacy to the inner, esoteric, or bāṭini meaning behind the literal wording of all religious texts and formulations.

Finally, another factor which contributed to the strength of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq’s imāmate revolved around the activities of the circle of thinkers surrounding him and his own ability to discipline the more extremist trends of thought within his following. Imām Ja‘far attracted an active group of thinkers who vigorously dealt with the intellectual issues and problems of the time. Most of these individuals lived in Kūfā, like the bulk of Ja‘far’s partisans from amongst both the ordinary Imāmī Shi‘īs upholding the legitimacy of the Husaynid line of imāms, and the more radical ones representing the heritage of the earlier extremist Shi‘īs. At the same time that the Imām Ja‘far encouraged the speculations of his disciples and associates, he made a point of keeping them within tolerable bounds, by imposing a certain doctrinal discipline. This formal disciplining seems to have been particularly enforced after the accession of al-Manṣūr, in response to the latter’s anti-Shi‘ī policies. As a result, while the imāmate of Ja‘far was invigorated by the ideas of the Ghulāt and other types of thinkers in his entourage, such ideas were kept in check, and often reconciled with one another, so as not to permit them to go too far beyond the limits
acceptable to the Jamāʿa and to Sunni Islam. This policy ultimately proved invaluable in making the Husaynid line of imāms the most widely recognized by the Shiʿīs.

Besides a number of jurists-traditionists who concentrated mainly on legal problems, Jaʿfar’s close circle of associates included some of the most famous speculative theologians (mutakallimūn) of the time. These theologians, such as Zurārā b. ʿAʿyān, Muʿmin al-Ṭāq, Hishām b. Sālim al-Jawāliqī, ʿAlī b. Ismāʿil al-Maythānī, and above all Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, the foremost representative of Imāmī kalām or scholastic theology, made significant contributions to the formulation of the Imāmī doctrine of the imāmate. Separate mention may be made of the enigmatic Jābir b. Ḥayyān, the renowned alchemist, who regarded Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq as his master and who was greatly influenced by the gnosticism of the early Shiʿī Ghulāt. There has been much debate concerning the authorship of the corpus of writings attributed to him; some of these works, in which the occult properties of the letters of the alphabet play an important part, were probably produced by circles close to the Ismāʿīlīs of much later times.

There were also several noteworthy Ghulāt contributing to the rich and varied intellectual life of Jaʿfar’s coterie; not only individuals such as Jābir al-Juʿfī (d. 128/745-746), whom Jafrī has classified among the so-called semi-Ghulāt, but most significantly, Abuʾl-Khattīb Muḥammad b. ʿAbī Zaynāb Miqlāṣ al-Ajdaʿ al-Asadi, the most prominent of all the early Ghulāt.

Abūʾl-Khaṭṭāb, a Kūfī and a mawla of the tribe of Asad, was the first Shiʿī to have organized a movement of a specifically bāṭinī type, namely, esoteric and gnostic. For quite some time, he was an intimate associate of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, who had appointed him as his chief dāʾī in Kūfa, the centre of Jaʿfar’s partisans whom the imām visited occasionally from Medina. Abūʾl-Khaṭṭāb acquired many followers of his own, known as the Khāṭṭābiyya, while he remained a zealous disciple of the Imām Jaʿfar and made exaggerated claims about him, in addition to holding other extremist views. As expected, the situation of this outspoken disciple eventually became intolerably dangerous to his quiescent and dissimulating imām. Consequently, Abūʾl-Khaṭṭāb, who had apparently found one of the imām’s sons, Ismāʿīl, responsive to his militant views and objectives, was accused of erring and was publicly cursed by Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. This repudiation, which probably took place soon after al-Manṣūr’s accession in Dhuʾl-Ḥijja 136/June 754, caused great consternation among the imām’s followers. Shortly afterwards, in 138/755-756, seventy of Abūʾl-Khaṭṭāb’s enthusiastic supporters, in the company of their
denounced leader, assembled in the mosque of Kūfā under obscure circumstances and possibly for rebellious purposes. They were attacked and massacred by the troops of the city's alert governor, ʿĪsā b. Mūsā, who later crushed the revolt of the Ḥasanid brothers. Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb was arrested and then crucified on the governor's orders. On the death of Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb, who had remained loyal to Jaʿfar al-Šādiq till the very end, the Khaṭṭābiyya, identified by al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qumī with the nascent Ismāʿīliyya, split into several groups. Some of the Khaṭṭābis transferred their allegiance to Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, the eponym of the Ismāʿīliyya and a close associate of the radical Shiʿis in his father's following, and to the latter's son Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. Further discussion of these developments belongs in our next chapter. Suffice it to say here that with Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb, the early Khaṭṭābiyya, and Ismāʿīl we are already dealing with the immediate milieu that gave rise to proto-Ismāʿīlism.

Only fragmentary information is available on the doctrines upheld by Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb and the early Khaṭṭābis. Before being disavowed, Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb claimed to be the deputy and wasī of the Imām Jaʿfar who had allegedly taught him the Greatest Name of God (ism Allāh al-aʿzam), with its miraculous implications. Aside from speculating about broad issues, like other Ghulāt, Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb and his disciples seem to have been particularly concerned with spiritual ranking and spiritual adoption. They ranked persons as angels, prophets, divine messengers, or even gods, though not in real rivalry with the one God, Allāh, but rather as His representatives. Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb is said to have taught that at all times there must be two prophets, one speaking (nāṭiq) and the other silent (ṣāmit); in Muḥammad's time, he had been the speaking prophet and ʿAlī the silent one, and now Jaʿfar and Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb were, respectively, the speaking and silent prophets. The early Khaṭṭābis preached the divinity of the imāms, on the basis of the divine light or nūr inherited by them. They are also credited with emphasizing the bāṭinī taʿwil, the esoteric or allegorical interpretation of the Qurʾān and the sacred prescriptions; a method adopted and refined to its fullest extent by the Ismāʿīlis. In cosmogony, they replaced the use of the letters of the alphabet, as introduced by al-Mughīra, by their corresponding numerical values. Some of the ideas or terminologies introduced or utilized by Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb were also adopted by the early Ismāʿīlis who, like the Khaṭṭābis, were preoccupied with esotericism, cyclicism, hierarchism, and symbolic exegesis.

Such were the circumstances under which Jaʿfar al-Šādiq appealed to the
diffuse Shi'i sentiments, following decades of defeats, tragedies and martyrdom for the loyal partisans of the 'Alid cause. They served to strengthen his imamate, while setting Imāmī Shi‘ism well on its way towards acquiring its sectarian character. Having consolidated Shi‘ism and established a solid foundation for its further doctrinal development, Abū 'Abd Allāh Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, the last imām recognized by both the Twelvers and the Ismā‘ilīs, being the sixth one for the former and the fifth for the latter, died (or was poisoned according to some Shi‘is, on the orders of the caliph al-Ma‘ṣūr) in 148/765. He was buried in Medina, in the Baqī‘ cemetery, next to his father, grandfather and al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, whose tombs were destroyed by the Wahhābīs in modern times. The dispute over the Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq's succession, causing historic splits in his following, marks the official beginning of what was to become known as the Ismā‘īli movement.
Early Ismāʿilism, which in Corbin's words represents the period of fermentation and incubation of the Ismāʿīli movement,\(^1\) is the most obscure major phase in the entire history of Ismāʿilism. It extends from the proto-Ismāʿīli origins of the movement, in the middle of the 2nd/8th century, to the establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate in the year 297/909, a period of almost one and a half centuries. Little reliable information is available on the history and doctrines of the early Ismāʿīlis who contributed so much to the success and intellectual development of their movement. As a result, many aspects of early Ismāʿilism continue to be shrouded in uncertainty, causing irreconcilable disagreements among scholars regarding some vital issues. The late Asaf Fyzee summed up this situation well in 1969, noting that 'we are faced not so much with fact and history as with legend and myth; conjecture and hypothesis; the passions and prejudices of the historians...\(^2\) Needless to recall that at least until a few decades ago, research problems were accentuated by the fact that anti-Ismāʿīli texts constituted the main sources of information on the subject.

The particular difficulties of studying the early Ismāʿīlis stem partly from the general dearth of accurate information on Shiʿism during the early 'Abbāsid period, when the major Shiʿī sects of Ithnāʿashariyya and Ismāʿiliyya, then in the process of being formed, were for the most part severely persecuted and as such had to resort to taqiyya and underground existence. More significantly, however, the persistence of research difficulties has been due to the fact that few genuine Ismāʿīli sources have survived from this early period. It is highly probable that the early Ismāʿīlis, living in an extremely hostile milieu, did not produce any substantial volume of literature, preferring instead to propagate their doctrines mainly by word of mouth. The modern rediscovery of Ismāʿili literature has confirmed this suspicion. It seems that the early Ismāʿīlis
produced only a few treatises which circulated mainly among the most trusted members of their community. Even then, however, utmost effort was made to conceal the identity of the authors. Another point to be noted here is that the meagre literary output of the early Ismāʿīlīs soon became obsolete and was subjected to censorship by the Fāṭimids; not only because the earlier works appeared rather crude compared to the elaborate treatises of the Fāṭimid period but, more importantly, because some of the views contained in them were in conflict with the official Fāṭimid doctrines. Nevertheless, a small collection of Ismāʿīlī texts from the pre-Fāṭimid period has survived to the present day. These include some fragments from the Kitāb al-rushd waʾl-hīdāya, attributed to the celebrated Ismāʿīlī dāʾī Ibn Ḥawshab, known as Mašūr al-Yaman (d. 302/914); and the Kitāb al-ʿālim waʾl-ghulām which, if not written by Ibn Ḥawshab or his son Jaʿfar, does apparently belong to the same school that produced the preceding item.  

At any rate, the production of Ismāʿīlī literature on a much larger scale occurred only after the accession of the Fāṭimids when the great Ismāʿīlī authors and dāʾīs embarked on their activities. A good portion of this literature has now become available to researchers. Unfortunately, it has also become clear that Ismāʿīlī sources, being essentially religious and philosophical in their character, contain little historical information, especially on the initial period of the movement. The earliest historical work in Ismāʿīlī literature is the Ifīṭḥāl al-daʿwa of the famous al-Qāḍī al-Nuʾmān (d. 363/974), who served the first four Fāṭimid caliphs in different capacities. This work, completed in 346/957, covers the immediate background to the establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate; it was used as the main source in all the subsequent Ismāʿīlī (and some non-Ismāʿīlī) writings on the subject. Furthermore, only one general history of Ismāʿīlism seems to have been written by an Ismāʿīlī; the ʿUyūn al-akhbār of Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468), the 19th Ṭāyyībī dāʾī in Yaman. This is a seven-volume history from the time of the Prophet until the opening phases of the Ṭāyyībī daʿwa in Yaman. In all these Ismāʿīlī historical works, the opening stage of the Ismāʿīlī movement is treated with great obscurity. For this earliest phase, the brief accounts of the Imāmī heresiographers al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi provide our main sources of information.  

The first Western orientalist who collected much valuable information on the early Ismāʿīlīs, particularly on the so-called Qarmatīs (al-Qarāmitha) of Bahrayn, was de Goeje. But the meticulous researches of this Dutch scholar, who also edited a number of Muslim historical and geographical
works, anteceded the modern access to Ismāʿīli sources. Consequently, like de Sacy and other leading orientalists of the nineteenth century, he had to rely mainly on anti-Ismāʿīli writings. With modern progress in Ismāʿīli studies, we have now acquired a much better understanding of early Ismāʿīlism, thanks especially to the pioneering labours of Massignon, Ivanow and Lewis, and to the more recent contributions of Stern and Madelung. The latter two specialists have also done much to clarify the picture of early Ismāʿīlism produced by the later Ismāʿīlis, who no longer subscribed to all the aims and doctrines of the earlier revolutionary phase of the movement.

Before commencing our detailed discussion of early Ismāʿīlism, a few words are in order concerning the name al-Ismāʿīliyya, which apparently was never used by the early Ismāʿīlis themselves. This designation, as we shall see, owes its origins to heresiographical works, notably those of al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummi. It may be added that the name al-Qarāmiṭa, originally belonging to only one section of the movement, had soon come to be applied in a wider and derogatory sense to the entire Ismāʿīli movement. The early Ismāʿīlis, when not referred to abusively as the malāḥida, were normally denominated as Qarmaṭis or Bāṭinīs by their contemporaries. They themselves, however, seem to have designated their movement simply as al-daʿwa, 'the mission', or more formally as al-daʿwa al-hādiya, 'the rightly-guiding mission'. Such expressions, stressing the attitude of the sectarians towards their movement and their divine duty to appeal for the allegiance of other Muslims, continued to be utilized by the Ismāʿīlis, in preference to al-Ismāʿīliyya, through the Fāṭimid and later times. For instance, aside from appearing in the works of al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, who used the title Iftīḥā al-daʿwa for his book describing the beginnings of Ismāʿīlī propaganda in Yaman and North Africa, they are mentioned in some letters or epistles of the eighth Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustaṣir, written between 469/1076 and 481/1089 to the pro-Fāṭimid Ṣulayḥid rulers of Yaman; in the already-noted epistle of another Fāṭimid caliph, al-ʿAmīr, addressed around 516/1122 to the Nizārī Ismāʿīlis, and in numerous earlier and later Ismāʿīli works.

The history of Ismāʿīlism as an independent movement may be traced to the dispute over the succession to the Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, who died in 148/765. According to the majority of the available sources, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq had designated his son Ismāʿīl as his successor, by the rule of the naṣṣ. There can be no doubt about the authenticity of this designation, which forms the basis of the claims of the Ismāʿīliyya and which should have
settled the question of al-Ṣādiq’s succession in due course. But, as related in the majority of the sources, Ismā’īl died before his father, and his death raised some questions in the minds of some of al-Ṣādiq’s followers who did not understand how a divinely guided imām could be fallible regarding so crucial a matter as naṣṣ. A group of these Imāmī Shi‘īs, having become doubtful about al-Ṣādiq’s ‘ilm and his own claim to the imāmāte, had already left him during his lifetime.13 Anti-Ismā’īli sources also add that Ismā’īl had been deprived of his succession rights due to his indulgence in drink. Such reports about Ismā’īl’s dipsomania and his disavowal by his father, especially as related by the Twelver sources, may represent later fabrications by those who did not accept the Ismā’īli line of imāms.14 As shall be seen, the Imām al-Ṣādiq had been apprehensive of Ismā’īl for the reason of the latter’s association with extremist circles. It is not absolutely certain whether Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq designated another of his sons after Ismā’īl’s death, although the later Twelver Shi‘īs claimed such a naṣṣ for Miṣṣ b. Ja‘far, the younger half-brother of Ismā’īl, producing several ḥadīths to this effect.15 However, the fact remains that three of al-Ṣādiq’s surviving sons simultaneously claimed his succession, while none of them could convincingly prove to have been the beneficiary of a second naṣṣ. As a result, the Imām al-Ṣādiq’s Shi‘ī partisans split into six groups, two of which constituted the nucleus of the nascent Ismā’iliyya.16

A small group refused to believe in al-Ṣādiq’s death and awaited his reappearance as the Mahdī; they were called the Nāwūsiyya after their leader, a certain ‘Abd Allāh (or ‘Ijlān) b. al-Nāwūs. A few others recognized Muḥammad b. Ja‘far, known as al-Dībāj, the younger full-brother of Mūsā; they became denominates as the Shumayṭiyya (Sumayṭiyya), after their leader Yahyā b. Abīl-Shumayṭ (al-Sumayṭ). Muḥammad al-Dībāj revolted unsuccessfully in 200/815–816 against the caliph al-Ma’mūn (198–218/813–833), and died soon afterwards in 203/818. But the majority of al-Ṣādiq’s partisans now accepted his eldest surviving son ‘Abd Allāh al-Aftāḥ, the full-brother of Ismā’īl, as their new imām. ‘Abd Allāh seems to have claimed a second naṣṣ from his father; and his adherents, the Aftāḥiyya, or Faṭḥiyya, cited a ḥadīth from the Imām al-Ṣādiq to the effect that the imāmāte must be transmitted through the eldest son of the imām. At any rate, when ‘Abd Allāh died, about seventy days after the death of his father, the bulk of his supporters went over to Mūsā b. Ja‘far, later called al-Kāẓim, who had already been acknowledged as his father’s successor by some of the Imāmiyya.

Thus, Mūsā al-Kāẓim soon received the allegiance of the majority of the
Early Ismāʿīlimism

Imāmī Shiʿīs, including the most renowned scholars in al-Ṣādiq's entourage, such as Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and Muʾmin al-Ṭāq who had supported Mūsā from the start. Mūsā, later counted as the seventh imām of the Twelvers, refrained from all political activity and was more quiescent than his father. He was, in fact, one of the two 'Alids who reportedly refused to support al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, known as Ṣāḥib Fakhkh. This Ḥasanid, a grandnephew of `Abd Allāh al-Mahd, revolted in the Hijāz during the short caliphate of al-Hādī (169-170/785-786), and was killed at Fakhkh near Mecca, together with many other 'Alids, in 169/786. Nevertheless, Mūsā was not spared the Shi'i persecutions of the 'Abbasids. He was arrested several times and finally died (possibly having been poisoned) in 183/799, whilst imprisoned at Baghdad on the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd's orders. Subsequently, one group of Mūsā's partisans acknowledged the imāmate of his eldest son ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā, who later became the heir apparent and son-in-law of the caliph al-Maʿmūn. ʿAlī al-Riḍā died in Ṭūs in 203/818, and most of his followers traced the imāmate through four more imāms, the direct descendants of al-Riḍā, namely, Muḥammad al-Taqi (d. 220/835), ʿAlī al-Naqī (d. 254/868), al-Ḥasan al-ʾAskārī (d. 260/874), and Muḥammad al-Mahdī (b. 255/869). This sub-sector of the Imāmiyya eventually became known as the Ithnāʿashariyya, or the Twelver Shiʿa; referring to those Imāmīs who recognize a line of twelve imāms, starting with ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalīb and ending with Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Mahdī, Lord of the Time (Ṣāḥib al-Zamān) whose emergence or ẓuhūr is still being awaited.

Two other groups supporting the claims of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar and constituting the proto-Ismāʿīlis, issued from amongst the Imāmī Shiʿī following of the Imām al-Ṣādiq. These Kūfī groups had actually come into being earlier, on the death of Ismāʿīl; a date mentioned by Ivanow and Corbin as the official beginning of Ismāʿīlism. However, these proto-Ismāʿīl or proto-Ismāʿīli groups seceded from the rest of the Imāmiyya only after al-Ṣādiq's death. One group, denying the death of Ismāʿīl during his father's lifetime, maintained that he was the true imām after al-Ṣādiq; they further believed that Ismāʿīl remained alive and would eventually return as the Mahdi. These Shiʿīs defended their claims by noting that al-Ṣādiq, who as an imām could speak only the truth, had done nothing to revoke Ismāʿīl's succession rights to the imāmate; accordingly, they had no reason for renouncing their allegiance to Ismāʿīl. They believed that the Imām al-Ṣādiq had announced Ismāʿīl's death merely as a ruse to protect
his son, whom he had hidden because he feared for his safety. Al-
Nawbakhtī and al-Qummi call the members of this group, recognizing
Ismāʿīl as their Imām-Mahdī, the ‘pure Ismāʿiliyya’ (al-Ismāʿiliyya al-
khāliṣa). Some later heresiographers, notably al-Shahrastānī, designate
this group as al-Ismāʿiliyya al-wāqifa, referring to those who stopped their
line of imāms with Ismāʿīl.

There was a second group of pro- Iṣmāʿīl Shiʿis who, affirming Iṣmāʿīl’s
death during the lifetime of al-Ṣādiq, now recognized Muḥammad b.
Ismāʿīl as their imām. They held that he was the rightful successor to
Ismāʿīl and that the Imām al-Ṣādiq had personally designated him as such,
after Iṣmāʿīl’s death. According to these partisans of Muḥammad, the
imāmīate could not be transferred from brother to brother after the case of
the Imāms al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. This was why they rejected the claims
of Mūsā and other brothers of Iṣmāʿīl, as they did that of Muḥammad b. al-
Ḥanafiyya, who, according to them, had falsely claimed the imāmīate in
rivalry with ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-ʿAbidīn. The Imāmī heresiogra-
phers call this group the Muḥārakiyya, named supposedly after their
leader al-Muḥārak, a mawlā of Iṣmāʿīl. However, Ivanow has shown that
in all probability al-Muḥārak (meaning ‘The Blessed’) was the epithet of
Iṣmāʿīl himself, citing some passages from the famous Iṣmāʿīlī daʿī of the
4th/10th century, al-Sijistānī, in which Iṣmāʿīl is repeatedly referred to by
this name. More instances of the application of the name al-Muḥārak to
Iṣmāʿīl have now come to light, lending strong support to
Ivanow’s hypothesis. It seems likely then that the Muḥārakiyya were at first the
upolders of Iṣmāʿīl’s imāmīate, and it was only after al-Ṣādiq’s death that
the bulk of Iṣmāʿīl’s supporters rallied to the side of Muḥammad b. Iṣmāʿīl
and recognized him as their new imām. At the same time, Iṣmāʿīl had to be
elevated retrospectively to the imāmīate. In other words, it was main-
tained that while al-Ṣādiq was still alive, the imāmīate had passed from him
to Iṣmāʿīl. At any rate, it is certain that al-Muḥārakiyya was the original
name of the nascent Iṣmāʿiliyya.

Al-Qummi identifies al-Iṣmāʿiliyya al-khāliṣa with the Khaṭṭābiyya; and
al-Nawbakhtī has a similar statement. Furthermore, both authors, intent
on showing the influence of the Khaṭṭābīs on the nascent Iṣmāʿiliyya,
report that a group of Abu’l-Khaṭṭāb’s followers after his death joined the
supporters of Muḥammad b. Iṣmāʿīl, claiming that the spirit of the Imām
al-Ṣādiq had passed into Abu’l-Khaṭṭāb and from him, to Muḥammad b.
Iṣmāʿīl. Many later sources, too, speak of close connections between the
eyrly Iṣmāʿīlis and the Khaṭṭābīs. The exact nature of the relationships
between *al-İsmā‘iliyya al-khāliṣa* and the Mubārakiyya on the one hand, and the Khaṭṭābiyya on the other, remains rather obscure. It is certain, however, that all these groups in the following of the İmām al-Şādiq were comprised of radical Shi‘is who provided the milieus in which proto-İsmā‘ilism originated.

It will be useful at this juncture to know more about the life and activities of İsmā‘il himself. For the İsmā‘ilis, he is an İmām; the sixth one in the series. As such, he is highly revered by them, but unfortunately, İsmā‘ili sources such as the *'Uyun al-akhbār* contain little historical information of any value concerning him. On the other hand, the Twelver sources, which are better informed than the Sunni sources regarding the Shi‘i sub-sects, are basically hostile towards İsmā‘il and the claims raised on his behalf. The Twelvers, who recognize Müsā al-Kāzim as their İmām after al-Şādiq, are interested in upholding Müsā’s rights against İsmā‘il.29 It is not surprising, therefore, that they regard İsmā‘il as a reprobate. We have to keep these reservations in mind in utilizing the Twelver references to İsmā‘il, about whom our knowledge is extremely limited.

Abū Muḥammad İsmā‘il b. Ja‘far (al-Mubārak) and his full-brother ‘Abd Allāh were the eldest sons of the İmām al-Şādiq by his first wife Fāṭima, a granddaughter of the İmām al-Hasan b. ‘Ali. It is related that al-Şādiq did not take a second wife as long as Fāṭima was alive. As a result, there was a significant age difference between ‘Abd Allāh and İsmā‘il on the one hand, and Müsā, Ishāq and Muḥammad, al-Şādiq’s sons from a slave concubine called Ḥamīda, on the other. İsmā‘il’s birth date is unknown; but apparently he was the second son of al-Şādiq, born between 80 and 83/699–702, and was also some twenty-five years older than Müsā, who was born in 128/745–746. It seems likely then that İsmā‘il was born sometime during the initial years of the second Islamic century.31 The exact date and the circumstances of İsmā‘il’s death also remain unknown. According to some İsmā‘ili authors, İsmā‘il survived the İmām al-Şādiq. However, the majority of sources report that he predeceased his father in Medina, and was buried in the Baqi‘ cemetery. Ḥasan b. Nūḥ al-Bharūchī, an Indian İsmā‘ili author, relates visiting İsmā‘il’s grave in 904/1498.32 Many İsmā‘ili and non-İsmā‘ili sources repeat the story of how, before and during İsmā‘il’s funeral procession, the İmām al-Şādiq made deliberate attempts to show the face of his dead son to witnesses,33 though some of the same sources also relate reports indicating that İsmā‘il was seen in Baṣra soon afterwards. There are few other indisputable facts available on İsmā‘il’s biography. Al-Kashshī relates several versions of an event
regarding how Ismā'īl acted on behalf of his father to protest against the killing of al-Mu'allā b. Khunays, one of Ja'far al-Sādiq's extremist followers. The execution of al-Mu'allā, which greatly angered the imām, had been ordered by the governor of Medina, Dā'ūd b. 'Ali. As the latter's term of office lasted only a few months during 133/750, it is possible to infer that Ismā'īl was still alive in that year. One source actually places his death in the year 133 A.H. Other sources, however, mention later years, the latest one being 145/762–763. In addition, in the accounts of Ismā'īl's death and burial, al-Manṣūr, who succeeded his brother in 136/754, is usually named as the ruling 'Abbāsid caliph. It is, therefore, safe to conclude that Ismā'īl's premature death occurred sometime during 136–145/754–763, probably soon after 136 A.H.

Regarding Ismā'īl's activities, reference has already been made to his contacts with the extremist Shi‘is in his father's following. These contacts are clearly alluded to in several traditions reported by al-Kaşshi, showing Ismā'īl's popularity amongst the radical Shi‘is and his close association with them, especially with al-Muʃafdaʃal b. 'Umar al-Ju'fī, a money lender. At the same time, these traditions reveal al-Šādiq's dissatisfaction with the radical Shi‘is who were leading his son astray. Al-Muʃafdaʃal, the supposed author of several works, was the transmitter of certain gnostic teachings and the cyclical history associated with the earlier Kaysānis; he was an extremist disciple of al-Šādiq and initially an associate of Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb. He is also mentioned as the leader of one of the sub-groups, the Mufaʃdaʃaliyya, into which the Khaṭṭābiyya split after Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb's disavowal by the Imām al-Šādiq. However, unlike the other four Khaṭṭābī sub-groups, the Mufaʃdaʃaliyya repudiated Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb. And Ja'far al-Šādiq, though making some uncomplimentary remarks about him, never openly denounced al-Muʃafdaʃal, as he did in the case of other Khaṭṭābī leaders. In fact, there are reports to the effect that Ja'far al-Šādiq appointed al-Muʃafdaʃal to guide his Kūfan followers, or at least those amongst them who had supported Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb, subsequent to the imām's rift with the latter. In any event, al-Muʃafdaʃal later became an adherent of Müsā al-Kāẓīm during whose imāmate he died, although he did not lend support to the condemnation of Ismā'īl by certain Imāmī circles. According to another report, Ismā'īl was evidently involved in a militant anti-regime plot in collaboration with several others, including Bassām b. 'Abd Allāh al-Šayrafī, another extremist Shi‘i engaged in money lending in Kūfā. The caliph al-Manṣūr summoned Ismā'īl along with the Imām al-Šādiq, as well as Bassām, to his administrative capital at
al-Ḥira near Kūfa. The suspected plotters were taken before the caliph, who had Bassām executed but spared Ismā‘il. Massion places the date of this event in the year 138/755, and suggests that Bassām had the responsibility of financing the alleged plot.\(^4\) This is one of the occasions reported by the Imāmī sources, during which al-Ṣādiq expressed his strong disapproval of Ismā‘īl’s activities.

All this evidence confirms the existence of close relations between Ismā‘īl and the radical circles in al-Ṣādiq’s following; and it definitely places the young Ismā‘īl amongst those Shi‘is who were not satisfied with their imām’s conservatism and passivity. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq could not approve of such activities that were at variance with his efforts to consolidate Shi‘ism on a quiescent basis. As noted, some Imāmī sources do identify the early Ḥaṭṭābiyya, one of the most extremist Shi‘i groups, with the nascent Ismā‘iliyya. In modern times, too, this identification has been maintained by certain scholars, notably Massion and Corbin.\(^4\) Massion has in fact suggested that Abu‘l-KHaunted was the spiritual or adoptive father of Ismā‘īl, whence his kunya of Abū Ismā‘īl.\(^4\) In this connection, he formulated a general hypothesis, contending that since the beginning of the second Islamic century, the expression anta minnā ahl al-bayt (you are from the Prophet’s family) purportedly used by the Prophet in reference to Salmān al-Fārisī, and as reported in a hadith, had acquired a ritual value indicating ‘spiritual adoption’ amongst the revolutionary Shi‘is, for whom real family ties were established through spiritual parentage, adoption or initiation. Lewis, too, accepts the idea of ‘spiritual adoption’ and envisages a close collaboration between Ismā‘īl and Abu‘l-Khaṭṭāb who, according to him, worked for the creation of a revolutionary Shi‘i sect comprised of all the minor Shi‘i groups, around the imāmate of Ismā‘īl and his descendants.\(^4\)

However, such inter-connections as may have existed between the proto-Ismā‘īlis and the early Ḥaṭṭābīs should not be exaggerated, especially in the doctrinal domain, although certain ideas and terminologies attributed to Abu‘l-Khaṭṭāb and his followers were subsequently adopted by the early Ismā‘īlis.\(^4\) The Ḥaṭṭābiyya, as noted, believed in the divinity of the imāms and also held that al-Ṣādiq’s spirit had passed to Abu‘l-Khaṭṭāb, while some of them maintained that after the latter’s death this spirit had devolved to Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl. The Mubārakīyya and their successors, on the other hand, did not entertain such beliefs; they simply upheld the imāmate of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl, who later came to be regarded as the awaited Mahdi by the bulk of the early Ismā‘īlis. Fātimid
Ismāʿīlism, in fact, regarded Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb as a heretic and repudiated the Khattābiyya.⁴⁶

There is, moreover, the enigmatic *Umm al-kitāb*,⁴⁷ preserved by the Nizārī Ismāʿīlis of Central Asia, in which the Khattābis are mentioned as the founders of Ismāʿīlism. More specifically, it states that the Ismāʿīlī religion (*madhhab*) is that founded by the children (*farzandān*, referring probably to disciples) of Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb, who gave their lives for love of Ismāʿīl, the son of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, and it will continue through the cycle of cycles (*dawr-i dawāʾir*).⁴⁸ This book, extant only in an archaic Persian, contains the discourses of the Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir in response to questions raised by an anachronistic group of disciples, including Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī, Jaʿfar (Jābir) al-Juʿfī and Muḥammad b. al-Mufad-dal. The Imām al-Bāqir appears here in the guise of a five-year-old child, strongly reminiscent of certain apocryphal Gospels relating to Jesus.⁴⁹ The *Umm al-kitāb*, containing the doctrines of certain Shiʿī Ghulūt, is a syncretic work reflecting the influences of diverse non-Islamic religious traditions and schools of thought, such as Valentinian Gnosticism and Manichaeism. However, the author (or authors) and the date of the composition of this treatise remain unknown. According to Ivanow, it must have been written before the beginning of the 5th/11th century. Corbin assigns its origins to those Shiʿī milieus in the 2nd/8th century which produced proto-Ismāʿīlism, while Madelung is of the opinion that the final redaction of this book probably dates from the earlier part of the 6th/12th century.⁵⁰

Recent scholarship, by examining the terminology and the cosmogony of the *Umm al-kitāb* which is expressed in the form of a gnostic myth, has revealed that the treatise was in all probability produced by an early Shiʿī group called al-Mukhammisa.⁵¹ This inference is supported by other doctrinal features of the treatise, such as its endorsement of metempsychosis, and by the important role it assigns to Salmān al-Fārisī, whose gnostic name here is al-Salsal. In fact Salmān and Abuʿl-Khaṭṭāb are mentioned jointly and repeatedly in a sacred formula throughout the text. The Mukhammisa or the Pentadists were a group of the Shiʿī Ghulūt who originated in Kūfah during the second half of the 2nd/8th century, and subsequently survived for some time, like the Khattābiyya, on the fringe of the Imāmiyya. Al-Qummi, the only early heresiographer who discusses the Mukhammisa in some detail, identifies them with the Khattābiyya.⁵² According to his account, they preached that the Prophet Muḥammad was God, who had appeared in five different bodies or persons, namely, Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. In
this divine pentad, however, only the person of Muḥammad was real and represented the true meaning (ma'nā); for he was the first person created and the first speaker (nāṭiq). They also maintained that Muḥammad had been Ādām, Nūh, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and ʿĪsā, appearing continuously among the Arabs and non-Arabs; and Salmān was the bāb, or gate, who always appeared with Muḥammad. These and other doctrines of the Mukhammadisa are strongly represented in the Umm al-kitāb.

Al-Qummi describes a variant of the Mukhammadisa, the so-called 'Ulyā'iyya or 'Albā'iyya, followers of Bashshār al-Sha'īrī, a Kūfī ghālī who was reportedly repudiated by Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.53 The members of this group upheld the divinity of 'Alī instead of that of Muḥammad, and this was the main point distinguishing them from the rest of the Mukhammadisa. The doctrines of the Mukhammadisa, especially those held by the 'Ulyā'iyya, provided the basis of the beliefs of the later Nuṣayriyya, one of the most famous extremist Shīʿī sects.54 The cosmological and eschatological ideas of the Nuṣayrīs, named after Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr (d. 270/883) who initially followed the tenth īmām of the Twelvers but who later made exaggerated claims for himself, are equally present in the Umm al-kitāb. The Nuṣayrīs, who are still found in Syria, where for centuries they have maintained rivalries with their Nizārī Ismāʿīlī neighbours, worship 'Alī as God and maintain that Muḥammad was his prophet. Besides these two, Salmān assumes a special rank for them.55 If 'Alī is the original sense or the true meaning (ma'nā), and Muḥammad his name (ism), then Salmān is the gate (bāb) leading to the 'name' and the 'meaning'. In Nuṣayrī thought, this triad is designated symbolically by 'āyn-mīm-sīn, standing for the first letters of the names 'Alī, Muḥammad and Salmān, and corresponding to ma'nā-ism-bāb. Such gnostic designations, and the use of the mystical properties of the letters of the alphabet, are also important features of the Umm al-kitāb.

The technical terminology of the Mukhammadisa-'Ulyā'iyya tradition is equally incorporated into the already-noted Kitāb al-hafti, which is essentially a Mufaddali-Nuṣayri text. This book, also known amongst the Tayyibīs, found its way to the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs, who seized the Nuṣayrī fortresses and settlements of central Syria, recruiting also new converts from the defeated community, in the first half of the 6th/12th century. The Ismāʿīlīs came to view the book in question as their own, though no Ismāʿīlī ideas are found in it. The Umm al-kitāb of the Central Asian Nizārīs may have had a similar fate. It is safe to conclude that the Umm al-kitāb originated, probably during the second half of the 2nd/8th century, in the
Shi'i Ghulât milieus of southern Irâq which gave rise to the Mukhammadîsa and later to the Nuṣāríyya traditions. It represents the earliest extant Shi'i record of the Mukhammadîsa-‘Ulya‘iyya type, which is quite distinct from the beliefs of the early Isma‘îlîs, especially regarding creation. Evidently, this text was eventually adopted into Isma‘îli literature, and, under obscure circumstances, found its way into the private libraries of the Nizâriis of Shughnân, Wakhân and Chitral in the upper Oxus, where these sectarianis have claimed the book as their own. Filippani-Ronconi has postulated a complex hypothesis regarding the origins of this work and how it came to be located in Central Asia.56

As in the case of Isma‘îl, little is known about Muḥammad b. Isma‘îl, the seventh imâm of the Isma‘îliyya. No specific details are related about him in Muslim historical literature, as he did not participate in any anti-‘Abbâsid revolt. In Isma‘îli literature, he is treated briefly and with numerous anachronisms. The relevant information contained in Isma‘îli sources has been collected by Idrîs ‘Imâd al-Dîn, who provides the most detailed biographical account of him.57 Muḥammad was the eldest son of Isma‘îl who had at least one other son named ‘Aţî. He was also the eldest grandson of the Imâm al-Ṣâdiq and, according to Isma‘îli tradition, was twenty-six years old at the time of the latter’s death.58 Furthermore, all sources agree that he was older than his uncle Mûsâ by about eight years. On the basis of these details, Muḥammad must have been born around 120/738. The Dastûr al-munajâmin, in fact, places his birth in Dhu‘l-Ḥijja 121/November 739.59 He was the imâm of the Mubârakiyya and the eldest male member of the Imâm al-Ṣâdiq’s family, after the death of his uncle ‘Abd Allâh al-Afṭâh. As such, he enjoyed a certain degree of respect and seniority in this Fâṭimid branch of the ‘Alid family.60 However, after the recognition of the imâmâte of Mûsâ al-Kâzîm by the majority of al-Ṣâdiq’s followers, Muḥammad’s position became rather untenable in his native Hîjâz where his uncle and chief rival Mûsâ also lived. It was probably then, not long after al-Ṣâdiq’s death, that Muḥammad left Medina for the east and went into hiding; henceforth, he acquired the epithet al-Maktûm, the Hidden. As a result, he was saved from persecution by the ‘Abbâsids, while continuing to maintain close contacts with the Mubârakiyya who like most other radical Shi‘i groups of the time were centred in Kûfâ. Different sources mention various localities and regions as Muḥammad’s final destination; but it is certain that he first went to southern Irâq and then to Persia.61 According to the later Isma‘îlîs, this emigration marks the beginning of the period of concealment (dawr al-satr) in early Isma‘îlîsm,
the concealment ending with the establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate.

Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl seems to have spent the latter part of his life in Khūzistān, in southwestern Persia, where he had a certain number of supporters and from where he despatched his own daʿīs to adjoining areas. The exact date of Muḥammad’s death remains unknown. But it is almost certain that he died during the caliphate of the celebrated Hārūn al-Rashid (170-193/786-809), perhaps soon after 179/795–796, the year in which al-Rashid, continuing the anti-ʿAlid policy of his predecessors, arrested Mūsā al-Kāẓim in Medina and banished him to ʿIrāq as a prisoner. The Twelver sources, which are hostile to Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, maintain that it was he who betrayed Mūsā to the ʿAbbāsids, though they also relate the story of a reconciliation between these two Fāṭimid s prior to Muḥammad’s departure for ʿIrāq. Muḥammad had at least two sons, Ismāʿīl and Jaʿfar, while he lived openly in Medina; after his emigration, he had four more sons, including ʿAbd Allāh, who, according to the later Ismāʿīlis, was his rightful successor.

Almost nothing is known about the early history of Ismāʿīlim after these proto-Ismāʿīli beginnings. On the basis of the opening remarks of al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī on the Qarāmīta, and in view of the later history of the sect, however, it may be assumed that the Mubārakiyya split into two groups on the death of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. One small and obscure group apparently traced the imāmat in the posterity of the deceased imām. However, the separate existence of this group has not been recorded in any contemporary source, until ʿUbayd Allāh – or ʿAbd Allāh according to the Ismāʿīlis who reject the diminutive form of his name – the future leader of the movement, openly claimed the imāmat of the Ismāʿīlis for himself and his ancestors. It should be mentioned in passing that in using the name ʿUbayd Allāh instead of ʿAbd Allāh in this book, in accordance with popular usage, we do not intend to be pejorative. There was a second group, still small but comprising the bulk of the Mubārakiyya, who refused to acknowledge the death of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. For these sectarians, identified by the Imāmī heresiographers as the immediate predecessors of the Qarmāṭīs, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl was regarded as their seventh and last imām, who was expected to reappear as the Mahdī or Qāʾim, ‘riser’. It should be added that the terms al-Mahdī and al-Qāʾim are basically synonymous in their Shiʿī usage, though al-Qāʾim came to be preferred by the Ismāʿīlis, especially after the accession of ʿUbayd Allāh to the Fāṭimid Caliphate. Such sects of the so-called Wāqīfīyya, ‘those who stand fast’ by their last imām, upholding his
imminent return as the Mahdi to fill the earth with justice, were quite numerous during the 2nd/8th century. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, who had a considerable following, could easily have qualified for the position of the eschatological Mahdi.

More details of the original beliefs of the Ismāʿīlis can be derived from what al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī relate about the Qarmatīs. These writers do not mention any other specific Ismāʿīli group of their time, and their accounts antedate 'Ubayd Allāh’s open claim to the imāmate and the splitting up of the movement in 286/899. According to their accounts, the Qarmatīs, who had issued from the Mubārakiyya, limited the number of their imāms to seven, which also explains why the Ismāʿīliyya later acquired the additional denomination of the Sabʿiyya or the Seveners. These imāms were 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who was both an imām and a messenger-prophet (rasūl), al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, Muḥammad b. 'Alī, Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad, and finally Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, who was the Imām al-Qāʾim al-Mahdī and also a messenger-prophet. It is interesting to note that in order to keep within the limit of seven, and starting with 'Alī, both authors omit the name of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar from the series of the imāms recognized by the Qarmatīs. As a result, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl ranks as the seventh imām in the series.

At the same time, however, these Imāmī heresiographers contradict themselves by adding that according to the Qarmatīs, the imāmate had in effect been transferred during the lifetime of the Imām al-Ṣādiq to his son Ismāʿīl, just as the position of God’s emissary and messenger-prophet had passed by divine command at Ghadir Khumm, from Muḥammad to ‘Alī, while the former was still alive. On the basis of this reckoning, Ismāʿīl would have to be counted as an imām, the seventh one, with the result that his son Muḥammad would now become the eighth imām in the series. The matter is not very clear, however. It seems that some Qarmatīs or early Ismāʿīlis included Ismāʿīl as an imām, while others omitted him. In later Ismāʿīli literature, ‘Alī acquires a higher rank than that of an ordinary imām, being regarded as the foundation of the imāmate (asās al-imāma), and Ismāʿīl is always included in the list of the imāms. According to this enumeration, still maintained by the Mustaʿlians, al-Ḥasan is counted as the first imām, with Ismāʿīl and Muḥammad occupying, respectively, the sixth and seventh positions. The latter system of enumeration was somewhat modified by the Nizāris who, emphasizing the equality of all imāms, counted ‘Alī as the first and al-Ḥusayn as the second imām. The Nizāris exclude al-Ḥasan who according to them was a temporary or
trustee (mustawda') imām as distinct from the permanent (mustaqarr) imāms.

In any event, the Qarmatis and their predecessors maintained that Muḥammad b. Iṣma‘īl, who remained alive, was the Qā‘im and the last of the great messenger-prophets. On his reappearance, he would bring a new religious law, abrogating the one announced by the Prophet Muḥammad. The Qarmatis recognized a series of seven such law-announcing (shāri‘) prophets, the so-called ʿulu‘l-ʿazm or the prophets 'with resolution', namely, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ʿĪsā, Muḥammad, ʿAlī, and Muḥammad b. Iṣma‘īl, the last being the seal of the series. The inclusion of ʿAlī in this sequence cannot easily be understood. As the early Iṣma‘īlīs emphasized the distinction between the inward and outward aspects of the religious scriptures and commandments, this inclusion may have been due to the role conceived for ʿAlī as the revealer of the all-important inner (bāṭin) meaning of the Shari‘a delivered by Muḥammad, rather than his having promulgated a religious law of his own, replacing Muḥammad’s. The latter role was clearly reserved for the Qā‘im Muḥammad b. Iṣma‘īl. Indeed, it cannot be doubted that the bulk of the Iṣma‘īlīs (Qarmaṭīs) originally preached the Mahdism of Muḥammad b. Iṣma‘īl. Aside from the testimony of our Imāmī heresiographers, this is confirmed by the already-mentioned letter of the first Fatimid caliph,69 as well as by the few other extant early Iṣma‘īlī sources. The Kitāb al-rushd, for instance, centres around the idea of the reappearance of the Mahdi, the seventh nāṭiq and the eighth imām whose name is Muḥammad.70 There is another pre-Fatimid Iṣma‘īlī text, the Kitāb al-kashf, a collection of six short treatises, written separately but attributed to Ja‘far b. Maḥsūr al-Yaman who apparently acted only in the capacity of the compiler and editor of the collection. In this work, too, the expectation of the return of the seventh speaker-prophet (nāṭiq) as the Mahdi or Qā‘im, often referred to as the Ṣāhib al-Zamān, plays a significant part.71 In close affinity with the ideas of the early Iṣma‘īlīs, the final chapter of the Umm al-kitāb also contains brief references to the cycles of the seven prophets, the names here being Ādam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ʿĪsā, Muḥammad, and the Qā‘im who, as the last of the prophets, will on his return initiate the seventh and the final cycle (dawr).72

After these obscure and underground beginnings, lasting for almost a century, the Iṣma‘īlī movement suddenly appeared on the historical stage shortly after the middle of the 3rd/9th century. The movement now emerged as a dynamic, revolutionary organization conducting intensive da‘wa activity through a network of da‘īs. Behind this outburst of activity,
one can clearly discern the guiding hands of an energetic and secret central leadership. Stern denies the existence of strict historical continuity between this Ismā'ili movement and the earlier Ismā'ili (or proto-Ismā'ili) group or groups of the 2nd/8th century, although he does allow for some such continuity as best manifested in the role assigned to the figure of Muḥammad b. Ismā'il in early Ismā'ili thought. In any event, the Ismā'ilies who were awaiting the reappearance of Muḥammad b. Ismā'il as the Qā'im now began to attract the attention of the 'Abbāsid officials and the public at large, under the name of al-Qarāmiṭa. In fact, al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi, who as well-informed contemporary writers, describe the situation of the Ismā'īlīs prior to the year 286/899, when a schism occurred in the movement, mention no other Ismā'īli group besides the Qarmātīs. They report that at the time they were writing, there were some 100,000 Qarmātīs concentrated chiefly in the Sawād of Kūfā, Yaman and Yamāma; this figure and the designation al-Qaramita were obviously meant to refer to the whole movement. The Ismā'īli da'wa soon met with unprecedented success; it managed, in a few decades, to spread rapidly from southwestern Persia and southern 'Irāq to several other parts of the Muslim world, including Yaman, Bahrayn, Syria, the Jībāl, Khurāsān, Transoxiana, Sind, and North Africa, where the Ismā'īli Imām was finally installed to a new caliphate.

There are diverse accounts on the beginnings of the Ismā'īli da'wa of the 3rd/9th century, and on the exact religious functions and pedigree of the central leaders who were responsible for organizing and directing the movement. There is the brief and vague official version, sponsored by the Fāṭimid caliphs who censured the extremist aspects of the origins of the sect. This version is summed up in the fourth volume of the 'Uyūn al-akhbār of the dā'i Idrīs who based himself on the few Ismā'īli historical sources produced during the 4th/10th century. There is, on the other hand, the anti-Ismā'īli version of the Sunni pamphleteers and polemists who gave rise to a fanciful 'black legend' regarding early Ismā'īlism and its alleged founder, a diabolical non-'Alid bent on destroying Islam from within. This hostile account can be traced in its main outline to a work written in the refutation of Ismā'īlism by Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Ali b. Rizām (or Razzām) al-Ṭā'ī al-Kūfī who flourished in the opening decades of the 4th/10th century. There is, furthermore, al-Ṭabarī's narrative of the opening phase of the Qarmāṭī movement in 'Irāq. This narrative is based on the report of the interrogation of an Ismā'īli captive (a relative of the dā'i Zikrawayh b. Mihrāwāyh) by an 'Abbāsid official,
Muḥammad b. Dāʿūd al-Jarrāḥ (d. 296/908); an event which took place around 291/903–904.

According to the official Fāṭimid version, the founder of the Fāṭimid dynasty, ʿUbayd Allāh (ʿAbd Allāh) al-Mahdī, was preceded by a series of ‘hidden imāms’ (al-aʿimma al-mastūrīn) who were descendants of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl.⁷⁷ Al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummi, it is true, refer to a subgroup of the Mubārakiyya who maintained the imāamate in the progeny of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. However, as the same writers indicate, the majority of the nascent Ismāʿīliyya, known as the Qārāmiṭa by the middle of the 3rd/9th century, did not recognize any imāms after Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. As we shall see later on, it seems that the ancestors of the Fāṭimids, the central leaders of the Ismāʿīli movement, were initially regarded as the lieutenants or representatives of the Qāʿim; and it was only due to the reform of ʿUbayd Allāh that the imāmate came to be openly claimed for these past leaders. According to this official version, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl appointed as his successor his eldest son ʿAbd Allāh, the first of the second heptad of the Ismāʿīli Imāms. In order to escape ʿAbbāsid persecution, ʿAbd Allāh, who later received the surname al-Raḍī, sought refuge in different parts of Persia and did not reveal his identity and place of residence except to a few trusted associates. Eventually, he settled in Ahwāz, in the province of Khūzistān, whence he later fled to ʿIrāq and then to Salamiyya in central Syria. In Salamiyya, the residence of the imāms and the headquarters of the Ismāʿīli daʿwa for the next few decades, he posed as an ordinary Ḥāshimid, of whom there were many in that locality, and as a merchant.⁷⁸ Before dying in about 212/827–828,⁷⁹ ʿAbd Allāh had designated his son Aḥmad as his successor. Aḥmad, who according to Ismāʿīli tradition was the author of the famous Rasāʿil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, was, in turn, succeeded by his son al-Ḥusayn, and then by the latter’s son ʿAbd Allāh (ʿAli), also called Saʿīd, who later became known as ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī. ʿUbayd Allāh was born in 259 or 260/873–874, and he was about eight years of age when his father died around 268/881–882.⁸⁰ In fact, ʿUbayd Allāh spent many years under the care and tutelage of his paternal uncle and future father-in-law Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, known as Saʿīd al-Khayr and al-Ḥakim with the additional kunya Abuʿl-Shalaghlah (or Shalaʿla’). It is not clear whether or not Muḥammad b. Aḥmad himself had meanwhile succeeded to the leadership of the movement.⁸¹ However, it is reported that before ʿUbayd Allāh took charge of the leadership, his uncle Muḥammad had attempted several times, in vain, to usurp the leadership for his own sons, all of whom died prematurely.⁸²
It is necessary to point out at this juncture that the issue of the genealogy of the Fāṭimid caliphs has been the centre of numerous controversies, some of which seem to defy satisfactory solution. The ancestors of the Fāṭimid, according to the later official doctrine, were the Ismāʾīlī Imāms who descended from Muḥammad b. Ismāʾīl. However, the Ismāʾīlī sources are very reluctant to mention the names of these so-called 'hidden imāms', the links between 'Ubayd Allāh ('Abd Allāh) and Muḥammad b. Ismāʾīl b. Jaʿfar; individuals who lived under obscure circumstances. Their names are, in fact, not to be found in the earliest Ismāʾīlī sources which have so far come to light. Ivanow has interpreted this silence as reflecting an Ismāʾīlī prejudice against 'uncovering those whom God has veiled'. Consequently, there has developed some disagreement among the Ismāʾīlīs concerning the names, number, sequence and the actual descendant of the 'hidden imāms', notwithstanding the traditional Fāṭimid version, namely, Muḥammad b. Ismāʾīl, 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad, Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh, al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad, and 'Ubayd Allāh ('Abd Allāh) b. al-Ḥusayn. The difficulties have been accentuated by the fact that the ancestors of the Fāṭimid who led the Ismāʾīlī movement used pseudonyms to protect their identity, while the enemies of the sect produced their own non-'Alid pedigrees of the Fāṭimid dynasty.

The Fāṭimid caliphs did not clarify matters by their persistent refusal to publish any official genealogy. 'Ubayd Allāh ('Abd Allāh), the only one among them who did make such an attempt, simply added to the confusion. In his letter to the Ismāʾīlī community in Yaman, reproduced from memory at a later date by Jaʿfar b. Maḥrūz b. Yaman, 'Ubayd Allāh explains the nasab or genealogy of the Fāṭimid caliphs, divulging the names of the 'hidden imāms', in the manner he desired them to be known. He does claim Fāṭimid ancestry by declaring himself to be 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. But strangely enough, instead of tracing his descent to Ismāʾīl b. Jaʿfar and his son Muḥammad, he names Jaʿfar's eldest surviving son 'Abd Allāh as his progenitor, whom he regards as the Sāhib al-Ḥaqq or the legitimate successor of the Imām al-Ṣādiq. We shall have more to say on this important letter. Here it suffices to add that, according to 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdi, 'Abd Allāh b. Jaʿfar had called himself Ismāʾīl b. Jaʿfar, for the sake of taqiyya; and similarly each of his successors had assumed the name Muḥammad. Be it as it may, 'Ubayd Allāh's explanation of his ancestry, whatever its merits or authenticity, was not eventually accepted as the official genealogy of the Fāṭimid dynasty by 'Ubayd Allāh's successors.
As noted, there is also an anti-Ismā'īlī version of events and of the Fāṭimid genealogy which can be traced back to Ibn Rizām who, it seems, had access to some early Ismā'īlī sources. The original polemical treatise of Ibn Rizām has been lost, though excerpts of it have been preserved in some later works. It is quoted directly by Ibn al-Nadīm in his famous catalogue of Arabic books completed in 377/987–988. Above all, it was utilized extensively in another anti-Ismā'īlī book written in about 370/980 by the Sharīf Abū'l-Husayn Muḥammad b. 'Alī, known as Akhū Muḥsin, an 'Alīd from Damascus and a descendant of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. Akhū Muḥsin, who died around 375/985–986, was a polemist and one of the early genealogists of the 'Alīd family. His book, which contained historical and doctrinal parts, is also lost. However, substantial portions of it have been preserved by the Egyptian historians al-Nuwayrī (d. 732/1332), Ibn al-Dawādārī, in a chronicle completed in 736/1335, and al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), who was the first authority to have identified Ibn Rizām as the principal source of Akhū Muḥsin while condemning both writers as unreliable. The unreliability of Ibn Rizām had already been pointed out by his contemporary chronicler al-Mās'ūdī, who included him in his list of the anti-Qārmaṭī writers. The Ibn Rizām–Akhū Muḥsin account which aimed at discrediting the whole Ismā'īlī movement, provided the basis for most subsequent Sunni writings on the subject. It also influenced the famous anti-Fāṭimid manifesto of Baghdād, issued in 402/1011, by a number of 'Alīds and jurists. This declaration, sponsored by the reigning 'Abbāsid caliph al-Qādir (381–422/991–1031), was a public denunciation of the 'Alīd descent of the Fāṭimid caliphs. In short, this anti-Ismā'īlī account became the standard treatment of the rise of Ismā'īlism, and, as such, it came to be adopted also by the majority of the nineteenth-century orientalists; eminent scholars like de Sacy and de Goeje.

The most derogatory and lasting aspect of the Ibn Rizām–Akhū Muḥsin narrative has been the allegation that a certain non-'Alīd, 'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, was the founder of Ismā'īlism as well as the progenitor of the Fāṭimid caliphs. According to this allegation, Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ was a follower of Abu'l-Khāṭṭāb and founded a sect called al-Maymūniyya. He was also a Daysānī (Bardesanian), an adherent of Ibn Daysān (Bar Dīșān or Bardesanes), the celebrated heresiarch of Edessa and a dualist who founded the Christian Gnostic sect of the Bardesanians or Daysāniyya and died at the beginning of the third century A.D. This explains why in some later sources, following Akhū Muḥsin, Maymūn was referred to as the son of Daysān, while the Baghdād manifesto names a
certain Dayṣān b. Saʿid as the ancestor of the Fāṭimids. Maymūn’s son, ‘Abbād Allāh, claimed to be a prophet, and supported his claim by conjuring tricks. He organized a movement and instituted a system of belief, consisting of seven stages that culminated in libertinism and atheism; he pretended to preach on behalf of Muhammad b. Ismāʿīl as the expected Mahdī. ‘Abbād Allāh came originally from the vicinity of Ahwāz, but later moved to ‘Askar Mukram and then to Baṣra, fleeing from the Shiʿīs and the Muʿtazilis, and accompanied by an associate al-Ḥusayn al-Ahwāzī. In Baṣra, he sought refuge with the family of the Ḥāshīmīd ‘Aqīl b. ʿAbī Ṭālib. Later, he fled to Salamiyya, where he remained in hiding until his death sometime after 261/874. From Salamiyya, dāʾīs were sent to ‘Irāq, one of whom converted a certain Ḥamdān Qarmāṭ. ‘Abbād Allāh was succeeded by his son ‘Abbād, and then by the latter’s descendants who extended the daʿwā to many regions, as their dāʾīs operated in ‘Irāq, Yaman, Baḥrayn, Rayy, Ṭabaristān, Khurāsān and Fārs. Eventually, one of ‘Abbād Allāh’s Qaddāḥīd successors, Saʿid b. al-Ḥusayn, went to the Maghrib in North Africa and founded the Fāṭimid dynasty. He claimed to be a descendant of Muhammad b. Ismāʿīl, and called himself ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī.

This is essentially what Akhū Muḥsin and his source, Ibn Rizām, have to say on Ibn al-Qaddāḥ and the origins of Ismāʿīlim. Akhū Muḥsin also included in his book an outline of the doctrine of the Ismāʿīlis. He quotes long passages on the procedures observed by the dāʾīs for winning new converts and the various degrees of initiation into Ismāʿīlim, from an allegedly Ismāʿīli book entitled the Kitāb al-ṣiyāsa. Ibn al-Nadīm also claims to have seen such works describing the degrees of attainment through which a proselyte was gradually initiated. However, the Ismāʿīli tradition knows the book in question only through the polemics of the enemies of the sect; and, as quoted by Akhū Muḥsin, it seems to represent a malevolent forgery. Nevertheless, the doctrinal part of Akhū Muḥsin’s work still holds some accurate details, though its attribution of libertinism and atheism to the sectarians should be dismissed as totally unfounded. The doctrine of the imāmate which it describes agrees almost completely with that ascribed to the Qarmāṭīs by al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi. Akhū Muḥsin lists the same series of seven imāms, starting with ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and ending with Muhammad b. Ismāʿīl, and states that the seventh imām was the expected Qāʾīm. However, by counting ʿAlī as the first imām, he faces the same problem as the Imāmī heresiographers, and like them, mentions that some included while others omitted Ismāʿīl
as an imām. Another important piece of information is Akhū Muḥṣin's reference to a schism in the movement, resulting from some doctrinal changes. In this connection, he notes, there was a change of opinion about Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, for whom they had first demanded recognition as the Imām-Mahdī, but whom they then replaced by a descendant of ‘Abd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, whose progeny have ruled in the Maghrib, Egypt and Syria.\(^{100}\)

The modern progress in Ismāʿīli studies has, indeed, shown that the Ibn Rizām–Akhū Muḥṣin account, despite its hostile intentions and false accusations, sheds valuable light on early Ismāʿīlism. Aside from containing certain valid points of doctrine, it also provides the main source of information on the history of the Ismāʿīli movement during the second half of the 3rd/9th century. But the section which treats Ibn al-Qaddāḥ as the founder of Ismāʿīlism and the ancestor of ‘Ubayd Allāh, the most controversial part of the account, seems to have been motivated by strongly anti-Ismāʿīli sentiments. Al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummi, as well as many other important early authorities such as al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) and ‘Arib b. Sa’d (d. 370/980), do not mention Ibn al-Qaddāḥ in connection with the Ismāʿīliyya; nor is he named in the anti-Fāṭimid Baghdadī manifesto of 402/1011. Massignon, Qazvinī and Lewis were the first modern scholars to have clarified the biographies of Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son ‘Abd Allāh.\(^{101}\) It was Ivanow, however, who produced the most detailed study of the true personalities of these individuals, based on a comprehensive survey of various types of Twelver Shiʿi sources.\(^{102}\) In fact, Ivanow made every effort to refute what he called the myth of Ibn al-Qaddāḥ; a myth which, according to him, was probably invented by Ibn Rizām himself.\(^{103}\)

Maymūn b. al-Aswād al-Qaddāḥ al-Makkī, a mawlā of the Banū Makhzūm and a resident of Mecca, was actually a disciple of the Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, from whom he reported a few hadiths. Maymūn’s son ‘Abd Allāh, who died sometime during the second half of the 2nd/8th century, was a companion of the Imām al-Ṣādiq and a reporter (rāwī) of numerous traditions from him. These Qaddāḥids may also have taken care of the properties of the imāms in Mecca. In any event, Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ and ‘Abd Allāh are known in the Twelver literature as respected Shiʿi traditionists from the Hijāz,\(^{104}\) and not as Bardesanians originating in Khūzistān. It is, therefore, important to know why this Ibn al-Qaddāḥ, who lived in the 2nd/8th century, was chosen by Ibn Rizām as the organizer of a movement that occurred in the 3rd/9th century, several
decades after his death. Recent access to Ismā'īlī sources has made it possible to formulate a plausible answer to this question.

As noted, the early leaders of the Ismā'īlī movement lived under utmost secrecy and kept their identity hidden, in order to escape persecution. In his letter to the Yamanī Ismā'īlis, 'Ubayd Allāh ('Abd Allāh) explains that the true imāms after Ja'far al-Ṣādiq indeed assumed names other than their own; calling themselves Mubārak (the Blessed One), Maymūn (the Fortunate One), and Sa'īd (the Happy One). It has become evident that Mubārak was the epithet of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far; and, according to numerous Ismā'īlī and non-Ismā'īlī sources, Sa'īd was 'Ubayd Allāh's pseudonym prior to his advent in North Africa. Now, the myth of 'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn can be solved if it is shown that Maymūn was the sobriquet of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. This conclusion is strongly implied by 'Ubayd Allāh's letter.

It is also suggested by a report, dating back to the 6th/12th century, naming Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as the imām of the Maymūniyya, a sect which according to Ibn Rizām was founded by Maymūn al-Qaddāh. In all probability, then, the Maymūniyya, like the Mubārakiyya, must have been one of the original designations of the nascent Ismā'īliyya; in this case named after the epithet of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl.

There is, furthermore, the epistle of the fourth Fāṭimid caliph al-Mu'izz, written in 354/965, and sent to the chief dā'ī of Sind, Ḥalam (or Jalam) b. Shaybān. This document, which represents perhaps the earliest official refutation of the myth of Ibn al-Qaddāh, reasserts the 'Alid ancestry of the Fāṭimid caliphs. It states that when the da'wa on behalf of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl spread, the 'Abbāsids sought the person who was acknowledged as its leader. Therefore, the imāms went into hiding and the dā'īs, to protect the imāms, called them by pseudonyms (or esoteric names); referring, for instance, to 'Abd Allāh, the son and successor of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, as the son of Maymūn al-Qaddāh. This was true, the epistle affirms, since 'Abd Allāh was the son of maymūn al-naqība (the one with the happy disposition) and al-qādīh zand al-hidāya (striking the spark of right guidance). Similar names were applied to the imāms succeeding 'Abd Allāh, according to the instructions of the imāms to their dā'īs. But then, such code-names reached those who did not understand their real meaning, and so they erred and misled others. The substance of this epistle is confirmed by an earlier document, preserved in one of al-Qādī al-Nu'mān's books, reporting a conversation between al-Mu'izz and some envoys sent by a dā'ī from a distant land. In this audience, which took
place about the year 348/959–960, the Fāṭimid caliph again explains that Maymūn and Qādīh had been the pseudonyms of the true imāms from the family of the Prophet. In short, al-Mu‘izz emphasizes that in reality 'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ had been a code-name for 'Abd Allāh, the son of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il, the ‘hidden imām’ whom the Fāṭimid s regarded as their ancestor. It is, therefore, not surprising that the name of this Fāṭimid 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad, esoterically called 'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn, should have been confused, deliberately or accidentally, with the Shi‘i traditionist of the earlier times, 'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ.

Finally, it is interesting to review the manner in which Ibn al-Qaddāḥ has been treated in Ismā‘ili tradition. The earliest Ismā‘ili sources do not mention Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son 'Abd Allāh. Later, after Ibn Rizām had already produced his account, the official Fāṭimid doctrine consistently denied any connection between these persons and the Ismā‘ili movement. Nevertheless, in the time of al-Mu‘izz, certain Ismā‘ili circles from amongst his adherents deviated from the official position and held that the leadership of the movement had passed, after Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il, to 'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ and his Qaddāḥid descendants; but that it had later reverted to the progeny of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il, who ruled as the Fāṭimid caliphs. As noted, al-Mu‘izz had found it necessary to refute the views of these dissident eastern Ismā‘ilis. The sectarian in question seem to have been influenced by some Qarmaṭī groups who had persisted in not recognizing any imāms after Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il. Still later, around the beginning of the 5th/11th century, Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, one of the most learned Ismā‘ili da‘īs, produced his own refutation of the Qaddāḥid ancestry of the Fāṭimid s. He wrote a short treatise rejecting the views of a certain Zaydi Imām, al-Mu‘ayyad bi‘l-lāh Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Hārūn al-Būṭhānī al-Hārūnī (333–411/944–1020), who had attacked the claims of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Ḥākim to the imamate while accepting Ibn al-Qaddāḥ as the progenitor of the Fāṭimid s. At about the same time, highly complex and often contradictory ideas concerning Ibn al-Qaddāḥ began to appear in the sacred literature of the Druzes, who split off from the Ismā‘ilis. According to these ideas, there had been seven ‘hidden imāms’, not all genuine ‘Alids. 'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, possibly an ‘Alid, was an associate and the asās of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il, the seventh nāṯiq; he was also the progenitor of some of the latter’s successors, including ‘Ubayd Allāh. But the second Fāṭimid caliph was a genuine descendant of Muḥammad b.
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Ismā'īl. Ibn Rizām had already stated that the second Fāṭimid caliph was not the son of 'Ubayd Allāh. He had, thus, implied that only the 'hidden imāms' and 'Ubayd Allāh were descended from Maymūn al-Qaddāh, without clarifying the ancestry of the second Fāṭimid caliph al-Qā'im.

The idea that al-Qā'im was not the son of 'Ubayd Allāh ('Abd Allāh) al-Mahdī reappears in the post-Fāṭimids Ismā'īlī works of some Yamanī da'īs who assigned a compromise role to al-Qaddāh and his son. Al-Khaṭṭāb b. al-Ḥasan al-Hamdānī (d. 533/1138), in his esoteric work the Ghāyat al-mawālid, sought to establish historical precedents supporting his ideas on the need for a substitute or guardian when the rightful imām was under age; the particular minor in point being al-Ṭayyib, the son of the Musta'lian Imām al-Āmir. He says that Ismā'īl b. Ja'far entrusted his infant son and heir Muḥammad to the care of Maymūn al-Qaddāh, who was his ḥujja. Upon attaining maturity, Muḥammad took up his responsibilities and the imāmate continued in his lineage from father to son, until it reached 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. It should be noted that al-Khaṭṭāb here introduces 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn as the fourth hidden imām after the usual sequence of three, and adds that this imām, before dying on the way to the Maghrib, handed over the charge of the da'wa, as a trust or wādī'a, to his ḥujja al-Sa'īd, known as al-Mahdī. Later, al-Mahdī, whose own descent is not specified, returned the trust to its legitimate mustaqarr holder, Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Qā'im, and the imāmate continued in his progeny. It is not possible to evaluate the historical truth of these important statements which appear for the first time in the literature of the Musta'lian Ismā'īlīs. Suffice it to note that in his obvious zeal to prove that 'Ubayd Allāh ('Abd Allāh) was the temporary substitute for, rather than the true imām and the father of, the second Fāṭimids caliph whom he reports to have been the son of 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, al-Khaṭṭāb overlooked the fact that 'Alī had been one of the names, besides Sa'īd and 'Abd Allāh, used by 'Ubayd Allāh himself. Al-Khaṭṭāb presents the cases of al-Qaddāh and 'Ubayd Allāh as sufficient proof that the ḥujja of an under-age imām can take temporary charge of the imāmate. Similarly, al-Khaṭṭāb's younger contemporary and the second Yamanī da'ī İbrahim b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmīdī (d. 557/1162) briefly refers to 'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn as the tutor of the Imām Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, adding that the latter was succeeded by his son 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad. But he regards 'Ubayd Allāh as the father of the second Fāṭimids caliph, whom he names as Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī. The divergencies between al-Khaṭṭāb's account and the official Fāṭimids version of the sequence of the
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‘hidden imāms’ proved to be particularly confusing some three centuries later, for the learned dāʿī Idrīs, who mentions Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son as the guardians and the hujjas of the successive Imāms Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, Muḥammad, ʿAbd Allāh and Aḥmad. In his exoteric historical work ʿUyun al-akhbār, he adopts the official version, according to which the Imāms al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad, ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī and al-Qāʾīm are of the same lineage. But in his esoteric work Zahr al-maʿānī, he attempts to reconcile this version with al-Khaṭṭāb’s ideas, which he follows closely; the results are very ambiguous indeed.

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The available evidence, both Ismāʿīli and non-Ismāʿīli, does not prove that ʿUbayd Allāh (ʿAbd Allāh) al-Mahdī was not the father of al-Qāʾīm, nor does it lend support to the alleged Qaddāḥid origin of the Fāṭimid dynasty. Amongst the modern authorities, Ivanow laboured indefatigably to show the absence of any connection between the Shiʿī traditionists Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ and his son and the Ismāʿīli movement. On the other hand, following the earlier suggestion of Qazvini, Stern believes that the basis for the story about Maymūn and ʿAbd Allāh is to be sought in the role that some of their descendants played in the Ismāʿīli movement of the 3rd/9th century. There is also the interpretation of B. Lewis who accepts the historicity of the roles of the non-ʿAlid Maymūn and his son in early Ismāʿīlim. By relying mainly on the allusions of the Druze scriptures and the Ghāyat al-mawālid and by emphasizing the significance of spiritual parentage and the distinction between mustaqarr and mustawdaʿ imāms in Ismāʿīlim, Lewis is of the opinion that there existed actually two lines of imāms during the period of concealment. According to this interpretation, Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ was the chief dāʿī and guardian of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl; and ʿAbd Allāh b. Maymūn, who succeeded his father in the role of chief dāʿī, received the imāmate in trust and bequeathed it to his own descendants down to ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī. These were the mustawdaʿ or trustee imāms who were of Qaddāḥid origin but were spiritually associated to the ʿAlids. There was, however, a second line of ‘hidden imāms’, the genuine ʿAlid and mustaqarr imāms, starting with Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl and ending with the second Fāṭimid caliph al-Qāʾīm, with whom the imāmate returned to the Fāṭimids. In other words, while attributing a Qaddāḥid ancestry to ʿUbayd Allāh, al-Qāʾīm and his successors are thought to have been genuine Fāṭimids. This interesting theory has been adopted, with slight variations, by some other modern authorities, although it, too, presents its own shortcomings. Finally, we should recall again at this juncture the already-mentioned hypothesis
of Hamdani and de Blois who argue that the official version of the genealogy of the 'hidden imāms' and the Fāṭimid caliphs was, in fact, constructed by combining two parallel lines of descendants of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, viz., the descendants of 'Abd Allāh and Ismā'īl b. Ja'far; thus this official genealogy reflected a rearrangement of the genealogy claimed by 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī, who was a descendant of 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far.

Resuming our discussion of the history of Ismā'īlism during the second half of the 3rd/9th century, it should be recalled that the main sources of information are still the Ibn Rizām-Akhū Muhsin account, along with al-Ṭabarī's statements on the Qarmāṭī movement in 'Irāq. It is certain that after Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, 'Abd Allāh and his descendants organized and led the Ismā'īlī da'wa, first from Khūzistān and eventually from Salamiyya. Shortly after the middle of the 3rd/9th century, the Ismā'īlī leadership intensified its activities by sending numerous da‘īs to various regions, especially to southern 'Irāq and the adjoining areas where earlier forms of revolutionary Shi‘īsm had been successful. Ibn al-Nadīm quotes Ibn Rizām as saying that the da‘wa in 'Irāq was organized in 261 A.H., soon after the death of the Twelvers' eleventh imām and the occultation of their twelfth imām. It was in that year, or in 264/877–878 according to Akhū Muhsin,\(^{123}\) that Ḥamdān Qarmat, the son of al-Ash‘ath, was converted to Ismā'īlism by al-Ḥusayn al-Ahwāzī. This prominent da‘ī had been sent to southern 'Irāq to propagate the doctrines of the sect; he met and converted Ḥamdān, a carrier, in the latter's native locality, the Sawād of Kūfā.\(^{124}\) Ḥamdān's surname Qarmat (or Qarmaṭūya), which is probably of Aramaic origin, is variously explained as meaning short-legged or red-eyed, amongst other descriptions and etymologies.

Ḥamdān organized the da‘wa in the villages around Kūfā and in other parts of southern 'Irāq, appointing da‘īs for the major districts. Soon, he succeeded in winning many converts who were named Qarmaṭī (plural, Qarāmiṭa) after their first local leader. This term came to be applied also to the sections of the Ismā'īlī movement not organized by Ḥamdān. At the time, there was one unified da‘wa centrally directed from Syria; and Ḥamdān, having his own headquarters at Kalwādhā near Baghdād, accepted the authority of the central leaders with whom he corresponded but whose identity continued to remain a well-kept secret. A major factor contributing to the rapid success of Ḥamdān was the revolt of the Zanj, the rebellious black slaves who for fifteen years (255–270/869–883), terrorized southern 'Irāq and distracted the attention of the 'Abbāsid officials at Baghdād. The Qarmaṭīs of 'Irāq had become quite numerous by 267/880,
when 赟款n found it opportune to make an offer of alliance to the leader of the Zanj, 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Zanji; the latter, however, being at the height of his own power, declined the offer. The rapid success of the da'wa in 'Iraq is attested by the fact that references to the Qarmatis began to appear soon after 261/874-875. However, 銳懽’s activities may have started earlier than that year, which is the earliest date mentioned in our sources, though probably still during the caliphate of al-Mu'tamid (256-279/870-892). This is because al-Fadl b. Shadhân, the great Imâmi scholar of Nishâpûr who died in 260/873-874, had already written a refutation of the Qarâmiya. The revolutionary, messianic movement of the Ismâ'ili (Qarmatis) achieved particular success amongst those Imâmís who had become increasingly dissatisfied with the quietism and political powerlessness of Imâmî Shi'ism. Furthermore, with the death of their eleventh imâm in 260 A.H., who had left no apparent successor, the Imâmís had been left in disarray. Under such circumstances, the Ismâ'ili da'wa, then promising the imminent advent of Muhammad b. Ismâ'il as the Mahdi and the restorer of religion and justice, had obvious appeals for them. As a result, many dissatisfied Imâmís in southern 'Iraq and elsewhere converted to Ismâ'ilism, contributing significantly to the success of the Ismâ'ili movement during the second half of the 3rd/9th century.

赟懽’s chief assistant and one of the most celebrated early Ismâ'ili da'is was his brother-in-law 'Abdân. 'Abdân, who enjoyed a high degree of independence, appointed many of the da'ís in 'Iraq and probably also in southern Persia and Bahrayn, such as Zikrawayh b. Mihrawayh and Abû Sa'id al-Jannâbî. A number of different taxes were levied on the Qarmatis of 'Iraq, including a fifth of the individual’s income to be saved for the expected Qâ'im. In 277/890-891, 銳懽 founded a fortified dâr al-hijra, an abode of emigration and congregation, near Kûfa for the Qarmatis. The Qarmâṭî movement, however, continued to escape the notice of the 'Abbasids, who had not re-established effective control over southern 'Iraq since the Zanj revolt. It was only in 278/891-892, mentioned by al-'Tabârî as the year in which the Qarmâṭîs of the Sawâd intensified their activity, that the Baghdad officials began to realize the danger of the new movement, on the basis of some reports coming from Kûfa. But no immediate action was taken against the Qarmâṭîs, who staged their first protest in 284/897. However, the energetic caliph al-Mu'tâqid (279-289/892-902) did not permit any Qarmâṭî unrest to succeed in 'Iraq, and he repressed the three revolts which were attempted during 287-289/900-902. The doctrine preached by 銳懽 and 'Abdân must have been that
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ascribed to the Qarmatīs by al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi, and confirmed by the Ibn Rizām-Akhū Muḥsin account. There is no indication that at the time the beliefs of the Qarmatīs of ʻIrāq differed in any significant respect from those held by the rest of the Qarmatīs (Ismā’īlīs). It is interesting to note that Ḥamdān and ʻAbdān are not mentioned in any of the early Ismā’īlī sources, which may be attributed to their eventual rift with the central leadership.

The Ismā’īlī da‘wā was started in other regions, besides ʻIrāq, around the 260s/870s. In southern Persia, the mission was apparently under the supervision of the Qarmatī leaders of ʻIrāq. Abū Saʿīd al-Ḥasan b. Bahrām al-Jannābī, born at Jannāba on the coast of Fārs and trained by ʻAbdān, was initially active there with much success.129 And in Fārs proper, ʻAbdān’s brother al-Ma’mūn was appointed as a da‘ī, and the Ismā’īlīs of that region were reportedly called al-Ma’mūniyya after him.130 The da‘wā in Yaman, which has remained an important Ismā’īlī stronghold over the last eleven centuries, was from its inception in close contact with the central leadership of the movement. The recruitment and despatch of two famous da‘īs to this southwestern corner of the Arabian peninsula in 266/879–880, to start the mission there, is fully narrated by al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān.131 These da‘īs were ʻAlī b. al-Fadl, a Shi‘ī from Yaman who had been converted to Ismā’īlism while on pilgrimage to the tomb of the Imām al-Ḥusayn in Karbalā‘; and Abu’l-Qāsim al-Ḥasan b. Faraj (or Farāb) b. Hawshab al-Kūfī, known as Maṣṣūr al-Yaman, who came from a prominent Imāmī Shi‘ī family. Ibn al-Fadl and Ibn Hawshab who were to collaborate closely for some time, reached Yaman in 268/881, and, as a result of their initial success, preached their cause publicly as early as 270/883. Ibn Hawshab launched his activities from ʻAdan Lā‘a near the Jabal Maswar, where he built a dār al-hijra. Ibn al-Fadl first established himself at al-Janad and, like his companion, founded a place of refuge. From these mountainous strongholds, the Yamanī Ismā’īlīs penetrated into the surrounding areas, a strategy fully utilized by the later Nizārī Ismā’īlīs of Persia and Syria. The mission in Yaman won strong tribal support and met with astonishing success. By 293/905–906, when Ibn al-Fadl occupied Ṣan‘ā‘, almost all of Yaman had been brought under the control of the Ismā’īlīs. Later, however, the Ismā’īlīs were obliged to abandon the greater part of their conquests under pressures from the local Zaydī Imāms who had established a state in northern Yaman in 280/893. Yaman also served as an important base for the extension of the da‘wā to adjoining areas, such as Yamāma, as well as to remote lands. In 270/883, Ibn Hawshab sent his
nephew al-Haytham as a da'i to Sind, from where the da'wa spread to other parts of the Indian subcontinent; and, as we shall see, another da'i later went from Yaman to the Maghrib, where he prepared the ground for Fatimid rule.

In the meantime, the da'wa had appeared in eastern Arabia in 281/894, or perhaps even earlier in 273/886. After his initial career in southern Persia, Abū Sa'id al-Jannābī was sent by Ḥamdān to Bahrayn, entrusted with the mission there. This is reported by the majority of the sources, which also add that Abū Sa'id had been preceded by another da'i, a certain Abū Zakariyya al-Ṭamāmī (or al-Zamāmī), who may have been despatched by Ibn Hawshab. Abū Sa'id, who in time disposed of Abū Zakariyya', married the daughter of al-Ḥasan b. Sanbar, the head of a prominent local family, and rapidly won converts from amongst the bedouins and the Persians residing there. By 286/899, with the important support of the Rabi‘ī tribe of the 'Abd al-Qafs, Abū Sa'id had brought under submission a large part of Bahrayn and had also taken Qatif, on the coastal region of eastern Arabia, causing considerable alarm in Basra. In 287/900, the Qarmaṭis of Bahrayn were in control of the suburbs of Hajar, the ancient capital of Bahrayn and seat of the 'Abbāsid governor. The caliph al-Mu'tadid sent an army of 2,000 men, joined by a large number of volunteers, against them; but the 'Abbāsid force was utterly defeated. Around 290/903, Hajar was finally subdued after a long siege. Abū Sa'id now established his headquarters at al-Aḥṣā (al-Ḥasā), which became the capital of the Qarmaṭi state of Bahrayn in 314/926 after Abū Sa'id's second successor had built a fortress in the locality. Later, the Qarāmiṭa of Bahrayn extended their control to the adjoining regions, including Yamāma and 'Umān.

Abū Sa'id had in effect founded a prospering state which lasted for almost two centuries, and was a menace not only to the Sunni 'Abbāsids, but also to the Fāṭimids. Although the da'wa propagated by Abū Sa'id did not openly contain any specific social programme, nevertheless communal and egalitarian principles seem to have played an important role in the organization of the Qarmaṭi state of Bahrayn, especially in terms of the ownership of property, cultivation of agricultural land, collection of taxes, distribution of public expenditures, and various types of state assistance to the underprivileged. In governing the affairs of the community, too, Abū Sa'id and his successors conferred in major decisions with a council known as al-'Iqdānīyya, comprised of some high-ranking officials and the representatives of the influential families. The state
concern for the welfare of the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn, and the particular order established there, evoked the admiration of many a keen observer like Ibn Ḥawqal, and later Nāṣir-i Khusraw, who visited al-Aḥsāʾ in 443/1051 when the local Qarāmīta were still called Abū Saʿīdīs after their initial leader.\footnote{The Ismāʿīlīs: their history and doctrines}

Ismāʿīlism spread also in many parts of west-central and northwest Persia, the region called al-Jībāl by the Arabs; like Rayy, Qumm, Kāshān and Hamadān. It was shortly after 260 A.H., when the Qarmaṭī leaders of ʿIrāq were at the beginning of their activities, that the central leaders of the movement despatched dāʾīs to the Jībāl; and later the daʿwa was extended to Khurāsān and Transoxiana. The most detailed account of this phase of the early daʿwa, containing the names of the chief dāʾīs until the opening decades of the 4th/10th century, is related by Niẓām al-Mulk, the famous Saljūqid wazīr who was assassinated by the Persian Nizāris in 485/1092.\footnote{The Ismāʿīlīs: their history and doctrines} The account of Niẓām al-Mulk, who was an outspoken enemy of the Ismāʿīlīs and apparently had access to the earlier works of Ibn Rизm and Akhū Muḥsin, returns in several other sources utilizing the same anti-Ismāʿīli authorities.\footnote{The Ismāʿīlīs: their history and doctrines}

In the area of Rayy, which served as the headquarters of the Ismāʿīli mission in the Jībāl, the daʿwa was started by a certain Khalaf al-Ḥallāj, after whom the Ismāʿīlīs of Rayy became also known as the Khalafīyya. He established himself in the village of Kulayn (Kulin), in the district of Pashāpūya (the present Fashāfūya to the south of Tehran), and began to preach secretly in the name of the Qiʿīm Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. Khalaf had barely commenced his activity when he was discovered. Subsequently, he was forced to go into hiding in Rayy, where he died. He was succeeded by his son Aḥmad and then, by the latter’s chief disciple Ghiyāth, a native of Kulīn. Ghiyāth, who was well versed in ḥadīth and Arabic literature and wrote a book of religious terms entitled Kitāb al-bayān,\footnote{The Ismāʿīlīs: their history and doctrines} held disputations with the local Sunnis and won disciples in the cities of Qumm and Kāshān. Eventually, one of the Sunni jurists, al-Zaʿfarānī, incited the people of Rayy against him and the Ismāʿīlīs, forcing Ghiyāth to flee to Khurāsān. In Marw al-Rūdh, he met and converted the amīr al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Marwazı (or al-Marwarrūdhi). Many of the inhabitants of the surrounding districts of Ṭāliqān, Maymana, Harāt, Gharjistān and Ghūr, under the influence of this powerful amīr who later became a dāʾī himself, also adopted Ismāʿīlism. Ghiyāth later returned to Rayy and appointed as his deputy a learned man from the district of Pashāpūya, Abū Ḥātim Aḥmad b. Ḥamdān al-Rāzī, the future chief dāʾī of
Rayy and one of the most important early Ismāʿīlī authorities. Ghiyāḥ disappeared under mysterious circumstances and was succeeded by Abū Jaʿfar-i Kabīr, a descendant of Khalaf. The latter became afflicted with melancholy and was ousted by Abū Ḥātim who now became the fifth chief daʿī of Rayy and the leader of the daʿwa in the Jībāl.

Abū Ḥātim greatly expanded the daʿwa activities upon assuming office during the first decade of the 4th century/912–923, sending numerous daʿīs to Iṣfāhān, Ḍhahrayjān, Ṭabarīstān and Gurgān. He also succeeded in converting the amīr Ahmad b. ‘Alī, who governed Rayy during 307–311/919–924. Around 313/925, after the conquest of Rayy by the Sunni Sāmānids, Abū Ḥātim went to Ṭabarīstān, the mountainous region south of the Caspian Sea and a sanctuary for numerous ‘Alids who had fled the ‘Abbāsids. There, he sided with Asfār b. Shirawḥy (d. 319/931), a Daylamī condottiere who soon became for a short period the master of Ṭabarīstān, Rayy, Gurgān, etc. against the local Zaydī Imām al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim, known as al-Dāʾī al-Ṣaghīr. In 316/928, Asfār had this imām killed while seizing many other ‘Alids and sending them to the court of the Sāmānīd amīr Naṣr II, to whom Asfār had declared his allegiance. Abū Ḥātim acquired many converts in Daylam and Gīlān, including Asfār and his lieutenant Mardāwīj b. Ziyār (d. 323/935), who later rebelled against Asfār and founded the Ziyārid dynasty of northern Persia, with his capital at Rayy. According to the daʿī al-Kirmānī, the famous disputation between Abū Ḥātim and the physician-philosopher Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyyāʾ al-Rāzī (Latin, Rhazes) took place in Mardāwīj’s presence. Mardāwīj at first supported Abū Ḥātim, but soon afterwards he adopted an anti-Ismāʿīlī policy in the region under his control, perhaps because Abū Ḥātim’s predicted date for the emergence of the Mahdī had proved wrong. Consequently, Abū Ḥātim, who had meanwhile returned to Rayy, was obliged to flee to Adharbayjān where he sought refuge with a local ruler called Muḥīṭ. After Abū Ḥātim’s death in 322/934, the Ismāʿīlīs of the Jībāl were thrown into disorder, and their leadership eventually passed to two persons, namely, ‘Abd al-Malik al-Kawkābī who resided in Girdkūh, the future Nizārī stronghold, and a certain Ḥṣāq staying in Rayy; the latter may perhaps be one and the same person as the famous daʿī Abū Yaʿqūb Ḥṣāq b. Ḥṣam al-Sijistānī.

The daʿwa was officially taken to Khurāsān, around the last decade of the 3rd century/903–913, by Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Khādīm; while Ghiyāḥ, as noted, had earlier introduced Ismāʿīlism to that province on his own initiative. It was probably also at that time that Ḥṣam b. al-Kayyāl,
originally a daʿi, seceded from the Ismāʿili movement and claimed the imāmāte for himself. This enigmatic Shiʿi gnostic, wrongly identified by some authorities as one of the ‘hidden imāms’ of the Ismāʿili, later gained the favour of the Sāmānī court during the rule of Naṣr II (301–331/914–943), and acquired a significant following in Transoxiana. In any event, al-Khādīm established himself in Nīshāpūr as the first chief daʿi of Khurāsān. He was succeeded around the year 307/919, by Abū Saʿīd al-Shaʿrānī, who was despatched by ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī. This daʿi managed to convert several notable military men of the province. The next head of the daʿwa in northeastern Persia and the adjoining region was the already-mentioned al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī al-Marwāzī who had been converted by Ghiyāth. It was during his time that the provincial seat of the daʿwa was transferred from Nīshāpūr to Marw al-Rūdḥ. Al-Ḥusayn al-Marwāzī is well-known in the annals of the Sāmānī dynasty. During the rule of Aḥmad b. Ismāʿīl (295–301/907–914), he commanded the Sāmānī forces in Sīstān (Arabic, Sījistān). Later, he rebelled at Harāt against Aḥmad’s son and successor Naṣr II, and was defeated in 306/918. After being pardoned and spending some time at the Sāmānī court, he returned to Khurāsān, and subsequently became designated as the chief Ismāʿīli daʿi there.

On his deathbed, al-Ḥusayn al-Marwāzī appointed as his successor Muhammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafi (or al-Nakhshābī), a brilliant philosopher who came from the village of Bazda in the vicinity of the Central Asian town of Nakhshāb (Arabicized into Nasaf). This daʿi, who is generally credited with introducing a form of Neoplatonism into Ismāʿīli thought, soon set out for Transoxiana, where he had been advised to go by his predecessor in order to convert the dignitaries of the Sāmānī court at Bukhārā. He left a certain Ibn Sawāda, an Ismāʿīli refugee from Rayy, as his deputy in Marw al-Rūdḥ. After a short and fruitless initial stay in Bukhārā, al-Nasafi retreated to his native Nakhshāb from where he had more success in penetrating the inner circles of the Sāmānī capital. He converted several confidants of the Sāmānī āmīr, including his private secretary Abū Ashʿath. Al-Nasafi then moved to Bukhārā, and, with the help of his influential converts at the court, managed to win over the young āmīr Naṣr II and his wazīr. As a result, the Ismāʿīli daʿi acquired a particular position of influence in the Sāmānī capital and began to preach openly. At the same time, he extended the daʿwa to Sīstān through one of his subordinate daʿis. These developments displeased the Sunnī religious leaders of the state and their military allies, the Turkish guards of the
Sāmānid rulers. They conspired and finally deposed Naṣr II, under whose son and successor, Nūḥ I (331–343/943–954), the Ismāʿilis of Khurāsān and Transoxiana were severely persecuted. Al-Nasafī and his chief associates were executed at Bukhārā in 332/943, soon after the accession of the amīr Nūḥ I. But the daʿwa in Khurāsān outlived this catastrophe and was later resumed under al-Nasafī’s son Masʿūd, nicknamed Dihqān, and other daʿīs, notably Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī who may also have had the mission in Rayy under his control.146

It is worthwhile to digress briefly now and consider the social character of early Ismāʿilism and the composition of its following. The Muslim Near East experienced important economic transformations during the first two centuries of ʿAbbāsid rule. In particular, there was significant expansion of activity in the fields of industry, crafts and trade, and urban centres were growing very rapidly. There were also changes in the organization of the factors of production and in economic relationships prevalent in Muslim society. All these developments brought about or accompanied important social changes which subjected the ʿAbbāsid empire to new strains and grievances. The Arab tribal aristocracy of the Umayyad times was now replaced by a ruling class composed of merchants, landowners, professional military men, administrators, religious leaders and men of learning. The garrison towns had been transformed from simple military encampments in the conquered territories to urban centres and vital market places where all types of exchange took place. The emancipation of the mawāli had finally removed the distinction between the Arab and non-Arab Muslims; a distinction that in earlier times had given rise to a vocal malcontented social class, providing a ready recruiting ground for revolutionary Shīʿism.

In this new and more complex socio-economic setting, there appeared new conflicts of interest. In broad terms, the city had now become sharply delineated from the open country, and the interests of the landless peasantry and the bedouin tribesmen had become distinguishable from those of the prospering urban classes, which derived attractive incomes from their properties and activities. The various distressed groups, along with the common people, were naturally attractable to any movement opposed to the established order. Indeed, there were some minor peasant revolts and anti-regime movements in Persia and ʿIrāq; while the appearance of various local dynasties had signalled the early political disintegration of the caliphate. The first serious sign of unrest came with the revolt of the Zanj, the black slaves who were employed on the large
estates near Baṣra for the drainage of the salt marshes. But it was revolutionary Shi‘ism, and particularly Ismā‘ilism, that held the greatest appeal for the discontented, both amongst the Arabs and non-Arabs. The message of the Ismā‘ili movement of the 3rd/9th century, which centred on the expectation of the imminent emergence of the Qā’im, who would establish the rule of justice in the world, was most promising to the underprivileged people of diverse backgrounds. Therefore, as soon as the Ismā‘ili da‘wa had become sufficiently organized, it attracted an ever-increasing number of adherents through the efforts of its able propagandists. In sum, as some Sunni authorities later observed,\textsuperscript{147} the Ismā‘ili movement from the very beginning paid particular attention to social grievances and inequities, and, as such, it acquired the character of a movement of social protest, posing a serious threat to the developing ‘Abbasid order.

The Ismā‘ili da‘is, as noted, were sent to many regions, and they appealed to different social strata. Their initial success, though, was greatest in the less urbanized milieus that were removed from the vital administrative centres of the caliphate; and, socially speaking, the early Ismā‘ili movement took the form of protest against the oppressive rule of the ‘Abbāsids, the privileged urban classes and the centralized administration.\textsuperscript{148} It cannot be denied that the early Ismā‘ilis (Qarmatīs) also had some partisans in the towns, especially among the upper strata; but, as in the case of the Zanj, the urban proletariat and artisans did not join them, probably because they did not see their interests championed by the Ismā‘ili da‘is. In short, early Ismā‘ilism seems to have mainly addressed itself to, and relied upon the support of, the peasants and the bedouins, with the result that one does not find real urban penetration of the movement until later times. There is, however, a hypothesis expounded chiefly by Massignon suggesting that the Ismā‘ilis were responsible for the creation of the professional corporations or the so-called Islamic guilds (singular, ṣinf), in Muslim cities during early mediaeval times, in order to mobilize the support of the urban working classes and the artisan groups against the regime.\textsuperscript{149} Recent research does not substantiate the alleged Ismā‘ili origin of the guilds in the Near East. It has, furthermore, become evident that the Islamic guilds, which were different from their European counterparts, did not exist in the strict sense of the term prior to the later Middle Ages, while during the earlier centuries any such loose associations that may have existed were instruments of state control.\textsuperscript{150}

It should be added that the social composition of the Ismā‘ili following
also varied from region to region, despite the fact that early Ismāʿīlism was primarily concentrated in non-urban milieus. In ʿĪrāq, the daʿwa appealed mainly to the rural inhabitants of the Sawād of Kūfa and, to some extent, to the nearby bedouin tribesmen. It was in this semi-sedentary, semi-bedouin milieu that Ismāʿīlism established a simple socio-economic system and witnessed its initial success. In Bahrayn and Syria, the bedouin tribes provided the backbone of the movement. In Yaman, Ismāʿīlism was supported by the tribesmen of the mountainous regions; later in North Africa, the mission was based on the Kutāma Berbers. In Persia, the daʿwa originally aimed at converting the rural population, and the first dāʿīs in the Jibal concentrated on the villagers around Rayy. But after the early realization of the movement’s failure to acquire a large popular following that could be led in open revolt against the authorities, as had been the case in the Arab lands, a new policy was adopted for the mission in Persia. According to this policy, implemented especially in Khurāsān and Transoxiana, the dāʿīs directed their efforts towards the ruling classes. It was in line with this that the amīr al-Husayn al-Marwāzī, himself belonging to aristocracy, was selected to head the daʿwa in northeastern Persia. However, in spite of winning over many dignitaries, the new policy did not lead to any lasting political success and the movement failed to gain any of the eastern provinces through the conversion of their rulers. The only eastern region where the early daʿwa eventually succeeded in establishing itself for a few decades was Sind. There, the Ismāʿīlis, recognizing Fāṭimid suzerainty, won over the local ruler and made the city of Multān their capital, but their rule was soon brought to an end in 401/1010–1011, when Maḥmūd of Ghazna invaded Multān and massacred many Ismāʿīlis.  

Meanwhile, a major schism had occurred in the Ismāʿīli movement. This is reported in detail by Akhū Muḥṣin, who had probably derived his information from Ibn Rizām. The main points of this anti-Ismāʿīli account are corroborated by Ibn Hawqāl, the famous geographer and traveller of the second half of the 4th/10th century who had strong sympathies with the Fāṭimids, if indeed he was not an Ismāʿīli himself. Ḥamdān Qarmāṭ, as noted, maintained correspondence with the Ismāʿīli headquarters. In 286/899, not long after ʿUbayd Allāh (ʿAbd Allāh) had succeeded to the central leadership, Ḥamdān noticed a change of tone in the written instructions sent to him from Salamiyya, suggesting certain doctrinal changes. Consequently, he despatched ʿAbdān to the central headquarters in order to investigate the reason behind the new instruc-
tions. It was only at Salamiyya that 'Abdān learned that 'Ubayd Allāh had succeeded to the leadership, following the death of the previous chief of the sect. Upon returning from his fact-finding mission, which included an interview with 'Ubayd Allāh, 'Abdān reported that instead of recognizing the Mahdiship of the hidden Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il, on whose behalf the da‘wa had been so far conducted, the new leader now claimed the īmāmate for himself.

Having thus become convinced of 'Ubayd Allāh's drastic deviations from the original doctrine of the sect, the Qarmāṭi leaders of 'Irāq, who may already have drifted away slightly from the Ismā‘īli headquarters, renounced their allegiance to the central leadership. Thereupon, Ḥamdān assembled his dā‘īs, and, after informing them of his discovery, ordered them to suspend the da‘wa in their respective districts. Soon afterwards, Ḥamdān went to Kalwādhā from where he disappeared and was never heard of again;154 'Abdān was murdered at the instigation of Zikrawayh b. Mihrayh, a dā‘ī of western 'Irāq. All this happened in the year 286 A.H. It may be added that Zikrawayh had conspired against the local Qarmāṭi leaders in collaboration with some of his subordinates, who had remained loyal to the headquarters, and one of 'Ubayd Allāh’s relatives, perhaps on orders from Salamiyya. These reprisals, however, did not prevent the numerous followers of Ḥamdān and 'Abdān from threatening to take their own revenge on Zikrawayh, now appointed the chief dā‘ī in 'Irāq. As a result, Zikrawayh was forced into hiding for some time; and, as we shall see, he soon revealed his own disloyalty towards the central leadership.

The reform introduced by 'Ubayd Allāh, which brought about the apostasy of Ḥamdān and 'Abdān, concerned the īmāmate. As noted, according to the Ibn Rızām-Akhū Muḥsin account, confirmed by al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummi, the early Ismā‘īlis, or at least by their overwhelming majority, originally recognized only seven īmāms, the last one being Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il, the expected Qā‘īm and the seventh nāṭiq. This is also attested by the few extant pre-Fāṭimid Ismā‘īli sources. But in 286/899, 'Ubayd Allāh had felt secure enough to make a public claim to the īmāmate for himself and his ancestors who had actually led the movement after Muhammad b. Ismā‘il. In order to fully understand this important reform, it is necessary to investigate the nature of the authority assumed by these central leaders up to that time; especially since the original Ismā‘īli belief in the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il had left no place for any further īmāms. On the basis of certain allusions found in the early Ismā‘īli sources, it seems that the central leaders of the sect, before 'Ubayd Allāh's
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reform, assumed the rank of the hujja for themselves. It was through the hujja that one could establish contact with the exalted 'ayn, namely the imām; and the imām referred to the hidden Mahdi. In other words, the leaders of the movement at first apparently acted as the hujjas of the hidden Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and summoned people to obey him. By his reform, 'Ubayd Allāh had in effect openly elevated himself and his predecessors from the hujjas of the expected Qā'im to actual imāms. This, of course, also implied the denial of the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl.

The term hujja, which appears in the Qur'ān, means proof or testimony; it also means argument. Amongst the Shi'is, the term has been used in different senses. Initially, it meant the 'proof' of God's presence or will, and as such, referred to that person who at any given time served as evidence for mankind, of God's will. It was in this sense that the application of the term was systematized by the Twelver Shi'is to designate the category of prophets and imāms and, after the Prophet Muḥammad, more particularly of the imāms without whom the world could never exist. The Imāmiyya had indeed come to use al-hujja as the equivalent of al-imām, as best reflected in the adoption of the term for the heading of the section on the imamate in al-Kulaynī's al-Kulayn. The original Shi'ī application of the term hujja, going back to the time of the Imām al-Sādiq, was retained by the pre-Fāṭimid Ismā'īlis who held that in every era ('asr) there is a hujja of God, whether he be a prophet (nabi), a messenger-prophet (rasūl), or an imām. They also used hujja in reference to a dignitary in their religious hierarchy (huḍūd al-dīn), notably one through whom the inaccessible hidden Mahdi could become accessible to his adherents. As a rank in the early da'wa organization, the hujja came directly after the imām and had a special significance during the dawr al-satr. If the world could at no time exist without a 'proof' of God, it would follow that during the time of the imām's concealment his representative would have to manifest God's true will. In other words, during his concealment, the Qā'im Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl would have to be represented by his hujja. It is in line with this usage that al-Shahrastānī attributes to the Ismā'īlis the tenet holding that when the imām is visible, his hujja may be hidden, and when the imām is concealed, his hujja and dā'īs must be visible. The early Ismā'īlis used the term hujja in a third sense, namely as the designated successor of the nātiq (or the imām), whilst they were both alive. This is why they referred to 'Āli b. Abī Ṭālib as Muḥammad's hujja. In this sense, the imām is at first a hujja prior to becoming the imām, and the hujja becomes an imām after his imām.
interesting to note that the *Kitâb al-kashf* allows for several *hujjas* by specifying that only the 'greatest *hujja* (al-*hujja al-kubrâ*) succeeds to the imâmate after the imâm of his time.\textsuperscript{161} Our Imâmi heresiographers, too, mention twelve *hujjas*, one for each of the twelve regions (*jazâ'ir*) into which the *da'wa* territory was, in theory, divided.\textsuperscript{162} But this usage of the term in connection with the *da'wa* hierarchy attained its full development under the Fâtimids. During the earlier period, it seems that in the absence of the imâm, the *hujja* was his full representative in the Ismâ'îli community. This also explains why 'Ubayd Allâh's open claim to the imâmate did not meet with more resistance on the part of the sectarians. After all, the bulk of the early Ismâ'îlîs (Qarmâtîs) had already acknowledged 'Ubayd Allâh as the *hujja* of the expected Qâ'im and as such, he was entitled to the highest religious authority.

Other aspects of 'Ubayd Allâh's doctrinal reform are revealed in his letter to the Ismâ'îlîs of Yaman. In this document, the Ismâ'îlî leader claims descent from 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far, and explains how the 'misunderstanding' concerning the Mahdíship of Muḥammad b. Ismâ'îl had come about. According to him, the name Muḥammad b. Ismâ'îl referred to all the true imâms in the progeny of 'Abd Allâh who had assumed the name Ismâ'îl and whose successors had assumed the name Muḥammad. Consequently, the Mahdíship of Muḥammad b. Ismâ'îl, instead of referring to a certain grandson of the Imâm al-Šâdiq, now acquired a collective meaning and referred to every imâm after 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far, until the advent of the Mahdí, the Šâhîb al-Zamân.\textsuperscript{163} In other words, 'Ubayd Allâh denied both the imâmate and the Mahdíship of the particular 'Alid who had hitherto been regarded as the expected Qâ'im by the Ismâ'îlîs (Qarmâtîs); because, according to his explanation, all the legitimate imâms after 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far had adopted the name Muḥammad b. Ismâ'îl as a code-name in addition to other pseudonyms whilst assuming the rank of *hujja*, for the sake of *taqiyya*. In support of his new doctrine, 'Ubayd Allâh attributed a tradition to the Imâm al-Šâdiq, affirming that the family of the Prophet was to produce more than one Mahdí.\textsuperscript{164} These are basically the same points gathered by 'Abdan in Salamiyya, as described with certain variations by Akhû Muḥsin.

'Ubayd Allâh's ideas on Mahdíship required modifications of the function of the Mahdí, if the new doctrine was to be adapted to actual realities; especially because the 'order' traditionally expected upon the advent of the Mahdí had not yet materialized. Consequently, the task of the Mahdí was now redefined to essentially encompass the defence of the
Shari'a by means of the sword, rather than abrogating the sacred law of Islam and establishing the rule of justice throughout the world.\textsuperscript{165} The new ideas concerning the Mahdi and his function were later corroborated by al-Qādi al-Nu'mān, who entered into the service of the first Fāṭimid caliph in 313/925, in his collection of traditions called the \textit{Sharḥ al-akhbār}.\textsuperscript{166} Finally, it may be added that by adopting the title of al-Mahdi on becoming the first Fāṭimid caliph, 'Ubayd Allah ('Abd Allah) may have initially aspired to the 'modified' position of the awaited Mahdi. Soon, however, he designated his young son Muḥammad as his successor, and for the role of \textit{al-Imām al-Muntazar} and the \textit{Ṣāhib al-Zāmān},\textsuperscript{167} giving him the title al-Qā'im. The significance of this nomination becomes more apparent if it is recalled that 'Ubayd Allāh's son in fact bore the name of the Prophet, Abu'l-Qāsim Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh, the name required by the old Shi'i traditions and prophecies for the would-be Mahdi from amongst the Ahl al-Bayt. The eschatological importance of this designation is clearly alluded to in some poems composed by the Qādi al-Nu'mān, in which the qualities and deeds of the Mahdi are attributed to the then reigning second Fāṭimid caliph.\textsuperscript{168} These, then, were the changes introduced by 'Ubayd Allāh into the doctrine of the imāmate upheld hitherto by the majority of the early Ismā'īlis. It should, however, be added that a section of the community had from the beginning traced the imāmate in the progeny of Muḥammad b. Ismā'il; and, thus, for this group 'Ubayd Allāh's open claims to the imāmate for himself and his ancestors did not represent doctrinal changes.

The doctrinal reform of 'Ubayd Allāh and the consequent revolt of Ḥamdān and 'Abdān split the Ismā'īli movement into two factions in 286 A.H. On the one side, there were those who accepted the reform, later incorporated into the official Fāṭimid doctrine of the imāmate according to which there was a visible imām at the head of the Ismā'īli community. These Ismā'īlis maintained continuity in the imāmate and accepted 'Ubayd Allāh's explanation that the Ismā'īli Imāmate had been handed down amongst the direct descendants of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. In contrast, the dissident Ismā'īlis who lacked united leadership, refusing to recognize 'Ubayd Allāh's claim to the imāmate, retained their original doctrine and expected the return of the hidden Qā'im, Muḥammad b. Ismā'il. And in time, some of the leaders of the dissident communities claimed the Mahdi'ship for themselves or others. Needless to recall that in such instances, in line with the earlier ideas, the Mahdi as the seventh nātiq was expected to abrogate the Shari'a, ending the era of Islam and initiating the final era of the world
and the *qiyaṭa*. Henceforth, the term Qarāmiṭa came to be generally applied to those sectarians who did not acknowledge the Fāṭimid caliphs as imāms, although it was sometimes used in a derogatory sense also in reference to those Ismā‘īlīs supporting the imāmate of the Fāṭimids.

The available evidence on the reaction of the various Ismā‘īlī groups to the schism in the movement can be summed up as follows. The Qarāmāṭīs of ʿIrāq were left in a state of confusion and doctrinal crisis following the demise of Ḥāmdān and ʿAbdān. Soon, however, ʿĪsā b. Mūsā, a nephew of ʿAbdān, rose to a leading position among them and continued the *daʿwa* in the name of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl. These sectarians survived in southern ʿIrāq, with some support in Baghḍād, through the first quarter of the 4th/10th century and on into later times.[^169] Ḫāṣa and other Qarāmāṭīs of ʿIrāq, like the brothers Abū Muslim and Abū Bakr b. Ḥāmmād in Māwsīl, apparently ascribed their own writings to ʿAbdān, who had continued to be recognized as their authoritative teacher. In doing so, they were perhaps motivated by a desire to stress their doctrinal continuity, besides wanting to attribute a high degree of learning to their fallen teacher. Some of the works attributed to ʿAbdān apparently came to be esteemed also by the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlīs; and even such a loyal supporter of the Fāṭimids as the Ḥādī al-Nuʿmān did not find it objectionable to quote him.[^170]

In the case of Bahrayn, Ibn Ḥawqal has preserved a very valuable piece of information revealing that Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī sided with Ḥāmdān and ʿAbdān against the central leadership,[^171] killing the *daʿi* Abū Zakariyyaʾ who had remained loyal to ʿUbayd Allāḥ (ʿAbd Allāḥ). Abū Saʿīd then claimed to represent the awaited Mahdi. For Abū Saʿīd, who established his rule over Bahrayn in the same eventful year 286 A.H., the schism may actually have provided a favourable opportunity to make himself completely independent. He had, indeed, succeeded in founding an independent state when he was murdered by a slave in 301/913–914. He was followed by his sons Abu'l-Qāsim Saʿīd (301–311/913–923) and Abū Ṭāhir Sulaymān (d. 332/943–944). Under the latter, the Qarāmāṭīs of Bahrayn, reflecting a view then prevalent amongst the Qarāmāṭīs, were at the time predicting the advent of the Mahdi on the basis of certain astrological calculations for the year 316/928; an event which would end the era of Islam and usher in the seventh, final era of history. In 319/931, they accepted a young Persian as the Mahdi, to whom Abū Ṭāhir turned over the rule. The early and disastrous end of this affair, however, weakened the doctrinal vigour of the Qarāmāṭīs of Bahrayn and their influence over the dissident Ismā‘īlīs of ʿIrāq and Persia. We shall have
more to say on the Qarmâtîs of Bahrayn; here it suffices to note that their state survived until 470/1077–1078, after they had brought about a political rapprochement with the Fatîmids.

In western Persia and the Jîbâl, too, some Ismâ‘îlîs joined the dissident faction. Circumstantial evidence indicates that the Ismâ‘îlî community in the area of Rayy repudiated the claims of ‘Ubayd Allâh (‘Abd Allâh) and continued to expect the reappearance of Muḥammad b. Ismâ‘îl. It seems that the dâ‘îs there had close contacts with the Qarmâtî leaders of ‘Irâq and Bahrayn, and sided with the dissenters after the schism. Abû Ḥâtîm al-Râzî, for instance, corresponded with Abû Ṭâhir and may even have claimed to be the lieutenant of the hidden imâm. Later, the dâ‘îs of Rayy converted some members of the Musâfirid dynasty of Daylam and Ādharbayjân, notably Marzubân b. Muḥammad (330–346/941–957) and his brother Wahsûdân (330–355/941–966). It is interesting to note that in line with the views of the dissident Ismâ‘îlîs, these Musâfirid rulers acknowledged the Mahdîship of Muḥammad b. Ismâ‘îl, rather than the imâmât of the Fatîmid caliphs. This is clearly attested to by the inscriptions on the coins of Wahsûdân b. Muḥammad, minted in 343/954–955. In Khurâsân, the Ismâ‘îlîs generally maintained their allegiance to ‘Ubayd Allâh, who had appointed some of the earliest dâ‘îs of that region. The dissident view, however, was also present there. It will be recalled that it had been Ghiyâth, the chief dâ‘î of Rayy upholding the Mahdîship of Muḥammad b. Ismâ‘îl, who had introduced Ismâ‘îlîsm to Khurâsân. Moreover, Ghiyâth had also converted al-Ḥusayn al-Marwâzî, who later spread Ismâ‘îlîsm in the districts under his influence. It is likely, therefore, that both wings of Ismâ‘îlîsm – Fatîmid and dissident Qarmâtî – were strongly represented in northeastern Persia and Transoxiana. On balance, however, the influence of the Fatîmids in the eastern communities remained stifled until around the middle of the 4th/10th century, when the caliph al-Mu‘izz was able to launch with some success an intensive campaign to regain the allegiance of the schismatic eastern Ismâ‘îlîs.

The Ismâ‘îlî community in Yaman at first remained completely loyal to ‘Ubayd Allâh, supporting his imâmât. By 291 A.H., however, Ibn al-Faḍl seems to have manifested signs of disloyalty towards ‘Ubayd Allâh al-Mahdî. In Muḥarram 299/August 911, after reoccupying Ṣan‘â’, Ibn al-Faḍl publicly renounced his allegiance to ‘Ubayd Allâh, abolished the Shari‘a, and himself claimed to be the Mahdî. Subsequently, he endeavoured unsuccessfully to coerce the collaboration of Ibn Ḥawshab (d. 302/914), the senior dâ‘î who had remained loyal. After Ibn al-Faḍl’s
death in 303/915, his movement disintegrated rapidly. As‘ad b. Abī Ya‘fur of the local Ya‘furid dynasty, who had acted as Ibn al-Faḍl’s deputy in Ṣan‘ā’ and had recognized the latter’s suzerainty over a part of Yaman, now revolted against the deceased dā‘ī’s son and successor al-Fa‘fā (or al-Ghāfā). In 304/917, he captured Mudhaykhira, the former residence of Ibn al-Faḍl and the seat of his movement, killing al-Fa‘fā and many of the dissenting Qarmāṭīs and ending their movement in Yaman. Finally, the dā‘īs in the Maghrib, having had close ties with Ibn Hawshab, also chose the loyalist camp and made it possible for ‘Ubayd Allāh (‘Abd Allāh) to select their territory for the seat of the Fāṭimid Caliphate.

Zikrawayh b. Mihrayth, who had gone into hiding after the events of the year 286 A.H., soon showed his own rebellious intentions by organizing the Qarmāṭī revolts of ‘Irāq and Syria during 289–294/902–907. He could not launch his scheme effectively during the reign of the caliph al-Mu‘tāsid, who severely repressed all the Qarmāṭī revolts taking place in ‘Irāq. But on the accession of the next caliph, al-Muktafi (289–295/902–908), Zikrawayh intensified his activities by appealing to the Kalb bedouin tribesmen who lived in the Samāwa desert and transported goods along the trade route between Kūfah and Damascus. In 289/902, he sent one of his sons, al-Husayn (or al-Hasan), to the Syrian desert in order to convert the Banū Kalb. Rapid success was gained in winning the support of the Banū‘l-‘Ulayṣ and some of the Banū‘l-‘Aṣbagh, clans of the Kalb, who adopted the name al-Fāṭimiyūn, later utilized by ‘Ubayd Allāh. Al-Ḥusayn, who had become known as the Şāhib al-Shāma as well as the Şāhib al-Khāl, was soon joined by his brother Yahya (called the Şāhib al-Nāqa and also Shaykh). Yahyā assumed the leadership of the newly converted beduins and claimed to be a descendant of Muḥammad b. İsmā‘îl. Yahyā’s success in Syria was, however, short-lived; he was killed in 290/903 during a lengthy siege of Damascus, then held by the Țūlūnids (254–292/868–903), the first local dynasty of Egypt and Syria to acquire autonomy from the ‘Abbāsids. Subsequently, the Şāhib al-Shāma succeeded to the leadership. He, too, claimed descent from Muḥammad b. İsmā‘îl, while assuming the titles Amīr al-Mu‘minūn and al-Mahdī; he made his authority felt in Syria by occupying several towns. Being aware of the hostile intentions of Zikrawayh and his sons, ‘Ubayd Allāh had already left Salamiyya before the Qarmāṭīs entered it in 290/903. The Şāhib al-Shāma ordered a general massacre of the inhabitants of Salamiyya, also approving the destruction of ‘Ubayd Allāh’s residence and the killing of the members of his family and household who had been left behind. In
291/903, a severe defeat was inflicted on the Qarmatīs near Salamiyya, by an 'Abbāsid army. The Ṣāḥib al-Shāma was captured and taken before the caliph al-Muktafi, who had him executed.

Subsequently, Abu'l-Fadl, another of Zikrawayh's sons, endeavoured in vain to revive the Qarmatī movement in Syria. However, Zikrawayh continued to maintain his aspirations, and in 293/906, he sent a dā'ī, Abū Ghānim Naṣr, to lead his Kalb followers. They attacked several towns, including Damascus, pillaging everywhere. In the same year, the 'Abbāsid armies effectively took the field against these Qarmatīs, and as a result, the opportunistic Kalb betrayed and killed Abū Ghānim in order to gain amnesty from the caliph. Zikrawayh now sent another dā'ī, al-Qāsim b. ᴧaḥmad, to his Syrian supporters, informing them of his imminent personal appearance. They were apparently also told to migrate secretly to southern 'Iraq. Soon afterwards, the Syrian tribesmen, joined by Zikrawayh's followers in the area of the Sawād, made a surprise attack on Kūfa but were driven out quickly. Thereupon, the Qarmatīs withdrew to the vicinity of Qādisiyya, where they were met in Dhu'l-Ḥijja 293/October 906 by Zikrawayh, who had finally come forth from his hiding place. The Qarmatīs repelled an 'Abbāsid army sent after them and then began to pillage the caravans of the Persian pilgrims returning from Mecca, massacring a large number of them. Zikrawayh and his supporters continued their activities until 294/907, when they were defeated in battle by an 'Abbāsid force. Zikrawayh was wounded, and died in captivity a few days later; many of his followers were killed at the same time, bringing about an end to the Syro-Mesopotamian Qarmatī revolts.

Several major factors contributed to Zikrawayh's inability to establish a Qarmatī state in 'Iraq and Syria, like the one founded in Bahrayn. Not only did he simultaneously engage in hostilities towards the Sunnis as well as all other Ismā'īlī Shi'i groups, he also limited his base of support to the unreliable bedouins from amongst the Banū Kalb, who were more interested in booties than in any ideological issues. In fact, Zikrawayh's followers aroused the enmity of both the townspeople and the peasantry. Furthermore, the area of their activity was too close to the central administration of the caliphate, as in the case of all the defeated Shi'i revolts of the Umayyad times. On the other hand, the unrest created by the Qarmatīs, and the failure of the Tūlūnids to control the situation, made it possible for the 'Abbāsids to re-establish their rule over Egypt and Syria.

Some of the surviving supporters of Zikrawayh in the Sawād of Kūfa denied his death and awaited his return. In 295/907–908, a certain Abū
Hašım al-Zuṭṭī was active as a dā'ī among these Qarṣaṭīs. He prohibited the consumption of certain vegetables and the slaughtering of animals, whence his followers were called the Baqliyya, a name subsequently applied to all the Qarṣaṭīs of southern 'Irāq, who for the most part had retained their belief in the Mahdīship of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl. It seems that the Baqliyya, also called the Būrāṇiyya, were soon joined by the former adherents of Ḥamdān and Ṭabān. This Qarṣaṭī coalition survived for some time in southern 'Irāq, under leaders like ‘Īsā b. Mūsā and Mas‘ūd b. Ḥurayth. In 312/925, we hear of these sectarians rallying to the side of a man who pretended to be the expected Mahdī; they were defeated and dispersed by the ‘Abbāsids. Later in 316/928, the Qarṣaṭ (Baqliyya) revolted again in the Sawād, at which time ‘Īsā b. Mūsā was captured by the ‘Abbāsids; but in 320/932, he escaped from prison and resumed his missionary activity. Finally, a section of the Baqliyya, comprised mainly of Persians, joined the forces of Abū Tāḥīr al-Jannābī and went to Bahrayn, where they became known as the Ajamiyyūn.

In the meantime, ‘Ubayd Allāh had fled from Salamiyya in 289/902, shortly before the Qarṣaṭī invasion of that town. He had embarked on the fateful journey that was to take him to North Africa, where he was to establish the Fāṭimid dynasty. Prior knowledge of the malevolent designs of Zikrawayh and his sons, and of the intentions of a new ‘Abbāsid governor to arrest the Ismā‘īli leader, have been mentioned as the main reasons for ‘Ubayd Allāh’s hurried flight from Syria. Accompanied by his young son Abu‘l-Qāsim Muḥammad, the chief dā‘ī Firūz, his chamberlain Ja‘far, and a few other trusted associates, ‘Ubayd Allāh went to Ramla in Palestine, where he stayed for some time. It was there that he received the news of the atrocities committed by the Qarṣaṭīs against the inhabitants of Salamiyya and his relatives. Subsequently, he continued his journey and arrived in Egypt, probably in 291/903–904. There, he was met by the dā‘ī Abū ‘Alī who had been preaching Ismā‘īlism on his instructions for some time. In Egypt, Firūz soon deserted the imām and fled to Yaman, where he instigated a revolt against ‘Ubayd Allāh. This revolt, which received the support of Ibn al-Fāḍl, was opposed by the loyal Ibn Ḥawshab. ‘Ubayd Allāh could not stay long in Egypt, as the ‘Abbāsids had resumed their chase. The Ismā‘īli leader now decided to proceed to the Maghrib, where his dā‘ī Abū ‘Abd Allāh had already achieved considerable success amongst the Kutāma Berbers, instead of going to Yaman as expected by his entourage all along. This turned out to be a very wise decision, since in Yaman he would have risked ‘Abbāsid confrontation and the menace of
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the rebellious Qarmāṭīs. He set off on his westward journey and first went to Tripoli. But unable to join Abū 'Abd Allāh at once in the Kutāma country, he proceeded to Sijilmāsa in eastern Morocco, the capital of the small Midrārid state of Tāfilālīt in the extreme Maghrib, then ruled by the Khārīji Alīsā b. Midrār. By 292/905, he was settled in Sijilmāsa, from where he sent Abū'l-'Abbis Muḥammad, the brother of Abū 'Abd Allāh, to inform the latter of his whereabouts and plans. But Abū'l-'Abbās was intercepted and detained in Qayrawān by the Aghlabids, who were a local dynasty which ruled in the name of the 'Abbāsids over Ifriqiya, the eastern part of the Maghrib, from 184/800 to 296/909. Meanwhile in Sijilmāsa, due to the pressures of the 'Abbāsids, 'Ubayd Allāh was soon put under house arrest, if not actually imprisoned, by the Midrārid amīr. He was to remain so until his rescue by Abū 'Abd Allāh.

Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad, known as al-Shī'ī, a native of Ṣan'ā', had joined the Ismā'īlī movement in southern 'Irāq. He had then spent some time in Yaman working with Ibn Ḥawshab. In 279/892, while making the pilgrimage, he met some Kutāma pilgrims in Mecca and, on Ibn Ḥawshab's instructions, accompanied them to their native land in the Maghrib, where he arrived in 280/893. It seems that the Kutāma had been introduced to Shi'ism by two dā'īs sent there in the time of the Imām al-Ṣādiq. Abū 'Abd Allāh first established himself in Ikjān, in the mountainous region north of Saṭīf, and began to propagate Ismā'īlism in the name of the Mahdī among the Kutāma tribesmen of the Lesser Kabylia in present-day Algeria. Aside from capitalizing on Shi'ī inclinations of the Kutāma Berbers, the success of the da'wā was hastened by the fact that the Aghlabids exercised no effective control over that part of the Maghrib. Later, Abū 'Abd Allāh transferred his headquarters to Tāzrūt and founded a dār al-hijra for the Kutāma converts, as earlier dā'īs had done in 'Irāq and Yaman.

After establishing his authority over the Kutāma, and reorganizing them into seven groups, each one led by a trustworthy chief, Abū 'Abd Allāh commenced the second phase of his mission, the quest for the conquest of Ifriqiya and the overthrow of the Sunnī Aghlabids. In 289/902, he easily overtook Mīlā and then withstood the attacks of two Aghlabid expeditions. He launched his own offensive in 293/906, against Saṭīf, Ṭubna, Billizma and other towns in the western territory of the Aghlabids. In 296/909, he seized Qafṣa and Qaṣṭīliya, and began to threaten Qayrawān itself with the full support of the Kutāma. The fall of al-Urbus (Laribus), the key of Ifriqiya, in the same year, led the last
Aghlabid amir Ziyādat Allāh III (290–296/903–909) to despair; he abandoned the royal city of Raqqāda which had been built on the outskirts of the Aghlabid capital of Qayrawān, shortly before it was entered by Abū 'Abd Allāh in Rajab 296/March 909. Having consolidated his position in Ifriqiya, and leaving his brother Abu'l-'Abbās behind as his lieutenant, Abū 'Abd Allāh marched at the head of his Kutāma warriors towards Sijilmāsā, to hand over the reins of power to his master, whom he still had not seen. On his way, he brought about the downfall of another dynasty, the Khārijī Rustamids, who had ruled since 160/777 over a small principality in western Algeria from Tāhār, the headquarters of the Ibādi Khārijīs of North Africa. In Sijilmāsā, 'Ubayd Allāh was speedily liberated and presented to his dā'īs and Kutāma followers; he also presided over certain ceremonies which suggest his preliminary investiture as caliph. Soon afterwards, in Rabi' II 297/January 910, 'Ubayd Allāh ('Abd Allāh) made his triumphant entry into Raqqāda where he was publicly proclaimed as caliph, receiving the homage of all the notables of Ifriqiya. He became the first Fāṭimid caliph, taking the titles of al-Mahdi bi'llāh and Amīr al-Mu'minīn. The new caliphate, or anti-caliphate, was appropriately named al-Fatīmiyyīn, after the Prophet's daughter Fātimā whom 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdi and his successors claimed as ancestress.

The success of the Ismā'īlī da'wā was thus crowned, less than twenty years after its inauguration in North Africa, by the establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Ifriqiya (modern-day Tunisia), in the very heart of Mālikī Sunni territory. The aspirations entertained by the Shi‘īs, for two and a half centuries, had finally become a reality in this distant land. For the Ismā'īlīs in particular, this represented a great victory, since it was their imām who was installed to the new Shi‘ī caliphate, which was to control important parts of the Muslim world for more than two centuries. With this event, the period of concealment (dawr al-satr) and of the ‘hidden imāms’ in the history of early Ismā'īlism, had also come to an end, being followed by the period of unveiling or manifestation (dawr al-kashf), when the Ismā'īlī Imām appeared publicly at the head of his community.

We have already discussed certain aspects of the doctrines expounded by the pre-Fāṭimid Ismā'īlīs. With the dearth of contemporary Ismā'īlī sources, these doctrines can be derived in their main outlines from later Ismā'īlī texts and from the writings of anti-Ismā'īlī polemists. In the early Ismā'īlī religious system, which was apparently fairly well-developed by the time of 'Ubayd Allāh's accession to power and which was subsequently maintained with some modifications by the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlīs, a
fundamental distinction was made between the exoteric (zāhīr) and the esoteric (bāṭīn) aspects and dimensions of the sacred scriptures and ritual prescriptions of Islam, between the outward and the inward meanings of the Qur’ān and the Shari‘a. It was held that every appearance implied an inner, true reality (ḥaqīqa). Accordingly, the revealed scriptures and the laws laid down in them had their apparent or literal meaning, the zāhīr, which was contrasted to the bāṭīn, containing their hidden and true meaning. The zāhīr would undergo changes or abrogations with every law-announcing prophet initiating a new era. The bāṭīn, by contrast, embodying the truths or the so-called ḥaqā‘iq, would remain immutable and eternal. For the Ismā‘iliyya, the ḥaqā‘iq in effect formed a gnostic system, representing an esoteric world of hidden spiritual reality. Before the coming of the Qi‘im, this bāṭīnī world could be accessible only to the elite (khawāṣṣ), those initiated into the sect upon taking an oath of secrecy, as distinct from the ordinary masses (‘awāmm) who were merely capable of perceiving the zāhīr, the outward world. The initiation, known as balāgh, seems to have been gradual, involving also the payment of dues. The Kitāb al-‘alīm wa’l-ghulām, for instance, contains some valuable details of this process of initiation; and the gradualism in question is also described in the Ibn Rizām–Akhu Muḥsin account. But there is no evidence of a strictly fixed number of degrees, seven or nine, as reported by anti-Ismā‘ili sources. Indeed, very little is known about this initiation and the actual da‘wa organization of early Ismā‘ilism. In the broadest terms, it seems that the Qā‘im Muhammad b. Ismā‘il was represented, during his concealment, by twelve hujjas. And beneath the hujjas, a hierarchy of da‘īs performed the various tasks of initiation and instruction.

By exalting the bāṭīn and the ḥaqā‘iq contained therein, the early Ismā‘ilis soon came to be regarded as the most representative Shi‘ī group espousing esoterism and gnosticism in Islam, the foremost amongst the Bāṭiniyya. Herein lies also the secret of the special role of the imām and of the religious hierarchy or ḥudūd in Ismā‘ilism. The early Ismā‘ilis held that while the religious laws were announced by the prophets, it was the function of the imāms or the prophets’ awsiyā‘ (singular, wasī), to interpret and explain their true meaning to the worthy few, those who were initiated and acknowledged the imāms. The unchangeable truths contained in the bāṭīn were the exclusive prerogative of the divinely guided, sinless and infallible Ismā‘īli Imām, and the hierarchy of teachers installed by him. These truths, furthermore, could not be revealed to anyone except on formal and gradual initiation. Hence, the need for a hierarchy of
religious dignitaries or intermediaries between the imām, as the supreme head of the da’wa organization, and the proselyte or the ordinary initiate. In this context, the Isma’īlis reinterpreted the Shi‘i principle of taqiyya to imply the obligation of the sectarians not to reveal the bātin to any unauthorized person, apart from their duty to dissimulate when facing the danger of persecution.

The truths behind the revealed scriptures and laws could be made apparent through the so-called ta’wil, viz., symbolical, allegorical or esoteric interpretation which came to be the hallmark of Isma’īlism. The ta’wil, literally meaning to lead back to the origin or to educe the bātin from the zāhir, may be distinguished from tafsīr, to explain and comment upon the apparent meaning of the sacred texts, and from tanzīl, which refers to the revelation of the religious scriptures through angelic intermediaries. The ta’wil practised by the early Isma’īlis was often of a cabalistic form, relying on the mystical properties and symbolism of letters and numbers. Although similar processes of interpretation and of spiritual exegesis had existed in the earlier Judaeo-Christian traditions and among the Gnostics, the immediate origins of the Isma’īli ta’wil are Islamic and may be traced especially to the Shi‘i circles of the 2nd/8th century. The purpose of the bāṭini ta’wil, utilized extensively by the Isma’īliyya, was to manifest the hidden so as to unveil the true spiritual reality. It represented a journey from the zāhir or the exoteric appearance, to the original ideas hidden in the bātin, causing the letter to regress to its true meaning, to the esoteric truths (ḥaqā‘iq) which were later identified with Isma’īli philosophy or theosophy. In short, the passage from zāhir to bātin, from shari‘a to ḥaqīqa, or from tanzil to ta’wil, entailed the passage from the appearance to the true reality, from the letters of the revelation to the inner message behind them, and from the symbol to the symbolized. It corresponded to a passage from the world of phenomenon to the world of noumenon. The initiation into the ḥaqā‘iq, attained through the ta’wil or ta’wil al-bāṭin, indeed led to a spiritual rebirth for the Isma’īlis. The ta’wil, translated also as spiritual hermeneutics or hermeneutic exegesis, supplemented the Qur‘ānic world view with a more elaborate view which rapidly developed into an intellectual system. The early Isma’īlis thus laid the foundations of their later religious system as well as their intellectual sciences, according to which the sectarians would progress from the zāhir sciences of the Shari‘a, history, etc., to the bāṭin sciences, comprised of the ta’wil, a means-science, leading to the ḥaqā‘iq, an ends-science, the final goal of human attainment.
The ḥaqqāʾiq, as noted above, formed a gnostic system for the early Ismāʿīlīs. The two main components of this gnostic system were a cyclical interpretation of hierohistory and a cosmology. On the basis of the state of knowledge available to them, the early Ismāʿīlīs developed their particular conceptions of time and eternity which were closely related to their views on history and prophetology. Their eclectic temporal vision reflected Greek, Judaeo-Christian and Gnostic influences as well as the eschatological ideas of the earlier Shiʿīs and the Qurʾānic view on the evolution of man. They conceived of time as a progression of successive cycles, with a beginning and an end. As a result of their particular (semi-cyclical and semi-linear) conception of time, the Ismāʿīlīs worked out a cyclical and ultimately teleological view of history, or rather religious history, in terms of the eras of different prophets recognized by the Qurʾān. This view was combined with their doctrine of the imāmate which, in its fundamental framework, had been inherited from the Imāmiyya.

Accordingly, the early Ismāʿīlīs believed that the hierohistory of mankind is consummated in seven eras of various durations, each one inaugurated by a speaker-prophet or enunciator (nāṭiq) of a revealed message, which in its exoteric aspect contains a religious law (ṣhāriʿa). In the first six eras of human history, the nāṭiqs (or nuṭaqāʾ), also known as the ʿulūʿl-ʾazm or the prophets ‘with resolution’, had been Ādām, Nūḥ (Noah), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Mūsā (Moses), ʿĪsā (Jesus) and Muḥammad. It may be recalled that, according to al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummi, the Qarmatis had originally included ʿAlī instead of Ādām in their list of law-announcing prophets, which represented an extremist viewpoint. The subsequent substitution of Ādām for ʿAlī, as one of the nāṭiqs, and the change of ʿAlī’s rank from prophet to that of Muḥammad’s successor, may thus indicate a less radical position. The early Ismāʿīlīs further maintained, probably by projecting their current ideas into the past, that each of the first six nāṭiqs was succeeded by a spiritual legatee or executor (waṣī), also called a foundation (asāṣ) or silent one (ṣāmit), who interpreted the inner, esoteric (bāṭin) meaning of the revealed messages to the elite. In the first six eras, Shīth (Seth), Sām (Shem), Ismāʿīl (Ishmael), Hārūn (Aaron) or Yūshaʿ (Joshua), Shamʿūn al-Šafāʾ (Simon Peter), and ʿAlī had been such legatees. Each waṣī, asāṣ, or ṣāmit was, in turn, followed by seven imāms called atimmaʾ (singular, mutimm, completer), who guarded the true meaning of the scriptures and the laws in both their zāḥir and bāṭin aspects. In every prophetic era, the seventh imām would rise in rank to become the nāṭiq of
the following era, abrogating the *shari'a* of the previous *nātiq* and promulgating a new one. This pattern would change only in the seventh, final era of history.

The seventh imām of the sixth era, the era of the Prophet Muḥammad, was Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl who had gone into concealment. On his parousia, he would become the seventh *nātiq*, and the Qā‘īm or Mahdī, ruling over the final eschatological era. Only he would unite in himself the ranks of *nātiq* and asās, being also the last of the imāms. Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl would abrogate the sacred law of Islam and initiate the final era of the world. He was not to announce a new religious law, however. Instead, he would fully reveal the esoteric truths concealed behind all the preceding messages; truths which had so far been revealed imperfectly and only to the elite of humanity. In the final era, before the end of the world, the *haqqā‘iq* would thus be fully known, free from all their symbolism, and an age of pure spiritual knowledge would be ushered in. In this messianic age, there would be no need for religious laws. Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl would rule the world in justice and then end the physical world, sitting in judgement over mankind. He would be the Qā‘īm al-qiyāma, the Imām of the Resurrection; and his era would mark the end of time and human history.

In order to reconcile a seemingly eternal universe with a limited number of cycles and with the partial temporality of man, later Ismā‘īlis allowed for a greater, endless, series of cycles. On the basis of astronomical and astrological speculations, they conceived of a grand cycle (*al-kawr al-a‘zām*), composed of numerous cycles, each divided into seven periods, the whole to be concluded by the Grand Resurrection. Furthermore, the cycles of time were held to progress through the epochs of concealment (*satr*), when appearance and true reality are essentially different, and epochs of epiphany or revelation (*kashf*), when truth is manifest and there is no need for external law. ‘Ubayd Allāh (‘Abd Allāh) al-Mahdī and his successor Fāṭimid caliphs, because of their open claims to the imāmate, modified the earlier doctrine of the Ismā‘īlis concerning the position of Muhammad b. Ismā‘īl as the Qā‘īm and the final imām. The Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlis allowed for more than one heptad of imāms during the era of the Prophet Muḥammad, removing the expectations connected with the coming of the Qā‘īm further into the future.¹⁸¹ A major result of these doctrinal adjustments was the loss of the eschatological significance of the seventh imām and of that vital sense of messianic anticipation which
played such a crucial role in giving early Ismāʿilism its popular appeal and success.

The cosmology of the pre-Fāṭimid Ismāʿilis can be reconstructed only from the fragmentary evidence preserved in some later Ismāʿili texts, notably in works by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Abū Yaʿqub al-Sijistānī, and in a Risāla by Abū ʿĪsā al-Murshid, a Fāṭimid dāʿī of the time of al-Muʿizz. There are also those precious contemporary references by some Yamani Zaydi authors. According to this evidence, fully examined by Stern and Halm, there was a crude myth at the very basis of the earliest Ismāʿili cosmology. More specifically, various motif complexes were combined into a mythological cosmogony, describing the creation of the universe and the analogies between the celestial and the terrestrial worlds. The early Ismāʿiliyya held that the universe was created by God's fiat kun, 'be', reflected as the Qurʾānic creative imperative. From this divine fiat, consisting of the two letters Kāf and Nūn, there arose through duplication the words kūnī and qadar, the two original principles; the former was the female principle, and the latter the male. Kūnī was formed first, out of kun, and then God commanded kūnī, a demiurge endowed with creative powers, to create qadar, predestination. By creating qadar, kūnī had also created the seven karūbiyyūn, corresponding to the Cherubim of the Judaeo-Christian angelology. The primal pair kūnī-qadar thus produced a heptad of letters, KUNI-QDR, called the 'higher letters' (al-hurūf al-ʿulwiyya), which were utilized in different ways. In this gnostic cosmological system, the myth of the letters had an extremely important function; it provided a ready explanation for the genesis of the universe. The letters produced the names or the words that were, in effect, identical with the things created. Clearly, what we have here may be referred to as a cabalistic mythological cosmogony.

The original pair kūnī-qadar, which were wrongly thought by our Zaydi sources to have been the 'gods' of the early Ismāʿilis (Qarmatis), were indeed closely associated with the formation of the letters and the higher and lower worlds, and with the prophetic eras. The seven 'higher letters' of kūnī-qadar were interpreted as the archetypes of the seven nāṭiqs and their revealed messages; each letter standing for one of the speaker-prophets, beginning with K for Ādam and ending with R for al-Qāʿīm. These primal letters produced the remaining letters of the Arabic alphabet, presumably in heptads, and the elements from which the higher and the physical worlds were built. The two original principles produced three hypostases.
Kūnī ordered qadar to create, from his three letters, the triad of the spiritual beings (rūhaniyyūn) or hypostases called jadd, fath and khayāl, identified with the archangels Jibrā’īl (Gabriel), Mikā’il (Michael) and Isrāfīl (Seraphiel), which mediated between the spiritual world and men in the physical world. They would also act as intermediaries between God and the nātiqs in every prophetic era. These hypostases provided important links between the cosmological doctrine of the early Ismā’īlis and their ideas on hierohistory and prophetology. Kūnī and qadar, together with jadd, fath and khayāl formed a pentad that along with the seven karūbiyyūn and other created spiritual ranks (ḥudūd rūhaniyya) constituted the higher world existing between God and the cosmos; gnostically speaking, this was the spiritual world or the pleroma. There was correspondence between the higher, spiritual world and the lower, physical world created through the mediation of kūnī and qadar, with the ranks of religious teaching (da'wa) hierarchy corresponding closely to the ranks of the higher world. The air called ‘the throne’ (‘arsh), the water called ‘the chair’ (kursi), the seven skies, the earth, and the seven seas, etc., were all formed from the four letters of the original female principle. In al-Murshid’s version of the myth, the male principle qadar, which is subordinated to kūnī, has the character of a heavenly Adam or anthropos. Other Ismā’īli authorities, notably al-Sijistānī, also present traces of a motif indicating the fall of this cosmic man; Adam-qadar disobeyed God and was therefore banished from paradise to the terrestrial world.

All these motifs, and several more, are the components of the kūnī-qadar gnostic synthetic myth, representing the cosmological system of the early Ismā’īlis. This cosmology had a soteriological purpose; it aimed towards man’s salvation and the knowledge or gnosis of his true origin, in order that he might be reintegrated into his cosmic being. As Halm has shown, the main features of the early Ismā’īli cosmological system, such as hypostatization of God’s will (irāda) and the word (kalima or logos), primal female-male pair, pentad of the pleroma, heavenly anthropos, and the prophetic eras, are traceable to diverse sources. There are doubtless some Judaeo-Christian influences. More significantly, there are strong parallelisms between this Ismā’īli system and the Samaritan Gnosis of Simon Magus, in whose central mythologumenon there is a female hypostasis (Ennoia or Sophia) causing the creation of the universe, and the related ‘Ophite’ and ‘Barbelo-Gnostic’ systems that have been classified under the label of ‘Syrian-Jewish’ types of Gnosticism. There are also close affinities between the pre-Fāṭimid Ismā’īli cosmology and the reli-
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gious concepts of the Mandaeans, an enigmatic sect probably belonging to the same category of Gnosticism. However, none of these earlier systems seem to have served as a direct prototype of the early Ismāʿīlī gnostic system of cosmology. The latter is an original model which developed on its own in an Islamic milieu, relying on Qurʾānic terminology and Shiʿī doctrines, while apparently drawing on the overall pattern of an earlier Simonian type of Gnosticism. The Ismāʿīliyya did appear and remain as a Shiʿī sect, whose revolutionary and messianic propaganda was conducted for a Fāṭimid Imām from the Ahl al-Bayt. As such, the doctrines of the early Ismāʿīlīs were mainly of the Islamic provenance, though they also borrowed, directly or indirectly through the Shiʿī Ghulāt, from some earlier non-Islamic traditions.
Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism

Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism, the subject of this chapter, covers the period from the establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate in 297/909 until the death of the eighth Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustanṣir in 487/1094 and the ensuing major schism in the Ismāʿīli movement. During this so-called ‘classical’ Fāṭimid period, lasting some 185 years, Ismāʿīlism remained the state religion of a powerful empire centred first in Ifriqiya (Tunisia), and after 362/973, in Egypt. The Fāṭimid caliphs were acknowledged as the rightful imāms by the main body of the Ismāʿīliyya not only in their own dominions but also in many other Muslim lands. This represented the ‘golden age’ of Ismāʿīlism, during which the Ismāʿīlis achieved a prosperous state of their own and Ismāʿīli thought and literature reached their summit, as attested by numerous treatises produced by the Ismāʿīli dāʿīs and authors of the period, notably Abū Ḥātim al-Razi, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī, Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nuʿmān b. Muḥammad, better known as al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, al-Muʿayyad fiʾl-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, and Naṣīr-i Khusraw. At the same time, the Fāṭimids, after consolidating their position, began to pay considerable attention to cultural and economic activities as well as Islamic sciences in general. From their initial base in Ifriqiya, the Fāṭimid rulers soon expanded their territorial domain in the western half of the Muslim world, culminating in their conquest of Egypt. Later, they extended their religio-political influence eastwards as far as Transoxiana and India. At its peak, the Fāṭimid empire, at least for a short period, included North Africa, Sicily, Egypt, the Red Sea coast of Africa, Yaman, the Ḥijāz with the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, Syria, and Palestine. But the Fāṭimids never succeeded in conquering the eastern lands of the Muslim world beyond Syria, as they failed to overthrow the ‘Abbāsids and the latter’s Buwayhid and Saljuqid overlords. Consequently, they failed to establish the Ismāʿīli
Shi‘i creed throughout the world of Islam, hence not realizing their allimportant objective of uniting the Muslims under a Shi‘i caliphate headed by the Fātimid caliph-imām. Nevertheless, the Fātimids made important contributions to Islamic civilization, and it is in recognition of these contributions that L. Massignon has designated the 4th/10th century as the ‘Ismā‘īlī century’ of Islam.¹

The Fātimid period is one of the best documented periods in Islamic history. Many mediaeval Muslim historians and chroniclers have written about the Fātimids, and there are numerous non-literary sources of information on this dynasty. In the latter category, Fātimid monuments and works of art have already been thoroughly studied, and scholarly investigations of numismatic, epigraphic and other types of existing evidence related to them have been made. There are also valuable archival documents from Fātimid Egypt; documents which are rarely available in connection with other Islamic dynasties and periods in the Middle Ages. Furthermore, the extant Ismā‘īlī literature of the period, recovered in recent decades, illuminates various aspects of the doctrines held by the Fātimid Ismā‘īlis, enabling us to grasp the nature of their intellectual achievement. Due to this relative abundance of evidence, examined extensively by modern Islamists as well as specialists in Ismā‘īlī studies, Fātimid Ismā‘īlism has now become the best known major phase in the development of Ismā‘īlism.

Taking a closer look at the nature of the historical evidence available on the Fātimids, it is to be noted that with the collapse of the Fātimid Caliphate in 567/1171 and the return of Egypt to the Sunnī fold during the subsequent Ayyūbid and Mamlūk periods, the Fātimid libraries were effectively destroyed and the sectarian literature of the Fātimid Ismā‘īlis was severely repressed. Henceforth, whatever was salvaged of various types of Ismā‘īlī works came to be preserved secretly and in private collections. As a result, the mediaeval accounts of Fātimid history and doctrines come almost exclusively from the pens of Sunnī historians who, as a rule, were hostile towards the Fātimids and their Shi‘ī ideals. As an example, these writers, with the chief exceptions of Ibn Khaldūn and al-Maqrīzī, categorically reject the claims of the Fātimid caliphs to an ‘Alid descent, many of them referring to the members of this dynasty as ‘Ubayyids rather than Fātimids. It may be recalled that most such anti-Fātimid positions had probably originated with Ibn Rizām, who had aimed at discrediting the entire Ismā‘īlī movement. Thus, numerous distortions and negative biases are contained in the narratives of the Sunnī
historians and chroniclers who inevitably provide our main sources of information on Fāṭimid history and on the dynasty’s political achievements. The Fāṭimid Išmā‘īlī theologians, in line with the characteristic outlook and priorities of the Išmā‘īlīs in general, were not keen on historiography. Consequently, the Išmā‘īlī texts from the Fāṭimid period are surprisingly poor in historical detail; while none of the official Fāṭimid chronicles, compiled at various times, have survived. The only Išmā‘īlī account of Fāṭimid history, aside from al-Qādi al-Nu‘mān’s Iṣṭīḥāḫ al-da‘wa, explaining the background to the establishment of the dynasty, is contained in the last three volumes of the ‘Uyūn al-akhbār of the Yamānī dā‘ī ldrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn, which draws on earlier works and was completed some three centuries after the fall of the dynasty.

Considering in more detail the Fāṭimid historiography produced by non-Išmā‘īlīs, it is known that many Arab historians flourished in Fāṭimid Egypt after the dynasty had assured its existence following its turbulent North African phase. But with the exception of a few fragments, the works of these contemporary authors, who wrote local histories of Egypt or dynastic chronicles of the Fāṭimids, have not survived directly. The evidence recorded by them is, however, often preserved and utilized by later authorities, especially al-Maqrīzī. Ibn Zūlāq (d. 386/996) is one of the earliest writers amongst such contemporary Egyptian historians whose works have been completely lost; apparently he wrote among other things an independent book on the reign of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mu‘izz. The tradition of local historiography in Fāṭimid Egypt was continued by al-Musabbiḥī (d. 420/1029), a high official after 398/1007–1008 in the service of the Fāṭimids, and who may have been an Išmā‘īlī himself. He produced a major history of Egypt and the Fāṭimids, covering the period from 365/975 to 415/1025. Only a small portion (volume forty) of al-Musabbiḥī’s vast history, relating to the years 414–415 A.H., has survived in a unique manuscript preserved at the Escorial Library, Madrid. Another historian was Muḥammad b. Salāma al-Qudā‘ī (d. 454/1062), a learned judge and a trusted Sunnī in the service of the Fāṭimid caliphs, notably al-Mustānṣır. Al-Qudā‘ī’s works are not extant, but al-Maqrīzī and other later sources have utilized his history of the Fāṭimids. The only surviving contemporary account of the Fāṭimids is contained in the history of al-Anṭākī (d. 458/1066), an Arab Christian who spent the earlier part of his life in Egypt and then, during the caliphate of al-Ḥākim, migrated to the Byzantine city of Antioch in Syria where he composed his history of the ‘Abbāsid, Fāṭimid, and Byzantine empires, covering the period 326/937 to around 425/1033.
Amongst the later Egyptian historians, who were for the most part also
civil servants in Fatimid administration, mention should be made of 'Ali b.
Munjib, better known as Ibn al-Šayrafi; a prolific, versatile writer who
worked in the *diwan al-inša‘* or chancery of the Fatimids in Cairo from
495/1010 until his death in 542/1147. A historical work by Ibn al-Šayrafi,
apparently an abridgement and continuation of an earlier Fatimid
chronicle, has not survived, but two other works dealing with different
aspects of Fatimid institutions have been preserved and published.⁵

Amongst later relevant regional and dynastic histories produced during
the 7th/13th century, reference may be made to the already-noted short
history of the 'Ubaydids (Fatimids), the *Akhbār mulūk Bani 'Ubayd,*
written in 617/1220 by Ibn Ḥammād (Ḥamādū), a Berber qaḍī and
historian who died in 628/1231. There is also Ibn al-Ṭuwayr (d. 617/1220),
a high-ranking official of the later Fatimids who wrote a history of the
Fatimid and Ayyūbid dynasties which is lost, but on which al-
Qalqashandi, al-Maqrizi, and Ibn Ṭaghribirdi drew extensively for their
knowledge of the last Fatimids and their institutions. Ibn Abī Ṭayyi’ (d. ca.
630/1232–1233), a native of Aleppo and the only Shi‘i historian of the
period, is another important source of historical information on the later
Fatimids. His universal and Egyptian histories, also lost, have been quoted
frequently by later historians, notably Ibn al-Furāt. The Egyptian Ibn
Ẓāfir (d. 613/1216), who was a secretary in the chancery of the early
Ayyūbids, wrote several works, including a universal history classified
according to dynasties. The most important part of Ibn Ẓāfir’s history
concerns the Fatimids, and has recently been published for the first time.⁶

But the most extensive history of Fatimid Egypt, produced in the second
half of the 7th/13th century under the early Mamlūks, belongs to Tāj al-
Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Yūsuf b. Jalab Rāghib, better known as Ibn
Muyassar (d. 677/1278). Unfortunately, his *Akhbār Miṣr,* which may be
considered a concise continuation of al-Musabbihi’s chronicle, has
survived in an incomplete form, covering the events of the Fatimid
Caliphate during the period 439–553/1047–1158, with two fragments on
the years 362–365 and 381–387 A.H. This work, based on the lost histories
of al-Muḥannak (d. 549/1154) and Ibn al-Ma’mūn al-Baṯā‘iḥī (d. 588/
1192), is preserved in a unique and incomplete manuscript held at the
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and which derives from a copy made by al-
Maqrīzī in 814/1411.⁷

During the later Mamlūk period, the Fatimids were treated in certain
regional chronicles, and in several universal histories written by Egyptian
authors. Ibn 'Idhāri, a Maghribi historian who died after 712/1312, included an account of the early Fātimids in his chronicle of Ifriqiya, *al-Bayān al-mughrib*. Ibn al-Dawādāri, an Egyptian historian and a Mamlūk officer, wrote an extensive universal history, *Kanz al-durar*, of which the sixth part is devoted to the Fātimid dynasty, and which preserves valuable extracts from Akhū Muḥsin, Ibn Zūlāq and other earlier sources whose works have not survived. Ibn al-Furāt (d. 807/1405), another Egyptian historian, attempted to write a universal history, of which only the part covering the years after 500/1106 was completed. This work, surviving in fragments, is important for later Fātimid history as it utilizes a wide range of contemporary sources, many of which, like the chronicles of Ibn al-Ṭuwayr and Ibn Abī Ṭayyī', have been lost. The relevant section of Ibn al-Furāt's history concerning the Fātimids still remains unpublished. Then there are the three celebrated Egyptian authors of the late Mamlūk period, al-Qalqashandi, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and al-Maqrīzī. Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Qalqashandi (d. 821/1418), a secretary in the Mamlūk chancery in Cairo and the author of numerous works, is best known for his secretarial manual, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*, completed in 814/1412. A large number of original documents are preserved in this work, published in fourteen volumes. Amongst such documents, those pertaining to the Fātimid and subsequent periods of Egyptian history are of particular significance. Abu'l-Maḥāsin Yūsuf b. Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1469) wrote a detailed history of Egypt from 20/641 to his own times, which includes a full account of Fātimid Egypt. But it was left to the dean of the mediaeval Egyptian historians, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), to produce the most extensive account of the Fātimids, in both his *Ittī‘āz* and *al-Khitat*, utilizing many early and contemporary sources. It may also be added that although he was a Sunni, al-Maqrīzī was favourably disposed towards the Fātimids. The tradition of local historiography in Egypt attained its peak in the works of al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī, though historical writings on Egypt and the Fātimid period were continued by later historians like al-Suyūṭī (d. 915/1505) and Ibn Iyās (d. ca. 930/1524).

Much valuable information on the Fātimids is also contained in the famous universal histories of the Muslim authors. For almost two centuries after al-Ṭabārī, the semi-official continuation of his *Ta‘rikh* was maintained. Al-Ṭabārī's *Ta‘rikh* was initially continued to the year 320/923, by 'Arib b. Sa’d, the Andalusian historian and poet who held various official posts in the administration of the Spanish Umayyads. More significantly, its continuation became the collective work of Thābit b. Sinān (d. 365/
976) and some of the latter's relatives, all belonging to a learned family of Sabean scholars and secretaries who had left their native city of Harran in northern Mesopotamia to settle in Baghdad. Thabit continued the narrative up to the year 362/973; and the history was in turn continued by his nephew Hilal b. al-Mu'assim al-Šabi' (d. 448/1056), the first member of his family to embrace Islam. The universal history of Thabit b. Sinan seems to be almost completely lost, while that of Hilal, which went down to the year 447/1055, survives only in a short fragment covering the period 389–393/999–1003. Hilal al-Šabi' lived in Baghdad when the reigning 'Abbāsid caliph al-Qādir was conducting his anti-Fātimid campaign, which culminated in the famous Baghdad manifesto denouncing the 'Alid ancestry of the Fātimid caliphs; and Hilal seems to have fully endorsed this hostile 'Abbāsid view. Many later historians, such as Ibn al-Qalānīsī (d. 555/1160), who wrote on the Fātimids and their activities in Syria, were directly or indirectly influenced by Hilal's unfavourable account of the Fātimids. Hilal's history was, in due course, continued down to 479/1086 by his son Ghars al-Ni'ma Muhammad (d. 480/1087), of whose work nothing has been recovered save some extracts, including a section on Fātimid Egypt, which are preserved in Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī's universal history. Thabit and Hilal too, are quoted in later universal histories, such as al-Muntaqarn of Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) and the Mur'āt al-zamān of the latter's grandson Yusuf b. Qizughlu, known as Sibt (d. 654/1256). The most important universal history produced in this early period after al-Ṭabarī, however, is the Tajārib al-umām of Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), the famous historian, philosopher and physician, with its continuation by the wazir Abū Shujā' al-Rūdhrāwārī (d. 488/1095); they both also made extensive use of the histories of Thabit and Hilal. The tradition of writing continuations to al-Ṭabarī found its culmination in Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1234), one of the greatest chroniclers of the Muslim world and the author of a vast general history down to the year 628/1231, which is rich in information on the Fātimids. Ibn al-Athīr's history, representing the peak of Muslim annalistic historiography, was supplemented by the universal histories of the already-noted Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1325–1326); al-Nuwayrī (d. 732/1332); the Syrian prince and historian of the Ayyūbid family Abu'l-Fidā (d. 732/1331); al-Dhahabi (d. ca. 748/1348); Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373); the celebrated Tunisian historian, sociologist and philosopher Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406); and al-‘Aynī (d. 855/1451), amongst others.

Aside from historical sources, there exist valuable archival documents
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concerning the Fātimids. In fact, Fātimid Egypt is one of the rare periods in the annals of the Islamic Middle Ages from which such materials have survived. In Fātimid times, the official documents were issued mainly through the diwan al-insha', the chancery of state, and their originals were preserved there or in other Fātimid archives. Subsequently, these documents, such as decrees, or epistles (singular, manshūr or sijill), letters of various kinds, diplomas, treaties, etc., came to be scattered in different isolated locations, since no Fātimid archives outlived the fall of the dynasty. It is unfortunate that no Islamic archives of the mediaeval times have survived, the only exception being the Ottoman archives. But the texts of some of the Fātimid documents have been preserved in certain chronicles, notably in those of al-Maqrizi and Ibn Taghibirdi, and in other literary sources, especially in manuals for secretaries. The most impressive example of the latter category is undoubtedly al-Qalqashandi’s Subh al-a'shā, which is of encyclopaedic dimensions and which remains an indispensable source for the study of Fātimid documents and institutions. Then there are those documents from the Fātimid period found amongst the famous Geniza collection of papers. The Geniza (a Hebrew term meaning a repository of discarded writings), or Cairo Geniza, refers to the lumber-chamber of an old synagogue in Fustat (Old Cairo), where documents of all kinds were deposited and preserved from the 4th/10th century onwards. When the synagogue was renovated in 1890, the great treasure of papers and manuscripts hidden in its Geniza was recovered and dispersed to many public and private libraries throughout the world. In 1897, Solomon Schechter of Cambridge University transferred all of the still-available Geniza records to the Cambridge University Library, where it forms the famous Taylor-Schechter Collection. For Islamic studies, it is mainly the Geniza’s documentary material, consisting of thousands of letters, contracts, petitions, etc., concerning the Jewish and non-Jewish communities of the Muslim world, which is of particular interest. Most of these documents, written in Arabic or more commonly in Judaeo-Arabic (Arabic language written in Hebrew characters), date from the Fātimid and Ayyūbid periods. Purely Muslim materials from the chancery of the Fātimids are also found amongst the Geniza papers; documents which apparently had been taken into the Geniza by Jewish clerks employed in the chancery. The Geniza documents, particularly their Arabic items, provide an invaluable source of information for the economic, social, and cultural history of mediaeval Egypt, especially during the Fātimid times.

Finally, mention should be made of a small but unique corpus of eight
decrees issued by the Fāṭimid chancery to the monastery of St Catherine in Mount Sinai. These documents, dating from the last phase of Fāṭimid rule, have been preserved over the centuries in the archives of the monastery and in its Cairo and Istanbul branches. Two other extant Fāṭimid decrees of a similar nature, dating from 415/1024, had been originally issued by the Fāṭimid al-Ẓāhir to the Coptic monks and the Karaite Jewish community in Cairo. These documents, which are administrative decrees set forth by the Fāṭimids in response to petitions from non-Muslim communities, shed valuable light on Fāṭimid diplomatic and chancery practice.18

In modern times, Ferdinand Wüstensfeld (1808–1899) was the first European orientalist to have written, in 1880–1881, an independent history of the Fāṭimid Caliphate, drawing on a number of Arabic chronicles. Until the 1930’s, only one other book in the West, written by the late British scholar O’Leary, had come to be devoted entirely to the history of the Fāṭimids.19 With modern progress in Ismā‘ili studies, however, the Fāṭimids too began to receive the fresh attention of the Islamists and specialists who now felt a need for re-writing their history. As a result, there appeared an upsurge of short studies and articles treating various aspects of Fāṭimid history and achievements. Attempts were also made to produce more comprehensive histories of the Fāṭimid dynasty. The late Zāhid ‘Alī of Niẓām College, Hyderabad, belonging to that small group of Indian Ismā‘ilis who together with W. Ivanow played a decisive role in initiating modern progress in Ismā‘ili studies, published in 1948 his history of the Fāṭimids. This work, still available only in the Urdu language, utilized for the first time a number of Ismā‘ili sources; and it remains a valuable secondary source on the subject. Later, Abbas Hamdani, another modern Ismā‘ili scholar belonging to an eminent Indian Ismā‘ili family, produced a succinct account of the Fāṭimids in the English language.20 Professor Hamdani, too, has had access to an important collection of Ismā‘ili manuscripts preserved in his family for several generations. Meanwhile, Muḥammad Kāmil Husayn of Cairo University (formerly the University of Fu‘ād I) had started to edit and make available to scholars a number of Fāṭimid Ismā‘ili texts in his well-known series of publications entitled Silsilat Makhṭūṭāt al-Fāṭimiyyin. Other Egyptian scholars, teaching the history and civilization of mediaeval Egypt at various universities in their country, also began to publish important studies on the Fāṭimids, including a number of monographs on different Fāṭimid caliphs.21 With these developments, an increasing number of
students, both Ismāʿīlī and non-Ismāʿīlī, now selected topics related to Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism for their doctoral dissertations in European and American universities and in some Eastern institutions. At the same time, Western scholars continued to make contributions of their own to the study of the Fāṭimids. The late Professor Marius Canard, who for more than thirty years until his retirement in 1961 taught at the University of Algiers, was undoubtedly the doyen of this group of Westerners. He has written a number of major articles on the Fāṭimids, summing up the current state of research on the subject in his long article in the new edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam. The close co-operation between the Eastern and Western specialists in Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī studies is well attested to by the papers presented at an international conference held in 1969 in Cairo to commemorate the millenary of that city.

Fāṭimid history during its ‘classical’ period is normally divided into two phases. The initial phase, commonly designated as the North African phase, lasted just over sixty years from the establishment of Fāṭimid rule in Ifrīqiya in 297/909 to the Fāṭimid conquest of Egypt in 358/969 and the transference of the dynasty’s seat of power there in 362/973; during which time the Fāṭimids were chiefly occupied with laying the foundations of their caliphate and assuring their existence. In the second phase, covering a period of some 120 years from 362/973 until the death of the caliph al-Muṣṭaṣir in 487/1094, the Fāṭimid Caliphate, now centred in Egypt and enjoying stability, reached and then passed its peak of glory and territorial expansion, which was subsequently followed by the rapid decline and fall of the dynasty.

The first three Fāṭimid caliphs, ‘Ubayd Allāh (‘Abd Allāh) al-Mahdī b’Illāh (297–322/909–934), Abu’l-Qāsim Muḥammad al-Qā’im bi-Amr Allāh (322–334/934–946) and Abū ʻṬāhir Ismā‘īl al-Manṣūr b’Illāh (334–341/946–953), who reigned entirely from Ifrīqiya, encountered numerous internal and external difficulties while they were consolidating their power and position in that remote region of the Muslim world. Not only did they face internal dissent and the continued enmity of the ‘Abbāsid, the Umayyads of Spain, the Byzantines, and the Qarmāṭīs of Bahrayn, but they also soon came to confront the hostility of various Sunni and Khārjī dynasties and Berber tribes of the Maghrib, in their more immediate surroundings.

The Fāṭimids, like the ‘Abbāsid before them, came to face a serious internal conflict soon after their victory. This conflict, threatening the very existence of the newly founded Shī‘ī dynasty, had its roots in the
incompatibility between the ideas and expectations of those daʿīs who had played a vital role in bringing the Fāṭimids to power on the one hand, and the needs of the state and the responsibilities of sound government on the other. The establishment of Fāṭimid rule required some modifications in the revolutionary objectives and policies of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīli daʿwa. Now that the Ismāʿīli Imām had become a caliph, the daʿwa could no longer address itself primarily to the overthrow of the ʿAbbāsids, as it had done during the 3rd/9th century. It was also obliged to defend and uphold the claims of the Fāṭimids within the world of Islam. In the words of Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī, with the establishment of the Fāṭimid state, the Ismāʿīli movement was obliged to adopt ‘a graver and more conservative attitude towards the then existing institutions of Islam’. This changed attitude found its expression also in the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīli literature, displaying a tendency away from the earlier revolutionary principles of the movement. At any rate, almost immediately after al-Mahdi’s accession, serious disagreements developed between the caliph and his chief lieutenant the daʿī Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Shiʿī. The daʿī evidently had ideas of his own regarding the policies of the state, including taxation measures to be employed; he also resented the new limits put on his authority. Under these circumstances, Abū ʿAbd Allāh, who was extremely popular amongst the Kutāma, had begun to agitate against his master. But al-Mahdi, knowing that the daʿī could easily incite the Berbers against him, moved swiftly. In 298/911, both Abū ʿAbd Allāh and his brother Abuʾl-ʿAbbās were murdered on his secret orders, reminiscent of Abū Muslim’s fate. The demise of Abū ʿAbd Allāh outraged the Kutāma Berbers, some of whom now rose in open revolt. However, al-Mahdi repressed this revolt speedily, before it could become more widespread.

In North Africa, the Fāṭimids had to struggle against Sunnism, mainly in its Mālikī form, and more importantly, against Khārijism, the predominant religion of the Berbers. The existence of old rivalries in the Maghrib among the various Berber tribal groups, especially between the Zanāta and the Ṣanḥāja, which was continuously exploited by the Umayyads of Spain, was another source of trouble for the early Fāṭimids. The Zanāta, who adhered mainly to Ibadī Khārijism and who, out of their hatred for the Fāṭimids, often placed themselves under the patronage of the Umayyads, were to be found in the western and furthest Maghrib, while the Ṣanḥāja (or Šinḫāja), who included the Kutāma, were concentrated in the central and eastern regions of the Maghrib. The Kutāma Berbers, it will be recalled, had been converted to Ismāʿīlism and now
provided the backbone of the Fāṭimid armies. After disposing of Abū ‘Abd Allāh, the caliph al-Mahdi had to deal with the revolts of the Zanāta, while in the west of his realm he was confronted by the Idrīsids of Fās (Fez), the first ‘Alid dynasty of the Maghrib founded in 172/789.

The Rustamids of Tāhart, a Khārijī dynasty brought to power with the help of the Zanāta, had been overthrown in 296/909 by the Kutāma fighters of the dāʾi Abū ‘Abd Allāh. But Tāhart had continued to serve as the rallying point of the Ibāḍī Khārijī Berbers, and soon the Zanāta of western Maghrib revolted against the Fāṭimidīs. In 299/911, this revolt was subdued and Tāhart retaken, by Mašāla b. Ḥabūs, who then subjugated the Idrīsids of Morocco in 305/917. The Idrīsīd ruler Yahyā IV was, however, permitted to retain the governorship of Fās and its province, under the condition that he recognize the sovereignty of the Fāṭimid al-Mahdī. The remainder of the Idrīsīd territories was given to Mūsā b. Abī‘l-‘Āfiya, a Miknāsa Berber chief and Mašāla’s cousin. In 307/919–920, Mašāla was obliged to return to the Idrīsīd territories, and this time he deposed Yahyā IV, also taking possession of Fās. Subsequently, the Fāṭimid general proceeded to Sijilmās, which he took in 309/921. After Mašāla’s death in 312/924, his lieutenant Ibn Abī‘l-‘Āfiya became the sole ruler of western Maghrib as far as Sabta (Ceuta). However, he eventually defected from the Fāṭimid camp, and, in 320/932, transferred his allegiance to the celebrated Spanish Umayyad ‘Abd al-Rahmān III (300–350/912–961) who, as part of his anti-Fāṭimid campaign, had seized Sabta during the previous year. It was only in the initial year of the second Fāṭimid caliph’s reign that a Fāṭimid army, under the command of Maṣṣūr, succeeded in defeating Ibn Abī‘l-‘Āfiya and in re-establishing Fāṭimid authority over western Maghrib. As a result, the Umayyads of Cordova became obliged to abandon, at least temporarily, their expansionist policies in North Africa, where they had the support of the Zanāta.29

From the beginning of their rule, the Fāṭimidīs aspired to establish their hegemony over the entire Muslim world. Their more immediate objective, however, was to overthrow the ‘Abbāsīds, who were their most obvious adversary. As a first step toward their campaign against the ‘Abbāsīds, which was to culminate in the extension of their rule over the entire Muslim East, they addressed themselves to conquering the Egyptian province of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate. They attacked Egypt twice in al-Mahdī’s reign, during 301–302/913–915 and 307–309/919–921, led by the caliph’s son and future successor Abu‘l-Qāsim Muhammad. Both inva-
sions, however, ended in failure, with only Barqa remaining in Fatimid hands. Meanwhile, in order to have better access to the Mediterranean and eastern lands, al-Mahdi had founded the town of Mahdiyya on the east coast of Ifriqiya to where, in 308/921, he transferred his capital from Qayrawân. Later, the Fatimid capital in Ifriqiya was moved to Muḥammad- madiyya and then to Mansūriyya, towns founded by and named after al-Mahdi’s next two successors. Mahdiyya was equipped with an impressive shipyard which soon enabled the Fatimids to possess a powerful fleet. This fleet was badly damaged in the second Fatimid invasion of Egypt, mainly due to the inexperience of its pilots. It did not take long, however, for the Fatimid warships to engage in numerous far-reaching battles and raids throughout the Mediterranean. After his accession, al-Qāʾim launched a third expedition against Egypt in 323/935, again without success. The founder of the Ikhshidid dynasty, Muhammad b. Tughj al-Ikhshid (323–334/935–946), who was appointed to the governorship of Egypt by the ‘Abbāsids, repelled this attack, forcing the Fatimid troops to withdraw to Barqa. Ibn Tughj and his able general Kāfūr, who became the real authority behind the later Ikhshidids, managed to delay the Fatimid conquest of Egypt for more than three decades. The military operations of the Fatimids in Egypt were accompanied by their Ismaʿili propaganda there. This propaganda, conducted by numerous daʿīs and secret agents, was addressed both to the soldiery and the civilian populace, including the non-Muslims of that ‘Abbāsid province. On several occasions, the Egyptian authorities succeeded in arresting and punishing some of these Fatimid propagandists and their local collaborators; but the Fatimids were not deterred from continuing their campaign. 

As successors to the Aghlabids, the Fatimids had inherited the island of Sicily (Siqilliyya), separated from Italy by the narrow strait of Messina. The Aghlabids had seized Sicily from the Byzantines in a gradual conquest that was completed by 264/878. Byzantium, however, had continued to have possessions in Calabria, in neighbouring southern Italy. As a result of numerous raids, conquests and migrations, Sicily had come to be inhabited by a mixture of races with different religious beliefs. There were, for instance, Lombards, Greeks, Arabs and Berbers who adhered to Christianity, Islam and Judaism. This heterogeneity was a source of constant friction in the island. Under the Aghlabids, Sicily was governed by an amīr residing in Palermo, and this tradition was upheld by the Fatimids. The first Fatimid governor of Sicily was Ibn Abi’l-Fawāris, a former amīr of the island who had championed the Fatimid cause there.
Soon afterwards in 297/910, he was replaced by al-Hasan b. Aḥmad, better known as Ibn Abi Khinzir, a more trustworthy individual and a former Fāṭimid police-chief of Qayrawān. In 299/912, the Arabs and the Berbers revolted against Ibn Abi Khinzir, in Palermo and Girgenti, also rejecting his successor, ʿAlī b. ʿUmar al-Balawī, sent by al-Mahdi. The Sicilians now chose a governor of their own, Ibn Qurhub, a rich nobleman associated with the Aghlabid family. Ibn Qurhub declared himself to be in support of the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Muqtadir (295–320/908–932), and during the short span of his rule, representing virtual independence for Sicily, there was an influx of Mālikī Sunnīs to the island, refugees who feared the persecution of the new Shīʿī masters of Ifriqiya. Later, the Berbers of Girgenti, joined by the inhabitants of other parts of Sicily, revolted against Ibn Qurhub and, in 304/916, delivered him to al-Mahdi, who had him executed. After this short interval, Sicily again reverted to the Fāṭimid domain, though periodical troubles continued to erupt on the island.

In 336/948, the Fāṭimid al-Manṣūr appointed al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Kalbī, of the influential Maghribī Kalbid family of the Banū Abīʾl-Ḥusayn, as governor of Sicily, in order to subdue the recurrent anti-Fāṭimid activities there. This appointment led to the foundation of the semi-independent dynasty of the Kalbids, which ruled over Sicily for almost a century on behalf of the Fāṭimids. By the middle of the 5th/11th century, civil wars and Byzantine interventions had paved the way for the downfall of the Kalbids and the gradual reduction of Sicily by the Normans. The Kalbid period, it may be noted, was one of the most prosperous periods in the history of Muslim Sicily. The island developed vital trade relations with Ifriqiya, while Palermo, with its numerous mosques, became a flourishing centre of traditional Islamic sciences. Fāṭimid Sicily also played an important part in the transmission of Islamic culture into Europe. It is interesting to note, however, that the Fāṭimid daʿwa does not seem to have penetrated into Sicily. The Kalbid amirs and the ruling circles associated with them in view of their recognition of Fāṭimid suzerainty, probably adhered to Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism, at least outwardly. But there is no evidence of the Fāṭimid daʿīs trying to win converts in the island, whose Muslims continued to be mainly Mālikī Sunnis. There were, however, some Ismāʿīlis, mainly refugees, amongst the Sicilian masses. The bulk of them had fled from Ifriqiya to avoid persecution by the Sunnīs, in the aftermath of the departure of the Fāṭimids to Egypt.

The early Fāṭimids used Sicily as a base for launching raids against the coastal towns of Italy and France as well as the islands of the western
Mediterranean. At the same time, they continued to be engaged in war and diplomacy with the Byzantines, who held possessions in eastern Sicily and southern Italy and occasionally benefited from the alliance of the Umayyads. During al-Mahdi's reign, the Fatimid forces raided the coast of Lombardy and Calabria, forcing the Byzantines to pay an annual tribute. They also carried further naval assaults against the territories of Salerno and Naples. Later in 322/934, the caliph al-Qa'im sent a fleet of twenty vessels from Mahdiyya to Italy; this expedition sacked Genoa in the following year, returning to Ifriqiya with much booty. Fatimid fleets also attacked the southern coast of France, and temporarily occupied the islands of Sardinia and Corsica. Following several minor entanglements, in 345/956-957 they inflicted a major defeat on the Byzantines in Italy, obliging the emperor Constantine VII (913-959) to send tributes and a peace-negotiating embassy to the Fatimid al-Mu'izz in 346/957-958. In 351/962, the second Kalbid governor of Sicily, Ahmad b. al-Hasan, while consolidating his position, staged war against the eastern part of the island, where several Christian towns had survived in a state of semi-independence under Byzantine protection. In the same year, the Kalbids captured Taormina, which had resisted Muslim rule, renaming it Mu'izziyya, after the reigning Fatimid caliph. The early Kalbids continued to have periodic clashes with Byzantium whilst they were often asked to intercede in the struggles between the various small states of southern Italy. In 354/964, following the accession of the emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (963-969), who had refused to pay the customary tribute to the Fatimids and had also renewed the hostilities in Sicily, the Byzantines were severely defeated on land and sea by the joint Fatimid-Kalbid forces. Rametta, the last Sicilian possession of Byzantium, was now seized by the Muslims. According to the terms of a peace treaty signed in 356/967 between the Fatimids and the Byzantines, the Muslims acquired the right to exact jizya from the Christian inhabitants of Sicily. This defeat of the Byzantines, who had menaced the Muslims of the Near East, was indeed celebrated throughout the Islamic world. But subsequently the Fatimids did not find it objectionable to collaborate with Byzantium against a common enemy, the German emperor Otto I (d. 973) who was then establishing his authority in southern Italy. At any rate, after a decade of peace, the relations between the Fatimid and the Byzantine empires once again became marked by sporadic conflicts, accompanied by frequent Kalbid raids into Calabria and Apulia, a situation lasting until the downfall of the Kalbid state in Sicily.
Having laid a solid foundation for Fātimid rule in North Africa, from Morocco to the borders of Egypt, ʿUbayd Allāh (ʿAbd Allāh) al-Mahdi died in Rabiʿ I 322/323/934, after a caliphate of twenty-five years and an imāmate of some thirty-five years. He was succeeded by his son Abuʿl-Qāsim Muḥammad, who had accompanied him from Salamiyya to the Maghrib, and had already participated in the affairs of the state and in numerous military campaigns before ascending to the throne as al-Qāʿim bi-Amr Allāh. The second Fātimid caliph-imām continued his father’s policies of expansion and consolidation; but he was more severe with his subjects, imposing heavy taxes on them to finance his diverse expeditions. It was towards the end of al-Qāʿim’s reign that the protracted rebellion of the Khārjī Berbers, led by Abū Yazid, broke out. This revolt, which capitalized on the economic grievances of the Berbers as well as on the Zanītā-Sanḥījī, Sunnī-Shīʿī and Khārjī-Shīʿī rivalries in the Fātimid dominions, almost succeeded in overthrowing the new dynasty.

Abū Yazīd Makhlūd b. Kaydād, who traced his tribal origins to the Banū Ḳifran, the most important branch of the Zanītā, had studied and adopted the teachings of Nukkārī Ibāḍīsm, one of the main sub-sects of the Ibāḍīyya. The latter, together with the Ṣufriyya, formed the moderate wing of Khārijism. In due time, Abū Yazīd was in fact elected the imām and ‘shaykh of the true believers’ by the Nukkāris of the Maghrib, in succession to Abū Ṭāmir al-Aʾmār, who had taught him the doctrines of the sect. Abū Yazīd was, however, more interested in acquiring political power, thus not finding it difficult to depart from the accepted doctrines of the Ibāḍīs. He authorized istiʿrād for instance, the religio-political assassination of adversaries along with their women and children, following the practice of the Azraqis and other extremist Khārjīs. After spending some time in Tāharta as a schoolmaster, Abū Yazīd returned to Qaṭṭāliya in southern Ifriqiyya where he had been raised, and started his anti-Fātimid agitation in 316/928. He soon acquired a large following among the Ibāḍī Zanītā Berbers of the Awrās and elsewhere, and it was in recognition of his increasing popularity that the imāmate of the Nukkāris also came to be ceded to him.

With the Berbers moving quickly to his side, Abū Yazīd launched his revolt against the Fātimids in 332/943–944. He swiftly conquered almost all of southern Ifriqiyya, seizing Qayrawān in Ṣafar 333/October 944. The inhabitants of Qayrawān, the stronghold of Mālikī Sunnism in North Africa, initially co-operated with the Khārjī rebels. The rebels had promised to relieve them of the rule of the Shīʿī Fātimids and the exactions of
their Kutāma supporters, who had monopolized most of the privileged positions in the state.\textsuperscript{33} Being subjected to the devastation and the pillaging of the Khāriji Berbers, however, the Qayrawānis soon came to submit themselves once again to the Fātimids. In the meantime, al-Qāʾim had adopted a purely defensive strategy in dealing with Abū Yazīd, and had split his troops into three groups in order to check the onslaught of the rebels. Abū Yazīd easily defeated the divided Fātimid forces, including the group stationed between Qayrawān and Mahdiyya under the command of Maysūr, who was killed in battle. Subsequently in Jumādā I 333/January 945, the rebels began their siege of Mahdiyya, where al-Qāʾim was now staying. But Mahdiyya put up a vigorous resistance for almost a year, repelling Abū Yazīd’s repeated attempts to storm the capital and mounting its own counteroffensive, aided by the new reinforcements sent by Zīrī b. Manād, the amīr of the Sanhāja. At the same time, many of Abū Yazīd’s Berber contingents, having become tired of the prolonged hostilities, had started to desert their leader, who had further irritated his followers by his newly-adopted luxurious manner of living. Consequently, Abū Yazīd was obliged to withdraw to Qayrawān, where he quickly returned to his former simple habits, such as riding a donkey, hence his nickname ʿāḥib al-himār. He soon regained his popularity amongst the Khāriji Berbers, and once again heavy fighting broke out between the rebels and the Fātimid forces around Tunis and elsewhere in Ifriqiya. But when al-Qāʾim died in Mahdiyya in Shawwāl 334/May 946, after a reign of twelve years, the tide of events had already begun to turn against Abū Yazīd.

Al-Qāʾim’s son and successor Ismā’il, who adopted the title of al-Manṣūr bi’llāh, was the first Fātimid caliph born in Ifriqiya. He came to power in the midst of Abū Yazīd’s revolt, and, like his father, kept his predecessor’s death secret for awhile. He immediately shifted to an offensive strategy towards the rebels, spending many months chasing them. Soon after his accession, al-Manṣūr defeated the rebels at Sūsā, besieged by them for some time, forcing Abū Yazīd to retreat once again towards Qayrawān, whose inhabitants had now turned against him. Consequently, Abū Yazīd’s attempts to seize the city proved futile and, in Muḥarram 335/August 946, he withdrew westward in the direction of the Zāb. Al-Manṣūr, who meanwhile had been well-received in Qayrawān, personally conducted a close chase, defeating Abū Yazīd near Tubna and then around Masīla. In Muḥarram 336/August 947, al-Manṣūr, assisted by his general Zīrī b. Manād, inflicted a final defeat on the Khāriji Berbers in the mountains of Kiyāna, where the rebels had entrenched themselves in a
fortress overlooking what was to become known as Qal‘at Bani Ḥammād. Abū Yazīd himself was captured and died of his wounds a few days later. His son Faḍl continued the revolt in the Awrās and elsewhere for a few more months until he, too, was defeated and killed. Other sons of Abū Yazīd found refuge at the court of the Umayyad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, who in response to Abū Yazīd’s request, had at one time allied himself with the Khārijī rebels against their common enemy. Having reasserted the Fāṭimid domination in North Africa and Sicily, al-Manṣūr died in Shawwal 341/March 953, after a short caliphate and imāmate of about seven years. He was succeeded by his eldest son Abū Tamīm Ma‘add al-Mu‘izz li-Dīn Allāh.

We shall now consider the situation of the Qarmātīs of Bahrāyn and other dissident eastern Ismā‘īlīs, who had awaited the appearance of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl as the Mahdī and the initiator of the final era of history, after the establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate. According to al-Ṭabārī and the majority of the later Muslim chroniclers, Abū Sa‘īd al-Jannābī, the founder of the Qarmāṭī state of Bahrāyn, was murdered in 301/913–914. He was succeeded by the eldest of his seven sons, Abū’l-Qāsim Sa‘īd. The latter was apparently forced out of power in 311/923, or possibly even earlier, by his younger brother Abū Tāhir Sulaymān. This sequence of succession may have been in accordance with Abū Sa‘īd’s own instructions and last testament. At any rate, during the rule of Sa‘īd, who lacked energy and authority, the Qarmātīs refrained from any outside activity, also maintaining good relations with the ‘Abbāsid regime. During this quiescent period, the Qarmāṭīs were in fact engaged in extensive negotiations with the famous ‘Abbāsid vizier (Arabic, wazīr) ‘Alī b. ‘Isā (d. 334/946), on the latter’s peace initiative. In 301 A.H., soon after assuming his high office, and again in 303/915–916, ‘Alī despatched embassies to the Qarmāṭīs, and before being dismissed from the vizierate in 304/917, he had granted some privileges to them, such as access to the important port of Sirāf on the northern shore of the Persian Gulf. These contacts, coinciding with the Qarmāṭīs’ inactivity, gave the vizier’s enemies, especially his chief rival and successor the Shī‘ī Ibn al-Furāt (d. 312/924), a pretext for accusing him of being in complicity with the Qarmāṭīs. It may be noted in passing that ‘Alī b. ‘Isā, who subsequently assumed the vizierate several more times, was the person responsible for organizing the ‘Abbāsid military forces that repelled the first two Fāṭimid invasions of Egypt. He is also the same vizier who, in 301 A.H., interrogated the celebrated mystic-theologian al-Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-
Ḥallāj, but declined to bring him to trial. Al-Ḥallāj, who had acquired great influence over many people, including some members of the ʿAbbāsid family, had aroused the jealousy of certain officials who accused him of being a Qarmāṭi agent. Deliberate misinterpretations of al-Ḥallāj's symbolic exegeses and of his missionary-like wanderings in remote lands were cited as sufficient evidence by his enemies, led by Ibn al-Furāt, for persecuting this enigmatic personality who claimed a mystical union with God and whose devoted disciples later founded a number of Ḥallājī sects and Şūfī orders. After being imprisoned for several years, al-Ḥallāj's trial finally opened in 308/921. Amidst much intrigue, al-Ḥallāj was eventually condemned to death. He was tortured, crucified and then brutally dismembered before a large crowd at Baghdad in 309/922. Ibn ʿĪsā's leniency with the martyred mystic was mentioned as another proof of his favourable disposition towards the Qarмаṭiś.

The Qarмаṭiś ended their temporarily peaceful relations with the ʿAbbāsids in 311/923. It was in that year that under the command of the young Abū Ṭāhir Sulaymān, they entered Başra at night by surprise and pillaged the town for more than two weeks before returning to Hajar. Shortly afterwards, the Qarмаṭiś attacked and looted the pilgrims returning from Mecca, murdering a large number of them and taking many prisoners, including the famous Arab lexicographer al-Azhari (d. 370/980), who spent two years in Bahrayn. These activities marked the beginning of a decade of devastating raids into ʿIrāq, interspersed with attacks on the pilgrim caravans, which greatly enriched the treasury of the Qarмаṭi state. In 312/925, following the ʿAbbāsids' refusal to cede Başra, Ahwāz and other territories to Abū Ṭāhir, the Qarмаṭiś sacked and pillaged Kūfā. During the year 314 A.H., when Abū Ṭāhir was busy with the fortification of al-ʿAḥsāʾ, the ʿAbbāsids caliph al-Muqtadir recalled to ʿIrāq Yūṣuf b. Abīʾl-Sāj, the hereditary amīr of Adharbayjān and Armenia, in order to have the Qarмаṭi menace checked. However, Abū Ṭāhir again sacked Kūfā in 315/927, and then defeated a much larger ʿAbbāsid army commanded by Ibn Abīʾl-Sāj, who himself was captured and later killed. Subsequently, Abū Ṭāhir advanced up the Euphrates, seized al-ʿAnbār and came close to taking Baghdad, before being stopped by the eunuch Muʾnis al-Khādim (d. 321/933), the all-powerful ʿAbbāsid commander-in-chief (amīr al-umāraʾ) who had earlier fought the Fāṭimids in their Egyptian expeditions. This campaign, lasting for almost two years, encouraged the Qarмаṭiś of southern ʿIrāq, who were concentrated in the Sawād of Kūfā and who had close ties with their co-religionists in Bahrayn, to launch
rebellious activities of their own. The ‘Irāqi Qarmāṭīs, also known as the Baqlīyya, under the leadership of ‘Īsā b. Mūsā and other da‘īs, and joined by the tribesmen of the Banū Rifi‘a, Dhuhl and ’Ijl, rose in revolt in the area of Wāsīt and Kūfah in 316/928–929. After initial successes, however, they were subdued by the ‘Abbāsid general Hārūn b. Gharib. Abū Ṭāhir, like other Qarmāṭī da‘īs and leaders, was at that time predicting the advent of the Mahdī after the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the year 316/928, an occurrence which was expected to end the era of Islam and initiate the seventh, final era. Abū Ṭāhir had indeed intensified his attacks as the expected date approached. Abū Ṭāhir eventually returned to Bahrayn at the beginning of 317 A.H., having already completed the construction of a fortified dār al-hijra near al-Aḥsā′ and taking with him many of the retreating Qarmāṭīs of southern ‘Irāq, the successors to the earlier Persian mawāli who were to become designated as the Ajamiyyūn.

The ravaging activities of Abū Ṭāhir culminated in his attack on Mecca, where he arrived in Dhu‘l-Ḥijja 317/January 930, during the pilgrimage season. For several days the Qarmāṭīs massacred the pilgrims and the inhabitants of Mecca, committed innumerable plunderous and desecrating acts in the great mosque and other sacred places, and, finally, dislodged and carried away the Black Stone (al-hajar al-aswad) of the Ka‘ba to their new capital, al-Aḥsā′, presumably to symbolize the end of the era of Islam. The sacrilege of the Qarmāṭīs at Mecca shocked the Muslim world, and most sources relate that soon afterwards, the Fātimid caliph al-Mahdī sent a letter to Abū Ṭāhir, reprehending him severely for his conduct and requesting him to return the Black Stone. Abū Ṭāhir rejected this however, along with similar requests put to him by the ‘Abbāsids. Having conquered ’Umnān in 318 A.H., he now became the undisputed master of Arabia and the terror of all nearby rulers. Abū Ṭāhir was finally in a position to attempt the conquest of ’Irāq; and in 319 A.H., he led the Qarmāṭīs as far as Kūfah. But after 25 days of plundering the town, he decided to return to Bahrayn, alarmed possibly by the internal troubles that were developing in the Qarmāṭī state. At any rate, Abū Ṭāhir, who had been expecting the emergence of the Mahdī since the year 316 A.H., turned over the rule to a young Persian from Isfahān, whose name may have been Zakarī or Zakariyyā′, in Ramaḍān 319/September–October 931. Abū Ṭāhir had in effect recognized the Mahdī in this Isfahānī who had arrived in Bahrayn a few years earlier and who had rapidly acquired a position of influence amongst the ruling circles there. This, however, proved to be a disastrous decision for the Qarmāṭī movement, and events
now took a different course from what had been predicted by the Qarmaṭīs for the advent of the Mahdī. The date had been evidently chosen to coincide with the passing of 1,500 years after Zoroaster (equalling the end of the year 1242 of the era of Alexander) for which prophecies attributed to Zoroaster and Jāmāsp predicted the restoration of the reign of the Zoroastrians or Magians (Arabic, al-Majūs). The Isfahānī, who is reported to have been a Zoroastrian, claimed descent from the Persian kings and manifested anti-Arab and antinomian sentiments. He also instituted a number of strange ceremonies, such as the cursing of Muḥammad and all other prophets, the burning of religious books, and the worship of fire, instead of initiating the circumstances prophesied for the advent of the expected Mahdī and ending the era of Islam. Furthermore, he started to execute the notable Qarmaṭīs of Bahrayn, including some tribal chiefs and even the relatives of Abū Ṭāhir himself. As a result, after waiting some eighty days and now fearing for his own life, Abū Ṭāhir was obliged to admit that the young Persian was an imposter, and had him killed. It is interesting to note that a few years later, the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Rādī (322–329/934–940) executed Isfandiyār b. Ḵāharbād, the chief priest (mubid) of the Zoroastrians, for his alleged complicity with Abū Ṭāhir.

The obscure episode of the false Mahdī seriously demoralized the Qarmaṭīs of Bahrayn, and weakened their influence over other dissident Ismāʿīlī groups in the east. Many Qarmaṭīs, especially from amongst the Ajamiyyūn and the Arab tribal chiefs, left Bahrayn to serve during the following decades in the armies of various anti-Qarmaṭī rulers, including the ʿAbbāsids and the Shiʿī Buwayhids (Būyids). The Buwayhids took possession of Baghdad in 334/946 and became the real patrons of the ʿAbbāsid realm for more than a century. The leading Qarmaṭī dāʿīs of ʿIrāq, including ʿĪsā b. Mūsā who had remained in Baghdad following his escape from an ʿAbbāsid prison, also severed their ties with Abū Ṭāhir and began to oppose him. The Qarmaṭī dāʿīs of ʿIrāq continued to propagate the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, while devoting the greater part of their efforts to producing treatises which they often attributed to ʿAbdān. In the meantime, after repudiating the false Mahdī, the Qarmaṭīs of Bahrayn had reverted to their former beliefs and claimed to be acting on the orders of the hidden Mahdī. Abū Ṭāhir himself had not remained idle. After a brief respite, he had again started to plunder the pilgrim caravans and to carry out raids into ʿIrāq and southern Persia. In 322/934, Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb, the caliph al-Rādī’s chamberlain, negotiated in vain with Abū Ṭāhir for the restoration of the Black Stone and the Qarmaṭīs’ guarantee of
safe passage for the pilgrims. In 327/938-939, an agreement was finally concluded between Abū Tāhir and the 'Abbāsid government, due mainly to the efforts of 'Umar b. Yaḥyā, a Kūfī 'Alīid and a personal friend of the Qarmanī leader. Abū Tāhir now accepted to protect the pilgrims in return for an annual tribute from the 'Abbāsid treasury and a specified sum from the pilgrims themselves. The Qarmanīs had thus once again adopted a peaceful policy towards the 'Abbāsids when Abū Tāhir died in 332/944, the same year in which the Khārīji Abū Yazīd started his anti-Fātimid revolt. Subsequently, the Qarmanī state of Bahrayn was for some time ruled jointly by Abū Tāhir's surviving brothers, including Abū'l-Qāsim Saʿīd (d. 361/972), Abū Maḥmūd Ahmad and Abū'l-'Abbās al-Fāḏl; while Abū Tāhir's sons, notably Sābūr, the eldest, enjoyed much esteem in the state and with the council of the ʿIqdāniyya. The Qarmanīs, who had continued to honour their peace treaty with the 'Abbāsids, voluntarily returned the Black Stone in 339/950-951, for a large sum of money paid by the 'Abbāsids, and not, as held by some authorities, in response to the Fātimid al-Mansūr's request. One of the most distinguished Qarmanīs of Bahrayn, Abū Muḥammad Sanbar, the son of al-Ḥasan b. Sanbar and the brother-in-law of Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī, the most influential individual on Abū Tāhir's council of viziers, accompanied the Black Stone first to Kūfa, where it was displayed in the great mosque, and then to Mecca, where it was reinstalled in the Kaʿba after an absence of almost twenty-two years. The chroniclers do not relate any further activity on the part of the Qarmatis of Bahrayn for more than one decade.

Much has been written in modern times concerning the relations between the Qarmatis and the Fātimid Ismāʿīlīs. De Goeje was the first orientalist to deal with this issue in some detail, and he arrived at the important conclusion that Abū Tāhir, in all his important undertakings, acted on the direct orders of the Fātimid 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī, who could not publicly acknowledge his secret alliance with the disreputable Qarmanīs of Bahrayn. He further held that with minor fluctuations, the Qarmanīs maintained their close co-operation with the Fātimid Ismāʿīlīs until the Fātimid conquest of Egypt, at which time they broke openly with the Fātimids. Subsequently, this view was to be endorsed by others, notably Louis Massignon, Ḥasan I. Ḥasan and Tāhā A. Sharaf. More recent scholarship, however, does not attest to the existence of close relations between the Qarmanīs and the Fātimid Ismāʿīlīs during the first half of the 4th/10th century. To a great extent, the difficulty of determining the precise nature of the relationship between the Qarmatis and the
Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlism

Fāṭimid has stemmed from the unfortunate fact that we possess little reliable information on the creed of the Qarmatīs, who were extremely secretive about their doctrines and whose literature has perished almost completely. The Sunni writers, who provide our main sources of information on the Qarmatīs, generally fail to distinguish between the different groups of the early Ismā‘īlis, treating all of them as belonging to one and the same heretical Shi‘ī Bāṭini movement. But in the light of what is known about the beliefs of the Qarmatīs, modern scholarship has taken cognizance of the fundamental differences between Qarmatīsm and Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlism. It is known that the Qarmatīs of Bahrayn, from the outset of their history, anticipated the return of the Qā‘im Muhammad b. Ismā‘īl, as reported in the earliest chronicles and in the accounts of Ibn Rizām, who, in 329/940, was the head of the mazālim or the tribunal for the investigation of complaints in Baghdad, and Akhū Muḥṣīn. These reports clearly show that the imminent anticipation of the Mahdi played a dominant part in the creed of the Qarmatīs, and that this anticipation was not fulfilled by the appearance of the Fāṭimids in North Africa. In other words, the Qarmatīs of Bahrayn and other areas did not acknowledge the imāmate of the Fāṭimid caliphs, nor did they recognize their expected Mahdi in ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdi or his successors. This is why they were so readily drawn into the catastrophic affair of the false Mahdi during the reign of the first Fāṭimid caliph. However, as the Fāṭimids and the Qarmatīs of Bahrayn shared a common hostility towards the Sunni ‘Abbāsids, it may appear that at times they acted in unison. But there is no solid evidence to support the view that the Qarmatīs were in the service of the early Fāṭimids and that the two acted on the basis of a joint strategy.

During the first decade of the 4th century/912–923, when ’Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdi was establishing his authority in North Africa and the Qarmatīs of Bahrayn and ‘Irāq were quiescent, dissident Ismā‘īlism had begun to spread in Persia. The dā‘ī Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who corresponded with Abū Ṭāhir al-Jannābī, and like the latter was expecting the appearance of the Mahdi, succeeded in extending the da‘wa from his seat in Rayy to Ādharbayjān and Daylam, which at the time referred to a number of Caspian provinces, including Daylam proper (Daylamān), Ṣīān, Tabaristan (Māzandarān) and Gurgān. Abū Ḥātim was particularly successful in converting a number of rulers in the region. We have already noted Ahmad b. ‘Alī, the governor of Rayy, Asfār b. Shirawayh, a Daylamī amīr, and Mardāwīj, the founder of the Ziyārid dynasty. The Persian da‘wa also succeeded in attracting Mahdi b. Khusraw Firūz
(Firûzân), known as Siyâhchashm. He was one of the Justânid rulers of Daylam who, like his predecessors, had his seat at Alamût, the same locality in the highlands of Daylamân that about two centuries later was to become the headquarters of the Persian Nizârî Ismâ‘îlîs. The obscure dynasty of the Justânids (Jastânids) of Daylam was apparently founded towards the end of the 2nd/8th century, and one of its members, Wahsûdân b. Marzûbân (d. ca. 251/865), is reported to have built the fortress of Alamût around 246/860. Until the accession of Siyâhchashm, the Justânids normally supported the ‘Alid rulers of Tabaristân, notably al-Ḥasan b. Zayd (d. 270/884) and his brother Muḥammad b. Zayd (d. 287/900), and later al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alî al-Uṭrûsh (d. 304/917), who led the cause of Zaydî Shi‘ism in the Caspian region. Justân II b. Wahsûdân was murdered during the last decade of the 3rd century/903–912, after a reign of some forty years, by his brother ‘Alî. Soon afterwards, the latter entered the service of the ‘Abbâsids, becoming a financial agent in Iṣfahân in 300/912 and then the governor of Rayy in 307/919. ‘Alî b. Wahsûdân was killed in 307 A.H. by Muḥammad b. Musâfir, Justân II’s son-in-law and founder of the Musâfirîd (also called Sallârid, Sâlûrid or Langarid) dynasty, which ruled from the fortress of Shamîrân in Ṭârum (Arabic, Ṭarm), the region along the middle course of the Safîdrûd before its confluence with the Shâhrûd. Khusraw Firûz b. Wahsûdân, another brother of ‘Alî, who had meanwhile ruled from the dynasty’s traditional seat in the Rûdbâr of Alamût situated in a side valley of the Shâhrûd basin, now marched against Ibn Musâfir to avenge his murdered brother, but he was killed in battle. Khusraw Firûz was succeeded in Alamût by his son Mahdî (Siyâhchashm) who apparently was the first Justânid to have embraced Ismâ‘îlîs. After being defeated by Ibn Musâfir, Siyâhchashm sought refuge in 316/928 with Asfâr b. Shirawayh who, aspiring to possess Alamût, had his co-religionist killed. With the demise of Siyâhchashm, the Justânid dynasty began to disintegrate, their local position being now eclipsed by the rise of the Musâfirîds.

Qarmaṭî Ismâ‘îlîs continued to be preached in northwestern Persia for some time under the Daylamî Musâfirîs. In 330/941–942, Muḥammad b. Musâfir, who had constructed the castle of Shamîrân with much splendour, was deposed and imprisoned by his sons, Marzûbân and Wahsûdân. Both of these Musâfirîs adhered to Ismâ‘îlîs. While Wahsûdân remained at Shamîrân and governed his ancestral territories in Ṭârum, under the overall authority of his brother, Marzûbân b. Muḥammad soon conquered Ādharbayjân and began to rule over the expanding
Muisafirid domains from his own seat at Ardabil. It may be noted that after the governorships of the Sājids Yūsuf b. Abīl-Sāj and his nephew Abūl-Muisafir (d. 317/929), Ādharbayjān had become the scene of rivalries among various independent local rulers, including one of Ibn Abīl-Sāj’s officers named Muḥiḥ. The latter, who remained in power at least until 323/935, is the same ruler who gave protection to the dāʿī Abū Ḥātim and who may have become an Ismāʿīli himself. At any rate, by 326/937–938, the Khānjī Daysam b. Ḥizrāḥīm al-Kurdi had gained control of the province. In 330/941–942, there appeared a rupture between Daysam and his vizier Abūl-Qāsim ʿAlī b. Jaʿfar, initially a Sājid financial administrator who, according to Miskawayh, had also been active as a Bāṭinī (Ismāʿīli) dāʿī in Ādharbayjān. Abūl-Qāsim now fled to Ṭārum and entered the service of Marzubān b. Muḥammad, soon encouraging his new master to invade Ādharbayjān. Marzubān, who after conquering Ādharbayjān in 330 A.H. extended his rule northwards into Transcaucasia as far as Darband, appointed Abūl-Qāsim as his vizier and, being an Ismāʿīli himself, allowed him to advocate Ismāʿīlim publicly in the Musafirid dominions. Abūl-Qāsim, who had previously converted a number of Daylamī notables and army officers in the entourage of Daysam, now became even more successful in his missionary activity. Ibn Ḥawqal, who visited Ādharbayjān around 344/955–956, reports the existence of many Ismāʿīlis there. Ismāʿīlim flourished also in Daylam under Wahsūdān b. Ṭūsāfīr, whose rule lasted until around 355/966. Numismatic evidence dating from the year 343/954–955 indicates that Wahsūdān and his more authoritative brother Marzubān (d. 346/957) adhered to the Qarmatī form of Ismāʿīlim, recognizing the Mahdihip of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl rather than the īmāmate of the reigning Fāṭimid, al-Muʿizz. The Musafirids eventually withdrew to Ṭārum and survived for some time under Saljūqid suzerainty. Their dynasty was finally overthrown by the Persian Nizārī Ismāʿīlis, who came to occupy Shamirān and other mountainous fortresses of the region.

In Khurāṣān and Transoxiana too, the dissident Ismāʿīli view persisted after the advent of the Fāṭimidīs. The dāʿī al-Nasafī reaffirmed the īmāmate of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, who was to reappear as the Mahdi, in his Kitāb al-mahṣūl, which also introduced a type of Neoplatonic philosophy into Ismāʿīli thought. It seems that al-Mahṣūl soon gained widespread acceptance within the various Qarmatī circles; and, in fact, it played an important part, prior to the episode of the false Mahdi, in unifying the ideas of the dissident eastern Ismāʿīlis, who lacked central leadership. As
Madelung has noted, it may be assumed that Abū Ḥātim, who like other ḍaʿīs must have been shocked by the events in Bahrayn, probably wrote his al-Iṣlāḥ to correct the erroneous statements of al-Mahsūl, after the episode of the false Mahdi and as a partial censure of that event and its accompanying manifestations of libertinism. This also explains why al-Iṣlāḥ pays particular attention to criticizing the antinomian aspects of al-Mahsūl. The Iṣlāḥ was, in turn, attacked in the non-extant Kitāb al-nuṣra, written by al-Nasafī’s successor Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, who initially defended most of al-Nasafī’s views.

Abū Yaʿqūb Iṣhāq b. Ḥamd ad-Sijistānī (al-Sijzī), curiously nicknamed ‘Cottonseed’ (Persian, panba-dāna, or its Arabic equivalent, khayshafūj) who at the time of the writing of the Nuṣra did not acknowledge the imamate of the Fāṭimids, is one of the most eminent early Ismāʿīli thinkers and ḍaʿīs of Persia. He was particularly influenced by Neoplatonism, and continued the philosophical trend started by al-Nasafī. Having been a prolific writer, al-Sijistānī’s contributions to various theological and cosmological doctrines in Ismāʿīlism may be traced through his numerous extant works. It may be added that later in his life, sometime after the accession of the Fāṭimid al-Muʿizz, al-Sijistānī was won over by the Fāṭimids and many of his views became acceptable to the Fāṭimid daʿwa. The philosophico-theological system expounded by al-Nasafī and al-Sijistānī, and the general ideas current among the Ismāʿīli circles of Persia during the 4th/10th century, are also reflected in a long poem (qasīda) by al-Sijistānī’s contemporary Abu’l-Haytham Ḥamd b. Ḥasan al-Jurjānī, an obscure Ismāʿīli philosopher-poet from Gurgān; also, in a commentary to this poem by Muhammad b. Surkh al-Nīshāpūrī, an Ismāʿīli disciple of Abu’l-Haytham who had studied under him for nine years.

Few details are known about the life of al-Sijistānī who, contrary to an earlier widely-held opinion, was not executed by the Sāmānids in 332/943 together with al-Nasafī. In fact, he succeeded al-Nasafī as the ḍaʿī of Khurāsān and became prominent also in Sīstān (Arabic, Sijistān), possibly his original base of operation. He may have combined these posts with that of the chief ḍaʿī of Rayy, in which case he may perhaps be identified with the ḍaʿī Abū Yaʿqūb who, residing in Rayy, had succeeded Abū Ḥātim after 322/934 and who is reported by Ibn al-Nadīm to have also had the daʿwa in northern ‘Irāq (al-Jazira) and the adjacent regions under his control. According to the well-informed Ibn al-Nadīm, the brothers Abū Muslim and Abū Bakr b. Ḥammād in Mawṣīl and Ibn Nafīs in Baghdād, amongst other high ranking ḍaʿīs of northern ‘Irāq, were
subordinate to the same Abū Ya‘qūb, referred to as the deputy (khalīfa) of the imām. Al-Sijistānī’s date of death is also unknown. According to Rashid al-Dīn and other sources, he was executed by the Šaffārid Khalaf b. Aḥmad who governed Khurāsān from 353/964 to 393/1003, when he was overthrown by Muḥmūd of Ghazna. Internal evidence contained in al-Sijistānī’s Kitāb al-iftikhār indicates that this work was composed around 361/971. It is, therefore, safe to assume that al-Sijistānī died not too long after the year 361 A.H., and, less probably, perhaps soon after the accession of the Fāṭimid al-Ḥākim in 386/996, another date deducible from two of his other works. At any rate, it is an established fact that, during the early Fāṭimid period, the dāʾis of the Jibāl maintained close contacts with those in ‘Irāq and with the Qarmaṭīs of eastern Arabia, all belonging to the dissident wing of Ismāʿīlīsm and predicting the imminent return of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. Meanwhile, Qarmaṭī Ismāʿīlīsm had persisted elsewhere in Persia as well as in other regions of the Muslim East.

Resuming our history of Fāṭimid rule in North Africa, it must be emphasized that only under the fourth Fāṭimid caliph, al-Muʿīzz li-Dīn Allāh (341–365/953–75), did the Fāṭimid Caliphate at last find the peace and internal security required for pursuing an effective policy of conquest and territorial expansion. Al-Muʿīzz was an excellent planner, an efficient organizer and a statesman amply talented in diplomacy. It was due to these skills of the young caliph and the outstanding military competence of his general, Jawhar, that he soon succeeded in subduing the entire Maghrib as a prelude to implementing his own eastern policy. After gaining some initial victories in the Awrās, and against the Umayyad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III and the Byzantines, al-Muʿīzz next turned his attention to organizing a major military operation to re-establish Fāṭimid authority in the central and extreme Maghrib. He entrusted the command of this campaign to his general Jawhar b. ʿAbd Allāh, a freedman of the Fāṭimids and possibly of Slav origin, who carried various epithets such as al-Šaqlabī (the Slav), al-Šiqlīli (the Sicilian) and al-Rūmī (the Greek), and who had risen in rank to become secretary to the caliphs al-Maṇṣūr and al-Muʿīzz, and then the latter’s chief general (al-qāʿīd). In 347/958, Jawhar led the Fāṭimid forces westwards and defeated, near Tāhār, a large army of the Zanāta Berbers commanded by Yaʿlā b. Muḥammad, the chief of the Sunni Banū ʿIfran and an ally of the Umayyads of Spain who had rebelled against the Fāṭimids. Yaʿlā, who had come to control the central Maghrib from Tāhār to Tangier, was killed in battle. With this defeat, the Ifranid domination of this part of the Maghrib was also brought to an end, at least
temporarily. Subsequently, Jawhar invaded the principality of Sijilmāsa, then still ruled by the Banū Midrār, and killed its amīr, Muḥammad b. al-Fāṭḥ. After spending a year in that region of eastern Morocco, Jawhar marched against Fās, and in 349/960, besieged this important Umayyad stronghold in al-Maghrib al-Aqṣā. He seized the city after a few weeks, mainly due to the bravery of Zīrī b. Manād al-Ṣanhājī, and took prisoner its Umayyad governor. This victory brought all of the far-western Maghrib, with the main exception of Sabta, under Fāṭimid authority, which for a brief period now extended westwards as far as the Atlantic. Even the last of the Idrīsids of Rīf, al-Ḥasan b. Ḫannūn (d. 375/985), who from the city of Baṣrā ruled over a small state in Morocco under Umayyad patronage, now pledged allegiance to the Fāṭimids.

In his North African campaign, Jawhar was assisted, as noted, by Zīrī b. Manād, the chief of the main tribe of the Ṣanhājī. Zīrī who had earlier fought on the side of the Fāṭimids against Abū Yazīd, had become a fervent Ismāʿīli Shiʿī, defending the cause of the Fāṭimids. In recognition of his services, Zīrī had been given permission by the caliph al-Qiʿīm to found and fortify the town of Ṭaḥir in the central Maghrib, on the western borders of the Ṣanhājī territory. He had thus acquired a prestigious semi-autonomous status, ruling from Ṭaḥir over a large area inhabited by the Ṣanhājī tribesmen and always ready to defend the Fāṭimids against the Zanāta and other enemies. As we shall see, Zīrī’s son, Bulūqīn (Arabic, Buluqqīn), was later entrusted by al-Muʿizz with the governorship of Ifrīqiya, where he founded the Zirid dynasty. The early Fāṭimids also received the support of the Banū Ḥamdūn, a distinguished family of Yamanī Arabs who had settled in Spain and who had moved, before the end of the 3rd/9th century, to North Africa. ʿAlī b. Ḥamdūn al-Andalusī had accompanied ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī from Sijilmāsa to Raqqāda and had later come to govern the Zāb for the Fāṭimid al-Qāʾīm. He had personally supervised the construction of the city of Masila, which became his capital. According to Ibn Khaldūn, ʿAlī b. Ḥamdūn was killed in 334/945–946 while fighting Abū Yazīd’s son. He was succeeded by his son Jaʿfar who also fought against the Khārijī rebels and was in due course reaffirmed as the governor of the Zāb by the caliph al-Manṣūr. Jaʿfar held court, together with his brother Yahyā, at Masila, where he patronized numerous poets and men of learning. Both Jaʿfar and Yahyā b. ʿAlī also participated actively in Jawhar’s North African campaign. There existed, however, a bitter rivalry between the Zirids of Ṭaḥir and the Banū Ḥamdūn of Masila, both families earnestly competing for the
favour of their mutual Fātimid overlord. Zirī b. Manād had gradually managed to acquire the more advantageous position in this contest. His position was particularly enhanced by the incorporation of Tāhart and its dependencies into his domain, while he had also extended his influence to the vicinity of Masīla. As a result of such humiliations, and also envisaging more important roles for himself in the broader context of the Zanātā–Ṣanhāja rivalry, in 360/971 Ja'far b. 'Ali transferred his allegiance to the Umayyad al-Ḥakam II (350–366/961–976) and started a rebellion against the Fātimids with the help of the Zanātā. In the same year, Zirī who had continued to remain loyal to the Fātimids, led a Ṣanhāja force against the rebels, but fell in battle, and his head was carried by Yahyā b. 'Alī to the Umayyad court. Soon afterwards, Buluggūn b. Zirī, the new amīr of the Ṣanhāja, defeated the Zanātā Berbers under Ja'far's command and also took possession of Masīla and the Zāb. Ja'far b. 'Alī, feeling insecure amongst the Zanātā, who desired to possess his treasures, was now obliged to flee to Cordova. He rendered many valuable services to his new masters, and from 365/975–976, he governed a part of the central Maghrib for the Umayyads while exercising authority on the chiefs of the Banū Īfran, the Maghrāwa, the Miknāsa and other branches of the Zanātā in that region. Ja'far was eventually killed in 372/982–983 on the orders of al-Manṣūr Muhammad b. Abī 'Amīr (d. 392/1002), the influential chamber-lain (ḥājib) of the youthful Umayyad caliph al-Hishām II (366–399/976–1009) and the effective ruler of al-Andalus for several decades. Yahyā b. 'Alī, too, served the Umayyads in North Africa, but later returned to the service of the Fātimids in Egypt, where he died in the reign of al-Ḥākim.

In the meantime, after pacifying the Maghrib, al-Mu'izz had started making detailed preparations for the conquest of Egypt, a vital Fātimid goal which the first two caliphs of Ifriqiya had failed to achieve. The preparations took some ten years of meticulous work, while al-Mu'izz awaited the opportune moment to launch his invasion. The military base of the Fātimid regime was widened to include Berbers from tribes other than the Kutāma, in addition to incorporating Sicilians, Greeks and other non-Berber elements into the Fātimid armies. More significantly, al-Mu'izz could now count on the Ṣanhāja for the defence of the Maghrib during major Fātimid operations in the east. At the same time, the Fātimid da'wa was intensified in Egypt through the activities of Abū Ja'far b. Naṣr, Abū ʿĪsā ʿAbd al-'Azīz b. ʿĀḥmad, and other ʿādīs, as well as many secret agents who advocated the cause of the Fātimids and undermined the Ikhshīdīds. They also attempted to win over the high military officials and
other influential persons of the Ikhshidid regime, and approached in vain even Kāfūr himself. However, although the Egyptian Muslims respected the numerous 'Alids living amongst them, Shi‘ism had never established roots in Egypt, especially in terms of winning the support of the masses. This state of affairs continued to exist even after the introduction of Ismā‘īlī Shi‘ism as the state religion of the country, under the Fātimids. In due time, the route of the Fātimid expedition to Egypt was carefully chartered while the financial and manpower requirements of the campaign were being determined. Al-Mu‘izz had no hesitation in selecting Jawhar to lead the expedition, as this ablest of all the Fātimid generals had already proved himself by his shining victories in the Maghrib. Meanwhile, the internal situation of Egypt was rapidly deteriorating due to famine and numerous economic difficulties, natural calamities, and dynastic instability; causing political and civil disorders. In spite of this, Kāfūr, the effective ruler of Egypt for twenty-two years after al-Ikhshīd, had succeeded in averting the Fātimid conquest of Egypt. But on Kāfūr’s death in 357/968 and the accession to leadership of a weak grandson of al-Ikhshīd, Aḥmad b. ‘Alī (357–358/968–969), the internal disorders soon turned into chaos, aggravated by mutinies in the army. The days of the Ikhshīdīd regime were clearly numbered now. And this was fully reported to al-Mu‘izz by the famous Ibn Killis, who had sought refuge with the Fātimids after Kāfūr’s death. Ibn Killis, originally a Jew who had embraced Islam after entering the service of Kāfūr as a fiscal administrator and who may have been won over by the Fātimids while still in Egypt, encouraged al-Mu‘izz to speed up his conquest. Ibn Killis later accompanied al-Mu‘izz to Egypt, where he was to become the first Fātimid wazīr.

In Rabi‘ I 358/February 969, Jawhar led the Fātimid expedition out of Qayrawān after an elaborate ceremonial send-off attended by al-Mu‘izz, who, as a reflection of high honour, gave Jawhar his royal garments and ordered all the governors along the way to Egypt to dismount when greeting the general. Jawhar, encountering token resistance near Jīza, entered Fusṭāṭ, the capital of Ikhshīdīd Egypt, four months later in Sha‘bān 358/July 969. He behaved diplomatically and leniently towards the Egyptians, declaring a general amnesty and assuring the people of the safety of their lives and property, through a public proclamation. He ordered the name of the reigning ‘Abbasid caliph, al-Muṭīr (334–363/946–974), to be dropped from the khattāba in the Friday sermons, but tolerated religious freedom and introduced the Shi‘ī modes of prayer only gradually. Doubt-
less, he was fully aware of the minoritarian position of the Shi'is in Egypt, where the Sunnis following the Shafi'i madhab and the Christians represented the majority. Nevertheless, Egypt was henceforth ruled by an Isma'ili Shi'i dynasty. Jawhar camped his large army to the north of Fustat and immediately proceeded to build a new city there, the future Fatimid capital Cairo (al-Qahirah). He also marked the site of the royal palace there, destined for al-Mu'izz and his successors, in accordance with the plans drawn up by the Fatimid caliph himself. Soon afterwards, in Jumada I 359/April 970, Jawhar laid the foundations of al-Azhar. The original structure of this famous mosque was completed two years later. In 378/988–989, al-Azhar also became a university, the first in the world; it has remained the principal institution of religious learning in the Muslim world. Under the Fatimids, al-Azhar played a crucial role also in the dissemination of Isma'ili doctrines, with numerous Isma'ili scholars, jurists and students constantly participating in its seminars. This explains why al-Azhar suffered the hostility of the Sunni Ayyubids after the fall of the Fatimid dynasty.

The Fatimid conquest of Egypt was glorified in the poems of Muhammad b. Hani' al-Andalusi, the first great poet of the Maghrib and an ardent Isma'ili. Ibn Hani' in fact repeats, in a number of panegyrical verses, that not only all of the Muslim world but the entire world belongs legitimately to the Fatimid al-Mu'izz. Ibn Hani' was born in Seville (Ishbiliya), and his father, also a poet, was apparently one of the Fatimid missionaries in Muslim Spain. Eventually, Ibn Hani' too was suspected of pro-Fatimid activities and had to flee to the Maghrib from the persecution of the Umayyad 'Abd al-Rahman III, who was a Maliki Sunni. After spending some time at the court of the Bani Hamdun at Masila, the young Ibn Hani' in 347/958 joined the Fatimids and became the chief court-poet and panegyrist of al-Mu'izz. Defending the claims of the Fatimids against those of the Sunni Umayyad and 'Abbasid usurpers, he continued to eulogize the merits of the Fatimids, making known their noble aims. He thus rendered a valuable service to Fatimid propaganda through his poetry, which was widely read from Cordova to Baghdad. Ibn Hani' was murdered under mysterious circumstances in 362/973, perhaps by Umayyad or 'Abbasid agents, whilst on his way from Ifriqiya to Egypt.

Having settled in his new quarters, Jawhar became the governor of Egypt for four years, until the arrival of al-Mu'izz. During this period, he assigned high priority to alleviating the problem of famine, improving
the country's finances and reforming its existing administrative set-up. His preference was to utilize the Kutāma and other Maghribīs who had accompanied him rather than the Egyptians, especially for the more important government positions. Jawhar also endeavoured to extend Fāṭimid rule beyond Egypt, particularly to the areas previously under Ikhshīdīd domination. In 359/969–970, Mecca and Medina submitted readily to the Fāṭimid al-Muʿizz, who had given the local amīrs of the two holy cities monetary inducement to ensure their new allegiance. Apart from occasional interruptions, Fāṭimid suzerainty over the Ḥijāz lasted until the fall of the dynasty. It was much more difficult for the Fāṭimid to establish a firm foothold in Syria, hitherto under Ikhshīdīd rule, with the Ḥamdānīs controlling the northern parts from their seat at Aleppo. The main obstacle to a speedy Fāṭimid victory in Syria was provided by the Qarмаṭīs of Baḥrayn, whose hostility towards the Fāṭimid broke into open warfare following the Fāṭimid conquest of Egypt. The Qarмаṭīs had already cultivated friendly relations with the Ikhshīdīds and the Ḥamdānīs, besides being ready to receive the help of the ‘Abbāsīds and the Buwayhīds against the Fāṭimid.

It may be noted that at the time, the Qarмаṭī state was still being ruled jointly by Abū Ṭāhir’s brothers. Abū Ṭāhir’s eldest son Sābūr (Shāpūr), who aspired to a ruling position and the command of the army, rebelled in vain against his uncles in 358/969; he was captured and executed in the same year. But the ruling sons of Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī themselves did not survive much longer. Abū Mansūr Ahmad died in 359/970, probably of poisoning, and his eldest brother Abu'l-Qasīm Saʿīd died two years later. By 361/972, there remained of Abū Ṭāhir’s brothers only Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf, who retained a position of pre-eminence in the Qarмаṭī state. Henceforth, the grandsons of Abū Saʿīd were also admitted to the ruling council. After the death of Abū Yaʿqūb in 366/977, the Qarмаṭī state came to be ruled jointly by six of Abū Saʿīd’s grandsons, known as al-sāda al-rūʿasāʾ. Meanwhile, al-Ḥasan al-Aʿṣam, the son of Abū Mansūr Ahmad and a nephew of Abū Ṭāhir, had become the commander of the Qarмаṭī forces. He was usually selected for leading the Qarмаṭīs in their military campaigns outside of Baḥrayn, including their entanglements with the Fāṭimid.

In 357/968, al-Aʿsam, at the head of the Qarмаṭī army, had taken Damascus after defeating al-Ḥasan b. ʿUbayd Allāh b. Tughj, the Ikhshīdīd governor of Syria. The Qarмаṭīs had then plundered Ramla and received a substantial tribute from its inhabitants before returning to
Baḥrayn. Three months after the Fātimid conquest of Egypt, a Qarmatī force, under al-Aʿṣam’s cousins, again attacked and defeated the Ikhshīdīd al-Ḥasan. The latter, however, managed to have the Qarmatīs sign a peace treaty, according to which he was to pay them an annual tribute. Subsequently, the Qarmatīs, who never remained in their conquered lands, as they were mainly concerned with augmenting the resources of their treasury, returned to Baḥrayn, leaving behind a small detachment. Soon afterwards, at the beginning of 359/970, a large Fātimid army commanded by Jaʿfar b. Fālāḥ, sent to conquer Syria, defeated the joint Qarmatī and Ikhshīdīd forces near Ramla; the Ikhshīdīd al-Ḥasan was taken prisoner. The Fātimid conquest of Syria, however, meant the loss of the tribute paid previously by the Ikhshīdīds to the Qarmatīs of Baḥrayn; and this is cited as the main reason for the Qarmatī invasion of Syria in the following year. In 360/971, al-Aʿṣam, aided by the Buwayhid ʿIzz al-Dawla Bakhtiyār (356–367/967–978) and the Ḥamdānīd Abū Ṭaghlib of Mawsīl, seized Damascus and Ramla, having defeated the Fātimids and killed Jaʿfar b. Fālāḥ in battle. Al-Aʿṣam, who had also allied himself with the ʿAbbāsīds, now proclaimed the suzerainty of the caliphs of Baghdad in these domains and had the Fātimid al-Muʿizz cursed in the mosques. Being encouraged by his victories, al-Aʿṣam marched towards Fātimid Egypt and advanced to the gates of Cairo, but due to the defection of some of his allies who were bribed by the Fātimids, Jawhar’s resistance, and internal problems in Baḥrayn, he was obliged to retreat to al-Aḥṣāʾ in Rabīʿ 361/December 971, with Damascus still remaining in Qarmatī hands.

Meanwhile, al-Muʿizz had finished preparations for transferring the seat of the Fātimid Caliphate from Ḫirūqiyya to Egypt. Before embarking on his historic journey in Shawwāl 361/August 972, al-Muʿizz appointed Buluggīn b. Zīrī as his governor of Ḫirūqiyya, giving him the honorific name Abuʾl-Futūḥ Yūsuf. This was a well-deserved reward for the amīr of the Ṣanḥāja, who, following the precedent set by his father, had faithfully defended the Fātimids against the Zanīta and other enemies in North Africa. Buluggīn was in effect vested with the governorship of all the Fātimid dominions in the west, except for Kalbid Sicily and for Tripoli, which was placed under the care of the Kutāma Berbers. Thereupon, Buluggīn moved from Ashīr to Qayrawān, where he was to found the Zīrid dynasty (361–543/972–1148). Al-Muʿizz entered Cairo in Ramaḍān 362/June 973, accompanied by his four sons and relatives, most of the Ismāʿīli notables and dāʿīs, including al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān who died in the following year, and many Kutāma tribesmen. He had also brought along
his treasures and the coffins of his predecessors. This migration marked the termination of the North African phase of the Fāṭimid dynasty.

Akhū Muḥsin, writing shortly after 372/982, has preserved for us the text of a threatening letter sent by al-Muʿizz after his arrival in Cairo, to al-Ḥasan al-Aʿsam, reproaching him for having deviated from the creed of his forefathers. As Madelung has explained, al-Muʿizz had tried cleverly, but in vain, to convince al-Aʿsam that Abū Saʿīd and Abū Ṭāhir had been loyal supporters of the Fāṭimids. Al-Aʿsam made this letter public and denounced the Fāṭimids; as for his response, which he said he would deliver soon, he invaded Egypt in 363/974 for the second time. Al-Aʿsam besieged Cairo, but betrayed by his ally Ḥassān b. Jarrah, who was commanding the Jarrāḥids of Palestine, he was defeated by the Fāṭimids and retreated to Bahrayn. Subsequently, the Fāṭimids reoccupied Damascus and al-Muʿizz concluded a peace treaty with the Qarmātīs, who successfully demanded to receive the tribute formerly paid to them by the Ikhshidīds. However, soon afterwards, in 364/975, Damascus was seized by the Turk Alftakin (Alptekin), a former Buwayhid officer in Baghdād. Death prevented al-Muʿizz from expelling Alftakin from Damascus, where the ambitious rebel had proclaimed the sovereignty of the ʿAbbāsids.

The rule of al-Muʿizz in Egypt lasted just over two years. He had dismissed Jawhar shortly after arriving in Cairo and had entrusted the shrewd Ibn Killis with the task of reorganizing Egypt’s financial system. The caliph himself had been mainly preoccupied in Egypt with repelling the menace of the Qarmātīs. Having considerably enhanced the power and fortune of his dynasty, and the territorial extent of the Fāṭimid empire, al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh died in Rabiʿ II 365/December 975, at the young age of forty-four and after an imāmate and caliphate of twenty-two years.

Al-Muʿizz was the first of the Fāṭimids who seriously endeavoured to gain the support of the dissident eastern Iṣmāʿīlīs and to re-establish ideological unity of the Iṣmāʿīlī movement. He was apparently motivated not only by a desire to utilize the dissident Iṣmāʿīlīs in the service of his eastward drive to conquer the ʿAbbāsid lands, but also because he was apprehensive of the dangerous influence of the Qarmātī ideas on his own followers in the east, the Fāṭimid Iṣmāʿīlīs, who lived outside the dominions of the Fāṭimid empire. In contrast to his predecessors, who were entirely preoccupied with consolidating their positions, al-Muʿizz could also concern himself with doctrinal issues. As we have noted, he received emissaries from Sind and other remote Fāṭimid Iṣmāʿīlī com-
munities, and discussed matters of doctrinal importance with them, being particularly alert to rectify their dogmatic misgivings and errors. It has now become evident, through the access to Ismā‘ili sources, that al-Mu‘izz in fact revised the Fātimid Ismā‘ili teachings and accommodated some of the beliefs of the dissident Ismā‘ilis. The reform of al-Mu‘izz implied a partial return to the doctrine of the imāmate held by the majority of the early Ismā‘ilis. This reform found expression in the works of al-Qādir al-Nu‘mān and Ja‘far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, the foremost Ismā‘ili authors of the time, and in certain writings attributed to the Fātimid caliph-imām himself.

As noted, ‘Ubayd Allāh (‘Abd Allāh) al-Mahdi had denied the Mahdi-ship of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il by openly claiming the imāmate of the Ismā‘iliyya for himself and his ancestors. The continuity in the imāmate thus propounded by ‘Ubayd Allāh, was subsequently corroborated by al-Qādir al-Nu‘mān, who explicitly allowed for more than one heptad of imāms in the sixth era of hierohistory, the era of the Prophet Muḥammad. But later, in a treatise written perhaps not too long before his death, al-Nu‘mān came to present a different picture of the Fātimid doctrine; one which now incorporated the doctrinal reform of al-Mu‘izz, who apparently read al-Nu‘mān’s writings with much scrutiny. This treatise seems to have been composed in response to questions put to the learned Qādir by an envoy, sent probably by one of the eastern Fātimid Ismā‘ili communities. The questions and al-Nu‘mān’s replies are chiefly concerned with the Qā‘im and his manifestation. In this work, after reviewing the various Shi‘i ideas hitherto expressed about the Qā‘im, al-Nu‘mān explains that the Qā‘im essentially has three degrees (hudūd): the degree in the corporeal world, the degree of resurrection in the spiritual world, and finally, the degree of reckoning (the last judgement). More specifically, he mentions two corporeal degrees for the Qā‘im, namely, the degree of speaker-prophet (nāṭiq) and that of the rightly-guided deputies or lieutenants (al-khulāfa‘ al-rāshidūn).

According to al-Nu‘mān, the Qā‘im first appeared at the end of the sixth era of history, as the seventh imām of the era of Islam. He had thus attained his first corporeal degree in the person of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il, as the seventh nāṭiq who had not announced a new shari‘a. However, since the Qā‘im had appeared at the time of complete concealment (satr), his revelation, too, which consisted of the interpretation of the inner meaning of the religious laws, had remained concealed. This is why the Qā‘im appointed deputies (khulāfa‘) for himself, in whom he attained his second
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corporeal degree. It is through these deputies that the Qâ’im will reveal the inner meaning of the laws and carry out the deeds prophesied for him; because Muḥammad b. Iṣmā‘īl will not return. Initially, the deputies were hidden, but starting with ‘Ubayd Allāh, they became manifest during the era of unveiling (dawr al-kashf); they will continue to rule until the end of the corporeal world, the last of them being the hujja of the Qâ’im. Thereafter, the Qâ’im will attain a new degree, appearing in the era of the spiritual world of stars (dawr al-jirm) and passing judgement on mankind, before finally ascending to unite with the universal soul. However, this system suffered from an internal anomaly. On the one hand, al-Nu‘mān is extremely careful to emphasize that none of the religious duties specified by the Qur‘ān and the Shari‘a will be dispensed with prior to the Day of Judgement, which meant that the era of Muḥammad and Islam would continue until that time. Yet, according to him, the seventh dawr, the eschatological era of the Qâ’im–Mahdī, had already begun; since the Qâ’im had appeared in the person of Muḥammad b. Iṣmā‘īl and then in his khulāfa’, the Fāṭimids. The latter were to disclose his mission by elucidating the hidden meaning of all the previous laws, including the sacred law of Islam.

Similar ideas are found in the writings of al-Mu‘izz himself; in al-Munājāt ascribed to him by the Syrian Iṣmā‘īlis, in his Seven-Day Prayers, and elsewhere. Al-Mu‘izz, too, speaks of the seven eras of the speaker-prophets and mentions the Qâ’im, often referred to as al-Qâ’im bi‘l-haqq al-nāṭiq bi‘l-ṣidq, as the seventh nāṭiq and the seventh imām of the era of Muḥammad. He does not mention Muḥammad b. Iṣmā‘īl by name, but he refers to Iṣmā‘īl b. Ja‘far as the sixth imām of the era of Muḥammad while counting the Qâ’im as the seventh imām and the eighth successor after ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Clearly then, by the Qâ’im he intends to refer to Muḥammad b. Iṣmā‘īl. The Qâ’im, according to al-Mu‘izz and al-Nu‘mān, does not announce a new shari‘a, but merely reveals the inner meaning of the previous laws. Al-Mu‘izz also speaks of the khulāfa’ who act righteously and represent the doctrine and the deeds of the Qâ’im. He further adds that there is no Qâ’im and Lord of the Time (Ṣāhib al-Zamān) besides the imām of the time, who interprets the inner meaning of the laws. In other words, al-Mu‘izz denies the corporeal return of Muḥammad b. Iṣmā‘īl as the Qâ’im because the Fāṭimids, as his deputies, had already fully assumed his functions.

The doctrinal reform of al-Mu‘izz is also reflected in the latest works of
Ja'far b. Mansûr al-Yaman. In his al-Shawāhid wa'l-bayān and his Ta'wil al-
vakāt, completed in the final years of al-Mu'izz (both of which are still in
manuscript form), Ja'far discusses the eras of the seven nātiqāt, the seventh
one being that of the Qā'im Muḥammad b. Ismā'il and of his khulafā'. It is
interesting to note that Ja'far gives great importance to the Qā'im, the
revealer of all laws, and his lieutenants, in contradistinction to the ordinary
nātiq. Very little is known about the life of Ja'far, the son of the famous
Yamani dā'i Ibn Ḥawshab (Mansûr al-Yaman). After the death of Ibn Ḥawshab, when 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī appointed 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās
al-Shāwirī as head of the Ismā'īli da'wa in Yaman, Ja'far alone amongst his
brothers remained loyal to the Fātimids. His elder brother Ḥasan (or Abu'l-Ḥasan), who had expected to succeed his father, defected from the
da'wa and had the dā'i al-Shāwirī assassinated. It was under these circum-
stances that Ja'far, as a partisan of the Fātimids, migrated to North Africa
and joined the court of the second Fātimid caliph al-Qā'im at Mahdiyya. In
335/947, under al-Ma'nūsūr, he fought against Abū Yazīd. In fact, Ja'far has
celebrated the various Fātimid victories over the Khariji rebels in several
poems. Subsequently, he rose to literary prominence and became one of
the leading representatives of the Ismā'ili ta'wil under al-Mu'izz, who held
Ja'far in high esteem and is also reported to have helped him financially.
In Ifriqiya, Ja'far evidently did not hold any public office and devoted his
time entirely to writing; but Idrīs relates that he rose to a high rank in the
da'wa, even superior to that of his contemporary al-Qādī al-Nu'mān,
under al-Mu'izz. Ja'far b. Mansûr al-Yaman died at an unknown date, not
too long after al-Mu'izz.

In sum, through his reform, al-Mu'izz introduced important changes
into the doctrine of the imāmate held by the Fātimid Ismā'īlis. He
acknowledged the imāmates of Ismā'il b. Ja'far and his son Muḥammad, to
whom he traced his genealogy, instead of the imāmate of 'Abd Allāh b.
Ja'far, named by 'Ubayd Allāh, in his letter, as the progenitor of the
Fātimids. He again attributed to Muḥammad b. Ismā'il, as the seventh
imām of the era of Islam, the rank of the Qā'im and the nātiq of the final era,
but with a different interpretation compared to that held by the pre-
Fātimid Ismā'īlis. Since the Qā'im Muḥammad b. Ismā'il had appeared in
the time of complete concealment, his functions were to be undertaken by
his deputies or khulafā', the Fātimid Ismā'īli Imāms, who were his
descendants. Al-Mu'izz also permitted the incorporation of Neoplaton-
ism, more specifically an Ismā'īli Neoplatonic cosmology, into Fātimid
thought. As a result, the works of the early representatives of this cosmology who ranked amongst the dissident Ismā‘īlīs came to be studied by the Fāṭimid da‘īs and authors.

The efforts of al-Mu‘izz to gain the allegiance of the dissident Ismā‘īlīs were partially successful. He won over the da‘ī al-Sijistānī, who endorsed the imāmate of the Fāṭimids in the works he wrote after the accession of al-Mu‘izz. Consequently, the Ismā‘īlīs of Khurāsān, as well as of Sistān and Mākrān, to a great extent came to support the Fāṭimid cause. Al-Mu‘izz also succeeded in establishing a Fāṭimid foothold in Sind, in northern India. As noted previously, around the year 347/958, a Fāṭimid vassal state was founded in Sind, with its seat at Multān, serving as the dār al-hijra for the Ismā‘īlīs of that state, through the efforts of a Fāṭimid da‘ī who had converted the local ruler. But the da‘ī in question evidently also manifested some dissident Ismā‘īlī tendencies, and while al-Mu‘izz was contemplating his removal, he was killed in a riding incident. He was succeeded around 354/965 by the da‘ī Ḥalam (or Jalam) b. Shaybān, who was completely loyal to the Fāṭimids. The sovereignty of al-Mu‘izz was now openly proclaimed in Multān, where the khutba was read in the name of the Fāṭimid caliphs, instead of their ʿ Abbāsid rivals. This Ismā‘īlī state survived until 396/1005–1006, when Maḥmūd of Ghazna invaded Multān and made its last Ismā‘īlī ruler, Abū’l-Futūḥ Dā‘ūd b. Naṣr, a tributary. A few years later, in 401/1010–1011, Multān was actually annexed to the Ghaznavid dominions; Abū’l-Futūḥ was taken prisoner and the Ismā‘īlīs of Multān and its surrounding areas were ruthlessly massacred.75 Another local ruler in Sind, belonging to the Ḥabbārid dynasty ruling from Maḥsūra, was later converted to Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlism around 401 A.H.; he apparently made Ismā‘īlism the official religion of his state. Soon afterwards, this Ismā‘īlī ruler too, perhaps called Khaṣīf, was overthrown by Maḥmūd, who invaded Maḥsūra in 416/1025.76 Despite these setbacks and the continued hostilities of the Sunni Ghaznavids, Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlism survived in Sind and later became the creed of the Sūmras, who revolted against the Ghaznavids in 443/1051 and established their independent dynasty, ruling from Thatta for almost three centuries.77 However, Qarmātī Ismā‘īlism persisted in some parts of Persia, notably in Daylam and Ādharbayjān, as well as in southern ʿIrāq, even though the Fāṭimids had now endeavoured to restore the name of ʿAbdān and permitted the study of his works. Above all, al-Mu‘izz failed in the case of the Qarmātīs of eastern Arabia, with whose co-operation he might well have realized his dream of conquering Baghdād and supplanting the ʿ Abbāsids.
Al-Mu‘izz was succeeded by his third son Abū Maṃsur Nizār, who adopted the regal title of al-‘Aziz bi‘llāh and became the first Fāṭimid caliph to begin his rule in Egypt.78 He had been designated as the heir apparent or wali al-‘ahd only about a year earlier, after the death of his elder brother ‘Abd Allāh in 364/975. Al-Mu‘izz had originally nominated his second son ‘Abd Allāh as his successor, in preference to his eldest son Tamīm, since the latter had been suspected of cooperating with those Fāṭimids intriguing against al-Mu‘izz. Several documents preserved in Jawdhar’s Sīra, compiled in the time of al-‘Aziz, in fact reveal the existence of certain hitherto unknown discords within the inner circles of the Fāṭimid family during the reigns of al-Mansūr and al-Mu‘izz.79 According to these documents, some of the sons of the first two Fāṭimid caliphs, from amongst al-Mansūr’s uncles and brothers, apparently disagreed strongly with certain policies pursued by al-Mansūr and his successor, becoming involved in activities against their ruling relatives. The amīr Tamīm, born in 337/948–949, had close relations with some of these discordant Fāṭimids, and evidently maintained secret correspondence with them, a fact which was brought to the attention of his father. It was probably due to these contacts, as well as his reportedly libertine manner of living, that Tamīm was passed over as the first in line for succession, in favour of his younger brother ‘Abd Allāh.80 Around the year 357 A.H., al-Mu‘izz designated ‘Abd Allāh as the heir apparent to the Fāṭimid Caliphate and successor to the Ismā‘īlī Imāmate. This nomination, which later surprised many courtiers and members of the Fāṭimid family, was at first divulged by the caliph only to the highly trusted Jawdhar (d. 363/973–974). Jawdhar, in turn, kept this secret for seven months, according to his master’s instructions and reminiscent of an earlier precedent set by the caliph al-Qā‘im.81 After ‘Abd Allāh’s death, al-Mu‘izz, acting contrary to the beliefs of some of the earliest Ismā‘īlis (the Mubarakiyya), who had maintained that the imāmate could no longer be transferred between brothers after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, designated another son, Nizār, as his successor. On this occasion, Tamīm was passed over a second time, now in favour of a yet younger brother seven years his junior. Tamīm had meanwhile shunned political activity, and, unlike ‘Abd Allāh and Nizār, had not participated in any expeditions against the Qarmāṭīs. Instead, he had devoted himself to literary activities and had acquired a reputation as a poet. Tamīm b. al-Mu‘izz died at an early age in Cairo, in 374 or 5/984–986.82

The consolidation and extension of Fāṭimid power in Syria, at the
expense of the 'Abbāsids and the Byzantines, became the primary objective of al-'Aziz in the field of territorial expansion and foreign policy. In 365/976, immediately after his accession, al-'Aziz despatched a Fātimid army to Syria under the veteran Jawhar, to retake Damascus from Alftakin, who had allied himself with the Qarmāṭis. But upon the arrival of new Qarmāṭi forces led by al-Aṣam, Jawhar was obliged to retreat to Ramla and then to 'Asqalān, where he was besieged for nearly seventeen months. During this period, al-Aṣam died at Ramla in 366/977, and his cousin Ja'far succeeded him as the commander of the Qarmāṭis. Jawhar was eventually permitted in 367 A.H., under humiliating conditions, to return to Egypt, where he led a quiet life until his death in 381/992. Meanwhile, al-'Aziz himself had taken the field and defeated Alftakin and the Qarmāṭis near Ramla in 368/978. Alftakin was taken captive, and the Qarmāṭis agreed to a peace, again on the condition of receiving a sizeable tribute. Henceforth, the Qarmāṭis of Bahrayn were rapidly reduced to a local power. Al-'Aziz treated Alftakin generously, taking him and his Turks into his service; but Alftakin soon became a victim of the jealousy and hatred of the all-powerful Ibn Killis and was poisoned at his instigation in 372/982. In spite of the victory of al-'Aziz in Syria, Damascus remained only nominally in Fātimid hands for some time. Shortly afterwards, it was seized by Qassām, one of Alftakin's former assistants. A Fātimid army under al-Fadl b. Šāliḥ failed to defeat Qassām and withdrew to Palestine. There, a series of negotiations took place between the Fātimid general and the Ḥamdānīd Abū Taghlib who, having been driven out of Mawsil by the Buwayhid 'Adud al-Dawla (367–372/978–983) and having subsequently failed to take Damascus, now aspired to obtain the governorship of that city from al-'Azīz.83 Abū Taghlib promised to help al-Faḍl in his renewed attempt to conquer Damascus. But the Fātimid general had already allied himself with the Jarrāḥid Mufarrij b. Dağhal, the master of Palestine who now competed with Abū Taghlib for the favour of al-'Azīz. The co-operation between Mufarrij, who captured and killed Abū Taghlib in 369/979, and the vacillating Fātimid general al-Faḍl, also proved to be short-lived. Soon, Mufarrij joined Qassām, who had meanwhile continued to resist the Fātimids; but the two rebels were finally defeated in 372–373/982–983 by Baltakin, a Turkish general in the service of the Fātimids. Mufarrij fled to Antioch, seeking refuge with the Byzantines, while Qassām was sent to Cairo. It may be noted that al-'Azīz was the first Fātimid to employ the services of the Turks in the Fātimid
armies, to the strong disapproval of his Berber officers; a practice that later led to serious consequences for the Fātimids.

Al-ʿAzīz also aimed to expand into northern Syria; and in the pursuit of this objective, he capitalized on the enmity existing between the Hamdānid amīr of Aleppo, Saʿd al-Dawla (356–381/967–991), and the latter’s rebellious governor of Himṣ, Bakjūr, who encouraged the Fātimid caliph in his conquest of Aleppo. In 373/983, Bakjūr besieged Aleppo with the help of al-ʿAzīz, but soon became obliged to lift the siege and flee, on the approach of a Byzantine army sent to aid the ʿHamdānids. Nevertheless, al-ʿAzīz kept his promise and gave Bakjūr the governorship of Damascus. In 376/986, Saʿd al-Dawla, weary of the declining power of the Buwayhids in the region, nominally acknowledged the sovereignty of the Fātimids. In spite of this, al-ʿAzīz did not abandon his plan to possess Aleppo. A few years later, Bakjūr, who had meanwhile been expelled from Damascus in 378/988 due to the intrigues of Ibn Killis, again easily persuaded the Fātimid caliph to entrust him with the command of a new expedition against the ʿHamdānids of northern Syria. Receiving insufficient aid from the local Fātimid forces, he was defeated and killed in 381/991 by Saʿd al-Dawla, who was assisted effectively by the Byzantines. Following this victory, Saʿd al-Dawla seriously contemplated the invasion of the Fātimid possessions in Syria, when he died in 381 A.H. From 382/992 until his own death four years later, al-ʿAzīz made better organized attempts to conquer Aleppo but without any results, owing to the vital assistance extended by Byzantium to Saʿd al-Dawla’s son and successor Saʿīd al-Dawla (381–392/991–1002). On one occasion in 385/995, when Aleppo had been besieged for several months by Fātimid forces under the Turk Mangūtakin, the governor of Damascus, the Byzantine emperor Basil II (976–1025) personally rushed to the scene and saved the city from falling into Fātimid hands.

The foreign policy of al-ʿAzīz was not very active outside of Syria; and in Syria, as noted, he acquired Damascus but failed in his conquest of the ʿHamdānid amīrate of Aleppo, a Byzantine tributary. He did, however, manage to obtain favourable terms in a treaty with the emperor Basil II, who now removed the Byzantine commercial restrictions against the Fātimids. Al-ʿAzīz avoided direct confrontation with the Sunni ʿAbbāsids and the Shiʿi Buwayhids in ʿIrāq, but tried in vain through diplomatic negotiations to have ʿAḍud al-Dawla recognize the sovereignty of the Fātimids. In the case of the Qarmāṭīs of Bahrayn, al-ʿAzīz received their
nominal and interrupted allegiance, mainly by paying them large annual tributes. Finally, in North Africa, al-ʿAzīz confirmed Buluggin in his position, but under the latter’s son and successor al-Manṣūr (373–386/984–996), who fought the Kutāma, the Zirids had already begun to detach themselves from the Fāṭimid Caliphate. At any event, it was towards the end of the reign of al-ʿAzīz that the Fāṭimid empire attained, at least nominally, its greatest extent, with the Fāṭimid sovereignty being recognized from the Atlantic and the western Mediterranean to the Red Sea, the Hijāz, Yaman, Syria and Palestine. The khūṭba was read in the name of al-ʿAzīz also in Multān, and, for a short while in 382/992, even in Mawsil, then ruled by the ʿUqaylid Abuʾl-Dawādh Muhammad (382–386/992–996), the amīr of the Banū ʿUqayl who had seized the region from the last Ḥamdānīs of Mawsil. At the same time, the Fāṭimid dāʾīs had continued to be active in many eastern regions beyond the frontiers of the Fāṭimid empire, notably in various parts of Persia.84

Most sources name al-ʿAzīz as the best and wisest of all the Fāṭimid caliphs of Egypt. Besides being an excellent administrator, he knew how to utilize the services of capable men, without much regard for their religious beliefs. In regulating the affairs of the state, al-ʿAzīz was greatly helped by Abuʾl-Faraj Yaʿqūb b. Yūsuf b. Killis, who had continued to serve him in various financial and administrative capacities after the death of al-Muʿizz.85 In 367/977, al-ʿAzīz made Ibn Killis his vizier, and in 368/978, the caliph conferred on him the title of al-wazīr al-ajall (the illustrious vizier). Ibn Killis thus became the first vizier of the Fāṭimid dynasty and retained that position, except for two temporary dismissals, for over twelve years until his death. He was also highly instrumental in giving Egypt an extended period of economic prosperity. Al-ʿAzīz repeatedly failed to listen to the advice of his vizier against invading Aleppo. Nevertheless, the Fāṭimid success in Syria owed much to Ibn Killis, through whose policies the complicated situation in Syria resulting from the conflicting activities of Qassām, the Ḥamdānīs and the Jarrāḥīds was finally brought under control. Ibn Killis was also noted for his patronage of scholars, jurists and poets, according pensions to such men in his own entourage. He himself was an expert in Ismāʿīlī jurisprudence, which had meanwhile been developed by al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān; he composed a legal treatise, known as al-Risāla al-wazīriyya, based on the pronouncements of al-Muʿizz and al-ʿAzīz. This was indeed a remarkable achievement for someone who had converted to Islam from Judaism. The credit for utilizing al-Azhar as a university also belongs to Ibn Killis who, moreover,
supervised the construction of what later became known as the mosque of al-Ḥākim. Al-ʿAzīz found it difficult to replace this outstanding vizier, who died in 380/991, with a suitable successor. Ibn Killis was followed in rapid succession by six viziers in as many years, during the remainder of the caliphate of al-ʿAzīz, the last of whom was a Coptic Christian, Ḥisā b. Naṣṭūrūs (385–386/995–996). The latter was the first of the several Christians to occupy the vizierate under the Fāṭimids. Al-ʿAzīz also appointed the Jews to high positions, though never to the vizierate; probably under the influence of Ibn Killis who had maintained friendly relations with the Jewish community after his own conversion. In this respect, mention may be made of Manashṣ̄ā (Manasseh) b. Ibrāḥīm, a close associate of Ibn Killis, who was given important posts in Fāṭimid Syria.

The unusual policy of assigning numerous high administrative posts to Christians and Jews in a Shiʿi Muslim state was basically in line with the religious toleration practised by the Fāṭimids. But al-ʿAzīz went further than his predecessors and set remarkable precedents in this area, probably being also encouraged by his Christian wife, perhaps the mother of his only surviving son and successor. It was in fact through the recommendations of al-ʿAzīz that his two brothers-in-law, Orestes and Arsenius, became respectively the Melkite patriarch of Jerusalem and the metropolitan of Cairo in 375/986. Moreover, the caliph behaved rather favourably, despite Muslim opposition, towards the Coptic patriarch Ephraim, allowing him to rebuild the church of St Mercurius near Fustāṭ. The Christians in particular enjoyed a large degree of religious freedom and participation in government under al-ʿAzīz, as attested by the appointment of Ibn Naṣṭūrūs to the vizierate and the caliph’s open disposition to religious disputations between Severus, the bishop of Ashmūnayn, and al-qāḍī Ibn al-Nuʿmān, the Fāṭimid chief jurist. The tolerant religious policy of al-ʿAzīz towards the ahl al-dhimma led to growing discontent amongst the predominantly Sunnī Egyptian Muslims, who later reacted by plundering several churches and murdering a number of Christians in 386/996, after the death of al-ʿAzīz. Al-ʿAzīz himself was a devout Shiʿi who greatly encouraged the observance of the mourning ceremonies of ʿĀshūra, commemorating the martyrdom of the Imām al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā’ some three centuries earlier, and the Shiʿī feast of al-Ghadīr, celebrating the investiture of Ṭālib b. Abī Ṭālib at Ghadīr Khumm. Both ceremonies had been introduced to Fāṭimid Egypt under al-Muʿizz. These Shiʿī ceremonies were actually inaugurated at Baghdād in 352–353/
963–964, in the time of the Buwayhid Mu'izz al-Dawla (334–356/945–967), under whose successors Twelver Shi'i thought and practices started to be systematically developed. The Buwayhids, who originally adhered to Zaydi Shi'ism, also embellished the 'Alid shrines of 'Iraq.

Al-‘Aziz bi’llah had personally set out to lead the Fātimid armies, in yet another expedition against the joint forces of the Ḩamdānīds of Aleppo and the Byzantines, when he suddenly fell ill and died at Bilbays, the first stop on his route to Syria, in Ramadān 386/October 996. His reign had lasted nearly twenty-one years. He was succeeded by his son Abū ‘Alī al-Mansūr, with the laqab (honorific title) of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, who was then about eleven years of age. He had been designated as wali al-‘ahd in 383/993, following the death of his elder and only brother Muhammad. Al-Ḥākim, the most controversial member of his dynasty and the first Fātimid ruler to have been born in Egypt, received the bay'a as caliph in Bilbays, to where he had accompanied his father immediately on the latter’s death. He made his entry into Cairo on the following day. 88

Al-Ḥākim faced many problems during his relatively long caliphate. Initially, the struggle between the so-called al-Maghiriba, the western faction of the army consisting of the Berbers, and al-Mashāriqa, the eastern faction comprised mainly of Turkish and Daylamī troops, overshadowed other difficulties. It will be recalled that it was al-‘Aziz who had encouraged the employment of Turks, along with other non-Berber groups, in his forces. This policy had been adopted in order to facilitate the Fātimid conquest of the eastern lands, since the Turks were skilful fighters in addition to having had the valuable experience of serving in the ‘Abbāsid armies. Furthermore, al-‘Aziz may also have aimed at undermining the monopolistic military position of the Berbers, comprised mainly of the Kutāma tribesmen, in the Fātimid state. To the discontent of the Berbers, the Turks had rapidly come to occupy the most important posts in the Fātimid armies, giving rise to serious rivalry and animosity between the two main factions of the Fātimid armies; the Berbers, who had traditionally provided the backbone of the Fātimid troops, and the newly recruited easterners, led by the Turks. This rivalry reached the point of open warfare during the early years of al-Ḥākim’s rule.

The death of al-‘Aziz had provided a suitable opportunity for the Berbers to reassert themselves. Now, the Kutāma demanded that the leadership of the government be entrusted to their chief, al-Ḥasan b. ‘Ammār. The youthful caliph capitulated and appointed Ibn ‘Ammār as his wāsiṭa, the highest administrator acting as the intermediary between
the caliph and his officials and subjects, a ministerial position without the specific office or title of vizier. This position, known as wasāta, henceforth became rather common under the Fātimids. Ibn 'Ammār thus replaced Ibn Naṣṭūrus, who was executed soon afterwards. As expected, Ibn 'Ammār began to improve the relative position of the Berbers in the army, at the expense of al-Mashāriqa. His policies soon alarmed Barjawān, the tutor and guardian of al-Ḥākim since before the latter's accession. Being a highly ambitious person, Barjawān envisaged becoming the caliph's chief official. To this end, he sought the support of al-Mashāriqa, and, in particular, made an alliance with Mangūṭakin, the governor of Damascus, who was induced to march towards Egypt at the head of his forces. However, Mangūṭakin, abandoned along the way by his ever unreliable ally the Jarrāḥid Mufarrij, was defeated near 'Asqalān by Ibn 'Ammār's forces, which were commanded by Sulaymān b. Ja'far b. Fallāḥ. The Berber Sulaymān now became the new governor of Damascus, and soon committed the serious error of dismissing Jaysh b. Šamsām, a powerful Kutāma chief, from the governorship of Tripoli, replacing him with his own brother 'Āli. Shortly afterwards, Barjawān allied himself with the dissatisfied Jaysh, who had the support of a number of other Berber chiefs, and challenged Ibn 'Ammār's authority. This time, Ibn 'Ammār, failing to check the street riots in Cairo which culminated in open revolt, was defeated and forced into hiding. Barjawān now seized power as wasīta, in Ramadan 387/October 997, and became the effective ruler of the Fātimid state for four years. He dealt leniently with the defeated Berbers and even pardoned Ibn 'Ammār who was, however, executed later. But the loss of the position of the Berbers in the army proved to be irreversible.

Barjawān, a eunuch slave of uncertain origins, governed competently with the help of his able secretary, the Christian Fahd b. Ibrāhīm. He also attempted to reconcile the differences between al-Maghāriba and al-Mashāriqa. But he dealt harshly with the disorders in Syria, where he had sent Jaysh b. Šamsām as his governor. At Tyre, Jaysh repressed the rebellion of a certain Arab adventurer, ‘Allāqa, who was supported by a Byzantine fleet; Jaysh also subdued Mufarrij. Jaysh then restored order to Damascus and defeated the Byzantines at Afamiya in northern Syria. Following these victories, peace negotiations commenced between the Fātimids and the Byzantines, at the initiative of the emperor Basil II, resulting in a ten-year truce beginning in 391/1001. However, Barjawān was not so successful with his policies in the Maghrib. He did repress the disturbances at Barqa, but acted unwisely in engaging the Fātimid troops
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in battle for the first time against the Şanhāja Berbers serving the third Zirid, Bādis b. al-Manṣūr (386–406/996–1016), over the control of Tripoli. This conflict undermined the position of the Fātimids in the Maghrib, further weakening the loyalty of the Zirids towards them. It was under Bādis that the control of the western parts of the Zirid dominions, in the central Maghrib, was given to Ḥammād b. Buluggin b. Zirī (405–419/1015–1028), the progenitor of the Banū Ḥammād branch of the Zirid family. The latter, in effect, became the founder of the Ḥammādid dynasty of the Maghrib, ruling from their newly constructed capital at Qal‘at Bani Ḥammād, northeast of Masila, while the Zirids continued to rule over ʿIfriqiya proper from Qayrawān. Both dynasties were extinguished in the third quarter of the 6th/12th century, their territories passing to the Almohads (al-Mawāḥhidūn).

In the meantime, al-Ḥākim had developed a deep hatred for Barjawān, who had been severe and disciplinarian with the caliph, limiting his authority and restricting him to the palace. Al-Ḥākim had Barjawān killed in 390/1000, with the encouragement and collaboration of another eunuch slave Raydān. Henceforth, al-Ḥākim became the real ruler of the Fātimid state. Starting with al-Husayn b. Jawhar, who succeeded Barjawān, al-Ḥākim limited both the spheres of authority and the terms of office of his wazīrs and wāsītas, of whom there were more than fifteen during the last twenty years of his caliphate. Al-Ḥākim issued an endless series of the most extraordinary decrees, which were often abolished or reversed at later dates. His changing moods and eccentricities have given rise to many different descriptions of his character, even causing some to regard al-Ḥākim as a person of unbalanced character. However, some sources regard him as a wise and tactful leader, and have praises for al-Ḥākim’s patronage of the arts and sciences. Al-Ḥākim also maintained a keen interest in the da’wa organization and activities, paying special attention to the education of the Fātimid dā’īs.

One of the distinguishing features of al-Ḥākim’s reign was the adoption of persecutory measures against Christians and Jews. His anti-dhimmi policy, which took definite shape by 395/1004, was doubtless partially motivated by the caliph’s desire to enhance his popularity amongst the Muslims of Egypt, who had become increasingly antagonistic towards the dhimmīs under al-ʿAzīz. Furthermore, by directing his anti-Christian measures mainly against the Melkites, he may have wished to win the support of the Copts, who comprised the Christian majority in Egypt. At any event, al-Ḥākim imposed numerous restrictions on Christians and
Jews, who were also obliged to observe Islamic law. A large number of churches and monasteries were demolished; others were converted to mosques, while their properties and revenues were confiscated. Only the monastery of Mt Sinai was spared. In 400/1009, al-Ḥākim even ordered the destruction of the church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, an act which greatly anguished the Christians throughout the world and brought to an end the Fāṭimid-Byzantine truce. In 406/1015-1016, the emperor Basil II issued an edict forbidding commercial relations between Byzantium and the Fāṭimid Caliphate, initiating a declining trend in Fāṭimid trade with Europe. On the other hand, in 404/1013, al-Ḥākim allowed those Christians and Jews who had been obliged to embrace Islam to revert to their original faiths or to emigrate to Byzantine territories. Still later, he restored some of the churches and adopted a more tolerant attitude towards the Christians and their religious practices. In the meantime, al-Ḥākim had maintained his anti-Sunni measures, although at times he intensified them and then had them temporarily revoked. For instance, his order for the denouncement of Abū Bakr, his two successors and others amongst the Ṣaḥība, issued in 395 A.H. and according to which the relevant maledictions were inscribed on the walls of the mosques, was repealed after two years, only to be reintroduced in 403/1013.

One of al-Ḥākim’s most important acts was the foundation of the Dār al-Ḥikma (House of Wisdom), sometimes also called the Dār al-‘Ilm, which was set up in 395/1005 in a section of the Fāṭimid palace in Cairo. This institute of learning, with its fine library, which served as a meeting place for traditionists, jurists, astronomers and others, was utilized for the propagation of Shi‘i doctrines in general and Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlīsm in particular. Being directed by the dā‘ī al-du‘āt, the chief dā‘ī, the Dār al-Ḥikma was in fact closely associated with the Fāṭimid da‘wa activities; and it remained operational, with the exception of a few decades, to the end of the Fāṭimid dynasty. Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī doctrines, called hikma since the time of the caliph al-Mu‘izz, were instructed at the lecture halls of this institute where dā‘īs were also trained. Al-Ḥākim often attended the lectures at the Dār al-Ḥikma, some of which were reserved only for Ismā‘īlis. Some Sunni jurists, too, were permitted to teach at the Dār al-Ḥikma. In 400 A.H., al-Ḥākim apparently founded a separate Sunnī institute of learning at Fustṭāṭ, under two Mālikī scholars; this institute was however closed down three years later. Amidst his religious policies, al-Ḥākim concerned himself with the moral standards of his subjects and issued many edicts of an ethico-social nature. He was also prepared to mete out severe punish-
ments. A long list of wazirs, wasıtas, commanders and other dignitaries, starting with Barjawân, lost their lives at his order, including Fahd b. Ibrâhîm, ‘Ali b. al-Ḥusayn al-Maghribî, Ṣâlih b. ‘Ali, Maṣūr b. ‘Abdûn, al-Ŷâdh b. Ṣâlih, al-Ḥusayn b. Jawhar, al-Ḥusayn b. Ţâhir al-Wazzân, and al-Ŷâdh b. Ja’far b. al-Furât; in addition to a number of his concubines and numerous ordinary prisoners. Of the five persons who held the post of chief dâ‘i under al-Ḥâkim, al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Ali b. al-Nu‘mân, and his cousin ‘Abd al-‘Azîz b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu‘mân as well as Mâlik b. Sa‘îd, all three prominent personalities who simultaneously held the prestigious office of qâdi al-qudat, or chief qâdi, were executed.

There occurred several disturbances and open revolts during al-Ḥâkim’s caliphate. The most serious of these revolts, lasting about two years, was that of Abû Rakwa Walîd b. Hishâm, who claimed to be related to the Umayyads of Spain. He started his revolt in 395/1004 in the region of Barqa (Cyrenaica), receiving support from the Zanâta Berbers and the Arab tribe of the Banû Qurra. Abû Rakwa defeated the Fâṭîmid forces sent against him and seized Barqa at the end of 395/1005. About a year after this victory, Abû Rakwa left Barqa on the verge of famine and plague and besieged Alexandria for several months. Subsequently, he proceeded as far as Fayyûm, where the rebels were eventually defeated by Fâṭîmid troops under the command of al-Ŷâdh b. Ṣâlih. Abû Rakwa, who had sought refuge in Nubia, was delivered to the Fâṭîmids; he was executed in Cairo in 397/1007. It was during this revolt that al-Ḥâkim decided to adopt more liberal policies, also revising his anti-Sunni measures.

The Jarrâḥids of Palestine led another important rebellion against al-Ḥâkim. The ambitious Mufarrij b. Daghfal, who had helped the Fâṭîmids against Abû Rakwa, but was always ready to change sides and desired a semi-independent state of his own, revolted openly in 402/1011–1012. He ambushed and killed the new Fâṭîmid governor of Damascus, the Turk Yârûkh, and then occupied Ramla, the main city of southern Palestine. In 403/1012, Mufarrij, assisted by his three sons, took the further significant step of proclaiming an anti-caliph in the person of the sharîf of Mecca, the ‘Alid al-Ḥasan b. Ja’far, known as Abu’l-Futûḥ. The latter was acknowledged as such in the Hijâz and Palestine, where the khutba came to be read in his name. However, the victory of the Jarrâḥids lasted just over two years, during which time Mufarrij attempted to win the favour of the Byzantine emperor and the Christians of Jerusalem by the partial restoration of the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Al-Ḥâkim succeeded in persuading the Jarrâḥids to abandon the anti-caliph, whom they had set up at
Ramlā. Abū’l-Futūḥ now chose to return to Mecca, where he was pardoned by al-Ḥākīm. He was reappointed as the sharīf of Mecca by the Fāṭimid caliph. But the Jarrāḥīds continued to retain their mastery of Palestine, where they menaced the inhabitants and raided the pilgrim caravans going from Egypt to the Hījāz. In 404/1013, al-Ḥākīm decided to deal with the Jarrāḥīds more effectively and sent a large army against them. At the same time, Mufarrīj died suddenly, perhaps having been poisoned. Thereupon, two of Mufarrīj’s sons, ‘Aḥī and Maḥmūd, surrendered, while the third, Ḥassān, later succeeded in obtaining al-Ḥākīm’s pardon. Ḥassān b. Mufarrīj, who was permitted to regain his father’s lands in Palestine and who now became the dominant figure of the Jarrāḥīd family, remained loyal to the Fāṭimids throughout the rest of al-Ḥākīm’s reign.

In North Africa, al-Ḥākīm did not lose any important territory. However, during the last years of his caliphate, the Iṣmāʿīlīs began to be severely persecuted in Ifrīqiya. Iṣmāʿīlīsm had never deeply penetrated the masses there, including the region’s Berber tribesmen; and only small urban groups, in addition to the Kutāma and the Ṣanḥāja Berbers, had been won over by the Fāṭimid daʿwā. With the transfer of the seat of the Fāṭimid Caliphate to Cairo, large numbers of the Kutāma tribesmen and leading daʿīs had migrated to Egypt, leaving behind in Ifrīqiya the superficially converted Ṣanḥāja to defend Iṣmāʿīlīsm in an overwhelmingly Sunnī state. This state was ruled by the Zīrīds, who were rapidly losing their own allegiance towards the Fāṭimids. Consequently, the conditions had soon become opportune for the anti-Shīʿī sentiments of the Sunnī inhabitants of Ifrīqiya. In 407/1016–1017, following the accession of the Zīrid al-Muʿizz b. Bāḍīs (406–454/1016–1062), the Iṣmāʿīlīs of Qayrawān, Mahdiyya, Tunis, Tripoli, and other towns, were attacked and massacred by the Sunnis of Ifrīqiya, under the leadership of their Mālikī jurists and scholars, and with the connivance of the government. These persecutions and popular riots against the Iṣmāʿīlīs continued, and the Iṣmāʿīlī communities of Ifrīqiya were practically extinguished by the time the Zīrid al-Muʿizz transferred his allegiance to the ʿAbbāsids a few decades later.

On the other hand, al-Ḥākīm was successful in Syria and finally managed to extend Fāṭimid authority to the amirate of Aleppo, which had begun to decline after the assassination in 392/1002 of the Hamdānid Saʿīd al-Dawla on the orders of his minister Luʾluʿ. After this event, Luʾluʿ became the effective ruler in Aleppo, though initially he acted as regent for
Sa‘īd al-Dawla’s two sons, who were later exiled to Cairo in 394/1003–1004. Lu’lu’ died in 399/1008–1009 and was succeeded by his son Maňsūr, who received investiture from the caliph al-Ḥākim and in effect became a Fāṭimid vassal. Al-Ḥākim supported Maňsūr against Abu’l-Hayjā’, a son of Sa‘īd al-Dawla, who unsuccessfully endeavoured, with the help of the Byzantines, to restore Ḥamdānid rule to Aleppo. In 406/1015–1016, Maňsūr was defeated by the chief of the Banū Kīlāb, Ṣāliḥ b. Mirdās, and took refuge with the Byzantines. Soon afterwards, the Fāṭimid troops occupied Aleppo, and the first Fāṭimid governor, Fātik, entered the city in 407/1017. But in 414/1023, Aleppo again fell to Ṣāliḥ b. Mirdās, whose descendants, the Mirdāsids, continued to rule (with the exception of brief periods) over northern Syria until 472/1079, when they were overthrown by the ‘Uqaylids. With some occasional periods of conflict, the Mirdāsids acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of the Fāṭimids.

By the time of al-Ḥākim, the Fāṭimids had come to realize the difficulty of achieving a speedy conquest of the Muslim East. In effect, a stalemate had developed between the Fāṭimid and the Buwayhid regimes. Nonetheless, whilst more concerned now with a lasting settlement in Egypt, the Fāṭimids still aimed at penetrating the eastern lands of the Muslim world through their da’wa activities. As a result, the Fāṭimid da’wa was greatly expanded under al-Ḥākim, who concerned himself with the da’wa organization and the training of the da’īs. The Fāṭimid da’īs, who were carefully selected and trained at the Dār al-Ḥikma and elsewhere in Cairo, were despatched to various regions in the Muslim world, both inside and outside the Fāṭimid empire. Within the Fāṭimid dominions, numerous da’īs, such as Abu’l-Fawāris (d. ca. 413/1022), who wrote a valuable treatise on the doctrine of the imāmate,97 worked in Syria where they eventually won many converts amongst the Sunni population. In Egypt itself, the da’īs operated in rural and urban areas, and large numbers of Egyptians gathered at the Dār al-Ḥikma to listen to different lectures on Shi‘ism. More significantly, the da’wa now became particularly active outside the Fāṭimid empire, in the eastern provinces of the Muslim world, and above all in ‘Irāq and Persia. A large number of da’īs were assigned to those territories, where they addressed their propaganda to various social strata. In ‘Irāq, the seat of the ‘Abbāsid Caliphate, the da’īs seem to have particularly concentrated their efforts on local rulers and influential Arab tribal chiefs, with whose support they aimed to bring about the downfall of the ‘Abbāsids.

Foremost amongst the Fāṭimid da’īs operating in the Muslim East
during the reign of al-Ḥākim, was Ḥamid al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Kirmānī, an eminent Ismāʿīli philosopher, and, perhaps, the most learned and talented Ismāʿīli theologian and author of the Fāṭimid period. As in the case of other prominent dāʿīs who observed strict secrecy in their affairs, few details are known about al-Kirmānī’s life and activities. A prolific writer, he was of Persian origin and was probably born in Kirmān, later maintaining his contacts with the Ismāʿīli community in that region. As noted, he addressed one of his treatises to a subordinate dāʿī in Jiruft, situated in Kirmān. Al-Kirmānī seems to have spent the greater part of his life as a Fāṭimid dāʿī in ʿIrāq, having been particularly active in Baghdād and Baṣra. The honorific title hujjat al-ʿIrāqayn, meaning the chief dāʿī of both ʿIrāqs (al-ʿIrāq al-ʿArabi and al-ʿIrāq al-ʿĀjamī), which is often added to his name and which may be of a late origin, implies that he was also active in the northwestern and west-central parts of Persia known as the ʿIrāq-ī ʿĀjam. In the early years of the 5th/11th century, he was summoned to Cairo and intervened in the controversy that had developed amongst the Fāṭimid dāʿīs, concerning the nature of the imāmate. More specifically, he now argued against those extremist dāʿīs who had begun to preach the divinity of al-Ḥākim. Thereafter, he apparently returned to ʿIrāq, where he completed his last and principal work, Rāḥat al-ʿaql (Peace of the Mind) in 411/1020–1021, and where he died soon afterwards. In this work, which is the earliest attempt at a systematic exposition of Fāṭimid Ismāʿīli philosophy, al-Kirmānī, well-acquainted with the Judaeo-Christian sacred scriptures and Hebrew and Syriac languages, introduces many new ideas, including a new cosmological system, showing the influence of the earlier Greek and Muslim philosophers.

The activities of al-Kirmānī and other Fāṭimid dāʿīs soon bore fruit, especially in Baghdād and elsewhere in ʿIrāq where the Shiʿīs, being pressured by the ʿAbbāṣids who were now acquiring a greater degree of independence from the Buwayhids, were more readily attracted to Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism. In 401/1010–1011, Qirwāsh b. al-Muqallad (391–442/1001–1050), the ʿUqaylid ruler of Mawṣil, Kūfa, Madāʾin and some other towns, whose family adhered to Shiʿism and whose uncle Muḥammad had earlier rallied to the side of al-ʿAzīz, acknowledged the suzerainty of the Fāṭimids and had the khutba read in the name of al-Ḥākim. In the same year, ʿAlī al-Asadī, chief of the Banū Asad, declared his loyalty to al-Ḥākim in Ḥilla and other districts under his control. Being alarmed by the success of the Fāṭimid daʿwa within his territories, and indeed at the very doorsteps of Baghdād, the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Qādir (381–422/991–1031)
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decided to take retaliatory measures. Still in 401 A.H., he obliged Qirwāsh, by threatening to use military force against him, to transfer his allegiance back to the 'Abbāsids. And in 402/1011, he launched his own carefully planned anti-Fātimid propaganda campaign. It was in that year that al-Qādir sponsored the already-noted Baghdād manifesto to discredit the Fātimids. He assembled a number of Sunnī and Shi‘ī scholars at his court in Baghdād, amongst them some prominent 'Alīds such as the celebrated Imām the theologians al-Sharīf al-Rāḍī (d. 406/1015) and his brother al-Sharīf al-Murtada (d. 436/1044–1045), who also acted as inter-

mediaries between the 'Abbāsids and the Buwayhids. He commanded them to declare in a written statement that al-Hākim and his predecessors were imposters with no genuine Fātimid ancestry. This manifesto was read in mosques throughout the 'Abbāsids empire, to the deep annoyance of al-Hākim. In addition, al-Qādir commissioned several theologians, including the Mu'tazīli 'Alī b. Sa'id al-Iṣṭakhri (d. 404/1013–1014), to write treatises condemning the Fātimids and their doctrines.

The Fātimid da'wa continued in the east, and it is reported that al-Hākim even attempted in 403/1012–1013, though without results, to obtain the allegiance of Maḥmūd of Ghazna who had two years earlier massacred the Ismā'īlis of Multān. Most of the Qarmātī Ismā'īlī communities outside of Bahrayn soon either embraced Fātimid Ismā'īlism or disintegrated. Meanwhile, the power of the Qarmātīs of Bahrayn had been rapidly declining. In 375/985, the Buwayhids inflicted two heavy defeats on the Qarmātīs, who had endeavoured to re-establish their hold over southern 'Irāq by occupying Kūfā. And in 378/988, they suffered another humiliating defeat at the hands of al-Asfar, chief of the Banu'l-Muntafīq, who then besieged al-Aḥsā' and pillaged Qaṭīf. Henceforth, the Qarmātīs lost the privilege of taxing the pilgrim caravans to al-Asfar and other tribal chiefs of the region. Subsequently in 382/992, the Qarmātīs of Bahrayn renewed their nominal political allegiance to the Fātimid al-ʿAzīz, probably in exchange for the resumption of the Fātimid annual tribute which had been discontinued after al-Asfar’s victory in 378 A.H. However, they continued to adhere to their own dissident form of Ismā'īlism and avoided any doctrinal rapprochement with the Fātimid Ismā'īlis. In al-Hākim’s time, the relations between the Qarmātīs of Bahrayn and the Fātimids were evidently hostile, though no specific details are available. By this time, the Qarmātīs of Bahrayn had indeed become a local power and not much is known about their history and subsequent relations with the Fātimids.
In the meantime, al-Ḥākīm had developed a strong inclination towards asceticism. In 403/1012-1013, he forbade his subjects from prostrating before him; he also dressed simply and rode on a donkey. In 404/1013, he made yet another unprecedented decision in appointing ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. Ilyās b. Ṭwāṣ, a great-grandson of ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī, as his wali al-ʿahd, to the exclusion of his own son ʿAlī. Thereupon, al-Ḥākīm delegated all the affairs of state, at least for some time, to his heir apparent, who attended the official ceremonies and later also became the governor of Damascus. In the final years of al-Ḥākīm’s reign, there occurred an open division amongst the Fatimid dāʿīs in Egypt, which led to the genesis of what was to become known as the Druze religion. This religion, though originally derived from Fatimid Ismāʿīlism, came to represent so many doctrinal innovations as to be considered to fall beyond the confines of Ismāʿīlism or even Shi'i Islam. We shall, therefore, consider only the highlights of the origins of the Druzes (Arabic, Durūz or Drūz; singular, Durzi).

Al-Ḥākīm’s imāmate had witnessed the formation and circulation of certain extremist ideas amongst some Fatimid dāʿīs, regarding the powers and attributes of this Fatimid caliph. These ideas found their roots in the eschatological expectations of the Ismāʿīlīs and, more importantly, in the speculations of the Shiʿī Ghulāt of the earlier times, especially the Khaṭṭābiyya. The earliest expressions of such extremist ideas regarding al-Ḥākīm and the identity of their proponents are shrouded in obscurity. It seems however, that a certain al-Ḥasan b. Ḥaydara al-Akhrām may have been the first dāʿī who began to organize early in 408/1017 (the opening year of the Druze era) a movement for the purpose of proclaiming the divinity of al-Ḥākīm. The Fatimid daʿwa, in line with the basic tenets of the doctrine of the imāmate, recognized al-Ḥākīm as the divinely appointed, sinless and infallible leader of mankind as well as the true guardian of Islam and the authoritative interpreter of the inner meaning of the Islamic revelation. But on the basis of their beliefs, the Fatimid Ismāʿīlīs could not acknowledge him or any other Fatimid caliph-imām as a divine being. Consequently, the official daʿwa organization was categorically opposed to this new movement that was gaining a growing number of adherents amongst the Egyptian Ismāʿīlīs. Soon afterwards, al-Akhrām, who had been attempting to win over prominent officials by sending them letters, was assassinated in Ramaḍān 408/January–February 1018, while riding in the retinue of al-Ḥākīm.

With al-Akhrām’s death, the propaganda of the new movement was
suspended until Muharram 410/May 1019, when it was resumed under the leadership of Ḥamza b. ʿAlī b. ʿAḥmad, a former associate of al-Akhram and of Persian origins. Ḥamza established his headquarters at the mosque of Rayḍān, outside the walls of Cairo, where he began to preach the new doctrine. Soon, Ḥamza came to confront a prominent rival in the person of the dāʾī Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Darazi (or al-Darzī), also known as Nashtakin, a Turk from Bukhārā. Although he may initially have been one of Ḥamza’s disciples, he now acted independently, competing with Ḥamza for winning the movement’s leadership. Al-Darazi, after whom the movement later became designated as al-Daraziyya and al-Durziyya in addition to being called al-Ḥākimiyya, attracted many of Ḥamza’s followers and was in fact the first to declare publicly al-Ḥākim’s divinity. This occasioned several riots in protest of the new preaching, and the ensuing unrest was aggravated when, in 410/1019, Ḥamza sent a delegation to the Fāṭimid qāḍī al-quṭ demanding his conversion. Now the Turkish troops of al-Ḥākim turned against the movement, killing a number of al-Darazi’s followers, while the latter managed to take refuge at the palace. It was under these circumstances that al-Darazi vanished mysteriously in 410 A.H.; he was probably killed on the orders of al-Ḥākim. Subsequently, the Fāṭimid troops besieged Ḥamza and a number of his disciples in the Rayḍān mosque. But Ḥamza succeeded in going into hiding, and by Rabi’ ʿIl 410/August 1019 he had regained al-Ḥākim’s favour. Ḥamza now gave the Ḥākim cult its definitive theological form and developed a strong daʿwa organization for the propagation of the new doctrine, under his own overall leadership. He was assisted by a number of dāʾīs and disciples, notably Abū ʿIbrāhim Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad al-Tamīmī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Wahb al-Qurashi, Abūʾl-Khayr Salāma b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Sāmurrī, and Abuʾl-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿAḥmad al-Ṭāʾī, also known as Bahāʿ al-Dīn al-Muṭṭanā. The Druze movement was indeed the cause of much of the unrest that occurred during the closing years of al-Ḥākim’s caliphate. It was also in relation to this movement that al-Ḥākim, at the end of 410 A.H., ordered his black troops to plunder and burn Fustṭāṭ, where, following the proclamation of al-Ḥākim’s divinity, certain circles had accused the Fāṭimid caliph of having abandoned Islam.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the official Fāṭimid daʿwa had launched a campaign of their own against the new doctrine. They declared that al-Ḥākim had never supported the extremist ideas propagated by the dissident dāʾīs, circulating special decrees and documents to this effect. As
part of the Fātimid attack on the Ḥākim cult, al-Kirmānī, the most distinguished daʿī of the time, who had already elaborated the official view on the doctrine of the imāmāte in a special treatise,103 was summoned to Cairo probably at the request of Khattigin al-Ḍayf, the last chief daʿī under al-Ḥākim and a former governor of Damascus. In Egypt, he produced several works in refutation of various aspects of the new doctrine. In 405-406/1014-1015, al-Kirmānī wrote a risāla on imāmāte in general and on al-Ḥākim’s imāmāte in particular, upholding that al-Ḥākim was the sole legitimate imām of the time who, like his predecessors, was divinely appointed though not divine himself.104 In another risāla known as al-Wāʾiẓa,105 composed in 408/1017 as a reply to a pamphlet by al-Akhram, al-Kirmānī rejects the claim of al-Ḥākim’s divinity (ulūhiyya) and accuses the dissenters of ghuluww and kufr. Recognizing that the Druze heresy was essentially rooted in the hopes for the advent of the Qāʾim with its antinomian implications raised by earlier Ismāʿīlī teaching, al-Kirmānī refuted them strongly. He repudiated the ideas that the resurrection (qiyyāma) had occurred with the appearance of al-Ḥākim and that the era of Islam had ended. The era of Islam and the validity of its Shariʿa would, indeed, continue under al-Ḥākim’s numerous prospective successors as imāms. He also discusses other issues concerning God, imām, etc., raised by al-Akhram, who, according to al-Kirmānī, had propagated his false ideas against the wishes of al-Ḥākim. Another of al-Kirmānī’s works, produced after 407 A.H. and discussing the subject of divine unity (al-tawḥīd),106 also had direct bearings on the controversy.

Al-Kirmānī’s writings, which were widely circulated, were to some extent successful in checking the spread of extremism in the inner circles of the daʿwa organization, and influencing many dissident daʿīs to return to the fold of Fātimid Ismāʿīlism. Nevertheless, the new doctrine expounded by al-Akhram, al-Darazi and Ḥamza continued to spread. With al-Ḥākim’s disappearance in 411/1021, Ḥamza and several of his chief assistants went into hiding, while the adherents of the Ḥākim cult became subject to severe persecutions during the first years under al-Ḥākim’s successor. In this period, when all activities for the new doctrine had been suspended, the leadership of the Druze movement was entrusted to al-Muqtanā who was apparently in contact with Ḥamza. It is not known when or how Ḥamza died, but his return was still expected in 430/1038 by al-Muqtanā, who had resumed the open activities of the movement in 418/1027. Meanwhile, the Ḥākim cult had been fading in Egypt, from where al-Muqtanā had sent letters to various regions. The movement acquired its
greatest success in Syria, where a number of Druze da`īs had been active. In fact, the new doctrine seems to have provided the ideology for a wave of peasant revolts in Syria, the permanent home of the Durūz.

By 425/1034, al-Muqtanā had won many new converts in the eastern Ismāʿīlī communities and as far as Multān,107 where the Ismāʿīlīs had survived the persecutions of the Ghaznawids. Soon, al-Muqtanā’s leadership was challenged by several of his subordinates, notably a certain Ibn al-Kurdi, and Sukayn who was the leading Druze daʿī in Syria. Thus, the movement lost much of its earlier vigour and proselytizing success. Al-Muqtanā withdrew from his adherents after 429/1037, though he continued to send out letters until 435/1043, when the active call of the movement also ended. Henceforth, the Druzes became a closed community, permitting neither conversion nor apostasy. The extant letters of al-Muqtanā, together with those written by Ḥamza and Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad al-Tamīmī, have been collected into a canon which has served as the sacred scripture of the Druzes. This canon, arranged in six books, is designated as the Rasāʿil al-Hikma (The Books of Wisdom), also called al-Ḥikma al-Sharīfa. The Druzes, who are still awaiting the reappearance of al-Ḥākim and Ḥamza, guard their sacred literature and doctrines most secretly. Today, there are some 300,000 Druzes in the Middle East, mainly in Syria, especially in the Ḥawrān mountainous region, as well as in Lebanon and Israel. Smaller Druze communities of Syrian origins are settled in the Americas, Australia and West Africa.

The doctrines of the Druzes, who call themselves Muwahḥidūn, ‘unitarians’, signifying their emphasis on God’s unity (al-tawḥīd), were based on the eschatological expectations of the Ismāʿīlīs and the special type of Neoplatonism which had come to be adopted as the basis of the cosmological doctrine of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs. The founders of the Druze religion were, moreover, greatly influenced by certain beliefs, notably the belief regarding the incarnation or hulūl of the divine essence in human bodies, held by the Shiʿī Ghulāt of earlier times, especially the Khaṭṭābīyya who believed in the divinity of the imāms. Under such influences, Ḥamza and his chief associates had come to believe in the periodical manifestations of the divine spirit in human form. And in their time, the ultimate One, the Godhead, who had created the universal intellect or intelligence (al-ʾaql al-kullī), the first cosmic emanation or principle, and who was himself beyond name or rank, was embodied in the person of al-Ḥākim. In other words, al-Ḥākim was the last maqām, or locus, of the Creator, and it was only in recognition of al-Ḥākim that men could purify themselves. On the
other hand, Ḥamza had now become the imām, the human guide of the believers and the embodiment of the ‘aql al-kulli. However, the imām’s function no longer included ta’wil, since the time had arrived for the removal of the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of religion. Henceforth, the imām was to help the believers to realize themselves by recognizing the unity of God through al-Ḥākim. Ḥamza also expected al-Ḥākim to initiate the final era of the sacred history, abrogating all the previous religious laws, including the Shari’a of Islam and its Ismā‘ili interpretation. In effect, Ḥamza’s teaching represented a new religion superseding all the previous religions, and falling outside of Ismā‘iliism. This religion laid a special emphasis on the immediate presence of the One at the expense of the subordinate emanations in the universe that were ultimately caused by the One. What mattered above all else was the worshipping of the One, revealed clearly in al-Ḥākim. This is why the Druzes refer to their religion as the din al-tawḥīd.

On the basis of the Druze emanational doctrine of cosmology, Ḥamza assigned cosmic ranks, derived from corresponding cosmic emanations, to prominent members of his da’wa organization. There were five such ranks, called al-hudūd. Besides the universal intellect (al-‘aql al-kulli) embodied in Ḥamza himself, there were the universal soul (al-nafs al-kulliyya); the word (al-kalima); the right wing (al-jānih al-ayman) also called the preceiver (al-sābiq); and the left wing (al-jānih al-aysar) also called the follower (al-tāli). The last four ranks were held, respectively, by Ismā‘il b. Muhammad al-Tamimi, Muhammad b. al-Wahb al-Qurashi, Salīma b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Simurri, and Bahā’ al-Dīn al-Muqtani.108 In Druze terminology, these hudūd are the five highest ministers, or disciples, of al-Ḥākim, embodying the five highest cosmic emanations or principles. Below them, there were three other ranks; namely, dā‘ī, ma’dhīn, and mukāsir (or nāqib), in charge of the various aspects of propagating the new faith, corresponding to the cosmic principles jadd, fath and khayāl. Subordinated to all these ranks were the common believers. From the time of al-Muqtanā’s withdrawal, Ḥamza’s hierarchical propaganda organization, including its dā‘is and lower dignitaries, gradually fell into disuse, and the Druze canon came to serve in place of the absent hudūd. Since then, while the Druzes have been expecting the return of al-Ḥākim and Ḥamza, a much simpler religious organization has taken shape amongst the Druzes of the Middle East. The members of the Druze community have been divided into the ‘uqqāl (singular, ‘āqīl), ‘sages’, who are initiated into the truths of the faith, and the juhhāl (singular, jāhīl), ‘ignorant persons’, the
majority of the uninitiated members, who are not permitted to read the more secret Druze writings. Any adult Druze may be initiated after considerable preparation and trial; subsequently, he is obliged to live a strictly religious life. The more learned amongst the 'uqqāl are given special authorities in the community as shaykhs. They spend much time copying the epistles contained in the Druze canon, offering spiritual guidance to the juhāl and presiding over various communal ceremonies and functions. The Druzes, who possess elaborate doctrines of cosmology and eschatology, believe in metempsychosis or tanāsukh. According to them, there are a fixed number of souls in existence and all souls are reincarnated immediately after death in other human bodies. Ḥamza attacked the Nuṣayrī doctrine that the soul of a sinful person may enter the body of lower animals. In the end, when al-Ḥākim and Ḥamza reappear to establish justice in the world, the best amongst the Druzes will be nearest to al-Ḥākim.

Al-Ḥākim's asceticism increased in the closing years of his reign, when he took to nocturnal walks in the streets of Cairo and Fuṣṭāṭ as well as long solitary excursions in the countryside, especially on the Muqāṭṭam hills outside of Cairo. Al-Ḥākim's end was as enigmatic as his life. On 27 Shawwāl 411/13 February 1021, he left for one of his usual outings to the Muqāṭṭam hills and never returned. A futile search was conducted for the 36 year-old caliph; a few days later his riding donkey and his clothes, pierced by dagger cuts, were found. His body was never recovered, and subsequently several stories came into circulation regarding the incident. According to one plausible version, al-Ḥākim was assassinated on the orders of his scheming sister, Sitt al-Mulk, whose own life had been threatened by the caliph. A Kutāma chief, Ibn Dawwās, had apparently collaborated with her. According to another version, he was killed and his body was carefully hidden at the instigation of Ḥamza, so as to enable the Druze leaders to capitalize on the caliph's mysterious disappearance for their own religious purposes. In fact, the Druzes did interpret al-Ḥākim's disappearance as a voluntary retreat initiating his ghayba. His caliphate and imāmate had lasted just over twenty-four years.

About forty days after al-Ḥākim's disappearance, Sitt al-Mulk had al-Ḥākim's only son Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī, then only sixteen years old, proclaimed as imām and caliph with the laqab of al-Zāhir li-Iʿzāz Dīn Allāh. The shrewd Sitt al-Mulk became regent. It may be added that henceforth the Fāṭimid throne always fell to children or youths; while regents, viziers or generals held the actual reign of power for extended periods. Sitt al-
Mulk, who is given various other names by the chroniclers, ruled efficiently for more than three years until her death in 415/1024. At the beginning of her regency, she managed to have 'Abd al-Raḥim, al-Ḥākim’s heir designate who had meanwhile revolted in Damascus, arrested and brought to Cairo, where he was imprisoned and murdered shortly before Sitt al-Mulk’s own death. She also publicly denounced Ibn al-Dawwās as al-Ḥākim’s murderer and had him killed. After Sitt al-Mulk, who had brought order and stability to the state and had re-opened negotiations with Byzantium, real political authority came to be vested in al-Ẓāhir’s wāsitā, and later wazīr, ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Jarjā‘ī, whose hands had been cut off on al-Ḥākim’s orders. Al-Jarjā‘ī ruled with the help of other notables of the state without the participation of the young caliph. In 415/1024, Egypt suffered a severe famine, which lasted for several years and led to an economic crisis and riots in Cairo and elsewhere. In 416/1025, the Fāṭimid regime began once again to persecute the Sunnīs, culminating in the expulsion of all the Mālikī faqiḥs from Egypt. In 423/1032, partial agreement was reached between the Fāṭimid and the Byzantine empires, permitting the Byzantine emperor to reconstruct the ruined church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the da‘wa had continued to be active in many regions. In particular, the Fāṭimid dā‘īs had won many converts in 'Irāq, having taken advantage of the disturbances created by the Turkish soldiery during the reign of the Buwayhid Jalāl al-Dawla (416–435/1025–1044).

Fāṭimid control of Syria was seriously threatened during the caliphate of al-Ẓāhir by the alliance between the Jarrāḥids of Palestine, the Kalbīs of central Syria and the Kilābīs of northern Syria. In 415/1024–1025, the Jarrāḥid Ḥassān b. Mufarrij renewed a pact of cooperation with the Kalbid Sinān b. Sulaymān and the Kilābid Šāliḥ b. Mīrās, who had already seized Aleppo from the lieutenant of the Fāṭimids in the previous year. According to this pact, Damascus was allotted to Sinān, Aleppo to Šāliḥ and Palestine to the ambitious Ḥassān. These allies defeated the Fāṭimid forces at ‘Asqalān. After Sinān’s death, however, the Kalbīs rallied to the side of the Fāṭimids, enabling the Fāṭimid general Anūṣhtīgin al-Duzbarī to defeat the joint forces of Ḥassān and Šāliḥ at al-Uqhwānā in Palestine in 420/1029, and to reoccupy Damascus. Šāliḥ b. Mīrās was killed in battle, and Ḥassān, together with his Tayy tribesmen, took refuge in Byzantine territory. Due to the efforts of Anūṣhtīgin, who seized Aleppo from the Mīrdāsids in 429/1038, Fāṭimid domination was re-established in Syria and then extended to the neighbouring areas as far as Ḥarrān, Sarūj and
The seventh Fāṭimid caliph al-Ẓāhir died of plague in his early thirties in Shaʿbān 427/June 1036, after an imāmate and caliphate of fifteen years.

Al-Ẓāhir was succeeded by his seven year-old son, Abū Tamim Maʿadd, who adopted the laqab of al-Mustānṣir biʿl-lāh. He had been designated as waliʿ al-ʿābd since the age of eight months, in 421/1030. Al-Mustānṣir’s caliphate, lasting almost sixty lunar years (427-487/1036-1094), was the longest of his dynasty. His caliphate also marked the closing phase of the classical Fāṭimid period; while it witnessed numerous vicissitudes, the overall fortune of the Fāṭimid empire had now clearly begun its irreversible decline.

During the first nine years of al-Mustānṣir’s reign, real political authority remained in the hands of al-Jarjāriʿi, who had retained the vizierate, while al-Mustānṣir’s mother, a Sūdānī, had started her regency and continually intrigued behind the scenes. On al-Jarjāriʿi’s death in 436/1044, all power was seized and maintained for a long period by the queen mother who had kept her close relations with Abū Saʿd al-Tustarī, a Jewish merchant who had originally brought her to Egypt. Under the influence of Abū Saʿd, she now appointed a renegade Jew, Ṣadaqa b. Yūsuf, to the vizierate. Meanwhile, the racial rivalries in the Fāṭimid army had started to provide a major cause of unrest in Egypt, often leading to open rioting and factional fighting. Berbers, Turks, Daylamis and Arabs, all undisciplined and hateful of one another, usually joined forces however, in their common opposition to the black regiments. The latter consisted of large numbers of Sūdānī slaves purchased for the army with the active encouragement of the queen mother. The persistent intrigues of the Fāṭimid court added their own share to this chaotic milieu. Both Abū Saʿd, who had held the reins of power with the queen mother, and the vizier Ṣadaqa, fell victim to the rivalries within the inner circles of the court. In 439/1047, Ṣadaqa, in conspiracy with the Turkish guards, had Abū Saʿd murdered; the queen mother then retaliated by arranging Ṣadaqa’s own assassination in the following year. It was against this background that inept viziers replaced one another, while the overall situation of Egypt deteriorated. In 442/1050, as an exception to the rule, the vizierate was entrusted to a capable person, the qāḍī Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ŷāzūrī, who held that office for eight years and restored some order to the state. With the execution of al-Ŷāzūrī in 450/1058, the factional fights and internal disorders erupted in an intensified manner. Al-Ŷāzūrī was followed, in rapid succession, by numerous
ineffective viziers, while the Fāṭimid state was undergoing a period of decline, accompanied by the breakdown of the civil administration, chaos in the army and the exhaustion of the public treasury.

Matters came to a head in 454/1062, when open warfare broke out near Cairo, between the Turks, aided by the Berbers, and the black troops. The Südānīs were finally defeated in 459/1067, after which they were driven to the region of the Śa‘īd. The victorious commander of the Turks, Nāṣir al-Dawla, a descendant of the Ḥamdānīs and a former governor of Damascus, now became the effective authority in Egypt. He easily wrested all power from al-Mustanṣir and even rebelled against the helpless Fāṭimid caliph. In 462/1070, Nāṣir al-Dawla had the khutba pronounced in the name of the ‘Abbāsid caliph al-Qā‘im (422–467/1031–1075) in Alexandria and elsewhere in lower Egypt. In the meantime, Egypt was also going through a serious economic crisis, marked by shortage of food and famine which were due to the low level of the Nile during seven consecutive years, from 457/1065 to 464/1072, as well as to the constant plundering and ravaging of the land by Turkish troops, all resulting in the total disruption of the country’s agriculture. During these years, Egypt had become prey to the utmost misery. People were reduced to eating dogs, cats, and even human flesh, giving way to all sorts of atrocities, crimes and epidemics. Al-Mustanṣir was forced to sell his treasures in order to meet the insatiable demands of Nāṣir al-Dawla and his Turks. The Fāṭimid palaces, too, were looted by the Turkish guards, who also caused the most regrettable destruction of the Fāṭimid libraries at Cairo in 461/1068–1069. Fustāṭ was twice pillaged and burned on Nāṣir al-Dawla’s orders. During these desperate years, disturbances and rioting, caused by famine, disease and the tyranny of Nāṣir al-Dawla, became widespread and eventually led to the complete breakdown of law and order. A growing portion of the population, including the caliph’s own family, were now obliged to seek refuge outside of Egypt, mainly in Syria and ‘Irāq; and various stories are related of the extreme destitution to which al-Mustanṣir himself was reduced, in his royal quarters in Cairo.

It was under such circumstances that fighting broke out even amongst the Turks themselves, leading to the assassination of Nāṣir al-Dawla by the commander of a rival Turkish faction in 465/1073. In the same year, the seven-year famine was greatly alleviated as a result of a good harvest. Al-Mustanṣir was now finally roused to action and secretly appealed for help from an Armenian general in Syria, Badr al-Jamālī, the governor of ‘Akkā (Acre). Badr was initially a slave of the Syrian amīr Jamāl al-Dawla,
whence his name al-Jamālī; but he rapidly rose in rank and twice became the Fāṭimid governor of Damascus in 455/1063 and in 458/1066.113 Badr accepted the caliph’s summon on the condition of taking his Armenian troops with him. He arrived in Cairo in Jumādā I 466/January 1074, and, with intrigue, immediately succeeded in killing all the rebellious Turkish leaders who had not suspected the general’s mission. Having thus saved al-Mustanṣir and the Fāṭimid Caliphate from definite downfall, Badr speedily restored order in various parts of Egypt. Badr al-Jamālī acquired the highest positions of the Fāṭimid state, being also the first person to be designated as the ‘Vizier of the Pen and of the Sword’ (wazīr al-sayf wa’l-qalam), with full delegated powers. He became not only the commander of the armies, amīr al-juyūsh, his best-known title, but also the head of the civil, judicial and even religious administrations. His titles, besides wazīr, thus included those of qādī al-quḍāt and dā’ī al-du’āt. Indeed, it was primarily due to his efforts that Egypt came to enjoy peace and relative prosperity during the remaining twenty years of al-Mustanṣir’s caliphate.

Territorially, the overall extent of the Fāṭimid empire began to decline during al-Mustanṣir’s reign. With Anūshتīgin’s seizure of Aleppo in 429/1038, the Fāṭimids had reached the zenith of their power in Syria. Thereafter, their domination of Syria and Palestine was quickly brought to an end. In 433/1041, Palestine was once more in revolt under the Jarrāḥīd Ḥassān, and in the same year Aleppo fell again to a Mirdāsid, Thīmāl b. Mirdās. The Fāṭimids attempted in vain to regain Aleppo during 440–441/1048–1049, and although Thīmāl submitted temporarily to al-Mustanṣir in 449/1057, northern Syria was irrevocably lost to the Fāṭimids in 452/1060. The Mirdāsids, who had often accorded only nominal allegiance to the Fāṭimids, transferred their bay’a to the ‘Abbāsids and their new Saljūqid overlords in 462/1070, in spite of the disapproval of their subjects, who for the most part had adhered to Shi‘ism. The Fāṭimids, like many other Muslim dynasties, now faced the growing menace of the Saljūq Turks who were rapidly advancing from the east and laying the foundations of a powerful new empire.

The Saljūqs, as a family of chieftains, had led the Oghuz (Arabic, Ghuzz) Turks, during the early decades of the 5th/11th century, westwards from Khwārazm and Transoxiana. The Saljūq leader Tughril, who had defeated the Ghaznawids and proclaimed himself sultan at Nīshāpūr in 429/1038, soon conquered the greater part of Persia, and then crossed into ‘Irāq. The Saljūqs regarded themselves as the champions of Sunni Islam, which gave them a suitable pretext for wanting to free the ‘Abbāsids
from the tutelage of the Shi'i Buwayhids, and to rid the Muslim world of the Fātimids. At any event, Tughril entered Baghdad in Ramadān 447/December 1055, and soon after extinguished the rule of the Buwayhids of 'Iraq by deposing and imprisoning the last member of the dynasty, al-Malik al-Rahim Khusraw Firūz (440–447/1048–1055). The 'Abbāsid caliph al-Qā'im now confirmed Tughril's title of sultān, and the Saljūqid announced his intention of sending expeditions against the Shi'i Fātimids in Syria and Egypt. However, dissent within the Saljūqid camp and the pro-Fātimid activities of al-Bāsārisī in 'Iraq prevented the founder of the Saljūqid sultanate from carrying out his design against the Fātimids, whose cause achieved an unprecedented, though brief success in 'Iraq.

Abu'l-Hārith Arslān al-Bāsārī, originally a Turkish slave, had become a chief military figure in 'Iraq during the final decade of Buwayhid rule there. Al-Malik al-Rahim's seven-year reign at Baghdad was marked by continuous violence and rioting due to the lack of discipline of the Turkish troops, the Sunni-Shi'i contest, and the troubles caused by various Buwayhid and 'Uqaylid pretenders as well as local Arab tribesmen. In this turbulent situation, Baṣra and other towns were temporarily seized by the rebellious Turkish general al-Bāsārī, who had a powerful adversary at Baghdad in the person of the 'Abbāsid vizier Ibn al-Muslima. The latter, who had secretly established an alliance with Tughril and who, like the 'Abbāsid caliph, had accepted the Saljūqids' arrival in Baghdad, accused al-Bāsārī of being in league with the Fātimids. Al-Bāsārī, who had Shi'i leanings and had been obliged to leave Baghdad before the arrival of the Saljūqids, now appealed to al-Mustansir for support to conquer Baghdad in his name. In the meantime, riots had broken out in the 'Abbāsid capital, in protest of the ravages of Tughril's troops. It has now become known that the celebrated Fātimid dā'i al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī had a major part in creating these anti-Saljūqid disorders and in directing al-Bāsārī's moves. In 448/1056–1057, Fātimid propaganda, accompanied by military measures under the overall direction of al-Mu'ayyad, was intensified. Benefiting also from the excesses of the Turkomans, it met with success in Mawsīl, Wāṣīṭ, and Kūf, where the khutba was read in al-Mustansir's name. After receiving a substantial gift of money and arms from Cairo, delivered to al-Bāsārī at Raḥba by al-Mu'ayyad, and aided by his brother-in-law, the Mazyadid ruler Dubays (408–474/1018–1081), and by numerous Arab tribesmen, al-Bāsārī inflicted a heavy defeat on the Saljūqids in the region of Sinjār in 448/1057. After this defeat the Fātimids were again acknowledged by the 'Uqaylids of Mawṣīl. Soon afterwards,
Tughril took Mawsil but was prevented from adopting further measures against al-Basāsirī due to the revolt of his own half-brother, Ibrāhīm Ināl, who aspired to seize the Saljuqid sultanate for himself with the assistance of al-Basāsirī and the Fātimids.

The departure of Tughril for western Persia to subdue Ināl, provided a suitable opportunity for al-Basāsirī to expand his activities. Shortly afterwards, in Dhu'l-Qa'da 450/December 1058, al-Basāsirī easily managed to enter Baghād, accompanied by the 'Uqaylid Quraysh (443–453/1052–1061). Now the Shi'i form of adhān or call to prayer was instituted in Baghād, where the khuṭba was also pronounced in the name of the Fātimid al-Mustansir. Al-Basāsirī, drawing popular support from both Sunnis and Shi'is who had been united in their hatred of the Saljuqid soldiery, then attacked the 'Abbāsid palace. He agreed, however, to leave al-Qā'im in the protection of the 'Uqaylid Quraysh, to the great disappointment of al-Mustansir, who had expected to receive the 'Abbāsid captive in Cairo. But al-Basāsirī did send the 'Abbāsid caliphal insignia to the Fātimid capital. Subsequently, al-Basāsirī took possession of Wāsiṭ and Baṣra, while failing to gain Khūzistān for the Fātimids. At any rate, al-Basāsirī had already been abandoned by Cairo when he was at the height of his power, and his success was thus bound to be short-lived. The Fātimid vizier Ibn al-Maghribī, who had succeeded al-Yāzūrī, now refused to extend any further help to al-Basāsirī. Meanwhile, Tughril had repressed Ināl's revolt and was preparing to return to Baghād. He proposed to leave al-Basāsirī in Baghād, provided he would renounce his Fātimid allegiance and restore al-Qā'im to the throne. Al-Basāsirī rejected this offer and left Baghād in Dhu'l-Qa'da 451/December 1059. A few days later, Tughril entered Baghād and was met by the freed 'Abbāsid caliph. Al-Basāsirī was pursued and killed shortly afterwards near Kūfā by the Saljuqs, who also carried out an intensive persecution of the Irāqī Shi'is. Thus ended the Fātimid ambitions in 'Irāq and the episode of al-Basāsirī, who for a year had gained the acknowledgement of Fātimid suzerainty at the 'Abbāsid capital.114

The Saljuqid empire was consolidated in the reigns of Tughril's nephew and successor Alp Arslân (455–465/1063–1073) and the latter's son Malikshāh (465–485/1073–1092), who both depended greatly on the organizational talent of their illustrious Persian vizier Niẓām al-Mulk. At the same time, the Saljuqids had continued to expand their territories, never abandoning their dream of marching on to Egypt and overthrowing the Shi'i dynasty of the Fātimids. Fātimid Egypt was now in complete
disorder, and the rivalries between the Berber and Turkish troops had brought unrest to Syria. As a result, the Fātimid governors of Damascus could not exert their authority effectively, nor could they check the Turkoman bands who had appeared in Syria as early as 447/1055. Even Badr al-Jamālī’s efforts to enforce Fātimid sovereignty in Damascus during the years 455–456/1063–1064 and 458–460/1066–1068 had proved futile. Under these desperate circumstances, the Fātimids, according to prevalent custom, hired the services of a Turkoman chieftain, Atsiz b. Uvac, to subdue the rebellious Arab tribes of Palestine. But Atsiz himself revolted against the Fātimids and occupied Jerusalem in 463/1071. Later, after Badr’s departure for Egypt, Atsiz, who was now carving out a principality in Palestine and Syria, seized Damascus in 468/1076. All subsequent attempts by Badr to regain Damascus proved futile and Syria remained lost to the Fātimids. In 469/1077, Atsiz attacked Cairo itself, but was defeated and driven back by Badr. When threatened by a Fātimid expedition, Atsiz appealed to Malikshāh, who responded by despatching his brother Tutush to Syria. In 471/1078–1079, Damascus, having been surrendered by Atsiz to Tutush, became the capital of the new Saljuqid principality of Syria and Palestine. By the end of al-Mustanṣir’s rule, of the former Fātimid possessions in Syria and Palestine, only 'Asqalān and a few coastal towns, like Acre and Tyre, still remained in Fātimid hands. In the meantime, relations had stayed friendly between the Byzantines and Fātimids, following the signing in 429/1038 of a thirty-year peace treaty which also permitted the Byzantines to rebuild the church of the Holy Sepulchre. In particular, the emperor Constantine IX Monomachus (1042–1055) maintained excellent relations with al-Mustanṣir and supplied Egypt with wheat after the famine of 446/1054. Subsequently, when the Fātimids refused to co-operate with Byzantium against the Saljuqs, relations cooled somewhat between the two empires, to be later ameliorated by the exchange of several embassies, including one in 461/1069 during the reign of Romanus IV Diogenes (1068–1071).

The success of the Saljuqs also affected the position and influence of the Fātimids in certain parts of Arabia. In 462/1069–1070, the sharīf of Mecca informed Alp Arslān that henceforth the khatiba in Mecca would be read for the 'Abbāsid caliph and the Saljuqid sultan, and no longer for the Fātimids. Furthermore, he abolished the Shi‘i adhān. The sharīf was rewarded by a generous pension from the Saljuqs. After a brief return to Fātimid allegiance during 467–473/1074–1081, the holy cities of the Hijāz passed permanently out of Fātimid control. On the other hand, the
Fāṭimid Ismā‘ili causium achieved a new success in Yaman during the reign of al-Mustansır, through the efforts of the Ismā‘ili dynasty of the Śulayhids.  

In Yaman, with the death of the dā‘i Ibn Ḥawshab, who was a fervent supporter of ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī, and with the extinction of the Ismā‘ili state he had founded, Ismā‘ilism had come to face a major religio-political setback. Nevertheless, the Ismā‘ili da‘wa had continued to be active in Yaman throughout the 4th/10th century, though in a dormant form, receiving the secret allegiance of several Yamanī tribes, especially some of the Banū Hamdān. For this obscure period of more than one century, lasting until the early years of al-Mustansır’s caliphate, only the names of the successive Yamanī dā‘īs, starting with ‘Ābd Allāh b. ‘Abbās who succeeded Ibn Ḥawshab, have been preserved.  

At the time, amidst continuous tribal strife, Yaman was ruled by several independent dynasties, notably, the Ziyādīds (204–412/819–1021), with their capital at Zabīd in the region of Tīhāma; the Ya‘furīds (247–387/861–997) who established themselves at Ṣān‘ā’ and Janād; and the Najīḥīds, who were originally the Abyssinian slaves of the Ziyādīds but eventually succeeded the latter in 412/1021, ruling intermittently over Zabīd until 554/1159, while the Zaydī Imāms held Ṣa‘da in northern Yaman. During this period, around 377/987, the da‘wa had succeeded in gaining the allegiance of only one Yamanī ruler, ‘Ābd Allāh b. Qalīṭān, the last Ya‘furīd amīr. By the time of the Fāṭimid al-Zāhir, the headship of the Yamanī da‘wa had come to be vested in a certain dā‘ī Sulaymān b. ‘Ābd Allāh al-Zawāḥī, a very learned and influential man living in the mountainous region of Ḥarāz. Sulaymān chose as his successor ‘Alī b. Muḥḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, the son of the qāḍī of Ḥarāz, who was also an important Hamdānī chieftain. ‘Alī, who in time came to lead pilgrim caravans to Mecca, had studied Ismā‘ilism under Sulaymān and had eventually become the dā‘ī’s assistant. 

In 429/1038, the dā‘ī ‘Alī b. Muḥḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, who had already established contacts with the da‘wa headquarters in Cairo, rose in Maṣār, a mountainous locality in Ḥarāz, where he constructed fortifications. This marked the foundation of the Şulayḥīd dynasty, which ruled over Yaman as vassals of the Fāṭimids for almost one century, until 532/1138. Receiving much support from the Hamdānī, Ḥimyarī, and other Yamanī tribes, ‘Alī started on a career of conquest, everywhere instituting the Fāṭimid Ismā‘ili khutba. In 452/1060, he seized Zabīd, killing its ruler al-Najāḥ, founder of the Najāḥīd dynasty, who had earlier incited the Zaydis of Ṣa‘da against him. ‘Alī appointed his brother-in-law, As‘ad b. Shihāb,
to the governorship of Zabid and its dependencies in Tiḥāma, and then proceeded to expel the Zaydis from Šanʿā‘, which became his own capital. In 454/1062, he conquered ‘Adan, but the Banū Ma‘n were permitted to continue for some time as rulers there, though now as tributaries of the Sulayḥids. In 476/1083, the Sulayḥids conferred ‘Adan’s governorship on two Hamdānī brothers, al-‘Abbās and al-Mas‘ūd b. al-Karam (or al-Mukarram), who founded the Ismā‘īli dynasty of the Zuray’ids (476–569/1083–1173). By 455/1063, ‘Ali had subjugated all of Yaman, while his influence extended from Mecca to Ḥaḍramawt. ‘Ali, who desired to meet al-Mustansir, in 454/1062 sent Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī, the chief qādi of Yaman, to Cairo to discuss his prospective visit. Lamak remained in Cairo for five years and eventually had an audience with al-Mustansir. During those years, Lamak stayed at the Dār al-‘Ilm with the chief da‘ī al-Mu’ayyad, who furthered his religious knowledge and also acquainted him with the intricacies of Fātimid Ismā‘īlism. The Egyptian mission of the da‘ī Lamak, who upon returning to Yaman became one of the main Ismā‘īlī leaders and the executive head of the da‘wa there, and his friendly relationship with al-Mu’ayyad, served to bring Yaman yet closer to the headquarters of the Fātimid da‘wa. The exceptionally close ties between the Sulayḥids and the Fātimids are well attested to by numerous letters sent by the Fātimid chancery to the Sulayḥid ‘Ali and his successors, being mostly issued on the orders of al-Mustansir.

The Sulayḥid ‘Ali, who never succeeded in going to Egypt, had set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca when he and a number of his relatives were murdered in 459/1067, in a surprise attack by the sons of al-Najāh in revenge for their father. ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Sulayḥī was succeeded by his son al-Mukarram Aḥmad (d. 477/1084) and then by other Sulayḥids. However, from the latter part of al-Mukarram’s rule, during which time much of northern Yaman was lost to the Zaydi Qāsimī amīrs, effective authority in the Sulayḥid state through which Fātimid sovereignty came to be extended to other parts of Arabia like ‘Umān and Baḥrayn, was exercised by al-Mukarram’s consort, al-Sayyida Ḥurra bint Ahmad al-Sulayḥī. Generally known as al-Malika al-Sayyida, she was a capable queen and a most remarkable personality. She maintained close relations with al-Mustansir and his next two successors in the Fātimid dynasty during her long rule. Upon her death in 532/1138, marking the effective end of the Sulayḥid dynasty, Yaman became subjected to the authority of local dynasties, including the Ismā‘īlī Zuray’ids of ‘Adan and the Ismā‘īlī
Hamdânids of Şan‘â’, who were overthrown in 569/1173 by the Sunni Ayyûbids, the new masters of Egypt, Syria and Yaman.

The Şulayḥids played a crucial part in the renewed efforts of the Fāṭimids to spread Ismā‘îlism on the Indian subcontinent. As noted, Maḥmûd of Ghazna persecuted the Ismā‘îlis of Sind and destroyed their state at Multân. However, Ismā‘îlism managed to survive, in a greatly reduced and inactive form, in the Indus valley. Soon afterwards, the Druze leaders acquired followers from amongst the surviving Ismā‘îlis of Sind who no longer had any direct contacts with the Fāṭimid da‘wa. And the Ghaznawids, fearing the revival of Ismā‘îli activity in Sind and other eastern territories under their control, in 423/1032 tried and executed Hasanak, Maḥmûd’s last vizier, who had earlier accepted a robe of honour from the Fāṭimid al-Zâhir, on charges of being a Qarmâṭi (Ismā‘îli). But now, in the reign of al-Mustanṣîr, a new Ismâ‘îli community was founded in Gujarât, in western India, by the da‘īs sent from Yaman. According to the traditional accounts of the origins of this community, it was in 460/1067-1068 that a da‘ī named ‘Abd Allâh arrived in Khâmbâyat (Kambhât), modern Cambay, in Gujarât, where he started the da‘wa and soon won many converts, including the local rulers. ‘Abd Allâh had been sent from Yaman by Lamak b. Mâlik, who had then recently returned to Yaman from his long visit to Egypt, most probably on the instructions of the chief da‘ī al-Mu‘ayyad. The Şulayḥids evidently supervised the selection and despatch of da‘īs to western India, with the knowledge and approval of al-Mustanṣîr himself. There are extant Fāṭimid documents indicating that the Şulayḥid al-Mukarram, for instance, sent a certain da‘ī Marzûbân b. Ishâq to India in 476/1083; while in 481/1088, the latter’s eldest son Ahmad was selected to head the da‘wa in India after his father’s death and upon the recommendation of the Şulayḥid queen al-Sâyîda, who was officially put in charge of the affairs of the Indian da‘wa.

The da‘wa in western India maintained its close ties with Yaman; and the Ismâ‘îli community founded in the second half of the 5th/11th century in Gujarât in fact evolved into the modern Ṭâyyibî Bohra community. It may also be added that the revitalization of the Fāṭimid da‘wa in Yaman and India may have been directly related to the Fāṭimids’ new interest in trading with India, and in diverting the Near Eastern trade with Asia away from the Persian Gulf route, favourable to the ‘Abbâsids, to the Red Sea. As a result, the Fāṭimids had become concerned with developing and channelling any existing and prospective mercantile trade through an old route passing through the port of ‘Aydhâb, on the African coast of the Red
Sea, to Yaman and 'Adan, from where merchant ships sailed to various harbours on the west coast of India. In mediaeval times, Cambay was one of the most important of these Indian ports, having also close commercial ties with Yaman. It is, therefore, quite likely that the extension of the Fāṭimid da’wa in Yaman and Gujarāt, in al-Mustansir’s time, occurred in connection with the development of the new Fāṭimid commercial interests and policies, which necessitated the utilization of Yaman as a safe base along the Red Sea trade route to India.124

In North Africa, the Fāṭimid dominions were practically reduced to only Egypt itself. About the year 440/1048, the fourth Zirid ruler al-Mu’izz b. Bādis, who had already persecuted the Shi‘īs of Ifriqiya, formally renounced the suzerainty of the Fāṭimids and placed himself under that of the ‘Abbāsids. As a result of this complete rupture with Cairo, the khutba came to be read in the name of the ‘Abbāsid caliph in Zirid territories. The Mālikī ‘ulama’ of Qayrawān, in order to satisfy the predominantly Sunni public opinion of Ifriqiya, had thus succeeded in replacing Shi‘ism with Sunnism as the official creed of the Zirid state. Though al-Mu’izz later in 446/1054–1055 returned briefly to the allegiance of the Fāṭimids, as did his successor Tamīm b. al-Mu’izz (454–501/1062–1108) during the early years of his own reign, the Fāṭimids had now permanently lost Ifriqiya, their oldest dominion in North Africa. Soon, various independent principalities sprang up in the further Maghrib, in territories dependent on Ifriqiya. According to traditional accounts of these developments, the Fāṭimid vizier al-Yazūrī convinced al-Mustansīr, who lacked sufficient military power, that he should punish the disloyal Zirid al-Mu’izz by encouraging a number of bedouin tribes, based close to the Nile valley, to migrate towards Ifriqiya. By this measure, the Fāṭimid caliph would rid himself of these troublesome Arab tribesmen, while at the same time taking vengeance on the Zirids. The bedouins, led by the Banū Hilāl and Banū Sulaym, captured Barqa and then penetrated Ifriqiya proper. Defeating the Zirids decisively in 443/1051–1052, they plundered the countryside and towns ruthlessly. These bedouins, supplemented by new arrivals, gradually spread through North Africa in what was to become known as the Hilālī invasion.125

By 449/1057, the Zirid al-Mu’izz was obliged to abandon his capital, Qayrawān, and to seek refuge in Mahdiyya, then governed by his son Tamīm, while the Zirid domains were breaking up into different principalities. When al-Mu’izz repudiated al-Mustansīr, his cousin al-Qā’īd b. Ḥammād (419–446/1028–1054), the second Ḥammādīd ruler,
also temporarily cast off Fāṭimid suzerainty. Soon afterwards, the Ḥammādids, who were equally hard pressed by the westward migrating Arab bedouins, returned to Fāṭimid allegiance. But the last Ḥammādīd, Yaḥyā b. al-ʿAzīz, before surrendering in 547/1152 to the Almohads, had already renounced the Fāṭimidis in 543/1148. A few years later, the Zīrid territories, limited to the coastline of Ifriqiyya, also passed into the hands of the Almohads. The later Zīrids are mainly known for their maritime activity and corsair raids, though they failed to take command of the Mediterra-
nean from the Normans of Sicily. The last Zīrid, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli, was
driven out of Mahdiyya in 543/1148 by Roger II, king of Sicily. He had
tried in vain to pay homage to the Fāṭimid caliph so that the latter would
intervene on his behalf with the Normans. He was, however, reinstated in
Mahdiyya by ʿAbd al-Muʿmin (524–558/1130–1163), the founder of the
Almohad dynasty, who himself some eight years later exiled al-Ḥasan
permanently. Sicily, in the meantime, whose Kalbid amīrs had recognized
the nominal suzerainty of the Fāṭimidis, had been conquered by the
Normans. The Fāṭimidis had long since lost their interest in Sicily and did
not find it difficult to cultivate friendly relations with Norman Sicily.126
With the Norman conquest of Sicily in 463/1070–1071, Barqa had become
the western limit of the Fāṭimid state under al-Mustanṣir.

The Fāṭimid daʿwa activities reached their peak in al-Mustanṣir’s time.
The daʿwa organization, which had acquired a definite shape under al-
Ḥākīm, was expanded during al-Mustanṣir’s long imāmate. Many daʿīs
now operated not only inside Egypt and other Fāṭimid dominions but also
outside of the Fāṭimid empire. The daʿwa was particularly active in ʿIrāq
and in various parts of Persia, notably, Fārs, Iṣfahān, Rayy, where Ḥasan-i
Ṣabbāḥ the future leader of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs was converted, and
Khurāsān. The Ismāʿīlī daʿwa had continued to exist in a subdued form also
in Transoxiana, where Ismāʿīlism maintained secret followers under the
last Sāmānīds and in subsequent decades. Amongst its adherents, there
ranked the father and brother of Ibn Sīnā (Latin, Avicenna), the celebrated
philosopher-physician who was born near Bukhārā in 370/980 and died in
Hamadān in 428/1037. Ibn Sīnā himself became acquainted with the tenets
of Ismāʿīlism at an early age through the scholarly discussions held at the
house of his father, ʿAbd Allāh, a Sāmānīd official; and he perused the
Epistles of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, though he did not adhere to Ismāʿīlism, into
which he was born.127 After the Sāmānīds, the daʿwa seems to have met
with greater success in Central Asia. In 436/1044–1045, a large number of
Ismāʿīlīs, who had been converted by Fāṭimid daʿīs and who recognized
the imāmate of al-Mustansir, were massacred in Bukhārā and elsewhere in Transoxiana on the orders of the local Qarakhānid ruler Bughrā Khān. But Ismā’īlism survived in that region, and later in 488/1095, ʿAlī b. Khiḍr, another Qarakhānid who ruled over Bukhārā, Samarqand and western Farḡāna, was accused by the local Sunni ḫālifū ‘ulama’ of having embraced Ismā’īlism, and was executed. Later, we shall have more to say about the Fāṭimid da’wa of the time in Persia. It is a fact, however, that during al-Mustansir’s reign, the Fāṭimid dā’īs, under the central direction of Cairo, succeeded in spreading Fāṭimid Ismā’īlism in many regions of the Islamic world, and in gaining the recognition of their numerous converts for al-Mustansir as the rightful imām of the time and the caliph of the entire Muslim world. It was also due to the efforts of the da’wa that the suzerainty of the Fāṭimids came to be established in Sulayḥīd Yaman, and Ismā’īlism was introduced to an important area like western India.

The most prominent Fāṭimid dā’ī of al-Mustansir’s time was al-Muʿayyad fi’l-Dīn Abū Naṣr Hībat Allāh b. Abī ʿImrān Mūsā b. Dāʾūd al-Shirāzī, who was also a prolific writer, a poet, as well as a political organizer and a military strategist. He was born around 390/1000 in Shirāz, where his father, coming from a Daylamī Ismā’īli family, was himself a dā’ī with some influence in the Buwayhid circles of Fārs. Al-Muʿayyad probably succeeded his father as the chief dā’ī of Fārs, and in 429/1037-1038, entered the service of the Buwayhid Abū Kālījār al-Marzūbān (415-440/1024-1048), who ruled over various provinces from his capital at Shirāz. The subsequent decades in al-Muʿayyad’s life are well documented in his autobiography, al-Sīrā, which covers the period 429–451 A.H. He soon succeeded in converting Abū Kālījār and many of his Daylamī troops to Fāṭimid Ismā’īlism and also held disputations with Sunni theologians and Zaydi ‘Alīds at Abū Kālījār’s request. The dā’ī’s growing influence with the Buwayhid amīr and the people of Fārs, however, resulted in court intrigues and Sunni reactions against him. In particular, the ʿAbbāsids insisted on his exile from Persia. Eventually, al-Muʿayyad was obliged to migrate from Shirāz in early 438/1046. After an eventful journey that took him through Jannāba, Ahwāz, Kūfa and Mawsīl, he arrived in Cairo early in 439/1047 and immediately proceeded to visit the chief dā’ī al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammad b. al-Nuʿmān, a great-grandson of al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān. He had his first audience with al-Mustansir a few months later in Shaʿbān 439/February 1048. Henceforth, al-Muʿayyad had easy access to the Fāṭimid caliph-imām and came to participate actively in the affairs of the Fāṭimid state. He
established close relations also with the vizier al-Yāzūrī who, in 440/1048, entrusted the Persian dāʾī with a section of the Fāṭimid dār al-inshāʾ.

Subsequently, al-Muʿayyad played a leading role as an intermediary between the Fāṭimids and al-Bāsāsīrī in the latter’s activities against the Saljūqids. In 447/1055, he was sent by al-Mustansir and al-Yāzūrī to Syria and ‘Irāq. For more than a year, he delved into extensive negotiations and exchanged numerous letters with al-Bāsāsīrī as well as the Mirdāsid Thīmāl, the Mazyadīd Dubays and the ‘Uqaylid Quraysh, amongst other local amīrs who for the most part adhered to Shi‘ism, for the purpose of winning over or maintaining their allegiance to the Fāṭimid cause. It was also in pursuit of this general policy that al-Muʿayyad attacked Ibn al-Muslima for having destroyed in 443/1051 the tomb of Mūsā al-Kāzīm, the seventh imām of the Twelver Shi‘īs. These important dealings, which included the planning of most of al-Bāsāsīrī’s moves and alliances, are fully described in al-Muʿayyad’s autobiography, which has revealed to modern researchers the dāʾī’s hitherto unknown crucial part in the al-Bāsāsīrī incident. Al-Muʿayyad returned to Cairo in 449/1058, shortly before al-Bāsāsīrī finally seized Baghdad, and had the khutba read there in the name of al-Mustansir.

In 450/1058, al-Muʿayyad was appointed dāʾī al-duʿāt, and with the exception of a brief period in 453/1061, when he was exiled to Syria by the vizier Ibn Mudābbir, he held that post until about two months before his death, at which time he was succeeded by Badr al-Jamālī. From 454/1062, al-Muʿayyad was also the head of the Dār al-ʿIlm, which became his residence. It was from here that al-Muʿayyad directed the affairs of the Fāṭimid daʿwa, being in constant contact with the dāʾīs in many lands and paying special attention to Yaman and India. As noted, the Yamanī dāʾī Lamak stayed several years with al-Muʿayyad who is considered the spiritual father of the Yamanī daʿwa. He also regularly delivered lectures at the Dār al-ʿIlm, where dāʾīs had continued to be trained since al-Ḥākim’s time. It is possible that most of his so-called Majālīs, the dāʾīs magnum opus, were composed for these lectures. The Majālīs of al-Muʿayyad, arranged in eight volumes of one-hundred assemblies or lectures each, deal with various theological and philosophical questions and represent the high watermark of Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī thought. They also contain al-Muʿayyad’s famous correspondence with the blind Syrian poet-philosopher and ascetic Abu’l-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarri (d. 449/1057) on the subject of vegetarianism, and his refutation of Ibn al-Rawandi’s Muʿtazili ideas as expressed in the latter’s Kitāb al-zumurrud. Al-Muʿayyad died in 470/
1078 in Cairo and was buried in the Dār al-ʿIlm, where he had lived and worked. Al-Mustansir himself led the funeral rites for this distinguished daʿi who for almost two decades had directed the Fāṭimid daʿwa, and with whose foresight the Fāṭimids had come to realize, even though briefly, their perennial objective of having the Fāṭimid khuṭba pronounced in the ʿAbbāsīd capital.

Another prominent Iṣmāʿīlī dignitary of al-Mustansir’s time was Abū Muʾīn Nāṣīr b. Khusraw b. Ḥārīth al-Qubādiyānī, better known as Nāṣīr-i Khusraw. He was a daʿī, a philosopher, a traveller, as well as a renowned poet who in fact ranks amongst the greatest of the Persian poets. Much has been written by orientalists and scholars of Persian literature about this multi-faceted personality; even though major portions of his life still remain shrouded in mystery. There are also numerous legends surrounding Nāṣīr-i Khusraw, in addition to a spurious autobiography attributed to him, which has been circulating for several centuries amongst Iṣmāʿīlīs and non-Iṣmāʿīlīs. However, Nāṣīr’s extant works, all of which are written in Persian, especially his Safar-nāma and Diwān of poems, in which he eulogizes the Imām al-Mustansir, al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān and the daʿī al-Muʿayyad, do provide valuable details on his life and ideas. And yet, most of these writings were subject to censorship and mutilation at the hands of hostile Sūnī scribes so as to delete their Iṣmāʿīlī features. The available information on Nāṣīr’s biography can be summed up as follows. According to his own statement, Nāṣīr-i Khusraw was born in 394/1004 in Qubādiyān, a district of Balkh, which at the time as part of the province of Marw was attached to Khurāsān. He belonged to a family of government officials and landowners, and apparently, he entered government service as a scribe early in life, and later became a financial administrator in Marw. During his youth, of which few details are known, Nāṣīr evidently led a life of pleasure, having access to the Ghaznawīd court at Balkh, before Khurāsān became a Sāljuqīd dominion in 431/1040.

When he was about forty-two years old, Nāṣīr experienced a drastic spiritual upheaval which completely changed the future course of his life. As a result of this experience, which he describes symbolically in terms of a dream and in a confession versified in a lengthy qaṣīda addressed to the daʿī al-Muʿayyad, Nāṣīr renounced all bodily pleasures, and tendered his resignation from his administrative post at Marw. At the time, Marw was ruled by the Sāljuqīd Chaghri Beg, Tughrīl’s brother, in the service of whose vizier a brother of Nāṣīr-i Khusraw, Abu’l-Ḥaṭḥ, held a prominent position for a long time. Nāṣīr decided in Jumādā II 437/December 1045 to
set off on a long journey for the apparent reason of making the pilgrimage to Mecca. Soon afterwards in Sha‘bân 437/March 1046, accompanied by one of his two brothers Abû Sa‘îd, and an Indian servant, he began his famous journey, which was to last for almost seven years. Travelling through Persia, where he spent a few days at the fortress of Shamirân, Asia Minor, as well as through Syria and Palestine, he made his first of several pilgrimages to Mecca before entering Cairo in Şafar 439/August 1047, the same year in which al-Mu‘ayyad arrived there. Nâşir stayed in Cairo for about three years, until Dhu‘l-Ḥijja 441/May 1050, during which time he saw al-Mustansîr, and most probably also established a close relationship with al-Mu‘ayyad al-Shîrâzî. It was in Cairo that, after receiving proper instructions, Nâşir was given a high rank in the da‘wa organization. Despite the opinion of earlier scholars, it is almost certain, as Ivanow and Corbin have argued, that Nâşir-i Khusraw had already been converted to Ismâ‘îlism, probably from Twelver Shî‘ism, prior to his departure for Egypt. It seems that his journey was primarily motivated by his connection with Ismâ‘îlism, as Hasan-i Šâbbâh was to be sent to Fâtimid Egypt a few decades later, rather than for making the pilgrimage which was mentioned as a pretext, allowing Nâşir to receive the required training as a da‘î at the headquarters of the Fâtimid da‘wa. In his Safar-nâma, Nâşir describes in vivid detail the splendour of the Fâtimid capital, with its royal palaces, gates, gardens and shops, as well as the wealth of Egypt, even though the country was then undergoing difficult times.¹⁴²

Returning through the Ḥijâz, Yamâma, Bahrâyin, southern ‘Irâq, and Persia, Nâşir-i Khusraw was back in Balkh in Jumâdâ II 444/October 1052, a date marking the beginning of the most obscure phase of his life. He immediately began to propagate Ismâ‘îlism as a Fâtimid da‘î, or, according to himself,¹⁴³ as the ḥujja of Khurâsân. Nâşir established his headquarters at Balkh, from where he extended his da‘wa activities to Nîshâpûr and other cities of Khurâsân. However, his success soon aroused the enmity of the Sunni ‘ulama‘ who enjoyed the support of the region’s Saljûqid rulers. It was also during this period, not too long after returning from Cairo, that Nâşir went to Tabaristân (Mâzandarân), to preach the cause of the Fâtimids in the Caspian provinces, a region already penetrated by Shî‘ism. According to the testimony of his contemporary Abu’l-Ma‘âlî, who completed his well-known work on religions in 485/1092 and who is the earliest authority referring to our da‘î, Nâşir succeeded in winning many converts in Tabaristân, and possibly in other Caspian regions.¹⁴⁴ Subsequently, Nâşir returned to Balkh, where he became
subjected to yet more severe Sunni persecutions. He was accused of being irreligious (Persian, bad-din), a heretic (mulhid), a Qarmati and a Râfidi.\textsuperscript{146} His house was plundered and destroyed, and there was even an attempt on his life, forcing Nāṣir to flee from his home.\textsuperscript{146} Under obscure circumstances, he took refuge in the valley of Yumgān, a mountainous district in the upper Oxus, irrigated by a tributary of the Āmū Daryā called the Kokcha. Yumgān was then one of the territories of an autonomous amīr of Badakhshān, ‘Alī b. al-Asad, an Iṣmā‘ili who had close relations with Nāṣir. Doubtless, Nāṣir’s flight to Yumgān, where he was to spend the rest of his life, took place before 453/1061, the year in which he completed his philosophical treatise \textit{Zād al-musāfirīn} whilst in exile.\textsuperscript{147}

It was in Yumgān, the permanent abode of his exile for more than fifteen years,\textsuperscript{148} that Nāṣir-i Khusraw produced most of his poetry and prose, including the \textit{Kitāb jāmi‘ al-hikmatayn} (Book Joining the Two Wisdoms), his latest known work which was completed in 462/1070 at the request of his Iṣmā‘ili friend and protector, the amīr ‘Alī b. al-Asad.\textsuperscript{149} There, he also continued to propagate Iṣmā‘ilism, while maintaining correspondence with the dā‘ī al-du‘āt al-Mu’ayyad and the headquarters of the Fātimid da‘wa in Cairo. According to the local tradition of the present-day Iṣmā‘ilis of Badakhshān, who refer to our Persian dā‘ī as the Shāh Sayyid Nāṣir and who still revere him and preserve some of his genuine and spurious works, it was Nāṣir-i Khusraw who introduced Iṣmā‘ilism into Badakhshān, a region that subsequently became a stronghold of the Nizārī Iṣmā‘ilis and a repository of their literature. The present-day Ṭayyibī Iṣmā‘ilis of India, who do not preserve Nāṣir’s works in their collections of manuscripts, regard him as a Nizārī Iṣmā‘ili, perhaps because he wrote entirely in the Persian language. In many of his odes, Nāṣir-i Khusraw laments his exile and solitude at Yumgān, often calling it his prison, and makes frequent references to the fanatics who drove him from his home and family, reminiscing his earlier happy days in Khurāsān.\textsuperscript{150} Nāṣir lived to be at least seventy;\textsuperscript{151} he died in Yumgān, at an unknown date after 465/1072–1073, the latest year mentioned in most sources being 481/1088–1089.\textsuperscript{152} Nāṣir’s tomb, situated on a hillock, is still to be found in Yumgān, in the present-day village of Ḥadrat-i Sayyid (or Ḥadrat-i Sa‘īd) and not too far from Jarm, now in Afghanistan,\textsuperscript{153} an epigraph attests to the renovation of the modest mausoleum in 1109/1697. The local inhabitants, who guard the mausoleum as a shrine and claim to be sayyids and descendants of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, are, strangely enough, zealous Sunnis who strictly discourage visits of the Iṣmā‘ilis of Badakh-
shān and elsewhere to the site. They also maintain that their ancestor Nāṣir was a Şūfi pīr, and a Sunni like themselves, with no connections whatsoever with Ismā‘īlism.

The Fāṭimid doctrine of the imāmate during al-Mustansir’s time was essentially that developed earlier under al-Mu‘izz. In the meantime, as noted, a group of extremist dā‘īs had proclaimed the divinity of al-Ḥākim; a view that had been officially repudiated especially by the dā‘ī al-Kirmānī who had argued for the continuity of the imāmate. Al-Kirmānī had, in fact, propounded that the imāmate would continue in the era of Muḥammad until the Day of Judgement; while he essentially endorsed the doctrine propounded by al-Mu‘izz, Ja‘far b. Mansūr al-Yaman and other earlier Fāṭimid authorities. By the time of al-Mustansir, the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlīs had come to allow for further heptads of imāms after Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl. Al-Mu‘ayyad speaks of the imāms in the progeny of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb throughout his lectures, but without specifying their number. He also refers to the seven eras of history, the seventh one being that of the Qā‘īm al-qiyāma on whose future appearance the era of the imāms ends and mankind is judged. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ṣūrī, a Fāṭimid dā‘ī in Syria who died around 487/1094, enumerates the imāms of the era of Islam in a long poem. According to him, the seventh heptad of imāms in the era of Muḥammad is the most eminent one, because it precedes the coming of the Qā‘īm. Making a distinction between the functions of the Mahdi and the Qā‘īm, he further states that the former had appeared in the person of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl, who became spiritual after having been corporeal. In sum, al-Ṣūrī held that the Mahdi had already appeared while the Qā‘īm, who would be a descendant of al-Mustansir, was still the awaited one. Meanwhile, the imāms and their gates (bāḥs) would continue to exist in the intervening period, summoning the people to obey the two eschatological personalities.

Al-Ṣūrī’s account clearly reveals the adjustment of the earlier doctrine to the realities faced by the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlīs after the termination of the second heptad of imāms, and similarly to the adjustments made in the time of al-Mu‘izz, the fourteenth imām. However, the belief in the advent of the Qā‘īm had persisted in the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlī community. It was due to this basic orientation that authors like al-Ṣūrī could not resist the temptation of making more concrete predictions. Such tendencies are also distinctly embodied in al-Majālīs al-Mustansīriyya, a collection of lectures by al-Mālijī, one of the chief qādīs in al-Mustansir’s imāmate. According to this source, the heptads of imāms will succeed one another until the
arrival of the Qā'īm of the Resurrection, whose ḥujja will be the seventh imām contiguous to his era; and the Qā'īm himself will be the eighth amongst the imāms of that era and the seventh of the nātiqs. Al-Māliji does not, however, fail to add that the imām of his own time, al-Mustanṣir, was in fact the eighth imām and the eighth of the khulafā', implying that he might be the one to fulfil the functions of the Qā'īm, if the time for the latter’s arrival came. Yet, through a special esoteric interpretation of the resurrection, this Fāṭimid author attempts to explain that his ideas on the Qā'īm, who may appear imminently, do not represent any denial of the Day of Judgement in the remote future.

Similar views, reflecting the influences of Ja'far b. Mansūr al-Yaman and other earlier Fāṭimid authors, are contained in Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s Wajh-i din, a masterpiece of the bāṭini ta'wil and still one of the basic books of the Ismā‘īlis of the upper Oxus region. Nāṣir, too, speaks of the continuity in the imāmāt, while constantly referring to the concept of the seven imāms, or the seven nātiqs after the Prophet Muḥammad, without further explanation. He does, however, specify that the seventh imām will be the Qā’īm (or the Qā’īm-i qiyāmat), possessing the rank (martabat) of Resurrection (qiyāmat). According to him, the Prophet Muḥammad, who was the sixth nātiq after Adam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhim, Mūsā and ‘Īsā, will be followed by six imāms whose completion lies in the appearance of the Qā’īm, the seventh imām in the series and the seventh nātiq who, instead of promulgating a new shari‘a, will pass final judgement over humanity under divine guidance. Moreover, Nāṣir distinguishes between a grand cycle (dawr-i mīhīn), referring to the period of the seven nātiqs, and a small cycle (dawr-i kīhīn), coinciding with the latter part of the grand cycle and referring to the era of Muḥammad and thereafter. According to him, the era in which we find ourselves is itself comprised of two parts, namely, that of the imāms and that of the khalqān (literally, created beings), which is the period of Resurrection. Both parts go back to spiritual principles. Doubtless, Nāṣir-i Khusraw conformed to what may be regarded as the official Fāṭimid doctrine of his time, thinking of the advent of the Qā’īm, the seventh imām and the master of the final era, as a future event. But he does not venture to make any more specific predictions regarding the Qā’īm’s arrival, nor does he seem to attach any particular significance to the actual number of imāms or their heptads. Indeed, as W. Madelung has remarked, Nāṣir’s exposition, with its rich symbolism, though lacking in references to historical events and to the names of the imāms, was not meant to apply to the temporal reality as he
might have perceived that reality. The account in the Wajh-i din should, in other words, be taken symbolically. Naṣir simply and masterfully applies his esoteric exegesis to the system of ideas, concepts, doctrines and methods of interpretation propounded in the Fatimid works of an earlier period, works that the exile in Yumgān took as representation of the ideally valid and sacred truth.

The success of the Fatimid da'wa in the eastern Islamic lands, especially 'Iraq and Persia, brought about the hostile reaction of the Sunnī 'Abbasids and Saljuqids, as well as that of various local rulers as far as Transoxiana. Several instances of such reactions have already been noted; and in 444/1052, yet another anti-Fatimid document was sponsored by the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Qā'im at Baghdad. This document, to which a number of jurists and 'Alīds subscribed, again aimed at discrediting the claim of the Fatimids to an 'Alīd descent. Later, when Ismā'īlism was spreading rapidly in Persia, the Ismā'īlis found a stout enemy in the person of Niẓām al-Mulk, the virtual ruler of the Saljuqī dominions for more than two decades until his assassination in 485/1092 by the Persian Ismā'īlis, who were already under the leadership of Ḥasan-i Sabbāh. Niẓām al-Mulk devoted a long section in his Siyāsat-nāma to the denunciation of the Ismā'īlis, reflecting his anxiety over their growing importance in Persia. Meanwhile, the 'Abbāsīds had continued to encourage the production of polemical works against the Ismā'īliyya, or the Bāṭiniyya, as they were more generally designated. The most famous of such works was written by Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), the celebrated Sunnī theologian, jurist, philosopher and mystic. Al-Ghazālī, who had attracted the attention of Niẓām al-Mulk, was appointed by the latter in 484/1091 to a teaching position at the Niẓāmiyya Madrasa in Baghdad, one of the several so-named colleges founded by the Saljuqī vizier; he maintained that post for four years. It was at Baghdad that al-Ghazālī was commissioned by the young 'Abbāsid caliph al-Mustāẓhir (487–512/1094–1118) to write a treatise in refutation of the Bāṭiniūs. This work, which became simply known as al-Mustāẓhīrī, was written shortly before al-Ghazālī left Baghdad at the end of 488/1095. Subsequently, al-Ghazālī wrote several shorter works against the Ismā'īlis. It is interesting to note that a detailed refutation, entitled Dāmgh al-bāṭīl, of al-Ghazālī's al-Mustāẓhīrī was later produced in Yaman by the fifth Musta'li-Ṭayyibi da'i, who died in 612/1215.

In the meantime, the Qarmaṭī state of Bahrayn had been collapsing
rapidly after Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s visit to al-Aḥsā’ in 443/1051. It may be recalled that Nāṣir had found the state still ruled by a council of six descendants of Abū Sa‘īd, assisted by six viziers, from the progeny of Ibn Sanbar. He also noted that the Friday prayers and other Muslim rites such as fasting were not observed at al-Aḥsā’, where all mosques had been closed, though a mosque had been built there by a Persian merchant. All this, in a sense, reflected perhaps a second attempt, after the failure of the episode of the Persian Mahdī, to set up a new order in Bahrayn, though the Qarmats there by the time of Nāṣir-i Khusraw evidently still believed themselves to be in the era of the Prophet Muḥammad. The troubles that initiated the downfall of the Qarmatī state started in the large island of Uwāl (now called al-Baḥrayn) which had hitherto provided an important source of revenue for the state, on account of the customs charges levied on all the ships passing through the Persian Gulf. Around 450/1058, a certain Abu‘l-Bahlūl al-‘Awwām of the tribe of Abd al-Qays, aided by his brother Abu‘l-Walīd Muslim, both Sunnis, revolted against the Qarmatī governor of Uwāl and required that the khutba be read in the name of the ‘Abbāsid al-Qā‘im throughout the island. Uwāl was permanently lost to the Qarmatīs when, around 459/1066–1067, the rebels defeated a Qarmatī fleet sent after them. Soon afterwards, Qatif was taken from the Qarmatīs by another local rebel, Yaḥyā b. ‘Abbās, who had taken advantage of the insurrection in Uwāl to assert his own claims and who later seized that island from Abu‘l-Bahlūl. More importantly, the Qarmatīs were now threatened by ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ali al-‘Uyūnī, a powerful local chief of the Banū Murra b. ‘Āmir of Abd al-Qays residing in the province of al-Aḥsā’, who rose against them in 462/1069–1070. He defeated the Qarmatīs and then besieged the town of al-Aḥsā’ for seven years. Meanwhile, ‘Abd Allāh had successfully negotiated with Baghdād for receiving military help from the ‘Abbāsids and the Saljuqīds. Assisted by a force of Turko–man horsemen sent from ‘Irāq, he managed to take al-Aḥsā’ in 469/1076. ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Uyūnī decisively defeated the Qarmatīs and their tribal allies, especially the Banū ‘Āmir b. Rabī’ī of ‘Uqal, in 470/1077; putting a definite end to the Qarmatī state of Bahrayn and founding the new local dynasty of the ‘Uyunīds in eastern Arabia. ‘Abd Allāh, who had difficulties of his own with the Saljuqīds, had shortly earlier acknowledged the suzerainty of the Fātimid al-Mustansīr. The latter had evidently placed the ‘Uyunīd ruler under the protection of the Sulayhīds in Rabī’ II 469/November 1076. By that time, the remaining Qarmatī communi-
ties elsewhere, comprised of the dissident Ismā'īlis who had continued to expect the return of Muhammad b. Ismā'īl, had been by and large won over to the side of Fāṭimid Ismā'īlism.

Returning to the domestic scene in Fāṭimid Egypt, it may be recalled that Badr al-Jamāli had managed to restore order to the country's administration and finances, after having crushed various rebellious factions, during his long vizierate of some twenty years. The Fāṭimid Caliphate was in effect saved by Badr who became the real master of the state during the final two decades of al-Mustansir's reign. The amīr al-juyūsh Badr al-Jamāli, also known as Badr al-Mustansirī, died at an advanced age in Rabi‘ I 487/March–April 1094, after he had already arranged for his son al-Afdal to succeed him in office. The military saw to it that the Fāṭimid caliph duly acted according to Badr's wishes. A few months later in Dhu‘l-Hijja 487/December 1094, Abū Tamīm Ma‘add al-Mustansir bī’llāh, the eighth Fāṭimid caliph and the eighteenth imām of the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlis, died in Cairo, after a reign of some sixty years during which the Fāṭimid Caliphate was well embarked on its way to collapse. Al-Mustansir’s death also marked the end of the 'classical' Fāṭimid period. As we shall see later, the dispute over al-Mustansir’s succession, which was the greatest internal crisis of the Fāṭimid dynasty and revolved around the claims of al-Mustansir’s sons Nizār and al-Musta‘li, caused a major split in Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlism. This schism, as a result of which the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlis became divided into two rival wings, the Musta‘lawiyya or Musta‘liyya (Musta‘lians) and the Nizāriyya, proved to have a drastic and lasting consequence for the future course of the Ismā‘īli movement.

In the remainder of this chapter we shall discuss certain issues related to the organizations of the state and the Ismā‘īli da‘wa under the Fāṭimids as well as some aspects of the doctrines propounded by the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlis. In the Fāṭimid Caliphate, especially until al-Mustansir, every caliph who was also the imām of the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlis, was selected through the naṣṣ of his predecessor. This designation, as noted, could be made public or could be divulged to only a few trusted persons for as long as deemed necessary. The succession of the Fāṭimid caliph-imāms was, furthermore, normally governed by the rule of the primogeniture. Starting with al-Ḥākim, however, the Fāṭimid sovereign was usually a minor at the time of his accession to the throne, and, therefore, often a regent or a vizier held the real reins of power in the state. From 466/1074, when Badr al-Jamāli arrived in Egypt and became the all-powerful vizier, the authority of the caliph-imām was reduced drastically and the Fāṭimid rulers became in
effect mere figureheads and puppets in the hands of their viziers, henceforth the real masters of the Fāṭimid state.

Indeed, the institution of the vizierate acquired an increasing importance throughout the history of the Fāṭimid dynasty. During their North African phase, the Fāṭimid caliph-imams also acted as the supreme heads of the government administration and commanders of the armed forces. As such, they personally regulated the affairs of the state and made the major decisions like other autocratic Muslim rulers of the period. The early Fāṭimid did consult with certain trusted individuals, and, at least from the reign of al-Qā’im, a few dignitaries in the Fāṭimid state, like Jawdhar, gradually came to discharge some of the functions of a chief minister. But the actual title of wāzīr was not given to any high official whilst the Fāṭimid still ruled from Ifriqiya. Ibn Killis, the organizer of the public administration and finances of the first two Fāṭimid in Egypt, was the first to have received the title under al-ʿAziz. Until Badr al-Jamālī, the Fāṭimid viziers, whether they carried various forms of the title wāzīr or were less pretentiously called by the title of wāsīṭa, were simply regarded as high agents for the execution of the sovereign’s orders. They were intermediaries without any effective authority of their own, corresponding to what the Sunni jurist and theoretician al-Māwardi (d. 450/1058) designated as wāzīr al-tanfīdḥ, or vizier with executive powers only. These viziers were generally selected from amongst civilians, or the so-called men of the pen (arbāb al-aqlām); consequently, they were known as ‘Viziers of the Pen’. From Badr al-Jamālī onwards, the Fāṭimid vizier obtained full powers from his sovereign and became what in al-Māwardi’s terminology is called wāzīr al-taṣwīd, or vizier with delegated powers. As this latter type of vizier, acting independently, was normally of military status, he was called ‘Vizier of the Pen and of the Sword’, or simply ‘Vizier of the Sword’ (wāzīr al-sayf). He was not only the commander of the armies (amīr al-juyūsh) and the effective head of the civil bureaucracy, but often also the head of the religious hierarchy. A distinguishing feature of the Fāṭimid vizierate, whose occupants were changed frequently, is that several viziers were Christians, serving sovereigns who regarded themselves as the rightful leaders of Muslims throughout the world. In later Fāṭimid times, this position came to be held by yet other Christians, notably the Armenian general Bahrām (d. 535/1140), who was ‘Vizier of the Sword’ during 529–531/1135–1137 and also bore the title of Sayf al-Īslām.

The organization of the Fāṭimid state remained simple during its North
African phase, although al-Mahdi and his three successors developed their own ceremonials and institutions. During that period, when the caliph himself assumed all the major responsibilities, the highly centralized administration known as al-khidma, normally situated at the caliphal palace (dār al-mulk) in Fāṭimid capitals in Ifriqiya, required only a few offices for the discharge of different administrative, financial and military tasks. But from the very beginning of the Egyptian phase, the organizational structure of administration and finance introduced by Jawhar and Ibn Killis, with the assistance of ʿUslūj b. al-Ḥasan, provided the basis for a complex system of institutions. These institutions, most of which were derived from those adopted or developed by the ʿAbbāsids, became progressively more elaborate or even modified. The Fāṭimid system of administration in Egypt continued to remain strongly centralized, with the caliph and his vizier at its head; while the provincial organs of the government were subjected to the strict control of the central authorities in Cairo. The central administration of the Fāṭimids, as in the case of the ʿAbbāsids, was carried on through the diwān system; and the various diwāns (ministries, departments or offices) were at times situated at the residence of the caliph or his vizier. Apparently the first central organ in Fāṭimid Egypt, in which the entire government machinery seems to have been concentrated and which at some unknown date split into a number of departments, was the diwān al-majālis. Al-Qalqashandi and al-Maqrizi discuss three main diwāns through which operated the Fāṭimid central administration in Egypt. These diwāns, each of which was in turn divided into a number of offices also called diwāns, were the diwān al-inshiʿ or al-rasāʾil, the chancery of state, entrusted with issuing and handling the various types of official documents including the caliphal decrees and letters; the diwān al-jaysh waʾl-rawātib, the department of the army and salaries; and finally, the diwān al-amwāl, the department of finance. The officials of the Fāṭimid state, both civil (arbāb al-aqlām) and military (arbāb al-suṣyūf), in all the administrative, financial, military, judicial and religious organs, were organized in terms of strict hierarchies, marked by differences in rank, insignia, remuneration, and places occupied in official ceremonies.

The daʿwa activity on behalf of the Fāṭimid Imāms did not cease upon the foundation of the Fāṭimid dynasty in North Africa. The missionary activity of the Fāṭimids, in contradistinction to that of the ʿAbbāsids in the aftermath of their own victory, continued and became even more organized and extensive, especially following the transference of the
Fatimid headquarters to Cairo. This was presumably because the Fatimids never abandoned the hope of establishing their rule over the entire Muslim world. Consequently, the Fatimid da’wa persistently aimed at convincing the Muslims everywhere that the Fatimid Ismā’ilī Imam, divinely inspired and in possession of special ‘ilm and the secret allegorical interpretation of the religious prescriptions, was the sole rightful leader of mankind; and that all other dynasties, including those Shi‘ī ones descended from ‘Ali b. Abī Ta‘lib, had been usurpers. This also explains why the Fatimid Ismā’ilīs referred to their missionary activities as al-da’wa al-hādiya, or the rightly-guiding summons to mankind to follow the Fatimid Imam. At any event, Fatimid Ismā’ilism had now become the state religion of an empire, in parts of which some of its doctrines were preached freely. At the same time, the da’wa had been maintained in clandestine form in regions outside the Fatimid domain, as the direct continuation of the Ismā’īli da’wa of the second half of the 3rd/9th century. By the time of al-Mustansir, the Fatimids had progressively come to command the religious loyalty of numerous local Ismā’īli communities in many parts beyond the borders of their empire; although Ismā’ilism had never become the majoritarian religion even within the Fatimid dominions.

The organization and evolution of the Fatimid da’wa, as well as the scope of the functions of various actual or potential ranks (ḥudūd) within the organization, are amongst the most obscure aspects of Fatimid Ismā’ilism. Information is particularly meagre concerning the nature of the da’wa organization in non-Fatimid regions where, fearing persecution, the da’is were continuously obliged to observe secrecy in their activities. Understandably, the Ismā’īli literature of the period also maintains silence on the subject. In regions ruled by the Fatimids, Ismā’ilism, enjoying the protection of the state, became the official madhhab and its legal doctrines were applied freely by the judiciary. Consequently, the chief qādi, who headed the judiciary, was normally selected from amongst the Ismā’īlis. It is interesting to note that the Fatimid chief qādi, or qādi al-qufāt, often also acted as the administrative head of the da’wa and was thus simultaneously the chief da’ī. In Egypt, at least, doctrinal propaganda aiming at increasing the number of Ismā’īli adepts, was conducted openly and was accompanied by education and instruction (ta’lim) in various Ismā’īli sciences. These lectures, or majālis, delivered chiefly in Cairo by Ismā’īli theologians and jurists, provided the main occasion for the Ismā’īlis of the Fatimid capital and its vicinity to assert themselves as a community. Al-Maqrīzī, quoting al-Musabbiḥī and Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, relates valuable details
on these lectures and on incidents occurring due to overcrowding in the course of their attendance. In 365/975, 'Ali b. al-Nu'mân lectured at al-Azhar to vast audiences, from a legal text composed by his father al-Qâdi al-Nu'mân. The vizier Ibn Killis delivered weekly lectures in his residence on Ismâ'îlî jurisprudence, using also a text written by himself. In 385/995, Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mân, 'Ali's brother, lectured to large numbers gathered at the Fâṭimid palace on the sciences of the Ahl al-Bayt, in accordance with the custom set by his father in the Maghrib and maintained by him and his elder brother in Egypt. In 394/1004, 'Abd al-'Azîz b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mân, after becoming the chief qâdi, delivered lectures in the palace and also at al-Azhar, drawing especially on one of his grandfather's treatises. Besides these public sessions related mainly to law, there were other types of sessions in Cairo; the so-called da'wa sessions, which had come to be more elaborately organized and specifically designed for the da'wa purposes and for the exclusive benefit of the Ismâ'îlîs.

The da'wa sessions (majâlis al-da'wa), initiated in al-Ḥâkim's reign under the direction of the chief dâ'i, were arranged in terms of systematic courses on different subjects. In due time, these courses came to be compiled in written form, often with a formal division into lectures or majâlis. The sessions on Ismâ'îlî doctrines, being particularly devoted to theology and theosophy, became known as the majâlis al-hikma. By the end of the 4th/10th century, regular sessions were conducted for the reading of the majâlis by the chief dâ'i, at the Dâr al-Ḥikma and elsewhere, and of which several collections had been compiled by that time. The majâlis, normally composed by or for the chief dâ'i, reached their culmination in the collection of al-Mu'ayyad al-Shirizi, some of which were originally read out, from 441/1049 onwards, in the majâlis al-hikma by the chief qâdi and chief dâ'i al-Yâzûrî, who in 442 A.H. also became al-Mustansîr's vizier. There were separate meetings for men, held at the great hall (al-iwân al-kabîr) of the palace, and for women, held in other quarters of the palace or at al-Azhar. These sessions were arranged according to the degree of learning of the adepts. The fixed monetary contributions of the individual Ismâ'îlîs, known as najwâ, were apparently collected during the majâlis al-hikma, and the lists of the contributors were kept by a special secretary (kâtib al-da'wa) appointed by the chief dâ'i. Wealthy Ismâ'îlîs, according to al-Maqrîzî, made substantial voluntary donations, over and above the sums required of all adepts. The meetings of the majâlis al-hikma were often utilized by the chief dâ'i also for the purpose of administering a
special oath (‘ahd) to the new Ismā‘īlī converts. Other categories of courses, open also to non-Ismā‘īlis, were designed for senior officials, palace personnel and the common people.

The chief dā‘ī was evidently responsible for appointing the provincial dā‘īs within the Fāṭimid empire. These subordinate dā‘īs, acting as lieutenants of the chief dā‘ī and representatives of al-da‘wa al-hādiyya, were stationed in several cities of Egypt as well as in the main towns of the Fāṭimid provinces, such as Damascus, Tyre, Acre, Ramla, and ‘Asqalān. The Fāṭimid dā‘īs were also active in some rural districts of Syria, notably in the Jabal al-Summāq, southwest of Aleppo. The chief dā‘ī seems to have played a major part also in selecting the dā‘īs of the non-Fāṭimid provinces. Not much more is available on the functions of the chief dā‘ī, who had his headquarters in Cairo and who in the Fāṭimid ceremonial, ranked second after the chief qādi, if both posts were not held by the same person. Even the title of dā‘ī al-du‘āt, used frequently in non-Ismā‘īli sources, rarely appears in Ismā‘īli texts. In those Fāṭimid Ismā‘īli sources which refer to different ranks in the da‘wa, the term bāb (sometimes bāb al-abwāb) is reserved for the administrative head of the da‘wa, the dignitary immediately after the imām. Thus, in Ismā‘īli religious terminology, the rank of bāb was used as the exact equivalent of the official term dā‘ī al-du‘āt. For instance, al-Mu‘ayyad al-Shirazi is called the bāb of al-Mustanṣir by the dā‘ī Idris and many other Ismā‘īli writers, while he is named as dā‘ī al-du‘āt by the Sunni historians. Hāmid al-Dīn al-Kirmānī makes various allusions to the position and importance of the bāb, and his closeness to the imām. Other Ismā‘īli sources also emphasize that under the Fāṭimid in Egypt the bāb was the first person to receive the imām’s teachings; and as such, he was the imām’s mouthpiece. Without mentioning particular details, the Ismā‘īli literature conveys the impression that the bāb, who naturally had to be a highly qualified and pious Ismā‘īli dignitary, was responsible for the overall administration and certain policies of the da‘wa; and in the discharge of his functions he was closely supervised by the imām and assisted by a number of subordinate dā‘īs.

The Ismā‘īli authors make differing and occasional allusions to the seemingly elaborate organizational structure of the da‘wa, designated as the ḥudūd al-dīn or the marāṭib al-da‘wa. Although no details are available on the da‘wa organization during the Fāṭimid period, it is certain that this organization developed over time and attained a definite shape during al-Ḥākim’s reign; whilst the da‘wa hierarchy became finally fixed by the time of the chief dā‘ī al-Mu‘ayyad. At the same time, the da‘wa terminology
experienced an evolution of its own. During the early Fāṭimid period, differing names were used for the *da’wa* positions by the Persian and Yamanī Ismā‘ili authors, such as Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Ja‘far b. Maṇṣūr al-Yaman. But some of the earlier designations had already fallen into disuse by al-Mustansir’s time. It is also important to note that the hierarchy traceable in the Fāṭimid texts seems to have had reference to an idealistic or utopian situation, when the Ismā‘ili Imām would rule the entire world, and not to any actual *hudūd* existing at any given time. In other words, it is certain that the diverse *da’wa* ranks mentioned by these sources were not actually filled by incumbents at all times; and some of them were never filled at all.

The Fāṭimid *da’wa* was organized hierarchically, in line with the particular importance accorded to hierarchism in Fāṭimid Ismā‘ili thought. Indeed, there was a close analogy between the terrestrial hierarchy of the Fāṭimid *da’wa*, with its highest ranks of nātiq, wasi (asās) and imām, and the celestial or cosmological hierarchy developed in Fāṭimid thought. There are diverse partial accounts of the *da’wa* ranks or *hudūd* after the imām and his bāb. All Ismā‘ili authors agree that the world, presumably the non-Fāṭimid part of it, was divided into twelve *jazā’ir* (singular, *jazīra*; literally, island), for *da’wa* purposes; each *jazīra* representing a separate and somewhat independent region or diocese for the penetration of the *da’wa*. Research for this book located the list of these twelve *da’wa* regions, commonly referred to as the ‘islands of the earth’ (*jazā’ir al-ard*), in only one Fāṭimid source, namely, an esoteric work by al-Qidi al-Nu‘mīn dating to the 4th/10th century. According to this source, the twelve *jazā’ir* in the author’s time were: al-‘Arab (Arabs), al-Rūm (Byzantines), al-Šaqāliba (Slavs), al-Nūb (Nubians), al-Khazar (Khazars), al-Hind (India), al-Sind (Sind), al-Zanj (Negroes), al-Ḥabash (Abyssinians), al-Ṣīn (Chinese), al-Daylam (Daylam, probably for Persians), and al-Barbar (Berbers). These regions were apparently delineated on the basis of a combination of geographic, ethnographic and linguistic considerations. The same list, with one variation, al-Turk (Turks) for al-Nūb, and obviously derived from al-Nu‘mān or another source belonging to the same period, is enumerated in a work written in the 6th/12th century by the Yamani Ismā‘ili author ‘Ali b. al-Ḥusayn al-Qurashi (d. 554/1159). It is interesting to note that Khurāsān, of which Nāṣir-i Khusraw claimed to be the *hujja* in the second half of the 5th/11th century, does not appear as a *jazīna* in al-Nu‘mān’s list. However, al-Nu‘mān’s well-informed and possibly Ismā‘ili contemporary, Ibn Ḥawqal, who himself travelled through eastern Persia and
Transoxiana around 358/969, mentions Khurāsān as a jazīra of the Fāṭimid daʿwa (daʿwat ahl al-Maghrib), further adding that the Ismāʿīlī Balūčis of eastern Persia belonged to that jazīra.¹⁹⁷ It is also possible that Khurāsān may have been included in the jazīra of Hind. Each jazīra was placed under the charge of a high ranking missionary called ḥujja; also called naqīb, lāḥiq or yād by the Ismāʿīlī authors of the early Fāṭimid period. The ḥujja was the chief local dāʾī and the highest representative of the daʿwa in the region under his jurisdiction. Amongst the twelve ḥujjas serving the imām, four occupied special positions, comparable to the positions of the four sacred months amongst the twelve months of the year.¹⁹⁸

The bāb and the twelve ḥujjas were followed, in the daʿwa hierarchy, by a number of dāʾīs of varying ranks operating in every jazīra.¹⁹⁹ Sources distinguish three categories of such dāʾīs, who in the descending order of importance are: dāʾī al-balāgh, al-dāʾī al-muṭlaq and al-dāʾī al-mahdūd (or al-maḥṣūr). It is not clear what the specific functions of these dāʾīs were, although the third was apparently the chief assistant of the dāʾī al-muṭlaq, who became the chief functionary of the daʿwa, acting with absolute authority in the absence of the region’s ḥujja and dāʾī al-balāgh. And the latter seems to have served as the liaison between the central daʿwa headquarters in the Fāṭimid capital and the local headquarters of a jazīra. Finally, there was the rank of the assistant to the dāʾī, entitled al-maʿdhūn, the licentiate. At least two categories of this ḥadd in the hierarchy have been mentioned, namely, al-maʿdhūn al-muṭlaq, sometimes simply called al-maʿdhūn, and al-maʿdhūn al-mahdūd (or al-maḥṣūr), eventually designated as al-muṣāṣir. The maʿdhūn al-muṭlaq, or the chief licentiate, who often became a dāʾī himself, was authorized to administer the oath of initiation (ʿahd or mithiq), and to explain the various regulations of the daʿwa to the initiates. The muṣāṣir (literally, persuader), who had limited authority, was mainly responsible for attracting converts. At the bottom of the daʿwa, and not as a rank in its hierarchy, there was the ordinary initiate called al-mustajīb (literally, respondent). Sometimes two grades of ordinary Ismāʿīlīs were distinguished, namely, muʿmin al-balāgh or simply al-muʿmin, the initiated major member of the community; and al-mustajīb, the neophyte or the candidate for initiation. At any event, the initiated members of the community, now belonging to ahl al-daʿwa, represented the elite, as compared to the non-Ismāʿīlī Muslims, called ʿāmmat al-Muslimitz. These daʿwa ranks, numbering to seven from the bāb to the muṣāṣir, together with their main functions and corresponding celestial ḥudūd, are enumerated fully by the dāʾī al-Kirmānī who synthesized the
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differing ideas of his predecessors. Al-Kirmānī’s schema of the *da‘wa* hierarchy, the most elaborate of its kind, endured at least theoretically; providing especially the basis of the hierarchy which was later espoused by the Ṣayyībī *da‘wa*.²⁰¹

The word *dā‘i*, meaning ‘he who summons’, was used by several Muslim groups to designate their religio-political propagandists. It was utilized by the early Mu‘tazila, but soon became particularly identified with certain Shi‘ī groups. The designation was adopted by the ‘Abbāsid *da‘wa* in Khurāsān and also by the Zaydiyya and some of the Shi‘ī Ghulāt, notably the Khāṭṭābiyya. The term, however, acquired its greatest application in connection with the Ismā‘iliyya, although the Persian Ismā‘ili authors of the early Fātimid period sometimes used other designations such as *al-janāh* (plural, *al-ajniha*) for *al-dā‘ī*.²⁰² Notwithstanding this lack of uniformity in nomenclature and the existence of different grades of *dā‘is* during any particular epoch, the term *al-dā‘ī* came to be applied generically from early on by the Ismā‘ilis. It was used in reference to any authorized representative of their *da‘wa*, a propagandist responsible for spreading the Ismā‘ili religion and for winning suitable followers for the Ismā‘ili Imām, or the awaited Mahdi-Qā‘im of the Ismā‘iliyya. During the Fātimid period, the *dā‘ī* was moreover the unofficial agent of the Fātimid state operating secretly in many non-Fātimid territories, where the *da‘wa* aimed to establish the rule of the Fātimid caliph-imām.

In spite of its unique importance to the Ismā‘ilis, almost nothing seems to have been written by them on the subject of the *dā‘ī* and his functions. Al-Qādí al-Nu‘mān, the most prolific Fātimid author, devoted only a short chapter in one of his books, which was on the etiquette to be observed towards the imām, to explaining the virtues of an ideal *dā‘ī*.²⁰³ A more detailed though general discussion of the qualifications and attributes of a Fātimid *dā‘ī* is contained in what is evidently the only independent Ismā‘ili treatise on the subject, written towards the end of the 4th/10th century by al-Nu‘mān’s younger contemporary Aḥmad b. Ibrāḥīm al-Nisābūrī. This treatise has not survived directly, but it is quoted almost completely in some later Ismā‘ili works.²⁰⁴ Ismā‘ilism never aimed at mass proselytization, and al-Nu‘mān emphasizes that the *dā‘ī* should personally know the individual initiates. The learned jurist also states that the *dā‘ī* must be exemplary in his own behaviour and use sound and timely judgement in disciplining the erring members of his local community. According to al-Nisābūrī’s fuller account, a *dā‘ī* could be
appointed only by the imām's permission (*idhn*); and, having been despatched to a certain locality, he would then operate independently of the central headquarters, receiving general guidance from the imām and the central authorities.

Under such circumstances, only those candidates who possessed the highest necessary educational qualifications combined with the proper moral and intellectual attributes would become da'īs. In addition to having good organizing abilities, the da'ī was also expected to be sufficiently familiar with the teachings of different non-Muslim religions and Islamic sects, whilst knowing the local language and customs of the province in which he was to operate. Many of the Fāṭimid da'īs, as noted, were highly trained in various specialized institutions of Cairo and elsewhere, such as the Dār al-Ḥikma and al-Azhar, prior to being sent to the field. And the high degree of learning attained by the Fāṭimid da'īs, many of whom were outstanding thinkers and scholars, is attested by the fact that the bulk of Ismāʿili literature surviving from the Fāṭimid period was written by these da'īs, who were well-versed in theology, philosophy and other fields of learning. The da'ī was also responsible for the training of his ma'dhūns, and for supervising the education of the mustajibs. Al-Nisābūrī also reminds us that in case a da'ī felt unable to fulfil his duties properly, he was not to hesitate in informing the imām and in resigning from his post. The overall picture that emerges from these sketchy accounts, as well as from the existing evidence on the relationships between the Fāṭimids and their provincial missions, notably those in Yaman and Sind, is that the provincial da'īs normally enjoyed a great deal of independence in their activities, once appointed. There was, nevertheless, a good deal of contact and correspondence between the local da'wa in any region and the central administration of the da'wa in the Fāṭimid capital; between the ḥujja and the lesser provincial da'īs, on the one hand, and the imām and his bāb (da'ī al-duʿāt), on the other.

Like so many other aspects of the da'wa, almost nothing is known about the methods used by the Fāṭimid da'īs for winning and educating new converts. Doubtless, different procedures were adopted for peoples of different religions and socio-ethnic backgrounds. Addressing themselves to one mustajib at a time, the da'īs treated each case individually with due consideration to the respondent's particular status. However, many Sunni sources, deriving their information chiefly from the anti-Ismāʿili accounts of Ibn Rizām and Akhū Muḥsin, speak of a system of seven or nine degrees of initiation into Ismāʿilism. Other anti-Fāṭimid sources discuss yet
another type of graded system, giving a different name to each stage in the process of detaching the respondent from his previous religion and leading him towards heresy and unbelief. There is no evidence of such fixed graded systems in Ismāʿilī literature, though a certain amount of gradualism must surely have been unavoidable in the initiation and education of the converts. Al-Nisābūrī, for instance, relates that the daʿīs were expected to educate the mustajibs in a gradual manner, not revealing too much at a time so as not to confound them. Gradualism, from simpler and exoteric sciences to more complex esoteric ones, was also observed in the organization of lectures for the ordinary Ismāʿilīs and the training courses for the daʿīs themselves, at various institutions in Cairo.

The Fāṭimid Ismāʿilīs maintained the basic doctrinal framework developed by the early Ismāʿilīs, but they gradually modified certain of its aspects. In particular, they retained the fundamental distinction between the exoteric and the esoteric aspects of religion, and the earlier cyclical prophetic view of history, while introducing drastic changes into the pre-Fāṭimid cosmology. However, in contrast to the early Ismāʿilīs, who tended to emphasize the significance of the bāṭin, they now insisted on the equal importance of the zāhir and the bāṭin. Both were considered as complementary dimensions of religion, and consequently, the Fāṭimid daʿwa adopted the position of opposing the antinomian tendencies of the more radical Ismāʿilī circles. These tendencies, such as those manifested by the daʿīs who organized the Druze movement or those espoused by the Qarmatīs or even by the dissident Ismāʿilīs within the Fāṭimid camp, were generally rooted in enthusiasm for the bāṭin. There are numerous references in almost every work of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿilī literature for the necessity of preserving a careful balance between the zāhir and the bāṭin, emphasizing that one could not meaningfully exist without the other.

The taʿwil or esoteric exegesis, required for deriving the truths hidden in the bāṭin, thus retained its importance in Fāṭimid Ismāʿilī thought. The taʿwil was the exclusive prerogative of the divinely-guided, infallible Fāṭimid Imām who could convey such knowledge of the inner meaning behind the religious prescriptions, to the lower members of the daʿwa hierarchy. In the absence of the Qāʿim, the haqaʾiq could be conveyed to the elite of mankind, the Ismāʿilī community or the ahl al-daʿwa, only by the Fāṭimid Ismāʿilī Imām and the hierarchy of dignitaries serving him, especially the twelve hujjās and the lesser daʿīs.

The Fāṭimid Ismāʿilīs elaborated and expounded their doctrines in what were to become known as the classical works of Ismāʿilī literature. In line
with the basic structure of their religious thought, they paid attention to both the 'ilm al-zāhir and the 'ilm al-bāṭin, exoteric and esoteric knowledge, which found expression in numerous works ranging from the legal treatises of al-Qādī al-Nu'mān to the more complex theological and philosophical writings of other outstanding authors of the period. The works on the zāhir of religion, propounding the exoteric doctrines, consisted mainly of those on jurisprudence (fiqh) and related subjects dealing with the exoteric aspects of the Shari'a and the ritual prescriptions of Islam. Historical works, as noted, were rather rare amongst the Ismā'īlis. Writings on tafsīr, the external philological exegeses and commentaries used for explaining the apparent meaning of the Qur'ānic passages and so important amongst the Sunnis and the Twelver Shi'is, are also absent from the Fāṭimid literature. For the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlis, the living imām was the repository of true knowledge and the sole authoritative interpreter of the literal and hidden meaning of the sacred texts. Therefore, they had no need for a zāhirī science of tafsīr apart from what the imām would explain about the Qur'ān, with or without resorting to ta'wil. This is why the Ismā'īlis often referred to their imām as the speaking Qur'ān (al-Qur'ān al-nātiq), in contrast to the actual text of the 'sacred book' which was regarded as the silent Qur'ān (al-Qur'ān al-ṣā nit). For similar reasons, the Ismā'īlis produced few works on hadīth, since in that respect, too, the imām would provide the necessary guidance and criteria for the community. The Fāṭimid Ismā'īlis did, however, accept those traditions related from the Prophet which had been handed down or sanctioned by their imāms, in conjunction with those traditions related from their recognized imāms, including especially the Imām al-Ṣādiq. Most such traditions were compiled by al-Qādī al-Nu'mān, mainly in his Da'ā'im al-Islām and Sharḥ al-akhbār.

In the area of the bāṭinī sciences, which account for the bulk of the writings produced during the Fāṭimid period, the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlis made their greatest contributions to Shi'i gnosis and Islamic philosophy. It was in expounding the esoteric doctrines of the sect, which constitute the essence of the Ismā'īli gnosis, that the highly educated dā'īs produced their elaborate treatises on ta'wil and haqā'iq. It was also in connection with developing their theological, philosophical and metaphysical theories that the eminent Ismā'īli authors of the classical Fāṭimid period showed their originality of thought, mastery of pre-Islamic religions and Judaeo-Christian scriptures, as well as their profound knowledge of the Hellenistic and Islamic philosophies.
Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlimism retained the early Ismā‘īli views of cyclical hierohistory and prophetology, which conceived of seven eras, each inaugurated by a nāṭiq. However, due to the Fāṭimid claims to the imāmate, the early Ismā‘īli doctrine of the imāmate now required modifications. These modifications necessitated adjustments in the earlier views concerning the duration of the sixth era, the era of the Prophet Muḥammad, the number and functions of the imāms during that era, and the identity and attributes of the Qā‘im. We have already discussed these modifications, starting with the reform of ‘Ubayd Allāh, who openly claimed the imāmate and denied the Mahdiship of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il, causing a split in the movement. By the time of al-Mu‘izz, Ismā‘il b. Ja‘far and his son Muḥammad were openly recognized as imāms and progenitors of the Fāṭimids. But the earlier doctrine of the imāmate was revised in respect to the role of Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il as the seventh and final imām of the era of Islam, allowing for more than one heptad of imāms in that era, in contradistinction to the situation in the first five eras. In addition, the Fāṭimid Imāms, succeeding one another in the second heptad, had come to be viewed as the deputies (khulafā‘) of the Qā‘im Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il, discharging some of the latter’s functions. As Fāṭimid rule continued and the eschatological expectations regarding the Qā‘im were not fulfilled, further heptads of imāms were permitted in the era of Islam, whose duration was now continuously extended. This postponed the awaited emergence of the Qā‘im, who was to initiate the final era of history, still further into the future. By the time of al-Mustansir, the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlis had come to accept even a spiritual interpretation in respect to the Qā‘im’s parousia, while in general they had allowed for him to be a person, from the progeny of the Fāṭimids, other than Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il, who was no longer expected to reappear corporeally.

Before discussing the cosmology of the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlis, it is necessary to refer to an important school of thought developed by some eminent da‘īs of Persia and Transoxiana during the earliest decades of the Fāṭimid period. The protagonists of this so-called Persian school of dissident Ismā‘īlimism were Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafi, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī. When the Fāṭimids were still preoccupied with establishing the roots of their power in North Africa and not as concerned with doctrinal issues, the above-mentioned da‘īs, all belonging to the dissident eastern Ismā‘īlis who had not accepted the imāmate of ‘Ubayd Allāh (‘Abd Allāh), were deeply involved in philosophical speculations, propounding their own views on the imāmate, prophecy, metaphysics
and cosmology. These daʿīs in fact acted as the main links, in the doctrinal domain, between the early Ismāʿīlīs and the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs. Many of the ideas first elaborated by al-Nasafi and Abū Ḥātim who had already become prominent in the pre-Fāṭimid period and who unlike al-Sijistānī never rallied to the side of the Fāṭimids, were later incorporated into Fāṭimid doctrines during the reign of al-Muʿizz. Without unified leadership, however, these dissident daʿīs, and the communities directed by them, diverged in respect to various doctrinal matters. In fact, they became engaged in a scholarly dispute that lasted for some time during the 4th/10th century. Subsequently, the daʿī al-Kirmānī took it upon himself to act as an arbiter in this famous controversy in his Kitāb al-riyāḍ (Book of the Meadows).

Al-Nasafi, the leading philosopher amongst the early Ismāʿīlīs, was evidently also the first eastern daʿī to propagate his ideas in writing. He produced a major work, Kitāb al-mahṣūl (Book of the Yield), summarizing his views, shortly before the establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate or during the earlier years of Ubayd Allāh’s reign. The first half of al-Mahṣūl apparently contained the exposition of a type of Neoplatonic metaphysical system which al-Nasafi himself introduced into Ismāʿīlīsm, while the second half of the book dealt with the seven eras of prophecy in human history. Al-Mahṣūl’s rapid popularity amongst the dissident Ismāʿīlīs, who at the time had only a few works at their disposal, prompted Abū Ḥātim to devote an entire work, entitled Kitāb al-islāḥ (Book of the Correction), to its criticism. Abū Ḥātim seems to have been particularly concerned with correcting the antinomian tendencies expressed by al-Nasafi. Unfortunately, al-Mahṣūl, an important work of Ismāʿīlīsm, has not survived and our knowledge of it is limited to the quotations and references in al-Islāḥ, al-Riyāḍ and a few other works. Abū Ḥātim’s al-Islāḥ, which is still unpublished and in manuscript form, evoked a reaction from al-Nasafi’s successor and disciple al-Sijistānī, who wrote a special work called Kitāb al-nuṣra (Book of the Support) to defend his master’s views against the attacks of Abū Ḥātim. Al-Nuṣra, which was composed before al-Sijistānī was won over to the Fāṭimid camp, has also been lost; but it is quoted extensively, along with al-Islāḥ, in al-Riyāḍ, which in general vindicates the views of Abū Ḥātim. Al-Kirmānī reviewed the controversy from the official viewpoint of the Fāṭimid daʿwa which, by the time of al-Muʿizz, had already rehabilitated Abū Ḥātim, and went even further than the latter in his affirmation of the indispensability of the law. Later, the antinomian tendencies of al-Nasafi and al-
Sijistānī were also attacked by Nāṣir-i Khusraw, who, like al-Kirmānī, reflected the position of the Fātimid headquarters. These developments may explain why al-Iṣlāḥ remains at least partially extant, while both al-Maḥṣūl and al-Nujaṭra, treated by the Fātimids as unorthodox and unworthy of being copied, failed to survive.

Al-Nasafī and Abū Ḥātim both envisaged hierohistory in terms of the Ismā'īlī scheme of the seven eras, marked by the appearance of the speaker-prophets, announcing new shari'as and religions, though they disagreed on some of the details. According to al-Nasafī, the first of the seven nātiqs (nuṭaqā'ī), Adam, promulgated no law; he taught the doctrine of the unity of God, al-tawḥīd, without prescribing any action ('amal) or religious duties. In any event, in the first era, there were no other human beings besides Adam, so no shari'a was actually required. Consequently, the first law-announcing nātiq was Noah, at the beginning of whose era other beings had also appeared; and a religious law was now needed. Similarly, the seventh nātiq, the Qā'im Muḥammad b. Ismā'il, would not announce any law, since his function was to reveal the inner meaning of all the previous laws and to re-establish the original lawless state that had existed in Adam's era. Meanwhile, Muḥammad b. Ismā'il had disappeared like the fifth nātiq Jesus, but he would soon return. Apparently, al-Nasafī also maintained that the era of Islam had ended with the first coming of Muḥammad b. Ismā'il. In other words, the seventh, lawless dawr had already started; and in that era, by contrast to the previous six eras, there were no longer any imāms, but only the lawihiq (lihiqs) of the twelve jazā'ir of the earth. Herein lay antinomian tendencies which met with the strong disapproval of Abū Ḥātim, who held that all esoteric truth inevitably requires an exoteric revealed law.

Abū Ḥātim countered al-Nasafī's views with detailed arguments that Adam did in fact announce a law, though for him too, Adam could not be classified amongst the ʿulu'l-ʿazm prophets, since he had not abolished the law of any previous nātiq. In similar manner, the seventh nātiq, who himself brings no law, does not abrogate the religious law of Islam; he merely manifests its hidden meaning. Abū Ḥātim, however, holds that there will be no 'amal in the seventh era. In order to avoid the conclusion reached by al-Nasafī that the seventh, lawless era had already begun with the first coming of Muḥammad b. Ismā'il, Abū Ḥātim introduced the concept of the interim period. This was a period marked by the absence of imāms, and occurring at the end of each prophetic era, between the disappearance of the seventh imām of that era and the coming of the nātiq
of the following era. During this period of interregnum, or dawr al-fatra, the twelve lawāḥiq assume command, with one acting as the deputy (khalīfa) of the absent seventh imām and as such possessing the right of authoritative arbitration amongst the lawāḥiq. It may be added that this is also the earliest usage of the term khalīfa by an Ismāʿīli author. According to Abū Ḥātim, an interim or fatra of this nature had occurred after the disappearance of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿil, implying that the sixth era, the era of Islam, had not yet expired. More specifically, Abū Ḥātim argues that the seventh nāṭiq Muḥammad b. Ismāʿil has three degrees, namely, that of the seventh imām, like the final mutimm of the preceding eras, that of absence and that of appearance. Abū Ḥātim also fails to see any comparison between the absence of the seventh nāṭiq and the disappearance of the fifth nāṭiq, Jesus, since the latter's mission had been completed on his departure from this world, while the cause of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿil was not concluded upon his disappearance. Indeed, the seventh nāṭiq is to reappear, at which time he will attain his final degree. Abū Ḥātim further holds that while the imāms in each era are the descendants of the nāṭiq and the asās of that era, the ranks of lāḥiq, and therefore, khalīfa, are exclusively reserved for the rest of mankind. In view of the facts that even after the accession of the Fātimids, Abū Ḥātim preached the imminent return of the Qāʾīm and also maintained his close relations with the Qarmatis of 'Irāq and Bahrayn, it can be inferred that the chief dāʿī of Rayy did not recognize 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī either as an imām or as the awaited Qāʾīm. There is in fact reason to assume that Abū Ḥātim regarded himself as the khalīfa of the absent imām.

Al-Nasafī and Abū Ḥātim also devoted much energy and imagination to accommodating some other prevalent religions, notably those of the Zoroastrians (Arabic, al-Majūs) and the Šābiʿa or Sabaeans mentioned in the Qurʿān, within their scheme of the seven prophetic periods, assigning these religions to specific periods and nāṭiqs. The Sabaeans, who in the Islamic period have been identified with both the Mandaeans of southern 'Irāq and the pagan community of Harrān in Mesopotamia, were assigned by al-Nasafī to the era of the fifth nāṭiq, Jesus. Their doctrines, therefore, were considered to have been derived essentially from Christianity. Abū Ḥātim concurs with al-Nasafī in attributing the religion of the Sabaeans to the era of Jesus, adding that this religion was originally founded by a lāḥiq of that period who was not himself a nāṭiq and who did not promulgate any new laws in his book, called al-Zabūr. However, as al-Sijistānī also argued later on, the original doctrine of the founder of the Sabean religion was
corrupted during the interregnum of the fifth era by adversaries such as Mānī, Bardesanes (Ibn Dašān) and Marcion, who misinterpreted the doctrine. On the other hand, Abū Ḥātim objects to al-Nasafi’s assignment of Zoroastrianism to the period of the third nātiq, Abraham. Al-Sijistānī, as in other cases, supported al-Nasafi’s view in this respect, considering Zoroaster as a missionary of Abraham. According to Abū Ḥātim, the Zoroastrians belonged to the period of the fourth nātiq, Moses; and Zoroaster (Zardusht) was one of the lāhīqān of that period, receiving his investiture during that era’s interregnum. But Zoroaster’s original doctrine was also corrupted by adversaries such as Mazdak.

Abū Ya’qūb al-Sijistānī defended al-Nasafi’s position against the criticisms of Abū Ḥātim. He, too, believed that Adam had brought no law, and his historical scheme is identical with that of al-Nasafi. Between any two nātiqān, he explains, there are seven imāms, the last one becoming the speaker-prophet of the following era. But there are no more imāms in the final era after the Qāʾīm, when the period of the lawīhīq and khulāfāʾ who follow him begins in the world. For al-Sijistānī too, the era of Islam had ended with the coming of the Qāʾīm Muḥammad b. Ismā’īl. In due time, al-Sijistānī modified some of his more radical, and antinomian views. For instance, in his Kitāb ithbāt al-nubuwāt, he states that he does not belong to those who follow the path of taʾwil without paying attention to the religious commandments. He also restricts religious obligations which can be abolished by the Qāʾīm to only some of what he calls the wasfī regulations, including the ritual prescriptions like prayer and pilgrimage, as compared to the ‘aqlī or rational regulations like the prohibitions on murder and theft, which can never be abandoned. He adds that neither the Qāʾīm nor his deputies will cancel the religious commandments all at once. In fact, interestingly enough, al-Sijistānī concludes this discussion by stating that the commandments in question will be cancelled gradually by the community (ummā), so that nothing will remain of them by the time of the Qāʾīm’s emergence (zuhūr). Contrary to the view of Abū Ḥātim, al-Sijistānī explains that the imāmate and the function of the deputies (khulāfāʾ) of the Qāʾīm will belong until the day of resurrection to the progeny of Muhammad, the seal of the prophets. And more significantly, contrary to the view expressed earlier in his own Kitāb al-nuṣra, he now designates these deputies, who carry out the deeds of the Qāʾīm, as imāms. In these statements, al-Sijistānī has clearly approached the reformed doctrine of al-Muʾīzz, to the extent that one could have been directly derived from the other. Al-Sijistānī doubtless recognized the
imāmate of the FatimidIs at least since the time he composed his Ithbāt al-nubūwāt. Finally, the already-mentioned anti-Isma‘ili work entitled the Kitāb al-siyāsa, quoted by Akhū Muḥsin and often baselessly attributed to one of the first two Fatimid caliphs, may be dated to the period of al-Mu'izz, since, in a distorted manner, it reflects details of the doctrine expounded at the time.225

As noted, the first part of al-Nasafi's Kitāb al-mahṣūl was devoted to the exposition of a type of Neoplatonic metaphysical system, containing particularly a new Isma‘ili cosmological doctrine and representing the earliest instance of harmonization between Neoplatonism and Isma‘ilism. Neoplatonism, continuing the tradition of Greek philosophy, especially that maintained by the Platonist school, had been founded in the third century A.D. by Plotinus (d. 270 A.D.). After Plotinus, known to Muslims as al-Shaykh al-Yūnāni, Plotinian philosophy was further developed by a number of his disciples, notably Porphyry (d. ca. 300 A.D.) and the latter's student Iamblichus (d. ca. 330 A.D.). Neoplatonism received its major systematization by the philosopher Proclus (d. 485 A.D.), of the famous Platonic Academy of Athens. It was during the 3rd/9th century, in the course of translating the philosophical texts of the various Greek masters, that the Muslims became familiar with the writings of the Neoplatonists and adopted some of their ideas. Al-Kindi, the founder of Islamic philosophy who died around 252/866, was already influenced by the Neoplatonic school of philosophy. The nascent tradition of Islamic Neoplatonism soon found its full development in the works of the foremost Muslim philosophers al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037). The Isma‘ili authors of the Persian school, being in close touch with Khurāsān, an important region for the development of Islamic philosophy from the earliest decades of the 4th/10th century, evidently had access to some Neoplatonic sources in Arabic translation. Included were some pseudo-Aristotelian Neoplatonic treatises, such as a version of what in Arabic was known as the Theology of Aristotle, containing excerpts from Plotinus' Enneads, and the so-called Liber de causis (Kitāb al-īdāh fi l-khayr al-mahy), another pseudo-Aristotelian work based on Proclus’ Elements of Theology.226 As al-Sijistānī mentions himself,227 he seems to have been further acquainted with a Neoplatonic pseudoepigraphon ascribed to Empedocles (Arabic, Anbā‘duqlis). Al-Nasafi, Abū Ḥātim and, later, al-Sijistānī, who were elaborating their own metaphysical systems during the first half of the 4th/10th century, became greatly influenced by Neoplatonism, especially by its concept of the unknowable God, its
theory of emanation, and its hierarchic chain of being. In their cosmo-
gies, which represented a drastic change over the theory of creation of the 
early İsmā‘ilis, the authors of the Persian İsmā‘ili school did not, however, 
adopt every dogma of the Neoplatonic school, since they had to integrate 
these borrowed ideas into an Islamic perspective. As a result, our eastern 
İsmā‘ili theologians developed their own unique brand of metaphysics, 
cosmology and spiritual anthropology.

The dā‘ī al-Nasafi, as pointed out by Samuel Stern, was probably the 
founder of İsmā‘ili philosophy, having been the earliest İsmā‘ili thinker to 
introduce Neoplatonism, or more precisely, a type of the nascent Islamic 
Neoplatonism, into İsmā‘ili thought. Al-Nasafi’s new metaphysical and 
cosmological doctrines of Neoplatonic origins laid the foundation for the 
systems developed by Abū Ḥātim, and more importantly, by al-Sijistānī. 
The new İsmā‘ili Neoplatonic cosmology, some details of which aroused 
controversy amongst the three authors of the Persian school, became the 
prevalent doctrine of the eastern İsmā‘ili communities during the 4th/1oth and the 5th/11th centuries. Later, it came to be adopted by the central 
headquarters of the Fātimid da‘wa during the reign of al-Mu‘izz, replacing 
the original cosmology of the İsmā‘iliyya. The outline of al-Nasafi’s ideas 
on this Neoplatonic cosmology introduced to the İsmā‘ili circles of Persia 
by himself, may be reconstructed from the fragments of al-Mahṣūl 
preserved in Abū Ḥātim’s al-İslāh and in al-Kirmānī’s al-Riyād; also, in a 
polemical treatise written in refutation of İsmā‘ilism by the Zaydi-
Mu‘tazili al-Bustī (d. ca. 420/1029), now extant in a unique manuscript at 
the Ambrosiana Library in Milan. Abū Ḥātim, in his al-İslāh, shared the 
main Neoplatonic propositions of al-Nasafi regarding creation, though 
agreeing on some minor details. It is, however, mainly due to al-
Sijistānī, an original thinker who further developed al-Nasafi’s ideas in 
several preserved works, that we owe our understanding of the İsmā‘ili 
Neoplatonic cosmology formulated during the early decades of the 
Fātimid period.

In this cosmology, God is described as absolutely transcendent, beyond 
comprehension and any attributes, and completely unknowable. 
Transcending being and non-being, God could not be comprehended or 
described by reason. This conception of God most closely resembled the 
ineffable Neoplatonic god, often referred to by Plotinus as the One or the 
Good, who was beyond the reach of thought, reason or language. At the 
same time, it was in close agreement with the fundamental Islamic 
principle of al-tawḥīd, affirming the absolute unity of God. The basic tenet
of Neoplatonism could thus find ready acceptance in Ismāʿīlī theology, which adhered to strict monotheism and at its core was revelational rather than rational. This is why al-Sijistānī stresses that the worshipping of the unknowable God and the upholding of al-tawḥīd would require, via double negation, the denial of both tashbīh, or anthropomorphism, and the most radical anti-anthropomorphist doctrines such as those held by the rationalist Muʿtazila; since the advocacy of the latter doctrines would mean committing taʾṭīl, or the denudation of the divine essence. It was indeed in the revelational basis of the Neoplatonic conception of the One that al-Nasafī and the Persian school of Ismāʿīlism recognized an essential affinity to their own theology. This also explains why the Neoplatonic Ismāʿīlī theologians found it unnecessary to offer a proof of God, who is beyond reason and being.

The Ismāʿīlīs did, however, introduce some major changes in the next stage of the emanational cosmological doctrine they had borrowed from the Neoplatonists, harmonizing it with their Islamic beliefs and the Qurʾānic view of creation. Instead of having the intellect, called nous by the Neoplatonists, emanate directly and involuntarily from the source of being, the One, as with Plotinus and his school, they now held that God originated (abdaʿa) intellect (al-ʿaql) through his divine command or volition (al-amr), or word (al-kalima). This represented an act of primordial, extra-temporal origination or innovation (ibdāʾ), signifying creation ex nihilo. Hence, God could be called the originator or al-mubdiʿ. The ʿaql is the first originated being (al-mubdaʿ al-awwal), also called simply as the first (al-awwal) and the preceder (al-sābiq), since the amr or logos is united with it in existence. The intellect is eternal, motionless and perfect, both potentially and actually. It corresponds to the number one, and, in keeping with the Neoplatonic tradition, it is called the source of all light. From the intellect proceeds through emanation, the soul (al-nafs), or the universal soul (al-nafs al-kulliyya), also referred to as the second (al-thānī) and the follower (al-tālī), corresponding to the psyche of the Neoplatonists. In this cosmological doctrine, intellect and soul are also combined together as the two roots or principles (al-ašlān), the original dyad of the pleroma. The nafs, the second hypostasis, is much more complex than the ʿaql; it is imperfect and belongs to a different plane of existence. The soul is also definitely subservient to the intellect. The Ismāʿīlīs continued the emanational chain of their cosmology beyond the simple triad of the One, intellect, and soul described by Plotinus, though according to them God had created everything in the spiritual and physical worlds all at once.
The various parts of the universe, however, became only gradually manifested through the process of causation and emanation, referred to as *inbi'āth*, proceeding from the 'aql in accordance with the divine resolution or predestination (*taqdir*).

The imperfection (*naqs*) of the soul expresses itself in movement; and movement is a symptom of defect, just as tranquillity reflects perfection. For Plotinus as for Plato, the essential characteristic of the soul is movement; and it is the soul’s movement which causes all other movements. It is interesting to note that for al-Sijistānī, as for Plotinus, time is the measure of motion, resulting from the soul’s activity. The soul’s defect also accounts for its descent into the depths of the physical world, which owes its existence to this very defect. From the soul, which is the source of matter and form, proceed the seven spheres (*al-ajīk*) with their stars; and the heavenly bodies move with the soul’s movement. Then the four elemental qualities or simple elements (*al-mufradāt*), namely, heat, cold, humidity and dryness, are produced. The simple elements are mixed, through the revolution of the spheres, to form the composite elements (*al-murakkabāt*), such as earth, water, air and ether (fire). The composite substances then mingle to produce the plants with the vegetative soul (*al-nafs al-nāmiya*), from which the animals with the sensitive soul (*al-nafs al-hissiyya*) originate. From the latter, man with his rational soul (*al-nafs al-nīrīqa*) comes forth. In order to relate more closely this Ismā‘īlī Neoplatonic cosmology to Islamic tradition, some of the concepts of the spiritual world contained in it were identified with Qur’ānic terms. Thus the 'aql was identified with the pen (*qalam*) and the throne (*'arsh*), while the *nafs* was equated with the tablet (*lawh*) and the chair or pedestal (*kursī*), always reflecting the subservience of soul to intellect. At the same time, much emphasis was given to analogies between the spiritual, celestial world and the physical, terrestrial world on the one hand, and between man as the microcosm and the physical universe as the macrocosm, on the other. This cosmology, as refined by al-Sijistānī, came to be officially accepted by the Fātimid da‘wa sometime towards the latter part of the reign of al-Mu‘izz, with the caliph-imām’s approval and as part of his measures designed to win the allegiance of the dissident eastern Ismā‘īlīs.

Certain conceptions of the earlier Ismā‘īlī cosmology continued however to be retained in the Neoplatonic cosmology that superseded and partly replaced it, though the original character and function of the older elements are unrecognizable in their new context. The *amr* or *kalima*, as the creative command of the new doctrine, may be equated with the *kun* of the
earlier doctrine; while the terms kūnī, qadar, jadd, fath and khayāl, preserved by the authors of the Persian school, now came to lose their original significance. For al-Nasafi, the pair KŪNĪ-QDR represent the letters of the seven days of the week. Al-Sijistānī regards them as the seven upper or divine letters through which the spiritual forms come into being. Abū Ḥātim applies Neoplatonic emanationalism to the cosmological pair of the early Ismāʿiliyya, holding that the three letters QDR are issued from the first three letters of the word kūnī. In a general sense, kūnī and qadar now became synonymous for intellect and soul of the new doctrine. Thus, kūnī came to be identified with the first, the preceder, and al-ʿaql; and qadar was equated with the second, the follower, and al-nafs.

This identification is also attested by a Yamani Zaydi historian of the 6th/12th century, Musallam b. Muḥammad al-Lahji, who comments on some earlier Zaydi references to the doctrines of the Yamani Ismāʿili. In one of his commentaries on a reference made to kūnī-qadar by Ṭabd Allāh b. Ṭumar al-Hamdānī, a Yamani author of the beginning of the 4th/10th century who wrote a biography of the Zaydi Imām al-Nāṣir (d. 324/935), al-Lahji states that ‘they now say of the one they formerly called kūnī, al-sābiq, and of the one they used to call qadar, al-tāli. . . and of the preceder they also say the first two principles (al-ʿaslān al-auwwalān), saying the two are al-ʿaql and al-nafs, from which al-jadd, al-fath and al-khayāl are issued like emanations (inbiʿathāt).’ It may be noted that the original female-male sequence of the primal pair was now reversed, and qadar in effect came to precede kūnī. The priority of the feminine hypostasis, kūnī, that assumed the more preferred place in the older doctrine, was lost in Ismāʿili Neoplatonism. The ʿaql, occupying the first place in the new doctrine, was masculine and perfect, while the feminine hypostasis, al-nafs, now descended to second place and became characterized by imperfection and unrest.

The three spiritual beings jadd, fath and khayāl, preserved from the earlier cosmology, now acquired the function of acting as intermediaries between the terrestrial daʿwa hierarchy and intellect and soul, whilst retaining their previous role of rendering the cognition of the upper world feasible for mankind. As in the case of the earlier doctrine, they are also the special graces which bestow certain gifts upon the speaker-prophets of sacred human history, bringing the benefits of intellect and soul directly to the muṭaqāʾ. For al-Sijistānī, the pentad consisting of the ʿaslān (intellect and soul), jadd, fath and khayāl, in fact, comprise the spiritual hudūd which together with the five ranks of the terrestrial daʿwa (nāṭiq, asās, imām, lāḥiq
and *janāḥ*) make up what Paul Walker has designated as the normative or moral hierarchy, which is of specifically Ismā'īli provenance. Al-Sijistānī harmonizes this hierarchy of the intelligible reality, in a highly intricate fashion, with the hierarchical order derived from Neoplatonism, viz., intellect, soul, the spheres and the lower natural orders, God being at the head of both hierarchies.

The authors of the Persian school also propounded a doctrine of eschatology and salvation as part of their cosmology. The Ismā'īli Neoplatonic cosmology, like its predecessor, implied a soteriological purpose from the outset, though salvation is not discussed explicitly in the extant fragments of al-Nasafi's *al-Maḥṣūl*. This doctrine of salvation, as especially elaborated by al-Sijistānī, bears a close affinity to Plotinus' ideas on the mystical union between man and the One; a union that according to the ancient Neoplatonists was the supreme goal of all human endeavour. More generally, it draws heavily on various Neoplatonic and gnostic ideas, and is closely related to al-Sijistānī's doctrine of the soul and the Ismā'īli cyclical view of history. The actually imperfect soul, as noted, moves in search of the benefits (*fawā'id*) of the intellect, because it is only through the intellect that it can come to rest. And man is called upon to assist in the perfection of the soul, since each human soul, according to al-Sijistānī, is a part of the universal soul, just as Abū Ḥātim believed that the human soul is a trace (*athar*) of the higher soul. In Abū Ḥātim's system, however, the intellect and the soul are equally perfect; while for al-Nasafi and al-Sijistānī it is through human souls that the actually defective universal soul can realize its perfection in potentiality. This idea is particularly reminiscent of the theologoumenon of the members characterizing various aspects of Manichaeism. The pivotal idea of Neoplatonic cosmology and Ismā'īli soteriology, as expounded by al-Nasafi's school, is that it is only through the perfection of individual human souls that perfection may be restored to the pleroma. Consequently, history becomes the record of the soul's quest for perfection, and also the record of human achievement. In this historical process, marked by different prophetic eras, man seeks the benefits of the intellect in order that the collectivity of human souls may one day rise to intellectual eternity, and thereby, to salvation. The prophets and other members of the terrestrial *da'wā* hierarchy are charged with conveying the benefits emanating from the intellect to mankind. Indeed, man is saved because of the truth that he receives from the prophets and their successors; and since true knowledge is eternal, that part of man which possesses this knowledge also becomes
eternal. It is, therefore, essential for man to understand the nature of the specific prophetic era in which he lives, because it is from the nātiq of his own time that the blessings of the intellect may be acquired. Nonetheless, the cognition that causes the perfection of the universal soul and the salvation of man comes ultimately from the Qā'īm, the last nātiq who initiates the final era of absolute true knowledge.248 When the Qā'īm has attained the rank that God has intended for him, there steps forth among the forms, viz., the individual human souls, those having the power to attain the benefits of the intellect. The advent of the Qā'īm, initiating the final stage of history, will thus bring with it the definite separation between the redeemed and the unredeemed.

The Fatimid Ismā'īli headquarters in Ifriqiya did not participate in the development of the Neoplatonic cosmology initiated by the Persian school. The original mythological cosmogony had continued to be adhered to by Fatimid Ismā'īlism until the latter part of the imāmate of al-Mu'iẓz, as attested, for instance, by Abū 'Īsā's Risāla. It was al-Mu'iẓz who authorized the adoption of the new cosmological system by the Fatimid da'wa. The first tangible influence of Ismā'īli Neoplatonism on Fatimid thought is detectable in al-Risāla al-mudhhiba attributed to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, in which the original Ismā'īli pentad of the pleroma is revised to include al-'aql, al-nafs, al-jadd, al-fath and al-khayāl,249 corresponding to al-Sijistāni's spiritual hudūd as part of his normative order of the universe. Henceforth, this Ismā'īli Neoplatonic cosmology came to be generally advocated in its essentials by Fatimid authors, including Nāṣîr-i Khusraw, who refined and elaborated various aspects of it in his own metaphysical system.250

A somewhat different cosmological system was propounded by the dā'i al-Kirmānī in his Rāḥat al-'aql, a summum of Ismā'īli philosophy written for the well-prepared adepts. The Rāḥat al-'aql, composed in 411 A.H.,251 reveals the depth of al-Kirmānī's knowledge of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophies, al-Kindī's thought, as well as the metaphysical systems of later Muslim philosophers (falāšīfā) such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. Above all, al-Kirmānī's synthetic cosmology, which is a modification of the earlier Ismā'īli Neoplatonic cosmology, reflects the influence of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics. Thus, instead of the previous dyad, intellect-soul, al-Kirmānī's system is comprised of ten intellects, or archangelical hypostases, in the spiritual world, each celestial hududd being the immediate cause of the following one.252 The celestial hierarchy of the ten hududd is, more specifically, divided into two distinct sub-groups, a triad and a heptad. In
this system, the intellect of the previous cosmology becomes the first intellect (al-ʿaql al-awwal), while the soul is replaced by the second intellect (al-ʿaql al-thāni), also called the first emanation (al-munbaʿith al-awwal), proceeding from the higher relation (al-nisba al-ashraf) of the first intellect. The third intellect, or the second emanation (al-munbaʿith al-thāni), which proceeds from the lower relation (al-nisba al-adwan) of the first intellect, is equated with matter (al-hayūlā) and form (al-ṣūra); it is also the first potential being.

From the primordial dyad, consisting of the first and second intellects, proceed seven further intellects, equated with the seven Cherubim, designated also as the seven divine words. The tenth intellect, also called the active intellect (al-ʿaql al-faʿāl), governs the physical world as a demiurge. The structure of the physical world and the terrestrial daʿwa hierarchy were similarly modified by al-Kirmānī, in close analogy with the hierarchy of the celestial world. Indeed, he emphasizes a close correspondence between the celestial and the terrestrial hierarchies and the comparable functions of the various ḥudūd in the two orders. While al-Nasafi, Abū Ḥātim and al-Sijistānī endeavoured to harmonize the earlier ideas with Neoplatonism, the traditional ideas and concepts are almost completely absent from al-Kirmānī’s cosmology. The Rāḥat al-ʿaql devotes merely a chapter to the so-called seven upper letters (al-ḥurūf al-ʿulwiyya); while kūnī and qadar are mentioned apparently only once by al-Kirmānī, in a rather incidental manner, and as names occurring in the works of earlier authorities. Clearly, the old primal pair kūnī-qadar could no longer be assigned a function in al-Kirmānī’s doctrine, in which Ismāʿīli Neoplatonism prevailed thoroughly. Al-Kirmānī’s cosmology was not adopted by the Fātimids; but, with some modifications, it later came to be utilized by the Ṭayyibī daʿwa in Yaman, completely replacing the older Fāṭimid system based on the works of al-Nasafi, al-Sijistānī and Abū Ḥātim.

Besides the Persian school, there was another trend in Ismāʿīlism in the 4th/10th century that came greatly under the influence of Neoplatonism. This trend is manifested in the Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity, also translated as the Epistles of the Sincere Brethren. Much controversy has surrounded the authorship and the date of composition of these famous Epistles, whose Ismāʿīlī origin was already recognized in 1898 by Paul Casanova, long before the modern recovery of Ismāʿīlī literature. There are various anachronistic accounts attributing the authorship of the Epistles to different Shiʿi Imāms; while the dāʾī Idrīs,
reflecting the official view of the Ṭayyibi *da'wa* in Yaman, has a detailed account in which he ascribes the *Epistles* to the Imām ʿĀlim b. ʿAbd Allāh, the grandson of Muḥammad b. Ṣimāʾil and one of the hidden imāms of the early Ṣimāʾilīs. However, some reliable contemporary authorities from the 4th/10th century, notably the philosopher Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023), name certain men of letters and secretaries of Buwayhid ʿIrāq, affiliated with the Ṣimāʾilī movement and residents of Baṣra, as belonging to the group that composed the otherwise anonymous *Epistles*. Amongst such authors, and in reply to certain questions raised around 373/983 by his patron Ibn Saʿdān, who was the vizier of the Buwayhid ʿṢaṃṣām al-Dawla, Abū Ḥayyān names Abū ʿUthmān Muḥammad b. Maʿṣhar al-Bustī, also known as al-Maqdisī, Abū ʿIlām Hārūn al-Zanjānī, Abū ʿĀlim al-Nahlajūrī, and al-ʿAwfī. Furthermore, these four persons were somehow associated with the Ṣimāʾilī movement; and it seems that al-Zanjānī, a qāḍī and an acquaintance of Abū Ḥayyān, was the leader of the group. Abū Ḥayyān’s important statements, later reproduced by Ibn ʿal-Qifṭī (d. 646/1248), are essentially corroborated by another contemporary source ʿĀlim al-Jabbar b. ʿĀlim al-Hamadhānī (d. 415/1025), the famous Muʿtazī theologian and chief qāḍī of Rayy. In his own list, ʿĀlim al-Jabbar omits al-Maqdisī but adds the names of Ibn Abīʿl-Baghl, a certain astrologer, and the chancery secretary Zayd b. Rifāʿa who, also according to Abū Ḥayyān, was a close friend of the group. On the basis of this evidence, most specialists are now agreed that the *Epistles* were secretly produced in Baṣra by a coterie of secretaries and scholars affiliated with Ṣimāʾilīsm, in the middle of the 4th/10th century, around the time of the Fāṭimid conquest of Egypt.

The small group that composed the *Rasāʾil* did not represent the official view of the Fāṭimid *da'wa* and evidently did not even adhere to Fāṭimid Ṣimāʾilīsm. As Samuel Stern has argued, it may well be that the Ṣimāʾilī authors of the *Epistles* were motivated in their encyclopaedic undertaking by a desire to reunite the non-Fāṭimid Ṣimāʾilīs, including the Qarrāṭīs of Bahrayn and the dissident eastern Ṣimāʾilī communities, on a common and idealized doctrinal ground. The authors adopted a type of Ṣimāʾilī Neoplatonism, on the basis of which they elaborated their emanational cosmological doctrine, conceiving of a hierarchy of being in nine stages. They also espoused a liberal and highly enlightened attitude towards religion and the wide range of subjects discussed. Written in Baṣra at a time when southern ʿIrāq was under the virtual domination of the Qarmaṭīs of Bahrayn, the *Epistles* probably also had the tacit approval, if
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not the active encouragement of the Qarmatīs. The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ do, in fact, place their teaching under the auspices of the hidden seventh imām of the Ismā’iliyya, the same Muḥammad b. Ismā’īl whose emergence was at the time expected by the Qarmatīs of Bahrayn and all other dissident Ismā’īlis. In other words, the authors did not recognize the imāmate of the Fāṭimids; nor did they find it necessary to mention the early Fāṭimid caliph-imāms and their ancestors. More recently, Abbas Hamdāni has pointed out the weaknesses of al-Tawhīdi’s assertions. On the basis of detailed studies, he has argued that the Epistles were compiled by a group of pre-Fāṭimid Ismā’īli da‘īs, who worked in collaboration with non-Ismā’īli colleagues, between the years 260/873 and 297/909, and that the references and verses of later chronology in the Epistles represent subsequent editorial interpolations.

The Epistles did not have any influence on contemporary Ismā’īlism, including the doctrines propagated by the Fāṭimid Ismā’īlis; and they are not referred to by the authors of the classical Fāṭimid period. It was only about two centuries after their composition that the Epistles began to acquire an important place in the literature of the Ṭayyibī Ismā’īli da‘wa. Evidently, it was the dā‘ī Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmidī (d. 557/1162) who first introduced the Rasā’il into the literature of the Ṭayyibī community in Yaman. Henceforth, the Epistles came to be widely studied and commented upon by the Yamanī da‘īs, and later, also by their Indian successors in the Dā‘ūdi Bohra community.

The Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, numbering fifty-two epistles, are divided into four books or sections, dealing with mathematical sciences (geometry, astronomy, music, logic, etc.), bodily and natural sciences, psychical and intellectual sciences (cosmology, eschatology, etc.), and theological sciences. Connected with these Epistles, which treat nearly all the sciences known at the time, there is a separate concluding summary of the Ikhwān’s corpus, known as al-Risāla al-jāmi‘a. The latter work, wrongly attributed to Maslama al-Majritī (d. ca. 398/1007) and of which there exists a further condensation, was evidently intended for the more advanced adepts. The authors of the Epistles, who practised tolerance and eclecticism, thought it quite legitimate to adopt all ‘the science and wisdoms’ of the ancient philosophers in producing their own synthesis of the knowledge of the time. They drew on a wide variety of pre-Islamic sources and traditions, which they combined with Islamic teachings, especially as upheld by the Shi‘īs belonging to the Ismā‘īli movement. There are, for instance, traces of early Babylonian astrology, and many
elements of Judaeo-Christian, Iranian, and Indian origins. Above all, the *Epistles* reflect the influences of diverse schools of Hellenistic wisdom. Characterized by a type of numerical symbolism in a Pythagorean manner, the *Epistles* are permeated throughout with Hermetic, Platonic, Aristotelian, Neopythagorean, and especially Neoplatonic ideas and doctrines. However, Neoplatonism, with its distinctive doctrine of emanation and hierarchism, is the dominant influence of Greek philosophy on the Ikhwân al-Ṣafâ’, who in an original and enlightened fashion attempted to harmonize religion and philosophy for the ultimate purpose of guiding man to purify his soul and achieve salvation.

The Ismâ‘ili system of *fiqh* or jurisprudence also came to be founded and elaborated during the classical Fâtimid period, especially under the early Fâtimids, chiefly by Abû Ḥanîfa al-Nu‘mân b. Muḥammad b. Maṣûr b. Aḥmad b. Ḥâyyûn al-Tâmîmî al-Maghribî, better known as al-Qâḍî al-Nu‘mân. Destined to become the greatest Ismâ‘ili jurist of all time, al-Nu‘mân came from a learned family of Mâlikî Sunnis in Qayrawân. There is much controversy surrounding the religious background of al-Qâḍî al-Nu‘mân, but it seems certain that his father had already embraced Ismâ‘ilism before the year 311/923 and that al-Nu‘mân himself was converted early in life, following his initial training as a Mâlikî *faqiḥ*. Some Imâmi Shi‘î authorities have maintained throughout the centuries that al-Nu‘mân was one of their co-religionists, although the early Imâmi biobibliographers like al-Kashshi, al-Najishi and al-Tusi do not refer to him at all. Ibn Shahrâshub (d. 588/1192) is evidently the earliest Twelver Shi‘î authority to mention al-Nu‘mân and some of his works, whilst explicitly asserting that the Qâḍî was not an Imâmi. This assertion implies that some Imâmi (Twelver) circles did consider al-Nu‘mân as one of their own. Nûr Allâh al-Shûshtârî, the renowned Persian Twelver jurist who migrated to India and was later executed there in 1019/1610 on the order of the Mughal emperor Jahângîr, was probably the first Imâmi scholar who, quoting Ibn Khallikân, stated that al-Nu‘mân was originally a Mâlikî Sunnî, and then, an Imâmi. In his view, al-Shûshtârî was followed by other Imâmi divines like al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilî (d. 1104/1693), al-Majlîsî (d. 1110/1699), Baḥr al-‘Ulûm, better known as Sayyid al-Ṭâ‘îfa (d. 1212/1797), and Mîrzâ Ḥusâyñ al-Nûrî (d. 1320/1902). Ághâ Buzurg al-Ṭîhrânî (d. 1389/1970), a contemporary Imâmi scholar who produced a valuable encyclopaedia of Shi‘î works and who was acquainted with the writings of W. Ivanow, also maintained that al-Nu‘mân was an Imâmi. All these authorities evidently rely solely on Ibn Khallikân who may have
used the term Imāmī in reference to both the Ithnā’ashariyya and the Ismā’iliyya. There have also been those Imāmī scholars like al-Khwānsārī (d. 1313/1895) who, in line with Ibn Shahrāshūb, have denied that al-Nu’mān was ever an Ithnā’ashārī Shī‘ī.271 For the Ismā‘īli authorities, such as the da‘ī Idrīs, the question of the original madhhab of a prominent Ismā‘īli figure so closely associated with several of their imāms, is an irrelevant one; they simply do not discuss the matter. Having been a contemporary of some of the most renowned early Imāmī authorities, like al-Kulaynī and Ibn Bābawayh, al-Nu’mān’s works are indeed amongst the earliest Shi‘i contributions to hadith and fiqh; and this may explain his high esteem by the Twelver Shi‘īs of different generations.

The Qādī al-Nu‘mān, born around 290/903, entered the service of ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdi in 313/925. He served the first four Fātimid caliphs in various capacities, such as the keeper of the palace library and the qādī of Tripoli and Mansūriyya. His growing position and importance reached its zenith under al-Mu‘izz, when he became the highest judicial functionary of the Fātimid state. He accompanied al-Mu‘izz to Egypt and died in Cairo in Jumādā II 363/March 974, having faithfully served the Fātimid dynasty for almost fifty years. Al-Nu‘mān’s funeral prayer was personally led by al-Mu‘izz. Al-Nu‘mān was a prolific writer, with more than forty treatises to his credit. He appears to have devoted the greater part of his life to the composition of his numerous works on law as well as on many other subjects, including history, ta‘wil and haqā‘iq. He evidently consulted his contemporary caliph-imāms on whatever he wrote; and it is primarily due to this Ismā‘īli tradition, related by Idrīs, that al-Nu‘mān has been accorded such a high position of respect and authority amongst the Ismā‘īlis. One of al-Nu‘mān’s principal works on fiqh, the Da‘ī‘ī al-Islām (The Pillars of Islam), was in fact composed at the request of al-Mu‘izz, who supervised its writing very closely. The Da‘ī‘ī, which is the main source for the study of Fātimid Ismā‘īli law, became the official Fātimid corpus juris from the time of al-Mu‘izz, and it still remains the chief legal text for the Tayyibī Ismā‘īlis, including the Ismā‘īli Bohras of India. The Da‘ī‘ī is divided into two volumes, the first one dealing with ‘ibadāt, acts of devotion and religious duties, consisting of the seven pillars of Islam according to the Ismā‘īlis, namely walā‘ya (devotion to imāms), tahāra (ritual purity), ṣalāt (prayer) including jana‘iz (funeral rites), zakāt (alms), sawm (fasting), ḥajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), and jihād (holy war). The Fātimid Ismā‘īlis, as Shi‘īs, had thus added walā‘ya and tahāra to the five pillars recognized by the Sunnis. The second volume of the Da‘ī‘ī deals
with *muʿāmalāt*, or worldly affairs, such as food, drinks, clothing, wills, inheritance, marriage and divorce.

Al-Nuʿmān was the founder of a distinguished family of *qādīs* in the Fāṭimid state. His son Abuʾl-Ḥusayn ʿAlī (d. 374/984), the chief jurist under al-ʿAziz for nine years, was in fact the first person to bear the official title of *qādī al-quḍāt* under the Fāṭimids. ʿAlī was succeeded as chief *qādī* by his younger brother Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad (d. 389/999). Subsequently, that highest judicial office came to be held successively by two of al-Nuʿmān's grandsons, Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī (d. 395/1004), and Abuʾl-Qāsim ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammad (d. 401/1011), who also became Jawhar's son-in-law. Al-Nuʿmān's great-grandson, Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, was the last member of the family to hold the position of chief *qādī*. He was finally dismissed, after several terms in office, in 441/1049 and was succeeded by al-Yāzūrī, the first to unite in his person the offices of *wazīr* and *qādī al-quḍāt*.

In comparison with the four Sunni schools of law, namely the Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfīʿī and Ḥanbalī, as well as the Ithnāʿasharī *madhdhab*, the legal literature of the Fāṭimid Iṣmāʿīlīs is extremely meagre. The Iṣmāʿīlī system of *fiqh* is almost exclusively the work of al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān, as few other Iṣmāʿīlī jurists, during or after the Fāṭimid period, concerned themselves with producing legal compendia. It is therefore not surprising that until recently, it was generally unknown outside of Iṣmāʿīlī circles that Iṣmāʿīlism has had its own separate school of jurisprudence; a distinct Shiʿī *madhdhab* developed in the 4th/10th century after the appearance of the authentic legal literature of the Iḥāʾī (Twelver) Shiʿīs. In modern times, it has been mainly due to the efforts of Asaf A. A. Fyzee, the foremost contemporary authority on Iṣmāʿīlī law, that the students of Islamic law and researchers in Iṣmāʿīlī studies have become acquainted with this Shiʿī school of *fiqh*.²⁷² Iṣmāʿīlī Shiʿī jurisprudence, as it has come down to us, is chiefly propounded in al-Nuʿmān's writings. Al-Nuʿmān's works, more of which seem to have been extant at the time of the dāʾī Idris, have been preserved by the Yamani and, later, by the Indian Iṣmāʿīlīs belonging to the Ṭayyibī *daʿwa*, notably the Dāʿūdī Bohras.

Fāṭimid Iṣmāʿīlī law, which in general agrees with Iḥāʾī law, represents a blending of Shiʿī beliefs, especially as embodied in the doctrine of the *imāmāte*, with the legal concepts of the Muslims. The Iṣmāʿīlīs, like all other Muslims, did accept the Qurʾān and the *sunna* of the Prophet as the principal sources of law. However, in line with the Iḥāʾīs, the Fāṭimid Iṣmāʿīlīs departed from the norms of the Sunni schools in acknowledging
only those Prophetic traditions which were reported by their imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt. In addition, they also accepted traditions from the imāms recognized by them. The traditions related by al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān are from the Prophet, ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib and the latter’s five successor imāms, with the majority from the Imāms al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq. It is interesting to note that al-Nu‘mān does not normally quote any hadīths from the Ismā‘īli Imāms after Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, the fountainhead of Ismā‘īli fiqh. In the case of the Prophetic traditions, the isnāds or chains of transmission, aside from having an Ismā‘īli Imām, are dropped in all Fatimid legal literature, implying that when an imām relates a hadīth from the Prophet, no further authority is necessary. Al-Nu‘mān totally ignores the hadīths of the Twelver Shi‘i Imāms after al-Ṣādiq, beginning with Mūsā al-Kāzim, who are not recognized by the Ismā‘iliyya. Those Imāmī scholars who regard al-Nu‘mān as a co-religionist attribute this to his observance of taqiyya in fear of the Fatimids. At any event, this is one of the main differences between the hadīths used by al-Nu‘mān and those included in the four major Imāmī compendia of traditions, compiled by al-Kulaynī, Ibn Bābawayh and Shaykh al-Ṭā‘ifah al-Ṭūsī. On the other hand, al-Nu‘mān quotes opinions of the ‘Alīids not recognized as imāms by the Ismā‘īlis or the Imāmīs, relying on Zaydi transmission.

The fundamental difference between the Shi‘i, Ismā‘ili or otherwise, and the Sunnī systems of fiqh, however, centres around the doctrine of the imāmate. For the Shi‘i, the imām is the final authority for interpreting the ordinances of God, and, after the Prophet, the sole repository of the rules of human conduct and worship. For the Ismā‘īlis in particular, he also interprets the all-important inner meaning of the Qur‘ān and the Shari‘a. Therefore, for the Fatimid Ismā‘īlis, the authority of the divinely-guided and infallible imām became the third and most decisive foundation of law, after the Qur‘ān and the sunna. They did not accept ijmā‘ or consensus of opinion, and qiyās or analogical deduction, which are the third and fourth bases of Islamic law accepted by the Sunnīs. The Fatimid Ismā‘īlis also rejected all other supplementary roots of law which are substitutes for qiyās, such as istihsān, istiṣlāḥ and istidlāl.

The Imāmīs, too, rejected qiyās and its substitutes, while they later subscribed to a type of ijmā‘, and ‘agl, reason or systematic reasoning in law.273 For the Imāmīs, or rather for the adherents of the predominant Usuli school of Twelver Shi‘i law, the fuqaha‘, who are qualified to form legal judgements and who are present at all times as the agents of their hidden twelfth imām, are the recognized interpreters of the law. These
powerful religious lawyers are known as mujtahids, practising ijtihād in their legal reasoning and judgement. Every ordinary Imāmī (Twelver) believer is expected to follow a mujtahid of his choice, thus becoming a muqallid, or imitator, practising taqlīd. It may be noted, however, that in the Fātimid age and earlier, the Imāmīs had not yet accepted ijtihād, which in later times continued to be rejected by the Akhbarī school of Twelver Shiʿī law. The Fātimid Ismāʿīlis, with their imām ruling at the head of the community, never recognized any kind of ijtihād and taqlīd. In other words, Fātimid law rejected adjudication or legal interpretation from sources other than the imāms. Al-Nuʿmān, in a work composed after 343/954 on the principles of the law (usūl al-fiqh), in conjunction with most of the Imāmī scholars of his time, clearly recognizes the Qurʾān, the sunna of the Prophet and the dictum or teachings of the imāms (qawl al-aʿīma) as the only authoritative sources of law. The Shiʿī Imāms not only enforce the Shariʿa like the Sunnī caliphs, but also interpret it. This may be considered the major point of difference between the Shiʿī and Sunnī concepts of law. Regarding the specific application of the law, however, the Fātimid Ismāʿīlis, like other Muslims, had courts presided over by trained qādis who dealt in legal judgements and issued specific decisions. There are some minor points of difference between the Fātimid Ismāʿīli and the Imāmī schools of law, especially regarding the questions of inheritance and marriage; while some of the specific legal doctrines of the Ismāʿīlis represent a compromise between those of the Imāmīs and the Zaydīs. For instance, the Ismāʿīlis, similarly to the Sunnīs and Zaydīs, do not permit muʿā, or temporary marriage for a stipulated period, which is practised by the Twelver Shiʿīs. In this connection, it is interesting to note that al-Nuʿmān based his rejection of muʿā on a Zaydī, rather than any Sunnī, tradition. In Fātimid law, muʿā is equivalent to zinā or unlawful intercourse. In religious rituals, too, there are certain differences between the practices of the Ismāʿīli and the Imāmī Shiʿīs.

Such were the achievements of the Ismāʿīlis during the classical Fātimid period. The advent of the Fātimid dynasty and state in North Africa marked the transformation of a revolutionary Shiʿī movement into a major Islamic empire, initiating at the same time the ‘golden age’ of Ismāʿīlism. The Fātimid caliph was not only the ruler of a vast and prosperous state; he was also the Ismāʿīli Imām, belonging to the Ahl al-Bayt and descending from the Prophet through Fātimma. As such, he was the spiritual leader of the Fātimid Ismāʿīlis, comprising the main body of the Ismāʿiliyya, wherever they were to be found. The Ismāʿili message did
have considerable appeal to different social groups outside the Fāṭimid dominions, penetrated by the secret and hierarchical Fāṭimid daʿwa organization, which promised to relieve Muslims from the oppressive rule of the Sunni ʿAbbāsids and other usurping dynasties. It was in the pursuit of these ideals that the Fāṭimid daʿīs disseminated the message of Ismāʿilsim in many lands, including especially the ʿAbbāsid provinces in the Muslim East. The Fāṭimid triumph was, however, incomplete. The Fāṭimids failed to unite all the Muslims under their own Fāṭimid ʿAlid Imāmate, as they also failed in their policy of eastern conquest. They did, however, succeed in encouraging intensive literary and intellectual activity in Fāṭimid Egypt, also turning their capital, Cairo, into a flourishing centre of commerce, arts and sciences, which rivalled Baghdad in the 5th/11th century. During that crucial century of Islamic history, the Fāṭimid dynasty, at least until the consolidation of Saljūqid power, represented the major political and cultural force of the Muslim world.

The Fāṭimids greatly expanded their territorial possessions, and despite periodical disturbances and crises, Fāṭimid Egypt in general enjoyed economic prosperity. This was primarily due to the capability and stability of Fāṭimid administrative and financial organizations, and substantial revenues earned from expanding trade and economic activities. The doctrines of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿilis, as elaborated by gifted theologians and daʿīs, represent a high level of intellectual accomplishment. In their treatises, not only theology but complex metaphysical and philosophical doctrines, drawing on Hellenistic and other traditions, are discussed in an Islamic perspective. The Fāṭimids were also noteworthy in terms of their patronage of artistic activities. There exists considerable evidence of Fāṭimid art, displaying originality as well as the influences of various older artistic traditions. The Fāṭimid mosques, mausoleums and other architectural remains have been thoroughly studied by Keppel A. C. Creswell (1879–1974), the leading modern authority on the Fāṭimid monuments. The Fāṭimids also encouraged artistic endeavours in other areas, like textiles, woodwork, ceramics, glass and mural painting. Scholars generally agree that the successes of the Fāṭimids were in large measure due to the remarkable ethnic and religious tolerance of the dynasty and the administrative stability of the Fāṭimid state. The Shiʿī Fāṭimids did, indeed, have a special talent for utilizing the services of capable individuals and groups, regardless of their race or creed.

As the official religion of an empire, Fāṭimid Ismāʿilism maintained its unity for close to two centuries, although it witnessed periodical internal
dissensions of minor importance. The main body of the Ismāʿīlis, both inside and outside the Fāṭimid dominion, did on the whole remain faithful to the Fāṭimid caliph-imām, who had failed to win over the Sunni majority of the Muslim world. It was in this religio-political setting that the challenge of strong enemies, like the Saljuqs, and factional strife from within set the Fāṭimid Caliphate on a course of decline and eventual collapse; a course that had irretrievable consequences for the Ismāʿīli movement. By the time of al-Mustansir’s death in 487/1094, which confronted Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism with its most catastrophic internal conflict and caused a major schism in Ismāʿīlism, the Fāṭimids still had another seventy-seven years to rule, but the dynasty had already passed its peak of accomplishment and glory. The days of Ismāʿīlism as the official religion of an empire were almost terminated. By that time, the Fāṭimids had abandoned their hopes of universal leadership in Islam, and yet, their intellectual achievements and contributions had already forever enriched Islamic thought and culture.
In this chapter we shall trace the development of the Musta’liyya (or Musta’lawiyya) sub-sect of Isma‘ilism, from its origins in 487/1094 to the present. Until the year 524/1130, the Musta’lian Isma‘ilis of Egypt, Syria, Yaman and elsewhere, constituted a unified group, as distinct from the Nizāriyya. By then, the Musta’lians had recognized two more imāms in the persons of al-Mustaṣṣir’s son and grandson, al-Musta‘li and al-Āmir. However, the confusing events following al-Āmir’s death in 524/1130 and the claims of al-Ḥāfiz, al-Āmir’s cousin and successor in the Fātimid state, to the imāmate, led to a new split in the Musta’lian community, subdividing it into the Ḥāfizīyya and the Ṭayyibiyya. Both of these branches of Musta’lian Isma‘ilism will be discussed in the present chapter.

The Ḥāfizīyya, also known as the Majīdiyya, accepted al-Ḥāfiz and the later Fātimid caliphs as their imāms after al-Āmir. The Ḥāfizī cause, officially endorsed by the Fātimid da‘wa in Cairo, found the bulk of its supporters in Egypt and Syria. It received support also in Yaman, where the local dynasties of the Zuray’ids of ‘Adan and some of the Hamdānids of Ṣan‘ā’ adhered to the Ḥāfizī da‘wa. The Ḥāfizīyya, however, did not survive long after the fall of the Fātimid dynasty in 567/1171.

The Ṭayyibiyya, initially known as the Ṭāmirīyya, recognized al-Āmir’s infant son, al-Ṭayyib, as their imām after al-Āmir; rejecting the claims of al-Ḥāfiz, and his successors on the Fātimid throne, to the imāmate. The Ṭayyibi cause was at first supported by a minority of the Musta’lian Isma‘ilis of Egypt and Syria as well as by many of the Isma‘ilis of Yaman, where the Sulayḥids officially upheld the rights of al-Ṭayyib. Soon afterwards, with the establishment of the independent Ṭayyibi da‘wa headed by a da‘ī muṭlaq, Yaman became the main stronghold of the Ṭayyibiyya. The Ṭayyibi da‘īs, in time, succeeded in winning a consider-
able number of adherents in western India, amongst the Bohras of Gujarāt and elsewhere, some of whom had earlier embraced Ismā'ilism.

The Ṭayyibīs, who closely maintained the traditions of the Fātimid Ismā'ilis in the doctrinal domain, divide their history of the Islamic era into succeeding periods of concealment (satr) and manifestation (kashf or ḵuḥūr), during which the imāms are, or are not, concealed from the public eye. The first period of satr, coinciding with the period of early Ismā'ilism, came to an end with the appearance of ʿUbayd Allāh (ʿAbd Allāh) al-Mahdī in North Africa. This was followed by a period of ḵuḥūr, continuing until the concealment of the twenty-first Ṭayyibī Imām, al-Ṭayyib, soon after al-Āmir's death. The concealment of al-Ṭayyib initiated another period of satr in the history of Ṭayyibī Ismā'ilism, continuing to the present time. During the current satr, al-Ṭayyib, the last visible Ṭayyibī Imām, and his successors from amongst his descendants, have chosen to remain hidden (mastūr) from the eyes of their followers. According to the Ṭayyibīs, the present period of satr will continue until the appearance of an imām from the progeny of al-Ṭayyib; that imām may be the Qāʾīm of the present cycle in the history of mankind. At any rate, a few years after the death of al-Āmir, the headquarters of Ṭayyibī Ismā'ilism were established in Yaman, where the Ṭayyibī daʿwa developed under the overall leadership of a powerful ḍāʾī, called al-ḍāʾī al-mutlaq, who in the absence of the imāms looked after the affairs of the daʿwa and the community.

The current period of satr in Ṭayyibī Ismā'ilism is, in turn, divided into a Yamanī period, extending from 526/1132 to around 999/1591, when the Ṭayyibīs were split into the Dāʿūḍi and Sulaymānī factions; and an Indian period, covering essentially the history of the Dāʿūḍi daʿwa during the last four centuries. During the Yamanī period, the Ṭayyibīs maintained their unity in Yaman and also succeeded in winning an increasing number of adherents in western India. By the end of the 10th/16th century, when the Dāʿūḍi-Sulaymānī schism occurred, the Indian Ṭayyibīs by far surpassed their Yamanī co-religionists in terms of numbers and financial contributions to the daʿwa treasury. In a sense, the Indian Ṭayyibīs had by then become ready to exert their independence from Yaman, where the Ṭayyibī ʿdāʾīs had resided for more than four centuries. Under these circumstances, the Indian Ṭayyibīs lent their support mainly to the Dāʿūḍi daʿwa, while the Yamanī Ṭayyibīs became the chief followers of the Sulaymānī daʿwa. There were essentially no doctrinal differences between
the two groups, who, henceforth, followed separate lines of da'i is. During the Indian period, the majoritarian Indian Tayyibi community, represented by the Dāʾūdī Bohras, prospered as a trading community and developed rather freely, though it also experienced periods of severe persecution and internal dissent.

The non-Ismāʿīli historical sources, on al-Mustaʿlī and the later Fāṭimids, relevant to the study of the opening phase of Mustaʿlīan Ismāʿīlism, have already been reviewed at the beginning of the previous chapter. For the earliest period, much valuable information is contained, especially, in the Dhayl taʾrīkh Dimashq of Ibn al-Qalānīsī and in the histories of Ibn Zāfir, Ibn Muyassar, Ibn Taghribirdī and al-Maqrīzī, who, in the final portion of his Ittīʿāz al-hunafāʾ, continues the history of the Fāṭimids to the fall of the dynasty. The general Muslim histories, notably that of Ibn al-Athīr, are also relevant here. The literary sources for the history of the Yamānī phase of the Tayyibī daʾwa, essentially a history of the activities of the various Mustaʿlī-Tayyibī daʾīs and their relations with the Zaydīs and other local dynasties of Yamān, have been fully discussed by Ayman F. Sayyid in the relevant sections of his bio-bibliographical survey of the sources on the Islamic period in Yamān.1 For the earliest period in the history of the Tayyibīs and Ḥāfiẓīs in Yamān, our chief authority is the already-cited Taʾrīkh al-Yaman by Najm al-Dīn ʿUmārā b. ʿAlī al-Ḥakamī, the Yamānī historian and poet who emigrated to Egypt and was executed in Cairo in 569/1174, on charges of plotting to restore the Fāṭimids to power.2 Ismāʿīlī historical writings on the earliest Mustaʿlīans, the Ḥāfiẓīs and the Tayyibīs of Yamān, are, as expected, rather meagre. No Ḥāfiẓī sources have survived, and our chief Ismāʿīlī authority on the Yamānī Tayyibīs is again the daʾī Idrīs who as the head of the Tayyībī daʿwa in the 9th/15th century, was well-informed about the details of the movement in Yamān.3 Idrīs also has extensive quotations from earlier Ismāʿīlī sources, many of which have not survived.

Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn b. al-Ḥasan came from the prominent al-Walīd family of Quraysh in Yamān, who led the Tayyibī daʿwa for more than three centuries. He succeeded his uncle as the nineteenth daʾī muṭlaq of the Tayyībīs in 832/1428. Idrīs was also a warrior and fought several battles against the Zaydīs; he died in 872/1468. Idrīs was the most celebrated historian of the Ismāʿīlī movement, producing three extensive historical works. In the final, seventh volume of his ʿUyun al-akhbār (The Choice Stories), still in manuscript form, he relates valuable details on the Sulayḥīds, the reigns of al-Mustaʿlī and al-Āmir, and the opening phase of
the Ṭayyibī daʿwa in Yaman. It also contains important details on various Yamani daʿīs. His second work, a two-volume history entitled the Nuzhat al-afkār, deals with the history of Ismāʿīlīsm in Yaman, especially after the fall of the Sulayhid dynasty, carrying the narrative to the year 853/1449. This provides the most complete and accurate history of the daʿwa in Yaman during the post-Sulayhīd period. Idrīs took special interest in the Ismāʿīli daʿwa in India, and has references to this daʿwa and to relations between the Ismāʿīli communities of Yaman and India in his Nuzhat al-afkār. Thirdly, in his Rawdat al-akhbār, which is a continuation of the preceding work, Idrīs adds the events of his own time, from 853/1449 to 870/1465. The histories of Idrīs shed valuable light on issues, events and personalities not discussed elsewhere. As such, they are indispensable for understanding the mediaeval history of the Ṭayyibī Ismāʿīli movement in Yaman. Unfortunately, the latter two works remain unpublished, and manuscript copies of them cannot be easily obtained. It may be added that the tradition of writing compendia of Ismāʿīli works in Yaman attained its peak in the Zahr al-maʿānī of the dāʿī Idrīs. Other Ṭayyibī authors and dāʿīs have also written important Ismāʿīli chrestomathies which, however, rarely contain historical details.

The history of the Indian phase of Ṭayyibī Ismāʿīlism, too, is essentially comprised of the history of the activities of different dāʿīs, in addition to the accounts of the occasional disputes and minor schisms in the community stemming from conflicting claims to the headship of the Ismāʿīli Bohras. A number of Dāʿūdī dāʿīs and authors have produced historical works, mostly in Arabic, on the Mustaʿli-Ṭayyibī daʿwa in India. In more recent times, some of these works have appeared in a form of Arabicized Gujarātī written in Arabic script, the official language of the Dāʿūdī Bohras, so as to reach a wider public. The bulk of the Ismāʿīli sources produced in India, however, intermix legend and reality, being concerned chiefly with defending or refuting certain claims to the position of dāʿī mutlaq. As a result, the history of the Ṭayyibī daʿwa in India, especially during the earlier centuries, continues to be shrouded in mystery. Amongst the few accurate Ismāʿīli histories produced in India, mention may be made of the Muntazaʿ al-akhbār, in two volumes, written in Arabic by Quṭb al-Dīn Sulaymānī Burhānpūrī (d. 1241/1826), a Dāʿūdī Bohra author. The second volume of this still unpublished work covers the history of the Ṭayyibīs and their dāʿīs until the year 1240/1824. Another noteworthy history of Ismāʿīlism in India is the Mawsim-i bahār of Miyān Šāhib Muḥammad ‘Ali Rāmpūrī, an agent of the Dāʿūdī daʿwa organiza-
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This work, in Gujarātī and written in Arabic script, draws on the Muntazaʾ al-akhbār and a number of earlier sources, some of which have not survived. The first two volumes of the Mawsim-i bahār deal with the history of the prophets and the Ismāʿīlī Imāms until al-Ṭayyib. The third volume, completed in 1299/1882 and lithographed soon after, contains the history of the Ismāʿīlī daʿwa in India from its origins in Gujarāt until the author’s time, covering the lives of the Ṭayyibī daʿīs in Yaman and the Dāʾūdī daʿīs residing in India.

In modern times, a number of Dāʾūdīs, who greatly outnumber the Sulaymānis, have written on various aspects of their community. However, historical studies of any value have remained few in number. In the early decades of this century, Mullā ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn, a Dāʾūdī functionary, produced one of the most popular books in the English language on the Ṭayyibī daʿwa in India. The late Zāḥid ʿAlī, a learned Dāʾūdī Bohra, has produced the fullest contemporary account of the doctrines of the Ṭayyibīs in his already-cited Hamārē Ismāʿīlī madḥhab, written in Urdu; he presents the earlier history of the Mustaʿlīs and a summary of their beliefs in the second volume of his Taʿrīkh-i Fāṭimīyyīn.

Several members of the distinguished al-Hamdānī family of Sūrat, descendants of Muḥammad ʿAlī b. Fāyḍ Allāh al-Yaʿbūrī al-Hamdānī (d. 1315/1898), a prominent Dāʾūdī scholar and author, have written on Mustaʿlī-Ṭayyibī Ismāʿīlīsm and on the Ṭayyibī daʿwa in India. Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Hamdānī’s grandson, al-Ḥusayn b. Fāyḍ Allāh al-Hamdānī, was amongst the pioneers of modern Ismāʿīlī studies, drawing on the valuable collection of the Ismāʿīlī manuscripts preserved in his family. The latter’s son, Abbas Hamdani, is currently making noteworthy contributions to Ismāʿīlī studies. Western orientalists and Ismāʿīlī specialists have not so far produced major works on Mustaʿlīan Ismāʿīlīsm, particularly on the history of the Ṭayyibī daʿwa in India, owing mainly to the scarcity of reliable sources; the main exception being the survey of John Hollister in his book The Shiʿa of India.

The Indian Ismāʿīlīs have also rendered a unique service to Ismāʿīlīsm by preserving a good portion of the literary heritage of the Ismāʿīlīs, including the classical works of the Fāṭimid period and the treatises written by the Yamanī Ṭayyibīs. These Ismāʿīlī manuscripts, collectively designated as al-khizāna al-maknūna, the guarded treasure, were transferred, especially after the 10th/16th century, from Yaman to India, where they continued to be copied by the better educated Ismāʿīlī Bohras of Gujarāt and elsewhere. At present, there are major libraries of such manuscripts at
Sūrat, Bombay, and Baroda, the seats of the Dā‘ūdī and the Sulaymānī da‘was in India. Most Bohras have had their own small collections of manuscripts, many of which have been incorporated into the Ismā‘īlī library at Sūrat. The dā‘ī muṭlaq of the Dā‘ūdī Bohras has instituted very strict rules regarding the use of the vast collections of the library at Sūrat; fortunately however some learned Ismā‘īlī Bohras have come to permit Ismā‘īlī scholars and researchers access to their private collections.

After the death of the Fāṭimid al-Mustansīr in Dhu‘l-Ḥijja 487/December 1094, a major schism occurred in the Ismā‘īlī movement concerning the succession to the imāmate. Al-Mustansīr had already designated his eldest son Abū Ṭāsun Nīzār as his successor. Nīzār, who had received al-Mustansīr’s naṣṣ and was thus expected to succeed to the imāmate, was about fifty years-old at the time of his father’s death. However, Abū’l-Qāsim Shāhanshāh, better known by his vizieral title of al-Afdal, who a few months earlier had succeeded his own father Badr al-Jamālī as the all-powerful vizier and commander-in-chief of the Fāṭimid state, had other plans. Aiming to retain the state reins in his own hands, al-Afdal favoured the candidacy of al-Mustansīr’s youngest son Abū’l-Qāsim Aḥmad, who would be entirely dependent upon him. At the time, Aḥmad was about twenty years-old and already married to al-Afdal’s sister. Al-Afdal moved swiftly and, on the day after al-Mustansīr’s death, placed Aḥmad on the Fāṭimid throne with the title of al-Musta‘lī bi’llīh. He quickly obtained for al-Musta‘lī the allegiance of the notables of the Fāṭimid court and the leaders of the Ismā‘īlī da‘wa at Cairo. There are conflicting accounts of this important event in the history of Ismā‘īlism. Later, the Musta‘lian Ismā‘īlis circulated different versions of the dubious circumstances under which, according to them, al-Mustansīr had allegedly nominated al-Musta‘lī as his heir apparent, including also a deathbed naṣṣ. But it cannot be denied that Nīzār’s succession rights were never revoked by al-Mustansīr, and al-Afdal secured al-Musta‘lī’s accession in what amounted to a palace coup d’état.

The dispossessed Nīzār hurriedly fled to Alexandria in the company of his half-brother ‘Abd Allāh and a few followers, where he rose in revolt early in 488/1095. In Alexandria, the centre of military factions suppressed by Badr al-Jamālī, Nīzār was assisted by the city’s governor, the Turk Nāṣir al-Dawla Aftakūn, who aspired to replace al-Afdal, and its Ismā‘īlī qāḍī, Ibn ‘Ammār. He also received much local support, especially from the Arab inhabitants of the area. Soon, Nīzār received the oath of allegiance of the Alexandrians, and adopted the caliphal title of al-Muṣṭafā
The revolt was initially successful, Nizár easily managing to repel al-Afdal’s forces and advancing to the vicinity of Cairo. Nevertheless, towards the end of 488 A.H., the alarmed Fāṭimid vizier effectively besieged Alexandria and forced Nizár to surrender. Nizár was taken to Cairo where he was imprisoned and then immured on al-Musta’li’s orders; all of these events taking place during the year 488 A.H.⁶

The fate of Nizár and the strife over the succession to the Fāṭimid caliph-imām al-Mustanṣir left a decisive mark on the history of the Ismā‘ili movement. By choosing al-Musta’li, al-Afdal had split the Fāṭimid Ismā‘iliis into two rival factions which were duly to become bitter enemies. The ambitious al-Afdal had in effect alienated almost all of the Ismā‘ili communities of the Muslim East. The imāmate of al-Musta’li came to be recognized by most Ismā‘ili in Egypt, many in Syria, and by the whole Ismā‘ili community in Yaman and that in western India dependent on it. These Ismā‘ili now accepted al-Musta’li as their nineteenth imām. On the other hand, the Persian Ismā‘iliis, under the leadership of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and defending al-Mustanṣir’s original naṣṣ, upheld Nizár’s right to the imāmate and refused to acknowledge the ninth Fāṭimid caliph al-Musta’li as their next imām. As part of the Saljuq realm, they and many other eastern Ismā‘iliis, permanently broke off their relations with the headquarters of the Fāṭimid da‘wa in Cairo. Nizár also had partisans within the Fāṭimid territories. In Egypt, they were quickly suppressed, but in Syria, now beyond Fāṭimid control, Nizár’s followers became organized by emissaries despatched from Persia. The two factions of the Ismā‘ili movement henceforth became known as the Musta’liyya or Musta’lawiyya, and the Nizāriyya, depending on whether they recognized al-Musta’li or Nizár as the rightful imām after al-Mustanṣir. Subsequently, the movement of the Nizāris, who launched an open revolt against the Saljuqs and who from the beginning were very active also in the doctrinal domain, became designated as al-da‘wa al-jadīda, the new preaching, in contradistinction to al-da‘wa al-qadīma, the old preaching of the Fāṭimid Ismā‘iliis maintained by the Musta’lians.⁷ In modern times, the Nizāris and the Musta’lians, or more specifically the Tayyibis, have also become respectively designated as the Eastern and the Western Ismā‘iliis.⁸

Al-Musta’li remained a puppet in the hands of al-Afdal during his short reign (487–495/1094–1101).⁹ Al-Afdal, continuing his father’s policies, maintained order and relative prosperity in Egypt. He was also initially successful in Syria, regaining Tyre from a disloyal governor in 490/1097 and recapturing Jerusalem in the following year from the Turkish
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Artuqids, Sukmān and Ilghāzī, who had established themselves in Palestine. Close relations had continued between Fātimid Egypt and Sulayḥīd Yaman, now still ruled by al-Malika al-Sayyyida, who had recognized al-Musta’lī as the legitimate imām after al-Mustansīr and who managed the affairs of the Ismāʿīli daʿwa in Yaman with the help of the dāʾī Yahyā b. Lamak al-Ḥammādī (d. 520/1126).10 Yahyā had succeeded his father in the headship of the Yamanī daʿwa shortly before the year 491/1098. Now, however, the Fātimids and all Muslims of the Near East faced a new danger from the Crusaders, who had appeared in northern Syria in 490 A.H. to liberate the Holy Land of Christendom. Al-Afdal had immediately opened negotiations with the Crusaders and had exchanged embassies with them, seeking their aid against the Turkish amīrs of Syria. Nonetheless, it seems that he had underestimated the threat of the Crusaders, being taken by complete surprise when the invading Franks moved towards their primary target of Jerusalem. The Crusaders seized Jerusalem easily after defeating the Fātimid army, led by al-Afdal, near Ṭisasqalān in 492/1099. By 494/1100–1101, they had established themselves firmly in Palestine, having taken Ḥayfā, Arsūf and Qaysariyya (Caesarea). Al-Afdal’s continued attempts to deal more effectively with them proved futile. It was in the midst of the Fātimid entanglements with the Franks that al-Musta’lī died in Safar 495/December 1101. Al-Afdal now proclaimed al-Musta’lī’s five year-old son Abū ‘Ali al-Manṣūr as the new Fātimid caliph with the laqab of al-Āmir bi-‘Ākhām Allāh.11

During the first twenty years of al-Āmir’s caliphate (495–524/1101–1130), al-Afdal remained the effective master of the Fātimid state, and ruled efficiently. Externally, he concerned himself mainly with the Crusaders, and organized numerous expeditions against them. In one of the more successful campaigns led by al-Afdal’s son Sharaf al-Maʿālī, the Fātimids defeated the Franks in 496/1103 and took Ramla. Nevertheless, the greater part of Palestine and the towns on the Syrian coast fell into the hands of the Crusaders. In 497/1103, Ṭisasqalān in 497/1103, ‘Akkā (Acre) was surrendered by its Fātimid commander, and then, in rapid succession, Ṭarablus (Tripoli) and Ṣaydā (Sidon) were lost to the Franks during 502–504/1109–1111. By 518/1124, when Ṣūr (Tyre) fell, only Ṭisasqalān remained of the former Fātimid possessions in the Levant. Egypt itself was invaded in 511/1117 by Baldwin I (1100–1118), king of the Latin state of Jerusalem and one of the original leaders of the First Crusade, who took Faramā and then advanced to Tinnis. However, the Crusaders were compelled to retreat from Egypt due to Baldwin’s fatal illness. After being the unchallenged ruler of
Fāṭimid Egypt for some twenty-seven years, al-Afdal was assassinated in 515/1121. His assassination seems to have been plotted by al-Āmir, who had become weary of his vizier’s tutelage and restrictions. As related in some sources and claimed by the Nizāris themselves, it is possible that the assassination was planned by the Nizāris, who deeply despised al-Afdal. Be it as it may, al-Āmir immediately ordered the confiscation of the murdered vizier’s substantial properties and renowned treasures.¹²

After al-Afdal, al-Āmir appointed al-Ma’mūn al-Baṭā’īḥī to the vizierate. Al-Ma’mūn, implicated in the murder of his patron al-Afdal, re-opened the Dār al-Ḥikma, which had been closed by al-Afdal towards the end of the 5th/11th century. Al-Ma’mūn soon fell from al-Āmir’s favour and was imprisoned in 519/1125; three years later, he was crucified with his brothers on charges of plotting against the caliph.¹³ Al-Āmir did not appoint any viziers after al-Ma’mūn, preferring to run the affairs of the state personally. Financial matters, however, were placed under the charge of a Christian monk, Abū Najāḥ b. Qanna’, who was soon afterwards dismissed and flogged to death in 523/1129. Al-Āmir was becoming rapidly detested by his subjects due to his cruel acts, when he, too, was killed. The tenth Fāṭimid caliph and the twentieth imām of the Musta’lian Ismā’īlis was assassinated by a group of Nizārī fidā’īs in Dhu’l-Qa’dā 524/October 1130. He had reigned for almost twenty-nine years, longer than any other Fāṭimid caliph-imām except for his grandfather al-Mustanṣir.

As we shall see, it was in al-Āmir’s time that the Nizārī Ismā’īlis consolidated their power in Persia and Syria, under the leadership of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124), who resided at the mountain castle of Alamūt. Although the Nizāris never made any major attempts to penetrate Egypt after the Nizārī-Musta’li schism, it seems that their cause continued for some time to have supporters in Fāṭimid Egypt, finding expression also in occasional plots. The Nizāris were allegedly involved in al-Afdal’s assassination; and al-Afdal’s successor al-Ma’mūn had to take extensive precautionary measures to prevent the infiltration of the Nizāri agents into Egypt.¹⁴ Some of these agents, carrying material aid as well, were reportedly being sent directly from Alamūt. Nonetheless, the Nizāris succeeded in killing al-Āmir. The vizier al-Ma’mūn, who himself feared the Nizāris, also found it necessary to arrange for a public assembly in order to publicize the rights of al-Musta’lī and al-Āmir to the imāmate and to refute the claims of Nizār and his partisans. This meeting, convened at the great hall of the palace, was attended by numerous Fāṭimid princes
and high state dignitaries. Amongst those present were Wali al-Dawla Abūl-Barakāt b. ‘Abd al-Haqiq, the chief dā‘ī, Abū Muḥammad b. Ādam, the head of the Dār al-‘Ilm in Cairo, Abūl-Thurayyā b. Mukhtar and Abūl-Fakhr, the foremost Ismā‘ili jurists, and Ibn ‘Uqayl, the chief qāḍī. Ibn Muyassar has preserved a detailed account of this event, which took place in 516/1122. It is possible that Ibn Muyassar derived his account from a near contemporary Egyptian annalist, Ibn al-Ma‘mūn (d. 588/1192), the son of the Fāṭimid vizier who had organized the assembly.

In the course of this meeting, various circumstances and episodes were mentioned according to which al-Mustansir had supposedly expressed his preference for al-Musta‘li over Nizār. Most significantly, Nizār’s full-sister, seated behind a screen in an adjoining chamber, testified that al-Mustansir, on his deathbed, had designated al-Musta‘li as his successor, divulging this nass to his own sister (Nizār’s aunt). At the end of the meeting, al-Ma‘mūn ordered Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (d. 542/1147), then an important secretary (kātib) at the Fāṭimid chancery, to draw up an epistle (sijill) to be read from the pulpits of the mosques throughout Egypt. This epistle, or perhaps what may be a longer version of it produced later, has been preserved under the title of al-Hidāya al-Āmiriyya. Written about twenty-eight years after the Nizārī–Musta‘li schism, it is the earliest official refutation of Nizār’s claims to the imamate. The Hidāya admits that al-Mustansir had originally nominated Nizār as his heir apparent. But it also argues, in violation of the beliefs of the earlier Ismā‘ilis, that this original nass was subsequently revoked in favour of al-Musta‘li, repeatedly referring to al-Mustansir’s deathbed nass. The Hidāya also gives prominence to the testimony of Nizār’s sister, who, during the assembly of Shawwal 516 A.H., had defended the legitimacy of the Musta‘li line of imāms. The Hidāya was also circulated in Syria, where it caused an uproar amongst the Nizāris of Damascus. One of the Syrian Nizāris forwarded al-Āmir’s epistle to his chief, who wrote a refutation of it. This Nizāri refutation was, in due course, read at a meeting of the Musta‘lians in Damascus. A Musta‘lian dā‘ī from Damascus then wrote to al-Āmir asking him for further guidance on the matter. Soon afterwards, al-Āmir sent a reply to his Syrian dā‘ī in the form of an additional epistle, refuting the Nizāri refutation of the Hidāya.

After the assassination of al-Āmir on 2 Dhu’l-Qa‘da 524 A.H., the Fāṭimid Caliphate embarked on its rapid decline, with numerous periods of crisis, whilst a new schism developed amongst the Musta‘lian Ismā‘ilis. It may be noted in passing that Idrīs, in his ‘Uyun al-akhbār, in line with the
Musta'li-Tayyibi tradition in general, and for some inexplicable reason, mentions the year 526 A.H. as the year of al-Âmir’s death. The Tayyibis hold that a son, named al-Âtyyib, had been born to al-Âmir a few months before his death. This Tayyibi tradition is supported especially by an epistle of al-Âmir sent to the Sulayhid queen of Yaman, al-Malika al-Sayyida, announcing the birth of Abu’l-Qâsim al-Âtyyib in Rabî’ II 524 A.H. The historical reality of al-Âtyyib is also attested by Ibn Muyasar, probably on the authority of the lost chronicle of al-Muhannak (d. 549/1154), and by other histories written during the 6th/12th century. Al-Âtyyib was immediately designated as al-Âmir’s heir, and the occasion was celebrated by a fortnight of public festivities in Cairo and Fustât. After al-Âmir, who had acted as his own vizier during the last years of his caliphate, power was immediately assumed by his cousin, Abu’l-Maymûn ’Abd al-Majîd, the eldest member of the Fâtimid family and the son of Abu’l-Qâsim Muḥammad b. al-Mustansîr. More specifically, Hazârmard (Hizabr al-Mulûk) and Barghash, two favourites of al-Âmir, now came to hold the reins of power in the Fâtimid state, whilst placing ’Abd al-Majîd as nominal ruler. ’Abd al-Majîd ruled officially as regent, pending the expected delivery of al-Âmir’s pregnant wife. Hazârmard himself assumed the vizierate, and Yânis, an Armenian general in the service of the Fâtimids, became the commander-in-chief and the regent’s chamberlain. ’Abd al-Majîd somehow managed to conceal the existence of al-Âtyyib, born a few months earlier, and nothing more is known of his fate.

The regency of ’Abd al-Majîd and the vizierate of Hazârmard proved to be brief. Abû ’Alî Âḥmad, nicknamed Kutayfât, the son of al-Afdal b. Badr al-Jamâlî, was raised to the vizierate by the army about two weeks after al-Âmir’s death. Hazârmard was executed, but ’Abd al-Majîd continued a while longer as regent (wali ’ahd al-Muslimîn) with Abû ’Alî Kutayfât as his vizier. This temporary arrangement is confirmed by an epistle issued in Dhu’l-Qâda 524 A.H. by the Fâtimid chancery to the monastery of St Catherine in Mount Sinai. Soon afterwards, probably when the expectation of the birth of a male heir to al-Âmir had proved false, Kutayfât made radical changes which affected the very foundations of the Fâtimid regime. ’Abd al-Majîd was overthrown and imprisoned by Kutayfât, who now declared the Fâtimid dynasty deposed and proclaimed the sovereignty of the twelfth imâm of the Twelver Shi‘îs, the Imâm al-Mahdî whose reappearance had been expected since 260 A.H. As a result of this ingenious religio-political solution to the succession problem
created by the absence of a direct heir to the Fāṭimid throne and the imāmate. Kutayfāt, an Imāmī Shiʿī himself, acquired a unique position of power, ruling as a dictator responsible to no one either in theory or in practice. Kutayfāt issued coins in Egypt during 525 and 526 A.H., bearing the names of ‘al-Imām Muhammad Abu’l-Qāsim al-Muntazar li-Amr Allāh’, and ‘al-Imām al-Mahdi al-Qā’im bi-Amr Allāh’, in some of which he himself is named as the hidden imām’s representative (nā’ib) and deputy (khalīfā). These developments of course, meant the adoption of Imāmī Shiʿism, instead of Ismāʿīlism, as the state religion of the Fāṭimid state.

Nonetheless, Abū ʿAlī Kutayfāt, who came to adopt his father’s title of al-Afdal, allowed the Ismāʿīlis and other non-Twelver communities some consideration. Kutayfāt’s policies, however, created much resentment amongst the Ismāʿīlis and the supporters of the Fāṭimid dynasty in Egypt who plotted against him, cutting down the period of his rule to just about a year. On 16 Muḥarram 526/8 December 1131, Kutayfāt was overthrown and killed in yet another coup d’État, organized by the dissatisfied Ismāʿīli elements and the Kutāma faction of the army, led by Yānis. ʿAbd al-Majīd was released from prison and restored to power. This event came to be commemorated annually by the so-called feast of victory (ʿīd al-naṣr) held on that day, until the end of the Fāṭimid dynasty.

At first, ʿAbd al-Majīd ruled once again as regent, with Yānis assuming the vizierate. But three months later, in Rabi’ II 526/February 1132, he was proclaimed caliph and imām with the title of al-Ḥāfīz li-Dīn Allāh. And Ismāʿīlism was reinstated as the state religion of Fāṭimid Egypt. Al-Ḥāfīz became the first Fāṭimid caliph-imām whose father had not reigned before him; clearly, his irregular succession required specific justifications. Thus, a sijill was issued on the occasion of his proclamation as caliph-imām, containing various explanations for his legitimacy. Above all, this epistle, preserved by al-Qalqashandi, centred around the idea that al-ʿAмир, the previous imām, had personally transmitted the caliphate and the imāmate to his cousin ʿAbd al-Majīd, just as the Prophet had designated his cousin ʿAlī as his successor at Ghadir Khumm. It also referred to the nomination of ʿAbd al-Rahīm b. Ilyās, al-Ḥākim’s cousin, as heir apparent. Yet, it did not mention the uncertainties of the initial interregnum of al-Ḥāfīz and the obscurities of his regencies, nor did it make any reference to al-Ṭayyib and to al-ʿAмир’s posthumous child. This important document, claiming legitimacy for the imāmate of al-Ḥāfīz on the basis of an alleged nasṣ derived from al-ʿAмир, provided the foundation on which Fāṭimid rule continued for another four decades. It also provided justification for the
claims of the later Fāṭimids to the imāmāte of a section of the Musta‘lian Ismā‘ili community. The expressions al-dawla al-Ḥāfiziyya and al-imāma al-Ḥāfiziyya henceforth occur frequently in documents issued by the Fāṭimid chancery.\(^\text{30}\)

The proclamation of al-Ḥāfiz as caliph-imām caused the first important schism in the Musta‘lian community, further weakening the Ismā‘ili movement. The claims of al-Ḥāfiz to the imāmāte, though he was not a direct descendant of the previous imām, were supported by the official da‘wa organization in Egypt and by the majority of the Musta‘lian Ismā‘ilis in both Egypt and Syria. These Musta‘lians, recognizing al-Ḥāfiz and the later Fāṭimids as their rightful imāms, became known as al-Ḥāfiziyya or al-Majidiyya. However, some Musta‘lian groups in Egypt and Syria, as well as many in Yaman, acknowledged the rights of al-Ṭayyib to the imāmāte, accepting him as al-Āmir’s successor and rejecting the claims of al-Ḥāfiz. These Musta‘lians were initially known as the Āmiriyya, but later, after the establishment of the independent Ṭayyibi da‘wa in Yaman, became designated as the Ṭayyibiyya. Ḥāfizi Ismā‘ilism, as we shall see, also found support in Yaman for some time. However, Yaman was to become, for several centuries, the chief stronghold of Ṭayyibi Ismā‘ilism. Thus, by 526/1132, the unified Fāṭimid Ismā‘ili movement of al-Mustansir’s time had become split into the rival Nizārī, Ḥāfizi and Ṭayyibi factions. While the Nizārīs had by then founded an independent state in Persia and Syria, and the Ṭayyibis were taking advantage of the mountainous districts of Yaman to consolidate their own position, the days of Ḥāfizi Ismā‘ilism, now the official creed of the Fāṭimid state, were already numbered.

Since Badr al-Jamāli’s time, the viziers had become the real masters of the Fāṭimid empire. But al-Ḥāfiz, the only caliph amongst the later Fāṭimids who was a grown man at the time of his accession, paid special attention to the activities of his viziers. It may be added that from the reign of al-Ḥāfiz onwards, the Fāṭimid viziers, or more precisely ‘Viziers of the Sword’, also competed with the claimants to the vizierate in gaining the loyalties of the various factions of the army, resulting in continuous military rivalries and disturbances in Egypt. Having become fearful of the growing influence of his Armenian vizier Yānis, who had given his name to a private regiment, al-Yānisiyya, al-Ḥāfiz had him killed towards the end of 526/1132; the vizierate of Yānis having endured less than a year. After ruling without a vizier for some time, in 528/1133–1134 al-Ḥāfiz entrusted the duties of the vizierate to his eldest son Sulaymān, who had that year been designated as heir apparent. When Sulaymān died two
months later, al-Ḥāfiz named another of his sons, Ḥaydara, as heir, also charging him with the functions of the vizierate. 31 Ḥasan, a third son of al-Ḥāfiz, driven by jealousy, successfully plotted against his father and Ḥaydara, seizing power as vizier and killing several army leaders. Irritated by Ḥasan’s behaviour, the army now revolted and demanded his head. Al-Ḥāfiz was obliged to comply, and had Ḥasan poisoned by his physician. To deal with the deteriorating situation, Ḥasan had previously appealed for aid to Bahrām, an Armenian general who served the Fāṭimids and was at the time the governor of al-Gharbiyya, a province in lower Egypt. When Bahrām entered Cairo with his Armenian troops, Ḥasan had already been killed. Nonetheless, al-Ḥāfiz could not ignore Bahrām’s presence in the capital and the Armenian general was appointed to the vizierate in Jumādā II 529/March 1135.

The pro-Armenian policies of Bahrām, who encouraged the immigration of his co-religionists to Egypt and gave them important posts, angered the Muslim populace and soon provoked a military revolt led by Riḍwān b. Walakhshi, the new governor of al-Gharbiyya. Abandoned by the Muslim troops in the Fāṭimid army, Bahrām was forced out of office in Jumādā I 531/February 1137, when he fled to upper Egypt to seek the assistance of his brother Vasak, the governor of Qūṣ. But Vasak had been killed by the Muslims, and Bahrām now had to face an army sent after him by Riḍwān, who had meanwhile succeeded to the vizierate. Bahrām was saved through the intervention of Roger II, king of Sicily. Granted safe-conduct by al-Ḥāfiz, he was allowed to retire to a monastery. Riḍwān, himself a Sunni, now began to persecute the Christians. Soon, he came to exercise full authority and took the title of al-malik, or king, a title which later passed to other Fāṭimid viziers and then to all members of the Ayyūbid dynasty. Al-Ḥāfiz, threatened and displeased by the growing influence of his vizier, removed Riḍwān from office in 533/1139; he was later killed in 542/1147 while attempting to overthrow the caliph. The caliph recalled Bahrām to Cairo, entrusting the vizierate to him without officially appointing him to the post. Bahrām died in the Fāṭimid palace in 535/1140, and al-Ḥāfiz personally took part in the funeral procession of his faithful Armenian servant. 32 Subsequently, Ibn Maṣāl held the vizierate for some time during the latter part of the caliphate of al-Ḥāfiz. 33 Al-Ḥāfiz, the eleventh Fāṭimid caliph and the twenty-first imām of the Ḥāfizī Ismāʿīlīs, died in Jumādā II 544/October 1149, after a reign of almost eighteen years beset by numerous revolts and disturbances.

Like al-Ḥāfiz, the last three Fāṭimid caliphs, al-Ẓāfir (544–549/1149–
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1154), al-Fā'īz (549–555/1154–1160), and al-Ẓāfir (555–567/1160–1171), were also recognized as the imāms of the Ḥāfiẓiyya. These caliph-imāms who died in their youth were, however, no more than puppets in the hands of their viziers.34

Al-Ḥāfiẓ was succeeded by his seventeen year-old son Abū Mansūr Ismā'īl, who adopted the title of al-Ẓāfir bi-Amr Allāh. Al-Ẓāfir, strongly inclined to a life of pleasure, chose Ibn Maṣāl as his vizier; this being the last time a vizier was appointed by a Fāṭimid caliph. During his few months in office, Ibn Maṣāl checked the quarrels that raged between the Blacks and the Rayḥānīs in the army, restoring relative order to the country. Soon afterwards, al-ʿAdil b. al-Salār, the governor of Alexandria, revolted and marched on Cairo at the head of his troops. He defeated and killed Ibn Maṣāl in Shawwāl 544/February 1150, forcing al-Ẓāfir to nominate him as vizier with the title al-Malik al-ʿAdil. Ibn al-Salār, who in 545/1150 fruitlessly sought an alliance with the Zangid ruler of Aleppo, Nūr al-Dīn (541–569/1156–1174), against the Franks, and who also engaged the Fāṭimid fleet against the Frankish ports of Syria, was murdered in Muḥarram 548/April 1153.35 The assassination plot, approved by the caliph, had been conceived by Ibn al-Salār's step-son, ʿAbbās, and carried out by the latter's son Naṣr, a favourite of al-Ẓāfir. Thereupon, ʿAbbās, who was commander of the garrison of Asqalān, the last Fāṭimid foothold in Syria, returned to Cairo and seized the vizierate.36 Asqalān was lost to the Franks shortly afterwards in Jumādā I 548/August 1153. ʿAbbās, rapidly becoming convinced that the caliph was conspiring against him, resolved to move first, with the aid of his son. Accordingly, Naṣr, luring al-Ẓāfir to his house, killed him in Muḥarram 549/April 1154.

ʿAbbās, continuing as vizier, then placed al-Ẓāfir's five year-old son ʿĪsā on the Fāṭimid throne, giving him the title of al-Fā'īz bi-Naṣr Allāh. ʿAbbās also charged two of al-Ẓāfir's brothers with the murder of the caliph and had them executed. These events terrified the members of the Fāṭimid family, and they appealed for help to Ṭalāʾī b. Ruzzik, the Armenian governor of Usyūṭ (Asyūṭ) in upper Egypt. As Ibn Ruzzik approached Cairo, ʿAbbās and Naṣr fled to Syria, where the Franks, warned in advance, awaited them. ʿAbbās was killed in Rabi' I 549/June 1154, whilst Naṣr was delivered to the Fāṭimids and executed the following year. Meanwhile, Ibn Ruzzik had succeeded ʿAbbās to the vizierate in 549/1154, and became the absolute master of Egypt, a position he maintained throughout the reign of al-Fā'īz. Ibn Ruzzik, too, carried some military operations against the Crusaders, gaining victories at Ghażza and
al-Khalil (Hebron), in southern Palestine, in 553/1158. But he failed in his endeavours to secure an alliance with Nūr al-Dīn, which would have effectively protected Egypt against the Crusaders. The sickly and helpless al-Fāʾīz died in an epileptic seizure in Rajab 555/July 1160 at the age of eleven, after a nominal reign of some six years spent in virtual captivity.

Al-Šāliḥ Ṭalāʾī b. Ruzzik now placed Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Yūsuf, the grandson of al-Ḥāfiz and a cousin of al-Fāʾīz, on the Fāṭimid throne with the laqab of al-ʿĀḍid li-Dīn Allāh. Al-ʿĀḍid’s father Yūsuf had been one of the Fāṭimid princes charged with al-Ẓafir’s murder and executed on the orders of ʿAbbis. Al-ʿĀḍid, destined to be the last Fāṭimid caliph, was only nine years-old at the time of his accession. Ibn Ruzzik continued to act as the effective ruler of the state, and he further enhanced his position by having his daughter married to the caliph. He was assassinated in Ramadān 556/September 1161, evidently at the instigation of one of al-ʿĀḍid’s aunts. The caliph was obliged to confer the vizierate on Ruzzik, the son of the murdered vizier, who soon afterwards met a similar fate. Ruzzik was killed by Shāwar, the governor of upper Egypt who had revolted and entered Cairo to assume the vizierate in Muḥarram 558/January 1163. Shāwar’s own vizierate, however, did not last more than nine months. In Ramadān 558/August 1163, he was driven out of Cairo by Dirghām, an able Fāṭimid officer who had distinguished himself by defeating the Franks at Ghazza in 553/1158. Now there followed a fateful struggle between Shāwar and his successor Dirghām, not only influencing the relations of Egypt with the Crusaders and Nūr al-Dīn, but also bringing about the circumstances that led to the downfall of the Fāṭimid dynasty. 37

Shāwar had succeeded in taking refuge at the Zangid court in Syria, where he sought the help of Nūr al-Dīn for regaining the Fāṭimid vizierate. After some hesitation, Nūr al-Dīn agreed to assist Shāwar, encouraged perhaps by the fact that Amalric I (1163–1174), the new Frankish king of Jerusalem, was then seriously considering his own conquest of Egypt. 38 The Franks had already, in 556/1161, entered Egypt and forced Ibn Ruzzik to pay them an annual tribute. The following year, another Frankish invasion of Egypt had proved abortive due to the deliberate flooding of the Nile by the Fāṭimids. At any event, towards the end of 559/1163, the advance guards of Amalric had entered Egypt, obliging Dirghām to resume the payment of the tribute previously promised to the Franks. It was under these circumstances that Nūr al-Dīn sent Shāwar back to Egypt with a force commanded by Asad al-Dīn.
Shirkūh, an *amīr* of Kurdish origins who along with his brother Ayyūb had entered the service of the Zangids. On this expedition, Shirkūh took along his nephew Ṣalaḥ al-Dīn (Saladin), the son of Ayyūb and the future founder of the Ayyūbid dynasty. After several battles, Dīrghām was defeated and killed in Ramaḍān 559/August 1164; Šāwar was restored to the vizierate.

Šāwar's second term as vizier lasted about five years, a most confusing period in the closing years of Fāṭimid history, marked by several more Frankish and Zangid invasions of Egypt, and by Šāwar's vacillating alliances with Amalric I and Nūr al-Dīn, whose forces fought numerous battles on Egyptian soil. It was also in 562/1167 that Amalric I despatched an embassy, headed by Hugh of Caesarea, to al-ʿĀḍid, and successfully demanded a substantial tribute. Even in these final days of the dynasty, the Christian knights were amazed by the splendour and ceremony of the Fāṭimid court. In 564/1168, Nūr al-Dīn, now completely distrustful of Šāwar, who had failed to honour his commitments to the Zangid ruler, sent his third expeditionary force to Egypt, again under the command of Shirkūh, and accompanied by Saladin. Nominally, the expedition had been undertaken in response to the appeals of Šāwar and al-ʿĀḍid, who had become weary of the Frankish occupation of Egypt. But in effect, Nūr al-Dīn now entertained designs of his own for the Fāṭimid territories. Shirkūh, having caused the withdrawal of Amalric's troops from Egypt, entered Cairo triumphantly, now also resolving to eliminate Šāwar. Saladin arrested Šāwar and had him killed, with al-ʿĀḍid's consent, in Rabi' II 564/January 1169. Thereupon, al-ʿĀḍid was obliged to appoint Shirkūh to the vizierate, giving him the title of al-Malik al-Manṣūr. When Shirkūh suddenly died two months later in Jumādā II 564/March 1169, he was succeeded by Saladin, the last of the Fāṭimid viziers.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūṣuf b. Ayyūb (d. 589/1193), who received his formal investiture to the vizierate with the *laqab* of al-Malik al-Nāṣir from al-ʿĀḍid, and became known as Saladin in the European chronicles of the Crusades, was generally referred to by the title of *sūlān*. He rapidly began to consolidate his position and prepare the ground for ending Fāṭimid rule, an objective persistently sought by his master Nūr al-Dīn, a fervent Sunni favoured by the 'Abbāsids. Saladin immediately embarked on the task of building his own loyal military force and destroying the Fāṭimid army. In particular, he dealt effectively and ruthlessly with the mutinous black troops in Egypt, an important contingent of the Fāṭimid army, burning down their quarters and routing their remnants in upper Egypt. He
systematically appointed Syrians to key administrative positions at the expense of Egyptians. At the same time, Saladin gradually adopted anti-Ismāʿili policies, including the elimination of the Shiʿi form of adhān and the closing of the sessions of Ismāʿili lectures at al-Azhar and elsewhere in Cairo. He also appointed a Sunni to the position of chief qāḍī, who removed the Ismāʿili jurists of Egypt and replaced them with Sunni ones. About two and a half-years after his accession to the vizierate, Saladin felt sufficiently secure to take the final step in uprooting the Fāṭimid dynasty.

Saladin formally put an end to Fāṭimid rule when, in Muḥarram 567/September 1171, he had the khutba read in Cairo in the name of the reigning ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Mustaʿdī (566–575/1170–1180), thus proclaiming ʿAbbāsid suzerainty in Egypt. A Shāfiʿi theologian, Najm al-Dīn al-Khabūshānī, carried out this act, reciting the misdeeds of the Fāṭimids, who were characterized as infidels. After two centuries, Ismāʿilism was abandoned as the state religion of Egypt, the sole remnant of the former Fāṭimid empire. Egypt returned to the fold of Sunnism amidst the complete apathy of the populace. A few days after, the helpless al-ʿĀḍid, the fourteenth and the last of the Fāṭimid caliphs, and the twenty-fourth imām of the Ḥāfizī Ismāʿilīs, died following a brief illness. He was barely twenty-one years old. The Fāṭimid Caliphate, established in 297/909 and embodying perhaps the greatest religio-political and cultural success of Shiʿi Islam, had thus come to a close after 262 years. Saladin, who acquired his independence on Nūr al-Dīn’s death in 569/1174, succeeded in founding the Ayyūbid dynasty, which was to rule over Egypt, Syria, Yaman and other parts of the Near East.

On al-ʿĀḍid’s death, the numerous members of the Fāṭimid family were permanently placed in honourable captivity in sections of the Fāṭimid palace and in other isolated quarters. The immense treasures of the deposed dynasty were divided between Saladin’s officers and Nūr al-Dīn. Saladin also caused the destruction of the renowned Fāṭimid libraries at Cairo, including the collections of the Dār al-Ḥikma. At the same time, Saladin started to persecute the Egyptian Ismāʿīlīs, who for the most part were Ḥāfizī Mustaʿlians. The Ḥāfizī daʿwa, which had now lost official support in Egypt, did not survive long after the fall of the Fāṭimid dynasty. It may be noted that during the reigns of the last four Fāṭimid caliphs, recognized as the imāms of the Ḥāfiziyya, the Ismāʿīlī traditions of the earlier times had been maintained. These included the appointment of chief daʿīs as administrative heads of the daʿwa, starting with Sirāj al-Dīn Najm b. Jaʿfar (d. 528/1134), who became chief daʿī and chief qāḍī in 526/
1132, and ending with Ibn 'Abd al-Qawî and his relatives, who held that office during the final years of the dynasty. It may also be assumed that the Ḥāfizī theologists of this period engaged in literary activities. However, as the Ḥāfiziyya were to disappear soon afterwards, no Ḥāfizī texts analogous to the mediaeval works of the Ṭāyyibīs and Nizārīs, preserved by the adherents of these branches of Ismāʿīlism, have survived to the present times.

In the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Fāṭimid dynasty, the Ismāʿīlīs of Egypt, fleeing from the persecutions of the country’s new Sunnī Ayyūbid masters, went into hiding. Many took refuge in upper Egypt, where they continued to agitate against Saladin. And for some time thereafter, the direct descendants of al-Ḥāfiz, as well as a few false Fāṭimid pretenders, claimed the imāmate of the Ḥāfizīs. Some of them also led revolts which always received limited support in Egypt. Al-ʿĀdid had appointed his eldest son, Dāʿūd, as his heir apparent. After al-ʿĀdid, the Ḥāfizīs recognized Dāʿūd, with the title of al-Ḥāmid liʾllāh, as their next imām. He, like other members of the Fāṭimid family, was detained as a prisoner by the Ayyūbids. In 569/1174, a major conspiracy for overthrowing Saladin and restoring Fāṭimid rule was discovered in Cairo. The chief conspirators, who had also sought the help of Amalric I and the Franks, included the famous Yamanī poet-historian ʿUmāra, a former chief dāʿī, several Ismāʿīlī jurists and Fāṭimid commanders, some descendants of the viziers Ibn Ruzzik and Shāwar, and even some of Saladin’s own officers. ʿUmāra and certain of his collaborators were executed on Saladin’s orders, while many of the supporters of the fallen dynasty were killed or exiled to upper Egypt, henceforth the main area of pro-Fāṭimid activity. During 569–570/1174–1175, a pro-Fāṭimid revolt led by the general Kanz al-Dawla, and with the participation of the Egyptian Ismāʿīlis, was suppressed in upper Egypt by al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, Saladin’s brother and future successor. In 572/1176–1177, a pretender, falsely claiming to be Dāʿūd b. al-ʿĀdid, led another pro-Fāṭimid revolt in the town of Qift. Saladin had to send an army, commanded by al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, to deal with the revolt, in which many participated. Some three thousand inhabitants of Qift were killed before the revolt was ended. It may be noted at this juncture that while the Ḥāfiziyya and the pro-Fāṭimid elements were thus being annihilated in Egypt, the Nizāriyya had developed into a significant political force in Syria, where, under the leadership of the celebrated Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, they had to be reckoned with in various local alliances and rivalries, as we shall see later. It was also at this
time that the Syrian Nizāris struggled against Nūr al-Dīn and the Ayyūbids, making two unsuccessful attempts on Saladin’s life during 570–571/1175–1176, when he was conducting military campaigns in Syria.

A few more revolts of little significance, led by Fāṭimid pretenders or Ismā‘īlis, occurred during the final decades of the 6th/12th century, during which time the Ayyūbid regime had become well entrenched in Egypt under Saladin, who left various parts of his empire to different members of his family. The real Dā‘ūd b. al-ʿĀḍid died as a prisoner in Cairo in 604/1207–1208, during the reign of the fourth Ayyūbid sultan al-Malik al-ʿĀdil I (596–615/1200–1218). In this same year Dā‘ūd and other surviving Fāṭimid prisoners were collectively transferred to a new location in the citadel of Cairo. The Ḥāfiẓis of Egypt asked and received permission from the Ayyūbids to mourn Dā‘ūd publicly in Cairo. The Ayyūbids used the occasion to arrest the Ḥāfiẓi leaders and confiscate their properties. After Dā‘ūd, his son Sulaymān, surnamed Badr al-Dīn and conceived secretly in prison, seems to have been generally acknowledged as the imām of the Ḥāfiẓiyya. Sulaymān too, died in his Cairo prison in 645/1248. Evidently, Sulaymān left no progeny, although some of his partisans held that he had a son who was kept in hiding. A number of Fāṭimids from amongst the descendants of al-ʿĀḍid, including two of his grandsons, Abu’l-Qāsim ʿImād al-Dīn and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Badr al-Dīn, were still alive in 660/1262, during the early decades of the Mamlūk dynasty established in 648/1250 by the Turkish slave troops in Egypt. According to al-Maqrīzī, the Fāṭimid prisoners were finally released in 671/1272–1273. Still later, in 697/1298, a Fāṭimid pretender, claiming to be Dā‘ūd b. Sulaymān b. Dā‘ūd b. al-ʿĀḍid, appeared in upper Egypt where the remnants of the Ḥāfiẓiyya had clandestinely survived. The Ḥāfiẓiyya had disintegrated almost completely in Egypt by the end of the 7th/13th century. Indeed, by about a century after the fall of the Fāṭimid dynasty, Ismā‘īlism too had disappeared from the land of Egypt. Henceforth, only a few isolated Ismā‘īli communities, probably Ḥāfiẓi, continued to exist for a while longer in some villages in upper Egypt, such as the one reported to have existed around 727/1327 in the village of ʿUṣfūn. By the end of the 6th/12th century, Ḥāfiẓi Ismā‘īlism had disappeared also in Syria, although an isolated Ḥāfiẓi community is mentioned there in the Baqi‘a mountains near Safad during the early decades of the 8th/14th century.

The Ḥāfiẓi da‘wa, as noted, had found support also in Yaman. In fact, the
Zuray’ids of ‘Adan and some of the Hamdānids of Ṣan‘ā’ adhered to Ḥāfiẓī Ismā‘īlism until the Ayyūbid conquest of Yaman. And significant numbers in the territories of these local Yamānī dynasties, as well as in the region of Ḥarāz, later the stronghold of Ṭayyibī Ismā‘īlism, had rallied to the side of the Ḥāfiẓī da’wa, in preference to the Ṭayyibī da’wa which after the collapse of the Ṣulayḥīd dynasty in 532/1138 did not have the support of any of the ruling dynasties of Yaman.

The main source for the history of the Zuray’ids is ‘Umāra, who had close relations with several members of the dynasty. ‘Umāra, a zealous partisan of the Fāṭimids, wrote his history of Yaman in the year 563/1167–1168, at the request of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, at the time chief secretary to the caliph al-‘Āḍid and subsequently a close companion of Saladin. Later south Arabian historians, like al-Khazraji (d. 812/1410), add very little to ‘Umāra’s account of the Zuray’id dynasty. The Zuray’ids, who belonged to the Yām branch of the Banū Hamdān, had come to prominence during the reigns of the early Ṣulayḥīds. In recognition of their services to the Ṣulayḥīd and to the cause of the Fāṭimid da’wa in Yaman, the second Ṣulayḥīd ruler al-Mukarram Aḥmad (459–477/1083–1084) conferred in 476/1083 the governorship of ‘Adan and its surrounding regions on the brothers al-‘Abbās and al-Mas‘ūd b. al-Karam (al-Mukarram). They ruled jointly and founded the Ḥisnī Ḥisnī dynasty of the Zuray’ids of ‘Adan. The generally accepted name of the house, the Banū Zuray’ or Zuray‘iyya, was derived from the name of a subsequent ruler, Zuray’ b. al-‘Abbās. Al-‘Abbās was given the hinterland of ‘Adan, ruling from the Ḥisn al-Ta’kar, while al-Mas‘ūd received the port and the coastline of ‘Adan, establishing his residence at the fortress of al-Khadra’. The joint system of government, with constant rivalry between the two branches of the Zuray’id family, continued for some time. Since ‘Adan formed part of the dowry of the queen al-Sayyida, who soon became the real authority in the Ṣulayḥīd state, the Zuray’ids were to pay her direct allegiance and a portion of their revenues. Disagreements and conflicts over the actual size of the annual tribute payable to al-Malika al-Sayyida proved to be a constant theme in Ṣulayḥīd-Zuray’id relations, contributing to the eventual estrangement of the Zuray’ids from their Ṣulayḥīd overlords.

In 480/1087, when al-Sayyida sent her general and chief advisor al-Muḥammad b. Abīl-Barakāt to Zabīd to fight the Najāḥīds, the Zuray’id rulers al-Mas‘ūd and Zuray’, who had succeeded his father al-‘Abbās in 477/1084, fought on the side of the Ṣulayḥīds and lost their lives in that campaign. However, the Zuray’ids themselves periodically attempted in
vain to win their independence from the Sulayhids, although they did succeed in gradually reducing the tribute they paid to them. On one occasion, after 484/1091, al-Mufaqad had to be despatched with a large army to ‘Adan so as to force the renewed submission of the Zuray‘id rulers, Abu‘l-Su‘úd b. Zuray‘ and Abu‘l-Ghārāt b. al-Mas‘úd. After the death of al-Mufaqad in 504/1110, al-Sayyida sent a cousin of al-Mufaqad, As‘ad, against the Zuray‘ids who had rebelled anew, refusing to pay the customary tribute. It was Saba‘ b. Abu‘l-Su‘úd, the grandson of Zuray‘, who united the port and the interior of ‘Adan under his own rule. With sufficient tribal support and after prolonged warfare during 531–532/1136–1138, he finally defeated ‘Ali b. Abu‘l-Ghārāt, thus permanently ending the rule of the Mas‘údid branch of the family. Saba‘ died in 533/1138–1139, a few months after he had become the sole Zuray‘id ruler.

Towards the end of his life, Saba‘ had started to exert his independence from al-Malika al-Sayyida, taking over various fortresses in the southern highlands of Yaman which belonged to the Sulayhids. Saba‘ also enriched the Zuray‘id treasury by prospering from the flourishing trade between Fātimid Egypt and India, which passed through the Red Sea and the port of ‘Adan. When al-Ḥāfiz claimed the imāmate in 526/1132, a bitter fight undoubtedly ensued at the court of the Sulayhids and throughout the Musta‘lian Ismā‘ili community in Yaman. As a result, the Yamanī Ismā‘ilīs, always closely connected with the headquarters of the Fātimid da‘wa in Egypt, became split into two factions. The Sulayhid queen championed the cause of al-Ṭayyib and became the official leader of the Ṭayyibi faction in Yaman. On the other hand, the Zuray‘ids became the leaders of the Ḥāfizī (Majidī) party, recognizing ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfiz as their new imām after al-Āmir. It was probably immediately after the Ḥāfizī–Ṭayyibi schism that the Zuray‘id Saba‘, under obscure circumstances, allied himself to al-Ḥāfiz and assumed the title of da‘ī on behalf of the Ḥāfizī da‘wa in Yaman.

It seems that the successors of Saba‘ became officially designated as da‘īs by the headquarters of the Ḥāfizī da‘wa at Cairo. Muḥammad b. Saba‘ was the first Zuray‘id to have become so designated as a da‘ī in Yaman. Saba‘ had been initially succeeded by his son ‘Ali al-A‘azz, who died a year later in 534/1139. Subsequently, Muḥammad b. Saba‘, a younger brother of ‘Ali, was placed on the throne by the powerful Bilāl b. Jarīr, who retained the Zuray‘id vizierate from that time until his death around 546/1151. Meanwhile, al-Qādī al-Rashīd Aḥmad b. ‘Ali b. al-Zubayr had set off from Cairo in 534/1139–1140 with a charter of investiture issued by al-
Hāfiz, appointing ‘Alī b. Saba’ to the office of the dā‘i of the Majidi da’wa in Yaman. By the time of the Qāḍī al-Rashid’s arrival in Yaman, ‘Alī had died, and, consequently, the dā‘iship was transferred to the next Zuray’id ruler Muḥammad b. Saba’.56 Al-Hāfiz also bestowed several honorific titles on the Zuray’id vizier Bilāl for his loyalty to the Fātimids and the Ḥāfizī da’wa. Bilāl, who had married his daughter to Muḥammad b. Saba’, was followed in the vizierate by two of his sons. In 547/1152–1153, Muḥammad b. Saba’ purchased a number of fortresses and towns from the Sulayḥids, whose dynasty had effectively ended with the death of al-Malika al-Sayyida in 532 A.H. These acquisitions included the former Sulayḥid capital Dhū Jibla which was chosen by Muḥammad as his own place of residence.

Muḥammad b. Saba’ died around 550/1155 and was succeeded by his son ‘Imrān, who, like his father, carried the title of dā‘i. During ‘Imrān’s rule, close relations continued to be maintained between the later Fātimids and the Zuray’id state. There are extant coins of this Zuray’id ruler, minted in ‘Adan in the year 556 A.H., and bearing the name of the Imām al-ʿĀḍid, on one side, and ‘Imrān’s name on the other.57 With the death of ‘Imrān in 561/1166, the affairs of the Zuray’id state fell into the hands of the vizier Yāsir b. Bilāl, who ruled on behalf of ‘Imrān’s three minor sons. By then, the Ḥāfizī Ismā‘ili kingdom of the Zuray’ids included ‘Adan, Abyan, Dumluwa, Ta‘izz, and other localities as far north as Naqil Šayd. Zuray’id rule was brought to an end with the Ayyūbid conquest of south Arabia in 569/1173. Tūrānshāh, Saladin’s brother, who led the Ayyūbid armies into Yaman, also conquered ‘Adan and killed Yāsir b. Bilāl. The Ayyūbids re-established Sunnism throughout the former Zuray’id territories. ‘Imrān’s sons, Muḥammad, Maņṣūr and Abu’l-Su‘ūd, continued to stay for a while longer, under the guardianship of Jawhar b. ʿAbd Allāh, at the fortress of Dumluwa, the last Zuray’id outpost. Eventually in 584/1188, Jawhar sold Dumluwa to the Ayyūbids and left south Arabia for Abyssinia in the company of ‘Imrān’s sons, the last nominal rulers of the Zuray’id state.58

The Ḥāfizī da’wa in Yaman was also supported by at least some of the Hamdānīd rulers of Šanʿa’, who like the Zuray’ids had been Ismā‘īlis and belonged to the tribal confederation of Hamdān.59 Šanʿa’ and its environs were often ruled by the large and influential Banū Hamdān, many of whose clans adhered to Zaydī or Ismā‘īli Shi‘ism. Around 467/1074, when the second Sulayḥid al-Mukarram retired to Dhū Jibla and left the affairs of the state to his consort al-Malika al-Sayyida, Šanʿa’ was placed under the
joint governorship of al-Qâdı 'Imrân b. al-Fâdî and As‘ad b. Shihâb, al-Mukarram's uncle. 'Imrân, one of the leaders of the Banû Hamdân from the sub-tribe of Yâm, had supported the founder of the Sulayhid dynasty in most of his wars and had also undertaken a mission on his behalf to Cairo in 459/1067, urging al-Mustansîr to permit the visit of 'Ali b. Muḥammad al-Šulayḥî to the Fâṭimid court. Later, 'Imrân, who like the Sulayhîs adhered to Fâṭimid Ismâ‘îlîsm, became the commander of the Sulayhîd army. 'Imrân’s governorship of Şan‘â’, however, did not last very long. For some unknown reason, there soon occurred an estrangement between al-Mukarram and 'Imrân, who was removed from his post. It seems that 'Imrân had been intriguing against the Sulayhîs, probably out of his resentment for the authority exercised by al-Sayyîdî. He had also become envious of the power and position of Lamâk b. Mâlik al-Ḥammâdî in the Sulayhîd state. As it turned out, the successors of these two rival qâdis became leaders of opposing Ismâ‘îlî factions in Yaman. While Lamâk’s successors held the dâ’iship of the Tâyyîbis, the descendants of 'Imrân were amongst those Hamdânî rulers supporting the Ḥâfîzî dâ’îwa. The rising fortunes of al-Mufâdîl b. Ābî-l-Barakât (d. 504/1110), al-Sayyîdî’s confidant who fought against the Najâhîs and the Zuray’îds, was another factor undermining the loyalty of the Zuray’îds and the Hamdânîs towards the Sulayhîds. In any case, due to the Sulayhîd queen’s popularity throughout Yaman, 'Imrân could not oppose her openly. In fact, 'Imrân fought for her in the Sulayhîd war against the Najâhîs in 479/1086, and was killed in battle.

In the meantime, different Hamdânî clans had been attempting to acquire their independence from the central authority of the Sulayhîs. By 492/1098–1099, they had severed Şan‘â’ from the Sulayhîd state. The city and its surrounding districts now came under the rule of Ḥâtim b. al-Ghashîm al-Mughallasî, another Hamdânî leader who founded the first of the three Hamdânî dynasties of Şan‘â’. Ḥâtim died in 502/1108 and was succeeded by his sons ‘Abd Allâh (502–504/1108–1110) and then Ma‘n, who came to face serious opposition from within the Banû Hamdân. In 510/1116, Ma‘n was formally deposed by the Qâdî Aḥmad b. 'Imrân b. al-Fâdî, the son of the former Sulayhîd governor of Şan‘â’, who had assumed the leadership of the Hamdânî clans. Hishâm b. al-Qubayb, from another Hamdânî family and a Musta‘lian Ismâ‘îlî, was now set up as the new ruler of Şan‘â’.

Hishâm, the founder of the second Hamdânî dynasty, died around 518/1124 and was succeeded by his brother Ḥimâs b. al-Qubayb. It was during the reign of Ḥimâs that al-Āmir died and al-Ḥâfîz claimed
the imāmate. Ḥimās became the first Hamdānid ruler to support the cause of al-Ḥāfiz in Yaman. He died in 527/1132–1133, shortly after the Ḥāfizī–Ṭayyibī schism, and his son Ḥātim took over the Hamdānid state. He, too, adhered to Ḥāfizī Ismā’īlism.

When Ḥātim b. Ḥimās died in 533/1138–1139, soon after al-Sayyida, his sons quarreled over his succession and tribal dissension arose once again within the Banū Hamdān. It was under these circumstances that the Hamdānī house of ‘Imrān, with the approval of the tribal leaders, assumed responsibility for ruling over Ṣan‘ā’. The control of the Ṣan‘ā’ area thus passed in 533 A.H. into the hands of Ḥamīd al-Dawla Ḥātim b. Aḥmad b. ‘Imrān, who founded the third Hamdānid dynasty of Ṣan‘ā’, the Banū Ḥātim. The heritage lost by ‘Imrān was regained by his grandson, who, by 545/1150, held the whole country north of Ṣan‘ā’ with the main exception of Ṣa‘dā, the chief Zaydi centre in Yaman. Ḥātim, like the Banu’l-Qubayb, supported the Ḥāfizī da’wa in the districts under his rule. Religious differences played their part in continuous entanglements between the Ḥāfizī Ḥātim and the Rassid Zaydi Imām al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad b. Sulaymān, who in 532/1137–1138 had proclaimed his leadership of the Yamanī Zaydīs in Ṣa‘dā. These conflicts began in 545/1150, when the Zaydīs attacked Ḥātim and temporarily wrested the control of Ṣan‘ā’ from the Hamdānīs, and continued until Ḥātim’s death in 556/1161.61 When Ḥātim regained control of Ṣan‘ā’, he restored the inscription at a mosque in Ṣan‘ā’ containing the names of the Fāṭimid Ismā’īlī Imāms and which had been erased by the Zaydi Imām al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad (d. 566/1170).62

Ḥātim was succeeded by his son ‘Alī, the last ruling member of his dynasty. Sultan ‘Alī b. Ḥātim consolidated his position and expanded his territories northward, gaining temporary control of even Ṣa‘dā, and westward as far as Ḥarāz, where significant numbers of Ḥāfizī Ismā’īlīs were then to be found. The Hamdānī ‘Alī b. Ḥātim who led the cause of the Ḥāfizī da’wa in the Ṣan‘ā’ region, waged a prolonged war against Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmīdī, who in 557/1162 had succeeded as the third dā’ī muṭlaq to the headship of the Ṭayyibīs. This also represented the most serious military contest between the Ḥāfizī and the Ṭayyibī parties in Yaman. The hostilities lasted for three years, starting in 561 A.H. when the dā’ī Ḥātim, with the growing support of a large number of Hamdānī tribesmen, rose against ‘Alī b. Ḥātim and then seized the fortress of Kawkabān near Ṣan‘ā’.63 ‘Alī b. Ḥātim retaliated and fought the dā’ī Ḥātim, eventually defeating him. Kawkabān was surrendered in 564/1168–1169, and the dā’ī retreated to Rayḥān and Lu’lu’a before establishing
himself in Ḥarāz. The Hamdānids destroyed much of the territory around Kawkabān and Shibām. Sultan ‘Ali also played a leading role in forming an alliance with his Zuray’id co-religionists and some Hamdānī tribes against the Khārījī ruler of Zabīd, ‘Abd al-Nabī, son of ‘Ali b. al-Mahdi (d. 554/1159) who had seized Zabīd from the Najāhids and founded a new dynasty there. ‘Abd al-Nabī, in his own campaign of territorial expansion, had laid siege to ‘Adan, obliging the Zuray’ids to seek military assistance from the Hamdānids, both dynasties being Yāmīs and Ḥāfīzī Ḥīmālīs. The Mahdī was defeated in 569/1173, and driven back to Zabīd by the combined forces of the Ḥīmālī dynasties and their tribal warriors. By that time, the Ayyūbids had already started their penetration of Yaman, which was to result in the collapse of the Zuray’id, Hamdānid and Mahdī dynasties. Only the Zaydī Imāms ruling from Ṣa’dā escaped the Ayyūbīd reduction of south Arabia.

Shortly after ‘Ali b. Ḥātim returned to Ṣan’ā’ from his campaign against the Mahdīs, the Ayyūbīds under Tūrānshāh managed to reach the outskirts of the city in 570/1174. ‘Ali fled to the safety of his fortress of Birāsh, while Tūrānshāh temporarily secured Ṣan’ā’, abandoned by the Hamdānīs. This marked the end of Hamdānid rule, although a number of Hamdānīs continued to control various localities around Ṣan’ā’ for some time longer. ‘Ali b. Ḥātim returned to Ṣan’ā’ after Tūrānshāh left Yaman for Egypt in 571/1175–1176, and put up a vigorous resistance against the Ayyūbīds with the help of his brother Bishr b. Ḥātim and other relatives. It was not until 585/1189 that the second Ayyūbīd ruler of Yaman, al-Malik al-ʿAzīz Tughtakin b. Ayyūb (577–593/1181–1197), having settled the affairs in the south, entered Ṣan’ā’, then still in the hands of the Ḥāfīzī Hamdānīs. Nonetheless, ‘Ali b. Ḥātim’s brothers and other Hamdānīs, scattered over a wide area around Ṣan’ā’, continued to hold on to a number of fortresses during the Ayyūbīd period in Yaman (569–626/1173–1229). ‘Ali b. Ḥātim himself remained in possession of different fortresses until his death in 599/1202–1203. The slow progress made by the Ayyūbīds in conquering Ṣan’ā’ and its environs and in uprooting the Hamdānīs is related by Badr al-Dīn Muhammad b. Ḥātim (d. ca. 700/1300), a Yamanī historian and great-grandson of ‘Ali b. Ḥātim. This also explains why Ḥāfīzī Ḥīmālīsm lingered on for quite some time in Yaman after the Ayyūbīd conquest of the country, although with the fall of the Zuray’id and Hamdānid dynasties, Ḥāfīzī Ḥīmālīsm lost its prominence in Yaman, surviving only in isolated communities and amongst some of the descendants of the Hamdānid rulers of Ṣan’ā’. It is interesting to note that
by the beginning of the 7th/13th century, the Ḥāfizīyya were still important enough in Yaman to warrant the writing of polemical treatises by Ṭayyibīs, refuting the claims of al-Ḥāfīz and his successors to the imāmāte and defending the legitimacy of the Ṭayyibī ḍaʿwa. One of these polemical works against the Majīḍi (Ḥāfīzī) ḍaʿwa, and written by the fifth dāʿī muṭlaq of the Ṭayyibīs, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walid (d. 612/1215), is extant and has been published.67 There is no evidence showing that the Ḥāfīzī ḍaʿwa ever gained a foothold in India. The Indian Mustaʿlian Ismāʿīlīs, who had close ties with the Sulayhid state, seem to have rallied completely to the side of the Ṭayyibī ḍaʿwa, upheld by the Sulayhīds.

Before starting our discussion of Ṭayyibī Ismāʿīlism in Yaman, it may be noted in passing that the few Ṭayyibī communities of Egypt and Syria, known as the Āmirīyya, which had come into existence following the Ḥāfīzī-Ṭayyibī schism, remained insignificant and short-lived. By the time Ayyūbid rule was firmly established in Egypt and Ismāʿīlism was replaced there by Sunnism as the state religion, the clandestine Egyptian Ṭayyibīs, who had been subjected to severe persecutions, had disintegrated almost completely.68 In Syria, too, the history of the Ṭayyibīs was of rather short duration. Ibn Abī Ṭayyiʿ, the Shiʿī chronicler of Aleppo who died around 630 A.H., attests to the presence of some Syrian Ismāʿīlīs belonging to the Āmirīyya party at the end of the 6th/12th century.69 By the early decades of the 8th/14th century, only an isolated community of the Āmirīyya still evidently existed in Syria, in the Baqiʿa and Zābūd mountains near Ṣafad. It was in Yaman, and then in India, that the Ṭayyibī ḍaʿwa was successfully propagated and became permanently established in due time.70

As noted, a son named al-Ṭayyib was born a few months before his father al-ʿĀmīr, the twentieth imām of the Mustaʿlian Ismāʿīlīs, was murdered in 524/1130. We have already referred to Ibn Muyassar’s account and to the epistle, preserved by ʿUmāra and the Ṭayyibīs, in which al-ʿĀmīr announces the birth of al-Ṭayyib to al-Malīk al-Sayyida. At the time, the aged Sulayhud queen had been supporting for some thirty-six years the rights of al-Mustaʿlī and al-ʿĀmīr to the imāmāte of the Mustaʿlīans. It is not clear what happened to al-Ṭayyib, designated heir apparent on his birth, during the critical weeks following al-ʿĀmīr’s assassination. For instance, it is not known whether he died in infancy or was disposed of in some manner at the instigation of ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfīz who had then assumed the regency. A near contemporary Syrian chronicler, who has remained anonymous, insinuates that he was secretly
killed on the orders of al-Ḥāfiz. Ibn Muyassar merely relates that al-Ḥāfiz somehow managed to conceal the existence of al-Ṭayyib. Other non-Ismāʿili historians of the period maintain silence on the subject. However, there is a Yamanī Ṭayyibi tradition concerning the fate of al-Ṭayyib, who is counted as the twenty-first imām of the Ṭayyibiyya, and the last one whose name is known to his followers. This tradition, preserved in the seventh volume of the ‘Uyun al-akhbār of Idrīs, dates back to Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmidī, the second chief da‘ī of the Yamanī Ṭayyibiṣ, a mature man at the time of the Ḥāfīzi-Ṭayyibi schism.72

According to this tradition, a certain Ibn Madyan was the leader of a small group of da‘īṣ in the entourage of al-ʿĀmir. The other members of this group, selected from amongst the most eminent and trusted da‘īṣ, were Ibn Rasālān, al-ʿAzīzī, Qawnaṣ (Qūnis), and Nasālān. Just before his death, al-ʿĀmir placed al-Ṭayyib in the custody of Ibn Madyan, who had been appointed to the position of bāb by the caliph-imām. On al-ʿĀmir’s death, these da‘īṣ swore allegiance to al-Ṭayyib; and Ibn Madyan, assisted by his brother-in-law Abū ʿAlī, assumed the headship of the da‘wa on behalf of al-Ṭayyib. When Abū ʿAlī Kutayfāt seized power and showed his hostility towards the Fāṭimīds, Ibn Madyan and his circle of da‘īṣ, realizing the impending dangers, decided to conceal the infant imām who had received al-ʿĀmir’s naṣṣ. However, Ibn Madyan and the other four da‘īṣ who had been highly devoted to al-ʿĀmir were arrested on Kutayfāt’s orders. They were subsequently executed due to their refusal to abjure al-ʿĀmir and al-Ṭayyib. In the meantime, Ibn Madyan’s brother-in-law Abū ʿAlī, had managed to go into hiding with al-Ṭayyib. Nothing more was heard of al-Ṭayyib. It is the belief of the Ṭayyibiṣ that al-Ṭayyib survived73 and that the imāmāte continued in his progeny, being handed down from father to son, generation after generation, during the current period of satr initiated by al-Ṭayyib’s concealment. It is interesting to note that according to this tradition, the blame for usurpation of al-Ṭayyib’s rights is put on Kutayfāt, during whose brief rule, many of the supporters of the Ṭayyibī cause were persecuted in Egypt and Twelver Shīʿism was adopted as the state religion. This tradition thus ignores the fact that the mentioning of al-Ṭayyib’s name was suppressed from the very beginning of the regency of ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Ḥāfiz.

Meanwhile, the news of al-Ṭayyib’s birth had been rejoiced at the Sulayḥid court. We learn from the ‘Uyun al-akhbār that a certain Sharīf Muḥammad b. Ḥaydara was the Fāṭimid envoy, who, in 524 A.H., carried al-ʿĀmir’s epistle regarding the birth of the heir apparent to Yaman.
There also exists the eyewitness report of al-Khaṭṭāb, assistant to the first chief ṭāʾī of the Tayyibiyya, concerning the circumstances under which this epistle was received by the Sulayḥīd queen.74 Soon afterwards, the Yamanī Mustaʿliyan were thrown into confusion by the news of the events taking place in rapid succession, in Cairo, viz., al-ʿĀmir’s murder, ʿAbd al-Majīd’s regency and Kutayfāt’s vizirate. Muḥammad b. Ḥaydara, still in Yaman at that time, delivered public sermons deploiring the murder of al-ʿĀmir and exalting al-Ṭayyib. These sermons must have taken place soon after al-ʿĀmir’s death, since in one of them the Fatimid envoy names al-Ṭayyib, ʿAbd al-Majīd and Abū ʿAlī Kutayfāt, as, respectively, imām, regent and vizier.75 It may be assumed that the crisis faced by the Yamanī Ismāʿīlīs reached its peak in 526 A.H., when ʿAbd al-Majīd claimed the imamate. Idrīs relates how al-Malīka al-Sayyīda was astonished when al-Ḥāfīz adopted the new title of Amīr al-Muʾminīn, instead of the previously used one of Wakīʿ ʿahd al-Muslinīn, in his official correspondence with the queen.76 It was probably at that time that the Mustaʿlians of Yaman became split into the Ḥāfīzī and Ṭayyībī parties. The Zurayʿīds of ʿAdān and the Hamdānīs of Ṣanʿāʾ led the Ḥāfīzī daʿwa, while the Sulayḥīd queen championed the cause of the Ṭayyībī daʿwa.

It is useful at this juncture to recapitulate the succession of the ṭāʾīs in Sulayḥīd Yaman. The first Sulayḥīd ruler, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥi, was also the head of the Fatimid Ismāʿīlī daʿwa in Yaman; he combined, in his person, the offices of sultan and chief ṭāʾī.77 However, when Lamāk b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī returned to Yaman from his Egyptian mission in 459/1066–1067, the same year in which ʿAlī b. Muḥammad died, the headships of the daʿwa and the state became separated. Lamāk was now appointed chief ṭāʾī of Yaman by al-Mustansīr and became the executive head of the daʿwa, while the new Sulayḥīd ruler al-Mukarram remained only nominally in charge of the daʿwa.78 This arrangement was essentially maintained when al-Mukarram retired to Dhu Ḫibla in 467/1074–1075, leaving the affairs of the state to his consort al-Malīka al-Sayyīda. When al-Mukarram died in 477/1084 and was nominally succeeded by his minor son ʿAlī b. ᴮḥmast and then by others, al-Sayyīda continued to hold the real authority in Sulayḥīd Yaman. Henceforth, she also exercised more control over the affairs of the daʿwa, especially since she was officially designated by al-Mustansīr as the ḥuṣayna of Yaman, a higher rank than ṭāʾī, shortly after al-Mukarram’s death.79 The highly respected al-Sayyīda lent her support to the Yamanī daʿwa organization headed by the ṭāʾī Lamāk, who in turn solidly backed the queen. Both upheld the rights of al-Mustaʿliā hold the real authority in Sulayḥīd Yaman. Henceforth, she also exercised more control over the affairs of the daʿwa, especially since she was officially designated by al-Mustansīr as the ḥuṣayna of Yaman, a higher rank than ṭāʾī, shortly after al-Mukarram’s death.79 The highly respected al-Sayyīda lent her support to the Yamanī daʿwa organization headed by the ṭāʾī Lamāk, who in turn solidly backed the queen. Both upheld the rights of al-Mustaʿliā
against those of Nizār, thus permanently separating the destiny of the Yamani Ismāʿīlīs from that of the eastern Nizārī communities.

Lamak b. Mālik, who belonged to the Banū Ḥammād branch of the Ḥamdān and resided at Dḥū Jibla, died shortly before 491/1097–1098 and was succeeded by his son Yahyā. Yahyā’s dāʿīship coincided with the reigns of al-Mustaʿli and al-Āmīr, and it seems that during this period relations deteriorated between the Sulayhīd queen and the Fāṭimid state. It was perhaps due to this fact that in 513/1121 Ibn Najīb al-Dawla was despatched by al-Āmīr to assist the queen and bring the Sulayhīd state under greater administrative control of the Fāṭimids. However, there arose strong differences between al-Sayyida and Ibn Najīb al-Dawla, who as commander of the Sulayhīd forces had participated in several battles against the enemies of the Sulayhīds. In 519/1125, Ibn Najīb al-Dawla was recalled to Cairo, but on his way was thrown overboard and drowned. Rumours were spread to the effect that he had been conducting propaganda in favour of the Nizārīs. The queen then replaced Ibn Najīb al-Dawla by a member of the Sulayhīd family, ‘Alī (‘Abd Allāh) b. ‘Abd Allāh, who became the Sulayhīd administrator at Dḥū Jibla. It is interesting to note that to ‘Umāra, and other non-Ismāʿīli Yamani historians after him, Ibn Najīb al-Dawla and his successor Ibn ‘Abd Allāh wrongly appeared as dāʿīs. According to the Ṭayyībī tradition and literature on the succession of the early Yamānī dāʿīs, however, Ibn Najīb al-Dawla and Ibn ‘Abd Allāh did not hold any positions in the daʿwa organization.

At any event, before his death in 520/1126, Yahyā b. Lamak, in consultation with al-Malika al-Sayyida, appointed his assistant al-Dhuʿayb b. Mūsā al-Wādīʾī al-Ḥamdānī as his successor. It was during the earlier years of the latter’s dāʿīship that the Mustaʿlian Ismāʿīlīs became confronted with the Ḥāfīzī-Ṭayyībī schism. Al-Dhuʿayb, in line with the position of the Sulayhīd queen, recognized the rights of al-Ṭayyīb and thus became the first Yamānī chief dāʿī to propagate the Ṭayyībī daʿwa. From 524/1130 until her death in 532/1138, the Sulayhīd al-Malika al-Sayyida Ḥurra bint Aḥmad made every effort to consolidate the Ṭayyībī daʿwa. In her will, she bequeathed her renowned collection of jewellery to al-Imām al-Ṭayyīb. Al-Dhuʿayb and other leaders of the established daʿwa in Yaman collaborated closely with al-Sayyida, who, during her final years, evidently broke relations with the Fāṭimid regime. It was after 526 A.H. that al-Dhuʿayb was declared al-dāʿī al-muṭlaq, with full authority to conduct and supervise the daʿwa activities on behalf of the hidden Imām al-Ṭayyīb. This marked the foundation of the independent Ṭayyībī daʿwa
in Yaman under the headship of an absolute da'i. Al-Dhu’ayb thus became the first in the line of al-du’āt al-muṭlaqīn who have followed one another during the current period of satr in the history of the Ṣayyibī Ismā’īlīs.

Al-Dhu’ayb was at first assisted in the affairs of the da’wa by al-Khaṭṭāb b. al-Ḥasan b. Abī’l-Ḥifāẓ, who belonged to a family of chiefs of al-Ḥajūr, a clan of the Hamdānīs. Al-Khaṭṭāb himself was the Ḥajūrī chief or sultan and had been converted to Ismā’īlism by his teacher al-Dhu’ayb. An important Ismā’īlī author and Yamanī poet, al-Khaṭṭāb was also a brave warrior and fought against the Najāḥīs and the Zaydīs on behalf of the Ṣulayḥīs. An important loyalty to al-Malika al-Sayyida and his military services to the Ismā’īlī cause were crucial to the success of the Ṣayyibī da’wa in Yaman during its formative years. In his Ḥāyat al-mawālid, he uses various arguments in support of al-Sayyida’s rank as the hujja of Yaman, insisting that even a woman can hold the rank, and defends al-Ṭayyib’s imāmate. Al-Khaṭṭāb was also involved in a prolonged family feud resulting from the murder of his sister and a bitter rivalry with his elder brother Sulaymān, a non-Ismā’īlī, over the control of al-Ḥajūr. Al-Khaṭṭāb, who had succeeded in driving away and eventually murdering Sulaymān, was killed in revenge by Sulaymān’s sons in 533/1138, shortly after al-Sayyida had died. On al-Khaṭṭāb’s death, al-Dhu’ayb appointed Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥamīdī, belonging to the Ḥamīdī branch of the Banū Hamdān, as his new chief assistant or ma’dhūn, the second highest rank in the Ṣayyibī da’wa hierarchy. On al-Dhu’ayb’s death in 546/1151, Ibrāhīm succeeded him as the second dā’ī muṭlaq. Al-Dhu’ayb, al-Khaṭṭāb and Ibrāhīm al-Ḥamīdī were in effect the earliest Yamanī Ṣayyibī leaders who, under the patronage of al-Malika al-Sayyida, founded and consolidated the Ṣayyibī da’wa in southern Arabia. Al-Sayyida’s death also marked the effective end of the Sulayḥī dynasty. The last Sulayḥī rulers only held on to certain isolated fortresses for a while longer until the 560s/1170s, when the Ḥāfīzī Zuray’īds came into the possession of the remaining Sulayḥī outposts. After al-Malika al-Sayyida, the Ṣayyibī da’wa, unlike the Ḥāfīzī da’wa, did not receive the support of any Yamanī rulers. Nonetheless, Ṣayyibī Ismā’īlīsm began to spread successfully in Yaman under the undisputed leadership of the chief dā’ī al-Dhu’ayb and Ibrāhīm. The Ṣayyibī da’wa had now become independent of both the Fāṭimid regime as well as the Sulayḥī state, and this explains why it survived the fall of both dynasties.

Ibrāhīm al-Ḥamīdī resided at Ṣan‘ā’, where he evidently enjoyed the hospitality of Ḥātim b. ʿĀḥmad, the city’s Hamdānīd ruler who adhered to
Hāfizī Ismā'īlīsm. Ibrāhīm introduced the *Rasa'il Ikhwān al-Șafā'* into the literature of the Tayyibi community in Yaman, and in his own writings drew extensively on the works of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī. He formulated a new synthesis in the doctrinal domain, combining al-Kirmānī's cosmological system with mythical elements. His major work, *Kitāb kanz al-walad* (*Book of the Child's Treasure*), provided the basis of the peculiar Tayyibi haqā'iq system and was used as a model for later Tayyibi writings on the subject. After the death of his original ma'dhūn 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Walīd in 554/1159, Ibrāhīm appointed his own son Ḥātim as his assistant. Subsequently, the position of dā'i muṭlaq remained in the hands of Ibrāhīm's descendants until 605/1209. Ibrāhīm died in 557/1162, and was succeeded by his son Ḥātim. The third dā'i muṭlaq of the Tayyibis, Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥamīdi, was a prolific author and poet in addition to being a warrior and a capable organizer. He also achieved great success in spreading Tayyibi Ismā'īlīsm in Yaman during his thirty-seven years as a dā'i. Early in his career, Ḥātim won the support of some of the tribes of Hamdān and Ḥimyar, with whose help he seized the fortress of Kawkabān. The dā'i's increasing influence, which came to be spread also in Dhimār and Naqīl Bani Sharḥa close to Ṣan'ā', soon aroused the jealousy and apprehension of the Hamdānid ruler of Ṣan'ā', 'Alī b. Ḥātim al-Ŷāmī. We have already referred to the prolonged hostilities between the dā'i Ḥātim and the Hamdānid ruler, which lasted from 561 to 564 A.H. The dā'i was finally defeated and had to surrender Kawkabān to 'Alī b. Ḥātim. Having realized the futility of large-scale warfare, Ḥātim eventually withdrew to a location called Shi'āf (or Sha'āf) in Ḥarāz, where he converted large numbers to Tayyibi Ismā'īlism. According to Idrīs, until the arrival of the dā'i Ḥātim in Ḥarāz, the inhabitants of that mountainous region, with its several towns and fortresses, had adhered mainly to Hāfizī Ismā'īlīsm. Subsequently, Ḥātim began to conquer various strongholds in Ḥarāz. In 569/1173, he seized the fortress of Zahra, and then reached the famous mountain of Shibām, taking the fortress of Ḥuṭayb on its lower peak which was situated in the country of his chief supporters, the Ya'buris of the Banū Hamdān. He established his headquarters at Ḥuṭayb, which he fortified. Later, he conquered the higher peak of Shibām and repaired its fortress, which had been constructed by the founder of the Sulayḥid dynasty. In his conquests, Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm was effectively helped by Saba' b. Yūsuf, the chief of the Ya'buris and the commander of the dā'i's forces. With the murder of the amīr Saba' at the hands of the Banū Ḥakam and the extension of Ayyūbid rule over Yaman, Ḥātim could no
longer rely on military power for expanding his influence. Nonetheless, he managed to maintain his control over Ḥarāz and the three main fortresses of the Shibām mountain, namely, Shibām, Jawḥab and Ḥuṭayb. Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm continued to use Ḥuṭayb as his headquarters, holding his assemblies and delivering his lectures (majālis) in a cave below the fortress. The dāʾī muṭlaq of the Ṭayyibīs had now assumed the teaching functions of the Fāṭimid dāʾī al-duʿāt. It was also at Ḥuṭayb that Ḥātim received the subordinate Ṭayyibī dāʾīs from all over Yaman, of whom there were many, as well as the dāʾīs he appointed for Sind and Hind. Ḥātim had, however, stationed his assistant, the learned Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥarīthī, in Ṣanʿāʾ, where he aimed to undermine the Ḥamdānī dynasty and win influential converts. It was Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir, closely associated also with the dāʾī Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmīdī, who compiled a valuable chrestomathy of Ismāʿīlī works and composed some poems on the occasion of the fall of the Fāṭimid dynasty, an event greatly rejoiced by the Ṭayyibīs, who regarded al-Ḥāfīẓ and the later Fāṭimids as usurpers and deserving of divine punishment. On Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir’s death in 584/1188, Ḥātim chose ‘Ali b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd as his new maʾdḥūn at Ṣanʿāʾ. ‘Ali b. Muḥammad, who later became the fifth dāʾī muṭlaq, visited Ḥarāz frequently and was entrusted with the education of Ḥātim’s son ‘Ali. It was on the recommendation of ‘Ali b. Muḥammad that Ḥātim nominated his own son ‘Ali as his successor. Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm died in 596/1199 and was buried under the fortress of Ḥuṭayb; his grave is still piously visited by the Ṭayyibīs. ‘Ali b. Ḥātim al-Ḥāmīdī succeeded his father as the fourth dāʾī muṭlaq, and ‘Ali b. Muḥammad continued as his maʾdḥūn. As the Yaʿburīs of Ḥarāz now turned against ‘Ali b. Ḥātim and fought amongst themselves, killing their leader Ḥātim b. Sabaʾ b. al-Yaʿbūrī who supported the Ṭayyibī daʿwa, the dāʾī was obliged to transfer his headquarters from Ḥarāz to Ṣanʿāʾ. There, he was treated hospitably by the Ḥamdānīs and with no opposition from the Ayyūbīs. ‘Ali b. Ḥātim died in 605/1209, bringing to an end the dāʾīship of the Ḥāmīdī family.

The aged ‘Ali b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd succeeded ‘Ali al-Ḥāmīdī as the fifth dāʾī muṭlaq of the Ṭayyibīs. He belonged to the prominent Banuʾl-Walīd al-Anf family of Quraysh. His great-grandfather Ibrāhīm b. Abī Salāma was a supporter of ‘Ali b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī and a descendant of the Umayyad al-Walīd b. ʿUtbā b. Abī Suṭyān. He had studied first under his uncle ‘Ali b. al-Ḥusayn, the maʾdḥūn to the second dāʾī muṭlaq, and then under Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥārīthi, whom he had succeeded as maʾdḥūn. He resided at Ṣanʿāʾ and maintained friendly
relations with the Hamdânids, also visiting as a guest their fortress of Dhū Marmar. 'Ali b. Muḥammad, one of the most learned Ṭâyyibi daʿîs, produced numerous works which are important for understanding the Ṭâyyibi esoteric doctrine.92 He died at Ṣanʿāʾ in 612/1215, at the age of ninety.

Henceforth, the office of daʿî muṭlaq remained amongst the descendants of 'Ali b. Muḥammad b. al-Walid al-Anf al-Qurashi, with only two interruptions in the 7th/13th century, until the death of the twenty-third daʿî in 946/1539. During this period of more than three centuries, Ḥarâz remained the traditional stronghold of the Ṭâyyibi daʿwa. The daʿîs enjoyed the general protection and sometimes military support of the Hamdânids, who permitted them to reside in Ṣanʿāʾ, and later, during the 8th/14th century, in Dhū Marmar, before the daʿîs transferred their residence to Ḥarâz in the 9th/15th century. In general, the Ṭâyyibîs maintained peaceful, even friendly relations with Yaman's Ayyubid (569-626/1173-1229), Rasûlid (626-858/1229-1454) and Tâhirid (858-923/1454-1517) rulers. On the other hand, relations between the Ṭâyyibîs and the Zaydis of Yaman were often marked by bitter enmity and open warfare.

In 612/1215, 'Ali b. Ḥānẓala b. Abī Sâlim al-Mahfūzî al-Wâdîʾî succeeded to the headship of the Ṭâyyibi daʿwa as the sixth daʿî muṭlaq.93 He was from the Banû Hamdân, and the first of the two daʿîs of this period not belonging to the family of al-Walid. He maintained good relations with the Ayyûbîs and Hamdânids, staying at both Ṣanʿāʾ and Dhū Marmar. He sent daʿîs to the Ismâʿîlîs of western India, who had retained their close and subservient ties with the Ṭâyyibi daʿwa in Yaman. 'Ali b. Ḥānẓala died in 626/1229 and was followed by Aḥmad b. al-Mubârak b. al-Walid, who headed the daʿwa for about one year during 626-627/1229-1230, and then by the eighth daʿî muṭlaq al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali (627-667/1230-1268), the son of the fifth daʿî. Al-Ḥusayn was on particularly good terms with the Rasûlîds and succeeded in converting several members of the family of Asad al-Dîn, cousin of the second Rasûlid ruler al-Malik al-Muẓaffar (647-694/1250-1295). He was also an important Ismâʿîlî author and produced several works on the haqâʿiq, including the already-noted al-Mabdaʿwaʿl-maʿād, dealing with cosmogony and eschatology.94 Al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali was assisted by his son, 'Alî, who succeeded him as the ninth daʿî. He first resided at Ṣanʿāʾ and then moved to the fortress of 'Arûs, where he was well-received by the Hamdânîs. After the Hamdânîd repossess of Ṣanʿāʾ, however, the daʿî returned to that city and died there in 682/1284.
The Ismā’īlīs: their history and doctrines

‘Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Walid was in due course succeeded by ‘Ali, the son of his ma’dhin al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Ali b. Ḥanẓala (d. 677/1278). The tenth da’i muṭlaq of the Ṭayyibīs, like his grandfather, did not belong to the Banū’l-Walīd. The da’i ‘Ali died in 686/1287 in Ṣaʾn’ā’, and was succeeded by Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Walīd (686–728/1287–1328), who established his headquarters at the fortress of Af’īda. In 725/1325, Ibrāhīm acquired Ka’kabān, where he gathered a force for possible confrontation with the Zaydīs. The eleventh da’i was followed by Muḥammad b. Ḥātim (728–729/1328–1329), and then by ‘Ali b. Ibrāhīm (729–746/1329–1345), who fought the Zaydīs with the help of some of the Banū Hamdān and seized Dhū Marmar in 733/1332. Subsequently, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalīb b. Muḥammad (746–755/1345–1354) became the fourteenth da’i, and was in turn followed by ‘Abbās b. Muḥammad (755–779/1354–1378) and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ali (779–809/1378–1407). The latter, supported by the ever loyal Ya’burīs, fought the Zaydīs in Ḥarāz and then inflicted a heavy defeat on the Zaydī pretender al-Manṣūr ‘Ali b. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (793–840/1390–1436). He also succeeded in 794/1392 in reconquering the fortress of Shībām. The seventeenth and the eighteenth da’īs were al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 821/1418) and his brother ‘Ali b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Walīd. It was during the latter’s time that the Zaydī al-Manṣūr ‘Ali besieged and captured Dhū Marmar in 829/1426, but allowed the da’ī to move to Ḥarāz with his family, associates, and his collection of Ismā’īlī books. Henceforth, the da’īs resided in Ḥarāz during the remainder of the Ṣaʾn’ā’ period of the da’wa. The Zaydīs now captured several of the Ṭayyibī fortresses, including Af’īda. ‘Ali b. ‘Abd Allāh died in 832/1428 at Shībām and was followed by his nephew Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan, whose father and grandfather had been the seventeenth and sixteenth da’īs.

The nineteenth da’i muṭlaq Idrīs, who was the last great Ṣaʾn’ā’ exponent of the ḥaqāʾiq and the foremost Ismāʾīlī historian, was born in the fortress of Shībām in 794/1392. He succeeded his uncle as the head of the da’wa in 832/1428. Maintaining the policies of his predecessors, Idrīs allied himself with the Rasūlīds of Zabīd and remained hostile towards the Zaydīs of Ṣaʾn’ā’ and elsewhere in Ṣaʾn’ā’. Joined by the Rasūlīd al-Malik al-Ẓāhir (831–842/1428–1439), the da’ī engaged in battle against the Zaydī al-Manṣūr ‘Ali. Indeed, he fought constantly with the Zaydīs and regained control of several fortresses. He also enjoyed the support and friendship of the Ṭāhirīd brothers ‘Ali and ‘Āmir, who, around 858/1454, seized ‘Adan and Zabīd, replacing the Rasūlīds as the masters of lower Ṣaʾn’ā’. Idrīs took special interest in the affairs of the da’wa in western India, and during
his long dā‘īship of some forty years, he contributed to the success of Ṭayyibi Ismā‘ilism in Gujarāt. The dā‘ī Idrīs died in 872/1468 at Shibām, where he had established his headquarters in 838/1434, and was succeeded by his son al-Ḥasan (872–918/1468–1512), and then by another of his sons al-Ḥusayn (918–933/1512–1527). The latter’s son, ‘Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. Idrīs, led the da‘wa as the twenty-second dā‘ī for only a few months during 933/1527. The twenty-third dā‘ī muṭlaq, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, the grandson of Idrīs, was the last of the dā‘īs from the Banu ’l-Wālid al-Anf and also the last Yamanī dā‘ī to lead the undivided Ṭayyibīs of Yaman and India. When he died in 946/1539, the position of dā‘ī muṭlaq passed to an Indian from Sidhpūr, Yūsuf b. Sulaymān.

In the doctrinal field, the Ṭayyibīs maintained the Fāṭimid traditions and preserved a good portion of the literature of the Fāṭimid Ismā‘ilīs. Like the latter, the Ṭayyibīs stressed the equal importance of the zāhir and bātin dimensions of religion. They also retained the earlier interest of the Ismā‘ilīs in cosmology and cyclical hierohistory, which provided the main components of their esoteric, gnostic haqā‘iq system. In their esoteric doctrine, however, they introduced some innovations which gave the Ṭayyibī gnosis its distinctive character. In cosmology, the Yamanī Ṭayyibīs from the beginning adopted al-Kirmānī’s system with its ten higher intellects, instead of the earlier Ismā‘ili Neoplatonic system accepted by the Fāṭimids. But the Ṭayyibīs also modified al-Kirmānī’s system by introducing a mythical ‘drama in heaven’, first elaborated by the second dā‘ī muṭlaq, Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmīdī, who drew extensively on al-Kirmānī’s Rāḥat al-‘aql. This represented the final modification of the Ismā‘ili Neoplatonic cosmology introduced into Ismā‘ili thought by the dā‘ī al-Nasafi. The cosmological doctrine first expounded by Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmīdī, and adopted by later authors, shaped the peculiar Ṭayyibī haqā‘iq system, which is a synthesis of many earlier Ismā‘ili and non-Ismā‘ili traditions and gnostic doctrines. By astronomical and astrological speculations, the Yamanī Ṭayyibīs also introduced certain innovations into the earlier Ismā‘ili conception of hierohistory, expressed in terms of the seven prophetic eras. The Ṭayyibīs conceived of countless cycles leading the sacred history of mankind from its origins to the Great Resurrection. The Ṭayyibī haqā‘iq find their fullest description in the Zahr al-ma‘ānī of Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, an extensive compendium of esoteric doctrines completed in 838/1435.96 Subsequently, the Ṭayyibīs made few further doctrinal contributions, while they continued to copy the works of the earlier authors.
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According to the Ṭayyibi cosmological doctrine, the primordial pleroma or the intelligible world (‘ālam al-ībdā‘) was created all at once, with innumerable spiritual forms (ṣuwar) which were all equal to one another in terms of life, power and capacity. This was the state of the so-called first perfection (al-kamāl al-awwal). One of these forms of primordial beings, in contemplating itself, became the first to realize that it was originated; it recognized and worshipped the originator (al-mubdi‘). As a result, this particular form was singled out for special distinction, meriting to be called the first originated being (al-mubda‘ al-awwal), or simply the first (al-awwal). He also became known as the first intellect (al-‘aql al-awwal), identified with the Qur’ānic term al-qalam, or the pen. The first intellect now invited, in what may be called the da‘wa in heaven, all the other primordial beings to follow his example by recognizing the originator and his unity or tawhīd. Those responding positively to this call were ranked in descending order according to the swiftness of their response, occupying the hudūd of the celestial world.

According to the mythical ‘drama in heaven’, introduced by Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidi, the first two emanations from the first intellect, viz., the first emanation (al-munba‘ith al-awwal) and the second emanation (al-munba‘ith al-thānī), respectively designated as the second intellect and third intellect, were rivals for the second rank (ḥadd) in the celestial hierarchy, after the first intellect. It was the second intellect who, by his superior efforts and swifter response, attained that position. But the third intellect, whilst acknowledging the originator, refused to recognize the superior rank of the second intellect, the universal soul, also identified with the Qur’ānic term al-lawh, the tablet, since he considered himself to be his equal. Thus, the third intellect, the protagonist of the cosmic dramaturgy, fell into a state of negligence and stupor, and, by hesitating to accord due recognition to his preceding archangelical hypostasis, committed the first cosmic sin or error. As punishment for his insubordination, he fell from the third to the tenth rank in the archangelical hierarchy, coming after the other seven intellects who had meanwhile responded to the call of the first intellect. In other words, after awakening from his stupor, the third intellect discovered that he had descended by seven ranks, due to his immobilization that gave rise to a temporal gap or retard (takhalluf) in the pleroma, the so-called ‘retarded eternity’ which may be viewed as the prototype of cyclical time and history based on the number seven. The doubt or hesitation expressed by the third intellect may also be described as the exteriorization of the darkness which had remained hidden within
him, a being of light, and which had to be overcome. After repenting, the third intellect became stabilized as the tenth intellect and demiurge (mudabbir) of the physical world, an inferior and opaque world. The tenth intellect is also called the celestial or spiritual Adam (Ādam al-rūḥānī), the angel corresponding to Christos Angelos and showing certain traits of the Manichaean and Gnostic anthropos. As Corbin has explained, his role corresponds even more closely to that of the angel Zervān in Zervānīte Zoroastrian myths.

There were other spiritual forms (suwar) that, like the third intellect, committed the error of failing to acknowledge the superior rank of the second intellect. The physical world was produced out of these fallen forms, belonging to the circle (daʿira) of the tenth intellect, and out of the darkness generated by their sin. Through their movements, reflecting confusion and doubt, the fallen forms produced length, width, depth, the dimensions of space, matter (hayūla), the spheres (aflāk), the elements (arkān), etc. In this Ṭayyībi cosmology, characterized by the fall and repentance of one of the archangels in the pleroma, the tenth intellect or the spiritual Adam, who is charged with administering the affairs of the physical world, tries to regain his lost position by calling on other fallen spiritual forms to repent, like himself. This daʿwa, corresponding to the daʿwa of the first intellect, is indeed the outstanding motif of the Ṭayyībi cosmogony. The primordial universe, which becomes the scene of combat between the posterities of Adam and Iblīs, was created for this soteriological purpose, namely, the redemption of the spiritual Adam and the salvation of the fallen forms which had manifested themselves as darkness and matter. Some of the fallen spiritual forms respond to the appeal of the spiritual Adam. They are the celestial archetypes of the earthly proclaimers of the mystical daʿwa, becoming the posterity of the spiritual Adam. On the other hand, various categories of forms belonging to the circle of the tenth intellect persist in their negation and denial. The implacable adversaries constitute, throughout the cycles, the posterity of Iblīs, the devil. The spiritual Adam, helped by his supporters, carries on a combat which finally, after innumerable cycles, will destroy darkness and the progeny of Iblīs.

The earliest representative of the spiritual Adam's daʿwa on earth was the first, universal Adam (Ādam al-auwal al-kullī), the terrestrial homologue of the first intellect and the epiphanic form or maẓhar of the spiritual Adam. He appeared, together with his twenty-seven loyal companions, on the island of Sarandīb (Ceylon), a region of the earth having the best
climatic and astronomical conditions. The primordial universal Adam made his appearance at the dawn of the Tayyibi mythohistory, at the beginning of the cycle of cycles, and inaugurated the first cycle of epiphany or manifestation (dawr al-kashf). He was the first repository of the imamate, the primordial imam, who as such was ma'sum, being immunized against all impurity and sin. He instituted the terrestrial da'wa hierarchy, corresponding to the celestial order, and divided the earth into twelve regions (jaz'ir), each one placed under the charge of one of his companions who, themselves, had responded to the da'wa of the spiritual Adam. This original cycle lasted for 50,000 years; it was a period of knowledge ('ilm) and not of action ('amal), an era of true gnosis in which no laws were required. It endured until the approach of the first cycle of concealment (dawr al-sair), when the form of Iblis reappeared, disturbing the preceding state of harmony. The Tayyibi mythohistory allows for a great number of such cycles, the original one having been a cycle of manifestation rather than concealment, because the spiritual Adam, the Tayyibi figure of the saved-saviour, had defeated his Iblis. The universal Adam of this doctrine must be distinguished from the 'historical' Adam described in the Bible and the Qur'an. The latter, who opened the present cycle of concealment, was only a partial Adam (Adam al-juz'i), like so many others preceding and following him in the partial cycles of history.

At the end of the first cycle, the universal Adam, along with his supporters, rose to the horizon of the tenth intellect and took his place, while the tenth intellect rose by one rank towards his original hadd in the pleroma. Similarly, the qa'im of every following cycle, which is closed by a resurrection or qiyama, after his passing, rises and takes the place of the tenth. In this manner, the ascension of each qa'im al-qiyyama at the end of every cycle marks the progressive elevation of the spiritual Adam towards the primordial archangelical dyad in the celestial hierarchy in which he originated, and which he lost due to the crisis that befell him in heaven. This process continues throughout the cycles and from qa'im to qa'im, and the spiritual Adam gradually rises in rank and annuls the form of Iblis which he tears out of himself, until he actually joins the second intellect. This conjunction is the central idea of the Tayyibi gnosis. The universal Adam, as noted, in initiating the first cycle also initiated the imamate; he was the first imam to accomplish the task which henceforth became the work of each imam and qa'im in a partial cycle, and particularly of the final Qa'im. Just as the universal Adam is the first terrestrial manifestation of the spiritual Adam, exemplified in the partial Adams, so the Qa'im
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(exemplified in the partial qa'im) will be his final manifestation. The imām–qa'im of each partial cycle is, thus, the manifestation of an eternal imām who, in the person of the seal of the series, will consummate the aeon, consisting of a vast number of cycles. All the partial qa'im are, in a sense, 'recapitulated' in the last one amongst them, the Qā'im of the Great Resurrection (qiṣyamat al-qiṣyāmāt), which consummates the grand cycle (al-kawr al-a'zam), restoring the Angel Adam to his original position and redeeming humanity.

The original cycle of manifestation, as noted, was followed by a cycle of concealment, initiated by a partial Adam and closed by a partial qa'im, and then by another cycle of manifestation, and so on. An unknown number of successive cycles of kashf and satr, each one composed of seven periods or eras, occurred until the present cycle of satr, which was initiated by the 'historical' Adam of the Qur'ān, the first nātiq of the present age. When this cycle is closed by the seventh nātiq and the expected qa'im of the current cycle, there will begin again another cycle of manifestation, inaugurated by an Ādam al-juz'ī, and so on. The countless alternations of these cycles will continue until the parousia of the final Qā'im, proclaiming the final qiṣyāma, the Resurrection of the Resurrections (qiṣyamat al-qiṣyāmāt), at the end of the grand cycle. According to some Tayyibi calculations, the duration of the grand cycle (al-kawr al-a'zam) is estimated at 360,000 times 360,000 years, amounting to almost 130 billion years. The consummation of the grand cycle will also mark the end of the Tayyibi mythohistory. The final Qā'im is not merely a final legitimate leader of mankind from amongst the descendants of 'Ali and Fāṭima; he is the Lord of the Resurrection and the summit of the eternal imāmate in which the Ismā'ili vision of the aeon finds its culmination. As Corbin has remarked, "the perfect child of the Gnostics, engenders himself in the secret of the cycles of the aeon, and in his eschatological epiphany is expected to be the ultimate 'exegete' of mankind. He is the final manifestation of the spiritual Adam, and a member of his true posterity, which he will lead back to its original celestial archetype.

Tayyibi gnosis is indeed rich in eschatological doctrines, which draw heavily on Manichaean ideas. The eschatology of the Tayyibis, closely related to their cosmogony, is expounded in terms of a cosmic process which includes the eschatological fate or ma'ād of the individuals. Naturally, different posthumous fates await the believers and unbelievers. A person is categorized as a believer (mu'min) if he affirms the unity of God,
recognizes and obeys the true imām of his time, and acknowledges the ḥudūd of the daʿwa hierarchy. These are, in fact, the conditions for man's salvation, although other groups of human beings may also ultimately receive an opportunity for redemption.

At the moment of initiation into the daʿwa, the soul of each neophyte (mustajib) is joined by a point of light, which is his spiritual soul. This point stays with the initiate and grows as its possessor advances in knowledge and virtue. On his passing from this world, the point of light, which by then has grown into a form of light (al-ṣūra al-nūrāniyya), becomes completely integrated with the believer's soul. The resulting luminous soul leaves the body and rises to join the soul of the holder of the next higher rank (ḥadd) in the hierarchy. This ascension toward the superior ḥadd is caused by the magnetism of the column of light ('amūd min nūr, or al-ʿamūd al-nūrāni), the summit of which reaches into the pleroma of the archangels and towards which the souls of the believers are drawn. This column of light, which in Ṭayyibi gnosis assumes a two-fold function in eschatology and imamology, is one of the characteristic motifs of Manichaeism, where it has an essential, salvational function. The elevation of the soul of each believer from ḥadd to ḥadd does not, it may be emphasized, imply transmigration (tanāsukh), or the reincarnation of human souls in the bodies of other persons or animals, a doctrine rejected by the Ṭayyibis. Here, the Ṭayyibi authors are in fact referring to the conjunction of souls, and more precisely, the souls of the holders of different ranks in the hierarchy. Each ḥadd is the superior spiritual limit of the ḥadd immediately below it, viz., its mahdūd. And the relationship between ḥadd and mahdūd acquires a particular significance in this eschatological context. Each ḥadd becomes an imām for its mahdūd. And the 'quest for the imām' raises each adept, metamorphosing and elevating him from rank to rank, throughout the hierarchy.

The soul of each believer continues to ascend in the hierarchy until it is gathered together with the luminous souls of all other believers. Their collectivity constitutes the temple of light (haykal nūrāni), which has the shape of a human being but is purely spiritual. Without any confusion, each individual soul subsists as a member in the coalescence of the souls. This temple of light is the imāmate, representing the lāhūt or divinity of the imām, as distinct from his nāsūt or humanity. Each imām has his own temple of light or corpus mysticum, and as the epiphanic form of the celestial Adam, he is also the terrestrial support of the column of light. On the passing of each imām, he and his temple of light rise into the pleroma.
This holds true also for the imāms of the era of Muḥammad who are recognized by the Ṭayyibi Ismāʿīlis, including the concealed imāms succeeding al-Ṭayyib. The qaʿim of each partial cycle, the last imām of that cycle, has his own corpus mysticum, or sublime temple of light (haykal nūrānī ʿazīm), composed of all the temples of light belonging to that cycle and constituting the form of the qaʿim (al-ṣūra al-qaʿimiyya), again having a human shape. At the end of each partial cycle, when a resurrection is proclaimed, the qaʿim of that cycle rises into the pleroma with his sublime temple of light and takes the place of the tenth intellect. The latter, as noted, ascends by one hadd in the celestial hierarchy, drawing the entire universe of beings one degree closer to reconquering the ‘retarded eternity’ and bringing the repentant beings of the cosmos a step closer to redemption and salvation. This celestial ascension, representing the denouement of the ‘drama in heaven’ that befell the spiritual Adam, and reflecting a symmetrical relationship between the cosmogony and the eschatology of the Ṭayyibis, is aimed toward the second intellect whose circle is designated as the ḥazīrat al-quds, the paradise. The process will continue, from cycle to cycle, until the consummation of the grand cycle. At the time of the Great Resurrection, the final Qāʿim will rise and take his own sublime temple of light, the coalescence or majmaʿ of all the luminous souls located at the horizon of the tenth intellect, to the second intellect, the universal soul. The error of the third intellect is now completely atoned. The spiritual Adam, the saved-saviour angel of humanity, and his supporters in both the celestial and terrestrial worlds are thus ultimately redeemed. Once more, there is only the harmonious world of the ʿibdāʾ.

The unbelievers, designated as the adversaries (mukhālifūn) of the people of truth (ahl al-ḥaqq), cannot emancipate themselves from matter so as to obtain salvation. Their souls, representing the form of darkness (al-ṣūra al-zulmāniyya) and being inseparable from their bodies, stay with their corpses when they die. In time, the bodies of the unbelievers decompose in the earth and join the elements. After several mutations, they are transformed into various substances and creatures in descending order. Depending on the nature and seriousness of their sins, they may eventually rise again through the ascending forms of life, culminating in the human form. As human beings, they may either accept the daʿwa and become believers or reject it. Those belonging to the latter category end up in Sijjin, a place for the supreme torment (al-ʿadhāb al-akbar) located in the depths of the earth, where they stay throughout the entire duration of the grand cycle.
The Yamani Tayyibis also inherited the da'wa hierarchy of the Fātimids, especially as described by the da'i al-Kirmānī. However, since the Tayyibi da'wa had to operate under changed realities, some modifications were required in the earlier structure. The organization of the Tayyibi da'wa, first explained in Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī’s Tuhfat al-qulūb, came to be much simpler with fewer ranks (ḥudūd) than that under the Fātimids. The imām had now gone into concealment, along with his bāb and hujjas, a situation continuing from generation to generation after al-Ṭayyib, the twenty-first imām. Similarly no longer was there any person occupying the position of dā'i al-balāgh, who in earlier times evidently acted as an intermediary between the central headquarters of the Fātimid da'wa and the local headquarters of a jazīra. In Yaman, Lamak b. Mālik was the only chief dignitary to have borne the designation of dā'i al-balāgh, when al-Malika al-Sayyida was accorded the rank of hujja. In the absence of these higher ranks of the hierarchy, the administrative head of the Tayyibi da'wa, starting with al-Dhu’ayb b. Mūsā, was designated as dā'i, or more precisely as al-dā'i al-muṭlaq. As al-Kirmānī had argued, the holder of every ḥadd in the da'wa hierarchy was potentially entitled to the position of the next higher ḥadd and as such, a dā'i was potentially in possession of the authority reserved for higher ḥudūd. At any rate, the dā'i muṭlaq, as the chief of the da'wa, enjoyed absolute authority in the community. Obedience to the imām, required of all the believers, now meant submission to the da'i muṭlaq, the concealed imām’s highest representative in the Tayyibi community. As in the case of the imāms, every dā'i muṭlaq nominated his successor by the rule of the nasṣ.

The dā'i muṭlaq was assisted in the affairs of the da'wa by several subordinate dā'is, designated as ma’dhūn and mukāsir. These lower ranks are mentioned for the first time in the Tuhfat al-qulūb as having fixed status in the hierarchy. One or two chief assistants to the dā'i muṭlaq received the designation of ma’dhūn. Normally, the dā'i chose the ma’dhūn as his successor. The mukāsir, who had more limited authority, was now identical with al-ma’dhūn al-mahṣūr and al-ma’dhūn al-mahdūd of the Fātimid hierarchy. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the ranks of mu'min, the ordinary initiated member of the community, and mustajīb, the neophyte or candidate for initiation. The Tayyibis maintained the concern of the Fātimid period in the training of the dā'is and the education of the adepts, though on a much more limited scale. The Yamani dā'is were amongst the most learned members of the Tayyibi community, and many of them, as thinkers and authors, produced elaborate treatises synthesizing different
Islamic and non-Islamic traditions. In principle, the Ṭayyibī daʿwa in Yaman seems to have functioned similarly to the Fāṭimid daʿwa in terms of its initiation procedures, secrecy, teaching, as well as the gradual training of the adepts and the members of the hierarchy, though few specific details are available. There is no evidence showing that the Ṭayyibī daʿwa was active in any region outside of Yaman and India. The Indian daʿwa continued to be under the strict supervision of the Ṭayyibī daʿis and headquarters in Yaman until the middle of the 10th/16th century, when the headquarters were transferred to Gujarāt. Until then, the head of the Indian daʿwa, locally known as wāli, was regularly selected by the daʿī mutlaq residing in Yaman. The wāli had a hierarchy of assistants of his own, about which few details are available until more recent times, but which essentially seems to have been the replica of the pattern utilized in Yaman. The Ṭayyibī daʿwa operated with such an organization until the Ṭayyibis of Yaman and India became split into Diʿūdis and Sulaymānis, with their separate daʿis, headquarters and organizations.

In the meantime, the Iṣmāʿīlī community in western India had grown steadily since the arrival of the first Iṣmāʿīlī daʿī in Gujarāt in 460/1067–1068. The Iṣmāʿīlīs of Gujarāt, who were mainly of Hindu descent, had become known as Bohrās (Bohorās). According to the usual etymological explanation, the name bohra (bohorā) is derived from the Gujarāti term vohorvū (vyavahir), meaning ‘to trade’. The term was applied to the Iṣmāʿīlīs of Gujarāt probably because they were originally a trading community; trade having also been the occupation of the earliest Gujarātī converts to Islam. According to another explanation, the Bohras were so designated because they had been converted to Iṣmāʿīlism from the Hindu Vohra caste. At any rate, the first Iṣmāʿīlī daʿī, ʿAbd Allāh, had been despatched, as noted, from Yaman to Cambay, where he succeeded in firmly establishing the daʿwa. According to the Iṣmāʿīlī Bohra traditions or riwāyat,102 ʿAbd Allāh eventually converted Siddharāja Jayasingha (487–527/1094–1133), the Rājpūt Hindu king of Gujarāt who had his capital at Anhalwāra (modern Pātan), and his two ministers, the brothers Bhārmal and Tārmal, along with a large portion of the local populace. According to these traditions, after ʿAbd Allāh, it was Yaʿqūb, the son of Bhārmal, who became the head of the daʿwa in India. He sent his cousin Fakhr al-Dīn, the son of Tārmal, to propagate Iṣmāʿīlism in western Rajasthan, where he was murdered. The tomb of Fakhr al-Dīn, who is considered the first Indian Iṣmāʿīlī martyr, is located at Galiakot, and is one of the most venerated Bohra shrines.103 Yaʿqūb was succeeded by his son Iṣḥāq and
then by his grandson 'Ali b. Isḥāq. Subsequently, the wālishship of the daʿwa in India passed to Pīr Ḥasan, a descendant of the dāʿī ʿAbd Allāh. Ḥasan was killed while conducting missionary activity and his grave is still located near Hārij. Pīr Ḥasan was succeeded by his grandson Ādam b. Sulaymān, whose descendants occupied the wālishship for several generations.\textsuperscript{104}

The Ismāʿīlī community in Gujarāt had maintained close religious ties with Yaman, and like the Sulayḥids, upheld the rights of al-Mustaʿlī and al-Āmīr to the imāmat. Similarly, in the Ḥāfiẓī–Ṭayyībī conflict, the Mustaʿlīans of Gujarāt sided with al-Malika al-Sayyīda and the established daʿwa organization in Yaman, in supporting the Ṭayyībī cause. After the collapse of the Sulayḥīd state, the Ṭayyībīs of India were closely supervised by the dāʿī mutlaq in Yaman, who selected the successive heads of the Indian community and received regular Bohra delegations from Gujarāt. Under these circumstances, the Ṭayyībī community in Gujarāt grew appreciably, and large numbers of Hindus embraced Ṭayyībī Ismāʿīlīsm, especially in Cambay, Pātan, Sidhpūr and later, in Aḥmadābād, where the headquarters of the Indian daʿwa were established.

The Ṭayyībīs of Gujarāt and their dāʿīs were not persecuted by the local Hindu rulers, who did not feel endangered by their activities. The Ṭayyībī community thus developed without any hindrance until the Muslim conquest of Gujarāt in 697/1298, when the daʿwa activities became somewhat scrutinized by the region’s Muslim governors, who recognized the suzerainty of the sultans of Delhi, belonging to the Khalji and Tughluqīd dynasties. The situation of the Indian Ṭayyībīs deteriorated further with the invasion of Gujarāt by Ẓafar Khān Muẓaffar in 793/1391. Ẓafar Khān, who had been sent out by the Tughluqīd Muḥammad Shāh III (792–795/1390–1393), established the independent sultanate of Gujarāt in 810/1407, which lasted until 991/1583 when Gujarāt was annexed to the Mughal empire, then ruled by Akbar. Ẓafar Khān favoured the propagation of Sunnism, his own newly-acquired religion. Being apprehensive of the success of Ismāʿīlīsm, he became the first ruler of Gujarāt to suppress Shiʿism in his domains. It was, however, under Ẓafar Khān’s son and successor, Aḥmad I (814–846/1411–1442), that Ismāʿīlīs began to be severely persecuted. During the reign of Aḥmad I, who founded his capital at Aḥmadābād in 814/1411, the Ṭayyībīs observed taqiyya very strictly, adhering outwardly to many of the Sunni formalities. It was during his oppressive rule that many Ismāʿīlīs were obliged to convert to
Sunnism, while an important schism in the Ismāʿīlī Bohra community, the first of its kind, divided the community and caused even greater numbers to join Sunni Islam. This schism resulted from an estrangement arising between a wālī and a certain charismatic Bohra by the name of Jaʿfar.

In the time of the eighteenth daʾī muṭlaq, ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh (821–832/1418–1428), the wālīship in India passed to Hasan b. Ādam b. Sulaymān, who founded a madrasa at Aḥmadābād for religious sciences. A certain Jaʿfar, from Pātan, was one of the many Bohra students attending the wālī’s school. Later, Jaʿfar decided to proceed to Yaman to study under the daʾī himself, without the wālī’s permission. In the wālī’s judgement, Jaʿfar had not yet completed his courses of study in Gujarāt; hence, he was not adequately prepared for benefiting from the more advanced courses offered in Yaman. However, Jaʿfar went to Yaman despite the wālī, and won the confidence of the daʾī muṭlaq. He studied in Yaman for two years. On his return to Gujarāt, Jaʿfar was asked by the Ṭayyibis of Cambay and elsewhere to lead them in prayers. When pressed sufficiently, Jaʿfar complied, although he did not have the wālī’s required authorization. These developments further aggravated the wālī, who, in due course, reprimanded Jaʿfar at Aḥmadābād for his unorthodox conduct. A deep rupture had now occurred between the wālī and the defiant Jaʿfar who proceeded to Pātan, where he declared himself a Sunni and began an intensive campaign against the wālī and the Ṭayyibi daʿwa in Gujarāt. He met with immediate success as many Bohras in Pātan, and its surrounding villages responded positively to his call and left the fold of Ismāʿīlī Shiʿism.

In his anti-Ismāʿīlī campaign, Jaʿfar had the active support of Ahmad Shāh and his son Muḥammad, who at the time deputized for his father in Aḥmadābād. On the other hand, the attempts of the daʾī muṭlaq to resolve this serious internal conflict in the Bohra community, and his insistence that the wālī should reconcile his differences with Jaʿfar, proved futile. An increasing number of Bohras followed Jaʿfar’s example and embraced Sunnism, doubtless having also been fearful of the persecutions of the sultan. According to some accounts, more than half of the entire Bohra community seceded, and became known as Jaʿfari Bohras. The secessionist Sunni Bohras were also designated as the jamāʿat-i kalān, the large community, in contrast to the jamāʿat-i khurd, or the small community, an appellation reserved for the loyal Ṭayyibi Ismāʿīlī Bohras. These events gave further encouragement to the sultan Aḥmad’s persecution of the Ismāʿīlīs. The wālī himself had to go into hiding and his deputy in Pātan and future successor, Rāja, was obliged to seek refuge in Morbi around
840/1436. The harassment of the Ismāʿīlī Bohras continued until Jaʿfar's assassination in 845/1441.

The Ṭāyyībī Bohras continued to be persecuted in the sultanate of Gujarāt. Mullā Rāja Jamāl al-Dīn b. Ḥasan, who succeeded his father as wālī, was a learned man who endeavoured to consolidate the position of the Ṭāyyībīs in Gujarāt. He became very popular amongst the Ṭāyyībī Bohras, and, according to their traditions, he was the only ʿālim in India who successfully carried disputation with a Shīʿī envoy sent from the Safawīd court in Persia. Rāja's reputation, however, angered the sultan of Gujarāt, Muẓaffar II (917–932/1511–1526), who had the wālī executed in 924/1518. Meanwhile, the disruptive work of Jaʿfar was pursued by another Sunnī missionary, Ahmad Jaʿfar Shirāzī, who caused a deeper rift between the Ṭāyyībī and Sunnī Bohras. Ahmad Jaʿfar arrived in Gujarāt from Sind and soon won the favour of Mahmūd I Begra (862–917/1458–1511) and his successor Muẓaffar II. Until then, intermarriages had occurred frequently between the Ṭāyyībī and Sunnī Bohras, whilst the social identity and homogeneity of the Bohra community had not been drastically affected by the earlier religious schism. But Ahmad Jaʿfar now persuaded the Sunnī Bohras to sever all ties with the Ṭāyyībī Shīʿīs of their community. Henceforth, the two Bohra factions became distinctively and permanently separated from one another, developing different socio-religious identities. The Ṭāyyībī Bohras were also severely persecuted in the reign of Mahmūd III (943–961/1537–1554). It was only after the establishment of Mughal rule that the Ṭāyyībī Bohras began to enjoy a certain degree of religious freedom, abandoning taqiyya and praying publicly in their mosques.

As noted, taking advantage of the close ties existing between the Ṭāyyībī Bohras and their central daʿwa headquarters, promising Indian Ṭāyyībīs were often sent to Yaman to further their education. It was according to this custom that Jaʿfar, the future Sunnī dissident, travelled to Yaman during the first half of the 9th/15th century. Subsequently, several prominent Ṭāyyībī Bohras distinguished themselves by advancing their religious learning in Yaman. Ḥasan b. Nūḥ al-Bahrūchī (d. 939/1533), the famous Ṭāyyībī author born in Cambay, made the journey to Yaman around 904/1498 and became a student of al-Ḥasan b. Idrīs, the twentieth daʾī. The courses of study pursued by him are described in the introduction to his Kitāb al-azhār, a seven-volume chrestomathy of Ismāʿīlī literature. He was closely associated also with ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Idrīs and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Idrīs, who later became the twenty-second
Musta'lian Iṣmā'īlīsm

and twenty-third dā'īs. Yūsuf b. Sulaymān, who succeeded to the headship of the Ṭayyibīs, was another Bohra selected by the wālī to further his studies in Yaman. Yūsuf arrived in Yaman while still in his youth and first studied under al-Bharūchī. Yūsuf’s learning soon attracted the attention of the twenty-third dā’ī, who nominated him as his successor. Yūsuf thus became the first Indian to head the Ṭayyibi da’wa as the twenty-fourth dā’ī muṭlaq. When the twenty-third dā’ī died in 946/1539, his successor Yūsuf was in Sidhpūr, and it was from Gujarāt that he conducted the affairs of the da’wa for a few years, before settling down in Yaman. When Yūsuf died in 974/1567, the central headquarters of the Ṭayyibī da’wa were transferred from Yaman to Gujarāt by his Indian successor, Jalāl b. Ḥasan. The twenty-fifth head of the Ṭayyibīs, who had now established his residence at Ahmādābād, appointed a deputy for the administration of the Yamanī community. By that time, the Ṭayyibīs of India had grown to such an extent, despite persecutions and mass conversions to Sunnīsm, so as to overshadow the original community in Yaman. Clearly, the larger share of the religious income of the dā’ī was now contributed by the Indian Ṭayyibīs. The Yamanī Ṭayyibīs, meanwhile, had been experiencing difficulties of their own, in the aftermath of the Ottoman occupation of Yaman, which had started in 923/1517. This was at a time when the Banū’l-Anf were practically annihilated in the 10th/16th century by the Zaydi Imām al-Muṭahhar b. Sharaf al-Dīn, who was extremely hostile towards the Iṣmā’īlīs of Yaman. The transference of the da’wa headquarters to India was therefore in recognition of these realities. It marked the definite end of the Yamanī phase of Ṭayyibi Iṣmā’īlism.

Jalāl b. Ḥasan died in 975/1567, after a dā’īship of only a few months. His son, Aminji b. Jalāl (d. 1010/1602), was an eminent Iṣmā’īlī jurist who attained high ranks in the Dā’ūdī da’wa. The Ṭayyibī Bohras still regard him as a great authority on legal matters after al-Qādī al-Nu’mān, whose Da’ā’īm al-Islām was used from the beginning by the Ṭayyibīs as their most authoritative compendium on fiqh. Jalāl b. Ḥasan was succeeded by Dā’ūd b. ‘Ajabshāh, whose dā’īship coincided with the closing years of the sultanate of Gujarāt. In his time, the Ṭayyibī Bohras were subjected to a new wave of persecutions spurred by the activities of Muḥammad Tāhir, a Sunnī propagandist and leader of the Ja’fari Bohras, who was assassinated by a Ṭayyibī in 986/1578. Muḥammad Tāhir also briefly received the support of the Mughal emperor Akbar the Great (963–1014/1556–1605), who conquered Gujarāt in 980/1573. Akbar’s deputy at Ahmādābād, too, adopted anti-Shī‘ī policies. Dā’ūd b. ‘Ajabshāh was obliged to go to Āgra
and personally present the grievances of his community to Akbar, who enjoyed a reputation for religious tolerance. Before leaving Ahmdadabad in 981/1573, the da'i appointed Dā'ūd b. Qutbshāh as his deputy in Gujarāt, an appointment later cited by the Dā'ūdis in their argument against the Sulaymāṇis. The da'i was well-received by the Mughal emperor, who ordered his officials in Gujarāt to accord religious freedom to the Tayyibis. Henceforth, it was no longer necessary for the Tayyibi Bohras to observe taqīyya. Dā'ūd b. 'Ajabshāh now launched a programme of revitalizing the community, reinstating the Tayyibi practices of worship which had been set aside for a long time in Gujarāt. In 986/1578, he was also able to reprimand Muẓaffar III, the last sultan of Gujarāt, who was then visiting Kapadwanj whilst fleeing from the Mughals, for his anti-Islāmīli policies. When Dā'ūd b. 'Ajabshāh, the twenty-sixth da'i muṭlaq, died in 999/1591, or in 997/1589 according to the Sulaymāṇī Tayyibis, his succession was disputed, causing a schism in the Tayyibi community.

Dā'ūd b. 'Ajabshāh was succeeded in India by Dā'ūd Burhān al-Dīn b. Qutbshāh, and the Yamanī Tayyibis were duly informed of this event. However, four years later, Sulaymān b. Ḥasan al-Hindi, the grandson of the twenty-fourth da'i muṭlaq and the deputy of Dā'ūd b. 'Ajabshāh in Yaman, claimed the succession for himself and returned to India to establish that claim. Sulaymān produced a document, still extant, showing that he had been the beneficiary of the naṣṣ of the twenty-sixth da'i. According to certain Tayyibi groups, this document had been forged with the help of some of the relatives of the deceased da'i, who had been implicated in financial misconduct. Matters became further complicated due to an inheritance suit filed in Mughal courts by Ibrāhīm b. Dā'ūd b. 'Ajabshāh against Dā'ūd b. Qutbshāh. The heated succession dispute was brought before the emperor Akbar at Lahore in 1005/1597. To investigate the matter, Akbar appointed a special tribunal consisting of Abu'l-Fadl 'Allāmī, his biographer and secretary; Ḥakīm 'Ali Gilānī, his Persian Shī'ī physician; and the governor of Gujarāt. The tribunal decided in favour of Dā'ūd b. Qutbshāh, but the dispute, having essentially an Indian versus Yamanī characteristic, was not resolved definitely and led to a schism in the Tayyibi community. The great majority of the Tayyibi Bohras, comprising the bulk of the Tayyibi Iṣmā'īlis, acknowledged Dā'ūd Burhān al-Dīn as their twenty-seventh da'i muṭlaq; henceforth they became known as Dā'ūdis. An insignificant number of Yamanī Tayyibis, too, rallied to the side of the Dā'ūdī cause. On the other hand, a minority, consisting of the bulk of the Yamanī Tayyibis and a small group of the
Tayyibi Bohras, upheld the succession rights of Sulaymān b. Ḥasan. These Tayyibis, designated as Sulaymānis, accepted Sulaymān b. Ḥasan as their twenty-seventh daʿī. Henceforth, the Dāʿūdis and the Sulaymānis followed different lines of daʿīs. The Dāʿūdi daʿī muṭlaq continued to reside in India, while the head of the Sulaymānī daʿwa established his headquarters in Yemen.

Dāʿūd Burhān al-Dīn, who had managed to win the support of the majority of the Indian Tayyibis, continued to have his headquarters at Aḥmadābād. He was not troubled during the remaining years of Akbar’s reign. He also established friendly relations with Qulij Khān, the Mughal governor of Gujarāt under Akbar’s son and successor Jahāngīr (1014-1037/1605-1627), who, at the instigation of the Sunni ‘ulama’, ordered the execution of the Imāmi scholar Nūr Allāh al-Shuštari. Dāʿūd died in 1021/1612; his tomb and that of his rival, Sulaymān b. Ḥasan, who died in 1005/1605, are still visited at Aḥmadābād by the Dāʿūdis and Sulaymānis. Dāʿūd Burhān al-Dīn was succeeded by his chief lieutenant, Shaykh Ādam Ṣafī al-Dīn. On the latter’s death in 1030/1621, ʿAbd al-Ṭayyib Ṣakī al-Dīn, the son of the twenty-seventh daʿī, became the twenty-ninth daʿī muṭlaq of the Dāʿūdis. Soon afterwards, his authority was challenged by ʿAlī b. Ibrāḥīm, the grandson of the twenty-eighth daʿī, Ādam. ʿAlī, supported by his paternal uncles and some others, claimed the succession for himself and carried his protest to the court of Jahāngīr. The Mughal emperor decided in favour of the incumbent daʿī and had ʿAlī reconcile his differences with the daʿī in his presence at Lahore. After both parties returned to Aḥmadābād, however, ʿAlī once again refused to acknowledge the daʿī’s leadership and seceded, with his followers, from the Dāʿūdi Bohra community. ʿAlī had in fact founded, in 1034/1624-1625, a new Tayyibi Bohra sub-sect called ‘Aliyya, after his own name. ʿAlī was succeeded by one of his uncles, Zakī al-Dīn Ṣaṭīb Ibrāḥīm al-Dīn b. Shaykh Ādam (d. 1047/1638). Since the time of the thirty-second daʿī, Dīyā’ al-Dīn Jiwaḥībī b. Nūḥ (d. 1130/1718), the headquarters of the ‘Aliyya have remained at Baroda in Gujarāt.

At present, the ‘Aliyya are a small community confined essentially to Baroda, and their present daʿī, the forty-fourth in the series, Tayyib Diyā’ al-Dīn b. Yūsuf Nūr al-Dīn, succeeded to office in 1394/1974. The ‘Aliyya do not intermarry with the orthodox Dāʿūdī Bohras, and evidently have produced no particular sectarian literature. In the time of their thirty-seventh daʿī, Shams al-Dīn ʿAlī (1189-1248/1775-1832), a small group of
dissenters broke away from the 'Aliyya community in 1204/1789. The dissenters, who were excommunicated by the dāʾī, preached that the era of Islam had ended. They also held some Hindu doctrines, especially the sinfulness of eating the flesh of animals, which won them the name of Nāgoshiyya. The vegetarian Nāgoshias, who like their parent sub-sect of the ‘Aliyya subsisted on the fringe of the Dā’ūdī community in Baroda, are now practically extinct.

Meanwhile, the Dā’ūdī Bohra community had grown and prospered under the successive dāʾīs, who were for the most part allowed religious freedom by the Mughal emperors and their governors or šubadārs in Gujarāt. Violating the religious policies of his dynasty, Awrangzib was the only Mughal to launch a major wave of persecutions against the Ismā’īlīs, both during his governorship of Gujarāt and after ascending to the Mughal throne in 1068/1658. The twenty-ninth Dā’ūdī dāʾī, ‘Abd al-Ṭayyib, was succeeded by ‘Ali Shams al-Dīn (1041–1042/1631–1632), a descendant of Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn and the first Yamanī to head the Dā’ūdīs. ‘Ali’s father, al-Ḥasan, had been appointed the deputy of the dāʾī muṭlaq in Yaman by Dā’ūd Burhān al-Dīn, a position he retained until after the succession of his own son to the dāʾīship. The tenure of the thirty-second dāʾī, Qutbkhān Qutb al-Dīn (1054–1056/1644–1646), coincided with Awrangzib’s brief governorship of Gujarāt, when the Dā’ūdīs were persecuted. Awrangzib, who himself did not exercise religious toleration, had come also under the influence of ‘Abd al-Qawi, his mentor and close adviser, who was strongly anti-Shīʿī. Upon his arrival in Ahmadībād in 1055/1645, Awrangzib started a campaign against the Ismā’īlīs. The dāʾī Qutbkhān and his close associates were arrested and imprisoned. The Ismā’īli Bohras, accused of heresy, were now pressured into embracing Sunnism and their mosques were placed in the hands of Sunni administrators. Many Dā’ūdīs converted to Sunnism or fled from Ahmadībād in fear of persecution, and the community once again resorted to taqiyya. These persecutory measures culminated in the trial of the dāʾī Qutbkhān in a Sunni court and in his execution in 1056/1646 on Awrangzib’s orders.115

Soon after, Awrangzib left Ahmadībād, handing the governorship of Gujarāt to Shāyasta Khān, who was tolerant towards the Bohras and allowed them religious freedom. Awrangzib, now engaged in his military campaigns, took along with him Qutbkhān’s successor as the thirty-third dāʾī, Pirkhān Shuja’ al-Dīn (1056–1065/1646–1655), and the latter’s chief deputies. Pirkhān accompanied Awrangzib as a prisoner to Deccan and elsewhere, but he was later released and permitted to return to
Ahmadabad. The Ismai'ilis were once again persecuted by Ghayrat Khān, who arrived in Gujarāt in 1058/1648 as Dārā Shukoh's deputy there. He also kept Pirkhān in prison for some time, freeing him only on the orders of Shāh Jahān (1037–1068/1628–1657). In Pirkhān’s time, another split which proved to be of temporary duration occurred in the Dā'ūdi Bohra community. The original protagonist of this split was a certain Bohra named Ahmād, a trusted associate of Pirkhān who had mishandled his mission to Āgra for obtaining the Mughal emperor’s intercession on behalf of the imprisoned dā'ī. Angered by Pirkhān’s refusal to reconcile with him, Ahmād started an anti-dā'ī campaign, and preached certain ideas which were to have important consequences later on. Ahmād adopted the view that the dā'ī, due to his erroneous judgement, had disqualified himself from office and that he should have been replaced by his ma'dhūn. Ahmād was now in effect expounding a new doctrine, holding that in the period of satr, when the concealed imām cannot rectify the errors of his dā'īs, the dā'ī muṭlaq is to be ka'l-ma‘ṣūm, nearly possessing sinlessness and infallibility. Ahmād and his followers, failing to win the support of Pirkhān’s ma’dhūn and future successor Ismā‘il, seceded from the Dā’ūdi community and became known as the Hujūmiyya. Initially, Ahmād gained some success and even managed to have Pirkhān imprisoned in 1064/1654 by the new governor of Gujarāt, Shāh Jahān’s youngest son Murād Bakhsh. However, the Hujūmiyya did not survive long.

Ismā‘il Badr al-Dīn b. Mullā Rāj (1065–1085/1655–1674), who succeeded Pirkhān as the thirty-fourth dā'ī, was the first Rājpūt dā'ī of the Dā’ūdis, tracing his ancestry to Bhārmal and Rāja, the wāli’s deputy in Pītān at the time of Ja’far’s secessionist activities. Ismā‘il transferred the headquarters of the dā’wā (or dā’wat, as pronounced by the Dā’ūdis themselves) from Ahmādābād to Jāmnagar. It was during the dā’īship of Ismā‘il’s son and successor, ‘Abd al-Ṭayyib Zakī al-Dīn (1085–1110/1674–1699), that the Ismā‘ili Bohras experienced the renewed persecutions of Awrangzīb (1068–1118/1658–1707), who had meanwhile installed himself as the Mughal emperor of India. The new sectarian troubles began around 1091/1680, when the Dā’ūdi dā’ī held a large public assembly in Ahmādābād, where he intended to reside, for announcing his naṣṣ in favour of his son Mūsā. The governor of Gujarāt, apprehensive of the increasing influence of the Dā’ūdīs, ordered the arrest of the dā’ī in 1093/1682. But ‘Abd al-Ṭayyib fled to Jāmnagar and the officials contented themselves with seizing a number of prominent Dā’ūdis of Ahmādābād who were sent to Awrangzīb. The dā’ī himself was forced to go into hiding.
in Khambhia and elsewhere. Under the new persecutions, the religious rituals and practices of the Indian Ṭayyibis, including their pilgrimages to various shrines and the mourning ceremonies for the martyrdom of the Imām al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī during the month of Muḥarram, were banned. The regular Ṭayyibī religious ceremonies, such as the daily prayers, were to be performed by Sunnī functionaries, who also became the custodians of the sectarian mosques. The Ismāʿīli Bohras were subjected to heavy punitive taxes and other monetary exactions. At the same time, Sunnī instructors were appointed for teaching the doctrines of Sunnī Islam to the Ismāʿīlis. Periodical reports on this official educational programme were to be forwarded to Awrangzib. These persecutions, necessitating the strict observance of taqiyyya, continued during the dāʾīship of ʿAbd al-Ṭayyib’s son and successor, Mūsā Kalim al-Dīn (1110–1122/1699–1710), whose tenure coincided with the final years of the ʿĀlamgīrī era. As late as 1116/1704, yet more leading Bohras working on behalf of the Dāʿūdī daʿwā were seized with their books and sent to the Mughal emperor.117

With Awrangzib’s death in 1118/1707 and the subsequent decline of the Mughal empire, the Ismāʿīli Bohra community was in general permitted to develop freely. As a trading and wealthy community, however, the Ismāʿīli Bohras continued to attract the attention of various petty rulers of India, who often exacted irregular payments from them. The dāʾī Mūsā Kalim al-Dīn’s son and designated successor, Nūr Muḥammad, was imprisoned for unknown reasons by the ruler of Jāmnagar, which was at the time the seat of the Dāʿūdī daʿwā. He was released after the payment of a large ransom by the dāʾī, reflecting an often utilized form of exaction applied to the Dāʿūdīs. Nūr Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn b. Mūsā, the thirty-seventh dāʾī, died in Mandvi, Cutch, and was succeeded by his cousin and brother-in-law Ismāʿīl Badr al-Dīn b. Shaykh Ādam Ṣāfī al-Dīn (1130–1150/1718–1737). The Dāʿūdīs were required by him to attend the mourning assemblies held during the early days of Muḥarram, and to read verses from the Qurʿān after their morning prayers. It was also in Ismāʿīl’s time that the dissenting Hujūmiyya returned to the fold of the Dāʿūdī daʿwā. Ibrāhīm Wajih al-Dīn’s accession to the headship of the Dāʿūdīs as the thirty-ninth dāʾī in 1150/1737 marks a shift in the family line of dāʾīs. Ibrāhīm’s father, ʿAbd al-Qādīr Ḥakīm al-Dīn (d. 1142/1730), was an influential and learned Bohra from Mālwā in central India, who had risen to the rank of maʿdhūn of the thirty-eighth dāʾī. Ibrāhīm Wajih al-Dīn transferred the headquarters of the daʿwā to Ujjain, where he died in 1168/
1754. At the time, Burhānpūr had become another important Dāʿūdī centre outside of Gujarāt.

During the dāʿīship of Ibrāhīm’s son and successor, Hibat Allāh al-Muʿayyad ʿīl-Dīn (1168–1193/1754–1779), coinciding with the early phase of the British subjugation of India, another insignificant dissident movement occurred in the Dāʿūdī community. The leaders of this new anti-dāʿī movement were Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Rasūl al-Majdū’, the author of the famous Ismāʿīli bibliographical work, Fiḥrist al-kutub, and his son Hibat Allāh. Ismāʿīl who had studied under Luqmānji b. Ḥabīb (d. 1173/1760), a renowned Dāʿūdī scholar, and Hibat Allāh had distinguished themselves as Ismāʿīli scholars and aspired to the leadership of the community. In 1175/1761, Hibat Allāh claimed to have established direct contact with the concealed Ṭayyibī Imām through his dāʿī al-balāgh, ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥārith. He further claimed to have been appointed by the hidden imām to the position of al-ḥuṣṣa al-laylī, a rank superior to that of dāʿī mūṭlaq. By these claims, which were supported by Ismāʿīl, Hibat Allāh evidently expected the reigning dāʿī to yield his position to him. Hibat Allāh acquired some followers in Ujjain and elsewhere, who became known as Hiptias (Hibtiyas) after his name.118

The dāʿī attempted in vain to persuade the new dissenters to abandon their propaganda. They were attacked and chased out of Ujjain, their initial seat, by angered orthodox Dāʿūdīs. Ismāʿīl managed to escape unharmed but Hibat Allāh was seized and his nose was amputated as a mark of disgrace, before he was permitted to leave Ujjain. The derogatory nickname al-Majdū’, meaning a person whose nose is cut off, was later given to Hibat Allāh’s father, Ismāʿīl, who died in 1183 or 4/1769–1770 in Ujjain. Hibat Allāh conducted his campaign in various towns, but he failed to acquire any significant following. The dāʿī mūṭlaq himself travelled widely throughout the community, countering the propaganda of the Hiptias. Today, the Hiptias are almost extinct, except for a few families in Ujjain, where the survivors of this minor Ṭayyibī sub-sect live in isolation from the orthodox Dāʿūdīs. In his travels, the dāʿī also spent a few years in Sūrat, then rapidly becoming another important Dāʿūdī town in India. The fortieth dāʿī, who had statesmanship qualities, averted the occurrence of what could have been a major schism in the Dāʿūdī community. He also maintained cordial relations with the Mughal emperor of his time, Shāh ʿĀlam II, who appointed him the qādī of Ujjain, and with other petty rulers as well as with the British, who by then controlled parts of Gujarāt. The
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dā'ī Hibat Allāh died in 1193/1779 at Ujjain. He was succeeded by his son-in-law 'Abd al-Ṭayyib Zakī al-Dīn b. Ismā'īl Badr al-Dīn (1193–1200/1779–1785), marking the reversion of the dā'īship to the Rājpūt dynasty and the abandonment of Ujjain as the headquarters of the Dā'ūdī da'wa. 'Abd al-Ṭayyib, who was very strict in enforcing the Dā'ūdī Bohra prohibitions against the use of tobacco and liquor, spent most of his time in Gujarāt and died in Burhānpūr.

The forty-second dā'ī, Yūsuf Najm al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Ṭayyib Zakī al-Dīn (1200–1213/1785–1798), transferred the headquarters of the da'wa to Sūrat, then controlled by the British and as such a safe refuge for the Ismā'īlīs. Yūsuf Najm al-Dīn's brother and successor, 'Abd 'Ali Sayf al-Dīn (1213–1232/1798–1817), founded the famous seminary at Sūrat, known as the Sayfī Dars, for the training of the Dā'ūdī functionaries and for imparting higher religious education to the members of the community. The tenure of the forty-third dā'ī coincided with the consolidation of British rule in India and the virtual termination of persecutions against the Ismā'īlī Bohras and Khojas. However, occasional internal strife and factionalism, often due to succession or financial disputes, as well as conflicts with other Muslim groups and Hindus, continued to mark the subsequent history of the Dā'ūdīs of India.

The forty-sixth dā'ī, Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn b. 'Abd 'Ali Sayf al-Dīn (1252–1256/1837–1840), was the last of the dā'īs belonging to the Rājpūts of Gujarāt. He died suddenly in 1256/1840, without having pronounced the so-called nass al-jāli, the public designation of a successor, thus causing a heated succession controversy in the community which has continued to the present. Under the circumstances, the Dā'ūdī 'ulamā' did not divulge the matter to the public, and four of the most prominent 'ulamā', led by 'Abd-i 'Ali 'Imād al-Dīn (d. 1271/1854), nominated 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn for administering the affairs of the da'wa. 'Abd al-Qādir, who at the time held the rank of mukāsir, was the son of the forty-fifth dā'ī, Ṭayyib Zayn al-Dīn b. Shaykh Jiwanji Awrangābādī (1236–1252/1821–1837). Shaykh Jiwanji, it may be noted, is the ancestor of the most recent family of the Dā'ūdī dā'īs, initiated by the forty-fourth dā'ī and continuing to the present fifty-second dā'ī with the exception of the forty-sixth dā'ī. According to the agreement reached between the 'ulamā' and 'Abd al-Qādir, the latter was to become al-nāẓim, an adjuster or caretaker for administrative purposes only, without laying any claim to the spiritual position of al-dā'ī al-muṭlaq. At any rate, the Dā'ūdīs now recognized 'Abd al-Qādir as their new head while certain learned circles continued to debate his accession and doubted his legitimacy.
Some of the 'ulama', greatly disturbed by the suspension of the naṣṣ (inqiqa' al-naṣṣ) and the regular succession of the dā'is, even began to expect the imminent emergence of the imām. As a result, in 1293/1876, five renowned Dā'udi 'ulama', including Muḥammad 'Ali b. Fayḍ Allāh al-Hamdānī (d. 1315/1898), left India for Arabia on a search for the imām. The group visited many localities in the Hijāz and elsewhere, and also ran into difficulties with the Ottoman authorities who suspected the Ismā'ili Bohras as spies. In 1295/1878, the leading Dā'udi scholars, headed by Ibrāhimbhā'ī Ṣafī al-Dīn b. 'Abd-i 'Ali 'Imād al-Dīn (d. 1315/1897), set up a consultative council in Sūrat, known as ḥijāt al-faḍā'il, to guide the community in religious matters in accordance with the Shari'a, especially since religious education in the meantime had been discontinued at the Sayfī Darṣ. The council proved to be short-lived and various Dā'udi circles remained perturbed by the controversy surrounding the dā'iship of 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn.

Appearing as early as 1264/1847–1848, the circulation of the so-called ʿImīmī letters, with their mysterious content and threatening tone, indeed indicated the existence of growing opposition in the community to 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn's leadership and policies. Meanwhile, after being securely established, 'Abd al-Qādir had assumed the title of dā'i muṭlaq. He had also adopted a policy of weakening the position of the 'ulama' who were opposed to him. For instance, he appointed numerous members of his own family to the ranks of the da'wa hierarchy. And the status of shaykh (plural, mashāyikh), hitherto bestowed on Dā'ūdis in recognition of their learning and piety, was now given to unworthy persons in the community. These developments had, in turn, adverse effects on the financial situation of the da'wa, further aggravating the fears of the discontented Dā'ūdis. Financial difficulties were accentuated by the fact that 'Abd al-Qādir's relatives, made responsible for collecting the religious dues of the Dā'ūdis in many regions, including the prosperous Bohra community of Bombay, often kept the funds for themselves.

'Abd al-Qādir survived various vicissitudes during his long dā'iship of nearly forty-five years, but at the cost of causing irrevocable damage to the office of dā'i muṭlaq. He also laid the ground for the grievances which later led to more active dissent in the Dā'ūdi Bohra community. The events of this tumultuous period were subsequently brought out during the court hearings related to two well-known Bohra civil suits filed in British India, viz., the Chandabhai Gulla case of 1917 and the Burhanpur Durgah case of 1925. 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn died in 1302/1885 and was succeeded by his brother 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Ḥusām al-Dīn (1302–1308/1885–1891), who
devoted his brief da'iship mainly to campaigning against the superstitious beliefs and practices of the Dâ'ûdî Bohras, often reflecting Hindu influences.

The forty-eighth da'i was succeeded by his nephew Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn (1308–1323/1891–1906). The latter succumbed to the Dâ'ûdî opposition circles and admitted in a written document, issued in 1309/1891, that he and his two predecessors were merely nāzims or caretakers of the community and not da'is, since the forty-sixth da'i mutlaq had died without appointing a successor. Overt dissension now broke out in the community, and Muḥammad’s leadership was contested even by his own brother ‘Abd Allāh, whilst financial difficulties continued to beset the da'wa. At the same time another split occurred in the Dâ'ûdî Bohra community. In 1315/1897, a talented young Dâ'ûdî called 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Jiwājī, originally a petty merchant in Bombay, came to Nagpur, claiming that he was in direct communication with the hidden imām and that he had been appointed his hujja. At first he gained some supporters, including some Dâ'ûdî 'ulama', who came to be known as the Mahdībāghwālās, or the Mahdībāgh party, named after their place of residence in Nagpur. The 'ulama’, however, soon became disillusioned with 'Abd al-Ḥusayn, who had also attracted some wealthy and enterprising Bohra merchants, and left the new Dâ'ûdî sub-sect. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn, popularly known as Malak Şahīb, designated as his successor one Ghulām Ḥusayn (Khan Bahadur H. H. Malik), who became the head of the Mahdībāgh colony at Nagpur in 1321/1903. In 1341/1922, Ibrāhīm Riḍā Şahīb took over the leadership of this group; he was then followed by Ḥasan Nūrānī, who succeeded to that non-hereditary position in 1376/1956.

The Mahdībāghwālās, continuing to live in their settlement in Nagpur, never acquired any significance and were refuted in several treatises written by prominent Dâ'ûdīs. A small group of the Mahdībāghwālās, believing that the dawr al-kashf had commenced and that it was no longer necessary to observe the prescriptions of the Sharī'a, gave up praying and fasting in the month of Ramadān, along with other Muslim rituals and obligations; they became known as the Dâ'ûdī Atbā'-i Malak Vakil, or Artāliswālās.

'Abd Allāh Badr al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Ḥusām al-Dīn (1323–1333/1906–1915) succeeded his cousin Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn as the fiftieth da'i of the Dâ'ûdīs. During his short term in office, he introduced some changes designed to improve the functioning of the da'wa and its regional
machinery in India. He was, however, opposed to the dissemination of Western-style secular education among the Da'ūdīs, which at the time was the foremost desideratum of the reform-oriented members of the community. It was also during 'Abd Allāh Badr al-Dīn's dā'i-ship that serious troubles broke out between the Ismā'īl Bohras and other Muslim groups, leading to serious riots in Bhopal. A new era in the modern history of the Da'ūdī Bohras began with the fifty-first dā'i, Ġāhir Sayf al-Dīn b. Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn (1333–1385/1915–1965), who headed the community for fifty years, longer than any of his predecessors. Henceforth, the Da'ūdīs became strongly polarized between the dā'i and his supporters on the one side, and the opposition comprised of reformist groups on the other. From early on, Ǧāhir Sayf al-Dīn strove to acquire a firm hold over the community by assuming the title of dā'i muṭlaq and making unprecedented claims to sinlessness and infallibility, while pursuing specific policies designed to ensure the unquestioning submission of the Da'ūdīs to his authority in both religious and secular matters. The dā'i, maintaining the policies of his grandfather 'Abd al-Qādir Najm al-Dīn, appointed his own family members to the high positions in the da'wa organization. He undermined the status of the 'ulamā' and took into control all the communal and endowed properties, the so-called awqāf. The opposition, initially emphasizing secular education, in time came to campaign for social change and individual rights, democratization of the local institutions belonging to the da'wa, and financial accountability of the funds collected from the Da'ūdīs. During the 1950s and 1960s, more reformist groups were formed which soon joined forces with the old opposition in the community, establishing a united front under the name of Pragati Mandal (Progressive Group). So far, the reformist movement has had its greatest appeal amongst the elite of the community. The majority of the Da'ūdī Bohras, traditional in their ways and outlook, continue to be apathetic and submissive to their dā'i. In no small measure, the Da'ūdī reformist efforts have been undermined by the effective use of excommunication and the ordering of social boycotts, amongst other punitive measures, exercised by the dā'i. The present dā'i muṭlaq of the Da'ūdīs, the fifty-second in the series, is Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn b. Ǧāhir Sayf al-Dīn, who succeeded his father in 1385/1965. In his time, the Da’ūdīs of East Africa, too, have raised questions regarding his authority.

No accurate information is available on the number of the Da'ūdī Bohras, since the government of India does not publish separate census figures for various Muslim groups in the country. According to the
population census of 1931, the Bohras of different religious persuasions, including the Ismāʿīlīs as well as those Sunnīs, Hindus and Jews who reported themselves as Bohras, numbered to about 210,000 persons in India. On the basis of some recent estimates, accounting also for natural annual increases, the total Dāʾūdī population of the world is currently placed at around 500,000 persons, of which four-fifths reside in India. More than half of the Indian Dāʾūdī Bohras live in Gujarāt, while the remainder are located mainly in Bombay and central India. The major urban centres of the Dāʾūdīs of India are Bombay, Dohad, Udaipur, Ujjain, Sūrat, Aḥmadābād, Sidhpūr, and other cities in Gujarāt, Madhya Pradesh and Maharāstra. Outside of India, the largest number of Dāʾūdīs are to be found in Pakistan, where there are about 30,000 Dāʾūdī Bohras residing chiefly in Karachi. In Yaman, the Dāʾūdīs represent a small community, perhaps not exceeding 5,000 persons living in the Ḥarāz region, especially amongst the Banū Muqāṭāt and on the Jabal Šaʿfān. Small trading communities of the Dāʾūdī Bohras are also settled in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), in various parts of the Far East, and along the southern shores of the Persian Gulf; while a few hundred have immigrated to Europe and America in recent decades. The largest Dāʾūdī Bohra settlement outside of India after Pakistan, however, is located in East Africa, where some 20,000 Dāʾūdīs currently live in Tanzania (incorporating since 1964 the island of Zanzibar and the former territory of Tanganyika on the mainland), Kenya and Uganda. The Ismāʿīlīs of East Africa have been increasingly obliged to immigrate to the West, due to the repressive policies of some of the local governments.

The Dāʾūdī Bohras, along with the Nizārī Khojas, were amongst the earliest Asian immigrants to East Africa. The permanent settlement of the Ismāʿīlī Bohras and Khojas in East Africa was greatly encouraged during the early decades of the nineteenth century by the Ḥumāni sultan Sayyid Saʿīd (1220–1273/1806–1856), belonging to the Ibāḍī Buʾ Saʿīd dynasty of Ḥumān and Zanzibar. Sultan Saʿīd was interested in foreign trade, and, benefiting from British protection, he managed to extend and consolidate his African dominions into a commercial empire. In the pursuit of his policies, Saʿīd encouraged the immigration of Indian traders, who were accorded religious freedom, to Zanzibar. After the Khojas, the Bohras, coming mainly from the districts of Cutch and Kathiawār in Gujarāt, constituted the largest group of Indian immigrants in Zanzibar. The movement to East Africa of the Indian Ismāʿīlīs, engaged in trade, was intensified after 1840, when Saʿīd transferred his capital from Muscat to
Zanzibar. Subsequently, the Indian Ismā'īlis moved from Zanzibar to the growing urban areas on the east coast of Africa, notably Mombasa, Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam, where they acted as commercial agents for firms in Zanzibar or became petty merchants and shopkeepers. Further penetration of the Indian Ismā'īli settlers into the interior of East Africa followed the establishment of British and German rule in the region. Both of these European colonial powers were in need of the commercial skills and connections of the Bohras and Khojas in the territories under their rule. By the early decades of the twentieth century, however, the immigration of the Indian Ismā'īlis to East Africa had practically come to an end; only a few Bohra families have gone there since 1918. From the beginning, the Bohras of each town in Africa have lived in their own separate quarters, while maintaining their religious practices and social customs. Almost all of the Ismā'īli Bohras of East Africa belong to the Dā'udi faction, with virtually no Sulaymānis amongst them.\textsuperscript{125}

The organization of the Dā'udi da'wa has been based on the pattern developed during the Yamani phase of Ẓayyibī Ismā'ilism.\textsuperscript{126} The Dā'ūdis are headed by a dā'i muṭlaq, who is in fact a substitute for the concealed imām. The dā'i, appointed by the nass of his predecessor, is considered to be ma'sūm, sinless and infallible, and in possession of the required religious knowledge or 'ilm. With absolute authority over every aspect of the community, the dā'i is the supreme head of the da'wa organization and governs autocratically with the help of his personally chosen assistants. The dā'i muṭlaq is commonly known as the Mullāji Şāhib or Sayyidnā Şāhib. Since the early decades of the twentieth century, he has resided in Bombay, although the headquarters of the Dā'udi da'wa, known as the Deorhī, have continued to be located in Sūrat. In both places, there are good collections of Ismā'īli manuscripts, under the direct supervision of the dā'i himself. The private manuscript collections of deceased Dā'ūdis are normally confiscated for these officially administered libraries, especially the one at Sūrat. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible for researchers to obtain access to these treasures of Ismā'īli literature.

The next lower ranks in the Dā'udi da'wa hierarchy are those of ma'dhūn and mukāsir. The dā'i appoints one ma'dhūn who acts as his chief assistant. The ma'dhūn is normally chosen from amongst the close relatives of the dā'i and succeeds to the dā'iship. The dā'i also nominates one mukāsir, again usually a relative. The mukāsir assists the ma'dhūn and sees to the lesser details and the more routine administrative affairs of the da'wa. Next, there are the mashāyikh (singular, shaykh), also known as ḥudūd, who are
normally eighteen in number. The mashāyikh are of varying ranks but all of them are addressed as Bhāʾī Šāhib, the reverend brother. Each dāʾī selects his own mashāyikh from amongst the Dāʾūdis most learned in Ismāʿili doctrine and in Arabic. The mashāyikh, who are trained at the Sayfī Dars, officiate in the larger Dāʾūdi centres, also announcing the orders of the dāʾī.

Next in the daʿwa hierarchy comes the ʿāmil or agent, who is the head of any local Dāʾūdi congregation or jamaʿat. Addressed as Bhāʾī Šāhib or Miyān Šāhib, the ʿāmil is sent by the dāʾī to every Dāʾūdi community whose population exceeds fifty families. The main duty of the ʿāmil is to lead the community under his charge in prayers and to perform the various religious ceremonies, including marriage, funeral rites, and circumcision (khatna). Being the local representative of the dāʾī, no religious or communal ceremony is valid without his permission; and for every ceremony that the ʿāmil performs, he receives a fee out of which the greater share is sent to the dāʾī’s treasury, while the rest is retained by him. The ʿāmil is also responsible for collecting the various religious dues and offerings for the dāʾī. He is usually appointed for a period of five years, and his tenure is seldom renewed; while the dāʾī favours the inter-communal transfers of his ʿāmils. These policies are aimed at preventing the ʿāmils from developing privileged positions in any particular community, which would enable them to misappropriate local funds. In important Dāʾūdi cities like Bombay and Karachi, the ʿāmils are likely to be the dāʾī’s relatives or highly trusted individuals. In East Africa, the earliest ʿāmils were despatched around the turn of the last century from Gujarāt to Zanzibar and Mombasa. At present, there are two Bhāʾī Šāhibs in East Africa. One acts as the head ʿāmil of East Africa, with his headquarters at Mombasa; and the second is the ʿāmil of the Dāʾūdi Bohra congregation at Nairobi. Furthermore, unlike other areas, the ʿāmils of East Africa often hold their positions for long periods, sometimes exceeding two decades. The lowest rank in the Dāʾūdi daʿwa organization is that of mullā, who is usually appointed by the dāʾī from amongst the qualified members of the community where he is to serve. The Dāʾūdi mullās are numerous, and in the larger towns there is also the position of wāli mullā, who leads the communal prayers in the absence of the ʿāmil. The ʿāmils may delegate some of their functions to the mullās, who normally have some knowledge of Arabic and Ismāʿili rituals and who are employed as instructors at the elementary schools or madrasas for the Bohra children.

Every Dāʾūdi on attaining the age of fifteen takes an oath of allegiance or
mithaq, also known as the 'ahd al-awliya', pledging loyalty to the Tayyibi Isma'ilis and the Dâ'ûdi dâ'îs. Thereupon, he is officially initiated into the community as a believer (mu'min). The same covenant is renewed annually by every adult Dâ'ûdi on the 18th of Dhu'l-Hijja, celebrated by the Dâ'ûdis like other Shi'is as the 'id Ghadir Khumm, which is a day of fasting for the Dâ'ûdis. The mithaq, reminiscent of a custom adopted in Fatimid times, is administered by the 'âmil of every congregation, and its present text, introduced in recent times, includes a promise of unconditional obedience to the dâ'î. The Dâ'ûdis pay a number of dues to the dâ'î mithaq. These include the annual khums, also payable by other Shi'is, and zakât; as well as special occasional dues like haqq al-nafs, levied on the relatives of a deceased Dâ'ûdi, and salâm, a voluntary but customary offering to the dâ'î. These dues, representing substantial annual payments to the dâ'î's central treasury, are regularly collected on a local basis by the 'âmils, normally once a year during the month of Ramaḍân. Sometimes, the collections are made by a special envoy of the dâ'î, referred to as the sâhib al-da'wa.

Amongst their more important religious practices, the Dâ'ûdis make the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca and pay equal attention to visiting the shrines of the Imâms 'Alî b. Abî Ṭâlib and al-Hasayn b. 'Alî, at Najaf and Karbala'. They also hold elaborate mourning sessions, or majâlîs, during the first ten days of the month of Muḥarram, commemorating the martyrdom of the Imâm al-Hasayn. The Dâ'ûdis pray three times a day, at dawn, mid-day and just after sunset, in their separate mosques, found in every Dâ'ûdi community. The names of their twenty-one revealed imâms are repeated at the end of every prayer. The Dâ'ûdis do not participate in special communal prayers on Fridays or on religious festivals as do the Twelver Shi'is, and they do not recite the sermon or khutba reserved for those occasions. According to a Tayyibi belief developed in Yaman, such sermons could be pronounced only under a manifest imâm. As a result, there are no minbars or pulpits in the Dâ'ûdi mosques. The Dâ'ûdi Bohras also have their jama'at-khânas or assembly halls, reserved for communal and religious gatherings and ceremonies. They are managed by the committees of the leading Bohras, appointed by the 'âmil of each community. The Dâ'ûdi Bohras use a form of Gujarâtî language, permeated with Arabic words, and write in the Arabic script. They have retained many Hindu customs in their marriage ceremonies and other rituals. Disputes in the Dâ'ûdi communities are resolved by the 'âmils or referred to the dâ'î in Bombay. In such cases, the dâ'î's decisions are binding on all
parties. In legal disputes relating to the Ismāʿili Bohras, the Indian courts now apply the Islamic law, especially as enunciated in al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān’s Daʿāʾim al-Islām, the chief legal compendium of the Dāʿūdi and Sulaymāni Ţayyibis throughout the world. The Ismāʿili Bohras have their own version of the Islamic lunar calendar, developed in Fāṭimid times, which is based on astronomical calculations for determining the beginning of the months. This calendar is therefore fixed, and as such it may differ from the usual Muslim dating based on the sighting of the new moon by one or two days. A general feature of the Dāʿūdi Bohra communities in India and elsewhere is their strong inclination towards seclusion. Although such isolationist tendencies are diminishing, the Dāʿūdis still keep their books secret, indulge in limited contact with outsiders, and refrain from intermarrying with Hindus or with other Muslim groups. These customs, along with the fact that the Dāʿūdi daʿwa no longer attempts to win new converts, have combined to limit the total size of the Dāʿūdi population of the world.

In Yaman, meanwhile, the unified Ţayyibī daʿwa had been succeeded mainly by the Sulaymānī daʿwa, which had few adherents in India. As noted, the twenty-seventh dāʿī mutlaq of the Sulaymānīs, Sulaymān b. Ḥasan, was an Indian who had originally been sent to Yaman as the deputy of Dāʿūd b. ʿAjabshāh, the last Ţayyibī dāʿī recognized by both the Dāʿūdis and the Sulaymānīs. Subsequently, Sulaymān went to India to establish his claims to the dāʿīship of the Ţayyibīs, then consisting chiefly of the Ţayyibī Bohras. Failing to win much support amongst the Bohras, who had already acknowledged Dāʿūd b. Qutbshāh as their new dāʿī, Sulaymān b. Ḥasan died at Ahmadibid in 1005/1597, during the earliest years of the Dāʿūdi–Sulaymānī dispute. This dispute, it may be recalled, also represented a conflict of interests of the majoritarian Indian and the minoritarian Yamanī wings of Ţayyibī Ismāʿilism. At any rate, while the Ţayyibī Bohras rallied to the side of Dāʿūd b. Qutbshāh and his successors, the Yamanī Ţayyibīs mainly supported the claims of Sulaymān b. Ḥasan, who initiated a separate line of Sulaymānī dāʿīs. Sulaymān b. Ḥasan was succeeded by his minor son, Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān (1005–1050/1597–1640), who was one of the four Indian dāʿīs of the Sulaymānīs, along with his father, his successor, and the forty-sixth dāʿī. Henceforth, the Sulaymānī dāʿīs established their headquarters in Yaman, where the great bulk of the Sulaymānīs lived. During the youth of Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān, Ṣafī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Fahd (d. 1042/1633), belonging to the influential Makramī family of the Yamanī Ismāʿīlī tribe of Yām, ran the affairs of the
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Sulaymāni da‘iwa as the mustawda’ or acting dā‘ī. Muḥammad b. al-Fahd al-Makramī was also one of the foremost Sulaymāni authors who, in line with the main characteristic of the Sulaymāni literature, wrote several works in refutation of the claims of Dā‘ūd b. Quṭbshāh and the Dā‘ūdis.130 With the death of the twenty-ninth dā‘ī, ‘Ali b. Sulaymān (1050–1088/1640–1677), the dā‘īship of the Sulaymānis passed to Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. al-Fahd al-Makramī (1088–1094/1677–1683), and that hereditary position has remained since 1088/1677 in the same Makramī family, with only a few interruptions. The Sulaymāni dā‘īs followed one another in Yaman, by the rule of the naṣṣ, without any succession disputes. Consequently, there have been no schisms in the Sulaymāni community. The Makramī dā‘īs established their headquarters in Najrān in northeastern Yaman. Supported by the Banū Yām, who, like the bulk of the Yamanī Ismā‘īlis, had sided with Sulaymān b. Ḥasan and the Sulaymāni cause, the Makramī dā‘īs ruled Najrān, usually from Badr, independently.

The Makramī Sulaymāni dā‘īs had frequent conflicts with the local Zaydī Imāms, who belonged to the Qāsimī line of al-Qāsim al-Manṣūr (d. 1029/1620), who had expelled the Ottoman Turks from Yaman in 1045/1635. In the earliest decades of the long dā‘īship of Hibat Allāh b. Ibrāhīm al-Makramī (1109–1160/1697–1747), however, the Zaydī Imām al-Manṣūr b. al-Mutawakkil granted the dā‘ī control over Ḥarāz, in return for the dā‘ī’s earlier support of al-Manṣūr against rebels in his family. Subsequently, the Makramīs resisted all attempts of the Zaydis to expel them from that region. In the middle of the 12th/18th century, the Banū Yām, led by the Makramī dā‘īs, penetrated into the Mikhlaf al-Sulaymāni (Haly), adjoining the Red Sea, a region then under the control of the amīrs of the Āl Khayrāt. Later, the thirty-third dā‘ī, Ismā‘īl b. Hibat Allāh (1160–1184/1747–1770), conquered Ḥadramawt in 1170/1756–1757. Subsequently, however, the Makramī dynasty of the Sulaymāni dā‘īs endeavoured in vain to fight the rising power of the Sa‘ūdī family of central Arabia. In the middle of the 12th/18th century, a new era had commenced in Arabia with the spread of the Wahhābiyya, a religious and reformist movement founded by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 1206/1792), a Hanbali Sunnī theologian from Najd who was also very hostile towards Shi‘ism. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb acquired powerful protectors in Muḥammad b. Sa‘ūd (d. 1179/1765), the amīr of Dir‘iyya near Riyāḍ, and the Āl Sa‘ūd. In 1157/1744, Ibn Sa‘ūd and Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb concluded a basic alliance, marking the effective beginning of the Wahhābī state in central Arabia. By 1202/1788, all of Najd had been conquered by Ibn Sa‘ūd’s son
and successor, 'Abd al-'Aziz (1179–1215/1765–1801), who had repelled three expeditions sent against him by the Sulaymānis. The Sa‘ūdis soon expanded their territories in the Hijāz and in southern Arabia, alarming the Ottoman Turks into taking military action against them. It was in the aftermath of these events that the Ottomans, led by Aḥmad Mukhtār Pasha, occupied Yaman anew in 1288/1871, significantly curtailing the power of both the Qāsimi Zaydi Imāms and the Makramī Sulaymānī dā‘īs. The Makramīs were in fact expelled from Ḥarāz in 1289/1872 by the general Mukhtār Pasha, who destroyed their fortress at Ḥattāra and killed the forty-first dā‘ī, al-Ḥasan b. Ismā‘īl al-Shibām al-Makramī (1262–1289/1846–1872). At the same time, the Banū Yām were coerced into accepting a peace settlement, and the dā‘īs, now divested of their fighting capability, retired quietly to Najrān. This marked the end of the political significance of the Makramī dynasty of Sulaymānī dā‘īs and their followers in Yaman.

Subsequently, the Sulaymānī dā‘īs and their community in Yaman had to withstand the hostilities of the Zaydi Imāms and the puritanic Sa‘ūdis of central Arabia. In the twentieth century, the Sa‘ūdis rose to prominence under 'Abd al-'Aziz II (1319–1373/1902–1953), who, after becoming the ruler of the Hijāz and Najd, proclaimed himself the king of Saudi Arabia in 1351/1932. In 1353/1934,'Abd al-'Aziz went into war with Yaman over a boundary conflict, and easily defeated the Zaydi Imām al-Mutawakkil Yahyā (1322–1367/1904–1948). As a result of the ensuing truce and treaty for the demarcation of the boundaries, Najrān, the seat of the Makramīs, was apportioned to Saudi Arabia. During these eventful years, the reigning forty-fifth dā‘ī, 'Alī b. Muḥsin (1331–1355/1913–1936), handled his disputes with Malik Ibn Sa‘ūd and Imām Yahyā with great tact and diplomacy. The forty-seventh dā‘ī, Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Makramī (1357–1358/1938–1939), too, attempted to protect the Yanāmī Sulaymānīs in those difficult times, but he was obliged to spend his short term in office in Saudi Arabia; he died at Ṭā‘īf. Under these turbulent circumstances, the forty-sixth Sulaymānī dā‘ī, al-Ḥājj Ghulām Ḥusayn (1355–1357/1936–1938), another Indian to occupy that office, chose to stay in India. Ghulām Ḥusayn had visited Yaman in 1303/1885–1886, and in 1327/1909 he was selected by the forty-fourth dā‘ī 'Alī b. Hibat Allāh (1323–1331/1905–1913) to head the Sulaymānī Bohras. He was designated in 1333/1915, by the forty-fifth dā‘ī, to succeed to the dā‘īship. Ghulām Ḥusayn, who lived and died near Bombay, was a religious scholar and the author of numerous works in Arabic and Urdu, including an abridgement of al-Kirmānī's Ṛḥat al-‘aqīl. He also introduced al-Nu‘mān’s Da‘ā‘īm al-
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Islam to the general Indian Isma'il public in an abridged form, in his Sharh al-masa'īl, written in both Arabic and Urdu. The complete text of the Da'a'im, utilized by the Sulaymānī and Dā'ūdī Ṭayyībis, was edited by the late Asaf A. A. Fyzee (Aṣaf b. 'Ali Aṣghar Faydī), the foremost modern Sulaymānī scholar and the leading contemporary expert on Isma'īlī jurisprudence. After Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Ḥājj Ghulām Ḥusayn, the dā'īship of the Sulaymānīs reverted to the Makramī family. The present dā'ī, the forty-ninth in the series, is al-Sharafī al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan al-Makramī, who succeeded to office in 1396/1976.

The total number of Yamānī Sulaymānīs may currently be placed around 50,000–70,000 persons, living mainly in the northern districts of Yaman and on the northern border region between Yaman and Saudi Arabia. Besides the Banū Yām of Najrān, the Sulaymānīs are found in Ḥarāz, amongst the inhabitants of the Jabal Maghāriba and in Hawzan, Lahāb and 'Attāra, as well as in the district of Hamdān and in the vicinity of Yārim. In Yaman, the Sulaymānīs live in isolation from the Zaydis and evidently also from the less significant Dā'ūdīs. By the early decades of the twentieth century, the Sulaymānīs of India were still fewer than a thousand persons. At present, there are only a few thousand Sulaymānī Bohras living mainly in Bombay, Baroda, Aḥmadābād, and Ḥaydarābād in the Deccan. There are also some Sulaymānīs in Pakistan.

The Sulaymānī dā'wa essentially continued the traditions of the post-Fāṭimid Yamānī Ṭayyībis. The religious organization of the Sulaymānīs maintained the simplicity of the dā'wa organization developed during the Yamānī phase of Ṭayyībī Ismā'īlism, in contrast to the more elaborate Dā'ūdī dā'wa in India. In addition, being a small community distributed over a relatively small area, the needs of the Yamānī Sulaymānīs could be adequately served by a simple dā'wa organization. The Sulaymānī dā'ī mutlaq personally sees to the major problems of his followers, being helped by his assistants who occupy the ranks of ma'dhūn and mukāsir. He also has a few representatives, 'āmils, in the more important Sulaymānī districts of Yaman. The Sulaymānī dā'īs, unlike those of the Dā'ūdīs, do not use honorific titles, being simply addressed by the designation of Sayyidī. In the nomenclature of the Sulaymānī dā'wa, the dā'ī mutlaq has three jazā'īr, or dā'wa regions, under him, viz., Yaman, Hind (India) and Sind (Pakistan). The dā'ī himself resides in Yaman, where he is known as the dā'ī qabā'il Yām. In India, where he is referred to as Sayyidīnā Sāhib, the dā'ī has his chief representative or agent, known as the mansūb. The mansūb resides at Baroda, the headquarters of the Sulaymānī dā'wa in the Indian
subcontinent, where there is a Sulaymānī library of Ismāʿīlī manuscripts. The mansūb in India also supervises the affairs of the Sulaymānīs of Pakistan. Sometimes, as in recent decades, the dāʿī simultaneously has two mansūbs in India, residing in Baroda and Ḥaydarābād. A person selected by the dāʿī for the position of mansūb is known as al-mansūb al-muṭlaq, while on actually assuming his post he is called al-mansūb al-mustaqill (or al-munfarid). There is no rank of shaykh in the Sulaymānī daʿwa hierarchy in India. The mansūbs are chiefly assisted by a number of ʿāmils who are generally mullās residing in different Sulaymānī Bohra communities. These lesser functionaries conduct the communal prayers, perform religious ceremonies, and collect the dues for the dāʿī in Yaman.

In India, the official language of the Sulaymānī daʿwa is Urdu, the language commonly used by the majority of the Indian Muslims. The Sulaymānī Bohras deliver their sermons in Urdu. On the other hand, Arabic is used in the correspondence between the Sulaymānī Bohras and their dāʿī in Yaman. The official letters of the dāʿī muṭlaq are publicly read and translated for the Indian Sulaymānīs by the mansūb; such letters of the dāʿī are called musharrafāt. The Sulaymānīs, too, are particular in secretly guarding their books. The Ismāʿīli literature produced in the pre-Fāṭimid and Fāṭimid periods and by the Mustaʿli-Tayyibī Ismāʿīlis up to the Dāʿūdī-Sulaymānī schism is accepted by both of these main factions of Ṭayyibī Ismāʿīlism. Subsequent to the schism, the Dāʿūdīs and the Sulaymānīs produced their own separate literatures, devoted mainly to polemical issues and claims or counterclaims of various dāʿīs. The Dāʿūdīs and the Sulaymānīs, adhering to the same Mustaʿli-Ṭayyibī heritage and religious beliefs, disagree primarily in respect to their line of dāʿīs. There are few differences between the customs of the two groups, in particular setting apart the Yemeni Sulaymānīs of Arab origins from the Dāʿūdī Bohras who have been influenced by many Hindu traditions; within India, increasing differences have separated the Dāʿūdīs from the Sulaymānīs, who are following their own distinctive paths of socio-religious development.

In Yaman, the Sulaymānī community has enjoyed a great degree of cohesion, partly inspired by the fact that the Sulaymānī daʿwa was the direct continuation of the post-Fāṭimid Ṭayyibī daʿwa and partly necessitated by the local environment of the Sulaymānīs, which was often under the control of their Zaydī and other opponents. Under these circumstances, the Yemeni Sulaymānīs lent full support to their Makramī dāʿīs, consolidating themselves into an effective fighting force and avoiding
schisms and internal strifes. In India, the small and scattered Sulaymānī Bohra community, as in the case of other Ismāʿīlis, has been subjected to frequent persecutions, often resulting in the mass conversions of the Ismāʿīlī sectarians to Sunnism. The Sulaymānī Bohras have also encountered the hostility of the much larger Dāʿūdī community of India. On the other hand, similar to their Yamānī co-religionists, the Indian Sulaymānīs have not experienced any internal conflicts. Under these realities, the Sulaymānī Bohras have been increasingly inclined to cultivating friendly relations with other Muslim groups; relations that would lessen their social difficulties as one of the smallest Muslim groups of India. This explains why in the course of time the Sulaymānī Bohras, in contrast to the Dāʿūdīs, have developed closer affinities to other Muslims in terms of language, dress and behaviour. Not only have the Sulaymānī Bohras adopted Urdu instead of the special Gujarātī language used by the Dāʿūdī Bohras, but they have also abandoned the Gujarātī Bohra dress and turban and intermarry with Sunni Muslims. Nor are the Sulaymānīs under the strict central control of their dāʿī and his mansūbs. The Sulaymānī Bohras have been allowed a much greater degree of freedom than the Dāʿūdīs, and they have readily resorted to the Qāḍī courts of India. In sum, the Sulaymānī Bohras have come to represent a progressive group, approving of social change and encouraging modern secular education and the attainment of specialized training at the higher occidental institutions. It is not surprising, therefore, that the small Sulaymānī Bohra community has produced, proportionately speaking, a significant number of prominent men, including India’s first Muslim barrister. In particular, numerous members of the Tyabji family of Bombay have distinguished themselves in legal careers and in other professions, while the ladies of the same Sulaymānī Bohra family were amongst the earliest Indian Muslims to publicly defy the pardah (Persian, chādur), or the special veil still worn by women in many regions of the Islamic world.\textsuperscript{134}
In this chapter we shall discuss the initial phase in the development of Nizārī Ismā‘īlism, the so-called Alamūt period from around 483/1090, the year marking the effective foundation of what was to become the Nizārī Ismā‘īli state of Persia and Syria, to the downfall of that state in Persia in 654/1256. During this period of some 166 years, under the initial leadership of the redoubtable Ḥasan-ī Ṣabbāḥ, the Nizāriyya succeeded in maintaining an independent state of their own in the midst of a hostile Sunnī environment controlled mainly by the Saljūq Turks. During al-Mustansir’s succession dispute in 487/1094, Ḥasan-ī Ṣabbāḥ and the Persian Ismā‘īlīs, who had shortly earlier launched their anti-Saljūq revolt, upheld the rights of Nizār to the imāmate. Henceforth, becoming known as the Nizāriyya, the Persian and some other eastern Ismā‘īlī communities severed their relations with the Fāṭimid Caliphate and the Musta‘liyya, the other major branch of the Ismā‘īlī movement of the time.

The Nizārī state, with its seat mainly at the mountain fortress of Alamūt in Daylamān in northern Persia, was widely scattered territorially, stretching from Syria to eastern Persia and controlling numerous fortresses with their surrounding lands and villages, as well as a few towns. This independent state retained its cohesion in the face of various upheavals and the persistent enmity of the majority of the Muslim society, which never ceased its endeavours to uproot the Shi‘ī Nizāris and the dynasty ruling over their state. The Nizārī state of Persia, having eventually weakened internally as a result of prolonged struggles against formidable adversaries and lacking in capable leadership, collapsed under the onslaught of the all-conquering Mongols. The destruction of the Persian Nizārī state in 654/1256 had indeed been one of the primary objectives of Hülegü’s Mongol armies invading Persia. Soon afterwards, the Syrian Nizāris, who had developed somewhat independently of Alamūt though
maintaining a subservient position to the parent sect in Persia, were completely subdued by the Mamlûk sultan Baybars I. By 671/1273, Baybars had seized all the fortresses of the Syrian Nizâris, who themselves were permitted to survive as a semi-autonomous community. Subsequently, the Nizâris never succeeded in regaining their earlier political prominence; but they managed to survive clandestinely and as scattered communities in many parts of the Muslim world, often in the guise of Şûfism.

The Nizâri movement was from the very beginning associated with certain doctrinal developments, subsequently designated as the new preaching or al-da'wa al-jadîda, which was to set the Nizâriyya apart also doctrinally from the Musta'liyya, who essentially maintained the old preaching, or the so-called al-da'wa al-qadîma, of Fâtimid Ismâ'îlîsm, the common heritage of both branches of the movement. Soon, the Nizâris also came to have an imâm present at the head of their community; an imâm who interpreted the Sharî'a and guided his followers as he deemed necessary. In sum, by contrast to the Musta'liyya, or more precisely the Ţayyibiyya, not only did the Nizâriyya acquire political prominence but they also developed and interpreted their doctrines in the face of changing circumstances. The Persian Nizâris, who used the Persian language in their religious works, did not develop any special interest in copying and studying the classical works of the Ismâ'îli literature produced during the Fâtimid period. On the other hand, the Syrian Nizâris, who followed a somewhat different religio-political path and produced their own literature in Arabic, preserved some of the Fâtimid Ismâ'îli treatises, also retaining certain traditions of the Fâtimid period. It should also be mentioned that the Persian Nizâris of the later Alamût period played an active role in the cultural life of the time, acting as hosts to a number of celebrated Muslim scholars and developing significant libraries, notably the chief Nizâri library at Alamût.

The study of Nizâri Ismâ'îlîsm during the Alamût period presents research difficulties of its own, resulting from the loss of the bulk of the Nizâri literature of that period and the general hostility of the non-Ismâ'îli literary sources on the subject. Living under adverse conditions and often being involved in long-drawn military entanglements, the Persian Nizâris evidently did not produce any voluminous religious literature during the Alamût period.¹ The bulk of what they did produce did not survive the fall of their state, which resulted in the massacre of the Nizâris and the burning of the famous library at Alamût. Less noteworthy collections of manu-
The Ismā'īlīs: their history and doctrines

scripts held at other Nizārī castles, too, did not escape the rage of the Mongols. Indeed, only a handful of Nizārī doctrinal works have survived directly from that period, including an anonymous treatise, the *Haft bāb-i Bābā Sayyidnā*, written around 596/1199–1200, and a few Ismā'īli works produced during the final decades of the Alamūt period and attributed to Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). Also, excerpts from some non-extant Nizārī works, such as Hasan-i Šabbāḥ’s autobiography and doctrinal writings as well as the epistles (*fuṣūl*) of the lords of Alamūt, are preserved by al-Shahrastānī as well as in some post-Alamūt Nizārī treatises and in a few Persian historical sources. This extant Nizārī literature, despite its meagreness and fragmentary nature, does shed valuable light on important aspects of the doctrines propounded by the Persian Nizārīs. Evidently, the Persian Nizārīs also maintained chronicles at Alamūt and other fortresses. These chronicles, recording the detailed history of the Persian Nizārī state, have not survived, but some later Persian historians fortunately found access to them. The accounts of these historians, as we shall see, provide our chief sources on the history of the Persian Nizārīs of the Alamūt period. During the post-Alamūt period, the various Nizārī communities, notably those of Persia, Syria, Badakhshān and India, developed independently of one another; but none of these communities ever produced any reliable and continuous account of Nizārī Ismā'īlism of the Alamūt period.

The non-literary sources on the Nizārīs of Persia are rather insignificant. The Mongols demolished most of the Nizārī castles in Persia, which may have provided valuable archaeological evidence on various aspects of the Nizārī history and intellectual achievement. At any event, the remains of the main Persian Nizārī fortresses, whose exact locations have now been identified, and their vicinities, have not been subjected to systematic archaeological study and excavation in modern times. Furthermore, the Nizārī mausoleums, which evidently existed in the Alamūt area, have been destroyed. Indeed, no Persian epigraphic evidence remains from that period, while only a few Nizārī coins, known to have been minted at Alamūt and elsewhere, have been recovered. In sum, the limited non-literary evidence has not significantly augmented our knowledge of the Persian Nizārīs of the Alamūt period, though the ruins of the rock fortresses have provided valuable details on the ingenious methods adopted by the Persian Nizārī community, notably those underlying their water supply systems, for coping with highly difficult living conditions, and which manifested their formidable, striving spirit.
The celebrated Persian historians of the Ilkhânid period (654–756/1256–1355) are our chief authorities for the history of the Nizârî state in Persia. Amongst these Persian Sunni historians, 'Alâ' al-Dîn 'Aṭâ-Malik b. Muḥammad Juwaynî is the earliest historian of the Mongol invasions. Juwaynî entered the service of the Mongols in his youth, and later, upon the arrival of Hûlegû in Khurasân early in 654/1256, he joined the entourage of Hûlegû and accompanied the Mongol conqueror on his military campaigns against the Nizârîs. Juwaynî was with the Mongols when they converged on Alamût and other Nizârî castles in Daylam later in 654 A.H. Having taken part in the peace negotiations between Hûlegû and Rukn al-Dîn Khurshâh, it was Juwaynî who drew up the actual terms of surrender of the last Nizârî ruler in Persia. He was also responsible for writing the *Fath-nâma*, or proclamation of victory, declaring the final defeat of the Nizârîs. Having personally witnessed many of the events marking the downfall of the Persian Nizârîs, Juwaynî relates how, with Hûlegû's permission, he examined the Ismâ'îlî library at Alamût, founded in Ḥasan-i Sâbbâh's time, wherefrom he selected many 'choice books', while consigning to the flames those which, according to him, related to the heresy and error of the Nizârîs. Of the latter category, however, he fortunately preserved a work known as the *Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnâ*, containing Ḥasan-i Sâbbâh's biography, which he quotes extensively. Juwaynî, who began writing his history of the Mongols around 650/1252 and stopped working on it in 658/1260, composed his account of the Ismâ'îlîs soon after the fall of Alamût, adding it to the end of the third and final volume of his history. This account is a detailed history of Ḥasan-i Sâbbâh and his seven successors as rulers of the Nizârî state, based on the Nizârî chronicles and other texts and records which Juwaynî found at Alamût and elsewhere, and which have not survived. Juwaynî's account of the Persian Nizârîs is preceded by sections relating to the earlier history of the Ismâ'îlîs and the Fâṭimid caliph-imâms, a pattern adopted by later Persian historians. Subsequent to the collapse of the Nizârî state, Juwaynî accompanied Hûlegû to Baghdad, where the Mongols had proceeded to overthrow the 'Abbâsid Caliphate. In 657/1259, Hûlegû appointed Juwaynî to the governorship of Baghdad and its dependencies; a post Juwaynî maintained for more than twenty years, with the exception of a brief period of dismissal and imprisonment, until his death in 681/1283. The renowned Persian scholar Mirzâ Muḥammad Qazvini (1877–1949) undertook, for the E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, the monumental edition of the Persian text of Juwaynî's *Ta'rikh-i jahn-gushây*, and the late
Professor John Andrew Boyle (1916–1978), a leading authority on the history of the Mongols and its sources, produced an English translation of this work, the first complete translation in a Western language.

The second of our chief Persian authorities on the Nizāris is the slightly later famous historian, physician and statesman, Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh, often referred to by his contemporaries as Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb. Being of Jewish origin, Rashīd al-Dīn converted to Islam and rose in the service of the Mongol Īlkhāns of Persia to the rank of vizier, a position he held for almost twenty years until his execution in 718/1318. In 694/1295, the Īlkhān Ghāzān (694–703/1295–1304) commissioned Rashīd al-Dīn, initially his personal physician and later his vizier, to compile a detailed history of the Mongols. It was at the request of Ghāzān’s brother and successor ᪶ljeytū (703–716/1304–1316) that Rashīd al-Dīn subsequently added to his already voluminous work the histories of all the important Eurasian peoples with whom the Mongols had come into contact during their conquests. Thus, on its completion in 710/1310, Rashīd al-Dīn’s vast Jāmī’ al-tawārīkh (Collection of Histories) had acquired the form in which we know it today, with the distinction of being the very first history of the world written in any language. Rashīd al-Dīn’s section on the Ismā’īlīs, Nizārī and pre-Nizārī, is contained in the second volume of the Jāmī’ al-tawārīkh, the volume which is in fact the first universal history. This Ismā’īlī section, more detailed than Juwaynī’s account, is now available in print.

In writing his own history of the Ismā’īlīs, Rashīd al-Dīn undoubtedly made use of Juwaynī’s work, which he quotes verbatim at some points. In addition, Rashīd al-Dīn seems to have had direct access to the Ismā’īlī sources available to his predecessor, along with some other sectarian items which he names, whilst also making greater independent use of the Sunnī sources existing in his time. As a result, Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of the Ismā’īlīs is significantly fuller than Juwaynī’s. Omitting very little which is found in Juwaynī except the curses, Rashīd al-Dīn quotes more extensively from the Nizārī chronicles and preserves many details ignored by his predecessor. Furthermore, Rashīd al-Dīn, who displays a sense of objectivity not found in other Sunnī historians writing about the Ismā’īlīs, seems to have utilized his Nizārī texts in the form he had found them. By contrast, Juwaynī wrote with a distinctly anti-Ismā’īlī bias, often manifesting itself in outright condemnation of the sectarians, a position not incomprehensible for a Sunnī historian aiming to please a master who had almost exterminated the Nizārī Ismā’īlīs of Persia. Rashīd al-Dīn’s
closer and fuller treatment of the Ismā‘īli sources, in contrast to Juwaynī, has continued to puzzle some scholars, since Juwaynī ordered the destruction of the library at Alamūt which he alone apparently utilized for his history. It has also been suggested that perhaps Rashīd al-Dīn used an earlier, fuller draft of Juwaynī’s history, which is no longer extant. It is more reasonable to assume, however, that Rashīd al-Dīn found direct access to some of the Ismā‘īli books which originally belonged to the collections held at fortresses other than Alamūt, or which were possessed by individual Nizārīs; books which had somehow survived the Mongol debacle. It is also possible, as it was one of the methods adopted in compiling the Jāmi‘ al-tawārikh, that Rashīd al-Dīn had personal contact with some Nizārīs who possessed such manuscripts. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Rashīd al-Dīn’s grandfather, Muwaffaq al-Dawla ‘Ali, had been at Alamūt for some time as a guest when that fortress surrendered to Hülegü. It is, therefore, not unlikely that Muwaffaq al-Dawla, who was received into Hülegü’s service, might have come into the possession of some Ismā‘īli books, in addition to developing friendly relations with the Nizārīs.

Chronologically, our third major authority on the Nizārīs from amongst the Persian historians of the Mongol period, is Jamāl al-Dīn Abu’l-Qāsim ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ali Kāshānī (al-Qāshānī), a relatively unknown chronicler belonging to the Abū Ṭāhir family of leading potters from Kāshān. Few details are known about the life of this Persian Shi‘ī historian who also held official posts in Ilkhanid administration. Having served Öljeytū, Kāshānī worked as a secretary in the court of Öljeytū’s son and successor Abū Sa‘īd (716–736/1316–1335), the last effective member of his dynasty who ordered the execution of Rashīd al-Dīn. It is known that he was associated with Rashīd al-Dīn and most probably worked, under his supervision, on parts of the Jāmi‘ al-tawārikh. Kāshānī claims that he himself was the real author of that work.5 He died around 738/1337–1338. Kāshānī produced a chronicle of Öljeytū’s reign and a general history of the Muslim world to the fall of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate, entitled the Zubdat al-tawārikh. The latter history, dedicated to Öljeytū and still unpublished, contains a section on the Ismā‘īlis, following the model of Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn. Kāshānī’s history of the Ismā‘īlis is very similar to Rashīd al-Dīn’s account and is probably related to it, especially considering the fact that Kāshānī participated in the compilation of the Jāmi‘ al-tawārikh.6 The two versions, however, differ at some points, and Kāshānī mentions details missing in both Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn.
Later Persian historians produced summary accounts of Hasan-i Sabbāḥ and his successors at Alamūt, based mainly on Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn, but also occasionally drawing on sources of legendary origins. Amongst such later Persian authors writing general histories, with a separate section devoted to the Ismā‘īlīs, the earliest and perhaps the most famous one is Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī. He was appointed financial director of his native town of Qazwīn and of several neighbouring districts by the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn, his master and patron who encouraged his historical studies. Ḥamd Allāh used Juwaynī, Ḧāshānī, and especially Rashīd al-Dīn, amongst other authorities mentioned by him, in compiling his Ta‘rikh-i gūzīda, a general history of Islam and the Islamic dynasties of Persia. This work, completed in 730/1330, was dedicated to Ghiyāṭh al-Dīn Muḥammad, the son and successor of Rashīd al-Dīn. Ḥamd Allāh died after 740/1340, the year in which he composed, at least partially, his Nuzhat al-qulūb, a manual of cosmography and geography. Ḥamd Allāh’s contemporary al-Shabānkārā’ī also included a short and hostile account of Hasan-i Sabbāḥ and his successors in his Majma‘ al-ansāb, a concise general history. This work, too, originally completed in 736/1335–1336, was dedicated to the vizier Ghiyāṭh al-Dīn Muḥammad. Upon the vizier’s death and the pillaging of his house in 736 A.H., however, this history was lost and the author, also a panegyrist at the court of Abū Sa’īd, rewrote it in 743/1342–1343.

Amongst later Persian chroniclers writing on the Ismā‘īlīs, a special place is occupied by ‘Abd Allāh b. Luṭf Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Rashīd al-Bihdādīnī, better known under his laqab of Ḥāfīẓ Abrū (d. 833/1430). This Sunni historian of the Timūrid period, who joined the suite of Timūr and became the court historian of Timūr’s son and successor Shāhrukh (807–850/1405–1447), produced several historical and geographical works, based mainly on earlier authorities. In 826/1423, at the request of Bāysunghur (d. 837/1433), Shāhrukh’s son and a noteworthy patron of the arts, Ḥāfīẓ Abrū began to compile a vast universal history, the Majma‘ al-tawārīkh, in four volumes or arba‘. In the third volume of his Majma‘ al-tawārīkh, Ḥāfīẓ Abrū devotes an extensive section to the Fātimid caliphs and the history of the Persian Nizārī state, following closely, with certain omissions, the account of Rashīd al-Dīn. Ḥāfīẓ Abrū’s account of the Ismā‘īlīs was recently published for the first time. Amongst subsequent Persian chroniclers who produced relatively detailed accounts of the Fātimids and the Persian Nizārī rulers, though still less detailed than that of Ḥāfīẓ Abrū, one of the more noteworthy ones, whose general history has
been published in numerous extracts in Europe since the earlier decades of the last century, is Muḥammad b. Ḵhwāndshāh, known as Mirkhwānd (d. 903/1498). The latter's grandson, Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Ḥumām al-Dīn Muḥammad, surnamed Ḵhwānd Amir (d. 942/1535–1536), also included a section on the Ismā'īlis in his own general history, completed in 930/1524. The Fāṭimids and the Nizārī rulers of Alamūt continued to be treated, to various extents, in the general Persian histories of subsequent times. It should be noted that when discussing the Nizāris, these Persian historians concern themselves almost exclusively with the history of the Nizārī state in Persia, making only minor references to the Syrian Nizāris.

There are other historical sources on the Persian Nizāris of the Alamūt period. Numerous relevant details are contained in the contemporary and near contemporary chronicles of the Saljūqid empire. The earliest Saljūq history with references to the Nizāris, is the already-noted Nusrat al-fatra, written in 579/1183 by ʿĪmād al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Kāṭib al-Īsfahānī (d. 597/1201), now extant only in an abridgement, the Zuhdat al-nusra, compiled in 623/1226 by al-Bundārī. There are, too, the Saljūq-nāma of Ẓahir al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, composed around 580/1184 and used by most of the later chroniclers; a work written around 622/1225 and ascribed to Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Husaynī; and especially Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Rāwandi's Rāḥat al-sudūr, an important history of the Great Saljūqs completed in 603/1206–1207 and containing many references to the Persian Nizāris. The mediaeval local histories of the Caspian provinces, starting with Ibn Isfandiyār's Taʿrīkh-i Ţabarīstān, written at least partly in 613/1216–1217, provide another category of historical sources on the Nizāris of northern Persia during the Alamūt and early post-Alamūt periods. Finally, the Persian Nizāris are treated in many of the general histories of the Arab authors, amongst which the most comprehensive one is al-Kāmil of Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1234). This chronicle contains much relevant information on the Persian and Syrian Nizāris, including a short biography of Ḥasan-i Šabbāh which is independent of the Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā.

The different sources of information on the Syrian Nizāris have been fully discussed by Bernard Lewis. The Nizāris of Syria produced their own religious literature in Arabic, during the earliest centuries of their history; and, in contradistinction to the Persian Nizāris, they also preserved many of the Fāṭimid treatises, including some of the works of al-Qāḍī al-Nuʾmān and Jaʿfar b. Ṭaṭṭūr al-Yaman. The Persian Nizārī works of the Alamūt period were evidently not translated into Arabic in Syria, and similarly, the sectarian literature originating in Syria was not
rendered into Persian. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Syrian Nizāris kept chronicles similar to those maintained by their Persian co-religionists, and which were cited by Juwaynī, Rashid al-Dīn and Kāshānī. Most of what the Syrian Nizārī authors produced independently of the Persian sources, however, has not survived, even though the Nizāris in Syria were spared the Mongol catastrophe. The literature of the Syrian Nizāris has been destroyed throughout the centuries in constant entanglements with neighbouring communities, especially the Nuṣayrīs. Amongst the few surviving Nizārī works of Syrian provenance, a significant place is occupied by the anecdotal and legendary biography of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, the most famous leader of the Syrian Nizāris. The surviving archaeological evidence and especially the epigraphic inscriptions of the Syrian Nizārīs at Maṣṣūf and elsewhere in the Jabal Bahrā' have also yielded some valuable historical information.

The main literary sources on the history of the Syrian Nizāris, from the arrival of the first emissaries of Alamūt in Aleppo around the earliest years of the twelfth century A.D. until the complete subjugation of the Nizārī fortresses by the Mamlūks in 671/1273, are the regional histories of Syria and the general Arabic chronicles. Unfortunately however, many of the relevant regional histories have not survived directly or still remain unpublished; only a few have been critically edited. Amongst such authorities whose works are extant, the chief ones are Ibn al-Qālānīsī, utilized by most later chroniclers; Kamāl al-Dīn b. al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262), the historian of Aleppo; Ibn al-ʿAthīr, who uses several sources no longer extant; and Ibn al-Jawzī's grandson known as Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī. There are also some works by lesser-known historians such as Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Tanūkhi, known as al-ʿAzīmī (d. after 556/1161), chronicler of Aleppo, as well as the anonymous Bustān al-jāmī', written in the 6th/12th century. Ibn al-ʿAdīm is a valuable source for the biography of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān, who led the Syrian Nizārīs to the zenith of their power during 557–588/1162–1192. For this period, Ibn Shaddād (d. 632/1235), the biographer of Saladin, is another important primary authority. For the subsequent period, until the accession of Baybars I in 658/1260, aside from Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Ibn al-ʿAthīr and Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī, other authorities are Abū Shāma (d. 665/1268) and Ibn Wāṣil (d. 697/1298). Needless to add that these Sunni historians, writing mainly during the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk periods in Syria, are generally hostile towards the Ismāʿīlīs. The Syrian Nizārīs are also treated in some biographical works, memoirs and travel accounts, amongst other types of non-historical
sources. In addition, most of the occidental chroniclers of the Crusaders make some reference to the Syrian Nizāris. Amongst such writers, William of Tyre was the earliest to have produced a general account of the Syrian Nizāris, setting the pattern for later descriptions by Europeans.

We have already traced the main steps in the development of Nizārī studies in modern times. As noted, the Westerners had first come into contact with the Nizārī branch of the Iṣmāʿīlī sect in Syria, through the Crusaders and their occidental chroniclers. Consequently, Western scholars for centuries concentrated their Iṣmāʿīlī studies on the Nizāris, under the name of Assassins, reflecting the hostile point of view of the Crusaders and the Sunni chroniclers. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, de Sacy and Quatremère produced their more scholarly studies of the Nizāris, using for the first time a large number of Muslim histories, while von Hammer was the first European to devote an entire book, published originally in German in 1818, to the history of the Nizārī state in Persia. This book, displaying obvious hostilities towards the Nizāris, who are portrayed as a diabolical 'order of assassins', served as the generally accepted interpretation of the Nizārīs until a few decades ago. Meanwhile, the ground was being prepared for more objective studies. Defrémery collected a large number of scattered passages on the Nizāris, which provided the basis for his two articles on the Nizāris of Syria and Persia, published during 1854–1860, and in which he summed up the state of knowledge then available to European orientalists. At the same time, some Nizārī texts in Arabic, recovered in Syria, were becoming available to orientalists, mainly through the efforts of Guyard. Soon, more Nizārī texts, written in Persian and preserved by the Central Asian Iṣmāʿīlis, were obtained and studied by Russian scholars. However, the distorted image of the Nizāris, representing the earlier hostile and legendary impressions, was maintained until the commencement of the modern progress in Iṣmāʿīlī studies in the 1930s.

This progress, made possible by the recovery and study of numerous Iṣmāʿīlī manuscripts and the publication of an ever increasing number of Muslim chronicles, also affected the Nizārīs. By contrast to the earlier interest of the scholars in the Nizārīs, modern progress in Iṣmāʿīlī studies came to be centred mainly on Fāṭimid Iṣmāʿīlism, since by far the greatest number of the Iṣmāʿīlī texts recovered belong to the Fāṭimid period. Nevertheless, Nizārī studies, too, have been revolutionized. As a result of the recovery and study of the meagre Nizārī literature dating from the Alamūt period and the post-Alamūt works quoting earlier texts, as well as
the evidence preserved by the Persian and Arabic chronicles, we now possess a much better knowledge of the history and doctrines of the Nizāris during the Alamūt period. More than anyone else, W. Ivanow has been responsible for the re-evaluation of the Nizāris and our understanding of Nizāri Iṣmaʿīlism of the Alamūt period. Although his interpretations are sometimes arbitrary and his translations suffer from a certain degree of freeness, Ivanow spent a lifetime acquiring, editing and analyzing the extant literature of the Nizāris, and as such, he is undoubtedly the founder of modern Nizāri studies. Most of the Nizāri texts edited and translated by Ivanow appeared, as previously noted, in the series of publications put out during 1946–1963 by the Ismaili Society in Bombay. This valuable series was not resumed after Ivanow’s death. Besides Ivanow, very few modern Islamists and Iṣmaʿīli specialists have produced any major work on the Nizāris. The chief contributor was the late Marshall G. S. Hodgson, who, using Ivanow’s works and a host of Iṣmaʿīli and non-Iṣmaʿīli primary sources, wrote what has remained the standard book on the history and doctrines of the Persian Nizāris during the Alamūt period, with a shorter treatment of the Syrian Nizāris.23 Subsequently, Lewis, known particularly for his studies of the Syrian Nizāris, and Filippani-Ronconi produced less detailed monographs on the Nizāris,24 while Corbin studied some aspects of the Nizāri doctrines. The modern Nizāri community, scattered in many regions including the upper Oxus, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, East Africa, and several countries in the West has not shown too much interest in investigating its history during the Alamūt period; only ʿĀrif Tāmir and the late Muṣṭafā Ghālib, prominent Nizāris from Syria, have produced some studies related to the Nizāris of the Alamūt period, in addition to having edited numerous Iṣmaʿīli texts. More recently, a number of Nizāri Khojas of India and elsewhere have produced studies dealing with the history of post-Alamūt Indian Iṣnārīsm and the various aspects of the modern Nizāri communities of India, Pakistan and East Africa, which do not extend their coverage to the non-Indian Nizāri communities of the Alamūt period.

The Nizāri state in Persia was ruled by Ḥasan-i Ẓabbāḥ and his seven successors, who are commonly referred to as the lords (Persian singular, khudāwand) of Alamūt. On the basis of their reigns, as well as their ideologies and policies towards the outside world, the history of Nizāri Iṣmaʿīlism during the Alamūt period may be subdivided into three main phases.25 During the initial phase, stretching from the foundation of the Nizāri state in 483/1090 to the end of the rule of Ḥasan-i Ẓabbāḥ’s second
successor in 557/1162, the Nizāris succeeded in establishing and consolidating their independent state, after having failed in their initial revolt against the Saljuqs. In the second phase (557–607/1162–1210), coinciding with the reigns of the fourth and fifth lords of Alamut who claimed the imāmate of the Nizāris, the Nizāri community symbolically turned to the realm of the Resurrection (qiyyāma), which also represented a spiritual rejection of the outside world. In the third and final phase (607–654/1210–1256), concurrent with the rules of the last three lords of Alamut, the Nizāris, while partially retaining their inwardness and their ideal of the qiyyāma, attempted a rapprochement with the Sunni world, and at the same time revived their political aspirations; these endeavours were, however, terminated by the invading Mongols, who destroyed the Nizāri state in Persia.

By the final decades of al-Mustansir's imāmate, the Ismā‘īlis of Persia and elsewhere in the Muslim East had by and large rallied to the side of the Fātimid da‘wa, centrally directed from Cairo. The success of Fātimid Ismā‘īlīsm in the eastern lands had come about as a result of the activities of numerous Fātimid da‘īs operating in those regions over a long period, while at the same time dissident Ismā‘īlīsm had rapidly begun to lose its appeal due to the declining fortunes of the Qarmatīs of Bahrayn and southern 'Iraq. Even though the Fātimid Caliphate was now beset by numerous difficulties, the Fātimid da‘wa had not ceased in Persia, as the ardently Sunni Saljuqs replaced various local dynasties there in Buwayhid times. In fact, the Ismā‘īli movement had continued to be strong in Persia, where a growing number of converts in different towns as well as amongst the soldiery and the inhabitants of the northern highlands supported the Fātimid Ismā‘īli da‘wa and acknowledged al-Mustansir as the sole rightful imām of the time. Few details are available on the specific ideas preached at the time in Persia and the adjacent regions by the Fātimid da‘īs, who maintained their close contacts with the da‘wa headquarters in Cairo. It seems that the da‘īs emphasized existing social injustices while also capitalizing, in a general sense, on the dislike of the Persians for their new Turkish rulers.

The eastern Ismā‘īlis were not unaware of the declining power of the Fātimid Caliphate, and consequently they did not expect to rely on the continued central leadership of the da‘wa headquarters in Cairo, although they were not ready to assert their independence from the Fātimid regime until after al-Mustansir’s death. At any rate, for some time prior to the Nizārī–Musta‘li schism, the Persian Ismā‘īlis in the Saljūq territories seem
to have owned the authority of a single chief dāʾī who had his headquarters at Isfahān, the main Saljuq capital. At least by the early 460s/1070s, the dāʾī at Isfahān was ‘ʻAbd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh, who headed the Ismāʿili movement throughout the central and western regions of Persia, from Kirmān to Ādharbayjān. He may have been responsible for the daʿwa activities in some other regions as well; it is not known with certainty, however, whether he provided overall supervision for the dāʾīs operating in Khurāsān, Qhīstān (Persian, Kūhistān), and ‘Irāq. Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh himself evidently received his general instructions from Cairo; the dāʾī al-duʿāt then having been Badr al-Jamālī, who had succeeded to that position in 470/1078 after al-Muʿayyad al-Shirāzī. Few details are known about Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh, a learned man who seems to have been respected for his scholarship even in the Sunni circles. As the dāʾī at Isfahān, he came to be behind the renewed Ismāʿili activities in many parts of the Saljuq dominions; and, significantly enough, he was also responsible for launching the career of Ḥasan-i Šabbāh in the service of the Ismāʿili movement.26

On Ḥasan-i Šabbāh, as noted, we have fragments of an Ismāʿili biography, preserved by later Persian historians, the first part of which seems to have been based on his autobiography. According to these quotations from the Sargūdhasht-i Sayyīdīnā,27 Ḥasan was born at Qumm into an Imāmī Shiʿī family. His father, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Šabbāh al-Ḥimyārī, a Kūfan Arab claiming Yamānī origins, had migrated from the Sawād of Kūfa to the traditionally Shiʿī town of Qumm in Persia. Subsequently, the Šabbāh family had moved to the nearby city of Rayy, where the youthful Ḥasan received his early religious education as a Twelver Shiʿī. It was at Rayy, a centre of Ismāʿili activity, that, soon after the age of seventeen, Ḥasan had come to regard as the rightful imām of the time. In Ramadān 464/May–June 1072, the initiated Ḥasan was brought to the attention of the dāʾī Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh, who was then visiting Rayy. Ibn ‘Aṭṭāsh approved of Ḥasan and evidently recognized his capabilities, appointing
him to a post in the da'wa organization. At the same time, Ibn 'Atţāsh urged Ḥasan to proceed to Cairo, probably to further his training as Nāṣir-i Khusraw had done three decades earlier. A few years had to pass, however, before Ḥasan could embark on his journey to the Fāṭimid da'wa headquarters.

The Sargudhasht-i Sayyidnā also contained a colourful legend about a schoolfellow vow exchanged by Ḥasan-i Šabbāh, Nizām al-Mulk, and 'Umar Khayyām. This tale was first quoted by Rashīd al-Dīn and then repeated by several later Persian historians.\(^7\) In modern times, the tale has been introduced into the West by Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883) in the introduction to his English rendition of Khayyām's quatrains.\(^8\) It should be added, however, that FitzGerald derived the tale from Mirkhwānd, who had recounted a different version of it based on a spurious work, the Waṣāyā, attributed to Nizām al-Mulk.\(^9\) According to this so-called tale of the three schoolfellows, Ḥasan-i Šabbāh, Nizām al-Mulk, and the astronomer-poet 'Umar Khayyām had been in their youth students of the same master at Nishāpūr. They made a pact that whichever of them rose to a high position first would help the other two. In due time, Nizām al-Mulk succeeded to the vizierate in the Saljuq empire, and his schoolfellows now came forth with their claims. Nizām al-Mulk offered them provincial governorships, which they both refused for different reasons. Khayyām, not desiring public office, contented himself with receiving a regular stipend from the vizier. But the ambitious Ḥasan-i Šabbāh sought a higher post at the Saljuq court. Hasan's wish was granted, and soon he became a serious rival to Nizām al-Mulk. Consequently, Nizām al-Mulk plotted against Hasan and eventually succeeded in disgracing him before the sultan. Hasan was obliged to flee to Rayy and then to Egypt, while contemplating to take his revenge. Suffice it to say that on the account of the age discrepancies of its protagonists, who were also raised in different towns in their youth, most modern scholars have dismissed this tale as a fable.

At any rate, in 467/1074-1075 Ḥasan moved from Rayy to Isfahān, the da'wa headquarters in Persia. Subsequently in 469/1076-1077, when al-Mu'ayyad was still the chief dāʾī at Cairo, Ḥasan-i Šabbāh finally set off from Isfahān for Egypt with Ibn 'Atţāsh's permission and help. First he travelled north to Ḍhahrābīj and thence to Mayyāfīriqīn. There, he held religious disputations, refuting the authority of the Sunni 'ulama and asserting the exclusive right of the imām to interpret religion. He was expelled by the town's Sunni qādī. Ḥasan then proceeded to Mawṣil and
Damascus. In Syria, he found that the land route to Egypt was blocked by the military operations of Atsiz, who had revolted against the Fātimids. Hasan was, therefore, obliged to turn to the coast, and, travelling through Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Acre and Caesarea, he sailed to Egypt. He arrived in Cairo in Safar 471/August 1078, and was greeted by high Fātimid dignitaries. Almost nothing is known about Hasan’s experiences in Fātimid Egypt, where he stayed for about three years, first in Cairo and then in Alexandria. He did not, however, see al-Mustansir. According to later Nizārī sources used by Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn, whilst in Egypt, Hasan incurred the jealousy of the all-powerful vizier Badr al-Jamālī, because of his support for Nizār. According to another anachronistic detail of the later sources, cited also by Ibn al-Athīr, al-Mustansir personally revealed to Hasan that his successor would be Nizār. At any event, eventually Hasan seems to have been banished from Egypt to North Africa, but the ship on which he was travelling was wrecked and he was saved and taken to Syria. On the return journey, Hasan travelled through Aleppo, Baghdad and Khūzistān, and finally arrived in Isfahān in Dhu’l-Ḥijja 473/June 1081.

During the next nine years, Hasan-i Šabbāh travelled extensively in Persia in the service of the da’wa, as related in the fragments of his biography. Initially, he went to Kirmān and Yazd, where he preached Ismā’īlism for a while. Then, he spent three months in Khūzistān before going to Dāmghān, where he stayed for three years. Gradually Hasan had come to realize the difficulties of achieving success in the central and western parts of the country, the centres of Saljuq power. He was now concentrating his attention on the Caspian provinces and the northern highlands of Persia, the general region of Daylam which had traditionally been a safe refuge for the ‘Alids. Daylam, a stronghold of Zaydī Shi‘ism, was not only out of the reach of the Saljuqs, but it had also been penetrated by the Ismā‘īlī da’wa. Hasan, who had realized that the Persian Ismā‘īlis could not rely on the Egyptians in their own struggle against the Saljuqs, was then already planning a major revolt and searching for a suitable site to establish his headquarters. At the time, the da’wa in Persia was still under the overall direction of ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Aṭṭāsh. By around 480/1087–1088, Hasan seems to have chosen the remote and inaccessible castle of Alamūt in Daylamān as the best possible stronghold for his revolt. From his initial base at Dāmghān, and then from Shahriyārḵūh in Māzandarān, he despatched a number of da‘īs, including Ismā‘īl Qazwīnī, Muḥammad Jamāl Rāzī and Kiyā Abu‘l-Qāsim Lārijānī, to various districts around
Alamūt to convert the local inhabitants. Ḥasan, who was eventually appointed ḍāʾī of Daylam, was indeed now reinvigorating the Ismāʿīlī cause in Persia, and his activities did not escape the attention of Niẓām al-Mulk who ordered Abū Muslim, the governor of Rayy and his son-in-law, to arrest him. Abū Muslim, it may be noted, was later assassinated in 488/1095 by a Persian Ismāʿīlī. At any rate, Ḥasan managed to remain in hiding, and, having carefully planned the seizure of Alamūt, he proceeded in due time to Daylamān. Choosing a mountainous route to avoid the authorities at Rayy, he first spent some time at Qazwīn.

At the time of Ḥasan’s arrival in Qazwīn, the castle of Alamūt was in the hands of a certain Ḥusaynid ʿAlīd called Mahdī, who held it from the sultan Malikshāh. He was a descendant of al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Uṭrūsh (d. 304/917), one of the ʿAlīd rulers of Tabaristān and a Zaydī Imām better known under the name of al-Nāṣir li’l-Ḥaqq, who founded the separate Zaydī community of the Nāṣirīyya in the Caspian region. Some of the soldiers under Mahdī’s command had already been secretly converted to Ismāʿīlīsm by Ḥasan’s emissaries, notably Ḥusayn Qaʿīni; and Mahdī, aiming to dispose of the converts in his garrison, pretended to have accepted the daʿwa. From Qazwīn, Ḥasan sent yet another ḍāʾī to Alamūt, who won more converts. Ḥasan also infiltrated the Alamūt area with Ismāʿīlis from elsewhere. These final preparations were completed by the early months of the year 483 A.H., and thereupon, Ḥasan moved closer to his target, going to Ashkawar and then Anjirūd, adjacent to Alamūt. On the eve of Wednesday the 6th of Rajab 483/4th of September 1090, Ḥasan secretly entered the castle of Alamūt. He lived there for awhile in disguise, calling himself Dihkhudā. In due time, Mahdī learnt of Ḥasan’s identity in the castle, realizing that he had been tricked. The bulk of Alamūt’s garrison and many of the inhabitants of the surrounding districts had embraced Ismāʿīlīsm, rendering Mahdī powerless to defend his position. Ḥasan permitted Mahdī to leave peacefully and, according to our Persian chroniclers, gave him a draft for 3,000 gold dinars as the price of the castle. The draft, drawn on the raʾīs Muṣṭaffār, the future governor of Girdkūh and Dāmghān and a secret convert to Ismāʿīlīsm, was honoured in due time, to Mahdī’s astonishment.

The seizure of Alamūt in 483/1090, marking the effective foundation of what was to become the Niẓārī state, initiated a new phase in the activities of the Persian Ismāʿīlīs who had hitherto operated clandestinely. Henceforth, the daʿwa in Persia adopted a new policy of open revolt aimed at the heart of the Saljūq regime, and the capture of Alamūt represented the first
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blow in that Ismā’īlī revolt. The fortress of Alamūt in Daylamān was situated about thirty-five kilometres northeast of Qazwin in the region of Rūdbār, named after the river Shāhrūd flowing through it. The region, as noted earlier, was the traditional seat of the Justānid rulers of Daylamā, one of whom is said to have constructed the castle of Alamūt in 246/860. Subsequently, the area came under the influence of the Musāfīrids and the castle was held for some time by the Zaydi ‘Alīds until its capture by the Ismā’īlis. According to legend, an eagle had indicated the site to a Daylamā ruler whence its name of Alamūt in the Daylamā dialect, derived from āluh (eagle) and āmū(kh)t (taught). The fortress itself, constructed on the top of a high piercing rock before the massive Hawdigān range in the central Alburz mountains, dominated a fertile valley surrounded by mountains on all sides; at present, the rock of Alamūt is next to the village of Gāzurkhān. Access to the fortress was evidently possible only through a narrow, steep and winding path on the northern face of the Alamūt rock. The fortress was truly impregnable and it was evidently never taken by force.  Ḥasan immediately embarked on the task of renovating the castle, which was in great need of repair, improving its fortifications, storage facilities and water supply sources. He also improved and extended the systems of irrigation and cultivation of crops in the Alamūt valley, where many trees were planted.

Once  Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ was firmly established at Alamūt, he despatched da‘īs and agents in various directions to spread the da‘wa, which after his death came to be called the new preaching (Persian, da‘wat-i jadid). His immediate objectives, however, were to convert the rest of Rūdbār and to gain possession of more castles in the neighbourhood of his headquarters. He exerted every effort to capture, by conversion or assault, the places adjacent to Alamūt or in its vicinity; he took such castles as he could and wherever he found a suitable rock he built a castle upon it. Soon, Ḥasan’s headquarters came to be raided by the Saljūq forces under the command of the nearest military lord, a certain amīr Yūrun Tāsh, who held the district of Alamūt as his iqṭā’ granted by the Saljūq sultan. He constantly attacked the foot of Alamūt and massacred the Ismā’īlis of the area. As the store of provisions was still inadequate in Alamūt, its occupants were reduced to great distress and they suggested abandoning the fortress. Hasan, however, persuaded the garrison to continue resisting, claiming to have received a special message from the Imām al-Mustanṣīr, who promised them good fortune. For this reason, Alamūt was to be called baldat al-iqbal, or the city of good fortune. Meanwhile, Sanamkūh, near Abhar in the
mountains to the west of Qazwin, was taken by the Ismā'ilis; and in 484/1091-1092, Hasan sent Ḥusayn Qā'īnī, a capable da'i who had played a prominent role in the capture of Alamūt, to his native Quhistān to spread the da'wa there. Quhistān, a barren region in the south of Khurāsān, was to become another major area of Ismā'ili activity in Persia. In both Daylam and Quhistān, the Ismā'ili da'wa found suitable ground due to previous Shi'i traditions. In eastern Persia, the situation was even more favourable. The Quhistānis were highly discontented with the oppressive, alien rule of a local Saljuq agent. Consequently, the Ismā'ili da'wa in Quhistān did not merely unfold in terms of secret conversion of the populace and the capture of the existing castles, but it erupted into what amounted to a popular rising. The da'wa met with immediate success in Quhistān, and in many parts of that region the Ismā'ilis, who were placed under the authority of a deputy appointed by Hasan, rose in open revolt, seizing control of several main towns in eastern Quhistān, such as Tabas, Qā'in, Zūzan and Tūn. In eastern Quhistān, as in Rūdbār, the Ismā'ilis had thus succeeded in asserting their local independence from the Saljuqs. The Persian Ismā'ilis had now virtually founded an independent territorial state of their own.38

Upon realizing that the local Saljuq agents could not check the Ismā'ili menace, Malikshāh decided early in 485/1092, probably on the advice of his vizier Niẓām al-Mulk, to send armies against the Ismā'ili of Rūdbār and Quhistān. The Rūdbār expedition, led by the amīr Arslān Tāsh, reached Alamūt in Jumādā I 485 A.H. At the time, Hasan-i Sabbāh had with him only about seventy men with limited supplies. Besieged by the Saljuq forces, he appealed for help to one of his da'is, a certain Dihdār Abū 'Alī Ardastānī, who resided in Qazwin and had converted many people there, as well as in Ṭāliqān, Rayy and elsewhere. The da'i gathered a force of 300 Ismā'ilis who threw themselves into Alamūt, bringing the needed supplies. The reinforced Alamūt garrison, supported by some of the local converts in Rūdbār, made a surprise attack one evening at the end of Sha'ban 485/September–October 1092, and routed the army of Arslān Tāsh, forcing the Saljuqs to withdraw from Alamūt. Meanwhile, the Quhistān expedition under Qizil Sāriq, who was supported by extra troops from Khurāsān to the north and from Sistān to the south, had apparently concentrated its attacks on the Ismā'ili castle of Dara, one of the dependencies of Mu'minibād and close to the border of Sistān.39 Whilst the Saljuqs were contemplating further plans against Rūdbār, the Ismā'ilis achieved their first great success in what was to become one of their
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important techniques of struggle, the assassination of prominent enemies. The chosen victim was the all-powerful Saljuq vizier Abū 'Ali al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli al-Ṭūsī, carrying the honorific title of Nīḥām al-Mulk, an ardent enemy of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and the Ismā'īlis. On 12 Ramaḍān 485/16 October 1092, whilst Nīḥām al-Mulk was accompanying Malikshāh to Baghdād, at Ṣahna in the district of Nahāwand in western Persia, the vizier was stabbed and killed by an Ismā'īli volunteer for the mission. The assassin, a certain Abū Ṭāhir Arrānī, was the first Ismā'īli fidā'ī (fidāwi) or devotee to risk his life in the service of the da'wa.

At any rate, when Malikshāh himself died shortly afterwards in Shawwāl 485/November 1092, the pending Saljuq plans for renewed action against Alamūt were abandoned. At the same time, on receiving the news of the sultan's death, the Quhistān expedition, which had failed to take Dara from the Ismā'īlis, dispersed, as the Saljuq forces traditionally owed their allegiance to the person of the ruler. On Malikshāh's death, the Saljuq empire was thrown into civil war and internal confusion, which lasted for more than a decade, marked by disunity among Malikshāh's sons and the constant shifting of alliances among the Saljuq amīrs who controlled various provinces in an independent fashion. Now there were rival claimants to the Saljuq sultanate, of whom the most prominent one was Malikshāh's eldest son Barkiyāruq. While Malikshāh's four-year-old son Maḥmūd had immediately been proclaimed as sultan, Barkiyāruq, who initially enjoyed the support of the rival party of the Nizāmiyya, consisting of the murdered vizier's relatives and partisans, was taken to Rayy where he was placed on the throne. Maḥmūd died in 487/1094, and Barkiyāruq was recognized by the new ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Mustaʿẓir in Baghdād, the caliphal arbitration having already become a significant factor in the succession to the Saljuq sultanate. Barkiyāruq's chief rivals came to be his uncle Tutush, who held Syria as his appanage, and his half-brother Muhammad Tapar. Tutush was soon killed in battle at Rayy in 488/1095, while Barkiyāruq, whose seat of power was in western Persia and ʿIrāq, fought a series of indecisive battles with Muḥammad Tapar, who received much help from his brother Sanjar, the ruler of Khurāsān and Tukhāristān from 490/1097 onwards. On occasions when his fortunes were low, Barkiyāruq, who never enjoyed the reputation of being a strong defender of Sunnism, accepted Ismā'īlis in his army. On one such occasion in 493/1100, when he was fighting his brother, Barkiyāruq is said to have received 5,000 Ismā'īlis into his army. However, Barkiyāruq eventually purged the Ismā'īlis from his forces, and, towards the end of his reign,
encouraged the persecution of the Ismāʿīlīs in his territories. Peace was restored to the Saljūq dominion only on Barkiyaruq’s death in 498/1055, when Muḥammad Tapar became the undisputed sultan and Sanjar remained at Balkh as his viceroy in the east.

During this period of civil war, when the Saljūq armies were quarrelling among themselves, the Ismāʿīlīs of Persia took advantage of the prevailing disorders to consolidate and extend their position, perhaps finding more sympathy for their message of resistance against the alien and oppressive Turkish rulers. The Ismāʿīlīs already held a number of fortresses in Daylam besides Alamūt, and controlled a group of towns and castles in Quhistān. They now began to seize more fortresses in widely scattered but still relatively inaccessible places. They extended their activities from the western to the central and eastern parts of the Alburz range, taking the fortresses of Manṣūrakūh and probably also Mihrān (Mihrmīār) to the north of Dāmghān, and Ustūnawand in the district of Damūwand.41 Around the same time, the Ismāʿīlīs took possession of one of their most important strongholds, Girdkūh, in the same mediaeval Persian province of Qūms. The fortress, built on a high rock, some fifteen kilometres northwest of Dāmghān, was situated strategically in the Alburz chain along the main route between western Persia and Khurāsān. The raʾīs Muʿayyad al-Dīn Muẓaffar b. Aḥmad al-Mustawfī, who was well-connected among the Saljūq officers at Isfahān and who had been secretly converted to Ismāʿīlīsm by ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAṭṭāsh himself, persuaded his superior the Saljūq amīr Amīrdād Ḥabashī to acquire Girdkūh from Barkiyaruq and to install him there as his lieutenant. The sultan granted the request, and Ḥabashī acquired the castle, after forcing its reluctant Saljūq commandant to surrender in 489/1096. Thereupon, Ḥabashī appointed the raʾīs Muẓaffar as his lieutenant in Girdkūh. Muẓaffar, who still posed as a loyal Saljūq officer, immediately proceeded to make Girdkūh as self-sufficient as possible. It is reported that he had an extremely deep well dug in the solid rock of Girdkūh without reaching water, but years later, after an earthquake, a spring gushed out in that well. It was near Girdkūh that Muẓaffar, with 5,000 Ismāʿīlīs coming from Quhistān and other places, fought on the side of Ḥabashī and Barkiyaruq against the forces of Sanjar in 493/1100. However the Ismāʿīlīs failed to win the day for Barkiyaruq and Muẓaffar’s patron, Ḥabashī, was killed in battle. Nevertheless, Muẓaffar succeeded in transferring Ḥabashī’s treasures to Girdkūh, and some time later, having completed the fortification of the castle, openly declared himself an Ismāʿīlī. He stayed in
Girdkūh a long time, taking orders from Hasan-i Šabbāh and rendering valuable service to the Ismā'īlī cause in Persia. The ra'īs Mużaffar was succeeded in Girdkūh by his son, Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammād, a learned man who had earlier spent some time in Alamūt.43

The Ismā'īlīs had now also come to direct their attention to a new area in the Zagros range, especially the border region between the provinces of Khūzistān and Fārs in southwestern Persia. The Ismā'īlī leader in this mountainous area was the da'i Abū Ḥamza, a shoemaker from Arrajān, who, like Hasan-i Šabbāh, had spent some time in Egypt. He seized at least two fortresses near the town of Arrajān and used them as bases for further Ismā'īlī activity.43 The Ismā'īlī da'wa spread to many towns and non-mountainous regions in the Saljuq empire, often with the temporary support of various Turkish amīrs. The Nizāris achieved particular success in Kirmān, for instance, and even managed to win the local Saljuq ruler Bahā' al-Dawla Īrānshāh b. Tūrānshāh (490–494/1097–1101), to their side; but the Sunni 'ulamā’ of Kirmān soon aroused the townspeople against Īrānshāh and had him deposed and killed.44 In 488/1095, a Saljuq vizier, al-Balāsānī, who himself adhered to Imāmī Shi’ism, entrusted the town of Takrit on the Tigris north of Baghdad to an Ismā'īlī officer, Kayqubād Daylamī. The Ismā'īlīs held the citadel of Takrit, one of their few open strongholds, for twelve years; while the vizier who had given it to them was later accused of Ismā'īlism and lynched by the Saljuq officers.45

Meanwhile, in Rūdbār, where the centre of Nizārī Ismā'īlī power was to be located, the sectarians were rapidly consolidating their position, profiting from the continuing Saljuq quarrels. Hasan-i Šabbāh systematically made Alamūt as impregnable as possible, ready to withstand an indefinite siege, while capturing several other fortresses in Rūdbār, often with the co-operation of the local leaders, who were assisted by the Ismā'īlīs against domination from Rayy or Qazwin. In 486/1093, the Ismā'īlīs took the village of Anjirūd, repelling a force gathered there against them. In the same year, they defeated in Tāliqān an army of 10,000, consisting mainly of the Sunni inhabitants of Rayy, led by Abū Muḥammad Za'farānī, a leading Ḥanafi scholar from Rayy.46 Soon afterwards, the Ismā'īlīs of Rūdbār beat off another raid led by the amīr Nūshtagān. With these Ismā'īlī victories, the local chiefs in Daylam gradually submitted themselves to Hasan-i Šabbāh and received his help in time of need. Hasan thus prepared the way for seizing Lamasar, also called Lambasar and Lanbasar, in the Rūdbār district of the upper Shāhrūd, tributary of the Safīdrūd, about forty kilometres northeast of Qazwin and west of
The rock of Alamūt

Some fortifications on the rock of Alamūt
General view of the rock and castle of Lamasar

The castle of Shamirān
5 The rock of Girdkūh

6 The castle of Mihrin (Mıhrmığar)
Alamūt. Lamasar was then held by a certain Rasāmūj and his relatives, who after submitting to Hasan-i Šabbāḥ had rebelled and repudiated their agreement with the Ismāʾīlīs, wanting to entrust the castle to the Saljūq amīr Nūshtagin. Hasan now sent Kiyā Buzurg-Ummīd along with three other Ismāʾīlī chiefs, Kiyā Abū Jaʿfar, Kiyā Abū ʿAlī and Kiyā Garshāb, to Lamasar; they assaulted the castle in Dhuʾl-Qaʿda 489/November 1096, or in 495/1102 according to Juwaynī. Hasan appointed Buzurg-Ummīd as the governor of Lamasar, the largest castle held by the Nizārīs. Using local labour, Buzurg-Ummīd rebuilt Lamasar into a major stronghold, equipping it with ample water resources and cisterns, which are still in existence, and fine buildings and gardens. Lamasar’s position guarded the western approaches to Alamūt from the Shāhrūd valley and it considerably enhanced the power of the Ismāʾīlīs in the Rūdbār area. Buzurg-Ummīd stayed at Lamasar, the second most important unit in the network of the Nizārī castles in Daylam, for more than twenty years until he was summoned by Hasan-i Šabbāḥ to succeed him.47

In the meantime, as the Ismāʾīlī revolt was successfully unfolding in Persia, Ismāʾīlism suffered its greatest internal conflict. In 487/1094, the caliph-imām al-Mustansir died in Cairo after a long and eventful reign, leaving a disputed succession. The vizier al-Afdal moved quickly and placed the youthful al-Mustaʿli on the Fatimid throne, depriving his elder brother Nizār of his succession rights. Al-Mustansir, as we have seen, had originally designated his eldest son Nizār as heir and had not subsequently revoked his nāṣ for him. Al-Mustaʿli was acknowledged as his father’s successor by the Egyptian Ismāʾīlīs, a good portion of the Syrian Ismāʾīlīs, as well as the Ismāʾīlī communities in Yaman and western India; that is, by those Ismāʾīlīs under the direct influence of the Fāṭimid regime. By contrast, the Ismāʾīlīs of the Saljūq dominions, notably those of Persia and ʿIrāq and a faction of the Syrian Ismāʾīlīs, refused to recognize al-Mustaʿli’s imāmāte. Upholding al-Mustansir’s initial nāṣ, they acknowledged Nizār as their nineteenth imām. The Persian Ismāʾīlīs in particular, who had already revolted against the Saljūqs and had weakened their relations with the Fāṭimid regime, now completely severed their ties with the Fāṭimid Ismāʾīlī daʾwa headquarters in Cairo.

These rebel eastern Ismāʾīlīs had now in effect founded the independent Nizārī daʾwa. Soon, Hasan-i Šabbāḥ, who eventually succeeded ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAṭṭāsh as the leader of the Ismāʾīlī movement within the Saljūq realm, came to be recognized as the head of the Nizārī daʾwa. The Nizārī daʾwa seems to have been largely restricted to the Saljūq domains, having succeeded the Fāṭimid daʾwa in the Saljūq empire. The farthest eastern
regions in the Ismā‘ili world, notably Ghazna and the Oxus valley, where evidently independent dā‘is like Nāşir-i Khusraw had been active in al-Mustanṣir’s time, remained for a long time outside the sphere of influence of the Nizārī movement. In Syria, both the Nizārī and the Musta‘lian wings of the movement continued for some time to be present in rivalry with one another. Tutush’s son Riḍwān, the Saljuq ruler of Aleppo, briefly accepted the suzerainty of al-Musta‘lī; and we have evidence, in such works as al-Āmir’s epistle al-Hidāya, on the disputations between the Nizārīs and the Musta‘lians of Damascus. However, the Nizārī da‘wa soon gained the upper hand in Syria, especially in Aleppo and in the Jazr, a group of towns in northern Syria. By the time of al-Āmir’s death, the Syrian Ismā‘īlis had by and large acknowledged the Nizārī da‘wa, and the Musta‘lian Ismā‘īlis, who themselves were subsequently subdivided into the Tayyibiyya and the Ḥāfiẓiyya, were reduced to insignificance there. In the eastern lands, the more active Nizārī da‘wa with its revolutionary ideals had greater success than the conservative Musta‘lian da‘wa of the remote and the then rapidly declining Fāṭimid regime. It managed to win an increasing number of new converts, especially from amongst the various non-Ismā‘īli Shi‘ī groups of Persia, ‘Irāq and Syria.

The eastern Ismā‘īlis, who after the Nizārī–Musta‘li schism became known as the Nizāriyya and who had already drifted away from the Fāṭimid headquarters, also had a doctrinal justification for their breach with Cairo. They adhered to al-Mustanṣir’s original nās in Nizār’s favour, refusing to accept the claims made on behalf of al-Musta‘lī, just as the earliest Ismā‘īlis had supported Ismā‘il’s rights to the imāmate against those of his brothers. The Nizārīs thus argued, perhaps retrospectively, that any subsequent nās of al-Mustanṣir for al-Musta‘lī, even if it had actually occurred, could not have superseded the imām’s first designation for his successor, reminiscent of the doctrinal point established by the earliest Ismā‘īlis to the effect that the imāmate could no longer be transferred between brothers after the case of al-Hasan and al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī. The Nizārīs, in fact, later came to recognize al-Ḥasan only as a mustawda’ or temporary imām, since the imāmate had not continued in his progeny, while considering al-Ḥusayn as the mustaqarr imām and counting him as the second imām after ‘Alī in the line of imāms recognized by them.

The Nizārīs soon came to confront a major difficulty, like the Musta‘lians of a generation later. The Nizārīs had acknowledged Nizār as their true imām after al-Mustanṣir. But a year later, by the end of 488/1095, Nizār’s revolt had been crushed in Egypt and he was immured, on
al-Musta’li’s orders, in a Cairo prison. It is a historical fact that Nizâr did have male progeny. Some of these Nizâris even launched unsuccessful revolts against the later Fâtimids from their base in the Maghrib. However, Nizâr does not seem to have designated any of his sons as his successor. As a result, about a year after al-Mustanṣir’s death, the Nizâris were left without an accessible imâm as their leader. Doubtless, many Nizâris must have wondered about the identity of their imâm after Nizâr. Before long, as related by our Persian historians, many came to hold the belief that a son or grandson of Nizâr had been smuggled from Egypt to Alamût and was kept there secretly; while al-Āmir’s epistle al-Hidâya al-Āmiriyya, sent to the Musta’lians of Syria, ridicules this idea. At any rate, no account seems to have been taken of the presence of any Nizârid in Alamût during Hasân-i Şâbâh’s time. It is also interesting to note in this connection that the Nizârî coins minted during the reign of Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummid (532–557/1138–1162), Hasân-i Şâbâh’s second successor, simply mention the name of Nizâr himself, blessing his descendants anonymously. It was later that a Nizârid Fâtimid genealogy was claimed for the lords of Alamût succeeding Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummid. At any event, Hasân-i Şâbâh and his next two successors at Alamût did not name any imâms after Nizâr. In the absence of a manifest imâm, it seems that Hasân-i Şâbâh, as the supreme head of the Nizârî da’wa, was eventually recognized as the hujja of the imâm. The term hujja, or proof, had already been used as a high ranking position in the Fâtimid da’wa organization, while the bulk of the early Ismâ’îlis had evidently regarded the central leaders of the Ismâ’îli movement as the hujjas of the concealed Muḥammad b. Ismâ’il, who was to reappear as their expected Qâ’îm. On the basis of this tradition, it was held that in the time of the imâm’s concealment his hujja would represent him amongst his followers. In line with this usage, Hasân came to be regarded as the imâm’s full representative and living proof or hujja in the Nizârî community, acting as the custodian of the Nizârî da’wa until the time of the imâm’s reappearance, when Hasân was expected to identify the imâm for the faithful. Indeed, in the earliest extant Nizârî treatise, written around 596 A.H. by an anonymous author, Hasân-i Şâbâh is said to have predicted the imminent coming of the Qâ’îm while he himself is given the rank of hujja of the Qâ’îm. According to Hodgson, it was perhaps due to a misunderstanding of Hasân’s rank as the hujja of the inaccessible imâm that the outsiders and even some Nizâris came to believe that Hasân had concealed the imâm
in Alamūt, a belief reflected in later Nizārī traditions. This interpretation of Hasan’s rank as ḥujja was probably adopted when he became the leader of the Ismā‘īlī movement in the Saljūq territories, in succession to Ibn ʿAṭṭāsh, not long after the Nizārī–Musta‘li schism.

The Nizārī revolt had certain characteristic features which manifested themselves from the very beginning, giving the revolt its own distinctive pattern and methods of struggle. Many Islamic movements, both Shi‘i and non-Shi‘i, adopted as their model the Prophet’s emigration from Mecca to Medina and set up in a similar fashion a dār al-hijra, a place of emigration or refuge as headquarters for their campaign from which to return victoriously into the Muslim society at large. For instance, Khurāsān provided such a dār al-hijra for the ʿAbbāsids against the Umayyad regime, while the early Ismā‘īlīs had established dār al-hijras of their own, for more limited purposes, in ʿIrāq, Bahrayn and Yaman. Under the changed circumstances of the Saljūq period, however, the Nizāris realistically aimed at acquiring a score of dār al-hijras, rather than a single fixed base of operation. Every stronghold which could be seized by local Ismā‘īlī groups now became a dār al-hijra for the Ismā‘īlīs of the Saljūq lands. But the multiplicity of such places in effect formed a single coherent society unified in its ultimate purposes and ideology; if one of them was lost to the enemy, its occupants could readily find refuge in another dār al-hijra. In this network, each stronghold was at once a defensible place of refuge and headquarters for conducting local operations, serving as nucleus for the armed groups of Ismā‘īlīs who could raid the surrounding lands. The very leadership of the Ismā‘īlī revolt in the Saljūq domains, at least in its initial phase, seems to have been as decentralized as the sites of the revolt. For instance, after Ibn ʿAṭṭāsh’s death, the dā‘ī of ʿIsfahān, originally the supreme leader of the Ismā‘īlī movement in the greater part of the Saljūq realm, does not seem to have had any precedence over the dā‘ī of Daylam. But the dā‘īs operating somewhat independently in different regions did co-operate with one another. At any rate, the Nizārī revolt soon acquired its distinctive pattern marked precisely by its co-ordinated decentralization which was very appropriate to the times.

After Malikshāh, there was no longer a single all-powerful Saljūq ruler to be overthrown by a strong army, even if such an army could be mobilized by the Ismā‘īlīs. Even before Malikshāh’s death, when the central Saljūq regime was still essentially intact, socio-political power in the Saljūq empire had come to be increasingly localized in the hands of numerous military and religious leaders; leaders who were virtually equal
and autonomous as loyal but independent Saljūq vassals. Under these circumstances, when the central Saljūq bureaucracy was decaying and losing control over innumerable areas which had been parcelled out as *iqta'* assignments to individual *amīrs* and commanders of garrisons, the strategy best suited to the objectives of a rebellious movement had also to be decentralized. The Persian Ismā'īlīs adopted precisely such a piecemeal strategy in their efforts to subdue the Saljūq domains, locality by locality, stronghold by stronghold, and leader by leader. In the regime of the many *amīrs*, there scarcely existed a major or central target for military conquest by a regularly recruited army as had been the case in the Fātimid conquest of Egypt. Consequently, the Nizārī revolt was based on the seizure of a host of strongholds from where a multiplicity of simultaneous risings could be launched throughout the Saljūq realm, so as to overwhelm the existing decentralized socio-political structure from within. These coordinated local efforts of the Ismā'īlīs would ultimately free the whole society from the unjust rule of the Turks and prepare the way for the rule of the Ismā'īli Imām, the sole legitimate leader of mankind. There were Ismā'īli cells in many towns and localities of the Saljūq empire even prior to the Nizāri–Musta'li schism; these cells often served as nuclei for armed groups which seized key mountain fortresses as *dar al-hijras* and bases for further operations. In some cases, however, the fortresses were acquired through the submission of their commandants who needed the assistance of the Ismā'īlīs in their own factional fights. Indeed, if circumstances required, the Ismā'īlīs openly helped one Saljūq *amīr* against another, always considering the overall benefits of such alliances in the cause of their own revolt.

The same atomization of established power suggested to the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs the use of an important auxiliary technique for achieving military and political aims, the technique of assassination in connection with which so many anti-Nizārī legends have circulated throughout the centuries. Many earlier Muslim sects, including the Khārijis and some Shi‘i Ghulāt groups like the Mughirīyya and the Mansūriyya, had used assassination as a technique in their struggle against religio-political opponents. And at the time of the Nizārī revolt, when authority was distributed locally and on a personal basis, assassination was commonly resorted to by all factions. This method of eliminating individual enemies has continued to be utilized by various Muslim and non-Muslim groups up to the present time. But it was the Nizārīs who assigned to assassination a major political role in their methods of struggle. Initially, it seems that the Nizārīs utilized
Nizārī Ismā'īlism of the Alamūt Period

assassination as an occasional convenience, as did other groups. But soon, with the commencement of their all-out struggle against the much more powerful Saljūqs, they began to make a relatively systematic and open use of it. The Nizārīs did not use assassination, or the threat of it, against all of their enemies; but they did use it often enough so that almost any such attempt was normally attributed to them.

Doubtless, accepting a mission to kill a notorious military or civilian figure normally surrounded by guards, and with very slim chances of surviving, was glorified as heroic by the Nizārīs. The Nizārīs praised the courage and devotion of their fidā'īn, the young self-sacrificing devotees of the sect who offered themselves for such suicidal missions;\(^5^4\) evidently rolls of honour of their names and assassination missions were kept at Alamūt and other fortresses.\(^5^5\) The assassination of single prominent individuals who caused the Nizārīs special damage, often served to eliminate bloodshed among many ordinary men on battlefield. Consequently, the Nizārīs presumably saw even a humane justification for their assassinations. The assassinations were performed in as public a setting as possible, since part of the purpose was to intimidate other actual or potential enemies.

Few details are known about the selection and training of the Nizārī fidā'īn. However, contrary to the mediaeval legends fabricated by uninformed writers and the enemies of the sect, there is no evidence that hashish was used in any way for motivating the fidā'īn who displayed an intensive group sentiment and solidarity. It is doubtful whether the fidā'īn formed a special corps at the beginning, although towards the end of the Nizārī state in Persia they probably did.\(^5^6\) At the time of Nizām al-Mulk's assassination and probably until much later, all the ordinary Persian Ismā'īlis, who referred to one another as rafīq (plural, rafīqān) or comrade, were presumably ready in principle to perform any task in the cause of the da'wa. But it is safe to assume that some Ismā'īlīs held themselves in special readiness for such risky missions. At any event, the fidā'īs do not seem to have received special training in languages, etc., as suggested by some occidental chroniclers of the Crusaders and later European authors. At some point in the history of the Nizārī state, the practice allegedly also arose of sending the would-be assassins to insinuate themselves into the households of different dignitaries as servants. These undercover fidā'īs would be in an ideal position to carry out their assassination missions if and when the necessity arose. As noted, the Persian Ismā'īlis intervened militarily in non-Ismā'īli factional disputes during the initial decades of their open
revolt. It seems that from an early date they also used their assassinations for the benefit of their non-Ismâ‘îlî allies. The Nizârî assassinations were for the most part aimed at those military or civilian men who had acted against the Nizârî dâr al-hijras or had in some way posed serious threats to the success of the Nizârî da‘wa and the survival of the community in specific localities.

The assassinations were soon countered by the massacres of the Ismâ‘îlîs. The assassination of a Saljûq amîr or a Sunni qâdî, who had initiated action against the Ismâ‘îlîs, would often rouse the Sunni population of a town to gather all those suspected, or accused by private enemies, of being Ismâ‘îlîs, and to kill them. Around 486/1093, the people of ʻIsfahân, apparently moved by a report that a certain Ismâ‘îlî couple had been luring passers-by into their house and torturing them to death, rounded up all the Ismâ‘îlî suspects and threw them alive into a large bonfire in the centre of the town. And in 494/1101, Barkiyâruq and Sanjâr, who could not tolerate the revolutionary, anti-Saljûq movement of the Persian Nizârîs, came to an agreement for eliminating the Ismâ‘îlîs of their respective regions. Sanjâr sent the amîr Bazghâsh against the Ismâ‘îlîs of Qoḥistân. This expedition caused much devastation, and three years later, another Saljûq expedition destroyed ʻTabâs, killing many Ismâ‘îlîs in the region. However, the Ismâ‘îlîs of Qoḥistân maintained their position, and in 498/1104–1105 the Ismâ‘îlîs of Turshîz were able to launch attacks as far west as Rayy. At the same time, Barkiyâruq ordered a second massacre of the Ismâ‘îlîs of ʻIsfahân in 494 A.H. The massacres, in turn, provoked assassinations of their instigators, which led to further massacres. It was under such circumstances that the Nizârîs came to be called by derogatory terms such as malâhîda, or heretics, and hashishîyya, or smokers of hashish; names indicating strongly anti-Nizârî feelings.

Despite the repressions and massacres, the Nizârî fortunes continued to rise in Persia during the turbulent years of Barkiyâruq’s reign, especially after 489/1096. Not only were the Nizârîs seizing strongholds and consolidating their position in Rûdbâr, Qûmis and Qoḥistân, as well as in many other mountainous areas, but they were spreading the da‘wa in numerous towns and had begun to intervene directly in Saljûq affairs. Encouraged by their success, the Nizârîs now directed their attention closer to the seat of the Saljûq power, against ʻIsfahân. The Ismâ‘îlî da‘îs had been at work in ʻIsfahân for several decades, and, as noted, ʻAbd al-Malik b. ʻAţţâsh, the chief da‘î in western Persia and ʻIrâq, had established his headquarters in that city. Taking advantage of the factional fights amongst
the Saljuqs, they now intensified their activities in and around Isfahān. In this area, the Nizāris, under the leadership of Aḥmad Ibn ʿArṭāsh, the son of ʿAbd al-Malik, achieved their greatest success by seizing the important fortress of Shāhdiz, situated on a mountain about eight kilometres to the south of Isfahān. Aḥmad, who eventually succeeded his father as the daʿī of Isfahān, had been secretly propagating Ismāʿīlism in the very centre of the Saljuq sultanate in Persia. According to Saljuqid chroniclers, Aḥmad set himself up as a schoolmaster for the children of the garrison of Shāhdiz, which was composed mostly of Daylamī soldiers with Shiʿī tendencies.

Shāhdiz, which was evidently called Dizkūh in earlier times, had been rebuilt by Malikshāh as a key military fortress for guarding the routes to the Saljuq capital. Aḥmad gradually converted the Shāhdiz garrison, and by 494/1100, gained possession of the fortress. It is reported that Aḥmad, who had set up a mission house (daʿwat-khāna) near Isfahān, managed to convert some 30,000 people in the Isfahān area. Be that as it may, the Nizāris soon began to collect taxes in districts around Shāhdiz, to the detriment of the Saljuq treasury. The capture of Shāhdiz was indeed a serious blow to the power and prestige of the Saljuqs. The Nizāris seized a second fortress, Khālnanjān (Khālanjān), about thirty kilometres south of Isfahān. According to some unreliable reports, the daʿī ʿAbd al-Malik himself had by now left Isfahān for Alamūt, where he spent his final years under Ḥasan-i ʿSabbāḥ's protection. There are no reliable details on the final phase of this daʿī's career, but it is safe to assume that by 494 A.H. he was no longer active in Isfahān, having been succeeded in a much more limited capacity by his son Aḥmad.

With the capture of Shāhdiz, which was fortified like other Nizārī castles, the Nizāris became bolder in their ventures. The daʿwa was now successfully infiltrating Barkiyāruq's own court and armies. So large was the number of Barkiyāruq's amīrs and soldiers converted to Ismāʿīlism that, according to Ibn al-Athīr, some Saljuq officers asked the sultan for permission to appear before him in armour, for fear of attack by their own Ismāʿīlī soldiers. Meanwhile, the Saljuq factions opposed to Barkiyāruq were accusing all of the sultan's soldiery of Ismāʿīlism, in addition to blaming Barkiyāruq for the Nizāris attacks on those officers opposing him, although Barkiyāruq's own life had been threatened by fidāʾīs. At any event, the growing power of the Nizāris finally forced Barkiyāruq to move against them. Under such circumstances, Barkiyāruq in western Persia and Sanjar in Khurāsān agreed in 494/1101 to take combined action against the Nizāris, who were now posing a serious threat to Saljuqid
power in general. Accordingly, Barkiyāruq sanctioned the massacres of Nizāris in İsfahan and Baghdād, as well as many of the Saljūq officers suspected of conversion, while Sanjar had many Nizāris killed or enslaved in Quhistān. Nevertheless, the Nizāris did not lose any of their castles to the Saljūqs and managed to retain their overall position in Persia. The Nizārī revolt, despite occasional setbacks, was still continuing when Barkiyāruq died in 498/1105 and was succeeded by Muḥammad Tāpar.

It was during the opening years of the twelfth century A.D., or a few years earlier, that the Persian Nizāris began to extend their activities to Syria. A number of emissaries from Alamūt began to be despatched to Syria to organize the Syrian Nizāris and to win new converts. The political fragmentation of Syria at the time as well as the religious traditions of the country were significant factors favouring the spread of the Nizārī daʿwa in Syria. The first Turkoman bands, as noted, had entered Syria as early as 447/1055, and the country was subsequently invaded by the regular Saljūq armies. By 471/1078, the whole of Syria, apart from a coastal strip retained by the Fāṭimids, was under Saljūq rule or suzerainty; Tutush, the brother of the Great Sultan Malikshāh, had come to be recognized as the Saljūq overlord of Syria. As in Persia, Saljūq rule in Syria had caused many problems and was resented by the Syrians who were divided amongst themselves and incapable of expelling the alien Turks. With Malikshāh’s death and the ensuing factional fights among the Saljūqs, the relative political stability of Syria too was disrupted. Soon after, when Tutush was killed in Persia in 488/1095, political confusion became openly manifest in Syria and Tutush’s kingdom was broken into a number of smaller states. Syria now became the scene of rivalry among different Saljūq princes and amīrs, each one claiming a part of the country, while various minor local dynasties were at the same time attempting to assert their independence. The political fragmentation of Syria became more pronounced by the appearance of the Crusaders in 490/1097. Starting from Antioch, the Crusaders advanced swiftly along the Syrian coast and settled down in the conquered territories, establishing four Latin states based in Edessa, Antioch, Tripoli and Jerusalem. The Frankish encroachment of Syria naturally added to the apprehensions of the local population, complicating the Saljūq quarrels. In these troubled times, the most important Saljūq rulers of Syria were Tutush’s sons Riḍwān (488–507/1095–1113) and Duqāq (488–497/1095–1104), who ruled respectively from Aleppo and Damascus.

The emissaries of Alamūt took advantage of Syria’s political disarray
and capitalized on the fears and grievances of the local population. The religious background of the country was also favourable to the propagation of the Nizārī daʿwa. The Syrians adhered to many religions. Amongst the Syrian Muslims, the Sunnis were closely rivalled by the Shiʿis belonging to a variety of sects, including several extremist sects, which provided suitable recruiting ground for the Nizārī daʿīs. There were the extremist Nuṣayris and the Druzes, who had earlier broken off from the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlis. Amongst the Shiʿis, there were also the Imāmis and the Ismāʿīlis. Indeed, the Syrians had been exposed to Ismāʿīli doctrines for more than two centuries. Salamiyya, as noted, had served as the headquarters of the central leaders of the Ismāʿīli movement in the 3rd/9th century. Subsequently, when the Fāṭimids extended their rule to Syria during the second half of the 4th/10th century, Ismāʿilism was propagated openly there by numerous Fāṭimid daʿīs. After the Nizārī–Mustaʿlī schism, both branches of the Ismāʿīli movement were represented in Syria. Threatened by the Turks and the Crusaders, and despaired by the collapse of the Fāṭimid regime under al-Mustansir’s successors, many Sunnis and Shiʿis, including both non-Ismāʿīlis and Mustaʿlians, were now prepared to transfer their allegiance to Nizārī Ismāʿilism which was increasingly appearing as the more active branch of the movement. The Nizārī movement, also boasting a record of rapid success in Persia, seemed to be the only force offering potential challenge to the alien invaders and rulers of Syria.

From the very beginning, the Persian daʿīs, who were despatched from Alamūt to Syria for organizing the Nizārī daʿwa there, used the same methods of struggle as their co-religionists in Persia. They attempted to seize strongholds for use as bases for extending their activities into the surrounding areas. Furthermore, the Syrian Nizārīs resorted to political assassination and co-operated with various local rulers, when such temporary alliances seemed expedient. Despite occasional successes, however, the Nizārīs found their task in Syria much more difficult than it had been in Persia. Almost half a century of continuous effort was needed before the Nizārīs could finally gain control of a group of strongholds in Syria. Three separate periods can be distinguished in the initial struggles of the Nizārī leaders in Syria, who were evidently all Persians sent from Alamūt and who took their orders from Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh and his successors. During the first and second periods, from the earliest years to 507/1113 and then from the latter year to 524/1130, the Nizārīs operated from Aleppo and subsequently from Damascus, with the support of the Saljūq
rulers of these rival cities; but they failed to acquire any permanent bases. During the third period, from 524/1130 to around 545/1151, the Nizāris succeeded in acquiring a number of fortresses in the mountain area known then as the Jabal Bahrā', today called the Jabal Anṣāriyya after its Nuṣayrī population.

The first Nizāri leader in Syria, mentioned by Ibn al-Qalānīsī and later sources, was a da‘ī known as al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjīm, the physician-astrologer. Probably accompanied by a number of subordinate agents sent from Alamūt, he appeared in Aleppo, and, by the very beginning of the twelfth century A.D., managed to find a protector in the city’s Saljūq ruler, Rīḍwān. Aleppo, in northern Syria, was a suitable location for the initiation of the Nizārī activities. It had an important Shi‘ī population, perhaps even outweighing the city’s Sunnī inhabitants, and was close to the Shi‘ī areas of the Jabal al-Summāq, already penetrated by Ismā‘īlism. Rīḍwān, aware of his military weakness against his rival amirs in Syria and seeking new alliances, allowed the free propagation of the Nizārī da‘wa in Aleppo; and, significantly, al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjīm is reported to have openly joined his entourage. Rīḍwān himself may have been a convert, although he lacked religious convictions and was evidently more concerned with political expediency. A few years earlier in 490/1097, he had briefly recognized the suzerainty of al-Musta‘īlī and had pronounced the khutba for the Fātimids. He now permitted the Nizārīs to practise and preach their religion and use Aleppo as a base for further activities, also helping them to construct a dār al-da‘wa, or a mission house. Rīḍwān’s patronage of the Nizārīs soon proved rewarding. In Rajab 496/May 1103, Janāḥ al-Dawlā, the independent ruler of Ḥimṣ (Homs) and one of Rīḍwān’s crucial opponents, was murdered by three Persian fīdā‘īs in the great mosque of Ḥimṣ during the Friday prayers. Most sources agree that this assassination was ordered by al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjīm at Rīḍwān’s instigation. The people of Ḥimṣ were much disturbed by this event, and, interestingly, most of the Turks living there fled to Damascus. Prompt action by Duqāq, the ruler of Damascus, prevented the Franks from seizing Ḥimṣ, and the city was now brought under Damascene control.

Al-Ḥakīm al-Munajjīm himself died in 496/1103, a few weeks after Janāḥ al-Dawlā, and was succeeded as the leader of the Syrian Nizārīs by another Persian da‘ī, Abū Ṭāhir al-Ṣā‘īgh, the goldsmith. Abū Ṭāhir retained the favour of Rīḍwān and attempted to seize strongholds in the areas inhabited by Ismā‘īlī sympathizers, especially around the Jabal al-Summāq to the south of Aleppo. From early on, the Nizārī da‘īs seem to
have received local support in Sarmin and other towns of the Jazr and may even have controlled a few localities in northern Syria. However, the first Nizārī attack was aimed at Afāmiya (Apamea), a fortified outpost of Aleppo. Its Arab ruler, Khalaf b. Mulā‘ib, a Shi‘i and probably a Musta‘lian, had seized the town from Ridwān in 489/1096 and thereupon had held it for the Fātimids. Khalaf, who was evidently unwilling to cooperate with the Nizārīs, had amply demonstrated the suitability of Afāmiya as a base in his successful career of brigandage. Abū Ṭāhir devised a plan for killing Khalaf and seizing the citadel of Afāmiya, counting on the assistance of the local Nizārīs who were then led by a certain Abu‘l-Fath, a judge originally from Sarmin. Khalaf was killed in Jumādā I 499/February 1106 by a group of fidā’īs sent from Aleppo, and Afāmiya readily fell into the hands of the Nizārīs. Soon after, Abū Ṭāhir arrived on the scene to take charge, nominally on behalf of Ridwān. This attempt to make Afāmiya the first Nizārī stronghold in Syria was short-lived, however. Tancred, the Frankish prince of Antioch who had already occupied the surrounding districts, now besieged Afāmiya, bringing with him as a prisoner a brother of Abu‘l-Fath. After lifting his initial siege in return for receiving a tribute from the Nizārīs, Tancred returned and forced Afāmiya to surrender in Muḥarram 500/September 1106. Abu‘l-Fath was tortured to death, while Abū Ṭāhir and a number of his associates managed to ransom themselves from captivity and returned to Aleppo. This was probably the first encounter between the Nizārīs and the Crusaders in Syria. In 504/1110, the Nizārīs also lost Kafarlitha to Tancred, a lesser locality in the Jabal al-Summāq, which had come into their possession sometime earlier.

Abū Ṭāhir, now back in Aleppo, continued with his da‘wa activities as well as his search for suitable strongholds; and the association between Riḍwān and the Nizārīs was retained to their mutual benefit. In 505/1111, when Riḍwān decided to close the gates of Aleppo to Mawdūd, the Saljūq amir of Mawsil, who had come to Syria with an army to fight the Crusaders, armed groups of Nizārīs rallied to Riḍwān’s side. Both Riḍwān and the Nizārīs were apprehensive of the presence of this eastern expeditionary force in Syria, as was Ṭughtīgin (d. 522/1128), Duqāq’s atabeg, or guardian-tutor, who became the effective ruler of Damascus on Duqāq’s death in 497/1104 and founded the independent Būrid dynasty. Nevertheless, Riḍwān could not completely disregard the anti-Ismā‘ili campaigns of Muḥammad Tapar, who had succeeded the more lenient Barkiyāruq; nor could he ignore the increasing unpopularity of the Nizārīs
amongst his subjects. Consequently, Rıdıwan somewhat retracted from his pro-Nizârî position during his final years. In 505/1111, an unsuccessful attempt on the life of a certain Abû Ḥarb ʿĪsâ b. Zayd, a wealthy merchant and a declared enemy of the İsmâʿīlīs from Transoxiana who was then passing through Aleppo, led to a popular outburst against the Nizârîs, which Rıdıwan was obliged to condone. Two years later, in 507/1113, Mawdûd was murdered in the great mosque of Damascus. Most sources attribute this assassination to the Nizârîs, although the event is surrounded by some uncertainty. A few authorities suggest that ʿUghtūtīn may have had a hand in it.

With Rıdıwan’s death in Jumādā II 507/December 1113, the Nizârî fortunes began to be definitely reversed in Aleppo. Rıdıwan’s young son and successor Alp Arslân at first maintained his father’s policy towards the Nizârîs and even ceded them a fortress outside Bâlis, on the road from Aleppo to Baghḑād. But soon afterwards, he authorized a widespread anti-İsmâʿīlī campaign. According to Ibn al-ʿAdîm, Muḥammad Tapar had written to Alp Arslân warning him against the menace of the Nizârîs and insisting on their elimination. At the same time, Sāʿid b. Bâdi’, the raʾîs of Aleppo and the commander of the militia, had been urging Alp Arslân to take measures against the Nizârîs. Alp Arslân finally agreed and entrusted the task to Ibn Bâdi”. Abū ʿĀhir and other Nizârî leaders, including the dâʾî İsmâʿîl, and a brother of al-Ḥakîm al-Munajjîm, were arrested and killed. Some two hundred Nizârîs of Aleppo were also killed or imprisoned and their properties were confiscated. Many Nizârîs, however, managed to escape to different areas, some even finding refuge in Frankish territories. Ḥusâm al-Dīn b. Dumlâj, the commander of the Nizârî armed groups in Aleppo, fled to Raqqâ where he died, and Ibrâhîm al-ʿAjamî who had held the fortress of Bâlis, abandoned it and took refuge at the fortress of Shayzar on the Orontes between Ṭafâmiya and Ḥamāt, then held by the Banû Munqidh. By the spring of 507/1114, some one hundred Nizârîs from Aleppo as well as Ṭafâmiya, Sarmin, Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān and Maʿarrat Maṣrîn, were at Shayzar and made an unsuccessful attempt to seize the place when its lords had gone out to view the Easter celebrations of the local Christians. On returning to the citadel of Shayzar, the Banû Munqidh, assisted by the townspeople, fought the Nizârîs from tower to tower and eventually killed them all. The sectarians evidently had hoped to use Shayzar as a new base of operations, in the immediate aftermath of their debacle in Aleppo. With these events, the initial period in the activities of the Syrian Nizârîs came to an end. The Nizârîs had
hitherto failed to secure a permanent base or any castles in Syria, but, on the positive side, they had made contacts with the local population and had won many converts and sympathizers, especially in the Jabal al-Summāq, the Jazr, and the territory of the Banū 'Ulaym, situated between Shayzar and Sarmin.

Meanwhile, the ardently Sunni Muḥammad Tapar had succeeded his brother Barkiyāruq in Persia, while Sanjar remained at Balkh as his viceroy in the East. Muḥammad reigned for some thirteen years, from 498/1105 to 511/1118, as the undisputed sultan, bringing order to the Saljuq empire. Probably Barkiyāruq and Sanjar had already checked what might have been a Nizārī sweep through the Saljuq dominions in Persia and 'Iráq. Nonetheless, the Nizāris had maintained their position in widely scattered territories and posed a continued threat to the Saljuqs, from Syria to eastern Persia as well as in ʿIṣfahān itself. Therefore, Muḥammad, who had secured sole power in the aftermath of the civil wars of Barkiyāruq's reign, immediately set to work to take action against the Nizāris. Within two years of his accession, Muḥammad launched a series of campaigns against the Nizāris, and succeeded in checking their expanding revolt. In 500/1106, he sent an expedition against Takrit, which the Nizāris had held for twelve years. The Saljuqs failed to capture Takrit after besieging it for several months, although the Nizāris, too, lost the place. In order to prevent the Saljuqs from taking Takrit, its Nizāri commandant, Kayqubād, surrendered the citadel to the Mazyadid Sayf al-Dawla Ṣadaqa (479–500/1086–1108), an Arab Imāmī Shiʿī ruler who had asserted his independence in central 'Iráq. 71 At about the same time, Muḥammad had Sanjar again attack the Nizārī strongholds in Quhistān, though no details are available on the results.

Muhammad's chief anti-Nizārī campaign was, however, against Shāhdiz. The sultan led a large force in person and besieged the fortress in 500/1107. 72 It is noteworthy that the siege and capture of Shāhdiz were delayed by a series of manoeuvres and tactics utilized by Aḥmad Ibn ʿAṭṭāsh, and supported by friends and sympathizers of the Nizāris within the Saljuq camp. Aḥmad managed to engage the Saljuqs in a series of negotiations, involving the Sunni 'ulamā' of ʿIṣfahān in a long, drawn-out religious disputation. In a message to the sultan, Aḥmad argued that the Nizāris were true Muslims, believing in God and the Prophet Muhammad and accepting the prescriptions of the Shariʿa. They differed from the Sunnis only concerning the matter of the imāmate, and therefore maintained that the sultan had no legitimate ground for acting against them,
especially since the Nizāris were willing to recognize the sultan's suzerainty and pay him tribute. This message led to a religious debate. It seems that at first most of the sultan's advisers and the Sunni jurists and scholars were inclined to accept the Nizāri argument; a few, notably Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Ali b. 'Abd al-Ḥamān al-Samanjānī, a leading Shāfi'i divine, stood fast in refuting the Nizāris, denouncing them as going outside the pale of Islam, and convincing the sultan to reject ʿAḥmad's request. The debate thus ended and the siege continued. The Nizāris now bargained for alternative fortresses, but this phase of the negotiations also proved fruitless and ended when a Nīzārī ḥiḍrnī attacked and wounded one of the sultan's amīrs, who had been particularly opposed to the Nizāris. The sultan once again pressed ahead with his siege of Shāhdzīz and the only matter remaining concerned the terms of surrender by the defenders of the great fortress. Finally, the conditions of capitulation were agreed upon. Part of the Shāhdzīz garrison was to be given safe-conduct to go to other Nīzārī strongholds in Arrajān and Qūhīstān, while the remainder, holding on to only one wing of the fortress, was to surrender upon receiving the news of the safe arrival of those departed; thereupon, being permitted to go to Alamūt. In due time, the awaited news was received at Shāhdzīz, but ʿAḥmad declined to come down from the fortress. He had evidently decided to fight to the end. He and his small band of Nīzāris, some eighty men in all, fought the Saljuqs and defended themselves even from the last tower remaining in their hands. In the final assault, most of the Nīzāris were killed and a few managed to escape. ʿAḥmad's wife, decked in jewels, threw herself down from the ramparts, but ʿAḥmad was captured. He was paraded through the streets of Isfahān and then skinned alive. ʿAḥmad's son was also put to death, and their heads were sent to al-Mustāẓhir at Baghdād. The fortress of Khānlanjān too was apparently destroyed by the Saljuqs during the siege of Shāhdzīz. With these defeats, the influence of the Nīzārīs disappeared from the Isfahān region.

It was probably soon after the fall of Shāhdzīz in 500 A.H. that Muḥammad Tapar caused the destruction of the Nīzāri fortresses around Arrajān. The mission was carried out by Fakhr al-Dīn Chāwli (d. 511/1116), the atābeg of Fārs; thereafter, little was heard of the Nīzārīs who survived in the border region between Fārs and Khūzistān. Ibn al-Balkhī who composed his Fārs-nāma, a local history and geographical account of his native province during 498–510 A.H. at Muḥammad Tapar's request, already speaks of the Nīzārī occupations of these fortresses in southwestern Persia as a past event.73 Sultan Muḥammad from early on directed
his attention also to the main centre of Nizārī power, the Rūdbār area with
its numerous castles.74 Ḥasan-i Šabbāh, while remaining the daʿī of
Daylam, was then acknowledged as the head of the entire Nizārī move-
ment, and Alamūt, his residence, became the central headquarters of the
Nizārī daʿwa. In 501/1107–1108, or 502/1108–1109, the sultan sent an
expedition to Rūdbār under the command of his vizier Ǧiyāʾ al-Mulk
Aḥmad, a son of Niẓām al-Mulk, who was accompanied by the amīr
Chāwli (Jawāli). The expedition fought the Nizāris for some time and
caused much devastation in the area. But the expedition failed to accom-
plish its primary objective, the reduction of Alamūt, and withdrew from
Rūdbār. On that occasion, the sultan had sought in vain the assistance
of Ḥusām al-Dawla Shahriyar b. Qārīn (466–503/1074–1110), a local
Bāwandīd ruler in Ṭabaristān and Gilān, against the Nizāris of Rūdbār.75
The Nizāris later made an unsuccessful attempt in Baghdād to assassinate
Aḥmad b. Niẓām al-Mulk, who had led the expedition against Rūdbār.

In 503/1109, the reduction of Alamūt was entrusted to Anūštāqīn
Shīrgīr, the governor of Sāwa. Realizing the futility of a direct assault
against Alamūt, Shīrgīr decided to undermine the position of the Nizāris
by attrition. For eight consecutive years, he destroyed the crops of
Rūdbār, besieged Lamasar and other castles in the area, and engaged in
sporadic battles with the Nizāris. It was during this period, when severe
hardship was inflicted on the Nizāris, that Ḥasan-i Šabbāh and many
others sent their wives and daughters to safer places, such as Girdkūh; a
practice followed by the later Nizāris. Shīrgīr received regular reinforce-
ments from other Saljūq amīrs, while the resistance of the hard-pressed
Nizāris had continued to amaze the enemy. Finally, by Dhuʾl-Ḥijja 511/
April 1118, when Shīrgīr was evidently on the verge of taking Alamūt,
whose garrison was near exhaustion, news arrived of Muḥammad Taparʾs
death. Thereupon the Saljūqs broke camp and left Rūdbār, paying no
attention to Shīrgīrʾs pleas to stay and fight longer. Shīrgīr was obliged to
abandon his siege of Alamūt, and lost many men upon retreating. The
Nizāris came into possession of all the food supplies and implements of
war left behind by the Saljūq armies. Alamūt was thus saved and the
Nizāris of Rūdbār were rescued from what could have been an irrevocable
defeat. According to al-Bundārī, the Saljūq vizier Qiwām al-Dīn al-
Dargazīnī, a secret convert to Iṣmāʿīlism, may have played an important
part in preventing the victory of the Saljūqs and in procuring the
withdrawal of Shīrgīrʾs army from Rūdbār.76 At any event, al-Dargazīnī
roused Muhammad’s son and successor in Isfahān, Mahmūd, against Shirgir, who was imprisoned and executed soon afterwards.

The death of Muhammad b. Malikshāh was followed by another period of internal strife in the Saljuq empire, which gave the Nizāris a respite to recover from the blows inflicted on them during Muhammad’s reign. Sultan Muhammad was succeeded at Isfahān by his son Maḥmūd, who ruled for fourteen years (511-525/1118-1131) over western Persia, and, at least nominally, ‘Irāq. But Maḥmūd, unlike his father, was faced with other claimants to the sultanate. These claimants often sought the support of their atabegs or Saljuq amirs, who increasingly came to enjoy local autonomy in different parts of the empire. In time, three other sons of Muhammad Tapar, viz., Tughril II (526-529/1132-1134), Mas’ūd (529-547/1134-1152) and Sulaymānshāh (555-556/1160-1161), as well as several of his grandsons, some of whom held power in various parts of the empire during Maḥmūd’s reign, succeeded to the sultanate in the west. However, Maḥmūd’s uncle Sanjar, who had controlled the eastern provinces since 490/1097, now became generally recognized as the head of the Saljuq family, acquiring the precarious position of supreme sultan among the Saljuq rulers until his death in 552/1157. In this capacity, Sanjar played a decisive role in settling the succession disputes of the later Saljuq sultans. At the beginning of his rule, however, Maḥmūd had to face an invasion of his domains by Sanjar, commanding a large army which included bands of Nizāris. Sanjar defeated Maḥmūd at Sāwa and then advanced as far as Baghdād. But in the ensuing truce, Sanjar made Maḥmūd his heir, while seizing from him important territories in northern Persia. Sanjar continued to control these territories, including Ṭabaristān and Qūmis, which were already penetrated by the Nizāris or were adjacent to their strongholds in Daylam. Maḥmūd’s brother Tughril rebelled and succeeded in taking Gilān and other districts in northern Persia, in addition to Qazwīn. Dissension in the Saljuq camp encouraged the ‘Abbāsid caliphs to seek an increasing degree of independence at Baghdād during the 6th/12th century, starting with the caliph al-Mustarshid (512-529/1118-1135).

Meanwhile, the Nizāris had entered a new period in their relations with the Saljuqs, designated by Marshall Hodgson as a period of stalemate. The great Saljuq offensive against the Nizāris had clearly ended on Muḥammad Tapar’s death, and so had the Nizāri open revolt. For almost three decades the Nizāris had carried out an open revolt in the Saljuq lands, for a while threatening Isfahān itself. But they had also sustained severe
blows. In particular, their partisans in the cities had been massacred on numerous occasions, and they had lost many of their fortresses in the Alburz and Zagros mountains and around Isfahān. The Nizāris had in effect failed in their revolt against the Saljuqs, and their remaining strongholds, located chiefly in Rūdbār, Qūmis, and Quhistān, could not be used as adequate bases for continuing the revolt as they had done during the first period of their activity in Persia. Doubtless, the Nizāris did not abandon the ultimate aims of their struggle, and they did maintain their cohesion from eastern Persia to Syria in spite of hardships and defeats. The Nizārī revolt had indeed been successful on a local basis in several scattered territories. But the Nizārī movement was now in need of reorganization and a new effort in the light of the experiences gained hitherto. The Nizāris were now more concerned with consolidating their position and defending the territories which they controlled, rather than waging war against the Saljuqs. Instead of being merely a revolutionary party, the Nizārī community was now transforming itself into a permanent and independent state, with substantial though scattered territories. This state, with its numerous dār al-hijras which had earlier served as bases for revolutionary activities, was now beginning to take its own special place amongst the small states within the boundaries of the Saljuq empire.

The remaining years of Hasan-i Šabbāh's life, after 511/1118, were essentially peaceful and devoted to consolidating the Nizārī state which he, more than anyone else, had worked to create. Hasan, who was now the central leader of the Nizārī community whilst continuing as the dāī of Daylam, recaptured some of the castles which Shirgīr had seized in Rūdbār and evidently even intensified the da'wa in many regions like 'Irāq, Ādharbayjān, Māzandarān, Gilān and Khurāsān. The sources attribute the Nizārī successes of this period and the subsequent decades, to Sanjar's tolerance towards the Nizāris. Indeed, Sanjar seems to have sought peaceful relations with the Nizāris, allegedly procured by a dagger which Hasan-i Šabbāh contrived to have thrust onto the floor beside the sultan's bed. Juwaynī also relates seeing several of Sanjar's manshūrs or decrees at the Alamūt library, in which the sultan conciliated the Nizāris and sought their friendship.78 Our Persian chroniclers state that Sanjar gave the Nizāris an annual pension of 3,000–4,000 dinars from the taxes on the lands belonging to them in the region of Qūmis, also allowing them to levy a toll on travellers beneath Girdkūh.79 It seems that Hasan-i Šabbāh reinvigorated the Nizārī cause in Egypt during his final years, though earlier he had made no serious attempts in that direction. Hasan's intensive
activities in Fāṭimid Egypt date to around 515/1121, the year of the assassination of al-Afdal, who had dispossessed Nizār of his rights to the imāmate. According to the Nizārī sources used by our Persian historians, this assassination was carried out by three fīdāʾīs from Aleppo. On receiving this news at Alamūt, Ḥasan ordered the Nizāris to celebrate for seven days and nights. Al-Afdal’s successor al-Maʾmūn, as noted, had to adopt security measures against the Nizārī agents and fīdāʾīs who were then reportedly being sent from Alamūt to Egypt. Many such agents were arrested. Soon after, in 516/1122, the Fāṭimid regime deemed it necessary to hold a public assembly in defence of the rights of al-Mustaʿlī and al-Āmir to the imāmate, as against those of Nizār; an assembly which led to the issuance of the epistle entitled al-Hidāya al-Āmirīyya. Ibn Muyassar, who relates these details indicating the apprehension of the Fāṭimids of the Nizārī activities in Egypt and Syria, also mentions that at about the same time, al-Maʾmūn had a long letter issued by the Fāṭimid chancery, in Ibn al-Šayrāfī’s writing, urging Ḥasan-i Šabbāh in harsh terms to renounce his support of the Nizārī cause and to return to the truth. The Nizārī activities in Egypt, however, do not seem to have continued for long; while relations between the Nizāriyya and the Mustaʿlawiya, who themselves soon split into the Ḥāfiziyya and the Tayyibiyya, continued to deteriorate.

Ḥasan-i Šabbāh fell ill early in the month of Rabiʾ II 518/May 1124. Feeling that his end was near, he made careful arrangements for the future leadership of the Nizārī community. He called for his lieutenant at Lamasar, Kiyā Buzurg-Ummīd, and designated him his successor as dāʾī of Daylam and head of the Nizārī community. At the same time, Ḥasan appointed three senior Nizārī personalities to what may be viewed as a council of advisers for assisting Buzurg-Ummīd in conducting the affairs of the Nizārī state and community as well as the daʿwa until such time as the imām himself appeared. These advisers were Dihdār Abū ʿAlī Ardistānī, a veteran dāʾī who had once rescued Ḥasan from a difficult situation at Alamūt; Ḥasan ʿĀdam Qaṣṭānī, and Kiyā Bā Ṭafār, the commander of the Nizārī forces who died in 519/1125. The dāʾī Abū ʿAlī was singled out for the affairs of the daʿwa. Ḥasan died at an old age towards the end of Rabiʾ II 518/middle of June 1124.

Ḥasan-i Šabbāh was indeed a remarkable man. An organizer and a political strategist of unrivalled capability, he was at the same time a thinker and writer who led an ascetic life. Several examples of his asceticism and harshness have been cited by our Persian historians. He was
evidently equally strict with friend and foe, and highly uncompromising in his austere and Islamic life style which he imposed on the Nizārī community, especially in Rūdbār. In particular, he insisted on the observance of the Islamic religious duty of *amr bi maʿrūf va nahy az munkar* (commanding the good and prohibiting the evil). During all the years spent at Alamūt, Hasan evidently never descended from the castle, and he is said to have left his living quarters only twice to mount the roof-top. During that period, nobody drank wine openly in Alamūt, and the playing of musical instruments was also forbidden. Hasan sent his wife and daughters to Girdkūh where they earned a simple life by spinning, never having them return to Alamūt. He also had both his sons, Ustād Husayn and Muhammad, executed. Muḥammad’s guilt was wine-drinking, while Ustād Ḫusayn had been suspected of complicity in the murder of the dāʾī Ḫusayn Qāʿīnī in Quhīstān, a suspicion which proved unfounded. A year later, the real instigator of the dāʾī’s assassination, a certain ’Alid called Zayd, was discovered and put to death along with his son, on Hasan’s orders. This ’Alid, a resident of Alamūt who aimed to undermine Ḥasan’s position, had been successful in secretly conducting propaganda on his own behalf, claiming to have been the *mustawdāʾ* imām. Hasan is said to have been learned in philosophy and astronomy and when he was not performing the duties prescribed by the Shariʿa, he devoted his time to reading, writing and administering the affairs of the Nizārī community. Always remaining the dāʾī of Daylam, Hasan was, after Nizār’s death, regarded as the *ḥujja* of the hidden Nizārī Imām. He founded the Nizārī state in Persia with its subsidiary in Syria, guided the Nizārī community in difficult times, and eventually became the undisputed leader of that community and the Nizārī *daʿwa*. He was highly revered by the Nizārīs, who called him Sayyidnā, or ‘our master’. Hasan’s mausoleum in Rūdbār became a shrine for the Nizārīs, who made regular pilgrimages to the site until it was destroyed by the Mongols.

ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ṭṭṭāsh and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh, and possibly other Persian Ismāʿīlī dāʾīs living during the final decades of the 5th/11th century, were also active intellectually and doubtless produced some doctrinal treatises which have not survived. However, the early Nizārīs, conducting an open revolt in hostile territories and being very concerned with their survival, did not have time for philosophical speculations and highly sophisticated doctrinal arguments. In a sense, their intellectual activities were also closely geared to the more pressing and practical needs of their struggle. In particular, the Nizārīs did not retain the earlier interest
in cosmology and some other esoteric doctrines, expounded in the classical works of the Fāṭimid period and central to Ṭāyyībī Ismāʿīlī thought. The early Nizāris, on the other hand, showed a particular interest in the doctrine of the imāmate. From the time of Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ and even during the years preceding their break with the Fāṭimid regime, the Persian Ismāʿīlis concentrated their doctrinal investigations on the reality of the imām and the imāmate, transcending history and the physical world. Indeed, from early on, the Sunnī observers and other outsiders developed the distinct impression that the Nizāri movement reflected a ‘new preaching’, which became designated as al-daʿwa al-jadīda. The ‘new preaching’ did not, however, entail the formulation of any set of new doctrines; it was, rather, the reformulation of an old Shiʿī doctrine which already had a long history also amongst the Ismāʿīlis. This reformulation of the Shiʿī doctrine of taʿlim, or authoritative teaching, was apparently most eloquently expounded by Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ himself, though he was not probably its originator. At any event, in its fully developed form the doctrine is commonly ascribed to Ḥasan, who devoted a theological treatise to it in the Persian language. This treatise, entitled Ḥusul-i arbaʿa (The Four Chapters) has not survived. But it was seen and paraphrased by our Persian historians, and quoted extensively by Ḥasan’s contemporary Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) in his famous heresiographical work produced around 521/1127.

Al-Shahrastānī, who spent most of his life in his native Khurāsān and became an associate of the sultan Sanjar, was widely renowned as an Ashʿarī theologian and noted for his open-minded interest in all religions and philosophies. However, some of his contemporaries believed that he had secretly converted to Ismāʿīlism and worked on behalf of the Nizāri daʿwa. The well-informed Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), who himself adhered temporarily to Nizāris Ismāʿīlism, asserts in his spiritual autobiography that al-Shahrastānī was an Ismāʿīlī, calling him dāʿī al-duʿāt; al-Ṭūsī furthermore adds that al-Shahrastānī was the teacher of his father’s maternal uncle. At any event, several of al-Shahrastānī’s extant works bear an Ismāʿīli imprint and attest that at least during the final decades of his life he espoused Ismāʿīli terminologies and methods of interpretation. Aside from the Mafīṭih al-asrār, an incomplete Qur’ānic exegesis, and the Majlis-i maktab-i Shahristānī mun‘aqīd dar Khwārezm, his crypto-Ismāʿīli works include al-Muṣūra‘a, a refutation of Ibn Sinā’s theological doctrine on the basis of traditional Ismāʿīli theology. Be it as it may, al-Shahrastānī was interested in ideas propounded by the earliest Nizāris, and
he has preserved for us in Arabic translation an abridgement of Hasan-i Sabbâh’s reformulation of the doctrine of *ta’lim*, the central doctrine of the earliest Nizâris.

The Shi‘is had always condemned the Sunnis for exercising the right to choose for themselves in religious matters, starting with the choice of the Prophet’s first successor. The Shi‘is, by contrast, held that Muslims had no right to rely on their own arbitrary decisions and that they must base their understanding of religious truths and especially law on the teaching (*ta’lim*) of proper authorities; authorities or true imâms, who, according to the Shi‘a, are designated by divine ordinance and not by human choice or reasoning, as in the case of the Prophet himself. This was essentially the crux of the Shi‘i doctrine of *ta’lim*, the authoritative teaching in religion, which could be undertaken by authoritative teachers in every age. And for the Shi‘is, only their divinely appointed and guided ‘Alid Imâms were qualified to perform the functions of such teachers. As explained by al-Shahrastânî, Hasan-i Sabbâh reformulated the Shi‘i doctrine of *ta’lim* in a series of four propositions, translated by al-Shahrastânî from Persian into Arabic with the title of *al-Fuṣûl al-arba‘a*. These propositions which took the form of a critique of the traditional statement of the doctrine, in effect aimed to prove that only the Ismâ‘ili Imâm fulfilled the role of the authoritative teacher after the Prophet.

In the first proposition, Hasan reaffirmed the need of men for an authority or teacher (*mu‘allim*) and the inadequacy of reason (*‘aql*) alone in enabling men to understand religious truths. This proposition also aimed at refuting the position of those, notably the philosophers, who believed in the adequacy of reason and independent human judgement in comprehending the ultimate truth. In the second proposition, Hasan argued, in line with the traditional Shi‘i position, that the needed teacher must be authoritative or trustworthy (*sâdiq*). He stated, in opposition to the position of the Sunnis, that there must be only one single divinely appointed arbiter, the true imâm, in every age. Here, the single authoritative teacher (*mu‘allim-i sâdiq*) of the Shi‘is is set against the numerous scholars and jurists who are accepted as guides and teachers by the Sunnis in every age. The third proposition brings out the dilemma faced by the ordinary Shi‘is themselves; since the identification of the sole authoritative teacher at any time requires the demonstration of his authority, which is possible only on the basis of some further authority whose own authority must be demonstrated, and so on. In the fourth proposition, Hasan attempts to solve this dilemma by reformulating the whole question in
such a manner as to arrive at the desired result. He held that the authority of the needed teacher could be known not through something beyond itself but through the very nature of knowledge, in which he recognized a dialectical principle. Emphasizing that all true knowledge requires a contrast of two opposites which can be recognized only through one another, Ḥasan then proceeds to apply this dialectical principle to the relationship between the individual person who wishes to know and the authoritative teacher whom he must discover. The individual’s reasoning enables him to realize his need for the recognition of an authoritative teacher; but it does not by itself determine who that teacher is, nor does it lead him to the ultimate truth. On the other hand, the claimant to the position of final authority, the imām, need not prove his claims by resorting to any proof beyond himself. But a conjunction of the individual’s reasoning and the authoritative teacher solves the dilemma. The individual’s reasoning does, as noted, indicate his need for the teaching of an authoritative teacher, the imām. And when reasoning has reached this point, the imām can present himself as satisfying this very need. Accordingly, the true imām does not seek extrinsic proofs for his authority or imāmate, which is proved only by his own existence. Indeed it is through his very existence that the true imām can fulfil the need which only reasoning can demonstrate. For Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, this imām, who did not need to resort to miracles or refer to his ancestry, was the Isma‘īli Imām, whose very being and claims were sufficient proofs of his legitimacy.

The doctrine of ta‘lim presented by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ was both more rigorous and self-sufficient than the traditional Shi‘ī view on the subject. In his argumentation, Ḥasan consistently emphasized the role of the imām, with the Prophet having been a link in the logical chain from God to imām. This doctrine, stressing the autonomous teaching authority of each imām in his time, became a powerful ideological tool in the hands of the Nizārī community of the later Alamūt period. Meanwhile, in the absence of an accessible imām, the community authority depended on his hujja; and Ḥasan himself, as noted, was recognized as that hujja. The doctrine of ta‘lim, as restated by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and others, became so central to early Nizārī thought that the followers of the Nizārī da‘wa came to be known as the Ta‘limiyya. The Nizārī doctrine of ta‘lim also had a strong impact on the Sunnis, many of whom had continued to view the Isma‘īlis as their arch-enemies. Many Sunnī writers responded to the intellectual challenge posed by this new Isma‘īli sub-sect and in particular attacked the doctrine of ta‘lim. Al-Ghazālī, as noted, was the foremost and probably the earliest
Sunnī thinker in this group. He wrote several treatises against the Isma‘ilis and paid special attention to refuting the doctrine of ta‘lim in his al-Musta‘zhirī and other treatises.

On Hasan-ı Şabbāh’s death, Kiyā Buzurg-Ummīd was installed at Alamūt as da‘ī of Daylām and head of the Nizārī community and state.91 The da‘ī Abū ‘Ali Ardīstānī immediately set off for various Nizārī castles and obtained their allegiance to the new Nizārī leader. Buzurg-Ummīd’s leadership was not challenged by any segment of the community, which must have been rather difficult to understand by the quarrelling Saljuqs. Ruling for fourteen years (518–532/1124–1138), Buzurg-Ummīd maintained the policies of his predecessor and succeeded in further strengthening the Nizārī state, despite the renewed Saljuq offensive. He, too, was a capable administrator and military strategist, and was furthermore well-placed in northern Persia as a native of Rūdbār. He was not, however, related by marriage to the local Caspian rulers, as believed by some authorities. It was a sister of Kiyā Buzurg al-Dā‘ī ila’l-Ḥaqq b. al-Ḥādi (d. ca. 551/1156), an ‘Alīd Zaydī ruler of Daylamān, and not Buzurg-Ummīd’s sister, who was married to Hazārasf b. Fakhir al-Dawla Namāwar, the Bādūspānīd ruler of Rustamdār and Rūyān. The latter’s son Kaykā‘ūs (d. 560/1164–1165), who adhered to Zaydism and ruled for thirty-seven years, was hostile towards the Nizārīs. On the other hand, Hazārasf’s grandson, Hazārasf b. Shahrnūsh (d. 586/1190), another Bādūspānīd ruler, cultivated very friendly relations with the Nizārīs. Again, it was Kiyā Buzurg, and not Buzurg-Ummīd, who married a daughter of Shāh Ghāzī Rustam b. ‘Alī al-Dawla ‘Alī, who later became the Bāwandīd ruler of Māzandarān and Gīlān (534–558/1140–1163). Shāh Ghāzī became an enemy of the Nizārīs, subsequent to the Nizārī assassination in 537/1142 of his son Girdbāzū, who had been sent to Khurāsān to serve Sanjar; while the Nizārī fidā’īs made unsuccessful attempts to murder Shāh Ghāzī himself. At any event, this Bāwandīd ruler co-operated with the Saljuqs and fought the Nizārīs on numerous occasions. He attacked Alamūt in vain several times, but eventually succeeded in seizing the castles of Mihrīn and Manšūrakūh in Qūmīs from the Nizārīs. Another of Shāh Ghāzī’s daughters was married to Shahrnūsh b. Hazārasf b. Namāwar, the Bādūspānīd ruler who reigned contemporaneously with Buzurg-Ummīd. Shahrnūsh seems to have maintained cordial relations with the Nizārīs and Buzurg-Ummīd.92

Buzurg-Ummīd was confronted with the enmity of the local amīrs from the very beginning of his reign, and in 518/1124 some 700 Nizārīs were
massacred in Āmid in Diyār Bakr. In 520/1126, two years after his accession, the Saljuqs launched new attacks against the Nizāris strongholds in both Rūdbār and Quhistān, probably to test the leadership capabilities of Ḥasan-i Ṣabāḥ’s successor. Sultan Sanjar had not sanctioned any anti-Nizāri activity for almost two decades, which may reflect the existence of some sort of a truce agreement between the sultan and the sectarians. However, he had now decided to deal with the Nizāris, and a large army, commanded by his vizier, was sent against Ṭurayythith in Quhistān, as well as against Bayhaq and Ṭārz in the district of Nišāpūr, with orders to kill the Nizāris of those places and pillage their properties. This expedition despatched from Khurāsān eventually withdrew without accomplishing much. The expedition sent in 520 A.H. by the sultan Maḥmūd to Rūdbār, under the command of Shīrgīr’s nephew Aṣīl, was even less successful; it was defeated and driven back by the Nizāris. A second Saljuq attack in the same year was similarly repelled by the Nizāris of Rūdbār, who captured one of the enemy’s āmirs, Ṭāmūrṭughān. The latter was kept as a prisoner at Alamūt for some time before being released on Sanjar’s request. In spite of these entanglements, the Nizāri position in Rūdbār was actually strengthened during the earliest years of Buzurg-Ummid’s reign. Several fortresses were seized in the area, including Maḥnūr and others in Ṭāliqān, while a few castles were built, such as Saʿādatkūh, and most significantly, Maymūndiz, a major stronghold which began to be erected in Rabi‘ I 520/April 1126. In eastern Persia, too, the Nizāris had continued to be active. In 521/1127, the jidāris killed Muʿīn al-Dīn Abū Nasr Aḥmād, the Saljuq vizier who had convinced Sanjar to take action against the Nizāris, having himself led the expedition to Quhistān. In 523/1129, the Quzristānī Nizāris were able to mobilize and send an army to Sistān.

By Jumādā I 523/May 1129, the sultan Maḥmūd found it expedient to enter into peace negotiations with the Nizāris, and for this purpose invited Alamūt to send an envoy to Isfahān. Buzurg-Ummid despatched Khwāja Muḥammad Naṣīḥī Shahrastānī. But the discussions proved abortive as the Nizāri emissary and his colleague were lynched upon leaving the Saljuq court by some of the townspeople. The sultan disclaimed all responsibility, also rejecting Buzurg-Ummid’s demand to punish the murderers. Soon afterwards, the Nizāris took their own revenge and attacked Qazwīn, killing some 400 persons and taking much booty. This marked the beginning of a long-lasting enmity between the Qazwinis and
their neighbouring Nizāris, which often manifested itself in open warfare. Subsequently, Mahmūd made another unsuccessful raid on the Alamūt district, while an army sent from 'Irāq against Lamasar failed to accomplish much.98

Sultan Mahmūd died in 525/1131 and his succession was disputed by his brothers and son Darūd, giving the Nizāris another respite. It was during this period that the Persian Nizāris directed their attention to the Caspian region, where the Bāwandids of Māzandarān had become their active enemy and the local Zaydis had hindered the spread of their da'wa in northern Persia. The Nizāris achieved a great triumph in dealing with Abū Hāshim 'Alawī, who claimed the imāmate of the Zaydis in Daylam, and had adherents as far as Khurāsān.99 Buzurg-Ummid sent a letter of advice, but Abū Hāshim persisted in accusing the Nizāris of unbelief and heresy. In Muharram 526 A.H., an army was sent from Alamūt to Gīlān against Abū Hāshim, who had gathered a force of his own. The Zaydis were defeated and Abū Hāshim was captured and brought to Alamūt, where the Nizāris held disputations with him. According to the Nizāri chronicler of the reign of Buzurg-Ummid, Abū Hāshim eventually renounced his claim to the imāmate and expressed his willingness to convert to Ismā'īlism. He was later executed.

During the remaining years of Buzurg-Ummid’s reign, the Persian Nizāris further consolidated their position and made a few more raids on Qazwin and more remote areas such as Georgia. At the same time, the Nizāri da‘īs spread the da’wa in different regions while the fīdā‘īs removed more of the sect’s enemies. In addition to the usual Sunni qādīs and local officials, the victims now included a Zaydi Imām, the Fātimid caliph al-Abīm and an ‘Abbāsid caliph, representing the first successful Ismā‘īli attempt on the life of the titular head of Sunni Islam.100 On Ṭughril b. Muḥammad’s death in 529/1134, his brother Mas‘ūd had succeeded to the Saljuq sultanate in western Persia, Ādharbayjān and ‘Irāq. Sultan Mas‘ūd ruled relatively unchallenged with Sanjar’s support for eighteen years (529–547/1134–1152). From the very beginning of his rule, however, the ‘Abbāsid caliph al-Mustarshid, aiming to assert his independence from the Saljuqs, refused to recognize Mas‘ūd’s authority and declined to name him in the khutba at Baghdād. As a result, al-Mustarshid and Mas‘ūd soon engaged in battle near Hamadān. The ‘Abbāsid caliph was defeated and taken as prisoner to Marāgha, where he was treated respectfully by the sultan Mas‘ūd on Sanjar’s request. At Marāgha, a large band of fīdā‘īs
found the opportunity to enter al-Mustarshid’s pavilion and stabbed him to death in Dhu’l-Qa‘da 529/August 1135. Al-Mustarshid’s death was celebrated at Alamut for an entire week.101

In Syria, meanwhile, the Nizāris had survived their debacle of 507/1113. During the second period of their initial efforts to establish themselves, the Syrian Nizāris no longer used Aleppo as the base of their operations; they soon came to concentrate their activities in southern Syria.102 But even in Aleppo, where they were massacred on Riḍwān’s death, the Nizāris retained some foothold for a while and established friendly relations with ʿĪlghāzī, the Artuqid ruler of Mārdīn and Mayyāfāriqīn who gained possession of Aleppo in 512/1121. In 512 A.H., their enemy Ibn Badi', who was then fleeing Aleppo, was killed together with his two sons by the Nizārī fidāʾīs.103 In 514/1120, the Nizāris of Aleppo were strong enough to demand a small castle known as Qal’at al-Sharif from ʿĪlghāzī. Instead of ceding it or refusing the demand, ʿĪlghāzī had the castle demolished in haste, pretending to have ordered this action earlier. The qāḍī Ibn al-Khashshāb, who conducted the demolition and was involved in the massacre of the Nizāris in Aleppo, was assassinated in 519/1125. The end of Nizārī power in Aleppo, however, came in 517/1124, when Balak, ʿĪlghāzī’s nephew and new ruler of the city, arrested the local representative of Bahram, the chief daʾī of the Syrian Nizāris, and ordered the expulsion of the Nizāris, who sold their properties and departed from Aleppo.104 The following year, the inhabitants of Amid massacred a large number of the local Nizāris. It seems that Bahrim had succeeded to the leadership of the Syrian Nizāris soon after ʿAbū Ṭāhir’s execution in 507 A.H. Like his predecessors, Bahram was a Persian, the nephew of al-Asadibādi, a high Saljūq official who was executed as a Nizārī in Baghdad in 494/101 on Barkiyāruq’s order. Bahram had subsequently fled from ʿIrāq to Syria, where he became active as a daʾī. Shortly after the massacre of the Nizāris of Aleppo, Bahram, now chief daʾī, transferred the centre of the daʿwa activities to southern Syria. For a while he lived under different guises and conducted the daʿwa secretly in various localities, according to Ibn al-Qalānisi, the contemporary chronicler of Damascus.105

By 520/1126, the Syrian Nizārī movement was revived in the south and Bahram’s influence was noteworthy in Damascus and other localities. In the same year, Bahram had a hand in the murder of ʿAq Sunqur al-Bursuqī, the governor of Mawṣil and an enemy of the Ismāʿīlis. Some of the fidāʾīs who assassinated al-Bursuqi in the great mosque of Mawṣil had been despatched from Syria.106 Already in 519 A.H., when Damascus was
threatened by the Franks, the Nizāris were in a position to send armed groups from Himṣ and elsewhere, who according to Ibn al-Qalānīsī were noted for their courage, to join the troops of Ṭughtīgīn in an unsuccessful attack on the Crusaders. At any rate, Bahrām appeared openly in Damascus in 520/1126, with a letter of recommendation from ʿIlghāzī. Whilst in Aleppo, Bahrām had established friendly relations with ʿIlghāzī, who himself had an understanding with Ṭughtīgīn. The Turkish atabeg of Damascus received Bahrām with honour and gave him official protection, further enhancing the position of the Nizāris there. At the same time, Bahrām found an influential and reliable ally in Ṭughtīgīn’s vizier Abū ʿAli Taḥīr b. Saʿd al-Mazdaqānī, who was not himself an Ismāʿīlī. In pursuance of the established Nizārī strategy, Bahrām immediately demanded to be given a castle, which he could use as base of operations. In Dhu‘l-Qa‘da 520 A.H., Ṭughtīgīn ceded the sectarians the frontier fortress of Bāniyās, on the border with the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, which was then menaced by the Franks. Enjoying the continued support of al-Mazdaqānī, Bahrām was also given a building in Damascus which he used as a mission house and local headquarters. Henceforth, Bahrām preached the Nizārī doctrines openly. He despatched dāʿīs in all directions and won an increasing number of converts among both the urban people and the peasantry. Meanwhile, he fortified Bāniyās, his residence, and gathered a large group of followers there. From Bāniyās, the Nizārīs embarked on further military and propagandist activities, attempting to spread their influence in the surrounding country. In their systematic raids, the Nizārīs seem to have captured a number of places. However, their success in southern Syria was to be short-lived.

The Wādī al-Taym, in the region of Ḥāḥbayyā to the north of Bāniyās and on the western side of Mount Hermon, offered favourable opportunities for the spread of the Nizārī daʿwa. Inhabited mostly by Druzes, Nuṣayrīs and bedouin tribes, this valley had in fact attracted the attention of Bahrām, who came to be suspected of the murder of Baraq b. Jandal, a local tribal chief. In 522/1128, Bahrām set out from Bāniyās at the head of his Nizārī troops to occupy the Wādī al-Taym. But Daḥhāk b. Jandal, Baraq’s brother and sworn avenger, had already made sufficient preparations to confront the Nizārīs. In a fierce battle, the Nizārīs were defeated and Bahrām was killed; his head and hands were taken to Cairo, where the bearer was generously rewarded. With this defeat and Ṭughtīgīn’s death earlier in the same year 522 A.H., the Nizārī fortunes began to be reversed in southern Syria. Bahrām was succeeded as chief dāʿī in Syria by another

在屠杀之后，和意识到他的位置的不现实性在巴尼雅斯，伊斯密爾放弃堡垒给Franks，他们是在大马士革前进的，和逃避到连同一些他的伙伴到Frankish领土。The dir Ismi‘īl died soon afterwards，at the beginning of 524/1130，in exile among the Franks.

这些发展标志着尼札里达瓦在叙利亚的另一次暂时的重组。在尼札里达瓦的早期历史的第二时期。在那时，Būrī和他的主要军官采取了预防措施以免遭到尼札里人的报复。然而，Jumādā II 525/May 1131，Būrī被两个波斯的fida‘īs刺伤来自Alamūt谁假装为被装扮为土耳其士兵。他一年后死于他的伤口，但尼札里人从未恢复他们在大马士革的立场。在同样的时期，叙利亚的尼札里和Musta‘līans的敌对加强，迫使在Cairo的公众集会于516/1122在Cairo在防守的权利的al-Musta‘lī和al-Āmir到的imāmate。The Nizāris are accused of the murder of their arch-enemy al-Afdal in 515/1121，while the Fātimid regime rejoiced at receiving Bahrām’s head in Cairo. The rivalry between the two wings of the Ismā‘ili movement culminated in the assassination of al-Āmir by the Nizārī fida‘īs in 524/1130，shortly before the attempt on Būrī’s life. Henceforth，Ismā‘ilism weakened in Egypt，while the bulk of the Syrian Ismā‘ilis rapidly rallied to the side of the Nizārī daʿwa. In subsequent times，the Nizāriyya continued to represent the most active
Ismāʿīli wing. There do not seem to have occurred any major confron-
tations between the Nizāris, entrenched in their mountain dār al-hijras in
Persia and Syria, and the Ḥāfiẓiyya and the Ṭayyibiyya, restricted respec-
tively to Egypt and Yaman.

In contrast to the first two periods, the Syrian Nizāris succeeded during
the third period of their earliest history, lasting some two decades after
their debacle of 523/1129 in Damascus, in finally acquiring a number of
permanent strongholds. During this period, they directed their efforts to
the Jabal Bahrā', a mountainous region between Ḥamāt and the coastline
southwest of the Jabal al-Summāq, which was inhabited by Nuṣayris and
possessed a number of castles suitable as dār al-hijras for the Nizāris. Few
details are known about the Syrian Nizāris and their dīs during this third
period, when they transferred their activities out of the cities. It seems that
the Nizāris, including those who had taken refuge in Frankish territories,
recovered swiftly from their setback in Damascus. They were soon
reorganized under the leadership of Ismāʿīl al-ʿAjami's successor, Abuʾl-
Fath, and effectively penetrated the Jabal Bahrā', in the aftermath of the
Crusaders' failure to establish themselves there. In 527/1132–1133, the
Nizāris came into possession of their first fortress in the Jabal Bahrā' by
purchasing Qadmiis from the Muslim lord of Kahf, Sayf al-Mulk b.
ʿAmrūn, who, with the assistance of the Nuṣayris, had recovered the place
from the Franks the previous year.112 From Qadmiis, which became one of
their chief strongholds and often served as the residence of their leader, the
Syrian Nizāris extended their dominion in the region.113 Shortly after-
wards, Mūsā, another of the Banū ʿAmrūn and the son of Sayf al-Mulk,
sold Kahf itself to the Nizāris, to prevent its falling into the hands of his
cousins in the course of a succession dispute. In 531/1136–1137, the
Frankish occupants of the fortress of Kharība were driven out by the local
Nizāris, who subsequently regained control of the place after being
temporarily dislodged by Ibn Ṣalāḥ, the Zangid governor of Ḥamāt. In
535/1140–1141, the Nizāris captured Maṣyāf, their most important
stronghold in Syria, by killing Šuqr, who held the place on behalf of the
Banū Munqidh of Shayzar.114 Maṣyāf, situated about forty kilometres to
the west of Ḥamāt, subsequently became the usual headquarters of the
chief dāʾī of the Syrian Nizāris. Around the same time, the Nizāris
captured several other fortresses in the Jabal Bahrā', including Khawābī,
Rusāfā, Manīqa and Qulayʿa, which became collectively designated as the
qilāʿ al-daʿwa.115 As noted, William of Tyre, writing a few decades later,
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Nizārī Isma'ilism of the Alamūt Period
puts the number of these castles at ten and the Nizārī population of the region at 60,000.

Indeed, in less than twenty years after their debacle in Damascus, the Syrian Nizārīs had succeeded in establishing a network of mountain fortresses and consolidating their position despite the hostility of the local Sunnī rulers of Syria and the threats posed by the Crusaders, who were active in the adjacent areas belonging to the Latin states of Antioch and Tripoli. As in Persia, however, the Nizārīs of Syria were content as a local power controlling a particular territory and enjoying for some time an independent status. The sources relate only a few scanty details on the relations between the Syrian Nizārīs and the outside world during this period when the sectarians were chiefly preoccupied with consolidating themselves in the Jabal Bahra'. Doubtless, the Syrian Nizārīs had always been apprehensive of the Turkish rulers of Mawṣil, who were friendly with the Saljūqs and who held a strategic region along the line of communication between the Syrian and Persian centres of the sect. And when Zangi b. Āq Sunqur (521-541/1127-1146), the Saljūq governor of Mawṣil, took Aleppo in 522/1128, the Syrian Nizārīs became even more threatened. In 543/1148, Zangi's son and successor Nūr al-Dīn Ṭahmūd (541-569/1146-1176) abolished the Shi'i forms of prayer hitherto used in Aleppo, which amounted to an open declaration of war on the Ismā'īlīs and the Aleppine Shi'īs in general. It is therefore not surprising that in the following year, a contingent of Nizārīs led by a certain 'Ali b. Wafā' assisted Raymond of Antioch in his campaign against Nūr al-Dīn; 'Ali b. Wafā' and Raymond were amongst those who perished in the fighting in Ṣafar 544/June 1149 at Inab. Furthermore, only two assassinations by the Syrian Nizārīs are recorded for this period. In 543/1149, two ḥāshi murād Dāḥǧāb b. Jandal, the tribal chief of the Wādī al-Taym, who had earlier inflicted a severe defeat on the Nizārīs, killing Bahrām. And in 547/1152, a band of ḥāshi attacked and assassinated count Raymond II of Tripoli, together with Ralph of Merle and another knight who at the time were accompanying the count to the gates of Tripoli. The motives behind the assassination of Raymond II, the first Frankish victim of the Nizārīs, were never revealed. But the Christians of Tripoli in a frenzy of revenge, attacked the Syrians, and the Templars raided the Syrian Nizārīs. It was probably from that time that the Syrian Nizārīs were obliged to begin paying an annual tribute to the Templar military order.

By the end of Buzurg-Ummīd's rule, the Nizārīs had clearly established
an independent state of their own. The scattered territories of this state consisted primarily of two areas in Persia, namely, Rûdbâr and a large tract of Quhistân, as well as the southern part of the Jabal Bahra’ in Syria. The capital of this state, where the Persian head of the Nizârî community resided, was normally at Alamût, and less frequently at other fortresses of Rûdbâr. The Nizârî territory in Quhistân was extensive, though not continuous, and it included several towns and fortresses. The Quhistâni Nizâris owned the authority of a single chief, sometimes called muhtashim, who was appointed from Alamût and usually resided in Tūn, Qā’in, or in the castle of Mu‘minâbâd, in the vicinity of Birjand. The Nizâris soon lost their strongholds in eastern Alburz, but they retained two other scattered tracts in Persia. In Qūmis, they held on to Girdkûh and a few other isolated fortresses near Dâmghân. Girdkûh became the last Nizârî stronghold in Persia to surrender to the Mongols. The Persian Nizâris also held some fortresses in central Zagros, in the region of Luristân, which they had probably acquired after losing Arrajân and other castles in southern Zagros. In Syria, they controlled the southern Jabal Bahra’ region from their fortresses. Their chief, residing at Maṣyâf or Kaḥf, was normally appointed from Alamût. For some time, the Nizârî community included not only those living in the Nizârî territories, but also a significant number of Nizâris in other Persian and Syrian towns. However, gradually the Nizâris came to be located chiefly in their own territories, though some sectarian groups continued to be found in the Jazr district of Syria, and in parts of Quhistân and Sistân not under Nizârî rule. At the same time, there were non-Ismâ‘îlîs, including Sunnîs, Imâmîs, Zaydis and Nuṣayrîs, living in the areas held by the Nizâris. The Nizârî state had its own mint and supreme head, who acted as an independent territorial ruler and was generally accepted as such by others. This was clearly demonstrated already in 530/1136 when a certain Saljûq amîr Yaranqush (Yarnaqash), dislodged from his iqṭâ’s by the Khwârazmians, took refuge at Alamût. Although this amîr had been an enemy of the Nizâris, Buzurg-Ummîd declined to deliver him to the Khwârazmshâh, a Saljûq vassal who himself had been friendly with the Nizârîs, declaring that he would not betray a man who had taken asylum with him.

The Nizârî territories were separated from one another by long distances, and yet the Nizârî state maintained a remarkable cohesion and sense of unity both internally and against the outside world, which could not have been enforced by military power or centralization of authority alone. Indeed, each territory enjoyed a certain degree of independence and
initiative in conducting its local affairs, while they all shared a common purpose and acted in unison vis-à-vis the outside world. The Nizāri groups, differing in their local conditions and problems, nevertheless shared a common heritage and sense of mission. Having acquired its independence from the Fātimid regime, the Nizārī community, highly disciplined and dedicated to its purpose, continued to manifest a strong sense of solidarity in maintaining its independence from the surrounding Turkish rulers. Consequently, the most drastic changes of policy initiated at Alamūt were accepted throughout the Nizārī community. Similarly, the Nizārī territories readily acknowledged the supreme leadership of the central head of the sect, while the Qahistānī and Syrian Nizārīs accepted the authority of their local chiefs designated by Alamūt. The tradition of the centralization of authority in the Ismāʿīlī movement and the hierarchism in the daʿwa organization were obviously effective antecedents contributing to the cohesion of the Nizārī community, but doubtless the common vision of the community also played an important part. The Nizārīs maintained a strong sense of their mission, and even after failing in their initial revolt against the Saljūqs, they continued to dedicate themselves to preparing the way for the general rule of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imām. As a result, the Nizārī state manifested a stability rarely encountered at the time in similarly situated small principalities of the Muslim world. Most of the lords of Alamūt had long reigns, and there seem to have been no succession disputes in the state, whether the community was led by a dāʿī, or later, by an imām. Indeed, the central heads of the Nizārī community continued to enjoy the allegiance of the widely dispersed Nizārī territories for more than one and a half centuries.

The Nizārī community of the Alamūt period, comprised of highlanders and mountain dwellers, villagers, and urban groups living in small towns, maintained a sophisticated outlook and placed a high value on intellectual activities, encouraged by the local sense of initiative in the main Nizārī territories. In Alamūt, Qahistān, and Syria, the Nizārīs established impressive libraries, containing not only religious literature of all sorts, including Ismāʿīlī works, but also scientific tracts and equipments. The Nizārīs seem to have been interested in different branches of learning, and the vitality of their community was reinforced by the continuing arrival of a certain number of outsiders into their centres. Eminent Muslim scholars such as Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, availed themselves of the Nizārī libraries and patronage of learning; some of them even embraced Ismāʿīlism at least temporarily. In sum, as Hodgson has observed, the vigour and stability of
the Nizārī state can only in part be attributed to the specific methods of struggle used by the sectarians or to the genius of the earliest Nizārī leaders in Persia. Doubtless, the Nizārī solidarity under outside pressure, total dedication to their mission, a strong sense of initiative among the local Nizārī groups, and the special appeal of the movement to outstanding individuals in the Muslim society, also played a role.120

Kiyā Buzurg-Ummīd died in Jumādā I 532/February 1138, and was buried next to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, where his tomb was piously visited. Buzurg-Ummīd was succeeded as dāʾī in Alamūt by his son Muḥammād, whom he had designated as heir only three days before his death.121 Muḥammād b. Buzurg-Ummīd readily received the allegiance of all the Nizārī territories, and henceforth hereditary central leadership became established in the Nizārī state. This was indeed a new feature of the Nizārī community, although the Nizaris were already familiar with hereditary rule on a local basis in Girdkūh and elsewhere. The enemies of the Nizaris had evidently counted on some resistance to Muḥammād’s leadership, but such hopes soon proved ill-founded as the Nizāris maintained their solidarity.

At least in the earlier part of Muḥammād’s long reign (532–557/1138–1162), the area under the control of Alamūt was extended in Daylamān and Gilān, where several new fortresses were acquired or constructed. Amongst such mountain castles, the Nizārī chroniclers, notably the raʾīs Ḫasan b. Ṣalāḥ Munshi Birjandī, quoted by our Persian historians, mention Saʿādatkūh, Mubārakkūh and Firūzkūh. These castles were acquired chiefly through the efforts of a Nizārī commander called Kiyā Muḥammād b. ʿAlī Khusrav Firūz, who led expeditions from Alamūt and was subsequently appointed as commandant of some of the new fortresses. During these years, the Nizārī raids were sometimes led by Kiyā ʿAlī (d. 538/1144), Muḥammād b. Buzurg-Ummīd’s brother. The Nizārīs are also reported to have extended their activities to Georgia (Gurjistān), where they raided and carried on the daʿwa. They also made a major effort to penetrate an entirely new region, Ghūr, to the east of Quhistan, in present-day central Afghanistan. It seems that the Nizārī daʿwa was established in that region around 550/1155 at the request of the Ghūrid ruler ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Ḥusayn Jahānsūz (544–556/1149–1161). But soon after ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn’s death, his son and successor Sayf al-Dīn Muḥammād (d. 558/1163) massacred the Nizārī dāʾīs despatched from Alamūt, as well as their converts in Ghūr.122 As a territorial power, the Nizārīs were mainly involved in petty quarrels with their immediate neighbours. The Nizārī
chroniclers of Muḥammad’s reign pay special attention to these local conflicts, especially the continuing series of raids and counter-raids between Rūdbār and Qazwin, providing details on the number of sheep, cows and other booty taken on each occasion. Although the Nizāris continued to maintain a strong sense of their mission even during this period of stalemate, the days of the great Nizāri revolt had clearly ended and the vigorous campaigns of the earliest years in Nizāri history had now transformed into petty local entanglements.

In the area of assassination, too, the Persian Nizāris now made fewer attempts as compared to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ’s time. A total of fourteen assassinations are recorded for Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummid’s reign, mostly occurring during his earlier years between 532 and 537 A.H. The first victim of this period was another ‘Abbāsid, al-Mustarshid’s son and successor al-Rāshid (529–530/1135–1136). Like his father, al-Rāshid had become involved in Saljuq disputes and, refusing to give allegiance to the Saljuq sultan Maṣʿūd, he was deposed after a short caliphate in favour of his uncle al-Muqtasī (530–535/1136–1140). Subsequently, al-Rāshid was exiled from ʿIrāq to Persia, where he was killed in Isfahān by four Nizāri fidāʾīs in Ramaḍān 532/June 1138, a few months after Muḥammad’s accession. The Nizāri chroniclers relate, however, that al-Rāshid had set out for Persia to avenge his father. His assassination was countered by the massacre of the Nizāris by the townspeople of Isfahān, while Alamūt rejoiced at al-Rāshid’s death with a week of celebrations. Besides al-Rāshid, the most notable victim of this period was the Saljuq sultan Daʿūd, who had severely persecuted the Nizāris in Ādharbayjān, then under his rule. He was murdered in Tabriz, curiously enough by four Syrian fidāʾīs, in 538/1143. Amongst other famous victims, the roll of honour kept at Alamūt lists Girdbāzū, the son of the local ruler of Māzandarān, a Georgian ruler, and the qādīs of Tiflis, Hamadān, and Quhistān, who had authorized the execution of the Nizāris.

The Nizāris of northern Persia were also confronted with two persistent enemies in the persons of Shāh Ghāżī Rustam b. ʿAlāʾ-al-Dawla ʿAlī, the Bāwandid ruler of Māzandarān and Gilān, and ʿAbbās, the Saljuq governor of Rayy. After the assassination of his son Girdbāzū in 537/1142 at the hands of the Nizāris, Shāh Ghāżī continuously attacked the Nizāris of Rūdbār, killing large numbers of them and building towers of their heads. Similarly, ʿAbbās, upon hearing in 535/1141 the news of the Nizāri assassination of Jawhar, his master, in Sanjar’s camp, massacred the Nizāris of Rayy and thereafter attacked and killed many Nizāris in Alamūt
and elsewhere. In 541/1146, the Nizāris were obliged to send an emissary to Sanjar asking for his intervention to end the menace posed by 'Abbās. A few months later, 'Abbās was murdered whilst on a visit to Baghdād, on the sultan Mas'ūd's order and evidently at Sanjar's request; his head was sent to Alamūt.125 This was apparently another period of agreement between the Nizārī leaders and Sanjar. However, earlier in 538/1143, the Nizāris had repelled an attack by Mas'ūd's army on Lamasar and other localities in Rūdbār. And later, Sanjar lent his support to the enemies of the Quhistānī Nizāris. Al-'Amīd b. Manṣūr (or Mas'ūd), the governor of Ṭuraythith, had somehow submitted to the Nizāris of Quhistan, but his son and successor 'Alā’ al-Dīn Maḥmūd attempted to restore Sunnism in the area in 545/1150 and was expelled. He appealed to Sanjar for help, but in the following year a Saljūq army led by the amīr Qajaq failed to reinstate Maḥmūd.126 Shortly afterwards, one of Sanjar's amīrs, Muḥammad b. Anaz, probably with his master's approval, began conducting an almost personal series of raids against the Nizāris of Quhistān, who carried out raids of their own in the region.127 The anti-Nizārī activities of Ibn Anaz continued for at least six years until 554/1159, even after Sanjar's death in 552/1157.

The stalemate between the Nizāris and the Saljūqs, and the overall setback in the Nizārī struggle, must have been disappointing to the Nizārī community. By the time of Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummīd, many Nizāris doubtless looked back to the glorious past and the campaigns of Ḥasan-i Šabbāh's days. At the same time, the Nizāris had continued to wait since Nizār's death for the open manifestation of their imām, who was to deliver them from injustice. It seems that by the later years of Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummīd, a number of young Nizāris had begun to favour certain radical Iṣmā‘īlī doctrines of earlier times. These Nizāris indeed seemed to be highly restive for the parousia of their imām and the coming of the qiyyāma. At any rate, the young Nizāris inclined to such ideas found a leader in Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummīd's heir apparent Ḥasan, who shared and encouraged their ideals.

According to our Persian historians, Ḥasan, born in 520/1126, developed an early interest in studying the past history and doctrines of the Iṣmā‘īlī movement. He examined the teachings of Ḥasan-i Šabbāh. He also read philosophic and Šūfī writings. Possessing intellectual qualities and reading widely, Ḥasan became quite learned and acquired many followers in Alamūt. In particular, he became well versed in the Iṣmā‘īlī ta‘wil, and his allegorical interpretations became popular amongst his followers.
Indeed, many of the younger Nizāris soon began to regard Hasan as the imām who had been promised by Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ. Having been endowed with eloquence and a charismatic personality, Hasan’s popularity increased rapidly in Rūdbār. Already in Muhammad b. Buzurg-Ummid’s time, many Nizāris followed and obeyed him as their leader.128

Eventually, Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummid, who like his predecessors was rigid in his observance of the Sharīʿa and the conduct of the daʿwa on behalf of the imām, was obliged to take drastic action against the radical Nizāris who followed Hasan and believed in his imāmate. On one occasion, he had 250 of them killed in Alamūt and exiled the same number from the castle. From that time till Muḥammad’s death, Ḥasan made every effort, orally and in writing, to refute the earlier ideas preached by himself and his partisans. But Hasan was merely waiting for the opportune time to propagate his drastic ideas.

Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummid fell ill and died in Rabīʿ I 557/March 1162; he was buried next to Ḥasan-i Sabbāḥ, Kiyā Buzurg-Ummid and Abū ʿAlī Ardīstānī. Muḥammad was succeeded by Ḥasan, at the time about thirty-five years old, who had earlier been designated as heir.129 Ḥasan, who was then considered to be Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummid’s son, proceeded cautiously to prepare the way for a religious revolution which was to initiate a new phase in the history of Nizāri Ismāʿilism. About two and a half years after his accession, he gathered at Alamūt the representatives of the various Nizāri territories, at least those in Persia, to announce his religious revolution. The accounts of this amazing event are preserved by our Persian historians and a few later Nizāri authors.130

In Ramaḍān 559 A.H., Hasan ordered a pulpit (minbar) to be erected, facing towards the west in the public prayer ground at the foot of Alamūt. And four large banners (singular, ʿalam) of four colours, white, red, yellow and green, were attached to the four pillars of the pulpit. Then, on 17 Ramaḍān 559/8 August 1164, he ordered the people of his territories, whom he had previously summoned to Alamūt, to assemble there. The Nizāris from Rūdbār and Daylam were placed in front of the pulpit, those from Khurāsān and Qhīstān were stationed on the right side, while the rafīqs from central and western parts of Persia stood on the left side of the pulpit. Hasan, wearing a white garment and a white turban, came down from the castle about noon and ascended the pulpit. He greeted the assembly and, after sitting down for a moment, rose up and holding his sword, delivered in a loud voice a message which supposedly had been secretly sent to him by the hidden imām who now had new instructions
for his followers. The imam of our time, Ḥasan declared, has sent you his blessings and compassion; he has called you his special chosen servants, he has relieved you of the duties and burdens of the Shari’a, and has brought you to the qiya‘ma, the Resurrection. Ḥasan then delivered a khatba in Arabic, claiming that his address represented the exact words of the imam. The jurist Muḥammad Busti, who knew Arabic, had been placed at the foot of the pulpit to translate this khatba into Persian for those present. The khatba named Ḥasan not only as the imam’s dā’i and hujja or proof, like Ḥasan-i Šabbāh, but also his khalifa, or deputy, with plenary authority, a higher rank yet. The imam also required that his shia must obey and follow Ḥasan in all religious and temporal matters, recognize his commands as binding, and deem his word as that of the imam’s. After completing his address, Ḥasan descended from the pulpit and performed the two prostrations (rak’at) of the festival prayer (namāz-i ‘id). Then he invited the people to join him at a table which had been prepared for the breaking of their fast. Ḥasan declared that day the Festival of the Resurrection (‘id-i qiyimat), and the people feasted and made merry. Henceforth, the 17th of Ramadān was celebrated annually as the Festival of the Resurrection by the Nizāris who rejoiced on that day.

A few weeks later, shortly before the time of the hajj pilgrimage, a similar ceremony was held at the fortress of Mu’minābād, to the east of Birjand in Qohistān. Ḥasan had sent the khatba, the epistle and the message which he had delivered at Alamūt, to the ra’is Muẓaffar, his deputy who had headed the Nizāris of Qohistān since 555/1160, by the hand of a person called Muḥammad Khāqān. These documents, proclaiming the qiya‘ma and indicating the position of Ḥasan, were read out to the representatives of the Qohistānī Nizāris, in Dhu’l-Qa’da 559/September–October 1164, by the ra’is Muẓaffar from a special pulpit set up for the occasion. In addition, Muḥammad Khāqān delivered an oral message from Ḥasan. The lord of Alamūt now declared that just as previously al-Mustansir had been God’s khalifa or representative on earth and Ḥasan-i Šabbāh had been al-Mustansir’s khalifa, so now Ḥasan II himself was the khalifa of God on earth and the ra’is Muẓaffar was Ḥasan’s khalifa in Qohistān; hence his commands were to be obeyed. At the close of the ceremony, the Nizāri assembly rejoiced at the steps of the pulpit in Mu’minābād. In Syria, too, the qiya‘ma was announced, evidently a while later, and the Syrian Nizāris likewise celebrated the beginning of a new era.

The public proclamations made at Alamūt and Mu’minābād, in 559/1164, indeed amounted to a religious revolution. Ḥasan II, whom the
Nizāris called 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām (on his mention be peace), had in effect introduced the doctrine of the qiyyāma. To the Nizāri inhabitants of Rūdbār, Quhistan, and other territories, Hasan had announced the qiyyāma (Persian, qiyyāmat), the long-awaited Last Day when mankind would be judged and committed forever to either Paradise (bihisht) or Hell (dūzakh). Relying heavily on the Ismā’ilī ta’wil, however, qiyyāma and ma’ād, or the end of the world, was interpreted symbolically and spiritually. The Resurrection was interpreted to mean the manifestation of the unveiled truth (ḥaqīqa) in the person of the Nizāri Imām. Accordingly, the believers, those who had embraced Nizāri Ismā’īlism, were now capable of comprehending the truth or spiritual reality, the bātin of the religious laws, and as such, Paradise was actualized for them in this world. On the other hand, the non-Nizāris who had refused to acknowledge the Nizāri Imām, were henceforth cast into Hell, which was spiritual non-being. As the person who had brought the qiyyāma, the Nizāri Imām of the time was also the judge of mankind and the Qā’im of the Resurrection (Qā’im al-qiyyāma), a rank which in Ismā’ili thought was above that of ordinary imāms; and his da’wa was the da’wa of the Resurrection (da’wat-i qiyyāmat). As noted, Hasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām had initially claimed to have been the khalīfa of the Qā’im al-qiyyāma. According to the later Nizārī sources, Hasan-i Šabbāh, designated as the ḥujja of the Qā’im al-qiyyāma, had sounded the first blast of the trumpet that had prepared the way for the qiyyāma, and Hasan ‘alā dhikrihi’l-salām sounded the second blast that actually brought the qiyyāma. According to this interpretation of the Resurrection, all believers could come to know God and the mysteries and realities of creation through the Nizāri Imām, as was appropriate in Paradise. This was indeed the time of the Great Resurrection, or the Resurrection of the Resurrections (qiyyāmat-i qiyyāmat), towards which all lesser searchings, all the partial consummations of the preceding cycles in the history of mankind had been tending. It was the culmination of the ages.

Our Persian historians relate that in line with the expectations of the earlier Ismā’ilis concerning the qiyyāma, Hasan II had also announced the abrogation of the Shari’ā, which had been vigorously enforced by Hasan-i Šabbāh, Buzurg-Ummid and Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummid. As a consequence of the Resurrection, and as was fitting in Paradise, the believers could henceforth be relieved of the duties and obligations imposed by the law; for in this world all is action (‘amal) and there is no reckoning (ḥisāb), but in the world of the qiyyāma all is reckoning and there
is no action. According to the same sources, this doctrine thus taught that in the era of the Resurrection (dawr-i qiyāmat), men were to turn in every sense towards God and abandon the established habits of worship. For instance, instead of praying five times a day, as required by the Shari'a, in the time of the Resurrection they would constantly be with God in their hearts, for such is true prayer (namāz-i ḫaqīqī). Our sources add that in like manner, the Nizāris interpreted, through ta'wil, all the other principles of the Shari'a and the practices of Islam. According to Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī, it was for their abolition of the Shari'a that the Nizāris became designated as the malāhid, or heretics.133

The announcement of the qiyāma was in fact a declaration of independence from the larger Muslim society and, at the same time, an admission of failure of the Nizārī struggle to take over that society; for the qiyāma declared the outside world irrelevant. The Nizāris envisaged themselves in spiritual Paradise, while condemning the non-Nizāris to the Hell of spiritual non-existence. Now the Nizāris had the opportunity of being collectively introduced to Paradise on earth, which was the knowledge of the unveiled truth; the Nizārī Imām was the epiphany (mazhar) of that unchangeable ḥaqīqa. It was in this sense that the Nizāris reportedly celebrated the end of the religious era (dawr-i shari'at) and earthly life, represented by the zāhir of reality. Henceforth, the bātin of that reality became apparent to the Nizāris, who were to lead a purely spiritual life. Like the Sūfis, the Nizāris were now to leave behind all material compromise and rise to the spiritual level of existence. In the year 559/1164 the Nizārī Ismā'īlis of the Alamūt period entered the second phase of their history, the phase of the qiyāma, which was to last forty-six years until the year 607/1210.

The announcement of the qiyāma, as noted, also introduced an important change in the status of the lord of Alamūt. In his initial proclamation at Alamūt, Ḥasan II had declared himself the imām's dā'ī, like his predecessors, and ḥujja, like Ḥasan-i Šabbāh, and his khalīfa. By the latter term, now used for the first time by a lord of Alamūt, Ḥasan II was claiming a specific position, evidently superior to the ranks of dā'ī and ḥujja. Our Persian historians explain that Ḥasan II claimed to be the imām's sole vice-regent and deputy (qā'im maqām va nā'īb-i munfarid).134 At Mu'minābād, Ḥasan's position as khalīfa was explicitly identified with that of the Fātimid caliph al-Mustansīr, who had been the imām. After the proclamation of the qiyāma, Ḥasan, in his epistles (fuṣūl) and addresses, apparently hinted that he himself was the imām and the Qā'im al-qiyāma, the son of an imām.
from the progeny of Nizār b. al-Mustansīr, though in appearance he had
been considered to be the son of Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummīd.135 At
any rate, it seems that Ḥasan II claimed the imāmate in some sense towards
the end of his life.136

The account of the doctrine of the qiyāma presented in this chapter is
based, as noted, on our Persian historians, some Nizārī works of later
times, and the standard interpretation of Hodgson, endorsed by Corbin
and Madelung, amongst other modern specialists in the field. The declara-
tion of the qiyāma and its particular implications for the Nizāris of the
Alamūt period, however, represent a highly controversial episode in the
history of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism. Many modern day Nizāris, indeed, question
the truth behind certain aspects of the narratives of this episode. According
to them, a fundamental function of the current Nizārī Imām has always
been the contextualization of the interpretation of the Shariʿa and the
practice of the faith in his own time. As a result, they are of the opinion that
the declaration of the qiyāma represented an attempt by the imām to give
an interpretation to the Shariʿa that fitted the times. And the few modern
Nizārī scholars who have occasionally referred to the declaration of the
qiyāma in the Alamūt period, have made statements such as ‘the outward
performance of ritual elaborated in the shariʿah, or religious law, was not
abrogated as is generally thought’.137 In view of the fact that no con-
temporary Nizārī sources have survived from the qiyāma period, it is very
difficult to know precisely how the qiyāma was actually perceived by the
rank and file of the Nizārī community, who were scattered in remote areas
with diverse socio-economic and cultural as well as rural-urban character-
istics. Highly valuing the preservation of their identity, the Nizārīs
doubtless continued to regard themselves as Shiʿī Muslims, and as such,
especially when soon after the declaration of the qiyāma the community
came to be led by a manifest imām, they did not become a lawless society
indulging in libertinism. Indeed, our Persian historians do not report any
instances of libertinism in connection with the Persian Nizārī community
of the qiyāma times. Even Juwaynī, always ready to express his strong
anti-Ismāʿīli sentiments, remained silent on the subject.

In the absence of contemporary reports, we cannot determine the extent
to which the observance of different religious commandments came to be
affected in the Nizārī community as a result of the declaration of the
qiyāma. It seems that the community conformed to the new doctrine at
least outwardly. Doubtless, many Nizārīs who in general had been used to
a strict moral purism founded on the sacred law of Islam, continued to
closely obey the commands and prohibitions of the Shari'a. According to Juwayni, some Nizâris even chose to give up their houses and properties and emigrated from the Nizâri territories, especially going from Qohistan to nearby areas in Khuräsân. Be that as it may, the Nizâri leadership had now stressed the spirituality and the inner meaning of the religious commandments as compared to their routine performance. In other words, the faithful, now once again led directly by an infallible imâm, were henceforth expected in the *qiyaMA* times to concentrate on the spiritual reality behind the positive law. The salvation of the Nizâris now depended on their recognition of the true spiritual reality of the Nizâri Imâm rather than on blindly observing the rituals specified by the Shari'a.

Meanwhile, the Nizâris had for some time not had any entanglements with the Saljuqs, whose power was rapidly on the decline. But in 560/1165, immediately after the proclamation of the *qiyaMA* when the sultan Arslân (556–571/1161–1176) was ruling over western Persia, the Nizâris, who had then built a new fortress just outside Qazwin, besieged that town. But they were obliged to retreat when the sultan’s forces came to the aid of the Qazwinis. Around the same time, the amír Muḥammad b. Anaz raided the Qohistâni Nizâris, killing many and taking much booty.

A year and a half after the declaration of the Resurrection, on 6 Rabi‘I 561/9 January 1166, Ḥasan II was stabbed in the castle of Lamasar by a brother-in-law, Ḥasan b. Nâmâwar, who belonged to a local Daylamî branch of the Imâmî Buwayhid family and who opposed Ḥasan II’s new policies. Ḥasan ‘alâ dhikrihi’l-salâm died of his wounds and was succeeded by his nineteen-year-old son Muḥammad, who was born in Shawwâl 542/ March 1148. Nûr al-Dîn Muḥammad II reigned for forty-four years, longer than any other Khudâwand of Alamût. Immediately upon his accession, Muḥammad II put to death Ḥasan b. Nâmâwar, together with all his relatives. Muḥammad II, who is said to have been a prolific writer, reaffirmed Ḥasan II’s policies and devoted his life to a systematic elaboration of the doctrine of the *qiyaMA*. Aside from adopting and sharpening the doctrine of the *qiyaMA* to an ongoing life, however, Muḥammad II seems to have altered or modified his father’s teachings in two respects. He claimed the imâmate for his father and, therefore, for himself in the fullest sense. He also put the imâm, more specifically the present Nizâri Imâm, at the very centre of the doctrine of the *qiyaMA*.

In accordance with the earliest expectations of the Ismâ’îlîs, the imâm had to be present in person at the time of the *qiyaMA*; for it was precisely the
eschatological role of the culminating imām, the Qā’īm, to inaugurate the qiyāma. The Nizārīs of the time of the Resurrection thus expected to know the identity of the imām who had ushered in the qiyāma for his community. As noted, Ḥasan II had hinted that he was not merely the representative of the imām, but the imām himself. Muḥammad II explicitly claimed that his father had been the imām also by physical descent. According to our Persian historians and the Nizārī tradition, he claimed that Ḥasan II was not the son of Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummīd, as it had been previously believed, but the son of a descendant of Nizār who had secretly found refuge in a village near Alamūt. He in effect claimed a Nizārid ‘Alid genealogy for his father and himself. Thus, after a period of some seventy years following Nizār’s death, the line of the Nizārī Imāms emerged openly and the Nizārīs henceforth recognized the lords of Alamūt, beginning with Ḥasan II, as their imāms. There were alternative versions of Ḥasan II’s Nizārid ancestry, as reported by Juwaynī and other Persian historians.142 The Nizārīs maintained that in 488/1095, a year after al-Mustansir’s death, a certain qādi Abu’l-Ḥasan Ṣa’īdī went from Egypt to Alamūt, secretly taking with him a grandson of Nizār who was known as al-Muḥtaḍī. The secret was divulged only to Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, who protected Nizār’s grandson, who was living clandestinely at the foot of Alamūt. According to the most widely popular version, a son born to Nizār’s grandson or great-grandson, and who subsequently ruled as Ḥasan II, was exchanged with a son born at the same time to Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummīd, without the latter’s knowledge. According to yet another version, a pregnant wife of Nizār’s descendant at Alamūt was given to Muḥammad’s care, and, in due course, gave birth to Ḥasan II. On the basis of the genealogy subsequently circulating amongst the Nizārīs, there were three generations between Ḥasan II and Nizār, Ḥasan being represented as the son of al-Qāhir b. al-Muḥtaḍī b. al-Ḥāḍī b. Nizār.143 Once Ḥasan II and his son Muḥammad II were recognized as Nizārids and imāms, the breach with the preceding period of satr in early Nizārī Ismāʿīlism, when the imām was hidden from his followers and there were only his hujjas and dāris at Alamūt, was complete. The Nizārī community had now clearly entered the period of the Resurrection, ushered in by the Nizārī Imāms who were at the same time the Qā’īms of the qiyāma.

In his elaboration of the doctrine of the qiyāma, Muḥammad II assigned a central role to the imām, and more specifically to the present imām.144 The exaltation of the autonomous teaching authority of the present imām over
that of the previous imāms, already taught by Ḥasan-i Șabbāḥ, and over that of the prophets, in fact became the outstanding feature of Nizārī thought. The qiyāma entailed much more than the psychological independence of the believers from the outside world. It implied a complete personal transformation of the Nizāris who henceforth were expected to see nothing but the imām, and the manifestation of the divine truth in him. The imām in his eternal essence was defined as the epiphany (mażhar) of the word (kalima) or command (amr) of God. In Shi‘ī thought, the imām had been considered as the hujja or proof of God. But in the Paradise of the qiyāma, the present Nizārī Imām became the manifestation of the divine word or order to create, the cause of the spiritual world. It was essentially through this vision of the imām that men could find themselves in Paradise, and not by being in Rūdbār, Qhīštān, or any other particular locality. More specifically, this vision did not consist of merely knowing the identity of the true imām of the time, or of seeing the body of that imām. The imām had to be seen in his spiritual reality, by penetrating the metaphysical and mystical significance of his person. If one saw the imām in his spiritual reality, then all else that one saw and did would follow from that knowledge, enabling one to view the whole world from the imām’s viewpoint and no longer from one’s personal viewpoint. As a result, one would see only the imām, and not oneself, living a totally spiritual life which was the afterlife expected by the Īsmā‘īlis.

This viewpoint towards the universe, and the imām in particular, would lead the individual to a third level of being, in effect a world of bātin behind the bātin, the ultimate reality or ḥaqīqa, contrasted to the worlds of the sharī‘a and its bātin as interpreted by the ordinary Īsmā‘īli ta‘wil. In the realm of the ḥaqīqa, the believers would turn from the world of appearances to the realm of ultimate reality and unchangeable truths. The qiyāma was thus identified with ḥaqīqa, a realm of spiritual life and awareness in the presence of God. On that level of existence, the believers had only an inward-spiritual life, merging into their idealized roles as expressions of cosmic harmony. In this sense, the qiyāma also amounted to a declaration of spiritual maturity, in which the individual acted solely on the basis of his own consciousness which was at one with the rest of existence in the present imām.

The doctrine of the qiyāma, drawing on various earlier religious traditions, introduced a further element in the cyclical history of the Īsmā‘īlis in the new figure of the imām-qā‘im. There had been imām-qā‘ims also in...
earlier prophetic eras. In each era, the *imām-qā'īm* was contemporary with that era’s prophet but superior to the latter’s *wasi*. According to the series given in the *Haft bāb-i Bābā Sayyidnā*, the *imam-qā’ims* of the eras of Adam, Noah, and Abraham were, respectively, Malik Shūlim, Malik Yazdāq and Malik al-Salām, who collectively corresponded to the Biblical Melchizedec, the priest who was honoured by Abraham. In the eras of Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad, the *imam-qā’ims* were Dhu’l-Qarnayn, identified with the Qur’ānic figure Khidr who had drunk of the water of life and would live for ever, Ma’add, and ‘Ali. Muḥammad II now identified the present imām, the imām who was the master of the *qiyyāma*, with the figure of the *imām-qā’im*, and clearly exalted the authority and status of the present imām, independently from the preceding imāms and the prophets. Furthermore, every imām, when seen rightly, was seen to be ‘Ali, who was identified with the Melchizedec-Dhu’l-Qarnayn-Khidr *imām-qā’im* figure; and every believer was again Salmān, the faithful disciple of the Prophet of Islam and one of the earliest followers of ‘Ali. Thus, in the *qiyyāma*, the *imām-qā’im*, the present imām who was identical with ‘Ali, appeared openly in his spiritual reality to the believers, who in their spiritual relationship to him were identical with Salmān.

The small and scattered Nizārī community of the Alamūt period did not have any use for the elaborate da’wa organization developed by the Fātimid Ismā‘īlis. Until the declaration of the *qiyyāma* and the emergence of the imāms, a chief *dā’ī*, with the title of the *dā’ī* of Daylam or the *hujja* of the imām, provided central leadership from Alamūt for the Nizāris, who referred to themselves as *rafiqs*, comrades. The chief *dā’ī* apparently selected the local *dā’īs* of Quhistān and other Nizārī territories. Only the Syrian Nizāris seem to have occasionally enjoyed a certain degree of independence from Alamūt. The chief *dā’ī* as well as the local *dā’īs*, who often acted as military commanders, doubtless must have had a hierarchy of assistants or subordinate *dā’īs*, about whom no particular details are available. At any event, towards the end of the Alamūt period, the less formal *mu’allim* or religious teacher gradually seems to have replaced the *dā’ī*, as the function of teaching the Nizārī tenets to the members of the sect displaced the function of preaching the *da’wa* to win new converts. But in the period of the *qiyyāma*, when the spiritual reality of the *imām-qā’im* manifested itself openly to the faithful and in accordance with the earlier predictions about the advent of the Qā’im and the event of the Resurrection, the *da’wa* organization and its hierarchical ranks intervening between the imām and his followers, whatever they may have been, faded away. In
the *qiya*ma*, we are informed, there remained only three categories of men.

The Nizārī sources define these categories, representing three different levels of being, in terms of the relationship between the individual and the Nizārī Imām. There are the opponents of the imām (*ahl al-taḍādd*), the non-Nizārī bulk of mankind, including both Muslims and non-Muslims. The opponents, or the common people (*ʿāmm*), who exist only on the realm of appearance (*zhāhir*) and who do not recognize the imām, are spiritually non-existent in the *qiya*ma*. They can be ignored. Secondly, there are the ordinary followers of the imām, the so-called people of gradation (*ahl al-tarattub*), representing the elite of mankind (*khāss*). These ordinary Nizāris have gone beyond the Shariʿa and the *zihir* to the *batin*, the inner meaning of religion. Having found only partial truth, however, they still see both the *zhāhir* and the *batin*. As a result, they still see both themselves and the imām, and as such, they are not fully saved in the *qiya*ma*. Finally, there are the people of union (*ahl al-waḥda*), the super-elite (*akhass-i khāss*) amongst the Nizāris, who see only the imām in his true nature. Discarding all appearances, the people of union have found full (*kulli*) as opposed to partial (*juzʿi*) truth. They have arrived in the realm of *haqīqa*, the *batin* behind the *batin*, and see only the imām in his true spiritual reality. It is the people of union who are truly resurrected and existent in eternal Paradise; they have obtained full salvation in the *qiya*ma*. The other two categories should, therefore, strive to attain the state of the people of union.

There are close analogies between the doctrine of the *qiya*ma* and certain Śūfī ideas and terminologies. The imām was to serve for his followers as a Śūfī *shaykh* or *pir* did for his disciples. By concentrating their attention on him, they could be made to forget their separate selves; and through him, they could come to attain spiritual birth. However, the Nizārī Imām was more than a mere Śūfī *pir*, one amongst the many such guides. He was a single cosmic individual who summed up in his position the entire reality of existence; the perfect microcosm, for whom no lesser *pir* could be substituted. The cosmic position of the Nizārī Imām, as the representative of the cosmic reality, was also analogous to the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) of the Śūfis, though again such an abstract figure could not offer a full equivalent of the present and visible Nizārī Imām, with whom the Nizāris shared a joint spiritual experience. There are many other analogies, such as the identification of the *haqīqa* of the Śūfī inner experience with the spiritual afterlife of the Nizāris in the *qiya*ma*. Be it as it may, the
The doctrine of the *qiyāma* laid the ground for the coalescence between Nizārī Ismāʿīlism and Šūfism in Persia during the post-Alamūt period.

The doctrine of the *qiyāma* now effectively replaced the doctrine of *taʿlīm* as central in Nizārī thought. But the doctrine of the *qiyāma*, unlike its predecessor, did not have any impact on the outside world. The contemporary Sunni chroniclers and theologians, fully aware of the earlier Nizārī revolt and the doctrine of *taʿlīm*, do not refer to the teachings of Ḥasan II and Muḥammad II. Ibn al-Athīr, for instance, does not even mention the Nizārī declaration of the *qiyāma* in 559/1164. It was only after the fall of Alamūt, when Nizārī sources became available to outsiders, that the Sunni writers, beginning with Juwaynī, took notice of the episode of the *qiyāma* in the Nizārī community. Politically, too, the first three decades of Muḥammad II's reign were rather uneventful. Outside of Syria, the Nizārīs of the *qiyāma* times evidently ignored the Sunni world, and did not launch any major campaign against their enemies. The Nizārīs of Rūdbār did evidently, however, continue with their local raids against Qazwin and other neighbours, about which our Persian historians do not seem to have found any specific details. During that period, the Persian Nizārīs assassinated only an 'Abbāsid vizier in Baghdād; and we come across a single case of an outsider taking refuge at Alamūt; he was Ustandār Hazārasf b. Shahrnūsh (560–586/1164–1190), the Bādūspānid ruler of Rustamdar and Rūyān. The latter, unlike his predecessor Kaykāʾūs, cultivated close relations with the Nizārīs of Rūdbār and gave them a number of castles in his territories. Hazārasf eventually ran into difficulties with his superior, Ḫusām al-Dawla Ardāshīr (567–602/1172–1206), the Bāwandid Ispahbad of Māzandarān, and took refuge at Alamūt. Subsequently, with the assistance of the Nizārīs, Hazārasf raided his former territories, also killing an 'Alīd who ruled over Daylamān. Hazārasf was eventually captured by Ardāshīr and killed in 586/1190. Rashīd al-Dīn and other Persian historians also relate a story about how the Nizārīs persuaded, initially through a *fidāʾī* and then through bribery, the celebrated Sunni theologian Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Rāżī (d. 606/1209) to refrain from speaking against them in public.

Meanwhile, the Syrian Nizārīs had entered the second phase of their history, coinciding with the career of their greatest leader Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān. One of the most prominent figures in Nizārī history, Sinān b. Salmān (or Sulaymān) b. Muḥammad Abūʾl-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, known also as Rāshid al-Dīn, was born into a Shīʿī family in 'Aqr al-Sudan, a village near Baṣra on the road to Wāsīt. Sinān was brought up in Baṣra, where
he became a schoolmaster and was converted to Nizārī Ismāʿīlism. Subsequently, he went to Alamūt and attended school there with Muḥammad b. Buzurg-Ummīd’s heir apparent Ḥasan. During his stay at Alamūt, Sinān studied Ismāʿīlīsm, the doctrines of the philosophers, and the Epistles of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, amongst other works, and became a close companion of the young Ḥasan II. Soon after his accession to power in 1162, Ḥasan II sent Sinān to Syria. Travelling cautiously through Mawṣil, Raqqā and Aleppo, then ruled by Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Zangī, Sinān finally arrived at Kahf, one of the major Nizārī fortresses in the Jabal Bahrā’. He remained at Kahf for a while, making himself extremely popular with the local Nizāris, until Shaykh Abū Muḥammad, the head of the Syrian Nizārī daʿwa, died in the mountain. The death of Abū Muḥammad, an obscure daʿī, led to a succession dispute which intensified the existing dissension in the Syrian Nizārī community. Abū Muḥammad was succeeded, without the approval of Alamūt, by a certain Khwaja ‘Alī b. Masʿūd, who had the support of a faction of the community. However, another group of the Syrian Nizāris, led by Abū Mansūr, the nephew of Abū Muḥammad, and the raʾīs Fahd, conspired against Khwaja ‘Alī and had him murdered. Soon after these events, Sinān assumed the leadership of the Syrian daʿwa on the orders of Alamūt. Once established, Sinān began to consolidate the position of his community while adopting suitable policies towards the neighbouring Sunnī rulers and the Crusaders who were a constant threat to the Syrian Nizāris. He rebuilt the fortresses of Ruṣāfa and Khwābī, fortified and constructed other strongholds, and captured the fortress of ‘Ullayqa, near the Frankish castle of Marqab held by the Hospitallers. At the same time, while moving among the various Nizārī castles, especially Maṣyāf, Kahf and Qadmūs, Sinān rapidly ended the internal dissensions of the community and reorganized the Nizāris; paying particular attention to organizing an independent corps of fidaʾīs.

Externally, Sinān, aiming to protect his state from numerous enemies, concentrated his attention on the Sunnī rulers who were extending their hegemony over Syria. Indeed, in his time, Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin, who were at the height of their power and led the Muslim holy war against the Crusaders, were potentially greater enemies than the Franks for the Nizāris. And Sinān, a shrewd strategist like Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, recognized these realities and adopted suitable policies in his dealings with the outside world; policies which were revised when needed to reassure the safety and independence of his state. As a result, from early on, Sinān established peaceful relations with the Crusaders, who had been sporadically fighting
the Nizāris for several decades over the possession of various strongholds. The Nizāris, however, had meanwhile acquired a new Frankish enemy in the Hospitallers, who in 537/1142 had received from the lord of Tripoli the celebrated fortress of Krak des Chevaliers (Ḫiṣn al-Akrād) at the southern end of the Jabal Bahrā’. The Nizāris continued to have minor entanglements with the Hospitaller and Templar military orders, which owed their allegiance directly to the Pope and often acted independently, whilst paying an annual tribute to the Templars. Subsequently, around 569/1173, Sinān sent an embassy to Amalric I, seeking a formal rapprochement with the kingdom of Jerusalem in the hope of being relieved from the tribute to the Templars. The negotiations were evidently successful as the king of Jerusalem promised the cancellation of the tribute. The Templars naturally disapproved of this Nizārī embassy, and on their return journey Sinān’s emissaries were ambushed and killed by a Templar knight, Walter of Mesnil. Amalric took punitive measures against the Templars, but as he himself died soon afterwards in 570/1174, the negotiations between Sinān, known to the Crusaders as the Old Man of the Mountain, and the Franks of Jerusalem proved fruitless. William of Tyre curiously relates that it was at the time of this embassy that the Syrian Nizāris proposed to collectively embrace Christianity, having asked Amalric to send them Christian teachers. Needless to say that this story can be regarded as purely fictitious.

When Sinān assumed power, Nūr al-Dīn was preoccupied with his policies against the Crusaders and the declining Fāṭimid Caliphate. Nevertheless, relations between Sinān and Nūr al-Dīn remained relatively tense, due to the activities of the Nizāris in northern Syria. But Nūr al-Dīn, who finally succeeded through Saladin in overthrowing the Fāṭimids in 567/1171, did not attack the Nizāris, though it is reported that he was planning a major expedition against them just before his death, when he allegedly exchanged an unfriendly correspondence with Sinān. The death of Nūr al-Dīn in 569/1174, the same year in which Amalric I died, finally gave Saladin his opportunity to act as the champion of the Muslim orthodoxy and the leader of the holy war against the Crusaders. As the strongest of the Muslim rulers in the area, Saladin strove towards incorporating Arabia, Syria and Ἰράq into his nascent Ayyūbid empire. As a result, he now became the most dangerous enemy of the Syrian Nizāris, while the Zangids of Aleppo and Mawsil were equally threatened by his expansionary policies. Under the circumstances, the Nizāris and the Zangids were induced to cultivate friendly relations in fear of their mutual enemy
Saladin, who had entered Damascus in 570/1174. From Damascus Saladin marched northward, and after capturing Ḥimṣ he laid siege to Aleppo. It was at that time that Gümüşhtigin, the effective ruler of Aleppo and the regent of Nūr al-Dīn’s young son and nominal successor al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, sent messengers to Sinān, offering him land and money in return for the assassination of Saladin. The Nizārī chief accepted the offer and despatched fidāʾīs, who penetrated Saladin’s camp but failed in their attempt to kill him in Jumādā II 570/December 1174–January 1175. In the following year, when Saladin was besieging ‘Azāz, north of Aleppo, the Nizārī fidāʾīs failed in their second attempt to assassinate him on 11 Dhu’l-Qa’da 571/22 May 1176; thanks to his armour, Saladin received only superficial wounds. Shortly after these events, Saladin, in a vengeful move, invaded the Nizārī territory and besieged Maṣyāf. The siege lasted very briefly, and, on the mediation of his maternal uncle Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Takash, the governor of Ḥamāt and a neighbour interested in having good relations with the Nizārīs, Saladin concluded a truce with Sinān and withdrew his forces from the area. Various reasons have been given for Saladin’s withdrawal from the Jabal Bahrā’. Whether the mediation was invoked by Sinān or Saladin himself, and for whatever reason, hostilities henceforth ceased between the two men, who had evidently arrived at some sort of agreement. Meanwhile, the Syrian Nizārīs had been menaced by the Nubuwwiyya, a local Sunni order based in ’Irāq and bent on harassing the Shiʿīs of the region. It is reported that in 570 A.H., 10,000 Nubuwwi horsemen attacked the Nizārīs of Bāb and Buzāʿa, massacring several thousand people and taking much booty. Ibn Jubayr (d. 614/1217), the Andalusian traveller and writer who passed through Syria in 580/1184–1185, places this event at around 572/1176–1177.

The Nizārīs did not engage in any aggressive acts against Saladin following the latter’s withdrawal from Maṣyāf. In fact it seems that henceforth Sinān and Saladin acted in collusion. By contrast, relations between Sinān and the Zangids of Aleppo now deteriorated. In 573/1177, the Nizārī fidāʾīs assassinated Shihāb al-Dīn b. al-ʿAjami, the influential vizier of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, in the principal mosque of Aleppo. The vizier had been in serious rivalry with Gümüşhtigin, who, according to some sources, had instigated this assassination. Gümüşhtigin had allegedly forged his master’s signature on a letter to Sinān, asking him to send fidāʾīs. At any rate, the opportunity was seized by the enemies of Gümüşhtigin, and he was removed from office and tortured to death. In 575/1179–1180,
al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ (d. 577/1181) seized the fortress of Hajira from the Nizārīs, who protested in vain. Sinān then sent Nizārī agents to Aleppo, where they set fire to several locations in the city’s market places.163

Sinān, as noted, assumed power in Syria at about the same time as Ḥasan II in Alamūt. The two men had been close companions at Alamūt, where Sinān had probably belonged to that circle of young Nizārīs who supported Ḥasan II’s new ideas. When Ḥasan II announced the doctrine of the qiyāma in 559/1164 in Alamūt and thereupon sent messengers carrying the tidings to the Nizārīs of other territories, it fell upon Sinān to inaugurate the new dispensation in Syria. Sinān did proclaim the Resurrection in Syria, and the doctrine of the qiyāma was introduced there, but the doctrine seems to have had a very limited impact on the Syrian Nizārī community. The Syrian authors of doctrinal works, having little acquaintance with the literature of their Persian co-religionists, evidently maintained the Fatimid interest in cosmology and cyclical hierohistory, and did not pay any special attention to the autonomous status of the present imām, independently from his predecessors, which had now come to occupy a central position in the doctrine of the Persian Nizārīs. The Nizārīs of Syria, therefore, unlike those in Persia, do not seem to have explicitly recorded the declaration of the qiyāma, and the new doctrine has not been expounded in any of the Syrian Nizārī texts recovered thus far. On the other hand, the event is briefly referred to by the Sunni historians of Syria, who were unaware of a similar event taking place in Persia and of the accounts of it produced by the Persian historians.164

Some time after 559/1164, Sinān did proclaim the qiyāma, and held ceremonies similar to those held earlier in Persia. But the doctrine of the qiyāma as developed in Persia does not seem to have become the central doctrine of the Syrian Nizārīs in the time of Sinān, who acquired increasing independence from Alamūt during Muhammad II’s reign. Indeed, there are reports that as a result of the growing conflict between Sinān and Muhammad II, the latter repeatedly sent fidā‘īs from Alamūt to kill Sinān.165 These would-be assassins failed in their mission and Sinān avoided a complete break with Alamūt. At any event, Sinān evidently taught his own version of the doctrine of the qiyāma. The specific features of this Syrian version, which never acquired any deep roots in the community, remain rather obscure, since it has not been expounded in any available Ismā‘īlī or non-Ismā‘īlī source. Later Syrian Nizārī writings, like the Faṣl of Abū FIRĀS, or the fragment ascribed to Sinān, make only vague references to what may have been Sinān’s teaching.166 But these writings
do not explicitly emphasize the status of the current imām and the manifestation of the unveiled truth in him. On the contrary, their emphasis is on self-knowledge and self-discovery as constituting important steps towards knowing God.

Sinān enjoyed unprecedented popularity in the Syrian Nizārī community, which enabled him to drift away from the central headquarters of the movement in Alamūt. But it is not known just what role he claimed for himself. Some sources relate that he was venerated as the imām, at least by some of his followers who were called Sinānis after him.167 In the popular Syrian Nizārī literature of later times he is exalted as a saintly hero with a cosmic rank appropriate to the imām himself; a rank much higher than that accorded to any representative of the imām. Indeed, Abū Fīrās ascribes the glory of Sinān’s achievement directly to God, as if he received divine protection and guidance. The Syrian Nizāris had been exposed to a wider variety of Shi’i ideas than the Nizāris of Rūbdār and Quhistān. Sinān probably made his version of the new doctrine bear a distinct Syrian flavour and readily admitted the popular impressions available to Ismā‘ilism. Finally, in the Syrian Nizārī ideas one comes across certain popular Shi’i motifs absent in the doctrine of the qiyāma developed in Persia. For instance, Abū Dharr, one of the original partisans of ‘Alī, has a prominent place in Syrian Nizārī thought; and the Syrian works of later times display belief in some sort of metempsychosis or transmigration of souls, an important doctrine for the Nuṣayris and the Druzes. As can be gathered from these popular works of the later Syrian Nizāris, their ideas on metempsychosis were essentially of a symbolic nature and related mainly to the destiny of those souls whose possessors had gone astray.168 Such persons would not, however, be reincarnated in the form of animals; but their souls would be punished within the ordinary routine of life, if not rendered non-existent. The Syrian Ismā‘ilis have been exposed to the doctrines of their Nuṣayrī neighbours through the centuries, and in Sinān’s time the two Shi‘i sects had several entanglements in the Jabal Bahrā‘, while occasionally, some Nuṣayris were converted to Nizārī Ismā‘ilism. Doubtless, the Nuṣayris provided the chief source for the Syrian Nizārī ideas on metempsychosis.169

There are indications that the doctrine of the qiyāma, or more specifically its Syrian version, was not fully understood by all the factions of the Syrian community, particularly by the Nizāris who lived in the Jazr and the Jabal al-Summāq, outside the main strongholds in the Jabal Bahrā‘. Ibn al-‘Adīm for instance reports that in the year 572/1176–1177, when Sinān
had not yet reached a settlement with Saladin, a faction of the Nizāris of the Jabal al-Summāq embarked on a programme of libertinism.170 These Nizāris called themselves al-Ṣufāt, the Pure, reflecting Sinān’s injunction to his followers to live together in purity and in fraternity. Disclaiming any responsibility for their behaviour, Sinān succeeded in preventing the intervention of the Zangids of Aleppo with whom he had good relations at the time. He personally dealt with the Ṣufāt, who had fortified themselves in the mountains, killing many of them and effectively ending the antinomian activities of his rebellious followers. It should be recalled that the Persian Nizāris were not accused of similar behaviour and that the community there did not experience any internal dissension comparable to the episode of the Ṣufāt.

In Rabi’ II 588/April 1192, the Syrian Nizāris brought off their greatest coup, the assassination in Tyre of the marquis Conrad of Montferrat, the newly-elected Frankish king of Jerusalem and the husband of Amalric I’s daughter Isabella. This event, which shocked the Crusaders, is, as noted, reported by most of the occidental chroniclers of the Third Crusade and by many Muslim historians.171 Most sources agree that the act was carried out by two assassins who had disguised themselves as Christian monks and who had managed to win Conrad’s confidence. There is, however, much controversy regarding the instigator of this assassination. Many Muslim sources, as well as some occidental ones, state that its instigator was Richard I, surnamed the Lion Heart (Coeur de Lion), the king of England (1189–1199), who was then in the Holy Land and had an enmity with Conrad. On the other hand, Ibn al-Athīr, who was favourably disposed towards the Zangids and as such disliked Saladin, reports that it was Saladin who commissioned Sinān to murder both Conrad and Richard, in return for a certain sum of money. In a confused account, Abū Firās, too, attributes the initiative to Sinān, who was then evidently not on good terms with the Franks, because he wanted to help his friend Saladin.172 In any case, when soon afterwards Richard I signed a peace treaty with Saladin, the Nizāri territories were included in the treaty at Saladin’s request.

Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān died in 588/1192 or 589/1193, in the castle of Kahf.173 In the course of some thirty years, Sinān consolidated the Syrian Nizāri state and led his followers to the peak of power and fame. The ablest of the Syrian Nizāri chiefs, he was the only one amongst them to acquire effective independence from Alamūt. He gave the Syrian Nizāris an independent identity; with their own sphere of influence, a network of
strongholds, a hierarchy of da'is, and a strong corps of fidaiis. At the same time, his shrewd strategies and appropriate alliances with the Zangids, the Crusaders, and Saladin, served to ensure the independence of his community in difficult times.

Meanwhile, important political changes had been taking place in Persia and other eastern lands. The Great Saljuq Sultanate had been disintegrating after Sanjar’s death in 552/1157, being replaced by a host of more or less independent principalities held mainly by Turkish amirs and generals. At the same time, a new expansionary power with great ambitions, based on Khwārazm, had emerged on the political scene of the East. The region of Khwārazm, on the lower Oxus in Central Asia, had passed a century earlier into the hands of a Turkish dynasty acting as vassals of the Saljuqs. These hereditary rulers adopted the old title of the kings of the region and called themselves the Khwārazmshāhs. Taking advantage of the Saljūqid dissensions after Sanjar, the Khwārazmshāhs asserted their independence and began to expand their dominions. Around 586/1190, the Khwārazmshāh 'Ala’ al-Dīn Tekish (567–596/1172–1200) occupied Khurāsān and came to control the bulk of Sanjar’s former territories. The decline of the Saljuqs had provided an opportunity also for the 'Abbāsids to revive their power and prestige; and with the accession of al-Nāṣir (575–622/1180–1225), the caliph at Baghdad became a central figure in eastern Islamic diplomacy and politics. Al-Nāṣir strove to restore the religious unity of Islam, with the 'Abbāsid caliph as its real, not just titular, head; he also had limited territorial ambitions and wanted to rule over a small caliphal principality in 'Irāq. These objectives determined the nature of al-Nāṣir’s policies and alliances. Al-Nāṣir did not hesitate to ask the assistance of his potential enemy Tekish against the last Saljuq ruler of Persia, Tughril III (571–590/1176–1194), thus providing the occasion for the Khwārazmian armies to advance westwards. The Saljuq dynasty came to an end when Tekish defeated Tughril III at Rayy in 590/1194. The triumphant Khwārazmshāh was the obvious ruler to fill the vacancy created by the Saljuqs, and in the following year al-Nāṣir invested Tekish with the sultanate of western Persia, Khurāsān, and Turkistān. The Khwārazmians soon came to have an impressive empire of their own, stretching from the borders of India to Anatolia, but this empire was short-lived, and like the Persian Nizārī state, it succumbed to the Mongols.

During the last sixteen years of Muḥammad II’s reign, the Persian Nizāris were once again engaged in petty warfare with their neighbours. The Nizāris of Rūdbār had entanglements with Māzandarān. Alamūt gave
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refuge to Bisutun, a ruler of Rûyân who had rebelled against the Bawandid Husâm al-Dawla Ardashîr; and later the Nizâris of Rûdbâr spread their influence in Mâzandarân, assassinating in the course of their raids Rûkn al-Dawla Qârîn, the younger brother of the Bawandid Shams al-Mulûk Shâh Ghâzî Rustam II (602–606/1206–1210). At the same time, the Rûdbâri Nizâris were confronted with the Khwârazmians, who had replaced the Saljûqs in western Persia and were now expanding into Daylam. Around 602/1205, Miyâjîq, a Khwârazmian general, tricked and killed a number of Nizâris from Alamût, and thereupon the Khwârazmian troops established themselves as the partisans of the Qazwînîs, the traditional enemies of the Nizâris, and made regular raids into Rûdbâr. In 590/1194, the Nizâris of Quhistân had begun to have their own troubles and battles with the rulers of Sîstân. Later, the Ghûrîds, under Ghiyâth al-Dîn Muḥammad (558–599/1163–1203), the chief rivals of the Khwârazmians in eastern Persia, attacked and devastated Quhistân, forcing the submission of the Nizâris there. Ghiyâth al-Dîn’s brother, Shihâb al-Dîn, however, conducted further raids of his own against the Quhistânî Nizâris, who had to ask for Ghiyâth al-Dîn’s intervention; he had also attacked the Ismâ‘îlis of Multân in 571/1175. The Ghûrid Shihâb al-Dîn was assassinated in 602/1206; and the Nizâris claimed responsibility for the act, probably in order to win the favour of the Khwârazmshâh ‘Alâ’ al-Dîn Muḥammad (596–617/1200–1220). The Nizâris had, meanwhile, retained their reputation as a body willing to fight the enemies of their allies and to protect refugees fleeing from their common adversaries. Though they were then defending themselves against the Khwârazmians, it is reported that the Nizâris in 596/1200 murdered Nîzâm al-Mulk Mas‘ûd b. ‘Alî, the vizier of Tekish, allegedly at the request of the Khwârazmshâh. Sometime in the reign of Tekish’s successor ‘Alâ’ al-Dîn Muḥammad, the lord of Zawzan Nuṣrat al-Dîn was accused of Ismâ‘îlism and had to take refuge in the Nizârî castles in Quhistân. He was, however, lured back and killed by the new Khwârazmian governor of Zawzan. Meanwhile, the Sunni rulers had maintained the practice of occasionally massacring the Nizâris; it is reported, for instance, that in the year 600/1204, a large number of people accused of Ismâ‘îlism were killed in lower ‘Irâq.

There are indications that at least some of the Persian Nizâris were becoming increasingly weary of their isolation from the outside world in the qiyâma times. Our Persian historians relate that during the later years of Muḥammad II’s reign, a growing breach had occurred between the lord of
Alamūt and his eldest son Hasan, born in 562/1166–1167. Hasan, who in his childhood had received the nass to succeed his father, had shown signs of dissatisfaction with the doctrine and practices of the qiyama; he evidently desired a rapprochement between the Nizāris and the larger Sunni world. Hasan had communicated his own ideas secretly to several Sunni rulers, with whom he desired to have good relations in the future.

Muhammad II died, possibly of poison, in Rabi' I 607/September 1210, and was succeeded by his son Hasan III, who, as had become customary by then with the lords of Alamūt, carried the honorific title of Jalāl al-Dīn. As noted, intending to achieve a rapprochement with the Sunni world, Hasan had already prepared the way for his own drastic reform. Our Persian historians relate that upon his accession, Hasan publicly repudiated the doctrine of the qiyama and proclaimed his adherence to Sunni Islam, ordering his followers to observe the Shari'a in its Sunni form. Hasan sent messengers to the caliph al-Nāṣir, Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh and the amirs of other lands to notify them of his reform. The Nizāris of the Alamūt period had now in effect entered the third and final phase of their history, later interpreted as a new period of satr or concealment which lasted until the destruction of their state by the Mongols.

During the initial years of his reign, Jalāl al-Dīn Hasan did his utmost to convince the Sunni world that his community had abandoned its previous teaching and practices and that it had now adopted the law in its Sunni form. He ordered the building of mosques and baths in every Nizārī village, to prove their status as full-fledged centres of normal Muslim life. He invited Sunni faqīhs from 'Irāq and Khurāsān to instruct his people. The outside world, and especially the caliph at Baghdād, accepted Hasan's new orthodoxy; and in Rabi' I 608/August 1211, the caliph al-Nāṣir issued a decree confirming Hasan's conversion to Sunni Islam. Hasan III became commonly known as the New Muslim (naw-musalmān). Hasan was thus accepted as an amīr amongst other amirs, and his rights to the territories held by the Nizāris were officially acknowledged by the 'Abbāsid caliph who showed him all manner of favours. Hasan's mother went on the pilgrimage to Mecca in 609/1213 under the patronage of al-Nāṣir, who treated her with the highest honours. The caliph also intervened to persuade the nobility of Gilān to allow four of their daughters to marry Hasan. Among these Gilānī wives of Hasan, there was the sister of Kaykā'ūs b. Shāhanshāh, the hereditary ruler of Kūtūm who bore Hasan's successor Muḥammad III. The Qazwinīs, however, remained skeptical for some time regarding the authenticity of Hasan's announcements. The
Nizārī leader asked a number of religious scholars and notables of Qazwīn to visit Alamūt, allowing them to inspect its library and burn all books deemed heretical. The Qazwīnis, too, were finally convinced.

All the Nizāris in Rūdbār, Qūmis, Quhistān and Syria seem to have accepted Ḥasan’s new dispensation without any question. The Syrian Nizāris, and probably also the Nizāris in other territories, chose the Shāfi’ī madhhab. To the Nizāris, Ḥasan was undeniably the infallible imām, having received the naṣṣ of the previous imām and acting as the leader of the Nizārī community and state. His orders, therefore, were to be obeyed without any hesitation. The Nizāris evidently regarded Ḥasan’s declarations as a reimposition of taqiyya, which had been lifted in the qiyāma; its reinstatement could now be taken to imply any sort of accommodation to the outside world deemed necessary by the imām. Hasan’s new policies had obvious political advantages for the Nizārī community and state, which had survived only precariously. The Nizāris had failed in their revolt, and had subsequently isolated themselves in their strongholds during their spiritual Resurrection. The outside world, however, had continued to be very much in existence, despite the Nizārī declaration of the qiyāma. Under the circumstances, many Nizāris, it would seem, had become disenchanted with their isolation, desiring to have normal relations with other Muslims. Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan had in effect boldly accommodated the Nizāris to the outside world. For the first time, the Nizārī state now became recognized as such by the leading rulers in the Muslim world, which implied territorial security for the Nizāris, especially in Quhistān and Syria, where their position had been constantly threatened. In Quhistān, the Ghūrid attacks against the Nizāris came to an end; and in Syria, where the Nizāris were facing new troubles from the Franks, they received opportune help from the Ayyūbids. The improved relations were naturally beneficial to the Sunnis as well. For instance, around the end of Ḥasan III’s reign, many Sunnis, including scholars who were fleeing from the invading Mongols in Khurāsān and other eastern regions, found asylum in the Nizārī towns of Quhistān.184 The Nizārī state also played an effective role in the caliphal alliances of al-Naṣīr.

Indeed, Jalāl al-Dīn Hasan’s reform was accepted sufficiently by his people to allow him to leave Rūdbār for some time to engage in military operations, as none of his predecessors had done. According to al-Nasawī (d. 647/1249–1250), the secretary and chronicler of Sultan Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh’s son and successor Jalāl al-Dīn (617–628/1220–1231), Ḥasan III had at first recognized the suzerainty of the Khwārazmshāh.185
However, he soon allied himself with the caliph al-Nāşir, the chief opponent of the Khwārazmians. As a result of this shift in alliance, Ḥasan developed a close and personal relationship with Muẓaffar al-Dīn Özbek (607–622/1210–1225), the last Eldigüızid ruler of Arrân and Ādharbāyjān and an important ally of al-Nāşir. When Özbek decided to deal with Mengli, his lieutenant in ‘Irāq-i ‘Ajam who had rebelled and asserted his independence, Ḥasan offered his assistance. It was for this purpose that in 610/1213–1214 Ḥasan, accompanied by his army, departed from Alamūt to Ādharbāyjān, where he stayed at Özbek’s court. Özbek treated him hospitably and paid for the expenses of the Nizārī troops. The caliph played a central role in organizing the military coalition against Mengli, as ‘Irāq-i ‘Ajam had been a primary area of contention between al-Nāşir and Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh. Besides sending his own troops, the caliph persuaded the amīrs of ‘Irāq, Syria and elsewhere to participate in the campaign against Mengli. After ample and prolonged preparations, battle was joined in 611/1214–1215 near Hamadān. Mengli was defeated and later executed by Özbek, who now appointed Ighlamish as his governor in ‘Irāq-i ‘Ajam. After the victory, Ighlamish received the bulk of the conquered territories, including Hamadān, Rayy and Iṣfahān, but Jalāl al-Dīn Hasan was given Abhar and Zanjān and their environs, which remained in Nizārī hands for a few years.

After an absence of one and a half years, Ḥasan returned to Alamūt and maintained his close relations with al-Nāşir and Özbek. When Ighlamish rebelled, no campaign was conducted against him, as in the case of Mengli. At the caliph’s request, Ḥasan despatched Nizārī fidā’is, who assassinated Ighlamish in 614/1217. Later, Ḥasan was quick to recognize the danger of the Mongols, and was evidently the first Muslim ruler to come to terms with them after the Mongol armies had crossed the Oxus. After a reign of eleven years, Jalāl al-Dīn Hasan III died of dysentery in Ramadān 618/November 1221. But his vizier, who was the tutor of the next imām, accused Ḥasan III’s Sunni wives and sister of having poisoned him. They were all put to death.

Jalāl al-Dīn Hasan III was succeeded by his only son ‘Alāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad III, who was then nine years old. The vizier previously appointed by Ḥasan III continued to be the effective ruler of the Nizārī state for some time and the Nizārī community under Muḥammad III remained officially Sunni in the eyes of the outside world. Indeed, Ḥasan III’s Sunni policies were never formally renounced at Alamūt, but gradually the enforcement of the Sunni Shāriʿa was relaxed and the ideas
associated with qiyama were revived. After a while, the community once again came to openly regard itself as specifically Nizārī Ismāʿīlī. In Muḥammad III’s time, the doctrine of the qiyama introduced by Ḥasan II, the Sunnism of Hasan III, and the partial reversion of the community to its earlier practices during Muhammad III’s reign, were explained to the satisfaction of the rank and file of the community. In other words, it was explained that these seemingly contradictory policies were in effect identical in their spiritual reality, since each infallible imām had acted in accordance with the requirements of his own time. In the process, an adjusted doctrine which may be called the doctrine of the satr, was formulated to explain the new religious situation of the Nizārī community in line with the actual course of events pursued since the declaration of the qiyama in the year 559/1164. Muḥammad III, who now clearly and openly acted as the imām, does not seem to have made any specific contribution to the Nizārī thought of his time. The doctrine of the satr was formulated by others in the community; thinkers who had taken cognizance of the many questions which perturbed the ordinary members of the community.

There were also those outside scholars and theologians who, especially after the Mongol catastrophe, had availed themselves of the learned patronage of the Nizārīs, and played an active part in the intellectual life of the Nizārī community. Amongst such scholars who found asylum in the Nizārī strongholds of Quhistān and Rūdbār, the most prominent was the celebrated astronomer and Shiʿī theologian Naṣīr al-Dīn Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, a leading Muslim philosopher of his age. Indeed, several of the Nizārī fortresses had become flourishing centres of intellectual activities by the late Alamūt period. There is no evidence suggesting that these outside scholars were detained in the community against their will or that they were forced to embrace Ismāʿīlīsm during their stay amongst the Nizārīs, although at the time of the Mongol invasion, al-Ṭūsī and a few other similarly situated scholars claimed otherwise. On the contrary, it seems that these learned guests partook of the hospitality of the Nizārīs willingly, and were free, in the time of satr, to maintain their previous religious convictions.

There is, nonetheless, much controversy surrounding the Ismāʿīlī affiliations of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, who was born into an Imāmī family in Ṭūs, Khurāsān, in 597/1201. In his youth, around the year 624/1227, al-Ṭūsī entered the service of Naṣīr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Abū Maḥṣūr (d. 655/1257), the muḥtashim or head of the Quhistānī Nizārīs, who himself was a learned man. During his long stay at Qāʾīn and other Nizārī
strongholds in Quhistân, al-Ṭūsî developed a close friendship with the muḫtaṣhīm Nāṣir al-Dīn, to whom he dedicated in 633/1235 his great work on ethics, the Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī, which originally contained an Ismāʿīli preamble. Subsequently, al-Ṭūsî went to Alamūt and enjoyed the patronage of Muhammad III and his successor, until the collapse of the Nizārī state in 654/1256. After the fall of Alamūt, al-Ṭūsî, claiming to have been a captive amidst the Nizārīs, became a trusted adviser of the Mongol conqueror Hülegü, who built a great observatory for him at Marāgha, Ādhabayjân. Having also served Abaqa, Hülegü’s successor in the Īlkhānid dynasty of Persia, al-Ṭūsî died in 672/1274 at Bağdād. He had thus spent almost three decades with the Nizārīs, which was in effect the most productive period of his career. It was during that time that he produced his well-known works, Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī and Akhlāq-i Muḫtaṣhīmī, also written for the same Nizārī dignitary in Quhistân, as well as numerous treatises on astrology, philosophy and theology. The Rawdat al-taslim (Meadow of Submission), his major Ismāʿīli work, and a few other short treatises bearing an Ismāʿīli imprint, also date from that period. The Ithnā’asharī ‘ulamā’, who consider al-Ṭūsî as one of their co-religionists, have persistently denied that he ever embraced Ismāʿīlimism, rejecting the authenticity of the Ismāʿīli treatises ascribed to him; treatises which have been preserved by the Nizārīs. Other Twelver writers, including his modern Persian biographers, believe that al-Ṭūsî, observing taqiyya as an Imāmī Shiʿī, was obliged to compose these works for fear of his life during his captivity at the Nizārī strongholds. There is, however, no reason to doubt the authenticity of his spiritual autobiography, the Sayr va sulūk, in which al-Ṭūsî narrates how, after his initial dissatisfaction with scholastic theology (kalām) and philosophy (hikma), he came to realize the necessity of following an infallible teacher (muʿallim) who would guide reason to its perfection. Hence, he joined the Ismāʿīlis (ahl-i taʿlim) and recognized their imām. In the same autobiographical account, al-Ṭūsî explains how he had been influenced by the Ismāʿīli teaching of al-Shahrastānī, the teacher of his father’s maternal uncle and teacher. In all probability, then, al-Ṭūsî willingly embraced Nizārī Ismāʿīlism temporarily during the time of his stay within the Persian Nizārī community, but, upon the fall of the Nizārī state, reverted to Twelver Shiʿīsm and wrote some theological works supporting the Twelver views. At any rate, he contributed significantly to the development of the Nizārī thought of his time, especially to the formulation of the doctrine of the satr. It is indeed in his Ismāʿīli writings, constituting the only extant works from Muḥammad III’s
period, that we find a detailed exposition of this doctrine. Various aspects of the doctrine of the satr are also reflected, in modified forms, in the Nizārī works of the post-Alamūt period.

The doctrine of the satr explained Ḥasan III’s reform and at the same time reinterpreted the doctrine of the qiyāma. It was explained that the qiyāma was not necessarily a final event but a transitory condition of life, when the veil of taqiyya was lifted so as to make the unveiled truth available to all. The tacit identification between the shari‘a and taqiyya, implied in the teaching of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikrihi‘l-salām, was thus confirmed, and so was the identification between the qiyāma and haqiqa. Accordingly, the strict imposition of the Sunnī Shari‘a by Ḥasan III was depicted as a return to taqiyya, or precautionary dissimulation of one’s true religious belief, and to a new period of satr or concealment, when the truth would be once again hidden in the bātin. The condition of the qiyāma could, in principle, be granted or withheld by the current imām to mankind, or to the elite, at any time; consequently, at the will of the imām, human life could alternate between the times of the qiyāma, when reality is manifest, and satr, when reality is hidden. In this sense, Ḥasan II had introduced a brief period of qiyāma, while Ḥasan III had closed that period, initiating a new period of satr requiring the observance of taqiyya. Such alterations between the periods of qiyāma and satr could occur, according to the decision of the imāms, because every imām was potentially also a Qā‘im; that is, an imām-qā‘im. Al-Ṭūsī clearly allows for the sequence by stating that the era of each prophet of the zāhir of the shari‘a is called the period of satr; and the period of each qā‘im, who possesses the truths (haqa‘iq) of the religious laws (shara‘i‘), is called qiyāma. In the current cycle of human history, however, it was still expected, as with the earliest Ismā‘ilis, that full qiyāma would come at the end of the final millennial era after Adam; that is, at the end of the sixth millennium initiated by the sixth law-announcing prophet, Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad himself had introduced an era of satr, like the other five law-announcing prophets preceding him in the current cycle of history; but within Muḥammad’s millennial era, and in special honour of his greatness, there could be on occasion anticipatory periods of qiyāma, each one a foretaste of the qiyāma coming at the end of his era, which would initiate the seventh and final millennium of the current cycle in the religious history of mankind. Accordingly, the qiyāma proclaimed by Hasan II, roughly in the middle of Muḥammad’s era, was one of such anticipatory qiyāmas; and the remainder of that era were times of satr or concealment. In sum, it was explained that in the era of
Muḥammad, periods of *satr* and *qiyyāma* could alternate at the discretion of each imām.

Earlier Ismāʿīlis had used the term *satr* in reference to those periods in their history when the imāms were hidden from the world at large, or even from their followers, as had been the case with the period in early Ismāʿīlīsm between Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl and ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī and again with the period of *satr* in Nizārīsm between Nizār and Ḥasan II. But in the Nizārī teaching of the late Alamūt period the term acquired a different and broader meaning. It now came to mean specifically the concealment of the true spiritual reality of the imām, his reality as the manifestation of the unveiled truth, and not merely the hiddenness of the person of the imām. Accordingly, despite the physical availability of the imām, there could be a period of *satr*. For al-Ṭūsī, writing in Muhammad III’s time, such a period of *satr* had started with the advent of Ḥasan III in 607/1210, even though the imāms were visible and ruling at the head of the community. Indeed, for the Nizāris of the late Alamūt period, the Fāṭimid period, when the imāms were visible; and the earliest period in their history between Nizār and Ḥasan II, when the imāms were hidden; as well as the post-*qiyyāma* period, when the imāms were again visible, were all regarded as times of *satr*.

As we have seen, this doctrine of the *satr* retained, in a more discreet sense, the ideas of the earlier Ismāʿīlis regarding cyclical hierohistory, while reinterpreting the doctrine of the *qiyyāma*. At the same time, it retained in a modified form certain specific features of the *qiyyāma* doctrine, including its categorization of mankind in terms of three classes. It allowed for the state of spiritual wāḥda or union with the imām even in the time of *satr*, which was depicted as the normal condition of mankind due to human weakness. It seems, however, that in the time of *satr* the state of wāḥda was restricted to a few, though possibly to a single figure, the ḥujja of the imām. Therefore, only the ḥujja, having achieved spiritual perfection, attained access to unveiled truth and could dispense with taqiyya; all other members of the community, even though they acknowledged the Nizārī Imām as the sole legitimate leader of mankind, would have to obey the Shariʿa, otherwise they would be on the same level as the people of opposition, heretical (*mulḥid*) and irreligious (*bi-dīn*). The position of ḥujja, originally occupied in the Nizārī community by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh, now acquired a new prominence as the sole access to the imām and the truth. This highest position in the *daʿwa* hierarchy, ranking only after the imām, became even more important amongst the Nizāris of the
The doctrinal system of the Nizāris of the later Alamūt period in effect enabled the Nizāri community to maintain its identity and spiritual independence under changing circumstances. The Nizāris had indeed moved closer to the ideas and practices of a Šūfī order and in Persia they survived under the mantle of Šūfism after the fall of their state.

Politically, too, Muḥammad III's reign was a very active period, not only for the Nizāri state but also for the entire Muslim East, which now experienced a foretaste of the Mongol menace. Muḥammad had come to power in 618/1221, immediately after the first Mongol conquests that destroyed the Khwārazmian empire. The Mongol conquest of Transoxiana was accomplished with incredible speed. By 1219, Chingiz Khan, the mighty ruler of the new Mongol empire, was already leading his armies into the lands of Islam. By 1220, Chingiz Khan had captured Bukhārā and Samarqand, from where he despatched his generals in pursuit of Sultan Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh (d. 617/1220), who was now fleeing across Persia in the aftermath of the collapse of his empire. The Mongols had meanwhile continued their westward advance through Ādharbayjān and the Caucasus. Early in 1221, Chingiz Khan crossed the Oxus and seized Balkh. He then sent his youngest son Toluy to complete the conquest of Khurāsān, a task accomplished with unprecedented thoroughness from which the province never recovered. The Mongols totally devastated Marw and Nīshāpūr, massacring the populations of both cities. They had now acquired a solid foothold in eastern Persia, and the death of Chingiz Khan in 624/1227 brought only a brief respite. It was at that time in the early years of Muḥammad III's reign that an increasing number of refugees, including numerous Sunni 'ulamā' of Khurāsān, found asylum in the Nizāri towns of Quhīstān; since during this initial phase of the Mongol invasion the Nizāri state had proved to be stronger than most other small principalities and because some sort of an entente seems to have existed between the Nizāri leaders and the Mongols. Ḥasan III, as noted, had
previously made friendly overtures to the Mongols at the beginning of their westward advance, probably sometime in the autumn of 616/1219; and his secret emissaries had apparently met with Chingiz Khan himself in the spring of 618/1221 at Balkh or Tāliqān, informing him of the Nizārī ruler’s desire for peace.

At any rate, the Quhistānī Nizārīs, unaffected by the initial Mongol invasions, continued to enjoy their prosperity and stability, and were able to share their good fortune with the refugees who were now pouring into their midst. Indeed, Shihāb al-Dīn, the learned chief of Nizārī Quhistān, was so lavish in his treatment of these refugees that soon the Nizārīs of the area were forwarding complaints to Alamūt about the negative effects of his hospitality on the resources of their treasury. But Shams al-Dīn, the new muhtashīm of Quhistān designated by Alamūt, came to be equally admired and respected by the refugees. These events, and the contemporary situation of the Nizārīs in Quhistān are related in detail by Minhāj al-Iltīn b. Sirij al-Dīn al-Juzjānī, commonly known as Minhāj-i Sirāj, a Sunni jurist and the historian of the Ghūrids and the Mu’izzī or Slave dynasty of India, who spent his earlier years in the service of the Ghūrids and visited Quhistān three times between 621 and 623/1224–1226. He knew both Shihāb al-Dīn, for whom he had the highest praises, and Shams al-Dīn, and conducted diplomatic negotiations with the latter muhtashīm on behalf of Sistān.

The arrival of Shams al-Dīn in Quhistān had coincided with the outbreak of new troubles between the Nizārīs and their Sistānī neighbours. Yamīn al-Dīn Bahrāmshāh, the local āmir of Sistān, had previously fought two wars against the Nizārīs during Hasan III’s reign, and his nephew had sold them the fortress of Shahanshāh near the town of Nih. Yamīn al-Dīn now wanted the Nizārīs to give up that fortress, threatening to take it by force. Thereupon, Yamīn al-Dīn was assassinated in 618/1221 by four Nizārī fida’īs despatched from Quhistān. There ensued a series of succession disputes in Sistān, and the Quhistānī Nizārīs began to interfere directly in the affairs of that province. The Nizārīs supported Rukn al-Dīn against his younger brother Nuṣrat al-Dīn b. Bahrāmshāh, who had been put on the throne by a group of the notables of Sistān. But soon Rukn al-Dīn assumed power with the assistance of the Nizārīs. At this time, in 619/1222, the Mongols attacked Sistān, without staying there, and Rukn al-Dīn was killed by one of his slaves. The Sistānis then successively raised to the throne Shihāb al-Dīn b. Harb and his brother ‘Alī, to the dissatisfaction of the Nizārīs who again had their own candidate, ‘Uthmān. They
sought the help of a Khwārazmian general, Bināltigin (Yināltigin), who was then in Kirmān, for the enthronement of 'Uthmān. When Bināltigin arrived in Sistān in 622/1225, he assumed power in his own name. At this point, Shams al-Dīn, a capable military commander, was already the muḥtashiwi in Qhristān and led the Nizāris in battle against Bināltigin, who was defeated in 623/1226. It was after this battle that Bināltigin sent Jūzjānī as his envoy to conclude a truce with the Nizārī chief of Qhristān. The Nizārī community in Qhristān clearly pursued an independent policy in its local affairs, also developing important trade routes with other regions, which contributed significantly to its economic prosperity.

The Nizārīs had never abandoned their expansionary ambitions, and now in the aftermath of their accord with the caliph at Baghdād and the crumbling of the Khwārazmian empire, they found it possible to extend their territories. At the time, the Nizārīs still maintained their understanding with the Mongols, who may even have been in alliance with them. At any rate, the Mongols then appeared to be a lesser threat to the Nizārī state than the Khwārazmians, who, under Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn, the last of the Khwārazmshāhs, were making a last effort to restore their kingdom in Persia. Around 619/1222, the Nizārīs seized Dāmghān, the town near Girdkuh, and recaptured some fortresses in Qūmis. They also acquired further strongholds in Tārum and in the Zagros mountains. At the same time, the Nizārīs seem to have had designs for Rayy, at least through their more traditional method of converting the local populace, for around 619/1222 a group of Nizārī daʿīs were arrested and executed in Rayy on the orders of Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh’s son Rukn al-Dīn.203 The Nizārī territories in Persia thus expanded during the first six years of Muḥammad III’s reign. It was during that time, when the false news had spread of Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn’s death in 624/1227 in battle against the Mongols at Isfahān, that the Syrian Nizārīs boasted to the Saljūq ruler of Rūm (Anatolia) of the imminent seizure of ‘Irāq-i ‘Ajam by their Persian comrades.204

It is possible that the Nizārī daʿwa was also introduced into the Indian subcontinent sometime during the first half of the 7th/13th century, or even earlier. There are no reliable sources on the origins of Nizārīsm in India, and it is not known whether any of the Indian Ismāʿīlī communities that had come into existence in Fāṭimid times accepted the Nizārī daʿwa following the Nizārī–Mustaʿlī schism of 487/1094. For the earliest phase of Nizārī activities in India we have only the traditional accounts of the Indian Nizārīs or Khojas themselves as reflected mainly in the gināns (gnāns), the
community’s indigenous religious literature, written in verse form and recorded in several Indian languages. The ginâns, ascribed mostly to various pirs, are often anachronistic and legendary in nature, and as such, are not reliable as historical sources. According to the tradition of the Nizârî Khojas, a certain Satgur Nûr, also called Nûr al-Dîn, was the first Nizârî dâ‘î sent from Daylamân to Gujarât. 205 There, in Pâtan, he allegedly converted the local ruler Siddharâja, the same Hindu king of Gujarât who is reported to have embraced ûrayibi Ismâ‘îlism. Satgur Nûr, the community’s tradition adds, soon converted all of Pâtan, which became known as Pirn Pâtan, the pîr’s city. The dates mentioned for Satgur Nûr’s arrival in India vary widely. According to one tradition, he was despatched by the Fâtimid al-Mustansîr in order to preach in favour of his son Nizâr. According to another version, he started his activities in the time of Hasan ‘alâ dhikrihi‘l-salâm; while in yet another account he is identified with the early Ismâ‘îlî Imâm Muḥammad b. Ismâ‘îl. Be it as it may, there is no concrete evidence attesting the success of the Nizârî da‘wa in Gujarât during the 7th/13th century, when ûrayibi Ismâ‘îlism was already well-established in the region.

The Nizârî activities in the Indian subcontinent seem to have been originally concentrated in Sind, where different forms of Ismâ‘îlism had persisted in Multân despite periodical persecution of the Shi‘î sectarians. The figure traditionally associated with the commencement of Nizârî activities in Sind is Pir Shams al-Dîn; although a previous pîr, Šalâh al-Dîn, sometimes named as Shams al-Dîn’s father, is also reported to have been sent from Alamût to India. Shams al-Dîn is an obscure figure surrounded by all sorts of legends while the dates mentioned for his activities cover a long period. In legendary accounts, Shams al-Dîn, whose grave is located in Multân, has been identified with Shams al-Dîn Muḥammad Tabrizî (d. 645/1247), the spiritual guide of Mawlâna Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî (d. 672/1273), the celebrated Persian mystic and poet, and also with Shams al-Dîn Muḥammad, the first post-Alamût Nizârî Imâm. 206 It is interesting to note in passing that some sources trace the genealogy of Shams-i Tabrizî himself to the imâms of the Alamût period. 207 In some of the ginâns attributed to Pir Shams al-Dîn, Qâsim Shâh, one of the earliest Nizârî Imâm of the post-Alamût period, is often named as the contemporary imâm, thus placing the pîr’s activities around the middle of the 8th/14th century. In other ginâns he is placed in the 6th/12th century. The opening phase of Nizârî Ismâ‘îlism in India is uncertain. It is safe to assume, however, that the Nizârî da‘wa initially acquired a strong foothold
amongst the Hindus of Sind, rather than Gujarāt, only after the fall of Alamūt, following the activities of the first daʿīs who arrived in Sind towards the end of the Alamūt period.

Meanwhile, Jalāl al-Dīn Khwārazmshāh, who had been defeated in 618/1221 by Chingiz Khan on the banks of the Indus and had subsequently spent three years in India, appeared in Persia, where his brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn had successfully established himself in ʿIrāq-ī ʿAjam. Jalāl al-Dīn soon removed Ghiyāth al-Dīn from his position, and in 622/1225, he overthrew Īzāb, the last Eldigūzid ruler of Ādharbayjān, who had been allied with the caliph and ʿHasan III. The Nizāris who had inherited ʿHasan III’s pro-caliphal policy and quarrels with the Khwārazmians, began to feel menaced by Jalāl al-Dīn Khwārazmshāh, who was conducting his desperate campaigns and sporadic battles with the Mongols in many parts of Persia. The relations between Alamūt and Jalāl al-Dīn, during this brief period before the Mongols finally caught up with the last Khwārazmshāh, have been recorded by al-Nasawī. It seems that after some initial hostilities, the Nizāris were obliged in 624/1227 to accept a peace treaty imposed on them by Jalāl al-Dīn. According to this truce agreement, reached in Ādharbayjān between Badr al-Dīn Ahmad, the envoy of Alamūt, and Sharaf al-Mulk, Jalāl al-Dīn’s vizier, the Nizāris were allowed to retain Dāmghān in return for the payment of an annual tribute of 30,000 dinars to the Khwārazmshāh treasury. This agreement was reached soon after Īrkhān, one of Jalāl al-Dīn’s most trusted commanders who held Khurisān as his iqṭā’, was assassinated by three Nizāri fidāʿīs in Ganja, in revenge for the activities of his lieutenants against the Quhistānī Nizāris. In the course of the negotiations, Badr al-Dīn boasted that several fidāʿīs had been posted in the service of the Khwārazmshāh and his vizier, and summoned five of these agents to prove his claim. On hearing this news, Jalāl al-Dīn ordered Sharaf al-Mulk to burn the fidāʿīs alive. The vizier, who had become highly intimidated, tried in vain to change the sultan’s mind. The fidāʿīs shouted the name of ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad as they were dying, like the fidāʿīs who had killed Īrkhān and were stoned to death by the townspeople of Ganja. Alamūt now sent another envoy, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ʿAlī, to Sharaf al-Mulk, demanding 10,000 dinars in recompense for each of the five fidāʿīs burned, and threatened his life should he refuse. Thereupon, Sharaf al-Mulk reduced the annual tribute payable by the Nizāris by 10,000 dinars for a period of five years.

The truce between the Nizāris and Jalāl al-Dīn, however, did not prove very effective, as Alamūt continued to maintain friendly relations with the
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Caliph and the Mongols, the two main enemies of the Khwārazmians. In 625/1228, Alamūt gave refuge to Özbeg’s son, Malik Khāmūsh, and to Jalāl al-Dīn’s brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn, who had been dispossessed of their power by the Khwārazmshāh. The Nizāris helped Ghiyāth al-Dīn, despite the Khwārazmian blockade of Rūdbār, to go to Kirmān. There however he was murdered. Al-Nasawi relates that the Nizāris had offered at this time to place a group of their fidā'īs at the disposal of Jalāl al-Dīn, who refused the offer. In the same year (625/1228), while the Nizāri envoy Badr al-Dīn was travelling east across the Oxus to the Mongol court, Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn ordered the stopping of all caravans in that direction, on the pretence that a Mongol envoy was on his way to Syria in the company of some Ismā‘īlis. On these orders, Sharaf al-Mulk put to death in Ādharbāyjān a westward Syrian Nizārī caravan of seventy merchants. Later, Alamūt sent an emissary to the Khwārazmshāh, successfully demanding retrieval of the goods taken from the massacred caravan. This event took place after the arrival of the news of Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s flight from Alamūt, which had enraged Jalāl al-Dīn. It was also at this time that Muḥammad III’s vizier, captured in the vicinity of Qazwīn by the iqṭā’ holder of Sāwā, was sent as prisoner to Jalāl al-Dīn, who had him executed. On one occasion during this period, al-Nasawi himself was despatched as Jalāl al-Dīn’s envoy to Alamūt, to demand the balance of the tribute that the Nizāris still owed on Dāmghān and to settle other points of dispute. Al-Nasawi succeeded in meeting with Muḥammad III and his vizier ’Imād al-Dīn, who gave him lavish gifts. Al-Nasawi obtained only a compromise solution; nonetheless, he describes his mission with extreme satisfaction. Relations between the Nizāris and the Khwārazmians, who had replaced the Saljūqs as Alamūt’s foremost enemy, were thus characterized by warfare, assassination and negotiation till Jalāl al-Dīn, the last of the Khwārazmshāhs, was mysteriously murdered by Kurds in 628/1231, following his decisive defeat at the hands of the Mongols.

Beside its quarrel with the Khwārazmians, the Nizārī state had continued to have periodical problems with its neighbours. In particular, relations between Rūdbār and the Caspian provinces seem to have deteriorated in Muḥammad III’s time, following the execution of Ḥasan III’s Gilānī wives. The Nizāris acquired new places in Gilān and entered Rūyān, effectively aiding the local rebels there against the new Bādūspānīd ruler, Fakhr al-Dawla Namāwar b. Bīsutūn, who had succeeded his father shortly before in 620/1223. Fakhr al-Dawla was obliged to leave Rūyān
and seek refuge for a while at Jalāl al-Dīn Khwārazmshāh’s court. On the other hand, relations between the Rūdbārī Nizāris and the Qazwīnis, their perennial enemy, had finally become peaceful. Muḥammad III had evidently developed a close association with a Sufi shaykh of Qazwin, Jamāl al-Dīn Gīlī (d. 651/1253), and sent him an annual grant of 500 gold dinars. Muḥammad is reported to have informed the Qazwīnis that had it not been for the sake of the shaykh, he would have destroyed their town.

With the disappearance of the Khwārazmshāhs, the Nizāris came to be confronted by the Mongols, who, under Chingiz Khan’s son and first successor Ögedei (1229-1241), were making new efforts to conquer all of Persia. The Nizāris soon lost Dāmghān to the Mongols, who had filled the position vacated by the Khwārazmians. As Muḥammad III had by now decided to resist the Mongols, in 1238 he despatched an embassy, in cooperation with the ‘Abbāsid caliph al-Mustansir (623-640/1226-1242), to the kings of France and England to seek an alliance between Muslims and Christians against the Mongols. Matthew Paris, as noted, relates the dealings of this embassy in Europe, particularly at the English court of Henry III. The mission failed however to have any results, since the Christian monarchs of Europe were soon attempting to ally themselves with the Mongols against all Muslims. A few years later, the Nizāris completely severed their relations with the Mongols when their overtures to the new Great Khan Gūyük (1246-1248) were rejected. In 643/1246, on the occasion of the enthronement of Gūyük in central Mongolia, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muhammad, along with the caliph al-Mustaṣim (640-656/1242-1258) and many other Muslim rulers, sent a mission under Shihāb al-Dīn and Shams al-Dīn, Nizārī muḥāshims in Quḥistān, to Mongolia to participate in the celebrations and deliver a memorandum to Gūyük. The Nizārī ambassadors were, however, dismissed with contempt by Gūyük, who replied to Muḥammad III’s memorandum in the harshest terms.

Soon after, Gūyük prepared to match his words with deeds. He despatched Eligidei to Persia at the head of reinforcements for the Mongol armies already there and instructed him that two out of every ten soldiers in Persia were to be used for reducing the rebellious territories, beginning with those of the Nizāris. He himself intended to follow after, but his death prevented him from carrying out his operations. Gūyük’s designs against the Nizāris were taken up by his cousin and successor to the Khanate, Mōngke (1251-1258). The Mongols had already been spurred against the Nizāris by the Sunnīs at their court, and now more such complaints, including one forwarded by Shams al-Dīn, a chief qāḍī of Qazwin, were
brought to Mongke’s notice, in addition to the warnings of the Mongol commanders in Persia.218 At any rate, when Mongke decided to consolidate and complete the Mongol conquest of western Asia, he assigned first priority to the destruction of the Nizārī state in Persia, and of the ʻAbbāsid Caliphate. In 650/1252, Mongke entrusted this mission to his brother Hülegü, who was to lead a major expedition against the two powers that still held out in the Muslim lands. Elaborate preparations were made for this expedition, and Hülegü did not in fact set out on the westward journey from Mongolia until 651/1253; it took more than another two years before Hülegü actually arrived in Persia. As we have noted earlier on the authority of William of Rubruck, who was in Mongolia in 1254, it was during this period that a group of fidā‘īs were allegedly despatched to Mongolia to kill Mongke in reprisal for his anti-Nizārī operations.

Meanwhile in Syria, Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān had been succeeded, in 588/1192 or a year later, by a Persian dā‘ī called Abū Ma‘ṣūr b. Muḥammad, or Naṣr al-ʻAjami.219 With Sinān’s successor the authority of Alamūt over the Syrian Nizārī community was restored fully and remained unshaken until the collapse of the Persian Nizārī state in 654/1256.220 The names of several chief dā‘īs who led the Syrian Nizārīs during this third phase of their history, lasting some sixty-five years, are known to us from the inscriptions at Maṣyāf, Kahf and other strongholds, and from a few Syrian literary sources.221 Between the years 620/1223–1224 and 656/1258, these dā‘īs were Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Maṣ‘ūd, Majd al-Dīn, Sirāj al-Dīn Muẓaffar b. al-Ḥusayn, Tāj al-Dīn Abu’l-Futūḥ b. Muḥammad, and Raḍī al-Dīn Abu’l-Ma‘ālī. Most of these Syrian leaders are specifically referred to as the delegates of Alamūt, their names appearing after that of the imām in the Syrian inscriptions. Like the community in Quhistān, the Syrian Nizārīs continued during this period to exercise a certain degree of local initiative in dealings with their Muslim and Frankish neighbours. The Syrian Nizārīs had, on the whole, maintained peaceful relations with Saladin’s Ayyūbid successors in Syria; but upon Jalāl al-Dīn Hasan III’s rapprochement with the Sunnīs, even closer relations developed between the two sides. Henceforth, the Nizārīs could count on the Ayyūbids as allies. The Arabic sources place the declaration of Hasan III’s new policies in the year 608/1211–1212, and add that he sent messengers to Syria and other Nizārī territories, ordering his followers to adopt the Sunnī Shari‘a and to build mosques.222 Besides emissaries, the imām evidently despatched a letter to the same effect to Syria.223 As subjects of Alamūt, the
Syrian Nizāris apparently carried out these orders; and in view of Hasan III’s alliance with the ’Abbāsid caliph al-Nāṣir, their own relations were now markedly improved with the Ayyūbids, especially with al-Malik al-Ẓāhir (582–613/1186–1216), Saladin’s son and ruler of Aleppo. Moreover, the Syrian Nizāris did not attempt to assassinate any local Muslim personality during this period of satr, but they continued to have quarrels and dealings with the Franks, who still held the Syrian coast.

In 610/1213, the Syrian fidāʾīs killed Raymond, the youthful son of Bohemond IV (1187–1233) of Antioch, in the cathedral of Tarṭūs (Tortosa). In 611/1214–1215, Bohemond in an act of vengeance laid siege to the fortress of Khawābī. The Nizāris appealed to al-Malik al-Ẓāhir for help, and he sent a force to their rescue; when al-Ẓāhir’s own troops suffered a setback in the Jabal Bahrā’, al-Malik al-‘Adil I, the Ayyūbid ruler of Damascus, sent another army compelling the withdrawal of the Franks from Khawābī.224 The Syrian Nizāris had meanwhile found a way to exact payments from a number of Muslim and Christian rulers. In 624/1227, Frederick II (1212–1250), the emperor of Germany who went to the Holy Land on his own Crusade, sent envoys to Majd al-Dīn, the Syrian Nizāri chief. The envoys of Frederick, who was also the king of Sicily and the titular king of Jerusalem, had brought gifts worth almost 80,000 dinars, destined eventually for Alamūt. However, explaining that the road to Alamūt was too dangerous due to the activities of the Khwārazmians and others, Majd al-Dīn retained the gifts in Syria.225 But he did not hesitate to inform the ruler of Aleppo, al-Malik al-‘Aziz (613–634/1216–1237), about the emperor’s friendly overtures, ensuring the Ayyūbids of his continued co-operation with them in case of need.226 Earlier in the same year of 624 A.H., Majd al-Dīn had sent his own emissaries to the Saljūq ruler of Rūm, ‘Alāʾ al-Dīn Kayqubād I (616–634/1219–1237), demanding that the regular tribute of 2,000 dinars hitherto sent by the sultan to Alamūt should now be diverted to him.227 The sultan consulted with the lord of Alamūt, who confirmed the request of the Syrian Nizāri chief. Eventually the tribute in question came to be paid to the Syrian community.

However, around the same time, the Hospitallers who had been highly displeased with the dealings between the Nizāris and Frederick II, demanded tribute from the Nizāris. The Nizāris refused by boasting that they themselves were then receiving gifts and payments from Frankish emperors and kings. Thereupon, the Hospitallers attacked the Nizāris and carried off much booty.228 By around 625/1228, the Syrian Nizāris had
become tributaries to the Hospitallers as well as to the Templars. There are hints to the effect that the Nizāris were now actually allied with the Hospitallers; on hearing this news, Pope Gregory IX (1227–1241) wrote a letter in 633/1236 to his representatives in the Holy Land strongly condemning such relations. The last important event in the history of the Syrian Nizāris of this period relates to the dealings between the sectarian chief and Louis IX, better known as St Louis, the French king who led the Seventh Crusade. These dealings, recorded by Joinville, the king's biographer and secretary, to which we have already referred, occurred soon after the arrival of St Louis in 'Akkā (Acre) in Ṣafar 648/ May 1250. At the time, the Syrian Nizāris were most probably still under the leadership of Tāj al-Dīn Abū'l-Futūḥ, whose name is mentioned in an inscription at Maṣyāf dated Dhu'l-Qa'da 646/February–March 1249. At any rate, Nizāri emissaries came to the French king and asked him either to pay tribute to their chief or at least release the Nizāris from the tribute which they themselves paid to the Templars and the Hospitallers. On the intervention of Reginald de Vichier and William de Chateauneuf, the grand masters of the Temple and the Hospital, the negotiations between the Old Man of the Mountain and St Louis did not lead to any results. St Louis, himself more interested in establishing friendly relations with the Mongols, did not pay any tribute to the Nizāris, who continued to pay their own tribute to the knights Hospitallers and Templars. But the French king and the Syrian Nizārī chief exchanged gifts. It was in the course of these embassies that the Arabic-speaking friar Yves le Breton met the Old Man of the Mountain and discussed religious doctrines with him in Maṣyāf or another of the Nizārī strongholds in the Jabal Bahrā'.

We shall now resume our account of the final years of the Nizārī state in Persia. Hülegū, as noted, took his time in making detailed preparations to lead the main Mongol expedition across Central Asia to Persia, where he did not arrive before the beginning of 654/1256. But already in Jumādā II 650/August 1252, he had despatched an advance army of 12,000 men from Mongolia, under the command of his famous Nestorian Christian general Ket-Buqa, to join forces with the Mongol garrisons in Persia and attack as many Nizārī strongholds as possible. Ket-Buqa crossed the Oxus in Muḥarram 651/March 1253 and soon afterwards attacked the Nizārī strongholds in Quhīstān, capturing several places there. In Rabi' 1 651/ May 1253, he appeared at the head of some 5,000 men at the foot of Girdkūh, where he erected walls and other siege works around the stronghold. Leaving one of his officers, Būrī, in charge of the siege at
Girdkuh, Ket-Buqa next proceeded to attack the castles of Mihrin, near Girdkuh, and Shâhdiz, which was no longer in Ismâ‘ili hands; while in Jumâdâ II 651/August 1253, he sent raiding parties into Rûdbâr and Ţârum, where little was accomplished. In Shawwâl 651/December 1253, the besieged garrison of Girdkuh made a daring night attack on the Mongols, killing a hundred of them, including Bûrî. The siege of Girdkuh however continued, and when cholera decimated the Nizârî garrison and the fortress was on the verge of falling in the summer of 652/1254, Alamût supplied reinforcements and saved the situation. The strengthened garrison of Girdkuh continued to resist the Mongols for a long time. Meanwhile, Ket-Buqa had returned to Quhistân, where the Mongols pillaged, slaughtered and finally seized, at least temporarily, Tûn and Turshiz, in Jumâdâ I 651/July 1253. A few months later, the Mongols had captured Mihrin and some other castles in Qûmis.

The Mongols had now come to exert constant pressure on the Persian Nizâris, whose situation was further threatened by the imminent arrival of Hüleğû. These external pressures seem to have aggravated the internal tensions within the Nizârî leadership, especially those between ‘Alâ’ al-Dîn Muḥammad III and his chief advisers, who evidently wanted to submit to the Mongols. At any rate, Muḥammad III, who is reported to have been afflicted by melancholia, had gradually isolated himself from the Nizârî leaders whilst persisting in defying the Mongols. At the same time, relations between Muḥammad III and his eldest son Rukn al-Dîn Khwurshih (Khwurshih), who had received the nasî in his childhood, were also deteriorating. It was under such circumstances that certain Nizârî leaders eventually began, according to our Persian historians, to formulate a plan against Muḥammad III, aiming to replace him by his designated successor. Accordingly, Khwurshih was to take charge of the affairs of the state and immediately enter into negotiations with the Mongols. Before this plan could be implemented, however, Khwurshih fell ill and was confined to his bed. Soon afterwards, on the last day of Shawwâl 653/1 December 1255, ‘Alâ’ al-Dîn Muḥammad III, who had always been fond of shepherding, was found murdered in a hut, adjoining his sheep-fold, in Shirkuh near Alamût. After putting several suspects to death, it was discovered that the murder had been committed by Ḥasan-i Mâzandarânî, a favourite and constant companion of Muḥammad III, whom the imâm had injured. The secret was divulged to Khwurshih by Ḥasan’s wife, a former concubine of Muḥammad III. Ḥasan and several of his children were put to death.
‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad III, who had reigned for thirty-four years, was succeeded by his youthful son Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh, born around 627/1230. Before entering into any negotiations with the Mongols, the new Nizārī ruler attempted to strengthen his situation with his neighbours and with other Muslim rulers. The Nizārīs first completed a campaign in western Daylam and seized a fortress in Khalkhāl which they had besieged. Then Khurshāh sent messengers to Gilān and other neighbouring areas to inform their rulers of his father’s death and of his own accession, and also attempted to establish better relations with them. At the same time, he ordered all the Nizārīs to follow the Shari’a very closely. Soon after his accession, and in order to inform the Mongols of the new policy of the Nizārī leadership, Khurshāh sent an envoy to Yasa’ur Noyan, the Mongol commander stationed at Hamadān, offering his submission. Yasa’ur’s reply was to the effect that the Nizārī ruler should present himself in person before Hūlegū, whose arrival was now imminent. This was the first of a long series of messages exchanged during the year 654/1256 between the Nizārīs and the Mongols.

Meanwhile, Hūlegū had been advancing westward at the head of the main Mongol force at a leisurely pace. Having set out from his ordu or encampment in Mongolia in Sha’bān 651/October 1253, Hūlegū arrived at the gates of Samarqand two years later, in Sha’bān 653/September 1255. After two months, he despatched messengers from his camp at Kish to various Persian rulers informing them of his intention to extirpate the Nizārīs and asking them to render assistance or suffer the consequences. In Dhu’l-Ḥijja 653/January 1256, Hūlegū crossed the Oxus and passed the remaining winter months in the meadows of Shafūrqān to the west of Balkh, the area now situated in northern Afghanistan. Hūlegū entered Persia through Khurāsān in Rabi’ I 654/April 1256 and selected the town of Tūn, which had not been effectively reduced by his advance guards under Ket-Buqa, as his first target. But he was prevented from personally supervising the Mongol assault against Tūn, by some obscure incidents that occurred as he was passing in the district of Ṣawā and Khwāf on the northeastern border of Quhistān. The task was entrusted to Ket-Buqa and Kōke-Ilgei, who, after besieging Tūn for a week, seized the town in the middle of Rabi’ I 654/May 1256. The Mongols slaughtered all the inhabitants of Tūn except the younger women, according to Juwaynī, or the artisans (pīshīhvarān), according to Rashīd al-Dīn. The triumphant Mongol generals then joined Hūlegū and proceeded towards Tūs. It was probably at Tūs that Hūlegū shortly afterwards received Nāṣīr al-Dīn, the
last Nizārī muḥtashīm of Qhīṣtān and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s friend and patron. Hülegū had earlier despatched Malik Shams al-Dīn (643–684/1245–1285), the founder of the Kart dynasty of Harāt, on a mission to the muḥtashīm, who was then residing at the fortress of Sartakht. Shams al-Dīn had succeeded in persuading Naṣīr al-Dīn to present himself before Hülegū, who asked the Nizārī chief why he had not brought down the garrison of the fortress. He replied that his people obeyed only the commands of Khurshīh, their ruler. Hülegū gave the aged Naṣīr al-Dīn a yarligh (decree) and a paiza (tablet of authority), granting him safe-conduct and appointed him to the governorship of the ruined town of Tūn. Naṣīr al-Dīn died in Șafar 655 A.H.

Meanwhile in Jumādā I 654/May 1256, after further negotiations of messengers, Khurshīh had sent his brother Shahanshāh with a retinue of dignitaries to announce his submission to the Mongols. They reached Yasa’ūr near Qazwīn, and he delegated his own son to accompany the Nizārī mission to Hülegū. On 10 Jumādā I/5 June, Yasa’ūr unexpectedly engaged in battle with the Nizārīs around Alamūt. But he withdrew after a short while and subsequently left Rūdbār upon the instructions of Hülegū, who had received the Nizārī mission at Qūchān (Khabūshān). Hülegū’s own elchis or ambassadors reached Khurshīh at the end of Jumādā II/July and delivered a yarligh full of encouragement to the effect that since Khurshīh had sent his brother and had demonstrated his submission and loyalty, the king had forgiven the crimes committed by his father. Khurshīh, who himself had committed no crime, was asked to destroy his castles and come down to pay homage so that the Mongol armies would not devastate his territories. The Nizärī ruler did destroy some castles, but in the case of Alamūt, Maymūndiz and Lamasar, he simply removed a few battlements (sardīvar) and turrets (kungara). Some of the Mongol ambassadors, accompanied by Khurshīh’s envoy Sadr al-Dīn, returned to report the situation to Hülegū. Khurshīh now asked for a year’s grace before presenting himself. The rest of the elchis had stayed behind in Rūdbār to supervise the demolition of the Nizārī castles. In the beginning of Sha’bān/September, the Mongol envoys came to Khurshīh with a new message that the Nizārī ruler should immediately present himself before Hülegū, and in his absence a Mongol called Tükel Bahadur would act as basqag or protecting governor in Rūdbār. Khurshīh, who was obviously playing for time, sent his reply through a distinguished embassy headed by his vizier, Shams al-Dīn Gilākī, and the son of his father’s paternal uncle, Sayf al-Dīn Sulṭān Malik b. Kiyā Bū Ṭānṣūr b. Muḥammad II, who
accompanied the Mongol ambassadors and reached Hülegü on 17 Sha‘bān/9 September.234 Khurshāh had again asked for a year’s grace and the exemption of Alamūt and Lamasar from the demolition order. He had also instructed his lieutenants in Girkūh and Qhīstān to present themselves before Hülegü in submission, which they did shortly afterwards.

By this time, Hülegū’s patience had become exhausted by Khurshāh’s delaying tactics in surrendering. In the middle of Sha‘bān 654/September 1256, Hülegū set out from his encampment near Baštām to launch his assault on the Nizārī castles in Rūdbār. All the Mongol garrisons in ‘Irāq-i ʿAjam were now instructed to prepare for battle. At the same time, the main Mongol force proceeded towards Rūdbār from various directions. The right wing of Hülegū’s forces, under Buqa-Temūr and Köke-Ilgei, proceeded by way of Māzandarān, and its left wing, under the Chaghatai prince Tegüder and Ket-Buqa, advanced through Khuwār and Simnān. Hülegū himself, with the main army, followed a parallel route passing through Firūzkūh, Damāwand and Rayy. Two other Chaghatai princes, Balaghāi and Tutār, had meanwhile set out from ‘Irāq-i ʿAjam in the direction of Alamūt. Hülegū halted at Damāwand for a while, and from there sent yet another message to Khurshāh. The Nizārī leader was to come to Damāwand immediately, and were he to be delayed up to five days by his preparations, he was to send his son in advance. Khurshāh did despatch his son, or a youthful brother, on 17 Ramadān/8 October. But Hülegū returned the boy on the grounds of his youth, and suggested that if Khurshāh could not come till later, he should send another brother to relieve Shahanshāh. Hülegū was by this time in the general area of Rayy, and messages were constantly exchanged between him and Khurshāh. On 5 Shawwāl/26 October, Khurshāh sent out his brother Shīrānshāh in the company of 300 men, who arrived at Hülegū’s camp two days later. At the same time, the vizier Shams al-Dīn Gilākī had returned from Girkūh and brought its governor, the qādī Tāj al-Dīn Mardānshāh, before Hülegū, while Girkūh itself still held out. Shahanshāh was now sent back to Rūdbār with the message that if Khurshāh destroyed the castle of Maymūndiz and presented himself in person before the king, he would be received with honour; otherwise God alone knew what would befall him. Around this time, Hülegū secretly put to death near Qazwin many of the Nizāris who on different occasions had been sent to him.

By this time, the Mongol armies were entering Rūdbār from every side. Having finally decided to seize Maymūndiz, where Khurshāh was staying, Hülegū broke up his camp in Pishkildara on 10 Shawwāl/31 October and
advanced towards Rūdbār through Ṭāliqān. On 18 Shawwāl 654/8 November 1256, Hūlegū encamped on a hilltop facing Maymūndiz. He made a last appeal to Khurshāh to surrender, but he was told that the Nizārī ruler was absent from Maymūndiz and that nothing could be decided without his permission. Having been greatly impressed by the defences of Maymūndiz, Hūlegū consulted with his commanders as to whether they should besiege the castle or turn back and wait until the spring. Most of his advisers favoured withdrawal in view of the onset of the winter and the consequent impossibility of procuring provisions for the troops and fodder for the animals. A few, including Ket-Buqa, insisted on laying siege to the castle immediately, and Hūlegū supported their view. The Mongol armies began to prepare for a siege. To provide poles for their mangonels, the Mongols felled the trees which the Nizārīs themselves had planted in former times. When battle was joined, the Nizārīs gained some initial victories, pouring down stones from their own mangonels upon the besiegers. But on the second day of fighting, the Mongols brought into play a Chinese ballista (kamān-i gāv) with a range of 2,500 paces. The garrison of Maymūndiz now ceased fighting and asked for truce, which was granted. On the following day, Khurshāh, who had in fact been present at the castle, asked for a yarlīgh to grant him safe-conduct. The decree was drawn up by Juwayni, who then acted as Hūlegū's secretary and accompanied his master to the Nizārī castles. Khurshāh was evidently persuaded not to come down from Maymūndiz by some zealous fidaīs, who, in contradistinction to the foreign scholars present at his court, were strongly against surrendering to the Mongols. Meanwhile, more messages continued to be exchanged. It is clear that all along, Khurshāh had been playing for time in the hope that the snows of winter would come to his aid and render the siege operations of the Mongols impracticable; but the weather remained unseasonably mild in that autumn of 654/1256. On 25 Shawwāl/15 November, the Mongols resumed their bombardment of Maymūndiz on a much larger scale. At last, Khurshāh decided to surrender, being greatly encouraged in this decision by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and other outside scholars then staying at Maymūndiz.

Khurshāh first sent down his son and another brother called Īrānshāh with a delegation of notables. Then, on Sunday 29 Shawwāl 654/19 November 1256, he himself descended, surrounded by a group of dignitaries including Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, Khwāja Aṣīl al-Dīn Zūzanī and
the vizier Mu'ayyad al-Din. Ru'kn al-Din Khurshâh had reigned for exactly one year, and his surrender marked the close of the Nizârî state of Persia, which had been founded some 166 years earlier with the capture of Alamût by Hasan-i Sabbâh. On the day following his surrender, Khurshâh brought out all his family, dependants and the other inmates of the castle, also offering the meagre treasures of Maymundiz as a token of his submission. When the Mongols went up to the castle to commence the work of dismantling its buildings and structures, they were confronted by a group of highly devoted fidâ'is whose desperate resistance was broken up only after three days of fierce fighting.

Khurshâh was well received by Hûlegü, though he was kept under the surveillance of a Mongol commander. At Hûlegü's request, the Nizârî ruler despatched his representatives in the company of Mongol elchis to all the Nizârî castles in Rûdbâr with orders for their destruction. Some forty castles were thus demolished, after the evacuation of their garrisons. In Rûdbâr, only the commanders of Alamût and Lamasar refused to surrender, perhaps thinking that their imâm was acting under duress and was observing a new sort of taqiyya. Hûlegü himself proceeded to the foot of Alamût, where Khurshâh tried in vain to persuade that castle's commandant, Muqaddim al-Din, to capitulate. Leaving Balaghâi behind to besiege Alamût with a large force, Hûlegü now set out for Lamasar. After a few days, the garrison of Alamût decided to surrender; and Khurshâh, who had accompanied Hûlegü to Lamasar, interceded on their behalf with the Mongol conqueror. The inmates of Alamût were given three days' grace to bring down their belongings, a party of Mongols having first entered the castle to remove its mangonels and gates. Khurshâh himself received permission to visit the castle. On the fourth day, towards the end of Dhu'l-Qa'da 654/December 1256, the Mongols ascended to the fortress of Alamût and plundered whatever had been left behind. They also began the tedious work of demolishing Alamût and setting fire to its buildings and its library. Meanwhile, Juwaynî, who had accompanied Hûlegü to the foot of Lamasar, had been allowed to examine the library at Alamût and to salvage whatever he deemed necessary. He saved the Qur'âns, and a number of choice books, including some Ismâ'îli works, as well as certain astronomical instruments, before consigning the library to flames. Juwaynî has left a valuable description of the fortress of Alamût, which he surveyed in connection with his inspection of the library. Juwaynî was greatly impressed by the storage facilities and the food supplies there, as
well as the castle’s water supply system and fortifications. He describes the difficulties faced by a large group of Mongols who were assigned the task of demolishing the castle.

Hülegü had meanwhile failed to capture Lamasar or to induce its commandant to surrender, despite Khurshāh’s intervention. He left Tayir-Buqa to besiege the place with an army of Mongols and Persians. Lamasar held out for another year, before cholera broke out and killed the bulk of the garrison. The few who survived the epidemic were obliged to surrender sometime at the end of 655 A.H.237 Hülegü left Rüdbār for his main ordu near Hamadān in Dhu’l-Ḥijja 654/January 1257. Khurshāh, being still useful to the Mongols, accompanied the Īlkhan, while the imām’s family, servants and belongings were sent to Qazwin. From Hülegū’s ordu, Khurshāh despatched his emissaries along with Mongol elchis to the Nizārī castles in Syria, instructing them to guard the castles as subjects of the king until such time as Hülegū himself should arrive there; but his instructions were ignored in Syria. Meanwhile, with Khurshāh’s co-operation it had become possible for the Mongols to secure the speedy surrender and dismantlement of the Nizārī castles in Tārum, Rūdbār, Qūmis, Quhistān and elsewhere, with the major exceptions of Lamasar and Girdkūh. The commandants (singular, kūtvāl) and the bulk of the garrisons of these fallen castles were placed under the supervision of different Mongol units and commanders.

Khurshāh continued to be treated respectfully by the Mongols while he was of use to them. But the surrender of the bulk of the Nizārī castles made his presence an embarrassment to Hülegū. Therefore, when he asked to be sent to the court of Mönği, Hülegū readily approved his request. On 1 Rabi‘ I 655/9 March 1257, Khurshāh set out on his fateful journey to Mongolia with nine companions and a group of Mongols led by Bujrai. On the way, when the party arrived at the foot of Girdkūh, Khurshāh tried once again in vain to bring down the castle’s garrison, though he may have told them secretly not to surrender. Khurshāh was not evidently treated respectfully by his escorts; and, by the time they reached Bukhārā, Khurshāh had to engage in fist-fighting with his Mongol guards. Mönği refused to see Khurshāh when he finally arrived in Karakorum (Qaraqorum). He was dismissed and reproached by the Great Khan for not having yet dismantled Girdkūh and Lamasar. On the return journey, somewhere along the edge of the Khangai mountains in northwestern Mongolia, the eighth and final lord of Alamūt and his companions were
led away from the road and put to the sword by the Mongols. In the meantime, after Khurshāh’s departure for Mongolia, there had taken place a general massacre of the Persian Nizāris who were in Mongol custody. Khurshāh’s family and dependants detained at Qazwin were put to the sword by Qaraqai Bitikchi, while Ötegū-China, the Mongol commander in Khurāsān, summoned the Quhistānī Nizāris to great gatherings and slaughtered some 12,000 of them. According to Juwaynī, the massacre of the Nizāris had been carried out in accordance with a decree of Möngke to the effect that none of the Nizāris should be spared, reflecting an earlier order of Chingiz Khan himself.238

As Hodgson has pointed out, it seems that given the spirit of earlier times, when the Nizāris were enthusiastically fighting the Saljuqs under Hasan-i Šabbāh and his immediate successors, some of the Nizārī fortresses might have been able to resist the Mongol assaults at least long enough to persuade Hülegū to come to some sort of an accommodation with them.239 Juwaynī, who accompanied the Mongols to Alamūt, Maymūndiz and Lamasar, clearly emphasizes the impregnability and self-sufficiency of the Nizārī fortresses, especially Alamūt, which would have enabled them to withstand Mongol sieges for indefinite periods; he also recalls how Alamūt had earlier successfully resisted the Saljuq armies for over a decade.240 Rashīd al-Dīn, too, speaks of the good fortune of Möngke and Hülegū in having extirpated the Nizāris and their castles so quickly.241 Indeed, as Girdkūh was to demonstrate, at least the key Nizārī fortresses could have held out for long periods on the basis of their own resources. Girdkūh continued to resist its Mongol besiegers, as the last surviving Nizārī outpost in Persia, for thirteen years after the fall of Alamūt. The garrison of Girdkūh finally yielded from want of clothing on 29 Rabi’ II 669/15 December 1270, during the reign of the Ilkhānid Abaqa, seventeen years after the first investment of the place by Hülegū’s advance guards.242 The Mongols, who had erected permanent structures and dwelling places of their own around Girdkūh (the remains of which together with the stones of their mangonels are still found there), killed the survivors of the garrison on their descent. But the Mongols did not evidently demolish Girdkūh, which they continued to use under the Ilkhānids succeeding Abaqa.243 In its decision to surrender, the central Nizārī leadership seems to have been greatly influenced by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and other outside scholars amongst the Nizāris; scholars who, having enjoyed the hospitality of the Nizāris, were now eager to taste the yet
larger munificence of the Mongols, which they did upon dissociating
themselves from the last lord of Alamût and entering into the service of the
Ilkhânid dynasty of Persia founded by Hülegü (654–663/1256–1265).

The collapse of the Nizârî state in Persia must have disheartened the
Syrian Nizârîs, who could no longer count on the support and leadership
of Alamût and the personal guidance of the Nizârî Imâm, who was now no
longer accessible to his followers. Under the circumstances, the Syrian
Nizârîs began to select their leaders locally, sometimes two persons jointly
holding the office of their chief da‘î. Deprived of any sort of strong central
leadership and threatened by the designs of various powers—especially the
Mongols and the Mamlûk dynasty of Egypt—for the invasion of Syria, the
Syrian Nizârî community began to experience serious internal dissen-
sions, often manifested in the form of rivalries among the senior da‘îs and
independent behaviour of the governors of various fortresses. All of these
factors prepared the ground for the eventual submission of the Syrian
Nizârîs to al-Malik al-Zâhir Rukn al-Dîn Baybars I (658–676/1260–1277),
the Bahri Mamlûk sultan of Egypt, who soon extended his hegemony
over Syria and its different principalities. Meanwhile, having dealt with
the Persian Nizârîs, Hülegü had proceeded towards his second major
objective, the extinction of the ‘Abbâsid Caliphate. By Safar 656/February
1258, the Mongols seized Baghdâd and devastated the ancient capital of
the ‘Abbâsids for a whole week. The caliph al-Musta‘sim, who had
endeavoured in vain to prevent the Mongol cataclysm, was put to death on
Hülegü’s orders. Hülegü’s third campaign was directed against the
Ayyûbid states in Syria. In 658/1260, the Mongols seized Aleppo, and
soon afterwards Hamât and Damascus surrendered to Hülegü. In Rabi’ I
658/March 1260, Ket-Buqa, who had been in charge of the advance
operations of the Mongols in Syria, made his triumphal entry into
Damascus, accompanied by Het‘um, the king of Little Armenia, and the
latter’s son-in-law Bohemond VI of Antioch, the allies of the Mongols. It
was during the same year, 658/1260, that four of the Nizârî fortresses,
including Masyif, were surrendered to the Mongols by their governors.
The Mongol success in Syria was, however, short-lived. Hülegü returned
to Persia in the summer upon hearing the news of Möngke’s death, which
in fact had occurred a year earlier in 657/1259, leaving Ket-Buqa in
command of his reduced forces in Syria. On 25 Ramadân 658/3 September
1260, the Mongols suffered a drastic defeat at ‘Ayn Jâlût, in Palestine, at
the hands of the Mamlûk armies of Egypt, led by the sultan al-Muţaffar
Qutuz (657–658/1259–1260). Ket-Buqa was captured and put to death.
The vanguard of the Mamluk forces was commanded by Baybars, who succeeded Qutuz to the Mamluk sultanate and thwarted the Mongols in their subsequent attempts to establish themselves in the region. Soon, the Mongols were expelled from all of Syria, where Baybars rapidly emerged as the dominant power. The Nizaris evidently collaborated with the Mamluks and other Muslim rulers in repelling the Mongols from Syria, and after the battle of 'Ayn Jâlût recovered the four fortresses which they had earlier lost to them. At the time of the Mongol invasion of Syria, the Syrian Nizaris were under the leadership of Raḍī al-Dīn Abu'l-Ma'āli, who punished the Nizāri governors who had yielded their castles to the Mongols. According to Ibn Muyassar, Raḍī al-Dīn had become the chief da'ī in Syria in 656/1258, and shortly before succeeding to that office he had gone to Mamluk Egypt as a Nizāri envoy.

The Syrian Nizāris now attempted to establish friendly relations with Baybars by sending him embassies and gifts. Baybars, who was then preoccupied with the Mongols and the Franks, reciprocated by granting certain favours to the community. Nonetheless, from early on Baybars capitalized on the weakness and internal dissensions of the Nizāri community and systematically adopted measures which ultimately led to the loss of the political independence of the Syrian Nizāri community. Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir (d. 692/1293), the biographer of Baybars, reports that already in 659/1261 Baybars granted rights to Nizāri territories to al-Malik al-Mansūr (642–683/1244–1285), the Ayyūbid prince of Ḥamāt. At the same time, however, the Nizāris sent an embassy to Baybars and successfully demanded to receive the privileges which they had enjoyed under the Ayyūbids. Baybars, in an attempt to divide the Nizāris, now appointed the Nizāri envoy, a certain Jamīl al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Thibit, to the headship of the Nizāri community, which was then still held by Raḍī al-Dīn, perhaps conjointly with Najm al-Dīn Ismā'īl b. al-Sha'rānī. But the community refused to acknowledge Jamīl al-Dīn, who was put to death. It was about this time that Raḍī al-Dīn died and the aged Najm al-Dīn became the head of the Syrian da'wa in 660/1261–1262. Najm al-Dīn was later assisted by his son Shams wa al-Dīn and his son-in-law Ṣārim al-Dīn Mubārak, who was Raḍī al-Dīn’s son. The Nizārī community had continued to retain possession of eight permanent strongholds; namely, Maṣyāf, Qadmūs, Kahf, Khawābī, Ruṣāfa, Manīqa (Maynaqa), ‘Ullayqa and Qulay’a. Khariba seems to have been lost sometime earlier.

As Baybars continued to consolidate his position in Syria, the Nizāris found it advisable to periodically renew their friendly overtures to him.
661/1263, when Baybars was engaged in his campaigns against the Franks, a Nizārī mission under the two sons of the Nizārī chiefs came to the sultan with gifts. The envoys of the ār al-da’wa, probably Shams al-Din and Šārim al-Din, were treated kindly. However, in 664/1265, Baybars felt strong enough to order the collection of taxes and tolls on the gifts sent to the Nizārīs by the various Frankish kings and the ruler of Yaman; gifts which passed through Egypt. Henceforth, the political significance of the Syrian Nizārīs, who were in no position to resist Baybars’ encroachments on their sovereignty, declined rapidly. Soon afterwards, the Nizārīs themselves began to pay tribute to Baybars, following the conclusion of a peace treaty in 664/1266 between the Mamlūk sultan and the Hospitallers. According to this treaty, the Hospitallers renounced the tributes which they had hitherto received from the Nizārīs and other Muslim states around Ḥamāt and Ḥims. Furthermore, starting in 665/1267, the Nizārīs became tributaries of Baybars, paying him what they previously sent to the Hospitallers, for which payment Baybars had already reproached them. In effect, the Nizārīs had now placed themselves under the suzerainty of the Mamlūk state, and it did not take long before they lost their nominal independence completely as Baybars maintained his pressure on the community. Indeed, Baybars soon began to appoint and dismiss the heads of the Nizārī community, as the lords of Alamūt had done previously.

In 668/1270, while Baybars was travelling to Ḥiṣn al-Akrād in the vicinity of the Nizārī territory, Najm al-Din, unlike other amīrs in the area, did not present himself before the sultan to pay homage. Baybars was greatly offended by this chief and reacted by deposing him. When Najm al-Din shortly afterwards sent his son-in-law Šārim al-Dīn Mubārak, the governor of 'Ullayqa, as an envoy to Baybars, evidently in the hope of receiving a reduction in the Nizārī tribute paid to the Mamlūks, the sultan designated Šārim al-Dīn to the headship of the Nizārī community. The sultan now demanded possession of Maṣyāf, which was to be entrusted to one of his own amīrs, 'Īzz al-Dīn al-'Adimi. Šārim al-Dīn, who was to hold the Nizārī castles as the deputy of Baybars, proceeded to take charge of them in Jumādā II 668/February 1270. His authority was initially contested by Najm al-Dīn, who soon yielded. But Šārim al-Dīn, too, angered the sultan by attempting through trickery to take possession of Maṣyāf, in violation of the sultan’s instructions. Once inside, he put to death a large number of the residents of Maṣyāf, who, abiding by the sultan’s orders, had refused to yield the castle to him. On Baybars’ request, al-Malik al-
Mansur, the ruler of Hamat, dislodged the rebellious Sarim al-Din from Masyaf and sent him as a prisoner to Cairo, where he later died. Baybars reinstated Najm al-Din, who had meanwhile apologized to the sultan; his son Shams al-Din was kept in Cairo.

In the month of Rajab 669/February 1271, when Baybars was besieging the Frankish castle of Hisn al-Akrad, two Nizariis from 'Ullayqa, who allegedly had been sent to kill the sultan, were apprehended. It became known that the fida'is had initially visited Bohemond VI, the sultan's enemy, with whose assistance they were to carry out their assassination mission. The discovery of this plot put an end to any existing entente between Baybars and the Nizari leadership in Syria. Baybars now decided to deal effectively with the sectarians. Shams al-Din was arrested on charges of collaborating with the Franks against the sultan. Najm al-Din pleaded successfully with Baybars for the release of his son, but he was forced to give up his leadership position and surrendered control of the Nizari fortresses to the Mamluks. Najm al-Din, then ninety years of age, accompanied Baybars to Cairo, where he died in 672/1274.254 Shams al-Din, who had acted as his father's chief assistant and probably had also held the office of chief da'i conjointly with him, was allowed to remain temporarily in Syria for settling the affairs of the Nizari da'wa and castles. However, for a time he tried in vain to organize the Nizariis against Baybars. The Nizari castles now began to submit in rapid succession to Baybars, who used military blockades, threats, negotiations, and tempting promises in dealing with them.255 'Ullayqa and Rusafa surrendered in Shawwal 669/May 1271; and by Dhu'l-Qa'da 671/May 1273, Khawabi, Qulay'a, Maniqa and Qadmus had also capitulated. Meanwhile, Shams al-Din, discouraged in his efforts to launch a revolt, gave himself up to the Mamluks and was sent to Cairo. Only the garrison of Kahf mustered some resistance, and with the fall of that fortress in Dhu'l-Hijja 671/July 1273 the last independent Nizari outpost in Syria fell into the hands of the Mamluks, less than three years after the garrison of Girdkuh had surrendered to the Mongols.

Having acquired complete control of the Nizari strongholds, Baybars, unlike the Mongols in Persia, tolerated the Nizariis and did not attempt to exterminate them. The Nizariis were in fact permitted to remain in their fortresses in the Jabal Bahri', but only under the strict supervision of Mamluk lieutenants. Indeed, there are reports that Baybars and his successors employed the services of the Nizariis against their own enemies.256 Already prior to the submission of all the Nizarii fortresses, Baybars is alleged to have used the services of the Nizari fida'is against his
opponents. Baybars is reported to have threatened the count of Tripoli with assassination in Sha'ban 669/April 1271, while the murder of Philip of Montford, lord of Tyre, in 1270 and the unsuccessful attempt on the life of prince Edward of England in 1272 are also said to have been instigated by him. Amongst the sources speaking of the use of Nizārī fīdā'īs by the early Mamlūks, an elaborate account is related by the celebrated Moorish traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who passed through Syria for the first time in his travels in 726/1326. He names Manīqa, ʿUllayqa, Qadmūs, Kahf and Maṣyāf as the fortresses which were still in the hands of the Ismāʿīliyya (Fidāwiyya), and then proceeds to give interesting details on the arrangements existing between the fīdā'īs and the Mamlûk sultan al-Nāṣir Nāṣir al-Dīn Muhammad, who reigned intermittently between 693/1294 and 741/1340.

Thus, the Syrian Nizārīs were allowed to exist in a semi-autonomous fashion as loyal subjects of the Mamlûks and their successors. This gave the Syrian Nizārī community the opportunity to maintain its identity, and its traditions and practices, a fate denied to the Persian Nizārīs, who never really recovered from the Mongol catastrophe. But for all practical purposes, the days of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism as the religion of a state and a political power to be reckoned with had already ended before the Mongols and the Mamlûks dealt their decisive blows to the Persian and Syrian branches of the movement. Whatever diminished political significance the Nizārīs had retained precariously during the later Alamūt period was irrevocably lost in the year 654/1256. With the fall of Alamūt, the majestic mountain fortress selected by Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ as the original headquarters of the movement, Nizārī Ismāʿīlism entered a totally different and often obscure phase of its history, surviving merely as a minor Shīʿī Muslim sect without its earlier political significance.
Post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismāʿīlism

In this final chapter, we shall trace the development of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism from the fall of Alamūt in 654/1256 to the present time, a period of seven centuries. The first five centuries of this period represent the darkest phase in Nizārī history and constitute the longest obscure period in the history of the Ismāʿīlī movement. Only the main events of this period are currently known to researchers in Nizārī studies. The Nizāris of Persia, contrary to the declarations of Juwaynī and later historians, did in fact survive the destruction of their state and strongholds at the hands of the Mongols. Despite the Mongol massacres, the Persian Nizārī community was not totally extirpated during 654–655/1256–1257, and significant numbers escaped the Mongol debacle in both Rūdbār and Quhistān. And while Rūkn al-Dīn Khurshāh was spending the last few months of his life amongst the Mongols, the Nizārī leadership evidently managed to hide his son and designated successor, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, who became the progenitor of the Nizārī Imāms of the post-Alamūt period. The Nizārī Imāmāte was thus preserved, and it was soon handed down through two different lines of imāms. For at least two centuries, however, the Nizārīs did not have direct access to their imāms, who were at the time living clandestinely in different parts of Persia. Meanwhile, in order to escape further persecution at the hands of the Īlkhānids, the Timūrids and other dynasties ruling over Persia, the highly disorganized and demoralized Persian Nizārīs were once again obliged to observe the strictest form of taqiyya. Under such circumstances, when mere survival was the prime concern of the community, the doctrinal background of the Persian Nizārīs enabled them to seek refuge under the mantle of Sūfism.

In Syria, as noted, Baybars I subjugated the Nizārī community completely by the year 671/1273. Thereafter, the Syrian Nizāris, devoid of any political significance and with almost no contact with the Persian Nizāris, lived in a semi-autonomous manner as the loyal subjects of the Mamlūks.
and later the Ottomans. Meanwhile, a third Nizārī tradition had come into existence in the upper Oxus region, where Ismā'īlism had been introduced several centuries earlier. The Ismā'īlis of Badakhshan and the surrounding areas evidently acknowledged the Nizārī Imāms sometime before the fall of Alamūt. The Nizārīs of those remote parts remained unaffected by the Mongol invasion of Persia and during the post-Alamūt period developed a somewhat distinctive literary tradition of their own, according particular importance to the works of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. They also preserved the bulk of the extant Nizārī literature of the Alamūt and post-Alamūt periods written in the Persian language. It was in the post-Alamūt period that Nizārīsm had its greatest success on the Indian subcontinent. The Indian Nizārī community, designated chiefly by the term Khoja, grew steadily under the leadership of its local leaders or pīrs until it became the main stronghold of the Nizārī sect. The Nizārī Khojas, too, developed a specific religious tradition, interfacing Islamic and Hindu traditions. The Indian Nizārīs experienced a major schism in the first quarter of the 10th/16th century. When Imām Shāh, one of the community’s leaders, died in 919/1513, his son and successor Nar (Nūr) Muḥammad Shāh repudiated the Nizārī Imāms living in Persia and claimed the imāmāte for his father and himself. He in effect founded a separate Indian Nizārī sub-sect whose adherents became known as the Imām-Shāhīs or Satpanthīs. This sect was later further subdivided, while different groups continued to split off periodically from the main Nizārī Khoja body.

The widely dispersed Nizārī communities of the post-Alamūt period, differentiated in terms of their language and socio-ethnic characteristics as well as their historical backgrounds, developed independently of one another, each retaining its own particular heritage and religious literature. Having been deprived of any central leadership under the guidance of their imāms, for quite some time after the fall of Alamūt, the Nizārī communities, especially outside of Persia, now came to be led by their own local leaders, dā'īs, pīrs or shaykhs, who alone could claim access to the Nizārī Imāms living secretly in Persia. In time, these local leaders established their own independent dynasties, which caused occasional schisms in the Nizārī movement. All of these factors have combined to create numerous research problems in post-Alamūt Nizārī studies, especially in view of the fact that very few reliable sources, Nizārī or otherwise, are available on the subject. In fact, it has been only during the last few decades that we have acquired some insights into the main trends in the development of post-Alamūt Nizārīsm.
As a result of modern progress in Nizārī studies, initiated by Ivanow, we can now distinguish three approximate periods in the history of post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismā'īlīsm. The earliest period, covering roughly the first two centuries after the fall of Alamūt, is the most obscure, during which time the Persian Nizāris attempted in vain to reassert their control over the Rūdbār region. It was also during that initial period that the Persian Nizāris camouflaged themselves under the cloak of Sufism and that a succession dispute in the family of the imāms split the Nizārī community into two factions, the Muḥammad-Shāhīs and the Qāsim-Shāhīs. The Muhammad-Shāhī Imāms, who, initially, seemingly had the support of the Nizārī majority in certain regions, emigrated to India during the earlier part of the 10th/16th century, but by the beginning of the 13th/19th century this line of the Nizārī Imāms became discontinued. The Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms, who were gradually acknowledged by the Nizārī majoritarian, emerged in Anjudān, a village in central Persia, at least by the second half of the 9th/15th century. This marks the beginning of the second period in post-Alamūt Nizārīsm, designated by Ivanow as the Anjudān revival, a renaissance in Nizārī thought and da'wā activity. During this phase, lasting for about two centuries, the Nizārī Imāms of the Qāsim-Shāhī line, who developed close relations with the Ni'imat Allāhi Şūfī order in Persia, attempted to extend their control over the outlying Nizārī communities in Syria, Central Asia and India, where great numbers had hitherto acknowledged the Muhammad-Shāhī Imāms or had come to owe their immediate allegiance to their hereditary dynasty of pirs.

Under the more favourable conditions created by the adoption of Twelver Shi‘ism as the state religion in Safawid Persia, the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms conducted the da'wā activities more openly. The Anjudān period also witnessed a revival in literary activities amongst the Nizāris of Persia and some adjoining areas, who now produced the first doctrinal treatises after the fall of Alamūt. In the second half of the 12th/18th century, the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms, who had meanwhile moved from Anjudān to the nearby village of Kahak and thence to Kirmān, began to acquire political prominence in Persia under the Zand and Qājār dynasties. By the middle of the 13th/19th century, when the Nizārī Imām had become known to the outside world as the Āghā Khān and the seat of the Nizārī Imāmate had been transferred to India, the Nizāris entered the modern phase of their history. This period in Nizārī history has been characterized by the efforts of the Nizārī Imāms, or the Āghā Khāns, to consolidate their leadership
over the community and improve the socio-economic conditions of their followers, especially of those living on the Indian subcontinent and on the coast of East Africa.

By contrast to the Tayyibis, the literary output of the Nizaris has always remained meagre. The difficult conditions under which the Nizaris have often lived and the generally limited standard of literacy and intellectual accomplishment attained by the community until recent times made it almost impossible for the Nizaris to produce outstanding theologians and authors comparable to the great Yamani Tayyibi da'isis. This dearth of education, together with the specific doctrinal trends of the Alamut period, caused the post-Alamut Nizaris, especially outside of Syria, to lose interest in studying the literature of the Fatimid Isma'ili, a literature preserved and utilized mainly by the Tayyibi Isma'ili. Of all the Nizari communities, only the Syrian Nizaris have preserved a certain number of the classical Isma'ili treatises of the Fatimid period. The few doctrinal treatises written during the post-Alamut period essentially retain the Nizari teaching of the late Alamut period; one does not come across any major or original work in the literature of this period. Furthermore, until more recent times, the post-Alamut Nizaris did not show any interest in studying the history of their sect, and consequently did not undertake to compile any historical works. It is, therefore, not surprising that many present-day Nizaris have continued to remain rather ill-informed about their past heritage and the development of the Isma'ili movement in general. Needless to repeat that the various Nizari communities of the post-Alamut period, separated geographically and by language barriers, have developed distinctive literary traditions of their own with little or no contact with one another.

On the basis of a mixture of geographical, linguistic, ethnological, and other criteria, the Nizari literature of the post-Alamut period can be classified into four main categories; namely, the Persian, the Central Asian, the Syrian and the Indian sources. The sources produced in Persia, Afghanistan and the upper Oxus region are written entirely in the Persian language, while the Syrian sources are in Arabic. The Nizaris of the Indian subcontinent, including the Khojas, the Satpanthi and the adherents of some lesser sub-sects, have utilized various Indian languages and dialects in committing their religious doctrines and traditions to writing. It should also be noted that our discussion of the post-Alamut Nizari sources refers mainly to the doctrinal works produced by the followers of the Qasim-Shahi Nizari Imams. The Muhammad-Shahi Nizari evidently produced
very few works in Syria, the upper Oxus and India, which have not been studied adequately.¹

The Nizāris of Persia and the adjacent regions, who use the Persian language in their religious literature, evidently did not produce any doctrinal works during the first two centuries after the fall of Alamūt. From that early post-Alamūt period, we have only the poetical works of Nizārī Quhistānī, a poet and government functionary from Birjand who died around 720/1320. He was perhaps the first post-Alamūt Nizārī author to choose the verse and Sūfī forms of expression for camouflaging his Ismāʿīlī ideas, a model readily adopted by later Persian Nizārī writers. The revival of Nizārīsm during the Anjudān period also encouraged the literary activities of the community, and a number of better-educated Nizāris living in and around Persia now began to produce the first doctrinal works of the post-Alamūt period in the Persian language.² The earliest and most noteworthy amongst such authors were Abū Ishāq Quhistānī, probably a native of the district of Muʿminābād, who flourished during the second half of the 9th/15th century,³ and Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī, a dāʾī and prolific writer with limited poetical talent who died after 960/1553.⁴ They were followed by Imām Quli Khākī Khurāsānī, who died after 1056/1646, and his son ʿAli Quli Raqqāmī Khurāsānī (or Dizbādī),⁵ amongst others. Khākī and his son, too, living in Dizbād, a village in the mountains between Mashhad and Nīshāpūr, resorted to poetry and Sūfī expressions for disguising their Nizārī ideas.

In modern times, a few more doctrinal works have been written in the Persian language by Nizārī authors. These works, produced in Persia, Afghanistan, and even India, marked a new revival in Nizārī literary activities. This new revival, which faded out in the opening decades of the present century, had been encouraged by the efforts of the Āghā Khāns following the transfer of their residence to India, to re-establish their control over the various Nizārī communities, similar to the efforts of the imāms of the Anjudān period. Amongst such modern Nizārī works written in Persian, mention may be made of some short treatises composed by Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh al-Ḥusaynī, the eldest son of Āqā ʿAli Shāh, the second Āghā Khān.⁶ He spent the greater part of his life in Bombay and Poona, and predeceased his father by a few months in 1302/1884 whilst still in his early thirties. In Persia, the most learned Nizārī author of recent times was Muḥammad b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Khurāsānī, who adopted the poetical takhallus or pen name of Fidāʿī and was also referred to as Ḥājī
Ākhūnd by the Persian Nizāris. He was a descendant of Khākī Khurāsānī and lived in the important Nizārī village of Dizbād near Māshhad, where his relatives are still residing. Fidāʾī travelled to India three times between 1313 and 1324/1896–1906, to see the Nizārī Imām of the time, Sūltān Muḥammad Shāh, Āghā Khān III, who treated him most kindly and appointed him to an important teaching position in the Persian Nizārī community. He died at Dizbād in 1342/1923 and was buried next to Khākī Khurāsānī; the site was modestly repaired in 1966.

Fidāʾī composed several doctrinal works, including the Irshād al-sālikīn, completed in 1317/1900, the Kashf al-ḥaqāʾiq, written in 1332/1914, the Kitāb-i dānish-i ahl-i bīnīsh, and the Ḥadiqat al-maʿānī, a treatise on fiqh. Copies of these works were either given or shown to the present writer in Dizbād and Mashhad in the summer of 1985 by Fidāʾī’s sole grandson Ṣadr al-Dīn b. Mullā Shams al-Dīn Mīrshāhī; but none of these works have been listed in the Ismāʿīlī bibliographies of Ivanow and Poonawala. Fidāʾī was also a prolific poet and his Dīwān of poetry, collected by his descendants, contains about 12,000 verses. Fidāʾī was the only contemporary Persian Nizārī to write a history of Ismāʿīlism, the already-cited Kitāb-i hidāyat al-muʾminin al-ṭālibīn, completed around 1320/1903, probably at the request of Āghā Khān III. Fidāʾī’s history, extending from the origins of the Ismāʿīlī movement to the Imāms of the post-Alamūt period, and filled with anachronisms and inaccuracies, was revised and updated to around 1328/1910 by Mūsā Khān b. Muḥammad Khān Khurāsānī (d. 1937), whose family had been in the service of the Āghā Khāns. Mūsā Khān himself had been an employee of Shīhāb al-Dīn Shāh before entering the service of his younger half-brother Āghā Khān III. He was a poorly educated man with limited knowledge of the Persian language; but he had access to the library of the Āghā Khāns in Bombay and had heard many of the oral traditions of the sect, including those circulating in the Imām’s own family. The portion added by Mūsā Khān to Fidāʾī’s history deals mainly with the lives of the Āghā Khāns and their miraculous deeds; the continuation is particularly noteworthy for reflecting the mentality and some of the beliefs of the nineteenth-century Nizārī Khojas.

As noted, within Persian Nizārī Ismāʿīlism, the Nizārī community in Badakhshān and the adjacent areas in the upper Oxus region has retained a specific literary tradition. This tradition represents several strata of Ismāʿīlī literature, though the Badakhshānī sectarians have been especially attached to Nāṣir-i Khusraw and his works. Consequently, the Nizārīs of Badakhshān have preserved and transmitted the anonymous Umm al-
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kitāb, the genuine and spurious writings of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, and the Persian Nizārī works of the Alamūt and post-Alamūt periods, including the treatises representing the coalescence of Ismā‘īlism with Śūfism and many anonymous works whose authorship cannot definitely be attributed to the Nizārīs. The Nizārīs of Badakhshān have played an important part in preserving the Nizārī literature written in the Persian language, which strangely enough has always been a foreign language to them. As noted, a large number of Nizārī manuscripts were recovered during 1959–1963 by a Soviet research expedition sent to the Gorno-Badakhshān region in Tājikistān.9 These manuscripts, all written in Persian, have been preserved mainly by the Nizārīs of Shughnān in western Pāmīr, whose own native language is a Tājik dialect. During the post-Alamūt period, the Nizārī community in Badakhshān did not produce any noteworthy authors after Sayyid Suhrāb Vali Badakhshānī, who wrote around 856/1452.10

The underground existence of the Persian Nizārīs did not attract the attention of the Persian historians of the post-Alamūt period, who did not have any direct contacts with the Nizārī communities and who, like Juwayni, thought that the Mongols had completely extirpated the sectarians. Only a few Persian chroniclers writing during the first three post-Alamūt centuries, including the historians of the Caspian region, occasionally refer to the Persian Nizārīs. It was after the latter part of the 12th/18th century, when the Nizārī Imāms had acquired political prominence in Persia, that the chroniclers of the Zand and Qājār dynasties began to make frequent references to the Nizārī Imāms and their political activities, especially in the province of Kirmān. Amongst such later chroniclers, mention may be made of Aḥmad ‘Ali Khān Vazīrī Kirmānī (d. 1295/1878), Rīdā Quli Khān Hidāyat (d. 1288/1871), and Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk Sipihr (d. 1297/1880).

The Syrian Nizārīs, who adhered almost entirely to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line of the Nizārī Imāms until the 13th/19th century, retained their own literature written in Arabic. During the post-Alamūt period, as in earlier times, the Syrian Nizārīs developed their literature independently of the Persian Nizārīs. The Syrian community preserved many of the Ismā‘īlī works of the Fāṭimid period, and consequently, some of the traditions of the Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlīs continued to be represented in the Nizārī texts of the Syrian provenance. However, the Syrian community, too, produced a few authors and genuine treatises during the period under survey.11 The most famous Syrian Nizārī author of this period was the dā‘ī Abū Fīrās Shihāb al-Dīn b. al-Qāḍī Naṣr al-Daylamī al-Maynaqī, who
died either in 937/1530–1531 or 947/1540–1541. The father of Abū Firās had migrated from Daylam to Syria in 859/1455 and settled down in the fortress of Maynaqa, where Abū Firās was born in 872/1467–1468. The Nizāris of Syria led an uneventful life under the Ottomans, who mention the sectarians and their qilā' al-da'wa, the Nizārī castles west of Ḥamāt, in their land registers of Syria. The Syrian Nizāris did not attract the attention of the outsiders until the early decades of the nineteenth century, when they were reported to be in conflict with their rulers and their Nuṣayrī neighbours. It was also around that time that the European diplomats, travellers and orientalists began to make references to the Syrian Nizārī community. In modern times, a few Syrian Nizārī scholars, notably 'Ārif Tāmir, a Muḥammad-Shāhī, and the late Muṣṭafā Ghālib (1923–1984), a Qāsim-Shāhī, have written about the history of their community. Professor Tāmir of Salamiyya has also edited a few of the surviving Syrian Nizārī texts.

The Indian Nizāris, too, have developed their own distinctive literature, the gināns (gnāns), representing the traditions of the Nizārī Khojas and the Imām-Shāhīs. They did not produce any elaborate theological or philosophical treatises nor did they translate the Persian and Arabic texts of other Nizārī communities into their own languages. The word ginān is evidently a popularization of jnāna, a Sanskrit word generally defined to mean contemplative or meditative knowledge. The authorship of the gināns is attributed chiefly to various pīrs whose activities on the Indian subcontinent began as early as the 7th/13th century. The gināns continued to be composed and revised until the early decades of the present century; they amount to a total of about 800 separate compositions of different lengths. Originally, the gināns were transmitted only orally, but in time, starting at least in the first half of the 10th/16th century, they began to be collected and recorded in writing. Āghā Khān II made a special effort to collect the gināns by assigning the task of locating and acquiring the relevant manuscripts to a specific group of his Indian followers. The gināns exist in a number of Indian languages, including Sindhi, Gujarāti, Hindi, Panjābī, and Multānī. The bulk of the recorded corpus of the ginān literature has survived in the Khōjkī script, one of the earliest forms of written Sindhi. Since the middle of the last century, an increasing number of gināns preserved by the Nizārī Khojas have been published, mainly in Gujarātī script. In the present century, the Imām-Shāhīs too, started to publish the gināns preserved amongst them, which are similar to those recorded by the Nizārī Khojas. The Khojas and the Imām-Shāhīs share
the same *gināns* composed prior to the early decades of the 10th/16th century. Other offshoots of the Nizāri Khojas, like the Mōmnas, preserve a religious literature that is very similar in form to the *gināns*. The *gināns*, as noted, are composed in verse form, and are meant to be sung and recited melodically. In some instances, the *ginān* manuscripts specify the melodies or *rāgas* according to which the *gināns* should be sung.

The *gināns* mainly contain moral and religious instructions, mystical poems, and legendary histories of the *pīrs*. On the whole, the *ginān* literature is not a reliable source of historical information, since it essentially reflects the community's self-image about its history and mixes reality with legend. Since the last century, a number of Nizāri Khojas and Imām-Shāhīs have produced works dealing with the history and beliefs of the Indian Nizāris. The earliest of these works were written by the Imām-Shāhīs, such as Qādī Raḥmat Allāh b. Ghulām Muṣṭafā’s *Manāzil al-aqtāb*, a history of the Imām-Shāhī sect written in Persian around 1237/1821-1822. The majority of these works are written in Gujarati and are polemical, reflecting the oral traditions of the specific Nizāri sub-sects of the Indian subcontinent. More recently, a number of Khojas have written books and doctoral theses on various aspects of Nizarism in India, Pakistan and East Africa, especially emphasizing the socio-economic progress of those Nizāri communities in the imāmate of the Āghā Khāns. The Āghā Khāns, who entered the political scene in British India in 1258/1842 and subsequently played an active part in international affairs, have of course been discussed and studied in numerous modern works, including several biographies.

Post-Alamūt Nizārīsm is one of the least understood phases of the Ismāʿīlī movement; and many aspects of its first five centuries will probably continue to be surrounded by controversy. The research difficulties of studying post-Alamūt Nizārism stem not only from the scarcity of reliable sources but also from the fact that the various Nizārī communities of this obscure period developed independently of one another and produced their own literatures in different languages. Under the circumstances, modern scholars, including the specialists in Ismāʿīlī studies, have not so far produced major studies dealing with this phase of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism. Only Ivanow, the founder of modern Nizārī studies, has made important contributions to this field. He indefatigably acquired, edited and published a number of post-Alamūt Nizārī texts written in Persian and preserved in the upper Oxus region, India, and elsewhere. These texts, published in the Ismaili Society Series, together with several original
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studies produced by Ivanow, have in fact set the perspective for the study of the history and doctrines of the post-Alamūt Nizārīs, especially in Persia and some adjacent regions. The investigation of post-Alamūt Nizārīsm in Persia, where the imāms lived until the last century, has to some extent illuminated the history of other Nizārī communities. The various Nizārī communities, however, need to be studied independently. The greatest progress to date has been made in the case of the Nizārī community of the Indian subcontinent, which is not only one of the largest and best organized Nizārī communities of the world but has also produced the majority of contemporary Nizārī scholars and researchers. On the other hand, the post-Alamūt Nizārīs of Syria and the upper Oxus have received very little attention from modern scholars, who have doubtless been aware of the decline in the overall significance of these isolated Nizārī communities. In this chapter we shall present the preliminary and often fragmentary results of modern research in post-Alamūt Nizārīsm. The writing of a connected history of Nizārīsm during the post-Alamūt period still requires a more profound understanding of the development of the individual Nizārī communities. Hopefully, the efforts of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, established in 1977 in London under the patronage of H.H. Karīm Āghā Khān IV, will enhance our knowledge of this branch of Ismā'īlī studies.

The Nizārīs of Persia became completely disorganized and disoriented in the immediate aftermath of the destruction of their state and fortresses in the year 654/1256. Those who survived the Mongol massacres of Rūdbār and Qhustīn entered a new phase of their history, living mainly outside their traditional mountain strongholds and strictly observing taqiyya. The news of the execution of Rukn al-Dīn Khurshīh in Mongolia in 655/1257 must have dealt another demoralizing blow to the confused and displaced Nizārīs who had been accustomed to having access to their imām or his local representatives. The Nizārī communities of Persia were now deprived of any central leadership which hitherto had been provided by the headquarters of the Nizārī movement at Alamūt. Henceforth the Nizārī communities were to develop on a local basis and independently of one another. In Persia, whilst the garrison of Gīrdkūh was still holding out against the Mongols and their local allies in the Caspian region, the Nizārīs had come to be located almost entirely in Daylam and Qhustīn. The isolated Nizārīs of other areas in Persia either migrated to these regions or were gradually assimilated into the surrounding non-Nizārī communities. At the same time many of the Qhustānī Nizārīs who survived the Mongol
massacres migrated to Afghanistan, Sind, Panjāb and other parts of the Indian subcontinent. It seems that the Nizārīs of Rūdbār soon succeeded in reorganizing themselves under some sort of local leadership; and less than two decades after the fall of Alamūt they had acquired a military force that continued to be active for quite some time. The Nizārīs of northern Persia made periodic attempts to reoccupy Alamūt and other key fortresses of Rūdbār which evidently had not been completely demolished, as reported by Juwaynī and reiterated by later Persian historians of the Ilkhanid period. The Mongols themselves had in fact reconstructed Alamūt and Lamasar for their own use. In 674/1275–1276, five years after the fall of Girdkuh, the Rūdbārī Nizārīs were strong enough to recapture Alamūt in a coalition with a descendant of the Khwārazmshāhs. They retained Alamūt for almost one year before they were dislodged by a force sent against them by Hülegū’s son and successor in the Ilkhanid dynasty, Abaqa (663–680/1265–1282).17

According to Nizārī tradition, in the months following the fall of Alamūt, the Persian Nizārī community managed to hide Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh’s minor son, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, who had received the naṣṣ. Shams al-Dīn, who succeeded to the imāmate on his father’s death in 655/1257, was reportedly taken to Ādharbayjān by some of the Nizārī dignitaries. There, he grew up and lived clandestinely as a tradesman and an embroiderer, whence his nickname of Zardūz. Certain allusions in the still unpublished Safar-nāma of Nizārī Quhistānī indeed indicate that Shams al-Dīn Muhammad, and possibly his next successor, lived in concealment in Ādharbayjān or in southern Caucasus. Hakīm Sa’d al-Dīn (or Na’īm al-Dīn) b. Shams al-Dīn (or Jalāl al-Dīn) b. Muḥammad Nizārī Quhistānī was, as noted, a Nizārī poet born in Birjand in 645/1247–1248 into a land-owning Ismā’īli family.18 Nizārī’s father, a poet himself, lost his wealth in the Mongol invasion of Quhistān. After receiving his early education in Birjand and Qā’in, Nizārī studied Persian and Arabic literature as well as philosophy, and subsequently served at the court and chancery of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad I (643–684/1245–1285), the founder of the Kart (or Kurt) dynasty of Harāt, and his successors. Nizārī was in fact obliged to panegyrize the Sunni Kart rulers in many of his qaṣidas. Both in his official capacity and on his own initiative, Nizārī travelled widely. In Shawwāl 678/February 1280,19 he set off from Tūn on a long journey to Ādharbayjān, Arrān, Georgia, Armenia and Baku, which lasted for two years (678–679/1280–1281). It was during this journey that Nizārī evidently saw the Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad,
named by him as Shams-i Din Shäh Nîmrûz 'Ali and Shäh Shams. Nizârî fell ill in Tabriz, possibly the place of residence of the imâm, and after being helped by some local Nizâris, whom he calls the Ikhwân al-Šafâ, he continued on his northward journey in Safar 679/June 1280. Nizârî relates the account of this journey in his versified Safar-nâmâ, written in mathnawi form and containing about 1200 verses. He praises the current imâm in his poems, and also speaks of the spiritual qiymâta and other Ismā'îli ideas, resorting extensively to Şûfi forms of expression. After returning to Quhistân, Nizârî served for a while longer the Kart rulers who had extended their influence throughout Afghanistan and Khurâsân. However, Nizârî’s enemies eventually succeeded in arousing the Karts against him. He was dismissed and his properties confiscated. Disillusioned and impoverished, Nizârî took up agriculture during his final years. He died in Bîrjand in 720/1320–1321, during the reign of Ghiyâth al-Dîn (709–729/1308–1328), who was Shams al-Dîn Muḥammad Kart’s grandson. His grave was destroyed when the cemetery of Bîrjand was turned into a park after 1344/1925. In recent years, a new mausoleum has been constructed for Nizârî in his native Bîrjand.

Shams al-Dîn Muḥammad died around 710/1310–1311 in Ādharbâyjân, after an imâmâta of almost half a century. It was during his long imâmâta that the Persian Nizârîs, especially in Rûdbâr, reorganized themselves to some extent and temporarily reoccupied Alamût, while the Syrian Nizâris became completely subjugated by the Mamlûks. Between Shams al-Dîn’s death and the second half of the 9th/15th century, when the Qâsim-Shâhî Nizârî Imâms emerged in Anjudân, there lies an obscure period in the history of Nizârî Ismâ’ilism. Practically nothing is known about the imâms who, according to Nizârî traditions, succeeded one another in Persia during this period of more than one and a half centuries. Only the names of these imâms have been preserved by later Nizâris. Indeed, the sectarian traditions present an unbroken chain of succession to the Nizârî Imâmâta during the post-Alamût period, although later lists of these imâms differ concerning their names, number and sequence. The official list currently circulating amongst the Qâsim-Shâhî Nizârîs was evidently finalized only during the latter part of the last century.

After Shams al-Dîn Muḥammad, there occurred once again a dispute over the succession to the imâmâta, splitting the line of the Nizârî Imâms and their followers into what became known as the Muḥammad-Shâhî and Qâsim-Shâhî branches. The Muḥammad-Shâhî line of imâms, whose most famous figure was Shâh Tâhir Dakkanî, was discontinued about two
centuries ago; while the Qāsim-Shāhī line has endured to the present day. The Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms, who since the earlier decades of the last century have carried the title of Āghā Khān, an honorific meaning chief master or lord, are now the sole Nizārī Imāms. The origins of this schism, which further weakened the Nizārī movement of the post-Alamūt period, have remained rather obscure, especially since the existing sectarian sources do not discuss the matter in detail. The Qāsim-Shāhī sources, constituting almost all of the extant Nizārī sources, do not refer to this schism at all. The few surviving Muḥammad-Shāhī works, furthermore, merely mention the schism without explaining the circumstances surrounding it. The Muḥammad-Shāhī sources themselves do not agree on the precise date of the succession dispute in the family of the Nizārī Imāms.

According to the oral tradition of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs of Syria, where the bulk of the Nizārī community continued to adhere to the Muḥammad-Shāhī line of imāms until the second half of the last century and where the only remnants of this Nizārī sub-sect are still to be found, the schism occurred on the death of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad. The succession to Shams al-Dīn, considered the twenty-fifth imām of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs, was disputed by his eldest and youngest sons, namely, ‘Ala’ al-Dīn Muʾmin Shāh and Qāsim Shāh; a middle son, Kiyā Shāh, did not play any part in the dispute. According to this Syrian tradition, Qāsim Shāh was merely to act as the hujja of his elder brother, Muʾmin Shāh, who in due course was succeeded by his own son Muḥammad Shāh. The members of this sub-sect in Syria, therefore, more commonly referred to themselves as al-Muʾminīyya or the Muʾminī Nizāris, in contrast to al-Qāsimīyya, since it was with Muʾmin Shāh rather than his son Muḥammad Shāh that they split off from the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizāris. On the other hand, according to the Irshād al-ṭālibīn, a Muḥammad-Shāhī work written in Badakhšān in 929/1523 by a certain Muḥibb ʿAlī Qunduzī, the schism took place after the imāmāte of Muʾmin Shāh, who had succeeded his father, Shams al-Dīn. According to this source, corroborated by the versified Lamaʾat al-ṭāhirīn, the sole extant Muḥammad-Shāhī work produced in India in 1110/1698–1699 by Ghulām ʿAlī b. Muḥammad, Muḥammad Shāh and Qāsim Shāh were in fact brothers, both being the sons of Muʾmin Shāh. And on their father’s death, each of the two sons claimed his succession. The issue is further complicated by the fact that the earliest extant Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī sources also name Muʾmin Shāh as the son and successor of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad. According to these sources, Muʾmin Shāh was in turn succeeded by his son
Qāsim Shāh. But Muʿmin Shāh’s name is omitted altogether from the later Qāsim-Shāhī lists of their imāms as well as from the list currently accepted by the Āghā Khān’s Nizārī followers. Thus, it is not clear whether Muḥammad Shāh and Qāsim Shāh were the sons of Muʿmin Shāh, or whether Muʿmin Shāh b. Shams al-Dīn was himself the elder brother of Qāsim Shāh. Be it as it may, Muʿmin Shāh b. Shams al-Dīn, who died around 738/1337-1338, was the father of Muḥammad Shāh, who soon after Shams al-Dīn’s death led a faction of the Nizārī community in rivalry with his paternal uncle (or brother) Qāsim Shāh. This split in the family of the imāms did subdivide the Nizārīs into two branches. The Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms, possibly representing the elder of the two lines, initially seem to have acquired a greater number of followers than the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms. Almost the entire community in Syria as well as large numbers in Persia, especially in Daylam, and in Badakhshān, upheld the Muḥammad-Shāhī cause for some time. In India, where Shāh Ṭāhir and his successors, the final ten imāms of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line, resided, this Nizārī sub-sect had a significant following. By the early Anjūdān period, however, an increasing number of Nizārīs began to acknowledge the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms, who had remained in Persia and who by then were making systematic efforts to extend their influence to the various Nizārī communities.

The Nizārīs had continued to be active in Daylam during the Ilkhānid and Timūrid times. In fact, it did not take long after the Mongol conquest of Persia before the various petty local rulers began to assert their authority over different parts of the Caspian region. This situation provided suitable opportunities for renewed Nizārī activities in Daylam. The post-Alamūt Nizārīs of northern Persia had evidently concentrated their efforts in Daylamān proper, the mountainous region to the south of Lāhijān and to the east of Safīdruḍ, one of the largest districts of Gilān. By 770/1368-1369, Daylamān was ruled by Kiyā Sayf al-Dīn Kūshayjī, who resided at Marjikūlī, and was, like his forefathers, a Nizārī Ḥisābī. His open advocacy of Nizārīsm in Daylamān soon aroused the hostile reactions of the neighbouring rulers, especially the Zaydī Sayyid ‘Alī Kiyā, who asked him to abandon the Nizārī creed. As Kiyā Sayf al-Dīn persisted in his religious beliefs, the troops of Gilān were despatched against him in 779/1377-1378 by Sayyid ‘Alī Kiyā b. Amīr Kiyā Malāṭī, who had become the master of Biyapīsh in eastern Gilān in 769/1367-1368 and had subsequently, with the help of the Mar‘āshī Sayyids of Māzandarān, extended his authority over Daylamān, Ashkawar, Kuhdūm and as far as Ţārum
and Qazwin. Sayyid 'Ali Kiyā had now effectively founded a new local Zaydi dynasty of the Amir (or Kār) Kiyā‘i Sayyids, also known as the Malāṭi Sayyids, who ruled over Daylamān and adjacent territories from Biyapish until 1000/1592 when Gilān was seized by the Šafawids. At any rate, Kiyā Sayf al-Dīn was defeated in battle and killed soon afterwards by Amir 'Ali, Sayyid 'Ali Kiyā’s new lieutenant in Daylamān who also began persecuting the local Nizāris. Some of the Nizāris of Daylamān, joined by the remaining forces of Sayf al-Dīn and other Kūshayji amīrs who had meanwhile succeeded in murdering Amir ‘Ali, now moved to Qazwin from where they began to conduct raids into Daylamān. In 781/1379, Sayyid 'Ali Kiyā chased these Nizāris and their Kūshayji allies out of Qazwin and retained control of that city for seven years until 788/1386, when he was obliged to surrender Qazwin, as well as Ţārum and its castle of Shamīrān, to Ţīmūr (771-807/1374-1409), the founder of the Timūrid dynasty of Persia and Transoxiana.26

In the meantime, a certain Nizārī leader known as Khudāwand Muḥammad, who may perhaps be identified with the Muhammad-Shāhi Nizārī Imām Muḥammad Shāh b. Mu‘min Shāh (d. 807/1404), had appeared in Daylam, where the bulk of the local Nizāris acknowledged him and his successors as their imāms for some time. With the help of his adherents in Daylamān, Rūdbār of Qazwin, Pādiz, Kūshayjān and Ashkawar, Khudāwand Muḥammad soon began to play an active part in the local alliances and quarrels of Daylam.27 In particular, he became involved in serious entanglements with Sayyid ‘Ali Kiyā, the most important ruler of the time in Daylamān and its environs. As Sayyid ‘Ali Kiyā then aimed at subduing Kiyā Malik Hazāraspī of Ashkawar, he promised to give Daylamān to Khudāwand Muḥammad on the condition that he would publicly abjure Nizārī Ismā‘īlim. Doubtless, Sayyid ‘Ali had no objection to utilizing the local influence of this Nizārī leader against his own enemies. Khudāwand Muḥammad accepted this offer and went to Lāhijān to renounce Nizārīsm in the presence of Sayyid ‘Ali and his circle of jurists. Thereupon, Sayyid ‘Ali had his fuqaha’ issue a declaration to the effect that Khudāwand Muḥammad had repented and returned to the fold of Islam. Soon afterwards in 776/1374–1375, Kiyā Malik and the forces he had gathered in Daylamān were defeated by the Gilānī troops of Sayyid ‘Ali led by the latter’s brother Sayyid Mahdī Kiyā. Kiyā Malik himself fled to Alamūt. However, Sayyid ‘Ali Kiyā now broke his word and instead of appointing Khudāwand Muḥammad to the governorship of Daylamān, gave Daylamān and Ashkawar to his brother Sayyid Mahdī. As a result,
Khudawand Muḥammad, too, went to Alamūt and joined Kiyā Malik, who promised to give the fortress of Alamūt to the Nizārī leader if he helped the Hazaraspid ruler to recapture Ashkawar. Khudawand Muḥammad allied himself with Kiyā Malik against Sayyid ʿAli Kiyā. He gathered the Nizāris of Alamūt and Lamasar, and in the company of Kiyā Malik, headed for Ashkawar where Sayyid Mahdi Kiyā was defeated in battle. Sayyid Mahdi was captured and sent as a prisoner to Tabriz to the court of Sultan Uways (757–776/1356–1374), the Jalāyirid ruler of Ḵācharbājān, ʿIrāq and Kurdistān whose dynasty had been one of the successors of the Mongol Ilkhanīds in Persia. Kiyā Malik Hazaraspi reinstated himself as ruler of Ashkawar, and gave Alamuṭ and its environs to Khudawand Muḥammad.

A year and a half later, Sayyid Mahdi Kiyā was released by the Jalāyirids, on the intercession of Tāj al-Dīn Ḵamul, one of the local Ḵāšī Zaydi Sayyids of Timjān, and was thereupon appointed to the governorship of Rānikūh by his brother Sayyid ʿAli. Soon after, Sayyid ʿAli himself led his troops to Ashkawar and defeated the Hazaraspid Kiyā Malik, who fled to Alamūt in the hope of being aided once again by Khudawand Muḥammad. Being ill received by the Nizārī holder of Alamūt, however, Kiyā Malik sought refuge with Timūr, who eventually sent him to reside in Ṣāwa. Meanwhile, the troops of Sayyid ʿAli Kiyā had laid siege to the fortress of Alamūt whilst pursuing Kiyā Malik. Sayyid ʿAli seized the district of Alamūt and soon forced Khudawand Muḥammad to surrender the castle. Khudawand Muḥammad was given safe-conduct and sought refuge with Timūr, who later sent him to confinement in Sultāniyya. Meanwhile, Sayyid ʿAli had reinstated Sayyid Mahdi as the governor of Ashkawar and had seized Lamasar, which had been held by Kiyā Malik. After Sayyid ʿAli Kiyā was defeated and killed at Rasht in 791/1389 by the Nāṣirwands of Lāhijān and other amīrs of Gilān, Kiyā Malik Hazaraspi returned to Daylamān, seizing Alamūt from the Amīr (Ḵār) Kiyāʾī Sayyids. Soon afterwards, amidst further confusion following the murder of Kiyā Malik by his own grandson and successor Kiyā Jalāl al-Dīn Hazaraspi, Khudawand Muḥammad reappeared in Daylamān, and with the help of the local Nizāris, once again seized Alamūt. But he soon surrendered the stronghold to Malik Kayūmarth b. Ḵisūṭūn, one of the Gāwba rūlers of Rustamdār. During the following years, Alamūt passed into the hands of the rulers of Lāhijān. In 813/1410–1411, Sayyid Raḍī Kiyā (798–829/1395–1426), a son of Sayyid ʿAli Kiyā and one of the most powerful rulers of Lāhijān, expelled the Hazaraspi and Kūshayjī amīrs
from Daylamān, also dealing a severe blow to the Nizāris of that region and killing a few of the descendants of the Nizāri Imām 'Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad who were still amongst them. The subsequent fate of Khudāwand Muḥammad himself is unknown, but his descendants were still living in Sultāniyya during the final decades of the 9th/15th century. Meanwhile, the Nizāris had continued to be active in some limited manner in Daylam, especially in Daylamān which remained under the suzerainty of the rulers of Biyapish until after the advent of the Šafawids in 907/1501. One of the latest references to the Nizāris of Daylam, who retained some local importance by the end of the 10th/16th century, is provided by Mullā Shaykh ‘Alī Gilānī, who wrote a history of Māzandarān in 1044/1634. In discussing the Banū Iskandar rulers of Kujūr, he states that Sultan Muḥammad b. Jahāngīr, who succeeded his father in 975/1567, was a Nizārī Ismā‘īlī. According to this source, Sultan Muḥammad officially encouraged the spread of Nizārism throughout Rustamdar. He seized Nūr and other localities in Māzandarān and spread his creed as far as Sārī. Sultan Muḥammad died in 998/1589–1590 and was succeeded by his eldest son Jahāngīr, who also adhered to Nizārism. Jahāngīr was obliged to go to the court of the Šafawid Shāh ‘Abbās I, following the latter’s conquest of Gilān and other Caspian provinces in 1000/1591–1592. Later, Jahāngīr returned briefly to Rustamdar but he was subsequently captured by the local lieutenant of Shāh ‘Abbās who led a large force against him. Jahāngīr was sent to Qazwīn where he was executed in 1006/1597–1598. By that year, Daylam was completely subdued by Shāh ‘Abbās, who appointed his own governors in various parts of that region. With the establishment of Šafawid authority in northern Persia, the Nizāris, like other local dynasties, lost their influence in Daylam. Only a few isolated Nizārī groups survived a while longer in the Caspian region during the Šafawid period, when the fortress of Alamūt was utilized as a state prison, especially for the rebellious members of the Šafawid family.

Meanwhile, the Qāsim-Šāhī Imāms, who succeeded one another regularly by the rule of the nasīṣ, had been secretly engaged in their own da’wa and reorganization activities, in rivalry with the Muḥammad-Šāhī Imāms. Nothing definite is known about the Qāsim-Šāhī Imāms until the second half of the 9th/15th century when they emerged in Anjudān posing as Šūfī shaykhs or pīrs. All that is available on Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad’s first three successors in this line are their names and a few unreliable dates and details preserved in the traditions of the Qāsim-Šāhī Nizārīs. According to these traditions, Qāsim Shāh, the twenty-ninth
imām and the eponym of this line, succeeded to the imāmate around 710/1310. As noted, he was either the son or the grandson of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, and it was in his time that the Nizāris became split into two factions. Qāsim Shāh too, apparently lived in Ḍhahrbayjān and devoted his long imāmate of some sixty years mainly to defending the legitimacy of his line. He died around 771/1369–1370 and was succeeded by his son Islām Shāh, also called Aḥmad Shāh. Islām Shāh, a contemporary of Khudawand Muḥammad and Timūr, died in about 829/1425–1426 and was succeeded by Muḥammad b. Islām Shāh. It was evidently Islām Shāh who transferred the residence of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms to certain localities around Qumm and Maḥallāt, in central Persia, during the earliest decades of his imāmate of almost fifty-five years. He may indeed have been the first imām of his line to establish a foothold in Anjudān, which shortly afterwards became the permanent residence of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms. The Persian chroniclers of Timūr’s reign do refer to Nizārī activities in Anjudān and mention an interesting expedition led by Timūr himself in Rajab 795/May 1393 against the Nizāris of Anjudān, who evidently belonged to the Qāsim-Shāhī branch and had by then attracted enough attention to warrant this action. Timūr was then engaged in his campaigns in Persia, and whilst en route from Ḩamadān and Baghdād, his attention was diverted to the Nizāris of the Anjudān area where he spent a few days. Timūr’s soldiers killed many Nizāris and pillaged their properties. According to Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī (d. 858/1454), the rebellious Anjudānī Nizāris had attempted in vain to seek shelter in their special underground tunnels, and most of them lost their lives when they were flooded out by the Timūrid troops. It may also be added that a year earlier, at the end of 794/1392, whilst passing through Māzandarān, Timūr had put to the sword many of the Nizāris of that region who probably belonged to the Muḥammad-Shāhī faction. It is with Muḥammad b. Islām Shāh’s son and successor Mustansīr bi’l-lāh II, who assumed the imāmate around 868/1463–1464, that the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms became definitely established at Anjudān, initiating the Anjudān revival in post-Alamūt Nizārism.

As noted, the coalescence between Persian Nizārīsm and Şūfism, too, dates to the early post-Alamūt period. The origins and early development of this complex association remain rather obscure in the absence of adequate studies. The subject itself was brought to the attention of modern scholars only a few decades ago, following our better understanding of the development of Şūfism in Persia and our access to the post-Alamūt Persian
Nizârî literature. This meagre literature and the traditions of the Persian and Central Asian Ismâ'îlîs attest to the fact that after the fall of Alamût, Nizârîsm became increasingly infused in Persia with Šûfî teachings and terminology, for which the ground had been prepared during the Alamût period. At the same time, Šûfî shykhûs and thinkers who relied on the bâtînî ta'wil like the Ismâ'îlîs, had begun to use ideas which were more widely ascribed to the Ismâ'îlîs. As a part of this coalescence, the Nizârî Ismâ'îlîs began to adopt Šûfî ways of life even externally. Thus, it is said that Shams al-Dîn Muḥammad and his immediate successors in the Qâsim-Shâhî line, lived clandestinely for the most part as Šûfî pîrs, while their followers adopted the typically Šûfî title of murîd or disciple. Doubtless, this was done partly for reasons of taqiyya which enabled the imâms and their followers to survive anonymously under hostile circumstances. Nonetheless, the adoption of a Šûfî exterior by the Nizârîs would not have been readily possible if the two esoteric traditions had not had common grounds. At any rate, due to the close relationship between Persian Nizârîsm and Šûfîsm, it is often difficult to ascertain whether a certain post-Alamût Persian treatise was written by a Nizârî author influenced by Šûfîsm, or whether it was produced in Šûfî milieu impregnated by Ismâ'îlî ideas. This applies, for instance, to the celebrated Šûfî treatise Gulshan-i râz (The Rose-Garden of Mystery) and its later commentary by a Nizârî author, providing a clear literary example of the Nizârî-Šûfî association.

The versified Gulshan-i râz was composed in 717/1317 by Sa'd al-Dîn Maḥmûd Shabistari, a relatively obscure Šûfî shykh and poet from Ādharbayjân. He was born around 686/1287 in Shabistar near Tabrîz, and died in his youth in 720/1320–1321. Thus, he was a contemporary of Nizârî Quhistânî who was probably the first Nizârî to express his religious ideas in the guise of Šûfî expressions and poetry. Maḥmûd Shabistari produced his Gulshan-i râz, a mathnawî containing about one thousand couplets, in reply to a number of questions on the doctrines of the Šûfîs propounded by Ḥusaynî Sâdât Amir (d. after 729/1328), a Šûfî master of Harât. This short summary of symbolic Šûfî terminology, one of the earliest of its kind, has remained very popular amongst the Šûfî circles. Consequently, many commentaries have been written on the Gulshan-i râz, the most detailed and famous one being that produced by Shams al-Dîn Muḥammad b. Yahyâ Lâhijî (d. 912/1506–1507), an eminent shykh of the Nûrbakhshî Šûfî order. The Nizârî Ismâ'îlîs of Persia and Central Asia, however, consider the Gulshan-i râz as belonging to their own literature, and as such, it has been chosen to be partially commented upon.
in Persian by at least one Nizārī author. This anonymous Nizārī commentary consists of the ta'wil interpretations of selected passages of Shabistari’s poems. The authorship of this Nizārī commentary may possibly be attributed to Shāh Ṭāhir, the most famous imām of the Muhammad-Shāhī line, who in fact wrote a work entitled Sharḥ-i gulshan-i rāz.37 Similarly, as a result of their close relationship with Ṣūfism, the Nizārīs have regarded some of the greatest Ṣūfī poets of Persia as their co-religionists, and selections of their works have been preserved by the Nizārīs of the upper Oxus region. In this category, mention may be made of Sanā’ī (d. ca. 535/1140), Farid al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār (d. ca. 627/1230), and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273), as well as lesser Ṣūfī personalities such as Qāsim al-Anwār (d. ca. 837/1433).38 The Nizārīs of the upper Oxus consider ʿAzīz al-Dīn Nasafi, too, as a co-religionist. Nasafi was a celebrated Ṣūfī master and author of Central Asia who later emigrated to Persia and died there around 661/1262-1263. His Ṣūfī treatise entitled the Zubdat al-haqaʾiq has been preserved in Badakhshān as an Ismāʿīlī work.39

It should also be noted that Twelver Shiʿism developed its own rapport with Ṣūfism in Persia during the period stretching from the fall of Alamūt to the rise of the Safawid dynasty. The earliest instance of this non-Nizārī Shiʿi–Ṣūfī coalescence is reflected in the works of Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, the eminent Ithnāʾasharī theologian, theosopher and gnostic (ʿārif) from Māzandarān who died after 787/1385. Strongly influenced by the teachings of Ibn al-ʿArabi (d. 638/1240), one of the greatest Ṣūfis of Islam whom the Nizārīs consider as another of their co-religionists,40 Ḥaydar Āmulī combined his Shiʿī thought and convictions with the traditions of Ṣūfism, especially as developed in Persia and ʿĪraq. More than anyone else before him, he emphasized the common origins of Shiʿism and Ṣūfism and prepared the ground for the doctrines held by many of the Persian Ṣūfī orders.41 Thus, according to Āmulī, a Muslim who combines sharʿa with haqīqa and ṭariqa, the spiritual path to God followed by the Ṣūfis, is not only a believer but a believer put to test (al-muʿmin al-mumtaḥan). Such a gnostic Muslim or Ṣūfī, who is also a true Shiʿī, preserves a careful balance between the ẓāhir and the bātin, equally avoiding the literalist and juridical approaches to Islam as well as the radical and antinomian tendencies of the Ṣūfis and the extremist Shiʿīs. Ḥaydar Āmulī, who upheld the legitimacy of Ithnāʾasharī Imāmī Shiʿism, denounced the Ismāʿīliyya and the Shiʿī Ghulāt, amongst other Muslim groups, as heretics, because, according to him, they undermined the ẓāhir (sharʿa) in favour of the bātin (haqīqa).42

It may be noted at this juncture that several Ṣūfī orders, which
contributed significantly to the circulation of Shi'i ideas in pre-Šafawid Persia, were founded during the early post-Alamūt period. We shall have more to say on these orders, especially on the Ni'mat Allāhiyya with which the Nizārī Imāms were to develop close relations. At the same time, several extremist movements with Shi'i tendencies appeared in Persia. In this connection reference should be made in particular to the Ḥurūfī movement, which dates to the second half of the 8th/14th century. This movement, whose doctrines were derived from Persian Ṣūfism and Ismā'ilism, amongst other traditions, was founded by a certain Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī, who was born in 740/1339–1340 into an Imāmī family and began his early career as a Ṣūfī wanderer. Faḍl Allāh was well-versed in the interpretation of dreams, and, like the Ismā'ilis, adhered to a cyclical view of history. He started to preach his own ideas on prophecy and on man around 780/1378, and by 788/1386 he announced that the period of prophecy had been superseded by that of the manifestation of the divinity (zuhur-i kibriyya) in man, particularly in Faḍl Allāh himself. Faḍl Allāh acquired numerous disciples and followers amongst the artisan classes and the wandering darwishes or qalandars in many parts of Persia and adjoining areas. He eventually aroused the apprehension of Timūr and his Sunni jurists, who sentenced him to death at Samarqand. He then sought refuge in the Caucasus with Timūr's son Mirānshāh, who had him executed in 796/1394. The Ḥurūfīs, with their strong cabalistic-gnostic tendencies, adopted the bāṭinī ta'wil and stressed the hidden meaning of the letters (ḥurūf), whence the name of the sect. From early on, Ḥurūfism spread to Anatolia due to the initial missionary efforts of 'Ali al-ʿAʿlā (d. 822/1419), one of Faḍl Allāh's original disciples and the author of several Ḥurūfī books. In fact, Anatolia soon became the main stronghold of Ḥurūfism, and the Ḥurūfī doctrines were adopted there by several Ṣūfī orders, especially by the Bektāšiyya. Subsequently, the Ḥurūfīs disappeared in Persia, but their doctrines have continued to be upheld by the Bektāshī dervishes of Turkey, who have also preserved the earlier literature of the sect.43

Several groups split off from the Ḥurūfīyya, notably the Nuqtawīyya or Ahl-i Nuqṭa who had close relations with Persian Ṣūfism and Nizārīsm. The Nuqtawīs were influenced by the Nizārī doctrines of the Alamūt period, and later apparently opposed the organized Twelver Shi'ism adopted by the Šafawids as the official religion of Persia. At least some eminent Nuqtawīs may even have been crypto-Ismā'īlis. The Nuqtawīyya sect, also called the Pasikhāniyya and the Maḥmūdiyya, was
founded around 800/1397–1398 by Maḥmūd Pasikhāni (d. 831/1427–1428), one of Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī’s disciples in Gilān. The movement became very popular in Persia, and by the time of the early Safawids, it had numerous followers in the Caspian region and in the cities of Qazwin, Kāshān, Īsfāhān and Shirāz. Shāh Ṭahmāsp I (930–984/1524–1576) persecuted the Nuqtawīs during the final years of his reign, but it was Shāh ‘Abbās I who took severe measures against them in 1002/1593–1594, killing many of the sectarians and their leaders, including Darwīš Khusraw Qazwīnī, and Mir Sayyid Aḥmad Kāshī, who was put to the sword in Kāshān by the Šafawid king himself. The Nuqtawī sect evidently disintegrated completely in Persia after the persecutions of Shāh ‘Abbās, while many Nuqtawīs, including a number of poets, took refuge in India where the sect survived for some time longer. Amongst the prominent Persian Nuqtawīs who migrated to Mughal India, the most prominent was Mir Sharīf Amūlī, who rose to high positions in the service of the emperor Akbar. The Nuqtawīs believed in metempsychosis and, like the Persian Nizāris of the qiyāma times, interpreted the Resurrection, Paradise and Hell spiritually. Evidently they also dispensed with the commandments of the Šarī‘a, which, in the eyes of Shāh ‘Abbās and his militant Twelver fuqahā’, amounted to intolerable heresy or ilḥād. Qāsim al-Anwār was amongst the well-known Šūfī poets suspected of Ḥurūfīsm. He was expelled from Harāt following an unsuccessful attempt there in 830/1427 on the life of Ťimūr’s son and successor Shāhrukh. There was also Abu‘l-Qāsim Muhammad Kūhpāyāʾī, better known as Amrī Shirāzī, a Šūfī poet of the Šafawid period who served Shāh Ṭahmāsp I for thirty years before falling into disfavour. In 973/1565–1566, Amrī was blinded on charges of heresy. Later in 999/1590–1591, he was executed in Shirāz as a Nuqtawī heretic by the order of Shāh ‘Abbās I. The Persian Nizāris, however, regard Amrī as a co-religionist. Ivanow, who examined Amrī’s scattered poems in some Ismā‘īlī anthologies, reports on the poet’s eulogies of his contemporary Nizārī Imāms, including Murād Mirzā. It is possible then that Amrī Shirāzī may have been a Nizārī, or perhaps a crypto-Nizārī who appeared as a Nuqtawī.

The Anjudān period in the history of post-Alamūt Nizārīsm started in the latter part of the 9th/15th century. The thirty-second imām of the Qāsim-Shāhis, ‘Alī Shāh, better known as Mustanṣīr bi’l-lāh II, is the first Nizārī Imām who is definitely connected with Anjudān. The locality remained the seat of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms until the end of the 11th/17th century, a period of two centuries coinciding with the greater part of the
7 The mausoleum of Imām Mustaṣṣir bi’llāh II (Shāh Qalandar), Anjudān

8 The mausoleum of Imām Mustaṣṣir bi’llāh III (Shāh Gharib), Anjudān
An epigraph, dated 1036/1627, reproducing the edict of the Safavid Shah 'Abbas I addressed to Imam Amir Khalil Allah Anjudani.
Şafāwid period in Persia. Anjudān, or Anjidān, is situated at the foot of a relatively low rocky range thirty-seven kilometres east of Arāk (former Sulţānābād) and about the same distance westward from Mahallāt in central Persia. One of the important villages of the district of Mushkābād in the agriculturally prosperous plain of Farāhān, Anjudān was probably a more populous place when the Nizārī Imāms emerged there. Currently, it has a population of about a thousand persons who are Ithnā‘ashārī and Persian-speaking, engaged mainly in orchard cultivation. The Nizārī antiquities of Anjudān, discovered in 1937 by Ivanow, include an old mosque and three mausoleums, containing the tombs of several imāms and their relatives. By the time the author first visited Anjudān in 1976, some of the architectural remains described by Ivanow had already disappeared, having been abandoned in an unrepairsed state. It is interesting to note in passing that when Nāşir al-Dīn Shāh Qājār visited Anjudān in Dhu‘l-Qa‘da 1309/June 1892, he did not suspect the locality’s past connections with Nizārī Ismā‘īlism.

Mustansir bi‘l-lāh II succeeded to the imāmāte around 868/1463–1464 and died in 885/1480. The latter date is inscribed on the wooden box (sanduq) placed on the grave of this imām. The octagonal mausoleum of Mustanṣir bi‘l-lāh, still locally referred to as Shāh Qalandar, is the oldest surviving Nizārī monument in Anjudān. The Nizārī tradition places Mustanṣir’s death in 880/1475–1476, which is in close agreement with the date given in his mausoleum, built during the imāmāte of his son and successor ‘Abd al-Salīm Shāh. But the sectarian tradition erroneously holds that Mustanṣir bi‘l-lāh II and his next few successors resided at Shahr-i Bābak in Kirmān. The grave of ‘Abd al-Salām, who, according to the sectarian tradition, died in 899/1493–1494, has not been discovered; but the mausoleum of his son and successor, ‘Abbās Shāh, who also carried the title of Mustanṣir bi‘l-lāh, is preserved at Anjudān. This imām, the thirty-fourth in the series, was also known as Gharīb Mīrzā and is still referred to as Shāh Gharīb by the Anjudānis who are unaware of the true identity of the Nizārī dignitaries buried in their village. Taking into account the Fāṭimid caliph-imām and his own grandfather, Gharīb Mīrzā was in fact the third Ismā‘īlī Imām to bear the title of al-Mustansir bi‘l-lāh. According to the sectarians, he died in 902/1496–1497 after a brief imāmāte, corroborated by the date of Muḥarram 904/August 1498 which was inscribed on the wooden box constructed for the grave of Shāh Mustanṣir b. Shāh ‘Abd al-Salām. In recent decades the box was dismantled by intruders; hence, only bits and pieces remain in his mausoleum.
There are, however, five tombstones inset in one of the walls of this octagonal mausoleum, including that of Shāh Khalil Allāh II, the thirty-ninth imām, who according to his epitaph died in Dhu’l-Ḥijja 1090/January 1680. The chamber adjoining this mausoleum, containing two more graves, including that of a certain Nūr al-Dahr Khalil Allāh (d. 1082/1671), who may be identified with the thirty-eighth imām, has disappeared. According to the traditional sequence of the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imāms, the successors of Gharīb Mīrzā (Musta’sīr bi’llah III), who died in 904/1498, were Abū Dharr ʿAlī (Nūr al-Dīn), Murūd Mīrzā, Dhu’l-Faqār ʿAlī (Khalil Allāh I), Nūr al-Dahr (Nūr al-Dīn) ʿAlī, and Khalil Allāh II (d. 1090/1680), the last imām to reside in Anjudān.  

The Anjudān period marks a revival in the da’wa and literary activities of the Persian Nizārīs. This renaissance of post-Alamūt Nizārīsm, or more specifically of Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīsm, can be traced to the time of the thirty-second Qāsim-Shāhī Imām, Musta’sīr bi’llah II. The Nizārīs were still obliged, in predominantly Sunnī Persia, to practise taqīyya and camouflage their beliefs mainly in the guise of Ṣūfism. Nevertheless, the general religio-political situation of Persia had now become more favourable for the activities of the Nizārīs and some other movements penetrated by Shi‘ī ideas. As a result, with the emergence of the imāms in Anjudān around the middle of the 9th/15th century, the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī da’wa activities could now be conducted somewhat more openly and with greater intensity. This revival soon led to the spread of Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīsm and to the reassertion of the direct control of the imāms of this branch over the various outlying Nizārī communities. The Anjudān revival, however, did not occur abruptly, as may be thought. The ground for the revival had been gradually prepared ever since the fall of Alamūt, especially after the collapse of the Ilkhanīd dynasty in the first half of the 8th/14th century. By the middle of the 9th/15th century, at least the imāms of the Qāsim-Shāhī branch of Nizārīsm, like the leaders of certain other religious groups, were able to take effective advantage of the improved religio-political atmosphere of Persia, an atmosphere characterized by political decentralization and the spread of Shi‘ī tendencies and ‘Alid loyalism, especially through certain Ṣūfī tariqas or orders.

Ilkhanīd rule, which had been extended to all of Persia, effectively ended with Abū Sa‘īd (717–736/1317–1335), the last great ruler of the dynasty. Subsequently, until the advent of the Ṣafawīs, Persia became increasingly fragmented, with the exception of certain periods during the reigns of Timūr (d. 807/1405), who reunited the Persian lands, and that of his son
Shâhrukh (807–850/1405–1447). During this turbulent period in the history of Persia, in the absence of any strong central authority, different parts of the country were held by local dynasties, including the minor Ilkhanids, the later Timurids, the Jalâyirids, and the Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu dynasties, based on federations of Turkoman tribes. The political fragmentation of Persia doubtless provided more favourable conditions for the activities of various radical movements, most of which were essentially Shi'i or influenced by Shi'i ideas. The same political atmosphere was conducive to the rising tide of Shi'ism which was taking place in post-Mongol Persia. Indeed, at times some of the local rulers of Persia who were in constant rivalry with one another openly supported Shi'ism, at least for political reasons. At any rate, the Nizâris and certain Shi'i-related movements with millenarian aspirations such as those of the Sarbadârs, the Ḥurûfiyya, the Nuqṭawiyya and the Musha'sha', as well as some Şûfî organizations, now found a respite in Persia to organize or reorganize themselves during the 8th/14th and 9th/15th centuries, though they were still occasionally persecuted by different local rulers who detected their revolutionary message of opposition to the established order.

Meanwhile, Shi'i tendencies had been spreading in Persia since the 7th/13th century, rendering the country's religious milieu more favourable for the activities of the Nizâris and other crypto-Shi'i or Shi'i-related extremist movements. These movements normally entertained chiliastic or Mahdist aspirations for the deliverance of the oppressed and the economically under-privileged who rallied in large numbers, especially after Timûr's death, in support of the leaders of these movements who often hailed from Shi'i-Şûfî backgrounds. It should be emphasized, however, that instead of the outright propagation of any particular school of Shi'ism, a new form of Shi'ism was now arising in pre-Safawid Persia. Being of a popular type and expressed largely in Şûfî forms, this Shi'ism ultimately culminated in Safawid Shi'ism. Hodgson designated this new Shi'ism as 'tarîqa Shi'i 'ism', since it was effectuated mainly through certain Şûfî orders. It was indeed due to the leaders of the Şafawiyya tarîqa, who eventually ascended to the throne of Persia in the opening decade of the 10th/16th century, that Shi'ism came to be adopted as the state religion of Persia. The Şûfî orders in question, most of which were formed in post-Mongol Persia, remained outwardly Sunnî for quite some time after their foundation. They followed one of the Sunnî madhhabs, usually the Shâfi'i school, whilst being particularly devoted to 'Ali and the Ahl al-Bayt and
accepting 'Ali's spiritual guidance. In time, some of these Şüfi tariqas came to profess Shi'iism formally. In this atmosphere of religious eclecticism, 'Alid loyalism, initially espoused by certain Şüfi tariqas and extremist movements, soon came to be more widespread. As a result, Shi'i elements began to be superimposed on Sunni Islam. By the 9th/15th century there appeared a general increase in Shi'i allegiance throughout Persia, where the bulk of the population still adhered to Sunnism. Professor Cahen has referred to this process as the 'Shi'itization of Sunnism', as opposed to the conscious propagation of Shi'ism of any specific school, Twelver or otherwise. It was through such a process that the religious outlook of the populace came to be increasingly moulded by this type of tariqa-diffused Shi'i-Sunni syncretism, preparing Persia for the official adoption of Shi'ism under the Safawids.

Amongst the Şüfi orders that played a leading role in bridging the gap between Sunnism and Shi'iism and in spreading Shi'ism in Persia, mention should be made of the Nūrbakhshīyya and the Ni'mat Allāhiyya tariqas. Both orders, as well as the Şafawiyya, which played the most active and direct political role in establishing a Shi'i state in Persia, eventually became fully Shi'i Şüfi tariqas. The Nūrbakhshī order was founded by Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh, known as Nūrbakhsh. He was born in 795/1393 at Qā'in into an Imāmi Shi'i family that had migrated from Bahrayn to Quhistān. In his youth, Nūrbakhsh was initiated into the Kubrawīyya, one of the major Şüfi orders of the time in Central Asia and northeastern Persia, founded by Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 617/1220). 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1336), the celebrated Sunni Şüfi and one of the Kubrawī shaykhs, had already emphasized the special position of 'Ali, allowing him primacy amongst the Orthodox Caliphs. But 'Alid loyalism and Shi'i ideas were introduced more directly into the Kubrawī order by Ishāq al-Khuttalānī, a later shaykh who was also politically active and unsuccessfully planned a revolt against the Timūrids. He was killed, together with some of his associates, around 826/1423 by emissaries of the Timūrid Shāhrūkh. Al-Khuttalānī appointed Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh as his successor, also designating him as the Mahdi. The majority of the Kubrawīs accepted Nūrbakhsh's leadership as their qutb or khalīfa and became known as the Nūrbakhshīyya, while a minority supported a certain 'Abd Allāh Barzishābādī Mashhādī and later became designated as the Dhahabiyya. Nūrbakhsh professed Shi'ism openly, and in his teachings he aimed at fusing Shi'ism and Sunnism through Şüfism, claiming also the Mahdiship for some time. Due to his Shi'i ideas and the increasing
popularity of his Sufi order, Nurbakhsh was arrested and exiled several times on Shahrukh's orders. On one such occasion in 840/1436, Nurbakhsh was forced to repudiate his ideas and claims publicly at Harat. He died in 869/1464 at Rayy, where he had spent his final years. The Nurbakhshiyaa flourished into the Safavid period, as a fully Shi'i order under Nurbakhsh's son and successor, Shah Qasim Faydabakhsh (d. 917/1511), and other shykhsh.

Shams al-Din Lahiji, the author of the best-known commentary on the Gulshan-i râz who died in 912 A.H., led a section of the Nurbakhshiyaa from Shiraz in succession to Nurbakhsh himself. The eminent Persian Imami scholar Nur Allah al-Shushtari, who emigrated to India where he was executed in 1019/1610, was evidently an initiate of the Nurbakhshih order. The Nurbakhshiyaa did not stretch far into the Safavid period as an organized Sufi order in Persia, though their mystical tradition continued for a while. On the other hand, the Dahabib order has survived in Persia as a minor Shi'i tariqa, with chief centres in Shiraz and Tehran, to the present time.

The Ni'mat Allahiyya, too, played a vital role in spreading 'Alid loyalty and Shi'i sentiments in pre-Safavid Persia, though the order remained outwardly Sunnî until after the advent of the Safawids. This Sufi order became widespread during the lifetime of its founder, Shah Ni'mat Allah Wali, and in the course of the 9th/15th century it acquired numerous initiates in different parts of Persia, including Kirmän, Yazd, Fars and Khurasan. At the same time, its influence spread to the Indian subcontinent, where it received the patronage of the Bahmanid rulers of the Deccan. From the 8th/14th century onwards, the term Shah came to be prefixed or suffixed to the name of many Sufi saints, in combination with 'Ali or Wali, reflecting 'Alid loyalty and their recognition of the wilâya and spiritual guidance of 'Ali. Accordingly, Nur al-Din Ni'mat Allah b. 'Abd Allah is commonly referred to as Shah Ni'mat Allah Wali. A prolific writer on mystical subjects and also a poet, the eponymous founder of the Ni'mat Allahi order traced his Fatimid 'Alid genealogy to Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ja'far al-Sadiq, the seventh imam of the Isma'ilis. This is perhaps why Shah Ni'mat Allah has been considered as a co-religionist by certain Isma'ili circles, and the Central Asian Nizariis have preserved some of his works, including a commentary on one of Nasir-i Khusraw's qasidas. This may also partly explain why the Nizari Imams chose this particular order for their Sufi affiliation.

Shah Ni'mat Allah was born in Aleppo in 731/1330. His father 'Abd Allah was an Arab and his mother came from the Fars region in Persia.
From early on, he was attracted to Šūfism (taṣawwuf) and gnosis ('ırfān) and searched for a perfect spiritual master (murshid-i kāmil), wandering and serving different Šūfi shaykhs. He is said to have finally found his spiritual master in ʿAbd Allāh al-Yāfiʿī (d. 768/1367), the founder of the Yāfiʿiyya branch of the Qādirī Šūfi order. After spending several years with al-Yāfiʿī in Mecca, Shāh Niʿmat Allāh began to travel extensively, a common practice among the Šūfis during a certain phase in their career. He went to Egypt and then journeyed to Adharbayjān, where he may have met Qāsim al-Anwār. Subsequently, he wandered to Transoxiana where he settled near Samarqand. Niʿmat Allāh was banished after some time from Transoxiana by Tīmūr. Later at Harāt, he married the granddaughter of Ḥusaynī Sādāt Amīr, who had induced the composition of the Gulshan-i rāz; she was to become the mother of the Shāh’s only son and successor Khalil Allāh, born near Kirmān in 775/1374. After Khurāsān, Shāh Niʿmat Allāh went to Kirmān and spent the rest of his years in and around that city. He spent the last twenty-five years of his life mainly in Māhān, about forty kilometres south of Kirmān, where he established the headquarters of the Niʿmat Allāhiyya. The saint’s relations were friendly with Tīmūr’s son Shāhrūkh, especially after the Timurid conquest of Kirmān in 819/1416. By that time, Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Wāli had become quite well-known, having acquired numerous murīds or disciples in different parts of Persia whilst his tarīqa had extended to India. Aḥmad I Wāli (825–839/1422–1436), the Bahmanid ruler of the Deccan who adopted the title of Wāli (saint) given to him by Shāh Niʿmat Allāh and who may have converted to Shiʿism around 833/1429, called himself a disciple of this saint. Aḥmad Shāh persistently invited Shāh Niʿmat Allāh to visit him in India. The Šūfī master, however, declined the invitations due to his old age and instead sent a grandson, Nūr Allāh, who settled in the Deccan and married one of the Bahmanid ruler’s daughters. Shāh Niʿmat Allāh had a Sunnī background, and, in his lifetime, the outward form of his tarīqa remained Sunnī, though it became increasingly imbued with ʿAlid loyalism. As most Šūfis would attest even today, the inward structure of the Niʿmat Allāhiyya and many other tarīqas, being Šūfī, remained above the Shiʿi-Sunnī distinctions raised by non-Šūfīs. Shāh Niʿmat Allāh, whose most lasting contribution to Šūfism was the order he founded, died in 834/1431, a centenarian, in Kirmān. He was buried at Māhān. The original structures of his mausoleum, still piously visited by the Šūfīs, were constructed through donations made by Aḥmad Shāh Bahmanī and his successor ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Aḥmad II (839–862/1436–1458).
Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh had designated his sole son Burhān al-Dīn Khalīl Allāh to succeed him as the qutb or pole, a term still used by the Šūfīs to describe their spiritual master. After a few years in Māhān and then in Harāt where he was Shāhrūkh’s guest, Shāh Khalīl Allāh migrated permanently to the Deccan. He rightly expected to benefit from the patronage and devotion of the Bahmanid rulers towards his family and tariqa, having probably experienced certain difficulties in Timūrid dominions. He left one of his four sons, Shams al-Dīn, in Māhān to take care of the affairs of the Persian Ni‘mat Allāhīs, and took with him to the Deccan another two of his sons, Muḥīb b al-Dīn Ḥabīb Allāh and Ḥabīb al-Dīn Muḥīb Allāh, who became the third qutb of the order after Khalīl Allāh’s death in 860/1456. Shāh Khalīl Allāh’s mausoleum near Bīdar became known as Khalīliyya and later other members of the family were buried there. Shāh Ḥabīb al-Dīn, who married one of the daughters of the Bahmanid Aḥmad II, became Shi‘ī outwardly. Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh’s descendants and successors were treated with respect in the Deccan, where the Ni‘mat Allāhī qutbs resided for more than three centuries. The qutbs established a khāniqāh (Arabic, zāwiya) or Šūfī centre at Bīdar, which remained the Indian seat of the Ni‘mat Allāhī order until the latter part of the 12th/18th century, when the position of qutb had already passed out of Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh’s family and the order was revived in Persia by emissaries sent from the Deccan. Meanwhile, the Persian wing of the order, increasingly Shi‘ī, helped the Ṣafawī Shāh Ḥisā’il to power. Soon after the establishment of Ṣafawī rule, the Ni‘mat Allāhiyya declared themselves to be Shi‘īs. Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh’s descendants in Persia inter-married with the Ṣafawī house and acquired prominence, often being appointed to the governorship of Yazd. The Persian section of the order, with its new headquarters at Taft near Yazd, became probably the most highly organized Persian Šūfī tariqa in the 10th/16th century; but subsequently it lost its significance mainly due to the adverse policies of the Ṣafawīs, a fate shared by other tariqas in Persia. At present, the Ni‘mat Allāhī order, with its several branches, is the most widespread Šūfī tariqa in Persia, having initiates also in Pakistan and other Muslim countries, especially amongst the Twelver Shi‘īs.

Amongst the Šūfī orders that contributed to the ‘Shi‘ītization’ of Persia, the most direct part was played by the Ṣafawī tariqa, which occupied a unique position also in terms of the political ambitions of its masters. The political success of the Ṣafawīyya eventually culminated in the accession of the Ṣafawī shaykh to the throne of Persia. The Ṣafawī tariqa
was founded by Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn (d. 735/1334), an eminent Ṣūfī shaykh of the Ilkhānid period and a Sunnī of the Shāfī‘i madhhīb. It was only after the establishment of the Ṣafawī state that the dynasty claimed an ‘Alīd genealogy, tracing Shaykh Ṣafī’s ancestry to the seventh imām of the Twelver Shi‘īs, Mūsā al-Kāzīm. The Ṣafawī order, centred in Ardabil, soon spread throughout Ādharbayjān, eastern Anatolia, Syria and Khurāsān. It is related that Qāsim al-Anwār, too, became an initiate of this order in the time of Shaykh Ṣafī’s son and successor Šadr al-Dīn (d. 794/1391). Most significantly, the order acquired deep influence over several Turkoman tribes in Ādharbayjān and adjoining areas. With Shaykh Ṣafī’s fourth successor, Junayd, the Ṣafawī order was transformed into a militant revolutionary movement with a policy of conquest and domination. The order’s murids amongst the Turkomans were gradually organized into a dedicated fighting force of Ṣūfī soldiers (ghuzā‘-i Ṣūfiyya) and were initially used especially against the surrounding non-Muslim powers. Junayd was also the first Ṣafawī shaykh to display Shi‘ī sentiments combined with radical religious notions of the type held by the Shi‘ī Ghulāt. Junayd fought the Caucasian Christians around Ādharbayjān and lost his life in 864/1460 in one of these battles.

Shaykh Junayd’s policies and political ambitions were maintained by his son and successor Ḥaydar, who was killed in the course of one of his military expeditions in 893/1488. Shaykh Ḥaydar was responsible for instructing his followers to adopt the scarlet headgear of twelve gores commemorating the twelve Ithnā‘ashārī Imāms, which led to their being designated by the Turkish term Qızıl-bāsh (Red-head). Sultan ‘Alī, Ḥaydar’s son and successor, also fell in battle, in 898/1493. By that time, the Ṣafawī order enjoyed a strong military organization, supported by many loyal adherents and powerful Turkoman tribes which constituted the backbone of the Qızıl-bāsh soldiers. Consequently, Iṣmā‘īl, Sultan ‘Alī’s youthful brother and successor as the master of the Ṣafawīyya, easily managed to take Ādharbayjān from the Aq Qoyunlu dynasty. Thereupon, in the summer of 906–907/1501, Iṣmā‘īl entered Tabriz, the capital of the deposed dynasty, and proclaimed himself Shāh Iṣmā‘īl, the first ruler of the new Ṣafawī dynasty, which was to last until the second quarter of the 12th/18th century. Shāh Iṣmā‘īl I brought the whole of Persia under his control during the ensuing decade and thus established the Ṣafawī state in the territories hitherto ruled by different dynasties. Under Iṣmā‘īl (907–930/1501–1524), Persia became a national state for the first time since the Arab conquest in the first century of Islam. Immediately
upon his accession, he proclaimed Twelver Shi'ism as the official religion of the Safavid state, inaugurating a new era for Shi'ism and the activities of the Shi'i movements and scholars in Persia.

It was under such circumstances, when Shi'i sentiments were gaining increasing popularity in Persia, that the Anjūdân revival of Nizārizm commenced around the middle of the 9th/15th century, in the imāmat of Mustaṣṣir bi'llāh II. The very titles adopted by this Qāsim-Shāhī Imām and his grandson indicate that the Nizārī Imāms now clearly strove to revive the old glories of the Ismā'īlis. Despite the improved conditions, however, the imāms and their followers were still obliged to practise taqiyya and to utilize the cloak of Ṣūfism. Mustaṣṣir bi'llāh II, the thirty-second imām whose Ṣūfī name was Shāh Qalandar, may in fact have been the first Qāsim-Shāhī Imām to associate with the Ni'mat Allāhī Ṣūfī order, though concrete evidence is lacking. The formal association of the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms with the Ni'mat Allāhī tariqa began more than two centuries later. But even at the beginning of the Anjūdân revival, Nizārizm utilized the guise of Ṣūfism, appearing as a Ṣūfī order, one amongst many such orders then existing in Persia. For this purpose, the Nizāris readily adopted the master-disciple (murshid-murid) terminology and relationship of the Ṣūfis. To the outsiders, the Nizārī Imāms appeared as Ṣūfī murshids, shaykhs, pirs or qulbs; they were generally regarded, it seems, also as pious Ḥusaynid Sayyids, descendants of the Prophet through Fāṭima. Similarly, the followers of the imāms posed as their murids, who were guided along the tariqa or path to haqīqa by a highly revered spiritual master. With Shi'i ideas and 'Alid loyalism then spreading in many Ṣūfī orders and religious movements, the veneration of 'Ali and other early Ḥusaynid Imāms by the Nizāris did not cause any particular alarm regarding the true identity of the sectarians. In the course of the Anjūdân period it became customary for the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms to adopt Ṣūfī names, like Shāh Qalandar and Shāh Gharib, often also adding the Ṣūfī terms Shāh and 'Alī to their names.

It seems that the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imāms selected Anjūdân only after a thorough search for a suitable locality to establish their residence and da'wa headquarters. Anjūdân had a central position whilst at the same time it was removed from the seats of the main Sunni powers then controlling western and eastern parts of Persia, notably the Aq Qoyunlu and the later Timūrids who ruled chiefly from Tabrīz and Harāt, respectively. Furthermore, Anjūdân was conveniently close to the cities of Qumm and Kāshān, also known as the dār al-mu'minin (abode of the faithful), that were traditional Shi'i centres in Persia. The Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī da'wa was now
reorganized and reinvigorated from Anjudān, not only to win new converts in remote lands and from amongst those Nizāris who had hitherto given their allegiance to the rival Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms, but also to reassert the central authority of the imāms over the various outlying regions, notably India and Central Asia, which had increasingly come under the control of their local dynasties of pīrs. During the earliest post-Alamūt centuries when the imāms were deprived of direct contacts with their followers, the different Nizārī communities in Persia and adjoining regions as well as in India, had gradually come under the authority of their local leaders, who were often referred to by the Ṣūfī term pīr, the Persian equivalent of shaykh. These pīrs or chief dā’īs were either appointed by the imāms, who accorded them extensive powers, or were selected locally by the particular Nizārī community. In most communities the position of the local pīr had gradually become hereditary, with the result that some dynasties of pīrs had become largely independent of the imāms whose precise whereabouts were often unknown to the bulk of their followers. The hereditary pīrs had become particularly autonomous in the areas farthest removed from the residence of the imāms; notably Afghanistan, Badakhshān and other localities in Central Asia, as well as the Indian subcontinent. Needless to add that often, the local pīrs in charge of these communities had acquired financial independence as well, relying on the religious dues which they collected. It was for these reasons that the imāms of the Anjudān period directed a good part of their revived efforts towards undermining the position of the local pīrs, with the objective of replacing them by their own loyal appointees. Mustanṣīr bi’llāh II began sending a number of trusted dā’īs to various localities in Khurāsān, Afghanistan, Badakhshān and elsewhere, a policy continued by his successors, who, in addition, seem to have regularly summoned the local dā’īs for consultation and instruction to Persia.62

In order to reorganize the da’wa and re-establish their control over different Nizārī communities, the imāms required adequate financial resources and loyal dā’īs who would act as local guides for the sectarian, emphasizing especially their obedience towards the imām of the time. These points are indeed reiterated throughout the Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī, the sermons of Mustanṣīr bi’llāh II containing the advices (Persian, pandiyāt) of this imām to the true believers or mu’mins, and to those seeking to attain the exemplary standards of chivalry (Persian, jawānmardī).63 These sermons or religious admonitions were evidently compiled and written down in Persian by an anonymous Nizārī author during the
imâmate of Mustanṣîr bi’llâh’s son and successor, ‘Abd al-Salâm Shâh. The Nizârî Khojas, who have preserved Sindhi (Khojki) and Gujarâtî versions of the Pandiyât, maintain that the book was sent to India for their religious guidance. It is possible that this book was subsequently despatched to other Nizârî communities so as to reinforce their allegiance to the Qâsim-Shâhî line of imâms; copies of the Persian version of the Pandiyât are still preserved in the Nizârî manuscript collections of Badakhshân and adjoining regions, including Hunza and Kâshghar in Chinese Turkiştân. It is interesting to note that the Nizârîs are referred to in the Pandiyât by Sûfî terms such as ahl-i haqq and ahl-i haqîqat, the people of the truth, whilst the imâm himself is designated as pîr, murshid and qaṭb. Indeed, the Pandiyât are clearly influenced by Sûfî ideas; and the imâm’s admonitions start with the shari‘at-tariqat-haqîqat classification of the Sûfîs, portraying the haqîqa as the bâṭîn of the shari‘a which can be attained through the spiritual path (tariqā) followed by the faithful. It is immediately explained, however, that the haqîqa essentially consists of recognizing the current imâm. The Pandiyât continuously stress the duty of the faithful to recognize and obey the current imâm, emphasizing that no sacrifice is great enough for making the didâr journey to see the imâm. An equal stress is placed on the obligation of the true believer to pay his religious dues, notably the tithe (Persian, dâh-yik) amounting to ten per cent of his annual income, to the imâm of the time. These admonitions find expression also in the works of Khayrkhwâh-i Harîtî, who wrote in the middle of the 10th/16th century, a few decades after Mustanṣîr bi’llâh II and ‘Abd al-Salâm Shâh. The latter imâm himself, following the footsteps of his father, invited the Muhammad-Shâhî Nizârîs of Badakhshân and Afghanistan to transfer their allegiance to the true line of the imâms, viz., the Qâsim-Shâhî Imâms. This invitation by the thirty-third Qâsim-Shâhî Imâm is reflected in at least one extant farâmitz or epistle written in 895/1490.

The Anjudân renaissance in Nizârî Ismâ‘îlîsm also brought about a revival of literary activities amongst the Nizârîs. The earliest fruits of these efforts, which include the first Persian doctrinal treatises produced after the fall of Alamût, are those written by Abû Ish’aq Quhistâni, a contemporary of Mustanṣîr bi’llâh III (Gharîb Mîrzâ) b. ‘Abd al-Salâm Shâh (d. 904/1498); and Muḥâammad Rida b. (Khwâja) Sulṭân Ḥusayn Ghûriyânî Harîtî, better known as Khayrkhwâh-i Harîtî, who flourished a few decades later and died after 960/1553. Khayrkhwâh was a prolific writer and a poet with the pen name (takhallus) of Gharîbî; he plagiarized
Abū Ishāq’s *Haft bāb* into the *Kalām-i pīr*, attributing it to Nāṣir-i Khusraw. As Ivanow has argued, Khayrkhwāh seems to have introduced certain ideas of his own, especially on the status of the *hujja*, into the Nizārī works that passed through his hands. Khayrkhwāh was an ambitious man and according to his own account was appointed, whilst only nineteen years old, by the imām of the time to succeed his father as a local Nizārī pīr in his native province of western Afghanistan and possibly some adjoining areas. The writings of Abū Ishāq and Khayrkhwāh, which constitute the chief Qāsim-Shāhī Persian treatises of the Anjudān period, have been preserved by the Nizārīs of Central Asia and elsewhere.

Khayrkhwāh’s works, especially his untitled *Risāla*,75 are of historical value and shed light on various aspects of the Nizārī communities of his time in Khurāsān and Afghanistan. He also reveals that by the first half of the 10th/16th century, direct contacts had been established between the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms and their followers in those regions as well as in the Indian subcontinent, from where *dā’īs* and other Nizārī dignitaries regularly travelled to the headquarters of the *da’wa* to see the imām. Khayrkhwāh relates how the imām had sent a messenger, Mîr Māhmūd, summoning his father, Khwāja Sulṭān Ḥusayn, who resided at Harāt, and another Nizārī dignitary called Khwāja Qāsim who lived in Quhistān; the imām evidently intended to designate Khayrkhwāh’s father as the *dā’ī* of Khurāsān, Badakhshān and Kābul.76 Khwāja Sulṭān Ḥusayn was, however, murdered in Khurāsān, whilst heading for Anjudān. Khayrkhwāh himself was then taken in his father’s place for the *didār* of the imām despite the objection of some members of the community who disapproved of his young age and lack of religious qualifications. Khayrkhwāh does not mention Anjudān by name but from some of the nearby localities mentioned by him, like Mahallāt,77 it is clear that he went to Anjudān to see the imām, whose name is not divulged. By Khayrkhwāh’s time, the term *pīr* had acquired a wide application and was used in reference to *dā’īs* of different ranks, the heads of any Nizārī community, as well as to the persons of the imām and his *hujja*. Khayrkhwāh vividly describes how different *pīrs* arrived at Anjudān during the fortnight that he spent there, bringing along the religious dues of their congregations and communities. He has interesting details on how carefully the imām checked and appraised these dues and how he punished those who had misappropriated the funds (*ḥaqq-i imām*).78 Having been assured of the trustworthiness of Khayrkhwāh, the imām appointed him to the *dā’īship* of Khurāsān and adjoining lands, a post possibly held by or
intended for his father. Khayrkhwāh in fact claims to have been designated as the chief pīr (pīr-i kull). At any event, he explains how his appointment to such a high rank in the daʿwa proved disappointing to those members of his community who regarded themselves as more deserving of the post. Indeed, Khayrkhwāh's autobiographical account attests to the existence of intense rivalry amongst various Nizārī dignitaries or pirs who challenged each other's competency and continuously attempted to win the favour of the imām, who had by then greatly reasserted his authority over the outlying Nizārī communities.

Meanwhile, the advent of the Šafawids and the proclamation of Twelver Shi'ism as the state religion of Šafawid Persia in 907/1501 promised yet more favourable opportunities for the activities of the Nizārīs and other Shiʿî movements in Persia. The Nizārīs did in fact reduce the intensity of observing taqiyya during the initial decades of Šafawid rule. At the time, the Muḥammad-Shāhīs were led by Shāh Ťāhir, their most famous imām; and Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad, known as Abū Dharr 'Ali, had succeeded to the imāamate of the Qāsim-Shāhīs. Abū Dharr 'Ali, who succeeded Gharīb Mīrzā as the thirty-fifth imām of the Qāsim-Shāhī line, was contemporary with Shāh Ismāʿīl I and with Ismāʿīl's son and successor Shāh Ťahmāsp I; he evidently married a sister or daughter of Ťahmāsp I. The new optimism of the Nizarīs was short-lived, however, as the Šafawids soon adopted a rigorous religious policy which aimed to suppress the popular types of Sūfism and the various Shiʿī movements that fell outside the boundaries of Ithnāʿasharism. This policy was directed even against the Qizil-bāš, who had brought the Šafawid dynasty into power. The conversion of Persia to Twelver Shi'ism, mainly at the expense of Sunnism, proceeded rather slowly under Ismāʿīl I and Ťahmāsp I, who brought into Persia a number of Imāmī theologians and jurists from 'Irāq and Syria. But from early on, the Šafawids persecuted the radical Shiʿī groups and the Sūfī orders. Most of the Sūfī orders of Persia were in fact extirpated in the reign of Shāh Ismāʿīl, with the major exceptions of the Niʿmat Allāhiyya, Nūrbakhshiyya and Dhahabiyya which gradually lost their importance during the Šafawid period.

It seems that the true identity of the Nizārī Imāms and their followers had become somewhat better known after the establishment of Šafawid rule, despite their continued use of the murshid-murid Sūfī guise. The increased and more overt activities of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs soon came to the attention of the earliest Šafawid kings and their Twelver 'ulama', who reacted by subjecting the sectarians to renewed persecutions. We have
records of two particular instances of such persecutions taking place during the first Šafawid century. Shāh Ismā‘īl, as we shall see, eventually issued an order for the execution of Shāh Ṭākhīr, who had become rather popular in Kāshān, obliging him to flee to India where the later imāms of the Muhammad-Shāhī line resided. And Shāh Ṭahmāsp persecuted the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizāris in the time of their thirty-sixth imām, Murād Mirzā, the son and successor of Abu Dharr ‘Alī. The Ta’rīkh-i alfī, an extensive history of the Muslim world from the death of the Prophet to around the year 1000/1591–1592, which was compiled in India by several authors at the request of the emperor Akbar, refers under the year 982/1574–1575 to the persecution of the Nizāris of Anjudān in the time of a certain Murād who claimed their imāmate. More details of the same episode, occurring in the reign of Shāh Ṭahmāsp, are recorded under the year 981/1573–1574 by Qāḍī Aḥmad al-Qummi, a contemporary Šafawid chronicler who died after 1015/1606. Both sources relate that Murād had numerous followers also in India, who sent him large sums of money from Sind and elsewhere. Murād Mirzā and his predecessor evidently did not reside permanently at Anjudān, where the headquarters of the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizāri da‘wa had been located. Murād Mirzā was engaged in political activity outside of Anjudān, having acquired supporters in Kāshān and elsewhere in central Persia. Being alarmed by the activities of Murād Mirzā, early in 981/1573 Shāh Ṭahmāsp ordered Amīr Khān Muṣīlū, the governor of Hamadān, to proceed to the Anjudān area to capture Murād and deal with his followers (murīdān). Amīr Khān killed a large number of the Nizāris of Anjudān and its surroundings and took much booty from them, but Murād Mirzā himself, who was then staying at a fortress in the district of Kamara around Anjudān, managed to escape. Soon afterwards, he was captured and imprisoned near the royal quarters. In Jumādā II 981/October 1573, Murād Mirzā escaped from prison with the assistance of Muḥammad Muqīm, a high Šafawid official who had come under the influence of the Nizārī Imām. Murād proceeded to the vicinity of Qandahār, receiving help on the way from his followers in Fārs, Makrān and Sind. A few months later, he was recaptured in Afghanistan by Šafawid guards. Murād was brought before Shāh Ṭahmāsp, who had him executed along with Muḥammad Muqīm. It is interesting to note that Khayrkhwāh, a contemporary of Ṭahmāsp I as well as Murād Mirzā and the latter’s predecessor, states that one of the Nizārī Imāms of his time went into hiding (satr) for seven years, probably making reference to Murād Mirzā. At any rate, the Persian Nizāris experienced new difficulties during the reigns
of İsmâ'îl I and glichsp I, and the graves of Abû Dharr ʿAlî and Murâd Mîrzâ, who were the Qâsim-Shâhî İmâms from around 904/1498 to 981/1574, have not been discovered at Anjudân.

With the third Şafawîd ruler, İsmâ'îl II (984-985/1576-1577), who attempted unsuccessfully to re-establish Sunnism during his brief reign, and his elder brother and successor, Muḥammad Khudâbanda (985-995/1578-1587), the Şafawîds came to have their own dynastic disputes and domestic strifes, which almost brought about the downfall of their newly founded empire. The religious movements that had survived the persecutions of the first two Şafawîd kings now received a respite which was particularly timely for the Nizâris. Order was restored to the Şafawîd state only during the reign of Shâh 'Abbâs I (995-1038/1587-1629), who systematically repressed the disruptive Qizil-bâşh tribes. 'Abbâs I, whose long reign marked the golden age of Şafawîd rule, introduced numerous administrative reforms and patronized the arts. It was also this monarch who transferred the Şafawîd capital from Qazwîn to ʿİsfâhân in 1006/1598. Although Shâh 'Abbâs I continued his predecessors’ policy of persecuting the Sunnîs, the majority of the Şüfi orders and some of the radical Şî‘î movements like the Nuqtawîyya, he was tolerant towards certain minoritarian organizations and religious sects, including the Nizâris, who were henceforth not molested by the Şafawîds.

In the meantime, the Qâsim-Shâhî İmâms after Murâd Mîrzâ had once again appeared at Anjudân, from where they quietly conducted the affairs of their followers without involving themselves in political activities. The imâms of the later Anjudân period had indeed developed friendly relations with the Şafawîds. Murâd Mîrzâ’s successor as the thirty-seventh imâm, Khalîl Allâh I, who also carried the Şüfi name of Dhu'l-Faqâr ʿAlî, married a Şafawî princess, possibly the sister of Shâh 'Abbâs I. The close relationship existing between this imâm and the Şafawîds is attested by an epigraph, recovered in 1976 at Anjudân by the author, which reproduces the text of a royal edict issued by Shâh 'Abbâs I in Rajab 1036/March-April 1627. According to this edict, addressed to Amîr Khalîl Allâh Anjudânî, the current Qâsim-Shâhî İmâm, the Şî‘îs of Anjudân, named as a dependency of the dâr al-mu'minîn of Qumm, were exempted, like other Şî‘îs around Qumm, from paying certain taxes. It is interesting to note that in this edict the Anjudânî Şî‘îs are regarded as Ithnâ‘asharis, indicating that by that time the Persian Nizârîs had adopted the cover of Twelver Şî‘ism, in addition to Şüfism, as a form of taqiyya.

Dhu'l-Faqâr ʿAlî (Khalîl Allâh I) may be identified with Khalîl Allâh,
who, according to his tombstone at Anjudān, died at the age of sixty-eight in Ramaḍān 1043/March 1634, seven years after the above-mentioned edict was issued. Imām Khalīl Allāh I’s successor, too, carried a Ṣūfī-sounding name, Nūr al-Dahr (Nūr al-Dīn) ‘Alī. This imām, the thirty-eighth in the series, may be identified with Nūr al-Dahr (b.) Khalīl Allāh, who died in Rajab 1082/November 1671 and was buried in Anjudān. The Ṣīrī imām Khalīq Khurāsānī, a contemporary of both of these imāms who died after 1056/1646, repeatedly eulogizes Shāh Dhu’l-Faqār (Khalīl), possibly also named Ḥaydar, and Shāh Nūr al-Dahr b. Dhu’l-Faqār. He also names Anjudān as their place of residence, which he apparently visited himself. Fīdā‘ Khurāsānī quotes some poems in praise of Shāh Dhu’l-Faqār by two obscure Ṣīrī poets of this imām’s time, viz., ‘Azīz Allāh Qummī and a certain Neyyāzī who was also a ḩā’ī. Khāqī refers to his imām’s followers and spreading influence in Khurāsān and ‘Irāq-ī ‘Ajam as well as in Multān and Hind. By the second half of 11th/17th century, the Anjudān revival of the Qāsim-Shāhī da’wa had, indeed, resulted in definite successes. Māḥmūd ‘Alī, a Ṣīrī poet from Mu’mīnābād and a contemporary of the Imām Nūr al-Dahr, in a long poem names the Qāsim-Shāhī ṭā’īs, teachers or mu‘allims, and lesser functionaries, in numerous localities in Khurāsān, Quhistān, ‘Irāq-ī ‘Ajam, Kirmān, Afghanistan, Badakhshān, Turkiştān and the Indian subcontinent, including Multān, Lahore and Gujārāt. This and other poems of this poet, not listed in the Ṣīrī bibliographies of Ivanow and Poonawala, were kindly given to the author by the leaders of the Ṣīrī community in Khurāsān. Nūr al-Dahr’s son and successor, Shāh Khalīl Allāh II, was the last Qāsim-Shāhī Imām to reside at Anjudān. This imām, the thirty-ninth in the series, died in Dhu’l-Ḥijja 1090/January 1680, and his tombstone is still preserved in one of the walls of Gharīb Mirzā’s mausoleum at Anjudān. With Khalīl Allāh II’s successor, Shāh Ṣīrī, the seat of the Qāsim-Shāhī da’wa was transferred from Anjudān to the nearby village of Kahak, initiating a new sub-period in the post-Alamūt history of Ṣīrī Ismā‘īlism.

During the earliest post-Alamūt centuries when the imāms were not in direct contact with the bulk of their followers, different Ṣīrī communities developed independently of one another and of the headquarters of the da’wa. Each of these communities gradually came to own the authority of a chief ṭā’ī or pīr, who was usually selected locally, if not belonging to the hereditary dynasties of such ṭā’īs. Under these circumstances, the central headquarters of the da’wa represented little more than the places of residence of the imāms, who were then unable to direct the affairs of the
outlying Nizārī communities. Matters began to change, however, with the Anjudān renaissance, at least in the Qāsim-Shāhī branch of Nizārī Ismā'īlism. From the earliest decades of the Anjudān period, the Qāsim-Shāhī da'wa was reorganized not only for reinvigorating the da'wa activities, but also for the connected purposes of asserting the central authority of the imāms over the scattered communities and undermining the position of the local dynasties of pīrs. Nonetheless, the da'wa hierarchy of Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs remained rather simple as compared to the elaborate organization adopted by the Fātimid Ismā'īlīs, also representing further simplification of the organization utilized by the Nizārīs of the Alamūt period.

The Qāsim-Shāhī da'wa hierarchy of the Anjudān period was naturally headed by the manifest imām, who now made every effort to establish direct contact with his followers. As can be gathered from the few Qāsim-Shāhī works preserved from that period, there were five lower ranks, after the imām, in the da'wa organization of this Nizārī sub-sector. The imām was followed by a single hujja, designated as hujjat-i a'zam, or the great hujja. Normally residing at the headquarters of the da'wa, like the imām himself, he was the highest religious and administrative officer of the da'wa and the imām’s chief assistant. The hujja was often selected from amongst the close relatives of the imām, persons who were not in the direct line of succession to the imām. Next, there was a single category of da'i, a propagandist at large who was not apparently restricted to any particular region or community. Selected from amongst the better educated Nizārīs, the da'i was apparently mainly responsible for periodically inspecting the different communities and reporting their conditions to the da'wa headquarters in addition to conveying the directives of the headquarters to the local leaders. Furthermore, the da'i was in charge of propagating the da'wa in places beyond the jurisdiction of particular Nizārī communities. There were presumably many such da'is operating as roaming propagandists and inspectors of the sect, travelling from locality to locality in the service of the Qāsim-Shāhī da'wa. The next lower rank in the hierarchy was that of mu'allim or teacher, who was normally in charge of the da'wa activities in a particular community or region. The earlier Ismā'īli term jazīra (plural, jazā'ir) was again utilized during the Anjudān period in reference to the various da'wa regions. The mu'allims were appointed by the hujja, doubtless in consultation with the imām; and by considering only the obedient persons for this position, the imām could assert his control over the remote circles of his followers. Every mu'allim was normally assisted by
two categories of ma’dhún. The senior one, or ma’dhún-i akbar, was allowed to propagate the doctrines of the sect and to convert anyone on the basis of his own judgement and initiative. But the junior assistant, ma’dhún-i asghar, who held the lowest rank in the hierarchy, could perform these tasks only on receiving the mu’allim’s permission. The ordinary initiates, as in earlier times, were referred to as mustajibs. On acquiring proper qualifications, a mustajib, who as such did not hold a rank in the da’wa hierarchy, could be appointed by the mu’allim to the position of ma’dhún-i asghar. Appointments to the higher da’wa ranks were made, at least ideally, by the ālij and the imām, extending the central authority of the da’wa headquarters. It may be noted, however, that not all of the lower da’wa ranks were occupied at all times and in every community, especially in the smaller Nizārī milieus. By the middle of the 10th/16th century, the term pīr had come to be generally used in reference to most positions in the da’wa organization, notably in place of the highest ranks of imām, ālij, dā’i and mu’allim. The ordinary members of the sect, the mustajibs, were often designated as murids, reflecting the Sufi guise of the da’wa organization. Khayrkhwāh, the chief doctrinal author of the Anjudān period, in particular uses the terms ālij and pīr interchangeably. The term pīr, however, rapidly fell into disuse in Persia after the termination of the Anjudān period, while it was retained by the Central Asian Nizārīs until modern times.

The Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs of the Anjudān period essentially retained the teaching of the late Alamūt period as reflected in the Ismā’īlī writings of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. But the Ismā’īlī works of the Fāṭimid age, which had influenced al-Ṭūsī’s Ismā’īlī thought, were apparently no longer available to the post-Alamūt Nizārīs living outside of Syria. Consequently by the time of the Anjudān revival, the Nizārīs had completely lost the earlier interest of the Ismā’īlīs in cosmology and in speculating about the creation in general, while they made only passing references to cyclical prophetic history. In other words, the post-Alamūt Nizārīs, in contrast to the Ṭayyibīs, were not interested in the ḥaqā’iq, which comprised the essence of the esoteric thought of the early and the Fāṭimid Ismā’īlīs. The Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs of the Anjudān period, as noted, retained the doctrine of the qiyāma as reinterpreted during the final decades of the Alamūt period. The present imām continued to have a central role in the Nizārī doctrine. Furthermore, the current imām had to be seen in his true spiritual reality as the manifestation of the divine word; and the attainment of that knowledge and vision was the ultimate desideratum of the faithful. In other
words, the Nizāris were expected, through improving their religious knowledge and attaining better recognition of the true essence of the imām, to journey from the physical zāhiri world to the spiritual world of the haqīqa; from merely understanding the apparent meaning of the Sharī‘a to comprehending the unchangeable truths as manifested in the person of the present imām. And those who recognized the true spiritual reality of the imām would thus penetrate the zāhir of the law.

The role of the hujja, already stressed by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, was further elaborated in the doctrinal works of the Anjudān period, especially by Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī, who claimed the position for himself. The Nizāris of the later Alamūt period had held that even in the time of satr and taqiyya, the haqīqa and the true essence of the imām could be known at least to a few individuals in the community. The Nizāris of the Anjudān period definitely reduced this elite group into a single person, the hujja. They held that the hujja, like the imām himself, was born to his status, and as such, he too was ma‘ṣūm or sinless and received divine support (ta‘yid). The hujja was, indeed, held to be almost of the same essence as the imām. The hujja, by the virtue of his miraculous knowledge (mu‘jiz-i ‘ilmī), not available to the holders of the lower da‘wa ranks, knew the true essence of the imām and was, thus, the revealer of the spiritual truth for the Nizāris. He was the sole access to the imām, and it was only through him that the Nizāris could recognize fully the current imām and attain salvation.

Reminiscent of the view of the early Ismā‘īlīs, the doctrine of the Anjudān period also emphasized that the imām and his hujja could not both be hidden at the same time. The Qāsim-Shāhīs of that period, like the Nizāris of the qiyāma and later times in the Alamūt period, recognized three categories of men, viz., the ahl-i taḍādd, ahl-i tarattub and ahl-i wahdāt. The ahl-i taḍādd, consisting of the infidels as well as all the non-Nizārī Muslims, were the opponents of the imām. Seeing only themselves and refusing to acknowledge the rightful Nizārī Imām, they had continued to be spiritually non-existent. The people of gradation, the ahl-i tarattub, also called ahl-i ḥaqq or haqiqat, were the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizāris who saw both themselves and the imām; they had acquired access to partial truth. The ahl-i tarattub were themselves divided into the strong (qawiyān) and the weak (da‘ifān). The strong group was comprised of the dā‘īs, mu‘allims and ma‘dhūns, the holders of the da‘wa ranks below the hujja, while the weak group was restricted to the ordinary members of the community, the mustajibs. The qawiyān recognized the authority of the
hujja, and invited the mustajibs to do likewise. Both factions of the ahl-i tarattub were expected to concentrate on the inner meaning of the so-called khalqi commandments of the Shari’a, such as those related to praying, fasting, the hajj pilgrimage, and so forth, especially when not practising tāqiyya. Finally, the ahl-i wahdat category consisted of the hujja alone, who concentrated only on the person of the imām as the manifestation of the divine word and truth. Forgetting his own self completely, the hujja had truly entered the spiritual realm of the haqīqa. The paradisal state made available to the Nizāris of the Alamūt period by the announcement of the qiyāma could now, in the Anjudān period, be enjoyed by a single person, the most trusted associate of the imām.

In the meantime, the Nizāri da’wa had spread successfully on the Indian subcontinent. As noted, the origins and early development of Nizāri Ismā’ilism in India remain rather obscure due to the absence of reliable sources. The gināns and other sectarian religious writings and traditions are often inaccurate on chronological details and on the sequence of events, frequently mixing legend with reality, especially regarding the earliest centuries of the da’wa activities. According to the sectarian traditions, the da’wa in India was initiated by the emissaries or pirs despatched by the Nizāri Imāms from Persia. These emissaries, who probably began their missionary work during the later Alamūt period, at first concentrated their efforts chiefly in Sind. It may be noted that the available information on the post-Alamūt da’wa activities in India stem solely from the traditions preserved by the followers of the Qāsim-Shāhī line of imāms and the Imām-Shāhīs who split off from the community. Later, we shall refer to the activities of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms, notably Shāh Ṭāhir, who resided in India.

Satgur Nur, as noted, is reported to have been the earliest pir or guru sent from Persia to India for the propagation of Nizirism, which in India became designated as Satpanth, that is, Sat Panth, the True Path. According to the traditions, Satgur Nur was mainly active in Pātan, Gujarāt. His shrine is located at NawsarĪ near Sūrat, and the tombstone, oddly enough, gives the date as 487/1094. The next important pir is Shams al-Dīn, whose activities centred on Sind. In most of the religious poetry ascribed to him, Qāsim Shāhī is named as the imām of his time. Pir Shams al-Dīn thus seems to have flourished in the first half of the 8th/14th century. He was particularly active in Multān and Uchchh, in Sind; his mausoleum at Multān is locally known as that of Shams-i Tabrīz. The Nizāri community of the Shamsīs, who now acknowledge the Āghā Khān
and live as goldsmiths chiefly in Multan and elsewhere in Panjab, claim to have been converted to Nizari Isma'ilism by Pir Shams al-Din. The work of Shams al-Din was continued by his son and grandson, Nasir al-Din and Shihab (or Shihab) al-Din. Almost nothing is known about these two pir, who occupy the twenty-first and twenty-second places on the traditional lists of pir; it is merely reported that they conducted the da'wa in secret. Pir Shihab al-Din was, in turn, succeeded by his son Sadr al-Din. By that time in the post-Alamut period, the chief Nizari pir in India had acquired a certain degree of autonomy and had also established a hereditary dynasty.

Pir Sadr al-Din, to whom the largest number of ginans is attributed, played a key role in the propagation and organization of the Nizari da'wa in India. He is reported to have died sometime between 770/1369 and 819/1416; he was thus contemporary with the Imam Islâm Shah. Sadr al-Din converted large numbers of Hindus from the Lohana caste and gave them the name of Khója, derived from the Persian word khwaja, meaning lord or master. This name corresponded to the Hindu term thakur (or thakkar), also meaning master, by which the Lohanas were addressed, since they were regarded as Kshatriyas. The Lohanas and Khojas still use the Hindu designation amongst themselves. Sadr al-Din is credited with building the first Nizari jama'at-khana, or assembly and prayer hall, in Kotri, Sind. Subsequently, he established two other Nizari centres in Panjab and Kashmir and appointed their mukhis or leaders. The term mukhi (pronounced muki) is derived from the Sanskrit word mikhya, meaning most important or chief. Sadr al-Din, thus, laid the foundation of the communal organization of the Indian Nizaris who henceforth became known mainly as Khojas. In time, he extended the da'wa to Gujarat and won success amongst the Lohanas and other trading Hindu castes of that region. The centre of Sadr al-Din's activities, however, remained in Uchchh, from where he now conducted the da'wa somewhat more openly. It may be noted in passing that Sind was at the time ruled by the Sammas, who around 752/1351 had succeeded the Sūmras who adhered to Isma'ilism. The later members of the Sūmra dynasty were probably influenced by the Nizari da'wa in Sind whilst maintaining an independent Isma'īlī tradition of their own, but the Sammas soon became Sunni Muslims. Pir Sadr al-Din evidently visited the Imam Islâm Shâh in Persia to submit to him the dassondh or tithes collected from the Nizârî community of India. Sadr al-Din's shrine is located near Jetpur, in the vicinity of Uchchh, to the south of Multân. The overseers of this shrine
now consider themselves as Twelver Shi'is and refer to the pîr as Ḥājjī Ṣadr Shâh.

Ṣadr al-Dîn was succeeded as pîr by his eldest son Ḥasan Kabîr al-Dîn. According to the well-known hagiographical work written in India by ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq b. Sayf al-Dîn Dihlawî (d. 1052/1642), Kabîr al-Dîn travelled extensively before settling down in Uchchh. He too apparently visited the imâm in Persia and converted a large number of Hindus during his pirship. The death dates mentioned for this pîr vary from 853/1449 to 896/1490–1491; but most probably he died around 875/1470–1471, the year mentioned in the yet unpublished Manâzîl al-aqtâb, the history of the Imâm-Shâhî sect compiled around 1237/1821 in Gujarât by Qâḍî Raḥmat Allâh b. Ghulâm Muṣṭafâ. Kabîr al-Dîn's shrine is outside Uchchh and is locally known as Ḥasan Dârîyâ. It is interesting to note that this pîr is reported to have been affiliated with the Suhrawardi Ṣûfî order, which was prevalent at the time in the region of Multân. In fact, Pîr Kabîr al-Dîn's name appears in the list of the shaykhs of this Ṣûfî tariqa. Be it as it may, this indicates that in India, too, close ties had developed in the post-Alamût period between Nizârî and organized Ṣûfism. On Ḥasan Kabîr al-Dîn’s death, the Indian Nizârî community began to experience internal dissensions which eventually led to an important schism. Ḥasan Kabîr al-Dîn is said to have had eighteen sons, but his brother Tâj al-Dîn was appointed as the next pîr by the imâm. This appointment was opposed by some of the sons of Kabîr al-Dîn, who were at the time also quarrelling amongst themselves. When Tâj al-Dîn returned from a visit to the imâm in Persia, where he had gone for delivering the tithes of the Indian Nizâris, he was accused by his nephews of embezzling a portion of the religious dues. Thereupon, the pîr is said either to have died of grief or committed suicide. Tâj al-Dîn, who is not recognized as a pîr by the later Imâm-Shâhîs, died towards the end of the 9th/15th century, not long after Kabîr al-Dîn. Tâj al-Dîn’s grave is located in Jhun in Sind.

After Tâj al-Dîn, Imâm al-Dîn ʿAbd al-Raḥîm b. Ḥasan, better known as Imâm Shâh, a son of Kabîr al-Dîn and the eponym of the Imâm-Shâhî sect, tried in vain to succeed to the leadership of the Nizârî Khojas in Sind. Later, he saw the imâm in Persia but was not designated by him to the position of pîr. On returning to India, Imâm Shâh settled in Gujarât where he spent the rest of his life and had much success in converting the local Hindus, especially from amongst the agricultural communities, to Nizârî Ismâʿîlism. According to some legendary accounts, he also con-
verted the sultan of Gujarāt, Maḥmūd Begrā (862–917/1458–1511), who gave his daughter in marriage to Imām Shāḥ’s eldest son Nar Muḥammad. Imām Shāḥ, who according to some unreliable accounts seceded from the Nizārī community and himself became the founder of the Imām-Shāhī sect, is not recognized as a pīr by the Nizārī Khojas, who regard him merely as a sayyid. He died in 919/1513 in Pirāna, the town founded by himself near Ahmadābād, where his shrine is located. Meanwhile, due to continuing conflicts in the family of Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Din, the imām had not appointed a new pīr after Tāj al-Din. Instead, a book of guidance, occupying the twenty-sixth place on the traditional lists of pīrs, was sent to the Indian Nizārī community. This book, the already-noted Pandiyāt-i jawānmardi containing the religious admonitions of Imām Mustanṣīr bi’llāh II, appears to have reached Sind around the middle of the 10th/16th century. At the time, it will be recalled, the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms were successfully endeavouring to assert their control over the Nizārī communities of India and other remote places. Khayrkhwāh, for instance, refers to the pilgrimages of the Indian ḍa’īs for seeing the imām at Anjudān, also noting that the Indian Nizārīs by then greatly outnumbered their Persian co-religionists. The Pandiyāt-i jawānmardi was in due course translated into Sindhi and Gujarāti and transcribed in Khojki for the benefit of the Nizārī Khojas.

Meanwhile, Imām Shāḥ had been succeeded in Gujarāt by his son Nar (Nūr) Muḥammad. Imām Shāḥ himself had apparently remained loyal to the imāms in Persia, but Nar Muḥammad seceded from the Nizārī da’wa and the Khoja community, founding an independent sect. At an unknown date not long after 919/1513, Nar Muḥammad demanded that the dassondh or tithes should henceforth be delivered to him in Gujarāt, instead of being sent through Sind to the imām in Persia. Nar Muḥammad had now in fact claimed the imāmate for himself, and, retrospectively, for his father. The new instructions caused a schism in the Nizārī community of Gujarāt. In particular, Nar Muḥammad’s requests and claims were rejected by a certain Kheta, who was the mukhi of some 18,000 converted Hindus. But the majority of Nar Muḥammad’s followers in Gujarāt sided with him and formed the separate Imām-Shāhī sect, also known as Satpanthī. A minority of Nar Muḥammad’s earlier followers, together with other Nizārīs of Gujarāt, remained loyal to the Nizārī Imāms and the main da’wa in India. Nar Muḥammad died in 940/1533–1534, and was buried in his father’s mausoleum in Pirāna. The Imām-Shāhīs later came to deny any connection with Ismā’īlism, though they continued to acknowledge the
line of the Ismāʿīlī Imāms until Islām Shāh, the thirtieth Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imām. They do not, however, recognize some of the Nizārī Imāms, such as Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh, Muḥammad b. Islām Shāh, and the latter’s successors until the schism. They claim that the early pīrs, until Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn, were in fact Twelver Shiʿīs. They do not recognize Tāj al-Dīn as one of their pīrs; and Nar Muḥammad is regarded as their last imām.

After Nar Muḥammad, there occurred several splits in the Imām-Shāhī community due to succession disputes over the position of the pīr. Different factions followed different lines of pīrs from amongst Nar Muḥammad’s descendants. In Awrangzib’s reign, the sajjāda-nishīn or leader of the Imām-Shāhī community centred in Pīrānā was a certain Shāhji Mīrān Shāh. In 1067/1657, he had succeeded his father, Muḥammad Shāh, a descendant of Nar Muḥammad’s son Saʿīd Khān, as the pīr of the so-called Āṭḥīhiyā branch of the sect. Having heard about the heretical beliefs of Shāhji, Awrangzib summoned the aged saint to have his beliefs examined by the Sunnī jurists of his court. Shāhji was forced to set off for Awrangzib’s court by the local governor of Gujarāt. But Shāhji died on the way, possibly poisoning himself, near Pīrānā or in Aḥmadābād. Thereupon, Shāhji’s numerous followers, especially from amongst the Matiya Kanbis caste, launched a revolt and seized the fort of Broaḥ. They proclaimed Shāhji Mīrān’s son and successor, Sayyid Muḥammad Shāh (d. ca. 1130/1718), as king of Broach. This rebellion, which occurred around 1100/1688–1689, was eventually suppressed by Awrangzib. The pīrship of this Imām-Shāhī sub-sect remained in the hands of Shāhji’s direct descendants until Bāqir ʿAli, the last pīr of the Āṭḥīhiyā who died around 1251/1835. Shāhji Mīrān’s wife, Rāji Tāhira, founded a separate branch of the Imām-Shāhī sect. The Imām-Shāhīs, through their various branches, have tended to revert towards Hinduism. The adherents of this syncretist sect, who are now mainly located in the rural communities of Gujarāt, Khāndesh and western Madhya Pradesh, near Burhānpūr, consider themselves chiefly as Twelver Shiʿīs or Sunnīs rather than Ismāʿīlis.

The immediate reaction of the Qāsim-Shāhī daʿwa headquarters in Anjudān to the Imām-Shāhī schism in India remains unknown. In the aftermath of the dissensions in the Indian community, culminating in the secession of the Imām-Shāhīs, the imāms did not appoint any new pīrs in succession to Tāj al-Dīn. As noted, the Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī was sent to India as a book of guidance for the Nizārīs of the subcontinent. Some of
the oldest lists of *pirs* mention after the *Pandiyat* only one other *pir* named Dādū. He is said to have been sent by the imām to Sind for the purpose of preventing the conversion of the Nizārī Khojas to Sunnism. Around 1584, however, Dādū was obliged to leave for Navanagar (Jamnagar) in Gujarāt, where he settled down with some of the Sindhi Nizāris who had fled with him. Subsequently, Dādū moved to Bhuj, where he died in 1593. Dādū played an important role in reorganizing the Indian Nizārī community and in strengthening the ties of that community with the imām and the central *da’wa* headquarters in Anjudān. Dādū’s name is, however, omitted from the later lists of the Indian *pirs*. With the termination of the line of *pirs*, the imāms came to be represented locally in India by *wakils* and *bāwās*. The latter term probably represents the Khojāi pronunciation of the Turkish and Persian word*bābā*, meaning father, and used also as an honorific for older men. Dissatisfied with the dynasty of *pirs*, the imāms of the Anjudān period now attempted to acquire more direct controls over the Indian Nizāris. One of the most important duties of the *wakil* and other local representatives of the imāms was the collection of the religious dues and their proper transference to the central treasury of the *da’wa* in Persia, located at the imām’s place of residence. At the same time, some local families of Sayyids, that is, descendants of Pir Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn, maintained their influence in the Khoja Nizārī community, sometimes holding the position of *wakil*. Remaining faithful to the imāms in Persia, they also conducted the *da’wa* on their behalf and performed certain teaching functions in the Khoja community. The Kadiwala Sayyids, who also composed *gināns*, represent one of the most important families of such Sayyids. They are still active in Sind. Their ancestor, Sayyid Fādīl Shāh, a descendant of Rahmat Allāh b. Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn, was originally active in the town of Kadi in Cutch around the middle of the 11th/17th century, before the family moved to Sind. In Sind, the family eventually settled around 1780 in Tando Muḥammad Khān, where the Kadiwala Sayyids still reside.

In India, the Nizārī *da’wa* had, meanwhile, continued in Gujarāt. One group of Gujarātī Nizāris, who had remained loyal to the imāms and their representatives in India, had come to be known as Mūmnas; a designation derived from the word *mu’min*. This term has also been used in reference to some of the Imām-Shāhī groups. The Nizārī Mūmnas allege that in time they came to obey the Kadiwala Sayyid Fādīl Shāh, who collected their tithes and sent them to Persia. Pir Mashāyikh and Ḥasan Pir, sons of Sayyid Fādīl, played important roles amongst the Nizārī Mūmnas of
northern Gujarat. According to the Nizari Momin tradition, Mashayikh was designated as the local head of the Nizari jamāʿat or community in northern Gujarat, where he attempted to suppress the Hindu practices of the sectarians. Mashayikh eventually settled down in Aḥmadābād and asserted his independence from the daʿwa headquarters in Anjudān. He kept the tithes collected in the community for himself and also renounced his allegiance to the imām in Persia. Indeed, some sources report that he even converted to Sunnism and visited Awrangzib in the Deccan. Pir Mashayikh is also said to have sided with this Mughal emperor against the Shi‘i rulers of Bījāpūr. Many of Mashayikh’s adherents, who later followed his descendants, converted to Sunnism, while the Nizari Mōmns came to support the Kadiwala Sayyids. Pir Mashayikh died in 1108/1697 in Aḥmadābād, and his followers later quarrelled as to whether he had been a Sunnī or a Shi‘ī, causing further divisions. The matter is obscure, as Mashayikh’s writings reflect both Sunnī and Shi‘ī tendencies. Azim Nanji has made the interesting suggestion that Pir Mashayikh may in fact have transferred his allegiance to the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī Imāms, who then resided in the Deccan, professing Sunnism for the purpose of taqiyya.120 Pir Mashayikh’s brother Ḥasan, who was active in Kathiawar, remained loyal to the Nizārī Imām and became the saint of the Nizārī Mōmns. In addition to his mausoleum in Thanapipli near Jūnāgarh, the Nizārī Khojas and Mōmns in 1717 constructed a shrine in Ganod, Gujarāt, as a tribute to Ḥasan Pir. The Mōmns, now found chiefly in Gujarāt, are sub-divided into various groups adhering to Sunnism, Twelver Shi‘ism, Nizārī Shi‘ism, and admixtures of these religions.

From early on, the Nizārī pīrs who preached the daʿwa in India paid special attention to the beliefs and rituals of the Indian communities that were to be converted. They attempted to present the Islamic teachings and Ismāʿīlī doctrines in terms that would be readily comprehensible to Hindu inhabitants of Sind, Gujarāt and other regions of the Indian subcontinent. This approach is clearly reflected in the religious content of the gināns which represent an interfacing of Islamic and Hindu elements. The pīrs condemned idol worship but they used Hindu mythology and Hindu motifs to explain certain aspects of their teachings.121 In particular they expounded within a Hindu framework the doctrine of the imāmate, especially as held by the Nizārīs of the post-qiyāma times. This formulation is contained in an important ginān entitled Dasa Avatāra, which is extant in three separate versions attributed to Pir Shams al-Dīn, Pir Šadr al-Dīn, and Imām Shāh.122 The Dasa Avatāra, which like many other
ginâns is no longer in usage, conveys the post-qiyâma Nizârî doctrines in
the light of the tenets of Vaishnavism, and presents the Nizârî Imâm as the
awaited saviour on the basis of Vaishnavite ideas concerning the different
manifestations of the Hindu deity Vishnu through the ages.

In general, the term avatâra in Vaishnavism had come to signify the
manifestation of deity, viz., the assumption of different forms, anthropo-
morphic or otherwise, in which Vishnu descended to earth and lived there
until his particular purpose was realized. The number of such avatâras had
ggradually come to be fixed at ten, whence the name of the ginân in
question, Dasa Avatâra. The ten avatâras were also adjusted in the ginâns
within the Hindu frame of cyclical time and history. This was accom-
plished on the basis of the concept of yuga or age, expressed in terms of the
discipline of the four yugas of unequal lengths, or a mahâyuga, referring to
the four cosmic cycles wherein the universe was periodically created and
destroyed. The final yuga, the present epoch, was called Kali Yuga, an age
of evil and darkness associated with the goddess Kali, the Black. The
Hindus had awaited the appearance of the tenth avatâra who would fight
the forces of evil in the Kali Yuga, the current age of darkness. The Nizârî
pirs now introduced 'Ali b. Abî Tâlib, instead of the standard Hindu figure
of Kalki, as the tenth avatâra or manifestation of Vishnu. 'Ali would thus
fulfil the eschatological expectations of the Hindu converts to Nizârism
by fighting the forces of evil in the Kali Yuga, the final age; he would
eventually kill Kalinga, the Iblis of Hindu mythology. Furthermore, all
the imâms succeeding 'Alî, who were recognized by the Nizâris, were held
to be identical with him in their status and authority. Consequently, each
and every Nizârî Imâm came to be represented as the tenth avatâra of
Vishnu. Such explanations were easily comprehensible to the Hindus,
who had been converted to Nizârism and were now taught the doctrines
of the imâmate and the qiyâma, depicting the current imâm as the expected
saviour. The recognition of the true path (sat panth) and imâm would
liberate the Nizârî Khoja believers from the cycles of rebirth, opening
Paradise to them. The Qurîân was represented as the last of the Vedas, or
sacred scriptures whose true interpretation (ta'wil) was known only to the
pirs. Indeed, the ginâns exalt the religious role of the Nizârî pîr or guru,
who guides the believers to attain the knowledge (ginân) of the imâm
and the true religion. The traditional Ismâ'îli cosmology and cyclical hiero-
history are not treated in the ginâns of the Nizârî Khojas and the
Imâm-Shâhis.

The available information on the Muḥammad-Shâhî Nizârî Imâms and
their *da'wa* activities is rather meagre. As noted, the bulk of the Nizārī community in Syria adhered, until the last century, to this line of îmāms. There were large numbers of Muḥammad-Shāhīs, at least through the 10th/16th century, in Persia, especially in Daylam, as well as in Afghanistan and the adjacent areas in Badakhshān and the upper Oxus. With the migration of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms to India early in the 10th/16th century, this Nizārī sub-sect acquired followers also on the Indian subcontinent for a few centuries. In the absence of adequate sectarian sources, however, most of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms continue to remain obscure figures, with only their names having been preserved in the sectarian traditions especially as handed down by the Syrian Nizāris.  

We have already made references to Muḥammad Shāh b. Muʿīn Shāh, the twenty-seventh îmām of this line who may be identified with Khudāwand Muḥammad. The latter led his Nizārī followers in Daylam, often from Alamūt, and played an active part in that region’s alliances and entanglements until he was exiled to Sultāniyya by Timūr. Khudāwand Muḥammad’s descendants, including perhaps his immediate successors, lived in Sultāniyya until the final decades of the 9th/15th century. Meanwhile, Muḥammad Shāh b. Muʿīn Shāh had been succeeded by his son Raḍī al-Dīn (d. 838/1434). The latter îmām was, in turn, succeeded by Ṭāhir b. Raḍī al-Dīn (d. 868/1463–1464) and Raḍī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir, the thirtieth îmām of this line and the father of the celebrated Shāh Ṭāhir al-Dakkanī. Imām Raḍī al-Dīn II may perhaps be identified with Shāh Raḍī al-Dīn, the Nizārī leader who early in the 10th/16th century appeared in Badakhshān, a mountainous region situated on the left bank of the upper reaches of the Oxus (Āmū Daryā), or more accurately of the Panj, the source of the Oxus.

The Ismāʿīlīs of the upper Oxus region who remained particularly devoted to Nāṣir-i Khusraw acknowledged the Nizārī *da'wa* sometime during the later Alamūt period. But the exact date and circumstances of this event are unknown. According to the Ismāʿīlī tradition preserved in Shughnān, a district on the upper Oxus situated on both banks of the Panj and on the western end of the Pāmīr, Nizārīsm was brought to Badakhshān by two *daʾīs* sent by the Nizārī Imāms of the Alamūt period. It is related that a certain *daʾī* called Sayyid Shāh Malang went to Shughnān from Khurāsān and took control of the area by deposing its ruler. Shāh Malang was followed by a second Nizārī *daʾī*, Sayyid Shāh Khāmūsh, who was a Husaynid ‘Alid tracing his descent to the Imām Mūsā al-Kāzim. These *daʾīs* became the founders of the local dynasties of pīrs and mīrs who
ruled over Shughnān and adjacent districts. Meanwhile, Badakhshān in the wider sense escaped the Mongol catastrophe, having remained in the hands of its own local rulers. The region was later annexed to the Timūrid empire in the time of Timūr’s great-grandson Abū Sa’īd (855–873/1451–1469). Still later, at the beginning of the 10th/16th century, Badakhshān was temporarily conquered by the Özbegs. Özbeg rule in Badakhshān was, however, resisted by different local rulers, including a certain Timūrid amīr called Mirzā Khān (d. 926/1520). It was under these chaotic circumstances that, in 913/1507–1508, the already-noted Shāh Raḍī al-Dīn, a Nizārī dignitary who had earlier led the Quhistānī Nizārīs and who may be identified with the thirtieth imām of the Muḥammad-Shāhīs, came from Sīstān to Badakhshān. With the help of the local Nizārīs, he established his rule over a large part of Badakhshān. In the midst of the quarrels that soon broke out amongst his supporters, Shāh Raḍī al-Dīn was killed in the spring of 915/1509 and his head was taken to Mirzā Khān, a local Timūrid ruler who resided at the fortress of Zafar situated on the left bank of the Kokcha. After defeating another local ruler called Zubayr Rāghi, Mirzā Khān dealt a severe blow to the Nizārīs of Badakhshān who had then gathered around Shāh Raḍī al-Dīn.

Imām Raḍī al-Dīn II was succeeded by his son Shāh Tāhir al-Ḥusaynī al-Dakkānī, the thirty-first and the most famous imām of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line. Shāh Tāhir was a learned theologian as well as a poet, a stylist and an accomplished diplomat who rendered valuable services to the Nizām-Shāhī dynasty of Aḥmadnagar in the Deccan. The most detailed account of this imām is related by Muḥammad Qāsim Hindū Shāh Astarābādī, better known as Firishta, in his well-known work entitled Gulshan-i Ibriḥīmī, usually called Ta’rikh-i Firishta, a general history of India completed in 1013/1606–1607. Firishta, who was aware of Shāh Tāhir’s position as a Nizārī Ismā’īlī Imām, states that his ancestors had acquired a large following in Persia, where they resided in a locality called Khund (Khwānd) near Qazwīn. In time, Shāh Tāhir became the sajjādānīshīn or head of his family and following. He was a highly gifted personality and attained much popularity due to his learning and piety, eclipsing his predecessors. The Ṣafawī Shāh Ismā’īl, too, heard about Shāh Tāhir and became apprehensive of his popularity. But through the intercession of Mirzā Ḥusayn Isfahānī, an influential dignitary at the Ṣafawī court and a supporter of Shāh Tāhir, the Nizārī Imām was invited to join other scholars at Shāh Ismā’īl’s court in Sultāniyya. However, Shāh Tāhir’s religious following began to arouse Shāh Ismā’īl’s suspicion. Once
again, on the intercession of Mirzā Ḥusayn Iṣfahānī, who may have been a secret convert to Nizārī Ismāʿīlism of the Muḥammad-Shāhī faction, Shāh Ṣāḥib was permitted to settle down in Kāshān. There, Shāh Ṣāḥib became a religious teacher (muḏarrī) at the local theological seminary and acquired many students and disciples. It seems that many of Shāh Ṣāḥib’s followers (muḥtadīn) proceeded to Kāshān to attend the lectures of their master. Shāh Ṣāḥib’s success soon aroused the hostility of the local officials and the Twelver Shiʿī scholars, who forwarded malicious reports to Shāh Ismāʿīl about the Ismāʿīlī teachings of Shāh Ṣāḥib. He was also accused of leading the Ismāʿīlīs and other heretical sectarians and of corresponding with foreign rulers.

Shāh Ismāʿīl, who had been waiting for a suitable opportunity to deal with Shāh Ṣāḥib, now issued an order for the imām’s execution. But Shāh Ṣāḥib was warned in time by his friend at the Šafawīd court, Mirzā Ḥusayn Iṣfahānī. In 926/1520, the imām fled from Kāshān with his family, barely missing the guards who had been sent after him. He went to Fārs and then sailed to India, landing in Goa. Shāh Ṣāḥib immediately proceeded to the court of Ismāʿīl ʿĀdil Shāh (916–941/1510–1534), who ruled from Bijāpur over one of the five states succeeding the Bahmanid kingdom in the Deccan. Ismāʿīl’s father Yūṣuf was the first Muslim ruler in India to adopt Shiʿīsm as the religion of his state. But Ismāʿīl ʿĀdil Shāh himself did not have deep religious convictions and did not pay any particular attention to Shāh Ṣāḥib. Disappointed about his reception at Bijāpur, the imām then decided to make the pilgrimage to Mecca and to the Shiʿī shrines in ’Īraq before returning to Persia. On his way to the seaport, Shāh Ṣāḥib stopped at the fort of Paranda where he came in contact with Khwāja Jahān, the famous vizier of the Bahmanid kings who was then in the service of the Nizām-Shāhs of Āḥmadnagar, another of the dynasties succeeding the Bahmanids. At Paranda, Shāh Ṣāḥib also met Pir Muḥammad Shirwānī, a Ḥanafī Sunnī scholar of Āḥmadnagar who had been sent by Burhān I Nizām Shāh (914–961/1508–1554) on some errand to Khwāja Jahān. Pir Muḥammad was much impressed by Shāh Ṣāḥib’s scholarship and reported the matter to Burhān Nizām Shāh, who invited Shāh Ṣāḥib to Āḥmadnagar.

In 928/1522, Shāh Ṣāḥib arrived in Āḥmadnagar, the capital of the Nizām-Shāhī state which was to become his permanent abode. Soon Shāh Ṣāḥib became the most trusted adviser of Burhān Nizām Shāh and attained a highly privileged position at his court. At the request of Burhān Nizām Shāh, Shāh Ṣāḥib started delivering weekly lectures on different religious subjects inside the fort of Āḥmadnagar. These sessions, attended by
numerous scholars and the ruler himself, spread Shāh Tāhir’s fame throughout the Deccan. Firishta relates interesting details on Shāh Tāhir’s miraculous healing of Burhān Nizām Shāh’s young son, ’Abd al-Qādir, which apparently brought about the conversion of Burhān I from Sunnism to Shi‘ism. The sources specify that Burhān Nizām Shāh adopted Ithnā‘asharī Shi‘ism, which, according to all authorities, was the form of Shi‘ism propagated from the beginning by Shāh Tāhir. The propagation of Twelver Shi‘ism by a Nizārī Imām may seem rather strange. One must bear in mind, however, that Shāh Tāhir and other Nizārī leaders of the period were obliged to observe taqiyya very strictly. It is certain that Shāh Tāhir propagated his form of Nizārī Ismā‘īlism in the guise of Twelver Shi‘ism, which was more acceptable to the Muslim rulers of India who were interested in cultivating friendly relations with the Twelver Shi‘i Safawid dynasty of Persia. This may explain why he wrote several commentaries on the theological works of the well-known Imāmī scholars. Furthermore, like his rivals in the Qāsim-Shāhī line, Shāh Tāhir apparently expressed his Nizārī ideas also in the guise of Sūfism, though specific details are lacking on the matter. In this connection, it may be recalled that the authorship of the already-cited Ismā‘īlī commentary on the Gulshan-i rāz is sometimes attributed to Shāh Tāhir. At any rate, these associations are well reflected in the Lama‘ät al-ṭāhirīn, a versified Muḥammad-Shāhī treatise composed in the Deccan around 1110/1698 by Ghalām ‘Alī b. Muḥammad.127 In the Lama‘ät, the only Muḥammad-Shāhī work preserved in India, the author clearly camouflages his scattered Nizārī ideas under Ithnā‘asharī and Sūfī expressions. He often eulogizes the twelve imāms of the Ithnā‘asharīs whilst also alluding to the imāms of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line.

Shāh Tāhir achieved his greatest religious success in the Deccan when Burhān Nizām Shāh, shortly after his own conversion, proclaimed Twelver Shi‘ism as the official religion of the Nizām-Shāhī state in 944/1537. The ruler of Ahmadnagar easily succeeded, with Shāh Tāhir’s advice, in subduing a rebellion led by Pīr Muḥammad Shirwānī against this proclamation. Henceforth, an increasing number of Shi‘ī scholars, including Shāh Tāhir’s own brother Shāh Ja‘far, gathered at Burhān I’s court and received his patronage. The Safawid court in Persia rejoiced at hearing about the official endorsement of Shi‘ism in the Nizām-Shāhī state, and Shāh Tahmāsp sent an emissary carrying presents to Burhān Nizām Shāh. In return, Shāh Tāhir’s son Ḥaydar was despatched on a goodwill mission from Ahmadnagar to Persia. Firishta and other authori-
ties relate many details on the diplomatic services rendered by Shāh Ṭāhir to Burhān Nizām Shāh. This Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī Imām participated during more than two decades in many negotiations and mediations on behalf of his patron with the surrounding Muslim rulers in Gujarāt, Bijāpūr, Golconda and Bīdar. After an imāmāte of some forty years, Shāh Ṭāhir died at Aḥmadnagar between 952/1545–1546, the year mentioned by the contemporary Ṣafawid prince Sām Mīrzā, and 956/1549, the most probable date recorded by Fīrishta. His remains were later transferred to Karbalāʾ and buried in the Imām al-Ḥusayn’s shrine. Shāh Ṭāhir was the author of numerous works on theology and jurisprudence, which do not seem to be extant; but many of his poems have been preserved.

Shāh Ṭāhir was succeeded by his eldest son Shāh Ḥaydar, who at the time of his father’s death was still at the court of Shāh Ṭahmāsp in Persia. Soon after, he returned to Aḥmadnagar as the sajjāda-nishīn of his sect and acquired a respectful position at the court of the Nizām-Shāhs. Besides Ḥaydar, Shāh Ṭāhir had three other sons, Shāh Rafīʾ al-Dīn Ḥusayn, Shāh Abū’l-Ḥasan and Shāh Abū Ṭālib, who had been born in India. They, too, received honour and respect at the courts of the ‘Ādil-Shāhs and other rulers of the Deccan. The Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāmāte was handed down amongst the descendants of Shāh Ḥaydar (d. 994/1586), who continued to live in Aḥmadnagar and later in Awrangābād. According to the traditions of the Syrian Muḥammad-Shāhīs, the successors of Shāh Ḥaydar were Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 1032/1622); Muʾīn al-Dīn (d. 1054/1644); ʿAṭiyyat Allāh, also known as Khudāybaksh, who apparently took up residence in Badakhshān and died there in 1074/1663; ʿAzīz Shāh, who died at Awrangābād in 1103/1691; Muʾīn al-Dīn II (d. 1127/1715); Amīr Muḥammad al-Musharraf (d. 1178/1764); Ḥaydar (d. 1201/1786); and Amīr Muḥammad al-Bāqir. The last, counted as the fortieth in the series, was evidently the final Muḥammad-Shāhī Imām.

Amīr Muḥammad al-Bāqir had his last contact with his Syrian followers in Shaʿbān 1210/February 1796. The Syrian Nizārī community had, as noted, continued to generally acknowledge the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms; but after searching in vain in India to locate the descendants of Amīr Muḥammad al-Bāqir, in 1304/1887 the majority of the Syrian Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs transferred their allegiance to the Qāsim-Shāhī line, then represented by Āghā Khān III. With the settlement of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms in the Deccan, the religious following of this line disintegrated in Persia in the course of the 10th/16th century. While
some Persian Muḥammad-Shāhis may have joined the Qāsim-Shāhi faction, the majority of the members of this Nizārī sub-sect probably embraced Twelver Shi‘ism, the official religion of Šafawid Persia. It is interesting to note, however, that the members of the Shāh-Ṭāhirī family, who currently reside in Qumm and some other towns in Persia, claim descent from Shāh Ṭāhir. The Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms continued to have supporters in Badakhshān and the Kābul area at least through the 11th/17th century. But by the beginning of the 13th/19th century, the Nizāris of the upper Oxus region and Afghanistan seem to have generally adhered to the Qāsim-Shāhī line. The Nizārī communities of Badakhshān, including those now under Soviet domination, have continued to be led by their local dynasties of pīrs. In India, too, the followers of the Muḥammad-Shāhī line gradually disappeared after the 11th/17th century, following the general persecution of the Shi‘īs in the Deccan by Awrangzib. At present, there do not seem to be any Muḥammad-Shāhīs in India. The only known members of this Nizārī sub-sect are currently located in Syria. The Syrian Muḥammad-Shāhīs have always followed the Shāfī‘ī madhhab in the legal affairs of their community.

In the meantime, the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms had succeeded by the end of
The tombstone of Imām Shāh Nizār II (d. 1134/1722), Kahak
A surviving section of the wall encircling Aghā Khān I's residential compound, Mahallāt.
General view of the citadel of Bam
Hasan 'Ali Shāh, Aghā Khān I
15 Āghā Khān I and (on the right) Āghā Khān II
One of Āghā Khān I's granddaughters, Bombay
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the 11th/17th century to gain the allegiance of the Nizārī majoritarian. Khalīl Allāh II, the thirty-ninth imām of this line, died in 1090/1680 and was succeeded by his son Shāh Nizār II. By that time, the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms had developed deep roots in central Persia, in Mahallāt and other localities around Anjudān. Sometime during the earliest decades of his imāmate and for unknown reasons, Shāh Nizār transferred his residence and the headquarters of the da'wā to Kahak, a village situated about thirty-five kilometres northeast of Anjudān and northwest of Mahallāt. Anjudān, separated from Kahak by a number of shallow ranges, was now abandoned permanently by the imāms. This marked the termination of the Anjudān period in Nizārīsm which had lasted about two centuries. Shāh Nizār and his immediate successor lived in Kahak, which was soon abandoned as the residence of the imāms. However, Nizār’s later successors maintained roots in Kahak at least by the beginning of the 13th/19th century. Kahak is now an insignificant and isolated village, with an Ithnā‘ashārī population of about 500 persons. The locality seems to have enjoyed greater importance in former times as a resting place with a Safawid caravanserai on the road between Qumm and Arāk.

The Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms evidently maintained their affiliation with the Ni’mat Allāhī Šūfī order continuously from the time of Mustaṣṣir bi’llāh II. But the earliest definitive evidence of this affiliation can be traced back to Shāh Nizār. He had close connections with this Šūfī order, which at the time was not yet revived in Persia, and adopted the tariqā name of ‘Aṭā’ Allāh. This also explains why his followers in certain parts of Kirmān came to be known as ‘Aṭā’ Allāhīs. These Nizārīs, originally nomadic tribesmen in Khurāsān, were settled down in the district of Sīrjān and elsewhere in Kirmān on Nizār’s own initiative. Imām Shāh Nizār II died, according to the inscription of his tombstone, in Dhu’l-Hijja 1134/September 1722, shortly before the Afghan invasion of Persia which extended also to Kahak. Sectarian sources place Nizār II’s death almost a century earlier, in 1038/1628–1629. His mausoleum is still preserved at the western end of Kahak. The building, which may in fact have been a part of the former residence of the imām, has several chambers, each one containing a few graves. In the compound and in its adjacent garden there are several tombstones with inscriptions in Khojki Sindhi characters, attesting to the pilgrimage of the Indian Nizārīs who regularly embarked on the long and dangerous journey to see their imām. By that time, close relations had developed between the Nizārī Imāms and their Khoja followers in Sind, Panjāb, Gujarāt and elsewhere in the Indian subcon-
tinent. Nizâr's mausoleum was restored, at the cost of destroying its original carved wooden doors and other fixtures, in 1966. A stone platform, discovered in 1937 by Ivanow, which was then situated in the former gardens of Nizâr's residence, was no longer in existence when the author visited Kahak in 1976. It has been related that Nizâr used to sit on this platform when he received his followers.

Shâh Nizâr II was succeeded by his son Sayyid 'Ali, whose grave is located in the largest chamber of Nizâr's mausoleum. Sayyid 'Ali was, in turn, succeeded by Sayyid Hasan 'Ali, also known as Sayyid Hasan Beg, the forty-second imâm of this line. It was during Hasan 'Ali's imâmâte that Nâdir Shâh expelled the Afghan invaders from Persia, and then overthrew the Safawid dynasty and proclaimed himself king, founding the short-lived Afshârid dynasty. Towards the end of Nâdir Shâh's reign (1148–1160/1736–1747), Imâm Hasan 'Ali moved to Shahr-i Bâbak in Kirmân, situated about 180 kilometres southwest of the city of Kirmân, between Rafsanjân and Sîrjân. This decision was apparently mainly motivated by the imâm's concern for the safety of the Indian Nizâri pilgrims coming to Persia and the proper flow of the tithes from India to his treasury. Ahmad 'Ali Khân Vazîrî (d. 1295/1878), who wrote a detailed regional history of his native province of Kirmân, relates that in the chaotic conditions of Persia after the downfall of the Safawids, the Indian Nizâris who regularly travelled to the Anjudân and Mahallât areas for seeing their imâm and remitting to him their religious dues, were often plundered and killed between Nâ'in and Yazd by the Bakhtiyârî tribesmen, in addition to being extorted on the route by various officials. Consequently, the imâm decided to move to Shahr-i Bâbak in southeastern Persia, a location closer to the Persian Gulf ports and the pilgrimage route of his Indian followers. Some Nizâris already lived in Shahr-i Bâbak, and with the imâm's arrival there, the town became an important Nizâri centre. With the improved flow of the tithes of the Nizâri Khojas, Imâm Hasan 'Ali soon acquired extensive properties in Shahr-i Bâbak, also establishing a winter residence in the city of Kirmân. He was, indeed, the first imâm of his line to emerge from concealment and obscurity. He became actively involved in the affairs of Kirmân, and was treated with respect by the Afshârid Shâhrukh who ruled the Kirmân province from the time of Nâdir Shâh's murder in 1160/1747 until he himself was killed in 1172/1758–1759, at which time Kirmân was annexed to the territories of Karîm Khân Zand, the founder of another short-lived dynasty in Persia. The close association between Hasan 'Ali and Shâhrukh culminated in the marriage between the
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Imām Hasan 'Ali was succeeded by his son Qāsim 'Ali (Shāh), also known as Sayyid Ja'far, about whom no particular details are mentioned in the sources.

Qāsim 'Ali’s son and successor as the forty-fourth imām of his line, Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali (Shāh), also known as Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan Kahaki, became the governor of Kirmān during the Zand period (1163-1209/1750-1794). He played an active part in that province’s political scene in the turbulent years when the Zand dynasty was being replaced by the Qājār dynasty in Persia. Abu'l-Hasan had friendly relations with Karim Khān Zand (1163-1193/1750-1779), and the latter’s governor of Kirmān, Mirzā Husayn Khān. The Nizārī Imām was treated most respectfully by Mirzā Ḥusayn Khān, who placed certain towns and districts of Kirmān, such as Sirjān and Zarand, under his rule. Later, Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan advanced to the position of beglerbegi or governor of the city of Kirmān. He continued to be popularly referred to by the title of beglerbegi even after being appointed by Karim Khān to the governorship of the province of Kirmān around 1170/1756. It has been reported that Abu'l-Hasan received, during his imāamate, an annual sum of 20,000 tumāns in religious dues from his followers in India. This enabled the imām both to acquire further property in Kirmān and spend generously for the benefit of the Kirmānis, which won him increasing local popularity. Consequently, he was able to continue as the governor of Kirmān when the Zand dynasty disintegrated on Karim Khān’s death in 1193/1779. In fact, the Nizārī Imām henceforth ruled over Kirmān in an independent manner, supporting or opposing various Zand rulers, who in their struggles for the control of Persia were soon confronted by their greatest common enemy, Āghā Muḥammad Khān (1193-1212/1779-1797), the founder of the Qājār dynasty of Persia. In the succession disputes following Karim Khān Zand’s death, Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan lent his support to Karim Khān’s brother Šādiq Khān (1193-1195/1779-1781), who was assisted by the imām in collecting an army in Kirmān and asserting his authority in Shirāz, the Zand capital. Šādiq Khān reinstated Abu'l-Hasan as the Zand governor of Kirmān.

Under the chaotic conditions of the time, Abu'l-Hasan soon lost control over certain parts of Kirmān, including Narmāshīr and the citadel of Bam. The border region between Kirmān and Afghanistan, including Narmāshīr, was invaded by the Afghan and Balūchi forces of A'zam Khān, an amīr from Qandahār. Later, A’zam Khān was defeated in battle.
by an army of 7,000 men sent after him by Sayyid Abu’l-Hasan. This army was placed under the command of Mirzâ Šâdiq, Abu’l-Hasan’s cousin and capable military commander. Subsequently, when Abu’l-Hasan was on one of his visits to Shahr-i Bâbak, A’zam Khân once again ravaged the various districts of Kirmân from Narmâshîr and led his forces as far as the gates of the city of Kirmân. This time, Abu’l-Hasan personally led his own forces from Shahr-i Bâbak and defeated A’zam Khân outside Kirmân. The retreating Afghans managed to hold on to Narmâshîr and a few other border localities in Kirmân. Imam Abu’l-Hasan’s rule was more seriously endangered when Muḥammad Ḥasan Khân Sistānî, who held Bam independently, encouraged Lutf ‘Ali Khân (1203–1209/1789–1794) to invade Kirmân. Lutf ‘Ali Khân, the grandson of Karîm Khân’s brother Šâdiq and an able military commander, was the last of the Zand rulers. His father Ja’far Khân (1199–1203/1785–1789) had briefly ruled over certain parts of Persia before him. It was during Ja’far Khân’s reign that Aḡâ Muḥammad Khân Qājār made himself master of northern Persia, also seizing Iṣfahān and making Tehran his capital in 1200/1786. Aḡâ Muḥammad Khân and Lutf ‘Ali Khân struggled intensely with each other over the throne of Persia, which eventually resulted in the victory of the Qâjârs. In Ṣafar 1205/October 1790, Lutf ‘Ali Khân proceeded to Sirjân, aiming to capture Shahr-i Bâbak, Abu’l-Hasan’s main stronghold in Kirmân where the imām had numerous adherents amongst the Khurāsānî and ‘Aṭâ’ Allāhî inhabitants of the area. The imām also had a fortified and well-provisioned fortress in Shahr-i Bâbak which was then guarded by a large number of armed Nizâris under the command of Mirzâ Šâdiq. Being informed in Sirjân of the difficulty of taking Shahr-i Bâbak, Lutf ‘Ali Khân then proceeded towards the city of Kirmân. In view of the fact that only Shîrâz and other parts of Fârs then remained in the hands of the Zands while Aḡâ Muḥammad Khân was rapidly extending Qâjâr rule over Persia, Sayyid Abu’l-Hasan prudently refused Lutf ‘Ali Khân admittance to the city, also refusing to present himself before the Zand ruler. He reinforced the city’s defences and prepared to withstand a long siege. Due to adverse weather conditions, Lutf ‘Ali Khân was eventually obliged to lift his siege of Kirmân and returned to Shîrâz in Jumādâ I 1205/January 1791.

In the meantime, the Ni’mat Allāhî Şûfî order was revived in Persia by the order’s thirty-fourth quṭb, Rida’ ‘Ali Shâh Dâkkanî (d. 1214/1799), who, like his predecessors, resided in the Deccan. The Persian Ni’mat Allâhîs, isolated from their spiritual master, had persistently asked their
quṭb in India to send them a trusted representative. Riḍā ʿAlī Shāh, who was the order’s quṭb for more than fifty years, eventually despatched one of his most important disciples, Maʿṣūm ʿAlī Shāh, to Persia. Maʿṣūm ʿAlī arrived in Shirāz around 1184/1770, and soon acquired a number of devoted disciples, including Nūr ʿAlī Shāh and a certain young musician called Mīrzā Muḥammad Turbatī, who later became famous under his ṭariqa name of Mushtāq ʿAlī Shāh. After travelling extensively in various parts of Persia and Afghanistan, and suffering persecution at the hands of different Zand rulers and their fanatical ʿulamāʾ, Nūr ʿAlī Shāh and Mushtāq ʿAlī Shāh arrived in Māhān in 1200/1785–1786 to be near the shrine of Shāh Niʿmat Allāh. They rapidly acquired a large number of supporters and settled in the city of Kirmān. The arrival of these Sūfis in Kirmān revived the ties between the Niʿmat Allāhī ṭariqa and the Nizārī Imāms.136 Imām Abuʾl-Ḥasan was amongst the numerous notables of Kirmān who supported Nūr ʿAlī and Mushtāq ʿAlī. This imām too had close connections with the Niʿmat Allāhī order, though there is no concrete evidence showing that he was actually initiated into the order. But Abuʾl-Ḥasan’s cousin Mīrzā Ṣādiq was an initiate of the order; he was trained by Muzaffar ʿAlī Shāh, a physician and one of the leading members of the order in Kirmān.

The success of the Niʿmat Allāhī Sūfis in Kirmān naturally aroused the envy and enmity of the local Ithnāʾasharī ʿulamāʾ, whose efforts to uproot the Sūfis were frustrated by Abuʾl-Ḥasan’s support for them. Nonetheless, Mullā ʿAbd Allāh, one of the influential mujtahids of Kirmān, persisted in his campaign against the Sūfis. He found a suitable opportunity to act when Imām Abuʾl-Ḥasan had left the city of Kirmān to restore order in Shahr-i Bābak and Sirjān, where the Qashqāʾī and Arab tribesmen were menacing the local populace. At the same time, Nūr ʿAlī Shāh himself, the foremost Niʿmat Allāhī of Kirmān, had gone on pilgrimage to the holy shrines of ʿIrāq. In Ramaḍān 1206/May 1791, when Imām Abuʾl-Ḥasan and Nūr ʿAlī Shāh were out of the city, Mullā ʿAbd Allāh, while preaching in the Friday mosque of Kirmān, saw Mushtāq ʿAlī Shāh, who had come to say his prayers. Thereupon, Mullā ʿAbd Allāh incited those present to stone Mushtāq to death as an infidel. Mushtāq ʿAlī Shāh was buried near the same mosque, and his mausoleum, known as Mushtāqiyya, is still preserved and visited regularly by Persian darwishes. Imām Abuʾl-Ḥasan died later in the same year 1206/1792, and was evidently buried in Mushtāq ʿAlī Shāh’s mausoleum.137 A few years later, Maʿṣūm ʿAlī Shāh, Nūr ʿAlī Shāh, and Muzaffar ʿAlī Shāh were killed at the
instigation of other Ithnā‘ashari mujtahids, notably Muḥammad ‘Alī Bihbahānī (d. 1216/-1801-1802). Imām Abū’l-Ḥasan was succeeded briefly as governor of Kirmān by his cousin Mīrzā Ṣādiq. In 1207/1792, ‘Aghā Muḥammad Khān seized Shirāz and sent his nephew and future successor Fath ‘Alī Khān to conquer Kirmān. Fath ‘Alī Khān replaced Mīrzā Ṣādiq by his own appointee. Subsequently, Luṭf ‘Alī Khān Zand briefly held Kirmān before losing the place permanently to the Qājārs in 1209/1794, when ‘Aghā Muḥammad Khān massacred a large number of Kirmānis. The local Nizāris were, however, spared. The Nizārī Sayyids and their families, relatives of the imām, who lived in Shahr-i Bābak, were permitted to move to Kahak, where ‘Aghā Muḥammad Khān gave the imām’s family new landed properties in compensation for what had been left behind in Kirmān. A few hundred Nizārī ‘Aţā‘ Allāhī families of the same locality were settled outside of Kirmān.138 Luṭf ‘Alī Khān, then a fugitive, was captured at Bām and sent to ‘Aghā Muḥammad Khān who had him blinded and then executed in 1209 A.H. ‘Aghā Muḥammad Khān, crowned as the first Qājār ruler of Persia in 1210/1796, was himself murdered shortly afterwards in 1211/1797.

Abū’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī was succeeded as the imām of the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs by his eldest son Khalīl Allāh ‘Alī, designated also as Shāh Khalīl Allāh III. Soon after his accession in 1206/1792, Shāh Khalīl Allāh transferred the seat of the imāmate from Kirmān to Kahak, where he stayed for about twenty years. Shāh Khalīl Allāh married Bibi Sarkāra, the daughter of Muḥammad Ṣādiq Maḥallātī, who bore the next imām, ‘Aghā Khān I, in 1219/1804 in Kahak. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Maḥallātī, a Nizārī Sayyid who was perhaps a brother of Imām Abū’l-Ḥasan, was a Ni‘mat Allāhī Šūfī. Initiated by Muẓaffar ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1215/1800), he carried the Šūfī name of Ṣidq ‘Alī Shāh. ‘Aghā Khān I’s maternal grandfather, who was also a poet, died in 1230/1815, and was buried in Qumm. Ṣidq ‘Alī Shāh’s son Muḥammad ‘Alī, better known by his ṭarīqa name of ‘Izzat ‘Alī Shāh, was another prominent Ni‘mat Allāhī darwīsh. This maternal uncle of ‘Aghā Khān I was initiated into the Ni‘mat Allāhī ṭarīqa by Majdhub ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1238/1823), the thirty-eighth quṭb of the order.140 Later, ‘Izzat ‘Alī Shāh developed close relations with Zayn al-Ḥabīdīn Shīrwānī (d. 1253/1837), who carried the Šūfī name of Mast ‘Alī Shāh and became the chief successor of Majdhub ‘Alī Shāh as a quṭb of the Ni‘mat Allāhīs, who were now split into several groups. ‘Izzat ‘Alī Shāh spent the greater part of his life in Maḥallāt, where the influence of the Nizārī Imām was by then extended, and died there around 1245/1829. Although Shāh Khalīl Allāh
III carried a Ni'mat Allâhî Sûfî name, he did not have any active interest in Sûfism.

In 1230/1815, Shâh Khalîl Allâh moved to Yazd, situated between Isfahân and Kirmân on the route to Balûchistân and Sind. Most probably this decision was motivated by the imâm’s desire to be yet closer to his Indian followers, who continued to make the pilgrimage to see their imâm in Persia. It was at Yazd that two years later, in 1232/1817, the Nizârî Imâm became a victim of the intrigues of the Ithnâ’ashârî ‘ulama’ and lost his life in the course of a dispute between some of his adherents and the local shopkeepers. The Nizârîs involved, who had used violence to settle their differences with the shopkeepers in the marketplace, took refuge in Shâh Khalîl Allâh’s residence and refused to emerge. A certain Mullâ Husayn Yazdi, who as a Twelver resented the spreading influence of the Nizârî Imâm, collected a mob and attacked the imâm’s house. In the ensuing uproar Shâh Khalîl Allâh and several of his followers, including an Indian Khoja, were murdered, and the imâm’s house was plundered. The Qâjâr ruler ordered his governor of Yazd, Hajjî Zamân Khân, to send Mullâ Husayn and his accomplices to Tehran for punishment. Shâh Khalîl Allâh had had good relations with the second Qâjâr monarch, Fath ‘Ali Shâh (1212–1250/1797–1834), who is groundlessly reported to have secretly embraced Ismâ‘îlîsm. Mullâ Husayn was bastinadoed and his beard was plucked out, but no one was executed for the imâm’s murder. Shâh Khalîl Allâh, the forty-fifth and last of the Qâsim-Shâhî Nizârî Imâms to spend his entire imâmâte of some twenty-five years in Persia, was taken for burial to the holy city of Najaf in ‘Iraq, where a mausoleum was constructed for this imâm and some of his relatives and descendants.

Shâh Khalîl Allâh III was succeeded by his eldest son Muḥammad Ḥasan, also known as Ḥasan ‘Alî Shâh. On moving to Yazd, Shâh Khalîl Allâh had left his wife, Bibî Sarkâra, and children in Kahâk to live on the proceeds of the family holdings in the Mahâllât area. However, disputes between the local Nizârîs and İmâni Khân Farâhâni, who was married to one of the imâm’s daughters Shâh Bibî and who had been placed in charge of the imâm’s land holdings, left the family unprovided for. Soon, Ḥasan ‘Alî Shâh and his mother settled down in the nearby town of Qumm, where their situation became even worse. Ḥasan ‘Alî Shâh was thirteen when his father was murdered and he became the forty-sixth Nizârî Imâm. Soon after, the youthful imâm’s mother went to the Qâjâr court in Tehran to seek justice for her husband and her son. Her
pleadings were eventually successful. The instigators of Shâh Khalil Allâh’s murder were, as noted, punished after a fashion; and, in addition, Fath‘Ali Shâh added to the imâm’s lands in the Maḥallât area and gave one of his daughters, Sarv-i Jahân Khânun, in marriage to Hasan‘Ali Shâh.143 At the same time, the Qâjâr monarch appointed the imâm as governor of Qumm and bestowed on him the honorific title of Āghâ Khân (less commonly but more correctly, Āqâ Khân). Henceforth, Hasan‘Ali Shâh became generally known as Āghâ Khân Maḥâllâtî; and the title of Āghâ Khân remained hereditary amongst his successors, the Nizârî Imams of modern times. Āghâ Khân I’s mother, who later moved to India, died in Cutch in 1267/1851.

Hasan‘Ali Shâh, Āghâ Khân I, led a tranquil life and enjoyed honour and respect at the Qâjâr court until the death of Fath‘Ali Shâh in Jumâdâ II 1250/October 1834. The Āghâ Khân had by then acquired a personal military force, which he used to restore order on his way to Tehran to pay homage to Fath‘Ali Shâh’s grandson and successor Muḥammad Shâh (1250–1264/1834–1848). Soon after his accession, Muḥammad Shâh, in consultation with his chief minister Qâ‘im-maqâm-i Farâhâni (d. 1251/1835), appointed the Āghâ Khân as governor of Kirmân in 1251/1835.144 On the occasion of this appointment, Qâ‘âni (d. 1270/1854), the greatest pategyrist of the Qâjâr period and a friend of the Āghâ Khân, composed a qaṣīda praising the imâm’s virtues.145 The province of Kirmân was then in the hands of the rebellious sons of Shuji’ al-Saltana, a pretender to the Qâjâr throne; it was also raided regularly by Afghans and Balûchîs. Āghâ Khân I soon succeeded in restoring order in Kirmân without receiving any advance payment from the Qâjâr treasury. Both Bam and Narmâshir, held for a long time by rebellious elements, were also reduced to obedience. In pacifying Kirmân, the Āghâ Khân was assisted by the local ‘Aṭâ’ Allâhi and Khurâsâni tribesmen who recognized him as their imâm. Henceforth, the Āghâ Khân’s younger brother Abu‘l-Hasan Khân, known as Sardâr (Commander), often acted as the commander of the Āghâ Khân’s forces.

In time, Āghâ Khân I sent an account of his victories to Tehran, but he waited in vain in the expectation of receiving compensatory payments and further royal favours. The Āghâ Khân’s governorship of Kirmân, despite his services, was short-lived. In 1252/1837, less than two years after his arrival in Kirmân, he was dismissed and recalled to Tehran. He had been replaced as the governor of Kirmân by Fîrûz Mirzâ Nuṣrat al-Dawla, one of the younger brothers of Muḥammad Shâh Qâjâr. However, Āghâ
Khān refused to acknowledge his dismissal and withdrew with his forces to the citadel at Bam. Recalling his brother Sardār Abu’l-Ḥasan Khān from Baluchistān, where he was conducting military campaigns, and his other brother Muḥammad Bāqir Khān from Rāwar, the Āghā Khān prepared to resist the government forces sent against him under the command of Suhrāb Khān. Āghā Khān was besieged at Bam for fourteen months, during which time his brother Muḥammad Bāqir Khān was seriously wounded and taken prisoner. When it had become evident that further resistance would be futile, the Āghā Khān despatched Sardār Abu’l-Ḥasan Khān to Shīrāz, appealing to the governor of Fārs, Farīdūn Mīrzā, to intervene on his behalf and arrange for his safe passage out of Kirmān. On Farīdūn Mīrzā’s intercession, the Āghā Khān surrendered and emerged from the citadel at Bam, but he was seized and his possessions were plundered by the government troops. Āghā Khān I and his dependants were then transferred to the city of Kirmān, where they remained captives for eight months. It was during that period that the Nizārī Imām was permitted to receive the religious dues sent to him by the Nizārī deputations coming from Khurāsān, Bādakhshān and India. On Muḥammad Shāh’s return from his unsuccessful campaign against Harāt, the Āghā Khān was finally allowed to proceed to Tehran towards the end of 1254/1838–1839. He presented his case before the Qājār monarch, who pardoned him on the condition that he retire peacefully to his family lands at Mahallāt. After a short stay in Qumm, the Āghā Khān did retreat to Mahallāt, where he had built a large fortified residential compound for his family and numerous dependants and servants.

The Āghā Khān’s dismissal from the governorship of Kirmān was probably occasioned by rivalries for the leadership of the Ni’mat Allāhī order in Persia; rivalries that had appeared after the death of Majdhub ‘Alī Shāh, the thirty-eighth qūṭ of the order, in 1238/1823. As noted, Ḥājjī Zayn al-‘Abidīn Shīrwānī, better known by his Šūfī name of Mast ‘Alī Shāh, had been recognized as Majdhub ‘Alī Shāh’s successor by the majority of the Ni’mat Allāhīs. According to the Ni’mat Allāhī sources, the Āghā Khān had been actually initiated into their order in his youth and carried the tariqa name of ‘Aṭā’ Allāh Shāh. This alleged initiation, not substantiated by the Nizārī sources, would represent a rather unusual relationship, since it would have required a Nizārī Imām to become a follower of a Šūfī master. The Āghā Khān did, however, support the claims of Mast ‘Alī Shāh. The Āghā Khān had once, during Fath ‘Alī Shāh’s reign, given refuge in the village of Dawlatābād near Mahallāt to
Mast 'Ali Shāh, who had escaped the persecution of the Twelver 'ulama' of Fārs. At the time of Muhammad Shāh's coronation, Mast 'Ali Shāh, who had been enjoying the Āghā Khān's hospitality for some time at Mahallat, accompanied his Nizārī friend to Tehran. As a reflection of their close friendship, Mast 'Ali Shāh indeed once boasted to Muhammad Shāh that 'I have a murid like the Aqa Khān who himself has thousands of murids in most countries (bilād) of the world'.149 Muhammad Shāh too, had firm Sūfī loyalties. He had been initiated into the Ni'mat Allāhī order, sometime before his accession, probably by Mast 'Ali Shāh, who later joined the entourage of the Qājār monarch. However, at Muhammad Shāh's court, Mast 'Ali Shāh soon came to confront a powerful rival in the person of Häjjī Mirzā Āqāsī, Qā'im-maqām's successor as chief minister (ṣadr-i a'zam) who as a Ni'mat Allāhī aspired to the leadership of that order. Muhammad Shāh soon came under the influence of his chief minister and evidently accepted him as the quṭā of the Ni'mat Allāhī order. Consequently, Mast 'Ali Shāh incurred the disfavour of the monarch and was driven from the court. Since the Āghā Khān had continued to support the claims of his Sūfī friend, he aroused the enmity of Mirzā Āqāsī, who persistently intrigued against him and eventually caused his removal from the governorship of Kirmān.150

Hājjī Mirzā Āqāsī's enmity towards the Āghā Khān was aggravated by the imām's refusal to give one of his daughters in marriage to the son of a certain 'Abd al-Muḥammad Mahallātī.151 The latter, a lowborn Mahallātī initially in the service of the Āghā Khān, had risen to a high position in the service of Mirzā Āqāsī and supported his master's Sūfī claims. At any rate, the Āghā Khān maintained his connections with the Ni'mat Allāhī order even after settling down in India. Āghā Khān I had close relations with Rahmat 'Alī Shāh (d. 1278/1861), who became the quṭā of one of the branches of the Ni'mat Allāhī order on Mast 'Alī Shāh's death in 1253/1837. Rahmat 'Alī Shāh, too, had spent some time, along with Mast 'Alī Shāh, at Mahallāt as a guest of the Āghā Khān. Later in 1298/1881, the Āghā Khān and his sons extended their hospitality in Bombay to Rahmat 'Alī Shāh's son, Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh, then on a tour of India. Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh, who produced the celebrated Sūfī work entitled the Ṭarā'iq al-ḥaqa'iq, participated in the first Āghā Khān's burial ceremony in Bombay in Jumādā I 1298/April 1881.152

Āghā Khān I lived peacefully at Mahallāt for about two years following his dismissal from Kirmān and the failure of the first stage of his rebellion. Soon rumours spread that the Āghā Khān was collecting men and material
in order to resume his revolt. The Āghā Khān attributed the origin of these rumours to 'Abd al-Muḥammad Maḥallātī, who in vain had sought the imām's daughter in marriage for his son. Be it as it may, the Āghā Khān was then actually gathering an army of mercenaries in Maḥallāt, comprised of Nizāris and non-Nizāris. Early in 1256/1840, Muḥammad Shāh himself went to Dilijān near Maḥallāt, on the pretence of recreation, to verify the truth of the alarming reports about the Āghā Khān's activities. At the time, the imām was away on a hunting trip, but he did send a messenger to Ḥājjī Mīrzā Ṭāqāī requesting the permission of the monarch to proceed to Mecca for the ḥajj pilgrimage. Royal permission was granted, and initially the Āghā Khān's mother and a few relatives were despatched to the 'atabāt, viz., Najaf and other holy cities of 'Irāq containing the shrines of the Shī'ī Imāms. The Āghā Khān himself left Maḥallāt, ostensibly to proceed to the Ḥijāz, early in Rajab 1256/September 1840. He was accompanied by his brothers, nephews, and a number of other relatives, dependants and many followers.

Before leaving Maḥallāt, the Āghā Khān seems to have equipped himself with letters appointing him to the governorship of Kirmān. At any rate, instead of going to Bandar 'Abbās on the Persian Gulf for travelling to Arabia, the Āghā Khān headed for Yazd, where he intended to be reinforced by the local Nizārī 'Aṭā Allāhīs. As he approached Yazd, the Āghā Khān sent the city's governor, Bahman Mīrzā Bahā al-Dawla, the documents that reinstated him in the governorship of Kirmān. Accepting the documents as genuine, Bahman Mīrzā offered the Āghā Khān lodging in the city. However, the Āghā Khān declined the invitation, stating that he wanted to visit the Nizārī 'Aṭā Allāhīs living around Yazd. Whilst he was staying in Mahrīz near Yazd, Bahman Mīrzā was informed through the despatches of Ḥājjī Mīrzā Ṭāqāī of the spuriousness of the Āghā Khān's documents. In the battle that ensued, Bahman Mīrzā was defeated by the Āghā Khān. Several other minor battles were won by the Āghā Khān before he arrived in Shahr-i Bābak, which he intended to use as his base of operations for seizing Kirmān. Shahr-i Bābak, as noted, was a stronghold of 'Aṭā Allāhī and Khurāsānī tribesmen who accepted the Āghā Khān as their imām. At the time, the citadel at Shahr-i Bābak was in the hands of Kuhandil Khān and his associates from Qandahār, who had sought refuge in Persia after the British invasion of Afghanistan. The Afghans had made themselves quite unpopular in the locality, and the Āghā Khān's arrival there coincided with the campaign of a former local governor, Ḥājjī Muḥammad 'Alī, to dislodge them from the citadel of
Shahr-i Bābak. The Āghā Khān, joined by a large number of 'Aṭā' Allāhīs and Khurāsānīs, participated in the siege of Shahr-i Bābak, forcing the Afghans to surrender.\textsuperscript{156}

The Āghā Khān then despatched his brother Muḥammad Bāqir Khān to Sirjān to secure provisions, and himself retreated to Rūmānī, a village near Shahr-i Bābak. By then, Faḍl 'Alī Khān Qarābāḡhī, the governor of Kirmān, had been ordered by Tehran to deal with the Āghā Khān. Accordingly, the beglerbegī of Kirmān besieged Muḥammad Bāqir Khān in the fortress of Zaydābād in Sirjān. The Āghā Khān set out in person at the head of his army to relieve his brother, and succeeded in evacuating him and his troops from Sirjān. The Āghā Khān then headed towards Fārs and spent the winter months in Mināb, near Bandār ʾAbbās. It was at that time that the Āghā Khān acquired two cannons of British provenance, which gave him an effective advantage in subsequent clashes with the government troops.\textsuperscript{157}

Soon after Muḥarram 1257/March 1841, the Āghā Khān set out once more in the direction of Kirmān. Sardār Abu’l-Ḥasan Khān was despatched to seize Dashtāb, where he was subsequently joined by the Āghā Khān. It was near Dashtāb that the Āghā Khān defeated a government force of 4,000 men under the command of Isfandiyār Khān, the brother of Faḍl ‘Alī Khān. Isfandiyār Khān himself was killed and many of his men went over to the Āghā Khān, who won a number of further victories against the government troops before resting for a while at Bam. By that time, Faḍl ‘Alī Khān had collected a force of 24,000 men, obliging the Āghā Khān to flee from Bam to Rīgān on the border of Balūchistān. There, a decisive defeat was inflicted on the Āghā Khān, who was greatly outnumbered by the forces of the beglerbegī of Kirmān. Thereupon, the Āghā Khān decided to seek refuge either in India or Arabia. As the way to the port of Bandār ʾAbbās was then blocked, the Āghā Khān decided to escape overland, through southern Khurāsān, to Afghanistan. Starting at Rāwar, he traversed the arid Dasht-i Lūt to Sarbīshā, southeast of Birjand. Accompanied by his brothers and many soldiers and servants, the Āghā Khān then proceeded eastwards, and, after crossing the border, arrived at Lāsh va Juwāyn in Afghanistan in 1257/1841.\textsuperscript{158} This marked the end of the Persian period of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imāmate.

Once inside Afghanistan, Āghā Khān Maḥallātī advanced by way of Girishk to Qandahār, the major city of western Afghanistan which had been occupied by an Anglo-Indian army in 1254/1839. Henceforth, a close association developed between the Āghā Khān and the British, who may
possibly have encouraged his earlier rebellious activities in Persia in the interest of safeguarding British rule in India. More specifically, it has been contended that the Āghā Khān’s revolt in Kirmān played an effective part in preventing the success of the Persian campaign against Harāt conducted during the reign of Muḥammad Shāh Qājār. Be it as it may, the Āghā Khān’s association with the British after his arrival in Afghanistan, coinciding with the final years of the period of the so-called First Afghan War, 1838–1842, is openly recorded in his autobiography and elsewhere. From Girishk, the Āghā Khān had sent notices of his impending arrival to Muḥammad Timūr, the British-appointed governor of Qandahār, and to Major Henry Rawlinson, the local British political agent. The latter had been in Persia during 1835–1839 and may have made the personal acquaintance of the Āghā Khān at Muḥammad Shāh’s coronation ceremonies in Tehran. Rawlinson granted the Āghā Khān a daily stipend of one hundred rupees for the duration of his stay in Qandahār. Soon after his arrival in Qandahār in the summer of 1257/1841, the Āghā Khān wrote to Sir William Macnaghten, the British political agent in Kibul who was later murdered by the Afghans in December 1841, discussing his future plans. He now proposed to seize and govern Harāt on behalf of the British and their puppet, Shāh Shujā’-al-Mulk, who had been temporarily placed on the throne of Kābul in 1255/1839 in succession to the rebellious Dūst Muḥammad, the founder of Bārakzāy rule in Afghanistan. The proposal was apparently approved, but soon all British designs in Afghanistan were frustrated by the uprising of Dūst Muḥammad’s son Muḥammad Akbar Khān, who in January 1842 annihilated the British-Indian garrison on its retreat from Kābul. The uprising extended to Qandahār, and in the ensuing clashes the Āghā Khān aided General William Nott in evacuating the British forces from Qandahār in July 1842. The Āghā Khān himself soon headed southwards to Sind. He left his brother Sardār Abu’l-Ḥasan Khān behind in Qandahār, where the imām had been visited during his stay by Nizārī deputations from Kābul, Badakhshān, Bukhārā, and Sind.

Āghā Khān I rendered further services to the British in Sind. In particular, he placed his cavalry at their disposal and endeavoured to convince Nāṣir Khān, the Tālpur amīr of Kālāt, to cede Karachi to the British. As Nāṣir Khān refused to co-operate, the Āghā Khān disclosed his battle plans to Major James Outram, the British political agent in Sind. As a result, the British camp was saved from a night attack, and, following the battle of Miyānī in February 1843, Ḣaydarābād and then all of Sind
became annexed to British India. For his services in Sind, the Āghā Khān received an annual pension of £2,000 from General Charles Napier, the British conqueror of Sind who maintained a friendly relationship with the Nizārī Imām from the time of the latter's arrival in Sind in the autumn of 1842.

After the conquest of Sind in 1259/1843, the British attempted to subjugate neighbouring Balūchistān; the Āghā Khān again helped them militarily and diplomatically. From Jerruck, where he was staying after February 1843, the Āghā Khān contacted the various Balūchi chieftains and advised them to submit to British rule. He also despatched his brother Muḥammad Bāqir Khān together with a number of his horsemen in order to help the British defeat Mīr Shīr Khān, one of the important Balūchi amīrs. Meanwhile, the Āghā Khān himself became the target of a Balūchi raid, perhaps in reprisal for his assistance to the British, and his possessions were plundered. However, he continued to help the British, always hoping that they would arrange for his safe return to Persia. It was with the approval of the British, and perhaps on their behalf, that in Rabi' I 1260/ April 1844 the Āghā Khān sent Muḥammad Bāqir Khān to capture the fortress of Bampūr (Banfahl), in Persian Balūchistān. Later, he despatched his other brother, Sardār Abu'l-Ḥasan Khān, who finally occupied Bampūr and won other military successes in Balūchistān while Muḥammad Bāqir Khān was relieved to join the Āghā Khān in India.¹⁶²

After controlling certain parts of Balūchistān for about two years, Sardār Abu'l-Ḥasan Khān was defeated in battle in 1262/1846 by a Qājār army sent against him from Kirmān. The Āghā Khān's brother was taken as a prisoner to Tehran, where he arrived in Rajab 1262 A.H. After spending some time in detention, Sardār Abu'l-Ḥasan Khān was pardoned by Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Qājār (1264-1313/1848-1896), Muḥammad Shāh's son and successor. Impressed by the Sardār's military and hunting expertise, the Qājār monarch subsequently received him amongst his entourage and gave him a Qājār princess, Mihr-i Jahān Khānum, in marriage. Sardār Abu'l-Ḥasan Khān spent the remainder of his life in Persia, managing the family lands in Maḥallāt and occasionally performing services for the Āghā Khān. He died in 1297/1880 and was buried in the mausoleum of his father, Imām Shāh Khalīl Allāh III, at Najaf. Sardār Abu'l-Ḥasan Khān's son, Mīrzā Ismā'īl Khān I'tībār al-Salṭāna (d. 1346/ 1928), the author's maternal great-grandfather, also received the favour of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh and handled the affairs of the Āghā Khān's properties in Maḥallāt and Kirmān. A number of the descendants of Sardār Abu'l-
Hasan Khan, through I’tibār al-Saltāna and other sons and daughters, are still living in Tehran and Maḥallāt.

In the meantime, in Ramadān 1260/October 1844, Āghā Khan I had left Sind via the port of Karachi for Bombay. He passed through Cutch and Kathiawar, where he arrived in Muḥarram 1261/January 1845. He spent a year at Kathiawar and visited the Nizārī communities of the area, as he had done all along his route. He then travelled through Sūrat and Daman, and arrived in Bombay in Ṣafar 1262/February 1846. Soon after his arrival in Bombay, the Persian government, then still controlled by the chief minister Ḥājjī Mīrzā Ṭaqī, demanded the Āghā Khan’s extradition from India, citing the Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1229/1814. The British, however, refused to comply and only promised to transfer the Āghā Khan’s residence to Calcutta, farther removed from Persia where it would be more difficult for him to launch new activities against the Persian government. Meanwhile, the British entered into a series of negotiations with the Persian government for the safe return of the Āghā Khan to Persia, which was the imām’s own wish. In Ṣafar 1263/February 1847, Justin Sheil, the British minister in Tehran, forwarded yet another unsuccessful appeal to this effect on behalf of the Governor-General of India. Ḥājjī Mīrzā Ṭaqī now consented to the Āghā Khan’s return to Persia, on the condition that he would avoid passing through Balūchestān and Kirmān, where he could start new anti-government activities. Furthermore, the Āghā Khan was to settle down peacefully in Maḥallāt.

Āghā Khan Maḥallāṭī was eventually obliged, in Jumādā I 1263/April 1847, to leave for Calcutta, where he remained until receiving the news of the death of Muḥammad Shāh Qājār in Dhu’l-Ḥijja 1264/November 1848, which had actually occurred two months earlier. Hoping that Muḥammad Shāh’s successor Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh would be more lenient towards him, the Āghā Khan left Calcutta for Bombay in Muḥarram 1265/December 1848. On arriving in Bombay a few weeks later, the British made new efforts to win permission for his return to Persia, while the Āghā Khan himself wrote a letter on the subject to Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh’s first chief minister, Amīr Kabīr. Amīr Kabīr proved even less responsive than his predecessor, insisting that the Āghā Khan would be arrested at the borders as a fugitive. After the downfall and execution of Amīr Kabīr in 1268/1852, the Āghā Khan made a final plea from Bombay to return to his ancestral homeland, and sent Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh an elephant and a giraffe as gifts. He also sent presents to Amīr Kabīr’s successor Mīrzā Ṭaqī Khan Nūrī, who was a personal friend of the Āghā Khan. Some of the imām’s
family lands in Persia were now restored to the control of his relatives, but the new chief minister was unable to arrange for his return. By then, the Nizārī Imām had resigned himself to permanent residence in India, though he maintained his contacts with the Qājār court and sent Naṣir al-Dīn Shāh another gift of three elephants and a rhinoceros in 1284/1867–1868. Still later in 1287/1870, when Naṣir al-Dīn Shāh was on pilgrimage to the Shi‘ī shrines in ʿIrāq, Āghā Khān I sent one of his sons, Jalāl Shāh, with a number of presents including a hunting rifle, to the Qājār monarch in Baghdaḏ. As an indication of royal favour towards the Āghā Khān, Naṣir al-Dīn Shāh had now consented to give one of his daughters in marriage to Jalāl Shāh who accompanied the monarch to Tehran. However, the youthful Jalāl Shāh was taken ill and died in Tehran the following year.

Āghā Khān Maḥallātī’s settlement in Bombay in effect initiated the modern period in the history of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism. The Nizārī Imāmāte was now transferred, after almost seven centuries, from Persia to India, and henceforth Bombay became the seat of the Qāsim-Shāhi Nizārī Imāms. Āghā Khān I was the first imām of his line to set foot in India and his presence there was greatly rejoiced by the Nizārī Khojas who gathered enthusiastically to his side to pay their homage and receive his blessings. The Nizārīs of many regions had regularly visited the Āghā Khān and given him their tributes when he was in Persia or wandering in Afghanistan and Sind. However, the Khojas had for several centuries comprised the most important section of the Nizārī community, and they often found it difficult to make the hazardous journey to Anjudān, Kahak, Shahr-i Bābak, Kirmān, or Maḥallāt, to see the imām. When the Nizārī Khojas found direct access to the imām for the first time, they more readily began to send their religious dues to his durkhana (Persian, darb-i khāna), or chief place of residence, in Bombay. As a result, the Āghā Khān was enabled to establish elaborate headquarters and residences in Bombay, Poona and Bangalore. He also supported numerous relatives, who gradually joined him in Bombay, and a large retinue of attendants and servants who were lodged in suitable living quarters. Āghā Khān I attended the jamaʿat-khāna in Bombay on special religious occasions, and led the public prayers of the Khojas there. Every Saturday when in Bombay, he held durbar (Persian, darbār), giving audience to his followers who received his blessings. In India, the Āghā Khān retained his close association with the British, and on a rare occasion he was visited in his Bombay home, the Aga Hall, by the Prince of Wales when the future King Edward VII (1901–
1910) was on a state visit to India. Āghā Khān I also came to be addressed as His Highness by the British.

Āghā Khān I received government protection in British India as the spiritual head of a Muslim sect, which strengthened his position and helped him in the exercise of his authority. During three decades of residency in Bombay, he succeeded in exerting a great degree of direct control over the Indian Nizāris, who had remained without any pīr or chief representative of the imām for quite some time. He also organized the Nizārī Khojas more tightly through the network of officers called mukhi, treasurer, and kamdia or kamadia (pronounced kāmniyyā or kāmariyyā), accountant, who were often appointed by the Āghā Khān himself, especially in the case of Bombay and other major Khoja centres. The mukhi normally acted as the social and religious head of any local Khoja congregation or jama'at, and he was assisted by a kamadia. These functionaries were found in every Khoja jama'at, who also possessed a jama'at-khāna or assembly hall. The mukhis and kamadias also collected the religious dues, notably the dassondh or tithe, and forwarded the funds to the imām, who was addressed as Sarkār Šāhib and Pīr Salāmat by his Indian followers.

The first Āghā Khān established his religious authority in India after some difficulties. He did, in fact, face periodical troubles from certain dissident members of the Khoja community. In 1829, while the Āghā Khān was still in Persia, some Nizārī Khojas of Bombay had refused to pay the customary dassondh to him. As a result, the Āghā Khān sent to Bombay a special representative, accompanied by his maternal grandmother, who filed a suit against the dissidents in the Bombay High Court. The suit was withdrawn in 1830. But the recusants were summoned before the jama'at-khāna in Bombay and, since they persisted in their refusal to pay the dues, they were outcast by the whole Khoja jama'at assembled there for the occasion. The dissidents, headed by a certain Ḥabīb Ibrāhīm, became known as the Barbhai, or the twelve brethren, because they were originally twelve in number. They were readmitted in 1835 to the Khoja jama'at of Bombay on the payment of their arrears. The Barbhai had, however, laid the foundation of a dissident party which subsequently posed doctrinal and financial objections to the position of the Āghā Khāns. In 1847, when the imām was in Calcutta, another conflict broke out in the Khoja community of Bombay. A legal case was initiated by two Khoja sisters for a share in their deceased father's estate against the will of the deceased. In this litigation, the Āghā Khān, then represented in court by
his brother Muhammad Bāqir Khān (d. 1296/1879), upheld the rules of female inheritance as laid down in Islamic law, while his Barbhāi opponents supported the Khoja custom that essentially deprived the females from such inheritance. In the resulting judgement, Sir Erskine Perry, the presiding judge, ruled that the custom of the Khojas should prevail even though it might be in conflict with the provisions of Islamic law. This judgement in effect recognized the Khojas as a distinct community. In view of their unwillingness to acknowledge the imām’s leadership, Ḥabīb Ibrāhīm and his supporters were again excommunicated in 1848. The Barbhāi dissidents, with their tacit Sunni leanings, now seceded from the Khoja community and established themselves in a separate jamāʿat-khāna in Bombay, but in Mahim they used the upper floor of the existing jamāʿat-khāna while the Khoja followers of the Āghā Khān held the lower floor. It was at the jamāʿat-khāna of Mahim that, in 1267/1850, four members of the Barbhāi party were murdered by the Khojas loyal to the Āghā Khān. Nineteen Khojas were brought to trial for this murder, and four of them were sentenced to death. Later, the Barbhāi dissidents were once again admitted into the Nizārī Khoja jamāʿat of Bombay.

It was under such circumstances that the Āghā Khān decided in 1861 to secure what amounted to a pledge of loyalty to himself and to the Nizārī religion, from the members of the Khoja community. He circulated a document in the Bombay jamāʿat summarizing the practices of the Nizārī Shiʿīs, especially regarding marriage, ablution and funeral rites, and requiring all those in agreement to sign it. The document, copies of which were sent to the Nizārīs of other places in India and elsewhere, was issued because there had appeared in print statements representing the Khojas as Sunnis, alleging that the Āghā Khān had been attempting by coercion to make them Shiʿīs. In opposition to this document, the dissenting Khojas of the Barbhāi party held that the Khojas had always been Sunnis and that no Shiʿī, including the Nizārī Imām, could be entitled to any share or voice in the management of the public property belonging to the Khoja community. As a result, the Barbhāi party was again outcast in 1862 by the unanimous vote of all the Khojas assembled in the jamāʿat-khāna of Bombay. Matters came to a head in 1866 when the dissenting Khojas filed a suit in the Bombay High Court against the Āghā Khān, emphasizing that the Khojas had been Sunnis from the beginning, since their conversion from Hinduism to Islam by Pir Sadr al-Dīn. More specifically, the Barbhāi plaintiffs, led by Ḥabīb Ibrāhīm’s son Ahmed Habibbhai, demanded that
an account be made of all the communal property and dues collected from
the Khojas; that the property of the community be held in trust for
charitable, religious and public uses for the sole benefit of the Khojas and
that no Shi'i person be entitled to any share or interest in them; that the
mukhis and kamadias be elected periodically; and that the Āghā Khān
refrain from interfering in the management of communal property,
appointing the functionaries of the Khoja jama'ats, excommunicating any
Khojas from the community, and charging fees for the discharge of his
functions as spiritual leader. This case, generally known as the Aga Khan
Case, was heard by Sir Joseph Arnould. After a hearing of several weeks,
in the course of which the Āghā Khān himself testified and the history of
the Khoja community was fully reviewed, in November 1866 Justice
Arnould rendered a detailed judgement against the plaintiffs and in favour
of the Āghā Khān and other defendants on all points.170 This judgement
legally established the status of the Khojas as a community of Nizāris,
referred to as 'Shia Imami Ismailis', and of the Āghā Khān as the murshid or
spiritual head of that community and heir in lineal descent to the imāms of
Alamūt. It also established, for the first time in a British court, the rights of
the Āghā Khān to all the customary dues collected from the Khojas, and
placed all the community property of the Nizārī Ismā'īlis in his name and
under his absolute control. The first Āghā Khān's authority was never
seriously challenged again.

Āghā Khān Mahallāti spent his final years peacefully in Bombay, with
seasonal stays in Poona. He had maintained excellent stables and became a
familiar figure in the Bombay racecourse. Āghā Khān I's interest in horse
racing and horse breeding was retained and further developed in Europe
by his successors. Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Ḥusaynī (Ḥasan 'Ali Shāh), Āghā
Khān I, the forty-sixth Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imām, died after an eventful
imāmate of sixty-four years in Jumādā I 1298/April 1881. He was buried in
a specially erected shrine at Ḥasanābād in the Mazagon area of Bombay.
Āghā Khān I married seven times and was survived by three sons, Āqā 'Ali
Shāh, Āqā Jangī Shāh, and Āqā Akbar Shāh, and five daughters.

Āghā Khān I was succeeded as imām by his eldest son Āqā 'Ali Shāh, his
only son by Sarv-i Jahān Khānum.171 Āqā 'Ali Shāh, who became known
as Āghā Khān II, was born in 1246/1830 at Mahallāt, where he spent his
early years. At the beginning of Āghā Khān I's rebellion in 1256/1840, 'Ali
Shāh was taken to 'Irāq where he stayed for a few years with his mother
and studied Arabic, Persian and the doctrines of the Nizāris. During the
late 1840s, Āqā 'Ali Shāh was apparently permitted by the Qājār regime to
take up temporary residence in Persia and assume certain responsibilities on behalf of his father. Sarv-i Jahân Khânnum (d. 1299/1882) and 'Ali Shâh eventually joined Āghâ Khân I in Bombay in 1269/1853. Henceforth, 'Ali Shâh, as the imâm’s heir apparent, regularly visited different Nizârî Khoja communities, especially in Sind and Kathiawar, and organized their jama‘at-khanas. Āqā 'Ali Shâh in fact lived for some time in Karachi, where his third son and future successor was born in 1294/1877.

On succeeding to the imâmate in 1298/1881, Āghâ Khân II maintained the friendly relations that his father had cultivated with the British. He was appointed to the Bombay Legislative Council when Sir James Fergusson was the governor of Bombay. Āghâ Khân II was distinctly concerned about the welfare of the Nizârî Khojas and opened a number of schools for the Khoja children in Bombay and elsewhere, also assisting needy Khoja families. During his brief imâmate, ‘Ali Shâh increased his contacts with the Nizârî communities outside of the Indian subcontinent, showing particular interest in his followers in the upper Oxus districts, Burma and East Africa. The growing prosperity of the Nizârî Khoja community and his own policies earned Āghâ Khân II prestige among the Muslim population of India. He was elected president of a body called the Muhammadan National Association. In that position, which he held until his death, Āghâ Khân II promoted educational and philanthropic institutions for the benefit of the Indian Muslims.

Āqā 'Ali Shâh, like his father, was closely associated with the Ni’mat Allâhi order. Before going to India, he had developed close ties with Rahmat ‘Ali Shâh, the qutb of one of the branches of this Sûfi tariqa who had been Āghâ Khân I’s guest in Mâhâllât in 1249/1833. Subsequently, Āqâ ‘Ali Shâh maintained his friendship with Rahmat ‘Ali, and after Rahmat’s death in 1278/1861, he regularly sent money from India for the recitation of the Qur’an at the Sûfi master’s grave in Shiráz. ‘Ali Shâh maintained close relations also with Rahmat ‘Ali’s uncle and one of his successors as qutb, Munawwar ‘Ali Shâh (d. 1301/1884). He entertained several notable Persian Ni’mat Allâhîs in Bombay, including Rahmat ‘Ali’s son Muḥammad Ma‘ṣûm Shirâzî, Nâ‘îb al-Sadr (d. 1344/1926), the author of the Tariq al-haqîq. This Sûfi, carrying the tariqa name of Ma‘ṣûm ‘Ali Shâh, visited India in 1298/1881 and stayed with Āqâ ‘Ali Shâh for an entire year. Ṣâfé ‘Ali Shâh (d. 1316/1898), the eponymous founder of one of the most important branches of the order, was another outstanding Ni’mat Allâhî to enjoy ‘Ali Shâh’s hospitality in Bombay. In 1280/1863 he went to India, for the first time, at the invitation of ‘Ali Shâh.
On his second visit a few years later, Safi 'Ali Shāh spent four years in India, during which time he completed and lithographed his well-known versified Šūfī work, the Zubdat al-āsrār, at Āghā Khān II's request. On his return to Persia, Safi 'Ali spent some time in 'Irāq, staying at the Āghā Khān's houses in Najaf and Karbalā and winning the approval of certain local Ithnā'ashari 'ulama for 'Ali Shāh's marriage to a Qājār princess, Shams al-Mulūk. The 'ulama had previously raised objections to this marriage on account of 'Ali Shāh's Iṣmā'īlī faith.

Shams al-Mulūk, the daughter of Mīrzā 'Alī Muḥammad Nīzām al-Dawla by one of Fath 'Ali Shāh's daughters, became 'Alī Shāh's third wife and bore him his sole surviving son and successor, Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh. Both of 'Alī Shāh's sons by a previous marriage predeceased him. His eldest son, Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh, also known as Khalīl Allāh, who was expected to succeed to the imāmate, was born around 1268/1851–1852. He acquired some learning and composed a few treatises in Persian dealing with the doctrines of the Nizārī Iṣmā'īlīs.²²² Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh died in Safar 1302/December 1884, and was taken for burial to Najaf. Shihāb al-Dīn's only son, Abu'l-Ḥasan, too, died shortly afterwards; he was buried at the mausoleum in Ḥasanābād next to Āghā Khān I. Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh's full-brother, Nūr al-Dīn Shāh, was killed in his youth early in 1302 A.H. in a riding accident at Poona. Āqā 'Alī Shāh, Āghā Khān II, the forty-seventh imām of the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizāris, was also a sportsman and a hunter, with particular renown for his tiger hunting in India. After an imāmate of four years, he died in Dhu'l-Qa'da 1302/August 1885 of pneumonia contracted in a day's hunting near Poona. Āghā Khān II's body was later buried in the family mausoleum in Najaf.

Āghā Khān II was succeeded by his sole surviving son Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh al-Ḥusaynī, Āghā Khān III, whose life is well documented.²²⁴ Born in Karachi in Shawwāl 1294/November 1877, he was eight years-old when installed in 1302/1885 at Bombay as the forty-eighth Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imām. His nominal guardian was his uncle Āqā Jangī Shāh, but the Āghā Khān grew up under the close supervision of his capable mother, Shams al-Mulūk, known as Lady 'Alī Shāh in the social circles of British India. Until the age of eighteen, Āghā Khān III received a rigorous education in Bombay and Poona under the guidance of his mother, taking lessons in Arabic, Persian literature, Iṣmā'īlī doctrine, and calligraphy. During the imām's youth, Lady 'Alī Shāh played an active part in the administration of the affairs of the Nizārī community through a council, also investing the family wealth shrewdly. Lady 'Alī Shāh, who had a
lasting influence on her son, died in 1356/1938 and was buried next to the
tomb of her husband in Najaf. Āghā Khān III’s closest childhood com-
panions were his cousins Āqā Shams al-Dīn and ‘Abbās, sons of Āqā Jangi
Shāh; he was greatly disturbed when Jangi Shāh and ‘Abbās were
murdered in 1314/1896, under obscure circumstances, at Jidda. Jangi Shāh
and his family had gone for pilgrimage to Mecca, and the murderers, who
were apparently religious fanatics, did not live long enough to divulge the
names of the instigators of their crime.175 The young Āghā Khān was
shocked again when his nephew Hāshim Shāh, son of his half-brother Nūr
al-Dīn Shāh, was assassinated in 1316/1898 at Poona by a family
steward.176 In 1315/1897, Āghā Khān III married his cousin Shahzāda
Begum, one of Jangi Shāh’s daughters who had witnessed the murders at
Jidda. This marriage, which lasted briefly, was the first of his four
marriages.

In 1898, Āghā Khān III set out from Bombay on his first journey to
Europe, which later became his chief place of residence. He visited France
and Britain, where he dined with Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle, and
met the future King Edward VII, who was to become his friend. On his
return journey to India, he paid the first of several visits to the Nizārī
Khojas of East Africa. Soon after, the Āghā Khān travelled to Burma and
met his followers there. On his second European journey in 1900, the
Āghā Khān made the acquaintance of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh’s son and
successor Muẓaffār al-Dīn Shāh Qājār (1313–1324/1896–1907), who was
in Paris at the time. By then, the old animosities between the Nizārī Imāms
and the Qājār dynasty of Persia had been forgotten, and the Persian
monarch gave valuable gifts and one of his highest decorations to the Āghā
Khān. However, the Āghā Khān, who remained aware of his Persian and
Qājār ancestry, was disturbed by Muẓaffār al-Dīn Shāh’s childish disposi-
tion and political incompetence.177 On that journey, he also met Kaiser
William II in Potsdam and Sultan ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II in Istanbul, which was
a historic meeting between an Ismā’īlī Imām and a Sunni ruler claiming the
heritage of the ‘Abbāsid caliphs.

Āghā Khān III returned once again to Europe in 1902 as the personal
guest of Edward VII at his coronation, and the new Emperor King
advanced the Nizārī Imām from the rank of Knight (K.C.I.E.) to that of
Grand Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (G.C.I.E.) in his
coronation honours.178 The Āghā Khān returned to India in November
1902, and, as a further sign of esteem in which he was now held by the
British, he was appointed by Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, to a seat
on his Legislative Council. He served two years on that council in Calcutta, then the seat of British power in India. The Āghā Khān paid another visit to Europe in 1904, and in 1905 he saw his followers in East Africa for the second time. While the Āghā Khān was in East Africa, a suit was filed against him in the Bombay High Court by certain discontented members of his family led by Ḥājjī Bibī, a daughter of Ḥanjī Shāh, and her son Șamad Shāh. The litigants had certain financial grievances regarding their shares in the estate of Āghā Khān I, and they also raised claims to the current Āghā Khān’s income and status. After lengthy hearings, Justice Russell, the presiding judge, ruled against the plaintiffs, confirming the Āghā Khān’s rights to the estate of his grandfather and to the offerings made to him by the Nizārīs. This ruling also established that the Nizārī Khojas were distinct from the Shi‘is of the Ithnā‘ashari school. 179 From 1907 onwards, the Āghā Khān visited Europe every year, and eventually established his chief places of residence there. Gradually, he came to know most of the royal families of Europe and that continent’s foremost political figures and artists. In 1908, he married Mlle Theresa Magliano (d. 1926) in Cairo. She bore Aly Khan, the first of Āghā Khān III’s two surviving sons, in 1911 in Turin, her native city.

Meanwhile, the Āghā Khān had increasingly concerned himself with the affairs of the Muslim community of India, beyond the immediate interests of his own followers. As a result, he gained much popularity amongst the Indian Muslims and their spokesmen. He participated actively in the first All-India Muslim Educational Conference, held at Bombay in 1903, and became the president of the second one, held at Delhi the following year. In 1906, he headed the Muslim delegation that met with Lord Minto at Simla, asking the Viceroy to regard the Indian Muslims not as a minority but as a nation within a nation whose members deserved adequate representation on both local and legislative councils of the land. In 1907, he joined in the founding of the All-India Muslim League, and served as the permanent president of that body until he resigned from the position in 1912. The Āghā Khān campaigned most energetically for various educational projects, for Khojas and other Indian Muslims. He played a leading part in the elevation of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh to university status, a measure that came about in 1912. 180 In the same year, King George V, who had gone to India for his coronation durbar, bestowed upon the Āghā Khān the highest decoration that could be given to any Indian subject of the British Empire, making him a Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India (G.C.S.I.).
In 1914, Āghā Khān III paid his second visit to Burma and advised his followers there to adopt measures, such as giving up their Indo-Muslim names and habits, that would facilitate their socio-cultural assimilation in Burma. In later years, the Āghā Khān recommended similar assimilatory measures to his followers in other parts of the world; a policy designed to reduce the local difficulties of the Nizāris who lived as minorities in many countries.

On the outbreak of World War I, the Āghā Khān went to Europe and offered his services to the British government, also urging his followers to aid the British authorities in their territories. For his valuable services, the Āghā Khān was accorded in 1916 the status of a first-class ruling prince of the Bombay Presidency, although unlike other native rulers of India he did not possess a territorial principality. In the same year, the Āghā Khān lost a cousin in the pursuit of his pro-British policies during the war. He had despatched Āqā Farrukh Shāh, the son of Āqā Akbar Shāh (d. 1322/1904), on a pro-Allies political mission to the tribesmen and the Nizāris of Kirmān, where he was assassinated at the instigation of German agents.

In 1917, the German agents evidently made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the Āghā Khān himself in Switzerland. Suffering from an illness that prevented him from undertaking any political activity, the Āghā Khān rested in Switzerland for three years until 1919, during which time he wrote a book setting forth his views on the future of India.

For a decade after World War I, the Āghā Khān stayed away from the international and Indian political scenes, devoting his time mainly to the affairs of his Nizārī followers. Having established permanent homes in Switzerland and the French Riviera, he now visited India every year. Soon, he also acquired an international fame for owning, breeding and racing horses. In 1928, the Āghā Khān presided over the All-India Muslim Conference held at Delhi, which was to formulate Muslim views on how independence should evolve for India. Under the guidance of the Āghā Khān, the assembly demanded guaranteed rights for Indian Muslims in the framework of a federal and self-governing India. In 1930, he led the Muslim delegation to the first Round Table Conference that was convened in London to consider the future of India. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who came from a Khoja family and later became the founder of the state of Pakistan, was amongst the other members of this Muslim delegation. In the course of the second Round Table Conference, held in London in 1931, Āghā Khān III had lengthy discussion sessions with Mahatma Gandhi who was then the sole representative of the Congress Party. These conferences,
lasting until 1934, marked the climax of the Āghā Khān’s involvement in Indian politics. Soon afterwards, at the insistence of his Indian followers, the Āghā Khān approached the government of India and asked to be given a territorial state, like other ruling princes of the land. This petition was, however, rejected. Meanwhile, the Āghā Khān had served, since 1932, as India’s delegate at the Disarmament Conference and at successive sessions of the Assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva. The Āghā Khān’s involvement in international affairs at Geneva culminated in his election in 1937 as president of the League of Nations for a session.

In 1929, the Āghā Khān had married his third wife, Mlle Andrée Carron, who bore his second son Ṣadr al-Dīn in 1933. In 1935, he celebrated the golden jubilee of his imāmate in Bombay and Nairobi. By then, Āghā Khān III had been the imām of the Nizāris for half a century and the celebrations culminated in the weighing of the imām against gold. In 1936, Aly Khan married Mrs Loel Guinness, formerly the Hon. Joan Yarde-Buller, a daughter of Lord Churston. On 13 December 1936, she bore Aly Khan’s first of two sons, Karim, who was to succeed his grandfather in the imāmate.

The outbreak of World War II found the Āghā Khān in Switzerland, where he once again urged his followers everywhere to support the British cause in the war. The Āghā Khān spent the war years in Geneva, where he divorced his third wife in 1943. In the following year, he married his fourth and last wife, Mlle Yvette Labrousse, who became known as the Begum Aga Khan. The sixtieth anniversary of the Āghā Khān’s imāmate was celebrated, with a year’s delay, in Bombay in 1946, when he was weighed against diamonds rented by the community for the occasion. A few months later, the diamond jubilee celebrations were repeated in Dar-es-Salaam. The platinum jubilee celebrations, marking the seventieth anniversary of Āghā Khān III’s imāmate, were held during 1954–1955 in Karachi and elsewhere. These jubilee celebrations reflected the deep devotion of the Nizāris to their present (ḥādir) imām, to whom they refer as Mawlānā Ḥādir Imām (Mawlana Hazar Imam). A few years earlier in 1951, Āghā Khān III had paid his first and only visit to Persia, his ancestral land, and was warmly received at Maḥallāt by thousands of his Persian followers, known generally as the Muridān-i ʿAqā Khān.

During his long imāmate, Āghā Khān III devoted much of his time and financial resources to consolidating and organizing the Nizāri community, especially in India and East Africa. He was particularly concerned with introducing socio-economic reforms that would transform his Shiʿī
Muslim followers into a modern, self-sufficient community with high standards of education and welfare. The successful attainment of these objectives, however, required an appropriate administrative organization, over and beyond the existing jamāʿat structure of the Nizārī community; an organization through which the imām could implement his reform policies and modernize the Nizārī community without destroying the traditions and the identity of that community. The development of a new communal organization, thus, became one of Āghā Khān III’s major tasks. The court decisions in Bombay had already laid the foundations in British India for the Āghā Khān’s institutional and administrative reforms. They had delineated the Nizārī Khojas from those Khojas who preferred to be Sunnis or Ithnā’asharīs, while clarifying the status of the Āghā Khān with respect to his followers and to all the communal property. At the same time, the deep devotion of the Nizārī Khojas to their imām permitted the sectarianists to readily accept the Āghā Khān’s reform policies. On the basis of such assets and the existing jamāʿat structure of the community, and enjoying the support of the British government of India, Āghā Khān III developed an elaborate administrative system of councils for the Nizārīs of the Indian subcontinent and East Africa. The powers, functions and compositions of different categories of councils were in due course specified in written constitutions for the Āghā Khān’s Nizārī followers in those regions, designated officially as the Shia Imami Ismailis. Similar constitutions were promulgated for the councils and jamāʿats of India and East Africa, and when India was partitioned in 1947, a separate but still similar constitution and council system was developed for Pakistan. The workings of the Ismāʿīlī administrative system of councils can perhaps be best shown in the case of the community in East Africa, where the Nizārī Khojas have been scattered through the independent states of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, formerly representing three colonial territories. Furthermore, East Africa provides a suitable case study for evaluating the achievements of the Nizārīs against the conditions of other Asian communities settled in the region, including the Bohras and non-Nizārī Khojas.

The Nizārī Khojas had been active as traders between western India and East Africa at least since the seventeenth century; and they began to settle permanently in the region during the earliest decades of the nineteenth century. The early Indian Nizārī immigrants came mainly from Cutch, Kathiawar, Sūrat and Bombay, located in western India, and they originally settled on the island of Zanzibar. By 1820, a small community of
Nizārī Khojas had settled in Zanzibar. They had built a *jama'at-khāna* on the island and the *jama'at*’s affairs were administered by two local functionaries, a *mukhi* and his assistant, a *kamadia*. This traditional pattern of local organization and administration, brought over from India, was in due course adopted by other Nizārī settlements in East Africa. As in the case of the Ismāʿīlī Bohras and other Asian immigrants, the Nizārī Khojas went to East Africa in large numbers after 1840, when the 'Umani sultan Sayyid Saʿīd transferred his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar. Sultan Saʿīd, who was interested in the development of foreign trade in his dominions, encouraged the immigration of Asian traders to Zanzibar. The settlement of Nizārī Khojas and other Indian sectarians in Zanzibar increased significantly between 1840 and the 1870s. This period of economic prosperity and trading opportunities in Zanzibar coincided with the period of improved travelling facilities between India and East Africa. At the same time, severe droughts and famines in Gujarāt induced many Khoja farmers there to join the caravans of the Khoja traders immigrating to East Africa. By the end of the nineteenth century, when the interior of East Africa was becoming more accessible through the construction of roads and railways, an increasing number of Nizārī trading establishments moved from Zanzibar to the mainland. Later, the Nizārī Khoja immigrants came to be found even in more remote rural areas of the East African mainland. By World War I, Nizārī *jama’ats* of Indian origins existed in many parts of East Africa, while the bulk of the Nizārī settlers were concentrated in the region’s growing urban areas, including Zanzibar, Mombasa, Dar-es-Salaam, Nairobi, Kampala and Tanga.

Āghā Khān III, as noted, first visited his East African followers in 1899. By that time, the Nizārīs of Zanzibar had come to experience their own internal conflicts, like the Khojas of Bombay a few decades earlier. The conflict centred around the same issues that had brought about the Arnould judgement of 1866. Some of the dissident East African Nizārīs, who raised questions regarding the Āghā Khān’s claims and privileges, seceded from the community during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The seceders mainly joined the Ithnā‘asharī Khojas of Zanzibar, who were the least organized group amongst the Asian immigrants to East Africa.\(^{187}\) The imām’s visit did not end the rift in the community and defections continued for a while longer. It was under such circumstances that on the occasion of his second visit to the region in 1905, the Āghā Khān issued a set of written rules and regulations that in effect comprised the first constitution of the East African Nizārī community.\(^{188}\) This
Post-Alamūt Nizārī Iṣmāʿīlimism

constitution foresaw a new administrative organization in the form of a hierarchy of councils; it also established rules for governing the personal relations in the community, especially with respect to marriage, divorce and inheritance. Around the same time, the first Iṣmāʿīli council was established in Zanzibar, then the seat of the East African Nizārī community, with the local mukhi acting as its president. This council not only took over the administration of the local jamāʿat-khāna and defended its interests against the dissenters, but also supervised the affairs of the congregations on the mainland. These steps initiated the Āghā Khān’s continuing programme of reorganizing and modernizing the Nizārī community of East Africa.

By the early 1920s, new centres of economic activity had appeared on mainland East Africa, where the Nizārī Khojas had gradually moved with the Āghā Khān’s encouragement. Having lost its importance as the main commercial centre of the region, Zanzibar had now also ceased to be the seat of the East African Nizārī community. Accordingly, the widely scattered Nizārī congregations of the mainland had to be provided with appropriate administrative organizations of their own. It was in recognition of these changed realities that Āghā Khān III revised the first constitution in 1926, instituting separate central councils in the three territories of Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda. The members of these councils were carefully selected by the Āghā Khān, who personally supervised much of their operations. The original council in Zanzibar continued for some time to co-ordinate the activities of the Territorial Councils in matters of common interest. These central functions were later delegated to a Supreme Council, separate from the council in Zanzibar; and subordinate committees with responsibilities in particular fields such as education, welfare and health, came to be attached to each Territorial Council. During the final three decades of Āghā Khān III’s imāmate, the hierarchical system of councils, with its subsidiary bodies, was further developed on the basis of periodical revisions of the constitution for the East African Nizārī councils and jamāʿats; the revisions occurring in 1937, 1946, and 1954. The Constitution of 1954 was promulgated after the Āghā Khān had called a special conference of the East African councillors at Evian in 1952 to discuss the existing problems and the future prospects of the community. By that time, the East African followers of the Āghā Khān numbered to around 50,000, with almost one half of the total residing in Tanganyika.189

All of the Iṣmāʿīli constitutions, including those pertaining to the Indian
subcontinent, revolved around the person of the Āghā Khān, who acted as the religious and administrative head of the community. He was the sole person who could change or revise the constitutions. After the earliest challenges to his status, Āghā Khān III’s leadership was accepted unquestionably by his followers. He remained in direct contact with many Nizāris in different lands and guided the community frequently in the form of firmans (fārmāns), or written directives read in the local jamā’at- khānas. The firmans of the Āghā Khān guided the Nizāris in specific directions, especially in the areas of education, social welfare, co-operative economic enterprises and female emancipation, also guiding the community in terms of religious practices, social relations, and personal conduct.190 Numerous firmans dealt with the abolition of the veil (pardah or chādur), worn until recent times by Nizāri women, like other women in many parts of the Muslim world, and the participation of the Nizāri women in communal affairs.

Āghā Khān III increasingly utilized the offerings submitted to him, including the tithes and the funds collected at the jubilee celebrations, for the implementation of socio-economic policies and projects that would benefit his followers. At the same time, he created a number of financial institutions which acted as vehicles for the realization of his multi-purpose programmes. In East Africa, the Āghā Khān founded an insurance company in 1935, and an investment trust company in 1946. The latter body and its subsidiaries provided loans, at low rates of interest, to Nizāri traders and co-operative organizations and to those needing financial assistance for building their own houses. Around the same time, the Āghā Khān became one of the founding members of the East African Muslim Welfare Society, devoted to building schools and mosques for the indigenous Muslim communities of East Africa. The Āghā Khān was deeply concerned with the housing problems of his followers and aimed to provide an adequate number of dwellings for the Nizāri Khojas. For this purpose, he established a number of housing societies in the major Nizāri centres of East Africa. He also paid special attention to the health and education standards of the community. Thus, the Āghā Khān created and maintained a network of schools, vocational institutions, libraries, sports and recreational clubs, hospitals and dispensaries for the benefit of his followers in East Africa, India and Pakistan. Appropriate bodies were created within the system of councils to supervise the operations of these institutions, whose services were often made available also to non-Ismā‘īlis.
Resuming our discussion of the administrative system of councils in East Africa, it may be noted that the Constitution of 1954 was again revised in 1962, in the imāmate of Āghā Khān III’s successor Karim Āghā Khān IV. The 1962 Constitution of the East African Nizāris was issued after considerable consultation with many councillors and knowledgeable members of the community, supplemented by the studies of specially appointed constitutional committees in Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda. According to the Constitution of 1962, which remained operative for twenty-five years, the administrative hierarchy was headed, after the imām, by a Supreme Council for Africa, an interterritorial body that directed, supervised and co-ordinated the activities of the three Territorial Councils. The Supreme Council, with its changing headquarters in Nairobi and other major cities of East Africa, was also empowered to act as a judicial tribunal of the second degree, the highest judicial authority being the imām himself. Members of the Supreme Council were appointed by the imām, who accorded some representation to each of the three East African territories. Below the Supreme Council, there were the Territorial Councils in the states of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, each enjoying a great degree of local autonomy; the headquarters of these councils were located in Dar-es-Salaam, Nairobi and Kampala, respectively. Before the formation of Tanzania in 1964, Zanzibar had its own Territorial Council, but subsequently the island was placed under the jurisdiction of the Territorial Council for Tanzania. In each of the three states, there were a number of Provincial Councils charged with directing the affairs of the various districts and local jamā’ats under their jurisdiction. The members of the Provincial Councils were appointed by the imām from amongst the Nizāris of each particular province. A number of auxiliary bodies, such as economic committees, welfare societies and women’s associations, operated under the supervision of the Provincial Councils.

The Constitution of 1962 was concerned, much more than its predecessors, with matters related to marriage, betrothal, dower and compensation, divorce, restitution of conjugal rights, maintenance, guardianship, apostasy and marriage with non-Nizāris. These matters were covered in numerous articles which in effect represented the personal law of the community. The Ismā’īli councils and their affiliated tribunals have frequently passed out decisions on such personal matters and the related disputes brought before them. The 1962 Constitution also established an Executive Council for Africa with the main function of allocating funds to
various organizations, including those operating in the fields of education, health and religious instruction. At the same time, in each of the three states, Education and Health Administrations were established. These bodies, entrusted to ministers and charged with providing services in their fields and supervising the relevant institutions in each state, were ultimately under the direction of the imām himself. All councillors and other important officeholders have been appointed by the imām for an initial period of two years, renewable at his discretion. The officeholders in the council system, comprised mainly of lawyers and other professional men, do not receive any salaries but are rewarded by receiving special blessings, titles, etc., from the imām. Āghā Khān III instituted an elaborate system of titles, maintained by his successor, which now includes designations such as diwan, vazir, rai, and alijah, for the eligible members of the community.

The Nizārī community in East Africa had, meanwhile, retained its traditional pattern of organization in terms of local jama'āts, each having a jama'āt-khāna where religious and social ceremonies continue to be performed. At the jama'āt level, the communal affairs are under the jurisdiction of a mukhi and a kamadia, who until 1987 were selected for each jama'āt-khāna by the relevant Provincial Councils. These functionaries officiate on various occasions, such as marriage ceremonies, funeral rites, and communal prayers on special occasions. They also collect the religious dues, including the dassondh and the memani, a voluntary offering to the imām. Religious matters of general interest to the community, including especially the religious education of the Nizāris themselves, have been the responsibility of an Ismailia Association, now called the Tariqah and Religious Education Board, in each of the three East African states, which operate independently of the secular councils and are accountable directly to the Āghā Khān. These bodies have also been responsible for the publication and distribution of the religious literature of the Nizāris, notably the imāms' firmans and speeches. The Ismailia Associations (Tariqah Boards), as well as mukhis and kamadias, have not conducted any proselytizing activities, though on rare occasions some native Africans and European residents of East Africa have embraced Nizārī Ismā'īlim. There are, however, religious functionaries, comparable to the dzis of the earlier times, active in most Nizārī communities of today. The modern-day missionaries, usually called religious teachers (mu'allims) and preachers (uaeezeen), perform the vital function of instructing the members of the community in their own religion. In East Africa, they work
mainly in the Ismāʿīlī schools or amongst the local groups. They do not attempt to spread the Nizārī doctrines and practices among the adherents of other religions. Formerly, many Nizārī teachers of East Africa received their education in India and Pakistan, but since 1964 a missionary centre in Dar-es-Salaam has provided the required training for them. The elaborate administrative organization of the Nizārī community in East Africa has represented essentially a carefully developed system of checks and balances. This system, together with its governing constitution, has safeguarded the absolute authority of the īmām and the traditional jamāʿat fabric of the community, while at the same time it has served to modernize the community and produce substantial socio-economic gains for the Āghā Khan’s followers. The Nizārī Khojas have, indeed, emerged as the best organized and the most progressive of the Muslim communities of East Africa.

Council systems with affiliated central and subordinate bodies, similar to those existing in East Africa, were also developed for the Nizārī communities of Pakistan and India. Allowing for special local conditions, the organizations of the councils and jamāʿats of Pakistan and India were specified in written constitutions, which were revised several times until the most recent constitution issued in 1986 for all the Nizārī jamāʿats of the world. According to these earlier constitutions, the Shia Imami Ismailis of Pakistan and India were organized hierarchically in a series of councils under the overall administrative and religious leadership of the present īmām of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs, the Mawlana Hazar Imam. In Pakistan, the communal administration was headed by a Federal Council located at Karachi. The Federal Council co-ordinated the activities of five Supreme Councils for the different regions of the country, including one that was charged with the affairs of East Pakistan until that region gained independence as the state of Bangladesh in 1972. On the basis of the Constitution of 1962 for Pakistan, each Supreme Council was responsible for supervising the activities of some of the twenty-three Divisional, District and Local Councils throughout the country. The Supreme Councils were also empowered to hear the appeals of the lower councils and to communicate instructions to mukhis and kamadias of the jamāʿats in their regions. The jamāʿats were represented on the Local Councils, and the latter selected the mukhis and kamadias of the districts under their jurisdiction. In India, the Federal Council, located at Bombay, directed the affairs of four Regional Councils for Maharashtra, Gujarāt, southern India and eastern India. At the bottom of the hierarchy, there were twenty-eight...
Local Councils in India, for south Bombay, north Bombay, Jamnagar, Cutch, Súrat, Hyderabad, and so forth. Every council had its own president and members, appointed by the imám or selected with his approval. All the councils also acted as judiciary tribunals for settling the various communal disputes.

As in the East African states, the general religious policies, the publication and distribution of religious literatures, and the supervision of the activities of the religious teachers in Pakistan and India have been entrusted to Ismailia Associations, renamed Tariqah and Religious Education Boards in 1987, with headquarters in Karachi and Bombay. Until the late 1970s, these Ismailia Associations, like those in East Africa, operated rather autonomously, especially in their publishing activities. Furthermore, in each country there developed a number of central boards in charge of communal activities in the fields of education, health, social welfare, housing and economic planning. These boards, acting under the general supervision of the Federal Council in each country, have been responsible for the provision of the services in their respective fields of operation. In the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent too, the followers of the Āghá Kháns have received substantial socio-economic benefits from various communal programmes. Nonetheless, sporadic dissension occurred in the Khoja community of the subcontinent after 1901. Some of the dissenters, raising particular doctrinal and financial objections, periodically seceded from the Nizārī community. They mainly embraced Twelver Shi‘ism. Other dissidents, a small minority, stayed within the community, forming the Khojah Reformers’ Society, with headquarters in Karachi.¹⁹³

Most recently in Rabi’ II 1407/December 1986, Āghá Khán IV issued a universal constitution entitled ‘The Constitution of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims’ for all his Nizārī followers throughout the world. The new Constitution was to be enforced by December 1987, while the new rules and regulations applicable to different Nizārī territories were to be formulated in due time. The preamble of the new Constitution affirms all the fundamental Islamic beliefs and then clearly focuses on the doctrine of the imámite upheld by the Nizārī Ismā‘ilis, like other Shi‘i Muslims; it also emphasizes the imám’s ta‘līm or teaching which guides his followers along the path of spiritual enlightenment and improved temporal life. The new Constitution, indeed, stresses the all-important teaching and guiding role of the present imám of the Nizārīs by affirming that by the virtue of his office and in accordance with the belief of his followers, the imám enjoys
full authority of governance in respect to all the religious and communal matters of the Nizāris. The hierarchical administrative system of councils is somewhat simplified in the Constitution of 1986, which envisages a uniform system of councils for a selection of the Nizāri territories in the Eastern and Western hemispheres of the world. Taking account of the fact that large numbers of Nizāris have immigrated during the last two decades to Europe and America as well as to the Persian Gulf region, the new Constitution has established the council system for a number of these newly-founded Nizāri communities in addition to modifying the system for several communities in the traditional abodes of the Nizāris in Asia and Africa. The particular Nizāri communities having the council system under the new Constitution are located in fourteen territories, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Singapore, the Gulf Co-operation Council Countries (namely, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), Syria, the Malagasy Republic, Kenya, Tanzania, France, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. In each of these fourteen Nizāri territories a National Council will direct and supervise the affairs of a network of Regional and Local Councils. At the discretion of the Aghā Khân, the jurisdiction of each National Council may be extended to geographical areas where the Nizāri jama'ats do not have their own council system.

The Constitution of 1986 envisages a number of additional organizations for the Nizāri territories having National Councils. Each of these territories will also come to possess a Tariqah and Religious Education Board (formerly called Ismailia Association), for the provision of religious education at all levels of the jama'at, for the training of religious teachers, and for research and publication of materials on different aspects of Islam and Ismā'īlism. It is interesting to note that the new Constitution officially refers to Nizāri Ismā'īlism as ‘the Ismaili Tariqah,’ defining tariqah as persuasion, path or way in faith analogous to the designation of a Šūfi tariqa. The Tariqah Boards will also be responsible for guiding the mukhis and kamadias in matters of religious rites and practices of Nizāri Ismā'īlism. Furthermore, the new Constitution has established Grants and Review Boards in eleven of the Nizāri territories to ensure the observance of proper standards of financial discipline by those institutions, such as the Councils, the Tariqah Boards and other central bodies, which receive financial support from the imām or the Nizāri community. Finally, the new Constitution has set up National Conciliation and Arbitration Boards
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in eleven of the fourteen territories with National Councils. These Boards will act as judicial tribunals to arbitrate between parties or on disputes arising from commercial and other civil liability matters as well as domestic and family matters; they are also empowered to take disciplinary action against the Nizāris. An International Conciliation and Arbitration Board will act as a judicial tribunal of the first degree, after the present imām, for hearing appeals from decisions of the National Conciliation Boards. In all matters related to the governance of the Nizāri jama‘ats, however, the ultimate authority is vested in the imām. The appointment of mukhis and kamadias and their functions and terms of office, too, are now placed strictly at the discretion of the imām. The new Constitution lists a number of grounds on the basis of which disciplinary action, including expulsion from the community, may be taken against Nizāris. These grounds include the ridiculing of the Qur’ān, the Prophet, the Ahl al-Bayt, the person of the Hazar Imam, the new Constitution, and any Ismā‘ili religious literature or practice, amongst other unacceptable behaviour and activities.

The administrative system of Ismā‘ili councils has not been extended to several countries and regions of the Near East and Asia, such as Persia, Afghanistan, and the upper Oxus region, where scattered Nizārī communities exist; while the Syrian Nizāris following the Āghā Khānī line of imāms acquired the council system only under the terms of the 1986 Constitution. These Nizārī communities, engaged mainly in agricultural activities, have been led by their hereditary dynasties of pirs, amirs or mirs. In some cases, the Āghā Khāns have appointed their own special representatives, who sometimes have been the same hereditary local leaders. In Syria, as noted, the community had mainly acknowledged the Muḥammad-Shāhī (Mu‘mini) line of imāms until the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Syrian Nizāris remained loyal subjects of the Mamlūks and their Ottoman successors, to whom they paid a special tax. The Nizāris had recurrent military entanglements with their neighbours in Syria, especially with the numerically stronger Nuṣayrīs who repeatedly occupied their fortresses and destroyed their religious literature. A number of such clashes took place between the latter part of the eighteenth century and the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Intense rivalries between the two ruling Nizāri families centred at Maṣyāf and Qadmūs further weakened the Nizāri community of Syria. In 1808, the Nuṣayrīs succeeded by trickery in murdering Muṣṭafā Mulhīm, the Nizāri amīr of Maṣyāf, also seizing his fortress. Thereupon, Shaykh Sulaymān b.
Haydar, the senior da'i at Maşyafa, left the locality with many Nizâris to settle in Ḥims, Ḥamāt and elsewhere. As in other instances, the Nizâris later regained possession of Maşyafa on the intercession of the Ottoman authorities. However, the Syrian Nizâris continued to be divided by rivalries between the amirs of Maşyafa and Qadmûs, and the whole community received a devastating blow in the 1830s from an Ottoman expedition led by İbrahim Pasha, who caused much damage to Nizâri castles and villages.

By the 1840s, Amir Ismâ'il b. Amir Muḥammad, the Nizâri amir of Qadmûs, succeeded in establishing his authority over the greater section of the Syrian community. He also managed to win the friendship of the Ottoman authorities in the time of Sultan 'Abd al-Majid I (1255-1277/1839-1861). Amir Ismâ'il had decided to gather his Nizâri co-religionists in Salamiyya, the town that had served as the central headquarters of the early Ismâ'ili movement. In 1843, he petitioned the Ottoman authorities to permit the Syrian Nizâris to restore Salamiyya, then in ruins, for their permanent settlement. The Ottomans later granted the request, allowing Amir Ismâ'il to gather the Syrian Nizâris from different localities and settle them in Salamiyya and in the nearby villages east of Ḥamât. This initiated a new era in the history of the Syrian Nizâri community. In 1850, the Ottomans granted a further favour to the Nizâris of Salamiyya by exempting them from military service. Meanwhile, the Syrian Muḥammad-Shâhis had lost contact with their fortieth imâm, Amir Muḥammad al-Bâqir. Since 1210/1796, as noted, they had not heard from this imâm, who, like his predecessors, had been living in India. In 1304/1887, the Syrian Muḥammad-Shâhi Nizâris sent a delegation to India to locate the descendants of Amir Muḥammad al-Bâqir, who was thought to have gone into concealment. The delegation failed in its search, and soon afterwards the majority of the Syrian Muḥammad-Shâhî Nizâris transferred their allegiance to the Qâsim-Shâhî line, then represented by Āğâ Khân III who had shortly earlier assumed the imâmate in Bombay. A minority remained loyal to the Muḥammad-Shâhî (Mu'mini) line of imâms, even though that line had apparently become discontinued.

The Syrian Muḥammad-Shâhis, who like the bulk of that country’s Qâsim-Shâhis are mainly engaged in agriculture, have not prospered in their difficult mountainous terrain west of Ḥamât. Lacking proper leadership and organization, they also suffered from further clashes with the Nuṣayris. The last Nuṣayrî attacks on the Syrian Muḥammad-Shâhis occurred during 1919-1920, when Qadmûs was taken and much damage
was caused to the sectarian houses, possessions and manuscripts. At present some 15,000 Muhammad-Shahis, locally known as the Ja’fariyya, live in Maşyaf, Qadmûs and a few surrounding villages. They are evidently the sole surviving members of the Muhammad-Shahi Nizari sub-sect. By contrast to the Muhammad-Shahis, the Syrian Qasim-Shahis have enjoyed a rising standard of living. Their agricultural activities have yielded better results in the plains around Salamiyya; they have also benefited from better leadership and greater access to educational services. Agha Khân III built several schools in Salamiyya and elsewhere, including an agricultural institution, for his Syrian followers, whom he visited in 1951. He also despatched religious instructors there from Africa. The Syrian Qasim-Shahi Nizâris were in the past particularly attached to Agha Khân III’s son Aly Khan, then the heir apparent to the imâmate, who visited the Syrian community several times. Today, the Nizâri adherents of the Agha Khânî line in Syria, numbering to around 40,000, live in Salamiyya and its surrounding villages. Most are the descendants of those Nizâris who restored the town in the middle of the last century. They carry family names, such as ‘Akkari and Jandali, indicative of the districts from which their ancestors moved to Salamiyya. Until recently, the leadership of the Qasim-Shahi community in Syria had remained hereditary in the family of Amîr Ismâ’il; a recent leader, Amîr Sulaymân, was Ismâ’il’s grandson and an uncle of the late Syrian Isma‘ili scholar Muṣṭafâ Ghâlib. These hereditary amîrs loyally represented the last two Agha Khânîs in the Syrian community. In the administration of the communal affairs, the amîrs were assisted by a number of functionaries, including mukhis (mukîs) and kamadias (kâmariyâs); designations originally adopted by the Nizâri Khojas and later used also by the non-Khoja Nizâri communities outside of India, Pakistan and East Africa. As noted, the Syrian Nizâris following the Agha Khân now have their own council system of administration under the terms of the 1986 Constitution of the Nizâri Isma‘ilis.

When Agha Khân I left Persia permanently in 1257/1841, the Persian Nizâris were left without effective leadership, as the bulk of the senior leaders of the community had also migrated with their imâm. More significantly, the Persian Nizâris were now deprived, for the first time in almost seven centuries, of direct access to the imâm and the headquarters of the da’wa. Under these circumstances, the different Nizâri communities of Khurâsân, Kîrmân and elsewhere in the country, separated from one another by relatively long distances, became highly disorganized, each
community developing autonomously on the basis of its own resources and local initiative. Deprived of the guidance and protection of the Nizārī Imām, who had clashed with the Qājār regime prior to establishing his permanent seat in Bombay, the scattered Nizārī communities of Persia were now also subjected to periodical persecutions at the hands of their hostile neighbours, who were often manipulated by the local officials and the powerful Twelver 'ulama'. It was only during the first quarter of the present century that the Nizārīs of Persia began to experience stability and improvements in their overall situation.195

According to the oral traditions of the Persian Nizārīs, Āghā Khān I made certain provisional arrangements for the administration of the affairs of his Persian followers a few years after his migration to India. A certain Mīrzā Ḥasan, whose family had served the imāms, was apparently made responsible for collecting the religious dues and managing the community in Persia for a period of forty years. The seat of Mīrzā Ḥasan's family was in Sidih, a village located between Qā'īn and Bīrjand in southern Khurāsān, the region formerly known as Qūhistān. Mīrzā Ḥasan's father, Mīrzā Ḥusayn b. Ya'qūb Shāh Qā'īnī, who is named in the sectarian traditions as the dā'i of Qūhistān, composed numerous religious poems.196 Mīrzā Ḥasan died around 1305/1887–1888, and his privileged position in the community was inherited by his son Mūrād Mīrzā, who had his own rebellious ideas regarding the affairs of the Persian Nizārīs.

From early on, Mūrād Mīrzā seems to have aimed at completely severing the ties between the Persian Nizārīs and their new imām, Āghā Khān III. He was particularly encouraged in his designs by the fact that the bulk of the Nizārīs of Persia had lost direct contact with their imām, whose place of residence was then unknown to most of them. Mūrād Mīrzā soon began to lead the community, especially in Khurāsān where the majority of the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārīs were concentrated, in an autonomous fashion, also refusing to remit the tithes to the imām in Bombay. He evidently claimed the rank of hujja for himself, and accorded a greater significance to this position than had been expressed on the subject by Khayrkhwāh. Mūrād Mīrzā asserted that now only the hujja was capable of having access to the imām, and that it was beyond the station of the ordinary Nizārīs to know the imām or even his place of residence. The hujja was, therefore, to be obeyed, without hesitation, by the ordinary members of the sect. Mūrād Mīrzā, who prevented the Nizārīs of Khurāsān from visiting the imām in India, became duly informed of the conflicts within Āghā Khān III's family; conflicts that led to the Hajji Bibi Case brought before the
Bombay High Court in 1908. Murād Mīrzā sided with Ḥājjī Bībī, Āghā Khān III's cousin. Soon, he went further and claimed that the rightful imām of the time was Ḥājjī Bībī's son Ṣamad Shāh, whose father Mūchūl Shāh (d. 1321/1903) was a grandson of Āghā Khān I. A faction of the Persian Nizārī community, especially in southern Khurāsān, accepted Murād Mīrzā's claims and acknowledged Ṣamad Shāh as their imām. They split off from the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizāris and later became generally known as Murād Mīrzā'īs. Ṣamad Shāh spent twenty years in the armed forces of British India, also serving with the British army in ‘Irāq during World War I. It was around that time that he visited the Murād Mīrzā'īs of Sidih, and on leaving Persia he promised to return. Murād Mīrzā died after 1925, and his descendants have continued to lead the surviving Murād Mīrzā'īs of Sidih and a few other villages in southern Khurāsān. It is not clear whether Ṣamad Shāh himself ever claimed the imāmate. At any rate, he seems to have eventually reconciled his differences with Āghā Khān III, as the latter sent Ṣamad Shāh on at least one mission to Hunza in the 1930s. When Ṣamad Shāh died without a son around World War II, most of the Murād Mīrzā'īs embraced Twelver Shi'ism, while a small number around Sidih refused to accept his death and began to await his reappearance.

In the meantime, Āghā Khān III had endeavoured to establish direct contacts with his followers in Persia to undermine the rebellious activities of Murād Mīrzā. He eventually succeeded in asserting his authority over the Persian Nizārī community through the efforts of Muhammad b. Zayn al-‘Abidin b. Karbalā‘ī Dā‘ūd Khurāsānī, better known as Fidā‘ī Khurāsānī, who was the most learned Persian Nizārī of the time. Born around 1266/1850 in the Ismā‘īlī village of Dīzbād, between Mashhad and Nīshāpūr, Fidā‘ī, a descendant of Khāhī Khurāsānī, studied the religious sciences at the Bāqirīyya Madrasa in Mashhad.197 Fidā‘ī set off on his first journey to India for the didār of the imām in 1313/1896. Accompanied by two other Nizāris from Dīzbād, he stayed in Bombay for two years before returning to Persia. In 1317/1900, Fidā‘ī paid his second visit to Bombay, where he remained a few years to see the imām who was then in Europe. Whilst waiting to see the imām, Fidā‘ī found access to the Āghā Khān's library and read many Ismā‘īlī books. He finally saw the imām, who, in 1321/1903, gave Fidā‘ī a firman, appointing him as the mu'allim in charge of the religious affairs of the Persian Nizārī community. At the same time, Āghā Khān III made a certain Muḥammad Ḥusayn Maḥmūdī responsible for the community's dealings with the Persian government, and instructed his Persian followers to stop paying their tithes to Murād Mīrzā. These
measures posed a direct challenge to Murād Mīrzā, who was now officially deprived of any authority. On returning to Persia, Fidāʾi passed through Arabia and made the *hajj* pilgrimage, which later won him the popular designation of Ḥājjī Ākhūnd in Khurāsān. Henceforth, Fidāʾi frequently visited the various Nizārī communities in Persia, guiding them in religious matters and winning their renewed allegiance to Āghā Khān III. It was also at the Āghā Khān’s suggestion that Fidāʾi composed his history of Ismāʿīlism, the *Hidāyat al-muʿminīn* (*Guiding the Faithful*). In 1324/1906, Fidāʾi, accompanied by twelve Nizāris from Dizbād, paid his third and last visit to Bombay, where he found the occasion to testify in favour of Āghā Khān III during the hearings of the Hajji Bibi Case. On returning to Khurāsān in 1326/1908, Fidāʾi continued to campaign on behalf of Āghā Khān III, whose authority was being increasingly extended throughout the Persian community. For instance, the Persian Nizāris of different *jamaʿats*, who hitherto possessed hereditary local leaders, were now instructed by the imām to choose their *mukhis* from amongst the trusted elders of their communities for terms of tenure not exceeding five years. The new local leaders were to make special efforts to collect the tithes and remit them regularly to the imām in Bombay.

Around 1910, in line with the directives issued to the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizāris of other countries, Āghā Khān III began to introduce certain changes in the religious practices and rituals of his Persian followers. In particular, he changed or simplified some of those religious rituals that the Persian Shiʿīs, like other Muslims, had categorized as the *furūʿ-i din*, comprising the positive rules of the Islamic law, such as the rituals of praying, ablution, fasting, the *hajj* pilgrimage, and so forth. The Persian Nizāris had hitherto observed these rituals mainly in the fashion of the Twelver Shiʿīs, perhaps for the sake of *taqiyya*. But now they were required to set themselves drastically apart from the Twelvers, asserting their own identity as a religious community. For instance, they now recited the entire list of the Nizāri Imams recognized by the Qāsim-Shāhīs at the end of their daily prayers. They were also discouraged from joining the Twelvers at their mosques on special occasions, and from participating in the Shiʿī mourning rituals of Muharram, because the Nizāris had a living and present (*mawjūd wa ḥādir*) imām and did not need to commemorate any of their dead imāms. Indeed, they were now required to observe only those religious prescriptions that were directly endorsed or issued by their living imām. The Āghā Khān, however, asked his followers to be aware of the true, *bāṭini* significance of the rituals, also emphasizing that all Muslims
essentially shared the same basic pillars of Islam irrespective of their sectarian persuasions. In the meantime, Murâd Mirzâ had not remained idle. Taking advantage of the breakdown of the Persian government's central authority during the years of the Constitutional Revolution, lasting throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, and capitalizing on the enmity of the Twelver 'ulama' towards the Ismâ'îlis, Murâd Mirzâ incessantly intrigued against the followers of the Āghâ Khân. Fida'i's house in Dizbâd was pillaged when he was on missionary work in Qâ'in and elsewhere. Later, a Twelver 'ālim, Mullâ Muḥammad Bâqîr, collected a mob and attacked Dizbâd to capture the Khurâsânî Nizârî leaders who were supporting the Āghâ Khân. Fida'i himself was in southern Khurâsân at the time but his brother, Mullâ Ḥasan, and a few others were seized and taken to Darrûd, a village near Nishâpûr. Subsequently, the captured Nizâris, refusing to curse the Āghâ Khân publicly, were sentenced to death by a group of local Twelver mullâs. In 1327/11909, two of the Nizârî prisoners were actually executed in Darrûd. The Āghâ Khân prevented further persecution of his Khurâsânî followers through the intervention of the British Consul at Mashhad. Fida'i died in 1342/11923, and was succeeded as the mu'allim of the Nizâris by Sayyid Sulaymân Badakhshâni, another senior sectarian leader from Dizbâd. By that time, Āghâ Khân III had established his authority over the Persian Nizâris, who had clearly set themselves apart from the country's Twelver Shi'is as well as the Murâd Mirzâ'is, who observed all their religious rituals in the manner of the Ithnâ'asharîs. By the 1930s, Āghâ Khân III began to concern himself with the socio-economic conditions of his followers in Persia, especially with the Khurâsânî Nizâris, who comprised the bulk of the community and possessed adequate local initiative for implementing the imâm's modernization policies. As instructed by the Āghâ Khân, the sectarians launched a programme of building a school in every Ismâ'îli village in Khurâsân. The first school, constructed in 1932 in Dizbâd, was named after Nâṣir-i Khusraw, who is particularly revered by the Nizâris of Khurâsân. Later, Dizbâd became the first village in Khurâsân to have a secondary school. The schools were built with local funds under the supervision of the trusted members of each village. Āghâ Khân III had permitted the sectarians to set aside 80 per cent of their tithes for this purpose: only the remaining 20 per cent was to be sent to the imâm. The sectarians were also encouraged to form special groups for undertaking communal ventures, including agricultural extension projects. Soon, the
Ismāʿīlī villages of Khurāsān attained high rates of literacy, with a growing number of the province's Ismāʿīli students attending the institutions of higher learning in Mashhad and Tehran. Many educated Khurāsānī Nizāris gradually settled down in those cities mainly as teachers and civil servants, thus changing the traditionally rural structure of the Persian Nizāri community. Northern Khurāsān took the lead in supplying the bulk of the educated urban elite of the Persian Nizāri community.

Āghā Khān III was pleased by the progress made by his Persian followers when he visited them in 1951. He was particularly glad to see that the Ismāʿīli women had abandoned the chūdūr, the traditional Muslim veil worn in Persia. It was in 1372/1953 that the Āghā Khān chose a distant cousin, Amir Asʿad Shāh Khalili, to be his chief representative (wazīr) in Iran. Shāh Khalilī, who had replaced another relative, managed the affairs of the community in an obedient manner whilst Āghā Khān III was alive. But soon after the accession of Āghā Khān IV, he began to act rather autonomously, issuing religious orders that were contradictory to the firman of the Āghā Khāns. In particular, he instructed the community to revert back to the ritual practices of the Twelver Shiʿīs. During the 1960s, several clashes occurred between Āghā Khān IV and Shāh Khalili.

Āghā Khān IV finally decided to remove Shāh Khalili and to reorganize the local leadership of the Persian Nizāri community. He sent two trusted Khoja Nizāris to Persia with a firman dismissing Shāh Khalili and ordering his followers to stop paying their tithes until further notice. Later, Āghā Khān IV despatched another firman, entrusting the affairs of the Persian Nizāris to two committees to be located in Mashhad and Tehran. The committees were actually set up in 1973. The twelve members of each committee, designated as the Kumita-yi Ḥaḍrat-i Vālā Āqā Khān, were chosen by the imām himself from amongst the candidates proposed by the community. The control of the committees has remained chiefly in the hands of the educated members of the community, appointed periodically by the Āghā Khān, who supervises their operations. The Mashhad Committee, responsible for the country’s largest and best educated Nizāri community in Khurāsān, has been rather successful in implementing different socio-economic projects while continuing to emphasize the community’s educational progress. The Mashhad Committee, whose headquarters are located at the newly constructed jamaʿat-khāna in Mashhad, also supervises the operations of the Ikhwan al-Ṣafā’ Co-operative Society, founded in 1965 at Mashhad. This body extends loans, at low
17 Sultan Muhammad Shah, Agha Khan III
A document, dated 1313/1895, issued by Āghā Khān III, granting some ancestral properties in Mahallāt to his cousin Mirzā Ismā'īl Khān ‘I’tibār al-Saltāna, the author’s maternal great-grandfather.
19 His Highness Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, Āghā Khān IV
rates of interest, to the Nizārīs of Khurāsān. The Tehran Committee, responsible for the affairs of a number of scattered Nizārī groups in Tehran, Mahallāt and Kirmān, has been less successful in the discharge of its duties. The leaders of both committees have access to the Āghā Khān and periodically see him in Europe or Pakistan. Āghā Khān IV also guides his Persian followers directly through his firmans. The Nizārīs of Persia, as elsewhere, have been traditionally organized in terms of jamāʿats, often representing the Nizārī inhabitants of single villages. Each jamāʿat has its own mukhi, acting usually as the chief religious headman of the village, and kamadia, the treasurer responsible for keeping record of the tithes. These functionaries are normally elected by the members of the local jamāʿat, but the Āghā Khān’s endorsement is sometimes required.

There are no reliable figures on the size of the Nizārī population of Iran, with different available estimates ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 persons. At present, there are probably about 20,000–30,000 Nizārīs living in various towns and rural areas of Iran, with nearly half of the total concentrated in the province of Khurāsān. The Khurāsānī Nizārīs are located mainly in the southern part of the province, in the towns of Qā’in, Birjand and a few surrounding villages like Khushk, where the Mashhad Committee has established a branch, Muʿminībād, Naṣrābād and Mazdāb. In northern Khurāsān, aside from some 1,500 Nizārīs engaged in urban jobs in Mashhad, the sectarians are to be found in Nishāpūr, Turbat-i Ḥaydariya and a few smaller towns as well as in Dizbād (Dizbād), Qāsimābād, Shāh Taqi and other villages. Most of the Nizārīs of northern Khurāsān have maintained houses in Dizbād, their ancestral home, where the remainders of some old Ismāʿīlī fortresses are still preserved. The Khurāsānī Nizārīs, joined by their co-religionists from other parts of the country, participate in the pilgrimage ceremonies of Naw-ḵišār, held annually at the end of summer in Dizbād. In 1985, when the author visited Dizbād on the occasion of the Naw-ḵišār ceremonies, some 3,000 Nizārīs had gathered there. The ceremonies included Šūfī-like dhikrs or incantations, which are recited by the Persian Nizārīs on other occasions as well. After Khurāsān, the largest number of Persian Nizārīs are to be found in the country’s central province, especially in Tehran where a jamāʿat-khāna has been established, and in some nine villages around Mahallāt. Smaller numbers reside in the province of Kirmān, mainly in the towns of Kirmān, Sirjān and Shahr-i Bābak and their surrounding villages, as well as in Yazd. In the largest Ismāʿīlī villages of Iran, like Khushk and Dizbād, the
sectarians now have friendly relations with the numerically fewer Twelver Shi‘is who live amongst them and are often related to them.

Nizārī communities following the Āghā Khānī line have survived in Kābul and other parts of Afghanistan as well as in Badakhshān and the adjacent districts in the upper Oxus region, notably in the Shughnān and Rushān districts of western Pāmīr. Small Nizārī communities are also located in Yarkand and Kāshghar, a town in Chinese Turkistān. Most of these remote Nizārī communities have been led by their hereditary amirs and pirs. During the twentieth century, the Āghā Khāns have not had any contacts with their followers in Central Asia and Chinese Turkistān, following the establishment of Communist regimes in those regions.

On the other hand, the Nizārī communities in Chitral, Gilgit and Hunza, in northern Pakistan where the sectarians are known as Mawlā‘īs, have maintained close relations with the Āghā Khāns. They often send deputations to their imām. The Mawlā‘īs of Hunza have been ruled for several generations by an Ismā‘īlī dynasty of mīrs, centred at Bāltīt.

Sir Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, Āghā Khān III, died at his villa in Versoix, near Geneva, in Dhu‘l-Ḥijja 1376/July 1957. He had led the Nizārī Ismā‘īlī community for seventy-two years, perhaps longer than any of his predecessors. He was subsequently buried in a permanent mausoleum at Aswan, overlooking the Nile in Egypt, the seat of the Fāṭimid caliph-imāms. In accordance with Āghā Khān III’s last will and testament, made in 1955, his grandson Karīm succeeded to the imāmate as the forty-ninth Mawṭānā Hāzār Imām of the Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs. Āghā Khān III had explained in his last will that due to the changed conditions of the world, it would be in the best interest of the Nizārī community that their next imām be a young man brought up and educated during recent years. Consequently, he designated his grandson Karīm as his successor, in preference to both his own sons. It may be added that Aly Khan, the elder of Āghā Khān III’s two sons and Karīm’s father, who led a controversial private life (and who later represented Pakistan at the United Nations) had been expected by many to succeed to the imāmate. Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, Āghā Khān IV, generally designated in the western world as His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, was immediately acclaimed as the new imām in Switzerland in the presence of the representatives of the Nizāris of Asia and Africa. In due course, all the Nizārī communities offered their bay‘a to Āghā Khān IV. Aly Khan, who personally did not question his father’s designation, lost his life in a car accident in 1960; he was buried in a
permanent mausoleum at Salamiyya in 1972. Born in 1936 in Geneva, Āghā Khān IV had attended Le Rosey, the famous boarding school in Switzerland, for nine years before entering Harvard University. Upon his accession to the imāmāte at the age of twenty, Āghā Khān IV interrupted his undergraduate studies at Harvard for a one-year visit to the various Nizārī communities, during which time he was officially installed to the imāmāte in a number of enthronement (takht-nishīnī) ceremonies held in Dar-es-Salaam, Nairobi, Kampala, Karachi and Bombay. He completed his final year of studies at Harvard during 1958–1959, receiving a B.A. in Islamic history, and thereafter concerned himself with his duties as the imām of the Nizārīs of many lands.

Āghā Khān IV has continued and extended the modernization policies of his grandfather. He has closely supervised the religious and temporal affairs of his followers, especially in India, Pakistan and Africa, mainly through their council systems and by paying regular visits to them. Āghā Khān IV has shown a particular interest in improving the socio-economic and educational conditions of his followers. In the field of education, he has encouraged the Nizārīs to acquire specialized and technical skills, also providing numerous scholarships in Western institutions for eligible students. Āghā Khān IV currently supports a network of some 300 educational institutions and programmes in India, Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania and elsewhere, ranging from day-care centres and elementary schools to specialized projects such as the Aga Khan School of Commerce in Dar-es-Salaam. In 1983, the Aga Khan University, with a medical college and a nursing school, was founded in Pakistan. Similarly, the Aga Khan Health Services consist of an elaborate network of approximately 200 health programmes and institutions, including six general hospitals, in different Asian and African countries as well as in the West. The Āghā Khān’s health and education services are available to all people regardless of their race or religion. Many new projects in these fields were launched during 1982–1983, when the twenty-fifth anniversary of Āghā Khān IV’s imāmāte was celebrated. On the occasion of his silver jubilee, however, the present imām of the Nizārīs was not weighed against silver. Being keenly concerned with the administrative and economic efficiency of his programmes, the Āghā Khān promotes and finances many of his different projects in the areas of health, education, rural development and social welfare through the Aga Khan Foundation, established in 1967. With headquarters in Geneva and branches in several countries, the Aga Khan
20 A group of Persian Nizāri Ismā'īlis, with the author (bespectacled) standing in the middle, Dīzbād, Khurāsān
Foundation now collaborates with more than thirty national and international organizations for the implementation of numerous programmes in the Third World.

Āghā Khan IV has also formulated and implemented many economic projects and services for the benefit of his followers, who have been increasingly encouraged to participate in industrial ventures in addition to their traditional activities in commerce and agriculture. For the realization of his economic programmes, in 1963 the Āghā Khan set up the Industrial Promotion Services. This development corporation now operates in several Asian and African countries as well as in Canada. With the participation of various private and public organizations, this corporation has launched more than one hundred projects in areas ranging from textiles to modern enterprises in tourism, providing direct employment for some 10,000 persons. All of the Āghā Khan’s existing projects and institutions related to economic activities, including the Industrial Promotion Services, are now absorbed into the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development. The Fund, established in 1984, particularly seeks to promote economic projects in the Third World.

As a modern Muslim leader with an international outlook, Āghā Khan IV has shown a profound interest in promoting a better understanding of Islam and its cultural heritage. In pursuit of these aims, he has established a number of specific institutions and programmes. In 1977, the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, was founded to promote Islamic studies. There is also the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, based in Geneva, which encourages projects and scholarship for a better understanding of Islamic civilization. The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, established in 1976, seeks to encourage architectural excellence for the Islamic world. Furthermore, students from different Islamic countries continue to benefit from the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, established in 1979 at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Thus, Āghā Khan IV has been responsible not only for guiding a progressive community of Shi‘i Muslims scattered in more than twenty countries of Asia, Africa, Europe and America, but he has also managed a vast complex of administrative, social, economic and cultural enterprises while concerning himself with a better understanding of the Islamic culture in the world today. In 1976, he moved his headquarters, the Secrétariat de Son Altesse l’Aga Khan, from Switzerland to Aiglemont, Gouvieux, near Paris. In 1969, Āghā Khan IV married Lady James Crichton-Stuart, née Sarah
Crocker-Poole; they have two sons, Rahim and Husayn, and a daughter, Zahrā.

Since the 1970s, thousands of Nizāris have immigrated to the West. Many of these immigrants, belonging mainly to the Khoja families of East Africa, have been forced to leave their native countries due to the unfavourable policies of certain African governments towards the Asian minorities. The Nizāris who have established new homes in Europe and North America, especially in Britain, Canada and the United States, have been able to find employment in various professional occupations. The largest single community of such Nizāri expatriates, numbering to around 10,000 persons, has come to be concentrated in London, where the Āghā Khān recently built a religious and socio-cultural centre for them. Different Asian groups of Nizāri immigrants, too, have found employment in the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf region and in the Far East. At the same time, in every country of Asia and Africa where the Nizāris live as indigenous religious minorities and loyal citizens, the sectarians enjoy exemplary standards of living. These realities attest to the Nizāri successes achieved in modern times under the leadership of the last two Āghā Khāns. The Nizāris have successfully entered the modern world while cherishing their heritage and retaining their doctrines and identity as a religious sect.

Having withstood the Mongol massacres and many later persecutions, the Nizāris have, indeed, passed the test of time, and they have emerged in the twentieth century as a prosperous and progressive community. The experience of the modern Nizāri Ismāʿīlī community, which numbers several million, represents an exceptional record of achievement in the Muslim world, which is still deeply plagued by poverty, illiteracy and religious fanaticism.
GENEALOGICAL TABLES AND LISTS
The Hāshimids and the early Shīʿī imāms

[Diagram of the family tree of the Hāshimids and early Shīʿī imāms]
The early Ismāʿīlī imāms

Originally 'Alī was counted as the first imām. Later, 'Alī acquired the higher rank of asās and al-Ḥasan was counted as the first imām. Still later, the Nizāris omitted al-Ḥasan and started the list with 'Alī, counting al-Ḥusayn as their second imām.
The Fatimid Ismā'ili caliph-imāms

I–11. Abū Muḥammad 'Ubayd Allāh ('Abd Allāh) al-Mahdī bi'llah (d. 322/934)

II–12. Abūl-Qāsim Muḥammad al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh (d. 334/946)

III–13. Abū Ṭāhir Ismā'īl al-Mansūr bi'llah (d. 341/953)


V–15. Abū Mansūr Nizār al-'Azīz bi'llah (d. 386/996)


VIII–18. Abū Tamīm Mā'add al-Mustansir bi'llah (d. 487/1094)

IX–19. al-Musta'li bi'llah (d. 495/1101)

X–20. al-Āmir bi-Ahkām Allāh (d. 524/1130)

XI–21. 'Abd al-Majīd al-Hāfīz (d. 544/1149)

XII–22. al-Zaʿfar (d. 549/1154)

XIII–23. al-Fāʾiz (d. 555/1160)

XIV–24. al-'Ābid (d. 567/1171)

25. Dāʾūd (d. 604/1207–8)

Nizārī imāms

 Hidden Tayyibī imāms

 Roman numbers designate the succession order of the Fatimid caliphs. Arabic numbers designate the order of the Ismāʿīli imāms. After al-Mustansir, the Nizārīs and Mustaʿlians followed different lines of imāms. After al-Āmir, the Mustaʿlians themselves split into the Tayyibi and Hāfīzī factions, recognizing different imāms.
NIZARĪ IMĀMS
Qāsim-Shāhi Nizārī Imāms

19. Nizār b. al-Mustansir bi’llāh (d. 488/1095)
20. al-Hādi
21. al-Muhtadi
22. al-Qāhīr
23. Hasan II ʿalā dhikrihiʿl-salām (d. 561/1166)
24. Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad II (d. 607/1210)
25. Jalāl al-Dīn Hasan III (d. 618/1221)
26. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad III (d. 653/1255)
27. Ṭuḥr al-Dīn Khurshāh (d. 655/1257)
28. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. ca. 710/1310)
29. Qāsim Shāh
30. Islām Shāh
31. Muḥammad b. Islām Shāh
32. Mustansīr bi’llāh II (d. 885/1480)
33. ʿAbd al-Salām Shāh
34. Gharīb Mīrzā (Mustansīr bi’llāh III) (d. 904/1498)
35. Ābū Dharr ʿAlī (Nūr al-Dīn)
36. Murād Mīrzā (d. 981/1574)
37. Dhuʿl-Faqār ʿAlī (Khalīl Allāh I) (d. 1043/1634)
38. Nūr al-Dār (Nūr al-Dīn) ʿAlī (d. 1082/1671)
39. Khalīl Allāh II ʿAlī (d. 1090/1680)
40. Shāh Nizār II (d. 1134/1722)
41. Sayyid ʿAlī
42. Ḥasan ʿAlī
43. Qāsim ʿAlī (Sayyid Jaʿfar)
44. Abuʿl-Ḥasan ʿAlī (Bāqir Shāh) (d. 1206/1792)
45. Shāh Khalīl Allāh III (d. 1232/1817)
46. Ḥasan ʿAlī Shāh, Āghā Khān I (d. 1298/1881)
47. Āqā ʿAlī Shāh, Āghā Khān II (d. 1302/1885)
48. Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, Āghā Khān III (d. 1376/1957)
49. H.Ḥ. Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, Āghā Khān IV, the present ḥādir imām

Muḥammad-Shāhi (Muʿminī) Nizārī Imāms

19. Nizār b. al-Mustansīr bi’llāh (d. 488/1095)
20. Ḥasan b. Nizār (d. 534/1139)
21. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan (d. 590/1194)
22. Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Muḥammad (d. 618/1221)
23. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan (d. 653/1255)
24. Ṭuḥr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad (d. 655/1257)
*25. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad (d. ca. 710/1310)

* Some Muḥammad-Shāhi sources add the name of Aḥmad al-Qāʾīm between the 24th and the 25th imāms.
26. 'Alā' al-Dīn Mu‘min Shāh b. Muḥammad
27. Muḥammad Shāh b. Mu‘min Shāh
28. Raḍī al-Dīn b. Muḥammad Shāh
29. Ṭāhir b. Raḍī al-Dīn
30. Raḍī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir (d. 915/1509)
31. Shāh Ṭāhir b. Raḍī al-Dīn II al-Ḥusaynī al-Dakānī (d. ca. 956/1549)
32. Ḥaydar b. Shāh Ṭāhir (d. 994/1586)
33.Šadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar (d. 1032/1622)
34. Mu‘īn al-Dīn b. Šadr al-Dīn (d. 1054/1644)
35. 'Aṭiyyat Allāh b. Mu‘īn al-Dīn (Khudāybakhs) (d. 1074/1663)
36. 'Aziz Shāh b. 'Aṭiyyat Allāh (d. 1103/1691)
37. Mu‘īn al-Dīn II b. 'Azīz Shāh (d. 1127/1715)
38. Amīr Muḥammad b. Mu‘īn al-Dīn II al-Musharraf (d. 1178/1764)
39. Ḥaydar b. Muḥammad al-Muṭahhar (d. 1201/1786)
40. Amīr Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar al-Bāqir, the final imām of this line
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<th>Musta'li-Tayyibi Da'is</th>
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<td>In Yaman</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Al-Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādi'i (d. 546/1151)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ibrāhim b. al-Husayn al-Hāmīdī (d. 557/1162)</td>
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<td>3. Hātim b. Ibrāhim al-Hāmīdī (d. 596/1199)</td>
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<td>4. 'Ali b. Hātim al-Hāmīdī (d. 605/1209)</td>
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<td>5. 'Ali b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 612/1215)</td>
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<td>6. 'Ali b. Hanzala al-Wādi'i (d. 626/1229)</td>
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<td>7. Ahmad b. al-Mubārak b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 627/1230)</td>
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<td>11. Ibrāhim b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. al-Walīd (d. 728/1328)</td>
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<td>12. Muḥammad b. Hātim b. al-Husayn b. al-Walīd (d. 729/1329)</td>
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<td>13. 'Ali b. Ibrāhim b. al-Husayn b. al-Walīd (d. 746/1345)</td>
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<td>15. 'Abbas b. Muḥammad b. Hātim b. al-Walīd (d. 779/1378)</td>
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<td>16. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Ali b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd (d. 809/1407)</td>
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<td>17. Al-Hasan b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Ali b. al-Walīd (d. 821/1418)</td>
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<td>18. 'Ali b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Ali b. al-Walīd (d. 832/1428)</td>
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<td>19. Idrīs b. Al-Hasan b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Walīd (d. 872/1468)</td>
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<td>22. 'Ali b. Al-Husayn b. Idrīs b. al-Walīd (d. 933/1527)</td>
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<td>23. Muḥammad b. Al-Hasan (Al-Husayn) b. Idrīs b. al-Walīd (d. 946/1539)</td>
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<td>24. Yusuf b. Sulaymān (d. 974/1567)</td>
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<td>25. Jalāl b.  Kasım (d. 975/1567)</td>
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<td>26. Da'i'd b. 'Ajabshāh (d. 999/1591)</td>
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<td>27. Da'i'd Burhān al-Dīn b. Qutbshāh (d. 1021/1612)</td>
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<td>28. Shaykh Adam Şafi al-Dīn b. Tayyibshāh (d. 1030/1621)</td>
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<td>29. 'Abd al-Tayyib Zaki al-Dīn b. Da'i'd b. Qutbshāh (d. 1041/1631)</td>
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<td>30. 'Ali Shams al-Dīn b. al-Hasan b. Idrīs b. al-Walīd (d. 1042/1632)</td>
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**Sulaymānī Ịdīs**

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<td>27</td>
<td>Sulaymān b. Hasan</td>
<td>1005/1597</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Ja‘far b. Sulaymān</td>
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<td>‘Alī b. Sulaymān</td>
<td>1088/1677</td>
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<td>Ibrāhīm b. Mūḥammad b. al-Fahd al-Makārī</td>
<td>1094/1683</td>
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<td>Mūḥammad b. Ismā‘īl</td>
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<td>Hibat Allāh b. Ibrāhīm</td>
<td>1160/1747</td>
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<td>Ismā‘īl b. Hibat Allāh</td>
<td>1184/1770</td>
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<td>al-Ḥasan b. Hibat Allāh</td>
<td>1189/1775</td>
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<td>‘Abd al-‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan</td>
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<td>‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī</td>
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<td>Yūsuf b. ‘Alī</td>
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<td>al-Husayn b. al-Ḥasan</td>
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<td>Ismā‘īl b. Mūḥammad</td>
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<td>al-Ḥasan b. Ismā‘īl</td>
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<td>Aḥmād b. Ismā‘īl</td>
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<td>‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī</td>
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<td>‘Alī b. Hibat Allāh</td>
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<td>‘Alī b. Mūḥsin</td>
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46. Husām al-Dīn al-Ḥājj Ghulām Ḥusayn (d. 1357/1938)
47. Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Makramī (d. 1358/1939)
49. al-Sharatī al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan al-Makramī, the present dāʿī
Listings in the glossary are selected terms and names, chiefly of Arabic and Persian origins, frequently appearing in the text. The meanings given often refer to the technical and religious senses of the words, reflecting their main applications in the text, especially as adopted by the Ismāʿīlis. More detailed definitions and explanations of the Ismāʿīli terms and doctrines, which appear in different chapters, may be located by consulting the Index. In this glossary, pl. and lit. are the abbreviated forms for the words 'plural' and 'literally'; and q.v. (quod vide) is used for cross-reference in the glossary.

'Abbāsids: descendants of the Prophet's uncle al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib; also the name of the dynasty of caliphs from 132/749 to 656/1258.

adḥān: Muslim call to prayer. The adḥān of the Shiʿīs differs slightly from that of the Sunnis.

Ahl al-Bayt: lit., the people of the house; members of the household of the Prophet, including especially, besides Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, and their progeny. The Prophet's family is also designated as āl Muḥammad.

ʿAlids: descendants of ʿAlī b. Abī Tālib, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, and also the fourth caliph and the first Shiʿī Imām (q.v.). The Shiʿīs believed certain ʿAlids should be imāms, and they acknowledged ʿAlī as the first amongst their imāms. ʿAlī's first spouse was Fāṭima, the Prophet's daughter, and ʿAlī's descendants by Fāṭima (the only descendants of the Prophet) are in particular called Fāṭimids (q.v.). Descendants of ʿAlī and Fāṭima through their sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are also called Hasanids and Husaynids. Descendants of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are often also designated, respectively, as sharīfs and sayyids.

ʿālim (pl., ʿulamāʾ): a learned man; specifically a scholar in Islamic religious sciences.

amīr (pl., umarāʾ): military commander, prince; many independent rulers also held this title in the Islamic world.

amr: command; specifically the divine command or volition.

Anṣār: lit., helpers; name given collectively to those Medinese who supported the
Prophet after his emigration (hijra) from Mecca to Medina, in distinction from the Muhājurūn (q.v.).

'āql: intellect, intelligence.

asās: lit., foundation; successor to a speaking prophet, nātiq (q.v.).

atabeg (or atabak): lit., ‘father-lord’; a Turkish title given to tutors or guardians of Saljuq and other Turkish rulers. The atabegs became powerful officers of state and some of them founded independent dynasties in Islamic lands.

'awāmm (or 'āmnm): the common people, the masses, in distinction from the khawā̈s (q.v.).

bāb: lit., gate; the Iṣmā’īlī religious term for the administrative head of the da’wa (q.v.) under the Fāṭimids, sometimes also called bāb al-abwāb; the highest rank, after the imām, in the da’wa hierarchy of the Fāṭimid Iṣmā’īlis; the equivalent of the official term dā’ī al-du’āt (q.v.), mentioned especially in non-Iṣmā’īlī sources; also a chapter or short treatise.

bātin: the inward, hidden or esoteric meaning behind the literal wording of sacred texts and religious prescriptions, notably the Qur’ān and the Shari‘a (q.v.), in distinction from the zāhīr (q.v.); hence, Bātīnis, Bātinīyya, the groups associated with such ideas. Most of these groups were Shi‘is, particularly Iṣmā’īlis.

bay’a: recognition of authority, especially the act of swearing allegiance to a new sovereign or leader.

bayt al-māl: lit., the house of wealth; treasury of the Muslim state.

da’ī (pl., du’āt): lit., he who summons; a religious propagandist or missionary of various Muslim groups, especially amongst the Iṣmā’īlis and other Shi‘i groups; a high rank in the da’wa (q.v.) hierarchy of the Iṣmā’īlis. The term dā’ī came to be used generically from early on by the Iṣmā’īlis in reference to any authorized representative of their da’wa; a propagandist responsible for spreading the Iṣmā’īli religion and for winning suitable converts.

da’ī al-du’āt: chief dā’ī; a non-technical term used mainly in non-Iṣmā’īlī sources; see bāb.

da’ī mutlaq: a rank in the da’wa (q.v.) hierarchy of the Fāṭimid Iṣmā’īlis; it later became the highest rank in the Musta‘li-Ṭayyibī da’wa organization; the administrative head of the Ṭayyibī da’wa during its Yamāni phase, enjoying absolute authority in the community. It was also adopted by the administrative heads of the Dā’ūdī and Sulaymānī branches of the Ṭayyibī da’wa.

darwīsh (Anglicized dervish): a term meaning ‘poor’ applied to a practising Šūfī (q.v.), with special reference to his poor or wandering life.

dassondh: lit., tithe, a tenth; equivalent of the Arabic word ‘ushr; the religious tithe paid annually by the Nizārī Khojas to their imām. Amongst the Persian Nizārīs it is called dah-yik, sometimes more generally referred to as haqq-i imām.

da’wa: mission or propaganda; in the religio-political sense, da’wa is the invitation or call to adopt the cause of an individual or family claiming the right to the imāmate; it also refers to the entire hierarchy of ranks, sometimes called hudūd (q.v.), within the particular religious organization developed for this purpose,
especially amongst the Ismā’īlis. The Ismā’īlis often referred to their movement simply as al-da’wa, or more formally as al-da’wa al-hādiya, ‘the rightly-guiding mission’.

*daur* (pl., *adwār*): period, era, cycle of history; the Ismā’īlis held that the hierohistory of mankind consisted of seven adwār, each inaugurated by a speaking prophet or rādīq (q. v.) who brought a revealed message in the form of a religious law.

*diwān*: a public financial register; or a government department; also the collected works of a poet.

*faqīh* (pl., *fuqahā*): in its technical meaning it denotes an exponent of fiqh (q. v.); a specialist in Islamic jurisprudence; a Muslim jurist in general.

*farman*: royal decree; written edict; also called firman by the Nizāri Khojas. For the Nizāri Ismā’īlis, it refers to any pronouncement, order or ruling made by their imām.

**Fāṭimids**: descendants of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and Fāṭima, the Prophet's daughter, corresponding to Fāṭimid ’Alids (q. v.); also the name of the Ismā’īli dynasty of caliph-imāms, claiming Fāṭimid descent, from 297/909 to 567/1171.

*fidā’ī* (or *fidāwī*): one who offers his life for a cause; a term used for special devotees in several religio-political Muslim groups; particularly those Nizāri Ismā’īlis of Persia and Syria who, during the Alamūt period, risked their lives to assassinate the enemies of their sect.

*fiqh*: the technical term for Islamic jurisprudence; the science of law in Islam; the discipline of elucidating the Sharī‘a (q. v.).

*ghayba*: lit., absence; the word has been used in a technical sense for the condition of anyone who has been withdrawn by God from the eyes of men and whose life during that period of occultation (called his ghayba) may be miraculously prolonged. In this sense, a number of Shi‘ī groups have recognized the ghayba of one or another imām (q. v.), with the implication that no further imām was to succeed him and he was to return at a foreordained time before the Day of Resurrection, *qiyyāma* (q. v.), as Mahdī (q. v.).

**Ghulāt** (pl. of *ghālī*): exaggerator, extremist; a term of disapproval for individuals accused of exaggeration (*ghuluww*) in religion and in respect to the imāms (q. v.); it was particularly applied to those Shi‘ī personalities and groups whose doctrines were offensive to the Twelver Imāmī Shi‘īs.

*ginān* (gnān): derived from a Sanskrit word meaning meditative or contemplative knowledge; a general term used for the corpus of the poetical, religious compositions of the Nizāri Khojas and some related groups. The ginān literature exists in a number of Indian languages.

*hadīth*: a report, sometimes translated as tradition, relating an action or saying of the Prophet, or the corpus of such reports collectively, constituting one of the major sources of Islamic law. For the Shi‘īs, it generally also refers to the actions and sayings of their imāms (q. v.). The Shi‘īs accepted those hadīths related from the Prophet which had been handed down or sanctioned by their imāms in
conjunction with those hadiths related from the imāms recognized by them. The Shi‘is also use the terms riwāyāt and akhbār as synonyms of hadith.

*ḥaḥː* the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and some other sacred localities in the Hijāz in the month of Dhul‘-Hijja, the last month of the Muslim calendar; required of every Muslim at least once in his lifetime if possible. One who has performed the ḥaḥː is called ḤaJJ in Arabic and Ḥaji in Persian and Turkish.


*ḥaqā‘iq* (pl. of ḥaqiq): truths; as a technical term it denotes the gnostic system of the Ismā‘īlīs. In this sense, the ḥaqā‘iq are the unchangeable truths contained in the batin (q.v.); while the law changes with every law-announcing prophet or nātīq (q.v.), the ḥaqā‘iq remain eternal.

Ḥasanids: see ‘Alids.

Ḥāshimihs: descendants of Ḥāshim b. ‘Abd Manāf, the common ancestor of the Prophet, ‘Ali and al-‘Abbās. The chief Ḥāshimid branches were the ‘Alids (q.v.) and the ‘Abbāsids (q.v.). Ḥāshimid also refers to those Shi‘is who acknowledged the imāmate of Abū Ḥāshim, the son of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya, and other Ḥanafīs (q.v.).

*ḥudūd* (pl. of ḥadd): ranks; a technical term denoting the various ranks in the da‘wā (q.v.) hierarchy of the Ismā‘īlīs, also called ḥudūd al-ḍīn.

*ḥujja*: proof or the presentation of proof. Amongst the Shi‘is, the term has been used in different senses. Initially, it meant the proof of God’s presence or will and as such, it referred to that person who at any given time served as evidence among mankind of God’s will. In this sense, the application of the term was systematized by the Imāmī Shi‘is to designate the category of prophets and imāms (q.v.) and, after the Prophet Muḥammad, more particularly of the imāms. The original Shi‘i application of the term ḥujja was retained by the pre-Ḫāṭīmīd Ismā‘īlīs who also used ḥujja in reference to a dignitary in their religious hierarchy, notably one through whom the inaccessible Mahdi (q.v.) could become accessible to his adherents. The ḥujja was also a high rank in the da‘wā (q.v.) hierarchy of the Ḫāṭīmīd Ismā‘īlīs; there were twelve such ḥujjas, each one in charge of a separate da‘wā region called jazīra (q.v.). In Nizārī Ismā‘īlī da‘wā, the term generally denoted the chief representative of the imām, sometimes also called pir (q.v.).

*ḥulūl*: infusion or incarnation of the divine essence in the human body; amongst some Shi‘i groups, notably the Ghulāt (q.v.), it particularly referred to the incarnation of the divine essence in one or another imām (q.v.).

Ḥusaynids: see ‘Alids.

ilha: heresy in religion. The Ismā‘īlīs and related groups were often accused of ilha by the Twelver Shi‘is and other Muslim groups amongst their enemies. A person accused of ilha is called mulhid (pl., malāhid).

‘ilm: knowledge, more specifically religious knowledge. Amongst the Shi‘is, it was held that every imām (q.v.) possessed a special secret knowledge, ‘ilm, which was divinely inspired and transmitted through the nāṣṣ (q.v.) of the preceding imām.
**imām (pl., a'imma):** leader of a group of Muslims in prayer, ṣalāt; or the supreme leader of the Muslim community. The title was particularly used by the Shi'is in reference to the persons recognized by them as the heads of the Muslim community after the Prophet. The Shi'is regard 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib and certain of his descendants as such leaders, imāms, the legitimate successors to the Prophet. The imāms are held to be ma'sūm, fully immune from sin and error; they are generally held to be also divinely appointed, and divinely guided in the discharge of their special spiritual functions. Amongst the Sunnis, the term is used in reference to any great ʿālim (q.v.), especially the founder of a legal madhhab (q.v.). The office of imām is called imāmate (Arabic, imāna).

**iqtā':** an administrative grant of land or of its revenues by a Muslim ruler to an individual, usually in recompense for service.

**jama'a:** assembly, religious congregation; also pronounced jama'at and used by the Nīzārī Ismā'īlis of the post-Alamūt period in reference to their individual communities.

**jama'at-khāna:** assembly house; congregation place used by the Nīzārī Ismā'īlis for their religious and communal activities.

**jazīra (pl., jazīr):** lit., island; a term denoting a particular da'wa (q.v.) region. The Ismā'īlis, specifically the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlis, in theory divided the world into twelve regions, sometimes called jazīr al-ard, each jazīra representing a separate region for the penetration of their da'wa, and placed under the charge of a ḥūja (q.v.).

**kalima:** word; specifically the divine word, logos; a synonym of kalimat Allāh.

**kamadia:** see mukhi.

**kashf:** manifestation, unveiling; in Ismā'ili doctrine, it is used specifically in reference to a period, called dawral-kashf, when the imāms (q.v.) were manifest, or when the haqā'iq (q.v.) would be no longer concealed in the batin (q.v.), in distinction from satr (q.v.).

**khān:** Turkish title originally a contraction of khāqān, which as a title of sovereignty denoted supremacy over a group of tribes or territories. The title khān was used by Turkish Muslim rulers in Central Asia from the 4th/10th century onwards; in time it came to be applied to subordinate rulers and important local officials; also an honorific appellation.

**khwāṣ (or khāṣa):** the elite, the privileged people, in distinction from the 'awāmm (q.v.).

Khoja: see khwāja.

**khudāwand:** lord, master; it was used as a term in reference to the rulers of the Nīzārī state in Persia.

**khutba:** an address or sermon delivered (by a khāṭīb) at the Friday midday public prayers in the mosque; since it includes a prayer for the ruler, mention in the khutba is a mark of sovereignty in Islam.

**khwāja:** master; a title used in different senses in Islamic lands; it was frequently accorded to scholars, teachers, merchants, and wazīrs (q.v.); in India, it was transformed to Khoja (Khōja), denoting an Indian caste consisting mostly of
Nizārī Ismā'īlis. In a looser sense, Khoja is used in reference to an Indian Nizārī, or a Nizārī of Indian origins, in general.

laqab (pl., alqāb): nickname, sobriquet, honorific title.

madhhab (pl., madḫāḥib): a system or school of religious law in Islam; in particular it is applied to the four main systems of fiqh (q.v.) that arose among the Sunnī Muslims, namely, Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfī’ī and Ḥanbālī, named after the jurists who founded them. Different Shi‘ī sects have had their own madḫāḥib. In Persian, the word madhhab is also used to mean religion, a synonym of din.

ma’dhūn: lit., licentiate; a rank in the da’wa (q.v.) hierarchy of the Ismā’īlis following that of the da’ī. In post-Fāṭimid period in particular, ma’dhūn came to be used generically by the Ismā’īlis in reference to the assistant of the da’ī.

madrasa: a college or seminary of higher Muslim learning, frequently attached to a mosque.

Mahdi: the rightly guided one; a name applied to the restorer of religion and justice who, according to a widely held Muslim belief, will appear and rule before the end of the world. This name with its various messianic connotations has been applied to different individuals by Shi‘īs and Sunnīs in the course of the centuries. Belief in the coming of the Mahdī of the family of the Prophet, Aḥl al-Bayt (q.v.), became a central aspect of the faith in radical Shi‘īsm in contrast to Sunnism. Distinctively Shi‘ī was also the common belief in a temporary absence or occultation, ghayba (q.v.), of the Mahdī and his eventual return, raj‘a (q.v.), in glory. In Shi‘ī terminology, at least from the 2nd/8th century, the Mahdī was commonly given the epithet al-Qā‘im (q.v.), ‘riser’, also called Qā‘im al-Muḥammad, denoting a member of the Prophet’s family who would rise and restore justice on earth. Various early Shi‘ī groups expected the return of the last imām (q.v.) recognized by them in the role of the Qā‘im. In Imāmī and Ismā‘īli usage, the term Qā‘im widely replaced that of Mahdī.

malāḥida (pl. of mulḥīd): see ilhād.

mawlā (pl., mawālī): master, freed slave, or client of an Arab tribe; more specifically a non-Arab convert to Islam who acquired status by attachment to an Arab tribal group. In the early Islamic centuries, the term mawlā was applied generally to the non-Arab converts to Islam.

minbar: the pulpit in a mosque, from which the khutba (q.v.) is delivered.

mu’allim: teacher, specifically religious teacher; also a rank in the da’wa (q.v.) hierarchy of the post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismā’īlis.

Muhājirūn: lit., emigrants; name given collectively to those Meccan followers of the Prophet who accompanied him in his emigration (hijra) from Mecca to Medina, in distinction from the Anṣār (q.v.).

muḥtašim: a title used commonly in reference to the leader of the Nizārī Ismā’īlis of Quhistān in Persia during the Alamūt period.

mukhi: a name originally used by the Indian Nizārīs in reference to the head of a local Nizārī community, jamā‘a (q.v.), who acted as treasurer and also officiated on various occasions in the local jamā‘at-khāna (q.v.). The mukhi’s assistant was called kamadia (pronounced kāmariyyā). The terms mukhi and kamadia, with
various pronunciations, were in time adopted by the Nizārī Ismāʿīli communities outside of the Indian subcontinent.

mulḥīd: see ʿilḥād.

murīd: disciple; specifically, disciple of a Ṣūfī (q.v.) master; member of a Ṣūfī order in general; also frequently used in reference to an ordinary Nizārī Ismāʿīli in Persia and elsewhere during the post-Alamūt period.

murshīd: guide, Ṣūfī master; also used in reference to the imāms of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlis during the post-Alamūt period.

mustaʿjīb: lit., respondent; a term denoting an ordinary Ismāʿīli initiate or neophyte.

nabī (pl., anbiyāʾ): prophet. The office of nabī is called nubuwāt.

nafs: soul, often used as a synonym of rūḥ.

nasṣ: explicit designation of a successor by his predecessor, particularly relating to the Shiʿī view of succession to the imāmate, whereby each imām (q.v.), under divine guidance, designates his successor. The Mustaʿlī-Ṭayyibī dāʿīs are also designated by the rule of the nasṣ. One who has received the nasṣ is called mansūs.

nāṭīq (pl., nūṭāqaʾ): lit., speaker, one gifted with speech; in Ismāʿīli thought, a speaking or law-announcing prophet who brings a new religious law (shariʿa), abrogating the previous law and, hence, initiating a new dawr (q.v.) in the hierohistory of mankind. According to the early Ismāʿīlis, the hierohistory of mankind was comprised of seven eras of various durations, each one inaugurated by a speaker-prophet or enunciator, nāṭīq. The early Ismāʿīlis further maintained that each of the first six nāṭīqs was succeeded by a spiritual legatee or executor (waṣī), also called foundation (asās) or silent one (sāmīl), who interpreted the inner, esoteric, bāṭin (q.v.), meaning of the revealed message of that era to the elite. This cyclical prophetic view of religious history was essentially maintained, with various modifications, by the later Ismāʿīlis.

Nizārids: descendants of Nizār b. al-Mustaʿṣir, the nineteenth imām of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlis, to whom the subsequent Nizārī Imāms traced their descent. The followers of the daʾwa (q.v.) of the Nizārī Imāms were designated as Nizārīs (Nizāriyya), in distinction from Mustaʿlīs (Mustaʿlawiyya or Mustaʿliyya) who recognized Nizār’s younger brother al-Mustaʿlī and the latter’s descendants as their imāms. In 487/1094, the Fātimid Ismāʿīlis split into Nizārī and Mustaʿlī branches, following different lines of imāms.

pir: the Persian equivalent of the Arabic word shaykh in the sense of a spiritual guide, Ṣūfī (q.v.) master or murshīd (q.v.), qualified to lead disciples, murīds (q.v.), on the mystical path, ṭariqa (q.v.), to truth (ḥaqīqa); also used loosely in reference to the imām and the holders of the highest ranks in the daʾwa (q.v.) hierarchy of the post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismāʿīlis; also a chief Nizārī dāʾī in a certain territory, in this sense it was particularly used by the Indian Nizārīs in reference to the administrative heads of the daʾwa in India.

qāḍī (pl., qudāṭ): a religious judge administering the sacred law of Islam, the Sharīʿa (q.v.).
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qāḍī al-quḍāt: chief qāḍī; the highest judiciary officer of the Fātimid state.
Qā'īm: 'riser'; the eschatological Mahdi (q.v.). In pre-Fātimid Ismā'īlimism, the terms Mahdi and Qā'īm were both used, as in Imāmī Shi'īsm, for the expected messianic imām. After the rise of the Fātimids, the name al-Mahdi was reserved for the first Fātimid caliph-imām, while the eschatological imām and seventh nāṭiq (q.v.) still expected for the future was called the Qā'īm by the Ismā'īlis.
qasīda: a poetic genre of a certain length, normally concerned with the eulogy of a personality; in Persian, it is a lyric poem, most frequently panegyric.
qi'yāma: Resurrection and the Last Day, when mankind would be judged and committed forever to either Paradise or Hell; in Ismā'īlī doctrine, it also came to be used in reference to the end of any partial cycle in the history of mankind, with the implication that the entire hierohistory of mankind consisted of many such partial cycles and partial qi'yāmas, leading to the final qi'yāma, sometimes called qi'yāmat al-qiyāmat. The Nizāris of the Alamūt period interpreted the qi'yāma spiritually as the manifestation of the unveiled truth in the spiritual reality of the current imām (q.v.), who was also called the Qā'im al-qiyāma. Thus, the recognition of the true essence of the imām actualized Paradise for the faithful while the imām's opponents were condemned to the Hell of spiritual non-existence.
qub (pl., aqṭāb): lit., pole; in Islamic mysticism, it denotes the most perfect human being, or al-insān al-kāmil; also the head of a Shī'ī order, ṭarīqa (q.v.).
rafiq (pl., rafiqān): comrade, friend; the Nizārī Ismā'īlis of Persia commonly addressed one another by this term during the Alamūt period.
raj'a: lit., return; the word has been used in a technical sense to denote the return or reappearance of a messianic personality, specifically one considered as the Mahdi (q.v.). A number of early Shi'ī groups awaited the return of one or another imām as the Mahdi, often together with many of his supporters, from the dead or from occultation, ghayba (q.v.), before the Day of Resurrection, qi'yāma (q.v.).
risāla (pl., rasā'il): treatise, letter, epistle.
Şahāba: companions; as a technical term it denotes the Companions of the Prophet, including the Muhājirūn (q.v.) and the Anṣār (q.v.), amongst other categories.
sāmit: lit., silent one; successor to a speaking prophet, nāṭiq (q.v.).
satr: concealment, veiling; in Ismā'īlī doctrine, it is used specifically in reference to a period, called dawr al-satr, when the imāms (q.v.) were hidden from the eyes of their followers, or when the haqā'iq (q.v.) were concealed in the hātīn (q.v.), in distinction from kashf (q.v.).
sayyid (pl., sādāt): lord, master; an honorific appellation for men of authority; the term has been used extensively, but not exclusively, for the descendants of the Prophet, particularly in the Husaynid line; see 'Alids.
Shāh: an Iranian royal title denoting a king; it is often also added to the names of Şūfī (q.v.) saints and Nizārī Imāms of the post-Alamūt period.
Shari'a (or Shar'): the divinely revealed sacred law of Islām; the whole body of
rules guiding the life of a Muslim. The provisions of the Sharī‘a are worked out through the discipline of fiqh (q.v.).

sharīf (pl., ashrāf): noble; at first used generally of the leading Arab families, then more particularly of the descendants of the Prophet, particularly in the Hasanid line; see ‘Alids.

shaykh: old man, elder; the chief of a tribe, any religious dignitary; in particular, an independent Sūfī (q.v.) master or spiritual guide, qualified to lead aspirants on the Sūfī path, tariqa (q.v.); in this sense called pīr in Persian; shaykh (pl., mashāyikh) is also a high rank in the da‘wa organization of the Dā‘ūdī Ṭayyībīs. Sūfī: an exponent of Sufism (tasawwuf), the commonest term for that aspect of Islam which is based on the mystical life; hence, it denotes a Muslim mystic; more specifically, a member of an organized Sūfī order, tariqa (q.v.).

sultan (Anglicized, sultan): a Muslim term for sovereign; the supreme political and military authority in a Muslim state.

summa: custom, practice; particularly that associated with the exemplary life of the Prophet, comprising his deeds, utterances and his unspoken approval; it is embodied in hadith (q.v.).

tafsīr: lit., explanation, commentary; particularly the commentaries on the Qur‘ān; the external, philological exegesis of the Qur‘ān, in distinction from tafsīr (q.v.).

Ṭalibīds: descendants of Abū Ṭalib b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the father of ‘Alī and full-brother of the Prophet’s father ‘Abd Allāh; including particularly the ‘Alids (q.v.) and the descendants of ‘Alī’s brother Ja‘fār al-Ṭayyār.

ta‘lim: teaching, instruction; in Shi‘ism, authoritative teaching in religion which could be carried out only by an imām (q.v.) in every age after the Prophet.

tanāṣuḥ: metempsychosis, transmigration of souls; passing of the soul (nafs or rūḥ) from one body to another; reincarnation of the soul of an individual in a different human body or in a different creature.

taqiyya: precautionary dissimulation of one’s true religious beliefs, especially in time of danger; used especially by the Shi‘is.

tariqa: way, path; the mystical path followed by Sūfīs (q.v.); also any one of the organized Sūfī orders.

ta‘wil: the educing of the inner meaning from the literal wording or apparent meaning of a text or a ritual, religious prescription; as a technical term among the Shi‘is, particularly the Ismā‘īlīs, it denotes the method of educing the bātin (q.v.) from the zāhir (q.v.); as such it was extensively used by the Ismā‘īlīs for the allegorical, symbolic or esoteric interpretation of the Qur‘ān, the Sharī‘a, historical events and the world of nature. Translated also as spiritual or hermeneutic exegesis, ta‘wil may be distinguished from tafsīr (q.v.).

‘ulamā’: see ‘ālim.

umma: community, any people as followers of a particular religion or prophet; in particular, the Muslims as forming a religious community.

walī al-‘ahd: heir designate, designated successor to a sovereign.
wasi (pl., awṣiyā'): legatee, executor of a will; also the immediate successor to a prophet; in this sense, it was the function of awṣiyā' to interpret and explain the messages brought by prophets, anbiya'; see nātiq.

wazir (Anglicized vizier): a high officer of state, the equivalent of a chief minister. The power and status of the office of wazir, called wizāra (Anglicized vizierate), varied greatly.

zāhir: the outward, apparent, or literal meaning of sacred texts and religious prescriptions, notably the Qurʾān and the Shariʿa (q.v.), in distinction from the bāṭin (q.v.).
The following abbreviations are used in the notes and bibliography.

AIEO  
AI(U)ON  
BIFAO  
BSO(A)S  
EI  
EI2  
EI1  
EIR  
EJ  
ERE  
GJ  
IC  
IJMES  
JA  
JAOS  
JASB  
JBBRAS  
JESHO  
JRAS  
MW  
NS  
REI  
RHC  
RHCHO  
RSCO  
SEI  
SI  
ZDMG  

Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales
Annali dell' Istituto (Universitàrio) Orientale di Napoli
Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale
Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies
Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1st edition
Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition
Encyclopaedia of Iran and Islam
Encyclopaedia Iranica
Eranos Jahrbuch
Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
Geographical Journal
Islamic Culture
International Journal of Middle East Studies
Journal Asiatique
Journal of the American Oriental Society
Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland
Muslim World
New Series, Nuova Serie
Revue des Études Islamiques
Recueil des Historiens des Croisades
Recueil des Historiens des Croisades: Historiens Orientaux
Rivista degli Studi Orientali
Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam
Studia Islamica
Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
1. Introduction: Western progress in Isma'ili studies


3. Ibid., translation pp. 53–54.

4. The Latin text of this report is incorporated in Arnold of Lübeck's Chronica Slavorum, book 7, chap. 8, in Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores, ed. Georg H. Pertz et al. (Hanover, 1869), vol. 21, p. 240.


8. L'Estoire de Eracles, pp. 216 and 230–231; Chronique d'Ernoul, pp. 323–324; Marino Sanudo Torsello, Liber secretorum fidelium Crucis, in Gesta Dei per
Fratres, ed. J. Bongars (Hanover, 1611), vol. 2, p. 207; Sanudo completed and presented this work in 1321 to Pope John XXII; friar Pipino, who also wrote in the early decades of the fourteenth century, is the author of a lengthy *Chronica* down to 1314 in which (chaps. 38–41) he repeats what his predecessors had said about the Isma'īlīs. Extracts of this chronicle are to be found in *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*, ed. Ludovico A. Muratori (Milan, 1723–1751), vol. 9, where the leap story is mentioned on p. 705. The same story appears as an incident in the poetical French romance of Bauduin de Sebourc, a work ascribed to the early fourteenth century, namely *Li romans de Bauduin de Sebourc III*, *Roy de Jherusalem* (Valenciennes, 1841), vol. 1, p. 359, where the sectarians are called the *Hauts-Assis*, and also at the end of an Italian collection of old stories, *Cento novelle antiche* (Florence, 1572), p. 92, where the German emperor Frederick wrongly replaces Henry of Champagne as the dignitary who visited the Old Man (Veglio).


10. He insisted, however, that these sectarians, despite their Jewish descent, did not adhere to Jewish law; see *Magistri Thietmari Peregrinatio*, ed. J. C. M. Laurent (Hamburg, 1857), p. 52.

11. Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. Henry R. Luard, Rolls Series 57 (London, 1876), vol. 3, pp. 487–489; English translation, *Matthew Paris’s English History*, tr. John A. Giles (London, 1852), vol. 1, pp. 131–132; where it is also related that whilst the Isma’īlī envoy was presenting his case before the king of England, the bishop of Winchester who was at the audience interrupted the proceedings and remarked: 'Let us leave these dogs to devour one another, that they may all be consumed, and perish; and we, when we proceed against the enemies of Christ who remain, will slay them, and cleanse the face of the earth, so that all the world will be subject to the one Catholic Church.'


13. Falconet notes, however, that the word Bedouin, occurring in du Cange’s and in later editions, may only represent a scribal misreading since it does not occur in Joinville’s original manuscript, which had found its way to the Bibliothèque du Roi; see Falconet, ‘Dissertation’, p. 165. Du Cange himself seems to have been aware of the issue when he accused Joinville of confounding the Bedouins with the Assassins; see his note in Joinville, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, pp. 331–332.


15. William of Rubruck (Willem van Ruysbroeck), *The Journey of William of


18. See Yule's comments in his valuable introduction to the Book of Ser Marco Polo, vol. 1, p. 142, and Pelliot, Notes, vol. 1, pp. 52–55, where other forms of this name, appearing in different manuscript copies of Marco Polo, are cited.


21. See Book of Ser Marco Polo, vol. 1, p. 149, where this castle is alluded to.


23. In some versions of Marco Polo the term Assassin does not appear at all; see, for example, The Travels of Marco Polo, ed. Thomas Wright (London, 1854), pp. 73–77, which is a revised edition of William Marsden's well-known English edition published in 1818 and itself translated from the Italian version prepared by Giovanni B. Ramusio and published in Venice in 1559.


27. Lewis, Assassins, p. 8.
38. See *Voyage de Rabbi Benjamin*, tr. J. P. Baratier (Amsterdam, 1733), notes to chaps. 7 and 15.


47. Giovanni F. Mariti, Memorie istoriche del popolo degli Assassini e del Vecchio della Montagna, loro capo-signore (Leghorn, 1807). According to this Italian abbot’s work, which may have been a reprint of an earlier 1787 edition, the name Assassins derived from Arsâids; the latter being the designation for the inhabitants of the Kurdish town of Arsacia from where the first Ismā’īlīs had allegedly migrated to Syria.


50. De Sacy’s works on the Druzes include editions of a number of extracts with French translations from Druze manuscripts, published in his Chrestomathie Arabe (Paris, 1806), vol. 1, pp. 260–309, and vol. 2, pp. 334–403; ‘Mémoire sur l’origine du culte que les Druzes rendent à la figure d’un veau’, Mémoires de l’Institut Royal de France, 3 (1818), pp. 74–128, where the earlier European literature on the Druzes is also reviewed; and most importantly Exposé de la religion des Druzes (Paris, 1838), 2 vols., partial German translation, Die Drusen und ihre Vorläufer, tr. Philipp Wolff (Leipzig, 1845).


52. Lewis, Assassins, p. 11, and also his ‘Assassins of Syria’, pp. 573–574.

53. An elaborate version of this story on the use of hashish to stimulate ecstatic visions of paradise is contained in an Arabic novel about the Syrian Ismā’īlīs. This novel was discovered by von Hammer, who took it seriously and later cited it to reject de Sacy’s doubts regarding the existence of an actual Nizārī garden of paradise; see J. von Hammer-Purgstall, ‘Sur le paradis du Vieux de la Montagne’, Fundgruben des Orients, 3 (1813), pp. 201–206.


55. For the application of the term to the Syrian Nizārīs, see al-Bundārī, Zubdat al-nuṣra, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, in his Recueil de textes relatifs à l’histoire des
Seldjoucides II (Leiden, 1889), pp. 169 and 195; Ibn Muyassar, Akhvār Miṣr, ed. H. Massé (Cairo, 1919), p. 68; ed. A. Fu’ād Sayyid (Cairo, 1981), p. 102; M. T. Dānishpazhūh, ‘Dhayli bar ta’rikh-i Ismā’īliyya’, Revue de la Faculté des Lettres, Université de Tabriz, 17 (1344/1965), p. 312, and Rashid al-Din, Histoire des Mongols de la Perse, ed. and tr. É. Quatremère (Paris, 1836), notes on pp. 122–128. Professor Madelung has informed the author that the Persian Nizāris, too, are called hashishis in some Caspian Zaydi sources of the early seventh/thirteenth century; these sources include the letter of Yūsuf al-Jilānī to the Yamani Zaydi scholar ‘Imrān b. al-Hasan al-Hamdānī, and Ḥumayd al-Muḥalli’s Kitāb al-hadāʾiq al-wardiyya, which are now contained in W. Madelung, ed., Arabic Texts Concerning the History of the Zaydi Imāms of Tabaristan, Daylamān and Gīlān (Beirut, 1987), pp. 146 and 329. Thus, B. Lewis has not been accurate in arguing that the Muslims have used the term hashishiyya exclusively in reference to the Nizāris of Syria.


60. See Hodgson, Order of Assassins, pp. 22ff.


63. For example, von Hammer is cited as a main authority by Freya Stark, the noted traveller to the Alamūt valley, in her The Valleys of the Assassins (London, 1934), p. 228, and in Betty Bouthoul’s celebrated historical


65. Ibid., pp. 1–2.

66. Ibid., p. 218.

67. Ibid., pp. 216–217.


75. See the following works by Silvestre de Sacy: 'Notice des manuscrits des livres sacrés des Druzes, qui se trouvent dans diverses bibliothèques de l'Europe', *JA*, 1 série, 5 (1824), pp. 3–18, and *Exposé*, vol. 1, introduction pp. 454–465.

76. J. B. L. J. Rousseau, 'Mémoire sur l'Ismaélis et les Nosairis de Syrie, adressé à M. Silvestre de Sacy', *Annales des Voyages*, 14 (1811), pp. 271–303, which contains some explanatory notes by de Sacy himself. This memoir was later
incorporated into Rousseau's expanded work entitled Mémoire sur les trois plus fameuses sectes du Musulmanisme; les Wahabis, les Nosairis et les Ismaéli (Paris, 1818), pp. 51ff.

77. Rousseau, 'Mémoire', pp. 279–280. Rousseau had already communicated, in 1808, some of this information to de Sacy who added it to the end of his own 'Mémoire sur la dynastie des Assassins', p. 84, published after a delay of some ten years; the same details were subsequently cited repeatedly by von Hammer, Defrémery, Guyard and others.

78. J. B. Fraser, Narrative of a Journey into Khorasân, in the years 1821 and 1822 (London, 1825), pp. 376–377.

79. For a brief account of these events from the pen of an Englishman attached to the British legation in Tehran, see Robert G. Watson, A History of Persia (London, 1866), pp. 191–192 and 331–334.


84. A preliminary note on the contents of this manuscript had been published earlier by its original discoverer, J. Catafago, a dragoman at the Prussian consulate in Syria; see 'Lettre de M. Catafago à M. Mohl', JA, 4 série, 12 (1848), pp. 485–493.


89. Fr. Dieterici, Die Abhandlungen der Ichwân es-Safâ in Auswahl; zum ersten Mal aus Arabischen Handschriften (Leipzig, 1883–1886), 2 vols.; also published as


93. 'Judgment of the Honourable Sir Joseph Arnould in the Khodjah Case, otherwise known as the Aga Khan Case, heard in the High Court of Bombay, during April and June 1866; Judgment delivered 12th November, 1866' (Bombay, 1867); see also Bombay High Court Reports, 12 (1866), pp. 323–363. This case has been summarized in H. B. E. Frere, 'The Khodjas, the Disciples of the Old Man of the Mountain', Macmillan Magazine, 34 (1876), pp. 342ff.; and more fully in Abdus Salam Picklay, History of the Ismailis (Bombay, 1940), pp. 113–170, and also in Asaf A. A. Fyzee, Cases in the Muhammadan Law of India and Pakistan (Oxford, 1965), pp. 504–549.


95. A. A. Bobrinskoy, 'Sekta Ismailiya v Russkich i Bukharskikh predelakh Srednej Azii', Etnograficheskoye Obozrenie, 2 (1902), pp. 1–20, published also separately (Moscow, 1902), and his Gortsy verkhovjev Pyandzha (Moscow, 1908).


98. For descriptions of these two collections, see V. A. Ivanov, 'Ismailitskiya


103. A. Berthels and M. Baqoev, *Alphabetic Catalogue of Manuscripts found by

The first such account of Ismā'ili literature by an Ismā'ili, belonging to a distinguished Dā'ūdi Bohra family with an important collection of manuscripts preserved originally at Sūrat, Gujarāt, was provided by H. F. al-Hamdāni in his 'Some Unknown Ismā'ili Authors and Their Works', JRAS (1933), pp. 359–378. For a similar later instance, see Asaf A. A. Fyzee, 'The Study of the Literature of Fatimid Da'wa', in Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb, ed. G. Makdisi (Leiden, 1965), pp. 232–249.


W. Ivanow, Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey (Tehran, 1963), covering 929 titles.

W. Ivanow, A Guide to Ismaili Literature (London, 1933), covering 691 titles by some 150 authors and based partly on the Fahrasat al-kutub wa'l-rasā'il of Ismā'il b. 'Abd al-Rasūl al-Majdū, a learned Indian Dā'ūdi Ismā'ili who died in 1183 or 1184/1769–1770. The Arabic text of the latter work, commonly known as the Fiḥrist al-Majdū, has now been edited by 'Ali Naqi Munzāvī (Tehran, 1966). See also P. Kraus, 'La Bibliographie Ismaïlienne de W. Ivanow', REI, 6 (1932), pp. 483–490, which contains some useful additions and corrections in respect to Ivanow's Guide.

Ismail K. Poonawala, Biobibliography of Isma'ili Literature (Malibu, California, 1977). This excellent compendium provides detailed information on more than 200 authors and 1,300 titles; it also supplies all the particulars regarding the Ismā'ili texts edited and published until the 1970s, in addition to indicating the locations of a large number of Ismā'ili manuscripts and including, pp. 383–463, a select bibliography of published works on Ismā'ili subjects; hereafter cited as Bio.


W. Ivanow, 'Ismailitica', Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 8 (1922), pp. 1–76.


2. Origins and early development of Shi‘ism

6. Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Ṭābātābā‘ī was one of the most respected Twelver Shi‘i scholars of Persia and also the country’s foremost Islamic theosopher. In his Shi‘a dar Islām (Tehran, 1348/1969), he produced the first authoritative introduction to Shi‘ism written in modern times; now also available in English as Shi‘ite Islam, ed. and tr. S. H. Nasr (London, 1975). It may be noted that until the translation of Ṭābātābā‘ī’s work, Dwight M. Donaldson’s The Shi‘ite Religion (London, 1933), written by a Christian missionary in Persia, was considered as the standard work on the subject in the English language. See also M. Momen, An Introduction to Shi‘i Islam (New Haven, 1985), and Shi‘ism: Doctrines, Thought and Spirituality, ed. S. H. Nasr et al. (Albany, N.Y., 1988).
8. Henri Lammens (1862–1937), the Belgian Islamist and Jesuit missionary in Lebanon, in line with his generally unsympathetic attitude towards Shi‘ism and his high regard for the Umayyads, produced an unfavourable account of Fāṭima in his Fāṭima et les filles de Mahomet (Rome, 1912), especially pp. 109–140; and ‘Fāṭima’, El, vol. 2, pp. 85-88. An objective and thorough study is now to be found in L. Veccia Vaglieri, ‘Fāṭima’, El2, vol. 2, pp. 841–850. The particular importance and reverence accorded to Fāṭima in Shi‘i thought has been studied in a number of works by L. Massignon, especially in his ‘Der Gnostische Kult der Fatima im Schiitischen Islam’, Ej, 6 (1938), pp. 161–173, reprinted in his Opera Minora, ed. Y. Moubarac (Paris, 1969), vol. 1, pp. 514–522, which contains most of Massignon’s scattered writings on Shi‘ism. H. Corbin has also treated this subject in his Spiritual Body, pp. 51–73, and elsewhere.
10. See, for example, W. M. Watt, The Majesty that was Islam (London, 1974), pp. 65–66.


The classical treatment of the first civil war, and the events of the subsequent Umayyad period, is still to be found in J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, tr. M. G. Weir (Calcutta, 1927), pp. 75–112, originally published in German, *Das arabische Reich und sein Sturz* (Berlin, 1902). The ‘Ali-Muʿāwiya conflict has been studied more recently by Erling L. Petersen; see especially his *‘Ali and Mu‘āwiya in Early Arabic Tradition* (Copenhagen, 1964), where a full bibliography is given on pp. 188–192. The same events have been examined on the basis of some Khārjī sources discovered in the present century, by a number of Italian Islamists, notably L. Veccia Vaglieri, who is also the foremost Western authority on the Khārjaw; see her ‘Il conflitto ‘Ali-Mu‘āwiya e la secessione khārjīta riesaminati alla luce di fonti ibādite’, *AIUON*, NS, 4 (1952), pp. 1–95, and 5 (1953), pp. 1–98; ‘‘Ali b. Abī Ṭalīb’, *Elz*, vol. 1, pp. 381–386; G. Levi Della Vida ‘Khāridjītes’, *Elz*, vol. 4, pp. 1074–1077, and I. K. Poonawala and E. Kohlberg, ‘‘Ali b. Abī Ṭalīb’, *EIR*, vol. 1, pp. 838–848.


12. See L. Veccia Vaglieri, ‘Ghadir Khumm’, *Elz*, vol. 2, pp. 993–994, where additional references are given.


17. The classical treatment of the first civil war, and the events of the subsequent Umayyad period, is still to be found in J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, tr. M. G. Weir (Calcutta, 1927), pp. 75–112, originally published in German, *Das arabische Reich und sein Sturz* (Berlin, 1902). The ‘Ali-Muʿāwiya conflict has been studied more recently by Erling L. Petersen; see especially his *‘Ali and Mu‘āwiya in Early Arabic Tradition* (Copenhagen, 1964), where a full bibliography is given on pp. 188–192. The same events have been examined on the basis of some Khārjī sources discovered in the present century, by a number of Italian Islamists, notably L. Veccia Vaglieri, who is also the foremost Western authority on the Khārjaw; see her ‘Il conflitto ‘Ali-Mu‘āwiya e la secessione khārjīta riesaminati alla luce di fonti ibādite’, *AIUON*, NS, 4 (1952), pp. 1–95, and 5 (1953), pp. 1–98; ‘‘Ali b. Abī Ṭalīb’, *Elz*, vol. 1, pp. 381–386; G. Levi Della Vida ‘Khāridjītes’, *Elz*, vol. 4, pp. 1074–1077, and I. K. Poonawala and E. Kohlberg, ‘‘Ali b. Abī Ṭalīb’, *EIR*, vol. 1, pp. 838–848.

18. See M. Guidi, ‘Sui Ḥarigiti’, *RSO*, 21 (1944), pp. 1–14; L. Veccia Vaglieri,
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20. W. M. Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology (Edinburgh, 1962), pp. 2-9, which reflects the author's emphasis on social factors in the genesis of Shi‘ism. For Watt's different hypothesis contending how for the Khawārij, the community rather than any individual came to acquire the charisma of leadership, see his 'The Conception of the Charismatic Community', Numen, 7 (1960), pp. 77-90; arguments relevant to both types of charismata are to be found also in his Formative Period, pp. 36-37 and 42-44; ‘Shi‘ism under the Umayyads’, JRAS (1960), pp. 158-172, and his Islam and the Integration of Society (Evanston, 1961), pp. 103-106 and 110-114.


23. J. Wellhausen, The Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam, tr. R. C. Ostle and S. M. Walzer (Amsterdam, 1975), pp. 96-101; this is a long overdue translation of Die religiöse-politischen Oppositionspartheiten im alten Islam (Berlin, 1901), an important study of the major events in the early history of the Khārijī and Shi‘ī movements.

24. Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774) is the earliest Muslim historian who recorded the Shi‘ī risings of the Umayyad period. But his detailed narratives have been preserved mainly in the famous chronicles of the Sunnī authors al-Balādhuri (d. 279/892) and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923). These historians have provided the chief sources for the thorough accounts of al-Ḥusayn’s martyrdom given in Wellhausen, Religio-Political Factions, pp. 105-120; Jafri, Origins, pp. 174-221, and L. Veccia Vaglieri, 'al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib', EI2, vol. 3, pp. 607-615. See also the accounts of Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 345/956), another noteworthy early Muslim historian, in his Murūj al-dhahab (Les Prairies d’or), ed. and tr. C. Barbier de Meynard and A. Pavet de Courteille (Paris, 1861-1876), vol. 5, pp. 127-147; Abū'l-Faraj 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn al-İsfahānī, Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyīn, ed. A. Ṣaqr (Cairo, 1368/1949), pp. 78-122, which is an important work containing the biographies of many Ṣāhibid martyrs, written by a Shi‘ī author who died in 356/967, and al-Mufīd, al-İrshād, pp. 299-374.

25. See, however, Jafri, Origins, pp. 229-230 and 244-245, where it is argued that the Ṣāhibābūn did probably consider al-Ḥusayn’s son Zayn al-‘Abīdīn as their imām; but, as he refused to make any public claims, or to allow any
claims to be made on his behalf, they were obliged to refrain from mention-
ing his name.


29. Most contemporary Western Islamists, such as B. Lewis, ‘Some Observations on the Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam’, SI, 1 (1953), pp. 44ff., by drawing on the findings of modern scholarship, have argued that although racial elements did play a part in the development of the Shi‘ī movement, Shi‘ism was nevertheless of Arab origin and it was in fact introduced into Persia (e.g., to the garrison town of Qumm) by the Arabs. As a corollary, they have concluded that Shi‘ism should not be regarded as having been the expression of Persian national aspirations. The latter view was held by a number of the nineteenth-century orientalists who were
influenced by the then current racial theories of Joseph A. Gobineau (1816–1882) and others; see, for instance, Dozy, *Essai sur l’histoire de l’Islamisme*, pp. 189–221.


33. See especially Claude Cahen, ‘‘Points de vue sur la ‘‘Révolution ‘‘Abbâside’’’’, in his *Les peuples Musulmans dans l’histoire médiévale* (Damascus, 1977), pp. 120 and 128; an important study on early Shi’ism originally published in *Revue Historique*, 230 (1960), pp. 295–338, hereafter references are to the paginations of the reprinted text. In line with the opinion of many Western Islamists, Cahen has further argued that during the Umayyad period ‘‘Alid claims to the imâmâte were based on descent from ‘‘Ali, rather than from Fāṭima and ‘‘Ali; since direct descent from the Prophet in the female (Fāţimid) line had still not acquired its later Shi‘i significance. See also W. Madelung, ‘‘‘‘Ali b. al-Hosayn’’, *IER*, vol. 1, pp. 849–850.


35. See al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq*, pp. 20–21; al-Qummi, *al-Maqālāt*, pp. 21–22; I. Friedlaender, ‘‘The Heterodoxies of the Shiites in the Presentation of Ibn Hazm: Commentary’’, *JAOS*, 29 (1908), pp. 33–34 and 93–95; H. Halm, *Die islamische Gnosis* (Zürich, 1982), pp. 43ff., and A. A. Dixon, ‘‘Kaysân’’, *EIz*, vol. 4, p. 836. The Kaysâniyya were sometimes also called the Khashabiyya, originally an abusive name for al-Mukhtar’s mawâli followers who were mainly armed with wooden clubs (singular, khashaba); see C. van Arendonk, ‘‘Khashabiyya’’, *EIz*, vol. 4, p. 1086.


43. Al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq*, p. 28, where they are also referred to as al-Mukhtâriyya. See also al-Qâdi, *al-Kaysânîyya*, pp. 212–237.


45. The relevant issues and sources have been particularly investigated by Sabatino Moscati in his ‘Il testamento di Abû Hâshim’, *RSO*, 27 (1952), pp. 28–46, and ‘Per una storia dell’ antica Šî’a’, *RSO*, 30 (1955), pp. 258ff.


50. Al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq*, pp. 32 and 41ff.; al-Qummi, *al-Maqa lät*, p. 44; al-


55. For an excellent survey of the changing criteria of *ghuluww* during the first three Islamic centuries, see W. al-Qādī, ‘‘The Development of the Term Ghulāt in Muslim Literature with Special Reference to the Kaysānīyya’’, in *Akten des VII. Kongresses für Arabistik und Islamwissenschaft*, ed. A. Dietrich (Göttingen, 1976), pp. 295–319; also his al-Kaysānīyya, pp. 238–267.


Ahmad b. ‘Alī al-Najāshī, *Kitāb al-rījāl* (Bombay, 1317/1899); the Shaykh al-Tā‘ifā Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. al-Hasan al-Ṭūsī, *Fihris kutub al-Shī‘a*, ed. A. Sprenger et al. (Calcutta, 1853–1855); also his Rījāl al-Ṭūsī, ed. M. S. Al Bahr al-Ulīm (Najaf, 1381/1961), and Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Shahraḥūb, *Ma‘ālim al-ulamā‘*, ed. ‘A. Iqābāl (Tehran, 1353/1934); more recently some of these works have been reprinted in Najaf, Qumm, Mashhad and Tehran.


Corbin, *Histoire*, p. 112.

The Mandaean, who appear in Arabic literature as the Šabī‘a, were numerous in southern Ḫūrāq in al-Muḥīra’s time; and their few survivors are still to be found there as well as in southwestern Persia. For more details on this peculiar gnostic sect, also identified with the Sabaeans, and their obscure Iranian and Judaeo-Christian religious origins, see W. Brandt, *Die mandäische


70. On the Shi'i Jafr or the mystical science of letters, see Corbin, Histoire, pp. 187 and 204-207, and T. Fahd, 'Djafr', Elz, vol. 2, pp. 375-377. See also L. Massignon, 'La Philosophie orientale d'Ibn Sina et son alphabet philosophique', in his Opera Minora, vol. 2, pp. 591, 594 and 603-604, where it is argued, after the earlier ideas of Paul Kraus, that it is in the Greek Gnosis of Asia (reflecting Aramaean influence) that we see the first systematic efforts to investigate the symbolic meaning of the letters of the alphabet. This is contrary to the commonly accepted view that ascribes the origins of such efforts to the Jewish cabala.


74. It is interesting to note that whereas in al-Mughirah's cosmogony, Muḥammad and 'Alī were the first persons created by God, Jesus and 'Alī were the primordial men for Abū Maṣūr, reflecting Christian influences; see Friedlaender, 'Heterodoxies: Commentary', pp. 89-92.

75. This is the most frequently cited year; for other dates and their sources, see Jafri, Origins, pp. 255 and 258, and W. Madelung, 'al-Bāqer. Abū Ja'far Moḥammad', Elz, vol. 3, pp. 725-726.


77. Al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh, II, p. 1700. For the meaning and different applications of this term, see Friedlaender, 'Heterodoxies: Commentary', pp. 137-159; J. H. Kramers, 'Rāṣidītes', SEI, p. 466; W. M. Watt, 'The Rāṣidītes: A Preliminary Study', Oriens, 16 (1963), pp. 110-121; and also his Formative Period, pp. 157ff.


79. For a brief survey of these risings, see Ivanov, 'Early Shi'ite Movements', pp. 3ff., and H. Laoust, Les Schismes dans l'Islam (Paris, 1965), pp. 33ff.

80. On Zayd's revolt, see al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh, II, pp. 1667-1688 and 1698-1716;


For a somewhat different view on the origins of the 'Abbasid movement, challenging the traditional account, see T. Nagel, *Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des abbasidischen Kalifates* (Bonn, 1972), and M. Sharon, *Black Banners from the East: The Establishment of the 'Abbasid State - Incubation of a Revolt* (Jerusalem-Leiden, 1983).


99. These hadiths are to be found in the *Kitâb al-hujja*, the opening book in al-Kulaynî's *al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfî*, vol. 1, pp. 168-548, of which a list of contents in English is given in Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism*, pp. 184-193.

100. See, for example, Abû Ḥanîfa al-Nuʾmân b. Muhammad, *Daʾīʾim al-Islām*, ed. Asaf A. A. Fyzee (Cairo, 1951-1961), vol. 1, pp. 1-98; this is the important opening chapter, the *Kitâb al-walāya*, based mainly on hadiths reported from the Imām al-Šādiq, now available separately also in English translation under the title of *The Book of Faith*, tr. Asaf A. A. Fyzee (Bombay, 1974). The *Daʾīʾim* is one of the principal works of al-Qâdî al-Nuʾmân (d. 363/974), the foremost Ismâʾili jurist of the Fâṭimid period. See also A. Nanji, 'An Ismâʾili Theory of Walāyah in the *Daʾīʾim* al-Islâm of Qâdî al-Nuʾmân', in *Essays on Islamic Civilization Presented to Niyazi Berkes*, ed. D. P. Little (Leiden, 1976), pp. 260-273.


103. For the different meanings and applications of the term *awliyāʾ* (singular, *wali*), see Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 255ff.; W. M. Patton, 'Saints and Martyrs (Muhammadan)', *ERE*, vol. 11, pp. 63-68; and B. Carra de Vaux, 'Wali', *EL*, vol. 4, pp. 1109-1111.


3. Early Ismāʿīlism


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Madelung has also contributed the major Ismā'īli entries, 'Ismā'īliyya', and 'Karimati', to EI2, vol. 4, pp. 198–206 and 660–665, amongst many other articles on different aspects of Imāmi, Ismā'īli and Zaydi Shi'ism. Recently, W. Madelung has summarized his views on these sects and some other movements in his *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany, N.Y., 1988).


25. See Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, Ithbāt al-nubūʿāt [al-nubūwāt], ed. ‘Ā. Tāmīr (Beirut, 1966), p. 190. Mubārak is also mentioned as a pseudonym of Iṣmāʾīl in a letter sent by the first Fāṭimid caliph to the Iṣmāʾīlīs in Yaman. This letter, as reported in the book al-Farāʾid wa ḥudūd al-dīn by Jaʿfar b. Munsūr al-Yaman, has been published and translated in Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī, On the Genealogy of Fatimid Caliphs (Cairo, 1958), hereafter cited as Genealogy; the
relevant passage on Mubārak is found in text p. 10, translation p. 12. For a detailed analysis of this letter and its more precise translation, and an interesting hypothesis regarding the descent of the early Ismāʿīli Imāms, see A. Hamdani and F. de Blois, 'A Re-Examination of al-Mahdi’s Letter to the Yemenites on the Genealogy of the Fatimid Caliphs', JRAS (1983), pp. 173-207.

26. See al-Nawbakhtī, Firaq, p. 62, and al-Qumnī, al-Maqālāt, p. 84; this can be gathered also from the earliest extant Zaydi reference to the nascent Ismāʿiliyya by the Zaydi Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 246/860), in a treatise entitled al-Radd ‘alā’l-Rawāfiḍ, cited in Madelung, ‘Immat’, p. 46.

27. Al-Qumnī, al-Maqālāt, p. 81, and al-Nawbakhtī, Firaq, pp. 58-59, where the group al-Ismāʿiliyya is identified with al-Khaṭṭābiyya. However, since al-Nawbakhtī does not discuss a group called al-Ismāʿiliyya, it seems that by the latter designation, similarly to al-Qumnī, he is referring to al-Ismāʿiliyya al-khāliṣa, one of the two proto-Ismāʿili groups covered in his work.


30. See al-Nawbakhtī, Firaq, p. 90, and al-Qumnī, al-Maqālāt, p. 103, where the claims of Ismāʿīl and Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl are rejected; see also al-Kashshī, al-Rijāl, pp. 473–474, where Ismāʿīl is accused of being inclined to drink.


from Hyderabad, also mentions the same year in his Ta’rikh-i Fatimiyyin-i Misr (2nd ed., Karachi, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 41, 43 and 63.


40. Al-Kashší, al-Rijál, pp. 244-245; see also al-Najáshí, al-Rijál, pp. 81-82; Lewis, Origins, p. 39, and Omar, ‘Some Aspects’, p. 177.

41. L. Massignon, ‘Explication du plan de Kúfá’, in his Opera Minora, vol. 3, p. 50. Al-Saffáh had established his capital at al-Anbár in 134/752; he died and was buried in his palace there in 136/754. Al-Manṣúr moved his capital from al-Anbár to al-Hira shortly after taking power, which lends further support
to the reports contending that Ismā'īl's death occurred after 136/754; see Lassner, *Shaping*, pp. 155 and 158-159.

42. See the following works by L. Massignon: 'Bibliographie Qarmāt', pp. 329-330; 'Les Origines Shi'ītes de la famille vizirale des Banū'īr Furāt', in *MêlèANGES GAUDEFROY-DEMOMBYES* (Cairo, 1935-1945), p. 26; and 'Karẓmātians', *EI*, vol. 2, p. 770, where Abū'-Khāṭṭāb's death is wrongly placed in 167/783, later changed to 145-147/762-764 in *SEI*, p. 221; Corbin, *Étude*, pp. 15-16, and also his 'Une liturgie Shi'īte', pp. 83 and 85.


50. Ivanow, 'Notes sur l'Ummul'-Kitab', pp. 422-425; also by Ivanow, *Studies 2*, pp. 8 and 82, where it is stated that the original Arabic text of the treatise was probably composed in the second/eighth century; Corbin, *Étude*, pp. 12 and 14; also his *Histoire*, pp. 111-112, and Madelung's review of Filippi-Ronconi's translation in *Oriens*, 25-26 (1976), pp. 352-358.

51. H. Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Isma'iliya* (Wiesbaden, 1978), pp. 142-168, an excellent study of early Ismā'ili thought, and also his *Islamische Gnosis*, pp. 113-198; see also E. F. Tijdens, 'Der mythologisch-gnostische Hintergrund des Umm al-Kitāb', *Acta Iranica*, 16 (1977), pp. 241-526, which was left unfinished by the death of its author.


56. According to P. Filippiani-Ronconi the Umm al-kitāb was originally produced by a Gnostic-Manichaean sect with cabalistic and Mazdaean strains in some Aramaic-Mesopotamian milieu. Later in the second/eighth century, the members of this sect became subjected to Muslim persecutions and fled to Khurāsān and Central Asia where the treatise was now influenced by Buddhist ideas. Still later, the sectarians in question became Muslims, and more specifically extremist Shi'īs of the Mughirī-Khattābī tradition. Eventually, during the fifth–sixth/tenth–eleventh centuries, these Central Asian Shi'īs were converted to Ismā'īlīsm, without incorporating any Ismā'īlī doctrines into the Umm al-kitāb which they continued to preserve; see Filippiani-Ronconi's introductory section in his Italian translation of Ummul-kitab, pp. xvii–lv, and his 'Note sulla soteriologica e sul simbolismo cosmico dell'Ummul-Kitab', AIUON, NS, 14 (1964), pp. 111–134, and 'The Soteriological Cosmology of Central-Asian Ismā'īlism', in Ismā'īlī Contributions to Islamic Culture, ed. S. H. Nasr (Tehran, 1977), pp. 101–120.


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Ghālib, p. 259, it is furthermore mentioned that Muḥammad was fourteen years old when his father died. On this basis, it can be inferred, therefore, that Ḥasan b. Jaʿfar had predeceased his father by some twelve years, or around 136 A.H.


61. The Dastūr al-munajjimīn, cited in de Goeje, Mémorie, p. 203, mentions India as the farthest region reached by Muḥammad; but according to Ibn ʿInaba, Umdat al-ṭalīb, p. 233, he left Medina much later, in the company of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashid, for Baghdād, where he eventually died. On the other hand, ʿIḍrīs, in his ʿUyūn, vol. 4, pp. 353–354, and his Zahr al-maʿānī, cited in Ivanow, Rise, text p. 54, translation p. 241, names several towns in Persia ultimately reached by Muḥammad; he also reports that the remains of Muḥammad were transferred from Persia to Cairo during the rule of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Muʿizz. See also Juwaynī, Taʾrikh, vol. 3, p. 148; tr. Boyle, vol. 2, p. 645; Rashīd al-Dīn, Ismāʾīliyyān, p. 11, and P. H. Māmour, Polemics on the Origin of the Fāṭimi Caliphs (London, 1934), pp. 66–68.


70. Kitāb al-rushd, pp. 198ff.; tr. Ivanow in Studies 2, pp. 43ff.


69. The earliest Ismāʿili source relating these details is apparently the Istitār al-imām written by Ahmad b. Ibrāhīm (or Muḥammad) al-Nisābūrī, who flourished towards the end of the fourth/tenth century; this work has been edited, together with another Ismāʿili text, by Ivanow in Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, University of Egypt, 4 (1936), pp. 93–107; English translation in Ivanow, Rise, translation pp. 157–183. The Arabic text of the Istitār is reproduced in Akhkhār al-Qarāmītā, ed. S. Zakkār (2nd ed., Damascus, 1982), pp. 111–132, not referred to hereafter.


85. Al-Hamdānī, *Genealogy*, text pp. 11–12, translation p. 14. See also al-Qummi, *al-Maqālāt*, p. 88, which somehow seems to support this claim; Madelung, 'Imamat', pp. 69–70; Madelung, 'Bemerkungen', pp. 38–39, and Hamdani and de Blois, 'A Re-Examination', pp. 179–183 and 200–201, arguing that the imāms listed by 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī in fact belong to two parallel lines of descendants of Ja'far al-Sādiq, representing the progenies of 'Abd Allāh and his brother Ismā'īl b. Ja'far. The authors of this interesting article further argue that the official Fāṭimid genealogy was later derived by combining the two lines and rearranging the genealogy claimed by al-Mahdī.


95. This was a flourishing mediaeval town in Khūzistān founded at the beginning of the second/eighth century, and today its ruins to the south of Shūshtar are known as Band-i Qīr; see the anonymous Ḥudūd al-‘ālam, the Regions of the World, tr. V. Minorsky (2nd ed., London, 1970), pp. 75 and 130, an important geographical work of the second half of the fourth/tenth
This is the title reported by al-Nuwayri, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 25, p. 220; tr. de Sacy, *Exposé*, vol. 1, introduction p. 148. The same book has been referred to under other titles, such as *Kitāb al-balāgh al-akbar*, mentioned by the Zaydi author Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Daylami in his *Bayān madhhab al-Bāṭinīyya*, ed. R. Strothmann (Istanbul, 1939), pp. 15, 30, 42, 59, 72-73, 75-76, 78-81, 84, 86 and 91-94, an anti-Isma‘ili treatise forming part of a larger work completed in 707/1308, while al-Baghdādi, *al-Fārq*, p. 278, knows the book as the *Kitāb al-siyāsa wa’l-balāgh*. S. M. Stern in a chapter entitled ‘The Book of the Highest Initiation and other anti-Isma‘ili Travesties’ included in his *Studies*, pp. 56-83, has partially reconstructed the Arabic text of the treatise in question with an English translation, from quotations preserved by different authors including al-Nuwayri, al-Baghdādi and al-Daylami.


Ivanow had already made this inference in his *Alleged*, pp. 110-112, before this letter had come to light; see also Mamour, *Polemics*, pp. 68ff.


Al-Nu’mān, *al-Majālis*, pp. 405-411 and 528-525. The text and English
translation of the relevant passages are also to be found in Stern, 'Heterodox', pp. 14-17 and 28-33.


For more details on the work of this Zaydi author and its refutation by al-Kirmãni, entitled al-Kãfiya jîl-radd 'ala'l-Hãrãnih al-Hasâni, included in al-Kirmãni, Majmû'at rašã'il, ed. M. Ghãlib (Beirut, 1983), pp. 148-182, see Ivanow, Rise, pp. 142-143, and also by Ivanow, Isma'ili Literature, p. 44.

See, for example, de Sacy, Exposé, vol. 1, pp. 83ff.


The relevant passage, quoted from a faulty manuscript, appears in Lewis, Origins, pp. 51-52 and (Arabic text) p. 109; a more complete excerpt of the same passage may be found in Ivanow, Rise, text pp. 35-39.


Idrîs, 'Uyûn, vol. 4, p. 335, and also by Idrîs, Zahr al-ma'ânik, in Ivanow, Rise, text pp. 47, 49, 59-60 and 64, translation pp. 233, 236, 248, 250 and 256.

Idrîs, Zahr al-ma'ânik, in Ivanow, Rise, text pp. 66ff., translation pp. 258ff., and Madelung, 'Imamat', pp. 77-78; however, see also Idrîs, 'Uyûn, vol. 5, p. 89, and Hamdani and de Blois, 'A Re-Examination', p. 190.


Lewis, Origins, pp. 44ff. and 71-73.


See Ivanow, Rise, pp. 54ff., 129 and 151-152, and also his Alleged, pp. 169-174.


treatment of the Qarmatī movement in 'Irāq is contained in M. 'A. 'Alyān, Qarāmīṭat al-'Irāq (Cairo, 1970).


130. Al-Daylāmī, Bayān, p. 21.


During the caliphate of al-Rādī (322-329/934-940), when contemplating a march on Baghdād, Mardāwīj was accused of collaboration with Abū Ṭāhir, the leader of the Qarmāṭīs of Bahrayn; see Muḥammad b. Yahyā al-Ṣāliḥ, *Akhkhar ar-Rādī billah wa-l-Muttaqi billah*, tr. M. Canard (Algiers, 1946-1950), vol. 1, pp. 71-73.


145. See Nāṣir-i Khusraw, Khwān al-ikhwān, ed. Y. al-Khashshāb ( Cairo, 1940), pp. 112 and 115, ed. A. Qāvim (Tehran, 1338/1959), pp. 131 and 135, where al-Nasafi is referred to as the martyred shaykh and khwāja; Stern, ‘Early’, pp. 80–81, and also his ‘Abū’l-Qasim al-Bustī’, p. 23.


148. Massignon repeated this hypothesis in various writings which have been reprinted in his Opera Minora, vol. 1, pp. 360–422; see also his ‘Ṣīnfi’, EI, vol. 4, pp. 436–437. Massignon’s ideas on the subject were pursued by B. Lewis, especially in his ‘The Islamic Guilds’, Economic History Review, 8 (1937), pp. 20–37; but Lewis advocated the milder opinion that if not actually created by the Ismā‘īlīs, the guilds were certainly used by them as instruments in their organization.


According to Ibn Mālik al-Yammāni, Kashf asrār al-Bātiniyya, ed. al-Kawthari, p. 18, also in Akhbār al-Qarāmita, p. 213, Hamdān was killed in Baghdād.


Kitāb al-rushd, p. 201, tr. Ivanow in Studies 2, p. 46.


Some of these traditions are cited in Ivanow, Rise, pp. 61–65, 95–122, and text pp. 1–31.


Al-Nu‘mān, al-Risāla al-mudhhiba, in Khams rasā’il Ismā‘īliyya, ed. ‘Ā. Tāmīr (Salamiyya, 1956), p. 41. For one such work attributed wrongly to ‘Abdān, see Kitāb shajarat al-yaqīn, ed. ‘Ā. Tāmīr (Beirut, 1982).


On the Musāfirīds, also called Sallārīds and Langarīds, who held the key fortress of Shamīrān, in Tārum, and who were eventually uprooted by the Nizārīs, see A. Kasravī, Shahriyārīn-i gum-nām (2nd ed., Tehran, 1335/1956).


176. The most detailed account of 'Ubayd Allāh's flight from Salamiyya to the Maghrib, and the establishment of the Iṣmā'ili mission in North Africa, used as the main source by later historians, is contained in al-Nu'mān, Istitāl, pp. 54–258; excerpts in Ivanow, Rise, text pp. 40–46, translation pp. 224–231. Other early Iṣmā'ili accounts, written shortly after 346 A.H. (the date of the composition of the Istitāl), may be found in al-Nisaburi, Istitār, pp. 96ff.; English translation, Ivanow, Rise, pp. 164ff., and in the Sirat al-Hājib Ja'far b. 'Alī, the autobiography of 'Ubayd Allāh's chamberlain, as compiled by a certain Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Yamān, edited and published by Ivanow in Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, University of Egypt, 4 (1936), pp. 107–133; English translation, Ivanow, Rise, pp. 184–223; French translation, M. Canard, 'L'autobiographie d'un chambellan du Mahdi 'Obeydallâh le Fātimide', Hespéris, 39 (1952), pp. 279–324. Canard has added to the end of this article (pp. 324–328) a French translation of the above-mentioned excerpts from the Istitāl, published by Ivanow. These Iṣmā'ili sources were later used extensively in Idris, 'Uyūn, vol. 5, pp. 44–112. There are numerous non-Iṣmā'ili sources on the subject; see 'Arib, Silat, pp. 51–52; Ibn Ḥammād, Histoire des rois 'Obaïdides, ed. and tr. M. Vonderheyden (Algiers–Paris,


179. The cyclical division of history into eras, and other related details, are clearly outlined in the *Kitāb al-nushd*, pp. 189 and 197ff., tr. Ivanow in *Studies* 2, pp. 33 and 41ff., in Ja‘far b. Mansūr al-Yaman, *Kitāb al-kashf*, pp. 14ff., 104, 113-

For these and other terms used by the early Ismaʿīlis, see Ivanow, Studies 2, pp. 9–27.


Extracts from Abū Ḥātim’s Kitāb al-ʾiṣlāḥ and from other Ismāʿīlī works on the subject are to be found in Halm, Kosmologie, pp. 206–227. See also al-Sijistānī, Kitāb al-ʾiftikhrār, ed. M. Ghālib (Beirut, 1980), pp. 43–56.

The full Arabic text of this small treatise, discovered by S. M. Stern at the end of a manuscript belonging to Asaf A. A. Fyzee, is printed in Stern, Studies, pp. 6–16; see also Goriawala, Catalogue, p. 69.


4. Fatimid Isma'ilism


3. The extant volume forty of Muḥammad b. ‘Ubayd Allâh al-Musabbîḥî’s Akhbar Miṣr consists of historical and literary parts. The historical part has been edited by A. Fu‘âd Sayyid and Th. Bianquis (Cairo, 1978), and the literary part has been edited by Husayn Naṣṣâr (Cairo, 1984); both parts are also contained in a separate edition prepared by W. G. Millward (Cairo, 1980). A small extract of al-Musabbîḥî’s extant fragment, covering the last two months of the year 415 A.H., was first published in Becker, Beiträge, vol. 1, pp. 59–80.


7. Ibn Muyassar’s Akhbar Miṣr, as noted, was first edited by H. Massé in 1919; more recently, a better edition from the same incomplete manuscript was prepared by A. Fu‘âd Sayyid (Cairo, 1981). The latter edition, along with the above-mentioned histories of al-Musabbîḥî and Ibn Zâfir, have appeared in the valuable series, entitled Textes Arabes et Études Islamiques, published by the Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire.


12. Ibn al-Aṭhir, *Kitāb al-kāmil fi'l-ta'rikh*, ed. Carl J. Tornberg (Leiden, 1851–1876), 12 vols., and indices, reprinted (Beirut, 1982); the Fāṭimid are covered in volume eight and the subsequent volumes. At least three other editions of this work were published in Cairo, in 1290/1873, 1301/1883, and 1303/1885; hereafter our references are to the Cairo edition, entitled *Tāʾrikh al-kāmil*, published in 1303 A.H.


15. The late Professor Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl published some twenty-three such Fāṭimid documents in his already-cited *Majmuʿat al-wathaʿiq al-Fāṭimīyya*, the majority having been preserved by al-Qalqashandi. Another collection comprised of sixty-six letters and epistles issued on the orders of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustanṣīr, was edited by 'Abd al-Munʿim Mājīd and published under the title of *al-Sijillāt al-Mustansirīyya* (Cairo, 1954).

16. More than any other scholar, Solomon D. Goitein (1900–1985) has written on the Cairo Geniza and its importance, see especially his 'The Cairo Geniza as a Source for the History of Muslim Civilization', *SI*, 3 (1955), pp. 75–91; 'The Documents of the Cairo Geniza as a Source for Mediterranean Social Studies', *JAOS*, 80 (1960), pp. 91–100; *Studies in Islamic History and Institu-


21. Amongst such works, Hasan Ibrâhîm Hasan’s *Ta’rikh al-dawla al-Fāṭimiyya*
(3rd ed., Cairo, 1964), which was originally written in English and submitted in 1928 as a doctoral thesis to the University of London, is the most comprehensive study of Fāṭimid history and institutions; see also Muḥammad J. Surūr, Misr fī 'aṣr al-dawla al-Fāṭimiyya (Cairo, 1960), and 'Abd al-Mun‘im Mājid (Magued), Zuhūr khilājat al-Fāṭimiyyīn wa suqītiyyāh fī Misr (Alexandria, 1968). See also Hasan, ‘Contributions to the Study of Fāṭimid History in Egypt during the Last 12 Years', pp. 129ff.


24. Colloque international sur l’histoire du Caire, sponsored by the Ministry of Culture of the Arab Republic of Egypt (Cairo, 1972); hereafter cited as Colloque du Caire.

25. Valuable details on the reigns of the first three Fāṭimids are contained in al-Nu‘mān, Iṣṭiḥāb, pp. 249–282, and also his al-Majālīs, which is a rich source of information. The fullest Ismā‘īlī account of this period, however, is contained in Idrīs, ‘Uyūn, vol. 5, pp. 112–350, based on al-Nu‘mān and a number of Fāṭimid chronicles which have not survived. The section from the ‘Uyūn on the North African phase of the Fāṭimid Caliphate has been edited separately, al-Khulafa’ al-Fātimiyīn bi’l-Maghrib, ed. M. al-Ya‘lāwī (Tunis, 1985); extracts from the ‘Uyūn, on al-Mahdi’s reign, are included in Stern, Studies, pp. 96–145. Numerous Fāṭimid documents from this period are contained in Abū ‘Alī Manṣūr al-‘Aẓīzī al-Jawdhari, Sirat al-ustādīh Jawdhar, ed. M. Kāmil Husayn and M. ‘Abd al-Hādī Sha‘īrā (Cairo, 1954), pp. 33–86; French translation, Vie de l’ustadh Jawdhar (Contenant sermons, lettres et rescrits des premiers califes Fātimides), tr. M. Canard (Algiers, 1958), pp. 41–126. On this important Ismā‘īlī work compiled by al-Jawdharī, the private secretary to Jawdhar (d. 363/973) who held various posts under the first four Fāṭimids, see Idrīs, Zahr al-ma‘ānī, in Ivanow, Rise, text pp. 70–72 and 79, translation pp. 263–266 and 279; see also Canard’s introduction to his translation of Jawdhar’s Sirat, pp. 8–24; Husayn, Fi adāb, pp. 114–116; Ghālib, A’lām, pp. 546–547; Poonawala, Bio, pp. 90–91, and M. Canard, ‘Djawdhar’, El2, vol.


35. According to al-Mas'ūdī, al-Tanbih, pp. 391 and 394-395, tr. Carra de Vaux, pp. 496 and 500-501, Abū Sā'īd was killed in Dhu'l-Qa'da 300/June-July 913. If this date is correct, then his death must have been kept secret for some time, since it was officially reported in Baghdad only towards the end of 301 A.H. Abū Sā'īd’s death is placed in 300 A.H. also by 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Jawbarī, cited in de Goeje, Mémoire, p. 208, a writer and traveller who flourished in the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century. 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī, Tahḥīṭ ḍalā'īl al-nuṣūwā, in Akhkhār al-Qaraṭīnīa, p. 151, also mentions the year 300 A.H.


39. Ibn Ḥawqāl, Ṣūrat al-ard, pp. 348–349 and 354. See also Kasravī, Shahriyārān,


47. Al-Sijistānī, *al-Itikhār*, p. 82.


65. Ibid., pp. 70–71.

66. Ibid., pp. 66, 74ff. and 79.


182. On the other hand, according to Ibn Ḥammād, *Histoire*, text p. 47, al-Mu‘izz had at one time designatedTamīm as his heir apparent, but had later revoked this nomination. Ibn Ḥammād is apparently the only source relating this nomination.


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102. The classical treatment of the early history and doctrines of the Druzes is found in Silvestre de Sacy’s Exposé de la religion des Druzes, which also describes the Druze literature then available in European libraries; a number of excerpts from the sacred scriptures of the Druzes are published and translated into French in de Sacy’s Chrestomathie Arabe, vol. 1, pp. 260–309, and vol. 2, pp. 334–403. Further Druze writings are to be found in Guys, Théogonie des Druses, and in other early European studies. A list of the Druze epistles, which are usually copied in the same traditional sequence and collected in the same number of volumes, may be found in Ivanow, Isma'ili Literature, pp. 112–125. Amongst the more recent studies, mention may be made of Philip K. Hitti, The Origins of the Druze People and Religion (New York, 1928), containing numerous inaccuracies; N. Bourn, Les Druses (Paris, 1930); M. Kāmil Ḥusayn, Tā'īfat al-Durūz (Cairo, 1962); A. A. Najjār, Madhhab al-Durūz wa'l-tawhīd (Cairo, 1965); Sami N. Makarem, The Druze Faith (New York, 1974), and Nejla M. Abu-Izzeddin, The Druze: A New Study of their History, Faith and Society (Leiden, 1984), the best modern


106. Al-Kirmâni, al-Risâla al-durriyya, ed. M. Kâmil Husayn (Cairo, 1952), edited together with his al-Risâla al-nazm, containing further discussions of the issues raised in al-Durriyya; both of these short works are included in al-Kirmâni, Majmû‘at rasâ‘il, pp. 19-34.


108. See, for instance, the epistle called Ma‘rifat al-imâm, in the second volume of the Druze canon. In the personal manuscript copy of the author, this epistle is only three pages long.

On the reign of al-Mustansir, see Idris, 'Uyûn, vol. 6, pp. 322–359 and the
beginning of vol. 7, still in manuscript form; Ibn al-Sayrafi, al-Ishâra, in
BIFAO (1925), pp. 59–77 (36–54) and (1926), pp. 66–67 (68–69); Ibn al-
Qalânisî, Dhayl, pp. 83–128; Ibn Zâfir, Akhbâr, pp. 67–81; Ibn Muyassar,
Akhbâr, ed. Massé, pp. 1–34, ed. Sayyid, pp. 3–59; Ibn Hammâd, Histoire,
10, pp. 4, 28–30, 35–36, 38, 43, 49, 60, 70 and 77; Ibn Khallîkân, Biographical
355–356; French tr., vol. 4, pp. 26–29; al-Maqrîzî, Ittî`âz, ed. Ahmad, vol. 2,
and 259–261; Zâhid 'Alî, Ta'rikh, vol. 1, pp. 273–323; Surûr, Mîsr, pp. 72ff.,
87ff., 125ff., 133–139, 144–151 and 169ff.; Surûr, Bilâd al-Shâm, pp. 50ff.
and 124ff.; Surûr, Jaza'ir al-'Arab, pp. 19ff., 54ff. and 73ff.; and also his Siyâsât,
pp. 79ff., 149ff., 207ff., 228–230 and 245–246; 'Abd al-Mu'înî Majîd, al-
Imâm al-Mustansîr bi'llâh al-Fâtimî (Cairo, 1961), also his Zuhûr, pp. 147–154,
al-Manâwî, al-Wizâra, pp. 253–271; Ghâlib, A'lâm, pp. 520–525; O'Leary,
Fatimid Khalifate, pp. 193–210; Fischel, Jews, pp. 68–89; G. Wiet, 'Yâzûrî,
EI, vol. 4, pp. 1172–1173, and H. A. R. Gibb and P. Kraus, 'al-Mustansîr

See the detailed account of al-Maqrîzî in his al-Khitât, vol. 1, pp. 335–337;
French tr., vol. 3, pp. 275–283, and in his Ighâthat al-unma bi-kashf al-
ghanuma, ed. Muhammad M. Ziyâda and Jamâl al-Dîn al-Shayyâl (Cairo,
1940), pp. 18–26; French translation, Le Traité des famines de Maqrîzî, tr. G.

Al-Maqrîzî, al-Khitât, vol. 1, pp. 408–409, and also his Ittî`âz, ed. Ahmad,

On Badr al-Jamâlî, see Ibn al-Sayrafi, al-Ishâra, in BIFAO (1925), pp. 57–58
(55–56); Ibn al-Qalânisî, Dhayl, pp. 84 and 91ff.; Ibn al-Athîr, al-Kâmil,
vol. 10, pp. 81–82; al-Maqrîzî, al-Khitât, vol. 1, pp. 381–382; French tr.,
vol. 4, pp. 92–95; al-Maqrîzî, Ittî`âz, ed. Ahmad, vol. 2, pp. 268, 272 and 311ff.;
Majîd, al-Mustansîr, pp. 179ff.; also his Zuhûr, pp. 392ff., and C. H. Becker,

On al-Basâsîrî and his pro-Fâtimid activities, see al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dîn al-
Shirâzî, Siyat al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dîn dâ'î al-du'ât, ed. M. Kâmil Husayn (Cairo,
1949), especially pp. 94–184; partial English translation in Abbas H. al-
University of London, 1950), pp. 58–105; Zahîr al-Dîn Nishâpûrî, Saljuq-
nâma (Tehran, 1332/1953), pp. 19–20; Muḥammad b. 'Alî al-Râwandî, Râhat
al-sûdâr, ed. M. Iqâlî (London, 1921), pp. 107–110; al-Fâth b. 'Alî al-
Bundârî, Zubdat al-musra, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, pp. 12–18; Ibn al-Athîr, al-


For these names, derived from Idrîs, see H. al-Hamdânî, ‘Doctrines’, pp. 30ff. For other lists, see Ibn Mâlik al-Yamânî, Kashf asrâr al-Bâţîniyya, pp. 39–42, written by a Yamani contemporary of the founder of the Sulayhid dynasty, and al-Janadî’s later work Akhlûr al-Qâramîta, in Kay, Yaman, text p. 152, translation pp. 211–212.

The date 429 A.H. is mentioned by Idrîs, ‘Umâra and Ibn Khallikân; but Ibn Mâlik, Kashf, p. 43, and some other sources, give the later date 439 A.H. for the accession of the Sulayhids.


are preserved in Idris, 'Uyûn, vol. 7, of which five have been reproduced in al-Hamdânî, al-Sulayhiyyûn, pp. 302-307 and 319-320. See also Ivanow, Ismaili Literature, p. 49, and Poonawala, Bio, pp. 126-127.

120. Until recently, there was controversy on the date of this event. According to Idrîs, 'Uyûn, vol. 7, and Ibn al-Athîr, al-Kâmîl, vol. 10, p. 19, it occurred in 459 A.H., a date endorsed also by 'Umârâ. On the other hand, Ibn Khallîkân placed the event in 473 A.H. In the light of al-Mustansîr's Sîjîllât, pp. 137-140 and 196-200, issued in 460-461 A.H. and in which the Fâtimid caliph expresses his sorrow about 'Ali's assassination, now there remains no doubt that the correct year was 459 A.H.; see also al-Hamdânî, 'Letters of al-Mustansîr', pp. 307, 319 and 323.


Zirid renouncement of their Fātimid allegiance are also considered, and his 'Hilāl', *El2*, vol. 3, pp. 385–387.


in his dissertation, 'Sira', especially pp. 19–135, and he has now provided a
good summary exposition in his 'The Fatimid Da'i al-Mu'ayyad: His Life
and Work', in Great Ismaili Heroes, pp. 41–47. Al-Mu'ayyad's writings are
103–109.

130. Al-Mu'ayyad, Diwan, pp. 256-258, and Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil, vol. 9,
p. 199.

131. This victory is commemorated in a qaṣida by al-Mu'ayyad; see his Diwan,
p. 281.

132. Muṣṭafā Ghālib had started to prepare a complete edition of al-Majālis al-
Mu'ayyadiyya (Beirut, 1974– ), of which only the first and third volumes
had appeared by 1984 when this Ismā'īlī scholar had passed away. A separate
edition of the first volume was undertaken by Hātim Ḥamīd al-Dīn (Bombay,
1395/1975); but hereafter our references are to Ghālib's edition. The first
volume of these Majālis, as abridged in two volumes by Hātim b. Ibrāhīm al-
Ḥāmīdī, has been edited by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Abd al-Nāṣir
(Cairo, 1975). An English summary of some of al-Mu'ayyad's lectures may
be found in Muscati and Moulvi, Life and Lectures, pp. 78–183.

133. This correspondence, included in the 13th majlis of the 6th volume, is
reproduced in Yāqūt, Mu'amalat al-udāba (Cairo, 1936–1938), vol. 3, pp. 176–
213, and also in his Irshād, vol. 1, pp. 194–214; it is edited, translated and
analyzed in D. S. Margoliouth, 'Abu'l-'Alā al-Ma'arri's Correspondence on
Vegetarianism', JRAS (1902), pp. 289–332. See also R. A. Nicholson, Studies

134. See P. Kraus, 'Beiträge zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte: Das Kitāb az-
379, where the relevant lectures, 17th through 22nd of the 5th volume, are
reproduced on pp. 96–109.

135. This spurious autobiography was used by Luṭf 'Alī Beg Ādhar (d. 1195/1781)
in his Ātashkada (Bombay, 1299/1881–1882), pp. 202–208; in more
recent times, only one reprint edition of this work, based on the one
lithographed in Calcutta in 1277/1860, has appeared (Tehrān, 1337/1958),
pp. 202–208. An abridgement of this autobiography was included in the
introduction to the first lithographic edition of Nāṣir's Diwan (Tabriz, 1280/
1863); it also appeared in a subsequent undated edition of his Diwan
lithographed in Bombay, pp. 2–14. Copies of this work, entitled Sargud-
hasht-i Nāṣir-i Khusrav, are still preserved by the Central Asian Ismā'īlīs; see
Berthels and Baqovc, Alphabetic Catalogue, pp. 64–65.

136. After several lithographic editions, the first critical edition of Nāṣir-i
Khusrav's Diwan was prepared by the late Persian judge and scholar Sayyid
Naṣr Allāh Taqavi, assisted by 'Alī Akbar Dīkhkūdā and Muṭṭabā Minūvī
(Tehrān, 1304–1307/1925–1928), containing a valuable biographical
introduction by the Persian scholar-politician Sayyid Ḥasan Taqizadeh
(1878–1970). More recently, an improved edition of the Diwan, based on the
oldest known manuscript copy dated 736/1335, was prepared by M. Minūvī
and M. Muḥaqiq (Tehrān, 1353/1974); but the death of Professor Minūvī
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(1903–1977) prevented the publication of a second volume which was planned to be devoted to Nāsir’s life and work. Some of Nāsir’s odes have been translated into English in a volume entitled Forty Poems from the Divān, tr. Peter L. Wilson and G. R. Aavani (Tehran, 1977). In the case of Nāsir’s Safar-nāma, besides the edition prepared by Schefer which provided the basis for several later editions produced in India and Persia, and that of Dabir Siyāqi, mention may also be made of M. Ghanizāda’s edition (Berlin, 1341/1922). Aside from Schefer’s French translation and Thackston’s English translation, the Safar-nāma has been translated into Russian, tr. A. E. Bertel’s (Leningrad, 1933); Urdu, tr. M. Tharvat Allāh (Lucknow, 1937); Arabic, tr. Y. al-Khashshāb (Cairo, 1945; 2nd ed., Beirut, 1970), and Turkish, tr. A. Tarzi (Istanbul, 1950). In order to understand Nāsir-i Khusraw’s ideas, it is also essential to study his prose writings. These include the small corpus preserved by the Ismā’īlis of Central Asia, notably his Wajh-i din, ed. M. Ghanizāda and M. Qazvīnī (Berlin, 1353/1924), with a better edition by Gholam Reza Aavani (Tehran, 1977), and his Six Chapters, or Shishtar-fâsî, also called Rawshānā-i-nāma, ed. and tr. W. Ivanow (Leiden, 1949); as well as other works, found in Istanbul libraries and elsewhere, such as his Khwān al-ikhwān, Jāmī’ al-hikmatayn, and Zād al-musāfīrin, ed. M. Badhl al-Rahmān (Berlin, 1341/1923).

137. See, for instance, Nāsir-i Khusraw’s Gushā’ish va rahā’ish, ed. S. Nafīsī (Leiden, 1950), pp. 82, 121 and 123; Italian translation, Il libro dello scioglimento e della liberazione, tr. P. Filippiani-Ronconi (Naples, 1959), pp. 68, 99 and 100, where the scribe clearly admits his censorship of certain passages in the original text. On the other hand, those works preserved by the Ismā’īlis seem to have escaped such interferences.


143. See three works by Nāṣīr-i Khusrav: Zād al-musāfīrīn, p. 397; Jāmīʾ al-hikmatayn, pp. 15 and 16–17, and Diwān, ed. Taqavi, pp. 309, 313, 321, 402, 404, 413, 420, 439, 451, 472 and 478; ed. Minuvi, pp. 8, 10, 17, 51, 56, 86, 92, 366, 416, 459, 490 and elsewhere. See, however, Ivanow, Nasir-i Khusrav, pp. 43–45, and also his Problems, pp. 48–49, where it is argued that Nāṣīr may only have aspired to that position in the daʿwa organization.

144. Abuʾl-Maʿālī, Bayān al-adīyān, pp. 39–40. The passages in question are also contained in the partial edition of this work in Charles Schefer, Chrestomathie Persane (Paris, 1883–1885), vol. 1, p. 161. For Nāṣīr’s own references to his visit to Māzandarān, see his Diwān, ed. Taqavi, pp. 413 and 506; ed. Minuvi, pp. 56 and 516.


147. See Zād al-musāfīrīn, p. 280.


152. In some Nizārī works, seen by Ivanow, the date of Našir's death is put as late as 498/1104; see Ivanow, *Problems*, pp. 15-16, and also his *Ismaili Literature*, p. 159.


154. See Madelung, *'Imamat',* pp. 127-132, where the different variants of this doctrine are also discussed. See also Āhmād b. Ibrāhīm al-Nisābūrī, *Ithbāt al-imāma*, ed. M. Ghālib (Beirut, 1984), written by a renowned Fātimid dā'ī who flourished during the reigns of al-'Azīz and al-Hākim.


159. Ibid., pp. 67ff.

160. Ismā‘īlī tradition ascribes this already-cited work to Badr al-Jamālī, though in some copies of the *Fihrīst* of al-Majdū, such as the one underlying Munzavī's edition, pp. 136-137, it is instead attributed to al-Mu‘ayyad al-Shirāzī. M. Kāmil Husayn, the learned editor of the published text of *al-Majālīs al-Mustansirīyya*, has, in his introductory comments, ascribed it to an anonymous dā’ī. However, it has now been demonstrated by S. M. Stern in his 'Cairo as the Centre of the Ismā‘īlī Movement', in *Colloque du Caire*, pp. 439-440, that the author of these lectures was Abu‘l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Wahb al-Mālījī, chief qāḍī in Cairo during 450-452 A.H., in al-Mustansir’s caliphate. See also Vatikiotis, *Fatimid Theory of State*, pp. 201-203; Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, pp. 46-47 and 49, and Poonawala, *Bio*, pp. 319-320.


162. Ibid., pp. 30-31, 32, 36-37, 64 and 117. The author is aware of the fact that al-Mustansir was, in his own words, the nineteenth imām after the Prophet. Nevertheless, he also seems to have started a different enumeration of the imāms, starting with the establishment of the Fātimid Caliphate and, consequently, ranking al-Mustansir as the eighth imām and the eighth amongst the *khulafā‘*, which in his terminology apparently referred to the Fātimid caliph-imāms.


For the organization of the state and its different institutions in North Africa, and the relevant sources, see Dachraoui, *Califat Fatimide*, pp. 303-309.

For the most detailed discussion of the organization of the Fatimid state in North Africa, and the relevant sources, see Dachraoui, *Califat Fatimide*, pp. 279-395 and 473-491.


See M. Canard, ‘Notes sur les Arméniens en Égypte à l’époque Fātimite’, *AIEO*, 13 (1955), pp. 143-157. Canard also explains how the policies of the Armenian viziers Badr al-Jamālī and Bahrām encouraged the immigration of large numbers of Armenians to Fātimid Egypt, where many of them secured important posts.

For the most detailed discussion of the organization of the Fātimid state in North Africa, and the relevant sources, see Dachraoui, *Califat Fatimide*, pp. 279-395 and 473-491.


188. The treatise in question is al-Nuʿmān's Kitāb al-iqtisār, ed. M. Wahid Mirza (Damas, 1957).

189. A polemical work on the principles of Islamic law according to different schools of jurisprudence, this book is al-Nuʿmān’s Ikhtilāf usūl al-madhāhib, ed. S. T. Lokhandwalla (Simla, 1972), also edited by M. Ghālib (Beirut, 1973).

190. See al-Qalqashandi, Subh, vol. 8, pp. 239–241 (reprinted in al-Shayyāl, Majmūʿat al-wathāʾiq, pp. 199–202), and vol. 11, pp. 61–66, citing letters of appointment for Fāṭimīd governors of Faramā, ‘Askalān and elsewhere, and in which the governors are also instructed to assist the local resident dāʾī, designated as the representatives of al-daʿwa al-hādiyā (the rightly-guiding mission).

192. See Husayn's introduction to al-Mu'ayyad's Dīwān, pp. 48-57, and A. al-Hamdani, 'Sira', pp. 107ff. But it may be noted that the term dā'ī al-du'āt is also applied to al-Mu'ayyad, as an official title, in two of al-Mustansir's letters, dated 461/1069, issued to the Şulayhids; see al-Hamdani, 'Letters of al-Mustansir', pp. 322 and 324, and also al-Majdū', Fihrist, p. 40.


194. Al-Kirmānī, Rāhat al-aql, pp. 135, 138, 143, 152, 205-208, 212-214, 224, 260-262 and 349; English summary in Ivanow, Studies 2, pp. 19-23. See also al-Mu'ayyad, al-Majālis, vol. 3, pp. 220, 256-257 and 263-264. The bāb's status is also described in various post-Fātimid Ismā'īli sources produced in Yaman; see, for instance, the references in Gnosis-Texte der Ismaïliten, ed. R. Strothmann (Göttingen, 1943), pp. 8, 82, 102, 154 and 175.

195. Al-Nu'mān, Tawil al-da'ā'im, vol. 2, p. 74, and vol. 3, pp. 48-49. See also al-Sijistānī, Ilḥāt, p. 172, where seven of these jazā'ir are named, together with al-Turk, as some of the main regions of the world.

196. The reference in question, the only one of its kind known to Ivanow, is cited in the latter's Rise, pp. 20-21; see also Ivanow, Studies 2, pp. 156ff. On this Ismā'īli author and his Risālat al-basmala, see Ivanow, Ismaïlī Literature, pp. 54 and 56, and Poonawala, Bio, pp. 130-140 and 146.


199. There may have been as many as thirty dā'īs in every jazīra, see Naṣīr-i Khusraw, Wajh-i din, ed. Ghanizāda, p. 154. ed. Aavani, p. 178.


201. See Naṣīr-i Khusraw, Six Chapters, text pp. 34-36, translation pp. 74-77, and also his Wajh-i din, ed. Ghanizāda, p. 221; ed. Aavani, p. 255; see also the hierarchy enumerated by Strothmann in his Gnosis-Texte, p. 57, derived from various Yamanī Ismā'īli works, including some in the same collection, pp. 82 and 174ff.

202. See Abū Hāṭim al-Rāzī, Kitāb al-islāh, excerpt in Hamdani, 'Evolution', p. 109; al-Sijistānī, Ilḥāt, pp. 91, 100 and 128, and also his Kitāb al-yanābī', in Trilogie Ismaïlienne, text p. 8, translation p. 21. Al-Sijistānī's al-Yanābī' has
also been edited by M. Ghâlib (Beirut, 1965); but our references are to Corbin's edition. See also Ja'far b. Mansûr al-Yaman, *Asrâr al-nûqaqâ*, ed. Ghâlib, pp. 159, 160 and 220.


204. Al-Nisâbûrî’s lost *al-Râsâla al-mûjaza al-kâfiyya ûâdâb al-da'ât* is reproduced in full, except for a short introduction, by Hâtîm b. Ibîrîhîm al-Îâmî (d. 596/1199) at the end of his *Tuhfât al-qulûb*, a treatise on Îsmâ‘îlî doctrine which has not been published; it is also quoted in Hasan b. Nûh al-Bharûchî’s Îsmâ‘îlî chrestomathy *Kitâb al-azhâr*, vol. 2, still in manuscript form. The main points of this treatise may be found in Ivanow, *Organization of the Fatimid Propaganda*, pp. 18–35.


208. According to Ibn al-Nâdîm, *al-Fihrist*, vol. 1, p. 189; tr. Dodge, vol. 1, pp. 471–472, Îsmâ‘îlî works were scarce even during the second half of the fourth/tenth century. The works of some of the most eminent Îsmâ‘îlî authors of the Fâtimid period are listed in al-Kirmânî, *Râhât al-aql*, pp. 21–23, but the fullest Îsmâ‘îlî bibliography of the literature of the Fâtimid *da’wa*, arranged in terms of some eleven categories in ascending order of secrecy from works on *fiqh* to the most secret writings on the *haqâ’iq*, may be found in the *Fihrist* of al-Majdû’, which provided the basis of Ivanow’s *Guide*. See also Zâhid ‘Ali, *Ta’rikh*, vol. 2, pp. 181ff.; Ivanow, *Guide*, pp. 19–24; also his *Îsmâ‘îlî Literature*, pp. 1ff. and 13–16, and Fyzee, *‘Study’, especially pp. 235ff.


212. The author has had access to an unnumbered copy of Abū Ḥātim's *al-Īslāḥ* transcribed in India during the nineteenth century, and to the photocopy of the manuscript in the Fyzee collection of the University of Bombay presented, along with the photocopies of other items in this collection, to the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London; see Goriawala, *Catalogue of the Fyzee Collection*, p. 8.

213. See, for instance, Idris, *Uyūn*, vol. 5, pp. 168–169, where the author cites the praise of al-Muʿizz for Abū Ḥātim's *Kitāb al-riyād*.


220. See Al-Sijistānī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*, pp. 53 and 79, where the author conveys a modified position by referring to Muḥammad as the master of his era.


222. Ibid., pp. 177ff. As Professor Madelung has mentioned to the author, in this context the correct reading of *wasfī* should probably be *waḍī*.

223. Ibid., p. 180.

224. Ibid., pp. 178 and 186–187. Compare these ideas with those expressed in his *Al-Iṣṭikhār*, pp. 72–73.

225. See Madelung, 'Imamat', pp. 112–114.


228. Stern, 'Early', p. 79, and also his 'Ismā'īlis', p. 107. See also A. Altmann and S. M. Stern, *IsaacIsraeli: A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century* (Oxford, 1958), which discusses a parallel Neoplatonic system expounded by al-Nasafi's contemporary Ishaq b. Sulaymān al-Isrā'īli, the earliest Jewish Neoplatonist who also served as a physician to the first Fatimid caliph in Ifriqiya.


236. Al-Sijistānī, Ithbāt, p. 3.


240. Ithbāt, p. 44.


244. The original Arabic passage is quoted in Arendonk, Les débuts, p. 333. See also al-Baghdādi, al-Fārq, pp. 269–270 and 277–278; tr. Halkin, pp. 115–117 and 131, and al-Dāylamī, Bayān, pp. 5–6 and 72–73.


249. Al-Nu'mān, al-Mudhibba, in Khams rasā'il, pp. 60ff. and 81. See also Halm, Kosmologie, pp. 135ff.

250. Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s metaphysical system may be traced through his Six Chapters, Gushā'ish va raha'ish, Khwān al-ikhwān, Zād al-musāfīrin and, above all, his Jāmī' al-hikmatayn, which analyzes agreements and disagreements between the views of Muslim philosophers and the wisdom of the Ismā'īli gnosis.

251. See al-Kirmānī, Rāḥat al-ʾaql, p. 20.

252. Ibid., pp. 134ff. See also Corbin, Avicenna and the Visionary Recital, pp. 25, 46ff., 56ff., 68ff., 120, 254ff., 262 and 314ff.


259. This approximate date was first suggested by Fr. Dieterici, the German orientalist who pioneered the Ikhwan studies in modern times, see his Die Philosophie der Araber, vol. 1, pp. 142ff.


264. The Epistles, for instance, refer (Beirut, ed., vol. 2, pp. 282, and vol. 4, pp. 58, 148ff., 152ff., 162ff. and 175) to the ancient Indian legend of Bilawhar and Yūdāsaf (Būdhāsif), known in mediaeval Europe as Barlaam and Joasaph. The full Arabic version of the Kitāb Bilawhar wa Būdhāsif, preserved in the Ismāʿīli libraries of India, was first lithographed in Bombay in 1306/1889, and more recently, it was edited by Daniel Gimaret (Beirut, 1972). Gimaret has also prepared a French translation of this work entitled Le Livre de Bilawhar et Būdhāsif, selon la version Arabe Ismaélienne (Geneva, 1971). See also S. M. Stern and S. Walzer, Three Unknown Buddhist Stories in an Arabic Version (Oxford, 1971); al-Majdūʿ, Fihrist, pp. 11-15; Ivanow, Ismaili Literature, p. 91; Poonawala, Bio, p. 360, and D. M. Lang, 'Bilawhar wa-Yūdāsaf', EL2, vol. 1, pp. 1215-1217.


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273. For summary discussions of the Imāmī sources of law, see R. Brunschvig, ‘Les usūl al-fiqh imāmītes à leur stade ancien (Xe et Xe siècles)’, in Le Shīʿisme Imāmīte, pp. 201–213; Fyzee, Outlines of Muhammadan Law, pp. 43–48; W. Madelung, ‘Authority in Twelver Shiism in the Absence of the


278. See Zakī Muhammad Hasan, *al-Fann al-Islāmī fi Misr* (Cairo, 1935); also his *Kunūz al-Fāṭimiyyin* (Cairo, 1937); C. J. Lamm, ‘Fāṭimid Woodwork, its Style and Chronology’, *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, 18 (1936), pp. 59–91; F. Massoul, *Le Céramique Musulmane d'Égypte* (Cairo, 1930); R. Ettinghausen,
5. Mustaʿlian Ismāʿīlism


3. The works of Idrīs are fully described in Ivanow, Ismaili Literature, pp. 77–82, and Poonawala, Bio, pp. 169–175. The unpublished Tuhfat al-qulūb of Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmīdī (d. 5/1119/1196) is also an important source for the history of the early Ṭayyibī and pre-Ṭayyibī dāʾīs in Yaman.

4. Muhammad ʿAli b. Mullah Jiwābihāʾī, Mawsim-i bahār fī akhbār al-tāhirīn al-akhyār (Bombay, 1301–1311/1884–1893), 3 vols. The first two volumes were reprinted in Bombay in 1335/1916–1917 and subsequently, while the long-prohibited and scarce third volume was reprinted only recently in Bombay; our references are to the original edition. On this important work, considered by the Dāʿūdī Bohras to represent their authentic history, see Ivanow, Guide, p. 76; also his Ismaili Literature, p. 96, and Poonawala, Bio, p. 229.

5. Mian Bhai Mulla Abdul Husain, Gulzare Daudi, for the Bohras of India (Ahmedabad, 1920).


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18. Ibid., text pp. 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, 22, 23 and 24.


20. This sijill is preserved in the first volume of the Majmū‘ al-tarbiya, a chrestomathy of Ismā‘ili literature compiled by Muhammad b. Ţāhir al-Ḥārithī (d. 584/1188), and in the seventh volume of the ‘Uyūn al-akhbār of Idrīs; it is also quoted in ‘Umāra, Ta‘rikh, text pp. 100-102, translation pp. 135-136.


Tuwayr according to which al-Ámir, shortly before his death, had prophesied his assassination and had in effect revoked his nass for al-Ṭayyib in favour of the expected posthumous child.


40. The account of this embassy, not recorded by Muslim chroniclers, is related in William of Tyre, Historia rerum in patribus transmarinis gestarum, book 19, chaps. 19-20.


43. The extant anonymous al-Qaṣida al-Shāfiyya, ed. and tr. S. N. Makarem (Beirut, 1966), also edited by 'Ā. Tāmir (Beirut, 1967), was, however, originally composed by a Ḥāfiẓī poet and then revised by a Nizārī author. See W. Madelung's review of these editions in ZDMG, 118 (1968), pp. 423-424, and Orients, 23-24 (1970-1971), pp. 517-518.
For the fullest account of these pro-Fāṭimid revolts, and the situation of the Fāṭimid rulers after the fall of their dynasty, see P. Casanova, ‘Les Derniers Fāṭimides’, Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique Française du Caire, 6 (1897), pp. 415-445.


61. Ibid., pp. 301–303.

62. This episode is related by Idris in the seventh volume of his ‘Uyūn al-akhbār; the relevant passage is quoted in Stern, ‘Succession’, pp. 252–253.


64. The Zura‘y’id Muhammad b. Saba’ had refused, in 549/1154, to help ‘Ali b. Mahdi in his conquest of Zabid; see ‘Umāra, Ta‘rikh, text p. 95, translation pp. 127–128. ‘Umāra was present at the Zura‘y’id court in Dhū Jibla when the Mahdī arrived seeking assistance.


67. This treatise, the Tuhfat al-murtād, may be found in Gnosis-Texte der Ismailiten, ed. Strothmann, pp. 159–170.


70. For the most detailed modern account of the establishment of the Tayyibi da'wa in Yemen, see al-Hamdâni, 'Doctrines and History of the Iṣmâ‘ili Da’wat in Yemen', and also his al-Ṣulayḥiyûn. The late Husayn al-Hamdâni, who had access to a family collection of Iṣmâ‘ili manuscripts, was the first modern Iṣmâ‘ili scholar to base his pioneering studies of Yemen Iṣmâ‘ilism on genuine sectarian sources.


73. According to a legend, known to the Tayyibis, al-Tayyib lived in a remote district of the Maghrib; see Stern, 'Succession', pp. 201–202.


75. The passages regarding these sermons, as preserved in the *Uyûn al-akhbâr* of Idrîs, are translated in Stern, 'Succession', pp. 224–225.


78. See Hamdani, 'Ḍâ‘i Ḥàtim', pp. 262–263.


82. This testament, also containing a detailed description of her jewellery, has been preserved in the *Uyûn al-akhbâr*, vol. 7, quoted in al-Hamdâni, al-Ṣulayḥiyûn, pp. 323–330. The mausoleum of this celebrated queen, who ruled for more than sixty years, still exists in Dhū Jîbla and is visited by members of different Muslim sects, see al-Hamdâni, 'Doctrines and History', pp. 45–46, and also his 'Life and Times of Queen Saiyidah', p. 515.

83. The earliest history of the Tayyibi da‘wa in Yemen is related by Ḥàtim b. Ibârîm in his unpublished *Tuḥfat al-qulûb*. Idrîs, too, has biographical details on al-Dhû‘ayb and his successors in his *Uyûn al-akhbâr*, vol. 7, and *Nuzhât al-afkâr*, both still in manuscript form. On al-Dhû‘ayb's life and


86. See *‘Umāra, Ta‘rīkh*, text p. 102, translation p. 137, where it is stated that al-Sayyida in 526 A.H. nominated Ibrāhīm as the chief *dā‘ī* before transferring the headship of the *dā‘wa* on behalf of al-Ḥāfīz to the Zuray’ids. These statements are not corroborated by the Ṭayyibi tradition and this confused passage of *‘Umāra* seems to have been subjected to later interpolations; see also Stern, *‘Succession’*, pp. 215ff. and 228, and Hamdānī, ‘Dā‘ī Ḥātim’, pp. 273–274.


110. See al-Majdu’, *Fiḥrist*, pp. 37–38; Muḥammad ‘Alī, *Mawsim-i bahār*, vol. 3,
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112. Biographical details on the Dā'ūdi dā'īs are contained in Qutb al-Dīn Burhānūrī's Muntaza' al-akhbār, vol. 2, and in Muḥammad 'Ali, Mawsim-i bahār, vol. 3. The Sulaymānīs have produced very few works, and information on their dā'īs is rather scarce. Lists of the Mustaʿlī-Tayyibī dā'īs and the separate dā'īs of the Dā'ūdis and Sulaymānīs may be found in the prayer books, the Şahifat al-salāt, of the Dā'ūdis (Bombay, 1344/1925), pp. 277-342 and the Sulaymānīs (Bombay, 1340/1921), pp. 547-552, with more recent editions available of both documents, in Abdul Husain, Culzare Daudi, pp. 35-43, and in A. A. Fyzee, 'A Chronological List of the Imams and Da'īs of the Musta'lian Ismailis', JBBRAS, NS, 10 (1934), pp. 8-16; also his 'Three Sulaymani Da'īs: 1936-1939', JBBRAS, NS, 16 (1940), pp. 101-104; Hollister, Shi'a, pp. 266-267 and 274-275; Ghālib, A'lām, table no. 3 in appendix, and Poonawala, Bio, pp. 364-369.


114. For the complete list, supplied by the present dā'ī of the 'Aliyya, see Poonawala, Bio, pp. 369-370.

115. Qutbkhān is highly revered by the Dā'ūdīs as a shahīd or martyr, and his tomb is a well-known Bohra shrine at Aḥmadābād; see Muḥammad 'Ali, Mawsim-i bahār, vol. 3, pp. 280-296, and Misra, Muslim Communities, pp. 32-34.


120. On this document known as the 'Ahd-nāma, which was subsequently
destroyed, see Fayḍ Allāh b. Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Hamdānī, 'Agīda-yī "Burhāniyya (Sūrat, 1966), containing the Gujarāṭi translation and analysis of the document in question; see also Poonawala, Bio, pp. 230 and 238-239.


122. For a reference to one of these treatises, written by Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Hamdānī, see Poonawala, Bio, p. 228.

123. For a detailed account of the history of the reformist movement in the Dāʿūdī Bohra community, written by an active reformer, see Engineer, Bohras, pp. 165-281 and 303-323.


132. This estimate is based on the adjustment of some older figures, allowing for natural population increases at an average annual rate of 3 per cent during the intervening years; see Fyzee, 'A Chronological List', p. 16; also his Outlines of Muhammadan Law, p. 73, and William H. Ingrams, 'Yemen', Encyclopaedia Britannica (1968 edition), vol. 23, p. 887. On the present situation of the Tāyyībīs of Yaman, see T. Gerholm, Market, Mosque and Mafrag (Stockholm, 1977).


6. Nizārī Ismā‘īlīsm of the Alamūt period


6. As noted, M. T. Dānishpażuhū prepared an edition of Abu'l-Qāsim Kāshānī’s history of the Ismā‘ilīs, on the basis of a single manuscript copy, under the title of Zubdat al-tawārīkh; ta'rikh-i Ismā‘iliyya va Nizāriyya va Malāhīda, which appeared in Revue de la Faculté des Lettres, Université de Tabriz, Supplément no. 9 (1343/1964), pp. 1–215. More recently, Dānishpażuhū has produced a better edition of this history, based on the same manuscript copy dated 989/1581; see Kāshānī, Zubdat al-tawārīkh; bakhsh-i Fāṭimīyān va Nizāriyān, ed. M. T. Dānishpażuhū (2nd ed., Tehran, 1366/1987). Our references in this book are to the first edition of Kāshānī’s history. Juwayni’s Ta’rikh was introduced to the orientalists of the nineteenth century by Constantin M. d’Ohsson (1779–1851), who made extensive use of it in his Histoire des Mongols (1st ed., Paris, 1824; 2nd ed., The Hague–Amsterdam, 1834–1835), while Rashid al-Dīn’s section on the Ismā‘ilīs was known in manuscript form long before it was published. But Kāshānī’s version does not seem to have been utilized by scholars until its publication in 1964.


other early Saljūq chronicles, see Cl. Cahen, 'The Historiography of the Seljuq Period', in Historians of the Middle East, ed. B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (London, 1964), especially pp. 68–76.


16. Most of these inscriptions were studied by Max van Berchem who presented the results in his 'Épigraphie des Assassins de Syrie', pp. 453–501, reprinted in his Opera Minora, vol. 1, pp. 453–501.

17. Claude Cahen has listed and analyzed most of these Arabic sources in his La Syrie du Nord à l'époque des Croisades (Paris, 1940), pp. 33–93. See also Sauvaget, Introduction to the History of the Muslim East, pp. 162ff.; F. Gabrieli, 'The Arabic Historiography of the Crusades', in Historians of the Middle East, pp. 98–107, and Elisséeff, Nūr ad-Dīn, vol. 1, pp. 9–81.


21. Passages from this chronicle, as noted, appeared in Cl. Cahen's 'Une chronique Syrienne du VIe/XIIe siècle: Le Bustān al-Jāmī', pp. 113–158, hereafter referred to as Bustān.


23. As noted, the title of this book, published in 1955 and reprinted with the same pagination (New York, 1980), is The Order of Assassins; the Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs against the Islamic World, hereafter cited as Order; Persian translation, Firqa-yi Ismāʿīliyya, tr. F. Badraʿī (Tabrīz, 1343/1964; 2nd ed.,

24. Lewis’s The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam has also been translated into Persian by F. Badra’i, Fidā‘iyyān-i Ismā‘ili (Tehran, 1348/1969), reproduced with some revisions, under the title of Ismā‘iliyān-i Nizārī, in B. Lewis, Ta’rikh-i Ismā‘iliyān, tr. F. Badra’i (Tehran, 1362/1984), pp. 135–319, also containing the Persian translation of Lewis’s The Origins of Ismā‘ilism, pp. 1–113; French translation, Les Assassins: Terrorisme et politique dans l’Islam médiéval, tr. A. Péliissier (Paris, 1982), also (Brussels, 1984). P. Filippini-Ronconi devoted the greater part of his book, Ismaeliti ed ‘Assassinì, pp. 107–265, to the history of the Nizārī state. For the sake of completeness, mention may also be made of A. S. Picklay, History of the Ismailis (Bombay, 1940), a popular account written by an Indian Ismā‘ili; the already-cited Jean-Claude Frère’s L’Ordre des Assassins, another popular account, and E. Franzius, History of the Order of Assassins (New York, 1969), a brief but scholarly treatment of the Nizārīs of the Alamūt and post-Alamūt periods. It may also be noted here that I. P. Petrushevsky (1898–1977) in the chapter dealing with the Ismā‘ilīs, the Qarمش and the Shi‘i Ghulāt in his Islam in Iran adopted a Marxist approach and viewed the struggles of the Nizārīs in terms of class conflicts. According to him, the Nizārīs represented the rural and the lower social classes in the urban areas who fought against the Saljūqs and other feudal rulers; see Petrushevsky, Islām dar Īrān, pp. 309–320; tr. Evans, Islam in Iran, pp. 248–258; for similar views see L. V. Stroeva’s chapter on the Persian Ismā‘ilīs in N. V. Pigulevskaya et al., Istoriya Īrāna (Leningrad, 1958); Persian translation, Ta’rikh-i Īrān, tr. Karim Kishāvarz (Tehran, 1354/1975), pp. 276ff.


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48. See Amin Hahī, ‘The succession to the Fatimid Imam al-Mustansir Bi-llaḥ (427–487/1036–1094) and the Rise of Nizari Isma’ilism’, in Proceedings of the Symposium on Fāṭimid History and Art, ed. M. Brett and G. Feurvārī (forthcoming), where it is also argued that a group of the Nizāris refused to accept Nizār’s death and awaited his return as the Mahdi until shortly after the declaration of the qiyyâma at Alamūt.


50. Casanova, ‘Monnaie des Assassins de Perse’, p. 345. See also G. C. Miles,


54. See W. Ivanow, ‘An Ismaili Poem in Praise of Fidawis’, *JBBRAS*, NS, 14 (1938), pp. 63–72, containing excerpts of poems composed by the raʿis Ḥasan b. Ṣalāḥ Bīrjandi, a secretary (muntushi) to Shihāb al-Dīn, the Nizārī chief of Quhistān during the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century. This Nizārī author-poet had evidently also written a history of the Nizārī state in Persia, which has not survived but was used by Rashīd al-Dīn, as stated in his history of Ismāʿīlimism, pp. 153 and 161. See Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, p. 134, and Poonawala, *Biō*, pp. 259–260.


59. Ibid., vol. 10, p. 137.


the event a year earlier. See also Lewis, ‘Sources’, pp. 485–486, relating the accounts of different authorities; Grousset, Croisades, vol. 1, pp. 338–340 and 387, and Runciman, A History of the Crusades, vol. 2, pp. 119–120.


73. Ibn al-Balkhi, Fârs-nâmâ, pp. 148 and 158.

74. On Muḥammad Tapar’s campaigns against the Nizâris of Rûdbâr, see
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95. Rashîd al-Dîn, p. 138, and Kâshânî, p. 158; while Hâfîz Abrû does not mention this detail. Both Rashîd al-Dîn, p. 122, and Kâshânî, p. 144, also give earlier dates, 490 and 497 A.H., respectively, for the construction of
Maymundiz. According to Juwaynî, vol. 3, pp. 122–123, tr. Boyle, vol. 2, p. 627, Maymundiz was built sometime during the reign of 'Alî al-Dîn Muhammad III (618–653/1221–1255), the penultimate lord of Alamût. The site of Maymundiz, located to the north of the present-day village of Shams Kilâyâ and westward from Alamût, was identified in 1960 by an expeditionary group organized at Oxford University for exploring the Nizârî castles of northern Persia; see Willey, Castles of the Assassins, pp. 158–192. For other views on the site of Maymundiz, see Ivanow, Alamût and Lamasar, pp. 75–81; Varjâvand, Sarzamin-i Qazvin, pp. 207 and 234–240, and Sutûda, Qilâ', pp. 108–122. Dr Sutûda, who is well acquainted with the area, rejects the validity of the identification made by Willey’s expedition.


113. Qadmūs has remained a major Nizārī centre in Syria, and the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of that stronghold are still reflected in the traditions of the Nizārīs living there. In 1850, the Nizārīs of Qadmūs related to the British traveller Frederick Walpole (1822–1876) that their ancestors
had migrated to that place in large numbers from Damascus in mediaeval times; see F. Walpole, *The Ansaryrii (or Assassins), with Travels in the Further East in 1850-51* (London, 1851), vol. 3, pp. 299-303.


120. On the territorial structure and stability of the Nizāri period, see Hodgson, *Order*, pp. 115-120 and 244ff., and also his ‘State’, pp. 447-449 and 455-457.


143. See, for example, Abū Ishāq, Haft bāb, text pp. 23–24, translation p. 23; Khayrkhwāh, Kalām-i pir, text p. 51, translation p. 44, and Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh al-Husaynī, Khībatāt-ī ‘āliya, ed. H. Ujāqī (Bombay, 1963), pp. 37–39. A more elaborate, but highly confused and anachronistic, account of the Nizārid Fāṭimid genealogy of Hasan II and the reign of his ancestors in Persia, is related by the modern Nizārī historian and poet Muhammad b. Zayn al-‘Ābidin Khurāsānī, better known as Fidā‘ī Khurāsānī (d. 1923), in his Kitāb-i hidāyat al-mu‘minin al-tālibīn, ed. A. A. Semenov (Moscow, 1959), pp. 104–111. Both Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh (d. 1884), the eldest son of the second Aghā Khān, and Fidā‘ī relate that it was Nizār’s son al-Hādī who was secretly brought to Alamūt. See also Tāmir, al-Imāma, pp. 192 and 217–219; Ghālib,
The three categories, with their particular attributes, are explained in the

The doctrine of the qiyāma, as elaborated under Muḥammad II, is pro-

The best modern exposition of the fully developed doctrine of the

The spiritual resurrection of the

144. The doctrine of the qiyāma, as elaborated under Muḥammad II, is pro-
pounded in the anonymous Haft bāḥ-i Bābā Sayyidnā, in Two Early Ismaīlī T


146. The spiritual resurrection of the Nizārīs is expounded in al-Ṭūsī, Rawdat al-taslim, text pp. 47–56, translation pp. 52–63.


152. The only Nizārī biography of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān is the so-called Fāṣl min al-
lafz al-sharif, ḥādhīhi manāqib al-mawālī Rāshid al-Dīn, a hagiographic work
containing various anecdotes based on the oral tradition of the Syrian Nizāris,
written by a certain Abū Firās, now generally identified with the Syrian dāʾī
Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Firās, who died towards the middle of the tenth/sixteenth
century. This work was first published with French translation by S. Guyard
under the title of 'Un Grand Maître des Assassins au temps de Saladin', JA, 7
série, 9 (1877), translation pp. 387–450, text pp. 452–489; Guyard had earlier
published excerpts of this work, from an anonymous Ismāʿīlī collection, in
his Fragments relatifs à la doctrine des Ismaélis. The entire text of the Fāṣl
was republished by Mehmed Şerefüddin in Darülfünnun Ilahiyat Fakültesi Mecmu-
asi, 2, no. 7 (Istanbul, 1928), pp. 45–71; and M. Ghālib produced a new
edition of the text in his Sinān Rāshid al-Dīn, Shaykh al-Jabal al-thālith (Beirut,
1967), pp. 163–214. Our references to the Fāṣl are to its text and translation
contained in Guyard's article. Amongst the non-Ismāʿīlī sources, the most
important biographical account of Sinān is related by Ibn al-'Adim (d. 660/
1262) in his Buḫyat al-talab fi taʾrīkh Ḥalaḥ. The volume of the Buḫyat
containing Sinān's biography has not so far been recovered, but the bulk of
its text has survived indirectly in at least three recensions in the works of
Qutb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī (d. 762/1362), Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabi (d. 748/
1348), and Khalil b. Aybak al-Šafādī (d. 764/1363). Al-Yūnīnī's text, the
fullest of the three recensions, has served as the chief source for the edition
produced by B. Lewis in his 'Three Biographies from Kamāl ad-Dīn', pp.
336–344; a better edition with English translation is contained in B. Lewis,
'Kamāl al-Dīn's Biography of Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān', pp. 225–267, reprinted in
his Studies in Classical and Ottoman Islam. Of the secondary sources on the
career of Sinān and his times, mention may be made of Quatremère, 'Notice
historique sur les Ismaéliens', pp. 339–376; Defrémery, 'Ismaéliens de Syrie',
JA, 5 (1855), pp. 1–32; Lewis, 'Ismāʾīlites and the Assassins', pp. 120–127;
also his Assassins, pp. 110–118; Hodgson, Order, pp. 185–207; Mirza, 'Syrian
Ismāʾīlīs', pp. 28ff., 40–77, 156–163 and 166–173; also his 'Rashid al-Dīn
Sinān', in Great Ismaīli Heroes, pp. 72–80; Filippiani-Ronconi, Ismeli, pp.
201–222; 'Abd Allāh b. al-Murtaḍa al-Khwābī, al-Falak al-dawwār (Aleppo,
1933), pp. 207–221; 'Ārif Tāmir, Sinān wa Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Beirut, 1956);
Ḥusayn, Taʾīfat al-Ismāʾīliyya, pp. 99–106; Ghālib, Taʾrīkh, pp. 278–283; also
his Aʾlām, pp. 295–303; Poonawala, Bio, pp. 289–290; Ivanow, Ismaili
Literature, pp. 169–170 and 173, and also his 'Rāshid al-Dīn Sinān', EI, vol. 3,
pp. 1123–1124.


Sinān waited for seven years at Kahf, teaching children and healing the sick.
This period of waiting seems to be long, unless, as Hodgson, Order, p. 186,
has suggested, it is assumed that Sinān left Alamūt a few years before Ḥasan
II's accession, perhaps fearing persecution by Muhammad b. Buzurg-
Ummid. On this point, see also Lewis, 'Kamāl al-Dīn's Biography', p. 251.

155. On the acquisition, fortification and construction of castles by Sinān, see Abū


164. *Bustān*, p. 136, under the year 561/1165–1166 reports that the Syrian Ḥisma’ilis changed their doctrine, ate and drank during the month of Ramaḍān, and stopped praying; and al-Ḥamawi, *al-Ta’rikh al-Mansūrī*, p. 176, records the same event under the year 561/1165–1166, naming Sinān as its instigator. Al-Dḥahābī and Ibn al-‘Adīm also relate that Sinān broke the fast of Ramadān and abolished the Shari’a; see Lewis, ‘Kamāl al-Dīn’s Biography’, pp. 230, 241 and 261.


Dawādārī, Kanz, vol. 7, p. 120, and Ibn Taghibirdi, al-Nujūm, vol. 6, p. 117.


186. On the campaign against Menglí, see Juwayni, vol. 3, pp. 245-246, tr.

Ibid., p. 38.


Al-Ṭūsī, Sayr va sulūk, especially pp. 38-42, 46, 51-52 and 54-55.

Ibid., p. 38.

Al-Ṭūsī’s chief work dealing with the doctrine of the satr is the Rawḍat al-
Jizjini, Al-Nasawi, On these interferences and the prosperous conditions of the
taslim, a detailed exposition of Nizârî thought after the qiyâma times,
reflecting the modifications of Muhammad III’s period; a briefer treatment of
the subject, designed for the ordinary members of the sect, is given in his
Other works of al-Ţūsî, especially his Sayr va sulûk, are also relevant here; see
As noted, Ithnâ’ashari scholars in general reject the attribution of these
Ismâ’îli works to Naṣîr al-Dîn al-Ţûsî. The best modern exposition of the
dogma of the sârî may be found in Hodgson, Order, pp. 225–238, and also
his ‘State’, pp. 472–475.

145, translation pp. 69, 115–116, 126 and 136; Abû Ishâq, Haft bâb, text p. 43,
translation p. 43; Khayrkhwâh, Kalâm-i pîr, text p. 67, translation pp. 62–63,
and also his Taṣûnîfât, pp. 18–19.

194. Rawdat al-taslim, text p. 119, translation p. 138; Abû Ishâq, Haft bâb, text
p. 38, translation pp. 38–39, and Khayrkhwâh, Kalâm-i pîr, text p. 63,
translation p. 58.

195. Rawdat al-taslim, text p. 61, translation pp. 67–68; Abû Ishâq, Haft bâb, text

196. Rawdat al-taslim, text pp. 61, 132–133, 147 and 149, translation pp. 67–68,
154–155, 173 and 175; see also Abû Ishâq, Haft bâb, text pp. 11–12 and 39,
translation pp. 11–12 and 39; Khayrkhwâh, Kalâm-i pîr, text pp. 19 and 64,
translation pp. 13 and 58–59, also his Fasl dar hayân-i shinâkht-i imâm, ed. W.
Ivanow (3rd ed., Tehran, 1966), pp. 1–2 and 28; English translation, On the
Recognition of the Imam, tr. W. Ivanow (2nd ed., Bombay, 1947), pp. 18 and
43.


198. Rawdat al-taslim, text pp. 76, 82, 83ff., 100, 104–105, 122–123, 126 and 127,
translation pp. 86–87, 92–93, 94ff., 114, 119, 143, 147 and 148; Matlûb al-
mu’minîn, pp. 48–49; Abû Ishâq, Haft bâb, text pp. 16, 17, 43 and 50,
translation pp. 16, 17, 44 and 50, and Khayrkhwâh, Kalâm-i pîr, text pp. 22,
26, 68 and 94, translation pp. 17, 21, 63 and 88.

54–55.

200. Rawdat al-taslim, text pp. 42, 76–77 and 83–84, translation pp. 46–47, 87 and
94–95.

1197–1205 and 1212–1214.

202. On these interferences and the prosperous conditions of the Quhistânî
Nizârîs at the time, see Jûzjânî, Ţabaqât, vol. 1, pp. 282–283 and 284–285,

p. 95.
204. Al-Nasawi, *Histoire*, vol. 1, p. 168, and vol. 2, pp. 280–281; the section dealing with the letter of Siraj al-Din al-Muzaffar, the Syrian Nizari chief, sent to the Anatolian ruler, and a few other sections, were omitted in the anonymous Persian translation of al-Nasawi’s *Sirat-i Jalal al-Din*.


207. Sec, for instance, Dawlatshāh, *Tadhkikat al-shu’ara*, p. 195; al-Shūshtarī, *Majalis al-mu’minin*, vol. 2, p. 110, and A. Semenov, ‘Sheikh Dzhelal-ud-Din-Rūmī po predstavleniyam Shughanskikh Ismailitov’, analyzing the ideas of the Nizāris of Shughnān on Jalāl al-Din Rūmī who is considered, by the contemporary Nizāris of Central Asia and some other regions, to have been one of their co-religionists.


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226. Ibid., p. 348.

227. Ibid., pp. 335-336.

228. Ibid., pp. 340-341.


235. This is the date given by Juwayni, vol. 3, pp. 133 and 267, who witnessed Khurshāh’s surrender. In his history of Hülegū, Rashid al-Din places this event a day later, on 1 Dhu’l-Qa‘da/20 November, also quoting a chronogram composed to that effect by Naṣīr al-Din al-Ṭūsī; see Jāmi’ al-


242. Rashīd al-Dīn, Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh, ed. Quatremère, pp. 212–213; ed. Alizade, pp. 15–16 and 140; ed. Karimi, vol. 2, pp. 695 and 766, and Rashīd al-Dīn, Ta’rīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī; dar dāstān-i Abāghā Khān va Sultān Ahmad va Arghūn Khān va Gaykhātu Khān, ed. K. Jahn (Prague, 1941), p. 29, reprinted (The Hague, 1957), p. 29. See also Jūzjānī, Ṭabaqāt, vol. 2, p. 186; tr. Raverty, vol. 2, pp. 1206–1211, stating that the garrison of Girdkūh, reduced to one or two hundred men, was still holding out against the Mongols in 658/1260, when Jūzjānī was writing. Of the key Nizārī castles in Persia, Girdkūh is the one least studied in modern times. The rock of Girdkūh and the remains of its fortifications, including those of its three outer walls, visited in 1985 by the author, are indeed impressive. The ruins of the living quarters built by the besieging Mongols and the two different types of mangonel stones, used by the Nizārīs and the Mongols, which are still scattered on the northeastern slope of the Girdkūh rock, attest to the fierce and extended fighting that occurred during the siege of Girdkūh.


7. Post-Alamut Nizari Isma‘ilism

1. For descriptions of the few Muhammed-Shahi works recovered so far, see Ivanow, Ismaili Literature, pp. 165–167, and Poonawala, Bio, pp. 270–275, 278 and 280–281.

2. Ivanow, Brief, p. 29; also his Ismaili Literature, pp. 10–11; Corbin, Histoire, pp. 139–140, and also his 'La Philosophie Islamique depuis la mort d'Aver-
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7. Details on Fidā'i’s life and works were given to the author by his grandson, Sadr al-Dīn Mirshāhī, who mentions some of this information in his unpublished biography of Fidā'i as well as in the introduction to one of his collections of Fidā'i’s works. This collection, copied by Mr Mirshāhī from autograph manuscript copies, includes the Kashf al-haqā’iq, Irshād al-sālikīn, Hilāyat al-mu’minīn, and Fidā'i’s correspondence with Shaykh Sulaymān, a Syrian Nizārī leader from Salamiyya. I would like to express my gratitude to Mr Mirshāhī for having given me a copy of this collection. Unfortunately, the original manuscripts of some of Fidā'i’s works have been taken by different persons from his descendants on the pretence of publishing them. On Fidā'i, see A. A. Semenov, ‘Ismailitsky panegirik obozhevlennomu ‘Aliyu Fedai Khorasanskogo’, Iran, 3 (1929), pp. 5ff.; Semenov’s introductory section to his edition of Fidā'i’s Hilāyat al-mu’minīn, pp. 5–24, reprinted recently (without Semenov’s Russian introduction) with the same pagination (Tehran, 1362/1983); Ivanow’s introduction to Khayrkhwāh’s Faṣl, pp. 2–3; Ivanow, Guide, p. 117; also his Ismaili Literature, pp. 153–154, and Poonawala, Bio, pp. 284–285.


10. See Ivanow’s foreword to Suhrāb Valī Badakhshānī’s Si va shish sahīfa, pp. 9–15; Ghālib, A’lām, pp. 304–305, wrongly attributing a number of anonymous works to this author; Ivanow, Ismaili Literature, pp. 163–164, and Poonawala, Bio, pp. 267–268.


16. Amongst these works, the most important are S. Nanjiani, Khōja Vrattan (Ahmedabad, 1892; 2nd ed., Ahmedabad, 1918); J. Rahimtoola, Khōja Konno Ithihas (Bombay, 1905); Š Pirzāda Dargāhvālā, Tawārikh-i Pir (Navsari, 1914–1935), 2 vols.; Contractor, Pirana Satpanth ni Pol, and Alimahomed J. Chunara, Noorum Mobin (Bombay, 1936), representing the official view of the Nizārī Khojis. Our references are to the Urdu translation of this work, Nūr-i muḥin (Bombay, 1936). For further items in this category, see Misra, Muslim Communities, pp. 190–191.


This date is given in one of Nīzārī’s poems, cited in Baradin, ‘Ḥakim Nīzārī’, p. 191, and in Baiburdi, Zhizn, p. 90. Before setting off on this journey, Nīzārī travelled widely in Qūhistān, and he relates that many former Nīzārī villages in Qūhistān had remained deserted; see I. P. Petrushevsky, ‘The Socio-Economic Conditions of Iran under the Īl-Khāns’, in Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 5, p. 488, citing this information from a manuscript of Nīzārī’s Kulliyyāt preserved at the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik S.S.S.R., Dushanbe; see also A. M. Boldyrev et al., Katalog Vostochnykh rukopisei, Akademii Nauk Tadzhikskoi S.S.S.R. (Dushanbe, 1960–1970), vol. 2, pp. 142–145.

Cited in Baiburdi, Zhizn, pp. 158 and 162.


W. Ivanow was the first Western scholar who referred to these Muhammad-Shāhī authors and to the schism in question, see several of his works, ‘An Ismailitic Pedigree’, JASB, NS, 18 (1922), pp. 403–406; Concise Descriptive


29. This is reported by Zahir al-Dīn Marʿashi in his Ta'rikh-i Gilān, ed. Rabino, p. 64; ed. Sutūda, p. 65, a work completed in 881/1476-1477 and later continued by its author to the year 894/1489.


35. See, for example, Ivanow, *Brief*, p. 18, and Corbin, *Étude*, pp. 23–24.


37. This anonymous Nīzārī commentary entitled *Ba’dī az ta’wilāt-i gulshan-i rāz* has been edited and translated into French with commentaries by H. Corbin.


On Ḥaydar Āmūli’s thought and the relationship between Shi’ism and Sūfism in general, see al-Shūshtarī, Majālis al-mu′minin, vol. 2, pp. 51-54; Corbin, Histoire, pp. 47ff., 56, 70-71, 88ff., 98, 141 and 300; and his En Islam Iranien, vol. 1, pp. 74-85, and vol. 3, pp. 149-213; Kāmil M. al-Shaybī, Tashayyu′ wa ṭaṣawwuf, tr. ‘Ali Ridā Dh. Qaraguzlū (Tehran, 1359/1980), pp. 64-71 and 112-123, being a translation of al-Shaybī’s al-Fikr al-Shī′a wa′l-nazā′īt al-sūfīyya (Baghdad, 1386/1966), and J. van Ess, ‘Ḥaydār-i Āmūli’, El2, Supplement, pp. 363-365, where further sources are cited. See also S. H. Nasr, Sufi Essays (London, 1972), pp. 104-120, and also his Ideals, pp. 121-146.


On the Ḥurūfīs and the Nuqtawis and their doctrines, which have barely been investigated, see the pioneering studies of E. G. Browne, especially his ‘Some Notes on the Literature and Doctrines of the Ḥurūfī Sect’, JRAS (1898), pp. 61-94; ‘Further Notes on the Literature of the Hurufis and their Connection with the Bektashi Order of Dervishes’, JRAS (1907), pp. 533-581, and A History of Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion, pp. 365-375 and 449-452. Clément Huart edited and translated into French a number of Persian Ḥurūfī texts in a collection entitled Textes Persans relatifs à la secte des
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51. The earliest lists of the Qasim-Shahi Nizari Imams of the Anjudan period are contained in Abu Ishaq, Haft bah, text p. 24, and in Khayrkhwa, Kalam-i pirm text p. 51; Khayrkhwa's list has been continued for several generations by later scribes. The versified list given in the Qasida-yi dhurriyya composed by Ali Quli Raqqami Dizbadi, ed. semenov in 'Imailitskaya oda', pp. 8-13, is extended down to the forty-eighth imam, Sultan Muhammad Shah, Agha Khani III, probably by Fida'i Khurassani; in some manuscripts, Raqqami's father Khaki Khurassani is named as the original composer of this poem. The imams are listed also in Shihab al-Din Shih, Khitabat, pp. 42-43 and 45. See also Ivanow, 'Imailitsita', pp. 67 and 68; Mujtaba Ali, Origin of the Khojahs, pp. 54-58; Hollister, Shi'a, p. 332; Ghailib, Ta'rikh, table 4 at the end of the book; also his A'lam, table 4; Taimir, al-Imama, pp. 159-161 and 178-179, and Nanji, Nizari Tradition, pp. 141-142. The official list of the imams currently circulating amongst the Agha Khani Nizaris is cited, for instance, in Sherali Alidina's genealogical chart in Kassim Ali, Ever Living Guide, published by the Ismailia Association Pakistan, Karachi, reproduced in Poonawala, Bio, pp. 372-373, and at the end of the daily prayers recited regularly by the modern-day Nizaris. The list appearing at the end of one of these du'as was given to the author in 1985 at Mashhad by the leaders of the Persian Nizari community of Khurasan. Brief biographical notices on the imams of the Anjudan period after Mustansir bi'llah II, with few reliable details, are given in Ghailib, Ta'rikh, pp. 304-319; also his A'lam, pp. 285-286, 332-335, 412-413, 491-492, 508-509 and 575-576, and Taimir, al-Imama, pp. 222-225. Fida'i, Hidayat al-mu'minin, pp. 133-140, has only praises for the imams without supplying any particular biographical details.

52. On the political situation of Persia between the collapse of the Ilkhaniid empire and the establishment of the Safavid dynasty, see Hans R. Roemer's articles 'The Jalayirids, Muzaffarids and Sarbadars', 'Timur in Iran', 'The Successors of Timur', and 'The Turkmen Dynasties', in Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 6, pp. 1-188.


55. On the spread of Shi'ism through the Sufi orders in pre-Safavid Persia, and the activities of certain Shi'i-related movements of social protest during this period, see al-Shayb, Tashayyu' wa ta'sawuff, pp. 115-340; Petrushevsky, Islam dar Irân, pp. 371-398; tr. Evans, pp. 302-326; Hodgson, Venture of Islam, vol. 2, pp. 455ff. and 490-500; Michel M. Mazzaoui, The Origins of the


58. Shāh Ni'mat Allāh has referred to his genealogy in one of his risālas which remains unpublished, and in a poem; see his Kulliyāyat-i dīwān, ed. M. 'Illmī (Tehran, 1333/1954), pp. 585-586. This poem and the genealogy derived from it are reproduced in near-contemporary biographies written by 'Abd al-Razzāq Kirmānī (d. after 911/1505) and 'Abd al-'Azīz Wā'īzī (d. after 839/1436), edited by Aubin in Matériaux, pp. 21-23 and 274-276, respectively. See also Zayn al-Abīdīn Shīrvānī, Bustān al-siyāhā (Tehran, 1310/1893), p. 526; also his Riyād al-siyāhā, p. 583; Ma'sūm 'Ali Shāh, Ṭarā'īq al-ḥaqa'īq, vol. 3, pp. 1-2, and Hīdāyāt, Riyād al-ārīfīn, p. 232.


60. See Muḥammad Mūfīd Yazdī, Jāmī'-i Mūfīdī, in Aubin, Matériaux, pp. 199-
268, and N. Pourjavady and P. L. Wilson, 'The Descendants of Shāh

61. On the Safawi Ṣūfī order and the background to the establishment of
Safavid rule in Persia, see Mazzaoui, * Origins of the Safawids*, pp. 41–63 and
71–82; R. Savory, * Iran under the Safavids* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 1–26; H. R.
Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, pp. 189–
3–29; all four citing the primary sources on the subject.


63. Mustansīr bi’llah II, *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī*, ed. and tr. W. Ivanow (Leiden,
Tradition*, pp. 27, 65, 80–81, 85–86 and 89; Ivanow, *Guide*, pp. 106–107; and
his *Ismaili Literature*, pp. 139–140; Ivanow’s introduction to the *Pandiyāt*, pp.

64. See *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī*, text pp. 47 and 56, translation pp. 29 and 35.

in *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī*, introduction p. 17.


67. Ibid., text pp. 11, 26, 27, 32, 39, 65, 86 and elsewhere, translation pp. 7, 17,
20, 24, 40 and 53.

68. Ibid., text pp. 2–3, translation p. 2.

69. Ibid., text pp. 3, 11, 13, 14, 16, 21, 25, 27, 32, 36, 37, 39, 41, 42, 45, 46–47,
48–49, 50, 53, 57–58, 60, 62, 65–66, 67, 69, 70–71, 77, 80, 82, 86, 87, 93, 98,
99 and 100–102, translation pp. 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26,
28–29, 30–31, 33, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54, 57–58, 60, 61
and 62–63.

70. Ibid., text pp. 34–36 and 54–55, translation pp. 21–22 and 34.

71. Ibid., text pp. 2, 11, 17, 21, 34, 60, 63–64, 70, 78, 82 and 88–89, translation

72. See, for instance, Khayrkhwāh’s *Taṣnīfāt*, p. 108, and Fasl dar bayān-i
Ivanow, pp. 49–50; the latter treatise emphasizes the paramount importance
of recognizing the sole legitimate imām of the time and his chief deputy or
huja.


74. This date is mentioned by Khayrkhwāh in one of his poems; see his *Taṣnīfāt*,
p. 120.


77. Ibid., p. 51.

78. Ibid., pp. 45–46 and 55.

79. Ibid., pp. 46ff.

80. Ibid., pp. 34 and 50.

81. Khayrkhwāh emphasizes such internal quarrels throughout his *Risāla* and
elsewhere; see, for instance, his Qiṭā‘āt, in his *Taṣnīfāt*, pp. 94ff.

83. The relevant passage from the *Taʾrikh-i afši* is cited in Kiyā, *Nuqtawiyān*, pp. 36–37, and in Falsāfī, *Zindaḡānī-yi Shāh ʿAbbās*, vol. 3, p. 44. The part of the *Taʾrikh-i afši* containing this section was written by Jaʿfar Beg Āṣaf Khan (d. 1021/1612).


85. Khayrkhwāh, *Risāla*, in his *Taṣnīfāt*, p. 52. Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh, *Khitābāt*, pp. 42–43, relates that the thirty-fourth imām, ʿAbbās Shāh, too, was obliged to live for some time away from his ancestral home, hence his epithet of Gharīb Mīrzā.

86. This is the latest date mentioned in his poems; see Khākī Khurāsānī, *Dīwān*, p. 19. In 1985, the author found access at Dizbād to what seemed to be a complete collection of Khākī’s poetical works. Perusing through that manuscript, transcribed by Sayyid Badakhshānī and now owned by ʿAbd al-Sultān b. Mullā ʿAbbās, a descendant of Khākī Khurāsānī, the author did not come across any date later than 1056/1646.


88. Ibid., pp. 10, 12, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 31, 54, 66, 76 and 101.

89. Ibid., pp. 9 and 68–69.


95. Abū Ishāq, Haft bāb, text pp. 53 and 58, translation pp. 53-54 and 58; Khayrkhwāh, Kalām-i pīr, text pp. 95-96 and 100, translation pp. 91 and 96, and also his Taṣnīfāt, pp. 18ff.
96. See Khayrkhwāh’s Taṣnīfāt, pp. 1-35, and his Faṣl, pp. 11-32; tr. Ivanow, pp. 28-48.
97. Abū Ishāq, Haft bāb, text pp. 33 and 50, translation pp. 33 and 50; Khayrkhwāh, Kalām-i pīr, text pp. 58 and 88, translation pp. 52 and 88; also his Faṣl, p. 9; tr. Ivanow, pp. 25-26, and Khāki Khurāsānī, Diwān, pp. 72 and 84.
98. Khayrkhwāh, Taṣnīfāt, pp. 20, 26, 52, 77, 78, 82, 89-90, 100, 102, 116 and 120; and his Faṣl, pp. 11, 13 and 21-22; tr. Ivanow, pp. 28, 30 and 36-37, and Khāki Khurāsānī, Diwān, p. 18.
100. Khayrkhwāh, Taṣnīfāt, pp. 19 and 92-93, and also his Faṣl, pp. 28 and 32; tr. Ivanow, pp. 43 and 48.
101. Abū Ishāq, Haft bāb, text p. 43, translation pp. 43-44; Khayrkhwāh, Kalām-i pīr, text pp. 67-68, translation pp. 63-64, and also his Faṣl, pp. 2 and 4-5; tr. Ivanow, pp. 18-19 and 20-21.
103. Pandiyā-i jawānmārdi, text pp. 48ff., 67, 81-82, 84, 96-97 and 98-100, translation pp. 30ff., 42, 51, 52, 59-60 and 61, also attacking those Shi‘is, notably the Twelvers, who blindly followed their ‘ulama’; see also Khayrkhwāh, Taṣnīfāt, pp. 68 and 91, and also his Faṣl, pp. 32-33; tr. Ivanow, p. 49.
104. The best modern discussion of the spread of the Nizārī da‘wa on the Indian subcontinent during the early post-Alamūt and Anjudān periods may be found in Nanji, Nizārī Tradition, pp. 65-96, based on the ginān literature. The sectarian traditions are reflected also in the account of Misra, Muslim Communities in Gujarat, pp. 54-65. For earlier discussions on the subject, see W. Ivanow, ‘Satpanth’, in Collectanea: vol. 1, pp. 1-54; Ali, Origin of the Khojāhs, pp. 41-44, and Hollister, Shi‘a, pp. 353-362. See also Zawahir Noorally, ‘Hazrat Pir Shamsuddin Sabzwari Multani’; J. H. Lakhani, ‘Pir Sadar Din’, and Abualy A. Aziz, ‘Pir Hasan Kabiruddin’, in Great Ismaili Heroes, pp. 83-86, 87-90 and 91-92; Enthoven, Tribes and Castes of Bombay,


106. Traditions concerning the initial phase of the Nizârî da'wa in India are summarized in the Jannatpuri, a ginân attributed to Imâm Shâh; this and other ginâns are translated into English in V. N. Hooda, 'Some Specimens of Satpanth Literature', in Collectanea: vol. 1, especially pp. 130ff.

107. For the relevant poems naming Qâsim Shâh, included in the so-called Garbi ginâns attributed to Pir Shams al-Din, see Hooda, 'Some Specimens', pp. 60, 68, 70, 73 and 84.


110. Hooda, 'Some Specimens', pp. 106, 114 and 131. According to Shihâb al-Dîn Shâh, Khîtablât, pp. 19-20 and 42, Sadr al-Dîn was a descendant of Muhammad b. Ismâ'îl and he was sent to India from Sabzawâr, Khurâsân, by Islâm Shâh.

111. See Hamdani, Ismâ'îli Da'wa in Northern India, pp. 14-16, and Elliot and Dowson, History of India, vol. 1, pp. 483-497.

112. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Dihlawî, Akhbâr al-akhâyr (Delhi, 1891), pp. 204-205.


116. The account of this visit is related in the Jannatpuri, a ginân attributed to Imâm Shâh and which is translated in Hooda, 'Some Specimens', pp. 122-137; the original text of this ginân, in Gujarâtî written in Khîjkî script, was published in Bombay in 1905.

117. Khayrkhwâh, Risâla, in his Tasniyat, pp. 54 and 60-61.


120. Nanji, Nizārī Tradition, p. 93; see also Misra, Muslim Communities, pp. 64–65.


129. On Nizār II, see Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh, Khītābāt, p. 43; Fīdā‘ī, Hīdāyat al-mu‘minīn, pp. 140–141; Tāmīr, al-Imāma, p. 225; Ghālib, Ta‘rikh, pp. 320–


The sectarian sources do not relate any particular details on this imâm; see Fidâ‘î, Hîdâyât al-mu’minîn, pp. 141–142; Tâmîr, al-Imâmâ, pp. 225–226; Ghâlib, Ta’rikh, pp. 323–325, and also his A’lam, pp. 159–160.


Vazîrî, Ta’rikh, p. 543. The sectarian sources relate only some legendary and anachronistic details on Imâm Hasan ‘Ali; see Shihâb al-Dîn Shâh, Khîtabât, p. 43, stating that Nâdir Shâh persecuted this imâm and eventually blinded him, a story repeated by Fidâ‘î, Hîdâyât al-mu’minîn, pp. 142–143; see also Tâmîr, al-Imâmâ, p. 226; Ghâlib, Ta’rikh, pp. 326–328, and his A’lam, pp. 220–221.


137. See Ivanow, ‘Tombs of Some Persian Ismaili Imams’, pp. 60–61. The grave attributed to Imām Abū’l-Ḥasan is still intact in one of the chambers of the Mushtaqiyā, but the mausoleum of this imām’s relatives which was located near Mushtaqiyā, as reported by Ivanow, who visited the site in 1937, was no longer in existence when the author visited Kirmān in 1975. Imām Abū’l-Ḥasan was a learned man and a friend of the Sūfis; he also patronized the local artists. The author possesses a copy of the Diwān of the famous Persian poet Ḥāfiz, with several miniatures of the Zand period, produced for the private library of this imām.


141. See Mas’ud Mirzā Zill al-Sultān, Sargudhaṣht-i Mas‘ūdi (Tehran, 1325/1907), p. 197. For Fath ‘Āli Shāh’s religious attitude and policy, see Algar, Religion and State in Iran, pp. 45–72.


148. Parts of the high walls and turrets encircling this compound are still in existence in Mahāllāt, in addition to a Husayniyya built by Āghā Khān I. One of the buildings constructed by the Āghā Khān was later used as a residence by the Qājār governors of the locality; see A. Houtum-Schindler, Eastern Persian Iran (London, 1896), p. 92, and Nāṣīr al-Dīn Shāh, Safar-nāma-yi ‘Irāq-i ‘Ajam, p. 31, relating that many of the houses in the Āghā Khān’s
compound were already destroyed when this Qajar monarch passed through Ma'hadat in 1309/1892.

149. 'Ibrat-afzā, p. 13.


154. Ibid., p. 27.

155. On these documents, see Vaziri, Ta'rīkh, pp. 608–609, and Bāstānī Pārizī's comments therein, and Bāstānī Pārizī, Farmānī-farmā-yi 'ālam, pp. 305–306.

156. Āghā Khān I relates his account of this and subsequent campaigns in Kirmān in 'Ibrat-afzā, pp. 30–47.


158. 'Ibrat-afzā, pp. 47–54.

159. See Correspondence Relating to Persia and Afghanistan (London, 1839), pp. 36–37 and 64, citing also a relevant dispatch sent in 1837 by John McNeill, the British minister in Tehran, to Henry J. Palmerston, the foreign secretary in London.

160. The date of 17 Dhu'l-Qa'da 1258 A.H., mentioned in Āghā Khān, 'Ibrat-afzā, ed. Kūhi Kirmānī, p. 56, and reproduced in Algar, 'Revolt of Āghā Khān', p. 77, is a misprint; it is inconsistent with the dates of the Āghā Khān's subsequent activities in Afghanistan. See also Isaac N. Allen, Diary of a March through Sinde and Afghanistan (London, 1843), pp. 200–205, relating interesting details on the situation of Āghā Khān I in Afghanistan.


162. Āghā Khān, 'Ibrat-afzā, pp. 64–65 and 70–73; Hidāyat, Rawdat al-safā-yi

163. ‘Ibrat-afzā, pp. 65ff. and 71ff.


166. ‘Ibrat-afzā, pp. 80–81.

167. I’timād al-Saltāna, Mumtażam-i Nāṣīrī, vol. 3, p. 306, and Buzurg-Ummid, Az māst, p. 18, relating that yet another elephant was sent from India to Nāṣīr al-Dīn Shāh by the Āghā Khān’s family in 1304/1886–1887.


170. The long judgement pertaining to the case of ‘Advocate General of Bombay v. Muhammad Husen Huseni’, known as the Aga Khan Case, as noted, was reported in Bombay High Court Reports, 12 (1866), pp. 323–363, published separately in Bombay in 1867. The text of the judgement may also be found in Picklay, History of the Ismailis, pp. 113–170, and in Fyzee, Cases in the Muhammadan Law of India and Pakistan, pp. 504–549.


173. Aside from Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh’s already-noted Khitābāt-i ʿāliya, see his


175. Aga Khan, Memoirs, p. 34, and Hollister, Shi′a, pp. 391–392.

176. Aga Khan, Memoirs, pp. 56 and 69ff.

177. Ibid., pp. 63–65.

178. Ibid., pp. 72–73.


188. Rules and Regulations of the Khoja Shia Imami Ismailia Council (Zanzibar, 1905).
192. See, for instance, His Royal Highness Prince Aga Khan Ismailia Federal Council for Pakistan, The Constitution of the Councils and Jamats of Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims of Pakistan (Karachi, 1962); Hollister, Shi‘a, pp. 400ff.; Sami


195. The history of the Persian Nizâris and the conditions of their community during the last one and a half centuries have not been adequately studied. W. Ivanow, who on his first visits to Persia spent a few years in Khurâsân during the 1910s, included some notes on the geographical distribution and social conditions of the Persian Isma'ilîs of the time in his *Ismailitica*, pp. 50-58. More recently, Rafique H. Keshavjee conducted field research in Iran investigating the progress made by the Nizâris of Khurâsân; see his *The Quest for Gnosis and the Call of History: Modernization Among the Isma'ilis of Iran* (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1981). The author has obtained much information on the present conditions of the Persian Nizâris from the members of the community in Mashhad, Dizbâd, Mahâllât and Tehran. The leaders of the *jamâ'at* in northern Khurâsân and the members of the Aghâ Khân Committee at Mashhad were particularly helpful in providing details on various socio-economic and religious aspects of the community and its oral traditions. Sadr al-Dîn Mirshâhî, the librarian of the Hâkim Nâsîr-i Khusrâw Library at the Mashhad *jamâ'at-khâna*, made a number of unpublished documents and Isma'ilî works available to the author, who is deeply indebted to him.

196. See Ivanow, *Guide*, pp. 112-113; also his *Ismaili Literature*, pp. 150-151, and Poonawala, *Bio*, pp. 282-283. Several of Mirzâ Husayn's religious poems have been published in recent years by the Aghâ Khân Committee in Mashhad.

197. These details are culled from an unpublished biography of Fidâ'i written in 1961 by his grandson, Sadr al-Dîn b. Mullâ Shams al-Dîn Mirshâhî.


201. Ibid., pp. 180ff.

202. A full account of Āghā Khān IV’s activities, including a detailed description of his various projects for the Nizārī communities of different countries, still needs to be written. For brief biographical notices on the present Āghā Khān, see Ghālib, Ta’rīkh, pp. 402–404; also his A’lām, pp. 434–436, and Frischauer, *The Aga Khans*, pp. 206–272. The Ismailia Associations have produced periodical publications on Āghā Khān IV and the events of his imāmate; see, for instance, Sherali Alidina, *Ten Eventful Years of Imamat of H.R.H. Prince Karim Aga Khan* (Karachi, 1967), and Ismailia Association for Kenya, *Speeches of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan* (Mombasa, 1964), 2 vols. There are also several collections of Āghā Khān IV’s *firmans*.

The bibliography does not include all the works cited in the notes; it lists some basic works of reference and a selection of the published sources cited most frequently in connection with individual chapters. The abbreviations used in the bibliography are the same as those used in the notes.

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'The Succession to the Fatimid Imam al-Āmir, the Claims of the Later Fatimids


Main entries are arranged alphabetically; their sub-headings are arranged thematically rather than alphabetically. The Arabic definite article 'al-' is ignored for the purposes of alphabetization. In the alphabetization, no distinction is made between different Arabic letters which are represented by the same letter in transliteration; thus, h and h are treated as one and the same. The abbreviation 'b.' for ibn ('son of') is alphabetized as written.

The letter 'n.' ('note') immediately following a page reference indicates the number of an endnote on that page (e.g. 642n.171). 'q.v.' ('quod vide') is used for cross-reference within the index, and 'passim' indicates scattered references to the subject, not necessarily on consecutive pages.

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