ideas, and to deal more elaborately with those its portions which really deserve our attention. Very unfortunately for me, the typographical means which are at present available to me do not permit to publish the original text of such passages, but I hope to do this later on.

For the preparation of this short note I had at my disposal two copies of the text. One was most kindly lent to me by Mr. A.A.A. Fyzee, to whom I wish to tender my sincere thanks. It is dated 1314/1897, and contains 118 pages, demy-octavo, 17 lines, three inches long, to a page. References are here given to the pages of this copy. Later on I succeeded in obtaining yet another copy, much older than the first, dated Friday, the 10th Jum.I 1012/21-xi-1603. It contains 163 pages of a smaller size, 13 lines almost four inches long to a page. There are no important, or even simply real variants, although trivial and quite obvious mistakes are many.

1. *The Contents of the Work.*

The work opens without any doxology, quite abruptly, typical of the early period to which it obviously belongs. The introductory lines are reminiscent of what is called "frame-work story" in fairy tales. "It has reached us that certain bodies of the faithful and some individual *dâ'is* (*balagha-nâ anna ṭawâ'if mina'l-mu'minin wa nafaran min du'âti'd-dîn*) asked their teacher (*'âlim la-hum*): We believe[1] that thou hast acquainted us with the matters (*amr*) for which we should be thankful to thee, for three reasons. Our gratitude is due to thee for thy having it preached to us, for the knowledge to which thou hast led us, and for the righteous life (*'amal*) in which thou hast instructed (*amarta-nâ bi-hî*). Now explain to us what one should do if he wants to earn gratitude (of others). Also explain to us our duties and rights (*ḥudûdu'l-wâjib fi-mâ la-nâ wa 'alay-nâ*), and what it is proper for the disciples (*ṭâlib*) to ask questions about and the teacher (*maṭlûb*) to answer. Tell us also about the beliefs (*madhâhib*) of the righteous and the proper ways for those who seek for knowledge, as far as it is possible to explain this."

[1] Both copies, obviously having nothing in common, and belonging to such different periods of time, nevertheless, repeat one and the same error in writing: *qad i'taqatnâ*, with a *q* instead of *i'taqadnâ*, with a *d*, as it should be in a correct form, probably perpetuating the error committed by an early scribe or in the ancient original itself.

The *'âlim* replies in the sense that gratitude to the teacher is expressed by obedience to him, gratitude for the knowledge is the following of its prescriptions and inviting others to do so. Gratitude for righteous practice is persistence in observing it (*aṣ-ṣabr 'alay-hi*), and recommendation of it to others. With regard to the beliefs of the righteous the *'âlim* promises to narrate a story which is really the subject of this book.

It runs as follows: in the province of Fârs, amidst general ignorance, there was a man who attained the (true) knowledge (obviously meaning that he was converted to Ismailism). Possessing a sensitive heart, a keen mind and high moral sense, he saw the illusion and hollowness of the mirage of life which promises a wide expanse of coveted water, and turns into nothing when reached. (In classic style) he left his home and people, and went wandering through the world, through the lands inhabited by various non-Arab peoples or by Arab nomads (*shu'ûbu'l-'ajam wa qabâ'ilu'l-'arab*), until he went far away from his own country.

Once he entered a town unobserved (*'alâ ghiflat min ahli-hâ*), without attractng the curiosity of its inhabitants. Here he had an experience which seems to be an inevitable motif in every story of missionary adventures. He incidentally overhears a group of people discussing religious matters, takes a seat near by, pretending to listen intently to their argument. His interest is duly noticed, he is invited to join in the conversation, and this gives him a chance to start his preaching, favourably impressing his listeners. They, however, later on rise and disperse, leaving him alone, except for an educated youth, a son of an

Arab of good position. The youth follows him with a view to receiving from him more information on the subject. Their dialogue fills up the first half of the book. All this is plainly symbolic, and even the names, obviously allegorical, are first mentioned on p. 70, where we learn that the boy's name was Ṣâliḥ (=righteous), while his teacher was called Abû Mâlik. The youth was attracted by a desire to augment his ordinary (*ẓâhir*) knowledge, adding to it the esoteric (*bâṭin*) wisdom.

As mentioned above, the abundance of expressions of affection, politeness and pious sentiment greatly slows the tempo of the narrative, which crawls from one elementary truth to another until it reaches the idea (at which the *'âlim* has been steadily aiming) that what his charge needs is to find the person "who possesses the knowledge of the absolute truth, or his trusted agent" (*ma'rifa ṣâḥibi'l-ḥaqq aw wakîli-hi*). In plain words this means the Imam, or one of his *dâ'is*. The youth can find his way to him, but must comply with certain conditions which are imposed upon him. He must be bound over not to divulge to others what is revealed to him, should not conceal from his teacher anything when he asks questions, and should never ask about anything unless permission to put a question is granted. He should not tell anything about the *'âlim* himself to his father (p. 16).

They continued to meet and discuss matters in the same affectionate manner. Gradually the youth, growing impatient, and listening only to platitudes or to matters quite familiar to him from his study of the *shari'at*, tries to bring the matters to a decision. According to the conditions which were imposed on him, he could not ask questions. He did not even know where the *'âlim* resided. The teacher had thoroughly ascertained and appraised the virtues and self-discipline of the youth. Then once, at night (to make it more romantic), when they were alone, being sure that no one overhears them, the *ghulâm* thought the moment opportune to bring the matters to a head. Prostrating himself before the teacher, he uttered his request

for the "higher knowledge." After a lengthy and tedious exchange of the sweetest compliments and expressions of the deepest feelings, with the *'âlim* trying to impress his charge with the great importance of the revelations to be made, he at last comes to the point. He prefaces his revelations with a kind of a warning, discussing the difference between the spiritual "legitimate marriage" and the "spiritual rape" which constitutes a grave sin.[1] The difference between these is that between religious knowledge being legitimately and properly acquired by the disciple, and the information fraudulently obtained by those who do not deserve it, and to whom it would not have been revealed in the ordinary course. It is the difference between lawful and unlawful, truth and falsehood. The genuine seeker after the truth must firmly observe the covenant with God, knowing what is due to Him (*'ahdu'l-lâh al-mu'akkad li-ḥuqûqi-hi*). The proper observation of such a covenant brings Paradise to the faithful, and forms that tie (*ḥabl*) with God which ensures safety (*amân*) to His true worshippers.

The *'âlim* then begins to recite the formula of the oath, *'ahd*, i.e. the promise to keep everything revealed in secret. The teacher pronounced the words of the formula distinctly, without undue haste, and the disciple repeated these, half swooning from excitement, with tears streaming from his eyes. When the formula had been recited, and repeated by the disciple, the *'âlim* offered praises to God and congratulations to the *ghulâm*, explaining to him that he had entered the confraternity of those who (correctly) believe in God, the brotherhood of the devotees (*awliyâ'*) of God. This is what the reciting of the *'ahd* formula implies.[2]

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[1] Cf. further on, in the paper on "an early controversy" in Ismailism, in which the contents of the introductory portion of Abû Ḥâtim ar-Râzî's *Kitâbu'l-Iṣlâḥ* is analysed.

[2] I have already discussed the question of the *'ahd* and its formulas, cf. "A Creed of the Fatimids" (Bombay, 1936). In the Musta'lian branch of Ismailism such *'ahd* still forms an obligation of every *mu'min*, and apparently even the original

After all these preliminaries the *'âlim* proceeds to reveal the mysterious wisdom that the *ghulâm* so impatiently awaits. To the student such revelations are quite disappointing. It is difficult to find out in how far the narrative really reflects the mentality and the state of the Ismaili philosophy of its time. If it does, then the work must be really ancient, belonging to the period long before the introduction of Hellenistic science into the Ismaili system.

The revelations begin with cosmogony, the story of the creation of the world which in substance and details differs very little from the quite orthodox ideas based on the Coran. To these are added speculations in Kabbalistic style based on the beliefs in mystic parallelism or rhythm of the universe, magic properties of figures and letters, and so forth. It is very difficult to see whether the faithful in those remote periods could really find all these fantastic and childlike speculations convincing and satisfying their curiosity as well as sentiment.

The creation of the world was achieved by God's having uttered the magic formula, in Arabic, *kun fa-yakûn*, "be, and it was," which, as written in Arabic letters, consists of seven signs. *This is why*, says the *'âlim*, there are seven heavens and seven earths, seven days in a week, and so forth. After several "sevens," revelation turns to twos, e.g. male and female, day and night, and so on. After this twelves are discussed. However strange, all this wisdom, which very soon became common-place not only in Shi'ite but also Sunnite milieu (as the opuscules attributed to Imam Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq, or 'Abdu'l-lâh b. Salâm and Ka'bu'l-aḥbâr, etc.) still evokes curiosity, and perhaps carries some degree of conviction in certain conservative circles even now.

The author then takes up the mystic meaning of

ancient formula is still in use. In the autobiographical *qaṣîda* (see *Dîwân*, Teheran edition of 1936, p. 173), Nâṣir-i Khusraw also mentions an oath which preceded his teacher revealing to him the coveted knowledge.

the formula of the *basmala*, revealing the implication of the number of letters used in writing it, connecting these with stars, planets, and general cosmological and astronomical matters.

The light, *nûr*, created by God, was both material, visible, and also spiritual, invisible. Material, or visible light, is deposited in the sun and other luminaries, while the spiritual is enshrined in the "houses" of prophethood, the treasuries of His wisdom, those who receive His inspiration and reveal it to ordinary mortals, and those whom He appoints as His deputies on the earth. They are the guides to salvation in all that is plain and in all that is symbolic (*ẓâhir wa bâṭin*). These are the Imams, the great Prophets (*nuṭaqâ'*), and their *ḥujjats*, or representatives, or *naqîbs*, officers, "calling the humanity to the Good" (*ad-du'ât ilâ'l-khayr*), and teachers (*'ulamâ'*),[1] whose position is like that of the stars in the sky. By their efforts the actions of ordinary mortals become more sublime, religious symbols become explained in all their implications. The Imam is like the Great Sun amongst the celestial lights. He is screened by his veils, *ḥijâbs*, from the eyes of the uninitiated. The visible sun is the symbol of the Imam (*ẓâhiru-hu wa mithlu-hu*). His *ḥujjat* and *bâb* are like the shining moon that symbolizes them.[2] The *dâ'is* are like brilliant stars (*an-nujûmu'z-zawâhir*) in the sky (p. 21).

Everything that has visible existence (*ẓâhir*), also has its inner or symbolical significance or meaning (*bâṭin*), and Divine indications are conveyed through these to His crea-

[1] In this sentence the word "Imams" means simply religious leaders in general, the *ḥujjats* of the *Nâṭiqs* are obviously the Imams; the *naqîbs* (cf. above, p. 45) may be the *ḥujjats*, and *'ulamâ'* are the *dâ'is*.

[2] It is remarkable that in this book the expression "*ḥujjat* and *bâb*" is frequently used, with both dignitaries mentioned always in the same order. In this passage, as has been mentioned above, the Imam who is symbolized by the Great Sun must be the *Nâṭiq*, and the "*ḥujjat* and *bâb*" may mean "the *ḥujjat* who is the *bâb* (of the *Nâṭiq*)", or the *ḥujjat* may be the Imam and *bâb* may mean the *ḥujjat* in the Fatimid sense.

tions (*balaghat ḥujjatu'l-lâh 'alâ khalqi-hî*). Their existence reveals the justice of God, both explicitly and implicitly. The *bâṭin*, or symbolical meaning of the visible objects, forms an esoteric doctrine, the religious knowledge (*dîn*) which is revealed only to the devout believers (*awliyâ'*) of God. This knowledge is spiritual, parallel to the spirit, while the ordinary religious beliefs, *shari'at*, corresponds with the body. Thus they are inseparable, and the body cannot exist independently just as soul cannot exist separately from the body.

The *'âlim* next takes up (p. 22) the subject of good and evil, and its problems in the visible world. Being Himself good, God the Creator of the world could not have created anything essentially evil. Unfortunately for us, the argument from the philosophical sphere turns to Kabbalistic proofs. These are based on the symbolism of numbers of seven, twelve, and so forth, letters of the Arabic alphabet, and other similar matters (p. 25). The world, according to this mentality, forms an immense symbolical picture which exists and is held together only by the force of the great idea (*bâṭin*) which it implies, the counterpart of the soul in the human body. God has not created the world for play or amusement. Everything in it forms a symbol of the invisible principles or spiritual substances which rule nature (*ad-dunyá wa jamî' amthâli-hâ ẓâhir li'l-âkhira wa mâ fî-hâ*). This may be an instinctive religious anticipation of the uniformity of the laws of nature. The author illustrates his thesis by various parallels and explanations of cosmic allegories. The Imam is like the sky, the twelve constellations of the Zodiac are like the twelve *naqîbs* of the *Imâmu'n-nâṭiq* (i.e. the Prophet), the *dâ'îs* are like stars. Or the earth is like the *bâb* of the *Imâmu'n-nâṭiq* when he is alive, or of his *waṣî* after his death. He, the *bâb*, is the refuge (*mathâba*) for the believers, the safe anchorage for those who seek for salvation. He knows the true meaning of the symbols, the correct interpretation of their implied or inner significance (*'âlim bi'l-amthâl wa ta'wîli'l-bâṭin*). The twelve *ḥujjats* are the *ḥujaju'l-awṣiyâ'*, i.e. the proofs,

representatives, of the *waṣis*, i.e. Imams. They also symbolize the traditional twelve divisions of the earth (*jazira*).[1] The *dâ'îs* who preach Good (*du'ât ilâ'l-khayr*) are symbolized by the rivers and springs (p. 28). The *imlâk*, i.e. the rule, or possession, of the corresponding spheres by the seven heavens, symbolize the ties (*asbâb*) between God and the prophets (*nuṭaqâ'*), which are.... (added in cipher: *lh, b, j, lâ, d, m, lh, m, ḥ, m* reading from right to left)[2], which are seven, and the spheres (*aflâk*) are "great ties with God" (*asbâbu'l-lâh al-kubrâ*).

The seven seas symbolize the ties (*asbâb*) between God and the *Imâms* of the *Nâṭiq*,[3] and are different from (*dûn*) those (i.e. mentioned above). The salt water (of the seas) is like the *ẓâhir*, and fresh water is like *bâṭin*, being hidden in the earth (p. 29). As water is the source of all life on the earth, so knowledge (*'ilm*) is the source of the spiritual existence of every *'âlim*. The air, embracing everything in the universe, is the greatest element, the symbol of God Himself.

The author then passes to the question of the substance of God the Creator, and explains that God cannot be compared with anything created. Times (*awân*) are the intention of God to create what He has created and order what He wished to command (p. 31).

The inner meaning of everything in this world possesses yet a deeper explanation (*abṭan min-hu*), broader in its implications, more perfect for religious guidance, the

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[1] On the meaning of the term *jazira* see my "Rise of the Fâtimids", note on pp. 20-21.

[2] About the cipher see the end of this note. The passage is not quite clear, while the idea is obviously that of the mystical correspondence between the seven heavens and seven *Nâṭiqs*. Here *aflâk* obviously implies both the sphere and the interspheral space, probably reserved for Paradise or abode of celestial beings. The original meaning of the word *sabab* (which usually means cause) is "tie", "relation".

[3] Here *A'immatu'n-Nâṭiq* seems to be a mistake for the expression *al-A'immatu'n-Nuṭaqâ'*, i.e. simply *Nâṭiqs*, the seven great Prophets.

ultimate guiding principle on the path to salvation (*li'l-bâṭin bâṭinan huwa a'lâ manâzil wa awsa' min-hu qudratan wa akmal min-hu hudan fa-huwa ghâyatu'l-adilla ilâ ṭarîqati'n-najât*). This idea is illustrated by several examples (p. 32) from the Coran, from ordinary life, and logic argument. Such examples seem to me not very convincing probably because the construction itself is obviously far too artificial. For instance (Coran, vii, 25): "O, sons of Ādam, We have sent down to you garments wherewith to cover your shame and plumage; but the garment of piety, that is better." Or, if one says "orb," or "disc," it is not clear what is referred to. Similarly, if one says "moon," it is not obvious what he really wants to say. Or, if one utters the word "rose" (has risen). But if one says: "the moon rose," the sense of his words becomes clear. Thus there should be an object, its name, and what is predicated (*ṣifa*) to it. Just in the same way an egg conceals the white in which yolk is hidden. Body and soul, knowledge and action, *ẓâhir* and *bâṭin*, etc., are syzygies. Every name is the *ẓâhir*, what is predicated to it (its *ṣifa*) is its *bâṭin*, and both imply the knowledge of God and His religion which is the *bâṭin* of the *bâṭin*. God is the general *bâṭin* of the *bâṭin* of the Universe.

Living beings created by God are of three classes: angels, human beings, and animals. The *ẓâhir* as the contents of knowledge (*aẓ-ẓâhir mina'l-'ilm*) is the grade of the animals. The knowledge of the *bâṭin* belongs to the grade of the human beings, and those who possess it, are *mu'mins*, the true believers, who thus possess the degree of the (real) man. The knowledge of the *bâṭinu'l-bâṭin* is an attribute of the angels. Those who acquire it become spiritual by knowledge (*rûḥâniyyu'l-'ilm*), although they remain by their physical self human beings. To this grade belongs the Apostle of God sent to the humanity as a "veil of the angels" (*ḥijâbu'l-malâ'ika*).[1] a "sea of inspiration"

[1] The term *ḥijâb*, veil, screen, in Ismaili literature in addition to its basic idea of covering, concealing, and so forth, obviously possesses yet another subtler implication, of "standing

(*imâzu'l-waḥy*), and its interpreter to the mankind (p.34).

There are only two types of the real man in the world. One is the *'âlim rabbânî*, i.e. theologian, one who has mastered all the religious knowledge and whose spirit has contacted the "spirit of axiomatic certainty" (*qad 'alam ghâyata'l-'ulûm wa bâsharat rûḥu-hu rûḥa'l-yaqîn*). He is called *'âlim*, "knowing," because he possesses the (true) knowledge which he enjoys. The other type of the real man is the disciple (*muta'allim*) who seeks for knowledge concerning the path of salvation (*sabîlu'n-najât*). The rest of the humanity is an ignorant mob. The Divine rope of salvation (*ḥablu'd-matîn*) is the Imam; the helping hand (which throws the rope) is the *ḥujjat* and the *bâb* of the Imam (p. 36).

The author next analyses the symbolism of the formula *lâ ḥawl wa lâ quwwa illâ bi'l-lâh*, i.e. "there is no might or real power except those of God." The term *ḥawl*, might, implies (p. 38) the *Imâmu'l-lâh an-Nâṭiq*, i.e. a great Prophet, his Deputy (*khalîfatu-hu'ṣ-ṣâdiq*), i.e. obviously the *waṣî*, and his twelve *naqîbs*, who are symbolized by the twelve months of the year.[1] The word *ḥawl* signifies the Imam because he transmits (*ḥawwal*) the word of the Creator together with its deep implications (*'alâ laṭîf kunhi-hi*) into the language intelligible to ordinary mortals, so that it ultimately becomes plain (*ẓâhir*), while the word of (su-

between". If the Prophet is here called the *ḥijâb* of the angels, this may imply his position as the one who stands just on the boundary line between the human beings and the angels: he is the Perfect Man, beyond whom begins the world of the angels.

[1] I do not remember having ever seen expressions such as this *Imâmu'l-lâh*, but here the meaning of the term is quite obvious. The author, normally using the expression *Imâm* in its ordinary, non-Shi'ite sense, of generally a "leader", applies to the great Prophet the descriptive name of the "Preaching Divine Leader". The expression twelve *naqîbs* has already been commented upon on p. 45. The reason why they symbolize the twelve months of the year may be not only because both number twelve, but also perhaps because the original meaning of *ḥawl* is "year". Thus it may be simply a case of wordplay, as is quite usual in esoteric revelations.

preme) wisdom thus becomes the body of flesh (*ṣár... jisman wa badanan*), while the word of God remains its animating spirit and the light of salvation (*rúḥu'l-ḥayát wa núru'n-naját*).

The word *quwwa*, force (p. 38) refers to his *ḥujjat* and *báb* whom God strengthens for carrying the heavy burden of (the Prophet's) speech (*qawl*). He accepts from the Imam (i.e. Prophet) the whole of it, and then splits it, dividing it between the *dá'is* (i.e. individual teachers), according to their capacity. He is thus called *quwwa*, power, because he is empowered (for his mission) by God. To illustrate all this the author then turns to the symbolism of the Biblical legend of the dreams of Joseph, discussing it at length. A dream is like a mirage which is sometimes quite life-like, but can never be reached.

The author sums up the relation between the *ẓáhir* and the *báṭin* (p. 42) as mutually interdependent and equally important for the salvation. They cannot exist one without the other. The knowledge of the *ẓáhir* is insufficient without the knowledge of the *báṭin*, just as the later is futile without the knowledge of the *ẓáhir* (*aẓ-ẓáhir lá yuṣlih illá bi'l-báṭin wa'l-báṭin lá yaqúm illá bi'ẓ-ẓáhir*). This is the formula which, as we see, being introduced before the advent of the Fatimids, was retained and rigidly enforced in their doctrine.

The conversation then (p. 43) turns to asceticism. The author apparently refers to early Sufis, with their ascetic practices, night vigils, fasts, prayers, and so forth. His attitude is on the whole that of condemnation, though he never openly disapproves of these practices. Human beings are created with equal chances of attaining salvation. The differences arise only from their attitude towards religion. Some are more responsive than others to the preaching of the prophets: others care more for the pleasures of the world. The difference between the rich and the poor is not that between those more or less favoured. God is just, and one has to follow His commandements.

The dialogue ends with the disciple's request for information concerning the person in whose hands are placed the keys to Paradise, i.e. the Imam. The *'álim* then departs (pp. 55-56) for the purpose of seeing the "elder parent" (*wálidu-hu'l-akbar*) of the boy, obviously the senior dignitary in the propaganda hierarchy. He submits to him a report concerning his new disciple, and receives permission to introduce him. He hurries back to see the boy to inform him that the doors of mercy are about to open for him. After rather far too abundant expression of affectionate regard (p. 57), they ultimately depart (the boy without having first obtained the permission of his father) to see *al-'álim al-akbar*, i.e. the superior *dá'i*.

The pages that follow are, for the student, the most important in the book. Despite their vague and evasive style, as elsewhere in this work, the author obviously incorporates in them indubitable elements of the genuine observances and formulas connected with the ceremony of the initiation and promotion of the dignitaries of the lower grade. So many baseless stories and falsehoods were put into circulation by the enemies of Ismailism on the matters such as these that every line of this account deserves the closest study.

When admitted to the presence of the *shaykh* (i.e. the senior *dá'i*), they offered their greetings to him, and sat down, with the *shaykh's* permission. After a while, when the assembly, disturbed by their appearance, became quiet, the *ghuláms* asked the *'álim* as to what he should say and how he should explain the purpose of their call. His teacher (here for the first time he is called *al-mu'allim*) replied that while in the presence of his superior, he, out of respect for him, cannot instruct his pupil in anything. The *shaykh* himself understands everything and will let the boy know what he wants to ask. (And really) the affairs of the boy were attended to, "his sacrifice (?) was completed, and his most sanguine hopes materialised." [1]

[1] In the original (p. 57) there is *akmal hadiyya-hu*, while the other copy reads *hadiyyata-hu*, both expressions originally meaning a sacrificial animal, sacrifice, offering. The motif of sacrifice is here probably introduced not without some special

He received instructions as to his rights and duties (*mâ la-hu wa mâ 'alay-hi*).

After they sat silently at the assembly for some time, they were dismissed by the *shaykh*, who ordered the manager of the house (*ṣâḥibu'l-manzil*) to arrange accommodation for them and look after their needs. The manager was incidentally an old friend of the *'âlim*.

The night passed in friendly talk, and when the day dawned, they again came to the house of the *shaykh*. After the usual greetings, they received permission to sit down, and the *shaykh* addressed a speech to them (pp. 58-59). The words of the *shaykh* were so appropriately pious and non-committal that there is little to be gleaned from them. After an introductory part, resembling the doxologies with which books of the later period ordinarily open, and even with the inevitable formula of transition, *ammâ ba'd* (p. 59), the shaykh proceeds: "high intellects apply themselves to the search (of knowledge), and ultimately find it, receiving the pleasure of (the possession) of what they have found (*'udhûbatu'l-mawjûd*). Such pleasure, like fresh water (*'adhab*, a play on the double meaning of the word) is the pure liquid (*mashrûb*) to quench thirst. Its inner meaning (*bâṭin*) may be, however, not quite apparent: the seeker's mind may be unfit to acquire it, and human beings generally cannot understand it properly. What it teaches is the truth, and what is required is the truth of the truth (*ma'âlimu-hu ḥaqq wa ḥaqqu'l-ḥaqq wâjib*). It is called the truth because it is self-evident. Whoever disregards the self-evident truth is an eternal sinner (*ẓâlimu'l-awân*). Reflection demands the tribute (*zakât*) of hearts in the form of proper ways (*âdâb*); the latter demand knowledge, (religious) knowledge demands righteous actions (*'amal*) in accordance with it. These demand purity (of behaviour) in obedience to those endowed with authority (*ûlû'l-amr*, p. 60), and such obedience must be perfect,

reasons, and has ample parallels in the Sufic rites of initiation. I shall, however, abstain from going here deeper into the matter as it would require more space than a footnote affords.

both in favourable and unfavourable circumstances, equally in happy days and in calamity. Only those acquire it who have patience (i.e. self-control), those who are endowed with such exceptional good luck as the possession of such ability."

From here apparently begins the passage which most probably reflects the formulas used at the rite of the proper initiation. It would be difficult to think that the author has invented or improvised the dialogue. Most probably the questions asked and answers given conform to the tradition, which is normally very conservative in such matters.

The *shaykh*, turning to the newcomer, says:

Sh. — O, young man, thou hast been favoured by a friend sent as an envoy, and beloved by a visiting messenger (obviously the *'âlim*)! What is thy name?

Gh. — 'Ubaydu'l-lâh, son of 'Abdu'l-lâh (i.e. "humble slave of God, son of the slave of God").

Sh. — Such a name describes thy qualities, and we have already heard of these.[1]

Gh. — I am a free man, son of a slave of God.

Sh. — Who has freed thee from slavery (*milk*) so that thou hast become a free man?

Gh. — This teacher (pointing with his hand to the *'âlim* who preached to him).

Sh. — But dost thou not see that he himself is a slave, not the owner. How could he let thee free?

Gh. — No, he could not do this.

Sh. — Then what is thy (real) name?

Gh. — (looking around helplessly, being unable to answer the question).

Sh. — O, young man, how could be anything known if it has no name, just as a newborn baby.

Gh. — I have been born to thee, so thou shouldst give me a name.

[1] This is merely a compliment, and the question is omitted by the copyists. The *shaykh* obviously asks him whether he is a free man, or a slave, and the *ghuldm* replies to it.

Sh. — This I shall do on the expiry of seven days.

Gh. — Why postpone this?

Sh. — For the benefit of the newborn.

Gh. — And if the newborn dies before these seven days expire?

Sh. — Nothing will happen, and he will be named after that period of time has ended.

Gh. — Will the name that thou art going to give me remain mine?

Sh. — If thou becomest its slave.[1]

Gh. — How can one speak like this?

Sh. — Thy name is thy owner, and thou art its slave. Do not argue inappropriately, go now, till the appointed day.

The boy hastened to retire, in full obedience, saying nothing out of politeness. He went out, and *his father* (*wâlidu-hu*), i.e. his teacher, followed him.

On the seventh day they returned, were admitted, and the *shaykh* ordered the boy to perform full ablutions and don his cleanest clothes (p. 61). The author does not miss a chance of dwelling on how much the boy felt elated by great joy during these preparations, feeling that the day will bring him the fulfilment of his ardent desires, his longing for the acquisition of the religious knowledge which should bring him nearer to God.

They re-entered the presence of the *shaykh*, finding him ready to proceed with the ceremony (*'uddatu'l-'amal*).

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[1] In the original (both copies) *idhan takun ma'bûdan*, "if thou becomest worshipped", which gives no sense. From the expression a line lower, "thy name is thy owner, and thou art its slave" we may suppose that here the verb *'a-b-d* is taken in the sense of "to be a slave", and *ma'bûd* may mean "enslaved, one turned into a slave". The idea of the *shaykh's* answer obviously is that the adept should be unreservedly faithful to his rank or duties in the *da'wat*, entirely absorbed, "enslaved" by these. The "name" here may be a special surname under which the man may be known in the *da'wat* organisation, but also may mean the rank to which the new convert is nominated.

They uttered the usual greetings, and (p. 62) the *shaykh* returned these. Then the *shaykh* ordered the boy to approach him. The *shaykh* began to advance towards him, and he advanced towards the *shaykh*. Then the latter began to say the things which the pen cannot record, and imagination cannot comprehend, the things that cannot occur to any (ordinary) man. This was what cannot be mentioned in any of the schools of sermon preaching, what cannot be revealed in any book, on account of its utmost importance (*li-'aẓim faḍli-hi*). It can only be (personally) communicated to the initiated.

When the *shaykh* had given the boy what he coveted, leading him from his roaming in the desert to the right track, his religious opinion (*madhhab*) became pure, and he recognised his Lord.[1] He was able then to don the *iḥrâm* which the pilgrims put on when visiting the sacred places on a *ḥajj*, supported by the helping hand extended to him. He could then circumambulate the "Ancient House," i.e. Ka'ba, perform the prescribed rites and recite the customary prayers, completing his *hajj* with the recital of the Great Verse of the Coran (*al-âyatu'l-kubrâ*).

The boy, with his (spiritual) father (*wâlidu-hu*) remained for some time in the place, visiting the *shaykh* and attending the assemblies which the latter used to hold. He remained patient all the time, refraining from asking questions from the *shaykh* out of respect. The *shaykh* ultimately realized that the new knowledge has become deeply rooted in the mind of the new convert, and has begun to thrive. On parting profuse compliments, thanks, and fine sentiments are exchanged. The boy calls the *shaykh* "the door to the people of the heaven and the *mi'râj*, ascension, for the people of the earth. From his light of greatness other lights have appeared, from his

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[1] Here obviously lies the key to the "unutterable mysteries" referred to above. It was evidently the name of the Imam in whose name the *da'wat* was carried on. The allegory of the *ḥajj*, circumambulation, putting on the *iḥrâm*, and other details of the ceremony of pilgrimage, are quite usual in Ismaili works.

hands springs (of generosity) began to flow as the mighty rivers," and so forth.

The *shaykh* mentions three reasons for which he sends the boy away: firstly, he himself is going to move. Secondly, the boy has spent a very long time after having left his home without the permission of his father. Thirdly, — the reason which was obviously the most important, — the new convert should pay (p. 63) for the wealth which was handed over to him, i.e. the higher religious knowledge, by starting with propaganda work according to the prinicples of the doctrine (p. 64). They then parted and the boy with his teacher returned to his native place.

Here ends the first part of the story which might be appropriately entitled "The Conversion," and the second, which may be given the heading "Disputation and Preaching," begins.

When they arrived near the town, the *'âlim* and his disciple agreed amongst themselves that the boy should go to his father and weather the expected storm of parental indignation, while the teacher would hide himself in an agreed place, to which the boy would send word when things settle down. There was, however, no storm, and the prodigal son was received with mild reproaches for not having taken his own father into confidence concerning his intended secret adventures. The explanations result in his father's being converted, and the *'âlim* being called from his hiding place. Only here, on the seventieth page, does the author reveal the original name of the boy, symbolical, of course, Ṣâliḥ (=righteous, pious), while his father's surname appears as al-Bukhturî.

The rest of the story is obviously intended as a dramatised specimen of elementary controversy on religious matters used to "break" potential converts. These primitive and naïve arguments probably were something novel and therefore impressive at the author's time. Later on they became much worn out by continuous use, by frequent repetition, and especially by the converts becoming more sophisticated.

The local people, friends of the family, who used to derive much benefit from the generosity of al-Bukhturî, a well-to-do man, became afraid that with the father and the son having embraced a new religion, and dissociated themselves from their original community (*bi-khurûji-him 'an millati-him*), the old order of affairs was bound to cease. They went to consult the local orthodox theologian (*'âlim*), whom the author pictures as a pious and exceptionally good-natured old man, well versed in tradition, commanding general respect, but, as it seems from the narrative, not endowed with much intellect. Their approach to the matter is remarkably utilitarian, "business-like." If the new religion is the true one, and is really good, then they should not lag behind others in embracing it. If, however, the new religion is wrong, and not good, then they should not waste time, and must at once refute it.

After much nice talk the author makes them betake themselves to the house of al-Bukhturî, where they again begin to pre-occupy themselves with compliments and expression of refined sentiments with which both parties appear to be overwhelmed. Then a discussion between the aged orthodox theologian and the boy begins, and, of course, ends with a complete triumph of the newly appointed missionary. The leader and the led are converted, and the original *'âlim*, who is not mentioned so far, is summoned to act as an expert technical adviser in the matters of the instruction of the new converts.

The arguments advanced in the controversy do not differ from those used by Islamic missionaries of all schools and all times. The most prominent feature of this controversy appears to be great restraint and caution which obviously belong to the author, and do not look typical of the real occasions of this kind. The author so carefully avoids names of the historical and religious persons that only a few Biblical personages are referred to. Even the names of 'Alî, Fâṭima, and Shi'ite Imams are not mentioned, although allusions to them are quite transparent. All this probably was the other way in real life.

The author first determines the common ground between the points of view of both parties. His attack is directed against the reliability of the orthodox tradition, with its conflicting statements and numerous variants. Another attack is launched against the crudeness of the idea of the Substance of God whose attributes suggest anthropomorphism. It is proved that the Substance of God is beyond human comprehension. Another line is that of revelation. God conveys it through His special envoys, or Apostles. It would be incompatible with His justice, however, if He would send an Apostle at one time, and none at another. He sends revelation to various peoples through prophets of uneven standing, as in the case of Ismâ'îl and Isḥâq, Abraham and Lot. Those saints who do not receive direct inspiration, nevertheless, have it indirectly, knowing the *ta'wîl*, or the symbolical and allegorical implications of the *ḥadîths* and sacred books (p. 101).

To the Apostles of God, i.e. great prophets of the standing of, e.g., Abraham, revelation comes from God unceasingly, and it is unthinkable that with the disappearance of such Prophet God would completely cut off His guidance to humanity, for very long periods. This postulates the necessity of Imamat, in the Ismaili sense. A remarkable detail of these discussions (p. 103) is the idea that the revelation sent to the Arabian Prophet was not final. The theory of its being final the author attributes to the "tyrants," obviously to the Omayyads and Abbasids. It is a kind of a general historical law, according to him, that every new great prophet is at first denied recognition. The Majûs (apparently mentioned in the sense of the supposed *umma* of Abraham) denied recognition to Moses, Jews denied recognition to Jesus, Christians to Muḥammad. In the same way this *umma*, i.e. the Muslims, walking along the same path, inherited superstitions and books from their predecessors (p. 105), obviously implying that they object to the new and really final religion of the Seventh *Nâṭiq*. The orthodox theologian recalls the doctrine about the *fitra*, i.e. the period of time between the missions of two successive great Prophets, the *ghaybatu's-ṣâliḥîn 'an-nâ*, "the absence of the saints from amongst us" (p. 111). The boy argues that the *fitra* does not mean the stoppage of the *da'wat*, or preaching of the true religion. It merely drives it underground. The earth can never exist without justice of God (*'adl*), even for a moment, as otherwise this would be inconsistent with the eternal and unchangeable substance of the Deity. The Imams as the exponents of the true religion may not be known to the masses at the time (p. 112), but this does not mean that they do not exist. They are concealed on account of the mortal danger with which their existence is threatened from their enemies.

Every one present is so much impressed with the truth of what had been said by the boy that all express their repentence (*tawba*) of their errors, and become converted. This success is achieved by the new *dâ'i* singlehanded, and the *'âlim* is only summoned when all is finished, to supervise the formal side of the conversion.

2. *Notes on the Contents.*

The author speaks above (p. 112 of the text) about the absence of the Imams from the public eye, *istitâr*, on account of the mortal danger to which they are exposed. Such a statement obviously could not have been made after 297/909 when the Fatimid caliphate was founded. It would be difficult to believe that an author belonging to the Fatimid period would have written a story like this with special care to reproduce the atmosphere and mentality of that early period. Therefore we may with a fair margine of safety treat the work as a product of the period which preceded the final phase of the Fatimid movement. The work is sometimes attributed to the authorship of the Manṣûru'l-Yaman, as mentioned above, and in fact it displays close relation to the *Kitâbu'r-rushd wa'l-hidâyat* which is also regarded as a work by the same saint. We cannot either prove or reject such theory on solid ground, and must be content with recognising it as

a work belonging to that dark period of the Ismaili movement which preceded the foundation of the Fatimid empire.

The form of the dialogue in which the work is written may suggest Hellenistic influences, but these are not supported by the contents in which there is nothing related to the Greek science. It is difficult to find out whether the dialogue as the form of an elementary treatise on religious matters could have been derived only from Hellenism. In any case, even if it was, the borrowing probably was indirect, through Christian models, just as in the *Ummu'l-kitâb* which seems to be really a work of the beginning of the second/eighth c.[1] Early Christian literature possessed many works in the form of dialogue, like the treatise by Bardesanes "On the laws of the countries," partly preserved in a Greek and a Syriac verson.[2] We can see that there are clear traces of gnostic influence as in the discussion of the three basic types in humanity (p. 17 of the text), the hylics, psychics and pneumatics.

Peculiarities of the author's terminology have been already discussed in another paper (see pp. 33-49). Although this treatise, as a popular work, does not use many technical terms, those which are found here appear to be very close to those in the *Kitâbu'r-Rushd*.

The main value of this work is constituted by the light which it throws upon two important matters in the history of the Ismaili movement concerning which there is such a huge accumulation of misunderstanding, chiefly introduced by credulous acceptance of the information offered by the authors of anti-Ismaili camp. It is, firstly, the usual methods of the *da'wat*, and, secondly, details of the ceremony of initiation.

Journalists of the type of Nuwayrî produced all kinds of stories about the methods of conversion and degrees of initiation which were always accepted as something real

[1] Cf. my "Alleged Founder of Ismailism", Bombay, 1946, pp. 99-101.

[2] Ed. by Cureton, "Spicilegium Syriacum", Lond. 1855.

true, and which appear to be fiction from the beginning to the end. Ismaili *dâ'is*, surely, never approached anyone unless they could ascertain his Shi'itic sympathies and interest in religious matters. It appears to be quite obvious that individual conversion and instruction were practiced only in exceptional cases when the convert promised to be a particularly valuable acquisition to the community, as in the present story. An experienced missionary at once recognizes the advantages presented by the possible conversion of a well-educated and very enthusiastic young man belonging to a wealthy family. He therefore carefully ascertains his determination and steadiness before he converts him, and secures for him a rank in the *da'wat* organisation, apparently of the *ma'dhûn*, i.e. junior *dâ'i*.

Quite different is his attitude to the conversion of the ordinary people. He leaves the young and inexperienced man to do this independently, and only when he has a success, he re-appears on the stage to receive the spoils. All that we know of the early history of Ismailism, and from genuine Ismaili literature uniformly points out to the fact that the technique of Ismaili missionaries was always one and the same. A professional missionary comes to a certain place where he soon finds suitable people to whom he thinks he would be able to entrust the work. He wins them over, leaves to them instructions as to how to carry on with the work, and then proceeds further on, leaving them to spread the religion amongst their ordinary co-religionists. Some of such improvised missionaries probably became professionals, as did the boy in the story. Others probably could never rise above the level of a headman in their own village. In any case there is no doubt that individual preaching and conversion was used only for the purpose of securing active and well-educated people who would later on take the position of the leader. In this way large areas could have been "blanketed" by the propaganda net of cells within a comparatively short period of time.

Although there are no references to the matter, we

may well believe that the *da'wat* organisation was a self-supporting concern. The new converts were probably very punctilious in paying religious taxes, and these were probably sufficient to support the higher dignitaries on the spot.

Initiation naturally forms one of the most momentous experiences in the life of the devotee. It is therefore, in all religions, surrounded with special sanctity and mysteriousness, owing to the symbolical religious implications which it is supposed to possess. Just as every anti-Ismaili author knows everything about the alleged degrees of initiation, so the authors of genuine Ismaili works invariably preserve silence on the matter. This is why references contained in this work are so precious, despite their being so brief and evasive.

We can easily see that the original "initiation" was nothing more than the oath of keeping secret what is to be revealed to the new convert. The real initiation, when things are uttered "that the pen cannot record, or human imagination cannot comprehend," obviously came after a fairly long period of probation, perhaps only in the case of the "active" members of the community who intended to work for the *da'wat*. The book contains no allusion as to whether there really were some higher degrees of initiation of which anti-Ismaili sources tell so much nonsense. It is doubtful, however, that there really were such degrees. Most probably there were some solemn ceremonies connected with the investiture of the higher ranks in the *da'wat* hierarchy, *ḥudûdu'd-dîn*, but these had nothing to do with the revelation of any special wisdom.

The author's description of the ceremony bears much resemblence with the rites of Sufic initiation, and such resemblence may be not quite fortuitous. The initial oath entirely corresponds with the ceremony which amongst the modern darwishes of Persia bears the name of "*lisân kashîdan*," i.e. "taking out one's tongue" (i.e. symbolical cutting off the tongue which may talk about the things that are to be kept secret). The ceremony performed by the *shaykh* in the book entirely corresponds with the first real intitation, *piyâla khûrdan*. Whether a kind of communion formed a part of the symbolism of such ceremonies, — this we do not know. Many details are similar: special ablutionss and changing the dress before the ceremony, changing the name for a special *ism-i ṭariqat* and the question as to whether the novice is a free man or a slave. All these belong to the basic practices connected with the darwish initiation, the spiritual birth. There are many parallels in the doctrine itself. The ideas of the *ẓâhir* and *bâṭin*, *ta'wîl*, and even *bâṭinu'l-bâṭin*, entirely correspond with the division of things into those belonging to the "worlds" of *shari'at*, *ṭariqat* and *ma'rifat* (also called *ḥaqîqat*). About the mystical hierarchy in Sufism, of the *quṭb*, *naqîbs*, *awliyâ*, etc., much has been written These and other parallelisms are very interesting because the Sufis for obvious reasons had to avoid a close resemblence of their rites with those of Ismailism. If, nevertheless, parallelism has been preserved, this shows that it is connected with some basic and really essential features of both movements, which could not be suppressed or disregarded. In Persia a form of almost complete synthesis between Ismailism and Sufism was developed at a later period, during the Safawid rule and later, and such a new formation proved to be strong enough to carry on for more than three hundred years, till our own time.[1]

The esoteric doctrine of early Ismailism, which is so much coveted by the hero of this book is not revealed in it. What could the boy originally expect to hear from

[1] The best specimen of this kind that is available in printed form is the *Dîwân* of Khâkî Khurâsânî (edited by myself in Bombay, 1933). The author, a native of Dizbâd, a village near Mashhad, flourished towards the end of the XVIIth c. This kind of religious poetry is very difficult, however, as a means of the study of Ismailism because the poet usually does everything possible to camouflage all individual tenets of his religion, dilluting these to the condition of the vague general dreaming and nice sentiments. Such poetry serves as a good additional source of information only when the student already knows what the author aims at.

the stranger to whom he listened half an hour talking to the assembly which he succeeded to join? It is difficult to believe that in his speech he could hint much at any special philosophical theory, or system. Most probably, as we can see from the words which the author puts into the mouth of the *'âlim*, the main purpose was (p. 14 of the text) "to find the person who possesses the knowledge of the real and ultimate truth, or his agent" (*ma'rifa ṣâḥibi'l-ḥaqq aw wakili-hi*), mentioned above (p. 90). In other words, it was the question of finding a way to come in contact with the *real* Imam through the organisation of his propaganda. Kabbalistic trickery, all kinds of manipulations of the supposed "mystical implications" of letters of the alphabet, or of numbers, appear to be merely a primitive device to keep the interest of the new convert, and serve as a more palatable form of a refresher in general religious matters. It is also an indisputable fact that such crude substitutes of the "higher knowledge," after which many were longing, could really convince many, and were much admired. Moreover, they not only attracted superstitious minds of the early mediaeval period, but appear not entirely inconvincing to many even in our own sophisticated times.

What probably the disciple of the *'âlim* could expect in the way of the secret knowledge, *'ilm*, was something very closely connected with the speculations of the *Kitâbu'r-Rushd*, translated above. If that be so, we may believe that the treatise reflects the mentality of the early phase of Ismailism through which it passed before the "revolution" in the form of the adaptation of Hellenistic science for the amplification of its esoteric doctrine.

Questions which the author deliberately avoids in the work are those of the political aspirations of Shi'ism. Only once (cf. text, p. 76) he vaguely refers to the *âkhirat wa mâ fi-hâ*, obviously meaning not the blissful life after death, but the millennium after the advent of the *Mahdi*, in the ideal Islamic state which he will establish on earth.

In conclusion two questions have to be touched upon.

One is that of the allegorism of "spiritual birth" and "spiritual parentage," as symbolising the relations between the pupil and the teacher. I shall not be wrong in anticipating various farfetched and artificial theories which mystically inclined authors may construe on the basis of such simple references. To me it seems as plain as the day that such allegorism has nothing to do whatever with any "esoteric" mysteries, rites, beliefs or ideas. The simile of a new birth for the conversion, as the acquisition of the "real truth" is too common through all the times and all the religious communities. We have seen above that early Shi'ism often shows clear traces of Christian influence, conscious or unconscious, direct or indirect. And if in Christianity any one addresses a priest as "father" so-and-so, his address implies the recognition of the priest's being either actual or potential *spiritual* father, the teacher, of the speaker. No one would ever dream to explain such custom as the result of some obscure and hardly authentic esoteric rites and beliefs. Birth, marriage, parental and filial relations, and other basic ideas derived from the forms of ordinary life, invariably figure in the allegories of all possible religions, sects or communities, with esoteric, mystical, or plain tendencies and outlook.

The other matter which may be mentioned here is the employment of a peculiar cipher on p. 28 of the original manuscript. It is quite different from that which is used in many books dating from the Fatimid period and after, and seems to be entirely forgotten at present. It seems to consist of ordinary Arabic letters with altered phonetical values. My inquiries from Ismaili experts could not elicit any sensible suggestion for decoding it.

V.

AN EARLY CONTROVERSY IN ISMAILISM.

In the intensely religious atmosphere of the life of the mediaeval Islamic society, with its limited circle of intellectual interests, much attention was always paid to minute divergencies in the opinions, or the form of their expression, concerning various religious questions. These formed an inexhaustible source of discussions, and while minor deviations from recognised standards were usually settled in various commentaries on popular books, the major alleged errors evoked strong protests in the form of refutations (*radd*), exposing the authors' heretical tendencies. In the case of the works of more technical contents, intended for specialists and advanced students, the authors, dissatisfied with the extant treatises, would write new ones, either entirely leaving the errors of their predecessors unchallenged, or alluding to these in such a way so that only the experts, well read in the subject, would be able to note and appreciate them.

The Ismaili mediaeval literature, for various reasons, cultivated only the last mentioned method. The student of Islamic theological literature, in its orthodox branches, accustomed to the long lists of commentaries upon various standard works, commentaries upon the commentaries, glosses (*ḥâshiya*), etc., feels astonished to find that in Ismaili literature of the same period there were no commentaries at all. This is obviously due to the fact that the Ismailis, living under the perpetual threat of persecutions, never had large schools, students attending which would need such commentaries. Those few who tried to acquire knowledge evidently depended on oral tradition and explanations of their teachers. Moreover, owing to the fear of trouble in case their books incidentally found their way into the hands of persecutors, the Ismailis developed the fashion of formulating their controversial remarks in impersonal expressions, without mentioning the alleged heretics by name.

Thus, although controversial references are not uncommon in Ismaili literature, it is rarely possible to be quite certain as to the real name of the sinner against whom the remark is intended. The key to their identification was probably handed down in oral tradition which in the course of time had been forgotten in so far as it related to earlier periods.

In conditions such as these the student may attach great importance to the unique group of works in early Ismaili literature which deal with an interesting controversy which sprang up in the community in Persia in the fourth/tenth c. Most probably the issues of the controversy also presented much interest to other Ismaili communities as may be seen from the fact that the works connected with it, and representing the official point of view, have been preserved in the Yaman and India till our own times, i.e. for almost a thousand years. For the study of the inner history of Ismailism, especially in Persia, and generally in the East, this controversy offers an exceptionally rare and invaluable chance. In addition to the discussion of matters of philosophical interest with which Ismailism was probably everywhere concerned, the dispute incidentally touches on such matters which formed, so-to-speak, hereditary national tendencies of the Iranian mind not only in Shi'ism, but also in Sufism. This was the persistent tendency in various particularly devout circles to regard the believer who had attained the higher gnostic knowledge of religion as becoming automatically absolved from the drudgery of practising the obligatory forms of worship, and being permitted to "worship in spirit" only. Such tendency periodically disappeared only to flare up again, finding enthusiastic support in the less-educated strata of the society.

The controversy arose from certain statements which were included in the *Kitâbu'l-Maḥṣûl*, an Ismaili work in Arabic which apparently was composed just about the beginning of the fourth/tenth c., and probably evoked much admiration in the community. 'Abdu'l-Qâhir al-Baghdâdi

(d. after 429/1038), a native of Khorasan, in his well-known *al-Farq bayna'l-firaq* (pp. 267, 277)[1], and later on Nâṣir-i Khusraw, also a native of Khorasan (*Khwân-i Ikhwan*, pp. 113, 115)[2] definitely call it the work of the famous Ismaili *dâ'î*, Abû 'Abdi'l-lâh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad an-Nasafî, the "martyr," executed in 331/942[3]. It is strange therefore that an earlier and exceptionally well-informed Ismaili scholar, Sayyid-nâ Ḥamîdu'd-dîn Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lâh al-Kirmâni, surnamed "*ḥujjatu'l-'Irâqayn*" for his learning, the author of many important works, in his *Kitâbu'r-Riyâḍ* in which he discusses the controversy, and in which he always refers to Abû Ḥâtim ar-Râzî and Abû Ya'qûb as-Sijistânî by their names, *never* mentions the author of

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[1] Printed in Cairo, 1910.

[2] Ed. by Dr. Yaḥyâ Khashshâb, Cairo, 1940.

[3] Nâṣir-i Khusraw does not call him Abû 'Abdi'l-lâh, but Abû'l-Ḥasan Nakhshabî (this is a more archaic form of Nasafî). He even mentions his son, surnamed "Dihqân" (p. 112) who was the *ṣâḥib-i jazira'i Kh-r-l-a-n pas az Ya'qûb*. *Jazira* here, of course, is not an "island", but the district, see, in charge of a missionary, and "Kharlân" is an obvious mistake, — such a place does not exist. In all probability it is a corruption of the word Jurjân, which is really referred to in the *Farq bayna'l-firaq* (p. 276) in the story of the conversion of Naṣr b. Nûḥ, the Samanid. The *Khwânu'l-Ikhwân* (112) refers to the controversy concerning the alleged preaching of *tanâsukh* in *al-Maḥṣûl*, between this Dihqân and "Ya'qûb" after whom the former was put in charge of the *jazira*. It is quite possible that this "Ya'qûb" is really Abû Ya'qûb Sijzî. In his *Iṣlâḥ* Abû Ḥâtim does not discuss much *tanâsukh*, but Nâṣir-i Khusraw emphasises this in his references to Abû Ya'qûb both in the *Khwânu'l-Ikhwân* and *Zâdu'l-musâfirîn*. It is interesting to note that while on p.267 of his *Farq* 'Abdu'l-Qâhir al-Baghdâdî clearly states that an-Nasafî "wrote for them", i.e. the Ismailis, the *k. al-Maḥṣûl*, on p. 277 he says that "one of their *dâ'is*, known as al-Bazdahî *(al-ma'rûf bi'l-Bazdahi)*", i.e. Bardha'î (?) "says in his book called *al-Maḥṣûl*". So far it has been taken that the latter *nisba*, Bardha'î belongs to the same Nasafî. It is not impossible that he really was a native of Bardha' (in Southern Caucasus), and later became known as Nasafî, or Nakhshabî, from the scene of his activities. But it would be worth while ascertaining from reliable sources, whether this is so.

K.al-Maḥṣûl which he profusely quotes [1]. There might have been some special reasons, unknown to us, for such silence on this point, but it is not easy to guess these, and there is every probability that the early work was erroneously attributed to the authorship of an-Nasafî. The anonymous works which attain fame are far too often attributed to the authorship of various celebrities, and Ismaili literature apparently contains a goodly number of such instances.

Obviously the popularity of *K. al-Maḥṣûl* (at the time when probably there were not many Ismaili books in general) prompted Abû Ḥâtim 'Abdu'r-Raḥmân ar-Râzî al-Warsinânî, seemingly the chief *dâ'î* in N.W. Persia, to issue a book, discussing and correcting the erroneous statements of *al-Maḥṣûl*, in his *Kitâbu'l-Iṣlâḥ* [2]. Practically nothing is known of his biography from Ismaili sources, and only a late work, the *'Uyûnu'l-akhbâr* by Sayyid-nâ Idrîs, probably from some early sources, narrates an anecdote of his success with his *Kitâbu'z-Zina* at the court of the Fatimid caliph al-Qâ'im (322-334/934-946) [3]. *K.al-Iṣlâḥ* does not contain references to the earlier works of the author, and we are therefore helpless in attempting to find out even the approximate date of its composition.

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[1] In his bibliographical introduction to the first vol. of his *Râḥatu'l-'aql* Kirmânî vaguely refers to the books, *kutub*, by "Muḥammad b. Aḥmad an-Nakhshabî". Apparently none of these books has been preserved.

[2] In his introductory passage to the tenth *bâb* of the *Riyâḍ*, translated further on here, Kirmânî vaguely refers to the fact that Abû Ḥâtim was one of the dignitaries who were specially commissioned for the task of rectification of religious beliefs and the enforcement of uniform and standard doctrine which headquarters approved. Cf. p. 149.

[3] It appears that Abû Ḥâtim travelled all the way from Persia to Tunisia, where the court of al-Qâ'im was at the time. Such a journey of a *dâ'î* to headquarters of the movement was apparently an important part of his career. We can see that almost every important Ismaili missionary of whose biography we possess some knowledge had to report himself at headquarters, most probably in connection with a promotion or for receiving special instructions.

The corrections of Abû Ḥâtim evoked a furious reaction from another eminent *dâ'î*, Sayyid-nâ Abû Ya'qûb Isḥâq b. Aḥmad as-Sijzî (or as-Sijistânî) wo probably died soon after 360/971 [1]. He composed *K.an-Nuṣra*, i.e. "assistance" (to the author of *al-Maḥṣûl*), rudely attacking Abû Ḥâtim. The *Nuṣra* was apparently a product of his earlier period, because, as Ḥamîdu'd-dîn observes in his *Riyâḍ*, Sijzî later on had to give up some of his earlier ideas, adopting many of those which he originally opposed.

Much later, probably towards the closing years of the fourth/tenth c., Sayyid-nâ Ḥamîdu'd-dîn al-Kirmânî (d. *ca.* 410/1019) [2] reviewed the whole controversy, and composed his learned treatise, *Kitâbu'r-Riyâḍ fi'l-Ḥukm bayna'ṣ-Ṣâdayn Ṣâḥibi'l-Iṣlâḥ wa Ṣâḥibi'n-Nuṣra*.

With the skill of an expert, Kirmânî criticises the statements of all the three earlier books, from the point of view of what he calls the *qânûnu'd-da'wati'l-hâdiya*, i.e. the law (or usage) of the rightly guiding religion, in other words the point of view of the Fatimid headquarters of his own time. On the whole almost everywhere he vindicates the point of view of Abû Ḥâtim as against Sijzî, although sometimes finding errors in the statements of the former [3].

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[1] It is usually believed that he died about the same time as Nakhshabî. This is wrong, however, because his book *Kitâbu'l-Iftikhâr* (cf. *Guide*, no. 26), referred to in the *Riyâḍ*, was, according to internal evidence that it contains, composed some time after 360/971.

[2] The exact date of Kirmânî's death remains unknown. As I have already pointed out in my "Guide" (p. 43) he could not have died before Jum. II, 408/Nov., 1017, because one of his works, *R. al-W'â'iẓa*, was completed on that date. On the other hand, all his works seem to contain a reference to al-Ḥâkim as the Imam of that time.

[3] It appears that there was no personal animosity between the two, as may be seen from the fact that Kirmânî wrote a pamphlet, included in his collection of the thirteen treatises, cf. *Guide*, no. 131, *ar-Risâlatu'z-Zâhira*, to prove that a certain book (unfortunately he does not mention its title in the treatise), with undesirable tendencies, was wrongly attributed to Sijzî's authorship. Kirmânî's arguments are based both on the style of its language and the errors in the doctrine.

In addition, he finds that *al-Maḥṣûl* contains also some other statements which were overlooked by Abû Ḥâtim, quotes them and comments thereon, in the tenth *bâb* of the *Riyâḍ*.

With the almost impenetrable mystery which surrounds the progress of Ismailism in Persia, a series of such works as these appears to deserve the most careful study. Unfortunately for the student, the *K.al-Maḥṣûl* and *K. an-Nuṣra* have been lost. Obviously treated as not quite orthodox, they were gradually abandoned, neglected, and never recopied. Abû Ḥâtim's *Iṣlâḥ* and *K.ar-Riyâḍ*, fortunately, are preserved. Both, however, present a voluminous accumulation of wisdom, at least over 500 closely written pages, filled with scholastic hair-splittings on "philosophical" subjects. It would hardly be feasible, therefore, to edit and translate both the works, and comment upon the whole of their contents. In the present paper it is only proposed, so-to-speak, to lay the matter before students, analysing the contents of the works in their outlines, and noting all that they comprise of interest for the student of history of ideas in that early phase of Ismailism.

We shall return presently to the analysis of these works, but before doing so it is necessary to offer a few general observations concerning the spirit and trend of the abstract theories with which the controversy formally deals, the mentality of the authors and their time.

1. *The Hellenistic* Ḥikma.

In order to understand this mentality, which was shared by Ismailism as well as Sufism and the most orthodox schools of Islam, several points should always be borne in mind. Much has been written on the genesis of Muslim philosophy, on the policy of the Abbasid caliphs with regard to translations of ancient Greek works on philosophic and scientific matters, on the gradual influence of these upon Muslim theology, and so forth. It seems to me, however, that certain aspects of this process and certain circumstances of overwhelming importance were often either overlooked or, in any case, not sufficiently stressed.

The extent to which original Islam borrowed from Christianity and especially its gnostic and other sects is being more and more brought to light. All these doctrines had already been saturated with Hellenistic elements. Thus from the start the path was paved for Islam to continue this tradition, and absorb Hellenistic ideas which probably were not in much demand during the rudimentary phase of Islam, but later on were able to assert their importance.

Secondly, although undoubtedly Muslim philosophy at its inception greatly depended on the translations of various Greek works, it is only right to stress the fact that these translations were not the only source of information. Hellenistic wisdom was "in the air" in many provinces which the Arabs wrestled from Byzantium, and certainly it could not disappear with the population's change of religion. This popular knowledge had retained little of the original spirit of the golden age of Greek philosophy and its great productions. Plato, Aristotle and others were long since popularized, simplified, brought down to the mentality of the "man-in-the-street," and, above all, lavishly adulterated with the superstition of various nations, relics of ancient magic beliefs, astrology, Kabbalistic speculations on the mystic meaning of numbers and letters, and so forth. Such mixture was the popular philosophy and science, and Islam somehow had to react on it, either objecting to it, or accepting and admitting it into its system. In fact as we know, Islam did both in the practice of its different schools.

The mechanism by which such popular wisdom could be coupled with the rigid Semitic monotheism of Islam also presented nothing novel. It was, according to the terminology of Muslim theologians, *ta'wîl*, "bringing out the meaning that was implied," or, simply, allegorical interpretation. We know very well how great a part fantastic parallelism, symbolism, "signs," "omens," "warnings," etc., observed in practically everything and believed to portend various events in human life, play in primitive religion, and even in much more advanced phases of human civilisation. Allegorism was much used in the ancient

world, was much cultivated by the Jews, and found enormous application in Christian sects. In fact, the Coran itself contains many instances of *ta'wîl*, and the most orthodox and conservative commentators make use of it, although officially rejecting and condemning it. Ismailism was no exception, but the difference, as compared with other schools in this respect was constituted by often openly-manifested partiality for it.

The most interesting point is the attitude of early Islamic works to such Hellenistic wisdom. With much practical sense the substantial majority in the Muslim world realised the value of the different branches of the ancient sciences, and even recognised a certain authority of the *ḥikma*, i.e. scientific and other knowledge. The Greek system of the universe was accepted as the truth, and therefore beyond question, and only required correct understanding of various secondary points. We may doubt whether early mediaeval Islamic theologians consciously tried to interpret the principles of Islamic outlook in the terms of that philosophy. Most probably for them it was merely a theoretic scheme, just as the system of logic or mathematics, a hollow form into which any contents may be poured. Thus if logic was enlisted for the service of theology, there was no reason why philosophy and cosmology could not be employed in the same way. Most probably (of course we can only theorize on similar matters, and will never find sufficient proof of this in history) such process to a great extent was spontaneous at the beginning, and it is not impossible that translations of Greek works followed, not preceded, the original impetus which the process received. Of course, in the conservative milieu of early Islamic devotees such "innovations" were seriously objected to, but the question was not of any substantial reform in Islam but simply a minute adjustment to more civilised outlook. It was therefore, as it seems, not resistence to impiety, but simply something like the opposition to the use of electric light or tap water in mosques in modern times[1].

[1] As we shall see further on, in the second *bâb* of his *Riyâḍ* Kirmâni incidentally expresses an opinion on ancient Greek philosophy which may be taken as expressing the official Fatimid attitude to the question. It may be defined as "acceptance, subject to adjustment to Divine Revelation as the final source of absolute truth".

It is impossible to expect that any historical work can ever reveal to us the real motives of the headquarters of the Ismaili propaganda adopting Hellenistic wisdom as an auxiliary to the dogma of Islam. But it would be not difficult to infer that the main purpose was of a double nature. It was intended to strengthen the institution of imamat as the basic principle of the theocratic ideal of Islam. Secondly, it was obviously the desire to pay the bill for the supreme knowledge claimed to be handed down in the house of 'Alî, as all Shi'ite sects believed. Such higher knowledge had no other course of revelation except for the language of the intellectual life of the time, i.e. those versed in Hellenistic philosophy.

The most important point in all this, however, was the absolute paramountcy of religion over all such elements of knowledge. Plain Islamic beliefs overruled every philosophic principle or speculation. Scrutinizing the Ismaili *ḥaqâ'iq*, as also any branch of Islamic philosophy, it is easy to note that all depended on its agreement with the standard dogma of Islam. So long as philosophical speculations agreed with these, they were tolerated and even admired. When they did not, it was easy to find an error in the argument. It would be no exaggeration to state that on the whole such philosophical experiments were a harmless pastime because no one took these too seriously. Those incautious ones who did, however, were at once outlawed as dangerous heretics and enemies of Islam. In fact, as we see in works on *ḥaqâ'iq* and generally philosophic matters, such speculations were nothing but a kind of game like chess. From a few arbitrary principles all kinds of deductions were made, usually quite futile and obviously unsound, until by various tricks this or that original and purely religious idea was « proved ». The whole show was chiefly intended to impress those restless souls "seeking

for the truth" who, being dissatisfied with the substantial but plain and monotonous religious food of orthodoxy, were craving for something novel and spicy.

In the speculations preserved in the controversy with which we have to deal on these pages it appears as if the usual principles of Hellenistic wisdom are unreservedly taken as an indisputable authority, and that there is not even a shadow of hesitancy to accept their application to Islamic theology. The discussion is concerned with secondary details and their proper explanations. It is therefore possible to think that the acceptance of the combination of the Islamic and Hellenistic outlooks as component parts of one system took place long enough before the rise of the Fatimid caliphate (297/909) to become an unquestionable law, while not long enough to give time for the final adjustment of details.

The story of the popularisation of ancient Greek philosophy, and its development into what we may call the mediaeval universal knowledge, to a great extent resembles the evolution of any of the classical languages in their development into modern dialects. The initial wealth of forms and developed and consistent syntax disappears to give place to simplified, shortened, worn out words combined into sentences by the debased syntactic rules. All this is over-simplified, adjusted to the tastes and comprehension of the most backward elements of the society. It requires a great national and cultural upheaval to bring the new dialect to the position of a new classical language, the medium of a new important literature.

Exactly the same is observed in mediaeval "universal knowledge." The spirit of ancient philosophy has evaporated, and it has become a dogmatic system of beliefs. We shall see further on that the authors of the works in this controversy often talk of abstract and primordial matters while plainly keeping in mind the relations between objects of the physical, visible world. This was obviously not only due to the imperfect terminology, but also generally the lack of philosophical spirit, mentality. It is easy to see that

the theory of the created world, as brought into existence by the uncreated "reason," *'aql*, of the universe from which the *nafs*, soul, emanated, as a complex combination of various psychological faculties, is merely a crude notion of primitive psychology projected upon the world around us. We must not forget that the application of such *maṣdar* forms in Arabic, as *'aql* or *nafs*, etc., does in fact include a considerable proportion of verbal implications. *'Aql* is not merely "reason" as a sort of mechanism *for* reasoning, but substantially the act of reasoning. From the context in many works it is easy to see that the idea of *'aql* is simply a projection of logical comprehensibility of the outer world to human mind upon the world itself as its main property. Similarly, the nature of the *nafs*, as a living or animating principle and the bearer of certain faculties of knowledge, is another projection of the human psychic life. Plato's grand theory of the world of ideas as having an independent existence, *hayûlâ* (i.e. the original Greek word *'ê 'ûlê*, left untranslated) is here understood as a store of generic ideas or forms (the same term *ṣûrat* conveys both) from which the forms of individual things or beings originate. In fact, the *hayûlâ* is a relic, a kind of fossil, inherited from ancient philosophy, with which, as it often seems clear, Muslim authors do not know what to do. We can see further on that while so much is said of the *nafs* being an emanation of the *'aql*, second in the list of existence, it appears that the *hayûlâ* is overlooked, and only by way of an afterthought the authors do remember that it *also* is an emanation from the *'aql*. Further on, the ideas of movement (and quiescence as a separate and independent element), time, space, etc., all are loosely fixed in the system, permitting a flood of speculation as to their mutual connection, origin, etc.

What the authors know unshakeably, however, is that the *'aql* was the word of God conveying the Divine command "be" to the world to come into existence. It is remarkkable as a proof of the overwhelming power of the plain original beliefs of Islam over Muslim philosophers that

hundreds and thousands of authors who discussed such matters never noticed the inconsistency of these theories with the principle of monotheism. Ismailism adopted the principle of the attributelessness of God almost as rigid as that of Marcionism, and yet it did not mind preserving that relic of the primitive anthropomorphic ideas of God the Creator which is retained in the Bible. They at length discuss the cosmic implications of the letters of which the word "be," written in Arabic, is composed, and so forth.

As a compliment to the general historic sense of the Islamic civilisation, we may see that Ismaili authors have developed for themselves a picture of the historical process They know well the purpose of the creation of the world, the events in the biography of Adam, etc., and, as one may note, they have so much to say about Noah, Abraham, and a multitude of other Biblical worthies. Islam, and especially Ismailism, has inherited the Biblical interpretation of history, repeating much that was invented by various early gnostic sects. Ismailism is the only true and genuine form of Islam, and the latter is the final and most perfect form of the religion of God which is the only true religion of the world. God revealed it to Adam, and thereafter He periodically sent His Apostles to refresh it and bring it up-to-date. Variety of action is strictly denied in this process. Each Apostle of God had to enact the same drama as that portrayed by the Arabian Prophet. He had to leave his *Waṣi*, executor of his will and his lieutenant after his death, who had to be followed by seven Imams assisted by their *dâ'is*. We can see that a number of Biblical worthies have been appointed to various ranks in the Ismaili propaganda organisation. It is quite obvious why we find such theories, especially in the works of the official exponents of the Fatimid doctrine. All this was consciously or unconsciously intended to serve, as a precedent, the cause of the central principle in Ismailism, that of Imamat.

Obviously there were local deviations from the approved standards, and these on various occasions probably displayed considerable tenacity. We can see that such eminent *dâ'i* as Sijzî rushes to the rescue of the *Kitâbu'l-Maḥṣûl*, and that despite the official condemnation of many of its points in the *Riyâḍ* by Kirmânî, another *dâ'î*, Nâṣir-i Khusraw, though renouncing Sijzî as a madman, a hundred years later speaks of the *Maḥṣûl* and its martyred author with great respect and affection.

2. *The* Iṣlâḥ *and its arrangement.*

Although Kirmânî often literally quotes the *Maḥṣûl* and *Nuṣra*, it would be difficult to arrive at a decision as to whether these were small or large books. From his quotations of the *Iṣlâḥ* we can see that he very often abbreviates the original text, leaving only its essential portions. Unfortunately, the learned Abû Ḥâtim is not so accurate in his book in noting the sentences and passages which are quotations. In the portions dealing with Biblical stories he apparently does not quote the *Maḥṣûl* at all but only refers to its contents.

His *Iṣlâḥ* is a bulky book, divided into six *juz's*, or parts. In some of these the headings are omitted. The beginning of the *Iṣlâḥ*, probably comprising an introduction and the beginning of the *juz'* I, is lost, and it abruptly opens with the quotation of the verses of the Coran, XXIV, 27-29. The first *juz'* is entirely devoted to the discussion of professional ethics of the *dâ'is* in their relations with each other, especially condemning the practice of the "stealing of others' disciples," enticing them to leave their original teachers and join the new ones. Abû Ḥâtim says that the *mustajîb*, i.e. new convert to religion, is the *matâ'*, stock in trade, of the *janâḥ* (i.e. *dâ'î*), for whom his *ma'dhûn* educates him (*yufâtiḥu-hu*), as for his father (*al-ladhî huwa abû-hu*).[1] The *ma'dhûn* can do this only on the instruction of his superior. The *ma'dhûns* can exchange the neophytes in their charge with each other also only on the

[1] Compare the story narrated in the *Kitâbu'l-'âlim wa'l-ghulâm*. The idea is the same, although there is some difference in terminology, probably because the latter book was intended for the general public.

proper authorisation of their superiors. A *ma'dhûn* can, however, take on someone else's pupil in case the latter is accidentally "stranded," i.e. left without spiritual guidance owing to some special circumstances. When educating (lit. breaking) the neophyte who has already been sworn in (*ma'hûd*),[1] the "weak" one (*ḍa'if*), i.e. obviously a man of little education, must not be instructed on the same lines as the "strong" one, *bâligh* (obviously already well educated). The tuition must be given systematically and gradually. The training of a man of little education is much easier than that of the advanced one (*bâligh*) who needs careful testing (*imtiḥân*). The preachers must in every way take great care for the interests of the *da'wat* (*ṣalâḥu'd-da'wat*), following the supreme guidance (*ifâdat*) of the Imam (*Mutimm*).

The relations between the missionary and his converts are allegorized by the relations between the husband and wife, and the "stealing" of one's pupil is the same as enticing away one's wife (this is apparently the principal aim at which the author drives, as again and again he returns to it). It is adultery and rape, while the bringing up of a convert from the beginning is legitimate marriage, which is a sacrament (*sirr*). Those who misappropriate the converts made by their superiors are like the son who marries his father's widow, which is *zinâ*, adultery. To illustrate this, the author refers to history and to the Bible. When the Prophet married Zaynab, the wife of Zayd b. Ḥâritha, it was quite different from the mean transactions of David to get Uriah's wife, because the rank of the Prophet was incomparably superior to that of Zayd, while David was a *lâḥiq*, just as Uriah. They were of equal rank, although David's following was more numerous than that of Uriah. Rank, however, does not depend on the number of one's

[1] As far as I can see, this expression is very rare. Of course, the mere fact of having sworn allegiance to the *da'wat*, without receiving the "education" would not make one an Ismaili. It is quite possible that this expression is used not as a technical term, but simply in its participial sense.

following. Noah was a *Nâṭiq* despite his having a very small following throughout the whole of his long life.

The tone of all these discussions does not appear to reflect controversy, and it is difficult to see what connection it has with the subjects discussed immediately following. It is quite possible that this is either an answer to the *muqaddima* of *al-Maḥṣûl*, which referred to such matters, or was an entirely unconnected fragment of a different work, erroneously taken for the remnants of *al-Iṣlâḥ*. In any case, even if this portion is genuine, a certain number of pages is missing. The terminology of this beginning is entirely consistent with the rest of the book, and genuinely belongs to the period. The Imam is here called *Mutimm*, *ḥujjat* — *lâḥiq*,[1] *dâ'i* — *janâḥ*, and only *ma'dhûn* and *mustajîb* remain as in the West, not in Persia. Sometimes, however, in the plural, *ayâdî* (Plur. from *yad*, hand) is used instead of *ajniḥa*, Plur. from *janâḥ* as in the phrase: *al-Atimmâ' wa'l-lawâḥiq wa'l-ayâdî*, although in another place, strangely, we read: *sunnat fî'l-lawâḥiq wa'l-ayâdî wa'l-ajniḥa*. The generic name for the "rank" is *ḥadd: ḥudûd ahli'd-da'wati'l-ḥaqîqiyya*. The expression *martaba*, *marâtib* apparently refers not to the rank, but competence. The *ṣâḥibu'd-da'wat* is not the Imam (as in early Shi'ism), but the dignitary in charge of the preaching in a certain district; his charges are called *muttaṣil*, "connected." The word *dâ'i* is used in the plain participial sense, not as a technical term.

The first *juz'* in the *Iṣlâḥ* has a colophon, showing that it is complete. Other *juz's* (at least in the copies that I have seen) have also similar colophons. We may suppose that originally the *Iṣlâḥ* had an introduction, from the fact that after the first *juz'*, with its colophon, there is the formula of *basmala*, after which follows: *ja-inna nabtadî fî iṣlâḥ mâ waqa' mina'l-ghalaṭ fi'l-kitâb al-ladhî qad jarâ dhikru-hu*, i.e. "And now we shall proceed with the correction of the errors which are found in the book

[1] The abstract noun from this word, *ḥujjat*-ship, is *luḥûq*.

which already has been mentioned." No such mention occurs in the first *juz'* as it is.

It is not easy to reconstruct the original division of the book. In my copy only the beginnings of the third to the sixth *juz's* are marked. At the beginning there is fairly systematic division into the quotations from *al-Maḥṣûl*, introduced by "*faṣl*," and "*naqûl*," introducing the comments. Towards the end there are several sections headed with *bâb*. Some sections are introduced by *mâ jâ' fi...* It seems that Abû Ḥâtim is not very accurate in copying the text of the quotations from *al-Maḥṣûl*, because these sometimes differ from the corresponding quotations as given in the *Riyâḍ*. Sijzî, however, is much worse in this respect, and Kirmânî often catches him in perverting the text of the quotations from the *Iṣlâḥ* and refuting what Abû Ḥâtim had never said.

We may note that Abû Ḥâtim devotes a lesser part of his book to the discussions of philosophical matters, and the greater portion of it is filled with the interpretation of various Coranic and Biblical stories. How Sijzî reacted to these, we do not know, because Kirmânî almost completely ignores the *ta'wîl* explanations, and concentrates on the philosophical issues of the controversy.

3. *The* Riyâḍ *and the Controversy.*

The *Riyâḍ* opens with a doxology, in which the author refers to al-Ḥâkim bi-amri'l-lâh as the ruling caliph [1]. Then he proceeds: "I saw that *Shaykh* Abû Ḥâtim corrected what he thought erroneous in the *K. al-Maḥṣûl*, and *Shaykh* Abû Ya'qûb as-Sijzî defended the author of *Maḥṣûl*, testifying to the soundness of his point of view. The matters which they discussed were not *furû'*, minor details of the doctrine, in which a difference of opinion is permissible.

[1] Judging from the fact that Kirmânî refers to quite a number of his own earlier works, it is possible to assume that the *Riyâḍ* was a product of his advanced age. This tallies well with his style which shows much technical skill and finish, probably the result of his experience throughout the whole of his life.

without a prejudice to the soundness of the basic principles (*uṣûl*). *Shaykh* Abû Ya'qûb, as I could see, supported certain statements as correct, contradicting Abû Ḥâtim, and attacking him. In other places he spoke irrelevantly (*'alâ ghayri'n-niẓâm*). Besides in the *Maḥṣûl* there are found statements, more particularly those referring to the doctrine of monotheism (*tawḥîd*) and the Primal Reason which by no means can be treated as dealing with details (*furû'*), and which ought to have been corrected by Abû Ḥâtim and discussed by him (but were not). These really should have had the precedence for being discussed over the lengthy stories dealing with matters of secondary importance [obviously an allusion to Biblical myths] with which he filled his book. He, Abû Ḥâtim, left these (uncorrected), neglecting to pay attention to them, and this caused much harm to the followers of the Rightly Guiding Religion (*ad-da'watu'l-hâdiya*), introducing difference of opinions amongst them through the perusal of that book (*Maḥṣûl*). This affected the purity of monotheistic belief (*masâliku't-tawḥîd*), and corrupted the correct understanding of the religious statute (*ḥudûd*).

For this reason I have decided to quote here both the original words of the *Iṣlâḥ* correcting the *Maḥṣûl*, and of the *Nuṣra*, supporting it, offering my own comment on them. The purpose of this, and the proper method of passing judgment on such statement by which their real meaning may be revealed, is to separate the truth in these from untruths. When this is done, it will become clear, which of these two authors is an aggressor and offender, and the doctrine (*ma'nâ*) will be safeguarded against their errors, to be accepted in its true form. After this I shall add my corrections needed by *K. al-Maḥṣûl*, and which have not been given (by Abû Ḥâtim) in those matters in which difference of opinions is not permissible."

The *Riyâḍ* is divided into ten *bâbs*, each subdivided into a varied number of *faṣls*. With his high literary technique, Kirmânî picks up what he regards as essential in the *Iṣlâḥ* and the *Nuṣra*, and criticises both in a lucid

and compact style which differs so markedly from the rather verbose style of Abû Ḥâtim.

The first *bâb* of the *Riyâḍ* is divided into 38 *faṣls*, and is devoted to the question of the perfection of the *Nafs*, the first emanation (*munba'ath*). It seems worth while to offer here a translation of its beginning to demonstrate the style and tone of his work.

"Says the author of *al-Iṣlâḥ*: *Nafs* is perfect (*tâmm*), a perfect emanation from perfection (*tamâm*), because the (Primal) Reason (*'Aql*) is perfection.

Says the author of *an-Nuṣra*, contradicting this, that the author of the *Iṣlâḥ* does not know that "perfect" is superior to and more complete (*akmal*) than perfection, because the latter is an attribute of the perfect which is defined by it. Thus the perfect is the bearer of such attribute, which belongs to it, and as such is superior and more complete than its attribute or property, which is connected with it. The perfect is defined by perfection, its bearer, while perfection is merely an attribute of the perfect, something that is borne by, or dependent on it."

As we may see, here is a prototype of the age long controversy which later on in Europe absorbed mediaeval philosophers, between the nominalists ("universalia ante res") and realists ("universalia post res"). The author of the *Riyâḍ* uncovers the logical error by pointing out that the author of the *Iṣlâḥ* by *tamâm* means not perfection generally, but the "supreme perfection," i.e. the "Primal Reason." The latter is the source, or cause (*'illat*) of the perfect *Nafs*, which is thus caused (*ma'lûl*) by it, and the caused cannot be superior to its cause. Thus, in the opinion of Kirmânî, Sijzî unjustly attacks Abû Ḥâtim.

The whole book is in the same strain. All these scholastic constructions and logical tricks are as boring as they are futile, and will add nothing to our knowledge by following them in detail. We may note only that Kirmânî sees the source of confusion in the application of one and the same method of reasoning both to the phenomena of the material world (*ṭabî'ât*) and to abstractions involved

in the speculations on the subject of what we may call primal realities, *al-mabâdî'l-ibdâ'iyya al-inbi'âthiyya*.

Further on the author quotes Abû Ḥâtim who develops his idea by reasoning that while the substance (*dhât*) of the *Nafs* is perfect, its actions (*fi'l*) are not perfect because they depend on time, while the *Nafs* is an emanation of the Primal *'Aql*. The latter is an entity (*ays*) forming one with the creative impulse (*ibdâ'*), time and perfection. On the contrary, the *Nafs* is emanated with time (*inbi'âthu'n nafs huwa ma'a'z-zamân*), obviously implying its being a separate *ays*. Its dependence on the benefit derived from the Primal *'Aql* does not constitute any inferiority of its substance, just as in the Primal Reason itself no inferiority or imperfection is constituted by its being dependent on the (Divine) volition (*amr*). Thus perfection or imperfection may be attributed to the actions of the *Nafs*, not to its substance.

These two quotations from the *Iṣlâḥ* form the subject of the first *bâb* of the *Riyâḍ* (63 pages in my copy). Kirmânî, however, profusely quotes the *Nuṣra*, persistently indicating the fact that Sijzî incorrectly understands these theories. He is, using a modern term, an empirist, intruding into the realm of idealism with his own yard stick, intended only for the phenomena of the material world. It may be noted that Sijzî, in his *Nuṣra*, several times refers to Mḥd b. Zakariyâ ar-Râzî (the famous Rhazes of mediaeval literature) whom he mentions as the exponent of an infidel doctrine.

In he fifteenth *faṣl* of the first chapter Kirmânî sums up the position of Sijzî: "What he aims at is that the *Nafs*, being an emanation (*munba'ath*) of the First *'Aql*, which is perfection, is perfect itself. Then the *hayûlâ* and *ṣûrat*, being emanations of the *Nafs*, should also be perfect. Similarly, this should be true of everything that forms an emanation of either of these, as he thinks, down to individuals (*ashkhâṣ*). In this way every thing that is found in this world should be perfect, and cannot comprise any imperfection. We have already explained above what was the purpose of the author of the *Iṣlâh* in saying that

the *Nafs* was perfect. The words of the author of the *Nuṣra* on this subject do not answer the question, because the *hayûlâ* is not an emanation of the *Nafs*, and individuals, contrary to what he thinks, are not indivisible (*ghayr mutajazza'a*). In fact, all individuals (*ashkhâṣ*) can be divided into their parts (*ab'âḍ*). The *hayûlâ* is not an emanation *of* the *Nafs*, but *with* the *Nafs*, as has already been discussed above. This is proved by the fact that the existence of the *Nafs*, i.e. *Tâlî* (the Second, lit. "following") is dissimilar to the existence of any other thing as there is no other thing of this kind existent. Nothing exceeds it in the degree of existence, outside it, just as in the case of the Primal *'Aql*, the First. In fact its existence is double, and what is its second existence is nothing but its (*Nafs*') independent existence, while, at the same time, the existence together with the existence of the *'Aql*. They do not together belong to one and the same category (*naw'*). This is because the *Tâlî* ("Second") which came into existence from the "First," *'Aql*, was the first thing never preceded by any other of its class. It is unique of its kind, its being is unique in existence, due to the Glory of the Almighty God who had brought into existence the causation, relation, multiplicity, and all other characteristics of things of various kinds. By this I mean the belonging, relation, creative cause, whose existence is the source of all derived from it and what exists in number, being more than one of its kind. The existence of multiplicity of its derivates, *ma'lûlât*, accords with its causes originating in it, and being implied in it. Just as God the Allhigh is above having anything that precedes Him, or coexists with Him, or from the change in His status (*naṣab*) and relations, so is the *Nafs* (in its own sphere). The Allhigh is He who has brought into existence, originated all, the Cause to which there is no cause, in Whom only one can originate. This one is the Primal *'Aql* which has two definitions (or relations, *nisbat*). One is that of its being the cause of all existence below it, and the other of itself having been caused (*ma'lûl*). If (thus) it acts as an initiator and creator (*mubdi' mukhtari'*), that which comes out from it should acquire double nature, as the sequence of its double connection (*nisbat*). That which was derived from its first connection (*nisbat*) was the Second *'Aql* (*al-'Aqlu'th-Thânî*), and from its second connection (*nisbat*), the *hayûlâ*. From the latter come the celestial spheres and other things in the existence of the visible world. Then, if the existent comes into being from one, there cannot become in existence except two, as there is in existence no other stage after one except two, and after a single except for a pair, which (thus) start multitude. If the first is one in the sequence of beings, no sensible man can expect it to be followed by anything except two, and (so forth) by multitude. And if there appear two, one of these should be what we call *Nafs*, and the other the *hayûlâ*, from which come the spheres, stars, and everything under these."

The religious purpose of all these speculations, which are so helplessly futile as they are abstruse, is stated in the next, sixteenth *faṣl*: "Thus the foundation of religion and its prescriptions (*ta'sisu'd-dîn wa waḍâ'i'u-hu*) is the harmony of existence (*mawâzanatu'l-mawjûdât*) and their proper correspondence (*muqâbalât*). These are intended to serve as a proof of their organisation in accordance with the existing principles (*ḥudûd*) which are not apparent to the eye of the ordinary man. The existence of the sacred book and law from (*min jihat*) the *Nâṭiq* and the advent of the *Asâs* which precedes the other two in importance as an act of the *Nâṭiq* (i.e. the book and the law. — *mu'awwalan 'an-humâ min jihati'n-Nâṭiq*) are the surest proof of the fact that (every thing) in existence comes from the Primal *'Aql*. The latter in its own sphere (*'âlam*, world) occupies the same position as the *Nâṭiq* in the material world. And with regard to the *Tâlî*, Second, which is the *Nafs* and the *Hayûlâ*, together they are like the Book and the *Asâs*, coming into existence through the *Nâṭiq*. This raises (in importance) what the Prophet has done putting together the Book and his progeny (*'itrat*) which both came into existence through him. [The author quotes the well known

hadîth on the subject]. Thus he, the Prophet, made himself in the material world a symbol (or simile) of the Primal *'Aql* in the primordial existence (*dâru'l-ibdâ'*), and the book which he had brought and those related to him, his progeny, i.e. the *Asâs*, and others, the Imâms (prayers of God be upon them!) The parallel of that comes from the First *'Aql*, i.e. the Second and the *hayûlâ*, as we have already discussed in the book called the *Râḥatu'l-'aql*. Thus the *hayûlâ* could only manifest its superiority (*sharaf*) and the excellent forms (*ṣûrat*) which it potentially comprises, only through the help (*bi-quwwat*) of the *Nafs* which is the Second (*Tâlî*), and the spreading of its light. Thus in the same way the Book and Law (*shari'at*) could not be taught by themselves, or show the wonderful wisdom which they contain, except with the help of the *ta'wîl* (allegorical interpretation) given by the *Asâs* and his successors. Similarly, the *hayûlâ* descends from the Primal Reason in the same measure as the Second."

I have translated this long passage from the *Riyâḍ* as extremely typical of the book, and generally of the Ismaili *ḥaqâ'iq*. It forms a good specimen of the cross section of the successive strata in the doctrine. The top, partly ornamental, and partly intended for defensive purposes, is the hollow scholastic philosophy of the time, with its speculations. The middle stratum contains the core of the Ismaili system, the doctrine of *'itrat* and *Imâmat*. And at the bottom is the solid rock of all-Islamic beliefs, accepted as sincerely and unshakeably as by any school of Islam, and characteristically presumed to be something in the nature of the matter of fact," the starting point of the whole theory.

Further on, in the eighteenth *faṣl*, Kirmânî returns to that original idea of Sijzî whether the *hayûlâ* and *ṣûrat*, and together with these the whole of the world, are imperfect. Kirmânî defines the idea of the perfect (*tâmm*) and complete (*kâmil*), obviously conveying one and the same meaning, as something from which nothing is missing that belongs to its kind (*min naw' wujûdi-hî*). He catches

Sijzî in a contradiction, pointing out that in his later work, *K. al-Iftikhâr*[1], in the *bâbu'l-amr*, he admits the perfection of the world taken in its entirety. He suggests that in the *Iftikhâr*, compiled later than the *Nuṣra*, Sijzi has given up his earlier erroneous ideas.

We need not follow the development of his reasoning. His logical errors, pointed out by Kirmânî, are chiefly formed by his involuntarily substituting the abstract ideas of the philosophical theory with the concepts of the material world and psychological sphere. Thus while philosophizing on the subject of the *Tâli*, the abstract *Nafs* of the world, he obviously thinks of the *nafs* = human soul. In the latter (*an-nafs al-juz'iyya*) the thought (*fikrat*) may sometimes occupy the position of the *'Aql* in the universe, and sometimes to be the reverse of this, being a parallel to the *Tâli*. The thought comprehends its object part by part, gradually, in time, while the cosmic *Nafs* comprehends all in its entirety, and is entirely outside the time.

Sijzî further on (as quoted by Kirmânî) cites as proof of the imperfection of the *Nafs* and perfection of the *'Aql* the theory that all early authors, including the author of the *Iṣlâḥ*, regard the actions as belonging to the functioning of the *Nafs*, Second, never attributing these to the work of the First. The action, however, is a definite proof of imperfection, being a proof of need, while inactivity (*tarku'l-fi'l*) is a proof of superiority and self-sufficiency. This is because every action is either intended for securing a benefit, or repelling some harm, or for a play. Ibn Zakariyâ (i.e. Mḥd ar-Râzî) says that the source of action is the *nafs*. .. The *'aql*, however, quiescent and perfect, is not stirred to action by any means.

Kirmânî remarks that *if* Abû Ḥâtim, attacked here by Sijzî, really speaks about the human soul, *nafsu'l-bashar*, then Sijzî is right, but as he does not, then again there is confusion in ideas. It is hardly worth quoting all these discussions. In the 25th *faṣl* Kirmânî again returns to Sijzî's criticisms: "Says the author of the *Nuṣra*: If the

[1] Cf. *Guide*, no. 26.

position of the *Nâṭiq* in the material world is similar to the position of the *'Aql* in the primordial sphere, and if that of the *Asâs* is like that of the *Tâlî*, and if it is impossible to assert that the *Nafs* is as perfect as the *'Aql*, then we must recognize that the *Asâs* is as perfect as the *Nâṭiq*, which is untrue. The position of the *Asâs* is lower than that of the *Nâṭiq*. This is explained in the meaning of the prayer[1]. This is what he says."

Kirmânî answers: "We say that the Second is like the First (*mithl*), even being inferior to it by its degree, just as the *Asâs* is equal to the *Nâṭiq*, even if being of a lower standing than his...., because he (later) acquires the perfection which does not belong to his substance (*dhât*) originally.. The ways of the *Asâs* to attain perfection (*naylu'l-kamâl wa't-tamâm*) are the same as those (accessible to) every ordinary member of the community who attains maturity and perfection (*balâgh wa tamâmiyyat*) from him (the Prophet ?), after first having sworn allegiance (*ukhdhu'l-'ahd*), and, secondly, after receiving instruction (*ta'lîm*). The Prophet has done this to the *Asâs* merely in order to give a proof that the *Thânî*, Second, who is the prototype of the *Asâs* in the world of primal realities (*tilqâ'u'l-Asâs*), attains the *kamâl*, perfection... The custom demands that "the sons of the *da'wat*" (*abnâ'u'd-da'wat*) must be first sworn, and only then can they be brought to attain religious maturity. This is merely a symbol of the fact that souls in the material world (*al-anfusu'ṭ-ṭabî'iyyât* which are under the *Thânî*, first possess their abilities potentially, and only later begin to exercise (*iktasab*) these in actions (*fi'l*), which implies the attainment of the completion or perfection (*tamâm wa kamâl*)." Kirmânî proves this, explaining the symbolism of the prayer. He further on (*faṣl* 26) explains that the *Asâs* in some respect is equal to the Prophet, and in other respects is not and it would be sufficient for the faithful to realise the differ-

[1] This probably refers to the usual *ta'wîl* explanations of the usual prayers, *ṣalât*, given in a well-known book, such, perhaps, as the *Ta'wîl'u'd-Da'â'im*.

rence in their position, not in their substance (*dhât*). He further on quotes lengthy extracts from the *Nuṣra* in order to give more proofs of Sijzî's confusion of the cosmic factors with human psychology, and to demonstrate that he simply does not understand that Abû Ḥâtim in his *Iṣlâḥ* speaks of quite different matters.

An interesting point is the attitude towards the ancient philosophers. Kirmânî quotes the words of Sijzî who refers to Empedocles (A- b -n-d-f-l-î-s), and remarks that the ancient philosophers were eminent in their own time. But the sway of error spread over them in much they have written about the abstract principles (*'aqliyyât*). If they would be living in our own times they would have recognized as true the "sources of blessing" (*yanâbi'u'l-barakât*) from the "house of the Divine inspiration" (*bayt'u'l-waḥy*) with its true principles which form the basis of the Alid doctrine (*ad-da'watu'l-'Alawiyya*). We must accept this as the true expression of the attitude of the Fatimid headquarters of his time towards ancient Greek philosophy.

The second *bâb* of the *Riyâḍ*, divided into nine *faṣls*, continues the same discussion of the relation between the *'Aql* and *Nafs*, taking up Sijzî's objections to the second *faṣl* of what is in my copy the second *juz'* of Abû Ḥâtim's *Iṣlâḥ*. The difficult question of the movement and rest is taken up, which, as is known, gave so much trouble to the ancient philosophers. Here movement and quiescence are regarded as "influences" mutually interconnected with each other (*atharân muttaḥidân*), of both the First and Second. This is (as Abû Ḥâtim says) because the First, on having been brought into existence (*ubdi'*), was connected with the fact of the bringing up (*ibdâ'*)... and this reflected on its double position of the *dhâtu'l-ibdâ'* and *dhâtu'l-mubda'*.... Both these *athars* are potentially contained in the First. When the Second became emanated, *inba'ath*, from the First, the act of the emanation, *inbi'âth*, also possessed a double aspect or nature (*dhâtu'l-inbi'âth* and *dhâtu'l-munba'ath*). Thus the two "products" (*atharân*) are connected with both the primordial principles (*aṣlân*). Movement (*ḥa-*

rykat) is the benefit (*ifâdat*) which the First bestows upon the Second, affecting all the entities, while quiescence (*sukûn*) is the reception (*qabûl*) of the benefit of the First in all entities (*al-aysiyyât kulli-hâ*). "I do not say (adds Abû Ḥâtim) that movement and quiescence were both born (*mutawalladân*) from the *Nafs* by the force generated (*mustafâdat*) from the *'Aql*, but I assert that both of these are "traces" (*atharân*) from the *Nafs* produced by the force generated from the *'Aql* in the *hayûlâ* and *ṣûrat*. It is for this reason that the *hayûlâ* and *ṣûrat* have become the foundation (*uss*) of this world".

The temperamental Sijzî, in his *Nuṣra*, quoted by Kirmânî, comes into action: "I say that these words are nonsense (*hidhyân*) because movement comes into existence only for a certain purpose (*li-ṭalabi-hâ*) just as the movement of the (material) bodies aiming at covering space, or the upwards movement of flames, or the movement of the earth downwards, and so forth." Kirmânî, discussing all these matters, comes to the conclusion that Abû Ḥâtim is right and Sijzî is wrong, chiefly because he again thinks of the material world while speaking of the primal realities. We may also add that the idea of the movement in these speculations is not only that of the lineal movement, but also of change in time, which makes all the difference. Kirmânî, having carefully discussed these speculations, and also making an excursion into the field of *ta'wîl*, further on moves far into religious and *da'wat* allegories. He says that the teacher (i.e. *dâ'î*) must not reserve anything in the doctrine from his pupil, so long as he claims to know this with a right and is capable of learning it. If the *dâ'i* does this out of jealousy, fearing lest his pupil might become a competitor of his, he commits the "murder of the spiritual son" (*qatlu'l-waladi'r-rûḥânî*), which the Prophet prohibited on behalf of God.

Bâb III in the *Riyâḍ*, which is short, has the heading: "Whether the *Nafs* and *hayûlâ* resemble the First ?" It is divided into six *faṣls*, and opens with the quotation from the *Nuṣra* in which Sijzî paraphrases the text of *Iṣlâḥ* in

such a way as to pervert its meaning. Kirmânî points out that Sijzî criticises what really Abû Ḥâtim has never said.

Bâb IV, divided into 8 *faṣls*, deals with souls (*anfus*) being parts (*ajzâ'*) or effects (*âthâr*) of the primal realities. Kirmânî again quotes Sijzî to show that he again perverts the statement of Abû Ḥâtim in paraphrasing it. The latter objects to calling human souls "partial" (*al-anfusu'l-juz'iyya*), with which Kirmânî agrees, noting that the sum of such "partial" souls does not form the "Universal Soul". Sijzî again speaks of this world, while refering to the absolute realities. He treats the (human) soul as belonging to the zone between the material world (*al-'âlamu'ṭ-ṭabi'i*) and the world of emanation (*inbi'âthî*), forming the natural force (*al-quwwatu'ṭ-ṭabi'iyya*). The soul reaches this higher world by practicing piety and then uniting with the Second. The usual "aspects" of the *nafs* (*nâṭiqa*, *zakiyya*, *nâmiya*, etc.) are discussed. The *nafs* is called the *ṣûrat*, idea, of the *'Aql*. The *'Aql* is nothing but the substance (*dhât*) of the Divine Command "be" (*kalima*). All this is based on the words of Mawlâ-nâ al-Mu'izz *li-dîni'l-lâh* himself in his work, *Ta'wîlu'sh-shari'at*.[1] Thus the *'aql* (human) is the first emanation (*inbi'âth*), while the souls (human), *al-anfusu'n-nâṭiqa*, are the second emanation. What was gone (*jarâ*) in the first emanation is also emanated (*inba'ath*) in the second. Kirmânî criticises it, and refers the reader to his own earlier works, such as *ar-Risâlatu'l-muḍî'a*,[2] *al-Waḥîda fi'l-ma'âd*,[3] and others.

Bâb V, in seven *faṣls*, on man's being the "fruit" of the material world, as Abû Ḥâtim calls him. He entirely (*bi-asri-hi*) belongs to it, with its foundations and roots, of which the first is the *hayûlâ*. The latter is the basis of individuality created in it by movement and quiescence, and other factors, which lead to the formation of the different

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[1] Cf. *Guide*, no. 70. Usually this work is attributed to the authorship of *Qâḍî* Nu'mân, but Kirmânî calls it the work of al-Mu'izz probably in the sense that the latter was the source of information which the *Qâḍî* collected in the form of a book.

[2] Cf. *Guide*, no. 128.

[3] Cf. *Guide*, apparently no. 138.

"souls," *nâmiya, ḥissiyya*, etc. Sijzî calls this the philosophy of a Dahrite, who does not admit the existence of the soul after its separation from the body, and so forth.

Kirmânî admits that both are right or wrong in different respects. Man is the result of the working of multiple natural, astral and psychical factors, the fruit of these, as stated in the same work, the *Ta'wîlu'sh-shari'at*, by *Mawlâ-nâ* al-Mu'izz: "Man is the purpose (*gharaḍ*) of the Second and the limit of the action of the nature." Ultimately Kirmânî explains that man is a being who partly belongs to (inanimate) nature, and partly to God. He therefore is the top of creation.

Bâb VI, divided into nine *faṣls*, again returns to movement and quiescence, *hayûlâ* and *ṣûrat*.

"Says the author of *al-Iṣlâḥ*: With regard to the words (of *Maḥṣûl*) that the *hayûlâ* and *ṣûrat* are like spirit, and quiescence is like the body, it may be noted that the first *hayûlâ* (*al-hayûlâ'l-ûlâ*) is the imaginary (*wahmiyya*) movement in compounds (*murakkabât*), and that the *hayûlâ* is of three kinds, — it must be noted that in the book (i.e. *Maḥṣûl*) there are many errors. I must briefly state that, on the contrary, movement and quiescence are like the spirit of the *hayûlâ* and *ṣûrat*, and the latter two are like the body of the first two. This is because the spirit is finer (*alṭaf*) than the body, and the body more solid (*akthaf*) than the spirit. Movement and quiescence are finer than the *hayûlâ* and *ṣûrat*," etc. Sijzî rejects all this, defending the point of view of the *Maḥṣûl*. Kirmânî states that both are wrong. Abû Ḥâtim is wrong because movement is the action of a mover, what we call the spirit, or *Nafs*. Similarly, quiescence is the discontinuation of the action of the mover. If thus the mover is the spirit, it cannot be similar to movement, which is its own action. This also applies to quiescence. It is also impossible to join movement and quiescence in one because they mutually exclude each other, while the *hayûlâ* and *ṣûrat* are, on the contrary, inseparable, forming one. This has been explained in detail in Kirmânî's *Râḥatu'l-'aql*, to which he refers the reader. All three, the *Maḥṣûl*, Abû Ḥâtim and Sijzî, according to him, are wrong.

[1] Much mystery surrounds the "sect" of the Dahriyya, so often referred to in Muslim works as the paragon of impiety, atheism and materialism. I. Goldzieher, in the first vol. of the Enclopaedia of Islam (*sub voce*) contributes a longish note to the question without arriving at any definite answer. To me it seems quite obvious that the Dahriyya are the ancient followers of Democritus and Epicurus, in the latter's theoretical, not practical philosophy, as, e.g., summed up by Lucretius. I would even be inclined to suspect that the term Dahriyya was introduced to evade the difficulties of transcribing the name of Epicurus which, in Arabic letters, would be a far from easy task.

Bâb VII, divided into seven *faṣls*, deals with the division, i.e. classification, of the elements of which the world is composed. In reality, however, it is almost entirely devoted to the definition of the position of man who is in a class by himself, and his relation to the world. Abû Ḥâtim describes man as a plant which grows on the elements of the cosmos, *al-'âlam al-kabîr*. Sijzî agrees, from a different point of view, because the body of man decomposes into such elements. Abû Ḥâtim classes man as an animal on account of his possession of senses. Sijzî attributes sensation to the "vegetative" (*nâmiya*) soul. Abû Ḥâtim says that man's "reasoning" (*nâṭîqa*) soul constitutes his point of difference from animals, while Sijzî argues that animals also possess it. Kirmânî comes to the conclusion that Abû Ḥâtim is nearer to the approved and standard (Fatimid) point of view than Sijzî. He sums up by saying that man has not only similarity with the material world, but also with the spiritual world, uniting in himself everything that precedes him in the scale of existence, and manifesting parallels to everything that exists in both worlds.

Bâb VIII, divided into 24 *faṣls*, on the *qaḍâ'* and *qadar*. Both these terms, mentioned in the Coran, are almost for certain synonyms, both meaning predestination, but the fact that two words have been used had led to an astounding amount of learned hairsplitting and profound discussions, as futile as they are copious. Very often one au-

thority would give each a definition which another great authority would reverse. Though still mixed with philosophical speculation, the matter at once moves into a religious sphere, with the texts of the Coran and *ḥadîths* serving as the supreme authority. An enormous amount has been written in thousands theological works in Islam on this subject, and it really would be a waste of time, labour and paper to go through these discussion were it not for the existence of a quite unexpected circumstance. This is the fact that, however paradoxically, in the Ismaili doctrine a question of outstanding importance has been connected with these speculations, namely the question of the lawfulness of giving up the following to the prescriptions of the *sharî'at* concerning the forms of worship or observing various taboos. There were apparently powerful psychological grounds within not only the Ismaili and cognate communities but also in Sufism which struggled for the recognition of such freedom. In the eyes of the orthodox this was a sign of great impiety, and suspicions in following it formed an inexhaustible source of accusations against the sectaries and advanced Sufis.

"Says the author of the *Iṣlâḥ* : With regard to the words (of the *Maḥṣûl*) that *qaḍâ'* corresponds with the First (*'alâ'-s-Sâbiq*), and *qadar* with the Second (*'alâ'l-Tâli*), it is an error. The *qadar* comes before the *qaḍâ'*, just as the First comes before the Second.... Both these terms, with their implications, are well-known. The *qadar* means *taqdîr*, i.e. making something possible ; the *qaḍâ'* means *tafṣîl*, separation, cutting off. The latter is obviously impossible before he former." [The author quotes several verses of the Coran to support his interpretation of the terms]. The *qadar* is like the cut of the dress which the tailor has in his mind before actually cutting the cloth, loosening here and tightening there. When he had cut it (*faṣṣala-hu*), it meant that he had finally shaped it (*qaḍâ-hu*), and it was no longer possible to alter it.

Sijzî objects to this, defending the original point of view of the *Maḥṣûl*. He argues that *qaḍâ'* does not mean

tafṣîl, although *qadar* really means *taqdîr*. He reverses their order, making *qaḍâ'* precede *qadar*. The former defines and necessitates the latter. The *qaḍâ'* is *farâgh*, finish, end. The example of the tailor is unsuitable to the case. The *qaḍâ'* is the idea of the dress produced by the tailor's art (*khayâṭa*), and the latter, depending on his *nafs*, is the *taqdîr*, and therefore *qadar*.

It would be too dull to follow all this futile argument which once more only demonstrates the initial baselessness of the desire to see in these two words two different ideas. However arbitrary seems the connection, or parallelism of these supposed ideas with the First and Second, it is discovered in various verses of the Coran which are here quoted. In the seventeenth *faṣl* of this *bâb* Kirmânî comes to the main point. He quotes the *Iṣlâḥ* : "If the *qaḍâ'* corresponds with the *Sâbiq*, First, and *qadar* with the *Tâlî*, Second, it leads us to an impossible admission that the Prophet, *Nâṭiq*, corresponds with the *Tâli*, as is aimed at by the *Maḥṣûl*, although he is responsible for the introduction of the *sharî'at*. It is erroneous to associate the *Nâṭiq* with the *Tâlî* because this is against the rules of the Rightly Guiding Religion (*qânûnu'd-da'watî'l-hâdiya*). The *Nâṭiq* in the material world and in the religious field occupies a position similar to that of the *Sâbiq* in the world of primal ideas, while the position of the *Tâlî* belongs to the *Waṣî* (i.e. *Asâs*). The *Nâṭiq* and *Asâs* form parallels (*mathalân*) to the *Sâbiq* and *Tâli*, to the sun and moon."

This indication is very interesting for the historian as it is quite possible that such reversal of the official *qânûn* is not merely due to the hopeless confusion in all these hollow and abstruse speculations, but to the strong tendency which we can see persisting during the whole course of the evolution of Shi'ism, in certain circles, to place the position and importance of the Imam above that of the Prophet, and of the esoteric doctrine above that of the plain *sharî'at*. The implications of this point of view are important : it means that the *ta'wîl* given by the Imam, and "worship in spirit," supersede the prescribed forms of

worship, the letter of the *sharî'at*. This idea finds a further development in the next *bâb*.

Bâb IX, divided into 33 *faṣls*, on the *sharî'at* of Adam and the *Waṣî* of Noah.

This lengthy chapter is devoted to the question whether Adam, who is mentioned in the Coran as one of the Apostles of God, conveying Divine revelation to humanity, *Nâṭiq*, using the Ismaili term, and *ṣâḥibu'd-dawr*, really preached a new law, *sharî'ât*, to whom and how. This chapter is not connected with philosophical speculations, but with the question of how to group and explain the scanty allusions in the sacred books, and how to combine and reconcile these often contradictory references in order to evolve a coherent and convincing theory. We may realize the fact that the simple-minded Adam of the Old Testament at the hands of Christian gnostics, and still more of Manichees, has grown into quite a different gigantic figure. Islam, together with an enormous amount of other ideas, inherited this new version of Adam, while various sects, including Ismailism, emphasised his part still more, approaching almost the Manichaean theories.

Standing at the beginning of the existence of the world, he could not discharge the duties of his successors, namely to reform and perfect the system of religious law of his predecessors, abrogating and abolishing some items, and adding new ones, briefly, using the term which appears here, he could not possess *'azimat*, "duty entrusted by God." To whom did he preach his law when there were no other human beings? To the angels who were ordered to prostrate themselves before him, or only to his rising posterity?

In the Ismaili system the doctrine about the seven *Nâṭiqs* admits the theory that the first and the last of them, Adam and the Qâ'im to come at the end of the world, slightly differ in their functions from the other five. Adam had no *'azîma*, reformatory functions, and the Qâ'im coming at the close of the world, will not preach any new *sharî'at*. This is why Muḥammad is the "seal of the Pro-

phets," and his *sharî'at* the last and final. In such a complicated position all kinds of unorthodox teachings can easily slip into the ideas of the community, and we really see that the *Maḥṣûl* incorporates the belief that Adam has only brought *'ilm*, i.e. religious knowledge, without prescribing any *'amal*, i.e. rules prescribed for religious behaviour in life. From such a precedent, quite obviously, there is only one step to the vindication of the idea of the "worship in spirit only," and the abolition of the obligatory general forms of worship prescribed by the *sharî'at*.

For the historian these discussions are very interesting. They show that already about 250 years before the proclamation of the "Great Resurrection," *Qiyâmat-i Buzurg*, by the Nizari Imam Ḥasan *'alâ dhikri-hi's-salâm*[1] in Alamût (in 559/1164) the idea already was sufficiently strong to find its way into an important book such as the *Maḥṣûl*, and that even later it found its defenders, as in Sijzi. Kirmânî mentions this *al-Qiyâmatu'l-Kubrâ*, explaining that it is going to arrive "when the gates of teaching, *ta'lîm*, will be closed, and the *da'wats* (*da'awât*) suspended by the Lord of the Great Resurrection because by that time the *da'wat* will attain its completion. He, the Qâ'im, will disband the *ḥudûd*, i.e. he ranks in the *da'wat* organisation, *yuzilu'l-ḥudûd 'an marâtibi-hâ bi-wuqû'i'l-istighnâ' 'an-hâ fi't-ta'lîm wa'stitmâmi'l-amr fi'l-khalqi'l-jadîd*, as no longer necessary for preaching in view of the attainment of the completion of the task in regeneration of the humanity (literally: new creation)."[2] This obviously reflects the expec-

[1] This form of the invocation of blessing after the name of this Imam shows that he was treated as the expected Qâ'im. It is added, in varying forms, to the mention of the Qâ'im in early literature, including these works: *salâmu'l-lâh 'alâ dhikri-hi*. The reason for the use of such form is obvious. The form *'alay-hi's-salâm*, and others similar to it, are used with the mention of the saints who *really existed*. But the Qâ'im is only expected. Therefore only the mention (*dhikr*) of his name may be blessed.

[2] The expression *al-khalqu'l-jadîd* is obviously metaphorical, and is probably connected with the dogma of resurrection. It is interesting that while this dogma is not specially discussed

tations of the purpose of the Fatimid *da'wat* being attained and the whole world united under their authority in one religious community of the only true and correct form of Islam which they preached.

Although the *Waṣî* of Noah is mentioned in the heading of the chapter, Kirmânî apparently does not mention his name. In all these discussions he entirely sides with Abû Ḥâtim against the *Maḥṣûl*, and Sijzî who defends it.

As has been mentioned above, Kirmânî devotes the tenth *bâb* of the *Riyâḍ* to the criticism of those philosophical passages in the *Maḥṣûl* which were left uncorrected by Abû Ḥâtim. There are altogether nine such passages, in 15 *faṣls* of this chapter. Kirmânî quotes the passage and then, after the heading "*naqûl*," we say, offers his criticisms. It seems to be worth while here to offer a translation of these original fragments of the *Maḥṣûl*, in order to give an idea of its style. When it becomes possible to obtain necessary printing facilities, I hope to edit these passages in the original Arabic.

Kirmânî introduces this by the passage : "We say : Verily, the author of the *Maḥṣûl*, — may God have mercy upon him, — when working for the preaching, vindicating and explaining the truth of the *da'wat*, and organising it, opened the gate of instruction (*abwâba'l-ma'âlim*) by composing several of his books for those who were firm in the expectations of its (*da'wat's*) fulfilling its promises. Shaykh Abû Ḥâtim (ar-Râzî), — mercy of God be upon him, — corrected some of these. The majority of the people accepted this as a condemnation of the *Maḥṣûl*, despite the apologies of the author of the *Iṣlâḥ*[1] refuting this in his book. They, however, treated this as a proof of its defects and shortcomings. This was a sad incident, an unfair act, because the real state of affairs was the opposite of what they had imagined. .... Corrections of Abû Ḥâtim, — may

in this controversy, later on accusations of *tandsukh* are so often repeated.

[1] In the present copy this is not found. Thus it is yet another indication of the fact that the original version contained a preface which some time later has been lost.

God raise his standing, — have neither belittled the book, *Maḥṣûl*, nor its author by either revealing their defects or condemning these... (because Abû Ḥâtim was one of) the persons specially appointed for the rectification of religious knowledge .... for the promotion and explanation of the true religion and confirmation of man's duties to God."

We may note that in his works Kirmânî invariably appears as a very polite and diplomatic author, with remarkable feeling of restraint. Sometimes, as in one of his smaller works, *ar-Risâlatu'l-wâ'iẓa* (see *Guide*, No. 134), he may even appear insinuatingly sweet where another author would thunder curses. Here are the few passages which he corrects :

1. "Says the author of the *K. al-Maḥṣûl* in the chapter on *tawḥîd* : He, God, is the Creator of things and of no-thing, intelligible, imaginable, intuitive (*fikrî*) and logical. I mean those matters which come under such categories (*'anâṣir*) and which do not."

Kirmânî rejects this as incompatible with the theory that the *'Aql* is the basic phase of the creation. "Beyond Reason there is nothing but God and it is the creative act itself" (*Al-'Aql dhâtu'l-fi'l al-ladhî lays warâ'a-hu illâ'l-lâh*). Nothing can either precede the *'Aql*, or be co-existent with it, or in it (*sâbiq 'alâ'l-'Aql fi wujûdi-hi aw ma'a'l-'Aql fi wujûdi-hi*). From one simple cause only one result may come out. Therefore the theory implies *shirk*, violation of the principle of monotheism. The words about the "creation of things and no-things" are obviously intended to mean the *material* things and immaterial substances, as otherwise it would imply the existence of yet another world by the side of the one that we know. No-thing, *lâ-shay'*, is a negation of the creation. Will it then be possible to maintain that God is the Creator (Initiator, *Mubdi'*), and at the same time to deny this?

2. (the fourth *faṣl*). "Says the author of the *Maḥṣûl* : The Creator (Initiator, *Mubdi'*) of things from nothing only (*lâ min shay' faqaṭ*), He and nothing with Him are endless. And if we say only : He and nothing with Him, we would

deny the things and nothing, making these both together created (*mubda'ayn*). We have dissociated from His substance (*huwiyyat*) any idea (*ṣûrat*), simple or complex, making every thing, nameable or unnameable, a creation truly brought into existence by a cause (*ma'lûl*), and limited (*mutanâhi*). Verily, no-thing comes after thing, because negation of a name is only possible after the name having come into existence".

Kirmânî criticises this : no-thing is not a conception, but a negation of any conception. But a negation of a name (i.e. subject) does not constitute a name, i.e. denote a definite subject. To say: "He and no-thing with Him are eternal" is the same as to say "He and that which is not a thing are eternal with Him" (*Huwa wa mâ lays bi-shay' ma'a-hu*). This is *shirk*, violation of the principle of monotheism. Kirmânî refers the student to his own treatise *ar-Rawḍa* (Guide, no. 130) and to the *Ta'wilu'sh-shari'at* by al-Mu'izz, already mentioned above. He goes on examining the matter in detail, sentence by sentence.

3. (the eighth *faṣl*). "Says the author of the *Maḥṣûl* in the chapter dealing with the First Initiator (*al-Mubdi'u'l-awwal*) that "God the All-high created (*abda'*) the world in one action (*daf'atan wâḥidatan*) and that means that He created (*abda'*) the *'Aql* as one whole (*jumlatan wâḥidatan*) and, by His power (*taqdîr*) manifested (*barraz*) in it (i.e. the *'Aql*) the ideas of the worlds and everything that they contain, without indicating each of these separately. He produced these with the *'Aql*, or the knowledge of the latter had found these, and they became known to it. The *'Aql*, however, in reality had precedence over them. But whether in fact or potentially, the *'Aql* and the ideas (*aṣ-ṣuwar*) all are connected (*jamî'an ma'an*)."

Kirmânî objects to this because implies the *'Aql* acting independently, on its own initiative, which is a grave error. The *'Aql* should be merely an intermediary in the Divine creative act, not an additional creator.

4. (the ninth *faṣl*). "Says the author of the *Maḥṣûl* the *'Aql* whose cause is the unity of God, is eternal because the (Divine) unity is eternal."

Kirmânî rejects the "eternal oneness," seeing in it an intermediary between God and the *'Aql*. The latter itself is the substance of the oneness, one, primal cause, and at the same time the first caused, the act of the creation and the created, perfection and perfect, eternity and eternal, existence and existent, all in one. All this is explained at length.

5. (the eleventh *faṣl*). "Says the author of the *Maḥṣûl:* as the idea (*ṣûrat*) is manifested in it (*'Aql*) from the oneness (of God), so (every?) individual idea in it (*aṣ-ṣûrat al-mujarrada 'inda-hu*) becomes eternal, because the *'Aql* becomes eternal in its entirety, not partially."

Kirmânî again points out the tendency of speaking of the primordial realities having in mind the phenomena of the material world. He suggests that this would rather apply to the mind of a *Nâṭiq*, *Asâs*, or Imam, rather than the primal cause, cosmic rational principle. This is the "angel standing near God" (*al-maliku'l-muqarrab*), the mystical Pen, *Qalam*, that draws and writes "on the tablet (*lawḥ*) of existence." Ideas are not eternal, do not return to their *ma'din*, source. They spring up, and later die.

6. (the twelfth *faṣl*). "Says the author of the *Maḥṣûl:* as the *'Aql* is caused by the eternity which amongst us is called the word of God (*kalimatu'l-lâh*), and as between them there is nothing third, the *'Aql* therefore becomes similar to it."

Kirmânî objects to this, saying that the *'Aql* and the *kalima* are one and the same thing.

7. (the thirteenth *faṣl*). "Says the author of the *Maḥṣûl:* if that be so, it, the *'Aql*, received the apellation Perfect (*tâmm*) by the right of its being a creation (*bi'l-mubda'iyyat*). This is because creation (*ibdâ'*) by a perfect creator (*al-Mubdi'u't-tâmm*) cannot be other than perfect, and the created (*mubda'*) by perfect creation can only be perfect."

Kirmânî objects to this, saying that God cannot have any epithets, and the creator presumes priority over the created.

8. (the fourteenth *faṣl*). "Says the author of the *Maḥṣûl* : The *'Aql* conveys the ideas from its own source (*'illat*) which is the *kalima*, just as the sun spreads light by its brilliance, not by the physical (immediate) contact of its orb. If the action of the 'Aql is due to the power of its cause, the *kalima*, and ability to transfer it, then it becomes clear that it is the *kalima* that is the cause of everything that emanates from the *'Aql*, not the *'Aql* itself. The latter is merely an intermediary between the *kalima* and that which is under it."

Kirmânî again points out that this applies to the minds of the *Nâṭiqs*, and not to the system of cosmology.

9. (the fifteenth *faṣl*). "Says the author of the *Maḥṣûl*: the act of the creation (= initiation, *ibdâ'*) is an intermediary between the creator and created, as the effect of the agent upon the object." (He further says:) "The idea of the creation is an intermediary." (He further says:) The idea of the creation is an intermediary between the agent and its product, and depends on the agent, the creator. The effect of such an idea (*atharu'ṣ-ṣûrat*) passes into the created from the creator." "Such an idea, I mean the creation, passes into the creation from the Creator."

The last paragraph obviously contains isolated sentences refering to the same subject, extracted from different contexts. Kirmânî, as one may well expect, rejects these statements as "contrary to the beliefs of the unitarians" (*'tiqâdu'l-muwaḥḥidîn*), because the act of the creation is here considered as something independent of the Creator. "Verily, the profession of monotheism (*tawḥîd*) and the understanding of the cosmic system (*ma'rifatu'l-ḥudûd*) is a difficult matter. By it souls thrive and abide and attain liberation from the material world and its limitations (*istiḥâlâti-hâ*)."

Here ends the *Kitâb ar-Riyâḍ* with its criticisms which, as its author intended, are concerned only with fundamental principles of the doctrine "on which divergence of opinions in the community is not permissible." There were, however, many questions in the *Maḥṣûl*, which are attacked in the *Iṣlâḥ*, and most probably defended in the *Nuṣra*, and which Kirmânî ignored because from his point of view these were concerned with matters of secondary importance. If we were to measure the space which these secondary matters occupied in the *Maḥṣûl* by the space devoted to them in the *Iṣlâḥ* it would be about four times as much. As its criticisms show, this portion of the original was entirely concerned with the interpretation of the various religious myths contained in the Coran and Bible. It is a pity that Abû Ḥâtim, who discusses the matter very circumstantially, and without undue haste, rarely takes care to make it perfectly clear what is a literal quotation from the *Maḥṣûl*, and what is his paraphrase of it.

4. *Corano-Biblical Prototypes in the* Iṣlâḥ.

Immediately after having discussed the beliefs that Adam received no Divine Revelation, and never appointed any *Asâs*, and that Noah was really the first *Nâṭiq* who introduced a *shari'at* and was succeeded by an *Asâs*, Abû Ḥâtim comes to the story of David and Solomon. The reason for the introduction of such discussions was not simply love for such legendary stuff and futile theorizing, but a quite practical need in putting right the organisation of the *da'wat*. We can see that the whole time while speaking of all sorts of Biblical worthies, Abû Ḥâtim makes them occupy various ranks in the *da'wat* hierarchy, and in their actions sees the supposed standards which such dignitaries had to follow. For instance, speaking about Solomon and his legendary command over the winds, etc., he at once turns it into a parallel with the institution of the *ḥujjats* or, according to his terminology, *lâḥiqs* (*lawâḥiq*) of the day and of the night, and so forth.

Then the author comes to the discussion of the story of Yunus, "who was one of the *lâḥiqs* sent for starting the *da'wat*." Thereafter 'Imrân also becomes a *lâḥiq*, then Zakariyâ. After this he deals at length with Jesus and connected legends (the author quotes a tradition related

by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrî), and ultimately Muḥammad, his *Mi'râj*, etc. It is interesting that the author does not use the word Arabs, but *Ahlu'n-Najdayn*, "the people of the two Nejds." He finally discusses some prophecies concerning the Qâ'im (*ẓuhûr Ṣâḥib dawri'l-adwâr al-Qâ'im maqâma's-Sâbiq*), while the Imams are called the *Mutimm al-qâ'im maqâm Rasûli'l-lâh*.

The Third *Juz'* opens with the quotation of the words of the *Maḥṣûl* to the effect that the *shari'at* is an *'aqd*, covenant. Just as a child is born from the male and female, so religion is born from the *shari'at*, or religious law, and *ta'wîl*, or the revelation of the inner, real meaning of it. Covenant, of course, cannot be unilateral. For the *mustajib*, i.e. new convert, it is necessary for him to believe sincerely what is revealed from the knowledge of the *Mutimm* and his *lâḥiqs* (i.e. *ḥujjats*) of his time, removing doubts concerning the origin of the world, and the punishment in Hell (etc.). In all this God is on the side of (=similar to) the *Mutimm* (*wa'l-lâh fî hadhâ'l-makân 'alâ'l-Mutimm*), because obedience to the latter is equivalent to obedience to God. His Prophets are similar to the *lâḥiqs* who bring help from him to his followers (*ahlu'd-da'wat*), just as the Apostle of God was helping his own followers. All this is explained at great length with the help of the symbolism of nature.

He again plunges into metaphysics, discussing nature (*ṭab'*), the elements (*mawâlîd*), etc., this time as symbolically interrelated with the *Nâṭiq*, *Asâs*, and so forth.

Then abruptly begins the *Bâbu'l-qawl fî thâlithi'n-Nuṭaqâ'*, i.e. Abraham. It opens with the quotation from the *Maḥṣûl* to the effect that the Majûs, Zoroastrians, follow the *shari'at* of the third *Nâṭiq*, Abraham. The chapter is very interesting as one of the earliest refutations of the claims which the Majûs insistently presented for the purpose of attaining extension of the privileges of the *ahlu'l-kitâb* to them. The author shows he is well acquainted with the question, and with remarkably clear vision rejects such claims as baseless.

There is much in common in this section with the corresponding pages of the author's other work, the *A'lâmu'n-nubuwwat*.[1] This section contains valuable information concerning Zoroastrianism in Persia a thousand years ago. It also touches on the Sabians, Manichees, Christian sects, Mazdakites, Bihafaridis, etc.[2] This chapter seems to be the most interesting in the book, well deserving separate edition and translation. How interesting it would be to see the corresponding section of the *Maḥṣûl*, and especially *Nuṣra*, because Sijzî seems also to be a well informed author in these matters.

The next *bâb* forms a continuation of its precessor, dealing with the story of Ismâ'îl and Isḥâq. Here the central point is the story of Abraham's sacrifice of his own son. Abû Ḥâtim finds many errors in the treatment of the subject by the author of the *Maḥṣûl*.

The fourth *Juz'* begins with the story of the fourth *Nâṭiq*, i.e. Moses. It opens with the refutation of the statement admitting that in Moses the manifestation of the *kalima* (primordial command "be") attained perfection as it never did in the case of any other Prophet, because the number four is "perfect." A lot of instructive speculations are offered, about the sun, planets, and so forth. Unfortunately, here the author gives free rein to Kabbalistic speculations, astrological considerations, etc. He explains the mystical implications of the name Muḥammad, as written in Arabic, with the "meaning" of every letter.

The next *bâb* deals with the fifth *Nâṭiq*, i.e. Jesus. Here also, as in the story of Moses, the author draws much on his acquaintance with the Bible, and Gospels. An interesting reference is contained in the third *faṣl* (as it should be, — the *faṣls* are not numbered here): "And with regard to what has been said (in the *Maḥṣûl*) that the Fifth (*Nâṭiq*)

[1] Cf. *Guide*, no. 19. Late Dr. P. Kraus prepared an edition of this interesting work, but it appears that after his death his manuscrirpt was lost.

[2] I have to some extent summed up such references in my work, "The Alleged Founder of Ismailism", Bombay, 1946, pp. 87-90.

resembles the Seventh (*Qâ'im*) in so far as he disappeared ascending to Heaven, and then is going to return, we have already mentioned the similarity of the Fifth with the Seventh, in which respect it is. But as regards the disappearance, his disappearance is not like that of the Seventh. This is yet another allusion to the fact that early Ismailism, during the time which the Ismailis call the period of *satr*, believed in the "return" of Imam Muḥammad b. Ismâ'il b. Ja'far.

The author touches on the question of the denial of the fact that Jesus composed the Gospels himself, has never produced a system of a new *shari'at*, and that his case was similar to that of the First *Nâṭiq*, i.e. Adam. He rejects the story that Adam has not given a system of law (*shari'at*). All the *Naṭiqs* act similarly, composing religious books and systems of law for their followers. If Muḥammad the Prophet used to order his associates to write the revelation with which he was inspired, so did Jesus to his disciples, *ḥawâriyyûn*. The only difference is that these latter wrote this in the Gospel at a much later date. Just as the Gospels (*Anâjîl*) differ, so also did the (real) Coran differ from the reminiscences of the Prophet's associates (*aṣ-ṣaḥâba*). There were disputes on this point (*yujâdilû fi dhalik*), and ultimately they have burnt the original copies »... The difference between the Gospels consists not in the subject but in the expressions in which the story is coached. The question over the story that Jesus several times appeared to his disciples (*lawâḥiq*) after his death, and that such things never happened with any other *Nâṭiq*, is explained symbolically and allegorically.

The author gradually returns again to the story of David, Solomon, Uriah, and so forth, and the next *bâb* is once more devoted to Solomon, his authority over the Jinn, birds, etc., and this leads to a further discussion of the same primordial realities.

Then the author again takes up the story of Jesus and his apostles after his death, and again touches on his favourite subject, the story of Solomon, explaining the allegory of

various verses of the Coran which refer to him. The next *bâb* deals with the story of Dhû'n-Nûn, or Yûnus b. Mattâ. The author refutes the idea that he was an Imam (*Mutimm*) of his time, obviously because it is expressed in the *Maḥṣûl*. According to the latter, he abandoned his knowledge, suffered from his followers, lost the rank of the Imam, of the *lâḥiq* and of the *dâ'î*, and so forth. In all this there are many errors. An Imam cannot lose his rank and become degraded; moreover an Imam cannot be instructed to carry on propaganda (*ma'mûr bi'd-da'wat*).

The next *bâb* deals with the story of Ayyûb, Job, who was one of the *lâḥiqs* of Isaac (Isḥâq b. Ibrâhîm). The author reveals its allegorical meaning.

The last, sixth *juz'*, begins with the story of Shu'ayb, Lot and those who were like them, and also a mention of Jurjîs (St. George). The author refutes the speculations (of the *Maḥṣûl*) that Shu'ayb was the sixth *Mutimm* from the progeny of Isḥâq, just before the appearance of Moses, and that he was unable to raise twelve *lâḥiqs*, raising only two. Similarly, Lot was not a *Mutimm* (Imam) before the appearance of Abraham. Jurjîs (St. George) also was not, as mentioned, the sixth Imam of the *dawr*, period, of the fifth *Nâṭiq*, i.e. Jesus, and that he concealed himself from his followers, knowing that the time of the advent of the sixth *Nâṭiq* was approaching. Similarly, it is wrong to say that the verse of the Coran (XIII, 43) : "and from him comes the knowledge of the Book" refers to him because he possessed the knowledge of the Book of Jesus.

In reality Shu'ayb was a *mustawda'* (trustee) at the time of the disappearance of the *Mutimm* of that period, according to the custom which existed in former periods. The story of Lot was exactly the same as that of Shu'ayb, who was *ṣâḥibu'l-wadâ'i'*, the liquidator of the *dawr* (*kân mustawda'an qad istawda' baqâyû'l-Atimmâ' wadâ'i'a-hum li-yaslima-hâ ilâ ṣâḥibi'l-amr*). This was done because his followers became thoroughly corrupt, worshipped Fir'awn, and had committed every form of sin. In the ancient periods such liquidators, *mustawda'în*, were always used in

similar sad circumstances, and Lot was one of these, just as Zakariyâ was on the eve of the appearance of Jesus.

Jurjîs was neither a *Mutimm* (Imam), nor a *lâḥiq* (*ḥujjat*), because the period (*fitrat*) between the two *Nâṭiqs* was lengthier before the advent of Muḥammad than before the advent of other Prophets. As Imam Ja'far said, there was no Imam just before the advent of Muḥammad the Prophet. It was in such cases that the *ḥujjat* of God (i.e. true religion) remains entrusted to the *mustawda'în*, guardians, and then to their successors (*mustakhlafîn*).

Such rigid Ismailization of Jewish history may appear fantastic to the sophisticated modern student, but it is only fair to appreciate its appeal to the simple religious minds which had no idea of the contents of the Sacred Books being anything other than a series of instructive stories, of purely religious and moral purpose, which God had revealed as an example to suffering humanity. It may be repeated again: what a pity that the *Maḥṣûl* and *Nuṣra* have been lost! How interesting it would be to see their version in full, not just in the form of crumbs gathered from here and there. It seems clear that in this portion Abû Ḥâtim does not so much criticise the *Maḥṣûl* as he takes the opportunity of offering that information to the student.

However dull all these discussions may appear, they may indicate a possibility of considerable importance in the study of Persia during that early period of the Islamic phase of her history. The point of view and method of the interpretation of various Corano-Biblical myths reflected in the *Maḥṣûl* may suggest a considerable development of local schools in Persia. We should not be greatly surprised by their existence. Persia for centuries was the country in which Christianity found immense opportunities for expansion, and there were important Christian minorities in every province. Jewish colonies probably existed all over Western Persia, and in many large centres in the East.

Careful study of Abû Ḥâtim's interpretations of the Biblical legends may perhaps make it possible to collect some idea of the organisation of Ismaili propaganda in the

Persia of that period. A very valuable detail may be recorded in his terminology. Just at the end of his book, as we have seen above, he speaks of the *mustawda's*, i.e. turstees, to whom the "proof of God," i.e. the true religious ideas, were entrusted until the advent of the full-sized Apostle of God who had to take charge of the task of revision and reformation of the religion, preaching it to the masses, and bringing it up-to-date. This provides a valuable means of checking the fantastic and baseless theorizing of some recent "enthusiasts" for whom every *mustawda'* mentioned in Ismaili literature appears as a *mustawda'* Imam, i.e. "acting Imam," as a permanent institution in Ismailism. The use of the term evidenced in these works for the period around the beginning of the fourth/tenth c., roughly about the date of the foundation of the Fatimid caliphate, thus proves that, using the words of Abû Ḥâtim, such a *mustawda'* of the *ḥujjat* of God "was neither an Imam nor (even) a *lâḥiq*."[1]

The fact that such a learned, undeniably intelligent and critically-minded person as Abû Ḥâtim, one of the most advanced representatives of the cultural life of his time, devotes such disproportionately great attention to these speculations, concerning the meaning of the Biblical legends, must be treated as due to the influence of the "fashion" of that period. We can remember that his eminent successor, *Qâḍî* Nu'mân, thousands of miles away in remote Tunisia, did the same in his classic *Asâsu't-Ta'wîl*, while his mystically minded contemporary, Ja'far b. Manṣûri'l-Yaman, in Cairo also concentrated on such speculations in his *Asrâru'n-Nuṭaqâ'* and *Sarâ'iru'n-Nuṭaqâ'* (apparently the first and the later version of one and the same work). We may presume that in the religious atmosphere of the time such "deep knowledge and understanding" of sacred books exercised a special attraction over the more enlightened members of the public.

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[1] Cf. *ibid*, pp. 169-174.

VI.

TENTH CENTURY ISMAILI DA'I IN PERSIA

Many a time have I read the section dealing with Ismailism in the well-known work by al-Baghdâdî, *al-Farq bayna'l-Firaq* [1] with the feeling (which, I am sure, is shared by many other students) that much in it is fundamentally wrong. The author, Abû Manṣûr 'Abdu'l-Qâhir b. Ṭâhir an-Naysâbûrî al-Baghdâdî, was apparently a Persian who for the most part lived in Nîshâpûr, and died soon after 429/1037. In his note he rabidly attacks the Fatimid caliphs and Ismailism in general, and, writing in an excited tone, collects all scanadlous untruths about them on which he can lay his hands. It is true, he was writing soon after the reign of al-Ḥâkim bi-amri'l-lâh whose actions and policy gave much food to the critics. Despite all this, however, there is too much bitterness in 'Abdu'l-Qâhir's tone to explain it merely by outraged sentiment.

While perusing his account the suspicion persists that the author knows more than he says, and that his numerous mistakes and signs of ignorance are sometimes deliberate. I have elsewhere attracted the attention of students to the fact that during the period of the ascendency of the Fatimid caliphate there was in Shi'ite theological circles a practice of composing pamphlets, or including special chapters in one's work, dealing with the refutation of the claims of the Fatimid caliphs and Ismailism in general. [2] Such works obviously formed a crude safety device, to be used as a testimony of the author's negative attitude towards a

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[1] The Cairo edition of 1910, by Muḥammad Badr, apparently still remains the only one available on the market. It swarms with grave errors, mis-spelling of proper names, and so forth. It is high time that a new, really critical edition, based on good manuscripts, was prepared and provided with a reliable and accurate index of names, technical terms, subjects, and other essential matters.

[2] Cf. my "Alleged Founder of Ismailism", Bombay, 1946, p. 5.

dangerous movement. We may *a priori* believe that the intensity of the sentiment displayed in the author's work, was in direct proportion to the suspicions which he might inspire in his critics. Therefore the passionate tone of 'Abdu'l-Qâhir may not be entirely spontaneous. It may rightly be asked, however, whether this practice, being quite natural in the case of Shi'ite theologians, was also intended for orthodox authors. 'Abdu'l-Qâhir permits us, however, to suspect something when he (on pp. 287-288) speaks of his conversations with renegades from Ismailism. He seems to trust them far too much, and this circumstance, coupled with his excited tone, evokes a suspicion as to whether he himself was one of those apostates.

This impression strengthens when we analyse the contents of the veritable dustbin, with which he presents his readers. Amidst the rubbish of plain lies, crude forgeries and deliberate misunderstandings, we may incidentally see scraps of genuine information. For instance, what he says of various *ta'wîl* explanations is often correct. We may recall the fact that exactly this variety of the esoteric doctrine was less rigidly concealed from the uninitiated, and was at an early stage communicated to beginners. At the same time he seems to be quite ignorant of, and helpless with, the philosophical theories. Whether deliberately or otherwise, he completely misunderstood well-known Greek philosophical ideas, interpreting these as the fancies of the Majûs with their dualism.

Similar confusion reigns in his references to Ismaili authors and their books. He apparently knows only that Ismaili literature which was current in Persia at his time. Thus he mentions Abû Ḥâtim (ar-Râzî) "who came to the land (*arḍ*) of Daylam," although he seems never to have heard of his religious and literary encyclopaedia, the *Kitâbu'z-Zina*, mentioned in the *Fihrist* of Ibn Nadîm, perhaps because it was not concerned with anything esoteric and unorthodox. He knows Muḥammad b. Aḥmad an-Nasafî, or Nakhshabî (executed probably in 331/943) whom he regards as the author of the *Kitâbu'l-Maḥṣûl* (p. 267 and

277)[1]. He, however, couples him with Abû Ya'qûb as-Sijistânî,[2] whose death cannot be placed before 360/971. He even mentions the titles of the latter's works: *Asâsu'd-da'wa*, which in fact may be either the *Asâsu't-Ta'wîl* or *Iftitâḥu'd-da'wa* by Qâḍî Nu'mân,[3] *Ta'wîlu'sh-Sharâ'i'* (most probably the *Ta'wîlu'sh-Shari'at*, attributed to the authorship of al-Mu'izz li-dîni'l-lâh himself),[4] and the *Kashfu'l-Asrâr*, perhaps either the *Kashfu'l-Maḥjûb*, which seems to be a genuine work of Abû Ya'qûb, or possibly *Kitâbu'l-Kashf* by Ja'far b. Manṣûri'l-Yaman.[5]

This is not much, indeed, but is, nevertheless, sufficient to show that he really had some direct contact with the Ismaili community. His errors may be due to his failing memory, but the possibility may not be excluded that, in the case of the titles of the books, he intentionally perverted these in order to "prove" his ignorance. The statement that Imam Muḥammad b. Ismâ'il b. Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq left no posterity may in fact be a deliberate lie on his part. He vaguely refers to *aṣḥâbu't-tawârikh*, "historians," as sources of his information, and we may believe that he really perused either the work of Ibn Razzâm, or a later book based on the former, because he makes Maymûn al-Qaddâḥ, and not his son 'Abdu'l-lâh, the founder of Ismailism. He dwells much on what in the printed text appears as the *Balâghu'l-Akid*, obviously the editor's mistake for the *Balâghu'l-Akbar*, a crude fake produced by pro-Abbasid propaganda, and attributed to the authorship of al-Mahdî. It would be interesting to trace the source from which he

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[1] Cf. the introduction to the preceding article.

[2] Apparently after him these two *dâ'îs* always appear connected, as in L. Massignon's "Esquisse d'une Bibliographie Qarmate", p. 332.

[3] See "Guide", pp. 38-40.

[4] See *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[5] An apparently unique copy of Abû Ya'qûb's *Kashfu'l-Maḥjûb* belonged to (now late) Sayyid Naṣru'l-lâh Taqawî, the learned expert in Nâṣir-i Khusraw's poetry, in Tehran. It is written in archaic Persian.

took his table of the "degrees" of the Ismaili doctrine (p. 282); obviously the same idea as the "degrees of initiation" of other authors: *tadlîs*, *ta'nîs*, *tashkîk*, *tafarrus*, etc.[1] It would be difficult to think that he had enough originality to invent these personnally.

By chance an interesting document has been preserved from precisely the same period, illustrating the matter from a diametrically opposite view point. It may be regarded, so-to-speak, as defence witness before the tribunal of history, although we may note that 'Abdu'l-Qâhir does not really appear as a plaintif, soberly arguing his case, but as an excited man showering abuse. Both, — the attack and defence, — gain much by being brought into juxtaposition, although the new source may generally claim our attention as one of the masterpieces of Ismaili literature.

This is an epistle of a certain Ismaili *dâ'î*, al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Mayhadhî,[2] apparently of the time of al-'Azîz bi'l-lâh (365-386/975-996),[3] who came to preach in Ray, the modern Tehran, was summarily apprehended, and probably with much difficulty managed to escape from imminent execution. When again in safety, he wrote his epistle, now-a-days styled an "open letter," addressing it to the "people of Ray" generally, as far as can now be ascertained. What his real object was, and whether he cherished a hope that it might have a desired effect on his persecutors, is difficult to see. Perhaps, after all, the address and the story form accessories of the epistolary form chosen by the author for his pamphlet.

[1] Cf. also L. Massignon's note on the Qarmatians in the "Encyclopaedia of Islam", II, 770.

[2] His *nisba* is variously spelt in different copies, and was obviously already corrupted beyond recognition at an early period. It appears in the form of Mihadî, Mayhandî, etc., and sometimes the letters are left without diacritical dots, as a sign of despair on the part of the copyist. Perhaps we should read it Maybudhî, from Maybudh, a village between Nâ'in and Yazd, in Central Persia.

[3] This is stated in the preamble by the author of the *Kitâbu'l-Azhâr*, and tallies well with the references to the Fatimids as the protectors of the Sacred Cities, contained in the epistle.

This interesting document concisely sums up the creed of the Ismaili community of the time,[1] and records the most important arguments in its favour derived from the Coran and *ḥadîth*. Its purpose seems to be not only to vindicate its truth, but also to bring the orthodox reader to the realisation of the fact that not all is right in his own *madhhab*. The epistle has been included, as a classic, in that precious chrestomathy of early Ismaili works, the *Majmû'u't-Tarbiyat*, compiled by Sayyid-nâ Muḥammad b. Ṭâhir b. Ibrâhîm al-Ḥârithî (d. 584/1188).[2] It is placed at the very end of the second volume; apparently from there it was included in the third vol. of the *Kitâbu'l-Azhâr*, by Ḥasan b. Nûḥ b. Yûsuf al-Bharûchî (d. 939/1533).[3]

The epistle, composed at about the same time as *al-Farq bayna'l-Firaq* of 'Abdu'l-Qâhir, offers an excellent point of comparison in so far as it is intended, like the note of al-Baghdâdî in his book, to deal with Ismailism as a complete system, and not with any special aspect or branch of it. We thus have side by side what the Ismailis themselves saw in their religion, and what they wished it to be in the eyes of the public, and, on the other hand, what their bitter enemies wanted it to be taken for. The *risâla* is written in plain, unsophisticated and lucid style, forming in its own way a really classic specimen of its kind. It is therefore very easy to sum it up, and to strip its flesh from its bones. Such a synopsis of its contents will be quite sufficient for our purposes.

Shi'ism, as is well-known, began to spread in the East, i.e. Persia and Mawara'annahr, already in the first c. A.H.,

[1] I have already published a summary of the Fatimid creed as it was towards the close of the fifth/eleventh c., "A Creed of the Fatimids" (Bombay, 1936). It is based on the *Tâju'l-'aqâ'id*, by Sayyid-nâ 'Alî b. Muḥammad b. al-Walîd (d. 612/1215). The work, however, belongs to high theology, and is too sophisticated and artificial to give an adequate idea of Ismailism as professed by the masses, which the present epistle chiefly has in view.

[2] Cf. "Guide", p. 53.

[3] Cf. "Guide", p. 65.

and, as we know, in the beginning of the second century possessed such strength and influence as to be able to head the revolutionary anti-dynastic movement which swept the Omayyads and laid the foundation to the Abbasid caliphate. Shi'ism was not an invention of the Persians. It came from Arabia, and was chiefly promoted by various South-Arabian or Yamanite tribes.

No opinion may be formed as to the approximate date at which Ismailism as an independent and already well-organised branch of Shi'ism started its propaganda in the East. All relevant indications tend to suggest that historically the process which led to the formation of the Fatimid version of Ismailism had nothing to do with the legendary accounts or retrospective schemes introduced later on under the Fatimids, and still more perfected after them, to harmonize with various purely religious theories. What later on became known as Fatimid Ismailism, most probably does not appear on the historical stage before the third quarter of the third/ninth c.[1] The liquidation of the family of the Twelvers' Imams in 260/874, coupled with the rising tide of the impatient Messianic expectations associated with the approaching end of the third century after the death of the Prophet, opened a wide field to the Fatimids. In addition to their military triumphs in the Maghrib, they had great success in "peaceful penetration" in the countries which their arms had not yet reached. Though references to that necessarily hidden process are few, the general impression created is that both with regard to the leaders and the masses Ismailism was chiefly expanding at the expense of the sect of the Twelvers, and possibly other branches of Shi'ism. Disillusioned by the growing disorganisation of

[1] In his *Farq*, 268, 'Abdu'l-Qâhir definitely says that his sources, *aṣḥâbu't-tawârîkh*, mention that Ismailism appeared at the time of the caliph al-Ma'mûn (198-218/813-833), and was strengthened in the reign of al-Mu'taṣim (218-227/833-842). But immediately after this he refers to the rising of Bâbak, the story of the treason of Afshîn, and continues in similar vein, so that it is possible to infer that Ismailism for him is the general name for all kinds of heresy.

their communities, and impressed by the victories of the Fatimids, many were attracted to the banner of al-Mahdî. Ismaili literature suddenly begins to develop, both in the West and East, in Persia, where a series of eminent missionaries, theologians and philosophers appears in the ranks of Ismaili *dâ'is*.

Ray, the city, the capital of the province, which roughly corresponds with modern Tehran, was at that time neither predominantly Shi'ite, nor even generally a centre of theological studies which flourished not far from it, in Qum. At the period to which the epistle belongs, Ray was not very populous or important. The branch of the Buyid or Daylamite house who ruled over it did not always treat it as the capital of their kingdom, prefering either Iṣfahân or Hamadân. The Buyid rule was rapidly declining, and the princes of that period, namely Fakhru'd-dawla (366-387/976-997) and his successor, Majdu'd-dawla (till 420/1029), had little authority over their country before it was seized by the Ghaznawides, and soon after occupied by the Saljuqs. The Buyids generally patronized the Ithna-'ashari school of Shi'ism, and on purely political, rather than religious grounds, were bitter enemies of the Fatimids.

Thus we can see that the atmosphere in Ray was not particularly calm, and there is nothing improbable in the story that a *dâ'i* of the Fatimids was received with more suspicion and hostility than he would expect in ordinary times.

1. *The Epistle.*

The *Risâla* opens with the author's complaints on the hostile attitude and unfair treatment meted out to him when he came as a friend, with the kindest intentions. He protests against being abused, against all sorts of impieties being wrongly attributed to him personally, and to his community generally, and especially against the abuse poured upon the name of the Fatimid Imam-caliph of his time. The latter, as he says, is a descendant of the Prophet, a ruler of a Muslim country, whose authority is recognized

in the sacred cities, the cradle of Islam.[1] He resents their resorting to violence without first properly examining his case and giving him a hearing.

He begins with a refutation of the imputations in heresy against Ismailism. It fully accepts the seven basic dogmas accepted by all schools of Islam, namely belief in God, angels, prophets, revealed books, Judgment Day, resurrection, and retribution. Ismailism accepts the usual forms of worship and religious practice, recognizes the usual prohibitions and taboos. Religious practice is regarded by Ismailism as important, just as other aspects of religion, and cannot be given up on any consideration (*lâ yajûz tarku'l-'amal bi-wajh mina'l-wujûh*). This is obviously a reply to the usual charge of the abandonment of worship.

The *ẓâhir* and *bâṭin* (which may be roughly rendered by the letter and spirit of religion) are co-related, and are both obligatory to every *mu'min*, as the provision for the Day of the Return (*yawmu'l-ma'âd*). The *ẓâhir mafhûm*, i.e. plain and direct injunctions of the religion, concerning the details and interpretation of which there are so many different opinions, and the *bâṭin ma'lûm*, i.e. the spirit and implications, which one learns (from the Imam), are both essential. The first is like the difference of colour and language between various peoples, while the other is uniform like the soul which belongs to the *bâṭin*, inner essence, of life.

Every Apostle of God, prophet, Imam, *Waṣi*, *ḥujjat li'l-lâh*, or *waliyyu'l-lâh*, in two ways preaches the double formula of the profession of the truth (*qad da'â shahâdatayn wa da'watayn*). These are the profession of the oneness, etc., of God, and the profession of the truth and genuineness of the mission of the Apostle of God. They carry it by the plain religious preaching (*da'wat ẓâhira*), by making the people follow compulsory and standardised forms (*bi'l-jabr wa't-taqlîd*), and by the *da'wat bâṭina*, the preaching of free will, promises of God and their acceptance (*bi'l-ikhtiyâr wa'l-wa'd wa'l-wa'îd*). The *ta'wil*, or allegorical interpretation, supplies a justification (*taṣdiq*) of every *ẓâhir*, and the latter rests on its corresponding *bâṭin*. The *bâṭin*, however, can be known only through its *ẓâhir*. Religious behaviour (*'amal*) does not bring a better chance of salvation (*âkhirat*) without the knowledge of its *bâṭin*. These ideas are carefully developed in copious quotations of verses of the Coran and of appropriate *ḥadîths*. As that which matters is the principle which the author wants to prove, not the quotations with which he supports them, we may omit the quotations.

Religious life must be based on sincere faith, real thirst for religious knowledge, not mere words of others which one may repeat without proper understanding. God will not accept the *ẓâhir* or *bâṭin* independently of each other. Religious life must be conscious, not purely outward compliance with certain rules which becomes a mere habit. The *bâṭin*, merely registered by mind for information without any effect on one's actions, is *ma'dûm*, something that has no real existence.

The Coran, sent by God to humanity, is both the *tanzîl*, i.e. revealed law, *ẓâhir*, and also *ta'wil*, i.e. the implied inner meaning or spirit of the preceding, *bâṭin*. The philological interpretation of the next of the Coran, *tafsîr*, may lead to difference of opinion, while its *ta'wil*, revelation of its inner sense, authorised by the Imam, leads to the unification of, and accord in, the community. Everyone (possessing sufficient knowledge of Arabic) may express an opinion as to the literal meaning of its text. The revelation of its inner sense, *ta'wilu'l-bâṭin*, is, however, entrusted by God only to the Imam, and those whom the latter authorises to teach this on his behalf.

This is why the Prophet ordered his followers to search for (religious) knowledge everywhere ("even in China"), ever since he had become the Apostle of God and delivered his message (*amânat*), entrusted to him, explaining to humanity that it was intended for their benefit. He never

[1] Such recognition took place about 370/980, actually in the reign of al-'Aziz. Further on the author again refers to this, as we shall see.

issued any commandement, rule, injunction, or prohibition of anything without stating the reason. And he also exhorted the community to seek for the (inner) sense, *al-'ilmu'l-bâṭin*. This will remain hidden (*maḥjûb*) from those who do not recognize it, oppose it, or simply ignore or disregard it, while it will be attained by those who seek for it, ardently wish to attain it, and accept it (when it is given to them).

The *ûlû'l-albâb*, i.e. the chosen ones, to whom knowledge is entrusted, are those who keep the covenant (*'ahd*) and do not violate their oath of secrecy, *mîthâq*. i.e. of keeping secret the doctrine that is revaled to them, and rendering unto God that which God commanded them to render.[1] This point, with special reference to the *'itrat*, or progeny of the Prophet, and position of 'Alî, is particularly elaborated by the author with the help of quotations.

The position of 'Alî as the prototype of the institution of Imamat is defined by the author: "Knowledge that humanity needed was with the Apostle of God, and 'Alî was the gate leading to it. He was the *Waṣî* of the Prophet, whom the latter appointed before his death, leaving him as the treasury of religious knowledge, *baytu'l-'ilm*. 'Alî's elder son, al-Ḥasan, similarly became the gateway to that knowledge, and the treasury of it after the death of his father. The same also refers to his younger brother al-Ḥusayn, who succeeded his brother." The same order continued till the author's own time, and will continue till the Judgment Day.

(Religious) knowledge, in its entirety (*kulliyyatu'l-'ilm*), is in charge of the Imam. Obedience to him is the same thing as obedience to God Himself. This knowledge is meant not merely for the benefit of a small community, such as the Shi'ites, or even Muslims in general, but of humanity as a whole. A tradition is quoted in which the Prophet appears as bidding 'Alî to treat the followers of the Torah according to the law of their Torah, the followers

[1] This is obviously a "polite" form of saying that they pay their religious taxes.

of the Gospels according to the law of their Gospels, and the followers of the Coran according to the law of their Coran. Ordinary mortals can acquire this knowledge only from the Imams. Every man who is sincerely pious must therefore devoutly follow the guidance of the Imam which constitutes the only means of avoiding discord and difference of opinion in the community. Apostles of God were sent to humanity from the beginning of the world, in fact they always preached one and the same doctrine (fundamental principles), and for this reason they cannot contradict each other. They always called humanity to a single religion, single truth, united attempt to avoid anarchy and chaos. They spoke different languages, and used different similes and parables, but the substance of their preaching was one.

God, revealing His religion to humanity, and manifesting His justice, left mortals freedom of action. Islam is in substance the prohibition of doing evil, and commandment to act righteously, while faith, *îmân*, is its *bâṭin*, the spirit and inner sense of it. All this is laid down in the Coran. Both *Islâm* and *îmân* have nothing to do with any impious speculations or heretical theories of various philosophers, astrologers, Zoroastrians, tricksters and materialists (*Dahrîyya*), believers in transmigration of souls, promoters of extremist beliefs (*ghulât*), or the people who accept in principle that the knowledge of the *bâṭin* absolves them from carrying on the prescribed religious practice, *'amal*. All this is obviously a reply to the baseless and unfair accusations of enemies. The author returns to these accusations further on.

Having thus explained the basic principles of Ismailism as a school of Islam, the author launches a counter-attack against his opponents. He devotes ten pages to an account of the divergencies and differences of opinion which reign in the camp of those who regard themselves as orthodox. He develops his theory of *shirk*, "giving God partners," giving it a wider interpretation, and plainly aiming at the non-Shi'ite theories of *qiyâs* and *ijma'*, without, however, naming them.

He further applies his wider theory of *shirk* to matters concerned with purely Shi'ite issues. His basic idea is that various religious prescriptions refer to a definite time and contain various associations and limitations. For instance, the *ḥajj* ceremonies are associated only with certain places and seasons, the fast of Ramaḍān is associated with only a certain month, and so on. Without such associations such duties become meaningless. All this is a parallel to the institution of Imamat. God sent many Apostles who were always accompanied by faithful associates who helped them and continued their work. In the case of the Prophet Muḥammad such a *wazir*, *waṣi*, assistant, or brother, was 'Alī. Similarly, God not only appointed a *ḥujjat*, His proof, who should give testimony of the Truth before His people, but also instituted a campaign for the wide preaching of such truth among the masses with the help of recognised preachers, *du'āt*, whose duty it was to "call" people to Him. Every one knows and understands this, and those who, nevertheless, ignore and refuse recognition to the institution (of Imamat) commit the sin of *shirk* by their giving preference to their own will and pleasure in religious matters, and by disregarding the command of God. All this is profusely illustrated by the precedents in the Corano-Biblical stories concerning the ancient patriarchs, beginning with Adam.

Having thus cleared the ground, the author passes to the positive proofs of the truth of Imamat contained in various verses of the Coran and numerous *ḥadīths*. He continuously returns to his amplified theory of *shirk*, in the sense of consciously over-ruling the will of God. Thereafter he takes up the theory of *kufr*, i.e. complete disregard and deliberate violation of religious prescriptions and basic principles. He analyses the sins connected either with the disrespect or disregard of the Prophet, his *Waṣī*, and so forth, or, on the contrary, their excessive adoration, *ghuluww*. Everything must have its proper limits, and every one must act accordingly.

He briefly refers to hope, *amal*, for Divine help which

the faithful must nourish, and their duty to strive to attain righteousness (*ṣiḥḥat*) which has nothing to do with the blind following of the example of others, *taqlīd*.

The Book revealed to the Prophet, and the *sunnat*, religious practice, introduced by him, are in full accord one with the other, and contain no contradictions. God also revealed His wisdom in the constitution of the universe, the heavenly spheres, and everything living; full harmony pervades the whole system. This also forms a proof of the Divine wisdom which mortals are also commanded to note and learn, not confining their knowledge merely to the talk of ordinary people like themselves. This valuable idea is obviously meant as the basis for the justification of the philosophical studies and "approfondation" of the doctrine by the Ismaili theological elite, associated with their rejection of everything savouring of *taqlīd*, i.e. uncritical following of the learned opinions of expert theologians, who, after all, are ordinary mortals.

The Coran contains the same eternal truth as the sacred books sent to all the Apostles of God who were the predecessors of Muḥammad the Prophet. Those of his followers who content themselves with the letter and literal meaning of its words, and disregard the spirit, *bāṭin*, which animates religion and makes it living, are like the dead, being deprived of spiritual life. This is why the faithful must follow not only the Prophets, when they are on their mission, but also, after their deaths, the Imams whom they have appointed to guide humanity on the path of Truth. Those who disregard the Imams, and preach hatred towards them, are *kāfirs*, the people who do not belong to Islam. One cannot believe in one branch of the doctrine, and reject the other parts. He who accepts the Coran as the true Word of God, must accept the whole of it, not making exception even for a single verse. But the Coran does not consist merely of the ideas which are literally expressed by the words comprising its text, but also of those ideas which are implied therein, or may be inferred from them. Thus it is impossible to separate the *tanzil*, revealed words, from the

ta'wil, revealed ideas which are implied, but not explicitly expressed. Those who recognize only the former and reject the latter are in the same position as those who would accept one half of the book, and reject the other half. God had already revealed the spirit of religion to earlier Prophets, taking an oath, *mîthâq*, from them. Ordinary mortals must similarly enter into a covenant, *'ahd*, with God, keeping their faith alive, as it is often commanded in the Coran. Concerning this they must take an oath of allegiance (*bay'at*) which is equally obligatory both to men and women.

The purpose for which the faithful should follow the Imam of the time (*sababu'l-ittiṣâl bi-Imâmi'z-zamân*) is the attainment of salvation (*najât*). The Imam is the guardian of the purity of religion. The faithful who sincerely want to follow him must believe in the fundamental principles of Islam, and carry on the prescribed obligatory duties. The author again enumerates the basic dogma of Islam and duties of the Muslim, evidently keeping in mind the formula of the *'ahd*, or covenant. Amongst such basic duties Ismailism includes the obligation not to divulge to unauthorised persons the esoteric knowledge (*'ilm wa'l-ḥikmat*) entrusted to the adept under the oath of secrecy.

He adds an interesting passage in which he refers to the wild accusations against the Ismailis ascribing to them atheism, various heretical beliefs, impious practices, neglect of religious duties, and other sins. "I cannot deny," — he writes, — "that there are in our community persons who really commit such errors and sins. But it would be unfair to generalize, attributing such vile and mean acts, committed by one in a thousand, to the whole community." He recalls the undeniable fact that similar offenders are also not uncommon in orthodox communities. All this is obviously quite a sensible and sober reply to the excited accusations in the style of those contained in 'Abdu'l Qâhir's work.

In a similar way the author meets the charges of the excessive adoration of 'Alî and the Imams (*ifrâṭ fi ḥubb 'Alî*), their excessive glorification and belief in their superhuman constitution. God has appointed the Imams for the guidance of their followers and all Muslims in general. They are the rallying banner of the community, a sword which God has unsheathed to help the oppressed. The truth of this God has proved by establishing the *da'wat*, or preaching, in the Sacred cities of Islam, i.e. Mekka and Medina (which recognized the Fatimid Imam's authority).[1] He, the Imam, is a direct descendant of 'Alî.

The author then implicitly refers to the Ithna-'ashari school of Shi'ism, criticising their doctrine concerning the person of the Imam. There cannot be two true Imams at one and the same time, just as there can be only one real *qibla* in Islam. The Ismailis recognize and follow their own line of the Imams, one after the other. Just as the heart is the most important organ in the human body, which is only one, so there must be only one Imam in the community. There must be only one caliph in Islam, and he can only be a member of the *dhurriyya*, i.e. the progeny of the Prophet. The office of the Imam can only pass from one to the other by legitimate succession and explicit appointment, *naṣṣ wa tawqîf*, and the earth cannot remain even a single day without an Imam. It is, however, so predestined by God that every Imam has to have opposition in the form of adversaries who rebel against him, and show hostility to him and his cause. So it was all through the course of history. The leaders of mischief (*a'immatu'd-ḍalâl*) always keep up unrest and strife in the world, doing everything possible to lead their dupes on the path to Hell. On the Judgment Day they will not help them in any way. They are all preoccupied with their own selfish interests and ambitions.

At the conclusion the author again addresses his reproaches to the inhabitants of Ray for their having treated him in such an unfriendly manner. He requests them to invite him to return and prove his case in open disputation in a principal mosque, or wherever they like. Such dispu-

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[1] Cf. above, p. 164.

tations were in the past staged for discussing religion with various people of indubitably unorthodox persuasions, such as philosophers, heretics, Dahrites, Zoroastrians, and even *ghulât* and believers in *tanâsukh*. He ends his epistle with a profusion of polite sentences and pious sentiments.

2. *Notes on the Contents.*

As may be seen from this short summary, the author of the epistle answers all the accusations contained in 'Abdu'l-Qâhir's note, except, of course, those which could not be answered as being entirely baseless and fantastic. The author, indubitably, often resorts to the smoothing of various points which would be not so palatable to the fanatics amongst the orthodox, or even passes them over in silence. On the whole, however, in all fairness, it is necessary to admit that as far as it is possible to judge from what is known of Fatimid literature, his statement is fair and balanced, clear, moderate and sober, containing no substantial perversion of the facts. The form of Ismailism which he describes is obviously that which was intended for the rank and file of the community, and not for advanced students of theology. It therefore probably gives us a fair idea of what the Ismaili "man-in-the-street" of a thousand years ago in Persia generally knew of his religion. This, of course, applies to the typical follower, and not those individual cases who attached special importance to various elements under the influence of some sectarian deviations of their religious opinion.

The modern, sophisticated man would hardly be convinced by many of the author's arguments, or accept his quotations as befitting the cases which they are quoted to prove. The numerous *hadîths* which he quotes rarely require much critical acumen to prove they are hopelessly unauthentic. What he says are the words of sincere faith, involuntarily addressed to believing hearts, not sceptic minds. But we are sufficiently grown up to be able to read between the lines and recognize the spirit of great devotion which

of itself is more convincing than the various theological arguments of the author.

Typically of an Ismaili, the author does not mention the genealogy of the Fatimid caliphs, and even the name of the Imam of his time; in fact, he only says that the Imam is a descendant of 'Alî. It is probably the heritage of a long period of underground existence of the community, and of special precautions used against the danger of "revealing too much" to potential persecutors.

'Abdu'l-Qâhir al-Baghdâdî, however, has much to tell on such matters. For the very reason that Fatimid propaganda avoided touching on such matters in public, he, and authors like him, indulged in extravagances on this subject without the fear of being confronted with documents of proven authenticity. He writes that al-Mahdî the first Fatimid caliph, was called Sa'îd b. al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lâh b. Maymûn al-Qaddâḥ. It is quite possible that al-Mahdî had a surname *Sa'îd*, the "lucky," i.e. specially blessed with Divinely granted success, which would be quite an appropriate epithet for a Mahdî. If we replace Maymûn al-Qaddâḥ, whose appearance in the pedigree constitutes an anachronism and suggests the influence of Ibn Razzâm's theory, with *al*-Maymûn, which was probably an esoteric designation of Muḥammad b. Ismâ'îl b. Ja'far, this would be the version which the Fatimids themselves recognized as genuine. But, in his zeal to expose the falsity of the genealogy, he further mentions that "later on" al-Mahdî changed his name into 'Ubaydu'l-lâh b. *Ḥasan* b. Muḥammad b. Ismâ'îl, without explaining why, when, and what for this was done. His revelation, however, is obvious fiction, because Muḥammad b. Ismâ'îl, born about 120/738, could not be a grandfather of al-Mahdî who most probably was born about 260/874, i.e. 140 years later. There is no indication as to who this mysterious Ḥasan was, and why al-Mahdî wanted to include him in his genealogy.

In addition to revelations of this kind, 'Abdu'l-Qâhir devotes much space to the discussion of the affinities of Ismailism with the religion of the Majûs, i.e. Zoroastria-

nism. He dwells on that bright idea of the Abbasid propaganda that the aim of the Fatimids was to bring about the end of the domination of the Arabs and Islam, and introduce the domination of the Majûs and their religion. Curiously enough, such absurd insinuations were for a long time, in fact many decades, taken quite seriously by many Oriental scholars of Europe who were so proud of their "critical methods" of study. Their pupils in the East even now repeat this as the scientifically proved truth. This merely constitutes a new proof of how little, in fact, we still know for certain about the history of the world of Islam and its civilisation, and how helpless we still remain in separating truth from falsehood in the sources of information that we use. 'Abdu'l-Qâhir al-Baghdâdî, writing in Persia four hundred years after the introduction of Islam, ought surely to have known that the Zoroastrians in Persia, forming small communities in remote villages where they were left undisturbed, were so few, so backward, and so completely devoid of any organisation and political influence that the Fatimids in Cairo would hardly regard them as anything more than a quaint relic of the past of no practical use whatsoever. In fact, there is every reason to believe that by that time the Zoroastrians were not only much less numerous than the Christians, in Persia, and especially in Syria and Egypt, but in all probability even less than the Jews. Such apparent stupidity on the part of 'Abdu'l-Qâhir's statements again can only prove that his purpose was to revile the Fatimids, collecting all possible — even antiquated — scraps of adverse information, in order to prove his own irreconcilable attitude to them and their religion.

He uses similar methods in his proofs of the alleged "dualism" of the Fatimid doctrine. He heard the philosophical terms such as *al-Awwal* and *ath-Thânî*, so often used in the Ismaili theory of the creation of the world, for the "Universal Reason" and "Universal Soul," being the first and second emanation respectively. Simply taking the words, without any connection to the context in which they

are used, 'Abdu'l-Qâhir wants his unsophisticated readers to accept this as a proof that the Ismailis believe in two Gods, the first and the second.[1]

Such intense bitterness against Ismailism might have a certain response in official circles for quite sound reasons which the author unwittingly reveals, preserving for us a precious bit of information. He mentions twice (pp. 266 and 285) that the religion of Maymûn al-Qaddâh (as he calls Ismailism) proved very attractive to the wild Kurds (Akrâd, i.e. nomads of Iranian stock)[2] and the *awlâdu'l-Majûs*, i.e. obviously recent converts to Islam. Knowing the connection between conversion and the taxation policy of the Omayyads and Abbasids, we can easily perceive what really attracted these people to Ismailism. It was not the dream of some fantastic domination of the Majûs, but equity and justice which the ideal Alid theocracy persistently promised to the masses. It was the very ease with which the doctrine was spreading in such milieu that alar-

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[1] Such examples of "twist" in the treatises of religious controversy by no means constitute an exceptional case of dishonesty. In fact, practically all authors would seize the chance of painting the devil of heresy blacker than he really appears, by "condensing colours", or distorting the doctrine, mixing it with philosophical speculations, and so forth, thus ultimately coming to the conclusion that Ismailism "is outside the fold of Islam", or something in the same strain. Many educated readers of such literature obviously knew this, but had nothing against similar methods which they probably accepted as proof of their authors' pious indignation and religious zeal.

[2] The term *kurd* is originally not an ethnic name in Persian, but an expression denoting nomad tribesmen of Iranian stock. There are in Eastern Persia some "Kurd" tribes which have nothing to do with the proper Kurds. Unfortunately for the student, the author does not specify the locality with which they were connected. Similarly, the *awlâdu'l-Majûs*, i.e. the "descendants of the Zoroastrians", may have been peasants in certain localities, perhaps in Fârs, where the Majûs were more numerous than in other parts of Persia. It would be difficult to believe that at such a late period they were the second generation of converts to Islam.

ned the Abbasid circles, and the authors such as 'Abdu'l-Qâhir merely give expression to the panic which was spreading, by heaping their accusations without any sense of proportion and measure.

INDEX

Exceptions in the alphabetical arrangement of the entries :

Abû, b. (= bin), Ibn, K. (= *Kitâb*), *R.* (= *Risâla*), unless forming an essential part of the title, the Arabic definitive article *al-*, prepositions, and words within parentheses, *are not taken into account* in the alphabetical arrangement of the entries in this index.

Abbreviations :

IA = Ithna-'ashari; *sûr.* = *sûrat*, chapter of the Coran.

The *oblique stroke* / signifies that reference is made to the *footnote* on the page indicated.