The Druze

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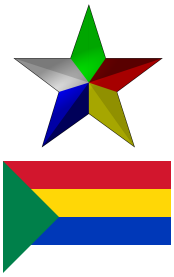
Druze

Druze

دروز



Druze star and Druze flag

Total population	
1,000,000 to 2,500,000	
Founder	
Ad-Darazi, Hamza and Al Hakim	
Regions with significant populations	
Syria	700,000
Lebanon	250,000
Israel	125,300[1]
Jordan	20,000
Outside the Middle East	100,000
United States	20,000
Canada	10,000
Venezuela	100,000
Australia	3,000
Colombia	3,000
United Kingdom	<1,000
Religions	
Unitarian Druze	
Scriptures	
Qur'an, Rasa'il al-hikmah (*Epistles of Wisdom*)	
Languages	
Arabic Hebrew (in Israel) Spanish (in Venezuela and Colombia) English (in United States and Australia)	

The **Druze** (Arabic: درزي, *derzī* or *durzī*, plural دروز, *durūz*; Hebrew: דרוזים, "druzim") are a monotheistic ethnoreligious community, found primarily in Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan. Druze beliefs incorporate several elements from Abrahamic religions, Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, Pythagoreanism, and other philosophies. The Druze call themselves *Ahl al-Tawhid* "the People of Monotheism" or *al-Muwaḥḥidūn* "the Unitarians".

Location

The Druze people reside primarily in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel.[2] The Institute of Druze Studies estimates that forty to fifty percent of Druze live in Syria, thirty to forty percent in Lebanon, six to seven percent in Israel, and one or two percent in Jordan.[3]

Large communities of expatriate Druze also live outside the Middle East in Australia, Canada, Europe, Latin America, the United States, and West Africa. They use the Arabic language and follow a social pattern very similar to those of the other peoples of the eastern Mediterranean region.

The number of Druze people worldwide exceeds one million, with the vast majority residing in the Levant or East Mediterranean.

History

Origin of the name

The name Druze is derived from the name of Muhammad bin Ismail Nashtakin ad-Darazī (from Persian, darzi, "seamster") who was an early preacher. Although the Druze consider ad-Darazī a heretic the name had been used to identify them.

Before becoming public, the movement was secretive and held closed meetings in what was known as Sessions of Wisdom. During this stage a dispute occurred between ad-Darazi and Hamza bin Ali mainly concerning ad-Darazi's ghuluww (Arabic, "exaggeration"), which refers to the belief that God was incarnated in human beings, especially 'Ali and his descendants, including Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah who was the current Caliph, and ad-Darazi naming himself "The Sword of the Faith" which led Hamza to write an epistle refuting the need for the sword to spread the faith and several epistles refuting the beliefs of the ghulat.

In 1016 ad-Darazi and his followers openly proclaimed their beliefs and called people to join them, causing riots in Cairo against the Unitarian movement including Hamza bin Ali and his followers. This led to the suspension of the movement for one year and the expulsion of ad-Darazi and his supporters.

Although the Druze religious books describe ad-Darazi as the "insolent one" and as the "calf" who is narrow minded and hasty, the name "Druze" is still used for identification and for historical reasons. In 1018 ad-Darazi was assassinated for his teachings; some sources claim that he was executed by Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah.

Some authorities see in the name "Druze" a descriptive epithet, derived from Arabic dâresah ("those who study"). Others have speculated that the word comes from the Persian word *Darazo* (درز "bliss") or from Shaykh Hussayn ad-Darazī, who was one of the early converts to the faith. In the early stages of the movement, the word "Druze" is rarely mentioned by historians, and in Druze religious texts only the word *Muwaḥḥidūn* ("Unitarian") appears. The only early Arab historian who mentions the Druze is the eleventh century Christian scholar Yahya of Antioch, who clearly refers to the heretical group created by ad-Darazī rather than the followers of Hamza ibn 'Alī. As for Western sources, Benjamin of Tudela, the Jewish traveler who passed through Lebanon in or around 1165, was one of the first European writers to refer to the Druzes by name. The word *Dogziyin* ("Druzes") occurs in an early Hebrew edition of his travels, but it is clear that this is a scribal error. Be that as it may, he described the Druze as "mountain dwellers, monotheists, who believe in 'soul eternity' and reincarnation."

Early history

The Druze faith began as a movement in Ismailism that was mainly influenced by Greek philosophy and Gnosticism and opposed certain religious and philosophical ideologies that were present during that epoch.

The faith was preached by Hamza ibn 'Alī ibn Ahmad, a Persian Ismaili mystic and scholar. He came to Egypt in 1014 and assembled a group of scholars and leaders from across the world to establish the Unitarian movement. The order's meetings were held in the Raydan Mosque, near the Al-Hakim Mosque.

In 1017, Hamza officially revealed the Druze faith and began to preach the Unitarian doctrine. Hamza gained the support of the Fātimid Caliph al-Hakim, who issued a decree promoting religious freedom prior to the declaration of the divine call.

> Remove ye the causes of fear and estrangement from yourselves. Do away with the corruption of delusion and conformity. Be ye certain that the Prince of Believers hath given unto you free will, and hath spared you the trouble of disguising and concealing your true beliefs, so that when ye work ye may keep your deeds pure for God. He hath done thus so that when you relinquish your previous beliefs and doctrines ye shall not indeed lean on such causes of impediments and pretensions. By conveying to you the reality of his intention, the Prince of Believers hath spared you any excuse for doing so. He hath urged you to declare your belief openly. Ye are now safe from any hand which may bring harm unto you. Ye now may find rest in his assurance ye shall not be wronged. Let those who are present convey this message unto the absent so that it may be known by both the distinguished and the common people. It shall thus become a rule to mankind; and Divine Wisdom shall prevail for all the days to come.

Al-Hakim became a central figure in the Druze faith even though his own religious position was disputed among scholars. John Esposito states that al-Hakim believed that "he was not only the divinely appointed religio-political leader but also the cosmic intellect linking God with creation", while others like Nissim Dana and Mordechai Nisan state that he is perceived as the manifestation and the reincarnation of God or presumably the image of God.[4][5]Wikipedia:Citing sources

Some Druze and non-Druze scholars like Samy Swayd and Sami Makarem state that this confusion is due to confusion about the role of the early preacher ad-Darazi, whose teachings the Druze rejected as heretical. These sources assert that al-Hakim rejected ad-Darazi's claims of divinity,[6]Wikipedia:Citing sources and ordered the elimination of his movement while supporting that of Hamza ibn Ali.

Al-Hakim disappeared one night while out on his evening ride – presumably assassinated, perhaps at the behest of his formidable elder sister Sitt al-Mulk. The Druze believe he went into Occultation with Hamza ibn Ali and three other prominent preachers, leaving the care of the "Unitarian missionary movement" to a new leader, Al-Muqtana Baha'uddin.

Closing of the faith

Al-Hakim was replaced by his underage son, 'Alī az-Zahir. The Unitarian Druze movement, which existed in the Fatimid Caliphate, acknowledged az-Zahir as the Caliph, but followed Hamzah as its Imam. The young Caliph's regent, Sitt al-Mulk, ordered the army to destroy the movement in 1021. At the same time, Bahā'a ad-Dīn as-Samuki was assigned the leadership of the Unitarian Movement by Hamza Bin Ali.

For the next seven years, the Druze faced extreme persecution by the new caliph, al-Zahir, who wanted to eradicate the faith. This was the result of a power struggle inside of the Fatimid empire in which the Druze were viewed with suspicion because of their refusal to recognize the new Caliph, Ali az-Zahir, as their Imam. Many spies, mainly the followers of Ad-Darazi, joined the Unitarian movement in order to infiltrate the Druze community. The spies set about agitating trouble and soiling the reputation of the Druze. This resulted in friction with the new caliph who clashed militarily with the Druze community. The clashes ranged from Antioch to Alexandria, where tens of thousands of Druze were slaughtered by the Fatimid army. The largest massacre was at Antioch, where 5,000 Druze

religious leaders were killed, followed by that of Aleppo. As a result, the faith went underground in hope of survival, as those captured were either forced to renounce their faith or be killed. Druze survivors "were found principally in southern Lebanon and Syria." In 1038, two years after the death of al-Zahir, the Druze movement was able to resume because the new leadership that replaced him had friendly political ties with at least one prominent Druze leader.

In 1043 Baha'uddin declared that the sect would no longer accept new pledges, and since that time proselytization has been prohibited.

During the Crusades

It was during the period of Crusader rule in Syria (1099–1291) that the Druze first emerged into the full light of history in the Gharb region of the Chouf Mountains. As powerful warriors serving the Muslim rulers of Damascus against the Crusades, the Druze were given the task of keeping watch over the crusaders in the seaport of Beirut, with the aim of preventing them from making any encroachments inland. Subsequently, the Druze chiefs of the Gharb placed their considerable military experience at the disposal of the Mamluk rulers of Egypt (1250–1516); first, to assist them in putting an end to what remained of Crusader rule in coastal Syria, and later to help them safeguard the Syrian coast against Crusader retaliation by sea.

In the early period of the Crusader era, the Druze feudal power was in the hands of two families, the Tanukhs and the Arslans. From their fortresses in the Gharb area (now in Aley District) of southern Mount Lebanon Governorate, the Tanukhs led their incursions into the Phoenician coast and finally succeeded in holding Beirut and the marine plain against the Franks. Because of their fierce battles with the Crusaders, the Druzes earned the respect of the Sunni Muslim Caliphs and thus gained important political powers. After the middle of the twelfth century, the Ma'an family superseded the Tanukhs in Druze leadership. The origin of the family goes back to a Prince Ma'an who made his appearance in the Lebanon in the days of the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Mustarshid (1118–35 AD). The Ma'ans chose for their abode the Chouf District in south-western Lebanon (southern Mount Lebanon Governorate), overlooking the maritime plain between Beirut and Sidon, and made their headquarters in Baaqlin, which is still a leading Druze village. They were invested with feudal authority by Sultan Nur ad-Din and furnished respectable contingents to the Muslim ranks in their struggle against the Crusaders.[7]Wikipedia:Citing sources

Persecution during the Mamluk and Ottoman period

Having cleared Syria of the Franks, the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt turned their attention to the schismatic Muslims of Syria. In 1305, after the issuing of a fatwa by the scholar Ibn Taymiyyah calling for jihad against all non-Sunni Muslims like the Druze, Alawites, Ismaili, and Twelver Shia Muslims, al-Malik al-Nasir inflicted a disastrous defeat on the Druze at Keserwan and forced outward compliance on their part to orthodox Sunni Islam. Later, under the Ottoman Turks, they were severely attacked at Ayn-Ṣawfar in 1585 after the Ottomans claimed that they assaulted their caravans near Tripoli.[7]Wikipedia:Citing sources

Consequently, the 16th and 17th centuries were to witness a succession of armed Druze rebellions against the Ottomans, countered by repeated Ottoman punitive expeditions against the Chouf, in which the Druze population of the area was severely depleted and many villages destroyed. These military measures, severe as they were, did not succeed in reducing the local Druze to the required degree of subordination. This led the Ottoman government to agree to an arrangement whereby the different nahiyes (districts) of the Chouf would be granted in *iltizam* ("fiscal concession") to one of the region's amirs, or leading chiefs, leaving the maintenance of law and order and the collection of its taxes in the area in the hands of the appointed amir. This arrangement was to provide the cornerstone for the privileged status which ultimately came to be enjoyed by the whole of Mount Lebanon, Druze and Christian areas alike.

Ma'an dynasty

With the advent of the Ottoman Turks and the conquest of Syria by Sultan Selim I in 1516, the Ma'ans were acknowledged by the new rulers as the feudal lords of southern Lebanon. Druze villages spread and prospered in that region, which under Ma'an leadership so flourished that it acquired the generic term of *Jabal Bayt-Ma'an* (the mountain of the Ma'an family) or *Jabal al-Druze*. The latter title has since been usurped by the Hawran region, which since the middle of the 19th century has proven a haven of refuge to Druze emigrants from Lebanon and has become the headquarters of Druze power.[7]Wikipedia:Citing sources

Fakhreddin castle in Palmyra

Under Fakhr-al-Dīn II (Fakhreddin II), the Druze dominion increased until it included almost all Syria, extending from the edge of the Antioch plain in the north to Safad in the south, with a part of the Syrian desert dominated by Fakhr-al-Din's castle at Tadmur (Palmyra), the ancient capital of Zenobia. The ruins of this castle still stand on a steep hill overlooking the town. Fakhr-al-Din became too strong for his Turkish sovereign in Constantinople. He went so far in 1608 as to sign a commercial treaty with Duke Ferdinand I of Tuscany containing secret military clauses. The Sultan then sent a force against him, and he was compelled to flee the land and seek refuge in the courts of Tuscany and Naples in 1613 and 1615 respectively.

In 1618 political changes in the Ottoman sultanate had resulted in the removal of many enemies of Fakhr-al-Din from power, signaling the prince's triumphant return to Lebanon soon afterwards. Through a clever policy of bribery and warfare, he extended his domains to cover all of modern Lebanon, some of Syria and northern Galilee.

In 1632 Küçük Ahmet Pasha was named Lord of Damascus. Küçük Ahmet Pasha was a rival of Fakhr-al-Din and a friend of the sultan Murad IV, who ordered the pasha and the sultanate's navy to attack Lebanon and depose Fakhr-al-Din.

This time the prince decided to remain in Lebanon and resist the offensive, but the death of his son Ali in Wadi al-Taym was the beginning of his defeat. He later took refuge in Jezzine's grotto, closely followed by Küçük Ahmet Pasha who eventually caught up with him and his family.

Fakhr-al-Din was captured, taken to Istanbul, and imprisoned with two of his sons in the infamous Yedi Kule prison. The Sultan had Fakhr-al-Din and his sons killed on 13 April 1635 in Istanbul, bringing an end to an era in the history of Lebanon, which would not regain its current boundaries until it was proclaimed a mandate state and republic in 1920. One version recounts that the younger son was spared, raised in the harem and went on to become Ottoman Ambassador to India.[8]

Fakhr-al-Din II was the first ruler in modern Lebanon to open the doors of his country to foreign Western influences. Under his auspices the French established a khān (hostel) in Sidon, the Florentines a consulate, and Christian missionaries were admitted into the country. Beirut and Sidon, which Fakhr-al-Din II beautified, still bear traces of his benign rule. See the new biography of this Prince, based on original sources, by TJ Gorton: *Renaissance Emir: a Druze Warlord at the Court of the Medici* (London, Quartet Books, 2013), for an updated view of his life.

Fakhr ad Din II was succeeded in 1635 by his nephew Ahmed Ma'an, who ruled through his death in 1658. (Fakhr ad Din's only surviving son, Husayn, lived the rest of his life as a court official in Constantinople.) Emir Mulhim exercised Iltizam taxation rights in the Shuf, Gharb, Jurd, Matn, and Kisrawan districts of Lebanon. Mulhim's forces battled and defeated those of Mustafa Pasha, Beylerbey of Damascus, in 1642, but he is reported by historians to have been otherwise loyal to Ottoman rule.

Following Mulhim's death, his sons Ahmad and Korkmaz entered into a power struggle with other Ottoman-backed Druze leaders. In 1660, the Ottoman empire moved to reorganize the region, placing the sanjaks (districts) of Sidon-Beirut and Safed in a newly formed province of Sidon, a move seen by local Druze as an attempt to assert

control. Contemporary historian Istifan al-Duwayhi reports that Korkmaz was killed in act of treachery by the Beylerbey of Damascus in 1662. Ahmad however emerged victorious in the power struggle among the Druze in 1667, but the Maʿnīs lost control of Safad and retreated to controlling the iltizam of the Shuf mountains and Kisrawan. Ahmad continued as local ruler through his death from natural causes, without heir, in 1697.

During the Ottoman-Hapsburg war of 1683 to 1699, Ahmad Ma'n collaborated in a rebellion against the Ottomans which extended beyond his death. Iltizam rights in Shuf and Kisrawan passed to the rising Shihab family through female-line inheritance.

Shihab Dynasty

Druze woman wearing a tantour, Chouf, Lebanon – 1870s

As early as the days of Saladin, and while the Ma'ans were still in complete control over southern Lebanon, the Shihab tribe, originally Hijaz Arabs but later settled in Ḥawran, advanced from Ḥawran, in 1172, and settled in Wadi al-Taym at the foot of mount Hermon. They soon made an alliance with the Ma'ans and were acknowledged as the Druze chiefs in *Wadi al-Taym*. At the end of the 17th century (1697) the Shihabs succeeded the Ma'ans in the feudal leadership of Druze southern Lebanon, although they reportedly professed Sunni Islam, they showed sympathy with Druzism, the religion of the majority of their subjects.

The Shihab leadership continued until the middle of the 19th century and culminated in the illustrious governorship of Amir Bashir Shihab II (1788–1840) who, after Fakhr-al-Din, was the most powerful feudal lord Lebanon produced. Though governor of the Druze Mountain, Bashir was a crypto-Christian, and it was he whose aid Napoleon solicited in 1799 during his campaign against Syria.

Having consolidated his conquests in Syria (1831–38), Ibrahim Pasha, son of the viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha, made the fatal mistake of trying to disarm the Christians and Druzes of the Lebanon and to draft the latter into his army. This was contrary to the principles of the life of independence which these mountaineers had always lived, and resulted in a general uprising against Egyptian rule. The uprising was encouraged, for political reasons, by the British. The Druzes of Wadi al-Taym and Ḥawran, under the leadership of Shibli al-Aryan, distinguished themselves in their stubborn resistance at their inaccessible headquarters, *al-Laja*, lying southeast of Damascus.[7]Wikipedia:Citing sources

Qaysites and the Yemenites

Meeting of Druze and Ottoman leaders in Damascus, about the control of Jebel Druze

The conquest of Syria by the Muslim Arabs in the middle of the seventh century introduced into the land two political factions later called the Qaysites and the Yemenites. The Qaysite party represented the Bedouin Arabs who were regarded as inferior by the Yemenites who were earlier and more cultured emigrants into Syria from southern Arabia. Druzes and Christians grouped in political rather than religious parties so the party lines in Lebanon obliterated racial and religious lines and the people grouped themselves regardless of their religious affiliations, into one or the other of these two parties. The sanguinary feuds between these two factions depleted, in course of time, the manhood of the Lebanon and ended in the decisive battle of Ain Dara in 1711, which resulted in the utter defeat of the Yemenite party. Many Yemenite Druzes thereupon immigrated to the Hawran region and thus laid the foundation of Druze power

there.[7]Wikipedia:Citing sources

Civil War of 1860

The Druzes and their Christian Maronite neighbors, who had thus far lived as religious communities on friendly terms, entered a period of social disturbance in the year 1840, which culminated in the civil war of 1860.[7]Wikipedia:Citing sources

After the Shehab dynasty converted to Christianity, the Druze community and feudal leaders came under attack from the regime with the collaboration of the Catholic Church, and the Druze lost most of their political and feudal powers. Also, the Druze formed an alliance with Britain and allowed Protestant missionaries to enter Mount Lebanon, creating tension between them and the Catholic Maronites, who were supported by the French.

The Maronite-Druze conflict in 1840–60 was an outgrowth of the Maronite Christian independence movement[*citation needed*], directed against the Druze, Druze feudalism, and the Ottoman-Turks. The civil war was not therefore a religious war[*citation needed*], except in Damascus, where it spread and where the vastly non-Druze population was anti-Christian[*citation needed*]. The movement culminated with the 1859–60 massacre and defeat of the Christians by the Druzes. The civil war of 1860 cost the Christians some ten thousand lives in Damascus, Zahlé, Deir al-Qamar, Hasbaya, and other towns of Lebanon.

The European powers then determined to intervene, and authorized the landing in Beirut of a body of French troops under General Beaufort d'Hautpoul, whose inscription can still be seen on the historic rock at the mouth of Nahr al-Kalb. French intervention on behalf of the Maronites did not help the Maronite national movement, since France was restricted in 1860 by Britain, which did not want the Ottoman Empire dismembered. But European intervention pressured the Turks to treat the Maronites more justly. Following the recommendations of the powers, the Ottoman Porte granted Lebanon local autonomy, guaranteed by the powers, under a Christian governor. This autonomy was maintained until World War I.[7]Wikipedia:Citing sourcesWikipedia:Citing sources

Rebellion in Hauran

The Hauran rebellion was a violent Druze uprising against Ottoman authority in the Syrian province, which erupted in May 1909. The rebellion was led by al-Atrash family, originated in local disputes and Druze unwillingness to pay taxes and conscript into the Ottoman Army. The rebellion ended in brutal suppression of the Druze by General Sami Pasha al-Farouqi, significant depopulation of the Hauran region and execution of the Druze leaders in 1910. In the outcome of the revolt, 2,000 Druze were killed, a similar number wounded and hundreds of Druze fighters imprisoned. Al-Farouqi also disarmed the population, extracted significant taxes and launched a census of the region.

Modern history

In Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine, the Druze have official recognition as a separate religious community with its own religious court system. Druze are known for their loyalty to the countries they reside in, though they have a strong community feeling, in which they identify themselves as related even across borders of countries.

Despite their practice of blending with dominant groups to avoid persecution, and because the Druze religion does not endorse separatist sentiments but urges blending with the communities they reside in, the Druze have had a history of resistance to occupying powers, and they have at times enjoyed more freedom than most other groups living in the Levant.

In Syria

Druze warriors preparing to go to battle with Sultan Pasha al-Atrash in 1925

In Syria, most Druze live in the Jebel al-Druze, a rugged and mountainous region in the southwest of the country, which is more than 90 percent Druze inhabited; some 120 villages are exclusively so.Wikipedia:Citing sources

Flag of Jabal el Druze representing the five Druze principles(خمس حدود); other variations of the flag exist

The Druze always played a far more important role in Syrian politics than its comparatively small population would suggest. With a community of little more than 100,000 in 1949, or roughly three percent of the Syrian population, the Druze of Syria's southwestern mountains constituted a potent force in Syrian politics and played a leading role in the nationalist struggle against the French. Under the military leadership of Sultan Pasha al-Atrash, the Druze provided much of the military force behind the Syrian Revolution of 1925–27. In 1945, Amir Hasan al-Atrash, the paramount political leader of the Jebel al-Druze, led the Druze military units in a successful revolt against the French, making the Jebel al-Druze the first and only region in Syria to liberate itself from French rule without British assistance. At independence the Druze, made confident by their successes, expected that Damascus would reward them for their many sacrifices on the battlefield. They demanded to keep their autonomous administration and many political privileges accorded them by the French and sought generous economic assistance from the newly independent government.Wikipedia:Citing sources

Druze leaders meeting in Jebel al-Druze, Syria, 1926

Well-led by the Atrash household and jealous of their reputation as Arab nationalists and proud warriors, the Druze leaders refused to be beaten into submission by Damascus or cowed by threats. When a local paper in 1945 reported that President Shukri al-Quwatli (1943–49) had called the Druzes a "dangerous minority", Sultan Pasha al-Atrash flew into a rage and demanded a public retraction. If it were not forthcoming, he announced, the Druzes would indeed become "dangerous" and a force of 4,000 Druze warriors would "occupy the city of Damascus." Quwwatli could not dismiss Sultan Pasha's threat. The military balance of power in Syria was tilted in favor of the Druzes, at least until the military build up during the 1948 War in Palestine. One advisor to the Syrian Defense Department warned in 1946 that the Syrian army was "useless", and that the Druzes could "take Damascus and capture the present leaders in a breeze."Wikipedia:Citing sources

During the four years of Adib Shishakli's rule in Syria (December 1949 to February 1954) (on 25 August 1952: Adib al-Shishakli created the Arab Liberation Movement (ALM), a progressive party with pan-Arabist and socialist views), the Druze community was subjected to a heavy attack by the Syrian regime. Shishakli believed that among

his many opponents in Syria, the Druzes were the most potentially dangerous, and he was determined to crush them. He frequently proclaimed: "My enemies are like a serpent: the head is the Jebel al-Druze, the stomach Homs, and the tail Aleppo. If I crush the head the serpent will die." Shishakli dispatched 10,000 regular troops to occupy the Jebel al-Druze. Several towns were bombarded with heavy weapons, killing scores of civilians and destroying many houses. According to Druze accounts, Shishakli encouraged neighboring bedouin tribes to plunder the defenseless population and allowed his own troops to run amok.Wikipedia:Citing sources

Shishakli launched a brutal campaign to defame the Druzes for their religion and politics. He accused the entire community of treason, at times claiming they were agents of the British and Hashimites, at others that they were fighting for Israel against the Arabs. He even produced a cache of Israeli weapons allegedly discovered in the Jabal. Even more painful for the Druze community was his publication of "falsified Druze religious texts" and false testimonials ascribed to leading Druze sheikhs designed to stir up sectarian hatred. This propaganda also was broadcast in the Arab world, mainly Egypt. Shishakli was assassinated in Brazil on 27 September 1964 by a Druze seeking revenge for Shishakli's bombardment of the Jebel al-Druze.Wikipedia:Citing sources

He forcibly integrated minorities into the national Syrian social structure, his "Syrianization" of Alawite and Druze territories had to be accomplished in part using violence, he declared: "My enemies are like serpent. The head is the Jabal Druze, if I crush the head the serpent will die" (Seale 1963:132). To this end, al-Shishakli encouraged the stigmatization of minorities. He saw minority demands as tantamount to treason. His increasingly chauvinistic notions of Arab nationalism were predicated on the denial that "minorities" existed in Syria.Wikipedia:Citing sources

After the Shishakli's military campaign, the Druze community lost a lot of its political influence, but many Druze military officers played an important role when it comes to the Baathist regime currently ruling Syria.Wikipedia:Citing sources

In Lebanon

Prophet Job shrine in Lebanon the Chouf region

The Druze community played an important role in the formation of the modern state of Lebanon, and even though they are a minority they played an important role in the Lebanese political scene. Before and during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90), the Druze were in favor of Pan-Arabism and Palestinian resistance represented by the PLO. Most of the community supported the Progressive Socialist Party formed by their leader Kamal Jumblatt and they fought alongside other leftist and Palestinian parties against the Lebanese Front that was mainly constituted of Christians. After the assassination of Kamal Jumblatt on 16 March 1977, his son Walid Jumblatt took the leadership of the party and played an important role in preserving his father's legacy and sustained the existence of the Druze community during the sectarian bloodshed that lasted until 1990.

In August 2001, Maronite Catholic Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir toured the predominantly Druze Chouf region of Mount Lebanon and visited Mukhtara, the ancestral stronghold of Druze leader Walid Jumblatt. The tumultuous reception that Sfeir received not only signified a historic reconciliation between Maronites and Druze, who fought a bloody war in 1983–84, but underscored the fact that the banner of Lebanese sovereignty had broad multi-confessional appeal and was a cornerstone for the Cedar Revolution. The second largest political party supported by Druze is the Lebanese Democratic Party led by Prince Talal Arslan, the son of Lebanese independence hero Emir Majid Arslan.

In Israel

The Druze form a religious minority in Israel of more than 100,000, mostly residing in the north of the country. In 1967, a small community of Druze in the Golan Heights came under Israeli rule, now growing to about 20,000 strong – only 500 of which hold Israeli citizenship (the rest holding resident status). In 2004, there were 102,000 Druze living in the country. In 2010, the population of Israeli Druze citizens grew to over 125,000.

In 1957, the Israeli government designated the Druze a distinct ethnic community at the request of its communal leaders. The Druze are Arabic-speaking citizens of Israel, who are drafted into mandatory service in the Israel Defense Forces, in which the same process goes for the majority of citizens in Israel. Members of the community have attained top positions in Israeli politics and public service. The number of Druze parliament members usually exceeds their proportion in the Israeli population, integrated within several political parties.

Beliefs of the Druze

The Druze are considered to be a social group as well as a religious sect, but not a distinct ethnic group. Also complicating their identity is the custom of Taqiyya—concealing or disguising their beliefs when necessary—that they adopted from Shia Islam and the esoteric nature of the faith, in which many teachings are kept secretive. Druze in different states can have radically different lifestyles. Some claim to be Muslim, some do not. The Druze faith is said to abide by Islamic principles, but they tend to be separatist in their treatment of Druze-hood, and their religion differs from mainstream Islam on a number of fundamental points.[9]

God in the Druze faith

The Druze conception of the deity is declared by them to be one of strict and uncompromising unity. The main Druze doctrine states that God is both transcendent and immanent, in which He is above all attributes but at the same time He is present.

In their desire to maintain a rigid confession of unity, they stripped from God all attributes (*tanzīh*). In God, there are no attributes distinct from his essence. He is wise, mighty, and just, not by wisdom, might and justice, but by his own essence. God is "the whole of existence", rather than "above existence" or on his throne, which would make him "limited". There is neither "how", "when", nor "where" about Him; He is incomprehensible.Wikipedia:Citing sources

In this dogma, they are similar to the semi-philosophical, semi-religious body which flourished under Al-Ma'mun and was known by the name of Mu'tazila and the fraternal order of the Brethren of Purity *(Ikhwan al-Ṣafa)*.[7]Wikipedia:Citing sources

Unlike the *Mu'tazilla*, however, and similar to some branches of Sufism, the Druze believe in the concept of *Tajalli* (meaning "theophany").Wikipedia:Citing sources *Tajalli*, which is more often misunderstood by scholars and writers and is usually confused with the concept of incarnation,

> ...is the core spiritual beliefs in the Druze and some other intellectual and spiritual traditions.... In a mystical sense, it refers to the light of God experienced by certain mystics who have reached a high level of purity in their spiritual journey. Thus, God is perceived as the Lahut [the divine] who manifests His Light in the Station (Maqaam) of the Nasut [material realm] without the Nasut becoming Lahut. This is like one's image in the mirror: one is in the mirror but does not become the mirror. The Druze manuscripts are emphatic and warn against the belief that the Nasut is God.... Neglecting this warning, individual seekers, scholars, and other spectators have considered al-Hakim and other figures divine.
>
> ...In the Druze scriptural view, Tajalli 'takes a central stage.' One author comments that Tajalli occurs when the seeker's humanity is annihilated so that divine attributes and light are experienced by the person."Wikipedia:Citing sources

The concept of God incarnating either as or in a human seems "to contradict with what the Druze scriptural view has to teach about the Oneness of God, while tajalli is at the center of the Druze and some other, often mystical,

traditions".Wikipedia:Citing sources

Scriptures

Druze Sacred texts include the Kitab Al Hikma (Epistles of Wisdom).

Sanctuaries

The prayer-houses of the Druze are called khalwa or khalwat and are used in place of mosques. The primary sanctuary of the Druze is at Khalwat al-Bayada.

Esotericism

The Druze believe that many teachings given by prophets, religious leaders and holy books have esoteric meanings preserved for those of intellect, in which some teachings are symbolic and allegorical in nature, and divide the understanding of holy books and teachings into three layers.

These layers, according to the Druze, are:

- The obvious or exoteric *(zahir)*, accessible to anyone who can read or hear;
- The hidden or esoteric *(batin)*, accessible to those who are willing to search and learn through the concept of exegesis;
- And the hidden of the hidden, a concept known as *anagoge*, inaccessible to all but a few really enlightened individuals who truly understand the nature of the universe.

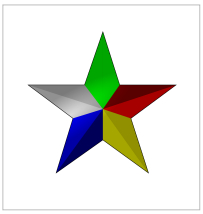
Unlike some Islamic esoteric movements, known as the *batinids* at that time, the Druzes don't believe that the esoteric meaning abrogates or necessarily abolishes the exoteric one. Hamza bin Ali refutes such claims by stating that if the esoteric interpretation of *taharah* (purity) is purity of the heart and soul, it doesn't mean that a person can discard his physical purity, as *salat* (prayer) is useless if a person is untruthful in his speech and that the esoteric and exoteric meanings complement each other.

Precepts of the Druze faith

The Druze follow seven precepts that are considered the core of the faith, and are perceived by them as the essence of the pillars of Islam. The Seven Druze precepts are:

1. Veracity in speech and the truthfulness of the tongue.
2. Protection and mutual aid to the brethren in faith.
3. Renunciation of all forms of former worship *(specifically, invalid creeds)* and false belief.
4. Repudiation of the devil *(Iblis)*, and all forces of evil (translated from Arabic *Toghyan* meaning *"despotism"*).
5. Confession of God's unity.
6. Acquiescence in God's acts no matter what they be.
7. Absolute submission and resignation to God's divine will in both secret and public.[10]

Religious symbol



The Druze strictly avoid iconography but use five colors as a religious symbol: green, red, yellow, blue, and white. Each color pertains to a metaphysical power called *Haad*, literally meaning a limit, as in the limits that separate humans from animals Wikipedia:Please clarify, or the powers that makes the animal body human. Each *Haad* is color-coded in the following manner: green for *Aql* "the Universal Mind/Nous", red for *Nafs* "the Universal Soul/Anima mundi", yellow for *Kalima* "the Word/Logos", blue for *Sabiq* "the

Potentiality/Cause/Precedent", and white for *Tali* "the Future/Effect/Immanence". The mind generates qualia and gives consciousness. The soul embodies the mind and is responsible for transmigration and the character of oneself. The word which is the atom of language communicates qualia between humans and represent the platonic forms in the sensible world. The *Sabq* and *Tali* is the ability to perceive and learn from the past and plan for the future and predict it.

The colors can be arranged in vertically descending stripes or a five-pointed star. The stripes are a diagrammatic cut of the spheres in neoplatonic philosophy, while the five pointed star embodies the golden ratio, phi, as a symbol of temperance and a life of moderation.

Temples and holy places of the Druze

Holy places of the Druze are archaeological sites, or religious places is of particular importance when society linked to the anniversary of religious, occupies with time high esteem in the community near and turn to the headquarters or pilgrimage or to target the visiting believers, this place or including the associated of worship blessed to fulfill vows, to resolve differences and various other things. The holy place begins from a small point of great importance in the hearts of believers, and turns into a shrine or a large religious building bigger significance with time, and become his other goals which they appeared. And holy places usually are public places, and does not belong to anyone, but are the property of the group.

In the past, society assigns attention to the holy places to someone, or that there was donated under the auspices of the place. But recently the body of the immediate community oversees the management of the place, and exchange it and care of their affairs. Often be a source of income or rely budget holy place on donations by the faithful and visitors, and sometimes bigger property holy place, where some grown fruits and plants, and this in itself constitutes a particular source of income for the place.

Holy places of the Druze like all other exist in all religions, a well-respected and revered religion associated with them, as well as other religions. All self-respecting religion, respected as well as the holy places of other religions. And holy places usually can be classified initially rated into two sections.First section places of public worship and daily, i.e. those installations that are built specifically for worship and prayer, and attend to people in times of tight in order to provide religious obligation. This includes what exist in other religions like mosques, churches and synagogues, retreats and temples in the Far East religions, these temples mainly called in Druze religion Khalwah or Majlis. These sacred places ordinary religious significance but is-life facilities such as a school or an office or a hospital or any other public institution, of course is like among the highest of its religious significance. The second type is all holy places associated with the anniversary of a historic event or a prophet or a specific memory of a historically arise with time and do not take the initiative to the composition, in order to become a holy place, it is gaining its holiness and importance due to the event or anniversary which they were associated,these holy places named a Mazar or Maqam in English Srines and Mausoleum.

The Khalwah and Majlis

Druze Tempel in Daliat al-Karmel, Israel

One of the most important features of the Druze village and most impact on the social life is Khalwat-it means"to be alone"- a house of prayer and religious unity. Kelweh the definition of retreat house of prayer when Druze same word have several meanings, including a place free "empty", an abandoned and left, and seclusion any monopoly with another.The reference to the latter meaning any unilateral another and seclusion in isolation is the closest to the correct understanding of retreat while unique Druze his Creator in isolation from the outside community. So Khalwah is modest house was still frequented by only the clergy and women to pray only religious Druze man is only when prove his religion and religious Druze women only until the contrary is proved.

There are two factors determine the site of Khalwat al-Bayada, the first one is isolation factor and the human factor for the second. Since the secret is one of the most important religious foundations Druze religion has consistently Druze in the past and in the present to locate both sides to retreat on the outskirts of the complex population away from the bustling center. Today after the Druze village and spread widened, remained alone place in the village but the isolation still exist in internal lanes parties. The second work, which is no less important than the first. His influence in determining the site alone – the human factor. When the decision to build a new retreat they define near house of the high rank religious man of the family or in the same house and collaboration between members of the family and belonging to them. It can be summed up to say that locate alone is likely parties to the old part of the village, next to the high rank religious man of the family. This selection albeit unintentional is ideal for the Druze community, as it is easily accessible on foot especially for the elderly and the women in the shortest distance and less time without the need to cut the village walk to retreat completely isolated from the village or at the center, khalwah is also called Majlis in local language.

Maqams and Mazars (Shrines)

Jethro shrine and temple of Druze, Hittin,northern Israel

The second type is all holy places associated with the anniversary of a historic event or a prophet or a specific memory of a historically arise with time and do not take the initiative to the composition, in order to become a holy place, it is gaining its holiness and importance due to the event or anniversary which they were associated, it called Mazars and Maqams. The Druze holy places are many and varied, which is present in every place where there are Druze, and close to their places of residence, and an important element in their lives, in their thinking and in their collective behavior. It polymorphic species, ranging from great place based organizer, such as the shrine of the Prophet Shuaib, or shrines of Lord El-Khodir (p), shrines and other sites associated with the prophets, including the tomb and what is not any tomb. Which is a component of the cave like shrine master Sabalan or Zebulun in Hurfeish, and the shrine of the prophet El-Khodir in Haifa, which is a component of the hole in the mountain like a cave was the worship of our Lord Sheikh Ali Fares (t) between Yarka and Julis. Including places of worship such as Bayada retreats and retreats "Ragab" in Yarka and others. Including what is an old tree lived hundreds of years ago. Including what is pod or angle. Including site that did not have a thing but built it fixed buildings such as the Holocaust in the Carmel Mountains, which was built in memory of beat El-Khodir Prophet on the prophets of Baal. Including a forest of

Arba'een in Carmel Forest, and forest of Asharah next to Kiryat Shmona. Which place a break stop the prophet or the Crown in favor, such as the Lady Sarah corners, or the angle of Sheikh Fadhel (t) in Kafr Samee'. Including a spring like leeches appointed beside shrine master Abu Abdullah in Isfiya, or a spring of water next to the shrine Shoaib. Including a prominent rock, like the rock of prophet Elijah, and there are other forms.

The holy places are gaining importance particularly in times of adversity and calamities that pass near the community of believers. In times of distress or imagined for the believers imagine that a miracle occurred and rescued because of the presence of the Crown in favor of them and this strengthens the conglomerate and unite believers and their association with the place sacred and their dependence on it. And the presence of the holy places near residential areas of great importance in their unity and cooperation toward hostile elements or enemies or rivals in the region. Often believers strive in defense of the holy places and are willing to sacrifice their lives for the protection of the holy place and defend them at all costs and usually is not done with the buildings or other institutions. The holy place is a source of inspiration for poets and artists and creators in the nearby residential areas.

The holy places and shrines of the Druze scattered in the villages, where they think they are protected and cared for and defend them.Believers intended these places blessed and asking the Lord for forgiveness and the boat and faith.The Druze holy places spread where Druze live in Syria, Lebanon and Israel, and this is a group of the most important shrines of the Druze:

- Shrine of Christ

Shrine located on top of a high mountain between the villages of Mafa'ali and Nimri and Taibeh of Swan area in Jebel Druze. Oversees more mountain areas and it seems from afar towering palace,consists of six rooms and has a special stop consisting of forty acres and a vast generosity grapes. Druze believe that Jesus (AS) took refuge to the summit where he stayed a secret with his disciples. To commemorate this occasion built a stone shrine and dome height of three meters built on the roof of the arches. Is primarily responsible for the Sheikh Ibrahim El-Hajari one of the elders of the mind in the Jabal al-Druze.

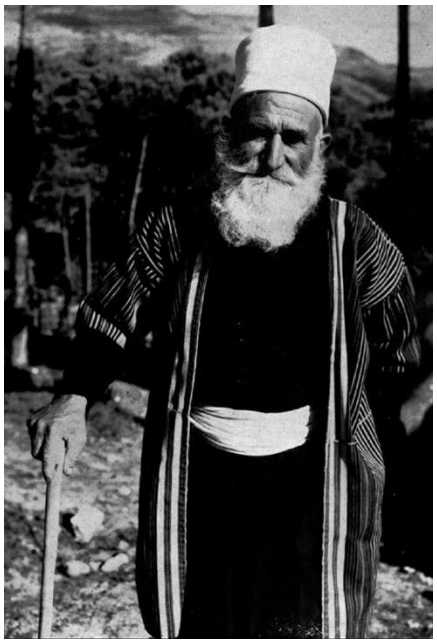
- Maqam Eyne El-Zaman (Eye of Era)

Sacred place is located near the city of Suweida in the Druze Mountain, was built on the ruins of a dilapidated monastery before the French mandate and called the appointed time relative to the Imam who represents the mind. This monastery was formerly called Deir Sinan. Primarily consists of two floors and contains a large number of rooms has been developed in which the Druze number of stone statues that have historical value and religious value to maintain the history of the place.

- Nabi Shoaib (prophet Jethro)

One of the most important holy places of the Druze. Located near the village of Hittin and a few kilometers from the Sea of Galilee. Primarily contains Old building housing the tomb of Prophet Shuaib dating back to the second century AD, have been added to the first place with the time new buildings so the place can accommodate large delegations of fans that come to it over the days of the year. The main building was held in the seventies of the nineteenth century and added to large suite in the sixties of this century.Spring water was restored next place which take place throughout the days of the year and provide place and visitors. Held in the annual celebrations place in the twenty-fifth of April, but the visitors destination all year round to fulfill vows and conduct ceremonies.

ʻUqqāl and Juhhāl


Druze Sheikh (ʻUqqāl) wearing religious dress

The Druze are divided into two groups. The largely secular majority, called *al-Juhhāl* (جهال) ("the Ignorant") are not granted access to the Druze holy literature or allowed to attend the initiated *Uqqal*'s religious meetings. They are around 80% of the Druze population and are not obliged to follow the ascetic traditions of the *Uqqal*.

The initiated religious group, which includes both men and women (about 20% of the population), is called *al-ʻUqqāl* (عقال), ("the Knowledgeable Initiates"). They have a special mode of dress designed to comply with Quranic traditions. Women can opt to wear *al-mandīl*, a loose white veil, especially in the presence of other people. They wear *al-mandīl* on their heads to cover their hair and wrap it around their mouths. They wear black shirts and long skirts covering their legs to their ankles. Male *ʻuqqāl* grow mustaches, and wear dark Levantine/Turkish traditional dresses, called the *shirwal*, with white turbans that vary according to the *Uqqal*'s hierarchy.

Al-ʻuqqāl have equal rights to *al-Juhhāl*, but establish a hierarchy of respect based on religious service.The most influential 5% of *Al-ʻuqqāl* become *Ajawīd*, recognized religious leaders, and from this group the spiritual leaders of the Druze are assigned. While the *Shaykh al-ʻAql*, which is an official position in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, is elected by the local community and serves as the head of the Druze religious council, judges from the Druze religious courts are usually elected for this position. Unlike the spiritual leaders, the *Shaykh al-ʻAql's* authority is local to the country he is elected in, though in some instances spiritual leaders are elected to this position.

The Druze believe in the unity of God, and are often known as the "People of Monotheism" or simply "Monotheists". Their theology has a Neo-Platonic view about how God interacts with the world through emanations and is similar to some gnostic and other esoteric sects. Druze philosophy also shows Sufi influences.

Druze principles focus on honesty, loyalty, filial piety, altruism, patriotic sacrifice, and monotheism. They reject tobacco smoking, alcohol, and consumption of pork (to those Uqqāl and not necessarily to be required by the Juhhāl). Also, in contrast to most Islamic sects, the Druze reject polygamy, believe in reincarnation, and are not obliged to observe most of the religious rituals. The Druze believe that rituals are symbolic and have an individualistic effect on the person, for which reason Druze are free to perform them, or not. The community does celebrate Eid al-Adha, however, considered their most significant holiday.

Origins of the Druze people

Ethnic origins

Arabian hypothesis

The Druze faith extended to many areas in the Middle East, but most of the modern Druze can trace their origin to the *Wadi al-Taymour* in South Lebanon, which is named after an Arab tribe *Taymour-Allah (formerly Taymour-Allat)* which, according to Islamic historian, al-Tabari, first came from Arabia into the valley of the Euphrates where they had been Christianized prior to their migration into the Lebanon. Many of the Druze feudal families whose genealogies have been preserved by the two modern Syrian chroniclers Haydar al-Shihabi and al-Shidyaq seem also to point in the direction of this origin. Arabian tribes emigrated via the Persian Gulf and stopped in Iraq on the route that was later to lead them to Syria. The first feudal Druze family, the Tanukh family,

which made for itself a name in fighting the Crusaders, was, according to Haydar al-Shihabi, an Arab tribe from Mesopotamia where it occupied the position of a ruling family and apparently was Christianized.[7]Wikipedia:Citing sources

Travelers like Niebuhr, and scholars like Von Oppenheim, undoubtedly echoing the popular Druze belief regarding their own origin, have classified them as Arabs. The prevailing idea among the Druzes themselves today is that they are of Arab stock. This hypothesis conforms to the general local tradition, but is in contradiction to the results obtained in this study.

In Huxley Memorial Lecture, "The Early Inhabitants of Western Asia," Professor Felix von Luschan, an anthropologist of the University of Berlin, states that he measured the skulls of fifty-nine adult male Druzes and "not one single man fell, as regards his cephalic index, within the range of the real Arab." Evidently the Druze claim of Arab descent is the result of their application of the principle of dissimulation (taqiyyah) to their racial problem, they being a small minority amidst an Arab majority which has always been in the ascendancy. According to this principle, one is not only ethically justified but is under obligation, when the exigencies of the case require, to conceal the reality of his religion, or race, and feign other religious or racial relationships.[11]

Druze as a mixture of Middle Eastern tribes

The 1911 edition of Encyclopædia Britannica states that the Druzes are "a mixture of refugee stocks, in which the Arab largely predominates, grafted on to an original mountain population of Aramaic blood."

The Tanukhs must have left Arabia as early as the second or third century CE. The Ma'an tribe, which superseded the Tanukhs and produced the greatest Druze hero, Fakhr-al-Din, had the same traditional origin. The *Talhuq* family and *'Abd-al-Malik*, who supplied the later Druze leadership, have the same record as the Tanukhs. The Imad family is named for *al-Imadiyyah* — the Kurdish town of Amadiya, northeast of Mosul inside Kurdistan, and, like the Jumblatts, is thought to be of Kurdish origin.[*citation needed*] The Arsalan family claims descent from the Hirah Arab kings, but the name *Arsalan* (Persian and Turkish for lion) suggests Persian influence, if not origin.[7]Wikipedia:Citing sources

During the 18th century, there were two branches of Druze living in Lebanon: the Yemeni Druze, headed by the Hamdan and Al-Atrash families; and the Kaysi Druze, headed by the Jumblat and Arsalan[12] families. The Hamdan family was banished from Mount Lebanon following the battle of Ain Dara in 1711. The battle was fought between two Druze factions: the Yemeni and the Kaysi. Following their dramatic defeat, the Yemeni faction migrated to Syria in the Jebel-Druze region and its capital, Soueida. However, it has been argued that these two factions were of political nature rather than ethnic, and had both Christian and Druze supporters.

Iturean hypothesis

According to Jewish contemporary literature, the Druze, who were visited and described in 1165 by Benjamin of Tudela, were pictured as descendants of the Itureans,[13] an Ismaelite Arab tribe, which used to reside in the northern parts of the Golan plateau through Hellenistic and Roman periods. The word Druzes, in an early Hebrew edition of his travels, occurs as "Dogziyin", but it is clear that this is a scribal error.

Archaeological assessments of the Druze region have also proposed the possibility of Druze descending from Itureans,[14] who had inhabited Mount Lebanon and Golan Heights in late classic antiquity, but their traces fade in the Middle Ages.

Other proposals of origin

Nevertheless, many scholars formed their own hypotheses: for example, Lamartine (1835) discovered in the modern Druzes the remnants of the Samaritans; Earl of Carnarvon (1860), those of the Cuthites whom Esarhaddon transplanted into Palestine; Professor Felix von Luschan (1911), according to his conclusions from anthropometric measurements, makes the Druze, Maronites, and Alawites of Syria, together with the Bektashis, 'Ali-Ilahis, and Yezidis of Asia Minor and Persia, the modern representatives of the ancient Hittites.

Genetics

In a 2005 study of ASPM gene variants, Mekel-Bobrov et al. found that the Israeli Druze people of the Carmel region have among the highest rate of the newly evolved ASPM haplogroup D-M174, at 52.2% occurrence of the approximately 6,000-year-old allele. While it is not yet known exactly what selective advantage is provided by this gene variant, the haplogroup D allele is thought to be positively selected in populations and to confer some substantial advantage that has caused its frequency to rapidly increase.

According to DNA testing, Druze are remarkable for the high frequency (35%) of males who carry the Y-chromosomal haplogroup L, which is otherwise uncommon in the Mideast (Shen et al. 2004). This haplogroup originates from prehistoric South Asia and has spread from Pakistan into southern Iran.

Cruciani in 2007 found E1b1b1a2 (E-V13) [one from Sub Clades of E1b1b1a1 (E-V12)] in high levels (>10% of the male population) in Turkish Cypriot and Druze Arab lineages. Recent genetic clustering analyses of ethnic groups are consistent with the close ancestral relationship between the Druze and Cypriots, and also identified similarity to the general Syrian and Lebanese populations, as well as a variety of Jewish groups (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Iraqi, and Moroccan) (Behar et al. 2010).

Also, a new study concluded that the Druze harbor a remarkable diversity of mitochondrial DNA lineages that appear to have separated from each other thousands of years ago. But instead of dispersing throughout the world after their separation, the full range of lineages can still be found within the Druze population.

The researchers noted that the Druze villages contained a striking range of high frequency and high diversity of the X haplogroup, suggesting that this population provides a glimpse into the past genetic landscape of the Near East at a time when the X haplogroup was more prevalent.

These findings are consistent with the Druze oral tradition, that claims that the adherents of the faith came from diverse ancestral lineages stretching back tens of thousands of years.

In 2008 a study published on the Druze of Israel, Syria and Lebanon.Were divided sample Israeli into three groups Galilee, Carmel and Golan (where deemed Golan within the Israeli sample), in addition to samples of the Druze of Syria and Druze of Lebanon as two separate groups andmay study included 311 people, 27 of them from Syria and 29 from Lebanon and 37 from the Golan Heights and 183 of the Galilee and 35 of Carmel, and was the result of the distribution of Y-Chromosomal breeds are as follows :

- Druze of Carmel (35 samples):L 27%,R 27%,J 18%,E 15%,G 12%.
- Druze of Galilee (183 samples):J 31%, R 20%, E 18%, G 14%, k 11%, Q 4%, L 2%.
- Druze of Golan (37 samples): J 54%,E 29%,I 8%,G 4%,C 4%.
- Druze of Lebanon (29 samples):J 58%,k 17%,L 8%,Q 8%,R 8%.
- Druze of Syria (27 samples):J 39%,E 29%,R 14%,G 14%,k 4%.

Notes

[1] Statistical abstract of Israel – Population by religion. 2010 (http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html?num_tab=st02_02&CYear=2010)

[2] Jordanian Druze can be found in Amman and Zarka; about 50% live in the town of Azraq, and a smaller number in Irbid and Aqaba.

[3] Dana 2003, p. 99 (http://books.google.com/?id=2nCWIsyZJxUC&pg=PA99&lpg=PA99&dq=druze+population+lebanon).

[4] Nisan 2002, p. 95 (http://books.google.com/books?id=keD9z1XWuNwC&pg=PA98&dq=Mordechai+Nisan++druze&ei=IJ5uSLuLMZOkiwHp99SCBg&sig=ACfU3U2QHNki1phQdaWTIOKngGyVPLnTbw#PPA100,M1).

[5] Dana.

[6] Swayd 2006.

[7] Hitti 1924.

[8] TJ Gorton, *Renaissance Emir: a Druze Warlord at the court of the Medici* (http://tjgorton.wordpress.com/prince-of-lebanon-a-druze-emir-at-the-court-of-the-medici/) (London: Quartet Books, 2013), pp 167-75.

[9] Dana, p. 18 (http://books.google.com/books?id=2nCWIsyZJxUC&pg=PA18&lpg=PA99&dq=druze+population+lebanon&source=web&ots=XpkTcA-TUj&sig=0K6Vh-8YA-A6_CUCH619FPd5EJw#PPA18,M1).

[10] Hitti 1924, p. 51.

[11] Druze Racial Origins .

[12] http://toolserver.org/%7Edispenser/cgi-bin/dab_solver.py?page=Druze&editintro=Template:Disambiguation_needed/editintro&client=Template:Dn

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[14] Religious and Theological Abstracts. Vol 34-35. "Heretofore studies of the Ituraeans have been based on historical sources and written history. Archaeological surveys from 1968 to ... Proposes the possibility that the Druze descended from the Ituraeans. RVR 4493 Demsky, Aaron (Bar-Ilan." (http://books.google.co.il/books?id=5GlRAAAAYAAJ&q=druze+ituraeans&dq=druze+ituraeans&hl=iw&sa=X&ei=bcRBUoKCCOe64AS-4oDYAw&ved=0CDgQ6AEwAjgU)

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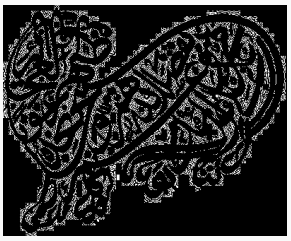
Ad-Darazi

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Part of a series on Shīʿah Islam
Ismāʿīlism

Concepts
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Groups and present leaders

Nizārʼīyyah · Aga Khan IV
Mustāʻlīyyah
Dawūdī · Syedna Burhanuddin
Sulaimanī · Al-Fakhri Abdullah
Alavī · Ṭayyib Ziyāʼu d-Dīn

Muhammad bin Ismail Nashtakin ad-Darazi (Arabic: **محمد بن اسماعيل نشتاكين الدرازي**) was an 11th-century Ismaili preacher and early leader of the Druze faith who was labeled a heretic in 1016 and subsequently executed by the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. Nashtakin was born in Bukhara and publicly proclaimed the divinity of Caliph al-Hakim.

Life

Little information is known about the early life of Ad-Darazi; according to most sources, he was the leader of the army that was sent from Cairo to put down the up-rising of the Unity movement that started in the mountains of Lebanon to unite Christian and Muslim Suna and Shiah under one God. Ad-Darazi's army was around 200,000 men, the Unity movement that started in the Choufe Mountain of Lebanon and the Houran Mountain of Syria had only less than 10,000 men, they fought north of Jerusalem. Ad-Darazi army was destroyed and he was captured, the unity movement was called at that time the movement that destroyed the army of the Darazi, Ad-Darazi was converted to be one of the early preachers of the Unity faith Or the Druze Faith, The movement enlisted a large number of adherents.[1] However, he was later considered a renegade [2] and is usually described by the Druze as following the traits of satan,[3] which is arrogance.

Since when the number of his followers grew, he became obsessed with the leadership and gave himself the title “The Sword of the Faith”. In the *Epistles of Wisdom*, Hamza ibn-'Ali ibn-Ahmad warns Ad-Darazi, saying, *“Faith does not need a sword to aid it.”* However, Ad-Darazi refused Hamzaʼs threats and continued to challenge the Imam. Such attitude led to disputes between him and Hamza ibn-'Ali ibn-Ahmad, who disliked his behavior. Ad-Darazi argued that he should be the leader of the Daʼwa rather than Hamza ibn Ali and gave himself the title “Lord of the Guides”, because Caliph al-Hakim referred to Hamza as “Guide of the Consented”

By 1018, ad-Darazi had around him partisans - "Darazites" - who believed that universal reason became incarnated in Adam at the beginning of the world, passed from him into prophets, then into Ali and hence into his descendants, the Fatimid Caliphs. Ad-Darazi wrote a book to develop this doctrine. He read his book in the principle mosque in Cairo, which caused riots and protests against his claims and many of his followers were killed. Hamza ibn Ali refuted his ideology calling him "the insolent one and Satan". The controversy created by ad-Darazi led Caliph al-Hakim to suspend the Druze da'wa in 1018 AD.

In an attempt to gain the support of al-Hakim, ad-Darazi started preaching that al-Hakim and his ancestors were the incarnation of God.

It is believed that ad-Darazi allowed wine, forbidden marriages and taught metempsychosis although it has argued that his actions might have been exaggerated by the early historians and polemicists.

Death

An inherently modest man, al-Hakim did not believe that he was God, and felt ad-Darazi was trying to depict himself as a new prophet. Al-Hakim preferred Hamza ibn 'Ali ibn Ahmad over him and Ad-Darazi was executed in 1018, leaving Hamza the sole leader of the new faith

Aftermath

Even though the Druze do not consider ad-Darazi founder of their faith - in fact, they refer to him as their "first heretic" - rival Muslim groups purposely attached the name of the controversial preacher to the new sect and it has stuck with them ever since. Druze refer to themselves as “unitarians” *al-Muwahhidūn*.

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Ismailism

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
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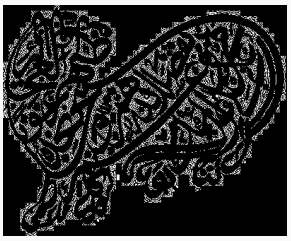
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Part of a series on
Shīa Islam

Beliefs and practices

Monotheism
Holy Books
Prophethood
Succession to Muhammad
Imamate of the Family
Angels
Judgement Day
Mourning of Muharram
Intercession · Ismah
The Occultation · Clergy

Views

The Qur'an · Sahaba

Holy days

Ashura · Arba'een · Mawlid
Eid al-Fitr · Eid al-Adha
Eid al-Ghadeer
Eid al-Mubahila

History

Twelver
Two things
· Ismāʿīlī · Zaidi
The verse of purification
Mubahala · Two things
Khumm · Fatimah's house
First Fitna · Second Fitna
The Battle of Karbala

Ahl al-Kisa

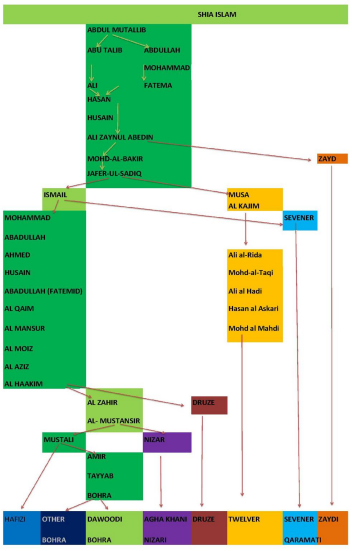
Muhammad · Ali · Fatimah
Hasan · Hussein

List of Shia companions

Holy Women

Fatimah · Khadija bint Khuwaylid · Zaynab bint Ali · Fatimah bint Hasan · Sukayna bint Husayn · Rubab · Shahrbanu · Nijmah · Fātimah bint Mūsā · Hakimah Khātūn · Narjis · Fatimah bint Asad · Farwah bint al-Qasim ·

Ismāʿīlism (Arabic: الإسماعيلية *al-Ismāʿīliyya*; Persian: اسماعیلیان *Esmāʿiliyān*) is branch of Shia Islam whose adherents are also known as **Seveners**. The Ismāʿīlī get their name from their acceptance of Isma'il ibn Jafar as the appointed spiritual successor (Imām) to Ja'far al-Sadiq, wherein they differ from the Twelvers, who accept Musa al-Kadhim, younger brother of Isma'il, as the true Imām.



Tree of the Shia Islam.

Tracing its earliest theology to the lifetime of Muhammad, Ismailism rose at one point to become the largest branch of Shīʿism, climaxing as a political power with the Fatimid Caliphate in the tenth through twelfth centuries. Ismailis believe in the oneness of God, as well as the closing of divine revelation with Muhammad, whom they see as "the final Prophet and Messenger of God to all humanity". The Ismāʿīlī and the Twelvers both accept the same initial Imams from the descendants of Muhammad through his daughter Fatimah and therefore share much of their early history. Both groups see the family of Muḥammad *(the Ahl al-Bayt)* as divinely chosen, infallible *(ismah)*, and guided by God to lead the Islamic community *(Ummah)*, a belief that distinguishes them from the majority Sunni branch of Islam.

Mosque of al-Hakim, in Cairo, Egypt, an Ismāʿīlī Shīʿah Imām.

After the death of Muhammad ibn Ismail in the 8th century AD, the teachings of Ismailism further transformed into the belief system as it is known today, with an explicit concentration on the deeper, esoteric meaning *(batin)* of the Islamic religion. With the eventual development of Twelverism into the more literalistic *(zahir)* oriented Akhbari and later Usuli schools of thought, Shi'i Islam developed into two separate directions: the metaphorical Ismaili group focusing on the mystical path and nature of God, with the "Imām of the Time" representing the manifestation of truth and reality, with the more literalistic Twelver group focusing on divine law (sharia) and the deeds and sayings (sunnah) of Muhammad and the Twelve Imams who were guides and a light to God.

Though there are several paths *(tariqat)* within Ismailism, the term in today's vernacular generally refers to the Nizaris, who recognize the Aga Khan IV[1] as the 49th hereditary Imam and is the largest Ismaili group. In recent centuries Ismāʿīlīs have largely been a Pakistani, Indian and Afghani community,[2] but Ismaili minorities are also found in Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Jordan, East Africa, Angola, Lebanon, and South Africa, and have in recent years emigrated to Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Trinidad and Tobago. There are also a significant number of Ismāʿīlīs in Central Asia.[3]

History

Succession crisis

Ambigram depicting Muhammad and Ali written in a single word. The 180 degree inverted form shows both words.

Ismailism shares its beginnings with other early Shīʿah sects that emerged during the succession crisis that spread throughout the early Muslim community. From the beginning, the Shīʿah asserted the right of ʻAlī, Muhammad's cousin, to have both political and spiritual control over the community. This also included his two sons, who were the grandsons of Muhammad through his daughter Fāṭimatu z-Zahrah.

The conflict remained relatively peaceful between the partisans of ʻAlī and those who asserted a semi-democratic system of electing caliphs, until the third of the Rashidun caliphs, Uthman was martyred, and ʻAlī, with popular support, ascended to the caliphate.

Soon after his ascendancy, Aisha, the third of the Prophet's wives, claimed along with Uthman's tribe, the Ummayads, that Ali should take Qisas (blood for blood) from the people responsible for Uthman's martyrdom. ʻAlī voted against it as he believed that situation at that time demanded a peaceful resolution of the matter. Both parties could rightfully defend their claims, but due to escalated misunderstandings, the Battle of the Camel was fought and Aisha was defeated but respectfully escorted to Medina by Ali.

Following this battle, Muawiya, the Umayyad governor of Syria, also staged a revolt under the same pretences. ʻAlī led his forces against Muawiya until the side of Muawiya held copies of the Quran against their spears and demanded that the issue be decided by Islam's holy book. ʻAlī accepted this, and an arbitration was done which ended in his favor.

A group among Alī's army believed that subjecting his legitimate authority to arbitration was tantamount to apostasy, and abandoned his forces. This group was known as the Kharijites, and ʻAlī wished to defeat their forces before they reached the cities where they would be able to blend in with the rest of the population. While he was unable to do this, he nonetheless defeated their forces in subsequent battles.

Regardless of these defeats, the Kharijites survived and became a violently problematic group in Islamic history. After plotting an assassination against ʻAlī, Muawiya, and the arbitrator of their conflict, only ʻAlī was successfully assassinated in 661 CE, and the Imāmate passed on to his son Hasan and then later his son Husayn, or according to the Nizari Ismāʿīlī, straight to Husayn. However, the political caliphate was soon taken over by Muawiya, the only leader in the empire at that time with an army large enough to seize control.

Karbala and afterward

The Battle of Karbala

After the passing away of Hasan, Husayn and his family were increasingly worried about the religious and political persecution that was becoming commonplace under the reign of Muawiya's son, Yazid. Amidst this turmoil in 680 CE, Husayn along with the women and children of his family, upon receiving invitational letters and gestures of support by Kufis, wished to go to Kufa and confront Yazid as an intercessor on part of the citizens of the empire. However, he was stopped by Yazid's army in Karbala during the month of Muharram. His family was starved and deprived of water and supplies, until eventually the army came in on the tenth day and martyred Imam Husayn r.a and his companions, and enslaved the rest of the women and family, taking them to Kufa.

This battle would become extremely important to the Shīʿah psyche. The Twelvers as well as Mustaali Ismāʿīlī still mourn this event during an occasion known as Ashura. The Nizari Ismāʿīlī, however, do not mourn this in the same

way because of the belief that the light of the Imām never dies but rather passes on to the succeeding Imām, making mourning arbitrary. However, during commemoration they do not have any celebrations in Jamatkhana during Muharram and may have announcements or sessions regarding the tragic events of Karbala. Also individuals may obeserve Muharram in a wide variety of ways. This respect for Muharram does not include self-flagellation and beating because they feel that harming one's body is harming a gift from Allah.

The beginnings of Ismāʿīlī Daʿwah

After being set free by Yazid, Zainab, the daughter of Fatimah and ʿAlī and the sister of Hasan and Husayn, started to spread the word of Karbala to the Muslim world, making speeches regarding the event. This was the first organized Daʿwah of the Shīʿah community, which would later develop into an extremely spiritual institution for the Ismāʿīlīs.

After the poisoning of ʿAlī al-Sajjad by Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik in 713 CE, Shiism's first succession crisis arose with Zayd ibn ʿAlī's companions and the Zaydī Shīʿah who claimed Zayd ibn ʿAlī as the Imām, whilst the rest of the Shīʿah upheld Muhammad al-Baqir as the Imām. The Zaidis argued that any sayed, descendant of Muhammad through Hasan or Husayn, who rebelled against tyranny and the injustice of his age, can be the Imām. The Zaidis created the first Shīʿah states in Iran, Iraq and Yemen.

In contrast to his predecessors, Muhammad al-Baqir focused on academic Islamic scholarship in Medina, where he promulgated his teachings to many Muslims, both Shīʿah and non-Shīʿah, in an extremely organized form of Daʿwah. In fact, the earliest text of the Ismaili school of thought is said to be the "Umm al-kitab" (The Archetypal Book), a conversation between Muhammad al-Baqir and three of his disciples.[4]

This tradition would pass on to his son, Ja'far al-Sadiq, who inherited the Imāmate on his father's death in 743. Ja'far al-Sadiq excelled in the scholarship of the day and had many pupils, including three of the four founders of the Sunni madhabs.

However, following al-Sadiq's poisoning in 765, a fundamental split occurred in the community. Isma'il bin Jafar, who at one point seemed to be heir apparent, predeceased his father in 755. While Twelvers argue that either he was never heir apparent or he truly predeceased his father and hence Musa al-Kadhim was the true heir to the Imamate. The Ismāʿīlīs argue that either the death of Isma'il was staged in order to protect him from Abbasid persecution or that the Imamate passed to Muhammad ibn Isma'il in lineal descent.

Ascension of the Dais

Shams Tabrizi in a circa 1503 copy of his disciple Rumi's poem, the "*Diwan-e Shams-e Tabriz-i*". Shams Tabrizi is believed to have been an Ismaili Dai and his relationship with Rumi a symbolic manifestation of the sacred relationship between the guide and the guided.

For the Sevener Ismāʿīlī, the Imāmate ended with Isma'il ibn Ja'far, whose son Muhammad ibn Ismail was the expected Mahdi that Ja'far al-Sadiq had preached about. However, at this point the Ismāʿīlī Imāms according to the Nizari and Mustaali found areas where they would be able to be safe from the recently founded Abbasid Caliphate, which had defeated and seized control from the Umayyads in 750 AD.

At this point, much of the Ismaili community believed that Muhammad ibn Ismail had gone into the Occultation and that he would one day return. With the status and location of the Imāms not known to the community, Ismailism began to propagate the faith through Dāʿiyyūn from its base in Syria. This was the start of the spiritual beginnings of the Daʿwah that would later blossom in the Mustaali branch of the faith as well as play important parts in the other three branches.

The Da'i was not a missionary in the typical sense, and he was responsible for both the conversion of his student as well as the mental and spiritual well being. The Da'i was a guide and light to the Imām. The teacher-student relationship of the Da'i and his student was much like the one that would develop in Sufism. The student desired God, and the Da'i could bring him to God by making him recognize the stature and light of the Imām descended from the Imāms, who in turn descended from God. The Da'i was the path, and the Face of God, which was a Qur'anic term the Ismāʿīlī took to represent the Imām, was the destination.

Shams Tabrizi and Rumi is a famous example of the importance of the relationship between the guide and the guided, and Rumi dedicated much of his literature to Shams Tabrizi and his discovery of the truth.

The Qarmatians

While many of the Ismāʿīlī were content with the Dai teachings, a group that mingled Persian nationalism and Zoroastrianism with Ismāʿīlī teachings surfaced known as the Qarmatians. With their headquarters in Bahrain, they accepted a young Persian former prisoner by the name of Abu'l-Fadl al-Isfahani, who claimed to be the descendant of the Persian kings as their Mahdi, and rampaged across the Middle-East in the tenth century, climaxing their violent campaign by stealing the Black Stone from the Kaaba in Mecca in 930 under Abu Tahir Al-Jannabi. Following the arrival of the Al-Isfahani, they changed their qiblah from the Ka'aba in Mecca to the Zoroastrian-influenced fire. After their return of the Black Stone in 951 and a defeat by the Abbasids in 976 the group slowly dwindled off and no longer has any adherents.

The Fatimid Caliphate

Rise of the Fatimid Caliphate

The political asceticism practiced by the Imāms during the period after Muhammad ibn Ismail was to be short lived and finally concluded with the Imāmate of Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi Billah, who was born in 873. After decades of Ismāʿīlīs believing that Muhammad ibn Ismail was in the Occultation and would return to bring an age of justice, al-Mahdi taught that the Imāms had not been literally secluded, but rather had remained hidden to protect themselves and had been organizing the Da'i, and even acted as Da'i themselves. He taught that during the supposed Occultation of Muhammad ibn Ismail, many of Muhammad ibn Ismail's descendants lived as Imāms secluded from the

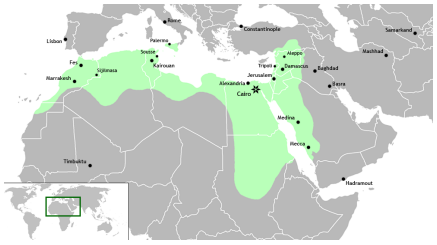
community, guiding them through the Da'i and at times even taking the guise of Da'i.

After raising an army and successfully defeating the Aghlabids in North Africa and a number of other victories, al-Mahdi Billah successfully established a Shi'ah political state ruled by the Imāmate in 910 AD. This was the only time in history where the Shi'a Imamate and Caliphate were united after the first Imam, Ali ibn Abi Talib.

In parallel with the dynasty's claim of descent from ʿAlī and Fāṭimah, the empire was named "Fatimid". However, this was not without controversy, and recognizing the extent that Ismāʿīlī doctrine had spread, the Abbasid caliphate assigned Sunni and Twelver scholars the task to disprove the lineage of the new dynasty. This became known as the Baghdad Manifesto, and it traces the lineage of the Fatimid dynasty to a Jewish blacksmith. Its authenticity has been both questioned and supported by various Islamic scholars.[*citation needed*]

The Middle-East under Fatimid rule

The Fatimid Caliphate expanded quickly under the subsequent Imāms. Under the Fatimids, Egypt became the center of an empire that included at its peak North Africa, Sicily, Palestine, Syria, the Red Sea coast of Africa, Yemen, Hejaz and the Tihamah. Under the Fatimids, Egypt flourished and developed an extensive trade network in both the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, which eventually determined the economic course of Egypt during the High Middle Ages.



The Fatimid Caliphate at its peak.

The Fatimids promoted ideas that were radical for that time. One was promotion by merit rather than genealogy.

Also during this period the three contemporary branches of Ismailism formed. The first branch (Druze) occurred with the Imām Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. Born in 985, he ascended as ruler at the age of eleven. A religious group that began forming in his lifetime broke off from mainstream Ismailism and refused to acknowledge his successor. Later to be known as the Druze, they believe Al-Hakim to be the manifestation of God and the prophesied Mahdi, who would one day return and bring justice to the world. The faith further split from Ismailism as it developed unique doctrines which often class it separately from both Ismailism and Islam.

The second split occurred following the death of Ma'ad al-Mustansir Billah in 1094. His rule was the longest of any caliph in both the Fatimid and other Islamic empires. After he passed away, his sons Nizar, older, and Al-Musta'li, the younger, fought for political and spiritual control of the dynasty. Nizar was defeated and jailed, but according to Nizari tradition his son escaped to Alamut, where the Iranian Ismāʿīlī had accepted his claim.

The Mustaali line split again between the Taiyabi and the Hafizi, the former claiming that the 21st Imām and son of Al-Amir went into occultation and appointed a Dāʿī al-Muṭlaq to guide the community, in a similar manner as the Ismāʿīlī had lived after the death of Muhammad ibn Ismail. The latter claimed that the ruling Fatimid caliph was the Imām.

However, in the Mustaali branch, the Dai came to have a similar but more important task. The term Dāʿī al-Mutlaq (Arabic: الداعي المطلق) literally means "the absolute or unrestricted missionary". This dai was the only source of the Imām's knowledge after the occultation of al-Qasim in Mustaali thought.

According to Tayyabī Mustaʿlī Ismāʿīlī tradition, after the death of Imām al-Amīr, his infant son, Taiyab abi al-Qasim, about 2 years old, was protected by the most important woman in Musta'li history after Prophet's daughter Fāṭimatu z-Zahrah. She was Malika al-Sayyida Hurra Al-Malika, a Queen in Yemen. She was promoted to the post of hujjah long before by Imām Mustansir at the death of her husband. She ran the dawat from Yemen in the name of Imaam Tayyib. She was instructed and prepared by Imām Mustansir and ran the dawat from Yemen in the name of Imaam Tayyib, following Imāms for the second period of Satr. It was going to be on her hands, that Imām Tayyib would go into seclusion, and she would institute the office of Dāʿī al-Mutlaq. Syedna Zueb-bin-Musa was first to be instituted to this office, and the line of Tayyib Dais that began in 1132 has passed from one Dai to another and is still

continuing under the main sect known as Dawoodi Bohra (may pl. see Main article: List of Dai of Dawoodi Bohra).

The Mustaali split several times over disputes regarding who was the rightful *Dāʿī al-Muṭlaq*, the leader of the community within The Occultation.

After the 27th Dai, Syedna Dawood bin Qutub Shah, there was another split; the ones following Syedna Dawood came to be called Dawoodi Bohra, and followers of Suleman were then called Sulaimani. Dawoodi Bohra's present Dai al Mutlaq, the 52nd, is Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, and he and his devout followers tread the same path, following the same tradition of the Aimmat Fatimiyyeen. The Sulaimani Bohra are mostly concentrated in Yemen and Saudi Arabia with some communities in the South Asia. The Dawoodi Bohra and Alavi Bohra are mostly exclusive to South Asia, after the migration of the Da'wat from Yemen to India. Other groups include Atba-i-Malak and Hebtiahs Bohra. Mustaali beliefs and practices, unlike those of the Nizari and Druze, are completely compatible with mainstream Islam, representing a continuation of Fatimid tradition and *fiqh'*.

Decline of the Caliphate

In the 1040s, the Zirids (governors of North Africa under the Fatimids) declared their independence from the Fatimids and their conversion to Sunni Islam, which led to the devastating Banu Hilal invasions. After about 1070, the Fatimid hold on the Levant coast and parts of Syria was challenged by first Turkish invasions, then the Crusades, so that Fatimid territory shrunk until it consisted only of Egypt. Damascus fell to the Seljuks in 1076, leaving the Fatimids only in charge of Egypt and the Levantine coast up to Tyre and Sidon. Because of the vehement opposition to the Fatimids from the Seljuks, the Ismaili movement was only able to operate as a terrorist underground movement, much like the Assassins.

After the decay of the Fatimid political system in the 1160s, the Zengid ruler Nūr ad-Dīn had his general, Saladin, seize Egypt in 1169, forming the Sunni Ayyubid Dynasty. This signaled the end of the Hafizi Mustaali branch of Ismailism as well as the Fatimid Caliphate.

Alamut

Artistic rendering of Hassan-i-Sabbah

Hassan-Al-Sabbah

Very early in the empire's life, the Fatimids sought to spread the Ismāʿīlī faith, which in turn would spread loyalty to the Imāmate in Egypt. One of their earliest attempts was taken by a Dai by the name of Hassan-Al-Sabbah.

Hassan-Al-Sabbah was born into a Twelver family living in the scholarly Persian city of Qom in 1056 AD. His family later relocated to the city of Tehran, which was an area with an extremely active Ismāʿīlī Daʿwah. He immersed himself in Ismāʿīlī thought; however, he did not choose to convert until he was overcome with an almost fatal illness and feared dying without knowing the Imām of his time.

Afterwards, Hassan-Al-Sabbah became one of the most influential Dais in Ismāʿīlī history; he became important to the survival of the Nizari branch of Ismailism, which today is its largest branch.

Legend holds that he met with Imām Ma'ad al-Mustansir Bi'llah and asked him who his successor would be, to which he responded that it would be his eldest son Nizar.

Hassan-Al-Sabbah continued his Dai activities, which climaxed with his taking of Alamut. Over the next two years, he converted most of the surrounding villages to Ismailism. Afterwards, he converted most of the staff to Ismailism, took over the fortress, and presented Alamut's king with payment for his fortress, which he had no choice but to

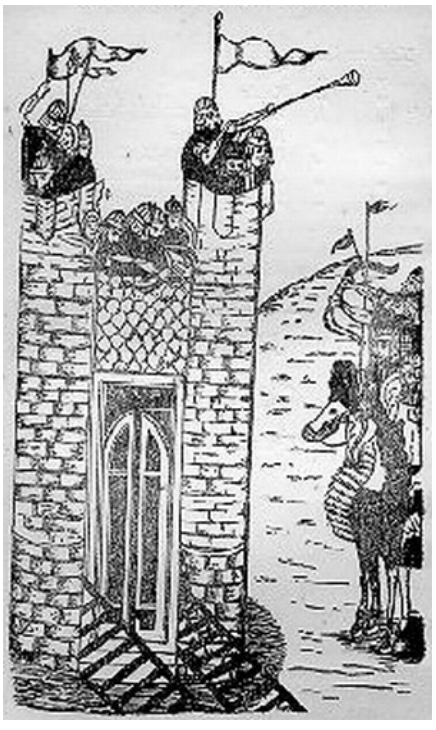
accept. The king reluctantly abdicated his throne, and Hassan-Al-Sabbah turned Alamut into an outpost of Fatimid rule within Abbasid territory.

The Hashasheen / Assassiyoon

Surrounded by the Abbasids and other hostile powers and low in numbers, Hassan-Al Sabbah devised a way to attack the Ismāʿīlī's enemies with minimal losses. Using the method of assassination, he ordered the murders of Sunni scholars and politicians whom he felt threatened the Ismāʿīlīs. Knives and daggers were used to kill, and sometimes as a warning, a knife would be placed onto the pillow of a Sunni, who understood the message that he was marked for death. When an assassination was actually carried out, the Hashasheen would not be allowed to run away; instead, to strike further fear into the enemy, they would stand near the victim without showing any emotion and departed only when the body was discovered. This further increased the ruthless reputation of the Hashasheen throughout Sunni-controlled lands.

The English word, assassination, is said to have derived from the Arabic word Hashasheen. It means both "those who use hashish," and one of the Shiite Ismaili sects in the Syria of the eleventh century. However, Amin Maalouf, in his novel *Samarkand*, disputes the origin of the word assassin. According to him, it is not derived from the name of the drug hashish, which Western historians believed that members of the sect took. Instead, he proposed that this story was fabricated by Orientalists to explain how effectively the Ismāʿīlīs carried out these suicide-assassinations without fear. Maalouf suggests that the term is instead derived from the word *Assass* (foundation), and *Assassiyoon*, meaning "those faithful to the foundation."

Threshold of the Imāmate



View of Alamut besieged.

After the imprisonment of Nizar by his younger brother Mustaal, it is claimed Nizar's son al-Hādī survived and fled to Alamut. He was offered a safe place in Alamut, where Hassan-Al-Sabbah welcomed him. However, it is believed this was not announced to the public and the lineage was hidden until a few Imāms later.

It was announced with the advent of Imām Hassan II. In a show of his Imāmate and to emphasize the interior meaning (the batin) over the exterior meaning (the zahir), he prayed with his back to Mecca, as did the rest of the congregation, who prayed behind him, and ordered the community to break their Ramadan fasting with a feast at noon. He made a speech saying he was in communication with the Imām, which many of the Ismāʿīlīs understood to mean he was the Imām himself.

Afterwards his descendants ruled as the Imāms at Alamut until its destruction by the Mongols.

Destruction by the Mongols

The stronghold at Alamut, though it had warded off the Sunni attempts to take it several times, including one by Saladin, soon met with destruction. By 1206, Genghis Khan had managed to unite many of the once antagonistic Mongol tribes into a ruthless, but nonetheless unified, force. Using many new and unique military techniques, Genghis Khan led his Mongol hordes across Central Asia into the Middle East, where they won a series of tactical military victories using a scorched-earth policy.

A grandson of Genghis Khan, Hulagu Khan, led the devastating attack on Alamut in 1256, only a short time before sacking the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad in 1258. As he would later do to the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, he destroyed Ismāʿīlī as well as Islamic religious texts. The Imāmate that was located in Alamut along with its few

followers were forced to flee and take refuge elsewhere.

Aftermath

After the fall of the Fatimid Caliphate and its bases in Iran and Syria, the three currently living branches of Ismāʿīlī generally developed geographically isolated from each other, with the exception of Syria (which has both Druze and Nizari) and Pakistan and rest of South Asia (which had both Mustaali and Nizari).

The Mustaali progressed mainly in Yemen and then shifted their dawat to India under Dai working on behalf of their last Imam, Taiyyab, and known as Bohra. From India, their various groups spread mainly in south Asia and eventually in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and America.

The Nizari have maintained large populations in Syria, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and have smaller populations in China and Iran. This community is the only one with a living Imām, whose title is the Aga Khan. Badakshan which spills over North-Eastern Afghanistan, Eastern Tajikistan and Northern Pakistan is the only part of the world where the Ismailis makes up the majority of the population.[5]

The Druze mainly settled in Syria and Lebanon and developed a community based upon the principles of reincarnation through their own descendants. Their leadership is based on community scholars, who are the only individuals allowed to read their holy texts. There is controversy whether this group falls under the classification of Ismāʿīlīsm or Islam because of their unique beliefs.

The Tajiks of China, being Ismaili, were subjected to being enslaved in China by Sunni Muslim Turkic peoples. The Hunza people are also Ismaili. They were also subject to being enslaved by Sunni Muslim Turkis. The Sunnis called them Rafidites and did not consider them Muslim.

Ismaili Historiography

One of the most important texts in Ismaili historiography is the *'Uyun al-akhbar*, which is a reference source on the history of Ismailism that was composed in 7 books by the Tayyibi Mustaʿlian Ismaili *daʿi*-scholar, Idris ʿImad al-Din (born ca. 1392 CE). This text presents the most comprehensive history of the Ismaili imams and *daʿwa*, from the earliest period of Muslim history until the late Fatimid era. The author, Idris ʿImad al-Din, descended from the prominent al-Walid family of the Quraysh in Yemen, who led the Tayyibi Mustaʿlian Ismaili *daʿwa* for more than three centuries. This gave him access to the literary heritage of the Ismailis, including the majority of the extant Fatimid manuscripts transferred to Yemen. The *ʿUyun al-akhbar* is being published in 7 volumes of annotated Arabic critical editions as part of an institutional collaboration between the Institut Français du Proche Orient (IFPO) in Damascus and The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) in London. This voluminous text has been critically edited based on several old manuscripts from The Institute of Ismaili Studies' vast collection. These academic editions have been prepared by a team of Syrian and Egyptian scholars, including Dr Ayman F Sayyid, and this major publication project has been coordinated by Dr Nader El-Bizri (IIS) and Dr Sarab Atassi-Khattab (IFPO).

Beliefs

View on the Qur'an

The Ismāʿīlīs believe the Qur'an was sent to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel over the course of 20 years. They believe that their Hazar Imam has the authority to interpret the Qur'an in relation to the present time.

Ismāʿīlīs believe the Qur'an has two layers of meaning, the *zahir* meaning apparent, and the *batin*, meaning hidden.

The Ginans and Qasidas

The Ginans are Nizari Ismāʻīlī religious texts. They are written in the form of poetry by Pirs to interpret the meanings of Qur'anic ayat into the languages of the South Asia, especially Gujarati and Urdu. In comparison to Ginans, Ismāʿīlīs of other origins, such as Persians, Arabs, and Central Asians, have Qasidas (Arabic: قصيدة) written by missionaries. See Works of Pir Sadardin

Reincarnation

Belief in reincarnation exists in the Druze branch of Ismailism. The Druze believe that members of their community can only be reincarnated within the community. It is also known that Druze believe in five cosmic principles, represented by the five-colored Druze star: intelligence/reason (green), soul (red), word (yellow), precedent (blue), and immanence (white). These virtues take the shape of five different spirits which, until recently, have been continuously reincarnated on Earth as prophets and philosophers including Adam, the ancient Greek mathematician and astronomer Pythagoras, the ancient Pharaoh of Egypt Akhenaten, and many others. The Druze believe that, in every time period, these five principles were personified in five different people who came down together to Earth to teach humans the true path to God and nirvana, but that with them came five other individuals who would lead people away from the right path into "darkness."

Numerology

Ismāʿīlīs believe numbers have religious meanings. The number seven plays a general role in the theology of the Ismāʻīliyya, including mystical speculations that there are seven heavens, seven continents, seven orifices in the skull, seven days in a week, and so forth.

Imamate

In Nizari Ismailism, the Imām is seen believed to be the “Face of God.” For this sect, the Imām is truth and reality itself, and hence he is their path of salvation to God.

Sevener Ismāʿīlī doctrine holds that divine revelation had been given in six periods (daur) entrusted to six prophets, who they also call *Natiq* (Speaker), who were commissioned to preach a religion of law to their respective communities.

Whereas the Natiq was concerned with the rites and outward shape of religion, the inner meaning is entrusted to a *Wasi* (Representative). The Wasi would know the secret meaning of all rites and rules and would reveal them to a small circles of initiates.

The Natiq and the Wasi are in turn succeeded by a line of seven Imāms, who guard what they received. The seventh and last Imām in any period becomes the Natiq of the next period. The last Imām of the sixth period, however, would not bring about a new religion of law but rather supersede all previous religions, abrogate the law and

introduce *din Adama al-awwal* ("the original religion of Adam") practised by Adam and the Angels in paradise before the fall, which would be without ritual or law but consist merely in all creatures praising the creator and recognizing his unity. This final stage was called Qiyamah.

Pir and Dawah

Just as the Imām is seen by Ismailis as the Face of God, during the period between the Imāmates of Muhammad ibn Ismail and al-Madhi Billah, the relationship between the teacher and the student became a sacred one, and the Dai became a position much beyond a normal missionary. The Dai passed on the sacred and hidden knowledge of the Imām to the student, who could then use that information to ascend to higher levels. First the student loved the Dai, and from the Dai he learned to love the Imām, who was but an interceder on behalf of God. In Nizari Ismailism, the head Dai is called the Pir.

Zahir

In Ismailism, things have an exterior meaning, what is apparent. This is called zahir.

Batini

In Ismailism, things have an interior meaning that is reserved for a special few who are in tune with the Imām, or are the Imām himself. This is called batin.

Aql

As with other Shīʿah, Ismāʿīlīs believe that the understanding of God is derived from the first light in the universe, the light of Aql, which in Arabic roughly translates as 'Intellect' or to 'bind' (Latin: Intellectus). It is through this Universal Intellect ('aql al-kull) that all living and non-living entities know God, and all of humanity is dependent and united in this light. Contrastingly, in Twelver thought this includes the Prophets as well, especially Muhammad, who is the greatest of all the manifestations of Aql.

God, in Isma'ili metaphysics, is seen as above and beyond all conceptions, names, and descriptions. He transcends all positive and negative qualities, and knowledge of God as such is above all human comprehension.

For Shi'a Muslims, the Light (nur) of the Imamate is the Universal Intellect, and consequently, the Imam on earth is the locus of manifestation (mazhar) of the Intellect. http:/ / www. facebook. com/ photo. php?fbid=10200913086208966&set=a.1234232895505.36572.1219670446&type=1&theater

Dasond

It is very similar to the popular general Muslim practice of zakat as mentioned in the holy Qur'an. Dasond is a proportion of personal income that Nizari Ismailis pay to their Imam. Many followers of the Aga Khan donate 12.5% of their personal income, and of this 12.5% of income that is donated, 2.5% is said to be for the poor, which can be considered as Muslim zakat, and the remaining 10% belongs directly to the Aga Khan. The entire 12.5% is presented to the Imam, usually in cash and without receipts, through the many Ismaili Jamatkhanas—places of worship.[6]

There is a discrepancy in the two references above with regards to how the 12.5% dasond is divided up. A. Meherally writes that 10% goes to the poor and 2.5% goes to the Imam, after which he comments that zakat is traditionally [at most] 2.5%, and he labels dasond as inflated zakat. In the *Encyclopaedia of Ismailism,* (retrieved from Ismaili.net) Mumtaz Ali Tajddin states that in the times of the Indian Ismaili Pirs, 10% went to the Imam and 2.5% to the poor:Ismailies are great Murad and Shumaila.

> The tenth part of the income is separated along with 2½ zakat, making the deduction of 12½ from the income. The tenth part solely belongs to the Imam, while 2½ part being zakat for the welfare purpose. Both parts (10 & 2½) are presented to the Imam.

Seven Pillars

Walayah

Walayah is translated from Arabic as “guardianship” and denotes “Love and devotion for God, the Prophets, the Aimmat and Imām uz Zaman, and the Dai.” It also denotes *Ta'at* (following every order without protest, but with one's soul's happiness, knowing that nothing is more important than a command from God and that the command of His vicegerents is His Word). In Ismāʿīlī doctrine, God is the true desire of every soul, and He manifests himself in the forms of Prophets and Imāms; to be guided to his path, one requires a messenger or a guide: a Dai. For the true *mawali* of the Imam and Dai, heaven is made obligatory. And only with this crucial *walayat*, they believe, will all the other pillars and acts ordained by Islam be judged or even looked at by God.

Taharah or Shahada

Taharah

A pillar which translates from Arabic as “purity.” As well as a pure soul, it includes bodily purity and cleanliness- without Taharat of the body, clothes and ma'salla, Salaat will not be accepted.

Shahada

In place of Taharah, the Druze have the Shahada, or affirmation of faith.

Zakat

A pillar which translates as “charity.” With the exception of the Druze sect, the Ismāʿīlīs' form of zakat resembles the Zakat of the Muslims. The Twelvers pay khums, which is 1/5 of one's unspent money at the end of the year. Ismāʿīlīs pay a tithe of 12.5%, which is used for development projects in the eastern world, primarily to benefit Ismāʿīlīs and, by extension, other communities living in that area.

Sawm

A pillar which is translated as “fasting.” Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims fast by abstaining from food, drink from dawn to sunset as well purifying the soul by avoiding sinful acts and doing good deeds, e.g., not lying, being honest in daily life, not backbiting, etc., for 30 days during the holy month of Ramadan (9th month of the Islamic calendar). In contrast, the Nizari and Musta'ali sects believe in a metaphorical as well as a literal meaning of fasting. The literal meaning is that one must fast as an obligation, such as during Ramadan, and the metaphorical meaning is seeking to attain the Divine Truth and striving to avoid worldly activities which may detract from this goal. In particular, Ismāʿīlīs believe that the esoteric meaning of fasting involves a "fasting of the soul," whereby they attempt to purify the soul simply by avoiding sinful acts and doing good deeds. Still, many Nizari Ismailis around the world fast during the month of Ramadan every year. In addition, the Nizari also fast on "Shukravari Beej" which falls on a Friday that coincides with the New Moon.

Hajj

A pillar which translates from Arabic as “pilgrimage," meaning the pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is currently the largest annual pilgrimage in the world and is the fifth pillar of Islam, a religious duty that must be carried out at least once in one's lifetime by every able-bodied Muslim who can afford to do so. Many Ismaili sects do not ascribe to mainstream Islamic beliefs regarding the Hajj, considering it instead to metaphorically mean visiting the Imam himself, that being the greatest and most spiritual of all pilgrimages. However, since the Druze do not follow shariah, they do not believe in a literal pilgrimage to the Kaaba in Mecca as other Muslims do, while the Mustaali (Bohras) as well as the Nizaris still hold on to the literal meaning as well, performing hajj to the Ka'aba and also visiting the Imam (or in a secluded time like today, the Dai, who is the representative or vicegerent of the Imam) to be Hajj-e Haqiqi.

Jihad

An Islamic term, Jihad is a religious duty of Muslims. In Arabic, the word jihād is a noun meaning "struggle." Jihad appears frequently in the Qur'an and always used in the nonmilitary sense. A person engaged in jihad is called a mujahid; the plural is mujahideen. When a violent act is intended, the Qur'an used the term "Qattal" meaning to engage in killing/violence.

A minority among the Sunni scholars sometimes refer to this duty as the sixth pillar of Islam, though it occupies no such official status. In Twelver Shi'a Islam, however, Jihad is one of the 10 Practices of the Religion.

For the Isma'ilis, Jihad is the last of the Seven Islamic Pillars, and for them it means a struggle against one's own soul; striving toward rightness, and sometimes as struggle in warfare. However, Isma'ilis will stress that none but their Imam uz Zaman [Imam of the Time] can declare war and call his followers to fight.

Branches

Nizari

The largest part of the Ismāʿīlī community Nizari today accepts Prince Karim Aga Khan IV as their 49th Imām, who they claim is descended from Muḥammad through his daughter Fāṭimah az-Zahra and 'Ali, Muḥammad's cousin and son-in-law. The 46th Ismāʿīlī Imām, Aga Hassan ʿAlī Shah, fled Iran in the 1840s after a failed coup against the Shah of the Qajar dynasty. Aga Hassan ʿAlī Shah settled in Mumbai in 1848.

Satpanth

Satpanth is a subgroup of Nizari Ismailism and Ismaili Sufism formed by conversions from Hinduism 700 years ago by Pir Sadruddin (1290-1367) and 600 years ago in the 15th century by his grandson Pir Imam Shah (1430-1520), they differ slightly from the Nizari Khojas in that they reject the Aga Khan as their leader and are known more commonly as Imam-Shahi. There are villages in Gujarat which are totally 'Satpanthi' such as Pirana near Ahmedabad where Imam Shah is buried. It is also the older form of Nizari Ismaili practice originating from the Kutch community of Gujarat. Pir Sadardin gave the first converts to Ismailism the name 'Satpanth' because they were the followers of the 'True Path.' They were then given the title of Khoja to replace their title of Thakkar.

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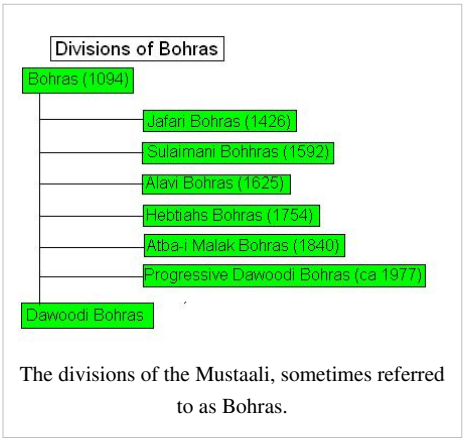
Musta'ali

In time, the seat for one chain of the Dai was split between India and Yemen as the community split several times, each recognizing a different Dai. Today, the Dawoodi Bohras, which constitute the majority of the Mustaali Ismāʿīlī accept Mohammed Burhanuddin as the 52nd Dāʿī al-Muṭlaq. The Dawoodi Bohras are based in India, along with the Alavi Bohra. Minority groups of the Sulaimani Bohra, however, exist in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. In recent years, there has been a rapprochement between the Sulaimani Mustaali and the Dawoodi Mustaali.

The Bohra sects are the more traditional of the three main groups of Ismāʿīlī, maintaining rituals such as prayer and fasting more consistently with the practices of other Shīʿa sects. It is often said that they resemble Sunni Islam even more than Twelvers do, though this would hold true for matters of the exterior rituals (*zahir*) only, with little bearing on doctrinal or theological differences.

Dawoodi Bohra



The divisions of the Mustaali, sometimes referred to as Bohras.

The Dawoodi Bohras are a very close-knit community who seek advice from the Dai on spiritual and temporal matters.

Dawoodi Bohras is essentially and traditionally Fatimid and is headed by the Dāʿī al-Mutlaq, who is appointed by his predecessor in office. The Dāʿī al-Mutlaq appoints two others to the subsidiary ranks of māzūn (Arabic Maʾḏūn مأذون) "licentiate" and Mukāsir (Arabic مكاسر). These positions are followed by the rank of ra'sul hudood, bhaisaheb, miya-saheb, shaikh-saheb and mulla-saheb, which are held by several of Bohras. The 'Aamil or Saheb-e Raza who is granted the permission to perform the religious ceremonies of the believers by the Dāʿī al-Mutlaq and also leads the local congregation in religious, social and community affairs, is sent to each town where a sizable population of believers exists. Such towns normally have a masjid (commonly known as mosque) and an adjoining jamaa'at-khaana (assembly hall) where socio-religious functions are held. The local organizations which manage these properties and administer the social and religious activities of the local Bohras report directly to the central administration of the Dāʿī al-Mutlaq.

While the majority of Dawoodi Bohras have traditionally been traders, it is becoming increasingly common for them to become professionals. Some choose to become Doctors, consultants or analysts as well as a large contingent of medical professionals. Dawoodi Bohras are encouraged to educate themselves in both religious and secular knowledge, and as a result, the number of professionals in the community is rapidly increasing. Dawoodi Bohras believe that the education of women is equally important as that of men, and many Dawoodi Bohra women choose to enter the workforce. Al Jamea tus Saifiyah (The Arabic Academy) in Surat, Nairobi and Karachi is a sign to the educational importance in the Dawoodi community. The Academy has an advanced curriculum which encompasses religious and secular education for both men and women.

Today there are approximately one million Dawoodi Bohras. The majority of these reside in India and Pakistan, but there is also a significant diaspora residing in the Middle East, East Africa, Europe, North America and the Far East.

The ordinary Bohra is highly conscious of his identity, and this is especially demonstrated at religious and traditional occasions by the appearance and attire of the participants. Dawoodi Bohra men wear a traditional white three-piece outfit, plus a white and gold cap (called a *topi*), and women wear the *rida*, a distinctive form of the commonly known burqa which is distinguished from other forms of the veil due to it often being in color and decorated with patterns and lace. The rida's difference from the burqa, however, is significant beyond just the colour, pattern and lace. The rida does not call for covering of women's faces like the traditional veil. It has a flap called the 'pardi' that usually hangs on the back like the hood of a jacket but it is not used to conceal the face. This is representative of the Dawoodi Bohra community's values of equality and justice for women, which they believe, is a tenet of the Fatimid Imamate's evolved understanding of Islam and the true meaning of women's chastity in Islam. The Dawoodi Bohra community also do not prevent their women from coming to mosques, attending religious gatherings or going to places of pilgrimage. It is often regarded as the most peaceful sect of Islam and an example of true Sufism; it has been critically acclaimed on several occasions even by Western governments such as those of the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden and particularly the United States for its progressive outlook towards gender roles, adoption of technology, promotion of literature, crafts, business and secular values. However, the Dawoodi Bohras are highly single-minded about inter-caste or inter-faith marriage. They do not oppose it but do not encourage it either. If a Dawoodi Bohra member does marry into another caste or religion, he or she is usually advised to ask his or her spouse to convert to Islam and, specifically, into the community.

They believe that straying away from the community implies straying away from Ma'ad – the ultimate objective of this life and the meaning of the teachings of Islam, which is to return to where all souls comes from and re-unite with

Allah. Besides, converting someone to Islam has high spiritual and religious significance as doctrines espouse that making someone a Muslim or Mu'min confers the Sawab (reward of good deeds) equivalent to that of 40 Hajjs and 40 Umrahs (visiting Mecca and the Kaaba during days other than that of Hajj).

The current and 52nd Dai-el-Mutlaq of the Dawoodi Bohra community, Dr Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin is a highly revered religious and spiritual figure in the world. He is 102 years old but travels actively across continents to meet his faithful followers and also other religious and political figures of the region. He is the Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University in India and has been received and welcomed on several occasions by dignitaries such as Prince Charles, Angela Merkel, George Bush, Jr., Bill Clinton, Hosni Mubarak and Dr Manmohan Singh. A great patron of architecture, he is single-handedly responsible for restoration of the Jamea al Azhar, Jamea al Anwar and several other Islamic universities in the Arab world. He is also responsible for building several mosques, institutions of learning in India and abroad, parks and gardens, and forming charitable trusts that work for the community as well as society at large. The Dawoodi Bohra community celebrated his 100th birthday in 2011 with full gusto in the city of Mumbai. It was also celebrated worldwide by his followers.

Besides speaking the local languages, the Dawoodis have their own language called Lisānu l-Dāʿwat "Tongue of the Dāʿwat". This is written in Arabic script but is derived from Urdu, Gujarati and Arabic and Persian.

Sulaimani Bohra

Founded in 1592, they are mostly concentrated in Yemen but are today also found in Pakistan and India. The denomination is named after its 27th Daʿī, (Sulayman ibn Hassan). They are referred and prefer to be referred as Ahle Haq Ismailis and Sulaimanis and not with the Bohras suffix.

The total number of Sulaimanis currently are around 300,000, mainly living in the eastern district of Haraz in the North west of Yemen and in Najran, Saudi Arabia[7]. Beside the Banu Yam of Najran, the Sulaimanis are in Haraz, among the inhabitants of the Jabal Maghariba and in Hawzan, Lahab and Attara, as well as in the district of Hamadan and in the vicinity of Yarim.

In India there are between 3,000 and 5,000 Sulaimanis living mainly in Baroda, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Surat. In Pakistan, there is a well-established Sulaimani community in Sind. Some ten thousand Sulaimanis live in rural areas of Punjab province of Pakistan known in Dawat e Sulaimani terms as Jazeera e Sind; these Ismāʿīlī Sulaimani communities have been in Jazeera e Sind from the time of Fatimid Ismāʿīlī Maulana Imam AlMuizz li din-illah when he sent his Dais to Jazeeara e Sind.

There are also some 900–1,000 Sulaimanis mainly from South Asia scattered around the world, in the Persian Gulf States, USA, Canada, Thailand, Australia, Japan and UK.

Alavi Bohra

While lesser known and smallest in number, Alavi Bohras accept as the 44th dāʿī al-muṭlaq, Abu Hatim Tayyib Ziyauddin. They are mostly concentrated in India.

The Alavi Bohra community has its headquarters at Baroda City, Gujarat, India. The 44th Dāʿī al-Mutlaq, Taiyeb Ziyauddin Saheb, is the head of the community. The religious hierarchy of the Alavi Bohras is essentially and traditionally Fatimid and is headed by the Dāʿī al-Mutlaq, who is appointed by his predecessor in office and similar as of Dawoodi Bohra.

Hebtiahs Bohra

The Hebtiahs Bohra are a branch of Mustaali Ismaili Shi'a Islam that broke off from the mainstream Dawoodi Bohra after the death of the 39th Da'i al-Mutlaq in 1754.[*citation needed*]

Atba-i-Malak

The Abta-i Malak jamaat (community) are a branch of Mustaali Ismaili Shi'a Islam that broke off from the mainstream Dawoodi Bohra after the death of the 46th Da'i al-Mutlaq, under the leadership of Abdul Hussain Jivaji. They have further split into two more branches, the Atba-i-Malak Badra and Atba-i-Malak Vakil.

Druze

While on one view there is a historical nexus between the Druze and Ismāʿīlīs, any such links are purely historical and do not entail any modern similarities,[*citation needed*] given that one of the Druze's central tenets is trans-migration of the soul (reincarnation) as well as other contrasting beliefs with Ismāʿīlīsm and Islam. Druze is an offshoot of Ismailism. Many historical links do trace back to Syria and particularly Masyaf.[*citation needed*]

Extinct Branches

Böszörmény

According to the historian Yaqut al-Hamawi, the Böszörmény *(Izmaelita or Ismaili / Nizari)* denomination of the Muslims who lived in the Kingdom of Hungary in the 10–13th centuries, were employed as mercenaries by the kings of Hungary. However following the establishment of the Christian Kingdom of Hungary their community was Christianized by the end of the 13th century. [*citation needed*]

Hafizi

This branch held that whoever the political ruler of the Fatimid Caliphate was, was also the Imam of the faith. This branch died with the Fatimid Caliphate.

Seveners

A branch of the Ismāʿīlī known as the *Sabaʿiyyīn* "Seveners" hold that Ismāʿīl's son, Muhammad, was the seventh and final Ismāʿīlī, who is said to be in the Occultation. However, most scholars believe this group is either extremely small or non-existent today.

Inclusion in Amman Message and Islamic Ummah

The Amman Message, which was issued on 9 November 2004 (27th of Ramadan 1425 AH) by King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of Jordan, called for tolerance and unity in the Muslim world. Subsequently, the "Amman Message" Conference took place in Amman, Jordan on 4–6 July 2005 and a three-point declaration was issued by 200 Muslim academics from over 50 countries focusing on the three issues of:

1. Defining who is a Muslim;
2. Excommunication from Islam (**takfir**); and
3. Principles related to delivering religious edicts (**fatāwa**).

The three-point declaration (later known as *The Three Points of the Amman Message*) included both the Ja'fari Shia and Zaydi Shia schools of jurisprudence (**madhāhib**) among the eight schools of jurisprudence that were listed as being in the Muslim fold and whose adherents were therefore to be considered as **Muslim by definition** and therefore cannot be excluded from the world community of Muslims.

The Aga Khan, the 49th Imam of the Ismailis, was invited to issue a religious edict for and on behalf of the Ismailis, which he did by a letter explicitly stating that the Ismailis adhered to the Ja'fari school as well as other schools of close affinity including the Sufi principles concerned with personal search for God.

The summarization by Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad explicitly delineates on page 11 the place of the Ismailis as being **within** the Ja'fari school as stated by the Aga Khan.

Notes

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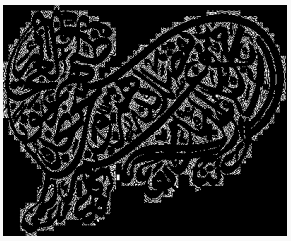
External links

- Official website (http://www.theismaili.org)
- Ismaili Gnosis Blog (http://www.ismailignosis.com)
- Ismaili Web Amaana (http://www.amaana.org/ismaili/)
- Institute of Ismaili Studies (http://www.iis.ac.uk)
- Aga Khan Development Network (http://www.akdn.org)
- Alavi Bohras (http://www.alavibohra.org)
- Introductory lecture on Ismailism (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcpDOSMDhYM), on YouTube

Hamza ibn-'Ali ibn-Ahmad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Part of a series on Shīʿah Islam
Ismāʿīlism

Concepts
The Qur'ān · The Ginans Reincarnation · Panentheism Imām · Pir · Dāʿī l-Muṭlaq ʿAql · Numerology · Taqiyya Żāhir · Bāṭin
Five Pillars
Shahada · Prayer · Charity Fasting · Pilgrimage
History
Shuʿayb · Nabi Shu'ayb Qarmatians · Seveners Fatimids · Baghdad Manifesto Nasir Khusraw al-Qubadiani Nizārī · Hāfizī · Mustāʿlī Batiniyya · Hassan-i Sabbah · Hashshashins · Alamut · Alamut Castle · Masyaf Castle · Rashid ad-Din Sinan · Pir Sadardin · Satpanth Aga Khan · Jama'at Khana Huraat-ul-Malika · Böszörmény
Early Imams
Ali · Ḥassan · Ḥusain as-Sajjad · al-Baqir · aṣ-Ṣādiq Ismāʿīl ibn Ja'far · Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh *(Wāfī Aḥmad)* Aḥmad *(Tāqī Muḥammad)* Husain *(Rāḍī ʿAbd Allāh / az-Zakī)* Ubayd ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī al-Qāʾim · al-Manṣūr al-Muʿizz · al-ʿAzīz · al-Ḥākim az-Zāhir · al-Mustansir bʾil-Lāh · Nizār al-Muṣṭafá li-Dīnʾil-Lāh / ʿAhmad al-Mustāʿlī bʾil-Lāh · Manṣūr al-Āmir bi'Aḥkāmiʾl-Lāh · At-Tāyyīb Abūʾl-Qāsim
Groups and present leaders

Nizārʼīyyah · Aga Khan IV
Mustāʻlīyyah
Dawūdī · Syedna Burhanuddin
Sulaimanī · Al-Fakhri Abdullah
Alavī · Ṭayyib Ziyāʼu d-Dīn

Hamza ibn ʻAlī ibn Aḥmad (985-???) (Arabic and Persian حمزه بن علي بن أحمد) was an 11th-century Ismaili and founding leader of the Druze sect. He was born in Zozan in Greater Khorasan in Samanid-ruled Persia (modern Khaf, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran).

Hamza is considered the founder of the Druze and the primary author of the Druze manuscripts.

Life

After spending the first twenty years of his life in Samanid-ruled Persia, Hamza emigrated to Egypt and became known in the Fatimid Government as *Hamza al-Fātimī* "Hamza the Fatimid". He arrived in Cairo (modern Egypt) just as the Fatimid Caliph Tāriqu l-Ḥākim built the House of Knowledge, which became one of the main cultural centers of the Fatimid state.[1] In a very short period of time, Hamza became a close associate of al-Ḥākim and the Caliph appointed him Head of Letters and Correspondence.

Hamza took as his headquarters the Raydan Mosque, which was located outside the walls of Cairo. This mosque became the center where Hamza organized a new missionary movement. In May 1017, al-Ḥākim issued a decree naming Hamza the imām of "the Monotheists" (*al-Muwahhidūn*) immediately after declaring the beginning of the Divine Call. Hamza demonstrated brilliant leadership for four years under al-Ḥākimʼs direction.

Al-Ḥākim granted Hamza the freedom to preach this new reformist doctrine openly. Public resistance to Hamza's teachings increased as he spoke against corruption, polygamy, remarriage of divorcees and other social customs as well as his theological disputes with other prominent Ismaeli leaders.

Hamza and ad-Darazī

During this external resistance, an internal rivalry arose between Hamza and one of his subordinates, ad-Darazī. Ad-Darazī deviated from the essence of the movementʼs message and falsified the writings of Hamza to present al-Ḥākim as divine.

Ad-Darazī had hoped that al-Ḥākim would favor him over Hamza, but instead there was public opposition to his teachings. Ad-Darazī then redirected the publicʼs resistance by declaring that he had acted on Hamza's instructions. Consequently, instead of attacking ad-Darazī, the crowds turned against Hamza and his associates, who were at Ridyan Mosque at the time. Although al-Ḥākim executed ad-Darazī for heresy and repudiated his teachings, many years later observers ironically attributed the Druze doctrine to ad-Darazī and do not mention Hamza at all. After the execution of ad-Darazī and his collaborators, Hamza continued his preaching activities for two more years.

Few medieval chroniclers of the time not only failed to make the distinction between Druzes and Darazīs but attributed ad-Darazīʼs doctrine to the followers of Hamza and argued that Hakim supported ad-Darazīʼs ideas. Other historians have reported that it was Hamza who was subordinate to ad-Darazī, and still others have referred to Hamza and Darazi as the same person: Hamza ad-Darazī. As a consequence, the name “Druze” became synonymous with the reform movement.

Despite the ironic and misleading origins of the sectʼs name, the title “Druze” never occurs in the Druze manuscripts of the 11th century. After the execution of Darazi and his collaborators, Hamza continued his preaching activities for two more years.

Many modern scholars have written that Hamza's and ad-Darazī's ideology was the same, which is preaching the literal divinity of al-Ḥākim,[2][3][4] whom they say supported their claims. Such uncertainty is caused by the historical ambiguity of that era and the secretive, esoteric aspect of the Druze faith.

Occultation

During the same year that al-Ḥākim disappeared in 1021, Hamza went into retreat and delegated the third leading figure, *Baha'u d-Dīn as-Samuqī* ("al-Muqtana Bahaʾud-Dīn") to continue the missionary movement. Baha'u d-Dīn continued public preaching with the approval of Hamza, who was in a disclosed location known only to Baha'u d-Dīn and few other missionaries. Preaching was halted after the Druze sect was closed in 1043 by Baha'u d-Dīn.

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[3] The Druze in the Middle East: Their Faith, Leadership, Identity and Status - Page 41 by Nissim Dana

[4] Encyclopaedic Survey of Islamic Culture - Page 94 by Mohamed Taher

External links

- *Hamzah ibn 'Ali.* Encyclopædia Britannica. 2005. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 18 Nov. 2005 <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9039092>.

Al-Ma'mun

Al-Ma'mun ابوجعفر عبدالله المأمون	
Caliph of Baghdad	
Reign	813–833
Predecessor	Al-Amin
Successor	Al-Mu'tasim
Full name	
Abū Jaʿfar Abdullāh al-Maʾmūn ibn Harūn	
Dynasty	Abbasid
Father	Harun al-Rashid
Mother	Marajil
Born	15 September 786[1]
Died	9 August 833 (aged 46)
Religion	Islam

Abū Jaʿfar Abdullāh al-Maʾmūn ibn Harūn (also spelled **Almamon**, **Al-Maymun**, **Al-Maʾmoon**, and **el-Mâmoûn**, Arabic ابوجعفر عبدالله المأمون) (13 September 786 – 9 August 833) (المأمون) was an Abbasid caliph who reigned from 813 until his death in 833. He succeeded his brother al-Amin who was killed during the siege of Baghdad (813).[2]

Birth

Al-Maʾmūn was born in Baghdad, on 15 September 786 CE to the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid and a woman called Marajil.[3]

Abbasid Civil War

In 802 Harun al-Rashid, father of al-Maʾmūn and al-Amin, ordered that al-Amin succeed him, and al-Ma'mun serve as governor of Khurasan and as caliph after the death of al-Amin. In the last days of Harun's life his health was declining and saw in a dream Musa ibn Jafar sitting in a chamber praying and crying, which made Harun remember how hard he had struggled to establish his own caliphate. He knew the personalities of both his sons and decided that for the good of the Abbasid dynasty, al-Maʾmūn should be caliph after his death, which he confided to a group of his courtiers. One of the courtiers, Fadl ibn Rabi' did not abide by Harun's last wishes and convinced many in the lands of Islam that Harun's wishes had not changed. Later the other three courtiers of Harun who had sworn loyalty to Harun by supporting al-Maʾmūn, namely 'Isa Jarudi, Abu Yunus, and Ibn Abi 'Umran found loopholes in Fadl's arguments, and Fazl admitted Harun had appointed al-Maʾmūn after him, but, he argued, since Harun was not in his right mind, his decision should not be acted upon. Al-Maʾmūn was reportedly the older of the two brothers, but his mother was a Persian woman while al-Amin's mother was a member of the reigning Abbasid family. After al-Rashid's death in 809, the relationship between the two brothers deteriorated. In response to al-Ma'mun's moves toward independence, al-Amin declared his own son Musa to be his heir. This violation of al-Rashid's testament led to a succession struggle. al-Amin assembled a massive army at Baghdad with 'Isa ibn Mahan at its head in 811 and invaded Khorasan, but al-Maʾmūn's general Tahir ibn al-Husayn (d. 822) destroyed the army and invaded Iraq,

laying siege to Baghdad in 812. In 813 Baghdad fell, al-Amin was beheaded, and al-Maʾmūn became the undisputed Caliph.

Internal Strife

There were disturbances in Iraq during the first several years of al-Maʾmūn's reign, while the caliph was in Merv. On 13 November 815, Muhammad ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq (Al-Dibaj) claimed the Caliphate for himself in Mecca. He was defeated and he quickly abdicated asserting that he had only become caliph on news that al-Ma'mun had died. Lawlessness in Baghdad led to the formation of neighborhood watches.

In A.H. 201 (817 AD) al-Ma'mun forced Imam Reza to move from Madina to Merv. Imam Reza, the Eighth descendant of Muhammad, was named his heir. This was not easily accepted by the Abbasid leaders but was widely seen as a political move by al-Ma'mun since he was fearful of the widespread sympathy towards the Ahl al-Bayt. Al-Ma'mun's plan was to keep watch over Imam Reza. However, his plans did not succeed due to the growing popularity of Ali Al-Rida in Merv. People from all over the Muslim world traveled to meet the prophet's grandson and listen to his teachings and guidance.

After a debate Al-Ma'mun had set up with the greatest scholars of the world's religions to humiliate the Imam, the victorious Imam informed Al-Ma'mun that his grand vizier, Fazl ibn Sahl, had not been informing him of everything. In Baghdad, the people believed that al-Maʾmūn was unseated, because of rumors spread by Fazl ibn Sahl. Because of this the people of Baghdad were giving their allegiance to al-Mamun's uncle Ibrahim ibn Mehdi. Al-Ma'mun set out for Baghdad in 12 April 818. At Tus, he stopped to visit his father's grave. Al-Ma'mun was troubled by the widespread support for the prophet Muhammad's descendant Imam Reza, and the betrayal of his grand vizier. With the aim of gaining Abbasid support and the establish of a new base for his rule in Baghdad, Al-Ma'mun went on to depose of Ali Ar-Rida by administering poison, and arranging the murder of Fazl ibn Sahl. On the last day of Safar in 203 AH, Imam Reza died. Imam Reza was buried beside Al-Ma'mun's father Hārūn al-Rashid. Following the death of Imam Reza a great revolt took place in Khurasan, Persia. Al-Maʾmun tried to show himself innocent of the crime but for all he did, he could not get himself acquitted and prove his innocence.

After Arrival in Baghdad

Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari states that al-Ma'mun entered Baghdad on 11 August 819 (v. 32, p. 95). He wore green and had others do so. Informed that compliance with this command was despite popular opposition to the colour, on 18 August he reverted to traditional Abbasid black. While Baghdad became peaceful, there were disturbances elsewhere. In A.H. 210 (825–826) Abdullah ibn Tahir al-Khurasani secured Egypt for al-Ma'mun freeing Alexandria from Andalusians and quelling unrest. The Andalusians moved to Crete where al-Tabari records their descendants were still living in his day (see Abo Hafs Omer Al-Baloty). Abdallah returned to Baghdad in 211 Hijri or (826–827 C.E.) bringing defeated rebels with him.

Also, in 210 h / 825–6 C.E. there was an uprising in Qum sparked by complaints about taxes. After it was quashed, the tax assessment was set significantly higher. In 212 Hijri or 827–828 C.E., there was an uprising in Yemen. In 214 (829–30) Abu al-Razi who had captured one Yemeni rebel was killed by another. Egypt continued to be unquiet. Sindh was rebellious. In 216 (831–832) Ghassan ibn 'Abbad subdued it. An ongoing problem for al-Ma'mun was the uprising headed by Babak Khorramdin. In 214 Babak routed a Caliphate army killing its commander Muhammad ibn Humayd.

Wars with Byzantium

By the time al-Maʾmūn became Caliph, the Arabs and the Byzantine Empire had settled down into border skirmishing, with Arab raids deep into Anatolia to capture booty and Christians to be slaves in the Abbasid Caliphate. The situation changed however with the rise to power of Michael II in 820 AD. Forced to deal with the rebel Thomas the Slav, Michael had few troops to spare against a small Andalusian invasion of 40 ships and 10,000 men against Crete, which fell in 824 AD. A Byzantine counter offensive in 826 AD failed miserably. Worse still was the invasion of Sicily in 827 by Berbers of Tunis. Even so, Byzantine resistance in Sicily was fierce and not without success whilst the Arabs became quickly plagued by internal squabbles. That year, the Arabs were expelled from Sicily but they were to return.

The Byzantine embassy of John the Grammarian in 829 to Ma'mun (depicted left) from Theophilos (depicted right)

In 829, Michael II died and was succeeded by his son Theophilos. Theophilos experienced mixed success against his Arab opponents. In 830 AD the Arabs returned to Sicily and after a year-long siege took Palermo from their Christian opponents and for the next 200 years they were to remain there to complete their conquest, which was never short of Christian counters. The Caliph Al-Ma'mun meanwhile launched an invasion of Anatolia in 830 AD. Al-Ma'mun triumphed and a number of Byzantine forts were taken; he spared the surrendering Byzantines. Theophilos did not relent and in 831 captured Tarsus from the Muslims.The next year, learning Byzantines had killed some sixteen hundred people, Al-Ma'mun returned. This time some thirty forts fell to the Caliphate forces, with two Byzantine defeats in Cappadocia.

Theophilos wrote to Al-Ma'mun. The Caliph replied that he carefully considered the Byzantine ruler's letter, noticed it blended suggestions of peace and trade with threats of war and offered Theophilos the options of acknowledging divine unity, paying tax or fighting. Al-Ma'mun made preparations for a major campaign and died on the way while leading an expedition in Sardis.

Al-Ma'mun's relations with the Byzantines are marked by his efforts in the translation of Greek philosophy and science. Al-Ma'mun gathered scholars of many religions at Baghdad, whom he treated magnificently and with tolerance. He sent an emissary to the Byzantine Empire to collect the most famous manuscripts there, and had them translated into Arabic.[4] It is said that, had he been victorious over the Byzantine Emperor, Al-Ma'mun would have made a condition of peace be that the emperor hand over of a copy of the *"Almagest"*.[*citation needed*]

Al-Ma'mun's Reign

Al-Ma'mun conducted, in the plains of Mesopotamia, two astronomical operations intended to determine the value of a terrestrial degree. The crater Almanon on the Moon is named in recognition of his contributions to astronomy.

Al-Ma'mun's record as an administrator is also marked by his efforts toward the centralization of power and the certainty of succession. The *Bayt al-Hikma*, or House of Wisdom, was established during his reign. The *ulama* emerged as a real force in Islamic politics during al-Ma'mun's reign for opposing the *mihna*, which was initiated in 833, only four months before he died.

The 'mihna', is comparable to Medieval European inquisitions only in the sense that it involved imprisonment, a religious test, and a loyalty oath. The casualties of 'Abbasid inquisition would not approach a fraction of those executed in Europe under similar circumstances. This is because the people who were subject to the mihna were traditionalist scholars whose social influence and intellectual quality was uncommonly high. Al-Ma'mun introduced the mihna with the intention to centralize religious power in the caliphal institution and test the loyalty of his

subjects. The mihna had to be undergone by elites, scholars, judges and other government officials, and in consisted of a series of questions relating to theology and faith. The central question was about the createdness of the Qur'an, if the interrogatee stated he believed the Qur'an to be created, he was free to leave and continue his profession.

The controversy over the *mihna* was exacerbated by al-Ma'mun's sympathy for Mu'tazili theology and other controversial views. Mu'tazili theology was deeply influenced by Aristotelian thought and Greek rationalism, and stated that matters of belief and practice should be decided by reasoning. This opposed the traditionalist and literalist position of Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others, according to which everything a believer needed to know about faith and practice was spelled out literally in the Qur'an and the Hadith. Moreover, the Mu'tazilis stated that the Qur'an was created rather than coeternal with God, a belief that was shared by the Jahmites and parts of Shi'a, among others, but contradicted the traditionalist-Sunni opinion that the Qur'an and the Divine were coeternal. The fact that the Mu'tazili school had its foundations in the paganism of Greece further disenchanted a majority of Islamic clerics.

During his reign, alchemy greatly developed and the pioneers of the science were Jabir Ibn Hayyan and his student Yusuf Lukwa was patronized by Al-Ma'mun, although he was unsuccessful in his attempts regarding the transmutation of gold, his methods greatly led to the patronization of pharmaceutical compounds.[5]

Although al-Mahdi had proclaimed that the caliph was the protector of Islam against heresy, and had also claimed the ability to declare orthodoxy, religious scholars in the Islamic world believed that al-Ma'mun was overstepping his bounds in the *mihna*. The penalties of the *mihna* became increasingly difficult to enforce as the *ulema* became firmer and more united in their opposition. Although the *mihna* persisted through the reigns of two more caliphs, al-Mutawakkil abandoned it in 848. The failure of the *mihna* seriously damaged Caliphal authority and ruined the reputation of the office for succeeding caliphs. The caliph would lose much of his religious authority to the opinion of the *ulema* as a result of the *mihna*.

The *ulema* and the major Islamic law schools became truly defined in the period of al-Ma'mun and Sunnism, as a religion of legalism, became defined in parallel. Doctrinal differences between Sunni and Shi'a Islam began to become more pronounced. Ibn Hanbal, the founder of the Hanbali legal school, became famous for his opposition to the *mihna*. Al-Ma'mun's simultaneous opposition and patronage of intellectuals led to the emergence of important dialogues on both secular and religious affairs, and the *Bayt al-Hikma* became an important center of translation for Greek and other ancient texts into Arabic. This Islamic renaissance spurred the rediscovery of Hellenism and ensured the survival of these texts into the European renaissance.

Al-Ma'mun had been named governor of Khurasan by Harun, and after his ascension to power, the caliph named Tahir as governor for his military services in order to assure his loyalty. It was a move that al-Ma'mun soon regretted, as Tahir and his family became entrenched in Iranian politics and became increasingly powerful in the state, contrary to al-Ma'mun's desire to centralize and strengthen Caliphal power. The rising power of the Tahirid dynasty became a threat as al-Ma'mun's own policies alienated them and his other opponents.

The *shakiriya*, which were to trigger the movement of the capital from Baghdad to Samarra during al-Mu'tasim's reign, were raised in al-Ma'mun's time. The *shakiriya* were military units from Central Asia and North Africa, hired, complete with their commanders, to serve under the Caliph.

Al-Ma'mun also attempted to divorce his wife during his reign, who had not borne him any children. His wife hired a Syrian judge of her own before al-Ma'mun was able to select one himself; the judge, who sympathized with the caliph's wife, refused the divorce. Following al-Ma'mun's experience, no further Abbasid caliphs were to marry, preferring to find their heirs in the harem.

Al-Ma'mun, in an attempt to win over the Shi'a Muslims to his camp, named the eighth Imam, Ali ar-Rida, his successor, if he should outlive al-Ma'mun. Most Shi'ites realized, however, that ar-Rida was too old to survive him and saw al-Ma'mun's gesture as empty; indeed, Al-Ma'mun poisoned Ali ar-Rida who then died in 818. The incident served to further alienate the Shi'ites from the Abbasids, who had already been promised and denied the Caliphate by al-'Abbas.

The Abbasid empire grew somewhat during the reign of al-Ma'mun. Hindu rebellions in Sindh were put down, and most of Afghanistan was absorbed with the surrender of the leader of Kabul. Mountainous regions of Iran were brought under a tighter grip of the central Abbasid government, as were areas of Turkestan.

Shortly before his death, during a visit to Egypt in 832, the caliph ordered the breaching of the Great Pyramid of Giza looking for knowledge and treasure. He entered the pyramid by tunneling into the Great Pyramid near where tradition located the original entrance.

Personal Characteristics

Al-Tabari (v. 32, p. 231) describes al-Ma'mun as of average height, light complexion, handsome and having a long beard losing its dark colour as he aged. He relates anecdotes concerning the caliph's ability to speak concisely and eloquently without preparation, his generosity, his respect for Muhammad and religion, his sense of moderation, justice and his love of poetry.

Death

Al-Tabari (v.32, pp. 224–231) recounts how Al-Ma'mun was sitting on the river bank telling those with him how splendid the water was. He asked what would go best with this water and was told a specific kind of fresh dates. Noticing supplies arriving, he asked someone to check whether such dates were included. As they were, he invited those with him to enjoy the water with these dates. All who did this fell ill. Others recovered. But Al-Ma'mun died. He encouraged his successor to continue his policies and not burden the people with more than they could bear. This was on 9 August 833.

Al-Ma'mun died near Tarsus. The city's major mosque (Tarsus Grand Mosque), contains a tomb reported to be his. He was succeeded not by his son, Al-Abbas ibn al-Ma'mun, but by his half-brother, al-Mu'tasim.

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External links

- **(English)** Al-Mamum: Building an Environment for Innovation (http://www.dinarstandard.com/innovation/AlMamun122505.htm)
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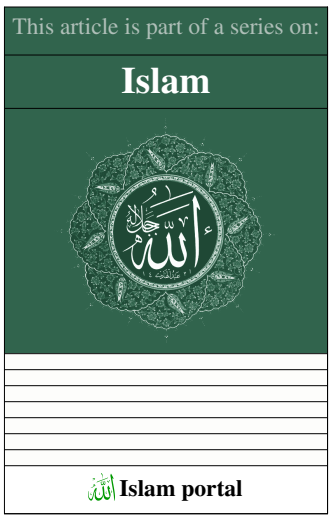
Al-Ma'mun **Abbasid** **Born:** 786 **Died:** 833		
Sunni Islam titles		
Preceded by **Al-Amin**	**Caliph of Islam** 813–833	Succeeded by **Al-Mu'tasim**

Mu'tazila



Muʿtazilah (Arabic: المعتزلة) is an Islamic school of theology based on reason and rational thought[1] that flourished in the cities of Basra and Baghdad, both in present-day Iraq, during the 8th–10th centuries. The adherents of the Mu'tazili school are best known for their having asserted that, because of the perfect unity and eternal nature of Allah, the Qur'an must therefore have been created, as it could not be co-eternal with God.[2] From this premise, the Mu'tazili school of Kalam proceeded to posit that the injunctions of God are accessible to rational thought and inquiry: because knowledge is derived from reason, reason is the "final arbiter" in distinguishing right from wrong.[3] It follows, in Mu'tazili reasoning, that "sacred precedent" is not an effective means of determining what is just, as what is obligatory in religion is only obligatory "by virtue of reason."

The movement emerged in the Umayyad Era, and reached its height in the Abassid period. Scholarship on the movement stagnated for centuries owing to an absence of sympathetic accounts of the movement (and an abundance of hostile accounts) until the latter 20th century, when the 11th-century texts of Abd al-Jabbar al-Qadi were

unearthed in Yemen.[4]

It is still adopted by some Muslim scholars and intellectuals today.

Etymology

The name Mu'tazili is thought to originate from the reflexive Stem VIII (stem افتعل *ifta`ala*) of the Arabic triconsonantal root ع-ز-ل (ʿ-Z-L) dealing with isolation or separation, i.e. the word اعتزل (*iʿtazala*) meaning "to separate (oneself)", "to withdraw" from (as in Quran 18:16, 19:48 and 4:90). The term is rooted in a disagreement over how to classify a person who has committed a major sin.[5]

As he sat in a circle in a mosque with al-Hasan al-Basri, Wasil ibn 'Ata inquired as to the place of a sinning Muslim, if he was to be considered a believer or an unbeliever. Upon the response that the individual was nonetheless a Muslim, Wasil dissented, suggesting that the sinner was neither a believer nor an unbeliever. With that, Wasil withdrew from the circle of al-Hasan al-Basri, and was followed by 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd and others. Al-Hasan's remark, "Wasil has withdrawn from us", is believed to be the origin of the movement's name.

Origin

Mu'tazili theology originated in the 8th century in Basra (Iraq) when Wasil ibn Ata (d. 131 AH/748 AD) left the teaching lessons of Hasan al-Basri after a theological dispute regarding the issue of Al-Manzilah bayna al-Manzilatayn (described below); thus he, and his followers, including Amr ibn Ubayd (d. 144 AH/ 761 AD), were labelled *Mu'tazili*.[6] Later, Mu'tazilis called themselves *Ahl al-Tawhid wa al-'Adl* ("People of Divine Unity and Justice") based on the theology they advocated, which sought to ground Islamic creedal system in reason.

Though Mu'tazilis later relied on logic and different aspects of early Islamic philosophy, Greek philosophy, and Hellenistic philosophy, the truths of Islam were their starting point and ultimate reference.[7] The accusations leveled against them by rival schools of theology that they gave absolute authority to extra-Islamic paradigms reflect more the fierce polemics between various schools of theology than any objective reality. For instance, Mu'tazilis adopted unanimously the doctrine of creation ex nihilo, contrary to certain Muslim philosophers who, with the exception of al-Kindi, believed in the eternity of the world in some form or another.[8] It was usually Muslim philosophers, not the Muslim theologians generally speaking, who took Greek and Hellenistic philosophy as a starting point and master conceptual framework for analyzing and investigating reality.

From early days of Islamic civilization, and because of both internal factors including intra-Muslim conflicts and external factors including interfaith debates, several questions were being debated by Muslim theologians, such as whether the Qur'an was created or eternal, whether evil was created by God, the issue of predestination versus free will, whether God's attributes in the Qur'an were to be interpreted allegorically or literally, etc. Mu'tazili thought attempted to address all these issues.

Historical background of the origin of Mu'tazilis

In order to understand the origin of the Mu'tazili, it is necessary to know the historical background of the social, religious and political conditions of that time.

Muhammad and his early companions, the Sahabah, always insisted on the concept of the Sovereignty of Allah, and the freedom of human will, based on the doctrine that man would be judged by his actions. These teachings were uppermost in the subsequent early Islamic empire.

However, according to one view, due to public hatred after the tragedy of Battle of Karbala, the sack of Medina, and many political blunders committed by the Umayyad Caliphate, they were in need of a theory of Predestination (see Predestination in Islam), fatalism (jabr), that "a man is not responsible for his actions which proceed from God". So with their help a school of thought was emerged and was called "JABRIA". The founder of this school of thought

was Jahm bin Safwan. He maintained " that man is not responsible for any of his actions which proceed entirely from God" According to Al-Shahrastani, the Jabarias were divided into three sects, 1, the Jahmia, 2, the Najjaria, and 3, the Zirdria. The Arabs of pre Islamic days also believed in this concept, so it was easy for them to accept these ideas.

This concept was challenged by Ma'bad al-Juhani, Eunas al-Aswari, and Gilan Dimishki, and there emerged a school of thought known in the history of Muslim philosophy, as "QADRIA" who believed in "Qader", i.e., Fate - the theory of freedom of human will, based on the doctrine that man would be judged by his actions. These persons were put to death by the Umayyad Caliphate for heresy. After them there were many followers of them. The founder of Mu'tazili, Abu Huzaifa Wasil ibn Ata al-Ghazzal, are believed to labeled at Mu'tazilitesWikipedia:Please clarify.

It is also said that this school also emerged as a reaction against the Kharijites on the one hand, and the Shia on the other hand. According to Encyclopædia Britannica, "The name first appears in early Islāmic history in the dispute over ʿAlī's leadership of the Muslim community after the murder of the third caliph, Hazrat ʿUthmān [ibn 'Affan] (656). Those who would neither condemn nor sanction Hazrat ʿAlī or his opponents (Muawiyah I) but took a middle position were termed the Muʿtazilah."[9].

It is also maintained that Mu'taziltes descend from the followers of some of the Companions; Hazrat Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, Hazrat `Abd Allah ibn `Umar, etc. who were neutral in the dispute between Hazrat ʿAlī and his opponents (Muawiyah I). For details please see;[10]. "It is an explanation of this kind which today, in particular as a result of the studies undertaken by Nallino (Sull'origine del nome dei Mu'taziliti, in RSO, vii [1916]), is generally accepted: i'tizal would designate a position of neutrality in the face of opposing factions. Nallino drew support for this argument from the fact that at the time of the first civil war, some of the Companions('Abd Allah b. 'Umar, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, etc.), who had chosen to side neither with 'Ali nor with his adversaries, were for this reason called mu'tazila. He even drew the conclusion that the theological Mu'tazilism of Wasil and his successors was merely a continuation of this initial political Mu'tazilism; in reality, there does not seem to have been the least connection between one and the other. But, in its principle, this explanation is probably valid."

According to Sarah Slroumsa "The verb i'tazala means "to withdraw", and in its most common use, as given in the dictionaries and attested in Hadith literature, it denotes some sort of abstinence from sexual activity, from worldly pleasures, or, more generally, from sin.[11] 'Amr taught his followers to be "the party which abstains" (i.e., from evil: al-firqa al-mu'tazila), asceticism was their most striking characteristic. They were given the name "Mu'tazila" in reference to their pious asceticism, and they were content with this name,"[12]

This school of thought emerged as a reaction to political tyranny; it brought answers to political questions, or questions raised by current political circumstances. The philosophical and metaphysical elements, and influence of the Greek philosophy were added afterward during the Abbasid Caliphate. The founders of the Abbasid dynasty strategically supported this school to bring political revolution against Umayyad Caliphate. Once their authority established, they also turned against this school of thought.

1. Al-Milal wa al-Nihal, by Al-Shahrastani
2. The Spirit of Islam by Justice Syed Ameer Ali
3. Iqbal ka Ilm-ul-Kalam, Ali Abbas Jallalpuri.

Historical development

Like all other schools, Mu'tazilism developed over an extensive period of time. Abu al-Hudhayl al-'Allaf (d. 235 AH/849 AD), who came a couple of generations after Wasil ibn 'Ata' and 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd, is considered the theologian who systematized and formalized Mu'tazilism in Basra (Martin *et al.*, 1997). Another branch of the school found a home in Baghdad under the direction of Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir (d. 210 AH/825 AD).

As the number of Muslims increased throughout the Muslim empire, and in reaction to the excesses of so-called rationalism, theologians began to lose ground. The problem was exacerbated by the Mihna, the inquisition launched under the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun (d. 218 AH/833 AD). Mu'tazilis have been accused of being the instigators though it was the Caliph's own scheme (Nawas, 1994; Nawas, 1996; Cooperson 2005; Ess, 2006). The persecution campaign, regardless, cost them and theology in general the sympathy of the Muslim masses. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, a Muslim jurist and founder of the Hanbali school of Islamic jurisprudence was a victim of Ma'mun's Minha. Due to his rejection of Ma'mun's demand to accept and propagate the Mu'tazila creed, ibn Hanbal was imprisoned and tortured by the Abbasid rulers.

By the end of the fifteenth century, Mu'tazilis were subjected to vehement attacks from the traditionalists on one hand, and from the atheists, deists, philosophers, non-Muslim thinkers, etc. on the other. It is important to note that the traditionalists, as opposed to Mu'tazili rationalists, were not irrationalists. Both groups operated on the basis of some synthesis between reason and revelation. (See below for Mu'tazili view of the role and interaction of reason and revelation.) Jackson (2002) argued against the "fiction" of a strict traditionalist/rationalist dichotomy, and asserted instead that traditionalism and rationalism, in the Islamic context, should be regarded as "different traditions of reason."

In response to the attacks, Mu'tazili theologians refined and made more coherent and systematic their idea system. In Basra, this task was accomplished by the father and son team, Abu 'Ali al-Jubba'i (d. 303 AH/915 AD) and Abu Hashim al-Jubba'i (d. 321 AH/933 AD). The two differed on several issues and it was Abu Hashim who was to have the greatest influence on later scholars in Basra, including the prominent Abd al-Jabbar ibn Ahmed who became the most celebrated proponent of Mu'tazilism in the late tenth and early eleventh century (Martin *et al.*, 1997). Mu'tazilism did not disappear from the Islamic intellectual life after the demise of 'Abd al-Jabbar, but it declined steadily and significantly. Many of the Mu'tazili doctrines and methodologies, nonetheless, survived in the other Islamic schools.

Tenets

Mu'tazili tenets focus on the *five principles*:

(1) Al-Tawhid التوحيد – divine unity

Mu'tazilis believed in the absolute unity and oneness of God. In this regard, they are no different from the overwhelming majority of Muslims. Nevertheless, the different Muslim schools of theology have differed as to how to uphold Divine unity in a way that is consistent with the dictates of both scripture and sound reasoning — a task that is extremely sophisticated given that God is ontologically different and categorically distinct from nature, humans, and material causality. All attempts to talk about the Divine face the severe, perhaps utterly insurmountable, barrier of using limited human language to conceptualize the Transcendent.

One example: All Muslim schools of theology faced the dilemma of affirming Divine transcendence and Divine attributes, without falling into anthropomorphism on the one hand, or emptying Divine attributes, mentioned in scripture, of any concrete meaning on the other.[13] The Mu'tazili way of doing this was to deny the existence of attributes distinct from Divine essence. In other words, God is, for instance, omniscient, but He knows through His essence rather than by having separate knowledge apart from Him. This assertion was to avoid the multiplicity of co-eternals — something that may impugn the absolute unity and oneness of God, according to Mu'tazilis. In

addition, they resorted to metaphorical interpretations of Qur'anic verses or Prophetic reports with seemingly anthropomorphic content. Many other Muslim theologians did likewise. Others opted for either abstaining from making judgments concerning these texts, or to affirm them "without knowing how."

The doctrine of Tawhid in the words of the Mu'tazili prominent scholar, chief justice Abd al-Jabbar ibn Ahmed (d. 415 AH/1025 AD), in an original Mu'tazili work translated in Martin *et al.* (1997): It is the knowledge that God, being unique, has attributes that no creature shares with Him. This is explained by the fact that you know that the world has a creator (*sani*) who created it and that: He existed eternally in the past and He cannot perish (*fana'*), while we exist after being non-existent, and we can perish. And you know that He was and is eternally all-powerful (*qadir*) and that impotence (*al- àjz*) is not possible for Him. And you know that He is omniscient of the past and present and that ignorance (*jahl*) is not possible for Him. And you know that He knows everything that was, everything that is, and how things that are not would be if they were. And you know that He is eternally in the past and future living (*hayy*), and that calamities and pain are not possible for Him. And you know that He sees visible things (*mar'iyat*), and perceives perceptibles, and that He does not have need of sense organs. And you know that He is eternally past and in future sufficient (*ghani*) and it is not possible for Him to be in need. And you know that He is not like physical bodies, and that it is not possible for Him to get up or down, move about, change, be composite, have a form, limbs and body members. And you know that He is not like the accidents of motion, rest, color, food or smells. And you know that He is One throughout eternity and there is no second beside Him, and that everything other than He is contingent, made, dependent (*muhtaj*), structured (*mudabbar*), and governed by someone/thing else. Thus, if you know all of that you know God's oneness.

(2) Al-'Adl العدل – divine justice

Facing the problem of existence of evil in the world, the Mu'tazilis pointed at the free will of human beings, so that evil was defined as something that stems from the errors in human acts. God does nothing ultimately evil, and He demands not from any human to perform any evil act. If man's evil acts had been from the will of God, then punishment would have been meaningless, as man performed God's will no matter what he did. Mu'tazilis did not deny the existence of suffering that goes beyond human abuse and misuse of their free will granted to them by God. In order to explain this type of "apparent" evil, Mu'tazilis relied on the Islamic doctrine of *taklif* — "God does not order/give the soul of any of his creation, that which is beyond its capacity." [Qur'an 2:286] This entailed the existence of an "act of god" to serve a greater good, or the existence of evil acts to prevent a far greater evil. In conclusion, it comprised life is an ultimate "fair test" of coherent and rational choices, having a supremely just accountability in one's current state, as well as the hereafter.

Humans are required to have belief, *iman*, secure faith and conviction in and about God, and do good works, **amal saleh**, to have **iman** reflected in their moral choices, deeds, and relationship with God, fellow humans, and all of the creation in this world. If everyone is healthy and wealthy, then there will be no meaning for the obligations imposed on humans to, for example, be generous, help the needy, and have compassion for the deprived and trivialized. The inequalities in human fortunes and the calamities that befell them are, thus, an integral part of the test of life. Everyone is being tested. The powerful, the rich, and the healthy are required to use all their powers and privileges to help those who suffer and to alleviate their suffering. In the Qiyamah (Judgment Day), they will be questioned about their response to Divine blessings and bounties they enjoyed in their lives. The less fortunate are required to patiently persevere and are promised a compensation for their suffering that, as the Qur'an puts it in 39:10, and as translated by Muhammad Asad, is "beyond all reckoning".

The test of life is specifically for adults in full possession of their mental faculties. Children may suffer, and are observed to suffer, given the nature of life but they are believed to be completely free from sin and liability. Divine justice is affirmed through the theory of compensation. All sufferers will be compensated. This includes non-believers and, more importantly, children, who are destined to go to Paradise.

The doctrine of 'Adl in the words of 'Abd al-Jabbar : It is the knowledge that God is removed from all that is morally wrong (*qabih*) and that all His acts are morally good (*hasana*). This is explained by the fact that you know that all human acts of injustice (*zulm*), transgression (*jawr*), and the like cannot be of His creation (*min khalqihi*). Whoever attributes that to Him has ascribed to Him injustice and insolence (*safah*) and thus strays from the doctrine of justice. And you know that God does not impose faith upon the unbeliever without giving him the power (*al-qudra*) for it, nor does He impose upon a human what he is unable to do, but He only gives to the unbeliever to choose unbelief on his own part, not on the part of God. And you know that God does not will, desire or want disobedience. Rather, He loathes and despises it and only wills obedience, which He wants and chooses and loves. And you know that He does not punish the children of polytheists (*al-mushrikin*) in Hellfire because of their fathers' sin, for He has said: "Each soul earns but its own due" (Qur'an 6:164); and He does not punish anyone for someone else's sin because that would be morally wrong (*qabih*), and God is far removed from such. And you know that He does not transgress His rule (hukm) and that He only causes sickness and illness in order to turn them to advantage. Whoever says otherwise has allowed that God is iniquitous and has imputed insolence to Him. And you know that, for their sakes, He does the best for all of His creatures, upon whom He imposes moral and religious obligations (*yukallifuhum*), and that He has indicated to them what He has imposed upon them and clarified the path of truth so that we could pursue it, and He has clarified the path of falsehood (*tariq l-batil*) so that we could avoid it. So, whoever perishes does so only after all this has been made clear. And you know that every benefit we have is from God; as He has said: "And you have no good thing that is not from Allah" (Qur'an 16:53); it either comes to us from Him or from elsewhere. Thus, when you know all of this you become knowledgeable about God's justice.

(3) Al-Wa'd wa al-Wa'id الوعد و الوعيد – the promise and the warning

This comprised questions of the Last day, or in Arabic, the Qiyamah (Day of Judgment). According to 'Abd al-Jabbar (Martin *et al.*, 1997): The doctrine of irreversible Divine promises and warnings, is fashioned out the Islamic philosophy of human existence. Humans, or "insan" in Arabic are created with an innate need in their essence to submit themselves to something. Also, it is seen as an innate need of all humans to pursue an inner peace and contentment within the struggles of an imperfect world. Knowledge of God, truth, and choices, in relation to one's innate need of submission is seen in Islam as God's promise and recompense (*al-thawab*) to those who follow. His warning is looked at as a conscious decision by a human submitting themselves, and choosing a varying principle which He had given a clear warning to. He will not go back on His word, nor can He act contrary to His promise and warning, nor lie in what He reports, in contrast to what the Postponers (Murjites) hold.[*citation needed*]

(4) Al-Manzilah Bayna al-Manzilatayn المنزلة بين المنزلتين – the intermediate position

That is, Muslims who commit grave sins and die without repentance are not considered as mu'mins (believers), nor are they considered kafirs (non-believers), but in an intermediate position between the two. The reason behind this is that a mu'min is, by definition, a person who has faith and conviction in and about God, and who has his/her faith reflected in his/her deeds and moral choices. Any shortcoming on any of these two fronts makes one, by definition, not a mu'min. On the other hand, one does not become a kafir (i.e. rejecter; non-believer), for this entails, inter alia, denying the Creator — something not necessarily done by a committer of a grave sin. The fate of those who commit grave sins and die without repentance is Hell. Hell is not considered a monolithic state of affairs but as encompassing many degrees to accommodate the wide spectrum of human works and choices, and the lack of comprehension associated to The Ultimate Judge (one of God's other names in Islam.) Consequently, those in the intermediate position, though in Hell, would have a lesser punishment because of their belief and other good deeds. Mu'tazilites adopted this position as a middle ground between Kharijites and Murjites. In the words of 'Abd al-Jabbar, the doctrine of the intermediate position is (Martin *et al.*, 1997): the knowledge that whoever murders, or fornicates (*zana*), or commits serious sins is a grave sinner (*fasiq*) and not a believer, nor is his case the same that of believers with respect to praise and attributing greatness, since he is to be cursed and disregarded. Nonetheless, he is not an unbeliever who cannot be buried in our Muslim cemetery, or be prayed for, or marry a Muslim. Rather, he has

an intermediate position, in contrast to the Seceders (Kharijites) who say that he is an unbeliever, or the Murjites who say that he is a believer.

(5) Al-amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al munkar الأمر بالمعروف و النهي عن المنكر – advocating the good and forbidding the evil

Commanding the good is of two types. One of them is obligatory, which is commanding religious duties (*al-fara'id*) when someone neglects them (*dayya ȧha*), and the other is supererogatory (*al-nafila*), which is commanding supererogatory acts of devotion when someone omits to do them (*tarakaha*). As for prohibiting evil, all of it is obligatory because all evil is ethically wrong (*qabih*). It is necessary, if possible, to reach a point where evil (*al-munkar*) does not occur in the easiest of circumstances or lead to something worse, for the goal is for evil simply not to happen. And, if it is possible to reach the point where good (*al-ma ȓuf*) occurs in the easiest of circumstances, then preferring the difficult circumstances would be impermissible. Similarly, God has said: "If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight against the one who transgresses until he complies with the command of Allah; then, if he complies, make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who act fairly" (Qur'an 49:9). Thus, prohibiting evil is obligatory only if the view does not prevail that prohibiting a particular evil would lead to an increase in disobedience, and if a preference for what was harmful were not predominant. If such a view does prevail, prohibiting evil would not be obligatory, and avoiding it would be more appropriate.

Theory of interpretation

Mu'tazilah relied on a synthesis between reason and revelation. That is, their rationalism operated in the service of scripture and Islamic theological framework. They, as the majority of Muslim jurist-theologians, validated allegorical readings of scripture whenever necessary. Justice 'Abd al-Jabbar (1965) said in his *Sharh al-Usul al-Khamsa* (The Explication of the Five Principles):

> إن الكلام متى لم يمكن حمله على ظاهره و حقيقته، و هناك مجازان أحدهما أقرب و الآخر أبعد، فإن الواجب حمله على المجاز الأقرب دون الأبعد، لأن المجاز الأبعد من الأقرب كالمجاز مع الحقيقة، و كما لا يجوز فى خطاب الله تعالى أن يحمل على المجاز مع إمكان حمله على الحقيقة، فكذلك لا يحمل على المجاز الأبعد و هناك ما هو أقرب منه (When a text cannot be interpreted according to its truth and apparent meaning, and when (in this case) two metaphoric interpretations are possible, one being proximal and the other being distal; then, in this case, we are obligated to interpret the text according to the proximal metaphoric interpretation and not the distal, for (the relationship between) the distal to the proximal is like unto (the relationship between) the metaphor to the truth, and in the same way that it is not permissible, when dealing with God's word, to prefer a metaphoric interpretation when a discernment of the truth is possible, it is also not permissible to prefer the distal interpretation over the proximal interpretation)

The hermeneutic methodology proceeds as follows: if the literal meaning of an ayah (verse) is consistent with the rest of scripture, the main themes of the Qur'an, the basic tenets of the Islamic creed, and the well-known facts, then interpretation, in the sense of moving away from the literal meaning, is not justified. If a contradiction results from adopting the literal meaning, such as a literal understanding of the "hand" of God that contravenes His transcendence and the Qur'anic mention of His categorical difference from all other things, then an interpretation is warranted. In the above quote, Justice 'Abd al-Jabbar emphatically mentioned that if there are two possible interpretations, both capable of resolving the apparent contradiction created by literal understanding of a verse, then the interpretation closer to the literal meaning should take precedence, for the relationship between the interpretations, close and distant, becomes the same as the literal understanding and the interpretation.

Note: Sharh al-Usul al-Khamsah may be a paraphrase or supercommentary made by Abd al-Jabbar's student Mankdim (Gimaret, 1979).

First obligation

Mu'tazilis believed that the first obligation on humans, specifically adults in full possession of their mental faculties, is to use their intellectual power to ascertain the existence of God, and to become knowledgeable of His attributes. One must wonder about the whole existence, that is, about why something exists rather than nothing. If one comes to know that there is a being who caused this universe to exist, not reliant on anything else and absolutely free from any type of need, then one realizes that this being is all-wise and morally perfect. If this being is all-wise, then his very act of creation cannot be haphazard or in vain. One must then be motivated to ascertain what this being wants from humans, for one may harm oneself by simply ignoring the whole mystery of existence and, consequently, the plan of the Creator. This paradigm is known in Islamic theology as *wujub al-nazar*, i.e., the obligation to use one's speculative reasoning to attain ontological truths. About the "first duty," 'Abd al-Jabbar said (Martin *et al.*, 1997): It is speculative reasoning (*al-nazar*) which leads to knowledge of God, because He is not known by the way of necessity (*daruratan*) nor by the senses (*bi l-mushahada*). Thus, He must be known by reflection and speculation.

The difference between Mu'tazilis and other Muslim theologians is that Mu'tazilis consider *al-nazar* an obligation even if one does not encounter a fellow human being claiming to be a messenger from the Creator, and even if one does not have access to any alleged God-inspired or God-revealed scripture. On the other hand, the obligation of *nazar* to other Muslim theologians materializes upon encountering prophets or scripture.

Reason and revelation

The Mu'tazilis had a nuanced theory regarding reason, Divine revelation, and the relationship between them. They celebrated power of reason and human intellectual power. To them, it is the human intellect that guides a human to know God, His attributes, and the very basics of morality. Once this foundational knowledge is attained and one ascertains the truth of Islam and the Divine origins of the Qur'an, the intellect then interacts with scripture such that both reason and revelation come together to be the main source of guidance and knowledge for Muslims. Harun Nasution in the Mu'tazila and Rational Philosophy, translated in Martin (1997), commented on Mu'tazili extensive use of rationality in the development of their religious views saying: "It is not surprising that opponents of the Mu'tazila often charge the Mu'tazila with the view that humanity does not need revelation, that everything can be known through reason, that there is a conflict between reason and revelation, that they cling to reason and put revelation aside, and even that the Mu'tazila do not believe in revelation. But is it true that the Mu'tazila are of the opinion that everything can be known through reason and therefore that revelation is unnecessary? The writings of the Mu`tazila give exactly the opposite portrait. In their opinion, human reason is not sufficiently powerful to know everything and for this reason humans need revelation in order to reach conclusions concerning what is good and what is bad for them."

The Mu'tazili position on the roles of reason and revelation is well captured by what Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 324 AH/935 AD), the eponym of the Ash'ari school of theology, attributed to the Mu'tazili scholar Ibrahim an-Nazzam (d. 231 AH/845 AD) (1969):

> كل معصية كان يجوز أن يأمر الله سبحانه بها فهي قبيحة للنهي، وكل معصية كان لا يجوز أن يبيحها الله سبحانه فهي قبيحة لنفسها كالجهل به والاعتقاد بخلافه، وكذلك كل ما جاز أن لا يأمر الله سبحانه فهو حسن للأمر به وكل ما لم يجز إلا أن يأمر به فهو حسن لنفسه
>
> *No sin may be ordered by God as it is wrong and forbidden, and no sin shall be permitted by God, as they are wrong by themselves. To know about it and believe otherwise, and all that God commands is good for the ordered and all that it is not permissible except to order it is good for himself*

That is, there are three classes of acts. The first is what the intellect is competent on its own to discover its morality. For instance, the intellect, according to Mu'tazilis, can know, independently of revelation, that justice and telling the truth (*sidq*) are morally good. God is under an ethical obligation to order humanity to abide by these. The second class of deeds is what the intellect can discover their inherent evil and ugliness (*qubh*), such as injustice, mendacity, or, according to al-Nazzam as reported in the above quote, being in a state of ignorance of the Creator. God cannot

but prohibit these. The third class comprises the acts that the human intellect is incapable of assigning moral values to them. These are only known through revelation and they become known to be morally good if God orders them, or morally wrong if God forbids them. In short, the human intellect is capable of knowing what is right and what is wrong in a very general sense. Revelation comes from God to detail what the intellect summarizes, and to elaborate on the broad essentials. Revelation and reason complement each other and cannot dispense with one another.

In the above formulation, a problem emerged, which is rendering something obligatory on the Divine being — something that seems to directly conflict with Divine omnipotence. The Mu'tazili argument is predicated on absolute Divine power and self-sufficiency, however. Replying to a hypothetical question as to why God does not do that which is ethically wrong (*la yaf àlu al-qabih*), 'Abd al-Jabbar replied (as translated in Martin *et al.*, 1997): Because He knows the immorality of all unethical acts and that He is self-sufficient without them…For one of us who knows the immorality of injustice and lying, if he knows that he is self-sufficient without them and has no need of them, it would be impossible for him to choose them, insofar as he knows of their immorality and his sufficiency without them. Therefore, if God is sufficient without need of any unethical thing it necessarily follows that He would not choose the unethical based on His knowledge of its immorality. Thus every immoral thing that happens in the world must be a human act, for God transcends doing immoral acts. Indeed, God has distanced Himself from that with His saying: “But Allah wills no injustice to His servants” (Qur'an 40:31), and His saying: “Verily Allah will not deal unjustly with humankind in anything” (Qur'an 10:44).

The thrust of `Abd al-Jabbar's argument is that acting immorally or unwisely stems from need and deficiency. One acts in a repugnant way when one does not know the ugliness of one's deeds, i.e., because of lack of knowledge, or when one knows but one has some need, material, psychological, or otherwise. Since God is absolutely self-sufficient (a result from the cosmological "proof" of His existence), all-knowing, and all-powerful, He is categorically free from any type of need and, consequently, He never does anything that is ridiculous, unwise, ugly, or evil.

The conflict between Mu'tazilis and Ash'aris concerning this point was a matter of the focus of obsession. Mu'tazilis were obsessed with Divine justice, whereas the Ash'aris were obsessed with Divine omnipotence. Nevertheless, Divine self-restraint in Mu'tazili discourse is because of, not a negation of, Divine omnipotence.

Validity of hadith

In the Islamic sciences, hadith are classified into two types regarding their authenticity. The first type is diffusely recurrent (*mutawatir*) reports — those that have come down to later generations through a large number of chains of narration, involving diverse transmitters such that it is virtually impossible that all these people, living in different localities and espousing different views, would come together, fabricate exactly the same lie and attribute it to the Prophet of Islam or any other authority. A large number of narrators is not a sufficient criterion for authenticating a report because people belonging to some sect or party may have an interest in fabricating reports that promote their agendas. The power of this mode of transmission, *tawatur,* rests on both the number and diversity of narrators at each stage of transmission. On the other hand, the authority of the second type of reports, *ahaad*, those which do not meet the criteria for *tawatur,* is considered speculative by the Mu'tazilah.

'Abd al-Jabbar commented on the issue of reports saying (Martin *et al.*, 1997): Mu'tazilis declare as true all that is established by *mutawatir* reports, by which we know what the Messenger of God has said. And that which was narrated by one or two transmitters only, or by one for whom error was possible, such reports are unacceptable in religions (*al-diyanat*) but they are acceptable in the proceedings of positive law (*furu `l-fiqh*), as long as the narrator is trustworthy, competent, just, and he has not contradicted what is narrated in the Qur'an.

Thus, the non-*mutawatir* reports are accepted by Mu'tazilis, according to 'Abd al-Jabbar, when it comes to the details or branches of law. When it comes to basic tenets, these reports are not considered authentic enough to establish a belief central to the Islamic faith. That is, the Mu'tazilis main issue is with reports of speculative authenticity that have a theological, rather than legal, content, when these seem to contravene the definitives of the Qur'an and

rational proof. Since the doctrines that Mu'tazilis hated most were anthropomorphism and unqualified predestination (Ess, 2006), it were reports supporting these and resisting all hermeneutical attempts at harmonizing and reconciliation that were criticized and rejected by Mu'tazilis.

Notes

[1] http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/H052
[2] Abdullah Saeed. *The Qur'an: an introduction*. 2008, page 203
[3] Oussama Arabi. *Studies in modern Islamic law and jurisprudence*. page 27-8
[4] Julie Scott Meisami, Paul Starkey. *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, Volume 2. 1998, page 626
[5] Alnoor Dhanani. *The Physical theory of kalām*. page 7
[6] Martin *et al.*, 1997
[7] e.g. Walzer, 1967; Craig, 2000
[8] Craig, 2000
[9] http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/399752/Mutazilah
[10] http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ei2/mu-tazila.htm
[11] Ibn Manzur,Lisan al-'Arab, s.v oy.':/ : wensirck, Concordance a indices de la tradition musulmatle, vol Iv, p. 11)7.
[12] http://pluto.huji.ac.il/~stroums/files/MuTazila_Reconsidered.pdf
[13] Jackson, 2005

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External links

- The Mutazilla & Rational Theology (http://www.youtube.com/playlist?p=PL39E88D35BCB301A0)

Brethren of Purity

The Brethren of Purity (Persian: الصفااخوان *akhvān alsfā*; also **The Brethren of Sincerity**) were a secret society[1] of Muslim philosophers in Basra, Iraq, in the 10th century CE.

Arabic manuscript illumination from the 12th century CE showing the Brethren of Purity.maqamat al hariri

The structure of this mysterious organization and the identities of its members have never been clear.[2][3] Their esoteric teachings and philosophy are expounded in an epistolary style in the *Encyclopedia of the Brethren of Purity* (*Rasa'il Ikhwan al-safa'*), a giant compendium of 52 epistles that would greatly influence later encyclopedias. A good deal of Muslim and Western scholarship has been spent on just pinning down the identities of the Brethren and the century in which they were active.

Name

The Arabic phrase *Ikhwan al-Safa* (short for, among many possible transcriptions, *Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ wa Khullān al-Wafā wa Ahl al-Ḥamd wa abnāʾ al-Majd*, meaning "Brethren of Purity, Loyal Friends, People worthy of praise and Sons of Glory") can be translated as either the "Brethren of Purity" or the "Brethren of Sincerity"; various scholars such as Ian Netton prefer "of Purity" because of the group's ascetic impulses towards purity and salvation.

A suggestion made by Goldziher, and later written about by Philip K. Hitti in his *History of Arabs*, is that the name is taken from a story in *Kalilah wa-Dimnah*, in which a group of animals, by acting as faithful friends (*ikhwan al-safa*), escape the snares of the hunter. The story concerns a ring-dove and its companions who get entangled in the net of a hunter seeking birds. Together, they leave themselves and the ensnaring net to a nearby rat, who is gracious enough to gnaw the birds free of the net; impressed by the rat's altruistic deed, a crow becomes the rat's friend. Soon a tortoise and gazelle also join the company of animals. After some time, the gazelle is trapped by another net; with the aid of the others and the good rat, the gazelle is soon freed, but the tortoise fails to leave swiftly enough and is himself captured by the hunter. In the final turn of events, the gazelle repays the tortoise by serving as a decoy and distracting the hunter while the rat and the others free the tortoise. After this, the animals are designated as the "Ikwhan al-Safa".

This story is mentioned as an exemplum when the Brethren speak of mutual aid in one *rasa'il*, a crucial part of their system of ethics that has been summarized thus:

> In this Brotherhood, self is forgotten; all act by the help of each, all rely upon each for succour and advice, and if a Brother sees it will be good for another that he should sacrifice his life for him, he willingly gives it.[4]

Meetings

The Brethren regularly met on a fixed schedule. The meetings apparently took place on three evenings of each month: once near the beginning, in which speeches were given, another towards the middle, apparently concerning astronomy and astrology, and the third between the end of the month and the 25th of that month; during the third one, they recited hymns with philosophical content.[5] During their meetings and possibly also during the three feasts they held, on the dates of the sun's entry into the Zodiac signs "Ram, Cancer, and Balance"), besides the usual lectures and discussions, they would engage in some manner of liturgy reminiscent of the Harranians.[6]

Ranks

Hierarchy was a major theme in their Encyclopedia, and unsurprisingly, the Brethren loosely divided themselves up into four ranks by age; the age guidelines would not have been firm, as for example, such an exemplar of the fourth rank as Jesus would have been too young if the age guidelines were absolute and fixed. Compare the similar division of the Encyclopedia into four sections and the Jabirite symbolism of 4. The ranks were:

1. The "Craftsmen" – a craftsman had to be at least 15 years of age; their honorific was the "pious and compassionate" (*al-abrār wa 'l-ruhamā*).
2. The "Political Leaders" – a political leader had to be at least 30 years of age; their honorific was the "good and excellent" (*al-akhyār wa 'l-fudalā*)
3. The "Kings" – a king had to be at least 40 years of age; their honorific was the "excellent and noble" (*al-fudalā' al-kirām*)
4. The "Prophets and Philosophers" – the most aspired-to, the final and highest rank of the Brethren; to become a Prophet or Philosopher a man had to be at least 50 years old; their honorific compared them to historical luminaries such as Jesus, Socrates, or Muhammad who were also classified as Kings; this rank was the "angelic rank" (*al-martabat al-malakiyya*).[7]

Identities

There have been a number of theories as to the authors of the Brethren.

Ismaili

Among the Isma'ili groups and missionaries who favored the *Encyclopedia* (as Paul Casanova shows in his 1898 work attempting to date the Brethren), authorship was sometimes ascribed to one or another "Hidden Imam"; this theory is recounted in Ibn al-Qifti's biographical compendium of philosophers and doctors, the "Chronicle of the Learned" (*Ahkbār al-Hukamā* or *Tabaqāt-al-Hukamā*).[8][9][10]

The compiler of Ikhwan as-Safa concealed his identity so skillfully that modern scholarship has spilled much ink in trying to trace the members of group. Using vivid metaphor, the members referred to themselves as "sleepers in the cave" (Rasail 4th, p. 18). In one place they gave as their reason for hiding their secrets from the people, not fear of earthly rulers nor trouble from the common populace, but a desire to protect their God-given gifts (Rasail 4th, p. 166). Yet they were well aware that their esoteric teachings might provoke unrest, and the calamities suffered by the successors of the Prophet were a good reason to remain hidden until the right day came for them to emerge from their cave and wake from their long sleep (Rasail 4th, p. 269). To live safely, it was necessary for their doctrines to be cloaked. Ian Richard Netton, however writes in "MusIim Neoplatonists" (London, 1982, p. 80) that, "The Ikhwan's concepts of exegesis of both Quran and Islamic tradition were tinged with the esoterism of the Ismailis." Strangely enough, in dealing with the doctrines of Qadariya and Sabaeans of Harran, the Epistles do not mention the Ismailism. Yet it was the Ismailis, perhaps more than any other, which had the most profound effect on the structure and vocabulary of the Epistles. Almost the average scholars have attempted to show that the Ikhwan (brothers) were definitely Ismailis. A.A.A. Fyzee,born and died a sulaimani, (1899–1981), for instance, writes in "Religion in the

Middle East", (ed. by A.J. Arberry, Cambridge, 1969, 2nd vol., p. 324) that, "The tracts are clearly of Ismaili origin; and all authorities, ancient and modern, are agreed that the Rasail constitute the most authoritative exposition of the early form of the Ismaili religion." According to Yves Marquet, "It seems indisputable that the Epistles represent the state of Ismaili doctrine at the time of their compositions" (vide, "Encyclopaedia of Islam", 1960, p. 1071) Bernard Lewis in "The Origins of Ismailism" (London, 1940, p. 44) was more cautious than Fyzee, ranking the Epistles among books which, though "closely related to Ismailism" may not actually have been Ismaili, despite their batini inspiration. Ibn Qifti (d.646/1248), reporting in the 7th/13th century in "Tarikh-i Hukama" (p. 82) that, "Opinions differed about the authors of the Epistles. Some people attributed to an Alid Imam, proffering various names, whereas other put forward as author some early Mutazalite theologians."

Among the Syrian Ismailis, the earliest reference of the Epistles and its relation with the Ismailis is given in "Kitab Fusul wa'l Akhbar" by Nurudin bin Ahmad (d. 233/849). Another important work, "al-Usul wa'l-Ahakam" by Abul Ma'ali Hatim bin Imran bin Zuhra (d. 498/1104), quoted by Arif Tamir in "Khams Rasa'il Ismailiyya" (Salamia, 1956, p. 120), writes that, "These dais, and other dais with them, collaborated in composing long Epistles, fifty-two in number, on various branches of learning." It implies the Epistles being the product of the joint efforts of the Ismaili dais.

Among the Yamenite traces, the earliest reference of the Epistles is found in "Sirat-i Ibn Hawshab" by Garar bin Mansur al-Yamen, who lived between 270/883 and 360/970, and writes, "He (Imam Taqi Muhammad) went through many a difficulty and fear and the destruction of his family, whose description cannot be lengthier, until he issued (ansa'a) the Epistles and was contacted by a man called Abu Gafir from among his dais. He charged him with the mission as was necessary and asked him to keep his identity concealed." This source not only asserts the connection of the Epistles with the Ismailis, but also indicates that the Imam himself was not the sole author (sahibor mu'allif), but only the issuer or presenter (al-munsi). It suggests that the text of the philosophical deliberations was given a final touching by the Imam, and the approved text was delivered to Abu Gafir to be forwarded possibly to the Ikhwan in Basra secretly. Since the orthodox circles and the ruling power had portrayed a wrong image of Ismailism, the names of the compilers were concealed. The prominent members of the secret association seem to be however, Abul Hasan al-Tirmizi, Abdullah bin Mubarak, Abdullah bin Hamdan, Abdullah bin Maymun, Sa'id bin Hussain etc. The other Yamenite source connecting the Epistles with the Ismailis was the writing of Sayyadna Ibrahim bin al-Hussain al-Hamidi (d. 557/1162), who wrote "Kanz ul-Walad." After him, there followed "al-Anwar ul-Latifa" by Sayyadna Muhammad bin Tahir (d. 584/1188), "Tanbih al-Ghafilin" by Sayyadna Hatim bin Ibrahim Al Hamidi (d. 596/1199), "Damigh al-Batil wa hatf ul-Munaazil" by Sayyadna Ali bin Muhammad bin al-Walid al-Anf (d. 612/1215), "Risalat al-Waheeda" by Sayyadna Hussain bin Ali al-Anf (d. 667/1268) and "Uyun'ul-Akhbar" by Sayyadna Idris bin Hasan Imaduddin (d. 872/1468) etc.

According to "Ikhwan as-Safa" (Rasail 21st., p. 166), "Know, that among us there are kings, princes, khalifs, sultans, chiefs, ministers, administrators, tax agents, treasurers, officers, chamberlains, notables, nobles, servants of kings and their military supporters. Among us too there are merchants, artisans, agriculturists and stock breeders. There are builders, landowners, the worthy and wealthy, gentlefolk and possessors of all many virtues. We also have persons of culture, of science, of piety and of virtue. We have orators, poets, eloquent persons, theologians, grammarians, tellers of tales and purveyors of lore, narrators of traditions, readers, scholars, jurists, judges, magistrates and ecstatics. Among us too there are philosophers, sages, geometers, astronomers, naturalists, physicians, diviners, soothsayers, casters of spells and enchantments, interpreters of dreams, alchemists, astrologers, and many other sorts, too many to mention."

al-Tawhīdī

Al-Qifti, however, denigrates this account and instead turns to a comment he discovered, written by Abū Hayyān al-Tawhīdī (d. 1023) in his *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa'l-Mu'ānasa* (written between 983 and 985),[11] a collection of 37 seances at the court of Ibn Sa'dān, vizier of the Buyid ruler Samsam ad-Dawla. Apparently, al-Tawhīdī was close to a certain Zaid b. Rifa'a, praising his intellect, ability and deep knowledge – indeed, he had dedicated his *Kitāb as-Sadiq was-Sadaqa* to Zaid – but he was disappointed that Zaid was not orthodox or consistent in his beliefs, and that he was, as Stern puts it:

> ...frequenting the society of the heretical authors of the *Rasa'il Ikhwan as-Safa*, whose names are also recorded as follows: Abu Sulaiman Muhammed b. Ma'shar al-Bisti al-Maqdisi, Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali b. Harun az-Zanjani and Abu Ahmad al-Mihrajani, and al-'Aufi. At-Tauhidi also reports in this connection the opinion expressed by Abu Sulaiman al-Mantiqi, his master, on the *Rasa'il* and an argument between a certain al-Hariri, another pupil of al-Mantiqi, and Abu Sulaiman al-Maqdisi about the respective roles of Revelation and Philosophy.

For many years, this was the only account of the authors' identities, but al-Tawhīdī's comments were second-hand evidence and so unsatisfactory; further, the account is incomplete, as Abu Hayyan mentions that there were others besides these 4.[12]

This situation lasted until al-Tawhīdī's *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa'l-Mu'ānasa* was published in 1942.[] This publication substantially supported al-Qifti's work, although al-Qifti apparently toned down the description and prominence of al-Tawhīdī's charges that the Brethren were *Batiniyya*, an esoteric Ismaili sect and thus heretics, possibly so as to not tar his friend Zaid with the same brush.

Stern derives a further result from the published text of the *Kitāb al-Imtā 'wal-Muanasa*, pointing out that a story al-Tawhīdī ascribes to a personal meeting with Qādī Abu'l-Hasan 'Alī b. Hārūn az-Zanjāni, the founder of the group, appears in almost identical form in one of the epistles.[13] While neat, Stern's view of things has been challenged by Tibawi, who points out some assumptions and errors Stern has made, such as the relationship between the story in al-Tawhīdī's work and the Epistles; Tibawi points out the possibility that the story was instead taken from a third, independent and prior source.[14]

al-Tawhīdī's testimony has also been described as thus:

> The Ikhwan al-Safa' remain an anonymous group of scholars, but when Abu Hayyan al-Tawhīdī was asked about them, he identified some of them: Abu Sulayman al-Busti (known as al-Muqaddasi), 'Ali b. Harun al-Zanjani, Muhammad al-Nahrajuri (or al-Mihrajani), al-'Awfi, and Zayd ibn Rifa'i.[15]

The last contemporary source comes from the surviving portions of the *Kitāb Siwan al-Hikma* (c. 950) by Abu Sulaiman al-Mantiqi (al-Tawhīdī's teacher; 912-985),[16] which was a sort of compendium of biographies; al-Mantiqi is primarily interested in the Brethren's literary techniques of using parables and stories, and so he says only this little before proceeding to give some extracts of the *Encyclopedia*:

> Abū Sulaimān al-Maqdisī: He is the author of the fifty-two Epistles inscribed The Epistles of the Sincere Brethren; all of them are full with Ethics and the science of... They are current among people, and are widely read. I wish to quote here a few paragraphs in order to give an idea of the manner of their parables, thus bringing my book to an end.[17]

al-Maqdisī was previously listed in the Basra group of al-Tawhīdī; here Stern and Hamdani differ, with Stern quoting Mantiqi as crediting Maqdisi with 52 epistles, but Hamdani says "By the time of al-Manṭiqī, the *Rasā'īl* were almost complete (he mentions 51 tracts)."[18]

The second near-contemporary record is another comment by Shahzúry or (Shahrazūrī) as recorded in the *Tawārikh al-Hukamā* or alternatively, the *Tawárykh al-Hokamá*; specifically, it is from the *Nuzhat al-arwah*, which is contained in the *Tawárykh*, which states:

> Abū Solaymán Mah. b. Mosh'ir b. Nasby, who is known by the name of Moqadisy, and Abú al-Hasan b. Zahrún Ryhány, and Abú Ahmad Nahrajúry, and al-'Aufy, and Zayd b. Rofá'ah are the philosophers who

> compiled the memoirs of the Ikhwán al-cafâ, which have been recorded by Moqaddisy.[19]

Hamdani disputes the general abovegoing identifications, pointing out that accounts differ in multiple details, such as whether Zayd was an author or not, whether there was a principal author, and who was in the group or not. He lays particular stress on quotes from the Encyclopedia dating between 954 and 960 in the anonymous (Pseudo-Majriti) work *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*; al-Maqdisi and al-Zanjani are known to have been active in 983, He finds it implausible they would have written or edited "so large an encyclopedia at least twenty-five to thirty years earlier, that is, around 343/954 to 348/960, when they would have been very young." He explains the al-Tawhidi narrative as being motivated by contemporary politics and issues of hereticism relating to the Qarmatians, and points out that there is proof that Abu Hayyan has fabricated other messages and information.[20]

Amusingly, Aloys Sprenger mentions this in a footnote:

> Since I wrote the first part of this notice I found one of the authors of these memoirs mentioned in the following terms: 'Zayd b. Rofa, one of the authors of the Ikhwan al safa, was extremely ignorant in tradition, and he was a liar without shame.'"[21]

The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity

The *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* (*Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*) consist of fifty-two treatises in mathematics, natural sciences, psychology (psychical sciences) and theology. The first part, which is on mathematics, groups fourteen epistles that include treatises in arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, geography, and music, along with tracts in elementary logic, inclusive of: the *Isagoge*, the *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, the *Prior Analytics* and the *Posterior Analytics*. The second part, which is on natural sciences, gathers seventeen epistles on matter and form, generation and corruption, metallurgy, meteorology, a study of the essence of nature, the classes of plants and animals, including a fable. The third part, which is on psychology, comprises ten epistles on the psychical and intellective sciences, dealing with the nature of the intellect and the intelligible, the symbolism of temporal cycles, the mystical essence of love, resurrection, causes and effects, definitions and descriptions. The fourth part deals with theology in eleven epistles, investigating the varieties of religious sects, the virtue of the companionship of the Brethren of Purity, the properties of genuine belief, the nature of the Divine Law, the species of politics, and the essence of magic.

They define a *perfect man* in their *Rasa'il* as "of East Persian derivation, of Arabic faith, of Iraqi, that is Babylonian, in education, Hebrew in astuteness, a disciple of Christ in conduct, as pious as a Syrian monk, a Greek in natural sciences, an Indian in the interpretation of mysteries and, above all a Sufi or a mystic in his whole spiritual outlook". There are debates on using this description and other materials of *Rasa'il* that could help with determination of the identity, affiliation (with Ismaili, Sufism, ...), and other characteristics of *Ikhwan al-Safa*.[22]

The *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* are available in print through a variety of Arabic editions, starting from the version established in Calcutta in 1812, then followed by the edition of Bombay of 1887–1889), then by the edition of Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli in 1928 in Cairo, and the Beirut Sadir edition by Butrus Bustani in 1957 and the version set by ʿArif Tamir in Beirut in 1995. All these editions are not critical and we do not yet have a complete English translation of the whole *Rasa'il* encyclopedia.

The first complete Arabic critical edition and fully annotated English translation of the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* is being prepared for publication by a team of editors, translators and scholars as part of a book series that is published by Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London; a project currently coordinated by the series General Editor Nader El-Bizri. This series is initiated by an introductory volume of studies edited by Nader El-Bizri, which was published by Oxford University Press in 2008, and followed in 2009 by the voluminous Arabic critical edition and annotated English translation with commentaries of *The Case of the Animals Versus Man Before the King of the Jinn* (Epistle 22).

Since style of the text is plain, and there are numerous ambiguities, due to language and vocabulary, often of Persian origin, it is believed the authors were of Persian descent.

Notes

[1] They are generally considered a secret society because of their closed & private meetings every 12 days, as mentioned in the *Rasa'il*.

[2] "Having been hidden within the cloak of secrecy from its very inception, the *Rasa'il* have provided many points of contention and have been a constant source of dispute among both Muslim and Western scholars. The identification of the authors, or possibly one author, the place and time of writing and propagation of their works, the nature of the secret brotherhood, the outer manifestation of which comprises the *Rasa'il* – these and many secondary questions have remained without answer." pg 25, Nasr (1964)

[3] William Bayne Fisher, Richard Nelson Frye, John Andrew Boyle, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Published by Cambridge University Press, 1975, ISBN 0-521-20093-8, p. 428

[4] pg 199, 189 of Lane-Poole 1883

[5] "The liturgy of the first night consisted of personal oratory; that of the second of a 'cosmic text', read under the starry heavens facing the polar star; and that of the third night of a philosophical hymn (implying a metaphysical or metacosmic theme) which was a 'prayer of Plato', 'supplication of Idris', or 'the secret psalm of Aristotle'." pg 35 of Nasr 1964

[6] "...the liturgy described by the Ikhwan seems to be more closely related to the religion of the heirs of the prophet Idris, that is, the Harranians who were the principal inheritors in the Middle East of what has been called "Oriental Pythagoreanism" and who were the guardians and propagators of Hermeticism in the Islamic world." pg 34 of Nasr 1964

[7] pg 36, Neton 1991

[8] pg 193 of Lane-Poole's *Studies in a Mosque*

[9] pg. 25 of Nasr 1964

[10] pg 1; "It can be easily understood too that the Ismā'ilis, among whom the *Rasa'il* enjoyed a quasi-canonical authority, ascribed to someone or other of their "Hidden Imams"." Here Stern is drawing upon Dr. H. Hamdānī's "The Rasail Ikhwan al-Safa in the Ismaili Literature", published in *Der Islam* in 1936. Compare also this quote from pg 7 of the "Ikhwan as-Safa and their Rasa'il: A Critical Review of a Century and a Half of Research" (by A. L. Tibawi,as published in volume 2 of *The Islamic Quarterly* in 1955; pgs. 28–46): "It tends, however, to prove one thing, namely, that the*Rasa'il* were popular with later Isma'ili missionaries who read, copied, and summarized them to suit their own purpose. But, as stated above, it has yet to be proved that Isma'ili bent of the tracts and of the genuine *ar-Risāla al-Jāmi'a* was itself a proof of early Isma'ili connexion. Indeed, the tracts speak in two voices on this Isma'ili bent." *Stern (1947)*

[11] pg 345, Hamdani

[12] 348, Hamdani

[13] pg. 4, Stern 1947

[14] pg 12-13 of "Ikhwan as-Safa and their Rasa'il: A Critical Review of a Century and a Half of Research", by A. L.Tibawi, as published in volume 2 of *The Islamic Quarterly* in 1955;pgs. 28–46

[15] http://www.hallagulla.com/vb3/philosophy/ikhw-n-al-saf-108780.html

[16] 349, Hamdani

[17] pg. 5, Stern 1947

[18] 350, Hamdani

[19] "Notices of some copies of the Arabic work entitled "Rasàyil Ikhwàm al-cafâ" by Aloys Sprenger, originally published by the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Calcutta) in 1848 Islamic Philosophy volume 20

[20] 351, Hamdani

[21] Image:Brethren8.png

[22] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods Used for Its Study by the Ikhwān Al-Ṣafā', Al-Bīrūnī, and Ibn Sīnā*, Edition: revised, Published by SUNY Press, 1993, ISBN 0-7914-1515-5. Chapter 1. (Pages 31–33)

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