

THE EVENTS OF PARADISE
FACTS AND ESCHATOLOGICAL DOCTRINE
IN MEDIEVAL ISMĀ'ILĪ HISTORY

István Hajnal

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

The purpose of this article is no more than a brief analysis of two episodes of medieval Ismā'īlī history which, although taking place in quite different historical periods and geographical regions, display a number of shared features, in particular the occurrence of the notion of Paradise as a structuring principle. One of these episodes is the attempt by the Qarāmita of Bahrayn (273/886-470/1078), or dissident Ismā'īlīs, to restore the 'original religion of Paradise' in the opening decades of the 4th/10th century, while the other is the use of the concept of Paradise as manifested in the declaration of Resurrection (*qiyāma*) by the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs during the Alamūt period (483/1090-654/1256) in the second half of 6th/12th century.

A couple of preliminary observations about the Ismā'īlī movement will be in order. The earliest Ismā'īlīs were a branch of the Imāmī Šī'a, arising from a schism about the succession to the 6th *imām*, ʿAḫmad aṣ-Šādiq on his death in 148/765. These splinter groups, centered in southern 'Irāq, now acknowledged the claims of aṣ-Šādiq's eldest son Ismā'īl al-Mubārak (d. 136/754) or the latter's son Muḫammad al-Maktūm (d. after 179/795 or about 184/800) to the imāmate (Daftary 1900:93-96).

The early Ismā'īlīs had a very particular conception of their own about the nature of religious authority, the essence of which can be summarized as the continuous need of mankind for a divinely guided spiritual guide (*imām*), an authoritative master who possesses knowledge (*'ilm*) inaccessible to ordinary men. By virtue of that knowledge, he was regarded as the genuine source of religious guidance, the real interpreter of the true meaning of the Qur'ān and the Islamic sacred law (*šarī'a*)¹.

The Ismā'īlī movement itself appeared on the scene in the mid-3rd/9th century as a large-scale centralized underground movement, whose main purpose was to overthrow the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate in Baḡdād. Several early sources agree that the earliest Ismā'īlī mission was related to the expectation of the immediate reappearance of Muḫammad ibn Ismā'īl as al-Mahdī, who died about 184/800 and would after his return end the era of Islam and proclaim the hidden truth (*ḥaqā'iq*)

¹ Esmail & Nanji 1977:238; Cf. Daftary 2000:88-89.

of former religions². Rather than calling themselves Ismā'īlīs, these adherents dubbed themselves ›People of the Truth‹ (*ahl al-ḥaqqā'iyya*), their own religious persuasion ›the true religion‹ (*dīn al-ḥaqq*), and their mission ›call to truth‹ (*da'wat al-ḥaqq*), or ›the rightly guided mission‹ (*ad-da'wa al-ḥadiyya*) (Halm 1988:162). Their revolutionary message, which basically consisted of preaching the imminent advent of the ›Truly Guided One‹ (al-Mahdī), or ›The One Who Appears‹ (al-Qā'im), was spread abroad in the strictest confidentiality throughout the Islamic world, from Central Asia to Iran, Iraq, Arabia, Yemen and North Africa.

Several treatises which have survived from the time of the underground propaganda prove that the doctrine embraced by the early Ismā'īlīs was composed of a cyclical history of revelation and a gnostic cosmology. This teaching held that divine revelation advanced through seven prophetic epochs, with each of these being initiated by a Spokesman-Prophet (*nātiq*) who proclaimed a religion of law (*ṣarī'a*) for their communities. They, however, only presented the outward (*zāhir*) aspect of religion with its rituals and legal prescriptions, but did not communicate its inner sense (*bātin*) to the believers. The secret meaning of all the rites and regulations was therefore only known to their deputies (*wasī*), who would in turn reveal it to a very limited number of individuals worthy of such initiation (Esmail & Nanji 1977:239). In every cycle (*dawr*), there succeeded seven *imāms*, and the last one among them would always be elevated to the status of Spokesman-Prophet (*nātiq*) for the next cycle, bringing a new scripture and law that invalidated the previous ones.

According to the early Ismā'īlī doctrine, the seventh *imām* of the sixth cycle was Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, which is to say he would then become the seventh and last Speaker (*nātiq*). He did not die, but went into hiding instead, and will appear once more as the Mahdī-Qā'im. The contemporary Imāmi Šī'ī heresiographers, reporting on the abrogation of Muḥammad's law (*nash ṣarī'at Muḥammad*), narrate: "They [the early Ismā'īlīs] say that God is giving Ādam's Paradise to Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, which means, according to their doctrine, that all forbidden things and everything that God has created in the world are allowed"³. Nevertheless, instead of coming up with a new religion of law (*ṣarī'a*), he will declare all the old ones obsolete, including that of Islam.

The ›repeal of the laws‹ (*raf' aš-ṣarā'ī'*) would clear the way for the ›original religion of Paradise‹ with no prescribed ceremonial or legal system. This was the religion thought to have been the one practised by Adam and the angels in Paradise before the Fall: ›the primaeval religion of Adam‹ (*dīn Ādam al-awwal*), confined to

² The notion of the *gayba* was clearly the original doctrine. On the details of the early *ismā'īlī* doctrine, see art. 'Carmathes', *EIR* I, 825-826; Cf. Daftary 1991:228-231, Halm 1988:168.

³ On the repeal of the religions of law (*raf' aš-ṣarā'ī'*), see an-Nawbaḥṭī, *Firaq* 62.8-10, 62.16-17, 63.2-4, al-Qummī, *Maqālat* 84.6-8, 84.13, 84.16-17, and the *ismā'īlī* author, as-Siġistānī, *Iḥbāt* 177-180.

the praise of the Creator and the recognition of His oneness (*tawhīd*). The seventh imām, whose function included the full revelation of all formerly esoteric truths (*ḥaqā'iq*), would reign over and bring to perfection the world in his capacity as al-Qā'im and al-Mahdī⁴.

The early Ismā'īlī movement underwent a schism in the late 3th/9th century. 'Abdallāh/'Ubaydallāh, who was later – after the foundation of the new caliphate (297/910) – to become the first Fāṭimid caliph al-Mahdī, now declared himself imām before the public, and was subsequently recognized as such by the bulk of the movement, that is the communities in North Africa, the Yemen, Egypt and Sind⁵. By doing so, he also rejected the idea of the return of Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il as the expected Mahdī. The dissident party of the movement, known as the Qarmatīs or al-Qarāmīta, and composed of the communities in the East, broke with him and remained devoted to the original creed of the imminent advent of Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il as al-Qā'im and al-Mahdī. After the schism, 'Ubaydallāh and later his successors the Fāṭimid caliphs – claiming as they did the imāmate for themselves – were obliged to modify the original doctrine of the Ismā'īlīs about Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il being the final imām, al-Qā'im. The first caliph himself left no doubt in his *Letter to the community in Yemen* that, far from being the saviour at the end of time, he was simply the first of a long series of future *imāms* who would succeed to one another in an infinite number of cycles of seven until the reign of the very last of the line⁶. As his actual words are quoted to have stated: "There will be as many imāms as God wills, until suddenly and unexpectedly, [the last] Speaker-Prophet appears, God willing"⁷. Consequently, the Fāṭimid doctrine counted with more than one heptade of imāms during the era of Islam, postponing the expectations connected with the coming of the al-Qā'im further and further into the future (Halm 1978:10-11).

The greatest insufficiency of this doctrinal modification was the inevitable loss of the eschatological role of the seventh *imām*, and the vital source of motivation that it had provided to the early Ismā'īliyya⁸. Thus, the days of the promised rule of the true religion (*dīn al-ḥaqq*) were indefinitely postponed to some uncertain date. This

⁴ See the details in the relevant sources: an-Nawbaḥtī, *Firaq* 62-63, al-Qummī, *Maqālāt* 84, as-Sigīstānī, *Iḥbāt* 180, 190-193; Cf. Madelung 1959:76, Madelung 1988:94, Halm 1988:169, Halm 1991:21.

⁵ With this innovation the *ismā'īliyya* turned away from the notion of occultation (*gayba*) to recognise living Imāms.

⁶ 'Ubaydallāh's letter is preserved in the book *al-Farā'id wa-ḥudūd ad-dīn* of Ḡa'far ibn Mansūr al-Yaman (d. 365/975), and was published by Ḥ. F. al-Hamdānī 1958:10-14; Cf. Hamdani & de Blois 1982: 173-207, Halm 1991:194.

⁷ Arabic text: al-Hamdānī 1958:14; Cf. Halm 1978:9-10.

⁸ Daftary 1991:244; Cf. Halm 1978:11.

was bound to be a huge disappointment to a lot of the followers of the movement. The Fāṭimids, for their part, did not allow any antinomian experiments whatsoever; the *qiyāma*, the era of the Qā'im – whose identity otherwise remained hidden – was shifted into the distant future; a whole series of future Imāms was envisaged, although speculations about the date of the beginning of the *qiyāma* did not cease.⁹ Until then, however, observance of Islamic law was to be obligatory even for the Ismā'īlīs.

Nevertheless, the latent antinomian tendencies within their ranks surfaced time and time again, leading to such extreme sets of events as those initiated by the Qarāmita in Bahrayn, or the Druzes, or the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs of Alamūt (Halm 1991:249-250).

It is in the light of the previous observations that we wish to turn our attention to the events in Bahrayn that attempted to restore the ›original religion of Paradise‹. After the break with the Fāṭimids, the headquarters of the radical dissidents of the Ismā'īlī movement, that is the Qarāmita, was transferred to Bahrayn, in the Eastern coastal region of Arabia. Here they established their own state, whose power was rooted in the Bedouin tribes of the Northern part of the Arabian peninsula. Their leading ideological authorities, however, lived mostly in Iran. From their stronghold, the Qarmaṭīs led a messianic revolutionary movement with marked antinomian tendencies against the Sunnī Caliphate. They earned a particularly frightful reputation in the Eastern as well as the Western territories of the 'Abbāsīd Empire, shaking the Muslim world for almost two centuries. Their constant raids and marauding expeditions destroyed the caravan and pilgrim routes of South 'Irāq and the urban centres of the region. Their military presence posed a permanent threat to the whole area, and it was to become one of the principal factors contributing to the disintegration of the Caliphate.

As far as they were concerned, recognizing the Fāṭimid caliph 'Ubaydallāh as the Mahdī was out of the question, as the ›Expected One‹ was still to arrive. Parallel to their military offensives, they also gave expression to their firm belief in the imminent appearance of the Mahdī on several occasions. Abū Sa'īd al-Ġannābī (d. 300/913) one of the founding fathers of the *da'wa* in Bahrayn claimed to be acting on behalf of the expected Mahdī who was to appear in 300/912¹⁰. The unfulfilled expectations of the adherents quite probably caused internal frustrations within the *da'wa*, which may have contributed to the murder of Abū Sa'īd al-Ġannābī and of several leaders of the movement in the summer of 330/913¹¹.

⁹ Halm 1978:11; Cf. Halm 1975:97 ff.

¹⁰ Abū Sa'īd's prophecies on the awaited Mahdī see 'Abd al-Ġabbār, *Taṭbit* II, 379-381.

¹¹ On these events see 'Abd al-Ġabbār, *Taṭbit* II, 379-381, al-Mas'ūdī, *at-Tanbih* 373, an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat* XXV, 243, Ibn ad-Dawādārī, *Kanz* VI, 61, al-Maqrizī, *Ittī'az* I, 164.

Otherwise, political astrology played an important role in the history of the entire Ismā'īlī movement. This distinctive Muslim science for the astral determination of political changes was developed after the 'Abbāsid takeover. It adopted the Sasanian astrological techniques for predictions of dynastic change on the basis of Ptolemaic astronomy, combined with Zoroastrian millennialism. It became the most respected science of the prediction of the predetermined future turnings in world domination, and thus instigated rebellions throughout Islamic history¹².

In the first half of the 4th/10th century, in a famous encyclopaedic work (*Rasā'il*) that is said to have been compiled in early Ismā'īlī circles, the *Ihwān as-Safā'* (The Brethren of Purity) had developed political astrology in an astrally determined cyclical theory of history. According to it, the conjugation of the stars determined major changes in world history. The *Ihwān as-Safā'* reconciled a duodecimal system of the Zodiac with the heptads of the Judeo-Christian hierohistory. With reference to one of the Prophet's statements that "[t]he life of this world is seven thousand years. I have been sent in the last of these millennia", in the conception of the *Ihwān as-Safā'*, each millennium (960 solar years) is divided into two complete cycles, each consisting of four (120-year) quarters of ascension, apogee, decline and clandestinity. Each quarter cycle is inaugurated by a Qā'im, who is followed by six imams. The seventh imam, who completes the heptad, is the Qā'im of the next quartercycle. The Qā'im of the Resurrection (*qiyāma*) would be expected at the end of the millennium of the Prophet Muḥammad, which is the final millennium (Arjomand 2002:120-121). These ideas, like other teachings of the *Ihwān as-Safā'* concerning human relations, probably retained great influence among later Ismā'īlīs.

Al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048) mentions a prediction, based on erroneous astronomical calculations, of the appearance of the Qā'im at the eighteenth conjunction after the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad, which is made to coincide with 'the tenth millennium, which is presided over by Saturn and Sagittarius'. At that time, the era of Islam and the rule of the Arabs will come to an end. The Qā'im 'will rise and will restore the rule of Magism'¹³.

The Iranian Ismā'īlī *da'ī* in Rayy, Abū Hātim ar-Rāzī (d. 322/934), had been spreading the same astrological prediction on the coming of the Qā'im¹⁴.

Then the second successor of Abū Sa'īd al-Ġannābī in the leadership of the Qarmaṭī community in Baḥrayn, his son Abū Tāhir (d. 322/944), prophesied the Mahdī's imminent arrival after the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 316/928,

¹² See Arjomand 2002:119-120. "Fī aḥammīyyat at-tangīm wa-dawruhu fī l-'aṣr al-wasīṭ" [The importance and role of astrology in the Middle Ages] in de Goeje, 1978:173-182. Cf. Arjomand 2002:119-120; Halm 1975:102-104.

¹³ al-Bīrūnī, *Āṭār* 213; Cf. *Chronology* 196-197.

¹⁴ Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 285.1-14, *The Book of Government* 210; Cf. Madelung 1988:96.

marking the end of the Islamic period, and the beginning of the final religious era, as did other Qarmatī missionaries in Northern Iran¹⁵.

As the much-awaited date was drawing near, the Qarmatīs increased their offensive activity against the dominions of the Caliphate. They embarked on a series of raids against Southern ‘Irāq, pillaging the pilgrims’ caravans returning from Mecca, and, in 315/927, they even made an attempt, unsuccessful though it was, at seizing Bagdad¹⁶.

As a result of the advances of the Mahdī’s messengers in Southern ‘Irāq, the local partisans of the Mahdī revealed their allegiance in the Sawād of Kūfa, attaching exaggerated expectations to the personality of Abū Tāhir. They said that the ‘Truth’ had appeared and the Mahdī had resurrected: the ‘Abbāsids had come to their end, as had all Sunnī dignitaries. “We have not come to establish another dynasty, but to abolish the *šarī‘a*” (*mā ġi‘nā li-iqāmat dawla wa-lākin li-izālat šarī‘a*) – they claimed; and they announced the realm of the Mahdī and collected the poll-tax, but government troops very soon suppressed this uprising¹⁷.

Al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048) mentions in his report “on the eras of pseudo-prophets” that the Qarmatīs of Baḥrayn ‘promised each other the arrival of the ‘Expected One’ (*al-muntazar*) in the seventh conjunction of the Fiery Triplicity’¹⁸. When that conjunction occurred in 317/928 a young man from Isfahān was ready to set off for Baḥrayn to claim to be the expected Qā’im-Mahdī.

Afterwards, the Qarāmīta unexpectedly returned from their military expedition to Baḥrayn, where construction works on a fortified refuge (*dār al-ḥiğra*), the prospective residence of the awaited Mahdī, had been completed. Later, in 319/930, they arrived without warning in Mecca during the pilgrimage season, subsequently committing a dreadful slaughter of the pilgrims and inhabitants, acting exactly like infidels. They finally tore out and carried off the Black Stone (*al-ḥağar al-aswad*) of the Ka‘ba, presumably with the aim of symbolizing the end of Islam.

It is these disastrous events that lead us to the curious incidents in Ramadān 319/September-October 931, when Abū Tāhir presented a young Persian prisoner of war as the expected Mahdī to his community, handing over authority to him and

¹⁵ On the prophecies of Abū Tāhir see ‘Abdalğabbār, *Taḥḥit* II, 381, al-Bagdadī, *Farq* 287; The expectation of the Mahdī is also reflected in a propagandistic poem by Abū Tāhir. In it he designates himself as the one who summons to obey the Mahdī. For the fragments of the poem, see: al-Bīrūnī, *Āḡar* 214; al-Bagdadī, *Farq* 287; Cf. de Goeje 1886:113-115, Madelung 1959:79ff, Nassār 1977:II, 341-342, Halm 1991:229.

¹⁶ On the details of the military events see Miskawayhi, *Tagārib* I, 172-177.

¹⁷ On this so-called *baqlīyya* revolt in the *Sawād* of Kūfa see ‘Arib, *Silat* 132ff, 137, 162; ‘Abd al-Ğabbār, *Taḥḥit* 383-84. Cf. Madelung, 1959:82-84, Halm 1991:227-228.

¹⁸ al-Bīrūnī, *Āḡar* 313-314; Cf. *Chronology* 197.

declaring all previous religions to be invalid: the true religion – “the religion of our father Adam”, that is “the religion of Paradise” without laws – had now been revealed and “the talk of Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad had shown itself to be lies and deception”¹⁹. The latent antinomian tendencies which from the very beginning mark the Ismā‘īlī *da‘wa*, become evident here for the first time²⁰. According to their tenets, the religions of the Sacred Law which have been revealed before – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – are only changing outer shells for the ‘True religion’ (*dīn al-ḥaqq*), the original Religion of Paradise exempt from cultic duties, commandments and prohibitions: the pure worship of God which Adam and the Angels used to practice before the Fall. The Mahdī – according to their expectations – will restore this original religion to mankind; what could be more obvious, now that he had come, than to declare the time fulfilled, and to abolish the outer shell of the law (*raf‘ aš-šarā‘i‘*). Nevertheless, let us have a look into the relevant reports.

All the sources agree that the youth was a young Persian from Isfahān or Ḥurāsān; some even asserted that he was a descendant of the Persian kings and described him as a ›Zoroastrian‹ or a ›Magian‹²¹. Isfahān, his home town, had long been associated by the astrologers with the rise of a Persian dynasty which would overthrow the Arab Caliphate.

However, the reports surrounding the events connected to his appearance are contradictory, confused, and they differ radically from one another²². It is also reported that the young man was of a charismatic character, excelled in intelligence and learning, and soon was initiated into the affairs of the Qarāmīta. His proud behaviour and noble mien catching the attention of those around him, he was taken before the chief *dā‘ī* Abū Ṭāhir. In a passage, (‘Arīb, *Ṣila* 163.2-4) there is a mention of a sign (*alāma*) by which the Isfahānī was able to make Abū Ṭāhir and his brothers believe that he was the ›Expected One‹ (*al-muntazar*). According to al-Bīrūnī²³ the date of the Isfahānī’s arrival was chosen to coincide with the passing of 1500 years from the death of the prophet Zoroaster, at the year 1242 of

¹⁹ The main source is ad-Dahabī, *Tarīḥ* XXXIV, [331/942-350/961], 15.10-12. For the interpretation of the events, see my article: Hajnal 1988:187-201; Cf. Madelung 1988:96-97, Halm, 1991:172.

²⁰ In fact, similar events had occurred in the *ismā‘īlī* communities before in Yemen in 299/912 and in Ifriqiya 309/921. See the details in *Sīrat al-Ḥādī* 262 and Ibn Idārī, *Bayān* I, 187; Cf. Halm 1991:223-224.

²¹ al-Mas‘ūdī, *Tanbīh* 361.15-16; ‘Abd al-Ġabbār, *Taḥḥīṭ* I, 107, II, 387; Cf. Nizām al-Mulk, *Sīyāsat-nama* 310.3, *The Book of Government* 230.

²² Ṭābit ibn Sinān, *Qarāmīta* 225-226, Miskawayhi, *Ṭaġarīb* II, 55-56, *Eclipse* II, 62-64; Cf. Ibn al-A‘īr, *Kamil* VIII, 351-352, ‘Abd al-Ġabbār, *Taḥḥīṭ* II, 386-388.

²³ al-Bīrūnī, *Āṭār* 313, Cf. *Chronology* 197.

Alexander's era for which prophecies attributed to Zoroaster and Ğāmāsp were predicting the restoration of the reign of the Magians.

Among the reports of the emergence of the young Iṣfahānī, there is a particularly valuable Sunnī eyewitness account from within the personal entourage of Abū Ṭāhir, by his personal physician²⁴.

This doctor (a certain Ibn Hamdān) tells us how the power was handed over. According to his report, when the chief *dā'ī* was presenting the youth to the community, "the people, including the Qarmaṭī Abū Ṭāhir and his brothers, were staying around him. Then Abū Ṭāhir called out as loudly as he could: 'You people! Know: We and you also were all donkeys! But now God has sent us this person', - and he pointed to the youth - 'this is my Lord (*hādā rabbi*) and your Lord (*rabbukum*), and my God (*ilāhī*) and your God (*ilāhukum*). We are all his slaves! The rule has now been transferred to him, and he will be king of us all (*wa-huwa yamlukunā kullanā*)'."

Then the eyewitness proceeds to narrate that Abū Ṭāhir and all the others took a handful of earth and strewed it over their heads. Thereupon Abū Ṭāhir declared: "Know, you people, that the [true] religion has now appeared. It is the religion of our father Adam (*huwa dīn abīnā Adam*) and all religions we have belonged to until now are null and void, and everything that the *dā'īs* have been telling you is null and void and false, all the talk about Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad! The true religion is the original religion of Adam, and those are all wily deceivers, so curse them! Then the people cursed them including Abraham, Muḥammad, even 'Alī and his descendants."

The doctor's report further states: "Abū Ṭāhir and the people used to circle around him [the incarnate God], completely naked, shouting: 'Our God, he is mighty and exalted!'"

Heinz Halm was the first to interpret these ritual ceremonies correctly as a Qarmaṭī attempt at restoring the religion of Adam, a way of ›returning to Paradise²⁵. The circling in the nudity of Paradise around the God who had become visible and walked among the men fits entirely into the early Ismā'īlī notion of the ›original religion of Paradise«. A century later entirely similar ideas were to be found among the Druzes, who were also Ismā'īlī dissenters²⁶.

²⁴ ad-Dahabī, *Tarīḥ* XXXIV, 14-16; Cf. Miskawayhi, *Ṭaḡarīb* II, 58.1-12.

²⁵ Halm also points out that nakedness was also characteristic of the participants in the rituals of the Adamite communities in late Antiquity and in medieval Europe. Sexual freedom was part of their attitude too, since they had entered into the condition of prelapsarian innocence, and thus their bodies were thought to be incapable of sinning. See Halm 1991:259-280.

²⁶ See Van Ess 1977:70-71; Cf. Vatikiotis 1957:149-158.

According to our sources the Isfahānī who evidently took the astral sign to indicate the end of the era of world dominion by the Arabs and the beginning of the domination of the Persians, had initiated a number of strange ceremonies. He prescribed pederasty and incest with their own sisters for them, and he ordered that all beardless youths who refused should be put to death. He also ordered them to worship the fire and to cut off the hand of everybody who put out the fire with his hand or the tongue of everybody who extinguished it by blowing and then began to execute the notables of Bahrayn²⁷.

Therefore after a while Abū Ṭāhir was obliged to acknowledge that the Isfahānī had been an impostor who had led him astray and had him killed²⁸.

Regarding the events Abū Ṭāhir could perhaps reckon with certain sentiments for some aspects of Persian religious tradition among the Qarmaṭī community in Bahrayn. And there were evidently some links with established Zoroastrianism, for the chief priest of the Magians, Isfandiyār ibn Ādarbād, was accused of complicity with Abū Ṭāhir and executed by order of the caliph ar-Raḍī (322/934-329/940) (al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh* 104-105). But we think that the central incentives of the developments were implied in the traditional Ismā'īlī doctrine and the expectations concerning the advent of the seventh Speaker-Prophet (*nātiq*), the Qā'im-Mahdī. Ad-Dahabī relates that exaggerated expectations were attached to Abū Ṭāhir's personality by his followers, like those we mentioned in connection with the uprising in the *Sawād* of Kūfa. He completes his account by saying that, "given no more delay by God, [Abū Ṭāhir] felt that his downfall was near, so he handed his power over to Abū l-Faḍl al-Maḡūsī al-ʿAḡamī."

De Blois (1986:18) regards the Isfahānī as a puppet created by Abū Ṭāhir, who arranged the whole intermezzo in order to fulfil his plans of gaining more power. Halm's (1991:235ff) careful reconstruction of the occurrences even depicts this obscure episode as a well-designed scenario, which comprises the capture of the young Persian (316/928), the arrangement of the predicted catastrophe with the disgrace of the sanctuary in Mecca (317/930), and also the disclosure of the youth's divinity to the community (319/931).

After all this unfortunate experiment with the incarnate God had seriously demoralised the Qarāmīta in Bahrayn and weakened their influence over the Ismā'īlī communities in the East, the movement's ideologists in the Iranian territories tried to restore the doctrinal unity of Qarmaṭī Ismā'īlīs, with but little success. Abū

²⁷ See ad-Dahabī, *Tarīḥ* XXXIV, 15.14-16, Miskawayhi, *Ṭaḡarīb* II, 58.12-14; Cf. al-Bīrūnī, *Āṭar* 313. 2-5; Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 309.12-15; ʿAbd al-Ġabbār, *Tatbīt* I, 30.7-8. Ṭābit, *Qarāmīta* 55-56.

²⁸ On the denouement of the events see ad-Dahabī, *Tarīḥ* XXXIV, 15.18-21; Miskawayhi, *Ṭaḡarīb* II, 59.

Ṭāhir and his advisers were, nevertheless, able to maintain their power. The Muslim rites were restored to their rightful position, since the Mahdī still had not arrived.

A century later, Nāṣir-i Ḥosrō (d. 481/1089), the *ismā'īlī dā'ī* and famous traveler and author, reported²⁹ that the Qarāmīta of Bahrayn still believed they were in the era of the Prophet Muḥammad and of Islam, and they abstained from drinking wine. He also relates the interesting details, certified for the most part by Abū-l-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī (d. 449/1057) (*Gufrān* III, 235) that the Qarmatī community had continued to await the Šarīf Abū Sa'īd's return from death [sic!], as he himself had promised.

It is worth mentioning that the expectation of the return of the Hidden Imām remained a popular eschatological belief. By 483/1092, the underground passage to a water well (*sardāb*) in Sāmarrā', where the Hidden Imām, Muḥammad al-Mahdī, was believed to have disappeared in 260/874, had become a place of pilgrimage. At about the same time, the *šī'ī* inhabitants of the city of Kāšān in central Iran are reported to have expected the return of the Mahdī and regularly organized processions on horseback, fully armed, determined to return with him only. Similar outward demonstrations of *šī'ī* eschatological expectation are reported by Ibn Bābūya (d. 381/991) and Ibn Ḥaldūn (d. 809/1406) in the 8/14th century³⁰.

In the case of the Qarmatīs of Bahrayn the former idea of the Mahdī had, in about a century, crystallized as a myth, and some facets of the theocratic attributes of the Imām-Mahdī were inherited by the founder of the *dā'wa* in the region as was bound to happen in other areas and times too in a *šī'ī* milieu.

Incidentally, the intermezzo of the Pseudo-Mahdī in Bahrayn gave rise to the persistent charges of Sunnī polemicists and other adversaries of the *Ismā'īlīs* that the core of their doctrine was a dualist atheism and that its founders were some non-'Alid heretics plotting to destroy Islam from within, and so they gradually created the 'black legend' of the *Ismā'īliyya*³¹.

The lack of a united leadership and the ideological disagreement among the Qarāmīta evidently aided the Fātimids' efforts to regain the allegiance of the dissident *Ismā'īlī* communities in the East. The *qarmatī dā'īs* could either remain loyal to their original eschatological ideas, or accept a secularization of the role of the Mahdī, whose manifestation would then be understood symbolically, as the dynastic revolution brought by the Fātimids. Some missionaries attempted to achieve a compromise

²⁹ Nāṣir-i Ḥosrō, *Safarnāma* 82.12-15, Cf. *Book of Travels* 87.

³⁰ Friedlaender 1911:496-497; Cf. Arjomand 1998: II, 269.

³¹ See the so-called Bagdād Manifesto of 403/1011 and of 444/1052 in Abū-l-Fidā', *Tārīḥ* II, 142-143, and Ibn al-Aṭīr, *Kāmil* VIII, 73, 310-311, and about their 'heretics' see al-Bagdādī, *Farq* 282, *Moslem sects* 107, Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* 255.7-9, *The Book of Government* 188; Cf. Daftary, 1991:109, 111, 149, 194, 220.

between loyalty to a secular power and the eschatological import of their original belief (Cortese 1993:68).

It is not difficult to appreciate that the expectation of the imminent return of the Mahdī-Qā'im and the concomitant advent of the primeval lawlessness and ›paradisiacal religion‹ must have contributed significantly to the popular appeal of the Ismā'īlī *da'wa*. But it was not long before the delay in the messianic arrival caused problems for the Qarmatīs; thus the Iranian *da'i* Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī from Rayy had been obliged to flee when the date predicted by him for the return of the Mahdī passed uneventfully, and in Baḥrayn in 319/931 a pseudo-Mahdī had even been presented and the Islamic Sacred law declared to be annulled.

Likewise the Fāṭimids in the period following their ascent to power faced a problem similar to the movement which had preceded them. This problem was partly one of wrestling with the expectations of the people who had supported the movement when it was still seeking to gain power. By establishing a dynasty of imāms in the Fāṭimid *da'wa* the return of the Mahdī-Qā'im was pushed into the distant future. By the 5/11th century, it was evident that the Fāṭimid imām-caliphs, despite having established a powerful empire, had not realised the promises which had given the dynasty its messianic character. Thus the overthrowing of the Abbasids and the uniting of the whole Muslim community under the guidance of the Imām had been unfulfilled. But the messianic expectations and the even then latent antinomian inclinations remained virulent and at the beginning of the century broke out in the full-scale antinomian movement of the Druzes. Their chief *da'i*s maintained that ›the era of the Qā'im‹ (*qiyāma*) had begun, and the Caliph al-Ḥakim (386/996-411/1021) was God and that the Islamic revelation and its Ismā'īlī interpretation were superstitions. Followers of the worship of the Caliph al-Ḥakim seem to have been eager to precipitate events by proclaiming the abolition of all beliefs including the Sacred law of Islam (*ṣarī'a*) and its esoteric (*bāṭinī*) interpretation³².

Far less disastrous and more durable was the proclamation of the Great Resurrection (*qiyāmat*) or ›Resurrection of the Resurrection‹ (*qiyāmat-i qiyāmat*) by the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs two centuries later.

We shall now devote some reflections to the problem of the place of Paradise in the thought of the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs. We may start with some remarks about their historical background. At the end of 5th/11th century the unified Ismā'īlī *da'wa* and community of Fāṭimid times were split into rival Musta'li and Nizārī branches. The schism resulted from the dispute over the succession to the Fāṭimid caliph-imām al-Mustansir (d. 487/1094). The Nizārīs had broken off the Fāṭimids in this schism, upholding the Imāmate of Nizār, the ousted older son of the caliph al-Mustansir.

³² See Van Ess 1977:35-37, 48-49, 54-55, 56-60, 80-81; Bryer 1975-76:55; 1976:10-11, 13-14, 21, 250; Cf. art. 'Durūz' *EP* II, 632.

Some Nizārīs believed later that their Imām was in occultation and would return as the Qa'im-Mahdī.

The Ismā'īlīs of Persia by this time were already under the leadership of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ (d. 518/1124) who in the succession dispute upheld the right of Nizār, the original heir-designate, who had been deprived of his succession rights. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, as the representative (*huḡḡa*) of the absent *imām*, founded an independent Nizārī Ismā'īlī state and mission centred at the mountain fortress of Alamūt in Northern Persia. In due course, the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs also established a subordinate state in Northern Syria.

In the political field, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ initiated a policy of armed revolt from a network of mountain fortresses against the Salḡūq sultanate backed by the Sunni establishment³³. In confrontation with the overwhelming military power of the Salḡūq opponents, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ introduced the policy of spectacular murders of leading politicians and religious dignitaries by his fearless warriors or self-sacrificing devotees (*fiḏa'i*) for the purpose of intimidation and deterrence. The conduct of the Nizārī emissaries seemed so irrational to the opponents that they called them 'hashish addicts' (*ḥašīšīyyūn*)³⁴.

At the same time the Nizārīs had been waiting impatiently since Nizār's death for the appearance of their Imām, who would personally take charge of their leadership and guide them in those troubled times³⁵.

In the doctrinal field, Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ underlined their doctrinal independence by elaborating a new missionary doctrine which became known as the 'new preaching' (*da'wa ḡadīda*) in the history of the Ismā'īliyya. In a theological treatise he restated the inadequacy of human reason in knowing God and understanding the religious truths, arguing for the necessity of an authoritative teacher (*mu'allim-i sādiq*) for the spiritual guidance of mankind, and he concluded that this trustworthy teacher is none other than the Ismā'īlī *imām* of the time³⁶. Thus Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ reaffirmed the central teaching of the old Šī'ī doctrine of the imāmate, which now became commonly known as the doctrine of *ta'līm* or of divinely inspired and authoritative teaching by the *imām*. But the doctrinal innovation of Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ was hardly a radical challenge to Islam; yet by exalting the autonomous teaching authority of each *imām* in his time, in independence from his predecessors, he paved the way for

³³ Halm 1988:185; Cf. Daftary 2000:101-102.

³⁴ Madelung 1988:103; Cf. Halm 1988:185.

³⁵ For the time being, the Nizārī *da'wa* once more reverted to the notion of occultation [*ḡayba*] and propagated the idea of a hidden anonymous imām. Cf. Halm 1988:186.

³⁶ See as-Sahrastānī, *Milal* I, 150-151, *Muslim Sects* I, 167-170; Cf. Madelung 1988:102, 109; Daftary, 2000:102-103.

the great outburst of radical religious activity and the antinomian tendencies of the later Alamūt period, namely of *qiyāma* times.

As regards the notion of Paradise in the Nizārī community, it is worth mentioning that by the 6th/12th century Muslims had long been familiar with the Islamic traditions, rooted in the Qurʾān, which held that pious believers, those who feared God and followed the right path, as well as martyrs of Islam, would be guaranteed an eternal place in Paradise as their deserved reward in the afterlife. For the Šīʿī Muslims, their imāms would also ensure through their intercessory role on the Day of Judgement that their followers should receive their just reward by being admitted into Paradise (Ayyoub 1978:198-199, 204-205, 207, 210, 217, 221-222, 229). The Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of the only rightful *imām* of the time, certainly expected to qualify as a saved community destined for salvation and the state of paradise in the afterlife.

There were, however, more specific reasons why the Nizārīs in general and their emissaries (*fidāʿī*) in particular expected to be deserving of Paradise. Ever since the martyrdom of the *imām* al-Husayn and his companions in 60/680, the theme of martyrology had occupied a particular place in the Šīʿī ethos, which accorded a unique status, comparable to that of pious believers, to those devotees who gave their lives in the service of their creed and of their *imām*. This was, indeed, the manner in which the *fidāʿīs* were viewed by the rest of the Nizārī community during the Alamūt period. These Nizārī emissaries, whether they returned safely from their missions or lost their lives as martyrs, were held in high esteem, attested to by the rolls of honour kept at Alamūt and other major Nizārī fortresses. A rare instance of its kind is a poem by Raʿīs Ḥasan, a Persian Nizārī historian, poet and functionary of the early 7th/13th century, in which the three *fidāʿīs* who had killed a Turkish *amīr* are praised for their self-sacrificing behaviour which had entitled them to the joys of the otherworldly Paradise (Daftary 1995:98). Similar ideas are echoed in the scattered and brief references to the *fidāʿīs* in Muslim historical sources. They reveal, for instance, that the mothers of the *fidāʿīs* would happily expect their sons to become martyrs and as such enter Paradise³⁷.

Nevertheless, the Paradise conception of the Nizārī community appears most definitely in the subsequent events. Their eschatological expectations and desires for Paradise culminated simultaneously when in 559/1164 on the astrologically determined date of 17th Ramaḍān/8th August³⁸ the fourth Lord of Alamūt, Ḥasan

³⁷ Ivanow 1938:64-71; Cf. Hunzai 1997:83-84.

³⁸ The date was of significance to the Ismāʿīlīs for two reasons: firstly, it marked the anniversary of the day that Imām ʿAlī had been killed [40/661]. Secondly, it fell in the middle of Ramaḍān, a time when the Muslims generally were required to fast during the hours of daylight and eat only a very restricted range of foods during the hours of darkness.

‘*alā dikrihi s-salām*’ declared in the third year of his reign that the *qiyāma*, the era of the Qa’im, had begun and that the Islamic Sacred law (*ṣarī‘a*), which had until then been rigorously observed, was abrogated on the orders of the Hidden *imām*.

The accounts of what happened are preserved in the later Ismā‘īlī sources and also in the somewhat different reports in Persian Īlḥānid chronicles written after the fall of Alamūt³⁹. They provide information on these curious events. On the 17th day of the month of Ramaḍān in the year 559 (8 August 1164) Ḥasan ordered the erection of a pulpit (*minbar*) in the courtyard of Alamūt, facing West, with four great banners of four colours – white, red, yellow, and green – at the four corners. The people from different regions, whom he had previously summoned to Alamūt, were assembled in the courtyard – those from the East on the right side, those from the West on the left side, and those from the North in front, facing the pulpit. As the pulpit faced West the congregants were all standing with their backs toward Mecca. “Then” – says an Ismā‘īlī report – “towards noon, the Lord [*Ḥasan ‘alā dikrihi s-salām*], wearing a white garment and a white turban, came down from the castle, approached the pulpit from the right side, and in the most perfect manner ascended it. Three times he uttered greetings, first to the Daylamīs, then to those on the right, then to those on the left. In a moment he sat down, and then rose up again and, holding his sword, spoke in a loud voice”⁴⁰. Addressing ‘the inhabitants of the worlds, *ginn*s, men and angels’, he announced that a message had come to him from the Hidden Imām, with new guidance. And then he said: “The Imām of our time has sent you His blessing and His compassion, and has called you His special chosen servants. He has freed you from the burden of the rules of the Sacred Law, and has brought you to the Resurrection”⁴¹.

And what is more the Hidden Imām required in His message that His *ṣī‘a* must obey and follow Ḥasan ‘*alā dikrihi s-salām*’ as His deputy (*ḥalīfa*) in all religious and temporal matters, recognize His commands as binding, and regard his word as that of the imām. After completing his address, Ḥasan ‘*alā dikrihi s-salām*’ stepped down from the pulpit and performed the two prostrations (*rak‘at*) of the festival prayer (*namāz-i ‘īd*). Then He invited the people to join at a table which had been prepared for the breaking of their fast⁴². He declared that day the Festival of Resurrection

³⁹ The main sources are: Ġuwaynī, *Ġabān-ḡuṣay* III, 222-243, *World-Conqueror* II, 686-699; Rašīd ad-Dīn, *Ġami‘* 130-137; Kāṣānī, *Zubdat* 199-208; Cf. Halm 1988:187; Mirza 1997:30-31, 81-84.

⁴⁰ Abū Ishāq Quhistānī, *Haft Bab* 41, *Kalām-i Pīr* 60-61, 115-117; Cf. Lewis 1985:72.

⁴¹ Ġuwaynī, *Ġabān-ḡuṣay* III, 226-230, *World-Conqueror* II, 688-690; Rašīd ad-Dīn, *Ġami‘* 132-133; Kāṣānī, *Zubdat* 201-202; Cf. Daftary, 1991:386-387.

⁴² The idea of the messianic banquet is found in both the Jewish and Christian traditions where it is mentioned as the way in which the advent of the Millennium would be celebrated. Jesus said: ‘*And I appoint unto you a kingdom [...] that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom*’. Luke, 22.30. Cf.

(*īd-i qiyāmat*) and the people feasted and made merry. Messengers were sent to carry the glad tidings to East and West. The *Nizārī* communities in Quhistān followed suit. Islamic worship was forbidden on pain of punishment. The *Īlhānīd* sources also relate: "And that day on which these ignominies were divulged and these evils proclaimed in that nest of heretics, Mu'minābād, that assembly played harp and rebeck and openly drank wine upon the very steps of the pulpit and within its precincts"⁴³. In Syria too the word was received, and the faithful celebrated the end of the law (*al-Bustān al-Ġāmī* 136). Accounts of a different kind relating to the proclamation of the Resurrection are to be found in the work of the Mamlūk historian Ibn ad-Dawādārī (d. 713/1313). He states that "the Ismā'īlīs changed the Islamic religion and drank wine, had intercourse with daughters, mothers and sisters and did all the things forbidden in the month of Ramadān all day and night. They also burned all their mosques, shrines and pulpits" (Ibn ad-Dawādārī, *Kanz* VI, 562.5-8).

The solemn and ritual infringement of the law – the congregants with their backs towards Mecca, the afternoon banquet in the midst of the fast – mark the culmination of eschatological expectations and strong antinomian tendencies which is recurrent in the Ismā'īliyya and has unambiguous parallels in the milieu of the Qaramita and, later, of the Druzes⁴⁴.

One wonders, however, what the introduction of these doctrines might have actually meant to the *Nizārīs* in Persia and Syria. From the limited information which is available, it appears that the *qiyāma*, the awaited 'Last Day' – when mankind would be judged and committed for ever to either Paradise or Hell – was interpreted spiritually on the basis of the well-known Ismā'īlī method of esoteric interpretation (*ta'wīl*)⁴⁵. On this basis it was explained that the *qiyāma* meant the manifestation of the unveiled truth (*ḥaqīqa*) in the person of the *Nizārī* imām. This implied that the era (*dawr*) of the Sacred law (*šarī'a*) and outer reality (*zāhir*) had come to an end and the era of inner reality (*bāṭin*) had begun. All members of the *Nizārī* community could know God and the cosmic mysteries through the Imām, and God would constantly be in their hearts. The essence of these ideas, in Ġuwaynī's words,

"[w]as that, following the Philosophers, they spoke of the World as being uncreated and Time as unlimited and the Resurrection as spiritual [...]. It was laid down in the Sacred law that men must worship God five times a day and be with Him. That charge was only formal but now in the Resurrection they must always

Cortese, 1993:159, n.35.

⁴³ Ġuwaynī, *Ġabān-guṣay* III, 230, 238, *World-Conqueror* II, 691, 696; Cf. Rašīd ad-dīn, *Ġāmī* 133, 136, *Kāšānī*, *Zubdat* 200, 202, 204.

⁴⁴ Lewis 1985:73. Cf. Halm 1991:187.

⁴⁵ Daftary 1995:40-41, Cf. *idem*. 2000:103-104.

be with God in their hearts and keep the faces of their souls constantly turned in the direction of the Divine Presence, for such is true prayer"⁴⁶.

According to their beliefs only the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs, – as the sole community of ›the true believers‹ acknowledging the rightful imām of the time – were capable of understanding the spiritual reality and the true meaning of all religions and, as such, Paradise had been created for them in this world. The Nizārīs were henceforth collectively admitted into Paradise and their mission (*da'wa*) implied an invitation into that paradisiacal state. By contrast, all other religious communities, who continued to adhere to the shell of the law, were condemning themselves to the Hell of spiritual non-being (Daftary 1995:41, 99).

The Ilhānid historians relate that, in line with the expectations regarding the time of Resurrection, the Sacred law of Islam was abrogated in the Nizārī community⁴⁷. "The true believers", as was fitting in Paradise, could thenceforth dispense with the obligations specified by the letter of law, since they had now found access to the meanings hidden behind those commandments. In another passage of his chronicle Ibn ad-Dawādārī relates that at the time when the Hwārazmšāh was proceeding towards the (Ismā'īlī) territories Hasan ibn Muḥammad [*'alā dīkrihi s-salām*] dreamed of the Imām 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib who told him to relinquish the Sacred law of Islam its obligations and the *sunna*. Hasan, supposedly addressing himself to the believers, stated that because he had the right to impose the *šarī'a*, he also had the right to remove it⁴⁸. According to the Sunnī chroniclers, it was for their abolition of *šarī'a* that the Nizārīs became designated as ›heretics‹ (*malāhida*)⁴⁹.

There are indications that among the Syrian Nizārīs, who lived far away from Alamūt in a different environment, the doctrine of *qiyāma*, or more specifically its local version, was not fully understood by all the factions of the community. The sources mentioning the so-called episode of the ›Pures‹ (*sufat*) state that these Nizārīs in the Ġabal as-Summaq committed all sorts of forbidden actions and indulged in libertine practices in the belief that the exoteric rules of the sacred law (*šarī'a*) were no longer to be observed after the proclamation of the *qiyāma* at Alamūt. Therefore

⁴⁶ Ġuwaynī, *Ġabān-ġusāy* III, 237-239, *World-Conqueror* II, 695-696; Rašīd ad-Dīn, *Ġāmi'* 135-136.

⁴⁷ There is a different opinion among some modern *ismā'īlī* scholars regarding Hasan's '*alā dīkrihi s-salām*' proclamation. Esmail and Nanji declare that 'However, the current view among some historians that the proclamation [of *qiyāma*] involved an abrogation of *šarī'a* has never been substantiated.' Esmail & Nanji 1977:249.

⁴⁸ Ibn ad-Dawādārī, *Kanz* VIII, 146. These informations indicate that the author had access to sources different from those used by the Ilhānid historians.

⁴⁹ Ġuwaynī, *Ġabān-ġusāy* III, 238-241, *World-Conqueror* II, 696-698; Rašīd ad-Dīn, *Ġāmi'* 133; Kašānī, *Zubdat* 209; Cf. Daftary, 1995:41.

those extremists, in order to celebrate this new freedom, held festivities alleged to have been accompanied by unlawful incidents⁵⁰.

Both the anonymous chronicle *al-Bustān al-Ġāmī*^c and Ibn Ġubayr (d. 614/1217) in his travels (*Rihla*) mention these events, and the *Bustān* gives the date as 561/1165. Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262) puts the date for the episode of the *Ṣufāt* some years later, at 572/1176-7. But the sources, with the exception of Ibn al-ʿAdīm, do not state that the contemporary head of the Syrian *daʿwa* Rāšid ad-Dīn Sinān (d. 588/1193), was responsible for the alleged debauchery in Ġabal as-Summāq. Nor is there in the sources any mention of the role of Alamūt in these events.

Ibn al-ʿAdīm relates that a certain *Ṣayḥ* from the district of al-Ġazr said that Rāšid ad-Dīn Sinān had told the communities to live together in ›purity‹, to help one another, and co-operate in the full sense of the word. The people of al-Ġazr went to Ġabal as-Summāq and said that they had been ordered to live in ›purity‹, and so on. Ibn al-ʿAdīm ends his account with the statement that Rāšid ad-Dīn Sinān summoned these people to the fortresses where he punished them and put some of them to death⁵¹.

Certainly such episodes provided further suitable excuses for the Muslim opponents of the Nizārīs to accuse them of the outright abandonment of the law and of engaging in antinomian actions.

The declaration of the *qiyāma* was later elaborated in terms of a theological doctrine and effectively replaced the doctrine of *taʿlīm* as the pivot of Nizārī thought. In this capacity, it initiated a new spiritual and esoteric era in the life of the Nizārī community. Nevertheless, it represents the most controversial episode in the entire Nizārī history. Its impetus could not be permanently sustained. After the death of Hasan (II) *ʿalā dīkrihi s-salām* (561/1166) his son Muḥammad (II) (561/1166 - 601/1210) claimed for the first time that he and his father were true descendants of the Fātimid Nizār and thus were themselves Imām-Qāʿim who bring in the *qiyāma* and repeal the law replacing an apocalyptic Mahdī-Qāʿim. But half a century later Hasan's second successor, Ġalāl ad-Dīn Ḥasan (III) put an end to the episode of *qiyāma*, reintroduced the *ṣarīʿa* and made peace with an-Nāṣir (575/1180 - 622/1225), the Sunnī ʿAbbāsīd caliph of Baġdād, whose political power and religious authority were considerably increasing at that time.

The proclamation of the *qiyāma* has been the object of different interpretation by modern scholarship. Hodgson understood the introduction of the *qiyāma* as "a declaration of independence of sovereign authority; they [the Nizārīs] refused to guide

⁵⁰ Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat* III, 22, 31-32, 38-39; *al-Bustān al-Ġāmī*^c 136; Ibn Ġubayr, *Rihla* 224, 229, *Travels*, 264-265; Cf. Mirza, 1997:81-82.

⁵¹ Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat* III, 31.12-32.3; Cf. Lewis 1966:261.

themselves by what Islamic society might think of them. But the same time it was an admission of defeat in the attempt to take over Islam at large" (Hodgson 1955:57).

According to Ivanow the revelation of the secret doctrine through the proclamation of *qiyāma* was a reward to the Nizārī community for the suffering which had accompanied its religious and military life for decades⁵². Stroeveva saw the revelation as a means adopted by Ḥasan (II) to abolish class distinction between the Ismā'īlī élite and the masses (1960:24-25). Buckley has investigated the events from an anthropological point of view and argued that the 'festival' of the *qiyāma* represented a temporary shifting from a 'normal-profane' order of existence (the period characterized by the practice of the *ṣarī'a*) to an 'abnormal-sacred' order (the period introduced by the *qiyāma* abolishing the *ṣarī'a*). The ceremony organized to celebrate such a 'shift' was a technique for changing the status of the people involved in it from 'profane' to 'sacred'⁵³.

Daftary (1991:389) is also of the opinion that the announcement of the *qiyāma* was in fact a declaration of independence from the larger Muslim society and, at the same time, an admission of the failure of the Nizārī struggle to take over that society, for the *qiyāma* declared the outside world irrelevant.

In recapitulation, we can make the following observations on the basis of our analysis of the above two historical events that took place in different periods and in rather dissimilar geographical and social settings. Both events may be regarded as historical responses to the challenges rooted in the peculiar messianistic doctrines of the Ismā'īlī movement. The element linking these two distinct reactions is their overall pattern, whereby the *qiyāma* episode in Alamūt had more or less the same function as the advent of the Mahdī among the Qarmatīs of Bahrayn. The eschatological beliefs concerning Paradise had a key role in both events⁵⁴.

And yet, a careful examination of the historical events which have been discussed here show that different motives can be detected behind them. In the pseudo-Mahdī intermezzo of Bahrayn, Abū Tāhir al-Ġannābī, a successful military leader, was caught up in a sort of legitimacy crisis caused by various factors, namely the failure of the Qarmatī invasion of Bagdād (316/928), the tragic turn of the events in Mecca (319/930), the internal tensions between the two opposing factions of the Qarmatī leadership, and last but not least, the frustration felt by the Qarmatīs over their unfulfilled expectations of the Mahdī's arrival. As a consequence, the charisma of

⁵² See Ivanow's Introduction, lxxx, in Tūsī, *Rawdat*.

⁵³ Buckley 1984:161-164; Cf. Cortese 1993:149-150.

⁵⁴ Here I am basically in agreement with the findings of Madelung; Cf. his 1988:103.

Abū Tāhir was seriously impaired. He sought to solve this crisis by arranging a kind of theocratic *coup d'état*, that is, the intermezzo of the pseudo-Mahdī⁵⁵.

In the case of the Nizārīs' *qiyāma* episode, there also appears to have been an increasing level of frustration at the increasingly apparent unlikelihood of the imminent return of the Hidden Imām, long awaited since the death of Nizār, which had occurred nearly half a century before. An additional source of frustration and anguish was the stalemate they had reached in the course of their conflict with the Salḡūqs. There were malcontents in the community who looked back at the days of Hasan-i Šabbāh as a kind of heyday, when nothing was impossible for the rising movement. And it is a recurrent pattern in such conflicts, familiar to the historian, that deadlock against the external enemy will intensify internal discord.

On the other hand, the modification of the original Ismā'īlī doctrine of *ta'līm* by Hasan-i Sabbāh, exalting as it did the autonomous teaching authority of each Imām in his time, in independence from his predecessor, provided considerable free scope for action and ideological innovation by the Imām and even his authorized representatives. This gave a remarkably free hand to the Lord of Alamūt, Hasan (II) *alā dīkerihi s-salām*, the then head of the Nizārī community, a man excelling in intelligence and learning to a far greater extent than his predecessors, who were primarily military leaders; and he was ready to use his new powers to find a solution to the internal crisis of his community.

REFERENCES

A. Primary sources

- Abdalḡabbār, *Tatbīt* = 'Abd al-Ġabbār al-Hamadānī, *Tatbīt dalā'il an-nubuwwa*, II. Edited by 'Abdalkarīm 'Uṭmān, Beirut 1966.
- 'Arīb, *Šila* = 'Arīb ibn Sa'ad al-Qurtubī, *Šilat Tārīḡ at-Tabarī* = *Tabarī Continuatus*. Edited by Michael Jan de Goeje. Leiden 1965².
- al-Baḡdādī, *Farq* = 'Abd al-Qāhir ibn Tāhir al-Baḡdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*. Edited by 'Abd al-Hamid Muḡammad Muḡyī d-Dīn. Beirut 1417/1995.
- al-Bīrūnī, *Ātār* = Abū r-Rayḡān Muḡammad ibn Aḡmad al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-ātār al-bāḡiyya 'an al-qurūn al-ḡāliyya*. Edited by C. E. Sachau. Leipzig 1878. = *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*. Engl. tr. by C. E. Sachau. London 1879.
- al-Bustān al-ḡāmi' = *Une Chronique Syrienne du 6e/12e siècle: Le Bustān al-Ġāmi'*. Edited by Claude Cahen. *Bulletin d'Études Orientales*, 7-8/1938. 113-158.

⁵⁵ See Hajnal 1998:195-198.

- ad-Dahabī, *Tārīḥ* = Šams ad-Dīn Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ad-Dahabī, *Tārīḥ al-islām wa-tabaqāt al-mašāhīr wal-aʿlām*, XXXIV. Edited by ʿUmar ʿAbd as-Salām Tadmūrī. Beirut 1414/1994.
- Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubda* = Kamāl ad-Dīn Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab min tāriḥ Ḥalab*, III. Edited by Sāmī Dahḥān. Damascus 1387/1968.
- Ibn al-Aṭīr, *Kāmil* = ʿIzz ad-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī aš-Šaybānī Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil fī t-Tārīḥ* = *Chronicon*, VIII. Edited by Karl Johan Tornberg. Beirut 1965-1967.²
- Ibn ad-Dawādārī, *Kanz* = Abū Bakr ibn Aybak Ibn ad-Dawādārī, *Kanz ad-durar wa-ḡāmiʿ al-ḡurar*, VI. Edited by Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Munagḡid. Kairo & Wiesbaden 1381/1961. Vol. VIII, edited by Ulrich Haarmann. Kairo & Freiburg 1391/1971.
- Ibn Ġubayr, *Riḥla* = Abū l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ġubayr, *Riḥla*. Beirut 1399/1979. = *The Travels*. Engl. tr. by R. J. C. Broadhurst. London 1952.
- Ġuwaynī, *Ġabān-ḡuṣāy* = ʿAlā ad-Dīn ʿAtā Malik Ġuwaynī, *Tārīḥ-i ḡabān-ḡuṣāy*, III. Edited by M. Qazwinī. Teheran 1382/1962. = *The History of the World Conqueror*. Edited and translated by John A. Boyle. Manchester 1958.
- Hunzai, Faqir Muḥammad [tr.]. 1997. *Shimmering Light. An Anthology of Ismāʿīlī Poetry*. London.
- Kalām-i Pīr* = *Kalām-i Pīr. A Treatise on Ismāʿīlī Doctrine*. Edited and translated by W. Ivanow. Bombay 1935.
- Kāšānī, *Zubda* = Abūl Qāsim ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlī Kāšānī, *Zubdat at-tawārīḥ: bahš-i Fātimiyān wa Nizāriyān*. Edited by M. D. Dānišpazhūh. Tehran 1366/1987².
- al-Maʿarrī, *Gufrān* = Abūl ʿAlā al-Maʿarrī. *Risālat al-Gufrān*. III. Edited by K. Kilānī. Cairo 1939.
- al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz* = Taqī ad-Dīn Abū l-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb Ittiʿāz al-hunafaʿ bi-ahbār al-aʿimma al-fātimiyīn al-ḥulafāʿ*, I. Edited by Ġamāl ad-Dīn aš-Šayyāl, Cairo 1948.
- al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh* = Abūl-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, *Kitāb at-tanbīh wal-išrāf*. Edited by Michael J. de Goeje. Beirut 1965.
- Miskawayhi, *Tagārib* = Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Miskawayhi, *Tagārib al-umam* = *The Eclipse of the ʿAbbasid Caliphate*, II. Edited and translated by H. F. Amedroz & D. S. Margoliouth. Oxford 1920-21.
- Nāšir-i Ḥosrō, *Safarnāma* = Nāšir-i Ḥosrō, *Safarnāma. Relation du Voyage*. Edited by Charles Schefer. Paris 1881. = *Book of Travels*. Engl. tr. by W. M. Thachston. New York 1986.
- an-Nawbaḥtī, *Firaq* = al-Ḥasan ibn Mūsā an-Nawbaḥtī, *Kitāb firaq aš-Šīʿa*. = *Die Sekten der Schīʿa*. Edited by Helmut Ritter. Leipzig-Istanbul 1931. = *Šīʿitskie sekty*. Russ. tr. by S. M. Prozorov. Moscow 1973.
- Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma* = Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk-Siyāsatnāma*. Edited by Hubert Darke. Tehran 1378/2000⁴. = *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*. Engl. tr. by H. Darke. London 1978.²

- an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* = Šihāb ad-Dīn Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, XXV. Edited by Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Āl al-Hinī. Cairo 1984.
- Rašīd ad-Dīn Tabīb, *Ġāmi‘* = Fadlallāh ibn ‘Imād ad-Dawla Abī l-Ḥayr, *Ġāmi‘ at-tawārīḥ: qismat-i isma‘īliyyān va fatīmiyyān va nizāriyyān va dā‘iyyān va rafiqān*. Edited by M. T. Dānišpazhūh & M. Mudarrisi Zangānī. Tehran 1381/1961.
- aš-Šahrastānī, *Milal* = Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm aš-Šahrastānī, *al-Milal wa-n-nihal*. Edited by W. Cureton. London 1842. = *Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects*. I. Engl. tr. by A. K. Kazi & J. G. Flynn. London 1984.
- as-Siġistānī, *Itbāt* = Abū Ya‘qūb Ishāq ibn Ahmad as-Siġistānī, *Itbāt an-nubuwwa*. Edited by ‘Ārif Tāmir. Beirut 1966.
- Sīrat al-Hādī* = *Sīrat al-Hādī ilā l-Ḥaqq*. = *al-Ġāmi‘ fī aḥbār al-qarāmīta* II, 249-268. Edited by Suhayl Zakkār. Damascus 1987.
- Tābit ibn Sinān, *Qarāmīta* = Tābit ibn Sinān aš-Šābi’, *Tārīḥ aḥbār al-Qarāmīta*. = *al-Ġāmi‘ fī aḥbār al-qarāmīta* I, 181-248. Edited by Suhayl Zakkār. Damascus 1987.
- Tūsī, *Rawdat* = Naṣīr ad-Dīn Tūsī, *Rawdat at-taslīm*. Edited and translated by W. Ivanow. Leiden 1950.

B. Secondary Sources

- Arjomand, Said Amir. 2002. “Messianism, Millennialism and Revolution in Early Islamic History”. *Imagining the End: Visions of Apocalypse from the Ancient Middle East to Modern America* ed. by A. Amanat & M. Bernhardtsson, 106-125. London & New York.
- . 1998. “Islamic Apocalypticism in the Classical Period”. *The Encyclopaedia of Apocalypticism* II, 238-283. New York.
- al-‘Azzāwī, Muhammad. 1970. *Firqat an-Nizāriyya*. ‘Ayn Šams.
- Ayyoub, Mahmoud. 1978. *Redemptive Suffering in Islam. A Study of the Devotional Aspects of ‘Āshūra in twelver Shi‘ism*. The Hague.
- Blois, François de, 1986. “The Abū Sa‘īdīs or so-called ‘Qarmatians’ of Bahrayn”. *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 16.3-21.
- Bryer, David, W. 1975-76. “The Origins of the Druze Religion”. *Der Islam* 52.47-84, 239-262; 53.5-27.
- Buckley, Jorunn, J. 1984. “The Nizari Isma‘īlites’ Abolishment of the Shari‘a during the ‘Great Resurrection’ of 559/1164”. *Studia Islamica* 60.137-165.
- Cortese, Delia. 1993. *Eschatology and Power in Mediaeval Persian Isma‘īlism*. [Unpublished Ph D. Thesis], University of London.
- Daftary, Farhad. 1990. *The Isma‘īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*. Cambridge.
- . 1991. “The Earliest Isma‘īlīs”. *Arabica*. 38.214-245.
- . 1995. *The Assassin Legends*. London.

- . 2000. "Intellectual life among the Ismā'īlīs". *Intellectual Traditions in Islam* ed. by F. Daftary, 87-111. London.
- Esmail, Aziz & Azim Nanji. 1398/1977. "The Ismā'īlīs in History". *Ismā'īlī Contribution to Islamic Culture* ed. by Sayyid Husayn Nasr. Teheran.
- Ess, Joseph van. 1977. *Chilistische Erwartungen und die Versuchung der Göttlichkeit der Kalif al-Hākim*. Heidelberg.
- Friedlaender, Israel. 1911. "Jewish-Arabic Studies". *Jewish Quarterly Review* 2.496-497.
- Goeje, Michael Jan, de. 1886. *Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahraïn et les Fatimides*. Leiden. Ar. tr. H. Zīna, *al-Qarāmīta*, Beirut 1978.
- Hajnal, István. 1998. "The Pseudo-Mahdī Intermezzo of the Qarāmīta in Bahrayn". *The Arabist* 19-20.187-201.
- Halm, Heinz. 1978. *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismā'īlīya*. Wiesbaden.
- . 1988. *Die Schī'a*. Darmstadt.
- . 1991. *Das Reich des Mahdī*. München.
- al-Hamdānī, Husayn, F. 1958. *Fī nasab al-ḫulafā' al-fāṭimiyyīn*. Cairo.
- Hodgson, Marshall G. S. 1955. *The Order of the Assassins: The Struggle of the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs against of the Islamic World*. The Hague.
- . 1962. "al-Darazī and Ḥamza in the Origin of the Druze Religion". *JAOS* 82.5-20.
- . 1970. "The Ismā'īlī State". *Cambridge History of Iran* V, 422-482. Cambridge.
- Ivanow, Wladimir. 1938. "An Ismā'īlī Poem in Praise of the Fidawīs". *JBBRAS* 14.64-71.
- Lewis, Bernard. 1985. *The Assassins*. London.
- Madelung, Wilferd. 1959. "Fātimiden und Bahrainqarmaten". *Der Islam* 34.34-88.
- . 1988. *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*. Albany NY.
- Mirza, N. Ahmad. 1997. *Syrian Ismā'īlism*. Richmond.
- Stroeva, L. P. 1960. "Den' Voskreseniya iz mertvih i ego sozial'naya suščnost'". *Kratkie Soobščeniya Instituta Vostokovedeniya*. 38.19-25.
- Vatikiotis, J. Panayiotis. 1957. *The Fatimid Theory of State*. Lahore.