

The Nusayris

An Extremist Shiite Sect

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The First Chapter

The Nusayri (Alawi) Ancient Period

Of all the ghulat sects or extremists Shi'i sects mentioned thus far, the Nusayri have attracted the most attention from contemporary writers of both east and west, largely because they now control the government of Syria. In 1970, a Nusayri general, Hafiz al-Asad, assumed military power in Syria, and on 22 February 1971, he became the first Nusayri president in the country's history. Al-Asad comes from the Numaylatiyya division of the Mutawira, one of the major Nusayri tribes in Syria. Other key positions in the present Syrian government are also occupied by Nusayri officers.¹

The Nusayri have been known throughout history by the name al-Nusayriyyah (Nusayri), but prefer to be called Alawi (followers of Ali). When the French mandate over Syria went into effect in 1920, the French authorities created a separate Nusayri territory with its own commissioner, under the authority of the French high commissioner in Beirut. On 1 July 1922, when this Nusayri territory became a state, it was named *Dowlah al-Alawiyyin* (the Alawi's state); it had a seventeen-member representative counsel, with the Nusayri's holding twelve seats and Sunnis (who make up the majority) and other minorities holding five. In 1930, the political institution of this state was defined by the Organic law and it became formally known as the Government of Latakia.

The Nusayri writer Muhammad Ghalib al-Tawil (d. 1932), who wrote a history of his sect, thanked God that after four centuries of Ottoman occupation of Syria, the Nusayri's, who have been contemptuously called by this name since 1516, finally had their lawful name, Alawi, restored.² The fact is, however, that the sect has always been known as Nusayri, a name that has had a religious connotation since the ninth century. Moreover, it should be pointed out that Alawi is a general term frequently applied to all Shi'is who follow Ali and believe him to be the heir and successor of the Rasul of Allah (saw) in leading the Muslim community.

The original habitat of the Nusayri is the massive mountain range in the northern Syria that bears their name: *Jabal al-Nusayriyyah* (Nusayriyyah Mountain), the Bargylus of the Romans.³ The ancient Syrians called them *Ukomo* (Black), following their Syrians' practice, the Arabs called them *Jabal al-Lukam* (black mountain). The southern peaks of this range are called *Jabal al-Summaq* (Sumac Mountains) and Jabal Amil. The Nusayriyyah Mountains stretches from al-Nahr al-Kabir (the great river, the ancient Eleutherus) on the south to a point north of the Orontes (al-Asi) River and Antioch. The range extends from Mount Lebanon along the Mediterranean, facing the island of Cyprus. The Nusayri are not confined to this mountain region, however. They are also found in great numbers in the Syrian provinces of Latika, Hims, and Hama; in the Lebanese district of Akkar, south of Latakia; and in the Turkish provinces of Hatay (formerly the Syrian province of Alexandretta, or al-Iskandarun), Seyhan (Adana), Tarsus, Antioch. A small number of Nusayri live in Wadi al-Taym, south of Mount Hermon, in

two villages north of Nablus in the Israeli-occupied West Bank of Jordan, and in Banyas (the ancient Caesarea Philippi).⁴ About thirteen Nusayri families live in Ana, a town in western Iraq near the Syrian border. Groups of Nusayri live in Damascus, Aleppo, and Salamiyya, south of Hama; in al-Karak, Jordan; in Istanbul, Turkey; in Yemen; and in Brazil.⁵ Until the thirteenth century, a number of Nusayri lived in Sinjar, north of the city of Mosul, Iraq. These Nusayri from Sinjar, led by their Amir Hasan Yusuf Makzum (d. 1240), left Syria to help their coreligionists in their struggle against their oppressors, the Kurds and the Ismaili. One of these tribes was Mutawira, to which President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria belongs.⁶

With the passage of time, the religious concepts of followers of al-Makzum evolved in new directions, especially regarding Ali ibn Abi Talib, the centre of worship of all the Nusayris. Some of al-Makzum's followers came to be known as Kalazis after one of their religious leaders, Muhammad ibn Kalazu. They also became known as *Qamris* (moon-worshippers, from the Arabic *qamar*, moon) because they believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib dwells in the moon; the *Shamsis* (sun-worshippers), also called Shamalis, derived their name from the word *shams* (sun), because they believe that the sun, not the moon, is the abode of Ali ibn Abi Talib. Thus, from a purely religious point of view, the Nusayri are divided into two sects whose beliefs, apart from their association with the sun or the moon with the worship of Ali, are substantially the same. We shall have more to say about these two sects in our discussion, in later chapters of the religion of the Nusayris.

As an oppressed minority, the Nusayris found a haven for centuries in the fastness of their mountains. They avoided the urban centres of Syria; in the nineteenth century, they were not found even in Latakia, Beirut, or Damascus. They were very suspicious of other Syrian peoples and were ready to attack at the least provocation. Rev. Samuel Lyde (d. 1860), who lived amongst the Nusayri for six years (1853-1859), writes that, oppressed by the Ottoman government and overburdened by many taxes, the Nusayri usually took revenge on the Muslim people of the plains, whom they hated, plundering and killing without mercy.⁷

The constant internal feud among their many tribes and clans reduced them to a state of barbarism and rendered their country a wasteland. We learn from Lyde that violence, bloodshed, treachery, and murder became a way of life with the Nusayris. He states that because of violence, the gradual ruin of the villages, and the increasing desolation and depopulation of their country, by the middle of the nineteenth century the province of Latakia, which once had been heavily populated by the Nusayris, had only a very small number of them left.⁸ These chaotic conditions must have impelled the remaining Nusayri farmers to move close to the urban centres of Syria to work for landowners who lived mostly in the cities. Some of the Nusayris moved to the plains of Akkar to the south and Latakia to the west, while others spread in the interior of Syria, especially the province of Hama.

Although Nusayris were despised by their Muslim and Christian neighbours, the landholders needed the services of the Nusayri farmers, who, because they were desperate, were subservient and hardworking, and posed no threat to their employer's interests. This explains the settlement of the Nusayris in the villages in the northern part of the province of Hama.

This migration, however, was only a trickle, because Syria, like other countries of the Middle East, was predominantly rural in nature, and the Nusayris could not make an adequate living in the urban centres of the country. Things have changed in the recent years; Syria has become greatly urbanized, and movement from the countryside to the urban centres has rapidly increased. When Hafiz al-Asad rose to power in the 1970, the Nusayris began to flock to the urban centres of Syria, seeking employment and education, now available thanks to the encouragement and assistance of the predominantly Nusayri government of Syria.⁹

The origin of the Nusayris is the subject of speculation among historians. Some believe that Nusayris are descendants of the Nazerini mentioned by Pliny in his *History* (5:23), when he wrote: "Hollow Syria contains the town of Qalat al-Mudiq separated by the river Marsyas from the tetrarchy of the Nazerini."¹⁰

In his Syriac *Chronography*, the Syrian Maphrian of the East, Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), includes a chapter entitled "The History of Those who are Called Nusiraye."¹¹ He ascribes the name Nusiraye to an old man who appeared in the year 891 A.D in the country of Aqula (al-Kufah, in southern Iraq), in the village called Nasariah. In his *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Duwal* (a compendium of the history of dynasties), written in Arabic, Bar Hebraeus mentions a village called Nasrana, from which came a certain Abu al-Faraj ibn Uthman, who belonged to the extremist sect of al-Qaramitah (Carmatians). And in a third place, Bar Hebraeus mentions the Nusayriyyah as an extremist Shi'i sect.¹² Silvestre de Sacy, who produced Bar Hebraeus' statements about Nasariah and Nasrana, seems at first to be convinced that the name of the Nusayris derives from the village of Nasariah or Nasrana, where their alleged founder lived. But after further contemplation, de Sacy seems uncertain of this explanation.¹³

Other writers, like Wolff, maintain that the name Nusayris is a diminutive of the Arabic word *Nasarah* (Christians), and the Nusayris means "little Christians." Wolff reasons that the adversaries of the Nusayris contemptuously called them by this name because of their many Christian's rituals and practices.¹⁴ Ernest Renan likewise maintains that Nusayris is a diminutive of *Nasarah*.¹⁵

The Nusayri writer Muhammad Ghalib al-Tawil maintains that the name Nusayris derives from *Jabal al-Nusayriyyah* (the Nusayriyyah Mountain), where they live.¹⁶ Another writer Hashim Uthman, avers that the name of this mountain is Nazare, and it was so called by the crusaders when they invaded Syria in the eleventh century.¹⁷ This is not so, in 1099, when the crusaders marched through Syria on their way to Jerusalem, they found Nusayris already living in the mountains called *Jabal al-Nusayriyyah*, side by side with the Isma'ilis and the Druzes.¹⁸ According to a Druze source, the Nusayris were once part of the Druze sect, later splitting off from it. The Druze catechism, probably originated in the eleventh century, speaks of the Nusayris as having been one with the Unitarian Druzes before separating themselves through the effort of a certain rector called al-Nusayri. Question forty four of the catechism asks: "How did the Nusayris separate themselves from the *Muwahhidun* [Unitarians, as the Druzes called themselves] and abandon the Unitarian religion?" Answer: "They became separated when al-Nusayri called them to do so. Al-Nusayri claimed to be the servant of our Lord, the commander

of the faithful [Ali]. He denied the divinity of our lord al-Hakim (reigned 996-1021), the Fatimid Khalifah defied by the Druzes] and professed the divinity of Ali ibn Abi Talib. He said that the Deity has manifested himself successively in the twelve Imams of the family of the Rasul of Allah (saw), and that he has disappeared after he manifested himself in the Muhammad al-Mahdi, the Qa'im [twelfth Imam]."¹⁹ From this statement we learn that the name of the sect dates back to the late tenth or early eleventh century, and that the founder of the sect was a certain Nusayri, who, despite the discrepancy of the dates, was most likely Muhammad al-Nusayr.

The Nusayr, accepted among contemporary historians as the source of the name Nusayris, was a Persian by origin whose full name was Muhammad ibn al-Nusayr al-Namiri al-Bakri al-Abdi (d. 270/883), but who was known also by his agnomen, Abu Shu'ayb. It is said that Muhammad ibn Nusayr, may have been born in Khuzistan or al-Basrah, Iraq. Through his association with the Arab tribe of the Banu al-Namir, he came to be known as al-Namiri. He lived in the city of Samarra, Iraq, where the eleventh Imam al-Askari lived at the same time.²⁰ According to Louis Massignon, the members of the sect used the name Nusayris from the time of al-Khasibi (d. 346/957), having been previously been called Namiriyyah.²¹

In *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* (Manual for the shaykhs), Muhammad ibn Nusayr is described as the "door" to the eleventh Shi'i Imam, al-Hasan al-Askari (d. 873). A substantial portion of this manuscript was translated by Rev. Samuel Lyde and incorporated in to his book, *Asian Mystery* (London, 1860).²²

In his book *Kitab al-Dala'il wa l-Masa'il*, still in this manuscript form, an early Nusayri writer, al-Maymun ibn Qasim al-Tabarani (d. 426/1034), relates a tradition in which the eleventh Imam al-Askari is reported to have said: "Muhammad ibn Nusayr is my light, my door, and my proof against mankind. Whatever he related of me is true."²³

In his *Munazarah* (debate), the Nusayri Shaykh Yusuf ibn al-Ajuz al-Halabi, known as al-Nashshabi, states that Muhammad ibn Nusayr is "the door of God after whom there is no other door. He became the door after *ghaybah* (occultation) of our Lord Muhammad [the Mahdi, the last of the twelve Imams]."²⁴

Muhammad ibn Nusayr also appears as the door to the Imam al-Hasan al-Askari in *Kitab al-Majmu*, the most important source of information about the doctrine of the Nusayris. Sulayman al-Adani, a Nusayri convert to Christianity burned alive for his apostasy by leaders of his sect, first presented this work in his *Kitab al-Bakhurah al-Sulaymaniyyah* (published in Beirut without a date, although many writers give 1863 as the date of its publication). *Kitab al-Majmu* contains sixteen chapters delineating the various doctrines of the Nusayris. Commenting on the fourth chapter, al-Adani leaves no room for doubt that the religion of the Nusayris originated with Muhammad ibn Nusayr.²⁵ The identification of the Nusayris with Muhammad ibn Nusayr is also affirmed by Shaykh Isa Suud, a former Nusayri judge of Latakia. Writing in 1930, Suud states that the name of the Nusayris derives from Abu Shuayb Muhammad ibn Nusayr, the

“door” to the Imam al-Askari. However, Suud attempts to project the Nusayris as a genuine Shi’i sect originating with Imam Ali.²⁶

Writers from Ibn Nusayr’s own era have noted that his teachings put him outside the mainstream of Shi’i belief, however. According to the tenth century (Shi’i) writer Sad ibn Abd Allah al-Qummi al-Ashari, Ibn Nusayr claimed not only that he was a prophet but that the tenth Imam, Ali al-Hadi, had appointed him as an apostle, entrusting him with the delivery of the message of the divine authority of the Imams. Al-Ashari also states that after the death of Ali al-Hadi in 868, Ibn Nusayr became associated with his son, the eleventh Imam al-Askari, and preached al-Askari’s divinity. Ibn Nusayr also allowed marriage between relatives forbidden to marry under Islamic law, and considered homosexuality not only to be lawful, but one of the pleasures permitted by Allah, an attitude al-Ashari deplored.²⁷ Another tenth-century Shi’i writer, Abu Muhammad al-Hasan al-Nawbakhti, seems to have used al-Ashari’s book as a source, for he gives the same account, adding only that Ibn Nusayr also preached *metempsychosis* [reincarnation].²⁸ Yet a tenth century Shi’i, Abu Amr al-Kashshi, notes in his *Marifah Akhbar al-Rijal* the existence of a sect proclaiming the Prophet-Hood of Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Namiri, who in turn preached the divinity of the Imam al-Askari. This was against al-Askari’s wishes; al-Kashshi produced a letter written by al-Askari to a follower, totally renouncing Ibn Nusayr and his teachings.²⁹

Al-Kashshi’s statement is significant, for it indicates that by the end of the tenth century, there was a well-established sect (although al-Kashshi does not give its name) that followed Ibn Nusayr as a prophet. The modern Iraqi writer Kamil Mustafa al-Shaybi confirms this, asserting that the a group of Shi’is broke away in the time of the tenth Imam Ali al-Hadi, upholding Ali al-Hadi’s Imamate and proclaiming Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Namiri as a prophet. Al-Shaybi calls Ibn Nusayr the founder of the Nusayri sect. He says Ibn Nusayr preached the divinity of the Imams, but was lax in the application of the religious duties.³⁰

Another Shi’i writer, Abu Ja’far al-Tusi (d. 460/1067), states in his *al-Ghaybah* that when the eleventh Imam died, Muhammad ibn Nusayr claimed that he had become the “door” to the twelfth Imam, al-Mahdi.³¹ The same assertion is repeated by Abu Mansur al-Tabarsi (d. 729/1325) in his *Ihtijaj*,³² and by Ibn Mutahhar al-Hilli (d. 726/1325) in his *al-Rijal*.³³

The contemporary Shi’i writer Shaykh Muhammad Hasan al-Zayn al-Amili discusses the Nusayris as a sect in his book *al-Shi’ah fi al-Tarikh*. He states that al-Nusayriyyah are the followers of Muhammad ibn Nusayr, himself a follower of the Imam al-Hasan al-Askari. Upon the death of al-Askari, Ibn Nusayr claimed to be the agent of the son of al-Askari, the twelfth Imam, al-Mahdi. Al-Amili also mentions that al-Askari renounced and condemned Ibn Nusayr in his lifetime.³⁴

It is significant that al-Amili uses the term al-Nusayriyyah, the traditional way of the sect, rather than al-Alawiyyun which is a recent appellation. The Shi’i sources cited above, however, refer to this sect not as al-Nusayriyyah but as al-Namiriyyah, a name taken from al-Namiri, one of the popular eponyms of Muhammad ibn Nusayr. Turning to Sunni sources, we find that

some writers like Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari (d. 234/935) in his *al-Maqalat al-Islamiyyin*, and Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi (d. 429/1037) in his *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, used the term Namiriyyah for this sect.³⁵ The Sunni writer al-Shahrastani (d. 548/1153), however, uses the name Nusayriyyah to distinguish this sect from another heterodox sect, the Ishaqiyyah, founded by Ishaq al-Ahmar.³⁶

Al-Shahrastani states that these two sects asserted that a spiritual appearance in a material body cannot be denied, since Gabriel appeared in a figure of a man, and Satan in a figure of an animal. In the same way, they argued, God appeared in the form of persons. After the Rasul of Allah (saw) (Muhammad), they believed, that there is no person more illustrious than Ali (ra), and after him, his sons (the Imams); the Divine truth appeared in their form, spoke by their tongue, and handled with their hands. For this reason the Nusayris and the Ishaqis both ascribe divinity to the Imams. Al-Shahrastani notes, however, that while the Nusayris stress the divine being of the Imams, the Ishaqis emphasise that, being divine, Ali should be a partner to Muhammad in the divine office of the Prophet-Hood.³⁷

Like al-Shahrastani, the Andalusian writer Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Hazm (d. 456/1065), uses the name Nusayriyyah for the sect under discussion. Ibn Hazm seems to be familiar with the Nusayriyyah as a sect whose members triumphed over the Jordanian army in Syria and captured Tiberius "In this our time." He quotes the Nusayris as saying that Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam, the murderer of Imam Ali, will be the most excellent and noblest of all the people the earth in the next life because, by killing Ali, he released his divinity from the darkness of his body. Ibn Hazm asserts that such belief is sheer lunacy and utter blasphemy.³⁸

From the foregoing evidence, we may deduce that the name al-Nusayriyyah was not used as the proper name of this sect until the tenth century, and prior to that time the sect was referred to as al-Namiriyyah. In the thirteenth century Bar Hebraeus, already quoted, and Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328), who issued a juristic opinion against the Nusayris as a heterodox sect, spoke of al-Nusayriyyah as a sect. however, both Bar Hebraeus and Ibn Taymiyyah (ar) seem to have confused the Nusayris with another heterodox Shi'i group, the *Qaramitah* (Carmatians).³⁹ A contemporary of Ibn Taymiyyah, Abu al-Fida' (d. 1331), also seems to have confused the Nusayris with the *Qaramitah*.⁴⁰

Modern writers offer no additional information about the origin of the Nusayris. They seem to reach the same conclusion held by ancient writers: that the Nusayris are *Ghulat* (extremist Shi'is) whose sect was founded by Muhammad ibn Nusayr in the ninth century. Thus, the Nusayris are one of the oldest of the *Ghulat* Shi'i sects, and the name *Alawiyyun*, which they apply to themselves at present, is quite recent, dating back (only) to the 1920s.⁴¹

Most of our information of Ibn Nusayr and his teachings derives from what others wrote about him, for he left no written record or formulation of his creed. What is clearly known is that he lived in the city of Samarra, Iraq, and was the contemporary of Imam al-Hasan al-Askari, and that after the concealment of the twelfth Imam al-Mahdi, Ibn Nusayr claimed to be the Imam and declared that his love for *Ahl-Bayt* (the family of the Rasul of Allah) led him to deify the

Imams. After his death, Ibn Nusayr was succeeded as the “door” to the Imams by Muhammad ibn Jundub, about whom much is not known. Ibn Jundub was succeeded by Abu Muhammad Abd Allah al-Jannan al-Jumbulani (d. 287/900), also known as *al-Farisi* (the Persian), from the town of Junbula, between al-Kufah and Wasit in the southern Iraq. From a reference in *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, we learn that al-Jumbulani was ascetic and the teacher of al-Khasibi, a very important figure in the history of the Nusayri sect. Al-Jumbulani founded a new Sufi order, al-Jumbulaniyyah, named after him. He went to Egypt, where he met al-Khasibi, who became his follower. He then returned to Junbula accompanied by al-Khasibi, to whom he taught Islamic jurisprudence, philosophy, astrology, astronomy, and other sciences known at the time.⁴²

After the death of al-Jumbulani, the leadership of the Nusayri sect was assumed by Abu Abd Allah al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi (d. 346/957), who is highly honoured by the Nusayris for unifying the sect and consolidating their teachings. The Nusayri writer Muhammad Ghalib al-Tawil describes al-Khasibi as “the great Alawi.”⁴³ An active missionary, al-Khasibi established two Nusayri religions centres in Baghdad and Aleppo and left several books, including *Kitab al-Hidayah al-Kubrah* (the book of great guidance).⁴⁴ He is considered one of the leading Nusayri jurists who received “divine” knowledge through a chain of authorities dating back to Ali (ra). Al-Khasibi is further credited with propagating the Nusayri religion in all lands.⁴⁵

Al-Khasibi’s importance pervades Nusayri rituals and texts. In the third Nusayri *Quddas* (mass), called the *Quddas al-Adhan* (the mass of calling people to prayer), the mu’adhin, after proclaiming that his religion (the Nusayri religion) has been established for eternity, that there is no god but God who is Ali, and that there is no *Bab* (door) but Salman al-Farisi, goes on to say that “there is no lord but my lord, our Shaykh al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi. He is the ship of safety, the very essence of life. Come to prayer; come to success, O faithful ones.”⁴⁶

Likewise, the ninety-eighth question of the Nusayris *Kitab Ta’lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah* [catechism] asks: “Which of the shaykhs spread our faith in all lands?” The answer is, “Abu Abd Allah al-Husayn ibn Hamdan [al-Khasibi].”⁴⁷

Jesus Christ occupies a prominent place in al-Khasibi’s teaching. Al-Khasibi held that Christ was each of the Old Testaments prophets beginning with Adam, the Islamic figure al-Khidr, and Muhammad. In brief, Christ was every one of the prophets who came to this world. Christ was likewise Socrates, Pluto, Galen, Nero, and many Persian and pre-Islamic Arab sages, including Luai, Kilab, Abd Manaf, and Hashim, ancestors of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Moreover, al-Khasibi taught that mothers of the former prophets and their wives, except for the wives of Nuh and Lut, were incarnations of Salman al-Farsi, as were Queen of Sheba and the wife of Potiphar. Salman al-Farsi also appeared, according to al-Khasibi, in animate objects and beasts, like the one supposed to have killed Joseph, the son of Jacob. He appeared as an ant, in winged form as a crow, and in other forms. Al-Khasibi further taught that Ali ibn Abi Talib (ra) was incarnate in Abel, Seth, Joseph, Joshua, Asaf, Simon, Peter, Aristotle, and Hermes, and in certain wild animals, including the dog of the companions of *Ahl al-Kahf* (people of the cave), the camel of Salih, and the sacrificial cow of Moses.⁴⁸

From Sulayman al-Adani, a Nusayri convert to Christianity, we learn that as an active missionary, al-Khasibi had fifty one disciples, of whom the most famous were Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jilli, Ali ibn Isa al-Jisri, and al-Qutni. Al-Adani states that any Nusayri who traces his genealogy to one of these men is considered a “brother” of al-Khasibi.⁴⁹ It is from this al-Khasibi that the Nusayris also call themselves [*Ta'ifat*] *al-Khasibiyyah* (the Khasibiyya sect).⁵⁰ They call their religion *Diyanat al-Khasibi* (the religion of al-Khasibi).⁵¹ Question ninety nine of their catechism asks: “Why do we bear the name of Khasibiyyah?” the answer is, “Because we follow the teaching of our shaykh, Abu Abd Allah ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi.”⁵² We have seen earlier that according to Massignon, the sect was also called Nusayri in the time of al-Khasibi.

To spread his teaching, al-Khasibi travelled extensively in Persia and Syria and settled in Aleppo, which in the tenth century was under the Shi'i dynasty of the Hamdanis. According to Nusayri authorities, al-Khasibi won the favour of the Hamdani ruler Sayf al-Dawlah (reigned 944-967), who helped him to propagate his teachings. In Aleppo he wrote *Kitab al-Hidayah al-Kubrah*, dedicated to Sayf al-Dawlah. Making Aleppo the centre of activity, al-Khasibi sent his disciples to Persia, Iraq, Egypt, and surrounding areas to spread his teachings. His disciples in Iraq were the Shi'i Buwayhids, who ruled Baghdad from 945 to 1055, when they were overthrown by the Seljuk Turkish Sultan Tughril. The Shi'i Fatimid sultans of Egypt were also among his disciples. To his disciples, al-Khasibi was erudite and deeply religious. Because of his extensive religious knowledge, he was called *Shaykh al-Din* (the spiritual authority of religion). After a long and eventful life, al-Khasibi dies in Aleppo, where his tomb is inscribed with the name Shaykh Yabraq. It has become a holy shrine visited by many people.⁵³

According to Sulayman al-Adani, the Nusayri religion began with Muhammad ibn Nusayr, who was succeeded by Ibn Jundub, who, in turn, was succeeded by al-Jumbulani who was succeeded by al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi, so esteemed by the Nusayris that they consider him “superior to all his successors.”⁵⁴ He is the one who perfected their prayers and taught far and wide in many countries. But, al-Adani goes on to say, al-Khasibi was not successful in winning converts to his religious ideas.

To show his disappointment with the Syrians, who did not respond to his preaching, he satirized them in some of his poems, saying, “I dislike staying in the land of *al-Sham* (Syria), may the curse of the lord of all creatures rest upon them.”⁵⁵ From Syria al-Khasibi journeyed to Baghdad, where he taught in public, but the governor of the city arrested him and threw him in prison. He managed to escape by night, claiming that Christ had delivered him from his captors, and that Christ was none other than Muhammad. According to Bar Hebraeus in his *Chronography*, al-Khasibi (who is not mentioned by a name) escaped through the efforts of the jailer's maid, who felt sorry for him. When the jailer was deep in sleep, she stole the keys of the cell for him, opened the gate, let al-Khasibi out, and returned the keys to their place. When the jailer awoke and saw the prisoner had escaped, he spread the rumour that an Angel delivered him, in order to escape the governor's wrath. When al-Khasibi heard the tale of this “miracle,” he became more resolute than ever in spreading his teachings.⁵⁶

Bar Hebraeus repeats this same story in his *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Duwal* (History of dynasties), relating it this time as the tale of a certain poor man who came from Khuzistan [Arabistan] in south west Iran. This man went to Sawad al-Kufah in southern Iraq and, according to Bar Hebraeus, founded the *Qaramitah* (Carmatians), another extremist Shi'i group.⁵⁷ Apparently the stories told by Bar Hebraeus in his *Chronography* about the founder of the Nusayris and in *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Duwal* about the founder of the *Qaramitah* are related to stories related by either Jirjis ibn al-Amid, called al-Makin (d. 1273), or Abu al-Fida' (d. 1331) regarding the founder of the *Qaramitah*.⁵⁸ From the accounts of these writers, we may gain the impression that the *Qaramitah* and the Nusayris are one and the same sect. De Sacy concludes that the *Qaramitah* are no different from the Nusayris because both sects are closely related with the Isma'ilis, and because information in Druze books about the doctrines are identical with those of the Isma'ilis.⁵⁹ There is a great deal of truth in De Sacy's statement that the Nusayris were related to the Isma'ilis. Such a relationship is suggested by the effort made to unite the Nusayris and the Isma'ilis. The Nusayri writer Muhammad Ghalib al-Tawil states that after the death of al-Jumbulani in 287/900, the Isma'ilis and the Nusayris, whom he calls Alawis, called an important religious meeting in the city of Ana near the Iraqi-Syrian border, attended by two representatives each from Baghdad, Ana, Aleppo, Latakia, and Jabal al-Nusayriyyah. The purpose of the meeting was to unite the Alawis (Nusayris) with the Isma'ilis, but its result, says al-Tawil, was more disagreement and greater alienation between the two sects.⁶⁰ From this account we may infer that, since the Isma'ilis were the older sect, the Nusayris were an offshoot of the Isma'ilis.

While there is no evidence that the Nusayris and the *Qaramitah* are identical, they do share common practices, such as prostrating themselves fifty times a day while praying, holding one fifth of their property at the disposal of their Brethren, and celebrating the feasts of the Mihrajan and Nawruz.⁶¹ It is noteworthy; however, that Shaykh Isa Suud, former Nusayri judge of Latakia, rejects the stories about al-Khasibi and the association of the Nusayris with the *Qaramitah*. He blames these stories on the authors, who, "because of ignorance of true history of the Nusayris, wrote such fables, which have no shadow of reality." However, Suud produces poetry composed by al-Khasibi while in prison in Baghdad, lamenting the fact that he was thrown into jail because he was accused of being a *Qarmati* (Carmatian), which indicates that there is some truth in associating al-Khasibi with the *Qaramitah*.⁶²

Among his many accomplishments, al-Khasibi established two religious centres — one in Baghdad, which he entrusted to his representative, Ali Jisri (whose epithet derives from *Jisri* [bridge] because of his position as a supervisor of bridges in Baghdad), and the other in Aleppo, operating by his agent, Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jilli, from Jilliyya, near Antioch.

According to Muhammad Ghalib al-Tawil, al-Khasibi's main goal was to win people over from all creeds to the Jumbulaniyyah order, founded by his master, al-Jumbulani. Al-Tawil goes on to say that Muslims, Christians, Jews, Byzantines, and Turks joined the Jumbulaniyyah order and formed the sect now called the Alawis, or Nusayris. Certainly this is a very significant testimony about the origin of the Nusayri sect, especially in that it comes from a member of the sect. Also noteworthy is al-Tawil's statement that al-Jumbulani was born 235/849 and died in 287/900. We can be quite sure that the Nusayris were already an establishment sect in the

ninth century,⁶³ but they were known as Namiriyyah and Jumbulaniyyah rather than Nusayris. In the tenth century, they were called Khasibiyyah, after al-Khasibi, as well as Nusayris.

The Nusayris Middle Period

The Nusayri centre in Baghdad was eventually destroyed, together with other institutions, when the armies of Mongol Hulago ransacked Baghdad in 1258. The centre in Aleppo, after al-Khasibi died, continued under the leadership of Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jilli, who was in turn succeeded by the prominent Nusayri, Abu Sa'id al-Maymun ibn Qasim al-Tabarani (d. 426/1034). Born in Tiberius, Palestine, in 968 (hence Tabarani), al-Tabarani was more prolific writer than al-Khasibi and a distinguished Nusayri leader. Among his books was *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad* (Book of feast), which describes, among other festivals, the celebration of Christmas and *Nawruz* (Persian New Year).⁶⁴

Constant warfare and turmoil forced al-Tabarani to move his headquarters in 1031 in Latakia, where three years later he died and was buried. During his stay in Latakia, a conflict over religious matters arose between his sect and the Ishaqiyyah, whom we have already mentioned as an extremist Shi'i sect sharing with the Nusayris the concepts of the apotheosis of Ali. The Ishaqiyyah derive their name from Abu Yaqub Ishaq (Isaac), nicknamed al-Ahmar (the red one), who, like Muhammad ibn Nusayr, was a follower of the eleventh Imam, al-Hasan al-Askari. Like ibn Nusayr, Ishaq al-Ahmar claimed to be the "door" to al-Askari, and he made additions to the dogma regarding the Imams.⁶⁵

In the time of al-Tabarani, a certain leader of the Ishaqiyyah, Ismail ibn Khallad of Balbak, nicknamed Abu Dhuhaybah (from *Dhahab*, gold) because of his wealth, made Jabal, south of Latakia, the headquarters of his sect. According to al-Tawil, there were no real doctrinal differences between al-Tabarani and Abu Dhuhaybah, "the Nusayriyyah and the Ishaqiyyah shared the extreme beliefs related by al-Shahrastani. However, al-Tawil says that while al-Tabarani was known for his piety and poverty, Abu Dhuhaybah was known for his wealth."⁶⁶

Taking advantage of the piety of al-Tabarani, the ambitious Abu Dhuhaybah moved his headquarters to Latakia, probably in the same year as al-Tabarani. We are informed by al-Tawil that at Latakia, Abu Dhuhaybah began to antagonize and pressure the Nusayris. Had it not been for the Nusayri people of the Banu Hilal, who rushed to help their brethren, Abu Dhuhaybah would have destroyed the Nusayris. When the Banu Hilal arrived at Latakia, Abu Dhuhaybah escaped to Antioch. The Nusayri Diyab Abu Ghanim chief of the Banu Zughba, chased Abu Dhuhaybah from place to place with eighty horsemen until finally they found him near Latakia. Abu Ghanim took him by surprise, kicked him with his stirrup, and killed him. Abu Dhuhaybah was buried in Latakia, where his tomb is well known amongst the people of the city as the tomb of Shaykh Qarash.⁶⁷

Al-Tabarani is so esteemed by the Nusayris that the third chapter of *Kitab al-Majmu'* is entitled "The Canonisation of Abu Sa'id." This canonisation, a kind of a holy supplication addressed to their god, Ali ibn Abi Talib, also "calls to mind the presence of the most illustrious, the most valiant, the lusty, the God-fearing possessor of divine knowledge, Abu Sa'id, who avenged

himself with his own hand on the hand of Abu Dhuhaybah, may the curse of Allah rest upon him.”⁶⁸

Al-Tabarani was the last religious leader to keep the whole Nusayri community united. From al-Tawil we learn that after al-Tabarani’s death, the Nusayri community split into different factions ruled by independent shaykhs.⁶⁹ They remain today as they have been for centuries: a tribalistic people with a closed society. Like other persecuted minority religious groups (e.g., the Mormons in the United States in the nineteenth century), they sought a haven from their oppressors, settling in the fastness of the rugged mountain of Bargylus or al-Lukam, which bears their name, Jabal al-Nusayriyyah. As noted earlier, al-Khasibi was highly favoured by the Shi’i Hamdanis, princes who ruled Aleppo from 944 to 1003; since they were Shi’ah, it was expected that they should support and sanction his teachings. Yet there is no evidence that the Nusayris gained any power within the Hamdani state. As extremist Shi’ah, the Nusayris were most likely detested by the Hamdanis, moderate Twelver Shi’i who rejected the deification of Ali and the Imams. It is because of their extreme Shi’i belief that the Nusayris retreated to the mountain regions of the north western Syria, where they could live in isolation, unmolested.

It was in this self-imposed isolation that the Nusayris finally developed their own syncretic religion system. As a society they developed what may be called inferiority complex, regarding themselves as a forlorn and despised people. Yet, like the children of Israel, they claimed to be a “chosen people.”⁷⁰ They were in constant fear of the Sunnis, whom they considered their worst oppressors. Munir al-Sharif, who has studied the life and conditions of the Nusayris (whom he calls Alawis), states that they transmit from generation to generation the stories of the Sunni persecution of their people. Therefore, says al-Sharif, if an Alawi (Nusayri) knows that you are a Sunni, he will not be as candid with you as he will be with a Christian, for the latter, like he, is weak and oppressed.⁷¹

This history of persecution made the Nusayris hate the Sunnis and pray for the destruction of Muslim Rulers. To the Nusayris, the Muslims are an accursed people; they believe that when Muslim chiefs die, their souls assume the bodily form of asses.⁷² The Nusayris’ hatred of the Muslims and the fact that they are considered heretics, caused the prominent Sunni learned man, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328), to issue a juristic opinion not only condemning the Nusayris as infidels who should be totally shunned by the Muslims, but also declaring that their property and blood may be lawfully taken by the Muslims unless they show repentance.⁷³

When the Crusaders swept through Syria in 1097, so we are told by Ba Hebraeus, they went to Mount Lebanon and killed a great number of Nusayris.⁷⁴ But it seems that when the Crusaders learned that the Nusayris were not a truly Muslim sect, they became tolerant towards them. This explains Ibn Taymiyyah’s statement that the Syrian coast, where the Nusayris lived, was captured by the Crusaders with their cooperation.⁷⁵ For the services they rendered to the Crusaders, the Nusayris were able to regain some of their castles, which had been captured by the Isma’ilis in 1071.⁷⁶ The Isma’ilis remained in power in the Southern part of the Nusayri territory, however. It is strange that we do not hear as much about the Nusayris in Muslim

chronicles as we do about the more powerful Isma'ilis and Qaramitah. Perhaps because the Nusayris had religious beliefs in common with the Isma'ilis and had lived among the Qaramitah, Muslim authors confused them with these sects.⁷⁷ The fact remains that the Nusayris remained subject to the Muslims, Crusaders, and Assassins [Isma'ilis], who were the absolute rulers of several castles, including those of Qadmus and Maysaf in the southern part of the Nusayris' country. Meantime, the Kurds, who had moved into Nusayri territory, allied themselves with the Isma'ilis and began to challenge the very existence of the Nusayris. Faced with both Kurds and Isma'ilis, the Nusayris delegated two men, Shaykh Muhammad of Banyas and Shaykh Ali al-Khayyat, to ask Shaykh Hasan al-Makzum (d. 1220), Prince of Sinjar in northern Iraq to rush to their aid. Al-Makzum responded. In 617/1120, he marched with a force of twenty-five thousand men against the Nusayri territory but his campaign ended in failure. Learning that al-Makzum had arrived in the Nusayri territory, the Kurds and their allies congregated at Maysaf, and attacked his forces at night, defeating them. Al-Makzum returned to Sinjar.

Three years later, with a much larger force, and accompanied by women and children, al-Makzum returned and marched once more into Nusayri territory. This time, the Isma'ilis deserted the Kurds and joined the Nusayris. Relieved by this defection by his side, al-Makzum drove the Kurds to Akkar in the south and returned to the citadel of Abu Qubays, which he used as headquarters. The people who accompanied al-Makzum became the ancestors of the Nusayri tribe of Haddadiyah, Matawirah, Muhalibah, Darawisah, Numaylatiyyah and the Banu Ali.⁷⁸ [Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, who belongs to the Numaylatiyyah branch of the Matawirah tribe, is, then, of Iraqi origin.]

After subduing the Kurds and the Isma'ilis, al-Makzum began to regulate affairs of the Nusayris. He was a pious man and a poet, whose poetry is characterised by religious symbolism. He died in 638/1240 and is buried at Kfarsusa, near Damascus.⁷⁹ The followers of al-Makzum who hailed from Jabal Sinjar form the Kalazis, or Qamaris sect, of the Nusayris.

In 1258, the Mongol hordes, commanded by Hulago, ransacked Baghdad. A Mongol army commanded by a Christian general, Kitbughah, swept through northern Syria, capturing the major cities, including Hama and Aleppo.⁸⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah accuses the Nusayris of helping the Mongols conquer Syria and handing over the fortresses to the enemies of Islam.⁸¹ When the Egyptian Mamluk Sultan al-Zahir Baybar (reigned 1223-77) finally defeated the joint army of the Mongols and the Franks at Ayn Jalut, near Nazareth, on 3 September 1260, the Nusayris, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, considered the triumph of the Muslims over the Mongols and the Christians (Franks) the greatest calamity.⁸² The collaboration of the Nusayris with the Mongols and the Franks against Baybars explains why, after his victory, Baybars marched against the country of the Nusayris, destroying their castles. He also forced them to build mosques, but never worshipped in them and left them to decay.⁸³ The Maghribi traveller Ibn Battuta (d. 1377), who was in Syria in 1326 noticed that the mosques that Baybars had forced the Nusayris to build were not only desolate, but had also been used as stables for cattle and sheep. Ibn Battuta said that if a stranger were to come to the Nusayris, enter a mosque, and call to prayer, they would say to him, "Don't bray, your fodder will come to you."⁸⁴ This shows that, like the

other extremist Shi'i we have discussed, the Nusayris had total disregard for Muslim religious duties.

The most prominent leader of the Nusayris after al-Makzum was Shaykh Imarat al-Dawlah Hatim al-Tubani (d. 700/1300), from the Haddadin clan, originally from Sinjar. In his time, the Isma'ilis sought reconciliation and unity with the Nusayris because, as al-Tawil states, there is only one point of difference between the Isma'ilis and Nusayris: the number of Imams they accepted. While the Isma'ilis acknowledge the authority of only the first seven Imams, stopping with Ismail, the son of Ja'far al-Sadiq, the Nusayris uphold the authority of the twelve Imams, ending with the disappearing Imam, Muhammad — the Mahdi.⁸⁵ In all other matters of dogma, the Nusayris were no different from the Isma'ilis, which supports what has been previously been said, that the Nusayris are an offshoot of the Isma'ilis.⁸⁶

The leaders of the Nusayris and the Isma'ilis met in 690/1291 at Safita, south-east of Tartus, but resolved nothing.⁸⁷ As we have already seen, efforts to unite the two sects had begun at the meeting of Ana (287/900), which likewise ended in failure.

The fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258 brought the end to the Abbasid state khilafah, creating a political vacuum which the Mongols could not fill. As long as the Abbasid Khalifah was still in power, he was looked upon as a symbol of Islam, at least in its Sunni form. But the power of the Muslims suffered a setback when Hulago, influenced by his Christian wife, favoured the Christians in Baghdad and Damascus. From Ibn al-Futi al-Baghdadi (d. 1323) we learn that when Hulago stormed and ravaged Baghdad, putting its inhabitants to the sword, he spared the Christians and appointed guards to protect their homes. For this reason many Muslims sought refuge with the Christians.⁸⁸ According to Imad al-Din Ibn Kathir (d. 1373), Hulago, before his defeat in Ayn al-Jalut, allowed the Christians to oppress the Muslims and celebrate their religious ceremonies openly.⁸⁹ He also favoured the Jews, bringing some from Tiflis and appointing them as executors of Muslims bequests.⁹⁰

Obviously, the Mongols' toleration of these minorities was meant to win over the weaker people, who will be more willing to serve the interest of the conqueror.⁹¹ This state of affairs changed, however, when the seventh Mongol Khan after Hulago, Ghazan Mahmud (reigned 1295-1304) embraced Islam. His inclination towards Shi'ism is revealed by the fact that he appointed a Shi'i as governor of Iraq. He also visited the Shi'i holy shrines in Najaf and Karbala'.⁹²

We have given this brief account to show that the Mongol rulers favoured one sect over another, creating religious conflict, political rivalry, and intrigue among those men that they appointed as their ministers. Naturally, there was a great deal of violence and bloodshed.

In this environment of religious and political turmoil, some men, driven by ambition, founded new religious sects; others claimed to be the Mahdi [the Shi'i messiah], appearing after his long concealment to restore justice to the world. Ibn Kathir, in a discussion of the Nusayris' attack

against the city of Jabalah in the year 717/1217, relates a story of a certain Nusayri man who claimed to be the Mahdi.

At this time according to Ibn Kathir, the Nusayris were in rebellion. Leading the rebels was a man who had at various times claimed to be Muhammad – the Mahdi, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and even Muhammad ibn Abd Allah (the Prophet of Islam). He declared that the Muslims were infidels, and the Nusayris are the true believers. He deceived many people, who followed him in attacking and pillaging the town of Jabalah. As they left the ravaged town they cursed the two Khulafa' Abu Bakr and Umar (rama), and shouted, "There is no God but Ali, no veil but Muhammad, and no door but Salman." In their distress, the inhabitants of Jabalah cried out for help, but no help came. Ibn Kathir goes on to say this Mahdi pretender ordered his men to ravage Muslim places of worship and turn them into taverns selling wine. Whenever the Nusayris captured a Muslim, they commanded him to say, "There is no God but Ali. Worship your God Ali, who causes people to live and die, in order to spare your blood."⁹³

Ibn Battuta, who arrived in Syria in 1326, gives a similar account of this Mahdi pretender. He states that an unknown man arose to prominence among the Nusayris pretending to be the Mahdi. Promising to rule the sect, he divided the land of Syria among his many followers, assigning them to conquer different parts of the country. When he commanded them to go forth, he gave them olive branches, saying, "By these conquer, for they are your authorisation." He ordered his followers to attack the Muslims, beginning with the town of Jabalah. They stormed the town while the inhabitants were at Friday prayers, entering the houses and ravishing the women. Some of the rebels were killed by the Nusayris, however.

When news of this Mahdi pretender reached al-Malik al-Nasir [Sultan of Egypt, 1310-40], who also controlled Syria, he ordered that the Nusayris who had killed the followers of the Mahdi pretender should themselves be put to death. But the Muslims explained that the Nusayri farmers were employed to till the land, and if they were killed, the Muslims would have no one to raise crops for them. So al-Malik al-Nasir revoked his order.⁹⁴

The accounts of Ibn Kathir (ar) and Ibn Battuta (ar) are significant because they reveal that the Nusayris are Ghulat who deify Ali, believing the Prophet of Islam (saw) is just a "veil" of Ali (ra), who considers Sunni Muslims to be their adversaries. Ibn Kathir, especially, implies that the Nusayris are not Muslims, but rather enemies of Islam. We shall elaborate on this point later.

From 1317, when the Nusayri Mahdi pretender appeared, until 1516, when the Ottoman Sultan Salim I, nicknamed "The Grim" (d. 1520), defeated the last of the Mamluk sultans, Qansawh, at Marj Dabiq near Aleppo, the Nusayris' country remained under the control of the Mamluks. The most important occurrence affecting the countries of the Middle East, especially Syria and Iraq, during this period was the conquest of the region by another Mongol, Timur Lang (Tamerlane, d. 1405).

In 1392, Timur conquered Iraq and parts of Syria and Turkey. Turning back to Syria, he occupied Damascus and Aleppo in 1401. The conquered people practiced a wide range of religious belief; the Muslims, who formed the majority, including Sunnis, Shi'ah's, and Sufis. To consolidate his position, Timur exploited their differences to his advantage.⁹⁵

Since Sufism and the Sufi orders were prevalent in the fourteenth century, Timur established strong relations with such paragons of Sufism as the Shaykhs Shams al-Din al-Fakhuri, Abu Bakr al-Khawafi, and Muhammad Barak, who were considered saints in their time.⁹⁶ On their part, the Sufis supported Timur, praising his actions as miracles worked by divine inspiration.⁹⁷

Timur also attempted to win over the Shi'ah's. As a gesture of his support for them, he occupied Damascus to avenge the killing of the Imam Husayn in 680 by the lieutenants of the Umayyad Khalifah Yazid, on the premise that Damascus was the capital of the Umayyads.⁹⁸ Timur is thought by some, including the Nusayri writer al-Tawil, to have been a Shi'ah. Al-Tawil maintains that Timur composed verses containing ideas conforming to those of the Jumbulaniyyah tariqah, a Nusayri order.⁹⁹ Whether or not Timur was a devout Shi'ah or had proclivities toward Shi'ism, the fact remains that he favoured and supported the Shi'ah's, who gained upper hand in the Islamic countries under his control.¹⁰⁰

Timur's march against Syria led the Nusayris to appeal to the pro Shi'i conqueror to avenge them against their enemies, the Sunnis. We are informed by al-Tawil that before Timur stormed Damascus, an Alawi woman, Durr al-Sadaf, the daughter of Sad al-Ansar (one of the men of the Mamluk Sultan al-Zahir), accompanied by forty Alawi virgins, tearfully asked Timur to avenge the family of the Rasul of Allah (saw) particularly the daughters, including al-Husayn's sister Zaynab, who was taken as captive after his murder to the Umayyad Khalifah Yazid in Damascus.¹⁰¹

Timur promised Durr al-Sadaf that he would avenge the family of the Rasul of Allah (saw). She accompanied him to Damascus with forty virgins, who sang songs against the Umayyads. When Timur entered Damascus, he offered amnesty to its inhabitants and asked them to find him a woman among the dignitaries of the city to be his wife. When a maiden was found, he ordered that she be marched naked through the city. When the people refused, Timur said to them, "Who, then, gave you the right to bring the daughter of the Rasul of Allah (saw) uncovered to your city?" Then he ordered them to be killed.¹⁰² What he meant was, who had given the right to bring the wives and sister of al-Husayn, the grandson of the Rasul of Allah (saw), naked through the street of Damascus?

Timur's authority in Syria did not last, however. The country fell under the rule of the Mamluks, whose power was finally in turn by the Ottoman Sultan Salim I in 1516, when Syria became an Ottoman province. The Ottoman occupation of Syria brought misfortunes to the Nusayris, who had to face oppression by the powerful Sunni enemy.

The beginning of the sixteenth century witnessed the rise of two powers, the Safawids of Persia under Shah Ismail, and the Ottomans under Salim I. The two suzerains held opposing

religious views. Shah Ismail was avowed Shi'i who had established Shi'ism as the religion of the state, by the sword. The Ottoman Sultan Salim was a devout Sunni who feared and loathed the fanatical Shi'ism of the Persians. The tension between the two rulers was exacerbated by the great number of Shi'i Kizilbash in Turkey who were the followers of the Safawid order in Persia. The ambitious Shah Ismail intended to extend his hegemony to Turkey and, by using his followers in that country, to make it a Shi'i satellite of Persia. The animosity between Shah Ismail and Sultan Salim I broke into open hostilities which culminated at Chaldiran in 1514, with the defeat of Shah Ismail.

As the extremist Shi'ah, the Nusayris obviously were on the side of the Safawid. The Ottoman Sultan, who was extremely suspicious of all Shi'ah's, naturally extended this suspicion to the Nusayris. Ottoman archives indicate that the Ottoman government took some preventive measures against the Nusayris because of their sympathies towards the Persians.¹⁰³

After he defeated the Egyptian Mamluk Sultan Muhammad Qansawh al-Ghawri at Marj Dabiq (1516) and entered Aleppo, Sultan Salim I summoned some Sunni religious men and obtained from them a *fatwa* (juristic opinion) to fight the "infidels Alawis," or Shi'ah's. He also summoned the Shi'i leaders to his presence, promising to confirm their authority over the town people. It is estimated that 9,400 Shi'i men assembled in Aleppo; all were maliciously murdered by the order of the Ottoman Sultan on the sanction of the Sunni religious leaders.¹⁰⁴

Many Shi'ah's did escape to Nusayris mountains, where it was difficult for Salim's army to wage war against them. The Turks called these Shi'ah's who escaped to the mountain *Surek* (exiles), which was later distorted to *Surak* [the plural form being *Swarik*]. The part of the Mountain range where they settled is now called the Saruk Mountain, and some Nusayris now living in the administrative districts of Sihyun (Zion), Umraniyya, and Safita, are called Saruk.¹⁰⁵

When the mountain refuge prevented Sultan Salim I from decimating the Nusayris, he resorted to a peaceful strategy calculated to weaken the Nusayris. He moved more than a million members of Turkish tribes from Anatolia and as far away as Khurasan in Iran, and established them in the castles and the most desirable areas of the Nusayri territory. Soon these Turkish newcomers had spread all over the Nusayri mountains, reaching as far as Latakia and Jabalah. They attacked and ravaged Latakia, driving its inhabitants to the Mediterranean, where some of them drowned. Jabalah faced the same disastrous fate. According to al-Tawil, "No traces of the Nusayris were left in Latakia except the graves of their ancestors."¹⁰⁶ To this day, the Nusayris remember the sufferings inflicted upon them by Sultan Salim I in his effort to eradicate their sect.¹⁰⁷ Salim's stratagem of stationing Turks in the Nusayri Mountain failed to achieve this objective, however; in fact, many of the Turks from Khurasan, themselves Shi'ah's, were absorbed by the Nusayri tribes. Because these Turks were first stationed in the Abu Qubay's castle, also called Qartal, they came to be known as Qaratilah; today they are considered to be the Nusayri tribe.¹⁰⁸

It should be pointed out here that the Isma'ilis, whose relations with the Nusayris were most precarious, allied themselves with the Ottomans, perhaps out of fear of persecution. Through fewer in number, they attacked and occupied some of the Nusayri castles in their area. To please the Ottoman conquerors, they adopted the Ottoman dress, including having their veil in conformity with the Ottoman custom.¹⁰⁹

In 1760, the Nusayris were faced with another misfortune. An English physician was killed in the Nusayris' mountains, and Nusayri leader refused to deliver the murderer to the Ottoman governor, Sulayman Pasha. Before the murder, Sulayman Pasha had imposed heavy taxes on the Nusayris, but had been unable to collect them. Using the murder of the English physician as a pretext, he led a large invasion force into the Nusayri Mountains, killing many of the inhabitants. He captured seventy Nusayri leaders and after killing them, had their heads stuffed with straw.¹¹⁰ In 1807 a conflict broke between the Nusayris and the Isma'ilis which resulted in a massacre of the Isma'ilis. In that year, three hundred Nusayris were at odds with religious leaders, and the Isma'ili chief gave them asylum in his territory. A short while later, while some Isma'ili men were working in their fields, the Nusayris attacked killing three hundred of them and ravaging their home. The Nusayris were assisted by some of their kinsmen, who had descended from the mountains to join them, a fact indicating that the attack was pre-planned. When the news of the massacre reached the Ottoman governor of Damascus, he marched with a force against the perpetrators and killed them.¹¹¹

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Nusayris district of the Kalbiyyah tribe was particularly notorious for its lawlessness. John Lewis Burckhardt (d. 1817), who was in Syria between 1809 and 1813, states that Berber, the Pasha (governor) of Tripoli, was in the neighbourhood of Latakia, making war against some rebel Anzeyrys (Nusayri).¹¹² Berber was fighting to avenge the killing of a Frenchman, Captain Boutin, by the lawless Arabs called Arab al-Muluk. The murderers escaped to the Kalbiyyah district, and the Kalbiyyah Nusayris, following what they believed to be a duty not to deliver anyone who has sought asylum with them, refused to hand over the murderers to Berber. This led Berber to attack the Kalbiyyah district and punish the residents with the marked savagery. During combat with the Kalbiyyah, he said to behead seven of their men at one time. The dragoman of the English vice-consulate at Latakia told Samuel Lyde that one of his visits to Latakia, Nusayri prisoners were taken out to meet him on the road, where Berber beheaded them and had their heads impaled. Berber, a Sunni Muslim hated the Nusayris, whom he must have considered worse than infidels. This dragoman told Lyde that unlike the Jews and the Christians, the Nusayris were not considered by Muslims as Ahl al-Kitab (the people of the book) under the protection of the Muslims, and that according to Islamic law, even their paying of poll-tax in lieu of conversion to Islam is not lawful. They should be put to the sword, and their wives and children should be sold to slavery.¹¹³

To show the traditional hatred harboured by the Sunni Muslims for the Nusayris, the dragoman added that a certain Shaykh Ibrahim al-Maghribi (d. 1827) issued a juristic opinion declaring that it was lawful for a Muslim to kill a Nusayri or confiscate his property. For this reason, the Nusayris curse al-Maghribi's memory.¹¹⁴

In 1832, Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad Ali, viceroy of Egypt (reigned 1804-1845), invaded Syria to further the ambition of his father, who dreamed about founding an empire in the Middle East. This invasion of Syria clearly affected the Nusayris although, according to al-Tawil, Nusayri sources are not in agreement with Ibrahim Pasha. Some of the sources portray him as saint, others as “divine calamity” and the “worst of God’s creations.” Al-Tawil says both views are correct, although he does not cite sources by name. It seems that Ibrahim Pasha treated the Nusayri leaders as equal to their common subject. For this reason the leaders hated him, while the commoners loved him.¹¹⁵ According to Col. Paul Jacquot, many Nusayris refused to support Ibrahim Pasha, which prompted him to disarm them, chase them into the Mountains, destroy the castles, and behead their leaders.¹¹⁶ Ibrahim Pasha even sought the assistance of the Druzes and the Maronites in order to subjugate the Nusayris. But the Nusayris captured five hundred Druzes from Ibrahim had sent against them and killed all of them on a round rock Wadi al-Uyun, near al-Murayqib. To this day this rock is called the Blood Rock.¹¹⁷

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Nusayris’ Plight was decidedly serious. Rev. Samuel Lyde, an English missionary who lived among the Nusayris from 1853 to 1859 and established a mission and school in the Kalbiyyah district, offers nothing but gloom about these people, their customs, and their way of life. At the end of his report, Lyde comments that even if the reader thinks that his picture of the Nusayris is a melancholy one, he may be assured that it is not exaggerated.¹¹⁸

Oppressed by the local government and exploited by the shaykhs, Nusayris sank to such low point that their communities were rife with violence, robbery, and constant feuds. The Kalbiyyah, among whom Lyde lived, constantly fought with the Muhalibah. On one occasion, the Kalbiyyah attacked the Muhalibah, robbing and killing them; their woman and children accompanied them and participated in the crimes. Lyde says that the women were like demons, encouraging the men and supplying them with water. When the fighting ended, the children would steal anything they would lay their hands on. Lyde says that on the hill near his house, he could see the wife of his servant stretching out her hands to Sultan Jafar al-Tayyar, oldest brother of the Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, praying for the success and safety of her husband, who was on one such marauding expedition.¹¹⁹

In 1857 there was fighting among the Budeh (people from the mountainous part of the Banu Ali district), the Kalbiyyah, and the Amamirah; the Kalbiyyah were victorious. One has only to read the account given by the Nusayri writer al-Tawil of the feuds among the Nusayri groups to realise how accurate Lyde is in his assessment of the Nusayris life.¹²⁰

In 1859, the government sought to burn the houses of the Juhaniyyah in Latakia, and murders were committed with the connivance of the government officials. So many were being killed that the population was noticeably decreasing. Brother fought against brother, and both cursed their parents, without fear or shame. The Nusayri chiefs themselves oppressed their own people, exacting double taxes from the weak and powerless. The Shaykhs, says Lyde, could not offer moral exhortation to the people because they were busy collecting taxes from them. Under these abnormal circumstances, “it is, indeed, melancholy to live under such an

order of things, in which all the finer and more useful qualities of man are repressed, and the deserving and humane must go to the wall. Hence, the state of society is a perfect hell upon earth.”¹²¹

The Nusayris rebelled against the Ottoman government in the time of the Wali (governor) Rashid Pasha in 1866, but the rebellion was suppressed; the chief rebels were hanged, and their houses destroyed. Ten years of quiet passed before the Nusayris resumed the rebellion against the government. A force from Beirut, commanded by Akif Pasha, captured the rebels, hanged some, and banished others to Akka.¹²²

When Midhat Pasha, the greatest Ottoman reformer, was appointed governor of Syria from 1879-80, he held the opinion that the Nusayris were rebellious who should be subdued by force, even though he had close friends among the Nusayris, like Hawash Bey, the chief of Mutawirah tribe. He changed his mind, however, and, instead of using force, attempted to improve the condition of the Nusayris through reform. He called a meeting in the city of Hama which was attended by five hundred Nusayri dignitaries. He told them that the Nusayris should stop rebelling against the government, pay their taxes and respect the military conscription laws. He also told them that the Syrians (who were mostly Sunnis) believed that the Nusayris were notorious for their bad behaviour, which forced the government to discipline them. Midhat promised the Nusayris that they would open schools in their region, stop oppression by local government officials, and, best of all, grant them autonomy.¹²³

These promises to the Nusayris aroused the indignation of the Sunni dignitaries of Damascus and Hama, and they denounced Midhat to Sultan Abd al-Hamid II. The Sultan, who detested and feared Midhat for his liberal and democratic ideas, transferred him to Izmir (Smyrna) as governor of that province.¹²⁴

It should be pointed out that the Ottoman government implemented the Millet system, which gave a certain degree of control over internal affairs to the different ethnic and religious sects within the empire. But since the Nusayris were not regarded by the Ottoman government as either as Muslims or as dhimmis (like the Jews and Christians, who, according to the Islamic law, were under the protection of the Muslims as long as they pay taxes) the Nusayris were not ruled according to the Millet system. However, some Ottoman statesmen were of the opinion that they were forlorn and persecuted minority.¹²⁵

One of these statesmen was Diya Bey, the Mutasarrif (provincial governor) of Latakia from 1885 to 1892 and one of the Sultan Abd al-Hamid II's most obedient servants. In a report to the Sultan, Diya stated, rightly or wrongly, that the Nusayris were the tools in the hands of the Persian, with which they sympathized, and that the presence of the American schools (founded by Missionaries) in some parts of the Nusayri mountains was detrimental to the Ottoman government's policy. He suggested that these schools be replaced by the state schools, and that the Nusayris be brought into the Islamic religion.¹²⁶

Diya's report was apparently approved by the Sultan. Diya Bey called the Nusayri dignitaries together and had them sign in his presence a document proclaiming that they embraced the true religion of Islam, and that they had been delegated to sign this document on behalf of all Nusayris. Thereupon, Diya Bey ordered the American schools closed (they were poor at best) and about forty state schools were built; there the Nusayri children were taught no more than elementary reading. Soon after Diya's death, however, the Nusayris closed these schools and turned them into castle barns.¹²⁷

The Nusayris Under the French Mandate

During World War I, France and Britain signed the notorious secret Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) which divided Syria, including Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq, among the great powers. In 1919, the League of Nations placed Syria under French mandate which came into effect in the next year. Beginning in 1918, the French forces stationed in Cilicia, in southern Turkey, moved into parts of Lebanon and Syria, including the coastal area of the Nusayri territory. General Gouraud was appointed the General Commander of the Allied occupation forces in Syria and Cilicia, and made Beirut his headquarters.

In the spring of 1919, the King-Crane Commission was sent by U.S. President Wilson to investigate the political aspirations of the Arabs, especially those in Syria. The Amir Faysal and his men declared the establishment of an Arab state in Syria at Damascus in 1920. This move was considered by France an effort to her role as the trustee of the Levant. On 24 July, a French force defeated a much smaller and badly equipped Arab army at Maysalun. King Faysal abdicated the Syrian throne and fled Damascus, leaving France the master of Syria.

On 1 September 1920, General Gouraud divided the French mandate territory into four districts: Greater Lebanon, state of Damascus (including the Druze Mountain), the state of Aleppo (including al-Iskandarun, or Alexandretta), and the territory of Latakia (Alawi territory).¹²⁸ At this time, the Nusayris were called Alawis, and their territory, which became a “state” on 1 July 1922, called *Dawlat al-Alawiyyin* (the Alawis state); in 1933 it became the government of Latakia.¹²⁹

The fragmentation of the Syrian population into many ethnic, religious, and political groups made it easier for the French to control the country, following the policy of “divide and rule.” Since the urban Sunni Muslims refused to enrol their sons in the army, the French authorities encouraged the minority groups, especially the Nusayris, to enlist. Thus, following the example of the British levy, the French formed *Les Troupes Spéciales du Levant*, consisting mostly of Nusayri recruits. Many Nusayris who were poor and could not afford an education for their sons had them join the army to save expenses. Once these Nusayris gained high-ranking positions in the army, they encouraged their relatives to follow suit.¹³⁰ The enrolment of the Nusayris in the army during the Mandate period was beginning of their movement toward control of the army in the 1950s and 1960s and their ultimate rise to political power in 1970. The French even used the military corps of minority groups to suppress nationalist insurrections.¹³¹

There is evidence that many Nusayris cooperated with the French authorities in the hope of securing the position of their sect. In a telegram sent to General Gouraud, seventy-three Nusayri chiefs, represented a great number of tribes, asked for an independent Nusayri union under French protection.¹³² The writer Munir al-Sharif, a sympathizer with the Nusayris, however, claims to have played an active role in convincing the Nusayris of the north not to

cooperate with the French. Al-Sharif states that some Nusayris in the northern part of the territory succumbed to the French promises of money, property, and leadership, and unwisely served the French, to the detriment of their own people.¹³³

Another writer offers a different picture. Yusuf al-Hakim, who occupied a cabinet position in the Arab-Syrian government under Faysal and was a witness to the events during and after World War I states that the Nusayris were loyal to the French mandate authorities as a gesture of gratitude for the care and compassion shown to them by the French.¹³⁴

Al-Hakim goes on to say that it was to show their loyalty and gratitude to the French that the Nusayris did not send a representative to the Syrian conference.¹³⁵ In 1919, Faysal had suggested to the Arab-nationalists the necessity of holding a conference of representatives from all of Syria to emphasize the desire of the Syrians for complete independence. The Arab nationalists, who would accept nothing less than complete independence, responded, and the Syrian conference met in July, 1919.¹³⁶ The Nusayris boycotted this conference. Taqi Sharaf al-Din voices the opinion that what al-Hakim said about relations between the French and the Nusayris is a significant indication of the Nusayris' antagonism toward the Arab liberation movement and the nationalist aspirations of the Syrian people.¹³⁷

Be that as it may, the French authorities soon had to deal with the fiercest Nusayri revolt yet against French rule, led by Shaykh Salih Ahmad al-Ali (d. 1950). On 15 December 1918, al-Ali called a meeting at Nahiyat Badr, in the administrative unit of Tartus, attended by prominent Nusayri chiefs. He alerted them to the fact that the French had already occupied the Syrian coast, with the intention of separating that region from the rest of the country. He also told them that as a sign of French antagonism to the Arab nationalists led by Prince Faysal, whose objective was the complete independence of the Arab countries, the French authorities were tearing apart the flags of the Arab rebels. He urged them to revolt and expel the French from Syria.¹³⁸

When the French heard about this meeting, they sent a force from Qadmus (home of Isma'ilis, who had allied themselves to the French) to Badr, to arrest Salih al-Ali. Salih al-Ali and his men met the French force at the village of Niha, west of Wadi al-Uyun, and the revolt began in earnest. The French force was defeated, leaving behind thirty five casualties.¹³⁹ After the victory, al-Ali began to organise the rebels into a disciplined military force, fashioned like a regular army with its own general command, officers of various ranks, and ordinary soldiers. Some Nusayri women supported the army of revolt by supplying water and food to the combat troops and replacing the men at work in the fields.¹⁴⁰ Al-Ali also turned against the Isma'ilis, attacking them at Qadmus, Masyaf, and Nahr al-Khawabi. The French authorities rushed to the Isma'ilis aid, however,¹⁴¹ and attacked al-Ali on 21 February 1919, but were defeated for the second time.

Meantime, the British General Allenby, commander-in-chief of the Allied forces in the East, asked Shaykh al-Ali to cease the hostilities against the French. Al-Ali agreed, on condition that the French forces remain only one hour at Badr. When al-Ali withdrew his forces of Badr,

however, the French broke the condition of his agreement with Allenby. As soon as he arrived in Badr, they installed cannons, took up their positions, and began shelling the villages of Shaykh Badr and al-Rastan. The fighting continued throughout the night, ending in a third defeat for the French. After this victory al-Ali turned once more against the Isma'ilis, attacking and plundering the town of Qadmus. He ordered his men to search for Isma'ili books and manuscripts, which he piled up and set fire to in the public square. The Isma'ilis regained Qadmus in their counter attack on 17 April 1920, however.¹⁴² (Commenting on the hostilities between the Isma'ilis and the Nusayris, Col. Paul Jacquot states that they constitute separate entities and religion, yet neither is a true Muslim religion.)¹⁴³

After this time al-Ali was joined by many Nusayri chiefs and prominent Sunni Muslims from Latakia, al-Haffa, Tartus, Banyas, and other homes and villages.¹⁴⁴ In July 1919, a French force attacked the rebel positions, but al-Ali retaliated by attacking and occupying the villages of the Isma'ilis, the allies of the French, leaving the French no alternative but to sue for peace. Al-Ali agreed to peace on certain conditions; that the Syrian seacoast be added to the state of Syria; that Nusayri captives be released; and the Nusayris be compensated for the damages caused to their villages and homes by the French army. Thus, peace was concluded between the French and al-Ali. But the French were not sincere in their deal with al-Ali and violated their peace agreement by occupying and burning the village of Kaf al-Jaz. Al-Ali counteracted by occupying Qadmus from which the French conducted their military operation against him.

On 20 February 1920, al-Ali attacked the city of Tartus, but counterattacks by the French fleet off the coast caused his forces to retreat. On 3 April, the French attacked, causing heavy casualties and much damage, but Ali's forces counterattacked and forced the French to withdraw from the villages they had been occupying. Meanwhile, a French army commanded by Gouraund defeated a small, poorly equipped Arab army at Maysalun on 24 July 1920, occupied Damascus, and ended the short-lived Kingdom of Syria under Faysal. Realizing the gravity of the situation, al-Ali attacked the town of Maysaf, which was being held by the French and their Isma'ili allies. On 29 November 1920, General Gouraund sent an expedition against al-Ali near the village of Ayn Qadib, west of Qadmus, but to no avail. The French forces entered Shaykh Badr without resistance and arrested some Nusayri leaders, jailing some and hanging the others, but al-Ali escaped with his forces to the north. The French gave chase; on 15 June 1921, a great French force attacked and overran his positions in the north, but failed to capture al-Ali, who went into hiding. The French authorities also offered one-hundred-thousand francs as reward in exchange for information leading to his capture, but this also was to no avail.

When the French authorities gave up hope of finding al-Ali, General Gouraund issued an edict pardoning him and had it distributed to the people by plane. Finally, after hiding out for a year, al-Ali surrendered to the French General Billote. When Billote asked why he had surrendered, al-Ali answered, "By God, if I had only ten armed men left to fight, I would not have quit." Al-Ali died at his home on April 1950.¹⁴⁵

Shaykh Ahmad Salih al-Ali's campaign was the first revolt against the French imperialism in Syria, but some Arab writers do not see it in that light. Taqi Sharaf al-Din maintains that the revolt of al-Ali, which the Nusayris use to justify their antagonism to the Arab nationalist movement, was not a reaction to the French occupation of the Syrian coast, although its interactions with other revolts, especially in the cities of the Syrian coast, gave it the resemblance of a nationalist revolt against French imperialism. "After all," says al-Din, "the Nusayris are not 'material' for revolt because, more than any other Syrian group, they supported the French forces occupation."¹⁴⁶ In fact, he states, the French used the good offices of Nusayri chief, Ahmad al-Hamid, to prevail on Shaykh Salih al-Ali to cease hostilities and enter into negotiations with them.¹⁴⁷ Al-Din concludes that Salih al-Ali's revolt was the result of the long-standing conflict between the Nusayris and the Isma'ilis. When the Isma'ilis allied themselves with the French, al-Ali's attacks were directed against the Isma'ilis, and only incidentally against their French allies.¹⁴⁸ Al-Ali believes that Prince Faysal, some of whose men fought alongside al-Ali's troops, supported the revolt out of fear of the French imperialistic design on Syria. In fact, Faysal would have supported anyone who revolted against the French imperialism. Faysal appointed al-Ali as his representative to the Nusayris' territory and supported his revolt not because al-Ali was an Arab nationalist, but because he was openly hostile towards the French, whom Faysal considered a great impediment to the achievement of Arab independence.¹⁴⁹

Mustafa Kamal also supported al-Ali against the French. Kamal was trying to oust the French army from Cilicia in southern Turkey. In order to pressure the French to withdraw from Cilicia, he furnished al-Ali with arms in his struggle against the French. Once Kamal concluded a secret peace treaty with Franklin-Bouillon in October 1921, however, he had no more use for al-Ali and ceased supporting him.¹⁵⁰

The revolt of Salih al-Ali against the French authorities, therefore, was not so much an antagonistic reaction to the Arab nationalist aspirations as a Nusayri movement whose objective was independence, or at least the autonomous administration of the Nusayris in their own territory. This is why, as soon as the French mandate authorities declared the establishment of an Alawi (Nusayri) state in 1922 and chose Latakia as its capital, the Nusayris began to support France. It also explains the Nusayris' failure to support the insurrection of the Arab nationalist in Damascus in 1925-26, which was met by French bombardment from the air. It is true that some Nusayri leaders supported the Arab national movement and collaborated with Prince Faysal, but, for most part, the Nusayris were looking to win the independence of their own territory, which they could obtain from the French authorities, rather than to become part of an all-Syrian Sunni state. The Nusayris feared the "Sunni Wolf," — that is, the Arab Sunni government in Damascus — more than the French.¹⁵¹ They had suffered a great deal from the brutality and neglect of their affairs at the hands of the Ottomans. Now the French were in control of their territory, and they could exact their independence or self-rule from the French, by revolt if necessary. To achieve this aim, the Nusayris had to contend with the French mandate authorities on the other. They were apprehensive of the French mandate as they were of the Syrian nationalists, who were agitating to unite all Syria and Lebanon under the sole control of Syrian government in Damascus.

The Nusayris did not seek an end to the French mandate if the French left, they would have no protection from the Sunnis.¹⁵² Therefore, the Nusayris' aspiration for self-rule coincided with the French objective of perpetuating the political and religious fragmentation of Syria in order to facilitate their rule of the country.

From 1920 until 1936, when France finally negotiated a treaty with the Syrian nationalists granting Syria self-government, the Nusayris opposed the incorporation of their state into a united Syria under one central government in Damascus. In 1923, the Nusayris refused to join with Damascus and Aleppo to form a "united Syria," causing General Weygard, who had succeeded Gouraund as High Commissioner, to devise a plan for uniting Damascus and Aleppo, without including the Nusayri state in this union.¹⁵³ When the Syrian nationalists revolted against the French in 1925 and demanded absolute independence for an Arab-Syrian state, the Nusayris did not participate in the insurrection. In fact, from 1925 to 1936, a period marked by nationalist riots and insurrection against French rule, the Nusayris vehemently opposed unity with Syria. On 28 April 1933, a Nusayri delegation headed by the president of the representative council of the government of Latakia (the Ali state) arrived in Beirut to express its disagreement with the proposed union with Syria. According to Henri Ponsot, the French high commissioner, the head of the delegation said that the Nusayris opposed any union with Syria, arguing that the Nusayris always lived separately from Syria, and that the Syrian (Sunnis) were hostile to the Nusayris because of their religion.¹⁵⁴

In the face of mounting nationalist sentiment and demands for independence, France entered into negotiations with the Syrian nationalists in Paris in March, 1936. Nusayri leaders, including members of the representative council of the government of Latakia, submitted several memoranda to the high commissioner opposing union with Syria, stating that such a proposed union should be placed on the agenda of the French-Syrian negotiations.

In a memorandum dated 8 June 1936, the Nusayris said that after generations of living by themselves in the fastness of their mountains, they had developed a natural instinct for independence. Now that the French were occupying their country, some Nusayris, because of this instinct for independence, fought the French, but the majority placed their trust in the honour of the French and believed that the mandate authorities will help them retain this independence, which had been affirmed by all the high commissioners in the name of France. The Nusayris were shocked, therefore, to see the French succumbed to the first blow by the Syrian nationalists, forgetting their promises to keep the Nusayris from being annexed by Syria. They felt that France had no right to bargain away their independence to another country. They reminded the French of their loyalty and trust. They concluded their memorandum by stating that if France wanted to keep this trust, it should issue an official declaration respecting and guaranteeing the independence of the Nusayris under its protection and send a Nusayri delegation representing the Latakia government to Paris to defend that independence. They threatened to resort to civil disobedience if their demands were not met.¹⁵⁵

In another memorandum, dated 11 June 1936, the signatories stated that the Nusayris, who formed the majority of the Alawi state, refused categorically to return to Islamic rule. France, they contended, could not determine to place a small and friendly people in bondage under the rule of their traditional religious enemies. The signatories requested the French government to delegate a parliamentary committee to their territory to investigate the great chasm separating the Nusayriyyah from the Syrians, and see whether it would be feasible to annex the Nusayri territory to Syria without precipitating a blood bath that would be a black spot in the history of France. They demanded that the French-Syrian negotiations regarding the Nusayris stop at once.¹⁵⁶

Still another Nusayri memorandum, dated 3 July 1936, affirmed that the signatories were most loyal to France, and that France ought never to defile its honourable history by the crime of uniting the Nusayris with Syria. The signatories reminded the French that even the Crusaders had never established a firm footing or remained very long except in north-western Syria, the Nusayri territory.¹⁵⁷

The most revealing document concerning the aspirations of the Nusayris and their attitude towards Syria and the French is one dated 15 June 1936 and submitted to Leon Blum, head of the Popular Front government. The document was sign by two Nusayri notables, including Sulayman al-Asad, father of the current president of Syria, and Sulayman al-Murshid, who began as a humble cattle herder and became a member of the Syrian parliament in 1937. (Al-Murshid claimed to be the Rabb (Lord God) and was used by the French to further their sectarian policy in Syria. He was arrested by the Syrian authorities and hanged in Damascus in 1946.) This memorandum is so significant that we cite it in full:

For the occasion of the current negotiations between France and Syria, we, the leaders and dignitaries of the Alawi [Nusayri] sect in Syria, take this opportunity to bring to your attention and the attention of your party the following:

1. The Alawi [Nusayri] people, who have preserved their independence year after year with great zeal and sacrifices, are different from the Sunni Muslims. They were never subject to the authority of the cities of the interior.
2. The Alawis refused to be annexed to Muslim Syria because, in Syria, the official religion of the state is Islam, and according to Islam, the Alawis are considered infidels.
3. The granting of independence to Syria and abolishing the mandate constitute a good example of socialist principles in Syria. But absolute independence means the control by some Muslim [Sunni] families of the Alawi people of Cilicia, al-Iskandarun [Alexandretta], and the Nusayri Mountains. As to the presence of a parliament and constitutional government [in Syria], that does not represent individual freedom. This parliamentary rule is no more than false appearance without any value. In truth, it covers up a regime dominated by religious fanaticism against the minorities. Do French leaders want the Muslims to have control over the Alawi people in order to throw them into misery?
4. The spirit of fanaticism imbedded in the hearts of the Arab Muslims against everything that is non-Muslim has been perpetually nurtured by the Islamic religion. There is no hope that the situation will ever change. Therefore, the abolishing of the mandate will expose the minorities in Syria to the dangers of death and annihilation, irrespective of the fact that such abolition will annihilate the freedom of thought and belief.

We can sense today how Muslim citizens of Damascus force the Jews who live among them to sign a document pledging that they will not send provisions to their ill-fated brethren in Palestine. The condition of the Jews in Palestine is the strongest and most explicit evidence of the military of the Islamic issue vis-a-vis those who do not belong to Islam. These good Jews contributed to the Arabs with civilisation and peace, scattered gold, and established prosperity in Palestine without harming anyone or taking anything by force, yet Muslims declared holy war against them and never hesitated in slaughtering their women and children, despite the presence of England in Palestine and France in Syria. Therefore, a dark fate awaits the Jews and other minorities in case the mandate is abolished and Muslim Syria is united with Muslim Palestine. The union of the two countries is the ultimate goal of the Muslim Arabs.

5. We appreciate the noble feeling which motivates you to defend Syrian people and your desire to realise the independence of Syria. But at present, Syria is still far off from the noble goal you trying to achieve, because it is still subject to the religious feudalistic spirit. We do not think that the French government and French Socialist Party intend to offer the Syrians an independence whose application will only mean the enslavement of the Alawi people and the exposure of the minorities to the dangers of death and annihilation.

As to the demand of the Syrians to bring the Alawi people into union with Syria, we believe it is impossible that you will accept or approve such unions. For if your noble principles support the idea of freedom, such principles will never allow a people to stifle the freedom, of another people by forcing it to unite with them.

6. You may think that it is possible to ensure the rights of the Alawis and the minorities by a treaty. We assure you that treaties have no value in relation to the Islamic mentality in Syria. We have previously seen this situation in the Anglo-Iraqi treaty, which did not prevent the Iraqis from slaughtering the Assyrians and the Yezidis.

The Alawi people, whom we, the undersigned, represent in this memorandum, appeal to the French government and the French Socialist Party and request from them a guarantee of their freedom and independence within their small territory, and place them in the hands of the French Socialist leaders. The Alawi people are certain that they will find a strong and faithful support for a loyal and friendly people threatened by death and annihilation and who have offered France tremendous services.

Signatories

Aziz Agha al-Hawwash

Muhammad Bey Junayd

Sulayman al-Murshid

Mahmud Agha Jadid

Sulayman al-Asad

Muhammad Sulayman al-Ahmad¹⁵⁸

The memorandum reveals that the Nusayri leaders feared and detested the Sunni Syrian nationalists, and felt that perpetuation of the French mandate was the only way to save their state from union with Syria. The most revealing thing in this historic memorandum is that the Nusayris (Alawis) speak of themselves not as Muslims, but as aliens to Islam, and that the Muslims consider them (Nusayris) to be infidels. The Nusayris clearly feared the religious fanaticism of the Muslims as a threat to their existence as a minority.

They looked upon themselves as a minority with its own distinctive cultural ethos. For his reason they sympathised with the Jews in Palestine and the Assyrians and the Yezidis in Iraq who were minorities already under the rule of the dominant Muslim Sunni majority. The Nusayri leaders had no use for treaties because, as they mention, the Anglo-Iraqi treaty (1930) did not save the Assyrians from being slaughtered by the Iraqi army in the village of Summayl in 1933.

The French government was faced with a dilemma. It was trying to negotiate with Syrian delegation to achieve the independence of Syria while simultaneously trying to allay the fears of the Nusayris, whom France suspected of planning an armed revolt. This is expressed in the memorandum dated 5 June 1936 from the French Minister of foreign affairs to General Weygand, the military governor of Syria. In this memorandum, the foreign Minister told Weygand that it would be better to confirm the confidence in France of the non-Muslims elements. He suggested that the military governor inform the Nusayri dignitaries that the French government had no intention of altering the wording of the terms of their independence, as stated on the Private Regulation of 14 June 1930.¹⁵⁹

The national situation in Syria in the mid-1930s had changed drastically however, since the inception of the French mandate in 1920. Arab nationalist sentiment was mounting, and demands for complete independence were increasingly vehement. The use of force to suppress the Syrian nationalists and their demand for a united Syria was no longer feasible.

Following the example of Great Britain, France had to reconsider the whole situation in Syria and Lebanon, and its protection of Nusayri independence could only be interpreted by the Syrian as antagonistic to national unity. Furthermore, the confederation of the four Nusayri tribes, the Haddadin, al-Khayyatin, al-Kalbiyyah and al-Mutawirah, whose leaders were members of the representative council of Latakia, which it was hoped would form the nucleus of an independent Nusayri state, began to lose authority, especially within the new Nusayri generation. Shortly before the outbreak of World War II, a new generation of educated Nusayris emerged who were more flexible than their fathers with respect to joining and working with the Syrian nationalists in Damascus.

The spread of elementary and secondary education, especially among the Nusayris, began to threaten the traditional Nusayri tribal cohesion, forcing the French government to find a better and a more acceptable substitute for the mandate. When Nusayri leaders found no positive response by the French government to their request for complete independence and learned that France was about to sign a treaty with the Syrian nationalists that would create a united Syria including the Nusayri state, they appealed to the French authorities to allow them to send a Nusayri delegation to participate in the Syrian-French negotiations in Paris.

The French minister of foreign affairs, Delbos, informed the high commissioner in Beirut that, while the French government appreciated the Nusayris' confidence in France, it would be better not to encourage them to demand from the French government what "this government cannot fulfil." On answer to the appeal of the president of the representative council, Ibrahim

al-Kinj, that a Nusayri delegation be sent to Paris, Delbos wrote to the high commissioner to inform al-Kinj that questions concerning Latakia would in time be discussed by the high commissioner and those Nusayris directly affected by those questions.¹⁶⁰

The declaration of the French government in June 1936 of its intention to create a state of a united Syria apparently convinced the Nusayri leaders that they were fighting a losing battle, but still they did not give up hope. Instead, they resorted to a new stratagem. On 24 June 1936, they informed the French government that if an independent Nusayri territory separate from Syria was not feasible from an international point of view, they would agree to negotiate with Lebanon concerning a possible union with that country that would guarantee them autonomy under French protection.

In a letter dated 25 June 1936, the president of the representative council, Ibrahim al-Kinj, reminded French Foreign Minister Delbos that France had promised independence to the Nusayris and should not sacrifice the Nusayris to placate their enemies. Al-Kinj added that union with Lebanon would be more feasible than union with Syria because the nation, like their own land, consisted of minorities.¹⁶¹

The Nusayris reasons for desiring union with Lebanon were these: under the Ottoman rule, the sanjaq (a province under the direct authority of the sultan in Istanbul) of Latakia and part of the sanjaq of Tripoli had been part of the province of Beirut; their country had always had strong trade relations with Lebanon; the laws of the Nusayri state and those of Lebanon were similar; and union with Lebanon would increase the largest country of minorities in the Middle East, with a population of almost 1,200 000, nearly balancing that of Syria, whose population in the 1930s was 1,700 000.¹⁶²

The Nusayris appeal for union with Lebanon was submitted to the high commissioner in a memorandum dated 20 August 1936. The high commissioner in turn referred the memorandum to the foreign minister with a letter attached; this letter stated that the memorandum had already been submitted to the Maronite patriarch and to the president of the Lebanese Republic, but did not indicate the response of either man. It should be pointed out that two Nusayri members of the representative council of the Nusayri state favoured union with Syria.¹⁶³

The appeals of the Nusayri leaders to the French government to maintain the mandate and prevent the union of their state with the rest of Syria were to no avail. World War II put an end to the mandate and the French presence in Syria. At long last Syria, including the Nusayri territory, became an independent state, and on 5 April 1946, the last French and British withdrew. In that year Sulayman al-Murshid revolted against a new independent state, but was captured, tried, and hanged. Apparently, the hope of an independent state, a Nusayri state, was shattered. But as the post war history of Syria shows, although the Nusayris did not achieve independence, they one day became the rulers of Syria. Sulayman al-Asad, one of the signatories of the memorandum to the French government requesting that France not to give up the mandate, could not have dreamed that one day his own son, Hafiz, would be the

president of Syria. Thus what Sulayman al-Asad and his colleagues failed to achieve was finally accomplished by the young Nusayris. The once despised and persecuted heretical sect, whose leaders would have been satisfied with an autonomous state separate from Syria, became masters of all Syria.¹⁶⁴

The Nusayris Rise to Political Power

How did the downtrodden Nusayris rise to become masters of post-independence Syria? They did so through two channels: the army and the Baath Party. Their rise to pre-eminence in both was slow but sure: not the result of a master plan but rather of the conjunction of a variety of circumstances, including political developments and economic conditions in the post war period, and the structure of the Nusayri community, which was based on the premises of regionalism and sectarianism. In the late 1950s, high-ranking Nusayri officers in the army realised that circumstances in Syria were favourable to a Nusayri takeover. By the mid-1960s, the Nusayris had gained control of both the army and the Baath Party, steps culminating in their rise to national power in November 1970.

The association of the Nusayris with the army dates back to the mandate period, when the French troops created the *Troupe Spéciales du Levant*, made up predominantly of Nusayri recruits.¹⁶⁵ The French government was aware of the importance of these Nusayri recruits in implementing a policy of “divide and rule”; it sued them to quell Arab nationalist insurrections and to encourage political regionalism and division among the various minorities, isolating the Nusayris especially.¹⁶⁶ The *Troupe Spéciales* remained after the French departed in 1946. However, they only numbered seven thousand men, and within two years this number had already dwindled to twenty-five hundred. Thus, their existence alone cannot explain the present Nusayri dominance of Syria, as Hanna Batatu contends.¹⁶⁷ The formation of the *Troupes Spéciales* was, however, the beginning that later opened the doors for the Nusayris’ rise to power.

This climb to prominence in Syria was slow and hard. In the early years after independence, the economic conditions suffered by the Nusayri peasants were deplorable. Abd al-Latif al-Yunus, a prominent Nusayri author and statesman, states that after World War I, some Nusayris in the mountains regions were forced to sell their daughters to wealthy townspeople as domestic servants because they could not support them at home.¹⁶⁸ Sheer poverty (the average daily income of the Syrian peasants in 1938 was a meagre sum of twenty two piasters much lower than per capita daily income of fifty piasters) also forced the Nusayri peasants to enrol their sons in the army in large numbers. This high rate of Nusayri enrolment was due to the fact that the majority of poor Nusayri peasants could not afford to pay the *badal*, a sum of money paid to the government in lieu of army services,. Wealthy town people who paid the *badal* (ranging from five hundred Syrian liras in 1964 to three thousand liras and even up to five thousand liras recently) were exempted from military service. Many Syrian Sunnis, mostly Arab nationalists, were among them, shunning military service because of their antagonism to French imperialism.¹⁶⁹ The poor Nusayri peasants who could not afford to pay, however, could not escape conscription.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, as noted in the preceding chapter, many Nusayris were sympathetic to the French, regarding them as bulwark against absorption into Muslim state.

Joining the army did more than merely remove extra mouths to feed from Nusayri homes; it gave Nusayri sons opportunities that they could not have found in civilian life. Nusayri secondary school graduates for example, were able to further their education by joining the military academy, which otherwise they could not have afforded. Before their assignments as commissioned or non-commissioned officers, these Nusayris in town encouraged relatives and friends from their villages and towns to join the military.¹⁷¹

Political instability in post-independence Syria also played a part in allowing Nusayri dominance of the military. The period from 1946 to 1949 was relatively quiet internally, so the Syrian government used the interlude to try to solve some of the nation's disturbing domestic problems. In an effort to assure the territorial and demographic integrity of all Syrians, regardless of their race or creed, and to establish some kind of uniformity within the framework of Syrian and Arab nationalism, as well as to dampen or at least contain the Nusayri ambition of separation, which had been fostered by the French authorities, the government reduced and finally abolished communal representation of minorities (especially the Nusayris) in the parliament, and abrogated certain judicial rights that the French authorities had granted to the Nusayris in personal status cases.¹⁷² The free election conducted in 1947 was only a false signal that Syria was on the way of becoming a democratic state. On 30 March 1949, Syria was rocked by the coup of General Husni al-Za'im (d. 1949), which not only shattered the hopes of any further democratisation, but set a precedent hitherto unknown in the Middle East, the emergence of military as "the real source of power," a precedent that would culminate in the present military regime of Hafiz al-Asad.¹⁷³

Two more coups followed in the same year, one headed by Colonel Sami al-Hinnawi on 14 August and another just four months later, on 19 December led by Colonel Adib al-Shishakli, who ousted al-Hinnawi and remained Syria's military Dictator until he in turn was overthrown by yet another coup four years later, on 25 February 1954.¹⁷⁴ All three of these men were Sunnis and after each gained power, a number of dissenting officers, mainly Sunnis who had participated in earlier coups were either purged, transferred to less sensitive positions, or forced to retire. Such "house cleanings" left Nusayri officers in important commanding positions. By the 1970s, all army strike units were effectively controlled by Nusayri personnel.¹⁷⁵ Thereafter, Nusayri officers dominated the Syrian army and a great number of key positions in the Syrian government.¹⁷⁶

In the light of the above factors, the Nusayris' military dominance was real but not too obvious. In fact, when, on 22 April 1955, Adnan al-Maliki, the Deputy Chief of staff, was assassinated by the Nusayri Sergeant, Hamid al-Sarraj, found to his astonishment that almost 65 percent of the non-commissioned officers were Nusayris.¹⁷⁷ This indicates that by the mid-1950s, the Nusayris had dominated the officer corps, paving their way to their ultimate control of the armed forces. This Nusayri officer has another source of leverage, too; from 1955 on they were members of the Baath party and in control of the military section within that party.

After independence, Syria's political parties — especially the Baath, the Hizb al-Qawmi al-Suri, SNNP (Syrian Social National Party), the Communist Party, and al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (the

Muslim Brother-hood) competed for the alliance of the Syrian youth, that is, the high school and college students. Although high school students in the mandate period were politicised, after independence they gained unprecedented freedom to participate in political life of their country by joining the political parties.¹⁷⁸

The Nusayri youth were particularly attracted to the Baath Party and SSNP because of their religious minority status. The Muslim Brotherhood did not appeal to them because of its strict Sunni Muslim orientation, and Communist party did not attract them because of its anti-religious ideology.¹⁷⁹ Both the SSNP and the Baath were active in recruiting members in the Nusayri area of Latakia, the former party in the late 1930s and latter after its formation Salah al-Din Bitar, a Sunni Muslim, and Michel Aflaq, a Rum Orthodox Christian, in 1944.¹⁸⁰

By the 1950s, equal numbers of Nusayris from both parties had joined the officer corps, but with elimination of the SSNP by the Syrian government in the 1950s Nusayri membership — by civilians and officers — in the Baath Party dramatically increased, especially in the Latakia area. Although there is no strong evidence that religious or communal factors provided any impetus for the political or ideological commitments of the Nusayris, they were, in the words of Van Dusen, a “latent factor in the political equation.”¹⁸¹

With the elimination of the SSNP, the Baath Party found itself competing with others, including the Arab Socialist Party of Akram al-Hawrani, from Hama, and especially the Syrian Communist Party of Khalid Bagdash, a Kurd from Damascus. As the struggle between the Baath and the Communist parties intensified, the Baath leaders became suspicious of the ambitions of the Communist Party, which was making political gains and securing advantages.

Baath leaders were especially alarmed at the possibility that the Communist might win a decisive victory in the municipal and parliamentary elections projected for November 1957, and the summer of 1958, which would give them control of the government. Fearing that a showdown with the Communists might end in failure, the Baath leaders decided that the only way to beat their opponents and foil their plan of government takeover was union with Egypt.¹⁸²

Although it is argued that the nation union with Egypt was the result of a military coup mastermind by Col. Abd al-Hamid al-Sarraj; with the full understanding of Egyptian leaders, the fact remains that it was the Baath leaders, Bitar and Aflaq, who argued the Syrian army officers to negotiate a union with Cairo, the union of Syria and Egypt was finally announced on 1 February 1958, and the United Arab Republic (UAR) was born. Ironically, the Baath Party, which had been instrumental in achieving the union with Egypt, was dissolved together with other parties as a condition set by Egyptian President Nasser for proposed union. Nasser was interested in using this union to further his ambitions as a leader of the Arab world, to consolidate his power at home, and to weaken the power of his rivals in the Arab countries. Nasser became disenchanted with the Baath Party, and disassociated himself from it.¹⁸³

The Nusayris, especially the army officers who were members of the Baath Party, were not enthusiastic about the union of Syria with Egypt. This union was an embodiment of Arab nationalism, which aspires to bring all Arabs into one nation, sharing a common destiny and united under one leadership. Traditionally, the Nusayris, as a minority group, were separatists who suspected the Syrian Sunni majority and feared that a union with Syria will cause them to lose their identity and their minority status. Now that Syria was united with Egypt, the Nusayri officers were even more apprehensive that the Nusayri community would be totally overwhelmed by the Sunni majority. Of course, the Nusayri officers were well aware of the pro-Arab ideology of the Baath Party, which they considered to be a veil hiding a feeling of Islamic and the Arab nationalistic superiority. They realised that with this ideology, the Baath Party will eventually rise to power in Syria. For this reason the Nusayris joined this party, which began to regroup after the dissolution of Syria's union with Egypt in September, 1961, calculating that, despite occasional setbacks, the time would come when they could use the party to promote their sectarian interest.¹⁸⁴

These officers were also aware of the depressed economic conditions in the Nusayri territory, especially the Latakia area, where a few wealthy landlords from large Syrian cities controlled the land. They were scared that immigrant farmers from Egypt might compete with or even dislodge Nusayri farmers. Their fears were compounded by rumours that the Ghab irrigation project might be turned over to Egyptian peasants. The Nusayri Baathists were especially concerned about the minority status of their own people, who formed about 10 percent of Syria's population, but would be overwhelmed by the combined majority of Syrians and Egyptians.¹⁸⁵ They hoped therefore, that through the Baath Party, they could fight for and achieve social equality, better economic conditions, and more human dignity for their people, still an oppressed, impoverished, and despised minority.¹⁸⁶ Finally, like civilians and non-Nusayri army officers in the Baath, the Nusayri officers believed that the Baath leaders, Bitar and Aflaq, had accepted the union with Egypt without consulting them and with no guarantees.¹⁸⁷ Motivated by foregoing concerns, some Nusayri officers, Hafiz al-Asad, Salah Jadid, and Muhammad Umran, and Druze officer, Hamad Ubayd, who were stationed in Cairo in 1959 during the union with Egypt, formed a clandestine military committee within the Baath Party, without forming party leaders.¹⁸⁸ This committee assured the Nusayris' dominance in the officer corps, while their control of the military section of the Baath Party afforded the right to decide who would be admitted to the military academies, together with the power to appoint, dismiss, and transfer the personnel of all the army units to suit their purpose.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, because of their dominance in the officer corps, the Nusayris had by 1963 assured for themselves control of all the armed forces.

The Nusayri forces who formed a military committee within the Baath Party could not have acted solely as Baathists; rather, they acted first as Nusayris. If they had been acting as loyal members of the Baath Party, why did they keep the committee secret from the party leaders? In fact, they did agree with the civilian members of the party who criticised Bitar and Aflaq for failing to ask guarantees in Syria's union with Egypt; as a result, they called for the reorganisation of the party. If this was the case, their decision to keep their committee secret from the party leadership had a purpose: it is almost certain that the officers were acting not as Baathists, but as Nusayris, with the intent of using the Baath party and the armed forces to

rise to power in Syria. The formation of the military committee was the beginning of the plan for a future takeover of the 1950s, the communal consciousness of the Nusayris was not overriding in their struggle for power, and that only after the Baathist coup of 1963 did sectarianism appear in the struggle for power among the Baathists, including the Nusayris.¹⁹⁰

The formation by the Nusayri officers of the secret military committee in 1959 in Cairo, followed by their attendance at a Nusayri meeting in 1960, however, is strong evidence that the Nusayri officers in the late 1950s were acting in full consciousness of communal solidarity and sectarianism. After their formation of this committee, the Nusayri officers, Hafiz al-Asad, Salah Jadid, Muhammad Umran, and Muhammad Nabhan, attended a meeting called by Nusayri leaders in 1960 in Qardaha, the native village of al-Asad. The main purpose of this meeting was to study ways of assisting Nusayri officers to join the Baath Party, in order to increase their membership in that party.¹⁹¹ It was decided at the meeting that Muhammad Umran should be granted the rank of bab (door), the highest degree in the Nusayri religion. Umran was also entrusted with devising plans for military organisation and ways and means of distributing these plans to the national organisation, to be exploited for Nusayri purposes. It was also agreed that Umran should remain at least outwardly within the group of Unionists, that is, those who supported the union with Egypt. Those at the meetings resolved to entice the Druze and Isma'ili army officers to cooperate with the Nusayri officers; to grant the Nusayri officer Izzat Jadid the high religious rank of naqib; to confirming another Nusayri officer, Ibrahim Makhus, in the religious rank of his father; and finally, to alert the Nusayri shaykhs and notables to call on all Nusayri young men, encouraging them to enlist in the army and cooperate with one another.¹⁹²

The union between Syria and Egypt was short lived, lasting only two years and eight months. The Syrians resented their country having become a political and economic appendage, serving the interests of Egypt. In all but name, Syria was an Egyptian colony. Matters came to a head when the army effected a *coup'detat* on 28 September 1961 and the union with Egypt (UAR) collapsed, much to the shock of President Nasser. Power now lay in the hands of the Supreme Arab Revolutionary Command of the armed forces. The proclamation of the provincial constitution on 12 November 1961, the election of an assembly on 14 December and the formation of a Syrian cabinet on 1 April 1962, gave a false impression that the country was establishing a stable, constitutional life. This was not the case and Syria was plagued by the political manoeuvring of many groups, namely, the Nasserites, Baathists, Secessionists, Unionists, and Communists. The Baathists, whose party in Syria had been officially dissolved, began to regroup and organise themselves. The Nusayri members of the party were especially active in reorganising the party in the Latakia area.¹⁹³ The Nusayri officers who formed the secret military committee within the Baath Party, once more became active in both the party and the armed forces.¹⁹⁴

The period between the collapse of the UAR on 28 September 1961 and the coup of 8 March 1963 was plagued by incessant plots and intrigues fomented by the various political factions in Syria. A coalition of Nasserites, Baathists, Arab nationalists, and the Socialists Unionists prepared for the coup. The Baathists and the Nasserites, the strongest and better organised of the groups, chose Ziyad al-Hariri, a compulsive, ambitious, power-hungry army colonel to

carry out the coup. Of all these groups, the Baathists emerged as the strongest, and they controlled the cabinet. Although the Secretary General of the Baath Party, Munif al-Razzaz, attempts to portray the coup as the work of the military and not of the civilian organisation of the Baath Party, he admits that the military committee of the party acted independently, as though it were a separate Baath Party, a stance which later created a rift between the party and the Baathist officers within it. In fact, the Baathists received most of the credit for the coup, and their power was manifested in their control of the national council of the revolutionary command and the cabinet. The Baathists' collaboration with the Nasserites was short-lived; they soon began their purge of the Nasserites. Their clashes with chief of staff Ziyad al-Hariri also intensified, and he was likewise purged in July 1963.¹⁹⁵ The Baathists had now gained full control of Syria.

Although prominent Nusayri officers like Hafiz al-Asad, Salah Jadid, and Muhammad Umran did not play a role in the coup of 8 March 1963, shortly after the coup they were recalled and placed in important positions in the high command of the armed forces. Al-Asad was promoted from lieutenant-colonel to general and became commander of the air force. Salah Jadid became head of the Officers' Affairs Bureau and the personnel branch of the central headquarters where he had the authority to control the appointments, transfers, and dismissal of officers. Hamad Ubayd (a Druze) was given charge of the Fifth Armoured Brigade, and Muhammad Umran became the commander of the Seventieth Tank Regiment, south of Damascus.

A few non-Nusayri officers filled important positions, too. A Druze, Salim Hatum, was made commander of the commando battalions; a Sunni, Ahmad Suwaydani, became head of military intelligence, and an Isma'ili, Abd al-Karim al-Jundi, head of the artillery. It should be remembered that some of the Nusayri officers promoted were members of the military committee within the Baath Party; through their positions on that committee, they were able to purge disloyal officers and fill the vacancies with loyal Nusayris or non-Nusayri officers, mostly Druzes and Isma'ilis, who now formed the majority of the Baath Party membership. It is estimated that seven hundred officers of various ranks were purged after the coup, their positions filled by Nusayri officers.¹⁹⁶

After occupying their new military positions, the Nusayri officers began to claim that, more than any other officers, they were responsible for upholding the new government and that they were the guardians of the Baath Party. The party, which had been dissolved officially in Syria since the union with Egypt in 1958, was trying to reorganise itself after the coup of March 1963, but was hindered by many internal problems. The Nusayri officers and members of the military committee took advantage of these problems to facilitate the admission of men of their own sect as members of both the military and civilian organisations within the party, especially the former. Such tactics resulted in Nusayri control of many important positions in army brigades stationed near Damascus and unlimited military support to the civilian organisation of the Latakia branch of the Baath Party, which was predominantly Nusayri, to the neglect of other branches of the party.¹⁹⁷

Evidence indicates that after the coup of March 1963, some prominent Nusayri members of the Baath Party were determined to increase Nusayri membership in order to gain ultimate control of the party. The party's organisational bureau founded after the coup and controlled by the Nusayris, admitted unqualified Nusayris and loyal non-Nusayris as active members of the party.¹⁹⁸ Thus, a number of blocs emerged within the Baath Party, whose members were more bound by sectarianism and regionalism than by the party's ideology of Arab socialism. Although the Nusayri members of the party were not enchanted with Arab socialism, which transcended their narrow sectarianism, they welcomed it as an ideology that will emancipate their people, who for centuries had been exploited by wealthy Sunni landholders from the cities of the interior.¹⁹⁹ As Munif al-Razzaz, former secretary of the Baath Party explains, to the Nusayri and Druze rural minorities, socialism was a revenge on the Sunni city dwellers, intended to impoverish the Sunni majority and reduce them to the village level of the Nusayris and Druzes. For this reason the Nusayri army officers applied, in a radical manner, the socialism imposed by the party, in order to satisfy their sectarian spirit of revenge.²⁰⁰ It should also be noted in this context that in their determination to overcome obstacles in their plan to control the party, the Nusayri officers planted their own Baathists in the different military organisation and had them report on the plans and movements of their opponents.²⁰¹

The major rivals of the Nusayri officers were the pro-Nasser groups hoping to restore the union with Egypt. On 18 July 1963, a group of Nasserites officers, led by the Sunni officer, Jasim Alwan, attempted to overthrow the government. The coup failed, thanks to the Nusayri officer Muhammad Nabhan, who pretended to join the pro-Nasserites, but secretly reported their intentions and plans for the coup to his Nusayri colleagues.²⁰² The Nusayri officers took advantage of the failure of the coup to purge more than four hundred pro-Nasserite officers,²⁰³ while sending others to the Syrian-Israel front. They also stationed Nusayri officers of different ranks in strategic positions around the capital, Damascus. Furthermore, they made every effort to admit a great number of the Nusayris to the military academy, the National Guard, and the Intelligent Department, and to different sections of the Baath Party.²⁰⁴

The coup of 18 July 1963, was a triumph of the Baathists over their Nasserite rivals. This triumph intensified the conflict between the regional command of the party, chosen by the Baath chapter, and the national command, which represented the party in different Arab countries. Another source of trouble was the failure of the party to define its relations with the military organisation, especially the military section within the party. The Nusayri officers, together with Druze and Isma'ili officers, who after 1963 outnumbered the Sunni officers, had interest radically different from those of the national command of the party. The Baathists officers, most particularly the Nusayri officers, formed a privileged class, occupying sensitive positions in the army and the government.²⁰⁵ There was evident conflict between the Baathist strongman, General Amin Hafiz (a Sunni), now the official head of state, and the Nusayri Colonel Muhammad Umran, commander of the Seventieth Tank Regiment. Hafiz advocated an end to the Baath isolation in Syria and reconciliation with other political groups, while Umran was of the opinion that the Baath alone should rule Syria, while retaining friendship with Nasser.²⁰⁶

To show how serious the Nusayri officers in the Baath Party were in planning to assume power in Syria, a meeting was held at Hims, shortly after the abortive Nasserite coup of 18 July 1963, attended by a great number of Nusayri dignitaries and the Nusayri officers, including Hafiz al-Asad, Izzat Jadid, Muhammad Umran, and Ibrahim Makhus. After discussing the role played by Muhammad Nabhan in foiling the Nasserite coup, the conferees made the following decision:

1. Muhammad Nabhan was promoted to the rank of *Najib* (a Nusayri religious rank) for his active role in aborting the Nasserite coup of 18 July 1963.
2. The degree of al-Wishah al-Babi al-Aqdas (most holy door decoration), one of the Nusayris' secret high religious degrees, and was conferred on Muhammad Umran, and he was advised to continue his activity among the Nasserites.
3. The present plan of admitting more educated Nusayris to the Baath and facilitating their admission through the party to the military academies and armed forces was to be studied. Nusayri notables were advised to call on Nusayri young men to encourage them to enlist in armed forces.
4. Plans were made for the future establishment of a Nusayri state with the city of Hims as its capital.
5. The high religious degree of Muqaddam was conferred on Salah Jadid, and he was entrusted responsibility of leading and directing the Nusayri elements in the army.
6. Relocating of the Nusayris from the villages of the cities of the interior, especially Hims, Latakia, and Tartus, was to be continued.
7. Hafiz al-Asad was granted the Nusayri religious rank of *Najib*.
8. The Nusayri religious rank of *Makhtus* was granted to Izzat Jadid and Ali Hamad.
9. The Druze and the Isma'ili elements on the army were to be eliminated and replaced with the Nusayris.
10. Ibrahim Makhus was entrusted with the civil and political leadership, and would be prepared to become the prime minister of the future Nusayri state.²⁰⁷

These decisions obviously reveal the determination of the Nusayri officers to assume power with the of the Nusayri notables. To achieve this goal, the Nusayri officers continued to create Nusayri blocs within the armed forces and to offer tremendous support to the Nusayri Major General Salah Jadid, who now occupied the sensitive position chief of staff of the Syrian army. He was accused by General Hafiz, who had become Prime Minister on 4 October 1964, of promoting sectarianism among the Nusayri officers and building a Nusayri bloc within Baath Party. Hafiz also told that he could not keep his position as Chief of Staff simultaneously with his other position as a member of the presidium (President's Council). Jadid gave up his position as Chief of Staff, and in 1965 he was excluded from the presidium, but continued to wield great authority in the regional command of the Baath Party. Hafiz and Lieutenant Colonel Ahmad Suwaydani, director of military intelligent, accused General Muhammad Umran of promoting sectarianism in the army. They were ostensibly supported by Jadid and Hafiz al-Asad, to dispel any suspicion of Nusayri sectarian activity in the army, although, like Umran, both Jadid and al-Asad relied heavily on their Nusayri officer colleagues to protect their positions in the armed forces.²⁰⁸

Amin Hafiz's accusation that Salah Jadid and other Nusayri officers created Nusayri blocs in the army is true. In fact, by the mid-1960s, sectarianism in Syria had become a serious problem. Although Sami al-Jundi, an Isma'ili who later became a Syrian ambassador to Paris, voices the opinion that Salah Jadid was not sectarian, he seems to contradict himself when he states that Jadid was "responsible for sectarianism. He organised and relied on it and transformed it into a 'party' lurking behind the Baath Party."²⁰⁹

But nothing reveals more the sectarianism of Salah Jadid than the following dialogue between Jadid and Sami al-Jundi:

Jadid: How should we treat the question of sectarianism?

Al-Jundi: By revolutionary measures.

Jadid: How?

Al-Jundi: Sectarianism has become a political problem, and it is becoming more complicated day after day. It will also become social problems which will expose the country to danger. I prefer that you return to the project begun by the former Alawi generation.

Jadid: What project?

Al-Jundi: The project of publishing your secret books [of the Nusayri sect] in order that other denominations will not suspect you to maintain that you are a sect [cult]. You should tackle the problem [of sectarianism] right at the roots, and I am confident that there is nothing in your books which you are afraid to publish... therefore, you should not leave other people the opportunity to doubt your intentions [of Nusayri sectarianism]. It [sectarianism] has become dangerous to you [the Nusayris] and to the country.

Jadid: If we do this [publishing the Nusayri secret books], the mashayikh (religious leaders) will crush us.

Al-Jundi: You are a revolutionary, and yet fear the masha'ikh? How could we then fight imperialism while cowing to religious leaders?

According to al-Jundi, Jadid then fell silent and sank deep in thought. Al-Jundi goes on to say that his dissatisfaction with the government — that is, with Salah Jadid and the Nusayris in key positions in the government began at this time. He later learned and even paid them religious taxes.²¹⁰

The conflict between Amin Hafiz and Salah Jadid was, in fact, an old one that began when the Baath Party reconstituted a year after Syria's union with Egypt collapsed in 1961. The newly reconstituted party was divided into two rival groups, the "old guard" including men like Aflaq, Bitar, and Hafiz, and the "regionalists," mostly Nusayri officers like Salah Jadid, Hafiz al-Asad, and Muhammad Umran, who, as previously stated, formed a party within the Baath Party. By 1965, Hafiz was fully aware of the power of the Nusayri and Druze officers within the army, and he intended to stem that power. The result was fierce conflict between the "old guard" and the "regionalists" that ultimately led to the coup in 1966.²¹¹

What intensified the struggle between Jadid and Hafiz was that Jadid was also able to win allegiance of a number of minority officers, like the Druzes Salim Hatum and Hamad Ubayd, and the Isma'ilis Ahmad al-Mir and Abd al-Karim al-Jundi. With these and other minority officers in his camp, Jadid attained a stronger position from which to challenge the Baath Party and government. Tabitha Petran writes that the military committee, which had gained great experience in clandestine activities, was able to withhold political power of the Nasserites and the army, and enable its own Nusayri members to challenge the leadership of the Baath Party, which they had always opposed. Thus, when the Baath Party leadership decided it was time to solidify the principles and objectives of the party, prohibit the military organisation from making political policy, and establish closer relations with Egypt and Iraq, the Nusayri officers, led by Jadid, opposed these measures on the grounds that the experimental union of Syria and Egypt had been a failure, and that domestic conditions in Syria should be the party's priority. The Nusayri officers seem to have won this round against the party leadership, and Jadid continued to purge a great number of Muslim Sunni officers in 1965, replacing them with Nusayris and other minorities.²¹²

The Baathist strongman Amin Hafiz was aware of the growing power of the Nusayri officers and their challenge to the party and government, and increasingly feared them; finally, he decided to curtail this power. On 19 December 1965, the Baath Party leadership announced the dissolution of the Syrian regional leadership of the party. In an official announcement addressed at the armed forces, this leadership criticised the fact that [Sunni] Baathist had been purged, declaring that it will protect them and that it will never allow anyone [the Nusayri officers] to control army units and to convert them into sectarian military blocs. The national leadership of the party also declared that it was against sectarianism, tribal blocs, and allegiance to individuals.²¹³

Amin Hafiz took another step to curtail the power of the Nusayri officers. He asked Salah al-Din Bitar to form government in which labour unions, teachers, students, and farmers will be represented. Bitar failed because of the opposition of the Nusayri officers, who convinced prominent minority officers that the Baath national leadership intends to curb their military activities. The fierce struggle for power between Amin Hafiz and Salah Jadid took a turn for the worse when Hafiz accused Jadid of forming a new Nusayri bloc within the army. The result was the bloody and savage coup of 23 February 1966, when military units around Damascus, staffed mostly by Nusayri officers entered the city and, after four hours of battle in which Amin Hafiz was wounded in the leg, toppled Hafiz's government and with it, the "old guard" of the Baath party.²¹⁴

Michel Aflaq and Bitar, the founders of the Baath Party, fled the country, branded as traitors to the party. The "regionalists" and the sectarians had finally triumphed, and the long-cherished objective of the rural minority groups — the Nusayris, Druzes, and Isma'ilis — to reduce the authority of the socialists Sunnis had been achieved. The government was in the hands of a new Baath Party, dominated by the Nusayris, who occupied the most sensitive positions in the new regime. Now that they were in the seat of power, these Nusayri officers had to play subtle political game to give the impression that the coup was not sectarian but a Baathist coup,

intended to serve the interest of all Syria's political groups. In the meantime, they were consolidating their power for the final elimination of their non-Nusayri rivals and takeover of the government.²¹⁵

It is true that on 25 December 1966, several Sunnis took key positions: Nur al-Din al-Atasi, a member of a Provisional Regional Command, was appointed head of state and secretary general of the Baath Party; Yusuf Zuayyin became prime minister, and Ahmad Suwaydani, formerly the military intelligence chief, was promoted to the rank of Major General and became chief of staff. But the sensitive power positions in the new Baath regime were filled by Nusayris. Hafiz al-Asad was appointed defence minister, and DR. Ibrahim Makhus became foreign minister, for example. The Nusayri Salah Jadid, who had engineered the coup, assumed no official position in the government, seeming content to occupy the post assistant secretary general of the Baath Party. However, he also occupied a highly sensitive position in the provincial party command that gives him power to appoint and dismiss head of state and the cabinet. Why did Jadid avoid assuming the position of head of state, offering it instead to the Sunni al-Atasi? It may have been to disarm potential opposition from non-Nusayri groups, who criticised the coup as a Nusayri scheme meant to serve Nusayri objectives. This is why, as A. R. Kelidar observes, Jadid formed a coalition of radicals who represented different political groups.²¹⁶

After the coup of 1966, the new Baath Party, now controlled by Nusayri strongmen, began systematically to purge and arrest Sunni Muslims, Druzes, and Isma'ilis in the party and the army. According to Munif al-Razzaz, former secretary general of the Baath Party, the rule of violence of the new Baath regime had no equal in the history of Syria. More than ninety officers who had disapproved of the way the regime was conducting affairs were transferred, pensioned, sacked, or arrested.²¹⁷

At the beginning of 1967, a number of Muslim officers were accused of the coup engineered by the Syrian national leadership of the Baath Party and were court-martialled. Other prominent Sunni Muslims, especially in the Hawran district, resigned their offices and membership in the party, in protest against the control of the party's administration and the armed forces by the Nusayris. Three cabinet ministers threatened to resign for the same reason.

After the 1967 Arab-Israel war, many prominent civilian Muslim Baathists who had occupied key positions were dismissed from the party.²¹⁸ Meantime, quarrels and disagreement between Lt. General Hafiz al-Asad and the Sunni Chief of staff reached a high pitch, and on 15 February 1968, Suwaydani was released from his position.

The fate of Druze officers was no better than that of their Sunni colleagues. When, after the 1966 coup, Hafiz al-Asad was appointed the defence minister, the Druze Hamad Ubayd became dissatisfied with the new regime. He had expected to become defence minister because he had been minister in the Zuayyin cabinet before its resignation on 22 January 1965, because he was staunch supporter of Salah Jadid, and especially because he had helped put down the resistance against the coup in Aleppo. Ubayd was also disappointed when he was merely

reappointed a member of the regional leadership of the new Baath Party. In March 1966, he was discharged from the army, and in May he attempted the coup against the regime, but the coup failed, and Ubayd and his collaborators were arrested.²¹⁹

The fate of another prominent Druze officer, Salim Hatum, was even worse than that of Ubayd. Hatum played a major role in the February 1966 coup, personally attacking the residence of Amin Hafiz, but when he received no reward, he turned against the new regime that he had helped bring to power. As distrust and hostility between Hatum and the regime intensified, Hatum, supported by Aflaq and Bitar, attempted a coup on 8 September 1966, against radical Baath regime. This coup also failed, and Hatum and one of his collaborators, Talal Abu Asali, escaped to Jordan, where they were given asylum. Although Jordan and Saudi Arabia were accused of supporting the plot and the editor of *al-Ahram* of Cairo implicated the CIA in the plot, it is certain that Hatum's attempted coup was the result of the conflict between the Nusayris, who were in control of the Syrian government, and the Druzes and Sunnis who were hounded by the Nusayris.²²⁰

While in Jordan, Hatum called a press conference at which he stated that the spirit of sectarianism had ignobly spread in Syria, especially in the Syrian army. He went on to say that the rulers in Damascus had endeavoured to get rid of those who disagreed with their policies and replace them with their own supporters, with the result that key positions in the state were filled by Nusayris. Hatum estimated that the proportion of the Nusayris to other groups in the army was 5 to 1.²²¹

On September 1966, Hatum issued a communiqué condemning the ruling clique in Damascus for its intention of establishing an opportunistic regime and the slogan, "One Nusayri state with an eternal message." In this state, Sa'id Hatum, the Amid [a Nusayri religious rank] Salah Jadid and Nur al-Anwar [the light of lights, another Nusayri religious rank] Ibrahim Makhus, would shine. Hatum remained in Jordan until the Arab-Israeli war broke out in June 1967, when he returned to Syria, placing himself under the Druze leader Sultan Pasha al-Atrash, who had fought the French in 1925. Hatum then offered his services in the Syrian army. He was arrested by the new Baath leaders and sent to Damascus, where he was accused of plotting to overthrow the government. He was summarily tried and executed on 26 June 1967.²²²

Following Hatum's abortive coup, the Nusayri-controlled government forced out many Druze officers, Fahd al-Sha'ir, who had formed a secret military organisation that refused admission to Nusayri officers. Not even the group of the Nusayri Muhammad Umran was admitted, because Umran was not trusted by the Nusayri officers like Hafiz al-Asad. Many Druze officers were forced to leave the country. Furthermore, the activity of the Baath Party in the Druze area was hampered to the point that the Druze leader, Sultan Pasha al-Atrash, sent a cable to the government in Damascus, criticising the policy of the Nusayri sectaries.²²³ The criticism of al-Atrash was to no avail, and the Nusayri controlled government continued to purge undesirable elements from the army and the party.

The Nusayris' design to take over the government was further manifested by several secret meetings, especially that of Jubb al-Jarrah on 30 January 1968. In this meeting it was decided to abolish the teaching of the Islamic and Christian religions in the schools. Another meeting convened at Sabbura on 14 April 1968, and a third at Damascus on 3 May of the same year. A fourth meeting, held at the home of Hafiz al Asad, was attended by Salah Jadid, Ibrahim, and many other prominent Nusayris.²²⁴ The plans of the Nusayris did not go unnoticed. The Beirut-based magazine *al-Sayyad* had sent one of its reporters to the Nusayri area in March 1966. In an article entitled, "The Alawites Today Rule Syria," the reporter said that the Alawis now openly ruled Syria after years of hiding behind the Baath Party. According to the reporter, Salah Jadid told Amin Hafiz that the loyalty of the Alawi bloc to the then current regime in Syria was guaranteed. In other words, such loyalty was essential to the existence of the Baath regime. The reporter concluded that Amin Hafiz and the rest of the non-Nusayri Baathists had swallowed the bitter truth that finally the Alawis had come forward and were now ruling Syria.²²⁵

In fact, there is evidence that the Nusayris in the government, especially Hafiz al-Asad, who occupied the sensitive position of defence minister, handed over the Golan Heights to the Israelis in the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. According to the periodical *al-Hawadith*, two weeks before the outbreak of this war, Syrian Ambassador to the French Sami al-Jundi, was instructed by his government to meet with the Israeli foreign minister, Abba Eban, in Paris. Al-Jundi says that he met with Eban for an hour and a half and made full recording of the meeting. Al-Jundi goes on to say that Eban told him: "The Israel forces will not go beyond Qunaytira, even though the road to Damascus will be open."²²⁶ In fact *al-Hawadith*, in a 1968 article entitled "al-Mu'amarah al-Jahannamiyyah" (The Hellish Conspiracy) states that the Syrian government affirmed the secret meeting between al-Jundi and Eban. *Al-Hawadith* further states that prior to the Israeli attack, the Syrian government had disarmed the non-Alawi units of the army. This action, says *al-Hawadith*, would ultimately allow the Alawis to achieve the takeover of the government.²²⁷ On 1 May 1979, Anwar Sadat, then president of Egypt, affirmed that shortly before the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Syrian authorities removed the mines from the Golan Heights, and that the Syrian government executed an officer who had announced the fall of the Golan Heights before they even fell to the Israelis.²²⁸

The author was told by the late Syrian Orthodox patriarch Yaqub III (d. 1980), who lived in Damascus, that he had been personally told by the Syrian minister of health that he was in the town of Qunaytirah when he heard Radio Damascus proclaim that the Golan Heights had fallen to the Israelis. The minister telephoned Damascus to tell authorities that he was in Qunaytirah, and there was no sign of Israeli soldiers in the area. Nevertheless, the minister was told that the Qunaytirah has already fallen.

The purpose of handing over Golan Heights to Israel was to find in Israel a socialist ally who sympathised with Syrian Alawi socialism. Nothing reveals this purpose more than the words of the former Jordanian Prime Minister, Sa'd Jumuah, in his *Al-Mu'amarah wa Marakat al-Misr* (The Conspiracy and Battle of Destiny). Jumuah states at noon on 5 June 1967, the ambassador of a great country (he does not name it) in Damascus contacted a responsible figure in the Syrian government and invited him in his home to discuss "an urgent matter." At the meeting, the

ambassador related to the prominent Syrian text of a telegram he had received from his government, confirming that the Israeli air force had totally destroyed the Egyptian air force and that the outcome of the war between the Arabs and Israel was obvious.

The telegram also emphasised that Israel did not intend to attack the Syrian regime, and that for all intents and purposes, Israel was a “socialist” country which sympathised with the Baath’s socialism in Syria. Therefore, it was in the interests of Syria and the Baath Party to carry on only token fighting to ensure their safety. The Syrian official immediately relayed this message to his colleagues in the national and regional commands of the Baath Party. He returned to inform the ambassador of the acceptance by the party, the government, and the national and regional commands of the telegram.²²⁹

Jumuah laments the reluctance of the Syrian air force to enter the war on the pretext that it was not ready for combat. He asserts that the “ruling gang” in Damascus suffered from a deadly complex which he calls the “Abd al-Nasser complex.” What Jumuah meant is that the rulers of Syria feared the personality of and popularity of the Egyptian president as an Arab national leader. They thought that once the Egyptian forces were totally destroyed by the Israelis, President Nasser would fall and they, as the apostles of the socialist left, would fill the resulting political vacuum and become the sole leader of the Arab world.

The Syrian leaders also thought that with Nasser out of the way, they would free themselves from the bonds of Arab nationalism and establish in Syria a sectarian (Nusayri) state, which would live in peace with Israel. However, concludes Jumuah, “the sectarian conspiracies against Arabism and religion [Islam] can no more be hidden.”²³⁰ From this statement we learn that Jumuah has accused the Syrian rulers of sectarian conspiracy and antagonism toward Islam and Arabism. The shadow of this accusation still hangs over the present Syrian regime and the Nusayri leaders in power.

The incident of the Golan Heights weakened Syria politically, but gave greater strength to the Nusayri-controlled army and specifically to Hafiz al-Asad. The Nusayri strike forces became so powerful that by 1970, Hafiz al-Asad was able to purge his enemies and assume full control of government. It is true that there was struggle for power within the Nusayri community, especially between al-Asad and Salah Jadid, but this struggle was essentially between two ambitious individuals each attempting to consolidate his local base of support in order to enhance his position and project himself as a national leader.²³¹ The outcome of this struggle was the triumph of Hafiz al-Asad, who had all the armed forces behind him.

On 13 November 1970, al-Asad overthrew the government and ordered the arrests of Salah Jadid and President Nur al-Din al-Atasi, who fled the country. On 22 February 1971, al-Asad became the first Nusayri President of Syria. Thus the Nusayris, who once would have been content to have autonomy in their own area, now were in control of Syria. This control has a very significant political implication. The Nusayri community, which suffered discrimination, ridicule, rejection, and economic deprivation at the hands of the Sunni Syrian majority, has evolved from a “backward religious community to a nationally emancipated population group

in a position of dominance.”²³² Today the Syrian government and army, and indeed Syria’s destiny, are in the hands of Nusayris.²³³

The Nusayri Religious System

The Concept of God

The fundamental article of the religion of the Nusayris is the absolute oneness of God, who is self-existent and eternal. Like other Gulas, the Nusayris believe in God without attempting to define His existence, essence, or attributes, either philosophically or theologically. Like the *Ahl-al-Haqq*²³⁴, the Nusayris believe that this God appeared on earth seven times in human form. The two sects each name seven different forms, however; the one form they both name is Ali.

In the Nusayri catechism known as *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, the fourth question asks how often our lord (Ali) changed his form and showed himself in the likeness of man. The answer is seven times:

1. He took the name of Abel and took Adam as his veil.
2. He took the name Seth and took Noah as his veil.
3. He took the name Joseph and took Jacob as his veil.
4. He took the name Joshua and took Moses as his veil.
5. He took the name Asaf and took Solomon as his veil.
6. He took the name Simon Peter and took Jesus as his veil.
7. He took the name Ali and took Muhammad as his veil.²³⁵

As the last manifestation of the Deity, Ali was the consummate reality, in all the preceding manifestations found their ultimate end and completion.²³⁶

This God who appeared in seven human forms is a single entity, but first is called the *Mana* (Meaning); theologically, it signifies the causal determinant who is the source and meaning of all this. This Mana created the second person, the *Ism* (Name), who created the third person, the *Bab* (Door). Thus, in each of His seven manifestations, God had with Him two other persons through whom He became completely manifested to mankind. Together with God, these two persons form an indivisible trinity:

Mana	Ism	Bab
Abel	Adam	Gabriel
Seth	Noah	Yail ibn Fatin
Joseph	Jacob	Ham Ibn Kush
Joshua	Moses	Dan ibn Usbaut
Asaf	Solomon	Abd Allah Ibn Siman
Simon Peter	Jesus	Rawzaba Ibn al-Marzuban
Ali	Muhammad	Salman al-Farisi ²³⁷

The last and supreme manifestation of God is Ali; his Ism is the Rasul of Allah, Muhammad (saw), and his Bab is Salman, the Persian — the Rasul's Sahabi. These three form the trinity of the Nusayris, whose mytery is represented by the initial letters of their names: A for Ali, M for Muhammad, and S for Salman, also known as Salsal. Louis Massignon speculates that the Salsal derives from the Arabic word *silsila* (chain, or link). In this context, Salman is the link between Muhammad and Ali.²³⁸

Like another Ghulat sect, the Ahl-i Haqq, the Nusayris divide time into seven cycles, each corresponding to a manifestation of the deity. The concept of seven cycles dates back to pagan Harranians, who maintained that the creator was multiple because of his manifestation in seven forms, corresponding to the seven heavenly bodies governing the universe.²³⁹

This concept of seven periods is also used in the Isma'ilis religious system to symbolise the authority of the seven Imams, beginning with Ali and ending with Ismail (d. 762), son of Ja'far al-Sadiq, from whom they received their names. According to Muslims sources, the Isma'ilis are known as *Sab'iyya* (Seveners) because they believe in the divine authority of seven Imams.²⁴⁰

Since the Nusayri dogma of the seven incarnations of the deity is probably based on the Isma'ili concept seven incarnations of the divine nature, a brief overview of the Isma'ili concept follows.

In their attempt to explain the origin of the universe by means other than divine creation, and in accordance with their esoteric belief in the necessity of having a divinely inspired Iman in every generation, the Isma'ilis adopted the neo-Platonic doctrine of emanations, stripping it of mysticism. The non-Platonists assert that everything that exists proceeds from God in successive emanations. The Isma'ilis, while maintaining seven stages of emanation, assert that God was not the immediate creator of the universe. They aver that the only thing emanating from God was the divine Will (Amr), and that this Will is the source of everything that exists, the cause of causes.²⁴¹ This Will, which is transubstantiated into the divine word "Be" (Qur'an 36: 82), is the first intellect, the universal reason (al-Aql al-Awwal), the first emanation of the divine nature. It is, as the Isma'ili writer al-Kirmani (d. 947) states, "the first intellect of the first Existence, whose existence is not by its self but by its creation and transcendence."²⁴²

According to this reasoning, God has no attributes or qualities. He is an abstraction, the first Intellect or Universal Reason. As an abstract principle without attributes, God becomes so obscure that man cannot communicate with Him. This Isma'ili seems to contradict those of Neo-Platonism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which teach that God has divine attributes and that He is the primary source of existence.

Continuing their esoteric line of reasoning, the Isma'ilis believe that the Universal Soul created primal matter, and that space, time, and the perfect man (al-Ihsan al-Kamil) conclude these

emanations. This perfect man comprises the sublime world, al-Alam al-Ulwi, which is the seat of creation, Dar al-Ibda.²⁴³

In each cycle of these emanations there exists a prophet who is the reflection of a perfect man. In Isma'ili terminology this prophet is called the *Natiq* (speaker, or proclaimer). He is accompanied by a coadjutant called the *Samit* (mute) or *Asas* (Foundation), who is the reflection of the Universal Soul in the world of senses. This *Samit* or *Asas* serves as a minister to the *Natiq* and is charged with the duty of proclaiming and interpreting (*ta'wil*) the revelation (*tanzil*) of the prophet. Al-Kirmani states that his interpretation reveals the inner knowledge of the revelation (*ilm al-Batin*), which is the true meaning of the divine message. Therefore, al-Kirmani says, it is the function of the Imam to carry on this inner knowledge and guide the community along its lines.²⁴⁴

The cycles of the *Natiqs* (proclaiming prophets) began with Adam, followed by Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, whose coadjutants were respectively Seth, Shem, Ismail, Aaron, Simon Peter, and Ali. Ali has a unique system in the Isma'ili system because he is the *Asas* of the Rasul of Allah (*saw*), and his descendants, the Imams after him, have the exclusive function of interpreting the inner meaning of the divine message of Islam.

Therefore it is imperative, al-Kirmani says, that an Imam should exist in every generation, whose duty to preserve the divine message is delivered by the Rasul and to protect it from distortion and alteration.²⁴⁵ Thus, in his religious capacity as the Imam, the Isma'ili Aga Khan III, becomes the successor of the Rasul.²⁴⁶

According to the Isma'ilis, six of these *Natiqs* and *Samits* have already appeared. The seventh cycle will be ushered in by the advent of the last and greatest of the Prophets, the Mahdi, or al-Qa'im, who will appear before the end of the world.²⁴⁷

The concepts of the Rasul as the *Natiq* of his coadjutant, the *Samit*, did not originate with the Isma'ilis. They were formulated by one of the earliest Ghulat, Abu al-Khattab Muhammad ibn Abi Zaynab al-Asadi, killed in 138/755. According to Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari (d. 935), Abu al-Khattab taught that the Imams are God's new prophets, His divine *Hujjas* (proofs), and messengers to mankind. Two of these remained he said; the *Natiq*, who was Muhammad, and the *Samit*, Ali ibn Abi Talib. They possessed the knowledge of what was, what is, and what will be, and it is imperative that all men obey them.²⁴⁸ Al-Ashari does not elaborate on Abu al-Khattab's concept of the *Natiq* and *Samit*, but we may speculate that the Isma'ilis, who were more philosophically sophisticated than Abu al-Khattab, made great use of this concept, which they combined with Neo-Platonist philosophy.

The Nusayri dogma of the seven incarnations of the deity probably derives from the Isma'ili concept of seven emanations, but lacks its philosophical subtlety. René Dussaud rightly observes that, unlike the Isma'ilis, the Nusayris were incapable of philosophical speculation, and therefore arrived at the concept of one god not stripped of divinity and authority, as is the god of the Isma'ilis, who is pure intellect. They could not comprehend the abstract

philosophical terminology and reasoning of the Isma'ilis with respect to the emanation of the divine nature and the relationship between the Natiq and the Samit, applied to Muhammad and Ali; thus, the Nusayris readily accepted Ali as the Incarnation of God. Dussaud concludes that the Nusayris represent a remarkable example of a sect passing directly from paganism to Isma'ilism. This transformation, however, was not complete. It was rather a compromise between Isma'ili doctrine and the Nusayri practices, resulting in a creation of a new religion.²⁴⁹

The fundamental tenet of this religion lies in the legend of Ali. Dussaud's conclusion seems to be correct, because the Nusayris exaggerate the position of Ali, regarding him as God, and as the *Asas* (foundation) of the Rasul of Allah, Muhammad (saw). He is the Mana, taking precedence over Muhammad, who is the *Natiq* (proclaimer) of the divine message contained in the Qur'an.

Closely associated with their belief in the seven human manifestation of God in seven periods is the Nusayris cosmogony. The Nusayris belief that in the beginning, before the world existed, they were brilliant, heavenly bodies and luminous stars, conscious of the distinction between obedience and disobedience. They did not eat, drink, or pass excrement. Their only activity was to behold Ali ibn Abi Talib in a sapphire of splendour. They remained in this state for 7,077 years and 7 hours. Then they boasted of themselves, saying, "Surely, he has created no more noble creatures than we are," thereby committing their first sin of pride.

Ali then created for them a Hijab (veil, or intermediary), who held them under restraint for a further 7,000 years. Ali then appeared to them and asked, "Am I not your Lord?" [Qur'an 7:172], to which they replied, "Certainly you are." After a while, Ali revealed to them his all-encompassing divine power (Qudrah), and they fancied that they could behold him fully, supposing him to be one like themselves; this was second sin they committed.²⁵⁰

Thereupon Ali made visible to them the Hijab, with whom they wondered 7,077 years and 7 hours. When this period was up, Ali appeared to the Nusayris in a form of an old man with white hair and a white beard; through this form, he tested the people of the light, of the higher spiritual world. The Nusayris did not look beyond the form in which he appeared to them, and when he said to them, "Who am I?" they replied, "We do not know."²⁵¹ Ali then appeared to them in a form of a young man with a curled moustache, riding upon and angry looking lion, and again in the form of a small child. In each manifestation, he called "Am I not your Lord?"

Ali was accompanied by his *Ism* (name), Muhammad, and his Bab (door), Salman al-Farisi, together with the people of the orders of his holiness, namely, the first seven orders constituting the great luminous world. When Ali called to the Nusayris, they imagined him to be one like themselves. They were bewildered and did not know what to do. In order to put an end to their doubt about his nature, Ali told them he would create a lower sphere for them and cast them down to it. He would also create a human form for them and appear to them in a veil akin to their human forms. He told them that he would rise up again anyone who acknowledged him, together with his veil and his door. Anyone who rebelled against him

would face an adversary created by Ali, and anyone who denied him would be subject to *Musukhiyyah* (degrading transformation) into an animal form.

The Nusayris implored God to leave them where they were to praise, magnify, and worship him, and not to cast them to the lower sphere. But He said, “You have disobeyed me. If you had said, ‘Lord, we know nothing save what you have taught us, you are inscrutable, omniscient one,’ [Qur’an 5:109] I would have forgiven you.”

Because of the disobedience of the Nusayris, Ali created the *Abalisa* (plural of Iblis — devil or Satan), and from the *Abalisa* he created woman. For this reason, the Nusayris do not teach their woman any form of prayer or initiate them into the mystery of their religion. Because they are believed to be created from the *Abalisa*, Nusayri women are degraded and held in low esteem.²⁵²

After casting the Nusayris into lower, human form, Ali appeared to them in seven *Qibab* (domes, tabernacles), that is, periods inhabited by al-Hinn, al-Binn, al-Timm, al-Rumm, al-Junn, al-Jinn, and *al-Yunan* (the Greeks).²⁵³ In each of his seven appearances during these periods, Ali was accompanied by an Ism, a Bab, and an adversary. It is worth noting that, according to Sulayman al-Adani, in each of these seven cycles the adversary, or Satan, consisted of three person in one (a kind of Satanic triad), namely, the “rightly guided” Khulafa’, Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman (ram).²⁵⁴ This, to be sure, expresses the implacable hatred the Shi’ah’s harbour for these men, whom they accuse of usurping the Khilafah from Ali. They also accuse Umar and Uthman of burning those portions of the Qur’an which, they assert, included the designation of Ali by the Rasul Muhammad (saw) as his heir and successor in leading the Muslim community.

From this account; it is clear that the Nusayris believe in the existence of Pre-Adamite ages, during which the world was inhabited by different kinds of beings who worshiped Ali. The Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq acknowledged the existence of seven Pre-Adamite nations. He said the Shi’i aver that before God created Adam, there were seven Adams who occupied seven ages, and that the time span of each age was fifty thousand years. Later, when God created mankind, “We, the Imams, were the first *Hujjas* (divine proofs) and messengers of God to mankind.”

Al-Sadiq also state that there were beings living on the earth before Adam. After they died, they were resurrected, judged, and consigned temporary to paradise or Hell. Finally, the people of paradise were transformed into Angels, while the people of Hell, the *qashshash* (waste heap), were transformed to such animals as pigs, bears, and dogs, and jackals.²⁵⁵

The concept of seven ages is found in Zoroastrianism and may have reached the Shi’ah through Persia. According to a Persian legend, Zoroaster, by divine favour, saw a tree with seven branches, one of gold, one of silver, one of bronze, one of copper, one of tin, one of steel, and one of iron alloy. Hormizd (Ahura Mazda) revealed to him that this tree was the image of the world, and that each of these branches represented one of the periods through which he

(Zoroaster) had to pass.²⁵⁶ This is similar to the image King Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream, which represented different periods of world kingdoms.²⁵⁷

These, then, are the Pre-Adamite periods, or domes as the author of *Kitab al Bakhurah* calls them, whose inhabitants worshiped Ali. According to Edward Salisbury, the people of these periods represent a gradation of human existence from inferior to higher, corresponding in reverse order to the seven forms of *musukhiyyah* (degrading transformation) which the Nusayris believe that they had to pass through as punishment for their disobedience, or perhaps to worship Ali wholeheartedly.²⁵⁸

Salisbury further states that the periods of the Greeks, the seventh and last, represents the highest point of human existence before the final special manifestation of Ali in the *sab qibab dhatiyyah* (seven periods of divine quality), which began after the Nusayris failed to recognize the divinity of Ali.²⁵⁹ Ali manifested himself seven times in this world, as Abel, Seth, Joseph, Joshua, Asaf, and Simon Peter, and finally in his own person. In this final manifestation, Ali revealed to the Nusayris that they were the highest among mankind, and that he was the only deity to be worshipped.²⁶⁰ In other words, Ali was one and the same god in each of his manifestations, and the Ism, Bab, and adversary who accompanied in each likewise appeared in successive theophanies.²⁶¹

The concept of the seven manifestation of the deity is also found in the Druze religious system. According to the Druzes, Hamzah ibn Ali, the founder of the Druze religion, appeared seven times in this world in human form. The Formulary (catechism) of the Druzes contains the question, "how many times did Hamzah appear, and under what names?" the answer is, "He appeared seven times, from Adam to the Rasul of Allah Muhammad (saw)." Then follow the names in which Hamzah appeared in each of the seven periods.²⁶² Silvestre de Sacy doubts whether this was the original teachings of the Druzes, since he could not find the number of Hamzah's appearances given in other Druze sources.²⁶³

The same Druze Formulary contains another question about the Fatimid Khalifah al-Hakim ibn Amr Allah (d. 1021), considered the supreme deity of the Druzes, and his names and the *maqamat* (stations, or periods) in which he appeared.²⁶⁴ The description of al-Hakim's manifestations shows that the Druzes, like the Nusayris, believe in a single deity who remained constant although he manifested himself in different forms. It also shows that the deity and his Hijab (veil) are so united in words and deeds that they form one person. Regardless of the number of his manifestations, the deity remains a single entity. He precedes the whole of creation and his prototype of men. The reason al-Hakim appeared in human form was to enable man to acquire full conviction of his existence. Al-Hakim is considered by the Druzes to be the culmination of all the manifestations, which pointed to him and were completed in him.²⁶⁵

The religious system of the Druzes and the Nusayris are strikingly similar, with one major exception: al-Hakim is God to the Druzes, while Ali is God to the Nusayris. It is not surprising, then, that the Formulary of the Druzes condemns the Nusayris from separating themselves

from the Druzes.²⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that both sects have their roots in Persia. Their founders, Muhammad ibn Nusayr and Hamzah ibn Ali, were both of Persian origin, as were the founders of the Isma'ili's and their offshoot, the Assassins.²⁶⁷ Later we shall see the influence of Persian tradition on the religious system of the Nusayris.

At the outset of this chapter, we noted that the first article of the Nusayri faith is the oneness of God, self-existent and coeternal. We also noted, however, that this God has three personalities, the Mana (Ali), the Ism (Muhammad), and the Bab (Salman al-Farisi), who form an inseparable trinity. In essence, however, these three are Ali ibn Abi Talib. As the Nusayri catechism explains, the Mana, the Ism, and the Bab are united as "God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," in the formula which precedes all but one of the surah's of the Qur'an. What the author of the catechism intends is that in this formula "God" signifies the Mana (Ali), "the Compassionate" signifies the Ism (Muhammad), and the "Merciful" signifies the Bab (Salman al-Farisi).²⁶⁸

Question 12 of the same catechism asks, "Are the Mana and the Bab separate from the Ism?" the answer is, "No, they are with it, they cannot be separated."²⁶⁹ This trinity, symbolised by AMS, the initial letters of the names Ali, Muhammad, and Salman, form a single divine essence. In the *Munazarah* (debate) of al-Nashshabi, we read, "The one whom we saw in human form [Ali] is the M [for Muhammad], and this Muhammad, Ali, Salman are one essence and one light."²⁷⁰

Each of these three persons manifests himself in the others, although as the "Most High" they do not change or cease to be. There is no difference between the Mana and the Ism. They are inseparable, as is the light of the sun from its sphere.²⁷¹ The tenth-century Nusayri writer Ali ibn Isa al-Jisri states in *Risalat al-Tawhid* (the epistle of the unity of God) that God is the Ism and the Mana. He is the Ism (Name) which manifested in the world in order that men might come to know the Mana. The Mana cannot be separated from his Ism, and the Ism cannot be separated from the Mana.²⁷²

The Nusayris believe that these three persons are one, and that it is sheer ignorance, even blasphemy, to separate or differentiate them. A Nusayri who does not recognise the relationship among the three the persons of this trinity is not a true believer. This is attested by Nusayri sources, which attribute to Ja'far al-Sadiq the tradition, "He who differentiates between the Ism and the Mana has blasphemed, and he who truly worships the Ism has also worshipped the Mana, and he who worships the Ism in the place of the Mana is an infidel, but he who worships the Mana through the divine reality of the Ism has in fact professed the oneness of God."²⁷³

The trinity forms the foundation of the Nusayris' religious system. In the ninth surah (in *al-Kitab al-Bakurah*), called the Luminary Ayn (the initial letter of Ali's name), Muhammad ibn Nusayr, founder of the Nusayri sect, is firmly associated with the third person of the trinity, Salman al-Farisi. This trinity is the focal point of the Nusayris' profession of faith: "There is no God except Ali ibn Abi Talib, with the bold forehead and temples, the adorable, and no veil but

the Lord Muhammad, worthy to be praised, and no door other than the Lord Salman al-Farisi, the object of desire.”²⁷⁴ This trinity is so sacred that is *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* (Manual for shaykhs), Ali is invoked “by the truth of the Mana, the Ism, and the Bab.” In this same book, reference is made to “*al-Mana al-Qadim* (an ancient meaning), *al-Ism al-Adhim* (great name), and *al-Bab al-Karim* (honourable door).”²⁷⁵ In Nusayri sources, a wife of the Rasul of Allah (saw), Umm Salamah, is spoken of as being endowed with divine grace, “Through her saintliness” says one source, she ‘has indicated the manifestation of the Mana, the Ism, and the Bab.”²⁷⁶

Thus, the trinity symbolised by the letters AMS is the centre of the Nusayri worship and faith. No Nusayri will ever swear by trinity and then tell an untruth. Indeed, we learn from *Kitab al-Bakhrurah* that the most binding actions among the Nusayris is to place one’s hand in that of another, saying, “I adjure you by your faith, the faith of the covent of Ali, the Commander of the faithful, and by the covenant of AMS,” making it obligatory to speak the truth.”²⁷⁷

Another form of this oath involves moistening a finger with saliva and placing it on the other person’s neck, saying, “I am absolved from my sins and lay them on your neck, and I adjure you by the foundation of your religion, by the mystery of the covenant of AMS, to tell me the truth regarding [this] matter.” This form also precludes the telling of a falsehood. Thus the whole life of the Nusayris — their conduct and relations with each other — is motivated by the grace of this trinity and bound by their faith in it.”²⁷⁸

To the Nusayris, the letters AMS constitute a *sir* (mystery) of their trinity, bringing to mind the mystery of the holy trinity in Christianity, although Christians do not use enigmatic letters to denote their trinity. The use of cryptic letters was practiced by the ancient people to accentuate the mysterious powers of the universe or deities.”²⁷⁹ Some surah’s of the Qur’an begin with cryptic letters that no one could understand or explain, except God and those Muslims scholars well versed in religious sciences (Qur’an 3:7).²⁸⁰ Perhaps it was God’s design to leave parts of His revelation enigmatic and not fully understood by mortals, as is stated in Qur’an 111:15: “it is He who revealed to you the Qur’an. Some of the verses are precise in meaning—they are the foundations of the Book—and others are ambiguous. Those whose hearts are infected with disbelief follow the ambiguous part, so as to seek dissention by seeking to explain it. But no one knows its meaning except Allah.”

The book of *al-Jafr*, believed by Shi’ah’s to have been revealed to the Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq, contains, among other things, an esoteric explanation of the meaning of the Arabic alphabet.”²⁸¹ In fact, some Nusayris, like the nineteenth-century Shaykh Muhammad ibn Kalazu, use the letters HBQ in a spiritual sense to denote Hilal, Badr, and Qamar, indicating the different cycles of the moon.”²⁸²

In summation, the Mana, the Ism, and the Bab form the inseparable trinity of the Nusayris, which is fashioned like the Qur’anic formula, “in the name of God, the Compassionate, and the Merciful.” The Mana, the Ism. And the Bab have threefold names: *Mathaliyyah* (figurative), *Dhatiyyah* (essential), and *Sifatiyyah* (attributive). The figurative name belongs to the Mana; the attributive is that of which the Ism has made use, but which belongs peculiarly to the Mana, as

when we say “the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Creator,” Thus *Kitab Ta’lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah* (the Nusayri catechism) begins with the formula: “In the name of the ancient Mana, the great Ism, and the eternal Door, who is God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.”²⁸³

The orthodox Muslim formula, “God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,” is explained by the Nusayris in accordance with both the outward and inward meanings of the divine mysteries. So to question 98 of the catechism. “What do the outer and the inner words, al-zahir and al-batin, denote?” the answer is, “The inner [signifies] the divinity of our Lord [Ali], the outer his manhood. Outwardly, we say that he is spoken of as a Lord Ali, son of Abi Talib, and this denotes inwardly the Mana, the Ism, and the Bab, one Compassionate and Merciful God.”²⁸⁴ Or, as Joseph Catafago has noted in his description *Kitab Majmu’ al-Ayad* (Book of Feasts), its author, Abu Sa’id Maymun ibn Qasim al-Tabarani (d. 1034), distinguishes three principles in Ali: the divinity or the essence of being, the light or veil, and the door, which is faithful spirit.²⁸⁵

The Nusayri trinity has been linked by various writers to trinities of other religions. Rev. Samuel Lyde, for example, states that the Nusayris took many things from Christianity, including the doctrine of the Trinity.²⁸⁶ Rev. Henri Lammens, who seems to believe that the Nusayris are converts from Christianity, maintains likewise that they have retained many Christian tenets, including the trinity.²⁸⁷ René Dussaud, on the other hand, sees in the Nusayri trinity all the characteristics of an adaptation of the local cults, and asserts it recalls the triads common in the ancient Syro-Phoenician cults.²⁸⁸ Although we shall return to this subject later, it should be pointed out that there is no fundamental resemblance between the Nusayri trinity and the Christians, despite similarity in terminology. According to Christianity, the trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comprises three persons who are one in essence, power, and majesty. They form one Godhead, coequal and coeternal. In this Godhead, the Son, Christ, is begotten, not made, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father; the three are but one God, who is Trinity Unity and Unity in Trinity.

The Nusayri trinity, however, is not a trinity of persons united in one Godhead, for the Mana (Ali) created the Ism (Muhammad), who in turn created the Bab (Salman al-Farisi). This is made clear in a question in the Nusayri catechism, “How did the Mana create the Ism, and how did the latter create the Bab?” the answer is, “The substance of substances produced the name out of his unity.”²⁸⁹ According to *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, “Ali created Muhammad from the light of his unity and from the power of his eternity. And he made him a light extracted from the essence of his Mana, and called him Muhammad the time when he conversed with him, and caused him to move from his state of rest, and chose him, and called him by his name, and elected him. And Muhammad had no lord but him, and Ali made him his flashing light and his sharp edge and his speaking tongue, and set him over the great matter and the ancient cause, and made him the circle of existence and the centre of prayer. And he said to him, ‘Be the cause of causes, and the framer of the door and the Hijab [veil].’ Muhammad created the door, Salman al-Farisi, by the command of the Lord [Ali] and according to his purpose. Then he commanded the door [Salman] to create the higher and lower worlds.”²⁹⁰

From this passage we learn that Ali created Muhammad, and that Muhammad has no lord but Ali. As the creator of Ali, Muhammad cannot be homologous with Ali in his divinity. He must (and does) occupy an inferior position in the trinity of the Nusayris, as is clear from the Nusayri catechism, which charges Muhammad with the duty of calling the believers to the knowledge of their Lord Ali. This catechism also asserts that Ali is the one who taught Muhammad the Qur'an through Gabriel.²⁹¹ Further evidence of Muhammad's inferiority to Ali is shown by his own sayings, "For I was created out of the light of his [Ali's] essence," and, "Is not Ali your Lord and my Lord?"²⁹² It is for this reason that we find in the Nusayri sources the Mana and the Ism coupled. We have already cited the statement attributed to the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, "He who differentiates between the Ism and the Mana has blasphemed, and he who truly worships worshiped the Ism has worshiped the Mana, and he who worships the Ism in the place of the Mana is an infidel, but he who worships the Mana through divine reality of the Ism has in fact has in fact professed the oneness of God."²⁹³ The same Ja'far al-Sadiq also explains, in *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, that God, the Mana, chides the believers for worshipping the Ism without the Mana, asking, "Will you, then, worship the Ism without the Mana?" This clearly indicates that the Mana alone should be their focus of worship.²⁹⁴

Thus, it is clear that the Nusayris' trinity is not a trinity of persons coequal and coeternal with God, nor is it true that in the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, as in the Christian trinity. It is rather a trinity of partnership, in which Ali, Muhammad, and Salman are three different facets of the divine nature.

Although in essence the Nusayri trinity is different from that of Christianity, yet Sulayman al-Adani, in his commentary on *Surah al-Fath*, states that these three, Ali, Muhammad, and Salman al-Farisi, form the "Holy Trinity" of the Nusayris. He explains that in this trinity, Ali corresponds with the Father, Muhammad to the Son, and Salman al-Farisi to the Holy Spirit, the three Persons of the Christian Trinity.²⁹⁵ Al-Adani may be justified in suggesting this correspondence, however, for we find in ancient Nusayri writings an explicit recognition of the sonship of the Christ and His consubstantiality with the Father, although these sources do not suggest an analogy between the Nusayri and the Christian trinities.

In *Kitab al-Usus* (Book of foundation), the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq describes the seven periods of the manifestations of God. He states that in each of these periods, God played different roles. In the period of Moses (as), for example, God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle in which He dwelt. God also gave Moses the Torah and commanded him to instruct the Israelites to observe the rules of *tahara* (purity), and to abstain from eating the flesh of certain animals which were forbidden to them. "However," says al-Sadiq, "when Christ, the Son, came, who assumed the form of the Sonship and dwelt in Mary, he altered the law of Moses and absolved the people from the obligation of purification."

Al-Sadiq continues, "Do not you who inquire see that He [Jesus] (as) has absolved them [Israelites] from many obligations imposed upon them by Moses (as)?"²⁹⁶ In this statement, we find the concept of a Father, and a son who is one in being with the Father and has become

incarnated through a virgin, the essence of the Christian religion. The context, however, is unmistakably Nusayri.

What, then, is the true relationship between Ali and Muhammad in the theological system of the Nusayris? We can answer this question only by examining each of the three persons of the Nusayri trinity. This we will do in the forthcoming chapters.

The Nusayri Religious System

The Apotheosis of Ali

TO THE NUSAYRIS, Ali ibn Abi Talib, blood cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), is the last and only perfect one of the seven manifestations of God, in which the Islamic religion and its *Shari'ah* (law) have been revealed. He is, as noted in the preceding chapter, the one who created Muhammad and taught him the Qur'an. He is the fountainhead of Islam. He is God: the very God of the Qur'an.

Whatever attributes the Muslims ascribe to Allah, the Nusayris ascribe to their God, Ali. Some attribute to him in his human form, others to his Godhead.²⁹⁷ The first question of the Nusayris' catechism asks, "Who is our Lord who created us?" the answer is, "He is the commander of the Faithful, *Amir al-Nahl* (Prince of Bees), Ali ibn Abi Talib, who is God and the only God, the Compassionate, the Merciful."

The second question asks, "Hence how do we know that our Lord the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, is God?" the answer is, "Through his own testimony given in a public sermon which he delivered from the pulpit before many people, and which he taught to scholars and speculative thinkers. In this sermon he said, "I have the knowledge of the hour (the end of the world). The apostles designated me, proclaimed my unity, and called people to my knowledge. I have given the creation its name, flattened the earth, fixed the mountains, made the rivers flow, and brought forth fruits. I have fashioned the dusk and caused the sun to rise and lightened the moon. I have created mankind and provided livelihood. I am the Lord of lords, the possessor of necks. I am *al-Ali* (the most high), *al-Allam* (the omniscient). I am *Qarm al-Hadid* (the Almighty Lord). I am the one who commands life and death, who begat Jesus in the womb of His mother, Mary, and who sent the apostles and instructed the prophets!"²⁹⁸

The divinity of Ali is further acknowledged in the eleventh chapter (*of Kitab al-Majmu'*), entitled *al-Shahadah* (testimony) and called by the common people of *al-Jabal* (the mountain). What is peculiar is that the testimony of divinity of Ali is associated with Islam as God's religion. The chapter begins thus: "God bears witness, the angels, to, and all those well versed in religious sciences, that there is no God beside him, the doer of justice... Verily, the religion with God is Islam. O, our Lord, save us by your revelation, cause us to follow the messenger [Muhammad], and so firmly count us among those who testify to AMS."

Further on the statement is made, "I testify that there is no God but Ali ibn Abi Talib with the bold forehead, the adorable, and no Hijab but Lord Muhammad, worthy to be praised, and no Bab but Lord Salman al-Farisi... I testify that the manlike form manifested among men was the end of all existence, and that it made manifest the essential light, besides which there is no God, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and that he is immeasurable, illimitable, incomprehensible, inscrutable. I testify that I am a Nusayri in religion."²⁹⁹

The Nusayris further maintain that the proof that Ali is God is based on his own testimony in the Qur'an, which they claim contains an inner meaning referring exclusively to divinity of Ali. This is evident in *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, where Ali is reported to have said, "God has described me in his precious book and said, 'He is God, beside whom there is no God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Holy King, the Creator. Him all things praise in heaven and earth.'" Now these attributes belongs to Him and are in Him, for it is necessary for Him to describe himself (because no other being could do), but they are in me and refer to me, and they are part of my descriptive marks. For when He says, 'He is God,' it refers to me, for I am God."³⁰⁰

The Nusayris go a step further by maintaining that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) has personally testified to the divinity of Ali. The Nusayri catechism contains the question, "Who called us to the knowledge of our Lord, the Commander of the faithful?" The answer is, "The Apostle Muhammad (saw), who in his sermon called *Bay'at al-Dar* said, 'Now hear what I am going to tell you, and never doubt it. I am calling you to Ali ibn Abi Talib as I call you to God, except that Ali is your master and mine... And I call those who follow me to Ali with full understanding. Praise be to God, for I am not one of the polytheists... I call you to Ali by his own command. My very state of prophet ship is under the dominion of Ali, because he is the one who sent me to you as a Rasul. He is the one who created me from the light of his essence. He is my God and your God, my creator and your creator. Fear Him and obey; declare his unity; praise, sanctify, and worship him, for there is no God beside him."³⁰¹

Kitab al-Mashyakhah contains a similar but more detailed testimony by the Prophet Muhammad (saw) of the divinity of Ali, related by Salman al-Farisi. Salman states that the Prophet (saw) invited him and others of his companions, including Ali, to the house of Umm Salamah, one of the Rasul's wives. After the companions assembled, the Rasul told them to be of good cheer, for he has invited them for their own good to hear and mind what he, as their Rasul, would tell them. The discourse is very long, so I shall give only excerpts of it.

The Prophet (saw) began by saying, "Do you believe in God most high and in me?" We all [Salman and the companions] said, "We believe in God Most High and in you..." "Hear now what I tell you, and beware of doubting what you hear from me. Know that I call you to Ali son of Abi Talib (ra), as I call you to the great and glorious God. Is not Ali your Lord and mine? I call you to Ali with my eyes open, I and those who follow me. I call you to Ali by his command; take care not to doubt. Is not my office of prophet under the dominion of Ali, because he has sent me as a Rasul to you, and because I was created from the light of his essence? Did not Ali teach me the Qur'an? Has not Ali sent me as an apostle to you? Is not Ali my Lord and your Lord? Is not Ali your God? Then Respect him.

Is not Ali your Framer, your producer, your healer, your witness and lender, your balance, your keeper, your enricher? Then know him, fear him, mind him, and worship him... Is not Ali the Lord of the Throne? To him are all things committed. Does not Ali know what is secret and what is open to you? Is not Ali the creator of the heaven and earth and the Lord of the east and the west. There is no God but him. Then take him as your patron. Has not Ali the keys of heaven, giving bountifully and sparingly to whom he pleases, for he is all-powerful? Does not Ali (there is no God but he) quicken and kill? He is your Lord and the Lord of your ancestors.

Does not Ali seize all the souls? To him all things tend. Is it not Ali to whom all things return? Therefore, hear him, and proclaim his unity, and praise him and sanctify him and glorify him, and say there is no God but him. He begat not nor was he begotten, neither he has any equal; neither he has been incarnated in flesh, nor taken to himself a female companion, nor a child. He has no partner in his dominion, nor any to protect from contempt. Therefore, magnify him (Qur'an 17:3). He appears as *dhahir* [outward] in revelation and is concealed in *batin* [inward] in created things. He is the lofty and great one [Qur'an 2:256]. He is all powerful and all knowing, and no one can bear his might or stand in his sight."³⁰²

Then the Rasul (saw) turned to the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (ra), who was sitting in his right hand, and said, "I ask you, by the strength of your strength and the might of your glory and the dignity of your Godhead and the greatness of your kingdom-" and before the Lord Muhammad finished his words, the Prince of the Bees (Amir al-Nahl), Ali, disappeared, and there shone upon the assembled companions a great light whose nature could not be comprehended, nor could its vision be and end be understood. A swoon came upon the companions from the intensity of its shining, and they saw it, as it were, in a dream.

When they saw this shining light, those assembled shouted, "Praise to you, how great is your dignity! We believe in you and believe in your apostle [Muhammad]." And there was not one of them who did not worship and see a vision from the fear and awe which had fallen upon them... what manifestation is more evident, and what witness and proof more just than that which is given in this information received from the greatest Lord Muhammad, and which he has manifested to the people of truth and faith [the Nusayris] in making known the unity of our lord [Ali] and his indication of him, for the greatest of his end and Mana? May God be exalted and his name sanctified."³⁰³

The books of the Nusayris are replete with similar statements indicating the apotheosis of Ali (ra). One has only to read *Kitab al-Majmu'* and the *Quddases* (masses) incorporated in Sulayman al-Adani's *Kitab al-Bakhrurah* to realise how fully the Nusayris have acknowledged Ali alone as their almighty God. For example, the *Quddas al-Ishara* (Indication Mass) begins thus: "Praise be to God, Ali the light of men, Ali is the lord of might. Ali is the cleaver of the grain. Ali is the creator of the breath of life. Ali is the fountain of wisdom. Ali the key of mercy... Ali is the possessor of this world and the world to come. Ali raised the heaven. Ali spread the earth. Ali is the creator of the night and day. Ali is the first and the last. Ali is the ancient of days. Ali is the Imam of Imam's. Ali is the light of light. Ali is one. Ali is Abel, Ali is Seth, Ali is Joseph, Ali is Joshua, Ali is Simon Peter, Ali is the Commander of the Faithful. We refer to him [as divine] as former ages referred to him, and as the people who maintained the belief in the oneness of God have indicated the priority of his essence, from the beginning of creation until this time. We refer to him as did our Lord al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi, his Shaykh Muhammad ibn Nusayr, and before him Salman al-Farisi, who indicated that the archetypal divinity of Ali was shown by the Lord Muhammad, the veil, the seven domes from Abel to Haydara Abu Turab [an appellation of Ali]. Know ye, brethren, that your God is eternal, Mana al-Maani, the ancient, the alone, the sublime Ali ibn Abi Talib, the indivisible, the uncompounded, whom no number comprises, who is neither restricted nor finite, to whom periods and ages bring no change."³⁰⁴

The apotheosis of Ali given expressions in this mass is contrary to the spirit and letter of Islam, violating both the Qur'an and the tradition of the Rasul (saw). To Orthodox Muslims, such pronouncements are sheer blasphemies. However, although the Twelver Shi'i renounce the Ghulat and their deification of Ali, yet their belief in the eternal pre-existence of the Imams, including Ali, and their belief that these Imams are free from human sin strengthens our conviction that the Twelver are themselves not very far from considering Ali more than mortal.

One appellation given to Ali - the Mana - has special connotation in the theological system of the Nusayris. As noted in chapter 26 in this book, Ali is the first person of the Nusayri trinity. He is thus called the *Mana* (Meaning), a term theologically denoting the casual determinant, the primal element, the divine reality, and the meaning of all created things. Their use of the name Mana for Ali, then, illustrates the Nusayri belief that Ali is God, the source and the cause of all things. His *manawiyyah* (archetypal divinity), revealed by Muhammad, is the very essence of God. Mana is the name for the Godhead in all its manifestations in relation to the Ism and the Bab, the second and third persons of the trinity. Because this *manawiyyah* cannot be comprehended separately from the Ism, it was necessary that the Ism (Muhammad) become the intermediary to manifest the manawiyyah of Ali. As Abu Abd Allah ibn Harun al-Saigh relates, his master al-Khasibi, in discussing the manawiyyah, states while Ali is Muhammad, the latter is not Ali, because divinity is peculiar only to the *Mana* (causal determinant), just as heat is peculiar to fire. Fire includes light, smoke, and activity, as well as heat, while heat alone does not contain all elements. Thus, while Ali contains Muhammad and all that is in the Muhammadan dome (period of manifestation), Muhammad does not contain all divine reality.³⁰⁵

The term Mana is not exclusively a Nusayri term. It was used by Baha al-Din al-Muqtana, one of the earliest Druze writers, who said, "Praise to the Lord God, who is distinguished from all other beings, in that He alone is the Mana of all the divine manifestations." De Sacy, who reproduces this statement, says, "This expression (Mana) is especially sacred with the Ansayri [Nusayris] even at the present time; it signifies the divinity concealed under human form."³⁰⁶

In their desire to emphasise the divinity of Ali, the Nusayris deny that he was flesh and blood. They believe him to be a luminous appearance. This point is made clear in the catechism, where the question is asked, "If Ali be God, how did he become of the same nature with men?" the answer is, "He did not so become, but took Muhammad as his veil in the period of his transformation and assumed the name of Ali."³⁰⁷ In other words, Ali was a *Ghilaf* (sheath) of the deity, and this sheath was concealed in another sheath, Muhammad, the veil.³⁰⁸

But if Ali is not considered flesh and blood, how do we account for the fact that in Nusayri writings Ali's human relationship are often detailed? He is spoken of as the only Hashimi on both sides of his family; his brothers - Hamza, Ja'far, Talib, and Aqil - are named; his sons - Hasan and Husayn - are named; his daughters - Zaynab and Umm Kulthum - are named; and his tomb near al-Kufah in Iraq is described.³⁰⁹ The explanation of this apparent contradiction is found in the fourteenth chapter of *Kitab al-Majmu'*, called *al-Bayt al-Ma'mur*. According to this

chapter, Ali's brothers, like Ali himself, are light of light and substance of substance. Ali is far above having brothers, sisters, father, and mother; that is to say, he is hidden by the nature of his divine essence. He is the mystery of the house - the roof, the grounds, and the firm underpinnings; that is, he is all and every one of the members of the house, or family of the Prophet (saw), who with him, form but one divine unity.³¹⁰

The *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, related by al-Mufaddal ibn Umar al-Ju'fi of the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq clearly indicates that the Imams, of whom Ali is chief, are not subject to the natural laws of life and death applied to the rest of mankind. According to al-Sadiq, when God desires to manifest an Imam, He sends His spirit into the future Imam, who thus becomes purified of human uncleanness, or sin.³¹¹ According to a Nusayri manuscript acquired by Carsten Niebuhr, the Nusayris apparently believe that Muhammad, and *Fatir* (Fatimah), together with Hasan and Husayn, and Muhsin (the three sons of Ali by Fatimah, Muhsin having died in infancy), form but one unity, and all are Ali.³¹² These five constitute the Ahl al-Aba or al-Kisa (family of the Nabi), considered by the extremist Shi'i al-Shurayi and his followers to be divine beings.³¹³ In this respect, the only difference between the Nusayris and al-Shurayi's followers is that the latter count Ali among the five, while the Nusayris count Ali's son Muhsin, who died in infancy, among the five, believing them to be one divine unity denoting Ali.

The Nusayris belief in the divinity of Ali is further manifested in their use of the many names which in the Bible and the Qur'an are given only to God. We have already stated that according to the Nusayri sources, the Mana, the Ism and the Bab have threefold names: *Mathaliyyah* (figurative), *Dhatiyyah* (essential), and *Sifatiyyah* (attributive). But a careful study of Nusayri sources shows that all these names of three persons of the Nusayri trinity are given to Ali and him alone.

In the seven periods of his manifestation in human form, Ali assumed many names, although he is a single entity. In the introduction to his *Kitab al-Hidayah al-Kubrah* (The Book of Great Guidance), the prominent Nusayri teacher al-Khasibi (d. 957) states that this book contains the names of the *ambiya'* of Allah (Muhammad) and those of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, his wife Fatimah, and the Imam's from Ali to Muhammad the Mahdi. Al-Khasibi then goes on to say that there are three hundred names for Ali in the Qur'an, which contradicts the Orthodox Muslims' belief that God has ninety-nine beautiful names. He gives some examples, based on Qur'an 11:17 and Qur'an 78:1 to show that Ali is the glad tidings; "Are they to be compared with these who have received a veritable word from their Lord recited by a witness from him?" and, "About what are they asking, about the great tidings (al-Naba al-Azim), the theme of their dispute?"³¹⁴ He further states that Ali's name appears in the books of Seth, Idris (Enoch), Noah, and Ibrahim (Abraham), books which are certainly apocryphal. In Syriac, his name is Miubin (Evident); in Hebrew, he is called *Hayula* (Primordial Matter), *al-Amin* (Faithful), *Thabat* (Firmness in Faith), *Bayan* (Divine eloquence), *Yaqin* (Indisputable Truth), and *Iman* (Faith).

Al-Khasibi also asserts that Ali is called Elias in the Torah, and Ariyah in the Psalms; that the *Zanj* (Black African) call him Habina, a distortion of Abuna, the title of the Ethiopian

Metropolitan; that the Abyssinians call him *Tabrik* (a distortion of Batrik, or Patriarch). In Arabic he is called *Haydarah* (lion) because he used to knock down his older brothers in their fights with him. He is also nicknamed Abu al-Hasan and al-Husayn; Abu Shibr and Abu Shabir (the sons of Aaron in Islamic tradition); *Abu Turab* (a nickname given to him by the Prophet); *Abu al-Nur* (father of light); and *Abu A'immah* (father of the Imam's).³¹⁵

So far this list of names is only slightly different to the one given in *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*.³¹⁶ But further on, al-Khasibi gives other names of Ali, some of which are current both among the Nusayris and among mainstream Shi'ah. Ali is called, for example, the Dividing Line between Paradise and the Fires of Hell, the Judge of Religion, the Fulfiller, the Promise, the Great Destroyer of Jinn, the Dispeller of Sorrow, the Ship of Safety, and the Firm Foundation who forever appears new in God.³¹⁷

Al-Khasibi also gives Ali the epithet of *Amir al-Nahl* (Prince of Bees, i.e., of the [Shi'ah] believers), a name peculiar to the Nusayris and the one most constantly used in their books. The Nusayris base this appellation on a tradition related by Ja'far al-Sadiq of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), who reportedly said, "The believer is like a bee, its sucks nectar and produces honey."³¹⁸ This is echoed in the Qur'an 16:68, "And your Lord has revealed to the bees." In these cases, "the bees" are interpreted by the Nusayris to mean the believers.

In the Nusayri catechism, we find still more names given to Ali along with few already cited by al-Khasibi. These names were given to Ali by many people including the Arabs, Hebrews, Hindus, Africans, Armenians, Daylamites (inhabitants of the Mountain region south of the Caspian Sea), and even beings believed by Nusayris to have pre-existed Adam.³¹⁹ Obviously, what al-Khasibi and the author of the catechism intended is to establish the universal recognition of Ali as God of all nations in conformity with the Nusayris' belief of the apotheosis of Ali.

Through the linguistic manipulation of the term Ali, which literally means "high?" The author of *Kitab al-Usus* states that the term Ali means "Most High," above every name and triumphant over every name.³²⁰ Obviously, the intention of the author is to ascribe divine attributes to the name Ali, which was and still is commonly used by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, with no spiritual connotations.

According to Dussaud, the Nusayris call Ali Allah (God-Ali), recalling the name Ali al-Ala (Ali the Most High).³²¹ Dussaud does not mention any Nusayri sources for the name Ali al-Ala; rather, he refers to De Sacy, who states that this name was used in a Druze text dealing with the manifestation of the divinity in human form.³²² Dussaud then proceeds to offer an etymological explanation for this name. He does not believe that it is of Arabic origin, because if it were, it will be written Ali Ta'ala, which is the name of God meaning Most High in Arabic. Dussaud conjectures the name Ali al-Ala instead derives from the old divine epithet El-Elioun, which is equivalent to the Greek Zeus Ophistos, and the Phoenician god known by the as Adonis.³²³ I find Dussaud's reasoning unconvincing, however. The name Ali al-Ala is used by

Ja'far al-Sadiq in *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, page 147, in reference to God. Al-Ala is certainly an authentic Arab term and forms the title of Surah 87 of the Qur'an.

A study of the Nusayris' religious system reveals the existence of deep-rooted Persian elements which give the Persians a prominent place in the divine economy of the cult of Ali. This is a vital point because Ali was an Arab, a pure Hashimi like his blood cousin, the Prophet Muhammad (saw), and most likely had nothing to do with the Persians or their kings. Yet he is called by the Nusayriyah the Crown of Kisras, from Khosraw (Chosroes), as the Sassanid kings of Persia were called by the Arabs.³²⁴ Among the figurative (mathaliyyah) names given to Ali from Adam to Muhammad the Mahdi, we find the names of the two Persian kings, Ardashir and Sapor.³²⁵

The seven appearances of the deity from Abel to Ali are said to have taken place in seven domes of periods, including the period of Abraham, the Arab periods, the periods of Muhammad and the Persian period, in which Ali manifested himself.³²⁶ In Persian books Ali is called Numayr, the word for fire.³²⁷ This is an indication that Ali is connected with the Persian worship of Fire, as shall be seen shortly.

The association of Ali with the Persian kings is more than fortuitous. It is the result of a deliberate attempt by Nusayri writers to project, through Ali, the supremacy of the Persians over the Arabs, by maintaining the Persian kings were the medium through whom Ali, his Name, and his Door were manifested in the world of light. This is indicated by al-Tabarani in his book *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad* (Books of feast) when he discusses the celebration of the festival of Nawruz (the New Day), which begins the Persian New Year. Al-Tabarani states: "The Lord (Ali, May he be glorified!) manifested himself in the person of the Persian kings, and it is in them that he affected the manifestations of his Names, his doors, and his sacred hierarchies, which constitute the great world of light."

Al-Tabarani goes on to say, "Our Lord al-Khasibi (may God sanctify his soul) has explained this point in one of his treatises called *Risalah fi al-Siyaqah*."³²⁸

In this *Risalah*, al-Khasibi discusses the manifestations of Ali since Adam in different periods, especially the Persian period. He states that in this period, Ali (who was also Adam) manifested himself in the person of Ardashir, son of Babek, the first of the Persian Sassanid Kings of the line of Khosraw (Chosroes), the Sassanid kings, and then manifested himself in the person of Sapor, so of Ardashir.

Afterwards, Ali manifested himself among the Arabs in the person of Lu'ay, son of Kilab (an ancestor of the Prophet Muhammad and of his cousin, Ali). Lu'ay, al-Khasibi explains, means "he who turns," signifying that he turned the light from the land of the Persians to the land of the Hijaz, where the Mana, the Ism, and the Bab were manifested.³²⁹

Al-Khasibi further explains that when the divinity (Ali) left the Persians to manifest himself among the Arabs, he delegated to the Persians the *maqamat* (stations) of his wisdom, to be transmitted successively to their kings, whom he designated as the personifications of the Mana, the Ism, and the Bab. However, a change took place in the time of Kisra [Khosraw, or Chosroes] Anushirwan; because of pride, he disobeyed the Lord Muhammad, and through his disobedience, the Persians lost their royalty.³³⁰

What al-Khasibi means is that the Persian kings were the personification of the divine religion, manifested from the time of Adam in Ali. But when Ali manifested himself in the period of Muhammad, which ushered in the religion of Islam, whose source is Ali, the religious light was transferred through Ali from the Persians to the Arabs. The Persian king, Anushriwan, disobeyed the new revelation and consequently lost his dominion to the Arabs. However, al-Khasibi attempts to minimise the Persians' loss of supremacy to the Arabs by stating to observe the festivals of Id al-Ghadir, instituted by the Lord Muhammad. All of these festivals, then, will be celebrated until the future manifestation of al-Qa'im bi al-Amr, the last Imam (Mahdi).³³¹ This must mean that the Persians were foremost in the divine manifestation of Ali, his Ism, and his Bab, and never lost their spiritual position, even after Ali manifested himself among the Arabs in the Muhammadan period, and that the Persians continued the tradition of the divine Ali through the celebration of their pagan festivals, which became the counterpart to the Islamic festivals instituted by Muhammad. This argument by al-Khasibi becomes pointless, however, when we realise that Id al-Ghadir was not instituted by Muhammad, and that its observance corroborates the Shi'i claim that the Prophet appointed Ali as his successor at Ghadir Khum.

In a special chapter of his *Risalah fi al-Siyaqah*, al-Khasibi shows supreme spiritual wisdom and positions of the Persian kings, whom he considers the manifestation of the Nusayri trinity, the Mana, the Ism, and the Bab. He ascribes great honour to the Persians because the Bab (Salman) was a Persian and the wisdom he possessed derives from the Persians. Furthermore, this Persian Bab, together with the other two persons of the trinity, the Mana and the Ism, was manifested in two *maqamat* (stations) of the first two Sassanid Persian kings, Aradashir, son of Babek, and Ardashir's son Sapor. Al-Khasibi asserts that through these manifestations the Persian kings received divine wisdom, which was transmitted in an unbroken line to the last three kings, whom al-Khasibi calls Sharwin, Kharwin, and Khosraw. He goes on to say that through these manifestations, these kings too, came to occupy the place of the Mana (Ali) and possessed full knowledge of him. This is indeed a very significant statement. Al-Khasibi means here that the Nusayri trinity, which is the essence of the Nusayri religion, has become a symbol of Persianism because the Bab (Salman) is Persian. Al-Khasibi also implies that divine wisdom and revelation are not the possession of the Arabs exclusively, but of the Persians too. Al-Khasibi concludes that on quitting the Persians, the Lord (Ali) deposited his wisdom with them, promising to return.³³²

While al-Khasibi seems in error in making these three Persian kings "the last trinity," his intentions is quite clearly to show that these Persian kings are the embodiment of the three persons of the Nusayri trinity. In other words, they are Ali, Muhammad, and Salman the Persian, which means that the Persians are much part of the divine economy of the god Ali as

the Arabs are. At the same time, al-Khasibi establishes the spiritual supremacy of the Persians over Arabs by asserting that the Arabs (and here he most likely means Sunni Muslims) have lost the divine mystery, while the Persians preserved it: “The Most High [Ali] deposited his wisdom with the Persians and then left, being pleased with them. He is the one who said that the God Almighty has deposited His mystery with you [Arabs], manifested Himself amongst you, and destined you to receive it. But you have lost it while the Persians have preserved it even after its disappearance, by means of fire and light, in which He manifested Himself.”³³³

Thus, the religious system of the Persians, based on their worship of fire and light, becomes the forerunner of the revelations of the Prophet Muhammad. This statement becomes even more important when we realise that in the treatise of *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), mentioned by al-Tabarani, “The Persians have sanctified fire, from which they await the manifestation of their Deity. This manifestation will take place among the Persians, for they never cease to keep lighted the fire from which they await this same manifestation and the accomplishment of the promise of the deity in that event.” Since the divinity manifested itself in the form of Ali, Ali becomes the personification of fire and the god of the Persians, not the Arabs. The Arabs, al-Khasibi states, lost their spiritual privileges when they refused to believe in the divine mystery of Ali while the Persians preserved it. This mystery is the manifestation of Ali in fire and light, which al-Khasibi likens to the fire of the burning bush which Moses (as) saw when speaking to God.³³⁴

Al-Tabarani then cites a tradition related by al-Mufaddal ibn Umar al-Ju’fi of the Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq, who is reported to have said, “The Mana [Ali] manifested himself in the time of the Persians twice each year, at the time of the change from cold to heat, and from heat to cold. The change from cold to heat was called Nawruz, and that from heat to cold was called Mihrajan. These two days are held sacred by the Persians because the Mana manifested himself in transmigration among them.”³³⁵

The spiritual supremacy of the Persians over the Arabs is also maintained in *Kitab Ta’lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, in connection with the celebration of Nawruz. Question ninety, about the nature of the Nawruz, is answered in a poem by al-Khasibi, who states that the Nawruz is the truth established by the authority of the most noble Hashimi. It is the day on which God [Ali] manifested himself in the periods of the Persians before he did so in the periods of the Arabs and raised these periods of the Persians to high heaven.³³⁶ We shall give a full translation of this poem in the discussion of the celebration of the Quddas.

The several passages cited above reveal many Persian elements in the religious system of the Nusayris. As Rev. Samuel Lyde has rightly observed, they contain “wild conceits which are probably by some Persian.” Lyde goes on to say that these passages are contained in a section of *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* entitled, “The Traditionary Sayings of [the Persian] Abu Ali of Basrah, in his Dwelling in Shiraz in the year of the Hijrah 327 [A.D. 938]”³³⁷

The fact that these passages glorify the Persians over Arabs convinces us of the Persian origin of the Nusayris and their religious system. As Abd al-Husayn Mahdi al-Askari rightly observes,

these passages betray “the Nusayri partisanship toward the Persians and indicate the hatred (Shubiyya) which non-Arabs, especially the Persians, harbour towards the Arabs.”³³⁸ Such hatred is also observed by Sulayman al-Adani, who states, “No member of any Arab sect is admitted into their [the Nusayris] fraternities for the first time unless he be one of the Ajam [Persians], because, like the Nusayris, the Persians believe in the divinity of Ali ibn Abi Talib (ra), and without doubt, their progenitors were from Persia and Iraq.”³³⁹ Al-Adani seems to be correct, because the founder of the Nusayri sect, Muhammad ibn Nusayr was of Persian origin.

The Persian element is most conspicuous in the association of light and the fire with the manifestation of the deity. Light and Fire constitute an essential part of the ancient Persian religious system. We have already seen in the description of the merits of the Nawruz that upon leaving the Persians to manifest himself among the Arabs, the deity deposited his wisdom with the Persians and promised to return to them. According al-Khasibi, God, as Ali, then deposited his mystery [his Manifestation as God] with the Arabs and ordered them to preserve it, but they failed to do so. After the deity left the Persians, however, they perpetuated his manifestation through their sanctification of light and fire, from which they await the manifestation of the deity.³⁴⁰ The manifestation, according to *Risalat al-Fiqh*, will take place among the Persians because they do not cease to keep lighted the fire from which they look for this manifestation and the accomplishment of the promises made by the deity during his appearance.³⁴¹

We have summarised these passages in order to show the lengths to which the Nusayri writers went in order to appropriate Ali as the manifestation of God and make his manifestation an “exclusively Persian” privilege, associated with the worship of the light and fire, which are part of the Persian tradition. The Nusayri writers, who are mostly of Persian origin, have Persianised Ali as a divinity to allow the Persians to boast to the Arabs that the Arab Hashimi Ali had become a “Persian” deity, whom the Arabs had lost because they were not worthy of him. Making Ali a Persian deity also offered the Persians the opportunity to boast that, although the Arabs, have Muhammad from the light of his essence. Hence, the Persians and the Nusayris can claim spiritual superiority over the Arabs.

The Nusayri Concepts of Light

Shamsis and Qamaris

Reverence for light forms an essential part of the Nusayri religious system. Among the Nusayris, light is symbolised by the sun, considered the light of lights. This light, according to *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, is the mystery of God. It is the ancient Mana [Ali], who was veiled by the light. The sun is the light of the light because it is the abode of the eternal, the everlasting, the mystery of mysteries, and Ali, who is veiled in the light which is the eye of the sun from which he shall appear again. Thus, the sun is the Qiblah (holy place) toward which the Nusayri believer (Ahl al-Wala) should turn his face when he prays.³⁴²

It should be pointed out there is dissension among the Nusayris over the connection of the sun with the adoration of their God Ali. They are divided by this question into two groups, the Shamsis, whose name is taken from Shams (sun), and the Qamaris, whose name derives from Qamar (moon). The Shamsis are also called Mawakhisa, Ghaybis, or (most often) Shamalis (from Shamal, whose connotation shall be explained later), and the Qamaris are known as Kalazis. The Shamsis are the original and oldest people of the mountains, while the Qamaris came from the east, from Jabal Sinjar (Sinjar Mountains) in northern Iraq in the thirteenth century, led by Hasan al-Makzun.³⁴³

The Shamsis and the Qamaris disagree over whether Ali and Muhammad should be associated with the sun or with the moon, and this disagreement causes a great deal of confusion. The Shamsis believe that Ali is the source of the morning sun, and the sun is his abode. It is also their belief that Ali is the creator of the luminous full moon. Therefore, the sun, as the abode of the creator, should be revered in greater measure than the moon, a created object. The Qamaris, who reverence the moon, answer that Ali created the moon as a place to live, just as man builds a house to live in. they claim that the black spots which appear on the moon are the personification of the worshipped Ali, who was a body, arms, and legs, and who wears a crown on his head and carries a sword named Dhu al-Fiqar.³⁴⁴

To prove they are correct in honouring the moon, the Qamaris cite the eleventh chapter of *Kitab al-Majmu'*, which states that Ali shall appear out of the eye of the sun. Commenting on this chapter, Sulayman al-Adani states that the Qamaris claim that the appearance of Ali out of the eye of the sun (Ayn al-Shams) must mean that the moon's light issues forth from the sun.³⁴⁵

Al-Adani further comments that those who worship the twilight (he does not identify them) believe that it comes from the eye of the sun, while at the same time they maintain that the reddening of the sky at twilight results in the appearance of the sun. The Shamsis' answer to this assertion is that the sun in this context is only a symbol for Fatimah bint Asad, Ali's mother, and the other Fatimah (rah), daughter of the Prophet (saw) and wife of Ali (ra), who are closely connected with the expressed deity, that is, Muhammad, who they maintain is symbolised by the sun.³⁴⁶

Al-Adani goes on to say that, based on the fourteenth chapter of *Kitab al-Majmu'*, called al-Bayt al-Ma'mur, the Nusayris all agree that Muhammad is the sun, and disagree only regarding the Mana and the Bab. While the Qamaris believe that the moon is the Mana (Ali), the Shamsis hold that the moon is the Bab (Salman al-Farisi). In other words, the Shamsis recognise the divinity of the sun under the name of Muhammad; as the abode of Ali, the sun also represents Muhammad. What this really means is that the Shamalis believe that in their association with the sun, Ali and Muhammad are the same deity. Such a belief is expressed in the seventh chapter, called *al-Salam* (Salutation).

While the Shamsis believe in the divinity of Muhammad, the elect, the Qamaris maintain the divinity of Ali. The Qamaris assert that the Shamsis have fallen into error by ascribing divinity to Muhammad and Ali indiscriminately. The Shamsis reply that Muhammad and Ali are allied not opposed. While Ali is the first cause (al-Ghayah al-Kubrah), they say, Muhammad is also a creator, and it is not an error to believe in Muhammad's divinity: the Shamsis and the Qamaris share the same doctrine of the trinity.³⁴⁷ The Shamsis also cite the fifth chapter of *Kitab al-Majmu'*, entitled *al-Fath* (the victory), to demonstrate that Ali and Muhammad are one in their divinity. According to this chapter, Ali created Muhammad out of the light of his essence and called him his *Ism* (name), his self, his throne, his seat, and his attribute. Muhammad is thus united with Ali as the sun's rays are to its disk.³⁴⁸ Whatever their reasoning, there is evidence that the Qamaris pray to the sun and the moon because they are very much afraid of them. It is also common among their women and children to consider the moon the face of Ali, and the sun the face of Muhammad.³⁴⁹

Another point of difference between the Shamsis and the Qamaris is that while the former believe that heaven is the Mana (Ali) and the moon is the Bab (Salman al-Farisi), the latter believe that the moon is heaven.³⁵⁰ The Shamsis' apparent identification of Ali with heaven (the sky) was a matter for reproach, according to an ancient Druze source.³⁵¹

Where did the Nusayris get these beliefs, which are certainly neither Biblical nor Islamic? Chapter 13 (of *Kitab al-Majmu'*), entitled *al-Musafarah* (the journey), offers a clue but not much detail. In it, we read about the mystery of Lord Abu Abd Allah (al-Khasibi) and his elect children, drinkers from the sea of AMS (the trinity of Ali, Muhammad, and Salman), who are fifty one in number. Of these, seventeen were from Iraq, seventeen from Syria, and seventeen of unknown origin, all stationed at the gate of the city of Harran.³⁵²

Commenting on this chapter, al-Adani states that whenever a city was mentioned in the Nusayris secret books, they interpreted it figuratively as signifying the heavens and supposed that its inhabitants were the stars. So it is with the city of Harran, at whose gate stand the fifty one disciples of al-Khasibi, believed to be the stars of the order of the small spirit world.³⁵³ This explanation of al-Adani of the Nusayri interpretation of this chapter may shed a revealing light on the source of many of the astral beliefs of the Nusayris. We are indebted to René Dussaud, who traced a connection between some of these beliefs and the astral cult of Harran, to which he traced the origin of the name Shamalis (a common name to the Shamsis).³⁵⁴

The Harranians are an Aramaic people who, like the ancient people of Syria, spoke the Aramaic-Syriac language. During the Muslim period, they came to be known as Sabeans, a name that they are still known by today. Their earlier name derives from their city, Harran, situated on a tributary of the Euphrates in upper Mesopotamia. It is the place in which Terah, Abraham's father, settled with his household after leaving his house in Ur, in the southern part of the present day Iraq (Genesis 11:31-32). The Sabeans were not confined in the city of Harran alone, however. They spread all over Syria, including the area inhabited by the Nusayris. In the tenth century, there were Sabeans living in Baalbak and Hierapolis (Manbij).³⁵⁵

Daniel Chwolsohn maintains that these Sabeans were a remnant of the Hellenized pagans of Syria.³⁵⁶ Their religion was based on worship of the sun, the moon, and five planets. In his *Fihrist*, Abu al-Faraj Muhammad ibn Ishaq, known as ibn al-Nadim (d. 873), devotes several pages to the religion and festivals of Sabeans of Harran, reproduced from earlier sources. He quotes a report by Ahmad ibn al-Tayyib (al-Sarakhsi) of the account of the Arab philosopher al-Kindi (d. 873), indicating that the Sabeans worship the sun at its rising and setting. Ibn al-Nadim also quotes another writer, said Wahb ibn Ibrahim al-Nasrani (the Christian), who states that the Harranians offer sacrifices every day of the week to a certain god. One of these gods is the sun god, Helios, to whom they offer sacrifice on Sunday. Another is a moon god, Sin, to whom they offer sacrifice on Monday.³⁵⁷ The Harranians also recognise five principles, as did the Neo-Platonists, the Gnostics, the Cabbalists, and, later, the Isma'ilis.³⁵⁸

Ibn al-Nadim's account of the Sabeans' religious practices is of the utmost importance to our subject. On several occasions throughout the year, he says, the Harranians would fast, pray, and celebrate a mystery (a kind of sacrament), offering sacrifices to their gods, including the god Shamal (Chief of the Jinn and their greatest god). They observed the birth of their lord, the moon on 24 January and celebrated for Shamal, offering sacrifices. In February, they fasted seven days for their great god of good, the sun, for the rest of the month, they would pray only to Shamal, the Jinn, and devils. Only on the first day of May, they celebrated the sacrificial mystery for Shamal, and on the 27 June, they celebrated the same sacrament in honour of the god Shamal, to Jinn, and devils. On 8 August, they would sacrifice a new born infant, mix his flesh with flour and spices, and bake it in a new oven, as a mystery to the people of Shamal. In September, the Harranians would bathe in boiled water as part of a celebration of the mystery of Shamal. They would also offer eight sheep, seven for their gods and one for the god Shamal. On the twenty seven and twenty eight of the same month, they would hold many celebrations and sacraments, offering sacrifices and oblations to Shamal and to the devils and the Jinn, who protect them and bring them luck.³⁵⁹

It is quite important to note that, according to ibn Nadim's account, the feasts, fasting, prayer, and sacrificial offerings to the god Shamal are often associated with the sun cult and seven planet gods of the Harranians. Most of these celebrations take place shortly before sunrise. For example, on 26 September, after they have offered sacrifices to Shamal, the Harranians climb the mountain to receive the sun.³⁶⁰ Thus, in list of feasts, we find the same characteristics attributed to both Shamal and sun god, "the greatest god."³⁶¹ Does this mean that the Shamsis derive their more common name of Shamalis and some of their religious practices from the ancient solar cult of Harran?

It is true that the word Shamalis means “northerners” (from Shamal, “north”), but these Nusayris are not called Shamalis because they live in the northern part of their country. If this were the case, then the Nusayris who live in the south (janub) of that country should be called Junubis; no such name appears in the Nusayri books or tradition. Rev. Samuel Lyde, who lived for many years among the Nusayris, observed that the Shamalis are not confined to the northern part of the country, as the name suggests, but are dispersed throughout the land, some living even in the extreme south, near Mount Hermon.³⁶² In fact, the only time the word Shamal, here meaning “left,” is used in *Kitab al-Majmu’* is to distinguish Abu Dharr al-Ghifari from al-Miqdad, who is called the Yamin (right handed side). Although Abu Dharr and al-Miqdad are considered by the Nusayris to be five of the *Aytam* (incomparables) created by Salman al-Farisi,³⁶³ the word Shamal, as used in this context, does not appear to have any religious connotation; even if it does, we are forced to speculate that the term derives from the Harranian cult, for otherwise, characterising these men as *Shamal* (left) and *Yamin* (right) makes no sense.

We need not to elaborate on this point any more. The few examples cited clearly show the correlation between the Nusayris’ cult and that of Harran.³⁶⁴ The Nusayri conception of God does not differ greatly from that of the Harranians, to whom god was unique in essence, but multiple in his manifestations as the seven heavenly bodies governing the world.³⁶⁵

The Nusayri “Trinity”

Ali, Muhammad, and Salman al-Farisi

As noted in chapter 26, the Nusayri trinity comprises the *Mana* (Ali), the *Ism* (Muhammad), and the *Bab* (Salman al-Farisi). The position of Ali in this trinity is discussed in chapter 27; here we shall discuss the positions of its other members.

The second person of the Nusayri trinity is the *Ism*, Muhammad, whose manifestations took place in the second period of Ali, considered the consummate period of the seven manifestation of God. The first appearance of the *Ism* in human form was Adam, and the last was Muhammad. The Shamalis consider Muhammad, as the *Ism*, to be their Lord, yet he occupies a position secondary to that of Ali. It was Ali, as God, who created Muhammad from the light of essence and taught him the Qur’an. Ali made Muhammad a light, extracted from the essence of his meaning; he called him by his name Muhammad, and elected him. He said to him, “Be the cause of causes, and framer of the *Bab* (door) and the *Hijab* (veil).”³⁶⁶ The phrase “cause of causes” suggests that the office of Muhammad as the *Ism* is like that of a demiurge, through which God (Ali) created the worlds, and to whom He entrusted the administration of the universe.³⁶⁷ In a way, Muhammad occupies the same position as the Logos in Christianity. Yet, unlike the Logos, who is begotten, not made, and who is one with the substance with the Father, Muhammad, as stated in *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, is the “best of created beings.”³⁶⁸

The Nusayri catechism lists many names in which Muhammad appeared. Some indicate the divine attributes of Muhammad, and others are merely abstract names. Among the divine names listed are the mysterious “Madd al-Madd” in the Torah, the “Redeemer” in the *Zabur* (psalms), the “Paraclete” in the gospels (the Holy Spirit is known by this name in the New Testament), and Muhammad in the Qur’an. The most important abstract names given to Muhammad are “Will,” “Perception,” and “Might.”³⁶⁹

The *Ism* is also the *Hijab* (veil, or intermediary) through whom the God Ali revealed himself to mankind. It is the *Ism* who veils the brightness of their God from the eyes of human beings. The *Hijab* is frequently mentioned and elaborated on in Nusayri writings in association with the deity.³⁷⁰ Question 4 of the catechism asks, “If Ali is God, how did he take man’s nature?” the answer is, “He did not take it, but he veiled himself in the period of his change of forms and took the name of Ali.”³⁷¹ This means that the divinity of Ali is so bright that no mortal can look at it directly, without a veil. Thus, Muhammad became the veil of the God, Ali, in whom Ali was concealed and through whom He manifested Himself to mankind.³⁷²

According to al-Khasibi, God is inwardly Muhammad, and Muhammad is outwardly God. God represents the power of the divinity, allowed to be named Muhammad or Ali, but no one is permitted to be named God.³⁷³ As al-Nashshabi explains in his *Munazara*, Muhammad and Ali are but two name of the Godhead; the God, *Mana*, revealed his essence to no one but Muhammad, and Muhammad was the only one worthy to be the veil of God.³⁷⁴

In *Risalat al-Tawhid* (Treatise in the unity of God), as related by the Nusayri writer Ali ibn Isa al-Jisri, a disciple of al-Khasibi, there is a tradition in which the Prophet Muhammad *salla Llahu `alayhi wa sallam* reportedly said, "I am from Ali and Ali from me," meaning that Muhammad is Ali's name, spirit, soul, and word. In essence, the Mana is one, the Ism is one, and the Bab is one, no matter how their names and attributes change. The Mana, the Ism, and the Bab are one.³⁷⁵

Muhammad is the pathway that leads to Ali, in accordance with the sayings, "No one knows God except God Himself," "God can only be known by God Himself," and "No one can indicate to God except he who is for God."³⁷⁶ In summation, when Ali as the divine Mana wanted to call mankind to himself, he inspired and guided the people through Muhammad, who became the intermediary between God and man.³⁷⁷ Whatever Muhammad's position in the religious system of the Nusayris, they believe Ali and only Ali to be worthy of their adoration.

The third person of the Nusayri trinity is the Bab. In the time of Adam, the Bab was the Angel Gabriel, and in the time of Ali, Salman al-Farisi (the Persian). In the third Nusayri (mass), entitled *Quddas al-Adhan* (call to prayer) is the statement, "I testify that there is no God but Ali, the prince of bees, with the bald forehead, the adorable, and no Hijab but Lord Muhammad, the unsurpassed, the all-glorious, the august, the worthy-to-be-praised, and no Bab but Lord Salman al-Farisi, the pattern." In the same mass, Salman is also called "God's noble Bab, whereby alone one comes to God," and "Salasal, Salsabil." (Both these words mean sweet water. The latter is believed by Muslims to refer to the Spring of Sweet Water in Paradise.)³⁷⁸ In another source, the same Salman is called not only Salsal and Salsabil, but Gabriel. (Divine Guidance and Indubitable Truth); it is even said, "He is truly the Lord of all worlds."³⁷⁹

As we have already indicated, Massignon seems to believe that Salsal derives from *silsilah* (chain, or link) and is applied to Salman, who is considered the "lost link" between Muhammad and Ali. He also quotes a Druze source to show that the Druzes consider Salman the *silsilah* (chain) of the Aqsa Mosque, at which people make their oaths.³⁸⁰

But why should a man from far-away Persia, whose history and personality are shrouded in mystery, occupy such a prominent position in Islamic tradition and serve as a link between the Prophet *salla Llahu `alayhi wa sallam* and Ali? Salman al-Farisi (the Persian) has been and still is a subject of controversy in the history of Islamic tradition.

In the accounts he published between 1909 and 1913, Clement Huart denied the historical existence of Salman al-Farisi, although he admitted that there was a Salman present at the Battle of Khandaq (trenches), fought by the Prophet of Islam in 627 against the Meccan confederate tribes (Ahzab).³⁸¹

In 1922, Josef Horowitz attempted to establish that a tradition in which Salman al-Farisi advised the Prophet *salla Llahu `alayhi wa sallam* to have a ditch dug to halt the advance of the attacking Meccan tribes is nothing but a fable created by Muslim writers to embellish the victory of the Muslims over the Meccans and make this Salman the Persian, about whom nothing is

known, a Persian engineer and Mazdakian convert to Islam who became the private counsellor of Muhammad. Massignon, who disagrees with this opinion, tries to demonstrate that Salman al-Farisi was a true historical figure. He bases his analysis and conclusion on early Islamic sources, from Abu Ishaq al-Subayi and Ismail al-Suddi (both of whom died in 127/744) to Ali ibn Mihzayar (d. 210/825).³⁸²

According to these sources, Salman was born to a noble Persian family and was raised in the Mazdakian religion, an offshoot of Zoroastrianism. He is identified as either Mabah, son of Budkhasan, or Rawzabah, son of Marzaban. While on a hunting trip, he passed a Christian monastery, where he heard the chanting of hymns and prayers and became fascinated with Christian worship. He converted to Christianity and decided to live a pious life, abstaining from drinking wine and eating the flesh of animals slaughtered by the Mazdakians.³⁸³ Salman travelled from city to city, stopping at Hims, Damascus, Jerusalem, Mosul, Nisibin, Antioch, Amuriya, and Alexandria in Egypt, always staying with the people of *zuhd* (piety). While in Alexandria, he learned that the imminent appearance of a nabi was expected in Arabia. Leaving Alexandria to meet the new nabi, he was betrayed by his guides, who sold him to some Arabians, who in return sold him to a Jew named Uthman al-Ashhal, of the Qurayzah tribe. (Some sources say he was sold as a slave to either a Jewish or an Arabian woman.) Eventually, Salman heard of Muhammad and went to Makkah to look for him, believing that he was a new Nabi. When he saw Muhammad *salla Llahu `alayhi wa sallam*, he searched his body and saw the sign of nubuwwah in the form of a fleshy growth on his right shoulder. Upon recognising Muhammad as the newly sent Prophet, Salman converted to Islam. He was emancipated and became the first Persian to convert to Islam, and the Prophet called him Salman.³⁸⁴

Salman occupies a prominent position in the early history of Islam. His wisdom, piety, and knowledge of the religions Persia and of Christianity were undoubtedly assets to the new Rasul Muhammad *salla Llahu `alayhi wa sallam* and his small band of followers. This wisdom was manifested when he advised the Rasul to dig a ditch to foil the attack of the Meccans against Madinah. His advice must have been well received, for both the Muslims of Madinah (the Supporters) and the Muslims of Makkah (the Immigrants) claimed Salman as one of their own. The Rasul *salla Llahu `alayhi wa sallam* solved the problem by proclaiming Salman a member of the family of the Rasul; hence the tradition, “Salman minna Ahl al-Bayt,” meaning Salman is counted as a member of the Rasul’s family.³⁸⁵

The Isma’ilis go step further, maintaining that Salman delivered the whole Qur’an to Muhammad, and that the Angel Gabriel, through whom God revealed the Qur’an to Muhammad, was none other than Salman, who carried this divine revelation.³⁸⁶ Thus, from the earliest period of Islam, Salman was considered a pious Muslim who possessed *al-ilm al-Ladunni* (knowledge imparted directly by God through mystic intuition).

Because of this knowledge, and because he was counted as a member of the Ahl al-Bayt, we can understand the prominent position of Salman in the traditions of Islam. This is attested to by Ali, who likened Salman to the Qur’anic figure Luqman, the Sage, affirming that he was “one of

us [the family of the Rasul] who has known as the first and the last Ilm [divine knowledge], and read the first and last books. He is an inexhaustible sea.”³⁸⁷

From the time of Muhammad, Salman was associated with other Sahabah of the Rasul who figure greatly in the religious system of the Nusayris. These *Aytam* (incomparables) as the Nusayris call them, were the first *Shi'ah* (supporters of Ali). According to one tradition, the Rasul said, “Paradise longs to meet four: Ali, Ammar, Salman, and al-Miqdad.”³⁸⁸ These supporters of Ali are so important that the Shi'ah chose four men whom they called Nuqaba' and later *Arkan* (pillars), namely, Salman, Abu Dharr, al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad, and Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman. They, so Ali ibn Ibrahim (al-Qummi) maintains, are the ones referred to in the Qur'an verse: “The true believers are those whose hearts are filled with awe at the mention of God... They are those who put their trust in their Lord, pray steadfastly, and bestow the alms that which we have given them” (Qur'an 8:2).³⁸⁹ As shall be seen later, the Nusayris maintain that the *Aytam* were created by Salman al-Farisi.

In the light of this account of Salman, his portrayal as one of the first Muslims to support Ali's right to Imamah is of utmost significance to the Shi'ah. They consider him no ordinary man, but one who possessed of divine wisdom and knowledge of prior religions. According to Islamic legend, he lived early enough to have been the contemporary of Jesus Christ and His disciples. In this sense, it is believed that Salman became the link between Christianity and Islam, and the one who proclaimed the appearance of the new Rasul, that is, Muhammad. Ibn Ishaq, the earliest biographer of the Rasul, relates a tradition in which Muhammad is reported to have said to Salman, “If you trust me, O Salman, I believe that you met Isa [Jesus] (as), the son of Mary.”³⁹⁰ To the Shi'ah, the longevity of Salman (he is believed to have lived since the time of Christ) and his possession of divine knowledge established him as a witness of the *ambiya'* of old and their message, especially the relations between Moses and Aaron, which Muhammad cited to show the relation between himself and Ali, in the tradition, “You [Ali] are in the same position to me as Aaron was to Moses, except that there will be no nabi after me.”³⁹¹ The Shi'ah often cite this tradition to show that Muhammad *salla Llahu `alayhi wa sallam* designated Ali as his successor through the *Wasiyyah* (testamentary trust) and confirmed him in the office of the Imamah, as Moses designated Aaron as his successor.

The witness to this tradition is Salman, who lived an uncommonly long time and acquired divine knowledge that qualified him to proclaim Ali as the rightful heir to the Rasul.³⁹² It is in this sense that Salman becomes the “lost link” of divine authority between Ali and Muhammad. It is in the same sense that the Shi'ah give great weight to Salman's association with both Ali and the Rasul especially with the latter, who counted Salman as the member of the Ahl al-Bayt to legitimise their claim that the Rasul appointed Ali as his successor and leader (Imam) of the Muslim community. Salman not only was considered the example of a faithful, true, and pious Muslim; he was, as the Rasul said, “the Ibn [son] of Islam.”³⁹³

In summary, to the Twelver Shi'ah, who maintain the divine authority of twelve Imam's, Salman is the divine counsellor whom the Rasul left for Ali, so that all Muslims recognise Ali as the sole Imam and heir to the Rasul, based on the divine testimony of Salman, and so that they

should realise that the office of the Imamah, or Khilafah, was meant exclusively for Ali. Through the machinations of some of the companions of the Prophet *salla Llahu `alayhi wa sallam* (Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman as presumed by the Shi'ah), however, this office was usurped from Ali. The witness again was Salman, who unleashed his resources to defend Ali's right to the Imamah according to Shi'ah belief.³⁹⁴

To the Shi'ah, he was also honoured as a witness of Ali's right to the Imamah. But as time went on and struggle between the Shi'i emerged, including Muhammad Abu al-Khattab (d. 138/755), who deified the Imams. It is also natural for them to deify Salman, the arch defender of Ali's right to the Imamah, and to call him Salsal and Salsabil, the two epithets which begins with the letter S, as does the name Salman.³⁹⁵

Thus, we find Muhammad al-Ash'ari (d. 324/935) stating, "In our time, there are those who assert the divinity of Salman al-Farisi."³⁹⁶ Some of these *Ghulat* (extremists) sects evidently regarded Ali, Muhammad, and Salman al-Farisi as divine, and placed great spiritual importance on their names, referring to them by their initial letters, AMS.

We learn from the Isma'ili writer Abu Hatim al-Razi (d. 934), in his *Kitab al-Zina*, that the *Ayniyyah*, (from *ayn* the initial letter of Ali), asserted the divinity of both Ali and Muhammad, giving preference to the former, while the *Mimiyyah*, (from *mim* the initial letter of Muhammad), asserted the divinity of both Ali and Muhammad but preferred Muhammad to Ali.³⁹⁷

Al-Razi goes on to say that one of the Ghulat is the Salmaniyyah sect, whose adherents maintain that Salman al-Farisi was a nabi. Others, al-Razi continues, proclaim that he was divine. They base their belief in Salman's divinity on Qur'an 43:45, where God tells Muhammad, "Question our apostles whom we send before you," Salman being an apostle having been sent before Muhammad. They justify this allegorical interpretation by saying the name Salman sounds identical to the Arabic words *Sal man* ("question whom"). Al-Razi concludes that some of the Ghulat exaggerated Salman's role to the point of giving him precedence over Ali.³⁹⁸

One of these Ghulat sects must have been the Nusayris, who assert that Ali, Muhammad, and Salman al-Farisi are a triune God symbolised by the letters *ayn*, *mim*, and *sin*. They must have emerged as a Ghulat group in the second century of the Islamic era (eighth century A.D), and mixed with other Ghulat groups such as *Siniyyah* (already mentioned), the *Alyaiyyah*, and *Khattabiyyah*, founded by Abu al-Khattab, a contemporary of the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 765). They remained without a distinct identity until the next century, when Muhammad ibn Nusayr, who claimed to be the Bab of the eleventh Imam, al-Hasan al-Askari (d. 873), became independent of the latter and founded Nusayrism. The great apostle and propagator of Nusayrism, al-Khasibi (d. 957), has left us very important evidence indicating that the Prophet Muhammad called Salman al-Farisi the Bab, the very position the Nusayris assign to Salman in their trinity.

According to al-Khasibi's account, Muhammad ibn Abi Zaynab al-Asadi, known as Abu al-Khattab, one of the Ghulat already mentioned, was in the company of the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, when the latter turned to him, saying that he wanted to address him as his great-grandfather, the Rasul, had addressed Salman. Al-Sadiq went on to say that one day Salman was in the company of the Rasul, who addressed him thus, "Salman, you have become the vessel of our knowledge, the mine of our mystery, the central points of our commands and interdicts, and the educator of the believers in our religious practices and moral conduct. By Allah! You are the Bab who transmitted our knowledge, and from you emanates the divine knowledge of revelation (tanzil) and the allegorical interpretation (ta'wil) of Qur'an, and the hidden mystery and the secret of this mystery. Blessed are you at the beginning and the end, outwardly and inwardly, living and dead. I am addressing you, O Muhammad [Abu al-Khattab], as my great-grand father the Rasul addressed Salman."³⁹⁹ Later we shall see the significance of Abu al-Khattab, an extremists Shi'i, in the discussion of Nusayri festivals.

It is clear from this tradition that (according to the Shiite hypothesis) the Prophet Muhammad was the first to call Salman the Bab, through whom the divine knowledge of the ancients was transmitted. Salman was also recognised by the Prophet as the source from whom this knowledge emanated. He was the trusted transmitter of the tradition of the Prophet; He was the first and most illustrious of the Muslims. He was called, as has been stated earlier, the Son of Islam. The Nusayris made Salman, whom they called Salsal and Salsabil, the fountain of water in paradise, according to Islamic tradition. In *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* we find the following references to Salman, "O God, be favourable to our Lord Muhammad and the family of our Lord Muhammad, and to Salsal and the family of Salsal, the light that disperses the darkness," and, "May God cause us and you, O brethren, to drink a draught from the palm of Salsal."⁴⁰⁰

In his introduction to *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, al-Tabarani, invoking the God Ali to pray over his Name [Muhammad], states, "... and also pray over the most shining light, the brightest lamp, the path, the Bab, the cause of causes, the faithful spirit, the refreshing water, the deliverance of those who seek him, the destroyer of tyrants, the possessor of plain [divine] ways, the audience and guidance, the one who sets up stations [of men], the creator of clouds, the Great Bab Salsal, through whom the gnostic attains to the God Ali."⁴⁰¹ Indeed, there is hardly a supplicatory prayer appended to the different festivals in this book which does not praise Salman and invoke his divine aid, along with that of Ali and Muhammad. In the discourse of the Fitr festival, the Nusayri believers invoke the God Ali to pray to "the Bab of your mercy and beginning of your wisdom," and in the *Khutbah* (sermon) for the Adha festival, after invoking the God Ali and Muhammad, the believers bear testimony that "the Lord Salman is the path of deliverance and the cause of life for all the learned believers."⁴⁰²

In the Nusayri religious system, Salman like the Mana and the Ism, appears under different names in the seven periods of manifestation of the deity. Questions 22 and 42 of *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah* furnish the names Salman. He is called the Faithful Spirit, the Holy Ghost, the Universal Soul, the Lord of Men, Mount Sinai, the Ark of Noah, the Throne of God, Gabriel, the Evidence, the Apostle, the Omniscient (the perfect soul) and the Cow [in the second chapter of the Qur'an], just to mention a few.⁴⁰³

Salman is also identified with *zakah*, or alms (religious tithes), as the Rasul is with *salah* (prayer). According to a verse ascribed to al-Khasibi, "Salman is *zakah* [alms], the Door (who is also the angel Gabriel), besides whom there is no guide to the Apostle [Muhammad]." ⁴⁰⁴ Such symbolism is used by the Nusayris to show that Muhammad and Salman represent spiritual as well as worldly concerns.

It is important to point out that the Nusayris believe Salman appeared in Persian periods, one of the periods of seven manifestations, in the persons of Persians Bahmans (kings), among whom were Firuz, Anushirwan, Bahram, Feridun, and others. ⁴⁰⁵ Once more we see the Persian roots of some of the Nusayris' tradition, although there is no evidence that Salman impressed his Persianism on the Rasul or on Islamic tradition.

Above all, in the Nusayri religious system, Salman is the Bab, created by Muhammad in the obedience to the command of his Lord, the End of Mana (Ali). For this reason, Salman calls the Rasul "my most great Lord." ⁴⁰⁶ He is the only Door which leads to the Mana, the casual determinant (Ali), through the name (Muhammad). No one comes to the God Ali except through him. ⁴⁰⁷ He is the teacher of men, a guide to apostle of Muhammad, whose office is only that of intermediary between Ali and Salman. ⁴⁰⁸

In this sense, the office of the Bab seems to complete the Nusayri system of the threefold manifestation of their deity. Indeed, this office is essential to the Nusayri system, because without the Bab no one can know or approach the Mana. In the judgement of the author, the office of the Bab forms the corner stone of the Nusayri belief in the divine and infallible authority of the twelve Imams' and perpetuation of this authority in the person of Muhammad ibn Nusayr, founder of Nusayrism, as the Bab and heir of the Imams.

The Nusayri Religious System

The Twelve Imams

According to the Nusayris each of the Imams has the *Bab* (door), who serves as the path leading believers to him. They base this belief on tradition in which the Rasul Muhammad (saw) is reported to have said, “I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate,” and, “He who seeks divine knowledge must go through the gate.”⁴⁰⁹

Because each Imam possessed the divine knowledge of former *ambiya'* and messengers of God, it is necessary that each should have a *Bab* able to transmit this divine knowledge to the faithful of his age. The office of the *Bab* was best explained by the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, who said that the *Bab* is the one who, at will, knows the affairs of the Imams. Nothing can conceal the Imam from him — no high mountain, deep sea, or surrounding wall.⁴¹⁰ The *Bab* acts as the testamentary trustee and heir to the Imam and, like the Imam, possesses divine knowledge and the capacity for allegorical interpretation (*Ta'wil*) of the inward and outward meaning of the Qur'an. This explains the necessity of the *Bab* for every Imam. In the Nusayri religious system, their Imams and their *Babs* are as follows:

Imam	Bab
Ali	Salman al-Farisi
Hasan	Qays ibn Waraqa, known as al-Safi
Husayn	Rashid al-Hijri
Ali Zayn al-Abidin	Abd Allah al-Ghalib al-Kabuli nicknamed Kankar
Muhammad Baqir	Yahya ibn Muammar ibn Umm al-Tawil al-Thumali
Ja'far al-Sadiq	Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju'fi
Musa al-Kazim	Muhammad ibn Abi Zaynab al-Kahili
Ali al-Riza	Al-Mufaddal ibn Umar al-Ju'fi
Muhammad al-Jawad	Muhammad ibn Mufaddal al-Ju'fi
Ali al-Hadi	Umar ibn Furat known as al-Katib
Al-Hasan al-Askari	Abu Shu'ayb Muhammad Ibn Nusayr

Since the twelfth Imam, Muhammad (the Mahdi), had no *Bab* still living when the Mahdi disappeared and who had been the *Bab* of the Mahdi's father, al-Askari, became the heir, representative, and guide of the Mahdi. In short, Ibn Nusayr became the *Bab*; he was succeeded by Muhammad al-Jannan al-Junbulani, who in turn was succeeded by al-Khasibi (d. 957), already mentioned. It was al-Khasibi, more than his predecessors, who established a firm foundation for the Nusayri sect and spread Nusayrism throughout the lands. Thus, according to the Nusayri writer al-Tawil, the office of the *Bab* forms a fundamental part of the religious system of the Nusayris.⁴¹¹

The twelve Imams also constitute an essential part of the Nusayri system. In *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, they are spoken of as the culmination of the sixty-three personifications of the Ism (Muhammad). This work also states that the Imams are part of the divine economy of God. In a supplicatory prayer, the Nusayris ask their God Ali establish them in obedience to Him, to his apostle Muhammad, to His *Wali* (vicegerent) Salsal (Salman al-Farisi), and to “the Imam’s, who are yours, you had named yourself by them; they are not empty of you, but you are of them.”⁴¹²

Like the Twelver Shi’i, the Nusayris maintain that the twelve Imams existed before all of creation. The Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq is reported to have said that God created the Imams thousands of years before he created Adam. They were spirits around the throne of God, praising Him, and were joined by heavenly host in their praise. Later the Imams descended to earth in physical bodies; there they continued to praise God, joined in their praise by the people of the earth, as is related in the Qur’an 37: 165-66: “and we are verily ranged in rank [for service]; and we are verily those who declare [God’s] glory.”⁴¹³

The Imams were also God’s first delegates to His people. They acted as God’s spokesmen, repositories of His divine knowledge and storehouses of His secrets, the heirs of His prophets and messengers, His light, His proof against mankind, and the trustees of His creation. In the words of the fifth Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir, the Imams are vicegerents of God on earth. No part of God’s knowledge on earth and in heaven escapes them. They are the arm, the hand, the face, the eye, and the side of God. Wherever the believer turns his face, he sees them. Whatever is God’s will is also that of the Imams. Al-Baqir concludes by saying, “Praise be to God, who chose us from the light of His power, granted us the secret of the knowledge His will, and commanded us to inculcate in our partisans [Shi’ah] the truth of His creed in order to redeem their souls from eternal torment through adherence to Him.”⁴¹⁴

The Nusayri representation of the Imams as pre-existent celestial beings having divine status, seems no different from the view of the Twelver Shi’i. In the treatise entitled *al-Tawjih* (Direction) in *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, for example, the eleventh Imam, Hasan al-Askari, is portrayed as a divine being. It is reported that a certain Yahya ibn Muin al-Samiri went to see Hasan al-Askari and found him sitting on the throne of light, with rays of light before him and a light between his eyes which filled the east and the west. Al-Samiri said, “When I saw him, I fell in my face in adoration; then raised my head and stood praising and thanking my Lord [al-Askari] and said, ‘My Lord is to be praised. He is holy. Our Lord is the Lord of the angels and of the spirit.’”⁴¹⁵

This spiritual pre-eminence of the Imams is further asserted by Ja’far al-Sadiq, who is reported to have said that God created seven heavens, the first being the abode of the Imams. Al-Sadiq also said that whenever a believer (Shi’ah) dies, his soul is carried to the Imam Ali to be examined, in order that Ali may determine whether the soul is that of a true believer and may decide whether it should be sent to Paradise or to Hell. Indeed, so magnificent is the spiritual position of the Imam that al-Sadiq interpreted Qur’an 41:10, “He set on the earth mountains

standing firm and high above it,” to mean that the mountains are the Imams, without whom the believers (Shi’ah) would have doubted their religion and gone astray.⁴¹⁶

The same Ja’far al-Sadiq also said that when mentioning an Imam, “the speaker should observe silence, and on mentioning God, [he] should fall silent and attentive.”⁴¹⁷

Such, then, is the lofty spiritual plane occupied by the Imams in the religious system of the Nusayris. They are divine beings chosen to guide believers to knowledge of the God Ali through the medium of their Babs. This role is reason the Imams are considered leaders of their communities and are so highly honoured.

According to Sulayman al-Adani, the common people among the Nusayris regard Imams as infallible and not subject to the laws of nature.⁴¹⁸ They also believe that their Imams have knowledge of the future; they consult them in any matter on which they need advice, such as the building of a house, or marrying, or moving from the village.⁴¹⁹

The religious hierarchy of the Nusayris embraces seven ranks. They are the Babs, the five Aytam of Salman al-Farisi, the Naqibs, the Babs are the highest of these, followed by the Aytam.⁴²⁰ The Aytam number 500, all of whom are connected with the different Isms (names) of Salman al-Farisi (ra), five with Muhammad (saw), five with Muhammad’s daughter Fatimah (rah), five with Muhammad’s wife Umm Salamah and five with one of al-Farisi’s close associates Abu Abd al-Rahman ibn Waraqa al-Riyahi nicknamed al-Safinah (the Ark).⁴²¹ In the Nusayris religious system, however, al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Abd al-Rahman ibn Rawahah, Uthman ibn Madh’un and Qandar ibn Kadan, are considered the five Aytam par excellence who exclusively belong to Salman al-Farisi and are believed by Nusayris to have been created by al-Farisi.⁴²²

It is strange that women are mentioned as Aytam, since they have no place in the Nusayris religious system. Like the extremists Shi’i, however, the Nusayris regard Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad, as a male and given her the name of Fatir.⁴²³ We shall further discuss the Aytam in the following chapter.

Fatimah/Fatir holds an interesting place in the Nusayri religious system, serving to exalt the Imamah. In *Kitab al-Majmu’ al-Ayad* (The Book of Feasts), Fatimah-Fatir is described as the personification of *Laylat al-Qadr* (the Night of Power), during which the Qur’an was first revealed to the Rasul Muhammad (saw). Qur’an 97:1-5 states, “We have revealed the Qur’an in the Night of Power. Do you realise what the Night of Power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. On it the angels and the Spirit, by their Lords’ leave, descend with His decrees. That night is peace till the break of dawn.” Al-Khasibi explains that Laylat al-Qadr, which falls in the middle of Sha’ban (the eighth month of the Islamic calendar), is a noble night during which God rewards and answers the prayers and fasting of His people [the Nusayris] for the glorification of Fatir [Fatimah], Hasan, Husayn, and Muhsin, who are the light and essence of Muhammad. He adds that the *Qadr* (power) is Muhammad, and the night of that power is

Fatimah — Fatir, who is the mystery of Muhammad. Fatimah, he says, appeared in a feminine form to delude the wretched created beings.

Another Nusayri writer, al-Jilli, reiterates al-Khasibi's interpretation, stating the Fatimah is the Night of Power. People believed that Fatimah appeared in feminine form, says al-Jilli, but God dispelled this belief when He asked [Qur'an 97:1], "Do you realise what the Night of Power is?" Al-Jilli explains that this Night of Power is Fatimah — Fatir, who created all mankind.

He goes on to interpret "better than a thousand months" to mean better than a thousand *ambiya'*, "angels" as those who possess knowledge of Fatimah's reality and "the Spirit" as her magnification and the call to know and obey her. Al-Jilli interprets the final sentence of the passage to mean that Fatimah will uphold justice and manifest herself on behalf of the Imams until the day of the appearance of the Mahdi.

From the preceding evidence we are able to state that to the Nusayris, Fatimah is divine. She is the creator of mankind. She is not only the daughter of the Rasul (saw), but homologous with him. They are the same essence. It is in this sense, as shall be seen later, that the Prophet addresses Fatimah as *umm Abiha* (mother of her father). Furthermore, Fatimah — Fatir is the Manifestation of the Imams, who emanated from her, and she is acting on their behalf until the day when the Mahdi shall appear and bring justice to the earth.

Just as Laylat al-Qadr is exalted as the time when the Qur'an was first revealed to the Rasul, so Fatimah — Fatir is exalted because she is the mother of the Imams, the one from whose essence they emanated. In other words, as the nubuwwah was exalted through the divine revelation of the Qur'an, so the Imamah was exalted through divine Fatimah, who is the very essence of Muhammad. Thus, the Nusayris believe that the nubuwwah and the Imamah are coequal; on this point they are in complete agreement with the Twelver Shi'i, although the Twelvers do not regard Fatimah as divine.⁴²⁴

The preceding evidence also indicates that the Nusayris are one of the ancient Ghulat sects called the *Mukhammisah* (Fivers), who maintained that the five members of the family of the Rasul are incarnation of God, and who prefer to call Fatimah by the masculine name of Fatir. Among the Fivers mentioned by al-Razi are the al-Shurariyyah and al-Namiriyyah sects.⁴²⁵ But in fact, as we have seen earlier, al-Namariyyah is none other than the Nusayriyyah, founded by Muhammad ibn Nusayr.

The Nusayri Religious System

Role of the Aytam and Spiritual Hierarchies

As explained in chapter 26, the Nusayris believe that the deity manifested himself seven times in seven human forms, beginning with Adam and ending with Ali ibn Abi Talib. Each manifestation as a Mana was accompanied by corresponding manifestation of an Ism, a creation through five *Aytam* (incomparables) who, as their name indicates, are unique. In cosmological essence, they are principles of the universe and the cause of all that exists, visible and invisible. The Aytam appeared in new incarnations in each of the seven cycles. But the Nusayri believe that in the seventh and last cycle, when the Mana was Ali, the Ism, Muhammad, and the Bab, Salman, the five Ayatams were created by Salman. We read in *Kitab al-Majmu'* that the Lord Salman created the five noble Incomparables, al-Miqdad ibn Aswad al-Kindi, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Abd Allah ibn Rawahah al-Ansari, Uthman ibn Madhun al-Najashi, and Qanbar ibn Kadan al-Dawsi, as servants of Ali.

The Aytam are creators of this world: the dry land and the oceans; every plain and every mountain; the Southern regions and the northern; the Orient and the occident; everything spanned by the blue vault of heaven.⁴²⁶

Not only did the Aytam create this whole world as it now exists, however; they also hold the government of the heavens and earth in their hands. Al-Miqdad controls thunder, lightning, and earthquakes; Abu Dharr al-Ghifari supervises the gyrations of the stars and constellations; Abd Allah ibn Rawahah directs the winds and is in charge of the arrest of human spirits (in Islamic tradition, he is the Angel of Death); Uthman ibn Madh'un controls stomachs, the heat of the body, and human diseases; and Qanbar ibn Kadan al-Dawsi is responsible for the introduction of spirits into the body.⁴²⁷

Like the Bab, the Incomparables form a part of the Nusayri hierarchy. But why should these five men be given such sublime positions in the Nusayri system? Like Salman, they were pioneer converts who saw in Islam a spiritual force that would change the carnal life of the pagan Arabs. Pious Mystics (*zuhhad*), they totally surrendered their souls to God, condemning the worldliness and extravagance of the Quraysh as sinful. These men saw in Ali ibn Abi Talib an exemplary Muslim, possessed of sublime spiritual ideals. They considered him to be the only one to succeed the Rasul (saw) in leading the Muslim community. They became, therefore, the first supporters (*Shi'ah*) of Ali's right to this leadership (the Imamah), and through this support, they came to be connected with Salman al-Farisi, who was greatly venerated by the Rasul, and who supported Ali as the Rasul's successor. This is why the Aytam are frequently referred to as the "five luminous bodies," and occupy the second rank in the world of light in the Nusayris' religious hierarchy.

The Nusayris primal belief in the seven manifestations of God and the threefold divinity is closely associated with their system of spiritual hierarchies. According to the Nusayris, there are countless worlds known by God. Chief among them are great luminous world (*al-Alam al-*

Kabir al-Nurani) and the little earthly world (al-Alam al-Saghir al-Turabi). The first is heaven, the “light of light,” and the second is the residence of men. The great luminous world contains seven hierarchical orders, each having its representatives on earth. Chief among these ranks are the Babs (doors), who number 400 and the Aytam, who number 500. Below them in the hierarchy are the Naqibs, or princes, numbering 600; the Najibs, or excellent ones, numbering 700; Mukhtassun, or peculiars, numbering 800; the Mukhlisun, or pure in faith, numbering 900; the Mumtahanun, or the tried, number 1,100; in all these orders number 5,000 strong.⁴²⁸

These heavenly ranks appeared in the little earthly world together with the manifestation of God in human form and were personified in the Nusayri dignitaries. These ranks are represented the twelve Naqibs and twenty eight Najibs, who possess complete knowledge of the functions of the ranks beneath them, and the knowledge of God Ali, His Name, and His Bab. They have other counterparts in apostles and Ambiya’ who are also representative of the deity because they have partially emanated from Him.⁴²⁹

These ranks seem to represent natural phenomena. The five Aytam who form the second order represent the East, the West, the moon, the new moon, the stars, thunder, and lightning. The seven degrees of the third order, Naqibs, are prayer, *zakah* (alms), pilgrimage, fasting, *hijrah* (immigration), *jihad* (holy war), and *dua’* (supplication). The seven degrees of the fourth order, the Najibs, are mountains, rain clouds, seas, rivers, winds, clouds, and thunderbolts. The seven degrees of the fifth order, the Mukhtassun are at night, day, lunch, supper, the morrow, sunset, and torrential streams. The seven degrees of the sixth order, the Mukhlisun, are cattle, riding beasts, camels, bees, fowl, monks’ cells, and churches. And lastly, the seven degrees of the seventh order, the Mumtahnun, are home, places of worship, palm trees, berries, pomegranates, olives, and figs.⁴³⁰

The Earthly World contains seven degrees of believers. There are 14,000 *Muqarrabun* (near ones), 15,000 Cherubim, 16,000 *Ruhiyyun* (spiritual or sanctified), 17,000 *Muqaddasun*, 18,000 *Sayhun* (wandering ascetics), 19,000 *Mustami’un* (listeners), and 20,000 *Lahiqun* (followers). In all, they number 119, 000.⁴³¹

These hierarchies are held in great reverence that the Nusayris believe their mere invocation is a means of gaining the remission of sin. According to one (of their) tradition, the Rasul (saw) said, “When a congregation of true believers assembled in the east, west, north, or south of the earth, and made mention of the Most High, his Name, his Door, his Aytam, his Naqibs, his Najibs, Mukhtassun, Mukhlisun, Mumtahanun and all the people of his hierarchies, then a crier from above would proclaim, ‘Rise with your sins forgiven, and your bad deeds changed into good ones.’”⁴³²

In addition to the hierarchies, the Nusayris are required to honour a host of apostles and Ambiya’ who, together with the hierarchies, number 124,000. These include 28 Najibs, or excellent ones, the greatest of whom is Abd Allah ibn Saba’, believed to have been the first to assert the divinity of Ali during his lifetime.⁴³³

Other illustrious characters honoured by the Nusayris include Ja'far al-Tayyar, brother of Ali, and the legendary figure al-Khidr, more correctly called al-Khadir (the ever-verdant), so named because of his eternal youth and because he caused a rod to break forth in blossom. The Nusayris also honour Christian's saints and apostles, including Matthew, Paul, Peter, and Saint John Chrysostom, who are believed to be the *Aytam* (incomparables) of Rawzabah, the Bab in time of Jesus (as), when Peter (Simon Cephas) was the Mana.⁴³⁴

Advancement within these hierarchies from the earthly world, to the great luminous world (heaven) is possible through instructions and training; the gnostic, who is well-versed in the science of religion, prepares the seeker, or neophyte. A neophyte desiring to attain the world of light must first become a *mumtahan* (one who is tried). From this stage the neophyte advances to the following rank of *mukhlis* (faithful one). When he attains all the knowledge of the mukhlis and of the mumtahan, then his spiritual guide advances him to the rank of *mukhtass* (peculiar). When he has absorbed the knowledge of the mukhtass, , his instructor advances him to the rank of *najib*, or excellent. If he absorbs the knowledge of the najib and without doubting, he moves up the rank of *naqib* (prince), and if he proves himself steadfast in the knowledge of the naqib, he is advanced to the rank of *Yatim* (singular of *Aytam*), or incomparable.

Upon attaining the rank of naqib, the seeker is given into the hands of the Bab, who will then entrust him to the Hijab (veil), or intermediary, Muhammad, who will then lead him to the Mana (Ali). The seeker, who has by now gone through a very rigorous examination of his faith, will be considered a *mu'min* (believer) and will be presented to the Mana. The Mana talks with him and examines him further, hoping to find that his good deeds outweigh his bad ones; even if they do, however, the Mana then reveals to him only those mysteries which he deems fit to disclose to him.

Now the believer is given the opportunity to intercede on behalf of a brother or another relative, that he may likewise attain the knowledge of Ali as a Mana by going through these stages and appearing before the Mana. The Mana will then respond to the believer's appeal, purifying his relative and raising him unto himself.⁴³⁵

Finally, the believer ask his Lord and God (Ali) to remove the veil from his eyes, so that he may behold the upper and lower worlds, the heaven and the earth, and all things therein. Then God will disclose Himself to the believer and empower him with His spirit, so that the believer becomes, like the angels, not subject to human necessities like eating or drinking. The believer is then emancipated from human nature and transformed into an immortal being, a shining celestial star, having his own will. He becomes able to ascend to the heavens or descend to the earth, and can traverse the world from east to west at will.⁴³⁶

In *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq states that the believers may advance from one hierarchical rank to another and from one virtue to another until they become like angels of heaven, free from human limitations and the needs of human nature. Al-Sadiq asked his interlocutor, al-Mufaddal al-Ju'fi, whether he had seen one of these believers in the spiritual

state. Al-Ju'fi replied he had not. But Muhammad ibn al-Walid, who was in the presence of al-Sadiq, told him that he had seen a man in this form. Al-Walid said that while he was sitting in the mosque praising God, he saw a stranger in travel-stained clothes guiding a female camel. He invited the stranger to his home and gave him a supper of meat and bread. When supper was over and a servant came to remove the dishes, al-Walid was astounded to see that the food on his guest's plate was untouched. The servant asked the reason for this. He became even more startled when he looked at his guest and found him to be someone else, not the man he had invited to dine with him. His guest now had a long moustache. Al-Walid was disturbed, but his guest told him not to be frightened because of his changed appearance. He explained that when a believer has passed through all the degrees of spiritual growth and reached the end, he became a spiritual being like the angels, no longer subject to the limitations of human nature. The guest declared that he had just experienced such transformation.

Al-Sadiq turned to al-Walid and al-Ju'fi and said, "This same man came to see me three times this week while you were sitting here with me, but you neither saw nor heard him."⁴³⁷ Belief in such spiritual transformation and transcendentalism is an integral part of the Nusayris' belief that, in the beginning, before the world was created, the Nusayris existed as shining lights and luminous stars beholding Ali in sapphire splendour, conscious of the distinction between obedience and disobedience, yet not drinking, eating or excreting. They lost this spiritual existence because of their disobedience,⁴³⁸ but the stages of spiritual advancement which the Nusayri neophyte must undergo are seen as a means of regaining it, the same by the grace of their God, Ali.⁴³⁹ Thus a Nusayri neophyte, who passes successfully through these spiritual stages finally becomes transformed into a celestial being emancipated from human nature, exactly like the Abdal and others discussed in chapter 10 of this book. In other words, the believer can gain immortality without experiencing death by passing through the stages of the Nusayri hierarchy. Al-Walid's transformed guest tells him, "I am only a believer like you, but I have been able to achieve this final stage [of spiritual transformation]."⁴⁴⁰ There is no evidence that the guest passed through death before he attained the supernatural change from a human to a celestial form.

The Nusayri Religious System

Metempsychosis

The doctrine of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, is an integral part of the Nusayri religious system. This doctrine is not new, and may have been adopted from early religions of the East. From al-Nawbakhti (tenth century) we learn that a certain Abd Allah ibn al-Harith (late seventh century), whose father was *Zindi*q (agnostic) from al-Mada'in (Ctesiphon), enticed some Muslims to adopt the doctrine of metempsychosis.⁴⁴¹ Al-Shahrastani (d. 1153) also affirms this, stating that the Ghulat are unanimous in their belief in metempsychosis, having received it from the Mazdakians, Brahmans, Philosophers, and Sabians.⁴⁴²

It is evident that metempsychosis is not an Islamic doctrine based on the Qur'an. Rather, it is a belief held by the early Ghulat, who interpreted certain passages of the Qur'an in their own way to justify their belief in it.

Metempsychosis (in Arabic, *tanasukh*) is referred to by Nusayris as *Taknis* or *Tajayyul* [from *jil* (generation)] and means reappearance in successive generations.⁴⁴³ The Nusayris maintain that the soul of man passes from one body to another several times. But the soul of a good Nusayri will enter into a body more perfect than his own, while the soul of a sinful Nusayri will enter the body of an unclean beast.⁴⁴⁴

From the second chapter of *Kitab al-Majmu'*, we learn that there are seven kinds of metempsychosis:

- a. Naskh: the passing of the soul to another human body
- b. Maskh: the passing of human soul into that of an animal
- c. Faskh: the passing of soul into a plant
- d. Raskh: the passing of the soul into a short plant
- e. Waskh: the passing of the soul into a dirt or trash
- f. Qashsh: the passing of the soul into a dry plant or straw
- g. Qashshash: the passing of the soul into insects such as flies or ants.⁴⁴⁵

The Nusayris' belief in metempsychosis is attested to by both Nusayri and non-Nusayri (especially Druze) sources. Hamza ibn Ali, the great Druze apostle and author (d. 1030), wrote that a Nusayri book entitled *Kitab al-Haqa'iq wa Kashf al-Mahjub* (The book of truth and the manifestation of that which is veiled) had fallen into his hands. He condemns anyone acquiring this book as a servant of the devil because its Nusayri author believed in metempsychosis. Apparently the author attributed this doctrine, together with the telling of falsehoods and the practice of sexual immoralities, to the Druzes. Hamza declares, "God forbid that the religion of our Lord [the fatimid Khalifah al-Hakim ibn Amr Allah (d. 1021), defied by the Druzes], should authorise criminal action."⁴⁴⁶ He goes on to say that the Nusayris assert that the souls of the *Nawasib* (Sunni Muslims) and the *addad* (adversaries of Ali) will pass into dogs and such other

unclean beasts as pigs, monkeys, owls, and fowl, till they the enter the fire to be burned and beaten under the hammer. Hamza rejects the belief that human souls enter bodies of animals as preposterous and utterly false, and warns that anyone believing in metempsychosis will suffer the loss of both this world and the next.⁴⁴⁷ Hamza is correct in asserting that the Nusayris believe in Musukhiyyah, the transmigration of human souls into dreadful forms, especially those of animals. But what is the origin of Musukhiyyah? Why should human beings be transformed into unclean animals like dogs, pigs, and monkeys, as the Nusayris maintain?

According to Ja'far al-Sadiq, Musukhiyah occurs as the result of the disobedience of Iblis (Satan) to God. When God created Adam, He asked all angels to prostrate themselves before Him. They all did so except Iblis, who disobeyed God and refused to worship Adam. When God asked why he refused to worship Adam, Iblis replied that he was nobler than Adam, who was created from clay, while he, Iblis, was created from fire (see Qur'an 7:12 and 38:75-77). Thus, from the disobedience of Satan and his posterity, God initiated Musukhiyyah. Satan looked at the state of Musukhiyyah and said, "What is this?" God answered, "This is your state and the state of your posterity, who will be transformed into all kinds of beasts." So God clothed Satan and his posterity with animals' skins, and clothed Adam and his posterity in human forms. Musukhiyyah, then, is the punishment inflicted on the infidels or unbelievers, who are the posterity of Satan. For this reason, says al-Sadiq, it is difficult to distinguish between those infidels who are still in human form and those who have been transformed into animals. He states that one may see a man and believe that he is a human being, when in reality he is a monkey, a bear, or a dog in human form. Or a man may pass by a strange dog that follows him or jumps at him. This man, al-Sadiq says, may unknowingly be married to the wife of this dog, once a human being, whom God has punished by transforming him. The "dog" sees this man living with his wife, and in his home, and tries to harm him.⁴⁴⁸

Al-Sadiq gives another example, of a female beast biting or kicking or trampling a man until he is dead for no apparent reason. Al-Sadiq explains that this beast in life was probably an infidel who was wronged by a believer, without having the opportunity to avenge the wrong done on him. The infidel, transformed after his death into a female beast, seeks to take revenge on the believer. By the same token, one may see a believer kill a female beast, who in a previous life was an infidel who had wronged the believer, and therefore deserves to be wounded or killed for its bad deeds.⁴⁴⁹

Here we find the law of retaliation implemented in both spirit and fact. In *Kitab al-Sirah*, we find that when a man is killed in this life by a beast, he will later be transformed into a beast to enable him to kill the beast that had killed him in his human form. Thus, while it appears that people kill lions and lions kill people, in fact, "no one kills a lion except lion." Thus, if one creature gets satisfaction by killing another, the victim in turn gets satisfaction by killing the killer.⁴⁵⁰

The point here is that the state of Musukhiyyah, or transformation into animal forms, does not rob the transformed person of his reason or humanity. He retains empathy toward people and animals alike. Thus — so it is stated in *Kitab al-Sirah* — one finds some people like to raise dogs,

cats, pigeons, and other creatures, because they have previously had the forms of these animals. Thus, what happens to a man in his transformed (animal) state because of disease or misfortune has already happened to him in his human form.⁴⁵¹

In this same work, a certain Muhammad ibn Sinan states that there is no bird or fowl which does not have human antecedents. He then points to a carpenter working on his house and says that this carpenter was, in his first *dawr* (period), a rooster. The Nusayris use the terms *dawr* and *kawr* to indicate the cycles of rebirth into this world, the revolution of time, and particularly the manifestations of Ali in human form.⁴⁵²

According to Sulayman al-Adani, all Nusayris believe that the spirits of Muslim (Sunni) dignitaries well-versed in religious science are reborn after death in the form of asses; the souls of learned Christian men enter the bodies of swine; and the souls of learned Jewish men take the forms of monkeys. The soul of wicked Nusayris, however will enter the bodies of cattle, especially those used for food.

The souls of persons of mixed character, partly good and partly bad, return in the bodies of persons from other sects that deviate from the Nusayri religion. When a person outside the Nusayri sect recants his belief and joins the Nusayris, they believe that in the past generations this person was one of them, and that, because of sins he had committed, he had renounced the Nusayri faith and joined another sect.⁴⁵³ However, the metempsychosis of “wicked Nusayris” related by al-Adani seems to be qualified by other Nusayri sources, as shall be seen shortly.

Rev. Samuel Lyde relates that he often heard the Nusayris laugh and say, when the Jackals howled toward dusk, “those are the Muslims calling [the faithful] to afternoon prayer, for the souls of Muslims passed into jackals.”⁴⁵⁴

The souls of the adversaries of Ali, as Hamza, the Druze apostle, said, will enter into dogs and other unclean beasts. An episode related by al-Khasibi seems to confirm Hamza’s statement. Al-Khasibi says that when, on the day of Ghadir Khumm, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) cited Ali to him and told those present, “This is your God, worship him, and this is your Lord, proclaim his oneness,” some of the host from heaven and earth who could not fully comprehend the oneness of the Lord of creation (Ali) were disturbed. Others who had full knowledge of the oneness of God became more firm in their belief and praised and thanked their God (Ali). Those of the heavenly host who denied the Rasul’s (saw) proclamation of Ali as Lord and God were transformed by Ali into toads and sent, croaking, through the clouds of earth. Ali also hardened their hearts so that they could not remember the proclamation of the oneness of the Commander of the faithful. In his wrath over their unbelief, the sad Ali, carried by clouds, descended to earth and slaughtered these unbelievers with his sword, Dhu al-Fiqar. When Salman al-Farisi saw Ali with his unsheathed sword dripping with blood, he asked him the reason for the carnage. Ali answered that some of the heavenly host had denied his oneness (as God), so he punished them with his sword.⁴⁵⁵

The Nusayris' belief in the metempsychosis is connected with the concept of reward and punishment. The souls of the wicked are punished by being made to assume the forms of unclean animals, like pigs, dogs, and monkeys, while the soul of the righteous will enter human bodies more perfect than their own.⁴⁵⁶

The Nusayris do not apply the term “wicked” to themselves, applying rather to non-Nusayris, who occupy a status much inferior to their own; for their wickedness — that is their denial of Nusayri beliefs — such Nusayris shall be forced to assume forever the forms of such beasts as pigs, bears, dogs, jackals, and weasels. While it is true that there are wicked Nusayris, they will not be punished by transformation into beasts; rather, their soul will enter human bodies (most likely Nusayri bodies) more perfect than theirs. They become purified by passing through a number of revolutions, as many as twenty-one, each lasting for 1,077 years. After their purification, the Nusayris join the heavenly host, becoming luminous stars and angels of light, because of the spirits of believers and those of angels are one and the same.⁴⁵⁷ For this reason the Nusayris pray to their God Ali to clothe the brethren in *qumsan* (literally, shirts), or envelopes of light.⁴⁵⁸

We do find in some Nusayri sources, however, instances of Nusayris being transformed into unclean animals, without evidence that these people were wicked or that their reappearance in animal form was a punishment. One such case concerns a carpenter who turned into a rooster. Another, related by Dussaud, was derived from a Druze source; although it was meant to caricature the Nusayris' belief in metempsychosis, it nevertheless corroborates this belief, especially with regard to the transformation of human beings into animals.

According to this story, a Nusayri husbandman had a vineyard. After his death, his son took care of the vineyard. The son noticed that during the grape season, a wolf visited the vine yard to eat grapes. He grew tired of the wolf's damage to the vineyard and decided to kill him. One day, therefore, the owner tried to shoot the wolf when he visited the vineyard. But just as he was about to shoot, the wolf spoke in a human voice, saying, “Would you kill your own father, who spent his whole life tending the vineyard, just because he ate a few grapes?” The son was startled to hear the wolf speak like a man and, turning to the wolf, he asked, “Who are you?” The wolf said, “I am your father. I have been transformed into a wolf, and this is my vineyard, which you and I worked together.” The son could not believe his ears. He decided to test the wolf to see whether it was really his father. He remembered that before his death his father had hidden a sickle somewhere in the vineyard; the son had tried his utmost to find it, but had failed. He turned to the wolf and asked, “Well, if you are really my father, tell me, where is the sickle that my father and I used to trim the vines?” The wolf asked the son to follow him, and when they reached the place in the vineyard where the father had hidden the sickle, the wolf picked it up and handed it to the son, saying, “This is it.” Now the son was convinced that the wolf was his father, and he allowed him to visit the vineyard and eat the grapes unmolested.⁴⁵⁹

The doctrine of metempsychosis also serves to support the superior position held by Nusayri men over Nusayri woman. It is quite clear from *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif* that a Nusayri woman can be transformed into another woman if God wills it, but never into of a male believer. Ja'far al-

Sadiq is reported to have said that God was too gracious to allow the transformation of a woman into a man. God would not degrade any Nusayri man, let alone a believing Nusayri, by permitting a Nusayri woman to assume the form of a man. This is so because the Nusayri believe that God created woman from devils, and therefore accord them a low status in Nusayri society.⁴⁶⁰

Metempsychosis also reinforces the position of the catamite in Nusayri society. When asked why some woman are used as catamites by men, al-Sadiq asserted that the state of being a catamite is an abomination with which God afflicts non-Shi'ah and those who deny that Ali is the Vicegerent of God. Al-Sadiq concludes that the catamite (*mabun*) was a harlot in his first incarnation who in his second was transformed into a man and came to be used as a catamite by men.⁴⁶¹

It is evident, then, that according to their belief in the metempsychosis, the Nusayris, whether wicked or righteous, will pass through many stages of transformation in human form, leading ultimately to total purification and transformation into luminous stars. The infidels and the damned will be transformed into unclean animals, and will continue to be reborn as animals until the Mahdi returns. Their transformation into animals is lesser punishment, however, the final punishment will come when the Mahdi appears and kills these infidels by the sword. He will also kill the *taghut* (the Qur'anic term for idols, or false gods) and destroy the cross (the symbol of Christianity), in order to establish one and only religion of God: Shi'i Islam.⁴⁶²

The Nusayris seem to take their belief in transmigration seriously, citing example to support it. Lyde relates many such examples. If a villager died and a child was born at the same time in another village, Lyde often heard the Nusayris say that the soul of the dead man has returned in a form of the child. He also heard a certain healer of snake bites claim that he had been a healer throughout all generations. Lyde even heard a peculiar story of a Christian woman who claimed that she had been a Nusayri in her former age, and that she could describe what she did in that age. Another woman, so Lyde says, claimed that she had appeared in seven forms, and that she went a village where she had lived in a previous state to tell the people where to dig for water. The villagers listened to her advice, and when they dug at the spot she pointed out, they found water. Lyde seems to dismiss these anecdotes as lies and fancy, however.⁴⁶³

The Nusayris support their belief in metempsychosis by citing passages such as Qur'an 6:38: "There is no beast on earth nor fowl which flies with its wings but communities like you. We have not omitted anything from the Book [Qur'an], and they [beasts and fowl] shall all be gathered [on the day of resurrection] before their Lord." This and other passages from the Qur'an believed to confirm metempsychosis are found in *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*.⁴⁶⁴

According to the Muslim heresiographers, these passages were also cited by the ancient Ghulat to justify their belief in the transmigration of souls. In this context, al-Nawbakhti notes the passage from the Qur'an cited above together with another (35:24), "and there never was a people without a warner (a prophet who carries a divine message) having lived among them [in the past]." He comments that the Kaysaniyyah, Harathiyyah, Abbasiyyah, and

Khurramdiniyyah sects, which believed in the transmigration of souls, interpret these passages to mean that beasts and fowl were formerly people and communities. Those good among them who died were reborn in bodies more perfect than their own, while the wicked were transformed after death into grotesque and dirty forms.⁴⁶⁵ Thus, the state of beasts and human beings in this context seems to be the same.

Among other passages cited by Nusayris to support their belief in metempsychosis is the Qur'an 6:27: "If you could see them they stand before the fire of Hell, they would say, 'Would that we could return. Then we would not deny the revelation of our Lord.'" In *Kitab al-Sirah*, the author seems to have twisted this passage to read, "Would that we could return in order to do other than what we did." the author apparently takes the passage to mean that people facing the fire of Hell shall return to the world once more in human form, in order to act justly and be purified of their former sinful ways, finally being drawn to heaven.⁴⁶⁶

Another passage, Qur'an 40:11, states, "They shall say, 'Lord, twice you have made us die, and twice you have given us life. We now confess our sins. Is there no escape from Hell?'" Again, the Nusayri author of *Kitab al-Sirah* cites this passage to show that God's causing people to die and live again is a continuous; the people in this passage are asking whether there is any escape from it.⁴⁶⁷

Still another passage, Qur'an 4:56, says, "Those that deny our revelations, we will burn in Hell-fire. No sooner will their skins be consumed than we shall give them new skins, so that they may truly taste our scourge." Qur'an 17:50-51 adds: "... Say: You shall; whether you turn stone or iron, or any other substance which you may think unlikely to be given life." The author interprets these passages, taken together, to mean that those people who after death assumed human form (skins) but were not sufficiently purified would be transformed into inanimate substances, like stone or metal.⁴⁶⁸

In *Kita al-Haft al-Sharif*, the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq cites several Qur'anic verses to support metempsychosis. One of these in Qur'an 10:31-"Who brings forth the living from the dead, and the dead to the living"-which al-Sadiq interprets to mean that people will pass through seven stages of metempsychosis in seven bodies. The believer shall assume a human form, while the infidel shall assume an animal form. Another passage is Qur'an 95:4-5-"We moulded man into a most noble image, and in the end we shall reduce him into the lowest of the low" — which al-Sadiq interprets as a meaning that the infidel shall assume an animal form in perpetuity, while the righteous shall be free from such transformation.⁴⁶⁹ Thus the destinies of the wicked infidel and the believing Nusayri will go through a process of purification by metempsychosis, finally becoming a luminous star, or angel.

Do the Nusayris embrace a concept of eschatology, including resurrection and a day of judgement? Nusayri sources imply that the Nusayris do expect a kind of millennium in the world, for they speak of Resurrection and Judgement. But the significance of these events in the Nusayri religious system seems to be allegorical rather than literal. In *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, Iblis (Satan) is said to have asked God to postpone his punishment to the Day of Resurrection,

but he was granted a shorter postponement: to the day of the appearance of the Mahdi, who shall kill Iblis.⁴⁷⁰ Such a mention of the Day of Resurrection is purely Islamic and conflicts with the Nusayri belief, as stated in the catechism, that after leaving their graves, the souls of Nusayri believers will go to the great world of light, while those of the godless and polytheists will be tormented and suffer for all ages. We learn from *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nisayriyyah* that Ali will manifest himself once more without any transformation, in pomp and glory, to claim for himself the world from one end to the other. He will become the Lord of all. In this last manifestation, without veil or intermediary, he shall reclaim the souls of the deceased believers from their flesh and blood coverings and clothe them in eternal light.⁴⁷¹

There is no evidence here of a real resurrection or Judgement. There is only an indication of a state on which perfect soul become part of the divine essence (the essence of light). The Nusayris believe that stars are perfect souls. Hence, they pray to their God Ali to draw the believers to his presence, that they may enjoy the bliss of being near him and his might.⁴⁷² Another prayer says, "Remember God with a due remembrance, and remember His Name, and His Door, and His Incomparables and all the people of His hierarchies, that they may release you from your graves, and the envelopes of flesh and blood in which you are now enclosed."⁴⁷³

The Nusayris believe that at death, the soul leaves the body of the dying person through the mouth. For this reason, the Nusayris object to the hanging of criminals, believing that hanging prevents the soul from quitting the body. Thus, whenever the government of Latakia in the last century condemned a Nusayri to die by hanging, his relatives offered considerable sums of money to have him impaled instead. Lyde relates that he often saw in the houses of the Nusayris two holes over the door, so that when the soul of a departed Nusayri left the body, it would not meet an evil spirit entering the house through a single hole.⁴⁷⁴

The day of the appearance of Ali is called *Yawm al-Kashf* (the Day of Manifestation). On this day all the kings and rulers of earth shall stand in the presence of Ali, who shall subdue his adversaries by the sword, destroy the unjust, and conquer all regions. The earth will be in great turmoil, but Ali will come and save all the worthy ones.⁴⁷⁵

After Ali, the Mahdi shall appear and possess all the earth. He shall conquer kings, rulers, and Kharijites [those who turned against Ali in his struggle with Mu'awiyah, the Umayyad governor of Syria]; control the seven regions of the earth by his sword; establish justice; destroy oppression; banish the corruptors; and alter the law and ordinances. Then will follow the judgement of the people according to their deeds. Those who have done good deeds shall go to paradise, but the wicked who passed through many periods of transformation and still failed to become totally purified shall be cast into eternal fire.⁴⁷⁶

This concept of reward and punishment is allegorical, however; in the Nusayri system, the bliss of Paradise and the torment of the fires of Hell are not to be understood in the Islamic sense. Paradise or eternal bliss is to know Ali and acknowledge him as God, and to honour and acknowledge the mystery of the Nusayri trinity of Ali, Muhammad, and Salman al-Farisi. He who knows these three is in Paradise, while he who does not know or acknowledge them is in

Hell. Thus, the infidels, atheists, and polytheists of all sects and religions who do not know or who deny Ali shall be in Hell.⁴⁷⁷ The ultimate state of happiness, then, is to know the trinity without an intermediary and live eternally in one of the seven heavens according to one's position. According to Ja'far al-Sadiq in *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, the first heaven is for the Imams, the second for the *Natiqs* (proclaiming prophets), the third for the *Najibs* (excellents), the fourth for the *Mukhlisun* (peculiars), the fifth for the seventh for the *Babs* (doors).⁴⁷⁸

The Nusayri Religious System

Initiation

Like other ghulat, the Nusayris are very secretive about their religious beliefs. They will not divulge them to strangers.⁴⁷⁹ We learn from the accounts of Muslim heresiographers that ancient extremists sects, usually called *batin's* (from *batin*, inward religious meaning) for their allegorical or esoteric interpretations of the Qur'an, kept their teachings absolutely secret to protect their communities from the intrusion of foreign ideas. Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi (d. 1037 AH.) gives an account of the different stages through which these sects passed on their teachings to the neophyte. When a neophyte advanced to the last degree, he was asked to state under oath that he would keep the teachings secret, never divulging anything without the authorisation of the leader or his party representative.⁴⁸⁰

In this sense all of the Ghulat sects, particularly the Isma'ili's, Bektashis, Kizilbash, Shabak, Ahl-i Haqq, and the Nusayris, functioned as secret societies, disclosing their teachings only to fully initiated and fully participating members sworn to keep those teachings secret. The reason for this secrecy, al-Baghdadi explains, is that the founders of these esoteric religions were *Majus* (adherents of Mazdaism) who did not dare proclaim their religion openly, for the fear of the Muslims' sword. They resorted to secrecy to preserve their ancient religion (especially the belief in the principles of good and evil, symbolized by light and darkness), which depended on allegorical interpretation of parts of the Qur'an and of the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad.⁴⁸¹ For this reason, initiation into the mysteries of the sect is an extremely important ceremonial process in the Nusayri religious system.

There are two main versions of the Nusayris' initiation ceremony agreeing in general but differing on minor points. One is contained in ancient Nusayri sources; the other is described by Sulayman al-Adani in his *Kitab al-Bakurah*. The differences between them arise from the fact the account of ancient Nusayri writers is based on the tradition of the Nusayri subgroup called Qamaris (also known as Haydaris or Kalazis), while al-Adani derives his account from the tradition of the Shamsis (or Shamalis). The differences between the beliefs of these two groups were discussed at length in chapter 28.

Among the Nusayris, only males are initiated, because religious knowledge is the exclusive privilege of the male. Instruction is also confined to those who were born to the Nusayri parents. Nusayri males of mix marriages, especially of non-Nusayri mothers, cannot be initiated. The ceremony of initiation is conducted by a religious shaykh selected by the father of the initiate. Usually the shaykh belongs to the family of the shaykhs whose function is to conduct the ceremony of the initiation. Thus, the solemn duty of imparting religious mysteries to the initiate is restricted to certain families. The shaykhs (religious teachers) are called *Uqqal* (initiates), while the laity are called *ammis* (commoners). The Nusayris' ceremony of initiation consists of two parts. The first part is called al-Taliq, also called al-Dhukhul, which ushers the initiate in the community of the chosen [Nusayris]. The second is called Rutbat al-Sam

(listening), which directs the attention of the neophyte to the teaching and guidance of his instructor in the mysteries of the faith.⁴⁸²

The initiate must be eighteen years old, or sixteen if he is the son of the shaykh. On the day of initiation, the neophyte brings with him an animal for sacrifice. He is accompanied by the shaykh, usually of the rank of Naqib, who partakes of the sacrifice. The shaykh, known as the *amm* (uncle) of the initiate, begins the ceremony of initiation in the presence of two or three witnesses, who testify that the initiate is of good conduct and will never betray the secrets of his religion.

After delivering a sermon, the officiating shaykh stands with the neophyte to his right. The shaykh orders the young man to place the slippers of his Imam on his head as a sign of humility.⁴⁸³ Then the initiate implores the congregation to ask his shaykh and his lord to accept him as his child, to free his neck from the yoke of bondage, to direct him to the right knowledge of God, and to deliver him from the darkness the blindness and from the *mushabihyyah* (anthropomorphist's and polytheists). The congregation stands and tell the shaykh that this disciple has implored them, in the most perfect manner, to ask him to grant the disciple's wish and accept him. After accepting their intercession, the Naqib removes the slippers from the neophyte's head and asks him to sit before the Imam. The Imam turns to the neophyte and recites the following passage (Qur'an 53:3-5): "He does not speak out of his own fancy. This is an inspired revelation. He taught by one who is powerful and mighty." Then the Imam recites the tradition in which the Rasul (saw) says, "Unite in marriage and multiply, for I will be boastful of you before the nations on the Day of Resurrection."⁴⁸⁴

The Imam explains that the ceremony of initiation just conducted is a consummation of *Nikah al-Sam*, a kind of spiritual marriage between the neophyte and his Naqib or shaykh, and that the reason the congregation attended the ceremony was to sanction his *nikah* (marriage) to his religious guide. If the neophyte rejects this "spiritual marriage," the Imam then figures out the amount of money the neophyte has spent on his initiation ceremony and asks those present to reimburse him. If the neophyte obeys, then the Imam holds his right hand and says, "I unite you in marriage by order of God and His will, and according to the tradition of His Rasul, to your master... because God has put you in his trust. It is a trust delivered according God's order. Certainly God has established something which cannot be doubted-the light of Knowledge and truth of the faith."⁴⁸⁵

The Imam goes on to tell the neophyte that this light will grow and its sanctity become greater because of the thirst the neophyte will develop for the spiritual instruction of his religious shaykh, or guide, and because of his readiness to accept the shaykh's words much as a foetus is formed and begins to develop in its mother's womb. Then the Imam asks the neophyte whether he has accepted this marriage. If he says he does, the Imam blesses the neophyte for accepting the marriage.⁴⁸⁶

The so-called marriage concluded between the neophyte and the Sayyid, his religious instructor, should be understood only as a spiritual bond uniting the two men in the

fundamental mysteries of the Nusayri religion, the manifestation of god Ali in human form and his representation in the trinity with Muhammad and Salman al-Farisi.

It is believed that in this spiritual union, the word of the initiator fertilizes the soul of the neophyte. According to the Nusayri source, in this spiritual marriage, the neophyte becomes a “woman,” that is, a “spiritual wife” to the instructor, whose teaching he will carry as a woman carries a foetus in her womb.⁴⁸⁷ The new spiritual relationship between the neophyte and his instructor (Sayyid) becomes exactly like a blood relationship between close relatives which forbids intermarriage between them. The neophyte is forbidden to marry a daughter of his instructor, for she is considered his real sister. The neophyte cannot desert his instructor except with the instructor’s consent. If the instructor goes on the journey or moves to another locality, he should first inform the Imam, so that another instructor can be found to continue teaching the neophyte and complete his initiation.⁴⁸⁸

The Imam’s use of symbolism during the initiation ceremony, when he reminds the neophyte that God has established in him the light of knowledge, which will grow and develop like a foetus in its mother’s womb, helps to illuminate the Nusayris’ belief system.⁴⁸⁹

Why should the mystery of religion be symbolised in terms of light, and its development likened to that of a foetus? We have already discussed the importance of light in the religious system of the Nusayris, who maintain that before the world began, they were themselves luminous lights. As we shall see later that the Nusayris also associate wine with light, calling wine *Abd al-Nur* (the servant of light).

Edward Jurji sees a strong connection between the Nusayri process of instruction, the concept of light in Sufism, and the mysticism of the Ishraqis, followers of the Islamic school of philosophy called *Hikmat al-Ishraq* (wisdom of illumination). The concept of illumination among the Sufis, especially Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (d. 1119 AH.), is greatly influenced by the philosophy of Hellenism, which reached the Near East through Neo-Platonism. As for the Ishraqis, one of the fundamental characteristics of their theosophy is the theory that a spiritual light constitutes reality of all things. Light is the essence of all beings; even God Himself is light. Therefore, superior intellects coming from God are also light. Since God is the Light of Light, the Ishraqis believed, the whole of existence is light which, through “irradiation” (in Arabic, *Ishraq*) from its primary source, illuminates the world of darkness. The concept of light might have reached the Nusayris through the Isma’ilis and Illuministic Sufis and thus may be ultimately traceable to Neo-Platonism and Zoroastrianism.⁴⁹⁰

When the first stage of the initiation, symbolized by the “marriage” of the neophyte to his instructor, has been accomplished, the neophyte then waits for nine months, the period of a normal pregnancy, at the end of which the final stage of initiation, called *Rutbat al-Sam*, is celebrated. During this nine-month period, the neophyte receives instructions in the Nusayri faith. This Faith, which is being nurtured in his soul as a foetus in the mother’s womb, will grow during the nine months, until the neophyte is ready to deliver his spiritual ‘baby,’ that is,

his developed faith, and join the fraternity of Nusayri believers.⁴⁹¹ This view of initiation is also held by the Isma'ilis and the Druzes.⁴⁹²

The second and final stage of initiation is a solemn occasion for the neophyte. If a neophyte comes from a rich family, a great deal of money will be spent for this occasion. The ceremony is conducted in the presence of three religious dignitaries, representing the Nusayri trinity. The first of these dignitaries is the Imam, who represents Ali; the second, the Naqib, represents Muhammad; and the third, represents Salman al-Farisi. The Naqib, it should be pointed out, is the *amm* (uncle) who participated in the instruction of the neophyte.

Beside these dignitaries the initiation ceremony is also attended by twelve other Naqibs, representing the twelve Apostles of Jesus and twenty-four men, called *Hawariyyun* (apostles), act as the guarantors of the first twelve. Dussaud raises a question of whether these twenty-four men suggest the twenty-four elders in the Book of Revelation, who sit in twenty-four thrones in God's presence. He later dismisses this notion of borrowing from Christianity; however, maintaining instead that the Abbasids instituted the twelve Naqib's to correspond to the captains of the twelve houses of Israel.⁴⁹³ Recalling Exodus 19:28, we may speculate, then, that the twelve Naqib's of Islam (and thus the twelve Nusayri Naqib's) are connected with the twelve captains of Israel in the Old Testament and the twelve Apostles of Jesus in the New Testament.

This part of the ceremony of initiation is very lengthy, containing many prayers, invocations, and oaths. Thus we will describe only its essentials, following the description in Arabic MS. 1450, in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. The Imam asks the neophyte what his ideas are, what seems right to him after serious consideration, and what he requires from his Sayyid.

If the neophyte answers that his wish is to have his neck freed from the yoke of bondage and to be directed to the right path, the Naqib warns him once again that he has prepared himself for the demands of a great matter, the "mystery of mysteries and the article of the faith of the righteous."⁴⁹⁴ The Imam then cites the words of the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq: "If anyone readily receives our instruction, it opens for him the door of the heart so that he becomes an able man. But he who receives it with doubt will only be removed by it to a great distance from us."⁴⁹⁵

The Imam further warns the neophyte that if he reveals the doctrine, he will be counted among the brethren of devils and transformed into a succession of horrid creatures. He will also be tortured in every revolution of time. The Imam advises him, therefore, to consider his choice carefully.⁴⁹⁶

If the neophyte agrees to the Imam's exhortation the Imam will bind him with the following contract.⁴⁹⁷ "In the name of the Lord, the compassionate, the merciful; in the name of the ancient Mana an the great Ism and the lasting Bab, and the high road of those rightly directed, and the eye of certainty, and the foundation of religion, I make between you (with your full

consent, and with freedom of determination with respect to what is mutually agreed upon between you and these notables who are present) a free and unconstrained contract... I have made a contract between you and your religious guide, the contract of AMS, the weapon of the pious." The Imam follows this by reciting the Qur'an 48:10, cited earlier.⁴⁹⁸ After further instructions, the Imam asks the Naqib to present a cup of wine to the neophyte, who drinks "the mystery" of the Imam. He hands him a second cup to "drink the mystery" of the congregation. Thereupon, each one present rises and drinks the "mystery of acceptance," indicating the admission of the neophyte into the fraternity of the Nusayris. All those present then kiss the Imam, one by one.⁴⁹⁹

A different account of the ceremony of initiation is given by Sulayman al-Adani, who himself was initiated to the Nusayri fraternity. His account derives from the tradition of the Shamsis, while the account given above derives from tradition of the Qamaris.

Al-Adani states that his initiation took place in the city of Adana, Turkey, when he was eighteen years old. The people of his community began to disclose to him the mysteries of their religion, which are withheld from anyone under eighteen (or in some classes twenty) years of age. One day a crowd of low and high Nusayris gathered in Adana and called in al-Adani to come to them. When he appeared they presented a cup of wine to him. The Naqib, who stood next to him, asked him to say, "By the mystery of your benevolence, O my uncle my Sayyid and the crown of my head." When al-Adani drank the wine, the Imam turned to him saying, "Would you take up the shoes of those here present upon your head to do honour to your Lord?" Al-Adani answered that he would put on his head only the shoes of his Lord, the Imam. This response made the audience laugh, because it was not according to the rules of the initiation ceremony. The attendant was ordered to bring shoes of al-Adani's Sayyid, the Naqib, to which they fastened a white cloth. They uncovered al-Adani's head and placed the shoes upon it. The Naqib then chanted a prayer that al-Adani might accept the mystery of the religion. When the prayer ended, the shoes were removed from al-Adani's head, and he was instructed to keep the ceremony secret. Then everyone dispersed. Al-Adani calls this gathering the Assembly of Consultation.⁵⁰⁰

After forty days another crowd assembled and called al-Adani to join them. The Sayyid, or Naqib, handed al-Adani a cup of wine, which he drank, and then commanded him to recite the mystery of AMS, which (al-Adani explains) stands for Ali, Muhammad, and Salman al-Farisi. The Imam then commanded al-Adani to recite the mystery the symbolic letters ayn, mim, and sin five hundred times a day. Before he was dismissed, al-Adani was once again enjoined to keep the ceremony a secret. This second gathering is called Jamiyyat al-Malik, which may mean the Adoption Assembly. After seven months (more commonly the interval is nine months), al-Adani was called for the third time and was made to stand some distance from the group. A deputy from the assembly stood with the Naqib on his right and the Najib on his left, each carrying a cup of wine. Turning their faces towards the Imam, they chanted the third hymn by al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi and walked towards the *Murshid* (religious guide), chanting, "I acquired about the location of the dwelling place of the traits of noble character, and certain man directed me to you. By the truth of Muhammad and his family, have mercy on

him who has come to kiss your hand. I have sought you, so do not disappoint my belief in you, for we are all today in your charge.”⁵⁰¹

The Murshid then walked towards the Imam, saying “Yes, yes, yes, my Lord the Imam.” The Imam replied, “May it be gracious to you and to those around you. You have done what this assembly could not have done. You have received the cup with your own hand, drunk it, prostrated yourself, and made the necessary greeting. To God alone worship is due. Tell me, what is your need, and what is it that you want?” The Murshid answered, “I want to have a blessed evening by looking at my master’s face.” Having said that, he retired, looked toward the heavens, and returned to the Imam, the deputy, the Naqib, and the Najib, and repeated, “Yes, yes, my Lord.” As before, the Imam asked him what he wanted. The Murshid said he had a need that he wanted to see fulfilled. The Imam told him to go and fulfil his need. The Murshid then approached al-Adani and asked him to kiss his hands and feet, which al-Adani did. The Murshid returned to the Imam, and the Imam asked him once more about his need. The Murshid said that a person had appeared to him on the way, and that the person was this man (al-Adani) who had come here in order to be initiated “in your presence.” “Who directed him to us?” asked the Imam. The Murshid replied, “The ancient Mana, the great Ism, and the noble Bab, signified by AMS.” The Imam asked the Murshid to bring the man in, that he might see him. The Murshid took al-Adani by his right hand and led him towards the Imam. When al-Adani drew near, the Imam stretched out his feet, which al-Adani kissed. Al-Adani also kissed his hands. The Imam asked al-Adani what his need was. Thereupon the Naqib rose, stood next to al-Adani, and instructed him to say, “I ask for your mystery of your faith and your believers.” The Imam looked sternly at al-Adani and asked him what has made him seek this mystery, crowned with jewels and pearls, which no one can carry except an angel or a nabi sent by God. The Imam went on to tell al-Adani that though angels are numerous, only those near to God can carry this mystery, though prophets are many, only those charged with God’s mission can carry it. The Imam then warned sternly, “Do you accept the condition that your head, hands, and feet be cut off rather than you disclose this mystery?” Al-Adani replied that he accepted. The Imam then added that he demanded one hundred witnesses, to which those present replied that the Imam should implement the law. The Imam agreed and reduced the number of witnesses required to twelve. When they were appointed, the Murshid and al-Adani hurried to kiss the Imam’s hands. They told him that if the initiate [al-Adani] disclosed or betrayed the mystery, they would bring him to the Imam, cut his body into pieces, and drink his blood. The Imam, not quite sure of their pledge, asked for two notable witnesses to guarantee the twelve. When the two were found, they told the Imam that they will guarantee the twelve sureties and initiate. They pledged that if the initiate escaped or betrayed the mystery before he had fully learned the form of their prayer, they would bring him to the Imam to be killed.

The Imam then called al-Adani to him and asked him to swear by the heavenly bodies that he would not disclose the mystery. He also handed him *Kitab al-Majmu’*, which al-Adani held in his right hand. The Naqib asked him to swear on this book that he would never betray this mystery, and that if he did, the Naqib would be absolved of his sin. The Imam took the book from al-Adani and told him that he was made to take an oath not because of material concerns, but because of the mystery of God, which his elders and lords had sworn him to keep. Al-Adani

says that he placed his right hand on the book and swore three times that he would never disclose the mystery. The Imam warned him that the earth would not suffer him to be buried in it if he should disclose the mystery, and that he would never be reborn in human form but would wear the garments of degrading transformation, from which there will never be deliverance.

Then they seated al-Adani and, uncovering his head, threw a veil over it, while the sponsors placed their hands over his head and began to recite prayers from *Kitab al-Majmu'*. After that, they all drank wine. The *amm* (uncle) from the first ceremony al-Dukhul, delivered al-Adani to his Murshid. The *amm* gave al-Adani a cup of wine, which he drank, and then taught him to say, "In the name of God, and by God, and by the mystery of the Lord Abu Abd Allah (al-Khasibi), possessor of divine knowledge, by the mystery of his blessed memorial, may God make happy his mystery." The assembly then dispersed, and the Naqib took al-Adani aside, teaching him chapters from *Kitab al-Majmu'*, acquainting him with the Nusayri prayer that pays divine homage to Ali ibn Abi Talib.⁵⁰²

We learn from this account that initiation is a not trivial ceremony to be observed like a festival. It is, rather, a most serious matter by which the Nusayri neophyte is introduced to the mystery and the holy of holies of this religion. After his initiation, the neophyte is entitled to partake in the celebration of the mass and to receive the consecrated wine in which God Ali has manifested himself.

Question 82 of *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah* asks, 'What is the mystery of the faith of the Unitarians, which is the mystery of the mysteries and the doctrine of the righteous?' The answer is, "It is the mystery of *Thintayn* [colloquial Arabic for "two"], which is the true knowledge of God. It is a noble mystery, a great message, a magnificent perception, and a heavy responsibility which mountains cannot bear because of its position and nobility. It is a healing antidote for him who keeps the mystery, and a killing poison for him who discloses it. It is the two fold [thintayn] mystery of the veiling of our Lord Ali in light, that is, the eye of the sun, and his manifestation in his servant *Abd al-Nur* (servant of light)."⁵⁰³

The servant of light is, in fact, the consecrated wine which only Nusayri initiates may partake of in the celebration of their Quddas mass during certain festivals.⁵⁰⁴ Wine occupies a prominent place in the religious system of the Nusayris; they believe that the God Ali has manifested Himself in it.⁵⁰⁵ According Ibn Fazl Allah al-Umari (d. 749/1348), the Nusayris glorify the wine and believe it to be light itself. They hold the grape wine in such high esteem that they would not uproot it.⁵⁰⁶

On the margin of page 16 of Arabic MS. 6182, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, opposite question 82, the Nusayri copyist added the following: "know ye that this mystery is also called the mystery of good and evil, light and darkness, water and fire, flesh and blood, eating and drinking, life and death, heat and cold, and it is the mystery of the Nawruz and Mihrajan."⁵⁰⁷ This is indeed a significant addition since it emphasizes the duality of principles, revealing the Persian,

Zoroastrian, Mithraic, and Manichean influences, and connects the Nusayris' mystery with the Nawruz and the Mihrajan, two Persian festivals.

It is solemn duty of the Nusayri initiate to keep the mystery of his religion secret. He is believed to lose the favour of God and invite death if he does not do so.⁵⁰⁸ This is exactly what happened to al-Adani, who recanted his Nusayri religion and converted to Christianity, for which he was burned to death by his own people.⁵⁰⁹

Before leaving the subject of initiation, we would point out that in his short article on the Nusayris, Victor Langlois states that the ceremony of initiation is also called *Tazneer* (putting on a sash), and that the neophyte has been "tazannara," that is, he has put on a sash when initiated in the presence of two godfathers. Of all the sources discussed thus far, Langlois is the first to mention the use of a sash as part of the initiation ceremony. Since Langlois states that his account derives from a Nusayri manuscript in the library of the Mufti of tarsus, there is no reason to doubt the truth of his account.⁵¹⁰

Nusayri Ceremonies Festivals

The Nusayris celebrate many festivals of varied origins: Arabian, Persian, and Christian. One major source of information about these festivals is the *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad* (Book of feasts), by the prominent Nusayri, Abu Sa'id Maymun ibn al-Qasim al-Tabarani (d. 1034), described because of his religious knowledge as *al-Shabb al-Thiqah* (the authoritative young man).⁵¹¹

From al-Tabarani we learn that the information about the Nusayri festivals is (falsely) derived from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. It is reported that one day Muhammad ibn Sinan, who attended the assembly of al-Sadiq, asked him to explain the Arabian and Persian feasts that God had mentioned in the Qur'an. Al-Sadiq gave an account of the festivals, beginning with the Arabian ones.⁵¹²

The association of the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq with the religious system of the Nusayris, and especially with their festivals, is very significant. It demonstrates that the Nusayris are Shi'i who recognise al-Sadiq's authority. The Imam is considered as an outstanding jurist and religious authority; indeed, a special juristic and theological school, al-Madhab al-Ja'fari, bears his name. To obtain legitimacy as sound and moderate Shiites, the Nusayris capitalised on the name of this Imam. It is no wonder that *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, one of the secret books of the Nusayris, is believed to have been related by al-Mufaddal ibn Umar al-Ju'fi from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq.⁵¹³

But we should not be misled by the Nusayris' association with the Imam al-Sadiq into believing that they are moderate Shi'ah like the Twelvers, who constitute the majority of Shi'ah's. The Nusayris were and still are Ghulat, or extremist Shi'ah, who have exceeded the religious bounds of Shi'ism by deifying the Imam Ali. Indeed, the purpose and celebration of the many feasts found in *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad* constitutes clear evidence that the Nusayris are Ghulat. Some of their festivals may seem similar to those of the orthodox Sunni Muslims, but in reality they demonstrate the Nusayris' extreme Shi'i beliefs. The account of each of their festivals given in *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad* is followed by supplicatory prayers or sermons in praise of the God Ali and His divine attributes.

In one section off this book Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq associates the Nusayris with one of the earliest Ghulat, Muhammad ibn Abi Zaynab, known as Abu al-Khattab. According to *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, Muhammad ibn Sinan asked the Imam al-Sadiq about the day on which Abu al-Khattab proclaimed his *dawa* (call or message). Al-Sadiq answered that day, a Monday, the tenth of the month of Muharram, is a great day glorified by God. Therefore, believers should spend that day praising God and praying for Abu al-Khattab and his companions.⁵¹⁴

Who was this Abu al-Khattab, and why was his message so significant to the Nusayris that the Imam al-Sadiq considered the day of its proclamation to be a festival among the Nusayris?

Abu al-Khattab was a Persian client of the Arab tribe of the Banu Asad; for this reason, he was called al-Asadi. He was one of the many Ghulat who lived in Kufah, in southern Iraq, which in the eighth century was a hotbed of extreme Shi'i teachings.⁵¹⁵

Abu al-khattab was a contemporary and acquaintance of the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. His extreme teaching included the deification of the Imam al-Sadiq. It is said that he pitched a tent in a certain district of al-kufah and began to call for the worship of the Imam al-Sadiq as god. He also preached that the Shi'i Imam were gods and sons of gods. When the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq learned that Abu al-Khattab was deifying him, he cursed and expelled him.⁵¹⁶

Abu al-Khattab and his followers revolted against the Abbasid governor of al-Kufah, Isa ibn Musa (d. 783), who sent a force against them. Abu al-Khattab was captured and crucified in 755. After his death, his followers taught that, although the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq was God, yet Abu al-Khattab was more excellent than him and the Imam Ali.⁵¹⁷ Thus it is clear that Abu al-Khattab's followers considered him to be divine.

In chapter 26, we discussed the Nusayri belief that, in each of the seven cycles of divine emanation, a prophet called the Natiq existed, who was a reflection of the perfect man, and was accompanied by a Samit who would proclaim and interpret the prophet's revelations. If, as we suggested earlier, this belief, thought to have been created by the Isma'ilis and adopted by the Nusayris, was in fact generated by Abu al-Khattab, there must have been a close connection between his followers and the Nusayris. It is significant that al-Nawbakhti considers the Isma'ilis and the Khattabiyyah (named after Abu al-Khattab) to be one and the same sect.⁵¹⁸

Arabian festivals

Among the Arabian (Islamic) festivals celebrated by the Nusayris is Id al-Fitr, the feast of breaking the fast. Muslims celebrate this feast at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. But to the Nusayris, it does not have the same significance, for there is no evidence in their book of feasts that they fast in the month of Ramadan. There is, however, a prayer in this book of Ramadan; a plea to God Ali to help, protect, and guide the believers (Nusayris). According to al-Khasibi, Id al-fitr, much like prayer and alms, is believed to be a personification of Lord Muhammad.⁵¹⁹

Another Arabian feast is *Id al-Adha* (the feast of sacrifice), which the Nusayris celebrate on the tenth of the Islamic month of Dhu al-Hijjah. To the Nusayris, this festival marks the day in which the Mahdi will appear wielding a sword and causing much bloodshed. To the Muslims, it is the commemoration of Abraham's offering his son, Isma'il, as a sacrifice.⁵²⁰

Another feast is celebrated in honour of Salman al-Farisi, the third person on the Nusayri trinity. It is observed on the second al-Ahad (Sunday) of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah. It is reported on that Sunday, Ali ordered Salman to enter the place of worship, preached to the people, and, through Ali, expose the false gods and the apostates (those who rejected Ali's divinity). It is also the day on which Ali told Salman that if he asked, he would endow him with eloquence and give him evidence of his (Ali's) divinity. Ali declared Salman to be a distinguished luminary and told the believers, "Salman is a tree, and you are the branches."⁵²¹ This is further evidence of the prominent position Salman, the Persian, occupies in the religious system of the Nusayris.

The Nusayris also celebrate three Shi'i festivals, but these observances are characterised by their extreme Shi'i beliefs. The first of these festivals is Id al-Ghadir, which is named after Ghadir Khumm (Khum is a Pond), the spot where the Rasul (saw) is believed to have appointed Ali as his lawful successor to lead the Muslim community, thus confirming the divine office of the Imamah.

According to Shi'i tradition, in the year 632 A.D., when the Rasul (saw) was returning to Madinah from Makkah, where he performed his last pilgrimage, he camped near the Ghadir Khumm. Making a pulpit of camel saddles, he began to preach. His followers fraternised with one another, joined in a bond of brotherhood. Ali was not invited to join this circle, however, and that broke his heart. Noticing that Ali was unhappy, the Rasul called him and, holding his hand, he raised it, saying, "He who recognises me as his master: for him, Ali too, is master. May Allah love those who love him and be the enemy of those who hate him."⁵²²

According to the Nusayri version of this event, the Prophet Muhammad said, "He who recognises me as his master, for him Ali is his Mana," indicating that the Rasul was revealing the *manawiyah* (divine reality) of Ali as God, the casual determinant of the entire creation. According to this version, when Muhammad called Ali to him that day, he knew that he was standing before his Lord Ali and his Bab (Salman), but he wanted to reveal the reality of Ali as the Mana (casual determinant) to the world. This is confirmed by al-Khasibi, who declares in a lengthy poem entitled "al-Qasidah al-Ghadiriyyah" (The Ghadir's Ode) that this feast is called the Feast of al-Ghadir because the lord Muhammad there revealed the divinity of his master, Ali, by saying, "This is your Lord, God and creator; therefore, know and worship him. He is the only one, the architect, the first and the last, the one who causes life and death, the compassionate. I am his apostle servant, sent to you with a divine book [the Qur'an]. He commanded me to inform his creation that he is their lord and master. He is truly God, and you who have denied this truth shall remain to be transformed, generation after generation."⁵²³ For this reason, says the author of *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, the Nusayris (whom he calls Ahl al-Tawhid) celebrate this feast with joy, eating and drinking.⁵²⁴

Another Shi'i feast is the Feast of Mubalah, which the Nusayris celebrate on the 21st day of Dhu al-Hijjah. As we have already seen in chapter 7, the Prophet Muhammad debated a group of Arab Christians from Najran, in southern Arabia, as to whether Jesus was the son of God. Muhammad, asserting that this belief is blasphemy, asked the Christians of Najran for a

Mubahalalah; that is, the disputants would supplicate (*bahala*) God over this matter and God, as judge, would strike dead those who were in error. The Shi'ah use this incident to prove that Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn are the family of the Rasul par excellence, and therefore the *Imamah* (leadership of the Muslim community) should be confined to Ali and his descendants. This Imamah is a divine office that no other Muslim, no matter how excellent his qualities, can occupy. Moreover, since the members of the family of the Prophet are pre-existent and their names are inscribed on the throne of God, Ali and his descendants, the Imams, are the only one who possesses the right, pre-ordained by God, to rule over the Muslim community.

The Nusayri account of the Mubahalalah is a little different from the Shi'i account. It expresses the Nusayris theological dogma of the trinity of Ali, Muhammad, and Salman. According to this version, the Mubahalalah took place near al-Kathib al-Ahmar (the red hillock). The hillock was ablaze with lightning flashes, and when the lightning subsided, Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, Husayn, and Salman al-Farisi appeared. Then, together with some companions, all were covered with a mantle. When the leaders of the Arab Christians of Najran were asked to draw near the shrouded figures to begin the Mubahalalah, they found they were unable to move. They tried three times to draw near, but failed each time. This greatly astonished them. One of the Christian leaders, Shihab ibn Abi Tammam, called to his companions in rhyme, asking whether they were seeing the same thing he saw, the deity covered with a mantle. The only sense that can be made of this episode is that the Christians of Najran were greatly surprised to realise that they were appealing to Ali, Muhammad, and Salman al-Farisi, the Nusayri trinity, which was identical in makeup to their own Trinity of god the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.⁵²⁵

Still another Shi'i feast the Feast of *Firash* (bed), which the Nusayris observe on 29 Dhu al-Hijjah, to commemorate the night when Ali slept in Muhammad's bed to save him from being killed by his enemies, the people of the Quraysh tribe. In the year 622 Muhammad decided to emigrate with his companions to Madinah, to escape the persecution of his enemies, the polytheist of Quraysh. Fearing that his enemies will kill him, Muhammad asked Ali to sleep in his bed, and Ali agreed. When the men of the Quraysh stormed into the bedroom, they found Ali in Muhammad's bed. Realising that they had been tricked, the men gave chase to Muhammad, but he escaped on his camel.⁵²⁶

According to one version of this episode, God blinded the attackers and poured dust on their heads. They spend the night in pain and confusion. Then when morning came, Ali went out to them, and they realised that Muhammad had already escaped to safety.⁵²⁷ Appended to this version of the episode is an ode by Ibn Harun al-Saigh.⁵²⁸

One of the revered festivals of the Nusayris is Dhikr Id Ashur, or the Commemoration of Ashur, as the title appears in *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*.⁵²⁹ Ashur, or Ashurah, is the tenth day of the month of Muharram in the Islamic year 61 (10 October 680), on which Husayn, second son of Ali, was brutally murdered with his entourage in Karbala', twenty-five miles northwest of Kufah in present day Iraq. To the Shi'ah, this day is a day of grief and mourning over Husayn, who was murdered by his enemies, the Umayyads. Mu'awiyah, the Umayyad governor of Syria, had

challenged Ali, Husayn's father, had disputed with Ali during his khilafah in 661. Ali was killed by a *Khariji*, Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam, and instantly became a canonised martyr to his partisans, the Shi'ah's. In that year, Mu'awiyah was proclaimed khalifah in Jerusalem. He made Damascus his capital, and with him began the Umayyad khilafah (661-750).

The Shi'ah's of Iraq declared Hasan, the eldest son of Ali, as khalifah. However, Hasan was not interested in becoming a khalifah; he abdicated the office in favour of Mu'awiyah and retired to Madinah, where he died in 669 at the age of forty-five.

Husayn, the younger brother of Hasan, refused to acknowledge Mu'awiyah's son, Yazid, who succeeded his father as khalifah in 680. The same year, the Shi'ah's of Iraq invited Husayn to come to Iraq and be their khalifah. Husayn travelled to Iraq with a small entourage. It was at Karbala', where they camped, that Husayn and his band were brutally murdered by a contingent of four thousand Umayyad troops commanded by Umar, son of the prominent Arab army commander, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas. Husayn's head was cut off and sent to the khalifah Yazid in Damascus. The Shi'i consider Husayn as Sayyid al-Shuhadah (the chief of martyrs). With the murder of Husayn, Muslim politics triumphed over Muslim brotherhood.

While the tenth day of Muharram (Ashurah) is the day of mourning to the Shi'ah, it is a day of jubilation, of praising God, and affirming his unity, to the Nusayris. The reason for jubilation is that the Nusayris believe that Husayn, like Jesus Christ, was not killed: that his murderers merely thought they had killed him. Concerning Jesus' crucifixion, Qur'an 4:157 states "They [the Jews] declared, 'We have put to death the messiah Jesus, the Son of Mary, the Apostle of God.' They did not kill Him, nor did they crucify Him, but they thought they did."⁵³⁰ According to Islamic tradition, Jesus was neither killed nor crucified, but was made to resemble another man, a substitute, whom the Jews really killed. So was it with Husayn. His murderers thought they had killed Him, but he was concealed from their eyes and killed another man, Hanzalah ibn Asad, instead: one who resembles Husayn. The Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, believed to be the source of the Nusayris' festivals, states that the episode of Husayn is similar to that of Jesus Christ, whom the Christians maintain that he was crucified, but in fact was not. Likewise the Muslims [Sunni] and the Shi'ah believe that Husayn was killed, but in fact he was not, because, "Our Lord Husayn is Christ and Christ is Husayn."⁵³¹

In accordance with the Nusayris' belief, al-Sadiq maintains that all the names from Adam to Qa'im (the twelfth Imam, the Mahdi), including Jesus and Muhammad, denote one and the same manifestation of the Prophet Hood and the Imamah. In other words, Husayn is believed to be one of the manifestations of God which appeared during the period of Muhammad, and one of the five members of the Ahl al-Bayt (the family of the Prophet), who are considered by the Nusayris to be deities.⁵³²

In *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, Ja'far al-Sadiq states that Husayn escaped being killed because he was an Imam and a vicar to God; indeed, God was veiled in him. God showed his grace in not allowing Husayn, one of His chosen, to suffer death at the hands of the infidels. This, says al-Sadiq, is a great mystery which is incomprehensible to unbelievers, who do not have vicars of

God. But, al-Sadiq, continues, “Our own followers, the Shi’ah, who hear from us the inner knowledge of God, His vicar Ali, and His apostle Muhammad, understand this mystery and deliver it to the believing brothers... As Ismail, son of Ibrahim, was ransomed by a ram when his father tried to offer him as a sacrifice, so Husayn was ransomed by the old man, Adhlam, of the Quraysh tribe, who was transformed into a ram and was sacrificed instead of Husayn.”⁵³³

Al-Sadiq further explains that the would-be murderers of Husayn could not have killed him because, as an Imam, Husayn had the power to transform himself from a physical to a spiritual body (and vice versa) at his own discretion. When the attackers of Husayn tried to kill him, he simply left his physical body; God lifted him up to prevent his enemies from killing him.⁵³⁴

Moreover, al-Sadiq asserts, Husayn could not have been killed because God was veiled in him; he was God. This statement confirms to the Nusayris’ belief in the divinity of the Imam’s. Al-Sadiq states that when the enemies of Husayn advanced to kill him, he called the Angel Jibril and said to him, “Brother, who am I?” Jibril answered, “You are god; there is no God but He, the Everlasting, the Ever living, and the One who is the author of life and death. You are the One who commands the heavens and the earth, the mountains and the seas, and they will obey you. You are the one who no one can deceive and harm.” Husayn asked, “Do you see those wretched people who intend to kill their Lord because of their weakness? But they will never achieve their aim nor be able to kill any of God’s vicars, just as they failed to kill Jesus and the Commander of the faithful, Ali. However, they intended to kill these vicars of God, and their intention might beproof convicting them of torture.” Following the command of Husayn, Jibril assumed the form of a stranger and went to see Umar ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas, who had orders from the Umayyad governor Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad to kill Husayn.

In this guise, Jibril appeared before Sa’d, who, though surrounded by guards and generals, was frightened by his looks. Sa’d asked the stranger what he wanted. Jibril told him that he was one of God’s servants who had come to ask Sa’d who it was that he intended to fight. Sa’d replied that he had orders to fight Husayn, son of Ali. Jibril said, “Woe to you. You want to kill the Lord of the Worlds and the god of those who are first and last, the creator of the heavens and the earth and all therein.”

When Sa’d heard these words, he became frightened and ordered his men to attack Jibril. Just as they were about to strike, Jibril spat in their faces, causing them to fall to the ground unconscious. When they regain consciousness, Jibril had disappeared.⁵³⁵

Sa’d and Mu’awiyah (the Umayyad khulafa’) suffered metempsychosis as their punishment for the plan to murder Husayn. They were transformed first into ugly giants, and then into rams. When they appeared as rams before the Lord of Mercy (Husayn) and asked Him to restore them to human form, Husayn refused to do so. He commanded that they remain in the *Musukhiyyah* (metempsychotic state) for a thousand years, saying, “I will never forgive you or have compassion for you. I forgive and have compassion for the holy and chosen only.”⁵³⁶ According to this account, the angel Jibril, whom Husayn dispatched to Umar ibn Sa’d, was none other than Abu al-Khattab, who talked to Sa’d and spat in his face and the faces of his

men and caused them to fall to the ground unconscious; and he is the one in charge of their torment forever.

This demonstrates the mind-set of the Nusayris. Religion is the focal point of their lives, directing their every action, at home and in their community, even extending into their government. The story clearly demonstrates the Nusayri belief that Abu al-Khattab existed from the beginning, together with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and Muhammad. It is a tenet of the Nusayris' faith, and their sincere belief, that Abu al-Khattab appeared in different forms and was known by different names in every one of the generations of the Imam's, and that he controls life and death and provides for mankind by the order of his Lord (Husayn).⁵³⁷

The story of Abu al-Khattab is also significant from another standpoint. It shows that the Nusayris were among the early Ghulat (extremists Shi'ah). Abu al-Khattab, whose full name is Muhammad ibn Abi Zaynab al-Asadi (d. 755), was one of the early extremists Shi'ah who proclaimed the divinity of the Imams, especially Ja'far al-Sadiq. Earlier we discussed the association of Abu al-Khattab with Ja'far al-Sadiq and the tradition that al-Khasibi related, indicating that al-Sadiq called Abu al-Khattab the Bab (door), just as his great grandfather, the Prophet Muhammad, had called Salman al-Farisi the Bab.⁵³⁸

Husayn's divinity and his freedom from death are reaffirmed by al-Khasibi, the great apostle of Nurayrism. He states that Husayn was Christ and the Mana and the death therefore had no power over him. He also attributes divinity to Husayn in a lengthy ode, asserting that divinity could not be killed.

After asserting that there is no difference between Jesus Christ and Husayn, al-Khasibi goes on to say, "How is it possible to kill the one [Husayn] by whose power and mercy people live?" he laments over those (Shi'ah) who weep over their Lord (Husayn), saying, "I will never be party to those who weep over their Lord, whom they think of having been murdered in Karbala'. Such thought is false because, like Jesus, Husayn was not killed."⁵³⁹

Thus the Shi'ah's observance of the murder of Husayn on the tenth of Muharram (Ashurah) as a day of sorrow and lamentation is transformed by the Nusayris into a day of festivity and joy because, being divine, Husayn has triumphed over death. Their celebration of this day affirms that the Nusayris are extremist Shi'ah.

We close the subject of the Nusayris' celebration of Ashurah with the following supplicatory prayer, entitled *Ziyarat Yawm Ashurah*, which Nusayris recite upon visiting a holy shrine on the day of Ashurah. It epitomises the Nusayri assertion of the divinity of Husayn, over whom death has no power.

Ziyarat Yawm Ashurah

Peace upon you, O brilliant light, radiant beam, shooting star, the Proof against mankind, the Insoluble Bond, the veritable Door, and the Strong Kernel (of faith). I testify that you have not been killed or vanquished, you have not died or slept, but that you concealed yourself by your power and hid from human eyes by your wisdom. You are my Lord, present and absent, witnessing and hearing what people ask, and you provide them with answers. My Lord, upon you and from you is peace. I have come visiting in knowledge and recognition of your excellence, professing your manifestation, seeking refuge in you, worshipping your forms, renouncing those who set themselves to fight against you. You are greater than their will and purpose, and through your power you are far from being subject to killing, captivity, defeat, and persecution. You cause to die whom you will. You provide livelihood to whom you will, without account. You are glorified and highly exalted above the falsehood of the iniquitous, who claim that on this spot (in Karbala') you were buried and vanquished. For you are the creator of death and annihilation. You are the everlasting, ever-living, the ancient of days. You are the lord of lords and god of gods. How could you be killed while you are he who authorised life? Or how could your enemies lay hands on you while you are the one who cause them to live and die, whatever you will and whenever you will? Exalted are you above those who say you were killed, vanquished, persecuted, contained, and buried on this spot. Nay, you have cast your form on your chosen one, Hanzalah, who came to resemble you, and for this reason you promised through your forgiveness your Garden (Paradise) and offered him a lofty rank and position. May your greeting, salutation, prayer, and peace be upon Hanzalah and upon the Unitarian believers [the Nusayris], who recognise their creator forever and ever.⁵⁴⁰

Another festival celebrated by the Nusayris is called the Remembrance of the Middle of Sha'ban is the last month of the Nusayri calendar; the first being the month of Ramadan. The Nusayri calendar was arranged by al-Khasibi, and for this reason it is called in *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad* the year of the *Muwahhidin* (Unitarians), who are "the noble sect of al-Khasibiyya al-Jiliyya."⁵⁴¹

In a discourse called the *Rastbashiyyah*, al-Khasibi extols the night of Sha'ban as a blessed night celebrated for the glory of *Fatir* (Fatimah), Hasan, Husayn, and Muhsin (a third son of Ali and Fatimah who died in infancy), who are the light and essence of Muhammad. Al-Khasibi cites Qur'an 44:2-3 to show that this night is blessed because in it, God revealed the Qur'an. To al-Khasibi, it is the night of power (Laylat al-Qadr), in which, Muslims maintain, Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad.

The Muslims celebrate the revelation of the Qur'an during the night of the 26th and 27th of Ramadan, not during Sha'ban as the Nusayris do. The Nusayris, desiring to stand apart from the rest of the Muslim community, give the celebration of this night a dogmatic meaning suited to their own extreme Shi'i beliefs. Thus, al-Khasibi interprets the Qadr to mean Muhammad, and the night to mean *Fatir* (Fatimah), Muhammad's daughter. Further, he interprets Qur'an 44:1-2—"We have revealed it [the Qur'an] on a blessed night... in that night is made distinct every affair of wisdom," —to refer to Hasan, Husayn, and Muhsin, through whom the legitimacy of the Imamah was established. Al-Khasibi considers Fatimah one of the Imam's, asserting that it is only through sheer confusion that she appeared to them in a feminine form.⁵⁴²

Here al-Khasibi is in fact reiterating a belief held by some ancient extremist Shi'i sects, the Alya'iyah, the Dhamiyyah, and the Mukhammisah, who maintain that the members of the family of the Prophet (that is, Muhammad, Ali, his wife Fatimah, and their sons, Hasan and Husayn) are gods, and that Fatimah (whom they call by the masculine form Fatir), is one of the Imams.⁵⁴³

Persian Festivals

The Nusayris celebrate two solemn festivals of Persian origin, the Nawruz and the Mihrajan. The feast of Nawruz and the Mihrajan (New Year) is celebrated in April. A very solemn and holy feast, it is the source of great merit to those who have received the faith (the Nusayris).⁵⁴⁴

The Nusayris celebrate this day because of their belief in the spiritual supremacy of the Persian over the Arabs. They believe that the Mana, Ali, appeared in the persons of Persian (Sassanid) kings, and that the Persians preferred the divine mystery thus revealed to them after the Arabs, Ali's own people rejected him. As discussed at length in chapter 27, the Nusayris' observance of the Nawruz reveals the Persian origin of the Nusayri religion.⁵⁴⁵

The Festival of Mihrajan is celebrated on 16 October. Although the *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad* refers to it as one of the finest of feasts, it contains no description of its observance or of its benefits to believers. This book does contain, however, two lengthy invocations describing the divinity of Ali and his appearance in the Persian periods, the second of which states clearly that the Mihrajan is a Persian holiday: "O great Lord Ali, this is a Persian day and a Bahman feast [Bahman is a Persian word for king], which you have instituted and revealed to your chosen ones, offering the Mihrajan to your creation in order that they may receive forgiveness by the knowledge of its inward and outward truth."⁵⁴⁶

Christian Festivals

The Nusayris celebrate many Christian's feasts, of which al-Tabarani, in *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, lists only one, Dhikr Laylat al-Milad (Remembrance of Christmas Eve).⁵⁴⁷ Sulayman al-Adani describes only the Christmas festivals, but he lists many other Christian's feasts observed by the Nusayris, including the Epiphany, Pentecost, Palm Sunday, and the feast of Saint John the Baptist, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Barbara, and Saint Mary Magdalene.⁵⁴⁸

The festival of Epiphany, which the Nusayris call *Ghattas* (Immersion), is celebrated on 6 January, following the custom of the Eastern Churches. It is the celebration of the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. Jesus was completely immersed in the water during His baptism, and for this reason the Christians, especially the Syrians and the Lebanese, call this festival "Ghattas," it is also for this reason that the Eastern Churches baptize by immersion — in the font in the case of an infant, or in a deep receptacle with an adult.⁵⁴⁹

The Nusayris have a tradition of adorning trees on the eve of the Epiphany, believing that by doing so they will receive anything they have prayed for. On their way back from the ceremony of immersion, they pick the branches of the myrtle. They dip these branches in water and put them in containers filled with corn, which they then place in various parts the house. They also bring in stones from their sacred sources of water and place them on fruit trees; this, they believe, will assure them of a bountiful harvest of fruit.⁵⁵⁰

The festival of Saint Barbara is celebrated on the 16 of October. Some Nusayris have a tradition of lightning bonfires in the village square or in special containers at home on the eve of this feast. On the same evening, young men gather and choose from among themselves one whom they call *Arandas* (the lion). They dress him in grotesque clothes and blacken his face with charcoal. Then they take him from house to house, shouting, “Biseyyat Barbara, biseyyat Barbara [supposedly the name of the Egyptian cat-headed goddess Bast]”⁵⁵¹ This feast is a combination of Christian and pagan traditions.

The Nusayris celebrate the feast of Christmas Eve (Dhikr of Laylat al-Milad) on the 24th of December according to one version of *Kitab Majmu’ al-Ayad*, and on the 25 December according to another version.⁵⁵² Their purpose in celebrating Christmas is to affirm their belief in the different manifestations of god, of which Ali was the final one. The Nusayris’ Christmas is outwardly Christian, but closer examination shows it to be a demonstration of their extremist Shi’i beliefs. Furthermore, we should not be misled by the Nusayri narrative of the birth of Jesus, based on the Qur’an, to conclude, as did Abd al-Rahman Badawi, that this narrative is Islamic. Badawi maintains that the Nusayris celebrate the birth of Jesus as a manifestation of God because he spoke like a grown-up, when a new born in the cradle. Badawi concludes the Nusayri celebration of the birth of Jesus is not Christian, but Islamic, and in full conformity with the story of the birth of Jesus as recorded in the Qur’an.⁵⁵³ This conclusion seems faulty, however. The Nusayris did utilize the Qur’anic rather than the Biblical narrative of the birth of Jesus, but they did so to affirm their own extremist belief in the different manifestations of God, which is not an Islamic belief. The *Kitab Majmu’ al-Ayad* provides evidence for this view.

According to this book of feasts, Christmas Eve falls on the 24 of December, the last day of the Greek year. On this night God manifested Himself through birth to the holy Virgin Mary. In the Qur’an 66:12, Mary is described as “Mary, daughter of Imran, who preserved her chastity, and into whose womb he breathed our Spirit. She believed in the word of her Lord, gave credence to His books, and was obedient.” To the Nusayris, however, Mary is none other than Aminah, the daughter of Wahb and the mother of the Lord Muhammad. In other words, in the Muhammdan period, Mary was manifested in the person of Aminah. Many Nusayris believe that this Mary — Aminah was also a manifested in *Fatir* (Fatimah), Muhammad’s daughter, because Muhammad reportedly addressed her once by saying, “Come in, O you who are the mother of her own father (Umm Abiha).” A more moderate interpretation is that the Prophet used this language merely to indicate that his daughter Fatimah was the mother of his grandsons, Hasan, Husayn, and Muhsin.⁵⁵⁴

The Nusayris belief that Muhammad's mother appeared in the form of Mary in the Christian period is affirmed by the prominent Nusayri writer Abu al-Husayn Ahmad ibn Ali al-Jilli. Al-Khasibi also speaks of the sanctity of Christmas Eve, in which Jesus Christ manifested himself: "On the hill where peace sojourns and pure water flows, Mary brought forth Jesus Christ, the Messiah, for whom I sacrifice myself and whom I love sincerely."⁵⁵⁵

The author of *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad* concludes his description of Christmas Eve by stating that ever since the Lord Christ spoke and manifested himself during the night, it has been sanctified and honoured.⁵⁵⁶ Although this narrative does not mention Ali by name, it does indicate that since Aminah, the mother of Muhammad was none other than Mary, the mother of Jesus, Muhammad is the manifestation of Jesus. In other words, Muhammad, the Ism of Ali in the Nusayri trinity, is also Jesus, who was the Ism of another: of the seven manifestations of God. As the Ism of Ali, Muhammad had to be born miraculously, like Jesus, or else the sequence of manifestations of God asserted by the Nusayris would have interrupted. That is why the author of *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad* considers Muhammad's mother homologous with the mother of Christ.

One prayer from the feast of Christmas Eve tells how, on the eve, Ali manifested himself in human form as a child and proved to men his eternity and divinity, as he had done before with different forms in his periodic manifestations. What is important is that Ali Manifested not only himself on the Christmas night, but also his name, Muhammad (who is his Soul, his Veil, and his Throne), and his Bab, Salman al-Farisi.⁵⁵⁷

Another Christmas Eve prayer seems to be more emphatic in stating that Ali appeared in the person of Jesus, and that, as the veil of Ali, Muhammad was manifested in the preceding prophets, including Moses and Jesus. Thus Ali, like his veil, Muhammad, became manifested in Jesus, who is intimately associated with the Nusayri trinity. The prayer contains invocations of Christian personages and describes rituals incomprehensible to any who are not familiar with Christian terminology.

The following prayer, written in very difficult Arabic (in one place it uses the Syriac term *Sulluq* [Ascension]), particularly illustrates the Christian elements in the Nusayri religion:

O Lord, I adjure you by the shining light of your awe-inspiring majesty and the tongue which utters mysteries of your wisdom and explains truths through the mouths of your saints. I adjure you by the by him who spoke miraculously in the cradle and raised the dead from the grave; by him who binds and looses, threatens and promises; by him whose mind cannot comprehend excepts by the knowledge and understanding supported by divine miracles and extracted from the universal elements of the divine world and transcendent spirit manifested in Yasu (Jesus) whose manifestation was Greek and whose speaking [in the cradle] was Jacobite, who appeared as Lord, was lifted up while he was veiled and concealed when he was crucified, and is the same to all those who see him. O Lord, my Master, I adjure you by the celebration of Easter, by the *Salluq* [Ascension of Jesus to the heaven], by the Anathemas [in assertion of the Christian orthodox faith, by the Epiphany, by the great sprinkling of water associated with the Epiphany, and by the innermost

[mystery] of Christmas Eve and in honouring it, that you purified the hearts of your saints by fire and spirit.

I adjure you by the glorification of the Great Cross and the Holy Mary and by what is said in Church; by the monks; by the Saint Simon and his light; by the Figs and Olives [Qur'an 95: 1]; by what was dwelt in Peter [probably the words of Christ delivering to him the Keys of the kingdom] and thy Saint George, who outdid him in the truth; by the crucifixion and Him who was lifted on the cross, by the gospel and him who reads it, by Christ and him who sees Him, by Him "Who is God in heaven and God on earth" [Qur'an 43: 84], there is no God but Him our Lord, the prince of Bees, Ali, who is manifest in John and Simon Peter, and no Hijab [veil] except our Lord Muhammad, who is manifest in Jesus, Moses, and Saint George, and no Bab except Salman. I adjure you by your self (for there is nothing greater than you) to bring us in full knowledge of you in every transmigration and revolution, inspire us with your guidance, confirm us in following your command, open for us the treasures of your bounty and knowledge; increase generously our livelihood in order to extend the same to our brethren and friends, and do not decrease it or offer it to us with a tight hand. Protect us from all evil and perils, you who control the affairs of heaven and earth, O benevolent and gracious, O Ali, O great.⁵⁵⁸

In essence, the prayer is in affirmation of the Nusayris' belief in Ali's divinity. The Christians terms and the names of saints it contains have been borrowed from the Eastern Churches of Syria, to assert the Nusayris' belief in the many manifestations of God in different periods of time, the last and the most important of which, of course, is Ali.

The various festivals celebrated by the Nusayris, whatever their origins, are transformed within the Nusayri culture into testaments of their belief in the divinity and eternity of Ali. It should be remembered that in the Middle Eastern societies, be they Islamic or Christian, religious dogma and doctrine plays a very insignificant role directing the peoples lives. Rather, it is the outward aspects of religion—traditions, customs, and ceremonies—that govern the lives of these people.

The importance of these various festivals as an affirmation of the Nusayris' popular beliefs can scarcely be overestimated. Given their importance, it is not surprising that during the seasons of these festivals, the Nusayris visit many *Ziyaras* (holy shrines) of their saints, there celebrating the great mystery, the secret of secrets, the consecration of wine, in a mass called "Quddas," the very word used by the Eastern Churches for the celebration of the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. This mass will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

Among the Christians, Muslims, and Yezidis (the so called devil worshippers), saint worship has exercised a great influence on the religious life of the people.⁵⁵⁹ This is true among the Nusayris also. They visit many holy shrines; some commemorating Biblical figures such as the Prophet Yunus (Jonah), Rubayl (Reuben), Saint Yuhanna (John), Saint Jirjis (George), and the Sayyida (the blessed Virgin Mary), while others commemorate Shi'i notables: Shaykh Badr al-Halabi, Ahmad al-Kirfas, a Nusayri holy man; Ja'far al-Tayyar, brother of Imam Ali and a Shi'i personage; and al-Arbayn, the forty Martyrs of Sebaste. These holy shrines and tombs are generally situated on hilltops, amid groves of evergreens and oak, with spring nearby, recalling the Canaanite shrines situated on high hills under evergreens. Lyde believes that

many of the Nusayri groves are very, very old, perhaps as old as the Canaanites. The shrine typically consists of one square room, topped with a white plastered dome, although some like that of Ja'far al-Tayyar, consist of three rooms.⁵⁶⁰

The Nusayris believe in the divine power of the holy men buried in these shrines to cure many diseases. Nusayris also take oaths by these shrines, which they take very seriously, firmly believing that a false oath leads to calamities.⁵⁶¹

Munir al-Sharif relates that one of the shrines in the village of Rabo, in the district of Masyaf, has a very narrow window. An oath taker whose veracity is in doubt is made to try and pass the window; if he has told a falsehood, he cannot pass through it. However, al-Sharif says, many Nusayris mock the miraculous power of the window; they commit immoral acts and then pass through the window purportedly proving that their denials about these acts were truthful.⁵⁶²

Other Nusayris believe that some of these shrines warded off bullets fired by the French. Still others, particularly young Nusayri men and women, look to the saints in the shrines to find them the right partner. Childless couples invoke the saints to grant them offspring; farmers pray to them for abundant crops; and householders ask for blessings on their homes.⁵⁶³

The Nusayri Mass

As noted in the last chapter, the celebration of the *Quddas* (mass), or consecration of wine, forms an integral part of observance of Nusayri festivals, and thus hold an important place in their religious system.

Since the Nusayris have no place of worship, like those of the Muslims, they celebrate their festivals and perform their *Quddas* in private homes or-out-of-the-way places.⁵⁶⁴ According Sulayman al-Adani, every rich Nusayri man is bound to celebrate one of three festivals every year with his family, relatives, and friends, and to bear the entire cost. The amount he spends on the food, drink, and entertainment on these occasions is a measure of his religious zeal.⁵⁶⁵

The consecration of wine is conducted with utmost secrecy. Watchmen are posted at the meeting place to make sure no stranger gets in. Lyde mentions that many times Nusayris would ask Christians living near their meeting place to leave their homes, because the Nusayris did not want them anywhere near the place where the wine was to be consecrated.⁵⁶⁶

Al-Adani tells us that the meetings are held in the evening and only in towns, because extreme secrecy is not practical in a village.⁵⁶⁷ Only the initiated male members of the community partake from this Nusayri mystery; women and children are prohibited from attending.

The celebration of the consecration of the wine is extremely important; this writer is convinced that nothing else in the whole Nusayri religious system so fully reveals the essence of their creed than their belief in the manifestation of their God Ali in the consecrated wine.

We have sources of information regarding the *Quddas*, or sacrament, and the prayers recited during their service. One is *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, by Sulayman al-Adani; the other is *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, the Nusayris' catechism. The information in the two sources is nearly identical except for some prayers which al-Adani had either abbreviated or merely mentions in passing. But the catechism is concerned not so much with the mechanic's of the celebration of the *Quddas* as with its mystical meaning and theological and connotation as a *sir* (mystery): the manifestation of the God Ali in the wine, which is called *Abd al-Nur* (the servant of light). Significantly, the concept of light is associated with the Persian *Nawruz* (New Year). The subject of the *Quddas* is covered by several questions in the catechism:

Question 76: What is the *Quddas*?

Answer: It is the consecration of wine, which is drunk in the mystery of the Naqib's and Najib's (religious rank of the Nusayri shayks)

Question 77: What is the *Qurban*?

Answer: It is the bread offered by the believers to the souls of their brethren, and for this reason the Quddas is read.

Question 79: What is the great mystery of God?

Answer: It is the sacrament of the flesh and blood which Christ offered to His disciples, saying, "Eat and drink thereof, for it is eternal life..."

Question 82: What is the mystery of the faith of the Unitarians? What is the secret of secrets and chief article of righteous?

Answer: It is the knowledge of God... It is the mystery of the vesting of our Lord [Ali] in the light [i.e., the eye of the sun and his manifestation in wine, his servant Abd al-Nur, the servant of light]...⁵⁶⁸

Question 91: What is the consecrated wine called which the believers drink?

Answer: It is called *Abd al-Nur* (servant of light).

Question 92: Why is it called Abd al-Nur?

Answer: Because God has manifested himself in the same.

Here follows a very important poem by al-Khasibi which associates the Nawruz with the manifestation of Ali in wine:

The Nawruz of truth is full of benefits and bounty.
It is realised by the allegiance of the most noble Hashimi (Ali)
It is the day God manifested His theophany in the
Persian period, before he did in the Arab period
He exalted the Persian period towards heaven,
Where they [Persians] saw His excellence.
And on that day Salsal [Salman al-Farisi] manifested
Himself with authority, who was conformable to an
Ancient One [Ali], the predecessor.
Drink, then, from the pure wine, for
It is the day whose light has shone through the clouds,
Namely, the day of al-Ghadir [the khumm Pond],
Where Muhammad
Intentionally referred to [Ali] as the all-knowing god and Lord. . . .⁵⁶⁹

We have elaborated on the Nusayri concept of light and its possible sources in chapter 28 and so shall not repeat that discussion here.⁵⁷⁰ It is worth emphasising, however, that the celebration of the Quddas by the Nusayris is an affirmation of their belief, not Jesus as Lord and Saviour as the Christians hold, but in Ali as God, who manifested Himself in wine. As noted earlier, the Nusayris believe Ali appeared in the Persian period in the persons of the Sassanid

kings before he appeared among the Arabs.⁵⁷¹ Thus the implication in this catechism is that the Persians are more favoured by the God Ali than Arabs, although Ali was a pure blooded Arab from the house of Hashim, to which Muhammad belonged. This belief in the spiritual superiority of the Persians over the Arabs allows as a corollary the belief that Nusayrism is far superior to the orthodox Islam, since Ali is the eternal God who was veiled in light, but appeared in the Muhammadan period and created Muhammad from the essence of his light.

There is a great, irreconcilable difference between orthodox Islam and Nusayrism. In Qur'an 24:35, God is the light of the heavens and the earth, in Nusayrism, Ali is the eternal light who manifested Himself in wine. To the Nusayris wine is a sacred substance, a personification of the God Ali. When he calls it *Abd al-Nur* (the servant of Light) al-Khasibi is actually considering it as a person. Thus because of this sacred nature, the Nusayris refrain from mentioning wine; they associate it exclusively with themselves. For this same reason, they glorify the grapevine.⁵⁷²

There are two versions of the celebration of Quddas, or consecration of wine, one given in *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, the other in *Kitab al-Bakhurah*. The order of the service is quite different in the two versions, although they contain some identical prayers. According to *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, the service begins with a prayer of direction, followed by the reading of the first Quddas, called *Quddas al-Isharah* (the Indication Mass). A second Quddas, containing the prayer of al-Khasibi quoted earlier as the answer to Question 92, is followed by several prayers and chapters from *Kitab al-Majmu'*. The partakers of the wine drink the mystery of the host in whose home the ceremony is conducted, and the mystery of the Imams, Naqibs, Najibs, Abd Allah ibn Saba' (a contemporary of Ali who was the first to proclaim his divinity), and the pillars of the Nusayri religion, such as al-Khasibi.⁵⁷³ In *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, the service begins with *Quddas al-Tib* (the Perfume Mass), *Quddas al-Bukhur* (the Incense Mass), and *Quddas al-Adhan* (the Mass of the Call to Prayer). They are followed by several prayers and then *Quddas al-Isharah*, which comes first in the order given in *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*.⁵⁷⁴

The two versions essentially agree, however, on the main purpose of the ceremony, which is the consecration and partaking of the wine. Indeed, the purpose of the celebration of the Quddas is to praise and glorify the God Ali and the Nusayri trinity of Ali, Muhammad, and Salman al-Farisi. It also reminds the people that the eternal God Ali is ever-present in the community in the form of wine, and that he is the only God.

Here follows a summary of al-Adani's account of Quddas in *Kitab al-Bakhurah*. It should be remembered that this mass is conducted during the Nusayri festivals in private homes, because the Nusayris have no places of worship like those of the Muslims.

When the day of festival comes, the people assemble at the house of the sponsor of the feast. The Imam takes his seat, and before him is placed a white cloth, on which are laid mahlab-berries, camphor, candles, and myrtle or olive branches, and a vessel filled with wine or raisin juice.⁵⁷⁵ Two *naqibs* (Nusayri religious officers) seat themselves on either side of the Imam, the

sponsor of the feast designates another Naqib to act as minister for the occasion, and then the sponsor kisses the hands of the Imam and the Naqibs.

The Naqib designated to conduct the service then rises and, placing his hand on his chest, bids the people good-evening. He asks them whether they want him to minister for them at the feast. When the people agree to this ministering, the Naqib kisses the group. Then he distributes the myrtle leaves while reciting the prayer called Myrtle-String. This prayer is actually an eulogy to some of the early Shi'i companions of Ali, including Sasaa ibn Sawhan and Ammar ibn Yasir. The prayer likewise is also recited by those present, who rub the myrtle leaves and smell them. Afterward the officiating Naqib takes a bowl of water, puts in the mahlab-berries and the camphor, and reads Quddas al-Tib. In this Quddas, those assembled are enjoined to put away hatred and malice from their hearts and remember that Ali is ever present among them, and that he is the omniscient God, to whom sincere worship is due.

The minister (or officiating Naqib) then pours a spoonful of perfume on the Imam's hand and passes the bowl to another Naqib who pours perfume upon the hands of those present. The minister then reads the prayer called Sitr-Rayhan, based on Qur'an 21:31 and 3:43. Those present recite these same passages while washing their faces. Then the minister takes a censor, stands up, and recites the second Quddas of the Bakhur. This mass refers to the wine as Abd al-Nur, and describes it as a mystery. The believers are instructed to incense their cups and light their lamps. They are told to believe that the person of Abd al-Nur is lawful to them and unlawful to others. Al-Adani comments that wine is thus presented as an image of Ali.

After this, the minister incenses the Imam, the two Naqibs seated at his side, and then each of those present while reciting the Sitr al-Bakhur. The receivers of the incense likewise recite this prayer, invoking the names of the Prophet Muhammad and the Imams. When they finish reciting, the minister takes the cap of wine in his hand and, rising, recites the third Quddas, al-Adhan. This service is an exaltation of Ali, the Mana, his wife *Fatir* (Fatimah); their sons; Muhammad as the veil of Ali; and Salman as his Bab. This is a succinct illustration of the Nusayris' extremist belief. This prayer states that at the time of call to prayer, Salman proclaimed that there is no God but Ali, no Veil but the Lord Muhammad, and no Bab but Salman al-Farisi, and the Lord Muhammad as Ali's Veil, is bound to Him, His sent prophet, His revealed book (the Qur'an), His great throne and firm seat.

The believers are also enjoined to say this prayer, that they may enter the Garden, delivered from bodily grossness and corporeal darkness, and behold their glorious Lord, Ali. The officiating Naqib then presents the cup he has filled to the Imam, and presents another to each Naqib. They drink the wine and recite the following prayer: "I testify that my master and yours is the Prince of Bees, Ali ibn Abi Talib, who is unchanging and imperishable and does not proceed from one state to another. I testify that his Hijab is the Lord Muhammad and his Bab is the Lord Salman, and that there is no separation between the Mana, the Ism, and the Bab."

The minister then says, "Brother, take this cup in your right hand and implore your right hand and implore your Lord Ali ibn Talib to help and support you." To this each one replies, "Give, O

my brother, that which is in your right hand, and implore your Lord and creator to help and guide you in the affairs of your religion. May God make it to flourish by the sanctity of Muhammad and the members of his family.”

Then they kiss each others hands. Afterwards the minister rises and, placing his hands upon his breast, he says, “May God grant you a good evening, O brothers, and a good morning, O people of the faith. Forgive us any errors and negligence, for man is so called only because he lapses into error. Absolute perfection belongs only to our lord Ali, the Glorious and Omniscient.” He then kisses the ground and sits down.

At this point the Imam stands to officiate. Facing the assembly, he says, “May God grant you a good evening, O brothers, and a pleasant morning, O people of the faith. It is your pleasure that I should minister to you on this blessed day on behalf of the sponsor?” He kisses the ground, and, doing the same, the assembly salutes him, saying, “We have accepted you as our lord and shaykh (chief).” The Imam then recites the following tradition:

It is reported on the authority of Ja’far al-Sadiq, the *Samit* (mute) and *Natiq* (proclaimer), that he said, “At prayer time it is forbidden to take or to give, to sell or to buy, to talk or gossip, to make noise or tell stories over the myrtle (considered a religious symbol). Let every man then be silent, listen, attentive, and saying Amen.

Know, O my brothers, that if anyone bears a black turban on his head (meaning Muslims) or a *thimble* (Kustaban) on his finger (indicating Christian bishops, who wore rings on their fingers), or has at his waist a two-edged sword (indicating the Druzes and Isma’ilis, who kill with poisoned knives), his prayer is not valid, because the greatest sin is the one against the myrtle. It is the duty of the messenger to deliver what he has been charged with.”

At the end of the prayer, those present prostrate themselves, kiss the ground, raise their heads, and say, “To God, may he be exalted, be your obedience, O our shaykh and lord.”

At this point, the Imam recites what is termed Tabari, a condemnation by Muhammad ibn Nusayr of those Sunni Muslims whom the Nusayris consider their accursed enemies, among whom are the first three rightly guided Khulafa’, Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman. After adjuring Ali, to make this an hour of favour, acceptance, and forgiveness for those present, the Imam says, “It is related of Abu Shu’ayb Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Abd al-Bakri al-Namiri that he said, ‘Whoever desires salvation from the glow of infernal fire, let him say, “O lord, curse that company of iniquitous men, oppressors, and those who turned against Ali and who shall end up in hell. Chief among these men are the accursed Abu Bakr, iniquitous adversary Umar ibn al-Khattab, and the Satan, Uthman ibn Affan. Others are Talhah, Sa’d, Khalid ibn Walid; Mu’awiyah and his son Yazid; al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi, the Wretched; Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, the Stupid; and Harun al-Rashid, the Abbasid khalifah. May the curse of God rest upon them until the Day of Judgement, when Jahannam (hell) is asked whether it has been filled and it replies, “There is room for more.”’”

Ibn Nusayr's condemnation of all the enemies of the Nusayris continues, naming such enemies as Ishaq al-Ahmar, founder of the Ishaqiyyah sect; Ismail ibn Khallad and other prominent Sufis, including the two shaykhs Ahmad al-Rifai and Abd al-Qadir al-Ghilani; the four Islamic schools of jurisprudence, the Hanafis, Shafis, Malikis, and Hambalis; and every Jew and Christian, including the Maronites, who follow the Patriarch John Marun. In brief, this condemnation is directed against all those who regard Ali as begotten rather than divine and subject to natural needs such as eating and drinking. The condemnation ends with Ibn Nusayr entreating Ali to curse all those who, while feeding themselves on his bounties as God, worshipped other gods. Ibn Nusayr beseeches Ali to rid the Nusayris completely of those accursed enemies as flesh is stripped from bone, by the sanctity of Ali, Muhammad, and Salman, and by the mystery of Ain, Mim, Sin. Apparently, the latter part of this condemnation is an interpolation by a later Nusayri because both al-Rifai and al-Gilani lived more than two centuries after Ibn Nusayr.

The service does not end here, but continues with more drinking of wine and the recitation of many more prayers, the longest of which is Quddas al-Isharah. This indication of Mass epitomizes the whole theological concept of the Nusayris. It proclaims the divine attributes of Ali, who is alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the personification of all the Biblical patriarchs from Adam and Shamum al-Safa (Simon Cephas, or Peter), the embodiment of religion and Islam.

The Quddas al-Isharah is followed by the recitation of still more prayers and poems, including a number by al-Khasibi. Two of these prayers, the Right-Hand Invocation and the Left-Hand Invocation, are contained in *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*. It is not clear what source al-Adani followed, but it seems that he omitted many prayers in his account, recording only what he thought was most necessary.

The ceremony, as described by al-Adani, ends when all the prayers, including the Right-Hand and Left-Hand Invocations, have been recited. The Imam closes by saying, "This homage to God and to you, O brethren, and to all present." Then he and each member of the assembly kisses the ground and the hands of the persons to the right and the left. They rise and uncover their heads, and the Imam directs the assembly to recite the *Fatihah* (opening chapter of the Qur'an), so that the Ottoman state will fall, the rulers of the Muslims perish, and the Khasibiyyah — Nusayriyyah sect triumph. At the end of the mass, the ministers rise and place food in front of those present, giving a good part of it to the Imam, who distributes some of it to those sitting near him. Then all eat and finally disperse.⁵⁷⁶

The Christian elements in the Nusayri religion are unmistakable. They include the concept of trinity; the celebration of Christmas, the consecration of the Qurban, that is, the sacrament of the flesh and blood which Christ offered to His disciples, and, most important, the celebration of Quddas. How did these Christian elements find their way into the Nusayri religion? Are the Nusayris Christian converts to extreme Shi'ism? Rev. Samuel Lyde (d. 1860), who worked among the Nusayris, states that they received their sacraments from Christianity.⁵⁷⁷ Father Henry Lammens (d. 1937) who wrote at length on the Nusayris goes a step further, asserting

(in an article entitled “Les Nosairis Furent-Ils Chrétiens?” Paris, 1901]) that the Nusayris were formerly Christians who converted to extreme Shi’ism.⁵⁷⁸ Lammens wrote this article in response to René Dussaud, who, in *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis* (Paris, 1900), rejected the hypothesis that the Nusayris were of Christian origin. Dussaud maintains that the trinity of the Nusayris is a vestige of the divine trinities worshipped by the Syro-Phoenicians. Furthermore, this is not a real trinity, says Dussaud, for Muhammad and Salman are regarded as lesser beings than Ali. He gives as evidence the phrase “Ali Most High,” used by the Nusayris.⁵⁷⁹

As to the celebration of the sacraments and the consecration of wine, Dussaud rejects any Christian influence on the grounds that there are only superficial similarities. Furthermore, he states, the Nusayris do not use the two elements, bread and wine, that characterize the Christian Mass; they use only wine in their service. Thus, Dussaud concludes, one should not pay attention to “certain Nusyri writings” whose authors attempt to show the excellence of the Nusayri religion by identifying it with Christianity.⁵⁸⁰

Dussaud also observes that the tradition of Christmas was transmitted to the Nusayris through the Muslims, not the Christians. With respect to the Christian names, Dussaud remarks that such names are also common among the Yezidi tribesmen. His final argument rests in the theory of “religious syncretism, which postulates that two religions living side by side “have a fatal influence on each other.” This, he avers, supports his conclusion that the Nusayris were originally Muslims.⁵⁸¹

Lammens disagrees with most of Dussaud’s opinions. He states that he personally visited four Nusayri areas and found many vestiges of Christian churches, sculptures, inscriptions, crucifixes, and tombstones. Lammens does not produce any convincing evidence that the Nusayri trinity is based on the Christian trinity; he makes a rather weak argument that while the author of Nusayri catechism reveals the incoherence and inconsistency of his ideas, this is characteristic of all Nusayri writing. To Lammens, such inconsistency is insufficient reason to deny the Christian origin of the Nusayri trinity.

Lammens also states that on one of his visits to the house of a Nusayri shaykh, someone brought a jar of oil, intended for a sick person, for the shaykh to bless. Lammens was able to jot down part of the blessing the shaykh said over the oil. One phrase, “The Messiah, who brought dead persons back to life. . .” led Lammens to compare it with the Christian sacrament of Extreme Unction.

Lammens also believes that the initiation ceremony of the Nusayris has replaced Christian baptism. According to the Nusayris the initiate becomes the son of the initiator, creating between the two a spiritual relationship identical to a real blood kinship, prohibiting the initiate from marrying the daughter of the initiator because she has become like his real sister.

Finally Lammens presents as proof of the Christian origins of the Nusayris their observance of traditional Christian feasts such as the Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost, and the feast days of some saints, including John the Baptist, John Chrysostom, Mary Magdalene, and Barbara.

Moreover, says Lammens, Christian names such as Matthew, Helen, Gabriel, and Catherine are common among the Nusayris.

In conclusion, Lammens maintains that the Nusayris were originally Christians who did not bend under the pressure of Muslim conquest but stuck firmly to the Christian ideas and traditions they had adopted very early in the Christian era. The Muslim customs evident among the Nusayris, he believes, were superimposed on this Christian framework as the result of dogmas spread by the Isma'ilis and Persian Shi'i.⁵⁸²

Abu Musa al-Hariri dismisses Lammens' argument on the grounds that he did not consult a single Nusayri source, but based his opinions solely on physical evidence of Christian practices — Christian ruins and vestiges of Christian faith — observed on his visit to Nusayri villages, evidence that al-Hariri dismisses as misleading.

Al-Hariri states that many villages in the Middle East once had Christian inhabitants who were, for one reason or another, evicted and replaced by non-Christians (most likely Muslims). A man like father Lammens, with his European mentality, says al-Hariri, is unable to understand this pattern of successive evictions and settlements common to the Middle East.⁵⁸³

Abd al-Rahman Badawi agrees with Dussaud that the Nusayri celebration of Christmas is inspired not by the Christian but by the Muslim tradition, based on the Qur'anic narrative of the birth of Jesus. He observes that the Nusayris celebrate the feast of Christmas because Jesus manifested Himself on Christmas Day and spoke in the cradle, in accordance with the Qur'anic, not the Biblical, narrative.

Furthermore, Mary is portrayed in the Qur'an as the daughter of Imran and has no relation to the Mary of the Bible; the Nusayris believe that Mary was none other than Aminah, the mother of Muhammad. Finally, Badawi asserts that the Nusayri invocation of Christmas is addressed to the God Ali and not to Jesus. He concludes that the Nusayris' celebration of Christmas is free from Christian influence.⁵⁸⁴

Whether the Nusayris were originally Christians or not, the fact that their religious system and traditions contain many Christian elements cannot be overlooked. Although it may be argued that Father Lammens fails to produce convincing evidence for many of his views, he does pinpoint a significant weakness in Dussaud's argument when he questions the latter's assertion that the reason for many Christian elements in the religious traditions of the Nusayris is "religious syncretism." What Dussaud means by this is that since the Nusayris lived side by side with their Greek and Maronite Christian neighbours for many centuries, they were likely to have been influenced by Christian tradition. Lammens forcefully retorts that the Isma'ilis, and especially the Druzes, also had prolonged and close contact with Maronite Christians. Why, he asks, didn't Dussaud's "religious syncretism" affect them?⁵⁸⁵

Dussaud's "religious syncretism" theory is further undermined by the fact that the Nusayris, like the Druzes, are very secretive about their religion and do not divulge anything to strangers. Both groups are closed religious communities. Why, then, should the Druzes show so little evidence of Christian influence and the Nusayris show so much?

Our own study has shown that the Nusayris are one of the ancient Ghulat, or extremist Shi'i sects, founded by Abu Shu'ayb Muhammad ibn Nusayr, a follower of the eleventh Imam, Hasan al-Askari (d. 873). Ibn Nusayr taught that al-Askari was God, and that he believed in the transmigration of souls, and declared incest and homosexuality to be commendable and lawful. These beliefs led al-Askari to condemn and renounce Ibn Nusayr.⁵⁸⁶ Although the Nusayri sect takes its name from Ibn Nusayr, it is also known by other names such as al-Namiriyyah, al-Khasibiyyah, and al-Jiliyyah.⁵⁸⁷

The Nusayris, Sunni, and Twelver Shiites

Outwardly, the Nusayris, like the rest of the Ghulat, seem to be an Ithna Ashari (Twelver) sect; Shi'ah who believe in the divine authority of twelve Imams. Like the Twelvers, the Nusayris believe that Ali and his descendants, the Imams, are the only legitimate heirs and successors to the Prophet of Islam in governing the Muslim community. They maintain that the Imamah is divine office that only Ali (ra), whom the Rasul appointed as his successor, should occupy. However, the Nusayris and other Ghulat differ from the moderate Twelvers on many fundamental issues, paramount among them the deification of Ali.

To the Ghulat, including the Nusayris, Ali is God, the very God of the Bible and the Qur'an, who created the heavens and the earth. They maintain that this God manifested Himself in this world seven times, the last time as Ali. The Nusayris also believe that He is manifested in sacramental wine, which they call *Abd al-Nur* (the servant of light).

The Nusayris asserted that this God created Muhammad from the light of his essence and made him His Name, and reflection of his essence. They also believe in a trinity of Ali, Muhammad, and Salman al-Farisi. And they share with other Ghulat, especially the Ahl-i Haqq (or Ali Ilahis), belief in metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. Finally, they believe that the five persons who constitute the family of the Rasul are deities. These beliefs separate the Nusayris from moderate Shiites and demonstrate that their creed is a syncretism of the astral pagan religious system of the Harranians, Christianity, and extreme Shi'ism.

We have shown in earlier chapters that the Nusayris does not share the Muslim emphasis on fulfilling Islamic religious obligations, such as prayer and fasting in the month of Ramadan and pilgrimage to Makkah. They have no mosques or mu'azzins, as the Muslims do, instead conduct their meeting in private homes, most often in the homes of their shaykhs. Moreover, they consider Sunni Muslims to be their enemies and pray for their damnation.

Like the rest of the Ghulat, the Nusayris are very secretive about their religious practices and beliefs, refusing absolutely to divulge them to strangers. This secretiveness has led outsiders to accuse them of nocturnal sexual orgies.⁵⁸⁸ But since no outsiders have ever been admitted to these nocturnal meetings, and since the reports of sexual misconduct came from enemies of the Nusayris, they should be considered groundless calumnies meant to besmirch the name of the Nusayris, who are hated by the Sunni as heretics.

The former Nusayri Sulayman al-Adani does state, however, that one branch of the Nusayris, the Kalazis, have a custom that stands to support such rumours: when one Imam visits another, the host is expected to offer his wife as a bed partner to his guest. Al-Adani says that the Kalazis believe anyone violating this practice will be forbidden to enter paradise. They seem to base this practice on a figurative interpretation of Qur'an 33:49, which states, "Prophet, we have made lawful to you the wives to whom you have granted dowries... and the other women who gave themselves to you, and whom you wished to take in marriage." Al-

Adani goes on to say that when he visited a shaykh from a village near Antioch; woman (whom he does not identify) entered his room at night and lay down beside him, reminding him of his solemn and imperative duty.⁵⁸⁹

Closely related to the secrecy with which the Nusayris surround their religious beliefs and ceremonies are the use of *Taqiyyah* (dissimulation) and of conventional signs which suggest a connection between freemasonry and Nusayrism.

The *Taqiyyah* is a strategy by which a person is permitted to conceal, lie about, and deny his true religious beliefs, and even to profess the beliefs of his adversaries, in order to escape persecution or save his life. The practice of *Taqiyyah*, which dates back to the earliest period of Islam and was once used by many different Muslim sects, has come to be exclusively connected with the Shi'ah. The reason is that the Shi'ah, more than any other sect in Islam, uphold this practice. Indeed, ancient and contemporary Muslim writers consider the Ghulat (the Nusayris included) to be subversive elements whose objectives is to destroy Islam and Arabism. Ibn Hazm accuses the Persians of deliberately creating the different Ghulat sects in order to destroy Islam. He states that when the Muslim Arabs occupied Persia and converted the Persians to Islam, the Persians lost their state and power to the Arabs, whom they considered inferior to themselves. As a result of this calamitous loss, the Persians became vindictive and went on to fight against Islam. Some of them, who had embraced Islam hypocritically, began to lure the Shi'i by pretending that, like them, they loved the family of the Rasul and decried the injustice done to Ali by his enemies, who had denied his exclusive right to the Imamah. In this manner, says Ibn Hazm, the Persians were able to inculcate the Shi'ah with heretical teachings and eventually lure them out of the domain of Islam.⁵⁹⁰ This same idea is expressed by contemporary Sunni Muslim writers, who refer to the anti-Arab and anti-Islamic attitude of the Persian converts to Islam as *Shu'ubiyyah*, meaning the movement which denigrates that privileged religious and cultural position of the Muslim Arabs. These writers affirm that the *Shu'ubiyyah's* objective is to destroy both Islam and the Arab entity.⁵⁹¹

Taqiyyah was allegedly sanctioned by the Imams, especially Ja'far al-Sadiq, who reportedly said, "the *Taqiyyah* is of my religion and that of my forefathers; he who has no *Taqiyyah* has no religion." Al-Sadiq also asserted on another occasion, "The believer shall be raised to the highest spiritual state by four qualities: faithfulness, truthfulness, decorum, and *Taqiyyah*."⁵⁹² To the Shi'ah, *Taqiyyah* is the religion of God, and protection is His sword, without which He could not be worshipped. God could not be better worshipped than by *Taqiyyah*; thus, it is an essential part of their religion, and neglecting it is the same as neglecting prayer.⁵⁹³

To the Nusayris, the *Taqiyyah* is a very serious matter. They are admonished to keep their religious beliefs and practices absolutely secret from outsiders. We have already pointed out that, according to *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, the Nusayris are not supposed to reveal the secrets of their religion except to their brethren. We have also shown that the neophyte makes a solemn oath not to betray the secret of his religion; else he will be punished by death. Indeed, in *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq constantly tells his

interlocutor to keep secret the “mysteries of God,” and the “knowledge of God, which God has kept secret from His Angels.”⁵⁹⁴

When they are in the company of members of other sects, especially Sunni Muslims, the Nusayris profess similar views in order to escape embarrassment or harassment. They swear to the Sunni that, like them, they fast and pray. Then enter a mosque or masjid with Sunnis and pretend to be praying. They genuflect and prostrate themselves and seem to be reciting prayer, when in reality they are cursing the first three rightly guided khulafa', Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman. They justify such behaviour by the metaphor; they are the body, and the other sects are clothing, and whatever clothing man may put on will not harm him. In fact, they seem to believe that anyone who does not dissemble in this manner is a fool. However, it is very serious matter for a Nusayri to abandon his religion or reveal its secrets. According to al-Khasibi, “Whosoever betrays our testimony is forbidden our garden.”⁵⁹⁵

The Nusayris seem to interpret the Islamic Jihad as a form of Taqiyyah, concealing their faith from non-Nusayris, even if such concealment exposes them to grave danger.⁵⁹⁶ Obviously, the reason for such strict emphasis on the Taqiyyah is the historical religious conflict between the Nusayris and orthodox Muslims, who consider the Nusayris to be infidels.

Like the rest of the Ghulat and Batini (esoteric) sects, the Nusayris form a secret society and are classified as such by some Western writers like Heckethorn and Springett.⁵⁹⁷ Springett, a Freemason, attempts to establish a connection between the ancient esoteric sects of the East, especially the Nusayris of Syria and the freemasonic movement.⁵⁹⁸ He seems to base this idea on the conventional signs the Nusayris use to recognise one another. Springett's attempt to connect Freemasonry with the Nusayris is not novel. He derives his idea from the accounts of Rev. Samuel Lyde and from Salisbury's translation of al-Adani's *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, which he has copied. Other Western writers have alluded to the conventional signs used by the Nusayris, without specifying these signs. F. Walpole, who visited Syria in the first half of the nineteenth century, states that the *Ansayri* (Nusayris) have signs and questions by which they salute and examine each other as a means of recognizing one another. Walpole says that these signs are little used and known only to a few Nusayris, however, and he does not indicate their nature.⁵⁹⁹ Victor Langlois also states that the Nusayris have conventional signs by which they recognise each other, but, like Walpole, he does not describe these signs.⁶⁰⁰ It was left to Sulayman al-Adani, a Nusayri convert to Christianity, to provide specific examples of these conventional signs. He states that when a stranger (looking for a relative) comes among his fellow believers, the Nusayris, he inquires, “I have a relative, do you know him?” They ask, “What is his name?” He says, “Husayn.” They follow up, saying, “Ibn Hamdan.” He answers, “al-Khasibi.” Thus, through question and answer, the stranger is recognised as a Nusayri by the naming of Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi, the great apostle of Nusayrism. The second conventional sign of recognition is similar. The Nusayris ask the stranger who is looking for a relative among them: “How many folds has the turban of your uncle?” If he answers that it has sixteen folds, they receive him as one of them. In the third case, the Nusayris ask the stranger, “If your uncle is thirsty, from where do you give him water to drink?” The correct answer is “From the fountain of Ali the divine.” The fourth sign is also a question: “If your uncle relieved himself what will you give him (to wipe himself with)?” The response should be, “The beard of

Mu'awiyah.”⁶⁰¹ A fifth question asks: “If your uncle were lost, how would you find him?” The answer is, “By al-Nisba,” which in this context could only mean tracing the relationship of the uncle to the host of apostles of Nusayrism mentioned in chapter 4, *al-Nisba*, of *Kitab al-Majmu'*.⁶⁰² The seventh sign takes the form of a riddle: “Four and two fours, three and two, and twice these numbers — in your religion, what is the answer? “The answer is, “In al-Musafarah.” The *Musafarah* (Journeying), forms the thirteenth chapter of *Kitab al-Majmu'*. It mentions disciples of al-Khasibi, divided into three groups, each from a different country. If one considers the numbers of this puzzle, four and two fours make twelve, and three and two make five, for a total of seventeen, which, added to twice that number, yields a total of fifty-one.⁶⁰³ If the stranger has guessed this number, he is further asked to state the groups into which these are divided, where they are stationed, and what they do. If he states, in accordance with the Surah of al-Musafarah, that the fifty-one stand at the gate of the city of Harran, and that seventeen of them are from Iraq, seventeen from al-Sham (Syria), and seventeen are hidden or unknown, and that their duty is to receive justly and render justly, he received as a genuine Nusayri.⁶⁰⁴ It is in these signs that Springett tried to find a connection between Freemasonry and Nusayrism. He states, “Here we have in all probability, the source of the Masonic custom of ‘lettering, or halving’ passwords in perambulating the lodge during certain ceremonies.”⁶⁰⁵ Lyde states that in their books the Nusayris use the double interlacing triangle, or seal of Solomon, also used by Freemasons, but he provided no source.⁶⁰⁶

The relation between the modern Freemasonry and the ancient esoteric cults of the East requires more investigation, which lies beyond the boundaries of this book. Suffice it to say that the connection between the ancient cults of the Assassins, the Isma'ilis, and the Templars is more than accidental. Von Hammer indicates many points of similarity among these groups, including the white mantle and red cross of the templars.⁶⁰⁷ Lyde states that the Nusayris dress in white and that they are fond of red jackets and red handkerchiefs. He further states that there is a degree of Freemasonry called that of Templars. The Templars lived next to these secret sects, including the Nusayris of Syria, and must have been influenced by their customs and tradition.⁶⁰⁸ In investing the sources of Masonic tradition and ritual, Springett affirms, one should look to Asia in general and to Syria in particular.⁶⁰⁹

The Nusayris have been denounced by Sunni Muslims as infidels. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) issued a juristic opinion condemning the Nusayris as infidels. He stated, “Those people who are called Nusayriyyah, together with the Qaramitah, are greater infidels than the Jews and Christians; nay, they are greater infidels than many polytheists, and their harm to the nation of Muhammad is greater than that of infidel Turks and Franks. They appear to be ignorant Muslim lovers of *Ahl al-Bayt* (the family of the prophet), but in reality they do not believe in God, His Messenger (Muhammad), or His book (the Qur'an). Nor do they believe in reward and punishment, the Garden (Paradise) or Hell, or in any messenger who preceded Muhammad.”⁶¹⁰

The Ghulat have also been condemned by twelve Shi'ah for their extreme beliefs. Among these Shi'ah we may cite Ibn Babuwayh al-Qummi (d. 991) who, although he does not mention the Nusayris specifically, condemns all Ghulat as “infidels and worse than the Jews, Christians, and polytheists.”⁶¹¹

Ibn Shahr Ashub (d. 1192) condemned the Nusayris as *nihilists* (Ibahiyya), saying, “Muhammad ibn Nusayr revived *ghulu* (extremism) by claiming that the most High God is Ali. The band of Nusayris who followed him are nihilists who relinquished Islamic worship and religious duties and permitted immoral and forbidden acts.”⁶¹²

A modern writer, Abd al-Husayn Mahdi al-Askari, avers that the Nusayris should not be considered Shi'i as long as “They renounce the Ithna Ashari Shi'ah's and their beliefs.”⁶¹³ In recent times, however, some Sunni and Ithna Ashari writers have tended to consider the Nusayris to be “true Muslims,” either because they were persecuted or in conformity with the true spirit of Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Hajjaj Amin al-Husayni, the Grand Mufti of Palestine (d. 1974), issued a juristic opinion in 1936 calling on Muslims to cooperate with the Nusayris. He stated, “These Alwis (Nusayris) are Muslims, and it is the duty of all the Muslims to cooperate with them and stop antagonizing each other for reasons of religion... because they (the Nusayris) are brothers who have common roots and interests with the Muslims and, according to Islamic brotherhood, Muslims should love others what they love for themselves.”⁶¹⁴

Munir al-Sharif, who lived for many years among the Nusayris and visited their villages, especially in and around Latakia, states that the Alawis (Nusayris) are a Muslim sect who continue to read the Qur'an with great respect, and that their rituals are the same as those of the Muslims, although they “have no mosques and maintain some of the ignorant extremist beliefs among them.”⁶¹⁵

It is evident that although al-Sharif considers the Nusayris to be Muslims, he admits that they have no mosques and that they harbour extremist religious beliefs; thus his statement confirms what has been said earlier, that the Nusayris are Ghulat who lie outside the pale of orthodox Islam.

Another writer, al-Shaykh Mahmud al-Salih, considers the Nusayris a true Shi'i Muslim sect and says that everything written about them by orientalists or other writers is sheer fabrication.⁶¹⁶

In 1956, Muhammad Rida Shams al-Din, a Shi'i living in Lebanon, was delegated by the highest Twelver Shi'i authority in al-Najaf (Iraq) to go among the Nusayris and study their conditions and religious beliefs. Shams al-Din visited the Nusayris and wrote an account in which he tried to portray the Nusayris as true Shi'i Muslims, although he remarks with obvious regret that he found the Nusayris to be lax regarding Islamic religious duties such as prayer and pilgrimage. He also notes that the Nusayris have no mosques, but excuses them on the grounds of poverty and politics, by which he means that the Syrian government is against them.⁶¹⁷

Several Nusayri writers have also written in defense of their people and religious beliefs. One of these is Arif al-Sus, who tried to show that the Nusayris are Shi'i Muslims who believe in God and His apostles, and in the *Walayah* (vicegerency) of Ali as the “brother’ and cousin of the

Prophet. Al-Sus further states that the Nusayris observe all the Muslim religious duties, such as prayer, pilgrimage to Makkah, and the offering of zakah.⁶¹⁸

Another Nusayri, Abd al-Rahman al-Khayyir, wrote several articles defending the Nusayris as true Muslims, although he admits that many superstitions have crept into their beliefs because of their cultural decline and manipulation by their shaykhs. However, al-Khayyir relates an incident which shows that as far back as the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Nusayri had no mosque and did not perform the pilgrimage to Makkah. He states that in 1838 a prominent Nusayri, Shaykh Abd al-Al, known as Hajj Mualla, went to Makkah to perform the pilgrimage. On his way back from Syria (then under the rule of Muhammad Ali, viceroy of Egypt), Hajj Mualla stopped in Egypt and obtained permission to build a mosque in this village.⁶¹⁹

In 1938, the magazine *al-Nahda* published a special issue about the Nusayris in which some Nusayri authors wrote articles in defence of their people as true Muslims. One of these writers, Ahmad Sulayman Ibrahim, lamented the bad luck of his people. He says they were constantly persecuted, for no reason other than that “we were and will ever be in relation to Islam as the roots are in relation to the trunk.”⁶²⁰ In this same issue of *al-Nahda* another writer, Muhammad Yasin, emphatically states that the Nusayris are Muslim Shi’i and seems greatly surprised by those who say that they are not Muslims.⁶²¹

In addition to these defences, Nusayri religious leaders issued several declarations to prove their innate Islamism. Perhaps they were encouraged by the juristic opinion of the Grand Mufti al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni, which affirmed they were true Muslims.

In 1936, Nusayri religious men published a pamphlet in which they stated emphatically that the Nusayris were Shi’i Muslims, and that any Nusayri who did not recognize Islam as his religion and the Qur’an as his holy book would not be considered a Nusayri according to the *Shari’ah* (Islamic law).⁶²²

In 1938 Nusayri religious leaders issued a proclamation entitled, “Decidedly, religion with God is Islam.” In it, they stated that their religion was Islam, according to the Ja’fari Theological School, named in honour of the Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq. In June 1956, after twenty days of deliberation with the Nusayri religious men, the Mufti of Syria agreed to license Nusayri religious men to teach their faith and allowed them to wear religious garb like other Muslim religious men. But the most significant proclamation was that issued by Nusayri religious men at their meeting in 1392/1972. In this proclamation they elaborated on their articles of their faith, their belief in God, the office of Imamah, the Qur’an, the Sunnah, eschatology, and other doctrines. As a matter of fact, these Nusayri religious men reiterated the Twelver Shi’i doctrines and affirmed that they held the same beliefs. The proclamation was signed by eighty Nusayri religious men.⁶²³

The Nusayri identification with true Islam was further strengthened by President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria. In the mid-1970s, after only a few years in power, al-Asad asked Syrian Sunni Muslim

religious men to declare him a true Muslim, which they did. He also persuaded Lebanese Shi'i religious men to declare the Nusayris true Muslims.⁶²⁴ Furthermore, the Nusayri-controlled Syrian government published a book to prove that the Nusayri community was an inseparable part of the main body of Islam. This book was distributed on a grand scale by various government agencies. It was followed by the publication of an edition of the Qur'an carrying a picture of al-Asad on its front page, which the people called "al-Asad Qur'an." In the meantime, al-Asad made a change in the Syrian constitution, inserting a new article stating, "Islam shall be the religion of the head of the state."⁶²⁵

One might ask why the Nusayris have this penchant for identifying themselves with Islam. If the Nusayris are true Orthodox Muslims, why is there urgency to prove it? Our study of the history and religion of the Nusayris shows they were not and still are not regarded by Sunnis and Twelver Shi'ah's as true Muslims, despite the efforts of some writers to exonerate them heterodoxy.

In the 1930s, under French mandate, the Nusayris stated they were not Muslims and declared the Sunnis their enemies. Some of them, however, witnessing the rise of Arab nationalism and the liberation of Syria at the end of World War II, attempted to identify themselves with Arab nationalism and true Islam to escape alienation and persecution by the Sunni Muslims. Some of the more prominent Nusayris must have believed that identification with true Islam would assure them of positions in the Syrian government and would expedite their rise to power. When they finally achieved control of the government in 1971, when Hafiz al-Asad became the first Nusayri president of Syria, the Nusayris were still considered heretics by the Sunni Muslim majority in Syria, as well as opponents of both Arab nationalism and Islam.

In order to protect their position and power, the Nusayri rulers resorted to secularisation and socialism as a means of diminishing the role of Islam and the position of the Sunni religious men in the state. These efforts enraged the Sunni community, especially in the city of Hama, where riots broke out in the spring of 1973 because the government had not included the article in the newly proposed constitution stating that Islam was the religion of the state.⁶²⁶

The Sunni uprising motivated Hafiz al-Asad to declare himself a true Muslim and amend the constitution, declaring Islam to be the state religion. Peter Gubser remarks rightly that al-Asad's objective in identifying himself with Islam was to broaden his base in the Syrian Society, rather than to lessen Nusayri consciousness or distinctiveness.⁶²⁷

The measures taken by al-Asad failed to convince the Sunni majority of his true allegiance to Arab nationalism and to Islam. The Nusayris continued to be considered a heterodox minority that had usurped power from Sunni majority. Key positions in both the army and the civilian sector of the government were occupied by Nusayris, while the few positions in the cabinet filled by Sunnis were mere window dressing.

The bubble of tension, suspicion, and antagonism towards the Nusayri-controlled government finally burst in March 1980; Sunni Muslims in the major cities and towns went on strike.

Demonstrations against the government began in Aleppo and then spread to other cities. The strikers demanded the end to sectarianism and sectarian rule. Government's answer was the use of force and dissolution of both labour and professional unions. For a while the situation seemed to have calmed down, but riots broke out in 1982 in Hama, and al-Asad retaliated by ordering the destruction of most of the city.⁶²⁸

In conclusion, based on their own writings and literature, the Nusayris (or Alawis, as they are known today), are a heterodox sect, called Ghulat or extremists by Muslim Sunni and Twelver Shi'i. Their religion is a syncretism of extreme Shi'i, pagan, and Christian beliefs, and they fall outside the pale of orthodox Islam. The very fact that some of them deify Mujib and Saji, the sons of Sulayman al-Murshid (who, because he declared himself God, was executed by the Syrian authorities in 1946) is a demonstration that the Nusayris believe in the continuous manifestation of the deity, a belief repulsive to orthodox Islam.⁶²⁹

¹ Hanna Batatu, "Some Observations on The Social Roots Of Syria's Ruling Military Group And The Causes for its dominance," *The Middle East Journal* 35, no. 3 (Summer 1981): 331-32.

² Muhammad Ghalib al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin* (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1981), 446-49; and Col. Paul Jacquor, *L'État des Alaouites Terre d'art, de souvenirs et de mytère* (Beirut: Emp. Catholique, 1929), 15-16.

³ Pliny, *Natural History*, Book 5-17

⁴ For thorough description of the Nusayri habitat, see Lyde, *The Asian Mystery* (London, Longman, 1860), 1-24. This is the first major work in the English on the Nusayri. Lyde lived for many years among the Nusayri and his knowledge about them is first hand. In his preface, he states that he attempted with the sect of the Ansayri (Nusayri) what De Sacy had already affected with that of the Druzes. For a lengthy review of Lyde's book see Charles Henry Brigham, "the Asian Mystery." *North American Review* 93, no. 193 (October 1861): 342-66.

⁵ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 521-24; Hashim Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun bayna al-Usturah wa al-Haqiqah* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Alami, 1980), 39-43; and Peter Gubser, "Minorities in Power: The Alawites of Syria," in *The Political Role of Minority Groups in the Middle East*, ed. R.D. McLaurin (New York: Praeger, 1979), 17-18.

⁶ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 416; Munir al-Sharif, *al-Alawiyyun: Man Hum Wa Ayna Hum* (Damascus: al-Maktaba al-Kubra li al-Talif wa al-Nashr, 1946), 69-71; Abu Musa al-Hariri al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun (Beirut: n.p., 1980), 196; and Abd al-Rahman Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin* (Beirut: Dar al-Ilm al-Malayin, 1973), 2:497-98. Al-Makzum al-Sinjari was a prominent Nusayri mystical poet. For his poetry see Asad Ahmad Ali, *Marifat Allah wa al-Makzum al-Sinjari*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dar al Raid al Arabi, 1972).

⁷ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 23 and 193-232.

⁸ Jacques Weulersse, *Le pays des Alouites* (Tour: Arrault, 1940), 1:121.

⁹ Gubser, "The Alawites of Syria," 20.

¹⁰ Cf. Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 55-56; and the sources the author cites.

¹¹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:150.

¹² Bar Hebraeus *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Duwal*, 97, 150. Cf. Abu al-Fida, *Kitab al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbar al-Bashar* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr and Dar al-Bihar, 1959), 3:70; and Jamal al-Din Abu al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzi, *Talbis Iblis* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyam, 1369/1948), 104.

¹³ Antoine Isaac Silvetre de Sacy, *Exposé de la Religion des Druzes*, (Paris: L'Ilm-premirie Royale, 1838) 2:565 and 567.

¹⁴ Wolff, "Auszüge aus dem Katechismus der Nossairier," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (1849). 3:302. The Arabic original of this Nusayri catechism, entitled *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, is found in Arab MS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale. For an abridged English translation of the same, see Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 270-80.

¹⁵ Ernest Renan, *Mission de Phénicie* (Paris: Impremarie, Impériale, 1864), 114; and Dussaud, *histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 9. For further information on the etymology of the name of the Nusayris, see Massignon, "Nusairi," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden and London: E.J. Brill, 1936), 3:963.

¹⁶ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 446-47.

¹⁷ See Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun*, 35-36; and Muhammad Kurd Ali, *Kitat al-Sham* (Beirut: Dar al-Ilm li al-Malayin, 19771), 6:260, whose idea about the origin of the term Nusayris was misunderstood by Uthman.

¹⁸ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 68.

¹⁹ See the Druze Catechism (Formulary) in Arab MS. 5188, fols. 51-52, Bibliothèque Nationale. Other copies are found in Arab MMS. 1445, 1446, and 1447, Bibliothèque Nationale; and De Sacy, *Exposé*, 2:260.

²⁰ Sulayman al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakura al-Sulaymaniyya fi Kashf Asrar al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah* (Beirut: n.p., n.d.), although the book contains no date of publication, many authors accept the year 1863 as the date of its publication. For the English translation of the same, see Edward Salisbury, "Notes on the Book of Sulayman's First Ripe Fruit Disclosing the Mysteries of the Nosairian Religion," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 8 (1864): 227-308; the Reference here is to page 242. See also, Rev. Louis Cheihho, "Jawla fi al-Dawla al-Alawiyyah," *al-Mashriq* 22, No. 7 (Beirut, 1924): 481-95; Abd al-Husayn Mahdi al-Askari, *al-Alawiyyun aw al-Nusayriyyah* (n.p., 1980), 31, n.1; Taqi Sharaf al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah: Dirasah Tahliliyya* (Beirut, n.p., 1983), 111; Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:441; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 27-30

²¹ Louis Massignon, "Les Nusairis," *Opera Minora* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1963), 1:619; and idem, "Nusairi," 963.

²² Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 58-59 and 235. Lyde states that the copy of *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* (Manual for Shaykhs) in his possession contains 188 pages transcribe in the handwriting of a certain shaykh Muhammad of the village of Bishargo, which he has transcribed from an old copy in the year 1239/1824. It contains all of the chief parts of the religion of the Nusayris. The first reference of this manuscript was made by Joseph Catafago, dragoman of the Prussian Vonsulate in Beirut; for his description of it, see the *Journal Asiatic* (July 1848), 72-78.

²³ R. Strothmann, "Seelenwanderung bei den Nusairi," *Oriens* 12 (1959): 104. In this article, Strothmann published Arabic excerpts from two books, *Kitab al-Ma'arif* and *Kitab al-Dala'il wa al-Masa'il*, by the Nusayri writer Maymun Abu al-Qasim al-Tabarani (d. 1034), using as his source a rare manuscript. See MS. Orient 304, fol. 81, Humburger Staats-und Universität-Bibliothek.

²⁴ Al-Shaykh Yusuf ibn al-Ajuz (known as al-Nashshabi), *Munazrah* (debate) in Arab MS. 1450, fols. 68-155, Bibliothèque Nationale. The reference here is to fols. 118-119; and al-jisri, *Risalat al-Tawhid*. Arab MS 1450, fol.44.

²⁵ *Kitab al-Majmu* contains sixteen Surah's (chapters) incorporated by Sulayman al-Adani in his *Kitab al-Bakhurah*. The reference here is to page 15 in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*. See also page 16. *Kitab al-Majmu* was published with a French translation by René Dussaud in his *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 161-98. The Arabic text of the same is found in Abu Musa al-Hariri's *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 234-55, and in al-Husayni Abd Allah, *al-Judhur al-Tarikhiiyyah li al-Nusayriyyah al-Alawiyyah* (Dubai: Dar al-I'tisam, 1980), 145-74. Because of his conversion to Christianity, al-Adani was lured by his own people to the city of Latakia, where he was burned to death. See Farid Wajdi, *Da'irat Ma'arif al-Qarn al-Ishrin*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Matbat Da'irat Marif al-Qarn al-Ishrin, 1925), 10:252.

²⁶ Shaykh Isa Suud, "Ma Aghfalahu al-Tarikh: al-Alawiyyun wa al-Nusayriyyah," *Mujallat al-Amani*, nos. 1-3 (October-November and December 1930), nos. 6-7 (March-April 1931), and no. 8 (May 1931). This article is reproduced in Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun*, 153-73; see especially pages 157 and 161. Cf. Mustafa Ghalib, *al-Harakat al-Batiniyyah fi al-Islam* (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1982), 272.

²⁷ Sa'ad ibn Abd Allah al-Ashari, *al-Maqalat wa l-Firaq*, 100-1.

²⁸ Al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shi'ah*, 102-3.

²⁹ Abu Amr Muhammad ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Kashshi, *Marifat Akhbar al-Rijal*, ed. Ahmad al-Husayni (Karbala: Muassasat al-Alami, n.d.), 438.

³⁰ Al-Shaybi, *al-Fikr al-Shii*, 18.

³¹ Abu Jafar al-Tusi, *al-Ghaybah*, 244.

³² Abu Mansur Ahmad ibn Ali al-Tabrasi, *al-Ihtijaj*, 2:290-91.

³³ Al-Hasan ibn Yusuf ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hilli, *al-Rijal*, (al-Najaf: al-Matba al-Haydariyya, 1961), 245-57.

³⁴ Shaykh Muhammad Hasan al-Zayn Amili, *al-Shi'ah fi al-Tarikh*, 2nd ed., (Beirut: Dar al-Athar li al-Tiba' wa al-Nashr, 1979), 95 and 219-25. For more information see al-Askari, *al-Alawiyyun aw al-Nusayriyyah*, 33-42.

³⁵ Al-Ashari, *Maqalat*, 15; and Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, 252 and 255.

³⁶ Al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, printed on the margin of Ibn Hazm's *Kitab al-Fisal*, 2:24-26.

³⁷ Al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 24-26; and Abbas al-Azzawi, *al-Kaka'iyyah fi al-Tarikh*, 64.

³⁸ Ibn Hazm, *Kitab al-Fisal*, 4:188.

³⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:150; and idem, *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Duwal*, 149-50. This fatwa by Ibn Taymiyyah entitled "Fatwa fi al-Nusayriyyah," was published by Stanislas Guyard, "Le Fatwa d'Ibn Taimiyyah sur Les Nosairis," *Journal Asiatique* 17 (August-September, 1871), 158-98. The reference here is to p. 162 of the Arab text. This fatwa is reproduced in several sources especially those of Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:449-57; Uthman,

al-Alawiyyun bayn al-Usturah wa al-Haqiqah, 52-58; al-Husayni Abd Allah, *al-Judhur al-Tarikhiyyah*, 28-51; and Mujahid al-Amin, *al-Nusayriyyah*, (*al-Alawiyyun*), *Aqa'iduhum*, *Tarikhuhum*, *Waqi'uhum* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), 47-66.

⁴⁰ Imad al-Din Ismail Abu al-Fida', *Kitab al-Mukhtasar*, 3:70.

⁴¹ As an example of the opinions of contemporary writers we give those of al-Shaybi, *al-Sila bayn al-Tasawwuf wa al-Tashayyu*, 145-56; and idem, *al-Fikr al-Shi'ah*, 18 and 36; Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Tarikh al-Madhahib al-Islamiyyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, n.d.), 1:67-68; and Mustafa al-Shaka, *Islam bi la Madhahib* (Beirut: al-Dar al-Misriyya li al-Tiba, 1971), 301-18.

⁴² *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 60; al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 14; al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 256, 258; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 30-31.

⁴³ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 256, 258.

⁴⁴ Ibid., and al-Khasibi, *Kitab al-Hidayah al-Kubrah* appended to Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun*, 229-96.

⁴⁵ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 60-61; al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 14-16, 27, and 47; *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, question 98 and its answer Arab MS 6182, fol. 16, Bibliothèque Nationale; Wolff, "Auszüge aus dem Katechismus der Nossairien," 3:303; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 280.

⁴⁶ Joseph Catafago, "Drei Messen der Nossairier," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (1848), 2:388-94. The Arabic version of these masses are also found in Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:490-94; al-Askari, *al-Alawiyyun wa Nusayriyyah*, 105-9; and Victor Langlois, "Religion et Doctrine des Noussaries," *revue d'Orient et d'Algérie et des Colonies in Societe Orientale De France*, (Paris: Juin 1856), 3:435-37.

⁴⁷ Wolff, "Auszüge aus des Katechismus der Nossairien," 303-9. For Arabic versions of *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, see Arab MS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale; Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 474-87; and al-Askari, *al-Alawiyyun wa al-Nusayriyyah*, 82-96.

⁴⁸ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 17.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 62.

⁵¹ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 90.

⁵² Arab MS. 6182, fol. 19, Bibliothèque Nationale; Wolff, "Auszüge aus dem Katechismus der Nossairies," 308-9; Lyde, *The Asian Mytery*, 280; Badawi, *Madha'ib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:487; and al-Askari, *al-Alawiyyun wa al-Nusayriyyah*, 96.

⁵³ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 256-60; and Suud, "Ma Aghfalahu al-Tarikh," in Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun*, 157.

⁵⁴ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 150; idem, *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Duwal*, 14-50; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Talbis Iblis*, 104; Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 63-64; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 33.

⁵⁷ Bar Hebraeus, *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Duwal*, 149-50.

⁵⁸ Abu al-Fida', *Kitab al-Mukhtasar*, 3:70; and De Sacy, *Exposé*, 2:567.

⁵⁹ De Sacy, *Exposé*, 1:183.

⁶⁰ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 258.

⁶¹ Abu al-Fida', *Kitab al-Mukhtasar*, 3:70; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 66.

⁶² Shaykh Isa Suud Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun*, 168-69.

⁶³ Al-Tiwal, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 285, 261.

⁶⁴ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 264-65; *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 17; Massignon, "Nusairi," 3:966-67; and Joseph Catafago, "Notices sur Les Anserien," *Journal Asiatique* (February 1848): 149056. The entire work was published by R. Strothmann in *Der Islam*, 27 (1943-44), 1-60 and (1946), 160-273. C.F. Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:462-66.

⁶⁵ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 262-64.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 262-63 and Massignon, "Nusairi," 996.

⁶⁷ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 262-64.

⁶⁸ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 11-12.

⁶⁹ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 262.

⁷⁰ Weulersse, *Le Pays des Alaouites*, 49, 54, 73, and 228; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 52-56.

⁷¹ Munir al-Sharif, *al-Alawiyyun*, *Man Hum wa Ayna Hum*, 93.

⁷² Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 53-54, 81.

⁷³ Stanislas Guyard, "Le Fatwa d'Ibn Taimiyya sur Les Nosairis," *Journal Asiatique*, 17 (1871): 158-98. The reference here is to page 175.

⁷⁴ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:235.

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- ⁷⁵ See the fatwa of Ibn Taymiyyah published in Guyard, “Les Fatawa d’Ibn Taimiyyah,” 169.
- ⁷⁶ Al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyu*, 210. For the castles the Ismailis captured from the Nusayris, see Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 64.
- ⁷⁷ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 69.
- ⁷⁸ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 359-63.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 363.
- ⁸⁰ Phillip Hitti, *History of Syria* (New York: McMillan, 1951), 631.
- ⁸¹ See the fatwa of Ibn Taymiyyah in Guyard, “de Fatawa d’Ibn Taimiyyah,” 169.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 169, 174.
- ⁸³ In Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* A.D. 1325-1352, translated with revision and notes from the Arabic text edited by C. Defrémery and B.R. Sanguinetti by H.A.R. Gibb (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1962), 1:111-12. Cf. Abu al-Mahasin ibn Taghri Birdi, *al-Nujum al-Zahirah fi Muluk Misr wa al-Qahirah* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, 1938), 7:150.
- ⁸⁴ *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, 1:112.
- ⁸⁵ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 365, 377-78.
- ⁸⁶ Hitti, *History of Syria*, 631.
- ⁸⁷ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 365 and 378.
- ⁸⁸ Kamal al-Din al-Fadl Abd al-Razzaq ibn al-Futi, *al-Hawadith al-Jami’ah wa al-Tajarib al-Nafi’a fi al-Mi’ah al-Sabi’a*, ed. Mustafah Jawad (Baghdad: al-Maktabah al-Arabiyya, 1351/1932), 329; and Imad al-Din ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, 13:203.
- ⁸⁹ Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, 8:219; and Abu al-Fida’, *Kitab al-Mukhtasar*, 3:273-74.
- ⁹⁰ Ibn al-Futi, *al-Hawadith al-Jami’ah*, 455.
- ⁹¹ Al-Shaybi, *al-Fikr al-Shi’ah*, 80.
- ⁹² Ibn al-Futi, *al-Hawadith al-Jami’ah*, 478; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa l-Nihayah*, 14:121; Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *al-Durr al-Kamina fi Ayan al-Mi’ah al-Thaminah* (Hydarabad: Matbat Majlis Dariat al-Ma’arif al-Nizamiyyah, 1348-50/1929-32), 1:501.
- ⁹³ Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa l-Nihayah*, 14:83-84; Abu al-Fida’, *Kitab al-Mukhtasar*, 7:97; and Abu al-Falah Abd al-Hayy ibn al-Imad, *Shadharat al-Dhahabi fi Akhbar man Dhahab* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsi, 1350-51/1931/32), 1:43. C.F. Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 70-71; and al-Shaibi, *al-Fikr al-Shi’ah*, 89.
- ⁹⁴ *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, 1:112-113.
- ⁹⁵ Al-Shaybi, *al-Fikr al-Shi’ah*, 80.
- ⁹⁶ Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abd Allah al-Dimashqi known as ibn Arabshah, *Aja’ib al-Maqdur fi Akhbar al-Timur* (Cairo: Bulaq, 1285/1868), 7; al-Sakhawi, *al-Daww al-Lami*, 3:15; Ibn al-Imad, *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, 7:43.
- ⁹⁷ Abd al-Razzaq ibn Ishaq al-Samarqandi, *Matla al-Sa’dayn*, Cambridge Persian M.S. Add. 185(12), fol. 272, Cambridge University; Abu Talib al-Husayni, *Malfuzat Sahib al-Qiran*, Persian MS. 7575, fol. 2, British Museum; and al-Shaybi, *al-Fikr al-Shi’ah*, 169.
- ⁹⁸ Al-Samarqandi, *Matla al-Sadayn*, fol. 34b.
- ⁹⁹ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 388.
- ¹⁰⁰ Al-Husayni *Malfuzat Sahib al-Qiran*, fol. 34b. for more information on this subject consult al-Shaybi, *al-Fikr al-Shi’ah*, 167-73.
- ¹⁰¹ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 390-91.
- ¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 391.
- ¹⁰³ See the Ottoman Bas Vekalet Muhimmat Defteri Arsif(7), 80, Stautes 1835, 1984 and 2021; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 60.
- ¹⁰⁴ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 394-95; and Sati al-Husri, *al-Bilad al-Arabiyyah wa l-Dawlah al-Uthmaniyyah* (Beirut: Dar al-Ilm li al-Malayin, 1965), 16-17.
- ¹⁰⁵ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 396.
- ¹⁰⁶ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 397.
- ¹⁰⁷ See *al-Sayyad*, no. 1123 (24 March 1966), 21; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, note a.
- ¹⁰⁸ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 399 and 434-36.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 399.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 442.
- ¹¹¹ John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and The Holy Land* (London: John Murray, 1822), 152-53.

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- ¹¹² Ibid., 71.
- ¹¹³ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 195-96.
- ¹¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁵ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 452.
- ¹¹⁶ Jacquot, *L'Etat des Alaouites*, 15.
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid., al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 451; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 215-16.
- ¹¹⁸ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 199-200 and 231; and al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 421-25.
- ¹¹⁹ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 199-200 and 208.
- ¹²⁰ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 418-38.
- ¹²¹ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 209, 211, 214, 216, 222-23.
- ¹²² Badawi, *Madhhab al-Islamiyyin*, 2:498.
- ¹²³ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 454-58.
- ¹²⁴ Ibid., 458.
- ¹²⁵ Wajih Kawtharani, *Bilad al-Sham* (Beirut: Mahad al-Arabi, 1980), 79.
- ¹²⁶ Farid Wajdi, *Da'irat Ma'arif al-Qarn al-Ishrin*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Matbat Da'irat Ma'arif al-Qarn al-Ishrin, 1925), 10:252; Badawi, *Madhhab al-Islamiyyin*, 2:499; al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 217; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 63-64.
- ¹²⁷ Wajdi, *Da'irat Ma'arif*, 10:252; Yusuf al-Hakim, *Suriyya wa al-Ahd al-Faysali*, 2nd ed., (Beirut: al-Matba al-Katholikiyyah, 1980), 70-71; Muhammad Kurd Ali, *Khitat al-Sham*, 3:108; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 64-65.
- ¹²⁸ For the territorial division of Syria consult A. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946); Hasan al-Hakim, *al-Watha'iq al-Tarikhyyah al-Muta'alliqah bi al-Qadiyyah al-Suriyyahh* (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1974), 254; Kawtharani, *Bilad al-Sham*, 220-21; Dhuqan Qarqut, *Tatawwur al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah fi Suriyyahh* (Beirut: Dar al-Talia, 1975), 61; and Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Serie E-Levant-Syrie-Lebanon, Paris vol. 125.
- ¹²⁹ Yusuf al-Hakim, *Suriyyah*, 52-53; and Cheikho, "Jawlah fi al-Dawlah al-Alawiyyah," *al-Mashriq* 22, no.7 (1924), 481-95.
- ¹³⁰ Gubser, "The Alawites of Syria," 40.
- ¹³¹ Tabithah Petran, *Syria: A Modern History* (London: Ernest Ben Ltd., 1972), 62; and Nikolas van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 18.
- ¹³² Kawtharani, *Bilad al-Sham*, 211.
- ¹³³ Shaykh Mahmud al-Salih, *al-Naba al-Yaqin an al-Alawiyyin* (n.p.: n.p., 1961), 127.
- ¹³⁴ Al-Hakim, *Suriyyahh*, 14 and 91.
- ¹³⁵ Ibid., 114; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 68-69.
- ¹³⁶ Qarqut, *Tatawwur al-Harakah*, 32.
- ¹³⁷ Al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 69.
- ¹³⁸ Abd al-Latif al-Yunus, *Thawrat al-Shaykh Salih al-Ali* (Damascus: Dar al-Yaqza al-Arabiyya, 1961), 107; Badawi, *Madhhab al-Islamiyyin*, 2:500-1; al-Sharif, *al-Alawiyyun Man Hum wa Ayna Hum*, 110-11; al-Salih, *al-Naba al-Yaqin*, 125-26; al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 221-26; and Ali Rida, *Qissat al-Kifah al-Watani fi Suriyyah Askariyyan wa Siyasiyyan hatta al-Jala* (Halab: al-Matba'ah al-Hadithah, 1979), 23.
- ¹³⁹ Badawi, *Madhhab al-Islamiyyin*, 2:501; and al-Yunus, *Thawrat al-Shaykh Salih al-Ali*, 107.
- ¹⁴⁰ Al-Yunus, *Thawrat al-Shaykh Salih al-Ali*, 72-85.
- ¹⁴¹ Badawi, *Madhhab al-Islamiyyin*, 2:500.
- ¹⁴² Ibid., 501.
- ¹⁴³ Jacquot, *L'État des Alaouites*, 15.
- ¹⁴⁴ Al-Sharif, *al-Alawiyyun: Man Hum wa Ayna Hum*, 110-11.
- ¹⁴⁵ Al-Yunus, *Thawrat al-Shaykh Salih al-Ali*, 219-28; Badawi, *Madhhab al-Islamiyyin*, 2:503-05; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 223-24.
- ¹⁴⁶ Al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 73.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ibid., and Rida, *Qissat al-Kifah*, 34.
- ¹⁴⁸ Al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 74-75.
- ¹⁴⁹ Al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 74; and Kawtharani, *Bilad al-Sham*, 372.
- ¹⁵⁰ Rida, *Qissat al-Kifah*, 32; Kawtharani, *Bilad al-Sham*, 372-73; and Weulersse, *Le Pays des Alouites*, 118.
- ¹⁵¹ See the report of the British consul in Damascus to his government in British Archives Fo 225/226, dated 10 October 1944, and in the Arabic magazine *al-Tadamun*, 2, no. 68 (28 July 1984): 36-37.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Kawtharani, *Bilad al-Sham*, 235-36; Qarqut, *Tatawwur al-Harakah*, 50-58; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 81-82, 85, 88.

¹⁵⁴ Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Levant, Syrie-Leban, Paris, file no. 510, 114, document 124.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., file 492, p. 193, Document 412.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., file 492, 53.

¹⁵⁸ On Sulayman al-Murshid, see Khayr al-Din al-Zirrikli, *Qamus al-Alam* (Beirut: Dar al-Ilm li al-Malayin, 1979), 3:170; *al-Tadamun* 2, no. 68, 28 July 1984, 36-37; and Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 344, where the author describes al-Murshid as “the obese and half-shrewd, half-crazy god Sulayman al-Murshid.” For the memorandum submitted to Blum, see Archives du Ministère, Paris, file 3547; al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 228-35; and Mujahid al-Amin, *al-Nusayriyyah (al-Alawiyyun), Aqa'iduhum, Tarikhukum, waqi'uhum* (Beirut: Dar al-Fiqh, nod.), 72-73. Cf. Gubser, “The Alawites of Syria,” 24.

¹⁵⁹ Archives du Ministère, files 492 and 493, which contains cable no. 347-49, dated 2 July 1936, sent by the French minister of foreign affairs to the French high commissioner in Beirut. Cf. al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 92.

¹⁶⁰ Archives du Ministère, files 492 and 493, including cable no. 557 from Delbos to the French high commissioner, dated 25 August 1936; Arabic excerpts of the same are in al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 90, 92-93.

¹⁶¹ Archive du Ministère, E. 412.2, file 393, 8 and file 493, 7; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 94.

¹⁶² Archive du Ministère, file no. 493, 229. The letter of the High commissioner to the foreign minister is no. 852, dated 28 August 1936.

¹⁶³ Al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 74-75.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 233-34.

¹⁶⁵ Batatu, “Social Roots of Syria’s Ruling Group.” 341.

¹⁶⁶ Archives du Ministère, file 419, 1940, document 2619 dated 4 October 1935. This document contains the letter of the French minister of war to the French foreign minister. Cf. Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 62; Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria*, 18; Gubser, “The Alawites of Syria.” 40.

¹⁶⁷ Batatu, “Social Roots of Syria’s Ruling Group.” 341.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 334; and al-Yunus, *Thawrat al-Shaykh Salih al-Ali*, 178.

¹⁶⁹ Batatu, “Social Roots of Syria’s Ruling Group.” 334, 342; and Gubser, “The Alawites of Syria,” 40.

¹⁷⁰ Batatu, “Social Roots of Syria’s Ruling Group.” 342; and Gubser, “The Alawites of Syria,” 40.

¹⁷¹ Gubser, “Alawites of Syria,” 40; Gordon H. Torrey, “Aspects of the Political Elite in Syria,” in *Political Elite in the Middle East*, ed. George Lenczowski (Washington, D.C.: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975), 157; Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria*, 41; Micheal Van Dusen, “Political Integration and Regionalism in Syria,” *The Middle East Journal* 26, no. 2 (Spring, 1972): 133-34; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 164-65.

¹⁷² Gubser, “The Alawites of Syria,” 39-40; and Moshe Maoz, “Attempts at Creating a Political Community in Modern Syria,” *The Middle East Journal* 26, no. 4 (Autumn 1972); 399; and idem “The Emergence of Modern Syria,” in *Syria under Asad*, ed. Moshe Maoz and Anver Yanuv (New York: St. Martin’s, 1986), 22-34.

¹⁷³ Umar F. Abd Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1983), 50. For a concise account of the political process in Syria 1945-70 see R. Hrair Dekmeian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*. (Syracuse: Syracuse, University Press, 1985), 110-12.

¹⁷⁴ For these coups of 1949, see Alford Carleton, “The Syrian Coups d’Etat of 1949,” *The Middle East Journal*, 4 no. 1 (January 1950): 1-11; George M. Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule in the Middle East: The Arab States* (New York: Robert Speller & Son, 1971), 2:195-204; Petran *Syria A Modern History*, 96-98; Richard F. Nyrop, ed., *Syria: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: American University Foreign Area Studies, 1979), 29.

¹⁷⁵ Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 2:204-15; Gubser, “The Alawites of Syria,” 40; Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria*, 41-42.

¹⁷⁶ A.R Kelidar, “Religion and State in Syria,” *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 41, (New Series, vol. 5, part 1) (February 1974): 17.

¹⁷⁷ Batatu, “Social Roots of Syria’s Ruling Group.” 341.

¹⁷⁸ Van Dusen, “Integration Regionalism in Syria,” 126.

¹⁷⁹ Gubser, “The Alawites of Syria,” 41.

¹⁸⁰ Petran, *Syria: A Modern History* 74 and 89-92; Nyrop, *Syria: A Country Study*, 162-63; John F. Devlin, *The Baath Party: A History from its Origin to 1966*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), 162-63; and Van Dusen, “Integration and Regionalism in Syria,” 134.

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- ¹⁸¹ Van Dusen, "Integration Regionalism in Syria," 134.
- ¹⁸² Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 106 and 111-20; Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 2:231 and 233; Devlin, *The Baath Party*, 65-73; and Abd Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, 52.
- ¹⁸³ Haddad, *Revolution of Military Rule*, 2:237-38.
- ¹⁸⁴ Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria*, 32; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 183.
- ¹⁸⁵ Gubser, "The Alawites of Syria," 41.
- ¹⁸⁶ Van Dusen, "Integration Regionalism in Syria," 132-133.
- ¹⁸⁷ Haddad, *Revolutionary and Military Rule*,
- ¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 146 and 171; Batatu, "Social Roots of Syria's Ruling Group," 343; and Abd Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, 56; Bernard Vernier, *Armée et Politique au Moyen Orient* (Paris: Payot, 1966), 144; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 166-67.
- ¹⁸⁹ Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 146 and 171; Batatu, "Social Roots of Syria's Ruling Group," 343; and Abd Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, 56.
- ¹⁹⁰ Haddad, *Revolution of Military Rule*, 2:321; Gubser, "The Alawites of Syria," 42-43; and Batatu, "Social Roots of Syria's Rule Group." 343.
- ¹⁹¹ Micheal Hudson, *Arab Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 64, where the author states that not until the 1960s that the Alawite political identity became a factor in Syrian politics. Cf. al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 234-35.
- ¹⁹² Al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 234-35.
- ¹⁹³ Avraham Ben-Tzur, "The Neo Bath Party in Syria," *New Outlook* 12, no. 1 (January 1969): 27.
- ¹⁹⁴ Gubser, "The Alawites of Syria," 42 and van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria*, 41-42.
- ¹⁹⁵ Munif al-Razzaz, *al-Tajribah al-Murra* (Beirut: Dar Ghandur, 1967), 86-90; Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 11, 2:309-12, 391-94; Itamar Rabinovich, *Syria under the Ba'th 1963-1966* (Tel Aviv: Israel Universities Press, 1977) 43-74; and H. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse University Press, 1985), 111.
- ¹⁹⁶ Van Dam, *The Struggle of Power in Syria*, 43; Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 171; Abd Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, 58; al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 167-68.
- ¹⁹⁷ Van Dam, *The Struggle of Power in Syria*, 43; Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 171; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 168.
- ¹⁹⁸ Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 171.
- ¹⁹⁹ Van Dam, *The Struggle of Power in Syria*, 36.
- ²⁰⁰ Al-Razzaz, *al-Tajribah al-Murrah*, 62-64, 94-96; and Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 2:190-91.
- ²⁰¹ Batatu, "Social Roots of Syria's Ruling Group," 343. For this coup see Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 2:312-19
- ²⁰² Van Dam, *The Struggle of Power in Syria*, 40; and Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 170.
- ²⁰³ Al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyin al-Nusayriyyin*, 325.
- ²⁰⁴ Van Dam, *The Struggle of Power in Syria*, 51-53.
- ²⁰⁵ Al-Razzaz, *al-Tajribah al-Murrah*, 62-64, 94-96; and Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 2:320-23.
- ²⁰⁶ Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 2:322-23.
- ²⁰⁷ Al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyin al-Nusayriyyin*, 235-36. Al-Hariri states that he was able to classified materials on the decisions of several Nusayri meetings including the one under discussion, but he gives no information on how he received such classified information.
- ²⁰⁸ Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 2:342-51; and Rabinovich, *Syria Under the Ba'th*, 160-64, 180-83; Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria*, 54-56.
- ²⁰⁹ Sami al-Jundi, *al-Ba'th* (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar, 1969), 144.
- ²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 144-45.
- ²¹¹ Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 239-48; Devlin, *The Baath Party*, 181 and 303; Nyrop, *Syria: A Country Study*, 33-34; Abd Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, 53-54 Rabinovich, *Syria Under the Ba'th Party*, 195-204.
- ²¹² Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 167, 169; and Batatu, "Social Roots of Syria's Ruling Group," 343.
- ²¹³ Van Dam, *Struggle for Power in Syria*, 60; and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 173-74.
- ²¹⁴ Petran, *Syria: A Modern History*, 239-48; Devlin, *The Ba'th Party*, 281-303; Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 2:352-58; and Van Dam, *Struggle for Power in Syria*, 60-62.
- ²¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²¹⁶ Kelidar, "Religion and State in Syria," 17.

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- ²¹⁷ Al-Razzaz, *al-Tajribah al-Murrah*, 200-4; and Haddad, *Revolution of Military Rule*, 360.
- ²¹⁸ Van Dam, *Struggle for Power in Syria*, 78.
- ²¹⁹ Ibid., 69-70; and Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 362-64.
- ²²⁰ Van Dam, *Struggle for Power in Syria*, 67-70; and Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 2:362-64.
- ²²¹ Van Dam, *Struggle for Power in Syria*, 75.
- ²²² Ibid.
- ²²³ Haddad, *Revolution and Military Rule*, 2:364.
- ²²⁴ Al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 236-37.
- ²²⁵ Ibid., 236; and *al-Sayyad*, no. 1123 (24 March 1966), 18-21.
- ²²⁶ *Al-Hawadith*, no. 518 (14 October 1966) and no. 608, (5 July 1968), no. 610 (19 July 1968) and no. 614 (8 August 1968); and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 237-39.
- ²²⁷ *Al-Hawadith*, no. 614 (16 August 1968).
- ²²⁸ Al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 238.
- ²²⁹ Sa'd Jumuah, *al-Mu'amarah wa Ma'rakat al-Masir* (Beirut: Dar al-Katib al-Arabi, 1968), 109-10; and al-Amin, *al-Nusayriyyun (al-Alawiyyun)*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), 31-32.
- ²³⁰ Jumuah, *al-Mu'amarah*, 191-94.
- ²³¹ Van Dam, *Struggle for Power in Syria*, 83-84; and Gubser, "The Alawites of Syria," 37.
- ²³² Van Dam, *Struggle for Power in Syria*, 88.
- ²³³ Batatu, "Social Roots of Syria's Ruling Group," 331-33.
- ²³⁴ The Ahl-i Haqq is an extremist Shiite group of Iran, one of the most popular, also known as Ahl-i Haqiqat, Ali Ilahis or Ali Allaahis. They consist of a number of sub-divisions known by either the names of specific 'saints', or by the names of objects peculiar to those groups. They regard Nusayr as their patron saint (and refer to themselves at times as Nusayris — not to be confused with the Nusayri sect founded by Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Namiri, the 'companion' of the eleventh imam al-`Askari. It is alleged by the Ahl-i Haqq that Nusayr was a member of the fighting troops of the Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib dispatched by the Prophet of Islam against the Jewish fortress of Khaybar. Nusayr was killed in this campaign, and his mother beseeched Ali to raise up her son from the dead, which Ali did. Upon opening his eyes and seeing Ali, Nusayr cried out, "Verily I see that you are a God." Ali became angry because the young man considered him a God and in his wrath he slew Nusayr with his sword, Dhu al-Fiqar. It is said that seven times Ali slew the young man and brought him back to life, trying to make him repent and stop his blaspheming. But Ali's efforts were in vain. Finally, Ali heard a voice coming from heaven, the voice of God, telling him that He is the only God, the creator of heaven and earth, in whose hands are life and death. But God went to tell Ali, "Never mind this time, I will be the God of all the world, and you will be the God of Nusayr." In obedience to God, Ali sent Nusayr back to his mother, alive and well. (*Shah Mama-ye Haqiqat* 1:236-239, al-Majlisi: *Hayat al-Qulub* 44)
- ²³⁵ See *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah* (catechism), Arab MS. 6182, fol. 4, Bibliothèque Nationale; and the English translation in Lyde, *Asian Mystery*, 271. See also, Dr. Wolff's German translation in Wolff, "Auzüge aus dem Katechismus der Nossairien," 303-9. Cf. al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 49.
- ²³⁶ Lyde, *Asian Mystery*, 110; and Bar Hebraeus, *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Duwal*, 97.
- ²³⁷ See question 9 to 33 of *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 61182, fols. 4-15, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Carsten Niebuhr, *Travels*, reproduced with an English translation in Lyde, *Asian Mystery*, 2295-97. Niebuhr's information is based on a Nusayri book that fell to his possession. The book, says Niebuhr, was founded by Turkish official in the room of a Nusayri whom they had surprised in the night and taken to prison. The seven manifestations of the deity in human form is also found in the Druze religion but in the case of the Druzes it was Hamza ibn Ali, founder of their religion and considered by the Druzes to be their God, who has appeared seven times in this world. See Formulary or Catechism (instruction of the Druze Religion) in Arab MS. 5188 question 24 and 25 fols. 58, Bibliothèque Nationale; and de Sacy, *Exposé*, 1:66.
- ²³⁸ See Surah's in chapters 5 and 8 of *Kitab al-Majmu'* in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah al-Sulaymaniyyah*, 3, 19-20 and 23-24. For an explanation of the term *Salsal*, see Massignon, *Salman Pak et les Prémices Spirituelles de l'Islam iranien*, 37, including no. 3.
- ²³⁹ De Sacy, *Exposé*, 1:471; Dusaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nossairies*, 45 and von Haamer-Purgstall, *The History of the Assassins*, 35.

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- ²⁴⁰ Jamal al-Din Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi, *Talbis Iblis*, 103; al-Sahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 2:38; Arif Tamir, *Khams Rasa'il Isma'iliyyah* (Beirut: Dar al-Ansaf, 1956), 147-50; Petrushevsky, *Islam in Iran*, 244; and al-Shaibi, *al-Sila bayn al-Tasawwuf wa al-Tashayyu'*, 200-3.
- ²⁴¹ Abu Yaqub Ishaq al-Sijistani, *Tuhfat al-Mustajibin* in Tamir, *Khams Rasa'il Isma'iliyyah*, 143-50; and Sami N. Makarem, *The Doctrine of the Ismailis*, (Beirut: The Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1972), 17.
- ²⁴² Al-Kirmani, *Rahat al-Aql*, 252-54; Makarem, "The Philosophical Significance of Iman in Ismailism," see Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 30-58 and 184.
- ²⁴³ Petrushevsky, *Islam in Iran*, 245.
- ²⁴⁴ Al-Kirmani, *Rahat al-Aql*, 252-54; Makarim, "The Philosophical Significance of the Imam in Ismailism," *Studia Islamica* 28 (1967): 47-48; Idem, *The Doctrine of the Ismailis*, 29-30; von Hammer-Purgstall, *The History of the Assassins*, 35; and Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 42, 45, 47, 98, 157, and 184.
- ²⁴⁵ Al-Kirmani, *al-Masabih fi Ithbat al-Imamah*, ed. Mustafa Ghakib (Beirut: Nashurat Hamad, 1969), 80-95; and Makarem, *The Doctrine of the Ismailis*, 37-39. Cf. Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, 3:231, 257, and 4:281-86.
- ²⁴⁶ *The Memoirs of Aga Khan* (London: Cassel and Company, 1954) 3:178-79.
- ²⁴⁷ Petrushevsky, *Islam in Iran*, 235.
- ²⁴⁸ Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ismail al-Ashari, *Kitab Maqalat*, 10-11; and Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, 247-48.
- ²⁴⁹ Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Nosairis*, 45 and 51.
- ²⁵⁰ Ibid., 70-71. See also, al-Mufaddal ibn Umar al-Jufi, *Kitab al-Sirah*, in Arab MS. 1449, fol. 86a, Bibliothèque Nationale; al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 59-69 and the English translation of the same in Salisbury, "Notes on the Book of Sulayman first ripe fruit," 280; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 67.
- ²⁵¹ See *Kitab al-Usus* in Arab MS. 1449, fol. 9a Bibliothèque Nationale; al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 60; Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 71; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 67.
- ²⁵² Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 60-61; Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 72; al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 68.
- ²⁵³ See *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah* in Arab MS. 6182, question 52, Bibliothèque Nationale; *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* (manual for Shaykhs), quoted in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 61; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 74-75.
- ²⁵⁴ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 17 and 62.
- ²⁵⁵ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 186-88; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 69. Cf. Ali ibn Ibrahim, *Tafsir*, 19 and 21, on al-Sadiq, who maintains the existence of pre-Adamite beings.
- ²⁵⁶ E. Blochet, "Études Sur l'Histoire Religieuse de l'Iran," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religion* (1899), 2:15; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 75. Cf. "Cyclical Time in Mazdaism," in Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 1-30.
- ²⁵⁷ See book of Daniel 2:31-45. Cf. Frédéric Macler, *Les Apocalypse Apocryphes de Daniel*, (Paris: C. Noblet, 1895); and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 75.
- ²⁵⁸ See Edward Salibury's translation of al-Adani's *Kitab al-Bakhurah* in "Notes on the Book of Salaiman's First Ripe Fruit," note on 287.
- ²⁵⁹ Ibid.; and al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 85-86.
- ²⁶⁰ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 11, 47 and 59-63, and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 70.
- ²⁶¹ See the Nusayri catechism in Arab MS. 6182 fols. 3-4, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 87.
- ²⁶² The Formulary of the Druzes in the Arab MS. 5188, fol. 58, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 87.
- ²⁶³ De Sacy, *Exposé*, 1:65-67.
- ²⁶⁴ Arab MS. 5188, fols. 59, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ²⁶⁵ For details, see De Sacy, *Exposé*, 1:66.
- ²⁶⁶ See Formulary of the Druzes in Arab MS. 5188, fols. 5152, question 44, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ²⁶⁷ De Sacy, *Exposé*, 1:66.
- ²⁶⁸ See *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, fols. 4, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ²⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁷⁰ See *Munazarah*, Arab MS. 1450, fol. 139, Bibliothèque Nationale
- ²⁷¹ Ibid., fols. 96-96.
- ²⁷² *Risalat al-Tawhid*, Arab MS. 1450, fol. 47, Bibliothèque Nationale.

- ²⁷³ Ibid., fols. 6-7; *Masa'il*, related by Abu Abd Allah ibn Harun al-Saigh of his master Abu Abd Allah ibn al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi, Arab MS. 1450, fol. 50, Bibliothèque Nationale; Abu Abd Allah Shuba al-Harrani, *Kitab al-Usayfir*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 7b and 8a, Bibliothèque Nationale, where the author quotes Jafar al-Sadiq. Cf. De Sacy, *Exposé*, 2:581.
- ²⁷⁴ Se Surah 4 of *Kitab al-Majmu'* in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 14; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 166.
- ²⁷⁵ For these passages, see *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* in Lyde, *The Asian Mytery*, 121; Surah 6 of *Kitab al-Majmu'* in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 21; and preamble to *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ²⁷⁶ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 22, fol. 6, Bibliothèque Nationale; and *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 121 and 136.
- ²⁷⁷ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 83.
- ²⁷⁸ Ibid.; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 43.
- ²⁷⁹ Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 65.
- ²⁸⁰ Theodor Nöldeke, *Sketches from Eastern History*, trans. John Sutherland Black (Beirut: Khayat, 1963), 47-48.
- ²⁸¹ Abd al-Rahman ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddimah*, (Cairo: Matbat Mustafa Muhammad, n.d.), 334 and 338. Cf. Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 67.
- ²⁸² Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 64; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 67.
- ²⁸³ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, fols. 1 and 4, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ²⁸⁴ Ibid., MS. 6182, fol. 19.
- ²⁸⁵ Abu Sa'id ibn Maymun ibn al-Qasim al-Tabarani al-Nusayri (known as al-Tabarani), *Kitab Sabil Rapat al-Arwah wa Dalil al-Surur wa al-Afrah ila Faliq al-Isbah, known as Majmu' al-Ayad*. This second title would be used throughout. This manuscript was discovered by Joseph Catafago, chancellor of the Prussian General Consulate in Beirut, who published in French the titles of the Nusayri feats and some prayers, especially those of the Nawruz and Christmas Eve. See Catafago, "Notices Sur Les Anseries," 149-68. And English translation of the same can be found in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 289-90. The whole text was later published by R. Strothmann in three parts; see al-Tabarani, *Kitab Maju al-Ayad*, ed. R. Strothmann, in *Der Islam*, 27 (1943-44): 1-60 and (1946): 161-273.
- ²⁸⁶ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 118. Cf. Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 64.
- ²⁸⁷ Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 64.
- ²⁸⁸ Henri Lammens, "Les Nosairis Furent-Ils Chrétiens?" *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 6 (1901): 33-50; and idem, "Les Nosairis, Notes sur leur Histoire et leur Religion," *Études Religieuses* (1899): 482-83; and idem, "Au Pay des Nosairis," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* (1899): 572, Seq and (1900): 99, Seq; and Edward J. Jurji, "The Alids of north Syria," *The Moslem World* 29, no 4 (October 1939): 337, no. 30.
- ²⁸⁹ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, fol. 4, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ²⁹⁰ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery* 125-25; and al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 19-20.
- ²⁹¹ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, questions 3 and 73, fols. 2 and 15, Bibliothèque Nationale, 271 and 278.
- ²⁹² *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 124.
- ²⁹³ See the works cited in note 39 above. See also De Sacy, *Exposé*, 2:158; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 67 n. 7, who follows De Sacy.
- ²⁹⁴ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 209.
- ²⁹⁵ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 19-20.
- ²⁹⁶ *Kitab al-Usus*, in Arab MS. 1449, fols. 56b-57a, Bibliothèque Nationale, and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 50-51.
- ²⁹⁷ *Risalat al-Tawhid*, Arab MS. 1450, fol. 47 Bibliothèque Nationale; al-Nashshabi, *Munazarah*, ibid., fols. 80-81 and 103; and Lyde, 113.
- ²⁹⁸ See *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, fol. 2, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 271. Cf. al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 55. According to Ali ibn Ibrahim, *Tafsir*, 283, the bees are Shi'ah.
- ²⁹⁹ This surah is in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 26-27, and *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 114.
- ³⁰⁰ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 114.
- ³⁰¹ *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 3 fol. 2-3, Bibliothèque Nationale; *Munazara*, MS. 1450, fol. 95, Bibliothèque Nationale. Cf. al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 55-56.
- ³⁰² *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 237-42.

- ³⁰³ Ibid.
- ³⁰⁴ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 46-48; Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 246-48; *Risalat al-Bayan li Ahl al-Uqul wa al-Afham wa man Talaba al-Huda ila Ma'rifat al-Rahman*, in Arab MS. 1450, fol. 54b, Bibliothèque Nationale; and *Kitab al-Usus*, Arab MS. 1449, fol. 54, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³⁰⁵ See *Masa'il*, related by al-Saigh of his master Abd Allah ibn al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 52-53, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³⁰⁶ De Sacy, *Exposé*, 1:60.
- ³⁰⁷ *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS, 6182, question 4, fol. 3, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³⁰⁸ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde *The Asian Mystery*, 116.
- ³⁰⁹ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* *ibid.*, 87-88; and *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, questions 45-48, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³¹⁰ See this surah in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 30.
- ³¹¹ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 114.
- ³¹² See an English translation of this manuscript acquired by Niebuhr in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 294-98; *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 21, fol. 6, Bibliothèque Nationale; and *Risalat al-Tawhid*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 45-46 Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³¹³ Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ismail al-Ashari, *Kitab Maqalat*, 14-15; and al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, reprinted together with Ibn Hazm's *Kitab al-Fisal fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal* (Cairo: Muassasat al-Khanji, 1321/1903), 2:13.
- ³¹⁴ Al-Shaykh Abu Abd Allah al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi, *Kitab al-Hidaya al-Kubra*, appended to Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun*, 229-97, especially 229 and 230.
- ³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 230-31. Cf. Ibn Babawayh, *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, 59-60.
- ³¹⁶ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 115.
- ³¹⁷ Al-Khasibi, *Kitab al-Hidayah al-Kubra*, in Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun*, 231-32.
- ³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 230, *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 93; and *Risalat Fitrat al-Munsan wa Nuzhat al-Qalb wa al-Ayan*, fols. 38-39 in Uthman, 28 of the introduction; *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 87-88; questions 45 and 50 of *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale; and most of the surah's of *Kitab al-Majmu'* in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 7, 10-11, 21, 23.
- ³¹⁹ *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, questions 43 and 50, fol. 11 and 12, Bibliothèque Nationale; *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery* 115; and the first Surah of *Kitab al-Majmu'* in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 8.
- ³²⁰ *Kitab al-Usus*, Arab MS. 1449, fol. 42b, Bibliothèque Nationale; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 59.
- ³²¹ Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 51.
- ³²² *Ibid.*, 51-52; and De Sacy, *Exposé*, 1:31-32.
- ³²³ Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 52. There is evidence that Fatimah, daughter of the Rasul of Allah (saw), claimed that she was divine and called herself Ali al-Ala. See Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Genosis*, 145-46, n. 214. In his *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, 55, Ibn Babawayh states that God derived the name of Ali from His name, Ali al-Ala.
- ³²⁴ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 115.
- ³²⁵ *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 14, fol. 5, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³²⁶ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 118; and *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 5, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³²⁷ *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 43, fol. 11, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³²⁸ Al-Tabarani in Catafago, "Notices Sur Les Anseriens," 161-61.
- ³²⁹ *Ibid.* 161-62.
- ³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.
- ³³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³³² *Ibid.*, 164-65. Cf. al-Askari, *al-Alawiyyun aw al-Nusayriyya*, 104-5.
- ³³³ Al-Tabarani, *Majmu' al-Ayad*, in Catafago, "Notices Sur Les Anseriens," 165.
- ³³⁴ See al-Tabarani, *Kitab al-Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothman, 190; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 292.
- ³³⁵ Al-Tabarani, *Majmu' al-Ayad*, in Catafago, "Notices Sur Les Anseriens," 167.
- ³³⁶ *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 90, fol. 17, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³³⁷ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 137-38.
- ³³⁸ Al-Askari, *al-Alawiyyun aw al-Nusayriyyah*, 105.
- ³³⁹ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 81-82.

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- ³⁴⁰ Al-Tabarani, *Majmu' al-Ayad*, in Catafago, "Notices Sur Les Aseriens,"
- ³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 167; idem, *Kitab al-Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 190; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 292.
- ³⁴² *Kitab al-Ta'lim al-Diyannah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 82 and 95, fols. 16 and 18, Bibliothèque Nationale; *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 295; al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 27-28; *Munazara*, Arab MS. 1450, fol. 126, Bibliothèque Nationale; and De Sacy, *Exposé*, 2:561.
- ³⁴³ *Kitab al-Majmu'*, in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 20-23, 28, 31 and 85. Cf. Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 78-79; al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 361-66, and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 50-54, and 138.
- ³⁴⁴ *Kitab al-Majmu'*, Surah 6, in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 20-21, 85. Cf. Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 39, especially the argument on this point between representatives of the Shamsis and the Qamaris.
- ³⁴⁵ This Surah is in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 26-27.
- ³⁴⁶ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 28.
- ³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 22, 31.
- ³⁴⁸ *Kitab al-Majmu'*, Surah 5, in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 18-19. Cf. Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 87-88.
- ³⁴⁹ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 139.
- ³⁵⁰ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 31 and 91.
- ³⁵¹ De Sacy, *Exposé*, 2:561; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 79.
- ³⁵² *Kitab al-Majmu'*, Surah 13, in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 29.
- ³⁵³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵⁴ Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 82-92.
- ³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 82; and Daniel Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus* (St. Petersburg: Buchdruckerei der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1856), 1:489-91.
- ³⁵⁶ Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, 1:180, and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 83.
- ³⁵⁷ Abu al-Faraj Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn al-Nadim, *Kitab al-Fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel (Halle, University of Halle, 1871-72; reprinted, Beirut: Khayat, n.d.), 320-21; Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, 1:180, and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 83.
- ³⁵⁸ Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, 1:748; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*,
- ³⁵⁹ Ibn al-Nadim, *al-Fihrist*, 322-24.
- ³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 323.
- ³⁶¹ Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 84.
- ³⁶² Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 50-55.
- ³⁶³ *Kitab al-Majmu'*, Surah's 11 and 15, in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 26-27 and 32.
- ³⁶⁴ For Further examples of the of the relations between the Nusayris cult and that of the Harranians, see Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 87-92.
- ³⁶⁵ Al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 2:97-99.
- ³⁶⁶ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 124; and *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyannah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 11 and 72, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³⁶⁷ See the review of Lyde's, *The Asian Mystery* by Charles Henry Brigham in *North American Review* 93 (1861): 355.
- ³⁶⁸ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 124, n. 2.
- ³⁶⁹ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyannah al-Nusayriyyah*, question 16 and 18, Arab MS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³⁷⁰ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 122.
- ³⁷¹ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyannah al-Nusayriyyah*, question 4, Arab MS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³⁷² Cf. al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 51.
- ³⁷³ See *Masa'il*, related by Saigh of his master, Arab MS, 1450, fol. 53, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³⁷⁴ *Munazara*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 95-96, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 47; *Risalat al-Tawhid*, related by Jisri, Arab MS. 1450, fol. 46, Bibliothèque Nationale; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 63.
- ³⁷⁶ See *Kitab al-Usus*, Arab MS. 1449, fol. 1, Bibliothèque Nationale; *Kitab al-Usayfir*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 11 and 18, Bibliothèque Nationale. Cf. Al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 47.
- ³⁷⁷ *Munazara*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 95-96, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³⁷⁸ See this third Quddas in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 40; and the anonymous tract, Arab MS. 1450, fol. 55, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ³⁷⁹ *Kitab al-Majmu'*, Surah 5, in al-Adani *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 18; and Catafago, "Drei Meesen der Nosairier," 393 and *Kitab al-Siraht*, Arab MS. 1449, fol. 122, Bibliothèque Nationale.

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- ³⁸⁰ Massignon, *Salman Pāk et les Prémices Spirituelle de l'Islam*, 37, n. 3.
- ³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ³⁸² *Ibid.*, 8; 13-14; and I. Horovitz "Salman al-Farisi," *Der Islam* 12 (1922); 178-83. Other sources Massignon cites are Ubayd al-Muktib (d. 140/757), Ibn Ishaq (d. 150/767), Abd al-Malik al-Khathami (d. 180/796), and Sayyar al-Anzi (d. 199/814).
- ³⁸³ Massignon, *Salman Pāk et les Prémices Spirituelle de l'Islam iranien*, 13-14; Muhammad al-Zahri known as Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, 4:53-57; Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirahh al-Nabawiyyahh*, ed. Mustafah' al-Saqqa et al. (Cairo: Mustafah' al-Babi al-Halabi, 1375/1955), 214-17; Ma'sum Ali; *Tara'iq al-Haqa'iq*, 2:2; and al-Sha'ibi, *al-Sila bayn al-Tasawwuf wa al-Tashayyu*, 25.
- ³⁸⁴ Massignon, *Salman Pāk et les Prémices Spirituelle de l'Islam Iranien*, 14, Ibn Sad, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, 4:53-57; Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirahh al-Nabawiyyahh*, 1:218-20, Jamal al-Din Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi, *Sifat al-Safwa*, 1:523-56; Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani, *Hilyat al-Awliya'*, 1:192; Ma'sum Ali, *Tara'iq al-Haqa'iq*, 2:2; al-Subayti, *Salman al-Farisi*, 2nd. Ed. (Baghdad: Matba'at al-Azhar, 1969), 22.
- ³⁸⁵ Jamal al-Din Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi, *Sifat al-Safwa*, 1: 535, Massignon, *Salman Salman Pāk et les Prémices Spirituelle de l'Islam Iranien*, 16-17; al-Subayti, *Salman al-Farisi*, 26-27; Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirahh al-Nabawiyyahh*, 1:70; and al-Sha'ibi, *al-Sila bayn al-Tasawwuf wa al-Tashayyu*, 19, 26, and 30-31.
- ³⁸⁶ Massignon, *Salman Pāk et les Prémices Spirituelle de l'Islam Iranien*, 33. On Salman as the angel Gabriel, see Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 72 and 124-126.
- ³⁸⁷ Jamal al-Din Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi, *Sifa al-Safwa*, 1:546. For the tradition related of the fifth Imam al-Baqir by Jabir al-Jufi, see Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 144.
- ³⁸⁸ For the Aytam see *Risalat al-Tawhid*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 55-57 and Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani, *Hilyat al-Awliya'*, 1:211.
- ³⁸⁹ Ibn Ibrahim, *Tafsir*, 287.
- ³⁹⁰ Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, 1:222. On the continued presence of Salman from Christ down to Muhammad, see Corbin, "Le Livre du Glorieux de Jabir ibn Hayyan," *Emranos-Jahrbuch*, 18 (1950): 47-114.
- ³⁹¹ Al-Mas'udi, *Muruj al-Dhahab*, 2:301; Abu al-Husayn Muslim, *Sahih Muslim* (Cairo: Matbat Muhammad Ali, 1334/1915), 7:120-21; and Ibn Ibrahim, *Tafsir*, 159.
- ³⁹² Al-Sha'ibi, *al-Sila bayn al-Tasawwuf wa al-Tashayyu*, 28.
- ³⁹³ Al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shi'ah*, 58.
- ³⁹⁴ Massignon, *Salman Pāk et les Prémices Spirituelle de l'Islam Iranien*, 35.
- ³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 37. On Abu al-Khattab, see al-Ash'ari, *Kitab al-Maqalat*, 10-11; Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, 247-48; and al-Razi, *Kitab al-Zina*, 289.
- ³⁹⁶ Al-Ash'ari, *Kitab al-Maqalat*, 13.
- ³⁹⁷ Al-Razi, *Kitab al-Zina*, 307; and al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 2:13.
- ³⁹⁸ Al-Razi, *Kitab al-Zina*, 306; and Massignon, *Salman Pāk et les Prémices Spirituelle de l'Islam Iranien*, 42-49. It is interesting that although al-Razi is an Isma'ili writer, he appears neutral as a heresiographer. This becomes more puzzling when we realise that in *Umm al-Kitab*, a proto-Isma'ili source of the eighth century, Salman appears as a divinity who is God's messenger, and His Bab (door), His Book (Qur'an), His Throne, His Right Hand, His Trustee, and His Hijab (veil). See *Umm al-Kitab*, 139 and 172; and Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 171.
- ³⁹⁹ This tradition related by al-Khasibi, appears in Husayn Muhammad Taqi al-Tabarsi al-Nuri, *Nafas al-Rahman fi Ahwal Salman* (Tehran, 1285/1868), part 5, 53; see also, Massignon, *Salman Pāk et les Prémices Spirituelle de l'Islam Iranien*, 48.
- ⁴⁰⁰ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 130.
- ⁴⁰¹ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab al-Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothman, in *Der Islam*, 27:23.
- ⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 23 and 67. In *Risalat al-Tawhid*, Arab MS. 1450, fol 47 Bibliothèque Nationale, Salman is considered as the creator of the world.
- ⁴⁰³ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyana al-Nusayriyya*, Arab MS. 6182, question 23, fol. 6, Bibliothèque Nationale. In the prologue of *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, Salman Pak (pure) appears as the terrestrial typification of Gabriel. See also Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 72, no. 3.
- ⁴⁰⁴ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 129.
- ⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 131; and al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothman, 209-22.
- ⁴⁰⁶ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 131.

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- ⁴⁰⁷ See Arab MS. 1450, fol. 55, Bibliothèque Nationale and the Third Quddas (called Quddas al-Adhan) in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 41.
- ⁴⁰⁸ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 24-29; Bibliothèque Nationale; and *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 131.
- ⁴⁰⁹ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 254. See also chapter 5 of his book, notes 10 and 15.
- ⁴¹⁰ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 67; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 24-26.
- ⁴¹¹ Al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin*, 254-59.
- ⁴¹² *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 132.
- ⁴¹³ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 205.
- ⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 190, 192-93, 196, 201, 221. In his *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, 35, Ibn Babawayh relates similar statements by the Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin.
- ⁴¹⁵ For this treatise of *al-Tawjih*, see Arab MS. 6182, fols. 21-22, Bibliothèque Nationale; and *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 133.
- ⁴¹⁶ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 102, 105.
- ⁴¹⁷ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 265 and 132.
- ⁴¹⁸ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 56.
- ⁴¹⁹ Al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 100.
- ⁴²⁰ C. Niebuhr gives the names of these Aytam at the seven appearances of the Deity. See the English translation of Niebuhr's manuscript in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 294-98.
- ⁴²¹ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusyariyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 23-43, and 70, fols. 7-11 and 15, Bibliothèque Nationale; and *Kitab al-Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothman, 23 and 69. Cf. *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 133.
- ⁴²² *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, question 56-63, and 70, Arab MS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale; *Risalat al-Tawhid*, fol. 55; and *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 134.
- ⁴²³ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusyariyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 70, fol. 15 which refers to Fatimah in the masculine as al-Sayyid Fatir; al-Razi, *Kitab al-Zina'*, 307; and al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 2:14. In the proto-Isma'ili source *Umm al-Kitab*, Fatimah declares that she is the creator — Fatir, of heaven and earth and the spirit of the true believers. See *Umm al-Kitab*, ed. W. Ivanow, 39-40; and Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 146, the note carried from previous page.
- ⁴²⁴ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothman 155-56 and *Risalat al-Tawhid*, Arab MS. 1450, fol. 45, Bibliothèque Nationale. Cf. Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 101; and Shari'ati, *Fatimah is Fatimah*, 134-36, where the author produces a tradition in which the Rasul states that Fatimah is part of his body and that she is the final link in the chain of divine justice. Cf. Ibn Babawayh, *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, 55-56.
- ⁴²⁵ Al-Razi, *Kitab al-Zina'*, 307; al-Ash'ari, *Kitab al-Maqalat*, 14; and al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 2:14.
- ⁴²⁶ *Kitab al-Majmu'*, Surah 5, in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 19. Cf. *Umm al-Kitab*, 172.
- ⁴²⁷ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 19-20.
- ⁴²⁸ *Kitab al-Sirah*, Arab MS. 1449 fols. 93b-98a, Bibliothèque Nationale; *Risalat al-Bayan*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 55a-60b, Bibliothèque Nationale; *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusyariyyah*, question 55, and 59-68, Arab MS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale; Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 111-12; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 103-8.
- ⁴²⁹ *Kitab al-Sirah*, Arab MS. 1449 fols. 93b-98a, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 112.
- ⁴³⁰ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, questions 58, 59, 61, 62, 63. Cf. al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 105-6.
- ⁴³¹ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, questions 55 and 65, Arab MS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale; and *Risalat al-Bayan*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 58a-60b. Cf. al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 107-8.
- ⁴³² *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 135.
- ⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 136.
- ⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 136; and *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, question 29, Arab NS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁴³⁵ See *Risalat al-Bayan*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 58b-60a, Bibliothèque Nationale and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 109-10.
- ⁴³⁶ *Risalat al-Bayan*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 58b-60a, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁴³⁷ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 74-78.
- ⁴³⁸ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 59-60.
- ⁴³⁹ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 142.
- ⁴⁴⁰ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 77.

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- ⁴⁴¹ Al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shi'ah*, 51. For more on the Nusayris' concept of musukhiyyah, see Strothmann, "Seelenwanderung Bei Den Nusairi," *Oriens*, 113, especially 104-13.
- ⁴⁴² Al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 2:12. For a detailed account of metempsychosis, especially the transformation of human beings into animal forms, see Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, 272-76; and Strothmann, "Seelen wandering Bei Den Nusairi," 107.
- ⁴⁴³ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 140.
- ⁴⁴⁴ *Risalat al-Bayan*, Arab MS. 1450, fol. 57, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁴⁴⁵ *Kitab al-Majmu'*, in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 10-11; *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 175-76; Neibuhr, *Travels*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 140; al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 72; al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 2:12; and Dussaud, *Histoire at Religion des Nosairis*, 122 and 124.
- ⁴⁴⁶ See Hamza ibn Ali, *al-Risalat al-Damighahh wa al-Radd, ala al-Nusayri al-Fasiq* (refutation of the Nusayris), Arab MS. 1419, fol. 2, Bibliothèque Nationale; DeSacy, *Exposé*, 2:561-68.
- ⁴⁴⁷ Hamza ibn Ali, *Risalat al-Damighahh*, Arab MS. 1419, 5 and 14, and MS. 1419, fol. 2, Bibliothèque Nationale; and De Sacy, *Exposé*, 2:579. Cf. Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 140.
- ⁴⁴⁸ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 59-61, 144-45. There is evidence that Jafar al-Sadiq considered metempsychosis to be one of the Ghulat's errors and deceptions. See Abu Mansur Ahmad ibn Ali al-Tabarsi, *al-Ihtijaj*, ed. Muhammad Baqir al-Khirsan, (al-Najaf: Matbat al-Nu'man, 1386/1966), 2:89.
- ⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵⁰ *Kitab al-Sirah*, Arab MS. 1449, fols. 117-18, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, fols. 114, and 118, 173b.
- ⁴⁵² *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 205; *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 141, and al-Tabarani, *Kitab al-Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 67.
- ⁴⁵³ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 81; and *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 97.
- ⁴⁵⁴ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 141.
- ⁴⁵⁵ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab al-Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 71-72.
- ⁴⁵⁶ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 81 85-86; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 140.
- ⁴⁵⁷ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 146-47 and 152-53; and *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 141-42.
- ⁴⁵⁸ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah* in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 141-42.
- ⁴⁵⁹ Arab MS. 4291, fol. 56, Berlin Royal Library, quoted in Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 35.
- ⁴⁶⁰ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 166-67; and Strothmann, "Seelenwanderung bei den Nusairi," 113, in which he quotes al-Tabarani as stating that God created woman from the disobedience Iblis (Satan).
- ⁴⁶¹ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 164-65.
- ⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 152-54.
- ⁴⁶³ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 144.
- ⁴⁶⁴ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 88-90.
- ⁴⁶⁵ Al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shi'ah*, 52-53.
- ⁴⁶⁶ *Kitab Sirah*, Arab MS. 1449, fols. 112-13, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 126.
- ⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 146.
- ⁴⁶⁹ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 62.
- ⁴⁷⁰ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 198; and *Journal Asiatic* (February 1848), 166.
- ⁴⁷¹ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, question 7, fol. 4 and question 80 and 81, fol. 16, Bibliothèque Nationale; and al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 67.
- ⁴⁷² *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 141.
- ⁴⁷³ *Risalat al-Tawhid*, Arab MS. 1450, fol. 46, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁴⁷⁴ Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*, 156; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 143.
- ⁴⁷⁵ See al-Nashshabi, *Munazara*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 140-41, Bibliothèque Nationale. *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 132.
- ⁴⁷⁸ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 102.
- ⁴⁷⁹ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 81-82.
- ⁴⁸⁰ Al-Baghdadi, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, 298-305.

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- ⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 284-85. Cf. M. Jan De Goeja, *Memoire Sur Les Carmathes du Bahrein* (Leiden: E.j. Brill, 1886), 170-72; Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 104; and Bandalī Jawzī, *Min Tarikh al-Harakat al-Fikriyyah fi al-Islam* (Beirut: Dar al-Rawai, n.d.), 138-41, where the author discusses the Ismaili allegorical interpretation of the Qur'an.
- ⁴⁸² See "Ma'rifat al-Sama," Arab MS. 1450, fols. 158-63, and "Ma'rifat al-Sama," fols. 163-67.
- ⁴⁸³ "Ma'rifat al-Sama," fols. 158-59; Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 107. Dussaud states that the initiate places the slippers of all the onlookers on his head.
- ⁴⁸⁴ See Hamza Ibn Ali, *al-Risalat al-Damighah*, Arab MS. 1419, fols. 5 and 14 and MS. 1415 fol. 2, Bibliothèque Nationale; De Sacy, *Exposé*, 2:561-68; Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 258; Arab MS. 1450, fol. 15, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 108-9.
- ⁴⁸⁵ Arab MS. 1450, fol. 160, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 112.
- ⁴⁸⁶ Arab MS. 1450, fol. 160, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 112.
- ⁴⁸⁷ See Arab MS. 5188, fol. 132, Bibliothèque Nationale. Cf. Jurji, "The Alids of North Syria," 340.
- ⁴⁸⁸ See the rubric entitled *Khitab al-Tilmidh ba'd al-Su'al* (The discourse of the disciple after being questioned), in Arab MS. 6182, Bibliothèque Nationale. This part of the manuscript immediately follows a portion of *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*. Cf. Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 160.
- ⁴⁸⁹ See "Ma'rifat al-Taliq," in Arab MS. 1450, fol. 160, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁴⁹⁰ Jurji, "The Alids of North Syria," 339-39. For a synopsis of the Philosophy of al-Ishraq, see M. Arkoun, "Ishrak," *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden and London: E. J. York: Longman, Green, 1918), 113-12; and A.V Williams Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies: The Iranian Religion and Vicious Monographs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), 174-75 and 187-93. Cf. Corbin, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 98, 112, 131-33, and 136.
- ⁴⁹¹ See "Ma'rifat al-Taliq," in Arab MS. 1450, fol. 160, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 113-14.
- ⁴⁹² De Sacy, *Exposé*, 2:578; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 114.
- ⁴⁹³ See the names of these twelve in Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 114-115.
- ⁴⁹⁴ Arab MS. 1450, fol. 160-67, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁴⁹⁵ See this quotation in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 258.
- ⁴⁹⁶ Arab MS. 1450, fols. 160-67, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 259.
- ⁴⁹⁷ Arab MS. 1450, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 261-62.
- ⁴⁹⁸ For this contract, see "al-Iqad" in Arab MS. 6182, fold. 36-37, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 256.
- ⁴⁹⁹ See al-Nashshabi, *Munazara*, Arab MS. 1450, fols. 16-167, Bibliothèque Nationale. Cf. al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 89-91; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 115-19.
- ⁵⁰⁰ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 2-3. I have followed closely the Arabic text giving a fresh translation in many places different from that of Salisbury.
- ⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 3-4.
- ⁵⁰² Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 4-7.
- ⁵⁰³ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusyariyyah* in Arab MS. 6182, question 82, fols. 16-17, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., question 88 and 92-93, fols. 18-19.
- ⁵⁰⁵ *Kitab al-Tawjih* in Arab MS. 6182, fol. 24; al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 39-40; and *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad* ed. Strothmann, in *Der Islam*, 27:64, and 66, 183, 185, and 215.
- ⁵⁰⁶ Shihab al-Din ibn Fadl Allah al-Umari, *al-Ta'rif bi al-Mustalah al-Sharif* (Cairo: Matbaat al-Asima, 1312/1894), quoted in Abu al-Abbas Ali Ahmad ibn Ali al-Qalqashandi, *Subh al-Asha fi Sina'at al-Insha*, (Cairo: al-Muassasa al-Misriyya al-Amma li al-Talif wa al-Nashr, 1964), 13:250-51.
- ⁵⁰⁷ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusyariyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, fol. 15, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., fol. 16, questions 83 and 86; and Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Sa'id al-Ansari al-Akfani al-Sinjari, *Irshad al-Qasid ila Asna al-Maqasid*, ed. Abd al-Latif Muhammad al-Abd, Cairo: Maktabat al-Anglo-Misriyya, 1978, 76-77; al-Umari, *al-Ta'rif bi al-Mustalah al-Sharif* in al-Qalqashandi, *Subh al-A'sha*, 13:249-50; and Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:442.
- ⁵⁰⁹ Ajdi, *Da'irat Ma'arif*, 250; and Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:440.
- ⁵¹⁰ Langlois, "Religion et Doctrine des Noussaries," 435; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 160-61.
- ⁵¹¹ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab al-Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann.
- ⁵¹² Ibid., 27:4-5; and Catafago, "Notices Sur Les Anseriens," 149-68. The titles of these feasts are reproduced in Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:462, 470.

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- ⁵¹³ See the title page and the introduction of *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*.
- ⁵¹⁴ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 10.
- ⁵¹⁵ Al-Al, *Harakat al-Shi'ah al-Mutatarrifin*, 8-33.
- ⁵¹⁶ Sa'd ibn Abd Allah al-Ashari, *al-Maqalat wa al-Firaq*, ed. Muhammad Jawad Mashkur (Tehran: Matbaat Haydari, 1963), 55.
- ⁵¹⁷ Al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shi'ah*, 81-82; al-Baghdadi, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, 247; Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ismail al-Ashari, *Kitab al-Maqalat*, 11; al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 2:17; Abu Hanifah al-Nu'man, *Da'a'im al-Islam* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1951), 62-63; al-Al, *Harakat al-Shi'ah al-Mutatarrifin*, 74-75; and al-Sha'ibi, *al-Sila bayn al-Tasawwuf wa Tashayyu'*, 136-40.
- ⁵¹⁸ Al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shi'ah*, 80.
- ⁵¹⁹ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 20, 21, and 22; and *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, question 101, Arab MS. 6182, fol. 38, Bibliothèque Nationale, where Muhammad is personified as a prayer.
- ⁵²⁰ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 34.
- ⁵²¹ See this festival listed among others in *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, fol. 38, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁵²² Al-Kulayni, *al-Usul min al-Kafi*, 1:294-95; al-Razi, *Kitab al-Zina*, 256-57; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, 3:14; and Ahmad ibn Abi Ya'qub Wadhih al-Yaqubi, *Tarikh al-Yaqubi* (al-Najf: Matbat al-Ghari, 1358/1939), 2:93.
- ⁵²³ See al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 55-59, which covers al-Khasibi's ode. I have tried only to give translation of excerpts of this ode. The prayer and the sermon associated with this feast continue until p. 84 of the same.
- ⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.
- ⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, 85-87.
- ⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, 97-102.
- ⁵²⁷ Ibn Khaldun, *al-Ibar wa Diwan al-Mubtaba wa al-Khabar* (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1956), 2:737-38; and Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:459. Cf. al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusyriyyun*, 136.
- ⁵²⁸ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 104-6.
- ⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.
- ⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 107-10; and *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 116. For the commemoration of Ashurah from the view point of the Twelve Shi'ah, see Ayub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam*; and Marçais, "Ashurah," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, (Leiden and London: E.J. Brill, 1960), 1:705.
- ⁵³¹ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothman, 107-8. Cf. Ibn Babawayh (al-Qummi), *Ilal al-Shar'i* (al-Najaf: al-Matbaat al-Haydariyyah, 1963), 1:227, where Ibn Babawayh condemns those who say that, like Christ, al-Husayn was killed, but that he was thought to have been killed.
- ⁵³² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³³ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 116-20.
- ⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.
- ⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, 121-22.
- ⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 123-26.
- ⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, 124-25.
- ⁵³⁸ Al-Nuri, *Nafas al-Rahman*, part 5, 53; and Massignon, *Salman Pāk et les Prémices Spirituelles de l'Islam iranien*, 48.
- ⁵³⁹ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 111-13.
- ⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 124-25.
- ⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 19-20.
- ⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 154-55 and 163-74.
- ⁵⁴³ Al-Razi, *Kitab al-Zinah*, 307; Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ismail al-Ashari, *Kitab al-Maqalat*, 14; al-Baghdadi, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, 251; and al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 2:13.
- ⁵⁴⁴ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 188; Catafago, "Notices Sur Les Anseriens," 161-65; and lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 289-94, which is the English translation of Catafago's French translation of the original text.
- ⁵⁴⁵ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, 188-222.
- ⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 223.
- ⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 175-77; Catafago, "Notices Sur les Anseriens," 154 and 158-59.
- ⁵⁴⁸ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 34-35.

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- ⁵⁴⁹ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 177. Cf. Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 149; al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 140.
- ⁵⁵⁰ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 177-78; and Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Nosairis*, 149.
- ⁵⁵¹ Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Nosairis*, 150. For a very brief account of this and other Nusayri feasts, see Munir al-Sharif, *al-Alawiyyun Man Hum wa Ayna Hum*, 136-37. For Bast, see E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead* (New York: Bell Publishing Company, 1960), 187.
- ⁵⁵² Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, Ed. Strothmann, 175.
- ⁵⁵³ Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:466-69, especially 468.
- ⁵⁵⁴ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 175: Catafago, "Notices Sur Les Anseriens," 156-57 and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 285-86, who gives translation of the episode of the Christmas Eve.
- ⁵⁵⁵ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 175, 177; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 287.
- ⁵⁵⁶ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 177; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 187-88.
- ⁵⁵⁷ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 177; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 288.
- ⁵⁵⁸ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 178-79.
- ⁵⁵⁹ For example, see White, "Saint Worship in Turkey," 8-18.
- ⁵⁶⁰ For these Ziyaras, see Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 167-75; and al-Sharif, *al-Alawiyyun Man Hum wa Anya Hum*, 130-35.
- ⁵⁶¹ Al-Sharif, *al-Alawiyyun Man Hum wa Anya Hum*, 133. Cf. Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 168.
- ⁵⁶² Al-Sharif, *al-Alawiyyun Man Hum wa Anya Hum*, 134.
- ⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁶⁴ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 158; al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 36; and al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 143.
- ⁵⁶⁵ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 34.
- ⁵⁶⁶ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 157.
- ⁵⁶⁷ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 36.
- ⁵⁶⁸ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 154-55.
- ⁵⁶⁹ *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, fols. 17-26 especially fol. 24, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁵⁷⁰ See chapter 28 of this book.
- ⁵⁷¹ See *Kitab Ta'lim al-Diyanah al-Nusayriyyah*, Arab MS. 6182, fols. 17-26 especially fol. 24, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁵⁷² Al-Umari, *al-Ta'rif al-Mustalah al-Sharif* in al-Qalqashandi, *Subh al-A'sha*, 13:250.
- ⁵⁷³ *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, in Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 243-56.
- ⁵⁷⁴ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 36-54.
- ⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 36-37. Dussaud, who follows al-Adani's narrative, states that people assemble at daybreak at the house of Sahib al-Id to show that like the Harranians the Nusayris conduct their prayers before sunrise. While it is true that the Nusayris recognise the sun and its rising, the celebration of the feast, as evident from al-Adani, is done in the evening, not at sunrise. See Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 89-90. Furthermore, Dussaud, and also Salisbury, state that a vessel filled with wine of pressed grapes or figs is made ready. I found no mention of a juice of pressed fogs in al-Adani's *Kitab al-Bakhurah*.
- ⁵⁷⁶ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 37-38, 40-48, 53-54, 176-77, 198-99; and Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 90-91. A French translation of the perfume mass is found in Langlois, "Religion et Doctrine des Noussaries," 436. The first English translation of the Perfume Mass was made by Rev. Samuel Lyde with the title Mass of the Ointment. See Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 246-48 and 198-99. For an explanation of the black turban, the thimbles, and the two-edged knife, see al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 147 n. 10, 156-58. See also *Kitab al-Mashyakhah*, Arab MS. 6182, fols 23-24, 28-30, Bibliothèque Nationale.
- ⁵⁷⁷ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 155.
- ⁵⁷⁸ Lammens, "Les Nosairis Furent-Ils Chrétiens?" 33-50.
- ⁵⁷⁹ Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis*, 51-52, 64.
- ⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.
- ⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 48, 147, 201, 211, quoted by Lammens, "Les Nosairis Furent-Ils Chrétiens?" 33-50.
- ⁵⁸² Lammens, "Les Nosairis Furent-Ils Chrétiens?" 33-39, 42, 44-49.
- ⁵⁸³ Al-Hariri, *al-Alawiyyun al-Nusayriyyun*, 186-87.
- ⁵⁸⁴ Badawi, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, 2:466-69.
- ⁵⁸⁵ Lammens, "Les Nosairis Furent-Ils Chrétiens?" 48.
- ⁵⁸⁶ See above p. 260; Sad ibn Abd Allah al-Ashari, *al-Maqalat wa al-Firaq*, 100-1; al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shi'ah*, 102-3; Abu Jafar al-Tusi, *al-Ghayba*, 244; and Abu Mansur Ahmad ibn Ali al-Tabarsi, *al-Ihtijaj*, 190-91.

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- ⁵⁸⁷ Al-Tabarani, *Kitab Majmu' al-Ayad*, ed. Strothmann, 19, and the discussion of the names of this sect in the previous chapter.
- ⁵⁸⁸ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 102-9; Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*, and Charles Williams Heckethorn, *The Secret Societies of All Ages and Countries*, (New York: New York University, 1966), 1:130.
- ⁵⁸⁹ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 58-59, 93.
- ⁵⁹⁰ Ibn Hazm, *Kitab al-Fasal*, 2:114-15. Cf. Muhammad Raghīb Paha, *Safinat al-Raghīb wa Dafinat al-Talib* (Cairo: Bulaq, 1255/1839), 216, reprinted by Bulaq in 1282/1865.
- ⁵⁹¹ Abd Allah Sallum al-Samarrai, *al-Shubiyyah Harakah Mudadda li al-Islam wa al-Ummah al-Arabiyyah* (Baghdad: al-Muassasa al-Iraqiyyah li al-Di'at wa al-Tiba, 1984).
- ⁵⁹² *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 54 and *Kitab al-Hikam al-Jafariyyah li al-Imam al-Sadiq Jafar Ibn Muhammad*, ed. Arif Tamir (Beirut: al-Matba' al-Katholikiyya, 1957), 68-69. In his commentary on the Qur'an, Ibn Ibrahim states that the taqiyyah is the "license of the believer." See Ibn Ibrahim, *Tafsir*, 54.
- ⁵⁹³ Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, *Kitab Sharh Aqa'id al-Saduq aw Tashih al-I'tiqad* (Tabriz: Matbat Ridai, 1371/1951), 66. This book is printed together with al-Mufid's *Awa'il al-Maqalat*; Ibn Ibrahim, *Tafsir*, 55 and Tamir, *al-Hikam al-Jafariyyah*, 68.
- ⁵⁹⁴ *Kitab al-Haft al-Sharif*, 54, 78, 198, and 201.
- ⁵⁹⁵ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 82.
- ⁵⁹⁶ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 25.
- ⁵⁹⁷ Heckethorn, *The Secret Societies of All Ages and Countries*, 1:130-31; and Bernard H. Springett, *Secret Sects of Syria and the Lebanon* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922), chapters 16-17, 140-65. Springett's account of the Nusayris is a rehash of the Rev. Lyde's *The Asian Mystery* and Salisbury's translation of al-Adani's *Kitab al-Bakhurah*.
- ⁵⁹⁸ Springett, *Secret Sects of Syria and the Lebanon*, the introduction, 5-9.
- ⁵⁹⁹ F. Walpole, *The Ansayri and the Assassins With Travels in the Further East in 1850-1851 including a Visit to Nineveh* (London: R. Bently, 1851), 3:354; and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 162 who follows Walpole.
- ⁶⁰⁰ Langlois, "Religion et doctrine des Noussairiens," 434 and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 162.
- ⁶⁰¹ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 83-84; and Salisbury, "Notes on the Book of Sulayman's First Ripe Fruit," 290, 296. Salisbury has misunderstood the meaning of these questions and answers.
- ⁶⁰² See fourth Surah in al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 14-18; and Salisbury, "Notes on the Book of Sulayman's First Ripe Fruit," 241-45.
- ⁶⁰³ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 29-30; and Salisbury, "Notes on the Book of Sulayman's First Ripe Fruit," 258-59.
- ⁶⁰⁴ Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakhurah*, 83; and Salisbury, "Notes on the Book of Sulayman's First Ripe Fruit," 297.
- ⁶⁰⁵ Springett, *Secret sects Of Syria and the Lebanon*, 176, n.1.
- ⁶⁰⁶ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 162.
- ⁶⁰⁷ Von Hammer-Purgstall, *The History of the Assassins*, 57 and Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 163.
- ⁶⁰⁸ Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 162.
- ⁶⁰⁹ Springett, *Secret sects Of Syria and the Lebanon*, 8 of the introduction.
- ⁶¹⁰ For this Fatwa, see Guyard, "Le Fatawa d'Ibn Taymiyyah," 167.
- ⁶¹¹ See al-Shaykh al-Saduq Abu Jafar ibn Muhammad ibn Babuwayh (al-Qummi), *Ilal al-Shara'i* (al-Najaf: al-Matba' al-Haydariyyah, 138/1963), 1: 227. Cf. al-Shaykh al-Mufid, *Kitab Sharh Aqa'id al-Saduq aw Tashih al-I'tiqad*, 63; Ibn Shahr Ashub, *Manaqib Al Ibn Abi Talib*, 1: 226-27; Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Ha'iri, *Muntaha al-Maqal* (Tehran: n.p. 1320/1902), 316; and Sad ibn Abd Allah al-Ashari, *al-Maqalat wa al-Firaq*, 37.
- ⁶¹² Ibn Shahr Ashub, *Manaqib Al Ibn Abi Talib*, 1: 228.
- ⁶¹³ Al-Askari, *al-Alawiyyun aw al-Nusayriyyah*, 44.
- ⁶¹⁴ See this fatwa in the newspaper *al-Shab*, 31 July 1936, reproduced in Munir al-Sharif, *al-Alawiyyun Man Hum wa Ayna Hum*, 59-60.
- ⁶¹⁵ Munir al-Sharif, *al-Alawiyyun Man Hum wa Ayna Hum*, 59-60.
- ⁶¹⁶ Shaykh Mahmud al-Salih, *al-Naba al-Yaqin an al-Alawiyyin*.
- ⁶¹⁷ Muhammad Rida Shams al-Din, *Ma al-Alawiyyin fi Suriyya* (Beirut: Matbat al-Insaf, 1956), 53-54.
- ⁶¹⁸ Arif al-Sus, *Man Huwa al-Alawi*, in Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun*, 131.
- ⁶¹⁹ Abd al-Rahman al-Khayyir, "Yaqzat al-Alawiyyun," reproduced in Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun*, 173-89, especially 179.
- ⁶²⁰ Ahmad Sulayman Ibrahim, "al-Alawiyyun bayn al-Muslimin wa al-Islam," reproduced in Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun*, 191-210.
- ⁶²¹ Shaykh Muhammad Hasan Yasin, "al-Alawiyyun Shi'iyyun," reproduced in Uthman, *al-Alawiyyun* 190-91.

⁶²² See the anonymous *al-Alawiyyun Shi'ah Ahl al-Bayt: Bayan Aqidat al-Alawiyyin*, (Beirut: n.p., 1392/1972), 8-10. Judging by the introduction, it is probable that this monograph has been compiled by the Shi'i Hasan Mahdi al-Shirazi. This proclamation first appeared in the newspaper *al-Qabas*, 27 July 1937.

⁶²³ *Al-Alawiyyin Shi'ah Ahl al-Bayt*, 10-32 and note 1 containing the signatories of the proclamation.

⁶²⁴ Maoz, "Syria under Hafiz al-Asad: New Domestic and Foreign Policies," *Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems* 15 (1975): 10-11; and Gubser, "The Alawites of Syria," 44.

⁶²⁵ Kelidar, "Religion and State of Syria," 18; and Moshe Maoz, "The Emergence of Modern Syria," 30; and Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 114.

⁶²⁶ Gubser, "The Alawites of Syria," 43-44.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶²⁸ Alisdare Drysdale, "The Assad Regime and its Troubles," *Middle East Research and Information Project Report* 110 (November-December 1982): 8 and al-Din, *al-Nusayriyyah*, 190.

⁶²⁹ See prayers of the Nusayris addressed to Sulayman al-Murshid and his sons Mujib and Saji as gods. These prayers consist of the following Surah's: (1) Surat al-Sajdah, (2) Surat al-Fath, (3) Surat al-Ma'rifah, (4) Surat al-Dua', (5) Surat al-Iqtibas, (6) Surat al-I'tiraf, (7) Surat al-Iqrar, in Mujahid al-Amin, *al-Nusayriyyah (al-Alawiyyun)*, 67-71.