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JABIR IBN HAYYAN AND EARLIEST ISMĀ'ILĪ GNOSIS :

A Note on the Significance of NATIQ and SAMIT  
in 'Radical' Shi'ism.

Douglas S. Crow

Ismā'īliism - Dr. H. Landolt  
Institute of Islamic Studies  
McGill University, April 1, 1980.

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The importance of Jābir b. Ḥayyān for the history of science is undisputed: today he is the subject of intense controversy by scholars and scientists, who have judged Jabirian 'Alchemy' to represent the most rigorous attempt to found a quantitative system of the natural sciences in the Middle Ages. For many scholars and 'scientists' of medieval Europe (at least from the thirteenth century on), Geber excited even more interest and respect; this is so because of the holistic system of knowledge which they held, where no art, science or technology was intelligible without its cosmological, ethical and existential presuppositions and implications.

But this approach towards science ('ilm) is precisely that which early Ismā'īlism fostered within the Islamic milieu. Felix Klein-Franke sums up the current trend of thought when he observes: "It is now assumed that the Ismā'īliyya constituted a centre of occult sciences."<sup>1</sup> Pio Filippini Ronconi states:

the 'scientific meditation' upon Nature was fostered, at least in the ambiance of the Ikhwān al-Safā' by Guides. The same is the case for the Imām, who is supposed to be in possession, somehow mystically, of total knowledge. That is why such philosophical-scientific research was promoted by people with an inclination toward Shī'ism, if not directly Ismā'īlism, people attracted to the bāṭinī implication of being led into research by a kind of pre-knowledge of its meaning and contents. 2

It is this intimate wedding of natural sciences with metaphysics and gnosis which permits one to include a discussion of the greatest of Muslim alchemists within the context of Ismā'īlī esotericism.

This paper attempts to situate the teaching of Jābir b. Ḥayyān within the context of the intellectual and 'spiritual' currents which comprise the phenomena of early Shī'ism, particularly through the prism of the notions of NATIQ and SAMIT.

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أداوى الحارّ بالبارد و البارد بالحارّ  
و الرطب باليابس و اليابس بالرطب  
و أردّ الأمر كله إلى الله عزوجلّ ...

I treat the hot with the cold, the cold with the hot;  
the wet with the dry, and the dry with the wet;  
and I return the whole affair back to God...

- Ja'far al-Ṣādiq  
(in debate with the Hindu  
physician before al-Manṣūr.  
'Ilal I 92f.; & Khisāl 98f.)

## PROLOGUE

The true story of the hatching and nurturing of Muslim gnosis, from the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad down to the first half of the 2nd/8th century, is largely a subject of legend and controversy (e.g., the figures of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, or of Salmān al-Fārisī). The threads of the story may possibly be picked up towards the late first and early second century of the Hejira within the circles around the Ḥusaynid 'Alīda Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 115) and his eldest son Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 148). There is little doubt that, pending the drastic re-evaluation and critical scrutiny of the early materials emanating from such persons, much light may be shed on the earliest diffusion of an esoteric teaching ('ilm al-bāṭin) arising out of a radically spiritual appropriation of the Islamic revelation.

For many Muslims in the past as well as today, the very idea of a 'hidden' tradition (sirr al-maknūn) at the heart of Islām, of a secret doctrine (maktūm, mustatir) conveyed by the Messenger of God and Seal of the Prophets, may God whelm him in glory and give him peace, to a limited number of individuals charged with its spread and preservation, comes as blasphemous. God's Revelation is for all men, and His message (the Holy Qur'ān) is clear and understandable. At the same time, throughout Muslim history, another current of thought and experience has held firmly to the view that God's Revelation is replete with significance at differing depths of understanding, and that in His unfathomable Omniscience, the AllMighty provides guidance

and teaching for all the different degrees of human understanding. This latter attitude perceives that because God addresses humanity in terms they can grasp and understand, the AllWise provides knowledges corresponding to every depth of human comprehension— however shallow or deep these may be. Both of these tendencies share the view that the Prophet Muḥammad was especially qualified and fitted to receive God's Revelation and that the Holy Book revealed on his tongue is in fact replete with all possible guidance and teaching, speaking clearly and directly to all the depths of human understanding.

Islām conceives of the Prophet Muḥammad, as well as the previous prophets in human history, as supreme examples of human life in its totality and thus the models par excellence to follow and obey. This is especially true in the inner religious and spiritual life of Muslims. The ideal of "Prophetic-Man" — from Adam to Muḥammad — is always taken as the archetype for human spiritual realization. In harmony with another fundamental aspect of Islām, namely Knowledge ('Ilm), the prophets are seen as the custodians and dispensers of unadulterated Truth and the Knowledge-of-God, which is the constant unchanging factor behind the various revelations and divine Laws sent down to mankind. Thus, Muslim gnosis apprehends Prophetic Knowledge to be the very content and substance of human spiritual realization, and trains all its attention and hopes towards coming into its possession. Here too, the AllMerciful does not leave man without concrete guidance towards the acquisition of prophetic truth, and it was the hallmark of SHI'ī Islām to continually look for a human exemplar who embodies and possesses this 'Ilm

to the fullest possible degree. Sunnī Islām, while generally considering the Qur'ān as embodying such 'ilm, also shares the concern for concrete guidance as enshrined, for example, in the figure of the Ṣūfī Shaykh or Pīr.<sup>3</sup>

In approaching the subject of earliest Ismā'īlī spirituality and its speculative expression, it is helpful to realize that, whatever interpretations and assignments of origins that have been made (ranging from Persian dualism, to theurgic Neo-Platonism, to a rather ill-understood branch of heterodox Shī'ī 'extremism'), this movement within Islām is rooted in certain underlying facets of archaic Shī'ī Islām whose development remains largely unexplored. A look at the understanding of prophecy and 'hiero-history' as envisioned by Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq will prove a valuable aid in examining the notions of Nāṭiq and Ṣāmit in earliest Ismā'īlism, and in appreciating their significance in Jabirian gnosis.



I. From ADAM to the Qā'im: The Greatest Name of God and the Relics of Prophecy.

These are the revelations which Adam made known to Seth his son. And his son taught his seed about them. This is the hidden knowledge of Adam, which he gave to Seth, which is the holy baptism of those who know the eternal knowledge . . .

! - The Apocalypse of Adam  
(Nag Hammadi, Codex V, 5: 85).

In the vision of prophecy propounded by Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, a developed hiero-history is discernible which has integrated within its perspective definite features of ancient Jewish, Christian and Gnostic mysteriosophy. The precise content and structure of this hiero-history, with its cosmological and anthropological elaborations, still awaits critical appreciation. Among its basic features is a mythos which seeks to explain the religious history of mankind as a progressive 'falling-away' from the primordial fullness of Adamic Knowledge, and the providential restoration of the original knowledge of Prophecy in Muḥammad and his Family. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq relates\* concerning the Greatest Name of God:<sup>4</sup>

ان الله عزوجل جعل اسمه الأعظم على ثلاثة وسبعين حرفا  
فأعطى آدم منها خمسة وعشرين حرفا وأعطى نوحا منها خمسة عشر  
حرفا وأعطى إبراهيم منها ثمانية احرف وأعطى موسى منها أربعة احرف  
وأعطى عيسى منها حرفين وكان يحين بهما الموت ويبرئ بهما الاكله  
والابرمس ، واعطى محمد اثنين وسبعين حرفا واحتجب حرفا للآل  
يعلم ما في نفسه ويعلم ما نفس العباد .

\* Note: In quoting hadiths related on the authority of al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, it should be evident that to accept uncritically all such reports is foolhardy; yet even more foolhardy is the dismissal of these documents without further ado, or the unwarrantable casting of doubt on them and their rejection simply because they do not fit in with generally accepted ideas.

This report may be represented thus:

|           | 'Greatest Name of God' | contains | 73 | 'letters' |
|-----------|------------------------|----------|----|-----------|
| God gave: | 1) Adam                | -        | 25 | "         |
|           | 2) Noah                | -        | 15 | "         |
|           | 3) Abraham             | -        | 8  | "         |
|           | 4) Moses               | -        | 4  | "         |
|           | 5) Jesus               | -        | 2  | "         |
|           | 6) Muḥammad            | -        | 72 | "         |

& God keeps one 'letter' with him which He gives to no-one else.

Apart from the significances of the number 73 as the number of letters of the Greatest Name of God (vide: seventy three 'sects' . . .), the depiction of these six major prophets as successively inheriting a decreasing portion of God's Greatest Name is striking. The Ḥusaynid Imāms claimed, furthermore, that Muḥammad's legacy (the 72 letters) passed to them via 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and was part of their secret knowledge, whose protection and dispensation was an integral function of their status as the Hujaj ('Exemplars', 'Authoritative Exponents') of God in creation.

This theme of the Greatest Name of God constituting part of the legacies of the major prophets and their trustees (Awsiyā'), understood as receptacles of God's Knowledge, and passing down from Adam in an unbroken succession (the chain of Anbiyā' wa al-Awsiyā') is further elaborated in an important number of fragments stemming from al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq.<sup>5</sup> Al-Kulaynī preserves a report on the authority of al-Bāqir (Rawdah I 218-27) entitled: "Ḥadīth Adam 'alayhi al-salām ma' al-Shajarah."<sup>6</sup> In this hadīth al-Bāqir recounts the story of Adam's eating of the Tree in paradise, his fall to earth, Cain's murder of Abel at the evil suggestion of Iblīs, and the birth of Hibat Allāh, Adam's third son, as a substitute for Abel, and to whom God instructs Adam to bequeath his share of the divine mysteries:

... فلما انقضت نبوة آدم م واستكمل أيامه أوجى الله عز وجل إليه  
أن: يا آدم قد انقضت نبوتك واستكمل أيامك فاجعل العلم الذي

عندك والإيمان والأسم الكبر وميراث العلم وآثار علم النبوة  
 في العقب من ذريتك عند صبة الله فإني لن اقطع العلم والإيمان  
 والأسم الاكبر وآثار النبوة من العقب من ذريتك الى يوم القيامة  
 ولن أضع الارض الا وفيها عالم يعرف به ديني ويعرف به  
 طاعتي ويكون نجاة لمن يولد فيعا بينك وبين نوح ،  
 وبشر آدم بنوح عم ...

(Rawdah I 218; compare 'AyyāshI I 306:

... فأوصى إلى خير ولدك وهو صبي الذي وهبته لك ،  
 فأوصى إليه وسلم إليه ما علمناك من الاسماء والاسم الاعظم ،  
 فاجعل ذلك في تابوت فإني احب ان لا يخلو أرض من عالم  
 يعلم علمي ويقض بحكمي اجعله تجتني على خلق).

Al-Bāqir then tells of the death and burial of Adam (attended by Gabriel with seventy troops of Angels & Hibat Allāh leading the funeral prayers for the angelic hosts), and the threat which Cain made to Hibat Allāh afterwards (Rawdah I 220):

لما دفن أباه أناه قابيل فقال: يا صبة الله إني قد  
 رأيت أبي آدم قد خصلك من العلم بما لم أخص به أنا وهو العلم  
 الذي دعا به اخوك هابيل فنقبل قربانه وإنما قتلته لكيلا يكون  
 له عقب فيفتخرون على عقبي فيقولون: نحن أبناء الذي تقبل  
 قربانه وانتم ابناء الذي ترك قربانه، فأتك إن أظهرت من  
 العلم الذي اختصك به أبوك شيئاً فقتلك كما قتلت أخاك هابيل،  
 فلبث صبة الله والعقب منه مستخفين بما عندهم من العلم والإيمان و  
 الأسم الاكبر وميراث النبوة وآثار علم النبوة حتى بعث الله نوحاً عم  
 وظهرت وصية صبة الله حين نظروا في وصية آدم عم ... (Rawdah I 220)

Al-Bāqir goes on to describe how Adam's legacy of prophetic knowledge and the Greatest Name of God were passed down through successive prophets—

Noah (who announces to his son Shem the coming of Hūd), Ibrāhīm, Moses, Jesus (both Moses and Jesus announce the coming of Muḥammad), and Muḥammad (who himself is instructed to surrender the trust to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib); and al-Bāqir caps his description of the prophetic chain (bayān 'urwat al-Imān) by commenting on the Qur'ānic verse 4:54 — ' But We had already given the people of Abraham the Book and Wisdom, and conferred upon them a great dominion. ' — in the following manner:

فأما الكتاب فهو النبوة وأما الحكمة فهم الحكماء من الأنبياء  
 من الصفوة وأما الملك العظيم فهم الأئمة الهداة من الصفوة  
 ولأصولاء من الذرية التي بعضها من بعض والعلماء الذين  
 جعل الله فيهم البقية وفيهم العاقبة وحفظ العيثاق حتى  
 تنقضى الدنيا والعلماء ولولاية الأمر استنباط العلم والهداة  
 فهذا شأن الفضل من الصفوة والرسل والأنبياء والحكماء  
 وأئمة الهدى والخلفاء الذين هم ولاية امر الله عز وجل واستنباط  
 علم الله وأصل آنا علم الله من الذرية التي بعضها من بعض  
 من الصفوة بعد الأنبياء عليهم السلام من الآباء والاخوان والذرية  
 من الأنبياء .  
 (Rawdah I 225).

An important detail of this scheme should be stressed here: both al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq make the point that in the period between Adam and Noah, the prophetic 'Ilm was hidden (katama) and was not publicly proclaimed;<sup>8</sup> with the advent of Noah, a sharī'ah or Divine Law was first openly instituted for mankind.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the prophetic 'Ilm still remained veiled even after Noah's era, and continued to be hidden with the inheritors of Muḥammad's legacy.<sup>10</sup> The Ḥusaynid Imāms are known to have expressed their possession of this prophetic afflatus (primordial prophetic knowledge) in several ways, emphatically declaring that they were the unique guardians of al-Jafr, a red leather case in which were contained not only the personal effects of the Prophet Muḥammad (e.g., his sword) but also a number of secret religious scrolls from ancient prophets and wise men, and various symbolic relics, including the Greatest Name of God. Al-Jafr was

often likened to the ancient Tabernacle (Tābūt) of the Hebrews; and in one cycle of reports about the transmission of the prophetic 'afflatus', al-Bāqir speaks of the 'coffin' of Adam, in which his secret knowledge and his bones were collected and stored, and which Noah received as his legacy, carrying it with him on the Ark to deposit it after the flood in Mesopotamia (Kūfah being the legendary site of Adam's grave, Noah's tomb and the burial place of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib according to early Shī'ism).<sup>11</sup> Such a division of human history into anti-deluvian and post-deluvian eras appears to reflect the Qur'ānic (and Biblical) teaching that until the time of Noah, mankind was one community (thus there was no need for a sharī'ah); but from Noah on, men differed among themselves (thus the divine laws were institutionalized— cf. Qur'ān II:213). Later on, early Ismā'īlī thinkers were to express a variety of views over whether Adam was to be seen as a bringer of a Sharī'ah or Divine Law.

One consequence of this understanding of 'hierro-history' peculiar to al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq is that the original sapiential knowledge of Adam and his progeny has always been kept secret throughout human history, only being entrusted to the wisest and purest of men, particularly that race of men who spring from the seed of the prophets. In other words, the Prophets have maintained 'silence' over it, even while publicly proclaiming divine revelations and instituting divine Laws. This may imply that the Walāyah ('sanctity', 'authority to initiate' spiritually held by God's 'Friends') precedes Nubuwwah ('Prophecy' - understood as limited to the public proclamation of a divine message and the instituting of a Law). Now, the perception of the relation between Nubuwwah and Walāyah, their relative precedence or priority, is one of the major criterion for classifying various 'Imāmi' Shī'ī currents of the first four centuries of Islām; to elevate the Imām/Ṣāmit above the Prophet/Nātiq, for example, distinguishes the more 'radical', more esoteric viewpoint from one more easily tolerated by the community at large. In fact, the relative priority of these concepts lies at the heart of the difference between the two major branches of Shī'ī Islām: the Ismā'īliyyah and the Ithnā'Ashariyyah. Since both these branches of early Shī'ism stoutly maintain that Ja'far al-Ṣādiq played a

determinative role in the formation of their respective traditions, the significance of the above interpretation (namely: the priority of walāyah over nubuwwah vis-a-vis the prophetic 'Ilm of God's secrets) may be far-reaching.\*

But we have seen that the transmission and application of the Adamic fullness of Knowledge does not stop with Muḥammad. According to the vision of al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, it continues to be successively enjoyed by the Imām's of the line of 'Alī through al-Ḥusayn, the Prophet's grandson. Each Imām who 'stands', (or: 'accomplishes', 'executes', 'undertakes' the office of Imāmah) — as the Qā'im — is seen to be in full possession of this 'Ilm (which is one of the chief requirements of Imāmah). It should be clearly understood here that by " 'Ilm " is meant prophetic gnosis, a type of resurrectional 'knowing' that involves both an uplifting of the human and a coming-down of the divine.

Al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq apparently rarely employed the term al-Mahdī, using terms such as: al-Qā'im, Ṣāhib al-Amr, Ḥujjah, Wasī, or al-Hudāt to refer to the Imāms; yet certain of their followers and various exponents of ghuluw (heretical 'exaggeration' in religion) from the late first century onwards seem to have referred to the Imām as either al-Mahdī, or al-Qā'im, or as both al-Mahdī al-Qā'im. Certainly, the more revolutionary, chiliastic wing of early Shi'ism entertained the expectation of a future Redeemer/Messiah who would appear, sword in hand (the Prophet Muḥammad's Sword, Dhū al-Fiqār) to exact vengeance on the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt (the Family of the Prophet), and to cleanse the earth of wickedness prior<sup>2</sup> to establishing a religious and politico-social Utopia in this world. Such a Mahdī ('divinely-guided' leader) or Qā'im was perceived as the 'Completer' (al-Tamm) of Muḥammad's prophetic mission, and as a precursor to the Last Days before the dissolution

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\* There is a great deal of tentativeness in these remarks, for until a much more definite understanding of al-Bāqir's and al-Ṣādiq's teaching has been attained, certain issues like this shall have to remain obscure.

of creation and the advent of Judgement Day. Probably some even viewed the Expected One (who had to be a descendant of 'Alī) as another Prophet to be sent by God, and thus in possession of the Prophetic 'Im. Several reports from al-Ṣādiq give an indication of the terrible role the Qā'im was destined to perform:

... عن الطيار عن أبي عبد الله عمي قول الله عز وجل :  
 ” سريهم آياتنا في الآفاق وفي أنفسهم حتى يتبين لهم أنه الحق “  
 قال : حَسَفٌ وَمَسْخٌ وَقَذْفٌ ، قال قلت : حتى يتبين لهم ؟  
 قال : دع ذاك ، ذلك قيام القائم .  
 (Rawḍah I 316)

... عن معاوية بن عمار ، عن أبي عبد الله عمي قال : إذا تمنى  
 احدكم القائم فليتمنه في عافية فات الله بعثت محمد ص رحمة  
 ويبعث القائم نَقَمَةً .  
 (Rawḍah II 55)

In the teaching of al-Ṣādiq, each Imām is the Qā'im in so far as he discharges and executes the functions of Imāmah: standing (qiyām) as the 'Delegated Exponent' (al-Hujjah) of God in creation, vehiculing the interior application of the revealed word to the Faithful, legislating (as the Prophet had done) for the community of the Faithful, and witnessing by his person to man's fulfillment of the Divine covenant and to God's fulfilling of the covenant. The Imām is thus the one authorized to speak in God's name, the utterer or enunciator of God's Will to men, the elucidator of the meaning of the Revelation according to the degree of understanding of different men, . . . the Nātiq. His successor/designated son & heir, who shares in the Knowledge and grace of Imāmah from his birth (or: from his designation as successor; or: from the death of the previous Imām who designated him) and maintains 'silence' (ṣamt) during the lifetime of the previous Imām (i.e. does not discharge the functions of the Imām-Qā'im) — is the Ṣamīṭ, and only has the authority to Guide and legislate upon his 'standing' as the Imām (i.e. upon his becoming Nātiq). For al-Ṣādiq, therefore, the terms Nātiq and Ṣamīṭ refer (at least in the most evident

employment of these terms as preserved in Ithnā 'Asharī ḥadīth collections) to the successive continuity of Walāyah, from one Imām to the next, which insures the preservation and dispensation of prophetic 'Ilm.<sup>12</sup> However, even in his own lifetime various closely related followers of al-Ṣādiq appropriated and expanded these terms in their own particular experience, e.g., Abū al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 138), whose companions:

held that there must be at all times two prophets, one speaking (nāṭiq) and the other silent (ṣāmī). In the time of Muḥammad, he had been the speaking prophet and 'Alī the silent one, and now Dja'far was the speaking prophet and Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb the silent one. They considered all Imām-prophets, including Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, as God.<sup>13</sup>

In general, the first few centuries of Islām witnessed the widespread and dramatic evolution of a dogmatic ideal of the Mahdī/Messiah, heavily coloured by the apocalyptic and millenarian hopes of political protest, social revolt, an anarchic mysticism, and a radical spirituality—whose interwoven strands constitute archaic Shī'ism. Out of the turbulent currents of these phenomena, the Qā'im-ideal most often envisioned the figure of the Expected One in terms of a return to the origins, the sealing of history (or at least this particular period of history) whereby the Qā'im will bring the end back as it was at the beginning of mankind— by re-introducing the Walāyah which preceded Nubuwwah: Paradise on earth! It is not far from such an understanding that the Qā'im's appearance (zuhūr) may involve an outmoding of institutionalized divine Laws/Sharā'ī', or perhaps a final, absolute consummation of all previous Laws through the agency of the "public" proclamation of what until then all prophets had outwardly maintained silence over: the hidden knowledge of Adam, which he gave to Seth, the Secrets of God. It is from such a background that the earliest specifically 'Ismā'īlī' form of Shī'ism springs.



## II. The Streamlining of Radical Revolutionary Shī'ism \*

Recently scholars have dwelt on the perplexing issue of the rise of the Ismā'īlī movement, the relations between the Qarmaṭians and Fāṭimid Ismā'īlism, as well as the speculative elaboration of 'Ismā'īlī' Shī'ism. Ivanow<sup>14</sup> and Madelung<sup>15</sup> have tended to minimize the importance of certain early Shī'ī groupings of the second century for the formations of Qarmaṭī and of Fāṭimid Ismā'īlism. Others such as Massignon<sup>16</sup>, Strothmann<sup>17</sup>, Lewis<sup>18</sup>, Stern<sup>19</sup> and Halm<sup>20</sup> have inclined towards accepting some link — however vaguely understood — between various currents within archaic Imāmī Shī'ism and the earliest speculations of Qarmaṭī and 'Ismā'īlī' Shī'ism. Without trying to survey the various views put forward by these scholars, nor take a stand on the issues involved, it should be noted that the gap of a century following the death of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq until the emergence of earliest Ismā'īlism is one of the most confusing blank spots in Shī'ī history, and very unfortunately so for the problem of Jābir's Shī'ism. Several factors should be kept in mind when considering this shadowy period: the Ismā'īlī claim that from the mid-second century to the latter half of the third century their movement was a secret underground organization, about which accurate information is extremely rare; and early Shī'ism of a radically esoteric nature (bāṭinī) was probably difficult to distinguish from what later on (i.e. by the late third and fourth centuries) came to be recognized as more moderate, conservative Shī'ism, e.g., in the Ithnā 'Asharī school.<sup>21</sup>

Yet certain definite links and prolongations of archaic Imāmī Shī'ī themes can be recognized in earliest Ismā'īlism. Take, e.g., the well-known "colourful-tale" of Ismā'īlī origins given currency by Akhū Muḥsin<sup>22</sup> (d. ca. 375), which relies on the lost anti-Ismā'īlī tract of Ibn Rizām

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\* In this section, the main emphasis is the problem of the emergence of the Ismā'īlī wing within 2nd to 3rd century Imāmī Shī'ism in the light of Qā'im ideology and of Jābir's Shī'ism.

(beg. of 4th c.), Kitāb fī Radd al-Isma'īliyyah, linking the Isma'īlīe with 'AbdAllāh b. Maḡmūn al-Qaddāh as a Daysanite subversion of Islām. Akhū Muḡsin attacks vehemently the idea of "hidden" knowledge (asr maktūm) and the secret transmission of esoteric truth.<sup>23</sup> He gives Ibn Rizām's description of the early Isma'īlī style of propaganda, whose terminology and intention smacks of earlier teachings such as those of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (Dawādārī, Kanz al-Durar VI 99):

... وإنما الدين صعبٌ مستصعبٌ و أمرٌ مُستنقلٌ ، و علمٌ  
 خفيٌّ غامضٌ ستره نبي حجه ، و عظم شأنه عن ابتذال  
 الأسرار له ، فهو يتر الله عز وجل المكنوم و أمره المستور  
 الذي لا يطيق حمله ولا ينهض بأعبائه و ثقله إلا ملك  
 مقرب أو نبي مرسل أو عبد مؤمن أتحن الله قلبه للإيمان ، ...

Again, one theme central to both early Ghulāt teaching and to al-Ṣādiq is met with in the Kitāb al-'Alīe wa al-Ghulām, an early Qarmaṭī production attributed to Abū Ja'far Maḡṣūr al-Yaman— namely the Asbāb or 'Ropes', 'recourses', linking the Prophet and Imām with the celestial world.<sup>24</sup> Or the theme of tābūt al-sakīnah in the same work recalls the role assigned to al-Jafr by al-Ṣādiq.<sup>25</sup> There is also the question of what Ivanow termed "the ḡaḡā'iq doctrine" — which most investigators have seen as an importation of Greek/Neo-Platonic/Hellenistic-Oriental-theosophy into Isma'īlism during the third century— and whether it has any resonances of the gnostic teachings met with already by the second century with al-Ṣādiq as well as various ghālī exponents. Thus, in a letter written ca. 362 by the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mu'izz bi-Allāh to al-Ḥasan b. Aḡmad al-Qarmaṭī (Dawādārī, Kanz VI 150-51), the notion of the Imām as divine hypostasis of the Divine Fiat is met with:

... إن الله جلّ وعزّ إذا أراد أمرًا أقضاه وإذا  
 أقضاه أمضاه . وإن من قضائه فينا قبل التكوين أن  
 خلقنا أشباحاً ، وأبرزنا أرواحاً ، بالقدرة مالكين و بالقوة قادرين . ...

If authentic, al-Mu'izz's epistle would contain an echo of one of the

fundamental teachings of al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq: the pre-corporeal creation of the light-bodies of the Imāms from the 'substance' of the Pleroma-world, and their pre-creation election as the upholders of God's Amr.

Perhaps the most relevant issue, with regard to the mechanics of the 'hiero-history' of Ismā'īlism and the prophetism involved in the Nāṭiq-Ṣāmit relationship, is the great variety among early trends of Ismā'īlism in the ḥudūd (degrees or ranks of the religious hierarchy) and their relation to the cosmic emanations from the One, as well as the place assigned to Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as the Qā'im. Madelung has characterized the earliest phase of the Ismā'īlī movement (at first directed probably from al-Ahwāz and al-Baṣrah) as holding that: "Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was acknowledged as the Imām, who had disappeared and was about to reappear as the Kā'im and to rule the world. The leaders of the movement in the absence of the imām claimed the rank of ḥudjdāe." (E.I.<sup>2</sup> IV 198). This trend supporting the doctrine of the return (ra'īsh) of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq remained potent until the last quarter of the fourth century, when the 4th Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mu'izz (341-365) was able to regain the allegiance of most of the schismatic Ismā'īlīs in Iraq and Persia— with the exception of part of the old Qarmaṭī movement in Baḥrayn. "Fāṭimid doctrine," states Madelung, "because of the Fāṭimid claim to the imāmate, was forced to modify the early doctrine concerning the role of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as the final Imām and Mahdī and the restriction of the number of imāms to seven." (E.I.<sup>2</sup> IV 204). Already in 286, when 'Ubayḍ Allāh al-Mahdī (the eventual founder of the Fāṭimid dynasty in North Africa) became the leader in Salamiyyah (Syria), a schism split the early Ismā'īlī movement provoked by 'Ubayḍ's claiming the imāmate for himself and his ancestors. The Irāqī Qarāmiṭh led by Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ and his brother 'Abdān, broke off their support of the Salamiyyah leadership, and Qarmaṭī activity in Syria, Iraq, and al-Baḥrayn, and probably western Persia also, refused to support the 'Fāṭimid' claim to Imāmsh, pursuing its own destiny for some time, and expecting the return of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl.<sup>26</sup>

What is clear is that the earliest Ismā'īliyyah held widely diverging views as to the line of Imāms from al-Ṣādiq on. One tendency, for example,

made the first Fāṭimid Caliph-Imāms descendants of Mūsā al-Kāzīm b. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (the seventh Imām of the Ithnā 'Achariyyah, and focus of intense messianic expectations following his death in 183 on the part of an important Wāqifi grouping). This possibly reflects the common mingling of wāqifi-type groupings who made the cycle of seven Prophets and/or Imāms the foundation of their faith.<sup>27</sup> Another very early tendency appears to have been the confluence of a certain stream of 'Ḥanafiyah' Shī'ism into the waters of Qarmaṭi genesis. Abū Sa'īd Ḥasan b. Bahrām al-Jannābī (murdered 301), the founder of Qarmaṭian power in East Arabia sent from Southern Iraq, who was responsible for the subjection of a large part of Baḥrayn by 286, "won followers rapidly, perhaps among a group formerly attached to the line of Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya." (Cerra de Vaux & M.G.S. Hodgson, E.I.<sup>2</sup> II 452). In one of the earliest historical references to the Qarmaṭi movement in south Iraq, a quotation is given from a 'book' of the Qarmaṭis (Ṭabarī, Ta'rikh III 2128-29, year 278):

وكان فيما حكوا عن هؤلاء القرامطة من مذهبهم ان جاؤا بكتاب فيه : بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم يقول الفرج بن عثمان وهو من قرية يقال لها نصرانة داعية الى المسيح وهو عيسى وهو الكلمة وهو المهديّ وهو احمد بن محمد بن الحنفية وهو جبريل وذكر ان المسيح تصور له في جسم انسان... اشهد ان آدم رسول الله اشهد ان نوحا رسول الله اشهد ان ابراهيم رسول الله اشهد ان موسى رسول الله واشهد ان عيسى رسول الله واشهد ان محمداً رسول الله واشهد ان أحمد بن محمد بن الحنفية رسول الله... 28

Nevertheless, the most significant trend in the genesis of earliest Ismā'īlism appears to have been the original Wāqifi groupings who 'stood fast' by Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, who thus becomes the Qā'im al-Zamān, being the seventh Imām after 'Alī, and the expected Mahdī who will 'complete' the Muḥammadan cycle of prophecy. In this respect, Sa'd b. 'AbdAllāh al-Ash'arī al-Qummī's description of the early Qarāmiṭah (Maqālāt 83-85), written ca. the 80's of the third century, as evolving out of a branch of the Mubārikiyyah grouping (one of the Khaṭṭābī factions in Kūfah ca. mid. 2nd c. on) may well

depict the predominant attitude of such 'sevenar' movements whose ideological momentum coalesced to form the first public manifestation of 'Qarmaṭī' propaganda shortly after the middle of the third century. Al-Qunawī reports of these earliest Qarmaṭīs (Maqālāt 84):

ومعنى القائم عندهم انه يبعث بالرسالة وبشريعة جديدة  
وينسخ بها شريعة محمد، وان محمد بن اسمعيل من اولى العزم  
واولو العزم عندهم سبعة: نوح و ابراهيم وموسى وعيسى  
ومحمد وعليّ ومحمد بن اسمعيل، اُعلى معنى ان السموات سبع  
والارضين سبع ... والائمة سبع كذلك وقلبهم محمد بن  
اسمعيل، ... وزصعوا انّ محمد بن اسمعيل هو خاتم  
النبيين الذى حكاها الله نبي كتابه ...

Note that in this description that Adam is not counted as a proclaimer of a sharī'ah, while 'Alī and Muḥammad b. Ismā'il are, the latter being seen as the bringer of a new Law which will abrogate the Law brought by the Prophet Muḥammad.

Before moving on to a discussion of early speculative elaborations of the notions of Nāṭiq and Ṣāmiṭ, it may be useful to comment on the links of 'AbdAllāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh with the genesis of the Qarmaṭī doctrine. Much has been debated over the validity of a 'Qaddāhid' role in 'proto-Ismā'ilism', yet the question still remains open whether it is only a vicious fabrication (as Ivanov held), or is spun out of half-truths (e.g., the possible connection of some 'Qaddāhids' with the beginnings of Ismā'ilism about 260 - cf. Stern, "'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn" E.I. I 48). Various versions of the Qaddāhid allegations (in a confused and apocryphal manner) link either Maymūn and/or his son 'AbdAllāh with: Abū al-Khaṭṭāb (ghulāt); Abū Shākir b. Daysān (i.e. Christian-gnostic-dualistic antecedents); Barmak al-Balkhī (ancestor of the Al Barmak, supposedly 'Zoroastrian', yet in reality Buddhist); and with al-Husayn al-Ahwāzī (the dā'ī who later initiated Ḥamadān Qarmaṭ in the Sawād of Kūfah). For the various versions of this story, consult: Ivanov, Rise of the Fāṭimids 127-56; Dawūdārī, Kanz VI 44f.; De Sacy, Exposé I 74f.; Lewis, Origins 44-71; Stern, "Abū'l Qāsim al-Bustī and his refutation of Ismā'ilism" JRAS 1961 25-26; al-Daylamī, Bayān Madhhab al-Bācīniyyah 20, 29, 30, & 36. Maqrīzī, Nuwayrī, and others, who repeat Ibn Rizām's version of Maymūn as a Daysānite & follower of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, have him go to Jerusalem where he practices magic, theurgy, astrology, alchemy and asceticism, before

his son 'AbdAllāh b. Maymūn goes to Persia to engage in sedition. (The historical person 'AbdAllāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh, a rāwī of Ja'far al-Šādiq and Mūsā al-Kāzīm well known in Ithnā 'Asharī hadīth collections, must have died sometime in the last decade of the second century<sup>61</sup>). The Zaydī author al-Bustī and al-Daylamī, whose accounts draw upon seemingly early sources, stress the Persian origins of Maymūn, the former even linking him with the Barmakid family, descendants of the high-priest of the Buddhist monastery Nawbahār of Balkh. Most of the versions of this legend make a Qaddāhid (usually 'Abdallāh b. Maymūn, d. ca. 190) the mentor of a certain al-Husayn al-Ahwāzī, himself the initiator of Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ and his brother 'Abdān in the Sawād of Kūfah in ca. 264. 'Abdān (d. 286) was reputedly an author of Qarmaṭī books, and learned in medicine, astronomy and philosophy (Stern, E.I. 2 I 96; al-Baghdādī, al-Farq bayn al-Firaq 294, links Ḥamdān with the Sabians of Ḥarrān). Do all these allegations, insinuations and mud-slinging convey something true or half-true? The mentions of occult sciences, of 'exaggerating' and gnosticising exponents, of the Barēmīkah, and of the person of al-Husayn al-Ahwāzī (often mentioned in conjunction with a certain Dindān (or Zaydān), or else as the Persian Muḥammad b. Husayn Dindān, an associate of 'Abdallāh b. Maymūn and/or secretary of Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Abī Dulaf (d. 280) living in the environs of Karkh and Isfahan) are suggestive. It is known that Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. ca. 179), one of the leading disciples of al-Šādiq and al-Kāzīm, was closely associated with the Daysanites, and with the Al Yaḥqīn in Baghdad. The Barmakid wazīrs in Baghdad were intimately linked with the Al Yaḥqīn (the descendants of a mawla of al-Bāqir and al-Šādiq) as well.

Both Messignon ("Esquisse" 629) and Lewis (Origins 70) have pointed out the importance of Ithnā 'Asharī testimony concerning the figure referred to as al-Husayn al-Ahwāzī / and/or "Dindān"; and it is generally recognized that the persons of Maymūn and his son 'AbdAllāh are better illuminated by Ithnā 'Asharī evidences than in Ibn Rīzām's polemics. Now, early Ithnā 'Asharī biographical and bibliographical compilations mention two sons of Sa'Id b. Ḥammād b. Mihrān (or: b. Sa'Id); Mihrān (or Sa'Id) who was a mawla of 'Alī b. al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidīn, the father of Muḥammad al-Bāqir; and these two sons of Sa'Id b. Ḥammād were named: al-Ḥasan and al-Husayn. Ample testimony is preserved concerning these two brothers, but as it will become clear, there are some puzzling details about them, their father Sa'Id, and al-Husayn b. Sa'Id's son: Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. al-Husayn.

→ al-Ḥasan b. Sa'Id b. Ḥammād al-Ahwāzī: a reliable rāwī of traditions from the 12er Imāms 'Alī al-Ridā and Muḥammad al-Jawād, was originally from Kūfah, but moved with his brother al-Husayn and settled in Ahwāz. Al-Ḥasan b. Sa'Id was an active representative of the Imām al-Ridā, who brought a number of important followers into contact with the Imām, such as: Ishāq & Muḥammad, sons of Ibrāhīm al-Ḥudaynī, 'AbdAllāh b. Muḥammad al-Ḥudaynī, 'Alī b. al-Rayyān, and 'Alī b. Mihziyār. See: Tūsī, Riḥāl 381 & 78; Kashshī, Riḥāl 551-52 #1041.

→ al-Husayn b. Sa'Id b. Ḥammād al-Ahwāzī: the younger brother of al-Ḥasan, an important Shi'ī scholar and author, the rāwī of the Imāms al-Ridā, al-Jawād, and al-Ḥādī, d. 230. Leaving Kūfah for Ahwāz with his brother,

he eventually settled in Qumm, where he is buried. He and his brother co-authored thirty books (yet these writings were commonly known as the books of al-Husayn, while al-Hasan's contribution was often ignored; cf. Najāshī, Rijāl 46-48 for the 30 titles, & Tūsī, Fihrist 83, & Ibn Shahrāshūb, Ma'ālim 35). As one of these books was entitled: al-Redd 'alā al-Ghulāt, it is not surprising that al-Kashshī transmits some very interesting reports from al-Husayn b. Sa'id concerning various ghulāt exponents vis-a-vis Ja'far al-Šādiq, including the famous "condemnation" of Ismā'il b. Ja'far by al-Šādiq after the death of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb (Kashshī, 244-45 #449; cf. 297 #527, 303 #546, 304 #547 & 548). From various other reports which al-Husayn relayed, his interest in esoteric sides of the Imāms' teachings is displayed; e.g., his interest in defending the good memory of al-Mufaddal b. 'Umar al-Ju'fī, and of Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (cf. Kashshī, 508 # 982 & 407 # 764), and of Ibn Sīnān (Kashshī, 507-508 # 980). On al-Husayn, cf. also: Ibn Hajar, Lisān al-Mizān (Hyderabad, 1330) II 284.

- Abū Ja'far Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. Sa'id b. Ḥammād al-Ahwāzī (d. ca. after 250), nicknamed "Dindān", related from his father's teachers. He also compiled books, which were related from him by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Šaffār al-Qummī, the author of the important early Shī'ī hadīth collection Basā'ir al-Darajāt. However, many of the Qummī traditionists labelled Ahmad b. al-Husayn as an extremist (ghāli), and refused his reports (Najāshī, 60; Tūsī, Fihrist 46; Ibn Shahrāshūb, 10). Both Najāshī and Tūsī, writing in the fifth century, state that this Ahmad died in Qumm, and that he was called by the laqab Dindān.
- About their ancestor, Sa'id b. Ḥammād b. Sa'id (or: Sa'id b. Ḥammād b. Mihrān), there is not much information preserved. He was a companion of the Imām al-Ridā (d. 203), and may be identical with the Sa'id al-'Aṭṭār mentioned by Kashshī (p. 462 #882). In contrast to the 5th century authors Tūsī and Najāshī, al-Kashshī, who died in 328, explicitly refers to this Sa'id b. Ḥammād, the father of the brothers al-Ḥasan & al-Husayn, as carrying the laqab "Dindān" (Kashshī, Rijāl, 552 #1041; & 507-508 # 980):

... الحسن والحسين ابنا سعيد بن حنّاد  
و يقال ان الحسن صنّف حسين تصنيفاً وسعيد كان  
يعرف بدندان.

... ۹۸۰ و الحسن والحسين ابنا سعيد الدهوازيان ابنا حندان، ...

Commenting on the 12er testimony on Dindān, Lewis concluded that: "the more extravagant Sunnī statements concerning Dindān must be discarded" (Origins, 70). It appears that al-Kashshī's evidence, explicitly linking the name Dindān with the father Sa'id, not with the son Ahmad, of al-Husayn b. Sa'id b. Ḥammād, may only serve to make even more complex an already murky problem. Interestingly enough, al-Husayn b. Sa'id al-Ahwāzī is one of the major rūwās whose reports are drawn upon by Furāt b. Ibrāhīm b. Furāt al-Kūfī (d. ca. end of 3rd c.) in his early Shī'ī Tafsīr, whose contents & striking

for their 'neo-ghā'II' colouring and even alchemical imagery. Even more striking is the occurrence of reports from al-Ṣādiq found in al-Ḥimyarī's Qurb al-Isnād where the terms mustaqarr wa mustawda are applied to the Imāms; or the reports found in 'Ayyāshī's Tafsīr which speak of Seven Imāms. Here again, such common elements between a certain tendency in late 3rd century "Ithnā 'Asharī" Shī'ism, and early Ismā'īlism may only indicate the shared basis they emerged out of. Yet, the possibility that the person called al-Husayn al-Ahwāzī who reportedly initiated Ḥamdān Qarmāṭ into the Ismā'īlī da'wah possibly as early as 264, may be the same person whom Ithnā 'Asharī literature preserves the memory of as 'Dindān', one of the descendants of Sa'īd b. Ḥammād whose sons are connected with Ahwāz, raises some interesting problems for Ismā'īlī (or at least Qarmāṭī) origins.



III. The Dynamics of the WORD: Nāṭiq and Ṣamīṭ in their relation to Revelation

Strothmann, in his article "Sab'īya" (E.I. IV 23-24), characterizes the basic system of wāqifī-style Ismā'īlism as follows:

Adam is the first nāṭiq, but as a rule not the first man; then follow Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad and Muḥammad al-Tāmm. Between each two of these Nāṭiqs there are inserted seven "silent ones," ṣamīṭ, of whom the first, as special helpers of the nāṭiq, under titles like fāṭiq, "releaser," or asās, "foundation," are particularly important because it is only through the esoteric exposition attributed to them that the teachings and laws of the nāṭiq receive their true meaning or are completely explained.

This idea that the walāyah of the Awṣiyā' serves to complete and perfect the public revelation and divinely instituted laws brought by each prophet-Nāṭiq, that every Nāṭiq necessarily has a Wasī ('trustee', 'Legatee') to complete his prophetic mission (thus the title Mutimm, 'completer', applied to each of the seven Imāms after Muḥammad), is a natural corollary of the early Ismā'īlī understanding of the chain of prophecy holding together history. 'Alī, as the Asās or Foundation-of-esoteric-dispensation for Muḥammad, establishes the basis for the continuity of revelatory guidance which prolongs the Muḥammadan legacy, being charged with the dispensation of the inner meaning of the publicly proclaimed revelation. A whole world of ideas and attitudes, reflecting a peculiar interiorization of the Qur'ānic givens, is implicated in such a teaching, which is difficult for one to enter into completely. For example, the function of the Asās is not simply to guide the faithful into the intricacies of an esoteric appropriation of the revealed Book, but also to preserve unimpaired the integrity of the inner meaning from the envious malevolence of the ignorant who are by nature incapable of approaching such mysteries. The vicissitudes suffered by early Shī'ism only served to

intensify and entrench an attitude of profound separation from the generality of Muslims, who were regarded as deeply deluded concerning the verities of the Islamic revelation, and victims of a treacherous sabotage of the prophetic mission.

Behind this stance peculiar to the early SHI'ah in general, (which was an ideological factor in their revolutionary and political orientation), and bonded with it in the most intimate manner, is hidden an approach to truth and knowledge characterized by a subtle complexity. The early Ismā'īlī understanding of revelation and prophecy shares the common Islamic position which distinguishes the 'Prophet Muḥammad from previous prophets by his remarkable gift of eloquent speech (nuṭq): prophets before him established the validity of their prophetic missions by means of miraculous signs or deeds (e.g., Moses with magic, Jesus with Tibb), while Muḥammad's divinely inspired tongue was his 'proof' (ḥujjah). The Ismā'īlīs went further, however, by viewing all the major prophets as Nuṭqā', who 'materialized' or made concrete the spiritual force/power of the divine revelatory knowledge into the apparent, evident form of vocal discourse and/or written word (i.e. Holy Books). The divine Law vehicled by each Nāṭiq-prophet was thus viewed as a sort of solidification or crystallization of the immutable untranslatable 'source' or unique power of spiritual truth underlying all the revelations 'sent-down' from God, and which assumed various forms and diverse expressions appropriate to the portions of humanity which they addressed. The Ṣūmit- Asās-Imām, however, was understood to 'possess' or personify this constant immutable spiritual 'meaning' at the source of the various revelations, functioning as the Guide or channel who conducts the knower back to the repose of the unutterable fullness of prophetic knowledge, the nomos-origin propping up the outwardly expressible Law. Here, the fundamental Islamic perspective of the Holy Book as a projection of the divine Word (Logos, or in the language of esoteric Islām, Kalimah, Amr) can be discerned. All the public revelations in the hands of men, their various divine Laws and Holy Books, are only projections of a single immutable source, the Umm al-Kitāb, the "Source-Book" of all spiritual significances. Thus, early Ismā'īlīsm (as archaic Imāmī SHI'ism) insisted on the crucial distinction

between the 'outward' apparent (exoteric) import of revelation, and the 'inner' hidden (esoteric) significance of revelation; it made this distinction the *raison d'être* of the spiritual life and of advancement into progressive degrees of knowledge of its adherents.

Between the Zāhir (outward immediately apparent meaning) and the Bāṭin (esoteric significance) dimensions of the divinely revealed Word (Qur'ān; Law) exists a mutually interdependent relationship which, for early Ismā'īlism, intersects at the point represented by the prophets and their trustees (the Imāms).<sup>30</sup> Already by the late first century of Islām the notion had become widespread among the Ghulāt that God, in His essence, was an incomprehensible 'substance' known as Rūḥ al-Qudus (The Holy Spirit), and that He revealed Himself or made Himself accessible to men *via* the medium of a Man like other men, namely a Prophet or Imām. Besides implying a docetic metaphysics characteristic of Gnosticism, this attitude ties in with the early Ismā'īlī experiencing the Ṣāmit-Imām as the personification or envelope for the unutterable unconcretizable spiritual 'Meaning' that a veritable grasp of the publicly proclaimed Word yields. A statement of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq concerning the meaning of God's Names is relevant here (Kulaynī, Uṣūl I 114):

... عن هشام بن الحكم أنه سأل أبا عبد الله عن أسماء الله واشتقاقها،  
 "الله" مما هوشتون؟ فقال: يا هشام! الله مشتق من إله وإله  
 يقتضى ما لوصاً والإسم غير العسمى، فمن عبد الإسم دون معنى  
 فقد كفر ولم يعبد شيئاً، ومن عبد الإسم والمعنى فقد أشرك  
 و عبد اثنين، ومن عبد المعنى دون الإسم فذلك التوحيد. ...

(cf. Kulaynī, Uṣūl I 87 #2; Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Tawhīd 220f. #3; & DeAngelis, "Hishām Ibn al-Ḥakam" 274 fr. 97).

The identification of the true Tawhīd with the worship of the Ma'nā (the real significance or meaning which the name "Allāh" points to) without the Isim (the name "Allāh" taken as a verbally uttered word devoid of content by itself), was taken up by certain circles of Imāmī Shi'ism around the Ḥusaynid Imāms (e.g., the Nuṣayrīs, the Mukhammisah) and elaborated into a system of thought-experience serving to express various viewpoints about the relationship twixt

Zāhir and Bāṭin, Prophet and Imām (or Asās), Nāṭiq and Ṣāmit. (Cf. Massignon, "Salmān Pāk"). This ancient SHI'Ī heritage seems to have been appropriated by early Ismā'īlīs (certainly the early Qarāmiṭah), and incorporated into the particular elaboration of hiero-history and of prophetic-revelatory-experience which lies at the base of their teachings.

Coming now to the specific teachings of the early Qarāmiṭah and Ismā'īlīs, it will not be feasible to treat their speculative elaborations about Nāṭiq and Ṣāmit briefly, for the reason that this aspect of their teachings is impossible to examine alone without becoming burdened with the cosmogony and the cosmology (whether of the cosmic hierarchy of the world, or the 'religious' hierarchy of the da'wah) inherent in these notions: The dichotomy of 'Aql/Sābiq & Nāfs/Tāī', represents a sort of pre-creation anticipation of the interplay between Nāṭiq and Ṣāmit in spiritual hiero-history of man (see Halm, Kosmologie for a review of early Ismā'īlī notions on such points). However, a few words may be offered on the treatment given the notions of Nāṭiq and Ṣāmit in one early Ismā'īlī author.

One of the early bodies of Ismā'īlī literature which has come down to us purportedly stems from the dā'ī Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faraḥ Ibn Ḥawshab al-Kūfī, known as 'Maṣūūr al-Yaman' (d. ca. 303), who was sent from southern Iraq to the Yaman in 266 to organize the da'wah there; and his son 'far, whose Kitāb al-Kashf is available in a published edition; while a number of other early works are ascribed to him, such as the Kitāb al-Rushd wa al-Hidāyah and the Kitāb al-'Alīm wa al-Ghulām. In the latter two works, the terms Asās and Ṣāmit do not appear, 'Alī being styled the Wasī or the Hujjah of the Nāṭiq (Ivanov, Studies 11-13). In the K. al-Rushd, al-Mahdī completes both the degrees of the Nāṭiq and the Wasī, being the seventh Nāṭiq (i.e. the Mahdī) coming eighth after the seven Mutimm Imāms, while also being the tenth after Muḥammad, 'Alī (the Wasī, taken separately from the Mutimms), and the seven Imāms from the progeny of 'Alī (Ivanov, Studies 43). The K. al-'Alīm wa al-Ghulām, an archaic work which tells the initiatic tale of the conversion of an Arab youth (Ṣāliḥ) by a dā'ī from Fars into "ma'rifat ṣāḥib al-Ḥaqq aw wakīlīhi", there is an interesting passage devoted to the question of whether the Prophet Muḥammad was the last Nāṭiq, and arrives at the conclusion that he was not. 31

This work employs terms such as hujjah, bāb, and hijāb; the hierarchy of Prophet - Imām - Dā'ī is expressed by the relations between Sun - Fullmoon - Stars (Sun is Nātiq; the moon is either the Naqībs of the Prophet, i.e. the Imāms, or the hujjah who is the bāb of the Nātiq; the dā'īs are the stars)—an isomorphism which was widespread among early Imāmī Shī'īs. The author of this interesting 'novel' has the 'Alīm say: "Every name is the zāhir, what is predicated to it (its aifah) is its bāṭin, and both imply the knowledge of God and His religion which is the bāṭin of the bāṭin." (Ivanov, Studies 71).

Ja'far b.

In the K. al-Kashf,<sup>A</sup> Manṣūr al-Yaman provides an instructive sample of the early Ismā'īlī speculation on the notions of Nātiq and Ṣūmit (see Kashf, ed. Strothmann, 4th risālah on ta'wīl of Hajj, p. 101ff.) He likens the Prophets in human history as the "Houses-of-Prophecy" (Buyūt li-Amr Allāh wa Wahīhi . . .), and the call to prayer (adhān) on the Day of the Greatest Pilgrimage (al-Hajj al-Akbar) to the 'Speaking Utterer' (Nātiq Mutakallim). (Kashf 101-102). God makes manifest to His Friends (awliyā') Himself in seventy Temples (Haykals) or Bayts, namely the Prophets and Imāms who are the chain of guidance in history by which God testifies of His Mercy to men. The Buyūt of the Prophets (i.e. of the Nutaqā') establishes the Proofs and makes clear the Laws (sharā'ī') for their particular epoch, and are the locus of God's revelation (mustaqarr li-Wahīhi); obedience to them is a must. The Prophets who give voice to revelation-sent-down and to Laws (yuntaqūna bi al-tanzīl wa al-sharā'ī') are Adam (!), Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and "Muhammad al-Mahdī al-Nātiq al-Sābi'" (Kashf 104). Here, it is clearly specified that Adam was the first Nātiq and brought a publicly proclaimed Law (Kashf 109), while also erecting the Law fī al-bāṭin for the true worshippers of God. The Mahdī, or seventh Nātiq, is the instrument by which God will bring His Religion to ultimate perfection, and whose Law will complete or finalize all the sharā'ī' or revealed Laws preceding him. He is described as the Greatest 'House-of-Prophecy', and the greatest of the Veils (huḡub) in which God veils His revelatory Knowledge (i.e. the bāṭin of the Law/Book); the Mahdī is Ṣāhib Izhār al-Amr kulluhu, and the manifestation of the Greatest Veil of God (Kashf 109-10).

Employing the symbolism of the Hajj ritual, where Muslims circle around the Ka'bah or House of God (itself the archetype of the Muḥammadan trust which the Ahl al-Bayt embody), the Kitāb al-Kashf unveils its authors' understanding of the nutq of the Prophet (tanzīl of the Law), and the samt of the Imām (who guards the esoteric knowledge & calls men to the true significance of what the Nāṭiq brings), by the analogy of the Hajj and the adhān which invites to worship in ḥajj:

... والأذان وهو دلالة على الذي يعرف الناس ميقاتهم وقبلتهم وهو في عصره الإمام المعظم وهو محمد مولانا وسيدنا القائم بالسيف م وهو ناطق عصره وزمانه بدعوة الحق ظاهرا القائم بالسيف مع الدعوة وهذه الصفة في الإمام القائم بأمر الله محمد ابن القاسم م ، والحج الأكبر وهو الصامت اليوم يعني لم يظهر فينطق بأمر الله وهو ناطق السابع ، زمانه خاتم الأزمنة وهو اعظم أسبابه ، العين العظيمة ... (Kashf 103)

... لا بد من إمام يدعو ويشير إلى الإمام وإلى الناطق فالأذان مثل الإمام العتم والأقامة مثل الناطق وكذلك الأذان بالحج فالحج مثل الناطق والأذان مثل الإمام يدعو ويشير إلى الناطق ... (Kashf 110).

The role of the Sāmit-Imām is further clarified by the simile of the Buyūt of the Prophets, the City of Muḥammad, and the Gate of 'Alī (Kashf 105-107):

... ضرب رسول الله من المدينة مثلا لنفسه وبابها مثلا لوصيه وحجابه الذي ستر فيه باطن علمه كما ستر الله وجهه في حبه ...

A certain amount of flexibility in the use of terms such as ḥijāb, Imām, bāb, etc., may be detected, for there is taken for granted that the position of one with respect to another one of this hierarchy may be transferred functionally to another pair. Thus, the Prophet is also referred to as an Imām,

the Imām serves as a veil/hijāb for the 'Ilm deposited with him by the Prophet; but the Mahdī, unlike the Mutimm Imāms, alone functions both as a Nātiq-prophet and a Ṣamīṭ-Imām. While all the prophets and Imāms were Qā'ims during their particular epochs or lifetimes, the Mahdī, whom <sup>Ja'far b.</sup> Manṣūr al-Yaman was awaiting the appearance/zuhūr of, is the Qā'im par excellence since with his advent the chain of prophecy would be completed, the greatest epoch of human history would be initiated, and the Adamic fullness of Knowledge would at last reach its ultimate expression through the Proclamation of the Law to end all sharā'ī' — the unveiling of the esoteric mysteries of God entrusted to Adam, then Seth, and finally being publicly shared by the Mahdī with all men so deserving. !

Now Jābir b. Ḥayyān teaches something very similar.

#### IV. The Legend of Jābir b. Ḥayyān.

Without becoming entangled in the ambiguities and controversy of three generations of scholars surrounding the historical person of Jābir, we may summarize the legend:

Jābir's father Ḥayyān al-'Aṭṭār (mentioned by the historians al-Ṭabarī & Abū Ḥanīfah al-Dīnawarī)<sup>32</sup>, a Shī'ī druggist of Kūfah and patron of the powerful Azd tribe, was deployed in the early years of the second century in Khurāsān as a secret agent (dā'ī) for the Shī'ah/'Abbāsīd cause. Ḥayyān was executed along with a number of other 'Abbāsīd agents by the Umayyad governor of Khurāsān ca. 107/725, but not before his son Jābir was born ca. 105 in Ṭūs. Ḥayyān (the term "Ḥayyān" can mean the 3rd symbol/mansion in the arabic science of geomancy represented by the figure  $\equiv$  33) was a friend of Yaḳīn (d. 185), one of the great dā'īs of the Shī'ah and a mawlá of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (the 6th Imām of the Ithnā 'Asharī Shī'ī, or the fifth Imām of the Ismā'īlī Shī'ī, d. 148/765). (cf. T. Fahd, "Tradition Scientifique" 135f.). Jābir returned to his own tribe of Azd, a South Arabian tribe who were well-represented in Kūfah (that great urban melting-pot of Islām on the lower Mesopotamian Euphrates), finally gaining access to the Imām al-Ṣādiq whose intimate disciple he became.<sup>34</sup> The Imām imparted to Jābir the sirr al-maknūn, 'the hidden secret' of the Family of the Prophet, the fabulous mysteries of esoteric Islām commonly believed by Muslim tradition to have been handed down through the descendants of the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Jābir allegedly made journeys to Yaman, Syria, Egypt and India, during the course of which he came into contact with other masters: Ḥarbī al-Ḥimyarī, a S. Arabian who supposedly died in 170 aged 463 years; 'al-Rāḥib', a monk of the Syrian desert, disciple of the famed alchemist Marianus who had imparted alchemical secrets to the Umayyad prince Khālīd b. Yazīd; and the obscure logician 'Udhūn al-Ḥimār ('the donkey-eared one'); . . . The legend makes Jābir intimately linked with the Vizierial family of the Barmakids in Baghdad during the reign of Ḥārūn al-Rashīd, where he is depicted as something like a court physician-



alchemist. JaldekI has it that it was at the urging of Jābir that al-Rashīd imported Greek works from Constantinople, eventually translated by Hunayn b. Ishāq and Ibn Bukhtīshu' (Kraus, Jābir I p. XLII). It was also in Baghdād that Jābir had relations with 'Alī b. Yaḡīn (124-182), a well-placed official at the 'Abbāsīd court and a rāwī of al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāzīn, as well as with another member of the family of Yaḡīn, Yahyā b. Mūsā b. Yaḡīn.<sup>35</sup> With the disgrace and fall of the Barmakīs in 187, Jābir suffered persecution, and with his life endangered he retired to Kūfah where he lived in retreat until the Caliph al-Ma'mūn's reign (193 - ); i.e. the rapprochement with the eighth Imām 'Alī al-Riḍā and the subsequent reprieve for Shī'ism. The legend has Jābir die in Ṭūs in 200, with a copy of his book Kitāb al-Rahmah under his pillow.

This legend has for over a thousand years been the subject of heated debate among scholars, and even more so today, with some rejecting any historical link between Jābir and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq or even the very existence of Jābir (e.g., Abū Sulaymān al-Manṣūqī, d. ca. 370; Julius Ruska), and others (e.g., Holmyard, Fahd and Sezgin) deeming it quite plausible. Hāshimī writes: "A connexion is possible in principle because the writings of Jābir about Ja'far deal only with religious and ethical problems, and are not concerned with experimental details. Jābir's quotations of Ja'far agree with the traditional views of the Imām about oneness and justice of God."<sup>36a</sup> (M.Y. Hāshimī, al-Imām al-Ṣādiq Muḥim al-Kīmīyā', develops this thesis in more detail.) This conflicts with the views of Kraus, Plessner and Ullmann, who hold that the writings attributed to Jābir reflect the period of the late third/ninth century and are the production of a school, not of a legendary disciple of the sixth Imām in the second century. Despite the opinion of Hāshimī that Jābir's connections with Ja'far had no relevance to his 'scientific' teaching, being purely moral instruction, and of the German school who doubt any connection between the two at all, it appears obvious that no progress on this question can be achieved until a clear picture of the 'scientific' aspects of al-Ṣādiq's teaching has been reconstructed, the best material for this being found in the mass of archaic Shī'ī tradition collections and exegesis. Only then can a valid comparison be made between Jābir's science and the 'science' of the Imām. Once someone has scrutinized the 'science' implicit in the gnostic mythos of Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far

al-Ṣādiq, the first step in such an investigation can be taken. For the purposes of this study, it is more useful to emphasize the clear connection which Jābir has with various archaic streams of SHI'Ī gnosis (particularly 'heretical' SHI'Īsm of the Ghulāt) and with the Qarāmiyah and the Nuṣayriyyah. A good starting point is the statement of Ibn al-Nadīm, writing in his Catalogue ca. 377/987, that Jābir composed books on the doctrines of the SHI'ah, who held that: "he is one of their great men, one of the 'Gates'/Bāb."\* (J.W. Fück, "Arabic Literature on Alchemy" 95).

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\* The term "Bāb" was applied in early SHI'ism to the senior authorized disciple of the Imām. Ithnā 'Asharī hagiography usually names the bābs of the Imāms; thus Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar al-Ju'fī was the Bāb of Mūsā al-Kāẓim, 'Abdallāh b. Sinān the Bāb of 'Alī al-Riḍā, and Ibn Nuṣayr the Bāb of 'Alī al-Naqī. Strangely, the Bāb of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq is not mentioned. In Ismā'īlism, the pre-Fāṭimid use of the term bāb is confusing; with the Fāṭimids, the bāb comes immediately after the Imām, from whom he receives instruction directly, and in turn instructs the hujjats (B. Lewis, "Bāb" E.I.<sup>2</sup> I 872).

## V. The Jābir Corpus and the Theory of the Balance.

All students of Jābir b. Ḥayyān are grateful that "the jungle of Ismā'īlī-infected documents that make up the Jābirian Corpus" (Stapleton, "Antiquity of Alchemy" Ambix V p. 3) has been thoroughly studied by Paul Kraus from the standpoint of the history of science (see Kraus, Jābir II). Kraus prepared a critical bibliography of over 1000 writings attributed to Jābir, and studied their relation with Greek science. He established their relation with various Ismā'īlī/Shī'ī currents of the third century (and possibly ghulāt notions of earlier times? - cf. Kraus, "Dachābir ibn Ḥajjān und die Ismā'īlīja", & "Les dignitaires de la hiérarchie religieuse selon Ḥābir ibn Ḥayyān"). He placed the date of the composition of the Jābir Corpus in the late third to beginning of the fourth centuries hejira, based on a number of converging factors: e.g., early references in other literature; the successive stages in the composition of the Corpus; the role of Muslim gnosis in Jābir's science; the scientific terminology used being that of the school of Hunayn b. Isḥāq, and the religious terminology having affinities with Qarmatī and Nuṣayrī (and Mukhammisah?) teachings.

Concerning the problems connected with History of the sciences in Islām, Kraus noted: No alchemical work of Islām reveals such vast knowledge of ancient literature or has such an encyclopedic character as the writings attributed to Jābir b. Ḥayyān; yet the alchemy of Jābir is fundamentally distinct from all that has survived of ancient alchemy, being an experimental science based on a philosophical theory;<sup>36b</sup> Jābir's science appears to be closely connected with the 'Ṣābīan' scholarship of the Ḥarrānian milieu, ultimately perhaps the Pythagorean-Hermeticism of Apollonius of Tyana; and the metaphysical principle par excellence symbolizing Jābir's scientific monism, namely the principle of the Mizān/Balance, is an extremely complex, amazingly sophisticated, quantitatively and qualitatively precise key which connects his scientific system with his religious teaching (cf. Kraus & Plessner, "Djābir b. Ḥayyān", E.I.<sup>2</sup> II 357-59).

One of the enigmas of the Jābir Corpus is that later Islamic alchemy never surpassed the level it attained with Jābir b. Ḥayyān (Holmyard,

Alchemy 68). Kraus was able to trace many of the sources employed in the construction of the Corpus, but not to adequately explain the startling originality and advance which these writings represent over earlier traditions. Ullman points out that the beginnings of Arab alchemy ". . . in the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries are still largely wrapped in darkness. It may however be stated that already in the period in which the Corpus Gabirianum . . . were compiled, an important literature must have come into being, whose authors might have been Greek, Egyptian, Jewish, Christian, Persian or Indian wise men and philosophers. This pseudographic literature uses to a great extent the same names that served early Greek alchemy as designations. . . . This largely still uninvestigated complex of the pseudographs was enlarged by the Arabs . . . and form the groundwork for the two large alchemistic corpora which came into being at the turn of the 3rd/9th and the 4th/10th centuries, namely the Corpus Gabirianum and the writings of Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā' al-Rāzī" (Ullmann, "Al-Kīmiyā'" E.I.<sup>2</sup> V 111). Thus Kraus and Ullmann would make the famous physician-philosopher-chemist al-Rāzī contemporary with the Jābir Corpus, even though Ibn al-Nadīm reports that al-Rāzī mentioned Jābir in his writings as his Master in the Art. Gerard Heym ("Al-Rāzī and Alchemy", Ambix I/3 p. 187) notes of these two figures: ". . . so much in the writings attributed to Jābir can only be correctly interpreted if the philosophical system of the Ismā'īlīs is accepted as one of the sources of this group of alchemical texts. As the origin of the theory of Alchemy of al-Rāzī must be sought 'near' the works of the supposed Jābir, or in a source common to both groups of texts, the Ismā'īlī philosophy is probably also one of the keys to the understanding of the more obscure part of al-Rāzī's alchemical writings." 37

Sezgin has argued at length that the Hermetica and all other pseudographs preserved in Arabic come not only allegedly, but really, from pre-Islamic times, and what we have are Arabic translations, and therefore that Arabic science reached in the 2nd/8th century the high level represented by the Jābirian Corpus. (G.A.S. IV 132-269).<sup>38</sup> Without becoming sidetracked in this lively controversy, it may be useful to suggest that some of the reasons which Kraus put forward as indicating a late third century dating for the Corpus (e.g., Hunayn's terminology, & the allusions to radical

SHI'I doctrines) could equally well be turned around to support an earlier dating; then there are a number of awkward anomalies, e.g., that the Cairo Ms. of Jābir's book on Poisons, copied in A.D. 1140, states in the final sentence that it is a copy of a badly written manuscript dating to the year 139/756 (see A. Siggel, Das Buch der Gifte des Ġābir ibn Ḥayyān, p. 193b of Arabic text).

In any case, Kraus' deduction from the successive chronological stages of the composition of the Jābir Corpus, and from internal evidence, that these writings probably represent the efforts of a group of SHI'I gnostics whose school (in our opinion probably spanning the late second to late third century), expressed their identity by the 'person' of Jābir b. Ḥayyān, and ambitiously incorporated virtually the entire heritage of ancient science on the basis that it was in essential conformity with the esoteric teachings of the Family of the Prophet, whose figurehead was given as Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, is a plausible deduction. Kraus, on the evidence of Ibn Nadīm's list and internal references within the Corpus, established the successive stages of the literary production of this school:

the 112 Books

the 70 Books

the Kutub al-Mawāzīn (Books of the Balances, 144 Books)

the 500 Books

plus a number of separate writings and series of writings which can be inserted between these four main sections of the Corpus; e.g., Kitāb al-Rahmah being the earliest & preceding the 112 Books.

The first two stages (the 112 & the 70 Books) are largely technical alchemical compositions, many dedicated to members of the Barmakid family and 'Alī b. Yaḡṡīn; they reveal a clear dependance on the apocrypha of Bālīnās (Appolonius) i.e. the Emerald Tablet or Sirr al-Khalīqah (dated by Ruska & Kraus to ca. al-Ma'mūn's reign, i.e. 198-223). The latter two series (K. al-Mawāzīn & the 500 Books, plus individual productions like the K. al-Khawāṣṣ al-Kabīr, & K. al-Khamsīn) represent an encyclopaedia of sciences: math, logic, philosophy, astrology, chemistry, theurgy, medicine, music, language, etc. . . ., where

the principle of the Balance is applied to all the branches of human knowledge, forming the theoretical basis for 'alchemy'.

In all of Jābir's writings, the Imām Ja'far al-Šādiq is quoted and explicitly referred to as the real authority behind all of the wisdom contained therein ("ma'dīn al-hikmah") with Jābir being only the nominal author. The esoteric character of this wisdom is constantly mentioned, the underlying principle determining its presentation being that of tabdīd al-'ilm, 'the dispersion of knowledge'. Jābir continually affirms that he never exposes the whole truth about any branch of knowledge in any one place, but disperses the different parts throughout all his numerous writings. Thus, whoever can re-unite all his writings will have reunited the whole of Truth (cf. Kraus, Jābir I p. XXVII - XXXIII). It was probably this which inspired the great Egyptian alchemist Aydamūr al-Jaldakī (d. 743/1342) to undertake long voyages in search of Jābir's writings (Kraus, Jābir I 193 n. 3). Furthermore, Jābir asserts that his writings are arranged in a definite hierarchical order (tartīb) and must be read in that particular progression. In almost every work extant, Jābir fails to explain the crux of his matter, referring one to another work(s) in which the matter is completed. He also warns that no benefit will be derived unless one reads each of his writings three times. Even the titles of the writings are imbued with significance; in his K. al-Mājid/Book of the Glorious, (Mukhtār Rasā'il 115) Jābir states:

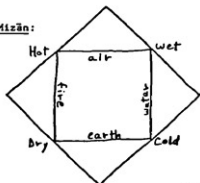
In each of these books, we mention the part of these sciences which correspond to the sense of the title, and that according to the principles that we have sketched. . . . If you know the plan which motivates and organised this dispersion, you would know who Jābir b. Ḥayyān really is himself.

'Ilm al-Mizān / The Theory of the Balance (refer Kraus, Jābir II 187-303).

The ultimate end of Jābirian 'science' is to integrate all domains of human knowledge in a system of numerical proportions based on a complex yet subtle arithmetic. By integrating the physico-medical theory of neo-Aristotelianism filtered through Stoic physics, with neoplatonic-Pythagorean Hermeticism, Jābir arrived at a certain fundamental sequence of Numbers:

1, 3, 5, 8, with its total of 17, as well as the number 28, to express the basal structure of not only Matter and of every science then recognized, but even of Language. The peculiarity of his alchemy was that Matter, itself arising from the equilibrium of the Four 'Natures' inherent in its composition (Heat, Cold, Moistness, Dryness) is arranged in varying proportions of the numbers 1, 3, 5, 8, but with the invariable total of 17. Thus all matter is essentially one, but the various forms assumed by matter depend on how the 'Natures' happen to be arranged in both the exterior/barrānī and the interior/jawwānī of the core structure. If every 'body' possesses an interior, potential base which constitutes the exact complement of that which is externally manifest or actuated, then the science of the Balance, being the alchemical operation of ta'wīl on a universal scale, has as its aim the discovery within every 'body' of the correspondance existing between the manifest/actualized and the occulted/latent (ẓāhīr - bātin). The work of alchemy is thus to effect a change in the existing relations, to rearrange the particular equilibrium of the Natures within a given body, by occulting a determined amount of a certain quality (i.e. one or more of the Four 'Natures') while making manifest a determined quantity of another, latent, quality. Such a vision of reality underlies Jābir's Kitāb al-Ikhrāj mā fī al-Quwwatī 'ilā al-Fī'l, for example; see Mukhtār Rasā'il, & P. Rex, Zur Theorie Der Natur Prozesse in Der FrüArabischen Wissenschaft.

Al-Mizān:



Crudely put: Water is wet & cold (externally), and dry & hot (internally); while Air is hot & wet (externally), and cold & dry (internally) . . .

By rearranging the equilibrium of both the external and internal Natures of Water, e.g., by applying Fire (hot & dry . . .), Air is produced. / transform water into air by heating it, thus attaining a new equilibrium of the Natures.

Concerning the Four Natures, Jābir held that in metals, two of the Natures are external/manifest and two are internal/latent; e.g., Lead is cold and dry externally & hot and moist internally, while Gold is hot and moist externally

& cold and dry internally . . . In his Mercury-Sulphur theory (one of his principal contributions to alchemical thought; here they represent hypothetical or ideal substances), metals were seen as growing in the earth by the union of Sulphur (hot & dry) and Mercury (cold & wet) . . . Each one of the Four Natures was taken to have 7 Powers, and each power had 4 degrees of intensity - giving a total of  $28 \times 4$  equals 112 'positions' (vide the 112 Books). The letters of the Arabic alphabet (28) were assigned to the 4 subdivisions of hot, cold, dry, & wet, and the scheme was extended to the values of the 4 degrees of intensity according to the series 1, 3, 5, 8. The powers and degrees-of-intensity were equated to the weights on the Arabic system of 2 qirats equals 1 danag, 6 danaqs equals 1 dirham; and a table was constructed in which, e.g., the letter 'B' denoted, in the 2nd degree of coldness, a weight of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  dirhams; in the 4th degree 'B' corresponded to a weight of  $9\frac{1}{2}$  dirhams . . . (cf. Mukhtār Rasā'il p. 162-63). The transmutation of one element into another is thus an adjustment of the ratio of the manifest and latent constitutional equilibriums of the first to those of the second.

The theory of the Balance, therefore, aimed at determining the internal structure of any body, no matter how simple it is, by measuring the quantity or intensity of the Natures implicit or explicit in its formation/manifestation, carried out by means of rational speculations elaborated within a coherent system. Since every 'body' represents an equilibrium of the Natures involved in its composition (& such an equilibrium is expressed by numerical relations established by the image of the musical harmony which governs heaven), the various qualities in physical compositions can be reduced to quantities; the degrees of intensity correspond to the musical intervals, with the number 17 (as the base of the Balance) indicating the harmony of all things here below. The Harmony-of-things is ultimately expressed by the notion of the Balance, due to the action of the World-Soul in the physical world, for the Soul 'informs' matter by taking hold of certain qualities or bundles of Natures, which it combines according to the laws of number and measure. Jābir sees the Balance as a symbol indicating the equilibrium which exists in the co-structure of 'bodies', i.e. the equilibrium which, in every body, re-aligns the Natures in the exterior/manifest and in the interior/latent, so that their relation remains constant: as expressed by the series 1, 3, 5, 8. Thus, the Mizān becomes a cosmological term, merging with the notion of the Cosmic Equilibrium (al-Qisṭas al-Mustaqīm of Qur'an 17:37 & 26:182, as glossed by Jābir, cf. Mukhtār Rasā'il 250) and of Justice/'Adl which governs the world, and with the notion of the Mixture/mizāj which is the origin of creation. The symbol of the Balance, the notion of the equilibrium of all things and of divine equity ('adl), is thus an eschatological symbol (cf. Qur'an 21:48), and lies at the basis for an extended series of isomorphisms characteristic of ḥikmī thought. When applied to the religious 'world', the Balance permits one to determine the correspondance between the esoteric hierarchy and the angelic hierarchy, and in general the correspondances twixt the spiritual world and the corporeal world (cf. Kraus, Jābir II 313f.; the later Ismā'īlī philosopher Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, d. ca. 408, employs the Mizān al-Diyāna in this way). Corbin notes: "C'est que la partie visible d'un être présuppose qu'elle soit équilibrée par sa contrepartie invisible, céleste. . . . De ce point de vue, la connaissance analogique comme forme typique de la science des



correspondances, est toujours une ansphore (l'acte de porter en haut), une ansôgê (l'acte de faire monter, élever); la voie analogique suit essentiellement le sens anagogique (qui conduit en haut), autrement dit le sens de la hiérarchie des êtres déterminée par la fonction spirituelle ou ésotérique impartie à chaque degré." ("La Science de la Balance et les Correspondances entre les mondes en Gnose Islamique" 82). Corbin, with his characteristic flair for smelling out every possible esoteric implication, connects the Balance with the figure of the expected Imām/al-Qā'im, hinting at the resemblance of Jābir's Mājid (equals i'tidāl, emblematic of Divine Justice, & the symbol of the cosmic harmony produced via the tafsīr of the Cosmic Book, viewed as realised and accomplished in the person who is the equilibrium between the two worlds - the Mesocosm) with the Nizārī Ismā'īlism of the Qiyāmat at Alamūt. ("Le Livre du Glorieux de Jābir b. Ḥayyān" Iranica-Jahrbuch 18 p. 57f.).

The principle at the origin of the scheme of Balances arises from the Desire experienced by the World-Soul towards the Natures and the elements (cf. Kraus, Jābir II 159-61 & Corbin, "Livre du Glorieux" 83 n. 3). In Jābir's cosmogony (see his Maydān al-'Aql in Mukhtār Rasā'il 206-223) : since the World-Soul operates to elaborate bodies by combining the Natures in successive equilibriums, then the measuring of the Natures of any thing means to measure the quantities that the Soul appropriates - or: to measure the intensity of Desire of Soul-elaborated-&-progressively-actualized-in-Matter. Likewise it is the transmutation of Soul which is the condition for the transmutation of bodies; thus, the elaborately exact numbers given as measures of the Desire of World-Soul incorporated in every substance.

→ ? / We raise the question here, as a problem for study, whether Jābir takes the absolute / Balance / and-or Imām as a hypostasis of 'Aql (World-Mind, or 1st Intelligence)? Kraus points out (Jābir II 313) that early Muslim gnosis finds in the Qur'ānic Balance, the equilibrium between Light & Darkness, the correspondance between the spiritual world and the corporeal world, the means of distinguishing the Truth from the False, as well as the general principle which operates in all religious phenomena. A later Sūfī like Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazzālī, in his Mishkāt al-Anwār, terms the 'aql as God's Mizān on earth. The equation with al-'Aql may seem to be indicated in an arresting series of syllogisms found in Jābir's K. al-Ikhrāj (Mukhtār Rasā'il 48):

- I) 'Ilm (sapiential science) = Nūr (Light) ;  
 'Aql = Nūr ; therefore 'Ilm = 'Aql & Nūr = 'Aql.  
 II) also: 'Ilm = 'Aql ; 'Aql = Nūr ; therefore 'Ilm = Nūr.  
 III) or again: Nūr = 'Ilm ; 'Ilm = 'Aql ; therefore Nūr = 'Aql.

Compare this with the discussion (Mukhtār Rasā'il 250-51), where in the course of refuting Manichean dualism, Jābir disagrees with the opinion of the Philosophers (falāsifah) who held that "the essence of the First Cause/al-'illat al-ūla is 'Aql, and the essence of 'Aql is 'Ilm, and the essence of the Balance/al-Qist is al-Mustaqīm is 'Ilm." Instead, Jābir appears to conceive of

these principles in a hierarchical order: First Cause --> 'Aql --> Justice --> Balance, with each being the essence of the preceding entity. The matter is rather occult but would be interesting to bring into focus, esp. as Ja'far al-Šādiq clearly equates Imām (& Prophet) with 'Aql/ World-Mind. Also compare Jābir's Kitāb al-Mawāzīn al-Saghīr (ed. Berthelot, La Chimie au Moyen Age III, L'Alchimie Arabe, p. 105), which begins with a veiled reference to the Prophet as 'Aql, and goes on to quote two well-known traditions about al-'aql traditionally related from Ja'far al-Šādiq in Ithnā 'Asharī sources:

... انه عز وجل لما خلق الثلاثة الأوائل التي لا رابع لها وصي الحيوان والنبات والحجر وجعل أشرف الثلاثة الحيوان ثم جعل أشرف الحيوان الانسان الناطق العاقل المأمور السهوي العظامب المؤدب الذي جعل فيه الجوهر النفيسة والعلّة القريبة منه وذلك العقل الذي شرفه الله عز وجل وعظمه ، فقال : بك أخذ وبك اعطى ولك الثواب وعليك العقاب ، ولما اصبط الله آدم عم الى الارض اتحفه بثلاث تحق على يد جبريل عم ... الحياء والعقل والدين ...

(cf. Kulaynī, Uṣūl I 10-12).

Jābir applied his theory of the Balance not just to the three 'Kingdoms' of the sublunar world, but to the astral spheres, the symbols/ 'persons' of the spiritual world, etc. There are balances for measuring Intellect, World-Soul, Nature, the Four 'Natures', . . . and the most perfect and essential of all: the Balance of Letters (Mizān al-Hurūf, Mizān Lafẓī), in which the letters of the Arabic alphabet (28 in number) are placed in the same relation to language as the named things are in relation to the Four 'Natures' composing them. Thus, by analysing words it becomes possible to establish the qualitative and quantitative structures of the things which the words designate. This development of the mysterious Jafr associated with the Imāms of the Family of the Prophet in Jābir's hands operates a sophisticated ta'wīl of the Ism of the Word leading to an appropriation of its Ma'ná. Kraus, in his discussion of Jābir's theory or philosophy of language and its geometria (Jābir II 262-70), points out the originality of the system adopted by Jābir when compared with analogous speculations found in Arab literature (*Ibid.*, 262-64). Muslim gnostics, probably under the inspiration of the 'magic' and teachings

of ancient Gnostic systems, incorporated the notion that the letters of the alphabet were at the base of creation, representing the 'materialisation' of the Divine Word (cf. also, the enigmatic letters of the Qur'ān; the 'letters' of the Greatest Name of God). He adds that although the coordination of the arabic letters with the 'Natures' or Elements is often mentioned in Arab literature, nothing similar to the numerical values assigned to the letters and the Natures by Jābir, nor to the arithmetical, geometrical, metrical or musical theories upon which he bases his doctrine, is known. Kraus remarks (Ibid., 265):

On trouve, il est vrai, dans la doctrine de la Balance quelques réminiscences de l'enseignement des premiers gnostiques musulmans. Ainsi, la permutation des racines arabes semble avoir été pratiquée dans les cercles des anciens extrémistes Ḥī'istes. C'est également à la gnose Ḥī'ite que se rattachent certaines spéculations sur les lettres que nous rencontrons dans les parties religieuses du Corpus Jābirien.

In an important series of articles, Stapleton attempted a possible explanation of the Balance numerology which had eluded Kraus.<sup>39</sup> Stapleton studied the 9-celled Magic Square mentioned by Jābir as being of talismanic efficacy in connection with childbirth (embryological parallels between the generation of the infant, & the production of the Elixir; in his 'ilm al-takwīn / 'science-of-generating-a-human-being', Jābir proposes as its goal the generation of philosopher-prophets). He points out that gnomonic analysis (in Pythagorean style) of this square yields the numerical series: 1, 3, 5, 8, 17, & 28, with 1:fire, 3:earth, 5:water, and 8:air; and that this square's base number is 5 (the sum of its numbers is  $5 \times 3^2$ ). This square was known to the Ṣābiens of Harrān as the Square of Saturn (equals Lead), and thus European occult tradition following Agrippa . . .; as well as to the NeoPlatonist Porphyry (d. 305 A.D.) and his pupil Theodorus, who used it determining the number of spheres (55; the number of degrees in Jābir's religious hierarchy). Furthermore a lettered form of the 25-square was used by Christians to symbolize their belief in Christ in second century Rome; and the 9 square is represented by the ground plan of the Ming-Tang or Chinese Imperial 'Hall of Divination' (with calendrical & seasonal correspondances) from the eleventh century B.C.

(This square is still in use by contemporary Taoist priests in Taiwan. -D.C.). Stapleton traces the origins of the magic square possibly as far back as the Sumerian civilization, by showing that the numerical series 1, 3, 5, 8 . . . conforms to the measurements of the Borsippa Ziggurat in terms of Sumerian cubits, recording in cryptogramic form the basic relationship between the platform areas of a seven-staged Ziggurat. In brief, the key to the entire system of Jābir b. Ḥayyān, to the theory of the Balance, was enshrined for the benefit of initiates in the 9-called Square. Stapleton further suggests (following Coxsage, "Sraosha Yasht" JASB 1932) that the numbers of the hierarchical degrees of the Ṣūfīs (as per, e.g., al-Ḥujwīrī) can be derived from the square of Jābir. Muslim tradition knows this square under the name of the square of "Budūh".

VI . Jābir and Shī'ī Gnosis: Sāmit above Nātiq.

Many passages of the later parts of the Jābir Corpus (Kutub al-Mawāzīn & the 500 Books) reveal clear references to the Qarāmiṭah, that obscure phase of Ismā'īlī Shī'ism which made its public appearance around the middle of the third century and with its sister movement of Fātimid Ismā'īlism was to grip the attention and the fears of Muslims for the ensuing decades, both politically and intellectually. In these passages, Jābir proclaims the near advent of the Imām who by his esoteric teaching would supplant the Sharī'ah and show the truth of Qur'ānic revelation by the lights of science, namely the gnostic sciences, esp. alchemy, alleged to form the content of the carefully guarded mysteries of the 'Alid Imāms. It is not at all clear if the Qarmaṭī and Nuṣayrī tone of the Jābir Corpus was intended as a summons for Muslims as a whole; more probable is the view that it was not even intended for the Shī'ah as a whole, but only reserved for certain circles within the ambiance of gnosticizing Imāmism (cf. Kruse, "Dschābir ibn Ḥajjān" p. 34), as represented e.g., by neo-Khaṭṭābī, Mukhammisah, so-called 'proto-Isma'īlī' and/or Qarmaṭī, as well as Nuṣayrī Shī'ism; i.e. that tendency within second to fourth century Imāmī Shī'ism which is termed Ghuluww or 'exaggerating'. Thus, in treating the philosophical idea of the First Cause, Jābir mentions (along with the falāsifah, the Indians, the Magi) the Qarāmiṭah and their epithet "al-Kūniyyah wa al-Qadariyyah" (Mukhtār Rasā'il 72 l. 3). He equates the Imām with the Sun rising in the West; he assigns the date of the appearance of the expected Imām to the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Sagittarius, i.e. in 316/928 (compare the Qarmaṭī expectation of the new epoch); he fixes the number of Imāms at seven, speaks of seven successive cycles of revelation, the Imāms being prefigured in cosmic terms by the seven earths, seven heavens, seven planets, seven climes . . .; and he asserts that Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl (the grandson of al-Ṣādiq) is the true Imām, while Mūsā al-Kāzīm was only an Imām in the exoteric sense (Mukhtār Rasā'il 493). But while Jābir makes use of the religious terminology of Shī'ī gnosis of the second and third centuries, it is impossible to place him in any one camp; rather he criticizes the doctrines of particular groups, whether Khaṭṭābī or

Naṣayrī, and continually offers his own peculiar position on specific points of controversy, basing his alternative on the insights supplied by the Balance.

Jābir's tendency to outdo the teachings of these Shī'ī gnostics is especially apparent in the system of the hierarchical degrees adopted by him in the Kitāb al-Khamsīn (Mukhtār Rasā'il 489-90; & Kraus, "Les dignitaires de la hiérarchie religieuse selon Gābir ibn Ḥayyān"). Among Qarmaṭīs and Ismā'īlīs one finds systems of degrees of initiation varying in number: 5, 7, 9, etc. (cf. 'Abbās Ḥamdān, "Evolution of the Organisational Structure of the Fāṭimī Da'wah" Arabian Studies III, 1976, 85-114); Jābir offers a list of the 55 degrees for the religious hierarchy, whose terminology is compiled out of the vocabulary of different gnostic sects with the aim of establishing a conformity to the 55 celestial spheres. These 55 'persons' of the religious hierarchy (ashkhās rūḥāniyyah; Rūḥāniyūn) are spoken of by Jābir as the Angels (Malā'ikah); similarly, Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī authors employ the terms Malā'ikah and Karūbiyyūn in the sense of the ḥudūd or dignitaries of the religious hierarchy (da'wah), interpreting e.g., the Angels invited to prostrate before Adam as the ḥudūd of their time (Kraus, "Les dignitaires" 85). Kraus points out that the transposition of the beings who controlled the movements of the celestial spheres (identified with the gods of the Greek pantheon by the pagan Neoplatonists) into Angels had already been effected by the Christian philosophers before Islām, and that certain early documents of Arab Hellenism (e.g., the Theology of Aristotle, K. Sīr al-Khalīqah of Bāllīnās, etc.) employ the term rūḥāniyyūn or jawāhir rūḥāniyyah to indicate the Malā'ikah/ashkhās rūḥāniyyah (Ibid., 92). "La cosmologie de Jābir," notes Kraus, "présente des traits nettement néoplatoniciens. La théorie des émanations successives, schématisées sous la forme d'orbites emboîtées, est recue en bloc sans que jamais l'auteur trouve nécessaire de la justifier" (Jābir II 136). Jābir does not know of the system of Ten Intelligences, later incorporated into Muslim philosophy by al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā; in this he is similar to the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'. (Cf. Mukhtār Rasā'il 405f., & Jābir II 139-47: for the section of his K. al-Taṣrīf which gives the most important and detailed outline of Jābir's cosmology).

It is also interesting to note the occurrence of specific religious terminology common to the Shī'ī groupings tracing their teaching back to

Ja'far al-Šādiq. The employment of al-Rūhāniyyūn (Malā'ikah/ḥudūd) has already been mentioned (compare Kulaynī, Uṣūl I 21 l. 4). The terms 'Alīm and Muta'allim are also met with (e.g., K. al-Bayān, ed. Holmyard, Arabic Works 6); the most striking example of Jābir's sharing the bātinī vocabulary of radical Shī'ism is found in his K. al-Khamsīn (Mukhtār Rasā'il 489-500: from the unique extracts preserved in Ms. Istanbul, Shāhīd 'Alī Pāshā 1277, f. 129<sup>a</sup> - 137<sup>b</sup>; Kraus identifies it with the K. al-Ṭilasmāt al-Kabīr mentioned by Pseudo-Majrīṭī, Ghayāt al-Ḥakīm, as containing fifty chapters - Jābir I 146-48)—for a discussion of which refer to Kraus, "Les dignitaires". The 55 degrees of Jābir's religious hierarchy are packed with terms which can only be placed within the context of early Nuṣayrī, Qarmāṭī, 'Mukhammisiyah' and other Bāṭinī groupings; e.g., the term Sā'ih.<sup>40</sup> There are also the terms employed, e.g., in Jābir's Kitāb al-Baḥth, for Matter/'substance' (Kraus, Jābir I 144-46 §1800)—such as maddah, hayūlā, uṣṣ, asās, haykal, jism, and Ṭinah. The occurrence of Ṭinah ('Clay') can be linked with its significance in the teaching of al-Šādiq (as pre-creation 'substance' of the Light-bodies of the Faithful), and known in Muslim philosophical circles before the employment of Aristotelian terminology (cf. Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, al-Muqābasāt, ed. Ḥasan al-Sandūbī, Cairo, al-Rahmāniyyah, 1347/1929, 230: Man is an extract of al-Ṭīn al-awwal, composed of Four Natures, each in battle with one another).

Thus, while Jābir evokes the Imām in terms reminiscent of Qarmāṭī vocabulary (Qā'im equals Muḥammad b. Ismā'il) yet he does not make 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib part of the series of the seven Imāms: 'Alī is raised to a status above Muḥammad, and the list of seven is completed by adding Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyyah, the third son of 'Alī & focus of intense ghuluw from the first century onwards (vide the Kaysāniyyah). As it was shown above, early Qarmāṭī doctrine was not a consistent dogma, and allowed for varying inclinations and emphases, especially in the Iraqi and Persian areas. Here, the inclusion of Ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah is certainly suggestive; does it support the theory of Blochet, Lewis, etc., that the Qarāmiṭah owe something to Ḥanafīyyah/neo-Kaysānī Shī'ism? It is known that Ḥanafīyyah sentiments were long-lived on Persian soil (e.g., the Abū Muslimīyyah; the Khurramīyyah; cf. Madelung, E.I.<sup>2</sup> V 63-65); does the role assigned to Ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah by Jābir confirm an Iraqi or Persian

milieu for the Jābir Corpus?

In the K. al-Khamsīn (Mukhtār Rasā'il 499) Jābir states expressly that Muḥammad b. Ismā'il is the true Imām, while Mūsā al-Kāzīm is only so in the exoteric sense of the term (a similar conception is found in the Kalām-i Fir of Nāṣir-i Khuraw, ed. Ivanov, Bombay, 1935; cf. Kraus, Jābir II, LI n. 7). "Jābir déclare que pour connaître les causes occultes des propriétés, il faut recourir à un guide (imām) inspiré. De même, d'après le K. al-ḥamsīn, chap. 12, les causes des ḥawāṣṣ ne se révèlent qu'à des gens doués d'un savoir prophétique (علم الربوبية والنبوة)." (Kraus, Jābir II 95 n. 2). In the Kitāb al-Rahmah al-Ṣaghīrah, the only known work where Jābir expressly drops all secrecy (kitmān) and speaks without enigma, he states (Holmyard, Arabic Works 154-55):

... فإذا أنت يا أخي طهرت ما يجب طهارته وصما الركناات التريفان  
الفاضلات الصابغان النار الصافية البيضاء الحجرية والاهن النقى المضئ  
النوراني العمازج الغير مشتمل واعانك الله تعالى الى ذلك فقد ادركت  
الغنى ووصلت الى كنوز الارض قاطبة فأبدا بتركيبها على الأرواح في  
ذواتها البارد الرطبة بالحار الرطب ثم تثبتت بالحار اليابس فإذا فعلت  
ذلك فذلك هو الإمام الذي انا ابدا اذكره في أكثر كتبى و هو قولى  
الان يسعدنى الله بروية الإمام ، ...

For Jābir the alchemical Elixir is given the name Imām, the Balance as personified in the Imām-of-the-Resurrection/Qā'im al-Qiyāmah becomes the focus of the gnostic's generation-of-cosmic-harmony, the birth of the Glorious, which Corbin suspects is to be identified with Jābir b. Ḥayyān himself. This implied self-divination is curiously in line with the bold heresies of the 'Shi'i Pretenders' of the second century.

One of the more revealing productions for the religious ideology of the school of Jābir is the Kitāb al-Bayān (ed. Holmyard, Arabic Works 5-12)—one of the '500 Books' in the Corpus. (Cf. Kraus, Jābir II, L-LI & 109; and "Dschābir ibn Ḥajjān und die Ismā'īlīja" 37). Here, Jābir arranges in a hierarchical order the different significations which belong to the term Bayān ('explanation', 'evidence', 'name of Qur'ān', etc.), finally arriving



at the Bayān which is one of God's Names and designates the First Cause ('illat al-ūlā) as well as its terrestrial apparition (i.e. the expected Imām). Jābir begins his exposition by distinguishing between two basic kinds of Bayān: 1) al-Bayān al-rājī' ilā al-Qawl, or al-Bayān al-Lafzī; and 2) al-Bayān al-rājī' ilā al-'Ilm wa al-Ma'ná (cf. K. al-Bayān 6). The heart of this distinction may be seen to amplify the discrimination between the Ism and the Ma'ná referred to above. He proceeds to expound the various types of Bayān peculiar to these two basic kinds as follows (Ibid., 6-10):

### I. البيان الراجع الى القول

- a) البيان للخطباء انه البلاغة
- b) البيان : شرح والبسط والترديد للمعنى
- c) البيان الخاص وهو التعريض الثاني للذكي
- d) الصريح الفاضع للمعنى المقصود باللفظ

### II. البيان الراجع الى العلم والمعنى

- a) العلم بالشئ (... من حيث كان يستبين في النفس بالعلم به)
- b) ظهور المعنى وتحليلته وانكشافه اما للحس واما للعقل
- c) (quoting Qur'an 6:125) الهداية

Jābir then speaks of the hidāyah of the final type of Bayān in these terms:

... واعلم ان هذا البيان له مداخل في جميع ضروب البيان ...  
(Ibid., 9)

... ومن حيث هو موجود في النفس لا من محسوس هو عقل محض ...  
واعلم انه قد بقى من البيان شئ محدث في عالم الكون والفساد لأجل السياسة  
وهو في حلة هذه البيانات شبيه بهذا البيان الالهى الاشراف لانه محدد  
على مثاله ومن فعل فاعله لكن لما التبس بالكون ظهر بغير ذلك المعنى  
لكن بالمعنى اللائق بالكون واصله وهو الهنزة الأرضية وهو المتحرك لا  
الألف الساكنة لان الألف الساكنة من الصامت ...  
(Ibid., 10)

... فان من عرف هذا الشخص الكريم حق معرفته واسعد  
بمصادته والتصرف بين امر ونهيهِ فلا تكبير عليه وليس  
(Ibid., 11) كل من صاده ينال هذه الرتبة ...

... وهذا الشخص يا أخي لن يظهر الا في القرات المعقضية للانتقالات  
اذا صجرت العلوم وفسدت الاديان وعم الفساد فانه يظهر اصلاح  
باسره ليكون اول اصلاح يبدو منه فيه تصنيف الكتب في العلوم لباطنه  
المهجورة وايضاح برايينها ثم يقوم بعد ذلك بالسيف فيصلح به  
من لا يصلح بالعلوم من النفوس المحتاجة الى التكرير ... (Ibid., 12)

Kraus summarizes these passages, (Jābir II L-LI) in this way:

En des termes qui sont entièrement empruntés au vocabulaire qarmaṭo-ismaʿīlien, Jābir parle de ce Bayān, qui, tout en étant d'essence divine, 'a revêter le vêtement de la generation', se manifeste dans le monde; 'compose les Ecritures, crée les arts et les sciences subtiles ainsi que les institutions politiques' en vue d'amener la délivrance et de sauver les hommes des cycles de la métépsychose.

Coming now to the terms Nāṭiq and Ṣāmit in Jābirian gnosis<sup>41</sup>:  
contrary to the official Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī doctrine, Jābir elevates the Ṣāmit  
to a superior rank above the Nāṭiq. (For his views on this, see K. al-Khamsīn  
496, & K. al-Majā'id 118f.; & Corbin, "Livre du Glorieux"). For Jābir, the  
term Nāṭiq/"Utterer", denotes the Prophet Muḥammad as Speaking-Prophet who  
announced the Shari'ah and the 'letter'/concretised-vocalization-of-the-Word;  
he unites in his person the two natures of divinity and humanity - ilāh &  
bashar / lāhūt & nāsūt. The Nāṭiq is like the vocalized hamzah articulated  
with the Alif أ (wheress the Ṣāmit, having no 'movement' phonetically is at  
rest as the unvocalised Alif ا). The office of Nāṭiq consists in his adding  
a new revelation to that laid down in previous sacred writings; each Nāṭiq  
writes Books, and the expected Nāṭiq (the Qā'im) is in a special sense an  
author of Books about Arts, Techniques, Sciences - of esoteric Knowledge.  
It has been shown above that for the radical Shi'Is, the Ṣāmit denotes 'ALI  
or the Imām who enshrines the esoteric knowledge entrusted to him by the Nāṭiq  
(who was often considered to serve as a veil/hijāb for the Asās), and by his

secret preservation and selective dispensation of such Knowledge became the personification of the transcendent, hidden, unknowable Godhead ('Deitas abscondita') for second and third century SHI'I gnostics/ghulāt. By elevating the Ṣūmit above the Nātiq, Jābir effectively proclaims the superiority of esoteric science (the Ma'nā) over the revealed letter of the religious Law (the Ism).

It is in his Book of the Glorious where Jābir goes the furthest in unveiling his notion of these terms, and he does this in connection with the enigmatic speculations upon the three letters 'ayn, mīm, and sin' as the three hypostases of God, diversified according to the different historical figures in whom they appear. Kraus (Jābir II 266-67) suggests a parallel between archaic SHI'I-gnostic meditation on these three letters, and the Sepher Yetzirah, text-book of Rabbinic gnosticism.<sup>42</sup> Now, as Massignon has shown ("Salmān Pāk"), the various systems of SHI'I gnosis of the third century are distinguishable by the preference they assign to one or another of this triad, the letters Mīm م /Muḥammad, 'Ayn ع /'Alī, and Sin س /Salmān al-Fārisī, being understood to express the different conceptions and priorities assigned to the action of God (always conceived as purely and totally ineffable) in humanity; one might say, attempts to explain how the Unknowable God can reveal Himself to man and how man can come to know Him. Roughly speaking:

'Ayniyyah : those who placed 'Ayn/'Alī first, giving priority to the Ṣūmit, the hidden Imām who conveys the creative teaching of Mīm to the spiritual medium of Sin (who in turn inspires in the initiates the directives of 'Ayn'). This trend seems to have developed earliest (e.g., the Sabā'iyyah, Kaysāniyyah), was held by the important disciple of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, al-Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar al-Ju'fī (d. ca. 170), by the Mukhāmmisāh, and by the Nuṣayrīs: the Ism (equals Muḥammad) proclaims the Ma'nā (the Meaning, equals 'Alī'). Here, Muḥammad is the veil/hiḵāb uncovering the divine appearance termed 'Alī'. (Cf. also Massignon, "Karmāṭians" SEI 221-22; & "Nuṣayrī" SEI 455).

Mīmīyyah : those who upheld the priority of Mīm/Muḥammad, giving superiority to the Nātiq. This trend, first evidenced in the early SHI'I ghāli al-Mughīrah (crucified 119), seems to have played some role in certain neo-Kaysānī groupings of the second century, esp. the 'Abbāsīd ghulāt (Rāwandīyyah & Kumayliyyah). Massignon comments on the Qarmāṭians that they: ". . . restore to Muḥammad priority over 'Alī'. Not that they in turn deify Muḥammad - it is simply

his predestined role of pre-eternally foreseen messenger or herald (nāṭīk) that they look at. They are (to use the exact term) not Muḥammadīya but Mīmīya (the letter mīm means in djafr the name, ism: that is to say the mission of onomaturge, nāṭīk, devolved on the prophet), in opposition to the 'Ainīya (the letter 'ain in djafr means the original sense, ma'na, whence: the hidden meaning, the 'silent' (sāmīt) role of "tacitly designated chief, devolved on 'Alī), . . ." (SEI 221).

Sīniyyah : those who upheld the priority of Sīn/Salmān Pāk, the famous companion of Muḥammad whom Muslim legend makes out to be a Zoroastrian initiate, then esoteric Christian, before becoming part of Muḥammad's inner circle & allegedly initiating the Prophet and 'Alī into the mysteries of his former religions. The complex figure of Salmān/Salsal denotes the Archangel of inner initiation (Sabab), the hypostasis of Rūḥ al-Amr (Spirit of God's Decree) who accomplishes the divine action of self-revelation via the penetration of the Holy Spirit into the initiate, transforming him to luminous angelicity . . . This trend seems to have originated with that notorious companion of Ja'far al-Šādīq who, banished by the Imām for divulging his secrets, was beheaded by the 'Abbāsids in 138, namely Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, linked in some way with the followers of Ism'īl b. Ja'far. The superiority of Sīn indicates the absolute priority of the First emanation of spiritual revelation over both the Nāṭīq and the Sāmīt.

Jābir displays affinities with the adepts of 'Ayn and of Sīn, while he also is opposed to them; yet he adopts a position which puts the 'Ayn/Sāmīt first, and by the application of his theory of the Balance to the letters of these three 'letters', establishes the following succession: 'Ayn → Sīn → Mīm. The new factor introduced by Jābir in this discussion is the person of the Glorious/Mājid, a solution of the most extreme abstruseness. Jābir writes (Mukhtār Rasū'īl 118):

His (Mājid) rank in relation to Sāmīt is like the rank of sīn in relation to mīm — at least according to the followers of 'ayn (i.e. the Nuṣayrīs), but not according to the followers of sīn (i.e. the Khaṭṭābiyyah/Mukhammisiyah). Thus according to the view of the followers of sīn, the rank of Mājid in relation to Sāmīt is in the same relation as the relation of 'ayn to sīn. This difference corresponds to the doctrinal opposition between these two schools.

Because of the primacy of 'Ayn/Sāmīt for Jābir (i.e. the Ma'nā represented by a 'divinised' 'Alī), his list of seven Imāms does not include 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib,

but makes room for Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah. "L'imām futur, dont Jābir proclame l'apparition et qu'il appelle Bayān ou Mājid (l'excellent) ou Yatīm (le solitaire), sera une émanation directe de 'Ayn et supérieur en rang au Hīm et au Sīn" (Kraus, Jābir II, LIII).

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## VII. The End of "History": Silence.

The masterminds of the Ismā'īlī movement(s) were expecting and actively preparing for a radical and general reform of all religious, social and cultural institutions, idealized by them as the (re)appearance of the Qā'im, a sword in one hand (and 'Books' in the other hand, so to speak). The first, indispensable stage of this universal renovation was the reform of learning; thus the sophisticated degrees of initiation into their 'Ilm which was so widely reported about their system. The authors of the Jābirian Corpus called for a new type of learning.<sup>1</sup> The 'legendary' author of these writings was reputed to have mastered the true secrets of 'Alchemy' (understood as a kind of metascience), and thus of all sciences. An old, familiar mythical scenario confronts us again: a primordial revelation written down by the ancients and passed down in secret for millenium, which was lately rediscovered/reappropriated and is communicated only to a secret group of initiates. The rediscovery of the primordial revelation, although still inaccessible to profane men, is announced to the world in order to attract the attention of those who honestly search for truth and sanctification. Here one is entitled to ask: did Jābir's 'alchemy' play a role in the astonishing cultural metamorphosis that made possible the great achievements in the natural sciences and philosophical 'mysticism' of classical Islām? To what extent did the nostalgia for an authentic 'spiritual rebirth', the hope for a collective metanoia and transfiguration of history which marks archaic Shi'ī spirituality, inspire the medieval Islāmic popular millenarian movements, prophetic theosophies, Ṣūfī mystical visions of the Prophetic God-man, as well as Ismā'īlī gnosis?

Again, does Jābir's religious doctrine represent a sort of 'missing-link' twixt Khaṭṭābī / Nuṣayrī / Ghāllī / Gnostic circles in radical Shi'ism, and 'early' (or pre-classical) Qarmatī / Ismā'īlīsm? If the Jābir Corpus falls into the century spanning the death of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and the appearance of the Qarmatī movement after the mid-third century, then its significance for the obscurely vague mutterings about possible links with early Ismā'īlī, Alchemical, Philosophical, and Ṣūfī currents in Islām takes on a new dimension. It is well-known, for example, that Jābir b. Ḥayyān is apparently the first major

Muslim figure to be known by the laqab "al-ṣūfī".<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the links between early Ṣūfī gnosticizing theoreticians and exponents such as al-Ḥallāj, Sahl al-Tustarī (?) and Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (originally from Panapolis, that great seat of Egyptian-Greek alchemical development in Upper Egypt) have often been hinted at, as well as the role of the Ismā'īlī-inspired Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'; all these are relevant to this issue.<sup>44</sup>

The cosmology of Fāṭimid Ismā'īlism conforms to the teachings embedded in the Jābir Corpus in spirit. What Massignon characterized in Qarmaṭī religion as "Creative Evolution" and "Gnostic Involution" (SEI 220f) is amplified in Ismā'īlī philosophy as a cosmic process of 'emanation' and a cosmic return. An 'emanation': the orders of creatures on earth - animal, vegetable, mineral - were formed through the combining of the elements - air, water, earth, fire; in turn derived from the principles of hot-cold and wet-dry; in turn these principles, moved by the spheres, and the spheres are moved by a principle of animation: Nafs or World-Soul - in turn ordered by 'Aql'; itself brought into Being by the creative Amr of God, the divine Fiat Kun! A return: a reverse motion: the elements scattered in the various compound beings (minerals, plants, elements ...), were ever more fully organized on the level of animals; and in Man is placed an even more unifying principle of Reason/Intelligence. And among men, the tendency to return to that ultimate unique source of Being was represented by the hierarchy of the Faithful, seeking Truth on ever higher levels until their intelligences reach to the ultimate Intelligence, the 'Aql al-Kullī'.

Recently, scholars have tended to distinguish between a more archaic mythic bed in Qarmaṭo-Ismā'īlī speculation, and a subsequent philosophical elaboration which incorporated a neoplatonising systematics into Ismā'īlism. Commonly the movements of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (ca. early 4th c. on) and the Iranian Ismā'īlī Dā'īs of the fourth century— whose school was initiated by al-Nasafī (d. 331), developed by Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī and Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī (d. after 361), and culminated in Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī— are taken as representing this latter neoplatonising philosophicalisation of Ismā'īlī teaching. Yet if, as seems clear, the appropriation of theurgic neoplatonism was already accomplished in the Jābir Corpus, how is one to assess this

commonly accepted view? The Qarmaṭī (and thus anti-Fāṭimid) tone of both the Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' and of al-Nasafī (and to a lesser extent Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī) has been pointed out by many investigators (e.g., Madelung E.I.<sup>2</sup> IV 661-63; yet against this cf. Marquet). If the doctrine first propagated by the pre-Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī revolutionary movement (i.e. including the Qarmaṭī groupings), of the 2nd half of the third century, forms a gnostic system comprising a cosmology and a cyclical hierohistory, and: "From about the beginning of the 4th/10th c. onwards the early cosmology was superseded and partially replaced by a cosmology of Neoplatonic origin, apparently first propounded by the dā'ī al-Nasafī" (Madelung, E.I.<sup>2</sup> IV 203), where is one to place the Jābir Corpus? Are we to accept Kraus' dating (late 3rd - early 4th c.) and see in its 'Hellenizing' elements a confirmation of the new directions experienced in Ismā'īlism in the early fourth century? Or are we to place the activity of the Jābirian school earlier (ca. early to late 3rd c.) and see in its Nuṣayrī - Qarmaṭī tone a confirmation of its formative impact on the emerging trends in Islām: whether of philosophical Ismā'īlism, 'Ṣūfī Mysticism', natural sciences, and Occult arts?

One of the major features of radical Shi'ism from its earliest appearance until today is the amazing continuity of certain phenomena. What in the second century was confined to Ghulāt circles (in the widest sense of the term), and in the third (and/or fourth) century was focused in the more daring and creative circles of Jābirian and Nuṣayrī gnosis— namely the elevation of the Imām above the Prophet, of walāyah over Nubuwwah, of the Bāṭin/Ma'na above the Zāhir/Ism— emerged again with the Qiyāmah ideology of Nizārī Ismā'īlism at Alamūt (the message of the Qā'im/Imām being the full revelation of the bāṭin truths without any zāhir Law . . . an inherent possibility even in earliest Imāmī Shi'ism, vide: Ibāhah & tashakkhus). With al-Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi al-salām, the figure of the Imām and the Qā'im were conflated: "Consequently, it became normal now for the Imām to take a rank notably higher than Muḥammad's, which was considerably depreciated. . . . The Imām was regularly identified with the Kalīma, the 'word', or the Amr, 'Command' of God . . ." (Hodgson, The Order of the Assassins, Hague, Mouton, 1955 p. 163). Even before the rise of Nizārī Ismā'īlism, however, the inherent logic of utopian messianism had



brought to fruition its 'dangerous' alternative with the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākīm bi Amr Allāh (disappeared in 411), who founded the Druze religion by the proclamation of his advent as the Qā'im and the ending of the Muḥammadan sharī'ah (note the role played by Persian dā'īs in the early Druze movement: al-Ḥanzah and al-Darazī). It may be germane to point out that al-Ḥākīm was famed for his mastery of the occult arts and sciences (alchemy, astrology, talismans, etc. - cf. Dawādārī, Kanz VI 257), and in the year 400 had certain relics retrieved from the house of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq in Madīnah (including allegedly the Mushaf of the Qur'ān exhibited to this day in the Mosque of al-Ḥusayn in Cairo).<sup>45</sup> Similarly, the library of al-Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi al-salām at Alamūt was reportedly rich in alchemical compositions and the various branches of occult sciences once valued so highly by the older tradition of Ismā'īlism (Hodgson, Assassins, 147).

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It can be seen that the notions of Nāṭiq and of Ṣūmit - of Ism and Ma'nā - lie at the very heart of radical Shī'ism, including Ismā'īlī gnosis and Jābirian alchemy. The doctrine of the transmission of the Adamic afflatus presupposes a continuous process of revelation which goes beyond Muḥammad; 'History' itself becomes viewed as a continuing and ever perfecting process of revelation. As Corbin has emphasized, the loss or oblivion of the esoteric significance of 'revealed scripture' is in fact the drama of the lost Word in all 'Book religions'; the retrieval of the Word necessitates the continuity of prophetic inspiration (gnosis)— thus the Imām was understood to be simultaneously the Qur'ān Nāṭiq and the tarjumān al-Qur'ān (the 'interpreter of the Book/Word'). ("L'initiation Ismaélienne" 46). Perhaps one could characterize the radical Shī'ī approach to the "letter" of the revealed Word as one that viewed all such divine enunciations as necessary concessions to human frailty, conditioned and limited by the aptitude and circumstances of the age and the particular humanity addressed, but ultimately and inevitably by the very nature of man himself. The call to a dynamics of revelatory consummation in history, to the appropriation and regaining of the 'content'

of the Word, is in the end a call to pass beyond our human conditions and to put a finish to 'history'. How are we to understand the assertion that the Ṣāmiṭ precedes and overshadows the Nāṭiq propounded by Jābir? This only becomes valid for the individual who is seeking an entrance into the ascending scale of an involution aiming at a return to the Origin and Source of all Being. In the expression reported of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq:

If all the (individual) Intelligences (al-'Uqūl) were to become completed, then this world (al-dunyā) would cease to exist.

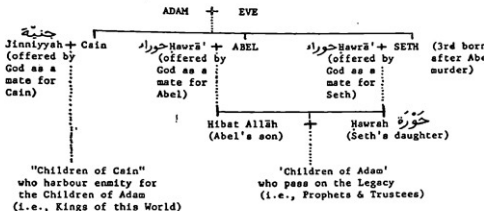
لو تمت العقول كلها صلت الدنيا .

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## NOTES

1. Felix Klein-Franke, "The Geomancy of Ahmad b. 'Alī Zunbul, a study of the Arabic Corpus Hermeticum" Ambix 20 (1973) 28.
2. Pio Filippini-Ronconi, "The Soteriological Cosmology of Central Asiatic Ismā'īlīsm" 103-104, in Ismā'īlī Contributions to Islamic Culture, ed. S. H. Nasr, Tehran, 1977.
3. The contrast between Sunnī and Shī'ī Islām in their conceptions of the locus of such 'ilm and guidance is well illustrated by their understanding of the referent of terms like ḥabl Allāh or 'urwat Allāh al-wuthqā, which Sunnī Islām uses for the Qur'ān, while Shī'ī Islām applies them to the Imām. The term Hujjah is likewise employed by the former to indicate the Qur'ān while the latter apply it specifically to the Prophet and the Imām. Cf. Ivanow, Studies 72 (on K. al-'Alīm wa al-Ghulām): "The Divine rope of salvation (ḥablu'l-matīn) is the Imām; the helping hand (which throws the rope) is the hujjat and the bāb of the Imām."
4. Al-Ṣaffār, Beṣā'ir 208; cf. also p. 208-211, & Kulaynī, Uṣūl I 230. Compare Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews V 116f. & 177, on Sefer Raziel & the legend of how this book was given to Adam by the Angel Raziel: " (Raz, 'secret'; El, 'God'), while he was still in paradise, by means of which he was able to master all the seventy-two kinds of wisdom, as well as the heavenly mysteries which were unknown even to the angels." (Ginzberg V 117 - ref. to Zohar).
5. See esp. al-'Ayyāshī, Tafsīr I 306-312 & II 144-51; and Kulaynī, Rawḍah I 218-227. Al-Mas'ūdī, Ichbāt al-Wasiyyah, has developed these reports into a grand vision of history.
6. The isnād of this hadīth (Rawḍah I 218: 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm - his father Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim - al-Ḥasan b. Mehbūb - Muḥammad b. al-Fuḍayl - Abū Ḥamzah - al-Bāqir) indicates that Kulaynī took this report from those rūwīs of Qumm (i.e., Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim al-Qummī) who are known to have preserved the original Kūfan riwāyah of reports from al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, unlike those Qummī scholars who often rejected this primary stage of Imāmī Shī'ī tradition. The parallel report in 'Ayyāshī (Tafsīr I 309-311) goes back to al-Bāqir via 'Alī b. Ḥamzah al-Thumālī.
7. Note the motive for Cain's murder of Abel as well as his threat to Hībat Allāh— jealousy that God accepted Abel's sacrifice and not his own, and that Abel's progeny would thus be superior to his own, due to their being entrusted with Adam's legacy. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq specifies that Cain slew Abel out of jealousy— not over their sisters— but out of jealousy fi al-waṣīyyah ('Ayyāshī I 312), and denies that Adam married his first two sons to each other's twin sisters, as commonly believed. Cain, being the first born, and born, moreover, in Paradise? (cf. Ibid. 311), was

7. jealous over first Abel, than Seth, being entrusted with Adam's prophetic testament. Al-Şādiq even gives an unusual genealogy of Adam's sons with the intent to establish that Adam's legacy passed down via the progeny of both Abel and Seth (Ibid., I 312):



8. Hishām b. al-Ḥakam reports from al-Şādiq ('Ayyāshī, I 311):

قال ابو عبد الله ع: لما أمر الله آدم أن يوصي آل صبه الله أمره أن يستر ذلك فجرت السنة في ذلك بالكتمان فأوصى إليه وستر ذلك.

Al-Bāqir states (*Rawḏah* I 221):

وكان من بين آدم ونوح من الأنبياء مستخفين ولذلك خفي ذكرهم في القرآن فلم يستقوا كما سقى من استعلن من الأنبياء صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين وهو قول الله عز وجل (ورسلاً قد قصصناهم عليك من قبل ورسلاً لم نقصصهم عليك) [4:163] يعني لم أسم السخفين كما سميت المستعلنين من الأنبياء ع.

9. 'Ayyāshī, II 144.

10. Basā'ir 9 - al-Bāqir protests to one of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's followers:

... وما زال العلم مكتوماً منذ بعثت آل نوحاً ع.

11. 'Ayyāshī, II 144-51; Mas'ūdī, Ithbāt 17, 28, & 152-53.
12. Mas'ūdī, Ithbāt 178-79: al-Ṣādiq tells Fudayl b. Yasār:  
 ... ليس لك إمام صاهو القام بأمر الله بعد الإمام الذي قبله هذا اسم لجميعهم ...  
 & from al-Ṣādiq's speech to his Family's SHI'ah after the death of his father al-Bāqir (Ithbāt 179f.; Kulaynī, Uṣūl I 203f.):  
 ... والإمام هو المنتجب المرتضى والقائم المرتضى ... صامتاً عن  
 النطق إذ فيما يرضاه الله . أيده الله بروحه و استودعه سره  
 و ندبه لعظيم أمره ...
13. Wilferd Madelung, "Khaṭṭābiyya" E.I.<sup>2</sup> IV 1132-33, p. 1132. This idea of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb's companions is quite consistent with al-Ṣādiq's notion of Nātiq and Ṣāmit when we allow for the Khaṭṭābiyyah equating the Imām with a Prophet ("Imām-Rasūl", "Rusul-A'imma" - cf. Qummī, Maqālāt 83). Thus, both Muḥammad and 'Alī were Imām-prophets, with 'Alī' maintaining 'silence' during Muḥammad's lifetime (or: until his designation as Muḥammad's successor at Ghadir Khumm - Ibid., 83). Besides being a good example of the obsession with prophetism of the more innovative radical SHI'īs, such an attitude implies a discrimination between Imāmah and Risālah (or: walāyah and nubuwwah).
14. Ivanow, Studies 8: ". . . it would be a waste of time to speculate upon the affinities or contacts between such early sects and the Ismā'īlī doctrine." ; & on Abū al-Khaṭṭāb he writes: "what little is reported about his doctrine has surely nothing in common with the earliest Ismailism." (cf. also his The Alleged Founder of Ismailism). For Ivanow, the problem of pre-Fātimid Ismā'īlism is the question of the introduction of the ḥaqā'iq doctrine, which he dates to ca. mid. 3rd/9th century because: "It would be difficult to believe that Hellenistic sources were tapped before Greek hikma had become widely known and gained recognition even in Islamic theological circles" (Studies 4). Nowadays, however, scholars such as R. M. Frank speak of the Neo-Platonism of Jahm b. Sa'fwan.
15. Madelung, "Khaṭṭābiyya" E.I.<sup>2</sup> IV 1133: "The doctrine of the Ismā'īlī movement emerging out of obscurity about the middle of the 3rd/9th century shows little affinity with the specific doctrines of either the early Khaṭṭābiyya or the Mukhammīsa . . ."
16. L. Massignon, "Karmāṭians" S.E.I. 221. .
17. R. Strothmann, "Sab'īya" E.I. IV 23-25, p. 23: "The remarkable feature that the number of Imāms was fixed at seven at the same time with the different sons of Dja'far is more simply understood if we assume that the political reasons already mentioned were further supported by a point of view which periodicated all cosmic and historical happenings

17. by the sacred number of seven." He rightly emphasizes the significance of Wāqifi groupings of the sevens type.
18. B. Lewis, The Origins of Ismā'īlism 40-41. He upholds the historicity of Maymūn's and 'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn's role as leaders of the movement out of which grew earliest Ismā'īlism. Lewis underlies the role of Mubārak, a moving figure in the Khaṭṭābī offshoot called the Mubārakiyyah, whom the heresiographers (Qummī, Ash'arī, Baghdādī, Shahrastānī) ascribe the organisation of the 'Ismā'īlī' grouping around Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, which is depicted as absorbing the greater part of the Khaṭṭābīyyah. References to the decisive role of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb are preserved in two groups of writings: Nusayrī literature (e.g., Majmū' al-A'yād, ed. Strothmann, Der Islam 1946, p. 6, 8, 10, 148, 159, 202), and in the Umm al-Kitāb, which assigns a central position to Abū al-Khaṭṭāb as the founder of the religion. Varying opinions have been expressed by scholars on the dating and composition of the Umm al-Kitāb, a complex synthesis of Manichaeism, Mazdakism, Gnosticism, Vajrayāna Bhuddism; Yoga, all meshed into a base of archaic Shī'ī ghuluw. Madelung (E.I. IV 1133) links it with early Mukhammisiyah & Nusayrī-like circles; while Filippini-Ronconi accepts it as an authentic document of the early Ismā'īlī school despite its irregular syncretic content, holding that the Islamic component of this work bears the character of Muḥirī-Khaṭṭābī extremist Shī'ism ("Soteriological Cosmology" 105-106).
19. S.M. Stern, in various places in his writings on Ismā'īlism, has hinted at a possible relationship; e.g., on the doctrine of 'limitation' (wuqūf vis-à-vis Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl) of certain trends within the Fātimid da'wah - "Heterodox Ismā'īlism at the time of al-Mu'izz" BSOAS 17 (1955) 17; "Abū'l Qāsim al-Bustī and His Refutation of Ismā'īlism" JRAS 1961 25; & 'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn" E.I. I 48, where he points out that the view that the Fātimids were descended from Maymūn al-Qaddāh was entertained by certain sections of the Ismā'īlī movement. However, the same Stern has in another place ("Ismā'īlīs and Qarmaṭians", in L'Elaboration de l'Islam, Paris, 1961, 100f.), he expresses firmly the opposite view. His developed position on this issue will be known when his posthumous Studies on Ismā'īlism are published shortly.
20. H. Halm, Kosmologie, introduction, & p.142f- on the Kūfan ghulāt.
21. This is not clear; yet 2nd century Imāmī Shī'ī currents often approached "ghāīlī" Islām (vide. Kaysāniyyah, Ḥanafīyyah, etc.) — making due allowance for the emergence of a more reconciling moderating stance (e.g., Zaydiyyah) at the same time. The Zaydī Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 246) wrote a book entitled: Kitāb al-Radd 'alā al-Rawāfiḍ min Ashāb al-Ghuluw polemicalizing against the followers of the Twelver line of Imāms (G.A.S. I 562); this may indicate that the future "Iṭhnā 'Asharī" Shī'ah were not seen as clearly distinct from more "exaggerating" or bāṭinī trends of the time.
22. Cf. Ivanow, Ibn al-Qaddāh 2-3; Madelung, "Qarmaṭī" E.I. IV 660-65, p. 665; Ibn al-Dawārdārī, Kanz al-Durar VI 44-156; De Sacy, Exposé I introd. 74-238.

23. Dawādārī, Kanz al-Durar VI 8:

... وَإِنَّا لَنَجِدُ عَهْدًا وَلَا مَوَاقِفَ تَكُونُ فِي شَرِيْعَةٍ مِنَ الشَّرَايِعِ بِكَلِمَاتٍ مَسْرُوءَةٍ . لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ لَمْ يَأْمُرْ بِكَلِمَاتٍ مُعَدَّةٍ أَنْزَلَهَا عَلَى عِبَادِهِ . ... إِنَّ كَلِمَاتٍ فِي أُمُورِ الدِّينِ وَالتَّنَقُّلِ مِنْ حَالٍ إِلَى حَالٍ هُوَ حُدُودُ الْإِرْبَةِ . ...

24. For Ghulāt notions of Sabab, see Massignon, "Salmān Pāk" 476 n. 8; & Nawbakhtī, Firaq 25 (on Hamzah b. 'Amūrah al-Barbarī, late 1st century, a Ḥanafīyah Shī'ī who claimed prophecy):

... وَإِنَّهُ يَنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِ سَبْعَةٌ مِنْ السَّمَاءِ فَيَفْتَحُ بِهِنَّ الْأَرْضَ

& Qumī Maqālāt 62.

For al-Ṣādiq, see Basā'ir 6. Compare these with the passage from Kitāb al-'Alīm wa al-Ghulām (Ivanow, Studies, text facing p. 70):

قال: فما مثل إمداد السموات السبعة وإتلاكها؟ قال [العالم]: تلك أسباب بين الله وبين النطقاء ...

Cf. also Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī, Kitāb al-Yanūbī', "al-yanbū' al-thānī" paragraph 27, p. 18 of arabic text, for a developed elaboration of this theme. The speculations on the ṣab'at hurūf al-'ulwī', i.e. Kūnī & Qadr, in Ismā'īlī and early Qarmatī metaphysics represents a complex development from the archaic notion of the Seven Asbāb; cf. also the early Yamani dā'ir 'Alī b. al-Faḍl, quoted in Arendonk, Les Débuts, p. 333.

Other correspondances are the division of men into three types: the 'Alīm, the Muta'allīm, and the ignorant mass (Ivanow, Studies 72).

25. See Corbin, "L'Initiation Ismaélienne ou l'esotermisme et le verbe", Eranos-Jahrbuch 39 (1970) 41-142, p. 112. Here, the important notion of Ta'yīd, or divine inspiration of knowledge via the Holy Spirit, is involved— both in al-Ṣādiq's teaching as well as early Ismā'īlī gnosis.
26. See: Madelung, "Ḳarāmiṭa" E.I.<sup>2</sup> IV 660-65, "Ḥamdān Karmatī" E.I.<sup>2</sup> III 123-24; S. M. Stern, "Abdān" E.I.<sup>2</sup> 195-96; B. Carrā de Vaux & M.C.S. Hodgson, "Al-Djannābī, Abū Sa'īd" E.I.<sup>2</sup> II 452; M. Canard, "Al-Djannābī, Abī Ṭāhir" E.I.<sup>2</sup> II 452-54; & S.M. Stern, "Heterodox Ismā'īlism" BSOAS 17 (1955) p. 17; treating of various exponents who held a wāqifi position vis-a-vis Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl— the number of Imāms was 'limited' to seven, the last being Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, who is the Qā'im in ghaybah, whose raja'ah is expected. Between his occultation and his re-appearance there are no Imāms, only his 'Lieutenants' (Khalīfah), pending his return; these Khulafā' were also limited to seven.

27. See P.H. Mamour, Polemics 93-100, for references to sources which make the Fātimids descend from Mūsā b. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq; & Blochet, Messianism 82 & 176; unless this trend was confined only to North Africa. Note the ḥādīth related in Dawādārī, Kanz VI 112, from a compilation of Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṭayyib b. 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Tamīmī:

قيل: سئل موسى الكاظم بن جعفر عليهما السلام عن ظهور القائم متى يكون؟ فقال: "إن ظهور القائم مثله كمثل عمود من نور سقط من السماء إلى الأرض، رأسه بالمغرب وأسفله بالشرق، فكذاك بداية هذا الأمر من المغرب

وانتهاه إلى المشرق." (Ibid., 113) and from the same source (Ibid., 113) is related how al-Ṣādiq sent two dā'īs in 145 to the Maghrib (cf. Tilman Nagel, Frühe Isma'īliya 50). The Qādī al-Nu'mān, in his account of the activity of these two dā'īs, Abū Sufyān and al-Hulwānī (Iftitāḥ al-Da'wah, Beirut, 1970, p. 54f), "was evidently interested in showing that pre-Fātimid SHI'ism was introduced by missionaries of Imām Ja'far, recognized by the Ismā'īlīs, and to minimize the role of Mūsawī SHI'ism which was a heresy for him" (W. Madelung, "Some Notes on Non-Isma'īli SHI'ism in the Maghrib" S.I. 44 (1976) 87-98, p. 92 n. 1); thus he does not mention in his Iftitāḥ 'Alī b. Warsand al-Bajallī, a pre-Fātimid SHI'ī scholar who founded a madhhab of Mūsawī SHI'īs (i.e. Wāqifi) in the Maghrib.

For the propagation of al-Ṣādiq's teaching in North Africa at such an early date, it may be interesting to compare the unusual report from al-Ṣādiq found at the very end of Jarīr b. Rustam al-Ṭabarī's Dalā'il al-Imāmah, on the "ashāb al-Qā'im". For a number of Mūsawī-Wāqifi traditions about the Mahdī status of al-Kāẓim, see Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah 40f., quoting extensively from a lost wāqifi<sup>sm</sup> e.g., the following report from al-Būqir:

... في صاحب هذا الأمر أربع سنين من أربع أنبياء، سنة من موسى، وسنة من عيسى، وسنة من يوسف، وسنة من محمد. أما موسى فخائف يترقب وأما يوسف فالجن وأما عيسى فيقال مات ولم يمته، وأما محمد فالسيف.

28. Ibn al-Athīr (al-Kūmil fī al-Ta'rīkh, ed. Tornberg, Leiden, Brill, 1865, VII 444-49) also reproduces Ṭabarī's account, as well as this quote from "Faraj b. 'Uthmān". Cf. Blochet, Messianism 33-39 for a treatment of this report, who also points out that Abū al-Faraj (Bar Hebraeus) in his chronicle gives a very similar excerpt from Faraj b. 'Uthmān for the year 270 near Küfeh. On the issue of whether certain parts of the early Qarāmiyah were originally a branch of neo-Kaysānī or Ḥanafīyyah SHI'ism, see Blochet, Messianism 39-40 & 63-65; Lewis, Origins 79; (I have not been able to trace any mention of a son of Muhammad b. al-Ḥanafīyyah named Aḥmad in historical and genealogical records). The early success of



the Qarāmiṭah in the Sawād shortly after the death of the eleventh Imām al-ʿAskarī in 260 probably depended on the widespread acclimatization of Shīʿī chiliastic ideas and expectations in that area reaching back to the success of al-Mukhtār and Abū ʿAmr Kayṣān among the Aramean "Nabaṭian" Mawālī. In some manner, early Qarṣaṭī movements incorporated the legacy of the early Mukhtāriyyah/Kaysāniyyah in southern Iraq; Ḥamdān and ʿAbdān were themselves "Nabaṭīa" from the Kūfan Sawād. The fact that Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī, the dāʿī sent by Ḥamdān & ʿAbdān in 273 to Bahrain who sided with these two brothers against ʿUbayd Allāh and renounced his allegiance to Salamiyyah, "claimed to represent the Maḥdī Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya, who would appear in the year 300/912-3" (Madelung, "Qarṣaṭī" E.I. IV 661). It may be significant that early Imāmī Shīʿī reports represent Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyyah as having been entrusted with a share in the legacy (wasīyyah) of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, i.e. part of the prophetic ʿilm passed on from Muḥammad.

29. Al-Ḥimyarī, *Qurb al-Isnād* 16, gives a ḥadīth relayed by ʿAbdAllāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh from Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq on his father's authority (al-Būqir) concerning the disparagement of asceticism for the sake of asceticism, and the rāwī Muḥammad b. ʿIsā, who related this report from ʿAbdAllāh b. Maymūn, adds at the end of the ḥadīth the comment:

... وحدثني بذلك سنة ثمان وتسعين ومائة . . .

which may indicate that ʿAbdAllāh b. Maymūn was alive in 198 A.H.

30. In the K. al-ʿAlīm wa al-Ghulām one reads (Ivanow, *Studies* 73):

الظاهر لا يَصْلِحُ إلا بالباطن والباطن لا يَقُومُ إلا بالظاهر.

Compare the statement of al-Ṣādiq (*Basāʿir* 536-37):

... أت قوماً آمنوا بالظاهر وكفروا بالباطن فلم ينفعهم شيء وجاء قوم من بعدهم فآمنوا بالباطن وكفروا بالظاهر فلم ينفعهم ذلك شيئاً، ولا إيمان بظاهر ولا باطن إلا بظاهر.

(By the first group, al-Ṣādiq refers to the Umayyads; the second group probably refers to those ghulāt who preached ibāḥah and tashakhkhus).

31. Ivanow, *Studies* 80. Corbin, "L'Initiation Ismaélienne" 66 n. 16, points out that the Prophet-Nāṭiq is here also termed "Imām-Nāṭiq": "... selon notre texte l'inspiration du prophète révélant le Livre (tanzīl) et l'inspiration herméneutique de l'Imām en faisant connaître le sens ésotérique (taʿwīl) ressortissent, en nature, à la même inspiration prophétique." It should be noted that Corbin, in alluding to the Qarṣaṭī tone of this book, questions its attribution to Maḥṣūr al-Yaman or his son/grandson Jaʿfar b. Maḥṣūr (*Ibid.*, 48).

32. Tabarī, Ta'rikh II 1358 (where he is referred to as khāl Ibrāhīm b. Sal'mah). Hayyān was sent to Khurāsān in the year 100. Many of the early 'Abbāsīd dā'īs in Khurāsān were more sympathetic to 'Alīd claims than to 'Abbāsīd rights, and may have understood the 'Abbāsīd slogan al-Ridā min Al Muḥammad to refer to 'Alīd rights.
33. Klein-Franke, "Geomancy" 32. In all probability Hayyān was a Persian mawla of the Azd tribe; other well-known mawālī named Hayyān were: Hayyān al-Nabaṭī (of Daylamite origin) who commanded a regiment of Persian troops in the army of Qutaybah b. Muslim, the Umayyad governor of Khurāsān; and the Persian Muqātil b. Hayyān, who was appointed by the Arab tribes in Khurāsān as their military leader against the 'Abbāsīd when Abū Muslim proclaimed the end of Umayyad rule in Marv in 129 (cf. Sadighī, Les Mouvements Religieux Iraniens 21 & 41).
34. This reconstruction of Jābir's birth-date and -place is taken from the Ithnā 'Asharī SHĪ'Ī work Ṭibb al-A'imma of the two brothers 'Abdallāh & al-Husayn b. Bistām b. Sābūr al-Zayyāt (ed. Ḥasan al-Khurāsān, Najaf, Ḥaydariyyah, 1965). This source for Jābir's biography has not been consulted by previous investigators. Contrary to the prevailing opinion, there are references (albeit infrequent) to Jābir b. Hayyān in classical SHĪ'Ī literature. See also 'Arif Tāmīr, ed., Hikāy al-Jā'fariyyah (Rut, Catholic Press, 1957) p. 27, 49; this is an Ism'īlī work usually entitled Majlis al-Mu'minīn.
35. The connection of Jābir with the Al Yaqṭīn may be significant. The sons and grandsons of Yaqṭīn were important propagandists for al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāzīm, serving as their liasons to the early 'Abbāsīds. Again, another important disciple of al-Ṣādiq, Hishām b. al-Nakam, evidently set the 'theology' of the Yaqṭīn family. The parallels between Hishām's career and Jābir's life are interesting; it may be that certain aspects of Hishām's teachings parallel or suggest some of the terminology and notions found in the writings of Jābir.
- 36.a. M.V. Hāshimī, "The Beginnings of Arabic Alchemy" Arabica 9/1 (1961) p. 157.
- 36.b. Kraus, like his master Ruske, approached Jābir as an historian of science; regrettably, the projected 3rd volume of his monumental study of Jābir - which would have dealt with the religious aspects of the Jābir Corpus - never appeared. Others have criticized such an 'historical' approach to Jābir, notably Henry Corbin:

la science de la Balance ne fait pas de l'alchimie un chapitre de la préhistoire de notre chimie moderne; elle ne tend pas à formuler des 'lois mathématiques', pas plus que dans les exemples que nous allons étudier elle ne tend à des résultats précurseurs de nos philosophies de l'histoire. ("La Science de la Balance et les Correspondances entre les mondes en Gnoae Islamique" Eranos-Jahrbuch 42 (1973) 79-162, p. 81)

37. This opinion may be too hasty a conclusion. More probable is the theory that the similarity between al-Rāzī's alchemy and that of Jābir lies in their common drawing from 'Sābian' sources (vide - al-Rāzī's doctrine of the "Five Eternals"). Al-Rāzī is also represented in Ismā'īlī sources as a heretic who denied the validity of Prophecy, and Abū Hātim al-Rāzī (early 4th c.) devoted a book to refuting his denial of prophecy, entitled *A'lām al-Nubuwwah*; al-Rāzī's theory of matter is contained in a work by the poet and Ismā'īlī *dā'i* Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Ibn Zakariyyā' al-Rāzī perhaps qualifies better than Jābir to be viewed as a precursor or anticipator of 'modern' scientific empiricism (esp. in medicine), and his alchemical theory, while sharing much with Jābir's, is different in scope and intention (e.g., completely absent is any 'science of letters', or the Balance).
38. For this, Sezgin has been strongly attacked by Martin Plessner (*Ambix* 19/3 1972, 209-15), who criticizes Sezgin's scholarly method on this point. See also their debate on the dating of the Corpus: Sezgin, "Das Problem des Ḥabir ibn Ḥayyān im Lichte neu gefundener Handschriften" *ZDMG* 114 (1964) 255-68; Plessner, "Ḥabir ibn Ḥayyān und die Zeit der Entstehung der Arabischen Ḥabir-Schriften" *ZDMG* 115 (1965) 23-35. Corbin comments on the debate over the 'apocrypha' (*Annuaire - Ecole Pratique des Hautes Études - Sciences Religieuses*, v. 80-81: III (1971-73) p. 253):
- C'est en grande partie à cause de la présence de thèmes ismaéliens dans le corpus de Jābir, que Krausè avait au devoir en retarder la date de deux or trois siècles (sans doute négligeait-il le fait que les doctrines ismaéliennes étaient écloses, déjà dans l'entourage du VI<sup>e</sup> Imām, bien avant que les Ismaéliens n'apparaissent sur la scène politique). Il s'ensuivait que tous les textes alchimiques se donnant comme les traductions de pseudépigrapbes grecs, étaient en réalité des fictions forgées par les auteurs islamiques; il s'ensuivait encore que les citations de Jābir chez Rhazès étaient des interpolations, etc. Toutes conséquences trop lourdes pour passer facilement. Notons que la question primaire est ici, non pas de se prononcer sur l'authenticité des oeuvres alchimiques grecques traduites, mais de savoir si, pseudépigrapbes ou non, il s'agit bien de textes grecs traduits en arabe. . . . Or, nous croyons avec M. Sezgin qu'il n'y a aucune raison sérieuse de mettre en doute une entreprise de traduction de textes grecs en arabe, bien avant l'époque d'al-Ma'mūn. . . .
39. H. E. Stapleton: "The Antiquity of Alchemy" *Ambix* V p. 1-43; "Probable Sources of the Numbers on which Jābirian Alchemy was based" *Ar. Int. d'Hist. Sc.* 32, p. 44-59; "The Gnomon . . ." *Ambix* 6, p. 1-9.

40. The term Sā'ih, met with in Nusayrī texts, is also found in Ithnā 'Asharī reports from al-Sādiq (cf. Tabarī, Dalā'il al-Imām, the report on the ashāb al-Qā'im referred to above, p. 59, n. 27), and seems to connect with a class of itinerant mendicants— cf. Kraus, "Les dignitaires" 86 n. 1: "les ermites bouddhistes (ou manichéens?) ruhān al-zanūdiqa désignés ap. Gūhiz, K. al-Hayawān, IV, 146, comme sayyāhūn. Voir aussi le nom de l'alchimiste Si'ite al-sā'ih al-'alcwī, ap. Fihrist p. 359, 17."
41. For the occurrence of these terms, see: K. al-Khamsīn in Mukhtār Rasā'il 492 & 495f.; K. al-Najjar ed. Holmyard, Arabic Works 23: al-nutaqā'; K. al-Bayān, Ibid., 10: al-Sāmit; and esp. K. al-Majīd in Mukhtār Rasā'il 118f.
42. The Sepher Yetzirah, traditionally attributed to Abraham by the Rabbins, who claimed to receive it as an oral secret tradition, constitutes one of the chief nucleus of all Cabbalaism. It was enveloped in a mythos of successive custodians who passed it down, and is characterized by the science of gematria where the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are taken as symbols of forces whose orderly combination produced the universe.
43. Cf. M. K. al-Shaybī, al-Silah Bayn al-Taṣawwuf wa al-Tashayyū', 265-72, for a discussion of early figures called "al-Sūfī"— Jābir b. Ḥayyān; Abū Ḥāshim al-Kūfī 'al-Sūfī' (mentioned by Jāmi); 'Abd al-'al-Sūfī'— all three seem to have flourished ca. the latter half of the 2nd c., and were connected with Kūfah. Is it possible that one person (viz. Jābir b. Ḥayyān) stands behind all three?
44. For some preliminary remarks on the possible connections of early Sūfī thinkers with gnosticizing alchemy and Ismā'īlī thought, cf. S. Diwald, Arabische Philosophie und Wissenschaft in der Enzyklopadie: Kitāb Ihwān as-Ṣafā' (III), (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1975) 23-28.
45. For references to this incident, see Y. Rāgib, "Un Episode Obscur d'Histoire Fatimide" SI 48 (1978) 129. Muslim alchemical tradition knows of a tract entitled Ta'wīdh al-Ḥākim ascribed to al-Ḥākim bī Amr Allāh, and allegedly attributed by him to the authority of Ja'far al-Sādiq. For a description of this tract (which mentions Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī) and the fantastic story of its discovery, see: H.E. Stapleton & R.F. Azo, "An Alchemical Compilation of the Thirteenth Century A.D." MASB III/2 1910 p. 77f.

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