

INTRODUCTION

A good amount of work exists on the Isma'ilis and their institutions, done both in the West and the East. Sylvester de Sacy, who was the first professor of Arabic, and later of Persian, at the School of Oriental Languages, which was part of the Ecole des Langues Vivantes at Paris established in 1759 that initiated the tradition of Scientific Orientalism in France, produced a landmark work on the Isma'ilis by the title *Expose de la religion des Druze*, (Paris, 1838). Etienne Mare Quatremere (1782-1857) followed up this study in his short treatises on the Fatimids and the Nizaris, and Charles Francois Defremery (1822-1883) published the results of Nizari studies in two long articles. These works had made a beginning in the field of Isma'ili studies in the West. F. Wusendfeld (1808-1899) was the first European Orientalist to have written, in 1881, an independent history of the Fatimid Caliphate, drawing on a number of Arabic chronicles. This subject was more thoroughly pursued, especially with respect to the Qarmatis (a branch from the Isma'ili) by the famous Dutch scholar, Michael Jan de Goeje, in his *Memoire sur les Carmathes*, which was published in 1886. It was followed by the British scholar De Lacy O'Leary's work *A Short History of the Fatimid Khalifate*, Published from London in 1923. This work had come to be devoted entirely to the history of the Fatimids. The well-known Orientalist, W. Ivanow, did another pioneering work in this direction. Amongst many works by him on the subject, his *A Guide to Isma'ili Literature*, published from London in 1933, throws valuable light on Isma'ili literature, which may serve as sources for future study on this theme. Ivanow also contributed a number of valuable articles on the Isma'ilis in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Bombay. Amongst his other works are the *Isma'ili Tradition*, published in 1942,

where he collected and systematically analysed the various authentic Isma'ili sources and literature concerning the history of the Shi'ite movement, which brought about the foundation of the Fatimid caliphate in North Africa in 297/909. Other important works on the Isma'ilis are *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, by Bernard Lewis (London, 1940), P J Vatikioti's, *The Fatimid Theory of State*, by P J. Vatikioti (Lahore, 1957), and the *D'aam al-Islam* by Asaf Ali Asghar Fyzee. In more recent times, Farhad Daftary, Head of the Department of Academic Research and Publication at the Institute of Isma'ili studies, London has published *The Isma'ili Their History and Doctrines*, (Cambridge, 1990), *the Assassin Legends: Myths of the Isma'ilis* (London, 1994), and *A short History of the Isma'ilis*. Also Asghar Ali Engineer of India, who has written generally on Islam, has also produced a work *The Bohras* (Revised Edition, Bombay, 1993) dealing with one of the sects of the Isma'ilis. One full chapter in this work is devoted to a discussion of the Fatimid state and its policies. Amongst the recent studies on Isma'ilis done in Arabic by Arab scholars are *Tarikh al-Dawlah al-Fatimiah*, of the Egyptian scholar Hasan Ibrahim Hasan (Cairo, 1930), *Taifat-al-Isma'iliya* by another Egyptian, Muhammad Kamil Husayn, and more recently, *Al-Mu'izz Li Din alah al-Fatimi* by Anif Tamir (Beirut, 1982), *al-Dawlah al-Fatimiah fi Misr*, by Ayman Fu'ad Sayyid (Cairo, 1992) and *al-Hayatu al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Asr al-Fatimi* by Abdul Mun'im Sultan (Cairo, 1999).

Our study aims to investigate the political, social, and cultural life under the Isma'ili Fatimids state in al-Maghreb and Egypt, which has not been studied adequately in a focused manner so far. We have tried to study the stages in the development of the history of the Isma'ili movement in relation to the rise of the Fatimid Caliphate. Also an

attempt has been made to survey the glimpses of social life under the Fatimid state, as also an examination of the structure of society in the Fatimid Era. This study also examines the institutions and the intellectual life under the Fatimids to show how the Caliphs encouraged the *da'is* and men of literature and culture to produce works of history, theology and philosophical studies and other genre of literature. The role that the al-Azhar mosque and *madrasa* played in the socio-cultural development under the Fatimids has also been taken note of. It has been highlighted that al-Azhar, which was the first true university of the world and continues to be a premier of Islamic learning since more than a thousand years of its inception. Thus there is a discussion on the intellectual life under the Fatimids.

Developments of far reaching consequences took place immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet. A row sprang up on the issue of succession to Prophet Muhammad's spiritual legacy or *khilafat* amongst his followers, which gave rise to the Shi'a, a group that was to play a significant role in the subsequent history of Islam. The first chapter focuses on the circumstances that gave rise to Shia'ism and its subsequent developments. How far the social and political discontent and the persecution of the dissenters by the ruling elites was responsible for the growth of such a movement has also been examined in this chapter. One of the sects that were to play a very significant role in the subsequent history of Islam in the region of Egypt, al-Maghreb and Yemen was the *Isma'iliya* or the Isma'ilis, an offshoot of the Shi'a. The Isma'ili movement was as much religious, as it was social and political in its content. The Isma'ilis were able to wield political authority in the regions of Yemen and North Africa (Maghreb) as early as the 9th century posing a challenge to the authority of the

Abbasids. It was the Isma'ili propaganda against the Abbasids that had paved the way for their rule over Yeman, Maghreb and Egypt.

The Ima'ilis were a sub-sect of the Shi'a (*Shi'an al-'Ali*) and represent the ascendancy of the first major political gain for this creed in the form of the Fatimid rule. The Fatimid authority (*Khlafat*) was established first at Ifriqiyah (modern Tunisia) in 909 A.D. and al-Mahdi was its first Khalifa. The key to the success of the Isma'ilis was their superior organization in which secrecy played a crucial role, careful planning, proper strategies and correct tactics. Al-Mahdi ruled from his capital Qayrawan that was later expanded in 308/921 by constructing a quarter called al-Mahdiyyah that was to serve as the Fatimid capital for a few generations.

Certain developments in Egypt were of far reaching consequences for the history of the Isma'ili movement in this region. Egypt was part of the Abbasid Empire and was ruled by governors appointed by the Abbasid Khalifa of Baghdad. Muhammad ibn-Tughj, a Turk who was appointed the governor of Egypt gained in prominence and was able to secure the title of Ikhshid in 937 from Khalifa al-Radi. After his death, his family established a right over the governorship of Egypt. During the period of the governorship of his son abul al-Qasim Unjur, who was only 15 years and thus a minor, he was placed under a regency of Abu al-Misk Kafur, a black eunuch. During this period, due to deterioration in the economic condition of the region as a result of droughts, social discontentment grew in the region. The Isma'ilis of al-Maghreb made attempts to conquer Egypt but were beaten back by Unjur. However, the revolts grew more and more under the rule of his son Abu al-Fawaris Ahmad Ibn Ali, who succeeded his father in 968. He was

unable to resist the Isma'ili advance into Egypt, which capitulated in 969 to the Isma'ilis.

It was Al-Mahdi had laid down the policy of conquest of Egypt. He had started making elaborate preparations by way of building a naval fleet to attack Egypt, a task that could be carried forward by al-Mu'izz, fourth in the line of succession him in 969 A.D. It was Jawhar bin 'Abdallah, a general of al-Mu'izz, who was a freedman of the Fatimids and possibly of slave origin, who carried various epithets such as al-Saqlabi (the slave), al-Siqilli (the Sicilian) and al-Rumi (the Greek) in various contemporary accounts who occupied Alexandria in February 969 A.D. without any serious resistance. The Fatimid rule was established over Egypt.

In the next chapter an attempt is made to understand the structure of state and society under the Fatimids. The establishment of Fatimid caliphate was based on the thought of sanctity of the Imam and his inerrancy, and the impression that was, even the caliphs came to believe themselves that they were above mankind. The matter of caliphate was restricted only to Fatimid family, and the one who inherits the caliphate should have letterpress from a previous caliph. The caliph Mahdi and his three successors acted as the supreme heads of the government administration and commanders of the armed forces. At least, from the reign of al-Qa'im, a few dignitaries in the Fatimid state, such as Jawhar al-Siqilli, gradually came to discharge some of the posts of a chief vizier, But the title of vizier was not given to any high official during their North Africa phase, But in Egypt, the viziers were of several classes of what the Sunni jurist and theoretician al-Mawardi (d.1058) designated as *wazir al-tanfidh* or vizier with

executive powers only, or the so-called men of the pen or *arbab al-qalam*, But from Bader al-Jamali onwards, the Fatimid vizier obtained full powers from his sovereign and became *wazir al-tafwid*, or vizier with delegated powers, As this later type of vizier was called *wazir al-sayf* or Vizier of the Sword He was not only the commander of the armies (*amir al-juyush*) and the effective head of the civil bureaucracy. The high personnel (officials) had enjoyed a strong influence during the reign of the Fatimid state and due to direct relationship with the members of the royal ruling family. The central administration under the Fatimids was carried on through the *diwan* system; and the various *diwans* (ministries, departments or offices) were at times situated at the residence of the caliph. Amongst the most important bureaucratic posts was *Sahib Diwan al-Insha* or *al-Rasa'il* (chief of the state chancery), which was entrusted with issuing and handling the various types of official documents including the Caliphal decrees and letters. Amongst the heads of religious (clerics) departments were the posts of *Qadi al-Quddat* or the chief *Qadi*, who presided over the judiciary, *Da'i al-Du'at* or the chief *Da'i* who acted as the administrative head of the *da'wa* or propaganda, and *al-Muhtasib* or the inspector of markets, We have thrown some light on the populace class, which included the big traders, vocational proprietors of apprentice literals' (technicians, vocation) and also on that of *al-'Abid* or the slaves Also discussed are the activities of big traders who occupied a high status in the Fatimid society, and were closely connected with the Fatimid court. Slave trade and its economic, social and military implications to medieval Islamic polity are also discussed.

The Fatimid state enjoyed a degree of seeming tranquility and prosperity that made the Persian traveler Nasir Khusraw

enthusiastically declare, "I could neither limit nor estimate its wealth and nowhere have I seen such prosperity as I saw there" when he visited Egypt in 1047. The prosperity and glory is evidently clear in the building of grand cities, the great royal palaces, ostentatious celebrations and commemorations. In the Third Chapter, therefore, there is a discussion of the socio-economic life under the Fatimids. It takes note of various celebrations such as of the new Hijri era, the birth anniversary of the Prophet, the month of Fasting (Ramadan), *'Eid al-Fitr* and the *'Eid al-Adha*. Also taken note of in the chapter are specific Shi'ite festivals such as *Ghadir Khumm*, (the day, according to Shiite traditions, the Prophet nominated Ali as his spiritual successor). This event of the spiritual investiture of Ali continues to be celebrated as one of the most important Shi'i festivals. Also the annual commemoration of the martyrdom of al-Hussain bin 'Ali on the 10th of the month of Muharram of 61 Hijri/681 A.D. has always been a very significant date for the Shi'is and was commemorated with lot of emotions under the Fatimids. Under the Fatimids, as a result of religious freedom that they granted to their non-Muslim subjects, we have the evidence of many celebrations of the Coptic and other Christians such as the Feast of Nativity, Feast of Baptism or Epiphany and the Cross Festival. The Fatimid rulers themselves publicly participated in the festivals of the Christians, the only exception being the Fatimid ruler al-Hakim. The general Muslim public too participated in the Christian festivals

Marriages with black slave female slaves were one of the very prominent social practices all over medieval Islamic world. There are many instances of Fatimid rulers marrying black slave females in our sources. For example, the caliph al-Zahir had bought a black Sudan

slave girl from Abu Nasir Sa'd al-Dahir, son of Sahl (a Jewish merchant in Cairo), and she was the mother of the Caliph, al-Mustansir.

Nasir Khusraw, the Iranian traveler who visited Cairo in the 11th century has described various crafts and embellishments that he came across in the Fatimid realm during his visit. Thus, the throne kept in the 12th room of the Fatimid Royal Palace that he visited in 1047 he notices, bore excellent metal work and was decorated with scenes of a chase. Ivory work, too, was highly developed under the Fatimids. One of the finest examples of Muslim ivory work is a remarkable Fatimid carved rock-crystal ewer in the treasury of Saint Marks, Venice, which bears the name of the Fifth Fatimid Caliph, al-'Aziz. Various crafts flourished under the Fatimids. Artifacts made of bronze, brass and copper works of artistic value are preserved in various museums. One of these is a huge bronze Griffin which stands in Pisa (Italy), which was probably brought from the Fatimid Royal Palace of the 11th century. Similarly, there are bronze statues, including that of a prince seated on a settee, holding a goblet in his right hand, a rose in his left, and at his left side stands a cupbearer. Also many other such specimens, including paintings, musical instruments (such as *qitran*, the basis of European guitar), ivory works (such as with a painting of flutist playing on *nai* or flute) of the Fatimid period, are preserved in the *Dar al-Athar al-'Arabiah* (Museum of Arab Antiquities) in Cairo.

The Fatimid caliphs were fond of music and song and patronized these arts. Al-Zafir (1149-1154) was frivolous in his tastes, and much given to the society of concubines and to listening to vocal music. Al-Mustansir (1035-1095) is said to have erected in his Royal Palace a pavilion, where he used to drink to the accompaniment of stringed music and

beautiful singers; Nasab al-Tabbalah was one of the most famous female singers of his times just as Ibn Maysarah al-Kutami was the most well known male singer

Isma'ili teachings carried out by their missionaries dominated the evolution of intellectual life in the Islamic world from the fourth to the sixth centuries of the Hijra era that is discussed in the next chapter. A large number of Muslim thinkers appear to have been influenced by the Isma'ili doctrine including the famous philosopher and the 'Father of Modern Medicine' Ibn Sina. It was during these centuries that we find the crystallization of the Isma'ili philosophy taking place. Thus during this period develops the belief in the *natiq* (a prouner or law giver) who would interpret the *shari'a* for his times to the people; the esoteric interpretation (*ta'wil*) of the Qur'an whereby what is in the *batin* (hidden) in the Qur'an is interpreted (*ta'wil*) only by the divinely ordained and infallible Fatimid *Imam*, and that the Fatimid Imam could convey such knowledge of the inner meaning behind the religious prescriptions, to the lower members of the *da'wa* hierarchy. In the basic structure of the Fatimids religious thought, they paid attention to both the '*ilm al-zahir* and the '*ilm al-batin*, the exoteric and esoteric knowledge. The Fatimid Isma'ili accepted only those traditions related from the Prophet, which had been sanctioned by their Imams. They, however, combined them with those traditions which were related to their recognized imams, including especially to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq.

This chapter also deals with the cultural role of mosques during this period. Mosques were not just for offering prayers; they formed the nerve centers of political, religious and educational activities in Islam. In fact the mosques served as educational centers and made

provisions for lectures on *fiqh*, *hadis* and *kalam*, besides language and literature. Not only the Fatimid *khalifas* were highly cultured and learned themselves, they also gave full patronage to learning and scholarship. The Fatimid Caliph al-Aziz made al-Azhar Mosque into an academy and thus established the first true university of the world. The chapter deals with the contribution of al-Azhar University to the field of knowledge and scholarship. Also the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim, had founded in 995 A.D. at Cairo an educational institution of called Dar al-Hikma or house of wisdom which was set up in a section of the royal Palace, which had within its fold a huge library, an observatory, and a medical college, which were also used for the dissemination of the Fatimid teachings to broader audiences, while paying considerable attention to the Islamic sciences and other cultural aspects.

Practically nothing is known about the Isma'ili religious literature from the beginning of the movement till the rise of the Fatimid state in North Africa. The production of this literature coincided with the Fatimid rule in Ifriqiyah and Egypt when the Isma'ili authors and *da'is* embarked upon their activities. Largely scholars of Iranian origin working as the Isma'ili *da'is* who wrote their works in Arabic did the Isma'ili literature on theology and philosophy produced during this period. Among the famous names of these Iranian *da'is* are of al-Kirmani, al-Sijistani, Nasir Khusraw, and Shirazi. Hamid al-Din al-Kirmani, an Iranian born in Kirman, was the most eminent Isma'ili philosopher, theologian and author of the Fatimid period. He wrote his principal work on the Isma'ili philosophy, *Rahat al-'Aql* (Peace of Rational Mind) in 411/1020-1021, and died soon afterwards. Qadi Nu'man, an Arab scholar, wrote the earliest historical work of the Fatimid period, *Iftitah al-Da'wa wa Ibtida al-Dawla*. Nu'man had served the first four Caliphs in different

capacities and thus was an eyewitness to many events. He completed his work in 346/957 and it covers the immediate background to the establishment of the Fatimid Caliphate. This work has been the basic source of information on the period for all later Isma'ili historians. Another work of importance is *Kitab al-Kashf*, which the Isma'ili tradition attributes to Ja'far b. Mansur al-Yaman, Abu al-Qasim, who died in service under the Fatimid rulers in Mansuriyya near Qayrawan in North Africa. Numerous Fatimid documents from this period are contained in the work of Abu 'Ali Mansur al-Azizi al-Jawdhari, an important official at the time of al-Mu'izz, called *Sirat al-ustadh Jawdhar*, and hence this work has been regarded as of fundamental importance.

Nasir Khusraw was born in 349/1004 in Qubadiyan, a district Balkh, which at the time was part of the province of Marw. He belonged to a family of government officials and landowners, Khusraw visited Egypt in August 1047, and stayed in Cairo for about three years until May 1050, during which time he saw al-Mustansir, Nasir received the required training as a da'i at the headquarters of the Fatimid da'wa. In his *Safar Nama*, Nasir described in vivid detail the splendor of the Fatimid Capital, with its royal palace, gates, gardens, and shops, as well as the wealth of Egypt.

The tradition of local historiography in Fatimid Egypt was continued by Muhammad b. Ubaidah b. Ahmad, popularly known, as al-Musabbihi (d.1029), a high official under the Fatimids after 1007-1008 who wrote the history (untitled) of the period 975 to 1025. Only a small portion, volume forty, of al-Musabbihi's vast history, relating to the years 414-

415 A.H , has survived. Its only manuscript is preserved at the Escorial Library, Madrid.

Many works relating to various branches of science were also produced during the Fatimid period. Amongst them, Ibn al-Haythem, who was born in al-Basrah about 905 produced and lived under the Fatimids wrote about a hundred works on mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and medicine. His chief work for which he is known was that on optics called *Kitab al-Manzer*, which is only available in the Latin translation that was published in 1572 while the original work is lost to posterity. Another important work composed in Egypt in the days of al-Hakim is *al-Muntakhab fi 'Ilaj al-'Ayn*, on ophthalmology, by Ammar Ibn-Ali al-Mawsili.

The Fatimid rule in Egypt and the Maghreb represented a landmark phase in the development of Islamic philosophy, polity, art and culture that is studied in the ensuing pages

Chapter 1

Rise of Shi'ism and The Establishment of The Fatimid Caliphate in The Region of al-Maghreb

The first crisis in the Islamic History came immediately after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the year 632 A.D.¹ As long the Prophet was alive, Muslims had taken it for granted that he would provide them the best guidance according to the revealed message of the Quran. Besides delivering and guarding his Prophetic message, the Prophet had also acted as the head of the Muslims community (*umma*). His death in Medina left the Muslims in a state of serious confusion.² The events that were to follow added to their confusion and they had a serious bearing on the future development of Islam.

While the family members of the Prophet, including his cousin and son-in-law Ali, were busy in arranging for his last rites, a group consisting of the companions of the Holy Prophet collected in the nearby mosque (in the *Saqifa* "hall" of Banu Sa'ida) and 'elected' Abu Baker, one of the close companion of the Prophet as his *khalifa*. This decision was contested by another group of companions of the Prophet who held the view that Ali was 'nominated' by the Prophet as the successor to his spiritual heritage.³ They, therefore, regarded Ali as the rightful *khalifa*

¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins (A Radical Sect in Islam)*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 5 Winsley Street London W 1, 1967, Printed by Cox & Wyman Ltd, London, Reading and Fakenham, P 20

² Farhad Daftary, *The Isma'ilis Their history and doctrines*, Printed in Great Britain at the University Press, Cambridge, Reprinted 1994, 1995 P 34 and Arnold of Lubeck, *Chronica Slavorum*, book 4, and chapter 16, in *Monumenta Cermaniae Histioea*, ed Georg H Pertz et al Hanover, 1869, vol 21, P 179

³ A S Triton, *Islam Belief and Practices*, Hutchinson University Library, Hutchinson & CO (Publishers) LTD 178-202 Great Portland Street, London, W 1, Reprinted, 1968 p 37, and more details about assembly of the Saqifatu Banu Sa'ida. Also see, Saiyid Athar Abbas

and refused to recognize Abu Baker.⁴ The partisans of Abu baker held the view that the Prophet had left neither formal instruction nor a testament regarding his successor. In the ensuing discussions, there was immediate consensus of opinion on one point only: the successor to the Prophet could not be another prophet as it had already been made known through divine revelation that Muhammad was the *Khatim al-anbiya*⁵ Moreover, the old-established *Ansar*⁶ Or Medinese would gladly have rid themselves of the preponderance of the Meccan *muhajirun* or Emigrants to become the sole masters in their own house once again. The leader of the *Ansar*, Sa'ad ibn-Ubadh, had enough power and influence to assert his claim of authority.⁷ Consequently, Abu Baker, one of the earliest converts to Islam and a trusted companion of the Prophet, who with 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and Abu

Rizvi, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'is in India, (7th to 16th century A D)*, vol 1, Ma'rifat Publishing House, Australia, 1986, Pp 22-24

⁴ Bernard Lewis, *The Origins of Isma'ilism A study of the historical background of the Fatimid Caliphate*, First Published, Printed and Bund in Great Britain at the Works of W Heffer & Sons Ltd , Cambridge, England, March, 1940, P 23

⁵ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis their history and doctrines*, P 34 and Ibid, Arnold of Leubeck, *Chronica Slavorum* P 179 See also al-Nawbakhti, al-Hasan bin Musa and al-Qummi, Sa'd bin 'Abd Allah al-Sh'ari *Kitab Firaq al -Shi'a*, Edited, Abd al-Mu'nim al-Hafni, Dar al-Rashaad, Cairo, First Edition, 1412/1992, P 15 *Khatim al-Anbiya* " He is the messenger of God and the seal of the prophets", by which is meant, that he is the last of the prophets See Tomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam A Cyclopedia of The Doctrines, Rites, Ceremonies, And Customs, Together With The Technical And Theological Terms, Of The Mohammedan Religion* First Published in Rupa &Co, (15 Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta 700 073), (94 South Malaka, Allahabad 211 001) (102 Prasad Chambers, Opera House, Bombay 400 004) (3831 Pataudi House Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002) 1988, P 270

⁶ *Ansar* (Lit helpers), the designation applied to the Medinans who joined Prophet Muhammad after his migration to medina from Mecca See Bernard Lewis, *Islam, Politics and War*, First Published in the U S A, Canada, 1974, and United kingdom, 1976, Published by The Macmillan Press Ltd London and Basing stoke, Associated companies in New York, Dublin Melbourne Johannesburg and Madras, SBN 333 047400 P 244 and H Lammens, S J, *Islam, Beliefs and Institutions*, Translated from the French by E Denison Ross Published in 2002 by Aryn Books International 4378/4B, Pooja Apartments, and 4B, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj New Delhi-11002, (India) P 28

⁷ Carl Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic peoples*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, Broadway House 68-74 Carter Lane, E C 4, and Printed by Lund Humphries, London, Bradford, and Reprinted, 1952 P 45 The *Ansar* of the Banu Sa'ad tribe preferred to follow the Muhajirun rather than the Khazraj led by Sa'ad bin 'Ubadh who refused to acknowledge Abu Bakr as their ruler, Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'is in India*, vol 1, P 23

Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah had previously exercised a decisive influence on the Prophet's politics, was elected as the successor (*khalifa*). The *Ansar* then had no choice but to recognize the new ruler⁸

The authorities stressing the Shi'a⁹ viewpoint regarding the right of Ali's *khilafat* have laid emphasis on the event of *Ghadir Khumm*. It was on 16th March 632 (18th Zulhijja 10AH), when returning from his Pilgrimage, the Prophet stopped at *Ghadir Khumm* (a place between Mecca and Medina), to make a declaration to the pilgrims who accompanied him. Taking 'Ali by the hand, he said: "*man kuntu mawla fa-haza Aliu'n mawla*" (He of whom I am the patron, of him 'Ali is also the patron). This event according to the *Shi'i*, was an unequivocal pronouncement by the Prophet of 'Ali being the successor to his spiritual authority. This event of the spiritual investiture of 'Ali bin Abi Talib continues to be celebrated as one of the most important *Shi'i* feasts.¹⁰

In July of 634, Caliph Abu Baker died in Medina. Before his death, he personally nominated Umer ibn Khattab, as his successor. The period of *khilafat* of Umar (634–44) is also regarded as the golden age of the Pious Caliphate. During his tenure as the *khalifa*, the expansion of the Islamic state was heralded. But more important than the political

⁸ Op Cit, *History of The Islamic Peoples*, Pp 44-45, and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis Their history and doctrines*, Pp 34-35

⁹ *Shi'a* is an Arabic word, which occurs in several Qur'anic verses (Qur'an xxviii, 15, xxxvii, 83). According to Arabic lexicons (sing *Qamus*), the friends or followers of a person are called his Shi's. The word *Shi'a* is singular but is used alike for all forms and genders. The term *Shi'i* means conforming to Shi'ism. The devotees of Prophet Muhammad, his *Ahl al-Bayt* (members of the family defined by the Prophet), or *qurba* (relatives), or *itra* (near relations), are *Shi'is*. According to the Prophet's own definition, members of the *Ahl al-Bayt* are the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, the prophet's daughter, Fatima and her sons, Hassan and Husayn. & *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, P 8

¹⁰ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis Their history and doctrines*, P 37

expansion was the strict enforcement of all Islamic principles, namely equity, justice, brotherhood and devotion to duty for which he is chiefly remembered.¹¹ In November 23, 644, Caliph 'Umer was killed by a Persian slave, Abu Lu'luah Firoz, when the caliph appeared in the mosque to lead the early morning prayers. Umer had decided that a council (*shura*) of six consisting of the early companions was to elect the new successor from amongst them. In due course, 'Uthman bin 'Affan of the house of Banu Umayya was elected and he became third Caliph.¹²

The period of 'Uthman's *khilafat* was marked by dissensions and strife. Under these conditions of socio-economic discontent against the policies of Caliph 'Uthman, mainly located in the provinces, the partisans of Ali became more active in his opposition. 'Uthman belonged to the aristocracy of Banu Umayya, which had bitterly opposed Abu Bakr and 'Umar regimes in the past. Thus the first six years of 'Uthman's rules were peaceful but gradually, his distribution of wealth and high positions among his own kinsmen shocked his supporters.¹³ The shi'a and the discontented provincials, two groups though while differing in the nature of their opposition to Uthman's politics but with the similar aims, joined forces unintentionally. This eventually culminated in the murder of Uthman on Friday, June 17, 656 by the hands of a group of Egyptians while he was offering prayers. His

¹¹ B. Sheik Ali, *Islam A Cultural Orientation*, Published by S. G. Wasani for Macmillan India Limited, 9 Community Centre, Naraina Industrial Area, Phase 1, Delhi 110 028, 1981 P 6

¹² Op Cit, *History of The Islamic Peoples* P 63 and, Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis Their History and Doctrines*, P 35

¹³ Op Cit, *Islam A Cultural Orientation*, P 6 And Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis Their History and Doctrines*, P 40 And more details about rule of Caliph Usman see Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, vol 1, Pp 32-35

house was also completely plundered.¹⁴ Ali bin Abi Talib¹⁵ was subsequently declared as the new *khalifa*. He was thus the fourth and the last of the *Al-Khulafa'a Al-Rashidun*.¹⁶

Ali's personality was well known throughout Arabia for his simplicity, piety, integrity and scrupulous conduct.¹⁷ His ascendance to *khilafat* in Medina was a notable victory for the *shī'at*, their imam had got the *khilafat* even though after a delay of some twenty-four years. All groups opposed to Uthman supported Ali.

Ali was confronted with difficulties from the start, which soon erupted into the first civil war in Islam lasting through his short-lived caliphate.¹⁸ The first challenge to Ali came from Medina, by Talhah and al-Zubayer, the followers of 'Aishah, referred at times as the *Ummu'l-Mu'minin*.¹⁹ She still retained her old hatred for Ali. The Umayyad, and a number of other people who hated Ali, soon joined her. The insurgents went to Basra to organize support for their revolution. Ali finding that he had no troops at Medina, left for Kufa where he gathered around twelve thousand Kufans to his cause. Negotiations with Aishah having broken down, the two forces met in a battle at Dhu Qar near Basrah. 'Aishah's

¹⁴ Op Cit, *History of The Islamic Peoples*, Pp 55-56 and, Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis Their History and Doctrines*, Pp 42-43

¹⁵ 'Ali the son of the Prophet's uncle Abi Talib, the grandson of 'Abd al-Muttalib and great-grandson of Hashim, was born on 13 Rajab, 600 A D in Ka'aba. He opened his eyes in Prophet Muhammad's arms and was tutored and brought up by him. Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'is in India*, vol 1, P 10

¹⁶ Canon Sell, D D, *Studies in Islam*, Published in India by B R Publishing Corporation 461, Vivekanand Nagar, Delhi-110052, Reprinted, 1985, P 48

¹⁷ Asghar Ali Engineer, *The Bohras*, Published by Central Board of Dowoodi Bohra Community, Himalaya Aps, 'B' Block, 1st Floor, Flat No 9B, 6th Road, Santacruz (E), Mumbai- 400 055, Revised Edition, 1993, P 3

¹⁸ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis Their History and Doctrines*, Pp 42-43

¹⁹ "A mother of the Faithful" She is Abu Baker Daughter and Prophet Muhammad widow, Thomas P Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, P 654 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis Their History and Doctrines*, P 43

forces where defeated in Jumada II 35 A.H December 656 A.D. This battle is referred to as the *Ma'arakatu-al Jamal* (Battle of the Camel) as Aishah was seated on a camel and leading the campaign.²⁰

Capital of the Islamic Caliphate was shifted subsequently from Madina to Kufa and later to Damascus. The military power of the Caliphate had already been concentrated at these places for along. It was in this new setting that the Umayyad challenge came to 'Ali's rule in his a new Capital Kufa in Iraq. Mu'awiyah, the governor of Syria refused to acknowledge Ali's *khilafat* and pay allegiance to him.²¹

Ali took various administrative measures in southern Iraq that made him popular with the people of that area and they became the backbone of Ali's forces. He also consolidated his control over Hijaz and Egypt, and dismissed the Umayyad governors and subdued the border provinces. Mu'awiyah confronted Ali by attacking these territories and urging Ali to hand over Uthman's assassins. The *Shi'i* leaders such as Malik bin al-Haris al-Ashtar, Hujr bin Adi al-Kindi, Adi bin Hatim and other supporters of Ali urged him to invade Syria and crush Mu'awiyah before he grew too strong²². The time went by in futile negotiations since 'Ali could not comply with 'Mu'awiyah's demand that the murderers of 'Uthman be handed over²³. He wrote to Mu'awiyah

²⁰ At the so-called battle of the camel (*al-Jamal*) at 'Dhu Qar, near Basra It's meant the Camel which Aishah was mounted on, to give confidence to the warriors. As a result it's, Ali got that victory, Talha Ibn Abd Allah and al-Zubayer Ibn al-Awam were killed, Aishah was respectfully escorted to Medina by her own brother Muhammad. She died on July 13, 678 & *History of The Islamic Peoples* Pp 66-67 and Op Cit, *Kitab Firaq al-Shi'a*, P 18

²¹ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis Their History and Doctrines*, Pp 42-44

²² Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, P 39. See also Abu Ja'far Muhammad b Jarir, al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, 1, Leiden, 1964, P 3256. See also Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Izuu'd-Din 'Abdul-Hamid b Hibat'llah al-Madani, *Sharh Nahj al-balagha*, Beirut, 1, 1950, P 554

²³ Ali failed to punish the murderer predecessor, the Khalifa 'Uthman, He also dismissed many of 'Uthman's official, amongst whom was Mu'awiyah who had a high command in

asking him to refrain from bloodshed. Nevertheless, Mu'awiyah amassed his army at the borders of Iraq, which resulted in the war with 'Ali. Early in Safar 37/July (657), the two forces met at Siffin on the Euphrates in Iraq. Next day a hotly contested battle took place. A long battle ensued, perhaps the most controversial one in the history of early Islam. At this critical moment, when Mu'awiyah's army was on the verge of defeat,²⁴ the cunning 'Amr'u ibn-al-'As, former governor of Egypt, urged Mu'awiyah to make a feint of raising copies of the Qur'an on his soldiers' lances, and demanding arbitration, appealing to God's word instead of decision by war to settle issues of khilafat. Consequently 'Ali, who had the victory already in his hand, decided to stop the battle, and instead, start negotiations with governor of Syria once again. An agreement was arrived at largely due to the pressure of a number of tribal leaders in Ali's army who had no stake in the war. An arbitration was agreed upon Mu'awiyah thus obtained a respite. The arbiters from the side of 'Ali was Abu Musa al-Ash'ari and from the side of Ali and Mu'awiyah's Amru bin-al-'as, the former governor of Egypt.²⁵

The time for arbitration having come, the arbiters proceeded to Adhruh (a region in south Jordan, between Ma'an and Petra in ancient Edom) each with a retinue of four hundred horsemen according to the agreement. Many a leading Chief from Mecca, Medina, Iraq and Syria went there to watch the proceedings, which were to decide the future

Damascus (Syria) to which he had been appointed by the Khalifa 'Umar. See, Op Cit, *Studies in Islam*, Pp 48-49 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis Their History and Doctrines*, P 44

²⁴ Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, Pp 39-40 and Op Cit, *Tankh ar-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol 1, Leiden, Pp 3329-60 and ibn al-Asir, Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali, *al-Kamil fi't-tarikh*, Beirut, vol 3, 1965, Pp 276-334 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis* P 44

²⁵ Op Cit, *History of The Islamic Peoples*, P 69 and Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, P 40

of Islam.²⁶ According to the account by al-Mas'udi in his *Kitab Muruj adh-Dhahab*, Amr bin Aas asked Abu-Musa to reject both Ali and Muawiya, and let the Faithful elect a third. This he said was the simplest and safest solution of the problem. 'I agree,' said Abu-Musa, 'let us go forth to pronounce' Abu-Musa wished 'Amr to go up first, but 'Amr, on the pretext that he wanted Ali's man to announce first, insisted upon Abu-Musa going up first Abu-Musa ascended the rostrum and addressed the people thus: 'Brethren! I and Amr bin Aas, both of us, have given full consideration to the matter and have come to the conclusion that no other course to restore peace and to remove discord from the people can possibly be better than to depose both Ali and Mu'awiya in order that people may have their choice of a better man in their stead.²⁷ I therefore depose both Ali and Mu'awiya from the Caliphate to which they pretend, in the manner as I draw this ring from my finger.' Having made this declaration Abu-Musa came down. Amr bin Aas now took his turn and went up to announce what he had to declare 'You have heard,' he said, 'how Abu-Musa on his part has deposed his chief Ali, I, on my part, do depose him too and I invest my chief Mu'awiya with the Caliphate and I confirm him to it, as I put this ring upon my finger. I do this with justice because Mu'awiya is the avenger of 'Usman and his rightful successor²⁸ so saying, he came down. This arbitration took place in the month of Ramadan, 38 A.H. / February 657 A D. 'Ali was outwitted through this stratagem and

²⁶ Ibid Cit, *History of the Islamic peoples*, Pp 69-70 and More details about the arbitration see *Kitab Tarikh ar-rusul wa'l-muluk*, ed Abu al-Fadhil Ibrahim, Dar al-Ma'arif, Misr, vol 5, 1960, Pp 64-93

²⁷ Al-Mas'udi, Ali b al-Husayn, *Muruj adh-Dhahab wa Ma'adin al-Jawhar* ed Muhyi al-Dain Abd al-Hamid, vol 2, Cairo, 1948, P 415 and Canon Sell, D D, *Studies in Islam*, Published in India by B R Publishing Corporation 461, Vivekanand Nagar, Delhi-110052, Reprinted, 1985 See *History of the Islamic peoples*, P 49

²⁸ More details about the court of arbitration see Ibid, *Muruj adh-Dhahab wa Ma'adin al-Jawhar* vol 2, P 415

Mu'awiyah was saluted by his men as the rightful *Khalifa*.²⁹ This laid the foundation of what is known as the Umayyid dynasty.³⁰

After hearing the result of arbitration, a section of Ali's followers left him declaring 'no decision save God's' and claimed that this appointment by a human tribunal was a sin against Ali. They had earlier disagreed with 'Ali on stopping the battle at Siffin making it clear to him that it was Mu'awiyah's trick to avoid defeat and urging 'Ali to continue the battle. These dissenters came to be known as *Khawarij* (dissenters, singular *khariji*).³¹ They collected at Harura³² and elected 'Abdallah ar-Rasibi to the Caliphate. 'Ali had to attack the insurgents, who had once belonged to his own camp, along the canal of *al-Nahrawan* in July 17 658, inflicting heavy losses on the *khawarij* (dissenters). 'Ali was also preparing for a campaign in Syria, but before he could even start the battle, he was assassinated in the mosque of Kufah on the morning of 19 Ramazan 40 A H/26 January 24, 661 A.D, by a *khariji* assassin, 'Abd-ar-Rahman ibn -Muljam al-Murady.³³

²⁹ Op Cit, *Tarikh ar-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol 5, p 161 and Op Cit, *Studies in Islam*, P 50 and Op Cit, *Islam A Cultural Orientation*, P 7

³⁰ 'Umayyads, Arabic *Banu Umayyah*, or *ad-Daulatu 'Al-Umayyiah* The dynasty of Caliphs who reigned from (A D 661 to 750), descended from Mu'awiyah, who was the grandson of Umayyah of the Quraish tribe. Mu'awiyah, the son of Abu Sufyan, established his Capital at Damascus. The dynasty includes the names of fourteen Caliphs Op Cit, *Dictionary of Islam*, P 448 and M. A. Enan, *The History of Islam Decisive Moments*, Published by Aryan Books International, 4378/4B, Pooja Apartments, 4B, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002, 2002, P 31

³¹ Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, P 40. 'Khawarij "the deserters" A sect of Muslims who affirm that any man may be promoted to the dignity of Caliph, even though he be not of the Quraish tribe, provided he be elected by the Mohammedan nation. The first who were so called were the 12,000 men who revolted from 'Ali after they had fought under him at the battle of Siffin, and took offence at his submitting the decision of his right to the Caliphate to the arbitration of men when, in their opinion, it ought to have been submitted to the judgment of God. They affirmed that a man might be appointed Caliph no matter of what tribe or nation, provided he were a just and pious person, and that if the Caliph turned away from truth he might be put to death or deposed. See, Op Cit, *Dictionary of Islam*, P 270

³² Harura a village, near Kufah in Iraq

³³ Op Cit, *History of the Islamic peoples*, P 70

After 'Ali's death, his supporters at Kufa acclaimed his eldest son, al-Hasan, as his successor. Mu'awiya's power had now become quite formidable and he easily succeeded in inducing al-Hasan to renounce the caliphate and take an oath of allegiance to Mu'awiya. It was crucial for Mu'awiyah to extract the oath of allegiance from al-Hasan as he was the eldest son of 'Ali and a member of the *Ahl- al Bait*.³⁴ Mu'awiyah also knew that the (*ba'it*) allegiance by al-Hasan taken by coercion was not long lasting. According to the Shi'at historians, Mu'awiyah caused al-Hasan to be put to death by poison in A.H 49.³⁵ Yazid, the son of Mu'awiyah became the Caliph after the demise of his father on April 18, 680. The Kufans (the loyal partisans of 'Ali) such as Muslem bin Awsaja, Habib bin Muzahir, Sulayman bin Surad al-Khuza'i, who had fought on 'Ali's side at the battles of *Jamal* and *Siffin* wrote to al-Husayn to take up the leadership in the hope that he would organize a revolt against the Umayyad Caliphate. Al-Husayn, who had already refused to accord the oath of allegiance to Yazid³⁶, sent his cousin, Muslim ibn-'Aqil, to Kufa, to prepare the ground for him there. Both, the devoted Shi'i leaders, and the others opposed to Mu'awiyah warmly welcomed Muslim Ibn-'Aqil in Kufa. About 18,000 supporters gathered around him. Ibn-'Aqil therefore sent one of the leaders to invite al-Husayn to Kufa. In Mecca, ibn 'Abbas and others urged al-Husayn to ignore these letters from the treacherous Kufans. Abdallah Ibn al-Zubayr, who wished to become the undisputed leader in Hijaz, however, encouraged al-Husayn to go to Kufa although he hid his feeling by adding that al-Husayn's presence in Mecca was also not unwelcome. On Zu'l-hijja 60/ 9 September 680, al-Husayn left Mecca

³⁴ Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, Pp 41-42 and Op. Cit, *Studies in Islam*, P 50

³⁵ Op Cit, *Studies in Islam*, Pp 50-51

³⁶ Op Cit, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, P 75 Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, Pp 43-44

without performing the annual Hajj. Ibn Ziyad's threats and promises of rewards made Muslim bin Aqil's fickle supporters in Kufa transfer their allegiance to Ziyad. The Shi's went underground and Ibn 'Aqil was arrested and executed on 'Ubaydallah ibn-Ziyad's orders, on the same day that al-Husayn left Mecca, en-route to Kufa.³⁷ On his journey; al-Husayn was accompanied by a small group of some 72 (men, women, children), consisting of his family members and close friends and supporters, mainly from Mecca. On 2 Muharram 61/ 2 October 680, he reached Karbala, in the province of Nainawah in Iraq. Next day Sa'd bin Abi al-Waqqas's son Umar was intercepted near Kufa by an 'Umayyad army of 4,000 soldier and he forced Husayn to move his tents from the banks of Euphrates to a waterless desert. Al-Husayn's followers, wished to resist, but al-Husayn refused to precipitate action. Ibn al-Waqqas had been sent with clear instructions to either obtain al-Husayn's oath of allegiance (*ba'it*) to Yazid or to kill him.³⁸

After the collapse of negotiations with Umayyad emissary, al-Husayn again refused to yield to Yazid and accept him as the Caliph. On 10 October 680, Husayn's protagonists came out to defend against Yazid. One by one everyone laid down his life including Husayn at Karbala. The women and children were spared their lives but humiliated; their shrouds taken off and paraded in the streets of Kufa. 'Ali bin al-Husayn, who was to receive the honorific title Zayn al-'Abidin and who

³⁷ Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, vol 1, P 44 and *Tarikh ar-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol 2, Leiden, Pp 254-278. On the invitation of al-Husayn to Kufa also on task of Muslim Ibn Aqil there, particularly on the letters between the Kufans and al-Husayn see al-Daynori, Abu Hanifa Ahmad bin Dawid, *al-Akhbar al-Tawaal*, ed Abd al-Mu'nim Amir, Cairo, 1960, Pp 229-243

³⁸ Ibid, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, Pp 45-46 and Ibid, *Tarikh ar-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol 2, Leiden, Pp 360-387

was sick was the only male survivor from the family of the Prophet.³⁹
The Shi'as recognized Zayn al Abidin as the fourth Imam.

The role of the Kufans during this entire episode was very dubious. They did not come to any assistance of Husayn when Yazid's forces were slaying the members of the Prophet's family⁴⁰

The battle of Karbala is one of the most touching events of Islamic history.⁴¹ While it provided an identity to the *shi'as*, the martyrdom of Husayn had some immediate consequences that were to trigger a series of developments in the decades to come. In the immediate aftermath of Karbala, the Shi'as and other Kufans who had invited al-Husayn into their midst were greatly moved with the tragedy. A sense of repentance set in and they felt the urge to avenge the murder of al-Husayn and to expiate their failure to come to his help. Hence, a party of avengers calling themselves *al-Tawwabun* (penitents) came up in Kufa. They did not openly proclaim any of the 'Alids as their Imam and elected Sulayman bin Surad as their leader. The avengers congregated at Nukhayla, near Kufa in the region of Syria. After paying respects to the graves of the martyrs of Karbala, they marched to 'Aynu'l-wardah in the region of Syria in Rabi' us Thani 65/ November 648. Ibn Ziyad's army, consisting of 30,000 troops fell upon the army of the Tawwabun. Even though the numbers of the Tawwabun's army had been reduced from 16,000 to 3,000 by the defections, they fought nevertheless fiercely for three days. The Tawwabuns were totally

³⁹ Ibid, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, P 50

⁴⁰ Op Cit, *Studies in Islam*, P 51

⁴¹ T P Hughes, *Outlines of Islam*, Published by Aryan Books International, 4378/4B, Pooja Apartments, 4B, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002, India, 2002, P 107

routed; only a small number could return from the battlefield alive. Sulayman along with other Tawwabun leaders was also killed.⁴²

The movement of retribution for Husayn and his family member's cold-blooded murder at Karbala was reinvigorated by Mukhtar bin Abi 'Ubayda al-Saqafi in Kufa. Al-Mukhtar's father and uncle were supporters of Imam 'Ali and the Shi'is in Kufa recognized Mukhtar as their leader. Al-Mukhtar, was a proclaimed champion of the Ahl al-Bait.⁴³ As a result of the martyrdom of al-Husayn at Karbala, and defeat of the al-Tawwabun, the ensuing events proved to be of great significance to the development of shi'aism. Al-Mukhtar on his return to Kufa began to mobilize support for the war of retribution against the Umayyads for the killing of al-Husayn and his followers. Al-Husayn's son, Ali known as Imam Zayn al 'Abidin, referred to above, who had returned to Mecca, gave him no encouragement and was silent on his move and his uncle, Muhammad al-Hanafiyah had also remained uncommitted.⁴⁴ Al-Mukhtar, however, launched a vigorous campaign, again with a general call for avenging al-Husayn's murder, in the name of Muhammad al-Hanafiyah (the son of Ali b. Abi Talib, by his wife Khawla, of Banu Hanifa tribe) Al-Mukhtar tactfully became the *amin* (confidant), vizier and army commander of Ibn al-Hannafiyah.⁴⁵

⁴² Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 48-51 and Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, vol 1, Pp 46-47

⁴³ Ibid, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, Pp 47

⁴⁴ Ibn Sa'd, Abu Abdu'llah Muhammad b Sa'd Katib al-Waqidi (d 230 A H) *Kitab al-tabaqat al-kubra*, vol 5, Dar al-Tahrir, Cairo, 1968, Pp 72-74 and Op Cit, al-Mas'udi, *Muruj adh-Dhab*, vol 3, P 83 and Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, Pp 47-48 and Op Cit, *Kitab Firaq al-Shi'a*, P 33

⁴⁵ Op Cit, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna'Ashari Shi'is in India*, Pp 47-48 Op Cit, *Tarikh ar-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol 2, Leiden, Pp 568-660 and *Kitab Sharh Nahj al-balagha*, vol 1, Pp 199- 201 The legend of the expected Massieh (Christ) is similar to that of the expected Mahdi. It has a Jewish origin and is also known in Islam. It was due at the same time to the idea of the appearance of the Massieh (his return to the world) in fulfillment of a promise he is said to have made, when as the legend says the Christians will be separated from the rest of mankind and enjoy the life of paradise. It was supposed that this

It is not clear to what extent such claims had the prior approval of Ibn al-Hanafiyyah, who resided in Medina and remained a mere figurehead in the unfolding revolt. Of greater consequence was al-Mukhtar's proclamation of Ibn al-Hanafiyyah as the Mahdi, 'The divinely guided one' and the saviour *imam* who would establish justice on earth and thus deliver the oppressed from tyranny. The concept of the Imam Mahdi was a very important doctrinal innovation, and it proved particularly appealing to the non-Arab Muslims, the so-called *mawali* who constituted the bulk of the oppressed masses of Kufa.⁴⁶

Kufa offered ideal conditions for the revolt as its population was mainly composed of people who were discontented with the Umayyid rule. Being a major military camp as a result of military campaigns in Persia, Kufa housed a large of people of other ethnic stocks, chiefly Persian. They were mostly slaves captured during the wars⁴⁷ These people referred to as *mawalis*⁴⁸ were naturally discontented. They resented not only their masters as an exploiting class but also the fact that the Arabs, whom they considered their inferiors culturally and intellectually, were the ruling race This discontent became acute and socially explosive for the 'Umayyad rule⁴⁹ On 66/686 Mukhtar began his revolt in such a socio-political setting of Kufa It was a suitable breeding-

phenomenon would happen a thousand years from the birth of the Massieh At the end of tenth century this legend became strong in the minds of Christian society Op Cit, *The History of Islam Decisive Moments*, Pp 311-312, and *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, P 25 and Op Cit, *Kitab Firaq al-Shi'a*, P 33

⁴⁶ Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, Pp 25-26 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 52 Op Cit, *Kitab Firaq al-Shi'a* Pp 33-34

⁴⁷ Op 'Cit, *The Bohras*, P 2

⁴⁸ *Mawla* (plural *mawali*) an Arabic term, the commonest meaning of which is freed slave, Freedom or client after liberation, the *mawla* retains certain ties with his former master and becomes a client members of his masters of a tribe, the same term was used by adoptive or client members of a tribe who were not necessarily former slave In the early Islamic centuries the term *mawali* was applied generally to the non-Arab converts to Islam See Op Cit, *Islam, Politics and War*, P 253

⁴⁹ Op Cit, *The Bohras* P 2

ground for syncretism and messianic movements, so conducive for a social revolt. Let us keep in mind that Muhammad al-Hanafiyah, though a son of Ali was not from the *ahl al-bait*.⁵⁰ In a battle fought by Mukhtar with Yazid, his troops consisted of 3,000 soldiers, according to Ibn al-Athir. Out of these only 700 were Arabs and the rest were the *Mawali*. Mukhtar, however, lost the battle and his rebellion was a failure.⁵¹ The chief reasons for the failure of Mukhtar's rebellion were the lack of proper organization and coordination between different units of his army. Despite the suppression of Mukhtar and the death of Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiya, the movement spread rapidly to far and wide places like Armenia. The rebellion of Mukhtar against the Umayyads was an expression of the discontent among the insurgents against their Arab rulers.⁵²

The most important of sect of the Shi'its was the faction which recognized al-Husayn as the third Imam, and his son 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin who succeeded him as the fourth Imam.⁵³ But after al-Abidin's death this line broke away into two; some following his son Zayd⁵⁴ whilst the majority of the Shi'it, recognized his son Muhammad, with

⁵⁰ Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, Pp 25-26 Also Ibid, *The Bohras*, P 2

⁵¹ Al-Mukhtar's army was defeated in two meets, the second one taking place in December 686 in which many Mawalis were killed. Al-Mukhtar retreated to Kufa where he, and the remnants of his Mawali troops were under siege of the Umayyad army for about four months. Finally al-Mukhtar and his supporters were killed while attempting a sortie in April 67/687. See, Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, P 26 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 53

⁵² Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 4, and, Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, P 26

⁵³ Imam Zayn al-Abidin's mother was a daughter of the king of Persia, and so the Persian people had affection for him, they also held strongly to the idea of Divine Right and discarded the idea of a popular and democratic election, natural to the Arab. He died in the year A D 695. It is said that he was poisoned by the order of the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik bin Marwan (685-705). See, Op Cit, *Studies in Islam*, P 54

⁵⁴ A small company of the Shi'at broke away and recognized Zayd bin 'Ali Zayn al-Abidin as their Imam. They claimed that the Imamate was elective and not hereditary. The Zaydiyya Imamate, differing very little from the Sunnis as regards religion. They are known as the Zaydites they settled in Yemen. Moreover, the Zaydiyya Imamate passed on to 'Idris who founded a dynasty in 'Morocco which ignored the authority of the Sunni Caliphs. See, Ibid, Pp 55-56, and, Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, P 30

horrific al-Baqir (deeply versed in science or knowledge) because of his immense intellect and knowledge.⁵⁵

During the life of Imam Muhammed al-Baqir who became the fifth Shi'at Imam, the number of partisans of the Imamate line increased strongly, and at least one important sub-sect, the Mansuriya also came into being. These were the followers of Abu Mansur al-'Ajli, who preached the Imamate of Muhammed al-Baqir and then of himself. Abu Mansur was killed in about 742 by order of Yusef bin 'Umar al-Thaqafi, governor of Umayyads in Iraq.⁵⁶ The majority of the Shi'its followed Al-Baqir's son Ja'far, who became the sixth Imam and is known as Ja'far al-Sadiq (Ja'far, the Truthful). He lived during the period of the Abbasid revolution.⁵⁷ The Abbasid victory in 750 brought about significant changes in the social and political fields⁵⁸. The line of Hanafiya politico-religious leadership came to an end and the Abbasids officially recognized Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq as the legitimate Imam of the shi'as.⁵⁹

Many other changes of far reaching importance took place during the Abbasid regime.⁶⁰ The Arabs were relegated into the background in the running of administration and the Persian influences became dominant. The assimilation of the Persian ruling classes into the Abbasid Caliphate, and the growing identity consciousness of Arab and non-

⁵⁵ De Lacy O'Leary, D. D., *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd. New York. E. P. Dutton & Co. London, 1923, P. 6

⁵⁶ Op. Cit., *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, Pp. 29-30

⁵⁷ Op. Cit., *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp. 6-7

⁵⁸ In 750 The 'Abbasids, achieved their final victory in the battle of the 'Zab against the Umayyad troops. The defeated 'Marwan II (son of Muhammad, son of Marwan) fled to Egypt, where he was killed in the same year. The 'Abbasids had finely succeeded in sealing the fate of the Umayyads after more than thirty years of planning by the chief propagandist of the House of 'Abbas (Abu Muslim of Khurasan). See Op. Cit., *The Isma'ilis*, P. 80

⁵⁹ Op. Cit., *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, P. 31

⁶⁰ Op. Cit., *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P. 7

Arab subject classes resulted in a new alignment of society, on economic rather than, as in the former, on ethnic lines, as a result of transformation of the Caliphate from an agricultural state to a commercial empire. Such far-reaching changes in social conditions and alignments naturally resulted in a reorganization and expansion of those movements, which expressed the revolt of the oppressed classes and peoples. The socio-political conditions as they obtained in the ninth and tenth under the Abbasid rule produced a series of revolutionary out-breaks.⁶¹ One of them was the emergence of the Isma'ilis.

History of the Isma'ili Movement until Rise of the Fatimid Caliphate:

The Shi'is before and after the Abbassid revolution had split into a number of sects and sub-sects, as well as extremist Zaydiyya, Mukhtariya⁶² Imamiyya Isma'iliyya and many other extremist groups. Each of them was further sub-divided into smaller groups. We will be mainly concerned here with Isma'iliyya, the subject of our present study.

On the death of Muhammed al-Baker, some of his followers seceded and supported the claims of Muhammed al-Nafs al-Zakiya. These claims were denied by Ja'far bin Muhammed al-Sadiq, the sixth Shi'at

⁶¹ Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, P, 31-32

⁶² The Mukhtariya, also called the Kaysaniyya (Kaysan, another name for Mukhtar) on the death of Muhammad bin al-Hanafiya, they split into three groups (1) Karbiya-followers of Ibn Karb and Hamza bin 'Umara al-Barbary (2) Those who believed that Muhammad bin al-Hanafiya was hidden in Mount Radwa, in the Hijaz, and would return to establish justice (3) Hashimiya-those who said that the Imamate had passed to Abu Hashim, the son of Muhammed bin al-Hanafiya, See, Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, Pp 27-28 and more details about Mukhtariya see Op Cit, al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi, Pp 33-44

Imam, who with his followers, refused to aid the pretender. The rest supported the Imamate of Ja'far, and continued to obey him.⁶³ After the death of Ja'far al-Sadiq in Medina in Shawal 148/ Nov/Dec.765 at an age of 68 or 69 years⁶⁴, the Shi'ats split into two major groups; those who recognized Musa al-Kazim, the son of Ja'far as Imam, were called twelvers (*Ithna 'ashari*) because of the twelve Imams in that line beginning with 'Ali bin Abi Talib.⁶⁵ While those who recognized Isma'il, the eldest son of Ja'far, as the rightful Imam were called the Isma'ilis.⁶⁶ The Isma'ilis were also called the Batini⁶⁷ and Ta'limi⁶⁸ The Isma'ilis, claimed more logical in their 'Alid legitimism, claim that his title must have passed to his son Muhammad and they practically consider Isma'il and his son together as the seventh Imam. It is for this reason that they are also called Sab'iyya (the Seveners)⁶⁹ The history of Isma'ilism as an independent movement may be traced to the argument over the succession to the Imamate of Ja'far al-Sadiq.

According to the majority of the sources. Ja'far had appointed his eldest son Isma'il as his successor; some of sources assert that Isma'il died before his father. Sources critical of the Isma'ili claims, especially the *Ithna 'Ashari* ones, also add that Isma'il had been deprived of his succession rights by his father, due to his indulgence in wine drinking.

⁶³ Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, Pp 7-8, & P 30

⁶⁴ W Ivanow, *Ismaili Tradition concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, Published by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, London, New York Bombay Calcutta Madras, 1942, P 29 and al-Ya'qubi, Ahmad b Ali Ya'qub al-Wazih, *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi*, vol 2, Beirut, 1960, P 381

⁶⁵ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 8 and Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, P 31

⁶⁶ The Isma'is take their name from Isma'il son of the sixth Imam of the Twelvers, Ja'far al-Sadiq. In this Isma'il they end the line of 'visible Imams, see Op Cit, *Islam, Beliefs and Institutions*, P 156 and Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 8

⁶⁷ The term Batin (esoteric) is mostly used in genuine Ismaili as a substantive, in the sense of the inner meaning revealed by ta'wil, or allegorical interpretation see, Op Cit, *Ismaili Tradition concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, P 3

⁶⁸ Ta'lim (instructionist) because the Imam alone could teach the true religion see, Op Cit, A S Tritton, P 77

⁶⁹ Op Cit, *Islam, Beliefs and Institutions*, Pp 156-157

However, the fact remains that three of al- Sadiq's surviving sons simultaneously claimed his succession⁷⁰ It will be worthwhile to take stock of the course of events on the death of Ja'far al- Sadiq that led to the Shi'i split into two major factions: the *Ithna 'Ashariya* and the *Isma'iliya*. Majority of our sources confine themselves to the simple statement that one group followed Musa al-Kasim, whereas another supported the claims of Isma'il and his son Muhammed.⁷¹ Some of our sources such as al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi, however, provide us with a more detailed account. Nawbakhti and al-Qummi⁷², divide those who recognized the claims of Isma'il on the death of Ja'far into two groups. One group denying the death of Isma'il during his father's lifetime maintained that he was the rightful Imam after al-Sadiq; they further believed that Isma'il remained alive and would eventually return as the Mahdi. Moreover, Nawbakhti and al-Qummi call the members of this group, recognizing Isma'il as their Imam-Mahdi, the "pure Isma'ilyya"(al-Isma'iliyya al-Khalisa).⁷³

There was a second group who recognized the Imamate of Muhammad bin Isma'il. According to them Isma'il succeeded to the Imamate during his father's lifetime. On Isma'il's death the Imamate passed on to his son Muhammad. According to the partisans of Muhammad bin Isma'il, the Imamate could not be transferred from one brother to another brother as in case of al-Hasan and al-Husayn⁷⁴, which was done under special circumstances. This group was called

⁷⁰ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, Pp 93-94

⁷¹ Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, P 40

⁷² Op Cit, *Kitab Firaq al -Shi'a*, P 78 and Ibid, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, P 40

⁷³ Ibid, *Kitab Firaq al -Shi'a*, Pp 78-79 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 96

⁷⁴ Ibid, *Kitab Firaq al -Shi'a*, Pp 78 -79 and Ibid, *The Isma'ilis*, Pp 76-77

Mubarakīyya, named supposedly after their leader al- Mubarak⁷⁵, a *mawla* of Isma‘il⁷⁶ The Mubarkīyya afterwards split into several sub-groups. One of them the Qarmatians, maintained that Muhammad bin Isma‘il who remained alive, was the Qa‘im and the last of the great messenger-Prophets.⁷⁷ According to the Fatimid sources, ‘Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi, the founder of the Fatimid dynasty was preceded by a series of hidden lamams (*al-a‘imma al-masturin*)⁷⁸ The earlier Isma‘iliyya, known as the Qaramita by the middle of the 9th century, did not recognize any Imams after Muhammad bin Isma‘il. It seems that the ancestors of the Fatimids, the central leaders of the Isma‘ili movement, were initially regarded as lieutenants of the Qa‘im; and it was only due to the reform of ‘Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi that the Imamate came to be openly claimed for the past leaders⁷⁹ According to the Fatimid version, when Imam Muhammed ibn Isma‘ili was about to die, he handed over the Earth to his eldest son ‘Abd Allah, the first of the three concealed Imams.⁸⁰ In order to escape Abbasid persecution as a result, ‘Abd Allah, who later received the surnamed al-Radi, sought refuge in different parts of Persia and did not reveal his identity and place of residence except to a few trusted associates. Eventually, he settled in Ahwaz, in the province of Khuzistan, from where he later fled to Iraq and then he established his residence at Salamīyya in central

⁷⁵ Al- Mubarak, (meaning ' The Blessed ') was the epithet of Isma‘il himself, see Ibid, *Kitab Firaq al-Shi‘a*, P 79

⁷⁶ Some of sources seem to point to Abul‘I-khattab as having been the first to organize a movement of specifically Batini type He is known as Muhammad bin Abi Zainab, also as Miqlas bin Abi I-Khattab, and was a Mawla of Asad He was a close associate of the Imams Muhammad al-Baqir and Ja‘far al-Sadiq, and was apparently one of their most intimate disciples until his disavowal by al-Sadiq, see Op Cit, *The origins of Isma‘ilism*, P 32

⁷⁷ Op Cit, *The origins of Isma‘ilism*, Pp 40-41

⁷⁸ Op Cit, *The origins of Isma‘ilism*, P 107, and Op Cit, *Islam Belief and Practices*, P 79 and Op Cit, *Studies in Islam*, P 8

⁷⁹ Op Cit, *The Isma‘ilis*, Pp 106-107

⁸⁰ Op Cit, *Isma‘ili Tradition concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, Pp 29-30 and Op Cit, *The Isma‘ilis*, P 107

Syria.⁸¹ The residence of the Imams and the headquarters of the Isma'ili *da'wa* at Salamiyya remained for the next few decades. Abd Allah continued to live as a merchant, and pretended as an ordinary Hashimi of whom there were many in that locality. This is how he preserved himself in very adverse circumstances.

Two sons were born to him, named Ahmad and Ibrahim.⁸² After the death of his father at Salamiyya 'Ahmad, known also as al-Taqi, or al-Khair, became the second hidden *Imam*. He lived, probably, (for no dates are obtainable) at the close of the second and opening of the third century of the Muslim era. His residence continued to be in Salamiyya, where two sons were born to him, al-Husain and S'ayyid al-Khair.⁸³ Ahmad had the reputation of being profoundly learned. Sectarial literature attributes to him the publication of the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al Safa*, on account of which he is known as Sahib al-Rasa'il.⁸⁴ *Istitaru'l-Imam*, a short account about the search for the hidden Imam by al-Naysaburi, who flourished under the Fatimid caliph al-Aziz and al-Hakim, tells us that Ahmad ibn Abd Allah was succeeded by his son al-Husayn, also known as ~~Zak~~ Zak. He was thus the third of the 'hidden Imams'. His headquarter continued in Salamiyya, where he was among the Hashimites and appeared to be one of them. He gave presents to the local governors and was lavish with his hospitality. He organized the *da'wa*, spread it further far and wide, broadcast instruction to his

⁸¹ Op Cit, Ivanow, *Isma'ili and Qaramtians*, JBBRAS, 1940, Pp 63-65 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, Pp 106-107

⁸² Sayyid-na Ahmad b Ibrahim (or Muhammad) an-Naysaburi, *Istitaru'l-Imam*, (Bulletin, P 95), Translations in *Rise of The Fatimids*, Published by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, London, New York Bombay Calcutta Madras, 1942, P 162

⁸³ Ibid, *Istitaru'l-Imam*, Bulletin, P 95, translation, P 162

⁸⁴ Op Cit, *The Rise of The Fatimids*, Pp 35-37 and Op Cit, *The Shi'a of India*, Luzac, Company, Ltd 46 Great Russell Street, W C 1, London, 1953, P 208

followers, making it manifest, he dispatched his *da'is* every where⁸⁵ The *da'wa* had gained strength in southern Mesopotamia, Khuzistan and Fars. Husain's son, 'Ubayd Allah, also called al-Mahdi, was born at Askar Mukaram, of a woman of Basra on the twelfth of Shawwal in the year 260/874⁸⁶ and his father died there about eight years later in Askar Mukram in Khuzistan. In Salamiya, before his death, he put his son in charge of his own brother, S'ayyid al-Khair bin Ahmad, known also Muhammad al-Habib because 'Ubayd Allah was still a minor. 'Ubayd Allah was the person according to Isma'ili belief, for whose advent the true religion waited. He was the first of recent Imams for whom we have any definite date.⁸⁷

Kitab Istitar al-Imam tells us that, S'ayyid al-Khair bin Ahmad (also known Muhammad al-Habib) who held the position which later came to be called *mustawda* Imam (trustee Imam), soon considered himself to be the real Imam, and sought to retain the office in his family. He called his own sons (ten in number) as successors, one after the other, but all died while the father, S'ayyid al-Khair remained alive.⁸⁸ The latter was thus forced to recognize the rights of 'Ubayd Allah as the true Imam. It was Ubayd Allah who established the Fatimid Caliphate in al-Maghreb (North Africa), and who became known in history as Imam 'Ubayd Allah ibn al-Husayn Abu Muhammad al-Mahdi billah Amir al-Mumunin.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Sayyid-na Idris 'Imad al-Din b al-Hasan, *Khitab Uyun al-Akhbar wa fununu al-athar fi dhikr al-Nabi al-Mustafa al-Mukhtar*, vol 4, in Op Cit, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, P 36

⁸⁶ Op Cit, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, P 14, and Op Cit, *The Shi'a of India*, P 210

⁸⁷ Op Cit, *Istitaru'l-Imam*, (Bulletin, P 95), in Op Cit, in *The Rise of the Fatimids*, P 162 and Op. Cit, F Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*, P 107 and Op Cit, Ivanow, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, P 31& P 35 and Op Cit, *The Shi'a of India*, P 210

⁸⁸ Op Cit, *Istitaru'l-Imam*, (Bulletin, Pp 95/96), in *The Rise of the Fatimids*, Pp 162-163

⁸⁹ Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 33

The above account of the Isma'ili Imams is based on the account of the sectarian tradition. The line of Imamate, according to this tradition runs like this. Isma'il ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq, Muhammad ibn Isma'il, Abd Allah Ibn Muhammad al-Mastur, Ahmad ibn Abdullah al-Mastur, Husayn ibn Ahmad al-Mastur, Ubayd Allah ibn Husayn al-Mahdi.⁹⁰ In the name of the 'hidden Imams'⁹¹ the Isma'ilis stake their claim as the progeny of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib through Fatima. They called themselves Fatimids openly and gave the same name to the dynasty by 'Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi in al-Maghreb (North Africa).⁹²

The links between Muhammad ibn Isma'il and Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi, has indeed been long one of the knottiest problems of mediaeval Islam.⁹³ Arab historians are divided on the truth of this genealogy, Ibn Khaldun (d 1406) al- Maqrizi (d.1441) support the legitimacy of the Fatimid genealogy, while, Ibn Khallikan (d.1282) Abu al-Fida (d.1331) Suyuti (d.1505), rejected it. Also the Orientalists have been divided on the issue; while de Sacy accepts this, Quatremere rejects the legitimacy of the Fatimid descent.⁹⁴ De Goeje interprets the silence of the contemporary sources on the issue as a proof that Fatimid descent is not genuine, as it has been alluded to, for almost two centuries, between the times of Muhammad bin Isma'il bin Ja'far al-Sadiq and 'Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi, the issue of the genealogy of the Isma'ilis does not seem to have exercised the minds of the contemporary intellectuals⁹⁵ There is a complete silence in the literature of this

⁹⁰ Op Cit, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, Pp 30-31

⁹¹ The Isma'ilis believed the batin meaning (hidden) could be known only to the Imam, the highest teacher of his time and to *da'is* (propagandists), who were appointed by him, and who learned from him, See, Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 23

⁹² Op Cit, *The Shi'a of India*, P 212

⁹³ Op Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, P 71

⁹⁴ Op Cit, *The Shi'a of India*, Pp 212-213

⁹⁵ Op Cit, *The Rise of Fatimids*, P 29

period on this issue. It was only after the establishment of the Fatimid rule in al-Maghreb that we find that their genealogy was questioned for the first time and that too by the Abbasid Caliph, through a proclamation issued in 1011 declaring the descent of the Ismai'ilis from 'Ali and Fatima as false.⁹⁶ Most of the historians of the period were connected with the Abbasid court and they understandably saw the Isma'ilis as enemies of Islam ready to destroy its glory. This attitude further intensified when the Fatimid Imams established themselves in Ifrikiyah (modern-day Tunisia). According to the perception of these historians, Maymun al-Qaddah, born in Ahwaz (a province in Persia), was the real founder of the Ismai'ili movement of the Batiniyya sect. He was assisted by his son, 'Abd Allah bin Maymun.⁹⁷ Al-Baghdadi and other Sunni historians call Maymun al-Qaddah as a client of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq.

The fundamental snag of the al-Qaddah theory is the almost improbable gap of a hundred years, which it leaves between the father and son. This crucial lacunae was first pointed out by Ibn al-Nadim.⁹⁸ Ivanow having done an intensive research on the Ismai'ili literature on the issue accepts the traditional Fatimid position, as opposed to Bernard Lewis⁹⁹ who thinks that the 'myth' of Ibn al-Qaddah was

⁹⁶ Op Cit, *The Shi'a of India*, P 212

⁹⁷ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 15

⁹⁸ Ibid, *The Bohras*, P 15

⁹⁹ He considers that the key to this argument of descent between Isma'il to al-Mahdi may be found in the "doctrines of spiritual fatherhood and trustee Imamate" By the first he means that the ties between the teacher and his disciple may be stronger than those of physical birth, making it possible for the disciple to supplant a son by birth, specifically, that Maymun son, Abdu Allah, came to be considered as the son of Muhammed b Isma'il. By the "trustees Imamate" He refers to a development, which came much later toward the end of the Fatimid period. This was the appointment of a temporary (Mustawda) Imam. He applies this principle at this early stage, but in a seemingly continuous succession throughout the period of Satr, The British scholar Lewis said, it is possible to discern by two lines of hidden Imams- one the Qaddahid, Mustawda Imamate, - one 'Alid, Mustaqarr Imamate, Op, Cit, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, Pp 71-73 and Op Cit, *The Shi'a of India*, Pp 213-214

invented by the living fantasies of anti Fatimid Imams, as it does not bear historical scrutiny. After a careful examination of the issue Ivanow maintains: "Looking at the matter critically and soberly, We can come to only one inevitable conclusion, regardless of whether the Fatimid version and tradition is true or false there is no doubt whatever that in the stories of `Abd Allah Ibn Muymun al-Qaddah we have myth, probably, as all myths, accidentally born, and as accidentally developed into a complex theory. It has all the features of a real myth. 1- a gigantic spans of life attributed to the hero 2- a gigantic underground plot and conspiracy, 3- a gigantic fraud and 4- A gigantic impiety of doctrine".¹⁰⁰ However, the full story is not yet clear as to be brushed aside by making Maymun al-Qaddah a mere figment of an historian's imagination, inspired by animosity towards the Isma'ilis ¹⁰¹ Later, we are told by some of the Isma'ili sources like *Kitab, Zahru'l-Ma'ani* of Idris (which belong to the middle of the fifteenth centuries) that Maymun al-Qaddah was the guardian (*Kafil*) and trustee (*mustawda*) of Imam Muhammed Ibn Isma'il in his childhood.¹⁰² But the fact that the early Isma'ili sources are silent about the hidden Imams obscures the story. It is difficult to ascertain the truth for the simple reason that during that period the Isma'ili mission had to conduct their activities secretly. There were enemies all around distorting the truth and carrying out hostile propaganda against the Fatimids and their doctrine ¹⁰³ It was a formative period for the Fatimids and the most critical one from the point of view of their survival. It was during this period that the Isma'ili movement took shape and evolved a structure

¹⁰⁰ Op Cit, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, P 131

¹⁰¹ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 16, and W Ivanow, *Ibn al- Qaddah The Alleged Founder of Isma'ilism*, First Published by V N Hooda at the Isma'ili Printing Press, Dongri Street, Bombay, 9 1946, P 2

¹⁰² *Kitab Zahru'l-Ma'ani*, Texts, P 47, in *The Rise of The Fatimids*, P 233

¹⁰³ Op Cit, *Ibn al-Qaddah*, P 6

so vitally needed for its underground functioning. In view of these considerations, The Fatimids never officially replied to the propaganda against the Isma'ili Imams. The historians saw Maymun al-Qaddah as the first recognisable Imam of the Isma'ilis and thus regarded him as the founder of the Isma'ili movement; a movement that was and evolving its dogma like a Zoroastrian or Manichean, as thus perceived as an enemy of Islam.¹⁰⁴

Maymun was, as we learn from some Isma'ili sources, a learned and a pious man Da'i Idris ascribed his lineage to the family of Salman al-Farsi; a fact, which Ivanow dismisses as untenable while acknowledging his Persian origin. Innumerable sources mention of Maymun being in the company of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir and later he also served Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq It was, due to his close association within the family of Imams that he was chosen for the task of organizing the Isma'ili da'wa¹⁰⁵ Moreover, Maymun played a very important role in the spread of the Isma'ili movement (*dawr al-Sater*). His Family was closely associated with Isma'ili religion-political organization. According to the Isma'ili sources, Maymun al-Qaddah had worked as the *hijab* (veil) of the hidden Imam and thus protected him from the eyes of the Abbasids Imams set out to build a well-knit organization based on a definite religious world-view¹⁰⁶

For the propagation of the Isma'ili doctrine, the Isma'ili Imams had divided the world into twelve *jazira* (12 sections).¹⁰⁷ The Isma'ili *da'is*

¹⁰⁴ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 19

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, *The Bohras*, Pp 19-20

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, *The Bohras*, P 19, & P 24

¹⁰⁷ Twelve Jazira should be translated as the '12 sections of the world's population' They are Arabs Turks Berbers, Negroes, Abyssinians, Khazars, Ghina, Daylam (obviously for Persia in general), Rum (= Byzantium and in general), India (Hindi = Eastern Afghanistan),

(propagandists) spread out far and wide in the twelve *jazīra* and took advantage of local conditions to induce people to join the Isma'ili movement.¹⁰⁸ There is no doubt that this success was because of personal efforts of the chief *da'i* Abu Abd Allah al-Shi'i, a native of *San'a* in al-Yemen, who toward the close of the 9th century proclaimed himself the precursor of the 'Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi and sowed the seeds of sedition amongst the Berber tribes of North Africa.¹⁰⁹ In a similar way, from Salamiyya (after Muhammed bin Isma'il, Abd Allah and his descendants), after the middle of the 9th century, the hidden Imams had sent numerous propagandists to various *Jazair*, especially to Iraq (around Kufa). According to some sources, Hamdan Qarmat¹¹⁰ was converted to Isma'ilism by al-Husayn al-Ahwazi. This prominent *da'i* was sent to Kufa (known as the Sawad) to propagate the doctrines of the sect. During the course of his travels, he met and converted Hamdan, of Kufa. Hamdan Qarmat organized the *da'wa* (preaching) in Iraq around 261 A.H., appointing *da'is* for the major regions.¹¹¹ Earlier, Hamdan had succeeded in winning many converts (from villagers) who were named *Qarmati* (plural *Qaramita*) after their first local leader. Hamdan's chief assistant and one of the most celebrated early Isma'ili *da'is*, Abdan carried out the missionary activities zealously and appointed many of the *da'is* in Iraq and in Bahrayn, such as Abu S'ayyid al-Jannabi at 890-891.¹¹² Hamdan had established the *Dar al-*

Sind (= India in general), and Saqalida (Slaves, - often confounded with Sicily) Thus this classification is partly based on geographical, and partly on ethnographical principle, and plainly belongs to the fourth/tenth c. " *The Rise of The Fatimids*, P. 21

¹⁰⁸ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 30

¹⁰⁹ Philip K Hitti, *History of The Arabs From The Earliest Times to The Present*, Published by Macmillan and Company Limited, London Bombay Calcutta Madras Melbourne, The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, Toronto, ST Martin's Pressing New York, Sixth Edition, 1956, Reprinted 1958, P 615

¹¹⁰ Hamdan Ibn al-Ash'ath, surnamed Qarmat (Qarmatuyah meaning 'short statured' in Arabic, probably of Aramaic origin) Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 116

¹¹¹ Op Cit, *History of The Arabs From The Earliest Times to The Present*, Pp 39-41

¹¹² Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 116

Hijra near Kufa (the House of Emigration) and had evolved an economic system very close to the communistic pattern. He levied taxes on the Qarmatis of Iraq including a fifth of all property, and dues for partaking of a communion meal, he introduced communism in the necessities of life.¹¹³

This movement, however, had continued to escape the notice of the Abbasid Caliphs. Who did not re-establish effective control over southern Iraq since the Zanj (Negro slaves) revolt.¹¹⁴

Another offshoot of the Qarmatis established itself in the Bahrayn region of the Persian Gulf with the help of the Bedouin tribe 'Abd-al-Qays.¹¹⁵ It was by propagandist Abu S'ayyid al-Janabi who had been sent by Hamdan Qarmat to Bahrayn, as in charge of the Mission. When Abu S'ayyid was able to gather a considerable following amongst the economically weaker classes such as butchers, porters and such like, he established his headquarters (from 894-1031) at the town of al-Ahsa (al-Hasa) and besieged Hajar (the present day al-Hafuf), the old Capital of the Bahrayn. Al-Hasa was pillaged and ruined, only to be revived in 926 A. D. as the capital city of Qarmati state of Bahrayn.¹¹⁶ In the meantime, the Qarmati leader, Abu Tahar

¹¹³ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, Pp 116-117 On the Qarmatis of Iraq see Suhail Zakar, '*al-Jamia' fi Akhbar al-Qaramitah*', 2 vols Third edition, Dar Hasan I-Tibaa' wa n-Nashir, Damascus, 1407/1987, vol 1, Pp 109-146

¹¹⁴ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 116 Near Basra there were great salt deposits, worked by squads of East African Negro slaves for the benefit of Basra entrepreneurs. Among these there arose a Persian, 'Ali bin Muhammad, who advertised himself as a descendant of Ali bin Abi Talib and of Fatimah through Zayd bin 'Ali's clan and summoned the Negroes to battle against their exploiters (Abbasid State). Ali bin Muhammad promised these oppressed people freedom and riches. He had made his first appearance in 869 at Basra and his movement spread rapidly to several places like Baghdad and continued for almost 14 years. See *History of the Islamic peoples*, P 134

¹¹⁵ Op Cit, *History of the Islamic peoples*, P 145

¹¹⁶ Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 48-49 and Ibid, *History of the Islamic Peoples* Pp 144-145

Sulayman had captured Mecca in 930 and carried off the Black Stone to al-Hasa. It was returned to its original place in Mecca in 950 at the command of the Fatimid caliph.¹¹⁷

The Isma'ili *da'wa* was started in other *Jaza'ir* (regions) such as Yemen, which had remained an important stronghold over the last eleven centuries. This *da'wa* was in very close contact with the central leadership of the Isma'ili movement. The spread of the Isma'ili doctrine in Yemen are credited to the two famous propagandists who were dispatched to al-Yemen in 879-880, to start the mission there. These *da'is* were Ibn Hawshab¹¹⁸, who came from a prominent Imami Shi'i family, and Ali Ibn al-Fadl, a Shi'i from Yemen, who had been converted to Isma'ili doctrine whilst on pilgrimage to the tomb of the Imam al-Husayn in Karbala. The *da'is*, Ibn Hawshab and Ibn al-Fadl, reached Yemen in 881, and as a result of their quick success, they started preaching their cause publicly as early as 883. The mission in Yemen won strong tribal support and met with great success. By 905-906 when Ibn al-Fadl occupied San'a, almost all of Yemen had been brought under the control of the Isma'ili movement.¹¹⁹ As a result of these events, we find that the Qarmati movement remained loyal to the hidden Imams in Salamiyya but their relations were strained after the establishment of the Fatimid state in Bilad al-Maghreb (North Africa).¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Op Cit, *Islam Belief and Practices*, Pp 79-80. On the Qarmatis of Bahrain see Suhail Zakar, *al-Jamia' fi Akhbar al-Qaramitah*, vol 1, Pp 146-158. On the returned of the Black Stone from al-Hasa to its original place in Mecca in 950, see Ibid, *al-Jamia' fi Akhbar al-Qaramitah*, vol 2, P 508.

¹¹⁸ Abu'l-Qasim al-Hasan ibn Faraj or Farah ibn Hawshab al-Kufi known as Mansur al-Yemen. See al-Nu'man bin Muhammad, al-Qadi Abu Hanifa, *Iftitahu al-Da'wa wa Ibtida'u al-Dawla* ed Widad al-Qadi, Beirut, 1970, Pp 45-47 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 118.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, *Iftitahu al-Da'wa wa Ibtida'u al-Dawla*, Pp 45-47 and Ibid, *The Isma'ilis* Pp 118-119. On The Qarmatis of Yemen see Suhail Zakar, *al-Jamia' fi Akhbar al-Qaramitah*, vol 1, Pp 141-146.

¹²⁰ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, Pp 31-32.

According to the famous Dutch scholar, Michael Jan De Goeje, in his *Memoire Sur les Carmathes*, the original Isma'ili movement preached the return of Muhammad bin Isma'il as the Mahdi. The change in this ideology was brought about by Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi who succeeded to the leadership in Salamiyya about the year 899. His claim to the Imamate for himself and his ancestors caused the schism in the movement. Hamadan al-Qarmat and Abdan, who became known as the Qarmatians, broke off from the central Isma'ili movement. This early rift affected the whole movement by vertically splitting the various da'wa units in their loyalty between the Fatimids and the Qarmatians¹²¹. Even though the beginning of the Qaramita was made by Hamadan, it was shaped by Abu S'ayyid and consolidated after the Qaramita revolts under his successors turning the Qaramita into a revolutionary force¹²². For this reason, Abu S'ayyid is regarded as the true founder of the Qaramita organization. The Isma'ili movement, due to its efficient organization, kept expanding its territorial base and presenting a serious challenge to the Abbasid Empire. Soon it was to succeed in establishing its power in Bilad al-Maghreb (North Africa)¹²³.

The Fatimid State and its Policies in Bilad al-Maghreb (North Africa)

From the earliest period of the Islamic History, North Africa has been a favorite field of exploitation of every political party, which found itself in opposition to the official Caliphate, and there has always been very close intercourse between that territory and South Arabia. Thus we find that as soon as the new Isma'ili da'wa was established in Yemen

¹²¹ Michael Jan De Goeje, *Memoire Sur les Carmathes*, Leiden, 1886, ed Arabic tr by Hussni Zaynah, First Edition, Dar Ibn Khaldun, Beirut, 1978, Pp 57-58

¹²² Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 50

¹²³ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 33

during the second half of the 9th century Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq had sent two missionaries, Abu Sufyan and al-Hulwani to preach in the province of Ifriqiyya, (modern-day Tunisia) in 145/762.¹²⁴ They worked particularly among the aboriginal Berbar population, for the Berbers were always more disposed to any rebellion which would give them a good pretext for making war against the ruling Arabs¹²⁵ Abu Abdullah al-Husayn bin Ahmad, known as al-Shi'i or al-Da'i, a native of Iraq who emigrated to Yemen, was one of the close confidants of Mansur al-Yemen, the conqueror of Yemen, and was a learned man, clever in the formation of plans and trained by Mansur al-Yemen¹²⁶ When the news came of the killing of the two missionaries Abu Sufyan and al-Hulwani, who had been sent to North Africa, reports al-Qadi al-Nu'man, Mansur al-Yemen decided to send Abu Abdullah al-Shi'i as propagandist to fill the void there.¹²⁷ Abu Abdullah met the Berbers of North Africa especially pilgrims of the Kutama tribe of Berber at Mecca, who invited him to visit their country¹²⁸. From Mecca he started his journey for the Berber country where he reached in 893 He found the tribe of Kutama very keen and ready to receive his teachings.¹²⁹ It seems that the Kutama had been introduced to Shi'ism earlier Abu 'Abd Allah first established himself in Iklan, a place located in the mountainous region north of Satif, and began to propagate Isma'ilism in the name of the

¹²⁴ Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 52

¹²⁵ Nothing is known of the subsequent history of these two missionaries save that after a brief career during which they seem to have made, a deep impression especially on the kutama tribe Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 51-52 and Op Cit, *Iftitahu al-Da'wa wa Ibtida'u al-Dawla*, Pp 54-58

¹²⁶ Ibid, *Iftitahu al-Da'wa wa Ibtida'u al-Dawla*, Pp 41-59

¹²⁷ Ibid, *Iftitahu al-Da'wa wa Ibtida'u al-Dawla*, Pp 32-54 and Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 52

¹²⁸ More details about Abu Abdallah al-Sh'i See Ibid, *Iftitahu al-Da'wa wa Ibtida'u al-Dawla*, Pp 59-122 The Berbers of North Africa were highly independent and difficult to subjugate They strongly resented domination by the Arab leaders Op Cit, *The Bohras*, Pp 64-65

¹²⁹ Op Cit, *Studies in Islam*, P 84

Mahdi amongst the Kutama tribesmen¹³⁰ Already reports of the movements and the mission of Abu 'Abd Allah had spread through the region of Ifriqiyah, and had reached Ibrahim ibn Ahmad, the Aghlabi prince (261—289 A.H).¹³¹ Ibrahim ordered the governor of Milah to chastise al-Shi'i but the governor reported to the Aghlabi Emir that al-Shi'i was just a devoutly religious person and a saint and his activities needed to be ignored. The political possibilities of al-Shi'i's mission were thus completely overlooked¹³² Abu 'Abd Allah's influence kept increasing and soon he became a challenge to the ruler of Ifriqiyah.¹³³ Al-Shi'i, with the support of Kutama tribes, captured Tarrut and advanced on Mieila. The Aghlabi Emir sent an army against Abu 'Abdullah al-Shi'i and his followers, while al-Shi'i gathered an army around him and in 287.A.H defeated them Al-Shi'i's work became easier after the death of Prince Ibrahim Aghlabi in 291/903¹³⁴ He propagated his mission openly, and very soon his followers were ranging at will through the whole region of Ifriqiyah to whom he boldly declared that the promised Mahdi was now near at hand and would soon appear in North Africa and would prove his sacred mission by performing miracles.¹³⁵ At this juncture, in 903, Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i and his partisans, the entire Kutama tribe, went on conquering towns after towns despite some minor temporary setbacks. Then he conquered Raqqada, a city much loved by Prince Ziyadat Allah al-Sani,

¹³⁰ Gautier, E F, *Les Siècles Obscurs du Maghreb*, Paris, 1927, P 318, & Op Cit, Farhad Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*, P 135

¹³¹ These Sunni Aghlabid were hereditary governors of Ifriqiyah established at Qayrawan about A H 184/800 by the Abasid state, & *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol 2, P 216

¹³² Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 59-60

¹³³ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 65

¹³⁴ After the death of Ibrahim ibn Ahmad ibn Aghlab, his grandson Ziyadat al-Lah came to power Ziyadat Allah was a man indolent and entirely devoted to pleasure of life, who recalled his brother Ahwal from his military duties See Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 60 and Op Cit, *History of the Islamic peoples* P 158

¹³⁵ Ibid, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 60-61

so decisively that he had to flee to Mesopotamia. The governor of Egypt refused to accede to Muqtadir's command to help the Aghlabid regain his empire. Abu Abd Allah al-Shi'i was thus able to establish his supremacy over the entire Aghlabid state ending the Abbasid suzerainty over it.¹³⁶ Abu 'Abd Allah al-Shi'i had already sent messengers over to Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi inviting him to cross into North Africa.¹³⁷ Imam al-Mahdi in fact had no intention to go to the North Africa at first. He was more hopeful of the developments in Yemen.¹³⁸ However, after hearing of the success in North Africa, he changed his mind and instead decided to proceed towards Ifriqiyah. According to *Sirat Ja'far al-Hajib*, the Abbasids issued orders to all their governors for the arrest of Imam al-Mahdi, wherever he was found. After receiving this news al-Mahdi started his journey from Salamiyya (in central Syria) with his young son Abu'l-Qasim Muhammad (al-Qai'm), also the chief *da'i* Firuz his chamberlain Ja'far, al-Shi'i elder brother Abu'l-'Abbas and a few other trusted associates.¹³⁹

In the midst of all this, *Istitar al-Imam* reports, the news of the Qarmatians attack on Salamiyah in Syria arrived. Al-Mahdi decided to go to Ramallah in Palestine. After staying there for two years, he reached Egypt.¹⁴⁰ Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi could not stay long in Egypt,

¹³⁶ Op Cit, *Iftitahu al-Da'wa wa Ibtida'u al-Dawla*, Pp 117-119 and Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 66 and Op Cit, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, P 158

¹³⁷ Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 61

¹³⁸ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 66

¹³⁹ Al-Mahdi had fled from Salamiyya shortly before the Qarmati invasion of Salamiyya. It was there that he received news of the atrocities committed by the Qarmatis against the inhabitants of Salamiyya and his relatives. *Sirat J'afar al-Hajib*, which usually forms one small volume with the *Istitar*, composed probably in the beginning of the reign of al-Aziz (975-996), by Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Yamani, (Bulletin, Pp 111-112), in Op Cit, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, Pp -191-192 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 134, Ibid, *The Bohras*, P 66, Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 61

¹⁴⁰ Sayyid-na Ahmad b Ibrahim (or Muhammad) an-Naysaburi, *Istitar al-Imam 'Abdi'l-lah b Muhammad wa tafarruqu'd-du'at fi'l-jaza'ir li-talabi-hi wa istiqamati-hi*. This work compiled under al-Aziz 975-996. It was translated into Gujrati, and lithographed under the title

as the 'Abbasids were in hot pursuit of him there. He changed his initial plan to go to Yemen and instead he and his party consisting of his son, and Abu'l-'Abbas, the brother of Abu Abd Allah al-Shi'i, set off on a westward journey and first arrived at Tripoli.¹⁴¹ He finally arrived at Sijilmasa in eastern Morocco, the capital of the small Midrarid state of Tafilalt in the extreme Maghreb.¹⁴²

At the time of al-Mahdi's arrival in 905, the ruling Emir, al-Yasa' bin Midrar had no grounds of suspicion, and received the travelers kindly. In the meantime, a letter from ziyadat Allah bin Aghlab was put into al-Yasa's hand, and in it Aghlab related the suspicion he had formed about al-Mahdi. The Midrarid Emir ordered the arrest of al-Mahdi and his son Abu al-Qasim (al-Qai'm) and cast them into prison.¹⁴³ Hearing of this news, al-Shi'i the chief *da'i* in Ifriqiyah (Mod. Tunisia) was highly aggrieved. He immediately, marched towards Sijilmasa with a body of followers with the objective of freeing al-Mahdi and his son. Al-Shi'i halted at some distance from city along with his army, and wrote a polite letter to the Emir requesting him to set free al-Mahdi and his party.¹⁴⁴ But the Emir of Sijilmasa did not oblige al-shi'i with his request.¹⁴⁵ To make matters worse, the messenger who had carried the letter to the Emir, on his return reported that al-Mahdi and his son have been put to death.¹⁴⁶ Enraged at the news, al-Shi'i made an

Kashfu'zalam fi tarjumat Istitan'l-Imam, by Ghulam 'Ali b Isma'il (Bombay, 1334/1916), in Op Cit, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, P 87

¹⁴¹ In Egypt the chief *da'i* Firuz, soon deserted the Imam al-Mahdi (after his decided to proceed to the Maghreb) and fled to Yemen where's instigated a revolt against al-Mahdi. This revolt, which received to support of Ali ibn al-Fadl, was opposed by the loyal Ibn Hawshab in Yemen see Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 134

¹⁴² Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 135 Also Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 62

¹⁴³ Ibid, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 62-63 & *Studies in Islam*, P 84

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 67-68 and Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 66

¹⁴⁵ Op Cit, *Studies in Islam*, P 85

¹⁴⁶ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 66

attack on Sijilmasa and after a few skirmishes, was able to liberate alive from prison al-Mahdi, along with his son al-Qai'm, and others. Al-Shi'i showed the Mahdi to the people, saying "this is the Mahdi to whose obedience I invited men." He then set al-Mahdi and his son on horses and paraded them around the city of Sijilmasa, crying, "this is your lord". Tears of joy welled up in his eyes. Al-Shi'i and sent some body in pursuit of the Midrarid Emir (al-Yasa). The fugitive Emir was overtaken, brought back, and executed.¹⁴⁷ The century-old Aghlabid dynasty thus was destroyed by 'Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi and his protege, al-Shi'i in 909. The last scion of the dynasty, Ziyadat-Allah, was driven out of his country. The Aghlabids were the last stronghold of Sunnite Islam in that region.¹⁴⁸

On January 910, Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi made his triumphant entry into Raqqada, where he was publicly proclaimed as Caliph, receiving the homage of all the notables of Ifriqiyah. He became the first Fatimid Caliph, taking the title of *al-Mahdi bi'llah amir al-Mu'minin*. The new Caliphate was appropriately named *al-Fatimiyyun*, after the Prophet's daughter Fatima, whom 'Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi and his successors claimed as their ancestress.¹⁴⁹ 'Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi (909 – 934) established himself - as the first Fatimid ruler making Raqqadah, the capital of the Aqlabids as their own capital. He proved himself a most capable ruler.¹⁵⁰ With the establishment of the Fatimid state in Bilad al-

¹⁴⁷ Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 68 and see Op Cit, *Sirat Ja'far al-Hajib* (Bulletin, Pp 124-127) tr in *The Rise of Fatimids*, Pp 210-215 and Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 66 Op Cit, *Ifitahu al-Da'wa wa Ibtida'u al-Dawla*, Pp 116-119

¹⁴⁸ Op Cit, *History of The Arabs* Pp 617-618 and Op Cit, *Ifitahu al-Da'wa wa Ibtida'u al-Dawla*, Pp 114-119

¹⁴⁹ Op Cit, *Ifitahu al-Da'wa wa Ibtida'u al-Dawla*, Pp 114-119 and Op Cit, *The Bohras*, Pp 66-68 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 136 and Op Cit, *The Shi'a of India*, P 221

¹⁵⁰ Ibn Idhari, Abu Abdallah Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Marrakshi, *al-Bayan al-Mughrib fi Akbar al-Andlus wa al-Maghreb*, vol 1, ed G S Colin and E Levi-Provencal, Leiden, 1948-51, Pp 150-152 and Op Cit, *History of The Arabs*, P 618

Maghreb in Ifriqiyyah (modern - day Tunisia), the period of *dawr al safer* (period of concealment) and of the hidden Imams in the history of early Ismai'ism had come to an end. It was followed by the period of *dawr al-kashf* (period of manifestation), when the Isma'ili Imam appeared publicly as the head of his community. Two years after al-Mahdi assumed the supreme authority¹⁵¹, he killed his missionary-commander al-Shi'i with several of the Kutama chiefs, fearful of his rising popularity amongst the masses. The assassination of al-Shi'i marks the establishment of the Fatimid State at Qayrawan. Prior to this it was religion that was used as an instrument to create a state. Now religion was put in the background and the state emerges as a secular power with the Fatimid caliph in command¹⁵²

After Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi settled in Qayrawan, the most difficult problem demanding the new ruler's immediate attention laid in the land to the west, for al-Mahdi claimed to control all the territory to the Atlantic. The Mahdi had confronted a series of Berber revolts that were encouraged by the Umayyads of Spain. The Mahdi tried to contain these revolts. The first serious revolt that he had to tackle took place at Tahart.¹⁵³ At one point the revolt became so serious that it threatened

¹⁵¹ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 136 and Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 73 and Op Cit, *Studies in Islam*, Pp 85-86

¹⁵² Abu Abd- Allah al-Shi'i and the chiefs of the kutama began to feel doubts about the Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi's claim because al-Mahdi proved unable to work any miracles, al-Shi'i further advised the Barbers to examine al-Mahdi. The Shaykh of the Kutama asked al-Mahdi to perform a miracle the reply to this was the immediate execution of the Shaykh. Also the reports indicated that al-Shi'i, under the influence of his brothers had started wavering in his loyalty towards Ubayd Allah who also knew that al-Shi'i was popular amongst the Berber tribes especially Kutama. As a result it, al-Mahdi ordered his bodyguard to kill him while entering the palace. Op Cit, al-Qadi al-Nu'man, P 260, Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 70, Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 69 & *The Shi'a of India*, Pp 221-223

¹⁵³ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 155 and Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 74-75 and M A Shaban, *Islamic History A New Interpretation* (A D 750-1055-A H 132-448), published by the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, the Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, Bentley House, 200 Euston Road, London NW1 2DP, 32 East

the very existence of the Fatimids in Ifriqiyyah. Also the Fatimids had to struggle against Sunnism, mainly in its Maliki form, and more importantly, against Kharijism, the predominant religion of the Berbers. The existence of old rivalries in the Maghreb among the various Berber tribal groups, especially between the Zanata and the Sanhaja, which was exploited by the Umayyads of Spain, was another source of trouble for the early Fatimid Caliphate.¹⁵⁴ The Kutama fighters of the *da'i al-Shi'i* had overthrown the Rustamids of Tahart of Khariji dynasty, who was brought to power with the help of the Zanata tribes, in 909. Tahart, however, had continued to serve as the rallying point of the Ibadi Khariji Berbers, and soon the Zanata of western Maghreb revolted against the Fatimids rule. Masala ibn Habus who occupied Tahart finally crushed this revolt in 911.¹⁵⁵

The Idrisid dynasty had established a state in the remoter part of Morocco, with Fez as their capital, and was the ruling dynasty in that region at that time. It was attacked and conquered by Masala ibn Habus in 917. In this way all the western lands up to the Atlantic coast was brought under the control of 'Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi.¹⁵⁶

The aspirations of the Fatimids for the domination of the entire Muslim world were clearly evident from the time of its inception. The Fatimids attacked Egypt (Misr) twice in the time of Ubayd Allah (913-915 and 919-921) in order to undermine the 'Abbasid state. Both the

57th Street, New York, NY 10022, U S A, 296 Beaconsfield Parade, Middle Park, Melbourne 3206, Australia, First Published, 1976, P 194

¹⁵⁴ Op Cit, *al-Bayan al-Mughrib fi Akbar al-Andlus wa al-Maghreb*, vol 1 P 191 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 153 and Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 74-75

¹⁵⁵ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 154

¹⁵⁶ Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 74-75

campaigns were unsuccessful for him¹⁵⁷ In year 920, al-Mahdi took up his residence in the new capital al-Mahdiyyah, which he built on the Ifriqiyyah coast, sixteen miles southeast of al-Qayrawan and named after himself.¹⁵⁸ Al-Mahdiyyah was supplied with an impressive shipyard, which enabled the Fatimids to maintain a naval fleet. This fleet was in action in the second invasion of Egypt by the Fatimids but was severely damaged in the campaign After 'Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi's death in March 934 after a rule of twenty-five years, and an imamate of some thirty-five years, he was succeeded by his nominated son Abu'l-Qasim Muhammad as the second Kahlifa with the title of *al-Qa'im bi Amr Allah*, (the Mahdi by the order of Allah).¹⁵⁹ Al-Qa'm continued his father's policies of expansion and consolidation. He continued the mission of his father of the conquest of Egypt by leading two expeditions but met the same fate as his father.¹⁶⁰ These attacks were stoutly and successfully resisted by 'Ubayd Allah, the brother of the Ikhshid governor of Egypt The conquest of Egypt remained an unfulfilled dream of the Fatimids A navel attack on the south of France, the coast of Genoa and Calabria was also undertaken, which brought in many slaves and a huge plunder.¹⁶¹

Al-Qai'm had to meet more serious rebellions, the principal of which took place among the Zanata tribe, south of the Kutama territory,

¹⁵⁷ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 71 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 154

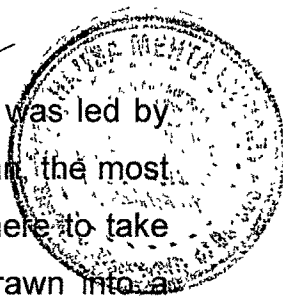
¹⁵⁸ *History of The Arabs* P 618, Later, The Fatimid Capital in Ifriqiyyah transferred to al-Muhamadiyya and then to al-Mansuriyyah, ns established by and named after al-Mahdi's next two successors Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 155 Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 74-75 and Op Cit, *Islamic History A New Interpretation*, P 194

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, *The Isma'ilis*, P 155 and Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 71 and Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 87-88 and Op Cit, *The Shi'a of India*, P 223 and Op Cit, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, P 263

¹⁶⁰ Op, Cit, *The Bohras*, P 71

¹⁶¹ Op, Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 88

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against members of the Khariji-Shi'i sect¹⁶² This rebellion was led by one Abu Yazid who traced his tribal origins to the Banu Ifran, the most important branch of the Zanata¹⁶³ It may be worthwhile here to take note of his personality and activities and how he was drawn into a conflict with al-Qa'im and its results for the latter. Abu Yazid was deeply well versed in the teaching of Nukkari Ibadism, one of the main sub-sects of the Ibadiyya Abu Yazid was elected the Imam and shaykh of the true believers' by the Nukkaris of the Maghreb After spending in Tahart as a school master He returned to Qastilya in southern Ifriqiyyah where he had been raised, and started his anti-Fatimid agitation in 928. Around 944 when the Berbers became his supporters¹⁶⁴, Abu Yazid marched swiftly northwards as the leader of the forces comprising of a large number of Zanata tribesmen and many others from the south.¹⁶⁵ Abu Yazid decided to capture al-Qayrawan but was defeated on the way by al-Qai'm's army. However, no more than a temporary check; Abu Yazid soon rallied, took Raqqada, and then pressed on to Qayrawan, defeated the force of the al-Qa'im and captured the city, al-Qa'im had to seek refuge in al-Mahdiyyah. Abu Yazid also besieged this city¹⁶⁶ In the meantime the Kutama and Sanhaja tribes shifted their allegiance to al-Qa'im and helped him defend al-Mahdiyyah and Abu Yazid and his followers were forced to retire. Abus Yazid was pursued by al-Qa'im, and inflicting defeat upon defeat on him, he recovered the whole of Ifriqiyyah.¹⁶⁷ But when al-

¹⁶² Ibid, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 88 and Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 71
¹⁶³ Abu Yazid Makhlad ibn Kaydad (also called Dajjal i e , imposter against-Christ, by the Fatimid hostarians), who assumed the title of " Sheikh of the true believers " But he was popularly known as Sahib al-Himar, the man with an ass Op Cit, *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol 2, P 218, Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 89
¹⁶⁴ Op, Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 158
¹⁶⁵ This tribe was rival of the Kutama who supported the Fatimids & *The Bohras*, P 71
¹⁶⁶ Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 88
¹⁶⁷ Ibid, P 88

Qa'im died in al-Mahdiyyah in 19-5-946 after a reign of twelve years.¹⁶⁸ Abu Yazid rallied again and laid siege to the town of Susa and prepared to take the offensive still further.¹⁶⁹ To make things difficult for the Fatimids, al-Qa'im died during this period and was succeeded by his nominated son Isma'il in 946 with the title al-Mansur Bi'llah (the conqueror by the will of Allah) Precarious as the situation of the Fatimid state was in these circumstances, the first task of the Caliph al-Mansur was to relieve the city of Susa and take necessary steps to suppress the revolt.¹⁷⁰

Al-Mansur defeated the insurgents at Susa, forcing Abu Yazid to retreat to Qayrawan, whose inhabitants had now turned against him. Abu Yazid's attempts to seize the city proved futile and in August 946 he withdrew westward in the direction of the Zab. Al-Mansur, who had been well received in Qayrawan, personally conducted a close chase, defeating Abu Yazid near Tubna and then around Masila.¹⁷¹ On August 19, 947, al-Mansur, assisted by the government of Ziri ibn Maanad, inflicted a final defeat on the Khariji Berbers in the mountains of Kiyana, where the insurgents had entrenched themselves in a fortress overlooking what was to become known as Qal'at Bani Hammad. Consequently, Abu Yazid was captured and died of his wounds in captivity a few days later.¹⁷² In fact, most part of al-Mansur's reign were

¹⁶⁸ Op Cit, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, P 32

¹⁶⁹ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 157

¹⁷⁰ Op Cit, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 91 and Op Cit, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, P 159, Op Cit, *The Rise of The Fatimids*, P 274

¹⁷¹ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 159,

¹⁷² On revolt of a Kharijite Berber, Abu Yazid see, Ivanow, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, Pp 272-274 and Op Cit, *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol 2, Pp 218-219, Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, Pp 158-160 and Op Cit, *History of the Islamic peoples*, P 159 and al-Numan, b Muhammad, al-Qadi Abu Hanifa, *Kitab al-Majalis wa al-musayarat*, ed al-Habib al-Fiqi, I, Shabbuh and M al-Ya'lawi, Tunis, 1978, Pp 72ff 113-114, 214,245, 323ff, 336-337, 429,447, 992, 542

spent in the struggle against Abu Yazid. Al-Mansur died in Shawwal 341 / March 953, after a short rule of about seven years.¹⁷³ In the words of Engineer, Caliph al-Mansur Billah “was a great orator and spoke extempore Though generous, he dealt with his opponents firmly, if the situation so demanded He put down all the rebellions of his period firmly and restored peace But death did not leave him enough time to consolidate his gains. He tolerated other faiths and never behaved like bigot”.¹⁷⁴

Reign of al-Mu'izz and Shifting of the Fatimid Caliphate to Misr

The reign of al-Mu'izz, the son and successor of al-Mansur and the fourth Fatimid caliph is considered to be the most important one in the history of the formation of the Fatimid state The Fatimid state achieved its great glory during his rule. He came to the throne in 953 and ruled for about 24 years¹⁷⁵ He was an excellent planner, an efficient organizer and a statesman amply talented in diplomacy. Al-Mu'izz with the help of his general Jawhar succeeded in subduing the whole of the Maghreb as a prelude to implementing his own eastern policy¹⁷⁶. After gaining some initial victories in the Awars, and against the Umayyad Abd al-Rahman III and the Byzantineans, al-Mu'izz next turned his attention to organizing a major military operation to re-establish the Fatimid authority in central Maghreb and its extremes. He entrusted the

¹⁷³ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 160 and Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 73

¹⁷⁴ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 73

¹⁷⁵ Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 74

¹⁷⁶ Jawhar ibn Abd Allah, a freedman of the Fatimids and possibly of Slav origin, who carried various epithets such as al-Saqlabi (the slave), al-Siqilli (the Sicilian) and al-Rumi (the Greek), and who had risen in rank to become secretary to the caliphs al-Mansur and al-Mu'izz, and then the latter's chief general (al-qa'id) on Jawhar, see Sayyid-na Idris Imad al-Din, *Zahru al-Ma'ani*, in *The Rise of The Fatimids*, text Pp 70-72 & 79, tr Pp 262-263 & 279 also see Al-Nu'man, b Muhammad, al-Qadi Abu Hanifa, *Kitab al-Majalis wa al-musayarat*, ed al-Habib al-Fiqi, I, Shabbuh and M al-Ya'lawi, Tunis, 1978 Pp 217, 256 & 546

job of pacification of these regions to his general, Jawhar who was successful in pacifying al-Maghreb. The desire to conquer Egypt was a long-standing one in the family¹⁷⁷ But before we take account of al-Mu'izz's handling of this ambition, we must turn for a while to the course of events in Egypt

A Turk, Muhammad ibn-Tughj, whose grandfather and father had already served the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad, came to Egypt as governor at this time and in two years was able to establish his power to such an extent that in 937 he could petition the caliph al-Radi with success to elevate him above the rank of an ordinary ruler by bestowing on him the title of Ikhshid (awesome)¹⁷⁸ On the death of Ikhshid Muhammad Ibn Tughj in 946, he was succeeded by his son Abu al-Qasim Unjur, a child of 15, who was kept in a state of tutelage by a black eunuch named Abu al-Misk Kafur, (Camphor, and the father of musk.)¹⁷⁹ The internal situation of Egypt was rapidly deteriorating due to famine and numerous economic difficulties, natural calamities, and dynastic instability, causing political and civil disorders.¹⁸⁰ In spite of this, Kafur, the effective governor of Egypt for 22 years (946-968) was still able to defend Egypt against the Fatimids. However, after his

¹⁷⁷ At the same time, the Fatimid da'wa was intensified in Egypt through the activities of Abu Ja'far ibn Nasr, Abu Isa 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Ahmad, and other propagandists, as well as many secret agents who advocated the cause of the Fatimids and undermined the Ikhshidids. They also attempted to win over the high military officials and other influential persons of the Ikhshidid regime, and approached in vain even Kafur himself. Although the Egyptian Muslims respected the numerous 'Alid living among them, Shi'ism had never established roots in Egypt, especially in terms of winning the support of the masses. Op. Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 172 and Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, *Ta'rikh al-Dawlah al-Fatimiah fi al-Maghreb, Misr, Sunah wa Bilad al-Arab*, Dar al-Nahzah al-Arabiah, Third Edition, Cairo, 1964, Pp 116--123

¹⁷⁸ Op. Cit, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, P 159

¹⁷⁹ Op. Cit, *A Short history of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 93

¹⁸⁰ Al-Maqrizi, Taqi al-Din Ahmad b 'Ali, *Kitab al-mawa'iz wa'l-l'tibar bi-dhikr al-Khitat wa'l-athar*, vol 1, Bulaq, 1270/1853, Pp 328-330, Op. Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 172, Ibn al-Athir, Izz al-Din, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, vol 8, Beirut, 1965-1967, Pp 590-591 and Op. Cit, *Kitab al-mawa'iz wa'l-l'tibar bi-dhikr al-Khitat wa'l-athar*, vol 1, Pp 329-330

death in 968 and the accession to leadership of a weak a grandson of Kafur, Abu-al-Fawaris Ahmad ibn 'Alī (968-969), the internal disorders soon turned into chaos, made more serious by mutinies in the army, and the days of the Ikhshid regime were clearly numbered now.¹⁸¹

In the meantime, the fourth Fatimid caliph, al-Mu'izz, resumed his dynasty's ambition to conquer Egypt. He chose Jawhar as his general (Qa'id) for this task. Jawhar set out for this historic expedition on the February 5, 969. Al-Mu'izz came in person to bid him farewell. Jawhar first proceeded towards Alexandria. The city was taken after a little resistance. Jawhar entered Fustat (the place where Cairo was founded later) triumphantly.¹⁸² Professor O'Leary, describes the scene as thus: "On Tuesday, the 17th Shaban 359 A H. (17th July, 969) by Jawhar's order, a deputation of leading officials, Sharifs, the learned, and prominent citizens went out to Giza. By orders announced by a herald, everyone except the wazir Ibn al-Furat, and the Sharif Abu Ja'far, dismounted and saluted Jawhar in turn, the Fatimid general standing with the Sharif on his right hand, the Wazir (minister) on his left. After this ceremony was concluded the envoys returned to the city, and the troops commenced their entry with arms and baggage. After the 'Asr or hour of mid-afternoon prayer Jawhar himself made his entry preceded by drums and flags; he wore a silk dress heavily embroidered with gold, and rode a cream colored horse. He rode straight through the city

¹⁸¹ On Kafur and his death see Op Cit, *al-Bayan al-Mughrib fi Akhbar al-Maghreb wa al-Andlus*, vol 1, Pp 221, 228 and Op Cit, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, Pp 159-160, and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 172, Op Cit, *Islamic History A New Interpretation*, Pp 194-197

¹⁸² Jawhar led The historic expedition out of Qayrawan after an elaborate ceremonial send-off attended by al-Mu'izz, who, as a reflection of high honor, gave Jawhar his royal garments and orders all the governors along the way to Misr to dismount when greeting the general. Also Fustat or Misr al-Atika (old Misr) The capital of Ikhshidid Misr was taken over after a few skirmishes, Op Cit, al-Maqrizi, vol 1, p 378, Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 172 and Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 75, and Op Cit, *A Short history of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 93-102 and, Op Cit, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, P 160

with his men, and passing out on the north-east (north of Fustat) side pitched camp there"¹⁸³. Jawhar immediately proceeded to build a new city there as per the instructions of his master al-Mu'izz and his successors. The name of the new establishment was al-Qahira (called Cairo by the British).¹⁸⁴ The city of al-Qahira was to play a cardinal role in the cultural history of Islam

The period of al-Mu'izz in Egypt lasted just over two years. He dismissed Jawhar shortly after arriving in Egypt and entrusted the shrewd Ibn Killis with the task of reorganizing Egypt's financial system. Al-Mu'izz had been mainly preoccupied in Egypt with repelling the menace of the Qarmatis¹⁸⁵. Having considerably enhanced the power and the territorial extent of the Fatimid state, al-Mu'izz died in December 975 while returning from a campaign against the Turks and Qarmatians. He was succeeded by his son al-Aziz

Under the rule of the Fatimids, (969-1171) Egypt enjoyed a fair degree of tranquility, though enormous demands continued to be made on the country by way of taxation¹⁸⁶. Finally, The Fatimid triumph was, however, incomplete; the Fatimid state failed to unite all the Muslims under their own Fatimid 'Alid Imamate, just as they also failed in their policy of eastern conquest. They however, succeed in encouraging an intensive literary and intellectual activity in the Fatimid Misr (Egypt), and turning their Capital, al-Qahira, into a flourishing center of

¹⁸³ Op Cit, *A Short history of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Pp 101-102

¹⁸⁴ Op Cit, *A Short history of the Fatimid Caliphate*, P 102 and Op Cit, *The Bohras*, P 75 and Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 103 and Op, Cit, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, P 160

¹⁸⁵ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 176 Al-Mu'izz faced many difficulties, at the very moment of his triumph, during the conquest of Misr, he even had to fight against the Qarmatis from Eastern Arabia who, after first supporting the Fatimids, turned against them and attacked their armies in Syria and Misr. At a later date the Qarmatis seem to have returned to the Fatimid allegiance, and disappeared as a separate entity Op Cit, *The Assassins*, P 33

¹⁸⁶ Op Cit, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, P 160

commerce, arts and sciences, which rivaled Baghdad in the 11th century¹⁸⁷ During that crucial century of Islamic history, the Fatimid state, at least until the consolidation of Saljuqid power¹⁸⁸ represented the major political and cultural force of the Muslim world The Fatimids anticlimax starts with the advent of the Crusaders and the repeated attacks of Amalric, the king of Jerusalem, who in 1167 stood at the very gates of al-Qahira. The attempts of Nuruddin Zinki, the governor of Damascus for the Abbasids to conquer Egypt from the Fatimids, finally bore fruit when his commander, a Kurdish soldier, Salah al-Din al- Ayyubi, dethroned the last Fatimid caliph al-'Adid on 10th September / 7th Muharam, 1171/567.¹⁸⁹ Slahuddin become the real master of Egypt, allowed a preacher to recite the *khutba* in the name of the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad The Fatimid state already dead, both as a religious and as a political force, was now formally abolished, amid the almost total indifference of the population. After more than two centuries, Egypt was restored to the Sunni fold.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, P 254, In the 11th century the growing internal weakness of the Islamic world was revealed by a series of invasions, the most important of which, that of the Saljuq Turks, created a new military Empire stretching from Central Asia to the Mediterranean, Associated with these invasions were important economic, social and cultural changes, of profound importance in the history of Islam & *The Assassins*, P 36

¹⁸⁸ Op Cit, *The Isma'ilis*, Pp 254-255

¹⁸⁹ Op Cit, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, vol 11, Pp 368-371, Op Cit, *History of The Arabs From The Earliest Times to The Present* P 624, Op Cit, *History of the Islamic peoples*, P 160, Op Cit, *The Assassins*, P 35

¹⁹⁰ Op Cit, *The Assassins*, P 35