The Christian Influences in Ismaili Thought

Rami İbrahim Mahmut[*]

Abstract

Christian influence is considered important in the development of Ismaili doctrine. While this research was being conducted, many Christian elements were encountered in the Ismaili doctrine. For example, the adoption of the doctrine of the Crucifixion of Christ which is cited in many Ismaili sources is one of them. Such sources even quote exactly what happened to Jesus Christ, based on direct quotations from the Bible. Some Ismaili dais even made a comparison between the Christian cross symbol and the Ismaili symbols; thus, they tried to establish a relationship of similarity between the Cross and Muslim pantheism, which shows the complete acceptance of the doctrine of the Crucifixion. This study examines the Christian influences in Ismaili thought, including the similarity between the Imam's character and that of Jesus, that have succeeded in entering Ismaili thought. Accordingly, both characters are connected with the spiritual world and carry a sacred color. It can be said that there is a similarity between the structural organization of the Ismaili da'wah and the religious structural organization in Christianity. The study highlights some of the overt Christian elements in Duruz thought. These include the spread of the concept of the Christianization of al-Mahdi's character among the Druze, and the use of verses from the Bible concerning the Messiah by some Duruz dais.

Keywords: Ismaili Doctrine, Christianity, Druze, Crucifixion, Quran.

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İsmaili Düşüncede Hristiyan Etkileri

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Öz

İsmaili öğretinin gelişmesinde Hristiyan etkisinin önemli olduğu kabul edilir. Bu araştırma yapılırken İsmaili öğreti içerisinde pek çok Hıristiyan unsura rastlanmıştır. Örneğin, birçok İsmaili kaynağında atıfta bulunulan Mesih'in Çarmıha Gerilmesi doktrininin kabulü bunlardan biridir. Bu tür kaynaklar, İncil'den doğrudan alıntılara dayanarak İsa Mesih'e tam olarak ne olduğunu bile aktarır. Hatta bazı İsmaili dâiler Hristiyan haç sembolü ile İsmaili semboller arasında bir kıyas bile yapmış ve böylece Çarmıha Gerilme doktrininin tam olarak kabul edildiğini gösteren Haç ile Müslüman tektanrıcılığın tanıklığı arasında bir benzerlik ilişkisi kurmaya çalışmışlardır. Bu çalışma İsmaili düşüncedeki İmam'ın karakteri ile İsa'nınki arasındaki benzerliği de içeren ve İsmailî düşünceye girebilmeyi başarmış Hristiyan etkilerini incelemektedir. Aynı şekilde, her iki karakter de manevi dünyayla bağlantılıdır ve kutsal bir renk taşırlar. İsmaili dâvanın yapısal organizasyonu ile Hristiyanlıktaki dini yapısal organizasyon arasında bir benzerlik olduğu söylenebilir. Çalışma, Dürzî düşüncesinde yer alan bazı aşikâr Hristiyan unsurların altını çizmektedir. Bunlar arasında, el-Mehdi'nin karakterinin Hristiyanlaştırılması kavramının Dürûz arasında yayılması ve bazı Dürzî dâiler tarafından İncil'den Mesih ile ilgili olarak kullanılan ayetlerin kullanılması yer almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İsmaili Doktrin, Hristiyanlık, Dürûz, Çarmıha Germe, Kuran.

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1. Introduction

The importance of studying the Isma'ili Doctrine lies in the influences that it has left within the Islamic thought in general as well as the sects that have diverged from it. Some of these sects have become extinct, whereas some others have evolved and changed. One of the sects that have evolved from Isma'ilism and is witnessed in today's world for example is the Bohrā Sect which spreads in different regions of Yemen and India (Öz, 1992, pp. 273-274), as well as Aghakhānism which is present in some parts of England and Middle Asia (Öz, 1992, pp. 453-455), in addition to the Durūzī Sects that are present in regions of Syria and Lebanon and other neighboring areas (Öz, 1994, pp. 39-48) not to mention other sects that have emerged from mainstream Isma'ilism or influenced by it and survived to this very day in present times. Historically, Isma'ilism has played a pivotal role in the movement of Islamic history. Three states had risen in the span of Islamic history and each of them had authority and power that annoyed their neighboring states around them at the time. These states include the Qarāmiṭah "Qarmatian" State centered in the Bahrain regions of eastern Arabian Peninsula, which had such immense authority at the time that enabled it to attack the Holy City of Mecca, kill about thirty thousand Meccans, pull off the Holy Ka'bah's Door and snatch away the Black Stone from its original place to their country where it remained for 12 years (Blois, 1986, pp. 13-21; Hizmetli, 2001, pp. 510-514). As for the second state, it was the Fātimid Caliphate State which had covered vast areas of North Africa and was centered in Egypt (909-1171 AD) (Hassan & Sharaf, pp. 48-50; Sayyid, 1992, pp. 35), which had become a real threat to the 'Abbāsid Caliphate State as it tried to expand east and west by means of spreading its preachers (du'ā), making the 'Abbasid Caliphate adamant to defend itself by means of arms or thought[1] (Al-Jawzi, 1992, p.

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[1]   Some of the attempts that the 'Abbasid State had resorted to in dealing with the Fatimid threat was that official report which has been written down by the order of the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Qadir Billah (d. 422/1031) in which he collected signatures of many renowned scholars of the time from different sects who proclaimed the fallacy of the Fatimid Caliphate and the invalidity of the Fatimid Caliphs' lineage to Fatimah Al-Zahra' as well. Ibn al-Jawzi mentioned in the year immediately preceding the issuance of that official report that Abu al-Mani' Qurwash b. al-Muqallad – who was a governor of Mosul, Kufa and the Two Banks of the Euphrates – had summoned the people of Mosul and asked them to pay allegiance to al-Hakim bi Amrillah al-Fatimi and to accept the Fatimid Call and they approved of that. This shows that these years had

82). The third state which had risen in a later period to the Fatimid State was the Assassins State and the Empire of the Alamūt Fortress, this group which had stricken fear and horror throughout both European and Muslim worlds of the time. The Assassins were famous for their special original assassination techniques, leading figures of that group such as Hassan al-Sabbah still have a name in history today (Daftary, 1996; Mahmoud, 2021, pp. 303-326).

The Isma'ili influence did not affect history alone but has left deep impacts on Islamic thought in general. It is safe to say that Sufism had witnessed a new stage under the Isma'ili influence, let alone that terms such as al-Batiniyyah "Esotericism", Gnosticism, Ta'wîl "Anagogy" and "Interpretation" and the likes could not be studied properly out of the umbrella of the Isma'ili thought. Islamic esoteric thought has primarily risen by the Isma'ilis, then it was widely spread in many fields of the Islamic thought spearheaded by Sufism.

2. Formation of the Isma'ili Doctrine

Isma'ilism had risen out of the dispute on who would lead the Shi'ites after the death of Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 148/765); the Isma'ilis claimed that the Imamate is due to his son Isma'il b. Ja'far, while other Shi'ite sects including the Twelfths "Ithna 'ashriyah" have claimed that the said Isma'il has died when he was three years old and that the Imamate is due to Musa al-Kazhim after him (Al-Baghdādī, 1988, p. 46; Al-Shahrastānī, 1986, p. 27). Anyhow and regardless of such dispute, we shall have a general view on the Isma'ili Doctrine and the elements that formed it.

It is safe to say that the Isma'ili Doctrine has been formed through many elements; some of them were Islamic and others were foreign to the Islamic circles. For instance, there has been a major influence of Greek philosophy on the Isma'ili Doctrine[2], also there has been an influence of

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witnessed a remarkable activity of the Fatimid preachers which has resulted to a strong reaction from Sunni parts whether Ash'aris or Hanbalis. Al-Ġazzālī's book "Fada'ih al-Batiniyah" was also written in this context cf. (Al-Dhahabī, 1985, p. 15/132) (Al-Ġazzālī, n.d)

[2]   This is why the Isma'ilite Studies have been recently listed as a branch of Islamic Philosophy, in addition the examples presented by both of the Isma'ili preachers al-

the Hindu doctrines especially the Isma'ili vision of the issues of death and reincarnation (Al-Bīrūnī, 1958, p. 43; Mahmud, 2020, p. 256). We can also add the Christian influences among the elements that have impacted the formation of the Doctrine too. Some illustrations that prove that Isma'ilism had a special view towards Christianity and Jesus Christ will be mentioned herein (Virani, 2019, p. 147).

It is important here to cite Mohamed Kamil Hussein when he says: "Those who study the Isma'ili doctrines will be able to realize that these doctrines are a mysterious blend of a group of doctrines, religions and ancient philosophical views that have been known and wide spread among Muslim countries from an early time due to Muslims' mingling with others from different faiths and various opinions; and that the Isma'ilis have adopted these opinions and doctrines and subjugated them to their concept of Imamate after giving them an Islamic tint." (Hussein, p. 174).

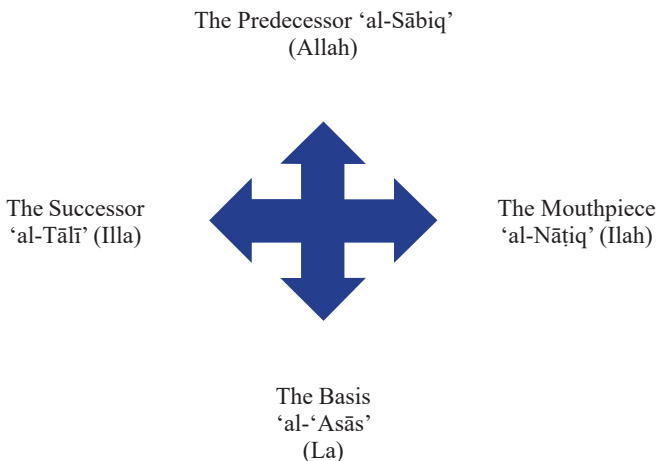## 3. The Belief in Crucifixion in Isma'ili Thought

It is well-known that the majority of Christians in today's world believe that Jesus Christ had been crucified (John, 1984, pp. 636-637; Mark, 1984, p. 596). On the other hand, the doctrine of the crucifixion is well-known to be contrary to the belief of the majority of Muslims. Adherents of Islam believe that Jesus Christ was not crucified; a double in his likeness was the one who was crucified instead based on Verse 157 of al-Nisa' Chapter of the Holy Quran stating that: "Yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them." (Arberry, 1983, pp. 95, 499; Al-Ṭabarī, 2001, p. 447; Taymiyah, 1999, p. 107; 96). Strikingly enough, however, some Isma'ili preachers are known not to deny the crucifixion doctrine, but rather find it consistent with the two proclamations of Islamic faith 'al-Shahadatayn' exactly as the da'i al-Sijistānī did.

Al-Sijistānī has dedicated 31st and 32nd Springs to clarify the meaning of the Cross to the Nation of Jesus Christ and how the Cross conforms to the Muslim proclamation that there is no God but Allah. He also claimed that

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Kirmānī and al- Sijistānī are very close to the examples of Arab philosophers including Ibn Sina; this due to the fact that they share the same origin that is Greek philosophy cf. (Abdul-Hamid, 2002, p. 162; Adamson & C., 2018, pp. 81-88; Daftary, 2004, p. 21; Ibrahim & Helmi, p. 19; Madkour, p. 2/65).

the crucifixion of Christ is one of the proofs of the presence of 'Ṣāḥib al-Qiyāmah' i.e., the Master of Resurrection who will come at the end of this world to start Last Judgement and Resurrection proceedings according to the Isma'ili Doctrine. In the next Spring, al-Sijistānī hold a comparison between the Proclamation of Faith and the Cross; he believes that each one of them is similar to the other. The Proclamation of Faith in his view is based on negation and affirmation; the beginning of the Proclamation means 'No' which means negation and the end is with 'Allah' which is affirmation; this in al-Sijistānī's view is similar to the cross which has two pieces of wood, one is stable by itself and the second has no stability without the other one's stability. One of the other similarities is the fact that the Proclamation of Faith is composed of four words, whereas the Cross has four ends.

Al- Sijistānī applies the bases of the Isma'ili Imams' hierarchy and its accessories to the Cross, saying that the firm end in the ground represents the Master of Interpretation 'Ṣāḥib 'al-Ta'wīl', while the opposite end away from the ground is the Master of Support 'Ṣāḥib al-Ta'yīd'. He also claims that the Proclamation of Faith is comprised from seven chapters which is similar to the Cross' four angles and three ends indicating the Seven Fulfillers 'al-'atimma' al-Sab'ah' in his turn. Al- Sijistānī further assimilates the Proclamation of the Prophet and the Cross with the Master of Resurrection 'Sāḥib al-Qiyāmah' for the Isma'ilis and draws the following figure (Al-Sijistānī, 1985, pp. 146-149):

The Predecessor 'al-Sābiq'
(Allah)

The Successor 'al-Tālī' (Illa)   The Mouthpiece 'al-Nāṭiq' (Ilah)

The Basis 'al-'Asās' (La)

Al-Sijistānī further speaks of the doctrine of Crucifixion as if it is self-evident and constant, for instance he speaks of Jesus Christ saying that: 'He is the crucified on the joined wood piece' (Al-Sijistānī, 1986, p. 248).

It is important here while presenting al-Sijistānī's viewpoint and the image of Jesus Christ in general to examine the position of Jesus among the messengers of God in the Isma'ili thought. The concept of divine message for Isma'ilis is different from the other sects of Islam; they make use of the terms 'al-Nāṭiq' (the Mouthpiece) and 'al-Nuṭq' (Revealed Talking). The Mouthpiece in Isma'ili thought is a link in a series of Cosmic Order, he is the medium between the Upper and the Underworlds and he serves as the head of temporal roles. The Isma'ilis have called him 'Nāṭiq' (Mouthpiece) because the skill of speaking as al-Sijistānī points out provides a given messenger with superiority over the general public and makes him distinct from regular people. Genuine revealed talking is what the Archangel Gabriel 'Jibrīl' throws into a messenger's heart and hence he becomes a speaker of true knowledge (Al-Sijistānī, 1983, pp. 16-17).

Mouthpieces or speakers for Isma'ilis are the most competent of messengers who were mentioned in Verse 13 of the Shūrā Chapter of the Holy Qūr'ān that says: "He has laid down for you as religion that He charged Noah with, and that We have revealed to thee, and that We charged Abraham with, Moses and Jesus: "Perform the religion, and scatter not regarding it" (Al-Rāzī, 1977, p. 109; Arberry, 1983, pp. 95, 499) in addition to Adam (Al-Rāzī, 1962, pp. 66, 60; Al-Kirmānī, n.d., p. 187; Al-Yaman, 1984, p. 128) and finally the Master of Resurrection who will come on the Day of Resurrection and initiate Dooms Day himself; all of the said messengers are privileged with the fact that each one of them has come with law and orders for his people (Al-Sijistānī & Al-Sijzi, 2000, p. 246; Imran & Zahrah, 1956, pp. 106-107).

The significance of the Mouthpieces or Speakers lies in the fact that each one of them plays a certain role; a role as defined by Da'i al-Rāzī is the management of the people of the world and whatever organization and regulation take place in it. al-Rāzī says that: "The orbit of this world is that he is the one who orders the celestial orbs and what it is included within, as God has entrusted him with holding this universe together and made him a reason for creation and decay in it. So, he assumes this role until his role is over by virtue of the seven organization principles by which the universe is

managed." This is the truth about the roles in the Upperworld; however, in case of Mouthpieces or Speakers, al-Rāzī has named every one of them a role player as he is 'The Pole of the World for people, and the central point of the universe around which the affairs of religion are set and the orders of the people's links to causations are held by which their survival and good conduct in this world and the netherworld are controlled; therefore they have been called Role Players.' (Al-Rāzī, 1962, pp. 66, 60)

Da'i Ali b. al-Walīd has made symbols to those Speakers; the symbol of Adam is a house, the symbol of Noah is a ship, Abraham's is a corner, Moses' is a staff whereas Jesus' symbol was the Cross which is another proof that the doctrine of the Crucifixion of Christ was prevalent among Isma'ili circles (Al-Hamidī, 1971, p. 219; Al-Walīd, 1985, p. 138; Al-Qurashī, 1991, p. 134).

In addition, there is great similarity between the infallible character of the Isma'ili Imam and the character of Jesus Christ as both of them hold a holy tinge from God. The Isma'ili Imam is infallible by virtue of the sublime support that he receives from the higher spiritual world and his resurrection means the advent of the Day of Resurrection as he is the one who undertakes the initiation of the Day of Resurrection and he judges people himself not God. One of the similarities too is that Bliss and Paradise in the Isma'ili belief is the rise of souls and their proximity to holy sublime world (Mahmud, 2020, p. 256).

4. Other Christian Influences on an Isma'li Sect: Druze as Case in Point

It has been mentioned at the beginning of this paper that the importance of studying the Isma'ili Sect is due to the great number of subsects that emanated under its cloak. Two sects shall be the focus of this part of the paper to examine the Christian influences on their belief.

The Durzī Sect is considered one of the most important Isma'ili sects that maintained its presence since its inception at the time of the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh (d. 1021). They have risen to the scene exactly in 407 A.H./1017 A.D. when a number of Persian Isma'ili preachers arrive in Cairo including al-Ḥassan b. Ḥaidarah al-Farghāni al-Akhram, Ḥamzah b. Aḥmad al-Labbād al-Zawzani and Muḥammad b. Isma'īl Anushtakīn

al-Darazi. The three preachers have declared in public that al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh is a god to be worshipped and they indulged in forcing the Egyptians to believe likewise. It seems that al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh was satisfied with such a call so that he did not stop them from propagating their call but rather supported them in their efforts though he did not show it in public. The movement was called the Muwaḥḥidīn Movement which was later developed into the Dūrzi Doctrine. A serious clash took place between those who were seeking to deify al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh and the Egyptians and the years from 408-410 A.H. were full of major events that included killings and assassinations. The Egyptians had killed the Da'i Muḥammad b. Isma'īl Anushtakīn al-Darazi while he was walking in the procession of al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh and the events were finalized with the fire of the city of Fusṭāṭ which took away about one third of its area and al-al-Ḥākim was seemingly content with this fire so that it has been said that he had enjoyed watching the city burning (Anān, 1983, p. 299; Al-Abbādī, p. 289; Sayyid, 1992, pp. 35).

It seems that the adherents of the Isma'ili Doctrine themselves as well as the Isma'ili preachers did not accept such a call in anyway, and al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh had abandoned this call after he secretly supported it. al-Ḥākim summoned the preacher Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmāni to write him an ultimate refutation of such a claim and an establishment of his imamship, al-Kirmāni wrote down a treatise which he called 'Mabāsim al-Bisharāt' (The Good Tidings Smiles) as well as another treatise refuting al-Akhram al-Farghāni and the idea of the divinity of al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh. Al-Kirmāni also cited in 'Mabāsim al-Bisharāt' some texts from the Holy Bible that prove that the prophecy of Isiah has become evident in the person of al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh which means that he is assimilated with Christ or the Mahdi (Al-Kirmāni, 1987, p. 113; Badawi, 1997, p. 585). Anyhow such a call was the reason behind the rise of the Druze Sect.

When the Druze belief is considered, the Christian element is deeply present in such belief. This paper found out that such Christian element found its way to the Druze belief through the main Isma'ili belief as it is evident from the Druze creed of the deification of al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh as it is stated in direct Druze texts such as "Mīthāq Walī al-Zamān" (Master of Time Pact) by which a person becomes a Durzi and it starts as follows: "I put my trust in our Lord al-Ḥākim the One and Only who has no wives

or number, So and So Son of So and So declares solemnly that…. and that he does not know of anything but the obedience of our Lord al-Ḥākim exalted be him and that obedience is worship and that he does not have any partners ever, present or coming" (Ali, Al-Tamīmī, & Al-Samouqi, 1986, p. 47, 37, 17; Hussein, 1962, p. 104, 17, 118-119). Such creed is so close to the Christian belief of the divinity of Jesus Christ (Taymiyah, 1999, p. 2, 1; 2019, p. 255;). Moreover, the Druze have claimed several persons to be the Messiah or the Mahdī including al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh himself (Ali, Al-Tamīmī, & Al-Samouqi, 1986, pp. 47, 37, 17) and they also claimed that he will return at the end of times to judge and condemn the world and scatter his enemies away from his face and subjugate the world in his kingdom (Ali, Al-Tamīmī, & Al-Samouqi, 1986, p. 47, 37, 17). Other Durzī views believe that the Messiah is Ḥamza b. ʿAlī[3] (Hussein, 1962, p. 104, 17, 118-119), in addition he was considered to be the Intellectus Universalis with God that is al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh.

The influences of the Christian dogma appeared in the writings of the Da'i ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Ṭa'ī al-Sāmūḳi al-Durzī (died about 420/1030), in the Constantinople Letter that he sent to Constantine, the Emperor of Byzantium, where he cited the Second Chapter of the Gospel of John: "His mother saith unto the servants, whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." (John, 1984, pp. 19: 16-37, 2: 5, 2: 19-22) as well as citing the same Chapter 19-22: "19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." (John, 1984, pp. 636-637) Bahā' al-Dīn interpreted these three days symbolically and said that the day after these days is when Christ comes, that is Ḥamzah b. ʿAlī, the aforementioned, and he rather applied much of what is mentioned in the Gospel about Christ and his vision of pain and persecution upon Ḥamzah ascribing him all the titles of Jesus Christ. Da'i ʿAlī b. Aḥmad

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[3]   One of the most important Druze figure at the time of the rise of the Sect, he is of Persian origin and came to Cairo and was among those who called for the deification of al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh (408 A.H.) in public, calling himself as his messenger (Al-Zirikly, 2002, p. 2/278; Bağlıoğlu, 2018, p. 122, 189).

al-Ṭa'ī al-Sāmūḳi al-Durzī called Ḥamzah b. 'Alī the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of Truth which appeared to forgive sins, the Son of God and that he is the one who sent Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (Hussein, 1962, p. 104, 17, 118-119).

5. Conclusion

Thorough study of the Ismai'li thought leads us to a clearer understanding of many of the intellectual developments that have taken place in Islamic history and which continue to occur up till today; for example, the Isma'ili thought has been associated with esoteric thought, a large cover under which many of our important sects, opinions and figures are included. Among them comes the Sufi current for instance, therefore focusing on this field of study would bring us lots of explanations that were not clear before. We cannot lose sight of Gnosticism which found a hotbed in the Isma'ili thought, all of which was in an Islamic tinge that was not evidently clear.

The Isma'ili thought has risen as a result of a mixture of foreign Persian, Greek and Indian elements and Arab as well, and this statement is not exaggerated at all. Those who study Isma'ili thought will find the influence of Greek philosophy so clear, especially in the Iranian school, which led the modern philosophical study to include the Isma'ili thought as one of the philosophical research studies that should be investigated alongside the thought of Muslim philosophers such as al-Farābī and Ibn Sīnā among others.

The paper found out clear Christian elements in the Ismaili thought and tried to extract them, those elements that may have caused a strange shock to the well-known and agreed Islamic thought, chief among them is the prevalence of the belief in the doctrine of the Crucifixion of Christ, a doctrine that contradicts the Quranic verse that says: "Yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them." (Arberry, 1983, p. 95, 499), and I could not in fact find an acceptable explanation of how these elements entered the Isma'ili thought, mainly because of the scarcity of Ismaili sources that reached us and the secrecy and concealment that surround these ideas, but again, the acceptance of the doctrine of crucifixion in Isma'ili thought is similar to that of other ideas that are foreign to Islam, including the issue of reincarnation.

There is a remarkable similarity between the Imam's character in Shi'a thought in general and the Isma'ili in particular, and the character of Christ in Christianity. Both characters have risen, according to both thoughts, from the human level to another level of holiness that is related to the Upper Spiritual World, and both receive the Holy Support 'al-Ta'yīd al-Qudsī" according to Isma'ili terms. The hierarchy of the disciples of both personalities is similar to a great extent and each character enjoys miracles such as foretelling the future, personal marvels among others. In addition, in Isma'ili thought Jesus is one of the Six Mouthpieces or Speakers on which time periods revolve and his symbol is the Cross as it is stated in many Isma'ili sources.

The paper further highlighted the Druze Sect, which has naturally emerged from Isma'ili thought. The study of Druze should be performed within the Isma'ili context, because Isma'ilism is the mother group from which it came out. Clear influences of Christian elements in the Druze Sect have been clearly found, one of which was the spread of the idea of Christian-Mahdiism among the Druze, let alone the use of some Gospel citations by Durzi preachers that were meant to be applied to Jesus Christ but were rather used in connection with the well-known Druze preacher Muḥammad b. Ḥamzah. Such texts were used to confirm that he is the Messiah who should be obeyed by Christians and the same has been applied to al-Ḥakim too as some Druze believe that he will come back as the Christ who will initiate resurrection at the end of days. It is known in the Durzi doctrine that the Druze deify al-Ḥakim bi Amrillāh, and I have cited explicit texts in this context in which many attributes - that can only be attributed to God – are bestowed upon al-Ḥakim bi 'Amrillāh, which reminds us of Christ and the belief in him as God by Christians.

Finally, it can be said that human beings may tend to be physically exaggerating in many situations, in the sense that they exaggerate the status of the person visible in front of them and find him closer to them than the moral forces that require more trouble to think and approach them. Such exaggeration may provide followers of a given sect with moral protection especially for minorities in society; the Isma'ili sects have been classified as extreme Shiites by authors of books on classifications of Muslim doctrines. The Isma'ili sects have been extreme in their belief in 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalib, from being a prominent companion of Prophet Muhammad to

elevating him to a higher degree above human nature; a degree that the Prophet himself does not enjoy. The same issue applies to al-Ḥakim bi 'Amrillāh and the Durzī belief in him.

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