

Assessment and Analysis of Ismaili Sect's Functionality Sect in Azerbaijan 4th - 10th Century A.H

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Abstract

The Ismaili is one of the sub-sects of Shiite sect which in addition to being involved in some specific events in the history of different regions in the world of Islam from India to Iran and North Africa has been able to form governments. The record of Ismaili's presence in Azerbaijan goes back to the third century A.H and the ruling period of Mosafer and Sajian in the fourth century A.H that continued to Seljuqs and Ilkhanids periods. Upon Mongol attacks the center of Imamat moved to Azerbaijan, during 8 and 9th century A.H and this coincided with the Nezari Ismaili's internal evaluations in Iran. The level of Ismaili sect's presence in and its contribution to Azerbaijan between 4th and 10th century A.H is assessed here through a descriptive-analytic method and library studies.

Keywords: Shiism, Ismaili, Azerbaijan, Al Mosafer, Seljuqs, Mongol

1. Introduction

The ambiguous historic records regarding the initial presence of Ismaili sect in Azerbaijan coincides with the ruling period of Mosaferi in the fourth century A.H. In this period the Ismaili missionaries succeeded in their attempt to convert Marzbanebn-Mohammad, the leader of Mosafer clan to Ismaili faith. In the same period the Ismaili missionary Abu Hatem Razi went to Marzbanebn-Mohammad, Golam Yousouf ebn abi Elsay's court in Azerbaijan and asked him to convert to Ismaili faith and allow missionaries to enter Azerbaijan. In the 4th century A.H the carmathes Ismaili sect was dominant in Azerbaijan. In the 5th century A.H the Alamouth Ismaili sect and Nezarian sub-sect were active in Azerbaijan. The existence of some Ismaili castles and some political assassinations by the Ismaili devotees during Seljuqs and Atabek ruling period prove the presence of Ismailis in Azerbaijan. After collapse of Alamut Castel through Holakookhan in 654 A.H the Ismaili Imams seat was moved to Azerbaijan. In this period the Ismaili Imams renovated the commissioning order in Azerbaijan. The attempt is made in this study to evaluate the level of contribution of Ismaili sect's presence in Azerbaijan during the six centuries by categorizing the period in the following three time junctures: 1- the beginning of commissioning up to Seljuqs era 2- from Seljuqs to Mongols era and 3- from Mongol to Safavid era in order to answer the following questions: Where would the Azerbaijani Ismaili faith fit from beginning to Seljuqs with respect to Ismaili clans? How was the relation between Azerbaijan Ismaili sects with the Fatimids in Egypt? And how much was the Alamuth Ismailis' influence on Azerbaijan Ismailis? During Mongols when the seat of Ismaili Imamat was moved to Azerbaijan and ruled for two centuries, to what extent were the Azerbaijani Ismailie's internal evolutions? And what was the effect of Azerbaijani Ismailis on the neighboring countries in minor Asia during the six decades?

2. Azerbaijan's Ismaili from Beginning to Seljuqs Era

2.1 The Beginning of Missionary

There are some ambiguities about the beginning movements of Ismailies in Azerbaijan. According to Ismaili records the first missionary to Azerbaijan was Hosain ibn Ahmad ibn Abdula (268 A.H). After his father's death he became the Ismaili Imam and went to Azerbaijan and then to Costantinapole. After inviting people to Ismaili faith in these scattered regions he returns to Salmieh (Hosain, 1959). The records indicate that many gifts were being sent to him when he was away from Azerbaijan (Tamer, 1377). Despite discrepancies in the sources regarding Ismaili presence in Azerbaijan the consent is on that their activities began in the third century A.H in

Azerbaijan (Nadim, 1350). The first Ismaili commissioners and propagandists in Iran especially in Azerbaijan were of carmathes clan. This indicates that this propaganda up to 286 A.H in Iran especially in Azerbaijan was of similar texture to what was being commissioned in Iraqe, Yemen and Bahrain (Chelongar, 1390). These historic resources in brief or general, regarding commissioning, point to some kind of ambiguities about the locations before the Fatimids dynasty's ruling over Egypt (Jafariyan, 1388).

2.2 *Al Mosafer*

At the beginning of 4th century A.H the Ale Jastan dynasty in Deilamestan was losing integrity. The founder of Salaris in Azerbaijan was Salar Marzban sun of Mohamad the sun of Mosafar Kangari (330-346AH) (kasravi, 2537). In this period the Ismaili sect had almost covered the north western Iran to a degree that Salar Marzban and his brother Vahsodan, the ruler of Tarum converted to Ismaili faith. Salar Marzban appointed Abolghasem Ali ibn Jafar, one of the Ismaili commissioners as his minister (Athir, 1350) and encouraged him to attack Azerbaijan and take it back from Deysam (Meskveyh, 1376). The reason for Almosafer's quick victory in this endeavor was the difference of the religion between Deysam and his minister Abolghasem. In this war the Deylamians of Azerbaijan cooperated with Salar Marzban who became the ruler of Azerbaijan in 344 A.H (Madelung, 1381 and Torkmani Azar, 1384). Since Abolghasem had converted some of Deysam's advisors to Ismaili faith he became successful in this propaganda in Azerbaijan (Daftary, 1375). The Ismaili sect became popular in a very strong sense all over Azerbaijan (Hamedani, 2536). This rapid the sub-sect of Almosafer's ismaili faith was carmathes clan and this sub-sect was being promoted in Azerbaijan. This fact is proved by the minted coin in (343 A.H) where the engravings indicate that Marzban and his brother Vahsodan followed carmathes clan and believed in messianic nature of Mohamad ibn Ismail but not the Fatimids Khalifat Immamat The Exalter (Daftary, 1375) Lack of the term The Exalter on Almosafer's minted coins indicates separation from Fatimids in Egypt (Jafarian, 1388; Tabatabai, 1373). In his book printed in 367 A.H, ibn Hoghol refers to high count of carmathes Ismailis in Azerbaijan in 344 A.H, and introduced them as "Boghaleyeh", or a branch of Ismaili (Ibn hogel, 1979) that rebelled in 316 A.H, when Abassi Khalifa crushed their movement. They carried white flags with verses from Koran on them calling for Israelis release from the Pharaoh (Mashkour, 1372) Some of the commissioners of Ray who were in close contact with carmathes of Iraqe and Bahrain have referred to Al Mosafer's carmathes faith (Chelongar, 1390).

Now the question rises about the degree of steadfastness in Al Mosafer's followers' faith in Ismaili sect. According to many researchers his believe was based on doubt. His objective was to disagree with the imitative style of Abbassi rather than true conversion to his new faith (Koub, 1367) Nevertheless, Al Mosafer keeps this influence on Azerbaijan can up to the point that Ismaili power was influential in Alamut (Azar, 1384). This shows that regardless of clan differences they sported Alamut. This cohesion among clans was due to the fact that the whole Ismaili sect was under pressure, thus, no time for disputes. In this final judgment it could be claimed that most Iranian and western researchers like Metz (1364) and Bosworth (1381) recognize Al Mosafer as the ruler of Shiite Ismaili faith in Azerbaijan. The records indicate that his ruling in Azerbaijan as the first with Ismaili faith began about one hundred and fifty years prior to that of Alamut Ismailies in 483 A.H; one hundred and twenty years prior to the Bavandian, the Imami faith in Tabaristan, 466 A.H, the second era of Bavandian; one century after the Zeidi Alavians of Tabatistan, 250 A.H, and fifty years after the coming to power of Fatimids in Egypt. It is worth mentioning that the conversation to Shiite Ismaili faith of Al Mosafer dynasty and their missionaries' propaganda on Ismaili faith in Azerbaijan did not cover all dynasty's subjects in this region.

2.3 *Other Discourses*

Abohatem Razi was one of the major think-tank and commissioners of Ismaili faith in Azerbaijan in the fourth century (316-323 A.H). He made Mardavich ibn Ziyar convert to Ismaili faith with the promise that he had predicted the time of Imam Mehdy's manifestation. This prediction did not materialize and this turned Mardavich against Abohatem Razi who had to leave Ray and go to Azerbaijan (Daftary, 1375). There he went to "Mofalah" court, to Gholam Yousof ebn abi Alsaj who had independent governance and after preaching the Ismaili faith, converted him as well. Abohatem Razi followed his mission in the same court for one year and died (Nizamulmolk, 1385; Maqrizi, 1416). He is the first theoretician of Ismaili sect who promoted this faith at the first decade of the fourth century A.H and prepared missionaries to be sent to different regions of Azerbaijan (Daftary, 1375; Madelung, 1368). At the beginning of the Ismaili propaganda in Azerbaijan the target population was of the lower stratum of the people. The attempt was made to convert the mass in order to rebel against the system, like the ones by Ismailis and carmathes in Bahrain, Sham, Yeman and North Africa. The commissioners realized that the same pattern would not work in Azerbaijan; therefore, they changed their strategy through advices by Abohatem Razi and here they concentrated on the elite and high ranking officials of the court (Chelongar, 1390).

With due respect to this approach, although the higher stratum of the Azari society converted to Ismaili sect, the majority of the people did not.

Another point worth mentioning regarding Ismaili presence and influence in Azerbaijan is the Sajian era. The commissioners were able to convert Yousof ebn Saj, the ruler to Ismaili faith; they even took him to Salamiyeh and because of this, Sajians sent many gifts through their messengers to Salamiyeh (Tamer, 1377). Of course in this source, although Yousef ibn Saj was submissive to Abbasids and was killed by carmathes there is no historical reliance. It seems that Yousef ibn Saj's determination to punish the carmathes by the cause of command by Abbasit Khalife led to misinterpretations about him (Koub, 1371). Being one of the co-authors of the text "Akhawanal Safa", the best source of Ismaili philosophy, an Azari is another indicator of the Ismaili influence on the Azari culture (Ghalib, 1964). In a report by Abohayam Tohidi (414 A.H) and another report by Ghefti and Ghazi Abdoljabar Motazeli another co-outer of this text is named as Aboul Hassan Ali ebn Haroon Zanjani (Daftari, 1375).

The last point here regarding the issue at hand is the influence of Ismaili faith on the tribes in Azerbaijan who were resided near the Anatoly borders in this period. There exist many documents regarding the manner of Ismaili penetration into Sophism, pointing to the Dervish uprising in the rural and boarder eras (Abujamal, 1382)

3. Azerbaijan Ismaili, Seljuqe to Mongol Eras

3.1 The Alamouth Ismaili and Azerbaijan

Ismailies in Iran, during Seljuqe ruling were the followers of one high theological authority who was stationed in Isfahan. Since beginning of 460 A.H this possessions was hold by Abdul Malek ben Attash who led the Ismaili movement all over the central and western regions including Azerbaijan of Iran (Daftari, 1375). In the meantime Hassan Sabah converted to Ismaili faith by a few Batenians from Ray and was appointed as the representative of Abdul Malek ben Attash in Egypt. In 469 A.H Hassan Sabah on the way to Egypt went to Azerbaijan first (Kashani, 1366). These two facts indicate that there must have been a reason for his change of path and prolonged journey. It could be said that during his stay in Azerbaijan he has studied the Ismailes records of the past century and found that in some points in time Ismaili ruling in Azerbaijan had been established. All these must have made that region something special in his pretensions. The Ismaili records have that on his way back to Iran from Egypt he passed some time in Azerbaijan where he had announced to Azerbaijan Ismaili that the righteous Imam after Mostansar is Nezar (Fadayi, 1373). Then, he occupied the Alamouth castle in 483 A.H and Ismailies gained more power and many people joined Ismaili faith and concurred many Vilayats in Azerbaijan, provinces (Hamedani, 1366). It is apparent that using the term gained more power here and meant non material influence of Ismailies on Azerbaijan, since this region was a strategic one under Seljuqe rule. After settling in Alamouth castle many people commuted to the castle to learn Baba Seiedna's teachings regarding religious principles and many Sunnites converted to Shiite-Ismaili and accepted the Jafari sect (Fadayi, 1373). Accordingly we can push the expansion of Shiite back to the 5th century in Azerbaijan and eventually the hole country in Safavid era, when Hassan Sabah ruled; since, all historical records indicate that the after Mongol attacks during 7th- 9th centuries the expansions of Shiism began in Azerbaijan.

Another document regarding the subject of this article is related to connection of Azerbaijan Ismaili clergy with Ali ebn Nezari, the Imam of the period also known as "Shah Hadi". Some sources point to the general facts, but not the details about what Azerbaijan Ismaili learned from the wisdom of Shah Hadi who reflected his knowledge to his followers after he was selected to Imamat (Fadayi, 1373).

Another document regarding the subject of this article is Presence Ismaili Imam, Jalaluddin Hassan, in Azerbaijan. The Imam stayed in Azerbaijan for one and a half years and helped Attabek in the battle with the Iraque rulers. He was compensated by Abhar and Zanzan cities for his assistance to Jalaloldin who was a Sunni (Hamedani, 1366; kashani, 1366). The expansion of Azerbaijan territory by Abhar and Zanzan regions is another fact supporting the Ismailies presence and influences in Azerbaijan.

Here it should be noted that according to Ismailies of Iran making an open confession to Sunnite sect did not mean abandoning ones religious beliefs. In a historic viewpoint this conduct was periodic for some by resorting to dissimulation under circumstances that were not fit for Ismailies (Abujamal, 1382). Kaje Nasiroldin Touri who was a statesman in Ismaili system considered the term of above mentioned brotherhood pact as a concealed dissimulation period (Tusi, 1950). Some researchers believe that the deviating approach by Jalal oldin Hassan helped him in acquiring more territories from the king and expand the Ismaili authority in Iran (Bayani, 1387).

During Ismailies influence period in Azerbaijan many castles were built and many political assassinations attempts were made by Ismailies and this shows the strong and active presence of Ismailies there during Seljuqs

and Atabeks ruling eras. The spread of assignation points on the map is grater than the points that show the castles, around Azerbaijan boundaries. The devotees to Ismaili, here the assassins were being directed from three main centers: Azerbaijan, and the mountains in Mazandaran (Sotudeh, 1362). Many of the Emirs and ungenerous men in Azerbaijan were killed through Ismaili devotees (Kashani, 1366). Hafez Abro has prepared a complete list of the men assassinated by Ismaili theorists (Sotudeh, 1362). As for the castles built under Hassan Sabah's governance, historians are of the opinion that these castles served as the military base, religious- political training centers for Ismailies (Fazai, 1363). The Shamankoh castle in Abhar and Shalrood in Khalkhal and Zahak in Hashtrood were the most famous ones after Alamut in Azerbaijan (Athir, 1344). Nevertheless, it should be added that with all the intolerable pressures exerted on Ismailies of Iran during Seljuqe era Ismaili influence in Iran not only did not recede, but expanded nationwide. After Soltan Mohammad Seljuqe died in 511 A.H his army that had surrounded the Alamut castle, fled out of fear by leaving all the stock and supplies in order to be light upon escape (Kashani, 1366; Hamedani, 1366). After this victory the Ismailies were able to spread their influence beyond Azerbaijan and signed treaties with other provincial rulers (Farghani, 1381) where the Ismaili Nezari clan gained power and fame national (Hamedani, 1366).

3.2 *The Infidels or Persian Ismailies of Azerbaijan*

During Hassan Sabah's presence and after his death there existed different clans of Ismailies other than Nezari called "Infide" or "Persia" Ismailies. According to Ismaili historians these clans were the "deceived" ones. These infidel Ismailies had acquired the nominal Ismaili faith for only a few decades. These clans represented the ideology that was true for all religions, that is: when a new sect or religious hypothesis is introduced many begin to claim that they are the devotees of that new sect superficially, while in reality they clinged to their original faith. Hassan Sabah sent Keykhosrow, one of his assistances who were affiliated with the "decived" to make them to convert to real Ismaili faith. Keykhosrow died before accomplishing his mission but his sons were appointed to lead the operation. They were so greedy for money and status that they forgot their own faith. Hassan Sabah tried to put them on the right path but he failed. After Hassan Sabah died in 518 A.H a weaver named Badil rised among the decived and claimed that the truth is with the Persians and Ismaili are superficial believes. Upon this claim and the relevant teachings the Ismailies captured some of the infidels and made them to confess by torturing them and killed these two brothers and some of their followers (Hamedani, 1366). The Nezari authors cursed these people because they wanted to follow an unlawful life style against Hassan Sabah's teachings and therefore there were punished by the pure Ismailies. Some believe that these people were foreign tribes whom Hassan Sabah wanted to convert to Nezari Ismaili or tribes that did not fight against Fatimids by becoming anti-Nezari and have joined the Mostalavies (Hodgson, 1343). Yet some called them the infidel Ismailies (Vladymyrna, 1371) and Mazdaki (Madelung, 1381). By doing so the Islam's legislative system was pushed away that resembled the Nezari to infidel Ismaili. Its hould be mentioned that after this period the Alamut Ismailies were called infidels (Hamedani, 1366). Here some similarities of Persian Azerbaijan Ismaili conceptions with that of the carmathes Ismailies who resided in Azerbaijan in the 4th century known as Baghalieh should not be ignored. When Imam Hassan ebn Mohammad who began the partial resurrection movement a few decades later a similarity was found between this movement and Boghaliyye. Both sub-sects shared and practiced the idea of not eating some greens and vegetables, and that eating animal flesh was prohibited by sectoral law and Persians believed no one should harm the and animal. Here, it could be concluded that the Persian Ismailies of Azerbaijan were the remainders of Babak Khorami's followers that while loyal to religions and Iranian traditions had converted to Ismaili faith and had introduced some of their traditional manners there, something that was not in agreement with Alamut Ismailies setup; therefore, the later rose against these measures. The main reason of Alamut Nezari Ismailies opposition with this group was their being close to carmathes Ismaili faith. Alamut Nezari Ismailies were in fury with them and called them Mazdaki.

Another fact among many regarding the Ismaili influence in Azerbaijan is that in the 6th century Sheikh Shahaboldin Shahrodi attended "Ismaili school" in Maraghe; hence strong and established presence of Ismaili ruling in the region (Ghalib, 1964).

3.3 *Ismailies in Azerbaijan from Mongol to Safavid Era*

There exist very few records on the history of Ismailies after Mongol attacks. The available records relate to the Nezari Imams presence in 7 and 8th centuries A.H and the "Nezari Ghehestani" dairy.

3.4 *Relocating the Nezari Imam's Seat to Azerbaijan*

Historic records showed that after Alamut collapse by Holaka Khan (654 A.H) the Nezari Imam's seat was transferred to Azerbaijan. The records show that at this period in time the Ismaili followers' number had increased in Azerbaijan (Abujamal, 1382) This fact justifies the Nezari Ismaili Immamat headquarter move to

Azerbaijan. The Nezari Ismailies elite hid Shamsoldin Mohammad the son and successor of the latest Alamut ruler, Roknoldin Khorshahs in order to be exposed when the time was right so they moved him to Azerbaijan while leading a hidden life with his close affiliates. (Daftari, 1389) He was called "Zardooz" because his hiding place was a goldsmiths workshop (Daftari, 1389) some records indicate that he was hiding in the city of "Zardooz" and established a center for the Ismaili clergy who had fled Mogols blades (Farghani, 1381; Abujamal, 1382). It took a while for the Ismailies to enjoy their Imam's presence. His first son was born in the city of Zardooz (Ghalib, 1964). The Surian Ismaili records claim that the Imam lived in a village called Ghosoor 60km north of Ormieh, in the suburbs of Tabriz. In the scarce reports about his Immamat, one thing for sure is that many Ismaili leaders' scholars and commissioners visited the Imam to renew pact and get advice and he himself visited his regular followers in the region (Khorasani, 1373). Since his era coincided with that of Shams Tabrizi the great mystic poet, some domestic sources even of Ismailies in India considered him as to be the latter (Tarom, 1381). As the last point of this section about the first Imam in Azerbaijan it is worth mentioning that in the 7th and 8th centuries according to the Syrian author Abu Fasan ebn Ghazi's text in the 9th centuries, who was a commissioner himself the name Akhavan ol Safa was what the Ismaili leader was called during Mongol occupation (Abujamal, 1382).

3.5 The Successor of the Imam Shamsoldin Mohammad in Azerbaijan

Shamsoldin Mohammad died after 50 years of Immamat in Azerbaijan on 710 A.H. It was during his long stay in Azerbaijan that the Iranian Nezari's become strong enough to occupy the Alamaat even temporarily while in the same period the Shami Nezari Ismailies were completely under Egyptian rulers control (Daftari, 1375). After Shamaoldin Mohammad's death conflicts began on the successorship among his three sons named Momen Shah, Khasem Shah and Kia Shah where only Ghasem Shah and Momen Shah were appointed as the Imams. This double power distribution created branching between Nezarians and they become the sub sects of Ghasem Shahi Ismailies and Momen Shahi Ismailies (Tarom, 1381; Tamer, 1377). Momen Shah's followers prospered in North Iran and central Asian in the 10th century A.H and they went to India. The Ghasem Shah's followers established a branch the followers of which are the Aghakhani sub-sect (Daftari, 1375). The Ghasem Shah's sect eventually held the Ismaili Immamat in Azerbaijan and evolved (Daftari, 1389). Ghasem Shah's Immamat lasted 60 years with the main object of protecting its dynasty's legitimacy (Daftari, 1375). He sent some missionaries to India and Keshmir. He also sent Momen Shah to Fars, Ghazvin and Sham, and Kia appointed Shah as the custodian of Alamut and vacinities (Ghalib, 1964). Despite the inner division in the Ismaili sect in Azerbaijan, Shamsildin and his sons were able to expand this sect beyond the borders of Iran. After Ghasem Shah's death in 771 H.A, his son Islam Shah occupied the Imams possession. It seems that during the Ismaili followers' massacre by Teymuri Lang's forces, Islam Shah had to move somewhere else from Azerbaijan. According to the Ismaili records he first residence was in the city of Babak and then in Kahak. Despite this replacement, for a long time the Ismaili Imams kept the correspondence with their followers in Azerbaijan (Hollister, 1373). All in all, after the Nezari division in two, the Ghasem Shah's followers decided to change the Imam's seat from Azerbaijan because they did not feel safe under Sunni Imams. During Mostanser Bellah the second known as Shah Ghalandar, the 32nd Nezari leader the Nezari base moved to Anjadan from Azerbaijan after two centuries (Daftari, 1389; Ivanov, 1338). Most of Mostansar Bealalah Immamat considered with the AghGhounlus ruling of Sunni sect.

It is worth mentioning that the 28th Imam, Shamsoldin Mohammad Shah (710 AH), 29th Imam, Shah Ghasem (660-771 AH), 30th Imam, Islam Shah (827 AH), 31st Imam, mohammad ibn Islam Shah (772-868 AH), 32nd Imam, Mostansar Bealalah (806-880 AH) (Hollister, 1373) led Azerbaijan Ismaili sect before moving the seat to Azerbaijan. It should be added that each Imams Immamat coincided with the following rulers period respectively: Ilkhanids (654-738 AH), Al Chupan (739-758 AH), Al Jalyer (759-787 AH), Teymorids (788-809 AH), GharaGhuyunlos (810-874 AH), AgGuyunlos (874-907 AH)

The Ismailies in Azerbaijan by adopting dissimulation policy and the Sufi's methods and creation of appropriate political atmosphere were able to convert the Ilkhanian, Teymurian, Chupanian, Al Jelayer and Ghara Ghoynlus to Shiite (Bayani, 1387; Mirjaafari, 1384) and continue their mission in Azerbaijan until everything ended when AghGhoynlus of Sunni faith took power (Roemer, 1385) (Although the base was moved to Anjadan, some sources have recorded the ongoing relations between Azerbaijan Ismaili followers and the Ismaili Imams. In addition records show that some Azerbaijan Ismaili visited the 34th Nezari Imam's temple (Farghani, 1381; Ghalib, 1964). Following and practicing the Sufi procedures among the Ismailies in Anjadan can be considered as the result of Ismailies long stay in Azerbaijan.

3.6 The Nezari Ghahestani's Travel Diary

Another reach source regarding the Ismailies settlement in Azerbaijan during Mongol era is the poet Ghahestani's diary of Ismaili faith (645-720 H.A). He was a missionary assigned to this journey by the state. At age 33 or 34 in the company of a Mongol authority, the tax collector he set out to Azerbaijan. According to Ivanov of this journey was to visit the Ismaili Imam of the period in Azerbaijan. The journey began from Isfahan passing through Natanz, Tabriz, Khoy, Alatagh, Armemi, Gorgan, Savani, Ardebil Shioyazi and Abhar.

During his three month stay in Tabriz the poet enjoyed his most emotional state because he shared his thoughts with the native men of knowledge. These individuals were of Ismaili faith who had adopted the Sufi or Dervish's way of life in Azerbaijan. Darolshafa was the administrative center of Ismailies in Tabriz where he often commuted adopted dissimulation. He does not shade much light on the events that took place in Tabriz since he adopted dissimulation. In his diary there are farcical indications regarding his visits with Shamsoldin Mohammad the Imam in Darolshafa (Bayburdi, 1370) His dairy is full of farcical remarks about the Ismailies of Ardebil, Baku, Zanzan and Shiruyaz (Soltanieh) (Abujamal, 1382). In Ardebil he meets San the poet researcher who was sick. In a revisit he sees a person called "a friend from the city of Ray" who had came to cure the sick poet. Due to the farcical nature of his writings it is possible to interpret the term "a friend from the city of Ray" and curing the sick as the elements of connection between the Ismailies of these two cities, regarding the guidance received by Azerbaijan Ismailies from Ray. When in Ardebil he receives a letter from Ghahestan and in the response he mentions a few famous names with which he had visited (Bayburdi, 1370). During his stay in Azerbaijan he visited friends in Zanzan and Shiruyaz. The positive, scientific and polite atmosphere there affected the poet significantly. During his short stay in arran he visited Ismaili colleagues Shahaboldin Fotuh and Sadaroldin. All the faces he met have been intellectuals and men of knowledge since all are commanded in his dairy. It can be deduced from this dairy that despite Ismailies loss of political power and territories, a significant number of them remained there by adopting the prevailing Sufi religion- cultural system that is dissimulation. This act kept the close correlation between Sufis and Nezari Ismailies in Azerbaijan to a point that for the centuries to come, based on his observations, this close correlation was highly promoted (Abujamal, 1382).

3.7 The Ismailies of Asia the Minor

Ismailies role in Asia the Minor is another aspect of this study. Through the influence of Ismaili faith on Sufism and literature regarding the rural movements recorded, spread by Sufi Dervishes in Anatoli and Azerbaijan in the previous centuries paved the way to being the Ismaili faith propaganda in Asia the Minor. In a sense the Ismailies in Azerbaijan, before Mongol era, appeared as Shiite with a full gratitude towards Imam Ali made connection with some Turkish Dervish Sects of the region (Abujamal, 1382). The Ismaili Imam, Shamsoldin sent a missionary named Hassanoldin to Rum where the Rumi clergy assisted him in preaching (Fadaye, 1373). Meanwhile it is observed that a Seljuqe Amir in Asia the Minor who become a king after the kingdom of Asia the Minor collapsed was convicted of being converted to Ismailies faith (Hodgson, 1343). Some researchers have addressed critical issues regarding the influence that Ismailies of Shiite had on the heads of Babaieh uprising (Dezfuly, 1389) Almost all researchers of Babaieh uprising are in consent that this uprising was motivated through the inner conceptual beliefs of Shiism (Sheybi, 1359) while some negate this notion of Ismaili sect of Shiism involment (Ocak, 2000). It should be mentioned that the Noseyris, the majority of whom resided in Turkey are a branch of the Ismailies who were very close to carmathes (Daftari, 1376).

3.8 Ismailies and Azerbaijan in Safavid Era

In this era, after the Immamat seat was transferred from Azerbaijan to Anjedan, during Safavid era the important issue is that an Ismaili Imam of Nezari Mohammad Shahi branch called Shah Taher ibn Razeoldin Hosseini the second, the thirty first Imam still resided in Azerbaijan while most of this Ismaili sub sects Imams resided in India. His knowledge and fame made Shah Ismail of Safavid to invite him to join other Shiite scholars in the Safavid court in Soltanieh of Azerbaijan (Daftari, 1389). Taher Shah had many influential followers in the court among which Mirza Hossain Isfahani was the most renewed (Amin, 1382). For unknown resources the Safavid king expressed his disapproval towards Taher Shah. This might have been the caused due to the fact that, according to the reports his teaching style was different with that of the orthodox Shiite. With the intervention of Mirza Hossain Isfahani an influential figure in Safavid court who in privy could have been a follower of the influential Taher Shah, his transfer to Kashan was organized to stay and teach.

When it was revealed that Taher Shah was of Ismaili faith, Shah Ismail ordered his death; but Taher Shah fled to India and began the propaganda on Shiite to a point that he made Sultan Ahmad Negar to convert to Shiite (Daftari, 1375).

4 Conclusion

The Ismaili sect in the 3rd and 4th century H.A and in Almosafer era was being promoted through carmathes commissioners; therefore, no political and religious correlation existed between Fatimids stewardship of Egypt. By occupying the Alamut Castle by Hassan Sabah in the 5th century Ismailies penetrated Azarbaijan, hence the growth of Ismailies there and fight connection with Alamut Castle. Accordingly the expansion of Ismaili sect in Azerbaijan can be connected to Hassan Sabah's ruling era in the 5th century. In addition to religious administration Ismailies were able to establish and organize military forces in Azerbaijan. The Ismailies of Azerbaijan were not the mere subjects under control of Alamut Castle because there was a difference in beliefs that indicates the thought-independency of Ismailies of Azerbaijan. The group of "Persian Ismailies" in Azerbaijan was called infidels by Alamout Castle and was severally punished. This group was influenced by some carmathes Ismaili beliefs that eventually influenced the Alamut Castle in the proceeding eras. In the 7th century the Ismaili seat was transferred to Azerbaijan to a place called "Darolshufa" and a specific name of "Akhavan olsafa". During 7th and 8th centuries active presence of Ismailies in Azerbaijan after Mongol attacks is evident. During this period the Ismaili Imams of Azerbaijan organized the new Nezarian Ismaili branch of Iran and sent commissioners all over the Asia the Minor. In this era Azerbaijan faced an internal Ismaili evaluation that is branching out of true basic Mohammad Shahi and Ghasem Shahi sub-sects. In Azerbaijan, in this period, the Ismailies adopted Sufi's patterns and converted the Azerbaijan rulers to Shiite until when Agh Ghionlous of Sunni sect took power and forced the Ismailies to move their sect from Darolshafa to Anjadan. Despite this sect replacement the context kept on. In the final analysis it should be noted that although at some points Nezari the Ismailies presence in Azeraijan when even the Governance with the Ismaili faith, this faith did not become popular among the ordinary people, but some elite. The Ismaili Imams and their affiliates did not succeed in establishing this sect among the mass in Azerbaijan.

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