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## The Ismaili *Da'wa* outside the Fatimid *Dawla*

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The Ismailis separated from the rest of the Imāmī Shi'is on the death of the Imām Ja'far al-Šādiq in 148/765. By the middle of the 3rd/9th century, the Ismailis had organized a secret, religio-political movement designated as *al-da'wa* (the mission) or, more precisely, *al-da'wa al-hādiya* (the rightly guiding mission). The overall aim of this dynamic and centrally-directed movement of social protest was to uproot the °Abbāsids and install the °Alid imām acknowledged by the Ismailis to the actual rule of the Islamic community (*umma*). The revolutionary message of the Ismaili

however, did not depend on his actual rule. The doctrine further taught that the Prophet himself had designated his cousin and son-in-law ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), who was married to the Prophet's daughter Fātima, as his successor under divine command; and that the imāmate was to

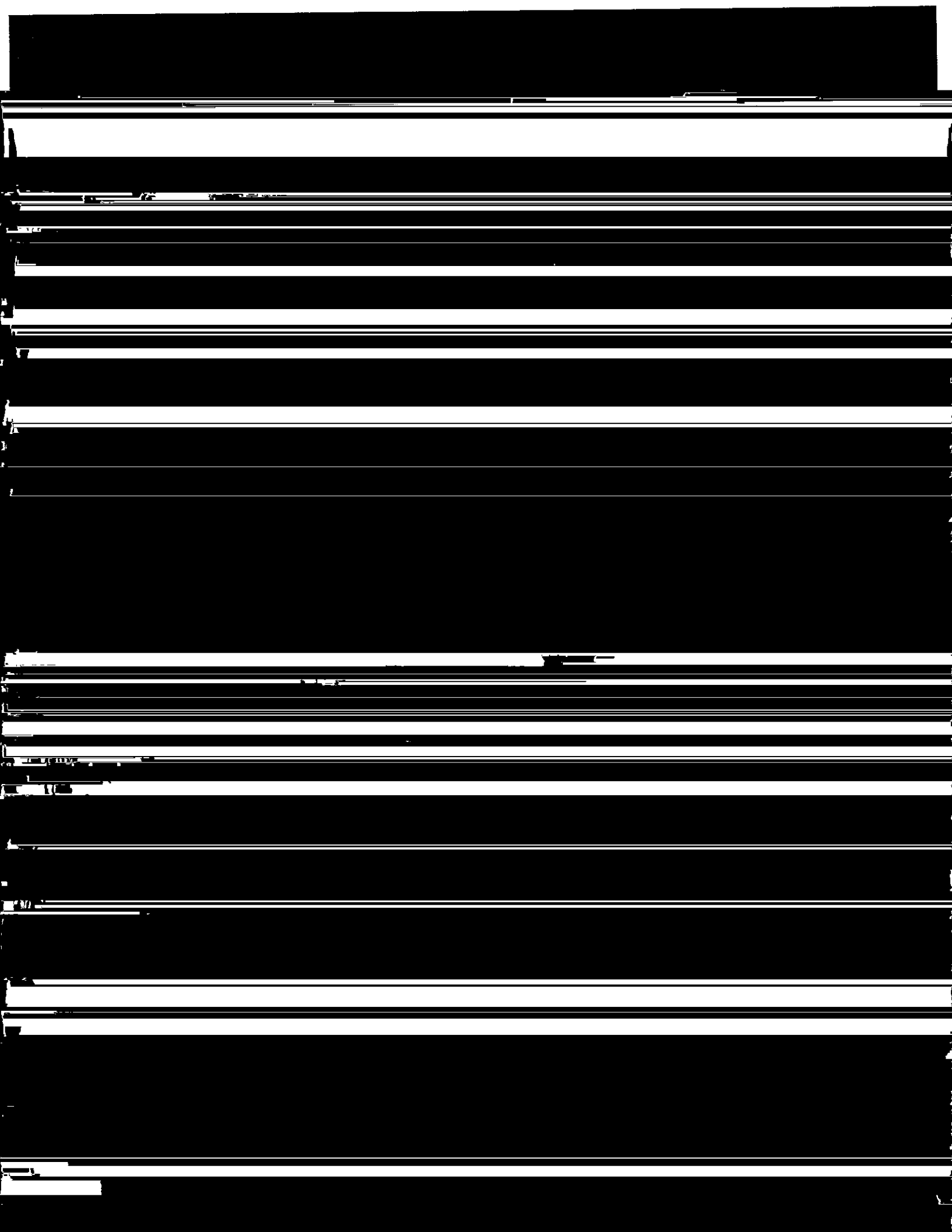
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too, now possessed a system of law and jurisprudence as well as an Ismaili paradigm of governance.

As developed by al-Nu<sup>c</sup>mān, Ismaili law accorded special importance to the central Shī<sup>c</sup>ī doctrine of the imāmate. In fact, the opening chapter in the *Da<sup>c</sup>ā'im al-Islām*, which relates to *walāya*, explains the necessity of acknowledging the rightful imām of the time, viz., the Fatimid caliph-imām, also providing Islamic legitimation for the <sup>c</sup>Alid state ruled by the Fatimids belonging to the Prophet's family. In fact, the authority of the infallible Fatimid <sup>c</sup>Alid imām and his teachings were listed as the third principal source of Ismaili law, after the Qur'ān and the *sunna* of the Prophet which are accepted as the first two sources by all Muslims. In sum, it was al-Qādī al-Nu<sup>c</sup>mān who elaborated in his legal compendia a doctrinal basis for the Fatimids' legitimacy as *ḥakīm al-umma*, also lending support to their universal claims.<sup>5</sup>



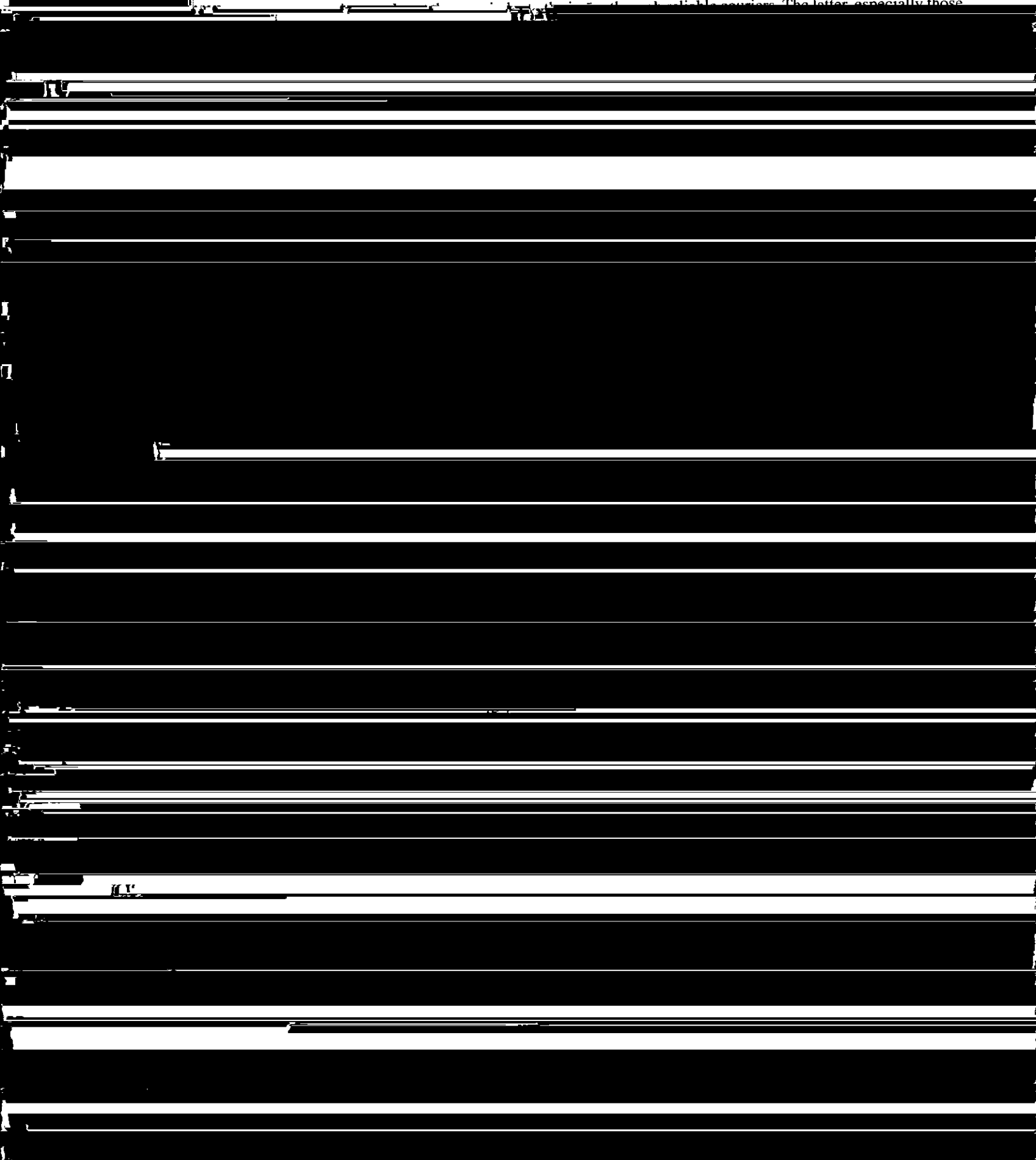
Qarmaṭī incursions. Having transformed the Fatimid *dawla* from a regional power into an expanding and stable empire with a newly activated *daʿwa* apparatus, al-Muʿizz died in 365/975.

and the structure of the Fatimid Ismaili *daʿwa* organiza-

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members of his community. The *dā'ī* kept a portion of the funds collected on behalf of the imām, including the *zakāt*, the *khums* and certain Ismaili-specific dues like the *najwā*, to finance his local



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would rule the entire world. Consequently, the *da<sup>ʿ</sup>wa* ranks mentioned in these sources were not actually filled at all times; some of them were probably never filled at all. The chief *dā<sup>ʿ</sup>ī* (*dā<sup>ʿ</sup>ī al-du<sup>ʿ</sup>āt*) acted as the administrative head of the *da<sup>ʿ</sup>wa* organization. He appointed the provincial *dā<sup>ʿ</sup>īs* of the Fatimid state, who were stationed in the main cities of the Fatimid provinces, including Damascus, Tyre, Acre, Ascalon, and Ramla, as well as in some rural areas. These *dā<sup>ʿ</sup>īs* represented the *da<sup>ʿ</sup>wa* and the chief *dā<sup>ʿ</sup>ī*, operating alongside the provincial *qāḍīs* who represented the Fatimid *qāḍī al-quḍāt*. The chief *dā<sup>ʿ</sup>ī* also played a part in selecting the *dā<sup>ʿ</sup>īs* of non-Fatimid territories. Not much else is known about the functions of the chief *dā<sup>ʿ</sup>ī*, who was closely supervised by the imām. As noted, he was also responsible for organizing the *majālis al-ḥikma*; and in Fatimid ceremonial, he ranked second after the chief *qāḍī*, if both positions were not held by the same person.<sup>17</sup> The title of *dā<sup>ʿ</sup>ī al-du<sup>ʿ</sup>āt* itself, used in non-Ismaili sources, rarely appears in the Ismaili texts of the Fatimid period which, instead, usually use the term *bāb* (or *bāb al-abwāb*), implying gateway to the imām's "wisdom", in reference to the administrative head of the *da<sup>ʿ</sup>wa* organization. The *dā<sup>ʿ</sup>ī* Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī makes particular allusions to the position of *bāb* and his closeness

clarified in the meagre sources. It seems, however, that *dāʿī al-balāgh* acted as liaison between the central *daʿwa* headquarters in the Fatimid capital and the *ḥujja*'s headquarters in his *jazīra*, and *al-dāʿī al-muṭlaq* evidently became the chief functionary of the *daʿwa*, operating with absolute authority in the absence of the *ḥujja* and his *dāʿī al-balāgh*. The regional *dāʿīs*, in turn, had their

The sources mention at least two categories of this

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°Abbāsīd caliphate. It was also the learned *dā'ī* al-Kirmānī who was invited to Cairo to refute, on behalf of the *da'wa* headquarters, the extremist doctrines then being expounded by the founders of the Druze movement.

The *da'wa* continued to be propounded successfully in Iraq, Persia, and other eastern lands even after the ardently Sunnī Saljūqs had replaced the Shī'ī Būyids as the real masters of the °Abbāsīd caliphate in 447/1055. Important Ismaili communities were now in existence in Fārs, Kirmān, Iṣfahān and many other parts of Persia. In Fārs, the *da'wa* had achieved particular success through the efforts of the *dā'ī* al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, who had penetrated the ruling Būyid circles. After converting AbūKālījār Marzubān (415-440/1024-1048), the Būyid *amīr* of Fārs and Khūzistān, and many of his courtiers, however, al-Mu'ayyad was advised to flee in order to escape °Abbāsīd persecution. Subsequently, he settled in Cairo, where he played an active part in the affairs

13. For a discussion of this text see note 27. It was evidently Nōair Khuzraw who extended the *da'wa* in Badakhshān

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From the latter part of Ahmad al-Mukarram's reign (459-477/1067-1084), when the Sulayhids

559/1164, the Nizārī imāms themselves emerged openly at Alamūt and took charge of the affairs of their *da'wa* and state.<sup>31</sup> The Nizārī state lasted for some 166 years until it too was uprooted by the Mongol hordes in 654/1256. However, the Nizārī Ismaili *da'wa* and community survived the

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