

## Survey to the Effect and Reflection of Esmaelians Ideas on the Poems of Kasae Marvzi and Firdowsi Tusi

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### Abstract

*Ismailia is one of the most important Shia sects that has constantly been discussed and researched about by historians. They are considered of paramount importance because they held a range of creed peculiar to themselves and, as a seven Imam Shia movement, were of great danger to Baghdad Sunni caliphate and its stooges. At the beginning centuries of Iran literature, a noticeable number of poets and writers aimed at warning and awakening common people against Arab caliphate and its Seljukian and Ghaznavian representatives through resisting dominant religion and its agenda. Ismailia was one of the resisting sects who put significant influence on people thought through presenting specific ideologies and beliefs. The degree of their success could be measured by the number of people of distinctive rank who converted to their sect; e.g. Naser Khosro, and helped preach and publicize their sect. This research investigates the emergence, effect, and the reflection of Ismailia beliefs during their life time and, finally, shows to what extent two poets of the day, Kasae Marvzi and Firdowsi Tusi, were influenced by these creed through representing various aspects of their ideas and their crave for freedom.*

**Keywords:** Ismailians, Kasae, Firdowsi, Beliefs, Influences

### 1. Introduction

After Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) passed away, Muslims were diversified in different groups, two most important of which were Shia and Sunni, because of the disagreements surrounding the issue of succession; the Shia, itself, forked further in more diverse sub-groups. Ismailia was one of the most important sects who considered Ismail and his son Mohammed as real successors to Imam Sadeq. Imam Sadeq had four sons whose names were Ismail, Moses, Mohammed, and Abdullah. As it is shown in religion and history books, Imam Sadeq had appointed Ismail as his successor; however, since Ismail passed away while his father was alive, Imam Sadeq bestowed the succession upon Ismail's next brother, Moses. But a group of Imam Sadeq's followers did not approve his decision and stated that since Imam Sadeq was Innocent, his first appointing Ismail as real successor must be realized. The Ismailian holds Ismail to be the seventh Imam and the one who concludes the caliphate of Imams. (The Final Imam)

Ahmed-ben Abdullah Meimoon Qadah, Abdullah Meimoon Qadah's son, succeeded his father as a caliph and, further, preached Ismailia and this is how the Ismailian found proponents and missionaries in Islamic cities. Based on quality and stages of completion, Ismailia creed can be discussed from three distinctive stages:

- Stage one: they hold the same general Shia beliefs in that they consider Ali-ben Abitaleb as Prophet Mohammed's legitimate successor and his children up to Imam Jafar Sadeq; so far, more or less, they follow Shia principles.
- Stage two: Ismailia finds a unique form with a range of beliefs, creeds, and ideas concerning Imamate, Prophethy, and the evolution of religious epochs after the succession of Mohammed-ben Ismail who followed Imam Sadeq; here begins the interpretation of apparent physical religious concepts into inner, esoteric meanings.
- Stage three: the completion of Ismailia thought results in the flourishing of Nazarian and Hassan-Sabah's

instructions.

Followings are their most important religious tenets:

- They consider God the Absolute as beyond illusion, thought, reason, and doubt, no adjective begins to cover the greatness of God; God is beyond the realm of all speech.
- They portrayed the trajectory of being as this: the Creator's word, Divine Wisdom, Divine Self, Natures, Important Things, Celestial Bodies, New Births, and Ultimate Self. They account for Divine Wisdom and Divine Self as two fundamentals and call them First and Second. They believe in seven orators each with an executor. A millennium is the historical epoch of each orator. The historical epoch of each orator experiences the succession of seven Imams with this order: Adam and his executor, Sheth; Noah and his executor, Sam; Ibrahim and his executor, Ismail; Moses and his executor, Aaron; Christ and his executor, Peter; and finally, Mohammed and his executor, Ali.
- Each orator is succeeded by seven Imams, the seventh of whom being the most important and considered primary. The primary Imams in the six aforementioned historical epochs are: Sholim, Yazdaq, Al-salaam, Elias, Moed, and finally Imam Sadeq's son, Ismail. It is necessary to remember that, according to Ismailia creed, the seventh Imam has not come yet and his advent would mean the coming of the Judgment Day and the end of human era.
- Interpretation, uncovering the latent meanings of religious receipts, Quran verses, and sayings, is one of the most crucial components of Ismailia religious creed. The order in which they preach their religious tenets is as the following: orator, fundaments, Imam, prayer plea, authorized, recommended.
- The Ismailian do not consider heaven and hell in physical forms; rather, for them, mind and body of a knowledgeable person is heaven and that of an ignorant is hell. Reason does not suffice in discovering the truth. To know the truth, one needs the company and tutorship of a knowledgeable person; i.e. Imams who are labeled as 'the learned men'. Attention to reason, logic, philosophy, and an attempt to keep the balance between logic and philosophy are other Ismailia claims.

## 2. Social Critiques

As it has been with all social conditions, there were many attempts to break social barriers which were on the way to liberty in Ismailia era. In the beginning centuries of Iran literature, most notably 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, which is our main point of discussion, a group of poets and writers were in search of cultural regeneration and focused on saving Iranian tradition from Baghdad caliphate which was dictated on Iranian people extensively through Saljukian and Ghaznavian.

The crucial point is that after three or four centuries of cruelty and dominance of external forces, there was born a wave of resistance and rebellion in the mind of intellectual individuals. And it was this spirit of discontent which gave birth to Firdowsi's Shahname and Kasaei and Nasser Khosro's defense of Shia and Fatemian. (Riahi, 60)

Such broad-minded figures fought temptations of wealth and rank; they were aware, and tortured by, ignorance, dogma, and cruelty of dominant religion which was obeyed by most of the people, and consciously sought solutions and paths of salvation and joined the Ismailian in their battle against Arab caliphate. Unsurprisingly, this amalgam resulted in the emergence of a new literature characterized by severe social criticism of Baghdad caliphate reflected in the poetry of Kasaei, Firdowsi, Nasser Khosro, etc.

*"The Fatemian power provided a resort and shelter for poets and thinkers of the time against Turkish invasion and Arab caliphate. The movements and rebellions of the freemen of the time such as Jacob Leis, Maziar, Babak Khoramdin, Mardavich, Ziar, Daghighi, Firdowsi, and Nasser Khosro were jeopardized by Turkish invasion and Arab caliphate; and it was to strife these movements that Mahmoud nurtured enmity with Firdowsi and Masoud, to keep Baghdad caliphate satisfied, killed any herald of freedom". (Mosaffa, 47)*

According to what was said, it is fair to conclude that the poets' severe social critiques to reform the status quo and to save Iran from the burden of cruelty of Arab caliphate and its stooges all owed much to the decrees and beliefs backed up by Ismailians. Their patriotism and struggle with Arab caliphate was a source of great fear and danger to Saljukian and their followers. Among all other effective factors, one can justly claim the Ismailian as a significant criterion in the formation and reformation of the time. Next section investigates the role and reflection of their creed in the poetry of Kasaei and Firdowsi.

### 3. Kasae Marvzi

The sage Abo-AL Hassan Majd-e-Din Kasae Marvzi was one of the most capable 4<sup>th</sup> century Persian poets. He was born in 341 A.H. in Marv. He was initially a eulogistic poet, but repented to the end of his life and became a poet of exhortation and advice and a mentor to Nasser Khosro. Nasser Khosro's poetry includes constant hinting at Kasae and his works, and he has replied some of Kasae's some of the most noted elegies. "Kasae is the first poet who used elegies of sermon and preaching to foreground religious commandments, and paved the way for the emergence of a capable poet; i.e. Nasser Khosro Ghobadiani". (Soffa, 114)

Even though most Persian literature scholars believe Kasae to a Twelve Imam Shia based on the materials in his poetry, some other scholars claim to have evidences which qualify them to refer to Kasae as Ismailia. For example, Saeid Naffisi in Mohammed Aafi's *Lebal-ol-Albab* and Mohammad Moein in *Nezami Orouzi Four Articles* and many other scholars analyze Kasae's poetry and label him an Ismailia.

Thus although, despite many evidences and references in his works, Kasae cannot be considered an Ismailia at the moment, most of his ideas, especially his harsh social criticisms aimed at Abbasi caliphates and some of his philosophical and moral poems, are reflected in Nasser Khosro's poetry who is obviously an Ismailia poet. So, the next parts will discuss some of Kasae's poems which are supposed to be influenced by Ismailia creed.

*"One of Kasae's most kernel odes is a wise one in which he ponders wisdom from an Ismailia perspective, an ode much admired by Nasser Khosro, and mistakenly attributed to him by some scholars. However, Kasae's being a Shia is very clear based on the traces in his poem, a fact much emphasized upon by Nasser Khosro's eulogistic dedications and nine references to Kasae as an Ismailia. One of his odes, Life and Reason, is totally saturated with Ismailia Creed". (Aafi, 661-664)*

Additionally, Dr. Mohammed Moein in *Nezami Orouzi Four Articles* states that despite the oppositions between Kasae and Nasser Khosro, Nasser Khosro's following address to Kasae substantiates the fact that Kasae was an Ismailia:

*"Till to the time when you're, by heart, my leader  
All my poetry is a slave to that of you, O Kasae" (Nezami, 97)*

The following notions can be, safely, attributed to Kasae's ode, Life and Reason, and reflect Ismailia Creed.

### 4. Divine Essence and Creation

Life and reason are the same as Divine Self and Divine Wisdom in Ismailia philosophy which was under Neo-Platonism influence and held that Divine Wisdom comes from Divine Essence and this wisdom gives life to Divine Self. In Ismailia philosophy, Wisdom is an immaterial substance in essence and being, but self is an immaterial substance which requires material in being:

*"Life and reason wander this green cycle  
Or both of whom are hidden in life's circle  
Why not a universe of animals which are talking  
If life and reason are in it erect walking". (Aafi, 661)*

And the idea that out of the union and combination of Divine Wisdom and Divine Self come out nine heavens, planets, earth, and other celestial orbits:

*"Because to these two natural entities end  
If wind, soil, and water are beyond heavens.  
How extent they must observe and rotate around moon  
This constellation of candles viewing this green life  
These seven candles monitoring this life, O Son!  
Reflects to us what we have exactly done afore.  
For the whiteness of the face of a shining star  
Is because it much reflects its essence and nothing more". (Aafi, 661)*

Based on these stanzas, Wisdom and Self came out of the blue as creation; they have form in that they are

portrayed, and yet lack from in that they do not have material, concrete outfits. Also, Wisdom and Self are not visible or perceptible; and the belief that Life, Reason, Wisdom, and Self are holistic, progressing towards spiritual completion and salvation is a common Ismailia precept. They figured that Reason and Wisdom affect life and destiny as visible entities:

*"They are not in the world thus absent they are  
But if they are, how come we feel them in us?  
And when they come out of this body, out they be,  
What are they? thing or nothing? Be or not be?  
If they are nothing and out they be out of the frame  
Thus how they are vicious, though in us they are be?  
If void they are and nothing they can do,  
But they give all body and actions in body to you?  
The blue sky above them they don't see and the birds  
Fly one after the other and get above us high". (Aufi, 661)*

The following verses reflect Ismailia idea about Divine Wisdom and Self as being non-existent, immaterial and beyond essence:

*"The one who separates essence form life,  
Knows how subtle and hidden these two be". (Aufi, 661)*

In another part of his ode, Kasaee states that it is necessary to discern truly wise and religious people, and to follow them and stay away from the ignorant who know nothing but mindless imitation. We can infer that by "truly religious people", he meant Ismailia caliphs:

*"Let this void path go away  
And follow a path led by the wise.  
The wise who are truly religious,  
And are crowned with a corona of reason.  
Those who let the reasonable be,  
In a place of heaven with green tree  
Those who through the skies they glare  
And of all universe functions are aware.  
World is but a wilderness and they the water of life  
People are all dead inside but they inside alive.  
Those whose precious load of knowledge  
Keeps them away from ignorance and its edge.  
Know all the goods of the bads of day,  
And meanings of they world in minds they array". (Eoufi, 663)*

Criticizing the ignorant people, the falsely wise, hypocrites, and religion, in general, is obvious in the following lines:

*"Like beast they just eat and sleep  
And in their filth they drown very deep.  
In goods they are numb with no strength  
But in bad they are erect and stand forth.  
They don't bend out of laziness when they pray  
But to a king they bow and stand all day.  
They are like vultures to all knowledge and religion  
Devouring them with a whim much beyond reason.  
And if Islamic community turns into lazy lethargy,  
Then wolves, tigers, and lions they in the leading be.  
Like hungry wolves and tigers who steal lambs,  
They devour the belongings of orphans and mobs.  
These who have by deceit tricked people as such,  
Judging people and biting them against their back much,  
Unbribed, they are bitter like the poison of a snake,  
If bribed, they are as subtle and firm as a cake.  
Don't join this herd of blind and deaf for they are*

*From the true nature of religion so much aware,  
Leave this path and join the direction of the wise  
Who do not to the falsity they might jeopardize". (663)*

#### Religious Animosity

*"you won't accept although form the Ale-Nabi the teller be,  
You will rave with anger and label all goods as bad.  
Clearly your speech shows that you are,  
Heart-blinded by Ale-Abbas decree". (Riahi, 73)*

#### 5. Praising Ali (Peace be Upon Him)

*"Think of our religion as a circle in which  
Prophet is the center and Ali the compass line.  
To Ali gave Mohammad the knowledge of all time  
Like a cloud giving water to a flower at its prime". (Riahi, 82)*

#### 6. Criticizing Enemies and Abbassian

*"Oh, you who seat upon the throne of righteousness,  
Observe bee's sting and what it does to the inflicted  
Three hundred and seven are the years after prophet's departure,  
And satisfied are all with false creeds and tricky commands.  
A pulpit tarnished with Yazeed's Marv followers,  
Has no sense of discerning truth from lie.  
What did Morteza and his people do out of cruelty,  
And what gift did we get from all their brutality  
For all those are afflicted with the glitters of the world,  
And pure, innocent, and victorious is the leader, Ali". (92)*

#### Hakim Abol-Ghasem Firdowsi

Abol-Ghasem Firdowsi is one of the world's greatest epic poets who was born in 329 A.H. in Tous into a peasant family and died in 411 A.H. in his home town. The peasants were among true-born Iranian races, and the word 'peasant' was taken to mean 'Iranian' as opposed to Turks and Arabs prior to Mogul invasion of Iran. Being interested in ancient Iranian stories, legends, and myths, Firdowsi dedicated himself to write about these stories, such as Bizhan and the Boars, Rostam and Sohrab, and other Iranian stories famous at the time.

Daghighi Tousi who had started versifying Abou-Mansouri Shahnameh under Nooh-ebn Mansour Samani, was killed by a man in 365 A.H., and his one thousand line version became available to Firdowsi; he started the job in 370 and finished it in 384A.H. He dedicated Shahnameh to Mahmud Ghaznavi after completion; however, under the shadow of political, racial, religious, and social controversies, Ghaznavi was cruel to Shahnameh and Firdowsi, being Shia, sought asylum in Khorasan and passed away in 411 in his home town. To describe the extent of the influences Firdowsi took from Ismailia Creed in his Shahnameh, the following comments are necessary, because his religion is not thoroughly agreed upon yet. To discuss the mentioned influences, two extracts from the introductions of two different books are brought here, and they are applied to come to a certain conclusion and oriented discussion of Firdowsi's poetry.

Dr. Mohammed Amin Riahi in his two valuable books, *Life, Beliefs and the poetry of Kasaei* and *A Knowledge of Firdowsi with the help of Dr. Abbas Zarrin Khou*, writes that: "Dr. Abbas Zarrin Khou has undertaken a considerable project in looking at the introduction of Shahnameh from a novel angle and, through comparing it with other Islamic sects, concluded that in the introduction of Shahnameh, Firdowsi has presented a set of ideologies in compatible with those of the Sunny and in line with Ismailia caliphate Creed. Shahnameh scribes manipulated, changed, edited, deleted, and added some verses to bring it in line with Sunny ideology. The same lost authentic introduction would have saved Firdowsi from Ghaznavi cruelty; because the Sunny hold not the Imami Shia, but Ismailia to be pagan". (Riahi, 21, 92)

Additionally, Professor Hafez Mahmud Khan Shirazi in his book, *Knowledge of Firdowsi*, states that: "In jurisconsult's sayings, God is the most merciful, the most omnipotent, and the Almighty. But Firdowsi the philosopher presents God as the possessor of Life and Reason who is beyond time, place, thought, and illusion not only in the introduction to Shahnameh, but in the first distich. Reason is the treasure of creation and the greatest gift given to men by God, a gift which entails this and the other world's grace for mankind. After praising reason, there comes spirit's turn. The

importance of philosophical concepts of Divine Wisdom and Divine Self is undeniable in Ismailia and other sects. Firdowsi's account of creation resembles that of Greek philosophers and scholars.

They both believed that at first there was nothing, and being came out of nothingness. First, there was a movement, then a fire, and fire made the land appear; coldness came out of immobility, and out of this mixture came the elements. A fire rose, made the skies like a labyrinth and mobile and accommodated twelve planets in the heavens; fire rose above all other things and covered wind and water; soil settled at the most bottom. Earth was like a small, dark, black dot; sun began to revolve around it; mountains and rivers appeared. Sea, mountains, and plateau made earth light. First inanimate objects, then plants and different species of trees came into being; plants and trees grew with their head in the soil and no other feature in essence. Then came animals which could move and govern all other inanimate and plants and trees; unlike them, animals could move, needed food, sleep, and rest. These were the purposes of the animal life, nothing more wanted from them; the last but not the least, was the creation of mankind who was erect, straight, with the powers of speech and reason". (Shirani, 211)

Out of these two introductions we can conclude that due to the fact that Islamic thought was under the influence of Greek and Neo-Platonist philosophy, and because of their emphasis on Divine Wisdom, Divine Self, Life, and Reason, and common idea about the howness of creation, some of Firdowsi's poems and writings in Shahnameh, consciously or unconsciously, were influenced by Ismailia thought. The followings are distiches taken from Firdowsi with clear reference to Ismailia thought and philosophy.

## 7. The Essence of God

According to Ismailia wisdom, God is, even, beyond naming; as Moheemad-ebn Ali-ebn Hassan Sourî, a 5<sup>th</sup> century Ismailia claimant, states in his work, *Arjouze*:

*"Anything which resides on human tongue  
And all names given to you by different religions  
All names, epithets, and adjectives attributed to you by different religions  
Do not begin to cover the greatness which is you".*

All the names and qualities coming from different thoughts and religions are only attributable to the First Creation; i.e. Wisdom, not to the essence of God. Firdowsi states that:

*"Beyond name, location, and doubt he is  
The owner of all possessions and beings he is  
No thought get close to knowing it, for  
Higher than any realm or position he is  
No matter how precious the power of speech be  
Won't find life and reason their paths into he".*

*"The last two lines represent Ismailia's belief of God's being irreducible to any names or labels". (Zaria Khoui, 54)*

As stated earlier, at the beginning distich of Shahnameh, Firdowsi pictures God beyond life, reason, illusion, and thought; this is one of the most central precepts in Ismailia thought:

*"In the name of the God of the life and reason  
And this is the best idea one can work with.  
No thought get close to knowing it, for  
Higher than any realm or position he is  
No matter how precious the power of speech be  
Won't find life and reason their paths into he".  
Both life and reason it will measure the power of  
And within the real of speech it is infinite". (Khaleghi Motlagh, 3)*

Later on, Firdowsi refers to much accepted idea of not being able to see God through physical, human eye:

*"To the normal eyes of a creature  
The greatness of creator is impossible to see  
Praise God to the edge of your reason,*

*Since with language you will never able be". (Khaleghi Motlagh, 3)*  
*"The created world got shaken by praise*  
*Greatness and knowledge began to parade*  
*Beyond any boundary of time and place it be*  
*Human thought weak in its attempt to see*  
*The God of life and reason it is*  
*Human knowledge comes from that of his". (Khaleghi Motlagh, 278)*  
*"The cruel of time and those whop were unjust*  
*Crying, looked into the heavens and begging they said*  
*Oh, you who are beyond human knowledge and wisdom*  
*Neither here, no there, but you are also everywhere". (Khaleghi Motlagh, 128)*

Following Neo-Platonist philosophy, Ismailia Creed deems God to be superior to being and origin of life.

## 8. Creation

Ismailian Creed hold Divine Wisdom responsible for human deeds, and this wisdom accompanies Divine Self and human to determine destiny and raise natural elements and births; these issues are spoken of in Nasser Khosro's poetry:

*"Do not blame the cycle and progression of heavens*  
*Out of your head throw all ignorance and stupidity*  
*Out of reproach hold the cycle of destiny*  
*For it is free from knowledge and in head empty*  
*You are the one who determine your being good and bad*  
*Do not expect any good fortune coming from night and day".*

Even though Ismailia Creed believes that heavens are mortal, no good or bad comes from it. As Nasser Khosro states, closeness to or being far from Reason is the source of all good and bad:

*"The world is by no means changed or altered*  
*The manner of world creation is changed*  
*Oh, you heavens that is hypocrite and passing*  
*No life in you might the roots implant.*  
*The one who is blind to the light of reason*  
*To you is servant and you to him are king". (Zariab khoui, 16)*

In the section of Ismailia thought about creation of world and its creatures, we said that they believe that the closest links to God are Divine Wisdom and Divine Self, out of the mixture of which came planets, heavens, opposing natures, and other creatures. Firdowski reflects this idea in the introduction to Shahnameh:

*"You are born out of the wedlock of two worlds*  
*Many mediators have been there for you to be.*  
*First think then act so that your actions,*  
*Won't cause you any trouble or hardship of life".*

According to Ismailia philosophy, mankind is the last in creation but the first in speech and reason and all creatures prior to mankind, as stated by Nasser Khosro, are intermediators:

*"Know the creation of reason first, for*  
*Thankfully it is the guard of life.*  
*What true deed is you must know from start*  
*For you are bestowed with the treasure of reason.*  
*That created being out of mere nothingness*  
*Your knowing make you capable of many things". (Khaleghi Motlagh, 5)*  
*"The first movement was from the heat of fire*  
*And then dry land was a fruit of it.*  
*Then coldness came out of the pause and it,*  
*Expanded the realm of all solid and dry.*  
*This heaven and all other celestial orbits,*

Came into being and in them life and death greets.  
Twelve towers were given being with the power of God  
To all the commands of the creator they shall nod.  
Above these towers seven heavens came  
And the place they got in the world of their frame.  
All heavens were locked into each other and moved,  
To give life the form it was supposed to have.  
Plants grew and then some other trees  
Were shaken by the beauty of a spring breeze". (Khaleghi Motlagh, 60)  
"Then the animate creatures came  
And the world homed them with such flame  
Its head, unlike tree, not tied in soil  
A difficult job it been with lots of toil  
Then came mankind and to all creation  
He was a chain linking them all together  
Erect and standing like a cypress he was  
Good his deeds and applying the reason of his  
Welcoming reason, wisdom, and choice  
Judged people of different races and lived in a place  
If you use reason to find the source of life  
You know that all men come from the same strife  
First think then act so that your actions  
Won't cause you any trouble or hardship of life". (Khaleghi Motlagh, 70)  
In Ismailia wisdom, hearing and seeing are peripheral, but speech and reason are human exquisite belonging:  
"Know the creation of reason first, for  
Thankfully it is the guard of life.  
Your three guards are hearing, seeing, and speaking  
Use these and you will live a cherished life.  
Guard your life and reason for they are  
The only means by which you can get to the star". (Zariab Khoui, 19)

## 9. In Praise of Wisdom and Reason

Reason and Life, or Divine Wisdom and Divine Self, which occupy the most central positions in Ismailia thought, are supposed to be the source of all being. This goes back to Neo-Platonist creed which states that Reason is the source of human salvation:

Ismailia and some other Shia sects put great emphasis and value on Wisdom and Reasoning as measuring rods to evaluate physical and spiritual completion. As Firdowsi states:

"Praise reason for the power it gives you  
For it is the most precious gift to mankind.  
Your guardian and mentor in both life  
Your helper and company in all strife  
The one who forgets about using reason,  
Will get inflicted with sense of treason.  
If you apply reason to the way you live  
You will feel salvation and cherished in life  
For reason is the eye to see and discern  
Stay away from what might get you concern". (Khaleghi Motlagh 41)  
"The heart which uses reason as its guide  
Will be gifted youth forever in life". (Khaleghi Motlagh, 258)

## 10. The Role and Influence of Number Seven (7):

Number seven is of great significance in Islamic religions; for example, mysticism includes seven stages and needs the advice of seven mentors. Ismailia thought, as well, believes in seven stages and Firdowsi repeatedly uses this number in Shahnameh: seven fire temples, seven heavens and earths, KeyKhosro's seven mercies, seven planets, seven planets, seven years, seven queens, seven colors, seven princes, seven speeches, seven treasures, seven men, seven villages, seven jewels, and seven springs.



Seven heavens and earths:

*"From the strength of the dust of their horses  
Earths got six and heavens got eight".  
Seven colors included yellow, blue, orange, red, violet, green, and azure. Seven planets were Sun, Moon, Mars, Saturn,  
Mercury, Hermes, and Earth:  
"The clouds disappeared in uncertain numbers  
All occupied places in the sky chambers".  
Seven Persian heroes who helped Rostam set free Bizahn in Turkestan were: Gorgin, Zenge, Gashtam, Zavare,  
Farhad, Roham, and Ashkash.  
"These seven heroes prepared themselves  
Guarded with an army of mighty soldiers  
All went to help Rostan and fight  
Make the dark skies right bright". (Tavazoei, 40)*

### 11. In Praise of Ali (Peace be Upon Him)

There are striking verse and distiches throughout Shahnameh which include admirations of Ali; of course, this is a common point among all Shia sects and Ismailia traces its origin back to Zahra and Ali. Followings are some Shahnameh distiches admiring Ali:

*"What was dear God's saying  
The God of orders and denials  
The prophet said in his precious speech  
I am a city and Ali is my entrance  
I testify this to be his self speech  
Like I heard these words with my own ears.  
As a God creates this world and a sea within  
Gave storms to the sea for their beauty  
Seventy ships are sailing on it with  
Crews all ready to see adventures anew  
Ali was to the prophet Mohammad like a friend  
They tow had lot in common together  
If you want to be one the heaven friends  
Beside prophet and Ali occupy your place  
If you don't like this, let it be my sin  
For this is my religion, my path, and my way  
I have been on this and I will remain so  
I am the dust at the foot of Ali's gate". (Khaleghi Motlagh, 11)  
Firdowsi, at the end of Siavosh story, states that:  
"I try to have the life of both worlds  
One with sword the other with pray  
I am slave to prophet and Ali  
And shall forever like this me stay".  
At the end of Nooshzad story, Firdowsi writes as such:  
"If you have Ali's passion in heart  
Then his forgiveness will be all with you  
His advice is the path to salvation and  
He is the crown of all creation  
If you hold your heart far from his path  
Then you have bought yourself the heaven's wrath".*

As we know, most early Persian literature scholars sought to unify all Iranians against Arabs and Baghdad caliphate either through sword or language. Firdowsi's Shahnameh, which is like Iranian testimony on liberty, is full of numerous critiques aimed at Arabs and Abbasi caliphate. With a careful consideration of structural and content similarities between Firdowsi and Nasser Khosro, finding common beliefs between the two is not surprising; beliefs such as the necessity of Iranian culture and Persian race sublimation which rooted in Ismailia creed at the beginning centuries of Persian literature which tried to resurrect Persian culture and save it from the invasion and dominance of Arabs.

Firdowsi's picture of Zahak the tyrant is a reflection of Arab caliphate in Iran:

*"The deeds of the sage were hidden  
The way of the insane expanded  
Art was humiliated and magic upheld  
Truth was covered and falsity did great  
The beast shouted cries of madness  
Truth was laid down and buried in ground".  
The cruelty, massacre, and plunder of Arab caliphate had made people furious; they took people's possessions for tax and imprisoned free-minded individuals for different reasons and murdered them. Though Firdowsi does not explicitly name the caliphs, he describes their brutality as such:  
"This hideous-faced, snake-eater who  
Was stranger to any kindness and truth  
With all their cruelty and unjust to people  
One day the crown will disappear in nothingness  
No good features was found in their beings  
No knowledge, mind, name, or kindness.  
Arabs got so baseless and pathetic that  
They ate lions, camels, and alligators.  
Persian crown was a wish far-fetched to them  
Oh, vicious wheel of fortune, damn you".*

"This verse describes Arabs' tradition of wearing and thinking in black which was in stark contrast with Ismailia and Iranian tradition". (Riahi, 25)

It is important to remember that Ismailia ideology roots in Iranian ancient culture; they wrote mostly in Persian and shared Firdowsi's hatred of Abbasi caliphate and its stooges:

*"Their caliphate is as sinister as God's enemies  
Closed for them all mercies and pieties  
Certainly they are doomed to fail and die  
Each low land will get to a place of high  
No knowledge, no poem, no art of any kind  
Full their bellies are and empty their mind  
Black is the colour they put on clothes with  
Like snakes in filth and trash they always wither". (Khaleghi Mollagh, 417)*

## 12. Conclusion

The emergence of Ismailia sect and the expansion of its creed and ideology as a Shia sect coincides with Khorasani style as an organic one. This sect can be pondered over from two different perspectives: one, their beliefs, creeds, and viewpoints, and the other, their criticism of Baghdad caliphate and its stooges who ruled over Iran. Based on the content of the essay and included introductions which were undertaken by researchers, we can conclude that religious and social criticisms of Ismailia sect are reflected not only among their followers and figures like Nasser Khosro, but also, through presenting a novel set of ideologies, philosophies, and religious precepts, among writers and poets of the day. This essay did not mean to label Kasaei and Firdowsi as Ismailia poets. Although all Shia sects have originally common ancestors, they can be sometimes quite different, even contradictory. If we compare Kasaei's ideology in his ode, Life and Reason, with Firdowsi's introduction to Shahnameh and his discussion of issues like God's essence, Life and Reason, howness of creation, and philosophy of life, and put them beside Nasser Khosro's comments as a clearly Ismailia figure, we ultimately can come to the idea that these two poets were undoubtedly influenced by Ismailia precept and creed.

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