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THE CONCEPT OF TIME
IN THE ISMAELITIC GNOSIS

I. THE "CONSTRUCTION" OF TIME

Although theory of time as a phenomenon or a category of the perception of the world is not given (afforded) extensive and explicit treatment in the literature of the Ismaelitic tradition, nonetheless the problem of time deeply permeates the entire doctrinal system and its philosophical exposition; what is more, it is far from overstating the case to say that the question of time is fundamental for the system. The Ismaelitic thought, constituting a rich and integral system which sprung from the Islam - a system which absorbed traditions of the antique philosophy assimilated by the Muslim civilization, thereby continuing the chain of early gnosis and esoteric knowledge - comprises both the theory of universe and nature, and also the mystical psychology as well as theology and theory of creation. Hence the issue of time pervades the whole of this heritage; for time is simultaneously a universal (cosmic) phenomenon and a situation of the soul making for or returning to - as any gnosis would have it - eternity.

To survey the problem of time in the totality of Ismaelitic theories it is therefore indispensable to consider its correlations with ontology and cosmology on the one hand, and with the psychological analysis of the inner life (the mind) of an individual, on the other. Another terrain where the issue of time predominates is gnostic historiography. This multifariousness and hetero-

genity assumes the shape of a coherent system only when projected upon the framework of myth situated as the very heart of the doctrine. In the sphere of mythical events, centered upon the drama of descent and return of soul, the timelessness of creation is united with the mystical autognosis of an individual entangled in time. What in the Christian thought is accomplished by the agency of divine grace - namely the enhancement of soul and its ascension to the heavenly kingdom - here, it stems as it were from the dynamism of the system, based on the structure of a closing cycle. Cycle and homology, structures characteristic for mythical construction, determine the way of time perception first, through the great transformation cycle time disengages from, and then re-enters eternity: second, this transformation is contingent on the correspondence of cycles occurring on all ontological levels, which in a way "elevates" higher and higher an act taking place on the level of human existence¹. Accordingly, this framework makes for the homology of myths, individual, social and cosmic, in the dynamics of their interdependence and interaction.

The fact that myth constitutes the core of a gnosis seems to be intimately related to the principal character of gnosis as an exegesis of an early (ancient) myth facing the danger of losing its symbolic function and being reduced to the canon of tradition. Such exegesis is founded on the substance of religious myths (prophetic and eschatological, and even earlier cosmological myths), interprets the principles of their structure, and re-institutes them into the shape of a new myth whose hero is the intellect seeking for its own principle and pursuing complete self-consciousness². Thus it describes a circle leading from the timelessness of the myth about the beginning, toward the past of tradition and on to the present instant of self-knowledge approaching the living eternity of the beginning. By virtue of this exegetic "metamyth" it is not so much a purely speculative metaphysics that is the substance of gnosis, as the dialectics of intellect entangled from the very beginning in constraints preclud-

ing a recourse to the simple (primitive) Cartesian "cogito"³. The intellect cannot transcend the mytho-historical dimension, which is but its own projection. Needless to say, a more detailed and extensive study of this aspect of gnosis goes beyond the scope of the present paper. It would have to account for the way the structure of such a "metamyth" appropriates the substratum of a traditional myth, analyses its structure and turns this structure into its own semantic substance to invest it with a sense it had not had as a pattern structuring its original substance. In other words, whereas in the original myth its structure was "immanently" contained in it, the structure of the superimposed myth is transcendent in relation to the original myth, transforming itself into the immanence of the myth-creating intellect which invents myths observing the rules of a syntax which are intrinsic to it. This is why the individual intellect pursuing self-knowledge (self-definition) according to the doctrine must yield to the rules imposed on it by the "universal intellect" - the angel of revelation⁴. This is precisely how myth reverts to symbol - a mirror which mediates between consciousness and the world in which the consciousness perceives itself as intellect.

The foregoing considerations are of utmost importance to the problem of time. In Ismaelitic gnosis we find temporal structures of mythical type - closed cycles, prophetic history, eschatology of resurrection beside philosophical analysis of cosmic time (not significantly developed, however), all this is subject to "interiorization" and symbolic interpretation; meanings are interspersed in the ultimate end of the great cycle, confining the frames of creative process, where all symbols are finally elucidated. Thus the problem of time is intimately related to the crux of gnosis and may be considered to be a privileged terrain whereupon its fundamental structures are imposed.

This article is the first part of a larger work, and will be complemented by a discussion of the Ismaelitic vision of history.

Let us commence with what the Ismaelitic authors say explicitly about the nature of time. And they do not say much. In the literature available to me I have found only one passage which contains a kind of definition. This is in Hamīdu'd-dīn al-Kirmānī's book entitled Kitābu'r-rijāl passing judgement on the polemics between two other Ismaelitic authors⁵. At some place in his work Kirmānī says the following:

The claim advanced by the author of al-Is'lāh whereby Intellect and time are one because created being and creation, time and wholeness (tamām) are one indivisible entity is erroneous, for time is a number of movements of the celestial spheres; it is a period (mudda) envisaged (mutawahhama) between the movement of one phase and the movement of the following phase until the latter replaces the former one. On the other hand, creation, whose object is Intellect and wholeness ontologically precedes the existence of the universe and its spheres whose movements constitute time; hence, the attribution of the existence of time to the Primal Intellect and the conviction that it is true contradict the principles of the guiding message⁶.

This definition is akin to the Aristotelean concept of time as a measure of movement and relates its existence to the regularity of celestial sphere revolutions - the cosmic clock. Let us now examine in more detail the components of this definition:

- 1 - Regularity and measure constitute the frames constraining movement, investing it with period and termination. They presume the existence of the order arranging matter and imposing on it the rigour of form.
- 2 - Measure of time is intimately related to space - the point of reference in space is indispensable so that time might have an abstract, reproducible form, and for the movements to be comparable.
- 3 - As the abstract, reproducible form, measure is intelligible, accessible to intellect without being the immanent property of matter. Harmony and order are ascribed to intellect, and period is envisaged intellectually - hence the necessity of the existence of the reason (mind) positioned (fixed) in time

and conceiving it in terms of measure and duration exceeding the immediate presence of a moment.

Although the definition says nothing about intentionality, nevertheless the emphasis on the order precludes any concept of time in terms of infinite extension and points to an interpretation in terms of the construction which controls amorphous chaos evading thought. The notion of continuity, a period between two temporal points corresponding to one identical point in space (more precisely, to commuting spacial parameters) establishes in the chaos of points a delimited continuum.

- 4 - Apparently, such conception of time must lead to the idea of absolute time uniform for the entire universe indicated by the revolutions of celestial bodies. Its intellectual measure would in turn require the existence of the universal supraindividual mind (reason) which would be reflected in the individual mind or rather the individual mind would approximate it, driven by the desire of perfection. There is indeed room in the Ismaelitic doctrine for the cosmic intellect, but the relationship between this intellect and human mind is not merely that of the reflection of ideas, with the revolutions of the spheres only signalling the sequence of events exceeding any temporal measure. It is the trespassing of the cosmic borders and reaching wholeness liberating it from the control of time that is the ultimate goal of the human mind.

Although Kirmānī's definition assumes that time is a measure of movement, it does not explain the characteristic property of time, that is, its "directionality" (linearity), its division into past, future and present - all that makes time "escape", "fly", but also last. This triple dimension is a function of presence and absence simultaneously, or rather incomplete presence. The movements of celestial bodies provide the measure and limits, and thus they at the same time introduce order and delimitation. For the limit

to be constituted a point in presence must be comparable to a point in absence; there would be no time if durability of existence were not vulnerable. But on the other hand, if there were no durability in some sense, be it the durability of movement or being, joining two points and extending between them, even demarcation of the very points would be impossible. Hence the present moment must have a reference to the past wherein it has already occurred or has not yet occurred, and at the same time it anticipates the future wherein it will continue to last or will end or else it will ultimately yield entities now inexistent. Accordingly, the world defined and delimited in terms of time is the domain of incomplete beings, extending from the future toward the past. It is the world of emergence into being and regress to nonexistence, the world of existence and destruction -- 'ālamu 'l-kawn wa' l-fasād. Applicable to it is Aristotle's dichotomy of being in actu and being in potentia -- bi'l-kuwwa wa bi'l-fi'l introduced to the Ismaelitic system in order to explain the distinction between beings eternal and immutable -- always actual and accomplished (fulfilled), free of any deficiency -- and the world of potential beings, latent as it were, which for their own accomplishment require time; time is then the measure of their imperfection. And thus time proves to be the measure and function of deficiency and non-fulfilment.

For the present is nothing but mere actuality -- the presence of that which its inherent measure has imported from the past and brought into being, thus realizing certain potentiality. On the other hand, latent in the present is what will be actualized in the future, i. e., when the future will "descend" into the present. However, since the future occurs as actuality, the previous actuality must give way and descend into the past. Therefore as long as a future is expected, the present actuality remains vulnerable and inevitably endangered by non-existence, for it is destined to the past which will devour it. In other words, as long as there exists a potentiality not yet realized, there will be the

ominous past, the potential obsolescence, the necessity of extinction (non-existence). This is precisely what distinguishes the world of existence and destruction from the world of creation and emanation, beings eternal ('ālamu 'l-ibdā' wa' l-inbi'āt); kawn -- existence, though actual is at the same time deficient and in fact contains potentiality; it is both the potentiality of changes and the possibility or anticipation of a being extrinsic to a given actual being, to which the latter must give way, itself ceasing to exist. Hence, the discontinuity in time.

This law refers to the material world. In it we can perceive entities finished and accomplished, actual, which have terminated their evolution, but despite their accomplishment they will not last forever, because there are other potential forms of existence, distinct from the former, and they must come into being, for this is entailed in the process whose fragments they are. This is the reason why the measure of the emergence of some entities is simultaneously the measure of extinction of other entities. We are talking about concrete time, about the measure contained in things themselves. This viewpoint "from within", the perception of time immanent to things, which is their mode of being, complements the foregoing discussion of the concept of time as the extrinsic measure controlled by the revolutions of the cosmos.

The Ismaelitic philosopher is not, however, content to state the facts, but he asks the metaphysical question: Why are beings entangled in time, how come that there exists this movement, flow, emanation and extinction? And he answers: potentiality is the want of actuality, and this deficiency is caused by an obstacle whereby the accomplishment of form is not immediate. The obstacle therefore impedes the process of actualization and causes virtuality, indeterminacy, the past and future. The obstacle is, in opposition to the form, the matter, which, not unlike in Aristotle, is a potential, passive factor, assuming a form and shaped by this form. The "matter" of time is the future, expectation, nonaccomplishment; these are the effect of action or rather passivity of that matter which

is the substance of beings and at the same time precludes their readiness to timeless existence. But this matter, together with all the forms it has been endowed with, constitutes the world whose ultimate form will simultaneously be its transcendence; and the matter itself (hājulā) is of the nature so abstract that this ultimate form it will eventually assume will not be similar to any of the particular forms giving existence to the fragments of the matter. And on its ultimate realization it will end the process which overcomes the passivity and undefinability of the matter.

Such form must be independent of the matter, free of the obstacle that might interfere with its actuality, that is, its action, for act (fiʿl) is also action; it must be insusceptible to mutations and ontologically dependent only on the form superordinate in the hierarchy, which invest it with a shape, likewise without any meditation of the matter. These properties distinguish and define the spiritual form - such and only such form can be fully actual and become the pure, undescrutable intellect.

With the problem of spiritual forms we pass from the physical time - the measure of existence of things - to the consciousness of time or rather the consciousness immersed in time. The definition introduced above contains an element which explicitly refers to such consciousness. Namely, it says that time is the period imagined (constituting the substance of consciousness). Therefore period as a temporal relation of sequence and the distinction in the set of temporal points of a defined, irreversible course, which may be comparable with another course both in respect to its measure and to the relation of sequence, requires the consciousness ordering the data of perception. However this "image" should not be confused with a transcendental category; the perception of time is for the consciousness its own situation, inasmuch as temporaneity is a situation of physical beings, deprived of consciousness, cannot be aware of their own imperfection, the soul, whose image is parallel to the reality of deficient world, perceives its own deficiency and lives

with it. Perception is not merely the reflection of the external world, but also the participation in this world. As long as the soul is pregnant with the image of time, it remains immersed in and limited by time. Perceiving period as a measure of movement, it simultaneously sees its own time, its duration and its movement.

Philosophical theories taken over from the Greek and Hellenic tradition, the philosophical method adapted by the Ismaelitic theologians, who themselves were high functionaries in the ecclesiastic organization, close to the imam - all those contributions do not constitute the core of the gnostic doctrinal complex. They serve both the building of theodicy and the rationalistic and intellectual exegesis of the revealed word. However, the essence of the system springs from myth and symbol - the substratum of soul, which, with their aid, climbs its mystic way. On the way it reaches and realizes successive stages of being, which the philosophy distinguishes and defines, thereby implementing philosophical speculation. Contained in the philosophical system as a substance occupying its place in the hierarchy, it reinforces in its action, in its act, the truth and the sense of this system. On the cognizance of its mystic way through philosophy, it is both subject and object simultaneously; it comes to know its role and realizes it. Accordingly, the degree of cognizance it reaches determines the stage of its self-realization and perfection, and the substance of its cognizance becomes for it the form it assumes. This is the distinctive epistemology of gnosis and it must be born in mind in any considerations of the way soul is related to time and eternity.

II. TIME EXTRINSIC AND INTRINSIC TO SOUL. TIME AND ETERNITY

In the previous chapter we observed that time in the Ismaelitic philosophy is conceived of in two complementary ways: as a measure of movement and as a function of the potentiality of being. We have also mentioned that human soul is invested with

the consciousness of time through the image of a period and continuum extending between points distant in time. Thus its presence in the cosmos makes it also subject to temporal continuity and discontinuity. For the conscious human soul ('an-nafsu' n-nātika) is a potential intellect which must undergo actualization if it aspires to become the spiritual substance no longer susceptible to temporal mutations⁷. Hence measure and limit bear upon it as they do upon unconscious beings, and are extrinsic to it or contain it, for it resides in and is dependent upon them. For the human psyche, unlike for objects unconscious with temporal existence, time has a characteristic which is missing when time is merely a measure of movements of celestial bodies - namely, it has meaning⁸. Obviously, it has a sense, natural as it were - such that on the one hand, it is a dimension of duration, and on the other, it is the cause of impermanence. But time is moreover a carrier of meanings, a screen, as it were, upon which images are projected, arranging themselves into structure with coherent architecture. It has its tendencies, predominant points, tensions of forms, its limits and subdivisions. Isolated in the theoretical infinity of temporal points is the beginning and end, which also becomes the central point where all lines converge. Such meaningful ordering of time, "cultivating" of the former wilderness is not - it must be clearly noted - the same as endowing with sense through history. To the Ismaelites the beginning is situated somewhere above history, in the great mythical time; similarly, this is also true about the ultimate end, in which the entire construction is closed and completed. The irreversibility of time, its anisotropy, as a modern theoretician would have it - which although being a formal property, to soul existing in time appears to be an essential property, because for the soul means uniqueness, unrepeatability of its states, or a series of unrelated acts - is here overcome by identifying the real present with the archetype. This does not imply, however, that the Ismaelitic gnosis "disposes" of time the way it was done in cultures

based on myths, which simply invalidated secular time, because historical dimension of history was alien to these cultures. Here, time appears in its most awesome and dignified, as a force both creative and destructive; besides, its existential aspect is not diminished to the advantage of the essential archetype. And history, too, conceived as progress and accumulation of events, marks its presence in the system. However, this history takes place on a different level than the history of nations and kingdoms; its hero is soul, which perceives the sense of this history in its own self and in its own reading of the history. This is why the entire construction is accessible and can be interpreted; it is endowed with meanings and images. Thus it is both symbolical and communicative - symbolical because sense is not inherent to history as such, but to what it signifies and materializes; communicative, because it constitutes an act of convention, a kind of language, laid down in the silent abyss of time. It is not an entity with absolutely closed structure although it appears to be so. It is not formal properties but meaning, experienced and existentially significant, that determines the distribution of its components; therefore from one of its extremes there leads a passage opening towards one who interprets and re-constitutes the symbol. Without it, the entire construction might fall down and disperse to return to chaos.

Hence the interest is the analysis of experienced time⁹. This analysis is confined within the framework of a specially constituted symbolic structure. It may be assumed that this concern is a general feature of Muslim mysticism despite some differences between pure ṭaṣawwuf and esoteric gnosis of the bāṭiniyya and imāmīyya type. Apart from its directionality, time experienced and sustained is also invested with multifarious qualitative values, corresponding to the complexity of the mental life of an individual.

Generally speaking, in gnostic systems the problem of time is intimately related to the question of soul. This is all the more

conspicuous in the Ismaelitic system which, having adopted neoplatonic ontology, situates the Universal Soul in between the Universal Intellect and Matter¹⁰, and individual souls are made to progress through time towards eternity. If soul is able to overcome time, it is only because time is the want of presence and because time presumes potentiality of being and unfulfilment. Since soul existing in time cannot encompass itself in its accomplished wholeness a form directly and immediately present, therefore potentiality is inherent to it. But as soon as it becomes intellect, that is, consciousness capable of comprehending its own essence and limits which constitute it as it is, the soul attains actuality free of a division into separate moments, and not susceptible to the possibility of mutations.

Thus both time and its surpassing are, above all, the states of soul, whose degree of cognitive perfection determines its mode of existence. Time and eternity are not realities independent of each other, between which there is a leap over the paradoxical border of the carnal death; they are rather the two exponents of the same ontological reality, creation being its prime cause.

The Universal Soul is an indispensable element in the whole ontological system, without which the system would be incomplete; this is reiterated in a number of documents. Likewise, individual soul is necessary for the concept of eternity to gain its concrete, reaffirming realization. The combination of astronomical and psychic time results in what may be labelled as monadisation of time. Precluded is the conception of absolute and linear time, which might inhere, simultaneously or in succession, an infinite multiplicity of courses and moments. On the contrary, the time we are concerned with is, firstly, a concrete time related to beings and their actualities; secondly, it is a time that tends towards convergence in concrete, fully actual substantial individuals into an incommensurable and undivided and unlimited eternal moment, but reproducible in multiplicity of individuals. Accordingly, eternity would be conceived of as a dimension not affected by di-

vision and fragmentarisation. Its number is always one, but this number does not imply singularity whose logical consequence and continuation would be number two. For it is only a perfectly complete monad, free of a division into multiple components, that may find its place in the dimension of eternity.

Time thus conceived, reaching eternity in substantive monads, could provide an alternative to ash'arites' temporal atomism, for whom each atom (moment) is a separate divine action¹¹.

Let us refer again to the text by Kirmāni introduced above. It implies clearly that eternity takes precedence over time in existence:

The claim advanced by the author of al-Is'lāh whereby Intellect and time are one because created and creation, time and wholeness (tamām) are one indivisible entity is erroneous; for time is a number of movements of the celestial spheres; it is a period (mudda) envisaged (mutawahhama) between the movement of one phase and the movement of the following phase until the latter replaces the former one. On the other hand, creation, whose object is Intellect and wholeness ontologically precedes the existence of the universe and its spheres whose movements constitute time; hence, the attribution of the existence of time to the Primal Intellect and the conviction that it is true contradict the principles of the guiding message¹².

It follows that the fundamental creative act whereby the basis of all existence is constituted, does not take place in time, nor does it delimit the beginning of time. In so far as temporal existence is incomplete and imperfect, it is consequently impossible that it should be the domain of the creator's direct agency (which is precisely how time is conceived of in Koran)¹³, and even more so, that infinite time itself should be the manifestation of deity, as it was maintained by adherents of the philosophical school called dahrijja¹⁴; this was a much disputed point among Muslim thinkers of various sects.

III. METAPHYSICS OF THE ACT AND THE PROBLEM OF TIME

In the fundamental writ from the Fatimide period, Rāḥatū'l-'aql, written by the already introduced author, Hamidu 'd-dīn al-Kirmānī, we find the following:

There are three kinds of action: the first, fullest and most perfect, accomplished extemporally (*lā bi-zamān*) and this is called creation; then, the second, which is accomplished metatemporally (*ma'a 'z-zamān*) and called emanation; and the third and last, the lowest and least perfect, accomplished con-temporally (*fī 'z-zamān*), called the event. That which is accomplished con-temporally is, the agency of a cause facing an obstacle either in itself or in matter, which does not immediately yield to its action, or else in both at the same time - this affects the world of existence and destruction. That which is accomplished metatemporally should be attributed to a cause whose agency is limited to itself or to something that totally yields to this agency - this affects non-carnal beings which are completely actual. And that which is accomplished extemporally is an action coming not from a cause in itself, neither from a cause encountering an obstacle in itself or its matter, but from God Supreme, who is above it all¹⁵.

The above quoted text is of particular importance in this discussion for it is one of the very few extracts from Ismaelitic literature which explain the role of time in the totality of this metaphysical construction. There is also another reason making us dwell upon this text in greater length: it captures the crux of that metaphysics which may be referred to as metaphysics of the act. God is not "the one who is" but the one who manifests himself as an imperative: be (the act of creation is the word "be" - *kun*, calling into being). A return to the world of creation means for the soul a transformation into the epiphany of a creative act, a transformation, through the noesis of the imperative word, into its pure actuality, immanence of the creative command. The act of creation is absolute; it presumes unilaterality and irreversibility, and precludes the understanding of the cause (God veils himself with his act - *jataḥaḡḡab*). God

as an imperative is situated above existence and above essence. He is unknowable because all abstract terms wherewith intellect aspires to describe creation, such as unity, good, or even being - are essences accessible to intellect and, moreover, they have one substratum, a subject which existentially precedes them and takes them over. Therefore they presume duality and division: unity - and that which is unity, good - and that which is good. Only the divine imperative may make the subject and predicative word be identical, and about god revealed his (*ṣifāt*) attributes be shown correctly¹⁶. Only he causes that divinity is accessible as essence and that this essence has existence in the shape of the subject - the First Intellect which is the very God revealed. Thus we are above the metaphysics of necessary being, whose essence is its existence, for the imperative is transcendent both in relation to existence and essence. The double tawhid, that is *tanzih* and *tagrid* - depriving divinity of its attributes and not endowing creation with divinity¹⁷ - conceives of God as an act of grace lavished upon intellect which gains the confirmation of the truth of what it ascribes to the creator, but it is then its own truth, a metaphore¹⁸, as it were, of the transcendent truth (*al-ḥaqq*).

This reflection of the primary act which turns towards itself is the end of the act of creation as its object. And the end of the act brings about passivity as its reverse. The First Intellect is therefore the essence of the act founded on the creative principle (*maḥḍu'l-fī'l aṣ-ṣādir 'an al-muta'ālī*)¹⁹ but at the same time it is the object of this very act. It is a creation, pure imperative: be, but also the subject that takes over the essence of being and is. As such it contains in itself a double aspect of activity and passivity because in it the act breaks down and appears as the result. This twofold relation makes it logically possible for the act to be transferred further to two mutually opposed beings, and for the monad to be decomposed into diad, whose internal relation will in turn be defined by the relation to

unity. Kirmānī discusses here the emanation accomplished through the intellect turning towards itself and through self-knowledge. The First Intellect perceives itself like in a mirror which it creates for itself and on which it projects its own picture²⁰. This is the point: when the Intellect looks in the direction of its creator, he is inaccessible to it. But when it conceives of this inaccessibility in terms of transcendence it gains the confirmation of this transcendence in itself. And when it now turns towards itself in attempt to know the transcendence in itself, this self-knowledge breaks into Soul and Matter, the first of which gives form to the second, once again confirming the truth of the Intellect. It may also be said that while shaping the Matter the Soul creates symbols, through which Matter gains the consciousness of itself and in a concrete sign informs what the Intellect directly conceives.

The dialectics of the sign and what it signifies, the symbol and that which is known through the mediation of this symbol, lies at the foundation of the existence of Ismaelitic worlds. Investigating itself, the Intellect creates a sign, or rather uses the sign, thereby building the whole world below itself, which is relatively autonomous ontologically. But at the end of this process the symbol, read and interpreted, ultimately turns towards that which it means, it becomes transparent as being nothing but meaning - it loses its autonomy for the benefit of the consciousness which investigates itself through it and becomes consolidated in its form as a reflexion of the creator, that is the one who is above the consciousness and beyond anything that it could perceive outside itself.

It has been mentioned that the object of creation appears as a new subject (ḡāt) except the divine one, whose act is knowledge. Then the act of emanation produces two subsequent subjects, which divine creation into two substances. One of them - Soul enables consciousness to be individualized in multiplicity of subjects which will realize the truth of the universal intellect ('aklu'l-kull) and whose multitude will be able to exist in the eternity, existentially individualized.

Let us return to the First Intellect. Without affecting its unity, it causes, nevertheless, the existence of duplicity stemming from its two aspects: one - as the essence of the act of creation, and the other - as its passive object. Since a reversal of the unilateral creation is impossible, and its true subject remains concealed, therefore the Intellect takes over the function of subject and object simultaneously, at the same time closing in the sphere of its activity all other activities which are its consequents (this is why any actuality, any act, whatever its nature, is placed in the orbit of the universal intellect). At the same time the irreversibility of the act of creation causes that the active Intellect transmits its power of action further, to subsequent beings which it produces as the subject and object of this very action. Since it is a diad that implies dualism and divergence or even opposition, therefore they cannot both be actual and equally perfect through the participation in the primary act. The act of creation, if it attempts at the understanding of itself, can produce only a reflection which is less perfect than its essence; emanation may progress only towards imperfection and passivity. It is a movement backwards and at the same time a descent, a regression in relation to the imperatively granted dynamics. This is the reason why subsequent hudud (steps in the hierarchy - concerning both extramaterial intellects and the mastic hierarchy) are said to be retarded, compared to those standing above them. This retardation does not necessarily imply a temporal sequence. The emanated intellect or the universal soul is retarded in relation to the created intellect because resulting from and depending on it is its form, but its act is metatemporal and does not contain a temporal distance between events or any growth or change. Such "retardation" cannot be susceptible to reduction because it is independent of time. It is only the individual soul, which "descends" into matter and whose activity assumes temporal dimension thereby being made imperfect, that has the retardation which is the function of its imperfection and which may undergo reduction.

Let us summarize what has been said so far. Metaphysics of the act draws the division of being into diverse kinds of actualities. The first is the actuality of the event which fills the temporal frame whereby it is limited and remains unable to regulate the measure of time. It is an ephemeral, transitory actuality, which contains in itself a germ of its own annihilation - it is the actuality enjoyed by the sublunar world. The third is the actuality of creation, beyond any frames and limitations. This act once and for all establishes (*daf'atan wāhida*) the totality of the world of intellects in their multiplicity (*'ālamu'l-'amr*), and this world becomes established as an integral unity. Thus the unity of creation determines the unity of being. The act of creation does not know time and has no relation to it.

There remains that kind of act which Kirmānī places between creation and event. What is emanation? It may be briefly defined as the operation which introduces to the unity of being a division into multiplicity of autonomous beings, which, in their structure, realize this unity. For it creation calls not being numerous intellects, then it but delimits their potentiality, that is creates frames wherein they may exist. The Ismaelitic ontology refers to this possibility of existence in terms of the first perfection (*al-kamālu'l-awwal*). On the other hand, their actualization depends on the agency of the First Intellect and on the extent to which they yield to and repeat this agency, assuming their form - the second perfection (*al-kamālu'l-tānī*). It has been said that emanation is accomplished through the emergence from the First Intellect of a picture in which it recognizes itself. Thus emanation is nothing but the emergence of this autonomous picture - an ontological shape (*ṣūra* in its two meanings - picture and form) whose actuality depends on whether it is a carrier of the same truth, the same meaning, which constitutes the First Intellect in its capacity as a universal pattern of being. Emanation as a kind of act concerns extra-carnal intellects, but it must be emphasized that the same term is used in the Ismaelitic literature

for the emergence of perfect intellects from the material world²¹. Thus emanation is a process of the formation of soul through mystical life progressing within an esoteric eclesia of the imam.

Generally, the term is used in reference to personal monads (*dawat*) whose emergence is a result of the subjectivity of the First Intellect and whose actuality derives from their objectivity through the assuming of creative energy of primary principle, that is, through the gnosis transforming the ego into archetype. Objectivization is at the same time individuation; similarly, the First Intellect is not limited by having the consciousness of the idea of all beings but it also constitutes an archetype of the person.

The First Intellect, constituting a direct act of creation, does not have any reference to time. It is immemorial and unchangeable (*azalī wa bākī*), being itself the essence of eternity and unchangeability (*azal wa baqā'*). On the other hand, emanative intellects (*'uqūl inbi 'ālija*), whose activity is of double nature: understanding of themselves, that is, their own limit (imitation of the superordinary level - assuming its epiphanic function), and acting in matter in order to derive from it the actual intellect have by the same token a double reference: to eternity, as beings actual and eternal, participating in the eternity of the First Intellect - and a reference to time, as the activity parallel to the course of time. Since Soul is contained within the Creative Intellect, therefore eternity constitutes its limit, and its eternal perfection is in a sense a reflexion of the eternity of creation. And if Matter together with time to which it is subjected is contained within and limited by Soul (*maḥdūda*) - hence time together with its structure is defined and limited by the activity of Soul. Whilst Soul possesses immanently the image of a creative act (*wuḡūd ṣūrī*) apart from substantial existence (*wuḡūd qātī*)²² and therefore is an intellect wholly actual, the Matter not having accepted the transcendental principle (and ignoring the existence of

Soul)²³ derives from God's creation but does not possess its actual image. Thus it forms a passive and potential intellect: it possesses entity (al-kamālu'l-awwal, the first perfection) but does not possess form (al-kamālu'l-tānī, the second perfection) which would constitute the projection of the act of creation and give it personal independence, an integrity allowing for eternal and actual existence.

Confrontation and mutual complementation of opinions of different Ismaelitic writers dating back to various periods of the gnostic formation allow the reconstruction of a homogeneous system underlying the basis of the metaphysical construction different versions of which can be formed in works from Fatimide epoch, in Yemen manuscripts of the post-Fatimide period and in the Eastern tradition from the times of the Alamut fortress. It can be then seen, how different explanations, either extracted from old images about the descent and return of the soul or new constructions of a mythical character appear to secure the efficiency of the metatemporal level whose purpose is to fill in the gap between the external creation and action in time. For, placing matter on the lowest level of emanative intellects constituting the overall structure of being, merely puts an end to the emanative series which exists timelessly. Matter is the last emanation itself placed outside time and above the concrete of nature; it constitutes the last part of the series of elements related structurally and not in terms of time sequence. It is only at the crossing point, the point of contact of the activity of Soul and passivity of Matter, or on this particular level of "compassionate leaning of Soul over Matter", on the level described by Yemen authors as the second aim (kaṣd tānī as different from kaṣd awal - the primary aim which is adoration of the Creator and for which creation was established) that time appears.

Time is a function - it appears where matter unites with form. Matter is still outside time, form is set within time; their very connection remains, though, imperceivable. Event, constitut-

ing a prototype of all time events, the point of reference and the beginning of the way - in itself is not yet an event, irrevocably and perfectly having occurred in the past time. The beginning is, then, reproducible - it is somehow the model and the archetype of the beginning, the event which is not embodied in natural or historical time. Therefore, it - or its successive replicas - will reproduce periodically, marking its units, braced by a mythical buckle, in natural time.

Metatemporal level of existence guarantees somehow that "on the other side of time" its course has already been closed and realized; that what sets boundaries to time is "stronger" as a being. The relation of metatemporal to temporal level corresponds therefore to the opposition of accomplished - not accomplished.

Eventually creation appears as a tree-winged act whose division corresponds to three basic levels of the world of God's imperative; pure act, or the essence of act; perfect and imperfect act. The first does not have any reference to time (lā bi-zamān), the second is eternally perfect archetypal (ma'a'z-zamān), the third is temporarily imperfect (fi'z-zamān). The last two refer to time in the sense that the second, although always actual, yet somehow has comprised and defeated in itself that interval separating perfection from imperfection - therefore its actuality is, in fact, potentiality realized from the beginning (between its potentiality and actuality there exists no time interval - says one of the Ismaelitic authors²⁴); in another - istibak - about which of them would take the rank directly below the First Intellect, while all the time the victory had been secured for the first one²⁵. Nevertheless, all three levels represent the same creative act in its different forms. Triple-creation is an operation tending towards achieving unity in which the multitude of elements leads to the unity of act. Its structure is based on bi-direction making transformation possible: transition from unity to multiplicity, from eternity to time - and vice versa, the order of ana-

lysis and synthesis. Nevertheless, the appearance of temporaneity, though within the emanative system, is a not quite comprehensible moment. The fact, that the sphere of temporal transformations contains in itself a potentially indestructible intellect, and the way the reversal of the perspective is performed, lacks ample elucidation in metaphysics. Matter - the third intellect in the emanative series, and matter submitted to form are two different beings. The difference between them is expressed in that as an intellect Matter exists only potentially to become actual only after having undergone transformations, metamorphosis in the world of nature. Matter and form, though belong to the real, sensory perceptible world. Hence the distinction between the first and the second matter - an absolute body. Similar situation arises with the transition from analysis to synthesis - it calls for the change of the language because from metaphysical terms one has to turn to psychology and history. In the emanative series the unity of creation descends to matter, in a sense, by means of impetus and the force of inertia - beginning from experienced nature and history one has to climb strenuously up towards unity, choosing a way which would overcome difficulties and adversities. Simultaneously with the change of perspective one more mysterious entrance upon the stage of thought will take place: creation emerges from the unity of principle, whereas synthesis arises from dualism - for there appears Iblis - the enemy, force of evil and destruction which does not exist in the act of creation, although it is present and active in the material world.

IV. MYTHICAL TIME

The sphere of temporaneity and temporal changes is inseparably related to the division into parts and the pretensions of these parts to being an integral entity. The notion of entity is connected in the Ismaelitic philosophy with the notions of completeness (tamām), perfection (kamāl) and autarchy (ʿinja,

istiḡnāʾ)²⁶. Meanwhile, when a being disintegrates into multiplicity of fragments and consistent parts, it contains, except itself, some excess which is, above all, a sum or synthesis of its parts, and forms an entity only in potentia. A part implies the existence of another part; a characteristic or a quality is transformed into its opposition. This dialectical principle rules the world of existence and destruction²⁷. The existence of parts leads to chaos, is the transgression of the boundaries denoting unity and integrity and gets close to the impossibility of existence. Existence itself contains, therefore, negation. That, which is temporal is a struggle between negation and existence, instability and permanence. Time derives from absence (naḳṣ), as well as from superfluous excess, rebellion and transgression²⁸. Temporaneity (understood as everything that fills up time and happens in it - mutazammīnāt in Mostem philosophical terminology - i.e. processes, events, continuity of history and evolution - similarly as extensible beings, mutamakkināt, fill up space) is not a sphere of being in itself, parallel to eternity (i.e. its subjects) and together with it fully taking part in the act of creation. It is rather the limit of the act of creation, a level which resists it, but, on the other hand, must be submitted to it.

Does time have a beginning? Its origin is creation itself because time reveals itself in it as its reverse - continuous discontinuity, the possibility of change as unlimited as the virtuality of the creative power but with a negative absoluteness. Thus, time does not have a beginning but it cannot be said to be eternal and endless because there are processes and events taking place in time which are finite. Rather, it may be described as absence of eternity, zero eternity - the obscurity of eternity and its erroneous imitation, a moment's claims to eternity. It seems that such message can be gathered from Yemen authors when they say that Primitive Matter²⁹ accepted Intellect (creation) as its limit (boundary) and directed its adoration towards him, but that the matter did not accept Soul which, after all, precedes

it and constitutes for the matter the only way to Intellect and to participation in creation³⁰. By means of this illicit overstepping of the boundaries the Matter got a wrong notion of Intellect and its role, because it did not get to know its creational reference, the aspect of dependence on the creator, and so it knew nothing about the existence of the transcendental principle. The mistake of the Matter was its conviction about the immanence of the principle and about the direct accessibility of eternity. This mistake caused its paralysis and perplexity and the descent into "negative infinity" so far that it causes immobilization and disintegration. For Matter (in the Yemen system identified with the Third Intellect) turned to subjective existence of Intellect (*ḡāt*) and not to the form (*ṣūra*) which makes it actual³¹. Thus, this mistake, the slip of the Third (*zalla*) causes material density to occur (*kaṭāfa*) which explodes in the Third immobilizing him and, in a way, paralyzing him in infinite void. It happened instantaneously. And ever since, that very moment will be (it can already be discussed in terms "since" - "to") the prototype of ephemeral moment, an erroneous reflection of the act of creation. Since this moment (the moment) entrance into the world of potentiality and distance is perpetrated, in which everything is tainted with mistake and insufficiency. The mistake of the Third was unintentional:

The mistake which happened (to him), his slip, perplexity and stupefaction were not intentional and conscious, neither did they result from untamable obstinacy, but they happened as accidental in relation to his nature. Because, if the mistake had been intentional and conscious, he would have perished himself and destroyed his world, he would have confused and disgraced himself with guilt. However, this insufficiency in him was not intentional and his weakness was not the result of rebellion and obstinacy³².

In the meantime, the Third is reduced to rank ten, which is the last in the series of non-carnal beings. But as his fault was not intentional, he is given a chance of return. At this point there appear echoes of metaphysical Fatimide tradition in which insufficiency and imperfection result in a necessary way from the

order of creation. The change of language, however, is apparent. As in that tradition the handicap resulted structurally from the emanative system as such, here it is the result of an event. It may be logical: if the act of creation as such is to be an extra-temporal event and not only the relation between principle and oneness (Kirmānī argues with the theory of the emanation of the first being from divine nature, which corresponds to Plotin's metaphysics)³³ then should not the creation of time sphere be an event as well - a metatemporal event, not temporal yet? Since then on we find ourselves in the reality of the myth. What makes it difficult from pure metaphysics? We have said earlier that in metaphysical thinking the transition of the soul into the realm of the world embodied by time forms a certain kind of mystery. When in a system there occurs exteriorization of time from the hermetic sphere of eternity, it causes the interiorization of its comprehension - the acceptance of the language of a subject submerged in time and rationalization of its situation perceived primarily as an existential experience. Only when we accept for real a subject in which this transition, transgression of the realm inaccessible to analytic metaphysics could have been performed, then, and only then, will we get a notional tool allowing for the leap from eternity to time.

The language of myth will thus operate with event because it belongs to the language of a subject existing in discontinuous time. But the event, having a symbolic function (in the most fundamental meaning of the word - the function of combining different realities) translates the extratemporal into the language of life and history, itself remaining in intermediate and intermediary sphere. It does not form the beginning of time so much as the bordering point between time and eternity, an entrance open for the transition from one domain into the other. The reverse is also true, because the first event (the fall of the Tenth into materiality, darkness and density of the matter) is immediately accompanied by next ones: the Soul's help for the Tenth, urging him to recognize the intervention and to return from darkness:

Intellects have him help and enlightened him so that he would give testimony to Him who had been acknowledged by the first being created and confess that he did not possess characteristics of any of his creation. He understood that and again undertook his act which he should have been performing, he repented and was obedient, and acknowledged the intervention of superior intellects. [...] He is Universal Soul for both worlds. For the high world he is the Soul and the high world is intellect for him. He receives inspiration and grace, and, in turn, breathes down the Holy Ghost who remains in contact with him, and Providence which flows down towards him. He is also the soul of everything that exists in material world because he himself is in a subtle state and all below him is in a dense state and the life of the lower world flows down from him uninterruptedly. His agency in this world is also continuous and unceasing - he is the creator of time and space³⁴.

Now, there appears a multitude of angels who belong to the sphere of the Tenth, and who reproduce his mistake. It turns out that the Tenth contains within himself the whole world of angels which, after his slip, appears as multitude. It was perceived only when the Tenth fell into darkness and formed from himself his shadow - extendible matter³⁵.

The Tenth appeals to the fallen and summons them to return, to acknowledge the Soul and the Creator. And then the slip, the mistake, gives way to rebellion and conscious opposition. They cause the occurrence of an irreversible fact as if time consolidated and justified itself through creation of perfective past, at the same time superimposing over this accomplished fact the potentiality of imperfect futurum. Because some of them rebelled and decided to remain in materiality when the others responded to the appeal and decided to return. Nevertheless, their mistake resulted in a delay (tahalluf), and this delay became the measure of the time of their return. On the other hand, those who did not hesitate help the Tenth to save and extricate the delayed, thus creating the most perfect parts of Cosmos thoroughly permeated with spirituality - those parts which are devoted to the cause of salvation. The author Kanzu'l-walad tells about it in the following way:

And so delay happened through condensation; and the change of light to darkness, the subtle state to extense, the change was caused by the occurrence of evil in themselves and from themselves because the beginning of evil does not exist in creation. As the wise man says: is God is just in his judgements, then every evil in the world must have its justification³⁶.

Evil, then, results from negative freedom, from the conceit of rebellion. This is why it remains somehow separated from the roots - active but having no real basis except for itself. To be sure, the possibility of the occurrence of evil is created by the archetypal mistake of the Tenth, but it is only a potential possibility and its existence is the result of choice. The problem of the beginnings of evil is, of course, well known from Christian apologetics but here the interest lies in the connection between its elucidation and the interpretation of the nature of time - evil works against return, in spite of the boundaries imposed through the archetype of the Tenth, in spite of immam which represents the call of the Tenth on the Earth, and last of all, in spite of Kā'im - a Messianic figure whose advent will be the end of domination of time and the defeat of Iblis. Does this rebellion not require the transgression of the boundaries of extendibility - extensio, existence in space, and time expansibility which is nothing else but incessant negation of unity and incessant destruction?³⁷ Is it not the juxtaposition of intensio - unity, and centreward motion, the approximation of limits? Those antagonistic directions of tensions will decide the structure and the cyclical construction of time, causing the boundary of the distance to be equal, in a sense, to the return to the starting point.

Here Ismaelitic authors refer to Koran, quoting the following verse: "You shall be enemies to one another, and on the earth you shall be given abode and possession for a time"³⁸. Obviously, it refers to different categories of fallen ancestors of present-day mankind and rebellious supporters of Iblis. The earth, the temporal and mundane world is the place of the con-

frontation of the powers of the Devil and the powers of creation - destruction and existence. Therefore, the world is uncertain and unstable; existence and creation have not won the final victory yet. Both powers are still potential, presently, though, there is a battle between them, the result of which is still hidden in future.

In the meantime the Tenth takes up regency over the world of nature, constructs the *Cosmos* - a machine revolving regularly and influencing the surface of the earth which exists in the very centre, in order to save souls closed in expansible matter, and to derive from it the character of *Kā'im*. It will be a perfect human being who will rise to the horizon of the bodiless world of creation and from there he will take up regency over the nature in substitution for the Tenth who, in turn, will rise one rank higher in the hierarchy of intellects. *Kā'im* - an intellect emanated from the world of nature is known under different names: it is a perfect son (*al-walad at-tāmm*), or a form (*ṣūra*) which the matter lost the moment it fell, and which will return on the day of resurrection, or, finally, it is the third emanation (*al-inbi'āṭu't-tāli*).

Myth supplies the notional tool for comprehending the sense and direction of time. Substituting a succession of events for the structure it transfers its sequence into time element imposing certain meanings on the substratum which the natural characteristics of time are, its existential duree and its historical dimension. The object of myth is not some event sequel which simply "happens" in time and fills it up, itself having significance independent of its temporal meaning. On the contrary - those events are not, in any way, contained in time but rather they themselves contain and envelop time, their sense, on the other hand, is closely related to it as time, and, specifically, its symbolic expression is just the object of the myth claiming exegesis and archetypal interpretation of a language "established" in time reality so much that it is impossible to grasp its sources and, at

the same time, limitations. The subject of the myth, however - if the source of the myth can be sought below the level of its transmission at all - will be mind which uses this language and wants to place itself somehow above it to prove to itself that it is not restricted by this language. This gnostic attempt results from a conviction; consciously or unconsciously taking for granted a semantic and communicative character of existence, that time is some kind of a language, a means of expression as much as a means of existence (maybe even more so) - and as such it submits to intellectualization and absorption by the mind. So "metalanguage" of the myth concerns its metatemporal sphere established and built within it. The concern of the thought analysed here being that the language could emerge logically from and return to the "metalanguage". The myth, handling events which are not in time yet, interrupts the emanation order in a temporal way, breaking up, as it were, the structure of emanation into a time-order - thus linking metaphysics with history. It presents metaphysics in a historical way, and makes metaphysical historiosophy. By such means it opens way for symbolism, mysticism and theurgy granting reality to something of a "hierophanic time", a time of archetypal events, revelations and mystical realizations. The role of a symbol lies also in the fact that it transforms the supraindividual relations into human language - an individual existing in time. Putting an equation mark between the Third - abstract primitive matter in Kirmāni's system, and the Tenth - Spiritual Adam, which is the symbol of a man tied to matter, has a momentous result, in that it allows to obliterate the difference in scales: *hipercosmic*, *macrocosmic* and *microcosmic*, as well as to establish between them a symbolic connection based on homology.

Cosmic machine which, by means of its revolutions, regulates and measures time is for the Ismaelitis the tool of the Tenth transmitting divine justice to the sublunar world, acting for the salvation of the fallen. In this case, nothing is said about the

deed of the evil Demiurge which is against creation as it happened in other gnostic systems; evil appears in fallen souls only, whereas Demiurge acts for their salvation and separation of the evil which has been attached to them. Cosmos, and time which it evolves from itself are of ambivalent nature, and this very ambivalence is the evidence of justice:

Said sajjidunā al-Mu'ajjad: Praise be to God who created the world based on (alternation of) oppression and freedom, and established time of sweetness and time of bitterness for a reason which minds are unable to grasp, which the imagination was mistaken about, and which evoked long-lasting controversies, and souls could not free themselves from the shackled of irresolution, or cast off the mask of inability of guessing this reason. I praise Him, I, who am oppressed, and in my ever-prolonging oppression am awaiting liberation, and I know that the divine thing is immense and immeasurable but God made a measure for everything (else) ³⁹.

Time serves to defeat evil which is brought forward and undertaken by the rebel and lead to the victory of creation and being which are accomplished by a religious man. This is why time is a kind of general outline into which a soul writes its substance and expresses itself in it, returning to a pattern created for it. And so one more, probably basic meaning of return in gnosis comes to light: through time everything returns to its source, its mythical archetype to which it belongs. If time imitates eternity, and eternity is a perfect time, then it happens so because this eternity, embodied in a concrete being, becomes its boundary and time, in itself embodied in its subject, aims and directs itself towards this boundary. On the other hand, however, everything that is potential, hidden in this world, is brought forward in a specific subject, and in this way, on the day of resurrection, as Kalami Pir - a treatise of the Alamut period says, everything is made concrete (mu'ajjan) and has its person (muṣaḥḥaṣ).

V. COSMIC TIME

If cosmic time, time of a life of an individual and history is enveloped in the same superior metatemporal event which is their model and stretches them between ignorance (ḡahl) and gnosis (ma'rifa, 'irfān), then da'wa - religion is a universal way which leads from the threat of nihility to salvation defining the length and structure of time interval stretching between the exit point and the intended end. For Ismaelitic theosophers, cosmos itself is a religious activity, though it is an activity hidden in matter; getting out of nature a spiritual being to form the essence (ḥu-lāṣa) of its changes is the aim of the religion of cosmos as much as getting out of man his sacral forms is the aim of revelation religions, and getting archetypal (fiṭra) religion out of multiplicity of religious forms is the aim of sacral history. The character of Kā'im - an eschatological replica of the Tenth unites in itself all those aims as the terminal point towards which the development of macrocosmos, microcosmos and the world of religion aims. Nevertheless, the road to it requires the undertaking of a certain transformation - through reaching the point of Kā'im, man gets out of cosmos which surrounded him before and reaches hipercosmic position, simultaneously taking over the regency in nature. Cosmos, then, enables man to get beyond matter, supplying him with the way of return, and this is what his religious activity is based upon, the activity which defines the structure of the time of cosmic cycles. And it so happens because the basis of the organization of cosmos and its movement is the entity of the soul which permeates it. Ismaelitic Cosmos is parapsychic:

The sense (ma'nā) which has been established in you, is sensuous soul permeating the whole creation. It is a form united with matter from the very beginning, hidden in its essence and visible in its symptoms (bātinu'd-dāt wa ḡāhiru'l-ajāt) and in its activities. In celestial spheres it will be the power flowing from the circuitous sphere all the way to the Moon sphere, and their form endowing them with move-

ment and shaping their bodies. In elements it constitutes power flowing in them to the centre of the earth and acting in every element through analysis and synthesis; in minerals - joining power giving them the totality of being; in plants - vegetative power urging them to acquire food; in animals - vegetative and sensory soul which directs their development through its seven powers and gives them sensory feelings through its five senses. In man, however, it constitutes sensory soul which, if it is subjected to education, finds a righteous tutor and receives his instructions - raises to the rank of intelligent ones and gets to know the whole of divine creation. Then it becomes meaning (ma'nā) surrounding and including in itself heaven and earth, in double sense: bodily and spiritual, whereas bodily heaven is celestial spheres - each sphere makes one heaven; and spiritual heaven is hudūd, each of which is heaven for one of a lower rank than itself, and earth for one of the higher rank. Bodily earth, however, is one of the elements of nature which is present in the centre of the world. Therefore surrounding and including in oneself heaven and earth means acknowledging the hierarchy and true sense⁴⁰.

The soul, also called Spiritual Eve - a partner for Spiritual Adam, being subjected to him, forms an active power of cosmos which organizes its matter. Simultaneously, thanks to the ability of increasing selforganization, she raises from one grade to another in the hierarchy of beings, aiming at revealing herself as an autonomous intellect and substituting the Tenth in his functions⁴¹. She is also described as creative nucleus (al-ḥamīratu'l-ibdā'ijja) out of which an intellect returning to the world of creative plerome is supposed to emerge. At the top of this pyramid of beings there is man, and to him, by way of unceasing evolution, life rises through a succession of levels to perfect, in the end, its indestructible spiritual character in holy ecclesis. The history of Cosmos is, therefore, expressed by evolution, the entelechy of which is Qā'im as an originally founded idea and the end of the creative task (awwalu'l-fikra wa āhiru'l-'amal):

The original idea and the end of the task for which everything which is subjected to movement moves [...], for which time and spatial beings have been set in order in space and time, and from which guidance (imāma) stems⁴².

Evolution, which is being discussed here, should be differentiated from the modern understanding of the word. It does not mean the development of many or one species which is achieved through subsequent phases in which the lower precedes the higher in time and then cease to exist giving place to their successors. Ismaelitic cosmos has had constant and identical structure since the beginning - all levels which the soul has to climb are present simultaneously; inanimate nature, plants, animals, man, the world of religion. What, then, undergoes the evolution? Time does not bring anything new into the constant classification of beings, nor does it add any new species to those already existing. Nevertheless, it causes rearrangement, replacement of schemes in ontical structure, although not necessarily in the structure of nature. Preserving the immutability of species and types in nature, it gets out of them the individual hidden in them as the universal material and final unity. It is the matter - intellect hidden in the multiplicity of species and secondary individuals born in the world of nature, returning to his identity in the shape of Qā'im. Differently from natural evolution, time here will not be an abstract measure of changes of a real world growing in linear time continuity, but an actual homogeneous transformation growing and taking place in a hierarchical and spatial, ever the same, world. Through individuals, in natural evolution there takes place a transmutation of species - here through species there takes place a transformation of an identical individual - a person forming himself during passing through impersonal structure of material world. General ideas are not more eternal and permanent than separate beings because the subject of eternity can be only a person repeating tawhīd and tawāḥḥud of the First Intellect. Thus, it will be above everything which is general and particular - hence above nature and cosmos. With such an outlook on cosmic time, it is not only a measure of evolution of species through the birth and annihilation of entities, nor a measure of exchange of entities within permanent

species and types. The first possibility assumes a basically changeable nature whose form never is, and never can be wholly "ready" - the other, however, assumes a nature basically unchangeable, just as the Greek philosophy imagined it, where planet revolutions - constantly repeating the same configurations - restore apparent changeability to constantly recurring configurations, and time becomes rather illusory compared to the reality of eternal return. In gnosis, which is the object of our considerations, we deal with still another solution - namely, that a closed time interval, bringing about a perceptible change through metamorphoses of entities, retaining at the same time unchangeability of species, produces a hiperindividual whose personal unity is situated above the opposition: particular - general and changeable - permanent. The return whose function is the time cycle runs through a unique and unreiterated way - each cycle absorbs and concentrates in itself the totality of time which passes with the end of the cycle. The time of return being realized in the form of a person returning to lost eternity appears to be more specific and meaningful at the same time, than the time of material entity drifting towards its annihilation in the impersonal world of cosmic Fate, and more real also than the lasting of types and universals. The revolutions of celestial bodies guiding the metamorphosis of the world of existence and destruction can thus be doubly understood, either as the measure setting the time of destruction of beings irrevocably departing into non-existence and perishing in the element of matter or as a substance out of which eternity is formed and existence emerges. In the first case, time presents the face of a devouring demon, in the latter - the face of an angel and has a creative power.

The perception of evolution and its sense is, therefore, a matter of interpretation. There is no possibility of time aiming forward unendingly - the fact, that it is superimposed on shapeless matter as a structure and dynamism of Logos, binds it to manifest the Logos, and to return to it mastering the en-

thropic character of matter and overcoming chaos. But the return to eternity is possible only when the individual manages to transform itself into a person overcoming the abstractness of its species. That is why, humanity united in the shape of Kā'im (in spite of the fact that this, which will be the duration after the day of resurrection, is impossible to describe in precise terms and submits only to approximation by means of a symbol)⁴³. It will certainly be basically different from humanity understood as a natural species, or even a society united by social ties. On the other hand, if an entity remains only as a specimen of a species, then it returns to shapelessness, non-existence (saḥik) with the advent of its date in order to reappear, after some time, as another individual⁴⁴. It is necessary to state that for the gnosis, apart from changeability and metamorphosis, there exists a convergent unity of time in which a sacred person is created, and besides unstability of existence the permanence of life purposefulness of energy are found.

Time-and-space as the activity of Logos is plainly visible in the description of the construction of the cosmic mechanism. Material cosmos as such is the result of co-operation of two elements - matter and form. Matter is the lowest spiritual being - vegetative soul; soul, however, the life of the universe, united with matter gives the image (ṣūra) of the First Intellect and then carries in itself the reflection of his eternity. Form is the organization and knowledge of matter higher and higher as it assumes increasingly developed and complicated shapes. Absolute passivity and negation of the matter would make the existence of time impossible. Activity and movement are impossible in the state of inertia in which the matter (left to itself and deprived of the "help" of the form) dwells. For the time to exist, it is necessary that there were an impulse of initiative, a movement forward which gives the beginning to some potential energy - which is necessary to create possibilities of further movements and changes. Even the lowest organization and structuralism

bring about the possibility of activity. It stems from certain operational rules which the structure possesses, and which constitute for it something very much like "memory". The whole nature, therefore, must have knowledge, and this knowledge is its soul⁴⁵.

The creation of such of time and space (as formed in the matter of structures, a construction endowing it with order and dynamics) is brought about as a result of the movement of the soul aiming at its salvation. Three movements formed archetypes of three basic dimensions, and those - an Ismaelitic author puts it - gave the beginning to the formation of space in order to create time⁴⁶. Another work from the Yemen period states that the beginning of the first movement was heat - a point which, it is said, "was a whole, not a part"⁴⁷.

Time-space understood in such a way is characterized by vectorial dynamics causing movement, actively setting in motion beings subjected to it, contrary to the statics of categories which only arrange movement. Neither form nor matter exist separately from each other, but together they appear as organization and construction. That is why, time and space, those foundations of the structure of nature, are not so much the form of matter, as the structure within which matter assumes form. Structuralization of cosmos, the creation of cosmic mechanism - the work of the Tenth Intellect - appears to be for the fallen soul a blessing, an act of grace. Heavenly spheres thanks to their perfect and harmonious built, become the quintessence of form imitating the image of primeaval rule of existence and thus can be the "argument" of rebelled Primitive Matter⁴⁸. On the other hand, if we consider the spacial structure, then its primordality in comparison to real, material objects which arrange themselves in it, and its "spirituality" - appear in the ideal character of vectorial relationship prior to real space. Movements of the soul fix the dimensions through establishing points, their opposites and correspondence (*munāẓarāt wa muqābalāt*) producing a crosscutting cluster which forms the central point in the point of intersection.

Those relationships and their common point are called substratum of unity (*dāt wāḥida*) organizing the multiplicity of beings into one entity "even before those ideal points have assumed the shape of bodies perceptible through senses"⁴⁹. Spacial relations, based on opposition and correspondence prepared a network of determinants for the occurrence of time, and since then (in whatever immemorial past occurred the "then") celestial bodies moving in cosmic space form a clock measuring the time of birth and death on earth. They regulate metamorphoses taking place between extremes of dialectical contradictions: every quality or natural characteristics has its opposite and whenever this characteristics loses its power, then it is overtaken by its antithesis which annihilates it taking its place instead⁵⁰. Similarly, the arrangement of hierohistorical cycles will be dual because material cosmos includes duality, the basis of which is the opposition of form and matter, movement and repose, activity and passivity, and finally tension between extremes of potentiality and actuality.

The question of cosmic time brings to mind the problem of the beginning. If time does not come from creation and is the work of the Tenth, then the time distance cannot be eternal, and time cannot be "more ancient" than the beginning of everything. However, search for a beginning which would be the zero point for historical chronology or the scale of cosmic age, is doomed to fail. The paradox of the beginning lies in the fact that it would have to be such a point from which time is derived - thus, a point which is not included in time, and at the same time, such a one, which would be the first point of a set of time moments. Besides, there could not exist any point which would precede it, and which, at the same time would remain the first, from which past begins, and the only one which would not be included in the potential future. The impossibility of imagining such a point speaks strongly against the existence of a zero point in absolute scale.

That is why, the beginning of time is enclosed only in the symbolic reflection of eschatological end, which, in turn, is not only the border of time measure, but also the connection with metatemporal level.

Kā'im is the form which is to appear with those, who detached themselves from bodies in small or big cycles. Matter and form, however, are the third emanation which did not respond (to the call of the First Intellect) because the second part (of the creative world) which rebelled and persisted in its mistake - fell into darkness and got mixed up, resulting in two things connected into a pair at the beginning of time and space⁵¹.

In Ismaelitic cosmos, macrounity consists of an astrological cycle finished by annihilation and recreation of cosmos from chaos. It coincides with the great hierohistorical cycle because with its end, there is formed a spiritual shape of Kā'im who undertakes providential rule over nature in place of the preceding intellect. It means that he becomes, in a way, the energy of cosmos, the structure which organizes it, and gives it its form - and, at the same time, an intellect performing concealed care of the evolution of religion (da'wa). Quite naturally, the cycle is divided into a string of smaller units which, in turn, consist of innumerable multiplicity of moments. The basic characteristics of such a cycle is its overall character. It results from the continuity of evolutionary process which takes place in it, and its organic cohesion. The continuity of evolution and the entirety of its product cause time to become an entirety which oversteps the total aggregation of points, thus converging into a unit - acon. We can draw a conclusion, therefore, that in the Ismaelitic notion of time, there can be seen two different ways of understanding its measure - according to distinguished kinds of topicality:

1. a unit of imperfect creation, measuring and embodying the existence of partial and incomplete beings - a moment including ephemeral and transitory actuality;

2. a unit, concentrating in itself the whole of perfected (not only past) time, which measures out the creation of perfect beings reaching eternity at its end.

If it is to be something real, eternity becomes somehow a sublimation of a moment - a lasting actuality of its subject, an eternal moment, which does not know internal division, which is immeasurable and simultaneously deprived of that, which, in temporal moment even most intensively experienced evokes fear - the feeling of the impossibility of enclosing the whole time, using it up in the present moment. Ismaelitic gnosis does not allow for a sudden, extatic transition from time to eternity in which the I of a mystic becomes the evidence of Divine ego⁵² - between eternity and time, this system places a separating layer of metatemporal level. In fact, it is nothing else but an operative myth, acting and existing presently not only in legend and tradition or a book. Hence, the possibility of the existence of personified characters encompassing the whole of time⁵³.

Time is here a periodical measure of absence, an announcement, a sign of hierophany which will come true only with its end - cosmic rhythms as such are not, and cannot be hierophany. It so happens because, in spite of repeatedly underlined mutual conformity of soul and cosmos, it is, in fact, the former which, above all, is the epiphanic place, and it is the soul which gives sense to cosmos, not the other way round.

NOTES

The list of abbreviations used in the text:

- R. A. - Ahmad Hamidu'd-din al-Kirmānī, Rā-hatu'l-akli prepared by, and with the introduction of Mustafa Chaleb, Beirut 1967, Dāru'l-Andalūs.

- K. W. - Ibrahīm ibn Husajn al-Ḥamīdī, Kan-zu'l-waladī prepared by, and with the introduction of Mustafa Chaleh, published with the subtitle *Die ismailitische theologie in Bibliotheca Islamica*, vol. 21, Wiesbaden - Beirut 1971.
- Ad-dahīra - 'Alī ibn al-Walīd, Kitābu'd-dahīra fī'l-bakī-ka prepared by Muḥammad Ḥasan al-A'ẓamī, Beirut 1971, Dāru i-takāfa.
- G. T. I. - Gnosis - Texte der Ismailiten, herausgegeben von R. Strothmann, Göttingen 1943.
- Kalāmī Pir - Kalāmī Pir. A Treatise on Ismaili Doctrine also (wrongly) called Haft - Bābī Shāh Sayyid Nasir. Edited in original Persian and translated into English by W. Ivanow. Bombay 1935.

¹ This homology was discovered and described by H. Corbin in his paper Le temps cyclique dans le mazdéisme et l'ismaélisme, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 1951, pp. 211-217.

² Cf. Corbin's emphasis of the re-constructive role of tā-wīl (Histoire de la philosophie islamique, pp. 13-30).

³ Problems of gnosis are here consciously related to the issues of hermeneutics as developed by P. Ricoeur, especially those, which has been discussed in the work Existence et herméneutique, published in the collection "Le conflit des interprétations", Paris 1969, pp. 7-29.

⁴ H. Corbin, Histoire de la philosophie islamique, p. 126.

⁵ The polemic was initiated by Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzi's treatise Kitābu 'l-islāh, wherein criticism was levelled against the work entitled Kitābu 'l-mahsūl attributed to Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad an-Nasafi. The latter was in turn supported by Abū Ja'kūb as-Siġistānī.

⁶ Kitābu'r-rijad, p. 39.

⁷ R. A., pp. 496-505.

⁸ Cf. C. G. Jung's remarks in Aion, ch. Die Struktur und Dynamik des Selbst on the subject of the function of time in time-space quaternity in gnosis, where the role of time is synthetic - time is the dimension giving space "spiritual" sense, a figure focusing energy and motion, having the meaning of unity which cannot be shut up in space torn by three dimensions. Similarly in Ismailitic gnosis time represents the movement of the soul which makes itself perfect and which aims at unity but it must be remembered that giving meaning is performed by means of building a construction - an organism which, when it is enveloped finally in its already fulfilled character ne-

vertheless gives time spatial character through synchronic vision of the whole (cf. H. Corbin's remarks in his article Morphologie de la spiritualité shi'ite, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 1960, p. 100, on the subject of spatial time in cyclical structure).

⁹ E. Meyerovitch, in his article on the subject of mystical time in Islam, says: "Mais ce qui nous semble plus particulier à la pensée mystique de l'Islam c'est l'étude systématique et incroyablement subtile de ces états psychologiques où le temps est ressenti et non pensé et calculé". (E. Meyerovitch, Temps et mystique en Islam [in:] Mélanges Georges Jamati, p. 213).

¹⁰ By capital letter we mark intellect, soul and matter when the names refer to the three substances appearing as supracosmic intellects.

¹¹ L. Massignon, Le temps dans la pensée islamique, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 1951, pp. 140-148.

¹² E. Meyerovitch, op. cit.

¹³ E. Meyerovitch, op. cit.

¹⁴ E. Meyerovitch, op. cit.

¹⁵ R. A., p. 258.

¹⁶ R. A., pp. 151-152, 157.

¹⁷ A somewhat fuller discussion of the rudiments of tawḥīd the reader can find in: H. Corbin, Histoire de la philosophie islamique, pp. 118-124.

¹⁸ R. A., p. 193.

¹⁹ R. A., p. 207.

²⁰ R. A., pp. 208-209.

²¹ Matter - the third intellect of the world of divine imperative is a potential intellect and only on the way of religious life of human society his emanation runs its course.

²² Ad-dahīra, p. 28.

²³ Ad-dahīra, p. 36.

²⁴ R. A., p. 260.

²⁵ Ad-dahīra, p. 32.

²⁶ R. A., pp. 280, 291, 481.

²⁷ K. W., p. 112.

²⁸ The mistake of the intellect called Matter which lies at the roots of the fall is described as overstepping of a given boundary which was caused by pretensions to the rank higher than the one which was his due. This mistake is called ta'addī which means both overstepping and crime or sin.

²⁹ In mythical time all intellects acquire the status of personified beings.

³⁰ K. W., p. 67.

³¹ Ad-dahira, p. 36.

³² Ad-dahira, p. 37.

³³ R. A., p. 171.

³⁴ K. W., p. 84.

³⁵ Ad-dahira, pp. 36-38.

³⁶ K. W., p. 100.

³⁷ R. A., p. 363.

³⁸ Koran, 3761, cf. K. W., p. 259.

³⁹ K. W., p. 100.

⁴⁰ G. T. I., p. 48.

⁴¹ Ad-dahira, p. 40.

⁴² G. T. I., p. 162.

⁴³ R. A., p. 523.

⁴⁴ K. W., p. 117.

⁴⁵ R. A., ch. V/3: "Of the knowledge which nature has, and what this knowledge is".

⁴⁶ K. W., p. 117.

⁴⁷ Ad-dahira, p. 45.

⁴⁸ L. cit.

⁴⁹ L. cit.

⁵⁰ L. cit.

⁵¹ L. cit.

⁵² L. Massignon, La Passion de Hallaj, vol. 1, pp. 541, 570.

⁵³ Kalami Pir, p. 68.

Marek STACHOWSKI

DIE NEOLOGISMEN IM TAGEBUCH
VON NURULLAH ATAC (1953-1957)

I. VORWORT

Die Einführung der türkischen Sprache in die osmanischen Schulen im Jahre 1839 war ein Resultat der im 18. Jh. dafür unternommenen Bemühungen. Sie liess die schnelle Entwicklung und die Belebung des Interesses für die Muttersprache erwarten. Wenn das Thema der Spracherneuerung in der Türkei berührt und neben dem Begriff "dil devrimi" (Sprachrevolution) in einem Atemzug auch der Name von Atatürk genannt wird, darf nicht vergessen werden, dass Kemal Pascha seinen Erfolg in einem hohen Grade den im 19. Jh. wirkenden Patrioten verdankt, die es verstanden, die türkische Gesellschaft auf die langwierige Sprachreinigung vorzubereiten. Aber die Gesellschaft war sich weder in dem Bedürfnis nach puristischen Reformen, noch über deren Arbeitsmethoden einig. Trotz vieler Strömungen und unterschiedlicher Meinungen lässt sich nur ein Spracherneuerungsprogramm als umfassend und kohärent bezeichnen. Sein Autor war Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924), der seinen ziemlich massvollen und sehr realistischen Plan im Werk Türkçülük esasları (Prinzipien des Panturkismus) darstellte.

Das nächste puristische Programm wurde von Atatürk vorgeschlagen. Diesmal war es jedoch eher ein radikaler Purismus. Die erste Organization für Arbeit an der türkischen Sprache nannte sich "Dil Hey'eti" (Sprachkommission). Die schnelle Auflösung der Organization wurde durch die unzureichende Sachkenntnis