

Research Article

The Impact of Ismailism on Thought d'al-Batalyawṣī (1127)

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Abstract

Secret Da'wa Ismaelite has continued its activity and expansion in the Muslim world and in the Islamic West (Andalus). The teaching of Ismailism provided a complete and coherent vision of God, the universe and the meaning of history. Principally, embodied general Islamic beliefs and ideas and chi'ites. It also absorbed part of the Greek spiritual and intellectual heritage, which was strongly rejected by many conservative scholars and would undoubtedly become part of Islamic cultural civilization. The purpose of this article, entitled "The Influence of Ismaelism in the Thought of Ibn al-Ssīd", is an attempt to affirm and evaluate the existence of these Ismaili ideas in the treatise *al-ḥadā'iq*. The latter, influenced by the intellectual climate of Ismaelism, played a major role through its Gnostic and Platonic spirit. He dealt up to date in most of the philosophical questions such as the idea of emanation, the hierarchization of beings in the world and the theory of intellects etc. Thus, the idea of circles has occupied a very important place in *kitāb al-ḥadā'iq*. It was adopted by the majority of philosophers and Sufis and many others to facilitate the understanding of creation theory. It is among the most dominant ideas in his treatise *al-ḥadā'iq*.

Keywords

Ibn al-Ssīd al-Batalyawṣī (1127), Livre *al-ḥadā'iq*, Ismaelism, Islmanic West (al-Andalus), Philosophy

1. Introduction

Philosophy in the Islamic West is considered the Peripatetic school par excellence, especially with the most representative names of the latter, namely Ibn Bāḡḡa (Avempace, 1139) and Ibn Ruṣd (Averroes, 1198). This statement needs to be examined closely. Our article aims to elaborate on this question, especially at the time of the advent of philosophy in the Islamic West, represented here by Ibn al-Sīd al-Batalyawṣī, and the impact of Ismailism¹ (represented here by Iḥwān al-Ṣafā').²

At the end of our study, questions remain on the subject of the religious and philosophical affiliation of this little-known author, Ibn al-Sīd al-Batalyawṣī on the one hand, and of his

predecessors, Iḥwān al-Safā' on the other, known for their immense philosophical influence. These questions can be summarized in five important points, which are as follows:

- 1) Was Ibn al-Sīd influenced by Ismaili doctrines?
- 2) What are the passages representative of such an impact, in particular, in the work al-Ḥadā'iq?

These are intriguing and questionable questions. Their answer requires a comparative and careful study as well as a detailed examination strongly demanded and necessary in order to define the relations and discordances of the thought of this Andalusian author with his predecessors.

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Received: 5 April 2025; Accepted: 13 June 2025; Published: 23 September 2025



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2. Was Al-Batalyawstīnfluenced by Ismaili Doctrines

Because of the important place that his work *al-Ḥadā'iq* occupied in the milieu of Jewish thinkers, Ibn al-Sīd received the famous name of the philosopher confirmed in the Islamic West.³ According to studies and analyses specializing⁴ in Andalusian philosophy, it has been affirmed by the majority that Ibn al-Sīd was subject to intellectual and doctrinal influences. According to some scholars⁵, Al-Fārābī and Iḥwān al-Safā' played a great role in his philosophical formation and in the orientation of his respective thoughts.

The similarities between the works of these authors and those of Ismaili thinkers provide approximate and arguably proof of the influence of the two on the other and the cultural and intellectual interaction between their predecessors and successors.

The influences were carried out either directly or indirectly, according to the requirements of the natural law of civilizations' interactions. This is the inevitable law.

The fact that Ibn al-Sīd's predecessors were the majority or certain of an Ismaili denomination,⁶ it was therefore very obvious that he drew from the same sources of the heirs of this heritage.

The various ancient thoughts disseminated in the Islamic world in general bore within them the marks and models of the Šī'ite and Ismaili philosophical systems.

It was widely spread and known by the scholars of Islamic civilization that the dissemination of ancient knowledge has a single objective, which is that of the continuity of knowledge and the development of human knowledge.

As a philosopher and successor of the Ismailis, Ibn al-Sīd did not escape the historical demands by which he too played the same role of transmission and influence with some of his successors.

He is undoubtedly the messenger carrying within him the knowledge of his masters and predecessors that was transmitted to his successors, to Ibn Rušd and Ibn al-'arabī.

To be subjected to such intellectual influences and exchanges is an inevitable natural law of the history of peoples. For this reason, it can be emphatically said that *Kitāb al-Ḥadā'iq* is a valuable witness to the impact and influence exerted on its author Ibn al-Sīd,⁷ and then on the majority of his successors.

2.1. Was There Any Direct or Indirect Contact with Any of Their Disciples

The doctrinal influence of Ismailism reached its peak between the tenth and twelfth centuries. As a branch of Šī'ism, Ismailism recognizes the authority of the Imam who is God's representative on Earth. The imam is both the spiritual and political leader of the community. He is infallible, and because of this, he is the one and only legitimate interpreter of Scripture. A hierarchy often builds parallels between meta-

physical, theological and social structures.⁸

Ismaili cosmology can be described as neo-platonic in its entirety. It seems that Neo-Platonism was introduced into Ismaili doctrine in a brief and rapid manner in the ninth century, by al-Nasafī (d. 943).⁹

This Neoplatonism serves to explain the relationship between the One and the existence of multiplicity. Ismaili thinkers tried to modify this Neoplatonic system by starting the process of emanation from the level of the Intellect and not from the degree of the One.¹⁰

Emanation has therefore been thought of as something that occurs from the Intellect to the Soul, from the Soul to Nature, and so on up to the elementary qualities. The hierarchy of emanations is a hierarchy of value and perfection.¹¹

2.2. Are There Any Arguments to Support the Observation of This Impact and Influence

Ibn al-Sīd followed the distinction between origination from the One and emanation from the Intellect. He thus names the One in terms of theological advantages (*al-Barī'*) as the Superior or the Transcendent.¹²

From the One, through the origination, arises the First Intellect, and from it, through emanation, arises the Second Intellect. From the Second Intellect emanates the Third Intellect, at the origin of the material world; the emanating process is completed with the tenth Intellect.

Such a 'philosophical' hierarchy corresponds very well to the vision of the cosmology of Al-Fārābī and Ptolemy according to which the Universe was made up of nine or ten concentric spheres, organized in hierarchical order.

This hierarchy represents a harmony of the universal organization. The whole is decided by the creator (*al-Bārī'*). This hierarchical order is very well accomplished when each of these creatures occupies his natural degree and the place willed and granted by the Creator.¹³

This order and harmony must be found in the universe, in each of its elements and more precisely in the generations from the mineral to the animal through the plant embodied in the human being, and then they will find their expression in his body (human body).¹⁴

2.3. In These Various Modes of Hierarchization of Beings, Where Does Man Fit in, How can He Know His Place

As the dominant creature of the animal generation, man is dressed representing all the generations below him. It is made of mineral and vegetable elements, but through its soul it takes part in the divine world. It is in the direction of the latter that his end is stretched and oriented.¹⁵

Since man is the only creature endowed with rational power, he therefore has a power of choice. It also needs to be directed to its natural place. His guidance and guidance is provided by a religious order, message, or law, which is the

link between the spiritual and material worlds and the link between the Creator and man.

For Ibn al-Sīd, as for his predecessors, including the Isma'ilis, this mission of guidance occurs through the people regulating human affairs and making the divine and natural law effective¹⁶. According to the divine, the order of hierarchy and universal harmony, in Ibn al-Sīd, consists of ten degrees, in which each of these creatures has a reason for being in the degree above its own.

Ibn al-Sīd himself gives a graphic example of this hierarchy, as do others, in a diagram representing a higher degree and others of lower sandstone.¹⁷

3. What Are The Representative Passages with Such an Impact in His Work al-Ḥadā'iq

The terms and (terminology) appear in several paragraphs of al-Batalyawṣī's kitāb al-Ḥadā'iq, especially in the first chapter. Example: (sababawwal- aw'illa-tu al-'ilal).¹⁸

In addition, several synonyms existed for certain terms and concepts, such as: (ibdā= inbi'ā=ḥalq).¹⁹

At the beginning of this first chapter of his work, al-Batalyawṣī exposes the problem of the divine essence (God), the first principle, the first cause and the cause of es.²⁰ All beings have emanated from the first principle through the intermediary of another being. The closest to the first principle is the cause of the one who succeeds it. They are nine intellects, called 'the seconds separated from matter'. The first, emanating from the first cause and without intermediary, is the second, then three, four, five, six, seven, eight, and nine. Each intellect is the cause of the one who succeeds it.

The world of the four elements is called the 'sensible world'. All causes have emanated from the First Principle 'God' which is the cause of all causes.

In this way, everyone needs him and the existence of each of them depends on him. On the other hand, He does not need any cause or anything else to exist.

His unity [Essence of God] diffuses in his creatures as the light of the sun diffuses in bodies. It protects the entity and the existence of its creatures. The latter [creatures] exist only with its existence [the first cause]. Without it, all creatures would disappear, and none would survive. She is the light of the world. It is unique. It has no partners or equals. It is imperceptible but perceives all things, as the Qur'an says: "...He knows what is on Earth and at the bottom of the sea. Not a leaf falls without his knowledge. There is not a single speck in the darkness of the Earth, a green or withered sprig that is not inscribed in the evident Book". [21]²¹

He, the giver of existence that is not limited by time or space.

According to Batalyawṣī, the notions of 'time' and 'space' have a specific meaning that forms the basis for understand-

ing attributes, essence, and their differences from those of creatures:

Time (al-zamān): Time is the duration of sensible things (*maḥsusāt*).²²

Eternity (al-dahr): Eternity is the duration of intelligible things (*ma'qūlat*).²³

God is not limited by time or space, and He is not influenced by eternity. It is the first degree in existence. He is existence itself. No one is like it, is associated with it, neither in its existence nor in its attributes. It cannot be located. He is the Creator of the sensible and the intelligible.²⁴

He is unlike any of his creatures, as they are defined by time, space, and movement.

The divine attributes and their logic according to al-Batalyawṣī. In his analysis, Al-Batalyawṣī resorted to the interpretation of Qur'anic verses mentioning attributes. According to him, it is impossible to compare God to his creatures. His divine attributes are different from those of man.²⁵

The description of the Creator as Audient (*Samī'*) and Seer (*baṣīr*) has a different meaning than that of man. His description does not resemble any of his creatures and none is like him.

The resemblance exists only at the level of the terms in their structure and not in their content and meaning.

Man hears and sees through senses that are in addition to his essence, unlike God who hears and sees through his essence itself. There is no resemblance between the created and the Creator.

The resemblance is in the pronunciation of the terms, but never in the psychological and existential meaning.

The attributes are similar in their name and not in their meaning. They are shared by the term and not by the meaning. Man sees with his eyes and hears with his ears. But God is indefinable and unimaginable.

Ibn Sid took a new step in his analyses and his study of other opinions when he said: "The divine attributes have a specificity that concerns God alone". [26] Batalyawṣī asserts that the divine attributes are indescribable, alluding to the conflicts caused by the divergences and misunderstanding of the verses by some thinkers.

The divine attributes are specific to God, but the description and naming always remain approximate and untruthful.

Example of the previous terms:

- 1) *Yā-ḡawād- lā - yabḥul* (Munificent and not miserly)
- 2) *Yā-ḥalīm -lā -ya'ḡal* (the most gentle one who does not lose patience)
- 3) *Yā- 'ālim- lā-yaḡhal* (scholar who knows nothing)

In spite of the degree reached by man's attributes, he is qualified by his impatience, in a hurry, Avar and ignorant in his judgments, unlike God who is indescribable by his creatures.

In his talk, Batalyawṣī proceeds to the analysis of attributes within a framework of admiration and insistence for demonstrative science based on main foundations drawn from theological science and profound realities of the study

of logic and philosophy.

On this principle of logical analysis, the relative and existing difference between human and creature attributes (*al-ṣifāt*) is clarified.

Example: *yā- Ḥalīm* (Patient); *yā-Ḡawād* (Munificent); *yā-‘ālim* (Savant).

The distinction is therefore made by the meaning of the terms chosen and not by their imposed structure.²⁷ The way in which God knows and understands things is different from that of men.

To achieve this distinction, Batalyawsī resorts to the interpretation of Qur'anic verses.

For example, in the following verse: "*fa-atā – bunyān-a-hum min-a al-qaw‘idi*"

Translation: "*But Allah has destroyed and devastated the basis of their construction. Thus, the ceiling collapsed above them. The punishment came to them from where they did not expect it*". [28]

Batalyawsī says: that the verb 'atā = to come' is an act of 'acting' and not a verb that means that God moves to come, that is: God does not describe himself as his creatures who move in time and space. The meaning of the verb 'atā = to come' is a metaphor.

Batalyawsī enters into a linguistic and philosophical debate with certain grammarians and theologians and even with philosophers who maintain the apparent meaning of the Qur'anic verses without interpreting them (*bila ta 'wīl*). Moreover, because of the qualification of the verb 'to rise' = '*qā'imān*' as a 'verb of state', Batalyawsī detects their linguistic, grammatical and philosophical incompetence. It is for this reason that he has called them the atheists, the ignorant impure, [29] as in the following verse:

«*ṣhahid-Allahu- anahu- la- ilāha -ila- huwa- wa- al-malā' ikat – wa- ūlū - al 'ilm-qā'im-an bi- l -qist - la-ilāha - ila – huwa- al- 'azīz al- hakīm* ».[30]

Allah testifies, and also the angels and the gifted with knowledge, that there is no god but Him, the Maintainer of Justice. There is no divinity except him, the mighty, the wise.[31]

Their explanation of the verb 'to rise' (*qā'imān*) in the above verse, sums up their shortcomings in theological sciences and their incompetence in Qur'anic interpretation.

The Qur'anic verses are of two kinds:

- 1) unequivocal (*muḥkam*)
- 2) equivocal (*mutaṣābih*)

The word (*qā'imān*) expresses movement, mobility and instability and this concerns man and creatures more than the divine essence.

The explanation of these thinkers was refuted by Batalyawsī because the state verb "to lever" *qā'im-an* was misinterpreted in describing the Creator by being-like qualities.

"Goderrant, moving and mobile": an unacceptable word by Batalyawsī. Misunderstanding proves their incompetence.

The noun to rise (*qā'im*), according to Batalyawsī, is an act without movement, without time or space. God does not

move. For this reason, Ibn al-Sīd qualifies these grammarians as misguided and ignorant of the rules of the Arabic language.

To raise '*al-qīyyām*' by which God has described His essence in this verse does not mean to rise, to stand, but the meaning is 'to do' and 'to protect things'.³²

According to Batalyawsī, the attributes are of two kinds:

The first is to eliminate the association and resemblance between two subjects. In this case, we describe one by qualities that differ it from the others. E.g., If there are three students named Zayd.

If we say, "Zayd is coming," the person we are talking to will not understand which Zayd we are talking about. In this case, he asks for more details to make the difference.

A second intended for praise or denigration. The interlocutor in this case does not need to be glorified, as in the following example if one says, "I met my noble teacher or the noble teacher."

The divine attributes, according to Batalyawsī, are therefore of the latter kind, but God differs from all his creatures. Each of his descriptions is unique. No one is associated with it or similar.

It is for this reason that the praise in al-Batalyawsī is in three kinds:

- 1) Excess or exaggeration, that is to say, to go beyond measure, truth, in one's words and actions.
- 2) Moderation, reduction, restrained attenuation that keeps away from any excess.
- 3) Negligence (5th chapter), Attitude of one who lackscare, attention and vigilance. (Lack of knowledge).
- 4) The first two are not allowed in the praise of the divine essence, but we are unable to glorify its essence by the right way of praise. We are powerless in linguistic, metaphorical and imaginative matters to achieve a description that lives up to its essence. It depends on our weakness as creatures created by our Creator.

All our eloquent and imaginative expressions are powerless, and our description is only a rough metaphorical image.

The names of the divine attributes are as follows:

- 1) Vivant (*ḥay*),
- 2) Savant ('*ālīm*),
- 3) Mighty (*qādir*),
- 4) The Oyant (*samī*),

Their divine meaning is absolutely contrary to what is implied by these names common in our world among human creatures. Our eloquence is powerless to imagine the divine essence in its own image. Our field of vision is overcast and obscure. He prevents us from penetrating into the reality of his essence - may he be exalted as a mighty God - of all his creatures.

Man does not provide a complete description that corresponds to the proper image of his divine essence, for he is above all imagination. God is Mighty and is higher than all of His creatures. Its essence is indescribable and unmistakable.

ble.

What is significant here is that a hierarchy existed in the early epochs of humanity, and that the underlying principle of the whole system was the concept of obedience.

All Ismaili authors agree on this point. Thus, the hierarchy made by Ibn al-Sīd in his work *al-Ḥadā'iq*, clearly shows obedience to a high authority living in the divine world, that is to say that the degrees of natural beings are equivalent in their hierarchization in the order of divine intellects.

Ibn al-Sīda has the same Ismaili opinion: authority and obedience are therefore two related concepts.

Ismaili thought has influenced Islamic thought in all its theological, philosophical and political aspects. It is part of the great esoteric current that has known the history of Muslim thought. It encourages intellectual speculation within the framework of the Islamic faith. This Ismaili current developed a certain religious science based on hermeneutics.

The various metaphysical concepts adopted by Ibn al-Sīd, either Ismaili such as (Initiator = *mubdi'*), the hierarchy of beings, the concept of cyclical time³³ and numbers, or Neoplatonic such as the emanation of the world, the One and multiplicity, etc. prove at least his knowledge of Ismaili (Neoplatonic) culture, if not even his membership in one of the philosophical circles.

The period before Ibn al-Sīd is characterized by the appearance and development of the cosmopolitan spirit of the school of Aristotle, Baghdad and humanistic urban culture (Yahya Ibn 'Adī and his disciples) and many others.

This period was characterized by Louis Massignon³⁴ as the Ismaili century. A proliferation of Ismaili works in both Arabic and Persian arose, describing the theosophy of Ismailism.

As we have mentioned in our thesis work, the Ismaili doctrines as well as the theory of the ten Intellects in *al-Fārābī* have been taken up, adopted and deepened by several thinkers, including Ibn al-Sīd, who is part of it in the Islamic West.³⁵

3.1. *AL-Ḥadā'iq*

In the first chapter of *Al-Ḥadā'iq*, by Ibn al-Sīd, exposes the notion of:

- 1) The First Cause,
- 2) The First Intellect,
- 3) The Cause of Causes (*al-Mawğūd al-awwal*) which is (*al-Sabab al-awwal*) of the existence of all beings.

As for his degree, the First Being is the highest of all. He does not need another being to exist. Being in the first degree of perfection of being, He cannot have associates. Its essence is unique and differs from any other being.

If the First Being is perfect, He cannot share some similarities with an opposite. The First Being is distinguished from all beings by the Unity of His essence. It is more fitting for him than for any other to be designated as the One (*al-Wāhid*). At this first stage, we can see that Ibn al-Sīd starts from a definition of the First Being, from which he logically

deduces His Attributes.³⁶

Ibn al-Sīd's definition of God resembles that of his predecessors in general and that of *Al-Fārābī* in particular,³⁷ but his vision is different from that of Aristotle: "Being as Being".³⁸ God, in Aristotle, is pure thought or Intellect in action, contrary to what Ibn al-Sīd assigns: God is the (Cause and Creator of the world). Ibn al-Sīd's conception, close to that of *al-Fārābī*, differs from that of Plotinus.

Ibn al-Sīd followed a period very marked by many controversial debates and opinions about the Divine Unity and the creation of the world. These theological and philosophical debates produced two opposing parts of thought: rationalist, having an abstract idea of God on the one hand, and anthropomorphic, describing God with human attributes.³⁹

The Sunni Muslims put the Divine Unity beyond all discussion, although they give God Attributes. For this reason, Ibn al-Sīd, like his predecessors, tried to preserve harmonization with official religious doctrines.

Monotheism, according to his doctrine, was founded on the divine essence. The First Being is the most perfect, He is unequalled, unparalleled, He is unique in himself.⁴⁰

The thought of Ibn al-Sīd is similar to that of *Al-Fārābī* on the one hand, and that of *Iḥwān al-Safā'* on the other, which affirms that the logic of interactions proves its influence indirectly through that of the Ismailis. The latter often imagine Deity as being beyond human intelligibility and all imaginations and descriptions.

As was observed, the Ismailis, unlike their successors, do not directly link the Attributes to Deity, for they believe that these characterize created beings.

According to contemporary studies and research, some claim that Ibn al-Sīda was influenced by Ismaili works⁴¹ and that he drew on the sources of the masters of the Ismaili faith either directly or indirectly.

Regarding the theory of the creation of the world, Ibn al-Sīd, like the majority of his predecessors. His doctrine has Neoplatonic and Ismaili roots.

Emanation is the perpetual radiance of a light and a thought that comes from the One.⁴²

The Neoplatonic theory is reported and represented by *al-Fārābī*, whose nine heavens, in the latter, constitute the ladder of descent, while the ten Intellects form the path of ascent. In *Iḥwān al-safā'*, this theory remains closer to Plotinus,⁴³ but Ibn al-Sīd remains close to all by giving it another aspect.

Influenced by the immense ancient philosophical heritage, Ibn al-Sīd proceeded to found an astrological theory according to which the stars govern the lower world. He also describes the evolution of physical beings by stating that minerals were produced by the mixture of the four elements (earth, water, air and fire).⁴⁴ Plants are made from a mixture of several minerals and elements. Animals come from a mixture of several plants, minerals and elements. Finally, a final mixture makes the man appear.⁴⁵

According to Ibn al-Sīd, the world is made up of nine

main spheres, the center of which is the Earth. The ninth sphere was added by al-Fārābī, probably influenced by the work of Ptolemy.⁴⁶ The first system of spheres has only one body which moves in a circular motion.

The second has only one body that moves in a circular motion surrounding the first system. All the systems that follow are hierarchical in this way.

The raw material is made up of a hierarchy ranging from the most complex to the simplest⁴⁷. Contrary to Aristotle's theory of spherical motions, he believed that each intelligence could produce all the motions proper to its sphere.

The Ismailis, previously, made some modifications to the Neoplatonic scheme. Thus, the first Intelligence (al-'aql al-awwal) does not emanate from God, but appears through Order (Amr) or the Logos (Kalima) in the act of Establishment (Ibdā').

From the first Intelligence begins the emanation (fayḍ) of beings. In the Kitāb al-Ḥadā'iq, Ibn al-Sīd adopts the same procedure with the modifications made by all his predecessors. He explains that the emanation of the world has produced the things of this world⁴⁸ in a hierarchy of perfection. He thus affirms that the human being, through his substantialization, can reach the level of the Soul and the substance⁴⁹ in a circular trajectory. This conception of the world is close to a Platonic idea.⁵⁰ Why then circular?

3.2. The Circle

In the various eras of human civilizations, the circle is considered an intriguing and powerful symbol. He had a striking presence in the world of ancient and modern times.⁵¹ Its shape is flawlessly defined. It has no beginning, no end, no angle. It includes other shapes such as the point and the line.

From there, it is associated with beauty and perfection, completeness and unity, timelessness and infinity. It is for this reason that the circle plays an important role in philosophical and mystical reflections, as well as in all the cyclical changes in nature that have been contributed to its symbolic appearances.

In his work al-Ḥadā'iq, Ibn al-Sīd adopted some aspects of this figure by emphasizing the importance of its roles to clarify his theory of emanation.⁵² He presented diagrams representing his own thinking.⁵³

As we can see from his chapters, the symbol of the circle and cyclical conceptions figure prominently in Ismaili thought and in their successors. Their (Ismaili) teachings are important for understanding the context in which Ibn al-Sīd and his predecessors developed their distinct circular visions of existence.

Ibn al-Sīd's cosmology is inspired by the thought of the heir of his various Muslim Neoplatonic predecessors. From their inheritance, he deduced the role of the circle by considering Intelligence as revolving around the One.⁵⁴

He took up al-Fārābī's theory of emanations on the one

hand and Iḥwān al-Safā's number theory on the other. By associating the two doctrines based on the system of ten Intellects,⁵⁵ he represents circles nesting into each other.

Ibn al-Sīd continues his study and affirms that God is the principle: the One (Wāhid), the First (al-Awwal), the Agent (al-Fā'il) and the Scholar (al-'alīm). He is the Most High Creator (Bārī') of man. What place does the latter occupy in kitāb al-Ḥadā'iq?

3.3. The Man

Man, according to Ibn al-Sīd, has multiple faculties.

- 1) The sensitive faculty (al-quwwa al-hāssa)
- 2) The imaginative faculty (al-quwwa al-mutaḥayyila)
- 3) The appetitive faculty (al-quwwa al-nuzū'iyya)
- 4) The nutritive faculty (al-quwwa al-ḡā'iyya)
- 5) The rational faculty (al-quwwa al-nā'iqa).⁵⁶

All these faculties are organized in a hierarchical order.

Happiness for all beings consists in attaining perfection. In Ibn al-Sīd, as in his predecessors al-Fārābī and Iḥwān al-Safā', union with the agent Intellect can take place through the intellect: it becomes the source of all philosophical knowledge.⁵⁷ This union can also be brought about by the imagination⁵⁸: it is then the source of revelations and inspirations.

Man's speech and rationality distinguish him from other creatures (animals) that possess intellectual faculties and principles. The attainment of the intellect ('aql) makes the human being truly substantial.⁵⁹ These rational principles are the foundation and condition necessary for the attainment of perfection.

The philosophy of Ibn al-Sīd takes up the metaphor of light⁶⁰ expounded by Plato, Plotinus and other philosophers and later taken up in the hierarchy of intellects and spheres by al-Fārābī⁶¹ expounded in his treatise *the ideas of the inhabitants of the ideal city*, studied and analyzed by his commentators.

Human beings have the choice to perfect themselves or not. Because of this, he deserves a reward or punishment. His primary objective must be to perfect his faculties:

Rational/Speculative (al-nā'iqa al-naẓariyya), are the faculties that can perceive happiness with certainty.⁶² He must develop his practical (al-'amaliyya), appetitive (al-nuzū'iyya), imaginative (al-mutaḥayyila) and sensitive (al-hassāsa) faculties in order to attain happiness.

When human beings seek to achieve this goal, everything they do is good. When he deviates from this goal, everything he does is wrong⁶³. Ibn al-Sīd presents this vision as the beginning of a connection or an entry into a junction (al-ittiṣāl).

Ibn al-Sīd's thought resembles that of his predecessors such as al-Fārābī, but unlike all philosophers, he is characterized by a different and particular reflection specific to his person.

Ibn al-Sīd, like his Ismaili predecessors and many others,

distinguished the science of the Sages (Hukamā') from that of others. People are different categories. They differ in their level of understanding and their openness to the divine and the natural. The Sages possess a science based on reliable demonstrations (barāhīn), while the others are content with

representations (tamattulāt).

Ibn al-Sīd strongly supports the idea of a true sage by the definition of Aristotle and Plato [64]:

"This one is the true philosopher according to Aristotle and Plato and their master."

فهذا هو الفيلسوف الحق عند أرسطو^(٨٧) ، وأفلاطون ، وزعماء
الفلايطة .

Figure 1. *Al-Hadā'iq*, p. 53

"Those who do not have these qualities, according to them, are not philosophers. For this reason, Aristotle says: 'The goal is not only to learn, but to learn and practice and you will be the best and virtuous bound to the laws of nature.'"

وَمَنْ لَمْ^(٨٨) يَكُنْ عِنْدَهُمْ بِهِذِهِ الصِّفَةِ فَلَيْسَ بِفِيلَسُوفٍ ؛ وَلِذَلِكَ قَالَ
أَرِسْطُو^(٨٩) : لَيْسَ الْغَرَضُ أَنْ تَعْلَمَ فَقَطْ ، وَإِنَّا^(٩٠) الْغَرَضُ أَنْ تَعْلَمَ
وَتَعْمَلَ ، وَتَكُونُوا أَخْيَاراً فَضْلاً مَرْتَبِطِينَ بِالنُّوَامِيسِ .

Figure 2. *Al-Hadā'iq*, p. 53.

Ibn al-Sīd's goal may have been to transfer this Wisdom to the Andalusian world in the Islamic West. Philosophy is the mother of the sciences, the virtue which includes all the virtues. The true philosopher, according to Ibn al-Sīd, is the one described by Aristotle and Plato.

Ibn al-Sīd developed a theory of wisdom that was integrated by the philosopher and the sage. The proper and pure qualities of nature, of wisdom. Thus, the role of the perfect man is more important. It deserves to be more than any other.

These terms refer to one who has attained such perfection. They are synonymous with the Greek definition of one who masters the art of pure philosophy. The perfect man is both a philosopher and a sage.

In his work, Ibn al-Sīd develops an Ismaili problem, according to which human beings always need perfection in order to reach the most ultimate degree of (Divine Guide) for the realization of the virtuous City, as is the case with Plato al-Fārābī and many others.⁶⁵

Ibn al-Sīd's philosophy should rather be called perfectionist philosophy (or philosophy of perfection). Indeed, man in the world with his perfection is none other than the perfect man or the philosophical man. He is the Sage who is also a ruler or an Imām⁶⁶ as among the Ismailis.

These arguments concerning the necessity of perfect men and the qualities of the philosopher or the sage, approximate the thought of Ibn al-Sīd to all other thoughts drawn from the Ismaili doctrine.

To develop the notion of the perfect man, Ibn al-Sīd was inspired by his Ismaili predecessors.

The latter often present themselves as the heirs of the Wis-

dom of the Greek philosophers. The Imām is the only one who has the privilege of interpreting the faith and unveiling the esoteric meaning of revelation. This stems from their conception of creation. Even if the Ismaili theory of creation is neo-platonic, the Imām occupies the same position as the philosopher who is the only one capable of explaining the world of Ideas to citizens.

For Plato, it is the Philosopher's duty to lead and show society the best way to live. It is the presence of the Philosopher-King that ensures the existence of a Republic that leads to happiness, to a good and wise life.⁶⁷

In a similar way, Imāma is a religious necessity to maintain the unity of the faith and for the ideal of religion to be realized. Without the guidance of the Imām, the unity of the faith is not possible and religion becomes a source of controversy among theologians.

For the ideal city to be realized, political power and philosophy must meet.⁶⁸

In these Platonic terms, modified by the Ismailis and taken up by the predecessors of Ibn al-Sīd, only the Imam or the philosopher, the sage, can reach and understand the World of Ideas as perfectly as possible. The qualities required of the Imām and the Philosopher are similar. Both were chosen by God.

God rewarded the philosopher with various qualities and intelligence. In the same way, among the Ši'ites or Ismailis, God has blessed humanity with the Imāma, which is transmitted in a different way.

Similarly, Imāms and philosophers have a knowledge of the afterlife that they transmit to their followers in order to

achieve perfection.⁶⁹

The philosophy of Ibn al-Sīd carries within it a perspective for regaining order.⁷⁰ The philosopher compares the hierarchy of the natural members of the world with that of the spiritual beings emanating from the First Cause. Each degree is simultaneously directing and directed, except that which is above or below the hierarchy.⁷¹ Above all, there is the creator of all things, below, there is raw material and the elements. This hierarchy resembles the human body, in al-Fārābī where all the members help each other to maintain life.⁷² In Ibn al-Sīd, the conception of the perfect or supreme man, like that of Abū Hātim al-Rāzī, is strongly Ismaili. In the latter, there is an intellectual hierarchy among men. The latter need each other. They have to learn from each other. The Creator God bestows upon some His Wisdom and Mercy, elects them from among all His creatures, sends them as messengers to others, and informs them through His revelation by favoring them through Prophecy. In this way, they can guide humanity in both their material and religious life.⁷³

4. Conclusion

In Ibn al-Sīd, creation is characterized by the ten Intellects emanating from each other, the last of which, the Agent Intellect, transforms the possible intellect into an acquired intellect. He integrated into his theory particularly Farabian ideas inspired by the thought of the Iḥwān al-Safā' and the Ismailis.

According to these doctrines, the function of the intellect is to work for the world of Order, while the function of the sensitive faculties is to work for the world of creation.⁷⁴ In Ibn al-Sīd's work, The Itinerary of the Neoplatonic Procession from Plotinus, it was duplicated by al-Fārābī.

The nine heavens constitute the ladder of the descent while the ten Intellects form the cable of the ascent. From the universal Intellect, also called the agent Intellect, emanates the Soul of the world or the universal Soul.

From what has been mentioned before and defined among the similar terms adopted by Ibn al-Sīd and his predecessors, including Ismaili theosophy, we conclude that our philosopher was clearly influenced by various ancient philosophical currents. We did mention his intellectual abilities in the selection that he needed this intellectual impact. We have not called attention to what has been of the order of his differences, for the Ismailis, among themselves, have often entered into controversy on certain points requiring new and independent research.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Biography

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1 Godefroid De Callatāy, Sacredness and Esotericism in the Rasā'il Iḥwān al-Safā', in *al-Kitāb: The Sacredness of the Text in the World of Islam*, eds. Daniel De Smet, Godefroid De Callatāy and J. Van Reeth, Brussels – Louvain-la-Neuve – Leuven, Peeters, 2004, pp. 389-401; Michael Ebstein, *Secrecy in Ismā'īlī*, Tradition and ed. in the 'Mystical Thought of Ibn al-Arabī', in *Journal Asiatique*, 298, 2, 2010, 320-329; Yves Marquet, La philosophie des Iḥwān al-Safā', in *SEHA-Archē*, vol 2, Paris-Milan, 1999, 449-453.

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See also 1 Note on Ibn al-Sid in the Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy:
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Ibn al-Sid was the first significant western Muslim philosopher whose works have survived. His main works are The Book of Questions and The Book of Circles; both show the introduction into the western Muslim world of (il manqu   quelque chose themes of the falsaf   that originated in ninth- to tenth-century Baghdad. In particular, the Book of Circles counts as evidence of the circulation of an emanatist metaphysics of clear Neo-Pythagorean bent, as the one witnessed in the encyclopedia of the Iḥwān al-Saf  '.

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have created for ourselves in order to get a better idea of what God is. Thus, God is not Seer by His sight (which is an attribute), nor Wise by His wisdom, nor Strong by His strength; but He is Seer, Wise, and Strong only because of His essence.

26 kit  b al-had  'iq, p. 9; al-Suy  f  , *al-a  b  h-wa l-na  a'ir*, p. 246

27 Ibid, same pages.

28 The Qur'an "Surat al-nahl": verse 26.

<http://fr.noblequran.org/coran/sourate-an-nahl/ayat-26/>

29 al-Batalyaw  s  , *al-Had  'iq*, p. 33

30 Verset coranique en Arabe: " -Allaah al-Shayid al'Aa'l-'aa'l-'a'aa'l-'aa'l-'aa'l-'aa'l-'aa'l-'a' -'aa'l-'a' -'A'l-'a'

31 <http://davidbelhassen.blogspot.com/2016/10/coran-divin-ou-coraneries-humaines.html> (consulted: 28/05/2025)

32 Al-Batalyaw  s  , *al-masa'i l wa l-a  wiba*, p. 9. See also al-Suy  f  , *opcit*, p. 246

33 Ibn al-S  d lived at a time when many groups expressed diverse opinions about the Divine Unity. Muslim theology was characterized by two tendencies: the first, rationalist, had an abstract idea of God; the second, anthropomorphic, described God with human attributes. According to his treatment of the theory of creation and his adoption of various terms used by his predecessors, several paragraphs of his treatise qualify them as a representative of one of the philosophical currents Neoplatonism or Ismaili, for this see: Henry Corbin, *Anthology of Iranian Philosophers*.

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45 *Al-Had  'iq*, p. 43 et seq.

46 "Finally, F  r  b   is confronted with possible contradictions between Aristotelian doctrine, which he largely follows, and the data of the science of his time, Greek or Arabic. Thus F  r  b   refrains from counting the Intellects, which are supposed to be the same number as the celestial bodies or spheres – that is, nine according to Ptolemy's *Almagest* – the First Heaven, the sphere of the fixed stars, and the seven planets – while Aristotle recognizes several dozen intellects. The celestial world is well opposed to the sublunar world in that it is not a matter of matter, nor therefore of contradiction and corruption (note 290, p. 91). As in Plato, vision is immanent to the eye, which projects its light on objects (note 379, p. 114). Finally, F  r  b   opposes the 'general skepticism' of the Mutazilites (p. 228 and note 725)"

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51 Tatkiewicz (W), Kasperek (C), 1980, Aesthetic Perfection, p. 146-147. Voir aussi: Aniela (J), 2002, Symbolisme, 79 – 97. Seidenberg (A), 1962, The ritual origin of counting. McClain (E. G), 1987, Circle and Geometry. Eliade (M), 1963, *Aspects d  mythe*. Jung Carl G., (1953), The Symbolism of Mandala, 91-213.

52 In 1950, Vladimir Ivanow published the first printed edition of *Raw  da-yi al-tas  l  m* with an English translation (*The Rawda-yi al-Taslim*): Commonly called *Tasawwu  t by Nasir  'd-d  n Tusi*, ed. And tr. Ivanow, Leiden, Brill, 1950). A new edition was published in 2005 by S. J. Badakhchani. See " *The Paradise of*

Submission": A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought. New Persian edition and English translation of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, ed. and tr. S. J. Badakhchani, London, I. B. Tauris, 2005, p. 16.

53 According to Hermann Landolt in his introduction to the 2005 edition of *Rawḍa-yi taslīm* (pp. 2, 5-8), Ṭūsī was involved in the preparation of the work, but he is apparently neither the sole author nor even the main author. For a general overview of Ṭūsī's extensive intellectual and scientific work see: H. Daiber - F. J. Ragep, Al-Ṭūsī, Naṣīr al-Dīn, *Encyclopedia of Islam* 2, vol. 10, 746 - 752.

54 Plotinus, *Enneads*, II, 2, 1; VI, 8, 18.

Kraus (P), *Jābir Ibn Hayyān: contribution to the history of scientific ideas in Islam*, t. II, p. 149.

55 *Al-Ḥadā'iq*, p. 35 et seq.

56 *Al-Ḥadā'iq*, p. 40 et seq.

57 *Enneads*, I, 8, 7: "... The good does not exist alone, there is necessarily in the series of things that come out of it, or, if you will, that descend or depart from it, a final term after which nothing can be generated. This term is evil. It is matter that has no part of Good..." »

58 C'est-à-dire « Al-ta'qqul: Every mind makes sense of the self and makes sense of itself »

59 Pour comparer les idées traitées dans les chapitres I et II de kitāb al-ḥadā'iq, voir aussi al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Aristūṭālīs wa ajzā'uhā wa-marātib ajza'ihā wa al-mawḍi' al-laḍī min-hu ibtada'a wa ilay-hi intahā* (*The Philosophy of Aristotle, the parts of his philosophy, the ranks of order of its parts, the positions from which he started and the one he reached*), traduit et introduit par Muhsin Mahdi, dans *The Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1969, p. 123-125.

60 See Al-ḥadā'iq and the work of al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' 'arā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, pp. 44-45 and pp. 196-197.

61 The analogy of light and active intellect seems to have been suggested to him by Plato's use of the sun, cf. W. David Ross, *Aristotle*, Paris, Payot, 1930, pp. 210-211; Herbert A. Davidson, *Al-fārābī, Avicenna, and Averroes*, on Intellect, p. 29.

62 *Al-Ḥadā'iq*, p. 49 et seq.

63 *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44

To note the repetitions of certain terms and even the terminology of the theory of emanation, an examination of pages 43-44 of kitāb al-ḥadā'iq and the work of al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' 'arā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, pp. 208-211 is recommended.

64 *Al-Ḥadā'iq*, p. 53

65 Al-Fārābī, *Tahsil al-sa'āda* (*The Attainment of Happiness*), translated and introduced by Muhsin Mahdi, in *The Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, p. 39 and the end.

66 *Al-Ḥadā'iq*, p. 62 et seq

67 *ibid*

68 Plato, "République" V, 473c-e: he said "Unless," said I, "either philosophers become kings", see: Luc Brisson, *Introduction: Plato: La République*, GF Flammarion, 2002, 799 p.; See: Luc Brisson and Jean-François Pradeau, *Introduction: Politique (Platon)*, GF Flammarion, 2011, 319 p

69 *ibid*. See also: al-Fārābī, *Mabadi' 'ara ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, p. 228

70 *ibid.*, p. 254

71 *Al-Ḥadā'iq*, p. 36

72 Al-Fārābī, *Mabadi' 'ara ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, p. 230

73 Al-Rāzī (Abu Ḥātim), *a'lām al-nubuwwa*, edited by Salah al-Sawī and Ghulam Reza Aavani, Tehran, 1977, p.6, 8.

Brion (F), Philosophie et révélation: traduction annotée de six excerpts du Kitāb a'lām al-Nubuwwa d'Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, in *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, 28 (1986), 134, 162

74 A. Badawi alludes to the resemblance of al-Fārābī's thought to that of his successors, *History of Philosophy in Islam*, vol. II, p. 54