

# Hasan b. Nuh

## An Indian Ismaili scholar

Ḥasan b. Nūḥ b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad b. Ādam al-Bharūchī al-Hindī (d. 939/1533) was a Mustaʿlī-Ṭayyibī Ismāʿīlī savant and the author of *Kitāb al-azhār* (“The book of blossoms”), a chrestomathy of Ismāʿīlī literature. He wrote that he was born and brought up in Khambhāt (Cambay), a port city in Gujarat, in western India, and received his early education there. Seeking more knowledge, after he had exhausted all the sources available in India, he gave up his family life and friends, left his native town, and sailed to Yemen (al-Bharūchī, 1:186ff.). There he settled in Masār and became a devout student of Ḥasan b. Idrīs, the twentieth *dāʿī* (lit., he who summons to the true faith, it was a title for an Ismāʿīlī religio-political agent). After the latter’s death, in 918/1512, when Ḥusayn b. Idrīs (d. 933/1527), the twenty-first *dāʿī*, moved his residence to Shibām (in Yemen), Ḥasan b. Nūḥ also moved there, to continue his education. In the introduction to his *Kitāb al-azhār*, he recounted, in order, all the books on various branches of the *ʿulūm al-daʿwa* (the religious sciences of the Ismāʿīlīs) that he had studied, especially with Ḥasan b. Idrīs (*Kitāb al-azhār*, 1:188-97).

Al-Bharūchī recorded neither the date of his birth nor that of his departure from India, but, in the place in his *Kitāb al-azhār* where he gives the dates and burial places of the early Ismāʿīlī imāms, he states that in 904/1498-9 he visited the tombs of al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 49/669-70), ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (d. 122/740), Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 115/733), and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) in the al-Baqīʿ cemetery of Medina (*Kitāb al-azhār*, 1:234)—which was razed by the Wahhābīs in the late twelfth/eighteenth century—and that the tombs of the four imāms and those of the Prophet’s daughter Fāṭima (d. 11/632) and his uncle ʿAbbās (d. c.32/653) were covered by domes. He also observed that the tombs of the imāms and Fāṭima were generally visited by Shīʿī pilgrims. Al-Bharūchī’s visit to Medina probably took place after he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and before he settled in Yemen, where he became known as al-Hindī. It is not known when and by whom he was given the *nisba* al-Bharūchī—“he of Bharūch (Broach),” a city on the Narmada river, in Gujarat—first used by Ismāʿīl al-Majdūʿ (77). He was a close companion of the twenty-second and twenty-third *dāʿīs* and was the mentor of Yūsuf b. Sulaymān (d. 974/1567), who later became the first Indian to lead the *daʿwa* (as the twenty-fourth *dāʿī*), when the latter arrived in Yemen for his education. Al-Bharūchī died in Masār, Yemen, on 11 Dhū l-Qaʿda 939/4 June 1533.

His fame rests properly on his voluminous *Kitāb al-azhār*. He probably began its compilation in Shibām, during the days of the twenty-first *dāʿī* al-Ḥusayn b. Idrīs. It is a collection of choice passages and short epistles from Ismāʿīlī literature, arranged, according to the author’s intended plan, in seven volumes (*Kitāb al-azhār*, 1:200-4). It contains, in full or in part, many works not otherwise preserved and contains numerous excerpts from Sunnī and Zaydī works dealing with the life of Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (ruled as caliph 35-40/656-61). Only the first volume has been edited, from a manuscript that is incomplete at the end (cf. al-Majdūʿ, 78-9). The contents of the remaining volumes and the location of their manuscripts are described by Poonawala (173-83).

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*Bibliography:* Anonymous, *Akhbār al-duʿāt al-akramīn. Brief accounts of the dāʿīs of Yemen, Sindh and Hind (Rajkot 1937)*, 87-8 (in Gujarati); al-Bharūchī, *Kitāb al-azhār wa-majmaʿ al-anwār al-malqūṭa min basāṭīn al-asrār*, in ʿĀdil al-ʿAwwā (ed.), *Muntakhabāt Ismāʿīliyya*, Damascus 1958; Quṭb al-Dīn Sulaymānjī Burhānpūrī, *Muntazaʿ al-akhbār fī akhbār al-duʿāt al-akhyār*, ed. Sāmīr Farūq Ṭarābulusī (Beirut 1999), 183; Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs. Their history and doctrines* (Cambridge 2007), 279; Ismāʿīl al-Majdūʿ, *Fihrist al-kutub wa-l-rasāʾil*, ed. ʿAlī Naqī Munzavī, Tehran 1344sh/1966; Ismail K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismāʿīlī literature* (Malibu

1977), 173-83; Muḥammad ʿAlī Rāmpūrī, *Mawsim-i bahār* (Bombay 1301-11/1884-93), 3:155-6 (in Gujarati with Arabic script).