

THE INTELLECTUAL CONFRONTATION OF ESOTERIC DOCTRINES – THE DRUZE AS A MODEL

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Abstract

Islam did not come to abolish others or eliminate their physical existence or even to close off from others regardless of their thought, religion, gender or color. Rather, it came with the idea of accepting the other, understanding him, and engaging in dialogue with him and confronting him intellectually. Islam is the first founder of the horizon of peace and peaceful coexistence with principles applied on earth such as the “Document of Medina” and the confirmation of that in the eternal book in the Almighty’s saying (To you be your religion, and to me mine

Hence, both the faith and the Sharia came with legislation and protective measures to confront deviation in the development of man intellectually, behaviorally, and socially, by establishing the correct faith and consecrating human values in a moderate Sharia that makes things easy for people and does not make them difficult, in order to preserve the humanity of man at all times and places, by establishing human rights without regard to his thought, gender, color, or religion, and by implementing the principles of justice and equality among all people.

Among the sects that Islam confronted intellectually were the esoteric sects, including the Druze sect. Many Islamic scholars confronted this sect through dialogue and debate, and this was evident in the many writings that emerged with the emergence of these sects. These efforts continue to this day, and this study is considered a modest contribution in this regard.

The study consisted of two sections. The first was devoted to the Druze faith, while the second focused on methods for intellectually confronting the Druze faith. The study concluded that intellectually confronting deviant beliefs requires a thorough understanding of the origins of the deviation so that intellectual treatment can have an impact on change.

Keywords: intellectual confrontation - esoteric beliefs – Druze

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the noblest of messengers, and upon his family and companions.

And after that... Building and shaping a human being is no easy task, for it requires mechanisms to cultivate them intellectually, socially, scientifically, morally, and behaviorally, so that they may attain a better reality, a stable life, and true, correct worship, thus achieving the good life that God Almighty mentioned in His Holy Book: “Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely reward them according to the best of what they used to do.” (Quran 16:97)

Islam accepts others and does not isolate itself, regardless of their beliefs, religion, gender, or color, because it was the first to establish the horizon of peace and peaceful coexistence, with principles implemented on earth, such as the Constitution of Medina, and affirmed in the eternal Book in the words of God Almighty: Come, for you is your religion, and for me is my religion. () From here, the creed and the Sharia each came with legislation and protective measures to confront deviation in the building of man intellectually, behaviorally and socially by: establishing the correct creed, and enshrining human values with a moderate Sharia that makes things easy for people and does not make things difficult for them, so that his humanity is preserved at all times, by establishing human rights without regard to his thought, gender, color or religion, and implementing the principles of justice and equality among all people. The Druze derived their beliefs from a collection of 111 letters attributed to Hamza al-Zawzani, which they called the Letters of Wisdom. These letters are the source of commands, prohibitions, and permissions for the Druze, after the absence of the Imams. The Druze beliefs, which they deviated from the natural order, revolve around the deification of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (). They believe that al-Hakim is the human image of God - exalted is God above what they say - so they give him the attributes of God Almighty and describe

him as one, and they direct their worship and obedience to him. Among their beliefs are the transmigration of souls, their denial of the Day of Judgment, and their rejection of religious obligations. They do not believe in the necessity of fulfilling the duties prescribed by Islamic law. Therefore, I sought God's help in writing on this topic, hoping for His guidance and assistance, and praying to the Almighty that He may make it beneficial to all people. "Our Lord, do not burden us with that which we cannot bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our Protector, so grant us victory over the disbelieving people." (Quran 2:265)

The importance of the topic and the reasons for choosing it. The importance of studying this topic stems from its crucial role in achieving a comprehensive understanding of this sect, which contradicts Islamic principles and human values. Moderation is the best path advocated by Islamic doctrine, and moderation in all matters is the highest goal in the noble Sharia of Muhammad. This moderation requires sincerity, purity, and devotion, free from deception, audacity, and falsehood, and necessitates avoiding extremism and the fanaticism that has afflicted the Druze community's beliefs.

The importance of this topic is further emphasized by the following:

First: Uncovering the Druze faith and its impact on the intellectual, moral, and social development of the human character.

Second: The interest of political circles hostile to Islam in highlighting sects, schools of thought, and denominations worldwide to oppose Islam.

Third: The urgent need to clarify the nature of beliefs and schools of thought to thwart those who spread falsehoods, particularly globally.

Fourth: The Druze represent one link in a chain of attempts to eradicate Islam, a continuous and diverse series of attempts where, as one is exposed, another emerges in a new guise. Fifth: To demonstrate the need for a fundamental understanding of the Druze and to study them thoroughly and comprehensively from all angles.

Therefore, I wanted to present my perspective on this matter, hoping for success with God's help, attempting to contribute to the understanding of "The Druze: Their Beliefs and Their Approaches in Light of Islamic Creed and Jurisprudence." This perspective aims to clarify their concepts and dispel the ambiguity surrounding them, within a comprehensive framework, God willing. It seeks to offer a holistic vision that defines my objective: how Islamic creed and jurisprudence shape the human personality intellectually, morally, and socially. My hope is to present a clear vision in this area, dispelling the negative image falsely and slanderously attributed to Islam, sometimes as terrorism, other times as extremism, isolationism, intolerance, and so on. Among the reasons for choosing this topic are the following:

- 1- The necessity of clarifying what Islamic creed and jurisprudence offer in shaping the human personality and establishing the foundations of Islamic law for this matter.
2. Working to build the human character intellectually, morally, and socially to confront destructive ideologies, nationalist sentiments, false doctrines, and Gnostic thought.
3. Understanding all aspects of the Druze faith, their nature, origins, and historical and contemporary locations.
4. The ongoing responsibility of Islamic thinkers to clarify the danger posed by these groups, confront them, warn people of their threat, understand their principles and laws, and judge them according to the standards of Islamic doctrine and jurisprudence.
- 5- Revealing the great Islamic heritage in the face of such corrupt beliefs, which seek to eradicate Islam, its creed, and its Sharia. Allah Almighty says: "They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, even if the disbelievers dislike it. He is the One Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over all religions, even if the polytheists dislike it."

(This is for those who wish to learn about it and draw upon it in every field.) Research Objectives:

This study aims to:

- 1- Present the true image of the Druze, including their founder, beliefs, principles, origins, prominent figures, and geographical distribution.
- 2- Address the urgent need to define the terminology used by the Druze in their purported religion and the messages they follow.

3- Produce a critical study, grounded in Islamic doctrine and jurisprudence, to evaluate the Druze, warn against their dangers, expose their falsehoods, and protect future generations from their threat.

4- Produce a comprehensive study on "The Druze: Their Beliefs and How to Confront Them from the Perspective of Islamic Creed and Jurisprudence," with God's permission and assistance, to serve as a guide for those concerned with this issue.

5- Highlight positive role models and exemplary figures in Islamic thought to address and judge the Druze without bias, prejudice, or prejudice.

6- Offer a practical vision for building the human character intellectually, morally, and socially to counter intellectual deviation and extremism. Scope of the Research:

Subjective Scope:

The study revolves around the Druze faith and its evaluation through Islamic doctrine and jurisprudence.

Spatial Scope:

The research is conducted within the Islamic heritage of the conference venue, examining it comprehensively.

Temporal Scope:

The research covers the study of this sect from its inception to the present day.

Previous Studies:

"The Druze: Their Beliefs and Confrontation in the Balance of Islamic Creed and Jurisprudence" has not been the subject of a separate title or independent study, to my knowledge. However, the Druze are mentioned as a sect in books on sects, schools of thought, and religions. This research is unique in highlighting their founder, beliefs, principles, areas of presence, and their status according to Islamic creed and jurisprudence. It also presents those who opposed and confronted them and their teachings. Some studies that have addressed this topic include:

1- Beliefs / Omar Enayat.

2- The History of Secret Societies and Subversive Movements / Dr. Muhammad Abdullah Othman.

3- Encyclopedia of the Twentieth Century / Muhammad Farid Wajdi.

4- Encyclopedia / Butrus al-Bustani.

5- The Druze Sect / Dr. Muhammad Kamil Hussein.

6- The Unique Guide to the Tools of Destruction and the Contradictions of Monotheism / Khalid Muhammad Ali al-Hajj.

This study, God willing, is unique because it offers a new perspective with a future-oriented view that will benefit future generations in understanding their beliefs, their call, their principles, and everything surrounding them. This is an attempt to contribute to this field of knowledge by presenting Islam's pioneering approach to Islamic creed and jurisprudence in this area, aiming to make this research unique, God willing.

Research Methodology:

Firstly: The research is based on the analytical and descriptive method, and I cannot do without the inductive method, as I have compiled the Quranic verses mentioned in the research, as well as the Prophetic hadiths in everything related to this matter, and I have followed the interpretation of the verses and the commentators of the hadiths with their analyses, and then I presented the sayings of those who wrote about the Druze doctrine, in order to come up with a comprehensive study that can be used in every field, in an attempt to lay the foundation of what was found among the Druze, their doctrine, their claims and their most famous preachers, and to clarify what Islamic doctrine and jurisprudence have said in judging them fairly, so that it is not accused of being based on improvisation and randomness, hostility towards others, and rejection of coexistence with them. This is what made me follow the path of the deductive method, and I also cannot do without benefiting from some other research methods. Secondly: Due to the abundance of verses and hadiths on this subject, I took the following into consideration:

1. I studied the topic thoroughly using the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). I attributed the Quranic verses to their respective chapters (surahs), mentioning the chapter name and verse number in the footnotes. I ensured that the verses were written in the Uthmani script (the Medina Mushaf), and I also provided the sources for the hadiths mentioned in the research.
2. I sought to understand the accounts of the Companions and the Successors (may God be pleased with them) and the contributions of Islamic thought, both ancient and modern.
3. I attempted to clarify the topic comprehensively through the lens of Islamic creed and jurisprudence.
4. I adhered, as much as possible, to scientific research methodologies, including analysis, deduction, retrieval, and presentation.
5. I attempted to present an Islamic perspective that addresses the beliefs and principles of this misguided sect with objectivity and fairness.
6. I kept the discussion concise to the best of my ability, focusing on the most important points and a few of the less important ones, as is the practice of someone seeking to understand the views of a particular group on all matters. This study can also rely on the critical method, which functions to evaluate, assess, distinguish between beauty and ugliness, and differentiate quality from mediocrity, and naturalness from affectation. Other research methods may also be employed as needed. I ask God for success, that He grant our country security and safety, protect the lives of Muslims, reconcile their differences, and unite them on a common ground.

Study Plan:

The study consists of an introduction, two sections, and a conclusion.

Introduction: A presentation of the history and origins of the Druze.

Section One: A general overview of Druze beliefs.

Subsection One: Druze beliefs in matters of faith.

Subsection One: Druze beliefs in theology.

Subsection Two: Druze beliefs in prophecy.

Subsection Two: Druze beliefs in reincarnation and numbers. Section One: The Druze Doctrine of Reincarnation

Section Two: The Druze Doctrine of Preparation

Section Two: The Druze Doctrine in Light of Islamic Belief and its Intellectual Confrontation

Requirement One: The Druze Doctrine in Light of Islamic Belief and Thought

Section One: The Druze Doctrine in Light of Islamic Belief

Section Two: The Druze Doctrine in Light of Islamic Thought

Requirement Two: Intellectual Confrontation of the Druze Doctrine

Section One: Refutations

Section Two: Investigation

Introduction

History and Origins Before judging any sect according to Islamic doctrine and jurisprudence, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the sect, its origins, history, and beliefs. This is necessary to know what the group holds before weighing their actions against the scales of Islamic doctrine and jurisprudence. Therefore, we must know their history, origins, beliefs, ideology, thought, and worldview. The Druze (a Persian name that has been Arabicized; lice and young girls are called "daughters of the Druze," and "Banu Darz" refers to tailors and weavers, and "Awlad Darza" to the rabble; and the Arabs call an illegitimate child "Ibn Darza" because his father is unknown, as his mother brought him into existence) are an esoteric Shiite sect descended from the Ismaili sect, having split from it through the Fatimid Caliphate. They developed principles distinct from those of the Ismaili sect. (They are an Ismaili sect characterized by esotericism, concealing their beliefs from other Islamic sects. They emerged during the Fatimid era and remained secluded, keeping their beliefs hidden and careful to...) Their beliefs were meant to be widespread and known among all people. The Druze, therefore, were an Ismaili esoteric sect, and they considered themselves, for a thousand years or more, to be in a state of secrecy and concealment. They did not reveal their beliefs, their imams, or even anything that might shed light on their doctrine. This may have encouraged many imposters to fabricate messages from time to time and attribute them to them.

They are called the Unitarians and they like that, although they do not deny the name Druze and they like it too (and there is disagreement about the word “Darzi” and whether it is with a damma on the dal and a sukun on the ra or with a fatha on both the dal and the ra? This is because there are two people who are each associated with the Druze negatively or positively, there is Muhammad bin Ismail al-Darzi, with a fatha on the doubled dal and a fatha on the ra, and he is one of the callers to the deification of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, the Fatimid caliph, and he preached this doctrine in Wadi al-Taym, the first homeland of the Druze, and he had Jewish-Magian tendencies, and it is said that the Druze killed him, known as Nashkatin al-Darzi, and there is another one named Abu Mansur Anushtakin al-Darzi, and he is one of the commanders of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, and it is said that the sect is attributed to the latter and not the former, and the Druze still today curse Nashkatin, and venerate Nashtakin) () From what has been mentioned above, the meaning of the name and the reason for the name, and the reason for the deification of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, and the people of his followers being deceived by his call, are clear. Their origin is pure Arab (they are from the Lakhm and Tanukh tribes, two Arab tribes each with a glorious past, although not all members of these tribes embraced Druze principles; we find that a single family included Sunnis, Imamis, and Druze within its branches). From the above, their origin, tribe, and Arab identity are clear. (They now inhabit some areas of the Lebanese mountains, such as the Chouf, Matn, and South regions; in Syria, they reside in areas of Jabal Hauran, currently known as Jabal al-Arab, Jabal al-Summaq, and some villages of Antioch in the Sanjak of Alexandretta; and in occupied Palestine, in Safed, Acre, and Mount Carmel).

Their approach can be summarized as follows:

First: The multiplicity and succession of their names: they are the Shia, the Shia of the family of Muhammad, the Ja'fari, the Isma'ili, the Qarmatians, the Fatimids, and the Druze, which is how they are known today.

Second: The deliberate concealment of all their affairs, which encouraged many imposters to fabricate messages and falsely attribute them to them.

Third: The deliberate incitement by colonial powers to fuel animosity between Sunnis and Shias, between Ja'fari and Druze, and between Druze and Sunnis. And other things that were not publicly declared and were plotted in secret, which will become clear throughout this study.

Section One

A General Overview of the Druze Beliefs

The first requirement: The Druze beliefs in matters of faith. The Druze have a strange relationship with divinity and prophets, oscillating between affirmation and negation. Anyone studying this false sect will find it astonishing, for humans deify themselves, making themselves gods to be praised, daring to challenge the absolute sovereignty of God Almighty. It is astonishing that they disagreed about the divinity of Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah and then killed him, causing strife within their ranks. Truth is lost, and righteousness has no place among them. (The Druze were the ones who believed in the divinity of Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, and this led to a major conflict within the Ismaili community. This prompted Hamid al-Din al-Kirman, the most prominent Ismaili scholar, to leave his residence in Iraq and come to Egypt to contribute to eradicating this new belief. He wrote a treatise known as "The Admonition," in which he proved the disbelief of anyone who even considered deifying Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. Al-Kirman did not leave Egypt until after Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah was killed. Therefore, the Druze are considered the first sect to split from the Ismaili sect.) From the foregoing, it is undeniably clear that these people are lying. Some of them deify al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, while others declare as infidels anyone who even considers deifying him.

First Branch: The Druze Doctrine of Divinity

Among the Druze doctrines of divinity is the belief in the divinity of the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. They believe in his divinity and his return at the end of time. This doctrine was proclaimed by Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Darazi, who came to Egypt from Persia. He declared al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah's divinity and called people to believe in it. This includes what is found in the Mushaf of al-Munfarid bi-Dhatihi or his holy book (and in the context of mercy, he attributes to al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah attributes of God taken from the Holy Quran, such as: “Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him is your return, all of you. The promise of Allah is true. Indeed, He originates creation and then He will repeat it.”).

To deify the Fatimid al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, they attempted to imitate verses from the Holy Quran, such as the phrase, “Say, ‘None despair of the mercy of Allah except the disbelievers’” (which he plagiarized from verse eight). He took from the story of Joseph, distorted it, and attributed it to himself. Is it befitting of God to do such a thing? And what new thing did he bring? Since he denies the existence of prophets and messengers, what alternative message could he possibly offer to humanity?

Among his statements and gestures are those that indicate his foolishness, lack of intellect, and flawed vision: "No monotheist, male or female, has the right to choose their course of action if our Lord, the Creator, the Ruler, decrees a matter concerning their worldly affairs or abrogates a ruling. Whoever disobeys our Lord in His commands and prohibitions has turned away from the right path, lost both this world and the Hereafter, and gone astray in manifest error." () () The core of what the Druze brought and presented to the people, and continue to present to this day, is the presentation of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah as a god who creates, originates, provides sustenance, begins and restores. This is recorded and documented in their books. (Regarding al-Hakim's claim to divinity, historians have offered numerous accounts. Most historians agree that al-Hakim claimed divinity for a period of his life, then recanted, then returned and claimed the embodiment of God and His indwelling in his person. He persisted in this claim until he disappeared, whether through death, assassination, or disappearance. However, some historians maintain that al-Hakim did not claim divinity, but rather Others attributed it to him ().

Second Branch: The Druze Doctrine of Prophethood

Among the fundamental beliefs of the Druze is the denial of all messengers and prophets without exception. (One of their core beliefs is the denial of all messengers and prophets, despite their outward affiliation with Islam. They pretend to be Muslims before Muslims, having lived in an Islamic environment, and they feign closeness to Christians, claiming that the Messiah is Hamza ibn Ali) ().

From the above, the corruption of the Druze belief in denying the messengers and prophets, peace be upon them, becomes clear. Their esoteric and gnostic nature is also revealed when they pretend to be Muslims with Muslims and Christians with Christians, while simultaneously ingratiating themselves with Jews in their words and deeds, never abandoning them. Their duplicity and hypocrisy towards others is a malicious, esoteric ideology.

The Druze have belittled the prophets and sought to undermine them, peace be upon them, claiming that they came only because they are the point and the circle. They have a continuous chain of evil, the "point and the circle".

He presents the appearance of some of the noble messengers and righteous prophets, such as: Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Moses, Aaron, Jesus, and Muhammad. He assigns a foundation to each prophet: Adam's foundation is Seth, Abraham's is Ishmael, Moses's is Ishmael, Moses's is Aaron, Jesus's is Simeon, and Muhammad's is Ali ibn Abi Talib. According to their claim, the one who holds all these circles is Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (the ruler by God's command), and the prophets and messengers serve him because he is the foundation, the source, the point, and the circle. They are all circles around him, and he is the point. (What is strange is that he mentions the seven Ismaili imams and makes Muhammad ibn Ismail the one with a foundation and a law, meaning that he is a sent prophet. He also criticizes Noah's law and describes it as a reprehensible law, and he mentions our master Muhammad in a way that is not appropriate to mention him with.) The Druze doctrines justify their denial and hostility towards the messengers and prophets and their laws by claiming that these prophets called people to a God who had not yet appeared, and that they themselves were unable to recognize the manifest God. Based on this claim, the Druze deny all the prophets, peace be upon them, and attribute ignorance to them, because they referred to the unity of nothingness and did not recognize the Master (i.e., the ruler by God's command). Thus, they dared to attack the prophets and messengers, peace be upon them. The Druze also hurl obscene insults at the prophets, peace be upon them, using terms like "the front," "the back," "excrement," and "urine," and they never miss an opportunity to slander them. Their greatest hatred is directed towards Muslims.

The second point: The Druze doctrine of reincarnation and numbers. The First Branch: The Druze Doctrine of Reincarnation and Transmigration

The concept of reincarnation or transmigration has many meanings among the Druze. It signifies continuous life, a transfer to another human body. Some meanings of reincarnation include:

First: The transfer of the soul from one body to another.

The transfer of the soul from one body to another means that humanity has no end; it is immortal and has no mortality. (The Druze believe in reincarnation in the sense that when a person's life ends and their soul ascends, it does not go to the intermediate life (Barzakh) recognized by Islamic schools of thought, but rather it is reincarnated, becoming a new being. The soul of a man is reincarnated as a newborn child, and the soul of a woman is reincarnated as a newborn child.) Thus, it transfers from one body to another and continues.

Second: Reincarnation and transmigration are not limited.

Reincarnation and transmigration are not limited to one person but extend to more than one (the Druze believe in reincarnation and transmigration, that is, the transfer of the soul from one human body to another, and sometimes even between themselves and animals, plants, or inanimate objects).

Third: Reincarnation can be a form of impoverishment or disfigurement.

Reincarnation varies according to a person's circumstances, as they are reincarnated according to their deeds. (The implication of this is that the punishment, which takes on different forms in the life of the next person in their subsequent roles, or "in their subsequent garments," to use the literal expression, may be poverty, disfigurement, or misery. I do not believe it is a metamorphosis. How we wish that the Druze specialists could clarify some aspects of the doctrine of reincarnation, its manifestations, and its circumstances within their faith. As for those who accept the call and know the truth, their reward is grace and goodness in some form.) Fourth: Reincarnation is a doctrine specific to them. This doctrine is exclusive to them; no one else knows it. Therefore, they do not accept anyone into this false sect so as not to reveal the secret of reincarnation or transmigration. (If someone from their sect dies, they are born again. They do not accept anyone into their sect, even if a person has studied their books, learned about their religion, and followed its teachings, because the door to them is closed, closed to those who entered it. They claim that if someone moves Some of them convert from their sect to another sect and never return to it.

Fifth: Those afflicted with disabilities are afflicted because of their sins.

The Druze believe that those afflicted with disabilities are punished for their sins and the trials they faced from God Almighty. (The Druze belief in reincarnation and transmigration of souls does not contradict the remembrance of the past, especially when we realize that, according to the doctrine of monotheism, subtle inclinations of thought are contained within the depths of the soul that passes from one body to another at death. These subtle inclinations and thoughts, like the seeds of the next life, determine the state of the next transmigration. Some minds, if they encounter suitable cases, will inevitably be affected. Because of this belief, they claim that those afflicted with these diseases and disabilities, such as the blind, the lame, the poor, and the ignorant, were punished for their sins during their previous lives.) The second branch: The Druze belief in numbers

Numbers hold symbolic significance in esoteric thought. Numerical value is organized and ordered, unchanging. Each letter of the Arabic alphabet has a meaning used to calculate a person's lifespan and what befalls them, the fates of nations and what happens to them, and so on. The first to become famous for asserting the significance of numbers were the Jews, who called it "Jafr" (or "Abjad" or "Abjad"). The esotericists followed the Jews in asserting the significance of numbers. For them, numbers are fluid, numerous, and clearly defined. (The numbers five and seven hold a special place among the Druze. The number five is sacred because there are five limits for the Druze.) (These limits are the source of every speaker and foundation. The speaker is the prophet, and the foundation is the person closest to him. Abraham's foundation is Ishmael, Moses' foundation is Ishmael, Moses' foundation is Aaron, Jesus' foundation is Simeon, Muhammad's foundation is Ali ibn Abi Talib, and Salman al-Farsi is one of the five limits.) Their understanding of numbers is as follows:

First: Glorifying numbers And their veneration without justification.

The glorification and veneration of numbers is a practice common among esoteric groups. An example of this is the veneration of the numbers five and seven. (The number seven holds a position of no less sanctity than the number five, if not greater, because the causes of the spiritual world are seven: the five limits, the rational being, and the foundation. Likewise, the governing forces of the physical world are seven.)

Secondly: Esoteric discourse is based on the esoteric meaning of numbers.

Esoteric meaning and significance are the foundation of the Druze concept of numbers. In his book, "The Points and the Letters," he says, "Know that our Lord, may His name be glorified, has removed from you seven pillars of legal obligation and imposed upon you seven monotheistic religious qualities." He suffices with this statement without specifying the seven pillars of obligation or the seven monotheistic qualities.

Thirdly: The diverse and varied interpretations of numbers indicate their invalidity. The Druze introduced these interpretations and promoted them among their followers.

The Third Requirement: Reward and Punishment And the Abolition of the Five Pillars and Limits

First Branch: The Significance of Reward and Punishment

The significance of reward and punishment in Druze esoteric thought does not include Paradise or Hell, because Paradise and Hell do not exist in their thought. Reward and punishment are not linked to Paradise or Hell. Paradise and Hell have an interpretation contrary to what Muslims know. They were preceded in this by earlier sects who interpreted resurrection as a cyclical, renewed manifestation of the divine spirit, where each subsequent manifestation is related to the previous one, and the new life is transferred to the next. This, for them, is the meaning of people meeting their Lord. They interpreted Paradise not as a place of reward, but rather that belief in Baha'u'llah is Paradise, protection, triumph, and salvation. They interpreted Hell not as a place of punishment, but rather that abandoning belief in him means entering the fire of Hell, misery, discord, and strife.

Reward and punishment in Druze thought are not related to Paradise or Hell, but rather to the knowledge one acquires. Reward and punishment are proportionate to the knowledge and belief the soul acquires in its successive incarnations and its transition from one body to another. And Paradise For them, it is the oneness of the Creator, who in their belief is the ruler by God's command, and its fruits are true knowledge, and hell is ignorance and evil, while the greatest fire is the triumph of misery and the desires of the animalistic soul, which is dominated by ignorance. ()

The second branch: Abandoning obligatory religious duties.

Among the principles upon which the Druze base their beliefs and teachings is the abolition of religious obligations, such as prayer, fasting, and zakat. Their aim is to leave people without religious obligations (abolishing obligatory religious duties, not performing Islamic religious duties, and acknowledging monotheistic attributes; whoever acknowledges these attributes is considered a monotheist. In this, they largely agree with the principles advocated by al-Hasan ibn Muhammad, the leader of the Ismailis in 588 AH, who asked his followers to abandon all religious obligations). Is it fitting for a person to be without obligations that connect them to their Creator? This is what the Druze, driven by their desires, wanted in an invented religion created by the Druze pioneers and leaders. They altered and changed everything, even the declaration of faith, making it one of their beliefs, accompanied by their own desires and the whispers of Satan. (Among their beliefs is that their declaration of faith is the statement, "There is no God in heaven, nor is there a Lord to be worshipped on earth except the one who rules by His command." The one who rules by His command is God—exalted is God far above that—and he has appeared on earth.) Ten times, the first being in al-Ali, then in al-Baz, until the tenth time it appeared in al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. They believe that al-Hakim did not die but disappeared until Gog and Magog emerged (whom they call the noble people). The abrogation of religious obligations is a fundamental tenet of their faith, because the one they worship is al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah and no other. They are exempt from prayer and zakat because these obligations have been lifted from them.

Third Branch: The Druze Doctrine of the Five Limits

Among the fundamental tenets upon which the Druze base their beliefs is the doctrine of the Five Borders, in which they claim that these five borders do not die but are immortal, never subject to decay. They emerged from the light of their god and deity (the Druze believe that five deities were created from His light, appearing with the deity in all His manifestations, the last of them appearing with Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. These borders are not born nor do they experience death, for they are the true spirit that no era is without, even if they take on different names and different forms). The Five Borders, as they claim, do not experience death nor do they perish. This contradicts the concept of alternation, which God mentions in His Holy Book: "If a wound afflicts you, a similar wound has afflicted the [opposing] people. And such days [of varying fortunes] We alternate among people." And that God may know those who have believed and take from among you martyrs. And God does not love the wrongdoers. () This contradicts the concept of immortality, which God did not grant to any human being, not even His prophets and messengers, peace be upon them. God Almighty said: "And We did not grant immortality to any human being before you. So if you die, will they be immortal?" () Thus, they are immortal in time and place, untouched by annihilation. They are the ones who affirmed the four defining principles, according to their claim, which are: (The four defining principles are: the Universal Intellect, the Soul, the Word, the Preceding, and the Following.) () These are the foundational beliefs of the Druze, upon which every principle is built. They relied on a corrupt foundation, and these doctrinal principles upon which they depend carry no weight in the scales of Islamic creed and jurisprudence, due to their contradiction of what is stated in the Druze creed with what is explicitly stated in Islam.

Second Topic: Intellectual Confrontation with the Druze Creed

First Requirement: General Intellectual Confrontation with the Druze Creed

First Branch: Refutation

This is done by saying to them, "Since you know that words have a hidden meaning and that this is the intended meaning, what is the method of knowing the hidden meanings of these words?" They will either say, "We derived these words through rational deduction," or "We derived them through hearsay."

It will be said to them, "If you derived them through rational deduction, then your rational deduction is invalid, and consequently, these words are invalid because they are based on a false foundation."

And if they say, "These words were transmitted to us through hearsay," it will be said to them, "The one from whom you received them may have intended words that are more subtle than those mentioned, and thus their argument falls apart." The second branch: Investigation. This involves asking whether these interpretations, even if we assume their validity, should be concealed or disclosed according to Islamic law. If it is said that they should be disclosed to everyone, then it is argued that Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) concealed them, mentioning nothing of them to the Companions or the general public. How could he conceal God's religion when

God Almighty said, "You must make it clear to the people and not conceal it"? This establishes that concealing the religion is not permissible. If they claim that it should be concealed, then it is argued that what the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) obligated to be concealed from the secrets of the religion, how can it be permissible for you to disclose?

The Second Requirement: A Specific Intellectual Confrontation of the Druze Doctrine

First Branch: Confronting the Druze Doctrines of Faith

Their claim that God Almighty incarnates in al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah is false, for union between the Creator and the created is impossible. Even if we were to hypothetically assume the union of the Creator and the created, either they would become two separate entities after their union—which is multiplicity, not union—or they would transform into a third entity. This would necessitate a change in the very essence of God Almighty, which is impossible for Him. Transformation implies the non-existence of what previously existed, and God is necessary in His essence and His inseparable attributes.

Incarnation is impossible between two servants, so how can it be conceived between a servant and his Lord? The proof of the invalidity of this union lies in the three possibilities that result from it: the continued existence of both entities, in which case there is no union; the annihilation of one and the continued existence of the other, in which case there is a union between existence and non-existence, and non-existence has no existence, so there is no union; and the final possibility is the complete annihilation of both entities—where is the union in that? The contradiction is evident in all three possibilities. God's existence is intrinsic, not dependent on any external cause. His existence is indivisible, unlike the existence of others, which is incomplete and dependent, meaning it derives its existence from something else and depends on the power that brought it into being.

In conclusion, the idea of God incarnating in human form is an affront to God Almighty and an impossibility due to the fundamental difference in their natures.

Second Branch: Addressing the Druze Doctrine of Reincarnation and Numbers.

The doctrine of reincarnation is based on the equality of two souls in all characteristics, which is impossible. No two things in the world are identical in every aspect. Evidence of this lies in the differences in appearances, forms, and character. God, in His wisdom and justice, does not create anyone who would be prone to sin, thus necessitating punishment after reform. He is capable of bringing forth every soul He creates without exposing it to temptation, and of treating it with kindness and reforming it until it deserves His favor and eternal bliss. The concept of reincarnation pertains to the unseen, and the unseen realm is beyond the grasp of reason. Imagination can wander in every direction in its conception, and reason cannot accept any of these notions unless they are supported by sound evidence. No sound evidence has been presented to support the concept of reincarnation.

In conclusion, the doctrine of transmigration and reincarnation is a human invention predating Islam. Through it, humanity attempted to find material explanations for certain realities concerning the universe, humanity, and life, and to offer a material, sensory explanation for the afterlife. When Islam arrived, it refuted these concepts and beliefs, which some esoteric groups affiliated with Islam, such as the Druze, have attempted to revive.

Conclusion: Praise be to God for granting me success in this presentation and understanding. I thank Him for this favor and blessing. This is what God has bestowed upon me through the understanding He granted me, and at the end of my study, I arrived at the following conclusions:

1- The Druze doctrine has its significance and symbolism in undermining the final message, as if it were a series of successive episodes. No era or region is free from this affliction, which appears under different names and varying descriptions, but with the same goal: to eliminate Islam and its followers, or to undermine the Messenger of Islam, peace and blessings be upon him, and his fellow messengers and prophets. Its general significance lies in this constant denigration of the final message.

2- The Druze creed is built upon pillars represented by the oneness of God in the name of Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, the doctrine of reincarnation, the five pillars, the preservation of the Brotherhood, and disavowal of devils.

3- Islamic law and reason refute the beliefs held by the Druze, especially those pertaining to the divinity of Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah and the doctrines of reincarnation and transmigration. 4- There are still some shortcomings in the response to Druze beliefs among scholars and researchers in this field.

Recommendations:

The study concluded with the following recommendations:

1- Religious institutions in the Islamic world, and others, should fulfill their designated roles, especially Al-Azhar University, the Federation of Islamic Universities, and the Muslim World League, in confronting all attempts to undermine Islam, its people, and its lands.

2- Official religious institutions should develop a well-prepared and carefully considered plan to counter these individuals and their supporters.

2- The correct principles of the religion should be clarified and disseminated, and the baseless principles produced by opposing discourses should be countered, particularly in countries with limited knowledge of Islam, as these are presented as Islam or an alternative to it.

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1. Surah Al-Kafirun, verse 6.
2. Surah An-Nahl, verse 97.
3. Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 255.
4. Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 286.
5. Surah As-Saff, verses 8–9.
6. Surah Yunus, verse 4.
7. Surah Al Imran, verse 140.
8. Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 34.

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