



## SAYR WA SOLUK

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**SAYR WA SOLUK**, title of the spiritual autobiography of [Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi](#) (597-672/1201-74), celebrated polymath and vizier of under the [Il-khanid Hūlegū](#) (r. 654-63/1256-63).

Around the year 620/1224, Ṭusi wrote a short treatise that takes the form of an extended letter addressed to the chief of the Nezāri Ismaʿili mission in southern Khorasan, seeking affiliation to the Nezāri Ismaʿili community. The outcome was his long and fruitful stay in Ismaʿili strongholds that lasted over thirty years and the production of over one hundred books and treatises on various scientific and philosophical subjects. Ṭusi's authorship of the *Sayr wa soluk* has been disputed by Twelver Shi'i writers (Moddarres Rażawi, pp. 3-16; Modarresi Zanjāni, pp. 27-34, 54-56). However, historical, linguistic, and theological evidences contained in the body of the text support its genuine attribution to Ṭusi (Madelung, pp. 85-101; Poonawala, pp. 206-7; Landolt, pp. 1-11; Daftary, 2007, pp. 378-82 and 636, n. 184).

The letter is clearly intended to be confessional, that is, to present an account of Tusi's personal search for knowledge of the Divine which led him to embrace the Ismaʿili faith together with a declaration of his religious convictions. But the philosophical and theological content of the work gives it special importance in the collection of those writings of Tusi's that have come down to us, because the author has also an expository purpose which manifests itself in his highly skilful and explicit exposition of Ismaʿili



doctrines of *Ta'lim* and *Qiyāmat*.  
(Aminrazavi, pp. 363-64)

Ṭusi's portrayal of Isma'īlism in the *Sayr wa soluk* can be interpreted as a "transcendental religious pluralism" and his expressions brings in mind Aldous Huxley's (1894-1963) idea of *philosophia perennis* underlying all philosophy, or Joseph Campbell's (1904-1987) concept of "monomyth" sustaining the world's mythologies, and even echo of Karl Rahner's (1904-1984) notion of "anonymous Christians" within the diversity of conflicting faiths (Lewisohn, p. 30).

In his usual style of composition, while touching upon subtle points that need a great deal of background knowledge, Ṭusi demonstrates a balanced exposition of the doctrine of the Imamate and aims at reconciliation between the principles of Islamic religious law (*šari'a*) and that of the resurrection (*qiāma*) proclaimed by the first Nezāri Isma'īli Imam of the Alamut period, Ḥasan II, to whom the Nezāris referred with the expression *'alā dekrehe'l-salām* (on his mention be peace).

In composing *Sayr wa soluk*, apart from demonstrating his deep religious conviction (Homā'i, pp. 37-80; Minovi, pp. 29-31), Ṭusi aims at accomplishing a number of objectives, such as demonstrating his comprehensive knowledge of the Isma'īli teachings (Saliba, pp. 201-3); reiterating some of the criticisms launched against Isma'īli theology; formulating an all-inclusive Isma'īli doctrine of the Imamate; providing a scholarly statement of the doctrines of authoritative teaching (*ta'lim*) and resurrection (*qiāma*), to name but a few; and finally articulating an Isma'īli pattern for the relationship between the Isma'īli imam and his followers, which subsequently he elaborated further in his *Rowza-ye taslim* (Ṭusi, 2005, pp. 97-198).

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