

“Marshall Hodgson” in Farhad Daftary ed. *Encyclopaedia of the Ismailis* (forthcoming)

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Marshall Hodgson (1922-1968) was an American scholar of Islamic Studies and world history. He was born on 11 April, 1922 in Richmond, Indiana to Gertrude Simms Hodgson and Dr. James Goodwin Hodgson. In 1943 he received a BA in Relief and Reconstruction from Earlham College and another BA in Economics and Political Science from the University of Colorado. Earlham was established in Richmond, Indiana by the Religious Society of Friends with a strong focus on Quaker values such as integrity, mutual respect, and a commitment to peace and social justice—values that permeated Hodgson’s life and academic work. As a conscientious objector during World War Two, he served with the Civilian Public Service for two years in a forestry camp in Oregon and one year as an attendant in a mental health hospital in New Hampshire. (CMES Archive: In Memoriam Announcement 12-June-1968).

After the war, his father showed the younger Hodgson’s outlines of world history to John U. Nef (1899-1988), the founding chair of the Committee on Social Thought (CST) at the University of Chicago, and implored him to admit Marshall into this inter-department graduate study group established in 1941 to counterbalance the specialisation in disciplinary departments (Kiesling, 6). In 1946, Hodgson began his studies at Chicago and came under the fatherly tutelage of the Austrian émigré historian, Gustav von Grunebaum (1909-1972). In 1951, he was awarded a PhD for his research on the Nizari Ismailis which was published in 1955 as *The Order of the Assassins: the Struggle of the early Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs against the Islamic World* (OA). His chapter on “The Ismaili State” in the *Cambridge History of Iran* in 1964 revised many aspects of his earlier book. He spent 1951-1952 in India at the Aligarh Muslim University as a Fulbright Scholar. In the following year, he was the junior member of the Chicago team participating in the faculty exchange seminar at the University of Frankfurt which was part of an effort to reinvigorate German education systems devastated during the war. Back in the US, he was appointed as a research associate for von Grunebaum and was given a lectureship in the CST. He was promoted to assistant professor in 1956 and associate professor in 1961 (CMES Archive: MGS CV 1-November-1963 rev 1965).

During a visiting professorship at Harvard University in 1964, he filled-in for Sir Hamilton Gibb (1895-1971) who after suffering a heart attack was unable to teach. Hodgson marshalled several doctoral students through the final stages of their degrees and left indelible imprints on their scholarship (personal communication John Voll, October 2014). In 1964, he was promoted to full professor with joint appointments in the College, CST and the History Department; although in the revision of his 1963 CV, Hodgson hand-wrote this date as 1965. He also replaced Nef as chair of the CST and became the head of the newly established Committee on Near Eastern Studies. On 10 June 1968, Marshall Hodgson collapsed while jogging in a park near the University and was pronounced dead on arrival at a nearby hospital later that day. He was survived by his wife, Phyllis, two young daughters and his mother; the twin of the older daughter had died a year earlier and his father had passed away in 1961 (CMES Archive: In Memoriam Announcement 12-June-1968). The memorial service held at the Quaker House in Chicago on 16 June, on the suggestion of his friend and colleague, Reuben Smith, began with a reading of the translation and recitation of *Ayat al-nur* (Q24:35) by Muhsin Mahdi (1926-2007) (CMES Archive: Appointed Readings at the Memorial Service for Marshall G.S. Hodgson, Compiled by Phyllis Hodgson).

Hodgson's three-volume *Venture of Islam* (VOI) was under preparation at the time and would be brought to publication in 1974 by Smith (VOI I:viii-x). Hodgson's numerous publications, the many stories told about him at Chicago, several biographical accounts and studies of his works and contributions and above all, the sixteen linear feet of his papers in the University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center (Papers, 16 boxes) paint a picture of a gentle but quirky soul whose passion for learning and compassion for students were matched by his unflinching administrative prowess, his insightful scholarship and his belief in the unity of humanity (Kiesling MA thesis).

The first three years of his employment at Chicago were funded half by the University and half from a grant of the Ford Foundation for the development of a Comparative Civilizations Project. The anthropologist, Robert Redfield (1897-1958) co-directed this project with Milton Singer (1912-1994)—also an anthropologist and a scholar of South Asia, They collaborated with von Grunebaum to nurture Hodgson's views of history and the creation of the first-ever course on Islamic Civilisation. In 1956, he began teaching the year-long Islamic Civ. course, divided over three quarters, (600-1000 CE; 1000-1800; 1800-the present) using a mimeographed manual

of translated primary sources and secondary literature (Course Syllabus and Selected Readings, Papers 1:5). In March 1957 he presented outlines of the course at a conference on teaching Islam and was bombarded with requests for copies of the manual from scholars at other institutions (Papers 1:5, Kiesling, 8-10). The manual prepared under von Grunebaum's direction, even after he moved to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1957, was ultimately edited and published by Reuben Smith in 1965 (Smith).

Meanwhile, the 1957 launch of the satellite, Sputnik, by the USSR triggered great anxiety in the US about the Soviet technological advances and military threat to the West. In response, Congress significantly expanded funding for area studies centres at several universities and colleges under Title VI of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (currently authorised under the Higher Education Act) to increase the number of American experts in international relations and to support the study of foreign languages and strategic regions of the world. As a "civilization man", Hodgson disapproved of the area studies approach, not only for its geo-strategic designs but because he felt that the pedagogies would be dominated by the data-driven social scientist, he referred to as "that half-breed, the 'area-specialist,' who knows only the 'area'". (Papers 2:2, Letter to Lloyd Fallers; Kiesling, 14). In place of self-standing courses taught by faculty members who may not ever talk to each other, each Civ. course was conceptualised to be directed by a senior scholar to survey the history and society and engage with the literature and thought of the civilisation. He argued that advanced specialised seminars ought to be taught by recently qualified scholars who would bring their cutting-edge research to train students. In his 1959 paper on the Islamic Civ. course, Hodgson proposed that there are two reasons to include the study of non-Western cultures in Western liberal education: the "practical", area studies approach, which emphasises "current social, economic and cultural conditions" of "underdeveloped areas of non-Western heritage" and the "humanistic", civilisation approach, which emphasises cultural heritage. The two are complementary and that "practical understanding of underdeveloped peoples" cannot be gained to any depth "without a degree of participation in the wisdom of their classics and the beauty of their ancient arts" (Hodgson A non-Western Civilization Course).

Hamid Dabashi, in his 2001 criticism of civilisational studies, argued that "Islamic, Indian, or African civilizations were invented contrapuntally by Orientalism, as the intelligence arm of colonialism, in order to match, balance and thus authenticate 'The Western Civilization'. All

non-western civilizations were therefore invented exactly as such, as negational formulations of the western, thus authenticating the western” (Dabashi, 364). This resonates with Hodgson’s notion that “one cannot understand one’s own civilization or religion fully without some awareness of others’ civilization and religion” (Papers 1:8 The world-wide range of Islamic civilization) and the stated objectives of the Islamic Civ. course that “...we draw on the corresponding resources of a non-western civilization, the Islamic, so as to complement this Western material [exclusively taught prior to the introduction of non-Western Civ. Core] and set it in perspective... and so learn something of what human societies can achieve and suffer. In so doing we should become larger men and women” (Hodgson (1958), 2; Papers 1:5). Redfield and Singer described the Cultural Studies Project to the Ford Foundation as holding “a hope of modifying in some degree the separateness with which study of Western Civilization has been carried on, and of supplementing, through a more central vision, the efforts made in UNESCO and elsewhere to develop a world community of ideas” (Boyer (1998), 29). Hodgson and his colleagues were decidedly engaged in de-centering Eurocentric humanities and were instrumental in designing the undergraduate Core curriculum which required students to take at least one year-long Civ. sequence in addition to the Western Civ. to “become larger men and women”. In 1984-1985 the faculty declared all world civilisation courses to be equal in the Core and students would choose one sequence “giving relative priority or absolute privilege to none” (Boyer-U-of-C: a History, 466).

Already in 1959, the Islamic Civ. course was adopted at Michigan State, Columbia, and Princeton universities (Papers Box 11:21); and its enduring impacts and that of the Core system would spread to many North American universities and colleges. He was instrumental in building up the faculty of the Oriental Institute by attracting rising scholars such as Wilferd Madelung (1930-2023, q.v.) to teach Islamic studies. In 1968 he recommended the hiring of Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988) for a “possible chair in Islamic Studies” at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES archive, hand-written note on letter to William Polk, Chair of CMES 31 May, 1966). His leadership of the Committee on Near Eastern Studies resulted in the creation, in the Division of the Humanities, of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations divided into the “ancient” (pre-600) and “modern” (from the emergence of Islam to the present) programs. Given the geographic limitations and association of the term “Near East” with the study of the pre-Islamic era, he advocated that the

term linear “East” is not only a symbol of a certain tradition which I oppose as a civilization-studies man for myself; it is also a symbol of subjecting the social-sciences men to that same

“Orientalist” tradition; so I oppose it doubly. The phrase I favor, “Middle East and Islamic” studies, would give rise, I think, to the fewest misapprehensions among other faculty and among students as to what is the range of our interests—if that range is what I think it ought to be, and not primarily just Arabic with a bow to the two states of Turkey and Persia. It would also assure us the widest leeway; I am repeatedly struck with how much a name determines the outsider's conception of what he may turn to one for, but also how much a name can be used in internal polemics, grossly or subtly. But the phrase “Near and Middle East” appalls me—it has no identifiable meaning at all. (Papers 2:2).

In 2024, this department has been renamed the Department of Middle Eastern Studies.

In the absence of a good textbook to teach Islamic Civ., Hodgson began to write one. This work would become the *Venture of Islam* (VOI) divided into three volumes. VOI was the first serious work that attempted to study Islam within the context of world history which included scrupulous epistemological, intellectual, methodological and historiographic approaches to the study of Islam and Muslim civilisations. Nineteenth and early twentieth century histories of Islam had normalised the formulaic chronology beginning with the career of the prophet, Muḥammad (fl 610-632 q.v.) followed by the so-called “rightly guided” caliphs (632-661), the Umayyads (661-750) and Abbasids (750-1258) and variously dating the “decline of Islam” to the deaths of al-Ghazali (d. 1111 q.v.), Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) or the Mongol conquest of Baghdad (1258). Hodgson debunked the notion of the progressive decline of a monolithic Islamic civilisation. In his sweeping hemispheric perspective, Islamicate civilisations, between the Nile and Oxus (Amu Darya, Panj) Rivers, constituted interpenetrating nexuses to all the major developments in world history.

Hodgson introduced a new periodisation of Islamicate history divided over the Later Sassani and Primitive Caliphal (485-692); High Caliphal (692-945); Early Middle (945-1258); Later Middle (1258-1503) (sic, should be 1501: the establishment of the Safawid Empire); Gunpowder Empires (1503-1798) Modern Technical (1789-present) (VOI I:96) periods. A book is dedicated to each of these periods in the three volumes of VOI. Hodgson alerted the reader to pre-commitment and bias (VOI I:26-30) and was meticulous about translation (VOI I:8ff) and terminology creating neologisms such as “Islamicate” to refer to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims in distinction from “Islamic” which he constrained to matters of the religion (VOI I:57-60). He developed analytical frameworks such as the ‘ayan-amir system which explains processes of socio-cultural continuities in face of changes in rulership (VOI I: II:131-135); military patronage states which supported cultural and intellectual development (VOI II:402-410, 430-432, 490-493, 562-563);

and the emergence of 'Alid loyalism (VOI I:392ff; II:203-204, 214-216) which gave rise *tariqa* Sufism (VOI II:201ff). Influenced by Martin Dickson (1924-1991) and Jean Aubin (1927-1998), he mapped continued efflorescences of literature, arts and thought subsequent to the Mongol invasion of Chingiz Khan (r. 1206-1227) and his grandson Hulagu (r. 1256-1265). Few studies of the time paid attention to the Middle Periods. Shifting from Arabocentric pre-commitments in the study of Islam, he included contributions of Persianate, Turkic and Indic cultures and societies. This included in-depth studies of the Safavid, Indian Timurid (Mughal) and Ottoman empires (VOI III:Book 1) prior to the military-industrial eclipse of the Muslim-ruled polities by European powers which culminated in the colonisation of much of Asia and Africa (VOI III:Book 2). He argued that "[i]n the sixteenth century of our era, a visitor from Mars might well have supposed that the human world was on the verge of becoming Muslim. He would have based his judgment partly on the strategic and political advantages of the Muslims, but partly also on the vitality of their general culture." (Rethinking History, 97). In a June 1963 letter to the Iranian translator of the OA, Faridun Banda'i, he wrote "[i]f my history of Islamic civilization, now in manuscript but still in need of several months of polishing, ever gets finally polished up and published, you may be interested to see, incidentally, how much I have come to insist on what some of my colleagues call an Irano-centric and even a Shi'a-centric interpretation of Islam at large" (Papers 11:21).

Hodgson envisioned the *VOI* as a complement to his *Unity of World History* which remains unpublished and planned to write a history of Shi'ism (Papers 2:14 Ltr to von Grunebaum 11 -March-1961). After Hodgson's death, Smith taught the Islamic Civ. course and after his departure from Chicago in 1972; the sequence was divided into the History-Society, and Thought-Literature tracks which were taught by Robert Dankoff, Waddad Kadi, Tahera Qutbuddin, and Fred Donner (600-1000), John Woods and Franklin Lewis (1000-1700), and Holly Schissler and Cornell Fleischer (1700-present). Through these courses, undergraduate and graduate students were introduced to the immensity of Islamicate texts and cultures. Due to curricular changes, beginning in 2024, graduate students will no longer participate in the Islamic Civ. courses at Chicago!

Initially intended for undergraduates and general audiences, due to its complexity and difficult language, the *VOI*, is only assigned to graduate students in Islamic studies in many institutions around the world. Participants in the 2014 Symposium held at Chicago to commemorate the

fortieth anniversary of the publication of the *VOI*, unanimously agreed that its “translation” into simplified English is warranted but that it is, perhaps, unlikely to be undertaken (Islamic Studies Symposium 18-October-2014). While fifty years from its publication, the *Venture of Islam* is still an unsurpassed contribution to Islamic studies; however, Hodgson’s *Order of the Assassins* published seventy years ago set a new paradigm and remains seminal in the study of the Nizari Ismailis.

Nineteenth and early twentieth century studies of Nizari Ismailism had relied exclusively on Jamā’ī-Sunni centric histories of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī (1226-1283, q.v.), Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī (1281-1344, q.v.) and Muḥammad b. Khwāndshāh Mīrkhwānd (1433-1498, q.v.). Histories such as that of Joseph von-Hammer Purgstall (1774-1856 q.v.) amplified the antipathy in their sources and construed Ismailism as an extreme heresy and the Nizaris as the “dreaded assassins” who sought the destruction of Islam from within. Supplementing these sources, Hodgson drew upon Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm Shahrastānī (1086-1153, q.v.); ‘Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (1160-1233, q.v.), most importantly, Rashīd al-Dīn Fadl Allāh (1247-1318, q.v.). He also greatly relied on Ismaili *da’wa* literature published by Stanislas Guyard (1846-1884, q.v.) and Wladimir Ivanow (1886-1970 q.v.). Amongst his papers are copious hand-written notes, from his reading, especially, of Ivanow’s many publications (Papers 2:11).

In the final stages of his doctoral work, Hodgson exchanged several letters with Ivanow asking research questions and inquiring about sources hoping to get access to Tusi’s *Rawdat al-taslim* that was nearing publication (Ivanow ed.). Ivanow was helpful yet obtuse in his responses. In his first reply he informed Hodgson that he did not know anyone other than himself who was working on the Nizaris. He advised Hodgson not to indulge in “all that silly nonsense” of the “dreadful assassins” and even suggested that if he was a beginner, he should abandon the topic and find something easier with more sources (Papers 2:10 Ltr 19-Mar-1949). In another letter Ivanow wrote: “I hope you may excuse me saying frankly that the mentality of your professors who have accepted a subject such as this for your doctorate thesis is beyond comprehension to me” (Papers 2:10 Ltr 1-Nov-1949). The relationship declined precipitously after Hodgson sent a cheque in payment for the publications of the Ismaili Society provided to him by Ivanow. The cheque was returned and to show that he “did not take any offence” at the “American tactlessness”, Ivanow wrote a screed against US foreign policies, the Korean War (1950-1953) and American colonial attitudes (Papers 2:10 Letter 29-July-1950). Hodgson courteously replied

with a long letter defending US foreign policies even though, as he stated, his own views on world relations differed in fundamental ways from those of the American government. The first portion of the draft was typed on the back of a ballot receipt (Papers 2:10 Ltr 11-August-1950). There were no more letters; however, in his book, Hodgson thanked Ivanow for a number of volumes he had been sent (OA, v) and discussed the latter's scholarship on the Nizaris. He intimated that Ivanow's position on the Nizaris was apologetic. Illuminating his own pre-commitment, he asserted that Ivanow even accepted "the very dubious claim of the later Nizari imam's to Fatimid descent was probably valid" (OA, 30). He criticised Ivanow's disdain of mysticism and his "tendency for freeness in translation"; however, he concluded that Ivanow "stands unchallengeably as the founder of such modern Nizari studies as may develop" (OA, 30-32, CHI 5:424). These complements and criticisms were not well received. In letters to Henry Corbin (1903-1978, q.v.) Ivanow described his "feeling of nausea" at reading the OA, which he called "a mixture of moralisation of a Chicago profiteer and hooliganism of a Chicago gangster". He wrote "[a]s to his attacks on myself, his book as a whole is the best antidot (sic) - no one, reading it, can take it as reliable" (*Schmidtke ed.*, 141-143 Letters 60-61). In his own study of the Nizari polity, without mentioning Hodgson, he criticised the latter's title stating that "[t]o call the Nizari branch of Ismailis something like the "order of Assassins" would be the same as to describe the United States of America as populated exclusively by gangsters. Surely, there are many gangsters, but to generalise it in this way would be a deliberate and conscious lie." (Ivanow, 22). In his hand-written notes on Ivanow's *Alamut and Lamasar*, Hodgson noted that Ivanow "did not do any actual excavating [thank goodness!]" and "he does not mention my b[oo]k once" (Papers 2:11 notes 26-Aug-1960). In his chapter on "The Ismaili State" in the *Cambridge History of Iran*, Hodgson acknowledged that *The Order of Assassins* was "unfortunately mistitled" (CHI 5:424). Without Ivanow's body of works, it is doubtful, despite his innate brilliance, that Hodgson would have produced the calibre of work found in the OA.

Hodgson posited the Nizari Ismailis as a community amongst the communities of Muslims and proceeded to re-write their history and analyse their doctrinal developments. He relied on the more detailed and fairer treatment of the Nizaris in Rashid al-Din's *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* (*Compendium of Histories*, British Library-Manuscript-7628) as a vital corrective to Juwayni's vitriolic account. The OA is divided in two parts: the first deals with the career of Hasan-i Sabbah (r. 1090-1124 q.v.), the Ismaili revolt against the Saljuqs (fl 1040-1194) and the

establishment of the Nizari state. While following Shahrastani's construal of Nizari Ismailism as *al-da'wa al-jadida* (the New Summons), he traced the doctrine of *ta'lim* (authoritative teaching of the imam) associated with Hasan to earlier forebears of the *da'wa* (OA, 52-61). Hodgson saw the reign of Hasan's successor, Buzurg Ummid (r. 1124-1138 q.v.) as the consolidation of the Nizari state headquartered at Alamut and that of the latter's son, Muhammad (r. 1138-1162 q.v.) as a period of stalemate in the conflict with the Saljuqs. In a lengthy analysis of assassination, he intimated that the Nizaris used it as an offensive strategy and thus "were feared and detested as few other heretics (sic) have been" (OA, 83). Quantitative analyses and sequencing of battles and assassinations have shown that this was not the case and that Nizari asymmetric warfare was mostly retaliatory in the face of Saljuq attacks and massacres (Hajiani, 226-235).

The second part of the OA examines the theological and societal transformations after the declaration of the *Qiyamat-i buzurg* (the Great Resurrection, q.v.) up to the destruction of the Nizari polity by the Mongols (1256). The *Qiyama* was declared in 1164 by the fourth *da'i*-ruler of the polity, Hasan (r. 1162-1166 q.v.), who was subsequently recognised as the imam descended from the eponymous imam-caliph Nizar b. al-Mustansir (r. 1095 q.v.). Hodgson construed the teaching of the *Qiyama*—by which the imam brought the believers directly to the presence of God and the rest of the world was consigned to perdition—as an abrogation of the *shari'a*, a rejection and turning away from the world in its failure to accept the Nizari *da'wa* (OA, 155-157). This reading, based on the Ilkhanid era chronicles, contradicts Nasir al-Din Tusi's *Matlub al-mu'minin* (Desideratum of the Faithful) which Hodgson had translated in April 1949. The text insists that to arrive at perfection, "anyone who makes a claim of divine worship must at first bind [to] affairs in the knowledge of the outer law, which is the husk, and fulfil [them] according to the law of the *shari'a*" (Papers 2:11 Ch. 4; Badakhchani ed. (2010) 26 tr. 41). Tusi's *Rawdat al-taslim* (Paradise of Submission) which he accessed in Ivanow's edition, suggests a transcendence rather than an abrogation of the *shari'a* (Badakhchani ed. (2005) 172ff tr. 138ff; Hajiani, 612ff).

He cast the adoption of Sunnism by the Nizari imam, Jalal al-Din Hasan (r. 1210-1221 q.v.), as an "attempt to fit into the kaleidoscopic Sunni society as one state among many" and as the beginning of the era of the "imams of *satr* (concealment)" (OA, 41). He designated the destruction of the Nizari polity in Iran by Mongol forces and in Syria by the Mamluks as the

“failure of the Nizari venture” (OA, 264-275). Such conclusions are anchored in his construals of the Nizari *da‘wa* primarily as a military-political revolt against the Saljuq-‘Abbasid Sunni establishment crystallised in the title of his book as “*the Struggle of the early Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs against the Islamic World*”. He appended a translation and commentary on the *Haft bab-i Baba Sayyidna*, the most important extant text of the teachings of the *Qiyama* (OA, 279-324; Badakhchani ed. (2017)) and a translation of the *al-Fuṣūl al-arba‘a*, the Four Propositions of *ta‘lim* attributed to Hasan-i Sabbah and preserved in Shahrastani’s *K. al-milal wa’l-nihal* (OA, 325-328).

Both in the VOI and the OA, Hodgson conflated religious with socio-political factors and even, technological change to derive his periodisations. Despite his attempts to be Shi‘a-centric, he tracked Sunni institutions of rulership. For example, his construal in the VOI of the “Early Middle Period” began with the Buyid capture of Baghdad (945) which led to the dual-kingship of the Buyid amir and the ‘Abbasid caliph (VOI I:96). The founding of the Fatimid Empire (909) would have been a better demarcation of the shifts away from centralised notions of authority, if they ever existed, during the fragmentation of the ‘Abbasid caliphate. Similarly, the above mentioned era of the “imams of *satr*” is construed from a Sunni prism in which the Nizari imams dissimulated their Ismaili beliefs and status. From the Nizari perspective, all the imam-rulers of the polity after the declaration of the *Qiyama* were manifest (*kashf*) (Hajiani, 37-40). Periodisations are arbitrary and even the most careful of scholars find it difficult to escape the discourses of our sources!

In his last recorded lecture “The Historian as Theologian” given in Henry Rago’s (1915-1969) seminar on Religion in the Intellectual Life on 18 January, 1967, Hodgson described the historian’s task not merely to refine and correct notions of past actualities but to “refine and correct images of world history” and that of the theologian was to study “a particular tradition of commitment to ultimate life-orientation” which would lead “ultimately to refine the tradition of life-orientation itself”. He argued that the historian invoked the past and the theologian drew from the sacred to mould the ultimate awareness of human beings. That the understanding of each event from the teleological past, present and future would not be complete until it is related to all teleologies pasts, presents and futures of world history and that each element of the sacred should be understood within and in relation to the totality of the sacred. Upending the Enlightenment era separations of theology from philosophy and all

other modes of knowing, he argued that the function of the historian was tantamount to that of the theologian. Each, in essence, must seek to apprehend the particular in relation and within the universal whole. In response to a lengthy rejoinder from his colleague, the professor of Classics, James Redfield who said to Hodgson that “you are making demands from the historian that I think every historian in the room must have felt very uncomfortable about”; he replied “I certainly sympathize. I think the ultimate historiography can only be produced on the Day of Judgement”. This working summation of his epistemology, attesting the conceptions of knowledge and knowing in his Islamicate historiographical and doctrinal sources, pervades Hodgson’s perspectives in the *Order of Assassins*, the *Venture of Islam*, the *Unity of History* and his moral outlook of conscience and history (Papers, 1:18 The Historian as Theologian; VOI I:22ff; Kiesling, 40-41; Bellows MA Thesis).

Hodgson’s list of publications is long and wide-ranging; it includes numerous important articles on Ismaili history and thought in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and elsewhere. Critical reading of his studies illuminate many pre-commitments and lacunae which are often overlooked because of his ground-breaking work. As with most scholars of his time, Hodgson focussed on intellectual traditions and “high culture”. While he sketched patterns of society in the VOI and OA emphasising piety not just dynastic or political histories, much work on the non-elite and “popular cultures” in Islamicate and Nizari societies remains to be done. It is conceivable, today, that not all scholars of Islamic studies will engage with every framework of the magisterial *Venture of Islam*; however, seven decades after its publication, the monumental *Order of the Assassins* is a foundation upon which every study of the Nizari Ismailis has and will be built upon for decades to come. In these few words, it is possible to survey but a few aspects of the depth and breadth of the life and complex thinking of Marshall Goodwin Simms Hodgson who was a towering giant among twentieth-century scholars of world history and Islamic and Nizari Ismaili studies. On the fortieth anniversary of the publication of the *Venture of Islam* in October 2014, Shiraz Hajiani and Michael Bechtel organised the Ismaili Studies Conference and Islamicate Studies Symposium to commemorate Hodgson’s endeavours and brought to together the largest gathering of scholars of Ismaili and Islamic Studies in the history of the University of Chicago.

This entry is based, in part, on archival research of Marshall Hodgson’s papers in the University of Chicago Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center (Papers) and

the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES archive). Lydia Kiesling and Kyle Bellows provided their MA theses as well as their research notes and insights which have been indispensable to this writing. Thanks also to Dr. Thomas Maguire for access to the Hodgson papers in the CMES archive.

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