

and in the countries of Africa where it helped innumerable people to come back to the path of loyalty and obedience to God and His Apostle.¹ ‘Abdul Qādir and his disciples were also successful in converting a considerable number of non-Muslims to Islam.

Influence of ‘Abdul Qādir :

The moral and spiritual excellence of ‘Abdul Qādir, his unflinching devotion to God, the efficacy of his sermons, the inspiring and regenerating influence exercised by him over the people in his own time and the upright character and moral rectitude of those who have had an opportunity to be instructed by him, mark him as one of the most eminent men of God born in Islam. He was not only a worker of incessant miracles, as the chroniclers of his time report, but his miracle of miracles lay in his inspiring and impressive teachings which made thousands to turn away from the lust of power and wealth and to inculcate the

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- 1 Among the disciples of ‘Abdul Qādir who devoted their life to the cause of preaching and inviting people through their precepts and example to spiritual and moral purification, the most notable was Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn Suharwardī (593—632 A H), the spiritual successor and nephew of Sheikh Abū Najīb Suharwardī. He was the founder of another Sufi order known as *Suharwardiya*. He also wrote a very popular work entitled ‘*Awārif ul-Ma‘ārif*’ on mysticism. Ibn Khallikān writes that during his old age he was the greatest mystic of Baghdad and there was none so pious and popular as he (Ibn Khallikān, Vol III, p 119). Another writer, Ibn al-Najjār has left records about his immense popularity and preachings (*Mir‘at ul-Jinān*, Vol IV, p 81). Ibn Khallikān writes that mystics from far off places visited him for guidance and spiritual light. Ibn Khallikān adds that his sermons were very efficacious (Ibn Khallikān Vol III, pp 119-120). ‘*Awārif ul-Ma‘ārif*, written by Shahab ud-dīn Suharwardī, has a pride of place among the mystic works. One of its distinguishing features is that unlike the mystic writings of the earlier sufis, it upholds the tenets of the orthodox school and cleanses the *Shari‘ah* of all innovations (*Tiqsār-e-Juyūd*, p 63).

Shahab ud-dīn Suharwardī too was fortunate in having some very notable personages among his disciples. One of these, Bahā’ ud-dīn Zakariya Multani was a well known and eminent saint of his time in India.

true spirit of faith through self-correction and purification of the soul. In short, his was an striking example of the innate power of Islam to produce a true spirit of religion, love of God and moral righteousness in an age of crass materialism.

Death of ‘Abdul Qādir :

‘Abdul Qādir died at the age of 90, in 561 A H. An account of the death of ‘Abdul Qādir has been preserved by his son, Sharaf ud-dīn ‘Isā. Thus he writes :

“During his last illness, ‘Abdul Wahāb (brother of Sharaf ud-dīn) requested Sheikh ‘Abdul Qādir to give him some advice which he could follow after his death. The Sheikh replied : ‘Inculcate a deep consciousness of the sublimity and grandeur of God. Fear not anyone nor cherish a desire for benefit from anybody save God. Entrust all of your needs to Him and then have confidence in Him. Whatever you need, place it before God with a conviction in the prospect of its fulfilment. Keep yourself constantly occupied with *Tawhid*, the Unity of God, on which there is a consensus, for, when the heart is filled with awe, love and respect for Him, nothing can escape it or get out of it.’ Thereafter he asked his sons to clear out saying : ‘You find me here with yourself but I am really with others. Make room for the angels who are here besides me. You ought to be courteous and pay homage to them. I find the blessings from God descending here for which you should leave ample space.’ He saluted from time to time some invisible beings for a day and a night. He would say : ‘May the peace and blessings of God be upon you. May God pardon you and me and accept our repentance. Come, in the name of God Almighty, and do not go back.’ ”

Once he said :

“Woe be unto you. I care not a whit for anything, neither for the Angel of Death or any other angel. My God has bestowed blessings on me far in excess of you.

“In the night the Sheikh died he gave a loud cry. He

lifted and stretched his hand several times. Thereafter, he addressed his sons, 'Abdur Razzāq and Mūsa, saying 'May God have peace and blessings on you. Pay attention to God and grasp His attributes'. Then he said 'I am just coming to you. Be more kind to me'. He remained unconscious for a while after that. On regaining consciousness he exclaimed 'There is as much difference between you and me as between the heavens and the earth. Don't think of me like anybody else'. When 'Abdul 'Aziz, one of his sons, asked about his illness, he replied 'Don't ask me anything. I am immersed in the gnosis of God Almighty'. In reply to another question asked by 'Abdul Aziz his reply was 'No body knows my illness, nor can anyone diagnose it, neither the jinn, nor men, nor angels. The command of God never supersedes His knowledge, the order changes but not His knowledge, God may override His command by another one, but never what is contained in His knowledge. He obliterates or preserves whatever He desires; He is the final Authority above whom there is none, unlike a human being who has to render an account for his actions, God is Omnipotent. Now I know the secrets of His attributes, they are what they are'.

"One of his sons, 'Abdul Jabbār asked him if he had any pain. The Sheikh replied to him 'I have pain in my entire body except my heart which is attuned to God'. Then in his last moments he said 'I seek the help of God Almighty save whom there is no other God, Glorified is He, the Most High, He is Ever-living for death seizeth Him not, Praise be unto Him for He is the Exalted, the Mighty, He exercises His power through the death of his creations. I bear witness that there is no God save Allah and that Muhammad is the Apostle of God'. His son Mūsa relates that he tried to say '*Ta'azzaza*' i.e. 'Exalted and Dominant is He' but he was not able to pronounce it correctly. He tried again and again till he pronounced the word correctly. Thereafter, he said thrice, 'Allah, Allah, Allah,'.

his voice failed thereafter, the tongue having been fixed up in the palate, his soul departed from the body”¹

‘Abdul Qādir left quite a large number of pious and saintly disciples who continued to disseminate his message and fight this-worldliness and its vices like opulence and luxury, fame and power.

1 *Futūḥ ul-Gharb*, pp 189-192

CHAPTER IX

IBN AL-JAWZI

Ibn al-Jawzi presents another striking example of a preacher, reformer and renovator of the faith. He was the most reputed and profound scholar of his time and a prolific writer of voluminous books on exegesis of the Qurʿān, Traditions, history and literary criticism

Early Life:

Born in 508 A. H. at Baghdad, Ibn al-Jawzi was 38 years younger than ʿAbdul Qādir. His father died when he was still young but his mother sent him to study under a reputed traditionist of the day, Ibn Nāsir. He committed the Qurʿān to memory and learnt its recitation, studied the Traditions and calligraphy. Describing his childhood days to his son, Ibn al-Jawzi says:

“I quite recollect that I was admitted to the primary school at the age of six. Boys much more elder than me were my class-mates. I do not recollect if I had ever spent my time in playing or laughing with other boys. Instead of witnessing the performance of the jugglers who frequently held their shows in the field in front of the mosque where I studied, I used to attend the lectures on Traditions. Whatever Traditions or biographical accounts of the Prophet were related in the lectures, those were memorised by me and then I also used to take them down on reaching home. Other boys spent their time in playing along the banks of the river but I invariably used to sit down with a book in my hand in a corner and read it from cover to cover.

“I was always so anxious to attend the classes in time that often I doubled up to reach the school before the

lectures began. It was not unoften that I had nothing to eat for the whole day but I am thankful to God that I have never had an occasion to be grateful to anybody in that connexion¹

Zeal for the Traditions :

Ibn al-Jawzī had an intense enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge and propagating the Traditions of the Apostle of God. His works on the subject were so numerous that, as the chroniclers of his time report, Ibn al-Jawzī had made a will that the water for the ritual washing of his dead body should be heated by burning the clippings and ends of his pens used for writing the Traditions. It is further related that these clippings were found more than sufficient for the purpose²

Ibn al-Jawzī was a voracious reader from an early age. In his time Baghdad had well-stocked libraries where he used to spend most of his time. He read whatever book he could lay his hands on. In one of his books entitled *Said al-Khatir*, an autobiographical memoir, he writes .

“I may state here my own cast of mind. I am never tired of reading books and my joy knows no bounds whenever I find a new book It would appear to be an exaggeration if I say that I had gone through 20,000 books during my student days. I came to know of the courage and large-heartedness, erudition and tenacious memory, piety and eagerness for prayer cherished by the savants of the old, which I could not have learnt without reading those books. The study of the books in those days also revealed to me the shallow knowledge of the scholars in our times and the dull spirits of the students now-a-days³

Penmanship of Ibn al-Jawzī :

Ibn al-Jawzī turned to writing from an early age. He began

1 *Nasihat ul-Iwalad*, pp 81-82

2. Ibn Khallikān, Vol III, p. 321

3 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol III, pp 607-608.

writing four folios daily and continued the practice throughout his life. Ibn Taymiyah relates that when he took a stock of Ibn al-Jawzi's books, they were found to be more than one thousand in number. Ibn al-Jawzi had such a profound knowledge of the science of Traditions that he claimed to tell the authenticity or otherwise of any Tradition with reference to the character of those through whom the Tradition had been handed down or with reference to the manner in which it had been narrated. He was also without a peer as a litterateur and as an orator.

His Piety :

Ibn al-Jawzi was as much celebrated for his moral uprightness, devotion and piety as for his literary attainments. His grandson, Abul Muzaffar, relates that Ibn al-Jawzi completed recitation of the Qur'ān every week, he never spent his time in fun or frolics during his childhood and never ate anything unless he was sure that it had been obtained through lawful means. Ibn al-Najjār records that in religious devotion and observance of prayers he presented a sublime picture of saintliness. Another annalist, Ibn al-Fārsī says that Ibn al-Jawzi kept vigils by night and was never forgetful of the recollection of God. The works of Ibn al-Jawzi present an striking example of his fervent devotion and the heartfelt love of God. In an autobiographical passage included in the *Said al-Khatir* he writes

"From early childhood I had an inclination towards devotion to religious contemplation and worship. I zealously observed obligatory as well as supererogatory prayers and preferred seclusion. Spending my days thus, I felt peace and enlightenment. I extremely regretted the time spent otherwise for I had an ardent desire to utilize every moment of my life under a diligent consciousness of the Omnipresent Lord. In those days I felt my heart attuned to God while my supplications and benedictions were a source of indescribable pleasure to me. My lectures and discourses, quite effective in those days, it appears, attracted a few high officials and chiefs who wanted to come closer

to me by paying homage and putting themselves at my service. As it were, I too felt inclined towards them but in their company I lost the sense of peace and sanctifying grace that I enjoyed earlier in my supplications. Thereafter other functionaries of the government started gaining my favour with the result that the precautions I used to take earlier in regard to avoiding everything unlawful and doubtful, gave place to a sense of complacency. It was still not so deplorable but gradually my specious reasoning made the doubtful objects appear as perfectly lawful and, then, I realised that I had lost the sublimity and purity of my heart, instead, it seemed, as if a profaneness had taken its place which gave rise to restlessness and disquietitude in me. I witnessed that my sermons too bore a mark of my anxiety which caused an ever larger number of persons to offer penitence for their sins while my own guilt weighed heavily on my consciousness. This, obviously, made me still more disturbed, but there seemed to be no way out. I visited the tombs of the saints and earnestly beseeched God to show me the right path. Ultimately, God helped me and I again felt an inclination to spend more of my time in prayer and solitude. Now I came to know what was wrong with me and I thanked my Lord, the Most Compassionate and Merciful, for His kindness”¹

Character of Ibn al-Jawzi :

He is reported to have been a well-built man with handsome features and an imposing countenance. Favoured with easy circumstances “he possessed a refined taste”, says Muwaffaq ‘Abdul Latif, “in dress and dietary habits and was charming and graceful”. Another annalist, Ibn al-Dayni relates that Ibn al-Jawzi was soft-spoken, handsome and of medium height, reputed for his clemency and generosity. Extremely careful of his health, he liked what may be called the “good things of temperate quality.”

1. *Said al-Khatir*, Vol. I, pp. 121-122

In the *Said al-Khatir* and the *Talbis-o-Iblis* he has mentioned his numerous clinical experiences and advised against penance and arduous religious practices which had then been introduced by the Iranian mystics

Encyclopædic Knowledge:

The most outstanding feature of Ibn al-Jawzi's character is his versatility. He towered over his contemporaries in his ardent desire to be well versed in almost every branch of learning. He has himself described it in some detail in the *Said al-Khatir*.

“The greatest trial for man lies in the loftiness of his ambition. the higher is one's ambition, the loftier aspiration for advancement or success one has. However, he is sometimes unable to achieve it owing to unfavourable circumstances, or because he lacks the means, and this causes dissatisfaction. God has, however, made me so ambitious that I have always a hankering for something higher. But I have never wished that God might not have made me too ambitious. It is true that life can be fully enjoyed only by a care-free, imprudent and a listless fellow but nobody endowed with brains would ever like retrogression of his intellect simply for the sake of getting more fun out of worldly pleasures. I know of many people who are boastful of their lofty ambitions but I have found their aspirations really limited to only one field of their activity in which they are ardently desirous of achieving success. These people are completely indifferent to their deficiency in other fields. A poet by the name of Sharif Radhi once said in a couplet ‘Ill health is never without a cause, but in my case it is because of too high an aspiration.’ However, on going through his biographical accounts I found that he had no ambition save achieving power and position.

“It is related that Abū Muslim Khurāsāni could not sleep well during his youthful days. When asked about the reason for it, he replied, ‘How can I sleep?’ Brilliant and

ambitious though I am, I have been condemned to lead a life of poverty and obscurity'

'Then, what would satisfy you ?' asked someone He replied, 'I would be satisfied only if I achieve greatness and power '

'Then try for it,' he was told

'This would not be possible without putting my life at stake', replied he

He was asked again, 'But why dont' you do so ?'

He said, 'Intellect asks me not to run into danger '

'What would you do then ?' was demanded of him

'I would not accept the advice of my intellect,' replied Abū Muslim, 'and would give myself up to my folly I will play a desperate game at the bidding of my ambition and seek the help of intellect only where imprudence fails me I have no other course left, as poverty and obscurity are interdependent'

"On giving further thought to this self-deluded yet ambitious man I came to the conclusion that he had not given thought to one of the most important factors, and that was the question of life-to-come He was mad after political power for which he had to be cruel and unsparing of innocent human lives He got just a fraction of the worldly power and glory, the things he aspired, for a short duration of only eight years Thereafter he fell an easy victim to the treachery of al-Saffāh, and then his intellect did not come to his aid It was the same with al-Mutannabbī too who was so pretentious of his ambitions, but he was also enamoured of worldly success

"My ambition is however, quite different from theirs I aspire for a profound knowledge embracing the entire field of learning, which, I know, I cannot attain I want to achieve a thorough and complete knowledge of every branch of learning which is obviously not possible in the short span of human life. I do not consider anyone perfect in the knowledge of a science so long as he lacks perfection

in another branch, as, for example, if a traditionist is not a master of jurisprudence too I consider his knowledge to be incomplete

“The imperfection of knowledge, I think, can be attributed to the lack of ambition alone. Not only that. to me the end of knowledge means an ability to act on it. Thus, what I want is that I should be able to combine with my knowledge the assiduity of Bishr Hāfi and piety of M‘arūf Karkhī. But it is hardly possible to achieve these along with the pre-occupations of studying and teaching and attending to other mundane affairs. And this is not all, I aspire to oblige others but do not want to lie under their obligation, my pre-occupation with the studies is an impediment in the way of my earnings but I detest to be indebted to anyone or to accept gifts from others. I ardently desire to have children as well as to be an author of merit and distinction so that these may commemorate my memory, but both these pursuits stand in the way of solitude and contemplation. I also do like to enjoy the lawful pleasures but do not possess the means for achieving these and if I devote myself to get at these, I would lose the contentment and peace of mind. Similar is the case with other matters, as, for example, I like the delicacies and refinements which my good taste desires. All these in fact mean aspiring for diametrical ends. What have those persons to do with these lofty ideals who aspire simply for worldly success, wealth, power and position? I too want worldly success but in a manner that I do not have to impair my faith or to expose my learning or virtuous action to any risk or injury. Who can appreciate the demands of my ambition: on the one hand I relish contemplation and prayer, divine manifestation and illumination of heart, but, on the other, I have an inclination for the cultivation of knowledge, teaching and penmanship. The first requires penance, fasting and seclusion while the latter demands nourishment and mixing with the people. Spiritual

contraction is unbearable for me, but making the both ends meet for my dependents stands in the way of my spiritual progress. I have endured these strains all through my life and submitted to the will of God for, it seems, the path to success and perfection lies through struggles and afflictions. For the loftiest ideal is to seek the pleasure of God Almighty, I guard myself of every defilement and take care that not a single moment of my life is spent in any vain effort. Glory be to God, if I succeed in my endeavours; but, I won't mind if I fail for the Prophet has said that the intention of the faithful is better than his action¹

Popular Enthusiasm :

The sermons delivered by Ibn al-Jawzi were attended by the caliphs, kings and chiefs of the state besides the common people of Baghdad. It is reported that his lectures were normally attended by ten to fifteen thousand persons and sometimes the number went up even to a hundred thousand². An eloquent speaker as he was, his sermons breathed an almost tragic urgency behind his message which touched the heart of his audience. His 'soul-stirring calls so carried away the listeners that many of them burst into tears, broke down into hysterical screams or even tore off their shirts. Innumerable persons offered earnest repentance for their sins as a result of his sermons. It is estimated that Ibn al-Jawzi secured conversion of 20,000 Christians and Jews and over a hundred thousand people made solemn affirmations to lead a virtuous life after listening to his sermons³.

Ibn al-Jawzi always condemned innovations and unlawful accretions to the Faith in his sermons, asking the people to follow the path enjoined by the Scripture and the Traditions. Because of Ibn al-Jawzi's profound knowledge and eloquence as also his popularity the sectaries of heretical factions never dared to

1. *Said al-Khatir*, Vol II, pp 334-337.

2. *Ibid*, Vol I, p 21

3. *Ibid*, Vol I, p 21.

controvert him, with the result that the orthodox school gained a dominating influence. The Caliphs and nobles of the time became followers of the Hanbalite school which was distinguished for its strict adherence to the Traditions and the Scripture.

Literary Endeavours :

Ibn al-Jawzi produced some of the most distinguished works which had a profound effect on the subsequent academic endeavours. His writings helped the succeeding generations to keep to the right path as enjoined by the *Shari'ah*.

Kitab ul-Mauzu'at is Ibn al-Jawzi's chief work on the Traditions. In this book he has discussed all those spurious or weak Traditions which were then commonly relied upon by the heretics for spreading beliefs contrary to the authorised teachings of the conformist school. It is true that Ibn al-Jawzi has been too harsh in his judgments since he has adopted an extremist course in regard to certain issues dealt with by him in this book, nevertheless, he has performed an invaluable task by exposing the fallacies of the heretics and innovators.

Talbis-o-Iblis is a critical study of the then Muslim society by Ibn al-Jawzi. In this book he has made a critical evaluation of the different classes and sections of the Muslim society of his time, highlighted their weaknesses, misconceptions and aberrations and delineated the causes which had given birth to different vices marring their faith, action and behaviour. Ibn al-Jawzi has set forth the habits and customs, faults and self-deceits to which the scholars, jurists, preachers, writers, rulers and the pious often fall a prey. This book is an outstanding example of the panoramic character of Ibn al-Jawzi's writings, he shows an awareness of the mental, emotional and social attitudes of the different classes of Muslim society along with the beliefs and doctrines of heretic sections, and the subtle ways in which the latter mislead others.

Critique of the Scholars and Administrators :

The criticism by Ibn al-Jawzi is at places too severe in the *Talbis-o-Iblis*, as is his verdict symbolic of his extremist views, yet

the book contains a mine of useful information since it deals extensively with the vices found among different sections of the people. One has generally to agree with Ibn al-Jawzi's analysis which also gives an idea of the liveliness and incisiveness of his intellectual grasp.

Criticising the scholars of his time, some of whom were engaged in unnecessary hairsplitting of legal issues, he writes in the *Talbis-o-Iblis*

“One of the greatest weaknesses of these scholar-jurists is that they have occupied themselves with the vain discussions but they do not pay heed to the Scripture, Traditions and the biographies of the companions of the Prophet which would have had a salutary effect towards the purification of their souls. It hardly needs any emphasis that the discussions on trifling issues like the kinds of impurities and the methods of purification would not make one tender-hearted or receptive of the awe of God. What is needed by man is the recollection of God and the discourses on the subject so that these may create a longing for success in the life-to-come. There is no denying the fact that ethical issues are not beyond the sphere of the *Shari'ah*, but these are by themselves not sufficient for achieving the ultimate objective. How can these persons be expected to follow the example of the pious souls of the bygone days, whose faith they profess to own, unless they endeavour to get at the state of ecstasy and propinquity to God attained by them? One should not lose sight of the fact that man is indolent by nature, and if left to himself, he would be inclined to follow the beaten track of his day. On the other hand, if he tries to cultivate the knowledge of beliefs and behaviour of the pious and elevated mentors of the former times, he would naturally try to take after their ways. A mentor of the yore has well said that he would prefer a Tradition that would make him soft-hearted to a hundred legal decisions of Cadi Shuraih.”¹

¹ *Talbis-o-Iblis*, pp 119-120

In his critique of the preachers in the same book, Ibn al-Jawzi observes

"Most of these preachers are accustomed to using a grandiloquent and heavily embellished language which often means nothing. The greater portions of their discourses are devoted to the accounts of the Prophet Moses, Mount Sinai, Joseph and Gelicho (Zulaikha), or the like, but they have hardly to say anything about the obligatory performances enjoined by the religion or how to avoid sins. How can their sermons prevail upon an adulterer to offer penitence; or else convince a woman to be faithful and maintain good relations with her husband? These discourses are completely devoid of the ethical or religious teachings of the *Shari'ah*. This is also one of the reasons for these sermons being so popular, for the truth is always distasteful while falsehood is pleasing."¹

Further, continuing the same subject, he observes:

"It often so happens that the preacher is sincere and honest but he wants to win over and dominate the hearts of his audience. He wants to extort admiration from others. A sure symptom of this vice is that if another preacher tries to help him or begins to deliver lectures to his audience, he does not relish it although a sincere person would have welcomed the helping hand in his endeavour."²

Ibn al-Jawzi also criticises the scholars for their lack of sincerity. He writes

"If the students of any scholar leave their teacher to sit at the feet of another savant more learned and reputed than him, he feels a heartburning which is not befitting a sincere scholar. Sincere savants and teachers are like physicians who treat the people simply to propitiate God and bless with contentment another physician who is able to cure their patient."³

1 *Tablis-a-Iblis*, p 125

2 *Ibid*, p 125

3 *Ibid*, p 131.

In connection with the vices developed by the kings, rulers and administrators, Ibn al-Jawzi writes

“These people prefer to pattern their behaviour according to their own wishes rather than do what the *Shari‘ah* enjoins. They would cut off the hand or execute a person even though it might not be lawful to do so. They labour under the misconception that what they do is essential as a matter of political expediency. This means, in other words, that the *Shari‘ah* is incomplete and they are now making up for that deficiency.

“This is in reality a great deception created by the Satan, for, the *Shari‘ah* comprises divine guidance for the conduct of our temporal affairs as well, and it is unthinkable that the guidance vouchsafed by God should be deficient. God Almighty has ordained: *We have not left anything incomplete in the Scripture, and also There is none to amend Our order*. Thus, the man who wants to superimpose his own ideas over the *Shari‘ah* in the garb of political expediency, really claims that the guidance vouchsafed to man by God is imperfect and incomplete. This is obviously blasphemous.”¹

Ibn al-Jawzi points out another weakness of the rulers and administrators in these words

“Besides their persistence on their wrongful ways they also ardently desire to pay a visit to some pious and godly personage for the purpose of seeking his benediction in their favour. The devil has brought them round to believe that the solemn invocation of the divine blessings by a godly person would make the burden of their sins lighter. This is, however, not so. Once a trader whose goods had been withheld by a collector of the toll-tax went to the reputed saint Mālik ibn Dīnār and requested him for his help. Mālik ibn Dīnār went to the collector of the toll-tax who treated him respectfully and released the goods

1 *Talbis-o-Iblis*, p. 132

of the tradesman Thereafter the official asked Mālik ibn Dīnār to pray for him but Mālik replied, 'Ask this purse in which you keep the money acquired illegally, to pray for you How can I invoke blessings for you when countless people curse you?' 'Do you think,' added Mālik, 'that God will accept the entreaties of a single individual in preference to the prayers of a thousand others?'¹

At another place he writes

"The rich and the affluent have a great regard for such misguided mystics who approve of the hearing of songs and playing on musical instruments They are lavish in spending their riches on these mystics but would not part with a single shell for the sake of scholars and savants As a matter of fact, the scholars are like physicians on whose advice a man spends his money grudgingly only when he falls ill On the other hand, the misguided mystics and the musicians and singers accompanying them are like courtiers and flatterers who are normally hangers-on of every wealthy person²

"Likewise, they are devoted to the ascetics and other persons of assumed piety, and prefer them to the doctors of religion They would readily submit to a charlatan attired as a mendicant, if he practises a pious fraud upon them they are easily led astray and begin to sneer at the scholars for not being ascetics However, to hold the ascetics in higher esteem than the scholars is simply ignorance and an insult to the *Shari'ah* These misguided persons should really be thankful to God that they were not present during the life-time of the Apostle of God for they would have turned apostate if they had seen him taking wives, eating, wearing clothes and enjoying honey."³

In his critique of the masses Ibn al-Jawzi writes ·

"Satan has mislead the masses to believe that attending

1 *Talbis-o-Iblis*, p 134

2 *Ibid* , p 373

3 *Ibid* , pp 388-389

of religious discourses and raising a wail of woe are highly meritorious acts and the sole purpose of delivering these sermons. This is perhaps because the people have been told about the merits of listening to these discourses but they do not know that the end of these sermons is reformation of their own morals and rectitude of their behaviour. Nor do they appear to be aware that whatever they listen to in these lectures shall be cited as an evidence against them on the Doomsday. I personally know a number of persons who are attending such discourses for a number of years. They get excited on hearing these sermons and burst into tears but they still persist in accepting interest, cheating others in their trade, remaining unmindful of the religious performances, and disobedience to their parents. Satan has led them to believe that their presence in these sermons, their lamentations and fits of crying will atone for their neglected duties and the sins of omission and commission. There are also others who think that accompanying the pious and godly persons or paying visits to them shall be enough for expiation of their sins.”¹

In regard to the rich and affluent, Ibn al-Jawzi has the following to say

“Many among these persons spend lavishly on the construction of mosques or bridges but their object really is to become famous and win over the people by such acts of piety. Another objective they have in view is that they should be remembered after their death, and, for that purpose they get their names inscribed on the foundation-stones of these edifices. Had they undertaken the construction of these works for the pleasure of God, they would have been content with the knowledge that God is aware of what they do. If these persons were to be asked to get simply a wall constructed without having their names inscribed on it, they would never agree to it.

1 *Talbis-o-Iblis* pp 393-394

“Likewise, these persons donate candle-sticks to the mosques during the month of *Ramadhan* although these remain without light during the remaining part of the year. They cannot, obviously, evoke admiration of others by providing oil for daily lighting, which they hope to attain by donation of a single candle-stick during the month of *Ramadhan*.¹”

Said al-Khatir:

Not strictly an autobiographical work, the book also contains reminiscences of Ibn al-Jawzi, his ideas and feelings and personal experiences. In describing the incidents he had come across, Ibn al-Jawzi frankly admits his mistakes and weaknesses. Ibn al-Jawzi often addresses his own self to criticise its longings and aspirations, gives an account of his mental and emotional states, describes his social experiences with the help of common and everyday happenings and relates the wisdom derived from the trials and tribulations, rough and tumble of life or his dealings with women, friends and servants. An outstanding feature of this book is its immaculate sincerity and simplicity. The book is also noted for the easy eloquence and lucidity of its style, which marks the first attempt made by an Arab writer in this direction, since the then prevailing style was to use a heavily embellished language in the literary works.

Ibn al-Jawzi possessed a special gift to draw out wisdom from insignificant occurrences which many of us come across and pass over without paying any heed to them. Here is an example from the *Said al-Khatir*.

“I saw two labourers who were carrying a heavy beam. Both were humming a song, when one recited a verse, the other listened to it attentively and then repeated it or came out with another verse in reply to the first. I thought that if they do not do so they would have a greater consciousness of their exertion. By singing the labourers made their work

1 *Talbis-o-Iblis*, p. 395

easier On further reflection I found that by engaging themselves in singing the minds of the labourers get a little respite, they get busy in another work for a short duration and thus refresh themselves This diversion also decreases the consciousness of the burden by diverting attention from the exertion of their work My attention was diverted from it to the burden of responsibilities and obligations enjoined by the *Shari'ah* I thought that perhaps the consciousness of these liabilities constitutes the heaviest burden on the self of man while the greatest effort lies in controlling and checking the propensities and impulses for which the self has a liking Thus, I arrived at the conclusion that one should cover the path of endurance with the help of giving it necessary respite and by allowing the consciousness to refresh itself by yielding to lawful pleasures A poet has rightly said that when the caravan gets tired of travelling for the whole night, tell the people that the dawn is at hand and that they would get the needed respite during the day.

"A similar story is told about Bishr Hāfi¹ who was going somewhere along with a companion The friend of Bishr Hāfi got thirsty and he asked Bishr to wait a bit so that he could get water from a well Bishr, however, advised him to wait till they reached the next well, and then to the next one After they had covered a considerable distance, Bishr told his friend that the life in this terrestrial world is also a journey which can be completed in that manner. The truth is that whoever is aware of the fact alluded to by Bishr, will console his self, cheer it up when in distress and assure it of lessening the burden so that it may bear the weight of its responsibilities with endurance A certain preceptor of the times past addressed his self thus 'O my self, if I check thee from thy fancies and attractions, it is only on account of my affection for

1 227 A H /841 A D

thee' Another master and devine, Bā Yazīd al-Bustamī,¹ once said 'I used to lead my wailing self flooded with tears towards God, then it gradually got familiar with the way and began to forge ahead cheerfully' It should thus be remembered that it is absolutely necessary to console and enliven the self so that it may bear its burden patiently''²

At another place he writes

"I have seen that when hounds pass by the side of wild dogs, the latter bark at them and try to chase them. The wild dogs are envious of the hounds because of their dog-belts and clothings, but the hounds do not pay any attention to them as if they do not belong to the same species. The wild dogs are fat and clumsy, and are not trustworthy, the hounds, on the other hand, are lean, well-proportioned and quick. They are also well-trained and trustworthy. It is out of the fear or on account of the gratitude to their master that they bring back the game to him. I have drawn two conclusions from this comparison. First, the frame and appearance of a man has a bearing upon his morals. If the former has a fine countenance, the latter would also be of a nice demeanour. Secondly, nobody is envious towards one whom he does not consider his equal. Likewise, a man who has been favoured by God with faith and wisdom bears no ill-will against those who lack these qualities even though the latter might be moved by jealousy towards him. In fact the faithful does not consider the faithless worthy of his attention, for, their spheres of hopes and aspirations are quite different. One harbours a feeling of hostility at another's good in this world but the other aspires for success in the world-to-come. There is a world of difference between the two''³

1 d 261 A H /874 A D

2 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol I, pp 146-147

3 *Ibid* Vol III, pp 639-640

Dialogue with the Self :

Ibn al-Jawzi sometimes applies the method of tracing an incident to its source so as to discover the general principles underlying that phenomenon. Once he prayed to God along with another saintly person. The prayer was answered by God and this made him to think as to whose prayer had found favour with God. Here Ibn al-Jawzi analyses the incident with the help of self-dialogue.

“Once I was confronted with a difficulty for which I had to invoke Divine blessings and succour. Accordingly, I prayed to God along with another godly person. I felt that my prayer was about to be answered by God but I thought that it was not on account of my beseechings but because of the prayer of that pious soul. I said to myself, I am aware of my own sins and weaknesses which should not apparently allow my prayers to be answered, but who knows that God did not really accede to my own entreaties? I felt that although the reverend man of God who prayed for me should be free of those vices which, I knew, I suffered from, still there was a difference between him and myself. I had a sense of regret and self-reproach for my sins while he was cheerful and enlivened. And, it is not unoften that broken-hearted penitence is more propitious on occasions like this.

“There is, however, another matter in which both of us stood on an equal footing. None of us solicited the favour of God on the ground of our moral excellence. Now, if in these circumstances, I owned my mistakes and humbly prayed to God, ‘Take pity on me, Oh Lord, for I am empty-handed’, there was every likelihood of my supplication having being granted. Also, it is just possible that the other person might have had an eye on his actions which would have caused hindrance in the acceptance of his prayer.

“Therefore, O my Self, thou shouldst not make it insufferable for an already broken-hearted man like me. I

am aware of my guilt, and I do also confess my sins, while, at the same time, I am aware of what I implore, and have a faith in the beneficence of my God to Whom I prefer my entreaties. God may bless that devoted soul if he lacks this quality, but so far as I am concerned, the confession of my guilt is my most valuable possession.”¹

At another place he again portrays his inner-struggle in these words :

“I was once undecided about a matter that was improper and unbecoming under the *Shari‘ah* but my mind had brought forth certain arguments in its favour which apparently made it look lawful to me. In truth, however, it was nothing but specious reasoning because, as I later found out, it was manifestly abominable. However, I addressed myself to God and implored Him to ward off this state of indecision

“I also began the recitation of the Qur‘ān so as to set my mind at rest. As I had to teach the commentary of the Chapter ‘Joseph’² I began my recitation from there. I was so engrossed with the problem I had in mind that I did not pay much attention to what I was reading, but I was taken aback when I recited the verse, *He said I seek refuge in Allah! Lo! he is my lord, who hath treated me honourably*³. I felt as if this verse had been revealed for me. I said to myself. Didst thou follow it? Joseph was free, he was wrongfully made a slave and sold to Potiphar. Joseph felt so grateful to Potiphar that he called him his lord, although neither Joseph was a slave nor Potiphar a master. The chief reason for this gratefulness of Joseph to Potiphar was that the latter had treated him honourably. ‘Now think of thy own self’, I said to myself. ‘Thou art really slave of a Master who has been a benefactor ever since thy

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol I, pp 157-158

2 Chapter XII of the Qur‘ān

3 *Āṣṣūf* 23

birth Nobody knows how many times he has over-looked thy mistakes Dost thou remember how He provided thy needs ? It was by His grace that thou acquired knowledge and earned thy living He guarded thee from every danger and guided thee to adopt the right course He saved thee from the hostility of thy enemies. He bestowed on thee a goodly appearance as well as intellectual gift He enabled thee to master the sciences in a short duration although others could not acquire these over a much longer period He also favoured thee with eloquence, intellect and memory, caused the people to show thee kindness and reverence, and made it easy for thee to procure thy livelihood without having to lie under an obligation to others It is not possible, in truth and reality, to thank Him for the innumerable favours He has bestowed on thee the good-looking countenance, well-proportioned limbs, worthy demeanour, refined taste, intellectual grit, discrimination to adopt the right path and to avoid lewdness, opportunity to acquire knowledge of the Traditions and to act on it--Verily, *if ye would count the bounty of Allah ye cannot reckon it* ¹ How many of thy enemies laid snares for thee, but God saved thee, how they wanted to discredit thee, but He exalted thee, how many favours were granted to thee, but denied to others, how many people left this world broken-hearted, but thou were crowned with success. Dost thou not see that thou are in good health, have sound intellect and a wholesome faith, thy knowledge is abounding, thy aspirations are fulfilled and if thou art ever thwarted in any desire, God makes thee patient and forbearing till thou knowest that it was really profitable that thy desire did not meet with success It would be impossible to recount all the favours of God bestowed on thee, since, the unknown bounties invested by God on man are far in excess of those that he can comprehend Then, how didst thou consider it lawful to do something which was considered

1 *Ibrāhīm* 34

unclean by God Almighty *I seek refuge in Allah! Lo! He is my lord, Who hath treated me honourably Lo! wrong-doers never prosper*¹

Ibn al-Jawzi narrates another personal experience of the same nature

“Once I acted on a legal opinion which was upheld by certain schools of jurisprudence but rejected by others. However, I felt an uneasiness as if I had committed a sacrilege which was causing me spiritual contraction and a drift towards unorthodoxy. With a deepening sense of bereavement and sullenness, I realised as if my own Self was asking me ‘You didn’t act against the advice of the jurists. Why is then this feeling of privation?’ I replied ‘O my insinuating Self, I have two answers to thy question. First, thou turned aside from the teachings of thy own juristic school. If thou had been asked to pronounce a legal opinion on this question, thou wouldst not have advised it thus.’ ‘I won’t have acted on it’, interjected the Self, ‘if I had not considered it lawful.’ I replied: ‘No, thou wouldst not even advise others to act likewise.’ ‘And the second reason is,’ I added, ‘that thou shouldst be happy over the gloom experienced by thee, for had thou not been already favoured with the illumination thou wouldst not have had this feeling of bereavement.’ ‘But I dislike the gloom coming over me,’ replied the Self. ‘Then thou shouldst make up thy mind,’ said I, ‘to give up the disputed act. Thou thinkest that it has been made lawful through consensus of opinion. Still thou shouldst decide to renounce it simply for the fear of God.’ The Self was then saved of the spiritual contraction and gloominess after it had acted likewise.’²

Biographical Studies :

Ibn al-Jawzi was primarily a traditionist and jurist but he

¹ *Said al-Khatir*, Vol II, pp 283-285

² *Ibid* , Vol II, p 304

always emphasised the importance of the study of biographical accounts of the pious and saintly masters of the olden times for the purpose of purification of soul and implanting a religious zeal. He has advised the scholars, jurists and traditionists in the *Talbis-o-Iblis* and the *Said al-Khatir* to pursue this branch of learning. Speaking of his own experience in this regard, he writes in the *Said al-Khatir*

“I feel that the study of juristic sciences and Traditions is not sufficient to instil a tenderness of heart which enables it to attract the divine grace. The only way to acquire this faculty is to study the inspiring biographies of the masters who were pure of heart. The knowledge pertaining to the lawful and unlawful matters does not produce the warmth and tenderness of heart. This is brought about by effective incidents narrated in the Traditions and the biographical accounts of the mentors of yore. Those teachers of the olden times had realised the true content of faith and lived up to it instead of simply acquiring a knowledge of it. What I am recommending to you is my personal experience. I have seen that the traditionists and their students generally devote their entire attention to the chain of narrators and the canons framed for the reception or rejection of the Traditions. Similarly, the jurists are extremely fond of the science of dialectics for gaining a victory over their opponents. How can these make one tender-hearted? Formerly the people used to visit the men of God to pattern their behaviour after the example set by these pious souls instead of acquiring knowledge from them. And, indeed, this is the end of knowledge. Therefore, let it be understood very clearly that it is absolutely necessary for you to include the study of the biographies of the pious and reverend souls in your curriculum of the Law and the Traditions.”¹

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol II, pp 302-303,

Biographical Writings :

Ibn al-Jawzi has accordingly written the biographies of a number of luminaries such as Hasan al-Basri, Caliph ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul ‘Aziz, Sufyān Thauri¹, Ibrahim ibn Ad’ham,² Bishr Hāfi³, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ma‘rūf Karkhi⁴ and others⁵. In addition to these biographies, he has also written a compendium of reputed scholars, writers, saints, etc. in four volumes under the title of *Sifat us-Safwah*. This book is really a revised edition of the *Hilyatul Auliya* by Abū Nua‘im Asbahāni which was edited by Ibn al-Jawzi. In revising the book he has kept in view the principles of historical criticism and deleted the spurious accounts related by Abū Nua‘im.

Study of History :

Ibn al-Jawzi held the view that along with the study of religious sciences like the Law and the Traditions, History should also be studied by the students because the lack of knowledge in this branch of learning had led certain scholars to commit unpardonable mistakes. He, therefore, advised that every student should have at least as much knowledge of history that he does not commit any greivous mistake. Writes he in the *Said al-Khatir* :

“A scholar-jurist must be conversant with all the related sciences. A jurist has to have the knowledge of other sciences like History, Traditions, Lexicology, etc. on which he has very often to rely upon. I heard a jurist saying that Sheikh Shibli and Cadi Shuraik had once got together in a meeting. I wondered at the ignorance of the jurist who did not know that the two were not contemporaries. Another scholar once said in a lecture that since Caliph

1 d 161, A H /778 A D

2 d 165 A H /782 A D

3 d 227 A H /841 A D

4. d. 200 A H /818 A D

5 Ibn al-Jawzi has made a mention of these books in *Said al-Khatir*, (vide Vol I, pp 137, 154, 175, Vol II, p 363 and Vol III, pp 562, 604, and 606) Out of these the first two have been published

‘Alī had bathed the dead body of Fatīma, their marriage did not terminate even after the death of the latter. I thought, God may help this man, for he does not know that Caliph ‘Alī had married the niece of Fatīma, Umamah bint Zaynab, after Fatīma had passed away. How would it have been possible if their marriage had continued after the death of Fatīma? I have seen similar greivous mistakes committed by al-Ghazālī in the *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm id-Dīn*. I was surprised to see how he could mix up the incidents happening at quite different times. I have compiled all such errors of *Iyḥā’* in one of my books. Another scholar, Sheikh Abul Ma‘ālī al-Jawā‘inī has mentioned another curious story in his book entitled *Ash-Shāmil*, on the subject of jurisprudence. He writes that certain Batinites have related that Hallāj, Abū Sa‘īd al-Janābī Qarmatī and Ibn al-Muqann‘a had conspired to overthrow the then government by creating dissatisfaction among the masses. Each one of them undertook to raise insurrection in a certain country and in accordance with that agreement al-Janābī went to Ahs‘a, Ibn al-Muqann‘a to Tarkistan and Hallāj to Baghdad. The two confidants of Hallāj, were, however, of the opinion that he would surely lose his life because it was not possible to dupe the people of Baghdad. If the narrator of this story only knew that Hallāj was not a contemporary of Ibn al-Muqann‘a, he would not have given credence to this story. Mansūr had ordered the execution of Ibn al-Muqann‘a in 144 A. H. while Abū Sa‘īd al-Janābī Qarmatī came to prominence in 286 A. H. and Hallāj was killed in 309 A. H. Thus Qarmatī and Hallāj were almost contemporaneous but Ibn al-Muqann‘a was born much earlier. There is thus no question of the three meeting and conspiring together.

This would amply make it clear that every scholar should have a grounding in the sciences related to his own. It is discreditable for a traditionist that he should not be able to give a legal opinion in any matter simply because

he has been engrossed in the study of Traditions and has no time to pay attention to other branches of religious learning. Similarly, it does not behove a jurist to be unable to explain the meanings of any Tradition. I implore God that He may endow us with an ambition that may not allow us to put up with the least indolence.”¹

Historical Writings :

Ibn al-Jawzi did not merely criticise the scholars for not being well versed in history, but he also wrote a comprehensive history of Islamic peoples from the inception of Islam till 574 A. H. in ten volumes. In this work entitled as *al-Muntazam fi-Tārīkh al-Mulūk wal-Umam* Ibn al-Jawzi first gives the year and then narrates the important incidents and events of that year along with the pre-eminent personages who died during the year, followed by an account of their achievements. This work of Ibn al-Jawzi thus combines chronicle with scientific history interwoven with a harmonious account of the notable personalities.²

Another historical work of smaller size by Ibn al-Jawzi is *Talqīh-o-Fuhūm-ī-Ahl-il-Athar Fi-ʿAyūn Al-Tārīkh Wa-Sayar*. This is a compendium of historical information which has also been published.³

Oratory of Ibn al-Jawzi :

The chroniclers of his time agree that Ibn al-Jawzi was a gifted orator who could draw large crowds. In the *Said al-Khatir* he has mentioned his internal struggle which once almost prevailed upon him to pay absolutely no attention to the rhetoric and the choice of words in his speeches as this could be construed as a show of oratory. However, he gave up the idea since on further reflection he came to the conclusion that eloquence was a

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol III, pp 604-606

2 The last five volumes of this book have been published by Darul-Ma'arif, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India

3 Published by Syed Muhammad Yusuf of Tonk, India

God given gift, a perfection and not a defection, which ought to be employed for the propagation of faith. Similarly, Ibn al-Jawzi entertained a desire, more than once, to give up preaching and withdraw himself to a life of complete seclusion and meditation. However, he won over his self to follow the right path by arguing the issue with it. He ultimately decided that this was a suggestion hinted at by the Satan who did not like to see thousands of persons carried away by his eloquence towards the path of moral and spiritual reformation. The prophets of God were primarily preachers and they also associated with the people. The self of the man being indolent and abhorring exertion wants to turn its back upon the world. It is also tempted by the love of fame, honour and popularity which can easily be gained through winning over the hearts of the people by retiring from the world. Thus Ibn al-Jawzi reasoned with his Self to counter the whisperings of the Satan who wanted him to abandon his mission of preaching and inviting people towards the path of divine guidance. Ibn al-Jawzi thus continued to press his intellectual gifts for more than half a century to the task of serving his people and revivification of the faith.

Ibn al-Jawzi died on a Friday night in 597 A. H. The entire population of Baghdad suspended its work to attend his funeral prayers which was held in the mosque of (Jam'at) Mansur. It was a memorable day in the history of the metropolis, innumerable people were found sobbing for the departed teacher. The annalist reports that quite a few inhabitants of Baghdad spent their nights throughout the ensuing month of Ramadhan at his grave offering prayers and reciting the Qur'an for the peace of his soul.

CHAPTER X

NUR UD-DIN ZANGI AND SALAH UD-DIN AYYUBI

The Crusaders :

The commonwealth of Islam was devoting its attention to the educational and intellectual pursuits, on the one hand, while Christendom was consolidating its might to wipe off the entire Islamic world, on the other. Europe had been nourishing an intense hatred for Islam ever since the Arabs had taken their arms to the eastern possessions of the Byzantine empire. All the holy places of Christendom including the birth-place of Jesus Christ were under the Muslims. This afforded, by itself, a sufficient cause to Europe for breathing vengeance on Islam but the existence of powerful Islamic States and then continued incursions into the Christian countries did not give them the heart to covet the Muslim territories. However, the downfall of the Seljukid empire and the unsettled conditions in Asia Minor and Syria towards the end of the fifth century A.H. were in many respects calculated to favour the success of Europe. At the same time, the Christendom got a wandering preacher in the person of Peter the Hermit who distinguished himself by his fiery zeal and ability to carry away by his eloquence thousands of the poor Christians from one corner of Europe to another. Apart from these, numerous other factors, social and economic, contributed to surround the religious venture of the Crusaders with a hallow of romance tainted with avarice, ambition and lust.¹

The first eastward march of the Crusaders towards Syria commenced in 490 A.H.; within two years the great cities of

1. For detailed account of these reasons see EBR, Vol. VI, Art. "Crusades."

Edessa and Antioch and many fortresses were captured and by 492 A H the Christians had regained possession of Jerusalem itself. Within a few years the greater part of Palestine and the coast of Syria, Tortosa, Acre, Tripolis and Sidon fell into the hands of the Crusaders. "The Crusaders penetrated like a wedge between the old wood and the new", says Stanley Lane-Poole, "and for a while seemed to cleave the trunk of Mohammedan empire into splinters"¹. The capture of Jerusalem threw the fanatical horde of Crusaders into a frenzy which gave rein to their wildest passions a savagery which their own writers are ashamed to confess, and unable to deny. Here is a graphic account of the massacre of Muslims after the fall of Jerusalem.

"So terrible, it is said, was the carnage which followed that the horses of the crusaders who rode up to the mosque of Omar were knee-deep in the stream of blood. Infants were seized by their feet and dashed against the walls or whirled over the battlements, while the Jews were all burnt alive in the synagogue."

"On the next day the horrors of that which had preceded it were deliberately repeated on a larger scale. Tancred had given a guarantee of safety to 300 captives. In spite of his indignant protest these were all brought out and killed, and a massacre followed in which the bodies of men, women and children were hacked and hewn until their fragments lay tossed together in heaps. The work of slaughter ended, the streets of the city were washed by Saracen prisoners."²

The fall of Jerusalem marks the beginning of the decline of Islamic power and the increasing strength of the Christian West which was successful in due course in establishing four Latin Kingdoms of Jerusalem, Edessa, Antioch and Tripoli in the territory bordering the eastern end of the Mediterranean from the Euphrates to Egypt, exposing the entire world of Islam to the

1 *Saladin*, p. 25

2 *EBR*, Vol VI, p. 627

danger of annihilation. The ambition of the warriors of the Cross ran so high that Reginald of Chatillon once expressed the desire to cross over to Arabia with the fell design of sacking Mecca and Madina and taking the corpse of the blessed Prophet out of his grave!¹ Never after the rising of the Apostates following the death of the Prophet had Islam been exposed to such a grave danger. The existence of Islam being at stake for the second time in its history, it had to take the field for a decisive battle with the Latin West.

The opening decades of the sixth century A. H. marked the dissension of the Islamic East. After the death of Malik Shah, the last great Seljukid ruler, civil war broke out among his successors and the empire split into many separate principalities. There was then no ruler who had the capacity to unify the forces of Islam in order to stand on the defensive against the increasing pressure from the north-west. Stanley Lane-Poole has rightly said that.

“It was a time of uncertainty and hesitation—of amazed attendance upon the dying struggles of a mighty empire; an interregnum of chaos until the new forces should have gathered their strength, in short, it was the precise moment when a successful invasion from Europe was possible.”²

Atābek ‘Imād ud-dīn Zangi :

At this critical moment, when the despair of the Muslims was at its height, a lucky star rose in the eastern horizon. As it had happened earlier, Islam got a champion for its cause from an unexpected quarter, who appeared on the scene to save the situation. Lane-Poole writes.

“It was but necessary to preach the *Jihad*—the Holy War—and to show them a commander whose courage and military genius all must respect, and the Turkman chiefs and vassals would at once become a Church Militant with

1. *Saladin*, p. 177

2. *Ibid.*, p. 25

whom the Crusaders would have very seriously to reckon. The leader was found in Imād-ed-dīn Zengy.¹

Imād ud-dīn Zangi was the son of one of the court chamberlains of Malīk Shah. Sultan Mahmūd conferred on him the government of Mosul along with the title of Atābek the Tutor of the Princes. After consolidating his power in Syria and Iraq, Imād ud-dīn advanced against Edessa (Roha) which was one of the strongest fortresses held by the Crusaders, and formed the centre of their aggressive inroads into the neighbouring territories held by the Muslims. Imād ud-dīn captured Edessa on the 6th of Jamādī ul-Akhir, 539 A. H. According to Arab historians it was the "conquest of conquests" for Edessa was regarded by the Christians as the "stoutest prop of the Latin Kingdom". The valley of the Euphrates was thus finally saved from the marauding excursions of the Crusaders. Shortly after achieving this brilliant victory Imād ud-dīn was assassinated by a slave on the 5th of Rabī' ut-Tham, 541 A. H. Thus perished one of the greatest heroes of Islam who had opened the way for a counter-attack on behalf of Islam against the Crusaders. However, the task left incomplete by the great Atābek was taken far ahead by his illustrious son al-Malik al-Adil Nūr ud-dīn Zangi.

Al-Malik al-Adil Nūr ud-dīn Zangi :

Nūr ud-dīn Mahmūd² was now the Sultan of Aleppo on whom devolved the responsibility of the championship of Islam. The constant aim of his efforts was the expulsion of the Latin Christians from Syria and Palestine and to this object he remained faithful throughout his life. For him *Jihād* with the Crusaders was the greatest act of piety crowned with the Divine blessing. In 559 A. H. Nūr ud-dīn Zangi captured Hārim a stronghold of the Crusaders in the north after defeating the united armies of the Franks and the Greeks. It is related that ten thousand Christians were slain in this battle and innumerable Crusaders

1. *Saladin*, p. 34.

2. Known to the West as Noradinus.

were taken prisoners along with the most of their chieftains, such as Bohemond, Prince of Antioch, Raymond of the court of Tripoli, Joscelin III, and the Greek general, Duke of Calamar. Soon after it the fortress of Banias¹ (Caesarea Philippi) at the foot of Mount Hermon, fell before the arms of Nūr ud-dīn, encircling the Crusaders from two sides. The significance of this political change has been described thus by Lane-Poole

“The possession of the Nile by Nūr-ed-dīn’s general (Salāh ud-dīn) placed the Kingdom of Jerusalem as it were in a cleft stick, squeezed on both sides by armies controlled by the same power. The harbours of Demietta and Alexandria gave the Moslems the command of a fleet, and enabled them to cut off the communications of the Crusaders with Europe, stop the annual pilgrim ships and seize their supplies.”

Nūr ud-dīn had thus practically outmanoeuvred the Crusaders in Palestine but his greatest ambition was to drive them out of Jerusalem. This was, however, to be accomplished by Salāh ud-dīn but its foundation was laid by the departing sovereign, Nūr ud-dīn, who died in 569 A. H., in his fifty-sixth year, of a disease of quinsy. The news of the death of Nūr ud-dīn, writes Lane-Poole, “fell like a thunderbolt among the Saracens”

Character of Nūr ud-dīn :

Muslim historians describe Nūr ud-dīn as a chivalrous, just and generous ruler, most tender-hearted, pious and high-minded, and a fearless warrior ready to expose himself in the front of every battle. True to his name ‘Mahmūd’ he was acclaimed as one of the best of the kings, as the historians tell us, he was more capable and enlightened than his predecessors.

Ibn al-Jawzi who was a contemporary of Nūr ud-dīn, writes of him in *al-Muntazam*:

“Nūr ud-dīn marched upon the enemy at the frontiers of his realm and succeeded in regaining more than 50 towns

¹ *Saladin*, p. 84 and *Al-Kāmil*, Vol. XI, p. 124,

² *Saladin*, p. 103

from the infidels. He led a life better than most of the kings and sultans. Peace and tranquillity reigned in his kingdom. There is, in fact, a lot to be said in his praise. He always considered himself as a subordinate of the Caliph at Baghdad. Before he died he abolished all oppressive and illegal imposts within his territories. He was extremely simple in his habits and loved the pious and scholars.”¹

Another historian, Ibn Khallikān, who is known for his objective assessment of the characters and events says

“He was a just and pious king, always eager to follow the observances prescribed by the *Shari‘ah* and a generous patron of scholars in whom he took great interest. He was distinguished for his keen desire to take part in the *Jihād*, he spent his income on the pious foundations and welfare of the poor, and had set up educational institutions in all the principal cities of Syria. It is difficult to enumerate all of his qualities or the monuments by way of public works left by him.”²

Ibn al-Athīr, the reputed historian and author of the *Tārīkh al-Kāmil*, writes

“I have studied the careers of the rulers of the past but excepting the first four Caliphs and ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul ‘Azīz there has been no prince so liberal and pious, law-abiding and just (as Nūr ud-dīn).”³

Ibn al-Athīr’s testimony carries a special weight because he was in his fourteenth year when Nūr ud-dīn died. He writes about the character and disposition of Nūr ud-dīn as follows

“He met his personal expenses from the property he had acquired out of the proceeds of his own share in the booty taken in war. He had set apart three shops situated in Hama which fetched an annual rent of 20 *Dinars* for meeting his household expenses. Once, when his wife

1 *Al-Muntazam*, Vol X, pp 248-249

2 Ibn-Khallikān, Vol IV, p. 272

3 *Al-Kāmil*, Vol IX, p 163

complained to him that the income from the shops was insufficient; he dryly replied 'I have nothing more to give you. Whatever else you see, I hold in sacred trust for the Muslims and I am no more than their trustee. I would not like to be consigned to Hell for your sake by spending anything on ourselves out of the public funds.'

"He used to devote a greater part of his time after the nightfall in prayers. Belonging to the Hanafite school, he had studied jurisprudence and the Traditions but the narrow dogmatism was entirely foreign to his character.

"He was distinguished for his remarkable love for justice which could be seen, for example, in the fact that he had abolished all customs, dues and tithes throughout his vast kingdom comprising Egypt, Syria and Mosul. He was always eager to observe, in exact details, the disciplines and injunctions of the *Shari'ah*. Once he was summoned to appear before a court. He sent the word to the Cadi that no preferential treatment should be accorded to him when he appeared before the court as a defendant. Although he won the case against the plaintiff, he gave up his claim in favour of his opponent saying 'I had already decided to do so, but I thought that perhaps my vanity wanted me to avoid attending the court of law. I, therefore, decided to appear before the court and now I give up what has now been decided in my favour.' He had set up a special tribunal known as *Dar-ul-'Adl* (House of Justice) where he along with a Cadi, personally heard the cases to check arbitrariness on the part of high officials, princes, etc.

"On the battle-field he earned the admiration of everyone by his personal bravery. He always took two bows and quivers to the battle-field. Once somebody said to him 'For God's sake, don't expose to danger your own self as well as Islam.' 'Who is Mahmūd', retorted Nūr ud-dīn, 'that you speak thus of him? Who defended the country and Islam before me? Verily, there is no defender save Allah.'

“He held the scholars in high esteem and always stood up to receive them. He took keen interest in their affairs and patronised them with generous gifts but despite his humility and simplicity, he had such a commanding personality that the people were seized with fright in his presence. The fact is that it is not possible to relate all his qualities in the limited compass of this book.”

Unflinching Faith :

Nūr ud-dīn had set his heart on the expulsion of the Crusaders from the holy land. He had also an unflinching faith in his mission and a firm conviction that he would ultimately succeed in his endeavour.

Nūr ud-dīn had to suffer a defeat at Hīsn al-Akrād in 558 A H, when he was taken unawares by the Christians². Soon thereafter he was making camp near Hama, a few miles from the enemy encampment. Some of his well-wishers counselled Nūr ud-dīn that it was not advisable to remain so near the enemy after suffering a defeat. Nūr ud-dīn, however, bade them to keep quiet and said “I won’t care for the enemy if I had only a thousand horses with me. By God, I would not go under a roof till I have taken revenge from the enemy.” Even after the defeat Nūr ud-dīn continued with his generous grants to the learned, the poor and godly persons. When it was suggested to him that the amount earmarked for charitable purposes might be diverted for strengthening the forces at that critical juncture, Nūr ud-dīn replied angrily “But I hope the succour of God only on account of their benedictions and prayers. The Holy Prophet has said that Allah causes sustenance and His help to come down on earth only for the sake of the poor and the oppressed. How can I desist from helping those who fight for me when I am fast asleep. And lo! they never miss their targets, yet, you want me to help those who fight only when they see me in their midst.

1 *Al-Kāmil*, Vol XI, pp 163-164

2 *Ibid*, Vol XI, p 119

on the battle-field, and they often succeed or fail in their endeavours. The poor have a right to derive benefit from the public revenues and so how can I ask them to forgo what is due to them ?”¹

Nūr ud-dīn made preparations to avenge his defeat he distributed large sums to his followers, sent letters to all the chiefs and governors for sending fresh levies, and, at the same time, requested the pious and devoted to pray for his success. His efforts created a new upsurge throughout his vast dominion to fight the Crusaders for the defence of Islam. Nūr ud-dīn met the united armies of the Franks and the Greeks, and in one of the severest battles which took place under the walls of Hārim, he achieved a splendid victory over his foes which gave him control over Hārim and a few other fortresses.²

The unflinching faith of Nūr ud-dīn can well be imagined by an incident reported by the historians. While he was laying a siege to Banias (Caesarea Philippi), his brother, Nusrat ud-dīn lost an eye. Nūr ud-dīn, on meeting his brother, said “If you only knew the divine reward for losing your eye, you would ardently desire to lose the other one too.”³

Salah ud-dīn Ayyūbi:

Salah ud-dīn was, in truth and reality, a standing miracle of the Prophet of Islam and a manifest sign of the truthfulness and authenticity of his message.

1 *Al-Kāmil* Vol XI, p 119

2 *Ibid*, Vol XI, pp 122-123

3 *Ibid*, Vol XI, p 123

4 Salah ud-dīn Ayyūbi was not a descendant of Abū Ayyūb Ansari, the famous companion of the Prophet. Salah ud-dīn called himself Ayyūbi after the name of his father, Ayyūb who was a Kurd belonging to eastern Azerbaijan. It seems that his grandfather had migrated to Baghdad with his two sons Ayyūb Najm ud dīn and Sherkoh Asad ud-dīn and thereafter settled in Takrait where he died. Ayyūb and Sherkoh entered into state service under Mujahid ud-dīn Bahroz, the police chief under Sultan Mas'ūd. Ayyūb Najm ud-dīn later got an employment under 'Āmad ud-dīn Zangī who made him the custodian of a castle in Balbek.

Salah ud-dīn was brought up like other Kurd youths of moderate means,¹ studying the conventional sciences and the art of warfare. Nobody could have predicted before Salah ud-dīn captured Egypt and confronted the Crusaders, that this young man would one day emerge as the conqueror of Jerusalem and a great Defender of the Faith, and that he would achieve such an eminence as to be looked upon by posterity as a brilliant example for his ardent zeal and courage in fighting the infidels, or, for his sterling virtues which could rightly be envied even by the most pious and pure in heart. Describing the youthful days of Salah ud-dīn, Lane-Poole says

“As the favoured governor’s son, he naturally enjoyed a privileged position, but, far from exhibiting any symptoms of future greatness, he was evidently a shining example of that tranquil virtue which shuns ‘the last infirmity of the noble minds’ ”²

God had, however, destined him to become the most renowned leader of his time, and when God wills a thing He provides the means therefor. His master Nūr ud-dīn ordered him to proceed to Egypt. Cadi Baha’ ud-dīn ibn Shaddād, a trusted councilor of Salah ud-dīn, writes that the latter had confessed it to him that he had gone to Egypt dragged against his will, like one driven to his death. It was the fulfilment of what the Qur’ān says *But it may happen that ye hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that ye love a thing which is bad for you* ³

Transformation of his life :

Sahab ud-dīn was, however, completely a changed man after assuming power in Egypt. Conviction dawned upon him that God had to take some work from him which would be thwarted by the pursuits of pleasure.

Ibn Shaddād is on record that “no sooner did he assume the over-lordship of Egypt, the world and its pleasures lost all

1. *Saladin* p 72

2. *Ibid* , p 72

3. *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultānī*, p 31 (Italics Quotation from the Qur’ān, *Al-Baqarah*, 216)

significance in his eyes. With a heart-felt sense of gratitude for the favour bestowed by God on him he gave up drinking, renounced the temptations of pleasure, and took to the life of sweat and toil which went on increasing with the passage of time”¹ Lane-Poole too has the same story to tell

He says

“On his side, Saladin began to order his life more rigorously. Devout as he had always shewn himself, he became even more strict and austere. He put aside the thought of pleasure and the love of ease, adopted a Spartan rule, and set it as an example to his troops. He devoted all his energies henceforth to one great object—to found a Moslem empire strong enough to drive the infidels out of the land. ‘When God gave me the land of Egypt,’ said he, ‘I was sure that He meant Palestine for me also.’ It may well be that natural selfish ambition quickened his zeal, but the result was the same. thenceforward his career was one long championship of Islam. He had vowed himself to the Holy War”²

Zeal for Jihad:

The constant aim of his efforts was to fight in the way of God. Describing the zeal of Salah ud-din for *Jehād*, writes Ibn Shaddād:

“Fired with the zeal to wage war against the Crusaders, *Jehād* was the most favourite topic of his discussion, he was always seen making his dispositions for the strengthening of his forces, seeking out men and materials for the same purpose and paying attention to anyone who spoke about these matters to him. He had gladly abandoned for its sake his hearth and home, family and children, and betaken to the life of the camp where a wind could uproot his tent. Anybody encouraging him in his ambitions could easily win his confidence”³

1. *Al-Nawadir-i-Sultana*, pp 32-33

2. *Saladin*, p 99.

3. *Al-Nawadir-i-Sultana*, p, 17

“One could make a solemn affirmation that after he started the war against the Crusaders he never spent a single shell on anything save on the preparation for war and helping his men ”¹

Ibn Shaddād continues

“The Sultan appeared to be like a bereaved mother on the battle-field, who had been deprived of her only child by the cruel hands of Death. He could be seen trotting on his horse from one end of the battle-field to another, exhorting the people to fight for the sake of Allah. He would himself go round all the detachments, with tears in his eyes, asking people to come forth for the aid of Islam ”²

The same writer describes how Salah ud-dīn spent his days during the siege of Acre.

“Excepting a sweet-drink for which his physician insisted, the Sultan did not take anything for the whole day ”³

“The royal physician told me that the Sultan had taken only a few morsels of food from Friday to Sunday as he was unable to pay attention to anything save the happenings on the battle-field ”⁴

Battle of Hittin :

After a series of fights and forays a hotly-contested battle was fought in the neighbourhood of Tiberias beneath the hills of Hittin,⁵ on Saturday, the 24th of Rabī ul-Akhir, 583 A H, which gave a death-blow to the power of the Crusaders. The victory achieved by the Sultan has been described thus by Lane-Poole

“The flower of chivalry was taken. The king and his brother, Reginald of Chatillon, Joscelin of Courtenay,

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 16

2 *Ibid* , p 155

3 *Ibid* , p 155

4 *Ibid* , p 90

5 Hittin is the place named by tradition as the scene of Christ's sermon on the mount

Humphrey of Toron, the Masters of the Temple and Hospital, and many other nobles were among the prisoners The rest of the chivalry of Palestine was under Moslem warders. Of the rank and file, all who were alive were made prisoners. A single Saracen was seen dragging some thirty Christians he had himself taken, tied together with a tent-rope. The dead lay in heaps, like stones upon stones, among broken crosses, severed hands and feet, whilst mutilated heads strewed the ground like a plentiful crop of melons¹

"The field long bore the marks of the bloody fight where '30,000' Christians were said to have fallen. A year afterwards the heaps of bleaching bones could be seen from afar, and the hills and valleys were strewn with the relics of the horrid orgies of wild beasts"²

Religious Ardour of the Sultan :

The fateful fight at Hittin came to a close with an incident which is symptomatic of Sultan Salah ud-din's fiery zeal for the religion. This is how Lane-Poole describes it .

"Saladin camped on the field of battle. When his tent was pitched, he ordered the prisoners to be brought before him. The King of Jerusalem and Reginald of Chatillon he received in his tent; he seated the King near himself, and seeing his thirst, he gave him a cup of water iced in snow. Guy drank and passed the cup to the lord of Karak: but Saladin was visibly annoyed. 'Tell the king,' he said to the interpreter, 'that it was he, not I, that gave that man drink.' The protection of 'bread and salt' was not to baulk his vengeance. Then he rose and confronted Reginald, who was still standing: 'Twice have I sworn to kill him; once when he sought to invade the holy cities, and

1. *Saladin*, p. 214

2. *Ibid*, p. 215

again when he took the caravan by treachery.¹ Lo! I will avenge Mohammed upon thee!" And he drew his sword and cut him down with his own hand, as he had sworn. The guard finished it and dragged the body out of the tent; and God sped his soul to Hell.

"The King, trembling at the sight, believed his own turn was now coming, but Saladin reassured him: 'It is not the custom of kings to slay kings; but that man had transgressed all bounds, so what happened, happened.'"

Ibn Shaddād's version of Reginald of Chatillon's execution adds that Salah ud-dīn offered him the choice of Islam and on his refusal cut off his head. The Sultan said: "Lo! I avenge Muhammad, (peace and blessings of God be upon him) upon thee."

Conquest of Jerusalem:

The victory at Hittin was but the prelude to the much coveted conquest of Jerusalem by Salah ud-dīn. The intense desire of Salah ud-dīn for regaining the holy city has been starkly depicted by Ibn Shaddād who says that "the Sultan was so keen for Jerusalem that the hills would have shrunk from bearing the burden he carried in his heart."

On Friday, the 27th of Rajab, 583 A.H., the day of the Prophet's Ascension,⁵ when he had led the congregational prayer of

1 Ibn Shaddād adds that when the caravan of pilgrims was treacherously waylaid by Reginald, some of his captives implored him to be merciful. Reginald, however, arrogantly turned down their request saying: "Ask your Prophet Muhammad to come to your rescue". When Salah ud-dīn heard of it he vowed that he would slay Reginald with his own hands, if he got hold of him.

2 *Saladin*, pp 214-215

3 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 64

4 *Ibid*, p 213

5. The miraculous event of the journey of Holy Prophet to Heaven has been alluded to in the Qur'ān (XVII - 1) which runs as follows: "Glorified be He who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship (Ka'aba) to the Far Distant Place of Worship (the Temple of Jerusalem) the neighbourhood where of We have blessed, that We might show him of

"If the taking of Jerusalem were the only fact known about Saladin, it were enough to prove him the most chivalrous and great-hearted conqueror of his own, and perhaps of any, age"¹

The Third Crusade:

The fall of Jerusalem and the terrible rout of the Crusaders at the battle of Hittin threw the whole of Christendom into a violent commotion. Reinforcements from Europe poured forth into Palestine. Almost all the principal sovereigns and eminent generals of the then Christendom, such as, Frederick Barbarossa, the Emperor of Germany, Richard Cœur de Lion, King of England, and Philip Augustus, King of France, Leopold of Austria, the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Flanders sallied forth with their armies against the lonely Sultan and his few chiefs and relatives who had to defend the honour of Islam.

Negotiations of Peace:

Both the parties which had been arrayed against each other in a sanguinary combat for five years at last got tired of the fruitless, harassing and decimating struggle. They came to an agreement at Ramla in 588 A. H. which recognised Salah ud-din as the sovereign of the whole of Palestine leaving the principality of Acre in the hands of the Christians. Thus ended the Third Crusade and with it the task entrusted to Salah ud-din by God. Lane-Poole describes the inglorious end of the Third Crusade in these words:

"The Holy War was over, the five years' contest ended. Before the great victory at Hittin in July, 1187, not an inch of Palestine west of the Jordan was in the Moslems' hands. After the Peace of Ramla in September, 1192, the whole land was theirs, except a narrow strip of coast from Tyre to Jaffa. Saladin had no cause to be ashamed of the treaty. The Franks indeed retained most

¹ Saladin, pp 233-234

of what the Crusaders had won, but the result was contemptible in relation to the cost. At the Pope's appeal, all Christendom had risen in arms. The Emperor, the Kings of England, France, and Sicily, Leopold of Austria, the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Flanders, hundreds of famous barons and knights of all nations, had joined with the King and Princes of Palestine and the indomitable brothers of the Temple and Hospital, in the effort to deliver the Holy City and restore the vanished kingdom of Jerusalem. The Emperor was dead, the Kings had gone back, many of their noblest followers lay buried in the Holy Land, but Jerusalem was still the city of Saladin, and its titular king reigned over a slender realm at Acre.

"All the strength of Christendom concentrated in the Third Crusade had not shaken Saladin's power. His soldiers may have murmured at their long months of hard and perilous service, year after year, but they never refused to come to his summons and lay down their lives in his cause. His vassals in the distant valleys of the Tigris may have groaned at his constant requirements, but they brought their retainers loyally to his colours, and at the last pitched battle, at Arsuf, it was the division of Mosul that most distinguished itself for valour. Throughout these toilsome campaigns Saladin could always count on the support of the levies from Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as from northern and central Syria; Kurds, Turkmans, Arabs, and Egyptians, they were all Moslems and his servants when he called. In spite of their differences of race, their national jealousies, and tribal pride, he had kept them together as one host—not without difficulty and twice or thrice a critical waver. But, the shrinking at Jaffa notwithstanding, they were still a united army under his orders in the autumn of 1192, as they had been when he first led them 'on the Path of God' in 1187. Not a province had fallen away, not a chief or vassal had rebelled, though the calls upon their loyalty and endurance were

the earlier prophets in Jerusalem, the Sultan entered the city

Ibn Shaddād has given a graphic account of this memorable day. He writes

“It was the victory of victories. A large crowd consisting of scholars and the nobles, traders and the laity had gathered on this joyous occasion. A number of people had come from the coastal lands on getting the news of the Sultan’s victory, and so had come nearly all the notable theologians from Egypt and Syria to congratulate him on his victory. Hardly any dignitary or any noteworthy personage of the empire was left behind. The joyful shouts of ‘God is Great’, and ‘There is no god but God’ rent the skies. After ninety years Friday prayer was again held in Jerusalem. The Cross that glittered on the Dome of the Rock was pulled down. An undescribable event as it was, the blessings and the succour of God were to be witnessed every-where on the day.”¹

A costly pulpit which had been designed under the orders of Nūr ud-dīn Zangī twenty years ago was brought from Aleppo and erected in the Dome of the Rock.²

Benevolence of Salah ud-dīn

The forbearance, humanity and magnanimity of Salah ud-dīn on this occasion was in striking contrast with the brutality of his Christian foes. The Christian biographer of Salah ud-dīn, Lane-Poole, acknowledges that the Sultan’s kindness of heart had conquered his desire for revenge. He writes.

“Never did Saladin show himself greater than during this memorable surrender. His guards, commanded by

Our tokens.” The Prophet was brought by the angel Gabriel to the Temple of Jerusalem where he offered the prayers, leading a congregation of all the prophets who had come before him. Thereafter, he was taken to the Heaven to be presented before God Almighty.

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultana*, p. 66

2 *Abul Fida*, Vol. III, p. 77

responsible emirs, kept order in every street, and prevented violence and insult, insomuch that no ill-usage of the Christians was ever heard of. Every exit was in his hands, and a trustee Lord was set over David's gate to receive the ransoms as each citizen came forth."¹

Then, after describing how the people left in the holy city were ransomed and how al-Mahk al-Adil, the brother of the Sultan, the Patriarch and Balian of Ibelin, were each allowed to set free a thousand slaves given by Salah ud-din, Lane-Poole writes

"Then said Saladin to his officers 'My brother has made his alms, and the Patriarch and Balian have made theirs, now I would fain make mine.' And he ordered his Guards to proclaim throughout the streets of Jerusalem that all the old people who could not pay were free to go forth. And they came forth from the postern of St Lazarus, and then going lasted from the rising of the sun until night fell. Such was the charity which Saladin did, of poor people without number."²

"Thus did the Saracens show mercy to the fallen city. One recalls the savage conquest by the first Crusaders in 1099, when Godfrey and Tancred rode through streets choked with the dead and dying, when defenceless Moslems were tortured, burnt, and shot down in cold blood on the towers and roof of the Temple, when the blood of wanton massacre defiled the honour of Christendom and stained the scene where once the gospel of love and mercy had been preached. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' was a forgotten beatitude when the Christians made shambles of the Holy City. Fortunate were the merciless, for they obtained mercy at the hands of the Moslem Sultan.

*"The greatest attribute of heaven is Mercy,
And 't is the crown of justice, and the glory
Where it may kill with right, to save with pity*

1 Saladin, p 230

2 Ibid , p 232

defray his burial expenses and it had to be met by obtaining a loan in his name, while the shroud was provided by his minister and amanuensis, Cadi Fādhil

The Saintly Sultan

In regard to the character and disposition of Salah ud-dīn, Ibn Shaddād has left the following record .

“In faith and practice the Sultan was a devout Musalman, ever conforming to the tenets of the orthodox school of faith. He was regular in the performance of religious observances. Once he told me . ‘I have not performed a single congregational prayer alone for the past several years.’ Even during his illness he would send for the *Imām* and force himself to perform the prayer behind him. Assiduous in offering the prayers founded on the practice of the Prophet, he also performed the voluntary prayers during the night. If he could not somehow offer these supererogatory prayers during the night, he made up for these before the dawn prayers as allowed by the Shafe‘ite school. I have seen him standing behind the *Imām* during his last illness and except for the three days when he had fallen into a stupor, he never missed his prayers. The poor-due could never become incumbent upon him since he never possessed, throughout his life, property of such estate and effects as was necessary to make him liable to pay that tax. Boundless in generosity, he gave away whatever he possessed to the poor and needy, and, at the time of his death, no more than forty-seven *dirhams* of silver and one of gold were found in his possession. He left no other property or goods.

“He always kept the fast during the month of Ramadhan. He had had to omit the fast once which he got noted down by Cadi Fādhil. Before his last illness he scrupulously made up for this involuntary omission against the advice of his physician. ‘I do not know when death will overtake me,’ said he; and, true to his words, he gave up the ghost soon

after the repayment of that omission The Sultan ardently desired to accomplish the pilgrimage to Mecca but he could never get time to fulfil his desire During the year he died he had an intense desire to set-out for the pilgrimage but he could not somehow leave for it

“He delighted in hearing the Qur’ān recited to him and it was not unoften that he listened three or four chapters of the Holy Scripture from the battlement guards whom he sometimes visited during the night He listened the Qur’ān with all his heart and soul till tears trickled down his cheeks He had also a fancy for listening to the sacred Traditions He would ask everybody present to sit down and listen calmly while the Traditions were read out to him If any reputed Traditionist visited the town, he would himself go to attend his lecture, sometimes he would himself relate a Tradition, his eyes brimming with tears He would sometimes pause on the field of battle, between approaching armies, to listen the Traditions read out to him He held the tenets of faith so reverently that it was on his command that a heretical mystic, es-Suhrawardy, was got executed by his son al-Malik al-Zāhir

“The Sultan had an unflinching trust and confidence in the beneficence of Allah He used to turn with his heart and soul towards God in the moments of difficulty Once Sultan was present within Jerusalem which then lay almost helpless before the besieging Crusaders The Sultan had, however, refused our request to leave the city It was a cold wintry night before Friday when I was alone with the Sultan, we spent the whole night in prayers and supplication I requested the Sultan, late after mid-night to take a little rest but he replied ‘I think you want to sleep Go and take a nap’ After a short while when I went to him for dawn prayers, which we more often performed together, I found him washing his hands ‘I didn’t sleep at all,’ said he After the prayer was over, I said, ‘I have had an idea which may be of benefit to us. You should address

enough to try the firmest faith and tax the strength of giants. The brief defection, quickly pardoned, of a young prince of his own blood in Mesopotamia only emphasises, by its isolation, Saladin's compelling influence over his subjects. When the trials and sufferings of the five years' war were over, he still reigned unchallenged from the mountains of Kurdistan to the Libyan desert, and far beyond these borders the king of Georgia, the Catholicos of Armenia, the Sultan of Konia, the Emperor of Constantinople, were eager to call him friend and ally.

"To such allies he owed nothing: they came not to aid but to congratulate. The struggle was waged by Saladin alone. Except at the last, when his brother came prominently to the front, one cannot point to a single general or counsellor who can be said to have led, much less dominated, the Sultan. A council of war undoubtedly guided his military decisions, and sometimes overruled his better judgement, as before Tyre and Acre, but in that council it is impossible to single out a special voice that weighed more than another in influencing his mind. Brother, sons, nephews, old comrades, new vassals, shrewd Kady, cautious secretary, fanatical preacher,—all had their share in the general verdict, all helped their Master loyally according to their ability, but not a man of them ever forgot who was the Master. In all that anxious, laborious, critical time, one mind, one will was supreme, the mind and the will of Saladin."¹

Death of Salah ud-din

On Wednesday, the 27th of Safar, 589 A.H. died Salah ud-din, the faithful ally of Islam, after working his way up to the summit of his ambition, in the fifty-seventh year of his age.² Thus describes

¹ *Saladin*, pp 358-360

² *Abul Fida*, Vol III, p 90

Ibn Shaddād the last days of Sultan Salah ud-dīn.

“It was in the night of the 27th of Safar, and the twelfth day since he fell ill, that the Sultan’s illness took a serious turn. He had become too weak by then. Sheikh Abū Ja‘far, a pious and saintly person, was requested to stay within the castle during the night so that if the Sultan were to breathe his last, he might be available for recitation of the Qur’ān at the last moment. It appeared as if the time of Sultan’s eternal rest was drawing near. Sheikh Abū Ja‘far was sitting by his bed-side, reciting the Holy Qur’ān while the Sultan lay unconscious for the last three days, regaining his consciousness only for brief intervals in-between. When Sheikh Abū Ja‘far recited the verse *He is Allah than Whom there is no other God, the Knower of Invisible and the Visible.*¹ the Sultan opened his eyes and smiled, his face lighted up and he said joyfully, ‘Verily, this is correct.’ No sooner had he uttered these words that his soul departed. It was before dawn on Wednesday, the 27th of Safar when the Sultan passed away. The day of his death was, for the Musalmans, a misfortune such as they had never suffered since they were deprived of the first four Caliphs. The fort, the city and the entire world appeared to be lamenting over his death. Whenever I was told earlier that sometimes people longed for offering their own lives for others, I thought it was just a figurative expression, but, I learnt, on the day the Sultan died, that it could really happen so I was one of those who would have then gladly parted with their lives if there had been the slightest possibility of saving the life of the Sultan by our sacrifice.²”

Ibn Shaddād writes that the Sultan left nothing except one *dinar* and forty-seven *dirhams* when he died, nothing else did he leave by way of houses, or goods, or villages, or gardens, or any personal property.³ He had not left even as much that could suffice to

1. *Al-Hashr*, 22

2. *Il-Namūdīr-i-Sultāniya* pp 249-250

3. *Ibid*, p 6 and *Salādīn*, p 375

would have given away the last shell¹ The Sultan once cynically remarked that there were certain people for whom money and dust were alike "I know," says Ibn Shaddād, "that he was indirectly referring to his own views in this regard"²

The Sultan never allowed his visitor, even if he was a pagan, to leave him without a gift or some mark of recognition.³ The ruler of Saida once paid a visit to the Sultan whom he welcomed with open arms The Sultan not only entertained him but also explained the tenets of Islam to him He regularly sent ice and fruits to Richard, his greatest foe, during the illness of the latter⁴

He was of so noble disposition and kind of heart that he could not see anyone in distress without being moved Once an old Christian woman came to him seeking her baby The old woman, screaming and in flood of tears, told the Sultan that her baby had been taken away from her tent by the dacoits She had been told, the woman said, that only he could help her to get her child back Touched by her lamentation the Sultan broke into tears and asked his men to find out from the slave market where her baby was After a short while her baby was brought back and the woman departed praying for the welfare of the Sultan⁵

Ibn Shaddād relates that the Sultan was very kind to the orphans Whenever he found such a child he entrusted him to someone or himself made arrangements for his up-bringing Similarly he was always grief-stricken to see the aged and infirm whom he considered to be his special charge⁶

Courage and Fortitude

During the siege of Acre, tells Ibn Shaddād, the Sultan had been overtaken by a painful illness which made it difficult for him

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultāniya* p 13

2 *Ibid* , pp 13-14

3 *Ibid* , p 24

4 *Saladin*, p 355

5 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultāniya* p 26

6 *Ibid* p 28 and *Saladin*, p 372

yourself to God Almighty and beseech Him for help' He asked, 'What should I do for that?' 'Today 't is Friday,' said I, 'You should take bath before leaving for the 'Aqsa Mosque and also make some offerings secretly by way of charity. When you reach the mosque, offer a special prayer of two *rak'ats* between the Call and congregational prayers, at the place where the Prophet had offered prayers during the Ascension. I have read in a Tradition that the supplications made at that time are favoured with acceptance. You should thereafter beseech God thus: O my Lord, having lost all resources, I turn to Thee for help. I now submit to Thee, for, Thou alone can help Thy faith to attain success at this critical juncture. I hope that God shall accept your supplications.' The Sultan did likewise. I was by his side when I saw his head touching the ground in prostration and tears trickling down his beard on the prayer carpet. I did not hear what was he beseeching unto the Lord but I witnessed the signs of his prayer being answered before the day was over. Dissensions overtook the enemy camp from where we got heartening news for the next few days, till they broke their camp for Ramla by Monday morning.'¹

Character of Salah ud-dīn

A devout Muslim as he was, the dominant notes of his character were an acute sense of justice, charitableness, tender-heartedness, patience and courageousness.

Ibn Shaddād writes that he held courts twice a week on each Monday and Tuesday, which were attended by the chiefs of state, scholars, jurists and Cadis. Great and small, everyone found the door open. He used to read all the petitions and himself sign the orders dictated by him. He never allowed anyone to leave him without meeting his requirement. At the same time he also kept himself busy in the recollection of God.

¹ *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultāniya*, Abridged from pp 5-10

If anybody had any complaint to make, he would listen to him patiently and give his judgment. Once a man lodged a complaint against Taqī ud-dīn, the Sultan's nephew, who was immediately summoned to the court for answering the charges. On another occasion a man brought a suit against the Sultan himself who immediately made necessary investigations. Although the claim of the person presenting the suit was not established, the Sultan granted him a robe of honour and a handsome grant before allowing him to leave the court.

Kind and noble of heart, Salah ud-dīn was full of gentleness, patience and tenderness, and could never tolerate any injustice. He always overlooked the mistakes of his associates and servants; if anything unpleasant was heard by him, he never allowed his annoyance to be betrayed to the person concerned. Salah ud-dīn once asked for water which was somehow not procured for him. He reminded five times for it and then said "I am dying of thirst." He drank the water which was brought thereafter without saying anything more.¹ Another time when he wanted to take bath after a prolonged illness, he found the water too hot. He asked for some cold water to be brought in. The servant twice splashed the Sultan with cold water which caused him unpleasantness owing to his weakness but he simply said to the servant, "Tell me, if you want to get rid of me." The servant apologised and the Sultan instantly forgave him. Ibn Shaddād has narrated a number of other incidents exhibiting Salah ud-dīn's charity and goodness of heart.

So generous and open-handed was he that sometimes he gave away the provinces conquered by him. After he had conquered Āmad, one of his generals Qurrah Arslan expressed a desire for the city and the Sultan granted it to him.² Sometimes he sold even his personal estates and effects for presenting a gift to his visitor. The treasurers of the Sultan always used to keep a secret balance for the emergencies, for, left to himself, the Sultan

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultāniya*, p. 21

2 *Ibid*, p. 13

in 372 A H A man who was found in possession of the *Muwatta*¹ of Imām Mālik was punished.

“In 393 A H thirteen persons were punished for performing *Salat ul-Zuha*. Two vegetables, that is, water-cress and marsh-mellow were prohibited in 395 A. H. because Caliph Muawiyah and Ayesah (the wife of the Prophet) were reported to have been fond of these. During the same year, curses and imprecations (upon the first three Caliphs and the Ummayyads), were ordered to be displayed prominently on the walls of all mosques, shrines and other public buildings. Wine was made lawful in 411 A H. by the Fatimide Caliph al-Zāhir l’ Ayzaz Dīn-illāh. On the one hand, tumultuous scenes of extravagant luxury, debauchery and drunkenness had become a common sight ; on the other, famine and disease were working havoc among the lesser folk During this period of the cruelest suffering people used to gather round the Royal castle and cry ‘Hunger, Hunger’. The callous indifference of the rulers, at last, gave rise to pillage and plunder.

“In 424 A H when the heir-apparent to the Fatimide throne, who was then only four years of age, drove through the well-decorated bazars of the Capital, people prostrated themselves before him

“It had become almost a rule among the Fatimides to raise the children of tender age to the throne of Caliphate Mustansir b’Illah was of only seven years when he ascended the throne, Āmir b’ Ahkam-illāh of five years, one month and a few days, Alfayez b’Nasr-illāh of five years and ‘Azid l’ Dīn-illāh of 11 years at the time of their being vested with the office of Caliphate.”²

Rise of Salah ud-dīn to power in Egypt marks the beginning of an era when Shia⁴ite creed began to vanish with the restoration

1 A collection of Traditions by Imām Mālik ibn Anas, the founder of one of the four juristic schools of Sunnīs

2 *Al-Maqrīzī*, Abbreviated from pp 352-359

of the spiritual authority of the orthodox Islam. Schools were established in numerous places for the instruction of the masses. Gradually all traces of heretical beliefs and practices which had been adopted by the people during the Fatimide rule of about three hundred years were effaced from Egypt. The annalist of Egypt, al-Maqrizi, writes

“The Shi‘ah, Isma‘iliyah and Imāmiyah creeds became so extinct that they have left no trace in the whole of Egypt.”¹

The Fatimide rule in Egypt was indeed a scourge for Islam. During the three hundred years of its supremacy it continued to play a cruel joke with the tenets and doctrines, performances and practices enjoined by the Scripture and Traditions. The orthodox school was looked down upon and its followers were persecuted, while the dissenters, sceptics and non-conformists preaching licentiousness and libertine conduct were elevated to the positions of power and authority. Al-Maqrizi has summed up the achievements of the Fatimide rule in these words.

“It was an affliction that Islam had to endure during the entire period of the ‘Obaidite (Fatimide) rule. It began in 299 A.H. and came to an end in 567 A.H. Shi‘ahs came to have a dominant position under them, oppressive imposts and taxes were levied upon the people, the Shi‘ahs, particularly those belonging to the Ismailiyah sect, had a corrupting influence on the beliefs and faith of the simple and impressionable people belonging to the hilly tracts of Syrian border as also of Nusayris and Daruziz tribes. The Hashashim (or the hashish-eaters) were also one of the Isma‘ilite sects. The Isma‘ilite preachers were successful among the above-mentioned tribes of the border areas owing to their ignorance and naivety, but they could not gain influence among other people. It was during their reign that the Franks captured many Muslim cities in Syria and northern Iraq. Their onslaught continued till the Atabeks

2 Al-Maqrizi, p. 359

grace of God, he came out victorious killing quite a large number and taking as many prisoners ¹ During the siege of Acre more than seventy enemy ship-loads of fighting men and munitions of war landed during an afternoon Everyone present on the occasion was perturbed except the Sultan In one of the most hotly-contested battles during this period, a fierce charge by the enemy threw back the Muslim troops into disorder The enemy rammaged the Muslim camp and even got into Salah ud-din's tent, pulling down the Royal banner, but Salah ud-din stood firm along with a few of his comrades and was quickly able to muster his soldiery to back him, turning the defeat into victory The enemy suffered a heavy and murderous defeat and withdrew leaving seven thousand of the dead on the battle-field ² Ibn Shaddād relates how ambitious Salah ud-din was Once the Sultan said to him, "I shall tell you what is my heart's desire When God shall have put into my hands the whole of the Holy Land, I shall share my states with my children, leave them my last instructions, and bidding them farewell, embark upon the sea to subdue the western isles and lands I shall never lay down my arms while there remains a single infidel upon earth, at least if I am not stopped by death" ³

Salah ud-din—A Scholar

Salah ud-din had a good grounding in the religious lore He was aware of not only all the Arab tribes and their genealogy but even the pedigree of famous Arab horses, which testifies to his wide knowledge of the history of Arabs. He was always keen of gathering information from his courtiers and associates ⁴ It has been reported by certain historians that he had also committed the *Hamasa*⁵ to memory ⁵

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 15

2 *Ibid* , pp 15-16

3 *Ibid* , p 17

4 *Ibid* , p 27

5 A collection of Arabic poetry

6 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 27

Writing about the youthful days of Salah ud-din, Lane-Poole says

“To judge by later years, his literary tastes tended to the theological, he loved poetry indeed, but less than keen dialectic, and to hear holy traditions traced and verified, canon law formulated, passages in the Koran explained, and sound orthodoxy vindicated, inspired him with a strange delight”¹

Collapse of Fatimides

Rise of Salah ud-din signalled the fall of Fatimide² power which had established a separate Caliphate in Egypt. It lasted for 266 years from 299 A H to 567 A H. The Fatimides had introduced strange cults in the Islamic faith and practice changing its tenets and doctrines, rules of conduct and behaviour out of recognition. A reputed historian al-Maqrizi has given a few examples of the orders promulgated by the Fatimides in his book *al-h'ulal wal .ithār*. He writes

“In 362 A H the law of inheritance was amended. If a person left behind him a daughter along with a son or a nephew, or the uncle, the daughter excluded all others from succession. Any violation of this law was treated as an evidence of enmity with Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. Visibility of the new moon for the beginning of a new month no longer remained necessary as the *Ramadhan* and *Id* were ordered to be observed in accordance with the officially computed calendar.

Tarawih was banned throughout Egypt by a Royal edict

1 *Saladin*, pp 73-74

2 The Fatimides claimed their descent from Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet but the historians are unanimous that they were not descendants of the Prophet. The progenitor of the sect was either a converted Jew or Magian. Cadi Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Tayyab, Cadi 'Abdul Jabbar and al-Muqdisi have discussed the question in greater detail and reached the conclusion that the Fatimides were not in the lineage of the Prophet.

came into power and a defender of Islam, as Salah ud-din was, came forward to crush their power. He regained the Islamic territories and saved the bondsmen of God from the Fatimide scourge.”¹

The revolutionary change brought about by Salah ud-din in Egypt was a harbinger of great religious and moral revival and, therefore, it is only natural that the historians of that period have expressed satisfaction over it. Al-Maqdisi had himself witnessed the traces of a revolution that had transformed Egypt only 29 years before his birth. The collapse of Fatimide rule finds expression in these words of al-Maqdisi:

“Their kingdom collapsed and with it ended the age of degradation for Islam.”²

Another scholar of repute, Hafiz ibn Qayyim, has given an impressive account of the rise of the Batinites and their downfall at the hands of Nur ud-din Zangi and Salah ud-din in his book *al-Sawayiq al-Mursalah*. He says:

“The teachings of the Batinites died a natural death in the East but it began gradually to gain ground in the West until it became a force, deeply entrenched, to be reckoned with. They assumed the charge of a few cities in North Africa, from where they advanced to Egypt and succeeded in taking possession of that country. They founded al-Kahira (modern Cairo). Their missionaries continued to enlist adherents and diffuse their esoteric cult. It is they who produced the *Tracts of the Brethren of Purity*. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) wrote the *Isharat* and the *Shifa* and certain other tracts under their influence, for he has himself acknowledged that his father was one of the missionaries of the Fatimide Caliph Hakim b‘Illah. During the reign of the Fatimides the path of the Prophet became an impious blasphemy, the collections of the Traditions were proscribed and only a few remained who read these books or secretly

1. Al-Maqdisi, Vol I, p 201.

2. *Ibid*, Vol I p. 200.

acted on these precepts. A dominant note of their teachings was that reason should be given precedence over revelation and the guidance of the apostles of God.

“Gradually a greater part of the territories in North Africa, Egypt, Syria and Hijaz submitted to the Fatimide rule. Iraq also remained under their sway for about a year. *Sunnīs* were treated like *Zimmīs* under their rule; the Jews and the Christians at least enjoyed the security of life and property unknown to the *Sunnīs*. Innumerable religious scholars were executed or expired in their dungeons.

“At last God Almighty came to the rescue of the Muslims who were saved from the clutches of the Fatimides by Nūr ud-dīn and Salah ud-dīn. Islam appeared to be at the verge of extinction in these countries but the revolution brought about by Salah ud-dīn granted a new lease of life to it. Muslims were indeed overjoyed at this miraculous revivification of Islam at a time when people had begun to ask one another ‘Who can now dare to defend the faith of God?’ It was at such a moment that Allah enabled His bondsmen to get back Jerusalem from the Crusaders whom the defenders of Islam fought with indomitable courage and chivalry.”¹

The chronicles of the time show that the news of the fall of the Fatimide kingdom was generally received with a sense of relief and pleasure by the entire Islamic world and by the Muslims of Syria, in particular.²

Thus Salah ud-dīn stemmed the tide of the Crusaders which saved the world of Islam from the bondage and exploitation of western nations for centuries to come. On the other hand, he plugged a great source of evil by overthrowing the Fatimide Caliphate which was spreading the contamination of *Batīnī* and *Ismaʿīlī* cults to other Muslim lands from its centre in Egypt. The esoteric doctrines preached by these sects during the last two

1 Ibn Qayyim, Vol II, pp. 233-234

2 Al-Maqdīsī, Vol I pp 198-199

or three centuries were responsible for the then prevailing intellectual waywardness and the degeneration of the faith and morals. The world of Islam cannot, indeed, forget either of these two achievements of Salah ud-din nor can any Muslim, living in any part of the world, ever fail to acknowledge his debt of gratitude to Sultan Salah ud-din Ayyubi

CHAPTER XI

SHEIKH UL-ISLAM IZZ UD-DIN IBN ABDUL SALAM

The heroic endeavours of Salah ud-din who set himself to work in the most earnest fashion with the re-introduction of orthodox doctrines of Islam in place of the Shia'ite creed, the chain of educational institutions started for the purpose all over his wide realm and, above all, the personal example set by him and some of the Muslim rulers in following the religious precepts and code of moral conduct redirected the energies of the people towards learning and teaching of the religious sciences. As a result thereof, we find several erudite scholars during the seventh century, who had devoted themselves, body and soul, to the dissemination of Islamic teachings among their compatriots. The most outstanding personage among these savants was Sheikh ul-Islam 'Izz ud-din ibn 'Abdul Salām (d. 660 A.H.). Reputed for profound learning, piety and courage, he never compromised with the corrupting influences of his time and the degenerate ways of the then rulers

Erudition of 'Izz ud-dīn -

'Izz ud-din ibn Abdul Salām was born in Damascus in 578 A.H. He had the honour of being a student of several eminent scholars of those days such as Fakhr ud-din ibn 'Asākir, Saif ud-din Amedi and Hafiz Abū Mohammad al-Qāsim. According to certain annalists, he started education quite late but he soon acquired such a proficiency in the then sciences that his contemporaries have paid glowing tributes to his deep learning and brilliance of mind, Ibn Daqiq al-'Id calls him *Sultan ul-'Ulema* (king of scholars) in some of his works. When 'Izz ud-din

migrated to Egypt in 639 A. H., Hafiz ‘Abdul ‘Azim al-Munziri, the writer of *al-Targhib wat-Tarhib*, suspended giving legal-opinions. When he was asked the reason for it, he said : “It does not behove any jurist to give legal-opinion where ‘Izz ud-din happens to be present.” Another scholar Sheikh Jamal ud-din ibn al-Hajib was of the opinion that in *Fiqah* (jurisprudence) ‘Izz ud-din excelled even al-Ghazali,¹

Al-Zahabi writes in his book entitled *al-Ebar*

“In his knowledge of *Fiqah*, devotion to religion and awe of God he had attained that degree of perfection which makes one capable of *Ijtihad* i.e. of interpreting the revealed law of God and of deducing new laws from it ”²

‘Izz ud-din occupied the chair of professor for a fairly long period in the *Madarsa Zāwiyah Ghazāliyah* of Damascus along with holding the offices of *Khatib* and *Imām* in the principal mosque of the city called the Umayyad Mosque. Sheikh Shahāb ud-din Abū Shāma relates that ‘Izz ud-din vehemently opposed the innovations and later-day accretions like *Salāt al-Raghāyeb*³ and the special prayers of mid-Sh‘abān⁴ which had become so popular in his time that several scholars of note thought it prudent to keep silence about these

Al-Malik al-Kāmil⁵ insisted on ‘Izz ud-din for accepting the office of *Cadi* in Damascus which he accepted reluctantly after imposing a number of conditions. During the same period

1. *Tabqāt al-Shaf‘iyyah* Vol V, p 83

2. Al-Suyuti, Vol I, p 141

3. *Salat al-Raghāyeb* was a special prayer of 12 *Rak‘ats* performed in the night of the 27th Rajab. The people had somehow come to regard it as a highly meritorious prayer. It came in vogue in 448 A. H. as described by ‘Izz ud-din, *vide Ithāf us-Sa‘ādah*, (Vol III, pp 423-424)

4. In the night of 15th Shābān a prayer of 100 *Rak‘ats* was performed in a manner specially prescribed for it. Ibn Subki and Imām Nawawi, have held both these offerings to be detestable innovations. (*Ithāf us-Sa‘ādah*, Vol III, pp 425-427)

5. Son of Al-Malik al-‘Adil who held Egypt after the death of his father in 615 A. H.

al-Malik al-Kāmil appointed him as his envoy to the court of the then ‘Abbāsid Caliph

Righteousness of ‘Izz ud-dīn:

Among the religious scholars of Syria, ‘Izz ud-dīn was held in such a high esteem that he was received by the then King with the most honourable marks of distinction. On his own part, however, ‘Izz ud-dīn never visited the king unless he was requested to do so. Being dignified, straight-forward and self-respecting, he did not like to curry favour with the king; instead, he insisted always upon the king to follow the course beneficial for Islam and the Muslims.

During his illness Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf who held the principality of Aleppo after the demise of his father, al-Malik al-‘Adil, sent for ‘Izz ud-dīn. Earlier the Sultan had had some misunderstandings¹ with the Sheikh on account of certain views held by the latter but the same were removed as a result of their meeting. The Sultan requested the Sheikh to forgive him for his mistake and also to let him have a word of advice. “So far as the request for pardon is concerned,” replied ‘Izz ud-dīn, “I forgive everyone with whom I happen to be displeased, for, I never allow the sun to go down upon my animus against anybody. Instead of seeking my recompense from the human beings, I desire it from God alone as the Lord has said - *But whosoever pardoneth and amendeth, his wage is the affair of Allah*.² “As for my benedictions for you”,

1 During the sixth and seventh centuries a controversy had arisen between the Hanbalites and Ash‘arites in regard to the attributes of God. The former favoured a literal interpretation of the Scripture while the latter held the attributes of God to be distinct from his essence, yet in a way as to forbid any comparison being made between God and His creatures. This difference later became a hotly-contested issue between the two groups who came to regard it as a criterion of the true faith. ‘Izz ud-dīn, was a Ash‘arite while al-Malik al-Ashraf had a predisposition towards Hanbalite school which had caused a misunderstanding between the two. *Tabqāt al-Shaf‘iyyah*, Vol V, pp 85-95

2 *Ash-Shūra* 40

added ‘Izz ud-din, “I very often pray to God for the well-being of the Sultan, for this also means the welfare of Islam and the Muslims. God may grant the Sultan insight and understanding of the matters which may be helpful to him in the life to come. Now, coming to the advice, it is my bounden duty to enjoin the right course since the Sultan has asked for it. I know that the Sultan is reputed for his valour and the brilliant victories he has won, but Tartars are making inroads into Islamic territories. They have been emboldened by the fact that the Sultan has pitched his aims against al-Malik al-Kāmil and thus he would not have time to face the enemies of God and the persecutors of Muslims. Al-Malik al-Kāmil is, however, the elder brother of the Sultan and, therefore, I would request the Sultan to give up the idea of fighting against his own brother, instead I would advise him to turn his forces against the enemies of Islam. The Sultan should make up his mind, in these critical days of his illness, to fight for the sake of God alone and for restoring the supremacy of His faith. We hope to overcome the infidels with the help of the Sultan, if God restores him his health. This would verily be a great achievement but if God has willed otherwise, the Sultan would undoubtedly be recompensed for his intention to come to the rescue of Islam”.

Al-Malik al-Ashraf thanked ‘Izz ud-din for his sincere advice and immediately issued orders redirecting his forces to face the Tartars instead of al-Malik al-Kāmil. As soon as the orders of the Sultan were communicated to the commander of his army, he retreated to Kasirah.

On al-Malik al-Ashraf’s further request to counsel him something more, ‘Izz ud-din said, “The Sultan is bedridden but his chiefs and officials are having rounds of pleasure, they are reveling in wine and wickedness while Muslims are being burdened with new taxes and tithes. The most valuable presentation that the Sultan can offer to God is that this cesspool of corruption is cleansed; illegal imposts are abolished, tyranny is stopped and justice is made available to the people.” Al-Malik al-Ashraf not only acted on the advice of ‘Izz ud-din but profusely thanked him saying, “May God give you a goodly reward for performing the

duty enjoined by the religion, on behalf of all the Muslims whose well-wisher you undoubtedly are Sire, allow me to be your companion in the Paradise.” The Sultan also presented one thousand Egyptian gold mohurs to ‘Izz ud-dīn but he refused to accept them saying, “I met you only for the sake of God and I do not want any worldly temptation to be made an additional reason for it.”

Courage of ‘Izz ud-dīn :

Al-Malik al-Ashraf was succeeded by Sāleh Ismā‘īl who sought help of the Christians against the impending danger of invasion from Egypt. In lieu of the aid promised by the Christians the cities of Saida, Thakīf and few other forts were ceded to them. The friendly relations thus established by Sāleh Ismā‘īl encouraged the Christians to purchase arms and ammunition from the Muslim traders in Damascus. ‘Izz ud-dīn deprecated these deals as the arms purchased by the Christians were likely to be used against the Muslims and, therefore, when the arms dealers asked for his legal-opinion in the matter, he advised that all such bargains were prohibited by the *Sharī‘ah*. This was not all, ‘Izz ud-dīn gave up benedictions for the King in the Friday sermons and started invoking the wrath of God on the enemies of Islam.¹ The matter was brought to the notice of the King who ordered to imprison him. After some time he was transferred to Jerusalem from his Damascus gaol.

In the meantime Sāleh Ismā‘īl along with his allies, al-Malik al-Mansūr, the King of Hams and a few Christian monarchs converged at Jerusalem with the intention of invading Egypt. Although Sāleh Ismā‘īl had imprisoned ‘Izz ud-dīn, he was feeling guilty in his heart of heart and wanted to set him free provided ‘Izz ud-dīn was prepared to give him an excuse for the same. He, therefore, gave his handkerchief to one of his trusted councillors with the instruction that he should present it to ‘Izz ud-dīn and tell him courteously that if he so desired, his previous position would be

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafī‘īyah*, Vol V, p. 80

restored The councillor was also directed to present ‘Izz ud-din before the King in case he agreed to the suggestion with the highest respect, otherwise to imprison him in a tent beside that of the King. The Councillor did what he had been commissioned, paid his compliments and related the admiration of the King for the Sheikh, and then said, “Everything will be set right and your previous position will be restored in no time, if you just kiss the hands of the king and show courtesy to him.” History can perhaps offer few such striking examples of fearless expression, for, ‘Izz ud-din replied, “What a fool you are! You expect me to kiss the hands of the King while I would not like my own hands to be kissed by him. My friend, you are living in a world other than that of mine. Praise be to Allah that I am not a prey to the temptations which have captured your soul.”¹ The Councillor then told him that in that case he had orders to imprison him again. The Sheikh was accordingly placed under confinement in a tent beside the king’s, who heard him daily reciting the Qur’ān. The King one day told his Christian ally that the person whom he heard reciting the Qur’ān at the moment was the chief pontiff of Muslims but he had been divested of his post and honours and kept under confinement because of his opposition to the cession of cities and forts to the Christians. The Christian monarch, however, replied that if he were to have such a man as his bishop, he would have felt honoured to sit at his feet.²

Shortly thereafter Sāleh Ismā‘īl was defeated and killed in an encounter with the Egyptian forces, and ‘Izz ud-din was honourably taken to Egypt.

While on his way to Egypt ‘Izz ud-din passed through the principality of Kark. When its Governor requested ‘Izz ud-din to settle in Kark, he replied, “This small city of yours is not befitting my learning.”³

1 *Tabqāt al-Shafī‘īyah*, Vol V, p 101

2. *Ibid*, Vol V, p 101

3 *Ibid*, Vol V, p 81

‘Izz ud-dīn in Egypt

‘Izz ud-dīn was received by the then Sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Sāleh Najm ud-dīn Ayyūb, with great reverence and honour. He was appointed *Khatīb* of the Mosque of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās as well as the grand Cadi of Egypt. He was also entrusted with the task of looking after the rehabilitation of deserted mosques and the professorship of Shafe‘ī jurisprudence in Madarsa Salihīya founded by the King.

Fearlessness of ‘Izz ud-dīn :

A man by the name of Fakhr ud-dīn ‘Uthmān who was an intendant of the palace had come to wield a great influence over the King. This man got a drum-house constructed over the roof of a mosque. When ‘Izz ud-dīn came to know of it, he ordered the structure of the drum-house to be pulled down¹. He declared Fakhr ud-dīn ‘Uthmān as an unreliable witness for the purposes of tendering evidence in a court of law and also resigned from the post of Chief Justice as a mark of protest against the blasphemous action of Fakhr ud-dīn ‘Uthmān. ‘Izz ud-dīn continued to enjoy the esteem of the king who, however, did not consider it prudent to appoint ‘Izz ud-dīn as grand Cadi for the second time. Notwithstanding this decision of the King, juristic-opinions tendered by ‘Izz ud-dīn were acted upon with the same respect as before. During this period al-Malik al-Sāleh Najm ud-dīn Ayyūb sent an embassy to the court of the Caliph in Baghdad. When the Egyptian envoy was presented before the Caliph he enquired of the envoy if the Sultan of Egypt had himself commissioned him to convey the message. On being told that he had been charged to convey the message by Fakhr ud-dīn ‘Uthmān on behalf of the Sultan, the Caliph replied that since Fakhr ud-dīn ‘Uthmān had been declared an unreliable witness by ‘Izz ud-dīn, no credence could be placed on a message conveyed through him. The envoy had to return to Egypt to obtain the orders of the Sultan afresh.

¹ *Tabqāt al-Shafe‘īyah*, Vol V, p 81

There is yet another incident which bespeaks of ‘Izz ud-dīn’s fearlessness. The Sultan who was holding a durbar on the occasion of ‘Id was seated on the throne in a large reception hall, with the princes and chiefs of the State ranged on his right, and the courtiers and dignitaries on the left. In front of the Sultan stood all the people entitled to enter and salute the sovereign, when a voice was suddenly heard addressing the Sultan by his first name. “Ayyūb, what would be your reply before God when He would ask you whether the kingdom of Egypt was given to you so that people should openly indulge in drinking-bouts and you should enjoy public receptions?” “Is it,” blurted out the Sultan who was taken aback, “is it a fact?” “Yes,” came the reply from ‘Izz ud-dīn, “Wine is being freely sold and consumed in the city while people indulge in other vices too.” Surprised as the Sultan was, he replied, “But ‘t is not my fault, Sire, for it has been happening from the time my father held the reigns of this kingdom.” “Then, you are one of those,” admonished ‘Izz ud-dīn, “who say that *we found our fathers acting on this wise*.” The Sultan immediately gave orders to stop the sale of wine in his realm.

While returning from the court one of the pupils of ‘Izz ud-dīn asked him why he had raised the question on that occasion. ‘Izz ud-dīn replied, “When I saw the Sultan surrounded by that pomp and show I thought that he might give himself airs and become a slave to his baser-self. I, therefore, thought it necessary to admonish him publicly.” “But were you not seized with fright,” demanded the disciple further. “Oh no,” replied ‘Izz ud-dīn, “I was so much seized by the awe and glory of God Almighty that the Sultan appeared to me as meek as a cat.”²

‘Izz ud-dīn in the Battlefield

These were the days when the dissensions among the Muslim monarchs had again created a situation favourable to the Crusaders who unsheathed their swords to take an offensive against

1 *Ash-Shu‘ara* 74

2 *Tabqāt al-Shaf‘iyyah*, Vol V, p 82

Mansurah in Egypt. ‘Izz ud-dīn accompanied the forces sent to retrieve the city from the Christians. A chronicler of the time, Ibn al-Subkī, writes that ‘Izz ud-dīn’s prayer for the success of Muslim forces was readily answered by God. The reinforcements of the Crusaders could not reach them as their ships were taken by a gale, which submerged quite a few of them¹

The Mongols had also started raiding and plundering Muslim territories by then. Once there was an imminent danger of Mongol invasion of Egypt but the Sultan and his commanders were so disheartened that they could not muster courage to face the Mongol hordes. ‘Izz ud-dīn encouraged the Sultan to fight the Mongols. He even assured the Sultan of his success against the Mongols. At last the Sultan agreed to his suggestion but as he was facing paucity of funds he sought the advice of ‘Izz ud-dīn about raising the necessary finances through loans from the businessmen. ‘Izz ud-dīn, however, advised “First bring the ornaments your women-folk and those of your dignitaries and nobles have in their possession. These are all prohibited by the *Shari‘ah* and should be used for meeting the expenses of this expedition. And, if you still need the money, then you can raise it through loans.” Surprising though it may seem, the king and his nobles brought out without a demur all the jewellery and valuables they possessed as the Sheikh had directed. The riches so brought forth was enough to meet the expenses of raising an adequate force to face the Mongols who were defeated by the Egyptian army as predicted by ‘Izz ud-dīn.

An still more surprising incident of the Sheikh’s life described by the historians relates to his insistence upon auctioning those dignitaries of the Sultan’s court whom he held to be the property of the State exchequer, since they happened to be slaves who had not been emancipated in accordance with the provisions of the *Shari‘ah*. These chiefs of the State were recruited as royal levies from the Turkish *mamluks* or slaves but had risen to the positions of authority and wielded great influence on the government of Egypt. One of

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafrīyah*, Vol V, p 84

them even held the post of a minister to the Sultan. 'Izz ud-din pronounced the juristic-opinion that these chiefs were still slaves in accordance with the rules of the *Shari'ah*, and should be treated as such until they were formally emancipated. The population of Egypt immediately ceased cooperating with such chiefs and dignitaries who were placed in such an invidious position that they had to call upon the Sheikh and to enquire what he proposed to do with them. 'Izz ud-din, however, told them plainly that he would sell them in a public auction on behalf of the State treasury and thereafter they would be emancipated as provided by the *Shari'ah*. They appealed to the Sultan who also tried, as the annalists have recorded, to placate 'Izz ud-din but he remained adamant. During the discussion on the subject the Sultan told 'Izz ud-din that he should not concern himself with the affairs of the State and also said something, as it has been reported, which was taken ill by 'Izz ud-din. The Sheikh returned to his house and announced his decision to leave Egypt immediately. The news spread like a wild fire in Cairo, and an overwhelming majority of its population decided to follow 'Izz ud-din and migrate with him. The matter was brought to the notice of the Sultan who was also told that if 'Izz ud-din went away from Egypt, his kingdom would also come to an end. Extremely worried by the fastly deteriorating situation, the Sultan himself went to bring 'Izz ud-din back to the city, who had by then left it with a large section of its inhabitants. The Sultan had at length to give in to 'Izz ud-din who was allowed to auction the chiefs. The *mamluk* minister, however, still tried to dissuade the Sheikh but, failing in his efforts, decided to slay 'Izz ud-din. He went with his entourage, sword in hand, to the house of 'Izz ud-din, and knocked at the door. The son of 'Izz ud-din, who came out to answer the call, went in and told his father what he had seen but the Sheikh calmly said, "My son, your father is not lucky enough to be slain in the way of God." 'Izz ud-din came out without the slightest trace of fear on his face. As soon as the minister saw 'Izz ud-din, he was overtaken by a flutter and the sword fell from his hand. With tears in his eyes he again humbly repeated the question, "My lord, what do you

want to do with us." "I will auction you", was the Sheikh's reply. "And where will you spend the sale proceeds," the minister demanded again. The Sheikh replied crisply, "On the welfare of Muslims". The minister asked again, "Who will collect the sale-price". 'Izz ud-din replied, "Myself". The minister at last agreed to be sold by the Sheikh who auctioned him along with other *memluks*. As a mark of respect to the position held by these dignitaries, the Sheikh fixed a higher price for each and asked them to deposit the sale-price. The money thus collected by 'Izz ud-din was spent on welfare projects while the chiefs were granted their warrant of emancipation. The historian Ibn al-Subki writes: "Such an incident was never heard of earlier about anyone."¹ This is perhaps the only example of its kind recorded by history about the deference and veneration ever accorded to any scholar.

'Izz ud-din and the Kings of Egypt :

Egypt witnessed quite a few political upheavals during 'Izz ud-din's stay in that country. When he arrived in Egypt, a monarch of Salah ud-din's dynasty, al-Malik al-Saleh Najm ud-din Ayyub was ruling over the country. He was succeeded by his son al-Malik al-Mu'azzam Turan Shah after whom the Turkish Chiefs seized the reins of government. They too held 'Izz ud-din in a high esteem while the celebrated Turk Sultan al-Malik al-Zahir Baibars was especially devoted to the Sheikh. It was on the advice of 'Izz ud-din that Baibars invited Abul Qasim Ahmad, the uncle of the last Caliph Must'asim b'illah who had escaped the massacre by Mongols, to Cairo in 659 A.H., and acknowledged him as Caliph under the title al-Mustansir b'illah. The first to take the oath of allegiance was 'Izz ud-din, next came the Sultan Baibars followed by the Chief Cadi Taj ud-din, the principal Sheikhs and nobles.²

1. *Tabqat al-Shaf'iyyah* Vol V, pp 84-85

1. *Al-Suyuti*, Vol. II, p 49

Moral Rectitude :

‘Izz ud-dīn was as much celebrated for his generosity, kindness and humanity as for his profound knowledge and piety. The Chief Cadi Badr ud-dīn ibn Jama‘ah relates that when ‘Izz ud-dīn was still in Damascus, a slump in prices once overtook the market. As the prices of groves had suffered a steep fall, the wife of ‘Izz ud-dīn gave him an ornament to purchase a grove so that they might spend the summer in it. ‘Izz ud-dīn sold the ornament and gave over the sale proceeds in charity. Later, when his wife asked if he had purchased the grove, ‘Izz ud-dīn replied, “Yes, but in the Paradise. I saw many poor people in great distress and so I spent the money on them.” His wife thanked God for the good act of ‘Izz ud-dīn.¹

Cadi Badr ud-dīn has also written that ‘Izz ud-dīn gave as freely when he was poor as when he happened to be rich. If he had nothing to give to a beggar, he would part with a portion of his turban.

‘Izz ud-dīn was equally courageous and truthful against his own self as against the kings and nobles. Ibn al-Subkī and al-Suyūṭī write that once during his stay in Egypt ‘Izz ud-dīn made a certain mistake in the juristic-opinion given by him. As soon as he came to know of his mistake, he got an announcement made that the people should not act on that opinion since it was wrong.²

Ibn al-Subkī relates that ‘Izz ud-dīn had also been favoured with the inner enlightenment. His fearlessness, disregard for worldly power, fame and riches and, above all, the unflinching faith and trust in God showed that he had attained the sublimeness of spirit. As Ibn al-Subkī records, ‘Izz ud-dīn was a disciple of the famous spiritual mentor, Sheikh Shahab ud-dīn Suharwardy who had authorised him to guide others in the mystic path.³ ‘Izz ud-dīn had also had the opportunity of meeting and

1. *Tabqāt al-Shaf‘īyah*, Vol. V pp 82-83

2. *Al-Suyūṭī*, Vol I, p 142 and *Tabqāt al-Shaf‘īyah*, Vol V, p 83

3. *Tabqāt al-Shaf‘īyah*, Vol V, p 83

remaining in the company of another reputed mystic, Sheikh Abul Hasan Sazli¹

Righteousness

‘Izz ud-din preached and acted on the Qur’ānic dictum commanding to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, no matter what dangers and hardships one might have to face for it.

In one of his letters addressed to the Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf he wrote

“What we claim is that we are partisans, friends and helpers or rather the troopers of Allah, and no one can lay a claim to be a combatant unless he is willing to expose himself to danger.”²

In ‘Izz ud-din’s view the knowledge and eloquence of a scholar constituted his two weapons which should be fully utilized in the fight for righteousness. In his another letter to the Sultan he wrote

“God has enjoined upon us to strive and fight for His religion. Just as you have your swords and lances for your arms, we have our knowledge and parlance, and as it does not befit you to sheathe your sword, similarly we cannot hold our tongue against the innovators and dissenters, apostates and sinners.”³

‘Izz ud-din considered it imperative for the scholars to be ever willing to face dangers in the discharge of their sacred obligation and enjoin the right course, cost what may. Thus, he vehemently disagreed with those religious scholars who did not consider it lawful to expose themselves to avoidable dangers. His commentary on the Qur’ānic verse “*and be not cast by your own hands to ruin*”⁴ amply bears out his point of view in this regard :

“To risk one’s life for the honour and dominance of

1 Al-Suyūti, Vol I, p 142

2 *Tabqāt al-Shaf‘īyah*, Vol V, p. 95.

3. *Ibid* , Vol V, p 90

4. *Al-Baqrah* : 195

the Faith is permitted by the *Shari'ah*, it is rather enjoined on all able-bodied persons to wage war in the way of God and fight the infidels. So it is lawful to expose oneself to danger, under the provisions of the *Shari'ah*, for enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. However, if anyone feels that he might lose his life in the venture, the command loses its obligatory character for him but it nevertheless remains a commendable act. Thus, they are definitely wrong who think that it is not lawful to risk one's life for the purpose. In short, if anybody gives preference to his Self over God, He will give preference to others over him, if anybody seeks the pleasure of God at the cost of offending others, God will not only bless him but also make others to be pleased with him. And if anybody, on the other hand, wants to gratify others by displeasing God, He will be displeased with him and also cause others to be disappointed with him."

"An Arab poet has rightly expressed the same idea in this verse

"I won't care howsoever troublesome my life may be, if I were only to gain your love, may thou be pleased with me even if this annoys the whole world."

'Izz ud-din lived up to his ideal and never hesitated to sacrifice his hearth or home, life or honour for what he believed to be the correct and righteous path enjoined by the *Shari'ah*.

Writings of 'Izz ud-din:

He was an erudite scholar, broad-minded jurist and a successful teacher. In penmanship too, he was equally celebrated, his two most well-known works being *al-Qawa'id al-Kubra* and *Kuāb Majāz al-Qur'ān*. Ibn al-Subki writes about these books

"These books of 'Izz ud-din mark him as an outstanding scholar of profound knowledge in religious sciences."

1 *Tabqāt al-Shafi'iyah*, Vol V p 91

2 *Ibid*, Vol V, p 103

‘Izz ud-dīn later summarised both the above mentioned books. Ibn al-Subkī has also praised his two other books entitled *Shajaratul-Ma‘ārif* and *Id-Dalāyel ul-Mut‘alihak bil Malāyikah wal-Ir*. In addition to these writings one more book of ‘Izz ud-dīn by the name of *Maqāsid us-Salūl* was widely read during his own lifetime. Thousands of its copies were made out by the people.¹ ‘Izz ud-dīn also left a voluminous collection of the juristic-opinions pronounced by him which is regarded as a valuable collection of legal precepts according to the Shaf‘ite school of jurisprudence.

‘Izz ud-dīn was perhaps the next scholar after al-Ghazālī in Islam who set forth to define and delineate the objectives of the religious observances and the benefits accruing from the performances enjoined by the *Shari‘ah*. In the introduction to his famous treatise *Hujjat Allah il-Bāligha*, Shah Wali Ullah Muhaddith of Delhi, the greatest authority on the subject, has acknowledged his debt to the three earlier masters viz al-Ghazālī, Abū Sulaiman Khattābī and ‘Izz ud-dīn.²

Death of ‘Izz ud-dīn

‘Izz ud-dīn died in the eighty-third year of his age on the 9th of Jamadī al-Awwal, 660 A H. Al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibars, the then king of Egypt, accompanied the funeral of the Sheikh along with the dignitaries and chiefs. The King was very much aggrieved that the Sheikh’s death was destined to occur during his reign.

Witnessing the mammoth funeral procession passing by the side of the royal Castle the King said to one of his councillors “My kingdom would have been nowhere if this man had decided to oppose me. He had verily won the hearts of the people.”³

1 *Tabqāt al-Shaf‘iyah*, Vol V, p 98

2 *Hujjat*, Vol I, p 6

3 *Tabqāt al Shaf‘iyah*, Vol V, p 84

CHAPTER XII

TARTARS –THE SCOURGE OF GOD

The Causes of Tartar Invasion

Islam was confronted with another danger in the seventh century, unparalleled in the annals of the world, which was about to wipe it out of existence. This was the invasion of the wild and savage hordes of the Tartars who issued forth from the Mongolian steppes and over-powered almost the whole of the Islamic world with a lightning speed.

The immediate cause of the Mongol invasion can be attributed to a greivous mistake of ‘Ala ud-dīn Muhammad, the Shah of Khwarizm¹. A body of traders who had arrived from Mongolia was put to death, and when Chengiz Khan deputed an embassy to enquire into the reasons for it, Muhammad replied by killing the envoy too. On receiving the news of this outrage upon international courtesy, the Mongol Khakan Chengiz Khan unleashed the whirlwind of savagery upon the world of Islam.

However, if one were to look into the moral behaviour and attitudes of ancient nations, particularly those relating to the Banī Israel as well as their destruction and massacre, demolition and sacrilege of Jerusalem, and the reasons therefor described in the Qur’ān,² one can clearly see with the insight provided by the Scripture into the nature of historical process, that the reason for converting the Islamic world into a vast charnel-house was not a

1 Khwarizm was the area south of Aral sea on the lower course of Amū Darya (Oxus) which now forms part of Turkmanistan and Uzbekistan Republics of U S S R.

2 One need look into the verses 4 to 7 of the Chapter *Banī Israel* in Qur’ān which brings out the religio-moral standpoint of the Scripture in regard to the downfall of the nations.

solitary act of cruelty on the part of a reckless and haughty sovereign. As the Qur'ān tells us, it was certainly not due to the mistake of a single individual that the storm of death and destruction burst forth on the entire world of Islam. If we were to cast a glance over the religious, moral, social and political conditions of the Muslim peoples in those days, there would be no difficulty in finding out the reason for this calamity. Such a survey would amply bear out that the carnage did not take place all of a sudden. It had deeper and far-reaching reasons than those narrated hitherto by the historians. We shall have to look for these reasons into the political situation and the social condition of Muslim society over a century or more prior to the Mongol invasion.

After the death of Salah ud-dīn in 589 A. H., the vast empire carved out by him split up into several independent principalities and kingdoms headed by his sons or other successors. Like many other founders of the Empires his successors did not possess the talent of their progenitor, and, what was more, they continued to fight each other for a fairly long time. Some of these even did not hesitate to seek the assistance of the Crusaders against their own brethren, an instance of which has already been cited in the previous section. The whole of Islamic world was, in fact, in a state of chaos, nowhere was to be found peace and tranquillity, a moral and social disintegration was at work which was clearly visible in the rapidly deteriorating political situation. The Crusaders were again making inroads into the Muslim territories and had recaptured the lands emancipated from their clutches by Salah ud-dīn. All those factors had already contributed to the repeated famines and epidemics. A fertile country like Egypt was so devastated by the fratricidal warfare between al-Malik al-ʿAdil and his nephew al-Malik al-Afzal that when the floods in Nile failed in 597 A. H., the country was overtaken by such a severe famine¹ that the people had to take resort to cannibalism. Death stalked over the land killing the people in such large numbers that the dead had to be buried without shrouds. The annalist Abū Shāma

1. Ibn Kathīr, Vol. XIII, p. 26

relates that Sultan al-Malik al-^cAdil provided shrouds for two hundred and twenty thousand dead bodies in a single month. People began to take the dogs' and human flesh without any feeling of revulsion, innumerable children were eaten away. Ibn Kathir writes that a stage came when the children and youth of tender age were all eaten up and people began to kill one another to satisfy their hunger.¹ These were grim reminders of God calling people to a sincere penitence for their sins and mending their ways. The ravages of famine and pestilence were followed by a severe and widespread earthquake which hit the region covering Syria, Asia Minor and Iraq. The devastation and destruction wrought by the earthquake can be judged from the fact that in the town of Nabulus² and its surrounding district 20,000 people were crushed under the fallen houses. Another historian writes in *Mir'at al-Zaman* that eleven hundred thousand people died as a result of this earthquake.³

On the one hand, these natural calamities were visiting the Islamic world with unwelcome regularity, and, on the other, fratricidal feuds and forays were continuing unabated. In 601 A.H. the two chiefs belonging to the same family, Qatadah Husami of Mecca and Salim Husami of Madina were locked up in a hotly contested battle.⁴ In 603 A.H. the deadly feuds between the Ghoriids of Afghanistan and the ruler of Khwarizm flared up which encouraged the Muslims to waste their energy and power by shedding each others' blood.⁵ This was the state of affairs on the one side, while the Christendom had inflamed another Crusade,⁶ on the other, barely two years after the death of Salah ud-din, and landed⁷ its forces on the Syrian coast in 604 A.H. The rulers of

1 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, p 26

2 Also known as Shechem, is in Jordan

3 The estimate may appear to be somewhat exaggerated

4 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, p 41

5 *Ibid*, Vol XIII, p 45

6 A general tax known as Saladin tenth was imposed in 1198 for the recovery of Palestine by Pope Innocent the Third

7. Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, pp 48-49.

al-Jazirah¹ were secretly in league with the Franks² in 607 A.F. while Damietta in Egypt, a city of considerable military importance, had fallen to the Crusaders in 616 A.H.³

In the metropolis of Islam, Baghdad, the magnificence and splendour of the Caliph's court, copied from the etiquettes and ceremonials observed by the Iranian and Byzantine Emperors had touched the summit of extravagance. It is difficult to imagine the wealth amassed by such personal servants of the Caliphs as pages, cupbearers, attendants of wardrobe who normally entered the service merely as slaves. The annual income from the property acquired by 'Ala ud-din al-Tabrasi al-Zāhiri a slave purchased by the Caliph al-Zāhir is reported to have been as much as three hundred thousand *Dinars*. The house built by him in Baghdad was conspicuous for its size and beauty. Similar was the case with other state officials—Mujahid ud-din Aibek al-Salāh 'Abdu Ghanī to name only a few. The former had an annual income of five lakh *Dinars* while the latter although an illiterate man lived like a prince. Annalists have left staggering accounts of their lavish expenditure on the marriages of their sons and daughters. On the other hand the teachers of the celebrated Madarsa al-Mustansaryah were doled out such paltry sums which bore no comparison to the wages paid to the meanest of the state officials. The most erudite scholars and professors did not get more than twelve *Dinars* a month while the servant of al-Sharābi, a grandee of the 'Abbāsid regime, could spend four thousand *Dinars* on a marriage and pay another three thousand as the price of a bird brought for him from Mosul.⁴

The royal processions of the Caliphs on the occasion of 'Id and to mark the anniversary of their succession to throne were seized as an opportunity for ostentatious display of royal pomp and

1 Northern part of the territory falling between the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris

2 Ibn Kathir, Vol. XIII, pp. 58-59

3 *Ib.d*, Vol. XIII, p. 79

4 For details see *Al-Hazrat al-Jam'ah* and *al-Ajrad il-Masbūh*

pageantry The whole of Baghdad came out to witness these processions in a mood, free and easy, amusing and entertaining itself and oblivious of even obligatory congregational prayers In 640 A H the royal procession taken out on the occasion of 'Id terminated after the night-fall with the result that most of the people witnessing the procession performed the 'Id prayers just before midnight ¹ Again in 644 A H a large number of people missed the prayers on the occasion of 'Id al-Ad'ha and performed the same at the time of sunset

The usual mode of making obeisance to the Caliph was to bow almost to the ground, or touch the ground with one's nose, but nobody even felt in it anything opposed to the teachings of the *Shari'ah* or degrading to his independent and manly character Confiscation of private property had become a common affair, illegal gratification by officials was widely prevalent, immodesty and grossness of conduct was on the increase, the Batinites, charlatans and swindlers were basking in sunshine, everyone seemed to be after wealth, love of music had grown almost into a craze, in short, the common pursuits of the people and the social and moral disintegration of the society threw a lurid light on the state of chaos then prevailing in the Muslim world ²

This was the time when the Mongols were devastating Turkistan and Iran and were casting a covetous glance over Baghdad "The year 626 A H began," writes Ibn Kathir, "with the indecisive yet sanguinary battles between the monarchs of the house of Ayyubids" Such a state of chaos prevailed in Baghdad, the centre of Caliphate, that from 640 A H to 643 A H no arrangements could be made by the Caliph for sending out *Hajj* parties nor was the covering for K'aba sent by the Caliph For 21 days the walls of the holy shrine remained without a cover, which was taken as an ill-omen by the people

Ahmad Abul 'Abbās succeeded his father, Caliph al-Mustadhī, in 575 A H under the title of Al-Nasir li' Din-illāh He had had

¹ *Al-Asjad il-Masbūq*, Events, 640 A H

² Article *Asr al-Shirabi li-Baghdad* by Naji Ma'arūf in the Journal *Al-Aqlāb*, Baghdad, Muharram 1386 A H

an opportunity to rule for forty-six years. His reign was the longest one ever enjoyed by any 'Abbāsid Caliph yet, perhaps, it was also the darkest of all the regimes of the house of 'Abbāsids. Historians have severely criticised his regime for tyranny and mal-administration. Writes Ibn al-Athīr

“He was a tyrant who ill-treated the populace. Iraq was a devastated land during his regime, its population migrated to neighbouring countries, and their possessions were confiscated by the Caliph. He gave contradictory orders rescinded the orders given by him a day earlier. Being too much interested in sports and pastime, he had prescribed a special uniform which could be put on only by those permitted to take part in gymnastics and athletic sports. His orders so severely curtailed the sports that these activities practically came to an end in Iraq. His interest in the entertainments had grown almost into a craze. Iranians accuse him of inviting the Mongols to attack the Muslim territories¹ and hatching a conspiracy for the same.”²

Al-Nāsir li'Dīn-illāh died in 622 A.H. and Mustansir b'illāh (623-640) ascended the throne³. He was a just, mild, benevolent and pious ruler, recalling the right-guided Caliphs, but unfortunately he did not get enough time to reform the administration. He was succeeded by his son Must'asim b'illāh in 640 A.H. He too was a pious and just sovereign who never touched wine nor indulged in immodest acts. He had committed the Qur'ān to memory and observed fast on the Mondays and Thursdays in addition to those during the months of Ramadhan and Rajab. He is reported to be punctual in the performance of prayers but, according to Ibn al-Athīr, he was too mild and miserly and also lacked foresight.

1 In order to weaken the kingdom of Khwarizm

2 *Al-kāmil* Vol XII, p 181

3 Al-Zāhir, succeeded Al-Nasir in 622 A.H. but al-Mustansir ascended the throne only after a year in 623 A.H. after the death of al-Zahir

4 Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, p 159

In 642 A H , a man by the name of Muwayyid ud-din Muhammad Ibn 'Alqami' was appointed as Prime Minister by the Caliph Must'asim. Disorders and disturbances were a source of constant trouble in Baghdad specially when the Sunnis and Shi'ahs quarrelled in 655 A H. It is reported that in these riots the Shi'ah quarters including those of the relatives of Ibn 'Alqami were plundered which led him to seek revenge from the Sunnis.² Although the danger of the Mongol invasion was hovering over Baghdad, a great reduction was made in the armed forces on the advice of Ibn 'Alqami. The number of cavalry was reduced to mere 10,000, their allowances and promotions were withheld, the disbanded soldiers were directed to take to trade and husbandry with the result that many of them were later on seen begging alms in the bazaars and in front of the mosques. Islam was reduced to the state of imbecility which led many poets to compose elegies to lament the helplessness of the Muslim peoples.³

Al-Must'asim was personally a man of unimpeachable character. He also wanted to reform administration and bring peace and prosperity in his realm but unfortunately he lacked the courage, zeal and ability of the founders of empires which alone could have saved the situation by infusing a breath of new life in the then tottering society and the administration. It has happened more than once that the last monarch of any ruling dynasty was just and wise, virtuous and humane but the degeneration of social and political order had reached the point in his time where its only natural outcome was final decay and crumbling down of that dynasty. This was the case with Must'asim too whom Providence had chosen for the badge of infamy, although he was better than most of his predecessors and had also a desire to set right the fastly deteriorating situation.

It is undoubtedly true that a group of people, pure in spirit and righteous in conduct, were there teaching and preaching in

1 His full name was Muwayyid ud-din Abū Talib Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Alī Muhammad 'Alqami.

2 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, p 196

3 *Ibid*, Vol XIII, p 201.

the mosques and seminaries of Baghdad but the affluent and those in authority had become so corrupt that an annalist of that age, Abul Hasan Khazraji had to describe the conditions prevailing in his time in these words:

"The desire to acquire estates and effects has become a craze with these people who never think of the community's welfare. They are so engrossed in feathering their own nests that it can never be deemed as a rightful course. The officials of the government are all tyrants who are obsessed with the idea of amassing as much wealth as possible...

This is the most dangerous state of affairs for the government can co-exist with apostasy but never with tyranny."

In the eastern part of the Islamic world, the kingdom of Khwarism, raised towards the end of the fifth century of the Muslim era on the ruins of Saljukid Empire, held sway over almost the entire Islamic territories excluding the principalities of Saljukid Sultans over parts of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Hejaz and Asia Minor and that of the Ghorids in Afghanistan. Sultan 'Ala ud-din Muhammad Khwarism Shah (596-617) was one of the most powerful Muslim monarchs or perhaps the greatest sovereign of his day. Harold Lamb writes in his famous book *Genghis Khan*.

"In the centre of Islam, Mohammed Shah of Kharesm had enthroned himself as war lord. His domain extended from India to Baghdad, and from the sea of Aral to the Persian Gulf. Except for the Seljuk Turks, victors over the crusaders, and the rising Memluk dynasty in Egypt, his authority was supreme. He was the emperor, and the Kalif—who quarrelled with him but might not deny him—was restricted to the spiritual authority of a pope."²

Muslim historians have not mentioned any noticeable personal laxity in the character or moral behaviour of Khwarism Shah. On the other hand, they speak of him as a brave and

1 Article *Asr al-Sharabi bi-Baghdad* by Naji Mat'arif in the journal *al-Aqlam* of Baghdad, Muharram, 1386 A. H.

2 Harold Lamb, p. 120

chivalrous ruler, just and pious, but there is no denying the fact that he spent his prowess and capabilities in subjugating the Muslim Kingdoms around his dominions. In the north-west of his territory he forced the Saljukids to retreat to the farthest end while he restrained the westward ambitions of the Ghorids by subjugating Khorasan, Mazandran,¹ Kirman, Ghazni and Transoxiana. These unending wars of Khwarizm Shah had, nevertheless, worn out his troops who had to strain every nerve in achieving the conquests they had had so far. Apart from the war-phobia normally created by the continuous warfare over a long period of time, the conquest of the most fertile and industrially developed areas had brought to the capital of Khwarizm Shah all that toil and labour could produce, along with the attendant vices of opulence and luxury. It is difficult to find any detailed account of these social ills in the annals of the time which are mostly concerned with the descriptions of kings and emperors. Unfortunately, however, the treatises and sermons, monographs and discourses of the saints and preachers, which would have thrown a lurid light on the subject, were all destroyed by the Mongolian avalanche. There is hardly any reason for attributing the following statement of Harold Lamb to his religious prejudice or exaggeration.

“It was a martial world, appreciative of song, with an ear not unmusical. A world beset by inward throes, slave-ridden, wealth gathering, and more than a little addicted to vice and intrigue. It left the management of its affairs to extortioners and its women to the custody of eunuchs, and its conscience to the keeping of Allah.”²

The Sultans of Khwarizm made the same fatal mistake which was committed by the Moors in Spain—an unpardonable blunder under the Divine Law of Retribution governing the historical process. They set about, body and soul, to extend and strengthen

1 Mazandran was a province to the south of Caspian Sea bounded on the west by Gilan, and on the south by the province of Astarabad.

2 Harold Lamb p. 117

Lamb whose accounts agree with those left by Muslim historians.¹ He says

“But the Mongol’s experiment with trade came to an abrupt end. A caravan of several hundred merchants from Karakorum was seized by one, Inaljuk,² governor of Otrar, a frontier citadel belonging to the Shah. Inaljuk reported to his master that spies were among the merchants—which may very well have been the case.

“Mohammed Shah, without considering the matter overmuch, sent to his governor an order to slay the merchants, and all of them, accordingly, were put to death. This, in due time, was reported to Genghiz Khan who dispatched envoys at once to the Shah to protest. And Mohammed saw fit to slay the chief of the envoys and burn off the beards of the others.

“When the survivors of his embassy returned to Genghiz Khan, the master of the Gobi went apart to a mountain to meditate upon the matter. The slaying of a Mongol envoy could not go unpunished, tradition required revenge for the wrong inflicted.

“There cannot be two suns in the heavens,” the Khan said, “or two *Kha Khans* upon the earth.”³

The Tartaric Invasion :

Thus the storm burst in 616 A. H. Bukhara was first razed to the ground, and its inhabitants put to the sword. Samarkand was reduced to ashes and its entire population passed under the sword. Other important and populous cities like Ray,⁴ Hamadan,⁵ Zanzan,⁶

1 Ibn Kathir, Vol. XIII, pp. 200-204 and al-Kamil, Vol. XII, p. 149

2 Minhaj ud-din, has given his name as Kadar Khan (*Tabqat-i-Nasri*, p. 272)

3 Harold Lamb, pp. 116-117

4 Ray—The ancient town of Ragha, to the south-east of Tehran and to the south of spur projecting from Elburz into the plain

5 Hamadan lies in the fertile plain at the foot of Mt. Elmend in Persia.

6 Zanzan—A town in the northern Persia

Qazwin,¹ Marv,² Nishapur³ met the same fate. The forces of Khwarizm Shah, the most powerful Muslim sovereign of his day, were simply swept away by the tempest of the Mongol arms, Khwarizm Shah was himself hunted from place to place by the Tartars with ruthless pertinacity. Muhammad Khwarizm Shah ultimately took refuge in an unknown island in the Caspian Sea, where he died broken-hearted, alone and abandoned.

Khwarizm Shah had already dismembered the independent Islamic Kingdoms of Iran and Turkistan and, therefore, none had remained in the east to check the onslaught of the Mongols after his defeat. The Muslims were so seized with the terror of the Mongols that often a lonely Tartar attacked a hundred of them but none had the heart to defend himself—everyone of them was killed by the Tartar without being opposed by a single Muslim. Once a Mongol woman, dressed as a man, plundered a house and killed all its inmates excepting a captive. It was only after this that the captive somehow came to know that the marauder was a woman, and then he could muster his courage to kill her. It often happened that a Mongol caught hold of a Muslim and asked him to wait till he brought a sabre to slaughter him, and this poor man did not have the courage to run away in the absence of the Mongol.⁴

“The scourge of God” was the greatest of calamities before which almost the entire world of Islam was swept away as by a torrent, it left the Muslims astounded and terror-stricken. The Mongols came to be regarded so invincible that an Arabic proverb

1 Qazwin—A town in Persia in the province of Irāk-Ajamī, 100 miles to the south of Tehran, at the foot of Mt. Elburz.

2 Marv—The principal town and centre of culture in the rich oasis which occupies the lower course of river Murghāb in Persia.

3 Nishapur—The most important of the four great cities of Khurasān, it was one of the greatest cities of middle ages.

4 For details see Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil*, Vol. XII and *Darātul Ma‘ārif Lil-Bustām*, Vol. VI.

gained currency which meant that if anybody tells you that the Tartars have suffered a defeat, don't believe him. Death and destruction was a foregone conclusion for all the lands through which the Tartar hordes passed, palaces, mosques and mausoleums were all levelled to the ground and trampled into dust. Historians are normally prone to be objective in their assessment of the past events but even such a cool and temperate historian as Ibn al-Athir could not help shedding his tears over the havoc and ruin caused by the savage ardour of the Mongols for rapine and slaughter. Speaking of these events in a harrowing strain Ibn al-Athir says

"These events are so frightful and heart-rending that for several years I was in a fix whether I should narrate these happenings or not. I have, however, penned these facts most reluctantly. In truth and reality, it is not easy to recount the tale of carnage and atrocities perpetrated on the Muslims, nor can one bear with equanimity the abasement to which they were subjected. I only wish that my mother had not given me birth! Oh, would that I had died before I had to relate this tale of woe! Some of my friends had insisted that I should record these events but I was still irresolute. Later, it dawned on me that it was of no profit to forego the task. The invasion of the Tartars was one of the greatest of calamities and the most terrible of visitations of which there is no parallel in the annals of the world. This calamity fell on all nations, but on the Muslims more than all. If one were to claim that the world, since God created it to the present times, was never so afflicted, one would speak truthfully, for, history records no other event which approaches it, and perhaps the world may not see its like again except the calamity of Gog and Magog till the dawn of the Doomsday. The Tartars put to the sword all men, women and children, cut open the bellies of the pregnant women and trampled the babies to death. *Verily, unto God do we belong and unto Him shall we return. There is no power, no might but from Allah, the Most High, the Great.*

"This was an affliction which overwhelmed the entire

world, like a severe torrent it suddenly swept over all the lands”¹

The author of *Mirsād ul-‘Abād*, who belonged to Hamdan and was born at Ray, and was thus an eye-witness to the Mongol invasion, has left the following harrowing account

“The year 617 A H shall ever remain conspicuous in the annals of the world, for the hordes of heathen Tartars gained ascendancy over the Muslims in that year. The way they ravaged the countries, killed the people and plundered and burnt the cities has a parallel neither in the days of Ignorance nor thereafter. It is enough to mention that in Ray, where I was born and lived, in Turkistan and in the lands extending from Rūm to Syria more than seven hundred thousand persons were either put to sword or made captives. The calamity befalling Islam and its adherents is beyond description and the holocaust is rather too well-known to require any detailed enumeration. God forbid, none of the monarchs and sovereigns of Islam felt the urge to defend the honour of Islam, nor were they alive to their duty of coming to the rescue of their subjects although they were like a shepherd unto their own people, and that they would have to render an account in regard to their safety on the Day of Judgement. It was their duty to have strained every nerve to strengthen Islam and defend the faith as God has ordered. *Go forth, light-armed and heavy-armed, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the way of Allah*”² They should have sacrificed everything they had—their lives, riches, dominions—for the honour of Islam. This would have given heart to others and fired a frenzy of enthusiasm among the Muslims, which would have contained and turned back the onslaught of the heathens.

“But now nothing remains except to seek the refuge of God. Whatever of Islam is still visible is exposed to the

1. *Al-Kamil*, Vol. XII, pp 147-148

2. *At-Taubah* 41

danger of being completely effaced leaving no trace of it whatsoever”¹

Not the Muslims alone, but the entire civilized world trembled before the savage Tartar hordes. Their atrocities had caused a flutter even in those far off corners of the then world where Tartars could have hardly been expected to carry their arms.

Edward Gibbon writes in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

“The Latin world was darkened by this cloud of savage hostility, a Russian fugitive carried the alarm to Sweden, and the remote nations of the Baltic and the ocean trembled at the approach of the Tartars,² whom their fear and ignorance were inclined to separate from the human species”³

The maddening frenzy for death and destruction aroused by Chenghiz Khan amongst the Mongols and the significance of this upsurge has been well summed up by the authors of the *Cambridge Medieval History*

“Unchecked by human valour, they were able to overcome the terrors of vast deserts, the barriers of mountains and seas, the severities of climate, and the ravages of famine and pestilence. No dangers could appal them, no stronghold could resist them, no prayer for mercy could move them. . . . We are confronted with a new power in history, with a force that was to bring to an abrupt end as a *deus ex machina*, many dramas that would otherwise have

1 Rāzi, pp 8-10

2 In the year 1238, the inhabitants of Gothia (Sweden) and Fise were prevented, by their fear of the Tartars from sending, as usual, their ships to the herring fishery on the coast of England, and, as there was no exportation forty or fifty of these fish were sold for a shilling (Matthew Paris, p 396). It is whimsical enough that the orders of a Mogul Khan, who reigned on the borders of China should have lowered the price of herrings in the English market.

3 Gibbon, p 16

ended in a deadlock, or would have dragged on an interminable course”¹

Harold Lamb continues on the impact of Chenghiz Khan

“This ‘new power in history’—the ability of one man to alter human civilization—began with Genghiz Khan and ended with his grandson Kubilai, when the Mongol empire tended to break up. It has not reappeared since”²

Sack of Baghdad

At last in 656 A H the myriads of savages and heathens advanced towards Baghdad, killing every man that came in their way, setting fire to every habitation and trampling into dust whatever they could not possess. The metropolis of Islam, celebrated throughout the world as the centre of civilization, learning and crafts was reduced to ashes, the sack of Baghdad is too harrowing and lengthy to be detailed here. The accounts given by the contemporary historians include some eye-witness accounts of the carnage and atrocities committed by the Mongols. Ibn al-Athir writes

“The horrors of rapine and slaughter lasted forty days, and, after the carnage was over, the most populous and beautiful city of the world was so devastated that only a few people could be seen here and there. All the streets and markets were strewn with dead bodies, heaps of corpses were to be found like small mounds from place to place. After the rains the dead bodies began to rot giving out a disagreeable smell of the putrid flesh and then a deadly pestilence ravaged the town which spread as far as the land of Syria. Innumerable people died as a result of this epidemic. The ravages of a terrible famine and pestilence and the rising prices reigned over the city thereafter”³

1 Harold Lamb, p 210

2 *Ibid*, p 210

3 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, pp 202-203 (Abbreviated)

Taj ud-din Ibn al-Subki gives his own account of the barbarous acts of Mongols

“Halaku received the Caliph (al-Must‘asim) in a tent while Ibn ‘Alqami invited the doctors of religion and other notables of the city to be a witness to the agreement between Halaku and the Caliph. When they had repaired to the Mongol camp, all were passed under the sword. They were called one by one in a tent and beheaded until none amongst the chiefs and counsellors of the Caliph remained alive. It was commonly believed that if the blood of the Caliph fell on the ground, some great calamity would overtake the world. Halaku was, therefore, hesitant but Nasir ud-din Tusi¹ intervened to suggest that the problem

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- 1 An Iranian historian confirms the incident in his book *Ahvāl-o-Athār-i-Khwaja Nasir ud-din Tusi*, which has been published by the Tehran University. He says that Tusi was at last successful in his endeavour to dismember the Caliphate and to reduce the castle of the Caliph to dust. Halaku had already been commissioned by his brother Khakan Mangu to put an end to the Caliphate after destroying the Batinites. Halaku sent messages of submission to the Caliph which, however, remained unheeded. Thereafter Halaku consulted his counsellors whether or not the stars were favourable for mounting an attack. A Sunni astrologer, Husam ud-din by name, advised Halaku that the time was most inopportune for launching an attack on Baghdad and anyone who desued to harm the Caliph at that hour would be defeated and suffer a grievous loss. Husam ud-din said that if Halaku persisted in his attempt, there would be no rains, torrents and hurricanes will devastate the world and, what is more, the Khakan would be dead. Halaku was dismayed but he asked Tusi, “What would happen if I attack Baghdad?” “Nothing”, replied Tusi, “except that Khan will be monarch in place of the Caliph”. Thereupon Halaku ordered Tusi and Husam ud din to debate the issue before him. “Thousands of the companions of the Prophet were killed,” argued Tusi, “but nothing happened. Even if you attribute any special piety and charismatic power to the ‘Abbāsids, look at Tahir who killed Amin under the orders of Mamun, or Mutawakkil who was strangled to death by his sons and slaves, or else Muntasir and Mu‘tadhid who were done to death by their chiefs and guards. Did ever any calamity overtake the world?” (*Nasir ud-din Tusi*, pp 9 19)

could easily be solved. The Caliph should be killed, he suggested, in a way that his blood did not fall on the ground. The Caliph was accordingly rolled in a carpet and then beaten to death.”¹

The general massacre continued in Baghdad for more than a month. Only those could save themselves who were able to find a hiding place. Halaku then ordered, it is related, to count the dead, who numbered eighteen hundred thousand.²

Christians were asked to take bacon and wine publicly. Although it was the month of Ramadhan, the Muslims of Baghdad were compelled to participate in these drinking bouts. Wine was sprinkled in the mosques and the call for prayer was prohibited. Nothing so despicable had happened since the foundations of Baghdad were laid – the city had come under the heathen rule for the first time and had never before undergone such a humiliation.³

In spite of all its vices and weaknesses, Baghdad was the metropolis of Islam, a centre of learning, arts and crafts as well as a city of mosques and shrines, saints and preachers. Its destruction made the heart of every Muslim bleed, the heart-rending account of its ruin was rendered by many poets into songs of mourning. S^cadi of Shiraz who had lived in Baghdad during his student days and had seen the city in its hey-day of glory, has described the fall of Baghdad in a language that shows his depth of misery.

“For it has seen the kingdom of Must^casim destroyed,
The heaven would be justified if it sheds the rain-tears
of blood.

If you will rise on the Day of Judgement,
O Muhammad,

Rise now to see the most severe affliction.

1. *Tabqāt al-Shaf^cīyah*, Vol V, pp 114-115

2. Some historians have given a lower estimate but the figure should not be off the mark for Baghdad had then a population of two and a half millions (*Tabqāt al-Shaf^cīyah*, Vol V, p 115)

3. *Tabqāt al-Shaf^cīyah*, Vol V, p 115

The blood of beauties slaughtered in the castle,
Overflows the gates of the palace
And our tears stain our garments.
Beware of the turn of time and its vicissitudes,
For who knew the glorious would come to such an
abrupt end.

Lo! you had seen the glory of the house of Caliphs,
Where the Caesars and Khakans bowed low in
obseisance

The blood of the progeny of Muhammad's uncle,
Is shed on the very earth where the Sultans placed
their heads

Coloured with blood, the waters of the Tigris will turn
the ground red,

If it flows to irrigate the desert oasis of Bat'ha ¹

Defaced by the calamity it has had to suffer,

Wrinkles of waves are seen on the face of the Tigris

No elegy is really befitting the elevated souls,

Whose minimum reward is the bliss of God in

Paradise,

I am shedding my tears only in sympathy,

For Muslims they were, and I hold them dear ²

From Baghdad, the Mongol hordes marched on to Haleb (Aleppo), sacked the city and turned to Damascus. They captured Damascus in Jamadī al-Ūlā, 658 A H. The Christian inhabitants of the city came out with presents to greet the conquerors. Ibn Kathir who belonged to Damascus, has portrayed the joy of Christians and the helplessness of the Muslims in these words

"The Christians came back by the Gate of Toma, carrying the cross over their heads and shouting slogans. They were praising Christianity and openly disparaging Islam and the Muslims. They had flasks of wine from which they sprinkled the liquor in front of the mosques and

1 Madma

2 Saadi, pp 56-57

on the faces of Muslims they happened to pass by, ordering the Muslims to pay homage to their emblem. Muslims could not restrain themselves for long and gathered in large numbers and pushed them back to the Cathedral of Mary where a Christian clergy delivered a speech praising Christianity and denigrating Islam and its followers¹

Thereafter Ibn Kathīr continues his description on the authority of *Zail ul-Mira'at*.

“The Christians then entered the mosque with wine in their hands. They intended to pull down a number of mosques in case the reign of Tartars continued for some time more. ‘Ulema, Cadis and other Muslim notables repaired to the citadel of the Tartar governor El Siyan to make a complaint about the excesses of the Christians but they were turned out by him. El Siyan, however, gave a hearing to the Christians. *Verily, unto God do we belong and unto Him shall we return*”²

After the fall of Syria, the Mongols wanted to carry their arms to Egypt which was the only Muslim country still out of their reach. The Sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Muzaffar Saif ud-din Qataz knew that his country would be the next target of the Mongols, and also, that it would be difficult to hold off those savages if they were allowed to make adequate preparations for invading his lands. He, therefore, decided to attack the Mongols in Syria before they were able to consolidate their power. The forces of Egypt accordingly met the Mongols at ‘Ain Jalut, a town below Nazareth in Palestine, on the 25th of Ramadhan, 658 A.H., under the command of Baibars who afterwards became the sovereign of Egypt. Unlike previous battles the Muslims met the Mongols in a hotly contested battle and drove back the stream of savage hordes. The Egyptians pursued the defeated Mongols, slaughtering and capturing a large number of them, east-ward beyond the Euphrates. Al-Suyuti writes in *Tārīkh ul-Khulfa’*

“The Muslims were, by the grace of God, victorious

1 Ibn Kathīr, Vol. XIII, pp. 219-220

2 *Ibid*, Vol. XIII, pp. 219-220

and they inflicted a greivous defeat on the Tartars. A large number of Tartars were put to the sword. The retreating Tartars were so disheartened that people easily caught hold of them and despoiled them of their possessions”¹

Sultan Baibers defeated the Tartars in many a fierce battles after the battle of ‘Ain Jalūt and thus disproved the proverb that the Tartars were invincible

Conversion of the Mongols :

Islam was about to be submerged in the whirl-pool of the Mongol ardour of slaughter and destruction, as several Muslim writers had then expressed the fear, wiping it out of existence, but Islam suddenly began to capture the hearts of the savage Tartars. The preachers of Islam thus accomplished a task which the sword-arm of the faith had failed to perform by carrying the message of Islam to the barbaric hordes of heathen Mongols.

Conversion of the Mongols to Islam was indeed one of the few unpredictable events of history. The Tartaric wave of conquest which had swept away the entire Islamic east within a short period of one year was, in truth, not so astounding as the Mongol’s acceptance of Islam during the zenith of their glory, for, the Muslims had by the beginning of the seventh century of Muslim era imbibed all those vices which are a natural outcome of the opulence, luxury and fast living. The Mongols were, on the other hand, a wild and ferocious, yet vigorous and sturdy race who could have hardly been expected to submit to the spiritual and cultural superiority of a people so completely subdued by them, and who were also looked down and despised by them. The author of the *Preaching of Islam*, T. W. Arnold has also expressed his amazement over the achievement of this unbelievable feat.

“But Islam was to rise again from the ashes of its former grandeur and through its preachers win over these savage conquerors to the acceptance of the faith. This was a task for the missionary energies of Islam that was rendered

1 *Tārīkh al-Khuljān*, p. 191

more difficult from the fact that there were two powerful competitors in the field. The spectacle of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam emulously striving to win the allegiance of the fierce conquerors that had set their feet on the necks of adherents of these great missionary religions, is one that is without parallel in the history of the world'

'For Islam to enter into competition with such powerful rivals as Buddhism and Christianity were at the outset of the period of Mongol rule, must have appeared a well-nigh hopeless undertaking. For the Muslims had suffered more from the storm of the Mongol invasions than the others. Those cities that had hitherto been the rallying points of spiritual organisation and learning for Islam in Asia, had been for the most part laid in ashes: the theologians and pious doctors of the faith, either slain or carried away into captivity.² Among the Mongol rulers—usually so tolerant towards all religions—there were some who exhibited varying degrees of hatred towards the Muslim faith. Chingiz Khān ordered all those who killed animals in the Muhammadan fashion to be put to death, and this ordinance was revived by Qūbilāy, who by offering rewards to informers set on foot a sharp persecution that lasted for seven years, as many poor persons took advantage of this ready means of gaining wealth, and slaves accused their masters in order to gain their freedom.' During the reign of Kuyūk

1. Arnold, p. 219

2. So notoriously brutal was the treatment they received that even the Chinese showmen in their exhibitions of shadow figures exultingly brought forward the figure of an old man with a white beard dragged by the neck at the tail of a horse, as showing how the Mongol horsemen behaved towards the Musalmans [Sir H. H. Howarth : *History of the Mongols*, London (1876—80) Vol I, p. 159]

3. This edict was only withdrawn when it was found that it prevented Muhammadan merchants from visiting the court and that trade suffered in consequence (*Ta'rikh-i-Nizami*. A general history of the Muhammadan dynasties of Asia, by Minhāj ud-dīn Abū 'Umar-i 'Uṣmān. London. 1881, p. 1146 and Howarth Vol I, pp. 112, 275).

(1246-1248), who left the conduct of affairs entirely to his two Christian ministers and whose court was filled with Christian monks, the Muhammadans were made to suffer great severities¹ . . .

“Arghun (1284-1291) the fourth Ilkhān persecuted the Musalmans and took away from them all posts in the departments of justice and finance, and forbade them to appear at his court²

“In spite of all difficulties, however, the Mongols and the savage tribes that followed in their wake³ were at length brought to submit to the faith of those Muslim peoples whom they had crushed beneath their feet.”⁴

Unbelievable and of far-reaching significance, although the conversion of the Mongols to Islam had been, it is also not less surprising that extremely few and scanty records of this glorious achievement are to be found in the annals of the time. The names of only a few dedicated saviours of Islam who won proselytes from the savage hordes are known to the world, but their venture was no less daring nor their achievement less significant than the accomplishment of the warriors of the faith. Their memory shall always be enriched by the gratitude of Muslims for they had, in reality, performed a great service to the humanity in general and to the Muslims in particular, by diffusing the knowledge of faith among those barbarians, winning them over to the service of one God and making them the standard-bearers of the Apostle of Peace.

After the death of Chinghiz Khan the great heritage of that Mongol conqueror was divided into four dominions headed by the offsprings of his sons. The message of Islam had begun to

1 Howorth, Vol I, p 165

2. C. L. J. De Guignes, *Histoire Generale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mogols*, (Paris, 1756-58), Vol III, p 265 ;

3 In the thirteenth century, three-fourths of Mongol hosts were Turks (Leon, Cahun, *Introduction a l'histoire de l'Asie Turcs et Mongols* Paris 1896, p. 279).

4 Arnold, pp 225-227.

spread among all these four sections of the Mongols who were rapidly converted to the faith. In regard to the conversion of the ruling princes in the lineage of Batu, the son of Chenghiz Khan's first born Juji, who ruled the western portion as Khan of the Golden Horde, writes Arnold .

“The first Mongol ruling prince who professed Islam was Baraka Khān, who was chief of the Golden Horde from 1256 to 1267.¹ According to Abū'l-Ghāzī he was converted after he had come to the throne. He is said one day to have fallen in with a caravan coming from Bukhārā, and taking two of the merchants aside, to have questioned them on the doctrines of Islam, and they expounded to him their faith so persuasively that he became converted in all sincerity. He first revealed his change of faith to his youngest brother, whom he induced to follow his example, and then made open profession of his new belief² . . . Baraka Khān entered into a close alliance with the Mamlūk Sultan of Egypt, Rukn al-Dīn Baybars. The initiative came from the latter, who had given a hospitable reception to a body of troops, two hundred in number, belonging to the Golden Horde, these men, observing the growing enmity between their Khān and Hūlāgū, the conqueror of Baghdād, in whose army they were serving, took flight into Syria, whence they were honourably conducted to Cairo to the court of Baybars, who persuaded them to embrace Islam³

1 It is of interest to note that Najm al-Dīn Mukhtār al-Zāhidī in 1260 compiled for Baraka Khān a treatise which gave the proofs of the divine mission of the Prophet, a refutation of those who denied it, and an account of the controversies between Christians and Muslims (Moritz Steinschneider *Polemische und apologetische Litteratur in arabischer Sprache, Zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden* Leipzig, 1877, pp 63 64)

2 Abu'l-Ghāzī *Histoire des Mogols et des Tartares* par Aboul Ghazi Behādur Khan, traduite par le Baron Desmāisons St Petersburg (1871-74) tome II p 181

3 Maqrīzī *Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks de l'Egypte*, traduite par M Quatremere (Paris, 1837-45), tome I, pp 180-81, 187

Baybars himself was at war with Hūlāgū, whom he had recently defeated and driven out of Syria. He sent two of the Mongol fugitives, with some other envoys, to bear a letter to Baraka Khān. On their return these envoys reported that each princess and amir at the court of Baraka Khān had an imām and a mu'adhdhin, and the children were taught the Qui'ān in the schools.¹ These friendly relations between Baybars and Baraka Khān brought many of the Mongols of the Golden Horde into Egypt², where they were prevailed upon to become Musalmans.³

Halaku had founded the dynasty of Ilkhans in Iran, to which he had later added a great part of Asia Minor. Arnold relates the conversion of this branch of Chenghiz Khan's progeny in these words

"In Persia, where Hūlāgū founded the dynasty of the Ilkhāns, the progress of Islam among the Mongols was much slower. In order to strengthen himself against the attacks of Baraka Khān and the Sultan of Egypt, Hūlāgū accepted the alliance of the Christian powers of the East, such as the king of Armenia and the Crusaders. His favourite wife was a Christian who favourably disposed the mind of her husband towards her co-religionists, and his son Abāqā Khān married the daughter of the Emperor of Constantinople. His brother Takūdār⁴, who succeeded him, was the first of the Ilkhāns who embraced Islam. He had been brought up as a Christian, for (as a contemporary Christian writer⁵ tells us), 'he was baptised when young and called by the name of Nicholas. But when he was grown up, through his intercourse with Saracens of whom

1 Maqrizī *Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks de l'Egypte*, traduite par M. Quatremere (Paris, 1837-45) tome I, p. 215

2 *Ibid*, p. 222

3 Arnold, pp. 227-29

4 Wassāf calls him Nikūdār before and Ahmad after his conversion

5 Havton (Ramusio, tome II, p. 60, c.)

he was very fond, he became a base Saracen, and, renouncing the Christian faith, wished to be called Muhammad Khān, and strove with all his might that the Tartars should be converted to the faith and sect of Muhammad, and when they proved obstinate, not daring to force them, he brought about their conversion by giving them honours and favours and gifts, so that in his time many Tartars were converted to the faith of the Saracens'. This prince sent the news of his conversion to the Sultan of Egypt in the following letter — 'By the power of God Almighty, the mandate of Ahmad to the Sultan of Egypt God Almighty (praised be his name ¹) by His grace preventing us and by the light of His guidance, hath guided us in our early youth and vigour into the true path of the knowledge of His deity and the confession of His unity, to bear witness that Muhammad (on whom rest the highest blessings ¹) is the Prophet of God, and to reverence His saints and His pious servants 'Whom God shall please to guide, that man's breast will He open to Islam '¹ We ceased not to incline our heart to the promotion of the faith and the improvement of the condition of Islam and the Muslims, up to the time when the succession to the empire came to us from our illustrious father and brother, and God spread over us the glory of His grace and kindness, so that in the abundance of His favours our hopes were realised, and He revealed to us the bride of the kingdom, and she was brought forth to us a noble spouse Qūriltāy or general assembly was convened, wherein our brothers, our sons, great nobles, generals of the army and captains of the forces, met to hold council, and they were all agreed on carrying out the order of our elder brother, viz to summon here a vast levy of our troops whose numbers would make the earth, despite its vastness, appear too narrow, whose fury and fierce onset would fill the hearts of men with fear, being animated with a courage before which

1 Qurʾān . vi, 125

the mountain peaks bow down, and a firm purpose that makes the hardest rocks grow soft. We reflected on this their resolution which expressed the wish of all, and we concluded that it ran counter to the aim we had in view—to promote the common weal, i.e. to strengthen the ordinance of Islam, never, as far as lies in our power, to issue any order that will not tend to prevent bloodshed, remove the ills of men, and cause the breeze of peace and prosperity to blow on all lands, and the kings of other countries to rest upon the couch of affection and benevolence, whereby the commands of God will be honoured and mercy be shown to the people of God. Herein, God inspired us to quench this fire and put an end to these terrible calamities, and make known to those who advanced this proposal (of a levy) what it is that God has put into our hearts to do, namely, to employ all possible means for the healing of all the sickness of the world, and putting off what should only be appealed to as the last remedy. For we desire not to hasten to appeal to arms, until we have first declared the right path, and will permit it only after setting forth the truth and establishing it with proofs. Our resolve to carry out whatever appears to us good and advantageous has been strengthened by the counsels of the Shaykh al-Islām, the model of divines, who has given us much assistance in religious matters. We have appointed our chief justice, Qutb al-Dīn and the Atābak, Bahā al-Dīn, both trustworthy persons of this flourishing kingdom, to make known to you our course of action and bear witness to our good intentions for the common weal of the Muslims, and to make it known that God has enlightened us, and that Islam annuls all that has gone before it, and that God Almighty has put it into our hearts to follow the truth and those who practice it. If some convincing proof be required, let men observe our actions. By the grace of God, we have raised aloft the standards of the faith, and borne witness to it in all our orders and our practice, so that the ordinances of

the law of Muhammad may be brought to the fore and firmly established in accordance with the principles of justice laid down by Ahmad. Whereby we have filled the hearts of the people with joy, have granted free pardon to all offenders, and shown them indulgences, saying, 'May God pardon the past!' We have reformed all matters concerning the pious endowments of Muslims given for mosques, colleges, charitable institutions, and the rebuilding of caravanserais, we have restored their incomes to those to whom they were due according to the terms laid down by the donors. We have ordered the pilgrims to be treated with respect, provision to be made for their caravans and for securing their safety on the pilgrim routes, we have given perfect freedom to merchants, travelling from one country to another, that they may go wherever they please; and we have strictly prohibited our soldiers and police from interfering with them in their comings or goings. He seeks the alliance of the Sultan of Egypt 'so that these countries and cities may again be populated, these terrible calamities be put down, the sword be returned to the scabbard, that all peoples may dwell in peace and quietness, and the necks of the Muslims be freed from the ills of humiliation and disgrace' ¹

"To the student of the history of the Mongols it is a relief to pass from the recital of nameless horrors and continual bloodshed to a document emanating from a Mongol prince and giving expression to such humane and benevolent sentiments, which sound strange indeed coming from such lips

" A revolt broke out against him (Takūdār Ahmad), headed by his nephew Arghūn, who compassed his death and succeeded him on the throne. During his brief reign (1284-1291), the Christians were once more

1 Wassāf Geschichte persisch herausgegeben und deutsch übersetzt von Hammer-Purgstall (Vienna, 1856) pp 231-34

restored to favour, while the Musalmans had to suffer persecution in their turn, were dismissed from their posts and driven away from the court ¹

“The successors of Takūdār were all heathen, until, in 1295, Ghāzān, the seventh and greatest of the Ilkhāns, became a Musalman and made Islam the ruling religion of Persia

“Ghāzān himself before his conversion had been brought up as a Buddhist and had erected several Buddhist temples in Khurāsān, and took great pleasure in the company of the priests of this faith, who had come into Persia in large numbers since the establishment of the Mongol supremacy over that country ² He appears to have been naturally of a religious turn of mind, for he studied the creeds of the different religions of his time, and used to hold discussions with the learned doctors of each faith ³ Rashīd al-Dīn, his learned minister and the historian of his reign, maintained the genuineness of his conversion to Islam, the religious observances of which he zealously kept throughout his whole reign, though his contemporaries (and later writers have often re-echoed the imputation) represented⁴ him as having only yielded to the solicitations of some Amīrs and Shaykhs.”⁵

Ibn Kathīr also relates, in the chronicles for the year 694 A H , that Ghazan embraced Islam during that year The accounts left by other historians show that the conversion of Ghazan was brought about by a pious Turk, Amīr Tuzaun⁶ by name Ibn Kathīr’s version is as follows

“In this year the great-grandson of Chenghiz Khan,

1 C L J de Guignes *Histoire generale des Huns des Turcs, des Mogols*, (Paris, 1756-58), Vol III, pp 263-65

2 C d’Ohsson *Histoire des Mongols*, (The Hague 1834-35), tom IV, p 148

3 *Ibid* , p 365

4 *Ibid* , pp 148, 354 , Cahun (op cit) p 434

5 Arnold, pp 229-33

6 Arnold and certain other historians have given his name as Nawruz Beg

Ghazan b. Arghun b. Igha b. Tuli b. Chenghiz Khan announced his conversion to the faith of Islam, along with all or a majority of the Tartars under him, through the persuasion of Amir Tuzaun (on whom may rest the peace of God). Pearls, gold and silver balls were showered upon those who declared their allegiance to Islam; the King renamed himself as Mahmūd and attended Friday services, a number of heathen temples and Churches were demolished and poll-tax was levied on them; goods and properties confiscated from Baghdad and other Muslim cities were returned; and justice was restored to them. Rosaries were seen in the hands of Tartars, for which act of benevolence the people thanked God Almighty.”¹

Continuing the account relating to Islamisation of the Mongol's Kingdom of Persia, Arnold writes -

“His (Ghāzān's) brother, Uljāytū, who succeeded him in 1304, under the name of Muhammad Khudābandah, had been brought up as a Christian in the faith of his mother and had been baptised under the name of Nicholas, but after his mother's death, while he was still a young man, he became a convert to Islam through the persuasions of his wife.² Ibn Batūtah says that his example exercised a great influence on the Mongols.³ From this time forward Islam became the paramount faith in the Kingdom of the Ilkhāns.”⁴

Coming to the story of the spread of Islam in the Middle Kingdom of the Mongols, Arnold says -

“The details that we possess of the progress of Islam in the Middle Kingdom, which fell to the lot of Chaghatay

1 Ibn Kathir, Vol. XIII, p 340

2 Hammer-Purgstall - Geschichte der Ilchanen, (Darmstadt 1842-43) Vol II, p. 182

3 Ibn Batūtah - Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah, texte arabe, accompagne d'une traduction par c. Deffremery et B. R. Sanguinetti (Paris 1853-58) Vol II, p 57

4. Arnold, p. 234

and his descendants, are still more meagre. Several of the princes of this line had a Muhammadan minister in their service, but they showed themselves unsympathetic to the faith of Islam. Chaghatāy harassed his Muhammadan subjects by regulations that restricted their ritual observances in respect of the killing of animals for food and of ceremonial washings. Al-Jūzjānī says that he was the bitterest enemy of the Muslims among all the Mongol rulers and did not wish anyone to utter the word Musalman before him except with evil purpose.¹ Orghana, the wife of his grandson and successor, Qarā-Hūlāgū, brought up her son as a Musalman, and under the name of Mubarak Shāh he came forward in 1264 as one of the claimants of the disputed succession to the Chaghatāy Khānate, but he was soon driven from the throne by his cousin Burāq Khān, and appears to have exercised no influence on behalf of his faith, indeed judging from their names it would not appear that any of his own children even adopted the religion of their father.² Burāq Khān is said to have 'had the blessedness of receiving the light of the faith' a few days before his death in 1270, and to have taken the name of Sultan Ghriyāth al-Dīn,³ but he was buried according to the ancient funeral rites of the Mongols, and not as a Musalman, and those who had been converted during his reign relapsed into their former heathenism. It was not until the next century that the conversion of Tarmāshūīn Khān, about 1326, caused Islam to be at all generally adopted by the Chaghatāy Mongols, who when they followed the example of their chief this time remained true to their new faith

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- 1 Jūzjānī *Minhāj-i-Sirāj al-Jūzjānī*, *Tabqāt-i-Nāsirī*; ed W Nassau Lees (Calcutta, 1864) pp 381, 397 and *Minhāj-ud-Dīn Tabakāt-i-Nāsirī Minhāj-ud-Dīn*, Abū-'Umar-i-Usmān (London, 1881) pp 1110, 1145-46.
 - 2 Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, *Tarīkh-i-Moubarek-i Ghazani*, *histoire des Mongols*, editee par E Blochet (Gibb Memorial Series, Vol XVIII) (London, 1911) pp 173-74, 188
 - 3 Abn'l-Ghāzī. (op cit) tome II, p 159.

But even now the ascendancy of Islam was not assured, for Būzun who was Khān in the next decade—the chronology is uncertain—drove Tarmāshīrīn from his throne, and persecuted the Muslims¹, and it was not until some years later that we hear of the first Musalman King of Kāshgar, which the break-up of the Chaghatāy dynasty had erected into a separate kingdom. This prince, Tuqlūq Tīmūr Khān (1347-1353), is said to have owed his conversion to a holy man from Bukhārā, by name Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn. This Shaykh, in company with a number of travellers, had unwittingly trespassed on the game-preserves of the prince, who ordered them to be bound hand and foot and brought before him. In reply to his angry question, how they had dared interfere with his hunting, the Shaykh pleaded that they were strangers and were quite unaware that they were trespassing on forbidden ground. Learning that they were Persians, the prince said that a dog was worth more than a Persian. ‘Yes,’ replied the Shaykh, ‘if we had not the true faith, we should indeed be worse than the dogs.’ Struck with his reply, the Khān ordered this bold Persian to be brought before him on his return from hunting, and taking him aside asked him to explain what he meant by these words and what was ‘faith’. The Shaykh then set before him the doctrines of Islam with such fervour and zeal that the heart of the Khān that before had been hard as a stone was melted like wax, and so terrible a picture did the holy man draw of the state of unbelief, that the prince was convinced of the blindness of his own errors, but said, ‘Were I now to make profession of the faith of Islam, I should not be able to lead my subjects into the true path. But bear with me a little, and when I have entered into the possession of the kingdom of my forefathers, come to me again.’ For the empire of Chaghatāy had by this time been broken up into a number of petty princedoms, and it was

1 Ibn Batūtah, (op cit) tome III, p 47

many years before Tūgluq Timūr succeeded in uniting under his sway the whole empire as before. Meanwhile Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn had returned to his home, where he fell dangerously ill. when at the point of death, he said to his son Rashīd al-Dīn, 'Tuqlūq Timūr will one day become a great monarch; fail not to go and salute him in my name and fearlessly remind him of the promise he made me.' Some years later, when Tuqlūq Timūr had re-won the empire of his fathers, Rashīd al-Dīn made his way to the camp of the Khān to fulfil the last wishes of his father, but in spite of all his efforts he could not gain an audience of the Khān. At length he devised the following expedient: One day in the early morning, he began to chant the call to prayers, close to the Khān's tent. Enraged at having his slumbers disturbed in this way, the prince ordered him to be brought into his presence, whereupon Rashīd al-Dīn delivered his father's message. Tuqlūq Khān was not unmindful of his promise, and said: 'Ever since I ascended the throne I have had it on my mind that I made that promise, but the person to whom I gave the pledge never came. Now you are welcome.' He then repeated the profession of faith and became a Muslim. 'On that morn the sun of bounty rose out of the east of divine favour and effaced the dark night of unbelief'¹

Certain Turk historians have related the story of Tuqluq Timur's conversion in greater detail and reported the dialogue verbatim between him and Jamāl ud-dīn. Tuqluq Timur had enquired, pointing out towards his dog, whether he (Jamāl ud-dīn) was better than the beast. Jamāl ud-dīn calmly replied, "If I pass away from this world with my faith intact, I would be better than the dog, if not, the dog would be better than me." Taken aback by this reply, Tuqlūq Timūr asked what he meant by 'faith.' And thus he was eventually led to embrace Islam as related by Arnold. It is thus certain that a word uttered by Jamāl ud-dīn in all

1. Arnold, pp. 234-36

sincerity was the ultimate cause of the conversion of Tuqluq Timur and of the spread of Islam in his realm: a feat which could not have perhaps been accomplished by a thousand speeches or the might of arms

Turning to the spread of Islam among that branch of the Golden Horde which was succeeded by Ogotāy, the third son of Chenghiz Khan, and under which Kubilay Khan later brought the whole of China, Arnold says :

“Scattered up and down throughout the length and breadth of the Mongol empire, there must have been many of the followers of the Prophet who laboured successfully and unknown, to win unbelievers to the faith. In the reign of Ogotāy (1229-1241), we read of a certain Buddhist governor of Persia, named Kurguz, who in his later years abjured Buddhism and became a Musalman.¹ In the reign of Timūr Khān (1323-1328), Ānanda, a grandson of Qubilāy and viceroy of Kan-Su, was a zealous Musalman and had converted a great many persons in Tangut and won over a large number of the troops under his command to the same faith. He was summoned to court and efforts were made to induce him to conform to Buddhism, and on his refusing to abandon his faith he was cast into prison. But he was shortly after set at liberty, for fear of an insurrection among the inhabitants of the Tangut,² who were much attached to him.”³

In this way Islam won over, in a short time, its most inveterate enemy who had trampled underfoot the entire Islamic world, and whose onslaught, for a time, no Muslim power was able to withstand. Islam again proved that it possessed an irresistible charm which can captivate the hearts of its bitterest foe. The Mongols, after accepting the faith of Islam, produced a large number of

1. C d' Ohsson, (op cit), Vol III, p. 121

2. Rashid al-Din, (op cit), pp 600-602

3. Arnold p 227

scholars, theologians and doctors of faith as well as those who fought for the cause of God, and served to defend Islam on many a critical occasion Iqbāl has rightly said :

“A sign manifest did adduce the charge of Tartar
hordes,
That defenders ere flock to Ka‘abah from the heathen
brutes.”¹

¹ *Bāng-i-Darā*, p 230.

CHAPTER XIII

MAULANA JALAL UD-DIN RUMI

The Crisis of Rationalism:

By the time the seventh century of the Muslim era began, dialectics had come to occupy such a pride of place among the religious sciences that nobody could lay a claim to scholarship unless he had mastered the controversial issues between the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites, on the one hand, and between the Ash'arites and the Hanbalites, on the other. Fakhr ud-din al-Rāzī, who died in 606 A H, had attracted all minds so powerfully, that the human intellect had come to be acknowledged by all as the infallible touchstone for the verification of metaphysical truths. A compromise between reason and faith, which was regarded as the ultimate end by the scholars of the time, had made them so fond of ratiocination that no religious dogma or tenet of faith was acceptable to them unless it could be established by rational arguments, logical syllogism and philosophical premises.

It is true that the Ash'arites had succeeded in building up a powerful system of Islamic scholasticism which gained the day against *ʿIlzāl* and philosophy but they had, nevertheless, imbibed the spirit of these sciences. The system of metaphysical theology evolved by the Ash'arites had a deep rationalistic foundation which allowed reason to delve into the questions relating to the nature and attributes of God and to discuss metaphysical issues as freely as did the Philosophers and Mu'tazilites. As a consequence, naturally, they had also come to regard the conceptual data furnished by the human senses as the most reliable criterion for verification of certitude. They had thus accepted logical reasoning and speculative thinking as the cornerstone for building up their

arguments for the affirmation of the religious tenets and finding out the ultimate Reality.

The religious scholars throughout the Islamic world had, as a result, been seized by an excessive formalism of dialectics, which, too, had by then deteriorated into a stale science handed down from generation to generation without any addition or modification. It had been unable to produce for quite a long time a celebrated thinker like Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari or Abū Hamid al-Ghazali. The constant engagement of the then scholars with polemics and logical disputation might have made them bright and quick-witted but it had certainly extinguished the warmth of their hearts and dimmed the light of faith and conviction. The dialecticians had undoubtedly been successful in silencing their opponents by their superior syllogism but they were unable to provide an unflinching conviction which could replace scepticism by faith and disquietude by peace of mind. As a matter of fact, the logical reasoning employed by the dialecticians had given rise to numerous questions which could never be adequately met by the scholastics. Also, the dialectics had no place for 'intuition' which is an invaluable source for acquisition of knowledge, for, it either did not recognise any 'inner sense' beyond the normal senses of perception or treated it with contempt. Obviously, therefore, facts pertaining to mysteries of mute reality and ecstasy were being contended simply because these were beyond the ken of senses; the scholars had developed a predisposition for rejecting or at least being sceptical about everything which could not be proved through rational arguments. The *Ummat*, having thus been seized by the so-called rationalism, was losing that fervour of faith which had been bequeathed to it by the Apostles and the elects of God, and which constituted a fountain-head of its strength for all times to come. Philosophical discourses and dialectical argumentations had turned the people into academicians as dry as dust, lacking that warmth of feeling and certitude of knowledge which is born out of divine intuition. There were, nevertheless, a few sublimated souls, pure of heart and beatified by divine grace; but, the overwhelming majority of the doctors of faith and the laity had become votaries of intellect, fond

so extremely learned that difficult problems pertaining to law and religion were referred to him for solution. His erudition had earned for him the honorific title of *Sultan ul-Ulema* (the king of scholars) while he used to hold his assemblies like the courts of monarchs. His discourses ran from morning till mid-day for all and sundry, and after the mid-day prayers, for the selected few to whom he expounded the mysteries of the true content of knowledge and faith. On Fridays and Mondays he delivered public sermons. He had an imposing countenance and always appeared to be engrossed in his thoughts.

Early Education :

Jalal ud-din Rumi was born on the 6th of Rabi ul-Awwal, 604 A.H. Baha' ud-din Veled entrusted him to the care of one of his disciples, Saiyid Buihan ud-din, for early education who taught him for four or five years in the beginning and then guided him again, after the death of Baha' ud-din Veled, in the secrets of the mystic path.

Migration from Balkh :

The popularity of Baha' ud-din Veled and the great number of his disciples and followers had made certain scholars jealous of him. In his lectures, he used to declaim publicly against the Greek philosophers and their rationalist followers, who, he said, had thrown the scriptures over their back, and could not, therefore, hope for the blessings of God. These scholars could not, however, harm him as Khwarizm Shah was himself a devotee of Baha' ud-din Veled. Once the king who had come to pay a visit to the Sheikh remarked, "What a big crowd has gathered here!" One of the scholars present at the moment readily added, "Yes, and if something is not done to check his popularity, it might become difficult for the King to rule over them." Khwarizm Shah took the remark to his heart and asked the scholar as to what should be done in the matter. The courtier, seizing the opportunity to malign the Sheikh, advised the king to send the keys of the treasury and also of the citadel to Baha' ud-din Veled with a

message that since he already reigned over the hearts of the people, it would be better if he had the keys as well.¹

When this message was conveyed to Baha' ud-din Veled, he replied, "Convey my respects to the King and tell him that I am a recluse having nothing to do with the treasures and arms. I would willingly leave the country so that the king may rule over it without any misgivings on this score. I would leave the town on Friday after delivering the last sermon."

The inhabitants of Balkh were so much agitated at the news of Baha' ud-din's departure that the Khwarizm Shah had to come along with his vizier to dissuade him from his intended migration. Baha' ud-din Veled, however, did not accede to the request made by the King who ultimately proposed that in order to avoid any tumult or agitation among the masses, Baha' ud-din might leave the city without letting people know of it. Baha' ud-din agreed to the suggestion. He delivered his last sermon on Friday and quitted Balkh on the succeeding Saturday. In his public discourse he warned the King that the Tartar hordes would invade his kingdom soon after his departure.²

The people everywhere on his way, hearing of his arrival,

1 A number of historians have attributed this conversation with the King to Imām Fakhr ud-din Rāzi. Cadi Talammuz Husain, however, holds it to be a mistake on the part of chroniclers, for Baha' ud-din Veled left Balkh in 609 or 610 A. H. while Fakhr ud-din Rāzi died at Herat in 606 A. H., where he had been residing before he died. (*Shahid ul-Mathnavi*, pp 46/48) Another biographer of Jalal ud-din Rūmi, Badi Uz-zaman Farozanfar, whose book entitled "The life of Maulana Jalal ud-din Muhammad" has been published recently in Iran, also subscribes to the abovementioned view of Talammuz Husain. (Farozanfar, p 14)

Talammuz Husain has expressed the view that this man might have been Sayyid Baha' ud-din Rāzi who was a courtier of Khwarizm Shah, and who has been mentioned in the *Tabqāt-i-Nāsi* (pp 270/71)

2 Badi Uz-zaman Farozanfar has expressed the view that it is possible that the real cause of Baha' ud-din Veled's migration was the impending danger of Tartar invasion of Khurasān and Iran since many other *ulema* and notable persons were then leaving these countries for other places of safety. (Farozanfar, p 15)

flocked to meet him and bring him into their cities with honour. Thus he passed through Baghdad, Mecca, Damascus and reached Malatia,¹ where he remained for four years, engaged in preaching and teaching. From Malatia, Baha' ud-din Veled went on to Āk Shahr,² and from there to Larenda³ which was a dependency of Konya.⁴

Arrival in Konya :

'Ala ud-din Kaikabād, the then Sultan of Rūm⁵, sent for and requested Baha' ud-din Veled to come to his Capital, where he arrived in 626 A. H. The Sultan himself went to receive Baha' ud-din and became his disciple along with his chiefs. In Konya, Baha' ud-din resided in a local college and died there after two years in 628 A. H.

Rūmī accompanied his father throughout the latter's journey from Balkh, and he was 22 years of age when he arrived at Konya. Impressed by Baha' ud-din's profound knowledge and erudition, the Sultan's teacher, Badr ud-din Gohartash, founded a college named Madarsa-i-Khudavandgār for him and endowed it richly for its maintenance.⁶

Sultan 'Ala ud-din Kaikabād had a great regard for Baha' ud-din Veled. When the Sultan had erected the fort of Konya he invited Baha' ud-din Veled to mount to the terraced roof of the fort, thence to survey the walls and towers. After his inspection, Baha' ud-din remarked to the Sultan, "Against the floods and enemy horses, you have raised a goodly defence. But what protection have you built against those unseen arrows, the sighs and moans of the oppressed, which pass through a thousand walls and battlements, and sweep whole worlds to destruction. Go and erect a citadel of justice and equity, for that alone can ensure

1 A city on the Upper Euphrates

2 Capital of a province of Konya

3 A city in Asia Minor

4 i.e. Iconium in Galatia

5 i.e. Anatolia in modern Turkey

6 Afāki, p. 30

the peace of the world.”¹

After the death of Baha’ ud-din Veled, Rumi was raised to occupy the seat of his father by the Sultan of Konya on the advice of the scholars and disciples of the departed teacher. Rumi thus started teaching in the college and preaching to the people in place of his father. Later, Saiyid Burhan ud-din, the tutor during his childhood, who had migrated to Tirmiz came back to Konya. Rumi received instruction in the mystic lore from Saiyid Burhan ud-din who lived in Konya for nine years and died there in 637 A. H.

Travels for further Education:

In 630 A. H. Rumi went forth to Syria for further education. He arrived at Halab (Aleppo) where Sultan al-Malik al-Zahir² had established, on the advice of Cadi Baha’ ud-din ibn Shaddad, several colleges in 591 A. H., which had made Haleb also a reputed place of learning like Damascus.

In Haleb Rumi stayed in Madarsa Halawiyah and received education from Kamal ud-din ibn al-‘Adim.³ Although Rumi was receiving education at Haleb, difficult juristic questions were referred to him for solution. Sipah Salār reports that Rumi not only furnished a solution to all such problems but also gave reasons which were not to be found in any book.

Rumi went to Damascus from Haleb and dwelt in Madarsa Maqdasyah. In Damascus, reports Sipah Salār, Rumi used to confer with Sheikh Mohi ud-din ibn ‘Arabi, Sheikh Sa‘ad ud-din Hamawi, Sheikh ‘Uthman Rumi, Sheikh Auhad ud-din Kirmāni and Sheikh Sadr ud-din Konwi.⁴

In 634 or 635 A. H. Rumi returned to Konya and resumed the profession of teaching. He continued to do so till the death of his mentor, Saiyid Burhan ud-din, in 637 A. H. Soon thereafter, Sheikh Mohi ud-din ibn ‘Arabi died in Damascus in 638 A. H., and a number of scholars and mystics moved on from Damascus.

1 Afāki, p. 37.

2 Son of Sultan Salah ud-din

3. Sipah Salār, p. 16 and Afāki, p. 52

4 Sipah Salār, p. 14

to seek the company of Rūmī in Konya. Sheikh Sadr ud-dīn and a large number of other scholars whose hearths and homes had been destroyed by the Mongols were too seeking refuge in Konya which had thus attracted quite a large number of celebrated scholars and doctors of faith reputed for their learning and piety. Rūmī, still busy in teaching at the Madarsa, where he is reported to have more than 400 students under his tutelage, was head and shoulders above all the other scholars.

The other pursuits of Rūmī, besides teaching, were preaching in meetings held for the purpose and giving juristic-opinion on the questions referred to him. Fifteen *Dinars* were fixed for him, it is reported, as a remuneration for this public service. He was so particular in this regard that he had instructed his attendants to inform him immediately on the receipt of questions eliciting juristic-opinion, even if he were in a devotional seclusion or trance, and take the dictation for sending a reply.

Rūmī Turns to Mysticism:

Rūmī spent his days in this manner till 642 A. H. when an incident completely transformed his life and turned him from Jalāl ud-dīn Konwī to Maulana-i-Rūm. This was his meeting with Shams Tabriz and his devotion and adoration of the latter. The Maulana has himself said :

“The lord of Rūm did not become a learned sage;
Until he had become a bondsman of Shams Tabriz.”

Shams Tabriz:

Muhammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Malik Dād was his name but he was commonly known as Shams Tabriz. His ancestry is shrouded in mystery and the place to which he belonged is also not known with certainty. Of the many charges levelled against him, one was that he belonged to an unknown descent¹ It was said of him that:

“Who is he and what his father was?

Does anybody know? Er, he comes from where?”

¹ A few historians consider him to be the son of Jalāl ud-dīn Hasan, a pontiff of the Ismailiyah sect, who renounced the cult of the famous

He is reported to have been gifted with a keen intellect and a fervour of love since his very childhood. It has been related in *Manūqib al-‘Arifin*¹ that while still young, he often remained so immersed in the love for the Prophet that he did not feel the pangs of hunger for as many as thirty to forty days². After he had mastered the exoteric sciences he became a disciple of Sheikh Abū Bakr, the basket maker. Some chroniclers report that he had taken Sheikh Zain ud-dīn Sanjāsī³ as his spiritual mentor while the names of certain other mystics have been mentioned in other reports. May be he received a grounding in the mystic lore from all these from time to time.

Not content with the esoteric teachings of “the Path” he has had from his tutors, Shamsī Tebrez took to extensive travels in various lands, in search of the best spiritual teacher and thus gained the nickname of *Parinda* (the Flier, Bird, etc.). In his travels he took care to conceal his own spiritual attainments. Pretending to be a wealthy merchant, he wore a black felt and always bolted the doors of his room in the inn, with a costly lock, although there was nothing inside except a tattered mat. He travelled in this way to Tebriz, Baghdad, Jordan, Rome, Qaisaryah and Damascus. He used to weave strings with which trousers are fastened, and this was enough to meet his frugal expenses. He lived for one year in Damascus where he did not take more than a cup of soup once a week⁴. Often he prayed to God for a companion

“Assassins” and adopted the orthodox faith. He was accordingly known as a *Nas-Muslim* (the recently converted Muslim). These reports are, however, of doubtful authenticity. For detailed study see, “The Life of Maulana Jalal ud-dīn Muhi-ud-dīn” (pp. 53-54) by Bidā Uz-zamān Ferozanfar and *Sahib ul-Mashneq* (pp. 127-128) by Cadi Talamnuq Husain.

1 Written by Shamsī ud-dīn Ahmad al-Afāki in 752 A. H.

2 Afāki, p. 370.

3 Ferozanfar has given the name of his mentor as Rukn ud-dīn Sanjāsī instead of Zain ud-dīn Sanjāsī. He also says that Sanjās was a dependency of Zanjan but he is not sure about it. (Ferozanfar, p. 56)

4 Sīpāh Salār, p. 63.

with whom he could share the mysteries of divine love.¹

Meeting of Shams Tabriz and Rumi :

The spiritual mentor of Shams Tabriz, it is related, asked him to proceed to Rūm and illuminate a broken-hearted soul yearning for the divine love. He accordingly reached Konya on the 26th of Jamadi ul-Ākhir, 642 A. H. and engaged a lodging in an inn. One day, he saw Rūmi coming by, riding on a mule, in the midst of a crowd of students and disciples accompanying him on foot. Shams Tabriz stepped forward and asked Rūmi, "What is the object of learning and prayer?" "It is to know," replied Rūmi, "the *Sharī'ah* and its tenets." "No", rejoined Shams Tabriz, "the object is to attain what is knowable". Thereafter he recited this couplet of Hakīm Sināī :

"Compared to that knowledge, ignorance is better ;
Which allows your self to remain as it were."

Rūmi was lost in amazement. He had taken to heart the remark of Shams Tabriz.²

Rūmi now took Shams Tabriz home with him. They remained closeted together, reports Aflākī, for forty days where no body could enter.³ Sipah Salār, another biographer of Rūmi, writes that both remained in holy communion for six months in a room where none dared to enter except Sheikh Salah ud-dīn.⁴

The company of Shams Tabriz opened a new vista of the hidden realm to the view of Rūmi who now felt a trenchant urge to grasp the mysteries of earth and of heaven through spiritual

1 Aflākī, pp 58-59

2 The conversation between Rūmi and Shams Tabriz has been reported in Tarkīrah Daulat Shah. The author of the Life of Jalāl ud-dīn Muhammad has also collected all the traditions in this regard but none being acceptable to him, he has put forth the view that the attachment of Rūmi to Shams Tabriz was not due to any sudden rapturous infatuation but because Rūmi was already in search of an illuminated soul (Faiyozanfar, pp 61-68) Also see *Shah ul-Ma'arif*, pp 139-142

3 Aflākī, p 60

4 Sipah Salār, p 66

illumination Rūmī says in a couplet :

“Shamsh Tebrez was it, who led me to the path of
Reality;

For the faith I have is simply his bounty.”

Rūmī had so long been a profound scholar and a successful teacher, disciples and students, many of them scholars and mystics, always gathered round him in large numbers to drink at the fountain of learning, but, now, he himself became a pupil of Shamsh Tebrez. Sultan Veled, the son of Rūmī says.

“The Sheikh himself turned a probationer,
He began to learn his lessons afresh, sitting at the feet
of his mentor.

Although perfect he was in ascetic lore,
He had to begin taking lessons once more.”

Rūmī has also acknowledged it in these lines

“A mendicant I was, thou madest me a liberatine,
A source of tumult, intoxicated with wine
Revered I was as a doctor of religion,
Thou hast turned me into a sport for children.”

The result was that Rūmī abandoned teaching as well as sermonising. He says

“Like Mercury had I ledgers of mine,
Upon which I devoted much time,
Lo! no sooner did I glance the forehead of the
cupbearer,
So intoxicated I became that I broke my pen.”

Tumult by Rūmī's Disciples:

After Rūmī had entered the enchanted circle of Shamsh Tebrez's spiritual powers, he gave up teaching and delivering lectures which was intensely resented by his followers, disciples and friends. They, accordingly, raised a fearful and threatening tumult against Shamsh. The resentment of Rūmī's disciples was kindled by the respect paid to Shamsh by Rūmī, and they were also jealous that an unknown person whose lineage and even whereabouts were not known to anybody should cause their revered

teacher to sever all relations with those who had so long been serving as well as deriving benefit from him, and spreading his fame far and wide. The disciples and followers of Rūmī took Shamsh Tebrez for a weird figure who had cast a spell over Rūmī otherwise he would not have changed so suddenly and decided not to see his old acquaintances. They could not express their resentment against Shamsh in the presence of Rūmī but whenever they got an opportunity they jibbed and stingingly reproached Shamsh Tebrez.

Departure of Shamsh Tebrez:

Shamsh Tebrez calmly put up with the irritation caused by Rūmī's followers for some time but when he found that they were bent upon taking resort to violent means, he stealthily left Konya one day. Aflāki reports that Shamsh Tebrez left Konya, at the end of his first visit, on Thursday, the twenty-first day of the month of Shawwal, 643 A.H.,¹ after a stay of about sixteen months.

The departure of Shamsh Tebrez left Rūmī in such a state of distress and depression that he completely cut himself off from all the disciples and acquaintances, friends and relatives. This was an unexpected turn of events unforeseen by those who had been envious of Shamsh, for Rūmī was now not prepared to see even those who had not opposed Shamsh, much less the persons who had been his adversaries.

Return of Shamsh Tebrez:

Sipah Salār relates that Rūmī remained cut off from every body till he unexpectedly received a letter from Shamsh Tebrez from Damascus.² A bit calmed down, Rūmī now permitted those who had not pitted themselves against Shamsh to join in his sittings. It was during this period that Rūmī began to take part in musical chantings in remembrance of his lost friend. He also wrote four letters to Shamsh Tebrez during this period of separation,

1. Aflāki, p 60

2. *Ibid*, p 66

which express his intense desire to see Shamsi again In the first letter he says

“Come back to me, the light of my heart, the object
of my desire
Thou forges ahead with the fervour of thy true love.
If thou comest, the joy of my heart shall I acquire
If not, extreme depression will be my hire
Thou art like the sun, which is far away but still near,
Come back, Oh, thou art at a distance, but I find thee
here.”

Gradually the antagonism against Shamsi Tebrez subsided and then Rūmī took steps to invite him back to Konya again He sent his son, Sultan Veled, to bear a letter to Shamsi Tebrez and assure him on behalf of his disciples and followers that all of them, who had earlier opposed him, were repenting their mistake and wanted to be forgiven Rūmī's letter to Shamsi expresses his heart-felt grief over the separation with his spiritual guide He wrote

“From the time thou hast departed from me, as wax is
separated from honey,
Like a candle I melt in the fire of love, deprived of thy
sweetness,
Separated from thy illustrious self, I have been turned
into a ruin,
Wherein my soul resides alone in wilderness
Turn the reins of thy mount, I implore, turn the
mount of thy joy (this way),
For music is not lawful unto me in thy absence, I hate
the joy as a devil
Not a single ode could I indite, till a letter to me did
ye write
To read thy letter, I was so over-joyed; lyrics I
composed six or five
O' God, let us meet again to turn my eve into morn,
For thou art indeed the pride of Syria, Armenia and
Rome.”

Sultan Veled conducted Shamsh Tebrez to Konya from Damascus like a prince

Shamsh Tebrez Departs again :

Rūmī was overjoyed to see Shamsh Tebrez for the second time. All those who had been discourteous to Shamsh requested him to condone their mistakes. For a time Shamsh and Rūmī passed their time happily in spiritual and religious disquisitions, divine manifestations and ecstasies, and the fervour of Rūmī's love for Shamsh increasing with the passage of time. However, Rūmī's disciples began to resent again their neglect by Rūmī, as they had done before. Another incident happened in the meantime which added fuel to the fire. Shamsh was putting up with his wife in an outer room of the house in which Rūmī dwelt. Chelebi 'Ala' ud-dīn, the son of Rūmī by his second wife, used to pass through the room of Shamsh, whenever he visited his father, and this caused inconvenience to the Sheikh. Shamsh politely asked 'Ala' ud-dīn on several occasions not to do so which was, however, resented by him. 'Ala' ud-dīn also viewed with jealousy the affection showed by Shamsh Tebrez to his step-brother, Sultan Veled, and, therefore, he gave vent to his feelings before such followers of Rūmī as were inimical to Shamsh. They immediately seized the opportunity to malign Shamsh Tebrez and again raised a storm of protest against him.

Shamsh Tebrez did not, at first, mention the matter to Rūmī but when the hostilities of these people increased, he alluded to his embarrassment in the form of an anecdote. He also hinted that this time he would slip away without leaving any trace of him. It appears from certain verses of Rūmī that he was not completely unaware of what was going to happen, for he had entreated Shamsh Tebrez in some of his verses to give up the idea of deserting him again.

However, the followers of Rūmī again rose in opposition to Shamsh with the result that he slipped away from Konya.¹

1. It has been mentioned in certain chronicles that Shamsh was put to death by certain persons in Konya and Rūmī, on receiving the news said, "God

Rūmī says in a couplet:

“That there be no room for any complaint, Suddenly
he set out to quit them all ”

Rūmī's Impatience:

When Rūmī found Shamsh missing again one morning, his distress knew no bounds. He immediately went to Sultan Veled and cried out, “Sleepest thou, Get up and find out where the Sheikh is? I find my soul devoid of his fragrance again.”¹

Now Rūmī again started his search for Shamsh, he was now even more distressed than he had been earlier. He ceased all intercourse with those who had caused ill-will to Shamsh and even forbade them to appear before him. Rūmī says:

“The separation made him mad in love,
Like Jonah he became, without a hearth or home.”

A few days later when his quest for Shamsh had proved fruitless, Rūmī became even more restless. Now he spent most of his time either in listening to the musical recitals or lamenting and raising a wail of woe for the departed companion. It was during this period that Rūmī composed a number of beautiful and extremely touching lyrics expressing the agonising pangs suffered by him due to Shamsh's separation.

This was the year 645 A H. Rūmī was extremely anxious for Shamsh specially because of the disturbed conditions in Egypt and Asia Minor and the tempest of rapine and slaughter let loose by the Tartar invasion. If anybody gave him the whereabouts of Shamsh, Rūmī would be so pleased that he immediately rewarded him with whatever he could lay his hands upon including even the garments he wore at the time.

does what He likes and orders whatever He intends ” Farozanfar, however, prefers the version that Rūmī was nearest to Shamsh, and, naturally, he should have been aware of what had happened to Shamsh. Thus, had Shamsh been killed in Konya, Rūmī would not have undertaken the journey to Damascus in his quest. (Farozanfar, pp 83-84)

1. Sırah Salār, p 69

Travels to Syria :

Not being able to calm down his restlessness, Rūmī set out for Damascus along with a few of his other companions in search of Shams̄h Tebrez. He was received with honour by the scholars of Damascus but they were surprised to learn that a person of his intellectual stature and erudition should be so agitated for any individual.

Rūmī could not, however, get any trace of Shams̄h Tebrez in Damascus. When he was worn out of his quest for Shams̄h, he remarked, "Myself and Shams̄h are not two. If he is like the sun, I am a particle, if he is an ocean, I am a drop, for the particle is illuminated by the sun and the drop owes its existence to the ocean. There is thus no difference between Shams̄h and myself." Rūmī returned to Konya from Damascus but his restlessness did not abate. After a couple of years he again undertook a journey to Damascus but he returned this time convinced that in reality he was himself Shams̄h and that all his search for Shams̄h was no more than a quest to find out his own self.

After coming back from Damascus for the second time, Rūmī gave up all hopes to meet Shams̄h Tebrez again. Nevertheless, Rūmī now experienced the same effulgence of spiritual wisdom streaming in his own self which he had sought in Shams̄h Tebrez. "Although the Maulana, on whom be the blessings of God", says Sultan Veled, "failed to find out the person of Shams̄h ud-dīn Tebrez, whose fame may be spread by God, in Damascus, he found whatever he wanted from Shams̄h, percolating in his own veins".

Sheikh Salah ud-dīn, the gold-beater .

A few days after his return from Damascus for the second time, Rūmī again became restless. He now promoted Sheikh Salah ud-dīn as his confidant and chief assistant. He was, in fact, elevated to take the place of Shams̄h Tebrez,¹ as Sultan Veled says

1 Farozanfar writes "When Rūmī became despaired of finding out Shams̄h, he turned his mind towards Salah ud-dīn whole-heartedly. He nominated him as his Sheikh and Caliph and appointed him as the leader of the

in these verses :

“After Shams, Salah ud-din became his helper in this
design.

His presence increased the illuminations and visions
Divine,

For he learnt the lore mysterious from him ”

Sheikh Salah ud-din came of a poor family belonging to a nearby village. His father was a fisherman while Salah ud-din had himself taken up the profession of gold-beating. Reputed as a trustworthy youngman from his early days, he had been a disciple of Saiyid Burhān ud-din. After Saiyid Burhān ud-din's death he took the oath of allegiance to Rūmī whose closest associate he remained during the last ten years of his life. He died on the first of Muharram, 657 A. H.

Elevation of Salah ud-din as the most trusted disciple and spiritual successor of Rūmī, again made his other disciples and followers run amuck. Now their complaint was that Shams was at least an educated person but this man, who was a mere gold-beater by profession, did not deserve to be the chief assistant of their respected teacher. They were amazed to see that Rūmī held Salah ud-din in such a high esteem, and this fired their envy again. However, when Salah ud-din came to know of the tumult among other disciples he remarked ‘ They deplore my selection as the chief associate of the Maulana but they don't appear to understand that the Maulana is really in love with his own self. I simply act as a veil to conceal this fact ’¹

seekers of God and instructed his friends and disciples to obey him”
(Farozanfar, p 101)

- 1 Farozanfar writes. The Maulana being tired of the blind envy of the malicious detractors of Salah ud-din, made him the cynosure of his eyes and showed him the same love and affection which he had for Shams. As Salah ud-din had been a soft-hearted man, his attraction and guidance were of a different nature. He was able to decrease the tumultuous restlessness of the Maulana to a large extent. (Farozanfar, pp 102-103)

Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn:

After the death of Salah ud-dīn, Chelebi¹ Hisām ud-dīn Turk was nominated by Rūmī to act as his chief assistant, confidant and spiritual vicegerent in place of the deceased friend. Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn had already occupied a distinguished place among the followers of Rūmī, and for eleven years after the demise of his spiritual superior, he acted as his successor. He was a Turk belonging to Armenia and came of a respectable and influential family known as Akhi.²

Hisām ud-dīn had also paid obeisance to Shamsī Tebrez and Salah ud-dīn from whom he had learnt the esoteric teachings.

Hisām ud-dīn spent all his belongings on Rūmī and ultimately emancipated his slaves as well. He was so cautious that he never used the water of the Maulana's bath-room for ablutions out of respect for him, and went to his own house for the purpose even if it was biting cold. On the other hand, Rūmī too paid such a homage to Hisām ud-dīn that one thought him to be a disciple of the latter.³

Composition of the Mathnawī:

The Mathnawī was composed by Rūmī during this period at the instance of Hisām ud-dīn.⁴

1 Chelebi is an equivalent of Sayyid in Turkish language (Farozanfar, p. 111).

2 Farozanfar says that Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn was born in 622 A.H. (Farozanfar, p. 111)

3 Rūmī sent whatever presents he received to Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn. Once Sultan Veled complained about it but Rūmī replied, "By God, if a hundred-thousand pious men were caught by trouble and it were apprehended that the world would perish, and I had only a loaf with me, I would send even that to the respected Chelebi," Rūmī used to keep silence whenever Hisām ud-dīn was not present in his meetings. His followers, therefore, always tried to cause Hisām ud-dīn to be present in these meetings. (Farozanfar, p. 114)

4 Farozanfar writes that the Mathnawī was composed by Rūmī on the request of Hisām ud-dīn. The latter had noticed the disciples and followers of Rūmī devoting their time to the study of *Hadiqa* of Sina'i and the *Manlaqat Tayr* of Attār because they could not find mystical lores in the odes of Rūmī.

The fact is that Rūmī was endowed with a love so fervent and rapturous that he could not do without a close companion and confidant with whom he could share the mysteries of the esoteric truth experienced by him. First, he selected Shams Tabriz whose place was taken by Salah ud-dīn and Hishām ud-dīn one after another. Sayyid Burhān ud-dīn was also elevated to his circle of selected associates, although in a different capacity, for a short while. The period of five years between the death of Sayyid Burhān ud-dīn and the arrival of Shams Tabriz in Konya was spent by Rūmī in such a way as if he felt some deficiency in his life. It is obvious that the latent capabilities with which Rūmī had been endowed required a stimulant for their expression. The Mathnawī is itself a proof of Rūmī's yearning for love, if one is required, for it would not have come into existence without the spiritual fervour aroused by Rūmī's favourite associates. There had been a gap of two years in the compilation of the Mathnawī when Rūmī suspended its composition on account of the Hishām ud-dīn's grief at the death of his wife.

Perfection in the 'Path' of mysticism or spiritual illumination was not the reason for selection of his confidants by Rūmī. He often said that love is born out of affinity. Once, in reply to a

which, nevertheless, displayed his fervour of love. He, therefore, sought and found an opportunity to propose that Rūmī might dictate something in the style of the above mentioned lyrics. Rūmī immediately produced a paper from his turban on which were written 18 verses, the first of which was to become the opening verse of the Mathnawī. It ran as follows:

"From reed flute hear what tale it tells,
What plaint it makes of absence ills,"

And, the last verse ran

"Now ends my discourse, peace be to ye "

Rūmī used to dictate the verses to Hishām ud-dīn who took them down and then recited these aloud in his beautiful voice. Often they spent whole nights at the task. After the first part of the Mathnawī was completed Hishām ud-dīn's wife died which made him very despondent. Rūmī too felt so aggrieved by the dejection of Hishām ud-dīn that the composition of Mathnawī was suspended for two years. Thereafter, Rūmī again took up the task continuing it for the next fifteen years till his death. (Farozanfar, pp 116-118)

question he told his son, Sultan Veled, that he cultivated friendship with his associates because of affinity, for the affection born out of it never leads one to remorse. True affinity or love, explained Rūmi, would never cause repentance either in this world or the Hereafter. Those who cultivate friendship for selfish ends would, in the Hereafter, languish with a longing described thus by the Qur'ān: *Alas for me! Ah, would that I had never taken such an one for friend.*¹ On the other hand, those who are sincere and fear God shall retain their friendship. *Friends on that day will be foes one to another, save those who kept their duty (to Allah).*²

Rumi has expressed the same view in a verse which says .

“Never from miracles, a faith sprouts;
Yet, qualities alike, affinity unites ”

Death of Rūmi:

Sıpah Salār relates that Konya was continuously rocked by earthquakes for forty days before the death of Rūmi.³ Aflākī, however, says that while Rūmi still lay in sickness, there were severe earthquakes for seven days and nights, until everyone in Konya was greatly alarmed. When the people went to Rūmi to beseech his help, he calmly remarked: “Poor earth, it is starving and wants a fat morsel. It shall soon have one and then it won't bother you.”⁴ During his last illness, he indited an ode which has the following opening lines:

“Despite thy kindness and affection, (my) heart craves
for anger from thee.
Like a glass fragile, break my heart by saying: ‘Thou
canst not see me.’”

Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn says that Sheikh Sadr ud-dīn along with a few other mendicants paid a visit to Rūmi during his last illness. During the course of their conversation he said, “May God grant you speedy recovery.” “No”, replied Rūmi, “There is only a

1. *Al-Furqān* 28

2. *Az-Zuhruf* 67

3. *Sıpah Salār* p 58

4. *Aflākī* . p 350

hair's-breadth distance between the lover and the beloved. Won't you like that this distance should also vanish and the finite spirit may unite with the Infinite One?"

Rūmī dictated the following ode during his illness to Chelebi Hīsām ud-dīn .

"Go ! head on pillow lay ; alone, in peace, me leave,
 Loved tyrant, plague by night, while all around thee
 That peerless beauty (God) has no need kind care to
 But, sorrow lovers, ye must patient faith still know
 Perplexity is ours to bear, 'tis his to own hard heart,
 Shed he our blood, 'what sin ? He'll not pay
 To die's hard, after all, but remedy there's none,
 How, then, to crave a remedy ? The evil's done
 Last night, in dream, a warder, from my love's abode.
 Made sign to me, and said 'This way ! Held thou my
 lode'"

Rūmī died, at the age of sixty-eight years and three months, at the close of the day, on the fifth of Jamādī-ul-Ākhir 672 A. H.

When his corpse was brought forth, a great multitude swarmed the place, all of whom smote their breasts and raised loud lamentations. Jews and Christians came reading their own scriptures. The Muslims strove to drive them away but they would not be repelled. It was feared, at length, that a tumult would break out. The intelligence was conveyed to Parwana,³ who asked the Rabbis and Bishops why they mixed themselves up with the funeral of a Muslim saint. They replied that they had found in him all the signs and virtues of the prophets described in their scriptures and have learnt the ways of the sages and saints of yore, than they had ever known before. They were all ultimately allowed to

1 Redhouse - p 95

2 Sipah Salār p 59

3 Moin ud-din Parwana, the governor of Konya

accompany the funeral. The number of people who flocked to join the funeral procession was so great that the bier taken out early in the morning could reach the burial place by sun-set, and thus with all honours, the luminous sage was laid to rest in his grave.

The Character of Rūmī:

Shibli writes in the *Sawāneḥ* (Biography) of Maulāna-i-Rūm :

“So long as the Maulāna had not taken to the path of mysticism, he led the life of an eminent scholar and a doctor of faith. Whenever he went out, riding on his mule, a large number of students, theologians and even the grandees accompanied him on foot. The kings and chiefs of State received him with highest honour. But no sooner did he adopt the mystic way of life, his life was completely transformed. He continued to teach and give juristic-opinions, but these vocations appeared to be only reminiscent of his past life. he always seemed to be enchanted with a rapturous love, in transports and trances of a sublimated soul.”¹

Prayers and Penance:

Rūmī was extremely fond of prayers and penance. Siph Salār, who dwelt with him for many years, relates that he never saw Rūmī in a night-gown. He never had a pillow or a bedding, nor did he ever lie down for taking rest. Whenever he felt drowsy, he took a nap wherever he might be sitting. He says in a verse

“Shrouded in a quilt studded with thorn,
How can he sleep, for pricked is always lovelorn.”

Whenever he found that his disciples were heavy with sleep, during the musical services, he would rest his head between his knees pretending to have fallen asleep, but after everyone had dropped into slumber, he would get up and occupy himself with the performance of *Zikr* (recollection) and recitation.² He has

1 *Sawāneḥ* : p. 34

2 *Ibid*, p. 35

alluded to it in one of his odes in which he says

“Everyone slept but not I, for the heart smite my
control, outright
My eyes grew accustomed to count the stars, night
after night.
Sleep has gone out of my eyes never to return,
It has taken the poison of thy separation and taken to
flight”

Prayers of Rūmī:

No sooner had the time for an obligatory prayer arrived then Rūmī was a completely changed man¹ He would immediately turn towards *Kā'ba*, his face turning pale, and he would soon be lost in the prayers Sīpah Salār relates that it was not unoften that Rūmī spent the whole night in two *rak'ats* of prayer² Rūmī has described in an ode his own condition during the prayers He says:

“After sun-set prayer, one lights the lamp or the meal
he takes,
But I am left with sighs and moans for my departed
mates.
With tears I perform ablution, my prayer is filled with
fire;
A call to prayer thus given, sets the door of mosque
ablaze
How very wonderful is the prayer of intoxicated ones;
Say ‘It is flawless’, for it transcends the time and
space
Perhaps I finished the second *Rak'at*, or perhaps the
fourth;
I know not in fact, what I read or didn't get the time
at all
How should I knock the door of Truth; my hands and
heart are not mine

1. *Sawāneh*, p 35

2. Sīpah Salār, p 21.

A friend like thee has robbed me of the heart : now
God alone can provide shelter.
I know not, by God, when the service ended or who
led the prayer.”

Once Rūmī was performing his prayers in a wintry cold night. His tears trickled down his face on the beard, turning the tears into heads of ice owing to the intense cold, but he remained engaged in his prayers without being even aware of it.

Austerity and Contentment :

Of simple habits, austere and frugal, Rūmī led a life of almost primitive simplicity. Whatever presents were received from the king, nobles or other affluent people were passed on by him to Salah ud-dīn or Chelebi Hīsām ud-dīn although he often had nothing to make both the ends meet for his own dependents. He kept a portion of such presents only on the insistence of his son, Sultan Veled, but he was very much pleased when there was absolutely no provision for subsistence in his own house. On such occasions he used to remark that his house appeared to be the abode of a mendicant.¹

Generosity:

Rūmī was so generous that he never returned a beggar without giving him something. More than open-handed—he gave away with both hands—he never buttoned his gown or shirt so that it might be easier for him to take it off in case anybody asked for it.

Humility and Tender-heartedness :

Once Rūmī was going somewhere with his disciples. He found his way blocked by a dog sleeping in a narrow lane. He stood there waiting but someone made the poor thing get up and clear the lane. Rūmī felt much aggrieved that the poor creature was disturbed in its sleep.²

1. *Sawānsh*, p 36

2. *Ibid* , p. 39.

On another occasion he found two persons quarrelling and abusing each other. He requested both of them to denounce him and bury the hatchet instead of calling names to each other. Both of them fell on his feet and patched up their differences¹

Lawful Earnings:

Rūmī received a stipend of 15 *Dinars* a month out of the proceeds of charitable trusts. Since he did not like to accept a remuneration without doing some work in lieu thereof, he had taken upon himself to give juristic-opinion on religious and legal matters referred to him by the people. He was so particular about it that he had instructed his disciples to let him know of the questions referred to him as soon as these were received.

Once someone remarked that Sheikh Sadr ud-dīn had a stipend of thousand *Dinars* fixed for him while he got only fifteen *Dinars*. Rūmī at once corrected him by saying that the Sheikh needed even more money and it would have been better if the fifteen *Dinars* fixed for him were also given to the Sheikh²

Dislike of Worldliness:

Rūmī hated the rounds of visits frequently paid to him by the king, princes and the nobles. He never liked them to call upon him and sometimes even expressed his distaste to the face of visiting personage. Once a certain grandee who paid a courtesy call to Rūmī, said "Excuse me, Sir, I couldn't pay my respects more frequently owing to other pre-occupations." "You need not be sorry for it", came the reply from Rūmī, "I am more grateful to those who do not call upon me."³

The Mathnawī and its Message:

Rūmī had been endowed with a tremendous spiritual enthusiasm and a fervour of love which was lying dormant under the

1. *Sawāneḥ*, p. 39

2. *Ibid*, p. 42

3. *Ibid*, p. 43

cover of his erudition, particularly of those relating to the speculative branches of secular sciences. As soon as Shams Tebrez cast his enchanted spell over Rūmī, it would be seen, his spirituality was animated and the outcome was enchanting and beautiful lyrics describing the mysteries of divine love and spiritual raptures, undescribable ecstasies and transports. He ultimately attained the stage where, in the words of Iqbāl, he could claim:

“At last flames burst forth from every hair of me,
Fire dropped from the veins of my thought.”¹

It is a state where every sage gives a call with a thousand tongues for a worthy companion:

“Oh, where in the wide world is my comrade?

I am the Bush of Sinai. Where is my Moses?”²

And this was the reason why Rūmī found it difficult to spend his days without a confidant and companion. His restlessness did not calm down until he found a companion in Salah ud-dīn after Shams and in Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn after Salah ud-dīn—verily, it is not easy for the candle to throb alone.³

It was this fire of love which led Rūmī to seek spiritual food and energy through musical recitations. He has explained it thus in the *Mathnawī*:

“Therefore *samāʿ* (music) is the food of lovers (of God), since therein is the phantasy of composure (tranquillity of mind)

From (hearing) sounds and pipings the mental phantasies gather a (great) strength; nay, they become forms (in the imagination).

The fire of love is made keen (inflamed) by melodies, just as the fire (ardour) of the man who dropped walnuts (into the water).”⁴

1. *Asrar-i-Khudī*, p. 88 (Translation by Nicholson, p. 145).

2. *Ibid*, p. 88 (Nicholson, p. 144).

3. *Ibid*, p. 88 (Nicholson, p. 145).

4. *The Mathnawī*, Vol. IV, p. 313 (Book IV-Verses 742-44).

veracity of revealed truths. Rūmī raised a severe criticism of this view and frowned upon its standard-bearers in these words:

"The doctrine held by the eye of sense is Mu'tazilism, whereas the eye of Reason is Sunnite (orthodox) in respect of (its) union (vision of God).¹

Those in thrall to sense-perception are Mu'tazihites, (though) from misguidedness they represent themselves as Sunnites.

Any one who remains in (bondage to) sense-perception is a Mu'tazilite; though he may say he is a Sunnite, 'tis from ignorance.

Any one who has escaped from (the bondage of) sense-perception is a Sunnite - the man endowed with (spiritual) vision is the eye of sweet-paced (harmonious) Reason."²

Rūmī has asserted at more than one place in the Mathnawī that in addition to the external senses, man has been endowed with certain inner senses too, and that these inner senses are much more wider, potent and sagacious than the outer sense-organs.

"Besides these five (physical) senses there are five (spiritual) senses - those (latter) are like red gold, while these (physical) senses are like copper.

In the bazaar where they (the buyers) are expert, how should they buy the copper sense like (as though it were) the sense of gold?

The bodily sense is eating the food of darkness, the spiritual sense is feeding from a Sun."³

If anything cannot be seen or, for that matter, is beyond the awareness of a physical experience, then in Rūmī's view, it is not

1 What Rūmī means is that those who are blind to spiritual things virtually occupy the position of the Mu'tazilites who denied that it is possible for the Faithful to see God either in this world or the next. From the Sufi standpoint, on the other hand, the real test of faith is the capacity for spiritual vision

2 *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 225 (Book II-61-64)-

3. *Ibid*, Vol II, p 224 (Book II-49-51)

necessarily non-existent. He holds the view that the latent underlies the manifest in the same way as healing properties form the intrinsic quality of a medicine.

“The unbeliever’s argument is just this, that he says, ‘I see no place of abode except this external (world).’

He never reflects that, wherever there is anything external, that (object) gives information of hidden wise purposes.

The usefulness of every external object is, indeed, internal: it is latent, like the beneficial quality in medicines”¹

Rūmī says that the materialists lose their sense of inner cognition and are unable to understand its objectives simply because they cultivate the habit of accepting only the external and manifest. In his opinion this signifies lack of foresight on the part of the materialists.

“Since the foolish took (only) the external appearances (into consideration), and (since) the subtleties (inward aspects) were very much hidden from them

Necessarily they were debarred from (attaining to) the (real) object, for the subtlety escaped (them) on the occasion when it (the object) presented itself”²

Rūmī proceeds further to censure the intellect as well which, like sense-perception, lacks the capacity to obtain the knowledge of realities revealed by the prophets. It really does not possess the ground on which it can base its speculation in such matters nor has it any experiential awareness of the realm hidden from its view.

“What do you know of the waters of Euphrates and
Oxus, sweet and pure,
You have taken abode in a pond, salty, rotted and
impure”³

An intellect which has a dominant carnal reason is a partial or particular intelligence, according to Rūmī, for it breeds doubts and scepticism and its abode is darkness, it brings disgrace to the

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol IV, pp 430-431 (Book IV-2878-80)

2 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 81 (Book V-1331-32)

3 *Ibid*, *Mathnawī Molvī Ma‘nawī*, p 96

absolute intelligence and frustration to mankind. Insanity is preferable, indeed, to the sagacity of such an intellect.

“Imagination and opinion are the bane of the particular (discursive) reason, because its dwelling-place is in the darkness.”¹

The particular intelligence has given the (universal) intelligence a bad name: worldly desire has deprived the (worldly) man of his desire (in the world hereafter) ²

It behoves us to become ignorant of this (worldly) wisdom, (rather) must we clutch at madness”³

Rūmī says that he has had an experience of this worldly wisdom and had reached the conclusion that :

“I have tried far-thinking (provident) intellect; henceforth I will make myself mad”⁴

Thereafter Rūmī advances an argument, clear-cut as well as to the point, in support of his contention. He says that if intellect were sufficient for the comprehension of the revealed truths, then the rationalists, logicians and dialecticians would have also shared the secrets of religion

“If the intellect could discern the (true) way in this question, Fakhr-ı-Rāzı⁵ would be an adept in religious mysteries”⁶

Rūmī holds the view that the sciences cultivated by human intellect cloud the knowledge of reality and make the seeker of Truth sceptical. Therefore, he pleads that one should shun philosophy and ratiocination, if he wants to inculcate an unflinching faith and attain the gnosis of the ultimate Reality.

“If thou desire that misery should vanish (from thee),

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol IV, p 87 (Book III-1558).

2 *Ibid* , Vol VI, p 30 (Book V-463)

3 *Ibid* , Vol II, p 341 (Book II-2328).

4 *Ibid* , Vol. II, p 341 (Book II-2332).

5. Alluding to Fakhr ud-dīn Rāzı (d 1209 A D), the famous scholastic theologian, philosopher and author of a commentary on the Qurʾān entitled *Mafātih al-ghayb*

6 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p, 248 (Book V-4144)

endeavour that wisdom may vanish from thee—

The wisdom which is born of {human} nature and phantasy. the wisdom which lacks the overflowing grace of the Light of the Glorious (God).

The wisdom of this world brings increase of supposition and doubt; the wisdom of the Religion soars above the sky.”¹

In his view the logical syllogisms and the inferences drawn therefrom smack of an artificial method of reasoning which is only of limited utility. This method is unsuited for establishing the veracity of theological truths. Drawing an analogy between the logical argumentation and the wooden legs, he says:

“The leg of the syllogisers is of wood: a wooden leg is very infirm.”²

The science of dialectics and the scholastic argumentation employed by it are incapable of producing conviction and an ardent faith. The reason for it is, according to Rūmī, that the dialectician is himself sceptical about the veracity of what he pleads; he merely rehearses the premises and propositions he has learnt from his teachers and the propounders of his school of thought.

‘ The imitator brings on to his tongue a hundred proofs and explanations, but he has no soul.

When the speaker has no soul and {spiritual glory}, how should his speech have leaves and fruit?”³

Rūmī prefers intuition or spiritual cognition to the carnal intellect which is particular, individual, discursive, and dependent on sense-perception. He holds the view that experiential awareness can gain knowledge pertaining to the terrestrial world only. On the other hand, the spiritual cognition emanating from the Universal Intellect is a lodestar for the human intellect; the intellect of man should be guided by intuition in the same way as

1. *The Mathnawī*. Vol. II, p. 387 (Book II, 3201-3).

2. *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 115 (Book I, 2128).

3. *Ibid.* Vol. VI, p. 149 (Book V, 2480-81).

the former holds the reins of human frame. The spiritual cognition is thus, in the view of Rūmi, the Intellect of intellect without which the carnal intellect would not deserve to be known by that name. Spiritual cognition is, however, enjoyed only by those who have been enriched by an ardent faith and an unquestioning conviction in the Ultimate Reality.

“The philosopher is in bondage to things perceived by the intellect, (but) the pure (saint) is he that rides as a prince on the Intellect of intellect.”¹

Volumes after volumes have been blackened by the discursive reason of man but it is only the Universal Intellect which illumines this universe

“The intellect makes books entirely black (with writing), the Intellect of intellect keeps the horizons (the whole universe) filled (with light) from the Moon (of Reality).

It is free from blackness and whiteness the light of its moon rises (and shines) upon heart and soul”²

The Intellect of intellect, born of faith and credence, guards man against carnal desires and earthly temptations. It instils a sense of faith and trust, confidence and hope while discursive reason brings disbelief and infidelity, doubt and suspicion.

“The reason that is allied to Faith is like a just police-inspector : it is the guardian and magistrate of the city of the heart”³

Intellect is the guardian of Faith within the human frame; its fear keeps the baser-self in chains”⁴

Rūmi propounds the view that Spirit rules over intellect precisely in the same way as the senses are servitors of reason. The Spirit can lay bare the mysteries of heaven and earth which are beyond the ken of intellect and resolve the most knotty problems

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 141 (Book III, 2527)

2 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 142 (Book III, 2531-32)

3 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 382 (Book IV, 1985).

4 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 347

to which reason cannot find a clue

“Sense-perception is a captive to the intellect, O reader,
know also that the intellect is captive to the spirit

The spirit sets free the chained hand of the intellect
and brings its embarrassed affairs into harmony.”¹

The philosopher cannot overstep the limits set by the information furnished by human perception and the rules of logical syllogism. The carnal intellect is thus cast into a prison from which it cannot come out.

“The philosopher simply speaks according to the science of reasoning, for his intellect cannot cross the threshold (of its abode).”²

The philosopher killed (exhausted) himself with thinking. let him run on (in vain), for his back is turned towards the treasure.

Let him run on the more he runs, the more remote does he become from the object of his heart’s desire.”³

The philosopher may possess a complete mastery over speculative branches of learning and may also be endowed with foresight but he lacks insight into his own self, although the cognition of the latter is more important than the knowledge of everything else.

“This tyrant excels in thousands of sciences”

But lo! of his soul he knowest nothing.

Thou knowest the value of every commodity,

But not of thy own, Is’nt it a folly?”

Rūmī advises the philosophers and dialecticians to abandon philosophy and scholasticism and cultivate the knowledge of religious truth, for it alone has the light of certainty and wisdom.

“How long wilt thou be mad after the Grecian lore,

Try to learn the wisdom of faith, once more.”⁵

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol IV, p 102 (Book III, 1824-25)

2 *Mathnawī Molvī Ma’nawī*, p 82

3 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 389 (Book VI, 2356-57)

4 *Mathnawī Molvī Ma’nawī*, p 449

5 *Ibid*, p 86

Rūmī says that man can attain the knowledge of Self through purification of his heart and rectitude of his behaviour. The more the heart is purified, the more it would be able to reflect, like a mirror, the wisdom contained in the faith and illuminate itself, without the help of a tutor or scripture, with the divine grace and revelatory guidance

“Make thyself pure from the attributes of self, that thou mayest behold thine own pure untarnished essence,

And behold within thy heart (all) the sciences of the prophets, without book and without preceptor and master.”¹

At another place Rūmī says :

“When the mirror of your heart becomes clear and pure, you will behold images (which are) outside of (the world of) water and earth.”²

If the orifice of heart is open and clean; Divine light without an agent shall it glean.”³

Love of God :

The impetus received by the movement of rationalism and scholasticism in the seventh century of the Muslim era had cooled the yearnings of the human soul for the apprehension of the Divine. From one end of the Islamic world to another, leaving a few illuminated souls here and there, nobody seemed to have any taste for Divine manifestation and illumination of the heart. It was, as if, an apathy or coolness had overtaken the hearts of the people. It was a situation expressed by Iqbāl in this verse :

“The fire of love has cooled down; what a calamity it is !

The Musalman is naught but a heap of ashes ”⁴

It was at this critical stage that Rūmī sounded the note of alarm and exhorted the people to betake the path of love. His call fired the frenzy of love once again in the entire world of Islam

¹ *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 188 (Book I, 3460-61)

² *Ibid* , p 225 (Book II, 72)

³ *The Mathnawī Molvi Ma'nawī*.

⁴ *Bel i-Jibreel*, p 168

Rūmī explained what he meant by love and to what sublime eminence it could raise the people. He says :

“By love bitter things become sweet , by love pieces of
copper turn into gold ;
By love dregs become clear , by love pains become
healing,¹
By love the prisons becomes a garden ; sans love the
garden becomes desolate ,
By love stone turns into liquid ; devoid of it, wax gets
hard as a metal ;
By love illness contributes health , and, the scourge
becomes a blessing ,
By love the dead is made living , by love the king is
made a slave ”²

Rūmī describes the vigour of love and its virtues in these words :

“Through Love the earthly body soared to the skies
the mountain began to dance and became nimble
Love inspired Mount Sinai, O lover, (so that) Sinai
(was made) drunken and *Moses fell in a swoon* ”³

Love is so dignified and high-souled that it cares nothing for empires. One who has once drunk at the spring of love looks with disdain on all worldly possessions. Iqbāl has expressed the same idea in the couplet in which he says :

“Listless it turns the heart from the heaven and earth
How should I describe, what the flavour of love is like ”⁴
‘The lover hardly cares for anything. he is mad after the Supreme Beauty. Rūmī says
“Love turns heedless of the worlds, this or that A

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 300 (Book II, 1529-30)

2 *The Mathnawī Molvi Ma'nawī*, p 134 (Book II)

3 *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 6 (Book I, 25-26) The words in italics give a mystical turn to the passage of Qur'ān (VII 143) which describes the epiphany of God on Mt Sinai and Moses becoming senseless

4 *Bal-i-Jibreel*, p 142

thousand madness it imbibes (in the lover's heart)."¹

The lover becomes a King of kings and an object of true-love. He tramples underfoot the crowns and sceptres of authority.

"Overt and latent to the extreme his wonders are;
For those who rule the heart aspire for him. He treads a
path different from others, Even the throne of King is
under his foot"²

Speaking of the love, arrogant and stately, Rūmī himself becomes enchanted by a tremendous spiritual enthusiasm. Says he :

"Worldly dominion is lawful (only) to those who
indulge the body : We (lovers) are devoted to the everlasting kingdom of Love."³

Love is the only malady welcomed by its sufferer, who never desires to recover from it. The lover really desires a continuous increase in his affliction

"All the sick hope to be cured, but this sick one sobs,
crying, 'Increase my sickness!'

I have found no drink sweeter than this poison: no
state of health can be sweeter than this disease."⁴

After the illness of love, no other sickness can overtake the lover

"The words (spoken by him) deliver (thee) from words
(of idle disputation), and the sickness (of love inspired by
him) lets thee escape from the sickness (of sensuality)."⁵

If love is a sickness, it is worth a thousand health. It pains and pinches, but still it is sweeter than thousands of pleasures

"Therefore the sickness of love is the (very) soul of
health; its pains are the envy of every pleasure."⁶

1 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 247.

2. *Ibid* , p 247

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol. ṼI, p 502 (Book VI, 4421)

4 *Ibid.*, p 512 (Book VI, 4598-99).

5. *Ibid.*, p 512 (Book VI, 4593).

6 *Ibid.*, p 512 (Book VI, 4594)

Rūmī says that love is essentially a spiritual passion. Even if it be regarded a sin, virtue can rightly be sacrificed at its altar. In so far as it serves to purify the soul, it helps to ascend to Divine favour in a moment that years of penance and prayer may be unable to attain.

“No act of piety can be better than this sin. Years in comparison with this moment are (but) an hour.”¹

The blood of the martyr of love is purer than water, for the martyr does not need purifying bath and ablution.

“For martyrs, blood is better than water: this fault (committed by him) is better than a hundred right actions (of another).”²

The distraught lover of God is not liable to follow the laws and ordinances promulgated for the ordinary folk. How can tithe be levied on a village already devastated?

“To lovers there is a burning (which consumes them) at every moment. Tax and tithe are not (imposed) on a ruined village.”³

Love is the heritage of Adam, while Satan has bequeathed artfulness and cunningness.

“He that is blessed and familiar (with spiritual mysteries) knows that intelligence is of Iblis, while love is of Adam.”⁴

The cunning and artful depends on his wits and craftiness, while the lover seeks asylum from his friend and entrusts himself to his care. Cunningness and artfulness are like swimming in a deluge while love is like the Noah's ark. And has anybody seen the crafty and the cunning coming out safely from the great deluge and the Noah's ark submerging in it?

“Intelligence is (like) swimming in the seas. He (the

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p. 512 (Book VI, 4600)

2 *Ibid*, Vol II, p. 312 (Book II, 1767)

3. *Ibid*, Vol II, p. 312 (Book II, 1765)

4 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p. 349 (Book IV, 1402).

swimmer) is not saved · he is drowned at the end of the business."¹

Love is as a ship for the elect · seldom is calamity (the result) , for the most part it is deliverance "²

The sagacity of intellect can be exchanged for the bewilderment of love, as the former is a product of doubt and uncertainty while the latter is born of gnosis and illumination

"Sell intelligence and buy bewilderment intelligence is opinion, while bewilderment is (immediate) vision "³

Rūmī's summon to betake the path of love is marked by his advice to become a lover if one cannot become a beloved He says that it is not possible for everyone to become lovable but he can nevertheless become an adorer.

"Thou who are not a Joseph, be a Jacob be (familiar), like him, with weeping and sore distress "⁴

If thou art not Shirin or Layla, be thou a true-love like Farhād or Majnun "⁵

He goes a step further and says that love being the greatest bounty, it is more profitable to be a lover than becoming a beloved. If the loved ones only knew the sublimity evoked by the devoted attachment, they would themselves choose to be adorers rather than remain an object of adoration .

"Abandon the state of being loved (by men) and adopt the practice of loving (God), O you who think that you are excellent and pre-eminent "⁶

But love is too precious to be wasted on any transitory or finite being which is likely to become extinct Love is a living spiritual passion and so the object of love should also be living and everlasting

"Love for the dead is not lasting · Keep your love

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol IV, p 349 (Book IV, 1403)

2 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 350 (Book IV, 1406)

3 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 350 (Book IV, 1407)

4 *Ibid* , Vol II, p 103 (Book II, 1909)

5 *Mathnawī Molkī Mathnawī*, p 49

6 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 192 (Book V, 3189)

(fixed) on the Living One who increases spiritual life.”¹

Rūmī says that only the overwhelming grace of the Divine Beloved can truly inspire and refresh the heart of man

“(But) love of the living is every moment fresher than a bud in the spirit and in the sight.

Choose the love of that Living One who is everlasting, who gives thee to drink of the wine that increases life

Choose the love of Him from whose love all the prophets gained power and glory.”²

Nobody need have any apprehension of being denied access to that Glorious True-love for He is ever willing to respond to the call of the lover.

“Do not say, ‘We have no admission to that King’ Dealings with the generous are not difficult ”³

The love may appear to be a sickness for it produces a crushing grief in the lover's heart Its pain may be unbearable but if the lover is able to endure it, he is rewarded with an everlasting illumination and the gnosis of God.

“Being in love is made manifest by soreness of heart there is no sickness like heart-sickness ”

The lover's ailment is separate from all other ailments love is the astrolabe⁴ of the mysteries of God.⁵

The sickness of love is in fact a cure for every other illness, be it moral or spiritual Where the spiritual healers fail and yield to despair, the love succeeds and cures all the moral and spiritual diseases in no time. A man so restored to moral and spiritual health by the grace of love exclaims thus under the spell of its enchantment

“Hail, O Love that bringest us good gain—thou that art the physician of all our ills,

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI p 197 (Book V, 3272)

2 *Ibid* , Vol II, p. 15 (Book I, 218-20)

3 *Ibid* , Vol. II, p 15 (Book I, 221)

4. Astrolabe is an instrument for measuring the altitude of the stars and solving the problems of spherical astronomy

5. *The Mathnawi*, Vol II , p 10 (Book I, 109-10)

The remedy of our pride and vainglory, our Plato and our Galen!"¹

Love kindles a flame that reduces every thing save the beloved to a heap of ashes. It is extremely jealous and arrogant to let anything survive besides itself.

"Love is that flame which, when it blazes up, consumes everything else but the Beloved.

He (the lover) drives home the sword of *Not* in order to kill all other than God: thereupon consider what remains after *Not*.²

There remains *except* God: all the rest is gone. Hail, O mighty Love, destroyer of polytheism!"³

The love of God is an ocean, boundless and wide-spread; it pervades the cosmos and is without any beginning or end. It is a story of the rapturous flame kindled in the heart of man, which can never be described adequately and therefore it is better to acknowledge one's incompetence to narrate it and hold his tongue.

"If I should continue to describe Love, a hundred Resurrections would pass, and it (my description would still be) incomplete,

For there is a limit to the date of the Resurrection, but what limit can there be where the Divine attributes are (concerned)."⁴

The World of the Heart⁵

The message of love diffused so vigorously by Rūmī could not have taken roots without a liveliness and warmth in the heart of

¹ *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 6 (Book I, 23-24)

² Alludes to the Qur'ānic Verse (XXVIII 88) which says "And cry not unto any other god along with Allah There is no God save Him Everything will perish save His Countenance"

³ *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 38 (Book V, 588-90)

⁴ *Ibid*, Vol VI, pp. 131-32 (Book V, 2189-90).

⁵ The heart or the *Qalb*, as Rūmī calls it, is the spiritual entity which abides in the physical body of man and controls his organic and physical functions. It is called *Qalb* (heart), because of its connection with the physical heart.

[Continued on page 352]

those to whom it was addressed In his time too, however, people were increasingly losing sight of the power and efficacy, vigour and energy possessed by the heart. Intellect was gaining ascendancy over heart · mind was being enlightened leaving the heart dull and cool The instigating self of man, comprising appetite and earthly temptations, was taking hold of him as a result of his worldly pursuits Rūmī called attention towards the fathomless vitality of the spiritual entity residing in the human heart, he narrated its wonders and miracles He reminded that every man has a world of his own which can accommodate the most far-flung empires of this earth without any danger of its being devastated by the enemy

“Heart is the abode of peace, O friend, ’tis a country,
Whose citadel is strong, wherein reigns peace and
amity.”¹

The heart is abode of security, O friends; (it has)
fountains and rose-gardens within rose-gardens ”²

Rūmī says that the gardens of our terrestrial world are short-lived, but those of the heart of man are everlasting, the former take a long time in being raised and implanted but can be laid waste in no time while the latter can instantly be brought into being without any danger of its ever withering away

“The flowers that grow from plants are (living but) a moment, the flowers that grow from Reason are (ever) fresh

The flowers that bloom from earth become faded; the flowers that bloom from the heart—oh, what a joy!”³

Rūmī tells us that instead of directing our efforts to the pursuits of worldly-pleasures and carnal enjoyment, we should

At the same time, its nature is rather both, intellectual and emotional as opposed to intellect which possesses only the former quality When illuminated it is capable of knowing the essence of God

1 *The Mathnawī Molvi Ma‘nūn*, p 199

2 *The Mathnawī*, Vol IV, p 31 (Book III, 515)

3 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 515 (Book VI, 4649 50)

endeavour to drink the elixir of Divine love, for only this can transmute our souls into a majestic and lofty state, enabling us to enjoy the bloom of true happiness, irrespective of our station and age.

“Eat your heart (in love of God), that you may be young always (and that) your Visage (may be rosy) with Divine illumination, like the *arghawan* ¹

To become intoxicating thyself like wine (of divine love) seek a heart, good and purer, It shall make thee smiling and cheerful like a flower ²

Rūmī, however, rings a note of caution that one should not be misled by the mention of ‘heart’ by him. He does not mean the heart that abides in the body and throbs, which is a seat of carnal desires and sexual appetites, completely oblivious of the taste of love and the richnesses of conviction, devoid of the frenzy of spiritual passion, and whose garden never blooms. That is not a human heart—it is a slab of stone.

“Is narrow and dark as the souls of Jews, (being) destitute of (spiritual) savour of the loving King.

Neither has the radiance of the Sun shown into that heart, nor is there (in it any) spaciousness or opening of the door ³

This heart too, undoubtedly, resembles the heart of an illuminated person, in its shape and make, but it really bears no relation to the other except that both are denoted by a common name. Water is the name for both—that which is found in a swamp and that which flows in a river, but, one can quench the thirst by the latter while the former being mixed with dust and filth is quite useless. The two hearts differ exactly in the same manner, one belongs to those who are saints and sages, having a purer and elevated soul, while the other throbs in the body of an uncouth

¹ *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 347 (Book II-2442) *Arghawan* alludes to the pink blossoms of the Judas-tree

² *Mathnawī Molvī Maḥnawī*, p 154

³ *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 384 (Book II-3130-31)

libertine, no better than a dead-weight and a piece of flesh

“You say, ‘I too have a heart’, (but) the heart is above the empyrean, it is not below.

Certainly in the dark earth also there is water, but ‘t is not proper for you to wash your hands with that water,

Because, though it is water, it is overcome by the earth
Do not, then, say of your heart, ‘This too is a heart’

The heart that is higher than the heavens is the heart of the saint or the prophet ”¹

Rūmī, then, holds out hope for the common herd as well He says that the human heart is, after all, a precious treasure which is never discarded by God He is willing to accept every heart presented to Him, for He has not an eye on the profit

“(There) that Gracious One hath purchased the piece of goods that no people would look at on account of its shabbiness

With Him no base coin is rejected. for His object in buying is not (to make a) profit ”²

Rūmī advises that since the belly of man is a veil between him and the Supreme Being, it should be cast aside Once man rises above carnal appetites and earthly desires, the mysteries of the spiritual realm are laid bare before him

“Leave the belly and stride towards the heart (spirit), in order that the salutation may come to you from God without (any) veil ”³

Place and Worth of Humanity

The autocratic kingdoms of the middle ages, their unjust and tyrannical ways of government along with the continued warfare between powerful despots, which always held a bleak future for the people, had, in consequence, brought about a sense of despondency and inferiority amongst the people The people had lost their

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol IV, p 125 (Book III, 2245-48)

2 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 329 (Book VI, 1266-67)

3 *Ibid* Vol VI, p 151 (Book V, 2514)

worth in their own eyes. In this atmosphere of mental torpor came the Iranian mysticism which zealously propagated the negative doctrine of *fana*, or annihilation, which meant the loss of ego and a passing away of the human consciousness in a mystical union. The inevitable result of these teachings was that the ideas of self-affirmation and self-perfection, which are at the root of courage and manliness, struggle and betterment, had come to be looked down upon as unpardonable spiritual sins. The Iranian mysticism, in its zeal to propagate the cultivation of divine attributes and the absorption of individual self in the Universal Ego through annihilation of the Self, had depicted such an enlarged portrait of the baser elements in the human self that one felt ashamed of the manhood. It had come to regard the negation of manhood as the ultimate end. This spirit of non-worldliness and renunciation of physical activity, denigration of humanity and the negation of Self had also made inroads into the literary compositions of the time. The doctrine preaching negation of the world and life had imperceptibly brought the urge of life to a standstill within the people who were overtaken by a sense of dejection and helplessness, and who sometimes regarded themselves as baser than even the beasts and vegetable growths. Man had thus become completely oblivious of his exalted position in this universe and the boundless possibilities of his spiritual and material progress through the unfolding of individual potentialities. In order to remove this misunderstanding and rectify this defect, Rūmī forcefully expounded the theory of the exalted position enjoyed by man, in his own inimitable style, which lit the flame of self-affirmation, hope and confidence in the hearts of men. The melodious epics elevating the position of man, sung by Rūmī, have had a far-reaching effect on the subsequent Islamic poetry and opened a new vista of thought for the mystics and poets after him.

Rūmī invites man's attention to his unique creation as a human being. This is a Divine boon, he asserts, and a special favour from God, His robe of honour, prepared and reserved for Adam's progeny alone. This 'human creation' has been repeatedly referred to by God in the Qur'ān in the eulogistic expression of

Ahsan-i-Taqwīm, that is, *of the best stature* ¹

“Read in (the Sura entitled) *Wa'l-Tīn* (the words),
(*We created Man*) *in the best proportion*, for the spirit, O friend,
is a precious pearl

(That spirit created) *in the best proportion* surpasses the
empyrean · (that spirit created) *in the best proportion* is beyond
(the range of) thought”²

Rūmī asks · Who else except man was crowned with the
epithets, “*We have honoured the children of Adam*”³ and “*We have given
thee Abundance*”⁴ by the Lord of the Worlds?

“Did this heaven ever hear (the words) *We have honoured*
which this sorrowful Man heard (from God)?”⁵

The tiara of *We have honoured (the sons of Adam)* is on the
crown of thy head, the collar of *We have given thee* hangs
on thy breast.”⁶

Rūmī tells us that man is the centre and essence of this
universe, he unites the inward and outward aspects of all crea-
tions, he is the source of all goodness and beauty in the world, he
is the best of creations, in short, he comprises a universe in his
own self

“(He is) a sun hidden in a mote suddenly that mote
opens its mouth (and reveals the sun)

The heavens and the earth crumble to atoms before
that Sun when he springs forth from ambush”⁷

Thou art the sea of knowledge hidden in a dewdrop,
thou art the universe hidden in a body three ells long.”⁸

Man, Rūmī says further, is the ultimate end of creation and it
is for him alone that the universe was created by God The entire

1 *At-Tīn*, 4

2 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 314 (Book VI, 1005-6)

3 *Banī Israel*, 70

4 *Al-Kaūthar*, 1

5 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p. 265 (Book VI, 139)

6 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 214 (Book V, 3574)

7 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 511 (Book VI, 4580-81)

8 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 214 (Book V, 3579)

creation, therefore, is bound to serve him

“Every wine is the slave of this (comely) figure and (fair) cheek (of thine) all the drunken feel envy of thee

Thou hast no need of rosy wine: take leave of (its) rosiness, thou (thyself) art (its) rosiness

Man is the substance, and the celestial sphere is his accident; all things are (like) a branch or the step of a ladder . he is the object.

Thou seekest knowledge from books—oh, ridiculous !
Thou seekest pleasure from *halwa* (sweetmeats)—oh, ridiculous !

Service to thee is imposed on all existence as a duty .
how should a substance beg for help from an accident ?”¹

And this is not all, man displays the Divine attributes and is a medium through whom God reflects His signs and lustre of beneficence

“Adam is the astrolabe of the attributes of (Divine) Sublimity the nature of Adam is the theatre for His revelations

Whatever appears in him (Adam) is the reflection of Him, just as the moon is reflected in the water of the river ²

Know that (the world of) created beings is like pure and limpid water in which the attributes of the Almighty are shining

Their knowledge and their justice and their clemency are like a star of heaven (reflected) in running water ”³

Rūmī, however, still not satisfied that he has been able to narrate sufficiently the excellence of the son of Adam, adds that it is, in reality, something which cannot be described fully.

“If I declare the value of this inaccessible (pearl), I shall be consumed, and the hearer too will be consumed ”⁴

And who can really assess the worth of man, a creation so

¹ *The Mathnawī* Vol VI p 214 (Book V, 3567-68, 3575, 3577-78)

² *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 431 (Book IV, 3138-39)

³ *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 433 (Book IV, 3172-73)

⁴ *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 314 (Book IV, 1007)

sublime and grand, but the pity is that man himself does not know how precious he is. He is ever willing to sell himself at a trifling price.

“O thou to whom reason and foresight and intelligence are slaves, how art thou selling thyself so cheaply?”¹

Rūmī then says that Allah is Himself the purchaser of man, for only He knows the worth of His supreme creation :

“He is our Purchaser—*God hath purchased*² hark, rise above anxiety for any (other) purchaser.

Seek the Purchaser who is seeking thee, One who knows thy beginning and end.”³

But Rūmī adds that the qualities of head and heart which make man a human being are born in those who cultivate them and not in those who remain beasts in the garb of men, nor yet in those who have been led astray by their carnal desires and the temptations of their baser-self. Those who lack these qualities are not men but lifeless caricatures of human beings.

“These (others) are not men, they are (mere) forms. they are dead with (desire for) bread and killed by appetite.”⁴

It was, however, difficult to find in the days of Rūmī, as in every other age, those who could be called human beings in the true sense of the word. An overwhelming majority of the people who passed under the name of human beings were no better than beasts and reptiles in their conduct and behaviour, and Rūmī had grown weary of them. Being himself in search of man, he has given expression to his quest in this parable :

“Yesterday, with a lamp, the *Sheikh* went round the city
‘Tired of these beasts, a man I want,’ (said he),
‘These easy-going mates, they have sickened me’
‘A lion of God ; or Rustam, the son of Zal, That’s now
my fancy.’

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 214 (Book V, 3576)

2 *At-Taubah*, p 111

3 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 89 (Book V, 1463-64)

4 *Ibid* , Vol VI, p 174 (Book V, 2886)

'He is not to be found, I have sought him long' said I,
'A thing not to be found? That's what I desire, said
he.'¹

Self-Assertion :

Rūmī did not believe, like some other mystics, in self-negation, indifference, lethargy and renunciation of physical activity. On the contrary, he affirmed the importance of social progress, active life, self-assertion and self-preservation. He considered that the theories of monasticism and renunciation of the world were opposed to the teachings of Islam and the example set by the Prophet. "Had social life not been the object of God," asserted Rūmī, "He would not have prescribed congregational prayers five times a day and on Fridays, and the duty of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong."

"The bird said to him, 'O Khwāja, don't stay in (monastic) seclusion. monasticism is not good in regard to the religion of Ahmad (Mohammed)

The Prophet has forbidden monasticism. how have you embraced a heresy, O trifler?"

The conditions (imposed by Islam) are: (to take part in) the Friday worship and the public prayers, to enjoin good and shun evil,

Live amongst the community that is the object of (Divine) mercy. do not forsake the religion of Ahmad (Mohammed), be ruled by his practice"²

In the days of Rūmī, *tawakkul* i. e. confidence or sincere trust in God was held to mean a complete resignation to the preordained will of God. Any effort, direct or indirect, to obtain the means of subsistence, or admit the thought of providing for the morrow was looked down upon and deemed as incompatible with *tawakkul*. Rūmī explained the correct meaning of *tawakkul* as taught by the

1 *Divan-i-Shams-i-Tebriz*, p. 50

2 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p. 284 (Book VI, 478-80 and 483)

Shari'ah and urged the people to make effort for earning their livelihood with trust in the beneficence of God. Expounding the meaning of the Tradition: *Tether thy camel and have trust in God*, Rūmī says.

“The Prophet said with a loud voice, ‘While trusting in God bind the knee of thy camel’.

Harken to the signification of ‘The earner (worker) is beloved of God’. through trusting in God do not become neglectful as to the (ways and) means.”¹

Harken, O Sire, to combine thy effort with trust in God; to earn thy living, strive and work hard.

Strive hard to fulfil the duty charged unto thee, if thy effort slackens, what a fool thou would be ! ”²

In an allegory told by him Rūmī has repeated in the form of a debate between the lion and the beasts all those arguments which are normally set forth by the easy-going and half-hearted persons in support of their view of quietism. Thereafter, Rūmī advances his own views in the form of the reply given by the lion.

Rūmī explains that the limbs, capacities and capabilities given to the living beings are enough to indicate that the Divine Providence requires their active exertion and application in the form of effort. If anybody hands over a spade to his servant, it implies that the master wants him to dig the earth. In the same way God has endowed us with the limbs and a capacity to work which is a clear indication of His intention that we should strive and set to work all our capabilities and free-will to earn our subsistence. Quietism and suspension of effort are against the intention of Divine Providence and, in reality, they amount to the spurning of the Divine gifts bestowed to the human beings. Therefore, *tawakkul* really means that one should make all possible efforts and have trust in God only in so far as the result is concerned, for, notwithstanding the efforts made, the success or failure still remains entirely in the hands of God.

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 51 (Book I, 913-14)

2 *Mathnawī Molvi Ma'nawī*, p 26

“ ‘Yes,’ said the lion, ‘but *the Lord of His servants*¹ set a ladder before our feet.

Step by step must we climb towards the roof to be a necessitarian here is (to indulge in) foolish hopes

You have feet why do you make yourself out to be lame? You have hands why do you conceal the fingers (whereby you grasp)?

When the master put a spade in the slave’s hand, his object was made known to him (the slave) without (a word falling from his) tongue

When you take His signs to heart, you will devote your life to fulfilling that indication (of His will)

He will give you many hints (for the understanding) of mysteries, He will remove the burden from you and give you (spiritual) authority.

Freewill is the endeavour to thank (God) for His beneficence your necessitarianism is the denial of that beneficence

Thanksgiving for the power (of acting freely) increases your power², necessitarianism takes the (Divine) gift (of freewill) out of your hand

Beware! do not sleep, O inconsiderate necessitarian, save underneath that fruit-laden tree,

So that every moment the wind may shake the boughs and shower upon the sleeper (spiritual) dessert and provision for the journey.

If you are putting trust in God, put trust (in Him) as regards (your) work sow (the seed), then rely upon the Almighty³

Rūmī sets out to explain, on behalf of the lion, that the way of

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- 1 ‘Lord of His servants’ alludes to Qur’ānic verse (*Adh-Dharrīāt* 56) “I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me.”
 - 2 This paraphrases the verse of the Qur’ān (*Ibrāhīm*, 7) “If ye give thanks, I will give you more (of My bounty)”
 - 3 *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, pp 52/53 (Book I, 929-32, 934-35, 938-39, 941-42, and 947)

the prophets and the saints consists of striving and making effort. He also explains that "this worldliness" from which the *Shari'ah* wants a faithful to seek deliverance does not comprise the riches or offsprings; it lies in being attached to worldly possessions and temptations, since the Divine blessings shall be denied to those who lead a life of negligence and ingratitude.

"'Yes', said the lion; 'but at the same time consider the exertions of the prophets and the true believers.

God, exalted is He, prospered their exertion and what they suffered of oppression and heat and cold

O master, exert thyself so long as thou canst in (following) the way of the prophets and saints!

What is this world? To be forgetful of God; it is not merchandise and silver and weighing-scales and women

As regards the wealth that you carry for religion's sake, 'How good is righteous wealth (for the righteous man)' as the Prophet recited

Exertion is a reality, and medicine and disease are realities. The sceptic in his denial of exertion practised (and thereby affirmed) exertion."¹

Critique of the Rulers :

Rūmī reproached not only the populace or the learned who made mistakes in following or expounding the religious precepts, in his preachings and poems he often bitterly criticised those who held the reins of government. He openly taxed them with the charge that they were an inefficient lot who had turned the government into a child's play. In the days of despotic rule, Rūmī's criticism could have had dangerous consequences, but he never held his tongue from expressing what he considered to be just and truthful.

"When authority is in the hands of profligates, (2)
Dhu'l-Nūn² is inevitably in prison.

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol II pp 55/56 (Book I. 971-72 975 983-64 & 991)

2 A famous mystic, Tha'labani ibn Ibrāhīm, generally known as Dhu'l-Nūn al-Misri (c. 245 A. H. 859 A. D.)

When the pen (of authority) is in the hand of a traitor,
unquestionably Mansūr¹ is on a gibbet.

When this affair (dominion) belongs to the foolish, the
necessary consequence is (that) *they² kill the prophets.³*

Further, he criticises the rulers of his own times in these
words

“When authority falls into the hands of one who has lost
the (right) way, he deems it to be a high position (*jāh*),
(but in reality) he has fallen into a pit (*chāh*)

The foolish have become leaders, and from fear (of
them) the wise have drawn their heads into the cloak.”⁴

Dialectics .

Rūmī is critical of the rationalists for their undue dependence
on senses. At the same time he criticises the dialecticians too for
their formalism and addiction to disputation. But, unlike other
mystics, he is not content with summoning the people towards love
and faith, intuition and spiritual enlightenment alone, he also tries
to find out a convincing answer, in his own immutable manner, to
the difficult questions of dialectics and philosophy. In other words,
Rūmī's approach to scholasticism is not simply critical but affirma-
tive and constructive as well. In cases where the dialectical
method leads nowhere, or the logical syllogism employed for it
makes the matter even more intricate and insoluble, Rūmī
approaches the problem directly as if it were a simple question and
brings forth such parallels, from everyday happenings, or apologues,
anecdotes, fables or legends, that a solution to the problem almost
suggests itself and helps to convince the reader of the truth under-
lying it. The method employed by Rūmī is simple yet so subtle,
if it can be so-called, that the reader never feels that Rūmī is
leading him to a certain conclusion which he did not already

1 Mansūr Hallaj, another mystic (d 309 A H /913 A D)

2 Qur'ān , Al-i-Imran 112

3 *The Mathnawī*, Vol I, p 293 (Book II, 1393 and 1398-99).

4 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 352 (Book IV, 1447 and 1452)

know; on the contrary, he feels as if Rūmī has simply given expression to his own views on that particular question. The Mathnawī is thus a striking example of solving the most intricate theological and metaphysical issues, and also of instilling a deep conviction through the solutions offered by it, which cannot be had by going through a library of philosophical dissertations. No reader of the Mathnawī can doubt the sincerity of Rūmī and his attachment to the Creator or the inspiration drawn by him from higher sources in dealing with these intricate issues.

Rūmī belonged to the Ashʿarite school of dialectics and had earlier been a profound scholar and successful teacher of the Islamic scholasticism. He did not, however, remain a mere interpreter of that school but laid the foundation of a new method of dialectical reasoning which is quite distinct and more efficacious than the method of earlier propounders of his school. He is nearer to the Qurʾānic arguments in approach and treatment of the theological problems, for he follows in the footsteps of the Qurʾān in its simplicity, directness and appeal to the common-sense

Existence of God:

The existence of God has always been the fundamental and the most important problem for all the religious doctors and scholastics. Religious philosophers of the old have undoubtedly argued the issue quite logically which puts their adversaries to silence but their arguments fail to impart conviction in the existence of God. The Qurʾān, on the other hand, appeals to the common-sense of man and invokes his inherent though dormant inclination, to accept the Supreme Truth. The Qurʾān calls upon the Prophet to declare:

*Can there be doubt concerning Allah, the Creator of the
heavens and the earth ?¹*

The manner in which the Qurʾān directly introduces the subject and shows its astonishment on the doubt concerning Allah, catches man unawares and then he is led to think of the Creator of the universe, the Fashioner of all creations. The Qurʾān helps

1. *Ibrāhīm*, 10.

man to proceed from the effect to the cause, from the things made to the maker and from the heaven and earth to their Fashioner. One finds this method employed throughout in the Qur'ān. It calls attention to the creations of God Almighty and helps to ponder over His attributes ; and, this is the easiest and shortest as well as the surest route, according to the Qur'ān, to attain the gnosis of God.

*We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth. Doth not thy Lord suffice since He is witness over all things?*¹

Rūmi employs the same method of argumentation in the Mathnawi. He draws inference from the universe to the First Cause and the Creator of the universe. He says that we see a number of incidents taking place in the world but not the doer. It is thus sufficiently clear, argues Rūmi, that there is some one who is the ultimate cause of these happenings ; the act is before our eyes while the doer is hidden :

“See ye the pen writing but not the pen that writes :

The horse is seen running, but not that who rides ;

The arrow is visible, but not the bow.

The life is in sight, but hidden is the Life of lives ”²

Rūmi argues that the movement is itself an evidence of the power which is providing the driving force. If there is a whiff of air, there must also be someone who has put it into motion.

“Thou sawest the wind moving: know that a Mover of the wind is here, who drives the wind along.

Therefore in the mind of every one possessing knowledge this is certain, that with everything that moves there is a mover.”³

May be that man does not see the cause, but the effect is certainly before him. Therefore, it is evident that there must be the cause of everything, even though it may be hidden from one's eyes. If a human frame has life and movement, it must have a

1 *Fussilat*, 53

2. *Mathnawi Molei Ma'nawi*, p. 305

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, pp 279-80 (Book IV, 125 and 153).

soul too. One cannot see the soul, but is not the self-propelled movement of the body a proof that there is a soul in it?

“If you do not see him visibly, apprehend him by means of the manifestation of the effect.

The body is moved by the spirit: you do not see the spirit: but from the movement of the body know the spirit (to be its mover).”¹

Rūmī asks. What else can be a greater evidence of the existence of the Ultimate Cause than its effects, and of the Creator than His creation? What else one wants in order to accept the existence of the sun than the light it casts on the world?

“Does not light of the sun, by its presence,
Serve thee a proof of its existence.”²

The universe does not simply exist, it is functioning in accordance with certain set physical laws in an orderly fashion. The celestial bodies move in their orbit according to a pre-ordained law; the wind and clouds are not free to go wherever they like. All these laws, drawn out so carefully and minutely, and the order and sequence we see in the cosmos, drive us to one conclusion only, and it is that the universe has a Creator and Ruler who is Wise, Knowing. The world can never deviate for a moment from the path chalked out for it by Him.

“If thou seest not the revolutionary action of the (Divine) decree, look at the surging and whirling (that appears) in the (four) elements,

The sun and moon are two mill-oxen, going round and round and keeping watch (over the world)

The stars likewise run from house to house (in the sky) and convey every good and evil fortune

The cloud, too, is lashed with a whip of fire, (as though to say), ‘Go that way, do not go this way’

Rain upon such and such a valley, do not rain in this quarter’. He reprimands it, saying, ‘Give ear!’³

1. *The Mathnawī*, Vol IV, p 280 (Book IV, 154-55)

2. *Mathnawī Molvī Ma'nawī*, p 305

3. *The Mathnawī*, Vol IV, pp 309-10 (Book IV, 916, 919-20 and 932-33)

Rūmī says that God has not created the universe for His own benefit ; it has been created for the benefit and continuous promotion of man from one stage to another. He elucidates the ultimate purpose underlying the creation of the universe which is being sought without any success by the philosophers and dialecticians, in a beautiful and convincing manner.

“The Prophet has declared that God said, ‘My purpose in creating was to do good,

I created to the intent that they (My creatures) might draw some gain from Me, and that they might smear their hands with My honey,

Not to the end that I might draw some gain (from them), and that I might tear off a coat from one (who is) naked.”¹

Not to derive advantage did I create ; it was but simply (to shower) rewards on My bondsmen.”²

Prophethood ·

Instead of himself explaining the significance of prophethood, Rūmī prefers the prophets to elucidate the content and purpose of prophethood. They tell us that as Divine physicians they purify the hearts of mankind. Other physicians reach the heart by feeling the pulse but prophets need no medium to look into it. Ordinary physicians are concerned with the physical health of man while prophets cleanse his heart and rectify his morals and behaviour.

“We are the (spiritual) physicians, the disciples of God · the Red Sea beheld us *and was cloven*”³

Those natural physicians are different, for they look into the heart by means of a pulse

We look well into the heart without intermediary, for through clairvoyance we are in a high belvedere

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 357 (Book II, 2635-37)

2 *Mathnawī Mohr Ma'nawī*, p 159

3 Alludes to the verse of Qur'ān “Then We inspired Moses, saying . Smite the Sea with thy staff, and it parted and each part was as a mountain vast ” (*Ash-Shu'ara*’, 63)

Those (others) are physicians of food and fruit, by them the animal soul is (made) strong.

We are physicians of deeds and words: the ray of the light of (Divine) Majesty is our inspirer,

(So that we know) that a deed like this will be beneficial to thee, while a deed like that will cut (thee) off from the Way;

And that words like these will lead thee on (to grace), while words like those will bring anguish to thee.

To those (others) physicians a (sample of) urine is evidence, whereas this evidence of ours is the inspiration of the Almighty

We do not desire a fee from anyone¹: our fee comes from a Holy Place.

Hark, come hither for the incurable disease¹ We, one by one, are a medicine for the (spiritually) sick."²

In advancing arguments in support of the prophethood, Rūmī depends on such arguments as are appealing to the heart rather than bringing forth logical pleas for proving it on rational grounds. He says that every act of a prophet tells us that he is an apostle of God. He is a miracle from head to foot; one need have only a pure heart, untouched by hostility and pride to recognise a prophet. In other words, the prophet is himself an irrefutable evidence of his prophethood. And this was the reason why Abdullah ibn Salām³ exclaimed as soon as he saw the Prophet of Islam: "By God, this cannot be the countenance of an imposter."

"The heart of every one knowing its taste is cloven ;
Like a miracle wrought by the word, when a prophet
hath spoken !"

Rūmī says that the conscience of the followers of a prophet is perfectly in tune with the call he gives. Whatever the prophet

1 *Vide* the verse of the Qur'ān "And O my people ! I ask of you no wealth therefor " (*Hūd* . 29)

2 *The Mathnawī*, Vol IV, p 151 (Book III, 2700-9)

3. A distinguished companion of the Prophet of Islam who was formerly a Jew Rabbi

enjoins, his followers accept it ungrudgingly. The followers are really enchanted into an alluring rapture by the invigorating and revolutionising call of the prophet, since, the prophet has a message entirely different and new, capable of arousing a righteous zeal amongst his followers, that is unknown to any other view of life and the world.

“When a prophet utters a cry from without, the soul of the community falls to worship within,

Because never in the world will the soul's ear have heard from any one a cry of the same kind as his

That stranger¹ (the soul), by immediate perception of the strange (wondrous) voice, has heard from God's tongue (the words). *Verily² I am near³*

Rūmī says that no external evidence is required of the genuineness and truthfulness of a prophet because the call of the prophet strikes a hidden cord in the hearts of those who follow him. The call of a prophet constitutes both a premise and an argument in its favour, for, that is the only natural and convincing testimony required by the true nature of man. When a thirsty person is offered water he never asks to prove it first nor the child calls for any evidence before taking to the breast of his mother. What is really required for finding credence and acceptance of the truth is simply a sincere demand and sympathetic approach by the seeker of truth.

“When you say to a thirsty man, ‘Make haste! there is water in the cup take the water at once,’

Will the thirsty man say in any event?—“This is (mere) assertion go from my side, O pretender! Get thee far away!

Or (else) produce some testimony and proof that this

1 The soul separated from God is “a stranger” and also an exile

2 The Qurʾān says “And when My servants question thee concerning Me, then surely I am nigh” (*Al-Baqarah*, 186)

3 *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 408 (Book II, 3599-360)

is of aqueous kind and consists of the *water that runs from a spring*.¹

Or (suppose that) a mother, cries to her suckling babe, 'Come, I am mother . hark, my child '—

Will the babe say ?—'O mother bring the proof (of it), so that I may take comfort in thy milk '—²

Rūmī does not consider that miracles are capable of inspiring faith, or to say it differently, it is not necessary that anyone witnessing a miracle should also become convinced of the truthfulness of a prophet's message. And this is an incontrovertible fact too, since the biography of the Prophet of Islam hardly mentions anyone whose conversion was brought about by a miracle. All the illustrious companions of the Prophet were those who had responded to his call—and that is really what the faith means to a person. Rūmī says that the miracles are worked by the prophets simply to outwit their opponents and, evidently, one defeated in arguments can hardly be expected to become a faithful ally. The cause of attraction and devoted attachment lies in affinity and spiritual akinness.

"Miracles are not the cause of religious faith, 'tis the scent of homogeneity that attracts (to itself) qualities (of the same kind)

Miracles are (wrought) for the purpose of subjugating the foe the scent of homogeneity is (only) for the winning of hearts.

A foe is subjugated, but not a friend . how should a friend have his neck bound ?—³

The prophets are high-souled, dignified and stately, and therefore one has to be submissive and humble in order to derive benefit from them. Like sovereigns, it behoves them to ordain, and, for others, to listen and act. Contention and debate with a

1 Alludes to *Al-Mull*, 30 "Say Have ye thought If (all) your water were to disappear into the earth, who then could bring you gushing water ?"

2. *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p 408 (Book II, 3593-97).

3 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 324 (Book VI, 1176-78)

prophet simply make one unfit to grasp the truth of his message :

“If there are thousands of (eager) seekers (of knowledge) and a single weary (disgusted) one, the Messenger will refrain from delivering his message

These mystery-telling Messengers of the hidden Mind require a hearer who has the nature of Israfil ¹

They have a haughtiness and pride like (that of) kings: they require service from the people of the world

Until you perform the observances due to them, how will you gain profit from their message ?”²

Thereafter Rūmī asks : why should not the prophets be so dignified ? They have to be lordly for they are the apostles of the Lord of the worlds

“How is every (kind of) observance acceptable to them ?—for they have come from the Sublime Palace.”³

Life after Death :

Rūmī propounds the view that death is the gateway to eternal life and spiritual advancement. For death is not annihilation but simply dissolution of the bodily particles, essential for sustaining higher forms of spiritual life , so, it is nothing more than demolition of the ruins before undertaking a new construction.

“The spiritual way ruins the body and, after having ruined it, restores it to prosperity .

Ruined the house for the sake of the golden treasure, and with that same treasure builds it better (than before).”⁴

In another verse he expresses the same idea : death bespeaks of a richer and fuller life in the same way as the shedding of the blossom is a sign of fruits becoming visible

“When the blossom is shed, the fruit comes to a head .

1 The archangel who is always listening eagerly for the Divine command to sound the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection

2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 202 (Book III, 3604-7)

3 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 202 (Book III, 3609)

4 *Ibid* , Vol II, p 20 (Book I, 306-7)

when the body is shattered, the spirit lifts up its head."¹

It is unthinkable that God, the Bestower and Enricher, shall take away such a precious thing as life from His bondsmen without any recompense. Undoubtedly He intends to disperse the bodily particles to refashion the spirit into another vehicle homogeneous with its true nature and faculties in an everlasting world, and bestow upon it the gifts which no eye has seen and no ear has heard, nor any anxiety shall enter there into the hearts of men.

"One who is slain by a king like this, he (the king) leads him to fortune and to the best (most honourable) estate

Unless he (the king) had seen advantage to him (the gold-smith) in doing violence to him, how should that absolute Mercy have sought to do violence?"²

Rûmî lays stress on the fact that death is essential for a higher and eternal life. He illustrates his view thus:

"The ignorant (child) first washes the tablet, then he writes the letters upon it

At the time of washing the tablet (of the heart) one must recognise that it will be made into a book (of mysteries).

When they lay the foundation of a house (to rebuild it), they dig up the first foundation.

(Also), people first fetch up clay from the depths of the earth in order that at last you may draw up *flowing water*"³

To write we seek a paper that is blank. Seed is dispersed in a field not already sown

It is nothingness from which existence springs forth, or, in other words, it is the want that sets in motion the munificence and mercy of the Creator. Those who are generous and benevolent treat the poor with a loving-kindness

1. *The Mathnawî*, Vol II, p 160 (Book I, 2929)

2. *Ibid*, Vol II, p 17 (Book I, 242-3)

3. *Ibid*, Vol II, p 315 (Book II, 1827 and 1829-31) "Flowing water" alludes to the Qur'ānic verse, *Al-Mulk* 30

"Life comes out of the dead, so do the rich need poor to be bounteous"

Rūmī brings forth yet another argument in support of his contention. He calls to attention the evolutionary process which required the soul to progress, stage by stage, from a lower existence to a higher one until it attained the shape of a human being. "How could have the soul of man advanced to its present dignified position", asks Rūmī, "if it had continued to exist in its earlier state?" There is hardly any reason, therefore, to fear death.

"From the day when thou camest into existence, thou wert fire or air or earth

If thou hadst remained in that condition, how should this (present) height have been reached by thee?

The Transmuter did not leave thee in thy first (state of) existence. He established a better (state of) existence in the place of that (former one),

Thou hast gained these (successive) lives from (successive) deaths. why hast thou averted thy face from dying in Him?

What loss was thine (what loss didst thou suffer) from those deaths, that thou hast clung (so tenaciously) to (this earthly) life, O rat?"¹

Death is thus, in the eyes of Rūmī, not extinction but the beginning of a new form of existence. He holds that the death, instead of being hateful, is an occasion of joy for the faithful

"I have tried it my death is (consists) in life when I escape from this life 'tis to endure for ever"²

Death is quite different for those who are spiritually enlightened from what it is for others. Those who are illuminated welcome death as a bounty from the Lord, for they regard it as a stepping-stone to further elevation of their spirit

"Hūd drew a line round the believers the wind would become soft (subside) when it reached that place,

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol Vī, pp 49-50 (Book V-789-91 and 796-97)

2 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 215 (Book III-3838)

Even so, to those who know God (*‘arfān*) the wind of Death is soft and pleasant as the breeze (that wafts the scent) of (loved) ones like Joseph.”¹

Free-will and Necessitarianism:

This has been one of the most hotly-contested issues of dialectics. One school of the dialecticians denied “Free Will” and held that man was helpless before the preordained and immutable decree of the Creator. The people subscribing to this view were known by the name of *Jabriah* or Necessitarians. Rūmī poses the question: If man has been made so helpless, why has he been enjoined to perform certain actions and refrain from others? Why was the *Sharī‘ah* promulgated for him? “Has anybody heard,” asks Rūmī, “someone giving a command to the stones?”

“He (the Necessitarian) says that commanding and forbidding are naught and that there is no power of choice. All this (doctrine) is erroneous.

The entire *Qur’ān* consists of commands and prohibitions and threats (of punishment): who (ever) saw commands given to a marble rock?”²

Rūmī says that free-will is ingrained in the nature of man who demonstrates it by his everyday actions. If a piece of timber falls on somebody from the roof, he is never angry with it nor does he seek vengeance from the flood or the wind from which he suffers a loss. This is so because he knows that these things do not possess a will of their own. But the same man seeks retribution against another man—because he is aware that man is the master of his actions.

“If a piece of timber break off from your house-roof and fall upon you and wound you severely,

Will you feel any anger against the timber of the roof?

Will you ever devote yourself to taking vengeance upon it,

1. *The Mathnawī*, Vol II, p. 48 (Book I-854 and 860).

2. *Ibid*, Vol VI, pp. 181-82 (Book V-3019 and 3026).

(And say), 'why did it hit me and fracture my hand?
It has been my mortal foe and enemy?'

And (in the case of) a man who visits your wife, a
hundred thousand angers shoot up from you.

(On the contrary), if a flood come and sweep away your
house-hold goods, will your reason bear any enmity towards
the flood?

And if the wind came and carried off your turban, when
did your heart show any anger against the wind?

The anger within you is a clear demonstration of (the
existence of) a power of choice (in Man), so that you must
not excuse yourself after the fashion of Necessitarians¹

Rūmī goes a step further and claims that even animals are
aware whether a certain being possesses free will or not. He
draws this conclusion from the behaviour of pets like dogs and
camels who sometimes retaliate against the man hitting them but
not against the stick or the stone with which they are struck.

"If a camel-driver goes on striking a camel, the camel
will attack the striker.

The camel's anger is not (directed) against his stick:
therefore the camel has got some notion of the power of
choice (in Man).

Similarly a dog, if you throw a stone at him, will rush
at you and become contorted (with fury).

Since the animal intelligence is conscious of the power
of choice (in Man), do not thou, O human intelligence,
hold this (Necessitarian doctrine). Be ashamed!

This (power of choice) is manifest, but in his desire for
the meal taken before dawn² that (greedy) eater shuts his
eyes to the light.

Since all his desire is for eating bread, he sets his face

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 183 (Book V-3041-43 and 3046-49)

2 The last permissible meal during the time between sunset and dawn in the
month of Ramadhan, when the Muslims fast from dawn to sunset

towards the darkness, saying, 'It is not (yet) day.'"¹

Causation :

Divergent views were held by different factions of the then Muslims about the cause and effect. The view held by the philosophers was that the phenomenal world is governed by a sequence of cause and effect and, therefore, there is a permanent and essential correlation between the two; the effect proceeds from its cause in the same way as the cause is immanent in the effect. The Mu'tazilites too generally subscribed to the same view and held that since the effect was an inevitable outcome of the cause, there was hardly any possibility of any change in it. As a natural consequence, they denied miracles and viewed the effect proceeding without a cause as a 'breach of custom' which was an impossibility. The Ash'arites, on the other hand, subscribed to a view diametrically opposed to the Mu'tazilites and did not recognise any cause whatsoever for an effect to follow it. All causes were, in their view, of only secondary importance in determining the production or non-production of the effects. Similarly, their view was that no substance has any property whatsoever, all causes and substances were merely instruments for manifesting the effects and accidents in accordance with the will of God. The divergent views held by the different sections of the Muslim community were also proving harmful inasmuch as these were employed by the free-thinkers and libertarians to accept or reject whatever they liked or disliked according to their wishes and sweet-will.

The view propounded by Rūmī in this regard is a middle path between the two extremes of the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites. He recognises causation and accepts that there is a sequence of cause and effect in this phenomenal world which cannot be denied. He says that God has appointed effect to proceed from the cause just as He has made the properties immanent in the substances. At the same time, miracles are possible and

1. *The Masnavi*, Vol. VI, pp. 183-184 (Book V, 3050-52 and 3054-56)

these have also been worked by men of God from time to time,

“Most happenings come to pass according to the (customary) law, (but) sometimes the (Divine) Power breaks the law

He hath established a goodly law and custom ; then He hath made the (evidentiary) miracle a breach of the custom

If honour does not reach us without a (mediating) cause, (yet) the (Divine) Power is not remote from the removal of the cause ”¹

Normally the people see the cause and erroneously consider it to be the real agent They are helpless for they cannot draw any other conclusion from what they have been made to witness in this phenomenal world

“In short, thou are entangled in the cause,

But there is an excuse, for thou knowest it not.”²

Rūmī says that the causation is decidedly a fact but the “Cause of all causes” is still a greater reality. He is the only Real Agent, Creator of all causes and Omnipotent Lord, and, therefore, it does not behove man to recognise the phenomenal causes and forget the First Cause.

“O thou who art caught by the cause, do not fly outside (of causation); but (at the same time) do not suppose the removal of the Causer

The Causer brings (into existence) whatsoever He will the Absolute Power tears up (destroys) the causes ”³

Rūmī repeatedly stresses the fact that the causes of effects we ordinarily come to know are those which are capable of being perceived through our senses. In addition to these external causes there are some others too which are latent and hidden from our view. The causes known to us are immanent in the hidden ones in the same way as the effect proceeds from its evident cause The hidden cause is thus an instrument for using the manifest cause in

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 94 (Book V-1544-46)

2 *Mathnawī Mafḥūḥ Maṣṣūḥ*, p 261

3 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 94 (Book V-1347-48)

accordance with the Will of God which is really the Prime Mover and the Real Cause behind every incident.

“If you strike stone on iron, it (the fire) leaps out, 'tis by God's command that it puts forth its foot.

The stone and the iron are indeed causes, but look higher, O good man !

For this (external) cause was produced by that (spiritual) cause . when did a cause ever proceed from itself without a cause ?

That (spiritual) cause makes this (external) cause operative , sometimes, again, it makes it fruitless and ineffectual.”¹

Just as we perceive the external causes, the prophets are able to see the latent causes.

“And those causes which guide the prophets on their way are higher than these (external) causes.

(Ordinary) minds are familiar with this (external) cause, but the prophets are familiar with those (spiritual) causes ”²

The external causes are merely secondary and dependent on the latent or spiritual causes .

“Over the (secondary) causes there are other (primary) causes ‘ do not look at the (secondary) cause , let thy gaze fall on that (primary cause).”³

And, again he stresses the superiority of latent causes to the external ones .

“These causes are (linked together) like the physician and the sick these causes are like the lamp and the wick

Twist a new wick for your night-lamp (but) know that the lamp of the sun transcends these things ”⁴

The prophets are sent by God at a time when the entire community has accepted the external causes as the real and ultimate

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 47 (Book I, 840,842-43 and 845)

2 *Ibid* , Vol II, p 47 (Book I-844 and 846)

3 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p, 141 (Book III-2516)

4 *Ibid* , Vol II, p 316 (Book II-1845-46)

ones, and discarded the Creator of all causes. In other words, people become materialists or pagans by rejecting the Ultimate Cause or associating external causes with Him. The prophets have, therefore, to strike at the root of this slavery to the external causes and call attention to the Creator of all causes and effects. This is also the reason why the prophets are allowed to work miracles, for, God wants to demonstrate through them that every incident depends entirely on His Will, whether the ordinary sequence of cause and effect is maintained or not.

“The prophets came in order to cut (the cords of secondary) causes. they flung their miracles at Saturn (in the Seventh Heaven)

Without cause (means) they clove the sea asunder, without sowing they found heaps of corn

Sand, too, was turned into flour by their work; goat's hair became silk as it was pulled (from the hide).

The whole of the *Qur'ān* consists in (is concerned with) the cutting off of (secondary) causes (its theme is) the glory of the poor (prophet or saint) and the destruction of (those like) Abū Lahab¹

Still, the sequence of cause and effect is the ordinary law or the way of God prescribed for the phenomenal world. It is intended to create an urge in man for making effort and striving to achieve his ends

“But, for the most part, He lets the execution (of His will) follow the course of causation, in order that a seeker may be able to pursue the object of his desire.”²

These are some of the examples how Rūmī solved those problems of philosophy and religion and elucidated the tenets and doctrines of the Faith which had been turned into a spell of ideas and thoughts by the wordy wrangling of the Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites. Rūmī turned these dry as dust philosophical discourses

1 *The Mathnawī*, Vol IV, p 141 (Book III, 2517-20) (Abū Lahab was an uncle of the Prophet and his most bitter enemy)

2 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 94 (Book V, 1549)

into lively and interesting issues and illustrated them by means of anecdotes, fables and parables. He thus made the problems clear enough for his readers to grasp the truth underlying these intricate questions.

Rank and Worth of the Mathnawi :

The Mathnawi is one of the greatest mystical poems which has left a lasting and indelible mark on the thought and literature of the Islamic world. It would be no exaggeration to claim that there is hardly any other literary composition which has so influenced the Muslim peoples, and that too, for such a long time. The intellectual and literary circles have been drawing inspiration from the Mathnawi for the past six hundred years. In poetic merit and originality of ideas, in sublimity of thoughts and intensity of feelings, in the raptures of love and ecstasy, the Mathnawi has proved to be an unexcelled literary composition. It is an inexhaustible treasure, ever shedding its brilliance and bringing to light new ideas and thoughts, styles and dictions. The dialecticians and doctors of religion have ever since been drawing upon the Mathnawi to solve the problems of dialectics through its direct and easily understandable method of solving these issues. The examples and anecdotes through which Rumi has solved these problems can still satisfy the critical minds of the intelligent youths who do not want to be driven into a common groove. Most of all, the Mathnawi enjoys to this day the widest popularity as a manual of guidance for those who want to be infused with a fervour of Divine love, passionate devotion and spiritual enthusiasm by gaining access to the mystical subtleties of beautiful visions and illuminations, and the esoteric meanings of the Path, Love, Yearning and Union.

No work of the nature, as the Mathnawi is, can be free from faults or can remain beyond criticism. It has not been uncommon that the misguided mystics have taken advantage of Rumi's views, or the people with a pantheistic bent of mind have employed certain quasi-erotic expressions used in the Mathnawi for the defence of existentialist monism. The Mathnawi is, after all, a

literary composition by a human being who was neither infallible nor in a position to avoid his intuitional knowledge and spiritual illumination being influenced to some extent by his own propensities and inclinations of mind and extraneous impressions. Despite these human failings, the Mathnawī excels the literary and poetic works on the subject in its boldness of approach, variety of ideas and wealth of expression. It is indeed a living example of the intellectual superiority and immortality of Islam, establishing beyond doubt that Islam is always capable of breathing new life into its adherents. It is no mean achievement of Rūmī that the Mathnawī pulled out the thinkers and litterateurs of his time from the intellectual stupor into which they had fallen and revitalised them with a ferment of literary endeavour.

The Mathnawī has yet another achievement to its credit—and that belongs to the recent times. When materialism began to make inroads into the world of Islam for the second time during the twentieth century under the cover of western thought, science and philosophy, producing a scepticism and an inclination to disbelieve everything beyond the ken of senses, and the old Islamic scholasticism failed to cope with the situation, the Mathnawī of Maulana-i-Rum was again able to withstand the intellectual onslaught of the victorious and advancing materialistic West, which would have indeed been no less disastrous than its political domination. It again lit the flame of faith in revelation and the revealed truths, filling the hearts with the reverence for the prophets, and inculcating belief in the reality and the unlimited possibilities of the spiritual and the unseen world. It brought back to the citadel of Islam innumerable souls which had been waylaid by the materialistic view of the life and the world, so forcefully propounded by the West. Quite a large number of western educated Muslims, especially in the Indian subcontinent, have acknowledged the debt they owe to the Mathnawī in rediscovering the true content of the faith. The greatest Muslim thinker and philosopher of the present era, Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal has repeatedly owned with gratitude that he has imbibed the inspiration of faith and love, inner warmth of spirit and the

effervescent dynamism of action from the Mathnawī of his spiritual mentor, Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī

“A man of penetrating insight, Rūmī, my mentor,
The caravan enchanted with love got in him a path-
finder

He has an abode higher than the sun and moon,
Of the milky way he makes his canopy's string.
With the light of the Qur'ān his bosom radiates,
His mirror (of heart) puts the cup of Jamshed¹ to
shame.

Rejoicing notes of that musician, pure of heart,
Within my bosom make a tumult start.”²

At another place, Iqbāl says:

“A guide to the path of rapturous love, Rūmī indites,
Songs, which are a nectar for those dying of thirst.”³

But, as Iqbāl complains, instead of taking to heart the gift of Rūmī—his lofty idealism, his intuitive certitude and the glow of rapturous love—a section has been using his verses simply for musical recitals and whirling frenzy

“They dilated upon his works but cared not to under-
stand at all,
The content of his words eluded these fellows like a
ghezāl⁴

Nothing they learnt save the chant and whirl,
And shut their eyes to the dance of soul”⁵

This was, however, not the fault of Mathnawī which can still be a lodestar to the present materialistic age which is repining for the true and ardent love

“Thy heart not burns, nor is chaste thy glance,
Why wonder, then, if thou art not bold

1 Alludes to the legendary cup of the Iranian emperor Jamshed in which future events could be seen

2 Mathnawī, ‘*Pas Che Bayed Kard*’, p 5

3 *Javed Nāma*, p 44

4 A dear : e a sweetheart with beautiful eyes

5 *Javed Nāma*, p 245

The eyes that see by the light of the West,
Without a bead of tear, crafty and vile they are."¹

Iqbāl is confident that the Mathnawi of Rūmī can still awaken the soul from its slumber of heedlessness. Therefore, his message to the youth of today is

"Have Rūmī as thy guide and spiritual mentor,
Thy heart shall be filled, God-willing, with a mighty
fervour.

Rūmī can cleave the kernel from its shell,
Since implanted firmly is his foot in the path of love "²

1 *Bal-i-Jibreel*, p 52

2 *Javed Nāma*, pp 244-45

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- 50 *Qalā'id al-Jawāhir*—Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Tadfi al-Hanbali Qalā'id al-Jawāhir, Egypt (1303 A H)
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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

<i>A. H</i>	<i>A D</i>	<i>Events and Personalities</i>
21-110	642-728	Hasan al-Basri
61 (10th Muharram)	680 (10th October)	Massacre of Husain ibn 'Ali
61-101	681-720	'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz
73	692	'Abdullah bin Zubair (d)
80-150	699-767	Abu Hanifa, an-Nu'man
94-179	713-795	Malik ibn Anas, Imam
99-101	717-720	Reign of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz
122	739	Rising of Zaid ibn 'Ali bin Husain against Caliph Hisham
124	741	Ibn Shahab Zuhri (d)
144	761	Execution of Ibn al-Muqana'
145 (15th of Ramadhan)	762 (7th December)	Execution of Muhammad Zun-Nafs-us-Zakiya
145 (24th of Zul-Qa'ada)	763 (14th February)	' Death of Ibrahim ibn 'Abdullah
150	767	Ibn Juraih Makki (d)
150-204	767-840	Ash Shafe'i, Imam Muhammad ibn Idris
151	768	Ibn Ish'eq (d.)
153	770	Ma'mar Yamni (d.)
156	773	Sa'eed ibn abu-'Aruba Madni (d)
160	776	Rabi'e ibn Sabih (d.)
164-241	780-855	Hanbal, Imam Ahmad ibn
182	798	Haitham ibn Bashir (d.)
187	803	Ahmad ibn Hanbal's first meeting with Ash-Shafe'i
194-256	810-870	Al-Bukhari, Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Isma'il
204	819	Ahmad ibn Hanbal began teaching of Tradition
204-261	819-874	Muslim, Abdul Husain
218	833	Caliph al-Mamun's edict in regard to the creation of Qur'an

<i>A H.</i>	<i>A D</i>	<i>Events and Personalities</i>
218-227	833-842	Reign of Caliph al-Mu'tasim
232-247	847-861	Reign of Caliph al-Mutawakkil
258	871	Al-Kindi, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb (d)
260-324	873-935	Al-Ash'ari, Abul Hasan 'Alī
273	886	Abū 'Abdullah ibn Mājah (d.)
275	888	Abū Daūd Sajistānī (d)
286	899	Abū Sa'eed al-Janābī (d)
299-567	911-1171	Fatimide Caliphate
303	816	Abū 'Abdur Rahman an-Nasā'ī (d)
309	921	Execution of Hallāj
311	923	Abū Bakr Khallal (d)
331	943	Tahāwī (d)
332	944	al-Maturīdī, Abū Mansūr (d)
339	950	al-Fārābī, Abū Nasr Muḥammad (d)
362	973	Islamic law of inheritance changed by the Fatimides
372	983	<i>Tarāwīḥ</i> disallowed by the Fatimides
393	1003	Punishment for offering <i>Salat-ur-Zuhā</i>
395	1005	Water-cress and marsh-mellow prohibited by Fatimides
403	1013	Baqillānī, Abū Bakr (d)
411	1020	Wine declared lawful by the Fatimides
418	1027	Asfara'mī, Abū Is'hāq (d)
424	1033	People made to prostrate before the Fatimide Caliph
428	1037	Ibn Sīna, Abū 'Alī Hasan (d)
448	1057	Salat ur-Raghaib comes into vogue
450-505	1058-1111	Al-Ghazali, Abū Ḥamid ibn Muḥammad
470-561	1077-1166	'Abdul Qādir Jilānī
471	1079	al-Jurjānī, 'Abdul Qāhir (d)
476	1083	Shirāzī, Abū Is'hāq (d)
477	1084	Sheikh Abū 'Alī al-Fārmadī (d)
478	1085	Imam ul-Harmayn Abul Ma'ali Abul Malik Juwā'nī (d)
484	1091	Al-Ghazali's arrival in Baghdad
485	1092	Al-Ghazali's appointment as ambassador in the court of Turkhān Khatoon

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

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<i>A H</i>	<i>A D</i>	<i>Events and Personalities</i>
487-512	1094-1118	Reign of Abul ‘Abbās, Mustazhir b’ Illāh
488	1095	‘Abdur Qādir Jilani’s arrival in Baghdad
488	1095	Al-Ghazali leaves Baghdad
490	1097	First Crusade
492	1099	Fall of Jerusalem
499	1106	Al-Ghazali returned to teaching in Nishapur University
500	1107	Fakhr ul-Mulk killed
501	1108	‘Alī ibn Yūsuf ibn Tashfīn’s order to destroy copies of <i>Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm-id-Dīn</i>
502	1109	Tabrezi, Abū Zakaria
504	1110	Al-Ghazali returns to Tūs
508-597	1114-1201	Ibn al-Jawzi, ‘Abdur Rahmān
511	1117	Cadi Abū Sa‘eed Makhrāmī
512-529	1118-1135	Al-Mustarshid b’ Illāh, the Caliph
513	1119	Ibn ‘Aqeel, Abul Wafā (d.)
516	1122	al-Hariri, Abul Qāsim (d)
525	1131	al-Dabbās, Sheikh Abul Khair Mammad ibn Muslim (d)
529	1135	Caliph al-Mustarshid defeated by Sultan Mas‘ūd
529	1135	al-Rāshid b’ Illāh (deposed)
530-555	1136-1160	al-Muktafi I’ Amr Illāh
539 (6th Jamādi ul-Akhir)	1144 (5th December)	Capture of Edessa (Roha)
540	1145	‘Abdul Momīn succeeds Tashfīn ibn ‘Alī ibn Tashfīn in Spain
541 (5th Rabī ul-Thāni)	1146 (14th Septeber)	Murder of ‘Imad ud-dīn Zengi
543-628	1148-1231	Baha’ ud-dīn Veled, Muhammad
555-565	1160-1170	al-Mustanjid b’ Illāh
558	1163	Defeat of Nūr ud-dīn Zengi at Hīn al-Akrād
559	1164	Capture of Hārim by Nur ud-dīn Zengi
569 (11th Shawwal)	1174 (15th May)	Death of Nur ud-dīn Zengi
575-622	1179-1225	Reign of an-Nāsir li Dīn-Illāh

<i>A. H</i>	<i>A. D</i>	<i>Events and Personalities</i>
578-660	1182-1262	ʿIzz ud-dīn ibn ʿAbdul-Salām
583 (24th Rabi ul-Akhir)	1187 (4th July)	Battle of Hittin (Tiberias)
583 (27th Rajab)	1187 (2nd October)	Salah ud-dīn's entry in Jerusalem
588	1192	Peace concluded after Third Crusade
589 (27th Safar)	1193 (4th March)	Death of Salah ud-dīn Ayyubi
591	1195	Establishment of colleges in Haleb
593-632	1197-1235	Suharwardī, Shahab ud-dīn
595	1198	Ibn Rushd, (Averroes) Abū Wālī Muhammad (d)
557-624	1162-1227	Chenghiz Khan
596-617	1199-1220	Reign of ʿAlīʾ ud-dīn Muhammad Khwarizm Shah
597	1201	Famine in Egypt
597	1201	Earthquake in Syria, Iraq, etc.
601	1205	Battles between Qatādah Husamī and Salīm Husamī
602	1206	Chenghiz Khan elected Kakhan
603	1206-7	War between Ghorids and Khwarizm Shah
604	1207	Crusaders attack Syria
604 (6th Rabi ul-Awwal)	1207 (30th September)	Birth of Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī
606	1209	Rāzī Fakhr ud-dīn (d)
607	1210	Conspiracy between the Crusaders and the rulers of Jazirah
610	1213	Bahāʾ ud-dīn Veled leaves Balkh
616	1218	Chenghiz Khan attacks the kingdom of Khwarizm Shah
616	1219	Crusaders capture Damietta
622	1225	Birth of Chelebi Husām ud-dīn
623-640	1226-1242	Reign of Mustansir bʾIllāh
624	1227	Death of Khwarizm Shah
626	1229	Battles between Ayyubid Princes
626-639	1229-1241	Reign of Ogotay
628	1231	Death of Bahāʾ ud-dīn Veled
630	1233	Rūmī's journey to Damascus
635	1238	Rūmī returns to Konya
637	1239	Burhān ud-dīn (d)
638	1240	Ibn ʿArabī, Mohī ud-dīn (d)

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

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<i>A H</i>	<i>A D</i>	<i>Events and Personalities</i>
639	1241	Conversion of Khan Ananda
640-643	1242-1245	No covering sent for K'aba by the Caliph
640-644	1242-1246	Royal processions on the occasion of 'Id
640-656	1242-1258	Reign of al-Mu'tasim b'Illah
642	1244	Ibn 'Alqam appointed as the Prime Minister of Abbasid Caliphate
642 (26th Jamādi ul-Ākhir)	1244 (29th November)	Shams ud-dīn Tebrez arrives in Konya
643 (1st Shawwal)	1246 (20th February)	Shams ud-dīn Tebrez leaves Konya
644-646	1246-1248	Reign of Kuyuk
645	1247	Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī turns to musical recitations
647	1249	Sheikh Salah ud-dīn the gold-beater appointed as Chief assistant by Rūmī
654-665	1256-1267	Reign of Barāka Khan
655	1257	Shi'a-Sunni Riots in Baghdad
656	1258	Halaku sacks Baghdad
657	1259	Sheikh Salāh ud-dīn (d)
658	1260	Fall of Damascus
658 (25th of Ramadhan)	1260 (3rd September)	Battle of 'Ain Jalūt
659	1261	Revival of 'Abbasid Caliphate
664-669	1266-1270	Reign of Burāq Khan (Ghyas ud-dīn)
672 (5th Jamādi-ul-Ākhir)	1273 (17th December)	Death of Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī
683	1284	Rising against Takudar Khan
683-690	1284-1291	Reign of Arghun
694	1295	Conversion of Ghazān, the seventh Ilkhān
703	1304	Uljaytu (Muhammad Khudabandah) succeeds Ghazān
722-730	1322-1330	Reign of Tarmashirīn Khan
723-728	1323-1328	Reign of Timūr Khan
726	1326	Conversion of Tarmashirīn Khan
748-764	1347-63	Reign of Tuqlūq Timūr Khan
806	1403	Hafiz Zayn ud-dīn al-'Iraqi (d)

Ahl-i-Bait.—*Li* the people of the house of the Prophet, with reference to Qurʾān XXXIII-33. The Shiʿites, however, attribute the expression to ʿAlī, Fatima, their sons and dependents to whom they restrict their appellation as well as the right to spiritual merit and political rule.

Allah—has been used throughout in this book in the translation of the Holy Qurʾān, taken from Marmaduke Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Qurʾān*. As Pickthall says he has retained the word Allah because there is no corresponding word in English. The word *Allah* (the stress is on the last syllable) has neither feminine nor plural and has never been applied to anything other than the unimaginable Supreme Being.

Amīr-ul-Muminīn—*Li* The commander of the Faithful. A title which was first given to the second Caliph, ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb and afterwards assumed by his successors.

Asmāʾ ur-Rijāl—*Li* "The names of Men". A dictionary of biography, specially of those who handed down the Traditions of the Prophet.

Baʿit—Oath of allegiance taken by the people for remaining faithful to the head of a Muslim State or any other person acknowledged as a spiritual guide.

Bait ul-Māl—*Li* 'The House of Property'. The public treasury of a Islamic State, which the ruler is not allowed to use for his personal expenses, but only for the public good.

Batiniyah—*Li* "inner, esoteric". They maintained that only a symbolic interpretation requiring gradual initiation by an illuminated teacher could reveal the real meanings of the Qurʾān. The word they claimed, was like a veil, hiding the deep and occult meaning never attainable to those clinging to literal explanation. Being a Shiʿite theological school of thought, they also upheld the doctrine of the divine source of the *Imāmat* (the spiritual leadership of Imām) and of the transmission by divinely ordained hereditary succession from the Caliph ʿAlī. The wide-spread Ismaʿilite sect and its offsprings (Qarmatians, Fatimids, Assassins, etc.) belong to the sphere of Batinite thought.

Cadi—The judge and the administrator of law appointed by the ruler of a Muslim State.

Dīn—The Arabic word for 'religion'. Although sometimes used for an idolatrous religion, it is used specially for the religion of the prophets and their revealed scriptures.

Dīn-i-Ilāhī—Jalāl ud-dīn Muhammad Akbar, the great Mogul Emperor, had initiated a new religion entitled as *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* with the sole purpose of producing an amalgam of Hindu and Muslim faiths in order to strengthen and consolidate the Mogul empire. People who embraced this faith had openly to forsake the conformist or orthodox Islam which, according to Akbar, had outlived its utility after a thousand years since its inception. Although the new

religion claimed to embody the merits of all the religions without any prejudice, it favoured Hinduism and freely rejected or subjected to amendments the Islamic injunctions which were held to be retrogressive

Dinar.—A gold coin of the weight of ninety-six barley grains

Dirham.—A silver coin

Dozakh or Hell.—(also *Jahannum*) is the place of torment to which the sinners will be consigned on the Day of Judgement

Fardh.—That which is obligatory A term used for those rules and ordinances of religion which are said to have been established and enjoined by God Himself, as distinguished from those which are established on the precept or practice of the Prophet, and which are called *Sunnah*

Fardh-i-Kafāyah.—A command which is imperative upon all Muslims, but which if one person in a group performs it, it is sufficient or equivalent to all having performed it

Fatimides.—A Shia'ite dynasty of 13 Caliphs or *Imāms* in North-Africa (911-1171) and in Egypt (after 969) Unlike the other heads of the larger or smaller states emerging within the sphere of the 'Abbasid Caliphate or which conceded to the Caliph, at least to save appearance, the Fatimides challenged the 'Abbasids for both the temporal and spiritual power Beyond its political significance, however, it fulfilled the apocalyptic belief in the reign of Mahdī, an essential tenet of the Isma'ili branch of Shia'ism Following were the Fatimide Caliphs

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 al-Mahdī 'Ubayd-ullāh (911-934) | 8 al-Mustansir (1035-1094) |
| 2 al-Qa'im (934-946) | 9 al-Musta'li (1094-1101) |
| 3 al-Mansūr (946-952) | 10 al-Āmir (1101-1130) |
| 4 al-Mu'izz (952-975) | 11 al-Hāfiz (1130-1149) |
| 5 al-'Azīz (975-996) | 12 al-Zāhir (1149-1154) |
| 6 al-Hakīm (996-1021) | 13 al-Fa'iz (1154-1160) |
| 7 al-Zāhir (1021-1035) | 14 al-'Āhid (1160-1171) |

Fatwa.—A formal answer to a question on Islamic law, submitted by a judge, an official body or also by private people to a doctor of religion The findings given as an answer to such questions are based on the Qur'ān and the Prophet's Tradition (*hadith*), on *ijmā'* (consensus of opinion) and *qiyās* (sound deductive reasoning)

Fiqh.—The dogmatic theology of Islam, specially that pertaining to jurisprudence

Hadith.—See *Sunnah*

Hajj.—Lit "setting out", or "tending towards" The pilgrimage to Mecca performed in the month of *Zil-Hijjah*, or the twelfth month of the Islamic year, is the fifth pillar of Islam, and an incumbent religious duty for those who can afford the expenses It is founded upon express injunctions in

the Qur'ān

Hajr-i-Aswad.—*Lit* "Black Stone" At the north-east corner of the K'aba, near the door, is studded the famous black stone, at four or five feet above the ground. Its colour is deep reddish brown, approaching to black. Being kissed by the faithful after circumambulation of the K'aba, the *Hajr-i-Aswad* has been worn out to its present surface by the millions of touches and kisses it has received.

Halāl —*Lit* "That which is untied or loose" That which is lawful, as distinguished from *harām*, or that which is unlawful.

Harām.—*Lit* "prohibited" or that which is unlawful. The word is used in both a good and a bad sense, e.g. *Bait ul-Harām*, the sacred house, and *Mal ul-Harām*, unlawful possession.

A thing is said to be *harām* when it is forbidden, as opposed to that which is *halāl*, or lawful.

Hijrah.—*Lit* "migration" The date of the Prophet Muhammad's departure from Mecca was the fourth day of Rabi'ul-Awwal (20th June, 622 A.D.). The *Hijrah* was instituted by Caliph 'Umar to refer events as happening before or after it, thus beginning the Islamic Calendar from the year of *Hijrah*.

Hikmat —*Lit* "The Wisdom". The term is used to express the knowledge revealed in the Qur'ān.

'Id.—The two Muslim feasts are *'Id al-Adh'ha* or the Feast of Sacrifice and *'Id ul-Fitr* or the Feast of Fast-Breaking at the end of the month of Ramadhan. The former is held on the 10th of *Zil-Hijjah* which concludes the rituals of *Hajj*.

Ijtihad.—*Lit* "Exertion" The logical deduction on a legal or theological question by a learned and enlightened doctor of religion, as distinguished from *Ijma'*, which is the collective opinion of a number of jurists.

'Ilm.—*see* 'Ulema

Imām —"One who leads", a normal guide or a model. It commonly denotes in the Sunnite creed the leader of the congregation in prayer, who should be conversant with the ritual. In the Shi'ah doctrine, however, the term covers an entirely different notion. To them the *Imām* is the faultless and infallible leader, an offspring of 'Alī, to whom spiritual leadership is supposed to have been passed on from the Prophet through his son-in-law and the fourth Caliph 'Alī.

Islam —*Lit* "The Surrender" to Allah i.e. the religion which the Prophet had established, with complete submission to the will of God, as its cardinal principle.

Isma'īlites.—Or *seveners* (*Sibā'iyyah*) was a group of extremist Shi'ahs, originating from a schism which took place in the Shi'ah community towards the end of the eighth century about the question of the succession of the seventh

Imām, Ismāʿīl The sixth *Imām*, Jaʿfar al-Sādiq, had disinherited Ismāʿīl in favour of his younger son Mūsā al-Kāzim but a faction of the Shīʿah remained faithful to Ismāʿīl. Later, the Ismāʿīlites proved their vitality under such different aspects as the terrorism of the Qarmāṭian sectaries, the caliphate of Fatimides, the Brethren of Purity and the once so dreaded Assassins (also see *Batīniyah*)

ʿItizāl.—Lit “Seceded”, the word is applied to the school of Wāṣil ibn ʿAtā who broke away from Hasan al-Basrī. (Also see, *Muʿtazilah*)

Jabriyah—The sect denied free agency in man. They take their denomination from *Jabr*, which signifies “necessity or compulsion”, because they held man to be necessarily and inevitably constrained to act as he does by force of God’s eternal and immutable decree. They declared that reward and punishment are the effects of necessity and the same they said of the imposing of commands by a ruler.

Jāhiliyah—(*Jahl*, Ignorance) or the Age of Ignorance is the name given to the period preceding Islam in Arabia. It was mainly on account of the ignorance of religious truths and the materialistic way of life in the pre-Islamic times that the age was known as the Age of Ignorance. The poetry of the *Jāhiliyah* period is generally considered as one of the greatest contribution to Arabic literature.

Jahmiyah—A sect founded by Jahm ibn Saʿfān (717). He borrowed from the *Murjite* sect the doctrine that true faith is founded on conviction independently of external manifestations and from the *Muʿtazilites*, the rejection of all anthropomorphic attributes of God. Unlike *Muʿtazilites*, *Jahmiyah* believed in absolute predestination, that man has neither power nor choice in deciding his actions. Thus Jahm ibn Saʿfān was a precursor of *Jabriyah* (Determinists or Necessitarians) who survived until the XIth Century.

Jannat or Paradise—Is the celestial abode of bliss to which the righteous will be sent on the Day of Judgment.

Jazyah—Or poll-tax is levied, in an Islamic State, on those non-Muslims who choose to live as a citizen under it. Such citizens of an Islamic State obtain security on the payment of poll-tax and are exempted from compulsory military duty to which Muslim citizens are liable.

Jihād—*Lit* “An effort, or a striving”. A religious war which is a duty extending to all times, against those who seek to destroy Islam or put hinderances in the way of religious observance.

Kaʿba—*Lit* “The Cube”. The most venerated sanctuary of Islam, situated in the centre of the Great Mosque of Mecca.

Khatīb—*Lit* The preacher of a sermon or oration delivered on Friday at the time of congregational prayer on that day. The *Khutba* is also recited on the two festivals of *ʿId ul-Fitr* and *ʿId ul-Adhʿha*.

Khilafat-i-Rāshida—The expression is restricted to the rule of first four

successors of the Prophet who ruled over the community strictly in accordance with the tenets of the Qurʾān and the *Sunnah*. These were, Abū Bakr, 11 A. H. (632 A. D.), ʿUmar, 13 A. H. (634 A. D.), ʿUthman, 23 A. H. (643 A. D.) and ʿAlī, 35-40 A. H. (655-660 A. D.). Al-Hasan who succeeded ʿAlī but later resigned in favour of Muʿawiyah is also included by some among the right-guided caliphs.

Liʿān—Divorcing by mutual cursing of husband and wife

Maʿād—or requital in the Hereafter is an article of Muslim faith. It calls for belief in the Day of Judgement, the Resurrection, man's presence in the Divine court, and the administration of reward and punishment in accordance with his faith and actions.

Mamlūk—*Li* "Slave", the designation of a caste formed by imported slaves serving in the army.

Masah—The touching of earth for purification where water is not available for ritual ablution.

Malaʾikah—*Li* "The Angels". The angels as created beings are only Divine messengers, faithful executors of the commands of God and have nothing of Godhead about them.

Manlān—*Li* "Lord", a honorific title used for religious scholars.

Millat—The word occurs in the Qurʾān several times for the religion of Abraham. Hence it stands for those who are the followers of a prophet.

Mujaddid—One who revives and restores Islam.

Muqām-i-Ibrāhīm—*Li* "The place or station of Abraham" adjacent to Kʿaba, within the boundary of the Holy Mosque, which contains the sacred stone upon which Abraham stood when he built the Kʿaba.

Muʿtazilah—*Li* "The separatists". A school of thought founded by Wāsil ibn ʿAtāʾ, who separated from the school of Hasan al-Basrī. The chief tenets of the school were: (1) They rejected all eternal attributes of God saying that eternity is the proper or formal attribute of His essence, that God knows by His essence, and not by His knowledge, that to affirm these attributes is the same thing as to make more eternals than one, and that the Unity of God is inconsistent with such an opinion. (2) They believed the word of God (Qurʾān) to have been created, and whatever was created is also an accident, and liable to perish. (3) They held that if any Muslim is guilty of grievous sin, and dies without repentance, he will be eternally damned. (4) They also denied all vision of God in Paradise by the corporeal eye, and rejected all comparisons or similitude applied to God.

During the reign of the ʿAbbasid Caliphs, al-Manūn, al-Muʿtasim and al-Wāthiq (198-233 A. H.), the Muʿtazilah were in high favour.

Nabīd—An exhilarating but not intoxicating drink, prepared from barley.

Nabūwat—The office or work of a *nabi* or a prophet, who is directly

inspired by God and to whom a special mission has been entrusted.

Nifāq—Lū Hypocrisy A term applied by the Qurʾān (*munāfiqīn*) for a class of people who in the days of the Prophet professed to follow him. It therefore applies to anyone who publicly professes to believe in Islam but hides infidelity in one's heart

Qadriyah—Maʿbad al-Juhaim (d. 699 A. D.) was the first to discuss the problem of the freedom of will. He proclaimed that man held power (*qadr*) over his actions, and consequently, the tyrants and cruel kings and rulers were responsible for their unjust deeds. They were the ancient *Muʿtazilites* before al-Wasīl separated from the school of Hasan al-Basrī.

Qaramita—An extremely radical branch of the *Ismaʿīlī* group of the *Shrʿah* sect called after its founder Hamdān Qarmāt, in existence from the IXth until the middle of the XIth century. Hamdān Qarmāt preached a crudely materialistic communism to the masses, a mystical agnosticism to a selected elite, and a hostile contempt for orthodox ethics to all. Ruthless terrorism was proclaimed as the means to achieve ultimate happiness.

Qurʾān—The sacred book of Islam which is believed to be the revealed word of God to the Prophet Muhammad. It differs from other religious scriptures in so far as they are believed to be mere Divine inspirations and not revealed word by word to their writers.

Rakʿat—(pl. Rakʿah) A unit of prayer consisting of two prostrations and one genuflection.

Ramī—The throwing of pebbles at the pillars, or Jumrah at Mecca, as a part of religious ceremony during the (*hajj*) pilgrimage.

Ramadhan—Is the ninth month of Islamic year during which Muslims keep fast from dawn till sunset.

Risālat—The office of an apostle or prophet. As against *nabi* (prophet), the *rasūl* (apostle) is one to whom a special mission has been entrusted although a scripture may not have been revealed to him.

Rozah or Saum—Means fasting. It is one of the obligatory observances of Islam enjoined by the Qurʾān. The thirty days fasting during the month of *Ramadhan* is regarded as a divine institution, and is therefore a compulsory observance for all excepting those who are not in a position to keep the fast from dawn till sunset.

Sabaq—Giving precedence to certain rituals of *Hajj* which are to be performed after others.

Sakharah or Qubbatus-Sakharah—To the north-west of the Dome of the Rock, a small but beautiful cupola on a raised platform houses the sacred rock which was used as the place for sacrificial offerings by Abraham and later prophets of Banī Isrāʾīl.

Salāt—Is the second of the five fundamental observances in Islam. It is a devotional exercise which every Muslim is required to render to God five

times a day It is a duty frequently enjoined in the Qur'ān

Salat Ul-Zuha—A special but voluntary prayer performed halfway between the morning and mid-day prayers

Sharī'ah—The law, including both the teachings of the Qur'ān and of the Traditions (actions and sayings) of the Prophet

Sheikh—A title accorded to the venerable doctors of religion It is used in addressing theological scholars who have acquired a certain spiritual prominence, without necessarily holding a religious office

Shi'ah—*Lit* 'Split' and also 'followers'—a general designation covering various Islamic sects not following the conformist or orthodox faith The schism whose origin goes back to the early years of Islam had its beginnings in the rivalry for the caliphate between the Umayyad and 'Alid clans after Caliph 'Alī's death and Mu'awiyah's (the first Umayyad) accession to the caliphate The 'Alid partly maintained that this highest office of Islam was a prerogative of the Prophet's house They also maintained that 'Alī was the first legitimate *Imām* or successor to the Prophet and therefore rejected the first three successors of the Prophet The belief in this regard later developed into a faith that the Prophet's God-willed spiritual and secular guidance had passed from him to 'Alī who, himself an incarnation of the Divine Spirit, had bequeathed his mission to a sequence of hereditary *Imāms* of his progeny On this soil was set up a theological framework which left ample room for the most varied opinions, some of them hard on the borderline of Islam

Sūfi—One who professes the mystic principles for attaining the gnosis of God

Sunnah—As opposed to the Qur'ān which is a direct revelation from God, the Prophet also received what is regarded as *wahī ghair amīn* or an unread revelation which enabled him to give authoritative declarations on religious questions The Arabic words used for these traditions are *Hadith* and *Sunnah* (a saying and a custom) The Prophet gave very special instructions respecting the faithful transmission of his sayings Gradually, however, spurious Traditions also gained currency for which an elaborate canon of subjective and and historical criticism was evolved for the reception or rejection of the Traditions

The *Sunnah* represents an authentic interpretation of the Qur'ān, a valuable source of law and an infallible guide for the overwhelming majority of Muslims in every situation of their spiritual and secular life as opposed to *Bid'ah* (innovation)

Sunni—*Lit* 'One of the path' A term generally applied to the overwhelming majority of the Muslims who consider the *sunnah* of the Prophet, manifested by his sayings, acts or tacit approval and transmitted by the companions of the Prophet, as the infallible guide of the faithful and an authentic interpretation of the Qur'ān

abandonment to spiritual illumination and divine inspiration

Wājib—Li: 'That which is obligatory'. A term used in Islamic law for those injunctions, the non-observance of which constitutes sin, but the denial of which does not attain to downright infidelity.

Zakāt—Li: it means purification, whence it is used to express a portion of property bestowed in alms, as a sanctification of the remainder of the property. The institution is founded on the command in the Qur'ān (*vide* Surah II : 83), being one of the five obligatory observances enjoined for the believer. The fixed amount of property and the rate of the poor-due, varies with reference to the different kinds of property in possession.

Zihār—Husbands divorcing the wife by likening her to any kinswomen within the prohibited degree.

Zimmī—A non-Muslim subject of an Islamic state who, for the payment of a poll-tax or capitation-tax, enjoys security of his person and property and other civic rights.

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